

Origins of Fife Area and Rosyth District Badges

1. I was forewarned at the September (2018) District Executive Committee that the Youth Advisory Group were interested in the origins and meaning of the Fife and Rosyth Badges. This set me off on this little dissertation. Over the years I have taken a particular interest in the Fife and Rosyth badges as will be apparent from this note.

2. I am not aware of Fife Scouts having a County Badge before the Second World War although there is a hint that they might have had (see paragraph 6). We do know that a County Flag was introduced in 1913 as the prize for winning the recently inaugurated County Flag competition (see illustration).



3. The knight on horseback used in the flag appeared on a seal of Duncan, Earl of Fife which dated from 1360. A later Earl of Fife, James, applied for a Coat of Arms in 1780 using the seal as the basis. The original seal had a piece broken off at the top so James added headgear for the horseman. The colours of red and gold were chosen by the Earls of Fife because of the family's kinship with the Kings of Scotland whose colours were also red and gold.

4. Other organisations such as the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry (below left) and Fife Constabulary (in its early days) (below right) used forms of this design as their cap badges.



5. It was also incorporated in a seal adopted by Fife County Council in 1890 and in its Coat of Arms adopted in 1927. The motto "Virtute et Opera" can be translated "By Virtue and Energy". An abbreviated version of the heraldic description is of a knight armed in all points on a horse at full speed carrying in his dexter (right) hand a sword and on his sinister (left) arm a shield charged with a lion rampant. This was later adopted by Fife Regional Council when it was formed in 1976 with the addition of supporters (figures on either side) and a Regional Council coronet. The dexter supporter is St Servanus who was specially associated with the Burgh of Culross and its abbey. In 1997, the present day Fife Council assumed the arms granted to Fife

Regional Council with a change in the dexter supporter to a silver lion rampant and a new motto. The unicorn on the right has the collar and badge which was common to all Regional Councils.



Fife County Council



Fife Regional Council



Fife Council

6. In compiling my history of Scouting in West Fife I was unable to pin down exactly when a Fife County Badge was introduced. The minutes of the County AGM in November 1939 records that a new design for a County Badge was submitted to the meeting and was approved. It was described as being in black on a yellow background and was to be worn on the right breast of the shirt or jersey. The term “new design” is interesting. Does this mean that there had been a much earlier design and, if so, was it ever produced and worn? Could it mean that a design had been produced fairly soon before the November meeting and was rejected or required to be changed in some way? Looking at early photos of Scouts from the Dunfermline area it seems to be the early 1940s before a Fife Badge appears on uniform suggesting that the design approved in November 1939 was the first to be worn. Badges in those days were produced in strip form and had to be cut up. This is an example of the Fife Badge in strip form. In the International Badgers Club catalogue it states that the black line above the emblem represents a coal seam which was later removed when there were no longer any coal mines on the area. This is the first and only time I have come across this reference.



7. It may be of passing interest to note that as a young 19 year old scouter in 1965, I put forward a suggestion that we change the design of the County Badge. My suggested design had the Forth Road Bridge (opened a year previously) in the top half, a thistle with the scout badge in the bottom left hand quarter and the word “Fife” in the bottom right hand quarter. The note I received from our DC, John Prior, returning my design said that it had not been accepted. The County Commissioner had said that it was generally thought that the existing design was good and a subject of historical interest. I can’t remember what my reaction was at the time but from today’s perspective and with the knowledge I now have, I would certainly agree with this

conclusion. The County Commissioner had acknowledged that the size and manufacture of the badge was poor and said that when it was re-ordered it would be larger and produced as individual badges with bound edges.



8. Nothing further happened about producing a better style of badge (perhaps they were running down stocks of the old one) and at our District Executive Committee meeting in December 1971, I proposed that we attempt to get a better quality Fife Badge as, in the strip form, it compared unfavourably with other County Badges. This was agreed and the proposal was passed on to the County Executive Committee. At Fife County's AGM held in May 1973 in Cowdenbeath, it was agreed that a better quality County Badge should be obtained albeit that the cost would rise from 4p to 5p. This badge with interlocked edges was the result.

9. At Rosyth District's Executive meeting on 20 June 1974, it was decided that steps should be taken to obtain a District Badge. (I was not on the District Executive Committee at that time but had prompted this discussion through our Group representative.) At an Executive meeting on 10 October, it was reported that the District's proposal to have a District Badge had been rejected by the County Executive Committee as such badges were only sanctioned in large cities.

10. Subsequently Dunfermline District also pursued the idea of having a District Badge. Possible designs were considered at a meeting of their Executive Committee on 29 April 1976 and one was chosen to go to SHQ for approval. Probably spurred on by Dunfermline District's success in obtaining approval to have a District badge, Rosyth District also invited designs for a District badge. At a leaders' meeting held on 15 November 1977, these were considered and voted upon. The winning design was by Larry Scrimgeour, SL of the 61st Fife (St John's RC Church) Scout Group. It was based on the ship in the coat of arms of Inverkeithing Burgh and symbolised the close links which the communities of Rosyth District had with ships and the sea.



Left - the seal of Inverkeithing Town Council in use in the 1890s. Centre - the coat of arms granted to Inverkeithing Town Council in 1930. The figure is that of St Peter, the patron saint of the Burgh. Right - Inverkeithing District's flag.

I doubt if Larry was aware of it, but the first District flag when we were known as Inverkeithing District also featured a ship from the Inverkeithing coat of arms.

11. At Rosyth District's Executive meeting held on 16 February 1978, it was reported that quotations for the supply of the District Badge had been received through the Scottish Scout Shop. The Scout Shop were willing to meet the initial outlay if they could sell the badges over the counter. This was agreed. The badge would be submitted for the approval of the Scottish Management Committee on 8 March. This is the badge as it was first produced.



12. At Rosyth District's Executive meeting on 21 January 1982, it was reported that the Scottish Scout Shop were no longer willing to buy Area and District badges. We were asked (and agreed) to purchase the existing stock of about 1600 at 6p each. At a leaders' meeting the following month it was announced that the Scottish Scout Shop was to be taken over by Scout Shops Ltd which was probably the reason for their decision to dispose of stocks of District and Area badges.



13. The Rosyth District and Fife Area badges complemented each other with the same colour (gold or pale yellow) background. However, in about 1984, when a new supply of the badge was obtained, the Fife Area Badge was produced with a yellow border.

14. A new supply of the Rosyth District badge was purchased at the beginning of 1984 (5000 for £400 or 8p each). The badges were sold to Scout Groups at a higher price with the aim of building up a fund to replenish the stock at some future time. An investment account was opened with the Post Office in 1984 for the proceeds from the sale of District badges. At about this time I negotiated with the Camping & Outdoors Centre (Scout Shop) in Edinburgh to buy supplies of badges (100 at a time) at 15p each for resale. This arrangement continued for a number of years and made a significant contribution to the building up of the Badge Fund.

15. In 1989, the District Executive agreed to seek estimates for a new supply of Rosyth District badges and of a combined Rosyth/Fife badge. (The latter option was, I think, prompted by me although I haven't been able to confirm that. I had seen double badges for some English Districts in the Scout Shop in Edinburgh and that is probably where the idea came from.) The advantages of having a combined badge were that it was cheaper than having 2 separate ones and there was less sewing!

16. In March 1990, the District Executive agreed in principle to have a combined Rosyth & Fife Badge subject to referral to District leaders' meeting and SHQ. Stocks of the existing badge were to be run down before an order was placed. After a bit of a contretemps with Fife Area the new badge was obtained in 1993. It had a much darker background colour (see illustration on right) than the individual District and Area badges.



17. Fife Area had a badge secretary who maintained the stock of Fife Badges and sold them on to Districts as required. A move towards having combined District and Area badges would result in a much reduced demand for the separate Fife badge. At Fife Area's Executive Committee meeting held on 24 February 1993, reports were given on the present stock of District badges held by the Districts. It was decided that combined District/Area badges should be phased in when Districts require them. It was reported that Rosyth had ordered a combined badge and Benarty and Wemyss and Leven were to follow suit.



18. When we ordered a new stock of the badge in 2007 (3000 for £573 or 19p each) the opportunity was taken to tone down the background colour a bit as illustrated here. This was to take it back to nearer its original colour.

19. In 2017, we ordered a further supply (1000 at a cost of £299 or 30p each).

20. I think we were the first District in Fife to have a combined badge. Eventually other Districts (possibly all of them) followed suit.





21. So that is the saga of the Fife Area and District Badges. I hope it is of interest.

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23 November 2018