

A Coat of Arms



Good morning. I am here to tell you a story; a story about the B.S.S.H. Coat of Arms.

Journal of Hand Surgery



At one time, it was a very prominent feature of our Society, and emblazoned the front cover of every edition of our journal.

Then, over the years, it gradually became less and less prominent, until it disappeared, as the Journal evolved from a parochial British Journal, into the International Journal that it has become.

Julia Ruston



Somewhere in this evolution, the master copy of the cover illustration was lost.

We are fortunate that one of our members, Julia Ruston, as well as being a Hand Surgeon, is also an accomplished artist.

She has faithfully remastered the Coat of Arms, so that we now have this new master copy.

Stewart Harrison 1912 - 2011



The Coat of Arms was devised by Stewart Harrison.

This Society owes him much.

He was one of the founding members and was President in 1972.

Components

Escutcheon

Supporters

Crest

Motto



Coats of Arms were used to recognise knights, obscured by their armour.

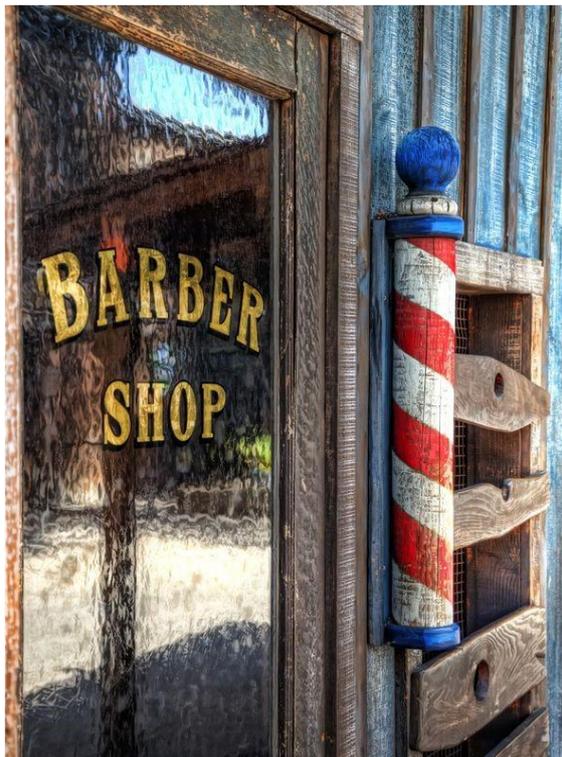
It consists of several components.

The escutcheon or shield, the crest on the helmet, a motto – usually written in Latin, and a supporter on either side.

Obtaining a Coat of Arms is a complicated and expensive process.

The various components must be approved by the College of Arms who act on behalf of the Crown.

At today's prices it would cost £18,500.



What is the meaning of our Coat of Arms?

The background of the lower part of the shield is red and white, the internationally recognised sign of the Barber, the originators of our craft of surgery.

This is emphasised by placing a scalpel in the middle of this background.

Our focus on Hand Surgery is depicted by the two hands in the upper part of the shield.



These hands are from Michaelangelo's painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.
The hand of God energises mankind by touching Adam's hand.



The hands of God and Adam have been cropped.

Adam's languid limp wrist has been extended and the margins of the cropping have been obscured by clouds.

Hands are repaired by hands



The Crest on the top of the helmet emerges from clouds.

The right hand holds a needle, and the left hand holds a sable thread, illustrating the reparative nature of our Society.

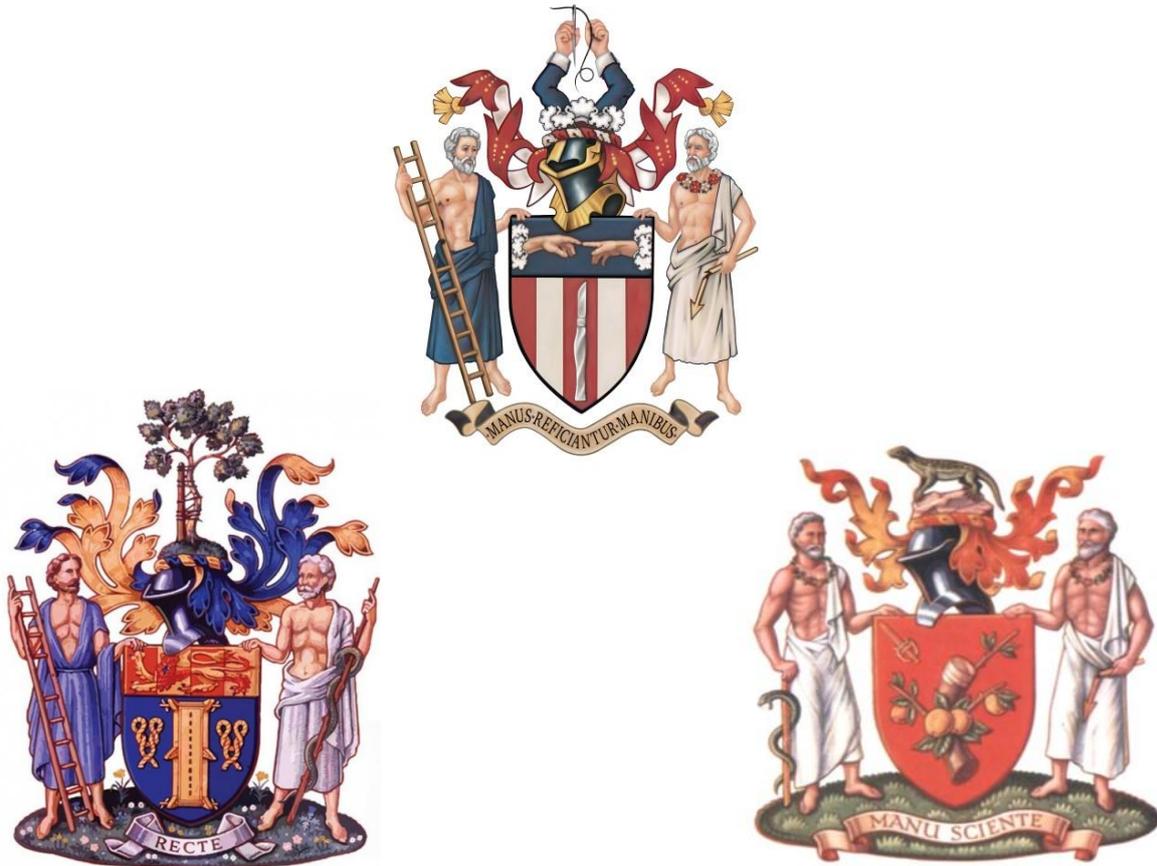
This is confirmed in the Latin Motto meaning “Hands are repaired by hands”.

Perhaps the most interesting part of this story relates to the supporters on either side.

On one side is Hippocrates. He holds a ladder in which the 5th rung is missing. This is an aid to reduce dislocated shoulders. The absent rung enables the ladder to be placed over the head and arm, so that the dislocation can be reduced using the ladder as a fulcrum.

On the other side is Machaon, a warrior surgeon, who took part in the Trojan war. He holds a broken arrow illustrating the need to break the arrow to remove it. This is described in detail, in the Iliad, when Machaon removed an arrow from the wounded King Menelaus.

Why were these supporters chosen?



The answer lies in the origins of our Society.

The British Society for Surgery of the Hand was formed in 1969 by a group of Orthopaedic Surgeons and Plastic Surgeons, who were either members of the British Orthopaedic Association or the British Association of Plastic Surgeons.

The BOA Coat of Arms has Hippocrates, with his rung-less ladder. He is accompanied by Aesculapius, the God of Medicine, who is father to the two supporters on the BAPS Coat of Arms who are both medics, Machaon a surgeon and Podalirius a physician.

Our founders used one supporter from each coat of Arms:

Hippocrates from the BOA coat of arms and Machaon, from the BAPS coat of arms.

This scrupulous even-handedness characterised all their decisions. They even alternated the order of "Orthopaedic" and "Plastic" in official documents, so that neither specialty assumed priority.



The BOA Coat of Arms is magnificent. It is hard to resist a closer look.

How many Orthopaedic Surgeons in this room have ever really looked at the BOA coat of arms?
What, for example, is this thing on the shield.

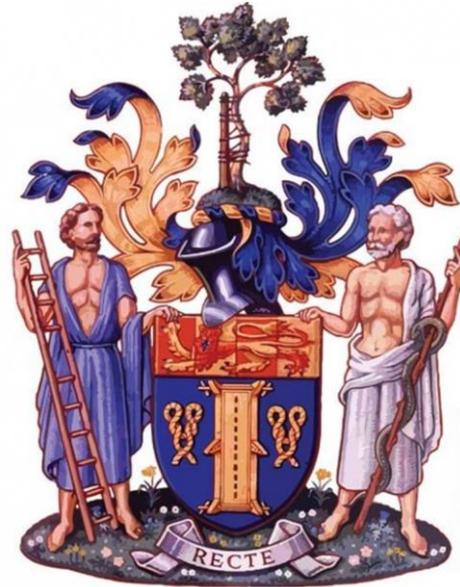
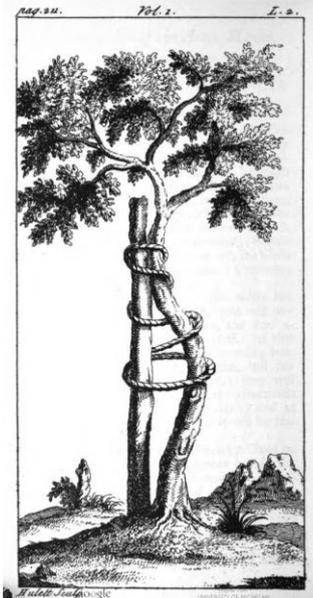
Scamnum



It is a Scamnum;

a traction device invented by Hippocrates to reduce fractures.

Andry's Tree



The Crest is also interesting. It is Andry's tree,

an illustration well known to Orthopaedic Surgeons throughout the world, but perhaps less well known by Plastic Surgeons.

It is from the frontispiece of Nicholas Andry's famous book, Orthopaedia, published in 1741, on the treatment of children's deformities.

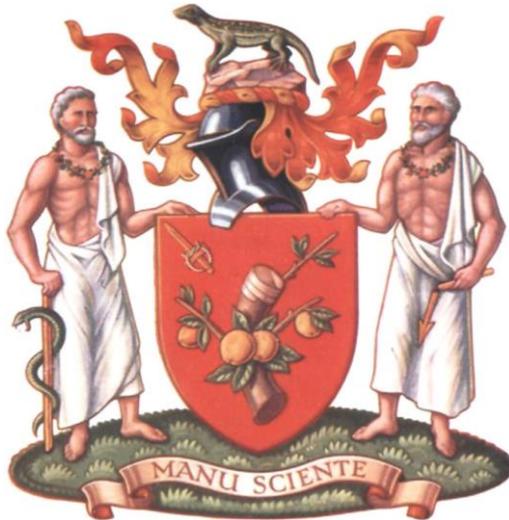
The crooked sapling, lashed to a straight stake is a metaphor for splinting deformed children's limbs.

The title of the book "Orthopaedia" was a neologism invented by Andry from the words Ortho (Straight) and Pais (a child).

Thus, the term "Orthopaedic" was born.

The motto is a terse "Recte", meaning straight.

BAPS Becomes BAPRAS



BAPRAS

British Association of Plastic
Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons

Younger Plastic surgeons may never have seen the BAPS Coat of Arms.

In 2006 the British Association of Plastic Surgeons changed its name to become the British Association of Plastic Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons.

The Coat of Arms was substituted by a logo depicting a Salamander.

The colour version of the Coat of Arms is no longer used. A tiny, light grey version, however, can still be seen at the bottom of official documents.

For those of you who have never seen the colour version of this Coat of Arms, it is rather beautiful.

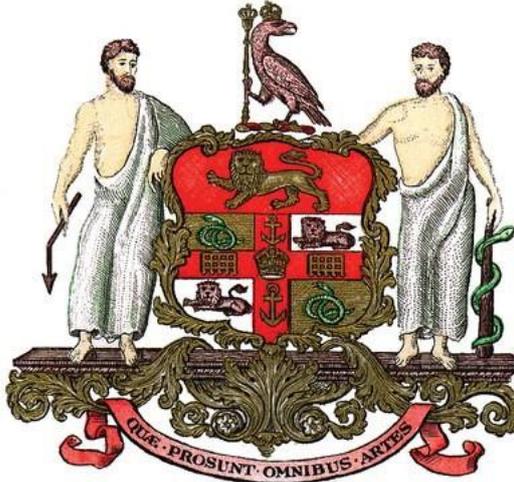
The shield shows a graft on an apple tree, secured by a bandage. and in the top left corner is a knife and golden thread, illustrating the various components of the Plastic Surgery art.

The crest has a lizard, chosen for its ability to regenerate its tail.

The motto, Manu Sciente means “with a skilled hand”.

Why did they choose Machaon and Podalirius as supporters?

Podalirius and Machaon



You don't have to look far to see the same two *brothers* supporting a much older Coat of Arms: that of the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

In the BAPS Coat of Arms, their positions have been transposed and they have been adorned with garlands of flowers around their necks.

These are flowers of the British Empire.

This was 1946.

A year later, in 1947, India became independent, and the Empire would begin to disintegrate.



However, our garland has survived as an anachronism.

So, there you have it.

A testament to the revolutionary vision of our founders to create this interface specialty of Hand Surgery.

A Pair of Hands

(Editorial 1969 Norman Capener)

The two branches of surgery have much to learn from each other: a "Pair of Hands" clasped together and of one mind. The object being to ensure that the disordered hands of our patients are, as far as possible, restored to be truly the extensions of their minds.



I leave you with the words of Norman Capener

Taken from his editorial, in our journal, when our Society was formed.

I hope you will agree that these words are as relevant today as when they were written.

Thank you.