

VOLUME ONE

1877 - 1889



Our Story

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

Collated by
David Cameron
November 2020

*Dedicated to all who made
our Club what it is today...*

*...and to those who will continue
to build on its legacy for tomorrow.*

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END

Preface

Volume One

Having been Secretary of the Ye Cronies Club for the last 7 years now, I have long held hopes of pulling together a book of some form containing notes of the Club's vast history.

My attraction to Ye Cronies always extended beyond its wonderful music, entertainment and seasonal calendar. We are a very unique Club with a rich history that stretches back nearly 150 years of Glasgow history. To me this is a fascinating aspect of Ye Cronies and one that makes me proud to be a member of it.

Little did I know that the Club's Secretary was responsible for storing and maintaining a stack of thick leather-bound books, jammed full of menus, wine lists, dance cards, programmes, musical scripts, and sign-in books. Each of these books are a time machine back to the Club's earliest days in the late 19th century, and their contents are quite likely the last of their kind.

To say my interest was piqued by this "inheritance" is an understatement! Many a night I would spend pouring through each ledger, picking up names to research further, discovering what life was like in the late 19th century, and growing a better understanding of how the Club came to be as much as develop over the decades.

I am writing this in the midst of a pandemic where we have all been asked to stay safe and isolate ourselves from others where possible. It's a situation none of us want to be in, but with every dark cloud there is a silver lining. In my case, the time given to isolation allowed me to finally put pen to paper and begin collating all the materials the Club has in its "archive" in a more legible, accessible form.

There is so much material that can and should be shared amongst our membership - the people, the concerts, the music, and the art, the outings, and the performers...everything that our concerts have become today are based on the loyal and passionate work of our predecessors.

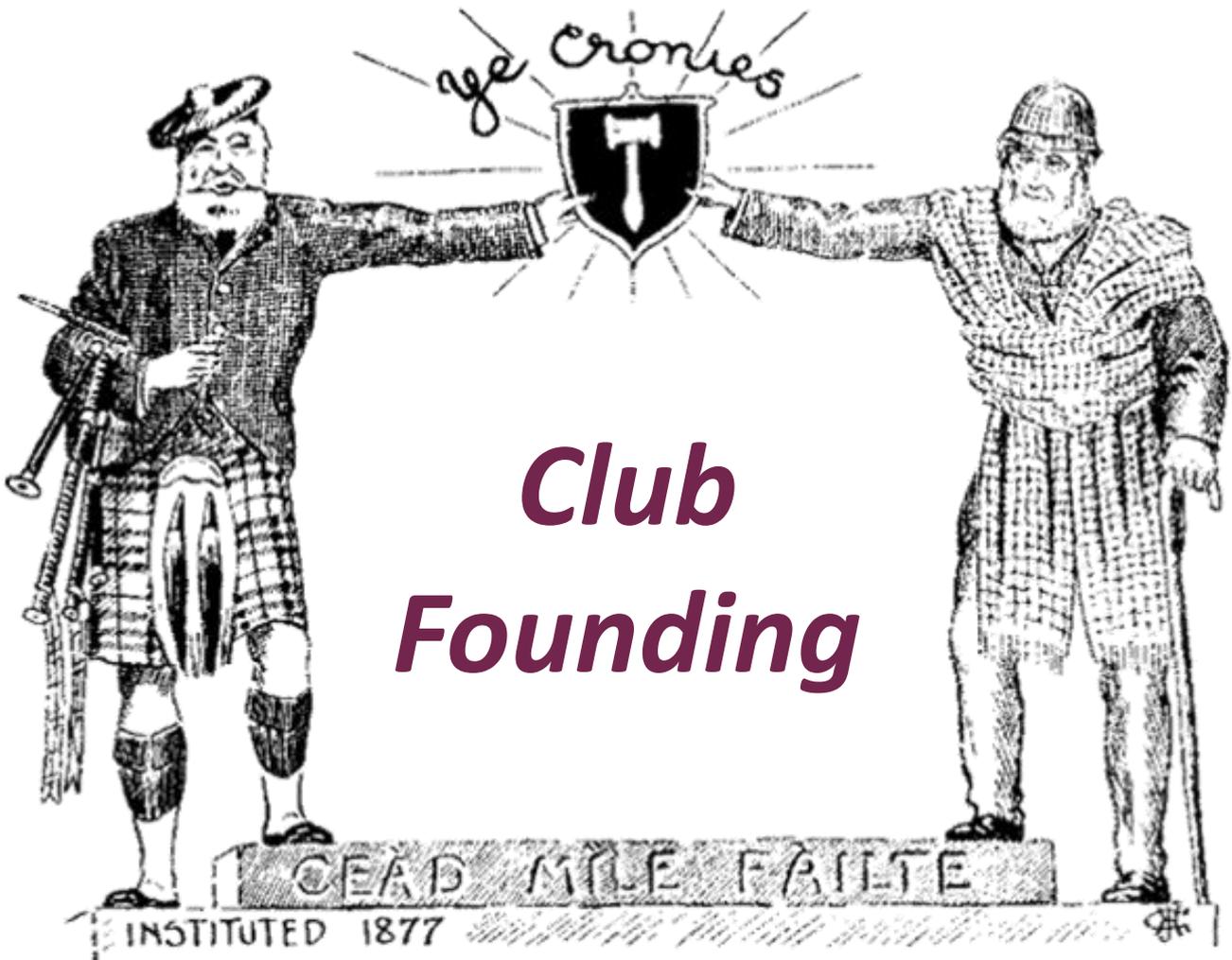
Whilst in "lockdown", what better way to remind ourselves of why Ye Cronies is an important institution than to become better acquainted with the history that defines it and that we are all now part of.

I sincerely hope you enjoy this first slice of history. It is by no means a complete account of the Club's activities, but it gives more than a flavour of how it all began...

David Cameron
19th November 2020

Our Story

Chapter 1



Club Founding

City life in the 19th century | Ye Cronies Founder | The Club Ethos

Glasgow

City life in the 19th Century

The Second City of the Empire

In the early decades of the 19th century, Glasgow was growing quickly in self-confidence and stature.

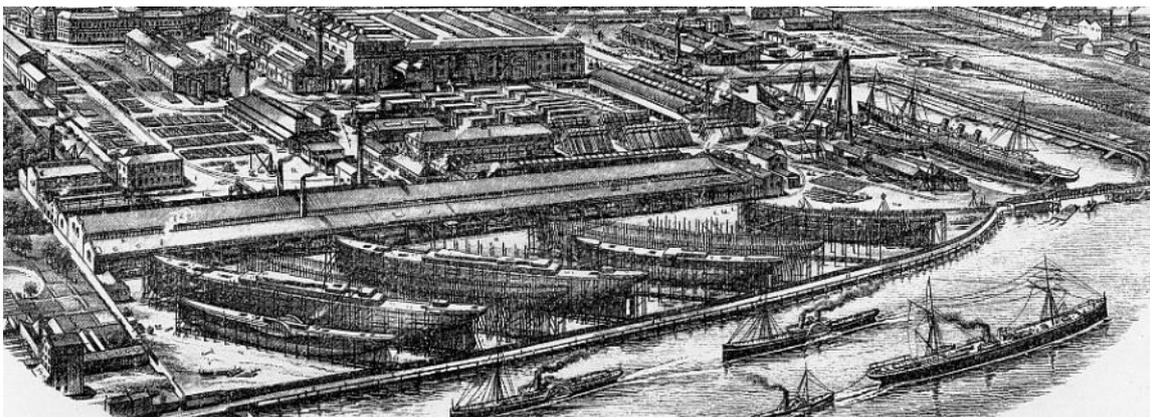
Through increases in immigration and extensions to city boundaries, Glasgow's population surpassed Edinburgh's in the 1920s and increased five-fold over the following decades to the point where local citizens referred to our dear green place as the "second city of the Empire".

Having been a modest, if under-valued trading port in the past, it is no surprise that this rapid growth ran concurrent to the heavy industrialisation of Glasgow.



Growth of the Shipbuilding Industry

The invention of the "hotblast" iron furnace in the late 1820s opened up rich deposits across Lanarkshire, greatly reducing the cost of producing pig-iron. By the 1830s iron founding and engineering was replacing textiles as the primary source of income for entrepreneurs in the city.



Shipbuilding became a hotbed of activity along the River Clyde, boasting more than twenty shipyards by the 1860s and employing more than half the British shipbuilding workforce by the 1870s. The Napier family were the most prominent builders during this era, making great strides in the development of the steam engine, fuel consumption, and transatlantic travel.

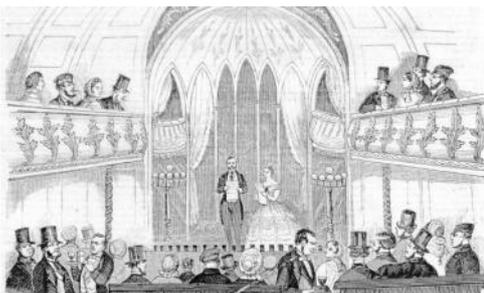
Glasgow

City life in the 19th Century

“Penny Geggies” Vs Touring theatres

With all this growth and wealth and a greater interest in arts, theatre and leisure. Throughout the 19th century, Scotland became an important part of the economic and social infrastructure of touring theatres, “penny geggies” contributed to the rising phenomenon of the urban music hall.

“Penny Geggies”, small-scale, fit-up touring theatres, became vital to sustaining and preserving Scotland’s “National Drama” as the growth of railway networks enabled larger, more refined performances to tour from the likes of London.



Whilst the more expensive, extravagant and “refined” productions from further afield appealed to Scotland’s prospering middle-classes, they were predominantly non-Scottish in nature (for example, the 1850s saw two of Europe’s greatest singers perform in Donizetti and Bellini operas at the Theatre Royal).

The unfortunate side effect of hosting these popular performances on a frequent basis was that anything by Scots, about Scotland, or even performed by Scottish actors were quickly relegated to theatres in the poorest parts of the urban centre, or to the long-standing “penny geggies”.

The Birth of Ye Cronies

It was against this backdrop of growing wealth, variety in leisure activities, and more importantly time to enjoy them, that Ye Cronies came to be.

What is evident is that Ye Cronies was established to re-affirm a Scottish identity within the musical entertainment sphere in Glasgow.

Ye Cronies was founded on the premise that all music would be Scottish in nature. Whilst this rule has been relaxed over the last 100 years, the initial focus on Scots works succeeded in attracting significant interest in a crowded field of international productions.

Ye Cronies Founder

8th December 1877



JAMES KERR

b. 1851 d. Unknown

Our founder of Ye Cronies was a 26 year old tailor called James Kerr. Born and raised in Shotts, Lanarkshire, he worked as a tailor and clothier out of South Portland Street in Glasgow.

Beyond these initial facts, very little is known about James or his motivations to start a music society in 1877. We do know he was newly married just 3 months before first proposing the formation of the club, but whether that had any influence is up to complete speculation!

Despite being the one to come up with the idea of Ye Cronies, James magnanimously deferred to others when it came to its first Committee, being voted in as its Vice-President and serving the Club in this role for 5 years without every stepping up to Chairman.

James and his wife Mary had a large family of 5 children but unfortunately Mary passed away in 1894. Over the next 10 years James re-married and made the decision to emigrate to Canada where information on what he went on to achieve has been lost to time.

It is left for us to sit back and wonder what such a young man would think of the fact that a seed of an idea has resulted in nearly 150 years of entertainment and social occasion for the locals of Glasgow, and artistes from further afield.

He may be gone, but we will never forget or be able to thank James Kerr enough for being the trigger to what we continue to enjoy today.

Ye Cronies Emblem

The Club Ethos



Purported to be the earliest design specially made for Ye Cronies, this illustration was conceived to represent the spirit and sentiment of the Club.

The Club's Gaelic motto features on the pedestal that the trophy sits on:

Ceud Mille Failta

This is translated to “One Hundred Thousand Welcomes” and is reinforced by the lower surround which features multiple arms shaking hands with one another.

On the trophy itself, the words of Auld Lang Syne feature front and centre, signifying good fellowship and continuing friendship.

It is under these values that the Club has continued to this day, gathering through the dark winter months to enjoy each other's company, and share in our love of music.

Ye Cronies Calendar

1879 - 1889

The Members Sign-in Book kept records of all events held since 1879

Year	Month	Date
1879	October	30
	November	27
	December	26
1880	January	26
	February	26
	March	25
	April	29
	October	28
	November	25
	December	30
1881	January	26
	February	24
	March	31
	April	28
	May	21
	October	27
	November	24
1882	December	29
	January	26
	February	23
	March	29
	April	27
	October	24
	November	28
	December	28

Year	Month	Date
1883	January	25
	February	22
	March	29
	April	26
	May	19
	November	1
	December	27
1884	January	-
	February	28
	March	29
	April	24
	October	30
	November	27
	December	18
1885	January	29
	February	26
	March	26
	April	30
	December	28
1886	January	28
	February	25
	March	25

Year	Month	Date
1886	April	29
	October	28
	November	25
1887	December	30
	January	27
	February	24
	March	31
	April	-
	October	27
	November	24
1888	December	29
	January	26
	February	23
	March	29
	April	26
1889	October	25
	November	29
	December	27
	January	24
	February	28
	March	28

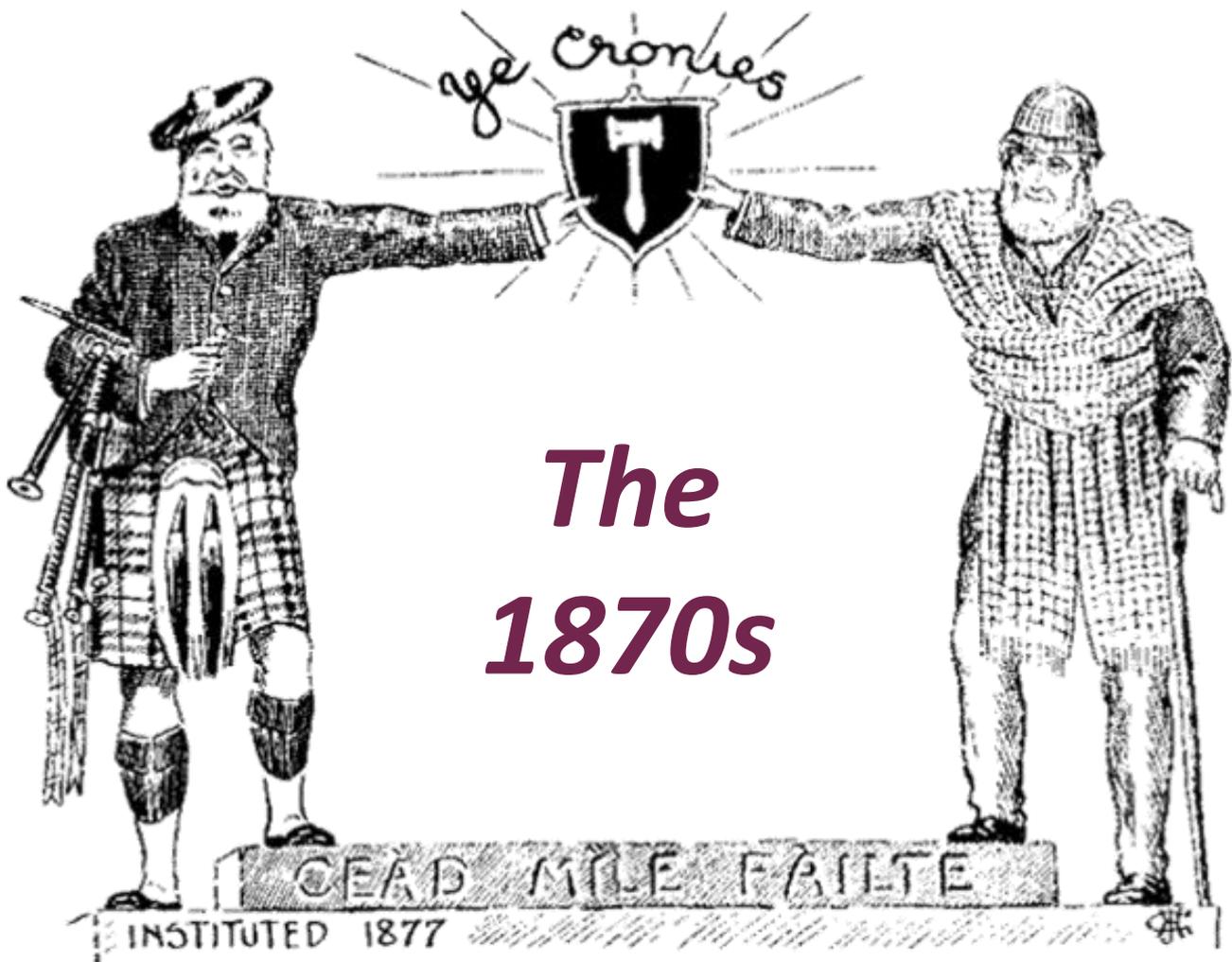
Picnic Day Trip

Opera & Ball

Cronies 'At Home'

Our Story

Chapter 2



The 1870s

Where it all began | World events in the 1870s | Cronies in the 1870s
Founding Committee | Inaugural Club President | MacLean's Hotel
Club Rules | Sign-in Books

Cronies in the 1870s

Where it all began...

Club Records

Whilst very little in historical artefacts exist from the Club's earliest days, a number of things are known from meeting minutes, sign-in books, and other testimonies found within Glasgow's various archives.



Membership

At the start of Ye Cronies' journey, one thing was clear - the membership was made up of highly musical and creative individuals.



This standard was clearly set by the Club's inaugural President, James Muir, whose profile is listed separately but was clearly a man of very many talents.

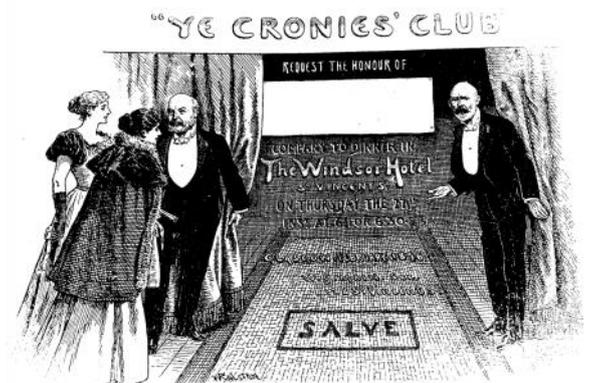
Each event cost Five Shillings (£30 today) per person to attend, with the annual membership subscription also set at Five Shillings. Membership numbers were limited to 50.

Events

Originally the club hosted seven events per season between October and April. These were held at the MacLeans Hotel at 250 St. Vincent Street.

Members were permitted to invite one guest to each event, except for January's event which was to be held on the 25th each year, and restricted to members only.

Over and above these formal events, the Cronies were seen to organise a couple of day outings to the surrounding areas of Glasgow, hosting "al fresco" concerts, and in one instance they made use of a newly opened venue to hold a formal Ballroom Dance.

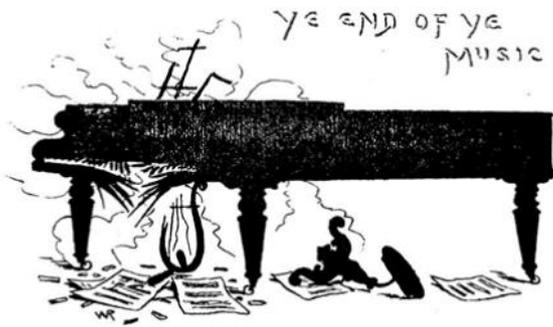


Cronies in the 1870s

Where it all began...

Entertainment

Curiously, the founding rules of the event made clear that all entertainment had to be Scottish at heart, with any deviation from this being agreed in advance with the President.



What may not be appreciated when compared to today's concerts is that all entertainment was performed by its members.

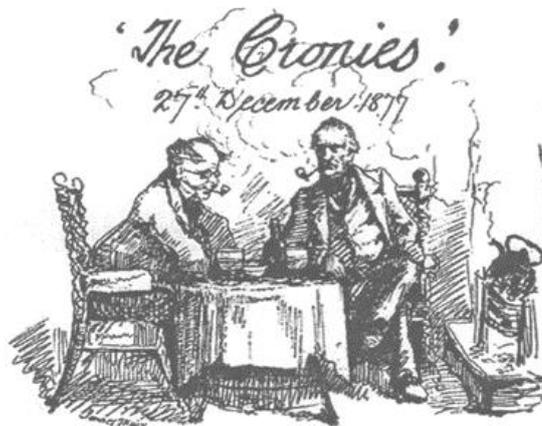
The creation of a Cronies Choir did not come about for nearly a century after the Club's founding, and all members were expected to play their part in hosting each event.

Indeed a number of members wrote their own songs, poems, anthems, even operettas, all specifically for a Ye Cronies event, such was the enthusiasm for the newly established society.

Presidential Terms

Another worthwhile note is that the term of each President was unlimited.

Unlike today where Presidents can serve a maximum of two years, when the Club first started the elected President continued until they chose to stand down. It was not until 1928 that the Club's Constitution was revised to limit terms to 2 year terms.



Setting the Scene

World events in the 1870s

- 1870** - *Franco-Prussian War (1870—1871) begins.*
- 1871** - *Royal Albert Hall opened in London by Queen Victoria.*
- 1872** - *The Mary Celeste merchant ship is found adrift under mysterious circumstances.*
- 1873** - *Death of David Livingstone at Chief Chitambo's village at Ilala (present-day Zambia).*
- 1874** - *Monet, Pissaro, Degas, Renoir, Sisley and Berthe Morisot hold The First Impressionist Exhibition in Paris.*
- 1875** - *Young Tom Morris, youngest winner of golf's Open Championship dies at the age of 24.*
- 1876** - *The Battle of Little Bighorn / Custer's Last Stand.*
- 1877** - *Professional opera first comes to Glasgow with the Carl Rosa company.*
- 1878** - *Alexander Graham Bell demonstrates the telephone to Queen Victoria.*
- 1879** - *The newly synthesised drug "Aspirin" is released to market.*

Cronies in the 1870s

Where it all began...

1870s



8th December 1877

James Kerr convenes a meeting to propose the establishment of "The Cronies Clubbe" with a focus on Scottish song and verse.



13th December 1877

Cronies host their inaugural event and AGM where James Muir is voted in as first President of The Cronies.



27th December 1877

Ye Cronies define a set of Club Rules.

Founding Committee

1877

President



James Muir

Vice-President



James Kerr

Secretary / Treasurer



William D. Main

- | | | |
|------------------|---|----------------|
| Committee Member | - | P. Buchanan |
| Committee Member | - | Robert McEwan |
| Committee Member | - | David Murray |
| Committee Member | - | Arch Watson |
| Musical Director | - | Montague Smith |

Inaugural Club President

1877 - 1882



JAMES MUIR



b. 7th Nov. 1839 d. 8th Dec 1898

A lot of what we know about the personality of our first President comes from a highly revealing and thorough memoir written by close friend Benjamin Taylor, itself a preface to Muir's book titled "Glasgow Streets and Places".

To try to summarise this extensive memoir would be a disservice to it, but as you will see over these few pages, Mr. Muir led a varied and adventurous life that goes a long way to explaining why he was asked to lead the start-up of the Ye Cronies Club.

Born on 7th November 1839, James was raised by his father and earned a collegiate gold medal for both diligence and ability at Garnethill's Collegiate School. He was described as "the embodiment of vital energy" with a childlike curiosity that was present throughout his life.

"[he has an] untiring capacity for work, a rich command of language, exceptional facility as well as felicity of expression, a bright and sparkling humour, and a brilliant power of repartee"

[extract from Benjamin Taylor Memorial]

Professionally, after a short stint in the counting-house of his father's firm, James joined Chartered Accountants Kerr, Anderson & Brodie (132 St. Vincent Street) where he became partner in 1870 and remained for the rest of his career.

Being a very thorough man in the workplace, his character was tested to the extreme when specially appointed by the Law Officers of the Crown in the case against directors of the failed City of Glasgow Bank, which liquidated in 1878.

Inaugural Club President

1877 - 1882



The ruin of the City of Glasgow Bank is still talked about today as being the biggest collapse in British banking history until the financial crisis of 2008, and one whose mistakes continue to be made.

As lead witness in Lord Watson's case against the Bank's former directors, and responsible with gathering all evidence for the Prosecution, James felt it his moral duty to take a very hands-on and attentive approach to his assigned task:

“the evidence I have given to-day has been entirely from my own checking of the books, with very little assistance from clerks at all, because I thought it very important that I should not give evidence about what I had not personally seen”

[James Muir during his cross-examination]

In reference to the sheer volume of notes and testimony gathered, James later joking that it had become his life's *magnum opus*.

Whilst the case brought James Muir much fame, it actually cost him a lot in fortune as he admitted himself that had he not taken on this case, he would have been inundated with the numerous bankruptcies that resulted from the collapse of the Bank.

With such high expectations of himself and others in a professional capacity, it is astonishing that such a young gentleman had time for any other interests, but interests he certainly had in abundance!

Inaugural Club President

1877 - 1882

James' interests beyond the workplace are vast and varied. As a lead writer for Glasgow News he wrote both art and principle musical criticisms, displaying an unerring ability to find the very best and worthiest in both.

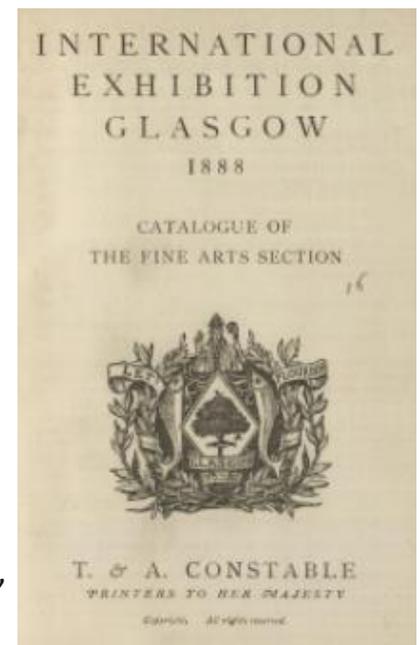
James was an accomplished artist, with an interest in painting as well as being a Librettist for a number of operettas performed at Cronies. Curiously he also held a great fascination with archaeology, going to great efforts to document and collate all sources of historical information relating to Glasgow.

“A capital raconteur, a ready wit, a brilliant conversationalist, a tactful and sympathetic listener, Muir was the charm of every social circle.”

[extract from Benjamin Taylor Memorial]

As a member of Glasgow's society, James was a man in high demand. Amongst many others, he was:

- Member of the Council of the Royal Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts.
- Member of the Regality Club's Council, the Institute of Accountants & Actuaries.
- Chairman of the Gold & Silver Extraction Company of America.
- The first layman to be conferred a second term as the Glasgow Art Club's Vice-President.
- Appointed Convenor of the Fine Art section of the Science, Art and Industry Exhibition of 1888.



His command of this last role saw the International Association of Fine Art, History and archaeology Committee appoint him Convenor of their “Loan Collection of Pictures” for the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1901, a position cut short by his untimely death in 1898.

And that leads us, finally, to his role as the inaugural President of Ye Cronies...

Inaugural Club President

1877 - 1882

In his memorial, James' contribution to Ye Cronies was given significant praise as found here:

“That Muir was one of the originators and was the first President of ‘Ye Cronies Club’ is a fact that may not convey much to the next generation; but it means a great deal to his contemporaries...

[his] association with Cronies was because of the heartiness and brightness of his social qualities”.

[extract from Benjamin Taylor Memorial]

James served a 5-year term as Cronies President, writing two successful comediettas for the Club as well as the opera “The Killabag Shootings” which was put to music by the Club’s Musical Director Montague Smith.

From its humble beginnings, to James Muir’s passing in 1898, the club had become known as “a dining club in Glasgow which organised first class musical recitals”, something we can be sure Muir had a significant hand in achieving.



Having now gained a sense of the man’s personality, high standing, and connections throughout society, it is hard to ignore the many reasons our Founder, James Kerr, may have invited Mr. Muir to be the Club’s figurehead.

There is no doubt that many of the names you will hear of in these early years had been invited into the Club by Mr. Muir, and loyalty to it was built through his infectious enthusiasm and determination to make it, and Glasgow, flourish through the sound of music.



Ye Cronies Venue

MacLean's Hotel

Unfortunately no records exist to confirm where Ye Cronies hosted their very first event on 13th December 1877.

In 1878, however, we do know that the newly built MacLean's Hotel became the Club's designated home, remaining so for the next 40 years.



Designed by architect James Thomson and owned by James MacLean, MacLean's Hotel was described in the Appleton's Guide Book as:

“a first-class Hotel...visited by American families [and] by the highest families in Great Britain and the Continent”

Situated on 250 St. Vincent Street (but listed initially as 198), the Hotel was also noted as being:

“pleasantly and fashionably situated in the immediate neighbourhood of Blytheswood Square (one of the healthiest in the city)”

Being within close proximity to several of Glasgow's railway stations it was clearly seen as a convenient venue for members and guests to reach.

The building underwent significant re-modelling in 1980 which removed most of its external fixtures.

As of 2020, plans are underway to restore its former façade.

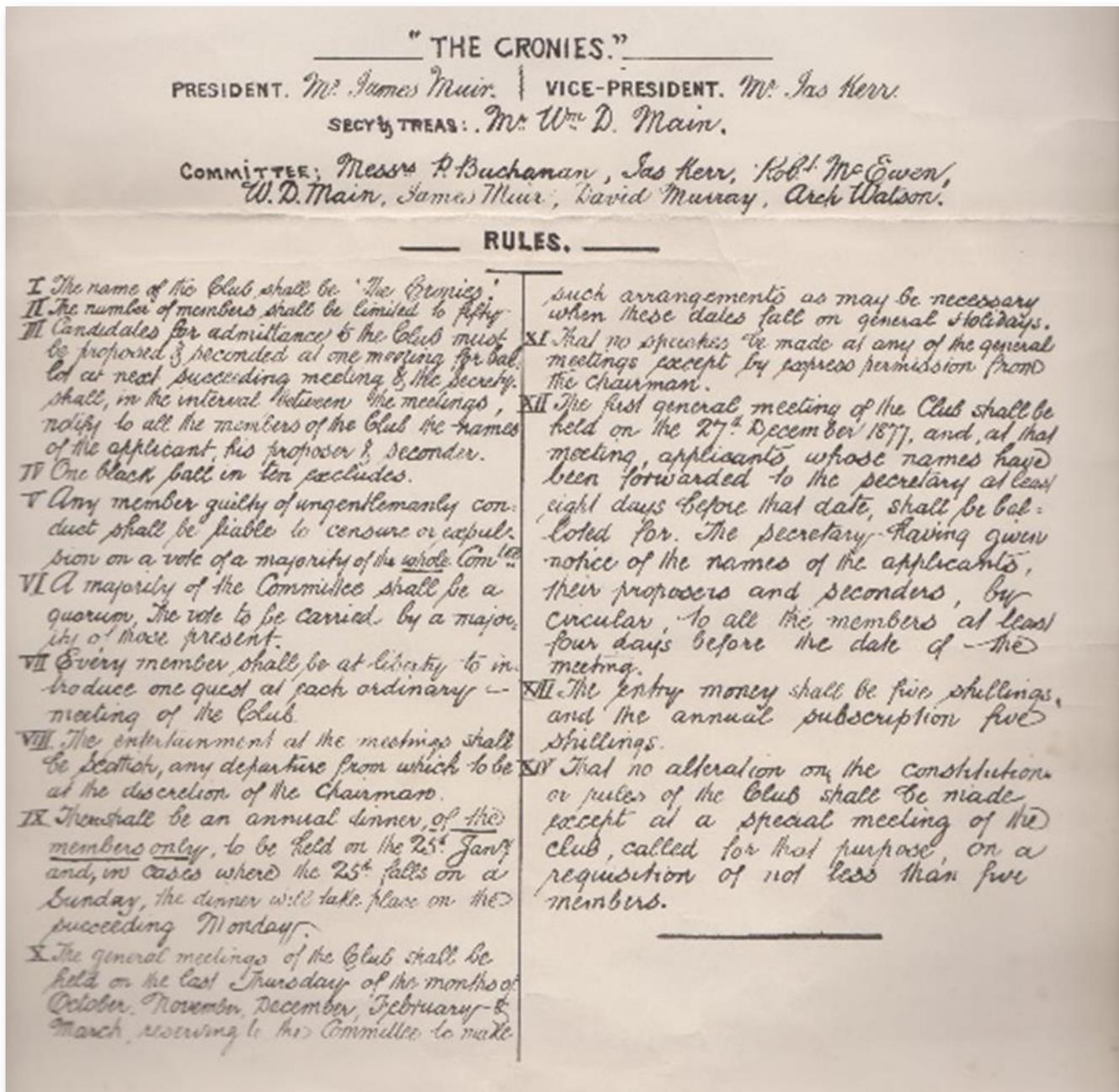


**MacLean's building
(2019)**

Club Rules

1878

Following the Cronies' first successful event, and voting in of its inaugural committee, the first set of Club Rules were agreed to on 27th December 1877, and have changed only marginally since then.



[TRANSCRIPTION ON FOLLOWING PAGE]

Club Rules

1878 (Transcribed)

- 1) The name of the Club shall be 'The Cronies'
- 2) The number of members shall be limited to fifty
- 3) Candidates for admittance to the Club must be proposed and seconded at one meeting for ballot at next succeeding meeting and the Secretary shall, in the interval between the meetings, notify to all the members of the Club the names of the applicant, his proposer and seconder.
- 4) One Black ball in ten excludes
- 5) Any member guilty of ungentlemanly conduct shall be liable to censure or expulsion on a vote of a majority of the whole Committee.
- 6) A majority of the Committee shall be a quorum. The vote to be carried by a majority of those present.
- 7) Every member shall be at liberty to introduce one guest at each ordinary meeting of the Club
- 8) The entertainment at the meetings shall be Scottish, any departure from which to be at the discretion of the Chairman
- 9) There shall be an annual dinner of the members only, to be held on the 25th January and, in cases where the 25th falls on a Sunday, the dinner will take place on the succeeding Monday.
- 10) The general meetings of the Club shall be held on the last Thursday of the months of October, November, December, February and March reserving to the Committee to make such arrangements as may be necessary when these dates fall on general holidays.
- 11) That no speeches be made at any of the general meetings except by express permission from The Chairman
- 12) The first general meeting of the Club shall be held on the 27th December 1877, and at that meeting applicants whose names have been forwarded to the Secretary at least eight days before that date shall be balloted for. The Secretary having given notice of the names of the applicants, their proposers and seconders by circular, to all the members at least four days before the date of the meeting.
- 13) The entry money shall be five shillings, and the annual subscription five shillings.
- 14) That no alteration on the Constitution or rules of the Club shall be made except at a special meeting of the Club, called for that purpose, on a requisition of not less than five members

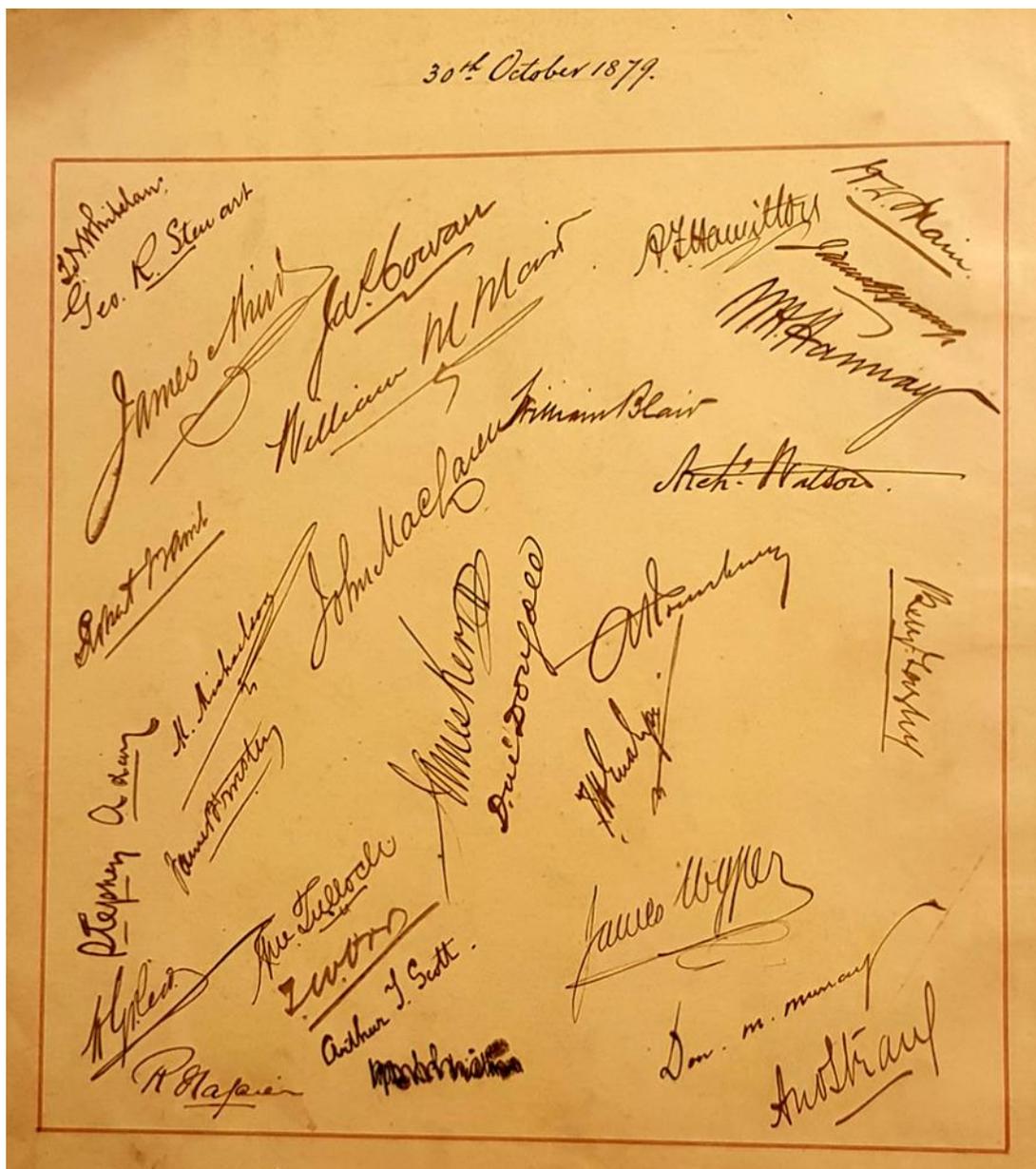
Cronies Sign-in Book

30th October 1879

Members were first asked to start signing into the attendance book on 30th October 1879, a practice that was continued until March 2002.

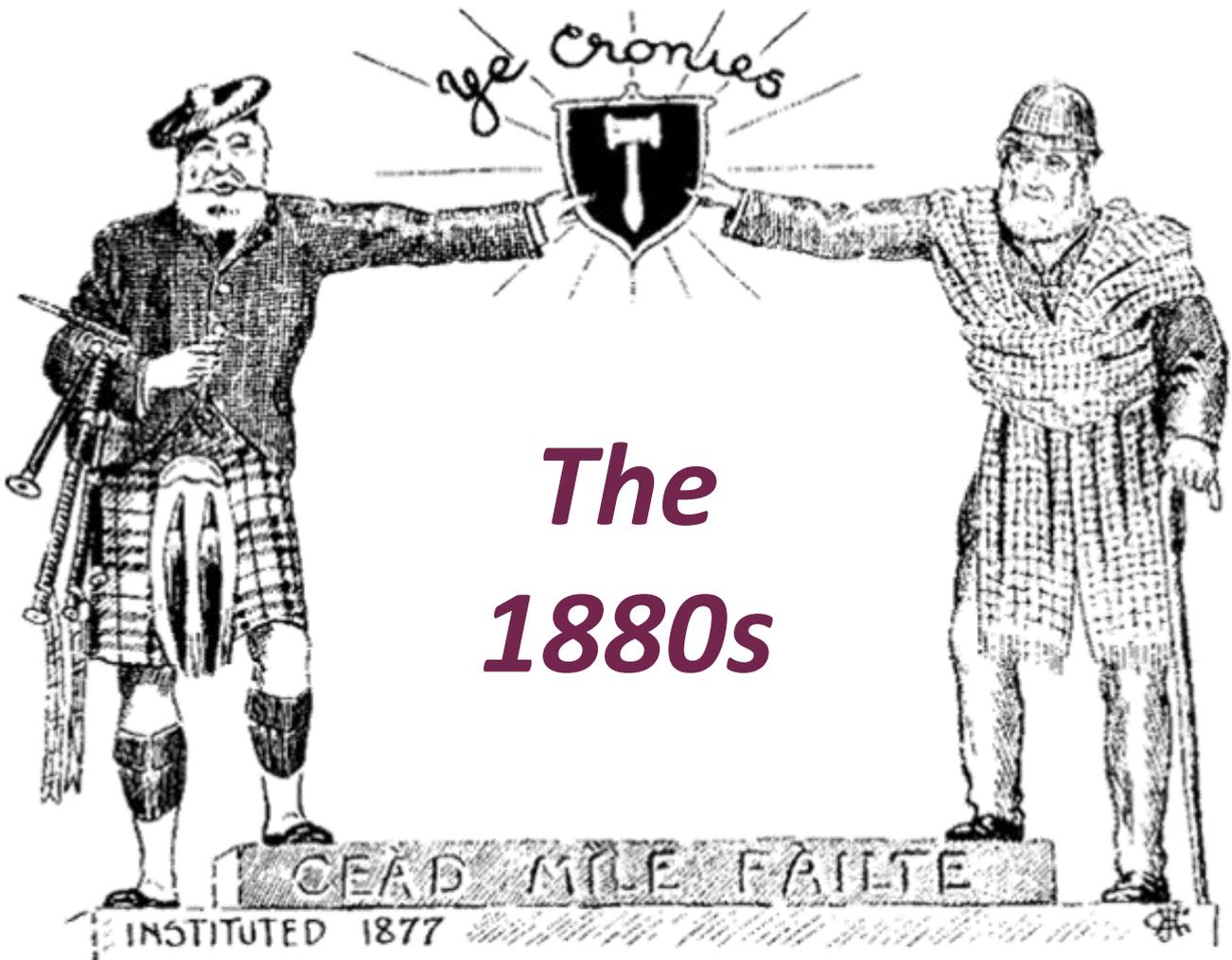


October and November's registers show that less than two years into its existence, Ye Cronies was attracting 30 to 40 members per event, with each member allowed to bring one additional guest.



Our Story

Chapter 3



The 1880s

Office Bearers | The Cronies Cruise | Special Excursions | 2nd Club President
Event Planning | A Voyage to the Moon | Cronies 'At Home' Cronies Illustrator
Rule Amendments | Cronies Menu | Cronies Programmes

Cronies in the 1880s

Rapid Growth

The 1880s saw Ye Cronies grow its reputation, to the point it was described as “a dining club...which organise[s] first class musical recitals”.



The Club’s Secretary, William D. Main, started keeping records of all concerts held from this period onward in the form of a scrap book. The financial investment in the Club is very evident from the content and high quality of the items that have been safely stored within these leather bound books.

From embossed invitations and extravagant six-course dinners, to the creation of professional illustrations and operettas specifically for Ye Cronies’ benefit, there is no doubt that “The Cronies” now existed as a hub for creative expression and socialising in Glasgow.

Membership

Within a few short years of Ye Cronies being founded, its membership was growing as quickly as its reputation.

Prospective members faced a ballot in order to be accepted into the Club, and by the 1880s, ballots were being held on a near monthly basis!

Ye Cronies' Clubbe.

Candidates to be Balloted for on 25th October, 1888.

CANDIDATE.	PROPOSER.	SECONDER.
JOHN HANNAY, 135 BUCHANAN STREET.	JAMES M. BLAIR.	LACHLAN COWAN.
ROBERT JOHNSTON, 139 ST. VINCENT STREET.	ARCH ^d WAYSON.	JOHN STODART.
JAMES STEWART CARRICK, 116 ST. VINCENT STREET.	JOHN MACLAREN.	A. F. MORRISON.
A. R. HENDERSON, 15 ELMBANK PLACE.	W. D. MAIN.	W ^m YOUNG.

Ballot Papers will be supplied to Members at the Meeting.

As per Club Rule #4 - “one black ball in ten excludes” - members in attendance at each event were asked to “Admit” or “Reject” each candidate.

Committee

1882 also saw both President James Muir and Founder James Kerr step aside in their Office Bearer duties to be replaced by James Cowan and John Hamilton respectively. Both of these successors would go on to become highly respected members of the Club as will be seen shortly.

Setting the Scene

World events in the 1880s

- 1880 - *The Royal Exchange Square is fitted with Glasgow's first telephone exchange in 1880.*
- 1881 - *Greenwich Mean Time becomes the standard by which time around the world is set as +/- GMT.*
- 1882 - *Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture is first played in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow.*
- 1883 - *Establishment of the Boys' Brigade at Kelvin Bridge, Glasgow.*
- 1884 - *The original Oxford English Dictionary is first published as a twelve volume set.*
- 1885 - *Modern photographic film technology is invented, making photography more accessible to the public.*
- 1886 - *Formation of the "Burns Federation" in celebration of the centenary of the "Kilmarnock Edition".*
- 1887 - *First (Golden) Jubilee of Queen Victoria.*
- 1888 - *The Scotland International Exhibition of Science, Art, and Industry is held in Kelvingrove Park.*
- 1889 - *The Eiffel Tower, or the Tour Eiffel, is opened to mark the centenary of the French Revolution.*

Our Timeline

The 1880s



1880s



25th March 1880

Cronies host their first “Cronies At Home” event, attracting over 400 attendees.



24th February 1882

Cronies host “The Grand Amateur Concert” at the Burgh Hall, Dunoon.



October 1883

James Cowan is elected as Ye Cronies President.



1884

“Daniel O'Rourke's Voyage to the Moon” is performed to over 500 Cronies and guests.



1887

Committee propose and adopt first amendments to the Club's rules.

Office Bearers

1880 - 1889

President

1880—82 James Muir
1882 - James Cowan

Vice-President

1880 - 84 James Kerr
1884 - John Hamilton

Secretary / Treasurer

1880 - William D. Main

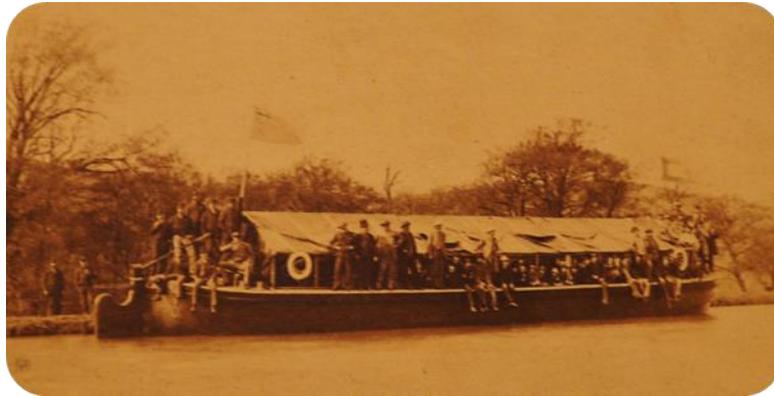
Musical Director

1880- Montague Smith



The Cronies Cruise

21st May 1881



In the early 1880s there are signs that Ye Cronies experimented with some summer day-trips in addition to their standard 7-event seasonal calendar.

The first of these occurred on Saturday 21st May 1881 when the club hosted a “Cronies Cruise” up the Forth and Clyde Canal. The Secretary’s minutes clearly summarise the activities of the day:

“...a pig-iron barge was roofed over with tarpaulin, tables and sets were fitted, and the craft transformed into a floating “Banquet Hall”, drawn by horses.

The members perched on the roof were a picturesque crew in light-coloured wide-awakes, and their tooting on fog horns during our voyage of discovery to Lock Sixteen frightened the cattle into fits.

After dinner on board, served by Anchor Line stewards, we had an al fresco concert, were photographed on a lovely reach of the Canal at Dullatur, walked to Falkirk, and returned to town by train highly delighted with our novel picnic.”



The member’s sign-in was signed on this day by 28 members, and within the Cronies archive we have several photos of the “floating banquet hall”.

Further research as part of this volume located an additional photo stored within the Falkirk Community Trust’s archives. It has been dated as 1896, but has been clearly labelled “Old Cronies Club” and was taken nearby Lock 16.

The Cronies Cruise

21st May 1881



Falkirk Community Trust: "Old Cronies Club"



Cronies Archive: Club Group Photo on the 'David' barge

Special Excursions

Picnics & Balls

A second picnic was undertaken two years later, on Saturday May 19th 1883, albeit a more 'grounded' trip, this time to the Falls of Clyde.



Once again the Secretary's notes from this outing give a great insight into the events of the day:

"...an expedition to the Falls of Clyde, driving up the lovely Clydesdale in four-horse drags, surrounded by apple blossoms in brilliant sunshine. We were photographed at Bonnington Fall, dined at the Hotel in Lanark, and drove down the valley in the gloaming, after a most enjoyable day."

Beyond the two May Day picnic outings, the members sign-in book also notes that on 29th March 1882, the decision was made to hold "operatic entertainment with Ball" at the St. Andrew's Halls.



There are no records as to why the decision was made to hold an event outside of the MacLean's Hotel, but the St. Andrew's Halls venue was a relatively new building having opened in 1877. It boasted a Grand Hall that could hold 4,500 people, but we suspect the 72 x 50 foot ballroom may have been a more likely room for the Cronies event.

St. Andrew's Halls was almost totally destroyed by fire in 1962, but the Granville street façade survived and is now part of the Mitchell Library.

Club President

1883 - 1891



JAMES COWAN

b. 30th April 1828 d. 1907

Mr. Cowan was a very wealthy individual, who began with a horse and cart in Barrhead and soon built up a successful business—Messrs Cowan & Co.—which served a number of railway companies in England and Scotland, as well as shipping firms on the Clyde.

He had an incredible eye for horseflesh, owning around 500 of the best draught horses in the country, and was very much in demand as a judge at horse shows.

His great passion, however, was art. His collection was among the finest in the West of Scotland. Among his 205 oil paintings were works by Rembrandt, Van Dyck, Turner, and Corot.

In 1877, just as Ye Cronies was establishing itself, James Cowan built the baronial style Ross Hall House in Crookston, which lives on today in Ross Park as a private clinic.



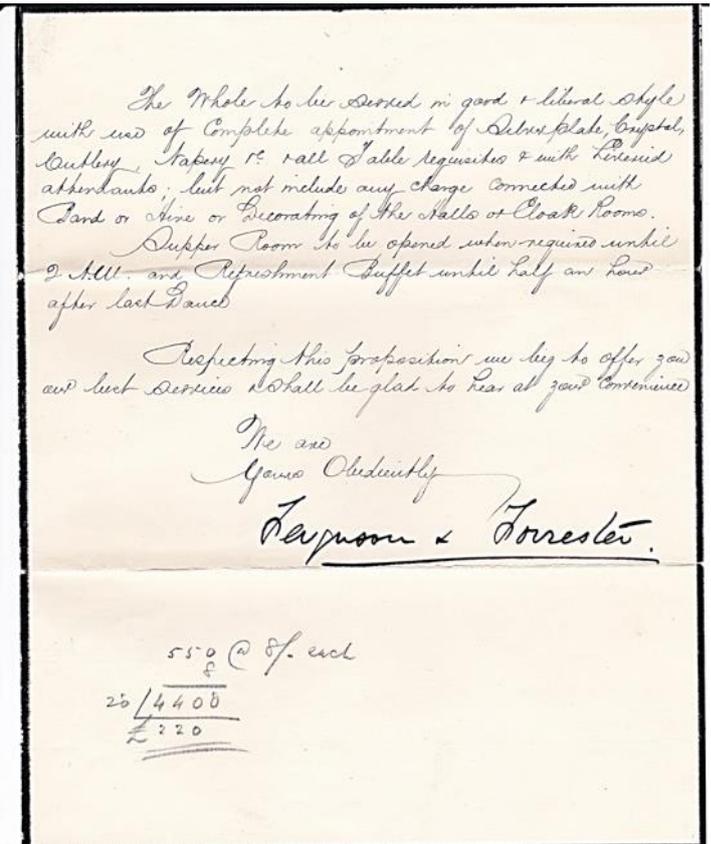
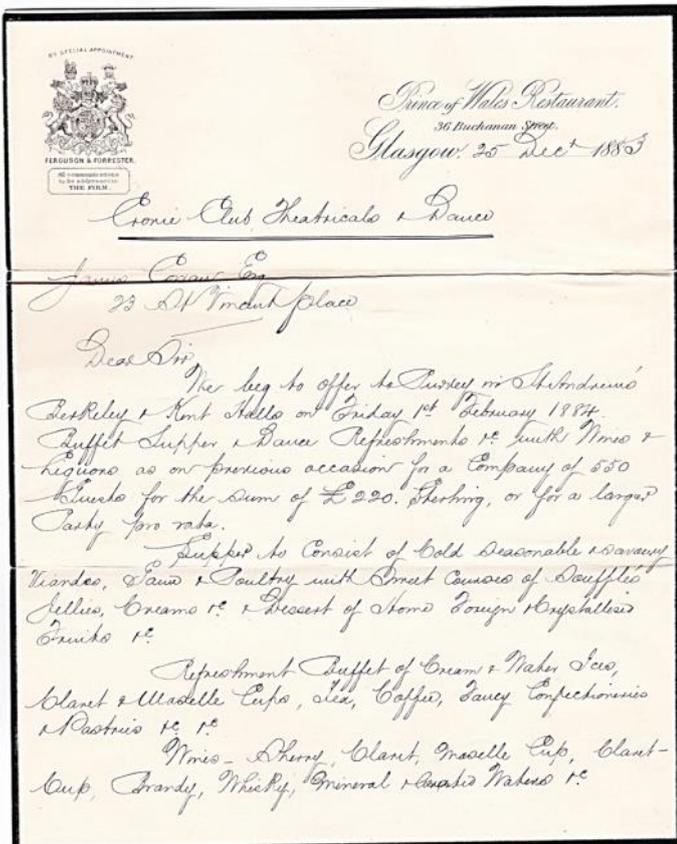
A self-made man, James was as energetic and active as his predecessor. A Justice of the Peace, Chairman of West Renfrewshire Conservative Association, President of the Renfrewshire Agricultural Association....all whilst serving 9 years as our President!

On his passing in 1907, James left his money to various hospital charities, as well as £10,000 to the establishment of a public hall and park in his native Barrhead called Cowan Park which remains to this day. A Memorial to James Cowan stands in Hawkhead Cemetery.

Event Planning

December 1883

The following correspondence is our only remaining evidence of behind the scenes discussion and organisation of Cronies events at the time.



[TRANSCRIPTION ON FOLLOWING PAGE]

What became of this event (scheduled for 1st February 1884) is not known.

Mention of 550 guests and a closing time of 2am suggests the Cronies were planning another 'At Home' event.

With such numbers (and extravagant requests), the Club had quite clearly grown significantly in the 6 short years since its inception.

Event Planning

December 1883 - Transcription

Prince of Wales Restaurant, 36 Buchanan Street, Glasgow.

Dated 25th December 1883

Cronie Club Theatricals & Dance

James Cowan
23 St Vincent Place

Dear Sir

?We? beg to offer to Purvey in St Andrews, Berkeley and Kent Halls on Friday 1st February 1884, Buffet Supper & Dance Refreshments re with Wines & Liquors as on previous occasion for a company of 550 Guests for the sum of £220 Sterling, or for a large party pro rata.

Supper to consist of cold seasonable and savoury viands, Game and Poultry with ? dessert? or ?Direct? courses of Souffles, Jellies, Creams and Dessert of Home ?Foreign? and Crystallised Drinks.

Refreshment Buffet of Cream & ?Maker? Ices, Claret & Moselle ? Cups, Tea, Coffee, Fancy Confectioneries & Pastries re re.

Wines – Sherry, Claret, Maselle Cup, Claret Cup, Brandy, Whisky, Mineral & ??? Waters re.

The whole to be served in good and liberal style with use of compatible appointment of Silver Plate, Crystal, Cutlery, Tapery? Re & all table requisites & with liveried attendants, but not include any charge connected with Band or Hire or Decorating of the Halls or Cloak Rooms.

Supper Room to be opened when required until 2AM and Refreshment Buffet until half an hour after last dance.

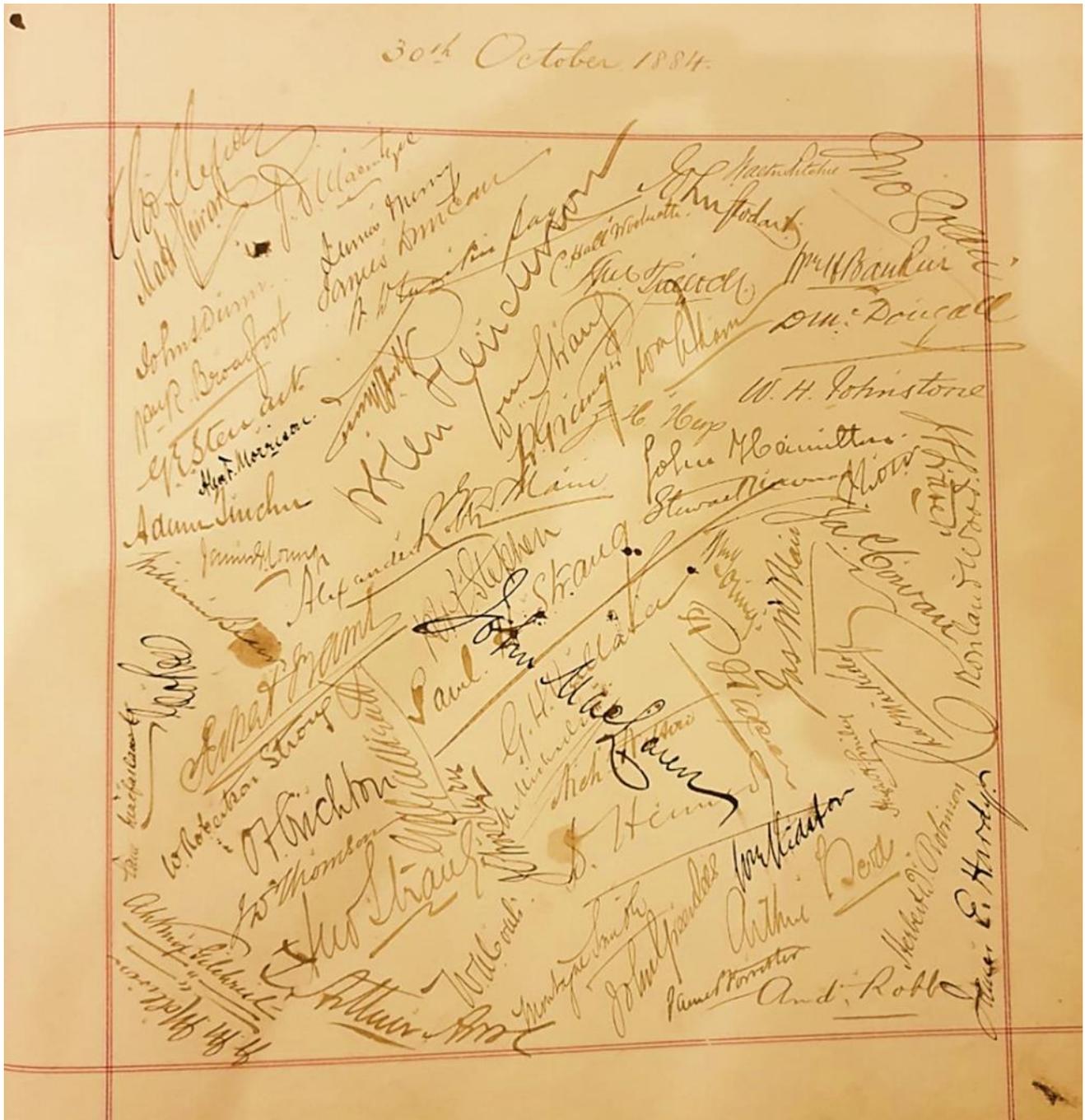
Respecting this proposition we beg to offer you our best services & shall be glad to hear at your convenience.

We are
Yours Obediently
Ferguson & Forrester

Cronies Sign-in Book

30th October 1884

In comparison to just 5 years prior, the sign-in books for the 1880s contained pages bursting with signatures. Whilst we cannot account for every name listed here, it has to be assumed they were all enthusiastic members as guests were not typically signed in or recorded at the time.



Daniel O'Rourke

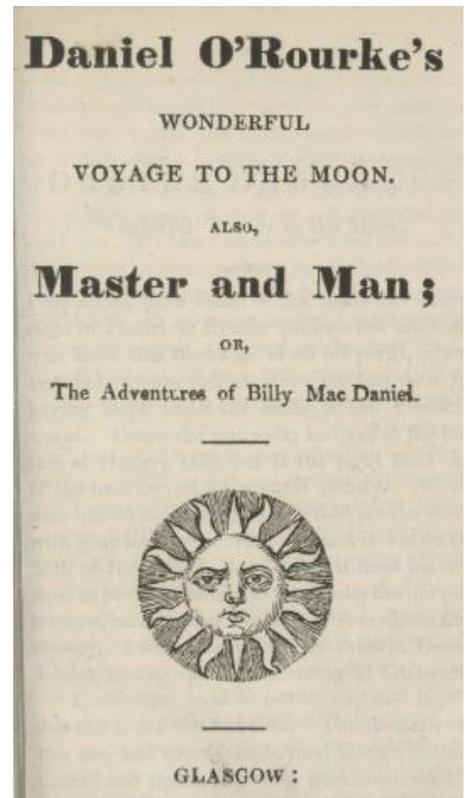
Or A Voyage to the Moon (1884)

Cronies records make multiple references to Operetta's "written and composed for the Club". Unfortunately this is not strictly true, but being a membership of singers and performers, it is clear that Ye Cronies were very proud of their interpretations of various works of the time.

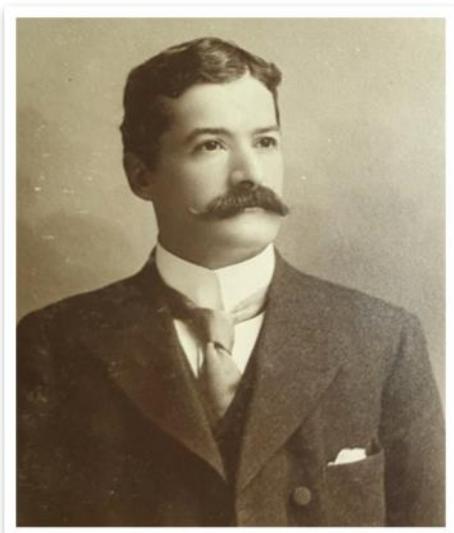
One such Operetta that received a lot of praise was the Cronies performance of "Daniel O'Rourke's Wonderful Voyage to the Moon".

Written in 1884 by Ernest Ford, at the time an accompanist for St. James' Hall in London, this operetta appears to have been based on a short 'chapbook' story written around 1850.

Ye Cronies hosted a concert in 1884, and took an audience of 500 people along with them on this special voyage, even reserving a dedication in the record books, recreated below:



DANIEL  O'ROURKE



Ye Composer
Ernest Ford

OR A VOYAGE
TO THE MOON



Ye Author
Walter MacKintosh

Cronies 'At Home'

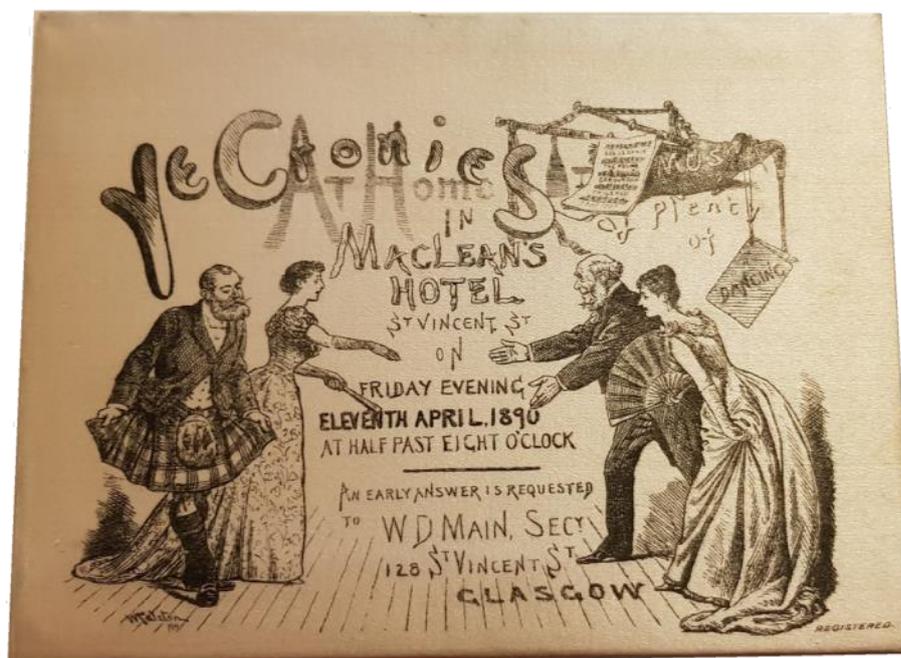
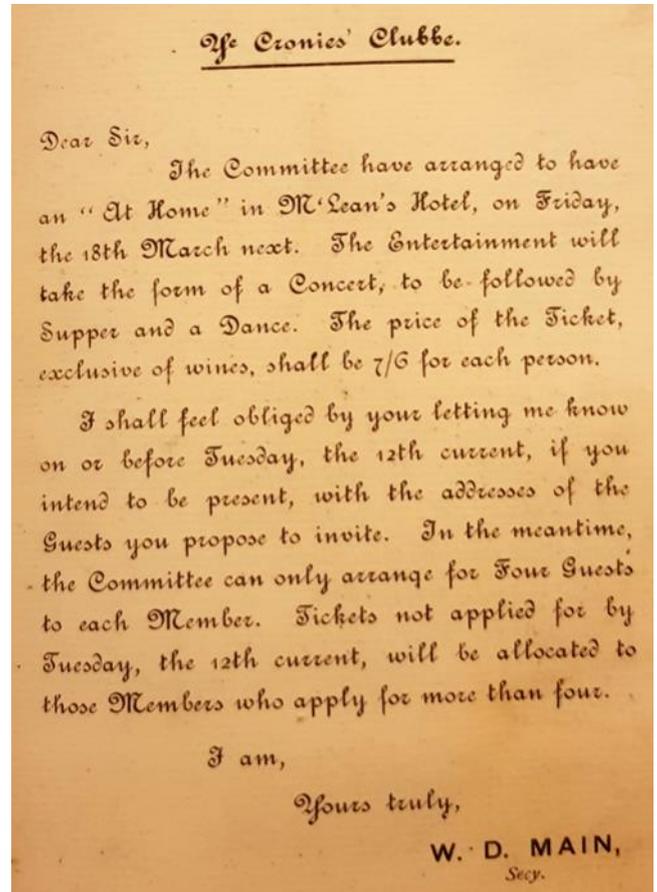
Music & Dancing

A recurring feature in the Cronies calendar in the 1880s (and well beyond) was the Cronies 'At Home' event.

Running much longer than ordinary events hosted by the Club, Cronies 'At Home' introduced dances to the entertainment, alongside the standard performances and recitals.

Whilst most seasons featured one 'At Home' event in March or April, invites also indicate November, December and February were also used to hold additional events.

Over the years, the Committee varied when and how often an 'At Home' evening was hosted, with some seasons enjoying more than one evening of dancing.

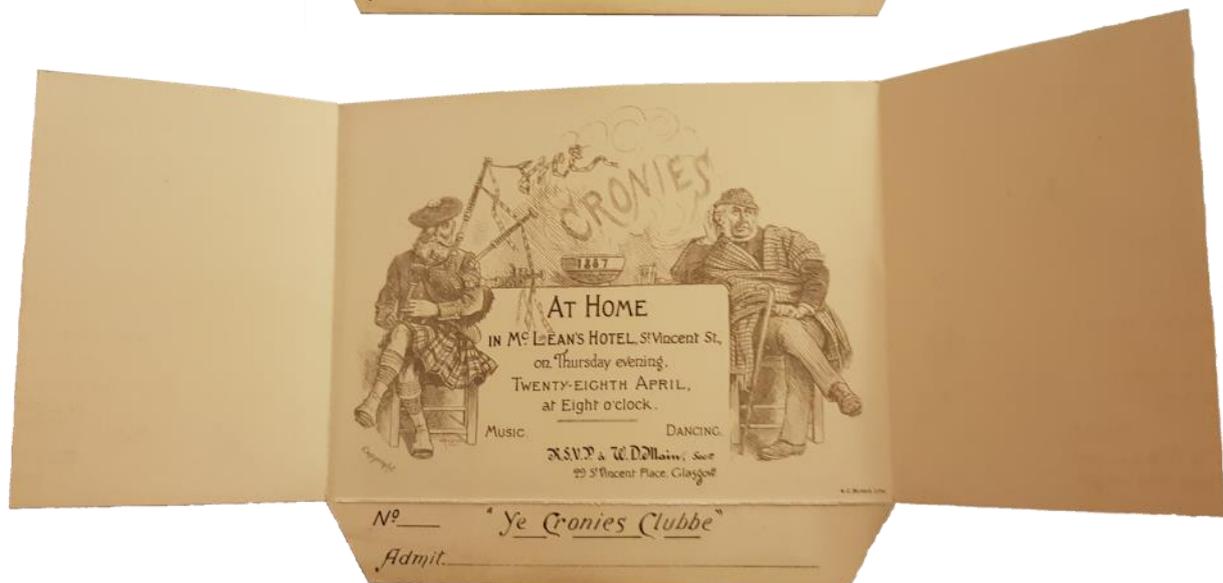
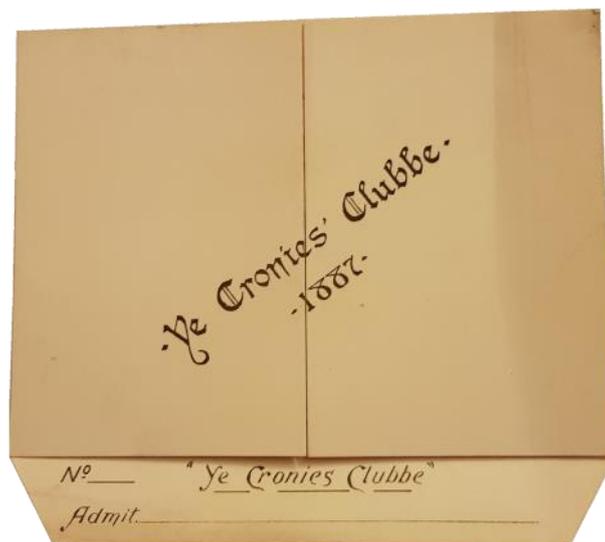


Cronies 'At Home'

Invitations & Tickets

The Cronies 'At Home' events were incredibly popular when first introduced, and resulted in the need to issue tickets to control numbers.

As shown here, the most intricate and exquisite of invitations and tickets were reserved for these evenings which promised recitals, sing-a-longs and dances for all to enjoy.

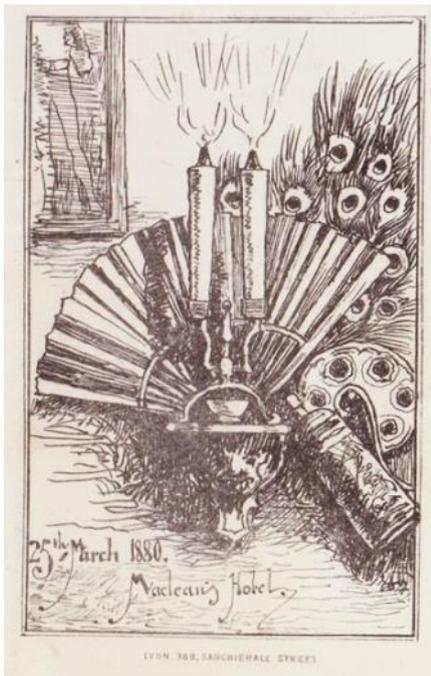


Cronies 'At Home'

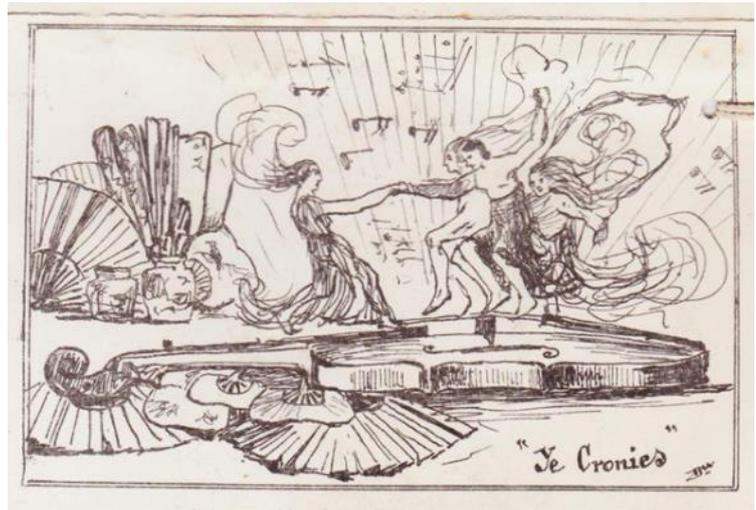
Dance Card - 1880

The first ever 'At Home' event was held in March 1880 and attracted over 400 members and guests.

Dancing featured prominently at 'At Home' events, and dance cards were regularly issued to members so that they could keep track of their engagements.



Dance Card [Front]



Dance Card [Back]



Dances & Engagements [Insert]

Cronies Illustrator

William Ralston (1841 - 1911)

Whilst Ye Cronies has never had an official “illustrator” per se, by the late 1880s the club started using a number of illustrations that included the distinctive monogram ‘WR’. A lot of these artworks still remain in use today by the Club.

The man behind ‘WR’ was none other than local artist and photographer, Mr. William Ralston.

Born in Dumbarton and raised in Glasgow, William Ralston’s earliest designs were produced in Scotland whilst supporting his father’s photography business on Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow.



WRalston



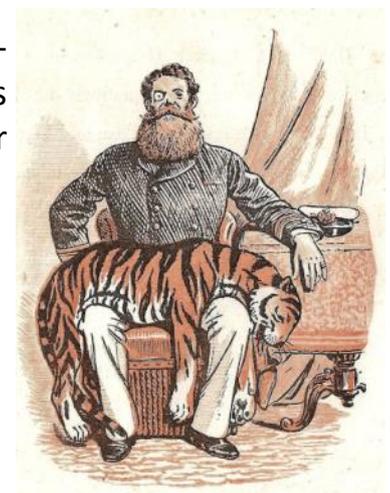
His work appeared in The Graphic magazine between 1870 and 1908, where his illustrations provided satirical commentaries.

By 1875, the editor of Punch magazine, a close friend of William, persuaded him to leave the family business and move to London and become a full-time artist.

Over the next 10 years, as well as working for Punch, Ralston created his most well-known piece of work “Tippoo”, a tale of a tiger who would go on to appear in many of his satirical works.

In 1886, Punch’s editor passed away and Ralston decided it was time to return home and support his ailing father’s business.

Ralston appears to have joined the Cronies very soon after his return, with his illustrations appearing to continue his satirical lens on society, capturing the character and culture of the club over the next two decades.



Cronies Illustrations

By W.R.

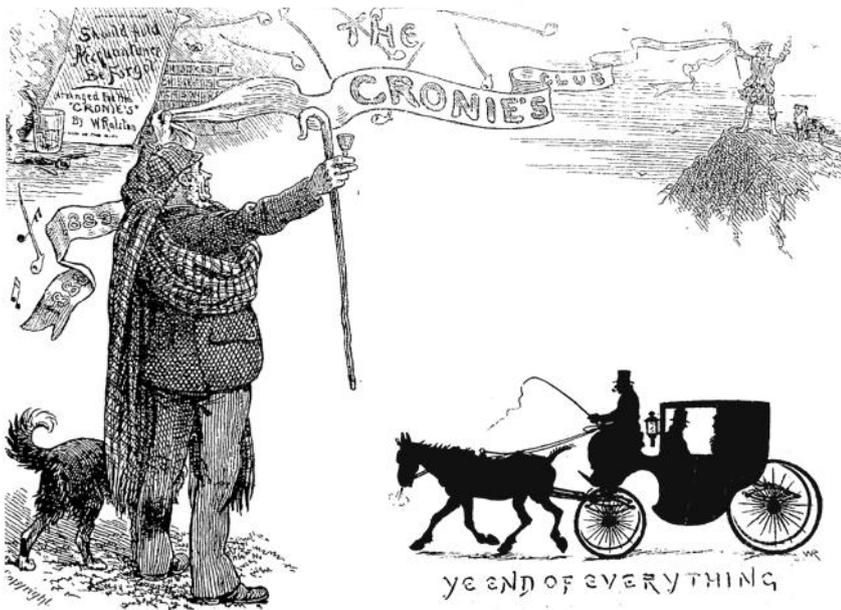
We have a number of Ralston's original Cronies artworks in our archive.

Many of his illustrations continue to be used to this day and a sample of them are shared below.



WILLIAM RALSTON.

(By himself.)



Rule Amendments

October 1887

Minutes from the 1887 Annual General Meeting are the first evidence of changes being made to the original set of rules that were defined for Ye Cronies when established 10 years prior.

At the Annual General Meeting on 3rd October, 1887, it will be submitted that Rules 4, 5, 7, and 8 be amended as follows:—

RULE 4.—The Committee shall consist of the President, Vice-President, and Secretary and Treasurer, *ex officio*, and Four ordinary Members, and shall be elected annually. The Two ordinary Members first on the list shall not be eligible for re-election to the same office for one year after they retire.

RULE 5.—A General Meeting for the election of Office-Bearers, Committee, and Auditors, shall be held on the First Monday in October of each year.

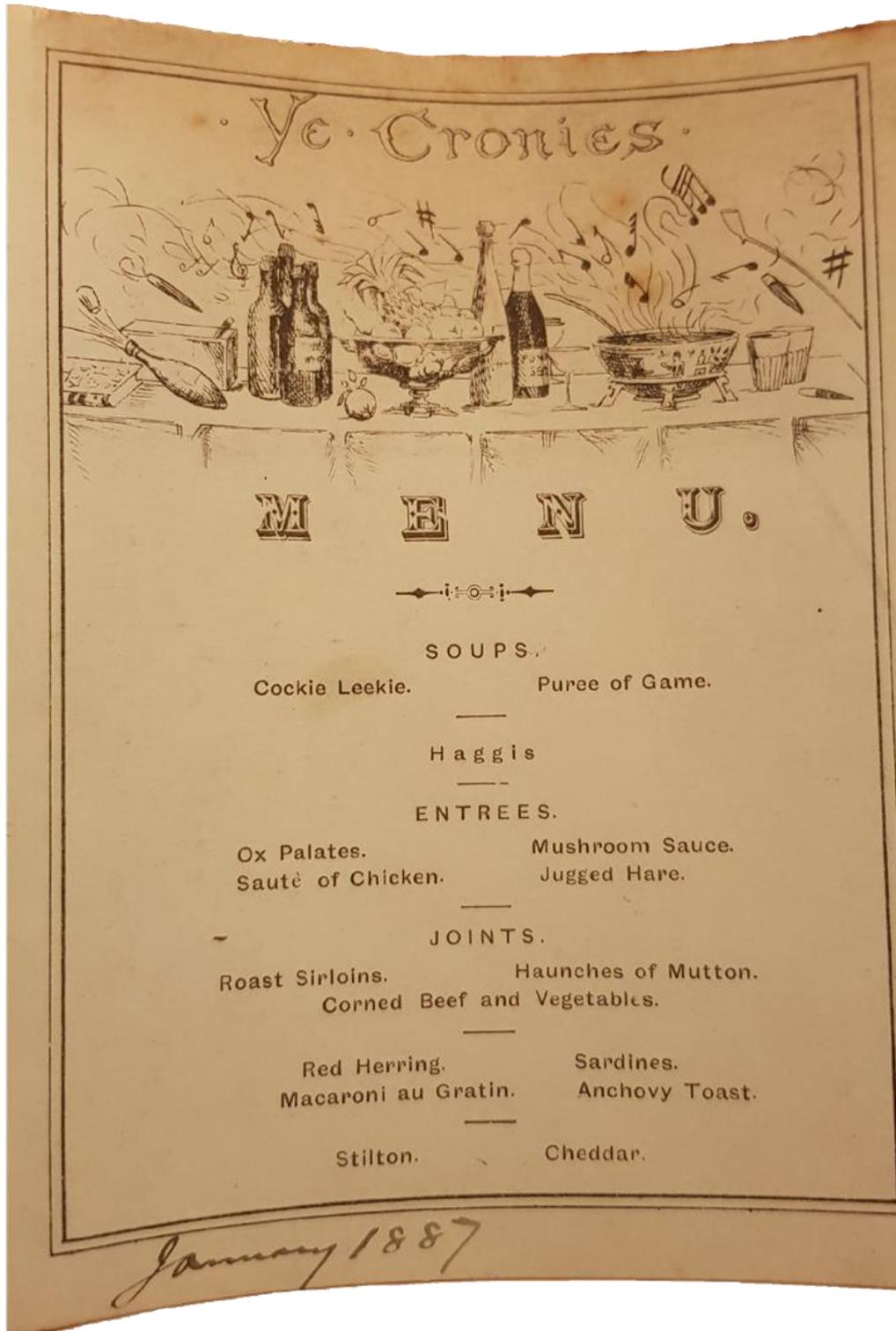
RULE 7.—The names of Candidates for admission, with the names of their proposer and seconder (to whom the Candidate must be personally known), shall be sent in writing to the Secretary, who shall enter the names in a book for the purpose, and as vacancies arise, the Candidates shall be balloted for in the order of their application, one black ball in ten to exclude. Only the Members present shall be entitled to vote in the election of Members. The Committee, however, shall have power to select from the list of Candidates such as are capable of contributing to the entertainment of the Club, and to elect them as Members without ballot. In such a case the Secretary shall send the name of the Candidate to each Member, not less than eight days before his proposed election, and it shall be in the option of any Member to communicate his objections to the election of such Candidate, in writing, to the Secretary, which communication shall be treated as private and confidential.

RULE 8.—Honorary Members, not exceeding three in any one Session, may be elected by the Committee.

Ye Cronies Menu

January 1887

The introduction of 'At Home' events saw some very exquisite menus, but ordinary events still provided a culinary delight for members that attended.



Ye Cronies Programme

April 1888

The programme of the April 1888 concert suggests yet another 'At Home' event was hosted, but the list of entertainment gives a flavour of the variety of performance that was on offer at this time.



PROGRAMME.

Part 1.

- 1 Part Song - "Comrades in Arms," - - - *Adam*
- 2 Song - - - "Bedouin Love Song," - - - *Pinsuti*
- 3 Part Song - "Hie thee shallop," - - - *Kuchen*
- 4 Duet VIOLIN & PIANO, "Sonata in F," (first Movement) *Beethoven*
- 5 Air - - - "Revenge, Timotheous cries," - - - *Handel*
- 6 Recit & Air - "My own Undine," - - - *Benedict*
- 7 Part Song "How can I bear to leave thee," - - - *Kinkel*

Reading—Mr G. Walter Baynham.

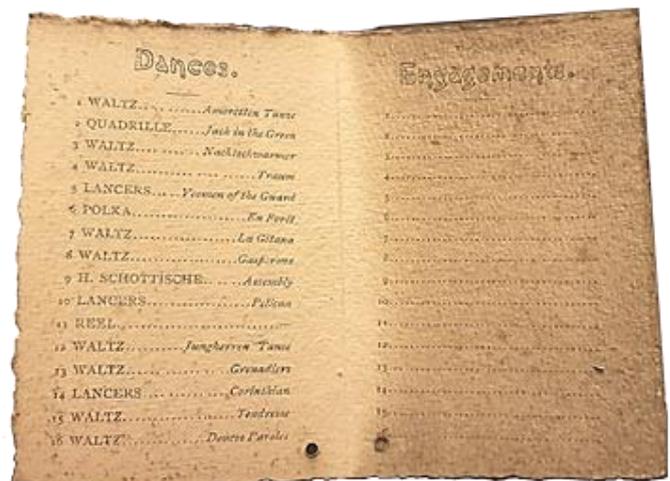
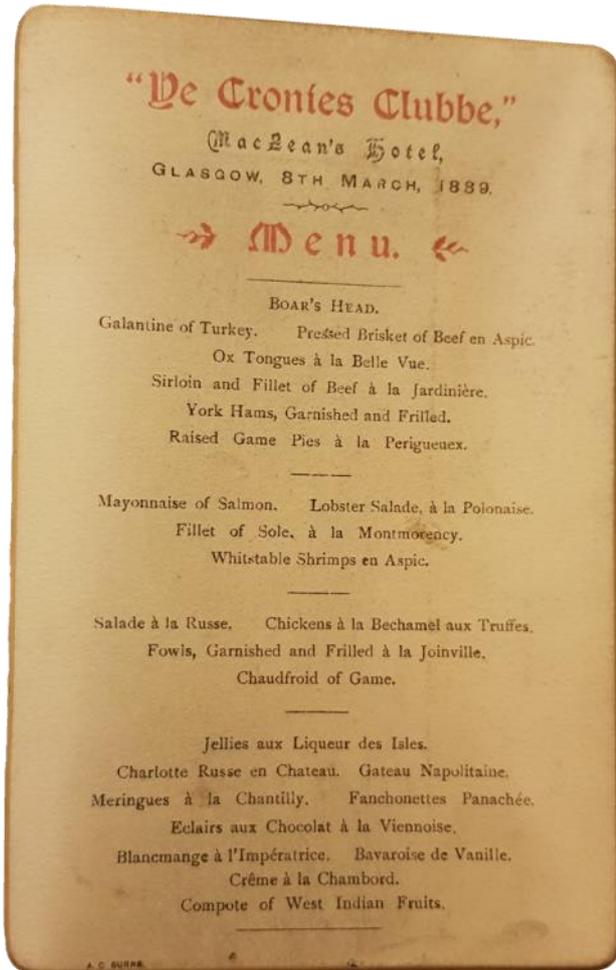
Part 2.

- 1 Bigband Lament "Vertach Maree," } *From "Ye Cronies"*
- 2 Ballad "A host of tender memories," } *Operetta, "The Kill-*
- 3 Solo & Chorus "When the breath of Autumn," } *alag Shootings,"*
Montague Smith.
- 4 Duet VIOLIN & PIANO, "Amantino et Polonaise," - *Danda*
- 5 Trio - - - "Dame Darden," - - - ---
- 6 Part Song - "The long day closes," - - *Sullivan*
- 7 Song - - - "The Roll Call," - - - *Pinsuti*
- 8 Songs - - - { "Hearts Devotion," - - *Ernest Ford*
"To Anthes," - - *Hutton*
- 9 Part Song - "Can' ye by Athole," - *arr. by Ockley*

Cronies 'At Home'

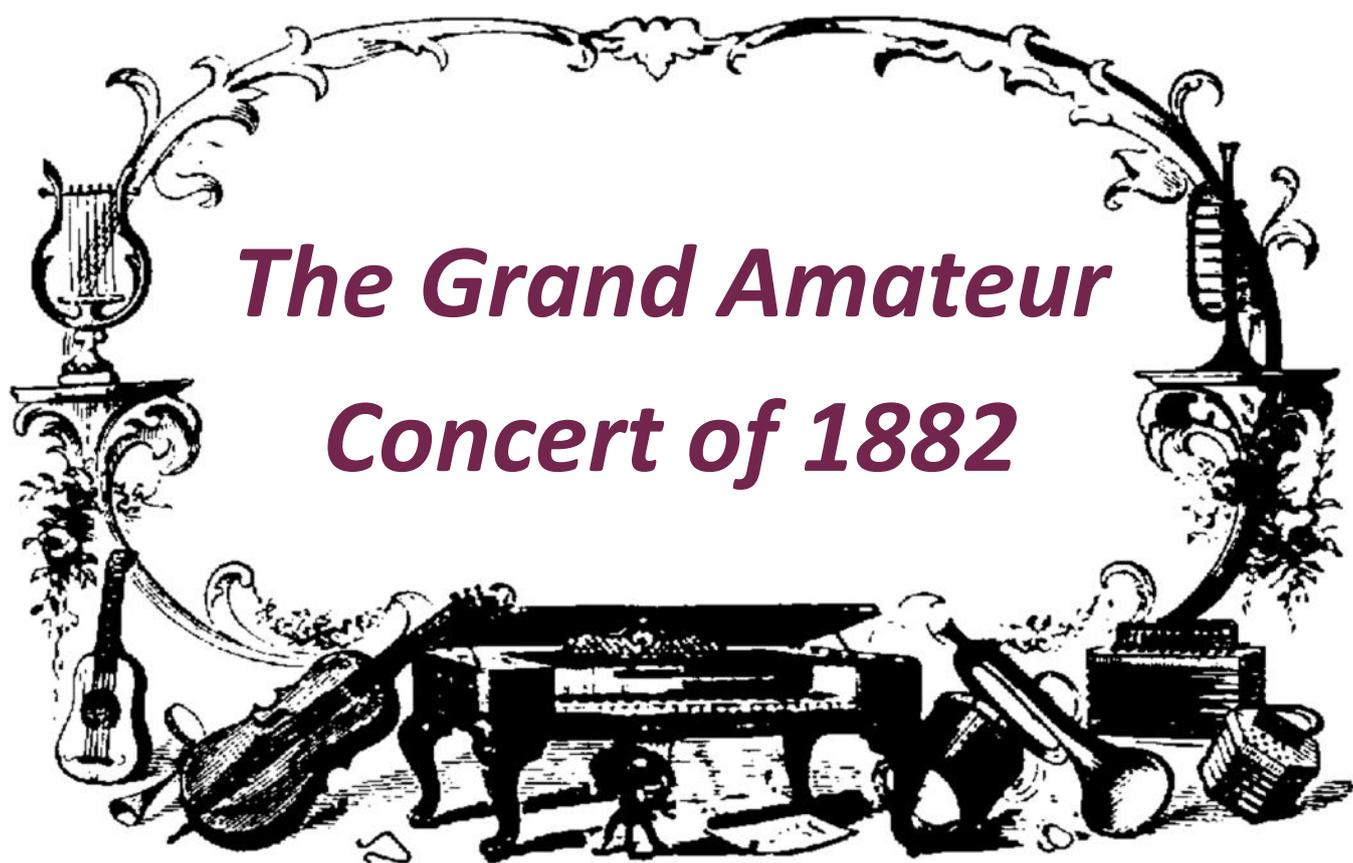
8th March 1889

The below provides some insight into what a night of 'At Home' entertainment entailed in 1889...



Our Story

Chapter 4



A digital copy of the original programme from Ye Cronies Archives

The Grand Amateur Concert

24th February 1882

In 1882, Ye Cronies took the unusual step of hosting a concert outside of the traditional season calendar and format.

Seemingly open to the public, and hosted in Dunoon's Burgh Hall in Dunoon, we have no further details as to why this was.



A fully intact programme remains which has been fully reproduced digitally here for your enjoyment.

The Grand Amateur Concert

Programme - Page 1/15

Quartette,..... "The Young Musicians",..... Kücken,

We are the Young Musicians, who go from place to place,
And watch at eve the windows where Beauty shows her face,
And where they bid us welcome, sweet lips and sparkling eyes,
From pipe and muckle fiddle sweet sounds will soon arise,

We sing then of the ringlets, and of the bonnie e'en,
From far so mildly beaming, like glowworms on the green,
Among the heads that gather, to hear the serenade,
There's One, the never failing, a fair and lovely maid,
When she is nigh then lighter, the strains begins to rise,
They find a kindred feeling, I read it in her eyes,



Good night thou lovely maiden, may none disturb thy rest,
May angels stand around thee, and guard thee as the best,
And in thy dreamy visions my image be imprest,
Repose in sweetest slumbers, thou fairest of the kind,
And may the morning find thee with heart to me inclin'd
"Sweet repose." "Sweet repose."

We are the Young Musicians, who go from place to place,
And watch at eve the windows where Beauty shows her face,
From place to place, we go, we go, from place to place, we go, we go,
"Hum, Hum, Hum, Hum, Hum, Hum, Hum, Hum."

The Grand Amateur Concert

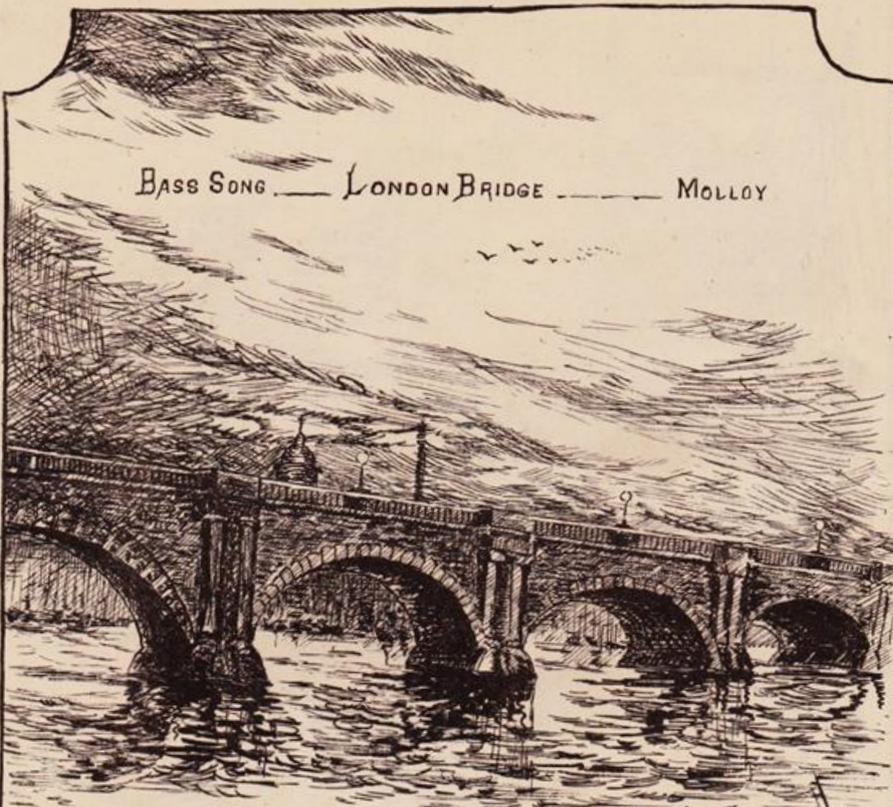
Programme - Page 2/15



The Grand Amateur Concert

Programme - Page 3/15

BASS SONG — LONDON BRIDGE — MOLLOY



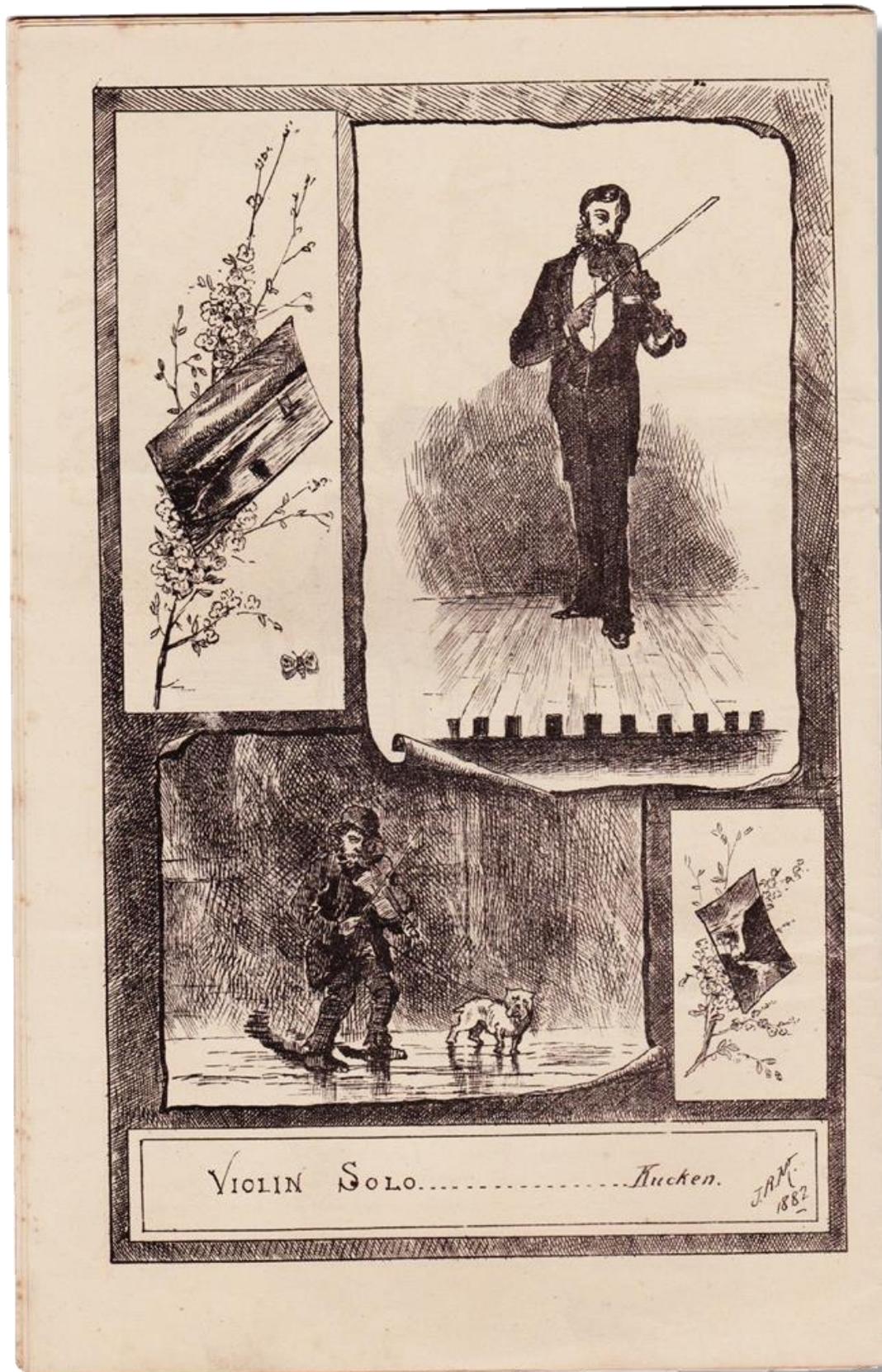
Proud and lowly, beggar and lord, over the bridge they go
Rags and velvet, fetter and sword, poverty, pomp, and woe,
Laughing, weeping, hurrying ever, hour by hour they crowd along,
While below the mighty river, sings them all a mocking song,
Hurry along, sorrow and song, all is vanity 'neath the sun!
Velvet and rags, so the world wags, until the river no more shall run.

Dainty, painted, powder'd and gay, rolleth my lady by;
Rags and tatters over the way, under the open sky,
Flowers and dreams from country meadows, dust and din through city skies
Old men creeping with their shadows, children with their sunny eyes,
Hurry along & &

Storm and sunshine, peace and strife, over the bridge they go;
Floating on in the tide of life, whether no man shall know,
Who will miss them there tomorrow, waifs that drift to the shade or sun?
Gone away with their songs and sorrow; only the river still flows on,
Hurry along & &

The Grand Amateur Concert

Programme - Page 4/15



The Grand Amateur Concert

Programme - Page 5/15



SOPRANO SONG..... "WHEN THE HEART IS YOUNG."..... BUCK

"OH MERRY GOES THE TIME WHEN THE HEART IS YOUNG,
THAT'S NOUGHT TOO HIGH TO CLIMB WHEN THE HEART IS YOUNG!
A SPIRIT OF DELIGHT SCATTERS RESES IN HER FLIGHT,
AND THERE'S MAGIC IN THE NIGHT WHEN THE HEART, THE HEART IS YOUNG.

BUT HEAVY GO THE FEET, WHEN THE HEART IS OLD,
TIME COMETH NOT SO SWEET, WHEN THE HEART IS OLD!
FROM ALL THAT SMILED AND SHONE THERE IS SOMETHING LOST AND GONE,
AND OUR FRIENDS ARE FEW, OR NONE, WHEN THE HEART, THE HEART IS OLD.

"OH SPARKLING ARE THE DAISS, WHEN THE HEART IS YOUNG,
THERE'S BLESS IN BEAUTY'S EYES, WHEN THE HEART IS YOUNG!
THE GOLDEN BREAK OF JAY BRINGS GLADNESS IN ITS RAY,
AND EV'RY MONTH IS MAY, WHEN THE HEART, THE HEART IS YOUNG

YET AN ANGEL FROM ITS SPHERE, THOUGH THE HEART BE OLD,
WHISPERS COMFORT IN OUR EAR, THOUGH THE HEART BE OLD,
"SAYING" ARE FROM OUT THE TOMB SHALL IMMORTAL YOUTH ASSUME,
AND SPRING ETERNAL BLOOM, WHERE NO HEART, NO HEART IS OLD.

The Grand Amateur Concert

Programme - Page 6/15



Trio

"O Willie brew'd a peck o' maut?"

Shore.

O Willie brew'd a peck o' maut,
And Rab and Ollan cam to see
Three vithor lads that lee-lang nicht
Ye wadna find in Christendie,
We are no fou, we're na that fou,
But just a drapsie in our e'e!
The cock may crow; the day may daw,
But aye we'll taste the barley tree;

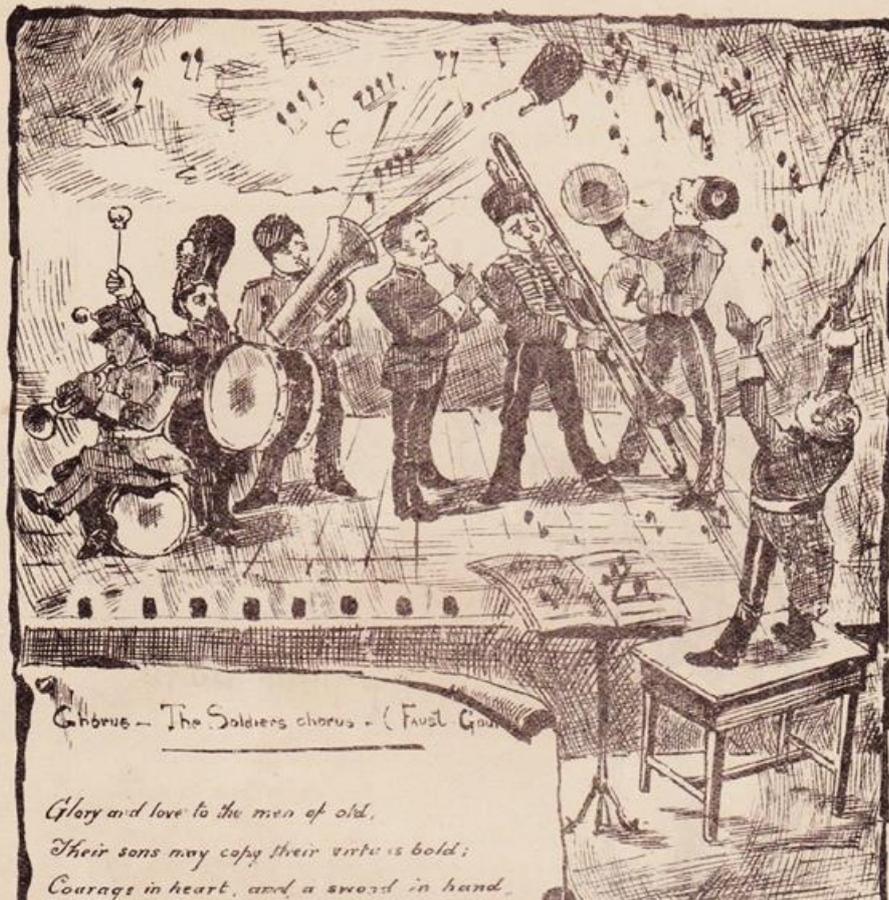
Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys, I thow are we,
And mony a nicht we've merry been
And mony more we hope to be;

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
That's blinkin in the lift sae hie!
She shines so bright to wyle us hame,
But by my sooth she'll wait a wee,

Wha first shall rise to gang away
A silly coward town is he!
Wha fast beside his chair shall fa!
He is the King among us three!

The Grand Amateur Concert

Programme - Page 7/15



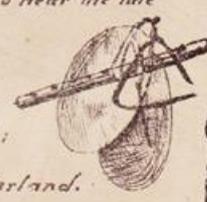
Chorus - The Soldiers chorus - (Faust Gounod)

*Glory and love to the men of old,
Their sons may copy their virtue bold;
Courage in heart, and a sword in hand,
Ready to fight or ready to die for Fatherland.*

*Who needs bidding to dare, by a trumpet blown?
Who lacks pity to spare when the field is won?
Who would fly from a foe, if alone, or last?
And boast he was true, as coward might do, when peril is past?*

*Not to home again we come, the long and fiery strife of battle o'er;
Rest is pleasant after toil us hard as ours beneath a stranger sun.
Many a maiden fair is waiting here to greet her truant soldier lover,
And many a heart will fail, and brow grow pale, to hear the tale
of cruel peril he has won
We are at home!*

*Glory and love to the men of old,
Their sons may copy their virtues bold;
Courage in heart, and a sword in hand,
Ready to fight or ready to die for Fatherland.*

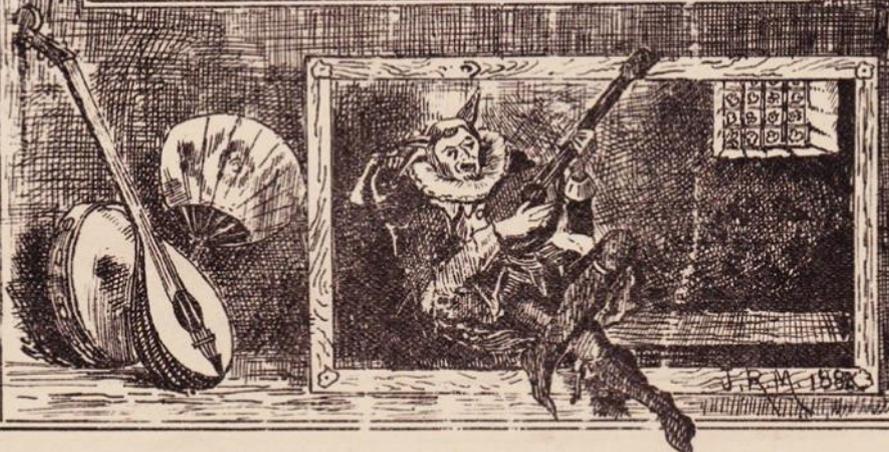
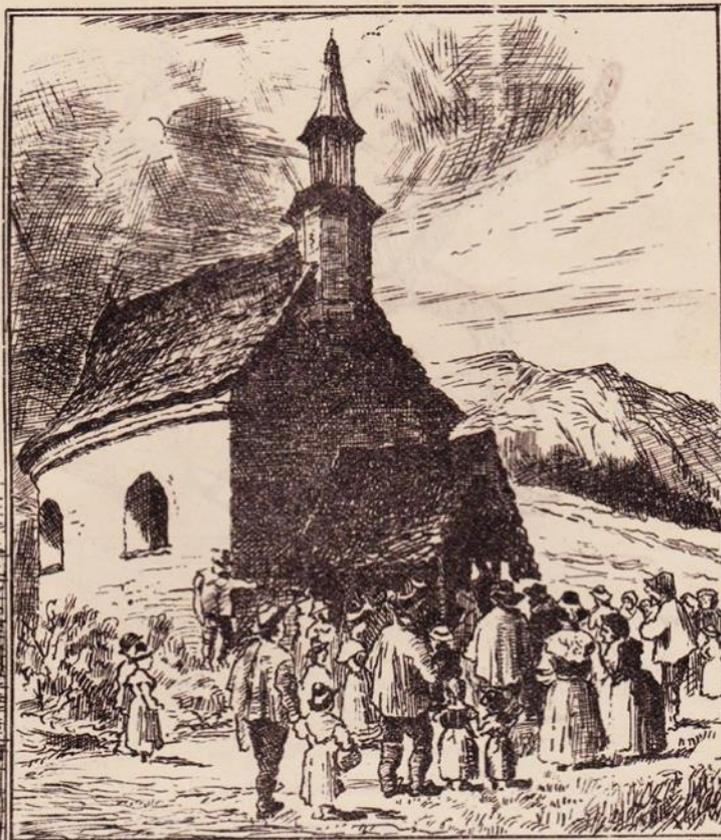


The Grand Amateur Concert

Programme - Page 8/15

OVERTURE

Serenade des Mandolines... Desormes
Wedding March..... Mendelssohn.



The Grand Amateur Concert

Programme - Page 9/15



TENOR SONG

"YES! LET ME LIKE A SOLDIER FALL" (Mariano)

WALLACE

Yes! let me like a soldier fall,
Upon some open plain
This breast expanding for the ball,
To blot out every stain,
I have manly hearts confer my doom,
That gentler ones may tell,
However forget, unknown my tomb
I like a soldier fell

I only ask of that proud race,
Which ends its blaze in me,
To die the last, and not disgrace
Its ancient chivalry!
Tho' o'er my clay no banner wave,
Nor trumpet requiem swell,
Enough, they murmur o'er my grave
He like a soldier fell.

The Grand Amateur Concert

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The Grand Amateur Concert

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The Grand Amateur Concert

Programme - Page 12/15



"THE TOAST"
part song Zöllner.

Health to the fairest we pledge!
Health to the fairest we pledge!
Health to the fairest,
Quaff it at beauty's shrine
Pledge it or pledge it,
In cups of Golden wine
Here a health to all that's fair

Health to the bravest we pledge!
Health to the bravest we pledge!
Health to the bravest,
Quaff it at valour's shrine
Crown the high brow
With a wreath of verdant vine.
Here a health to all that's brave

part song "Whall be King but Charlie"
(Specially arranged for this concert.)

The news frae Moidart cam yestreen
Will soon gar mony ferlie
For ships o' war hae just cam in
And landed ROYAL CHARLIE.
Come through the heather around him gather
Ye're a the welcomer early.
Around him cling wi' a your kiss,
For whall be King but Charlie

The highland clans wi' sword in hand
Frae John O'Groats to Airtly
Hae to a man declared to stand.
Or fa' wi' ROYAL CHARLIE.
Come through the heather &c.

Then here's a health to Charlie's eause
And be't complete and early
His very name my heart's blood warms
To arms for ROYAL CHARLIE.



The Grand Amateur Concert

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THE OLD BRIGADE

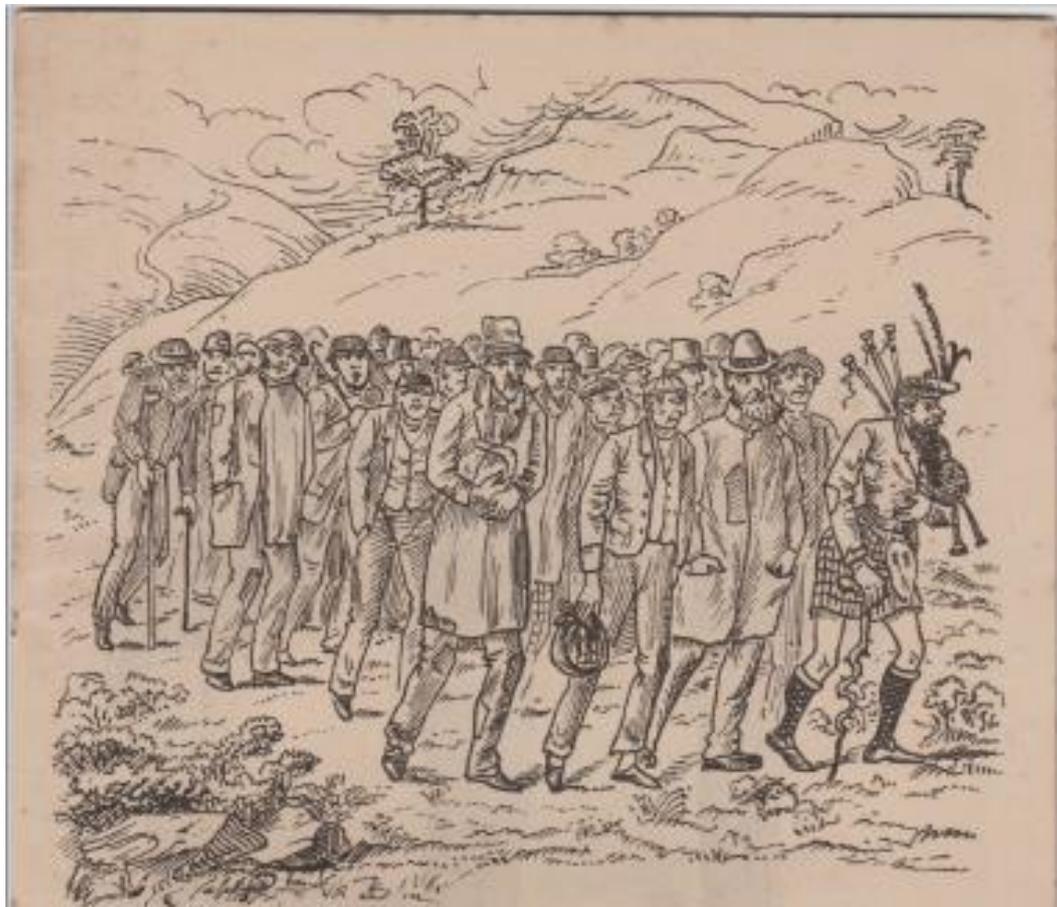
Baritone Song. Ode: Barri.

Where are the boys of the Old Brigade,
Who fought with us side by side,
Shoulder to shoulder, blade by blade,
Fought till they fell and died?
Who so ready and undismayed?
Who so merry and true?
Where are the boys of the Old Brigade,
Where are the lads we knew?
*Then steadily, shoulder to shoulder,
Steadily blade by blade!
Ready and strong, marching along
Like the boys of the Old Brigade!*

Over the sea far away they lie
Far from the land of their love;
Notions alter the years go by,
But Heav'n still is Heav'n above,
Not in the abbey proudly laid
Find they a place of re
The gallant boys of the Old Brigade,
They sleep in old England's heart.
*Then steadily shoulder to shoulder
Steadily blade by blade!
Ready and strong marching along
Like the boys of the Old Brigade*

The Grand Amateur Concert

Programme - Page 14/15



PART SONG..... "NOW TRAMP O'er MOSS AND FELL"..... BISHOP

*Now tramp o'er moss and fell,
The battered ground returns the sound,
While breathing chanters proudly swell,
Blun Alpines cry is "win or die."*

*Guardian spirits of the brave
Victory o'er my hero wave,*

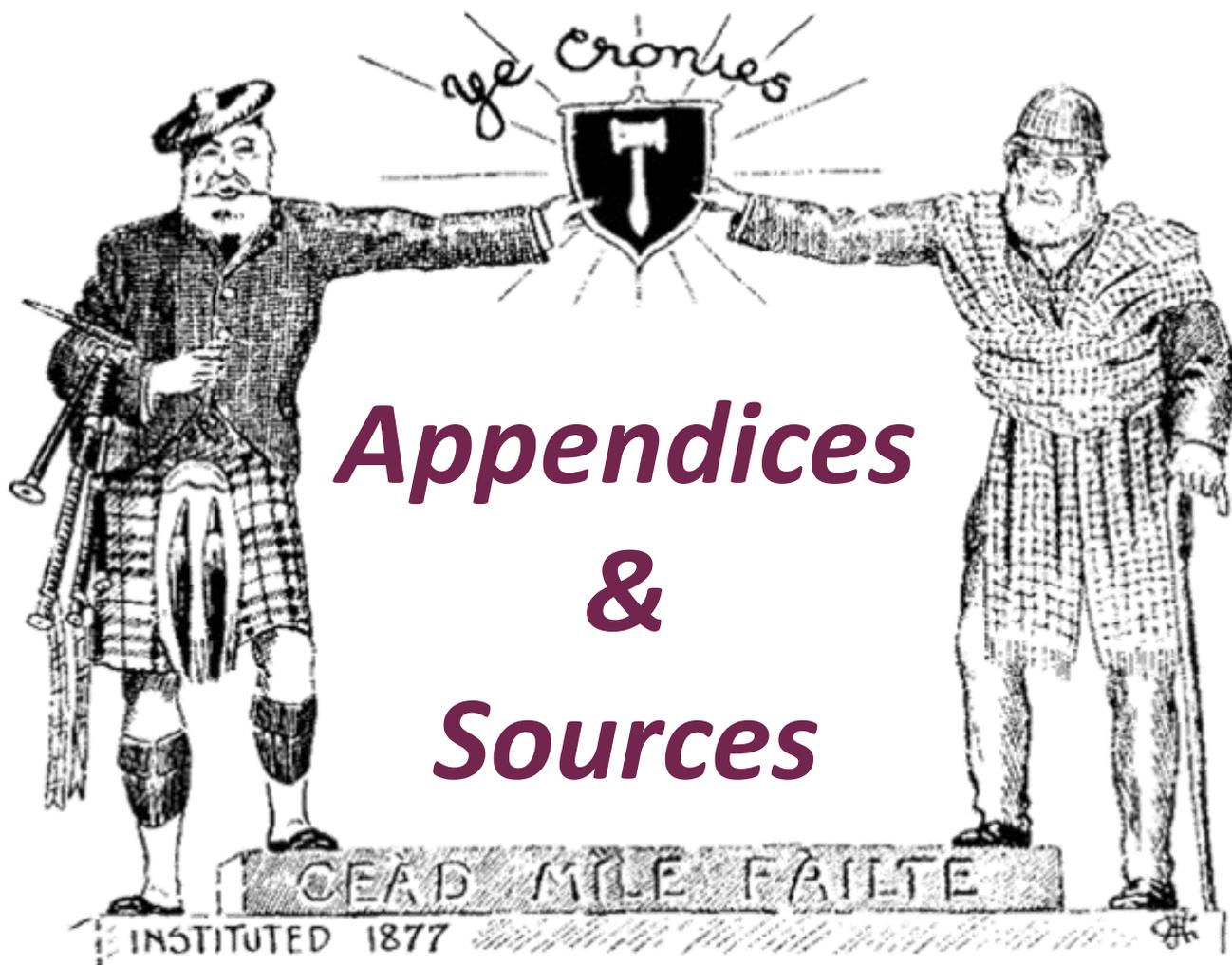
The Grand Amateur Concert

Programme - Page 15/15



Our Story

Chapter 5



Acknowledgements

Volume One

Special Thanks to the following contributors

David Black

*

Robert Burnett

*

Donald Forrester

*

Mike Graham

*

Ancestry.co.uk

*

Glasgow Art Club

*

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

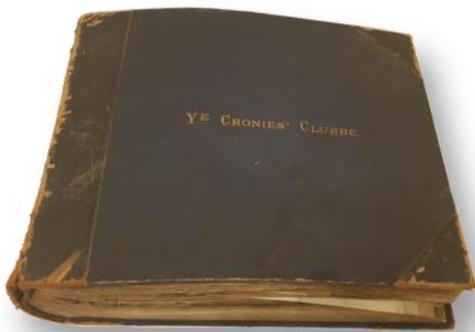
Collections & Archives

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

Primary Sources

Volume One

We are indebted to the first ever Ye Cronies Secretary, Mr. William D. Main, for keeping very thorough records of the Club's activities from its inception. The following sources have provided the bulk of material that have been presented and commented on in Volume One:

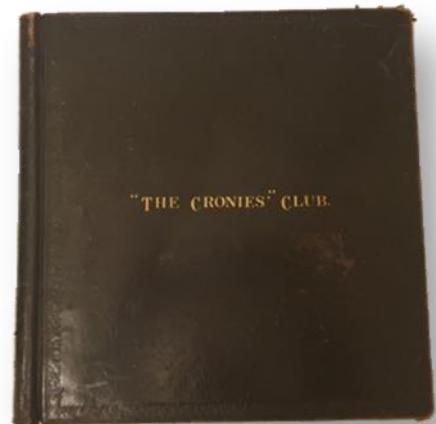


Ye Cronies Clubbe Scrapbook

A collection of programmes, dance cards, Food and Wine menus, meeting minutes, ballot papers, event invites and tickets, and various other additional materials dated from 1879 onwards.

Ye Cronies Members Sign-In Register

A page representing each concert held, with signatures of all members in attendance. Dating from 30th October 1879 onwards.



Ye Cronies Album Vol. 1

A photo album, with additional illustrations, of members from 1877 onwards.

Additional Sources

Volume One

Whilst the majority of this book has been created from the Club's own records and Archives, additional information has been gathered from external sources to provide both context and insight into the individuals concerned.

Events in History

- <https://www.theglasgowstory.com/story/>
- <http://www.thepeoplehistory.com>
- http://myweb.fsu.edu/cupchurch/Resources/Timeline_19thcBrit.html
- "ITV Visual History of the 20th Century", Carlton Books Ltd. 1999

International Exhibition

- https://archive.org/details/gri_33125007430776/page/n7/mode/2up
- <http://wendellhowe.blogspot.com/2011/07/tour-of-international-exhibition-of.html>

James Cowan

- <https://www.bmihealthcare.co.uk/hospitals/bmi-ross-hall-hospital/history-of-ross-hall#gdpr-out>
- <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/3610936>
- <http://www.portaltothepast.co.uk/article/3255/James-Cowan>

James Muir

- <https://sceptical.scot/2020/01/bankers-ignore-lessons-of-the-past/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_of_Glasgow_Bank
- [https://en.m.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionary_of_National_Biography,_1901_supplement/Watson,_William_\(1827-1899\)](https://en.m.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionary_of_National_Biography,_1901_supplement/Watson,_William_(1827-1899))
- "Glasgow Streets and Places: Notes and Memoranda by the Late Jame Muir, C.A.", Bibliobazaar, 1899.

Cronies Cruise

- <https://collections.falkirk.gov.uk/objects/147507/old-cronies-club-1896>

Additional Sources

Volume One

Ernest Ford & Daniel O'Rourke

- <https://digital.nls.uk/chapbooks-printed-in-scotland/archive/104185193>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernest_Ford

William Ralston

- <http://www.victorianweb.org/photos/ralston/index.html>
- <https://gsaarchives.net/collections/index.php/w-ralston-ltd>
- http://www.glasgowwestaddress.co.uk/1909_Glasgow_Men/Ralston_William.htm
- <https://www.theglasgowstory.com/image/?inum=TGSA05215>

MacLean's Hotel

- <https://www.lostglasgow.scot/posts/a-room-with-a-view-509/>
- <https://twitter.com/PastGlasgow/status/1304152634895597572>
- <https://reglasgow.com/historic-empty-glasgow-offices-could-be-returned-to-original-use-as-hotel/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/lostglasgowofficial/photos/a-period-advert-for-macleans-hotel-from-appletons-guide-book-to-glasgow/2364652336979942#>

Further Information?

Volume One

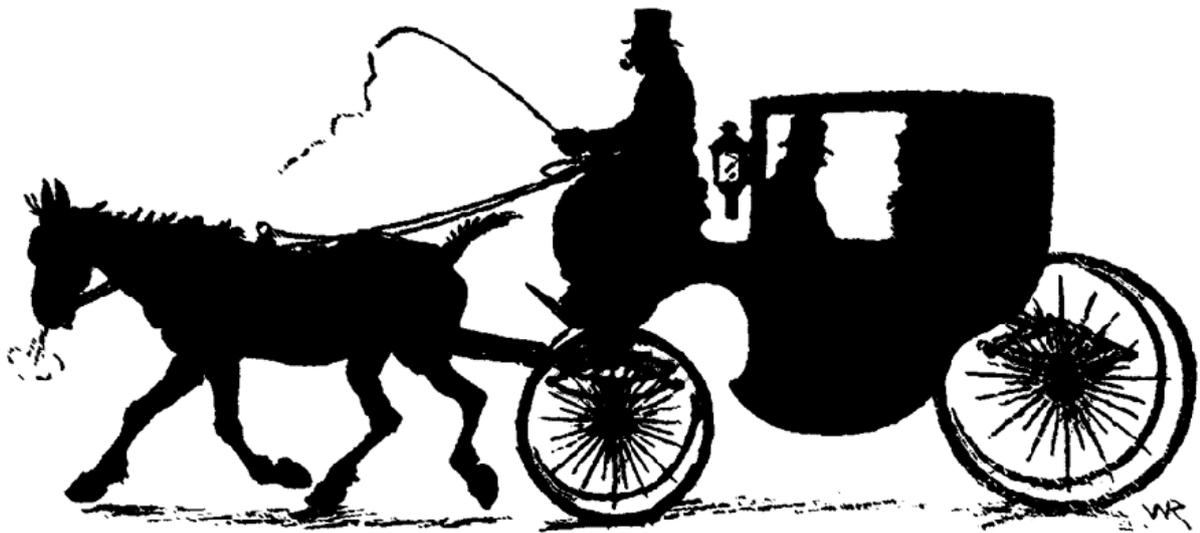


**Our knowledge of Ye Cronies history
is continually evolving.**

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

**For further details, please contact
the Club Secretary by the following email:**

yecronies@outlook.com



ye end of everything