

Revised Society  
26 Cross Gardens



Currie Toll 1897

CURRIE & DISTRICT  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY  
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Hello Friends,

In my introduction to Chronicle No. 89 I mentioned that as I was writing the contents the snow was falling heavily. I am glad to report that what followed, weatherwise, turned out to be the best summer we have had for many years. I do hope you took advantage of the sunshine and were able to visit some of the local history sites near you.

I am off to the Outer Hebrides in a few days time to fulfil a lifetime's ambition to see that part of Scotland before my travelling days are over! I hope to see the famous stones of Callanish, the Gearrannan Blackhouse village both on Lewis and of really special interest to me, the Carloway Broch, also on Lewis, one of the best preserved Iron Age forts in Scotland.

Brian Catley, one of our committee members and co-ordinator of the Society's Local History Guide, whilst researching for his part of the guide came across the term "Iron Churches" quite often. He has written a short article to clarify for members exactly what were "Iron Churches" and if any were built locally. I hope that you find his research an interesting read.

As most members will have noticed there has been quite a bit of local housebuilding. It therefore follows that names will have to be given to the new streets that are created by these houses. Douglas Lowe, our secretary, has been endeavouring over the last few weeks to obtain, from local council sources, the background to the names given to the new streets. However the

full information has not arrived in time to be included in this issue of the Chronicle – maybe in March 2019. Instead Douglas has compiled a list of other local street names, some old some new, which may also prove to be interesting in the meantime.

As you will see from the enclosed syllabus our first meeting of the 2018 /19 session is on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018. The talk is most apt as we are celebrating the centenary of the end of World War 1 and will be given by our recent President, Malcolm Fergusson.

The new President, Muriel Adam, and her committee hope to see you all again then.

Ronnie Dickson – Chronicle Editor

## IRON CHURCHES

In compiling the Local History Guide it became apparent that there were buildings relating to one another appearing in more than one of the ten constituent maps. These were temporary constructions set up during the replacement of old churches with larger ones built to accommodate expanding congregations. Further, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of Church Dissenters, those questioning Christian teachings and order of services in the established Church. Breakaway congregations led to the building of new churches. This took time; a delay which was, in some cases, bridged by the use of the so-called Iron Halls erected and dismantled over the course of a year or two. A supply of such constructions was fortunately to hand.

As a product of the Industrial Revolution they were manufactured by one of Glasgow's biggest metal works, that of Frederick Braby & Co. at the eclipse Works on Petershill Road, Barnhill, buildings using galvanized metal which was often corrugated. Founded in 1839 there were subsidiary establishments in Liverpool, Deptford and Euston Road in London.

This was a firm that capitalised on the construction of railway stations built for the rapidly expanding rail networks spreading out across the United Kingdom in the latter half of the Victorian era and, a little later, for the principal Indian Colonial railway lines.

Recording Braby and Co's success in marketing their products not only in the UK, but across the Empire suggests an efficient, possibly aggressive, marketing strategy which also solved the building problems of its neighbourhood churches.

Useful as they were, iron halls had their disadvantages, rain storms. This brings to mind a family story I was told as a boy. We often spent sort holidays in the upper Yorkshire Dales where "tin" roofs were often used for Methodist chapels. After a particularly long dry summer with little or no rain the Preacher was pouring forth in a full 2 hour sermon, part of which was an entreaty to the Almighty for some long needed rain. A few minutes later the heavens opened and a flash storm roared down the dale drowning out the Preacher. He raised his eyes to the roof: "Nae Lord, be reasonable".

Corrugated, galvanized iron was used not only as temporary building material for churches but also as roofing on permanent buildings, usually on churches in the more remote parts of the Highlands.

Three Church of Scotland communities, namely those at Craiglockhart, Juniper Green and Colinton are described as using these temporary constructions.

## Craiglockhart Church

To accommodate larger congregations Craiglockhart Church was rebuilt from 1880 to 1889. A temporary church, an "Iron Church", was purchased from Mayfield to allow its parishioners to continue services. The new stone church was opened in 1890 and the Iron Church sold to Juniper Green.

The Glasgow firm of Braby and Co. charged £500 (£40,000 in today's money) for dismantling, transport and re-erection.

## Church of Scotland Juniper Green

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a consequence of the increased church-going population in Juniper Green and friction between the emerging Free Church and the established Kirk, new church accommodation was needed.

In 1890 120 members of the Church of Scotland in Juniper Green signed a petition to the Presbtery of Edinburgh for the Iron Kirk that no longer had its use a Craiglockhart, to be reerected in Juniper Green at the Junction of the Lanark Road and Woodhall Drive. Initially the decision was opposed by the parish minister, the Rev Lockhart, who was located at Colinton.

Nevertheless, because of the inconvenient distance from Juniper Green, plans went ahead and a committee was drawn up to generate funds for the installation of an Iron Kirk in Juniper Green. Initially the partially built stone Kirk was blown down in a gale in the winter of 1891. Work, however, was resumed, and under a new minister, the Rev Charles Short, a Kirk, seating 350 people was opened in February 1892. 250 people attended. The service, however, had to be abandoned because the preacher, the Rev Dr MacGregor, moderator of the General Assembly, could not get through the snowdrifts. The temporary Iron Kirk was replaced by a stone built church sited across the road where St Margarets Court now stands. The first service being held in 1897. The Iron Church now became the Church Hall but was destroyed by fire 10 years later. A new hall was built adjacent to the church.

## St Cuthbert's Church of Scotland Hall, Colinton.

Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the old Iron Hall, affectionately known as the "Tin Hall", had accommodated Colinton's St Cuthbert's Church of Scotland Hall in Dregghorn Loan. It was replaced in 1925 by a new hall, financed by a vigorous subscription scheme; the old one being sold for scrap to a firm in Leith for £65.

Brian Catley

## STREET NAMES OLD AND NEW

### DOLPHIN AVENUE, GARDENS, EAST, WEST, ROAD.

This has a Gibson-Craig connection. The Dolphin was the name of the ship with which Lieutenant Robert J. A Cuming Gibson-Craig was serving when he died in 1930. He died instantly as a result of a road accident in Portsmouth dockyard. Lt. Gibson-Craig was the only son of Admiral Cuming and Lady Henrietta Gibson-Craig. As Lady Henrietta was the eldest daughter of Sir James Gibson Craig, Baronet of Riccarton., her son Robert had succeeded to the Riccarton Estates upon the death of his uncle, Sir Henry T. Gibson Craig Carmichael in 1926.

It is interesting to note that when Cadet Cummings parents married in Riccarton House (1897) the King of Siam was a guest at the wedding.

The Dolphin name was used as a form of respect to the Gibson-Craig family connections to the district. .

### HORSBURGH GARDENS, GROVE, BANK

After Thomas Horsburgh, who was the blacksmith at Johnsburn Smiddy, he also had the smiddy in the Main Street in Balerno village. He invented the steel-shafted golf club but although golfers were interested the Royal and Ancient were not keen. He was a founding member of Baberton Golf Club (1893) and was club captain from 1914-1917 and again from 1929-1931. He was President of the Balerno Burns Club for 30 years, was also a County Councillor and a Justice of the Peace. As well as golf he also excelled at bowling and curling. He was a founder member of the Caledonian Curling Club and was an international curler.

He patented his steel-shafted golf club in 1894. Included in his patent was also a club consisting of one shaft and a number of club heads which were affixed by a screw to the shaft depending on the shot to be



played. Golf's governing body, The Royal and Ancient, eventually sanctified the use of metal for golf club shafts in 1929. Unfortunately Thomas Horsburgh had allowed his patent to lapse in 1920 and the hollow steel shaft was taken up by an American company. Thomas Horsburgh died in 1938 aged 81.

**CHRISTIE ROAD** – From the Christie family who lived in Baberton House for over 100 years. James Christie was one of the group of local residents who proposed the creation of Baberton Golf Course in 1890, later becoming first Vice-Captain of the club.

### **DONKEY LANE**

A name dating only from the 1960s despite the fact that the track, leading from the corner of Muirwood Road down to Whitelaw Farm, is an old road recorded on Roy's map of 1755. There used to be donkeys at Whitelaw Farm and the then recently constructed Wimpey housing estate dwellers took to calling the track the Donkey Lane. The track leads down to Whitelaw Farm and then as a tarmac road forks left towards Riccarton over the railway level crossing and Riccarton Mains Road, or right to Wester Hailes by Baberton Mains Farm.

### **LUCAS GARDENS**

Named for artist Edwin G Lucas (1911 – 1990) who lived in Juniper Green from 1916 to 1947. Lucas Gardens is on the site of old Juniper Green Primary School that he attended. He was born in Leith and in later life settled in Stockbridge. He attended George Heriot's school in the 1920s and worked in the civil service until retirement. He was a surrealist painter and his work was almost completely unknown at the time. However the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art acquired five of his paintings for the national collection in 2013. In 2018 a major exhibition devoted to his work was staged at the City Art Centre in Edinburgh.

**WINTOUR LANE** – Bessie Wintour was an overhauler who worked in the Kinleith Mill Finishing House. Overhaulers checked the paper for any flaws and counted it. One of the pictures in our gallery on the website is of Kinleith Mill Finishing House, called the Salle (pronounced saul).

### **RAMSLACK STREET**

One of the "new" names being used for the recently constructed streets. However Ramslack (Ram Slaks Gellatly's map 1834, Ram Slacks Fowler's map 1845 and Ramslack ruins of OS 1854 ) is one of our disappeared farms that was situated on higher ground between Marchbank and Threipmuir Reservoir, near the Red Moss. Stuart Harris' book gives the derivation as being "wild garlic" or "with rank growth" and Slak or Slakki from Old Norse a hollow or small valley.

### **SOMERVILLE ROAD**

Presumably named for Rev Dr John Somerville. born 1774 in Dalmeny in 1837. He was originally in agriculture but following an accident in which he injured his spine he went to Edinburgh University where he excelled. He became house master and then house governor of Heriots Hospital (School)(1805-1816). He was ordained and became Currie minister 1816 – 1837. He was first President of Currie Curling Club and invented a number of items for use in curling; the justice, the iron tee, the counter, the crampits. He also advocated the use of shallow paved curling ponds. Balerno Curling pond which was in the woods behind the smiddy at Johnsburn was gifted to Balerno Curlers by Rev Somerville. He also patented a safety device in 1824 to prevent the accidental discharge of a firearm in 1824 following an accident in which one of his parishioners was killed. He preached at the laying of the foundation stone on the National Monument on Calton Hill and was the author of a great number of publications. He died in 1837.

**KINLEITH MILL ROAD** – John Tweedie in “Our District” tells us that the first mention of a mill with the name Killeithe was 1618. Kinleith was the largest mill on the Water of Leith. The mill closed in 1966. This name is preserved in the new development.

**TANSY STREET** – Peter and Sam Tansy were members of Kinleith Thistle, the mill workers football team.

**GILLON DRIVE** Named for Robert Gillon born in Currie but resident in Balerno. Son of Agnes Gillon of Main Street Balerno. Died in First World War 4/10/17. He is remembered on the Balerno Church and Currie Church memorial tablets.

**FAIRBAIRN STREET** named for James Garnet Fairbairn. Son of David B Fairburn of Balerno. He was in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Canadian Infantry. He died at Hill 60 during the First World War 18/3/15 and is commemorated on the memorial tablet in Balerno Parish Church.

**CASSIDY WYND** named for John Cassidy who resided at Rosebank Currie, his father was James Cassidy. He died in First World War on 25/7/1916 during the Somme battle. He is remembered on the memorial tablet in the former St Joseph’s chapel in Balerno and on the Currie War Memorial.

**BYRNE CRESCENT** – named for Frank Byrne, of Ravelrig Crossing, Balerno, who died of his wounds received in the attack on Ridge Redoubt near Serre on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1916 during the battle of the Somme.. He enlisted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers and was the Son of James Byrne railwayman at Ravelrig Junction. The steep hill on Ravelrig Road is known locally as Burn’s (Byrne’s) Brae as it leads down towards Ravelrig Junction. Commemorated on Currie Church panels and St Joseph’s plaque.