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The Arms of the Family of Adair

The arms as engraved upon this George II English Sterling Silver Coffee Pot by an unidentified silversmith hallmarked London 1743 are those of the family of Adair. They may be blazoned as follows:

Arms: **Quarterly of Six 1st Per bend or and argent three dexter hands coupéd and erect gules¹ (for Adair) 2nd Ermine on a canton sable a crescent argent² (for Strode) 3rd Gules on a bend argent three mullets gules (for Shafto) 4th Gules three herons close argent (for Heron) 5th Per fess gules and argent six martlets counterchanged (for Fenwick) and 6th Azure a bend between two swans argent (for Jenison)**

Crest: **A man's head affronty coupéd at the neck proper (for Adair)**

Motto: **Loyal au mort [Loyal to death]**

- 1) The engraver appears to have reversed the field of the first quarter and placed the hands in bend rather than placing them as normal in the arms of Adair, two and one.
- 2) The second quartering appears to be in the wrong place. As quarterings are invariably marshalled in chronological order; this quartering should have placed as the sixth

quarter. Perhaps there was a conscious decision to place it there for family reasons?

Although this piece dates from 1743, the scheme of quarterings engraved thereon date from 1810 or shortly thereafter some seventy years after the coffee pot left the workshop of the at present unidentified London silversmith. The engraving of these arms must date after the marriage of Robert Shafto Adair (born 26th June 1786 died 24th February 1869) and Elizabeth Maria Strode (died 1st September 1853) that took place on the 17th September 1810. Elizabeth was the daughter of the Reverend James Strode. Ordinarily the Strode quartering would have been added to the Adair scheme of quarterings by the children of Robert and Elizabeth after Elizabeth's death in 1853, although it is not confirmed that Elizabeth was indeed her father's heraldic heiress. The engraving is certainly very much earlier stylistically than the death of Elizabeth in 1853 and probably, it was caused to be engraved upon the coffee pot shortly after their marriage. At the present distance in time it may be assumed that this where the anomaly of placing Elizabeth's arms in the scheme of quartering and its misplacement crept in. Sadly, not all families who bore arms were in any way knowledgeable in heraldic practices, very often they did what suited them at the time. Again, it may be imagined that the coffee pot was either in the possession of the Adair or the Strodes at the time of Robert and Elizabeth's marriage or it was given as a wedding present to the couple or, indeed, purchased by the couple themselves. However, it came into their possession and it may very well have been part of a larger suite of silver.



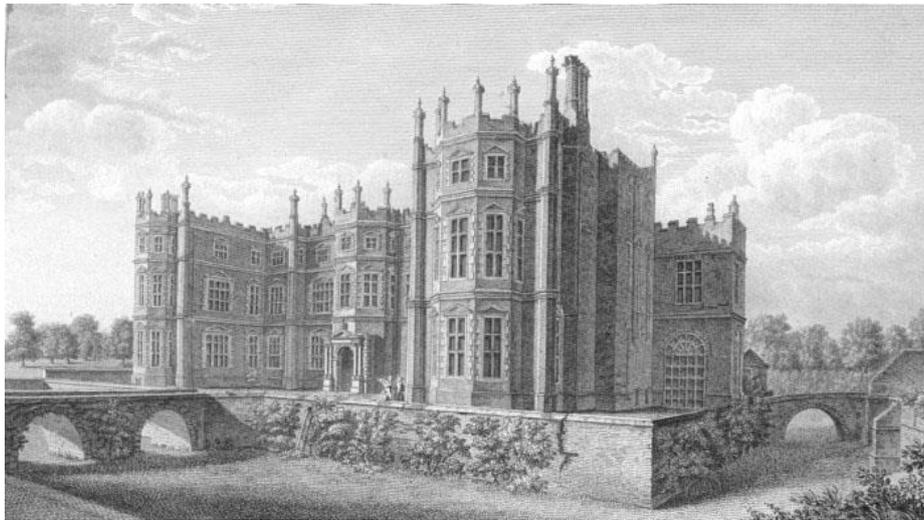
Robert Shafto Adair was the eldest son of William Adair, of Ballymena Castle in the County of Antrim, of Flixton Hall in the County of Suffolk and of Colehouse in the County of Devon and his wife, Camilla Shafto, daughter and heiress of Robert Shafto, of Benwell in the County of Northumberland. Robert was created a Baronet of the United Kingdom on the 2nd August 1838. Robert and Elizabeth's eldest son, Robert Alexander Shafto Adair inherited his father's baronetcy and was himself created Baron Waveney, of South Elmham in the County of

Suffolk in the Peerage of the United Kingdom on the 10th April 1873. On his death on the 5th February 1886, his peerage fell into extinction for want of a male heir and the family's baronetcy was inherited by his brother, Hugh Edward Adair as the 3rd Baronet.

After Elizabeth's death in 1853, Sir Robert married for a second time on the 3rd October 1854, Jane Anne Clarkson (died 18th March 1873) daughter of the Reverend Townley Clarkson, Vicar of Hinxton in the County of Cambridgeshire.



Ballymena Castle, Co. Antrim. Demolished in 1957.



Flixton Hall, near Bungay, Co. Suffolk.

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