

Dr Joe Morrow – in New York to promote Scotland

Dr Joe Morrow is the Lord Lyon King of Arms, and he is in New York for Tartan Week, “promoting Scotland”.

The Lord Lyon has held the position now for just over nine years, and most recently last year he proclaimed the new king from the Mercat Cross on the High Street on 11 September. This was for him a very important occasion.

Dr Morrow said: “That day was very exciting for me. And I think I have to say that, because it was a proclamation of a new King, something that hasn’t happened in Scotland for 70 years, obviously, because of the length the Queen had actually reigned, there was a sadness in the whole ceremony around the farewell to Her Majesty.

“But it was a farewell that Scotland did so wonderfully. And I’ve said on a number of occasions that Team Scotland stepped up. And that was because of the love they have for The Queen and the love they have for appropriate ceremony that actually makes these things happen.

“As for the proclamation itself, you probably know that that’s the one time that the flags go to full mast from half mast after a monarch dies and it’s to proclaim the new King. It was a great privilege to stand there.”



The Lord Lyon in full regalia proclaiming the new King in Edinburgh Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com Later this year he will also have a role to play in the Coronation and he and his band of nine officers at arms have been practising their marching with GSM Anthony Gibson MVO at Redford Barracks. Dr Morrow said: "We have really benefited from it. Everyone keeps in step now."

He is giving a talk on Friday afternoon about Robert Burns and his hypothetical claim to have a coat of arms. This is as a result of an article which Dr Morrow wrote – which then went viral. He said: "Burns ended up in poverty towards the end of

his life, he wasn't able to actually register his coat of arms. So I did an article and lecture on what would happen if Robert Burns had applied and really have got a coat of arms, and I concluded in the day in which he was placed with his background, he might not have been given a coat of arms, because the test is to be a virtuous and well deserving person."

However the current Lord Lyon disclosed that he might well have a different view of such an application if it were made now. Anyone may apply for their own coat of arms, but must beware as they will have to pass the virtuous and well-deserving test.

On Saturday he will be marching in the Parade, accompanied by someone carrying the banner, and although partly because of the unseasonably warm weather in New York, he is not quite sure yet what he will be wearing. The full regalia which he wore for Her Majesty the Queen's funeral is pretty heavy and even just the red coat might be a little too warm for the occasion, but he has some tartan with him too. We will hope to have photos of the Lord Lyon on Saturday to show what the final decision was.

In July there will be an important ceremony in Edinburgh when the Scottish royal honours are presented to Their Majesties the King and Queen with a service at St Giles. This for Dr Morrow is almost more important than the coronation as it will take place in Edinburgh, and he has posed it as the people of Scotland who will present the sword, sceptre and Crown to the newly crowned monarchs.

He is glad that he has been able to put his own stamp on the ceremony and explained: "I'm really pleased that the crown bearer will be our traditional crown bearer, but he will his escort will be a head boy in a head girl from two public schools in Scotland."

You may listen to the latest episode of our podcast – a conversation with Dr Morrow – below :



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