

# *Sprig of Heather*



• LITTLE • LYTTLE • LYTLE •

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**Volume 20, Number 4**

**November 2012**

**The Official Newsletter of the New Zealand & Australian  
Branch of Clan Little Society (Scotland and Worldwide)**

## Words in wonderment

Greetings and welcome to this edition of '**Sprig Of Heather**'. I'm preparing this as the Spring season and switch to Daylight Saving looms. Recently when walking into town there have been Tui's in various neighbourhood gardens and their bird song has been pleasing to the ears. There is something special about the contribution nature makes to our entertainment.



"Tui" of New Zealand



"Goldcrest" of Scotland

The South and West Scotland is a region rich in wildlife and diverse in habitat. Our ancestors would have known species such as the tiny Goldcrest, Finches, Tits, Thrushes, Warblers, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Sparrowhawk, Pied Flycatcher to name a few. On farmland and parkland alike there are many other species such as the Lapwing, Green Woodpecker, Oystercatchers, plus Tawny and Barn Owls, all bringing their special contribution to the land our kin folk knew. When travelling in the Glasgow to Dumfries area some years ago I marvelled at the Daffodils which seemed to grow along the road sides and in the burns.

As the festive season rushes at us, my wish for you is, an abundance of all that is good and pleasing in people and nature.

A Blythe Yule an a Guid Hogmanay

*Allen Little* 

# Bid to become Clan Chief

I received the following communication from Ian Little seeking members to vote for him to become the next Clan Chief of **Clan Little** giving the Clan more say in the world. He asks if you would like to vote for him please email [i.little@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:i.little@hotmail.co.uk) stating you vote yes and support him as Clan Chief or No for as the case may be and putting your name and address on the email.



**Ian S Little**

20a, Shelley Gardens,  
Dundee, Angus, DD3 6QL  
12 November 2012

Dear CLAN LITTLE Member

I have wrote to the Council of Scottish Armigerous Clans: their reply was if all members back me to become Clan Chief and they can vote for me by post or at the next A.G.M. As you will know I have been running the Clan as Guardian since 2009, I would like to put my name forward to be the next Clan Chief. If I can get the backing from members this will be put forward at the next A.G.M. I will not count the votes the Scottish Executive will do this members of the Executive are Dr Wendy Dirks, Linda Harris and Jimmy Little it will be down to them to count each vote. Members can vote by post or vote at the next A.G.M.

Continued next page

**Clan Little Society New Zealand & Australia – November 2012**

**My CV and family tree**

Since 2009 when I became Clan Guardian membership as gone up by 40% and Clan items for sale have gone up by 1000%.I have been a member of the Society since 1991,I was given the job of Quartermaster by Dr.Johnnie in 2002 and been Treasurer since 2003 so I have been working for the Clan since 2002 plus my late Mother and Father were members.

**My family tree**

John Little born Langholm 1609/Thomas Little 1645/Thomas Little born Upperby Mill Carlisle 1695/John Little born Upperby Mill 1722 Thomas and his son John ran 3 Mill in Carlisle. James Little born Harraby Mill Carlisle 1760 / George Little born Stonerise Carlisle 1802 / William Little born Dalston Carlisle 1836 / James Little born Leeds 1881 / Norman Little 1917 / **Ian Stewart Little** 1954 so you can see I am a Border Little. I Ian Stewart Little Would like members to vote for me to become the next Clan Chief. To become a Clan Chief is down to members not the Court of Lord Lyon, we only contact the Lord Lyon to be Granted Arms.

Kind regards

*Ian L*

Ian Little

**Clan Guardian**

Send or email your reply slips to 20a, Shelley Gardens, Dundee, Angus, DD3 6QL      Email [i.little@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:i.little@hotmail.co.uk)

Your name

Address

**VOTE YES**

**VOTE NO**

put a tick next to the above to vote for the next Clan Chief.

## **STOP PRESS: Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2012**

**A senior and experienced New Zealand member shared the following words by email which merit our consideration.**

*... “ I am a little dismayed at this business of bidding for the position of clan chief. I fear Ian Little makes light of the importance of chiefship and it is very unlikely that he would be recognised by the Standing Council of Chiefs. In essence he is correct that a chief can be unanimously elected by clan members, but is he the right man for the job? Chief of the Clan is a hereditary position so, if Ian's descendants are to be chief, we should examine his lineage. Does he descend from the last chief? No. Does he descend from a cadet branch? It seems unlikely. Does he hold land in Scotland or is he armigerous? I'm not sure. Arms are the outward sign of gentility and, in the very least, the chief of a clan should be of the gentility (that said, it is recognised that not all gentlemen are armigerous). In all, I'm not convinced that Ian Little holds enough weight in either historical or modern terms to be a suitable chief. Were he the third generation to be Guardian, then we may consider him! Here is a link providing more official advice: <http://www.lyon-court.com/lordlyon/656.html> It is also worth considering the plight of Clan Gunn, which has been trying to establish a chief for the past two hundred years. I think members should be given a more balanced overview than Ian's poorly written letter. ....Many legitimate clan chiefs are not accepted by the Standing Council. If, for example, chiefs are not entitled to the arms of the chiefship or are not entitled to supporters to those arms they will be declined membership. I am fairly certain if Ian Little, should be made chief, he would not be accepted onto the Council ... “*

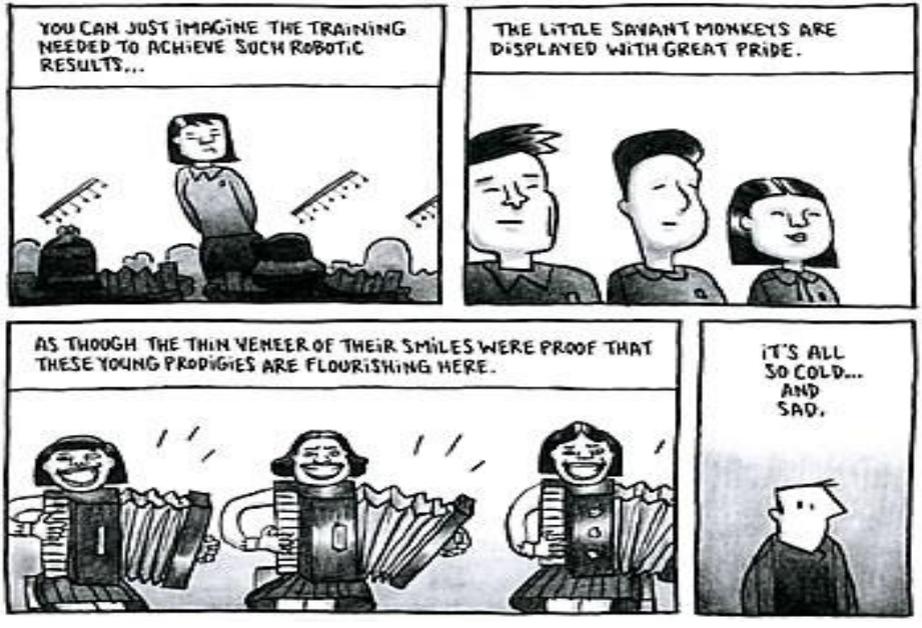


## Myths, fantasies and fallacies.

There are many romantic notions about the customs of our forbears. The reality is things may not necessarily be as we imagine them. The best thing is to enjoy occasions to the maximum and make sure kith and kin share mirth and merriment.

- **Hogmanay**, the celebration of bringing in the New Year, is not the only traditional festival in Scotland. Many national and local celebrations took place in the past and some survive to this day.
- **First footing** - 1st January. Visiting friends and relatives immediately after New Year's Eve, in the early hours of the morning of January 1st. First footing after the bells have rung in the New Year is still common - the "first foot" in the house after midnight should be male, dark, and handsome and should carry symbolic coal, shortbread, salt, black bun ( a spiced cake) and, of course, whisky.
- **Handsel Monday** - first Monday of the New Year. Traditionally this was the day on which handsel (presents) were given by employers to their staff, rather than on Christmas Day. Alternatively, in some areas, this was done on January 12th.
- **Burns Night** - 25 January. The anniversary of the birth of the poet Robert Burns, in 1759 at which many a "Burns Supper" is consumed and the "Immortal Memory", a speech in praise of the Bard, will be given.
- **Original New Year** - 25th March The Celtic New Year was celebrated on Samhain (November 1st). Then, until 1600, the Gregorian Calendar which was used in Scotland, placed New Year on 25th March.

## Clan Little Society New Zealand & Australia – November 2012

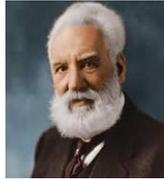


### Home rule a possibility

Politicians have signed an agreement paving way for a referendum in 2014 which will, if the Scottish National Party gets its way herald independence for Scotland. The British prime minister and Scotland's first minister signed the agreement at St Andrews House in Edinburgh. Mr Cameron said: "I always wanted to show respect to the people of Scotland. They voted for a party that wanted to have a referendum. I've made that referendum possible and made sure it's decisive, it's legal and it's fair, and I think that's right for the people of Scotland." Mr Salmond said: "this agreement paves the way for the most important decision our country of Scotland has made in several hundred years. Its an historic day for Scotland and a major step forward in Scotland's home rule journey." From a distance it seems if Scotland gains independence from England, they would wish to keep Stirling as the currency meaning monetary policy would still be tightly controlled by the Bank of England. In its economic favour, Scotland controls the North Sea oil rigs, giving it vital capital for trade in Europe and across the world.

## Who is he...?

In our previous edition I asked “Who is this ?” a well-known Scotsman who changed the world !



One of the most famous inventors of all-time. **Alexander Graham Bell** is best known for his invention of the telephone. He was born at Edinburgh on March 3, 1847 and was educated at the universities of Edinburgh and London. He also came to fame as a teacher of the deaf after immigrating to Canada in 1870 then the US in 1871 where he began teaching deaf-mutes,... publicizing his system called visible speech. In 1872, he founded a school to train teachers of the deaf in Boston, Massachusetts and became part of Boston University where he was appointed professor of vocal physiology.



A wee smile.... A Scotsman walking through a field, sees a man drinking water from a pool with his hand. The Scotsman shouts 'Awa ye feel hoor thatâs full Oâ coos Sharn' (Don't drink the water, it's full of cow s \*\* t.) The man shouts back 'I'm English, Speak English, I don't understand you'. The Scotsman man shouts back 'Use both hands, you'll get more in.'

This is a recipe from the lowlands

## Shortbread

### Ingredients:

100g caster sugar  
1 tsp ground cinnamon  
1/4 tsp ground cardamom  
1/4 tsp ground ginger  
1/4 tsp ground allspice  
1/2 tsp salt  
375g unbleached plain flour  
225g butter,

Combine the sugar, spices and salt in a bowl then divide the mixture into two equal parts and set one aside. Tip the other half in a large bowl, combine with the flour then mix-in the butter with your fingers until the mixture becomes grainy. Turn the dough into the base of a 20cm square pan and press evenly to cover the entire surface. Using a knife, cut into rectangles of about 3cm by 5cm. Prick the surface with the tines of a fork (to produce the classic pattern and to prevent the shortbread from curling while it cooks) Sprinkle the reserved sugar mixture over the top. Brush the sugar topping into all the holes and cracks, then transfer to an oven pre-heated to 180°C and bake for about 25 minutes, or until the shortbreads are firm and only slightly coloured at the edges. Allow to cool completely in the pan then break into pieces along the cuts you made and serve.

*Enjoy*

## Giving an explanation

The name Little is thought to be descriptive meaning 'small' and is found in Latin documents as **'Parvus'**. As with all such descriptive names, it is impossible to assert any certain origin of the name in Scotland. Hugo Parvus was clerk to the king during William the Lion's reign prior to 1214. There is also a Hugo Parvus as a burgess of Dundee in approximately 1202, however, its not known if they are the same person. In 1368 Nichol Lilit served the Earl of Douglas on the West Marches. The Littles held lands at Meikledale, Kirkton and Sorbie and quickly established themselves in the borders.



Track aside Meikeldale Burn visited  
With late Dr Johnnie Little in 2006



Stone marking the site of  
Tower at Meikeldale

Little's were part of the turbulent border families called the riding clans, who were some of the finest light cavalry ever seen. Also known as Border Reivers they were a force to be reckoned with. A reiver was a unique figure but not a separate minority group.

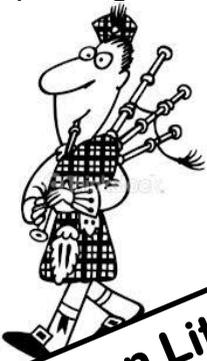
It can't be said that Reivers came from the lower classes because they were from all walks of life. Some did live in outlaw bands but most were just members of their local community.

Edward of Meikledale was an ardent supporter of Sir William Wallace, the patriot, who upheld the independent rights of Scotland under the oppression of England's Edward the 1st.

## Clan Little Society New Zealand & Australia – November 2012

James 1 confirmed to Simon Little the lands of Meikledale who is thought to be the first established chief of Clan Little. After the union of the crowns James VI was set on settling the border wars, which had gone on for several centuries and he did so with ruthlessness. Like many other border families the Littles were scattered and many of them emigrated to Ulster, and places like as New Zealand, Australia and North America.

There has been no recognised chief of the family since the late seventeenth century, however, there is now an active Clan Little society and an estimate 45 thousand families across the English speaking world connected to the Little name.



Clan Little Scotland & Worldwide  
[www.clanlittlesociety.co.uk](http://www.clanlittlesociety.co.uk)

*welcomes you*

**request information or membership**



## Useful Internet sites

There are a number of useful and interesting web sites available on the internet. I have recently begun working on one dedicated to our own Little Clan. And it is [www.littleclan.net](http://www.littleclan.net) It seemed this was a good way to catch the attention of the younger generation and build up our connections with them. I am currently building the site and it will be launched about Christmas. Other Clans listed below run web sites. .

Clan Elliot [www.elliotclan.com](http://www.elliotclan.com)

Clan MacLachlan [www.kilts.co.nz](http://www.kilts.co.nz)

Clan Fraser Society of NZ [www.clanfraser.org.nz](http://www.clanfraser.org.nz)

Clan Keith in NZ [www.ceiteach.org.nz](http://www.ceiteach.org.nz)

Clan Donald NZ [www.clandonald.org.nz](http://www.clandonald.org.nz)

Clan Forsyth NZ [www.clanforsyth.org.nz](http://www.clanforsyth.org.nz)

Clan Sutherland N Z [www.clansutherland.co.nz](http://www.clansutherland.co.nz)

Clan Gunn [www.clangunn.org.nz](http://www.clangunn.org.nz)

Clan MacKenzie NZ [www.clan-mackenzie.org.nz](http://www.clan-mackenzie.org.nz)

Clan Stewart of NZ [www.clanstewart.co.nz](http://www.clanstewart.co.nz)

Clan Fergus(s)on NZ [www.alandferguson.com](http://www.alandferguson.com)

Paeroa Highland Games

[www.paeroahighlandgames.co.nz](http://www.paeroahighlandgames.co.nz)

Waipu Caledonian Society

[www.waipugames.co.nz](http://www.waipugames.co.nz)

Turakina Highland Games

[www.turakinahighlandgames.co.nz](http://www.turakinahighlandgames.co.nz)

Clans in NZ [www.scottish.org.nz](http://www.scottish.org.nz)

Clan Little Society New Zealand & Australia – November 2012

## Entertained by YouTube

Clan Keith in New Zealand use Facebook and YouTube to share information Here is the link to a short video clip of the **Wellington Celtic band ForthRight** (formerly RedRocks) practicing at Frank Kitts Park for Sunday's St Andrew's Day Celebration. Its on YouTube at

<http://youtu.be/PW8F7prZV4M>



Wellington Celtic band ForthRight

## Shepard sets world standard

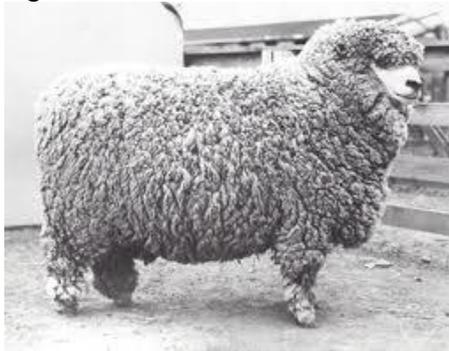
**MIDDELTON SCOTLAND: October 22,1834. To Mrs Henry Little at Powbeat a son. Mrs Little (Margaret Tait) and her husband Henry Little, are shepherds and members of the Kirk. The boy to be Christened James...**

The above might well have been the notice in Church records announcing the birth of James Little who subsequently migrated to New Zealand and farmed at Ngapara, near Oamaru, where he died on 5 November 1885. He descended from early Presbyterian Covenanters who had lost their ancestral lands in Meikledale. James was educated at Peeblesshire and spent much of his youth minding sheep on unfenced land.

Continued next page

## **Clan Little Society New Zealand & Australia – November 2012**

**On 5 June 1863, at Lamington, Lanarkshire,** he married **Mary Telfer**; and they had a family of seven children. About 1865 they embarked on the Canterbury with their infant daughter, Janet, to bring a consignment of Romney Marsh sheep to New Zealand. The ship began taking water during a storm in the Bay of Biscay and the crew considered jettisoning the valuable sheep, but Little saw them safely delivered to New Zealand. James and his wife eventually arrived in New Zealand with the sheep intended for Dr George Webster, of Corriedale station, Otago for whom he worked as head Sheppard. After Dr Webster's death in 1878, James leased a 5,500-acre property, Allandale, Hawarden, North Canterbury. He continued experimentation, stocking Lincoln rams and best merino ewes available. Through careful animal husbandry he bred sheep suited to South Island grasslands. In 1882 the first New Zealand shipment of frozen meat was exported from Otago.



Little's Corriedales were ideal for this new opportunity and firms competed to market them.

James Little regularly worshipped and often preached at local Presbyterian services. He served on the Waipara Road Board and several local committees, and wrote booklets and letters to newspapers on farming matters.

James Little died at his home, in Christchurch on 31 October 1921. He was survived by his son Henry and five daughters, Mary Little having died in 1906. **Some of our current Clan Little members are his direct descendants.**

## Hero who still impresses

Most of my working life was spent in the Health and Disability sector. In spite of being legally blind I was fortunate enough to undertake training and qualify as a Community Nurse at Wanganui School Of Nursing. During my training I became very interested in working with chronically impaired persons particularly those who had a condition which could not be put right... I was fascinated with the character and work of the late **William John Little (1810 – 1894)** who was the first man of medicine to attempt Definition of **Spastic Cerebral Palsy**



Dr. William John Little, was the first person to define cerebral palsy as a brain injury caused by oxygen deprivation at birth, turned his illness-ridden childhood experiences into a lifelong desire to help others through his practice of medicine. As a child, Little battled mumps, measles, and whooping cough, three diseases which still claim lives today. A bout with polio left him a clubfoot, an impairment where he foot turns inward. At the age of 15, his childhood illnesses and foot impairment began to fuel an interest in medicine. By age 27, he had earned his degree as a doctor of medicine. During his studies, Little met Dr. Georg Friedrich Louis Stromeyer, a German orthopaedic surgeon who was performing innovative reconstructive surgeries. Using his new techniques, Stromeyer was able to correct Little's clubfoot; the procedure was so successful that Little performed it in England and helped establish the field of orthopaedic surgery. Many of his practices are still used in medicine today. I'm sure such a fine man must be Scots.... ( ☺ ) **Allen Little**

## Clan Little Society New Zealand & Australia – November 2012



Plans are well underway for the 2014 to welcome the Scottish diaspora home. Scotland welcomes the world for the Year of Homecoming Scotland 2014! The year-long programme of events will be celebrating the very best of Scotland's food and drink, our fantastic active and natural resources as well as our creativity, culture and ancestral heritage. The first Homecoming year in 2009 was such an amazing success and as before, for 2014 everyone's invited to come and help us celebrate and reconnect with all that makes Scotland truly great.

The Homecoming team are busy preparing a fantastic programme of events and festivals which they'll be taking the wraps off in 2013. This will build on the success of the recent Year of Food & Drink, Year of Active, Year of Creative Scotland and Year of Natural Scotland focus years, as well as Scotland's rich ancestral resources and the Diaspora's connection with home.

Two world-class events already confirmed for 2014 are the XXth Commonwealth Games which Glasgow will host in July and the 40th Ryder Cup to be staged at historic Gleneagles in September.



## **Why Research family History?**

Knowing your History can change the way you think and feel. Connection to family and their histories can be a rewarding educational adventure of self-discovery. Researching family history is not always about finding dates and figures. Family history is about more than dates and places it includes the stories about individuals, occupations, life styles, communities and much more. Its probable that unless an individual was a member of the Aristocracy, Clergy, Artisan Guild, Legal/Academic/Medical establishment Military or Community leader, that little written evidence will survive. In general the common peoples of the time seldom had notoriety and survived in an oral tradition.

Finding the story of your family is actually about bringing together many small snippets of information and reflecting on their context. Its when these snippets and stories all come together that we can glean a more complete picture of our family. One of the secrets is gaining the sympathetic ear of elderly relatives and listening to what they say. Just as in modern New Zealand many people are overly conscious of 'Privacy' so it is when some seniors utter those words of barricade "let bygones be bygones". **Its worth remembering our Family History has taken a long time to become today so it will take a long time to unravel in the passage of time.**

The 1960s Soap Opera title line "**Like sands through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives....**". has good imagery for family history. There are so many grains of sand, specks of information which alone may be insignificant but, brought together they tell a unique story. Your story of heritage and culture.

**When the new web site [www.littleclan.net](http://www.littleclan.net) is finally on line I hope to include resources to help our members to take an interest in researching more of our Family History.**

## Lowland seasons greetings

Our Lowland ancestors celebrated the birth of Christ as 'Yule', or 'Yuletide' meaning 'Christmas season'. It officially lasts from 25th December until 6 January and was often known as 'The Daft Days' because games and other celebrations were held. The night before Christmas – Christmas Eve is usually called 'Yule E(v)en' in Scots. In modern Christmas cards produced in the Scots language its usual to see the message 'A Blithe Yule' meaning 'Happy Christmas'. The end of the Christmas season has long been known as 'Uphalyday' in the Scots language and is marked on 6 January.

Traditionally in Scotland the marking of the New Year was of greater significance than Christmas. Scots had long celebrated old rites at this time and, besides, the Calvinist church after 1560 took a dim view of the Catholic practices celebrated at Christmas and so discouraged those. Until 1599 the New Year began on 25 March but King James VI changed this to 1 January from 1600 onwards. In the Scots language New Year's Eve has been known as 'Hogmanay' since at least the 17th century. It's thought to derive from the French for a New Year's Eve gift. In Scots we say 'haud Hogmanay' for 'celebrate the end of the old year' and, once the New Year comes in, we call it 'Ne'rday' or 'Neerday' – New Year's Day. It has been traditional in Scotland to 'first-fit' or make a first visit to the homes of friends and neighbours on this day and to bring a 'handsel' or gift. 'Handsel' comes from an old word found in various languages and means to give with the hand. It is found in this form in Scots from the 14th century onwards. In Scots we greet people at the start of the New Year with **'A Guid New Year'** (Happy New Year).



## Clan Little Society New Zealand & Australia – November 2012

### DID YOU KNOW

THAT the Little clan of the Scottish Border numbers among the fifty-one Scottish clans in the proper sense listed in a decisive 16th Century Act of the Scottish Parliament?

THAT in the Anglo-Scottish Wars of 1296-1603 the Border Littles under their successive chiefs - Little of that Ilk, Lairds of Meikledale - were one of the fighting clans of the Scottish West March in the very forefront of the confrontation with England, the "Auld Enemy"?

THAT the direct forebear of the founder, Eduard Litill of Meikledale, "sister sonne so der" (sister's son so dear) of Sir William Wallace, the great Scottish patriot hero, fought at his uncle's side in the Wars of Independence, 700 years ago?

THAT today's Little clansfolk in descent from the line of the former chiefs inherit a lineage which can be traced back through Normandy and Norway to Ingjald "Ill-Ruler", last of the Yngling Peace Kings of Uppsala, who reigned in pagan Sweden 1,300 years ago?

### THE CLAN LITTLE SOCIETY

Ever since the brutal Pacification of the Border in the early 1600s clansfolk have been forced out, by political persecution in the early years but more commonly and persistently by rural overcrowding and poverty.

In consequence there are today some 45,000 Littles scattered across the English-speaking world.

The dispersed clansfolk are at long last coming together again. The Clan Little Society was founded on St. Andrew's Day 1991 with over fifty Founder Members from the British Isles, Canada, the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand. There is an area executive in each country and a Scottish-based international executive.

The Society is non-sectarian, non-political and non-profit making; its executive office-holders are unpaid.

The Logo of the Clan Little Society depicted on the front cover has the approval of the Court of the Lord Lyon.

The Clan Crest Badge is the crest of Little of Meikledale of old within a buckled strap bearing the motto. It is strictly for wearing on the person only as the Littles are one of Scotland's many heidless (headless) clans, having had no recognised Chief since 1672.



*The Crest of Little of Meikledale of Old (1672)*

The pattern of the Little tartan is unmistakable - a Border shepherd's black and white check on a claret and black ground relieved by a narrow band of yellow.

The livery colours are black and white (silver).

The Clan plant badge is heath/heather.

COMING SOON ~

[www.littleclan.net](http://www.littleclan.net)

presently under construction

the web site of our Clan in this area



*To Kith & Kin ~ Greetings, Every good wish for a happy, peaceful, safe festive season and for a new year of good health and prosperity . . .*

*'A Blithe Yule'*