**The Coat of Arms of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne**

****

The City's Coat of Arms was in use as long ago as the fourteenth century but was not made official by the College of Arms until 1954.

**Blazon**
The official blazon is Arms:- Gules three Castles triple towered Argent. Crest on a Wreath of the Colours. A Castle as in the Arms issuant therefrom a demi Lion guardant supporting a Flagstaff Or flying therefrom a forked Pennon of the Arms of Saint George. Supporters:- On either side a Sea horse proper crined and finned Or. (This is the Heraldic description, below is the interpretation of this description)

**Interpretation**
The castle motif goes back to earliest times. Originally the town took its name from the "New Castle" built by order of Robert Curthose, eldest son of William the Conqueror, in 1080 and a castle was depicted on the twelfth century common seal. The earliest surviving example of the three silver castles on a red shield, dating from about 1400, is in the window on the north side of the Chancel in St. John's Church. The castle motif is repeated in the crest which is a golden lion atop a silver castle. He is holding the golden staff of St. George's pennon. The castle stands upon a wreath of red and white leaves above a fifteenth century style helmet. The supporters, two mythical sea-horses shaded in green with gold manes, fins and tails, are a reminder that Newcastle is a seaport. Both the supporters and crest were added to the shield by grant of William Flower, Norroy King of Arms, in 1575. The motto, 'Fortiter Defendit Triumphans' ('Triumphing by Brave Defence') was adopted during the Civil War, following the stubborn defence of the town against the Scots in 1644.

**Civic Insignia**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Lord Mayor’s ChainThis chain comprises two 18-carat gold plain belcher chain links, each 60" in length and looped to form a circle. Suspended from one chain is a gold medallion having on the upperside the Arms of the City and on the reverse the Royal Arms with the following inscription:"Georgious IV Corantus,Julius 19th 1821"Suspended from the second chain is a gold button with embossed flowers and leaves. The maker's name is not known, but the chain is believed to have been made in Rome. |  |
| Lady Mayoress’ ChainThis chain consists of an 18-carat gold chain with shelds of blue enamel and alternate Tudor Roses. There are 16 shields, 8 on each side of the pendants and they are cased with gold showing (1) A gun (2) A spade and pick (3) A ship's wheel (4) St Nicholas' Church tower (5) A mace with crossed Swords of State (6) A sword and scales of justice (7) Roman faces (8) Anvil, hammer and pincers. The centre shield is the arms of Riley Lord. The chain has the following inscription:"Presented to the Corporation of Newcastle upon Tyne by Riley Lord, Esq., Mayor 1895-6 and 1899-1900, for the Mayoress, Mrs Albert Lord, and every future Mayoress. 1st May 1900"The upper pendant is of the Royal Arms in gold and enamel; hanging from this is a larger pendant of the City Arms also in gold and enamel. | Image of Lady Mayoress Chain |
| Sheriff’s ChainThe 15-carat chain consists of fancy gold curb links, with a gold 18-carat pendant badge bearing the City Armorial Ensigns in enamel. It was given to the City by Alderman and Sheriff William Haswell Stephenson, J.P., in commemoration of the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, 1887. | Sheriff's Chain  |
| Consort’s MedallionThe 9-carat gold and enamel medallion carries the City's Arms surmounted with the crossed mace and sword. | Consort's Medallion |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The Great MaceThe Great Mace, which dates back to 1687, is of silver gilt and is 4'11" long. The shaft is divided by handsome tracts chased with acanthus foliage into three sections, ornamented with a running pattern of roses and thistles. The foot-knob has the following inscription:"Made for the Corporation of Newcastle upon Tyne anno regni Jacob i secundo tertio annoque domini 1687. Nicholas Cole Esq., Mayor, Thomas Paise Esq., Sheriff"On the uppermost section of the Shaft are four slender brackets. The mace head, or bowl, is split up into four sections separated by caryatides and foliage. The first section contains a rose, the second a thistle, the third a Fleur de Lis and the fourth a harp. Each of these national emblems is surmounted by a crown and flanked with the letters J.R. (Jacobus Rex). On the bowl rests an open arch crown surmountd by Orb and Cross. On the plate beneath this cross the Royal Arms are engraved - also those of France, England, Scotland and Ireland. The only mark which occurs on each separate piece of the mace is that of the maker, F.T. (Frances Granthorne). The Great Mace is believed to be the largest post Restoration Mace in the U.K. | Great Mace |
| Swords of StateThe privilege of having a sword borne before the Mayor was conferred upon the town by Richard II by letters patent dated January 25th 1391. The older of the two swords is a fine example of a state sword of the middle of the fifteenth century. The blade is 34" long, without grooves or ridges and has, near the hilt, on both sides, the Solingen or Passau wolf mark. The hilt, which measurs 13" in length, is that of the original sword and is of steel plate with silver gilt. The pommel is 5" long of lozenge form, with a deep central groove. Both sides are chased with spirited leaf work and the groove with a slightly running scroll.The Guard has a central portion formed of three deep grooves chased with trophies, apparently a late sixteenth century restoration, and long flat quillons curved slightly downwards with a sharp curl at the ends. The quillons are chased with a running leaf pattern on either side of the central ridge and have a total length of 11". The grip is covered with modern red velvet bound with gilt wire. At the top of the pommel is a small cap, the result of a repair and through carelessness in putting together the pieces of the hilt. The band next to the pommel has been reversed and its supposed loss made good in common base metal.The Scabbard is covered with red velvet edged with gold lace and ornamented with handsome silver gilt lockets of a date circa 1760. The first locket has in front, under a text, the Royal Arms in use from 1714 to 1801 within the garter, and crowned with crest, supporters and motto. The reverse bears a military trophy. The second locket has in front an ornate cartouche with the three castles of Newcastle and on the back arabesque scrolls. The third locket has a ship in full sail on the front and a blank cartouche on the reverse. The chape has in front the figures of a Triton with a trident, astride a dolphin and on the reverse a blank cartouche. All the lockets are handsomely chased and wrought in repousse. They are not all hallmarked. The total length of the sword is 4'2" and its date appears to be circa 1460.The newer sword is 4'6" long and is a good example from the end of the eighteenth century. It has a lozenge shaped pommel wrought with a ship and other devices in relief, and a guard with curved quillions bearing the City Arms, also in relief. The scabbard is covered with red velvet with handsomely wrought lockets and chape, which like the hilt and the guard, are of silver gilt. From an almost obliterated inscription on one of the lockets, the sword appears to have been made by one J. Bland, perhaps the James Bland who was made free of the Goldsmith's Company of London in 1791. | Sword of State |
| Cap of MaintenanceThe Cap of Maintenance is the official headgear of the Swordbearer. The present example is of the same shape as that worn by the sword-bearer of the City of London and is, in fact, the type of hat worn at the time when Richard II granted to the Mayor of Newcastle the right to have a sword borne in front of him. It is of grey squirrel fur with a crown of crimson velvet and has long pendant gold cords ending in tassels. | Cap of Maintenance |
| RobesAt the present time only the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor wear robes. It was formerly the custom for the Mayor and Aldermen to go to church in scarlet robes on all high festival and thanksgiving days but on fast days and on Holy Innocents Day they wore black gowns. The Lord Mayor's robe is scarlet; elsewhere in the country the Lord Mayor's robe is often black with gold embellishments.The original Robe was trimmed with sable, the Robe currently worn is trimmed with synthetic fur. The Deputy Lord Mayor's scarlet robe is trimmed with black velvet. The hat is also different - in Newcastle the Lord Mayor wears a black tricorn trimmed with ostrich whilst in other authorities a black cocked hat with gold embellishment on the right is worn. The Lord Mayor and Sheriff wear a lace jabot at the neck. |  |
| Lord Mayor’s Silver GalleryA permanent display of Civic Plate and regalia is housed in the Lord Mayor’s Silver Gallery at the Civic Centre together with some of the gifts made to the City.  |  |