

DORNOCH SHERIFF COURT CEILING ARMORIALS

Images numbered according to position in attached illustrations:

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
10	11	

1. Quarterly, 1st and 4th, grand-quarters, quarterly i) Azure, three boars' heads couped Or (for Gordon); ii) Or, three lions' heads erased Gules (for Badenoch); iii) Or three crescents within a Royal tressure Gules (for Seton); iv) Azure, three fraises, Argent (for Fraser) (the whole for Huntly); 2nd and 3rd grand-quarters Gules, three mullets Or (for Sutherland) *Earls of Sutherland, probably for John, 13th. Earl.*

2. *[This has been incorrectly coloured]* Argent a three-masted ship, sails furled, oars in action, pennants flying, Sable, a bordure Azure, on a chief overall Gules a boar's head couped between two mullets Or. *[Not identified. The red (Gules) chief (top third or so of the shield) charged with a boar's head between two stars is common to coats belonging to armigers of the name of Cochran - with no terminal 'e' - but none has been found which has the ship and border. The hatching (see Note below) confirms the border as Azure (blue) and the unhatched field as Argent (silver or white) so it seems likely that the ship is Sable (black) suggesting a Caithness and / or Sinclair connection.]*

3. *[This has been incorrectly coloured]* Azure a sun in splendour Or between in chief two crosses pattee fitchee and in base a crosslet Argent. *Gilchrist*

4. Or a chevron between three saltires couped Gules. *Stafford*

5. *[This has been incorrectly coloured]* Gyronny of eight Sable and Gules a lion rampant Or within a bordure also Or charged with three boars' heads, two in chief and one in base, couped Azure muzzled Argent, and two hands fessways in fess holding daggers erect Gules. *Matheson of Achany*

6. This is a curious assemblage of the elements of what later became the arms, crest and motto of the Royal Burgh of Dornoch (granted in 1929 but in use before that date, see the Anderson fountain.) It may be based on an old Burgh seal, of which an impression dated 1786 is illustrated in Stevenson and Wood, *Scottish Heraldic Seals*, Glasgow 1940, but I have not been able to compare them. The wreath in the crest should probably be repainted with six bands of white and blue, otherwise it seems to be as it was intended.

7. Or, a saltire engrailed Sable between in fess two swans naiant in a loch proper. *Loch of Drylaw*

8. *[This has been incorrectly coloured, and is inverted in the photograph.]* Gules, a sword in bend Argent pommelled and hilted Or, surmounted by a fess also Or within a bordure undy Argent. *Dempster (of Skibo?) [This is clearly a Dempster coat, and presumably represents the then proprietors of Skibo. George Dempster of Dunnichen bought the property in 1786 and his family held it until c.1880. This*

specific rendition of the Dempster arms is a variant of ~~the~~ Dempster of Dunnichen, but careless repainting has obscured the detail. The small emblems painted black are indecipherable. The fact that they appear on both the colour of the field (background) and the metal of the fess (the band across the middle) precludes ermine tails. They may be droplet shapes (guttés) with the tinctures counterchanged, i.e. Or (gold) on the red field and Gules (red) on the fess. There are no arms in Lyon Register matching this description, but the attribution to Dempster is certain.]

9. [This has been incorrectly coloured] Gules three lions rampant Argent. Ross of Balnagown

10. Huntly, as in 1 above, with what appears to be an inescutcheon of Nova Scotia in the centre (in which case it should be Argent a saltire Azure surmounted by the Royal arms of Scotland, but the detail is obscure) in which case it would be Gordon of Gordonstoun, baronets which is quite probable.

11. Azure a buckle Or between in chief two wolves' heads erased and on base an escallop Argent. Lumsden of Cushing

Note: It may not have been intended to be paint the original plasterwork. It has been hatched to indicate the colours according to the standard scheme (sometimes called *petra sancta*) used by engravers: vertical lines for red, horizontal lines for blue, etc. Where the hatching is at odds with the colours now applied I have preferred the hatching by which to blazon, and where possible identify, the arms. In some places the paint colours applied are obviously incorrect, as in no. 8 for example where the field (background of the shield) and the fess (the bar across the centre) are the same colouring.

Graeme Muckart
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The Carnegie Courthouse roof heraldry

