



The Clan Douglas are honoured in the pages of Scotland's story as a powerful and influential Clan who actively shaped the course of history down through the centuries. An ancient Clan, the name derives from the Gaelic "dubh ghlas", meaning "black stream", from a placename in Lanarkshire. Although the Clan dates back to early times, the first recorded Douglas is William Douglas in the 12th century. It was not long before the name Douglas became a regular entry. During the 13th century English occupation of Scotland, the infamous Edward I of England jailed Sir William Douglas, a man known as "le Hardi" meaning "the hard man". Edward I confiscated the Clan lands to give to an English knight, but he did not count on the strength of the Douglas blood. When Edward ignored a request to return the land, William's son James stormed the castle, slew its garrison, and then threw their bodies, food, horses and wine down the well. Still unsatisfied, the Douglases rode with Robert the Bruce to free Scotland from the grip of the English overlord. After the Scots' victory at Bannockburn in 1314, the service of the Clan Douglas was rewarded, and their place assured as an honoured and powerful Clan.

Such was the might of Clan Douglas that by 1450 they controlled the whole south-west of Scotland, and could summon 30,000 men on a whim. Marrying into the Scottish royal family eleven times, the political power of the Douglases became massive. The Earldom of Douglas was granted to the chiefs of the Clan in 1357, furthering the Douglas fortunes. The strength of Clan Douglas led the Crown to become wary of its greatest subjects, known as the

Black Douglasses, and James II took extreme measures to break their power. In 1440, the 6th Earl was lured to Edinburgh Castle, where he was tried and executed. Twelve years later, James II personally murdered the 8th Earl, stabbing the great noble when he attended the Castle on assurance of safe conduct. His brother James, the 9th Earl, took revenge on the King by sacking the royal Stirling estates with a band of Douglas warriors. In a final showdown with the King at Arkinholm, the Douglasses were defeated and the Earl's estates and title were revoked.

The Red Douglasses, another branch of the Clan, managed to obtain some of the forfeited lands and rose to prominence. The 11th Earl of Douglas was advanced to become Marquess of Douglas in 1633, and the title was again escalated to a Dukedom in 1703. When the 1st Duke died without an heir, the Douglas titles and chiefship passed to the Hamiltons. Presently the chiefship is vacant because the title's claimant retains the compound name of Douglas-Hamilton, which is unacceptable in the ancient laws of Clan succession.

The Clan crest a salamander atop a flaming cap, and the proud motto reads "Jamais arriere" meaning "Never behind".

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