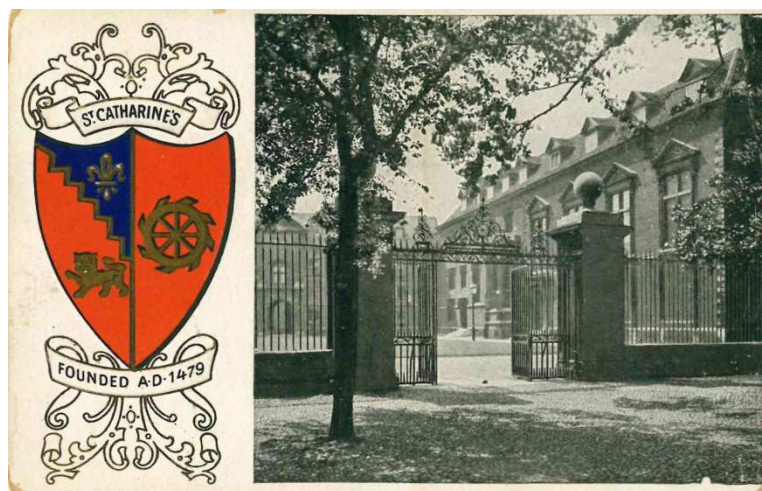


The Arms of the College

The arms of the College are a Catherine wheel, or to quote the York Herald 'Gules a Catherine wheel Or'. The College Bursar corresponded with the York Herald in July and August 1934 in order to find out more about the College's arms. At various points they have been shown as the Founder's arms impaling a Catherine wheel or as just a Catherine wheel, as this postcard shows.



Postcard of the College showing the Main Gates, Main Court and the College arms. The Founder's arms can be seen on the left, 'Per Bend indented gules and azure in dexter base a lion passant gardant and in sinister chief a fleur-de-lys or' and the Catherine Wheel on the right. Note the date of foundation at the bottom – it should read 1473! The postcard itself is undated.

Reference: PHOT/3/2/46

The York Herald could find no evidence for the arms being those of the Founder impaling a Catherine Wheel, though this was what Bishop Browne stated in his history of the College in 1902. In fact the York Herald could find no reference to a payment of fees for registering the College's arms. However, it is likely that the payment was made to Sir Henry St. George, Clarenceux at his visitation in July 1684, and that the arms were granted at this visitation. Alas, therefore, no actual grant of arms exists.

Laid out by of Master To Drury & Pringels	0	8	0
To Pringels	0	12	0
To Mr Howard	0	3	0
To Mr Baron	2	5	6
To St Francis Pemberton	1	1	6
For Cattlinus	7	11	6
To St Charles Coopers Park-keeper	0	10	0
→ To St George for registering of Coll arms & seal	1	10	0

Entry in the College Audit Account Book showing the payment for registering the 'Cath armes and seal' at a cost of £1 10s.

Reference: L/26, page 367



There is no armorial rule as to the number of spokes or knives on the wheel and so the wheel has been rendered in a variety of styles over the years. In most of the early representations there are 8 of each, and this is now the preferred number.

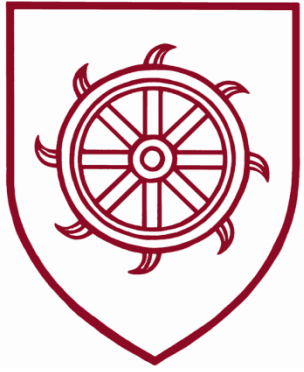


Extract from a postcard featuring a many-spoked wheel. Undated.
Reference: COLL/3/1

View of the stonework on the College's main gates, showing 2 Catherine wheels. June 2012.
Archivist's image



View of the College's main gates, showing a golden Catherine wheel. June 2012.
Archivist's image



The College crest as used on formal publications including letter heads and publicity materials. The image is the traditional 8 spokes and 8 knives.

It is by ancient custom the prerogative of a head of house to use the arms of the College impaling his own. Examples in the College include those of Dr Crosse (Master 1719-1736), impaled by St Catharine's College, on a carved cartouche, above the Senior Combination Room (SCR) door and those of Dr Henry Philpott (Master 1845-1861) and Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer (Master 1973-1984), featuring in a commemorative stained glass window, also in the Senior Combination Room. The stained glass was inserted to commemorate a visit by Queen Elizabeth II in 1981.



The arms of Dr Crosse in the SCR.

Archivist's image.



Left to right: The arms of Dr Philpott with helm, mantling and crest, plus dates of Philpott's two Vice-Chancellorships; Shield containing the Royal arms, within a Garter, ensigned by the Crown, above the cyphers of Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth; The arms of St Catharine's College impaling Swinnerton-Dyer ancient, plus dates of Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer's Vice-Chancellorship.

The Archivist is always pleased to answer questions about College activities and happy to receive records relating to the College. Enquiries should be directed to archivist@caths.cam.ac.uk, or call 01223 338343. The Archivist only works for the College on Thursdays and Fridays so there is sometimes a delay in being able to answer queries.