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The Arms of John Hamilton of Broomhall, the 1st Lord Belhaven and Stenton

The arms as engraved upon this Pair of George IV English Sterling Silver Soup Plates by Paul Storr hallmarked London 1829 are those of John Hamilton of Broomhall, the 1st Lord Belhaven and Stenton. They may be blazoned as follows:

Arms: **Quarterly 1st and 4th Gules a sword palewise argent hilted and pommelled or between three cinquefoils of the second (for Hamilton of Broomhall) 2nd Gules a mullet argent between three cinquefoils ermine (for Hamilton of Udston) 3rd Gules a man's heart proper shadowed or between three cinquefoils ermine (for Hamilton of Raploch)**

Motto: **Ryde through**

The arms are environed with a cirlet upon which is found the motto of the Baronetage of Nova Scotia '*Fax mentis honestae gloria*' [Glory is the light of a noble mind] which is ensigned by a Lord of Parliament's coronet. Pendant from the cirlet is the badge of a Baronet of Nova Scotia.

Upon the balance of probability and without any evidence to the contrary these arms are those of the John Hamilton of Broomhill in the County of Fife¹ (born 1623 died 17th June 1679), the 1st Lord Belhaven and Stenton in the County of Haddington² within the Peerage of Scotland and the 2nd Baronet of Broomhill in the County of Fife within the Baronetage of Nova Scotia³. It is strange that *Burke's Peerage*⁴ does not make any reference to the Broomhall baronetcy whatsoever, although John's father is styled as Sir James there is no reference to him being a Baronet. Sadly, *Burke's* is not always a reliable source as errors and omissions often creep in! John married Margaret (died after 24th October 1666), the natural daughter of James Hamilton, the 2nd Marquess of Hamilton. In any event, the Broomhall baronetcy fell into extinction for want of a male heir upon the death of John, the 1st Lord Belhaven and Stenton on the 17th June 1679 when the peerage devolved upon (as per the terms of regrant of 1675) John Hamilton of Biel in the County of East Lothian, the husband of the 1st Lord's grand-daughter, Margaret.

Given that these arms pertain to the 1st Lord Belhaven and Stenton and 2nd Baronet of Broomhall as they are not those of the subsequent (and present) heirs to the Parliamentary Lordship of Belhaven and Stenton who bore and presently bear the arms blazoned as followed:

Quarterly 1st and 4th Gules a mullet argent between three cinquefoils ermine (for Hamilton of Udston) 2nd and 3rd Gules a man's heart proper shadowed or between three cinquefoils ermine (for Hamilton of Raploch) all within a bordure argent

At the time of their manufacture, these soup plates there was no extant baronetcy in this branch of the Hamilton family. Here it should also be noted that there is in existence a Meissen Porcelain Service painted with the crest (*A horse's head couped argent bridled gules*) with motto '*Ride through*' environed with the tawny ribbon with pendant badge of a Nova Scotia Baronet ensigned with a coronet of a Lord of Parliament that dates *circa* 1830. This service is said to have belonged to the Lord Belhaven and Stenton at that date.

Perhaps this was an error on part the family, especially in respect of the baronetcy? On the other hand, were these soup plates replacements for a depleted suite of silver occasioned through lost or damage and as such was it thought correct to engrave the arms of the 1st Lord Belhaven and Stenton to match with the original suite? Although, so, saying the manufacture of the Meissen Porcelain Service as mentioned above certainly presupposes that the family may have thought that the baronetcy of 1635 was still extant. Perhaps, they thought it had devolved with the Lordship of Belhaven and Stenton. Throughout the history of the baronetage there have assumptions of the title that have been a little eccentric to say the least! Without further evidence/proofs it is difficult at this distance in time to come readily to a conclusion that fits a viable hypothesis.

As an aside, I know of the existence of a Set of Eight Victorian Scottish Silver Plates by J. McKay hallmarked Edinburgh 1849 engraved with the same arms which gives a little more weight to the hypothesis as posited in the paragraph above that these soup

¹ This branch of the Hamilton family descends from John Hamilton (died *circa* 1550) the illegitimate (but later legitimised) son of James Hamilton, 1st Lord Hamilton.

² Created on the 15th December 1647; regranted with a wider limitation on the 10th February 1675.

³ Created on the 5th January 1635.

⁴ *Burke's Peerage and Baronetage*, pp.231 -235 [105th Edition 4th Impression 1970].

plates and those plates by J. McKay were indeed replacements or additions to an existing service.



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