



Clan KERR

ARMS	O a chevron Argent, three mullets of the Field (Kerr)
CREST	Dexter, the sun in his splendor Or (Lothian); sinister, a stag's head erased Proper (Kerr)
MOTTOS	Dexter, Sero sed serio (Late but in earnest); sinister, Froward in the name of God
SUPPORTERS	Dexter, an angel Proper, crowned and winged Or; sinister, a unicorn Argent, armed, unguled and named Or
STANDARD	The Arms in the hoist and of two tracts Argent an Gules, upon which is depicted three times the Badte ensigned of a Marquess' coronet Proper, along with the Motto 'Forward in the name of God' in letters Argent upon two transverse bands Azure
BADGE	A Kerr knot Or

The Kerrs were one of the great riding clans of the Scottish Borders, and their name is rendered in various forms, including Kerr, Ker, Carr an Carre. It stems from the old Norse, 'kjrr', meaning 'marsh dweller', and came to Scotland from Normandy, the French settlement of the Norse. A variant is found on the west coast of Scotland and particularly on the island of Arran, which has a separate derivation, taken from the Gaelic 'ciar', meaning 'dusky'. Nevertheless, family tradition asserts a Norman origin, from two brothers, Ralph and Robert (also called John), who came to Roxburgh from Lancashire. Which of the brothers was the elder has never been ascertained, but the senior branch of the family, the Kerrs of Ferniehurst, claim descent from Ralph, while their rivals, the Kerrs of Cessford, descend from John.

The influence of the Kerrs grew steadily throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and by the time of the fall of the Douglasses in the mid fifteenth century, the Kerrs had become Crown vassals with considerable influence. In 1451 Andrew Kerr of Cessford received a charter to the barony of Old Roxburgh, and in 1457 he was appointed warden of the marshes. The family ere confirmed in the barony and Castle of Cessford by a charter of 1493. Sir Andrew Kerr of Ferniehurst received a royal charter to the barony of Oxnam, and was appointed warden of the middle marches in 1502. This important and influential royal office was to pass in 1515 to another Sir Andrew Kerr, this time of the house of Cessford, who had fought at Flodden two years earlier. He was killed near Melrose while escorting the infant James V to Edinburgh in July 1526. His grandson, Mark Kerr, had his lands of Newbattle and Prestongrange erected into the barony of Newbattle by a charter of 1591, and in 1606 he ws create Earl of Lothian. This title failed when his son died in 1624 without male issue. Sir Andrew Kerr of the Ferniehurst line was created Lord Jedburgh in 1621.

The third peerage to come to the family was the earldom of Ancram, which was bestowed upon Sir Robert Kerr who was descended from a younger son of Sir Andrew Kerr of Ferniehurst. Sir Robert of Cessford, who now spells his surname with a single 'r', was created Earl of Roxburg in 1616. To add to the plethora of honors showered on the family, Sir William Kerr, son of the Earl of Ancram, was granted a new earldom of Lothian in 1631. His son, Robert, who was advanced to the rank of Marquess, also succeeded to the earldom of Ancram on the death of his uncle. The Roxburg title was later to be advanced to a dukedom, largely in return for supporting the political union of Scotland and England in 1707. The dukedom of Roxburg was to pass through female lines until, in 1805, the chief of Clan Innes inherited the title and compounded his surname as Innes-Kerr.

The history of the rivalry between the two branches of the family is so complex that few who are not deeply interested can unravel it. If Ferniehurst supported young James V, then Cessford was for the Douglasses. In the next reign of Ferniehurst was a staunch supporter of Mary, Queen of Scots, and did not abandon her cause, even after her flight into English captivity; but Sir Walter Kerr of Cessford led his men against the queen at the Battle of Langside in 1568. The feud only came to an end when in 1631 William Kerr of Ferniehurst married Ann Ker of Cessford, and it is their descendants who are the present Marquess of Lothian.

The first Marquess was Lord Justice General of Scotland. He had five sons and five daughters. One of these, Lord Mark Kerr, was a distinguished professional soldier and is reputed to have a high sense of personal honor and a quick temper. He fought several duels throughout his military career but rose ultimately to the rank of general, and

was appointed governor of Edinburgh Castle in 1745. His eldest brother, the second Marquess was created a Knight of the Thistle in 1705. Robert Kerr, one of the sons of the third Marquess, has the dubious distinction of being the only person of high rank killed on the Hanoverian side at the Battle of Culloden in 1746. His eldest brother, later the fourth Marquess, commanded three squadrons of cavalry at Culloden and survived to serve under the Duke of Cumberland in France in 1758. Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Walter Talbot Kerr, a younger son of the seventh Marquess, was a naval lord at the Admiralty from 1899 to 1904.

The twelfth and present Marquess of Lothian lives at Ferniehurst Castle, although the principal seat of the family in the great mansion house of Moneviot. His son, Michael Ancram, is a Member of Parliament.

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