

A photograph of a teacher-training course in marine zoology at Millport (1914)

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At a recent members' evening of Cumbrae Historical Society, James Peacock showed me an old unused postcard from his collection featuring a photograph (Fig. 1) taken at the Marine Station, Millport on 6 July 1914. The photographer, as recorded on the reverse, was George Keppie, Stuart Street, Millport.¹ It depicts a class of school teachers studying junior and senior courses in nature study (course number 573G; marine zoology) held during the first fortnight of July 1914. Few such early Millport class photographs exist.



Fig. 1. A class photograph of school teachers at the Marine Station, Millport, 6 July 1914, against a backdrop of the, now ivy-clad, Deil's dyke. Seated in the front row (left to right) number 1, Professor L. A. L. King (St Mungo's College of Medicine, Glasgow; incorporated since 1947 into Glasgow University's medical faculty); number 3, J. G. Connell; number 5, Dr J. F. Gemmill. Number 7 may be Mr Frank W. Young, His Majesty's Chief Inspector for Schools for the West of Scotland who reported on the quality of these classes. One of the walrus-moustached, flat-cap-wearing gentleman (back row, centre) could be John Peden, the Laboratory Attendant, but which one of the two such gentlemen shown, I cannot be sure. Miss Alice Jones is likely to be one of the ladies in the front row (photograph by G. Keppie).

According to the annual report of the Scottish Marine Biological Association (SMBA, 1914: 12–13, 73) 18 students attended in July 1914: seven taking the junior

course (Course I) and 11 taking the senior course (Course II). The instructors on the course were John Gibson Connell FRMS (c.1876–1946) (from Glasgow Provincial Training College; subsequently to become Jordanhill College, now the Faculty of Education, Strathclyde University), who conducted the senior course, and Dr James Fairlie Gemmill (1867–1926) (Glasgow University), assisted by Miss Alice Jones, who conducted the junior course: “much work of excellent character was accomplished, and all the students received certificates from the Glasgow Provincial Committee” (SMBA 1914: 12–13): “it is interesting to note that, while most of the teachers enrolled in these classes, were from Glasgow and the West of Scotland, two were from Aberdeen, two were from Falkirk, and one from India.”

Prizes, as a result of voluntary competition, were awarded to: Course I, 1. Jessie A. Hutcheon, Victoria Road School, Aberdeen, 2. William C. Forsyth, BSc, Glasgow; Course II, 1. Mary D. Currie, MA, Hutchesons' Girls' Grammar School, Glasgow, 2. George Nelson, Northern Public School, Falkirk⁷

The students were listed (SMBA, 1914: 73) as follows: Course I (Annie E. Craib, William C. Forsyth, Jessie A. Hutcheon, Sara C. Jones, Wilhelmina M. G. Mackenzie, James Pryde, William Rowatt), Course II (Isabella Abel, Mary D. Currie,² Jemima Downie,³ Georgina M'Ilvain, Lillie A. M'Ilvain, James Mather, John D. Milne, George Nelson, Annie M. Russell,⁴ George Russell, James Shearer).

I have been able to identify only three persons by comparing Fig. 1 (see caption) with an earlier (1909?) Millport teachers' class photograph (Moore, 2008, Fig. 5). Note that over half of the students were women. Sixty-three percent of the class shown in Millport's 1909(?) photograph were women (Moore, 2008, Fig. 5). By 1911, nearly three-quarters of teachers in Scotland were women.⁵ Between 1880 and 1914, Scottish school masters commanded higher salaries than their English counterparts, whereas Scottish school mistresses (higher in number than male teachers across the United Kingdom) were consistently less well paid than English women teachers, although they were more highly qualified (Corr, 1997; Hulme, 2011).

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NOTES

¹ Keppie, George (aka George Kippie) [(c.1871–1917)]. Photographers of Great Britain and Ireland, 1840–1940 (URL, accessed 17 January 2012, http://www.victorianphotographers.co.uk/index.php/victorian-photographers-k/keppie-george-aka-george-kippie-/p_30356.html).

² Mary Darroch Currie (1878–1936) graduated MA from Glasgow University in 1905. Isabella Blacklock

(b. 1869) had been the first female to graduate MA from Glasgow University, graduating in 1895 (URL, accessed 13 January 2012, <http://www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/alumni/help/finding-graduates/>). Women were only permitted to study at Scottish universities after 1892.

³ A Jemima Wright Downie (1876–1965) graduated MA from Glasgow University in 1902.

⁴ Annie Russell, I know, taught at Kilmarnock Academy.

⁵ Knox, W. W., The Scottish educational system 1840–1940 (URL, accessed 12 January 2012, www.scran.ac.uk/Scotland/pdf/SP2_1Education.pdf).

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