

TEN SHINING SHIELDS

Scroll down to find out more about each shield. Start on the left side of the left staircase and make your way to the right to discover whose coat of arms is on each shield.

William the Conqueror (1066–1087)

William the Conqueror – famous for his invasion of England in 1066 bore the traditional arms of Normandy and the House of Anjou - two lions *passant guardant* or walking and facing the viewer. They are nicknamed *les p'tits cats* - the little cats.

King John (1199–1216), Henry III (1216–1272), Edward I (1272–1307)

These arms – three lions *passant guardant* – are the arms of the House of Plantagenet and are commonly regarded as the first English royal coat of arms being adopted from the 12th century. They were used by many of the Kings who expanded the Tower of London including King John, Henry III and Edward I.

Edward III (1327–1377)

Edward III was the first English monarch to be crowned 'King of England and of France' and adopted a field of *fleurs de lys* – the royal symbol of France – to display his claim to the French throne.

Richard II (1377–1399)

Richard II's reign, while often tumultuous, is remembered at the Tower for the Peasants' Revolt – during which an angry mob sacked the fortress. Richard adopted the arms supposed to be those of King Edward the Confessor linking himself to the saintly king.

Henry VI (1422–1461//1470–1471)

Henry VI ruled through a dramatic period of English history as the Wars of the Roses ravaged England. He was deposed twice by Edward IV – first in 1461 before being restored to the throne in 1470 and deposed again in 1471. He was imprisoned in the Tower and following the death of his son, he died of 'melancholy'. It is thought he was murdered in the Wakefield Tower on the orders of Edward IV. While King, Henry adopted the arms of France impaled with the arms of England, symbolising the dual monarchy. France is shown in the more prominent position of *dexter* (viewer's left) while England is displayed *sinister* (viewer's right).

Henry IV (1399–1413), Henry V (1413–1422), Edward IV (1461/1470//1471–1483), Henry VIII (1509–1547), Edward VI (1547–1553), Elizabeth I (1558–1603)

Henry IV removed the arms of King Edward the Confessor and reduced the field of *fleur de lys* to three – imitating Charles V of France. Edward IV restored the use of Henry IV's arms, and they were subsequently used by each of the Tudor monarchs except Mary I who impaled her arms with her husband, Phillip II of Spain, and Lady Jane Grey.

James VI/I (1567–1625 [Scotland] // 1603–1625 [England Scotland and Ireland])

When Elizabeth I died in 1603 with no heir James VI, who had been King of Scotland since 1567, inherited the English throne. He became James VI & I of Scotland, England and Ireland. The union of the kingdoms saw the royal arms of England quartered with those of Scotland and the royal arms of Ireland.

The Protectorate/Oliver Cromwell (1655–59)

These are the arms of Oliver Cromwell, a central figure during the English Civil War, who became Lord Protector of the Commonwealth from 1653 –1658 following the execution of Charles I. His arms feature those of the Commonwealth – the only republican arms of the United Kingdom – represented by the quartered flags of England, Scotland and Ireland surmounted by an *inescutcheon* – the central shield – of Oliver Cromwell's personal arms of a Lion *rampant* – rearing up facing forward – on a field sable. Cromwell's death created a power vacuum which resulted in the restoration of Charles II in 1660.

Anne I (1702–1714)

Anne inherited the throne upon the death of William III, and the royal arms returned those of James VI until 1707. The arms shown here are those used after 1st May 1707, when the kingdoms of England and Scotland were merged to form that of Great Britain. Following the Union, the impaled arms of England and Scotland were used to reflect their merging into one kingdom.

Victoria I (1837–1901)

The arms of the English royal family became increasingly complex between the 18th and 19th centuries. When Queen Victoria ascended to the throne in 1837 the devices were simplified to those shown here – quartered with the Plantagenet arms of three lions *passant guardant*, the royal arms of Scotland and Ireland. These are largely the same arms as those used by Charles III though the Irish harp has been simplified to a Gaelic harp.