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# grip fast

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THE NEWSLETTER OF CLAN LESLIE SOCIETY  
OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND. (CLANZ)



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## DOWN UNDER

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Vol. 4, No 2, April, May, June 2007.

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### REPORT ON THE YEAR 2006

Well, another year has come and gone and we as a Society must look at what can be done to improve the position of Clan Leslie Society of Australia & New Zealand. I must point out that Jillian Burcher of Auckland New Zealand has been very ill during the year and has had to stand down as our New Zealand representative and has been replaced by Ruth Leslie of Manukau City, just south of Auckland. See the list of Clan Leslie Representatives on the back page.

I would ask that all members of CLANZ look at recruiting new members. This must be done if we are to survive as a Society. Look in your local phone book at the Leslies, ring and ask for Mr Leslie, say that you are a member of Clan Leslie Society of Aust & NZ and ask has he done any research into his family history. If he is not interested, thank him for his time. If he is interested or wants more information give him our website and offer to send information, let me know and I will send information to him. It is quite simple to do and will often result in a new member. The other way is to attend a local Scottish Gathering with a Clan Tent. I can give you information on how to do this.

The members that we have, must get involved. It is no use thinking that someone else will do it, I need help to run the Society and if several people assist, it will not take much of their time.

We need a person to take over as Convenor of Clan Leslie Society of Australia & New Zealand as I have been doing it for nine years now. Another position that needs to be filled is the Administrator for the Clan Leslie DNA Project. This is a very important project and really needs a Leslie or a Leslie descendant to stand up and take over the administration of this project.

*Barrie Leslie.  
Convenor, Clan Leslie Society  
of Australia & New Zealand*



### JOHN GOWING LESSLIE.

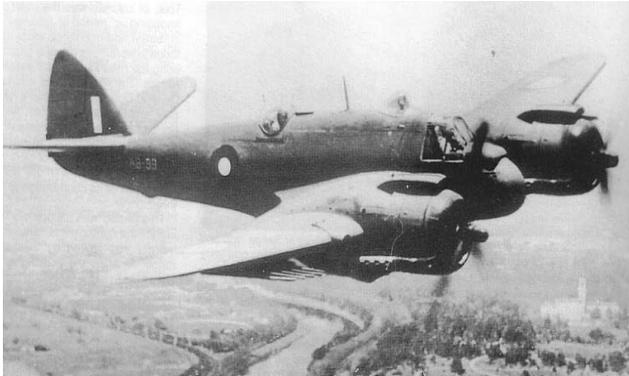
**LEADING AIRCRAFTMAN. 445754.  
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.**

John was born in Summer Hill, Sydney, New South Wales to William Rueben Lesslie and his wife Freda McAlister on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1925 and after his education he received an apprenticeship with A.W.A. at Ashfield in Sydney when he was 18, but when World War II broke out he managed to cancel his apprenticeship and enlisted in the R.A.A.F. Air Crew Training. He expected to be sent to Canada under the Service Flying Training School and the Operation Training Club, but was instead sent to Cootamundra and then Dubbo, both in New South Wales. He remustered as a Fitter / Driver and asked for a tropical posting and was shipped to Morotai. Soon after he had disembarked from the ship, it was torpedoed by the Japanese. He then went to Labuan in North Borneo, which was then known as British North Borneo, where he served as General Duties on the airstrip, among his duties were driving the Fire Tender,



*John, pictured 2<sup>nd</sup> from right when he was skinny*

trucks, etc, but one of the worst things he saw and which still stays with him was the crash of Beaufighter A8 247 at Labuan in November 1945, which suffered engine failure on takeoff and crashed while attempting to land. Two aircrew and two passengers were incinerated.



*Beaufighter of the type that crashed. Aircraft with odd numbers were built at Fishermans Bend in Melbourne and aircraft with even numbers were built at Mascot in Sydney, by the Dept of Aircraft Production (DAP).*

At the end of the War he went to Singapore and the Officer Commanding checked the facilities available, to pick up Australian prisoners of War from Changi Prison.



*John's Medals.*

John declined to join the Occupation Forces in Japan and flew home to Australia, where he was discharged 12 April 1946 and he then married "Judy" Mara at St Andrews Church at Summer Hill Sydney. They built a home at Merrylands, where they stayed for 22 years and then moved to Carlingford where they stayed for a further 5 years and then moved to Kenthurst in 1975.

John renewed and completed his apprenticeship and in 1949 after the birth of their first child, Pamela, they started a business as Toolmakers, progressing to Metal Stamping in the industrial

area of St Marys, in the far outer suburbs of Sydney, in premises that had been used by the Dept of Defence and leased out.



*John & Judy in March 1945.*

John and Judy then purchased the premises and their son Robert joined them in 1980 and helped to run the business until they sold the premises in 2003 and retired.

*Many thanks to John Leslie for the above.*

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### **A MESSAGE FROM THE HON ALEX LESLIE.**



*The Honourable Alex Leslie  
Acting Chief of Clan Leslie*

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A couple of years ago things in Leslie seemed a bit grim. Leslie House was for sale, and had already had one offer turn to dust as the potential new owner realised he could not simply develop the site as an office complex. Leslie crypt, found in the graveyard of the Kirk on the Green in Leslie, where centuries of Leslies and Rothes' had been laid to rest was suffering holes in the roof, and it was painful to watch the rain pour in. Now there is better news. I suppose actually the good news started just before my father died. One of the last things he heard was that Leslie House had been sold, and that we knew the new

owners – or at least his father-in-law, which was a start. He also knew before he died that we had finally got the local Council to commit to repairing the family crypt.

As with most good news like that, it was followed by many months of no news, of bad news, and of waiting. The Council dragged its heels, the rain continued to pour in, the new owners of the House seemed nice and well intentioned, but were having terrible problems with the Council about dry rot that had not come to light, and with planning permission to allow some ‘enabling development’ to take place, so that the funding for the restoration of the main house could proceed.

For a while it looked as if the whole project might go into reverse, and we would be back to square one.

Now, however, I am happy to report progress on both fronts. The latest news I have on the House is that the owners are in the final stages of negotiating with the Council on some minor developments in the grounds, so that the real work can start on the House.

The other news is that I stopped at the Kirk on the Green the other day and the Council has definitely started work on the crypt, the roof has been taken off and replaced by water tight, albeit temporary roofing, while the crypt is cleaned.

Soon, therefore, I should be able to report that the crypt is finished – which will also mean that I can move ahead with the plaque on the outside of the crypt, to commemorate my father, and which will be paid for by Leslies from near and far. Hopefully I will also be able to report on the work to the House – and having see some of the ideas, I am confident that, at least, Leslie House will remain Leslie House, and not be changed into something faceless.

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**PICTURES OF LESLIE HOUSE, FIFE.**



*Front Façade of Leslie House, Fife.*



*Front Façade & Courtyard of Leslie House.*

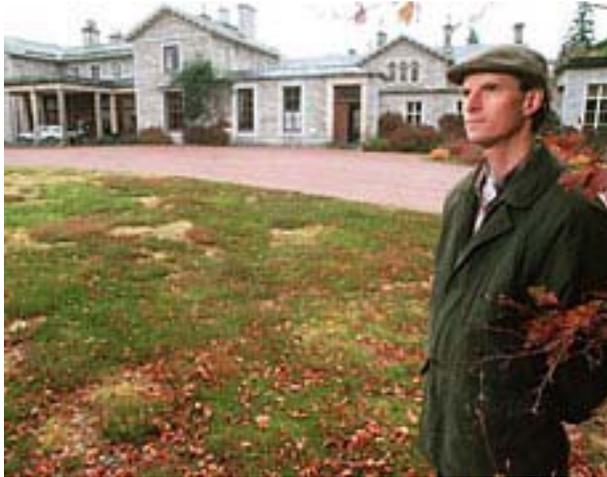
Many thanks to David & Sheena Leslie of Banchory, Kincardineshire for these photographs that show the current rundown state of Leslie House. Fife.

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**DEATH OF LORD BALGONIE  
DAVID MELVILLE-LESLIE.**

David Melville-Leslie, Lord Balgonie, son of Alexander, 14<sup>th</sup> Earl of Leven who lives in the family seat at Grantown-on-Spey was killed in an avalanche near Bruson in the Swiss Alps on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2007. David was with a friend, Patrick Baillie when they were caught

in the avalanche north of Tete de Payanne, at an altitude of 8000 feet.



*David Melville-Leslie at Bruson Switzerland*

Lord Balgonie lived at Glenferness House near Nairn Scotland, with his wife Julia and two children, Alexander 22, and Louisa 20. Lord Balgonie's son, Alexander is now heir to the title Earl of Leven.

The title of Earl of Leven was created in 1641 for Alexander Leslie, a soldier who had risen through the ranks in the Army of Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden who raised Alexander Leslie to the rank of Field Marshall. Alexander returned to Scotland in 1658 to command the Covenanting Army of Scotland, against Charles I of England, but this is another story.

*Barrie Leslie, Gordon, NSW.*

*See Story opposite on the Earls of Leven*



I hope that I will see you at Bundanoon on Saturday 28 April 2007 for the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bundanoon Highland Gathering. There will be in excess of 130 stalls, showing all sorts of Scottish

items, such as Arts & Crafts, Souvenirs, Clan items, and Scottish foods, such as Haggis, Scotch Pies and Black Pudding and every other type of food that you could imagine.

Once again the feature will be the lifting of The Bundanoon Stones of Manhood, which is a spectacle of strength, speed and agility by some of the strongest men in the land.

Admission to the grounds on the day will be Adults \$15, Children \$5 and a Family \$35, two adults and accompanying children.

The Heritage Express, Southern Aurora departs Central Station, Sydney. Please ring 02 93791031 for bookings and the Federal City Express Train departs Canberra, ring 02 62842790.

Pre-purchase of tickets is available through the Southern Highlands Information Centre please ring 1300 657 559.

Look at the Bundanoon Highland Gathering website [www.highlandsnsw.com.au/brigadoon](http://www.highlandsnsw.com.au/brigadoon) for further information.

Please come and see the show and come and see me at the Clan Leslie Tent.

*Barrie Leslie, Gordon, NSW.*

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## THE GREAT HISTORIC FAMILIES OF SCOTLAND

### THE LESLIE'S OF LEVEN.

ALEXANDER LESLIE, Earl of Leven, the distinguished general who commanded the army of the Scottish Covenanters in the Great Civil War, was the son of Captain George Leslie of Balgonie in Fife, by his wife, a daughter of Stewart of Ballechin. Having made choice of the military profession, he obtained at an early age a Captains commission in the regiment of Lord Vere, who was then assisting the Dutch in their memorable contest against Spain and soon rendered himself conspicuous by his valour and military skill. He afterwards served with great distinction under Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, by whom he was promoted to the rank of Field-Marshal. His successful defence of Stralsund in 1628, against a powerful army of Imperialists, under the celebrated Count Wallenstein, gained him great reputation; and the citizens showed their gratitude to their deliverer by making him a handsome present and having medals struck in his honour. In 1639, when the Scottish

Covenanters were preparing to resist, by force if necessary, the attempts of Charles I to compel them to submit to the new English Liturgy, General Leslie returned to his native country, along with a number of his brother officers and was appointed to the chief command of the army which had been raised by the Committee of the Scottish Estates. His plans were sagaciously formed and promptly executed and before the Covenanting forces marched towards the border to meet the hostile army which Charles was bringing against them from England, nearly all the strongholds of the country were in their possession. When their ill-advised Sovereign reached the Tweed, he learned to his surprise and dismay, that an army of at least twenty thousand men was encamped on Duns Law in readiness to repel force by force, with the most influential nobles in Scotland as their chief officers, with experienced soldiers for their subalterns and the whole under the command of a General who had gained, in the continental wars, a high reputation for military skill. *“We feared” says Baillie, “that emulation among our nobles might have done harm when they should be met in the field, but such was the wisdom and authority of that old little crooked soldier, that all with an incredible submission, from the beginning to the end, gave o’er themselves to be guided by him as if he had been great Solymán”.*



*General Alexander Leslie. 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Leven.*

Charles I finding that his soldiers had no heart in fighting in his quarrel and that he was quite

unable to resist the formidable army, which General Leslie had brought against him, was fain to come to an amicable agreement, 28<sup>th</sup> June 1639, which, however was not of long duration. In the following year the Covenanters found it necessary to reassemble their forces and Leslie again assumed the chief command and marched into England at the head of a well-equipped army, consisting of twenty three thousand infantry, three thousand cavalry and a train of artillery. He defeated the Royal forces that opposed his passage of the Tyne and took possession of Newcastle and other important towns in the north of England. These successes led to the Treaty of Ripon and compliance on the part of the King with all the demands of the Scottish Covenanters.

In the following year (1641) Charles I visited Scotland for the purpose of conciliating the Presbyterian party and created General Leslie Lord Balgonie and Earl of Leven. When the civil war at length broke out and the Scottish Estates resolved to send assistance to the Parliament, the Earl once more took the command of their forces. He was present at the Battle of Marston Moor and commanded the left division of the centre of the Parliamentary forces, which was broken by the impetuous charge of Prince Rupert and driven from the field, but David Leslie assisted in retrieving the day, which terminated in the total defeat of the Royal Army. While the Scots were engaged in the siege of Newark, the unfortunate monarch repaired to Leslie's camp, 5<sup>th</sup> May 1646, but his obstinate refusal to comply with the proposals of the Covenanting leaders made it impossible for them to espouse his cause.

On the termination of the war General Leslie resigned his command on account of his great age, but was present as a volunteer at the Battle of Dunbar in 1650. In the following year, he was surprised and taken prisoner by one of Cromwell's officers, along with a number of noblemen and gentlemen, who had met at Alyth, in Forfarshire, to concert measures for the restoration of Charles II. He was conveyed to London and confined in the Tower of London, but was ultimately set at liberty through the intercession of Christina, Queen of Sweden and returned to Scotland in 1654. He died in Scotland in 1661 at a very advanced age.

General Alexander Leslie had two sons, both of whom predeceased him. The elder, Alexander, Lord Balgonie, left by his wife – a sister of the Duke of Rothes a son also named Alexander and

a daughter. The former succeeded his grandfather as the second Earl of Leven, the latter married the first Earl of Melville and their son became the third Earl of Leven. The second Earl of Leven, who died in 1664, left two daughters who were successively Countesses of Leven in their own right. The elder, Margaret, who married the second son of the seventh Earl of Eglinton, died without issue. Catherine, the younger, died unmarried. Her aunt the Countess of Melville, was served heir to her in 1706 and the title devolved upon her son.

David, third Earl of Leven and second Earl of Melville entered the service of the Duke of Brandenburg in 1685 and became Colonel of a regiment of foot, with which he accompanied the Prince of Orange to England at the revolution of 1688. He fought at Killiecrankie and distinguished himself in the campaigns in Ireland and in Flanders. He attained the rank of Lieutenant-General in 1706 and was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Scotland.

The two sons of the fifth Earl of Leven were officers in the army and the younger, Alexander, served in the American war and was second in command under Lord Cornwallis, who, in his despatches, commends him in the highest of terms. The elder, David, sixth Earl of Leven had four sons, three of whom entered the military service of their country. One was killed in the American War. The other two earned the reputation of brave and energetic officers and both reached the position of Lieutenant-General. Alexander, the seventh Earl, married a daughter of John Thornton of London, the eminent banker, whose munificent charities are mentioned with glowing eulogies in the "Life and Letters of Cowper" the poet.

His eldest son David Leslie-Melville, eighth Earl of Leven, entered the Navy and attained the rank of Vice-Admiral. His two sons predeceased him. The elder Alexander, Viscount Balgonie, was an officer in the Grenadier Guards and died in 1857, worn out by the hardships and privations of the Crimean War. On the death of the eighth Earl of Leven, in 1860, his estates, yielding £3,089 18s a year, were inherited by his eldest daughter, Elizabeth Jane, who married Mr T. B. Cartwright, a son of the late Sir T. Cartwright, G.C.H., but the family titles passed to the Earl's brother John Thornton whose eldest son; Alexander Leslie-Melville, 10<sup>th</sup> Earl of Leven and 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Melville, is now the head of the house. He has a small estate in Fife of 1,019 acres, with a rental of £1,761 11s; and one in

Nairn of 7,805 acres, yielding £1,317 4s a year. The Balgonie Estate, which belonged to General Alexander Leslie, the founder of the family and has a rental of £5,102 6s; was sold by the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl a good many years before his death.



*Tower / Keep of Balgonie Castle, sold in 1824 to James Balfour, grandfather of the British Prime Minister Arthur Balfour 1902-1905*

*Excerpt from  
"The Great Historic Families of Scotland"  
Barrie Leslie. Gordon. NSW.*

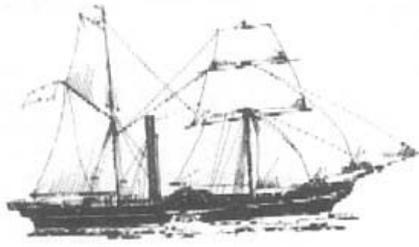
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### **THOMAS DYER-EDWARDES OF PRINKNASH PARK.**

You will be wondering who Thomas Dyer-Edwards is and what he has to do with Clan Leslie. Quite simply Thomas Dyer-Edwards was the father of Countess Noelle wife of Norman Evelyn Leslie 19<sup>th</sup> Earl of Rothes and survivor of the "Titanic" sinking.

Thomas Dyer-Edwards father was Thomas Dyer-Edwards Snr an Englishman who came out to Australia in 1829. He was born at New Shoreham. near Worthing Sussex on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1807. In 1841 he was a passenger in the paddle steamer "Clonmel" which was a proud luxury addition to the trade between Sydney and Melbourne. However the "Clonmel" left Sydney on the afternoon of 30<sup>th</sup> December 1840 with passengers and crew numbering 75. At 3-00am on the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1841 the ship struck heavily at the entrance to what is now called Port Albert. After the passengers and crew reached shore, Edwards was one of a crew of five who launched a ship's boat in an attempt to reach Melbourne and raise the alarm. They were

picked up at the entrance to Western Port by a ship, the "Sisters" from Launceston and arrived at Williamstown at 11-00pm, sixty three hours after leaving the "Clonmel". The cutters 'Sisters' & "Will Watch" were immediately despatched to rescue the crew and passengers.



*The Paddle Steamer "Clonmel"*

Thomas Dyer-Edwardes married Martha Sharp in 1835 and in 1847 she gave birth to an only son Thomas Dyer-Edwardes Jnr and she died four years later. Thomas Dyer-Edwardes Jnr lived in Leamington England and came out to Australia to see his inheritance. He donated an acre of land for an Anglican Church to be built and St Georges Anglican Church, Reservoir, occupies the land though the Church has been rebuilt.

After returning to England, Thomas Dyer-Edwardes wrote to Preston Council in Melbourne and offered the land that he owned for a Park. This was readily accepted by the Council and is now called Edwardes Lake Park in his honour.

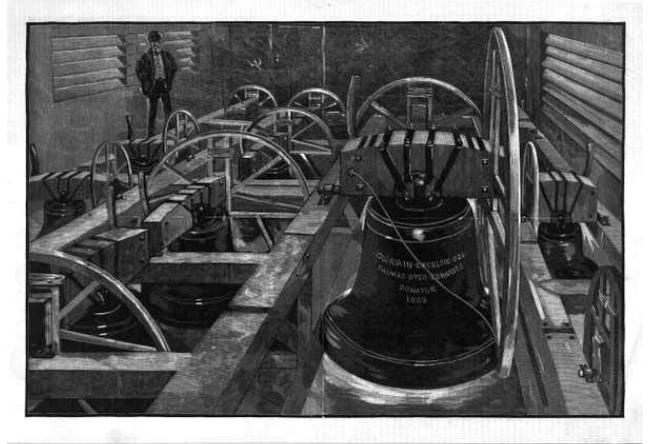
St Paul's Anglican Cathedral in Melbourne was also a recipient of his generosity of a peal of thirteen bells (the only peal of thirteen bells outside England), which was rung for the first time 15<sup>th</sup> November 1889.



*Thomas Dyer-Edwardes Snr.*

Thomas also made a second gift to St Pauls Cathedral of an organ. (made by T C Lewis &

Co of London in 1890) this was the cost to build the organ and the cost of transportation. It is now housed in the South Transept and has recently been rebuilt.



*The bells of St Pauls Cathedral in Melbourne.*

These gifts were made in memory of his father Thomas Dyer-Edwardes surviving the shipwreck of the "Clonmel"

Thomas Dyer-Edwardes Jnr married Clementia Lucy Drummond-Villiers and their daughter Noel Lucy Martha Dyer-Edwardes was born in Kensington London 25<sup>th</sup> December 1878 and she married Norman Evelyn Leslie 19<sup>th</sup> Earl of Rothes on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 1900.



*Edwardes Lake during filling in 1919*

Thomas & Clementina purchased tickets on the "Titanic" and disembarked at Cherbourg leaving their daughter Noel, Lady Rothes to continue on to New York, but as is well known the "Titanic" did not complete her voyage to New York.

Thomas Dyer-Edwardes was the Magistrate for the County of Gloucestershire and in 1888, he purchased the historic Prinknash Park. and started on the extensive alterations that he wished to make. These included alterations to

the house, the gardens, which included a sunken garden and the grounds themselves.

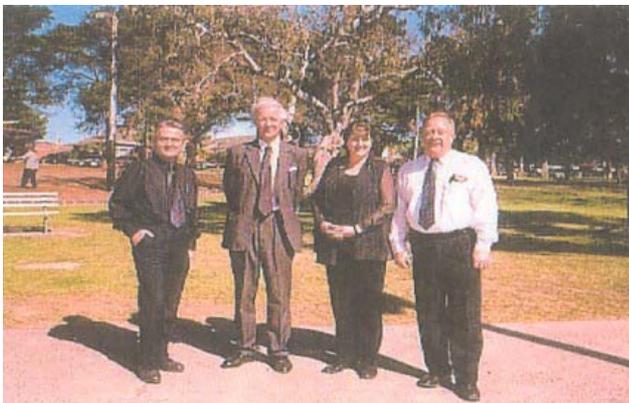


*Thomas Dyer-Edwardes, Jr.  
21<sup>st</sup> February 1847 - 10<sup>th</sup> February 1926*

Thomas had made a Deed of Gift of Prinknash Park to the Benedictine Monks of Caldrey but he died soon after and the Deed was not enforceable, but Norman 19<sup>th</sup> Earl of Rothes kept the wishes of his father-in-law and made a new Deed of Gift, dated 1<sup>st</sup> August 1928 to legalise the transfer of Prinknash Park to the Benedictine Monks.

In 2003 Alistair Pinckard Leslie, born 29<sup>th</sup> December 1934, 1<sup>st</sup> cousin to Ian 21<sup>st</sup> Earl of Rothes was invited to Edwardes Park Melbourne Australia, to participate in the celebrations on the improvements to Edwardes Park.

Thomas Snr also endowed a church at Waverley in Sydney NSW which I have to look for.



*Alistair Leslie (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) at Edwardes Park*

*Barrie Leslie, Gordon. NSW.*

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