

The technique

The battery for the plane will only run the motor for about 5 minutes so when I launch, I run the motor for one or two of those minutes for the initial climb to height. The motor is turned off and the plane glides under my control into position and then the camera is turned on. When I think I am over the target zone I operate the camera's shutter several times to take a series of photos. I can fire up the motor again for another 'burn' to reposition the glider and gain height if I want and repeat the process. Although the battery will only last about 5 minutes on a single charge, the flight usually lasts around 10 - 20 minutes in still air. In the summer I hope to pick up the odd thermal (a bubble of warm rising air) and then the plane could well be carried to thousands of feet if I let it and the flight duration might be measured in hours.

The pictures

The pictures are downloaded from the camera into a computer for immediate processing (a distinct advantage over conventional film). Mostly, I want to photograph ancient ruins and settlements around the island, though modern dwellings and other features can also be accommodated. The pictures should complement the activities of the newly formed Archaeology Group here on the island. The composite image above has been assembled using digital image processing – a clear advantage over traditional photography. The images shown are just two examples from my rapidly expanding collection!

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CO-OP IN DUNOON

by Michael Davis

When Co-op Manager, Garry Hay began to look into the history of the Co-op in Dunoon, he knew that the "Dumbarton Equitable Co-operative Society" had a long tradition of serving the people of Dunoon. But he was in for a surprise when he discovered just how long the Co-op has been around in the town.

At first, records suggested that the original shop in Edward Street had been opened in the 1920s. But suddenly when he began to dig deeper, a whole fascinating but mysterious history began to emerge. Firstly, ploughing through the Local Collection (in Library Headquarters at Sandbank), he found a listing for the Society's shop in Edward Street - in 1907.

Eventually, he found an advert in a 1928 programme for Dunoon Civic Week, which surprised him; it clearly said that the Edward Street Branch had opened on 22nd April 1898, with a membership of 50! This, of course, made 1998 the centenary of the Co-op in Dunoon.

But little enough has been uncovered regarding the early years of the Co-

op. Clearly, all was not plain sailing, for local shopkeepers were determined to fight off competition from a Society pledged to supply its members at as near to cost price as was possible. A hint of what was going on behind the scenes is provided by the *Dunoon Herald* of 4th March 1898:-

“The Dumbarton Equitable Society, owing to difficulties thrown in their way by Landlords and Factors in Dunoon, to secure suitable premises for a branch store, has taken the bulls by the horns and acquired premises of their own. Janet Cottage, Edward Street, has been purchased, which will be altered to suit the trade and opened at an early date”.

The off High Street situation of the old Co-op shop is therefore explained by the determination of local property holders to keep them out of Argyll Street.

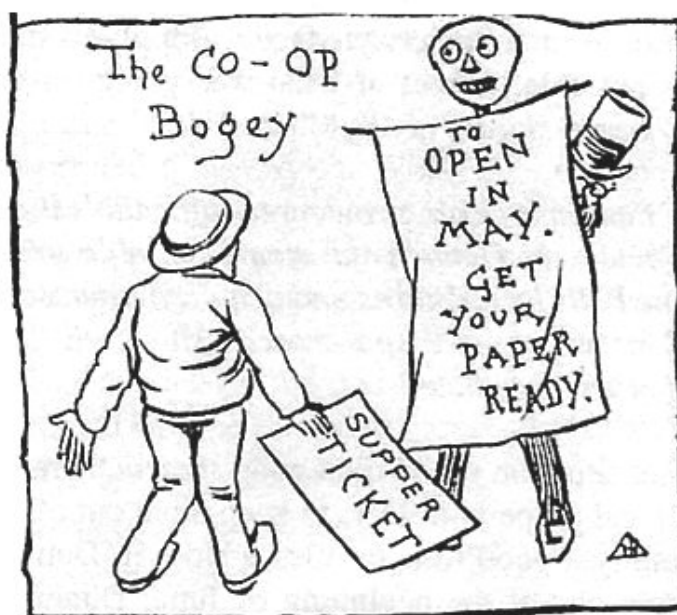
It was certainly a good time to open a store in Dunoon. Business in the town was booming, and at the beginning of June, Dunoon opened its “*grand new £15,000 pier*”. But, simultaneously, the worthies of the Burgh were also renewing their fight to prevent Sunday Sailings to the town. The business clout of the town could not, however, prevent the arrival of its new Co-op, although there is a curious absence of reportage concerning its opening on the 22nd April 1898. In the week building up to the great day, if the newspapers are to be believed, the most newsworthy event in Dunoon was the bolting of a milk cart in front of Galloway's shop, Argyll Street. The cart (and its frightened horse) overturned MacDougall the fruiter's van, knocked down Constable MacLean and collided with a telegraph pole in Manse Road! The culprit had been a motor car, which had frightened the milk carthorse.

Clearly though, behind the scenes the new Co-op was doing more than frighten the horses! The proof is in a series of anti-Co-op adverts run on the front page of

the *Dunoon Herald* in 1898 by MacPhie's Grocers. They attempted to prove that shopping at Macphie's was cheaper than at a “*Co-operative Society in this district*” by comparing selected prices, as well as attacking the whole sharing philosophy of the Co-op.

But the proof is in the pudding, as they say (rather than literally in the comparative prices for Tapioca quoted by Macphie's). By 17th June, under two months from the opening of the Co-op, the cost of a loaf of bread in the town had fallen to 7d. By 1928, the Co-op shop in Edward Street had a membership of 770. Sales had risen from over £1,000 to over £34,000, and members received a dividend of 2/4d per pound spent. (Contrast this with the current dividend of only 2 new pence – around one sixth of the amount – Ed.).

By 1993, the Co-op was ready to move from its Edward Street location (where its Funeral Directors are still based) to Queen Street. It is tempting to say that the rest is history, but of course, the next hundred years may well see more sweeping changes in retailing than the last!



How the Cowal Chronicle of Jan 17th 1898 commented on the way some viewed the Co-op

POOR, PROUD AND EXILED

by Murdo MacDonald & Michael Davis

Sir Duncan Campbell of Barcaldine, who died in 1926, cut an eccentric figure during his life. So much so, in fact, that the reporter who announced his death in the Campbeltown Courier of 5th June of that year, could not find a single headline to do the job. In the event he used three: "Tragedy of a Highland Laird", "Poor, proud and exiled" and "Death in a London Taxi." The article, found by Murdo MacDonald, rehearses the rather strange lifestyle of the Laird who gradually restored Barcaldine Castle from a ruined shell from the 1890s onward. The restoration was unusual for its time, in that it did not interfere with the external appearance of the existing building, even retaining the original window yetts. During the restoration these defensive grills were, or so it is said, hinged to open in the event of fire! It was presumably the expense of this slow restoration, which prevented the Laird from permanently occupying it.

"*There could not have been a more splendid gentleman living,*" was the tribute paid by Mrs Knighting, his housekeeper for 13 years to Sir Duncan Campbell, the Scottish Baronet, who died in a London taxicab last Wednesday afternoon. Hereditary Keeper of Barcaldine Castle, Ledaig, Argyllshire, which he had not the means to occupy, Sir Duncan lived almost the life of a recluse at 16 Ridgway Place, Wimbledon, London. He allowed only candles in his rooms, the walls of which are hung with dirks, claymores, fencing foils, swords