

THE ARMS OF THE SOCIETY


JOHN EVELYN was keenly interested in the early organization of the Society, and when the question of suitable arms was under consideration he appears to have prepared at least six designs. Charles John Smith, the antiquary, included these in his *Historical and Literary Curiosities*, published a hundred years ago; and the plate from that work is reproduced on page 38.

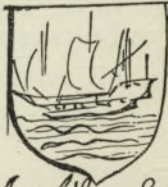
Evelyn's heraldic efforts, however, came to nothing, for in August 1662 Charles II. informed the Society that it might use 'the armes of England . . . in a canton' in its arms; and in the following month the present form of the arms was approved. 'We now resolv'd,' wrote Evelyn in his *Diary* under 17 September 1662, 'that the armes of the Society should be, a field Argent, with a canton of the armes of England; the supporters two talbots Argent; Crest, an eagle Or holding a shield with the like armes of England, viz. 3 lions. The words *Nullius in verba*.'¹ The King approved the form of the arms, and gave orders 'to Garter King at Armes to passe the diploma of their office for it.' How far Evelyn was responsible for the motto it is impossible to say: it will be noted that on the reproduced sketch of his heraldic designs it appears twice.

In the Second Charter, dated 22 April 1663, the royal grant of arms was given formal form. 'We give and grant, moreover, by these presents to the President, Council and Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid, and to their successors for ever, in testimony of our royal favour towards them, to the present and future ages, these following blazons of honour, that is to say: in a dexter corner of a shield argent our three Lions of England, and for crest a helm adorned with a crown studded with florets, surmounted by an eagle of proper colour holding in one foot a shield charged with our lions: supporters two white hounds gorged with crowns; to be borne, exhibited and possessed for ever by the aforesaid President, Council and Fellows, and their successors, as occasion shall serve.'

¹ *Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri.* Horace, Epist. i. 14.

Arms & Mottos proposed
for the Society 1660

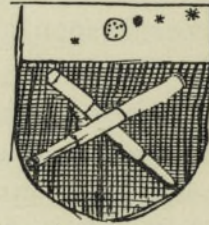
R SRS.  R S SRS



Et Augetur Scientia.



Omnia Probate.

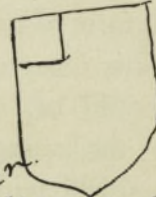


Quantum Nescimus.

*Quis dicere Falsum —
Audeat — 1. Geor.*



Ad Majus Lumen.



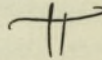
Nullius in Verba.

Rerum cognoscere Causas:



Experiendo:

Nullius in Verba;



Prælyn.

NOTES

- DESIGN I. A vessel under sail in a shield Argent.
Motto: *Et Augetur Scientia.*
- DESIGN II. A hand issuing from clouds and holding a plumb line on a quartered per fesse, Argent and Sable. A canton was apparently added later.
Motto: *Omnia Probate.*
- DESIGN III. Two telescopes extended in saltire; the earth and planets on a chief Argent.
Motto: *Quantum Nescimus.*
- DESIGN IV. The Sun in splendour on a field Argent.
Motto: *Ad Majus Lumen.*
Alternative Motto: *Quis dicere Falsum Audeat?*
- DESIGN V. A shield bearing a canton.
Motto: *Nullius in Verba.*
- DESIGN VI. A terrestrial globe; the human eye in chief Argent.
Motto: *Rerum cognoscere Causas.*

Evelyn makes no mention of the *helmet*; nor is its form defined in the patent in the Second Charter. On 13 July 1663 orders were given for the arms to be engraved on the mace. The engraver thereupon used a peer's helmet, that is, a helmet guarded by grilles and placed in profile: in strict accordance with heraldic custom a society or corporation ought to bear an esquire's helmet, that is, a helmet placed in profile with visor shut. Why the engraver perpetrated this mistake will probably never be known. He may have been ignorant of the heraldic distinction (it was not strictly adhered to in this country until about 1615); but perhaps he deliberately employed the peer's helmet out of compliment to the Society's first President, Viscount Brouncker, or because he knew that the City of London, contrary to strict heraldic rule, bore it in its arms.

Through the kind offices of Mr Stanley Morison a new die has recently been made of the arms as engraved on the mace, and this is to be used by the Society on its official documents. Incidentally in designing the new letter-heading for the Society's notepaper Mr Morison used the form of the script on the mace.

J. D. G. D.