



*CURRIE & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY*

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CURRIE CHRONICLE

(The Journal of the Society)

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Currie Toll 1897

Hello folks,

As I sit at home, in front of the TV on 4th September 2017 – having just completed putting the contents of this Chronicle together – I am viewing pictures of a wonderful Scottish engineering achievement. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has just officially opened the new Queensferry Crossing, over the Firth of Forth, linking Edinburgh and Midlothian with Fife and further North .

Coincidentally it was 53 years to the day since the Queen opened the adjacent Forth Road Bridge. The new £1.35million bridge is a fantastic feat of civil engineering and opened for traffic – for the **FIRST TIME** - on 30th August 2017. The 1.7mile long structure is the first and longest three tower, cable stayed bridge in the world. This innovative design provides extra strength and stiffness allowing the towers, and deck, to be more slender and elegant.

The contents of this Chronicle includes some other notable local 'firsts' that have occurred over the years. Hope you find them interesting.

Ron Dickson, Editor.

LOCAL 'FIRSTS'

The first school building in Currie was 'Lilacbank', the small white house opposite the former Curriehill Primary School; its foundation was laid in 1700 but was not completed for 'some time'.

The first Post Office in Currie was opened on 6th April 1806; the postmaster was Mr. Andrew Gourlay, and his salary was £5 per annum!

The railway line from Edinburgh to Balerno opened in 1874 with passenger stations at Juniper Green, Currie and Balerno and goods yards at the last two.

Currie Bowling Club was formed in May 1874.

The first 'co-op' store in the area was opened for business in Balerno in 1866.

The first Boys' Brigade Company, in Currie, was formed in 1903.

The first Boy Scouts (4th Midlothian, Currie) was formed in 1909. Sadly their first Scoutmaster was killed in the First World War.

The first SMT bus service from Waverley Bridge to Balerno, via Slateford, commenced on 15th July, 1922 – 95 years ago this year !!

The first Currie Operatic Society was founded in 1902.

The first Council house was built in Currie in 1923.

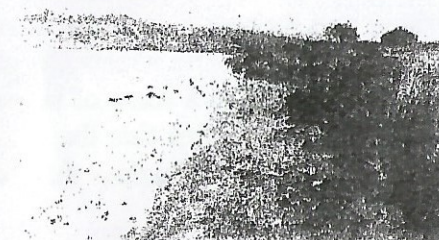
Douglas Lowe, the Society's Secretary, has prepared two very interesting local reports taken from three Edinburgh newspapers of the late 19th Century which, hopefully, will be of interest to members.

..... FLOOD and EVACUATION

Reports of flooding and storms are constantly in the news these days. (e.g. present day Hurricane IRMA) Reports in both the Courant and the Caledonian Mercury on 30th September 1856 records some extreme weather for the Lothians and Balerno in particular.

In late September 1856 there was a great storm and days of rain. The Water of Leith rose to a height "unprecedented" bringing down sheep carcasses, trees and bridges. On Sunday night 30th September great alarm was created at Balerno on hearing reports that the embankments/dams of both Harlaw and Threipmuir reservoirs were giving way. "The inhabitants of Balerno, a village on its bank, turned all out of their domiciles" and sought safety on higher ground. They returned to their homes at about 3.00am the torrent of water having abated, but, "spent the remainder of the night in some anxiety". Harlaw and Threipmuir reservoirs (the High Ponds) were constructed in 1847 and 1848. An engineer's report said that 20,000 cubic feet/125,000 gallons of water per minute were discharging over the dam overflow during the storm, not including the water being drawn off through the 2 foot diameter pipes below.

A later report said that although parts of the stonework of the overflow had been dislodged in the flood, the dam structure has been unaffected, although one newspaper report, mentioned that "some injury had been sustained to the embankments of the reservoirs".



Threipmuir
Reservoir

...KING of SIAM at RICCARTON SOCIETY WEDDING...

"His Majesty, the King of Siam, this afternoon honoured with his presence the marriage ceremony of Miss Henrietta Florence Gibson-Craig, eldest daughter of Sir James H. Gibson-Craig of Riccarton, to Captain R.S.D.Cumming, commander of his Majesty's State Yacht. The event in itself created no small stir among the people on the estate, but the presence of Royalty, even if it were from the East, imparted to it much greater importance" so began an article in the Edinburgh Evening News on Tuesday 10th August 1897.

The article went on to describe how both railway stations, Currie and Curriehill, were decked out with flags, as were Hermiston Village and the North Lodge, by which the guests entered, and Riccarton House had a string of flags along the eaves, and the pillars of the door were twined with evergreens. "Among the bunting the flag of Siam, a white elephant on a red background predominated".

Captain Cumming R.N. had previously been in charge of H.M. Training Ship Caledonia at South Queensferry and had been selected by the Government to bring the King of Siam's yacht, with His Majesty on board, to Europe.

The marriage service was carried out by the Very Reverend J.F. Montgomery, Dean of Edinburgh, assisted by Rev. Leslie Goodwin, Rector of Adlington in Kent and Rev. W. Nicholson Chaplain of HMS Caledonia; the music was provided by the band and choir of HMS Caledonia, the band also played the Siamese National Anthem upon the arrival of the King and his entourage of Royal princes. The great and the good were among the 200/300 guests in Riccarton House.

One unfortunate event that would blight their later lives was the death of their son Robert in a diving accident from his ship HMS Dolphin on 19th February 1930. The streets Dolphin Avenue, Gardens, Road etc. in Currie are so named as a form of respect to the Gibson-Craig family following this tragedy. After this the estate passed through another branch of the female line to the Sudlow family.