

John Grant Kinloch - HMIC
The Man who shaped the Scottish Police



Mentioned on several occasions since 1858 is the first 'Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland', Colonel John Grant Kinloch of Kilrie and Logie, (which doesn't exactly rattle off the tongue) who was a well renowned figure of his day to all the police in Scotland. If you were to look back at any of the Commissioners' Minute books and Police Memoranda between 1857 and 1872, his name was constantly written in view of his visits and annual reports. He had the overall governance of all Scottish Police Forces and Burghs. (Initially, 32 County Forces and 57 Burgh Forces which gradually reduced to 38) It appears however, that only on two occasions was he ever given credit for his accomplishments; on his retirement in November 1872 when aged 65, and on his death.

A remarkable background, he was born at Logie House, near Kirriemuir in 1807 into a notable Forfarshire family. He spent his teenage year's cadet training at Sandhurst where he was devoted to the

study of tactical warfare. He was commissioned into the 2nd Life Guards in 1827, then the most senior Army Regiment. (Now the Household Cavalry) The late 1820's and early 30's were quite peaceable times and the regiment saw little action. This caused him to further his skills in warfare and tactics and it was reported that he made contact with the Duke of Wellington. In 1836 he severed his connection with the Regiment and secured a commission as Captain with the British Foreign Legion. A volunteer force of about 9.600 men from British Army Regiments, formed to fight in the Spanish Civil war for Queen Isabella of Spain against the Carlists. (A war between supporters of Carlos V 'a pretender' and the rightful Isabella.) Here he was involved in the capture of San Sebastian, a principle fortress on the Bay of Biscay.

In 1837, he returned home to Logie House and married Agnes Garden Campbell of the Banffshire Troup family. For several years he lived in comparative retirement but still remained involved in Military Affairs. In 1854 at the start of the Crimea War, he became Colonel in the British Foreign Legion (later Inspector General) in view of his qualifications as a military organiser. In 1856, he was highly commended for his organisation and high standards of training given to its 14,000 German, Swiss and Italian auxiliary troops, which disbanded that year.

It was due to his previous record, that he was appointed Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland in 1857 in view of the new Police Act. A unique job at the time and from the start, he encountered numerous difficulties. The obvious being, to acquaint him with the many forces he had charge of and the geography involved, transport of the day limited to rail, coach and horse. However, his interest, skills, enthusiasm and persistence to improve the efficiency of all forces over his 15 years in office, was to form and fashion the future of the police forces in Scotland.

NB: The above Portrait photograph of the Colonel, was kindly supplied by his GG Grandson, Andrew Kinloch.

Some of the faults he found at the beginning were ways of management, uniforms, discipline, pay and promoting the service of the police to the public. Many forces having existed for 18 or less years were well embedded in their own customs. His early annual reports highlighted the matters that needed to be accomplished. Uniforms required to be standardised, many were badly manufactured, made from the cheapest material. Only a few forces had adopted better quality ones akin to the Metropolitan Police style.

He found that in several forces, the organisation and discipline was defective and coupled this with poor pay. Officers were expected to carry out no end of tasks in a perfect manner, yet their wages were calculated to that of society's lowest classes. They were not tiered by service, experience or efficiency. Many Constables received the same wages; some older ones (with less service) received more. Some were classed as Sergeants but ignorant of their specific duties of the rank. To rectify this he was to suggest two or three classes of Constables reflecting service, skills and professionalism. The maintaining of diaries (recording daily duties) and weekly reports had improved, but in some Forces, handwriting and spelling still needed to be checked and corrected.

His fight for better pay was to continue into the mid 1860's and in 1865, he even pled for extra pay for the recruitment of suitable Constables in Inverness-shire, Ross-shire, Sutherlandshire and Argyllshire, in view of the need for dual language capabilities in English and Gaelic.

In 1865, he reported that;

"The number of resignations, desertions and dismissals from Police Forces is greater than in previous years. Men with the qualifications necessary for the Police Service, in the prime of life, of good character, with a good education, with tact, good temper and general intelligence, can now obtain better remuneration in many other professions and trades on easier terms, with a less number of hours of work or duty and subjected to less discipline, besides having their Saturday evenings and Sunday to themselves".

Thankfully, this came to fruition in 1866, when the new structured pay scales along with the introduction of ranked class increments. Things were to continue reasonable well, until; 1872, when it was realised that many of those joining were eventually transferring to English Forces. This was in view of higher pay and the Superannuation fund which did not exist in Scotland. Even English recruiting teams were sent to Scotland in order to attract possible candidates. Further changes to pensionable service cropped up again in 1890 but it was to be 1921, under the Police (Pensions) Act before superannuation was to be the same throughout Britain.

Force accommodation was another credit to his list of improvements. In 1860 in Thurso, he found two Constables not only had to share the same room but the same bed. Stornoway didn't even have an official lock-up. Custodies were locked up in a local public house until a warrant could be obtained from a Magistrate to commit them to prison. In 1861 he reported Aberdeenshire had some of the best cells for both seasonal ventilation light and warmth, whereas many others were sub-standard. In 1860, the old prisons at Catrine, Cumnock, Largs, Saltcoats and Stewarton were taken over and converted into Police Offices. Edzell followed in 1870 and latterly Peterhead, Fraserburgh and Huntly in 1874.

His actions over numerous inefficiencies in some of small Burghs led to the General Police and Improvement Act of 1862. Its purpose was to regularise the policing of Burghs and Towns. Where their population were in excess of 7,000, a Superintendent and fixed number of Constables had to be appointed. It also gave power to the Burgh's Commissioners, to purchase or rent any building or land to build or convert buildings into appropriate offices, lock-ups or houses. To furnish or fit up appropriately for the relevant staff employed. Why many of the old police station locations are never traced.

Colonel Kinloch was indeed a man with great foresight and in his very first report of 1859, he, made three proposals to benefit all Scottish Forces. These were the 'Superannuation Fund' the Detective Force and the Scottish Police Gazette.

Another fact worthy of mention is that on the 28th September 1870 the first meeting of the 'County' Chief Constables Club was held in Edinburgh. 'Initiated for the cultivation of friendly communication and the mutual consideration of varying subjects within the Scottish Forces.' The annual subscription then was 25P. (now £27)

This was to lead to the Chief Constables' Association in 1920 and Association of Chief Police Officer's Scotland on 16th March 1970/1991 It was decided that all County Chief's would be Ordinary Members, the H.M. Inspector of Constabulary would be an Honorary member and that all Chief Officers of Police of Cities and Burghs would become Associate Members.

As stated, his first honourable mention, rendering the credit he well deserved, was truly enhanced at his close of service farewell gathering. Held in the County Buildings of Edinburgh in November 1872, it was chaired by Mid Lothian's Chief Constable, Alfred List. Both he and Provost James Watt of Leith emphasised many of the points of his years in office most of which have been covered. However, Mr List further emphasised that: "Not only the police but the community at large owed him a debt of gratitude for the sound footing on which the Constabulary of Scotland had been placed. From large experience he could say that the police of Scotland .were equal to any force in England, and superior to many." He concluded by formally presenting the testimonial to Colonel .Kinloch, given from all ranks of all the Scottish Forces. It consisted of an antique elaborately ornamented six branched solid silver candelabrum of Spanish design some 90cm high. Rounding off he expressed the hope that the gallant Colonel would be spared for many years to see it adorning his table.

In reply, Colonel Kinloch said he was very much obliged for the magnificent testimonial presented so kindly to him. He valued it the more, coming from the Police of Scotland, knowing as he did how very little they received for their valuable services, and therefore how little they had to spare. He expressed the hope that the Chief Constables would inform their men of the very high value he attached to it.

He then went on to mention, that prior to taking on the post, he had gained some knowledge of the Police from its beginnings, through interest and past experiences. He had known Sir Charles Rowan (first Senior Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police) selected by Sir Robert Peel, and been quartered some years in Dublin, after the Irish Force was reformed and his service on the Forfarshire Police Committee. He also emphasised that in all communities the public first made the mistake of *not* appreciating the services rendered by the police. His efforts from the start were directed at getting all forces into an efficient state and had succeeded in his years in increasing the strength in Scotland by a third.

Colonel Kinloch lived out his remaining years at Logie House, Kirriemuir with great involvement in several local affairs. He died on 7th May 1894 aged 87, after suffering for some months with oedema, known then as dropsy.