

# Clan Irving

The Border Irvings & Irvines

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## To Be Recognised As Clan Chief

To be recognised as Clan Chief & Chief of the Name & Arms of a Scottish Clan by The Court Of The Lyon carries with it a certain responsibility that still has relevance in today's contemporary climate.

Historically, the principal function of the Clan Chief was to lead his clan and followers in battle on land and sea. The Clan Chief and Chieftains were at one time influential political characters and most notably in the Highlands where they wielded a large and arbitrary authority.

However, none of this ancient authority remains. The disarming of the Highland Clans after the Jacobite Rising of 1745 effectively eliminated clanship from ordinary civil or statutory law. And the most notable of all legislation was the Heritable Jurisdictions (Scotland) Act of 1746 that abolished traditional rights afforded to Scottish Clan Chiefs.

What little remains of this most ancient Scottish tradition sits within the principal legal jurisdiction of The Court Of The Lord Lyon. This is where chiefship and clanship is recognised in Scottish Law and for the recognition of Chiefships, with The Standing Council of Clan Chiefs as the principal body for matters to do with the Scottish Clan system.

Whichever way one looks at it, neither Clan Chiefs nor clans appear to carry much relevance for today's generation and the danger is that this state of affairs is likely to continue.

Leading up to The Gathering at Holyrood, Edinburgh in 2009, there was a resurgence of interest in Scotland driven predominantly by the media. This wave of interest continued for a few years but then seemed to dissipate like the Highland mist. It was only the 2014 Independence Referendum that caused a sea fret of interest in all things Scottish but even now the interest level has waned once more.

So why should a Clan Chief have any interest in creating and building a new platform to engage with future generations? After all ancestral seats are clearly visible and a Clan's tartan is widely known, and no doubt formally registered with the official body – The Scottish Register of Tartans.

If nothing is done to maintain the profile of the Scottish Clans and to actively engage with future generations, then one of the most important facets of what makes Scotland

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unique in its position and in the modern day could well be lost, and ultimately over time be consigned to the annals of Scottish history and tradition.

One should not forget that one of Scotland's greatest exports worldwide is its people and with them go its history and traditions embodied in the clan system and clan histories.

So here is a suggestion:

One perhaps should look to the role of the Clan Chief. Gone are the days where the Clan Chief wielded any power whether social, economic or political. What remains in today's contemporary climate is the truth and understanding of the history and background of each Clan.

Most Scottish Clans have their history written up in some format or other, and with a fortunate few the history is written into publications available in the public domain. With us, the Border Irvings & Irvines and variations of the Name – spread across the Borders and Lowlands of Scotland and throughout the nations of the Commonwealth, we are especially fortunate in having “The Book of the Irvings &c” originally published in 1907 at Rosemount Press Aberdeen. This was put together by Colonel J.B. Irving (1844-1925). He achieved this without the use of computers and databases, privately funded we understand, and drawing on the information provided to the author by those individuals in the 1890s/1900s who evidently had an interest in their roots and Scottish identity.

The role of the Clan Chief should evolve to become the guardian or keeper of each Clan's history, its roots and above all else its unique identity, the latter of course should be of particular focus for the Clan Chief.

Putting Clan history and its roots into the public domain through a dedicated website, much as we have done with [www.clanirving.com](http://www.clanirving.com), is a recognised and effective way forward.

Often within Clans and Clan Societies there are misconceptions over truth and fact. The Clan Chief's duty is to uphold the truth, dispel the fiction and to steer a clear path through misunderstandings. And with the Border Irvings & Irvines, we have not been without a misunderstanding or two, or indeed deliberate positioning by certain individuals over recent time.

Doing little or nothing means that for us as a recognised Scottish Clan since 1587, Clan members not only in Scotland but worldwide in North America, Australia and New

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Zealand where most of the Clan diaspora emigrated, may lose interest in their family history and ultimately their Scottish roots.

***It is important that we work together, as after all, we are all on the same side.***

**[www.clanirving.com](http://www.clanirving.com)**

If you have any questions or need assistance with tracing your Irving/Irvine roots, then please do not hesitate to email us on **[irvings@clanirving.com](mailto:irvings@clanirving.com)** and we will do what we can to help, to answer your queries and to steer you in the right direction on your journey of discovery.