

The Rix Coat of Arms

A coat of arms has been linked to the Rix family since at least the early 1800s (as recorded in Berry's *Encyclopaedia Heraldica*), albeit with unclear genesis. The first official recording of this shield design was in 1620, connecting it with the Whitfields. Although it is possible that Rixes unofficially adopted the shield through marriage, the true story of how it came to be associated with our English ancestors is lost to history.

Its nebulous origin notwithstanding, the unique combination of shield with crest distinguishes this coat of arms from all others. The *blazon* (description) of the Rix coat of arms is consistent across at least four heraldry sources:

Rix: *Gules. A fesse between six crosses crosslet fitchée argent.*

Crest – A demi griffin proper.

Heraldic terminology borrows heavily from Norman French:

- *Gules* (red) is the *tincture* (color) of the *escutcheon* (shield). It contains a *fesse* (a horizontal bar), which is *argent* (silver; white when represented in a painting).
- The crosses are also argent, and specified as *crosslets fitchée*, which have smaller crosses at the arms (crosslets) and a pointed base (fitchée means “fixed,” as if in the ground).
- The *crest* is the object atop the helmet: a *demi griffin proper*. “Demi” indicates that only the upper portion of the griffin is shown. “Proper” refers to the griffin’s tincture; it should appear as the color usually associated with the subject. The proper color of the griffin is *or* (gold; yellow when represented in a painting).
 - The griffin embodies both the king of the earth (body of a lion) and the king of the heavens (head and wings of an eagle), sometimes symbolizing Christ.

Heraldic tradition generally includes the following elements often omitted from the blazon:

- The crest rests within a *torse* (wreath) on a *helmet of esquires*: a profile of a steel helmet with a closed visor. This helmet suggests some social esteem, but not royalty or nobility.
- The *lambrequin* (mantling) is the decorative cloth that flows from the helmet. It is traditionally depicted as shredded or battle-worn to mimic the cloth that knights would wear over their necks in tournaments. Its precise design is typically left to the artist.
- The banner below the shield includes the *motto*, “Cruce Salus.” This Latin phrase means “Salvation by/in/from the Cross.” The motto may be changed at will by the bearer.

Although its age and origin remain a mystery, this coat of arms has been associated with the Rix family for at least two centuries. May we remember our forebears with pride as we keep this symbol alive in our hearts and homes.