

Clan MACKAY



ARMS

Azure, on a chevron Argent, between three bears' heads couped of the Second, muzzled Gules, a roebuck's head erased between two hands grasping daggers, the points turned towards the buck's head all Proper

CREST

A dexter arm erect couped at the elbow the hand grasping a dagger also erect all Proper

MOTTO

Manu forti (with a strong hand)

SUPPORTERS

(on a compartment embellished with bullrushes) Dexter, a pikeman armed Proper, jacket and stockings Gules, laces, collar, ruffles and boots also Proper; sinister, a musketeer, his coat and stockings Vert, laces collar, ruffles and boots Proper, breeches and baldrick Gules, his helmet plumed as the other, sustaining in his exterior hand a musket resting on the ground Proper

STANDARD

The Arms in the hoist and of two tracts Azure and argent, upon which is depicted the Crest in the first compartment, and the Badge in the second and third compartments, along with the slogan 'Bratach ban Mhic Aoidh' in letters Argent upon two transverse bands Gules

PINSEL

Argent, semée of mullets Azure and dexter hands couped appaumée Gules bearing upon a Wreath of the liveries the crest within a strap Azure buckled and embellished Or, inscribed with the Motto 'Manu forti' in letters Argent, all within a circlet also Or fimbriated Vert, bearing the title 'Mackay, Lord Reay' in letters Azure, and in an Escrol Azure surmounting a great bullrush Proper the Slogan 'Bratach ban mhic aoidh'

BADGE

A great bullrush Proper

PLANT BADGE

Great bullrush

In Gaelic, this name is rendered as 'Macaoidh', 'son of Hugh'. Exactly who Hugh was is uncertain. Sir Iain Moncreiffe suggested that the name comes from a branch of the ancient Celtic royal house who disputed the throne in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. He asserted that the Mackays descend from Aedh, who was the last Abbot of Dunkeld, first Earl of Fife, and the elder brother of Alexander I. Aedh's wife was the granddaughter of Queen Gruoch, wife of Macbeth. Malcolm Macaeth, who was married to a sister of Somerled of the Isles, became Earl of Ross. He died in 1168. Malcolm's son-in-law became Earl of Caithness. He was also lord of the lands of Strathnaver where, by the fourteenth century, the clan appears to have become established in its recognized form.

Iye was chamberlain to Walter, Bishop of Caithness, in 1263. Angus Dubh, sixth in descent from the Chamberlain, married Elizabeth, sister of Donald Lord of the Isles and granddaughter of Robert II, around 1415. This indicates the importance the clan had achieved as such a marriage could not have been contemplated, except on political grounds. Angus is said to have been able to call out four thousand men from his lands at Strathnaver. From this pinnacle of power, the clan spent the next five centuries fending off their predatory neighbors, the Earls of Sutherland. They were ultimately to lose the lands to the Sutherlands in 1829. (For a detailed study, see Chief of Mackay by Dr Ian Grimble, published in 1965.)

In 1556 Iye Mackay, then the chief, was captured by the Sutherlands and sent as a prisoner to Edinburgh Castle. His grandson, Sir Donald Mackay, was created a Baronet of Nova Scotia on 28 March 1627. A year later he was elevated to the peerage as Baron Reay. Lord Reay was a distinguished soldier who fought for Charles I in the civil war. He was to have been created Earl of Strathnaver, but the royal patent was not completed. He went into exile in Denmark, where he died in February 1649. His second son, Angus, became a colonel in the Danish army. He married Catherine of Killernan and is ancestor of the Mackays of Melness. His elder son, John, the second Lord Reay, also fought for Charles I. His second wife was Barbara, daughter of Hugh Mackay of Scourie. Her father was better known as General Mackay, who commanded the forces of William and Mary at Killiebrankie in 1689. John's second son, Aenas, was Brigadier General of Mackay's Scotch Regiment in the service of the States General of Holland. The family settled in the Netherlands, where they prospered. Barthold Mackay was created Baron Ophemert in the Netherlands in 1822

In Scotland, the chiefly line passed to cousins from time to time, when the chief died without heirs. Eric, the ninth Baron Reay, got heavily into debt. The Earls of Sutherland encouraged him to borrow money, having first had their lawyers ensure that the Mackay lands were pledged as security. The Sutherlands acquired the entire estates when Eric died unmarried in 1875. The succession passed to his cousin, the Baron Ophenert who became tenth Lord Reay. His son, Donald, the eleventh Baron, was Governor of Bombay, Under Secretary of State for India and a Knight of the thistle. He was additionally created a peer of the United Kingdom, but this title became extinct on his death in 1921. The family maintained their links with the Netherlands, and on the eleventh Baron's death the title passed to his Dutch cousin, whose father had been Prime Minister of that country. Lord Reay died within months of succeeding to the title, which then passed to his fifteen-year-old son. The new chief became a British subject in 1938 and worked in the Foreign Office during the Second World War. He retained his Barony and Castle of Ophemert which escaped damage during the German occupation, although in 1966 an unexploded shell was dredged up from the moat.

There have been many distinguished Mackays in recent times. James Mackay prospered in business, becoming chairman of the P & O shipping line. He was created Earl of Inchcape in 1929. In October 1987, Donald Mackay, now Lord Mackay of Clashfern, was appointed Lord Chancellor of Great Britain. Formerly a professor of mathematics, he entered the law as a second career. He is the first Scot who is not a member of the English Bar, to be appointed head of the English judicial system.

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

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Clan MAC KAY septs

ABERACH	GRUMBEG, -AIG	MAC CA(I)ODH	MAC CUE
ABRACH	HETH	MAC CAA	MAC CUID
ALLAN	HUGH	MAC CAID(H)	MAC ETH
ALLEN	IYE	MAC CALLAN	MAC EYE
AYSON	KATY	MAC CALLEN	MAC GAA
BAIN(E)(S)	KAY(E)	MAC CASE	MAC GAF
BAYNE	KEAY	MAC CAUD	MAC GAGH
BANE(S)	KEE(S)	MAC CAW (S)	MAC GAHA
BAWN (E)	KEY(E)(S)	MAC CAY (E)	MAC GAHEY
BAYN(E)(S)	KIE(S)	MAC CEE	MAC GAUHY
CAY	MAC A	MAC CLAMERACH	MAC GAW(E)
CAYMAN	MAC AHAY	MAC CLAMRACH,-	MAC GAY (E)
COY	MAC AHEE	OCH	MAC GEE
EAS(S)ON	MAC AI	MAC COD (D)	MAC GEEHEE
ELSON	MAC AIDH	MAC CAE	MAC GEEHIE,-Y
ESSON	MAC AKEY	MAC COO	MAC GEHE (E)
EYE	MAC AKIE	MAC COOE (Y)	MAC GHIE
FAILL	MAC ALLAN	MAC COU	MAC GIE
FALL	MAC ALLEN	MAC COUH	MAC GOEY
GEE	MAC AW (E)	MAC COY	MAC GUE
GILLAM	MAC AY(E)	MAC COYD	MAC GYE
GILLIAM	MAC BAIN(E)	MACCRIE	MAC HAY

MAC HETH	MAC KUE	MAC YE	NILSON
MAC HEY (S)	MAC KY	MAC A	OYKELL
MAC HIE	MAC KY (E)	MACIESON	PAUL
MAC HOC	MAC KUE	MACKIE	PAULSON
MAC HUGHEY,-IE	MAC KY	MACOKEY	POL(L)SON
MAC IDH	MAC KY(E)	MACOY	POLE
MAC ILVAIN	MAC MORGAN	MAGEE	POLES(T)ON
MAC ISALL	MAC OH	MAGY	POLLARD,-ERD
MAC IYE	MAC OU	MAKAY	POULSON
MAC KA(A)	MAC OYD	MAKCAW (E)	QUA
MAC KAI	MAC PHAIL	MAKE (E)	QUAID(E)
MAC KAVENEY,-IE	MAC PHIAL	MAKEE	QUAY
MAC KAW	MAC QUADE	MAKGIE	QUEY
MAC KAY(E)	MAC QUAY	MAKGY (E)	QUOID
MAC KCOY	MAC QUE (E)	MAKHE	REA
MAC KE(E)(S)	MAC QUEHIE	MAKIA	REAY
MAC KAY(E)	MACQUERY	MAKIE	SCABIE,-EY
MAC KEIAY	MAC QUEY	MAKY	SCOB(B)IE,-Y
MAC KEKE	MAC QUGH	ME CAY	SCOBEE
MAC KER	MAC QUHEE	MECEY, -IE	SCABIE,-EY
MAC KEW	MAC QUHIE	MEIKIE	SCOB(B)IE,-Y
MAC KEY (S)	MAC QUOID	MEKAY	SCOBEE
MAC KHEE	MAC QUOY	MEKEE (S)	STOBIE,-Y
MAC KIE	MAC VAIL	MORGAN	WALLSON
MAC KIYE	MAC VAIN	MORGUND	WALSIN
MAC KO(E)	MAC VANE	MURGANE	WILL(S)
MAC KOGH	MAC VANISH	NEIL(L)	WILLIAM(S)
MAC KOO	MAC WEY	NEILSON	WILLIAMSON
MAC KOY	MAC WILLIAM(S)	NIELSON	WILSON

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