

# LORD KINGSALE

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The Right Honourable Nevinson Mark de Courcy, 36<sup>th</sup> Baron Kingsale (Peerage of Ireland 1223), Baron Courcy, Baron of Ringrone, and Premier Baron of Ireland, was born 11<sup>th</sup> May 1958, and succeeded a cousin to the peerage in 2005. He lives in Auckland, where his father, Nevinson Russell de Courcy, MA MICEM MNZIE was a municipal engineer.

John de Courcy, the late baron, was born posthumously in 1941, his father, Lieutenant-Commander the Honourable Michael de Courcy, Royal Navy, having been killed in action in the previous year. John succeeded his grandfather to the title in 1969. Lord Kingsale was educated at Stowe School, and the Universities of Paris and Salzburg. He was a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the Irish Guards 1962-65, when he resigned due to being unable to keep himself on his limited private income.

The late Lord Kingsale was famous for his varied career. At various times he was a property developer, law student, film extra, white hunter, and bingo caller. He also ran a dating service in Australia – which was successful although he never managed himself to marry, although he made repeated attempts to acquire a wife – including several times advertising for one. He was director of several companies, Chairman of the National Association for Service to the Realm (which advocated the return of national service) from 1979, and Patron of L'Orchestre du Monde from 1988.

The present baron is the 36<sup>th</sup> in line if reckoned from 1223. Some sources however would give 31<sup>st</sup> – from 1340 – and the official precedent is dated 1397 (which has been reckoned as making the present baron the 29<sup>th</sup>). The latter date is the year that letters patent were granted to the 9<sup>th</sup> baron, William de Courcy. Unusually these were not to create his peerage, but rather merely a licence to buy a ship in England and sail it to France. In the licence he was, however, styled Lord and Baron de Courcy. The current baron is officially recognised as Premier Baron of the Peerage of Ireland, so his exact date of creation is perhaps of principally historical interest only.

The barony of Kingsale is generally dated from the thirteenth century, and was possibly first created (by writ of summons to Parliament) in 1223 for Miles de Courcy.

The family is named for the village of Courcy-sur-Dives, in Calvados, France. They were also Lords of the Manor of Stoke Courcy, Somerset. The late Lord Kingsale died in sheltered housing in Somerset, where he had lived since 1994, on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2005.

The de Courcy's had played a leading part in the Anglo-Cambro-Norman incursion into Ireland, and Miles de Cogan, a younger son of the Cogans of Glamorgan, was granted the Kingdom of Cork (a creation of the Kingdom of Desmond), jointly with Robert FitzStephen, by King Henry II in 1177. He died in 1182 and his daughter married a de Courcy – possibly John de Courcy, Earl of Ulster (Justiciar of Ireland 1185-1190). It is from them that the family

descends. GEC however asserted that the title dated from 1340 at the earliest, and more likely fifty years later.



The Baron Kingsale also holds the Irish feudal titles of Baron Courcy, and Baron of Ringrone, the latter probably dating from the twelfth century. In common with other feudal barons the Barons Courcy and Ringrone sat in the Irish Parliament as late as the time of King James I and VI, and Lord Kingsale had a seat in the Irish House of Lords until that was abolished in 1801. Indeed, the very title alternated between Kingsale and Courcy for many centuries.

The late baron inherited a lighthouse – which brought in an annual rent of £180 – and the remains of a castle. The castle, of which the walls scarcely reached one foot at their highest point, was given to the people of the town of Kinsale in 1986.

There has long been legend of the supposed privilege of the Lords Kingsale being covered in the royal presence. This was granted, so legend maintained, to John de Courcy, Earl of Ulster, by King John. However there is no evidence of such a privilege

having been granted. Supposedly Almericus de Courcy, 23<sup>rd</sup> Lord Kinsale or Kingsale, who died in 1719, exercised this privilege. He is buried in Westminster Abbey, where his large monument records something of the family legend (which I read during a visit to the Abbey during mid-September, unaware that the then present baron was on the verge of death).

The armorial bearings of the de Courcy's has a mediæval simplicity. The shield is Argent three eagles displayed Gules, crowned Or.

The crest is on a ducal coronet Or an eagle displayed with two heads Argent.

The supporters are two unicorns Azure, each gorged with a coronet composed of crosses pateé and fleur-de-lys and chained, armed, crined and unglued Or.

The motto is “Vincit omnia Veritas” (“Truth conquers all things”).



### **Nevinson, Lord Kingsale**

- Arms: Argent three eagles displayed Gules, crowned Or
- Supporters: Two unicorns Azure, each gorged with a coronet composed of crosses pateé and fleur-de-lys and chained, armed, crined and unglued Or
- Crest On a ducal coronet Or an eagle displayed with two heads Argent
- Motto: “Vincit omnia Veritas” (“Truth conquers all things”)