



On the bonny banks of Loch Lomond, long immortalised by Scotland's bards in song and verse, is the territory of the Colquhouns and it is there that much of the Clan's turbulent history unfolds. Although the name Colquhoun derives from the barony of Colquhoun in Dumbartonshire, which was granted in 1241, the lands surrounding Loch Lomond became part of the Clan estates through the late fourteenth century marriage of Sir Robin Colquhoun to the Fair Maid of Luss, a Celtic heiress to the lands of Luss. However, the irrepressible allure which this scenic region held to other neighbouring clans meant that the Clan Colquhoun were compelled throughout the centuries to defend their possessions through the might of the sword and the power of the law. Despite hostilities from the Macleans and the warlike MacGregors, the Clan vigorously asserted sovereignty over their lands, with Colquhoun clansmen often willing to lay down their lives to ensure the maintenance of the Clan's power in Luss. Even Colquhoun chiefs were ready to die for their people - in 1439, one chief died on the Loch Lomond island of Inchmurrin, a casualty in a battle with the Macleans of Duart. However, while the Colquhouns were ready to fight, they were not unskilled in the art of strategy, both in the field of battle and the field of politics. When Iain Colquhoun was requested by King James I to retrieve the apparently impregnable Dumbarton Castle from the Crown's enemies, he responded "Se je puis", hence the clan's motto. While the castle was indeed well fortified, it was cunning which won the day. Iain invited the castle's garrison to go hunting, and the undefended castle was easily taken by the King's troops.

The Clan's greatest enemies were the tumultuous MacGregors. In the Battle of Glenfruin in 1603, 200 Colquhoun clansmen lost their lives to the enemy clan, and the MacGregors carried off over 600 cattle and 280 horses, sheep and goats. The Colquhouns never fully recovered from the magnitude of the military defeat, and their lands passed, through a marriage of a Colquhoun heiress to a Grant chief in 1718, to the Clan Grant. Even under these circumstances, the astuteness of the Colquhouns shone through. The father of the heiress, Sir Humphrey Colquhoun having only his daughter to succeed him, made a deal with the Crown whereby he would renounce his baronetcy in return for an assurance that his daughter and son-in-law would inherit the lands and chieftainship of the Clan, but the Clan name would never be under the control of the Clan Grant.

Sir Ivar Colquhoun of Luss, the 28th Chief, resides on the Clan's original lands beside Loch Lomond at Camstradden, near Luss, Dumbartonshire. The Clan crest is a stag's head, and the motto is "Si Je Puis" meaning, in Old French "If I Can".

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