

*The Herberts , every cockpit day,
Doe carry away
The gold and glory of the day,¹*

Introduction

The coat of arms of the Earls of Pembroke stand prominently over the front door of what was once the Royal Dublin Hospital, Baggot Street. With its themes of medieval helmets, fire-breathing panthers and lions on shields, the design blends in well with the baroque appearance of the building. It is among only a handful of family arms to be seen on the buildings of south Dublin. The most visible of these include the arms of the Westbys at Roebuck Castle (possibly the most heraldic piece of architecture in the region); the Pilkingtons in stain glass at Westbury (now St. Raphaela's School, Stillorgan); Bruce of Benburb at Rockford House, Stradbroke Road; the crest of the Nutting family over the door of St. Helen's, (now the Raddisson Hotel, Stillorgan); and oldest of all, the arms of the Fitzwilliam family on Merrion Road. Appropriately the bearers of these last arms played no small part in introducing the Pembrokes to their perch on Baggot Street.

Earls of Pembroke : Origins of their Coat of Arms:

The prominence of the Pembrokes in Irish history was in evidence from the start of the Anglo-Norman invasion due to the pivotal role of military adventurer, Richard de Clare or Strongbow, the 2nd Earl of Pembroke. The title was also synonymous with the world of chivalry through the exploits of Strongbow's son-in-law - the classic knight and tournament fighter of Anglo-Norman society, William Marshall. (1146 -1219, 3rd Earl). While coats of arms didn't really become popular among leading families in this country until the Tudor period, the heraldic heritage of these title holders was thus well established from centuries before ; although subsequent bearers of the title, the Herberts, were not related by blood to the early holders.

Burke's Peerage & Baronetage sets out the Pembroke and Montgomery blazon as follows:

Arms: per pale azure and gules, three lions rampant argent.

Crest: a wyvern wings elevated vert, holding in the mouth a sinister hand couped at the wrist gules.

Supporters: dexter, a panther rampant guardant argent, incensed, spotted or, vert, sable, azure and gules alternatively, ducally collared azure: sinister, a lion argent, ducally collared or.

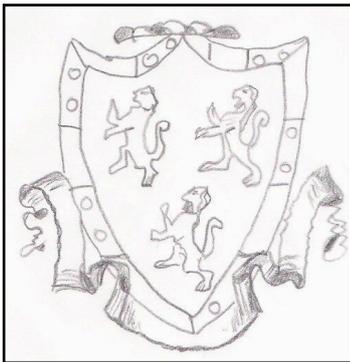
¹ *George Herbert and his Times* A.G. Hyde.Metheun and Co. London. 1906.Page 16. (Reference to an old rhyme about the Herberts from their tournament -fighting days.)

Motto: *Ung je serviray* (one I serve).²



Pencil sketch of the Pembroke Montgomery Arms after Burke's Peerage with colours added on the right according to the blazon.

Burke's gives the background to the history of the present title holders. On 11th Oct 1551, the earldom was granted to William Herbert, a member of the court of Henry VIII and Edward VI. He was both Master of the Horse and a Knight of the Garter. Previously Herbert had been granted lands at Wilton, Salisbury, with the confiscation of the Benedictine abbey there. This became the main seat of the family and remains so to this day. The Montgomery earldom was added on 4th May 1605. Before this date the history of the Pembrokes was volatile, with frequent reversions of the title to the crown. At least two early bearers of the title ended up on the executioner's block. Fox-



Herbert of Rathkeale coat of arms

Davies points out that the arms were originally properly within a bordure gobony or and gules, bezantee. Although this feature had been discontinued since 1618, it was still often portrayed in error. Indeed it was still in use on the arms of the Herberts of Rathkeale, Limerick. (Illustration left).

No augmentations occurred with the addition of Montgomery to the earldom - Montgomery referring to the seat at Montgomery Castle, Wales. This was probably because the castle was already held by the closely-connected Herberts of Colebrook, descendants of the youngest son of William, XVII Earl of Pembroke (b.~1423, beheaded 1469).³ This branch bore a distinctive crest of a saltire of arrows and numbered among its members the poet, George Herbert.

² *Burke's Peerage*, 107th Ed. Page 2217.

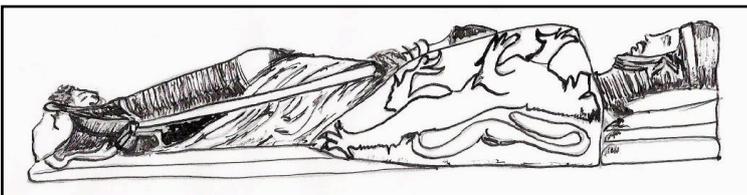
³ *The Complete Peerage*. Vol X. GEC. Page 400.

Design Features

Many features of the Pembroke coat of arms design comply with heraldic rules and give visual clues to the status of the bearer and age of the arms. For instance the crown over the shield is characteristic of an earl - five tall points interspersed with strawberry leaves - which readily distinguishes it from that of a marquis, baronet or duke . Although it is only decorative, the helmet in the crest also gives clues to the viewer. It is in profile, facing right, with a grilled visor of the sort that was adopted for tournament fighting in the Fifteenth Century. Without knowing anything of the origin of the arms this would allow a heraldry student to date the design in *Burke's Peerage* to between 1587 and 1615, as this corresponds to the era of Sir William Segar, the garter who introduced helmet distinction in heraldry.⁴ The open outward-facing helmet that is seen on many coats dates from the Restoration Period .

The inclusion of the panther as a supporter is interesting since this animal is uncommon in heraldry. Standing somewhere between myth and reality, it is represented in the usual way - that is breathing fire or *flammant*. Flame is also issuing from its ears. Its coat is spotted in keeping with descriptions in the classic Greek work , *Physiologus* from 140 A.D, from which Elizabethan society derived its notions of the wider natural world . A fanciful aspect of the panther theme is that its sweet breath was said to attract all creatures with the notable exception of the dragon, which recoils from its odour. Although it is never a good idea to overdo the significance of symbolism in heraldry, perhaps this might suggest the concept of protection from or conquest of the dragon in the Herbert family, a theme which appears to be cancelled out in the feature at the top of the crest , however, where a wyvern is shown sitting on a plinth with a human arm in its mouth.

Undoubtedly the most significant motif in the Pembroke arms is the lion - symbol of kingship, strength and nobility - present both as a supporter along with the panther and as the dominant feature of the shield. It is a constant pattern within the coats of various branches of the Herbert family. In all cases the lion is rampant. The prominence of the lion may be said to emphasise the closeness of the Herberts/Pembrokes to the crown, and may also be a heraldic tribute to the most important Pembroke in history, William Marshall: supporter of four Kings and regent to one, who was always represented carrying a shield bearing a single rampant lion.



Sketch of effigy of William Marshall at Temple Church London, showing a rampant lion on a shield and lion lying at his foot.

⁴ A.C. Fox -Davies. *A Complete Guide to Heraldry* .Thomas Nelson & Son. 1985. p. 239

As far back as the reign of Edward I, (1272 - 1307) possibly the most important monarch in heraldry, Herbets had been represented by the same dominant charge. The Ashmore Roll, which is a copy of the Edward I heraldic scrolls, describes their blazon as follows :

Bore, per pale azure and gules three lyonceaux rampant or.

However the Ashmore roll was copied by the notoriously reckless Elizabethan herald, Ralfe Brooke, who would not have been averse to backdating his representations.⁵ Therefore the antiquity of the lion charge is questionable.

The motto of the Pembroke Herbets is *Ung Je Serviray* (I serve but one) and is used by many branches of the family : the Fitzherbets of Tissington Hall, Derby, the Herbets of Painswick, Glos, Herbets, Earls of Carnarvon, and the Irish branches of the family - the Herbets of Rathkeale Co. Limerick, and the Kenny Herbets of Castleisland or Lockarrig, Co. Kerry. Where does the motto come from? The literature would indicate that its origin lies in battle cries. But mottoes only became popular in heraldry in the Eighteenth Century and many armigerous warrior families have none. While a common motto may point to feudal links between families, it can be a misleading genealogical guide. Nobody needs permission to adopt one and it isn't subject to the same conventions. This is not the case in Scotland where mottoes come under the same rules as coats and may only be granted by the herald.⁶ While it is true that only the Herbets appear to use *ung je serviray*, a glance at *Burke's General Armory* will show that there are many branches of the family with entirely different mottoes. *Audacter et sincere* for Herbert, Earls of Powis. *Jure, non dono* for Herbert of London. *Fortitudine et prudentia* for Herbert of Shropshire. And the now extinct motto *constantia et fortitudine* for Herbert of Cherbury.

Variants

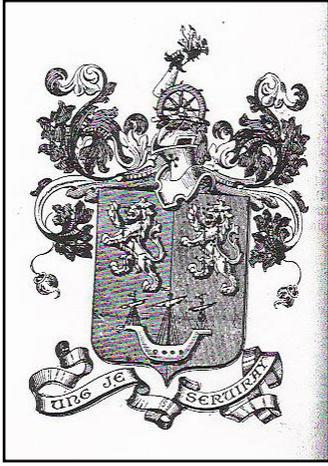
Other armigerous Herbets resident in Ireland were independent of the Pembrokes, but the similarity of their coats would indicate blood ties. Edward MacLysaght traces the appearance of the surname here right back to the Anglo Norman invasion - hence Fitzherbert as well as Herbert.⁷ Hanks and Hodges identifies the surname as Old French or Germanic, a combination of Heri (army) and berht (bright). It also links the surname to Wales, where it is recorded as Herberd as far back as the time of Edward I. Older than this was the first reference in 1125 to the Norman Fitzherbert family, descendants of William, son of Herbert, Lord of Norbury Manor.⁸

⁵ Joseph Foster, *Some Feudal Coats of Arms from Heraldic Rolls - 1298-1418*, pg. 99. London and Oxford 1902.

⁶ Grant Uden . *A Dictionary of Chivalry*. Longmans. 1968. Page 207.

⁷ Edward MacLysaght . *Surnames of Ireland* . Irish Academic Press Ltd 1991. Page155

⁸ Patrick Hanks. Flavia Hodges , *A Dictionary of Surnames* .Oxford Univ. Press 1996. Page 215



(From A. C. Fox Davies, *Armorial Families*.) The arms of Herbert of Painswick, Gloucester, differ from the others in that they present a galleon on the shield; a catherine wheel, instrument of death for St. Catherine, on the helmet; and, in a nice touch of heraldic irony, the crest consists of a human arm with a dragon by the scruff of the neck. ⁹

The Herberts of Colebrook, Monmouthshire, are distinguished by a crest consisting of a bundle of seven arrows, arranged in a saltire and tied with a buckled belt. This feature is echoed in the crest of the Herberts of Castle Island, Kerry, (with double the number of arrows) whose arms were marshaled in turn when the family of John Kenny married into the Herberts in 1842.¹⁰

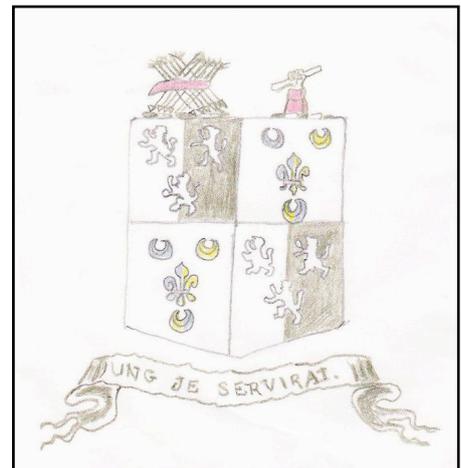
Blazon of Herberts of Castle Island Kerry:

1st and 4th per pale argent and sable, 3 lions rampant, 2 and 1 counterchanged, armed and languid gules (for Herbert).

2nd and 3rd per pale, or and azure a fleur de lis between 2 crescents, 2 and 1 counterchanged (for Kenny).

Crest: A bundle of twelve arrows in saltire or, headed and feathered arg., belted gu., and buckled gold (Herbert).

A dexter cubit arm erect vested gu., cuffed arg., the hand grasping a scroll of Paper ppr. (Kenny).

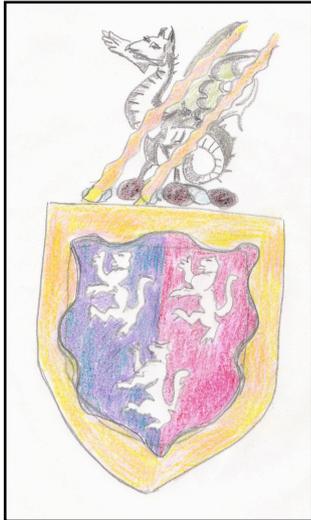


Not surprisingly a study of this branch's pedigree confirms a genealogical link through the J.P. and sheriff of Kerry, Sir William Herbert, (b. ~1533. d.1593.) (Herbert's daughter, Mary, was left all the lands in Kerry and Monmouth on the strict proviso that she marry another Herbert. And so she wed Lord Herbert of Cherbury whose arms were identical).

Burke's and the *Complete Peerage* do a good job of glossing over the problems of the 12th Earl of Pembroke, united with a Sicilian princess in a clandestine marriage from which he could never free himself. The consequence was illegitimacy and exclusion from the title for his children by another woman years later. The arms of two of these children, granted by royal license in 1889, are set out in Fox Davies's *Armorial Families* (represented below.) They describe the classic marks of

⁹ A.C. Fox Davies, *Armorial Families*, page 776. T.C & E.C. Jack. London. 1910.

¹⁰ National Library of Ireland, G.O. Ms. 107. Pg. 240-1. Microfilm Pos 8291.



bastardy, with a bordure wavy of a metallic colour around the otherwise typical shield, while the Herbert crest is defaced by a bendlet sinister wavy. The motto remains the same.

Coat of arms of the sons of George, 12th Earl of Pembroke (left)

Local connections

The facade of Baggot Street Hospital (below) reveal all the elements of the Pembroke coat of arms. (The widow of the 13th Earl bequeathed a huge sum of money to the institution). The shield, supporters and motto are over the main door, while the heraldic helmet and mantling are draped around a top gable window. Conspicuous by its absence is the wyvern crest although there is a small remnant of wing just visible over the helmet, suggesting it may have been damaged or broken off.



*Pembroke coat of arms over the main door
of Baggot Street Hospital, Dublin*

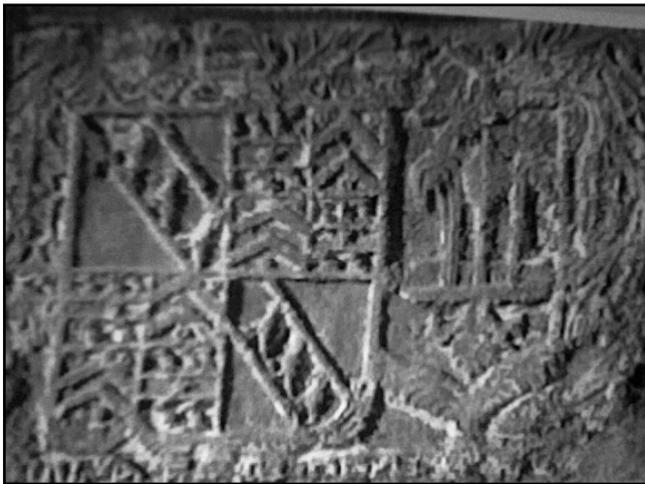
Another stone symbol of the family occurs frequently in South Dublin but it is not the coat. Instead the Pembroke Montgomery insignia graces the walls of many red-brick labourers' cottages and the few remaining Merrion estate cottages built in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century. (These cottages were funded by local government through loans secured by the Pembroke estate). An



attractive decorative motif, in which the main letters are cleverly interlinked, the insignia would certainly have been more easily carved by the stone workers than the coat. A pencil sketch of the motif is reproduced on the left. The only feature of the coat of arms to turn up on this insignia is the earl's coronet over the letters.

*Pembroke and Montgomery insignia (left)
as seen on wall of red-bricked cottage, Roebuck.*

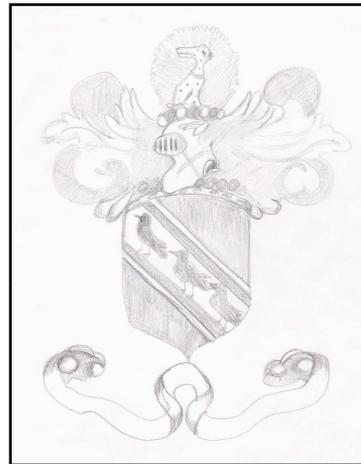
Some Interesting Aspects of the Nearby Fitzwilliam Coat of Arms



Photograph of Merrion Road arms set on the walls of a modern residence for the blind, Merrion Road .

Set in the wall of a small residence for the blind opposite the Merrion Gates, Booterstown, is a curious-looking, lichen-covered coat of arms of great age. An enigmatic face looks out overhead.

Recent developers of the site came across the carving in a delapidated barn associated with Merrion House and placed it in its present location. It is said to represent the coat of arms of the Fitzwilliams, a Norman family prominent in the Pale since the Thirteenth Century, with strongholds in Dundrum, Baggotrath, Simmonscourt and Merrion (also known as Thorncastle). But does a study of the heraldry of the carving bear this out?



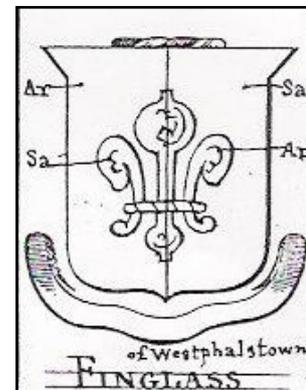
The arms above are a pencil sketch of the arms of Thomas Fitzwilliam Viscount Merrion from the Ulster King of Arms, made in 1629. Blazon: Gules on a bend, cetised argent, 3 popinjays vert, beaked and legged gules, and for Crest, in front of a peacock's tail proper a greyhound's head erased argent collared and spotted gules.

There are several accounts of these arms decorating the walls of a fine castle that once stood near this spot. Indeed the tablet appears to be the last trace of the castle to remain. Francis Elrington Ball in his *History of County Dublin* in 1903, writes that the engraving was to be found on the interior wall of the second floor. As early as the 1730s the castle was abandoned and in ruins - a sad shadow of the residence that boasted no less than sixteen hearths and played host to the Tudor Viceroy, Sir Henry Sidney.

Even allowing for age and weather damage, the Merrion Road coat bears little resemblance to the earliest documented coat of arms recorded for this Fitzwilliam family . These were granted to Thomas Fitzwilliam by the Ulster King of Arms in 1629 on the occasion of his elevation to Viscount of Meryong. Featuring heavily in the Down Survey¹¹ , where he is described as an Irish papist, Fitzwilliam nevertheless came through those times with his estates relatively untouched . Certainly the most prominent ordinary in both cases is a bend - that is a broad band going from the dexter chief corner to the sinister base. In the Ulster Office arms that bend is cottised . The bend is charged with small birds like popinjays, or heraldic parrots. But comparisons end there. The Merrion Road bend is charged with six birds as against the three indicated by the Ulster herald. Also the shield is quartered with a pair of chevrons or chevronels top sinister and bottom dexter. This makes it faintly reminiscent of the later Wentworth Fitzwilliam coat adopted by the family at a more recent date. (see figure, page 9). In keeping with the antiquity of the coat, there is no evidence of a motto. Little figurines, perhaps birds again but the tablet is too worn for the viewer to be sure, are set between bars on the second and third quarters of the shield.

In addition there is a curious motif on the sinister side of the Merrion Road arms which is given equal prominence on the tablet. Not full enough to be a plume of feathers, it appears more like a *fleur de lis* encased in a bracket or shield. *The fleur de lis* is a motif of French origin and has always been associated with the royal family of that country, where it is usually either scattered over a shield or arranged in a group of three. It is also employed in differencing for cadency, denoting the sixth son of a family in particular.¹² What is it doing on the Fitzwilliam arms? Does it refer to the coat of some family connected through marriage? Would further study of the heraldry of this coat allow the onlooker to unlock the date of the stone ?

To answer these questions, the arms of families closely connected with the Fitzwilliams were looked at. This extensive list, a virtual who's who of influential families of the Pale, included the Barnewalls, Cruises, Plunketts, Prestons, Holywoods, Dartasses , Breretons , Usshers, Flemings, Eustaces, Cusacks and Bagenalls . Extensive use was made of *Kennedy's Book of Arms*, a graphic compilation of old records from the Ulster Office by herald painter, Patrick Kennedy, in 1816 . It showed that the coat of arms of the Finglass family consisted of a single large *Fleur de Lis* set at the centre of the field. It seemed a very close match. (figure on right).

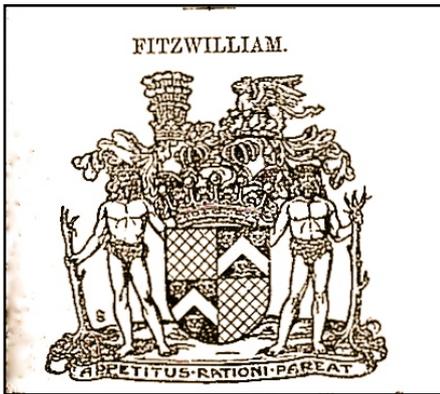


¹¹ *Civil Survey*. 1654 -56. Vol VII. Co. Dublin. Page 259- 262.

¹² A.C. Fox Davies , *A Complete Guide to Heraldry*, page 375.

According to MacLysaght, Finglass (or Fynglas) is one of the few toponymic surnames of Ireland.¹³ One of the most important bearers of the name was Patrick Finglass of Westphalstown - Chief Baron of the Exchequer in the reign of Henry VIII. Local history books revealed that Patrick Finglass acted as guardian to Thomas Fitzwilliam (b.~1519.d 1592) when the latter succeeded to his estates at the tender age of nine. A marriage was later arranged between Fitzwilliam and Finglass's daughter, Jennet. This researcher thus speculates that the Merrion Road coat of arms were carved sometime between 1528 and 1592 to commemorate either this guardianship or the above marriage.

Who was Thomas Fitzwilliam, father of the 1st Viscount, whose presence in stone lingers on the Merrion Road into the 21st century? He features frequently in the Calendar of State Papers of the Tudor period, where he is described by the archbishop of Dublin as a "godly and discreet



From *Burke's Complete Peerage*.

Lozenge argent and gules for Fitzwilliam (1 &4), a chevron between three leopard faces for Wentworth (2&3)

Motto: *let reason govern desire*.

gentleman"¹⁴. Always a royalist, he was knighted in 1566 for his military efforts against Shane O'Neill and he also set the modern-day boundary for Wicklow. In the Calendars he frequently curries favour by offering to put up his own money, usually £500, for measures that would benefit the English campaign. In all cases he seeks to secure offices for his sons in these deals. There is a strong sense that he is securing the interests of his heirs above all.¹⁵

In 1733, Mary Fitzwilliam, daughter of the 5th Viscount Merrion, married the Earl of Pembroke. Her arms grace the ceiling of the colonnade room of Wilton House. (There is no evidence of marshaling with the union). Yet they are not the arms of the Viscounts of Merrion. In the latter part of the Seventeenth Century, the Merrion Fitzwilliams decreed that they were related to the more powerful Yorkshire family of the same name and gave up their arms in favour of the latter. Accounts casting doubt on family connections were in evidence in the course of this research, with a piece in the *Irish Times* in 1925 by the then Ulster King of Arms suggesting that the link was no more than wishful thinking.¹⁶ From a purely heraldic point of view this opinion would seem to be borne out, for there are no similarities in their respective charges.

¹³ Edward MacLysaght, *The Surnames of Ireland*. Page 108. Irish University Press. 1973. Supplement to *Irish Families*. Page 69.

¹⁴ Ed. Mary O'Dowd, *Calendar of State Papers*. 1571-1575. Page 790. Sp63/50, no 66. 14th April 1575. Adam Loftus to Lord Burghley.

¹⁵ *Ibid*. Page. 805. SP 63/50 no 52. 10th May 1575.

¹⁶ *Irish Times Newspaper Archive*. <http://www.ireland.com/search/>. Fri. Sept. 11th 1925. Page 4. "Mount Merrion" by Sir Neville Wilkinson, Ulster King of Arms.. Accessed Feb 25th 2008.

The way in which the Fitzwilliam estate passed to the Pembrokes is a favourite anecdote of local historians. The unmarried, art-collecting 7th Viscount, having no heir, invited his Wentworth Fitzwilliam cousin to tea, was disgusted by his table manners which included decanting his tea on to his saucer, and promptly decided in favour of his other cousins, the Herberts ¹⁷. The famous cup and saucer are said to reside in the Pembroke Estate Office. Whether true or not, this colourful tale does much to back up the old rhyme often recited about the Herberts from many centuries before:

The Herberts , every cockpit day,

Doe carry away

The gold and glory of the day

Conclusion

The value of heraldry in confirming or disproving genealogical links between families is well exemplified by the background to the various Herbert and Fitzwilliam coats of arms . It can be especially useful in a pedigree as confusing and sometimes deliberately misleading as that of the Herberts. When incorporated into the architecture of a place, coats of arms have the added use of providing clues to the provenance of a building , or the era in which the building was designed or renovated. A lasting link between a family and a building can be proved long after other traces of that family have vanished. In the case of the Fitzwilliam arms at Merrion Gates, a study of heraldic detail can also be a useful tool for putting a date on such old features .

¹⁷ Ibid.

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