

Kelly

The surname of KELLY was originally from Kelly in Arbroath or Kellie in Fife, and from Kelly in County Devon. The name meant 'the dweller in a wood grove'. Local names usually denoted where a man held and owned land, and indicated where he actually lived. Warin de Kelly was documented in the year 1194 in the County of Devon. Other spellings of the name include O'KELLY, KELLEY, KELLOCH, KELLOCK and MISKELLY to name but a few. Early records of the name also mention Johnde Kelly 1373 County Devon. In many parts of central and western Europe, hereditary surnames began to become fixed at around the 12th century, and have developed and changed slowly over the years. As society became more complex, and such matters as the management of tenure, and in particular the collection of taxes were delegated to special functionaries, it became imperative to distinguish a more complex system of nomenclature to differentiate one individual from another. In Ireland they were a most important and numerous sept in the Ui Maine. In Irish the name was O'Ceallaigh. Ireland was one of the earliest countries to evolve a system of hereditary surnames. They came into being fairly generally in the 11th century, and indeed a few were formed before the year 1000. Surnames as we know them today were first assumed in Europe from the 11th to the 15th Century. They were not in use in England or in Scotland before the Norman Conquest, and were first found in the Domesday Book. The employment in the use of a second name was a custom that was first introduced from the Normans. They themselves had not long before adopted them. It became, in course of time, a mark of gentler blood, and it was deemed a disgrace for gentlemen to have but one single name, as the meaner sort had. It was not until the reign of Edward II (1307-1327) it became general practice amongst all people. At first the coat of arms was a practical matter which served a function on the battlefield and in tournaments. With his helmet covering his face, and armour encasing the knight from head to foot, the only means of identification for his followers, was the insignia painted on his shield and embroidered on his surcoat, the flowing and draped garment worn over the armour.

ARMS - Argent a chevron between three billets gules

CREST - An enfield vert

MOTTO - - TURRIS FORTIS MIHIL DEUS

God is a strong tower to me