



The Oliphant Clan & Family Association

NEWSLETTER

July 2006

# Contents

Association Information	3
Olivants in the Forest	4
John Houston Oliphint – The Mad Rebel	6
US Highland Games	8
Births, Marriages & Deaths	10
Updates on the Burial Vault and Marble Effigy at Aberdalgie Church	10
Elmer Oliphant - Top American Footballer	12
Laurence Oliphant {1829-1888} An Outstanding Member of the Clan	13
The City of Blacktown Pipe Band	21
Final Note	21

# Association Information

## Committee

Honorary Chief                      Richard Oliphant of That Ilk.

Please note the following are acting posts for a period of 2 years. A copy of the Clan Constitution will be included with this newsletter. If you have not received a copy please request one from your area secretary.

President	Roderick Oliphant {Scotland}
Vice President	Clare Oliphant {Scotland}
Vice President	Stacy Oliphant McPherson {USA}
Administrator	Mary Elizabeth Tibbetts {USA}
UK Treasurer	Allan Oliphant {Scotland}
US Treasurer	Gwen Holloway {USA}

## Clan Contacts

### **Members Interests Secretary & Genealogy**

Roddy Oliphant, Scotland                      e-mail – [rodoliphant@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rodoliphant@yahoo.co.uk)

### **UK Oliphant Membership Secretary {Inc areas where no Secretary Present} – UK Co-ordinator Worldwide Marketing – Publications**

Clare Oliphant, Scotland                      e-mail - [clare-clanoliphant@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:clare-clanoliphant@tiscali.co.uk)

### **US Co-Coordinator – Newsletter Editor – US Membership Secretary Covering MT, ND, MN, WI, MI, OH, HI & AK**

Stacy Oliphant McPherson                      e-mail – [stacy-clanoliphant@hotmail.com](mailto:stacy-clanoliphant@hotmail.com)

### **US Members Secretary for WY, SD, NE, KS & MO**

Gwen Holloway                      e-mail - [Gwen-ClanOliphant@hotmail.com](mailto:Gwen-ClanOliphant@hotmail.com)

### **US Members Secretary for TX, OK, AR & LA**

Nancy Day van Morkhoven                      e-mail - [nancy-clanoliphant@hotmail.com](mailto:nancy-clanoliphant@hotmail.com)

### **US Members Secretary for ME, VT, NH, NY, MA, CT & RI**

Mary Elizabeth Tibbetts & Mary Alice Yost                      e-mail - [NE\\_clanoliphant@yahoo.com](mailto:NE_clanoliphant@yahoo.com)

**US Members Secretary for IA, IL, IN, PA, NJ, DE, MD**

James and Barbara Oliphant

e-mail - [Jim\\_Barb-clanoliphant@hotmail.com](mailto:Jim_Barb-clanoliphant@hotmail.com)

**US Members Secretary for WA, OR, CA & ID**

Terry L. Birch

e-mail - [terry-clanoliphant@hotmail.com](mailto:terry-clanoliphant@hotmail.com)

**US Members Secretary for NV, UT, CO, AZ & NM**

Keith Oliphint

e-mail - [keith-clanoliphant@att.net](mailto:keith-clanoliphant@att.net)

**US Members Secretary for KY, TN, WV, VA, NC & DC**

Mark C. Oliphant

e-mail - [mark.clanoliphant@gmail.com](mailto:mark.clanoliphant@gmail.com)

**US Members Secretary for MS, AL, GA, SC & FL**

Steven D. Lampley-Oliphant

e-mail - [steve-clanoliphant@lycos.com](mailto:steve-clanoliphant@lycos.com)

**Worldwide Olivant Members Secretary {Inc other spelling variations}**

Jackie Nicholson

e-mail - [jackie\\_clanoliphant@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jackie_clanoliphant@yahoo.co.uk)

**Internet Co-Coordinator**

J Craig Oliphant

e-mail - [jcraig-clanoliphant@hotmail.com](mailto:jcraig-clanoliphant@hotmail.com)

## Olivants in the Forest

By Jackie Nicholson

For the past two years I have been researching my maternal line in Cumbria, formerly known as Cumberland. I knew very little about this side of my family, so to have found anything would have been good. Little did I know just what was in the Records Office in Carlisle just waiting to be found. There appeared to be a group of Olivant's who had settled early in Inglewood Forest. Who were they, where had they come from, were these my ancestors? Here are some of the answers.

The Forest of Inglewood today covers an area between Penrith and Carlisle along the valley of the River Petteril. It has been owned by the Dukes of Devonshire since the mid 1700's. The present Lord of the forest lives in the Manor of Hutton in the Forest and is an MEP. Anciently Inglewood covered a large area of Cumberland, from the River Eden in the east bordering on the Barony of Gilsland and the River Wampool in the west; from Carlisle in the north to Penrith in the south.

The history of the forest goes back a long way, pre-Roman caves and tunnels have been found underground. The Roman fort was called Brocavum, now known as Brougham. The fort and stables were supplied from the forest.

It was a Royal Forest under King David I of Scotland, being used as his hunting grounds in the 1100's. Many of David's and following King's numerous hunting tallies are to be found in the Exchequer Rolls of the period. As a Royal Forest there was strict control of who lived there, you were granted land by the King who ruled by the Lord's of the various manors and his Sheriff.

The Forest or Swainmote Court was held on the feast of St Barnabus, June 11th each year, near the stone and the ancient thorn tree, which is on the road north to Carlisle. At such courts a jury would be chosen from the land owners, cases would be heard, lands passed between father and son, rents paid and improvements to the land would be agreed on.

One of the major sources of information on the Olivant's is a collection of wills dating from 1566 to the 1800's. These were a real treasure trove, as they pre dated the parish records of Hesket in the Forest and other parishes which begin in the 1700's. Thomas Olivant who left a will in 1566 in Lazonby was one of two or three Olivant brothers living in Cumberland by 1540. His wife was Jane and his children were Robert, Rachel, Elizabeth, Hugo, Thomas, William, John and Janet, born from 1543 onwards.

Thomas was a yeoman and he and his descendants initially lived on two farms, Coathill and Theveside in Lazonby parish, which is a large village within the boundaries of Inglewood forest. His family was yeomen and fellmongers. Many of them later became Master Carpenters and Joiners, and there are Olivant's who are carpenters in the area to this day.

In the nearby parish of Dalston lived Alexander Olivant, who may be Thomas' brother. The two families both married people from both parishes having links throughout the years.

Some of Thomas' grandchildren settled at Troughhead, one of several farmsteads which have a long history. They were part of the Manor of Morton and today they are part of Broadfield Estate which is still owned by the descendents of this branch of Olivants.

The first mention I found of these farmsteads is in the Calender of Patent Rolls of Edward III.

"March 30 1358 committed to Robert de Tilliol herbage of Morton and Morton Sceugh in Inglewood for 12 years on petition and granted him said herbage for life"

"February 8 1361 the ancient farm of Wollaykes grant for 30 years by Ralph de Neville to William de Stapleton and his heirs"

"1466 Morton Woolakes and Itonfield passed to Richard Kirkbride and his heirs."

"1490 Walter Kirkbride loses the same lands to the Skelton family as Walter had murdered his neighbour."

Unfortunately the documents in the record office change to a less specific type at just the point I need them to find out when the Olivants moved to this estate.

"1564 By order of Elizabeth the First via the Sheriff of Inglewood, all the inhabitants of Inglewood must prove in writing that they have the right to be there or quit. "

The Olivant's have been in the area continuously since at least 1543. So what did the Olivant's do there? Many of them were Yeomen, passing the land down through their families. The Lazonby Olivant's were Master Carpenters. They would make much that would be essential to life in the Forest, from the timber frames of the houses and barns, to tables, chairs, beds, farm equipment and even wooden clogs. Down at Petheril Bank lived Thomas, a shoemaker, who would make anything from house slippers to outdoor boots made from sealskin, which he would buy from the itinerant merchants who visited the villages with such goods as they could not make locally. The weaver

would take in the wool from the sheep shearing, which was a big annual event which most of the folk would take part in. The weaver and his family would provide warm clothing and bedding against the cold wet Cumberland winters. (From one who lives there, the summers are not much better).

Christopher Olivant and family lived at Calthwaite Hall and provided for the dairy needs of the area from their dairy herd. Some of the milk would be used as a drink while fresh, but most was made into cheese and various milky puddings as it kept better that way. His cousin lived at Wooloaks and was a miller making a variety of bread from the grains of the Forest. A forest in those days was not all trees.

Cumberland in the 1500's was subject to various raids of the Border Reivers and had an earlier history of Scottish English Wars, being the base of Edward I's army and naval base in the late 1200's early 1300's, and the consequent Scottish counter attacks. The Forest was known as a refuge for the local Cumbrians.

The Lords of the West Marches would frequently call on the inhabitants of the Forest to defend the West Marches. A Muster Roll of 1580-1581 lists 18 Olyvant's from the area. Nine were Spearsmen, others were Bowsmen, some of them had no defense and a few were absent. I tend to think that as their estates covered the neighboring parish of Dalston they discovered "urgent business elsewhere" when Lord Dacre turned up.

The central transport of the time was the horse, and in nearly every will of the menfolk, they left horses and riding gear to the next of kin. I found that by the 1700's the Olivant's were frequent travelers, having business interests in London and as far away as Bengal.

My research is a work in progress, so I am continually finding more pieces of the puzzle. One branch of the family settled in Hutton in the Forest quite early on, some of them then moved to Manchester to become silversmiths, one became a Bishop and another an author.

But that, as they say, is another story ...

## John Houston Oliphint, the Mad Rebel

**By Keith Oliphint**

Duncan Oliphant, born 1682 in Perthshire, Scotland, left his homeland for the English colonies in the New World. His progeny have become a large number of Oliphants, Oliphints, and cousins with other names as well. Among Duncan's descendants were John Oliphant, born 1715 in New York, his son John, born 1740 in New Jersey, and his son Robert, born 1771 in North Carolina. One of Robert Oliphant's sons was Wilfred, and there are three facts to note about him: 1. Wilfred was born in 1801 after the colonies had become the United States of America, 2. Wilfred was born in Texas before it had become part of the United States, and 3. Wilfred was the first of these Oliphants whose name became Oliphint.

One of Wilfred's sons was Seaborn, born 1844 in Sabine County, Texas, and he named one of his sons John Houston Oliphint whose birth was in 1869 in Sabine County. He passed his name to his son who is the focus of these paragraphs: John Houston Oliphint, 8 December 1921, Sabine County.

John and his younger brother Benny Ray survived hardship as children to succeed in adult life. After the separation of their parents, and the subsequent death of their father, they were taken in by their uncle and his wife. Later their mother came from Louisiana and took them home with her. They were given better food, clothing, and schooling. Ben became a Methodist Minister, and later became Bishop. John joined the Army Air Corps.

It was the day after Pearl Harbour when John Houston Oliphint began his military career as a private in the Air Corps. He became a combat fighter pilot flying P-47 and P-51 fighters, each named "Mad Rebel" by his ground crew. Based in England, John flew many missions over Germany escorting fleets of bombers and hunting Luftwaffe fighters to challenge and shoot down. On one of these missions John had outmanoeuvred his enemy target, disabled the plane, and sent it blazing to the ground. Then he saw the pilot floating under his parachute, wagged his wings and they waved at each other. John says, "I'm sure he thought I was going to kill him, but that would have broken the unwritten code of honour among warrior pilots."

"Mad Rebel" is the title of the book John Oliphint wrote about his experiences in war. In the Preface the book is described this way:

These are the memoirs of self - - - the conscience of a youth at war with himself and the enemy. They are straightforward documentation delivered with brutal sardonic irony. The events are real...I was there... I lived them. Contrasting emotions and searing conscience changes intrude on the joyous pleasures and human drives of the individual being, and the killing requirements of a warrior. Revealed is the survival capacity for the individual to live beneath the protracted crisis, to sustain terrible damage to mind and body and yet be there and here now . . . sane, alive, still human.

John Houston Oliphint is a Command Fighter Pilot with over 6,000 hours of flying in propeller and jet fighters, helicopters, seaplanes as well as two, four, and ten-engine aircraft. He flew in combat and was an active covert agent in WWII, Korea, the Cold War and Viet Nam. He holds 43 decorations and awards, including the Silver Star, 3 Distinguished Flying Crosses, Air Medals, Bronze Star, Purple Hearts, and many more. He was Prisoner of War who escaped from the Gestapo in World War II and from the Chinese in Korea.

John Oliphint's 28-year military career included service as a communications intelligence officer, an interrogator of Prisoners of War, a public relations staff officer and a troubleshooter. He helped establish training programs and was devoted to worldwide covert recovery of downed aircrew members in enemy territory. He helped write and establish Air Force's Survival Escape and Evasion programs and wrote part of the US Armed Forces Code of Conduct. Today he is extensively involved in church, political, military and social activities, and has a passion for hunting and fishing. John lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Severely wounded with broken bones and bayonet stabs, tortured by his captors, and alone, John Oliphint sang Onward Christian Soldiers repeatedly till his singing attracted the attention of one of the guards. Later he awoke to soothing warm water. A Frenchman cleaned and rewrapped John's wounds. In covert whispers they agreed the man would supply John with a folding razor. The prison guard's commanding officer was coming and the prisoners must be seen to be receiving humane treatment. A hulk of a man came in carrying two buckets and a mop. John saw this man as transportation (for John's wounds prevented his walking). The cleaner was a prisoner compelled to work, and as he proceeded he softly hummed "Onward Christian Soldiers"!

John and Peter, the big man with the mop, quickly arrived at understanding of mutual purpose to escape. Peter was trusted by his guards even to the point that he had keys. As Peter was leaving the cell a woman walked in, moving with authority. The guards gave way for her. She proved to be Russian prisoner who also wanted to escape. They reached agreement of how they would help each other, risking everything for their freedom. The plan took shape. There was killing of guards, stealing of an ambulance, capturing a German officer to help them through checkpoints all to be

done. She looked at John's wounds and difficulty of movement with doubt, but John told her he had a man to carry him.

The next morning the woman returned to John's cell with news that the Gestapo interrogators had arrive to see him. They were now refreshing themselves from the journey. They laid final plans for escape. Then the Gestapo visited. After that the Frenchman came in cleaning and did pass the razor to John as promised. There followed a visit by Peter, the big man, in which experiment proved that John must be carried. Five days of starvation on top of his many wounds left him so weak that a few minutes on his feet had him shaking all over.

The little Frenchman came back with another man, who was an ambulance driver. He wanted to help with the effort at freedom. Later came the Gestapo agent who was the torture expert. He administered a severe beating with his patrolman's nightstick.

John was roused from unconsciousness by the Russian woman and given water. The escape plan was set into motion. Two Guards were killed, and the doctor who had refused to treat John and had abused the woman. Peter was forced to transport John as planned, since John had the Guards' weapons and ammo. But the ambulance and driver did not materialize, for there was no driver. Peter and John were out of the infirmary compound and into the crowded town streets by daylight. Peter, no longer trusted, used John's poor condition to leave him behind. John thought he had succeeded when he reached the crowded train station looking like many a near dead wounded soldier. Yet his escape took one more killing and a difficult trip into the woods where his plane had crashed. From the site of the crash one more difficult walk took John to a "safe house" where a brave French woman of the resistance helped him.

For many more wartime experiences, and for more details of what is written here, you may read John Houston Oliphint's book, "Mad Rebel". Copies are available from: John H. Oliphint (Maj. Ret. USAF), 240 Sierra Vista Drive, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80906 or phone 719-576-9203.

For knowing who the Oliphints are and that they also demonstrate the worth of the Oliphants from whom they descended, there is not a better example than this same John Houston Oliphint.

## USA Highland Games

### By Mary Elizabeth Tibbetts

Hopefully these pictures will show you how much fun Mary Alice and I had at the Rhode Island Games on May 20, 2006 and the Western Mass. Highland Games on June 24, 2006.

The Oliphant Clan tent was set up and sold Calendars, note cards and teddies with kilts and tammies. On display were three binders with indexes containing lots of research and we also displayed our family trees, which made an interesting talking point.

There was plenty to do, both for the adults and the children. In addition to the many pipe bands, we saw falconry, sheep herding and Clydesdale horses. There was entertainment such as the very talented [Caera Aislingeach](http://chaosdancer.egoplex.com/caera/) who in addition to playing the clairsach (wire strung harp) also presented workshops, one on Gaelic language and another on Gaelic folk songs for kids [<http://chaosdancer.egoplex.com/caera/>] and Charlie Zahm, one of the most popular soloists at Celtic music festivals [[www.charliezahm.com](http://www.charliezahm.com)]. Children of all ages could fight dragons and the Invisible Knight. Through a demonstration we even learned how to make the Celtic tartan as worn by the Historic Highlanders!



The food, especially the Haggis, was delicious and plentiful; the shopping was fun and we made many new friends whom we hope to see again at future games.

So if you missed out on all the fun please join us next time. We will be setting up a tent at the Maine Highland Games [www.mainehighlandgames.org] on Saturday, August 19, 2006 in Brunswick, Maine and at the New Hampshire Highland Games [www.nhscot.org] which runs September 22, 23 and 24, 2006 at beautiful Loon Mountain.

If you want to know about the Highland Games we have attended in the past or want information on future Games, please feel free to contact us at Email: [NE\\_clanoliphant@yahoo.com](mailto:NE_clanoliphant@yahoo.com)



Mary Elizabeth (Left) & Mary Alice (Right) displaying our Oliphant Tartan.



Oliphant Clan Tent



Pipe Bands on Parade

## Births, Marriages & Deaths

Members can add their entries to this section by mailing details to their Area Members Secretary.

### Marriages

Our Congratulations go out to our very own Stacy Marie Oliphant (US Members Secretary and US Co-ordinator) who married Daniel Warren McPherson in North Royalton, Ohio, USA on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. We wish them both a long and happy life together!

## Update on the Burial Vault and Marble Effigy at Aberdalgie Church

**By Roddy Oliphant**

### The Burial Vault

On Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> November, we began. Monumental conservators, working for Graciela Ainsworth arrived for the task of dismantling the stone "box" over the site of the ancient burial vault of the Oliphants.

The authorities had repeatedly said that it was no longer there. Their reasoning being that the ground was far too soft for any subterranean structure to have survived. Worse still, John Addison, almost certainly the most eminent structural engineer in the conservation field in Scotland, said that the vault, if there, was in “extreme peril”.

We had been in correspondence with the authorities for some three years and had very little support, except to be told that it is the responsibility of the family to maintain their own burial place (although it is up to the local authority to maintain the cemetery) and also that before we could proceed, we needed to get permission from the Planning Department.

The importance of the Oliphant Burial Vault is immense, not just to the family, but also to the nation and also it is a “feather in the cap” for the local authority to have important historic sites, such as this in their region.

For those who do not know the facts about the vault, let me explain:

Although it is called the Oliphant burial vault, this belies the fact that one of the ‘Oliphants’ buried there was also Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of King Robert the Bruce. Her father-in-law, Sir William Olifard, was a contemporary of the Princess’s father and like the Bruce; Sir William was a famous hero in the fight against the English. His defence of Stirling Castle against King Edward 1 is well recorded. Sir William, chief of the Oliphants, like so many generations of Oliphant chiefs after him, is also buried in the vault. Its importance to the nation is therefore, considerable. The antiquity of the vault is therefore at least 1329, but it may be much earlier as the Oliphants first acquired the estate in 1183.

The mission was, with the minimum invasion at this point, to ascertain whether there was anything left to save.

With the guidance of John Addison, and with the team of stone conservators provided by Graciela Ainsworth, the project was successfully fulfilled. First the careful task of dismantling the stone box (a twentieth century monument) on top of the site was done, making a careful photographic record of the position and stones which were removed. That exposed the vaulting over the chamber. Endoscopic cameras were lowered into the void through a small hole to inspect the vault below. The appearance of the lime mortar suggested that it may have been re-pointed some hundred years ago, when previous repairs were carried out, in 1905. Although this is speculative until full access is gained. However, inside the vault, at one end, there was an archway, blocked by a boulder which appeared not be mortared in. Above the boulder were gaps, the depth of which could not be ascertained as there was no surface beyond to reflect light. The boulder had been rolled into place from the other side, suggesting another, bigger, chamber beyond.

It is hard to judge the exact measurements of the void as this had to be done using the endoscopic camera. However it appeared to be about six feet deep, by four feet wide by eight feet long. It could be that it is simply the entrance chamber for lowering coffins into, so that they could be passed into the main chamber, or, as no coffins were evident, they could be interred under the floor. As we did not enter, there is much which is still left unknown. What was evident was that tree roots from nearby trees had penetrated the 14<sup>th</sup> century structure and were hanging down. Having established the existence of the vault, the twentieth century structure was then rebuilt with all the original masonry and covered over again with the original plinth. The infill included the pillars used for the construction in the 1780s of a canopy over the (Belgian) Tournai marble effigy of Sir William Olifard which used to cover the void. The effigy is now in the local kirk (church) at the top of the graveyard. When work began, it was found that the plinth had two “drys” (cracks). Care was taken when moving the plinth but it was impossible to prevent one dry from parting cleanly. The break was repaired when the 20<sup>th</sup> century monument was re-assembled.

It is crucial now to stabilise the bank, eradicate the trees nearby and learn as much as we can about the vault itself. This will all be part of a subsequent project once the necessary funds have been raised.

However, during the whole process, we came up against the local authorities once again, this time it was not so pleasant. In fact, they were vitriolic.

"How dare you go into the vault without permission".

"But you said that it did not exist", I replied, "So how could we get permission? Besides, we did not go into the vault, we simply unpicked 'the twentieth century monument' (their term for the stone box, not mine)"

"Ah yes" they said, "but a twentieth century monument is tomorrow's historic monument." That anyone could seriously say anything quite so stupid was breathtaking, we used the best (and some of the most expensive) conservation people in Scotland to dismantle and then rebuild a structure made one hundred years ago, to establish whether or not the authorities were wrong about the existence of the vault. – They were wrong and there is something hugely important to preserve.

"And you should have got planning permission and Historic Building consent"

"But we corresponded with the planners and they said that we needed neither unless we were altering an historic structure" I said.

"I have a copy of that letter in front of me and it says that you need to write to them to tell them what repairs you are intending to carry out, even if you are not doing alterations"

"We will, next year, when we do the repairs"

"And you did not get permission from the Cemeteries Department"

"So why did you not tell me about that when a year ago you told me that I had to get permission from the Planning Department?"

No matter how facile his statements, he had officialdom on his side and was determined to give me a hard time. Discretion was the better part that day and so I simply apologised for all my many errors. Since then "all the 'i's have been dotted and the 't's crossed and there is peace with the local authority. At the end of the day, the only two people who got upset with us were the two who had consistently said that the vault was not there and been unhelpful in the three years leading up to the project commencing. The planners, the Cemeteries Officer etc., could not have been nicer.

The real problem now begins, quantifying the extent of works required, the cost of those works, and then the process of fundraising. The question is, if the vault is historic, then should the state not bear the cost, or a large part of it? We are talking of sums in the region of tens, if not hundreds of thousands of pounds. In addition, access is through Lord Forteviot's garden. He is famously hostile to any kind of intrusion to his land. We will only get that access if we have the support of the government behind us. This has traditionally been the burial place of the chiefs of our clan and their immediate family, if, as the two chaps in the local authority are also saying, that the site is too important for future chiefs to be buried in, then why should the family have to be responsible for the maintenance of a grave which they cannot use?

At the end of the day, the most important aim is to preserve the site, and its present incumbents, for all time. The investigatory work by Graciela Ainsworth and John Addison has so far cost almost five thousand pounds (about US\$ 8,500) which will be paid for by Balcraig Properties, a company owned by Allan and Roddy Oliphant. We are also trying to create a charitable trust/foundation to act as the vehicle for all future works, as this is a far better way, both for fund raising and also for tax.

### The Marble Effigy

The effigy is a totally "different kettle of fish" altogether. It is visible, tangible and falling apart. It captures the imagination immediately a person sets eyes on it. It is ancient, irreplaceable and the best example of its kind to have survived in Scotland. The government, at every level, local and central, wants to see its preservation, and pay money towards the cost. That is not to say that we

will not have to make a contribution as well. We are expected to do so, some three thousand pounds (\$5,000). This will be covered either by Richard, our chief, or by Balcraig Properties. The total cost of these works is more than double (about US\$ 20,000) the cost of the investigatory work on the Vault, though mercifully we will only have to pay about 25%, as the rest is being paid by grants from state and charitable coffers.

Work has already started on this and, it is hoped, will preserve the effigy for a very long time. In 1904 it was moved into the existing church from on top of the Burial Vault. A recess in the wall of the church was created and the effigy was then set into concrete. Unfortunately, this cement is not good for the marble, and also, because there is no lining between the marble and the rest of the masonry, the marble is acting like a sponge and drawing in water. The moisture also contains salts which have been dissolved from the rest of the masonry; these then collect in the marble which then flakes off. Scraping off the cement is a slow and painstaking process. I expect that the whole restoration process of the Marble Effigy will take another month, maybe two. This project is being steered by the Minister for Aberdalgie, the Rev Colin Williamson of the Church of Scotland. As more information becomes available, I will of course let you know.

## Elmer Oliphant - Top American Footballer

### No 78 of the top 100 of all time

#### **Elmer Oliphant, Back Army, 1915-1917**

Here's where it starts to get more difficult for us. How do you rank a player who was one of the best all-around players of an era when compared to the specialists of the late 20th century? When doing our ranking of the 100 Greatest Players of All-Time, we look at what that player meant to his team, how revered he was for the era and how he ranks in the history of college football. Army's Elmer Oliphant is one player who was toughest to rank. He was a fine runner, but he was more than that. He could pass, and remember, this wasn't exactly the day of the fun 'n gun high octane passing attacks. He could kick when kickers weren't some little guy with little shoulder pads. He could block as well as anyone and was a fearsome hitter. Along with Rutgers' Paul Roberson and Carlisle's Jim Thorpe, Oliphant is widely considered one of the signature players of pre-1920 college football.



Oliphant still holds the Army record for most points scored with 45 vs. Villanova in 1916. He scored a record 125 total points in 1917 scored the most touchdowns in a game with 6 against Villanova.

**The Army offence:** It says a lot to be considered one of the best players in the long and storied history of Army football, but Oliphant was the main cog in one of the most dominant teams in the early part of the 20th century. Head coach Charles Daly put together a monster team that went 16-1



over Oliphant's final two years at the Academy (21-4-1 over his career) going 9-0 in 1916 and losing only to Notre Dame in 1917, 7-2. Oliphant, a two-time All-American, was a devastating all-around player who most certainly would've won the Heisman ... had the trophy been around then.

**All-Around Athlete:** Not only did Oliphant do it all on the gridiron, he was a four time letterman in baseball, earned three letters in basketball and one in track and field. He also earned letters in boxing, hockey and swimming to go along with his three in football.

#### Honours:

- College Football Hall of Fame - 1955
- All-American - 1916, 1917

## Laurence Oliphant (1829-1888) An Outstanding Member of the Clan

### Lecture by Thomas Meyer on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2005

Taken from Oliphant Clan Meeting, 24<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> August 2005, Strathallan, Perthshire, Scotland

Thomas Meyer is a historical researcher from Switzerland, and he has spent a considerable amount of time researching the life of Laurence Oliphant. He has put together the following information about Mr. Oliphant that up to this point has been a mystery to most. Hopefully someday soon, Mr. Meyer will publish a book about Laurence Oliphant.

(Note: The following text is a revised and slightly enlarged version of the lecture. Revision by Ireine Czech, Tübingen. Only for private circulation. © TM)

Thomas Meyer: Just before I met Roddy Oliphant I visited Twickenham near London where Laurence Oliphant died. Nobody seemed to know exactly where his tombstone was located. I found it after spending about four hours at the wrong cemetery in Twickenham—because there are two. Finally I ended up at the right one and there I found his date of birth—August 3<sup>rd</sup>—which had never been mentioned by his biographers.

There are, in fact, three biographies of Laurence Oliphant's life so far: One by Margaret Oliphant, from the Kellie branch of the family; one by Ann Taylor from whose book I will presently read you a few sentences; and another one by Philip Henderson. So there are three books about this man. But I think he is too interesting for anyone to stay content with just the three books. So there will be more.

Unfortunately, my own work in progress—kindly mentioned by Roddy—will first be published in German.

Let us start with the dates of his life. As Laurence's date of birth had never been mentioned, I slowly almost came to believe that he did not have one. Quite a miraculous thing, of course! But there it was on the tombstone: 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1829, and next to it: 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1888, the day of his death. So, he did not have too long a life; he was only 59 when he died of lung cancer. He was a heavy smoker and he had led a life that was so exhausting that one could find it surprising that he even

got *that* old. He travelled throughout the world all his life, constantly involved in various activities, crossing the Atlantic about 23 times.

Laurence was born in South Africa. His father was an attorney; later becoming Chief Justice for Ceylon.

Laurence had no regular education. Some biographers think that this was a serious handicap for his later career. I do not think so and Margaret Oliphant—a distant relative—did not think so. But let us briefly take a look at the way that Anne Taylor, the most recent biographer, looked at his life. She wrote:

‘To his contemporaries Laurence Oliphant was one of the most fascinating men of his generation. They knew that his experience of life was exotic, that he had observed at close quarters many of the significant events of the time – European wars and revolutions, the imposition of Western influence on China and Japan, the collapse of Turkey, the return of Jews to Palestine, the rise of Pan-Islam. All these, and more, formed the content of his vivid and perceptive books. What they did not know, though some suspected, was the extent to which he was active in these affairs, that he was, for example, a player in the great game with Russia, an agent of the British Government for a large part of his career. Something of this can be learnt from papers scattered in many libraries, but the whole story will never be known, for a great deal has been lost or deliberately destroyed. Much more remains of the course of events in the central tragedy of his life<sup>a</sup> – remember this phrase – ‘which caused him to abandon the opportunity many people believed to lie within his grasp, of attaining to the highest political office in the land. This failure was concerned with his spiritual being and the seeds of the disaster were present at the beginning, in the circumstances of his birth and upbringing.’<sup>a</sup>

(*Laurence Oliphant Traveller – Writer – Wit – Secret Agent – Diplomat – Mystic – Entrepreneur*, Oxford 1982, p. 1)

That is the actual beginning of Anne Taylor’s biography. It points to a great mystery or a great riddle in the life of Laurence Oliphant. He was, in fact, linked to all great politicians in Great Britain, and had a great political career lying ahead of him. But in the middle of his life, he seemed to abandon his chances—he gave them up, so to speak, in favour of other things that were of more value to him. If you go into the life of Laurence Oliphant, however, you will find that he regretted nothing and was in full vigour and positivity right up to the very end. But Taylor’s statement shows us that there really is a riddle in the life of this man. Many people cannot understand this turning point in his life. Why did he abandon all these wonderful possibilities of worldly success?

To be true, however, he already had had his share of success in relatively young years, in the realm of literature. It was Laurence’s adventurous nature that made him a writer. He started writing after travelling to Ceylon and Nepal where he had climbed high mountains and hunted elephants in the jungle. Nobody in the West knew anything about Nepal at the time. His first book, *Journey to Katmandu*, was an immediate success. In fact, Laurence became a prolific writer – he wrote travel books, political books and novels. One of his novels has a title that is the motto of the coat of arms of his family branch: *Altiora peto*—I am striving for higher things. This is a very witty novel with much substance.

In his autobiography, *Episodes in a Life of Adventure or Moss from a Rolling Stone*, written shortly before his death, Laurence himself tells us how he became a writer: ‘While I was engaged in this very uninteresting operation<sup>a</sup> – he is speaking of his studying law in England at the time – ‘my journey to Nepal was published by Murray with such satisfactory results that I became bitten with the mania for authorship. The difficulty was to find something to write about. This I solved by deciding to go to some out of the way place and do something that nobody else had done.’<sup>a</sup> You can see the spirit of adventure! And we can also see the spirit of a Robert Bruce-like independence in Laurence. He was a real individualist—that is one of the deepest characteristics of this man.

In the same spirit of adventure earlier on in his life, Laurence visited one of the mines in Cornwall, England. He recalls a dialogue that he had with an experienced miner, as they were on their way down into the bowels of the earth together. 'I was some hundreds of feet down in the bowels of the earth, crawling down a ladder (...) and feeling that the temperature was every moment getting warmer, I said to a miner who was accompanying me: <It is getting very hot down here. How far do you think it is to the infernal regions?> <I don't know exactly, Sir>, he promptly replied, <but if you let go, you will be there in two minutes!><sup>a</sup> (Laughter). (*Episodes*, Edinburgh 1887, p. 19)

Some years before Laurence had also experienced adventures of this sort. He spent some time with his mother in this beautiful area that we are exploring these very days. I have just seen the ruins of Condie house where they both lived in the neighbourhood we are in.

Laurence spent most of his life elsewhere in the world rather than at home. So, in his mid-twenties he travelled with Lord Elgin to Canada. Lord Elgin had the task of negotiating treaties with the Americans, the Canadians and also the Indians. Laurence had an important share in these negotiations. Of course, he also vividly took part in the social life connected with this political mission. In *Episodes* he reports the following remarkable salon conversation overheard by him one day:

'Senator Tombs, a violent Democrat, was a large pompous man, with a tendency, not uncommon among American politicians, to <orate> rather than to converse in society. He waited for a pause in the discussion, and then, addressing Lord Elgin in stentorian tones, remarked, *apropos* of the engrossing topic –<Yes, my lord, we are about to relume the torch of liberty upon the altar of slavery.> Upon which our hostess, with a winning smile, and in the most silvery accents imaginable said – <Oh, I am so glad to hear you say that again, Senator; for I told my husband you had made use of exactly the same expression to me yesterday, and he said you would not have talked such nonsense to anybody but a woman!>

The shout of laughter which greeted this sally abashed even the worthy senator which was the more gratifying to those present, as to do so was an achievement not easily accomplished.<sup>a</sup> [Laughter]

Maybe you can get a sense of Laurence's sharpness of observation as well as his wit and literary style.

Now I have to hurry on with this brief sketch of the man and I would like to give you an impression of how Laurence Oliphant was spreading out over the planet--quite physically.

Let us just look at one little fact: Where did he spend the Christmas period during four successive years? From 1854 to 1857 he would not spend them in the cosy Condie home in Scotland. He rather spent these days in Quebec (1854), Trebizond (1855) at the Black Sea, New Orleans (1856) and in Canton, China (1857). That is how this relatively young man spent Christmas!

Laurence liked to sketch during his many travels. Fortunately the family has preserved some of his sketch books, and they must be preserved for the future. Some of them illustrate scenes described in the *Episodes*.

One of the most dramatic scenes (in 1860) that he ever experienced was a bloody nightly attack upon the British legation at Yeddo, as Tokyo was formerly called. Laurence was nearly killed in the long course of fierce fighting with the attackers who had been hired by a Japanese prince who wanted to deter foreigners from settling in the country. He was, in fact, saved by a wooden beam! Indeed, whenever Laurence's attacker wanted to draw his sword to full length before striking, he was stopped from doing so by a wooden beam in the ceiling.



The life of Laurence Oliphant is full of incidents like this. He was not afraid of death. He went through life reckoning with the fact that you have to die anyway one day: indeed, he had no fear of death whatsoever.

Shortly after this episode we find him in Italy where he had conversations with Garibaldi—conversations of a downright conspiratorial character. Garibaldi and his friends had their own ideas about the independence of Italy. They did not want to surrender too much of it, for example, to the French. Oliphant was a co-conspirator in the attempt to falsify a plebiscite in Nice which was about to be given away to France. He describes it all in the *Episodes*.

One day Laurence and one of his servants approached the little town of Sulmona in the Abruzzi. The little town was in full festivity with music, flags and all sorts of things. They soon found out that *they themselves* were the reason for the festivities. It was all a great misunderstanding: Laurence had been taken for the nephew of Lord Palmerston who was very popular among the Italians at the time. Laurence tried to clear up the mistake, but to no avail. The mayor just expressed his deep understanding for Laurence's wish to keep his incognito and they ended up in the midst of a great banquet in the Town Hall!

We come to the time when Laurence meets the woman of his life: Alice Le Strange. She came from an old English family, Norman in origin. Alice was a very gifted artist. There are remarkable drawings and paintings by her in a catalogue published at Haifa in Israel, where both Alice and Laurence were going to live later on and where they are well-remembered, still today. Alice was an extraordinary woman; and very independent. You can imagine that a man like Laurence needed a strong partner with her own head and heart. Laurence met Alice in Paris when he was about forty. He was working there as a War Correspondent for the *Times* at the beginning of the Prussian-French War. At this time Laurence, who had always entertained a deep interest in religious and spiritual questions, had already found what we today would term his 'guru'<sup>a</sup>.

In fact, a few years earlier, in 1867, he had joined a community at Brocton, New York. He was disappointed with party politics, having become a member of the Scottish Parliament himself. The Brocton community of searchers for spiritual truth was led by a man called Thomas Lake Harris. He was a very remarkable figure. He was a follower of the doctrines of Swedenborg, the famous Swedish 'seer' who had inspired many artists such as Strindberg, Balzac, Blake etc. Laurence had been so fascinated by a lecture that Harris delivered in London that he gave away a substantial part of his fortunes and decided to settle at Brocton. His mother, only eighteen years younger than him, followed and remained his most intimate partner and friend besides Alice.

Of course, many people wondered if they had lost their heads. Why would they give away their fortune for an obscure community led by a strange prophet?

Laurence's motives were not superficial. He had been successful as a writer, travel agent and a great political career was open to him. He had, however, been disappointed with party politics, through his experiences as a member of the Scottish Parliament. Thus a political career seemed undesirable for him. Moreover he felt that he needed a real challenge for his whole being. Things had gone too smoothly in his life and almost without effort. Now he wanted to do real hard work and he decided to begin working on himself. That is exactly what a life at Brocton enabled. In full freedom he submitted himself to an external authority in order to get to know himself at a deeper level by renouncing his own individual will for a while. He had never done this in his whole life. So we find him in Brocton, sewing petticoats, digging the earth, reading spiritual literature, getting up at four o'clock in the morning, having only a shabby little room for himself. During the many years of his connection with Harris he regularly returned to Europe—whenever Harris found it appropriate—in order to have him earn money, for example, by working as a war correspondent.

After a while, Alice, who was in full agreement and in tune with Laurence's spiritual strivings, came over to Brocton. Laurence's letters from this period were not signed with his real name, but with the

new community name given by Harris: "Woodbine". You can see this on a number of autograph letters that Roddy acquired a few years ago; they are on display during the Clan Meeting.

Tus, Laurence was on a spiritual quest in his own decided way. That was actually the *central riddle* in his life. And a biographer like Anne Taylor thinks that this was the *central tragedy* in his life. Laurence himself never thought so. While he was at Brocton he was interviewed by two journalists who had difficulty in seeing the purpose of—as they saw it—his 'abandoning the world'. For them, Laurence Oliphant was a man with a literary reputation, with a diplomatic reputation and with a reputation as a successful and witty man. And now he is doing farm work or sewing petticoats! Under the headline 'A pointed dialogue with Mr. Oliphant'<sup>a</sup> we read:

'As we were about to leave the Community, we said to Mr. Oliphant, 'Your case interests us exceedingly. Will you permit us to ask if you do not sometimes long for the fleshpots of Parliament, and the allurements of aristocratic life?'

'Not in the least', he replied. 'I was saying only the other day that it seemed to me as though I had died to my old state and risen to an entirely new and different life. I take no interest in Parliamentary discussions, or European affairs. I received a package of papers from London a few days ago, but have not had the heart to look at them.'

'Do you consider such a state of mind a desirable one?' we asked. 'Is it not the best for us to take an interest in the affairs of mankind, and to play our several parts on the stage of life? We could do this in the name of the Lord, and perhaps thereby accomplish some good.'

'Very true', responded Mr. Oliphant, 'but my present work is an internal and spiritual one. I have all that I can do to combat and eradicate the evils of my nature. When I shall have accomplished that work, and become so spiritually pure that I can touch pitch and not be defiled, I may return to public life. I should then be in a condition really to benefit mankind and to do God service in the prosecution of worldly affairs.'<sup>a</sup>

Let us just ponder for a second: If nowadays some of our politicians, particularly in the West—I do not want to get too close to the Prime Minister of Great Britain...—would have such an intuition for a time and would say: 'Before I can do any good for humanity, I should do some work on my own inner nature', I think without any doubt that our world would be in a quite different state. Laurence Oliphant felt the intense need to transform his own nature before becoming useful again in the service of worldly affairs. To him this was a holy task requiring his full efforts and his undivided attention for a time. Therefore there was no question of escaping duties or jeopardizing real chances in life. He just wished to become more effective in his future service for the world.

As Harris more and more turned out to be a power- and money-craving 'crook', both Laurence and Alice decided to leave the community. Harris really had been an extraordinary man to begin with, but increasingly turned away, it seems, from his own higher sources, as is happening with some 'gurus' of our own age.

Are there results of this inner work during the time with Harris? I think there are. Shortly after finally leaving Harris and his community we find Laurence Oliphant in Palestine (1879), fired by what may be called the deepest social intuition of his life: *The Jewish people, especially in the East, have to be helped*. Not being Jewish himself, Laurence started to bring about the possibility that thousands of Jews, mainly from Eastern Europe and Russia, could settle there. During his travels he had witnessed the sorrow and persecution of many Jewish communities and individuals. Now he used all his skills and his contacts to realize this pre-Zionist project. Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire and the Sultans treated the Jewish population in a far better way than the rest of the rulers in the East. It was also for this reason that Palestine was chosen as the place of settlement. There was actually a growing community of Jewish settlers, cultivating the land, peacefully mixing with the Arabs and with the Druses, the latter a peculiar Christian sect that upheld the doctrine of

reincarnation. Laurence and Alice settled near Haifa. He learned Hebrew; she learned Arabic. Their home soon became a centre of peace, work and learning.

Thus, long before Theodor Herzl, Laurence Oliphant paved the way for the Balfour Declaration of 1917, (the official British permission for Jews to settle in Palestine) and for the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948. Oliphant undertook this in the spirit of tolerance with other peoples and religions and in the spirit of mutual understanding. He would never have accepted a Jewish settlement involving wars, religious intolerance and actual suppression, not to speak of the absurdity of erecting a kind of a Berlin Wall in Israel.

His book, *Life in the Holy Land*, originally published in 1887, was reprinted in 1976 in Jerusalem. Moderate modern Zionists keep him in good memory. In Tel Aviv there is a street with his name and the city of Haifa commemorates both Laurence and Alice to this day.

Besides his work for Jewish settlement, Oliphant co-organized the construction of the first railroad from Haifa to Damascus and took part in archaeological excavations in the Holy Land.

As late as August 1982, in an article in *The Jewish Times* with the title 'The Long Hot Summer of England's Jews'<sup>a</sup>, its author, Dr. Joseph Cohen regrets the absence of Laurence Oliphant's work for the Jewish community in Great Britain! Cohen, in reviewing the new biography by Anne Taylor, writes: 'In the last decade of his life, Oliphant, a non-Jew, became obsessed with the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. Though he was not formally attracted to Zionism, he was, curiously, a vigorously articulate spokesman for the Zionist ideal, advocating on his own the advantages of locating a colony of Jews east of the Jordan to stabilize and enhance the region. He envisaged a British protectorate in the midst of the Ottoman Empire, and prophetically viewed his proposed state as a democratic buffer against Russian expansionism. In 1878 he almost convinced the British government that it should support a plan to purchase a million acres of unsettled land from the Turks. Single-handedly, he recruited and settled in Palestine a colony of Rumanian Jews whose descendants are flourishing to day. Unquestionably, Oliphant's efforts subsequently influenced the Balfour decision.'<sup>a</sup> Cohen ends his article by saying: 'However pleasantly cool the temperature is in the British Isles these days, I have no doubt that the long hot summer of the English Jews will only grow worse, for no longer are there any Oliphant's around to speak in high places in their behalf.'<sup>a</sup>

Thus Laurence Oliphant had been active on many levels at the same time, never losing his head in doing so. Always calm, always witty. Margaret Oliphant, who had a hard time understanding the long Harris episode in his life, pointed out that Laurence never showed the least signs of being mentally or spiritually unbalanced—and she knew Laurence personally and had met him at various stages in his life. He never became a mystic in the negative sense, not knowing where to put his feet on the ground. He always had, I would like to say, his three feet firmly planted on the ground, wherever he stood. At the same time the spirit of purely original action and of absolute individual independence guided him. Precisely this mixture of characteristics makes him so interesting. And this also makes him – at least in my eyes – a true representative of the Oliphant Clan, particularly if we follow its traces back to Robert Bruce who defeated the English at Bannockburn (1314) and whose daughter Elizabeth was wedded to an ancestor of the clan.

I can only briefly touch on the end of Laurence Oliphant's life. After Alice died in 1886, Oliphant became acquainted with Rosamond Dale Owen, a granddaughter of the famous American Socialist, Robert Owen. In the summer of 1888 she became his second wife. The joys of marriage with this remarkable woman were very short: Soon Rosamond had to become Laurence's nurse, for in August 1888 he fell seriously ill. The lung cancer diagnosed led to his premature death on December 23<sup>rd</sup> 1888.

I will close with a passage from his truly remarkable autobiography. (By the way, if it should ever be reprinted, some of the sketches in the family archive should be included in it.)

Reading this book we enter the realm of living history. He was personally acquainted with all the leading personalities of the age. He met Lincoln; he met Queen Victoria, Emerson, Garibaldi, and the Sultan etc. It would be hard to tell which ruling figure of the time he had *not* actually met.

In the closing passages of *Episodes in a Life of Adventure*, published in the last year of his life, Laurence Oliphant gives us something like the extract of his life and an insight into the very core of all his life's striving: 'The more I raced about the world, and took as active part as I could in its dramatic performances, the more profoundly did the conviction force itself upon me, that if it was indeed a stage, and all the men and women only players, there must be a real life somewhere. (...) Now that I found myself among politicians, I think it forced itself upon me more strongly than ever. Here was a stage, indeed, on which I had proposed to myself to play a serious part. It was for this I had applied myself to the study of European politics, for this I had supplied myself with valuable sources of information. I had learnt my part, but when it came to acting it seemed to dwindle into most minute proportions. It is true that just at this juncture the British legislature was far more occupied with the cattle-plague than with foreign affairs, and that the disinfecting of railway trucks was regarded as a subject of absorbing interest, second only in importance to the Reform Bill which followed. The House of Commons does not yet seem to have learnt the lesson that voters are like playing cards. The more you shuffle them the dirtier they get. When it became clear to me that in order to succeed, party must be put before country, and self before everything, and that success could only be purchased at the price of convictions, which were expected to change with those of the leader of the party (...), my thirst to find something that was not a sham or a contradiction in terms increased. The world, with its bloody wars, its political intrigues, its social evils, its religious cant, its financial frauds, and its glaring anomalies, assumed in my eyes more and more the aspect of a gigantic lunatic asylum. And the question occurred to me whether there might not be latent forces in nature, by the application of which this profound moral malady might be reached. To the existence of such forces we have the testimony of the ages. It was by the invocation of these that Christ founded the religion of which the popular theology has become a travesty, and it appeared to me that it could only be by a reinvocation of these same forces – a belief in which seemed rapidly dying out – that a restoration of that religion to its pristine purity could be hoped for.

I had long been interested in a class of psychic phenomena which, under the names of magnetism, hypnotism, and spiritualism, have since been forcing themselves upon public attention, and had even been conscious of these phenomena in my own experiences, and of the existence of forces in my own organism which science was utterly unable to account for, and therefore turned its back upon, and relegated to the domain of the unknowable. Into this region –miscalled mystic – I determined to try and penetrate. Looking back upon the period of my life described in the foregoing pages, it appeared to me distinctly a most insane period. I therefore decided upon retiring from public life and the confused turmoil of a mad world, into a seclusion where, under the most favourable conditions I could find, I could prosecute my researches into the more hidden laws which govern human action and control events. For more than twenty years I have devoted myself to this pursuit; and though from time to time I have been suddenly forced from retirement into some of the most stirring scenes which have agitated Europe, the reasons which compelled me to participate in them were closely connected with the investigation in which I was engaged, the nature of which is so absorbing, and its results so encouraging, that it would not be possible for me now to abandon it, or to relinquish the hope which it has inspired, that a new moral future is dawning upon the human race – one certainly of which it stands much in need. As, however, this latter conviction has not yet forced itself upon a majority of my fellowmen, who continue to think the world is a very good world as it is, and that the invention of new machines and explosives for the destruction of their fellowmen is a perfectly sane and even laudable pursuit, I will refrain from entering further for the present upon such an unpopular theme. Perhaps the day may come, though it cannot be for many years, when I may take up the thread of my life where I have dropped it here, and narrate some episodes which have occurred since, which I venture to hope that the public of that day will be more ready to appreciate than those to whom, with the warmest feelings of attachment and compassion, I respectfully dedicate these pages.'<sup>a</sup> (p.417 ff.)

I hope that you have gained a little bit of an insight into the character of Laurence Oliphant: This man who truly was at the same time 'of this world', and 'above this world'. A man who wanted to renew the basic impulses and ideas that became sterile or even destructive within all human affairs—political, economic, and spiritual.

It seems to me to be no exaggeration to say: Laurence Oliphant was literally an outstanding member of the Clan. I hope to have increased your appetite to get to know him more closely.

## The City of Blacktown Pipe Band

### By Roddy Oliphant

Here is something which may or may not be of interest to you. There are a group of People from Australia called the Blacktown Pipe Band and they are in Scotland at the moment. What makes them interesting to us is that they wear the Oliphant Tartan:-

Checkout their website at <http://www.blacktownpipeband.com/>

There will be approximately seventy people in the Oliphant tartan, playing the bagpipes and drums. Some sight! Their diary is as follows:-

29th July Gourock  
30th July Callander  
5th August North Berwick  
6th August Bridge of Allan  
12th August Glasgow  
13th August Perth

I will try to attend as many as I can - probably 30th; 5th; 6th and 13th.

The more people there are attending, dressed in the Oliphant tartan, the better, even if it is just a scarf or tie. We may not see them again for many years, so I would suggest that you grab the opportunity when you can.

We will update you further on these events in the next newsletter.

## Final Note

Is there something you want us to cover in the newsletter or do you have an interesting Oliphant story to tell?

Please send suggestions to your area membership secretary!  
Please submit any Births, Marriages or Deaths in the same way.