

Having the courage of ones convictions:



We are sorry to learn that that the Baronage Press has now decided to reduce their original plans for an extensive International Armorial to a more basic collection of surnames and arms. These much reduced plans now appear to aim no higher than producing a modern day equivalent of the original Burke's General Armory and, although we wish Mr. Hogarth (editor of The Baronage Press and sole director of The Baronage Press Ltd.) well, we have concerns that this work will do little more than give the Bucket Shops a more up to date source of reference material.

It was announced in January of this year that Baronage Press had revised its plans for its long-planned Baronage Armorial Register after learning that Burke's Peerage and Gentry International Armorial Register had pipped it to the post. As the Burke's Register ploughed its furrow with determination and remained on course to produce an informative and factual record of contemporary armorial bearings which will be of lasting use to serious students of heraldry there were already signs that the Baronage Press was thinking twice about having to face the same battles being fought by Burke's to ensure its integrity. At that stage their plans were stated to be an online accumulation of arms in 21st century use and inclusion would carry no implication of nobility and gentry but those arms borne by the nobility and gentry would be recorded as they were used. This announcement was presented as being a fundamental difference between The Baronage Press armorial and that of The Burke's Armorial Register but in reality it was the same animal in a different fur.

Mr. Hogarth, ever adept at noting criticism others have received and adapting his own company policies to suit, went on to announce to the world that his armorial would be charging a fee but said fee would be donated to a charity of his choice. A commendable decision but if this was a change of policy it could only have been done to gain the moral high ground in order to avoid criticism and we have yet to learn which charity is to benefit from the proposed work.

Originally Mr. Hogarth, writing for and on behalf of The Baronage Press promised that his work would appear by the end of February and you will remember that back in January of this year he intended to produce a work full of information "useful to researchers"; an aim very much in line with that of The Armorial Register. However we are sad to report that the work did not appear in February or indeed March and it would now seem that the reason for this second delay is that The Baronage Press has had to review its plans yet again and a decision has finally been made (if indeed this is the final

decision) that the Baronage Armorial will simply show shields recorded against nothing more than a surname.

[Quote]The controversial beginning to the Burke's Peerage International Register of Arms persuaded us to review our plans for the publication online of our own register. Unlike the Burke's Register, ours concentrates on the arms borne by individuals and ignores crests and mottoes and the various additaments responsible for the long arguments the Burke's initiative has prompted. However for the present we have decided either to keep our records private or to publish them eventually annotated only with surnames (as did the original Burke's General Armory). [End Quote]

So - to summarise; The Baronage Press Ltd appears to want people to pay them a fee to send them their arms (which will go to a charity not yet named). These arms won't be published on the internet. Mr. Hogarth will then keep these arms a secret and gather them all together in private. When he (Baronage Press Ltd.) has a sufficient number to allow a book to be published he will strip the arms of their crests and any other additaments until they are down to the basic shield only - then he will delete the first names of the actual armiger and leave the surname only. After he has done that he will publish a surname guide to armorial bearings with no information as to when the arms were granted or assumed and no information as to which person named Smith or Jones the arms belong to. Mr Hogarth will have produced a brand new Bucket Shop Guide to the arms of your surname.

We believe that had Mr. Hogarth, Editor of The Baronage Press stuck to the courage of his convictions he would have produced an armorial of some worth; one which would have been of some value to serious students of heraldry. Somewhere along the line in an effort to avoid the hard work of resisting bogus and difficult applications in the same way that The Armorial Register has done (and continues to do) Mr. Hogarth has reduced his work to one that will be of as much use to serious heraldist as Fairbairn's Crests. We wish Mr. Hogarth and The Baronage Press Ltd better fortune with their Blue Blood Dating Agency – perhaps his Armorial Register was yet another April Fool.