



MacAulays of Ardencaple

Source: <https://www.scotweb.co.uk/info/macaulay>

The clan was historically centred around the lands of Ardencaple, which are today consumed by the little village of Rhu and burgh of Helensburgh in Argyll and Bute. The MacAulays of Ardencaple were located mainly in the traditional county of Dunbartonshire, which straddles the “Highland Line” between the Scottish Highlands and Lowlands. Clan MacAulay has been considered a “Highland clan” by writers and has been linked by various historians to the original Earls of Lennox and in later times to Clan Gregor. The MacAulays of Ardencaple, like Clan Gregor and several other clans, have traditionally been considered one of the seven clans which make up Siol Alpin. This group of clans were said to have claimed descent from Cináed mac Ailpín, King of the Picts, from whom later kings of Scotland traced their descent. The chiefs of Clan MacAulay were styled *Laird of Ardencaple*.



Google Maps

Clan MacAulay dates, with certainty, to the 16th century. However, the clan’s fortunes declined in the 17th and 18th centuries. After the decline and fall of Clan MacAulay, which ended with the death of Aulay MacAulay of Ardencaple in the mid-18th century, the clan became dormant. With the revival of interest in Scottish clans in the 20th century a movement was organised to revive Clan MacAulay.

Origin

The origin of Clan MacAulay shares both land and names with the early medieval Earls of Lennox. The Classical Gaelic personal name *Amhlaóibh*, (today Anglicised as *Aulay*), was a common christian name in the early families of the Earls of Lennox..



Ardencaple (“cape of the horses” or “height of the horses”), the ancestral home of Clan MacAulay, was located on the shores of Gare Loch in the historical district of Lennox. In the Middle Ages, the Lairds of Ardencaple paid homage to the Earls of Lennox. Today, all that remains of the grand turreted mansion is a solitary tower.

Near the shores of Faslane (which today is consumed by Her Majesty’s Naval Base Clyde), there was a place called *Cnoch-na-cullach* (translation from Scottish Gaelic: “Knoll of the cock”). There is a legend that when a cock crowed beneath the branches of an old oak tree upon the knoll that a member of Clan MacAulay was about to die.