



# Clan RAMSAY

## ARMS

Argent, an eagle displayed Sable

## CREST

A unicorn's head couped Argent armed Or

## MOTTO

Ora dt Labora (Pray and work)

## SUPPORTERS

Dexter, a gryphon with wings displayed Proper (Ramsay); sinister, a greyhound Proper gorged with a collar Gules charged with three escallops Argent (Maule)

**A** ram in the sea is said to have been an emblem on the seal of an abbey in Huntingdon in the eleventh century. When David, Earl of Huntingdon, traveled north to claim his kingdom in Scotland in 1124, he was accompanied by many young Norman noblemen keen to share in their overlord's heritage. These may have included Sir Symon de Ramesie who received a grant of land in Midlothian from David and who witnessed several important charters, including one to the monks of Holyrood in 1140.

The de Ramesie family prospered, and by the thirteenth century there were five major branches: Dalhousie; Auchterhouse; Banff; Forfar; and Clatto. William de Ransay of Dalhousie was a member of the king's council in 1255 during the minority of Alexander III. His son, or perhaps his grandson, also called William, appears on the Ragman Roll, swearing fealty of Edward I of England in 1296 as Ramsay 'de Dalwolsy'. Dalhousie later declared for Bruce, becoming one of the signatories to the open letter to the pope, now known as the Declaration of Arbroath, which declared Scotland's independence in 1320. He had at least two sons, William and Alexander. Alexander was a renowned knight, and for his many services he was made sheriff of Teviotdale in 1342. This aroused the jealousy of the Douglasses, who claimed the office as their own. Sir William Douglas of Liddesdale fell upon Alexander with a strong force of men and imprisoned him in Hermitage Castle, where he was starved to death. Alexander's brother, William, also endured captivity when he was captured at the Battle of Neville's Cross in 1346. The English were apparently kinder jailers than Douglas, as William lived to tell the tale.

In 1400, Sir Alexander Ramsay held Dalhousie Castle in Midlothian against a siege by Henry IV of England, and resisted so resolutely that the English were forced to withdraw. His descendent and namesake, Alexander Ramsay, was killed at Floden in 1513, when Dalhousie passed to his son, Nicolas, who was to be a staunch supporter of Mary, Queen of Scots. After Mary's final defeat the Ramsays acknowledged her son as James VI. They were later to be handsomely rewarded for saving that monarch's life. In 1600 John Ramsay, one of Nicholas's great-grandsons, killed the Earl of Gowrie and his brother, Alexander Rughven, who were apparently attempting to kidnap the king in what became known as the Gowrie Conspiracy. John was created Earl of Holderness and viscount Haddington by a grateful king. George Ramsay, the new earl's eldest brother, also attained high rank when he was created Lord Ramsay in 1618. Ramsay's eldest son, William, opposed the religious policies of Charles I and raised a cavalry regiment for Parliament. He fought at Marston Moor, and was part of General Lesley's force which surprised Montrose at Philipparugh in 1645. He had been created Earl of Dalhousie in 1633.

The Ramsays were thereafter to continue military and public service down to the present day. They served in all the great campaigns of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on the Continent, in Canada and in India. The ninth Earl was Governor of Canada from 1819 to 1828, and commander-in-chief of India from 1829 to 1832. His son also served as Governor General of India from 1847 to 1856, during a period of great expansion of British interest on the sub-continent. He was created Marquess of Dalhousie in 1849, but this title died with him in 1860, although the older earldom passed to a cousin from whom the present Earl descends.

Many other branches of the family have also produced persons of distinction and rank. Admiral the Honorable Sir Alexander Ramsay, the younger son of the fourteenth Earl, married HRH Princess Victoria of Connaught, granddaughter of Queen Victoria. Their son, Captain Alexander Ramsay of Mar, and his wife, the Lady Saltoun, chief of the Frasers, are, by HM The Queen's personal wish, members of the royal family. Sir Gilbert Ramsay of

Banff, descended from Neis de Ramsay, physician to Alexander II around 1232, was created a Baronet of Nova Scotia in 1666. The Ramsays of Balmain, whose title of 'Lord Bothwell' was forfeited for treason in 1488 and later given to the Hepburns, restored their fortunes by being created baronets, first in 1625 and again in 1806.

Fighting was not the only talent of this family. Andrew Ramsay, better known as the Chevalier de Ramsay, left Scotland for France in 1708. His academic excellence was soon recognized, and he became mentor to the Prince of Turenne. The King of France appointed him a Knight of the Order of St Lazarus, and for a time he was tutor to both the Jacobite princess, Charles Edward and Henry, later Cardinal York. Alan Ramsay, the great eighteenth-century poet, and his son, the distinguished portrait painter, were descended from the Lairds of Codkpen, cadets of the chiefly house. Dalhousie Castle is now a hotel, and the chief seat is Brechin Castle in Angus.

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#### **Clan RAMSAY Septs**

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REMSAY

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