The growth in provision in sporting opportunities in nineteenth century Britain is a well documented topic, and there has been a parallel growth of interest in particular sports in a Scottish setting. Such studies examine aspects of formal sports organisations in a variety of contexts and show the diversity of social arrangements which supported participation in sport. This paper examines the role of a national organisation, military rather than social in nature, to assess its contribution as a vehicle for the promotion of sport for rural working-class men in one specific Scottish setting. The nineteenth century Volunteer Force was set up with the aim of national defence, in the expectation that citizens would willingly do their patriotic duty:

“I do make Oath that I will be faithful and do swear true Allegiance to Her Majesty, her heirs and Successors and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend Her Majesty, her heirs and Successors in person, Crown and dignity against all enimies (sic) and will observe and obey all orders of Her Majesty, her heirs and Successors and of the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God”

Did membership serve a different purpose for the working-class men who unexpectedly became the mainstay of the force?
The Volunteer movement

The nineteenth century Volunteer Force (the precursor of the Local Defence Volunteers or Home Guard of the Second World War and the Territorial Army of the twentieth century) dates from 1859, but as its historian Cunningham (1975) points out, it was not the first of its kind. Its forerunner in the home-defence movement sprang up at the time of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars. That force had been disbanded in 1814 - although some volunteers, as Cunningham puts it, “were less than willing to forget past soldiering at the fiat of Government” and one such detachment in Greenock continued to meet triennially until 1841. Although there had been concern in the 1840s about the possibility of invasion, particularly when half of the Regular Army was stationed abroad and likely to remain so, the political state of Britain was such that the Government was reluctant to arm the labouring classes in case this increased pressure on the demands for political reform. However by the time of the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and with rising cross-Channel tension, increasingly there were calls such as that in The Times of 23 September 1857 for the establishment of a permanent Volunteer Force. Cunningham argues this was voicing the aspirations of members of the professional and business middle classes anxious to promote not only national defence but also social harmony. This may have been middle-class reaction to the aristocratic mismanagement of the Crimean war, but in the spirit of Rational Recreation it could also be seen to offer a cheap and efficient answer to the problem of National Defence, which at the same time provided improving and healthy activities for middle-class youth.

The middle-class orientation was revealed when the Government eventually authorised the formation of the Volunteer Force in a circular to Lords Lieutenant from the Secretary of War on 12 May 1859. The Volunteer movement was aimed at “those classes... who do not, under our present system, enter either into the Regular Army or the Militia” meaning neither working-class ordinary soldiers nor officers of aristocratic rank. A letter from the War Office to the Lords Lieutenant confirmed the conditions on which “Volunteer Rifle Corps as well as Artillery Corps and Companies in Maritime Towns in which there may be Forts and Batteries” could be enrolled. Officers bore “the commission of the Lord Lieutenant of the county.” Members “undertake to provide their own arms and equipment, and to defray all expenses attending the Corps”, but arms “though provided...
Patriotism or Pleasure?

at the expense of the Members must be furnished under superintendence of the War Office. This made it clear that there was to be no substantial financial obligation to the Government, that is, it was truly a Volunteer Force: if a Volunteer had to pay for his own arms and equipment it was inevitable that he would be a man of some financial and therefore social standing. Financial responsibility for the force initially lay with the Commanding Officers, which made wealth a premium for high rank and the maintenance of financial stability for any corps a major concern.

Cunningham noted that in Scotland a markedly higher percentage of the available population enrolled in the Force, and the Highlands (the part of the country furthest from the danger of invasion) had the most enthusiastic enrolment. This raises the question of motivation: how attractive a proposition was joining the Volunteers, and why? The existing records do not necessarily provide all the answers, but from archive evidence of the working of the Volunteer Force in Argyllshire, some tentative conclusions may be offered.

Following the circulars from the War Office in May and July of 1859, the Volunteer movement began to spread. On 28th October 1859 circulars went from the Marquis of Breadalbane (then Lord Lieutenant for the county of Argyll) to the respective conveners of Districts and chief magistrates of Inverary, Campbellton and Oban. In November of that year, Breadalbane wrote to the Clerk to the Lieutenancy “I am happy to find there is so much spirit in all classes in Argyllshire to promote the Volunteer Rifle cause, and I hope we may bring the work to a happy end.” The Army liaison officer wrote in a similar vein: “I am glad to find you are moving in the right direction in Inverary and have no doubt you will be able to raise either a subdivision of Pipers or at all events a section of Artillery or some men for the boat service.” There is only one other reference in the local archives to the boat service, and no reference at all in Cunningham to its existence. In Campbeltown a meeting called “to form a Volunteer Rifle Corps” in November 1859 by John Lorne Stewart of Coll, Deputy Leader of the Argyllshire Commissioners of Supply and Convener of the District Committee, resulted in a letter of 25th December 1859 offering establishment of a Rifle corps. On 23th February 1860 a letter from the War Office noted “Her Majesty the Queen has been graciously pleased to approve and accept the offer of the Inverary Rifle Volunteers under the Act. The Corps is numbered as
The 2nd in the County of Argyll” - no evidence has yet been found to determine which was the first. On February 29th a letter was forwarded from Taymouth Castle confirming War Office approval of the officers from the Easdale Artillery Corps\(^\text{11}\). Thereafter many communities followed the necessary steps to set up artillery batteries or rifle corps.

### ARGYLLSHIRE VOLUNTEER FORCE

#### ARTILLERY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formation Site</th>
<th>Formed</th>
<th>(Dissolved)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easdale</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>2 companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarbert</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>1862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oban</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Tarbert</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunmore</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronachan</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardgour</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>1866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbeltown</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islay</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Hall</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobermory</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lochgilphead</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarbert</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furnace</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All existing remained till consolidation in 1880

#### RIFLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formation Site</th>
<th>Formed</th>
<th>(Dissolved)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inveraray</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbeltown</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>2 companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobermory</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>1861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilmelfort</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>1863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunoon</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glendaruel</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenorchy</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>1869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knapdale</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>1869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlorn</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>1864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islay</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>1865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballachulish</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilmartin</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All existing remained till consolidation in 1880\(^\text{12}\)
As the details above show, the survival rate of Argyllshire Volunteer detachments was variable, with some of the early founded units continuing well through the century while others folded within a relatively short time. The Artillery batteries appear to have been more successful than the Rifle detachments, but there may have been more support in terms of funding in the villages/small towns than in some of the very rural areas where Rifle corps were formed. Evidence also shows that where units survived, there was nonetheless variability in membership numbers with considerable fluctuations in the year on year returns. Research is still incomplete, but it would appear that the pattern of popularity in the early 1860s was subsequently followed by slow decline or shrinkage, and a slight resurgence becoming visible in the 1890s.

For one Argyllshire Volunteer detachment, archive material provides more detail. The setting up of a rifle detachment at Kilmelfort was approved in a letter from the War Office to Lord Breadalbane, Lord Lieutenant of the County, on 28th February 1860. The establishment was to comprise 1 Captain Commandant, 1 Captain, 2 Lieutenants, 2 Ensigns and 200 men of all ranks divided into two companies. This must have been based on the expectation that a large number of Volunteers would be forthcoming from the gunpowder works which provided the main occupation in that remote corner of the county. By 26th March an accounts cash book had been opened for the Melfort Volunteer Rifles (6th Argyll Rifle Volunteer Corps) which recorded the money subscribed by various donors, including the sum of £40 from Lord Breadalbane, and itemised the various expenditures. The men paid £1 10s 8d (£1.53) for their uniforms including belts and cap badges (the uniforms costing the detachment £1 9s 8d each (£1.48)) while officers’ uniforms cost £5 each. The itemised early expenses recorded costs for advertisements, for drill sergeants’ pay, a set of silver bugles and freight charges on uniforms, arms and ammunitions, and the amount of £2 6s 6d (£2.32) for 3 gallons of whisky: all this before the detachment had enrolled a single man.

The Captain was sworn in at Oban on 6th August 1860 in the presence of a Justice of the Peace, and immediately set about the swearing in of the corps. By 21st August a total of 97 officers and men had been enrolled. A printed copy of the Rules and Regulations were issued to each man on 3rd September, when also were constituted a Court of Enquiry (comprising the
Ensign, two Sergeants and two Privates) and a Finance Committee comprising a Lieutenant, two other Sergeants, and three other Privates. Accounts were to be shown to the corps on the 1st of February every year\textsuperscript{14}.

From the swearing in roll and the census details for 1861 it is possible to make tentative identification of approximately half the members of the initial corps\textsuperscript{15}. It is clear 34 of the identifiable 47 were employed in the Powder works: as gunpowder makers or powdermen, as joiners, sawyers, cooperers and labourers. Others included agricultural labourers and cow-herds, a shoemaker, a tailor, a postman and a storekeeper (the latter identifiable as the Quarter sergeant or supplies man for the Corps). Ages ranged from 14 to 62, and only a small number had been born within the district. Thus it may be surmised that the working men of the Powderworks formed the backbone of the unit.

Although the corps continued to function, and the accounts books continued to record payments from the men for their uniforms etc. and outgoings (which from May 1862 included advertising for pipers and paying for pipe music, leather for bagpipes, targets and prizemoney for “section prizes”), it is clear that expenses exceeded income, since the level of subscriptions had also tailed off drastically. The accounts book ends on 9th May 1863 with the Captain donating the balance of 11s 9d (59p) still owed to him: the corps appears to have fallen apart with 18 resignations and retirals including the Captain and two sergeants. The Lieutenant resigned in April 1864, the War Office wrote in June requesting the return of 100 stand of Rifles issued to the 6th Corps, and there is written acknowledgement of an Ensign (appointed in February 1863) resigning in November 1864 when the corps was formally dissolved\textsuperscript{16}. Although there was no change in the local employment situation at that time with the Powder Works continuing as a source of employment, the enthusiasm of the initial joining of the Volunteers had not persisted. In another dissolution of an Artillery Volunteer Corps it was noted “the corps was principally composed of working men, and when the novelty of the thing was over, they had sufficient outdoor exercise without heavy gun drill”\textsuperscript{17}. Perhaps the men in the Powderworks felt the same, and their Captain could no longer give the necessary financial support to a less than willing corps. The attraction of patriotic duty, or whatever other motivation had created the corps, proved insufficient to sustain its existence.
Cunningham’s comments on the nature of the Officer class can be substantiated across the Argyllshire Volunteers, with involvement among the landowning gentry very marked from its inception. The list of Commissions issued to officers of Volunteer Corps in Argyllshire identified all the original Captains as Esquires or former Service officers. Three sons of the Duke of Argyll (himself Honorary Colonel of the Argyllshire Rifle Volunteers) commanded local units - Lord Archibald and subsequently his brother Lord Colin in charge of the Inveraray based 2nd Rifle Volunteers, while Lord Walter was captain of the nearby Furnace battery of the 12th Argyllshire Artillery Volunteers. Other local landowners led corps in the early days: sons of the laird of Poltalloch captained companies of Rifle Volunteers in Dunoon (the 7th) and Kilmartin (the 14th); artillery batteries were led by lairds and landowners in Oban (3rd), Ronachan (4th), Glendaruel (8th) and Tarbert (11th). At a later stage in the life of the Volunteers, the heir to the Duke of Argyll, the Marquis of Lorne, served as Lieutant Colonel commanding the Argyllshire Artillery Volunteers, while the Rifle Volunteers were commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Campbell of Glendaruel. The officer class in Campbeltown differed from that in the other small towns - certainly they were gentlemen, but the evidence indicates that there the officers were middle-class professionals (bank managers, writers, gentlemen farmers). One explanation for this difference may be the size and composition of the town’s population, and its Lowland rather than Highland orientation. By the end of the century the aristocratic element at corps level had declined considerably, although local lairds still acted as patrons to corps activities. Officers of the corps were much more likely to be managers (for example at Easdale in 1891 the quarry manager became captain,) or professional men (for example, Dr Campbell had replaced the Duke’s son as captain at Furnace while at Inveraray Mr Wright the banker officered the section based at Strachur).

However in the ‘other ranks’ membership, it is clear that Argyll Volunteers were not those for whom the movement had been intended: from the outset not only in Melfort was the recruitment focused directly on the working-classes. The Campbeltown Rifle Volunteer corps mentioned above was by September 1860 calling for Saturday half-day closing from October to April to permit members of the corps (shop assistants and artisans) to attend drills. Similarly the majority of the band of the Oban corps in 1863 were tradesmen. The Rifle corps formed in Ballachulish in...
1867 was comprised of slate quarriers and others who initially went through their drills in their working clothes till uniforms arrived. When this corps too applied for Saturday afternoons off for drills “the owner allowed the whole works to stop at the same time”\textsuperscript{21}. Later in the century are found comments on the membership of some of the Artillery batteries still extant - Oban battery had almost all the industries and handicrafts of the town represented and by 1896 there was active recruitment aimed at “youths anxious to improve themselves ...and in particular to apprentice tradesmen”; Tarbert’s annual ball had many members missing because of the Ayrshire fishings; while Lochgilphead’s turnout for the annual inspection was not at full strength because of the number of members at the Lochboisdale fishing. In rural districts it is clear the corps members were the agricultural workforce : the Kilmartin detachment (14th Rifle Volunteers) claimed that “some individual members live 25 miles apart, and others, again, come a distance of from five to fourteen miles for the twice weekly drills”\textsuperscript{22}. Although Cunningham claims that the working-class Volunteers who formed more than half of the Force by 1862 were predominantly upper working-class\textsuperscript{23}, the scarcity of that category of the working population in Argyll meant that any employed respectable working-class man was seen as eligible to join.

**Volunteers and sporting activities**

The initial Regulations had specified attendance requirements : Volunteers with “eight days in each four months or a total of twentyfour days drill and exercise in the year, are entitled to be returned as ‘effectives’”. This gave exemption from the Militia Ballot, or from being called upon to serve in any other levy\textsuperscript{24}. Not until 1863 did the Government begin to offer financial assistance by way of capitation grants for equipment and uniforms, following the Royal Commission’s recommendation that any man who had attended 30 drills as a recruit and 9 drills each year in subsequent years, and went through a course of musketry instruction should earn a capitation grant of twenty shillings (£1) for his corps, and be recorded as “efficient”. If he fired a defined amount of ball cartridge, he should earn an additional ten shillings (50p) for the corps. As the force became more like the Regular Army in its administration with the appointment of sergeant instructors and a permanent administrative staff, a Proficient category was included to denote officers who had passed an examination and thus earned special capitation of £2 10s (£2.50)\textsuperscript{25}. 

\textsuperscript{132}
The conditions for grant earning may explain the regularity of meetings of the various corps for shooting practices, but this in itself would not sustain attendance. A more likely explanation lies in the clear preference from very early dates for competitive shooting both within and between units, and the fact that rifle skills were encouraged in both Artillery and Rifle Volunteers. The Kilmelfort corps started with “a Watch and three 10s (50p) prizes for shooting”. Many of the corps (both Artillery and Rifle) held a series of monthly competitions which led towards annual prizes, for example Oban (3rd Artillery battery) ran such a competition from 1865 to at least 1896; the 7th Rifle Volunteers (Dunoon corps) had an annual shooting competition for the Unwin Cup and other prizes from 1876; while Ballachulish (13th Rifle Corps) had a new silver cup presented by Mrs Stewart of Dalness, a local landowner in 1893 - and subsequently a replacement presented when the first was won three times by an individual member who thus became its owner. Other competitions were held for specific prizes either of money or of items - Tobermory’s Artillery Corps for a gold medal presented by a commercial traveller in 1868 and subsequently; also at Tobermory in 1876 a rifle shooting competition for a bottle of brandy “won by a Good Templar” (a teetotaller); at Glendaruel in 1885 a silver brooch; at Tarbert in 1894 a silver cup presented by Campbell of Stonefield Younger, himself a Regular Army officer; and at Lochgilphead in 1894 for prizes donated by local merchants and others. Sweepstake competitions were also very popular: thus the Dunoon Rifle Corps held a “match for money prizes among members unsuccessful in gaining prizes at the last match”. In some corps where the membership was spread across a wide geographical area, local detachments would meet in annual competition such as the four detachments of the 8th Rifle Volunteers (Glendaruel, Strachur, Ardkinglas and Lochgoilhead) while the Glendaruel section regularly competed against their near neighbours the Southhall section of the 8th Artillery Volunteers. It was common to have special competitions at New Year - the Oban, Lochgilphead, Islay and Tobermory corps were still keeping that tradition in the 1890s. Tobermory Artillery battery had recorded a break in this tradition in 1879 “there was no carbine shooting since the carbines had been sent to Birmingham for repairs. This was the first time the shooting was omitted since the corps was established 19 years ago”. Most corps held their annual prizegiving and ball (usually paid for by the officers) at the time of New Year or Old
New Year’s Day (around the 12th of January): examples are Lochgilphead in 1868; Furnace, Kilmartin and Clachan in 1870; Tarbert in 1884 and Tobermory in 1893.

In addition to local competitions, Campbeltown had a tradition of friendly matches outwith the Argyllshire Battalion: the 6th Artillery Volunteers competed with Ayr’s battery in 1863 and 1869 while the 3rd Rifle Volunteers competed with the 3rd Ayr Rifle Volunteers in 1876 and 1891. Dunoon (7th Rifle Volunteers) also had competitions with Volunteers from Helensburgh as well as with the 2nd Renfrewshire Volunteers (although the competition of 1880 may have been rather unbalanced with Dunoon’s old carbines versus Johnstone’s Snider rifles). Oban’s Artillery Volunteers were by the 1890s having annual carbine matches against the Sergeants’ Mess of the Edinburgh Corps of Volunteer Artillery. Inter Corps competitions were facilitated by annual camps, the Artillery one instituted in 1865, the Rifle Volunteers camp instituted in 1868. The August timing of both of these fitted the pre-harvest period for agricultural workers (Port Ellen in 1894 had 32 of its total membership of 69 at camp, though Easdale with 69 predominantly slate quarriers formed the largest unit that year). The Rifle Volunteers camp of 1893 was postponed for a week “to suit the Ballachulish men” (also slate quarriers). It is noticeable that camps were held in localities easily accessible by water transport (a comment on Argyllshire communications of the time) - the Rifle Volunteers camp was frequently at or near Lochgilphead, while the Artillery Volunteers camped regularly on Bute at Ettrick Bay, or at Campbeltown. Thus for example the Brigade report of 1892 when “Oban, Easdale, Tobermory and Lochgilphead detachments will join the Iona at Ardrishaig on Saturday to go to Tarbert, where a specially chartered steamer would be at readiness to convey them to the artillery encampment at Campbeltown”.

Such camps provided the opportunity for inspections, skirmish practices and shooting competitions, but also for Highland games and sports. As early as 1868, at the regimental camp at Rothesay, competitions were held under the auspices of the county Rifle Association “open to the Volunteers” using their rifles to shoot for prizes (26 in all) ranging in value from £8 to £1 for an entry fee of 1s (5p): a significant reward for a working-class private trained to be a skilled shot. Participation in the various activities within Highland games could also be profit-
able e.g. in 1868 the 14th Rifle corps at a corps Highland games were the beneficiaries of £10 in prizes given by the Captain’s wife. By the 1890s regimental camps were still providing substantial prizemoney - one corps’ winnings of £20 at the 1894 camp was from a prizelist “of greater value than in any previous year”, and prizemoney came from group as well as individual competitions. The practice of Highland Games for money prizes was still continuing at regimental camp, and more widely at individual companies’ annual inspections.29

Regimental camps were not the only opportunity for the members to get free travel to more or less distant locations to meet with like-minded men: being a Volunteer opened up the possibility of attending Reviews, national competitions or other special events. Argyllshire corps regularly sent members to compete in National events both in Scotland and at Wimbledon. The Artillery were more likely to attend Scottish events at Irvine or Barry, while Rifle Volunteers participated in National competitions at Wimbledon for the Queen’s prize - an officer won a Bronze medal in 1868, while a private won the Queen’s prize in 1880, followed by a lieutenant winning the same prize in 1888. In the Bisley competition of 1896 a Campbeltown member won through to the third round of the Queen’s competition. This indicates the high skill level among some of the members of the Argyllshire division: in 1892 Argyll was heralded as the best shooting Regiment among the 10 Volunteer Battalions, while a Sergeant Instructor at the Barry Artillery camp of the same year “regretted not having a repository team from his corps at Easdale .. excellent artillerymen”. Argyllshire’s Rifle Volunteers had the extraordinarily high number of 316 marksmen out of 669 members on the annual return for 1895. At this national level prizemoney was also on offer as an incentive to attendance: the Barry Artillery camp of 1896, attended by a detachment of the Inveraray corps, offered 17 competitions and in addition to cups the prizemoney amounted to £550.30

Other sporting contexts

Such skill with the rifle may have been put to use in non-military settings also. In 1896, the Inland Revenue authorities agreed to allow ex-volunteers, “provided that they were once efficient”, to take part in shooting competitions and target practice without requiring them to take...
out a gun licence. The regular Easdale New Year wappenschaws had been restricted to Volunteers within the parish, but by the 1890s there had been a substantial growth in the number of glass ball, brass ball and clay-pigeon shooting competitions held across the county: and not all of the participants were gamekeepers (whose participation tended to be restricted to closed classes). It does not seem unlikely that in communities on Mull, on Islay, in Lorn and Lochaber, men who had practised target shooting with the Volunteers would pay an entry fee of 1s or 2s (5-10p) to compete for cash prizes or sweepstakes.

Cunningham clearly identifies the recreational opportunities as a major inducement and the attractiveness of outdoor recreation of a physical nature to the urban working class men. The need for outdoor physical recreation would not be so great for the rural working class shepherds, ploughmen, fishermen, quarriers, powdermen and labourers who comprised many of the detachments. For some, membership might offer the opportunity to meet distant friends or relatives while participating in drills, rifle-shooting, military competitions and athletic sports at the camps. In many rural areas there was little opportunity for active group recreation throughout the year, and the Good Templars, friendly societies and mutual improvement societies might not have been an attractive leisure option for active men. From early years, sporting opportunities were associated with the Argyllshire Volunteers: members played cricket in Campbeltown, shinty in Ballachulish and Furnace, and by the 1890s football - the Rifle Volunteers Football Club of Dunoon had won the County Association Cup in 1889, 1890 and 1891. More generally, annual pleasure trips or picnics were also a feature of life in the corps - frequently by chartered steamer, with a Corps band to entertain and with friends and families accompanying the Volunteers.

Given that much of Cunningham’s evidence came from urban areas, it is perhaps not surprising that he overlooked an aspect of the Volunteers of significance in rural districts - the building of Volunteer Drill Halls which could be used not only for winter drills or indoor recreative activities for the members (reading, chess, band practices) but also provided a meeting space for other community groups. Thus as well as maintaining the firing and shooting ranges (normally land leased or given over by a local laird or farmer), corps engaged in a range of activities (bazaars, concerts, enter-
tainments) to fund-raise to build and/or clear building debts on their own premises. While Ballachulish from its inception used the hall of the Mechanics’ Institute, other detachments built drill halls with public rooms as well as stores: Lochgilphead, Furnace and Easdale by 1870; Campbeltown by 1871; Tobermory 1872; Oban 1885 and Dunoon 1886, and by 1894 Lochgilphead was raising funds for a gymnasium. A more pleasurable use of such halls was for the Annual Balls held by every corps, generally paid for by the officers, to which partners could be invited.\(^{34}\)

**Conclusion**

Is it possible to offer an evaluation of why rural working class men joined the Volunteers? From the available evidence, it is difficult to suggest that patriotism was the sole motive - but equally it cannot be totally rejected as a contributory factor within a Victorian culture that embraced pride in the Empire and respect for Royalty. Another explanation might locate membership of the Volunteers within the artisan tradition of self-improvement and respectability but again this may be insufficient as exclusive motivation. The official view of long service acknowledged with medals “the time and trouble Volunteers have given gratuitously in the service of their country”\(^{35}\) but it can be argued that in rural areas, membership provided access to a range of sporting activities and other leisure opportunities which might have been considered fair recompense for the investment of time by the working men.

- It offered active outdoor recreation and the chance to participate in sport (both military and otherwise)
- Shooting competitions enabled demonstrations of skill which might give prizes in trophies, cash or goods as well as status in small communities
- Supported attendance at camps etc. gave men access to travel at no cost to themselves
- Membership gave access for family members to outings and excursions.

Another element which cannot be overlooked is the subtext of patronage - the initial willing response of landowners and gentlemen employers assumed the participation of the working classes from their estates and
villages. The response to the expectation could be claimed as ingrained among the respectable working men who joined the movement. Being a Volunteer may not have been for patriotism alone but also for “pleasure” and had its reward or “profit” in social companionship and standing in a community, which endowed respectability and thus acceptability to employer or landowner. The occasional opportunity to make financial profit out of a Service-honed skill cannot be dismissed as an incentive to continued membership of the Volunteers.

References


Cunningham, Hugh *The Volunteer Force : a social and political history 1859-1908* (London: Croom Helm, 1975)


Knox, W., The political and workplace culture of the Scottish working-class 1832-1914 in Fraser, W. Hamish and Morris, R.J (eds.) *People and society in Scotland, vol II. 1830-1914* (Edinburgh : John Donald, 1990)

MacLennan, Hugh Dan *Shinty!* (Nairn: Balnain Books, 1993)


Patriotism or Pleasure?

Notes

1 See, for example, Bilsborough 1983; Mason 1989; Tranter 1990a; Jarvie 1991; MacLennan 1993; Burnett 1995; Bradley 1997
2 6th Argyll Rifle Corps cash book, Argyll & Bute Archive (hereafter A&B) DR1/6/1
3 Cunningham 1975:2
4 Cunningham 1975:5-11
5 Cunningham 1975:13
6 A&B CO1/11/8
7 Cunningham 1975:12
8 Cunningham 1975:46
9 A&B CO1/11/8
10 Argyllshire Herald 3/11/1859
11 A&B CO1/11/8
12 A&B CO1/11/8 to CO1/11/18
13 A&B CO1/11/12
14 A&B DR1/6/1
15 1861 Census return : Kilmelford
16 A&B CO1/11/12
17 Argyllshire Standard 20/1/1872
18 Cunningham 1975:54-57
19 A&B CO1/11/15
20 Oban Times 22/9/1891, 15/1/1876 and 25/1/1890
21 Tranter 1998:40; Argyllshire Herald 21/9/1860; A&B DR1/8/1; Oban Times 22/6/1867, 1/6/1868 and 7/5/1870
22 Oban Times 14/12/1885 and 25/1/1896; 17/1/1891; 3/6/1893; 9/7/1870
23 Cunningham 1975:46
24 A&B CO1/11/9
25 Cunningham 1975: 12-27
26 Oban Times various; Argyllshire Herald various; Argyllshire Standard various
27 Oban Times various; Argyllshire Herald various; Argyllshire Standard various
28 Oban Times various; Argyllshire Herald various; Argyllshire Standard various
29 Oban Times 18/7 and 10/10/1868; 12/1/1895; 20/6 and 15/8/1896
30 Oban Times various; Argyllshire Herald various; Argyllshire Standard various
31 Oban Times 29/8/1896; Oban Times various
32 Cunningham 1975: 104-113
33 Argyllshire Herald various; Oban Times various
34 Oban Times various; Argyllshire Herald various; Argyllshire Standard various
35 Knox 1990: 153; Oban Times 29/8/1896
36 Jackson 1998: 95-106