One goal of our classification is to expand and clarify existing classes with emerging information as it becomes available. Heraldry, and the livery buttons springing from it, is a complex topic and one worthy of in-depth study. Deb Hanson and Tom Skovronsky have certainly done just that. Deb was fortunate to have been mentored by John Whiteford, a valued resource now lost to the society. She has given presentations on the subject of Livery at several state shows, and will do so again at this year’s National Convention on Wednesday at 5:30 pm. Tom is the author of an excellent book, *Livery Buttons: Identification, Classification and Heraldry*, for those of you who would like to go deeper into the subject. Their knowledge and efforts can now benefit all of us.

The newest edition of the classification (2009–2010) includes a reorganization of the existing livery classes as well as the addition of a couple of new ones. Livery assorted is now organized into three major categories: Achievements, Crests and Non-crest liveries. Glossary information is expanded accordingly. The always popular Crests, typically the pictorial ones, are categorized in a manner which puts them in sync with the pictorial content in the rest of the classification. This revision, although extensive, was done through housekeeping.

The classification committee would like to thank Deb and Tom for their tireless and thorough analysis of the project and their expedient work. —B. Barrans

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**SECTION 25 - USAGE, NON-MILITARY**

Since livery and crest buttons are listed under USAGE in the NBS classification, they can be used in any Div. I, III or IX competitions that apply, and you will usually be given extra points for including one!

**25-5 LIVERY ASSORTED.**

Typically depicting heraldic designs of the family, livery buttons were worn on uniforms (livery) of servants and only occasionally by the owner. Major types include achievements, and crests; there are also badges, initials and monograms. Badges are a relatively rare early form of livery button originally used to display a family motto. Later ones displayed decorative insignia only. Badges do not meet the heraldic requirements of crests or achievements. Most livery buttons were made of metal, but horn, pearl, and glass mounted in metal exist. When the master of the house died, metal buttons were darkened for a period of mourning.

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**An Illustrated Revision of the 2009–10 Livery Button Classification**

By Deborah Hanson and Tom Skovronsky
25- 5.1 Achievements
Crests (portions of coats of arms) are not applicable here.

25- 5.1.1 Coats of arms only. A shield marked with the heraldic designs of a person, family, or institution. May or may not include mantling, crest, helmet, and supporters.

25- 5.1.2 Full Achievement. Heraldic design including shield (coat of arms), helmet and crest with or without mantling, supporters, mottos, and belts of distinction.

In differentiating between Coats of Arms Only (25- 5.1.1) and Full Achievements (25- 5.1.2) two simple rules are used: **Coats of Arms only must have a shield, and Full Achievements must have a shield, a helmet, and a crest.** Full Achievements are rarer than simple coats of arms. In general, 25- 5.1.1 is used for the simpler designs and 25- 5.1.2 for the more complicated. If in doubt, just use the general category 25- 5.1 which covers both types.

1) A simple shield – coat of arms. 2) A complex shield, but still a Coat of Arms as it lacks a helmet. 3) Lacks a crest. 4) Shows a Full Achievement, as does… 5) which includes supporters, mantling, motto, helmet and 3 crests. Full Achievements are rarer than simple coats of arms.

25- 5.1.3 Lozenges.

Livery buttons designed for women, characteristically depicting a diamond shaped lozenge design, either straight sided or a modified fancy version. Since a woman was not entitled to bear arms, her livery buttons were only allowed to be impaled (depicted) with a portion of the family achievement of either her father or husband. 1) The unmarried maiden or lady used a diamond shaped lozenge, usually but not always, with straight sides, impaled with a portion of the family achievement from her father’s line. 2) A married woman used a diamond shaped lozenge, usually but not always, with floral sides, impaled with a portion of the family achievements from her father and husband’s line.

3) If the lady was the widow of a baronet, she could display the hand of Ulster with her father and husband’s arms. A widow could also have a mourning finish (darkening of the metal) applied to the button for a period of one year. 4) If a lady became a peeress in her own right, (her father dying with no male heirs), the family achievements were placed in escutcheon (inside a small shield shape) at the center of the lozenge with the other necessary achievements behind. This was called an “escutcheon of pretense.” 5) Only a hereditary peeress could have supporters (animal and/or figure) on either side of the lozenge, seeming to support it.

25- 5.2 Crests assorted

A livery button which bears a single, double, triple, or quadruple crest device. A crest device is comprised of a crest figure over a crest coronet. The crest coronet may be: 1) a torse (heraldic wreath of colors), 2) chapeau (cap of dignity), or 3) a figural coronet/crown. This coronet, which may only denote association with a person of rank, should not be confused with a coronet of rank (see Class 25- 5.2.3.3 under Specific crest types assorted). A crest design may include the family motto, collar of one of the orders of knighthood, fancy border, helm of rank, initials, or coronet of rank. A crest cannot include any other part of the achievement, such as the coat of arms or supporters.
25- 5.2.1 Patterns and symbols (corresponds to Sec. 22)

Includes traditional patterns such as crescent, cross, heart, star, fleur-de-lis, etc. Initials and monograms are appropriate here as well as in Cl. 25- 5.2.3.3 (under Specific crest types assorted). Crest may include pictorial subject matter in addition to pattern or symbol.

25- 5.2.2 Pictorial crests. Since many crest buttons are pictorial, even multi-pictorial, they may be used in all pictorial classes represented by their subject matter. (Many crests are crossovers.)

25- 5.2.2.1 Animals (corresponds to Sec. 17)

Animals that are found in nature. Fabulous creatures or mythological subjects are not found in nature and therefore do not belong in this category.

25- 5.2.2.2 Objects (corresponds to Sec. 18)

Parts of animals (such as paws, claws, antlers, etc., as well as arms and hands of humans, should be classified under objects because they may not represent a live animal or human. Look for position variations of arms and hands: armored, clothed, naked, double and what the hand may hold. Also look for objects alone, such as an empty helm or armor, globes, tools, etc.

25- 5.2.3 Plants (corresponds to Sec. 19)

Plant life found in nature.

25- 5.2.4 Other pictorials (corresponds to Sec. 20)

Includes architectural; astronomical; the human form: full figure, demi (half figure), head only; fabulous creatures; also angel, cupid and cherub, etc.

25- 5.2.3 Specific crest types assorted.

Includes crest buttons that have recognizable elements or attributes in addition to a standard crest. Multiple crests are included here.

25- 5.2.3.1 Coronets of rank.

Different from the crest coronet (a torse, chapeau or figural coronet below the crest), the coronet of rank appears in addition to (and usually above) the crest device. This coronet denotes the rank of the bearer. Coronets: baron, earl, duke, marquess, viscount. Crowns: astral, celestial, eastern or antique, mural, naval, pallasido, Royal Crown or Imperial Crown (of England), Saxon, crown vallery. Other symbols of rank: civic crown, chaplet, crown triumphant, woman's circlet. Ecclesiastical Crowns & Hats: papal crown, bishop's mitre (with or without coronet) or ecclesiastical hat.
25- 5.2.3.2 Helms of rank.

A helm is present in addition to the crest. The helm may be positioned in profile, partial profile, or frontal. The helmet placed affronte (frontal) shows that the owner was a king (helmet with bars), or knight or baronet (empty helmet). A helmet placed in profile or partial profile shows that the owner was an esquire, duke, marquess, earl, viscount, baron or a gentleman.

25- 5.2.3.3 Initials, monograms (with a crest)

A crest surmounting a torse, coronet or chapeau, with the addition of either initial(s) or a monogram (2 or more initials conjoined). Initial(s) or a monogram may be added to the crest in any of the appropriate 25-2 classes.

25- 5.2.3.4 Multiple crests. Includes double, triple, and quadruple crests. Each crest independently surmounts a torse, coronet or chapeau. Triple and quadruple crests are rare. A multiple crest may be used in whichever crest class one or more of the crest devices is appropriate.

25- 5.3 Other (non-crest) livery types assorted

Crest buttons are not appropriate here.

25- 5.3.1 Crowns/Coronets A crown or coronet by itself, or with initials or a monogram (2 or more initials conjoined), no crest or coat of arms present.

25- 5.3.2 Initials, monograms (by themselves, no crest present)

A livery button (non-crest) bearing either initial(s) or a monogram (2 or more initials conjoined).

25- 5.3.3 Unlisted (badges, bishop’s mitre by itself, plain without design, etc.)

An insignia without a torse, crown/coronet or chapeau. Badges were a rare early form of livery button that was used to display a family device, motto or insignia, and do not meet the requirements of crests or achievements.
Other heraldic information found on livery buttons

Canting arms (armes parlantes): arms for which the blazon (the verbal description) offers a pun on the name of the family. Arms were a form of visual identification in a world of limited literacy, and it was perfectly natural for someone to use as his emblem a device which recalled his name.

Hand of Ulster: signifies the rank of baronet which was a title given to distinguished men of law, medicine and other professions.

Order of the Garter: The Order, consisting of the king and 25 knights, was intended by Edward III to be reserved as the highest reward for loyalty and for military merit.

Cadency: a mark of cadency is a smaller symbol added to the crest to differentiate the birth order of sons in a family.

1st son or heir used the label
2nd son used the crescent
3rd son used the mullet (star)
4th son used the martlet (bird)
5th son used the annulet (ring)
6th son used the fleur-de-lis
7th son used the rose
8th son used the cross moline
9th son used the double quatrefoil

Also look for these special types and materials:
affronte, family mottos on banners, family mottos on belts, fancy border, shapes, pierced, 2-piece, mourning finish, horn, silver, ivory, enamel, pearl, Wedgwood, glass or gemstone in metal, papier mâché, one-piece gilt, engraved brass, and 18th-century tombac or copper (very rare).

Heraldic Terms

CORONETS & CROWNS OF RANK

Coronet: a small crown consisting of ornaments fixed on a metal ring signifying a rank lower than a sovereign; nobles, princes and princesses. A man with high ambitions could have a coronet as part of his crest, hoping that others might think he had noble connections.

Astral coronet: alternating wings and 6 pointed stars.

Baron’s coronet: four pearl balls in view.

Crest or duke’s coronet: five strawberry leaves in view.

Earl’s coronet: five rays topped by pearl balls in view.

Marquess’ coronet: 3 strawberry leaves alternating with two pearl balls in view.

Viscount’s coronet: seven rays topped by pearl balls in view.

Crown: head gear signifying the rank of a sovereign, worn by a monarch, other high dignitaries, divinities, etc.

Celestial crown: similar to an eastern crown with a star on top of each crown ray.

Eastern or antique crown: usually shows 5 points.

Mural crown: a little tower or a circlet of stone with battlements, bestowed on a soldier who first
climbed the wall of a besieged city or fortress. Later, this crown was bestowed on army officers with the rank of general or above.

**Naval crown:** alternating sails and sterns of ships. Awarded to the first man who boarded an enemy ship during a naval engagement, or to a sailor who made an achievement in battle. Later, this crown was bestowed on naval officers with the rank of admiral or above.

**Crown pallasido:** five spikes each resembling a picket fence post.

**Royal crown or Imperial crown** (crown of England): a crown used by a monarch.

**Civic crown:** a garland of oak leaves and acorns. Bestowed on a soldier who had saved the life of a citizen in battle.

**Chaplet:** a garland of flowers and laurel leaves in between. Worn on the head to signify victory.

**Crown triumphant:** a garland of laurel leaves.

### ECCLESIASTICAL CROWNS & HATS

**Papal crown** (tiara) an ornate head covering worn by a Pope, ornamented with precious stones and pearls. It is shaped like a beehive with small cross at its highest point.

**Bishop’s mitre** (with or without duke’s coronet), a traditional ceremonial headdress of bishops and some other Christian clergy.

**Ecclesiastical hat:** Ecclesiastical (clergymen’s) hats come in a variety of colors and tassel numbers.

- **Cardinal:** crimson with fifteen tassels per side (the number was fixed in 1832).
- **Vicar:** crimson with six tassels per side.
- **Domestic prelate of the pope:** violet with six tassels per side.
- **Continental archbishops and bishops:** green with ten tassels per side.
- **Abbot:** black with three tassels per side.
- **Other clergymen:** black with one tassel per side.

### OTHER SYMBOLS OF RANK

**Civic crown:** a garland of oak leaves and acorns. Bestowed on a soldier who had saved the life of a citizen in battle.

**Royal crown or Imperial crown** (crown of England): a crown used by a monarch.

**Saxon crown:** five rays topped by pearl balls with four alternating shorter spikes in between.

**Crown vallery:** nine spikes each resembling a picket fence post.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Buttons in this article are from the collections of the authors and Barbara and Tom Barrans, Nikki Deal, Anne McComb and the late John Whiteford. Achievements text by Tom Skovonsky.

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**Deb Hanson** was first encouraged to start collecting livery buttons by the late John Whiteford. He knew they were both Leos (astrologically) and knew she’d like to see his tray of lion crest buttons. Her livery lust began as she set out to assemble her own tray of lion (and lioness) livery & crest buttons. Kitty Dillon further encouraged her to research some of the more unusual livery buttons she’d found. Now, 15 years later, she continues to learn more about this fascinating category of buttons and share her knowledge with programs and articles.

**Tom Skovronsky** (otherwise known as “Mr. Gloriosky” after his wife Gloria) is the author of *Livery Buttons, Identification: Classification and Heraldry*. He started collecting livery buttons with a single stags head with a cross of some sort on top. After questioning all of the knowledgeable folks locally, he found a dearth of information. Many years, buttons and books later, he is still at it and working on Volume 2 of *Livery Buttons*. 