

VOLUME FOUR

1950—1979



Our Story

A collection of minutes, pictures, programmes,
and anecdotes from the Ye Cronies Archives.

Collated by
David Cameron



CEAD MILE FAILTE

“One Hundred Thousand Welcomes”

Contents

Volume Four

	<i>Preface</i>	1
Chapter 1	<i>The 1950s</i>	2
Chapter 2	<i>The 1960s</i>	27
Chapter 3	<i>The 1970s</i>	51
Chapter 4	<i>Ye Cronies Centenary Celebrations</i>	94
Chapter 5	<i>Membership Records</i>	106
Chapter 6	<i>Acknowledgements & Sources</i>	108

END

Preface

Volume Four

The trouble with approaching the writing of this series in chronological order is that the closer you get to the present day, the more you need to be aware of those around you who can remember it better than the records claim!

My efforts to portray an honest account our club's history have always been sincere, but there is no doubt some error or misunderstanding will have been made along the way.

I always fear my biographies of individual members in particular are at risk offending relations of friends of them. Where this becomes the case I absolutely welcome correction and unreservedly apologise for my misunderstanding.

That all said, this volume has taken a surprising, and somewhat refreshing direction compared to previous decades as we now have living testimony and eye witness accounts to the key events in the club's history. Thanks to submissions from both members and performers, their memories have been a joy to read and I am sure you will appreciate them as much as I did.

In starting this volume, I was very concerned that there would be little to say about the 1950s and 1960s, as we have very little information beyond committee meeting minutes. What these minutes make clear, however, is that the club faced severe financial difficulties that fundamentally challenged its very existence.

Faced with rising costs, the 1950s saw the club return to its roots, inviting members to provide the club's entertainment. "Time waits for no man" and the saying goes, and this strategy did not have the desired effect, meaning evolution became the somewhat controversial route to survival.

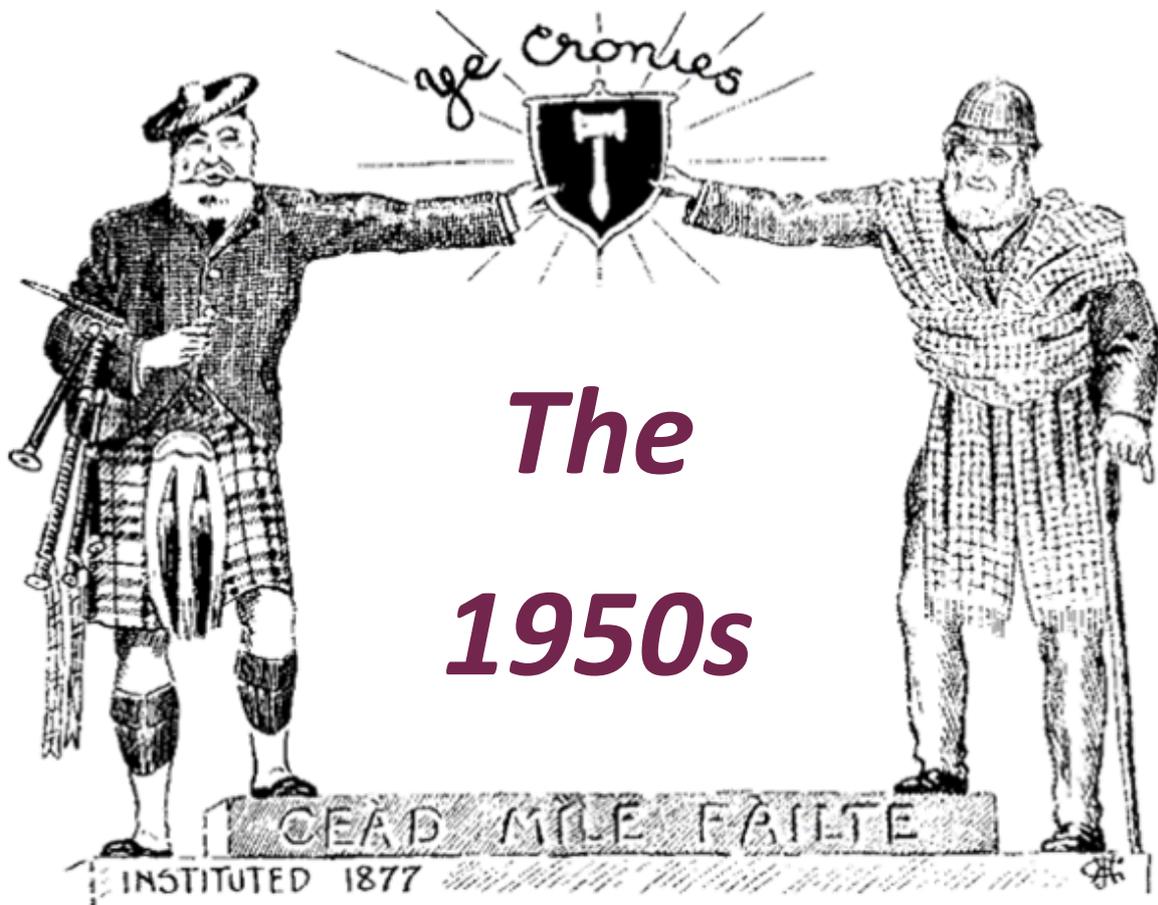
Luckily for us the written observations of long-time member John Watson provide a clear account of what the feelings of the membership were at the time, and once voted in as Concert Director alongside James Geddes, the club found renewed life, interest and success by focusing on the quality and variety of performances at a Cronies night.

Given the circumstances we are faced with today, with a whole season having been cancelled and falling membership, the lessons learned in these pages may act as a useful reminder that brave, even controversial, steps taken today can lead to greater rewards long into the future.

David Cameron
27th February 2021

Our Story

Chapter 1



The 1950s

Change of Venue | Cronies Performers | The Watson Interviews
James Denny Inglis | Guest Tokens | Ladies Evening 1953 | Cuthbertson Pianos
Centenary Celebrations | The Last Musical Director | Emilio Coia's Sketch

Cronies in the 1950s

Growing Concerns...

Following a decade that saw Ye Cronies persevere through World War II and work around rationing conditions thereafter, the 1950s saw the club face a number of growing challenges...

Managing Multiple Venues

The start of the 1950s saw Ye Cronies move to a new home in the form of the architecturally striking St. Enoch Station Hotel.

In an unusual move, the Ladies Evening would return to the Grosvenor after just one year due to negative feedback and so the club started running its events across two venues.



Annual General Meetings

Various approaches to the Club's AGM had been taken in the past, including a "mini" AGM concert at the start of the season exclusively for members.

Typically, the AGM was held at the first event of the season between dinner and the concert but with guests not allowed in attendance this caused some issues.

In 1957 the committee recognised this unnecessary disruption and agreed to reschedule the AGM, holding it prior to dinner going forwards - a schedule that remains today.

Financial Concerns

By 1950 the club's finances were under significant pressure. Whilst the club has never been a profit-making entity, venue and entertainment costs were rising at such a rate that they were at risk of overtaking the club's income quite early in the decade.

Unfortunately worse was to come in the 1960s, leading to questions on whether Ye Cronies had run its course...



Cronies in the 1950s

Growing Concerns...

One Year Presidential Reigns?



Throughout this decade there were various murmurs and discussions regarding the official length of Presidential terms.

Since being reduced in 1928 to a maximum of two years, there were some members who felt this was still too long and suggested a single year would be more appropriate.

The first formal discussion of this matter came at the end of 1950 when the incumbent President, Stanley Newton, asked to propose one-year terms and was willing to stand down accordingly. The Committee were non-committal and turned to Vice-President Thomas Sommerville who eventually convinced Stanley to remain for his two years.

This wouldn't be the end of the debate as opinions on the topic continued through to the 1970s where a formal vote would finally be held to settle the matter.

Balancing Amateur & Professional Performers

After an initial push to reduce the club's reliance on professional entertainment (to help reduce running costs), it was felt the quality and variety of performances at Cronies nights had suffered, with attendances reducing by the end of the decade.

Whilst being very conscious of its precarious financial situation, the club made the decision to return to a greater emphasis on professional performances, and to counter the risk of higher running costs began raising the prices of concert tickets appropriately.



In a testament to the passion and commitment to making the club a success, the committee were known by the end of the decade to invite professional performers to Cronies events as their guests, paying their performance fee out of their own pockets.

Needless to say the standards and quality of Cronies concerts saw an immediate uplift. Unfortunately, the higher cost to attend would meet some initial resistance as the 1960s began.

Ye Cronies Calendar

1950 - 1959

The Members Sign-in Book kept records of all events held in the 1950s

Year	Month	Date
1950	January	26
	February	23
	March	30
	October	05
	October	26
	November	30
	December	28
1951	January	18
	February	22
	March	29
	October	18
	November	29
	December	20
1952	January	31
	February	28
	March	27
	October	30
	November	25
	December	18

Year	Month	Date
1953	January	29
	February	26
	March	26
	October	29
	November	26
	December	17
1954	January	28
	February	25
	March	25
	October	28
	November	25
	December	30
1955	January	27
	February	24
	March	31
	October	20
	November	24
	December	29
1956	January	26
	February	23
	March	29
	October	29
	November	29
	December	27

Year	Month	Date
1957	January	31
	February	28
	March	27
	October	31
	November	28
	December	26
1958	January	30
	February	27
	March	20
	October	30
	November	27
	December	18
1959	January	29
	February	26
	March	26
	October	29
	November	26
	December	29

CANCELLED

Ladies Evening

No Records

AGM Concert

Setting the Scene

World events in the 1950s

- 1950** - *54-year-old William "Ned" Barnie becomes the first Scot to swim the English Channel.*
- 1951** - *American Disc Jockey Alan Freed coins the term "Rock n' Roll".*
- 1952** - *John Cobb is killed on Loch Ness attempting to break the world water speed record.*
- 1953** - *First James Bond novel "Casino Royale" is published by Ian Fleming.*
- 1954** - *First flight of Boeing 707 passenger jet.*
- 1955** - *Anti-pollution "Clean Air Act" is passed in Britain.*
- 1956** - *First Eurovision Song Contest is won by Switzerland.*
- 1957** - *First edition of "The Sky At Night" is shown on the BBC as the Soviet Union launch Sputnik 1.*
- 1958** - *Christmas Day is a public holiday in Scotland for the first time.*
- 1959** - *"The Sound of Music" by Rodgers & Hammerstein opens in New York.*

Our Timeline

The 1950s

1950s



1949/50 Season

Ordinary Meetings are moved to the St. Enoch Station Hotel with Ladies Evenings remaining at The Grosvenor.



7th April 1951

Ye Cronies' inaugural Concert Director, Bill Storry, passes away at the age of 83.



18th December 1952

Ye Cronies reaches its 75th anniversary.



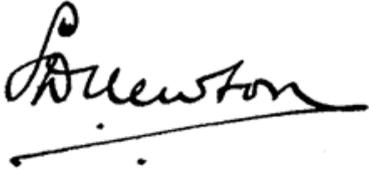
28th October 1954

The role of Musical Director is permanently retired following the death of Cyril A. Smith.

Committee Members

1950 - 1959

Ye Cronies Club Presidents



Stanley D. Newton
1950 - 1951



Thomas Sommerville
1951 - 1953



Howard Garvan
1953 - 1955



Andrew Letters
1955 - 1957



Charles J. Biggart
1957 - 1959



G. D. Robin
1959

Vice-President

1950	Thomas Sommerville
1951	Howard Garvan
1953	Andrew Letters
1955	Charles J. Biggart
1957	G. D. Robin
1959	John A. Lightbody

1950 - 53
1953 - 59
1953 - 56
1956 - 59
1959

Concert Director

W. Kerr Simpson
James Hepburn
R. G. McCrone
John A. Lightbody
John S. Wilkie

Secretary / Treasurer

1950 - 52	W. C. Campbell
1952 - 59	Geoffrey C. Duncan

1950 - 52
1952 - 53
1952 - 53
1952 - 53
1953 - 59

Musical Director

Cyril A. Smith
Duncan McKay

Accompanist

Duncan McKay
James H. Geddes

Committee & Honorary Members

1950 - 1959

Ye Cronies Committee Members

1949-1950	1950-1951	1951-1952	1952-1953	1953-1954	1954-1955	1955-1956	1956-1957	1957-1958	1958-1959
Thomas McCubbin	Charles D. Rigg		Charles J. Biggart		John Fielding		Thomas Hyndman		
James C. Dorsie	Andrew Letters		J.C. Neil			Walter Thornley			
W. Kerr Simpson		S.G. Askham		H.L. Finlay			William Law		
H.M. Dickson	Thomas Hyndman		G.D. Robin		John A. Lightbody			Dr. John Warren	
J. Ferrier Connell* / A. K. Stevenson		James Hepburn		Robert Murdoch		John G. Inglis			
T.W. Wilstencroft		D.A. Dewar		A.F. Osborne		Adam I. Templeton		Malcolm Allan	

* Passed away Nov 1949

Ye Cronies Honorary Members

1950



Mr. James D. Inglis

1950



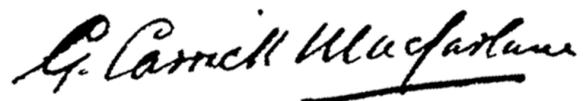
Mr. William C. Hamilton

1951



Mr. James C. Dorsie

1952



Mr. George C. Macfarlane

Change of Venue

St. Enoch Hotel

For the 1949/50 season, Ye Cronies had relocated its events to the recently refurbished St Enoch Station Hotel.

The St. Enoch Hotel was first built in 1875 and was at one point run by the brother of Albert Thiem who owned Cronies' previous venue The Windsor Hotel.



There is no clear explanation as to why Cronies felt the need to switch venues. Initial discussion was had in 1947 where it appears St. Enoch were keen for the club's business and must have made an offer that couldn't be refused.

Opening its doors for business in 1879, the St. Enoch Hotel was the largest station hotel in Scotland with over 200 bedrooms and 20 public rooms. The external architecture was designed by Thomas Wilson, a church architect from Hampstead.



Unfortunately whilst the building was generally well equipped, financial constraints meant the interior design was a visual disappointment and may explain why the first Ye Cronies Ladies Night held at the venue in 1950 was met with a fairly negative response from its guests. One such response was noted in the committee minutes from Mrs. Letters:

"...there wasn't the same atmosphere in St. Enoch Hotel as they had always enjoyed at such functions in the Grosvenor."

Such feedback led to Ladies Nights returning to the Grosvenor Hotel in 1952, where it would remain for another decade while ordinary Cronies events stayed at the St. Enoch.

Network rationalisation, and the infamous "Beeching cuts", saw the St. Enoch railway station close in 1966, followed by the Hotel in 1974.

Ye Cronies remained loyal to the hotel to its very end, likely being one of St. Enoch's final functions on 28th March 1974. By 1977, much to residents protests and anger, the hotel and railway buildings were demolished, making way for the shopping centre we see today.

Club Performers

1950—1959

By 1951 the committee recognised that the running costs of the club were rising at a significant rate. The increasing use of professional singers was seen as the reason for this high cost, and so the committee agreed that they should return to their roots as a club and further embrace the musical talents of its members.

The following members are listed as having been regular performers at Cronies nights during the 1950s:


Charles D. Rigg


T. Hyndman


Donald A. Dewar


Stanley Newton


J. C. Neil


A. Lawson


Bert Brisbane


John Watson


William Kerr Simpson


James Hepburn




R. G. McCrone


G. F. Duncan


J. L. Wallace


James T. Stoddart


Sam. G. Askham


James .C. Dorsie


Ian Smith


James McQueen


F. Elliot Dobie


James Chrystal

Calling in the Professionals

1950—1959

Following the strategy employed by the committee to battle its rising costs in running a concert, the number of professional performances in the 1950s was greatly reduced compared to the previous decade.

As seen below, only a handful of singers and instrumentalists would take to the Cronies stage between 1950 and 1959. It is worth noting that the majority were also invited solely to entertain at the very popular annual Ladies Evenings:

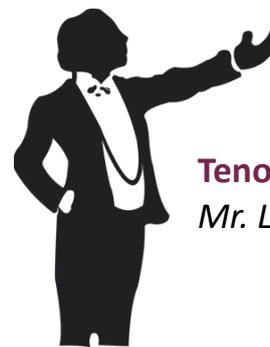
Soprano

Ms. Nan Caldwell
Ms. Ann Johnston
Mrs. Wilkie



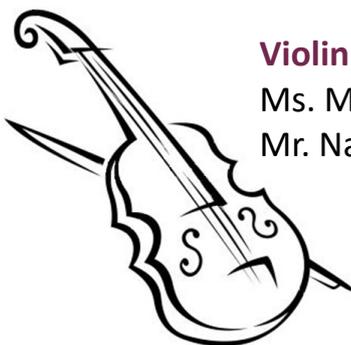
Tenor

Mr. Laurie



Violin & Bass

Ms. Margaret Smart
Mr. Nathan



Piano

Ms. Hyndman



Groups

The Mansefield Singers



The John Watson Interviews

Reflections of the 1950s

In April 2018, Ye Cronies lost its last living memory of the club's activities in the 1950s—former Concert Director, Honorary Member, and tenor, Mr. John Watson.

In the mid-1980s, as part of the committee's efforts to publish a written history of the Club, John took part in an interview with journalist Joe Stirling to record his memories of Ye Cronies since his first attendance in 1951.

At the turn of the century, John also contributed "Some Reflections" to a Members Directory published to celebrate the Year 2000 Millennium.



We are very fortunate to hold copies of both these pieces in the Cronies archive today and will recite passages from them throughout the remainder of the series, giving a first hand account of Cronies events from one of our most influential modern-day members.

Having been invited to sing the "Burns Grace" at a Cronies concert in 1951, John's first thoughts were quite surprising given what we know of the concert programmes in the 1930s and 1940s:

"Whereas in the "Ye Cronies" early days the programme was predominantly Scottish in character, by the Fifties the choice of music had become distinctly high-brow with a diet of Opera, German Lieder and Art song, while pianistic Cronies played Etudes, Sonatas and Bagatelles."

John put the evening's rather serious atmosphere down to committee member Charles Rigg who had strong connections to the Glasgow Choral Union and clearly held some sway over the night's choice of entertainment:

"They were pretty heavy going, with absolutely no comic relief ...and [the audience] were, or at least seemed, so very much older than me!"

The John Watson Interviews

Reflections of the 1950s

Reflecting in 2000, John noted that the 1950s were very much led by amateur performances compared to today's fully professional concerts:

“During the pre-entertainment dinner, the President of the day would take the names of members and guests prepared to perform and would later go down this list calling on Mr. So-and-So ‘for his pleasure’.

It may have pleased some...!”

Having become a welcome member of Ye Cronies in 1953, John began building his on records on each of the club's events but scribbling notes on the back of menu cards regarding the performances and his thoughts on them. At the time of John's passing he had amassed over 350 menu cards. To assist John in his efforts, the club started printing the names of performers on the reverse side of the menu cards, a practice that continues to this day.

Whilst we are still hoping to obtain copies of John's menu cards, he did share some thoughts in his reflections at the Millennium:

“How do I summarise the mass of information on these menus? Flipping through them, I find I tried my first jokes during the December 1957 meeting.

There was some opposition, with comments of ‘Lowering the tone!’, meaning I didn't try another joke for some five years!

Gradually, however, humour did become accepted despite these initial misgivings.”

By the end of the 1950s, John was a regular performer on the Ye Cronies stage, and highly respected for his musical abilities (and good humour!). The 1960s would see John step up to the position of Concert Director and would become an integral part of the running of the Club for the next 50 years.

Honorary Member

James Denny Inglis

In recognition of his 48 years as member of the club, James Denny Inglis was appointed honorary member of Ye Cronies in 1950.

James' family stretched across three of Glasgow's most renowned shipbuilding families - The Inglis, the Denny's and via Past President John Hamilton the Napiers.

Born to his mother Agnes Denny and father Dr. John Inglis in 1870, James would join the family shipbuilding business in the 1890s when his uncle, John Hamilton, became Ye Cronies President.

Due to the club's interest and preference for musical members, it would be James and his talents with the viola that would see him become a Cronies member in 1902. While we don't have any musical programmes from the early 1900s, it is more than likely that James would have performed on the Cronies stage whilst his uncle held the Chairman's gavel.

Outside of Ye Cronies, James was most responsible for the design and building of today's famous local paddle-steamers.



James D. Inglis



The Waverley

Launched in 1946, James was responsible for leading the design and build of this new ship following the sinking of the original Waverley during the Dunkirk evacuation in 1940, which was itself designed by his father.

The Maid of the Loch

Around the same time as becoming an honorary member, James led the design of this popular Loch Lomond steamer. Having sailed for the last time in 1981, it remains moored on the shores of Balloch and is undergoing significant renovation.



Today the old site of the A&J Inglis Pointhouse Shipyard has been replaced by the new Riverside Museum of Transport and Maritime.

James would pass away in 1953, but within club's ranks would be survived by his nephew, John G. Inglis, who went on to become Ye Cronies President in 1962.

Guest Tokens

12th December 1950

In the Committee minutes of 12th December 1950, reference was made to the retirement of “Guest Tokens” from Cronies events.

Such tokens have never been mentioned or referenced in previous minutes, but within the Ye Cronies archive a mysterious bag full of small leather coins with “Ye Cronies” engraved on them have been stored without explanation.



Measuring 3.5cm in diameter, it appears these coins were handed out to members to pass on to their guests and then collected prior to seats being taken on the night.

There is no record as to when these tokens were introduced, but demand for a seat at a Ye Cronies concert was certainly very high prior to the 1950s and this appears to have been the solution to controlling numbers and impromptu appearances from additional guests on the night.

As mentioned above, by the end of 1950 it was decided that there was no further need for the use of these tokens and so they were removed from operation. Given this decision coincided with the move to a new venue (St. Enoch Station Hotel), and the use of ‘Commissionaires’ to collect payments on the night, it may be that accommodating larger audiences (expected or otherwise) was no longer an operational concern for the club.



Ladies Evening Concerts

A return to the Grosvenor

As mentioned earlier, Ye Cronies attempted to switch the annual Ladies Night to the St. Enoch Station Hotel in 1950, but this was poorly received by the majority of guests who cited the lack of atmosphere and “glamour” offered by previous hosts, the Grosvenor.

Detailed records of each concert had become less common in the late 1940s and so we do not have any copies of the concert programmes performed during this period.

The only concert-related item we have in the Club’s archives for the 1950s is a solitary invite to the Ladies Evening held in 1953, where the concert had returned to the Grosvenor. Minutes show that each ticket cost £1/7/6d (£1.38 in today’s decimal).



Due to the large numbers attending the Ladies evenings, it was standard practice to not make use of the members sign-in book or the guestbook. The Club Secretary did however note the 1953 Ladies Evening attracted an audience of 161, including 42 members.

We also know that a Piper had been arranged by the President Howard Garvan, and Miss Nan Caldwell performed alongside accompanist, and future Concert Director, James Geddes.

Piano Hire

“The House of Famous Pianos”

In preparing for a Ladies Evening at the Grosvenor in 1953, the Ye Cronies committee noted that they would continue using the piano hire company J. D. Cuthbertson & Co.

J. D. Cuthbertson & Co. ran music stores that first appeared on the high street in the late 1890s and by the 1950s listed themselves as “The House of Famous Pianos”, running two large shops on Sauchiehall Street and Gilmour Street in Paisley.



J.D. Cuthbertson’s Glasgow store is now the site of a Tesco Metro.

Known more as a dealer of pianos rather than a manufacturer, Cuthbertson would often put his name onto their pianos in addition to the maker’s name and either sold or loaned them out locally, with the latter proving very profitable by the mid-20th century.



Piano hire had grown to unprecedented levels during WWII, partly due to the establishment of the Ministry of Transport’s “Glasgow and West of Scotland Music Trades Delivery Pool” (which Cuthbertson was a member of), but also by the very popular “Workers’ Playtime Concerts” held between 1942 and 1945.

During World War II, an average of 101 hired pianos were transported around Glasgow by John McIntosh & Sons to support various events. So popular was the Delivery Pool that it was still very much active in 1947 and was likely used by Ye Cronies to support their events.



Cuthbertson & Co. would continue their operations until the 1970s, and following the war effort they expanded into the sale and hiring of musical accessories, records and sheet music.

Described as “a magnet for classical music lovers” they sold a wide range of recordings from the world’s great orchestras and became very popular for their listening booths, where customers could hear the hits of the day.

Diamond Jubilee

Muted Celebrations



At the end of 1952, Ye Cronies had reached its 75th year of operation, an anniversary that sitting Club President Thomas Sommerville proudly remarked upon when he was elected at the start of the season.

It appears members were not inclined to mark this achievement in any distinctive way, and the 18th December concert ran like any other.

The Committee minutes immediately preceding and following the December concert sadly made no mention of the Club's birthday either, with far more focus being placed upon plans for their annual Ladies Evening.

In recognition of this milestone, we have included an extract from the member's sign-in book for this concert showing those who were present.

Diamond Jubilee

Members Sign-in Book

Thursday 18th December 1952

Thomas Sammeville

W. H. Miller

W. H. Miller

W. H. Miller

W. H. Miller

Charles D. Rigby

High Body
Rich Body

Geo. K. Johnstone

A. K. Stewart

At Home

R. G. Gibson

J. H. Gibson

James Gibson

Cyril Russell

Robert Gibson

W. H. Miller

Thomas Sammeville

W. H. Miller

David Longwell

W. H. Miller

Cyril A. Smith

The Last Musical Director

Following the unexpected death of James Crossland-Hirst prior to the 1943/44 season, the Cronies committee met to determine how best to secure the services of a new Musical Director on the 8th November:

This Meeting had been called to discuss the names of any likely persons to fill the vacancy of Hon. Musical Director, caused by the death of the late Mr. J. Crossland Hirst, but Mr. Simpson explained that since calling the Meeting he had received a letter from Mr. W.H. McDougall about an interview which he had had with Mr. Cyril A. Smith, and that Mr. Smith was very willing to act in any capacity the Committee thought fit, pending the official appointment.

The President explained that Mr. Smith was now a Member of the Club and thought it was most gratifying to learn of his Office.

The Committee heartily endorsed this remark and the Meeting closed.

By the 1940s the role of Musical Director had evolved from its original duties of creating each concert programme to also providing accompaniment to each artiste's performance.

With just five days notice, Mr. Smith arranged his first Ye Cronies concert programme and played accompaniment to the performers on 13th November 1943.

Minutes of Committee Meeting held on Monday, 14th February, 1944 at 12 noon, within the Hon. Secy's Office, 182 West Regent Street.

Present. A full Committee attended.

Business. Mr. Simpson explained the purpose of the Meeting was to discuss the appointment of Mr. Cyril A. Smith as Hon. Musical Director and to decide what might be offered to Mr. C. Smith by way of Honorarium for his invaluable help during the current Session.

With little discussion, the Meeting was unanimous in voting the sum of £10:10/-., to Mr. Smith for the current year and that thereafter the sum should be £15:15/-. It was further agreed that he remain an Ordinary Member meantime.

Following two further concerts in December and January, his position as Concert Director was officially confirmed and Cyril A. Smith would go on to hold the role for the next 8 years.

Cyril A. Smith

The Last Musical Director

It's a near certainty that veteran Concert Director Bill Storry will have assisted in agreeing the following programme, but at such short notice Smith would have been responsible for supporting the artists on the night.

<u>Programme.</u>		
<u>13th 11. 43</u>		
<u>Song</u>	" <u>The Floral Dance</u> "	<u>Mr. H. Findlay</u>
<u>Song.</u>	" <u>The Gentle Lark</u> "	<u>Miss Ferrier</u>
<u>Violin Solo</u>	" <u>Tägeneweisen</u> " (Parasale)	<u>Mr. Whitehouse</u> <small>Leader Scottish Orchestra</small>
<u>Humorous interlude</u>	_____	ex Pres: <u>J. A. Burns</u>
<u>Song</u>	" <u>Where are you wae!</u> "	<u>Mr. Henderson</u> <small>Son. Tenor</small>
<u>Piano forte Duet</u>	" <u>Jamfa</u> " (selection)	<u>Miss M. Dougal & Smith</u>
<u>Song</u>	" <u>The Jolly old Cavalier</u> "	<u>Wm Storry</u>
<u>Song</u>	" <u>Morning</u> " (Speaks)	<u>J. T. Stoddart</u>
<u>Humorous</u>	_____	<u>T. Brown.</u>
<u>Song</u>	" <u>Four Jolly Sailors men</u> "	<u>Mr. A. Letters</u>
<u>Song</u>	" <u>Waltz song</u> " from Tom Jones	<u>Miss Ferrier</u>
<u>Violin Solo</u>	" <u>Hejre Kati</u> " (Herby)	<u>Mr. Whitehouse</u>
<u>Accompanist</u>	_____	<u>Mr. Cyril Smith</u>

Cyril A. Smith

The Last Musical Director



Born in Staffordshire, England, little is known about Mr. Cyril Arthur Smith's life prior to joining Ye Cronies' in 1942 at the age of 50.

Responding to the National Registration Act of 1915, Smith enlisted in the army on 13th October 1915 where he stated his occupation as motorcyclist, with particular "touring and town-riding" experience with Triumph and Ariel machinery.



Described in his army medical as having brown hair, blue eyes and standing at 5'5" tall, the 22 year old Smith was assigned to the Royal Engineers' special reserve (motorcyclist) section, serving in France until 18th June 1919.



Upon his return from service, Smith appeared to have picked up the "musical bug" as by the 1920s his new profession was that of a "Ship's Band Master", working mainly out of Liverpool with the Canadian Pacific Line, and later the Pacific Steam Navigation Company.

By 1927, Smith was a resident of Glasgow and had married a fellow "southerner" in Gladys Handford. It's believed he continued working on various ships, and may even have crossed paths with Past President Alan Duncan who took a cruise from Liverpool to Chile in 1938 shortly before the outbreak of World War II.

After 9 seasons as Ye Cronies Musical Director, Cyril A. Smith started to show signs of liver damage by the end of the 1951/52 season in the form of jaundice. Despite the confidence of both Smith and Cronies in him making a full recovery, his condition would gradually worsen until he suffered a haptic coma in 1955, passing away 3 days later at the age of 62.

Smith would be the last official Musical Director of Ye Cronies as the club began placing more emphasis on the duties of the Concert Director.

Initially Smith's role as accompanist was filled by fellow pianist Duncan McKay, but in 1953 new member James H. Geddes would take up the role on a more permanent basis, becoming the official Cronies accompanist for the next 28 years.

Cyril A. Smith

Drama at Sea

One of the more prominent ships Cyril worked on as Band Master in the 1920s was the SS Metagama.

Built in 1915 for Canadian Pacific Railway, the Metagama initially served as a troopship during World War I before resuming her original purpose as an Atlantic passenger liner.



Serving a popular route with immigrants between Liverpool and Saint John, New Brunswick, the Metagama would run this service until 1931 before the Great Depression forced it to be sold for scrap metal in 1934.

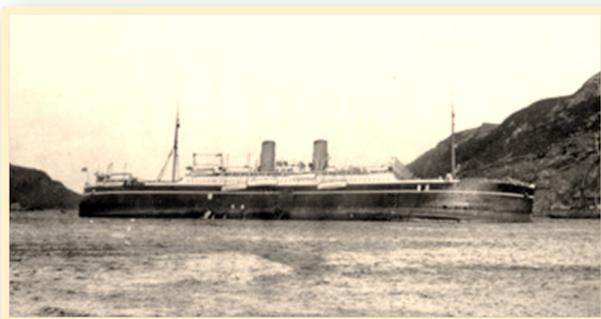
It was, however, in 1924 that the SS Metagama (with Mr. Smith and his band on-board) would tempt fate when it departed Liverpool on Friday 13th June.

One week after their departure, the Metagama hit the warmer waters of the Gulf Stream and entered a thick fog that forced the ship to reduce its speed and intermittently sound her horn to alert other passing ships.

Unfortunately such precautions did not prevent an Italian steamer, the SS Clara Camus, from accidentally colliding with the passenger ship, cutting a 15-foot long gash in its side.

As an S.O.S. message was sent out, the ship's lower compartments started taking on water and listing to his side.

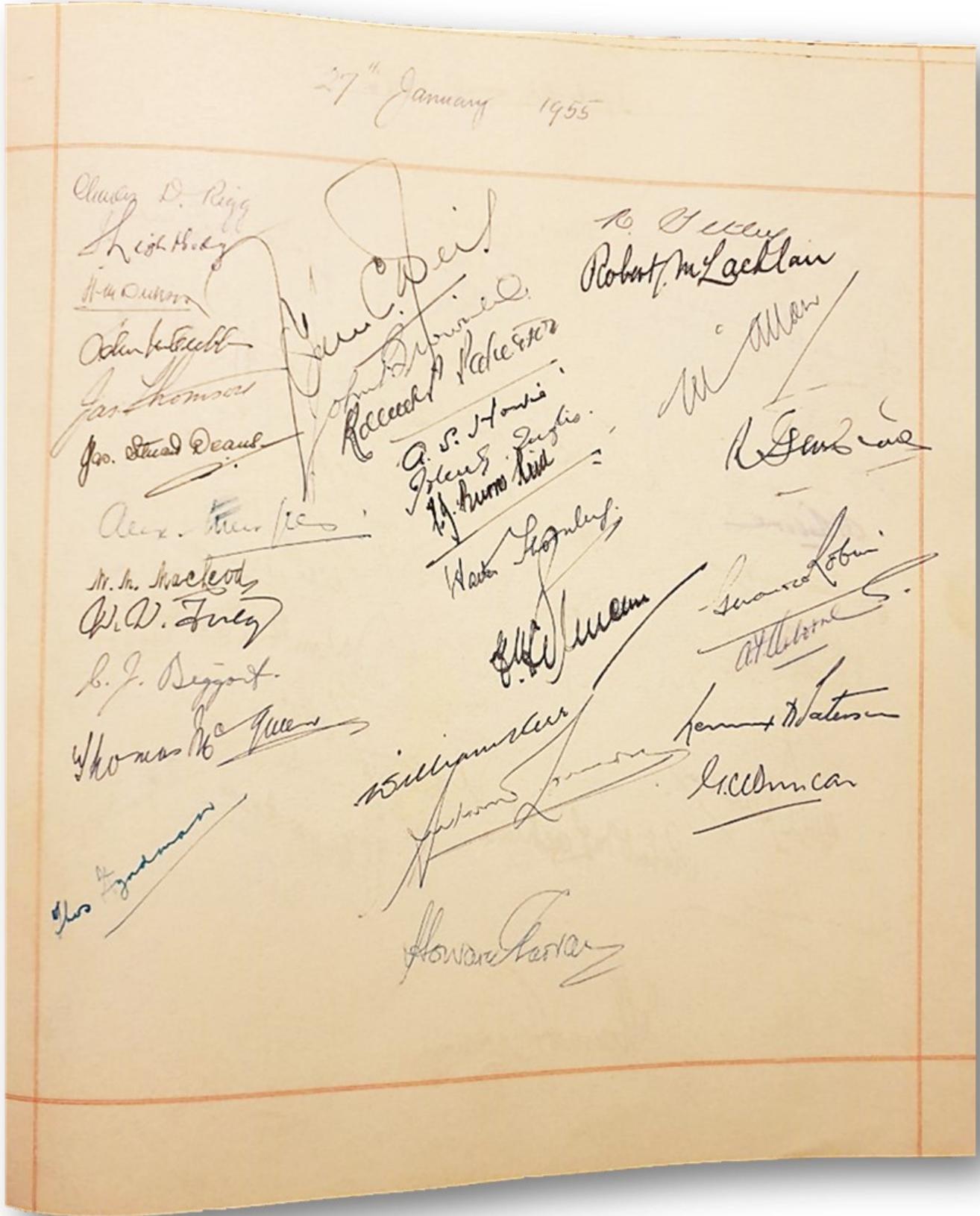
Stories of the Titanic's fatal sinking just 12 years prior were very much still fresh in people's memories, including the ship's band who gathered on the deck and struck up a "medley of airs" to calm the nervous passengers.



Fortunately the ocean remained calm and the damaged liner limped towards St. John's and made it into the harbour at a 35 degree angle and with 14 feet of seawater sloshing about in her hold.

Members Sign-in Book

27th January 1955



“Capturing the Moment”

By Emilio Coia (1959)

On the 29th January 1959, Ye Cronies hosted a very special guest to the club’s first concert of the new year—Scottish artist and widely published caricaturist Emilio Coia.

A student of the Glasgow School of Art, Coia had made his name in the early 1930s working in advertising.

Following the Second World War he contributed sketches to various national newspapers and television programmes where he would speak entertainingly on a wide range of subjects whilst producing caricatures and sketches.

As a guest at Ye Cronies, Coia took the opportunity to pencil a sketch on the back of a menu card as John Watson took to the stage to sing a three-and-a-half minute tenor solo.

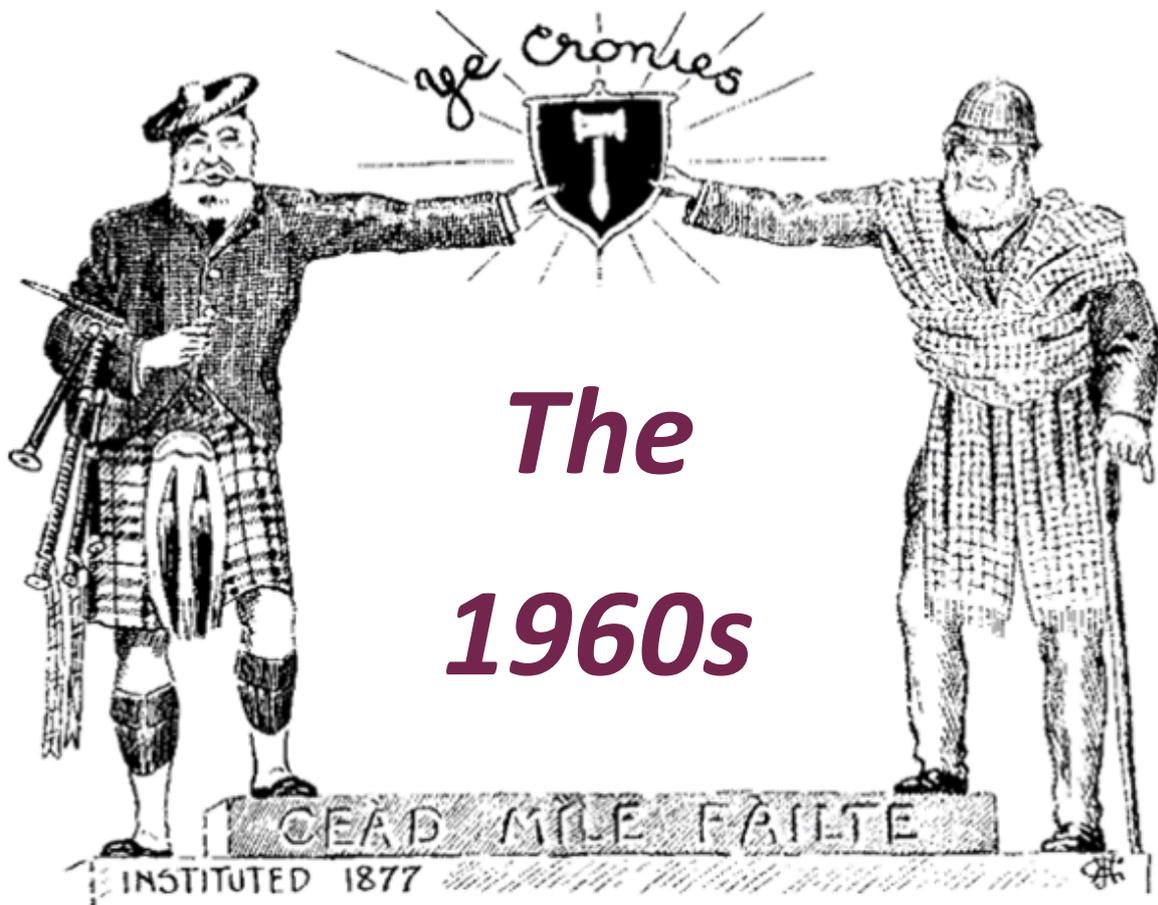


A treasured possession of John’s, this sketch was re-printed in the club’s special “Year 2000” Millennium edition of its members directory.

Coia, honoured and acclaimed for his professional work, would go on to be elected as President of the Glasgow Art Club in 1961, whilst John would become Ye Cronies’ Concert Director a year later in 1962.

Our Story

Chapter 2



The 1960s

New Concert Directors | Ye End of Ye Cronies? | Sourcing new Talent
Ladies Evening 1961 | President John G. Inglis | A New Children's Charity
Lost Treasure Found | Establishing a Choir | Club Finances
A Vote of Thanks

Cronies in the 1960s

A Decade of 'Self-Discovery'

The first half of the 1960s saw Ye Cronies question whether it had much of a future left. With rising costs, falling attendances, and a higher turnover of Office Bearers, there were a multitude of issues that were coming to a head.

Fortunately, through the passionate dedication of a few key members, the Club faced up to this test and by the latter half of the decade the club had re-found its purpose and was beginning to thrive once again.

The Decade of Single-Year Presidents

Rather curiously, the early 1960s saw two Presidents forced to step down from the Chair after only one year each. Not since the sudden passing of Wilfred MacDougall in 1947 had the Club seen such short-reigns.

In 1960 Mr. Gerard D. Robin stepped down "on doctor's orders" due to poor health with his Vice-President, John A. Lightbody, being voted in as President in 1961.

Mr. Lightbody's was the next President to serve just one year in 1962/63, this time citing ongoing work and travel commitments that would prevent him from fulfilling the duties of Chairman for a second consecutive year.

The final resignation during this decade was by Vice-President Mr. Robert Murdoch in 1966. Like Mr. Inglis before him, Mr. Murdoch cited travel commitments that would prevent him from even taking on the role of President. Fortunately this was realised in his first year as Vice-President and so a suitable candidate was found to replace him in the form of Mr. Andrew Stenhouse in 1966/67.

Several members had discussed the 'need' to reduce Presidential terms to one year for quite some time, primarily due to the need for Presidents to serve 2-years as Vice-President, totalling 4-years on the committee. These latest resignations would add fuel to these discussions and would finally come to a head at an AGM in the 1970s.



Cronies in the 1960s

A Decade of 'Self-Discovery'



Ye Cronies Ladies Evenings

For the last 11 years, the club had operated across two hotels - St. Enoch for ordinary concerts, and the Grosvenor for Ladies Evening.

The club's AGM in October 1960 saw concerns raised regarding the poor acoustics at the Grosvenor Hotel, and so it was agreed that the Ladies Evening would be moved to the St. Enoch Hotel for the 1962/63 season.

Unlike the last attempt to host a Ladies Evening at the St. Enoch in 1951, the 1963 edition was a rousing success, returning Cronies to a single-venue venture.

Commissionaires

A small but interesting sidenote during this decade was the use of a Commissionaire, whose role was to collect payments from members as they arrived to each Cronies concert. This position was introduced in 1960 and held by Sergeant Major Churchley who, despite never being a Cronies member, remained in the role for the next 26 years.



Under New Management

After 10 years of service as Secretary and Treasurer, Geoffrey C. Duncan chose to step down from the committee and Chartered Accountant James Stuart Deans was voted in to take his place at the 1962 Annual General Meeting.

The change in tone and detail of the committee minutes from this point on were very distinctive in their analysis and forecasting of the Club's general health. Given his professional background in the liquidation of companies, it's perhaps unsurprising that James' attention to these details proved pivotal in overcoming the difficult period the club was facing.

An amiable and easy-going gentleman, Mr. Deans was well acquainted with his new duties as he held the same position with the Sandyhills Golf Club. Aided by his business secretary Miss. Watson, James would remain in this role with Ye Cronies for the next 18 years.

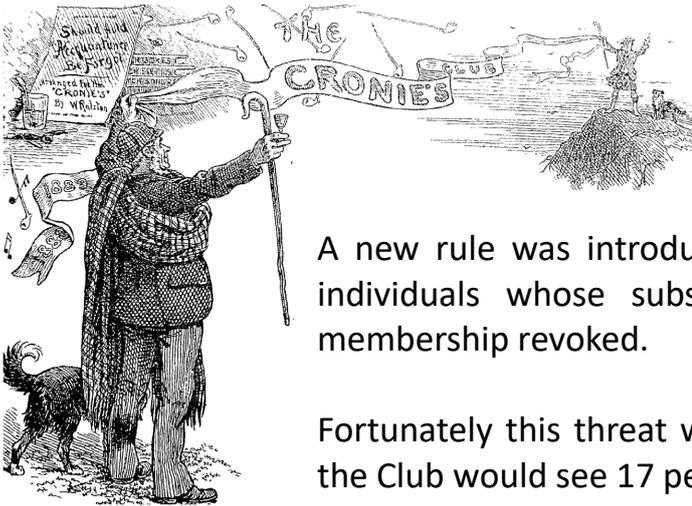
By tightening up the club's operational running costs, encouraging the growth of its membership, and introducing new beneficiaries to the annual Ye Cronies Children's Charity fundraiser, James' efforts ensured the future of the club as we know it today.

Cronies in the 1960s

A Decade of 'Self-Discovery'

Striking Off Members

Non-attending members had been an issue since World War 2, but the committee were unwilling to act upon this given the circumstances at the time.



With James Stuart Deans being voted in as the club's latest Secretary & Treasurer at the 1962 AGM, his first priority was made clear by the committee.

A new rule was introduced to the Club's constitution whereby any individuals whose subscription was in arrears, would see their membership revoked.

Fortunately this threat was used sparingly, but over the next 8 years the Club would see 17 people struck off the club's membership list.

A Fresh Musical Perspective

Faced with all these initial challenges, the Club would re-assert itself as a "go-to" social event by 1965, primarily due to the efforts of new co-Concert Directors John Watson and James Geddes.

One element of the club's running that was going through a tumultuous time was that of the Concert Directorship. Over a 15 year period the club had seen 8 directors come and go, an unprecedented turnover since the retirement of William Storry who had neem a stalwart in that role for 41 years.

Much like their predecessors Bill Storry and James Hirst, Watson and Geddes became a familiar presence at Cronies nights for the next 19 years, re-establishing some stability to the quality and content of the club's concerts.

Through John's many connections within local and national musical institutions, Ye Cronies would see his average attendance figures shoot up from 52 members and guests in 1962 to 92 and more by 1967.

The changes brought in by Geddes and Watson reinvigorated the club and its fortunes with demand for membership and concert tickets increasing dramatically over the course of the 1960s.

Ye Cronies Calendar

1960 - 1969

The Members Sign-in Book kept records of all events held in the 1960s

Year	Month	Date
1960	January	28
	February	25
	March	31
	October	29
	November	24
	December	29
1961	January	26
	February	23
	March	30
	October	26
	November	30
	December	28
1962	January	25
	February	22
	March	29
	October	25
	November	29
	December	26

Year	Month	Date
1963	January	31
	February	28
	March	28
	October	31
	November	23
	December	19
1964	January	30
	February	27
	March	26
	October	29
	November	26
	December	17
1965	January	28
	February	25
	March	25
	October	28
	November	25
	December	16
1966	January	27
	February	24
	March	31
	October	27
	November	24
	December	15

Year	Month	Date
1967	January	26
	February	23
	March	30
	October	26
	November	23
	December	21
1968	January	18
	February	29
	March	28
	October	31
	November	28
	December	19
1969	January	31
	February	27
	March	27
	October	30
	November	21
	December	18

CANCELLED

Ladies Evening

No Records

Setting the Scene

World events in the 1960s

- 1960 - *The Barrowland Ballroom re-opens in Glasgow following a fire in 1958.*
- 1961 - *“Seawards the Great Ships” is the first Scottish film to win an Academy Award.*
- 1962 - *Scottish Opera, Scotland’s national opera company, is founded by Alexander Gibson*
- 1963 - *Scotland’s Jim Clark wins his first Formula One World Championship.*
- 1964 - *The first part of the M8 motorway between Glasgow and Edinburgh is opened.*
- 1965 - *U.S. astronaut, Ed White, and Soviet Union cosmonaut, Alexei Leonov, complete their first space walks.*
- 1966 - *St. Enoch Railway station officially closed.*
- 1967 - *The Queen Elizabeth II is launched onto the Clyde, Scotland’s largest ever built ship.*
- 1968 - *The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland permits the ordination of women as ministers*
- 1969 - *Voting age is reduced to 18 years in Britain.*

Our Timeline

The 1960s

1960s



October 1962

John G. Inglis, descendent of the renowned Glasgow shipbuilder A&J Inglis is elected Ye Cronies President.



27th October 1966

The “Jack Duncan” Golf Cup is recovered after a 28-year absence, resurrecting the Cronies ‘Golf Outing’.



26th October 1967

Dr. John Warren establishes the Ye Cronies Choir, providing a quorum to sing the Burns Grace.



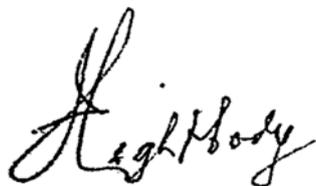
23rd November 1967

The *Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain* become the second beneficiary of Cronies’ annual Charity Fundraiser.

Committee Members

1960 - 1969

Ye Cronies Club Presidents



John A. Lightbody
1960 - 1962



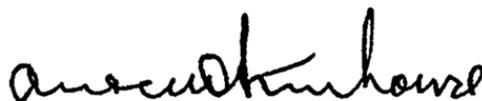
John G. Inglis
1962 - 1963



William Law
1963 - 1965



John Warren
1965 - 1967



Andrew Stenhouse
1967 - 1969



Lennard. Du Feu
1969

Vice-President

1960	John G. Inglis	1960 - 61
1962	William Law	1961 - 62
1963	John Warren	1962 - 69
1965	Robert Murdoch	1962 - 69
1966	Andrew Stenhouse	
1967	L. E. Du Feu	
1969	W. Boyd Innes	1967 - 69

Concert Director

John S. Wilkie
R. M. Hunter
John Watson
James Geddes

Secretary / Treasurer

1960 - 62	Geoffrey C. Duncan	1960 - 69
1962 - 69	James Stuart Deans	

Choir Master

John Warren

Accompanist

James Geddes

Committee & Honorary Members

1960 - 1969

Ye Cronies Committee Members

1959 - 1960	1960 - 1961	1961 - 1962	1962 - 1963	1963 - 1964	1964 - 1965	1965 - 1966	1966 - 1967	1967 - 1968	1968 - 1969
Thomas Hyndman	Robert McLachlan		W. Boyd Innes			L.E. Du Feu	W. Boyd Innes		
Alex Sim		John Marshall			Robert D. Chalmers		George Webster		
William Law	James Stuart Deans		Robert Stephen	Alex Sim		Andrew Hunter			
John Warren		William Law	R.G. McCrone		Louis Stewart		William M. Laurie		
J. White Hepburn		John Warren	Robert Murdoch		Thomas Donald		James B. MacWilliam		
Malcolm Allan		David J.P. Naismith			R.H. McLauchlan		James A. Turner		

Ye Cronies Honorary Members

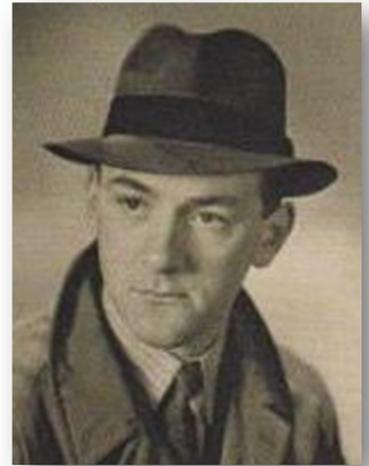
NONE

The John Watson Interviews

Reflections of the 1960s

Following the decision in the late 1950s to place more emphasis on professional performers (as opposed to entertainers from within the membership), John Watson's reputation in, and connections within, Scotland's performing arts sector made him an influential presence at Ye Cronies Committee meetings.

By the start of the 1960s James Geddes had established himself as the Cronies leading accompanist, and John had stood in for the incumbent Concert Director when required since becoming a member himself in 1953.



When, in April 1962, John S. Wilkie and Robert M. Hunter announced their intention to retire from their Concert Directorships, the committee quickly turned to John Watson and Ye Cronies accompanist James Geddes to take charge in finding a suitable replacement.

By October 1962, Geddes and Watson had clearly struggled to find "suitable candidates" for the Concert Directorship as at the AGM it was themselves who were being voted in for the role!

In becoming Concert Director, John noted that the position:

*"...allowed me to bring in principal singers from the operatic clubs
I was associated with [and] largely became the format
during the 1960s...."*

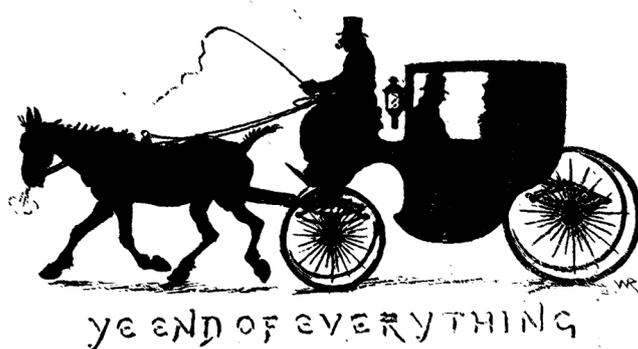
*...another generally accepted change for the better around this time
was the introduction of humour.*

*I do remember some excellent evenings when
the members of the Orpheus Club would provide
musical entertainment spiced with humour
provided by that uniquely funny "patter man" of Gilbert and Sullivan,
Bobby Hunter, singing the quick "patter" songs of Koko,
Jack Point and many others."*

The John Watson Interviews

The End of Ye Cronies?

Under “Any Other Competent Business” at the 1962 AGM, former Concert Directors Messrs Willie and McCrone raised concerns that the club’s falling attendance numbers, and precarious finances might require the committee to consider disbanding the Club’s activities altogether.



As shocking as this may sound today, the concern was not without reason as the '62 season was starting with one of its lowest membership numbers in quite some time at 72, and average concert attendances had hit an all time low of 52.

John Watson noted in his own reflections that:

“At one particular evening in the St. Enoch Hotel, only 25 people were present...At this time the mushrooming ownership of television sets was an undoubted factor.”

John went on to recall that the popularity of big-budget post-war musicals like “Carousel”, “Oklahoma”, and “South Pacific” meant a Cronies concert would frequently see 30 or 40 members and guests in attendance.

In hindsight, it could be argued John alongside his co-Concert Director James Geddes relished the challenge this threat posed to their beloved club:

“[Although] despairing voices, airing the demise of the Cronies, were growing in number and volume, a transformation was to halt the decline and, indeed, reverse the trend”

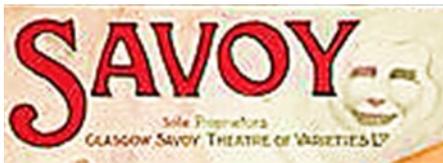
Thankfully the committee felt the same as Geddes and Watson worked with the committee to resurrect the fortunes of the club over the remainder of the decade.

The John Watson Interviews

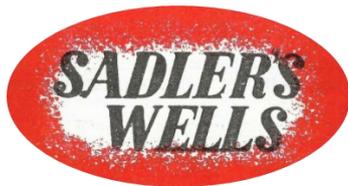
Sourcing new talent in the '60s

Through John Watson's connections as the new Ye Cronies Concert Director, in his own words:

"The level of performers was raised by the introduction of artistes from the Savoy Club, Orpheus Club, and Glasgow Grand"



As far as guest appearances are concerned, the first big 'coup' came in the 1960 as retold by John in the 1980s:



"I wrote to the Sadler's Wells Company, offering a 7 guineas fee for appearances by the company's leading artistes. The company's reply indicated that a 3-figure sum would be more appropriate. Finally a fee of 10 guineas was agreed upon"

Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama

Working somewhat "out of sight" of the RSAMD, who frowned upon students taking up "gigs", John also started introducing young singers from the Academy. Two of John's personal favourites included:



Patricia Hay (Soprano)

"a great favourite with Ye Cronies, subsequently (not consequently) going on to achieve starring roles with Scottish Opera"

Phyllis Cannan (Mezzo-Soprano)

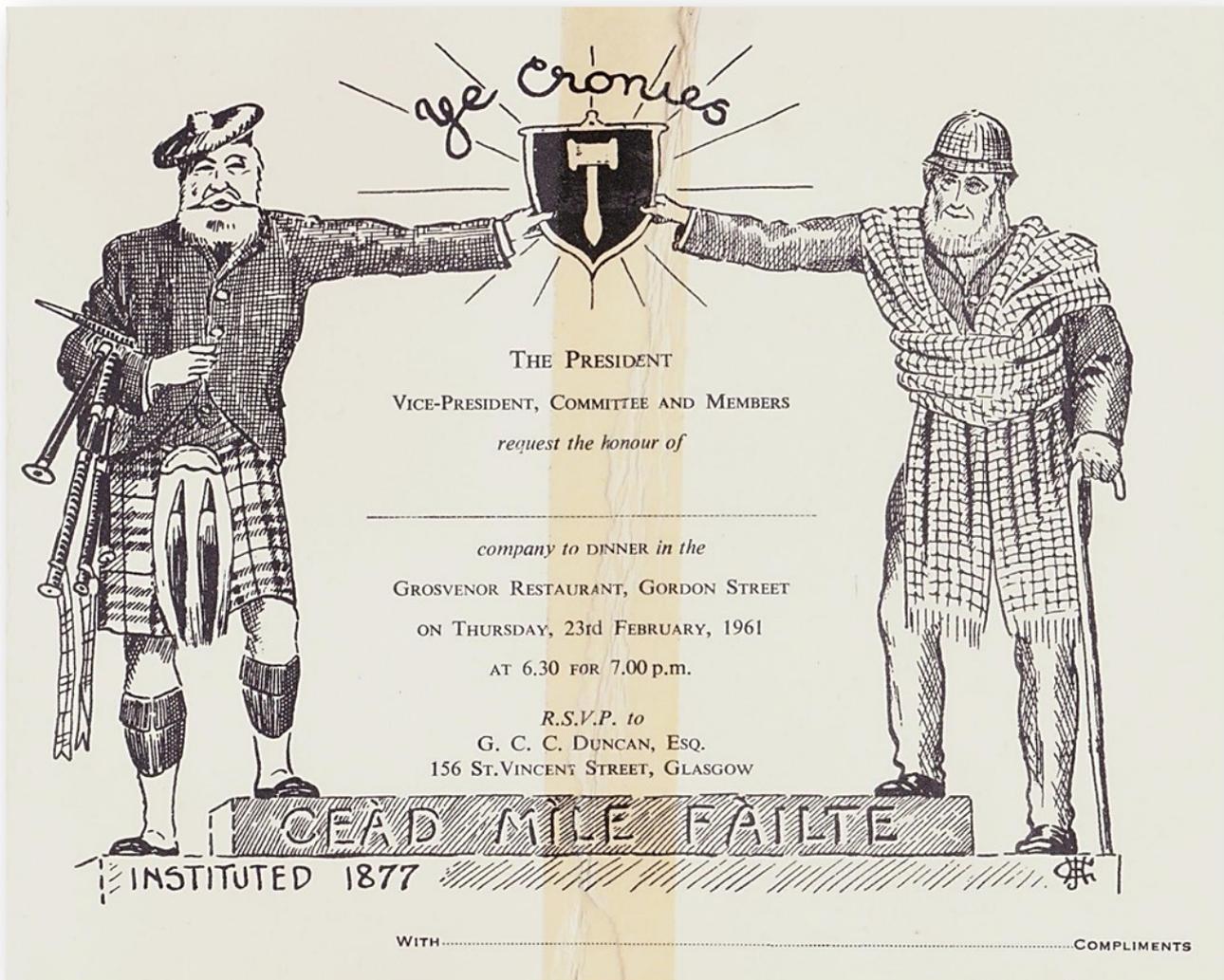
"Another of our well loved guests, [Phyllis] became a prima donna with English National Opera and Covent Garden"



With such esteemed performances on the Cronies stage every month, by 1967 the club would boast 100 members and consistently see an average attendance of over 90 between 1967 and 1969.

Ladies Evening Ticket

23rd February 1961



Club President

1962 / 1963



JOHN GODFREY INGLIS

b. 2 Sept. 1904 d. [Unknown] 1988

Born in Renfrewshire in 1904, John Godfrey Inglis was the second member of the Inglis shipbuilding family to join Ye Cronies after James Denny Inglis.

According to a speech given at Ye Cronies' centenary dinner, John performed as a guest of the club in 1924 at age 20. Being a farmer by trade, John's first taste of a Cronies concert was, however, short-lived as he moved down south to work in the farmlands surrounding Castle Cary in Somerset.

John built a strong reputation within the English farming community, eventually becoming Somerset's Chairman of the National Farmers' Union of England and Wales.

This interest in representing his peers led to John's interest in supporting the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1933, where John eventually became the Deputy Marketing Officer of the English Milk Marketing Board, responsible for promoting the manufacture and distribution of milk produce.



1951 saw John make a grand return to Glasgow as he was head-hunted to become the Chief Marketing Officer of the Scottish Milk Marketing Board.

Having been invited to Ye Cronies events as a guest of his uncle, Honorary Member James Denny Inglis, John joined the club a year after James' passing in 1953.

In 1954, John was instrumental in setting up 'The Cheese Bureau', an organisation whose objective was to promote the health benefits of cheese across British, New Zealand, Australian, and Canadian markets—most notably through their uniquely humorous advertisements.

Club President

1962 / 1963



In the same year John was promoting the benefits of dairy products to the public, he also setup and Chaired the Company of Scottish Cheesemakers who focused on the quality of Scottish cheese through the creation of a certification scheme.

All these efforts did not go unnoticed as John was promoted to General Manager of the Scottish Milk Marketing Board in 1958.

The ethos of the Board at this time was to travel extensively and observe how milk production was handled and operated in other countries, and so it came as a surprise to John as much as anyone when he was voted in as the 24th Ye Cronies President in 1962.

As previously mentioned, John was a member of the Inglis family, who's heritage stretched back to the Clyde Shipbuilders. In becoming the President of Ye Cronies, he was also the second of his extended family to achieve this position.

Whilst the Club had already voted two other "2nd generation" Presidents—namely the Alan Duncan (1938) and Thomas Somerville (1951)—John's familial predecessor was none other than John Hamilton, the longest-reigning Chairman of the club. John Hamilton being Inglis' great-uncle through his grandmother's side of family.

Unfortunately the demands on John's time from the various firms he headed up meant he faced a difficult decision at the end of his first year as Cronies President. Recognising that he would be unable to attend many of the Cronies events in the 1963/64 season he reluctantly became the first President to voluntarily resign from the Chairmanship.



Inglis [right] at work, 1959

Whilst this was an unusual move, the membership respected his honesty in forecasting his commitments to Cronies. There was absolutely no animosity between John and the Club, and he continued as a very well respected Past President for many years to come.

John was awarded an OBE for his services to the dairy industry in 1968, a year before he retired from professional life, handing over his General Manager role to fellow Cronies member, and close confidant, Ian McAlpine.

In retirement, John still made himself known in Cronies circles, going on to win the Jack Duncan golf trophy on two occasions in 1972 and 1975.

Children's Charity Fundraiser

A New Beneficiary

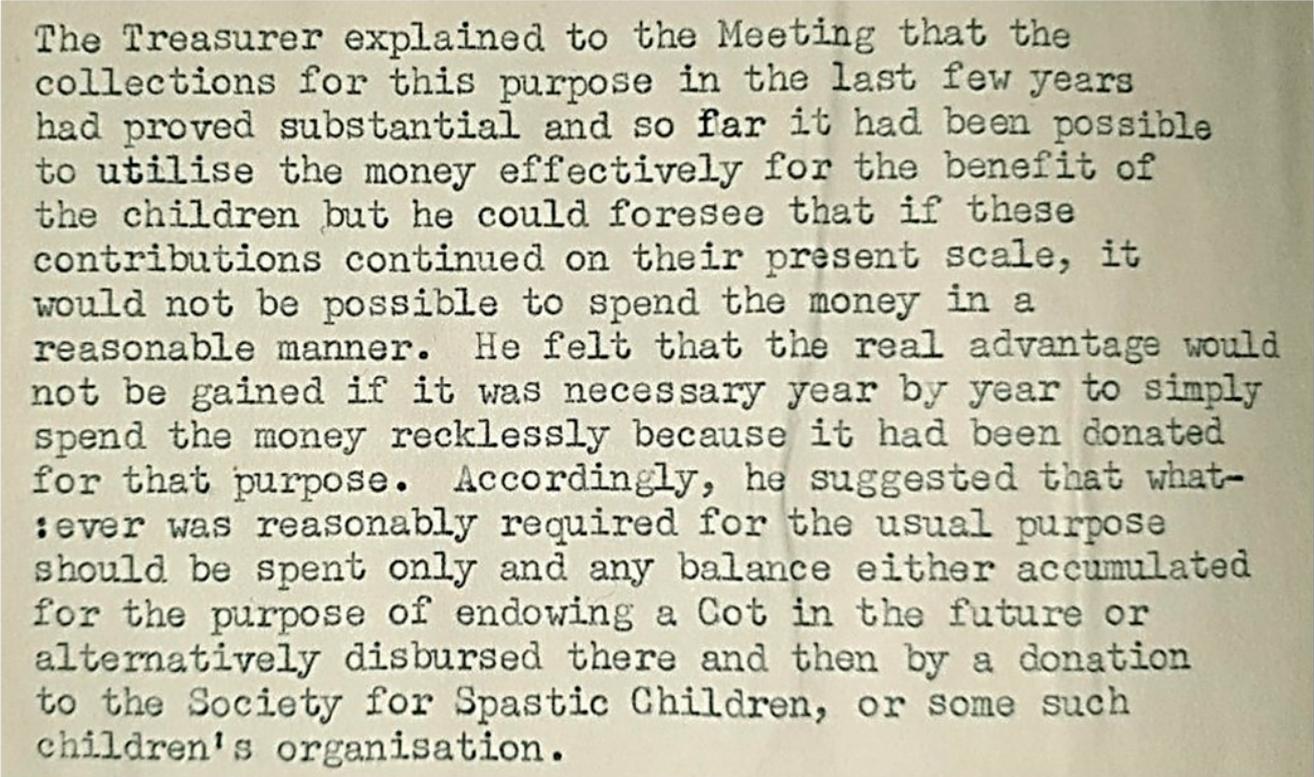
Chartered Accountant and, as of 1962, Ye Cronies Secretary James Stuart Deans spent his initial years in office reviewing the club's accounts and making efforts to address the precarious financial position it had been in for the last decade.

Whilst reviewing the operational costs of the club, Mr. Deans noted that the annual fundraiser for the Royal Hospital for Sick Children was building quite a substantial balance.

To date, the club's donations to the Hospital had taken the form of toys for the children of Ward 6B, and a small donation to the occupant of the Ye Cronies cot. In total this would amount to roughly £4 in costs per year.

By 1965 the club's charitable accounts showed a balance of £10/15/6, far in excess of the annual funds required for the cause.

The Club Secretary decided to raise this at the 1965 AGM as he felt the monies raised could support and benefit a second charity in a similar vein to the Sick Children's Hospital.



The Treasurer explained to the Meeting that the collections for this purpose in the last few years had proved substantial and so far it had been possible to utilise the money effectively for the benefit of the children but he could foresee that if these contributions continued on their present scale, it would not be possible to spend the money in a reasonable manner. He felt that the real advantage would not be gained if it was necessary year by year to simply spend the money recklessly because it had been donated for that purpose. Accordingly, he suggested that whatever was reasonably required for the usual purpose should be spent only and any balance either accumulated for the purpose of endowing a Cot in the future or alternatively disbursed there and then by a donation to the Society for Spastic Children, or some such children's organisation.

Minutes from 1968 Annual General Meeting—28th October 1965

Children's Charity Fundraiser

The Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain

The Meeting agreed that this was an important point and the President supported the Treasurer in the light of his experience in spending money on presents for the children.

Accordingly, it was agreed that it be remitted to the Committee to use their discretion as to the disbursement of these funds but to give preference to a donation to other activities on behalf of children rather than the accumulation of a balance with the object of ultimately endowing a Cot.

Minutes from 1968 Annual General Meeting—28th October 1965

Following agreement that a second beneficiary should be sought, the 1965 committee instructed the Club Secretary to identify and assess suitable candidates to benefit from the club's charitable funds going forwards.

At the November 1967 charity fundraiser, the President announced to all members that the committee had agreed on sharing funds raised between the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, and the Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain.

Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain



Founded by Lord Walton of Detchant in 1959, the Muscular Dystrophy Group was established to help families and children living with this debilitating condition, as well as to fund research into its causes and cures.

Prince Phillip had become a patron of the society a year before Ye Cronies began their donations, and in 1972 Richard Attenborough would become its President for the next 30 years.

The Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain (now known as Muscular Dystrophy UK) would benefit from the club's annual fundraiser for the next 43 years until 2011.

Members Sign-in Book

25th November 1965

25th November 1965

<u>Jim Cook</u>	<u>R.W. Stephen</u>	<u>Ed Mcmillan</u>
<u>John Stuart Deane</u>	<u>D. S. Macdonald</u>	<u>Jan A. Wallace</u>
<u>W. Law.</u>	<u>James Hill</u>	<u>Robert McLachlan</u>
<u>H. G. Anderson</u>	<u>Alfred King</u>	<u>Ann Lott</u>
<u>A. Linn</u>	<u>J. W. Ashburn</u>	<u>Jan A. Wallace</u>
<u>W. B. Trust</u>		<u>R. W. Stephen</u>
<u>Geo. E. Wright</u>		

Lost Treasure Found

The Jack Duncan Cup

In 1929, the club's members organised what they termed a 'golf outing' and unveiled the Jack Duncan trophy in honour of Past President John F. Duncan (1919—1928).

This trophy was competed for amongst the Cronies members on seven occasions between 1929 and 1938, last being won by committee member J. Ferrier Connell.

Unfortunately at the outbreak of World War II, the trophy was lost to history and largely forgotten about by the club until 1966 when retired Club Secretary Geoffrey Duncan found it in his office and returned it to the club prior to the new Ye Cronies season.



The Secretary explained that he had very recently received a letter from his predecessor in Office, Mr. G.E.C. Duncan, explaining that a Trophy had been found in his Office which at one time had been donated to Ye Cronies for the purposes of a Golf Competition. This Cup, however, had not been played for since 1938 and Mr. Duncan had forwarded it to Mr. Deans, with his letter. Understandably the Cup was badly in need of cleaning and the Secretary had taken steps to have this carried out. This information was duly noted.

[Extract from minutes of AGM on 27th October 1966]

The committee appeared to give this discovery little attention, but the membership wasted no time in re-establishing the competition, with the 8th iteration of the 'Golf Outing' taking place before the close of the year.

The Cronies Golf Outing became an annual event for the next 50 years, with the winners inscribed onto the Jack Duncan cup each year it was won.

The “Jack Duncan” Cup Winners

1966 - 1969



Year	Winner
1966	James A. Murphy
1967	Robert W. C. Stephen
1968	Louis Stewart
1969	William Law

Having re-discovered the Jack Duncan Cup in the summer of 1966, the return of the Ye Cronies golf outing saw James A. Murphy crowned the first winner in 28 years.

With the outing now an annual event, four further members went on to win the cup, with the final winner of the 1960s being none other than Past President William Law (1963—1965), the first President to win the cup in its history.

Establishing a Choir

January 1967



Ye Cronies Choir

In his final year as President, police surgeon Dr. John Warren took it upon himself to establish a members choir for Ye Cronies, with their first performance being held on 26th January 1967.

“Dr. John Warren, while no singer himself, was responsible for starting our choir in 1967, initially to provide a ‘quorum’ for the Grace.”

[Reflections of John Watson, 2000]

Dr. Warren was known to be very particular over the traditions of Ye Cronies, doing his best to ensure the values of the club were not lost over time. Given the club was established on the principle of the entertainment being provided from within its own membership, it appears Dr. Warren was weary of the growing presence of professional artistes and felt a counterpoint was required in the form of a members choir.

As recalled by Concert Director John Watson, the club’s first official Choir did not have the most auspicious of starts:

*“It was the butt of much humour in these early days and even had non-participating drinking members at rehearsals...
...it was widely regarded as a great source of tapped un-talent!”*

As noted above, Dr. Warren was not a singer himself, and the choir was run without a conductor for its first 16 years, relying on the talents of Concert Director James Geddes as their accompanist to keep them in tune!



Despite the initial lack of ‘participating’ members, the choir had some strong founding members in the form of John Watson and F. Elliot Dobie. Dr. Warren and the Choir’s perseverance paid off as they are now a welcome staple of Ye Cronies nights, keeping the true spirit of the club’s foundations alive and well.

Ye Cronies Accounts

1968/69

The majority of Ye Cronies records from the 1960s consist of interview notes and committee minutes, there is however one set of accounts included in the record books by Secretary and Treasurer Mr. James Stuart Deans.

The below extract provides a unique insight into how the club was run financially by the end of the decade where the club had performed a miraculous turnaround in its fortunes.

<u>Ye Cronies.</u>			
<u>1968/69.</u>			
<u>Cost of Dinners (excluding Ladies' Evening).</u>			
Hotel Accounts for Meals.		£683. 6. 1.	
Artistes' Fees and Refreshments.		118. 1. 6.	
Commissionaires and Gratuities.		<u>38. -. -. .</u>	£839. 7. 7.
Collected.			<u>708. 5. -. .</u>
	<u>Loss for Season.</u>		£131. 2. 7.
<u>Ladies' Evening.</u>			
Proceeds sale of Tickets.		£368. -. -. .	
Cost of Meals and Expenses.		<u>341. 18. -. .</u>	
	<u>Profit.</u>		<u>26. 2. -. .</u>
			£105. -. . 7.
<u>Subscription Income.</u>			
		£291. -. -. .	
<u>Less:-</u> Postages, Printing, Stationery, etc.	1-6 1 £44. 11. 11		
Insurance.	3. -. -. .		
Concert Directors' Honorarium & Expenses.	57. 16. -. .		
Secretary's Honorarium.	<u>75. -. -. .</u>	9. 5 <u>180. 7. 5.</u>	<u>110. 10. 7.</u>
	<u>Overall Surplus for Season.</u>		<u>£5. 10. 0.</u>
<u>Notes:-</u>			
(1) Total Attendance (excluding Ladies' Evening).	479 (448 paying).		
Attendance on Ladies' Evening.	<u>193.</u>		
(2) The Hotel requires for 1969/70 an increase of 1/- per meal, and an increase of the Service Charge from 7½% to 10% throughout. On the basis of the above attendance, this will cost an additional sum of £41. 8. -. . for ordinary evenings and £17. 5. -. . for Ladies' Evening.			

Vote of Thanks

27th February 1969

By the late 1960s, it had long been a tradition for the Vice-President to give the Vote of Thanks to members, guests and the performing artistes. We have an extract from the speech made by Lennard Du Feu, his last before becoming President in October 1969.

Extract from Vote of Thanks at Ladies Night.

..... And now we come to the Choir. Ah yes, the Choir! And you know, Ladies & Gentlemen I'm going to let you into a little personal secret. I'm going to tell you that I never see the Choir go on to that stage without feeling a strong tinge of sadness. And here again tonight I was sad. Yes, my friends, behind this smiling face there are tears. Because what you don't know, and the reality I have to live with, is that I am a reject from ye Bronies' Choir.

And when you are rejected by ye Bronies' Choir, Oh Boy are you rejected! It's no use saying "Oh well I'll just go off and join Covent Garden Opera" - or even the Saddlers Wells Ballet - no, when you are rejected by ye Bronies' Choir you stay rejected and there is nowhere else to go.

The fact that I was rejected is not important - after all we can't all expect to stand amongst the Immortals - no, it was the reason for rejection which caused the pain.

I well remember the night when the Choir was formed - John Warren was in the Chair, and when he called for volunteers many were forthcoming, raising their hands with enthusiasm and I recall that in the euphoria all were acclaimed and all were accepted. All that is, except me. And looking at me, the good Doctor - I use the term with scant regard for the truth - the good Doctor said "No, not you, you've just had a hernia operation!"

Vote of Thanks

27th February 1969

"You've just had a hernia operation" he said! But what on earth did a hernia operation have to do with joining the choir? Am I to understand that all those ageing gentlemen whom I see on the stage at every meeting are in fact in pristine condition? I could have understood it if I had not yet had the operation and there might be some uncertainty about the outcome. After all, medical science has not yet attained to perfection and who knows what results might issue from a slip of the Surgeon's knife. Many a Basso Profundo has emerged from a hernia operation and found that he was now a Mezzo Soprano.

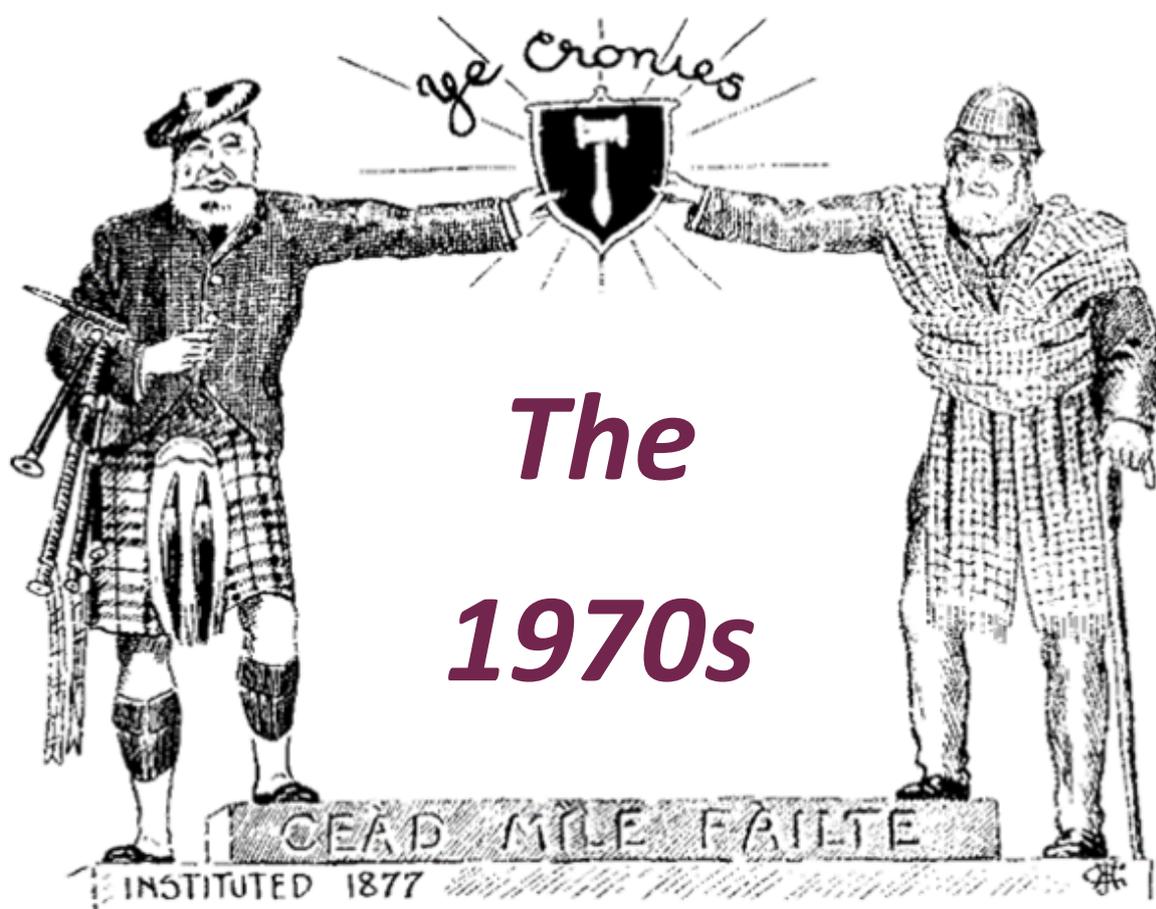
But in my case the operation was well behind me and my singing attributes well known. I realise that that may be exactly the reason for my rejection; but then the Chairman had not said that an ability to sing was a prerequisite for joining the choir: and in any case it isn't even as if I was wanting to sing. All I was wanting to do was to pour the whisky at the choir practices and eat some of the fine cakes with which kindly ladies regale them after each session.

But no that was not to be. Like most of you here tonight I am consigned to the sidelines and, like you, I must worship from afar.

And what do we want to say about tonight's performance, then?

Our Story

Chapter 3



The 1970s

Notable Cronies Artistes | Artiste Sponsorship | Ms. Phyllis Cannan
Glasgow Central Hotel | The Conjuror | F. Elliot Dobie
Ye Cronies & The Jolly Giant | A Note of Thanks | Presidential Terms
Ms. Enid Bannatyne | Jack Duncan Cup Winners

Cronies in the 1970s

Back to Basics - Rebuilding through Music

The 1970s saw Ye Cronies building on the momentum started in the second half of the 60s. Through the efforts of John Watson in particular, the club was unapologetically focused on music.

The results of this approach were immediate as Ye Cronies saw a huge growth in membership and average attendances at each event. This, however, would bring its own challenges.

Overwhelming Numbers



With concert attendances hitting a worrying low just 10 years earlier, 1970 started the new decade with an all time high of 106 members and attendances of 96 or more. Fast forward nine years and the club was hitting an average of 179 attendees per event. Considering membership was restricted to 100 this was quite some feat!

One trend that had not changed was the popularity of Ladies Night, which started suffering from overcrowding and a lack of overnight accommodation. The Committee introduced ways of controlling numbers, such as the use of guest limits and ballots.

Smoking

Given today's smoking bans make indoor smoking a distant memory, it was very much the norm during a Cronies concert in the 70s.

At the 1973 AGM, Past President Dr. John Warren, a strict disciplinarian when it came to the running of Cronies evenings, noted "extensive smoking" was becoming a "rather disconcerting practice" and asked the committee to "curtail the practice". The President stopped short of declaring a ban, but agreed to "encourage restraint" during performances for the sake of the performers if not for fellow audience members.



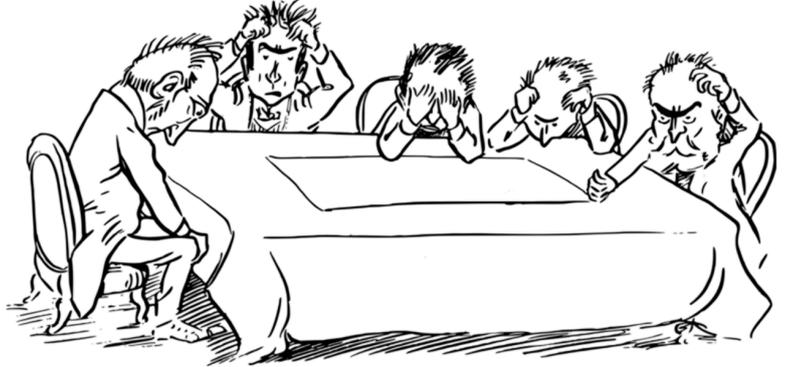
Cronies in the 1970s

Back to Basics - Rebuilding through Music

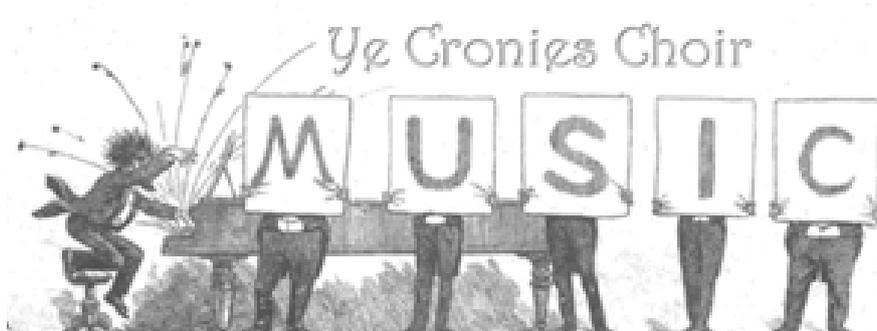
Choir Committee

Eleven years after its creation, the founding members of the Cronies Choir agreed that a committee should be formed to assist in its running in 1978.

The details and objectives of the choir are unclear as no record exists of their formation other than Concert Director John Watson noting to the Cronies committee that “it was anticipated that the Choir would benefit greatly as a result”.



With Choir practices typically being held over an evening at a members household (complete with drinks and snacks), the most obvious need for a committee would have been in the logistical and financial planning of the choir’s operations. Today, the choir have an official ‘Treasurer’, but a formal committee no long exists.



Choir Practice & Scotch Pies

A side note in the history of the Ye Cronies Choir is the introduction of a tradition known only to its members today - the importance of a post-practice scotch pie.

According to former chorist and Honorary Member Gregor Cameron, the pie was introduced during a practice evening at Past President William Law’s house. Mrs. Law had been cooking them during practice and made sure everyone enjoyed a pie before heading home. Today the role of the pie has become an important nightcap in Cronies Choir practices (when held at a members household) and is all thanks to Mrs. Law.



Ye Cronies Calendar

1970 - 1979

The Members Sign-in Book kept records of all events held in the 1970s

Year	Month	Date
1970	January	29
	February	26
	March	26
	October	29
	November	26
	December	17
1971	January	28
	February	24
	March	25
	October	28
	November	25
	December	30
1972	January	27
	February	24
	March	30
	April	27
	October	26
	November	23
	December	28

Year	Month	Date
1973	January	18
	February	22
	March	28
	April	24
	October	25
	November	29
1974	December	27
	January	31
	February	28
	March	28
	October	31
	November	21
1975	December	19
	January	30
	February	27
	March	27
	October	30
	November	27
	December	18
1976	January	29
	February	26
	March	25
	October	28
	November	25
	December	23

Year	Month	Date
1977	January	27
	February	24
	March	30
	October	27
	November	24
	December	13
1978	January	26
	February	23
	March	30
	October	26
	November	30
	December	21
1979	January	18
	February	22
	March	29
	October	25
	November	29
	December	20

CANCELLED

Ladies Evening

No Records

Cronies Choir Evening

Setting the Scene

World events in the 1970s

- 1970** - *Commonwealth Games are held in Edinburgh.*
- 1971** - *"Decimal Day" signals the end of the shilling in Britain as the "new pence" was introduced.*
- 1972** - *The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards' recording of "Amazing Grace" reaches No. 1 in the UK Singles Chart.*
- 1973** - *Britain, Ireland and Denmark join the European Economic Community.*
- 1974** - *Terracotta army is discovered in a burial tomb in China.*
- 1975** - *Microsoft computer company is founded by Bill Gates and Paul Allen.*
- 1976** - *Concorde begins commercial flights.*
- 1977** - *Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee.*
- 1978** - *Cardinal Albino Luciani is elected as Pope John Paul I.*
- 1979** - *National Youth Orchestra of Scotland is formed.*

Our Timeline

The 1970s

1970s



27th December 1973

Mezzo-Soprano Ms. Phillis Cannan becomes the first beneficiary of Ye Cronies' new "Artiste Sponsorship" initiative.



October 1974

Following the closure of the St. Enoch Station Hotel, the Club relocates to the Glasgow Central Hotel.



October 1975

Renowned Bass-Baritone and founding member of the Cronies Choir, Francis Elliot Dobie, is made an Honorary Member.



ANNIVERSARY

December 1977

Ye Cronies celebrates its centenary year.

Committee Members

1970 - 1979

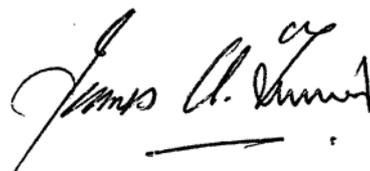
Ye Cronies Club Presidents



Lennard Du Feu
1970 - 1971



W. Boyd Innes
1971 - 1973



James A. Turner
1973 - 1975



Walter O. Hibberd
1975 - 1977



Norman Y. Keanie
1977 - 1978



Stanley R. Dobie
1978 - 1979

Vice-President

1970	W. Boyd Innes
1971	James A. Turner
1973	Walter O. Hibbert
1975	Noman Y. Keanie
1977	Stanley R. Dobie
1978	George B. Horspool

Concert Director

1970 - 79	John Watson
1970 - 79	James Geddes

Choir Master

1967 - 69	John Warren
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Secretary / Treasurer

1970 - 79	James Stuart Deans
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Accompanist

1960 - 69	James Geddes
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Committee & Honorary Members

1970 - 1979

Ye Cronies Committee Members

1969 - 1970	1970 - 1971	1971 - 1972	1972 - 1973	1973 - 1974	1974 - 1975	1975 - 1976	1976 - 1977	1977 - 1978	1978 - 1979
James Melrose Kellie		Mungo B. Campbell		William Law		Charles Baxter			
George M. Webster		Louis Stewart		Francis A. Maguire		Louis Stewart			
William Bell		Walter O. Hibberd		Gordon K. Woore		William Morrison			
William Laurie		Andrew Hunter		James B. MacWilliam		Alex J.B. Milroy			
James B. MacWilliam		Robert Donaldson		Stanley R. Dobie		John McDowall			
James A. Turner		Stuart M. Wallace		John Warren		George B. Horspool		David S. McLay	

Ye Cronies Honorary Members

1971



Sam G. Askham

1975



Francis Elliot Dobie

1975



Andrew Letters

The John Watson Interviews

Reflections of the 1970s



“Mention should be made of the fact that Artistes enjoyed their appearances at the Cronies so much that they were only too keen to return.

Inevitably one or two became regulars for a period in the 70s and 80s...”

Stafford Dean (Bass)

Trained by Sadler’s Wells principal Bass Howell Glynne, Stafford had a lengthy association with Scottish Opera, making his debut in 1970 as Leporello. He quickly grew an international reputation, particularly singing Mozart roles in the world’s major houses.



Angus Anderson (Violin)

Having studied at the Royal Academy of Music, Angus held positions in five different orchestras including associate leader of the RSNO and leader of the Scottish Opera Orchestra under Sir Alexander Gibson.

Today he is a teacher, chamber music player, soloist, and as a member of Cantilena performed Vivaldi’s Four Seasons for Scottish Television.



Duncan Nairn (Clarinet)

Trained by Tommy Young, the Principal Clarinet with the Scottish National Orchestra, Duncan joined the BBC Symphony Orchestra in 1965, remaining there for the next 36 years.

Since the turn of the century, Duncan has embraced his taste for jazz and big band music, playing with numerous local bands including Mike Daly’s Dixieland Rhythm Kings where he continues to provide clarinet and vocals today.



“...and there were others....”

The John Watson Interviews

Isobel Buchanan

“In the early 1970s, I heard two students in “Madame Butterfly” at the RSAMD where they had split the soprano lead.

Their names were Isobel Buchanan & Janice Cairns.

While still a student, Ms. Buchanan appeared some months later at the start of the latest Cronies season and she would become a regular favourite of the club until leaving for a wider stage in Australia.



Isobel would return to the UK in the 1980's and in an effort to secure her services once more I contacted her agent.

I was informed her international reputation had brought her appearance fee up to £1,000 per event!

In an impulsive, though sincere, move I agreed to this, setting the unfortunate record for the highest fee ever paid for one of our artistes.”

Notable Cronies Artistes

Isobel Buchanan

Glasgow-born soprano Isobel Buchanan earned a scholarship with the Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama in 1971 and ended her studies there in 1974 with the Student of the Year and Governor's Recital Prizes. Given the career that followed, Ye Cronies were incredibly lucky to have witnessed first-hand the magic of Ms. Buchanan on the operatic stage at one of our concerts whilst she was still studying.

Considered one of the leading sopranos of her generation, Isobel auditioned for Richard Bonyngé and Joan Sutherland in 1975 and was offered a three year contract with the Australian Opera, becoming their youngest ever principal artiste. Her professional debut was in January 1976, singing the role of Pamina in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, and by the end of the year, Ms. Buchanan was named 'Star of Scotland' by public vote.



[Rehearsing at the Sydney Opera House, 1976]

Just four years after graduating at the RSAMD, Isobel made her European debut at the Vienna State Opera as Micaela in *Carmen*, starring opposite Plácido Domingo as Don José.

Returning home in 1979, Isobel was Mimi in *La bohème*, a production conducted by Sir Alexander Gibson and saw national interest soar. The BBC made a documentary of her career in 1981 titled "La Belle Isobel" which led to being interviewed on the Michael Parkinson Show, and a further 3-part television series simply called "Isobel" in 1984.



In 1980 Isobel had married the Glasgow-based Australian actor Jonathan Hyde who would later go on to star in James Cameron's Academy Award winning film 'Titanic'. Choosing to take a career break soon after their marriage, Isobel would largely remain off the stage in the 1980s to focus on raising her two young daughters.

The 1990s saw Ms. Buchanan return to the stage in buoyant fashion, singing a number of songs at Her Majesty The Queen Mother's 90th Birthday celebrations at the London Palladium.

Today Isobel teaches voice privately, offering masterclasses and workshops throughout the UK, and teaches at the Guildhall School as a visiting professor. She regularly tutors for the Samling Foundation and acts as an external examiner for the Music Colleges in London.

Notable Cronies Artistes

A Note from Isobel Buchanan



"I had a terrific time singing for Ye Cronies on several occasions. I was a student at the RSAMD and first sang there probably around 1972 or 73?"

It was always a lovely evening with a slap up dinner and then the entertainment. As an aspiring young opera singer I had a chance to sing all the big operatic arias that I longed to perform such as 'One Fine Day', 'Musetta's Waltz Song' and many more."

It was a wonderful experience and gave me a great opportunity to broaden my repertoire. I also sang pieces from light opera and even shocked the company by performing a couple of Tom Lehrer songs, notably 'The Masochism Tango'.

I wonder if John Watson, the then Concert Director, knew what he was in for!

Those were the days and I had a fabulous time singing with Ye Cronies. I'm very pleased to hear that the club is still in good working order and I wish them all the very best."

Isobel Buchanan

January 2021

Notable Cronies Artistes

George McIlwham

George McIlwham was fondly remembered by John Watson for his performances on the flute, but it was actually the bagpipes that were George's first love.

Taking after his uncle, who piped for the Highland Light Infantry and Cameronians during the First World War, George started learning the bagpipes at a very young age.



It was when his music teacher and Hutcheson Grammar sought someone to take up the flute, that George revealed a long-held fascination with the instrument.

George's professional career began as a flautist, joining the National Orchestra in 1947 whilst continuing his studies under Professor Waller at the R.S.A.M.D. In parallel to this he was also being taught on the bagpipes with the renowned Pipe Major Robert Reid.



By 1954 Mr. McIlwham had joined the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra as principal Piccolo and Flute. It would be here that his connections in the piping world would bear fruit as the orchestra looked to perform Ian Whyte's ballet "Donald of the Burthens" which was to end with "The Reel of Tulloch" on the bagpipes. McIlwham managed to persuade Pipe Major Reid to take up the role of piper, becoming one of the first orchestras to feature the bagpipes in their performance.

Drawing inspiration from this performance, McIlwham went on to compose several pieces that merged orchestra and pipes into one, these included:

<i>Alba</i>	Featuring pipe band drumming which required orchestral drummers to replicate should a pipe band drummer not be available.
<i>Amazing Grace</i>	One of McIlwham's most popular pieces.
<i>Tam O'Shanter</i>	Performed in 1973 in the City Hall by the Linn Choir
<i>Vital Spark</i>	Used by the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association to win the Grade 3 World Bagpipe Championships in 1974.

Retiring in 1986, McIlwham didn't sit still for long as the BBC invited him to form part of their presenting team to cover the World Pipe Band Championships which he supported for many more years.

Notable Cronies Artistes

Linda Ormiston & Douglas Maxwell

“Linda and Donald were great favourites during the Seventies, Eighties and well into the Nineties, bringing to the Club clientele their own particular and attractive style of music and humour. We are indebted to both of them!”

[John Watson Millennium Reflections, 2000]

As “Music Box”, Linda Ormiston and Donald Maxwell were well known for taking a witty look at the serious business of music - summed up by their trademark performance of the “Cowcaddens Budget Version” of the Rigoletto Quartet! For two!

Linda and Donald first met in Scottish Opera chorus in 1976, forming “Music Box” in 1977 with the Perth based pianist, John Scrimger and then going on to perform together for another 40 years. Other pianists with whom they performed included the Welsh conductor, Wyn Davies and George Donald, member of “Scotland the What” and future Ye Cronies Concert Director.



Their career, as “Music Box” took them to all parts of the UK, with brief forays into Ireland and Europe. Particular highlights were a number of Last Night of the SNO Proms with Sir Alexander Gibson and 7 consecutive years of late night cabaret at the Edinburgh International Festival. A record that likely still remains to this day!

Notable Cronies Artistes

Linda Ormiston & Douglas Maxwell

Linda Ormiston (Mezzo)



After graduating MA in Mathematics and Music from Glasgow University, Linda continued her studies at the RSAMD (now RCS) and the London Opera Centre.

After a season with English Opera for All, she joined Scottish Opera and went on to sing more than 30 roles for the company. Her career then took her to most of the major British opera companies and further afield, to Vancouver, Tokyo, New York, Monte Carlo, with several appearances at the Salzburg Festival.

Linda became a well known broadcaster on BBC Radio Scotland and Radio 3 and was awarded an OBE for services to Opera in 2001. Today, Linda continues to give workshops and masterclasses across the UK and is a tutor on the Music Theatre Course at the Dance School of Scotland and in the vocal department at the RCS. She wonders if she is unique in having performed at Ye Cronies over five decades starting in St. Enoch's Hotel in the early 1970s?!



Donald Maxwell (Baritone)

Donald's formative years were spent teaching Geography, studying with the late Scottish tenor, Joseph Hislop, before joining Scottish Opera in 1976.

Since then, his operatic career has led to major roles throughout Britain and at La Scala, Milan; The Metropolitan Opera, New York; Vienna Staatsoper and Paris Opera. Donald continues to perform roles for elderly baritones at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and the Metropolitan Opera.



Away from singing, he was the Artistic Director of the National Opera Studio, Head of Operatic Studies at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and also directed several operas at the Buxton Festival.

Notable Cronies Artistes

A Note from Linda & Donald

“Having met in Scottish Opera we were 'spotted' by the inimitable John Watson and thus began our connection with Ye Cronies.

It would be great to say that we have marvelously clear recollections of our performances over the years, but there are two reasons why our memories are slightly dim.

Firstly, our debut was more than forty years ago, and secondly Ye Cronies hospitality was always very generous.

Through the mists of time and alcohol a few snapshots; Elliot Dobie singing a remarkable "On the Road to Mandalay"; Ye Cronies Choir's version of "Watchman what of the night", conducted by the unflappable Jack Gardner - also remarkable... but perhaps not always in the way the composer intended.

The choir though was an ideal reflection of happy nights in various Glasgow hotels. Great warmth, good humour, an intelligent appreciation of high quality music and then of course, John Watson.

What was his skill? - he knew his audience. A uniquely Glaswegian institution, our many visits were always special and remain as real highlights. It is a pleasure to be a small part of your continuing story!”



*Linda Ormiston
& Donald Maxwell*

February 2021



Members Sign-in Book

October 26th 1972

October 26th 1972

L.M.U.	W. Pape Burgos	John Watson
A.H. McFarland	John	W.B. Jones
Frank Ungar	John	J.P. Fowle
D. Thomas	Ray Stamech	Alex. D. & Byers
D.S. Hochstetler	W. Walker	Charles [unclear]
S. R. [unclear]	Stuart Wallace	Int. Campbell
John [unclear]	W. [unclear]	W. Law
W. A. [unclear]	W. [unclear]	H. Cunningham
James A. [unclear]	Edin [unclear]	J. Mitchell
J. [unclear]	A. [unclear]	J. [unclear]
W. [unclear]	R. Walcott	J. [unclear]
W. [unclear]	L. Stewart	W. [unclear]
Banker	W. [unclear]	W. [unclear]
W. [unclear]	J. [unclear]	W. [unclear]
J. [unclear]	J. [unclear]	J. [unclear]
	J. [unclear]	W. [unclear]

Artiste Sponsorship

Supporting Upcoming Talent

Upon stepping up to the role of Concert Director, John Watson was very keen to promote the yet-to-be-discovered talents being trained by the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (R.S.A.M.D.).

Through John's watchful eye, Ye Cronies benefitted from seeing many students come and perform for the club over the years before they went on to seek fame and fortune on the larger, sometimes global, stage.

As well as embracing the opportunity to invite students to entertain a Cronies audience, John also made sure to keep in touch with many students after their graduation, and assist where possible.

One such former student was Ms. Phyllis Cannan from Paisley, who in John's own words:

"...became an interesting footnote to the history of Ye Cronies."



PHYLLIS CANNAN studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music, taking part in Academy opera productions. She has sung with various choral unions throughout Scotland as soloist, with Scottish Opera in their recent production of "The Ring" and has just completed a tour with "Scottish Opera for All". Her ultimate goal is to take up a full-time career in opera.

Artiste Sponsorship

A Young Singer in Need

In 1986 John recalled the circumstances behind Ms. Cannan's difficulties that would eventually lead the Ye Cronies agreeing to the setup of an artiste support fund:

*"I first heard Ms. Cannan at the RSAMD,
and she quickly became a great favourite at the Cronies.*

*Once she had left to further her training in London,
I had kept in touch with her and learned that she was scrubbing floors
to provide the cash necessary to meet her fees.*

The struggle to continue seemed too daunting for the young singer."

After some thought, John felt compelled to ask the Cronies committee to consider setting up some funds for use in supporting young and talented artistes such as Ms. Cannan, who might need a helping hand in getting themselves setup in the musical world.

Sponsoring Artistes.

Mr. Watson explained that it might be possible for "Ye Cronies" if some surplus money were available to do some good among up and coming Artistes by rendering some financial assistance on a modest scale. This was agreed on principle but since there was insufficient information to go into any detail, the matter was remitted to Mr. Watson and the Secretary to go into this and report back to the Committee.

The Meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

[Committee Minutes 4th October 1973]

Having obtained a provisional thumbs up to his proposal, John wasted no time in forming a full proposal, and requested a further committee meeting to discuss this venture further just a month later.

Artiste Sponsorship

Proposing a new Club Rule

MINUTE OF MEETING OF COMMITTEE held within Hillside House, Gateside Road, Barrhead, on Monday, 26th November, 1973, at 7.30 p.m.

Present.

Mr. James A. Turner, (Vice-President).
Dr. John Warren.
Mr. Gordon Woore.
Mr. Louis Stewart.
Mr. John A. Watson.

Attending.

Mr. Jas. Stuart Deans, C.A.
(Honorary Secretary and Treasurer).

Sponsoring
Artistes.

Mr. Watson and Mr. Deans explained that, as requested, they had contacted Miss Phyllis Cannan and discussed with her the possibility that the Cronies might offer some financial assistance to her in the course of her studies.

It was explained that Miss Cannan was delighted that the matter was being given consideration and it was clear that some financial assistance would be of considerable benefit to her.

Mr. Watson went into some detail as to the studies involved and the cost of lessons, and the matter was discussed.

Following upon this, the Meeting unanimously agreed that the matter should be put to the general body of Members at a Meeting to be called for the purpose of appropriately amending the Constitution.

It was left to the President, Mr. Turner, and the Secretary, Mr. Deans, to draft the wording to be used in the Constitution empowering such finance to be provided at the discretion of the Committee up to a limit of £200 in any specific case.

This concluded the business.

W. Deans
3/11/74.

Artiste Sponsorship

The Special Meeting of Members

MINUTE of SPECIAL MEETING of the Members,
held within The Saint Enoch Hotel, Glasgow,
on Thursday, 27th December, 1973, at 5.30
o'clock p.m.

- Present. The Meeting was attended by 21 Members.
- Attending. Mr. Jas. Stuart Deans, C.A.,
Hon. Secretary and Treasurer.
- Apologies. Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of
the following:-
- Mr. Mungo B. Campbell.
Mr. Charles W. Laird.
Mr. Francis A. Maguire.
Mr. W.A. McAlpine.
Mr. George M. Webster.
- It was noted that in each case where an apology
had been submitted, the Member concerned had
indicated his approval of the purpose of this
Meeting.
- Chairman. Mr. James A. Turner, (President).
- Notice
calling
Meeting. The Notice calling the Meeting was held as read.
- Motion. Mr. Turner put the following Motion to the Meeting.
- "The Committee shall have power to provide from
the funds of the Club financial assistance to
Artistes during the course of their studies.
The amount and method of application of such
assistance shall be at the discretion of the
Committee but not more than £200 may be disbursed
in respect of any one Student Artiste, nor may
any more than one such Student Artiste be so
assisted in any one period of three years."
- Some general discussion ensued as to the merits
of financially supporting young Artistes and
also as to methods of finance.
- It was apparent that those present were in
agreement with the Motion, which was duly seconded
by Mr. W.O. Hibberd, and carried unanimously.
It was therefore agreed that the appropriate
amendment be made to the Constitution.
- The Meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to
the Chairman.

Making Headlines

July 4th 1974

THE PAGE THAT PUTS PEOPLE FIRST

TALK OF THE TIMES by VINCENT DONNELLY and IAIN MACDONALD

Thursday, July 4, 1974

A top opera award for Paisley girl

A GIRL from Paisley has just won a top British award for young operatic singers.

She's 26-year-old Phyllis Cannan, who has been selling programmes at Covent Garden for the past six months in order to see performances free.

Phyllis has just been awarded a Peter Stuyvesant Foundation scholarship.

"The scholarship—one of two awarded by the foundation—is worth £1250," said a spokesman for the tobacco firm which makes the awards.

"It will provide Phyllis with a year's advanced training at London Opera Centre."

Phyllis is a mezzo-soprano. She's sharing a flat in East Putney, London, with four other girls at present.

She told me—"I'm really thrilled about it all.

"The scholarship will be a tremendous boost to my ambition to become a versatile operatic performer."

Before moving to London nearly a year ago to continue her operatic education Phyllis lived with her parents in Wardrop Street, Paisley.

She's well known locally for the contemporary jazz and folk-singing appearances she made at local clubs and cabaret spots.

Previously she studied for four years at the Royal Scottish Academy for Music and Drama in Glasgow and worked with the Scottish Opera Company.

"I've still got a lot of studying to do," added Phyllis.

"To become a successful operatic performer requires years of patience, dedication, and hard work—but I am determined to make the grade."

The second scholarship award went to a 27-year-old London soprano.

More than 60 applicants entered for this year's competition, and auditions were held throughout the country.



... see main story.

[TRANSCRIPTION ON FOLLOWING PAGE]

Making Headlines

July 4th 1974

Talk of the Times by Vincent Donnelly and Iain MacDonald
Paisley Daily Express, Thursday July 4th, 1974

A top opera award for Paisley girl

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Phyllis has just been awarded a Peter Stuyvesant Foundation Scholarship.

"The scholarship - one of two award by the foundation - is worth £1,250" said a spokesman for the tobacco firm which makes the awards. It will provide Phyllis with a year's advances training at London Opera Centre."



Phyllis is a mezzo-soprano. She's sharing a flat in East Putney, London with four other girls at present. She told me - "I'm really thrilled about it all. The scholarship will be a tremendous boost to my ambition to become a versatile operatic performer."

Before moving to London nearly a year ago to continue her operatic education, Phyllis lived with her parents in Wardrop Street, Paisley. She's well known locally for the contemporary Jazz and folk-singing appearances she made at local clubs and cabaret spots.

Previously she studied for four years at the Royal Scottish Academy for Music and Drama in Glasgow and worked with the Scottish Opera Company.

"I've still got a lot of learning to do" added Phyllis "To become a successful operatic performer requires years of patience, dedication and hard work but I am determined to make the grade."

The second scholarship award went to a 27-year-old London soprano. More than 60 applicants entered for this year's competition and auditions were held throughout the country. The final was held at the Collegiate Theatre, London.

Artiste Sponsorship

Phyllis Cannan

Following the voting in of a new provision within the Club's rules to allow funding in support of promising young artistes, £69 had been sent to Ms. Phyllis Cannan in January 1974.

By no means a consequence, but shortly after receiving these funds Phyllis secured a one year scholarship to the London Opera Centre, worth £1,250.

John had the honour of informing the club's members at the following Annual General Meeting on 31st October 1974 and later reflected on her progress in 1986:

Any other
competent
Business.

The Secretary and Treasurer reminded the Committee of the purpose of the Special Meeting of the Members which had been held on Thursday, 27th December, 1973, namely, to empower the Committee in certain circumstances to grant financial assistance to Artistes during the course of their studies.

Any other
competent
Business.
(Contd.)

In accordance therewith Tuition Fees to the extent of £69 had been paid on behalf of Miss Phyllis Cannan during the year under review.

This had proved an extremely helpful and successful gesture as Miss Cannan had made very considerable strides in her career and had written to Ye Cronies' expressing her very full appreciation. This was read to the Meeting.

Mr. John Watson then described in more detail the extent of the success achieved by Miss Cannan, mentioning that she had won the Peter Styvesant Contest which was no mean feat in view of its open nature and as a result of this Miss Cannan was entitled to the benefit of Tuition, etc., to the extent of £1,200.

Mr. Watson said that Miss Cannan had made it very clear that at the first opportunity, if the Cronies so desired, she would be delighted to come forward to thank them in person and to entertain them in addition.

The Meeting expressed its full appreciation for the reports regarding Miss Cannan and concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

“Phyllis was the first student to benefit from modest yet essential financial assistance from our club and has since gone on to become a Soprano and a leading member of the English National Opera Company and Covent Garden”

Artiste Sponsorship

A Note from Ms. Canaan (1974)

To All "Ye Cronies"

1

p

Dear Gentlemen,

Just a Note to thank you

all for all the financial help you have given

me this year. Without it I am sure I probably

wouldn't have made the pre lim round of the

Peter Stuyvesant scholarship. I we had a

2

mf *p*

Detailed description: This is a handwritten musical score on aged, yellowed paper. The title 'To All "Ye Cronies"' is written in red ink at the top and underlined. The score is written in brown ink and consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is marked with a '1' and a piano dynamic (*p*). The lyrics are written in brown ink between the staves. The second system is marked with a '2' and contains dynamics *mf* and *p*. The handwriting is cursive and somewhat informal.

Artiste Sponsorship

A Note from Ms. Canaan (1974)

1

most use ful year in London and cannot thank
you all enough for your encouragement.
and help. My best wishes to one and all

Yours sincerely
Phyllis Canaan

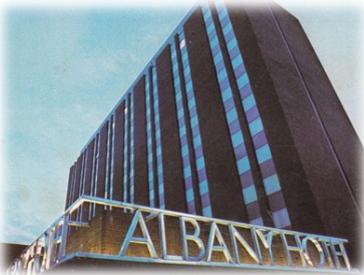
2

The image shows a handwritten musical score on aged, yellowed paper. The score is written in brown ink and consists of several systems of music. Each system includes a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass clef, and a vocal line with lyrics. The lyrics are written in a cursive hand. The score is marked with various dynamics such as *p*, *f*, and *mf*. The piece is numbered '1' at the beginning and '2' at the end. The signature 'Phyllis Canaan' is written in a large, stylized cursive font. The paper shows signs of age, including creases and discoloration.

Change of Venue

Closure of the St. Enoch Station Hotel

In 1973 the Cronies committee were informed that the St. Enoch Station Hotel was to be closed the following year, triggering the need to secure a new venue for future concerts.



After an initial suggestion of the City Hall was dismissed, greater consideration was given to The Albany Hotel on Bothwell Street.

The venue itself was very appealing but unfortunately transport links and car park facilities were causes for concern following a visit paid by the Secretary and Past President William Law.

By April 1974, the committee had settled on securing the services of The Central Hotel, situated next to Glasgow Central Station. Arrangements were quickly made to secure dates for the forthcoming 1974/75 season, where the Cronies would call it home for the next 10 years.

Venue for future Functions.

The Notice calling the Meeting had given details of the position regarding The Central Hotel, and the Secretary explained that he in conjunction with Mr. Law had visited The Albany to see whether suitable accommodation could be obtained there. In the case of The Albany, however, no dates suitable to Ye Cronies could be offered and the Meeting agreed that there was no point in taking further action.

After discussion, it was unanimously agreed that a firm booking be made with The Central Hotel for the 1974/75 Session.

With regard to the charges to be made to Members at future Meetings, the Treasurer undertook to prepare figures when the Income and cost relative to the Session now closing were known and offer some suggestions as to the charges to be made in the future. A Committee Meeting would be held later in the year for the purpose of considering this and also the question of whether or not payment by Members should be remitted in advance in place of the employment of a Commissionaire as hitherto.

[Extract from Committee minutes on 3rd April 1974]

Change of Venue

Glasgow Central Hotel

Sitting adjacent to Glasgow Central Station and opposite Cronies' former venue, The Grosvenor, on Gordon Street the benefits of this new venue were clear.

Prior to Ye Cronies moving across from the St. Enoch Hotel, the Glasgow Central had already played host to some of the biggest names in show business and politics, including:

John Logie Baird (1927)

Given its close vicinity to Central Station, Baird made use of the hotel's facilities to broadcast his first long-distance television pictures back to London.

John F. Kennedy (1939)

Alongside his father, John F. visited the Central for lunch whilst on a trip to meet with U.S. survivors of the liner Athenia which had been torpedoed by a U-Boat.

Winston Churchill (1949 - 51)

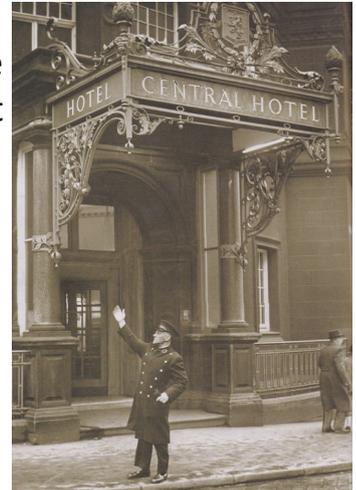
Used the hotel as his headquarters whilst visiting Scotland in the late 1940s to warn scots of the threat posed by the socialist Labour Party led by Clement Attlee.

Roy Rogers & 'Trigger' (1954)

The 'King of the Cowboys' kick-started his UK tour at the Central Hotel, famously leading his horse Trigger up the Hotel's trademark staircase.

Following the start of Ye Cronies relationship with the Central Hotel, more pop-culture icons chose the venue as their preferred accommodation in Scotland including the likes of the Rolling Stones, Diego Maradona and even Royalty during the Queen's jubilee in 1977.

Hotel owners British Transport would sell the Hotel to private investors in 1983 which unfortunately signalled the start of the end of Cronies time at the Central as members began to notice a change in "attitude and quality" of service from the Hotel's staff. By 1986 the committee had agreed it was time to move on once more.



[Hotel Entrance]



[Roy Rogers & Trigger]



[The Rolling Stones]



[Diego Maradona]

Change of Venue

Glasgow Central Hotel



**The Fireplace in the
“Grand Room of Glasgow”**



The Dining Room



Lounge Bar / Regent Meeting Room



The Coffee Bar

The Conjurer

Jimmy Fleming

In 1974, at the start a new season, and the club's first at the Glasgow Central Hotel, Ye Cronies included a magical act in its line-up, for only the third time in its history.

During World War II, when their concerts were being hosted in the afternoon's, Ye Cronies saw the Secretary of the mysterious "Mystic Twelve", Nelson Lyford perform his magic. This was soon followed by Cronies member Peter Templeton at a Ladies Afternoon in 1943.



The latest magician to ply his trade on a Cronies stage was Jimmy Fleming, an Honorary Life President of the Paisley Magic Circle, and of the Scottish Association of Magical Societies.

Fondly remembered for creating his own 'magic words', Jimmy's favourites were 'Ookie Bazookie' and 'Gozooty Gozinty' which were used to make shots of whisky (sponsored by Teachers no less) magically appear for consumption by lucky audience members.



Following his performance at Ye Cronies, Honorary Member Gregor Cameron made a point of approaching Mr. Fleming as recalled below...

"It's a shame Jimmy's performance was just a one-off, most of the audience were more interested in musical performances at the time.

I made a point of going over to Mr. Fleming at the end of the evening as my 12 year old son, Douglas, was obsessed with magic tricks. Between us we arranged a time for him to come round and show Douglas some new tricks.

On the day itself, Douglas had some of his friends to come round and we ended up with an impromptu magic show in my living room!

Jimmy was great with the kids, and for the grand finale he took Douglas aside to teach him a trick using a piece of rope and a bottle, making him the final act.

I lost touch with Jimmy but Douglas became an internationally recognised professional magician and he still makes sure to include the children in his act wherever possible, turning them into the magician in front of their friends!"

Gregor Cameron

January 2021

Honorary Member

F. Elliot Dobie

“Elliot brought his impressive voice To Ye Cronies dinners in the 60s, providing pleasure both as a solo artist and as a member of our embryonic choir.

Entertaining us well into his 90s, his “road to Mandalay” is legendary within the club.”

[Reflections of John Watson, 1986 & 2000]

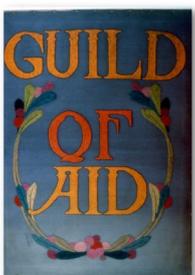


F. Elliot Dobie

Trained by George Henshall, a student of German composer Johannes Brahms, the Bass-Baritone Francis (Frank) Elliot Dobie was widely known for his love of Scottish song.

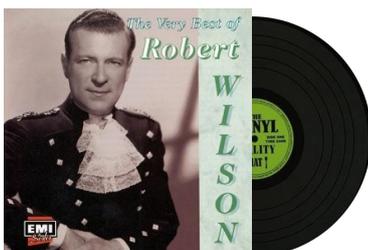
With a career stretching over 80 years, Elliot’s voice was known across all corners of the nation and entertained audiences over dinner functions, concerts, TV and radio broadcasts.

It is fair to say, given Elliot’s lengthy career and passion for music, Ye Cronies had an honorary member that truly reflected the values of the Club.

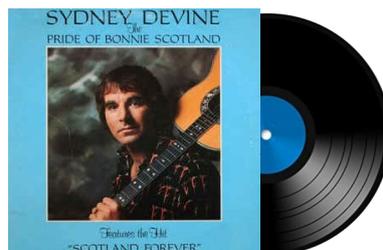


Recognising the value of his talents in bringing together and uplifting the spirit and morale of crowds, Elliot plied his trade in support of Glasgow’s societal problems, such as when he became the conductor of the Guild of Aid’s choir. With the Guild’s aim to help the women and children of the Gorbals, Dobie’s presence and voice would no doubt brought a smile to many people facing tough times.

Following the Second World War, Elliot setup a studio in Motherwell where he offered musical tuition and was responsible for honing the voices of many singers including:



Robert Wilson



Sydney Devine MBE



Bill McCue OBE

Honorary Member

F. Elliot Dobie

During a Cronies performance at the Grosvenor in the 1930s, Elliot Dobie's guest, Douglas MacLeod made a quick sketch of Mr. Dobie whilst he sang the Border Ballad on stage.

William Douglas MacLeod lived near to Dobie in Clarkston, and was an accomplished painter of Scottish and European landscapes. Between 1920 and 1930 he had also worked as a cartoonist for the Glasgow Evening News, producing a number of floral still-lives in pastel.



Douglas MacLeod a good friend & noted cartoonist drew this in Grosvenor whilst I sang Border Ballad

“Douglas MacLeod, a good friend and noted cartoonist drew this in Grosvenor whilst I sang Border Ballad”

[Written on the reverse side of illustration by D. MacLeod]

Honorary Member

F. Elliot Dobie

A consummate professional, Elliot’s eye for a performance was always razor sharp, as fondly remembered by Bill McCue in an interview he gave in 1995:

*“Let me give you a wee tip. Where would you sing in this room?”
When I said I didn’t know Frank replied:
‘There’s only one spot, see under that bright light, that’s the place to be’”*

Mr. Dobie lived a long and fruitful life, passing away at the age of 96 on 7th January 1983. Incredibly, he remained highly active on the music scene right up until his dying days.

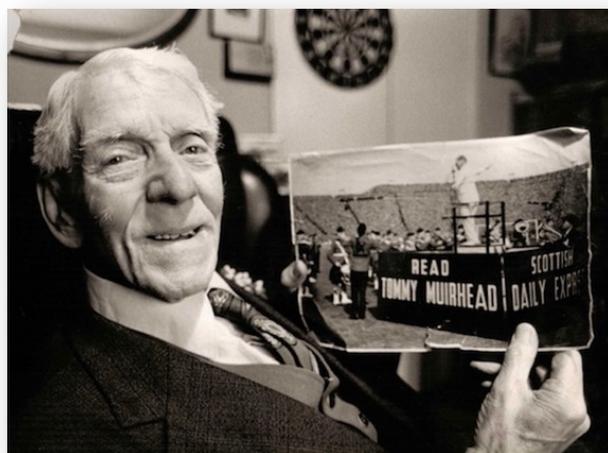
*“Don’t give up the singing until your voice goes,
and your voice will never go if you look after it”*

F. Elliot Dobie (c. 1975)

Elliot’s love of Scots music in particular made him a favourite at Burns Suppers, several chapters of the Mason’s appointed him their “Grand Bard”, and it was reported in 1977, at the age of 91 that he had supper bookings for the next five years!

In an interview with John Watson (Cronies Concert Director in Dobie’s latter years), he rated Frank’s final performance at Ye Cronies as one of his all time favourites—a rendition of “The Road to Mandalay” in 1981 when Dobie was 95 years old.

A talent for music clearly ran in the Dobie family as his grand-daughter, Fiona Dobie, became a successful soprano, and even performed with her great-uncle on television in the late 70s. Frank’s son, Stanley, would become our Club President in 1978, and his grandson, Fergus, remains a “Past Member” at the time of writing having joined the club in 1982.



Honorary Member

F. Elliot Dobie

Honorary Member, Alan Baxter, recalled a story told by Elliot Dobie over a Cronies evening, regarding a rather eventful evening in Glasgow when King George V had passed through the city.

In the 1930s, Dobie started gaining a royal audience. Having been “summoned by Royal command” to Balmoral Castle in the 1930s, none other than King George V. appeared to be a fan of the Bass-Baritone voice of F. Elliot Dobie and would recall he lived locally when staying overnight at the Central Hotel in Glasgow.



“The King was staying overnight at the Central Hotel in Glasgow and in need of entertainment said:

‘Get me Dobie’

The word went out, and it was soon discovered that Elliot was attending another function at the time, performing for an audience across the other side of the city.

Once notified of the King’s request Elliot quickly made his excuses and jumped on a tram to the Central.

It was only when the conductor walked up to sort out his ticket did “Dobie” realise he still had his dress trousers on and had left his wallet in his dressing room back at the function!

Thus began a short negotiation with the tram conductor, trying to convince her that he had genuinely been summoned by His Majesty at short notice and that he must make this trip.

The conductor eventually relented saying:

*‘Mr. Dobie, I’ve heard it all before,
just don’t do it again!’*



Honorary Member

F. Elliot Dobie

The
SUNDAY POST

January 9th 1977



Scotland's oldest bass-baritone, Elliot Dobie, has just celebrated his 90th birthday at a family party—with a selection from his extensive repertoire.

The party was arranged by his son, Stanley, at his home in Clarkston. Among the guests were Elliot's daughter, Joyce, and many of his old singing friends.

"The celebrating went on until 2am and we sang just about everything from opera to Scots ballads" said Elliot.

He made his first singing appearance at the age of 10 in a Border village at a concert celebrating Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in 1897.

Today he sings a solo in Merrylee Parish Church. He conducts the ladies choir of Gorbals Guild of Aid at an old folk's concert on Tuesday. And the same evening he'll be heard on a BBC Radio Scotland programme with Anne Lorne Gillies.

Then, on Friday, he travels south to Corby to sing and propose "The Immortal Memory" at a Burns club, many of whose members were his pupils in Scotland before they emigrated to the steel town. It will be the seventh "Immortal Memory" he'll propose in the current Burns session.

For many years Elliot led community singing at Hampden Park before cup final and international kick-offs.

He has ranged over just about every type of music, from Scots ballads to "The Messiah" and grand opera. One of his most famous pupils was the late Robert Wilson.

Honorary Member

F. Elliot Dobie

ELLIOT DOBIE DIES ON 96th BIRTHDAY

ELLIOT DOBIE, one of Scotland's finest-ever bass-baritone singers, died yesterday on his 96th birthday.

He made his first singing appearance at the age of 10 in a Borders village at a concert to celebrate Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in 1897.

He went on to become one of the country's leading singing teachers. One of his most famous pupils was the late Robert Wilson.



Elliot was also the principal bass in Glasgow Cathedral for 21 years.

For many years he led community singing by over 100,000 football fans at Hampden Park before internationals and cup finals.

He sang and proposed Immortal Memories at Burns Suppers all over the world—and still had requests coming in when he died.

A few weeks ago he sang at Ye Cronies Club in Glasgow for the 60th consecutive year.

A memorial service will be held in Merrylee Parish Church, Glasgow, on Tuesday at 2 p.m.

Honorary Member

Memories from a Grandson

Elliot's grandson, Fergus Dobie is a Past Member of Ye Cronies and welcomed the opportunity to share some memories, including his father, Past President Stanley Dobie.

"He was best known as Elliot Dobie and was Principal bass at Glasgow Cathedral for 25 years, he also made some records...78's.

My father, Stanley Dobie, used to say to my grandfather not to bring his music with him when he was attending Ye Cronies as a guest as John Watson would have a full programme.

My grandfather didn't need music to sing and if asked by John to get up on his hind legs he would, and did (with great joy), and many times it stole the show!

[I recall] he sang a duet or two at Ye Cronies with his granddaughter Fiona Dobie when his son (Fiona's father) Stanley, was President of Ye Cronies.

This was at The Central Hotel [where] I seem to remember 'My Fair Lady' being sung.

I was also present that night as a guest of my father, making it three generations at Ye Cronies in the same evening.

*My grandfather loved his singing!
I had many, many enjoyable nights at Ye Cronies and thank you for your interest in my grandfather Elliot Dobie."*

Fergus Dobie

December 2020

Royal Hospital for Sick Children

Ye Cronies & The Jolly Giant

Honorary Member, Charles Baxter, joined Ye Cronies in 1976 and being a toy wholesaler took it upon himself to ensure, in conjunction with the Club's annual charity fundraiser, that the children of the Royal Hospital for Sick Children received toys from the club.

The Baxter family would continue generously donating toys on behalf of Ye Cronies for the next 30 years, allowing the club to re-direct their funds to other charities such as the Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain. Charles' son and fellow Honorary Member, Alan Baxter, would continue to meet up with the Hospital's staff to select toys from his "Jolly Giant" superstore that would then be delivered to the children in time for Christmas.



Alan Baxter recently shared his recollections of this period:

"The company was called Baxter Brothers and my father and myself were the controlling shareholders from around 1963.

My father retired from the toy business on 25th January 1978, being his 65th birthday.

We supplied the toys to the hospital and from memory ward 6b in particular, which was the heart ward, for some 20 years. This allowed the collection taken every November to be used for other purposes.

I did on several visits help the nurses, and when on many occasions their selections were under the cost the club had allocated we included coloured pencils and colouring books for their general use within the ward.

I did at some point in time request that the chairman did not announce our participation and the club's thanks at the AGM as it was becoming a bit embarrassing.

In the latter years we had moved from wholesalers to retailers in 1982, and it may have been The Jolly Giant that we directed the nurses to go to and select the toys, since we no longer had a showroom.

I still support the hospital through a donation I send to their shop every year and Kim, the manager, always sends me a delightful note of thanks."

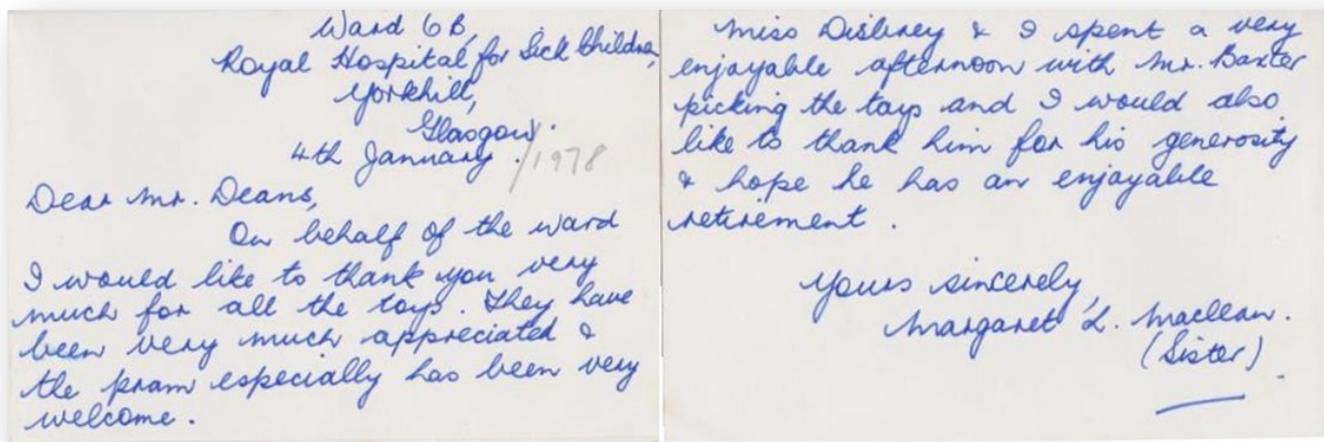
Royal Hospital for Sick Children

A Note of Thanks

In 1978 the Sister at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children wrote to Ye Cronies to express her staff's thanks to the club and the Baxter Family's assistance in securing toys for Ward 6b.



A transcript of the original hand-written note is below.



Ward 6B
Royal Hospital for Sick Children
Yorkhill, Glasgow

4th January 1978

Dear Mr. Deans,

On behalf of the ward I would like to thank you very much for all the toys. They have been very much appreciated and the pram especially has been very welcome.

Miss Disbrey and I spent a very enjoyable afternoon with Mr. Baxter picking toys and I would also like to thank him for his generosity and hope he has an enjoyable retirement.

Yours Sincerely,

Margaret . MacLean (Sister)

Presidential Terms

A Proposed Reduction

Since the sudden death of Past President Wilfred MacDougall in 1947, there had been ongoing “mutterings” from various members that having the Club’s Rules state that Presidents would serve only two year terms was simply too lengthy a commitment for one individual, especially when they would have to serve two years as Vice-President prior to their Chairmanship.

The 1960s had seen two further President’s resign half way through their terms, and one Vice-President, which served to strengthen the debate over how long a President should reasonably be expected to serve for.

This was first formally brought to the attention of the Committee on 25th September 1975 by the new Secretary James Stuart Deans:

Period of Office of President and Vice-President. The Secretary explained that the opinion had been expressed to him by some Members that a two year period for each office was too long as it meant four years in all and suggested that the Committee might consider this point for action, if decided upon, in future years. During discussion it became obvious that some Committee Members did not hold this view, but since no decision was required meantime the Meeting agreed that it be carried forward for future discussion.

With views on this issue strong on both sides of the debate, coupled with the Committee meeting quite infrequently during this decade, the matter was not formally discussed again until the 9th August 1977 where proposals had been drawn up in preparation for a vote at the 1977 Annual General Meeting:

Period of Office of President and Vice-President.

The question was raised as to whether the period of these Offices should be reduced from the present two years to one year only and, after discussion, it was agreed that the matter be put before the Annual General Meeting, one proposal to be a straight limitation of the period to one year, and the other to add to this the retention of the retiring President to remain on Committee on an ex officio basis. It was appreciated that this would require two notices from which the Annual General Meeting would choose.

Presidential Terms

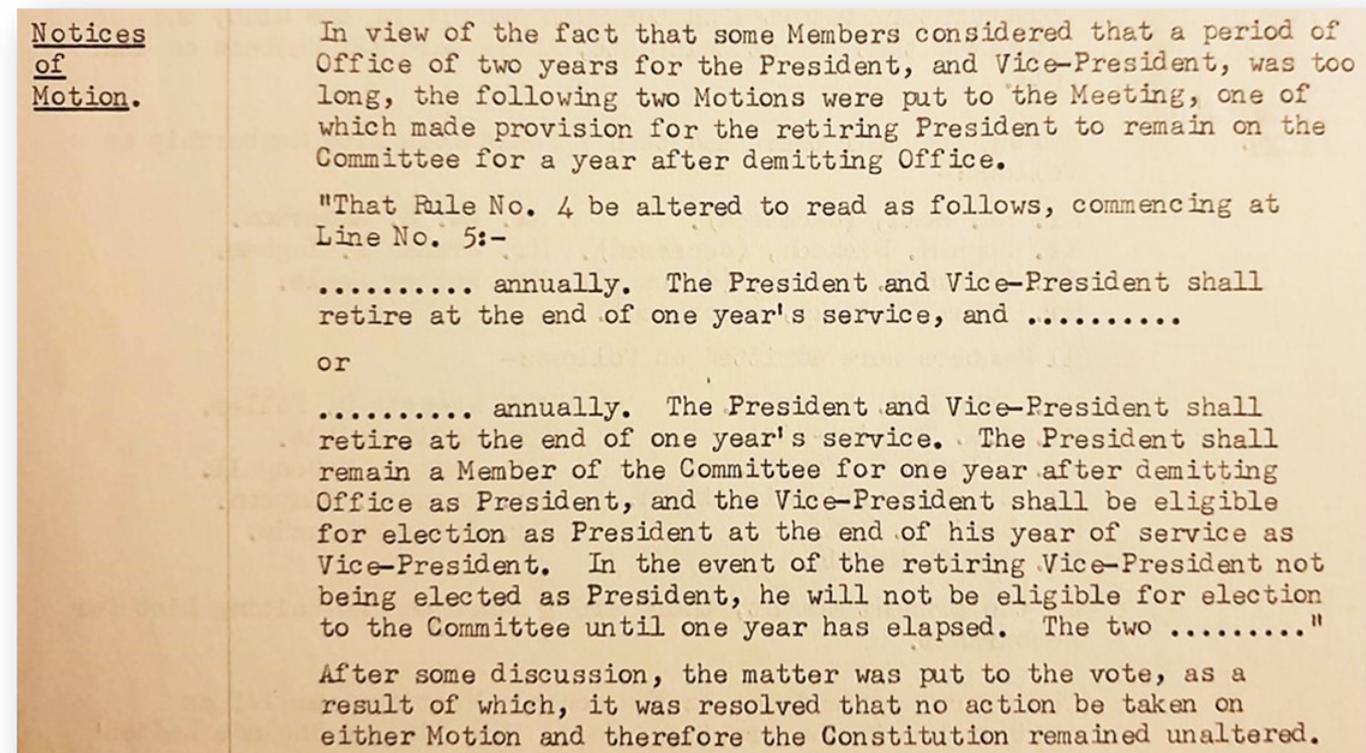
"Notices of Motion"

The 99th Annual General Meeting held on 27th October 1977, coincidentally the centenary year of the Club's founding, saw attending Ye Cronies members vote on a motion to change Rule No. 4 of the Club's Constitution regarding the length of time a President may remain in office.

Two proposals were put forward with the intention of limiting Presidential terms to a single year:

- 1) The President and Vice-President shall retire after one year in Office; or
- 2) The President shall retire after one year in Office and remain a Member of the Committee for one further year.

The formal minutes of this meeting indicate the motion triggered significant and lengthy debate amongst the attendees, but ultimately the decision was to reject both motions and retain the status quo of two year terms.

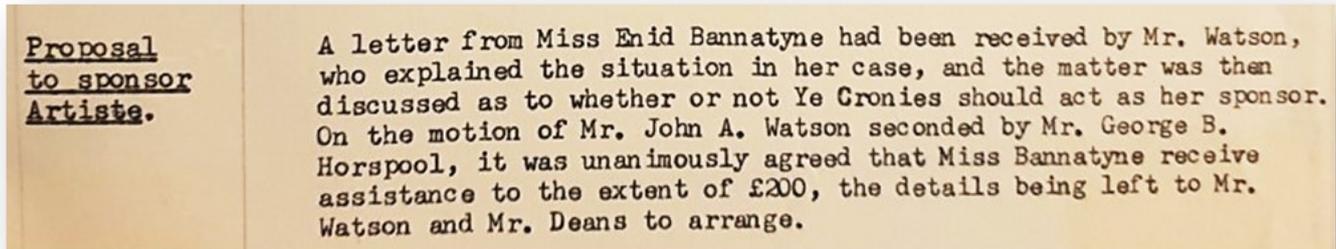


[Extract from the 99th Annual General Meeting - 27th October 1977]

Artiste Sponsorship

Ms. Enid Bannatyne

Following the success of Cronies' first beneficiary of their new 'sponsorship' fund, in the form of Phyllis Cannan, the next beneficiary would come in 1977.



[Extract from Committee Minutes - 9th August 1977]

We don't have the details that were read out to the committee, we know that soprano Ms. Bannatyne was educated in Edinburgh at the James Gillespie's High School for Girls.

Prior to John Watson's request to provide financial aid to Enid, she had been working with Scottish Opera for the last 5 years on various productions such as Alceste, Rosenkavalier, and Zauberflote.

Following Ye Cronies' £200 gift to Enid she went on to perform for the University of Edinburgh, notably being the lead in the Reid Orchestra's final concert on 14th January 1982 in the Reid Concert Hall.

Ms. Bannatyne released an album in 1990 titled "Classically Scottish" which took 14 songs by Robert Burns and "symphonically" arranged them according to five of the great classical composers—"bridging two centuries to create a unique musical experience."



BEETHOVEN

*The lovely lass of Inverness
The bonnie lad that's far awa!
O' for him back again*

HAYDN

*The brues o' Ballochmyle
Ca' the yowes to the knowes
Craigieburn Wood
My ain kind Dearie O'!*

Ref No. BE4 5432/1

KOZELUCH

*On a bank of flowers
Lord Gregory
And O' for ane and twenty, Tam*

PLEYEL

*Here awa', there awa'
Braw lads on Yarrow Brues*

WEBER

*John Anderson, my Jo
Young Jessie*

Having married in 1986, Enid Wilder now leads a Music and Theory exam centre in Edinburgh for the University of West London.

The “Jack Duncan” Cup Winners

1970 - 1979



Following its resurrection in 1966, the annual competition for the Jack Duncan Cup was in “full swing” throughout the 1970s, with a trio of “2-time winners”.

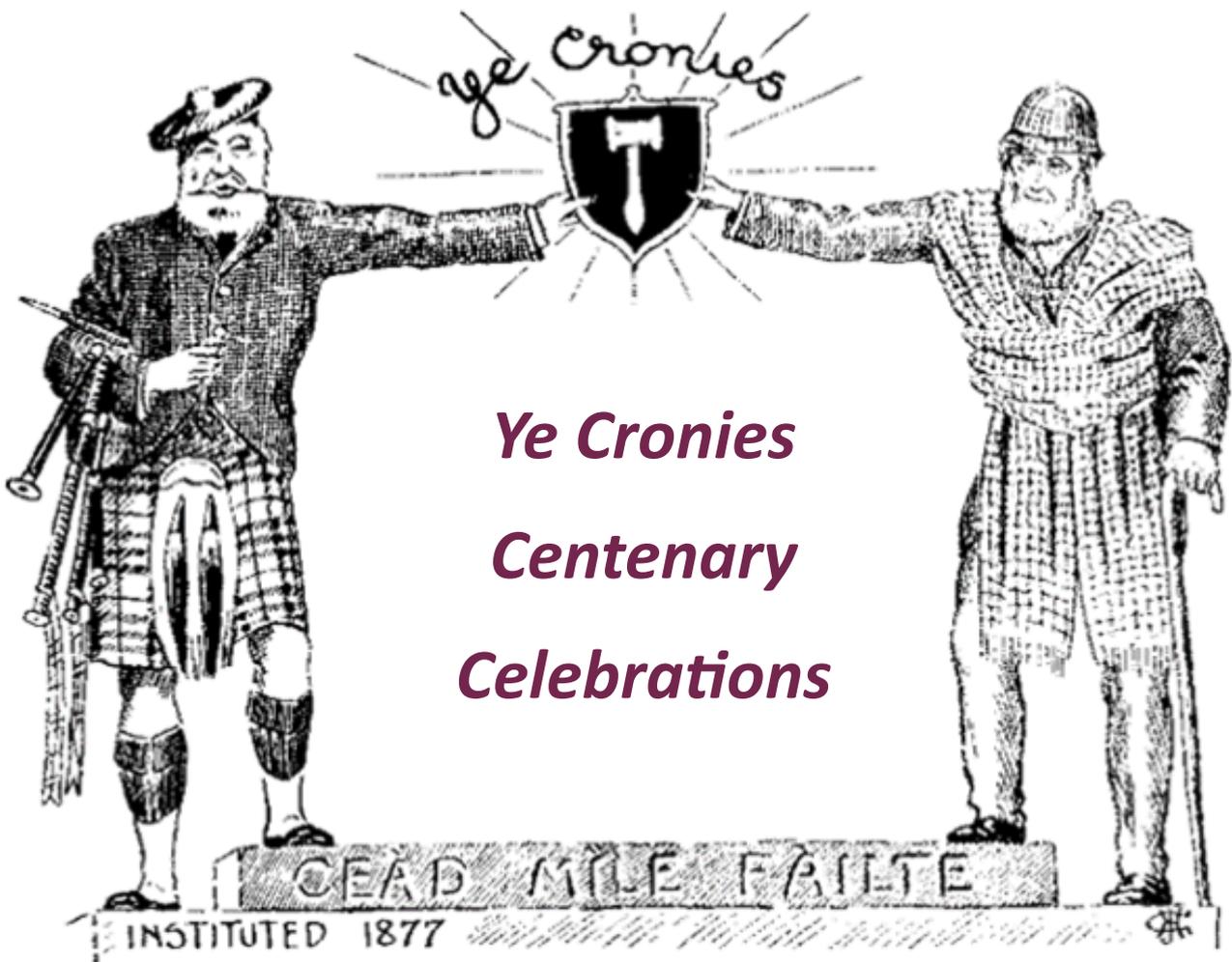
Past President’s William Law (1969 and 1971), John G. Inglis (1972 and 1975) showed their stamina for the game, winning their brace several years apart.

Meanwhile Mr. Archie L. Brown became the club’s first back-to-back winner, rounding out the first full decade of the cup’s resurgence.

Year	Winner
1970	James A. Turner
1971	William Law
1972	John G. Inglis
1973	Louis Stewart
1974	Gordon K. Woore
1975	John G. Inglis
1976	J. M. Bowes
1977	G. C. Fraser
1978	Archie L. Brown
1979	Archie L. Brown

Our Story

Chapter 4



Centenary Celebrations

Tuesday 13th December 1977



Subverting the traditional 'last Thursday of the month' rule within the Club's constitution, the club's centenary dinner was purposefully moved to a Tuesday in order to hold it exactly 100 years to the day Ye Cronies was first instituted,

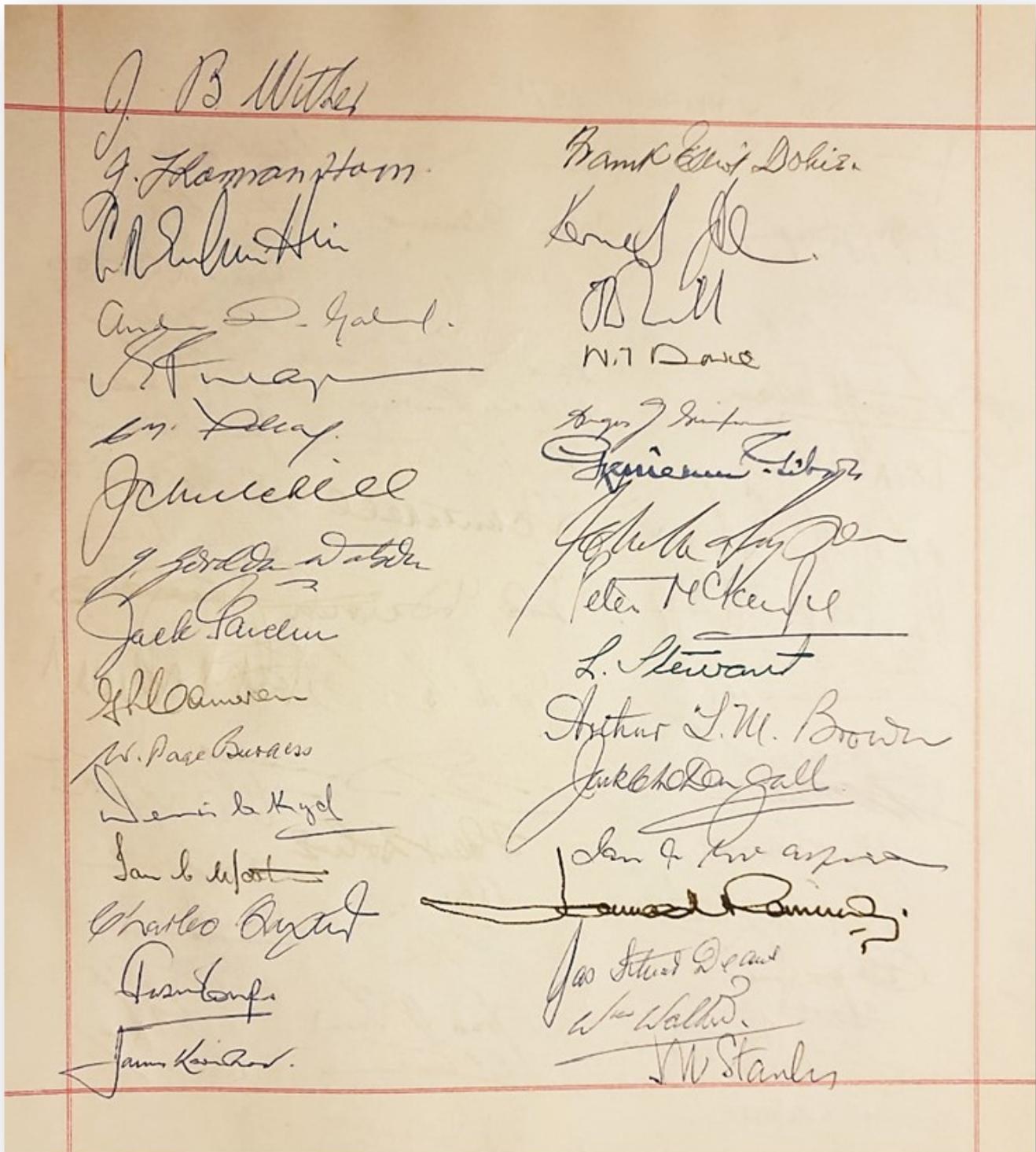
To commemorate this milestone, the club introduced its first ever set of 'official' Club ties which continue to be worn today.

Hosted by President and long-time member Norman Y. Keanie, the evening saw 387 members and guests convene at the Glasgow Central Hotel.

Featuring a keynote speech and toast in recognition of key events and characters in the club's rich history, the night was a fitting tribute to 100 years of musical entertainment!

Centenary Celebrations

Members Sign-in Book



Centenary Celebrations

Menu Card

Instituted

1877



GRACE

Some hae meat and canna eat
Some wad eat that want it;
But we hae meat and we can eat
And sae the Lord be thankit.—Burns

Music composed by the late Montague Smith

Menu

Coupe Miami

ou

Crème de Céleri

✱

Contre-filet de Bœuf Chasseur

Haricots Verts au Beurre

Pommes Chateaux

✱

Soufflé Surprise Elizabeth

✱

Café

CENTRAL HOTEL : GLASGOW

Tuesday, 13th December, 1977

Centenary Celebrations

Artistes



Janice Cairns

Soprano

Member of Scottish
Opera Choir



Donald Maxwell

Baritone

'Music Box'
Group



Linda Ormiston

Mezzo

'Music Box'
Group



Elizabeth Paling

Piano

Member of the RSNO



Edwin Paling

Violin

Leader of the RSNO

With Ye Cronies Concert Directors & Accompanist

John Watson & James Geddes

Centenary Celebrations

President's Speech



Address by the President—Mr. Norman Y. Keanie

One of the original Rules of the Club, and still there after 100 years, is that no speeches be made without the express permission of the Chairman, the implication being, I presume, that only something quite exceptional could justify such a non-musical item as a speech.

However, I now hold the prerogative of the Chair, and as I think tonight's function to be perhaps the most notable occasion since the first Ye Cronies' Dinner on 13th December 1877, precisely 100 years ago, some few words should be said about our beginnings and about what has happened since, and maybe Ye Cronies of 1977 by hearing a little about our past may feel even more appreciative of our present, and I hope our Guests may find something of interest in it too.

Dr. Samuel Johnson once wrote :- "all are at some hour or another fond of companions whom they can entertain on easy terms." With an idea of that sort in mind I imagine, one James Kerr, styled in our records as "Ye Founder and Original Member," gathered about him a number of kindred spirits, all fond of music, and set up Ye Cronies Clubbe; soon to have a membership of close to fifty—our Founding Gathers as I think of them—and so well did our Founding Fathers found that the Club's format and method have scarcely changed in 100 years.

Continuous written records are lacking till 1943, but there are many mementoes of earlier days, and in particular 3 large Books of photographs of Members right from 1877 till the outbreak of World War II in 1939.

Centenary Celebrations

President's Speech (2/5)

The first is appropriately of James Kerr, Ye Founder and shows a distinctly handsome and distinctly attractive man of, I would guess, about the magic age of 40. Presumably he also instigated Ladies' Nights, and judging by his photograph he must have been one of the attractions of our Lady Guests. Anyhow, Ladies' Nights were a great success right from the start.

Our first President was James Muir, who was also an Artist of some ability, and our first Secretary and Treasurer was William D. Main, who held this position till 1910—a period of 33 years. Stuart Deans—You have quite a target ahead of you. Stuart Deans, Ladies and Gentlemen, is our present Secretary and Treasurer, and a highly efficient one too. But he has only done 15 years so far. He is not even half way there yet. But I must see that he gets his due. Stuart has now served longest in this office since W.D. Main.

Then after 5 years of great service, President James Muir retired in 1882, and was succeeded by another Founding Father, who clearly from the records, was a man of great stature, James Cowan, Conductor of a leading Orchestra of the time. He presided for 9 years till 1891, when a special banquet was held in his honour, and he was also presented with a remarkable illuminated address signed by all Members and many past Members. A copy of this address is still in our possession.

Then followed another of our greats, James Hamilton, Vice-President for seven years, then President for 19 years from 1891 to 1910 26 years in Office altogether. So esteemed and respected was James Hamilton that in 1910 a special banquet was held in his honour; the quite vast and quite sumptuous Menu is amongst our mementoes. I am sorry there is not time to read it out. He was also presented with the silver casket now here in front of me, signed by every Member of the Club, which he bequeathed to us in 1929. Inscribed on it amongst other things is 1881—1929, the years of his Membership, 48 in all.

On this casket appears the signature of John Watson. John Watson—well ever youthful and indeed quite indestructible as our John appears to me today. 67 years ago is a very long time. It must have been somebody else. A case of coming events casting a shadow before—one could say.

Above them a' perhaps, must be reckoned Wm. D. Main, the greatest marathon runner in Office of them all. Secretary and Treasurer from 1877 till 1910; then Vice-President for 3 years; then President for 6 till 1919—a prodigious total of 42 years continuously in Office. He certainly deserves to rest in honoured peace.

Centenary Celebrations

President's Speech (3/5)

Then came a most jovial and entertaining gentleman whom I knew well, Provost Duncan of Helensburgh, President for 9 years till 1928, after 5 years as Vice-President—14 years in all. And that finished the age of marathon Presidents. After 1928 the Rules were changed, mercifully perhaps, to a maximum of two years for each President and Vice-President. One can only conclude that these men were all so good, that the Members just wouldn't let them go.

Provost Duncan was a young friend of Wm. D. Main's and joined the Club through him in 1892. I was a friend of the Duncan family and it was through them that I myself joined in 1938.

The Club has always had a Concert Director and a Musical Director right since 1877. These were the original terms used, as they are now, and from its Members have come an unbroken line of men of ability and energy to fill these positions. Ernest Ford and Walter MacIntosh who composed and wrote the Operetta "A Voyage to the Moon," a huge success, and performed in 1883 to an audience of Cronies and Guests of over 500. This is the first of 3 Operettas composed and produced by Ye Cronies Members in the first two decades. Then there was Montague Smith, Musical Director, a well known Pianist and Composer of his time who wrote the Music for our Grace before Meat, first sung at the January Meeting of 1891 and still sung to this day. At the turn of the Century, Philip Halstead, another Musical Director, also a well known Pianist and Composer, whom I was later to know personally.

When I joined in 1938, the Musical Director was Crossland Hirst, Pianist, Organist, Teacher of both and of Singing, whose name was a household word in these parts. He was our highly esteemed Musical Director for 35 years till his death in 1943. Then there was Bill Storry, a rousing Singer and a most jovial character our Concert Director. Bill held this position from 1905 till his retiral in 1945, 40 years in all, and a special presentation was made to him for his remarkable services.

Then early in the Fifties appear two young new Members, one a Pianist, the other a Tenor. The Pianist soon to be our much esteemed Musical Director, James Geddes, and the Tenor, deus ex machine, John Watson himself, soon to be our Concert Director and Composer extraordinary.

But about them I am going to say nothing. I reckon they have to be seen and heard to be believed, and very soon you will be seeing and hearing them for yourselves.

Centenary Celebrations

President's Speech (4/5)

Browsing through our past, as I have of course been doing, many things impress; the great efforts and enthusiasm of the early Cronies and how much they achieved in days when all letters were handwritten, no telephones, no tram cars, no buses, no taxis; the many many men of prestige and character amongst its Membership throughout these entire 100 years, and the Many Members prominent in the world of Music who eventually became Honorary Members.

In my own time amongst others, Philip Halstead, Crossland Hirst, Sir John Barbirolli, an enthusiastic Member in his Glasgow days before he went on to world fame in England and abroad—I have heard him play his violin here—and Horace Fellowes, the famous violinist, long Lead of the Scottish Orchestra, who died at the age of 100 less than 2 years ago, playing enthusiastically right to the end—I have heard him play here too; and one with us today, one whom I think of as the very epitome of Ye Cronies Clubbe, still in great form, still in good voice—and at the age of 92, the grand old man of song as I call him, Frank Elliot Dobie.

You will, I am sure, have noticed the picture at the head of our Menu. It has been on all our Menus for a very long time, and it was drawn by another Founding Father who died in 1879, George Inglis. It is conceived to represent the spirit and sentiment of the Club. On the base are the Gaelic words “Cead Mille Failte,” which I will translate for the benefit of those who only have the English, one hundred thousand welcomes, and on the Bowl of the Quaich are words from Auld Lang Syne signifying good fellowship and continuing friendship. No doubt a gude willywacht is meant to come into the sentiment too, though not specifically mentioned. George Inglis, the Artist, was a great-uncle of present day Cronie, John G. Inglis, whom himself first sang at Ye Cronies in 1924. So in John G. we have a hearty and healthy living link with 1877.

Several of the Inglis family have been Cronies. James Denny Inglis, whom I remember well, joined in 1902 and was a Member, latterly an Honorary Member for over 50 years. He played the Viola.

He also designed and built the present day Steamer, “Waverley,” and the present day “Maid of the Loch” and a few other ships as well of course as the Inglis Yard at Pointhouse.

I think, John, after all this I must ask you to stand up and show our Guests in what good and lively condition we keep our living link.

Centenary Celebrations

President's Speech (5/5)

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am far from the end of my topic, but I am nearing the end of my time.

One of the greatest and wisest of the Ancients—I am speaking of Aristotle—believed that those mortals worthy enough passed to immortality in the serene Elysian fields, where they would still be aware of happenings on Earth below and if this be so, our Founding Fathers must surely be gazing down upon us with benign satisfaction to-night—and to them I would say across whatever it is that separates us, the words on the plaque in St. Paul's Cathedral to its famous Architect, Christopher Wren, "si monumentus requires, circumspice." If you seek my monument, look around you, here it is. And so, dear Founding Fathers, this cheerful gathering here to-night can likewise, though in a different medium, be construed as a monument to you.

And after another 100 years and on the doubtful assumption that I get to these Elysian Fields myself, I would hope, given time in hand to be looking happily down upon another gathering of just such as this.

I believe we finish our first Century in good heart and in great fettle. I also believe it to be feasible that at least another Century could lie ahead of us—provided the Club's future is a worthy continuation of its past—provided that its high standards of music and entertainment and of decorum and its spirit de corps are maintained. If they are then Ye Cronies will endure.

I commend to you this Toast.

To Ye Cronies Club.

To its admirable past.

To its enthusiastic present,

and to a happy and vigorous future.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us drink together to Ye Cronies.

Centenary Celebrations

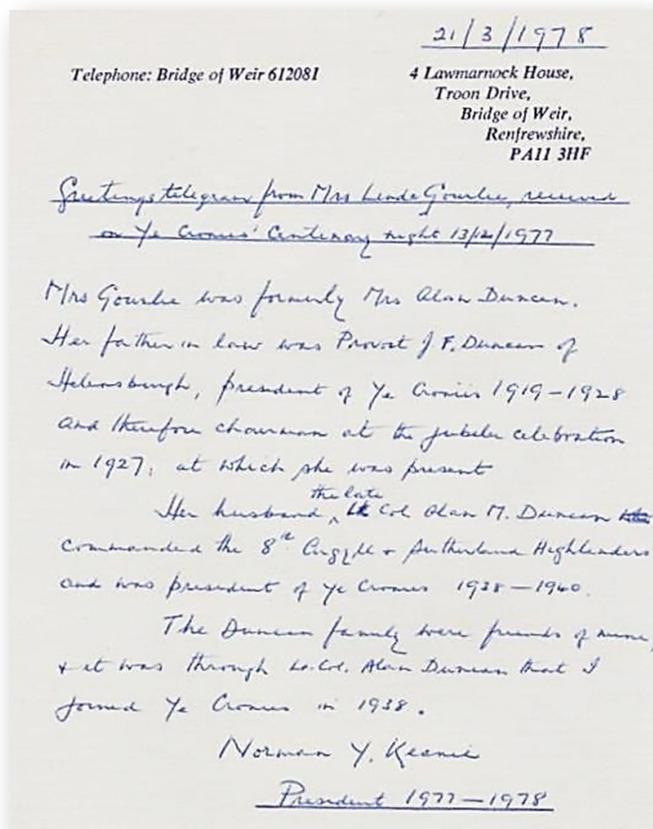
A Special Telegram

On the night of the celebrations, sitting President Norman Y. Keanie received a surprise telegram from a "Mrs. Linda Gourlay" from London.

Mrs. Gourlay as it turns out was the widow of Past President Mr. Alan M. Duncan who had sadly passed away in 1948,

Having re-married, Mrs. Gourlay clearly still remembered being a guest at Ye Cronies' 50th anniversary dinner when her then father-in-law, John F. Duncan presided over the club's celebrations.

Mr. Keanie included a cover letter when passing on the telegram to the club secretary for our archive which is transcribed below.



----- TRANSCRIPT OF COVER LETTER TO TELEGRAM -----

Dated: 21 / 3 / 1978

Greetings telegram from Mrs. Linda Gourlay, received on Ye Cronies Centenary night 13/12/1977

Mrs. Gourlay was formerly Mrs. Alan Duncan. Her father in law was Provost J. F. Duncan of Helensburgh, president of Ye Cronies 1919 - 1928 and therefore chairman at the jubilee celebration in 1927 at which she was present.

Her husband, the late Lt. Col. Alan M. Duncan, commanded the 8th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and was President of Ye Cronies 1938 - 1940.

The Duncan family were friends of mine, and it was through Lt. Col. Alan Duncan that I joined Ye Cronies in 1938.

Norman Y. Keanie
President 1977 - 1978

Centenary Celebrations

A Special Telegram



Post Office Telecommunications



M.
Received 13/12/1977

777111 PO GW G
TSO TGMS LNAJ
T37 AP8 1157 LONDON T 35

ALLPURPOSE THE PRESIDENT YE CRONIES, CENTRAL HOTEL
GLASGOW

CONGRATULATIONS ALL GOOD WISHES TO YE CRONIES
AND THEIR GUEST MAY THE EVENING BE AS HAPPY AND
MEMORABLE AS WAS THAT OF 50 YEARS AGO
LINDA GOURLIE

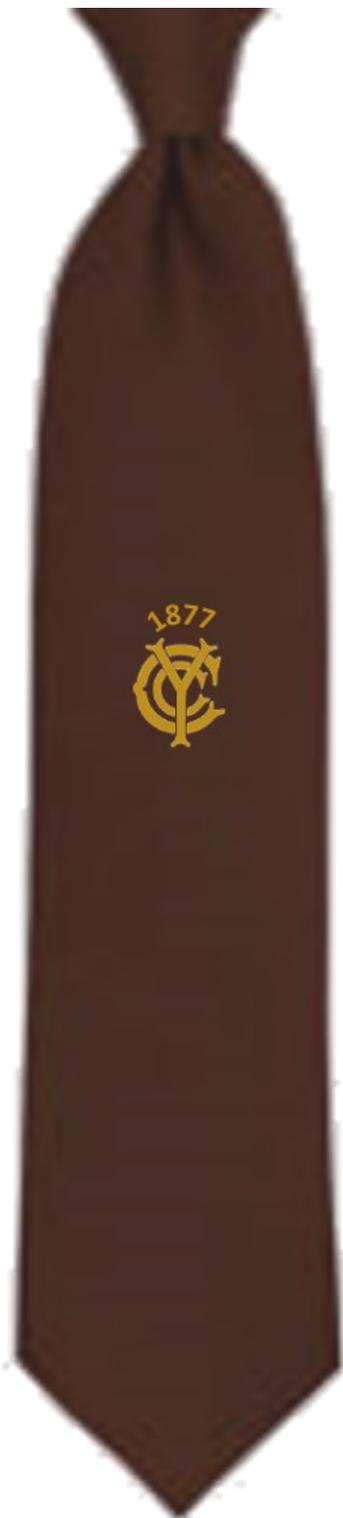
YE CRONIES 50
GOURLIE

TSO TGMS LNAJ

Centenary Celebrations

Commemorative Tie

It may surprise members to learn that there was no such thing as the 'Cronies tie' for the first 100 years of the club's existence.



[Past Presidents Tie]

For what is now considered an essential item of clothing in any true Ye Cronies member's "locker", the club tie is just 43 years old at the time of writing.

Introduced by the 1977/78 committee to recognise the club's 100th year, Past President James A. Turner was charged with the responsibility of designing and manufacturing the club's "centenary" tie.

Unlike the single standard design for all members that we have today, in 1977 the committee decided that there should be two colours of tie:

Dark Navy Design

Available for purchase by all ordinary members

Dark Maroon Design

Exclusively available only to Past Presidents of the club.

Ties were sold at £2 an item in advance of the Centenary dinner.

So popular were these club ties that demand resulted in a waiting list as further ties were ordered over the next two years.



[Ordinary Members Tie]

Our Story

Chapter 5



Membership

Records

1950—1979

Ye Cronies Membership Records

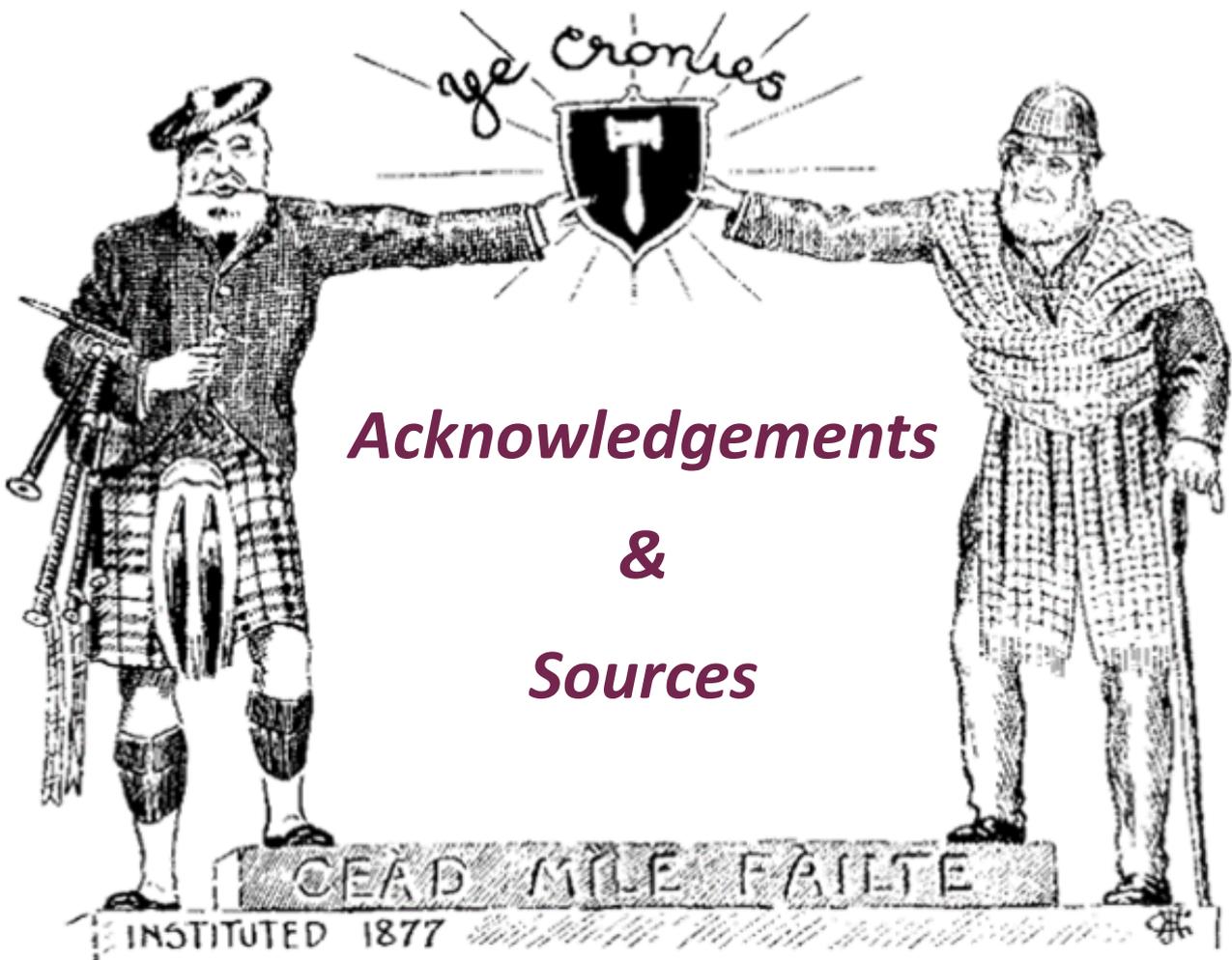
1950 - 1979

The following data has been gathered from the minutes books, and in particular the Secretary and Treasurer's Reports at the Annual General Meeting.

Year	Total Membership	Average Concert Attendance	Membership Subscription	Ordinary Concert Ticket Price	Ladies Night Ticket Price
1950	85	-	-	-/11/6d	-
1951	77	-	-	-/13/6d	1/5/-
1952	83	-	-	"	"
1953	76	-	-	1/7/6d	1/7/6
1954	79	-	-	"	"
1955	92	-	-	"	"
1956	86	-	-	"	"
1957	82	-	-	"	"
1958	84	-	-	"	"
1959	78	-	-	"	"
1960	79	65	2/-/-	1/1/-	1/1/-
1961	80	-	"	"	"
1962	72	52	"	"	"
1963	85	74	2/10/-	1/5/-	1/5/-
1964	92	75	"	"	"
1965	93	81	"	"	"
1966	98	78	3/-/-	1/10/-	1/15/-
1967	100	91	"	"	"
1968	96	93	"	"	"
1969	100	96	3/10/-	1/14/-	2/-/-
1970	106	108	"	"	"
1971	120	125	£3.50	£1.70	£2.50
1972	109	117	£4.00	£2.00	£3.00
1973	119	127	£5.00	£2.30	"
1974	119	133	£7.00	£3.80	£4.00
1975	112	129	"	£4.50	£5.00
1976	113	145	£10.00	£5.00	"
1977	121	141	"	£6.00	£6.00
1978	119	155	"	£6.50	£6.50
1979	121	178	£15.00	£7.50	£7.50

Our Story

Chapter 6



Acknowledgements

&

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Special Thanks to the following contributors

Alan Baxter

*

David Black

*

Isobel Buchanan

*

Bob Burnett

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Douglas Cameron

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Gregor Cameron

Fergus Dobie

*

Donald Forrester

*

Sharon Kirk

*

Jamie MacDougall

*

John Sharp

*

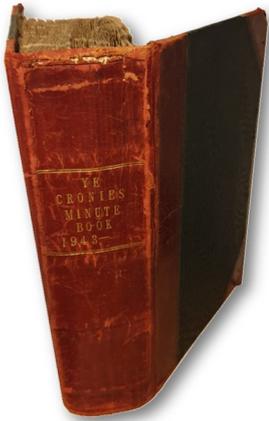
David Watson

Without their support and access to additional materials this publication would be far less informed than it is.

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Thanks to Club Secretaries W. C. Campbell, Geoffrey C. Duncan, and James Stuart Deans, the following original records were used to provide the bulk of material presented in this volume:

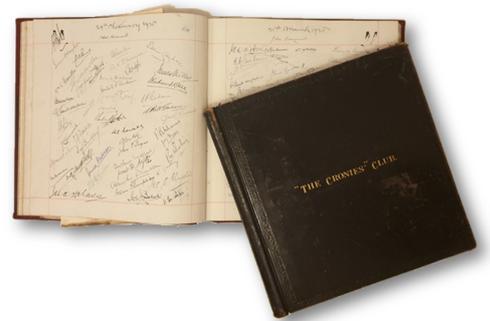


Ye Cronies Minute Books

Minutes of Committee and Concert meetings between 14th October 1943 and 20th December 1979.

Ye Cronies Members Sign-In Registers

A page representing each concert held, with signatures of all members in attendance. Dating from 29th January 1933 onwards.



Ye Cronies Guest Books

Register of all guests of members who attended a Ye Cronies event between 1906 and 1979.

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Additional information has been gathered from external sources to provide both context and insight into the individuals concerned.

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Volume Four

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Further Information

Volume Four

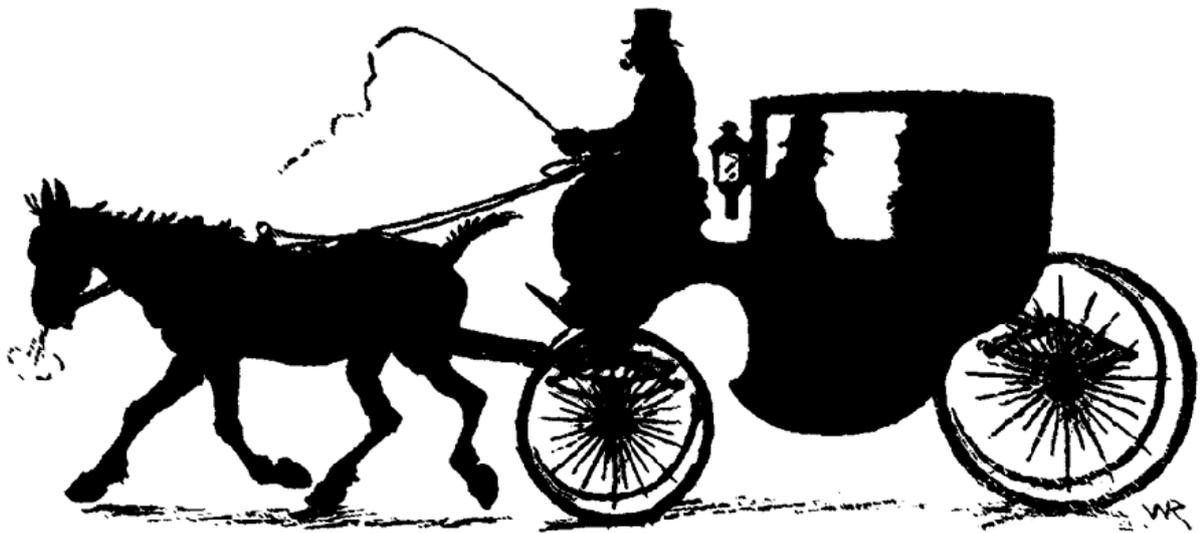


**Our knowledge of Ye Cronies history
is continually evolving.**

**Should you have any additional information
you think would enhance this volume
(or future time periods)
we would welcome your contribution.**

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