

HISTORY OF MERCHISTON CURLING CLUB

The club was instituted in 1809 and celebrated its 200th anniversary during season 2008/2009, although temporarily dissolved from 1913-27, it must be rated as one of the oldest in Scotland – with the exception of Kinross and Duddingston. It is one of only two clubs in the Province that affiliated with the Royal Caledonian Curling Club when that body was instituted in 1838. The other club being Musselburgh.

The club name derives from Merchiston Estate where its first pond – a natural one – was situated beside the Union Canal between Fountainbridge and Ardmillan, refer to maps below. There was also an asphalt pond on the Drumdryan Estate where Broughton Street is now. Around 1850 that pond was abandoned to make way for buildings.

Two artificial rinks were formed to cope with the influx of curlers and in the period just before 1850 Merchiston had its highest total of members. In fact, in 1848 some of them resigned and formed the Waverley Club. Then again in 1887, more members broke away to form Craiglockhart Curling Club, which did not survive.

In 1896 building operations swallowed up the Merchiston Estate pond and the club formed a pond and artificial rink in Slateford, refer to old maps below. But a decline in the affairs of the club set in – the reasons for which are not apparent from records – and with fewer members and higher costs for pond maintenance and feu duties, finances were badly hit.

In 1912 Haymarket Ice Rink opened and this was the final blow, for the need for outdoor ice became less obvious and the club as then constituted was dissolved – rapidly and in some disorder – in 1913.

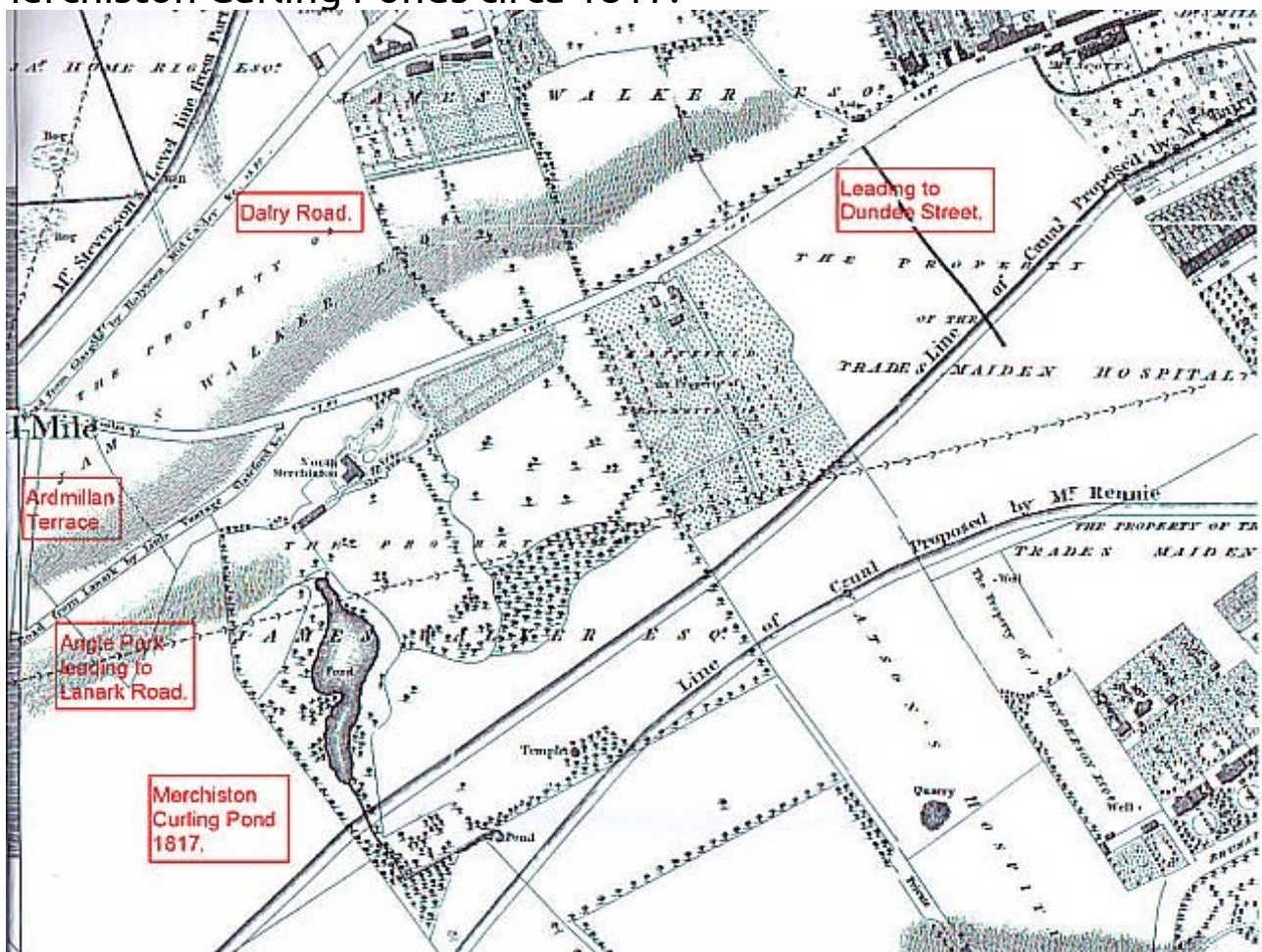
The club was reformed in 1927 when the late D B Campbell received an allocation of ice at Haymarket and met some friends with the idea of forming a club to take up this allocation.

Among those present were R. Cousin and S.P. Laird, whose fathers as well as Mr. Campbell's father had been Merchiston members. On their suggestion, Merchiston Curling Club was revived with Mr. W.C.P. Brown, who owned the Rutland Hotel, first president of the reformed club.

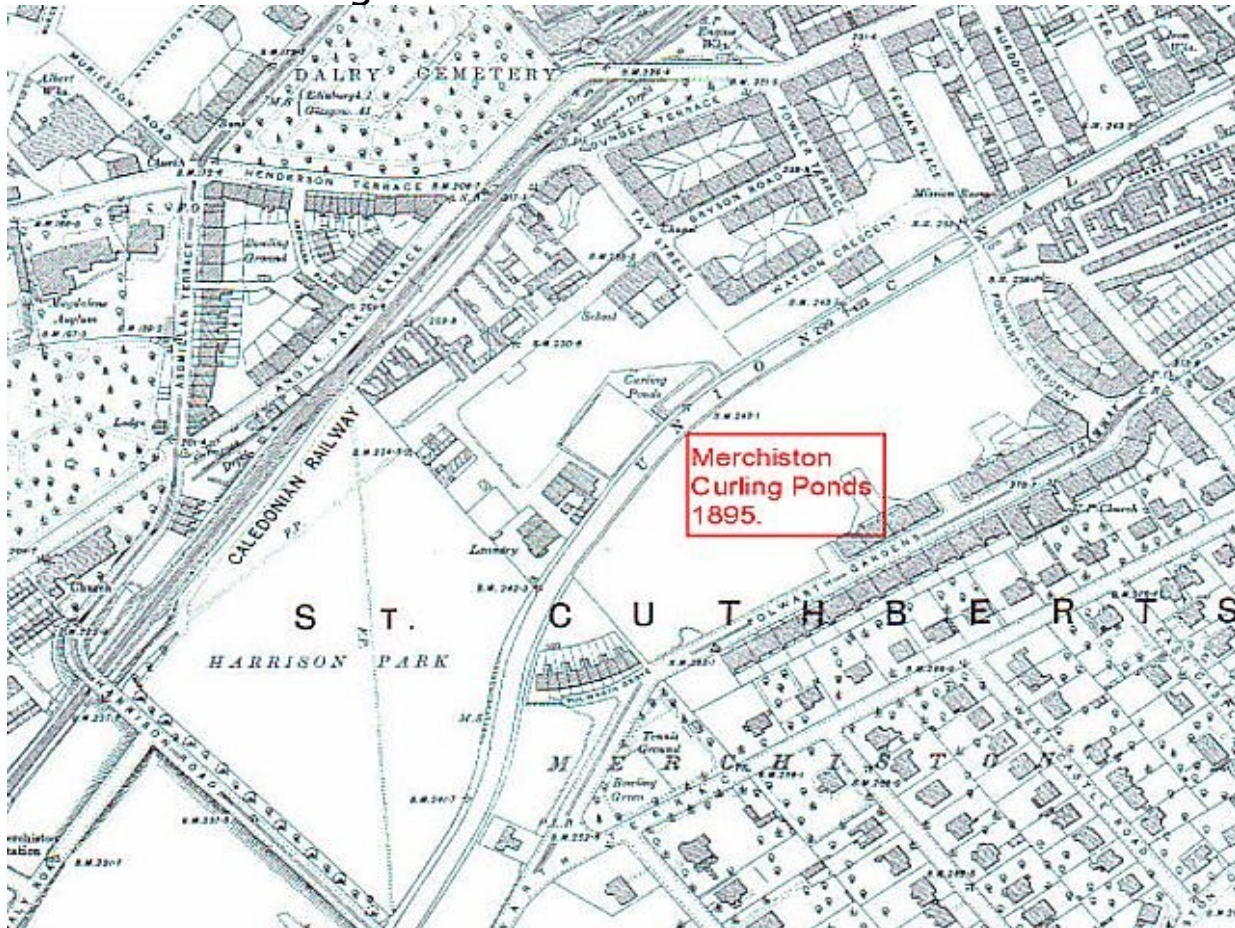
No mention of the club history would be complete without reference to the link with Leven Curling Club, which goes back many years and whose annual match with Merchiston dates back to 1932 – although the first games were actually in 1927. The competition terminated in 2018 with the Leven Curling Club's dissolution.

Please refer below to old maps which indicate the locations of the outdoor curling ponds used by the Merchiston curling club until 1913.

Merchiston Curling Ponds circa 1817.



Merchiston Curling Ponds circa 1895.



Merchiston Curling Ponds circa 1908.

