

Bell

The surname of BELL was derived from the Old French word 'belle' a nickname for one who was beautiful. Surnames having a derivation from nicknames form the broadest and most miscellaneous class of surnames, encompassing many different types of origin. The most typical classes refer adjectivally to the general physical aspect of the person concerned, or to his character. Many nicknames refer to a man's size or height, while others make reference to a favoured article of clothing or style of dress. Many surnames derived from the names of animals and birds. In the Middle Ages ideas were held about the characters of other living creatures, based on observation, and these associations were reflected and reinforced by large bodies of folk tales featuring animals behaving as humans. The name was brought into England in the wake of the Norman Conquest of 1066. Early records of the name mention Ailuardus filius Belli, listed as a tenant in the Domesday Book of 1086. Serlo Belle, was documented in the year 1190 in the County of Yorkshire Robert le Bel, 1200 Norfolk. Robert Bell was mayor of Bristol in 1239. The name was taken early to Scotland by settlers, and William Bell appears as Dean in Dunkeld, Scotland in 1329.

Later instances of the name mention Rev. Patrick Bell (1800-1869) who was the inventor of the reaping machine and founder of mechanical harvesting. Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922) was the Scottish-American inventor of the telephone. In Ireland the name is found mainly in the four north-east counties of Ulster, and is among the ten most numerous of settler names in the country. Ireland was one of the earliest 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. 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 draped and flowing garment worn over the armour.

The associated arms are recorded in Burkes General Armory. Ulster King of Arms in 1884.

ARMS - Sable a fess ermine between three bells argent

CREST - A hawk close proper belled or

MOTTO - PREND MOI TEL QUE JE SUIS
Take me as I am