

A verbatim extract from the Fife Herald and Kinross, Strathearn and Clackmanan Advertiser of August 11, 1842 transcribed for clarity:

SERIOUS RIOTS IN DUNFERMLINE

Dunfermline, Tuesday morning.

We regret exceedingly to announce that in consequence of the threatened reduction in weavers' wages an alarming riot occurred here last night, attended with considerable destruction of property. The correctness of the annexed hurried report may be relied on.

During yesterday it was generally reported that an aggregate meeting of the operatives was to take place in the evening, with reference to the reduction of wages. The intended meeting create no uneasiness to the authorities, the habitual orderly and peaceable conduct of the working classes having produced the utmost confidence in their respect for the laws. About 8 o'clock a large number had assembled at the Abbey Pends, but it soon became evident that there were no arrangements made for the meeting, and nobody could tell by whose authority it had been called. After waiting a short time, the assemblage left the Pends, a large proportion of them congregating in the High Street. Some lads having obtained an old drum and a flag, marched through the suburbs collecting a crowd, and these also arrived at the foot of the High Street a little after nine o'clock. At this time there could not be fewer than 5,000 persons present. They immediately proceeded to Mr. Walter Watson's house, which is near the east end of the same street, and instantly commenced smashing the windows with stones. The two town-officers who were stationed at Mr. Watson's door for his protection, having received some severe blows from stones, were obliged to give way. The rioters then directed their attention to the factory, which is immediately behind the house. Shouting "Forward, forward!" they closed en masse around the mouth of the close, while some of them went down and knocked in one of the windows and set fire to a loom. At this time Provost Morris, Bailie Drummond, Mr. James Inglis, and others arrived at the spot, but they were assailed with stones, and forced to retire to the front of the Spire Hotel (a few doors west), where there was light. After a short consultation it was deemed advisable to proceed to the townhouse, and endeavour to obtain a sufficient force to quell the riot. Mr. Thomas Morrison and a friend then went amongst the mob, entreating them to disperse, and reasoning with them on the impropriety of their conduct, but without effect. The crowd told them to go home – they had no wish to hurt them, but that the sooner they were gone the better, as they had their work to do. Some one cried out, "They are spies, and wish to keep us here till the constables come." They were then pushed about, and both of them struck, and at last were very glad to get away so easily.

At the Townhouse the Provost sent for the Sheriff, who shortly arrived. The constables were called out, and numbers of the inhabitants were furnished with batons and made special constables on the instant. Having received information that the rioters had left Mr. Watson's and that the fire in his factory had been subdued, but that they were demolishing the windows of Mr. Reid's house in Schoolend Street, the constables headed by the Provost and Sheriff, instantly proceeded to the scene of action; but ere they reached it the windows of the house were destroyed, and they found one of the factories in a blaze. They rushed forward, the crowd (which was now diminished two-thirds in numbers) running off in all directions without offering the slightest resistance; and we witnessed with indignation the savage and cowardly conduct then adopted by some of the constables, who struck unmercifully with their batons un-offending women and boys indiscriminately. The street being cleared, prompt and efficient means were taken to get under the flames which were raging within the factory. The window chases were smashed by the constables, some of whom instantly leaped among the flames, pulling down the portions of the burning looms. Water in pails and buckets was handed to them, and in a short time the fire was completely extinguished. Before the fire-engines reached the spot all was over. There can be no doubt, however, that had the constables been only a few minutes later, the factory would have been reduced to ashes. After clearing the streets of a few stragglers who lingered about the corners, the constables went to the Townhouse, where the Provost thanked them for their attendance, and dismissed them for the night, intimating that if their services were required, which he did not expect, the ringing of the Townhouse bell would be the signal for their attendance there. We are glad to say that there was no further disturbance during the night. Today several persons have been examined, but we believe no evidence has been obtained sufficient to criminate any one in particular. The Magistrates and Sheriff-Substitute have issued a proclamation, in which, after noticing the occurrence of the disturbances above described, they give notice "that any such riotous, disorderly, and tumultuous conduct in future, will be repressed by the civil force at the disposal of the Magistrates, and if need be, with the aid of Military. And all persons are hereby warned to remain in their houses, and not collect in crowds on the streets of the burgh and suburbs after nightfall. Any person or persons aiding and abetting in such riotous and tumultuous conduct will be preceded against with the utmost rigour of law. -The Magistrates, also, hereby Give Notice, that an Assessment will be forthwith laid upon the inhabitants, to compensate the damage that was done to

property on the evening of Monday last, in pursuance of the statute in that case made and provided.”

A large body of special constable were sworn in this (Tuesday) evening, and every precautionary measure has been taken to ensure the peace. Sheriff Monteith has arrived.

Tuesday evening—ten minutes to ten—An immense crowd occupy the High Street, and further disturbances are apprehended. The constables are assembled in the Townhouse, and are prepared for the worst.

A verbatim extract from the Fife Herald and Kinross, Strathearn and Clackmanan Advertiser of August 18, 1842 transcribed for clarity:

THE DUNFERMLINE RIOTS

[The first portion of our correspondent's account of the proceedings in Dunfermline since our last has unfortunately miscarried. It seems to have contained an account of the rioting which took place on Tuesday evening (9th) after the despatch of the communication which appeared last week. The first portion which has come to hand takes up the accounts apparently after the riot of that night had been nearly quelled.]

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The constables were told of what had occurred at Mr Scotland's whose shop is only a short way east, but finding the rioters all gone and everything quiet in that direction, while they perceived a considerable crowd collected at the Cross, they went direct west, the crowd, which was by no means formidable, running away at their approach. When going west the High Street several of the constables were severely hurt by stones thrown from closes and cross streets. One lad was taken into custody. It was now past one o'clock and it was evident that the great body of the rioters had dispersed, and all apprehension of danger being over for the night, the constables returned to the Townhouse. At the time they halted at the top of New Row, Mr James Inglis (whose cool and decided conduct throughout deserves the highest praise) left to go home. On his way he had to pass Mr Scotland's whose doors he found open, the house apparently deserted, and the property in it left without protection. He instantly returned to the Townhouse with the information, and got a party of constables dispatched to Mr Scotland's to remain there all night. Only a small body of constables and police remained in the Townhouse, the rest having been discharged for the night, when an incident occurred which led to important results. A weaver who lives at the east end of the town passed the Townhouse much the worse of liquor, and, going on west Bridge Street a short way, returned and began abusing some of the constables. He was advised home, and had gone away, but returned and again commenced abusive language. Mr Simpson then took him into custody. In his pocket was found a quantity of loose tea, and a large piece of tobacco. This circumstance, coupled with rumours that, after the sacking of Mr Scotland's shop, parties had been seen near to this person's house with some of the spoil, rendered it necessary to search the house and neighbourhood. Accordingly Bailie Drummond, with Simpson and Mackay, and a party of constables went east to the person's house. Nothing suspicious was found there; but, it being now grey dawn, some of the constables observed marks of some persons having gone into a corn field west of the house. Following in a few yards, they found a tea canister belonging to Mr Scotland and a handkerchief, and, from the way the corn was laid at the spot, it was evident that a number of persons had been lying there, and other marks showed that some of them had gone further into the field. These the officers tracked, and, after a long search, at nearly the bottom of the

park, they got three colliers lying fast asleep, quite drunk, with bludgeons at their sides, and one of Mr Scotland's whisky barrels almost empty in the centre of them. They were with difficulty roused, and then taken to the Townhouse. On searching them, we were appalled on seeing the officer take from the person of one of them, a pistol, in a cloth cover, loaded with ball, and with a percussion cap on, ready to fire, a dozen of lead bullets, a horn full of powder, a dirk in a wooden sheath, a large clasp knife, and empty pistol cover, and a silver watch, but no money. He gave his name Ramage, which was found correct. He was respectably dressed, and looked about 18 years of age. After being searched, he folded his arms and leaned himself forward on the back of a seat, gazing with a sulky, resolute countenance on the murderous instruments taken from him, and now spread on the table. He made no observations while being searched; but when the officer, on reading over the list of articles taken from him, came to "Percussion cap on, ready to fire," he said, "Hoo wast ready to fire? It was not," meaning, we presume, that the pistol was not on cock. When Mr Simpson raised up Ramage in the field, he had hold of only one arm, and he observed him with the hand which was at liberty fumbling in his pocket. Suspecting he might be dropping something, he returned to the place and found another pistol at the spot. On examination it was found to contain powder but no ball. The other two are named Henderson and Penman. Nothing was found on Henderson; on Penman were found some excise permits belonging to Mr Scotland, and four boxes of lucifer matches.

On Wednesday morning the excitement continued. The few shops opened in the morning were generally closed by half-past ten, a dense crowd thronged the High Street, and it was whispered that an attack on the jail was determined on, to relieve the three colliers who were made prisoners early this morning. At a little after ten o'clock, half a troop of Enniskillen dragoons arrived from Piershill barracks and drew up in front of the Townhouse, amidst the mingled cheers and hisses of the mob; and there can be no doubt whatever that their arrival prevented an immediate, and very probably a successful attack on the jail. At 12 o'clock an immense mob, congregated no one knows how, proceeded from the outskirts of the town, and in its progress to the centre, forced the workmen to leave their work, and the shop-keepers to shut their shops and join their ranks. The dragoons (who had got billets immediately after their arrival) were called out and patrolled the streets. The mob thickening notwithstanding, and the excitement increasing, it was suggested to the Sheriff that the only means of preventing a serious collision between the rioters and the military was to effect an accommodation between the weavers and manufacturers. The sheriff consented, and from the Townhouse window addressed the mob – the dragoons mounted and under arms being drawn up to the left. He explained that he was there for the purpose of enforcing the law and keeping the peace, that had nothing to do with the existing dispute betwixt masters and workmen; but that, being anxious to keep the peace, if possible without having recourse to harsh measures, he had sent to warn the manufacturers to meet in the

Townhouse for the purpose of hearing what the operatives by their delegate might propose to effect a settlement of the dispute. The meeting of the manufacturers would be held in the Townhall at 2 o'clock, and the meeting of the workmen at the same hour at the Abbey Pends. He begged them to separate quietly and keep the peace, and he hoped the result of the intended meetings would be satisfactory both to masters and men. A cry was here got up, "Release the prisoners!" The Sheriff asked what prisoners they meant? Those charged with bailable offences would, on bail, be liberated with the least possible delay, but the three who had been taken that morning were charged with a most serious offence, and would only be liberated in due course of law. He said he had taken what peaceable means he could to disperse the mob; and if the meetings should fail in the result which he hoped for, he would proceed to read the Riot Act, and then, be the consequences what they might, he would try to disperse the rioters with what force he had at his command.-- Provost Morris then addressed the crowd. He said he had received a requisition from the operatives, requesting permission for them to hold a public meeting. He had the greatest pleasure in granting the request. They knew he was their friend, and he earnestly entreated them, for their own sake, to keep the peace.

Mr Thomas Morrison also addressed them. He advised them to disperse for the present, and (having received an invitation to the meeting at the Abbey Pends) he would be happy to meet them there, when he trusted to shew them who were their worst enemies – that it was the landed aristocracy and their corn law that they had to pull down – that their cry should be down with class legislation and the landlords' monopoly. – Shortly after this a thunder storm burst over the town, but it cleared up in time for the Pends meeting to take place, and allow the manufacturers to congregate in the Town-house. The immense assemblage at the Pends conducted their proceedings with the greatest deliberation and enthusiasm. Having sent a deputation to the manufacturers, demanding the existing rate of wages, with the rectification of some misunderstanding with Mr E Beveridge, respecting the price he paid for weaving certain kinds of table-covers, and 9d in the shilling to all journeymen employed in the factories, they agree to remain at the Pends until the deputation returned. Mr Morrison then addressed them on the present position of the country. We are prevented by want of space from giving even an outline of his address, which was received with great cheering. The deputation at length returned, bringing with them a minute of the meeting, agreeing to the demands, signed by all the manufacturers of the town, with the exception of 2 or 3, who were unavoidably absent, and whose names have since been obtained. The result diffused the greatest joy. After appointing a committee to see everything settled, giving a vote of thanks with three hearty cheers to Mr Morrison and thanks to the Chairman, Mr George Patterson, this most important meeting quietly dispersed at a few minutes past five o'clock. At a little before six, a party of seventy or eighty colliers, all armed with formidable bludgeons, marched down the High Street in the midst of a pelting shower of rain (which continued with small intermission till

midnight). They drew up opposite the jail door in military order. At this time the Provost, Sheriff and Lord Lieutenant were met in Hutton's Inn, and the dragoons were feeding their horses. A messenger was immediately despatched to the Inn, and the Sheriff, accompanied by the Provost and Captain Wemyss, the Lord Lieutenant, read the Riot Act, in doing which they were jostled and insulted, and one man was taken prisoner by the constabulary. The dragoons were then ordered to clear the streets. The mob unwillingly retired, some to publichouses, others to the closes, but by far the greater number to the extremities of the streets, commanding a view of the Townhouse. The constables were then formed into companies, and were directed to clear the public-houses, and take all offensive weapons from the persons found in them. At the cross a dense crowd had collected – part retired upon the East Port, and another portion took up position in Schoolend Street, opposite the Episcopal Chapel. Both of these sections shewed fight – those stationed at the Episcopal Chapel wounding several constables, and driving them back down Douglas Street into the High Street. The cavalry making a dash upon them quickly dispersed them, and secured two or three prisoners. The only serious resistance now apprehended was from a party of colliers who had obstinately kept their ground at the Port, and had fallen back on the Town Green Toll. On them a strong body of police and constables marched, followed up at a short distance by a strong detachment of soldiers. They stood till the near approach of the soldiers, and then dispersed amongst the fields. After this, all organised resistance ceased, and every one who would not go home at once was taken into custody. It was owing to the manufacturers having yielded, to the rain, and to the dragoons that we have to attribute the Townhouse not being put in a blaze; if we had not had all these three circumstances, such would have been its inevitable fate. About one o'clock in the morning, sixty rank and file of the 42d arrived from Stirling, and the constables were discharged from duty for the night. During Thursday, the town was in a feverish state, no business doing, and very few of the operatives at work, but no breach of the peace occurred. Indeed since the manufacturers yielded to the demands of the weavers, no serious apprehensions of further disturbances were felt. An additional detachment of the 42d arrived.

On Friday, all the prisoners taken at the riots were liberated, most of them on promising to appear if required. Bail has been taken in a few cases. Ramage, Penman, and Henderson were examined by the Sheriff-Substitute, and committed. Considerable alarm was created in the forenoon by a body of at least 500 colliers marching through the town on their way to a gathering which had been announced to be held at Crossgates. They were mostly from Clackmanan district. They walked in military order, many of them carrying large sticks. At the Town Green Toll, they were joined by about 100 more from Townhill and neighbourhood. A strong detachment of military was placed in the vicinity of Crossgates until the

meeting was over. We are happy to say that the Crossgates meeting went of peaceably, and was conducted with order and propriety. It was unanimously resolved to demand an advance of wages to 3s. 6d. per day, to give their employers the legal warning of 14 days, and to strike work immediately thereafter until their demands are granted. The general feeling among the working classes in Dunfermline is in favour of the demands of the colliers, and there is little doubt they will receive considerable support, especially from the weavers. There was not the slightest disturbance in Dunfermline on Friday, and people began to resume their normal avocations.

On Friday night, at Townhill Railway some persons attempted to cut the ropes and push the wagons down the decline. The watchman, in preventing them is reported to have been seriously injured. A baker's shop at Crossgates was also broken into by a mob, and plundered of all the bread it contained. A posse of constables was sent out on Saturday morning, and they apprehended two men at Halbeath suspected of abusing the watchman at Townhill, and one charged with being connected to the Crossgates riot. The women at Halbeath attacked the constables with volleys of stones, and, putting them to flight, rescued the Crossgates prisoner. A party of dragoons, followed by a strong detachment of the 42d, were immediately sent to Halbeath to restore order. They returned in a short time bringing with them the prisoner, whom they had recaptured, who was then safely lodged in Jail. This affair created some little uneasiness during Saturday, and at night the streets were considerably more crowded than usual, and a good deal of excitement still existed. This was in part attributable to the fearful accounts from Lancashire, which are the general theme of conversation. It is well for the peace of the town that Wednesday's Scotsman did not contain the alarming intelligence from Manchester, which was contained in that of Saturday. By order of the Magistrates, the soldiers cleared the High Street; one man by accident got his hand slightly hurt with a bayonet.

Since Saturday night order has been completely restored, and the town has resumed its usual appearance, with the exception of the unwonted, and, we must say, disagreeable sight of soldiers parading the streets, or marching before the Townhouse with fixed bayonets. The parties whose property has been damaged have lodged claims for compensation with the Town Clerk. There is likely to be some difficulty in the case of Mr Scotland, arising from the nature of the property destroyed. It is said that there was £11 in the till. Will the lawyers admit this claim?

The conduct of Mr Beveridge, the Town Clerk, on the first night of the riots, has excited much surprise, and will probably lead to an investigation as to Mr Beveridge's discharge of his duty as legal adviser to the Magistrates. When the Magistrates met in the Townhouse on Monday night, the Provost sent to the Town Clerk requesting his attendance. He refused to come, and sent an answer that it was the Sheriff and Fiscal's duty, and he had no business with it. The Provost sent for him a second time, desiring him to attend – the answer was, "Not at home." The Magistrates were placed in a serious dilemma in consequence, the lists of special constables, the riot act, and other necessary public documents being of course in the Town Clerk's possession.

Wednesday, Aug. 17, 1842 ; Publication: [Derby Mercury](#) (Derby, England)
SERIOUS RIOTING IN DUNFERMLINE- THE MILITARY CALLED OUT., EDINBURGH, Thursday, Aug. 17.

We deeply regret to state, that on Monday and Tuesday night serious riots took place amongst the weavers of Dunfermline.

It appears that a week or two ago the proprietors of some of the large shops in that town, containing 20 or 30 looms, had seen cause to reduce the wages of their work- men. This the men were much dissatisfied with, but no serious outbreak took place till Monday night, about 10 o'clock, when a large party assembled, paraded the principal streets of the town, extinguished the lamps, and broke the windows of those who had proved obnoxious to them. Thence they proceeded to the factories, and set on fire the looms in one or two factories, which were consumed, though the flames were extinguished before they extended to the buildings.

On Tuesday Mr. Sheriff Monteith went over to Dunfermline, and exerted himself strenuously to preserve the peace of the town by swearing in special constables, &c.; but on Tuesday night the riotous assemblage again appeared, broke more windows, set on fire more looms, and broke into the shop of a man named Scotland, who, besides being a partner in one of the factories, keeps a grocer and spirit dealer's shop, gutted his shop of its contents, and threw them into the street. We understand also that when the Sheriff was conducting one of the prisoners to prison, the mob set upon the constables, wounded several, and rescued the prisoner. It may be stated also, as a specimen of the wild justice obtaining among them, that when they were breaking the windows of one of the inhabitants, under the impression that he was a partner in a factory, he looked out of the window and told them they were mistaken, on which the mob immediately desisted.

The Sheriff (Monteith), we understand, made application for a military force, and, in consequence, half a troop of the Enniskillen dragoons proceeded across the Frith yesterday morning; and as a report was spread that the mob intended to force the gaol, to rescue several of the rioters who were confined there, they were drawn up to protect it. A heavy shower falling in the afternoon served to clear the streets.

There was also a meeting of the weavers in the Abbey Pend, to draw up resolutions, in the afternoon, but we have not heard the results.

Things have a remarkably gloomy appearance, and it would appear that in Dunfermline the serious rioting had been premeditated.

The rioters appear to have been well organized, there not being the slightest misunderstanding among them as to their unlawful proceeding.

The appearance of the military among them has certainly tended to suppress a little outward appearance of additional disturbances, but there is evidently a deep-rooted determination to commit mischief, and it is impossible to predict ulterior proceedings.

We regret to state that it is confidently asserted that many wives of the weavers were to be seen encouraging, if not aiding, the infuriated mob.

Business is at a stand-still, which must necessarily greatly increase the existing distress.

