



Clan MORRISON

ARMS

Per bend sinister Gules and Argent, a demi-lion rampant issuant Or, armed and langued Azure, holding in his paws a battleaxe, the shaft curved, of the Third, axehead of the Fourth in chief, in base, issuing from the sea undy Vert and Or, a tower Sable, windows and port Or, over all a bend sinister embattled Azrue, charged with an open crown Or, jewelled giles. Between two fleur de lies Argent

CREST

Issuant from waves of the sea Azure crested Argent, a mount Vert, thereon an embattled wall Azure masoned Argent,

and

issuing there from a cubit arm naked Proper, the hand grasping a dagger hilted Or

MOTTO

Teaghlach Phabbay (Pabbay family)

On Compartment Dun Eistein

SUPPORTERS

(on a compartment consisting of two timber logs of driftwood Proper floating in the sea Azure crested Argent) Two dolphins hauriant Vert issuant from the waves

STANDARD

The Arms in the hoist and of two tracts Gules and Argent, upon which is deicted the Crest in the first and third compartments, and the Badge in the second compartment, along with the Motto 'Teaghlach Phabbay' in letters Or upon two transverse bands Azure

PINSEL

Gules, bearing the foresaid Crest within a strap and buckle Proper, inscribed with the Motto 'Teaghlach Phabbay' in letters Or, all within a circlet Or bearing the title 'Morrison of Ruchdi' in letters Azure and in the fly a strand of driftweed Proper, surmounted of an Escrol Argent bearing the Motto 'Dun Eistein' in letters Sable

BADGE

A tower embattled Sable, port and windows Or, issuant from the sea wavy Azure crested Argent, upon the battlements two hands couped Proper grasping a broadsword in pale Or

PLANE BADGE Driftweed

This ancient name highlights the problems created by the Anglicization of Gaelic names. It seems quite likely that there are three quite distinct origins – two Hebridean and one mainland. In County Donegal, the O'Muirgheasains, whose name means 'sea valor', were bards, and keepers of the holy relics of St Columcille at Colnmany. It is believed that a branch of this family found its way to Habost on the northeast coast of Lewis. Meanwhile, further to the south, Ghille Mhuire, or 'servant of the Virgin Mary', was, according to tradition, washed ashore, having survived a shipwreck by clinging to a piece of driftwood. This is commemorated in the clan's plant badge. The virgin's servant has been claimed as a natural son of King Olav, and therefore half-brother of Leod, the progenitor of the Macleods. However Olave's son came ashore, he married the heiress of the Gows, or clan Igaa, who held Pabbay in the sound of Harris. The Gows were noted armorers. Their descendents were thereafter known as Mhic 'ille Mhuire. In 1346 Cedhnain, son of MacIain of Ardnamurchan, married the heiress of the Morrisons of Lewis but whether this was a descendent of Ghille Mhuire of O'Muirgheasain is disputed. Perhaps the two families had by this time intermarried as the learned origins of the O'Muirgheasais would have qualified them for the post of hereditary brehon, or judge, which the Morrisons certainly were on Lewis by the late thirteenth century. Cedhain was compelled to take his wife's name which, as he was a descendent of the great Somerled, King of the Isles, suggests that she was of equal rank, and probably a descendent of King Olav. The match brought the Morrisons even closer to the Lords of the Isles, and this, together with the office of brehon, gave them power and influence. In

1493 the Crown finally broke the power of the Macdonald Lords of the Isles, but was in no position to establish royal justice. There followed almost two centuries of feuds and unrest. The Morrisons were not a numerous clan and tried to live at peace with their more aggressive neighbors. The Macaulays of Uig killed Donald Ban, the brother of John Morrison the Brehon, at Habost. When the Morrisons retaliated by raiding Uig, the Macaulays appealed to their allies, the Macleods of Lewes. The Brehon was soundly defeated at the Caws of Tarbert, whereupon a strong force of Macaulays and Macleods invaded the Morrison lands. The chief was captured and imprisoned at Rodil. He managed to escape, but the Macleods used their influence with the king to have him declared an outlaw. As every man's hand was now turned against him, Morrison resorted to desperate measures and kidnapped one of the Macleod heiresses. He agreed to surrender her in exchange for a royal pardon. The girl was apparently released, none the worse for her ordeal. The feud was carried on by the next chief Uisdean, or Hucheon, who invaded north Harris. Once again, the Macleods intervened, and Iain Mor Macleod engaged the Morrisons at Clachan on Taransay. It is said that Hucheon was the only Morrison to survive the battle, swimming over two miles to the mainland despite serious wounds.

The power of the Morrisons on Lewis survived the defeat, only to be finally broken when Hucheon, on his death bed in August 1566, confessed to being the natural father of Torquil, until then accepted as the lawful son of Roderick Macleod of Lewes and his wife, Janet Mackenzie. Macleod disinherited Torquil, set aside Janet as an adulteress and took a third wife. She bore two sons, Torquil Dubh and Tromod. The older Torquil, now half-brother to the Morrison chief allied himself to the Mackenzies of Kintail who, through him, claimed the island of Lewis. In the bloody war which followed the Morrisons sided with the Mackenzies against the Macleods, and both Hucheon's successor, Iain Dubh, and his son, Malcolm Mor, were killed. The Mackenzies were ultimately victorious when, on 14 February 1577, Regent Morton forced the Macleods to recognize Torquil's right to succeed to the Macleod lands. Torquil then drove the Morrisons, his erstwhile allies, from their lands, and Lewis thereafter became a Mackenzie fief. The Morrisons later returned to settle in Ness, but the power of the brehons was forever lost.

On the mainland the Morrisons, whose senior representatives were the Morrisons of Bognie in Aberdeenshire, appear to have no connection whatsoever with their Hebridean namesakes, but are descendents of Maurice, a Norman name derived from the Latin, 'Mauricius', meaning 'dark-skinned', or 'swarthy'. Although individuals of the name distinguished themselves both in Scotland and abroad, it was not until the twentieth century that a clan society was established and the chiefship vested in the Morrisons of Ruchdi.

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

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Clan MORRISON Septs

BRIEVE	JUDGE	MAC KILMORE	MURISON
ELMORE	MAC BRIEF(F)	MAC MAR(R) ISON	OYNIE
GILMER	MAC BRIEVE	MAC ROB (B)	PABBIE,-Y
GILMORE	MAC GILMORE, -OUR	MAC TARY	PABLAY
GILMOUR	MAC GILVOIR	MARNOCH,-K	REDFORD
INCH	MAC GILVOYLE	MAVER,-OR	REIDFORD,-URD
INNES	MAC ILMORE	MIDDLETON	WILSON
INNIE,-Y	MAC ILVOIL	MORISON	
INSCH	MAC ILVOR	MORRIESON	
JUDD	MAC ILVOYLE	MORRISON	

This clan information sheet has been prepared by
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