

2018 Honored Clans

Clan Elliot



That the Elliot clan originally derived from Angus has always been a tradition in the family and it is scarcely a coincidence that our name should be the same as that of the River Elliot in Angus. This little river runs into the sea near Arbroath and in ancient times was spelt 'Elloch' or 'Elloth' or 'Ellot'. The village of Abirlot (formerly Aberellot) which stands near its mouth, took its name from the river. As George Elliot in *The Border Elliots* observes: 'Altogether it is not too much to say that we have here a very probably derivation of the name, and one which accounts for its prevalence in this part of the country; (Angus).

This is strongly supported by Scott of Satchells whose work was published in 1688:

The town of Elliot was their antiquitie,
Which stands in Angus at the foot of Glenshie
With brave King Robert Bruce they hither came,
Which is three hundred and eighty years agone;
In west Teviotdale these gentlemen did dwell
They were twelve great families, I heard my goodsir tell;
Their chief was then a Baron of renown,
Designed Reid-heugh which is now called Lariston.

The move from Angus to Liddesdale would have been in the 14th Century probably about 1320-1321 when Robert the Bruce needed support to strengthen his Borderlands after the dispossession of William de Soulis as Lord of Liddesdale. This was an area of great strategic importance and a good reason to move a strong clan into the area.

The Elliots in Liddesdale became renowned as 'the best light cavalry' mounted and ready for sudden foray or swift revenge. The common people were inspired with an implacable hatred of the English and would bury their corn and remove the thatch on their roofs to deny sustenance and shelter to an invading army, while the cattle and sheep would be driven off and hidden in secret glens and mosses. Everywhere gaunt peel towers stood, guarding the fords and passes ready with their beacon fires to raise the alarm and rouse the countryside.

This was the way of it until the Union of the Crowns in 1603 when King James VI of Scotland became James I of England and difficult adjustments had to be made. The Elliots did not find this easy and much of their land was made forfeit as punishment for continuing their raiding and reiving. The Pacification of the Borders saw many Elliots leaving to escape hanging and imprisonment. Many to go to Northern Ireland and eventually from there across to a new life in America.

Many descendants of this fierce fighting clan became great soldiers, statesmen and diplomats. The Elliots of Minto produced great diplomats, a Viceroy of India, a Governor General of Canada and a founder of Hong Kong. George Augustus Elliott, Lord Heathfield, Governor of Gibraltar heroically withstood a three-year siege against the Spanish and French.

The Clan Society was founded by Sir Arthur Elliott of Stobs in 1972 following completion of his book on "The Elliots, The Story of a Border Clan" and has been going from strength to strength ever since. A clan museum is available to visit at Redheugh and a Gathering is held every four years to bring Elliots back to the clan lands. The Sir Arthur Elliott Memorial Trust is a charity dedicated to helping the local community. The Clan Elliot Society USA is now a non-profit organization and has a great presence at many Gatherings throughout the United States.

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Clan MacThomas



The Clan MacThomas takes its name from a 15th century Gaelic speaking Highlander, called Tomaidh Mor ('Great Tommy'). All the early Chiefs were seated at the Thom, opposite the Spittal of Glenshee. The Clan was mentioned in the Acts of the Scottish Parliament of 1587 and 1595. When the 4th Chief, Robert MacThomaidh of the Thom was murdered in 1600, the Chiefship passed to his brother, John McComie of Finegand, three miles to the south, which became the seat of the Chiefs.

The MacThomases flourished in Glenshee, acquiring a lot of property. Time was spent breeding cattle and fighting off those seeking to rustle them. The 7th Chief was John McComie ('McComie Mor') and his deeds have passed into the folklore of Perthshire and Angus. The legends surrounding this Highland hero abound: he kills the Earl of Atholl's champion swordsman; he slays the man who insulted his wife; he fights his son in disguise to test his courage; he overcomes a ferocious bull with his bare hands; and he puts to flight some tax collectors in defence of a poor widow single handed.

McComie Mor joined the Earl of Montrose at Dundee in 1644 and fought for the King's cause throughout the Civil War, but after the defeat at Philiphaugh, he withdrew from the struggle and devoted his energies to cattle raising. During this time the Clan further extended its lands and the Chief purchased the Barony of Forter in Glenisla.

The Government of Cromwell won McComie Mor's admiration for the prosperity it brought Scotland but, on the restoration of Charles II in 1660, the Chief found himself not only in trouble with Parliament, who fined him heavily, but also over a law suit that decreed that a forest on the Forter estate, which was leased to his cousin, Robert Farquharson of Broughdearg, did not belong to the MacThomases. The dispute over the forest led to a skirmish at Drumgley, near Forfar, where at a spot now known as McComie's Field, Broughdearg was slain in 1673, along with two of McComie Mor's sons. The fine, feud and the crippling law suit that followed ruined the MacThomases, and following McComie Mor's death, his remaining sons were forced to sell their lands.

The MacThomas Chief is mentioned in Government proclamations in 1678 and 1681 but the Clan was by now drifting apart with some going south into the Tay valley and Fife. The 10th Chief, Angus settled in Northern Fife where his family thrived as successful farmers until they moved to Dundee and became prosperous merchants, at the end of the 18th century, buying the Angus estate of Aberlemno. Others moved north into Aberdeenshire and one, William McCombie of Tillyfour, M.P. for South Aberdeenshire at the end of the 19th century, is today regarded as the father of the world-famous Aberdeen-Angus breed of cattle. Patrick Hunter MacThomas Thoms of Aberlemno, 15th Chief, was Provost of Dundee from 1847 to 1853, while his heir, the eccentric George Hunter MacThomas Thoms, advocate, bon vivant and philanthropist, became Sheriff of Caithness, Orkney and Shetland in 1870 donating, upon his death in 1903, his vast fortune to St. Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall, together with the Aberlemno estate. Having lost the Aberlemno estate, the chiefly family assumed the name MacThomas.

In 1954, the Clan MacThomas Society was formed and 13 years later, George's great nephew, Patrick Watt MacThomas, who married a 2nd. cousin of Her Majesty the Queen in 1941, was once again officially recognised by the Lyon Court by the historic designation 'The MacThomas of Finegand'. He died in 1970, being succeeded as 19th Chief, by his son, Andrew MacThomas of Finegand, who is our guest this year.

SURNAMES CONNECTED TO CLAN MACTHOMAS:

**Combie, McColm, McComas, McComb(e), McCombie, McComie,
McComish, MacOmie, MacOmish, Tam, Thom, Thomas, Thoms, Thomson.**

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