

Oswald Coat of Arms



The Oswald Coat of Arms illustrated was drawn by an heraldic artist from information officially recorded in ancient heraldic archives. Documentation for the Oswald Coat of Arms design can be found in Burke's General Armory. Heraldic artists of old developed their own unique language to describe an individual Coat of Arms. In their language, the Arms (shield) is as follows:

'Az, a savage wreathed head and middle with bay leaves, having a sheaf of arrows hanging by his side, and bearing a bow in the sinister hand all ppr. and pointing with the other to a comet placed in the dexter chief point or.'

Above the shield and helmet is the Crest, which is described as: 'A dexter hand issuing out of a cloud and pointing to a star of 8 rays ppr.'

When translated the blazon also describes the original colors of the Oswald Arms and Crest as it appeared centuries ago. Family mottos are believed to have originated as battle cries in medieval times. A Motto was recorded with this Oswald Coat of Arms: "FORTI FAVET COELUM"

Individual surnames originated for the purpose of more specific identification. The four primary sources for second names were: Occupation, location, father's name, or personal characteristics. The surname Oswald appears to be patronymical in origin and is believed to be associated with the Old Norse name for 'the God Os', which literally translated means, 'God - power'. Different spellings of the same original surname are a common occurrence. Dictionaries of surnames indicate probable spelling variations of Oswald to be Oswold, Os and Osuald. Although bearers of the old and distinguished Oswald name comprise a small fraction of the population there are a number who have established for it a significant place in history. They include: Saint Oswald (Osuald) 605-642, King of the Northumbrians. In the battle with Coldwalln, he set about raising a cross and held it with his own hands while his men fixed it in the ground. This was the first symbol of Christianity in the Bernician land. As a multitude of poor people gathered at his window on Easter crying out for alms, he ordered that they be given his food and that the silver dishes be broken into small pieces and divided among them. In Nennius, he is called 'Lamnguin', which is said to mean 'white hand' or 'free hand'. Saint Oswald (d. 992) Archbishop of York, who was consecrated by Dunstan in 961, and took part in the solemn coronation of Edgar at Bath on 'White Sunday' in 973. A portfolio of Saint Oswald is preserved in the Library of Corpus Christi College in Cambridge.