



Clan MACLEOD

ARMS	Quarterly, 1 st & 4 th , Azure, a castle triple-towered and embattled Argent, masoned Sable, windows and porch Gules (MacLeod of that Ilk); 2 nd & 3 rd , Gules, three legs in amour Proper, garnished and spurred Or, flexed and conjoined in triage at the upper part of the thigh (Royal House of Man)
CREST	A gull's head cabossed Sable, horned Or, Between two flags Gules, staved of the First
MOTTO	Hold fast
On Compartment	Murus aeneus esto (Be a wall of brass)
SUPPORTERS	(on a compartment embellished with juniper plants) Two lions regardant Gules, armed and langued Azure, each holding aloft in his interior paw a dagger paleways Proper, hilted Or
STANDARD	The arms in the hoist and of two tracts Azure and Argent, upon which is depicted the Badge in the first and third compartment, and the Crest in the second compartment, along with the Motto 'Hold fast' in letters Argent upon two transverse bands Gules
PINSEL	Azure, the Crest within a strap Argent with buckle and furniture Or, bearing the Motto 'Hold fast' in letters Sable, all within a circlet Or bearing the title 'MacLeod of MacLeod' in letters also Azure and in the fly an Escrol Argent environing a branch of juniper Proper and bearing the Motto 'Hold fast' in letters Gules
BADGE	A bull's head Sable, horned Or, between two flags Gules, staved of the First, within a chaplet juniper Proper, ensigned of a chapeau Gules furred Ermine
PLANT BADGE	Juniper

It is generally held that Leod was the younger son of Olaf the Black, one of the last Norse kings of Man and the North Isles. Olaf died around 1237, and Leod inherited the Islands of Lewis and Harris, with part of Skye. Marriage to the daughter of the Norse seneschal or steward of Skye brought the family to Dunvegan, which remains the chief's seat to this day. When King Haakon of Norway was defeated at the Battle of Largs in 1263 he was forced to relinquish his residual claims to the Western Isles, leaving Leod in possession of almost half the Hebrides. The clan consisted of two main branches, the Macleods of Lewis, later 'of the Lewes', named after a son of Leod, Thorkil or Torquil (the 'Sio Torquil'0, and the Macleods of Skye, named after another son of Leod, Tormod (the 'Siol Tormod'0, who established their seat at Dunvegan.

The spirit of independence which this clan inherited from its Norse ancestors did not make them easy subjects of the Crown, although Tormod's son supported Robert the Bruce in the War of Independence. Historians have noted that virtually no royal charters were granted to confirm the Hebridean chiefs in their lands and titles. The Macleods were, of course, more concerned at the growing power of the Macdonalds. The Macleods followed the Lord of the Isles to the Battle of Harlaw in 1411, but when James IV set out to break Macdonald power the Macleods were successful in steering a path through the tortuous politics of the time. However, the Macleods, who did not owe the possession of their lands to any gift of the Stewart monarchs, were forced to accept a royal charter which did not include all that was theirs by right. James V continued the royal policy of suppressing the power of the Hebridean chiefs, and the survival of the Macleods is to a large degree due to the talent of the eighth chief of Dunvegan, Alasdair Crotach, 'Hump-backed'. Alasdair not only avoided the wrath of James at a time when many other island chiefs were imprisoned or dispossessed, he actually advanced the interests of the clan. He secured a title to Trotternish in 1542 which had long been disputed with the Macdonalds of Sleat. The famous fairy tower at Dunvegan Castle was constructed on Alasdair Crotach's orders, and he also rebuilt the church of Rodel in Harris where he was later entombed. The church and his tomb are considered two of the finest monuments in the Hebrides. He also had a flair for the dramatic, which enabled him to win a wager with James V. The chief is said to have been challenged on a visit to the royal court to admit that nothing in the isles could match the grandeur maintained by the king. Alasdair replied that he had a finer table and candlesticks than any the court could provide. When James V came to visit Dunvegan he found that Macleod had set out a feast on a high flat hill, known as 'Macleod's tables',

facing Dunbegan, and the whole scene was lit by clansmen in all their Celtic finery, holding aloft flaming torches. The king conceded defeat.

Alasdair died in 547 and was succeeded by his eldest son, William, who swiftly followed his father to the grave, leaving his only daughter, Mary, a young girl under the guardianship of the Earl of Argyll. The chiefship was seized by one of Mary's kinsmen, Iain Dubh, who promptly killed any of his rivals who came within his grasp, forcing Mary's only surviving uncle, Norman, to flee. Iain held Dunbegan until 1559 when, as royal justice was about to lay hands upon him, he fled to Ireland where he was later killed. Mary ceded her rights to her uncle Norman, who became the chief. Norman's second son, Ruaraidh Mor, succeeded as the fifteenth chief in 1595. He was knighted by James VI and he continued the work of Alasdair Crotach, establishing Dunvegan as the cultural center of the isles. He was described in a contemporary report as 'a very lordly ruler'. No chief of the Macleods can avoid at least once calling Rory Mor to memory. A great drinking horn, named after the fifteenth chief, is kept at Dunvegan and forms an integral part of the rite of passage of every Macleod chief. The horn, which holds a bottle and a half of claret, must be drained at one draft 'without setting down or falling down'. The present chief successfully maintained the honor of his family by performing this feat in less than two minutes.

The Macleods of the Lewes, leaders of the 'Siol Torquil', who had never fully accepted the ascendancy of their cousins at Dunvegan, were forced to do so when the head of that family, Torquil Macleod of the Lewes, was killed in 1597, and the barony passed to Sir Rory Mackenzie of Cogeach, husband of Torquil's daughter, Margaret. The representation of the 'Siol Torquil' passed to the Macleods of Raasay, senior cadets of the Lewes house. In 1988 Troquil Macleod of Raasay rematriculated his arms to be recognized by the Lord Lyon as Macleod of the Lewes, 'Chief and Head of that Baronial House under the MacLeod of MacLeod'. His standard is divided into three tracts, indicating his rank as a major baron-chieftain. The Mackenzies occupied Lewis, and to this day their chief, the Earl of Cromartie, calls his seat Castle Leod, although it stands on the mainland northeast of Inverness. The Macleods were not immune from mainland politics. The eighteenth chief led his clan into England to fight in the royalist cause at the Battle of Worcester in 1651. Cromwell's forces won an overwhelming victory, and over five hundred Macleods were killed in the battle. Although loyal to the Stuarts, the terrible loss at Worcester prevented the Macleods from taking a leading roll in the rising of 1715. They believed that the arrival of Prince Charles Edward in 1745, without a substantial French army, to be ill conceived, and bluntly refused to join his standard. However, the Macleods of Raasay followed the prince, taking many of the chief's clansmen with them. Dunvegans official rebuff to the 'Young Pretender' saved them from the wrath of the Hanoverian government following the disaster at Culloden, and their estates were spared.

The Macleods of Raasay had also acquired, by royal charter in 1571, the lands of Assynt in Sutherland, and from them the MacLeods of Assyt descended. Assynt became synonymous with treachery, when Neil of Assynt sheltered Montrose at his Castle of Ardvreck after the Battle of Carbisdale in 1650. Assynt, to claim the reward on the marquis's head, betrayed him into Argyll's hands and the scaffold. The name of Assynt came to the fore once more, when Norman Macleod, born near the ruins of Ardvreck Castle in 1780, became one of the most renowned Calvinist preachers of his day. He took his congregation from Assynt to Nova Scotia to found a religious community which later followed him like a biblical prophet from Canada to Australia and, finally, New Zealand. Norman's zeal found an echo in the twentieth century when the Reverend Dr George Macleod of Fuinary became, in 1937, leader of the Iona Community dedicated to the restoration of the cradle of the Celtic Church in Scotland. Twenty years later his work was recognized when he was created a life peer as Lord MacLeod of Fuinary.

The most treasured relic of the clan is the Fairy Flag of Dunvegan, called in Gaelic 'am Bratach Sith'. Theories abound as to how this fragile fabric, said to have magical properties, came into the chief's possession. It has been claimed variously to the robe of an early Christian saint and the war banner of King Harold Hardraade of Norway, who died in 1066, but principally it is said to have been woven by fairies to be used by the chief in time of dire need. Belief in its power is strong, and on at least two occasions the magic of the flag has been called on to turn defeat into victory. Sir Reginald Macleod of Macleod had the Fairy Flag mounted in a specially sealed frame. An expert from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London discussed with Sir Reginald the various possible origins of the flag, but avoided any reference to the supernatural. The chief listened politely, and at the conclusion of the thesis, simply said, 'You may believe that, but I know that it was given to my ancestor by the fairies'.

The castle at Dunvegan has been renovated and remodeled. Sympathetic Victorian additions have done nothing to detract from the grandeur and elegance of what is still the chief's home, inherited from his grandmother, Dame Flora Macleod. An active clan society and the present chief have continued Dame Flora's work to maintain Dunvegan and promote the fellowship of clansmen throughout the world.

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Clan MAC LEOD Septs

ASKIE,-EY	MAC ANDIE,-Y	MAC CLEOUD	MAC CUAG
ASKING	MAC AS(S)EY	MAC CLESKIE,-Y	MAC CUIAG
AULA Y	MAC ASEE	MAC CLOUD	MAC CUSKIE(E)Y
BETHUNE	MAC ASGILL	MAC CLOW	MAC GILLECHALUM
CAIG	MAC ASKILL	MAC CLOWD	MAC GLADE
CASKIE,-Y	MAC AULAY,-EY	MAC CLOYD	MAC GRIMEN
CLOUD	MAC CABE	MAC COO	MAC HAIG
CRIMMON(D)	MAC CAGUE	MAC COOL(E)	MAC HAROLD
GASKELL	MAC CAIG	MAC CORKELL	MAC IAG
HAR(R)OLD	MAC CASKEN	MAC CORKLE	MAC KAGUE
LEOD	MAC CASKIE,-Y	MAC COSKEY,-IE	MAC KAIG
LOWD	MAC CASKIN	MAC COUSKY,-IE	MAC KASIE,-Y
MAC AFILICHIE,-Y	MAC CEG	MAC CRIHMON(D)	MAC KASKEL
MAC ALEAR	MAC CLE(A)D	MAC CRIHMOR	MAC KASKILL
MAC ALEER	MAC CLEAD	MAC CRUMMIN,-EN	MAC KASKLE

MAC KEAG(UE)	MAC LOUD	MACKOOL	ROSSIE,-(E)Y
MAC KEG	MAC LOUTH	MACKOUL	ROUSAY
MAC KLOW	MAC LOW(E)	MACKSOUD	ROWSAY
MAC KOOL	MAC LOWD	MACOOL	ROWZ IE
MAC KOSKI(E),-Y	MAC LOYD	MALCOLMSON	SCALPIE,-Y
MAC KOUL	MAC LUDE	MHIC LEOID	SCALPIE,-Y
MAC KUSKIE,-Y	MAC LURE	NIC(H)OLSON	SKIDDIE,-Y
MAC KUSKIE,-Y	MAC LUSKIE,-Y	NICHOL(L),-S	TASKILL,-ELL
MAC LASKIE, -Y	MAC NICHOL(S)	NICKLE(S)	TORK(E)
MAC LAUD	MAC NICOL(L)(S)	NICOL(L),-S	TORKIL(D)SON
MAC LEAD	MAC OLESKIE,-Y	NICOLSON	TORMON(D/T) SON
MAC LEOB	MAC RAIL (D)	NOR(R)IE	TORMONT,-D
MAC LEOD	MAC RIMMON	NORMAN (D) (North)	TULLEMIE,-Y
MAC LEOSH	MAC WHOOL	NORRY,-IE	WILLIAMSON
MAC LEOW(D)	MAC WILLIAM(S)	RASSIE,-Y	
MAC LESKIE,-Y	MAC WOOL	ROSSE (Y)	

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