



FROM THE CHIEFTAIN

Since you last heard from me, Colleen and I have been to the Celtic Festival in Glen Innes. This is a wonderful event, bringing, as it does, representatives of the Celtic nations together to celebrate their origins and culture. This year the honoured nation was Isle of Man, and it was great to hear Alastair Kneale, President of the London Manx Society, who formally opened the festival, speaking in Manx. He had travelled from the Isle of Man as the special guest of the organising committee.

The Dawn Service at the Standing Stones was truly evocative, with the lone piper marching through the mist, and the service that followed set the mood for the rest of the weekend.

We took part in the street parade, proudly showing our banner, and on the Sunday, I was asked to be a part of the "Scottish Ceremony" where each year, the representatives of various Clans are recognised.

We had a thoroughly enjoyable weekend, although we were disappointed to find that there were no Celtic foods at any of the food stalls (we would have enjoyed a feed of haggis or some black bun).



Colleen & Malcolm at the Standing Stones



Malcolm with Malcolm Buchanan, President of the Scottish Australian Heritage Council.

I will be trying to attend next year's event, where the Honoured Nation will be Ireland. Hopefully, some of you can also be there. I have recently acquired 3 books written by Anne Stephens of South Australia. These outline the family history of a group of Leslies from the village of Alvey in Scotland, who pioneered in South Australia. They are now held in the Society's history collection. More about these books in a future GFDU. Until next time, Slainté

Malcolm Leslie Chieftain

SITUATIONS VACANT

The following situations are vacant and need enthusiastic Society members to volunteer to take them on:

- Editor, Grip Fast Down Under
- Membership Secretary
- Representative Victoria
- Representative New South Wales

If anyone can see their way clear to make any of these positions their own, please contact the Commissioner/Chieftain



From Chief Alex

2016 – a year of interesting times

We are now beginning to understand the ancient expression ‘may you live in interesting times’. It is July already and this year is shaping up to be one of the most interesting in living memory.

Here in Britain, the Brexit shock waves are still crashing around in the confusion of our brains. No-one knows what will happen next, both major political parties are at a standstill. And here in Scotland the uncertainty is, perhaps, even greater. Nicola Sturgeon has been to Brussels and asked whether Scotland can stay in the European Union. The answer must surely be ‘no’. We are still part of the UK and that has to be addressed before we can even apply for membership.

My guess is that, even if everything goes to plan, we will not become members of the EU before 2030, maybe later. Maybe never.

Yet, life goes on. Nothing on the face of it has changed.

We are making our final plans to go to Canada in August, where the Clan Leslie is the Honoured Clan and I am the Guest of Honour. Fergus Highland Games and Scottish Festival is the largest gathering outside Scotland. It will be fun and informative and we are very much looking forward to it. We will report back.

This does not mean that we have forgotten about Australia and New Zealand. We did have a plan to visit this year, but sadly life got in the way.

There is, however, a plan forming to reinvigorate the relationships between Scotland, Australia and New Zealand. In fact, the Convenor of the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs (SCSC) has just returned from a visit, during which he met many high powered people. Indeed, in the weeks

leading up to his visit there was what seemed like an avalanche of requests for him to attend this function, and meet Governors and Parliamentarians. The Scottish Government itself is now keener than ever to support efforts to foster these relationships with overseas Scots.

Our own plans to visit are still intact and are ‘a work in progress’. Don’t tell my wife, Miranda, but a milestone birthday is coming up and I am planning a ‘surprise’. Her grandmother was Australian and she has always wanted to visit. Watch this space. And, hopefully, see you soon!

Best wishes

Alexander Leslie

Clan Chief (and Vice Convenor of the SCSC)

An Interesting Story

(with thanks to Sebastian de Valcourt)



A Livery Button is generally a fastener with a heraldic or symbolic symbol representing a particular family or individual. These were worn as ornamentation by members of the service staff in aristocratic households up until the early to mid-20th century. Used now, only for ceremonial purposes.

One of the things I love about collecting Livery buttons is that sometimes, even rarely, things fall into place and you get one button, one family, one household and they all get strung together into one story.

That is certainly the case here. When I acquired this button, it was mislabelled, likely due to a poorly handwritten label sometime in its lifetime. So the research started from scratch.

It is a Firmin button, the back mark dates it to approximately 1837.

The Motto “Grip Fast” combined with the Griffin Crest lead me instantly to Clan Leslie of Scotland. That was the easy part. While the crest and coat of arms were distinctly Clan Leslie, two subtle differences presented. The Griffin holding a buckle, and the centered smaller escutcheon (shield) over top the larger.

For the better part of a week I was stuck there, looking at Clan Leslie, the Earls of Rothes, and the Irish branch of Leslie. Finally with a bit of heraldry help and a nudge in the right direction, the Buckle in the talons of the Griffin Crest held the key.

And so finally, the story of this little button presents itself.

In 1811, William Leslie Esquire of Aberdeenshire a wealthy Norwegian merchant and proprietor died, leaving no direct heir. So he left the large estate of Dunlugas to his nephew, Hans George Leslie. Hans George Leslie was known to the people of Banff and Aberdeenshire, having been educated there and was remarked as having been during his life “a most liberal minded country-gentleman”. Dunlugas House, was the home for both our buttons original owner Hans George Leslie and his son, Hans George Leslie Jr. and after his father’s death in 1856 the house and family became part of quite a major lawsuit in the Scotland Court of Appeals known as “Leslie vs. McLeod (1870)” It is interesting reading if you have the time.

The button would have been used by Hans George Leslie’s Service Staff at Dunlugas around about 1837, right in the prime of his life, present in the house at that time and after. That was 179 years ago, where it has been between then and now is anyone’s guess, but finally this little button has told a bit of its secrets.

Here is a bit about Dunlugas House (Banffshire):

{Historic Scotland Building ID#: 2888 - Class A Listed}



A five bay two storey house built in 1793, probably for William Leslie, whose family became prosperous from introducing a new method of curing fish, with the previous house of c.1680, built for George Ogilvy of Dunlugas, retained as a service range at the rear. The main block is raised on a basement with a projecting pedimented single-bay centre and a double-pilastered doorcase on the piano nobile approached by an impressive flight of steps, with two flights rising to a central platform in front of the doorway. It has paired chimney-stacks in the gable-ends and raised quoins at the angles, suggesting that the house was originally harled. The house is modest in scale, with three main rooms on the ground floor. A narrow entrance hall leads through paired Ionic columns to a dog-leg ashlar main staircase with a round arched stair window and cupola. On the front of the house are the library (originally the dining room), redecorated (perhaps by John Smith) c.1820-30 with a trompe l’oeil painted plaster ceiling, simulating carved and panelled wood, a grey marble fireplace and panelled dado; and the drawing room with a plasterwork ceiling, white marble fireplace and the walls hung with pleated grey silk by John Fowler c.1965. At the rear is the dining room (originally library). The house is surrounded by parkland and rich plantations.

Celebrated aristocrat Sir Jack Leslie dies at the age of 99



The celebrated County Monaghan aristocrat, Sir Jack Leslie, has died at the age of 99. His family described him as an art connoisseur, water colourist, ecologist, disco-dancer and restorer of historic buildings. A World War Two veteran, Sir Jack was captured at Dunkirk while serving as an officer in the Irish Guards, and spent five years in prison camp.

At an advanced age, he became a keen clubber, with a love for house music. After travelling the world on his release at the end of the war, Sir Jack returned to live at the family home, Castle Leslie, in his 70s, when

he became a regular visitor to County Monaghan nightclubs.

He celebrated his 84th birthday by dancing on stage at the world's biggest nightclub in Ibiza.

Legion d'Honneur

In November 2015, Sir Jack was presented with the France's top military award at the French embassy in Dublin on Monday.

He said he was accepting the Legion d'Honneur "on behalf of all soldiers from the island of Ireland who fought and died between the two great wars".

In 2002, Sir Jack famously blew the lid on the secret wedding plans of Sir Paul McCartney and Heather Mills by admitting to reporters that the ceremony was to be held at Castle Leslie.

Leslie Brothers

The following is reproduced with the kind permission of the Toowoomba & Darling Downs Family History Soc. Inc., from the book "Squatters of the Eastern Darling Downs" by Diana Beal. There are a lot of articles about Patrick, and I thought that this insight into his brothers would be of interest.

"Walter Davidson (1818-1891); George Farquhar (1820-1860)

The story of these two brothers starts with the story of their father and brother, Patrick. Briefly, the family with five living sons needed to enhance their fortunes in order to remain minor gentry, as there was only one landed estate and the eldest son, William, would inherit that, according to the custom of primogeniture at the time.

It was decided three sons would come to Australia, Patrick initially and the other two as they came to adulthood. Thus, Patrick came to NSW in 1835 and the other two came in March 1839 when Walter was 21 and George 19 years of age. Within a few months, a plan to go north from the Sydney region beyond the 'limits of location' set by the government to find a sheep run and squat on government land was put into motion.

Patrick and Walter went north with the sheep which were to be the nucleus of their flock. George remained at their base in the Sydney region, a farm which Patrick had leased. Some months later after many trials, Patrick and Walter arrived at their dream run at the headwaters of the Condamine River on the Darling Downs. George then came north with more sheep.

Patrick took out the license to depasture on 16 November 1840 for Canning Downs and remained the licensee until 30 June 1844. By this time, Patrick, who had actually spent very little time at Canning Downs and who preferred life spent on his farm near Sydney with his new wife, had sailed

off to England to try to resolve a family matter. Walter and George then took out the annual licence.

Walter and George developed Canning Downs. Walter set to work immediately on arrival to make the first necessary infrastructure – huts, sheep hurdles, etc.

Six months later, the Commissioner for Crown Lands for the New England could report that five slab huts, a woolshed, 12 horses, 760 cattle and 8500 sheep on the run as well as 22 men and 12 acres of cultivation.

The next year or so was a time of consolidation. Walter was well aware that the Leslie's initial bite of the 'unlimited' land cherry, probably well in excess of one million acres, was too large and that they would suffer pieces of the edges being claimed by others. And so it proved. Runs to the west, north and south-west were hived off, and Canning Downs was left at about 250000 acres, not a bad little patch to have the use of for £10 annually.

As the Crown 'waste' or grazing land continued to be filled up by squatters in the early 1840s, Governor Gipps decided that for the purposes of better administration and the augmentation of government revenue, a single run should be defined as 20 square miles (12 800 acres) or land with a carrying capacity of 4000 sheep or 500 cattle. Established squatters naturally hated this idea, complained they were being unfairly treated, formed a pastoral association, petitioned both houses of parliament in London and the Legislative Council in Sydney. Walter and George Leslie controlled the equivalent of 13 runs and faced a 13-fold increase in their annual rent. The conflict between Gipps and the squatters continued for three years and ended with Gipps's return to England and the issue in March 1847 of the famous Orders-in-Council, which were a win for the squatters.

The Orders-in-Council gave the squatters in the unsettled districts 14-year leases for £10 rent annually and the right of pre-emptive purchase of strategic sections of land in 320-acre lots at £1 per acre.

George Leslie was happy with this arrangement as he thought they could still make good profits with this arrangement. Other, more greedy, squatters disagreed and thought the conditions outrageous. George Leslie managed to get away from Canning Downs long enough during these first few years to court Emmeline Maria (1828-1911), one of the many daughters of Hannibal Macarthur of "The Vineyard". (His brother, Patrick, married another daughter, Kate.)

Emmeline and George were married on 3 December 1847. They were to have no children. Emmeline and George returned to Canning Downs.

Walter at this time was on an extended visit to Italy, Scotland and China and did not return until late 1850. George carried on managing Canning Downs and indeed expanded his responsibilities by taking on Dalhenty's Plains, later renamed and renowned as Coochin Coochin, in the Moreton district so that he could run cattle there and easily supply Brisbane with beef. (Even though he took on Dalhenty in 1848-49, the transfer of the lease was not effected until 1 July 1851.)

Emmeline recorded her impressions of the life of an active squatter-manager. He was constantly on the move, riding great distances most days. He was especially on the lookout for travelling sheep impinging on his pastures, lest they bring in disease, especially the dreaded scab. (Remember there were no fences, and sheep flocks were moved slowly about the grasslands under the control of a shepherd.) He rode up to 100 miles a day overseeing the work of the station. Shearing time was especially hectic.

When Walter returned to NSW in late 1850, his grand plan was to have a manager take over the reins of Canning Downs while George went off on a well needed holiday and he himself went hunting in India.

George apparently severely disapproved this plan for the partnership was dissolved on 22 April 1851 with George becoming the sole owner of the run and Walter receiving an income. A later *Government Gazette* reflected the dissolution of the partnership in that the leases for Toolburra, Goomburra and Canning Downs were transferred from 1 July 1851 from Walter and George Leslie to George Leslie alone. Walter then dallied at Canning Downs for a while, without contributing much, then returned to England and Europe. Walter married Caroline Robinson (1831-1875), the sister-in-law of his brother, William, on 18 September 1860 at Fyrie, Aberdeen, Scotland. Walter and Caroline then apparently spent their time in Europe, England or Scotland; they had no children. Walter died in 1891 and left an estate of £14 000 which included a £1500 investment in the Peel River Land and Mineral Company, a subsidiary of the AACo, and an £800 investment in the Scottish Australian Investment Co.

George carried on at Canning Downs. On 9 September 1851, he was elected to the NSW Legislative Council for the Pastoral Districts of Clarence and Darling Downs. The local great and good in the form of Arthur Hodgson, Christopher Rolleston, Robert Ramsay, Fred Isaac, the Rev Glennie and many others met at Drayton to elect a local member. George was their preferred candidate, as his opinions accurately reflected theirs. George said, in part that he 'would advocate and support the squatting and agricultural interests to the utmost of his power. The squatting interests had made the colony and

now supported it.... he was an uncompromising advocate for transportation; at the same time believing that separation could only be obtained by a compliance with the proposals of the Imperial Government. He would always advocate the introduction of English emigration labour in preference to any other; but he must say that with his experience of the working of the exile system, he very much preferred it to the introduction of Chinese or Coolies. ... he should always respect the opinions and wishes of the constituency, and would not advocate this question contrary to the opinions of the majority of the electors. He remained in Parliament until February 1855, although he was absent overseas for nearly two years of this period, after receiving advice from his doctor that he need rest to improve his health.

The Leslies arrived back from this extended trip on 17 November 1853. As the couple had decided to give up the frontier life for the sake of George's health, they settled in Sydney at Petty's Hotel and Canning Downs was advertised for sale a month later.

Before the auction could be held, Gilbert Davidson, the son of George's uncle, Walter Davidson, with whom Patrick had had a long-standing financial struggle, bought the run for £50,000 with the sheep and cattle.

The horses were sold separately for £2800.

George set aside £8500 for Walter, bought some land at Port Curtis and went into partnership as a silent partner in a cattle station at Wide Bay. George remained in Sydney for the next year and attended parliament until he resigned in February 1855. The couple settled in London at Kensington for the next five years and George died at the age of 39 years. He left an estate of £8000 in England. Emmeline married again five years later and had two sons, Christian and William, both of whom joined the English army. Her second husband died after only six years of marriage, and she was a widow again for another 40 years.

The Leslie brothers, and Patrick in particular, appear to occupy a special place in Queensland pastoral history, and many people who are only casually interested in history assume that the brothers contributed much and stayed in the industry for a lengthy period, like the Gores, Kings, Kents and Wienholts. This view is contrary to the fact. How could this be? Some historians, for example, Marion Diamond who wrote 'The Myth of Patrick Leslie', put the blame at Henry Stuart Russell's door as, in his 1888 book *The Genesis of Queensland*, he put great stock on Patrick's entry to the Darling Downs.

Patrick certainly made the first great sally from the New England to the Darling Downs but he did not stay around to set up the sheep run at Canning Downs. Walter did that. Patrick actually spent the

most time on the Downs, less than a decade, after he bought Goomburra.

Walter established Canning Downs, but made little contribution after 1847, and even in the period up until that time, he had made at least one trip overseas and had many stays in Sydney. George, the youngest of the three, appears to have been the most responsible and the 'stayer'. However, like his brothers, he always intended to make his fortune and leave the accursed land for the delights of 'home'. George probably spent about a decade actively being a squatter, as he too spent much time away from the frontier during the period he held grazing licences and leases."



Walter Leslie John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland. Neg: 45534



George Leslie John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland. Neg: 45533

Squatters of the Eastern Darling Downs is available from:

Toowoomba & Darling Downs Family History Soc. Inc.
452 South Street, Harristown, Qld, 4350
Email: tddfhs@westnet.com.au
Website: www.tddfhs.org.au
for \$20 plus postage

KIRKING OF THE TARTAN

Commissioner Mal and Colleen attended the Kirking of the Tartan organised by the Scottish Clans Congress of Queensland on Sunday 26th June 2016 at St Paul's Presbyterian Church in Brisbane. Several Clans turned out with their banners, along with the Queensland Police Junior Pipe Band. After a moving service, the Clans joined the congregation for a lovely morning tea.



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Can be viewed on our website. You can also see them on, www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/leslie/index.htm

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