

MACEWEN



ARMS

(of Marchmont and Bardrochat LR 40/29) 1 Quarterly, 1st & 4th, Or, a lion rampant Azure, gorged with a ducal crown Proper, and on a chief of the Second three garbs of the Field (MacEwan); 2nd & 3rd, Gules, three headless cranes Argent (Finnie)

CREST

The trunk of an oak tree sprouting Proper

MOTTOES

- (1) Reviresco (I grow strong again)
(2) Dieu premier servi (I serve God first)*

There are numerous spellings of this name, which is rendered in Gaelic as 'Maceoghainn'. The history of the Macewens is exceptionally complex, and there are thought to have been several different and unrelated clans or families associated with the name.

The Macewen identity is generally traced to Clan Macewen of Otter who held the barony of that name on the shores of Loch Fyne. Based on a surviving but incomplete fifteenth century pedigree, Sellar considered the ancestor of the Macewens of Otter to have been Eoghan (Ewan) - himself a descendent of a Celtic noble, Donnsléibhe. The Macewens of Otter therefore had a shared heritage with other Argyll families such as the Lamonts. The chiefs resided at Macewen Castle at Kilfinan. In the fifteenth century the clan was forced from its lands by royal authority. A charter of James I confirmed the barony of Otter to Sween Macewen with a destination to the heirs of Duncan Campbell of Loch Awe. Sween was the last known Macewen chief and following his death in 1493 the clan appear only as dependents of the Campbells or as broken (clanless) men. They are listed in an Act of Parliament in 1602, along with other

broken clans as subjects of the Earl of Argyll who was made answerable for their good behaviour. Following the loss of the barony of Otter, a group of Macewens moved to Lennox and adopted the name Ewing. In 1598 two hundred Macewens were described as broken Highland men heavily armed and living by robbery. Another Macewen family became the hereditary bards of the Campbells and the Macdougalls. Neil Macewen composed a poem on the death of Campbell of Glenorchy in 1630.

A separate historic group of Macewens settled in Galloway and may have descended from the Norman family of Bisset, taking its name from the thirteenth century chief, Eoin Bisset, and thereby inheriting the Bisset's oak stump crest. Another branch were the Camerons of Erracht, who became known as Clan Ewen. Both Macewan of Glenboig and Macewan of Muckley, a descendant of the chiefly line of MacDougall, recorded arms in the eighteenth century. The latter family is considered to be a sept of the MacDougalls.

Many bearers of the name have been notable in Scottish society. The brewer, William McEwan was born in Alloa in 1827. He became a highly successful businessman and later Liberal MP for Edinburgh Central. His biographer, Ian Donnachie, quotes a 1913 obituary describing him as a 'shrewd, hard headed businessman, one of the merchant princes of Scotland who built up his firm from small beginnings to huge dimensions and world-wide reputation'. Today the lager which bears McEwan's name remains popular in Scotland. Sir William Macewen (1848-1924) was a surgeon who pioneered modern brain surgery, bone grafts and hernia treatment. He was knighted for his services to medicine in 1902. Alexander MacEwen (1875-1941) served as Provost of Inverness and in 1930 became one of the founders and first leader of the Scottish National Party. Sir John Helias McEwen (1894-1962) was a Conservative and Unionist politician and soldier who served in Winston Churchill's wartime cabinet, and was rewarded with a baronetcy in 1953. Ian McEwan (b.1948) is a bestselling novelist whose work has been recognised with several prestigious awards including the Booker and Jerusalem Prizes.

The Clan Ewen Society was formed in 1977. More recently, moves have been made to consolidate the clan and make progress towards the recognition of a chief. In 2014, following a formal Family Convention, the Lord Lyon issued a warrant recognising Sir John McEwen, fifth baronet of Marchmont and Bardrochat, as Commander of the Clan. The simultaneous recognition of Thor Ewing as Commander of Clan Ewing confirms that the Ewings and the Macewens are now considered to be separate clans. In due course, it is hoped that both clans will be represented and led by full, "three feather" chiefs.

