

THE ARMS OF SIR DONALD BRISCO, Bt

Noel Cox

Sir Donald Gilfrid Brisco, Bt JP, eighth baronet Brisco of Crofton Hall, Cumberland, in the baronetage of Great Britain, was born 1920, and succeeded his father in 1968. His elder brother, Robert Hylton Brisco, had been killed in action in 1943.

Sir Donald served with the Royal New Zealand Air Force and the Royal Air Force during the Second World War, and was a prisoner of war in Germany and Italy, 1942-45. Later he farmed in Hawke's Bay.

This family, whose earlier pedigree is given in the Visitation of Cumberland, 1615, derived its name from Brisco in that county. By the marriage of Isold Brisco, c.1390, with Margaret, daughter and heiress of Sir John Crofton, of Crofton, the latter property came into the family.

The baronetcy was conferred in 1782 upon Sir John Brisco, of Crofton Hall, eldest son of the Rev'd John Brisco, DD, Rector of Orton and Vicar of Aspatria, and of Catherine, daughter and co-heiress of Lord Hylton, of Hylton Castle, county palatine of Durham.

The Hyltons were prominent landowners in the area, near Sunderland, from the mid-twelfth century. Hylton Castle, now a ruin, was built in about 1400 by Sir William Hylton. In 1746 the male line of the family died out, and while the estate passed to the Brisco's and other co-heirs, the castle buildings were left to deteriorate.

The armorial bearings of the Briscos are *Argent, three greyhounds courant, in pale Sable*. The talbot is the ancestor of the heraldic dogs, but the greyhound is now more common. A white greyhound courant collared Azure was used as a badge by King Henry VII, to denote his maternal descent from John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset and Marquess of Dorset, the son of John of Gaunt.

The arms of the Briscoes of Bourn, in the county of Cambridge, created baronets in 1910, also include greyhounds courant. This family is not however apparently related to the Briscos of Crofton Hall, Cumberland. The founder of the Briscoes of Bourn was John Briscoe, of Penley, county of Flint, and Northwood, in Ellesmere, in the county of Shropshire, born 1699.

Greyhounds are also featured in the baronet's crest: *A greyhound, courant, Sable, seizing a hare, Proper*. Greyhounds are fairly frequently found as charges, though seldom in the crest as well. A greyhound courant is shown at full speed, rather than salient (springing, its hind-feet on the ground), passant (walking), or couchant (lying down).

The baronets have as a motto *Grata sume manu*.

There are no supporters.

Sir Donald Brisco, Bt JP

Arms: *Argent, three greyhounds courant, in pale Sable.*

Crest: *A greyhound, courant, Sable, seizing a hare, Proper.*

Motto: *Grata sume manu.*