

JCU  
*Symbols &  
Ceremonial*

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### **Description:**

28 page colour book describing the origins and meanings behind the James Cook University arms, academic dress and ceremonial mace.

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JCU  
*Symbols &  
Ceremonial*

**SYMBOLS & CEREMONIAL**  
the arms, academic dress and mace of  
James Cook University

B.J. Dalton



Department of History & Politics  
James Cook University  
Townsville  
1992

## THE UNIVERSITY ARMS

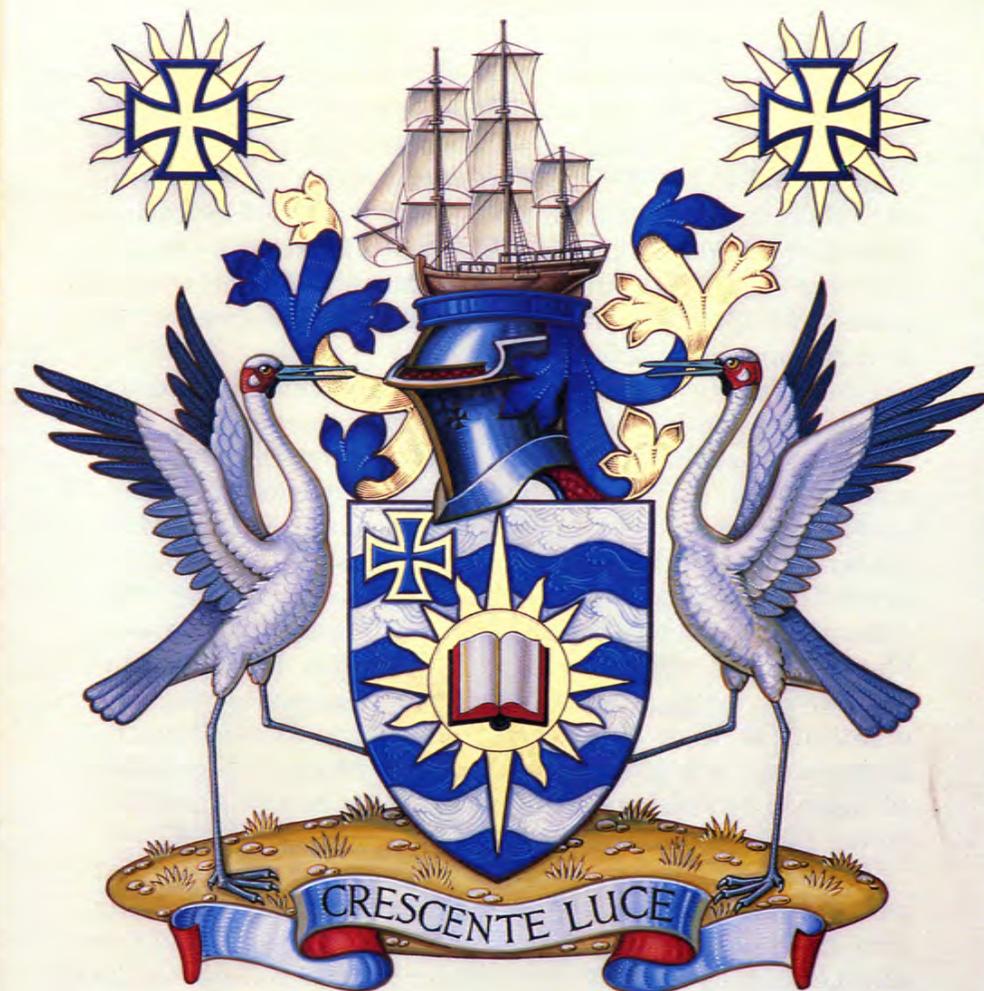
GRANTED BY THE COLLEGE OF ARMS, LONDON  
BY LETTERS PATENT DATED 26 JUNE 1972.

The shield is symbolic of the University's special mission: the pursuit of learning in a tropical environment. The white and blue undulating bars represent the sea; the sun is self-explanatory. The book, a traditional symbol of learning shared with many other universities, is modern, without medieval straps and buckles; it has been opened at a fresh page ready to record newly-discovered knowledge, thus emphasising research. The cross is an allusion to our parent body, the University of Queensland.

Historical and geographical allusions appear elsewhere in the arms. The crest alludes to Captain James Cook, R.N., whose name the University has the honour to bear; under his command and under the auspices of the Royal Society of London, the oldest of all scientific bodies, the *Endeavour* carried the first scientific expedition to work in our region, where it spent 48 days ashore compared with eight in Botany Bay. By a happy coincidence the Queensland Act establishing the University was signed on the campus by Queen Elizabeth II, 200 years to the day after Cook's first landfall on the Australian coast.

The supporters allude to our geographical environment. Brolgas are the largest and most impressive birds commonly seen in our vicinity; the ground on which they stand recalls the parched appearance of our surrounding countryside during most of each year.

In addition to the shield, crest and supporters of a corporate body, the University received the grant of a badge, an ancient privilege revived in this century after a long interval. It appears twice, on either side of the crest, for the sake of balance.



The Armorial Ensigns of  
**JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY  
OF NORTH QUEENSLAND**

College of Arms  
MCMLXXXIII

Walter J. Verco  
Norroy and Ulster King of Arms

## THE COMPONENT PARTS

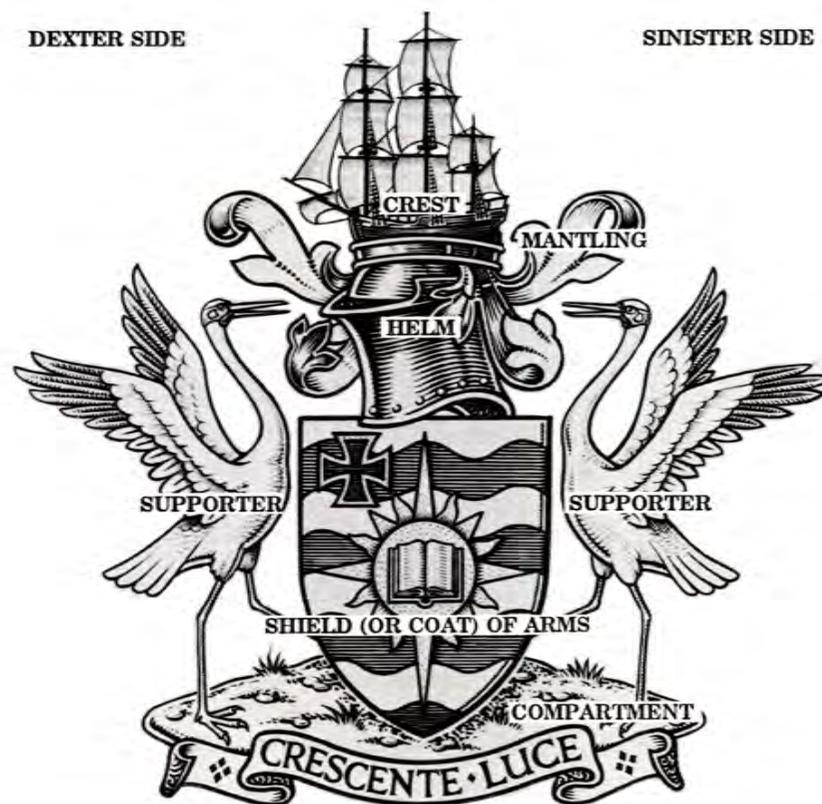
*The crest* sits on top of the helmet or, when the helmet is not shown, on top of the shield. Whereas the shield is strictly two-dimensional, the crest represents a three dimensional object. The blue cirlet on which the ship rests is part of the crest, and must appear when the helmet is absent. It was once common to use crests alone: on small but valuable objects like silver cutlery, and embossed on writing paper. Though less common today, the use of the crest on its own remains permissible.

*Mantling* originated as a short cape which hung down the back of the helmet to the shoulders, presumably as a screen against the sun's heat, a problem for the armoured warrior even in Europe; Shakespeare speaks of "a rich armour, worn in heat of day, that scald'st with safety." Always elaborately scalloped and slashed, its role is decorative: to fill out the composition, and to display "the colours": the principal "tincture" and "metal", in this case blue and gold. Only these are mentioned in the grant: "mantled Azure doubled Or". Heraldic artists can arrange the mantling as they choose. In each of the three versions reproduced it is a little different, but the two paintings follow convention by making blue predominate on one side and gold on the other.

*The Shield (or Coat) of Arms* is the most important part of any armorial bearings. Artists are narrowly constrained by the official description (the "blazon"), but two small examples of artistic licence can be seen. Mindful of the injunction to fill the shield without crowding it, the artists have extended the sun's vertical and horizontal rays almost to the edge of the shield; the other rays have to be shorter to avoid encroaching upon space required by the cross. Again, in the painting reproduced on p. 3, the artist has introduced a pattern of billows into the wavy bars. This is an example of "diapering", which gives texture to large areas of plain colour at the artist's discretion (the original measures 380mm by 280mm).

*Supporters and Compartment.* Usually the compartment merely completes the composition by providing something apparently solid on which supporters and shield can rest: usually a mound of green English turf not even mentioned in the blazon. In this instance, it is specified in the blazon: "a compartment of arid sandy and stony ground."

Supporters, crest and book are "proper": i.e., depicted in their natural colours. No further description is necessary for the ship and the brogias, but the colour of the book's binding and the edges of its pages have to be specified.



## DESIGNING THE ARMS

The University came into existence in 1961 as a college of the University of Queensland, then the only university in the State. During most of its ten years' existence, the Townsville University College used letterhead with a shield on which the arms of the parent University appeared on the face of the sun, all on a field of wavy bars. The symbolism was apt for a branch of the University of Queensland but not for an autonomous institution. Moreover the design was rather cluttered, and the book unavoidably reduced to diminutive proportions.



That shield provided the starting point in considering arms for the new University. The same elements were employed, but they were marshalled differently. Placed directly on the sun, the book could appear on a scale appropriate to its significance. Transferred to a corner of the shield, the blue cross would serve as a perpetual acknowledgment of the University's origin.



As granted by the Heralds in 1972, the complete arms differ from the design submitted by the University in only minor respects. It had been suggested that the blue cross stand on a gold square (a "canton") representing the gold field of the Queensland shield; the Heralds' version achieves the same result more elegantly, the gold edging still representing the field. In the University's proposal the brogias had their wings folded; the Heralds' version is undoubtedly more pleasing aesthetically.



All shields are of the actual size used in letterhead.

## THE LANGUAGE OF HERALDRY

This derives from Norman-French, the language of administration and law in England for centuries after the Conquest. When English replaced it in the 15th Century, many French terms and some usages survived in heraldry: e.g., the adjective follows the noun. Experts lament that virtually every heraldic term that has passed into everyday speech is habitually misapplied. This is true, but it is also true of technical terms from many other fields. To the ordinary reader heraldic language can seem vague and verbose: in fact it is exact and concise. Compare the blazon of the university's shield of arms with a careful rendering into ordinary English:

Barry wavy of  
eight Argent and  
Azure

The body of the shield is divided into eight undulating bands of equal width coloured alternately silver and blue in that order from the top down.

on a Sun in  
Splendour Or an  
open Book  
proper bound  
Sable edged  
Gules

In the centre is superimposed a golden sun, represented as a circular disc surrounded by rays alternately straight and wavy; on the disc is an open book in its true colours, the binding black and the edges of the pages coloured red.

in dexter chief a  
Cross formy  
Azure fimbriated  
Or

In the top lefthand corner (as seen by the viewer) is a blue cross with curving splayed arms of equal length, edged with a narrow rim of gold.

## THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF HERALDRY

Antecedents existed far back in ancient Europe, and parallels innumerable in other cultures, even in North Queensland. The large wooden shields of rainforest Aborigines bore painted patterns that may have been peculiar to the bearer.<sup>1</sup> But heraldry proper begins in Western Europe in the second quarter of the 12th Century. Within one lifetime it had spread throughout Latin Christendom.

There seems no reason to dispute the view that the origin is to be seen in the adoption of the close helmet which completely concealed the wearer's face and made necessary some other clearly visible means of identification. Association of the origins of heraldry with the First Crusade, which brought together armoured horsemen from all over Europe, may also be well-founded, but there can be little doubt that the subsequent development of heraldry, the codification of rules, the appearance of individual crests, the addition of supporters, and the emergence of heralds as expert recorders and arbitrators, owe more to the tournament: at once a training ground for war and the first of international spectator sports.

The earliest shields of arms were simple: most were arbitrary, without any symbolic significance. At first personal to the bearer, they rapidly became hereditary. *Canting* arms which make a punning allusion to the bearer's name, appeared early. Once coats of arms (as they came to be called very early) became associated with particular families, localities and institutions, it was easy and natural for a new grant to include an appropriate allusion to an older coat. Universities commonly included a book as an unmistakable symbol of learning; university colleges often adopted the arms of their founders.

<sup>1</sup> Most are utterly unlike heraldic patterns, but the author has seen a coloured slide of one that was in strict conformity with heraldic rules: by pure chance, of course.

Although heraldry had military origins, it was quickly put to non-military uses even while the shield remained an essential piece of cavalry equipment. Coats of arms were very useful for identifying the owner's property in an age when few were literate: on the seals which authenticated legal documents; carved on buildings; on tombs, stained glass windows, brass tablets and other memorials of the dead. These uses continued unabated when the demise of the armoured horseman, and of the tournament, severed the connection with warfare about the end of the 16th Century.

Before that date corporate bodies of heralds in many European countries had established their authority to adjudicate in disputes over armorial bearings, and to make new grants to suitable applicants. In England, the College of Arms (or Heralds' College) was chartered by Richard III in 1483. It continues to function after more than 500 years, the only collegiate authority surviving, though many European countries, republics as well as monarchies, have an official heraldic authority of some kind.

The authority of the College of Arms derives from the royal prerogative - powers vested in the monarch independently of parliament. That part of the prerogative is delegated to the Earl Marshall (the Duke of Norfolk) and exercised under his warrant by the heralds of the College. To recipients in England grants are made by two of the senior Heralds: Garter, Principal King of Arms, together with Clerenceux for southern England; Garter together with Norroy and Ulster for northern England and Northern Ireland. All three Kings of Arms unite in making grants to recipients outside Britain. Scotland has its own authority: Lyon King of Arms, based in Edinburgh.

\* \* \*

As the end of the 20th Century draws close, heraldry retains extraordinary vitality after more than 800 years. Many thousands of coats of arms from previous centuries remain in use. Each year sees new arms granted; many - like those of JCU - can stand comparison with the best heraldic designs of any age or county.



# TO ALL AND SINGULAR

to whom these Presents shall come, We Anthony Richard Wagner, Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Garter, Principal, King of Arms, John Russell, Groom of the Chamber, Esquire, Member of the Royal Victorian Order, upon whom has been conferred the Decoration of the Military Cross, Clarenceau, King of Arms, and Walter John George Vere, Esquire, Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Norrey and Ulster, King of Arms, Lord Steward of the Household, Esquire, Whereas Kenneth John Campbell Back, Gentleman, Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Queensland and Master of Science of the University of Sydney, Vice-Chancellor of James Cook University of North Queensland in the State of Queensland in the Commonwealth of Australia, hath represented unto the Most Noble Bertrando, Marquis de Euzkadi, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire upon whom has been conferred the Territorial Decoration, Earl Marshal and Secretary of State for the Colonies and One of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, that by an Act of the Legislature of the State of Queensland intituled the James Cook University of North Queensland Act 1970, it was enacted that a University to be known as the James Cook University of North Queensland consisting of a Council, Convocation, members of the teaching and research staff and the enrolled students of the University be established at Townsville in the said State of Queensland and that the said University should exercise and discharge the powers, authorities, duties and functions conferred or imposed upon it by or under the aforesaid Act and that it should be the governing authority of the said University that the said Act received the Royal Assent on the twentieth day of April 1970 and that the Council being desirous that the Common Seal of the James Cook University of North Queensland should contain fit and proper heraldic designs be therefore, as Vice-Chancellor of the said University hath requested the favour of His Grace's Most Excellent Highness the Earl Marshal and Vice-Chancellor of the said University to be granted and assigned unto the said University of North Queensland in the said State of Queensland and in the same Patent such Supporters and such Projected Badge as He may consider fit and proper to be borne and used by the James Cook University of North Queensland on Shields or otherwise according to the laws of Arms And forasmuch as the said Earl Marshal did by Warrant under his hand and Seal bearing date the thirtieth day of September 1970 authorize and direct us to grant and assign such Arms and Crest, such Supporters and such Projected Badge accordingly Know Ye therefore that He the said Earl Marshal and Vice-Chancellor of the said University hath granted and assigned unto the said University of North Queensland the Arms following that is to say: Dory waving eight Argent and Azure on a Sun in Splendour Or an open Book proper bound Sable edged Gules in dexter chief a Cross formy Azure sinistrated Or And for the proper Mantled Azure doubled Or as the same are in the margin hereof more plainly depicted And by the Authority of the said University of North Queensland the Supporters following that is to say: On either side a bird sandy and stony ground, as the same are in the margin hereof also more plainly depicted, the Shields of otherwise according to the laws of Arms In witness whereof We the said Earl Clarenceau and Norrey and Ulster, Kings of Arms have to these Presents subscribed Our names and affixed the Seals of Our several Offices this twenty-sixth day of June in the twelfth year of the reign of Our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth the Second by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Her other Kingdoms and Territories Queen Head of the Commonwealth Defender of the Faith and in the year of Our Lord the thousand nine hundred and seventy-two

should have perpetual succession and a Common Seal And the Council of the University should exercise and discharge the powers, authorities, duties and functions conferred or imposed upon it by or under the aforesaid Act and that it should be the governing authority of the said University that the said Act received the Royal Assent on the twentieth day of April 1970 and that the Council being desirous that the Common Seal of the James Cook University of North Queensland should contain fit and proper heraldic designs be therefore, as Vice-Chancellor of the said University hath requested the favour of His Grace's Most Excellent Highness the Earl Marshal and Vice-Chancellor of the said University to be granted and assigned unto the said University of North Queensland in the said State of Queensland and in the same Patent such Supporters and such Projected Badge as He may consider fit and proper to be borne and used by the James Cook University of North Queensland on Shields or otherwise according to the laws of Arms And forasmuch as the said Earl Marshal did by Warrant under his hand and Seal bearing date the thirtieth day of September 1970 authorize and direct us to grant and assign such Arms and Crest, such Supporters and such Projected Badge accordingly Know Ye therefore that He the said Earl Marshal and Vice-Chancellor of the said University hath granted and assigned unto the said University of North Queensland the Arms following that is to say: Dory waving eight Argent and Azure on a Sun in Splendour Or an open Book proper bound Sable edged Gules in dexter chief a Cross formy Azure sinistrated Or And for the proper Mantled Azure doubled Or as the same are in the margin hereof more plainly depicted And by the Authority of the said University of North Queensland the Supporters following that is to say: On either side a bird sandy and stony ground, as the same are in the margin hereof also more plainly depicted, the Shields of otherwise according to the laws of Arms In witness whereof We the said Earl Clarenceau and Norrey and Ulster, Kings of Arms have to these Presents subscribed Our names and affixed the Seals of Our several Offices this twenty-sixth day of June in the twelfth year of the reign of Our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth the Second by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Her other Kingdoms and Territories Queen Head of the Commonwealth Defender of the Faith and in the year of Our Lord the thousand nine hundred and seventy-two

Anthony R. Wagner

Garter

J. R. B. Waker

Clarenceau

Walter J. Vere

Norrey & Ulster



The Grant of Arms to James Cook University is conveyed in Letters Patent from the College of Arms, written and painted by hand on vellum in a form substantially unchanged since the College was established in 1483. At the head stand the Royal Arms, flanked by those of the Earl Marshal and the College itself. At the foot are the signatures of the three Kings of Arms, whose individual seals are attached by ribbon, each encased in a gilt box.

The patent embodies three distinct grants. The three Kings of Arms jointly grant, first the shield and crest, and then the badge, which is depicted in the body of the text. Finally Garter alone confers the supporters and compartment.

Although the motto is included in the original painting, it is not mentioned in the grant. This is normal. Thus, by one of the minor oddities of English heraldry, it is not, strictly speaking, part of the arms and could be omitted or even replaced by the University at will.

## DESIGNING ACADEMIC DRESS FOR JCU

Designing academic dress for the new university was a task undertaken by a specially-convened group in 1969. At the outset it was agreed that the basic gown must suit Townsville's tropical climate. A beige colour and a lightweight synthetic fabric were chosen. Greatly simplified patterns were sketched for gown and hood, the latter a cowl with a broad band in the faculty colour across the front. Undergraduates, bachelors and masters all would wear the same gown and the same beige trencher with brown tassel; on ceremonial occasions bachelors would add a hood partly, and masters one fully, lined in the faculty colour. These ideas were translated into garments by a robemaker in South Australia, who remains the University's supplier today.

PhD robes proved more contentious even though their adaptation to a tropical climate was considered less critical. The outcome of quite a long process was a gown wholly traditional in appearance - though of simpler cut and lighter weight than usual - except for the colour: blue with red facings. The hood is of the full modern shape, with cape, cowl and liripipe; a tudor bonnet in blue velvet is prescribed. The finished robes were received so favourably that the same pattern and colour, trimmed with the faculty colour, were adopted for the higher doctorates.

There are also robes of office: for Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and University Councillors. Chancellors' robes in older universities are not of great antiquity; usually they are of black brocade, lavishly trimmed with gold bullion like those of the Lord Chancellor, who is head of the English judiciary. Vice-Chancellors' robes are even more recent, appearing only in the current century: commonly they are of the Chancellors' pattern trimmed with silver. This difference in the trimmings is observed in the JCU robes, which are of blue brocade. Council members wear the beige gown with a hood fully lined with red, and a red tassel to the trencher cap.





Above (l-r): Master of Science (MSc); Bachelor of Arts [BA]; Doctor of Philosophy [PhD]

Right (l-r): Bachelor of Economics [BEc]; Doctor of Philosophy [PhD];  
Master of Engineering [MEng]; Bachelor of Education [BEd(Hons)]



## ACADEMIC DRESS

Forms of academic dress were established in the universities of Europe soon after they originated in the twelfth century. Those worn by graduates of James Cook, and of other universities in the English speaking world, represent part of a tradition maintained unbroken for over 800 years.

Academic dress in the medieval universities was ecclesiastical in form, since all university members were clergy in at least minor orders. Exempt from the jurisdiction of secular authorities but not segregated on a separate campus, university men were identified, to ecclesiastical and secular authorities alike, by a distinctive costume. Academic dress was functional not ceremonial: for everyday wear, not for special occasions. Once established, academic dress became subject to forces making for change over time. Within universities, different groups sought recognition of their separate status through modification of the costume. Junior members tended to usurp forms reserved for their seniors, and to ape changing fashion in the secular world. Authority generally resisted these pressures, attempting to preserve, and from time to time to restore, legitimate forms. Fulminations by authority against shameless innovations, echoing down the centuries, constitute one of the more voluminous sources of information about early academic dress.

For each of the three garments of modern academic dress - cap, gown and hood - there were medieval equivalents, all originally adapted to life in cold, damp and draughty quarters, all worn indoors as well as outdoors. Of caps little is known except that a square version was prescribed for junior members and for seniors a round one. The gown was voluminous and heavy, the type of material distinguishing junior from senior wearers; the more costly and comfortable materials, naturally, were reserved for the seniors. Similarly the more costly varieties of fur were

reserved for lining the hoods of seniors. Gowns and hoods both came to be of different colours for different faculties.

Little more can be said of cap and gown without entering into the conjectural and controversial. The names of different forms are well-known, as are some verbal clues to their appearance, but in total this evidence is meagre and its meaning doubtful. Effigies and illustrations thought to show academic dress exist only for the later Middle Ages. It is, moreover, difficult to be certain that any show academic (as distinct from ecclesiastical) dress and impossible to be certain that, if it does, it is accurate in detail. In the parallel field of heraldry, inaccuracies are common in exactly the same kinds of representation. Official regulations abound, but they prescribe garments by name, not by physical detail; in any event they record what authority prescribed, never an infallible guide to what is actually worn. Indeed the usual occasion for issuing, or reissuing, such regulations was habitual neglect to follow the prescription.

Much more can be said of the hood because it was an article of everyday secular dress worn by men and women for centuries, indoors and out. The hood had three parts, all lined with fur in the academic version: a *cape*, covering the torso and upper arms; a *cowl* or head covering; and *liripipe*, an appendage which was wrapped scarf-like round the throat for extra warmth when the cowl was over the head. In rustic Europe, carvings and illuminated manuscripts show the hood being worn unchanged from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. By the latter date it was being put to ornamental and frivolous use in fashionable circles: converted into a headdress, draped round the neck like a stole, or slung over one shoulder. The more comfortable buildings which made practicable purely ornamental use of the secular hood, had their effect on academic dress as well. In England by the end of the Middle Ages, the gown was being worn open down the front, a sure indication that it was being worn on top of other main garments. To correspond, the hood was also open down the front and had gained a throat band to hold it together. Undergraduates no longer wore the hood at all, and

graduates only on special occasions. Silk, originally for summer wear, had become the universal lining; fur survived only as a fringe, usually for junior graduates. Hoods of the original type survive largely unchanged in the ceremonial dress of peers of the realm and senior judges, who wear them with the fur turned outermost.

Changes during the Reformation completed the evolution into substantially modern forms. Cap and gown were both largely secularised. Black, once the colour of gowns and hoods in the Arts Faculty, became general for all junior gowns and hoods, probably because other faculties were postgraduate, their students beginning study as Arts graduates. Most faculties had adopted red gowns for their highest graduates, Doctors.<sup>2</sup> Faculty colours were now seen only in the silk linings of graduate hoods worn on ceremonial occasions. The sole function of the hood being to display the faculty colour, it was often greatly abbreviated. This process has continued down to the present, so that hoods of different universities, though looking much alike when worn, show a remarkable diversity of pattern.

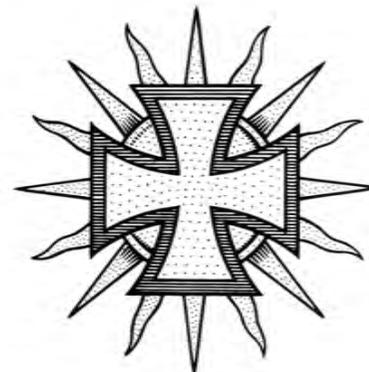
During the turmoil of the Reformation, academic dress in England narrowly escaped being abolished. At the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, academic dress was stabilised in substantially the Tudor form of a century earlier. No major changes have occurred down to the present.

The foundation of new faculties was accommodated easily by allocating each its own colour for graduate hoods. The admission of women to full membership in the early twentieth century, was also easily accommodated: gown and hood, having their origins in garments common to both sexes, were adopted without question; caps having exclusively masculine antecedents, some universities designed a different cap for women graduates, but most prescribe the square trencher ("mortar board") and round Doctor's bonnet

<sup>2</sup> Doctor, the latin word for teacher, had no special connection with Medicine, which was merely one of the graduate faculties whose senior graduates bore that title.

without distinction of gender. Introduction of the new degree of PhD in the 20th century posed more difficulty since it ranked above Masters but below the older Doctorates, and was not awarded in separate Faculties; some form of compromise was necessary. Cambridge prescribed a black gown with red trimmings and red-lined hood: Oxford the red robe of other doctors trimmed with blue, not a faculty colour. Australian Universities appear for the most part to lean towards the Cambridge model.

Universities of continental Europe are believed to have had similar systems of academic dress in the Middle Ages, but virtually without exception they did not retain it into modern times. What gowns and hoods are worn today are usually of quite recent origin. The one form of academic dress widespread in continental Europe is that of the PhD, usually black and buttoned down the front: in this respect resembling the medieval form. Some American universities, founded by royal charter in colonial times, preserve academic dress of the English type. More commonly, American hoods have colours intended to identify the institution, faculty colours being restricted to an outer piping. The robes of American PhDs are commonly of European pattern, but worn with a square cap of English origin. Scottish universities lost their hoods at the time of the Reformation, but regained them in the nineteenth century.

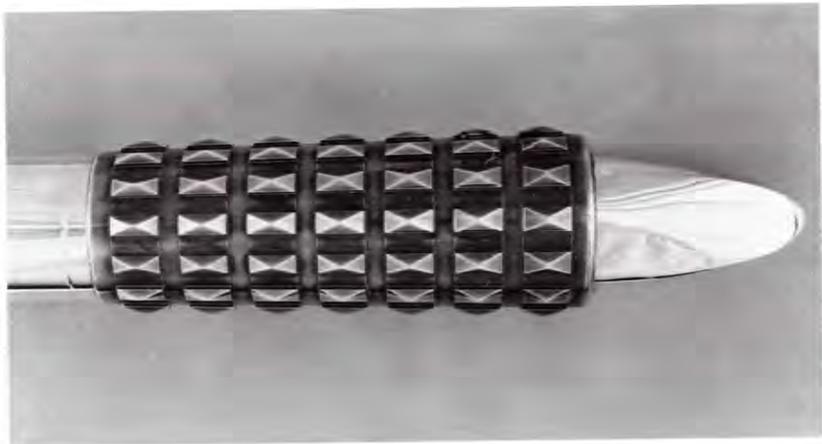


## THE UNIVERSITY MACE

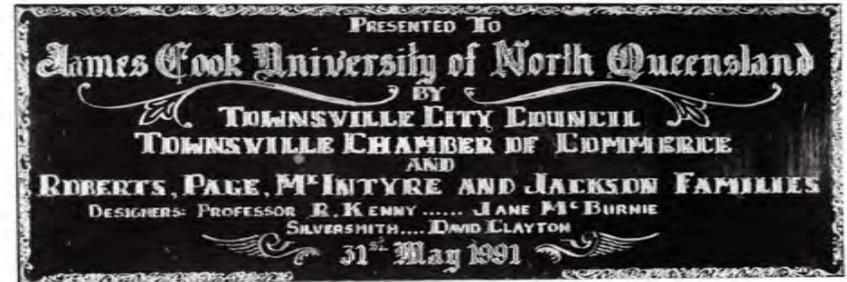
In 1987, when outside benefactors offered to present a ceremonial mace, the Vice-Chancellor set up a working party of three to consider the design. Agreement was quickly reached that the mace should be broadly traditional in its proportions and general appearance, but incorporate symbols of the university and its region; it should be made of sterling silver in Queensland. Subsequently it was agreed that the head should be based upon the shape of the heraldic shield, with ridges suggestive of the fighting weapon, and the butt upon the "pineapple *nulla*", a weapon of North Queensland Aborigines.

One of the working party, Ron Kenny, a member of the academic staff well-known as a painter, started work on drawings to incorporate these ideas, despite failing health. He died before he could proceed beyond sketches to finished drawings.

Jane McBurnie, a North Queensland sculptor, was invited to build a full-scale three-dimensional model based on the Kenny sketches. At her suggestion a finial was added to the head in the shape of the seed pod of the native kapok. On this model a silversmith would base the finished mace.



Choice of a silversmith, and liaison with him, was entrusted to another member of the initial group, Graham Jackson, himself a jeweller. Work on this scale in sterling silver is rarely required of the presentday silversmith; some considerable time elapsed before David Clayton of Brisbane accepted the commission. Many technical problems were encountered; all were triumphantly surmounted. The materials used for the model had necessitated some small compromises with details of the Kenny sketches. The silversmith's materials and techniques, in turn, dictated some small departures of detail from the model. Interestingly, the result was a closer approach to the Kenny sketches, which are strikingly realised in the finished mace.





PROPERTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MACES

The ceremonial mace derives from a weapon of medieval Europe. As seen in the Bayeux tapestry, the famous pictorial record of the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, the mace is a simple wooden club resembling an Aboriginal *nulla*. In the only scene which shows the mace in use as a weapon, one is thrown by an unseen hand from the English ranks against charging Norman horseman. In the last scene of all, a cluster of English in retreat carry maces; without armour, shields or swords, they are at best auxiliary troops.

On the Norman side two men carry maces: Duke William himself, and his half-brother Bishop Odo; though in armour they carry no other weapons. Both are seen leading, exhorting and rallying the Norman forces, but not fighting themselves. William usually carries his mace in his right hand, resting "at the slope" on his right shoulder, but in one significant scene he holds it aloft with his left hand while pushing back his helmet with the right, to uncover his face and dispel a rumour that he had been killed. In the scene immediately preceding, Bishop Odo brandishes his mace overhead while he "cheers on the young men", as the embroidered text expressly states. At that date, it seems, the mace was not important as a weapon to either side, but had connotations of high authority for the Normans. In later centuries the mace gained new importance as a weapon, and at the same time a broader significance as a symbol of royal authority.

In its new fighting role the mace evolved as a counter to plate armour which eventually encased the mounted knight from head to foot: *cap-à-pie*. The mace was now designed to burst open plate armour, which rendered the wearer invulnerable to pointed and edged weapons while it remained intact. It became a heavy all-metal club, the head an array of ridges or flanges radiating from a metal shaft whose lower end was bound with twine or leather for a handgrip. At the end of the shaft, a butt served the same

purposes as the pommel of sword: to balance the weight of the head, and to prevent the weapon slipping through the fingers in use. The fully-equipped armoured knight of the later Middle Ages carried shield, lance, sword and dagger on the person and a mace slung from the saddle. In the mimic warfare of the tournament, bouts with the mace were regularly staged both on horseback and on foot. It was at first the actual weapon that was used ceremonially, aided no doubt by the fact that maces, like swords, can be richly decorated without impairing their effectiveness as weapons.

Ceremonial use of the mace as a symbol of authority is traced to a royal bodyguard of serjeants, each armed with a mace, established by the French king in the 12th century. Other monarchs followed his example, including Richard I of England. While the bodyguard did not last long in England, serjeants-at-arms survived as minor royal officials with powers of arrest, and maces as their symbol of office. Ceremonial maces and their bearers in England descend, directly or indirectly, from the royal serjeants.

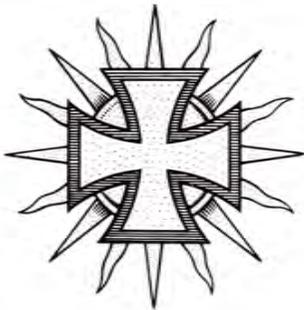
When Parliament became an established institution towards the end of the 14th century, royal serjeants were assigned to assist it in carrying out its orders. In the course of time the serjeant came to be regarded as an officer not of the King but of the House of Commons, his powers of arrest as those of the House and the Mace as his warrant for executing orders of the House outside its precincts. Asserted in a famous case of 1543, and not disputed by the King, this became constitutional law. During the 17th century, a period of prolonged conflict between King and Parliament, the mace came to be the singular symbol of the authority of the House of Commons, whose business could not proceed in its absence. Also around the end of the 14th century cities, as bodies corporate, began receiving royal sanction for the appointment of mace-bearing serjeants, a practice some had persisted in for more than a century in the teeth of objections from the royal serjeants.

Ceremonial maces became very large and ornate; civic maces were often showpieces of the silversmith's art. The

parliamentary mace, and those of most civic corporations, incorporated in the butt the royal coat of arms surmounted by a crown. Since it was unseemly for the crown to be carried upside-down, it became customary to carry the mace reversed, the crown on the butt uppermost. By a natural progression, maces were redesigned. What had been the butt became the head, surmounted by a very large crown; the original head shrank to the dimensions of a butt, with no more than decorative brackets to recall the flanges of the original weapon.

Parliamentary bodies established in British colonies from the 17th century onwards, commonly adopted ceremonial maces as part of their Westminster heritage, and usually retained them after achieving full independence. Often they are modelled closely on that of the House of Commons.

University maces have obscure origins, apparently unconnected with either parliamentary or civic maces. The oldest, indeed, must be reckoned among the many staves and rods of office which, with the passage of time, have taken on the name, and something of the appearance, of maces. When Universities began to be established in the Australian colonies in the middle of the nineteenth century, a mace seems to have been regarded as part of the traditional university heritage, along with academic dress and gothic architecture. The maces of older Australian universities appear to be based upon the parliamentary mace; those of some newer universities are relentlessly contemporary in design.



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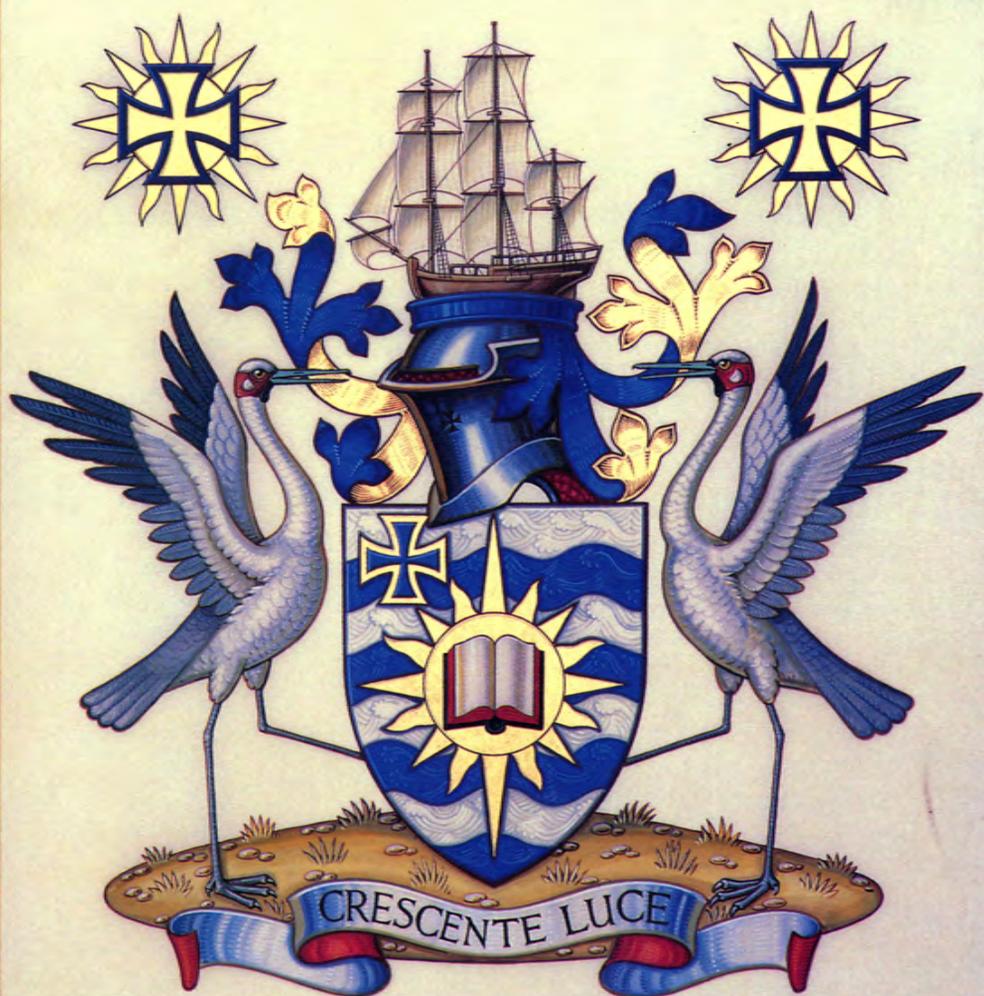
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