# Ward Family Name

This is one of the great surnames of Britain. Deriving from the pre 1066 Norman era, it has two quite distinct origins, one Olde English and the other Gaelic.

The 'English' nameholders themselves have two possible derivations, the first being occupational for a civil guard or keeper of the watch and the second topographical, and describing one who lived by a 'werd' - a marsh. Certainly there can be no doubt that Walter de la Warde recorded in the 1273 Hundred Rolls of Suffolk lived by a fen, whilst equally Robert le Warde in the Oxfordshire Rolls for the same year of 1273, was a guard.

The original coat of arms was born by Sir John Warde of Surrey, at the siege of Calais in 1345. This had the blazon of a blue field charged with a gold cross flory, and is one of the most ancient of all 'arms' on record.

The Irish Ward's prominent in Galway and Donegal are claimed to derive their name from the Old Gaelic 'Mac an Bhaird', translating as 'the Son of the Bard'. Certainly Maelisa Macaward was bishop of Clonfert, County Galway, in 1179, although the clergy were supposed to be celebrate!

In Scotland John de Warde was recorded as being a tenant of the Earl of Douglas in 1376. The surname was also one of the first into the new American Colonies, John Ward of 'Elizabeth Cittie, Virginia' being a recorded as head of his 'muster' on February 24th 1624.

The first recorded spelling of the family name is shown to be that of William de la Warda, which was dated 1176, in the 'Pipe Rolls of Leicestershire', during the reign of King Henry 11, known as 'the church builder', 1154 - 1189. Surnames became necessary when governments introduced personal taxation. In England this was known as Poll Tax. Throughout the centuries, surnames in every country have continued to "develop" often leading to astonishing variants of the original spelling.

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