

Grants played their part in many events that shaped Scottish history. They successfully brought peace in a lawless part of the Highlands. They joined the doomed and violent Jacobite uprising of 1745. And for two centuries they were guardians of one of the nation's greatest treasures.



THE MOST ENDURING REMINDER OF THE GRANTS' PRESENCE AT URQUHART CASTLE IS THE IMPOSING GRANT TOWER

Grant Clan tartan



Urquhart Castle



URQUHART CASTLE

The lands round Urquhart Castle were lawless and violent at the end of the 15th century.

John, Lord of the Isles, had been ejected due to a treasonable pact with the English but the new masters, the Gordons of Huntly, failed to gain effective control.

The Gordons then came up with the inspired idea of installing Sir Duncan Grant of Freuchie, an ageing warrior who worked closely with his grandson John 'the Red Bard' to bring order and peace and prosperity.

One of their main jobs was the repair of the castle itself. Rental revenues started to fill the royal coffers and the run-down Urquhart re-emerged as an impressive noble residence.

They did the job so well that in 1509 a grateful James IV awarded the lordship of Urquhart to the Grants.

The prosperity did not last and the men of the isles returned, taking the castle and the surrounding lands, and staying for three years.

When finally forced out they left with hundreds of cattle and 1,000 sheep.

John Grant went before the Lords of Council to claim damages and was awarded – but never received – £2,000.

Despite this calamity, he had done much to establish the family by the time of his death in 1528.

According to tradition the family originated with the 12th-century Gregor Mor MacGregor in Strathspey.

A Sir Laurence Grant was Sheriff of Inverness in 1263, a post held by another Grant in the 1400s.

But the earliest surviving references to the Grants as a clan survive from the time of John Grant and are contained in a document granting him remission for not attending a muster of the army in 1523.

The most enduring reminder of the clan's presence at Urquhart Castle is the imposing ruin of the Grant Tower which was where the lairds entertained and had their private rooms.

BALLINDALLOCH CASTLE

Few places have been home to the same family since the 16th century.

But Ballindalloch Castle still belongs to MacPherson Grants.

Known as 'The Pearl of the North', the castle was developed from a traditional tower house into an elegant and comfortable Victorian home.

While many changes date from in the 19th century, others were earlier.

The north wing was built by James Grant of Ballindalloch in the 1770s, supposedly for his favourite French chef.

Grant was an army officer who served in the Americas where he was ordered to crush the Cherokees.

Having considerable sympathy for his opponents he was slow to fulfil his instructions – yet he was also a supporter of the slave trade.

The family now runs the castle, which overlooks the River Avon in the Spey Valley, as a visitor attraction.

THE MONYMUSK RELIQUARY

A small, beautifully decorated box is among the great treasures displayed at the National Museum in Edinburgh.

The Monymusk Reliquary was possibly made at Iona Abbey around AD 750, perhaps to hold bones of St Columba.



It was among the contents of Monymusk House which was bought by Sir Francis Grant in 1712.

The box remained in the family's possession until the 1930s when it was bought for the nation.

The thin sheets of silver and copper alloy covering the reliquary are decorated with distinctive Pictish artwork with interlaced animals set against a stippled background.

Some believe the reliquary is the *Breccbennach* or 'Speckled Peaked One' which was shown to Scottish troops to inspire them before the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314.

Culloden



GRANT IS REPUTED TO HAVE PURSUED SOME OF THE GUARD RIGHT TO THE WALLS

CULLODEN

Grants were in the Jacobite ranks at Culloden in 1746.

Among them was Colquhoun Grant, the son of an Inverness-shire farmer.

Earlier in the uprising he was sent by Bonnie Prince Charlie to try to capture Edinburgh Castle.

Grant is reputed to have pursued some of the guard right to the walls where he stuck his dirk in the gate as an act of defiance.

He survived Culloden and went into hiding but became a law agent to his chief, Sir James Grant of Grant.

His relative Alexander Grant christened his son Charles – swords were clashed over the cradle and the baby was dedicated to Jacobite service.

Alexander was wounded at Culloden and forced into hiding, his property in Glen Urquhart was destroyed.

In 1756 he joined the British army – dying in Havana in 1762.



GRANT SITES

1 Arniston House:

The second wife of Robert Dundas, 4th Lord Arniston, builder of the west wing, was Jane or Jean Grant, the daughter of William Grant, Lord Prestongrange. Grant was both Lord Advocate and Solicitor General for Scotland. Robert Dundas succeeded him in both posts.

2 Ballindalloch Castle:

Acquired by the Grants in 1499, but burned by the Marquis of Montrose after his victory at Inverlochy in 1645. Passed by marriage to the MacPhersons in the 18th century, and still inhabited by the MacPherson-Grants.

3 Culloden:

About 100 Grants of Glemoriston and Glen Urquhart fought for Bonnie Prince Charlie. Most of those who surrendered were transported overseas to a harsh life of labouring in the colonies.

4 Urquhart Castle:

The castle was granted to John Grant of Glenmoriston by King James IV in 1509. He built the Grant Tower that today dominates the great castle. It was destroyed in 1691 to prevent its use by Jacobites.



Grant Tower at Urquhart Castle



Inside Urquhart Castle

