

# GRIP FAST DOWN UNDER



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

Vol. 10 No 1, January-March 2019



We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas, and that 2019 will be a happy and prosperous year for everyone in the clan.

This year promises to be very interesting as we look to the future of CLANZ and try to find a way to retain our “down-under” identity. My perception is that we can only succeed if we obtain more members, and if some members are willing to take some of the load. I do not want to appear hard-done by, or to be complaining, but as Barrie, our Past-Commissioner knows, being in charge of the Society entails quite a bit of work.

If you look at the last page of this newsletter, you will see my name occurring against several positions. With Colleen filling the role of Treasurer, it means that the administration of the Society resides wholly with us. I feel that this is not a good thing. PLEASE HELP.

## SITUATIONS VACANT

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

*Editor, Grip Fast Down Under*

*Membership Secretary*

*Representative Victoria*

*If anyone can see their way clear to make any of these positions their own, please contact me.*

In the meantime, I hope to make contact with some of you to discuss the possibility of my being able to convince you that helping out is not a bad thing.

Please continue to seek out Clan members in your vicinity to join us.

Until next time,  
Slainté

**Malcolm Leslie**, Commissioner/Chieftain

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## From Chief Alex

The evolution of Clan Societies has been extremely interesting to watch. When I first became involved with them, primarily with the Clan Leslie Society, my father was still very active.

At that time it was about research.

Before the internet revolutionised how we search for our ancestors, you joined a Clan society in order to help each other figure out how they came to be where they were and where their forbears came from.

The internet arrived and matured and we can now do all of that from our living room and, if needed, can go on various specialist sites to get some help.

So why would you need a Clan society once that element has been taken care of?

Fundamentally – and this is very true for the Clan Leslie Society in North America – it is about a sense of belonging. A clan is almost more than just a family because the stories of where people come from and how they got here are varied and invariably fascinating.

It is also true that real friendships grow out of societies.

I have been lucky enough to have made some real friends both in the Clan Leslie Society and out. The bond is great and the sense of community is real.

When I was in North Carolina in 2010, as Guest of Honour, I was grounded by the volcano in Iceland and couldn't get a flight home for 10 days. As I left the Games, as the guest of two local and lovely Leslies, I had a pocketful of cards with phone numbers. The people who gave them to me had all offered me accommodation or help in some form.

Oddly, when my father was still active I was not that interested in the family history or where I came from. I knew I was Scottish, I knew I was from Fife but it was only when I moved to Scotland and drove past a road sign called Leslie Road and that the town of Leslie was two miles away that it made sense and made me feel

proud.

The sense of community generated by Clan societies can be very powerful.

Alexander Leslie

Clan Chief

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## **ARTICLES**

I would be **greatly** pleased if members could send me articles or reports of events they have attended, or any news of interest, so I could include them to make our newsletter more newsworthy.

It is a difficult job to put out a regular issue if there is no news to go in it.

Send articles to: [malncol@icr.com.au](mailto:malncol@icr.com.au).

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## **Declaration of Arbroath**

The Declaration of Arbroath is a declaration of Scottish independence, made in 1320. It a letter in Latin submitted to Pope John XXII, dated 6 April 1320, to confirm Scotland's status as an independent, sovereign state and defending Scotland's right to use military action when attacked.

It is believed to have been written in the Arbroath Abbey by Bernard of Kilwinning, who was Chancellor of Scotland and Abbot of Arbroath, and was signed with seals by fifty-one nobles. The declaration is the only surviving letter of three known to be sent at the time. The others are believed to be a letter from the King of Scots, Robert the Bruce, and a letter from four Scottish bishops which all apparently made the same claims.

The Declaration was part of a broader campaign which sought to prove Scotland's right to be an independent kingdom, and not controlled by England's Norman kings. It sought also to lift the excommunication of Robert the Bruce. The Pope had recognised Edward I of England as overlord of Scotland in 1305. Bruce was excommunicated by the Pope for murdering John Comyn before the altar in Greyfriars Church in Dumfries in 1306.

The Declaration made several points: that

Scotland had always been independent, indeed for longer than England; that Edward I of England had unjustly attacked Scotland and perpetrated atrocities; that Robert the Bruce had delivered the Scottish nation from this peril; and, most controversially for the period, that the independence of Scotland was the prerogative of the Scottish people, rather than the King of Scots. It even stated that the nobility would choose someone else if the king proved to be unfit in maintaining Scotland's independence.

Some have seen this last point as an early expression of 'popular sovereignty' – that kings can be chosen by the people rather than by God alone. Some Scottish nationalists point to the "Declaration" as giving a very early date for the emergence of nationalism. But the overwhelming majority of academics challenge this. Scholars point out that definitions change with time, and the meaning ascribed to words similar to nation during the ancient and medieval periods was quite different than it is today.

It has also been pointed out that the Declaration was not a statement of popular sovereignty, that its signatories would have had no such concept, but a statement of royal propaganda supporting Bruce's faction. A justification was needed for the rejection of King John Balliol against whom William Wallace and Andrew de Moray had rebelled in 1297. The reasoning in the Declaration was that Bruce was able to defend Scotland from English aggression whereas King John could not.

*"To this man, in as much as he saved our people, and for upholding our freedom, we are bound by right as much as by his merits, and choose to follow him in all that he does".*

Whatever the motive, the idea of a contract between King and people was proposed to the Pope as a reason for Bruce's coronation whilst John de Balliol still lived in Papal custody.

There are 39 names at the start of the document, all of whom may have had their seals appended, probably over the space of some months, with nobles sending in their seals to be used. On the existing copy of the Declaration there are only 19 seals, and of those 19 people only 12 are named within the document. It is thought that at least 11 more seals than the original 39 might have been appended. The Declaration was then taken to the papal court at Avignon by Bishop Kininmund, Sir Adam Gordon and Sir Odard de Maubuisson.

The Pope heeded the arguments contained in the Declaration, probably influenced by the offer from the Scots to support his long-desired crusade if they did not have to fear English invasion. He pressed Edward II to make peace with the Scots. However the following year he was again persuaded by the English to take their side and issued six bulls to that effect.

On 1 March 1328 the new English king, Edward III signed the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northamptona between Scotland and England. This treaty was in effect for five years until 1333, and in it, Edward renounced all English claims to Scotland. Eight months later, in October 1328, the interdict on Scotland, and the excommunication of its king, were removed by the Pope.

The original copy of the Declaration which was sent to Avignon is lost. A copy of the Declaration survives among Scotland's state papers, and is held by the National Archives of Scotland. The best known English language translation was made by Sir James Fergusson, from text that he reconstructed using this existing copy and early copies of the original draft.

It has been shown that one passage in particular, often quoted from the Fergusson translation, was carefully written using parts of the "Conspiracy of Caitline" by the Roman author, Sallust (86–35 BC) as the direct source:

*"...for, as long as but a hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be brought under English rule. It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honours that we are fighting, but for freedom – for that alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself."*

Amongst the names of the nobles who placed their seals on the Declaration is that of Andrew de Leslie, showing our Clan's standing at the time.

US Senate Resolution 155 of 10 November 1997 states that the Declaration of Arbroath, the Scottish Declaration of Independence, was signed on 6 April 1320 and the American Declaration of Independence was modeled on that inspirational document. However, although this influence is accepted by some historians, it is disputed by others. Even advocates of the link concede that it is speculative and not based on any verifiable sources.

In 2016 the Declaration of Arbroath was placed on UNESCO's Memory of the World register.

Sir Harald Leslie, Lord Birsay, arranged to have a copy of the Declaration hung in every schoolroom in Scotland, because of its importance in Scottish History.

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### Just for a Laugh



"I couldn't be bothered hunting, so I just grabbed some 'McDonalds'..."



"Older homes are tricky. You never know what kind of pipes you'll find."

### A GOOD READ

For those of you who like a good read, and also the history of Scotland, I would recommend that you look for a book entitled "Scotland -The Autobiography".

It was published in 2007 by Penguin Books (ISBN 978-0-141-02768-5).

The book was edited by Rosemary Goring and relates Scottish history as told by people who lived at the various periods.

It is interesting to be able to read about historical events as told by someone who was there.

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### LESLIES IN RUSSIA

William Leslie, Third Laird of Crichtie, (a branch of the Leslies of Balquhain), had a son, Alexander Leslie of Auchintoul (1590-1663) who followed a military career on the continent. In 1618 he was officer in the Polish

army, was captured by the Russians, but released. By 1629, he was a colonel in Sweden. Sent by the King of Sweden on a mission to Russia in 1630, he applied for military service with the Tsar. He returned to Sweden in 1631 to advise of imminent hostilities between Russia & Poland, and began to recruit thousands of soldiers from western Europe to serve in the Russian army. Alexander supervised the first "foreign order" regiments, organised and armed along western lines. These were known as "Polki novovo stroya". He was subsequently promoted to the rank of General. After the defeat of the Russian army in 1634, Leslie returned to Britain when Charles I wrote to Tsar Mikhail in 1637, asking for him to return home on private business. He then fought in the English Civil War, supporting the Royalists. Unfortunately he was captured at Philiphaugh, but was treated fairly leniently due to the intervention of Lieutenant General David Leslie. Instead of execution, he was banished from Scotland.

He returned to Russia in 1647, and was commander of the Russian forces during the Siege of Smolensk (1654), one of the first great events of the Russo-Polish War (1654-1667). After the war he was appointed Governor of Smolensk, and resided there until his death in 1663.

He had three sons: Colonel Alexander Leslie, John Leslie of Balquhain (killed in the storming of Igolwitz Castle in 1655) and Colonel Theodore Leslie, Commander of the Belgorodski Regiment.



Alexander Leslie of Auchintoul

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### **Robert Burns**

The 25th January this year sees the 260th anniversary of the birth of Scotland's National Poet, Robert Burns.

His parents were William Burnes and Agnes Broun, and it is interesting that he retained his father's spelling of his last name until March

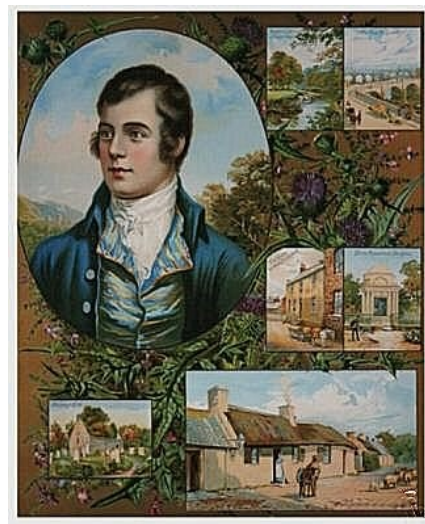
his brother Gilbert both signed a document and both of them left out the 'e'.

In 2016, The Honourable Justice Logan RFD, a Judge in the Federal Court of Australia, started his speech at the Society of St Andrew of Scotland (Queensland) Burns Supper, "In Centenary Place, Brisbane, in the inner-city block bounded by Wickham, Ann and Gotha Streets, is to be found a statue of the Scottish Bard, Robert Burns.

Our Brisbane statue is one of eight statues or busts in Australia which stand as memorials to Burns. There are four Burns statues in New Zealand, nine in Canada, 16 in the United States and one in England (London). Scotland itself has 20 statues or other memorials to Burns."

This proliferation of memorials demonstrates the universal appeal of Burns.

Many of the statues depict Burns leaning on a plough, to illustrate the epithet "Ploughman Poet", as he was often called.



In many countries of the world, on or about the 25th January, groups and Societies will be holding Burns Suppers. This custom started in Alloway, Scotland, in 1801, five years after his untimely death. It quickly spread around the world, wherever Scots or lovers of his poems were to be found.

As a long term member of the Toowoomba Caledonian Society, which until recent years, included "& Burns Club" in the name, I have attended many Burns Suppers, and I am always fascinated at the many aspects of Burns that different speakers explore. On several occasions I have been asked to deliver the "Immortal Memory" speech, and the hardest part is finding that 'new' way of approaching it.

If you have never been to a Burns supper, I would encourage you to find one near you, and get along to it for a really good night.

Malcolm



The statue of the Scotch poet, Robert Burns erected in Centenary Place, Brisbane, was unveiled by the Governor-General (Lord Stonehaven ) yesterday in the presence of thousands of people, among whom those of Scottish descent predominated. The statue bears the inscription, "Presented to the City of Brisbane by the Burns Club."

*Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Qld), 15 August 1929.*

### Try the Internet

For those of you who have not explored the internet, here are a couple of suggestions for finding more about our clan.

There are so many interesting facts available, that you could spend many an hour browsing.

- ♦ Search for "Clan Leslie"
- ♦ Search for "Noël Leslie—Countess of Rothes" (a great story).
- ♦ Search for "Culloden"
- ♦ Search for "Red Harlaw"

All of these will take you to great stories. The whole of Leslie and Scottish history is available at your fingertips.

Some web-sites that can be of great interest are:

Rampant Scotland

Scotweb

The Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs

The Scottish Tartan Authority

Happy Browsing!

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**Will be in Sydney  
17-19 October 2019**



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WEBSITE for CLANZ.

<http://www.clanleslie.org>

Note: We also have a group page on Facebook

Previous issues of Grip Fast Down Under:-

Can be viewed on our website. You can also see  
them on, [www.electricscotland.com/familytree/  
newsletters/leslie/index.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/leslie/index.htm)

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