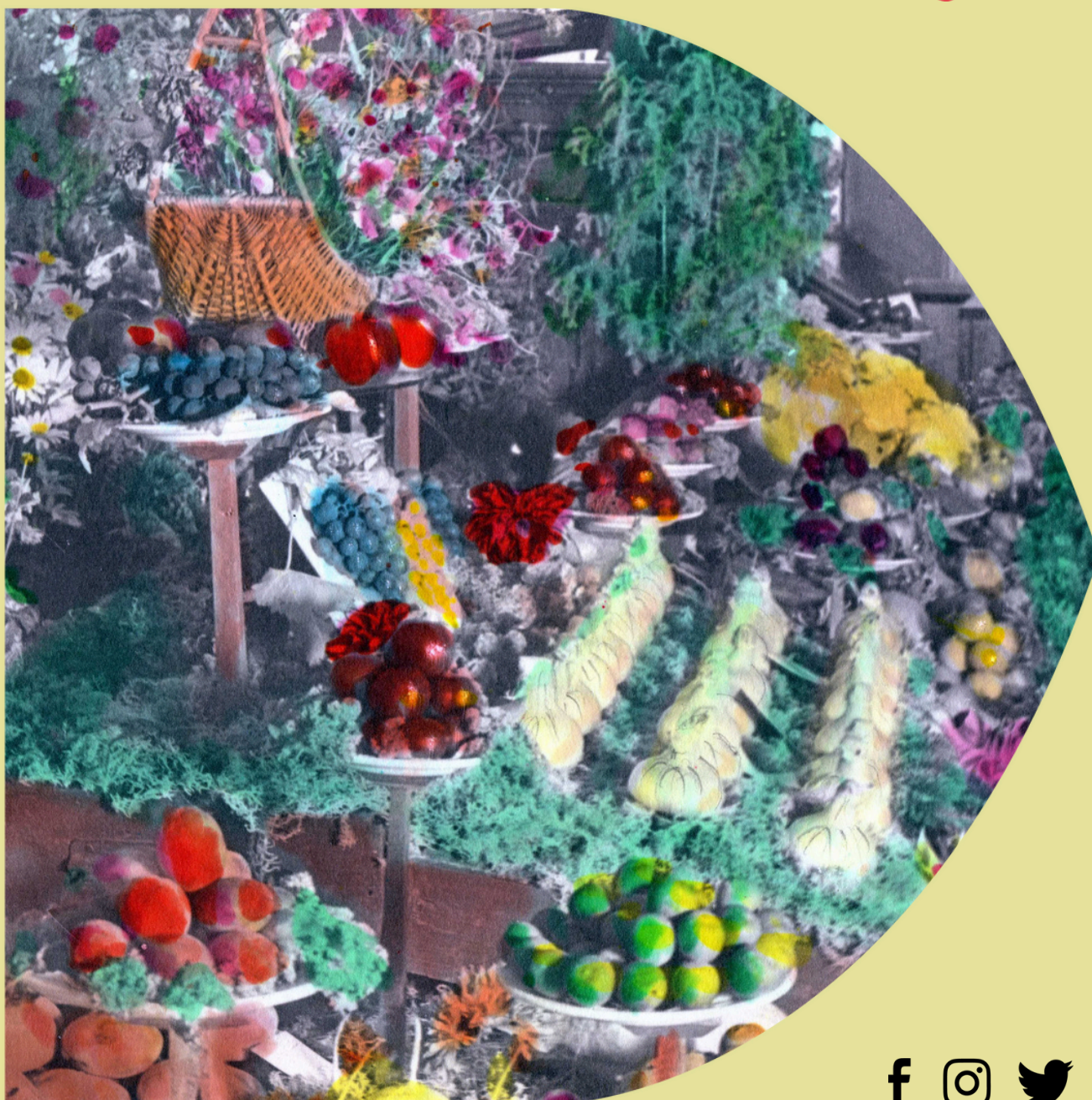


# Victorian Horticultural Show Dunoon Burgh Hall Jenny Hunter

2024/2025

150  
years of  
Dunoon  
Burgh Hall



[dunoonburghhall.org.uk](http://dunoonburghhall.org.uk)

Scottish Registered Charity SC041392,  
Scottish Registered Company No SC375576, VAT No 192628091

195 Argyll Street Dunoon PA23 7DD  
01369 701776

[info@dunoonburghhall.org.uk](mailto:info@dunoonburghhall.org.uk)

# Victorian Horticultural Show



386  
visitors

12  
volunteers

40  
children

In June 2024 Dunoon Burgh Hall celebrated its 150th Anniversary with a creative research project inspired by the annual show of 'Dunoon and District Horticultural Society'. On 21 September 2024 we created a contemporary re-interpretation to coincide with Doors Open Day.

We showcased an impressive array of produce, baked goods, and arts and crafts created by our community including baking, preserves, fruit, vegetables, flower displays, pot plants and ferns, and botanical artwork.

We ran art workshops with Primary 6/5 pupils from Kirn Primary School in the days preceding the show. Working with artist Jill Bryson pupils learned to sew with scrap fabric and buttons to create their own headwear inspired by fruit and vegetables. These were on display at the Horticultural Show.

Dunoon Players performed their new play, 'The Horticultural Society Show'. This play was written specifically for the event and was inspired by the heritage. It was performed 3 times during the afternoon to visitors to the Horticultural Show.



# VICTORIAN HORTICULTURAL SHOW

150  
Dunoon  
Burgh Hall

SATURDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER 2024

12.00PM TO 4.00PM



A community event aiming to bring people together!

Our Victorian Horticultural Show will showcase talent and skill from children, young people and older people as well as celebrating our heritage.

During the day there will be:

- A Showcase of produce from the local community: fruit, vegetables, flowers, pot plants & ferns, jams & preserves and vegetable animal creations. All things horticultural!
- Raise a glass to DBH's Architect Robert Bryden with Dunoon Goes POP. Help celebrate our 150th anniversary and pick up your final bottle of limited edition Rhubob and Bryden drinks syrups in the hall. Learn more about the heritage of soft drinks making and future plan to develop Dunoon Goes POP into a heritage inspired social enterprise.
- A performance from Dunoon Players - a newly written piece inspired by this project called 'The Horticultural Society Show'.
- A display of artwork created by Kirn Primary School.
- An art workshop for children and young people led by LOCAL ARTIST Jill Bryson
- Heritage displays from Dunoon Burgh Hall's own archives, as well as contributions from the local community.

◆ FREE ADMISSION ◆

FOR MORE INFORMATION, AND DETAILS ON HOW TO PARTICIPATE,  
VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [WWW.DUNOONBURGHHALL.ORG.UK](http://WWW.DUNOONBURGHHALL.ORG.UK)

195 Argyll Street Dunoon PA23  
7DD

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Scottish Registered Charity SC041392,

Scottish Registered Company No SC375576

VAT No 192628091



Delivered by  
THE NATIONAL LOTTERY  
COMMUNITY FUND





We showcased an array of produce, baked goods, and arts and crafts—each grown, created, and presented by our community.





# Dunoon Goes POP



Rhubarb

&

Ginger

£8.00 per  
bottle.





# Dunoon Goes Pop

In the 1880s an enterprising pharmacist called George Stirling opened a soft drinks factory in Dunoon behind his shop on Argyll Street. The factory continued to produce and distribute soft drinks in reusable bottles until the late 1970s.

Inspired by people, flavoured by plants and rooted in place. Each of our Dunoon Goes POP flavours are inspired by the stories of local people, including Robert Bryden, architect of Dunoon Burgh Hall. Rhubob and Bryden celebrates the architect and 150 years of Dunoon Burgh Hall.







# 'The Horticultural Society Show'

By  
Dunoon Players





# Dunoon Players

'The Horticultural Society Show' – an extract

A playlet by Julie Forrester for DBH Doors Open Day 2024  
(about 13 minutes)

Cast:

Mr. McDonald (Chairman) (M) Mark

Mrs. Lamont (L) the judge Ellie

Mrs. Campbell (C) Karen

Jock (J) Ian

Mrs. Graham – choir mistress (G) Marie

Robert Bryden – architect (B) Robert

Setting: Dunoon Burgh Hall, Autumn 1879

(G enters, humming 'My Grandfather's clock', crosses behind prize table, dusts/cleans the shields from st.R. J and C enter and cross to her, so the lineup from st.R is G,J,C)

J: Morning Mrs Graham.

C: What's that tune you're humming?

G: Hello Jock, hello Mrs Campbell. That song's called 'Grandfather's Clock'.

C: I thought I remembered the tune. Didn't you sing that here, at the Secular Concert, a few months back?

G: That's right, I did. It's quite a new song, it was only written in 1876, by an American gentleman called Henry Clay Work.

J: Oh, I've heard of him. Didn't he write 'Marching Through Georgia'?

G: Well remembered Jock, yes he did.

J: I followed all the news about the American civil war. Yon Mr Work was on the right side, wanting to abolish slavery.



# Children and young people

Artist Jill Bryson led workshops with 32 Primary 5 and 6 pupils from Kirn Primary School in the weeks leading up to the Horticultural Show. Each child took part in two half-day sessions with the artist, ensuring the event remained fresh in their minds and encouraging them to bring their families along. As part of the project, each pupil chose their favourite fruit or vegetable as inspiration, creating vibrant masks and headdresses featuring strawberries, guava, sweetcorn, mushrooms, and more!









The work was displayed at our very own Horticultural Show at Dunoon Burgh Hall on Saturday 21st September 2024.

‘What a fantastic opportunity our class have been given. Huge thank you to Jill and Siobhan and the funding from the Burgh Hall’ Kirn Primary School Teacher





# Horticultural Shows at Dunoon Burgh Hall

## Dates Unknown

These photographs capture the vibrant displays of fruit, flowers, and vegetables beautifully arranged on the stage and beneath the balcony at Dunoon Burgh Hall. While we don't yet know the exact year these flower shows took place, they may date from one of the known horticultural exhibitions held in the Hall in 1925, 1927, 1947, 1977, or 1979.



This hand-coloured photograph showcases an elaborate display arranged on, or in front of, the stage at Dunoon Burgh Hall. Among the carefully presented produce, we can see onions, potatoes, daisies, and grapes. In the background, the open lid of the piano is just visible, along with the hall's distinctive wood panelling and the banister leading up to the stage.

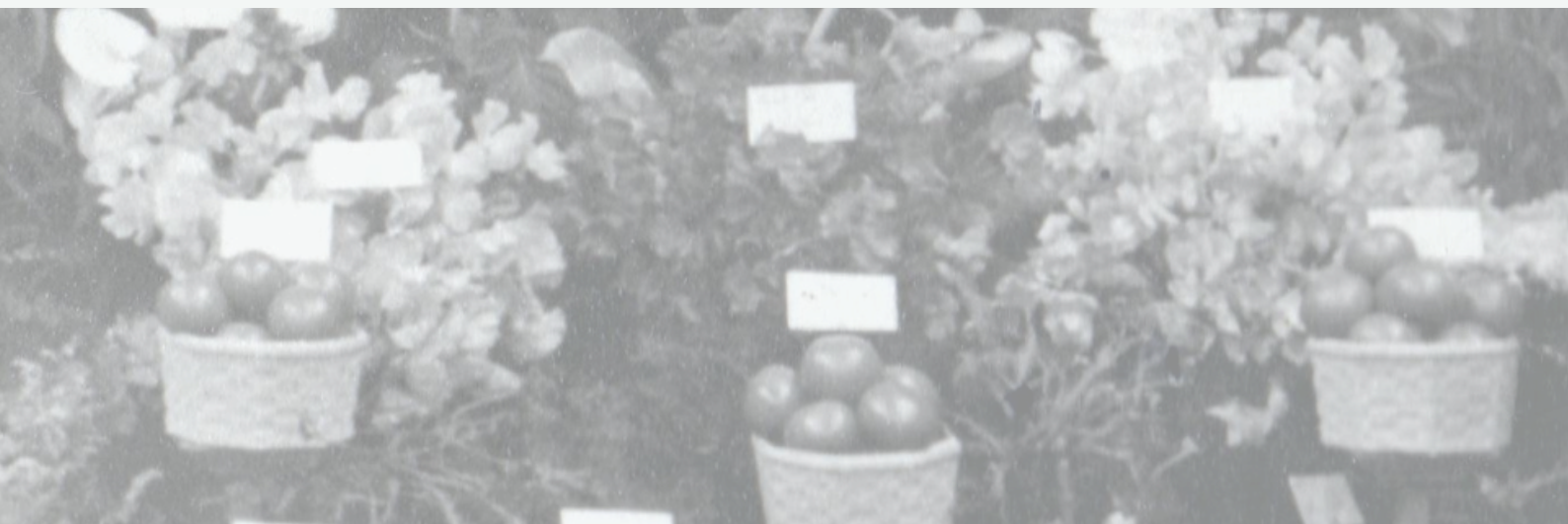
Credit: Castle House Museum





This black and white photograph captures a beautifully arranged display of geraniums, tomatoes, potted plants, ferns, and fuchsias. Set beneath the balcony, the arrangement appears both elaborate and professionally presented. On either side, the wrought iron pillars supporting the balcony are visible, while the windows at the back of the hall offer a glimpse of Albert Crescent beyond.

Credit: Castle House Museum





# The Caretaker's Flat at Dunoon Burgh Hall

The caretaker's flat was located at the back of the Burgh Hall, where the office and workshop space now stand. Access was from outside the building, just beyond what is now the café extension. The modest flat consisted of two rooms, a kitchen, and a bathroom.

The caretaker's responsibilities were demanding—keeping eight public rooms heated and lit, ensuring everything was in proper order, and tending the garden. The building was powered by coal boilers, housed in this very space, which made it reputedly the warmest place in the entire Hall.

During renovation works between 2014 and 2017, an intriguing discovery was made behind the fireplace and mantelpiece—a collection of old photos and slides. Among them was a glass plate slide and several portraits printed on cardboard.

To this day, the identities of the people in these photographs remain a mystery. Could you help us uncover their stories?



Photographs discovered in the caretakers flat during renovation.  
credit: Dunoon Burgh Hall Trust







## Nan McCallum. Caretaker of Dunoon Burgh Hall (1951–1976)

One of the longest-serving residents of the caretaker's flat was Nan McCallum, who, along with her husband Archie McCallum, lived at Dunoon Burgh Hall for 25 years. Archie worked as a burgh driver, while Nan took great pride in her role as caretaker from 1951 to 1976.

Nan had a deep love for the small garden beside the Hall, filling it with vibrant flowers every summer. Office staff often commented on how lovely it looked when they passed through. She was known for her meticulous care in keeping the building clean, warm, and welcoming.



Her daughter, Jean Buckles, shares this memory:  
“I remember my dad stoking the coal boiler every morning, sometimes coming home at lunchtime to fill it up. I used to play in the boiler house—it was a very cosy, warm little home. There were two bedrooms, a bathroom, and a kitchen/living room. A separate kitchen was promised but didn't happen until around 1969 or 1970.”

The photographs on this page show Nan McCallum in the back garden of the Burgh Hall, and the living room in the Caretakers Flat, believed to have been taken in the 1960s.



Credit: family of Nan McCallum



## Bob of the Burgh Hall Caretaker of Dunoon Burgh Hall (1914–1948)



Robert Wilson, affectionately known as "Bob of the Burgh Hall," was the caretaker of Dunoon Burgh Hall for many years, serving until 1948. He lived in the Hall, likely in the caretaker's flat, with his wife Jane (Jean) McBeath and their family.

Born on 28 July 1872 in Dunoon, Robert played an active role in the community. In 1914, when he signed his father's death certificate, he listed his address as "Burgh Building, Dunoon," confirming his long-standing connection to the Hall.

Robert came from a musical family—his father, also named Robert Wilson, was known as "Robert Wilson Bandmaster", as he was the first conductor of the Dunoon Silver Band/Dunoon Town Band.

Robert passed away on 29 August 1952 at Edward Street, Dunoon, and was laid to rest in Dunoon Old Cemetery, where his headstone bears the names Robert & Jeannie.

He married Jane McBeath (Jean) on 3 September 1904 at the Bath Hotel in Glasgow, beginning a life that would be closely tied to the Burgh Hall and its history.

Credit: Margaret White and Joyce Holt, great granddaughters of Robert Wilson Senior, aka "Robert Wilson Bandmaster".

Image: Margaret White in 2025.



# Cowal Horticultural Society

(Incorporating Dunoon and District Gardens and Allotments Association)

Cup won by Angus Murchison, Flower vases and prize tickets.





# Cowal Horticultural Society

(Incorporating Dunoon and District Gardens and Allotments Association)

The Cowal Horticultural Society's Annual Show, dating back to 1892, was held across various Cowal venues, including The Queen's Hall, The Pavilion, and Dunoon Burgh Hall. The Society also organised Spring Shows, often at St Mun's Church Hall, featuring Spring bulbs. Membership was required to enter exhibits, though many joined just to receive the schedule. Notable winners included Dr David Walker and Alistair Brown - dahlias, Jack Gibson - roses, Donald Mackintosh - sweet peas, George Sturrock - grapes, Angus Whyte - onions, Angus Murchison for Dahlias and Gladioli, Donald Murchison - sweet peas.

In March 1902, the Secretary of the Dunoon Horticultural Society issued a letter announcing the intention to reinstate the Annual Flower Show, as it had been nine years since the last one. The article referenced here, recording the flower show in the Burgh Hall from 1892, would have documented one of the final shows before this hiatus. Robert Wilson said 'Dunoon as it is now is - the Queen of Watering places on the Clyde - ought to have its Annual Flower Show'.

By 1923, records mention the Dunoon and Cowal Horticultural Society. In 1940, the first show incorporating the Dunoon and District Gardens and Allotments Association took place. The Society used to run a category for best kept garden, which was supported by the council. The Cowal Horticultural Society continued for many years before formally winding up in 2007. At this point the majority of the vases were donated to the Scottish Rhododendron Society. They have an annual show in Gairlochhead in the Spring.

Sandy Smith was Vice President of the Society from 1981 until 1986; President from 1986 until 1992; and treasurer from 1992 - 2005. He worked alongside Marion Carmichael who was the Minutes Secretary and Leonard Hinge was the honorary president.



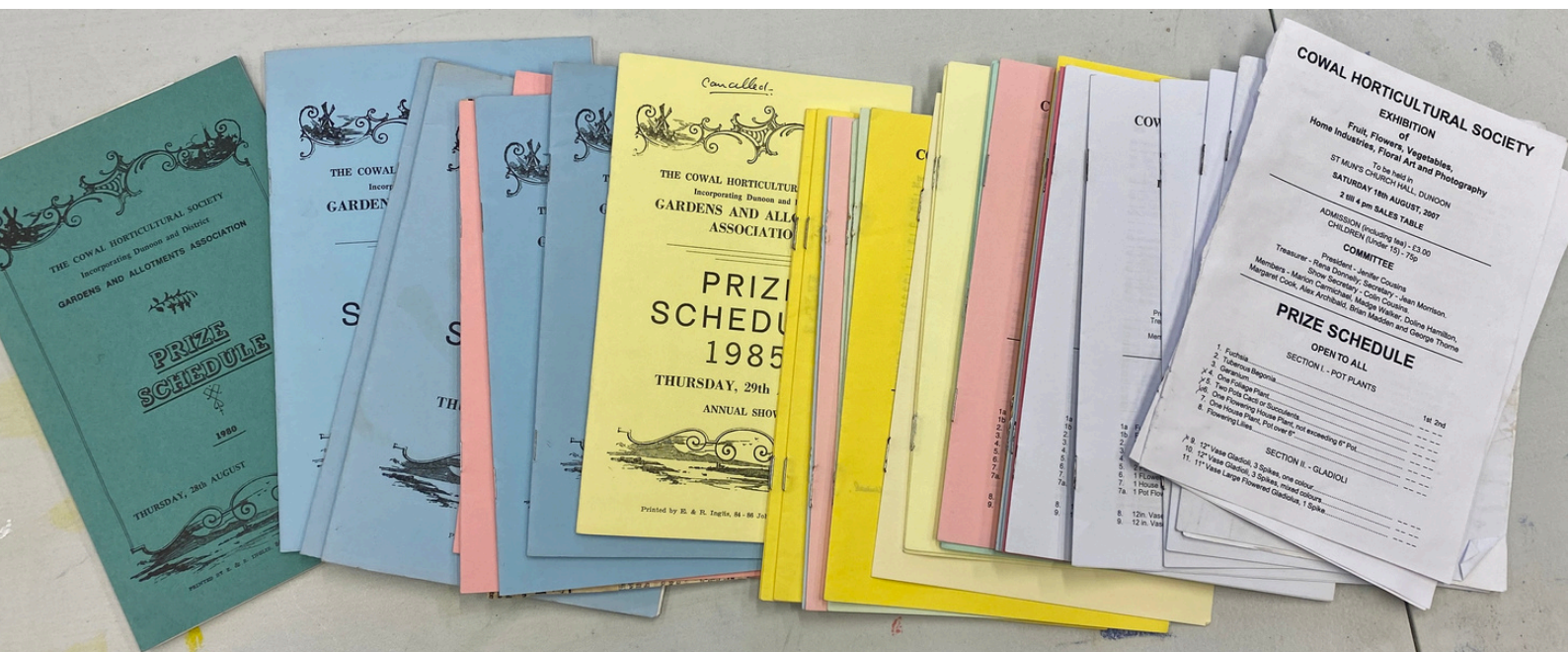
# Cowal Horticultural Society

(Incorporating Dunoon and District Gardens and Allotments Association)

Marion was a member of the Horticultural Society for about 50 years and came from a gardening family, with her father-in-law also a gardener. She recalls the effort of preparing the Burgh Hall for shows, which required a two-day hire for setup. She remembers Spring bulb shows being held in the hangar after the Pavilion burned down and before the Queens Hall was built. She also recalls a neighbour telling her about Horticultural Society members inspecting her father's garden to verify his competition entries.

Plant biosecurity is a major concern today, requiring plants to have a passport when transported. It involves measures to prevent the spread of pests, pathogens, and invasive species through trade and natural pathways while managing existing threats. Even plants moved from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh to Benmore Botanic Garden need passports and must undergo quarantine before planting.

Credit: Sandy Smith, Cowal Horticultural Society





## 'Queen of Watering Places on the Clyde'

This is a letter from the Secretary of Dunoon Horticultural Society, Robert Wilson. It states the intention of the Society to hold their Annual Flower Show this year as it has been nine years since the last one, and appeals to the public for help.

Credit: Castle House Museum

*DUNOON, 20th March, 1902.*

### Dunoon Horticultural Society.

DEAR SIR,

It is now nine years since the above Society held its last Annual Show, and, at a Meeting held lately, the Members resolved to hold a Show this year.

Dunoon as it now is—the Queen of Watering Places on the Clyde—ought to have its Annual Flower Show, and its resources are equal to those of any of the neighbouring watering-places. Twenty or more years ago, Dunoon stood at the top as having the best Shows in the West of Scotland. This was the opinion of many of the gentlemen who then acted as judges.

Taking these things into consideration, the Committee have resolved, as above stated, to commence anew. They therefore appeal to the Public to give them a helping hand.

I am,

Yours obediently,

ROBERT WILSON,

*Secretary.*



# Cowal Horticultural Society

(Incorporating Dunoon and District Gardens and Allotments Association)

Admission 20p. Life membership £2.50.

In 1979 Donald Murchison, father to Angus, was one of the honorary vice presidents. Angus himself was an honorary president and founder member of Cowal Horticultural Society.

Below - Prize schedule from 1979 detailing a wide variety of categories.

8.

## SECTION V.—FRUIT.

|       |   | 1st<br>Prize | 2nd<br>Prize | 3rd<br>Prize |
|-------|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 63.   | 3 Apples, Dessert, ...                    | 15p          | 10p          | 5p           |
| 64.   | 3 Apples, Cooking, ...                    | 15p          | 10p          | 5p           |
| 65.   | 6 Plums, ...                              | 15p          | 10p          | 5p           |
| 66.   | 3 Pears, ...                              | 15p          | 10p          | 5p           |
| 67.   | 4 Tomatoes, Red, ...                      | 15p          | 10p          | 5p           |
| ✓ 68. | 1 Cucumber, ...                           | 15p          | 10p          | 5p           |
| 69.   | 3 Peaches, ...                            | 15p          | 10p          | 5p           |
| 70.   | 1 Bunch Black Grapes, shown on board, ... | 25p          | 15p          | 10p          |
| ✓ 71. | 1 Vegetable Marrow, ...                   | 15p          | 10p          | 5p           |
| ✓ 72. | 3 Courgettes, culinary, ...               | 15p          | 10p          | 5p           |
| 73.   | 1 Dish Fruit (Mixed), ...                 | 35p          | 25p          | 15p          |

## SECTION VI.—VEGETABLES.

|     |   |     |     |     |
|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|
| 74. | 12 Potatoes, 2 Varieties (6 of each), ... | 25p | 15p | 10p |
| 75. | 3 Beet, Globe, ...                        | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 76. | 1 Head Celery (Red or White), ...         | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 77. | 3 Onions, ...                             | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 78. | 9 Shallots, ...                           | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 79. | 3 Leeks (Pot), ...                        | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 80. | 3 Leeks (Blanched), ...                   | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 81. | 3 Carrots (Long), ...                     | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 82. | 3 Carrots (Stump-rooted), ...             | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 83. | 1 Head Cauliflower, ...                   | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 84. | 3 Turnips, Golden Ball, ...               | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 85. | 3 Turnips, White, ...                     | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 86. | 3 Beet, Long, ...                         | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 87. | 6 Potatoes, 1 Variety, ...                | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 88. | 3 Onions, grown from sets, ...            | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 89. | 9 French Beans, ...                       | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 90. | 6 Broad Beans, ...                        | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 91. | 9 Pods Peas, ...                          | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 92. | 2 Lettuce, ...                            | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 93. | 1 Cabbage, Winningstadt, ...              | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 94. | 1 Cabbage, Early, ...                     | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 95. | 2 Parsnips, ...                           | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 96. | Plant Parsley, must be grown in pot, ...  | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 97. | 3 Stalks Rhubarb, Quality and Weight, ... | 15p | 10p | 5p  |
| 98. | Collection of Vegetables, 4 Kinds, ...    | 25p | 15p | 10p |
| 99. | Collection of Vegetables, 6 Kinds, ...    | 50p | 35p | 15p |

9.

## SECTION VII.—BAKING.

1st Prize 2nd Prize 3rd Prize

All Jams to be exhibited in plain Jars.

|      |  |     |     |    |
|------|--|-----|-----|----|
| 100. | 1 Fruit Loaf (2lb. or under), ...              | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 101. | 1 Sponge, plain icing, white, ...              | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 102. | 1 Sultana and Cherry Cake (2lb. or under), ... | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 103. | 4 Treacle Scones (Girdle), ...                 | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 104. | 4 Oven Scones, ...                             | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 105. | 4 Pancakes, ...                                | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 106. | 4 Coffee Buns, without Fruit, ...              | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 107. | 1 Plate Apple Tart (Short Pastry), ...         | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 108. | 6 Fingers Shortbread, ...                      | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 109. | 1 Pot Marmalade, ...                           | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 110. | 1 Pot Chutney, ...                             | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 111. | 1 Pot Strawberry Jam, ...                      | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 112. | 1 Pot Rhubarb and Ginger Jam, ...              | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 113. | 4 Mince Meat Pies (Short Pastry), ...          | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 114. | Approx. ½lb. Tablet, ...                       | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 115. | 1 Bottle Red Table Wine, ...                   | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 116. | 1 Bottle White or Amber Table Wine, ...        | 15p | 10p | 5p |

## SECTION VIII.—HANDICRAFTS.

No Article of Handicraft to have been previously shown at a Cowal Horticultural Society Flower Show.

|      |  |     |     |    |
|------|--|-----|-----|----|
| 117. | 1 Collage, ...                                   | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 118. | 1 Pair Knitted Slippers, ...                     | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 119. | 1 Soft Toy, Knitted, ...                         | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 120. | Lady's Knitted Waistcoat, ...                    | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 121. | Gent's Sleeveless Pullover, ...                  | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 122. | 1 Pair Gloves, ...                               | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 123. | 1 Pair Gent's Socks, ...                         | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 124. | 1 Colour Floral Slide, ...                       | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 125. | A Dressed Doll Knitted Outfit, ...               | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 126. | 1 Shadow Work Shower Cloth, ...                  | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 127. | 1 Crocheted Hat, ...                             | 15p | 10p | 5p |
| 128. | Knitted Hat and Scarf, open to Novices only, ... | 15p | 10p | 5p |

Maximum Points for 2 Cauliflower, 2 Celery, 3 Carrots, 2 Leeks.  
3 Onions, 6 Potatoes, 2 Parsnips, 6 Peas—20.  
2 Long Beet, 2 Globe Beet, 2 Turnips, 1 Cabbage—15.



JUNIOR  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**2nd PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
JAMIE SMITH  
FOR  
10 PRESSED FLOWERS

1992  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**1st PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
J.A. SMITH  
FOR  
10" VASE MIXED J. JARRO

1984  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**1st PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
Dr. A.C.A. Smith  
FOR  
1 Colour Slide of Flowers

93  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**2nd PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
Dr. A. Smith  
FOR  
SECTION I  
3 TURNIPS - WHITE

1987  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.  
(Incorporating Dunoon and District Gardens  
and Allotments Association).  
**2nd PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
Dr. A.C.A. Smith  
FOR  
1 Vase of Flowers

Springes  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**2nd PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
Dr. A.C.A. Smith  
FOR  
1 container 3 sprays flowering shrub

SECTION III  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**1st PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
Dr. A.C.A. Smith  
FOR  
GARDEN 10" VASE FLOWERS FROM  
OPEN BORDER

1988  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.  
(Incorporating Dunoon and District Gardens  
and Allotments Association).  
**1st PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
DR. A.C. SMITH  
FOR  
FOLIAGE PLANT (various)

1986  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**1st PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
Dr. A.C.A. Smith  
FOR  
3 Single Tulips

1995  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**1st PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
MRS. M. SMITH  
FOR  
SECTION II  
100 POT. RANUNCULUS AND SNAIL JAR

1979  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.  
(Incorporating Dunoon and District Gardens  
and Allotments Association).  
**1st PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
DR. A.C. SMITH  
FOR  
Cucumber

1987  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**2nd PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
MISS GWIAN SMITH  
FOR  
ARRANGEMENT OF FLOATING FLOWERS  
(SPACE 18 IN)

96  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**2nd PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
Dr. A.C.A. Smith  
FOR  
(37) 10 IN VASE SMALL DEC DAHLIAS  
3 BLOOMS (4-6 IN)

APR 1980  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.  
1 PAIR ROCK PLANTS.  
**1st PRIZE**

1989  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**2nd PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
DR. A.C.A. SMITH.  
FOR  
VASE SCARLET/PINK SWEET PEAS  
(6 STEMS)

SECTION IV  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**1st PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
A.C. Smith  
FOR  
(33) VASE MIXED SWEET PEAS 9 STEMS

1981  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.  
4 RED TOMATOES  
**1st PRIZE**  
Dr. Smith

1989  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**2nd PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
Dr. Smith  
FOR  
Cooking Apples

SECTION VI  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**2nd PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
A.C.A. Smith  
FOR  
(42) 8" VASE SMALL CACTUS DAHLIAS  
3 BLOOMS (14"-6" diam)

1982  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**1st PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
Gillian Smith  
FOR  
JUNIOR. WOVEN MAT.

1986  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**2nd PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
Dr. A.C.A. SMITH  
FOR  
1 VEGETABLE MARROW

99  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**2nd PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
Dr. A.C.A. SMITH  
FOR  
4 COURGETTES

1985  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**1st PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
Ms. M. Smith  
FOR  
SECT. 1 POT Orange Marmalade

1991  
COWAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
(Incorporating Dunoon & District Gardens  
& Allotments Association).  
**1st PRIZE**  
AWARDED TO  
Dr. Smith  
FOR  
HOUSE PLANT - HOT EXCEEDING  
6 IN POT



# Angus Murchison

Angus Murchison was a founding member and honorary president of the Cowal Horticultural Society. He earned top awards at shows in Dunoon, as well as events in Ayr and Renfrew. Renowned for his cultivation of gladioli and sweet peas, he took immense pride in his flowers.



Angus C Murchison cup. Best Exhibit in Leeks



According to his granddaughter Moira, Angus created his own special formula to nourish his blooms, ensuring they lasted longer. She fondly recalls that, as a child, she was not allowed in the big bedroom during flower shows because of the carefully arranged displays. Angus's passion for growing extended to his own back garden, where he built four greenhouses using reclaimed window frames. He was also known to make special trips to Loch Eck to collect fresh water gravel for his garden.

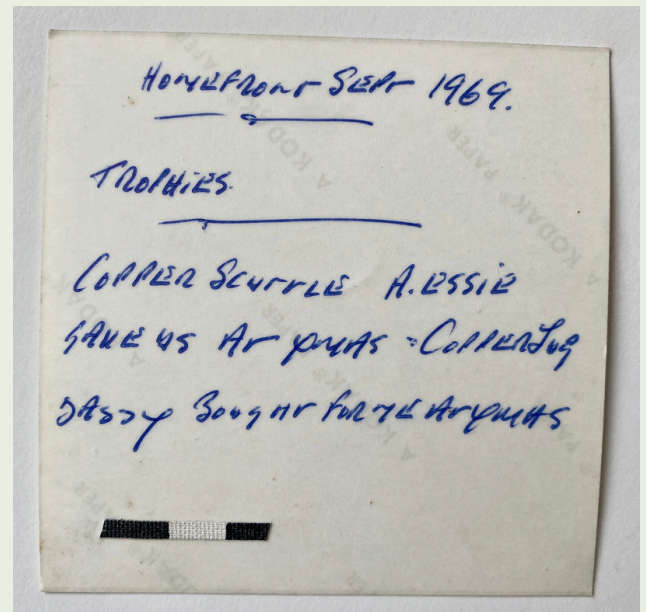




# Angus Murchison



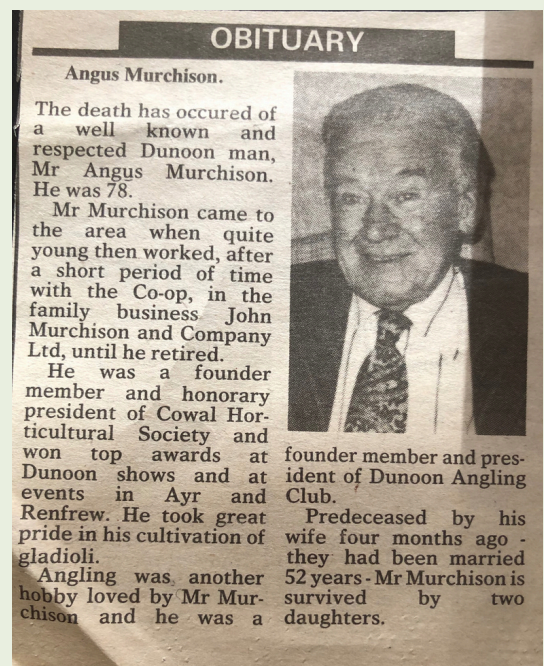
Angus' Dahlia and cups, 1969. Best exhibit in floral display, Rothesay



Notes on the back of photograph.



Angus watering his dahlia, 1969



Angus' Obituary taken from a newspaper cutting



# Donald Murchison

Angus came from a family of skilled growers—his father, Donald Murchison, was the gardener at Dhalling Mhor in Kirn. As boys, Angus and his brother helped tend the gardens and market garden there. Later, his daughters and their cousins also spent cherished childhood days lending a hand at Dhalling Mhor.



Dunoon and Cowal Horticultural Society, most points in all classes, D. Murchison, 143 points

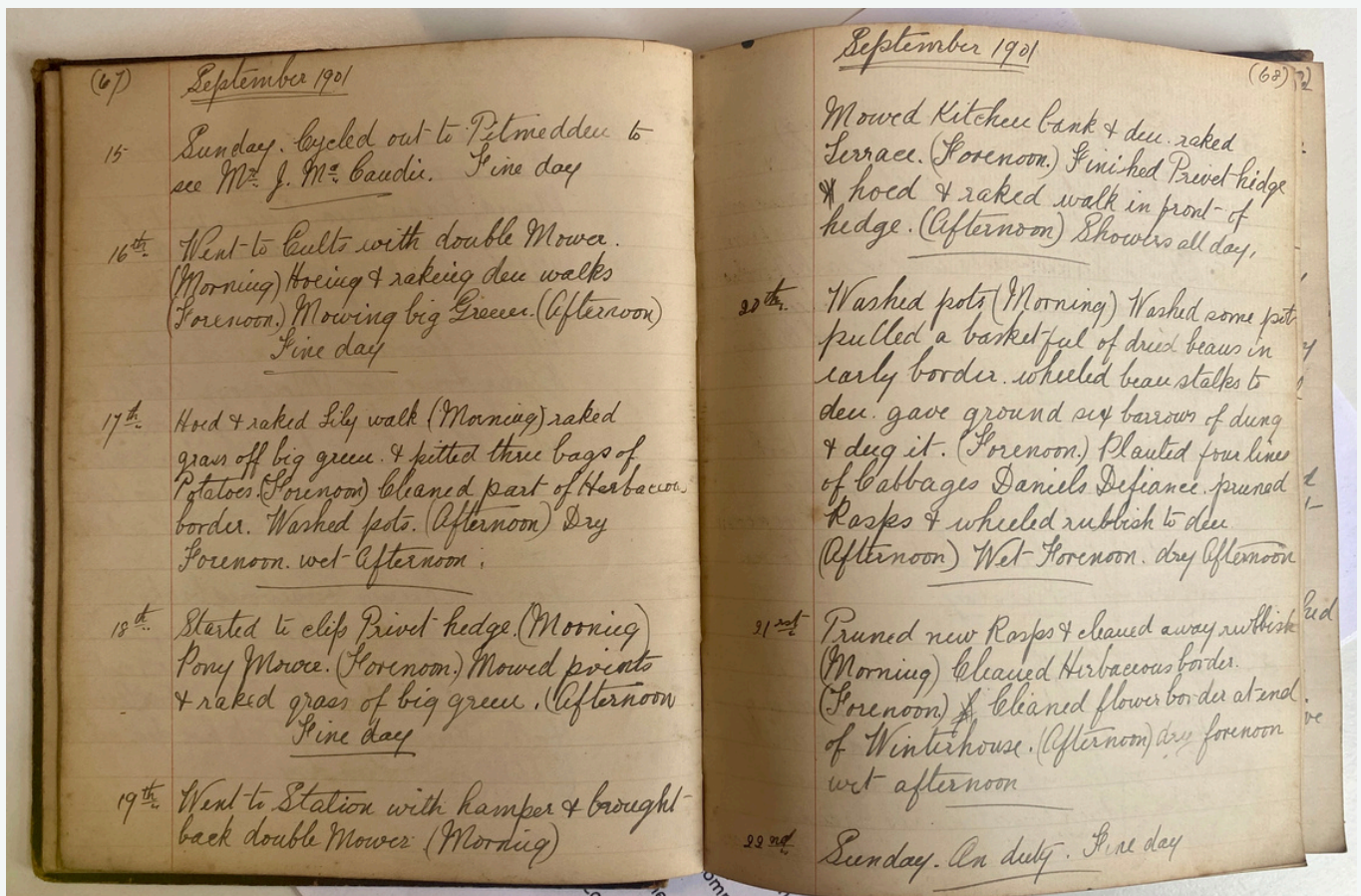


Certificate of Award – Gardening Illustrated Medal, 1922



# Peter Gordon Superintendent of Parks

Peter was based at Dunoon Castle house in the 1930's and was responsible for Dunoon and Cowal's 'Municipal Bowling Greens, Tennis Courts and Golf Course. These are his diaries and photographs on loan from his family.





# Peter Gordon Superintendent of Parks



Certificate from the Institute of Park Administration to Peter Gordon, 1935



# Peter Gordon Superintendent of Parks

COPY:

Town Clerk's Office,  
DUNOON, 29th March, 1922.

Dear Sir,

Dunoon Castle Gardens &c.  
Foreman Gardener &c.

I duly received your letter of the 27th inst., intimating that your wife was prepared to undertake the duties which would devolve upon her in connection with the Cleaning &c. of the various rooms in the Castle, in the event of your being appointed to the position of Foreman Gardener &c.

At a meeting of my Council held last night, you were appointed to the position of Foreman Gardener &c., your duties to consist during the Season, of the supervision and keeping in order of the Castle Gardens and the various Parks and open spaces within the Burgh, including the tennis Courts and putting greens and generally to act under and carry out the instructions of the Mayor. The wages to be £5. per week, with free house, coal & gas.

The duties devolving upon your wife will be to clean and keep in order the Council Chambers, and other rooms within the Castle House, attend to the Library and Reading Room and Billiard Room, and generally act as Caretaker. The wage payable in respect of these duties being 15/- per week. The engagements to be terminable on a fortnight's notice on either side.

As mentioned in my letter of the 20th inst., and also at your meeting with the Council on the 25th inst., there may be some difficulty in obtaining possession of the house in the Castle occupied by the present gardener and his wife, as they have difficulty in obtaining another house, for which they are looking out.

I will be glad to have your formal acceptance of the positions on behalf of yourself and your wife, and at same time state when you can commence your duties.

Yours truly,

(Signed) J. VALROSE CLERY.

Mr. Peter Gordon,  
The Gardens,  
Lennoxlove,  
Haddington.

Letter of appointment  
as Foreman Gardener to  
Dunoon Castle Gardens,  
March 1922

Credit: Colin McLelland



Council Chambers,

Dunoon, 14th May, 1931.

The Provost, Magistrates and Councillors of the Burgh of Dunoon have much pleasure in testifying to the excellent character and abilities of Mr. Peter Gordon, who has been in their employment for the past nine years as Head Gardener and Parks Superintendent. During that period he has proved himself to be a steady able energetic and courteous public servant. His abilities as an ordinary and Landscape Gardener are exceptionally high. He has planned and carried out extension improvements in the Castle Gardens, including formation of rock gardens etc., upon which he has been complimented by the Council, the Town's people and Visitors.

He has also had the supervision and control of the Municipal Bowling Greens, Tennis Courts and Golf Course, as well as the various other open spaces and public gardens throughout the Burgh.

He exercises a kind but firm control over the employees serving under him and obtains the best results in consequence. They recognise him as one who knows his business thoroughly in all its aspects and is therefore worthy of their respect. The maximum number of employees under his control is twelve men and six girls.

The Council wish him all success.

Signed on behalf of Dunoon Town Council.

John Miller Provost,  
J. Valrose Clery Town Clerk.

Letter from  
Dunoon Town  
Council, May  
1931

Credit: Colin  
McLelland





# SECULAR CONCERT,

IN THE BURGH HALL,

*On Tuesday Evening, 15th April, 1879,*

BY MEMBERS OF THE

DUNOON MUSICAL ASSOCIATION.

## PROGRAMME.

### Part First.

|                 |     |     |     |                                |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|--------------------------------|
| SOLO & CHORUS,  | ... | ... | ... | Spirits, Advance.              |
| SONG,           | ... | ... | ... | Our Jack's come home to-day.   |
| DOUBLE QUARTET, | ... | ... | ... | Where the bee sucks.           |
| PART SONG,      | ... | ... | ... | Sleep, gentle babe.            |
| SONG,           | ... | ... | ... | The Empress of the Wave.       |
| TRIO, ...       | ... | ... | ... | ... The Wreath.                |
| PART SONG,      | ... | ... | ... | Song of the Zetland Fishermen. |
| SONG,           | ... | ... | ... | ...                            |
| DUET,           | ... | ... | ... | Albion, on thy fertile plains. |
| SONG,           | ... | ... | ... | ... Dear England.              |

### Part Second.

|                         |     |     |     |                         |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------------------------|
| PART SONG,              | ... | ... | ... | An Old Romance.         |
| SONG,                   | ... | ... | ... | The Mistletoe Bough.    |
| PART SONG (by request), | ... | ... | ... | ... Duncan Gray.        |
| DOUBLE QUARTET,         | ... | ... | ... | Once upon my Cheek.     |
| PART SONG,              | ... | ... | ... | Slumber, Darling.       |
| DUET,                   | ... | ... | ... | Larboard Watch.         |
| SONG,                   | ... | ... | ... | My Grandfather's Clock. |
| PART SONG (by request), | ... | ... | ... | Maggie Lauder.          |
| TRIO, ...               | ... | ... | ... | The Red Cross Knight.   |
| PRIZE GLEE,             | ... | ... | ... | The Sisters of the Sea. |

DOORS OPEN AT 7.30; CONCERT AT 8.

ADMISSION TO ALL PARTS OF THE HALL, ONE SHILLING.



# Secular Concert

15 April, 1879

## Secular Concert in the Burgh Hall

Presented by members of the Dunoon Musical Association  
This historic poster was discovered in the Burgh Hall during renovation works between 2014 and 2017. The concert it advertises took place just five years after the Burgh Hall first opened—a significant event, as the Hall was originally built to provide the town with a much-needed non-religious gathering space.

Take a closer look at the poster, and you'll notice its well-worn folds, as well as handwritten notes and a drawing on the back.

Though some of the text is faded and difficult to read, it appears to be a conversation between two people. Was this note passed between friends during the concert? A quiet exchange amidst the music?

We can make out parts of the message—what do you think is happening here?

Here is what we can make out:

'.....I did not intend to speak frank to you'

'let the dead past – bury its dead'

'No I won't let the dead bury their dead'

'Why didn't you come to the church on Sunday'

'I had to make the dinner in the morning and I had to eat it in the afternoon'

'Why did you not come to the foot of John Street entrance?'



## Secular Concert cont...

One of our keen volunteers was intrigued by the phrase “Let the dead past bury its dead”, which appears in connection with the Secular Concert. His curiosity led him to discover its origin in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem A Psalm of Life, written in 1838 following the death of the poet’s first wife. The line is part of a broader message encouraging us not to dwell on the past or worry about the future.

"Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!  
Let the dead Past bury its dead!  
Act,—act in the living Present!  
Heart within, and God o'erhead!"

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was one of the most widely known and best-loved American poets of the 19th century. He achieved a level of national and international prominence previously unequalled in the literary history of the United States and is one of the few American writers honored in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey—in fact, he is believed to be the first as his bust was installed there in 1884.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44644/a-psalm-of-life>

Credit: research by David Dorren.







# Grandfather's Clock, 1876

## by Henry Clay Work (1832-1884)

composer of "Marching through Georgia".

Its origins lie with the 16th Century George Hotel at Piercebridge, Yorkshire." It was originally performed as part of the Secular Concert in 1879, 5 years after the Burgh Hall opened.

Many people knew this song from Children's Favourites on BBC Radio every Saturday morning. It was very famous.

Its origins lie with the George Hotel Yorkshire. It was originally known as The Bridge Inn. Parts of the building date to 17th Century and it was known as a coaching inn. Legendary Dick Turpin is said to have stayed there.

Because coaches needed to leave on time, one of The George's most important possessions was an accurate timepiece. There is a sundial on the outside of the hotel, and in its lobby is a longcase clock made by James Thompson who died in 1825. It was noted for its good timekeeping.

In mid-Victorian times, The George was run by the Jenkins brothers. The clock may have come into the family's possession on the day the elder brother was born. Immediately after he died, it was noted how the longcase clock lost its accuracy. The second brother continued winding the clock at precisely 11.05 am each day, and on the day he died, the clock stopped, never to go again.

In 1874, Henry Clay Work, a popular American songwriter from Connecticut, heard the story and wrote a version of it from the clock owner's grandson's perspective into a song which he released in 1876. It began:

My grandfather's clock was too large for the shelf;  
So it stood ninety years on the floor....  
But it stopped short – never to go again  
When the old man died

To this day longcase clocks are known as grandfather clocks.

Research by David Dorren. Text taken from The Northern Echo



# John Groom's Crippleage

John Alfred Groom was a London engraver and evangelical preacher, who became concerned with the plight of the poverty-stricken and often disabled girls and women who sold flowers and watercress in the streets around Farringdon Market. His work with them began when he founded the Watercress and Flower Girls' Christian Mission in 1866. A permanent home for the mission was found in Harp Alley and Lord Shaftesbury became its first president. Religious services were held at Foresters' Hall until its destruction in 1890, after which John Groom purchased Woodbridge Chapel, Clerkenwell.

Taking inspiration from the trend for imported handmade flowers, John Groom set up a factory in Sekforde Street, close to the Woodbridge Chapel, where disabled girls could work at making artificial flowers and thus make a living for themselves. The girls lived in houses in Sekforde Street, rented by John Groom. Further factories were subsequently built in Woodbridge Street and Haywards Place. The name of the charity was changed to John Groom's Crippleage and Flower Girls Mission in 1907.

Rising inner London rents forced the charity's council to purchase a large estate in Edgware in 1931 and the whole operation moved there in 1932. In 1965 Edgware opened its doors to male residents. The charity's name changed again in 1969 to John Groom's Association for the Disabled and in 1990 to John Groom's Association for Disabled People.

John Groom was also very concerned for the welfare of deprived and orphaned children. He bought a house at Clacton-on-Sea and built others around it and his orphanage opened in 1890. During World War II the older children from Clacton were evacuated to Davenport House, Shropshire, with the babies being sent first to Edgware and then to Farncombe House, Wolverhampton. After the war the older children moved into a new home at Pilgrim's House, Kent, and the babies moved to the new Cudham Hall, also in Kent. In 1956 Charnwood, near Chislehurst was purchased to provide a family children's home with room for 12 children. Thorpe Bay Children's Home was added to the list in 1951 when John Grooms took over a children's convalescent home at Stamford Hill House. The charity's work with children finally ended in 1979.

Credit: The National Archives

<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/b01e3894-4761-4263-9d15-cc63856988e5>



# John Groom's Crippleage

Wednesday 6 September, 3 pm, 1905  
Floral Exhibition in the Town Hall, Dunoon  
opened at 3pm

Mr John A Groom

The hall will be fitted up with all kinds of Palms, Plants, Foliage, Flowers, Cut Blooms, and Sprays (which may be purchased), forming the most unique and natural Flower Show, all the exhibits being a marvellously close copy of nature.

A Contingent of these Afflicted Girls will be at work each day and evening making various kinds of flowers.

NO PAPER FLOWERS

This item was found in Dunoon Burgh Hall during building renovations from 2014-17. This ticket dropped down from the ceiling onto the builders' tearoom on September 6th – the same day that this event took place.

Credit: Dunoon Burgh Hall Archives



**Mr. JOHN A. GROOM**  
Expresses the hope that you will visit the **CRIPPLED GIRLS' FLORAL EXHIBITION**  
IN THE **TOWN HALL, DUNOON,**  
And see these **Crippled Girls** at work making their beautiful Flowers.

To be Opened on Wednesday, Sept. 6, 1905, at 3 p.m.  
Under the Presidency of **THE PROVOST (W. Warner, Esq.)**,  
Supported by the Local Ministers,  
And will also remain open on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, September 7, 8 and 9, from 3 to 9 p.m.

The Hall will be fitted up with all kinds of Palms, Plants, Foliage, Flowers, Cut Blooms, and Sprays (which may be purchased), forming the most unique and natural **Flower Show**, all the exhibits being a marvellously close copy of nature.

**A Contingent of these Afflicted Girls will be at work each day and evening making various kinds of flowers.**

**NO PAPER FLOWERS.**  
**ADMISSION FREE** Open Each Day from 3 to 9.  
Music each Evening.

[Please Turn Over

**'s Homes**  
and Training of  
a Crippled  
the late  
St. flesbury's  
and Flower Girls'  
an Mission



# John Groom's Crippleage

Wednesday 6 September, 1905

Artificial Floral Exhibition – Private Invitation

The Provost (W. Warner) requests the pleasure of the Company of  
(scored out) and friends at the opening of the crippled girls'  
Artificial Floral Exhibition.

This is an invitation to the above flower show on September 6th  
1905 which originated from an Australian family  
Credit: Castle House Museum



THE PROVOST

(W. WARNER)

*requests the pleasure of the Company of*

AT THE OPENING OF THE CRIPPLED GIRLS'

*and Friends*

*Artificial Floral Exhibition.*

In the TOWN HALL, DUNOON, on WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6th, 1905, at 3 p.m.

REV. WALTER BUTCHER, OF THE INSTITUTION, WILL GIVE A SHORT EXPLANATORY ADDRESS,

SUPPORTED BY THE LOCAL MINISTERS.

The Hall will be Fitted up as a NATURAL FLORAL EXHIBITION, with Palms, Plants, Foliage, Cut Blooms, Flowers, etc.  
by the Crippled Girls in connection with Mr. Groom's

WATERCRESS & FLOWER GIRLS' CHRISTIAN MISSION.

The Flowers will be for sale at Stalls presided over by influential local Ladies.

*A Contingent of Crippled Girls will be present each day Making Flowers,  
all of which are made of Silk, Satin, Velvet, and best Woven Material, and are such a close copy  
of nature as to make distinction most difficult.*

NO SUBSCRIPTION LIST OR COLLECTION.

MUSIC EACH EVENING

The Exhibition will also remain open on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, September 7, 8, and 9, from 3 to 9 p.m.

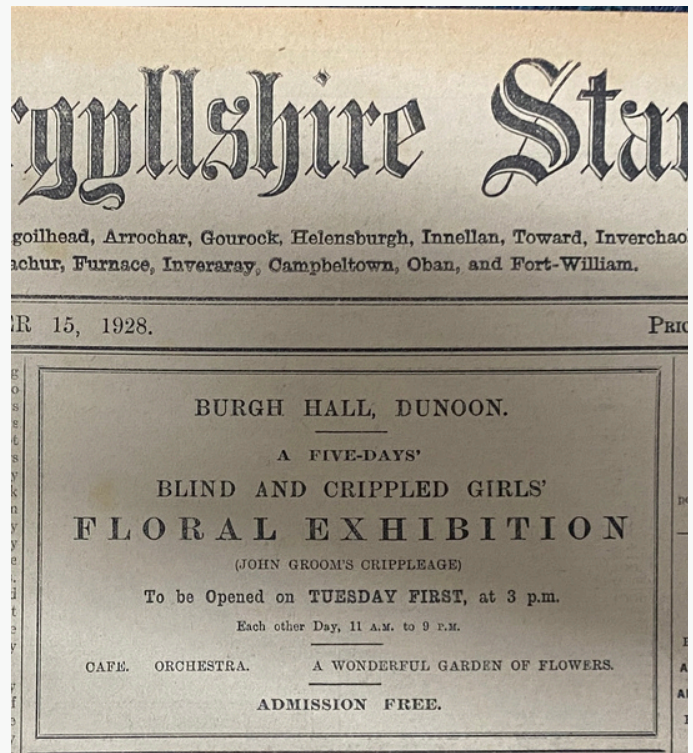


15 September 1928

A newspaper advertisement for Blind and Crippled Girls Floral Exhibition from Tuesday 1 October 1928 at Burgh Hall, Dunoon.

Observer and Argyllshire Standard

Credit: Dunoon Observer



## FLOWER GIRLS' MISSION.

To the Editor.

SIR,—I am desired by the Council of the John Groom Crippleage and Flower Girls' Mission to express our deep sense of gratitude and appreciation to the many kind friends in Dunoon and district who supported the recent blind and crippled girls' floral exhibition in the Burgh Hall, when £337 worth of flowers made by the girls were sold.

May I thank very sincerely and cordially the ladies who so nobly responded to our appeal for help as stall-holders, the ladies who helped in the tea-room, the local ministers, the Provost and Town Council, the Boy Scouts, and all the other kind friends who, by their sympathy and help, contributed to the success of the exhibition.

W. B. DRUMMOND,

Scottish Exhibition Manager.

24th September, 1928.

24 September 1928

Flower Girls' Mission

Letter to the Editor.

a letter from  
W.B.Drummond, Scottish  
Exhibition Manager from  
the Council of the John  
Groom Crippleage and  
Flower Girl's Mission, to  
thank the people of  
Dunoon for their recent  
support. £337 worth of  
flowers were sold at the  
above 5 day Floral  
Exhibition.

This is the equivalent of  
approximately £26,531 in  
2024.

Credit: Newspaper  
articles courtesy of  
Dunoon Observer





# Thanks go to:

Jenni Minto MSP

Colin McLelland

Moira McDonald and the family of Angus Murchison

Sandy and Morag Smith

Cowal Horticultural Society

Margaret Hubbard

John Stirling

Castle House Museum

Caitie Reid

David Dorren

Julie Forrester and the Dunoon Players

Hannah Clinch

Ewan Hamilton

Rosemary White

The children and staff at Kirn Primary School

This project has been possible with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund; Doors Open Day/Scottish Civic Trust; ACHA; and Argyll and Bute Council.

