

# Clan CHARTERIS



<b>ARMS</b>	Quarterly, 1 <sup>st</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> , Argent, a fess Azure within a double tressure flory counterflory Gules (Charteris); 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> , Or, a lion rampant Gules, armed and langued Azure
<b>CREST</b>	A dexter hand holding up a dagger paleways Proper
<b>MOTTO</b>	This is our Charter
<b>SUPPORTERS</b>	Two swans, wings elevated Proper, gorged with an Earl's coronet Proper

Chartres, the French city famed for its cathedral, is claimed as the origin of this name. William, a son of the Lord of Chartres, is said to have come to England with the Norman Conquest, and his son or grandson came north to Scotland with the retinue of David I. One of the earliest references to the name is found in a charter to the Abbey of Kelso around 1174, where the name appears in its Latin version, de Carnoto. In 1266 a charter of confirmation provides evidence of four generations: Robert de Carnoto, knight, is said to be the son of Thomas, who was himself son of Thomas, son of Walther, Sir Thomas de Charteris was appointed Lord High Chancellor of Scotland by Alexander III in 1280, the first person to hold this office who was not also a clergyman, Andrew de Charteris rendered homage to Edward I of England in the Ragman Roll of 1296, but soon took up arms to fight for Scotland's independence, for which his estates were forfeited to Balliol, the English-sponsored King of Scots. His son, William, was an adherent of Robert the Bruce and was with him when Comyn was slain at Dumfries in 1306. Sir Thomas Charteris, now styled 'of Amisfield', faithfully supported the Scottish Crown and was appointed ambassador to England. In 1342 he was appointed Lord High Chancellor by David II. He was killed in 1346 at the Battle of Durham. A feud appears to have developed between the Charterises and the Kilpatrick's of Kirkmichael. In Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials of Scotland* it is recorded that in March 1526 John Charteris of Amisfield, his brother and his two sons were charged with the murder of Roger Kilpatrick, son of Sir Alexander Kilpatrick of Kirkmichael. A nobler dispute occurred in 1530, when Sir Robert Charteris, the eighth Laird, fought a duel with Sir James Douglas of Drumlanrig in what was said to have been one of the last great chivalric contests. It was fought with all the observance of a medieval tournament with heralds and the king himself watching from the castle walls. The joust was apparently fought with such fury that Charteris' sword was broken and the king had to send his men-at-arms to part the combatants.

In 1641 Sir John Charteris of Amisfield was appointed one of the Commissioners of Parliament to confirm the Treaty of Ripon. He was a supporter of the National Covenant but was not prepared to rise against the king. He was imprisoned in Edinburgh in 1643 and released in March 1645, having provided security for his good behavior. He joined the forces of the Marquess of Montrose after the Battle of Kilsyth, and was with the royal forces when they were surprised by Lesley's cavalry at Philiphaugh in September 1645. His brother, Captain Alexander Charteris, was one of Montrose's staff and followed him on his ill-fated campaign in Caithness in 1650. He was captured and along with the great Marquess was conveyed to Edinburgh for trial. He was executed on 21 June 1650, beheaded by the Scottish version of the guillotine, 'the Maiden'. It was perhaps poetic justice that this machine was also used to execute Montrose's archrival the Marquess of Argyll, after the Restoration. The Borders estates passed through an heiress to Thomas Hogg, who later assumed the name of Charteris. Colonel Francis Charteris, the male representative of the family purchased lands near Haddington, which he renamed Amisfield to recall his family's ancient seat in Nithsdale. He left an only daughter, Janet, who married the Earl of Wemyss, and her second son, the Honorable Francis Wemyss, later fifth Earl, inherited the substantial estates of his maternal grandfather, and in consequence assumed the name and arms of Charteris. The Charteris estates near Haddington are now sold but the magnificent Palace of Gosford House, partly by Robert Adam, is still the seat of the Earl of Wemyss and March, chief of the name of Charteris.

Another branch of the family which long disputed the chiefship with their Dumfriesshire cousins were the Charterises of Kinfauns in Perthshire. They are said to have received the lands of Kinfauns as a reward for supporting the cause of Robert the Bruce against the English. The Ruthven's, who held considerable sway over Perth from their nearby Castle of Hintingtower, often disputed the authority of the Charterises, which led to a bitter and bloody feud. In 1544 Patrick, Lord Ruthven, was elected Provost of Perth, but at the instigation of Cardinal Beaton, who suspected Ruthven of Protestant sympathies, he was deprived of the office and John Charteris of Kinfauns was appointed in his stead. The city declined to acknowledge Charteris, and barred the gates against him. Charteris, along with Lord Gray and the Lesleys, gathered armed forces and attacked the town. They were repulsed by the Ruthvens assisted by their neighbors the Moncrieffs, and Charteris was forced to flee. The Ruthvens remained Provosts of Perth until William Ruthven, Earl of Gowrie, was executed in 1584. In 1552 John Charteris had been killed by the earl's heir in the High Street in Edinburgh.

The family was not always involved in violent conflict, however: Henry Charteris was an eminent printer and bookseller in Edinburgh, and is credited with publishing the famous *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* of Sir David Lyndsay, which is still performed today. The printer's son was to become Professor of Divinity and a regent of the University of Edinburgh.

*Taken from Scottish Clan & Family Encyclopedia, by Collins, HarperCollins Publishers 1994*

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