

Clan AGNEW



ARMS	Argent, a chevron between two cinquefoils in chief Gules and a saltire couped in base Azure
CREST	An eagle issuant and regardant Proper
MOTTO	Consilio non impetu (By wisdom not by force)
SUPPORTERS	Two heraldic tygers Proper, collared and chained Or
STANDARD	Azure, a St Andrew's Cross Argent in the hoist and of two tracts Argent and Gules, upon which is depicted the Badge three times along with the Motto 'Consilio non impetu' in letters Or upon two transverse hands Sable
BADGE	An eagle issuant and regardant Proper

This distinguished family has flourished in Wigtonshire and Galloway since the fourteenth century. The origin of the name is disputed, although it has generally been asserted to be Norman, from the Barony d'Agneaux. They first settled in England, but appear in Liddesdale in Scotland at the end of the twelfth century. A separate Celtic origin has also been suggested though the native Ulster sept of O'Gnimh, hereditary poets or bards to the great O'Neils of Clan Aodha Bhuidhe in Antrim who acquired the anglicized name of Agnew. The name was first written in English as O'Gwyn, and latterly, O'Gnew. This would give the Agnews a common descent with other great names such as Macdonald and Macdougall through Somerled, the twelfth-century King of the Isles. The Agnew eagle crest may echo the similar device which appears on the shield of the descendants of Somerled.

The fortunes of the family in Scotland were established when Andrew Agnew of Lochnaw was granted the lands and constablership of Lochnaw Castle in 1426. He was appointed hereditary Sheriff of Wigtown in 1451, an office still held by his direct descendents to this day. The sheriff's son, Andrew, married a daughter of the chief of the Macdowalls, and it was from his second son, William, that the Lochryan branch of the family descended. Andrew Agnew of Lochnaw was killed at the Battle of Pinkie in 1547. Sir Patrick was MP for Wigtownshire from 1628 to 1633, and again from 1643 to 1647. He was created a Baronet of Nova Scotia on 28 July 1628. He died in 1661 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Andrew, who had been knighted in his father's lifetime and who was also returned as MP for Wigtownshire. He was created Sheriff of Kircudbright as well as Wigtown in the 1650s when Scotland was part of the Protectorate with England. He married Anne Stewart, daughter of the first Earl of Galloway.

The family continued to prosper, and many alliances were made by inter-marriage with other prominent local families. The fourth Baronet married Lady Mary Montgomery, sister of the Earl of Eglinton. One of his grandchildren, Mary Agnew, married Robert McQueen who was to become notorious as the 'hanging judge', Lord Braxfield. Sir Andrew the fifth Baronet married his kinswoman, Eleanor Agnew of Lochryan, and produced no less than twenty-one children. He was a distinguished soldier who commanded the 21st Foot, later the Scots Fusiliers at the Battle of Dettingen in June 1743, the last occasion when a British monarch, George II, commanded troops in person. The king is said to have remarked that Sir Andrew's regiment had let French cavalry in among them to which Sir Andrew replied, 'Yes, please your Majesty, but they didna win back again'. Sir Andrew held Blair Castle, seat of the Duke of Atholl against the forces of the 'Young Pretender', Prince Charles Edward Stewart led by Lord George Murray in 1745. Murray, the Duke of Atholl's brother, had virtually starved out the garrison when he was ordered to lift the siege and return to Inverness to meet the advance of the Duke of Cumberland. The office of hereditary sheriff became purely honorary on the abolition of hereditary jurisdictions in 1747, and Sir Andrew Agnew received the sum of \$4,000 in compensation.

In 1792, Andrew Agnew, son of the sixth Baronet, renewed the family's links with Ireland when he married Martha de Courcy, daughter of the twenty-sixth Lord Kingsale. He died young and his son, the seventh Baronet, succeeded to the title and family estates when he was just sixteen years old. He married Madeline, daughter of Carnegie of South Esk, in 1816. He devoted himself to the improvement of his estates and almost completely rebuilt the Castle of Locknaw. He became MP for the County of Wigtown and was a strong supporter of the movement to preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath.

Many of the Irish Agnews were early emigrants to the new colonies in the Americas, and in particular to Pennsylvania. The castle and lands of Lochnaw have since passed from the family, but the world-wide family of Agnew has developed strong links with their Scottish homeland, largely through the efforts of the present chief, Sir Crispin Agnew of Lochnaw, eleventh Baronet. After a career in the regular army, he was called to the Scottish Bar and is now a distinguished advocate. He is also one of Scotland's leading heraldic experts and Rothesay Herald at the Court of the Lord Lyon. A thriving clan society exists and a tartan has been designed by the chief to further unite Agnews throughout the world.

Taken from *Scottish Clan and Family Encyclopedia*, by Collins. HarperCollins Publishers 1994.

This Clan information sheet has been prepared by
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