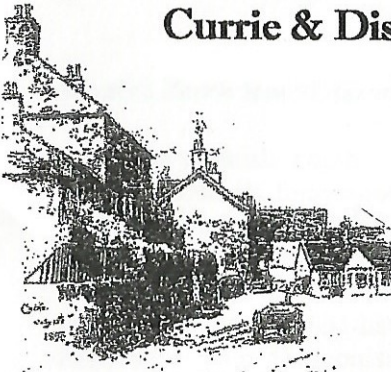


# Currie & District Local History Society

## Currie Chronicle (The Journal of the Society)

March 2015 . . . . No. 83



Currie from the Shildoy, 1897

*Hi, everyone,*

Another successful Winter session has passed so quickly. The Committee was pleased to see the very large attendances at most of these meetings when the audience number averaged between 50 and 60 at each session.

Robert Whitton tells me that the membership has nearly reached 90. Let's go for the 'ton' to celebrate our 45<sup>th</sup> Birthday this year !!

Douglas Lowe (the Society's Secretary) has researched a most interesting coincidence in part of Malcolm Fergusson's talk regarding the 'Currie War Memorial'.

Douglas has put 'pen to paper' and you can read, in his following article, what he discovered regarding a lady whose name was missed from the Balerno Roll of Honour.

*Ronnie Dickson,*

Editor.

## CONNECTIONS and COWBOYS

### Ruby Isobel Grierson, M.A.

The members who attended our President Malcolm Fergusson's talk on The Currie War Memorial would have heard his reference to a name missing from the Balerno Roll of Honour - Ruby Grierson - and my brief interjection as to who this lady was.

**Ruby Isobel Grierson** was the sister of John Grierson, the father of Scottish film documentary, and was a documentary film maker herself. In 1940 she was travelling on the 'SS City of Benares' between Britain and Canada. The ship, part of Convoy OB-213, was carrying evacuated children heading for Canada, and Miss Grierson had been commissioned, by the Canadian Government, to make a film about the evacuated children on the voyage and on their reception in Canada. Tragically 'the City of Benares' was sunk by German submarine U48, some 500 miles off the north-west coast of Ireland, on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1940. Seventy seven of the 90 children on board were lost, alongside a total loss of 260 passengers and crew. Ruby Grierson was 36 when she died.

The loss of the ship and particularly the children led to a change in government policy as regards the relocation of children abroad.

At the time of her death Ruby Grierson, M.A. was living in Southwark, London but the family home was shown as Malleny Grove, Balerno. Her parents were Robert Morrison Grierson, who was dead at the time of Ruby's death, and Jane Grierson. They previously lived in Cambusbarron, Stirlingshire. Malleny Grove was a property beside the Bavelaw Burn to the south of Balerno village and was demolished in the late 1960s when the Kestrel Roadhouse was built. The Kestrel has now gone and the houses in Harlaw Bank now occupy the site.

A Miss or Mrs. Grierson occupied the Malleny Grove property until the 1960s as my brother, a keen fisherman, regularly after school used to fish the broad part of the Bavelaw Burn above the weir. This was directly across the water from Malleny Grove. Miss/Mrs. Grierson used to chat to him across the burn and I think, feeling sorry for him, used to throw him wrapped sandwiches across to keep him going till teatime!

**Douglas Lowe.**

## Scottish Youth Hostel Association and the Balerno connection

When the Scottish Youth Hostel Association was formed in 1931 the "moving spirit" behind its foundation was **Dr. Alan Fothergill**. He became the first Honorary National Secretary. What people do not realise is that much of the work carried out was from his house in Balerno. The April 1931 list of office bearers (see page 5) records: Hon. National Secretary - Dr. Alan Fothergill, Olivedale, Balerno. This house is in Lovedale Gardens and still stands today. Despite ill health, a result of being gassed in the First World War, he was a driving force in the establishment of the organisation.



Alan Armour Fothergill was born in Darlington in 1898 into a medical family. He was educated at Edinburgh Academy then joined the Seaforth Highlanders but was incapacitated following a gas attack on the Somme in 1918. He entered Edinburgh University as a medical student in 1919 then moved on to become a house surgeon in hospitals in Manchester then London. Following a voyage to Japan as a ships surgeon in 1926 he returned to Edinburgh and was enrolled in the Royal College of Surgeons. He subsequently became a G.P. in Edinburgh. Although his practice was in Edinburgh, he was called into action in Balerno in the early 1930s when a young David Horsburgh (some of you may remember him as the regular columnist 'Hawkeye' in the C & B News in 1970/80s) came off his bike in Lovedale. Fellow resident Dr. Fothergill patched him up and delivered him back to his parents.

On 21<sup>st</sup> June, 1933, Alan Fothergill married a **Jean Dorothy Grierson**. Whose address was shown as **Malleny Grove, Balerno**. One of the witnesses was **Ruby Isobel Grierson** of the same address.

In 1934, when the SYHA National Executive decided to accept an Act of Reciprocity extended to the German Youth Hostel Association, Alan Fothergill resigned as Honorary National Secretary of the SYHA "on the grounds that this is now controlled for political propaganda of the German (Nazi) Government" And in hindsight we now know that he was correct as the Hitler Youth organisation had taken over!

Dr. Alan Fothergill, died on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1935, following a bout of influenza/pneumonia. A plaque was erected in the first Youth Hostel, Broadmeadows, to his memory.

In another local connection the person who replaced Dr. Fothergill as temporary secretary was an Edinburgh lawyer, **George D. Cheyne**, whom older members may recall as a Juniper Green resident, and a very active member of our Society. He, subsequently, was also Chairman of The Scottish Rights of Way Society.

There was another Balerno name on the original list of SYHA office bearers, Edinburgh District Committee Hon. Secretary, **Mr. Edward Albert** of Dunbeg, Balerno. Edward Albert was an English Master at Watsons and an author. He died in 1944.



*Dr. Alan Fothergill, the moving spirit behind the foundation of the S.Y.H.A. in 1931*

**D.L.**

# Scottish Youth Hostels Association

Office Bearers April 1931.

*Hon. Presidents.*

THE RT. HON. LORD SALVESEN,  
SIR JOHN STIRLING-MAXWELL, BT.

*Hon. National Treasurer.*

MR. A. D. SMITH, 64 Princes Street, Edinburgh.  
(To whom donations should be sent.)

*Hon. National Secretary.*

DR. ALAN FOTHERGILL, Olivedale, Balerno.

*Edinburgh District Committee.*

*Chairman.* - DR. WM. ROBERTSON.  
*Hon. Secretary.* - MR. ED. ALBERT, Dunbeg, Balerno.  
*Hon. Treasurer.* - MR. R. B. FASKEN, Essendean, Allermuir Road, Colinton.

*Glasgow District Committee.*

*Chairman.* - DR. GEO. W. TYRRELL.  
*Hon. Secretary.* - MR. J. LYNSAY ORR, 55 Bath Street, Glasgow.  
*Hon. Treasurer.* - MR. ALEX. M'GILLIVRAY, LL.B., 79 West Regent Street, Glasgow.

*Aberdeen Provisional Committee.*

*Interim Hon. Secretary.* - MR. D. G. MOIR, 92 Queen Street, Peterhead.  
*Interim Hon. Treasurer.* - MR. J. HALL TODD, 25 Crown Street, Aberdeen.

Application for membership should be made to the Treasurer of the nearest District Committee or to the National Treasurer.

**COWBOYS come to BALERNO**

Westerns were big in the 1940s, 50s and 60s and one of the biggest western stars at the time was **Roy Rogers**. In 1954, with his wife Dale Evans and horse Trigger were touring Britain making personal appearances in various theatres. They were appearing in Edinburgh at the Edinburgh Empire (now the Festival Theatre) on the Bridges, and many would have seen the publicity photograph of Roy leading Trigger down the stairs inside the Caledonian Hotel (hopefully followed closely with someone with a shovel).

Roy Rogers, a committed Christian, carried out a lot of charity work and often visited Children's Homes and Hospitals to put on a show for the kids. On this particular day he was due to visit a Children's Home in Ayrshire or Lanarkshire. Trigger, who had been residing in St. Cuthbert's Co-op Stables in Fountainbridge - not as some had assumed in the Caledonian Hotel - was to be transported part of the way by train, on the old Caledonian Line to Balerno. Word got out locally and a great number of Balerno children gathered to await the arrival. Roy Rogers and Dale Evans travelled by car and linked up with Trigger at the Station Goods Yard in Balerno. Trigger was transferred to a horsebox and Roy, Trigger and their entourage than set off along the Lang Whang to their destination in the West having made the day for Balerno's juvenile cowboy.

*Douglas Lowe,  
Secretary, C.&D.L.H.S.*

I was personally lucky to see the Roy Rogers and Trigger Show at that time. As a teenager I queued for unreserved 9pence seats to see this show, also to see a number of other American celebrities such as Laurel & Hardy, the Marx Brothers, Danny Kaye, Bob Hope etc.

Not bad for 9d !!

**R.A.D.**

**CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**DRAFT SYLLABUS - 2015/16**

<b>2015</b>		
5 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	The Other Christie of Baberton	Roderick W. Greig
19 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Scottish Caribbean Historical Connections	Professor Sir Geoff Palmer
2 <sup>nd</sup> Novr.	<b>John Tweedie Memorial Lecture - My Edinburgh</b>	Hamish Coghill, Honorary President, CDLHS
16 <sup>th</sup> Nov.	The Queen's Bodyguard for Scotland The Royal Company of Archers	Lt. Col. Richard Callander Secretary QBGS (JRCA)
30 <sup>th</sup> Nov.	Old College Excavations	Tom Addyman, Addyman Excavations
14 <sup>th</sup> Dec.	Edinburgh and the Act of Union 1707	Eric Melvin
<b>2016</b>		
11 <sup>th</sup> Jan.	The Past, Present and Future of Saughton Park, Edinburgh	Peter McDougall, Project Development Officer, Saughton House HL Project
18 <sup>th</sup> Jan.	Balerno over the last 200 years - A Village portrait	Ronnie Dickson and Val Wilson, CDLHS
8 <sup>th</sup> Feb.	National Trust of Scotland Archives	Ian Riches, NTS Archivist
22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb.	The Coal Mines and Limestone Quarries of Carlops and West Linton	James Waugh
7 <sup>th</sup> March	People at work in Edinburgh	Peter Stubbs <a href="http://www.edinphoto.org.uk">www.edinphoto.org.uk</a>
21 <sup>st</sup> Mar.	<b>Annual General Meeting - followed by social evening</b>	

The meetings, on Monday evenings, are held in the Gibson Craig Memorial Hall, Lanark Road West, Currie (next to the Bank of Scotland) commencing at 7.30pm

- *Visitors will be welcome at all meetings* -

For further information please contact

the Society's Secretary

**DOUGLAS LOWE**

on 0131 449 4349

