

Family Convention of MacDuffie, MacDuffee, MacDuffy, MacFee, MacFie, MacPhee, MacPhie etc

By Warrant of 6 March 2024, the Lord Lyon King of Arms appointed me, as (then) Linlithgow Pursuivant Extraordinary, to be the Supervising Officer in respect of a Family Convention for “the family comprising the surnames MacDuffie, MacDuffee, MacDuffy, MacFee, MacFie, MacPhee, MacPhie and other accepted cognates”. My appointment relates to the Family Convention to find a suitable Commander for the Clan.

Before Lyon can recognise a Commander, the Clan or family must have an agreed name. The present Warrant encompasses seven different surnames, together with “other accepted cognates”. It is clear that, as at March 2024, Lyon was petitioned (and granted the warrant) in the name of a Clan but not in a single agreed name. It is therefore essential that the worldwide family agrees an appropriate name going forward, before the proposed Family Convention in May 2025.

The Scottish Clan tradition typically recognises and accepts variant spellings and related cognates, all under one Clan Name (and can be thought of as “many names, one clan”). The Clan Name can be drawn from different sources. For example, the Bruce family take their name from Brix in Normandy, and therefore have a geographic name. Those with the surname MacGregor are united under the banner of Clan Gregor (<https://www.clangregor.com/>), rather than Clan MacGregor. Moreover, the Clan Gregor recognises well over 60 associated surnames eligible to be members of the Clan: <https://tinyurl.com/Clan-Gregor>. Likewise with Clan Grant: <https://tinyurl.com/Clan-Grant>. (And Clan Chattan provides a unique example of a “confederation or alliance of clans” (to quote George Way of Plean and Romilly Squire), uniting separate families, such as the Mackintoshes, Macphersons, MacGillivrays, and others, under Clan Chattan and the leadership of a single Chief.)

The Clan Name is therefore an important part of the Clan identity, but it is a complex and nuanced tradition. It is important to emphasise that the name provides a basis for a common or shared identity, but does not require any individual member to change name, or any clan association to change name: the Clan Name is capable – as demonstrated by Gregor, Grant and many others – of representing a range of surnames.

My role as Supervising Officer extends only to the Family Convention and the identification of a Commander. My duty is to Lyon, and I report to him. Although my appointment does not extend to the selection of the name of the Clan, I will be looking to report consensus to Lyon in the selection of a Name in order to allow the Family Convention to go ahead. Critically, if the family is unable to agree a Name, there cannot be Commander appointed. Lyon will not appoint a Commander in respect of “Names X, Y and Z”. The Clan therefore needs an agreed Name before a Commander can be appointed in that name.

Professor Gillian Black

Carrick Pursuivant

21 August 2024