

# Clan GRIERSON



## ARMS

Gules, on a fess Or between three fetterlocks Argent a mullet Azure

## CREST

A fetterlock Argent

## MOTTO

Hoc securior (More secure by this)

## SUPPORTERS

(on a compartment embellished with bluebell flowers) Two cats rampant guardant Sable each charged on the shoulder of a fetterlock Argent

## STANDARD

Azure, a St Andrews's Cross Argent in the hoist and of two tracts Or and Gules, upon which is depicted three times the Crest upon a chapeau Azure furred Ermine, along with the Motto 'Hoc securior' in letters Argent upon two transverse bands Azure

## PINSEL

Gules, displaying the Crest within a strap and buckle Proper with the Motto 'Hoc securior' in letters Or and within a circlet Or ensigned of a chapeau Azure furred Ermine the title 'Grierson of Lag' in letters Gules, and the fly an Escrol Or with the Slogan 'Lag' in letters Azure along with a stem of bluebells Proper

## PLANT BADGE

A stem of bluebells Proper

**T**he personal name of Gregor is from the Greek word for 'vigilant' through its Latin translation, 'fregorius'. This was a popular name in the Middle Ages, particularly among the clergy. 'Grierson' is believed to be derived from this forename, and it has been conjectured that the family come from the same stock as the Macgregors. However, modern historians have refuted this, and no evidence exists to support the theory.

Gilbrid Macgregor received a charter from the Earl of March of lands at Dalgarnock in Dumfriesshire. Around 1408, the Giersons obtained the lands of Lag, which was to become the principal seat of the family. In a charter of 1420, Gilbert Grierson is described as 'armor bearer' to Earl of Douglas. He married Janet, daughter of Sir Simon Glendinning, whose mother was Mary Douglas, daughter of the fourth Earl of Douglas and his wife, the Princess Margaret. This royal connection secured the early fortunes of the family and in 1460, Vedast Grierson of Lag built a strong tower on his lands. His son, Roger, obtained a royal charter in 1473 confirming his lands. He was killed at the Battle of Sauchieburn in 1488. The Lairds of Lag also followed James IV to the fateful field of Flodden in September 1513, where they met the same fate as much of the flower of Scottish chivalry. The Griersons declared for the infant James VI during the confrontation between his mother, Queen Mary, and the Protestant lords who held the child. Sir William Grierson of Lag was closely allied to the powerful Maxwell family, and he joined forces with them against the Johnstones of Annandale at the Battle of Dryfe Sands in 1593. He was knighted by James VI around 1608. His only son, Sir Robert, was succeeded by his cousin, also Robert, who was to become the first Baronet of Lag. Throughout the south and west of Scotland it was this Laird of Lag that for a time made the name of Grierson synonymous with terror and death, in his fierce persecution of the of the Covenanters during the reign of James VII. He was created a baronet of Nova Scotia in March 1685 and in the same year he surprised an illegal Covenanter service at Kirkconnell. In the struggle that ensued, most of the worshippers were killed and Lag was said to have refused to give them a decent burial. Whether the story was true or not, it was quickly spread, earning Grierson his feared reputation. One of the Covenanter Martyrs was John Bell of Whiteside whose stepfather was Viscount Kenmure. Lord Kenmure was with Graham of Claverhouse in Kirkcudbright when they encountered Sir Robert and a quarrel broke out. Kenmure drew his sword and was only dissuaded from fighting a duel by the intervention of Claverhouse. He made a splendid alliance when he married Lady Henrietta Douglas, sister of the Duke of Queensberry. Surprisingly, the Griersons did not support the overthrow of James VII, and considered William and Mary to be usurpers. Sir Robert Grierson was arrested in 1689 and held a prisoner for some months until a substantial cash surety was paid. He was imprisoned on two subsequent occasions, being at one point accused of a conspiracy to counterfeit money. He was cleared of all allegations, but his ordeal had broken his health and he died in 1736. He has secured a measure of immortality, as the writer Sir Walter Scott drew on his life in the novel, *Red Gauntlet*. His eldest son, William, second Baronet, died only four years later without an heir, and his brother, Sir Gilbert, succeeded to the title. From him descended Colonel William Grierson of Bardnooch, one of the intimate circle of friends of Sir Walter Scott. His eldest son, Thomas Grierson, was a soldier who distinguished himself at the siege of Delhi in 1857, but died later that year from wounds he had received. The eighth Baronet, Sir

Alexander Grierson of Lag, was also a regular soldier, being commissioned into the 78<sup>th</sup> Ross-shire Highlanders. Sir Robert Grierson of Lag, tenth Baronet, served in the King's Own Scottish Borderers during the First World War. By that time a great portion of the Grierson lands had been lost, although the ruins of the Tower of Lag still stand to this day.

Sir George Agraaham Grierson was a distinguished linguist who devoted much of his life to the study of the dialects of the Indian sub-continent. He studied mathematics at Trinity College, Dublin, where he discovered his ability to assimilate foreign languages and won prizes in Sanskrit and Hindi. He used this talent to obtain a government post in Bengal in 1873. He published two important works, *Seven Brammars of the Bihari Language* (1883) and *Bihar Peasant Life* (1885). In 1898, he began his life work, the *Linguistic Survey of India*, which ran to over eight thousand pages and contained information on over 364 languages and dialects. He was knighted in 1912.

Communications skills were also the first love of Dr John Grierson, born in Kilmadock near Stirling in 1898, and widely regarded as the father of the British documentary film movement. He was educated at the Universities of Glasgow and Chicago, making his first film in 1929, *Drifters*, a study of the lives of North Sea fishermen. He assisted in setting up the National Film Board of Canada in 1939 and on the outbreak of war made public information films for the government. He was a director of UNESCO and then film controller for the British Central Office of Information until 1950 when he embarked upon a career in television. He died in 1972. Other important branch families include the Griersons of Chapell, and of Dalgoner.

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

This clan information sheet has been prepared by  
The Scottish Society of Louisville, Inc.  
PO Box 32248  
Louisville, KY 40232-2248