

Clan BOSWELL



ARMS Argent, on a fess Sable three cinquefoils of the First
CREST A falcon Proper, hooded Gules, jessed and belled Or
MOTTO Vraye foi (Have faith)

Universally accepted as of Norman or French origin, Black offers two derivations of the name – either from a vill, or manor, near Yvetot in Normandy, or from Beuzevill near Bolbec. The ‘sieru’, or Lord de Bosville, is said to have been one of the Norman commanders at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. Robert de Boseuille witnessed several charters in the reign of William the Lion and it must be presumed that the Boswells were among the knights who accompanied David I back to Scotland after his stay at the English court. Walter de Bosville was taken a prisoner at Dunbar in 1296 and William de Bosville rendered homage in the same year. His son, Richard also received land from Robert the Bruce near Ardrrossan. A younger son of the Borders family is said to have been the first to settle in Fife, marrying Mariota, daughter and co-heiress of Sir William of Lochore. The family acquired the barony of Balmuto, which they held until the early eighteenth century. Sir Alexander of Balmuto was among the slain at Flodden in 1513. Boswells also fell in the royalist cause at the Battle of Worcester during the civil war in 16521. The family acquired the lands of Auchinleck and was to become lawyers of great eminence. Robert Boswell became a High Court judge, assuming the title of ‘Lord Balmuto’, and Alexander Boswell was also elevated to the Bench in 1756, assuming the title, ‘Lord Auchinleck’. His son, James, was the famous biographer of Dr Samuel Johnson. Sir Alexander Boswell, the biographer’s son, was created a baronet in 1821. Another distinguished Boswell was Robert Boswell, Writer to the Signet, who held the post of Interim Lord Lyon, King of Arms, from 1795 to 1796.

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