

# Clan ARBUTHNOTT



<b>ARMS</b>	Azure, a crescent between three mullets Argent
<b>CREST</b>	A peacock's head couped at the neck Proper
<b>MOTTO</b>	Laus deo (Praise God)
<b>SUPPORTERS</b>	Two wyverns wings elevated, tails noyed Vert, vomiting flame Proper
<b>STANDARD</b>	The Arms of Arbuthnott of that Ilk in the hoist and of two tracts Azure and Argent, upon which is depicted the Badge three times along with the Motto 'Laus deo' in letters Argent upon two transverse bands Vert
<b>BADGE</b>	A Peacock's head couped at the neck issuant from a chaplet of peacock's feathers all Proper banded at the base with a riband Azure doubled Argent and ensigned of a Viscount's coronet

This is a name of territorial origin, from the ancient lands of the same name in Kincardineshire. In early documents it is referred to as 'Aberbothernothe', and this has sometimes been translated as the 'mouth of the stream below the noble house'. This land has been in the hands of the same noble family for more than twenty-four generations and has passed to the present Viscount of Arbuthnott. Hugh, who may have been the noble family of Swinton, is believed to have acquired the lands of Arbuthnott by marriage to the daughter of Osbert Olifard, known as 'The Crusader', some time during the reign of William the Lion. Another Hugh, 'Le Blond', named presumably for his fair hair, was Laird of Arbuthnott around 1282. He appears in a charter of that year, bestowing lands upon the Monastery of Arbroath for 'the safety of his soul'.

Philip de Arbuthnott is the first of the name to be described in charter as 'dominus ejusdem', or 'of that Ilk', in 1355. His son, Hugh Arbuthnot of that Ilk, was implicated in the murder of John Melville of Glenbervie, sheriff of the Mearns, around 1420. According to the traditional story, Sheriff Melville had made himself extremely unpopular with the local lairds by too strict an adherence to his jurisdiction. The Duke of Albany, who was at the time Regent of Scotland during the captivity of James I in England, is said to have become tired of endless complaints against Melville and exclaimed, 'sorrow gin that sheriff were sodden and supped in broo'. This was taken by the disgruntled lairds as a signal to kill the sheriff. The Lairds of Mathers, Arbuthnott, Pitarrow and Halkerton invited Melville to a hunting party in the Forest of Garvock. The unsuspecting sheriff was lured to a prearranged spot where he was killed by thrown into a cauldron of boiling water. After he was truly 'sodden', each of the conspirators took a spoonful of the murderous brew. The Laird of Arbuthnott was ultimately pardoned for his participation in the affair and he died peacefully in 1446. His direct descendent, Sir Robert Arbuthnott of that Ilk, was elevated to the peerage of Viscount of Arbuthnott and Baron Inverbervie by Charles I to encourage him to support his cause.

Alexander Arbuthnott, who was descended from a younger branch of the chiefly house, was a distinguished cleric and staunch supporter of the Reformation in Scotland. He was Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland which met at Edinburgh in April 1577. In 1585 he was directed by the Assembly to wait upon James VI to complain of various 'popish practices' still being permitted within the realm and other grievances. He incurred considerable royal displeasure and he was placed under a form of house arrest within his college at St Andrews. His health seems to have declined and he died before his forty-fifth birthday in October 1583.

Dr John Arbuthnott, the distinguished eighteenth-century physician and political humorist, also claimed near kinship to the chiefly family. He was educated at the University of Aberdeen but ultimately went to London to seek his fortune. In this he was assisted by a great stroke of luck. In 1705, he was in Epsom when Prince George, husband of Queen Anne, was suddenly taken ill, and he was summoned to the royal sickbed. The prince recovered, no doubt to the doctor's great relief, and Arbuthnott was appointed one of the royal physicians. He soon grew to be a favorite and confidant of the queen, acquiring in the process a large circle of friend, including many of the leading politicians, wits and scholars of his time. He was admired by both Pope and Swift, particularly after the publication of his political satire, *The History of John Bull*. He even gained the respect of Dr. Samuel Johnson, who described

him as 'a man of great comprehension, skilful in his profession, versed in the sciences, acquainted with ancient literature and able to animate his mass of knowledge by a bright and active imagination'. Dr Arbuthnott died in September 1779

The eighth Viscount of Arbuthnott was Lord Lieutenant of Kincardineshire and representative peer for Scotland in Parliament from 1818 to 1847. The present chief and Viscount of Arbuthnott has contributed much of his life to public service, and has been awarded both the Distinguished Service Cross and the Order of the British Empire. He heads the Venerable Order of St John in Scotland, promoting their many charitable activities. The family seat is still at Arbuthnott House.

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