

The Tranent Massacre.

I don't usually make up songs about historical incidents, but this is the exception to the rule. On 29th August 1797 a mob rioted in Tranent in protest against the recently passed Militia Act, which it was believed was likely to result in local men being forced into military service abroad. The cavalry brought in to keep order panicked, and rampaged through the town and the surrounding countryside shooting and sabring guilty and innocent indiscriminately. Twelve people were killed and many more injured. My great great grandfather's cousin, Alexander Robertson, was cut down and left for dead in a field outside Tranent, and crawled home to North Winton on his hands and knees. The Lord Advocate declined to prosecute any of the troops involved.

The Tranent Massacre is commemorated in the town's High Street by a statue in bronze of the woman who led the protesters, beating the town drum.

**If through Tranent ye chance tae come,
Mark ye the lassie wi the drum.
Never forget, never forget.
Weak flesh will brek the cauld steel yet.**

**Sae prood in bronze she braves them aw;
Sojers, an government, an law.**

**Yince tae that drum rebellion floored,
While lairds an gentry in terror coored.**

**Nae history books hae cared tae say
Hoo Cadell cleared the street that day.**

**Hacked an sabred through the toon,
As careless bairns thrash thistles doon.**

**Damned tae hell an laughed tae scorn;
Shot doon like paitricks in the corn.**

**Yet for that day fae London came
Nae word o reprimand or blame.**

**Kingdoms rise an kingdoms faw.
Our maisters, they chainge nane ataw.**

(Words and tune original.)