



Clan FORSYTH

ARMS	Argent, a chevron engrailed Gules between three griffins segreant Azure, armed and membered Sable, crowned Or
CREST	A griffin segreant Azure, armed and membered Sable, drowned Or
MOTTO	Instaurator ruinae (A repairer of ruin)
SUPPORTERS	(on a compartment Sable) Two griffins Azure, armed and membered Sable, crowned
STANDARD	The Arms in the hoist and of two tracts Gules and Argent, upon which is depicted the Crest three times along with the Motto 'Instaurator ruinae' in letters Or upon two transverse bands Sable
PINSEL	Argent bearing upon a Wreath of the Liveries the Crest as in the Arms within a strap Sable, buckled and embellished Or having the Motto 'Instaurator ruinae' in letters of the Field all within a circlet Or fimbriated Vert bearing the name and style 'Forsyth of that Ilk' in letters Sable, the same ensigned of a chapeau Gules furred Ermine, and in the fly an Escrol Sable, surmounting a forsythia flower Proper, bearing the slogan 'Ethie' in letters Or
PLANT BADGE	Forsythia flower

As with so many families whose history stretches back before the twelfth century, the derivation of this family's surname is uncertain. If the name is Celtic in its origin, it may derive from the Gaelic personal name 'Fearsithe', meaning 'man of peace'. It may, however, allude to a place of peace, and refer to a particular place, or lands. One tradition provides a Norman descent from Forsach, one of the Norsemen who settled on lands on the River Dordogne in Aquitaine. The Viscomte de Fronsoc accompanied Eleanor de Provence to London to marry Henry III and lived at the English court from 1236 to 1246. It is believed that his family obtained lands in Northumberland, and thence to the Borders of Scotland.

William de Fersith appears on the Ragman Roll of Scottish noblemen submitting to Edward I of England in 1296. Osbert, son of Robert de Forsyth, received a grant of lands at Sauchie in Stirlingshire from Robert the Bruce sometime after March 1306. He distinguished himself at the Battle of Bannockburn and received confirmation under the great seal of the realm of his lands in 1320. Osbert's son was appointed the king's macer and constable of Stirling Castle in 1368. Fersith the clerk is recorded receiving a royal pension of one hundred pounds per annum from Robert II. The family became established around Stirling and many prominent burgesses and civic dignitaries bore the name.

David Fosityth of Dykes in Lanarkshire acquired his lands some time prior to 1488. His seal bore heraldry similar to the arms of de Fronsoc, and he specifically claimed them as his ancestors. There was a Forsyth castle at Dykes until it was demolished in 1828. A branch of the family left Dykes and moved to Inchnoch Castle in Monkland and their descendents spread the family throughout Ayrshire and around Glasgow.

William Forsyth, baillie of Edinburgh around 1365 had, with other issue, a son, William, who, in 1423, moved to St Andrews and subsequently acquired the barony of Nydie. This was a fief of the Archbishops of St Andrews. Alexander, fourth Baron of Nydie, was sheriff depute of fife, and the arms assigned to him are recorded in Balfour's manuscript. Alexander died at Flodden in 1513. His grandson, James, married a substantial heiress, Elizabeth Leslie, granddaughter of the Earl of Rothes and great-granddaughter of James III. The Forsyths of Nydie had little choice thereafter but to tie their fortunes to their extremely powerful relatives. They acquired lands around the royal Palace of Falkland, and in 1538 John Forsyth was appointed king's macer and thereafter Falkland Pursuivant. It is from the Falkland Forsyth lairds that the present chief descends.

Another branch of the family settled near Monymusk, and William Forsyth represented Forres in the Parliament of 1621. The Reverend Alexander John Forsyth was a pioneer in the development of modern firearms and his work led to the invention of the percussion lock, which replaced the flintlock in the eighteenth century. He received a modest Crown pension for an invention which in today's terms would have brought him enormous wealth. William Forsyth, born at Old Meldrum in 1737, was a distinguished horticulturist. He went to London where he studied at

the botanical gardens in Chelsea. In 1784, he was appointed Chief Superintendent of the Royal Gardens at Kensington and St James Palace. He researched actively and was particularly interested in plant diseases. He discovered a composition which inhibited certain diseases common to fruit trees and received a grant from Parliament to assist in publishing his findings in order to make his work widely available. In 1802 he published a *Treatise on the Culture and Management of Fruit Trees* which proved so popular that the first three editions were sold out. He was made a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and of the Linnean Society. He died in his beloved gardens at Kensington in July 1804. In honor of his name, there is now a genus of plants termed 'forsythia'.

The Reverend Peter Taylor Forsyth was born in Aberdeen in 1848. He studied at Aberdeen University before going to Germany for post-graduate research where he gained a high reputation for his strong Protestant theology. He was Principal of Hackney Theological College in London and published his most influential work, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, in 1909.

The present chief was recognized by the Lord Lyon in 1970. He has restored Ethie Castle near Arbroath, now the clan seat, making the family motto highly appropriate.

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