

SCOTTISH CREST BADGES

Much confusion exists about the meaning, use and entitlement to wear Scottish Crest Badges, and it is constantly increased by well-meaning but ill-informed explanations. Even the popular name "Clan Crest" is a misnomer, as there is no such thing as a "Clan" Crest. The Crest is the exclusively personal property of the Clan Chief, and it is fully protected to him by the law in Scotland. The circumstances in which his clansmen may wear it are set out below. Although the Crest Badge is purchased by and is therefore owned by the clansman, the heraldic Crest and Motto on it belong to the Chief and NOT to the clansman. They are the Chief's exclusive heraldic property, which the clansman is only thus permitted to wear.

It is illegal for the clansman to misappropriate the Chief's Crest and Motto for any other use of his own, such as decorating his own silver, writing paper or signet ring, which anyway would mean that these articles belonged to the Chief who is the owner of the Crest and Motto on them.

Chiefs



Head of a Clan, who have been Officially Recognised as Chief by the Lord Lyon King of Arms, may wear:

EITHER the simpliciter, without the accompaniment of circlet, motto or feathers behind the badge
OR as is more usual, surrounded with a plain circlet inscribed with his Motto or Slogan, without a strap and buckle and, if they choose, with THREE eagle's feathers in silver behind the circlet.

If the Chief is also a Peer of the Realm, he may add his appropriate coronet of rank on top of the circlet, but this is a matter of his personal choice. This is shown in the example as a crown on top of the circlet.

Chieftains



Heads of large branches of a Clan, who have been Officially Recognised as Chiefs by the Lord Lyon King of Arms, may wear: either their own personal Crest within a plain circlet inscribed with the Motto, as for a Chief, but with TWO small eagles' feathers instead of the Chiefs three.

If the Chieftain is also a Peer, he may add the appropriate coronet of rank on top of the circlet. They may wear their Chiefs Crest badge without feather like any other clansman, as described for clansmen below.

Armigers



A person who has registered his or her own coat of Arms and Crest, or inherited these according to the Laws of Arms in Scotland from an ancestor who had recorded them in the Lyon Register, may wear their own Crest as a badge: either on its Wreath, Crest Coronet or Chapeau,
or, as is more usual, within a plain circlet inscribed with his Motto.

An armiger is entitled to one silver eagle's feather behind the plain circlet, and if he is also a Peer he may add his appropriate coronet of rank on top of the circlet.

An armiger may also choose to wear instead the Crest badge of his Chief if the armiger is a clansman.

Clansmen and clanswomen



These are the Chiefs relatives, including his own immediate family and even his eldest son, and all members of the extended family called the "Clan", whether bearing the Clan surname or that of one of its septs; that is all those who profess allegiance to that Chief and wish to demonstrate their association with the Clan.

It is correct for these people to wear their Chiefs Crest encircled with a strap and buckle bearing their Chief's Motto or Slogan. The strap and buckle is the sign of the clansman, and he demonstrates his membership of his Chiefs Clan by wearing his Chiefs Crest within it.

References:

<http://www.lyon-court.com/>

<http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/lordlyon2.htm>