



## Clan FORBES

<b>ARMS</b>	Azure three bears' heads couped two and one Argent muzzled Gules
<b>CREST</b>	A stag's head attired with ten tines Proper
<b>MOTTO</b>	Grace me guide
<b>SUPPORTERS</b>	Two bloodhounds (Argent) collared Gules

**I**n that part of north-east Scotland which spreads itself from the mountain ranges of Aberdeenshire to the coast of Banff and Buchan, lie the lands of the Clan Forbes; here the great houses and estates of the clan – once there were no fewer than one hundred and fifty of them – were situated along the winding rivers that flow eastwards and northwards especially along the valley of the Don. Over looking the Don today stands Castle Forbes, built in 1815 by James Ochoncar, seventeenth Lord Forbes, and still occupied by the direct descendents of Duncan Forbes upon whom the original lands were conferred in a charter dated 1271 by Alexander III.

The Forbes family grew in power in Aberdeenshire throughout the fourteenth century. Sir John Forbes of the Black Lip had four sons: William became the progenitor of the Pitsligo line; Alistair of Brux founded the lines of Skellater and Invererman; while Alexander, his eldest son, fought in the victory at Harlaw in 1411 alongside the Earl of Mar against the invading hordes led by Donald of the Isles, and was elevated to the peerage some time between 1443 and July 1445, when he took his seat in Parliament. Since then the title has been handed down through successive generations, and on the union roll of 1701, Forbes was the premier Lordship of Scotland, a precedence held to this day.

James, son of the first Lord Forbes, himself had three sons: William, the third Lord Forbes; Duncan, who founded the family of Forbes of Corsindae and Monymusk; and Patrick of Corse, squire to James III, whose line later became Baronets of Craigievar.

Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a long and bitter struggle was waged against the great house of Gordon, although the Forbeses' traditional enemies were the Leslies. In the 1520s these feuds reached a climax, with murders by both sides occurring constantly. One of the most prominent of those killed by the Forbes faction, Seton of Meldrum, was a close connection of the chief of the Gordons, the Earl of Huntly. Huntly soon became involved in a plot aimed at the Master of Forbes, son of the sixth Lord, who was heavily implicated in the Seton murder. In 1536 Huntly accused the master of conspiring to assassinate James V by shooting at him with a canon. The Master was tried and executed, but within days his conviction was reversed and the Forbes family restored to favor. However, the damage to relations between the Forbes and Gordons was irreparable, and for the remainder of the century the feud reduced Aberdeenshire to an unparalleled state of lawlessness. The Reformation added religion to the differences already existing between the clans, as the Gordons remained defiantly Catholic but the Forbeses favored Protestantism. The Forbeses' traditional enemies, such as the Leslies, Irvines and Seton, attached themselves to the Gordon faction and thereby remained Catholic, while the Keiths, Frasers, Crichtons and others formed a Protestant opposition of which the Forbeses were the heart. The feud culminated in 1571 in two battles, at Tillieangus and Craibstone. Druminnor, then Lord Forbes's seat, was itself plundered, and in the same month the Gordons followed this with the massacre of twenty-seven Forbeses of Towie at Corgarff. Two Acts of Parliament were required to force the clans to put down their arms.

In 1582, James VI confirmed his 'trusty and well beloved cousin', Lord Forbes, in the 'lands which have been in continuous possession of his family in times past the memory of man'. However, the struggle of the previous decades had drawn the Forbeses deep into debt, making it necessary in later years for them to sell much of their land.

Through all these 'local' troubles, and indeed into this present century, members of the family have achieved military distinction for their country. James Ochoncar, the seventeenth Lord Forbes, was an officer in the Coldstream Regiment of Footguards for twenty-six years, rising to the rank of general, having served as second-in-command of the British forces in Sicily in 1808 before commanding the Cork and Eastern districts in Ireland. It was

during his time in Ireland that a castle was built near Alford on the site of the old family home of Putachie, and the seventeenth Lord is generally regarded as responsible for the building and for the layout of the estate. Today Castle Forbes is the home of his great-great-grandson. The present chief of the clan, Nigel, twenty-second Lord Forbes, lives at Balforbes on the south side of the River Don, which bisects the 'modern' Forbes estate. He followed his father, Atholl, twenty-first Lord, into the Grenadier Guards and fought throughout the major campaigns of the Second World War, before becoming military assistant to the High Commissioner for Palestine, General Sir Alan Cunningham. Like his father and many earlier holders of the title, he was elected to serve as a representative peer for Scotland in the House of Lords, and was Minister of State for Scotland in the Conservative government of Harold Macmillan in 1958-59.

*Taken from "Scottish Clan & Family Encyclopedia", by Collins, HarperCollins Publishers 1994*

**Clan FORBES Septs**

BANNERMAN	FURBUSH	MAC OUAT	MICHIE,-SON
BERRIE -Y	GIRTY,-IE	MAC OWAT	MIDDLETON
BOY	GOURTY	MAC WAT(T)ERS	WADKINS
BOYCE	GURTIE,-Y	MAC WATT	WALTER(S)
BOYE(S)	LUMSDAINE	MAC WATTIE,-Y	WAS(S)ON
BOYSE	MAC AOUT	ME(E)KIE,-Y	WATERS
FAUBUS	MAC COOWATT	MECHIE,-Y	WATKINS
FORBES	MAC FIRBIS	MEEKIE,-Y	WATSON
FORBES	MAC GERTIE,-Y	MEEKISON	WATT(S)
FORBUSH	MAC GIRTIE,-Y	MELDRUM(E)	WATTERS
FORDICE	MAC GOURTY,-IE	MELDRUM(E)	WATTIE,-EY
FORDYCE	MAC GURTIE,-Y	MICHEY	WATTSON

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