

## **Mallet - Malet Family History and Coat of Arms**

The surname of MALLETT was derived from the Old English word Mallette, a baptismal name 'the son of Malet'. Following the crusades in Europe in the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries, a need was felt for a family name to replace the one given at birth, or in addition to it. This was recognized by those of noble birth, and particularly by those who went on the Crusades, as it added prestige and practical advantage to their status. At first the coat of arms was a practical matter which served a function of the battlefield and in tournaments. With his helmet covering his face, and armour encasing the knight from head to foot, the only means of identification for his followers, was the insignia painted on his shield, and embroidered on his surcoat, the draped and flowing garment worn over the armour. Early records of the name mention Robert Late, listed as a tenant in the Domesday Book of 1086. Magota Malet of Yorkshire was listed in the Yorkshire Poll Tax of 1379. Gawen Mallet of County Somerset, registered at Oxford University in 1619. Anthony Mallet married Margaret Meredith, St. James's, Clerkenwell, London in 1619. The name is also spelt as Mallatt. During the Middle Ages, when people were unable to read or write signs were needed for all visual identification. For several centuries city streets in Britain were filled with signs of all kinds, public houses, tradesmen and even private householders found them necessary. This was an age when there were no numbered houses, and an address was a descriptive phrase that made use of a convenient landmark. At this time, coat of arms came into being, for the practical reason that men went into battle heavily armed and were difficult to recognise. It became the custom for them to adorn their helmets with distinctive crests, and to paint their shields with animals and the like. Coats of arms accompanied the development of surnames, becoming hereditary in the same way.