

## Grierson Ancient Origins

Gayle Greer Clutter-Friday, 7 September 2018

Clan Grierson is a lowland clan from the Dumfriesshire area. It is rich in history and achievements with 24 Chiefs and a blood lines spanning nearly 700 years. On the passing of the last Chief Sir Michael John Bewes Grierson (12th Baronet of Lag), his daughter and heir apparent, Sarah Anne Grierson of Lag is proud to become the 1st female in this line and 25th Chief of the Grierson Clan.

Crest Badge: The crest badge includes a single lock displayed within a strap and buckle, with the motto "HOC SECURIOR"

Motto: Hoc Securior, which translates from latin as 'Safer by this'.

Plant badge: Bluebell flowers, (*campanula rotundifolia*) being the proper plant badge of the name Grierson have long been symbolic of humility, constancy, gratitude and everlasting love.

Clan Plants Worn By the Highlanders: Grierson ~ stem of Bluebells

### ORIGINS

Dalriada was a country split by the sea, with a base in Ireland (the area of now County Antrim, Ireland) and territory also in the western portions of what is now Scotland. There are two legends concerning the origins of Scottish Dalriada (also known as Scotia Minor). One tells of a famine that caused the tribe of the Dal Riada to move into northern Ireland and parts of western Scotland. The other says that the Dal Riada moved north in Ireland because of famine and then aligned themselves with the Picts in Northern Ireland, thus gaining the right to settle in the Pict land of Caledonia (now called Scotland). In either case the settlement of Alba by the Irish Scotti apparently started around the second century AD. By the late fourth century, the Scotti had attained enough strength to draw the attention of the Picts. They were soon attacked and in retaliation Niall of the Nine Hostages, the High King of Ireland, landed with a sizeable force to punish the Picts. The little colony of Scottish Dalriada was saved and slowly gained strength over the next one hundred years. It is during the late fifth century that Fergus Mor (Big or Chief?) Mac (son of) Erc arrived in Scottish Dalriada.

Dalriada was comprised of the northwest of Scotland including the major islands. It was settled by a tribe of Celts called the Scots who came from Northern Ireland & eventually pushed out the native Picts. This kingdom maintained ties for a time to Ireland, but the Scots later became more independent & their name was eventually given to the entire country

Dál Riata (also Dalriada or Dalriata) was a Gaelic overkingdom on the western seaboard of Scotland with some territory on the northern coasts of Ireland, from which the kingdom originated & expanded. In the late 6th & early 7th century it encompassed roughly what is now Argyll & Bute & Lochaber in Scotland & also County Antrim in Ireland. In Argyll it consisted initially of three kingdoms: Cenel Loairn (kindred of Loarn) in north & mid-Argyll, Cenel nOengusa (kindred of Oengus) based on Islay & Cenel nGabrain (kindred of Gabran) based in Kintyre. By the end of the 7th century a fourth kingdom, Cenel Comgaill (kindred of Comgall) had emerged, based in eastern Argyll. The Lorn & Cowal districts of Argyll take their names from Cenel Loairn & Cenel Comgaill respectively.

Dál Riata is commonly viewed as having been an Irish Gaelic colony in Scotland, although some archaeologists have recently argued against this. The inhabitants of Dál Riata are often referred to as Scots, from the Latin *scotti* for the inhabitants of Ireland, & later came to mean Gaelic-speakers, whether Scottish, Irish or other

They are referred to as Gaels, an unambiguous term, or as Dál Riata. The kingdom reached its height under Áedán mac Gabráin (r. 574-608), but its expansion was checked at the Battle of Degsastan in 603 by Æthelfrith of Northumbria. Serious defeats in Ireland & Scotland in the time of Domnall Brecc (d. 642) ended Dál Riata's Golden Age, & the kingdom became a client of Northumbria, then subject to the Picts. There is disagreement over the fate of the kingdom from the late eighth century onwards. Some scholars have seen no revival of Dal Riata after the long period of foreign domination (after 637 to around 750 or 760), while others have seen a revival of Dal Riata under Áed Find (736-778), & later Kenneth MacAlpin (Cináed mac Ailpín, who is claimed in some sources to have taken the kingship there in c.840 following the disastrous defeat of the Pictish army by the Danes): some even claim that the kingship of Fortriu was usurped by the Dál Riata several generations before MacAlpin (800-858) The kingdom disappeared in the Viking Age.

Argyll (sometimes anglicised to Argyllshire) was a county of Scotland until 1975, when Scottish counties were abolished. At the time of abolition the county had boundaries as shown in the map. Argyll's neighbouring counties were Inverness-shire, Perthshire, Dunbartonshire, Renfrewshire, Ayrshire and Bute. Renfrewshire and Ayrshire were the other side of the Firth of Clyde. Bute was a county of islands in the firth. The county town was historically Inveraray, which is still the seat of the Duke of Argyll. Lochgilphead later claimed to be the county town, as the seat of local government for the county from the nineteenth century. Other places in the former county were Oban, Campbeltown, Dunoon and Inveraray. The Small Isles were part of the county, until they were transferred to Inverness-shire in 1891, by the boundary commission appointed under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1889

In 1975 the County of Argyll was abolished, with its area being split between Highland and Strathclyde Regions. A local government district called Argyll and Bute was formed in the Strathclyde region, including most of Argyll and the Isle of Bute from former county of the same name. The Ardnamurchan, Ballachulish and Kinlochleven areas of Argyll became part of Lochaber District, in Highland .

#### PICTS:

The Greeks sailed out in to the Atlantic and hugged the European coast. They discovered new lands and peoples. They sailed around Britain and called people in the north "Albiones." The Greek translation means "White People". When the Romans invaded Britain, they called the northern aristocrats who led their "Briton" infantry; "Caledonii."

The first historical reference to the Picts was in 297AD, when they were mentioned as enemies of Rome. Many historians assumed that the Picts were simply another Celtic Tribe. Although it is quite probable there was considerable Celtic stock in some of the southern tribes in the loose federation of tribes which eventually made up the Pictish Empire, it is the opinion of many historians that the Picts north of the Firth of Froth were made up mostly from the earlier, pre-Celtic people of northern Britain.

However, when a Roman fleet drove deep into the "Caledonian" homeland in 208 AD, they encountered "Orcadians" who voluntarily allied themselves with Rome against the Caledonii. This local reaction is evidence there was a hierarchical society there where some people considered themselves to be subjugated by the Picts.

The Picts had a tradition that they were descended from Scythians who fled before the Sarmatian onslaught which brought about their destruction as an Empire. The Scythian Empire began about 700BC reached its zenith at 400BC and vanished around 300BC. The Picts and Scythians had many

similarities, so there must have been considerable contact, if not intermingling, between their societies.

The Picts were of short stature and dark complexion. They colonized central and northern Scotland, at about 1000 BC, and entered northern Ireland about 200 AD. They were a fierce disciplined race with formidable military skills.

There were the northern warriors who the Romans fought and called "Caledonians." They fought so savagely that the Romans eventually built "Hadrian's Wall" to keep them out, then the Antonine Wall further north. Eventually the Picts harassed the Romans to the point where they left Britain in 453 AD.

No one knows when the Picts arrived in Scotland, or whether they were there all the time. Some historians claim they arrived in Scotland about 1000 BC, other about 500 BC, which would have been near the peak of Scythian power. It is acknowledged that the Celts flourished in what is now Austria while the Scythians were still forming their Empire on the eastern Steppes, and were greatly influenced by the eastern neighbors.

History records that St. Columba had to use an interpreter to speak to the powerful Pict King Bridei IV (554-584AD), clear evidence that the Picts did not speak the language of the Irish Celts.

They left ornate symbol stones and advanced practices of art and culture as well as a formidable military. A cultured people, there can be no doubt, and it is acknowledged they were an older race than either the Irish or the Scots. Unfortunately, their form of the Gaelic language was much different from that of the Scots, Irish, or Welsh, and with no written history, little else is known.

The Saxons in northern England at first kept clear of them, but as they began to drift northwards, the Saxons encountered these northern people and were defeated by them in a major battle in 685AD. Had the Picts lost, there would be no Scotland today.

By the year 750 AD the Picts ruled the largest kingdom in Scotland, yet 100 years later their kingdom had vanished. The reason for this is unknown, but many historians believe that in the 790's the fierce Vikings began to raid the northern coast of Scotland. They took over large parts of the Pictish kingdom such as Orkney, Shetland, Sutherland. The invaders smashed many Pictish strongholds. Historians also believe that the Picts lost a series of battles, and king in the struggle for territory and domination.

By 843, however, the Picts had united their lands with those of Dal Riata and accepted as their king Kenneth Mac Alpin, the King of Scots. There are various stories to explain how this happened but one likely explanation is that Kenneth Mac Alpin was descended from the Royal Pictish line through his mother. Since the Picts were a matriarchal society, Mac Alpin was probably entitled to join the two kingdoms.

Footnote: From: Jerry Greer: the Gaels and Gallowegians were of Viking origin. Galloway emerging after the end of the Dal Riata kingdom which was centered in the Hebrides.