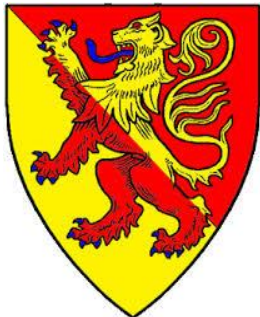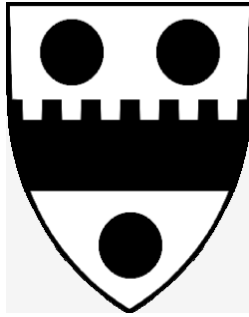**MHS Heraldry Group**

Blazoning – Unit 10
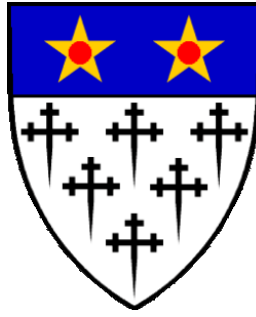
PRACTICE EXERCISE
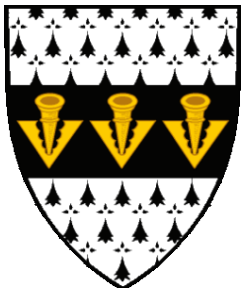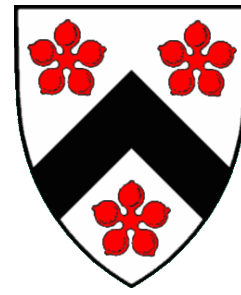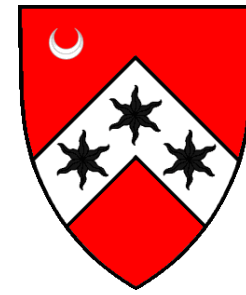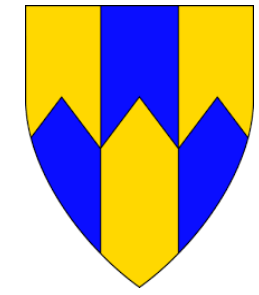

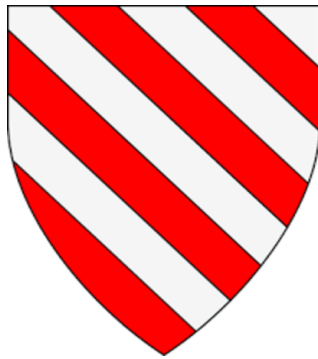**MORE-COMPLICATED PARTITIONS OF THE FIELD**

Repeated Ordinaries

We are familiar with blazons such as *Azure three pallets or*. That has a field *azure* with three vertical small pales *or* placed on it. Sometimes, but not always, the division of the field is very regular, and the field will appear to have been split into 7 equal vertical slices. A field *azure* that is cut equally into 5, 7, 9 or any **odd** number of vertical slices *or*, will be blazoned as *Azure two, three, four etc. pallets or.* In this situation the dexter and sinister slices will be of the same tincture.

But what if the field is split into an **even** number of vertical slices? In this case the tincture of the dexter and sinister slices is different. It is impossible to assign a single tincture to the field and imagine pallets, placed on it. So we say **that the field itself is partitioned** by vertical lines. A field sliced vertically in this way is called **paly** and it is blazoned as *Paly azure and or* if the dexter slice is *azure*.

The same approach is taken when the field is partitioned using the shapes of other ordinaries like bars (barry), bends (bendy), chevron (chevronny), lozenges (lozengy) etc. In the case of paly, barry, and bendy, particularly, it is common to state the number of slices, as shown below. As usual, when deciding which tincture to state first, one gives precedence to the upper one or, if not relevant, to that on the dexter side, but there are many cases where it is not possible to choose on that basis, so it is acceptable to use any order.

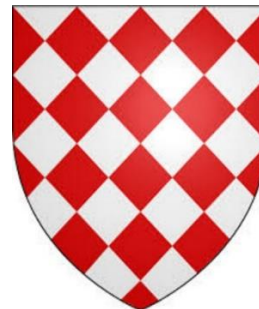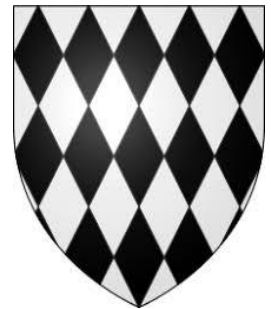| Paly of six argent and gules	Bendy of eight argent and gules	Bendy-sinister of six azure and or

Barry (of twelve) argent and azure	Chevronny azure and argent	Lozengy argent and gules	Fusily argent and sable

If the number of slices is large, however, and/or you suspect that it could be variable and unimportant, one might not state the number of slices. There are not many bars, for instance, on the Mortimer shield, so they can be easily counted, but the number varies in different examples of the shield. These days a Mortimer coat of arms is usually blazoned exactly, but the number of bars was frequently not counted in the early heraldic rolls, which just tended to say *barry azure and or*. So it is impossible to answer the question 'What is the correct Mortimer arms'.

Ignoring the chief and the escutcheon these two Mortimer shields would be blazoned as follows:

Left - azure three bars or
Right - barry of six or and azure

So the number of bars is clearly not significant.

Important

These repetitive patterns can be applied to charges as well as to the field as a whole. So you may come across a *lion paly* or a *lozenge barry*. A good example occurs in the coat of arms of Cust, baron Brownlow. Their arms include three *heraldic fountains* as below.

Ermine on a chevron sable
three fountains proper
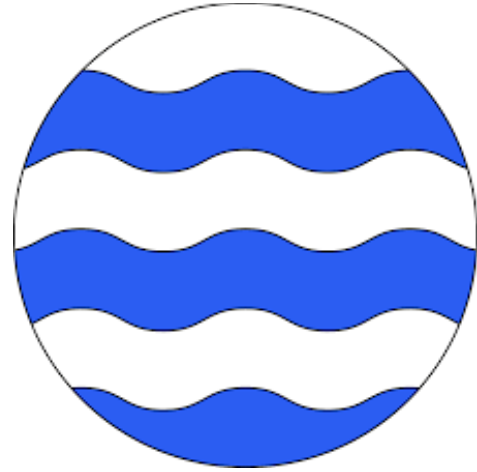
A fountain -a roundel barry wavy
argent and azure

Chequy or Checky

A checker pattern is called chequy or, anglicised, checky. When blazoning, the first tincture to mention is that in the dexter chief, but there are occasions when that is difficult to determine, in which case have a guess!

Checked patterns occur quite frequently on charges and it is not necessary to state the number of 'rows' or 'columns' of the individual squares, except in two cases. If the pattern is of a single line of squares, the design is **compony** sometimes called gobony. If the pattern has two rows of squares the design is **counter-compony**
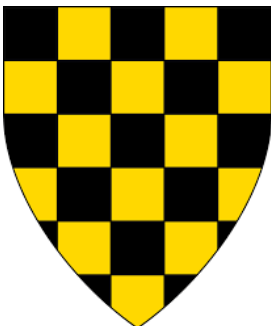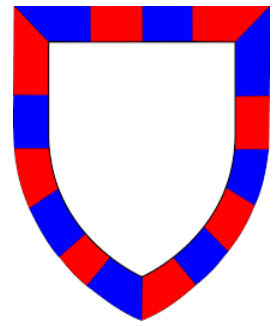

Checky sable and
or
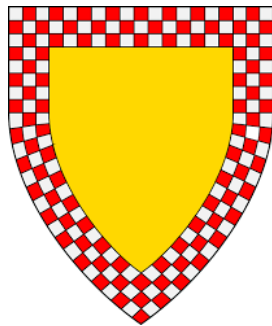


Or a bordure
checky argent and
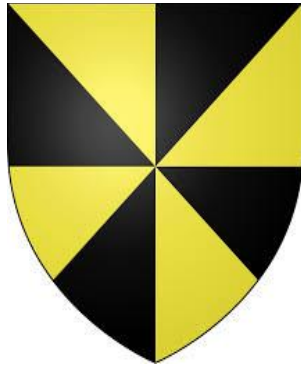gules
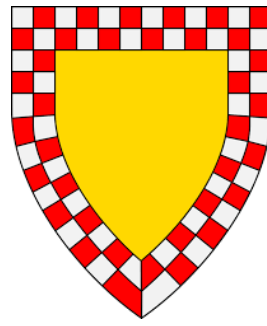
Or a bordure
counter-compony
argent and gules

Argent a bordure
compony azure and
gules

Gyronny

We've met the gyron as a charge, most notably at the corners of the chief in a Mortimer coat of arms. This shape is the basis for an unusual partitioning of the field. By default the field is split into 8 pieces. The most famous example of a field *gyronny* is the coat of arms of the Campbells, in evidence on many Scottish shields. There can be slight variations of the positioning of the radial lines, but this doesn't seem to affect the blazon.
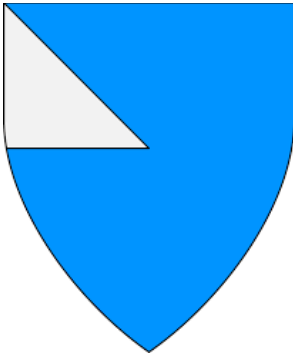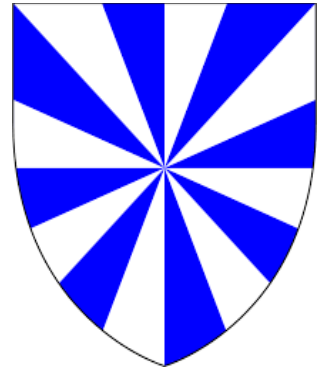
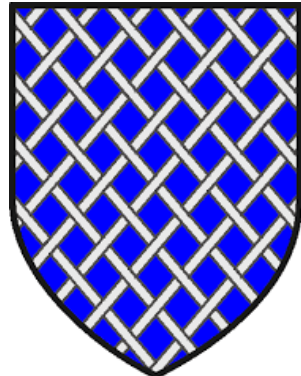| Azure a gyron argent | Gyronny or and sable (Campbell) | Gyronny gules and argent (different design) | Gyronny of 16 argent and azure |

Fretty

It's difficult to classify this pattern as it doesn't fit easily into this unit or the next, which is about powdered fields.
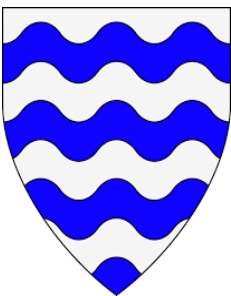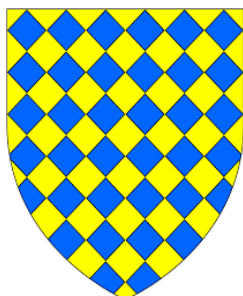

Gules a fret or   Azure fretty argent

EXERCISE 2 – BASED ON THE NEW WORK
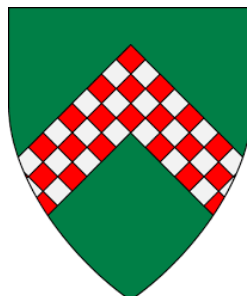
But beware, there's an imposter; one of these coats of arms is not a partitioned field. Can you find it?
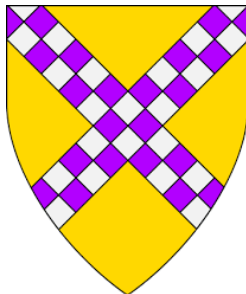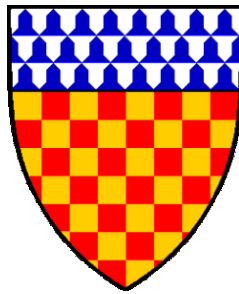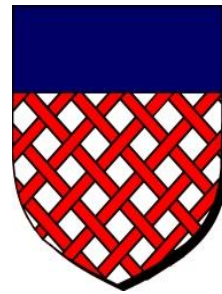

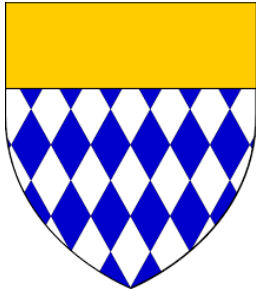1   2   3   4   5

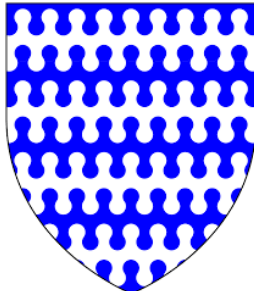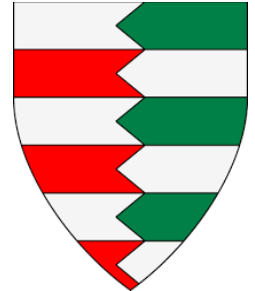**6** **7** **8** **9** **10**

11 **12** **13** **14** **15**

It's a cow!

ANSWERS

Exercise 1

1. Per bend gules and or a lion rampant counterchanged
2. Argent a fess embattled between 3 roundels sable
3. Argent six crosses crosslet fitchy sable 3, 2 & 1, on a chief azure two mullets or pierced gules
4. Argent two bendlets wavy sable, on a chief gules three bezants
5. Or a chevron between three roundels azure, a bordure engrailed vert
6. Ermine on a fess sable three pheons or
7. Sable a lion rampant argent overall a bend(let) gules
8. Argent a chevron sable between three cinquefoils gules
9. Gules on a chevron argent three estoiles sable, in dexter chief a crescent argent
10. Per fess dancetty or and azure a pale counterchanged

Exercise 2

1. Barry wavy argent and azure
2. Lozengy or and azure
3. Vert a chevron checky gules and argent
4. Gyronny or and azure
5. Sable a bend compony argent and gules

6. Paly of six azure and or a bend of the first

7. Or a saltire counter-compony argent and purpure

8. Checky or and gules a chief vair

9. Argent fretty gules a chief sable

10. Paly of six or and sable a bend counterchanged

11. Fusily argent and azure a chief or

12. Azure four bars nebuly argent

13. Chevronny sable and or a cow checky gules and argent

14. Per bend sable and bendy-sinister gules and argent

15. Per pale indented barry of six argent and gules and barry of six vert and argent