

## Tapestry of the coat of arms of the Bicknell family c.1900-5 by Miss Leoline Bicknell (1866-1951). FOR SALE

This extraordinary historic, heraldic and decorative tapestry could be yours. It was made by Leoline Sidney Bicknell, granddaughter of Elhanan Bicknell, whale oil magnate and patron of artists including Turner.

Leoline's father Sidney Algernon Bicknell (1832-1911), one of the most ardent genealogists the Bicknell family has ever experienced, created a new coat of arms for the Bicknell family and had them authorised by the College of Arms of England<sup>1</sup>. "*Arms granted to A. Sydney Bicknell, 17 May, 1894, registered at the College of Arms: Or, on a mount vert, a beacon fired proper, a chief sat thereon a cross flory, between two porcupines respecting each other of the first. Mantling: Vert and or. Crest: On a wreath of the colours, or and gules, a dragon couchant regardant, wings expanded, gorged with collar, or, holding in the dexter claw a cross as in the arms. Motto: Surge Biconyll*".

He had imagined this new motto for the family, "Surge Biconyll". The word "Surge" is a little joke (the Victorians loved a joke) because for at least five centuries, the Bicknell family cultivated and marketed serge<sup>2</sup>, the everyday fabric made essentially from wool. "Surge" is also a word for moving suddenly and powerfully forward upward as in an army surging to victory or a family surging to multitudinous successes.

Leoline Bicknell, listed in the Post Office London Directory of 1900 as a professional embroiderer living at 26 Fulham Road, was in her late 30s when she set to work on a craftwork of brilliant excellence, probably to her father's bidding. 120 years later, the colours of the threads are crystal clear and the gold filigree twinkles in the light. She adorned the surround with flowers of the valley, tendrils, peacocks and parakeets. The tapestry is today beautifully framed in the original hardwood and glass. The exterior frame dimensions are 920 x 1280 mm (3 foot 1 inch by 4 foot 2 inches) while the interior of the frame – the approx. size of the tapestry – is 760 x 1140 mm.



<sup>1</sup> The granting of armorial bearings (coats of arms) within the United Kingdom is the sole prerogative of the British monarch. However, the monarch has delegated this power to two authorities: the Lord Lyon, with jurisdiction over Scotland, and the College of Arms, over England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> Serge is a type of twill cloth that has diagonal lines or ridges on both sides. It is woven using a two-up, two-down construction. Serge is often used for military uniforms and to make clothes such as skirts, coats, and pants. The word "serge" comes from the Latin word serica, which means "silk" but Serge, originally made from wool or worsted, has no silk in it. Worsteds fabric is a thin wool fabric that can be woven in a twill or plain weave. It's often used for men's summer suits and is known for being resilient and returning to its natural shape.



At this time Hannah, Brigitte and Edward the children of John and Theresa Bicknell of Goring wish to find a good home for the tapestry. It has been offered to the Victoria and Albert Museum where many such Victoria creations are stored and sometimes displayed, but it might be that a Bicknell family member would prefer it in their home or in a museum – the tapestry can be shipped anywhere in the world.

Initial expertise values the embroidery at between £8,000 and £10,000 (say \$10-12,000 US Dollars), but the siblings would be happy to see lower offers. It is likely that half of the proceeds could go to the charity of your choice .



Arms granted 1894

Tapestry embroidered by: Miss Leoline S Bicknell (1866-1951), unmarried daughter of Sidney

Date: After 1894 (arms registered), probably before 1911 (death of Sidney Bicknell)

Size: exterior of frame 920x1280 mm, interior of frame, approx. size of tapestry 760x1140 mm

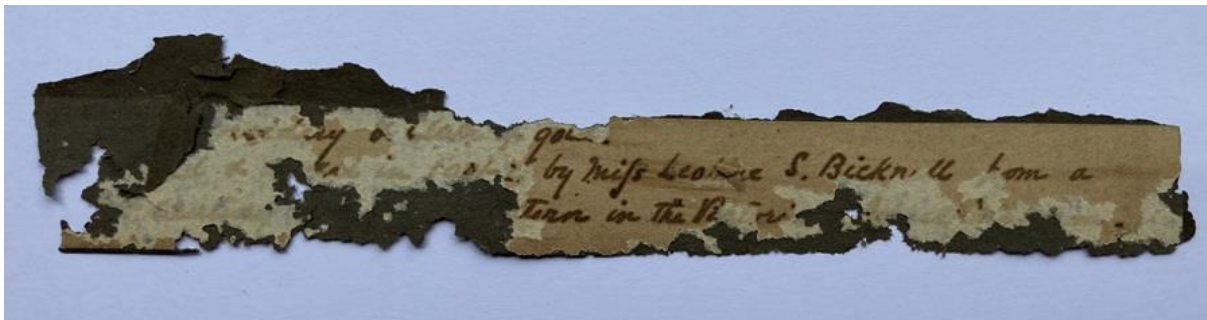
Frames in wood 80mm wide of which interior 10mm is gilded

Condition: very good. Tapestry has not been removed from frame in living memory.

Caption: A slip of paper (image below) was stuck to the back of the frame but has deteriorated. Possible interpretation by Marcus Bicknell September 2024...

Embroidery of a Coat of Arms \*\*\* \*\*\* ade xxx by Miss Leoline S. Bicknell from a painting XXX XXX presentation in the Victoria & Albert Museum

Provenance: the tapestry has been in the Bicknell family since its creation, handed down through the generations to the later John Bicknell of Goring.



Details compiled by Marcus Bicknell for Bridget Bicknell Munday, 9 September 2024  
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