

# Clan BEATON



<b>ARMS</b>	A gold fesse between three gold lozenges on a blue shield.
<b>CREST</b>	An otter's head erased argent
<b>MOTTO</b>	Dabonnair (Graceful)

Two learned families named Macbeth and Beaton or Bethune practiced medicine in the Isles in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Their names in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries became merged in 'English in the one surname Beaton. The Macbeths practiced in Islay and Mull, and the Beatons in Skye. The first of the Islay family on record is Ferros Macbetha, who witnessed and probably wrote the Gaelic charter of 1408. The family for the next two centuries were official physicians to the Chiefs of Macdonald, from whom they held lands. Gilchristus M'Veig, surrigitus or surgeon in Islay is in record. Fergus M'Baithe in 1609 received from James VI certain lands in Islay in his official capacity as "principalis medici intra bordas Insularum" - chief physician within the bounds of the Isles.

His son, John Macbeath, succeeds in 1628 to the lands, but gave them over to the Thane of Cawdor in following year. The words "Leabar Giolla Colaim Meig- gethadh" (book of Malcolm Macbeth) are written on one of the Gaelic manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland, glossed in the same hand "Liber Malcoli Betune". The Mull Beatons or Betons were hereditary physicians to the Macleans of Dowart. In 1572 Hector MacLaine of Dowart granted a charter to Andrew MacDonil Vikinollif (ie. Son of the doctor) and his heirs of the Pennyland of Piencross [Pennycross] and Borlas for his skill in the medical art. Martin says that Dr. Beaton was sitting on the upper deck of the "Florida" of the Spanish Armada when it blew up in Tobermory Bay in 1588 and he was thrown a good way off, but lived several years after. Another of the Mull family was Fergus M'Veagh in Pennycross whose medical MS, is now in the library of Edinburgh University. A branch of the family early settled in the Fraser county, and in 1589 it is recorded that they had possessed a davich in Glenconvinth "time out of mind." In 1558, one of them, James Bethune, attended Lord Lovat. He was known "as Tolly- Mullach - An T-Ollamh Muileach, the Mull doctor - showing that he was of the noted physician of that island. The race declined in the Aird, and before the end of the sixteenth century one of them, John M'Klich - John son of the Doctor who kept Lord Lovat's flocks, got into trouble by helping himself to his master's muttons, and was saved from punishment by his wit and skill in archery, By 1622 they probably ceased to practice the healing art. The Beatons of Skye "were real Beatons or Bethunes from Fife, descended from the Laird of Balfore.

A grandson of the fifth laird, Dr. Petere Bethune, settled in Skye about the middle of the sixteenth century. His descendants were numerous, and intermarried with the best families in Skye and the Isles. They are still strong in Skye. The Gaelic of the name is Peutan or Beutan. The last of these hereditary physicians came to an end in 1763 in the person of Niel Beaton. Bittoune 1675.

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