

Alexander de LECELLES  
Flanders France to Kinghorn Fife Scotland

**Alexander de LECELLES** (priest)

B 13<sup>th</sup> century in the village of Lecelles France

D 13<sup>th</sup> century at Priest-lies Estate Kirkcaldy Fife Scotland

M 13<sup>th</sup> century France

**Female Unknown**

B 13<sup>th</sup> century France

D 13<sup>th</sup> century Kirkcaldy Fife Scotland

Children:

1. Male de LECELLES

While growing up I would listen to my late father's stories about his ancestors as told to him by his father. The family had a leather bound LESSELS family history book dating back to before the Bonnie Prince Charlie period. This book included sketches and photographs of the some early ancestors. During World War Two the leather bound book disappeared and was never been seen again. After researching the family history for many years I wrote to the Royal Commission of Historical Monuments of Scotland and imaging my surprise when they sent me a photocopy of the draft typed document of the original family history that my great grandfather (chart 08-09) John LESSELS had written. Copies of the papers had been deposited into their collection by a distant relative residing in Scotland. The documents confirmed all my findings and included additional information which I was able to share with my father. My father confirmed that the same details were recorded in the lost leather bound book.

I continued to research and located our earliest ancestor **ALEXANDER DE LECELLES**.

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*According to tradition the founder of the LECELLES family in Scotland in the 13<sup>th</sup> century was a priest of royal descent, known at Paris University as Alexander de LECELLES who was born in the village of LECELLES and educated at the Benedictine School there. After becoming proficient in all the subjects taught there such as philosophy, divinity, medicine, law and council, he proceeded to Paris University to acquire more knowledge in Alchemy and astronomy.*

*Here he became acquainted with a Scotsman of about his own age Michael SCOT who had also been educated at a Benedictine School at Kirkcaldy and afterwards had studied for a few years at Oxford University then renowned as the second University of Europe had come to Paris University which was famous as the first University in Europe to prosecute his studies in Alchemy and astronomy &c.*

*These two lodged together, prosecuted the same studied together and became inseparable and congenial friends and "fratues-jurats" [sic] or sworn brothers according to a custom of that chivalrous age. Sir Walter Scot [1771-1832] of Abbotsford Roxburgh County Eastern Scotland the learned author and poet ancient of the Scot family call them "bosom friends".*

*On completing their studies at the University they bade an affectionate adieu to each other, and left Paris. Alexander returning to his birth place to occupy the position of the village Cure, and Michael proceeding to Spain, the favorite residence of magicians to study magic which was taught at Toledo.*

*(Reference Source The Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland, National Monuments Records of Scotland in Edinburgh 'Architects' file for John LESSELS "A Brief Account of the Ancient Family of LESSELS in Fifeshire)*

Lecelles is situated in Nord in north east of France. It is 195 km from Paris and 30 km from Lile. Lecelles is also about 8½ miles north by west of Valenciennes, by St Amand of the Springs, and must not be confused with the village of Lascelle, in the south of France near Aurillae.

*(Reference website <http://en.patrimoine-de-france.com/nord/lecelles> and <http://www.scotster.com/forums/scottish-general>)*

A church dedicated to Saint Denis was located at a place called old church as early as the 10th century. Until the 13th century Lecelles depends on the seignury of Saint Amand, in the Tournaisis, Flemish castellany of the County of Flanders. In 1297 the Tournaisis is annexed by King Philip the beautiful (1285-1314), the Treaty of Pontoise (1312) establishes a new administrative unit, the Bailiwick of the Tournaisis and Lille-Douai-Orchies, and then is created in 1383 the Bailiwick of the Tournaisis dependent of the County of Hainaut. In the Treaty of Madrid (1526), the commune was attached to the County of Flanders, under Spanish sovereignty. It is at this time that settles a Protestant community, in 1566. The first temple was rebuilt in 1717 and then in 1862.

*(Reference website <http://en.patrimoine-de-france.com/nord/lecelles> and <http://www.scotster.com/forums/scottish-general>)*

The ruling dynasty in the County of Flanders during this period was:

1244-1278 - Margaret I (sister to Joan; abdicated; Hainault only 1278-80)

1278-1305 - Guy (son of Margaret I and William Dampierre)

*(Source: The Wordsworth Handbook of Kings and Queens by John E Morby 1989plus Encyclopedia)*

The ruling dynasty in Scotland during this period was:

1249-1286 - Alexander III (son of Alexander II)

*(Source: The Wordsworth Handbook of Kings and Queens by John E Morby and Encyclopedia)*

Michael SCOT sometimes spelt SCOTT was a mathematician and scholar. He was born in Scotland about 1175 possibly at Balwearie in Fife (as Sir Walter Scott believed) and studied first at the cathedral school of Durham and then at Oxford and Paris then later Toledo devoting himself to philosophy, mathematics and astrology. It appears that he had also studied theology and become an ordained priest. Michael Scot was known in Scottish folklore as the "Wizard of Scotland".

*(Reference website [www.electricscotland.com/history](http://www.electricscotland.com/history) & [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) and [Wikipedia.org](http://Wikipedia.org) & [www.scotlandhistory.net](http://www.scotlandhistory.net) & [www.scotlandmag.com](http://www.scotlandmag.com) & various other website)*

Comment - Many historians seem confused between Michael Scot the wizard and Sir Michael SCOTT of Belwearie in Fife Scotland. Michael SCOT left manuscripts which were published in the 15<sup>th</sup> century but unfortunately I have not been able to access any of these publications. Another valuable reference source would be the Ragman Rolls but these are unavailable to me due to living so far away in New Zealand.

*About 1285 King Alexander III of Scotland became betrothed to Iolan (Eirik) the daughter of the Earl of Flanders, and Alexander de LECELLES who was much esteemed in Flanders for his great learning was made Chaplain and accompanied her and her brother to Jedburgh Abbey in Scotland to assist in the marriage service which was to take place there. After the wedding the festivities continued for a week, and the only thing that marred the jollity of the marriage feast was the appearance of a vision of death which all considered foretold the speedy death of either the King or Queen, and next year this was verified, as Alexander III fell from his horse at Kinghorn and was killed on the spot on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 1286 regretted by all his subjects. After some time spent in mourning his widow decided to return to her father in Flanders where she afterwards married Arthur Duke of Brittany.*

*(Reference Source The Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland, National Monuments Records of Scotland in Edinburgh 'Architects' file for John LESSELS "A Brief Account of the Ancient Family of LESSELS in Fifeshire)*

King Alexander III of Scotland was born between 1241-1243 and married Margaret daughter of Henry III of England in 1251. They had 3 children Margaret, Alexander and David. Alexander's wife Margaret died in 1275. On 01 November 1285 at Jedburgh Abbey on All Saints Day Alexander III married Yolande de Dreux (Joleta or Jolanda) of Dreux Countess of Montfort. Yolande born 1263 was the daughter of Robert IV, Count of Dreux and/or Earl of Flanders and Beatrice Countess of Montfort who were both members of a powerful French family. Through her first marriage to Alexander III of Scotland Yolande became Queen consort of the Kingdom of Scotland.

A year after his marriage Alexander left Edinburgh Castle on horseback to meet his new Queen in Fife. The king and his party rode through the night in bad weather and at some stage the parties were separated. The next morning Alexander was found on the beach at Kinghorn and it was assumed he fell over the cliff from his horse. Alexander III died 19 March 1286 aged 43 near Kinghorn Fife Scotland.

Through her first marriage to Alexander III of Scotland Yolande became Queen consort of the Kingdom of Scotland. Through her second marriage to Arthur II Duke of Brittany she became Duchess Consort of Brittany. Yolande died on 02 August 1322.

At the time of Alexander's death Queen Yolande had been pregnant but the child was still born. With no other live heir Alexander's granddaughter Margaret the Maid of Norway was assumed to be the next ruler of Scotland.

*(Reference Encyclopedia and Pocket Scottish History by Dr James MacKay & British Broadcasting Company website & Wikipedia website)*

Comment – For additional information about Kin Alexander III please refer to the end of this document.

*Alexander de LECCELLAS, on his arrival at Kinghorn with the King and Queen after their marriage renewed his old friendship with Michael Scot (whose Castle of Balwearie is in the adjoining parish) and had been induced by him to remain in Scotland instead of returning to Flanders with his wife and family, offering him a house and land and the position of personal chaplain if he had so, and as it would be for the mutual pleasure of both, Alexander accepted the offer.*

*The house and land that Michael ceded to him was a short distance from Balwearie Castle and consisted of a stone house similar to the country houses of this period, one storey high, a barn, byre (cow house) pigsty, and a shed for wood and peat. This house possessed two rooms, 'a but and a beam' the largest room being about 20 feet long and 14 ft, wide, the other being smaller. The land consisted of three acres, sufficient to pasture a cow. For this he was to pay 18 Kamed Hens (counted like the Houden breed of the present day) in perpetuity.*

*For centuries this small property was known as Priestleys i.e. Priest Meadows and is alluded to in the old ballad of "Ye ladye of Balwearie" which appears to have been written about the time of the Deformation. Others call at Priest-lies as according to tradition. Alexander de LECELLES was looked upon as a magician (like his bosom friend Michael Scot) and in consequence the Abbot of Dunfermline (in whose diocese this land was included) would not permit the priest to be buried in the Benediction Cemetery at Kirkcaldy, as he was buried in*

*his own land, and this may be the reason for the uncertainty of the burial place of Michael Scot also. This land is still known as Priestleys.*

*(Reference Source The Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland, National Monuments Records of Scotland in Edinburgh 'Architects' file for John LESSELS "A Brief Account of the Ancient Family of LESSELS in Fifeshire)*

Some historians state that Michael SCOTT the wizard of Scotland died on 15 July 1235. This was before Alexander de LESSELS arrived in Fife for the marriage of Alexander III in 1285.

Michael SCOTT burial place is uncertain. Some historians record that he was buried at Melrose Abbey while others say Holme Coltrame in Cumberland where a Sir Michael SCOT was buried in 1292. Others state the wizard met his death in Italy by falling masonry from a church ceiling which struck his head and he died not long afterwards.

*(Reference www.scotlandmag.com/magazine & www.rootsweb.ancestry.com & http://www.scotster.com/forums/scottish-general & www.philipcoppens.com/michaelscott & www.panoramio.com/photo)*

Comment - Michael SCOT the wizard of Scotland attended Paris University with Alexander de LECELLES so perhaps it was Michael's father Sir Michael SCOT of Balwearie Castle Fife Scotland who after the death of his son offered the land and dwellings in Fife called Priestleys to Alexander de LECELLES.

Comment - Michael SCOT the wizard of Scotland may have been buried on the land at Priestley (where the Priest lies) where his bosom friend Alexander de LECELLES was also buried.

*For some years Priestley formed the Rifle Range of the Kirkcaldy Rifle Volunteers but since 1906 it has formed a portion of the golf links of the Kirkcaldy Golf Club. When the Club House was opened by Mr Munro Ferguson M.P. he mentioned in his speech that although the approaches left something to be desired it was an old characteristic of the Balwearie Road for six hundred years or thereabouts when Michael Scot was bothered by his families demon, he gave him the Balwearie Road to set in order, which would be as interminable as making ropes out of sea sand "They tied off on some whinstone height at the pentacles of Balwearie the home of the LESSELS family for years, and also the ancestors of Count Ferdinand de LESSEPS.*

*As this property has been occupied by the family of LACELLES or LESSELS for over 500 years during which time it has descended from father to son in the direct line, it is a record that very few landed proprietors can boast of considering the disturbed state of Scotland in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and afterwards. It is also interesting and unusual fact that the heirs have been called John.*

*Between the years 1288 - 1290 Sir Michael Scot of Balwearie with his chaplain (Alexander de LECELLES) and Sir David Wamys all from Fifeshire, were sent on an Embassy to Norway, to bring over the heir to the Scottish throne "Margaret of Norway" but she sickened and died at Orkney to the great grief of the Scottish nation.*

*(Reference Source The Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland, National Monuments Records of Scotland in Edinburgh 'Architects' file for John LESSELS "A Brief Account of the Ancient Family of LESSELS in Fifeshire)*

The ruling dynasty in Scotland during this period was:

1286-1290 Margaret (daughter of Margaret, daughter of Alexander III and Eirik II of Norway)

*(Source: The Wordsworth Handbook of Kings and Queens by John E Morby and New Encyclopedia)*

Comment - Perhaps the Ragman Rolls may confirm if Alexander de LECELLES was with Sir Michael SCOT when they bought the Maid of Norway home to Scotland.

Sir Michael SCOT of Balwearie Fife was among the prominent Scottish knights sent to bring home the Maid of Norway (Margaret) in 1290. The family remained prominent enough until the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century when Michael of Balwearie was among a group of hostages sent to England in exchange for James.

*(Reference National Library of New Zealand publication on shelf Scotland's Historic Heraldry by Bruce A McAndrew chapter The Borders page 389 The Boydell Press Woodbridge 2006)*

Comment - Confirmation of our ancestor's link back to Alexander and his numerous descendants has been recorded in the records linking the different generations to the Priestley Estate in Fife Scotland. The family surname and the family estate have been given many variation of spelling during the centuries.

The late Alexander III daughter Margaret was aged 20 when she married Erik II of Norway who was only 13 at the time. From this marriage a daughter Margaret Maid of Norway was born in April 1283. Margaret also known as the Damsel of Scotland was only 3 years old when she and the Scottish Knights voyaged from Norway to Scotland. Unfortunately the ship sunk and everyone was lost around May 1290.

Balwearie Castle and lands are situated near Abbotshall Fife Scotland.

*Sir Michael Scot and Alexander de LECELLES are said to have been sent to France on a mission to King Louis IX respecting a quarrel between the Scot and French rights of fishing, and were royally entertained by King Louis.*

*(Reference Source The Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland, National Monuments Records of Scotland in Edinburgh 'Architects' file for John LESSELS "A Brief Account of the Ancient Family of LESSELS in Fifeshire)*

The ruling dynasty in France during this period was:

1226-1270 - St Louis IX (son of Louis VIII)

*(Source: The Wordsworth Handbook of Kings and Queens by John E Morby and New Encyclopedia)*

Comment - King Louis IX of France ruled up to 1270 so Alexander de LECELLES could not have gone to France with Sir Michael SCOT as he did not settle in Scotland until after 1285. But Alexander may have been a representative at the French mission.

*In the Court Rolls of 1295-96 containing the list of nobles in Scotland who did homage to Edward I of England appears "Sir Michael Scot of Fife".*

*(Reference Source The Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland, National Monuments Records of Scotland in Edinburgh 'Architects' file for John LESSELS "A Brief Account of the Ancient Family of LESSELS in Fifeshire)*

The ruling dynasty in England during this period was:

1272-1307 Edward I (son of Henry III)

*(Source: The Wordsworth Handbook of Kings and Queens by John E Morby and New Encyclopedia)*

Comment – Sir Michael SCOTT died in 1292. Did another Sir Michael SCOTT take his place at Balwearie Castle in Fife Scotland between 1295 and 1296?

*From the death of Alexander de LECELLES at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century until 1770 nothing positive has yet been discovered as regards the owners of Priestleys.*

*(Reference Source The Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland, National Monuments Records of Scotland in Edinburgh 'Architects' file for John LESSELS "A Brief Account of the Ancient Family of LESSELS in Fifeshire)*

Comment – Alexander de LECELLES died at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and was buried on his property the Priestley Estate in Fife Scotland.

The surname de LECELLES has been spelt in various ways through the centuries but now the family surname is commonly spelt LESSELS.

#### The Scotsman Tuesday 25 December 1894

The Scottish Origin of Ferdinand de Lesseps – Guernsey December 21 1894

*Sir- Having just received a copy of your paper stated the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. Containing a letter signed APP refereeing to the Scottish origin of the late Ferdinand de Lesseps it may interest some of your readers to know that he called upon the late John Lessels architect when in Edinburgh and claimed distant kinsmanship as one of his ancestors had been a native of Fifeshire of the name Lessels which name he stated had been corrupted in France into Lesseps and strange to say other members of the family when staying in for a lengthened period in France have been more frequently called Lesseps than Lessels. This ancient family claims its origin from a learned French Priest of the name of Alexander de Lascelles who accompanied his friend the renowned Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie on his return from France about the middle of the thirteenth century receiving from him for the maintenance of his wife and children a grant of a stone biggin barn, byre and woodshed with three acres of land adjoining Balwearie for which he was to pay a yearly rental of twenty pounds Scots money and sixteen kamed hens as long as grass grew and water ran. This property descended from father to son until about 1805 when it was acquired by the Laird of Raith in consideration of his undertaking to maintain the widow of John Lessels who died the year previous as long as she lived. On the completion of this arrangement the house and buildings were pulled down, trees felled and the land added to Balwearie farm which had been recently purchased by Mr Ferguson. It is situated in the same field as the Kirkcaldy Rifle buffs on the right hand side of the road leading from Windygates to Balwearie and was called Priestlies (as Alexander de Lascelles the priest is said to have been buried in this land) which name it still bears after a lapse of over 600 years.*

*As your correspondent APP says the name has been spelt in various ways it appears in the charter about 1350 as Johanni de Lassell (all the eldest sons of the race being called John) and in a later deed it is spelt Lascell.*

*I am &c JOHN LESSELS*

*(Reference ProQuest website The Scotsman Tuesday 25 December 1894 page 7)*

Comment - The LASCELLES information below does not relate to the descendants of Alexander de LECELLES as his descendants are recorded through the centuries as residing in the Presley Estate in Fife Scotland. I have recorded the Lascelles of Fifeshire details just in case there is a connection.

#### **LASCELLES of Fifeshire Scotland 13<sup>th</sup> century**

However this would appear to represent a change of arms for an individual member of the family as Alanus de Asseles bore Gules a saltire and chief argent in two armorial rolls that predate the Ragman Roll. Their position in the Lascelles family tree is unclear as the senior male line in Scotland had ended in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century leaving an heiress Marjorie who carried her Fifeshire lands of Forgan to her husband, Peter de la Haye and Richard Murray of Culbin. The original form of the name was Loucelles from the village in Calvados.

*(Reference National Library of New Zealand publication on shelf Scotland's Historic Heraldry by Bruce A McAndrew chapter The Borders page 88 The Boydell Press Woodbridge 2006)*

The Hays of Naughton (FIFE) descend from John de la Haye Sheriff of Perth in 1226 who married Joanna de Lascelles cheired of Naughton (now Forgun Fife) and are possibly

represented in the homages by Hugh Hay of Fife whose seal bears three escutcheons within a bordure engrailed. This family survived till the early 16<sup>th</sup> century bearing Argent three escutcheons within a borduer engrailed gules

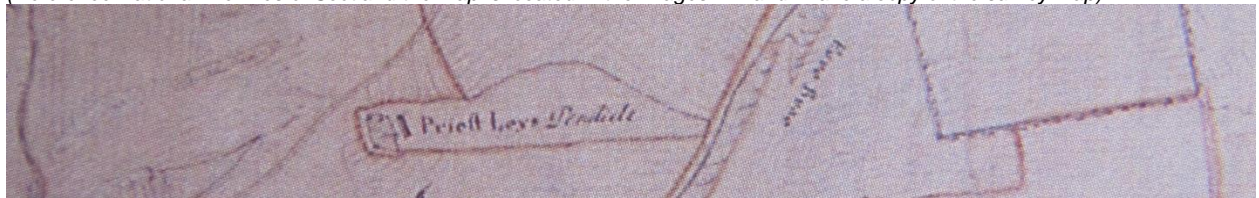
(Reference National Library of New Zealand publication on shelf Scotland's Historic Heraldry by Bruce A McAndrew chapter The Borders page 143 The Boydell Press Woodbridge 2006)

Prestley Estate - Balwearie Castle - Raith Estate - Fife Scotland

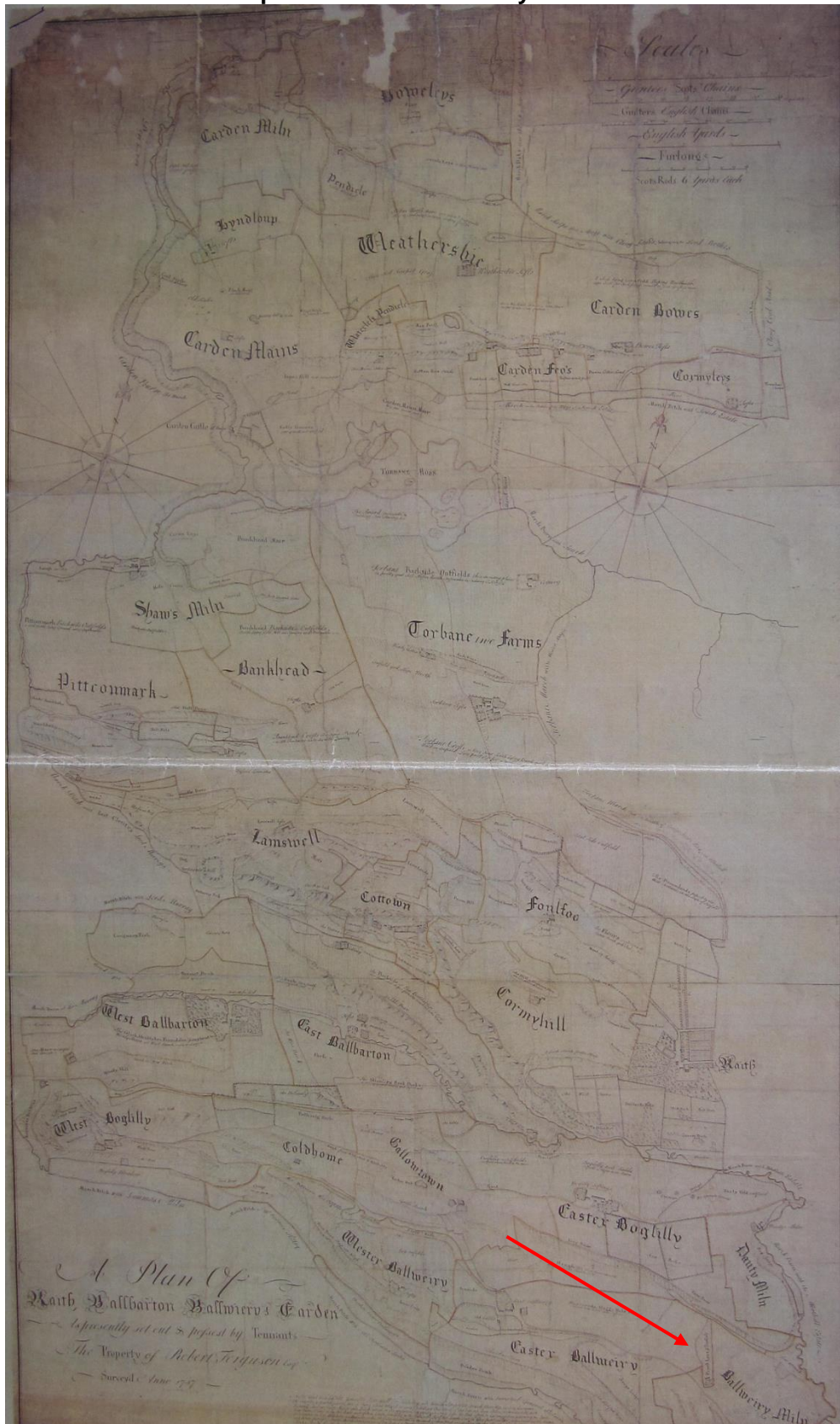
Comment - The Lessels families throughout the centuries have been connected to the Prestley Estate, Balwearie Castle and Raith Estate in Fife Scotland.

I located a June 1757 surveyed map of Raith Estate showing the property of Robert Ferguson Esq. To the left of Ballweiry Miln it records the **Priest-leys** Terbane [sic]. The map also records Raith, Ballbarton, Ballwiera [sic Balwearie] and Garden as presently set out and possessed by Tenants.

(Reference National Archives of Scotland the map is located in the images link and I have a copy of the survey map)



### 1757 Map Raith Estate Kirkcaldy Fife Scotland





The lands of the middle of the fifteenth century belonged to the abbey of Dunfermline and are supposed after the dissolution of monasteries to have been granted to the bailies and corporation of the town of Kirkcaldy and by them transferred to the family of the Scotts of Balwearie from whom they passed into the possession of the Ramsays of this place and were purchased by the ancestor of the present proprietor (Fergusson).

*(Reference National Library of New Zealand Wellington publication on shelf Topographical Dictionary of Scotland by Samuel Lewis first published in 1846 volume 1 -1 B there is also a volume 2)*

The greater portion of the lands formerly in Kirkcaldy was in the year 1650 separated from that parish and together with the lands of Easter and Wester Touch formerly in the Parish of Kinghorn and those of Wester Bogie in the parish of Dysart erected in to a separate and distinct parish under the appellation of Abbotshall

*(Reference National Library of New Zealand Wellington publication on shelf Topographical Dictionary of Scotland by Samuel Lewis first published in 1846 volume 1 -1 B there is also a volume 2)*

Comment – By researching the Balwearie land occupiers such as the Scott's – Ramsay's – and Fergusson's families we will learn more about our Lessels ancestors. When time permits I will attempt this additional line of research.

### King Alexander III

King Alexander III was widowed at age 43. He decided with the approval of his council to marry again in the hope of begetting a male heir to his crown. His choice fell upon the daughter of the Count of Dreux whose name was Joleta or Jolanda (Yolande). He sent four knights Thomas Charteris, Patrick de Graham, William de Saint Clair and William de Soulis to ask for her hand. The proposal was accepted. The King of England granted on 19 day of August 1285 safe conduct to her, her brother John and their train through his dominions and the knights brought her back to Scotland in Autumn. She was very joyfully received, for she was the fairest of women.

So the second marriage of King Alexander took place at Jedburgh on the first day of November, the feast of All Saints. There was assembled a great company of nobles both of France and Scotland to do honour to the King and his bride, and later the rites and the feasting were done the lords and ladies of France returned to their own country with rich gifts, excepting a few who remained to attend the queen.

But in after years there was told a strange tale of a happening at that feast which men took for an omen of evil. While that noble company sat at meat there was made a masque to give them pleasure. There passed among the feasters a procession of dancers. First went the skilled musicians playing all kinds of instruments and after then and mingling with them in studied order a solemn dance of armed men (ails choream militarem pompaticagentibus). But upon the heels of these there followed a single figure of whom it could hardly be told whether he was man or a phantasm. He seemed rather to glide like a shadow than to pass by on his feet and before the eyes of all the company he suddenly vanished. Then the whole gay procession was silent as though they had seen a spirit the singing ceased the music was broken and the band of dancers stood still. Their mirth says the Scotchchronicon where the story told was mingled with sorrow and grief dashed the climax of their joy.

Later authors have enlarged this tale. Boece says directly that the appearance was in the form of a skeleton and Holinshed calls it a bloody figure of death. Tyler and Hum Brown consider that the masque was a representation of the Dance of Death which been too vividly played struck the company at the feast with horror. But all this is conjecture.

Whether such an interruption of his wedding feast truly occurred or no, King Alexander's second marriage was not fated to prosper. There were according to the Chronicle of Lanercost other portents of some imminent disaster to Scotland. A Prophecy was whispered

about the land that in that year would fall the Day of Judgment and in the month after the King's marriage there were storms of thunder and lightning scarcely known at such a season.

On the 18 day of March in the year which we call 1286 but to the men of that time was still 1285 the King was holding a council in the castle of Edinburgh, the Queen being then at Kinghorn on the south coast of Fife. The council debated till late in the afternoon concerning the reply to be given to an embassy from the king of England when it broke up they went to dinner and the King was merry and pleasant. When the evening came he said he would ride to Queensferry and cross the firth of Forth to rejoin the queen.

His barons tried to dissuade him from leaving Edinburgh that evening. It was a wild weather and bitter cold and with a strong wind from the north bringing rain and snow so sharp that a man could hardly expose his face to it. But the King would not delay and took horse from Queensferry. There he was met by the ferry master who told him that the passage over the firth was dangerous in such weather and besought him to go back. The King asked him in jest if he was afraid to die with him. Far be it from me Lord said the other. It well befits me to meet my fate in company with your father's son.

The ferry was an eight oared boat, but the strong wind from the north made the crossing slow and moreover the Scotichronicon says that the king was delayed on the south side by the ferry. As though it had come from the north side to fetch him. Whatever caused the delay when at length the King and the three esquires who were with him came in Inverkeithing it was the deep mirk of the night. So black was it that when they met the master of the King's salt works which were at Inverkeithing he could not recognize the King save his voice. Lord he said what do you her in such weather and in so great darkness? He prayed the King to remain in the town until the morning, promising him honorable lodging. But the King said, it is not necessary but give me two countrymen on foot to guide me on the way. So the Master of the salt works gave him the guides, and they started eastwards along the shore through the darkness and the storm. They went on slowly for about two miles and then both guides and guided lost all knowledge of the way. The horses sought out the beaten path by instinct as horses will but the King and his company were separated from each other. As he pressed on his way his horse stumbled in the sand and threw him. His neck was broken in the fall and he died.

They buried him in the abbey of Dunfermline near the graves of his wife Margaret and their children. The chronicler of Lanercost priory who did not love Alexander tells how we saw great numbers weeping both over the destitution of the kingdom and for his sudden death.

The tale is told of Thomas of Ercildoun reputed a seer and prophet that on the night King Alexander died he was in the castle of Dunbar and Earl Patrick asked him jestinly in the presence of his household what hews the next day would bring forth. And Thomas signing from the depths of his heart answered thus, before the morrow day of misery and calamity! Before the hour of noon there will assuredly be felt such a mighty storm for long ages past. The blast of it will cause nations to tremble will make those who hear it dumb will humble the high and lay the strong level with the ground.

On the morrow the earl and all his household watched till the hour of nones, but seeing in sky and cloud no sign of any storm they deemed Thomas of no account and went to dinner. But the earl had scarce sat down to table and the clock hardly pointed to the hour of noon when there came one to the gate stunning the earl's ear with his knocking and demanding instant admission to his presents. And when he was admitted and asked for his news, News he said I have indeed and evil news which the whole realm of Scotland will mourn for alias its noble King ended his life yesterday at Kinghorn and this I come to tell you. At this staying the earl started as though out of a deep sleep and smote his breast acknowledging that Thomas was all too true a prophet.

*(Reference National Library of NZ Alexander Turnbull Library historical collection publication Alexander the Third King of Scotland by Sir James Fergusson 1937 call number G920 Alexander III FER 1937 Lond A Maclehose & Co 1937 pages 178 and 185)*

Alexander III son Prince Alexander of Scotland wedded Margaret the daughter of Guy the Count of Flanders on 15 November 1281 at Roxburgh. There may have been a relationship between the wife of the Prince Alexander and his father Alexander III second wife.

*(Reference National Library of NZ Alexander Turnbull Library historical collection publication Alexander the Third King of Scotland by Sir James Fergusson 1937 call number G920 Alexander III FER 1937 Lond A Maclehose & Co 1937 pages 172)*

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