



A staged photograph taken around 1895 on An Tràigh Mhòr. Lady Victoria is in her buckboard in conversation with the island's Church of Scotland ministers, Rev Dugald MacLean and Rev Thomas MacPherson. John MacKinnon from Lodge Farm, known to Lady Victoria as Iain Dileas 'Faithful John' holds the blinkered horse.

This began several years of visits for a few weeks every winter. She commandeered an army of volunteers to set up classes around the island. These were a mixture of instruction - needlework for the girls, wood carving for the boys - clothing clubs with help to bring in cheap cloth and make clothes, combined with hymn singing and Bible reading.

*Sunday January 1st 1899:
 'Dropped nurse after Helipol [service]'
 2nd: 'Went to Green and far end'
 3rd: 'Balephuill. Two invalid women'
 4th: 'Island House. Furious storm begins 6.25pm'
 'Week of great effort, physical and mental'*

Seeing the poverty of many on the island, she bought cows and arranged for families with no grazing to get a daily supply of milk, and set up soup kitchens near the schools where a cheap hot meal could be bought. She set up the local branch of the Young Women's Christian Association, an organisation dedicated to helping innocent young women from the country moving to the temptations of city life. She also started the Tiree Women's Guild, and laid the foundation stone of Heylipol Church in 1902.

Lady Victoria, following the example of both her parents, had a keen interest in the politics of the day, often visiting the House of Lords when she was in London. A compulsive letter writer, she took up the cause of the lack of a pier on the island after the small ferryboat capsized while coming alongside the mailboat. She also argued successfully for a nurse to be stationed on Tiree, and was furious when her fellow committee members tried to save money by bringing in a less qualified woman. She also encouraged the building of the Fever Hospital in Heanish.

Lady Victoria Campbell in the door of the annexe to The Lodge, known in the family as 'The Crystal Palace'. Probably photographed around 1900.



As her projects grew, she decided to spend the whole winter on Tiree, settling in Mannal for her first year. Within a few years, however, the Duke recognised her commitment and substantially rebuilt an old schoolhouse in Gott to become 'The Lodge'. This then became her island residence, although she still led a life of constant travel between Inveraray, London, the south of France and Edinburgh. She threw parties for children at Christmas, and helped to set up the inter-school sports day at Island House.

"When all the schools had assembled in that park, the pipers led us down to the marquee, where we got tea and cookies. When that was over, the games started: running, jumping, throwing the hammer, putting the stone. All kinds of games. And when everybody was tired, and was getting on to about three or four in the evening, we all gathered down outside the factor's office in a queue. There was always a hamper of gooseberries or plums or some fruit, everybody got so much of that. And of course everybody let out their voices singing: 'God Save the King!' After that was finished, it was: 'God send you home!' Only Lady Victoria [from the Duke's family] was present many a time, and after her Lady Frances Balfour. It was looked forward to by the children. Yes! It was the only outing they would get. The only day they would get either sweets, fruit or tea."
 ALASDAIR MACNEILL, BALEVULLIN.

She left the island for the last time in 1910 and died later that year at the age of fifty-six. Unlike her father and brother, the future ninth Duke, Lady Victoria visited the island frequently and spent time in people's homes. Her Gaelic became good enough to use while visiting. Many of the causes she espoused may have happened anyway without her lobbying, but her commitment to the island's day-to-day welfare was never in doubt, and she must have transformed the lives of a number of young people at that time, and helped to restore the reputation of the Argyll family after the Greenhill land raids of 1886.