

SAFFRON WALDEN HISTORICAL JOURNAL

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Saffron Walden Borough Arms *Deo Adjuvante Floremus*



The Borough of Saffron Walden Arms are preserved in the arch of the shopping complex in George Street. The late Town Clerk, Mr H. C. (Cliff) Stacey wrote this article about the Borough Arms and the motto, *Deo Adjuvante Floremus*.

In 1784 William Robinson jnr made a drawing of the parish church, engraved by I. Roberts and dedicated to the Mayor, aldermen and Corporation of the Borough of Saffron Walden. In the centre of his dedicatory 'submission', Robinson included the Borough Arms as used then, based on the 1688 seal made after the 1685 Charter. Those arms were unregistered at the College of Arms. The Year Books of 1857 and 1878 both use the 1688, pre-1835 Arms device printing block which had no *Deo Adjuvante Floremus* motto... The supporters of the Arms fixed to the font of Town Hall (presumably in 1879) have the lion dexter and the dragon sinister – in reverse positions to the design on the Great Mace...

Frank Emson, in his *History of Walden* (1904) wrote: 'The expression "Saffron Walden God Help You" may have come from pious expressions of begging friars adrift after the dissolution of Walden Abbey... It is not impossible that the town motto *Deo Adjuvante Floremus* is really the true original of this expression'. The translation 'By God's help we flourish' was simplified by the wags to 'Saffron Walden God Help Yer', a greeting seldom heard now. It used to be said in my young days that when one asked at Liverpool Street for a railway ticket to Walden, the booking clerk would hand it over with the remark 'God Help Yer' – but all in good part... the Mayor's chain was a gift to the Corporation by Ald Joshua Clarke in 1873 ... Ald Clarke would have commissioned someone to design the chain overall... the three saffrons included in the design suggest that Joshua consulted his brother Joseph, FLS ... Joshua Clarke would have to devise his own motto...

Note: see the journal *Saffron Walden History*, Spring 1987, pp 205-7; Autumn 1983, pp 225-9. Copies in Saffron Walden Town Library.