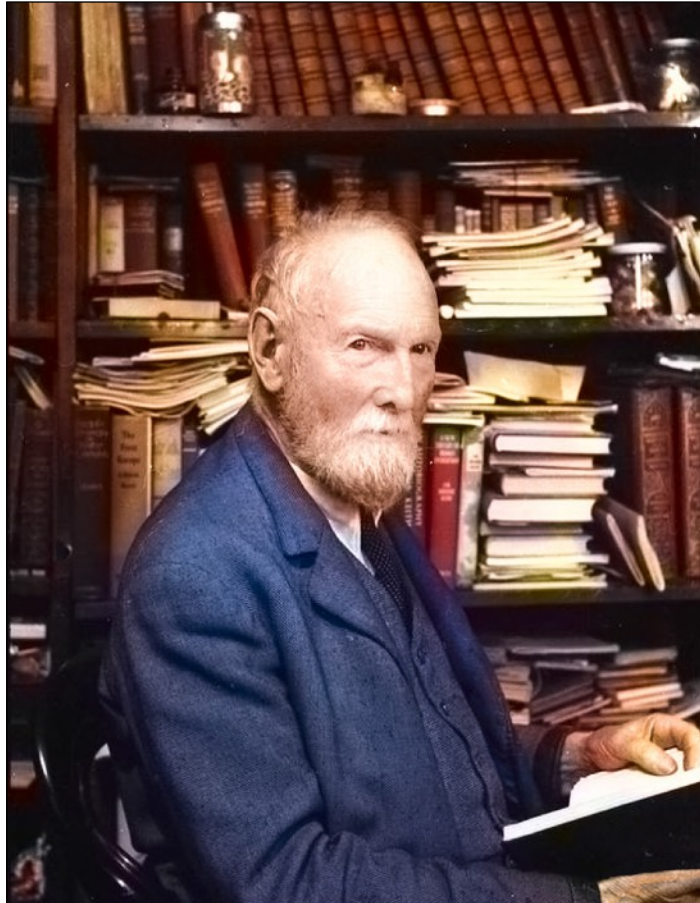

Bitesize History - People

Roland Eugene Muirhead 1868-1964

Owner of the Gryffe Tannery and the first chairman of the National Party of Scotland



In Paisley Sheriff Court on Thursday [1923] a small debt action was called at the instance of the minister of the parish of Lochwinnoch against Mr. Roland E. Muirhead, Meikle Cloak, Lochwinnoch, for £5 4s 10d, being stipend for crop and year 1922. Mr. J. Stewart Bannatyne, writer, Glasgow, who appeared for the defender, stated that there was no legal defence to the action. Gaining the Sheriff's permission to make a statement, however, Mr. Bannatyne stated that Mr. Muirhead as a dissenter protested against being compelled to contribute to the upkeep of the Established Church, of which he was not a member. When the Church of Scotland was originally established by law it was entrusted

with the care of the poor of the parish and with the education of the children belonging to the parish. But it gradually ceased to carry out these duties while still continuing to call upon the heritors to contribute to the stipend, notwithstanding that there is now a parish rate for the poor as well as an education rate. Mr. Muirhead, however, recognised that the teinds charge was a burden on landed property, and accordingly had already paid over the sum, named to a nonsectarian public parish purpose - viz., Lochwinnoch Parish Nursing Association. It was now, Mr. Muirhead believed, the generally accepted view that the support of any particular religious creed was not a duty which a citizen should be called upon to undertake otherwise than in a voluntary manner. As a citizen of Scotland Mr. Muirhead claimed religious freedom as a natural right. After hearing Mr. Bannatyne's statement, the Sheriff, without remark, granted decree for the sum claimed, with expenses.



Meikle Cloak

This became a yearly event. In 1932 a Grandfather Clock and other item were seized and auctioned to pay the debt.

All photos colourised