

THE ARMS OF VISCOUNT COBHAM

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Lieutenant-Colonel the Right Honourable Sir Charles John Lyttelton, KG GCMG GCVO TD PC, 10th Viscount Cobham (Peerage of Great Britain 1718), 7th Baron Lyttelton (Great Britain 1756 renewed 1794), Baron Cobham, Baron Frankley, County of Worcester, Baron Westcote, of Ballymore, Ireland (Ireland 1776), Baronet (England 1618) was born in 1909, succeeded to his titles in 1949, and died in 1977.

Viscount Cobham qualified as a Barrister. He was an active sportsman, and was vice-captain of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) team which toured New Zealand in 1935-36. He was service in the Second World War, ending his service as a Lieutenant-Colonel. Viscount Cobham was Governor-General of New Zealand 1957-62, and Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire 1963-74. He was Lord Steward of the Household 1967-72, and Chancellor of the Order of the Garter 1972-77.

The Lyttelton's are an ancient Worcestershire family, dating from the 13th century. Thomas de Luttelton held substantial amount of land in the Vale of Evesham, Worcestershire, particularly at South Lyttelton c.1235. He married Emma, only daughter and heiress of Sir Simon de Frankley, later Anselm, daughter and heiress of William Fitzwarren, of Upton, Worcestershire, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas 1228 and Sheriff of Worcestershire 1229.

Sir Thomas Luttelton/Lyttelton (who took his mother's name), was a Serjeant-at-Law (counsel in the Court of Common Pleas, the senior common law court) 1454, King's Serjeant (similar to a Queen's Counsel) 1455, and a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas 1475-81. He was the author of the famous *Treatise on Tenures*.

Sir Thomas Lyttelton, 1st Baronet, was so created 25th July 1618. He was High Sheriff of Worcestershire 1613, a Member of Parliament 1621-22 and 1640, and fought for the King during the Civil Wars. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London, and died in 1650.

Sir Thomas Lyttelton, 4th Bt, married Christian, sister of Sir Richard Temple, Bt, who was later the 1st Viscount Cobham (created 1718). The viscountcy had been granted with special remainder, failing heirs male of his body and of his 2nd sister Hester, to those of his 3rd sister, Christian, Lady Lyttelton. The latter contingency took place in 1889, on the death of the 3rd Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.

Sir George Lyttelton, 5th Bt, and 1st Baron Lyttelton of Frankley, County of Worcester (Great Britain), was ennobled in 1756. He was Principal Secretary to the Prince of Wales 1737-44; a Lord of the Treasury 1744-54; Cofferer to the Household 1754-55, and Chancellor of the Exchequer 1755-56. The peerage became extinct on the death of his son. His brother, Sir William Henry Lyttelton, 7th Bt, and 1st Lord Lyttelton, Baron of Frankley, Count of Worcester (Great Britain), was created 1794, and in 1776 Baron Westcote of Ballymore, County of Longford (Ireland). He was Governor of South Carolina 1755-60, and of Jamaica 1760-66.

The family seat is Hagley Hall, near Stourbridge, Worcestershire. The house were created in the 1750s for George, 1st Lord Lyttelton, to replace a previous Elizabethan manor house. The estate still extended to 3,600 acres when Lord Cobham was Governor-General of New Zealand.

The Lyttelton family have strong links with New Zealand. The 4th Lord Lyttelton (1817-76) was chairman of the Canterbury Association which founded the Canterbury settlement in 1850. The port and town of Lyttelton commemorate him. Hagley Park, Christchurch, is named after the family seat.

The third Duke of Buckingham and Chandos (1823-89), who was also seventh Viscount Cobham, was Secretary of State for the Colonies 1867-68 in the closing years of the Maori wars and was responsible for the recall of Sir George Grey in 1868.

The arms of Viscount Cobham are those of the ancient Lyttelton family, and are as simple as such ancient arms commonly are: “*Argent, a chevron between three escallops Sable*”. These were borne by Thomas Lyttelton at the time of King Henry IV. The old arms of the Cobham family was *Gules, a chevron Or*”, differenced by the addition of three Sable charges. This is one of the best known English examples of differencing by a change of charges, in which the ordinary was charged by various cadets with three pierced estoiles, lions, crossed crosslets, fleurs-de-lyis, crescents, and martlets, all Sable. There does not appear, however, to be a link between the families, except insofar as the Lyttelton’s title commemorates the other family (the Temples).

Sir Reginald Cobham, Lord Cobham, KG 1352-61, bore “*Gules, on a chevron Or, three estoiles Sable*”, with a crest “*a soldan’s head Sable, the brow encircled by a torse Or*”. This has been adopted by the Lyttelton viscounts as “*A Moor’s head in profile, couped at the shoulders Proper, wreathed about the temples Argent and Sable*”.

A carved wooden panel of the arms of the 10th Viscount are at Government House, Wellington. This is based on the design by Reynolds Stone.

Sources – *Armorist* Autumn 1987 (no 29, p 6); Winter 1992 (no 43).



Charles, Viscount Cobham, KG GCMG GCVO TD PC

Arms: *Argent, a chevron between three escallops Sable.*

Supporters: *On either side a merman Proper, in his exterior hand a trident Or.*

Crest: *A Moor's head in profile, couped at the shoulders Proper, wreathed about the temples Argent and Sable.*

Motto: *Ung Dieu, ung roy* ('One God, one king').

[illustration: *Burke's Peerage and Baronetage* 106th ed, reproduced with permission]