

# THE HERALDRY OF THE MACLEAYS AND THEIR KIN: THE ARMS OF WILLIAM MACLEAY, HIS SONS, AND THEIR MALE DESCENDANTS

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## *INTRODUCTION*

In an earlier article<sup>1</sup> I gave a brief account of the life of Alexander Macleay following his arrival in Sydney in 1826 and up to his death twenty-two years later. I noted that there had been little or no scholarly examination of the use of coats of arms and similar heraldic identifiers by Alexander Macleay and his kin by either blood or marriage, and ventured that such an examination, which I hoped to carry out, might reveal something about identity, aspiration and kinship in the Scottish diaspora in colonial New South Wales. The present article narrows its focus to look at the ancestry of Alexander Macleay, how his father acquired legitimately granted arms, and what use of these arms was made by various male family members to declare their social status.

## *ANCESTRY*

The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (*ADB*) tells us that Alexander Macleay was:

the son of William Macleay, provost of Wick and deputy-lieutenant of Caithness. He was descended from an ancient family which came from Ulster; at the Reformation the family had substantial landholdings in Scotland, but by loyalty to the Stuarts suffered severe losses after the battle of Culloden.<sup>2</sup>

The *ADB* entry for Alexander's son George claims that "the McLeays [were] an old Caithness landed family."<sup>3</sup> The latter is not entirely true, for it seems that the Macleays were newly settled in the late eighteenth century in Caithness, but they had indeed

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Michael Szabo, 'The Heraldry of The Macleays and Their Kin: Scottish Heraldry and Its Australian Context', *Journal of the Sydney Society for Scottish History*, Vol. 16 (2016), pp. 125-133. The purpose of that article was to place heraldry in its historical and social context in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain and in colonial Australia, setting the scene for this examination of how Alexander Macleay and his family made use of heraldic insignia.

<sup>2</sup> 'McLeay, Alexander (1767–1848)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1967). At: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mcleay-alexander-2413/text3197>. Accessed 9 August 2016.

<sup>3</sup> David S. Macmillan, 'Macleay, Sir George (1809–1891)', *ADB*. At: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/macleay-sir-george-2414/text3199>. Accessed 9 August 2016.

prospered and acquired land. In her biography of Macleay<sup>4</sup> Derelie Cherry delves briefly into the antecedents of Alexander Macleay in both his paternal and maternal lines. Macleays can be found in Ross-shire from the 1400s, and apparently had connections to the Stewarts of Appin. Alexander's paternal grandmother was born a Munroe, another prominent Ross-shire clan.<sup>5</sup>

Whatever the truth of tales of landholding prior to the '45, Alexander's father, William, who was born in 1740, began his adult life as a ferryman on the Cromarty Firth. His later achievements demonstrate that he was a man of vision, ambition and energy, qualities which would have made him attractive as a marriage partner.

William Macleay (1740 – 1820) married Barbara Rose, who was the same age as him, in about 1860. She was said to be a Rose of Kilravock, and kin to the Rosses of Cromarty House. She outlived her husband by more than two decades, dying in 1842 at the advanced age of 103. They were to have four sons and three daughters together: Kenneth (1765-1826), Alexander (1767-1848), William (1770-1802), John (c.1779-1821), Margaret Elizabeth (d. 1822), Barbara (d. 1836), and Catherine (d. 1848).<sup>6</sup>

The young growing family moved from Ross-shire to Wick in Caithness in about 1773. Here William Macleay began to purchase and cultivate land, growing crops of various types, and collecting manure from the town's street to improve the soil on his holdings. He was also a merchant and was interested in the establishment of a fishing industry in the far north of Scotland, becoming Inspector of Fisheries for Caithness in 1786, the year in which his second son, Alexander, moved south to London to work there.

William also became involved in civic affairs, being appointed a bailie (alderman or councillor) in Wick in 1778, coming to act effectively as deputy to the Provost of Wick, Sir John Sinclair, who was frequently absent. William was eventually appointed Deputy Lieutenant of Caithness, a position in which he acted on behalf of the Lord Lieutenant, the representative of the sovereign in the county. In 1814 he became Provost of Wick, and served in that capacity until 1818, two years before his death.

His role as Provost (mayor) was most definitely the crown of a series of appointments and activities that would have made William Macleay "virtuous and well-deserving" in the eyes of the Lord Lyon King of Arms, and he was granted arms on 23 April 1814.

### *THE ARMS OF WILLIAM MACLEAY (1740-1820)*

The entry in *The Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland* is economical with words, as indeed were most entries in the early nineteenth century. It runs:

<sup>4</sup> Derelie Cherry, *Alexander Macleay: from Scotland to Sydney* (Kulnura NSW: Paradise Publishers, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Cherry, *Alexander Macleay*, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Cherry, *Alexander Macleay*, p. 417. Cherry gives no year of birth for John Macleay, and places him third in the list of male children, but in *The London Magazine*, Vol. III, No. XVI (April 1821), p. 468 the death, on 18 February 1821, of "John Macleay, Esq. of Keiss, FLS. in his 43d year" is noted, so he is clearly the fourth and youngest son of William Macleay.

WILLIAM MACLEAY ESQUIRE of Wick in the County of Caithness, Chief presiding Magistrate of that Burgh and one of His Majesty's Deputy Lieutenants and Justices of the Peace for the County, BEARS Argent, on a Chevron Gules, between three Buck's heads Couped of the Last, armed Or, a Hawk's head erased of the last between two Salmons erect proper, on a Chief Azure an Anchor between two Garbs Or. CREST a Buck's head erased proper, MOTTO 'SPES ANCHORA VITAE'.

Matriculated 23 April 1814.

If the Macleays had lost much in supporting the Jacobite cause (and I have seen no evidence to suggest that they were Jacobites) then they recovered their losses within a generation. I suspect that the tale of lost lands was mere romanticism, as any landed family would already have been armigerous, retaining their heraldic insignia even if their lands were lost, and the arms which were granted to William Macleay were "of new", and contain allusions to his various commercial activities, such as the salmon, the anchor and the garbs. There are no other Macleay arms in the Lyon Register prior to this and if William Macleay's arms allude to any previously existing coats of arms it is to Monroe arms, which all feature a red eagle's head on a gold field.<sup>7</sup>

The author has yet to find any material evidence that William Macleay made much use of his arms,<sup>8</sup> but having gone to the trouble of acquiring them it seems highly likely that, at the very least, he would have acquired an armorial seal. Two of his sons, Alexander and John, certainly did, as will be seen below.

### *KENNETH MACLEAY (1765-1826) AND HIS SONS: HEIRS TO WILLIAM MACLEAY'S ARMS*

Kenneth Macleay of Newmore was the eldest son of William Macleay and husband of Isabella Horne (1792-1838). When William Macleay died in 1820, Kenneth was the rightful inheritor of the undifferenced arms, and Kenneth himself had four sons: Kenneth (1817-1890), William John (1820-1891), John (1821-1846), and Alexander Donald (1822-1897). There were also three daughters born of the marriage, these being Barbara (b. 1814), Elizabeth (b. 1819), and Isabella (b. 1824)

Alexander's brother Kenneth died in the 1826, the year in which Alexander arrived in Australia, so the undifferenced arms then passed to Kenneth "Junior", later known as Kenneth Macleay of Keiss.

<sup>7</sup> Eight shields of arms are listed under the name Monro (Munro) in Sir James Balfour Paul, *An Ordinary of Arms Contained in the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland* (Edinburgh: William Green & Sons, 1903), all of which have a gold field (*Or*) and four of which have as a charge *an eagle's head erased Gules* while the remaining four have *an eagle's head erased Gules holding in its beak a laurel branch vert* or very slight variants thereof.

<sup>8</sup> This inability to conduct a search in Britain for material remains on the part of the author makes such statements inconclusive, and it is hoped that future research and the kindness of strangers, resident in or visiting the United Kingdom, might turn something up in the future.

Kenneth Macleay (1817-1890), later Macleay of Keiss, was born on 16 June 1817. He was educated at the Edinburgh Academy and the University of Edinburgh. Like many local gentry he became an officer, holding the rank of Major in the Ross, Caithness, Sutherland, and Cromarty Militia. Like his grandfather William he was a Justice of the Peace and a Deputy Lieutenant for the County of Caithness. On 13 November 1852 Macleay of Keiss married Jane, daughter of Joseph Coote, who sadly died a month after their sixth wedding anniversary, on 18 December 1858. There were no children of the marriage, and Kenneth never re-married.<sup>9</sup> In his later years, Major Macleay lived in London, where he died on 10 January 1890.<sup>10</sup>

It would seem that Major Kenneth Macleay was reasonably prosperous, and it was most likely that he was responsible for commissioning a dinner service, each piece of which was emblazoned with the arms granted to William Macleay, although it is also possible that this was commissioned either by his father, Kenneth, or by his uncle, Alexander.

William John Macleay (1820-1891) was the second son of Kenneth Macleay of Newmore. He was only five when his father died. William John was studying medicine at the University of Edinburgh when his mother died in 1838, and apparently the family faced a financial crisis at this time as William John was unable to continue his studies. On his Uncle Alexander's advice, he emigrated to New South Wales, bringing either one or both of his younger brothers with him,<sup>11</sup> arriving in Sydney in March 1839.

Once in Sydney, and with considerable assistance from his uncle and cousins, William John acquired cattle runs in the Murrumbidgee, weathered the financial crisis of the 1840s which effectively ruined his Uncle Alexander, and prospered. He became a member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, representing Lachlan and Lower Darling from 1856 until 1858 and then as MP for Murrumbidgee from 1859 until 1874. Elected to the Senate of the University of Sydney in 1875 and knighted in 1889, William John Macleay cannot have been oblivious to his heraldic heritage, but I have yet to encounter any certain examples of it in use. Had he done so he could well have impaled the Macleay arms with those of the family of his wife, Susan Emmeline Thomson (1839-1903). She was one of the daughters of Edward Deas Thomson, successor to Alexander Macleay as Colonial Secretary. Thomson's arms appear at the University of Sydney, and it may be that his son-in-law is heraldically commemorated, albeit posthumously, on the southern wall of the original Fisher Library (now MacLaurin Hall) where the Macleay crest and motto appear not once, but twice.

<sup>9</sup> Edward Walford, *The County Families of the United Kingdom* (London: Chatto & Windus 1886), p. 683 and Sir Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland*, Part II (London: Harrison, 1863) p. 950 are the sources of the biographical information in this paragraph.

<sup>10</sup> Death Notices, *Hampshire Advertiser*, Wednesday 15 January (1890), p. 2. His age is given as 71, which is incorrect by one year.

<sup>11</sup> Martha Rutledge and Michael Hoare, 'Macleay, Sir William John (1820–1891)', *ADB* (1974). At: [macleay-sir-william-john-4125/text6599](https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/macleay-sir-william-john-4125/text6599). Accessed 9 August 2016. This source claims that William John "arrived in Sydney in March 1839 in the *Royal George* with his brother Walter", and since neither of his brothers was Walter, this is clearly a mistake. Other sources say that it was John who accompanied his brother, and Alexander Donald (always referred to by his brother as "Alick" in his diaries) who is clearly noted as holding land in the colony at a later date, either emigrated at the same time or shortly afterwards.

If John Macleay (1821-1846) made use of arms in his twenty-five years of life, there is no evidence of this in New South Wales. Given he was present in the colony for just over half a decade before his death he would have had little time to establish himself and to acquire the trappings to proclaim his status as a gentleman, such as a signet ring bearing the Macleay arms and so forth.

Alexander Donald Macleay (1822-1897) was the youngest son of Kenneth Macleay of Newmore. Like his brothers William and John, he emigrated to New South Wales, and took up sheep and cattle runs. He did well, eventually retiring to the Northern Hemisphere, with a home in London and also in Algiers. By all accounts he was a *bon viveur* and would have probably made use of the arms in some form to proclaim his status as a gentleman. We certainly have at least one sound piece of evidence of this as follows. On the death of Alexander Donald Macleay without issue in 1897, his will noted that “I have two rings with the Macleay crest and coat of arms those I wish to be given one to my cousin Colonel Calclough Macleay & the other to my cousin Oswald Macleay.”<sup>12</sup> It is also at this time that the undifferenced arms rightfully passed from the line of Kenneth Macleay to that of Alexander Macleay, to whom we will now turn.

#### *ALEXANDER MACLEAY: LIFE AND WORK PRIOR TO EMIGRATING TO NEW SOUTH WALES*

When he arrived in London in 1786, at the age of nineteen, Alexander went into business with William Sharp as a wine merchant. Five years later he married London-born Elizabeth (known as “Eliza”) Barclay, who was two years his junior. Her father, James Barclay, may have been a brewer, and may have been descended from the Barclays of Urie. This claim was certainly made a century or so later by at least one of her descendants.

Alexander and Elizabeth’s first child, William Sharp Macleay, was born nine and a half months after their wedding, and a further sixteen Macleay offspring, including two sets of twins, arrived over the next twenty-two years. Of these children, ten were to survive to adulthood, four sons and six daughters.

With the beginning of the wars with France in 1793, which were to then go on intermittently for more than twenty years, Alexander sought more secure employment in government service in 1795. He was appointed head clerk in the Department of Correspondence of the Prisoners of War Office within the Transport Board in 1797, and promoted to the position of Secretary of the Transport Board in 1806. Peace in 1815 meant that the Board would eventually cease to have a function, and it was wound down in 1817. Although he had family business to fall back on, that too would have met with difficulties due to the agricultural depression that peace brought. A further position in government service was sought, and eventually Alexander was offered the position of Colonial Secretary of New South Wales in 1825.

<sup>12</sup> I am indebted to Macleay researcher, Dr Jim Mackay, for this piece of information.



Figure 1: Impression of the seal used by Alexander Macleay as Secretary of the Transport Board. Photograph by Dr Jim Mackay and used with his permission.

Apart from his busy working life, Alexander Macleay became well-known for his interest in collecting insects and in other sciences. He was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society in London in 1794, and became secretary in 1798, a demanding role which he retained until leaving for Australia in 1825, when he brought his magnificent insect collection with him.

So it was that, at the age of 58, Alexander Macleay embarked on a new career and life in a new country on the other side of the world. It says much for his energy and the strength of his family that they were able to do so. Apart from Alexander and his wife, their six daughters, all unmarried and ranging in age from eleven to thirty-two, emigrated with them. They were followed by George in 1827, and James in 1829. The eldest son, William Sharp Macleay, emigrated to Australia in 1839. Only one of the surviving Macleay children never came to Australia, Alexander Rose Macleay.

### *ARMS AND THE MAN: ALEXANDER MACLEAY AND HIS USE OF HIS FATHER'S ARMS*

Without evidence from correspondence, journal entries, or the like, we will never know for certain when Alexander Macleay first became acquainted with and possibly developed an interest in heraldry. He certainly would have developed some knowledge of the process of petitioning for a grant of arms in England in his thirties, when he petitioned the Earl Marshal for a grant of arms, crest and supporters on behalf of the Linnean Society of London.<sup>13</sup> His name appears on the Letters Patent from the English Kings of Arms granting these to the Society and he corresponded with the College of Arms regarding this, prior to the grant being finalised. Through his work at the

<sup>13</sup> 'Patent Granting and Assigning Arms, Crest, and Supporters, to The Linnean Society of London', *The Transactions of The Linnean Society of London*, Vol. VII (1804), pp. xxxviii-xl.

Transport Board, his business connections in Scotland, and the gentlemen he met through the Linnean Society, Macleay would have probably become acquainted with the use of heraldry by people in those circles, and may have had a hand in his father's petitioning for a grant of arms in 1814, possibly even carrying out the negotiations with Lyon Court on his father's behalf, although this is simply speculation at this point.



Figure 2: The arms, crest and supporters of the Linnean Society of London from the title page of *The Transactions of The Linnean Society of London*, Vol. VII (1804)

What is clear is that he certainly lost no time in bringing those arms into use himself and continued to use those arms throughout his life.

Alexander's use of the arms of his father would have, in the strictest sense of Scottish heraldic law, been illegal within Scotland, even after his father's death. Properly speaking, as a younger son, Alexander should have petitioned for a rematriculation of the arms, a process whereby the arms are changed slightly so that their relationship to the "stem arms" is clear. These days this is achieved by a system of bordures or borders around the edge of the shield, but in the nineteenth century it was usually done by modifying one of the charges, by changing a colour or some other means.

Heraldic law at the time, however, was fairly lax in Scotland, and as Alexander lived mostly in London, where heraldic practice was even more lax, and individuals often claimed arms which simply belonged to someone with the same surname and no proven blood relationship his behaviour is not surprising. In families where a coat of arms legitimately existed, younger male siblings were, in theory, supposed to use small brisures as marks of difference (a crescent moon for the second son, a star for the third son, and so on), but in practice all family members tended to use the arms undifferenced. Given that Alexander spent his prime of life in London, his exposure to any sort of heraldry would have been to English heraldry rather than Scottish heraldry, and so no-one, even the heralds at the College of Arms, would have seen anything unusual in his use of the arms. He at least had a very close blood tie to the arms that he used, which is more than could be said for many of his contemporaries who used arms. Alexander used these arms in a variety of media both in Britain and in Australia, as the several following examples will show.

## SEAL

Alexander was well-acquainted with the use of seals for the authentication of documents, and had one for his role within the Transport Board which prominently featured an anchor (see image above). After the Linnean Society of London was granted its achievement of arms in 1804, an armorial seal was most likely engraved for official use, and so he would have seen another use of arms on a seal. It comes as no surprise then to find that Alexander and his younger brother John were using armorial seals depicting the arms granted to their father by the Lord Lyon King of Arms only several years after the grant. Of the two seal images shown below, that of John shows the elements of the arms clearly outlined, while the impression from Alexander's seal requires a good deal of squinting to identify, but his signature assists in corroborating this.

Seal impressions can be quite fugitive, while signet rings, often made of silver, with the seal matrix either engraved into the metal or sometimes into a stone mounted on the ring, are rather more permanent, and we know of at least two such rings which passed through the Macleay family as noted above. Valuable items of silver were often also engraved with heraldic identifiers, with smaller pieces often bearing either just crest or shield, while larger pieces might include the entire achievement of arms.

The Macleay arms as used by Alexander were sufficiently well-known to be accurately depicted on a very fine piece of silverwork. Following his somewhat controversial retirement as Colonial Secretary in 1836, a Committee of Subscribers was established to raise funds for the purchase of an appropriately engraved piece of silverware, which took the form of an epergne.<sup>14</sup> Owing to various delays, detailed in a pamphlet published at the time of the presentation,<sup>15</sup> the epergne was not presented until 1842, but one cannot fail to notice the well-executed engraving of the Macleay arms on one face of its base. This certainly shows that there were fellow colonists who were aware of Alexander's use of arms who were furthermore aware of how pleased he would have been to have those arms used on a piece that commemorated his time in such a vital and prominent office.

What happened to the epergne following Alexander's death in 1848 is not immediately apparent, but ultimately it ended up in the possession of his great-grandson, Sir James William Ronald Macleay. On his death in 1943, 101 years after it had been presented to his illustrious ancestor, his widow offered it to the State of New South Wales as a gift. It was accepted by the Premier of the day, and now forms part of the Parliamentary Collections. It is occasionally exhibited in publicly-accessible areas, and the present writer accidentally encountered it on one such occasion, and can attest to the accuracy of the armorial engraving.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> A centerpiece usually made of silver and crafted to hold flowers and/or candles.

<sup>15</sup> *Presentation of a piece of plate to Alexander Macleay ... by a numerous body of his fellow colonists, inhabitants of New South Wales* (Sydney, 1842)

<sup>16</sup> The author had the good fortune to be able to examine this epergne on a visit to the Parliament of New South Wales on 19 September 2017, and to photograph the accompanying card detailing its provenance.

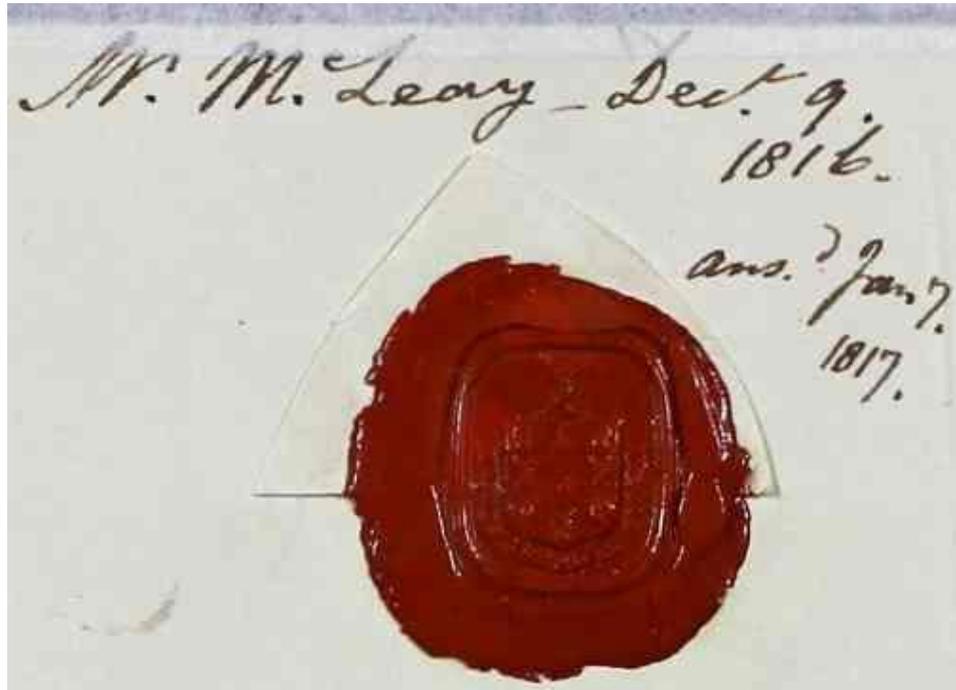


Figure 3: Wax seal on a letter from Alexander Macleay, dated to late 1816. Photograph by Dr Jim Mackay and used with his permission.



Figure 4: Wax seal on a letter from John Macleay of Keiss, Alexander's younger brother, dating from 1819. Photograph by Dr Jim Mackay and used with his permission.

## MONUMENTS

Heraldic identifiers were, in the past, extensively used to mark the death of a person, often on a temporary basis, but also in more permanent forms on grave markers or tombs, or on memorial plaques erected in the parish church attended by the deceased. There is one prominent example in the case of the Macleays, this being on the memorial to Alexander and Eliza which is to be found in St James Church King Street Sydney. Here we see the arms of Macleay impaled<sup>17</sup> with those of Barclay. The Barclay arms shown here are taken from the Lyon Register, and were entered in the period of the Register's establishment. These arms were *Azure a chevron between three crosses patee Argent*. All subsequent Barclay arms are variants of these.

In 1898, Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow, whose late husband was a grandson of Alexander and Eliza Macleay, memorialised them and other ancestors by erecting a number of shields in St James Church, Menangle. As mentioned earlier, Eliza is identified as a Barclay of Urie/Ury. The arms of Barclay of Urie were recorded in 1725, nearly a century before the Macleay grant, and are *Azure in chief three crosses patee Argent*. However, the arms that are depicted impaled with Macleay are those of Barclay of Buryhill, matriculated in 1858 and blazoned *Azure a chevron and in chief three crosses patee Argent*. It is quite possible that Eliza Barclay was descended from Barclay of Urie, and Barclay of Buryhill certainly was.

The use of the arms on the memorial at St James, Sydney which probably dates from the 1850s, and their use half a century later by the widow of one of their grandsons, suggests that there was an ongoing awareness on the part of family members of the importance of the arms to Alexander and his kin. The care taken in accurately depicting the colours of the arms is also commendable, showing some awareness of the role of heraldry as not simply decoration, but as an identifier of kinship and social status.

## THE SONS OF ALEXANDER MACLEAY AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

Of the five sons of Alexander and Eliza Macleay, all but one<sup>18</sup> survived to adulthood. Among the remaining four, two were to have no issue at all, and the other two only had three sons between them, so the line of inheritance of the arms remained quite narrow.

William Sharp Macleay (1792-1865) was born on 21 July 1792 in London, the eldest son of Alexander McLeay.<sup>19</sup> He was educated at Westminster School, where he distinguished himself as a classical scholar, and in 1809 proceeded to Trinity College,

<sup>17</sup> *Impaling* is used in heraldry as a way to depict marital arms, where a husband's arms are shown on the dexter (viewer's left) side of the shield and the wife's father's arms (or in rare cases, arms in her own right) on the sinister (viewer's right) side of the shield.

<sup>18</sup> James Macleay (1794 -1810).

<sup>19</sup> Biographical details of William Sharp Macleay are sourced from Cherry, *Alexander Macleay*, pp. 18 and 27ff. and David S. Macmillan, 'Macleay, William Sharp (1792-1865)'. At: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/macleay-william-sharp-2415/text3201>. Accessed 7 October 2015.

Cambridge (B.A., 1814; M.A., 1818). In 1818 he was appointed attaché to the British embassy in Paris and secretary to the Board for liquidating British claims on the French government. In 1825 he became British commissioner of arbitration to the conjoint British and Spanish Court of Commission in Havana for the abolition of the slave trade; in 1830 he became commissary judge in that court, and by 1833 he was judge to the Mixed Tribunal of Justice. He remained in Havana until 1836, when he retired with a pension of £900. He arrived in March 1839 in Sydney where he spent the remainder of his life living at his father's home, Elizabeth Bay House, which he inherited in 1848.

William Sharp took control of his father's finances a couple of years after arrival, and saved him from bankruptcy. Like his father, he was a keen entomologist, and continued collecting, with his cousin William John (1820-1891) acquiring the family collection after W S Macleay's death in 1865. The collection was initially offered to the University of Sydney in 1874, and finally accepted in 1889. William Sharp Macleay never married and left no legitimate issue. I have as yet found no evidence that he used the arms granted to his grandfather, although he most certainly would have used an official seal in some form as a commissioner and a judge. It might be that since he had left home around the time the grant was made, and was chiefly kept in contact with the rest of the family via correspondence with his sister Fanny, that he had little exposure to the arms and may have felt no attachment to them. Nevertheless, I still live in hope that I might turn up some examples of his using them.



Figure 6: Memorial tablet to Alexander and Eliza Macleay in St James Anglican Church, King St, Sydney. Note the coat of arms immediately above the text on the tablet. Photograph by the author.



Figure 7: Detail of the shield on the memorial tablet heraldically depicting the marriage of Alexander Macleay to Eliza Barclay by impaling the Macleay and Barclay arms. Photograph by the author.



Figure 8: The arms of Macleay impaling Barclay in St James Anglican Church, Menangle, heraldically depicting the marriage of Alexander Macleay and Eliza Barclay. Photograph by the author.

Alexander Rose Macleay (1796-1869) was the only son of Alexander and Eliza Macleay who never came to Australia. He seems to have been the “black sheep” of the family, and at least according to Cherry’s biography of his father, appears to have led a pretty miserable life. She records that Alexander Rose Macleay “died a pauper at Tours

and was survived by six single daughters and one son who had been declared insane.”<sup>20</sup> He hardly sounds like the sort of individual who would have had the circumstances and wherewithal to make use of the arms.

George (1809-1891), later Sir George Macleay KCMG<sup>21</sup>, was to have a significant presence both in Australia and in the land of his birth. He remained behind in England when his parents and sisters emigrated, to complete his education at Westminster School, and came to Australia in 1827. He came to public attention as an explorer, accompanying Charles Sturt in 1829-30 on his epic overland journey along the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers to the mouth of the latter in what is now South Australia. George proved his positive qualities under challenging circumstances in the course of this expedition, and received a considerable grant of land in 1831. He continued to live on his father’s Brownlow Hill estate near Camden, which he eventually inherited, from 1831 until 1859, although he continued to build up his own holdings in southern and south-west New South Wales. On 27 April 1842 he married Barbara St Clair Innes (sister of a man who was already his brother-in-law, Archibald Clunes Innes<sup>22</sup> who had married Margaret Macleay), with the “Lord Bishop of Australia”, William Broughton, conducting the ceremony.<sup>23</sup> The couple travelled abroad in 1843-44, with some time spent in Italy, before returning to the colony.

George took some interest in politics, serving in the Legislative Council from 1851 until 1856. He then represented the seat of Murrumbidgee in the new Legislative Assembly from 1856 until 1859. In that year he resolved to live in Europe, and lived in England of a number of years. He was made a Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George in 1869 and promoted to Knight Commander within the same order in 1875.

By the time he had established himself at Pendell Court in Surrey in 1870, Sir George was most certainly aware of the family’s armorial heritage and how it ought to be used. He was recently widowed, Barbara having died in 1869. In late 1870 he engaged the prominent architect Gilbert Scott to carry out restoration works in St Nicholas Church, Godstone, where the family had attended church while still living in England and where several of his siblings were buried. He also had Scott create a chapel for the family. The Macleay Chapel includes a stained-glass window depicting the arms of Macleay impaling those of Innes, with the badge of the Order of St Michael and St George suspended from beneath the shield. The chapel also contains an effigy of Barbara Macleay.<sup>24</sup> A tombstone in the graveyard of the same church (see image below)

<sup>20</sup> Cherry, *Alexander Macleay*, p. 185.

<sup>21</sup> Biographical details from David S. Macmillan, ‘Macleay, Sir George (1809–1891)’. At: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/macleay-sir-george-2414/text3199>. Accessed 7 October 2015. See also Cherry, *Alexander Macleay*, pp. 37 and 140ff.

<sup>22</sup> Archibald Clunes Innes, who had married Alexander Macleay’s daughter Margaret in 1829, was part of a family that has an interesting armorial history which I intend to explore in a future article.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Marriage’, *The Australian*, Thursday 28 April (1842), p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> At: <http://www.godstoneunitedbenefice.org.uk/st-nicholas/history-of-st-nicholas/>. Accessed 2 March 2019

includes the same arms depicted in monochrome, but with the Petra-Sancta system of hatching used to indicate the correct colours of various elements of the arms.

James Robert (1811-1892), the youngest of Alexander and Eliza Macleay's sons, also finished his education in England before arriving in the colony in May 1829. He spent some time helping his brother George to manage Brownlow Hill. Apparently, James Robert did not find life in the colonies congenial and he was back in England by 1837. In November 1837 he married Amelia Savage in London. In 1843 he was appointed as Secretary/Registrar to the Mixed British and Portuguese Commission for the Suppression of The Slave Trade, a position that he held until 1858, when he was able to retire.<sup>25</sup> James Robert and Amelia Macleay had two sons, Alexander Caldcleugh Macleay (1843-1907) and Oswald Sullivan Macleay (1852-1912). It was to these two brothers that their cousin Alexander Donald Macleay left heraldic signet rings on his death in 1897, as noted earlier.

Alexander Caldcleugh Macleay was to have a distinguished military career, retiring with the rank of Colonel. He was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath. He married Mabel Anderson in 1867 and they had a daughter, Lina (1868-1935), and a son, James William Ronald Macleay (1879-1943).<sup>26</sup>

James William Ronald Macleay<sup>27</sup> (whose preferred forename was Ronald) was educated at Charterhouse School and Balliol College, Oxford. Like his grandfather, he entered the Foreign Office, and served in various diplomatic roles, including that of Ambassador to Argentina (1919-22) China (1922-26), Czechoslovakia (1927-1929) and Argentina again (1930-33). He was made a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) in 1918, promoted to Knight Commander (KCMG) in 1922, and finally to Knight Grand Cross (GCMG) in 1932. He had married Evelyn Emily Peel (1869-1960) in 1901, and she proved to be an extremely supportive diplomat's wife. What use if any he made of the arms granted to his ancestor William Macleay, Provost of Wick, is not known to the present author, but since it was his widow who donated the epergne referred to above to the State of New South Wales, he could hardly have been unaware of this heraldic artefact.

Oswald Sullivan Macleay<sup>28</sup> was the younger of James Robert Macleay's two sons. Educated at Westminster School like many of his Macleay kin, he went on to Balliol College, Oxford and graduated with the degree of Master of Arts in 1877, becoming a barrister in the following year. He practised as a conveyancer until 1893, when he

<sup>25</sup>Biographical details from Cherry, *Alexander Macleay*, pp. 184, 216-217, and 338-339ff. and 'Obituary', *The Elizabethan: Magazine of the Westminster School*, Vol VII No 8 (November 1892) pp. 94-95. At: [https://elizabethan.westminster.org.uk/FileName.ashx?tableName=ta\\_elizabethan&columnName=filename&recordId=167](https://elizabethan.westminster.org.uk/FileName.ashx?tableName=ta_elizabethan&columnName=filename&recordId=167). Accessed 2 March 2019.

<sup>26</sup> Biographical details from Macleay family tree in the *Swainston Papers* in the Macleay Museum Archives.

<sup>27</sup> Biographical details are from James William Ronald Macleay's entry in Edward Hilliard (ed.), *The Balliol College Register 1832-1914* (Oxford, 1914) p. 217. At: <http://www.thepeerage.com/p67040.htm#i670395>, accessed 2 March 2019. See also 'Ronald Macleay', *Wikipedia*. At: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald\\_Macleay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Macleay). Accessed 2 March 2019.

<sup>28</sup> Biographical details from entry in Hilliard (ed.), *The Balliol College Register 1832-1914*, p. 217.

retired due to ill health. In 1895 he married Ida Marion Mawes, née Seawright, widow of Captain F G Mawes. It appears that they probably had a son, Oswald Seawright Macleay,<sup>29</sup> although to date I have been able to find very little further information on this individual.



Figure 9: The arms of Macleay impaling Innes, with the insignia of the Order of St Michael and St George dependant from the shield. This clearly identifies these as being used by Sir George Macleay KCMG. These are found on the Macleay tomb at St Nicholas' Church, Godstone. Photograph by Dr Jim McKay and used with his permission.

Like his ancestors, Oswald Sullivan Macleay was something of a booklover, and it is through him that we finally find a member of the Macleay family who made use of an item beloved of heraldic scholars, an armorial bookplate. While only featuring crest and motto, it suggests an awareness of and connection to his heraldic patrimony, and it appears that he not only had these bookplates engraved and printed, but also had them pasted into many books in his library, with several examples found on a search of Internet sites selling antiquarian books.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> In the notices in *The London Gazette*, 25 April 1961, p. 3084, the following appears: "The Queen has been pleased by Warrant under Her Royal Sign Manual dated the 24th of April 1961, to appoint Lieutenant Commander Oswald Seawright Macleay to be a Deputy Chairman of the Court of Quarter Sessions for the County of London." He is also included on a Macleay family tree in the *Swainston Papers* mentioned above. Further research is needed.

<sup>30</sup> An item listed on eBay includes an image of the bookplate. At: <https://www.ebay.com/itm/Antique-Leatherbound-Decorative-French-Parisian-Victorian-Literature-Francophone-/142671254442>. Accessed 2 March 2019. Items listed for sale on auction sites and with online book sellers, such as [https://www.artandobject.co.nz/AuctionResources/299/Art\\_Object\\_March\\_2013.pdf](https://www.artandobject.co.nz/AuctionResources/299/Art_Object_March_2013.pdf) (accessed 2 March 2019) and <https://www.antipodean.com/pages/books/24544/j-w-gregory/the-dead-heart-of-australia-a->

There are, to the best of my knowledge, no known male-line descendants of Alexander Macleay in Australia, and those in the UK, if they exist, would be very few in number. Further research may uncover more.

### *CONCLUSION*

This exploration has, I hope, shown that several of the male-line descendants of William Macleay and of his sons Kenneth and Alexander demonstrated an appreciation for and an understanding of the significance of the achievement of arms granted to William in 1814, via the representation of the arms in a variety of media, and the retention of heraldic artefacts by successive generations. Further investigation of other families of the Scottish diaspora in Australia and throughout other countries which were once part of the British Empire is likely to reveal similar patterns of heraldic use and inheritance.

journey-around-lake-eyre-in-the-summer-of-1901-1902-with-some-account-of (accessed 2 March 2019), include references to “the armorial bookplate of Oswald Macleay MA”. The Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection of the Historic Houses Trust/ Sydney Living Museums includes a volume that “Carries the bookplate of Oswald Macleay, M.A.” (<http://collection.hht.net.au/firsthht/fullRecord.jsp?recno=28083>. Accessed 2 March 2019.