



Clan DUNDAS

ARMS

Argent, a lion rampant Gules

CREST

A lion's head affrontée looking through a bush of oak Proper

MOTTO

Essayez (Try)

SUPPORTERS

(on a compartment bearing a salamander in flames of fire Proper) Two lions rampant Gules, armed and langued Azure

The ancestry of this ancient family is said to be traced from Helias, son of Hutred, a younger son of Gospatrick, Prince of Northumberland. The first reliable record of the family is found in the reign of William the Lion when Serle de Dundas appears in deeds of that period. Serle de Dundas and Robertus de Dundas both appear on the Ragman Roll of Scottish nobles submitting to Edward I of England in 1296. Sir Archibald Dundas was employed by him several times on important missions to England. The king intended to bestow high rank upon his ambassador, but died before he could do so. James IV did, however, bestow lands upon Dundas, including the island of Inchgravie with the right to build a castle there.

George Dundas, the eighteenth Laird, was a staunch Presbyterian who fought in the Wars of the Covenant. He was a member of the committee for the trial of the great Marquis of Montrose. He was subsequently given command of Linlithgowshire and charged with its defense against the forces of Oliver Cromwell. George Dundas, twenty-third Laird, was a captain in the East India Company and died in a shipwreck off the coast of Madagascar in 1792.

The principal branches of the family were Dundas of Blair Castle, Arniston, Duddingston, and Fingask. William Dundas of Kincavel, ancestor of the Dundases of Blair, was a Jacobite who was imprisoned for his part in the rising of 1715. The founders of the house of Arniston, which was to acquire distinction through high legal and political office, were senior cadets of the chiefly house of Dundas. Sir James Dundas, was knighted by Charles I in November 1641 and sat as member of the Scottish parliament representing Mid-Lothian. He was a loyal subject but violently disapproved of his king's interference with the Church of Scotland and in particular with plans for the re-introduction of bishops. Consequently, he was one of the first signatories to the National Covenant. When the monarchy was restored in 1660, he was offered a seat on the supreme court bench, in spite of not being a professional lawyer, and he eventually accepted the post, taking his place with the title 'Lord Arniston' in May 1662. He did not serve the court long as he refused to sign the declaration, required by law in 1663, accepting that both National and Solemn League Covenants had been unlawful. Arniston promptly resigned rather than accept the oath, but his vacancy was not filled for nearly eighteen months while his friends tried to persuade him to return. He offered to do so only if the declaration was amended to refer solely to the 'Solemn League and Covenant' and even then only in so far as it led to 'deeds of actual rebellion'. He did not resume his seat and died at Arniston in 1679. His eldest son, Robert Dundas of Arnistoun, was made a judge ten years after his father's death and to honor his memory, he took the title 'Lord Arniston'. The family were thereafter to provide no less than two Lords President of the Court of Session. Henry Dundas, first Viscount Melville, was a distinguished politician. In 1775 he was appointed Lord Advocate and thereafter Treasurer of the Navy. In 1791 he became Secretary of State for the Home Department at a time when the country was in crisis after the outbreak of the French Revolution. On 21 December 1802 he was raised to the peerage as Viscount Melville and Baron Dunira. His splendid town mansion in St Andrew Square in Edinburgh is now the headquarters of the Royal Bank of Scotland. In the original plan for Edinburgh's Georgian New Town, the site of Melville's house was to be a church to balance that built in Charlotte Square which lay at the other end of George Street, which linked the two. The viscount preferred the site for his own home, and so great was his influence that the plan was simply ignored. He died in 1811, and his statue stands on a lofty column in the center of St Andrew Square.

Sir David Dundas was born in Edingburgh in 1735. He was a distinguished soldier, rising ultimately to be commander-in-chief of the British army in 1809. Other branches of the family were also ennobled, including Sir

Thomas Dundas of Kerse, who was created Lord Dundas of Skea in 1794, and whose descendants became first Earls, and then Marquesses of Zealand. The second Marquess was Secretary of State for India from 1935 to 1937. Admiral Sir Charles Dundas of Dundas, twenty-eighth chief, was an aide-de-camp to George V and principal naval transport officer during the First World War. The present chief lives abroad, but many of the great Dundas houses, including Dundas Castle and the splendid eighteenth-century mansion of Arniston, are still homes of members of the family.

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Clan DUNDAS Septs

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ELLETT

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