

Airthrey Castle Curling Club



Extracts from a Club History written by A. Campbell

Full text available on request.

Around 1790 Robert Haldane, owner of the Airthrey Estate which lies between Bridge of Allan and Causewayhead, was completing the construction of his new mansion house and the landscaping of the grounds. As part of this project he formed the sheet of water known as Airthrey Loch. Almost ninety years later, in 1878, the then owner of the estate, Lord Abercromby, gave permission for the newly formed Airthrey Castle Curling Club to enjoy their sport on the Loch.

The inaugural meeting was held in the Wallace Arms at Causewayhead and the first Annual Dinner was at the same venue.

In 1879 the Club was admitted to membership of the Royal Caledonian Curling Club (RCCC) at its Annual Meeting in the Cafe Royal in Edinburgh with a membership of twenty regular and nineteen occasional members..

An account was opened at the Union Bank in Henderson Street but in the early years it seems that this was frequently overdrawn, a situation regularly blamed on the consumption of refreshments at Club matches.

The winter weather in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first twenty years of the twentieth was vastly colder than that which we experience today. Curling on the frozen Loch at Airthrey and at other suitable sheets of natural water in the area was a regular occurrence. Members of Airthrey took full part in both their own club games and in matches against other clubs.

The year 1901 was to prove a tragic one for the Club. On Friday 15th February curling was in progress on one part of the Loch while skaters were enjoying their sport in other areas. A young lady from Bridge of Allan, Miss Kate Rutherford, crashed through a thinner area of ice into the freezing water and despite the efforts of others both she and another member Fred Pullar died. No curling took place on the Loch for many years after this sad event but in 1979 members played a game there a few days after the Grand Match on the Lake of Menteith.

Following the loss of Airthrey Loch as a venue for curling, discussion turned to the provision of an artificial outdoor pond and in 1907 this was completed on the Logie Glebe, roughly where Pathfoot Drive stands today. A rent of four guineas a year was payable. Unfortunately the pond, which comprised two rinks, was never entirely satisfactory. Despite this it continued in use but only a few games were played there after 1945 and it was eventually abandoned in 1950.

Curling is an ancient, and particularly Scottish, game and Airthrey is by no means one the oldest of clubs. It does however have a proud record of sportsmanship and fellowship. The club trophies continue to have engraved upon them the names of winning skips that reflect the Club's history over the past 136 years.