British Triple and Quadruple Crest Livery Buttons

Potential Number and Identification

By David Wilton

Introduction

Among British livery buttons, those with triple and quadruple crests are the most infrequently found. But how scarce are they really? Gwen Squire's book 'Livery Buttons, The Pitt Collection' illustrates around 3000 buttons, only 2 of which are triples (excluding the non-British ones). If this is an accurate representation, triples and quads are extremely scarce.

However, assuming a relationship exists between the number of names used by a family and the number of crests used, the Pitt collection may under-represent the frequency of British livery buttons bearing triple and quadruple crests. The Pitt Collection is largely composed of buttons made pre-1860 and the creation of triple- and quadruple- barreled surnames increased noticeably from the mid nineteenth century. Figure 1 shows those changes of name for which a date can be identified and, as 65% of the identified adoptions of names with more than three barrels occurred after 1860, the proportion of triples and quads in a later sample of buttons would be expected to be around three times that in the Pitt collection.

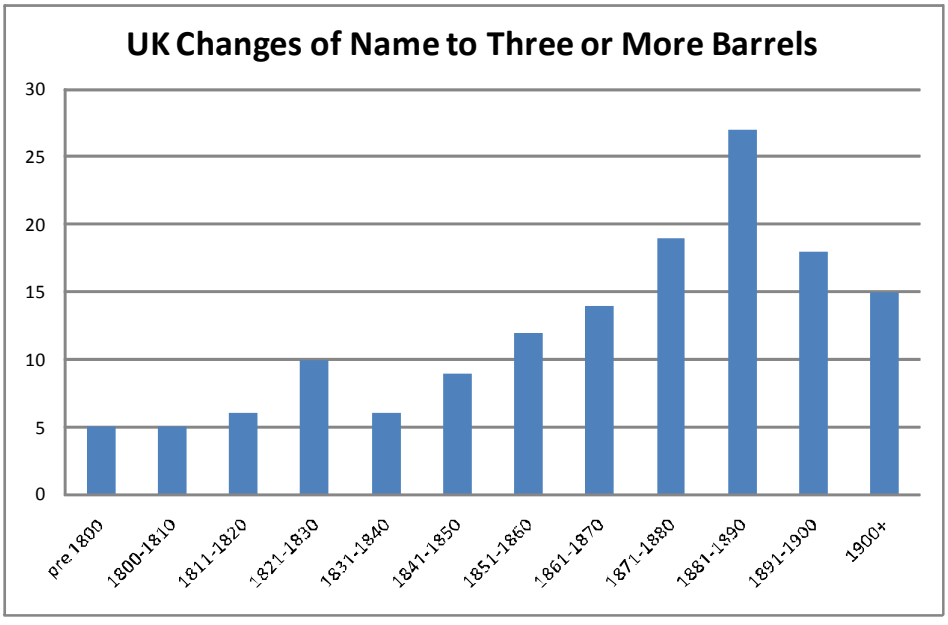


Fig 1

This article looks at two issues: (i) the *potential* number of triples and quads and (ii) the *actual* number of these buttons that can be identified. The conclusions are that (i) the potential number of triple and quadruple livery buttons is surprisingly large compared to the number currently known, possibly 174; (ii)

many of these buttons probably exit, possibly in excess of 100, and are waiting to be discovered and catalogued by collectors; but (iii) it is difficult to find existing examples of triples and quads (I have been able to find only 51) as, in addition to the normal loss over time, it is probable that only a small number of each of these buttons were made.

Method of Research

To estimate the *potential* number of triples and quads I have searched the books referenced in Table 1 to identify British families using or potentially using three or more crests. I do not pretend to be the most patient researcher, so anyone re-reading these sources may well identify potential buttons I have missed.

Source	Use
(1) 'An Index to Changes of Name: Under Authority of Act of Parliament or Royal License, and Including Irregular Changes From 1760 to 1901', Phillimore & Fry 1905.	Through search for all triple and quadruple surnames
(2) Fairbairn's Book of Crests.	Used to search for all names identified through (1). Also searched independently, however this search can be improved upon.
(3) 'Armorial Families' by Fox-Davies 1929 Edition.	Read each entry to identify use of triple and quadruple crests.
(4) Burkes Peerage & Baronetage 1850 Edition.	Looked at all illustrations.
(5) Burkes Peerage & Baronetage 1921 Edition.	Looked at all illustrations.
(6) Burkes Landed Gentry 1939 Edition.	Looked at all illustrations.
(7) Burkes General Armory.	Used to search for names identified through (1) and as an additional source of information to verify use of crests.
(8) Papworth's ordinary of Arms.	Used in the case of Full Armorials to help identify families.
(9) 'Livery Buttons Identification, Classification and Heraldry' Vols 1 and 2 by Tom Skovronsky.	Great illustrations and discussion of many triples and quads.
(10) 'Livery Buttons, The Pitt Collection' by Gwen Squire. Around 3000 buttons illustrated.	Searched illustrations

To find those triple and quad buttons known to exist I asked fellow collectors for assistance and am very grateful to Jan Farrow and Seamus Corballis for their generous help in providing buttons from their collections. I hope that this article will bring forth more examples from collectors (a table describing the triple and quadruple crests and the families they belong to that I have identified to date is with the Button Society and is available on request to help identification of your buttons).

Findings from Research

Table 2 provides the summary of the research to date. The first thing to note is that triples and quads are more common than is suggested by their representation in Squire. I have been able to identify 277 families who might have used three or four crests, of which I can be sure that 174 did use three or four crests. Burkes General Armory lists approximately 57,000 families and individuals entitled to armorial bearings: 174 out of 57,000 is 0.3%, a little over four times the 0.067% in Squire. This suggests that the

increase in the adoption of multiple-barreled names after the mid-1800's noted above did increase the number of multiple crests used by families. However, it is clear that triples and quads still comprise a very small part of the total production of livery buttons.

Table 2	Potential Number of Families With 3+ Crests	Number of Crests Used				Total Potential Buttons	Buttons identified	
		Arms not Identified	< 3	3	4		3 Crests	4 crests
1-2 names	76			71	5	76	16	2
3 names	170	27	69	72	2	74	13	
4 names	20	2	5	5	8	13	1	2
5 names	1				1	1		
Augmentation or office	10			10		10	3	
Unidentified Buttons							**13**	**1**
Total	277	29	74	158	16	174	46	5

Given how many potential triple and quadruple buttons there are, it is surprising how few are known to exist. To date I have only been able to find examples of 51 triple and quadruple buttons, under a third of the potential number. Five of these are quads and 46 are triples; one of the quads and seven of the triples show a full armorial while the majority show crests only (see table 3).

Table 3

Buttons Known to Exist	Crests Alone		Full Armorial		Total
	3	4	3	4	
Identified	27	3	6	1	37
Unidentified	12	1	1	0	14

Most of the buttons for which examples have been found are pictured at the end of the article and the others are referenced to illustrations in Squire or Skovronsky. The Jones-Parry (fig 2) and Borlase-Warren-Venables-Vernon (fig 3) buttons are illustrated as examples of quads with crests only and full armorial respectively.

Fig 2: Jones-Parry

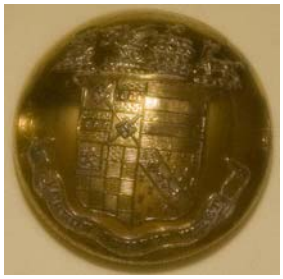


Fig 3: Borlase-Warren-Venables-Vernon

Why the large gap between the number of potential triples and quads and the number of known buttons?

Two factors will have reduced the number triple and quad buttons commissioned by families which used three or four crests

Some families who were entitled to use multiple crests may not have employed liveried footmen and so did not have livery buttons made. However, I do not think this will be a large number. An estimate from 1825 (Adams, The Complete Servant) suggests that households with an annual income of 100 pounds would have one servant and that a household would begin to have liveried servants at an income of 500-600 pounds: cook, housemaid, one other female servant, male Livery servant (groom/footman), occasional gardener. Indicative annual incomes for different middle class occupations in 1827 were barrister/solicitor 522 pounds, clergyman 254 pounds, clerk 240 pounds, engineer 365 pounds (Williamson, The Structure of Pay in Britain, 1982). This suggests that once a household was upper middle class it would employ at least one liveried servant. A family entitled to use three or more crests is very likely to be at least upper middle class – for the generation that established the right to use multiple crests at a minimum – suggesting that most of the 174 families identified as being entitled to use three of more crests would have used liveried servants and have had livery buttons made in at least one generation.

A number of families used fewer crests on their livery buttons than the number to which they were entitled. I cannot quantify how many families this involves, but can provide examples. The Duke of Buckingham and Chandos (Temple-Nugent-Chandos-Brydges-Grenville) used only the garb crest of the Grenvilles (Squire p78 #1), Count de Salis (Fane-de Salis) likewise used only one of the four crests to which he was entitled (Skovronsky v2 p 223) and the Duke of Norfolk (Fitzalan-Howard) (fig 4) used only one of the three to which he was entitled. This may have been a matter of ascetics, or the use of the single crest of the main family (Grenville, de Salis, Howard) may have been thought to be more easily recognizable. The Waldo-Sibthorp family used four crests on one occasion (fig 5) but only two on another (fig 6).

Fig 4: Fitzalan-Howard

Figs 5 & 6: Waldo-Sibthorp

Even after making an allowance for families who never had buttons made and families who did not use their full quota of crests on their buttons, there are probably still well over 100 different designs of triples and quads waiting to be collected. If there are potentially so many different designs, why have so few of them been found?

Problems common to all buttons

Triples and Quads will have been subjected to the same vicissitudes as other livery buttons in terms of loss and destruction. Once livery was no longer used, the buttons may have been thrown out. This will reduce examples of triples and quads as it does examples of all livery buttons. However, beyond normal wear and tear and disposal, I suspect that the scarcity of identified examples may be due to few examples of each triple or quad having been made in the first place.

Two factors limited the number of triple and quad buttons produced for many families

It is probable that one of the reasons examples of triples and quads are so scarce is that in many cases buttons were made for a family in only one generation, rather than in multiples generations and multiple branches of the same family.

An important circumstance that will have contributed to a short production span for buttons bearing some of these multiple crests is the time between the adoption of the name and the cessation of the use of liveried servants. The use of liveried servants declined abruptly post World War I, while around a third of the triple and quadruple barreled names identified were created within the 30 years before this (refer figure 1) and so would not have had time to spread to multiple generations and multiple branches of families. For many of these families, livery buttons would only have been commissioned in one generation.

The apparently small numbers of buttons in any one triple or quad design may also be explained in part by the lack of longevity of the use of multiple crests and multiple-barreled surnames: I suspect that some of these names may have had a relatively short shelf life. Some evidence for this comes from the number of names for which I have been unable to identify arms.

Of the 29 names for which I have been unable to find arms (refer table 2), 18 are known to have changed their name by Royal License. People changed names in several ways – Royal License, Act of Parliament, sign manual, deed poll or advertisement in a national newspaper such as the Times or

Dublin Gazette. Changes by Royal License and Act of Parliament were used by the gentry and those of property which, in the 18th and 19th centuries generally implied possession of a coat of arms. That I have not been able to identify arms for 18 people who most probably possessed them may indicate a short-coming in my research but also, I think, potentially points to the short usage span of some of these names which causes them to appear in reference works for only a short period, if at all.

Further evidence for a short life span for many of these names comes from the number of families which adopted multiple surnames prior to 1860 which are not represented in Fox-Davies Armorial Families in 1929. Only 29% of the families adopting multiple surnames prior to 1860 are reported in Fox-Davies and still using three or more surnames. Most are not reported at all. Several are reported but using only one or two surnames. An example is Timms-Hervey-Elwes.

J Timms changed his name to Timms-Hervey-Elwes by Royal Licence in 1793. In Armorial Families all members of the family are referred to as (Timms-Hervey) Elwes, indicating that while the name has never officially been changed they now use Elwes only.

The absence of so many families suggests that either there were no children, or only daughters, or sons were not as interested in long names and complex heraldry as their fathers. In this case the livery buttons may have been produced only once, rather than on multiple occasions over different generations and multiple branches of a family, and will thus be hard to find: Butler-Clarke-Southwell-Wandesforde (fig 7) is one example.

Fig 7: Butler-Clarke-Southwell-Wandesforde

Butler-Clarke-Southwell-Wandesforde: Charles Harward Butler was the 4th son of the 17th Earl of Ormonde and his wife Lady Francis Wandesforde sole heir of John Earl of Wandesforde by his wife Elizabeth sole heir of John Southwell of Enniscouch. In 1820 he assumed by sign manual the name of Clarke after that of Butler and by Royal License in 1830 the names of Southwell and Wandesforde to become Butler-Clarke-Southwell-Wandesforde (fig 7). He died in 1860, his two sons having pre-deceased him and his only grandson died unmarried in 1881. One of his daughters added Wandesforde to her husband's name to become Prior-Wandesforde.

Background on the use of triple and quadruple crests – how do they come about?

One thing that strikes me on looking at Table 2 is that the assumption of a strong relationship between tripe- and quadruple- barreled surnames and the use of three and four crests is only partly justified. Of the 174 families definitely using three or four crests, roughly half use three or four surnames and half

only one or two surnames. Conversely, 69 families using three names and five using four names used only one or two crests.

The less than perfect relationship between use of surnames and use of crests is not accounted for by the use of crests of office or honorable augmentation which would boost the number of crests used independent of the number of names. Such crests are uncommon – only ten families in the sample were entitled to use such crests. Within the class of triples and quads, these are the buttons I personally find most interesting. Two such buttons are illustrated, Dymoke (fig 8) and Gough (fig 9).

Fig 8: Dymoke

Fig 9: Gough

The family of Dymoke of Scrivelsby holds the position of Hereditary Royal Champion. Of the three crests used, the Lion and the Sword are Crests of Office used by the head of the family in his Office as Champion.

The two Gough crests with coronets and flags are crests of honorable augmentation granted to Hugh Gough, 1st Viscount Gough for (i) his conduct in the Peninsula War against Napoleon and (ii) for his capture of the Canton forts as commander of the British forces in China during the Opium War.

The reason for the less than perfect match between the number of names and the number of crests used appears to be related to a mix of personal choice and terms of inheritance. Three examples are Bruce-Pryce (fig 10), Athorpe (fig 11) and Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound.

Fig 10: Bruce-Pryce

Fig 11: Athorpe

Bruce-Pryce: John Knight (d 1799) married Margaret Bruce daughter of William Bruce RN. Their son John Bruce Knight assumed the name of Bruce after succeeding to his uncle's property in 1805 and the name of Pryce after Bruce (Bruce-Pryce) in 1837 on succeeding to the property of his cousin. The three crests used are 1st Pryce, a paschal lamb, 2nd Bruce a dexter arm in armor in bend grasping a scepter and 3rd Knight on a spur fesswise an eagle rising.

Athorpe: John Carver Athorpe (d 1848) elder son of Marmaduke Middleton Middleton by his wife Mary Ann daughter of Robert Athorpe Athorpe assumed upon attaining his majority the name and arms of Athorpe by Royal License in 1821 in pursuance of the will of his uncle Thomas Athorpe. Crests: 1st Athorpe a falcon belled the dexter claw resting on an escutcheon, 2nd Middleton an eagles head, 3rd Carver on a mount a cross cluchee charged with a fleur-de-lis.

Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound: Gilbert Elliot 1st Earl of Minto added assumed by Royal License 1797 the additional names of Murray-Kynynmound. His father Sir Gilbert Elliot 3rd Bt married Agnes daughter and heir of Hugh Dalrymple-Murray-Kynynmound to whose estates she succeeded. Only the Elliot crest is used – am arm embowed issuant from clouds throwing a dart.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Jan Farrow and Seamus Corballis for very generously sharing their collections and providing pictures, encouragement and editorial advice. I would also like to thank Lew and Gary Shotton for kindly sharing pictures of triple and quadruple crest buttons from the Gaunt stock books.

ANNEX: Pictures of Buttons

(A) Identified Buttons

Viscount Holmsdale, courtesy title of eldest son of Earl Amhurst

Fane-Benett-Stanford

Alcock-Stawell-Riversdale

Bruce-Pryce

Knight-Bruce

Clifford-Constable

Nisbet-Hamilton-Ogilvy

Tapps-Gervis-Meyrick Bt

Lloyd

Waldo-Sibthorp

Clay-Ker-Seymer

Vane-Tempest-Stewart

Marquis of Londonderry

Athorpe

Milborne-Swinnerton-Pilkington Bt

Montagu-Douglas-Scott

family of Lord Montagu

Harris-Arundel

Stuart-Wortley-Mackenzie

Lord Wharncliffe

Heathcote-Drummond-Willoughby

Earl of Ancaster

Gough (2 honorable augmentation)

Dymoke, Royal Champion

(2 crests of office)

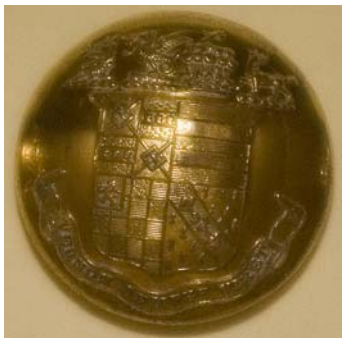
Ward-Boughton-Leigh

Jodrell Bt

Jodrell

Gordon-Cuming-Skene

Butler-Clarke-Southwell-Wandesford



Borlase-Warren-Venables-Vernon

Jones-Parry

Lyon of Auldbar (1st Lyon, 2nd & 3rd Ochterlony, center is hon augmentaton)

Lyttleton-Annesley

Heathcote-Drummond-Willoughby family of Earl of Ancaster

Porter

Rothschild

Montagu-Stuart-Wortley-Mackenzie

Earl of Wharncliffe

Monteath-Douglas

Harpur-Crew

Mainwaring-Elleker-Onslow

(B) Unidentified Buttons




3rd is Hudson?



1st is Compton? Kemp?



Globe is Drake Aikman?

Lawson, possibly of Brough Hall