

## YESTERDAY'S NEWS.14

1915

### DUKE OF ARGYLL'S CHILDREN'S FETES IN TIREE

Lady Victoria Campbell held a sports day for children attending Sunday school in 1902. The next reported one took place in 1915. There is some fascinating social detail in the lists of people involved:

'The annual treat given to the school children of Ruaig and Scarinish by his Grace the Duke of Argyll took place at the Lodge on Wednesday, 25th July. The weather was ideal, brilliant sunshine with a cool, refreshing breeze. Gott Bay looked its best. There was a large gathering of young people from Baugh to Caolas, who enjoyed to the full the pleasures of the day. A considerable number of other friends were also present, and entered with keen zest into the spirit of the occasion. Lady Frances Balfour, who is at present in residence at the Lodge, received the guests. She was accompanied by Miss E. Balfour and Master R.A.L. Balfour.

'In addition to the children, there were also present: Mr Hugh MacDiarmid [the factor], Island House, who organised and superintended the picnic, together with Mrs and Miss MacDiarmid; Rev. Mr MacInnes and Mrs MacInnes, The Manse; Rev. Mr MacLeod and Mrs MacLeod, U.F. [United Free] Manse [now the Eventide Home]; Mrs MacKenzie, Miss MacFarlane, and Master Douglas MacKenzie, Baugh Manse; Mr Hugh MacLean, Caolas; Mr Tom and Miss N. Barr, Balephetrish; Mr Malcolm MacLean, clerk of the School Board, and Mrs MacLean; Mr John MacKinnon, Hylipol; Mr James MacIntyre, Gott; Mr and Miss Rankine, Ruaig School; Miss MacLean, Scarinish School; Miss MacKenzie, Scarinish Villa [later the Bank House]; Mrs Hugh MacDonald, Scarinish; Mrs MacFadyen, Gott; Mrs and Miss C. MacKinnon, Kirkapol; Miss Margt. MacLean, [ditto]; Miss MacKinnon, Vaul; Miss MacFarlane, [ditto]; Miss Charlotte MacLean, Ruaig; Miss C. MacLean; Miss MacDonald, etc. There were also present several well-known summer visitors; Mrs Sinclair, Miss and Master Sinclair, Glasgow; Miss Brodie, [ditto].; Masters Neil and Allan MacKinnon, Leith, etc.

'A specially interesting feature of the gathering was the presence of Sergt. Rankine, 2nd Seaforths, in khaki. The gallant Sergeant has fought at Mons, the Marne, the Aisne, Ypres and in other severe engagements. At the Aisne he was severely wounded, and at Ypres he was badly gassed. He is now home on sick leave.

'It should also be mentioned that Mr Dun. MacKinnon, Kirkapol, and Mr Hugh MacIntyre, Gott, supplied excellent bagpipe music. After tea and cake, the young folks engaged with great enthusiasm in a variety of games: putting the stone, racing, leaping, tug-of-war, etc., for which prizes were given to the successful competitors. A very hearty vote of thanks was proposed by the Rev. Mr MacInnes, and seconded by the Rev. Mr MacLeod, to his Grace the Duke of Argyll for his renewed kindness in providing such an entertainment for the children of the district and their friends. His Grace would receive a hearty welcome to the island from all the people of Tiree, not least from its young people. They had grateful recollections that day of the late Lady Victoria Campbell, whose memory would always be lovingly cherished in Tiree. They had then with them Lady Frances Balfour, who took her sister's place, and to whom they looked for guidance and help in all their difficulties. Her Ladyship's son, Lieutenant Oswald Balfour, who had served with high distinction in Flanders since the beginning of the War, had been wounded twice, and had the honour of being mentioned in dispatches. Hearty cheers were given for his Grace the Duke of Argyll and for the Lady Frances Balfour. Lady Frances, in reply, commended the children for their smart appearance. She spoke of the great War in which our country was at present engaged, and emphasised the duty that lay upon all, young and old, of doing our best for our country at this anxious time. At her Ladyship's call, Sergt. Rankine, with soldierly grace and smartness, hoisted the Union Jack, which was loyally saluted by all present.

'The annual fete provided by the Duke of Argyll took place at Island House, in connection with the west end of the island, on the 20th July. The pupils from the various schools, attended by their teacher, and headed by pipers, marched to Island House and took up a position at the flagpole. On the arrival of Lady Frances Balfour, the procession moved down to the lawn in front of the house, where a marquee had been erected for the accommodation of the young people. Here they were hospitably entertained under the superintendence of Mrs MacDiarmid, assisted by a large staff of ladies and gentlemen. Field sports were afterwards engaged in under the superintendence of Mr MacDiarmid, assisted by Captain Ross, Corraig Higher Grade School, and Mr M. MacLean, School Board Clerk. At the conclusion of the sports, the prizes were handed to the successful competitors by her Ladyship, who had a pleasant word for each competitor as he advanced for the prize.

'The Rev. Alex. MacBean, in moving a vote of thanks to the Duke of Argyll and Lady Frances Balfour, referred to the prominent place taken by the House of Argyll in the history of the country. That place was maintained up to the present day in both Church and State. The Tiree people felt proud and honoured on reading the name of Lieut. Oswald Balfour among those mentioned in despatches by the Commander in Chief of the British Army in France. Her Ladyship, in reply, thanked the audience for the loyal manner in which the name of her Ladyship's son was received, and remarked that no mother could wish a higher honour for her son than to know that he had done his duty. When her Ladyship addressed them a year

ago war had just been declared, and she was proud that day to be able to say that the flag was still flying free over the British Empire.

'The following is the prize-list: Putting the Stone—1. Lachlan McFarlane; 2. Donald McLean; 3. Donald McDonald. Throwing the Hammer—1. L. McFarlane; 2. Archd. McFadyen; 3. Chas. McKinnon. Running Leap—1. Don. McLean; 2. L. McFarlane; 3. Chas. McKinnon. High Leap—1. Lach. McFarlane; 2. Don. McLean; 3. Colin McDonald and Charles McKinnon (equal). Standing Jump—1. L. McFarlane; 2. Chas. McKinnon; 3. Donald McLean. Race for Boys over 12 years—1. L. McFarlane; 2. Chas. McKinnon; 3. Don. McLean. Race for Boys under 12 years—1. William Mercer; 2. Don. Sinclair; 3. Colin McDonald. Race for Girls over 12 years—1. Jessie McArthur; 2. Julia Kennedy; 3. Catherine Kennedy. Race for Girls under 12—1. Flora McLean; 2. Bella McKinnon; 3. Mary Ann McDonald. Girls' Three-legged Race—1. Flora Ann McLean and Julia Kennedy; 2. Mary Ann McDonald and Mary Katie McLean; 3. Kathie McLean and Bella McKinnon. Girls' Potato and Spoon Race—1. Jessie McArthur; 2. Cath. Kennedy; 3. Maggie McDonald. Tug-of-War—1. Mr Barr's team.

'The following ladies and gentlemen were of the company:—The Lodge party; Mr, Mrs and Miss MacDiarmid, Island House; Mrs MacInnes, The Manse, Tiree; the Rev. A. and Mrs MacBean, Hylipol Manse; Dr MacKinnon, medical officer of the island; Capt. and the Misses Ross, Cornaig; Mr, Mrs and the Misses McLean, the Schoolhouse, Balemartine; Mr and Mrs Nicholson, the Schoolhouse, Hylipol; Mr and Miss Barr, Balephetrish; Mr and Mrs M. MacLean, Gott; the Misses MacKinnon, Hylipol Cottage; Nurse Green; Sergt. Rankine, 2l Seaforths; Pte. A. MacDonald, 4th Cameron Highlanders; Mr Currie, School Board Officer; and Mr L. McLean, E.C. Missionary, Cornaig.' (*Oban Times and Argyllshire Advertiser*, 14 August 1915, p. 2)

Following the 1915 games, none were reported until 1937. From 1939, they began to be held at the school itself.

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Children picnicking at Island House, quite possibly in 1915. Hugh MacDiarmid is standing behind the children, facing away from the camera. Lady Frances Balfour, 'commended the children for their smart appearance.'