Domestic Forms: Engraved Silver, Furniture, Shields & Memorabilia

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Heraldry display and armorial designs have been used in the domestic scene for hundreds of years. So far we have found examples on engraved silver, painted shields, carved furniture, and memorabilia. This section includes some examples of the images in each of these forms. We also know that Davidson armorial designs have been found on the fine porcelain exported from China for the western European market in the 18th & 19th centuries but we do not yet have the relevant images to show this type of item.

Engraved Silver

Historically the tradition of engraving the family silver with armorial designs goes back hundreds of years. A few Davidson examples survive the 19th century. Much has been lost from theft or having been sent for scrap and melting.

Part of a piece of silver cutlery with Davidson Crest

Ceremonial Powder Horn with Davidson Crest *c.*1837

Part of a solid silver cutlery set wedding present given in 1837 to one of the Davidson of Tulloch family and still in use today by the descendants

Part of an Engraved Silver Teapot with the Tillychetly crest & motto

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Furniture

So far we have found only two items of furniture with the Davidson armorial detail.

They comprise a pair of early Victorian chairs which possibly date from the 1840s. The chairs are still in use today. They come from the Davidson of Tulloch family but show the crest originally used by the Davidson of Cantray family. Once again the Tulloch family was copying earlier motifs.

Painted Shields

Painted armorial shields have used as domestic decoration for many years both in the small home as well in the larger settings. There is one example found in a major collection of clan shields on display in St Columba's Cathedral, Glasgow.

This shield purports to depict the arms of the Clan Davidson, but the design and the colours are not correct. However, the colours may have been distorted by the effect of the flash photography.

Davidson Shield at St Columba's Cathedral, Glasgow

Another form is the Embroidered Shield. The example shown here was made in the 1990s for the Clan Davidson Association using the arms of the Association as originally registered at the Lyon Court in 1934. It is interesting to compare both shields.

Clan Davidson Association Arms

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The Shield of the Chief of the Clan Davidson

On its own, this item might just be considered domestic but it actually forms part of a major set of carved wooden shields of the Clan Chiefs of Scotland. This set was created in the 1950s and is now located in the Regimental Drill Hall of the London Scottish Regiment in London. This collection has been fully refurbished in recent years and makes a very good backdrop to this Victorian Regimental Drill Hall located in the heart of Westminster.

I suspect few know about this collection.

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The Arms of the Scottish Clan Chiefs at the Regimental Drill Hall, London Scottish Regiment

Memorabilia

Memorabilia is everywhere today. The armorial device is a useful marketing tool for any organization and the Clan Davidson is no exception. Shown here are just some of the items marketed with the Clan Association arms or crest.

Mug; Commemorative Shield; Engraved Glassware; Silver Brooch; Car Sticker

Heraldry as Fun

A soap stone hand seal set made in Hong Kong for one of Clan Davidson's Founder Members

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Postscript

I grew up with many Davidson of Tulloch armorial images most of which I am beginning to understand.

However, there is one which I have yet to unravel. It is the image of the man holding a heart in his right hand, known in the family as the “bleeding heart”.

Crest with a man holding a heart in his right hand

Charles Davidson discusses this crest in his section and indicates that it first shows up on the Davidson of Corriehill [Curriehill] arms 1672–85. No doubt that the Davidsons of Tulloch copied it as did other families. But where did the Davidsons of Corriehill source this motif?

Charles Davidson thinks it might possibly have come from a Douglas connection where the heart motif is frequently used. My mother, a descendant of Henry Davidson 1773–1827, 3rd Laird of Tulloch, has always been intrigued by this rather gruesome image which the family has found on inherited items of furniture and silver. James Davidson, the Clan Davidson Association’s former President, also has this motif on inherited items and is also intrigued by its origin.

I have searched numerous references without coming up with any satisfactory answer. I would welcome any suggestions from readers of these notes.

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