

Currie & District  
Local History Society

**CURRIE CHRONICLE**  
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Quite an eventful six months have passed since our last meeting in March. First of all we had the splendid celebratory events to commemorate Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee throughout the United Kingdom, many joyful festivities were held and the Queen and Prince Philip were able to visit quite a number of cities, towns, and villages where large crowds turned out to greet the Royal couple despite, on some occasions, the somewhat inclement weather.

This was followed, in August and September, by the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (another remarkable event) held in many purpose built venues, and also in the spectacular Olympic Stadium. I think we can all be proud of the manner in which these two major events were so enthusiastically supported by the general public and visitors alike.

At the end of August the Committee mounted a Local History Photographic Exhibition in conjunction with the Annual Currie Flower Show. The Exhibition seemed to interest a large number of visitors at the Show held in the Concourse of Balerno Community High School. We hope that, by this display, we have attracted some *new* members to the Society's meetings in the coming session.

Our first meeting is on **Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2012** in our usual venue commencing at **7.30pm**, when former Head Teacher at Currie Community High School, Eric Melvin, will be speaking about 'Edinburgh, in the days of Mary Queen of Scots'.

Hope to see you there.

**Ron Dickson,**  
Editor.



## ..... THE LYMPHOY WALK .....

On 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2012, some twenty members of the Currie & District Local History Society walked, on a warm sunny day, from Malleny House, Balerno to Currie Kirk via Lymphoy, returning along the Water of Leith Walkway. The walk was led by Alastair Learmont who was brought up in Malleny House.

Even three short miles can reveal a rich and varied seam of local history.

The precise origins of Malleny ("plain of the damp meadows" according to Watson's Celtic Place Names) are unclear, but for more than 200 years the House was associated with the Scotts, a legal and military family, the most illustrious of whom was General Sir Thomas Scott (1745-1842). The general enjoyed a military career spanning half a century. As a young man, he achieved renown by undertaking a dare devil

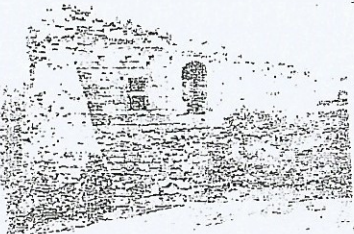


**Malleny House**

mission during the American Wars of Independence. As Fourth Scott of Malleny, the gallant soldier built a public curling pond, carried out the excavation of Iron Age coffins at Duncan's Belt, and was patron to the local bard, James Thomson. He also built a bridge over the Water of Leith at Blinkbonny. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Malleny Estate was bought by Lord Rosebery; Sir Thomas Gibson Carmichael, Liberal MP for Midlothian was an early tenant. Carmichael had a passion for wrought iron work and designed curious birds on the gates leading down to the fountain on Malleny front lawn.

Half a mile to the east of Malleny is the house of Lymphoy together with Lennox Tower. John Tweedie's superbly researched archive at Heriot Watt contains the fascinating memoir of David Muir. As a child in the 1880s Muir describes how Lennox Tower was his childhood haunt. He imagined Mary Queen of

..... **Lennox Tower**



Scots favourite corner and, in old age, added his own ending to Glassford Bell's eponymous poem with special reference to Lennox Tower. Muir had a somewhat fraught relationship with the gardener at Lymphoy, whose fruit garden he raided.

The return point for this delightful walk is Currie Kirk. There is a Scott pew at the Kirk and we can imagine General Sir Thomas worshipping there. During the course of his extraordinarily long life, the immediate environs of the Water of Leith underwent a complete transformation. In the 1790s Balerno Paper Mill (situated at Currie) - later a glue works and tannery - was established. The first Statistical Account describes it as "being probably the largest of any on the island".

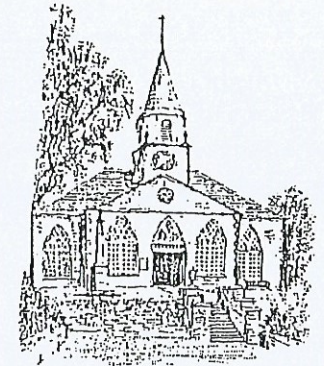
This was the first of a number of mills, the remnants of which can be observed on the return to Balerno. Eighty years after the first mill came the railways. The landscape changed once more. Volunteer church ladies provided tea and cakes in the old school hall adjacent to Currie Kirk. Muriel Adam, a History Society committee member - along with friends - provided a back-up facility of teas and goodies in the Baptist Church Hall opposite Currie Kirk. Both much appreciated by the walkers.

This gem of a walk is an excellent introduction to the history and development of Currie and Balerno.

**Alastair Learmont.**

### "FIRSTS"

As mentioned in my current introduction celebration seems to be the theme word this year, so I have researched some items of local interest that residents of Currie, Balerno and Juniper Green may have had reason to celebrate, at certain times in the 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century, depending on the date of inauguration



**Currie Kirk**



1. The first Boys' Brigade Company, in Currie, was formed in 1903
2. The first Boy Scouts (4<sup>th</sup> Midlothian, Currie) was formed in 1909.  
Sadly their first Scoutmaster was killed in the First World War
3. Currie Bowling Club was formed in May 1874
4. The Lapidary Club in Currie was formed in December 1968
5. The first local automatic car wash was opened at the former Jet Garage on Lanark Road West, Currie, in April 1969
6. The first Currie Operatic Club was founded 1902
7. The first Council house in Currie was built in 1923
8. The first phase of the Wimpey housing estate was started in 1957.  
25 houses were built at the foot of Curriehill Road. The first house occupied was No.67 in August, 1957 (*I wonder if the occupants had a party 5 years ago ?!*)
9. The first SMT bus service from Waverly Bridge to Balerno, via Slateford, commenced on 15<sup>th</sup> July, 1922 - 90 years ago this year !!
10. From the 'Scotman' dated 21<sup>st</sup> March, 1969 ..... "Now every house in Balerno, Currie and Juniper Green has been allocated a postcode"
11. The first 'co-op' store in the area opened for business in Balerno in 1866
12. The first local public meeting about the erection of our present meeting place (the Gibson Craig Hall) was in 1900
13. The passenger railway line from Edinburgh to Balerno (stopping at Juniper Green, Currie and Balerno) opened in August 1874.

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