



Clan HAIG

ARMS

Azure, a saltire between two mullets in chief and in base, a decrescent and an increscent in fess Argent

CREST

A rock Proper

MOTTO

Tyde what may

SUPPORTERS

Dexter, a bay horse caparisoned, thereon mounted a private of the Seventh (Queen's Own) Hussars, habited, armed and accoutred Proper

Tyde what may, shat'er betyde, Haig shall be Haig of Bemersyde'. That was the prophecy made in the thirteenth century by the poet, Thomas the Rhymer. For eight hundred years Bemersyde has been continuously in the possession of the Haigs, from Petrus de Haga, founder of the family to the present chief, the thirtieth Laird and second Earl Haig. Nisbet asserted that the family was of Pictish or early British extraction, but the name de Haga is evidently Norman. Petrus de Haga, proprietor of the lands and barony of Bemersyde, appears as a witness to a charter of Richard de Morville, Constable of Scotland from 1162 to 1188, to the Monastery of Dryburgh. The fact that Petrus is mentioned in several charters as 'Dominus de Bemersyde' (Master of Bemersyde) is evidence that this family were considerable magnets even at that time.

de Haga was one of the noblemen charged by Alexander II with the apprehension of John de Bisset for the murder of the Earl of Athol at Haddington in 1242. The Barons of Bemersyde appear swearing fealty to Edward I of England in the Ragman roll of 1296, but they wholeheartedly joined the struggle for Scottish independence and fought with Sir William Wallace at the Battle of Stirling in 1297. The sixth Laird followed the banner of Robert the Bruce to the Battle of Bannockburn, although he was only seventeen years of age at the time. He was killed at the Battle of Halidon Hill in 1333. Gilbert Haig was one of the commanders of the Scots host who defeated the Earl of Northumberland at Sark in 1449. He also opposed the rising power of the Douglas family. His son, James, was an adherent of James III and when that monarch's reign came abruptly to an end with his murder in 1488, Haig was forced into hiding until he could make peace with the young James IV.

William Haig of Bemersyde fell at Flodden in 1513. Robert, fourteenth Laird, avenged his father's death when, at Ancrum Moor in 1544, he captured Lord Evers, the English commander, and carried him in a wounded condition to Bemersyde where he died a few days later. Haig buried him in Melrose Abby.

The Haigs became embroiled in the religious and political turmoil of the seventeenth century, enduring persecution for their own religious beliefs. William Haig, the nineteenth Laird, held the office of King's Solicitor for Scotland during the reigns of James VI and Charles I. Anthony Haig, the twenty-first Laird, was a member of the Society of Friends or Quakers, and suffered a long period of imprisonment during the persecution of that sect. Four sons of the chief were killed fighting in the service of the king of Bohemia between 1629 and 1630.

In the nineteenth century, it seemed as if the prophecy of Thomas the Rhymer would come to nothing, as the future of the direct line of the Haigs then lay in the hands of three unmarried daughters, Barbara, Mary and Sophia. Before their deaths, they executed a deed transferring the succession to their cousin, Colonel Arthur Balfore Haig, of the Clackmannan branch of the family and who was descended from the second son of the seventeenth Laird of Bemersyde. He accordingly became twenty-eighth Laird and chief.

The father of the present chief was the first Earl Haig, commander-in-chief of the British Expeditionary Forces in France from 1915 to 1919. On leaving Oxford University, George Haig underwent his officer training and entered the 7th Hussars in 1885. He served in the Nile expedition of 1898 and fought at the Battle of Khartoum. He saw service throughout the Boer Wars where he served with distinction and was decorated for bravery. During the First World War, Haig was responsible for the policy of attrition followed by the British forces on the Western Front, a policy which made little real strategic impact until 1917 and has been the subject of great controversy since. He successfully halted the German offensive by July 1918 and launched the allied counter attack which ended the war four months later. He was created Earl Haig, Viscount Dawick and Baron Haig of Bemersyde on 29 September 1919. He was a Knight of the Thistle, a Member of the Order of Merit and received many other British knighthoods.

and foreign orders. Bemersyde was purchased from Arthur Balfour Haig in 1921 with money contributed by the people of the British Empire and resented to Lord Haig in recognition of the services he had rendered in the cause of freedom.

The Tower of Bemersyde was originally built in 1535, when its principal purpose was defense. It was improved in 1690, when large windows and fireplaces were introduced. The house was extended in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 1960 further alterations were carried out by the present chief to improve the overall design and proportions of the house. The second Earl Haig, who was page of honor to George VI at his coronation in 1937, is a distinguished artist and an Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy.

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