

Clan Colquhoun History

Clan Historical Facts



The Colquhoun motto being 'SI JE PUIS' translates as IF I CAN.

The name of Colquhoun is taken from an area of land around Kilpatrick which is on the north side of the River Clyde, to the west of Glasgow. These lands were granted to Humphrey of Kilpatrick by Malcolm, Earl of Lennox, in the time of Alexander II. In the 14th century, Sir Robert Kilpatrick married the Fair Maid of Luss, daughter of the Laird of Luss, and it is since then the chief of the Colquhouns has been known as Colquhoun of Colquhoun and Luss.

1592

According to Mr Fraser, the Family Historian, in July of that year, some of the MacGregors and MacFarlanes came down upon the low country of Dunbartonshire and committed vast ravages, especially upon the territory of the Colquhouns. At the head of his vassals, and accompanied by several of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, Sir Humphry Colquhoun attacked the invaders, and after a bloody battle, which was only put an end to at nightfall, he was overpowered by his assailants, and forced to retreat. To quote from Mr Fraser's "Chief of the Colquhouns"- *"He betook himself to the castle of Bannachra, a stronghold which had been erected by the Colquhouns at the foot of the north side of the hill of Bennibuie, in the parish of Luss. A party of the MacFarlanes and MacGregors pursued him, and laid seige to his castle. One of the servants who attended the Knight was of the same surname as himself. He had been tampered with by the assailants of his master, and treacherously made him their victim. The servant, while conducting his master to his room up a winding stair of the castle, made him by preconcert a mark for the arrows of the clan who pursued him by throwing the glare of a paper torch upon his person when opposite a loophole. A winged arrow, darted from its string with a steady aim, pierced the unhappy knight to the heart, and he fell dead on the spot. The fatal loophole is still pointed out, but the stair, like its unfortunate lord, has crumbled into the dust"* The other version of this story is that Humphry was having an affair with MacFarlanes wife and was discovered in a compromising position with this lady. He managed to evade capture and retreated to his castle at Bannachra where indeed he was killed by an arrow fired through a window. The post script to this story is that his genitals were severed from his body and served to the said lady as a great delicacy. Whether she enjoyed the meal is left to the imagination of the reader.

1602

The following is an extract from "Your Clan Heritage" booklet on Clan Colquhoun, compiled by Alan McNie and published by Cascade Publishing Company, Jedburgh, Scotland.

"In 1602, the MacGregors made a regular raid on the laird of Luss's lands in Glenfinlas, and carried off a number of sheep and cattle, as well as slew several of the tenants. Alexander Colquhoun, who had before complained to the privy council against the Earl of Argyll for not repressing the clan Gregor, but who had failed in obtaining any redress, now adopted a tragic method in order to excite the sympathy of the king. He appeared before his Majesty at Stirling, accompanied by a number of females, the relatives of those who had been killed or wounded at Glenfinlas, each carrying the bloody shirt of her killed or wounded relative, to implore his Majesty to avenge the wrongs done them. The ruse had the desired effect upon the King, who, from a sensitiveness of constitutional temperament, which made him shudder even at the sight of blood, was extremely susceptible to impressions from scenes of this description, and he immediately granted a commission of lieutenancy to the Laird of Luss, investing him with power to repress similar crimes, and to apprehend the perpetrators".

This visit to the King at Stirling Castle became known as the "Bluidy Sarkis" episode. This commission in hindsight could possibly have been the root cause of the Battle of Glenfruin, but has to be taken in context with all the bad blood that appears to have existed between the Colquhouns and MacGregors. Glen Fruin was the final result of episodes going back over years between the two clans and resulted in even more misery for both Clans. Glen Fruin did not end the slaughter.

1603

The most infamous episode in Colquhoun History, "The Battle of Glen Fruin", also called the Glen of Sorrow, where in February of that year 140 Colquhouns and their supporters were slaughtered by MacGregors and MacFarlanes. To learn more about this please join us. It was as a result of this battle that the name of MacGregor was proscribed.

Septs of Clan Colquhoun.

Over the centuries people associated with the area or those who owed fuedal duty to the Laird, and gained the benefit of his protection, became followers of his banner and subsequently Septs of the Clan. When trouble raised its' head they were expected to fight and even die to protect the land and possessions of their Laird. As a result of this we now have a position where different names are considered to be a Sept of the Colquhouns. These are:

Colquhoun (and its' many variants), Cowan, Ingram, Kilpatrick, King, Kirkpatrick, Laing, McCowan, McMain, McManus, McLintock and McOwan.

The list of Septs are very subjective and many experts disagree over them, thus, we have the name King which is listed as a Sept of the Colquhouns but is also a Sept of the MacGregors, the one time deadly enemies of the Colquhouns. Similarly the name McLintock is a Sept of the Colquhouns and also the McDougalls.



Ancient Colquhoun Tartan

In the old days, tartans were dyed using available vegetable / wild plants as colourings



Helensburgh & Lomond Highland Games Chairman - Sephton MacQUIRE,
Patron of the Games - Sir Malcolm Colquhoun of Luss BT, Lady Katherine Colquhoun and
their son Fergus Colquhoun.