



## Clan LEASK

### ARMS

Argent

### CREST

A crescent Argent

### MOTTO

Virtute cresco (I grow by virtue)

### On Compartment

Leskgaronne

### SUPPORTERS

Issuant from two roses Or, barbed and seeded Vert, as many wax candles Proper, inflamed Gules

**A**s with many Scottish families, there are several possibilities as to the origin of the name. It may be a diminutive of the Anglo-Saxon 'lisse', meaning 'happy'. In Norse it means 'a stirring fellow'. The late professor Keith Leask of Aberdeen believed that Liscus, chief of the Haedui, a tribe of Gauls described by Julius Caesar in his Gallic Wars, was the ancestor of the Leasks. The Castle of Boulogne, once the possession of Charlemagne and one of the greatest fortresses in France, at one time belonged to a family called de Lesque. An early reference to the name is found in mention of Erik Leask, who was reputed to be chamberlain to his kinsman, the king of Denmark,

William de Laskereske appears on the Ragman Rolls of 1296, submitting to Edward I of England. Around 1345 William Leask was granted a charter of confirmation by David II, son of Robert the Bruce, to his hands of Leskgoroune or Leskgaranne. He may be the same William Leysk who was recorded in the parish records of the church at Ellon in Agerdeenshire, in the following manner: 'William de Laysk, the elder, Lord of that Ilk, bequeathed a pound of wax yearly to the altar of the Holyrood in the church of St Mary of Ellon'. He also bequeathed from his lands at Logy a stone of wax for lights to be burned on the Sabbath and other feast days on his tomb and those of his wives, Alice de Rath and Mariota de St Michael. His seal was appended to the charter confirming the donations, along with that of the Bishop of Aberdeen, in 1380. The local kirk sessions records at the beginning of the seventeenth century show that William Lask of that Ilk and his tenants were regular attenders in the newly reformed church at Ellon. The second known chief, who was also baillie of the barony of Findon, inherited half of the lands of Henry de Brogan, Lord of Achlowne, in 1390. In 1391 he appears as a witness to a charter by the Earl of Orkney. About the middle of the next century a younger son of Lask went to Orkney at the request of the then earl, who had formed an almost princely court around his splendid palace at Kirkwall. A branch developed there which can still show the longest unbroken male lines of the family.

In 1456, the third chief, Wilfred, signed a bond of manrent in favor of William Hay, Earl of Erroll, and resigned his hands in favor of his son and heir, Thomas. The connection with the Hays appears to have remained strong from this point onwards and when the Cheynes of Esslemont allied themselves with the Hay Earls of Erroll, their bond, dated 1499, was signed at the Chapel of Laske. William Lask of that Ilk, the seventh chief, signed the oath of allegiance to the child James VI in 1574 following the deposition of his mother, Mary, Queen of Scots.

In 1615 the register of the Privy Council records a complaint from Alexander Leask that Adam Gordon, brother of the Laird of Gight, put violent hands upon him at the Yet of Leask and wounded him grievously. Later in the same year the Gordons again attacked the Leasks, setting upon the son of the chief, for which act George Gordon was outlawed. Yet again in 1616, William Leask of that Ilk was accosted by John Gordon of Ardlohy and a party of men with 'pistolets and hagbuts'. Alexander Leask of that Ilk was one of the noblemen who recorded his coat of arms in the newly established public register in 1672.

Disaster overtook the family at the end of the seventeenth century when they borrowed heavily upon their estates to invest in the ill-fated Darien scheme. This was a trading venture with Central America which was intended to rival the great East India Company established in London. The lands chosen for the first settlement were disease-ridden, and most of the colonists and traders perished. Broken by debt, Alexander Leask of that Ilk, the thirteenth and last known chief in the unbroken line, gave up his estates, and the house of Leask became the residence of Robert Cumming. Little is then known of the family until the twentieth century when, in 1963, a descendent managed to buy back a portion of the family lands and established the Leask Society with the support of other prominent Leasks such as Lieutenant General Sir Henry Leask, sometime governor of Edinburgh Castle and General Officer

commanding the Army in Scotland. In 1968 the Lord Lyon recognized the present chief for her lifetime and re-established a line of descent which has secured the bloodline for at least the next two generations.

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**Clan LEASK Septs**

LEASK(E)

LESK

LIST

This clan information sheet has been prepared by  
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