



Currie & District
Local History Society

CURRIE CHRONICLE
(The Journal of the Society)

September 2016 - No. 86

Currie Toll 1897

Hello friends,

I do hope you enjoyed the 2016 Rio Olympic Games on TV over the month of August, it was exciting and memorable viewing. Didn't the British participants do well in winning 67 medals in total and finishing second in the overall table. A wonderful achievement and something we should be very proud of. We wish the Paralympians every success in their endeavours.

A small team from our Committee, under leader Brian Catley, has been working during the summer to produce a 'Local History Guide of the Parish' for the benefit of residents, visitors, schools etc. I am sure Brian will be giving us an update on its progress at one of our early meetings. Our first meeting - in our usual venue - is on **Monday, 3rd October, 2016**. The 2016/17 Syllabus is enclosed with this Chronicle.

Douglas Lowe, our Secretary, has researched a most interesting article on the life of General Thomas Scott, the Fourth Laird of Malleny. He has to be commended for his interest and for allowing the Society to publish his findings as the contents of this current Chronicle

Hope to see everyone in October - kind regards.

Ron Dickson, Editor.

General Thomas Scott of Malleny - The Soldier Laird

The Scott family held Malleny from 1647 to 1882 when the estate was sold to The Earl of Rosebery. However in this Chronicle I will look at the Fourth Laird Thomas Scott (1745 - 1842).

In 1791, on the death of his brother John, Thomas Scott became the 4th Laird of Malleny. However for 30 years before this he had forged a successful career in the military. Thomas Scott was born in 1745, the second son of Thomas Scott of Malleny, he was one of 4 sons and 6 daughters and his army career reads like an exciting novel.

He enlisted in 1761 and was an Ensign in the 24th Foot in Hesse in Germany. He carried the regimental colours at the battle of Wilhelmsthal in 1762 and took part in other actions against the French. After the war he served in Gibraltar for 6 years, and then having been promoted to Lieutenant he went to America with the regiment in 1776. With a company of marksmen, attached to a large body of Indians, he served in two campaigns under General Burgoyne and was mentioned in despatches. During this campaign (1776) the French had been driven out of Canada. Thomas Scott was also involved in other actions, again, against the French.



- On Lake Champlain, with a small force of Canadians, Indians and British soldiers in bark canoes, he was involved in an attack on a much larger force in a bateau and defeated them.

- Thereafter he was sent to reconnoitre the enemy fleet and came upon 20 men who had disembarked from the fleet, as well as fighting the soldiers Scott and his men were also being fired upon from the fleet during this battle. Cut off from their canoes they had to make their way through the woods, he had seven Indians with him.
- He resided, over winter, in the Indian village of "The Lake of Two Mountains" to prevent the enemy from "tampering" with the Indians. He emerged with over 100 of their best warrior at the start of the 1777 campaign.
- He took part in various actions including the one at Freeman's Farm.
- Soon after he was sent in disguise, as a pedlar, through the enemy's lines carrying secret despatches hid the barrel of his musket. Had he been captured he would likely have been hanged as a spy and our story would have ended there!

Promotions followed and he spent the following years of the war carrying out duties and actions in Canada on the Mohawk River and was given command of the Fort and Island of Mackilmackinae, carrying out Government reforms and correcting abuses that had been discovered in the Indian Department. He returned to Britain in 1788 as a Captain.

In 1791 he served 6 months on board HMS Hannibal during the "Spanish armament". (This was where the Spanish had designs on parts of the Canadian west coast, including Vancouver Island). In 1793 Thomas Scott served in the Netherlands against the French Revolutionary army under Sir Ralph Abercromby, and took part in the sieges of both Valenciennes and Dunkirk. He received the rank of major for his exertions in the defence of Nieuport. At the attack on the village of Premont he was wounded on the inside of his right thigh. On 27th

October 1794 he was appointed lieutenant-colonel of one of the battalions of the 94th; in 1795 he accompanied his regiment to Gibraltar and, in 1796, to the Cape of Good Hope. In 1799, then in Mysore in southern India, he took part in the campaign against Tipu Sultan, and was present at the capture of Seringapatam. In the following year ill health compelled him to leave India, but, the Indiaman in which he took his passage was captured by a French privateer in the English Channel, he was held prisoner at Cherbourg and it was some time before he was exchanged. In 1801 he was appointed colonel by brevet (this is where you get the title but no additional pay), in 1802 inspecting officer of the Edinburgh recruiting district, 1803 deputy inspector-general of the recruiting service in North Britain, and in 1804 brigadier-general. He attained the rank of major-general on 25th April 1808, and was nominated lieutenant-general on 4th June 1813. Until he retired at the close of fifty-two years' service he was never unemployed or on half-pay. He received the rank of general on 22nd July 1830. After his retirement he resided chiefly at Malleny and was deputy-lieutenant for Midlothian.

Thomas Scott appears to have been a benevolent and kindly laird to his Malleny estate tenants, and approached his duties as laird conscientiously and with the vigour that exemplified his military career.

In 1816 we find Scott reducing the rents of his tenants by between 40% - 50% for two years owing to "the depressed state of agriculture". In 1822 "being a most generous landlord, and taking the warmest interest in the prosperity of his tenantry" he also proposed a 10% discount on their leases "until the agricultural interest of the country wore a more favourable aspect". In 1823 with agriculture and the weather still in a slump Scott gave his tenants a further 10% besides discharging all arrears due by some of his tenants,

His generosity and kindness was mentioned, in part in an earlier 'Currie Chronicle' I had written on the life of the late James Thomson - The Kenleith Poet.. Thomson was one of the laird's tenants. The General

visited Thomson in his cottage one day and noticed the verse he had inscribed on the wooden beam of his loom.

*A simple weaver at his loom
Wi' duddt coat and pooches toom,
May hae as guid and honest heart
As ony laird in a' the pert*

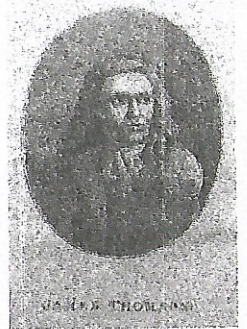
The General was so amused he had that section of the beam removed to be hung in his hall at Malleny. General Scott then offered Thomson the post of supervisor (gamekeeper) on Malleny Estate and he was given the tenancy of his cottage, at a nominal rent, together with a few acres of ground for so long as he, or any of his family resided there. General Scott, by this simple act, rescued Thomson from the precarious existence of a country weaver and gave him a steady position. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that

Thomson dedicated the second Edition of his poems (1819) to his benefactor Lieut-General Scott in recognition of "kindness which he can never forget or repay". Indeed one of the poems in the second edition was, **"Rules to be observed by those who hunt or course on the property of General Thomas Scott of Malleny. (1st Jan 1818)**

James Thomson
The Kenleith Poet
(Jamie Tamson)

Born
10th September 1763
in Edinburgh.

Died
6th May 1832
at Mount Parnassus



However General Scott also dealt with poachers on his estate strictly. We find a newspaper report in the Caledonian Mercury in February 1812 of Major-General Scott of Malleny taking two poachers to the Sheriff Court where the miscreants were each fined totals of 100/- Scots 20/- Scots and 20/- Scots, under various statutes, had their guns and dogs confiscated, were found liable for the full expenses of the case and were prohibited from hunting or trespassing on Malleny estate in future.

Many of us have seen the gravestone erected on the edge of the wooded strip on Lymphoy Road. This was erected by General Scott to aid future historical research. On Harlaw Farm in 1820 an immense stone cairn was excavated consisting of probably between 2000 and 3000 cartloads of stones so records the New Statistical Account in 1845. Under the cairn was discovered a stone kist containing many human bones, another stone coffin was also discovered in the field. These stone coffins were reinterred and the gravestone erected by the General to mark the site.

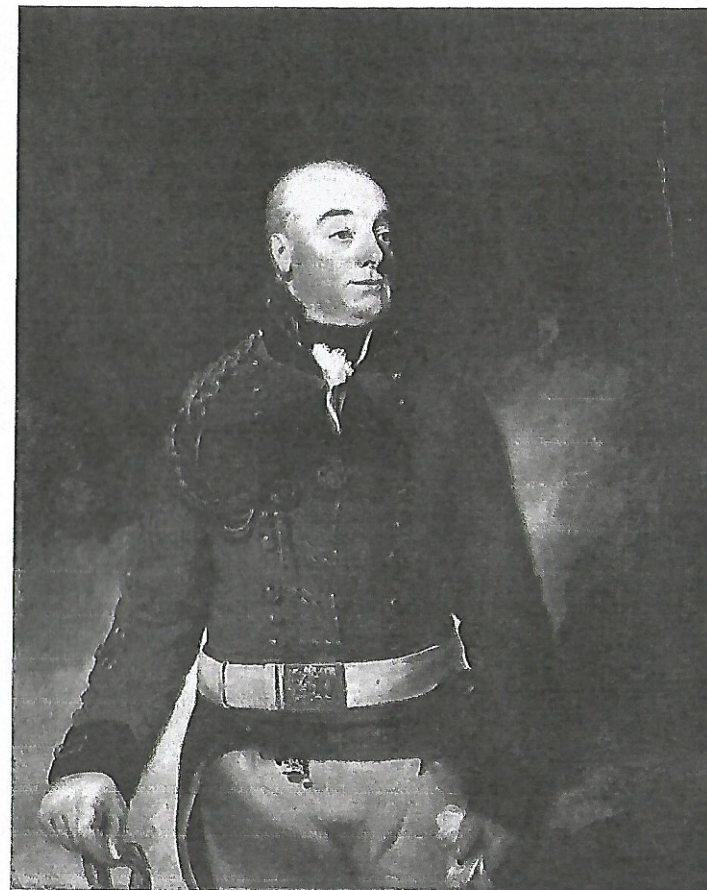
As I mentioned previously he approached his Lairdly duties conscientiously. As one of the Heritors of Currie Parish he regularly gave his "subscription for the industrious poor". In January of 1818 he gave £25, matching the donations of both Mr. Craig of Riccarton and the Earl of Morton. He also annually contributed to the comfort of the poor householders in the village of Balerno by sending them meals and coals.

In August 1829 along with other Heritors he attended the opening of the new parish school in Currie. In a Scotsman report in May 1837 we read that General Scott, along with a number of others (Rev. Lewis Balfour of Colinton, Rev. Dr. Somerville of Currie, James Gibson Craig, W. Craig of Riccarton, Henry Cockburn and Colonel George Scott, brother of the General who resided at Lymphoy) assisted in the examining of the pupils to ensure that the teaching was satisfactory. As the dominie was Robert Palmer how could it be other than satisfactory.

During his time as laird, around 1810, the Georgian wing was added to Malleny House. This is the part on the right of the House as you look at it from the drive.

In 1831 General Scott, in a major undertaking, had constructed the road descending from the Lanark Road and climbing towards Blinkbonny. He also had the large stone bridge over the Water of Leith constructed to carry this road - all of this at his own expense. The bridge is known as The General's Bridge (sometimes Mutter's Bridge) and has an inscription and coat of arms on the outside of the parapet.

GENERAL THOMAS SCOTT of MALLENY

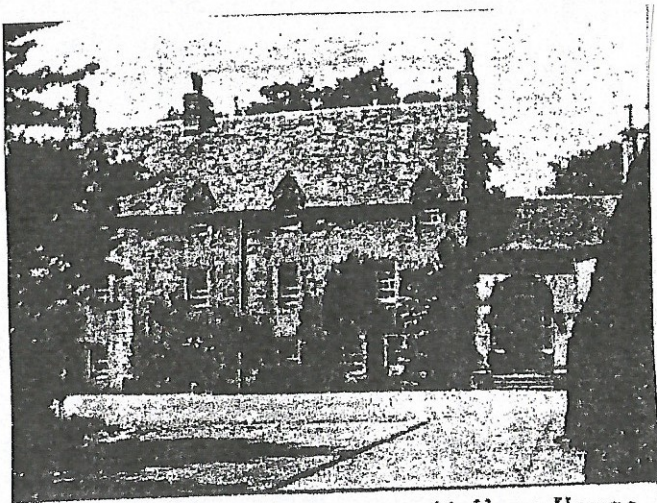


(Artist William Nicholson)
(National Army Museum Collection)

A dinner was held in Currie on 21st October, 1931 attended by a number of the inhabitants and all the tenantry of Malleny Estate to give thanks, to the General, for his generosity in providing the road and bridge for the benefit of the whole neighbourhood.

The busy life of our soldier laird drew to a close on 29th April 1842, He died at Malleny in his 98th year and was interred in the family vault in the grounds. He was unmarried and was succeeded - as laird - by his nephew Carteret George Scott, who became the 5th Laird of Malleny.

Douglas N. Lowe.



Malleny House