

Mottos & Crests

This section explains why care must be taken when examining mottos and crests. The use of these elements in armorial design tells us little and does not automatically indicate close blood relationship.

The gravestones in the Old St Regulus graveyard at Cromarty for the family of **Alexander Davidson**, a lawyer and the ancestor of the Davidsons of Tulloch, and a son of **Donald Davidson** in Newton near Cromarty, has a blank shield with the Corriehill motto "Sapienter si sincere" inscribed, probably an irregular adoption of the published motto.

There are plenty of examples of the descendants of this family copying armorial designs and motifs from other families before they matriculated arms.



Davidson Graves at Cromarty

A descendant of Alexander Davidson of Cromarty, **Duncan Davidson, 6th Laird of Tulloch**, was nominated and adopted as the Chief of the Clan Davidson in the early years of the 20th century. He matriculated arms in 1906 using the Corriehill motto. The Cromarty or Tulloch Davidson family had no known family connections with Corriehill. Records indicate that they had roots further west of Cromarty in the Black Isle and nearer to Inverness. The gravestones at Cromarty are fully chiselled and include what some claim to be the masonic skull and bones motifs.

Davidson of Muirhouse used another, probably a more recent motto, "Viget in cingere virtus", and since then many other mottos have been recorded by Davidsons.

Some of the mottos found associated with Davidson & Davison arms:

IN DEO FIDEMUS

We shall have faith in God

LUX EX TENEBRIS

Light in Darkness

MERCES PROFUNDO PULCHRIOR EVENIT

A recompense is fairer from a depth

PARATUS

Prepared

PER ANGSTA AD AUGUSTA

Through dangers to honour

PIETATE ET VIRTUTE

With piety and virtue

SAPIENS EXPERIENDO

He is wise by experimenting

SAPIENTER ET CANDIDE

Wisely and candidly

SAPIENTER SI SINCERE

Wisely if sincerely

SINCERE SI SIMPLICITER

Sincerely if innocently

TACE AUT FACE

Keep silence or do

TAM ARTE QUAM MARTE

As well by art as strength

VIGET IN CINERE VIRTUS

Virtue flourishes after death

We have details of one Davidson family using two different mottos within the same generation.

Crests

The earliest Davidson Crest that we know of was a **falcon or eagle's head**.

This motif was also used by those who served on the Northern Crusade of the Teutonic Knights.



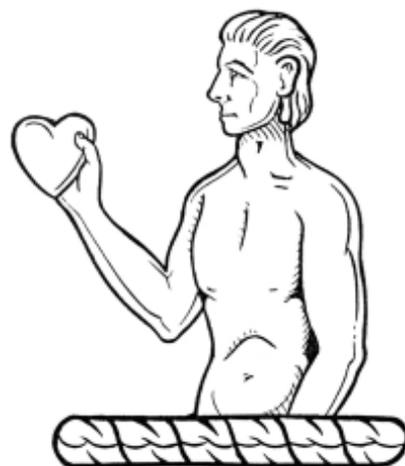
Crest on a Davidson Memorial
in Toronto, Canada



Falcon or Eagle's head

Certain matriculated Davidson arms show a man from the waist up holding a heart in his right hand. The earliest reference to this appears to be on the **Davidson of Corriehill [Curriehill] arms 1672-85**.

The **Tillychetly and Dess Davidson** families also used this crest. Some members of the Tulloch family also used it in an irregular way.



Man holding a heart



Right Hand holding a Heart

The Crest of the **Cantray Davidsons** is that of a right hand holding a heart.

The Heart in Scottish Heraldry is associated with the Douglas family and a story arising out of the wish of Robert the Bruce to have his heart taken to the Holy Land on Crusade. In the Davidson case it is said this was an allusion to the Mackintosh and Clan Chattan traditional clan connections where the heart is said to be that of a slain Comyn.

The **Tulloch Davidsons** have been reported to have changed, in Victorian times, their non-matriculated Falcon's crest to a Stag's head in recognition of a marriage to a Mackenzie of Gairloch.



Stag's Head