
Bitesize History - People

Robert Stevenson

A Lochwinnoch man at Waterloo
The Charge of the Scots Greys at Waterloo



Scotland Forever

Local papers have been calling attention to Miss Thomson's famous picture, which was on view for several weeks at the gallery of Messrs. McClure & Son's gallery Glasgow. By all true-hearted Scotsmen and all true lovers of art, this picture must be regarded with deep interest.

It is known that a very considerable proportion of the Scots Greys at the time of the French war was composed of men from the West of Scotland. Very likely some of the Lochwinnoch people of a former generation now in Glasgow, or it might be from the village itself, while viewing the painting, would be able to think and speak of one townsman, for many years known and respected in his native place after coming home from the war. This was Robert Stevenson, a member of an old Lochwinnoch family, the youngest of four brothers at one time all well known in the village. He enlisted in early life into the "Scots Greys," and was with the regiment all the time till his discharge after Waterloo.

He was a fine specimen of the "Heavy Dragoon," just such a buirdly*, well-built man as matched fitly with the sturdy chargers of the Clydesdale breed on which these heavy dragoons were mounted. Robert Stevenson resumed his trade as a weaver, as did numerous old soldiers from other regiments, after returning home to Lochwinnoch. Though he had seen service, he would hardly ever speak of himself; but when fairly "got on the crack," he would sometimes relate what he had come through while serving in the Greys. As a Waterloo man, and one of those who had dashed through that decisive charge, and had joined in the spirit stirring cry of "Scotland for ever," while he told his "plain, unvarnished tale," his listeners would regard him with much interest and would feel as if it were right to love him for the dangers he had passed.

Among other amusing incidents, Robert Stevenson used to tell of one Tom Healey, an Englishman, in the same troop, who, in that famous charge, had his gallant grey shot under him. Horse and rider came to the ground, when Stevenson thought "it was all up with Healey." But Tom was soon in his place again. He had sprung into the first empty saddle he could find. It was a Frenchman's, and when Stevenson next saw his comrade he was in among the Greys, mounted on a horse—not a Clydesdale, nor yet a grey—and charging along with the rest of them.

....In the afternoon of the 18th, the regiment, which was now reduced to about 200 men, found it actually necessary to charge a column of the enemy, which came down on them, from 2,000 to 3,000 men. They broke into the centre of the column with the bayonet; and the instant they pierced it, the Scots Greys dashed to their support, when they and the 92nd cheered 'Scotland Forever'

There has always been a due share of valour and patriotism in the Parish of Lochwinnoch. During the war with Bonaparte, the Lochwinnoch Volunteers, with Captain Cochran of Ladyland at their head, were always prompt and ready.

*buirdly is a Scottish term: beefy, burly, husky