



I indicated in the last issue that I had been invited to address the Haggis at the Robert Burns Masonic Lodge here in Toowoomba. Colleen and I had a lovely time at the luncheon, and I managed to successfully deliver the address. Scottish heritage opens many doors and allows us to make new friends.



We are looking forward to attending the Australian Celtic Festival in Glen Innes over the first weekend in May. Any Clan/Society members who can attend this wonderful event are welcome to join us when we march in the parade on Saturday morning. I have arranged to have Clan Leslie information on display in the Scottish Australian Heritage Council tent, and would love to meet fellow Leslies.

Last year, Colleen and I were the only members of the Clan in the march, but we received a lot of applause and people calling out to us.

On the Sunday there is a Scottish Ceremony to be held on Tynwald Hill at the Standing Stones, starting at 11.30am, and at this ceremony, my credentials as the Chief's Commissioner will be recognised by the Scottish Australian Heritage Council Scottish Australian Heritage Council.

As you may realise, I am quite excited by this, and feel that it also involves recognition of our Clan and Society as an integral part of the Australian Scottish community.

I hope to give you a report and some photos in the next issue.

We have just come home from a short holiday which was our first foray in our recently acquired caravan. We spent our time in Northern N.S.W. just relaxing and resting. One day we took a side-trip to McLean (Australia's Scottish Town). Of course, we had to find the Leslie power pole, as they have many poles painted in Clan Tartans.



In the meantime, I will be taking another trip to hospital for yet another session with a Plastic Surgeon. The dreaded skin cancer raises its head once again, the curse of Scottish skin! Please note that Colleen and I no longer have a landline telephone. We can be contacted on our mobile phones as listed under "Contacts"

Until next time,  
Slainté

**Malcolm Leslie** Chieftain

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## **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
- Representative New South Wales

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

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### **Past Commissioner**

We have received the following message from member Elaine Wood:

"Barrie Leslie still has lots of health problems as he has recently been in hospital again. He has not been well enough to have his knee replacements.

We wish him all the best and that he will soon return to good health."

We are sure that all members and friends agree with Elaine's wishes.

### **Acrostic Poem About Leslie**

L is for Laughter, nothing is as infectious as yours,

E is for Energy, you're passionate and alive,

S is for Sensational, you are just the best!

L is for Laughter, nothing is as infectious as yours,

I is for Inspirational, your affect on others.

E is for Energy, you're passionate and alive,

### **From Chief Alex**

It is, allegedly, Spring over here in Scotland. This is the season where one minute you dare to sit outside in the brief sunshine (coat on), the next you look out of the window and contemplate the torrential rain.

We love it.

The uncertainty with the weather is, sadly, reflected in the political climate as well. Just as we were beginning to get used to the idea of 'Brexit' and coming to terms with Mr Trump as President of the United States, our own First Minister Nicola Sturgeon decides we need another independence referendum. Whatever you believe is the right path for our country, it is not a calming or settling decision to have made. The uncertainty has, once again, brought Scotland to a halt. House prices, already at a ridiculously low level in the countryside, have suffered further and no-one is spending money on, well, anything. Everyone suffers and we do not yet know what the outcome will, whether the referendum will even go ahead, or when. The UK Government may be able to veto it. Uncertainty is complete. It is, frankly, not helpful.

We, however, do not come to a halt. We are making plans to attend the Gallabrae Games in in Greenville, South Carolina, at the end of May. Leslie is the Honoured Clan and we will be there as the Guests of Honour.

Later in the year, we have a 'Splash of Tartan' at the Edinburgh Royal Tattoo in August. We, and however many Leslies wish, will march onto the Esplanade along with two other clans. Hopefully the commentator will be able to point out that a Leslie was the first Governor of Edinburgh Castle. You can see more information on the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs' website –

[www.clanchiefs.org.uk](http://www.clanchiefs.org.uk).

So, while we go about our business, we will watch what happens in Scotland. If the referendum does go ahead all that is certain is that it will be much harder fought than the last one.

We will keep you posted.

Best wishes

Alexander and Miranda Leslie



### **Clan Leslie Septs**

The Founder of Clan Leslie Society International, Alexander Leslie Klieforth, in his writings, put out some good items regarding Septs of the Clan. Over the next several issues, we will reissue some of these. In this issue, we look at "Abernethy".

"According to one source, the first Abernethy of record was Hugh. He was succeeded by his son Orm, around 1150. Orm may have given his name to the lands of Ormison in East Lothian. His son Lawrence founded the Baronial House of Abernethy. It lasted somewhat over a century. We turn to the basic Leslie source for an account. The text below is quoted verbatim from the Historical

Records of Leslie by Colonel Charles Leslie, K.H., 26<sup>th</sup> Baron of Balquhain, Edinburgh, 1869.

"The great lordship of Abernethy, of which the barony of Ballinbreich formed a part, was held by Orm, the son of Hugh, in the reign of Malcolm IV, about 1160, and also by grants from William the Lion, about 1190. Orm's son, Lawrence, assumed the name of Abernethy from his lands. He gave the Canons of the priory of St Andrews ten shillings yearly, payable out of Ballinbreich, with the consent of Sir Patrick Abernethy, his son and heir, about 1230. Sir Patrick's son, Hugh de Abernethy, possessed great influence previous to and during the reign of Alexander III, about 1360. Sir Hugh de Abernethy died before 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1296, as, on that date, we find that King Edward I of England ordered the sheriff of Forfar to repon Maria, quae fuit uxor Hugonis de Abernethy, in her lands. Sir Alexander de Abernethy succeeded his father, Sir Hugh. He swore fealty to Edward I, 10<sup>th</sup> July 1292 and again 25<sup>th</sup> June 1296, and adhered to the English interests. He was made warden of the country between the Forth and the mountains by Edward II in 1310. He was one of the English plenipotentiaries appointed to treat with King Robert Bruce in 1312. He got a grant from Edward II of the manor of Wyleighten, 3d May 1313. On the death of Sir Alexander de Abernethy the lordship of Abernethy was divided between his daughters and co-heiresses, Margaret, married to John Stuart, Earl of Angus, and Mary, married to Sir Andrew de Leslie, VI Dominus Ejusdem."

When the lordship of Abernethy came to an end with Sir Andrew, the family of Abernethy became, so far as can be established, the first sept of Clan Leslie. The family itself continued and while small, remains one of the older Scottish families, going back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

As with many Scottish families, the name appears in various spellings. One David Abernyth was the Vicar of Drisdale in East Lothian. Abernethies have been identified a century earlier, in the same area. A Scottish knight, John of Abernethy. Received his knighthood in 1339.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when so many Scots established themselves on the continent, Abernethys appeared in Prussia as "Abernetti" and in Sweden as "Ebbernet". The first of the family reported to have appeared in America was one William Abernathy who is said to have arrived in Connecticut during the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Abernathys also settled in Ireland. One of them, John (1680-1740) became a celebrated and highly controversial clergyman.

After being educated at the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, he was appointed as a Presbyterian divine at Antrim, Ireland. After fourteen years of his pastorate he became embroiled. An English historian has said of him that his name should be "honoured by all who love freedom of conscience and opinion". Another John (1764-1831) born in London, following Scottish medical tradition, became a famous surgeon and medical professor. His lectures were so popular that the hospital to which he as attached had to build an auditorium to take care of all his students. Other Abernethys of our time have given the name distinction, so that while the family vanished from the rolls of the Scottish nobility long ago, it has continued, for seven hundred years, to be an honoured name.

At this point, we should return to Mary Abernethy, who married Andrew, the Sixth Lord Leslie. The marriage took place in 1316. With it, Sir Andrew acquired the barony of Ballinbreich (the Clan Leslie battle cry) in Fifeshire, and the barony of Cairney (which presumably is now Cairny – Carney became a Leslie Sept) in Forfar. The charters were granted by King Robert I the Bruce.

Sir Andrew quartered the Arms of Abernethy with his own, which shield subsequently was carried by the Earls of Rothes. From this union descended the remaining Lords Leslie, the Earls of Rothes and Ross, and the first Baron of Balquhain. From the last-named are descended, aside from the Rothes, about all the branches of the Leslies in Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Russia, France and so on. This means that any Leslie in direct descent from any of those branches has at least an atom of Abernethy blood, which makes Mary an ancestress to a vast number of Leslies."



## At The Back O' Benachie

This is the title of a book written by Mrs Helen Beaton (nee Mortimer) which was published in Aberdeen in 1915.

The sub-title of the book was "Life in the Garioch in the Nineteenth Century.

On pages 142 and 143, the following story appears:

### **"A LOCAL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.**

William Leslie, Esquire of Warthill, was the Eleventh Laird of Warthill. His father, also named William Leslie, became heir to Warthill in right of his mother, who was a daughter of the Eighth Laird of Warthill. William Leslie, the 10<sup>th</sup> Laird, married in 1813, Jane Davidson, who was the daughter of the late Patrick Davidson, D.D., of Rayne; and therefore the people of Rayne had rightly much interest and pride in their member of Parliament. William Leslie, the Eleventh Laird of Warthill, graduated M.A. in Aberdeen University in 1832; and soon after he went to China and India, and became a partner in the once-famous firm of Dent & Co., who were engaged in the tea trade. After about a dozen years abroad, he returned to Warthill, and, in 1847, purchased the estate of Drumrossie. On the death of his father in 1857 he became the laird of Warthill, and later on he bought the estate of Rothmaise, which was adjoining to Warthill.

When Lord Haddo was elevated to the peerage, the representation of Aberdeenshire became vacant in Parliament. Mr. Leslie was a popular landlord, and had a general knowledge of country business; he was also greatly respected by the county families. In due course, he was elected member for the constituency by a large number of voters; and, in accepting, he affirmed himself as being a "Liberal-Conservative", which was considered by many to be simply "Tory".

The Liberal candidate was the Hon. Arthur Gordon, Haddo House, who was absent in Egypt at the time. The polling campaign was a bitter affair at the hustings, and on the polling day, which was the 15<sup>th</sup> February, 1861, there was rioting at Inverurie, Huntly, and Turriff. It was reported that one man was killed and another very seriously injured. Several of the rioters were eventually taken to Aberdeen



Circuit Court on trial, but although Mr. Leslie was a witness, all the rioters were acquitted. Mr. Leslie polled 851 votes, and Mr. Gordon 667.

Open voting was at that time customary, and, therefore, it was well known to all what a voter's political views were. The names of the voters were even printed in the local newspapers, and how each of them had voted. I have an "Aberdeen Journal" dated May 16, 1866, in which appears a list of all the names of the committees of the different candidates. It is quite apparent that no farmer would vote in opposition to his proprietor's views, or even the factor's; otherwise it would have been likely that the tenant would have suffered.

Mr. Leslie was elected at the general election in 1865 without opposition; but in the summer of the following year he resigned, owing to the protracted illness of his only son, who had contracted an illness at school from which he never recovered.



Mr. Leslie was an ideal landlord, as he took a keen interest in the management of his property, and knew all of his tenants personally. He was fond of agriculture, and gave his home farm much personal attention. He also rebuilt the house at Warthill, and made considerable improvements on the grounds and lodges; and it is mainly owing to his management, as Chairman of the Garioch Road Trustees, that the public roads in the Garioch district are so good.

Miss Mary Rose Leslie became heir to Warthill by entail and the death of her brother. She married Mr. George Arbuthnot from Eldershe, Surry, who, on accession to Warthill, added Leslie to his name.

Mr. Leslie, M.P., had five daughters, and when they were married there was always a dinner and a ball given to the tenants and



friends in the surrounding districts. At such times opportunity was taken by guests to present to Mr. Leslie addresses in appreciation of his interest in their welfare. When Mr. Leslie died, at the age of 66, the inhabitants of the Rayne district lost one of their best friends.

The motto on the Warhill crest is "Grip Fast" and there is an old saying, Grip fast, Warhill. Freefield has gotten Cushiston; he will get Warhill at last." The above prophecy has not as yet come true, nor is it likely to do so."

### ARTICLES

I have heard through the grapevine that some members have been disappointed because some issues of GFDU have been fairly short. The reason for this is that it is difficult to find items of interest which have not appeared previously. In America, the Society has a lot of members to draw on, and there are regular gatherings, such as Highland Games on which reports can be submitted. I would be greatly pleased if members could send me articles or reports of events they have attended, 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).



Alexander Leslie  
Clan Chief (and Vice Convenor of the SCSC)



### **CHIEF OF CLAN LESLIE**

The Hon. Alexander John Leslie  
8 Buckingham Terrace. Edinburgh. EH4  
3AA. Scotland

[alex@disruptiveviews.com](mailto:alex@disruptiveviews.com)

### **CONTACTS**

Commissioner Clan Leslie Aust & NZ  
Malcolm W Leslie D.Ua.  
0418 986 876  
117/303 Spring Street, Kearney's Spring,  
Qld. 4350. Aust [malncol@icr.com.au](mailto:malncol@icr.com.au)

Chieftain CLANZ Malcolm W Leslie.D.Ua  
(See Commissioner)

Patron of CLANZ  
Ms Kathleen Moore D.Ua.  
[kathleenceltic@hotmail.com](mailto:kathleenceltic@hotmail.com) /  
[www.kathleenprocter-moore.com](http://www.kathleenprocter-moore.com)

Membership Secretary  
Malcolm W Leslie  
0418 986 876  
(see above)

Treasurer  
Colleen Leslie 0438 148 760  
117/303 Spring Street, Kearney's Spring,  
Qld. 4350. Aust  
[colnmal@icr.com.au](mailto:colnmal@icr.com.au)

Newsletter  
Newsletter Editor or committee required

Webmaster & I T Manager  
John O'Driscoll 61-3-5253 1254  
71Dandarriga Drive. Clifton Springs. Vic. Aust  
[john@johnodriscoll.com.au](mailto:john@johnodriscoll.com.au)

New Zealand Representative  
William (Bill) Leslie 64-9-431-2251  
Valima Farm 226 Settlement Road  
R.D. 2 Kaiwaka New Zealand  
[gripfastleslie@gmail.com](mailto:gripfastleslie@gmail.com)

Queensland Representative  
Malcolm W Leslie 0418 986 876  
See Chieftain above.

South Australia Representative  
Audry M Fry 61-8-8331-9688  
37 Ormond Grove, Toorak Gardens,  
South Australia 5065. Australia.

Victoria Representative  
To be advised.

West Australia Representative  
Terry Keith Leslie 61-8-8956-7646  
Ngaanyatjarra Lands School. Blackstone  
Campus  
P.M.B. 99 via Alice Springs 0872. NT  
[tezzles\\_50@yahoo.com.au](mailto:tezzles_50@yahoo.com.au)

WEBSITE for CLANZ.  
<http://www.clanleslie.org>

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see them on,  
[www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/leslie/index.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/leslie/index.htm)

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### **Clan Leslie Society International**

Chieftain Thomas (Tom) Leslie Huxtable,  
118 S. Coach House Rd. Wichita. KS 67235.  
USA. [tshux@cox.net](mailto:tshux@cox.net)

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