Description of my Heraldic Display

My version of a livery hat with a badge

This heraldic display is a livery hat with badge, as would be worn by one of my retainers during the late 16th C in England. The hat is a round tip, pleated wool with an embroidered heraldic badge. The livery colors of my household are green and gold thus the use of a green hat with gold accents.

Janet Arnold - Patterns of Fashion p.34

Pictured on the left is a wonderful example of a livery hat with a badge. The hat is dated 1600-10. While this particular example is made of leather, it was one of the inspirations for my heraldic display.

I used a contemporaneous brim shape. The pleated fabric over a round tipped foundation was a very popular shape in England although one can see examples in Germany, France and occasionally in Spain.

Brim shape sample
Elizabeth Knowsly

Origins and spread of the style

Heraldry was and is used in may ways to signify a person, a household, or even a country or region. Starting in about the 10th century, one begins to see some heraldic displays on military items such as shields, banners, and tabards. It is suggested that formal heraldry didn't really exist until the mid 12th C. It is believed to have formally originated in 12th Century Plantagent Anjou and Maine in France *(Gwynn-Jones & Paston-Bedingfeld p.10).*

 While most people are familiar with the heraldic displays of personal arms, there is another type of display that was used - these were called badges.

A Badge is defined as:
> "An heraldic device not associated with arms, crest or supporters, which an armiger may allow to be used by a stranger in blood, employee etc."
> *(Gwynn-Jones & Paston-Bedingfeld p.154)*

Badges can be displayed in a number of ways, the most common being embroidery or jewelry on clothing; painting, markings, etching, etc. on objects; and on standards. Some badges have fields associated with them. More

commonly they are fieldless. That is to say, independent of the background so that they can be embroidered, or made into pendants.

> "Badges and supporters proliferated in the 15th C yet documentary letters Patent issued by the King of Arms granting them seem non-existent. The power to grant and confirm all armorial bearings had been vested in the Kings of Arms since the early 15th C when this could have been interpreted as applying only to shields of arms. Badges and supporters were therefore not considered to come under royal jurisdiction… Another reason for the lack of documentary evidence may have been that it was only the upper echelons of armigerous society who assumed badges and supporters; and whose gentility was never in doubt and who required no authority to prove their social status." *(Gwynn-Jones & Paston-Bedingfeld p.63)*

Badges are used to basically mark items as well as people as "mine!" Whether that be an item, a house, or a person. Badges can be seen on everything from wall paper to carvings on furniture to embroidered onto clothing - badges seem to be everywhere once you look for them.

Livery in the late 16th C would have included hats in England, as everyone over the age of 13 was required to wear a hat. (*Tudor Royal Proclamation*)

Badges as well as livery are still used today throughout Europe. Perhaps the most famous livery is that of the Yeomen Warders at the Tower of London.

An SCA interpretation

My heraldic display is a livery hat of the type that would have been used by someone with rather high armigerous standing in an English community. It is designed to represent a late 16th C noble's household retainer.

1. It is made of wool so that it meets the required use of a wool hat on Sunday and I would not need to supply my retainers with more than one hat.
2. It is done using a very popular English hat shape; namely that of a tall rounded tip with pleated fabric over the top.
3. It uses silk dupioni, which while the lowest grade of silk one could use, would still only be used for retainers of a wealthy household.

I chose to use my personal badge, which has been passed by the SCA College of Herolds and is blazoned:

[Fieldless] A rabbit statant vert bezanty.

Components of Heraldic Display

The Heraldic Badge for Livery Hat:

	Period Materials	My variation
Floss	Silk or wool	silk
Stitch	Tent (aka step)	same
Ground material	linen	same
Beads/spangles	Metals such as gold or silver	Gold tone beads

My badge is stitched with Gloriana Silk floss using a tent stitch on linen. I chose to use the Gloriana silks, as they are hand-dyed and thus create a wonderful variegation in color. As I was planning to do the background in gold, it seemed like a good choice.

I used a tent stitch, as it seems a very popular stitch when creating household goods that one wanted to last for some time. "Elizabethan Treasures The Hardwick Hall Textiles" p 19 shows a series of badges done in silk and wool on linen, all using the tent stitch and dated 1573.
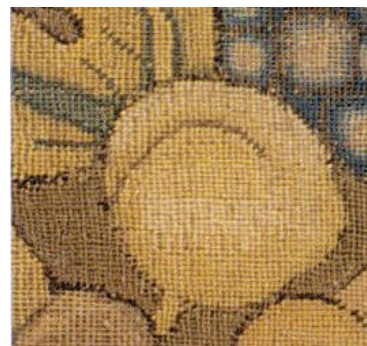
Tent-stitch sample 1573

I tried to create what I thought was a realistically shaped rabbit so that one could tell from a fair distance what the badge depicts. While my badge is "fieldless" The rabbit really needed some color around it so that it popped out more effectively. As gold (yellow) is also one of my household colors, it seemed a natural choice. I didn't want to use a laid gold or anything with intrinsic value as my retainer may decide to try and sell it and run off! Additionally, in Elizabeth's

England, those under the rank of knight or anyone with less than 5 pounds per annum could not use gold upon their caps or hats (*Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640*).

When it came time for the gold bezants, I wanted a more 3D look and chose to use gold tone beads. Since the rabbit was so small, I used very few beads.

Livery Hat

The following table compares some of the differences between how a Round-Tipped Pleated Tall hat was likely constructed and some of the modern changes I made to make my hat a little more wearable.

	Period materials/Techniques	My Variations
Fabric	Wool, silk, leather	Same - wool
Thread	Silk or wool threads	Cotton thread
Foundation materials	Hairy felt, felt and paper combined with glue sizing.	Tip: molded wool Brim: 2 ply buckram
Backing	Linen	same
Lining of hat	Silk	same
Interior of hat	Hairy wadding	Cotton wadding (French fleece)
Finishing touches	Flourish: of wool, silk, leather	Same - silk
Edging	Gimp: silk, wool, metal	Gimp - cotton/poly

The round tip is made of 100% wool felt, which has been steamed, starched and molded over a hat block. The lower edge has been wired with #9 hat wire for added durability. The brim is made of 2-ply buckram with a wired outer edge.

From Janet Arnold Patterns of Fashion… p33

The edging is made of cotton/poly gimp. Gimp was a very popular material for edging hats, as it is flexible while maintaining its pattern.

As this is a livery hat to be worn by those in service to my household, the brim is finished using gimp rather than a hidden edge. This not only adds more household color but also is a little cheaper. While still hand sewn, one need not be as careful as with a hidden edge.

I also decided to use gimp for the hatband as it helped maintain my preferred color scheme. Note the picture to the right, the hatband of this hat is made of gimp and is dated 1575-1600

I added a silk rosette around the embroidered badge. This makes it more distinctive, easier to see, and more aesthetically pleasing.

From Janet Arnold Patterns of Fashion…p 33

Tools and Materials for Heraldic Display

1. Fabric: 1 yard 100% wool
2. Round tip hat block (you may be able to rent on locally. In the bay area, Lacis in Berkeley will rent for about 7$ /week.)
3. 1/4 yard 100% wool felt
4. 2 cups of liquid starch
5. Large wash tub or sink
6. Thread: Use a good quality thread - silk is best if you can find it, a cotton thread will work too.
7. Millinery needles #14 #16
8. 1/4 yard of 2 ply buckram
9. Millinery wire #8 or #9
10. Cotton wadding or French fleece
11. Chalk or tracing paper
12. Manila paper for pattern
13. 1/4 yard silk dupioni
14. 1 yard of cotton gimp

Construction process

The badge:

I decided that an embroidered badge would be appropriate for a wool English livery hat. I wanted to use a stitch that reflected the time period pretty well and upon further research, discovered the tent stitch which seems to have been used quite extensively in home furnishings, slips, sweets bags and other items.

1. Used Gloriana silk thread as previously discussed.
2. Cut out the badge with an additional 1/2 inch of linen all the way around. I stitched a running/gathering stitch around the raw edge.
3. Put the embroidered badge on a circle of buckram with a small amount of cotton wadding behind it for a little more body.
4. Pull the edge stitches until it is gathered onto the buckram
5. Secure with small stitches

Adding the rosette
1. Cut a 1.5 inch strip of silk
2. Fold it in half and press
3. Stitch a running/gathering stitch around the raw edges
4. Pull stitches and a circle will develop
5. Secure with small stitches

Materials for constructing a round tipped pleated hat:

- Fabric: 1 yard 100% wool
- Round tip hat block (you may be able to rent on locally. In the bay area, Lacis in Berkeley will rent for about 7$ /week.)
- 1/4 yard 100% wool felt
- 2 cups of liquid starch
- Large wash tub or sink
- Thread: Use a good quality thread - silk is best if you can find it, a cotton thread will work too.
- Millinery needles #14 #16
- 1/4 yard of 2 ply buckram
- Millinery wire #18 or #19
- Cotton wadding or French fleece
- Chalk or tracing paper
- Manila paper for pattern
- 1/4 yard silk dupioni
- 1 yard of cotton gimp

Construction the rounded tip:

1. Soak the wool felt in hot water. Gently massage the felt until it is completely soaked. Squishing the fabric is OK, but do not wring it.
     Tip - I find it useful to wear rubber gloves for this process as it allows me to work in hotter water.
2. Once the felt is well soaked, remove it from the water and add 2 cups liquid starch to your water. Put the felt back into the hot water and continue to massage it until starch seems worked through the felt.
3. Squish excess water from felt and place over round tip hat block, press into shape.
4. Use a string or large rubber band to secure the felt at the bottom of the hat block
5. Put about 1 cup of undiluted liquid starch into a spray bottle. Once you have your felt stretched and secured onto the hat block, spray liberally with starch.
     Tip - I find it useful to gently massage the starch into the fibers. Begin at the tip and work you way down.
6. Let dry completely. Usually a couple of days will do it.
7. Once dry, add millinery wire around the base of the stock.

Adding the pleated fabric to your rounded tip:

1. Add French fleece or cotton wadding to the tip and down the stock of the hat. Secure with a large stab stitch randomly around the tip and stock.
2. Cut the wool into a circle that fits over the top of the tip and reaches to the bottom of the stock with about 1/4 inch to spare.

3. Mark the center of your circle.
4. Using a long ruler and chalk, mark long lines which transverse the center point in pie-like lines such that there is about 1/2 inch between lines at the edge of the fabric.
5. Using a hearty thread, stitch a guideline through your lines about 4" from center and 6" from center. Use thread which is the same color as your hat as these threads will remain visible on the outside of your hat.
6. Place the circle over your hat blank and pull the threads to make small pleats.
7. Arrange your pleats evenly around your hat
8. Turn the fabric under the edge of the stock, and stitch using a stab stitch.

The Brim - making a brim pattern

1. Measure your head 2 inches above your ear and add 1/2 inch. This will be your head plate size
2. Add 1/4 inch in from your head plate, this will be where you cut the buckram for the brim. The extra 1/4 inch will be used as tabs inside the hat where you will join the stock and the brim.
3. Add 2-2.5 inches from the actual headplate line, this will by the brim of your hat. If you want a point in the front, simply add it at this time.

Using the brim pattern

1. Using the above pattern cut 2 brims from 2-ply buckram, one on the bias and one with the grain.
2. Steam the two pieces together (it is rather like basting them together)
3. Add millinery wire to the edge of the 2 pieces of buckram.
4. Add 1/4 inch to your brim pattern and use it to cut out 2 pieces of your fashion fabric
5. Add French fleece or cotton wadding to the top of the brim - secure with large stab stitches
6. Place fabric on brim, pin securely
7. Turn each edge and sew using invisible stitches.
8. Using chalk or a marking pencil, mark your head plate.
9. Mark in 1/2 inch and draw another line, Cut the head hole along the inside line
10. Cut easing tabs out to the original headplate line
11. fold tabs (fabric and buckram) up
12. Place stock on brim and sew through stock and tabs.

Adding a lining

I like to use silk dupioni for lining as it has enough body to stay up in a hat and not become floppy over time. You may wish to add a sweatband inside the hat for comfort and to finish the look.

1. Cut a circle the same size as your outside fabric, of lining fabric.
2. Sew large darts from the raw edge to 3 inches from the center - you'll need about 8-10 darts
3. Sew inside your hat folding under raw edges and securing with a short stab stitch.

Construction Tips:

♦ When buying buckram, make sure you get "2 ply buckram" I like to get my supplies from California Millinery in Los Angeles.
> 721 South Spring St
> Los Angeles, CA 90014
> 213.622.8746

♦ Be patient when pleating, they have to be small pleats or it won't work
♦ I like to use a steamer when steaming pleats rather than an iron that can flatten your pleats and silk pile.
♦ In order to get a good head plate shape; you might find it useful to invest in an "architect curve". It lets you measure around odd shapes and retains the shape so you can trace it. This allows you to have an exact head plate. If you don't have a curve, feel free to use the plates at the end of this paper.

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