

PATRICK LESLIE OF THE DARLING DOWNS

It was a fine afternoon, late on the 20th March 1840 that two riders drew rein to their horses and gazed out over a vast expanse of lush pasture.

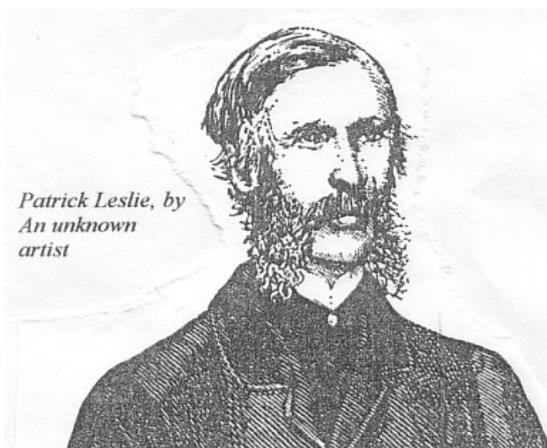
One was Patrick, the second son of William Leslie 10th Laird of Warhill; the other was Peter Murphy, an Irish convict assigned to Patrick Leslie. They had just completed an epic journey to reach the area, now known as "The Darling Downs". They were not the first white men to find the Darling Downs; Patrick Leslie was not even the first man to graze stock on the land. As early as 1831, Thomas Crampton regularly grazed stock there, but he did not build a homestead, or even have a permanent camp.

Patrick Leslie left Aberdeen, for London on 25th October 1834, and arrived in Sydney on the Emma Eugenia on 10th May 1835. He had letters of introduction to John Macarthur, and Hannibal Macarthur, as well as other influential families. Patrick studied sheep farming at both "Camden Park", the home of John Macarthur, and "The Vineyard", home of Hannibal Macarthur, at Parramatta. There were other interests at The Vineyard, such as Hannibal Macarthur's daughter Catherine [Kate].

Patrick had come to Australia on the understanding that he would manage the property of his maternal uncle, Walter Stevenson Davidson, at Collaroy, near Cassilis in New South Wales. Things were not well between Patrick and his uncle, as Walter

Davidson would not listen to suggestions, that the methods for handling a sheep station had changed since he was last in NSW, and worst of all, would not honour the debts that Patrick had incurred on the sheep station. Some of the faults were Patrick's, as he was rather lax in his bookkeeping.

Patrick's younger brothers, Walter and George arrived in Sydney in 1839, with news that their uncle, Walter Stevenson Davidson refused to honour the debts which now amounted to over Five Thousand Pounds. This was too much for Patrick and he resigned from his position, and his uncle had the sheep station valued and sold. Even then Patrick could get no relief for his financial troubles. This dispute caused a complete rift between the Leslie and Davidson families.



Patrick had heard about the Darling Downs, from the discoverer Alan Cunningham, whom he met at "The Vineyard", and decided that as land

[2] was too expensive close to Sydney, he would look north. Patrick Leslie and his brother Walter, accompanied by Ernest Dalrymple, Dr John Dobie and two convict servants headed north. They got as far as the Clarence River before the aborigines attacked them time and time again. They struggled on for another four days, but were finally compelled to retire to their camp at Falconers Plains.

Patrick decided that he would make another attempt to reach the Darling Downs, but this time just himself and Peter Murphy would make the attempt. From Falconers Plains, which is near Guyra, they struggled north, passing Glen Innes, Beardy Plains and crossed the Dumaresq and again headed north.

They emerged from the bush near what was to become Toolburra, they explored the Condamine Valley, and camped at what was to become Canning Downs homestead.



Canning Downs Homestead Circa 1842

Patrick selected the best of the land and then he and Peter Murphy returned to Falconers Plains, arriving at the camp on April 4th 1840. On the way back they were attacked on several occasions by aborigines, and Peter Murphy saved Patrick's life on several occasions. They waited for Walter Leslie to arrive from Sydney with the stock and further supplies. The drive north was started on April 14th with Patrick, Walter and 21 convict servants who were driving 4,000 breeding ewes, 100 rams and 1600 sheep, as well as a horse drawn dray, 24 bullocks and 10

saddle horses. The most remarkable feature of this drive, was that not one animal was lost on the way north.

The three brothers were eventually granted 100,000 acres of land.

Patrick hurried back to Sydney as soon as the preliminary work was done, to see Governor Gipps and asked for a ticket-of-leave [probation] for Peter Murphy who had twice saved his life. Governor Gipps however granted a conditional pardon to Peter Murphy, who died in Charters Towers in Queensland on April 6th 1878.

Patrick Leslie and Catherine Macarthur were married at St Johns Church Parramatta Sydney NSW on September 9th 1840, and had a honeymoon at Catherine's parents beach house at Watson's Bay Sydney.

I will continue this story in the next newsletter. As a matter of interest Patrick was my 4th Cousin.

Barrie Leslie Gordon NSW.

NEW SECRETARY AND TREASURER

I am happy to announce that Clan Leslie Society, Australia & New Zealand now has a new Secretary and Treasurer.

Jane Lingard, has accepted the position of Secretary, and **Robert Gowing Lesslie**, has accepted the position of Treasurer.

I look forward to working with them in the future, and to get Clan Leslie Society Australia & New Zealand Branch based on a very broad foundation. I would also like to expand the membership to try and get more members to take an active part in the affairs of the Society.

The addresses of both Jane and Robert are on the back page, under officers of the Society. If any members

would care to become regional councillors, please contact Barrie Leslie, as we need people to open “tents”, in other areas of Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY'S OWN HERALDIC ARTIST

Heraldic art, is an art form that fascinates many people, but for some, it is a life long passion. One such individual, is **Michael Spencer**. Michael has studied the subject for nearly forty years. His work has reached such high standards that incoming orders keep him constantly busy.

Michael studied heraldry at the City Literary Institute in London. The late Julian Franklyn, the celebrated author of the acclaimed books “Shield and Crest” and “Heraldry”, gave the two year course at City Literary Institute. Michael at that time, became an active member of “The Heraldry Society of Great Britain”.

Later he studied heraldic art and design, under Norman Manwaring, an eminent heraldic artist, who worked for “The College of Arms” in London. Over the years, Michael has developed a keen interest in Scottish heraldry, and has told me that more than 70% of his work, comes from Scots, or Australians of Scottish ancestry.

In recent times Michael has been involved in assisting and advising on all matters heraldic, for local Scottish Associations, and Clan Gatherings. Michael is currently designing Award medals for the Celtic Council of Australia, and in conjunction with his artwork, also gives illustrated seminars on heraldry to a wide range of community groups.

Michael is currently President of the Plantagenet Society of Australia,

which is an organisation devoted to the study of the Plantagenet Kings of England and their life and times.

Michael has painted two of the personal arms of my own family, one from 1805, and the other from the mid 1500s. I am very happy with the artistry, and can certainly recommend him to any members, who would like a painting of their family's arms, or a representation of certain Leslie arms.

Michael can be reached at the following address.

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Barrie Leslie.Gordon. NSW

NEW MEMBERS

Members are asked approach anyone that they know, who is descended from the Family of Leslie, and encouraged them to join Clan Leslie Society.

This means people with the surname of Leslie, and also those of the acknowledged septs of Clan Leslie. They are Abernethy, Bartholomew, Cairney, Lang and More and any of the spelling variations of those names. Bartholomew is from the founder of Clan Leslie, and the others came about through marriage.

IMPORTANCE OF THE CLS GENEALOGICAL SHEETS

Just to show how important it is to give your family information.

I was perusing the genealogical sheet of one of our members, when I noticed that she had listed that her GG grandmother, on her maternal side was Susanna Mary Ann Sparke, from the Hunter River region. I immediately realised that she was related to my wife, whose grandmother was a

Sparke, and after checking, found that they were indeed cousins. Therefore, as well as being a Leslie, she was also a relation of my wife. The moral of the story is, that the more information you give, the more you are likely to get back.

Barrie Leslie. Gordon. NSW.

TRIP TO NEW ZEALAND

I flew over to New Zealand on the 19th October to visit family and friends and to see if I could get some new members for Clan Leslie Society.

Although the following weekend was a holiday weekend, I rang Radio Pacific, which is a national radio station, and spoke to Phil Warren, and explained that I was over in New Zealand to try to get new members for Clan Leslie Society. After about thirty minutes I had my first reply, and to my surprise I found that we had gone to school at Point Chevalier, a suburb of Auckland, when we were five years old, and that his mother was a Leslie.

I had many replies from people who had been told by friends about my interview on Radio Pacific. Over the next two weeks I had over thirty replies, and sent out information and newsletters to all of them. I finally ended up with six of them becoming members of Clan Leslie Society, as well as helping some of them who had lost track of family to reunite.

I feel that I have accomplished a great deal by my trip, and hopefully, this will lead to more members in New Zealand in the near future. I would also ask any of our members in New Zealand, to try to recruit new members, as in this way, they may be able to find out further information on their family.

Barrie Leslie. Gordon. NSW

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