

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



WHAT IS THE STAFFORD KNOT?

The origin of the Stafford Knot is a distinctive three-looped knot that is the tradition symbol of the English county of Staffordshire and of its county town Stafford.

Although not heraldic in its own right, the Stafford Knot is an ancient symbol that is steeped in history.

The earliest recording of the Stafford Knot is the shaft of a stone cross located in Stoke-on-Trent churchyard. The cross itself is traceable to between 750 and 850 AD. However, the knot device could have been added at a later date.

There is a seal existing in the British Museum London which was the property of Lady Joan Stafford (later Lady Wake). It would seem that Lady Wake used on her seal a border made up from her husband's badge, the Wake Knot, made up from the initials W and O (for Wake and Ormond) intertwined. The seal quite clearly depicts a cordon of four knots in the shape of the Stafford Knot.

The knot was passed down through the Earl's family, and it was gradually used by the citizens and freemen of Stafford, until it was eventually included in the Stafford Borough Coat of Arms. It is incorporated into the badges and symbols of many organizations and companies, viz., Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Fire Service, Staffordshire Ambulance Service.

A popular romantic notion of the Stafford Knot is that it was used in barbaric times by a Stafford County Sheriff who invented it to hang three criminals at the same time, but the evidence above clearly contradicts this idea.

The motto of the arms of the County of Stafford is "The Knot Unites".