



Clan **LESLIE**

ARMS

Argent, on a bend Azure three buckles Or (Leslie)

CREST

A demi griffin Proper, beaked, armed and winged Or

MOTTO

Grip fast

SUPPORTERS

(on compartment embellished with plants of rue in flower Proper)
Two griffins Proper, beaked, winged and armed Or

STANDARD

The Arms of Leslie (Argent, on a bend Azure three buckles Or) in the hoist and of two tracts Azure and Argent, upon which is depicted the Badge in the first and third compartments and the rest in the second compartment, along with the Motto 'Grip fast' in letters Azure upon two transverse bands Or

PINSEL

Argent, upon a Wreath of the Liveries the foresaid Crest within a strap of leather Proper, buckled and embellished Or, inscribed with this Motto 'Grip fast' in letters of the Field, all within a circlet Or bearing the title 'Leslie, Earl of Rothes' in letters also of the Field, the same ensigned of an Earl's coronet and in the fly an Escrol Argent, surmounting a spring of rue Proper, bearing the Slogan 'Ballinbreich'

BADGE

A buckle Or surmounting two sprigs of rue saltireways Proper

PLANT BADGE

Rue, in flower

The progenitor of this great Scottish family is claimed as Bartolf, a Hungarian nobleman who came to Scotland in 1067 in the retinue of Edgar the Aetheling, brother of Margaret, later queen of Malcolm III. Bartolf was apparently a man of intellect and bravery, for which qualities Malcolm appointed him governor of Edinburgh Castle and bestowed on him estates in Fife, Angus, the Mearns and Aberdeenshire. It is said that he was carrying the queen across a swollen river upon his own horse. The queen almost fell from the horse, whereupon Bartolf cried out 'Grip fast', and as the queen took hold of his belt buckle she replied, 'Will the buckle bide'. The river crossing was accomplished, and to commemorate the event the family has the motto, 'Grip fast', and they still carry belt buckles on their shield. Bartolf established his principal holding in the Garioch district of Aberdeen, at a place known then as Lesselyn, where he built a castle. From Lesselyn the name has evolved to Lesley, of which spellings still vary widely. Bartolf's son, Malcolm, was created constable of the royal castle at Inverury which he held for David II and his great-grandson, Sir Norman Lesley, acquired the lands of Fythkill in Fife, afterwards called Lesley, around 1282.

The chiefly line passed to a junior branch of the family from whom the present chiefs, the Earls of Rothes descend in a curious manner. In 1391 Sir Norman Lesley, believing his only son, David, to have been killed in the Crusades, settled his estates on his cousin, George Lesley. In 1398, shortly after Sir George had taken possession of the castle and lands, David returned from the Wars and claimed possession of his estate. Time has now shrouded in mystery the exact terms of the settlement that was reached, but the family resolved matters peacefully. Sir George's grandson, another George, was created a Lord of Parliament in 1445 as Lord Lesley of Leven, and had all his lands united into the barony of Ballinbreich. He was advanced to the title of Earl of Rothes sometime prior to 1458. The third Earl died at Flodden in 1513. George, the fourth Earl, was one of the Scottish commissioners at the marriage of Mary, Queen of Scots to the heir to the throne of France in 1558. George died in mysterious circumstances at Dieppe, along with the Earl of Cassillis and two others. It was popularly believed that they had been poisoned for refusing to allow the crown of Scotland to be settled on the Dauphin.

Thereafter, the Lesleys abandoned politics for a time, for the less hazardous career of professional soldiery. Europe throughout the seventeenth century was an almost permanent battleground, providing ample employment for the younger sons of many Scottish noble houses. Lesleys fought in Germany, France, Sweden and the Baltic. Perhaps the most famous of the Lesley mercenaries was Alexander Leslie, who was recalled from the Continent to take command of the Army of the Covenant, and was later raised to the peerage as the Earl of Leven. His seat was the great Tower of Balgonie which he improved and extended (Although the castle fell into ruin, the main tower has now been fully restored as a family home, and the present Laird is a prominent heraldic craftsman.) David Lesley, of the Rothes family, was also a Covenanter commander. He defeated Montrose at Philiphaugh in 1645 and was routed by Cromwell's troops at Dunbar in 1650. He was captured the following year and imprisoned in the Tower of London until the Restoration in 1660, being created Lord Newark in the following year. Sir Alexander Leslie of

Auchintoul became a general in the Russian army and Governor of Smolensk. The seventh Earl was created Duke of Rothes in 1680 by Charles II. He was a great favorite of the king and one of the most distinguished statesmen of his time. The dukedom died with him as he left on male heir, but under the terms of an earlier charter the earldom could pass through the female line, and thus the title was preserved.

The ninth Earl was Vice Admiral of Scotland and governor of Stirling Castle. He was a supporter of the Hanoverians, and in 1715 he commanded a regiment of cavalry at the Battle of Sheriffmuir. He sold much of the Rothes estates, although the magnificent Leslie House near Fife remained the seat of the earls until 1926. Leslie Castle in Aberdeenshire has also been fully restored in recent years by David Lesley, a prominent local architect. There have been many other distinguished persons of this name, including Harald Leslie, Lord Birsay, a judge of the Scottish Land Court and twice Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland,

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Clan LESLIE Septs

ABERNATHY
ABERNETHY,-IE
ADZELL

BARTHOLOMEW
LAING
LANG

LESLEY
LESLIE,-Y
LESSELS

LESSLIE,-Y
MORE

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