

# GRIP FAST DOWN UNDER



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

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Another 3 months have galloped by, and I must begin by saying "sorry" for the lateness of this issue.

Last time I spoke about the "Recognition Ceremony" at Glen Innes, and I can now say that recognition has become harder. I

recently had another 4 aggressive skin cancers removed from my face, so it would be more difficult for people to know who I am. Luckily I have a great Plastic Surgeon.

In the meantime, Colleen has had surgery on her foot which slowed us down for a while, and she has also had 2 lots of surgery to remove cataracts. As we age, these things happen, but they do not help us to do the things we need to do.

We are almost back to normal, so I hope things will get a bit easier. Unfortunately, this has meant that I have not been able to get to events such as Tartan Day this year, to represent the Clan.

While I have not been out and about, I have had time to look at the existing "state of the nation" for our Society. We really are in a sad way. When I look at the records I find the following:

We have 61 members listed. Of these, we have 11 Honourary Members, 3 Life Members, 18 Financial Members and **29 UNFINANCIAL MEMBERS**. This is not good!

I am sad to say that this will be the last Grip Fast Down Under that will be sent to those who have not paid their fees. No Society can afford to support those who do not support the organisation. I urge unfinancial members to pay their fees, remembering that the next year's fees are due in January, if they wish to retain their membership.

On a more cheerful note, it was great to see photos of our Chief Alex leading Clan Members into Edinburgh Castle for the Leslie Night of the Tattoo.



Slainté

**Malcolm Leslie**, Chieftain

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## ARTICLES

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).

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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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## **From Chief Alex**

### **The resurgence of clan pride**



2017 has been – and still is – a year of a huge resurgence in Scottish pride.

For the first time in hundreds of years, the clans descended on Edinburgh Castle – in peace. The occasion was about a ‘Splash of Tartan’.

This year the Royal Edinburgh Tattoo embraced the clans.

Each performance during August featured two clans were featured, or honoured. On Friday 11<sup>th</sup> August it was the Leslie's turn. We numbered 26 and made our way to the Great Hall at the Castle in time to be briefed. In fact, we gave the organisers a fright because we managed to get through the security perimeter without being stopped, or noticed.

As the show started, we marched onto the Esplanade in front of thousands of people. It was a great feeling and one that could only fill you with pride.

Once on the Esplanade the clans of the evening lined up and I was privileged to take the gaelic toast with the Guest of Honour, on our evening one of the chiefs of the air force.

It was a special and memorable night, and not just because it was about us. The whole show, the whole month, was a celebration of the clans that knit Scotland together.

It is always said that distance makes the heart grow fonder and so it proved.

The distance in this case was not physical, it was emotional. The feeling of ‘Scottishness’ seems to increase the further from Scotland that you live (I do not need to tell you that). In this case, though, it was largely about people who live in Scotland, but who do not care that their name is Leslie (or Macdonald, or Campbell, or Lindsay). Why? Because they live here, they suffer the traffic jams, the inane politics, the crime, the rain and cold and so they have no real reason to feel proud of who they are or where they came from.

Until now.

I think this year, and particularly this Splash of

Tartan has changed things. More and more people are asking why they are called Leslie (or Macdonald, or Campbell, or Lindsay) and that is a good thing.

In a world in which we have to abide the increasing divisions, the extremist views and weak and pointless leaders, this new energy, this new hunger for belonging to a family – a clan – is what people turn to when things get tough.

Oh, and by the way, it was great fun. When the Edinburgh Tattoo comes back to Australia, which it will, go and see it. We might too!

Alexander Leslie, Clan Chief

October 2017

## **Clan Leslie Septs**

### **Cairney**

Although Cairney is now a clan in its own right, with various spellings as is often the case, it first comes into Leslie history when Mary Abernethy married Sir Andrew Leslie (1316), bringing with her the Abernethy inheritance, which included ‘the lands and baronies of Cairney in Forfar’. There are many places of that name or similar in Scotland, this one was situated between Perth and Dundee on the north bank of the river Tay estuary. A direct personal relationship between a Cairney and a Leslie is more difficult to establish but with surnames not yet widely used it was common for people to take the name of their district of origin to identify themselves. In all probability, therefore, there would have been people in Mary's entourage calling themselves ‘of Cairney’. A more definite connection, however, comes with the Earls of Ross. Mary and Andrew's fourth son, Walter, married Euphemia, only daughter and heiress of William, 6th Earl of Ross, so when he died his inheritance passed to Euphemia and Walter, and Walter became the 7th Earl of Ross. The first recorded connection between a Leslie and a Cairney is when Sir John de Ross, son of the Earl of Ross (Walter's father-in-law), assumed the name Cardney from Lands he acquired

from Robert II in 1375. Sir John's son, Robert de Cairney, and Alexander Leslie, Walter and Euphemia's son, were cousins (through Euphemia's Ross connection).

Robert became the famous Bishop of Dunkeld 1389-1436 and would have been serving as bishop there when Alexander died about 1405. Alexander, in the meantime, had inherited as 8th Earl of Ross on the death of his mother in 1394. There is a striking effigy of Robert in Dunkeld Cathedral.

The lands of Cairney were passed down through the Rothes line until there is a mention of them again on the death of the 4th Earl of Rothes in 1558. The succession of the earldom was challenged by his eldest surviving son, William, who had previously forfeit all claim to the title, so the title had passed to his younger half-brother, Andrew. Queen Mary eventually decreed that Andrew was the rightful Earl but that by way of compensation he must give the lands of Cairney to William and build a house there for him.

The Cairneys later became involved with the much larger families of Stewart and Ross but the records usually quote Cairneys as a sept of the Leslies and we are happy for that to remain so.

(The above piece was authorised by our then Chief, the 21st Earl of Rothes, and Dr C.T. Cairney, Assistant Professor of English Literature, Dogus University, Istanbul).

Footnote: Well-known Cairneys of today include John Cairney, an actor famous for portraying Robert Burns, Valerie Cairney, Publisher of the Scottish Banner, and her son, Sean, who edits the paper and is a member of CLANZ.

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## A Tale of Desperation

Our friend Stanley Bruce sent an email to Barrie Leslie "A Leslie Relative. Picture taken in St Clements Churchyard, Footdee, Aberdeen." The photo below was attached.



Although a little hard to read, the inscription tells of George Liddle, the grandson of Thomas Leslie, who was shipwrecked on the Auckland Islands, New Zealand. After a little research, the following story was found:

The Invercauld was under the command of Captain George Dalgarno and was bound from Melbourne to Callao in ballast with a total of 25 crew. She struck the Auckland Islands at 2 am on 11 May 1864, broke up and was totally destroyed in a short amount of time. The crew all struggled towards a small cove nearby and nineteen of the twenty-five crew managed to get ashore. Crew members Middleton and Wilson and four others drowned. All of the rest were hurt in some way and had no shoes. The survivors spent the night onshore and then at daybreak investigated the scene of the wreck and came away with only some few pounds of ships biscuits and salted pork. They found the bodies of the drowned crew and stripped them of their clothing but were unable to bury them.

The crew had enough timber to build a rough hut and, as one of the crew had matches, a fire was able to be lit. After four days of inactivity there were no remaining provisions and three men climbed the cliffs in search of food. The climb was very difficult as the cliffs were at least 200 ft high and rocky under foot. Eventually the entire group of survivors, save one ill man and a caretaker, climbed the cliffs. The original group of three had caught a pig, which they brought back to the group. The smell of the roasting pig, called to the caretaker, who left the gravely ill man to die alone on the beach. At the top of the cliffs



they found fresh water and some roots. The weather was very cold with frost and snow on the ground. They spent the night and then pushed on towards Port Ross, a journey that took several days due to the thickness of the scrub. They managed to hunt a single pig for food and continued to travel, losing another man to cold and hunger. They arrived on the other side of the island and set up a shelter but for 21 days had nothing to eat or drink except roots and water. Seven men decided to return to the wreck and the group saw nothing more of them.

Andrew Smith and four others left the remaining five crew to search for the beach through thick bush. They were able to get to the beach and harvest shellfish and sent a man back to fetch the others only to find that another two had died. The group reunited and the eight men stayed on the beach for about a week. A group of five continued to explore and reached Port Ross, where they found the traces of the Enderby Settlement and huts. One man again went back for the others. By this time the group was getting very weak and lost a further two men leaving The Captain, the Mate Andrew Smith, the Carpenter Alex. Henderson and three seamen including Robert Holding, **George Liddle** and James Lancefield at Port Ross.

After three or four months the supply of shellfish was exhausted and seals were rarely seen or captured. The group, now down to three surviving members, constructed a canoe from seal skins and tree branches and waited for fine weather to cross to Rose Island. Here they found rabbits and they also built a sod cabin with a thatched roof. Henderson, **Liddle** and Lancefield died before this time and were buried in the sand.

On 20 May 1865, the Portuguese ship *Julian* entered the harbour. The ship had sprung a leak and sent a boat to shore in the hopes of obtaining repairs. The three survivors were taken aboard the *Julian* and safely transported to Callao. The *Julian* didn't search for other castaways – possibly because the ship was taking on water and needed to get to harbour for repairs.

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## **BENNACHIE**



Just to the west of Aberdeen lies this mountain range, which is undoubtedly the best known and most climbed in north-east Scotland. It is also much loved by the Leslie Clan, for it is the focal point of the ancient Clan lands. An old song entitled “The Back o’ Bennachie” states that the “Leslies are thick upon the ground where the Gadie rins at the Back o’ Bennachie”.

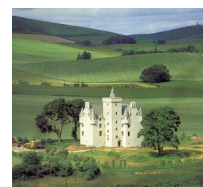
It is in a district known as the Garioch, and in this area lies the village of Old Leslie, Leslie Castle, the site of the Battle of Harlaw, and several other properties and estates associated with our name.

Archaeologists have found evidence of human inhabitation in the area going back to around 2000BC. Remains have also been found of Bronze and Iron Age peoples, who were followed by the Picts, and right down to modern times.

If you ever get a chance to visit this area, there is lots to see. As well as the battle site, and Leslie Castle, there is the Chapel of the Garioch, stone circles, the Maiden Stone (around 700-800 AD), and many lovely walks for the various car parks around Bennachie.

In 1973 a conservation society called “The Baillies of Bennachie” was formed to preserve the amenities, to discourage litter and vandalism, to maintain footpaths and rights of way, to study flora and fauna, to collect and preserve customs, legends, songs and literature relative to Bennachie, and to encourage and stimulate public interest in and care for the mountain. For over 40 years, the Baillies have done a wonderful job and are to be congratulated.

In conjunction with the Baillies, the Forestry Commission owns about 6000 hectares in the Bennachie area, where they have plantations of Scots pine, larch and spruce which are used for recreation purposes, as well as providing some 28000 tonnes of wood to the economy each year.



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### **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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