

# Society consults on modernising its Coat of Arms

With its new Charter in place and the Section 60 Order consultation now under way, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society has decided that the time is ripe for modernising its Shield of Arms, Crest and Motto, which, it says, feature outmoded emblems of pharmacy such as an alembic (retort) and a mortar and pestle.

The Society is consulting members on a draft new design for its arms. If it gains the membership's support the new design will be submitted to the College of Arms for its approval.

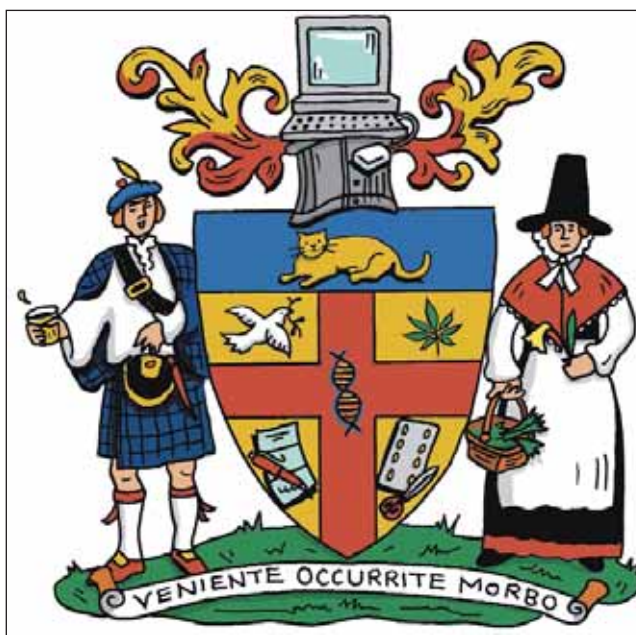
The Society's current Arms are more than 160 years old. After it obtained its Royal Charter in 1843, the Society made an application to the Heralds of the College of Arms for the grant of Arms for use on a common seal to be appended to its official documents. It was granted its Arms (Shield, Crest and Motto) and Supporters in March 1844.

The keeper of the Society's museum collections, Briony Hudson, says: "No accounts survive of how the various motifs were selected for inclusion on the Arms. Some of the symbolism remains obscure, but in general the choice of devices and supporters reflects the regard shown by chemists and druggists in the 1840s for the historical and international roots of their profession."

The Society has now decided to bring its Arms up to date by replacing most of the archaic motifs with symbols of modern pharmacy. A draft new design has been prepared and the Society is seeking comments from members and others.

The proposed new Arms retain the basic design of a red cross on a gold background surmounted by a blue "chief". Of the four motifs in the corners of the design, only the dove of peace remains, being the sole one considered to be still relevant. The aloe, now more closely associated with cosmetic use than with its medicinal properties as a laxative, is replaced by a cannabis leaf, symbolising the Society's role in developing the modern use of cannabinoids. The Rod of Aesculapius (the staff entwined by a snake), a traditional symbol of medicine rather than of pharmacy, gives way to a prescription form and pen to symbolise pharmacists' new role in prescribing. The glass retort and collecting vessel ("alembic and receiver"), which represent the 19th century preparation of medicines, are superseded by a blister strip of tablets to signify modern dispensing.

The scales in the centre of the red cross have been replaced by a double helix to represent genetic medicine. And the stag "lodged" (lying down) on the chief is replaced by cat in a similar pose in acknowledgement of the pharmacist's re-emerging role in pet health.



The proposed new arms, crest, supporters and motto

The Crest continues to include "a wreath of the colours", but the mortar and pestle, the most important equipment used by a 19th century pharmacist, have been replaced by the main tool of the 21st century pharmacist, a computer.

In addition, the two Supporters, Avicenna and Galen, have been changed. Although Avicenna (Abu Ali al-Hussain Ibn Abdallah Ibn Sina), who lived from AD980 to 1037, is still revered for his skill in medicine, Galen, who was born in AD129 and died in about AD216, is no longer in favour because adher-

ence to his many mistaken ideas delayed any advances in health care for more than 1,000 years after his death. The Society has therefore decided to replace Avicenna and Galen with generic representations of a Scotsman and a Welsh woman. These are intended to symbolise devolution within pharmacy and also to recognise the increasing proportion of women in the profession.

The heraldic descriptions of the current Arms, Crest and Supporters and the proposed replacements are set out in the Panels below.

The Society has also decided to change its Motto, "Habenda Ratio Valetudinis". This slogan, which is taken from Cicero, can be somewhat freely translated as "We must pay attention to our health". The new Motto for the 21st century, which has been chosen to mark "pharmacists' emerging proactive role in public health", is to be "Veniente occurrite morbo" ("Run to meet disease as it comes").

The Society's Director of Corporate and Strategic Development, Rob Darracott, says: "We hope that members will support the draft new Arms. It is not known for certain what will happen if they vote to reject the proposal, but it is likely that the Government will impose new Arms through an additional Order under Section 60 of the Health Act 1999."

To express your opinion on the proposed new Arms, log on to the questionnaire page of *PJ Online* ([www.pjonline.com/arms](http://www.pjonline.com/arms)).

## Heraldic description of the existing Arms, Crest and Supporters

Or, on a Cross Gules between a Dove holding in the mouth an Olive Branch in the First Quarter, an Aloe in the Second, a Staff erect entwined by a Serpent in the Third, and an Alembic and Receiver in the Fourth, all proper — a pair of Scales of the First: on a Chief Azure a Stag lodged also of the First. And for the Crest, On a Wreath of the Colours, A Mortar therein a Pestle Or. On the dexter Side a Figure intended to

represent Avicenna, habited in a dark red robe, with a white under Vest his Shoes red, around his Waist a Shawl also red, fringed gold, and upon his head a white Turban; in his right hand a Staff gold, entwined with a Serpent proper. And upon the Sinister a Figure intended to represent Galen, habited in a long white Vest and loose Robe, his Sandals red, and holding in his right hand a Steelyard Or.

## Heraldic description of the proposed Arms, Crest and Supporters

Or, on a Cross Gules between a Dove holding in the mouth an Olive Branch in the First Quarter, a Cannabis Leaf in the Second, a Prescription Form and Pen in the Third, and a Blister Strip of eight Tablets, arrayed in two ranks of four Tablets, with a Pair of Scissors, in the Fourth, all proper — a double Helix of the First: on a Chief Azure a Cat lodged also of the First. And for the Crest, On a Wreath of the Colours, a Computer Monitor Or. On the Dexter Side a Figure intended to represent a Scottish Man, habited in a dark blue Kilt, with a

white Shirt his Shoes red, his Socks white, around his Waist a Belt and Sporrans red, fringed gold, and upon his head a blue Tam-o-Shanter; in his right hand a Whisky Tumbler gold. And upon the Sinister a Figure intended to represent a Welsh Woman, habited in a long Skirt black, a Blouse white, an Apron white, her Shoes and Stockings black, around her Shoulders a Shawl red and upon her Head a Tall Hat black and holding in her right hand a Basket of Leeks green and in her left hand a Daffodil gold.