

Introduction

Free Gardeners of the Lothians and Fife

GARDENERS' societies appeared in Scotland during the seventeenth century. Working gardeners started societies to promote and regulate their profession and to support themselves in time of need. As time passed the main aim became the members' benefits - they were [friendly societies](#).



Non-gardeners could join most lodges. They were called 'free gardeners' and soon they out-numbered working gardeners. All through the 19th century free gardeners continued to found lodges despite the attractions of the many other friendly societies, such as the Foresters, Buffaloes or Oddfellows. Free gardeners made up their own rituals and practices, which helped unite the brethren of each lodge.

Some of the societies joined together in 'Orders' led by a 'Grand Lodge'. There were several orders based in Edinburgh, Glasgow and England. Some of the older lodges stayed independent. At their height in the Lothians there were over 10,000 free gardeners organised in upwards of 50 lodges. Juvenile and even women-only branches opened at the end of the 19th century.



The free gardeners are now part of history. Some of the societies are known only by name. Many different collections hold a few surviving documents or pieces of regalia. Luckily, the archives of the Dunfermline

and Haddington bodies have been preserved. The resources on this website have been collected from many different institutions and collections across the Lothians and Fife. We hope that the seed planted here will grow and inspire others to unearth the history of the movement.

Origins of Gardener Societies

NOBODY now knows when gardeners in the Lothians and Fife began to organise. The earliest surviving records come from Haddington (1676) and Dunfermline (1715). There has always been a general need amongst working men to secure sickness benefits, pensions and provision for their dependants. So both societies may be even older.

In cities and burghs (towns) there medieval trades incorporations. Incorporations had contracts between themselves and the town or city council as representatives of the community. Each stated the prerogatives of the craft, membership qualifications and how they were to organise. The Incorporation of Gardeners of Glasgow is believed to be only such group in Scotland to gain that status. The gardeners and greengrocers had become an incorporation of the city by 1626. Nowhere else had a gardeners' incorporation and by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries incorporations had ceased to be created.



Some newly arising trades were adopted by existing incorporations. In common with other professions gardeners organised because they felt a pressure to regulate skills and training to protect their own reputations. But gardeners in particular lived outside burghs on nearby landed estates or market gardens and so could not become burgesses, the essential

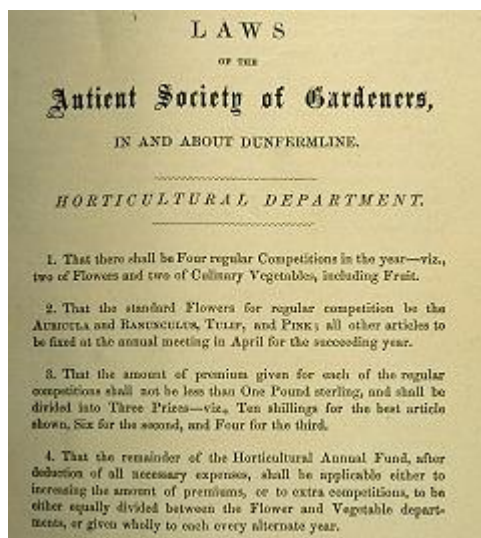
qualification to join incorporations. Gardeners' societies had been long established in Europe. Scotland's North Sea trading links may have helped spread the idea in the eastern lowlands. Further, there was an established alternative that could be adopted by gardeners. They could organise as a 'fraternity' or 'society'.

Gardeners before 1800

Purpose

THE FIRST lodges of which there is written evidence were formed to promote, regulate and support the craft of gardening and the gardeners themselves. The records of the gardeners of Haddington and Dunfermline both survive from before 1800.

Early rules concern spreading information and new varieties of plants throughout the membership. The rules also state that money will be used to help distressed widows, orphans and the poor (of the lodges).



In time, mutual aid became the most important function of the lodges. They began to attract members from among those who were not gardeners. By the nineteenth century the lodges were mostly benefit societies.

Dunfermline went as far as forming a separate section for those interested in horticulture. Lodges provided sickness benefit and pensions as well as grants and annuities.

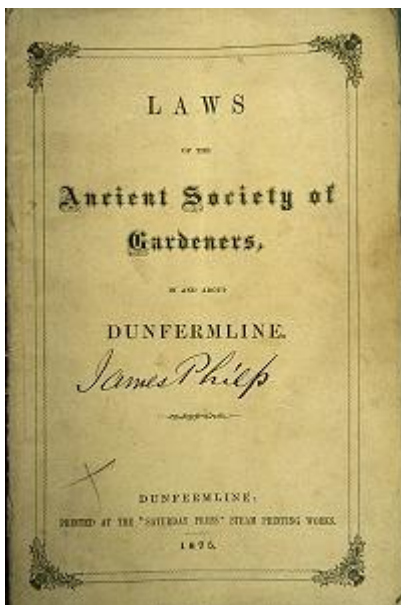
Free and working

THE DUNFERMLINE 'bond of union' follows almost exactly the form of a seal of cause or charter of an incorporation and the society refer to themselves throughout as both a fraternity and an incorporation. The Gardeners of East

Lothian listed a set of 'Interjunctions' to which every member subscribed. These too follow the kind of rules and regulations expected in a seal of cause.

In Dunfermline the senior officer was called deacon, just as in an incorporation. Later the title 'Chancellor' was preferred. In Haddington, the titles 'President' or 'Chairman' were used. Both organisations were essentially democratic. The officials were elected and the box where their money and papers were kept was subject to regular audit.

Both societies had rules that regulated gardening in their areas. They discussed entry to the profession, gardeners' conduct, education, and the administration and benefits due by the societies.



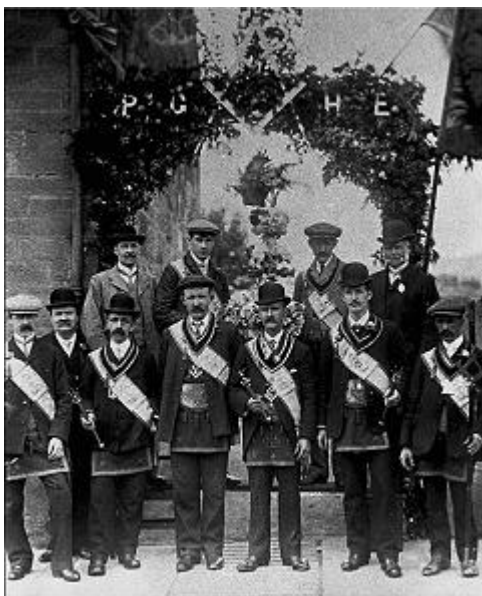
However, both bodies included clauses that allowed non-practitioner members to join (at different rates to gardeners). This was an essential difference to incorporations. The status of their 'gentlemen' members was of importance to the Dunfermline gardeners. Their published history always contained a cumulative membership list headed by a duke, and naming a marquis, six earls, seven lords, eight knights and hundreds of professionals (soldiers, ministers, advocates) and other landowners or lairds. However, by the end of the eighteenth century such illustrious company had faded away except for a leavening of Dunfermline based professionals.

In contrast to Dunfermline, Haddington seems to have been a practical fraternity for a longer time. They too admitted 'free' gardeners from an early date, but most of them were shopkeepers and craftsmen in Haddington itself. A few ministers, doctors and lawyers also joined.

Growth and developments in the nineteenth century

FROM THE first Dunfermline allowed its members to meet at places outside the town that were more convenient to them. The East Lothian Gardeners allowed their members resident near Dunbar to meet there. These groups spread the concept of gardening.

New lodges sought charters from existing lodges. Their choice may have followed personal connections rather than any precedence within the existing lodges. For example, Lodge Black Agnes at Dunbar several times got confirmatory charters from Haddington, first (1773) as a subsidiary group, as at Dunfermline, and then as a lodge in its own right.



While Dunfermline and Haddington disputed precedence, lodges owing no allegiance to either existed by the nineteenth century. When and why they arose is often lost or unknown. Within Lothian and Fife lodges at Edinburgh (founded 1782), Lasswade (1821), Penicuik (1822), and Stratheden at Letham, Fife (1845) are representative.

The newer lodges accumulated mysticism, legends, rituals and craft practices that were wider ranging and developed than those of Haddington and Dunfermline. The older lodges were happy with their own practices until very late in the nineteenth century. Most of the new detail was freely adapted from the rites and practices of [freemasonry](#). The appearance of Masonic style imagery and symbolism on gardeners' artefacts is almost a marker for a nineteenth century foundation.



There were around 50 lodges in the region by 1850. The newer Lodge names usually had a descriptive term or a dedication, e.g., Penicuik Thistle Lodge, Lasswade St Paul's Lodge, Whitburn Olive Lodge, Dunbar Black Agnes Lodge. They also included the words 'Free Gardeners' in their titles. Although some had roots in practical gardening, most were from the first exclusively mutual benefit societies of the type known as '[friendly societies](#)'.

In 1849 Lasswade St Paul's Lodge of Free Gardeners invited delegates to a meeting to open a Grand Lodge. There had been one in England for a while - the British Order of Free Gardeners. So five lodges joined the (brand new) 'Ancient Order of Free Gardeners', which had offices in Edinburgh. Lodge numbering was introduced, Lasswade being No1 and Penicuik No2. Soon internal disagreement prompted the formation of an eastern and western grand lodge. Glasgow City Archives hold a minute book of the West Of Scotland Grand Lodge of the Ancient Order of Free Gardeners dating from 1859. In 1879 the Western Order opened the St Andrew Order of Ancient Free Gardeners Friendly Society.



The Gardeners of the Lothians and Fife faced the 20th century in good heart. Despite the variety of organisations that had developed, all recognised a 'community' and shared a common mythology. Some had

considerable resources and most were at least capable of honouring their commitments, thanks to the supporting Friendly Society Acts passed in recent years.

The 20th century

THE NATIONAL Insurance Act changed friendly societies. Those that were strong could become 'approved' under the act to administer its provisions for their members. However, each individual lodge was too small. Even the total membership of the lodges affiliated to Grand Lodge in Edinburgh was too small. So throughout 1911 all the lodges of the Ancient, the British, and Western Orders and the unaffiliated societies met. Together they numbered around 70-80 lodges and 12,000 free gardeners. Delegates discussed the formation of an association of 'Free Gardeners in Scotland for the purposes of the Act (Section 39)', whilst 'maintaining their craft connection with the Orders'.



In March 1912, 44 societies (lodges) from all orders and none joined a new association, the Ancient Order of Free Gardeners (Scotland) National Insurance Association. Some lodges did not approve the terms and conditions of the Association and instead joined the British Order of Free Gardeners. It was large enough to become approved in its own right.

Most lodges kept this complicated set of insurance transactions separate from 'craft' practices (their ritual traditions). So, for example, Penicuik Thistle remained affiliated to the Ancient Order for craft purposes (where it was No 2 and male only) but opened a new approved society affiliated to the British Order for insurance purposes in May 1912 (where it was No 479 and open to both men and women)!

St Giles' Lodge, A.O.F.G., No. 97

St Cuthbert's Halls, King's Stables Road, EDINBURGH

W. U. O., Bro. JAMES MACDONALD

Secretary, Bro. WALTER BLICK, 31, 33 Stephen Street, Edinburgh

Treasurer, Bro. JOHN MILLER, Broxburn Hall Road, Broxburn

SYLLABUS FOR 1924

- Sat. Jan. 26 Annual Meeting, Treasurer's Statement, Auditors' Report, Election and Installation of Office-Bearers.
 - Sat. Feb. 23 Lecture by Bro. KIRKWOOD, Presentation to Bro. D. MARTIN, P.R.W.M.
 - Sat. Mar. 15 Discussion on Grand Lodge Circular and Craft Lecture.
 - Sat. " 29 Grand Lodge Conference, Oldfellows' Hall, Forrest Road, at 2.30 p.m.; Supper in Grand Restaurant, St Andrew's Street, 6 p.m. Tickets 3/6 each.
 - Sat. April 13 Report of Grand Lodge Conference, Craft Lecture.
 - Thurs. May 23 Visit to Leith Lodge, Leith. Members meet at Hope Street, Leith, 8 p.m.
 - Sat. " 27 Visit to Penicuik and Bowling Match with Thistle Lodge Members.
 - Sat. June 21 Ramble over the Pentlands Hills. Meet at St Cuthbert's Halls at 2 o'clock.
 - Sat. July 13 Thistle Lodge, Penicuik. (Annual Walk)
 - Sat. " 26 Calton Lodge, Prestonsquare (Annual Walk)
 - Sat. Aug. 26 Visit to Dunfermline. (Time of train to be fixed later.)
 - Thurs. Sept. 12 Visit to Albion Lodge, Broxburn. (Date to be fixed later.)
 - Sat. " 20 Grand Lodge Circular and Craft Lecture.
 - Sat. " 27 Grand Lodge Conference.
 - Thurs. Oct. 9 Visit to Auctioneer Office.
 - Sat. " 13 Report of Grand Lodge Conference and Craft Lecture.
 - Sat. Nov. 15 Harmony Night.
 - Sat. Dec. 20 A Review of the Year's Work by the R.W.M., Nomination of Office-Bearers, Syllabus for 1925.
- Lectures on the the Craft open to all Master Gardeners of the Ancient Order.
 Saturday Meetings at 8.30 p.m.
 Visits, Rambles, etc., at times notified at the various dates.

Many lodges decided to close: Dunbar's Black Agnes Lodge and Bonnyrigg's Dundas Lodge of the Ancient Order both took that path.

Still lodges were created. Mindful of their traditions, members of the Ancient Order created a special 'craft' lodge in November 1921 called St Giles. It was open only to Past Masters and others interested in the rituals of the Order.

For 30 years the friendly society sector delivered state welfare. But the Labour Government elected after the second world war nationalised the whole process. From then on the State took all responsibility for benefits and pensions. With their main reason removed friendly societies quickly declined. Their staff became civil servants almost at a stroke. Their members deserted in droves. The few that stayed found it difficult to attract new ones.

Discharge continued

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By Bro. Wm. Lauchlan for arrears	1	3	5			
By Bro. Wm. Lauchlan for arrears	1	7	11			
By Bro. Wm. Lauchlan for arrears	2	2	1			
By Production of 5/6 for fine	7	11				
By Bill of Sale for arrears	7	1	35	13	5	0
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By the end of the twentieth century free gardeners in Scotland had shared the fate of many other similar organisations - they were extinct.

Ritual and symbols

LODGES participated in all manner of public events. Over the course of time they acquired a wide variety of articles to signal their distinctiveness in public - banners, aprons and sashes were most common.

They had traditions, many peculiar to each lodge, and attempted to fit their 'trade' into a wider story by drawing parallels with the original garden - Eden. Enthusiasts assembled a body of esoteric knowledge and ritual, borrowing freely from the example of [freemasonry](#).



They had a hierarchy of membership that was similar to freemasonry and based in Scotland's craft traditions. Members could pass through a sequence of three degrees - apprentice, journeyman, and master. Members in good standing served as officers of each lodge (and later of the Grand Lodges). These posts were essentially democratically elected.

Lodges made sure that members attended meetings by fining absentees. They also tried to regulate behaviour and keep the rituals of the lodge secret from non-members. At one time this would have been important for security or for practical purposes (to confirm a stranger was a real gardener).



There were two main kinds of symbology in the free gardening movement. Some of the later symbology is overtly Masonic but older articles appear to express a true gardening tradition. From the Masonic tradition come the all-seeing eye, compasses and square (crossed by a clasp knife) and Masonic-style short aprons, usually made of leather-backed blue cloth and trimmed with braid.

The other tradition is horticultural. It is characterised by plants and produce (pineapples, grapes, flowers and, in particular, roses and thistles) and of working tools (crossed spade and rake, watering pans, reel and measuring line, and so on). Whilst this tradition shares ribbons, sashes and aprons with the former, their shape and decoration differ. Thus, aprons are full length, are usually made of dark blue serge and are often colourfully and fantastically embroidered.



The differences appear to reflect an earlier tradition (the horticultural symbology) supplanted by a later accretion (the pseudo-Masonic); sometimes evidence from both can be seen in a single lodge or a single article.

Regalia

REGALIA dating to before 1850 are scarce, although surviving pieces have not yet been subject to detailed investigation. However, from the earlier tradition, a pineapple or a bunch of grapes were used to symbolise the skill of a gardener. Only a master had skill to cultivate the fruit in 18th century Scotland.

Compass and square symbols appear in 19th century free gardener regalia, leading to a natural confusion with freemasonry. However, in gardener connections are shown by an open clasp knife crossing the compasses. The compasses (submission to the rules), the square (squaring moral actions) and the pruning knife (cultivation of one's mind and the embrace of brotherly affection) had the meanings indicated.



Free Gardeners based their creation story on Biblical references. Coded allusions to the mythology appear on many articles of regalia. It was coded because only 'initiates' were admitted to the 'correct' interpretations of the symbols. The letters PGHE are code for the four rivers (Pishon, Euphrates, Gihon and Hiddekel) that flow through the Garden of Eden. A further letter group, ANS, symbolises a word of recognition appropriate to each degree - Adam, Noah and Solomon. These letters are often accompanied by embroidered or gold braid depictions of Adam and Eve in Eden, Noah's Ark, doves and the rainbow after the Flood.



In the 19th century all the similar organisations competing for members tried to spread their own 'creation story' to highlight their uniqueness and build brotherhood and fraternity. However, many of the new enthusiasts were already freemasons and they brought with them a tradition of 'correct' symbols and styles. As these were universally recognised, older local forms were often discarded.

The commercial suppliers of Masonic regalia helped spread conformity. In Scotland Vernal of Glasgow and Jockel of Edinburgh simply adapted for free gardeners what they made already for freemasons. They kept the Masonic design and just changed the decoration as necessary. By the end of the 19th century almost all regalia was being provided from one or other of the 'Masonic warehouses' and local or homemade articles were no longer used.

Gardeners' artefacts

JEWELS (medals) and insignia (badges of office) are fairly common. Tableware, strongboxes and other special artefacts are also known. Many lodges bought marching banners. Sometimes trophies survive from the days of gardening competitions. Other artefacts are now known only from photographs, like the bowers and garlands of flowers carried on some parades.



Most surviving artefacts date from after 1850. However, Haddington's silver badges were made in 1825-6 and are very distinctive. The fraternity ingeniously symbolised stewardship (or pastoral care) using a watering pan (used to care for fragile plants). In contrast the medal awarded to Brother James Thomson by the Armadale Lodge of Free Gardeners shows a Masonic heritage. The obverse side is engraved with an open Bible on which is lying a pair of compasses, a setsquare and an open pruning knife, all recognised symbols of the 'Western Grand Lodge of the Scottish Order of Ancient Free Gardeners'.



Haddington bought a set of jugs around the same time as they got their badges. These show a gardener taking his ease under a spreading tree as he leans on a spade and reviews the fruits of his labours. Three sizes are known, all in Scots measure - quart, pint and mutchkin. Even their lodge box is decorated with a pineapple. To grow one was a challenge of skill in 18th and 19th century Scotland.



Some societies paraded with a costumed character - usually 'Old Adam', but sometimes 'Jock in the Green', who represented their mythology come to life. Other members carried garlands or bowers. Sometimes these were judged in a competition.



If a lodge were used to marching it would not feel complete without a giant banner. A few have survived. Most date from the late 19th century or early 20th century, when their style had become fixed. The banners are usually designed to hang from a horizontal pole, held up by two vertical poles. Gardeners' banners are usually blue with painted or embroidered decoration. Much of the decoration is similar to that on aprons - Adam and Eve, Noah, the Ark and a rainbow - but there was usually room for the lodge name, a motto and a different picture on the back.

Gardeners' documents

DOCUMENTS are sometimes the best surviving source for the detail of gardener societies, their members and their activities. Most 19th century societies published annual accounts. Sometimes these are bare financial statements but others list officers and a few contain potted histories of the lodge. In addition to the statutory returns each lodge maintained a set of business books.

The survival of this kind of material has been mostly down to chance. In some instances, significant records have been preserved by the foresight of the last members or their executors. But mostly all the business records

of a lodge will have been lost with perhaps only a stray volume or two finding its way into a library or archive.

Thereafter Mr Anderson treat offered to build
 a brick fence by the quarter high two feet
 at the bottom and eighteen inches at the top
 between his lands and the Society at two
 pounds 10 p^{ts} road and to pay the one half
 of the expence the Society paying the other
 And Robt Scotland agreed to inclose his part
 of the Gardeners Lands with the like dyke
 & at the same rate of two pounds 10 p^{ts}
 both which the Society agreed

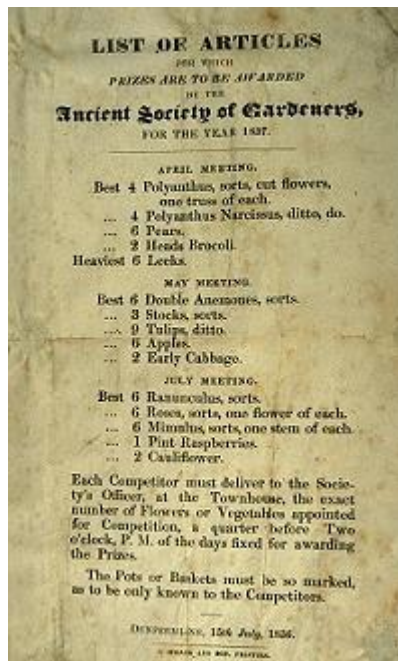
William Anderson
 Robt Scotland
 William Morris
 Wm Drummond

Minute books record the events and business conducted at meetings of the lodge or individual committees. They often record new members, notes referring to sickness claims, fines and lodge events. Some include a register of members and, at the very least, a record of elections to committee posts. The very best will be full of gossip and anecdote.

Discharge Continued		
	Dr. Over	50 2 9
June 1818	Mr James Lowrie & wicket	6 -
July 1818	James M'Graw 52 d ^{rs}	9 1 14
	And. Blair 6 d ^{rs}	11 - 9
	John McQueen 7 d ^{rs}	3 -
	James Reid 7 d ^{rs}	3 -
	Adam Morris 6 d ^{rs}	2 9 -
	William Peckles 19 d ^{rs}	1 5 0
	John Dick 7 d ^{rs}	3 -
	John Dittus 3 d ^{rs}	4 6 -
	Wm Williamson 30 d ^{rs}	2 5 -

Treasurer's books and accounts record the full financial history of each lodge. There is often a wealth of membership detail, showing both payments made and received. Transactions involving the administration of lodge property and all manner of day-to-day transactions are listed.

In addition to the more formal books of each lodge other more ephemeral material can survive. Such items usually refer to particular events such as special campaigns, competitions, or meetings. All this material is scarce, but some Victorian posters have survived, like the example here. Haddington made sure that its members were always formally invited to the AGM. To save money they bought their own engraved copper plate, which would be handed to a local printer whenever more invitations were needed.



Gardeners' diversity

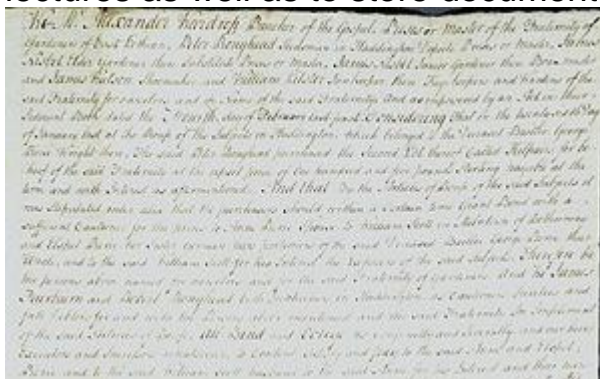
GARDENERS' societies differed from place to place in the Lothians and Fife. Many lodges had customs unique to themselves and these customs changed from time to time. Even the creation of the Grand Lodge in 1849 did little bring about systematic habits because within a few years there were lodges affiliated to at least three grand lodges. There were even short-lived bodies that seem to have, from their names, taken the esoteric side of the movement to extremes: in 1885 the 'Husbandmen Gardeners (Knights)' were based at Cordwainers' Hall in Edinburgh.

The study of esoteric gardening had its own devotees. In November 1921 members of the Ancient Order created a special 'craft' lodge in Edinburgh called St Giles. It had no friendly society function. It was not even a forum for members interested in real gardening. Instead, it was open only to Past Masters and others interested in the rituals of the Order. One of these was Mr Black of Penicuik. Like many others he was deeply interested in the history of his society and collected what he could. Much of his research is still preserved in Midlothian.

Find out more about free gardener lodges in East Lothian, Fife, Midlothian, West Lothian and the City of Edinburgh:

- [Free Gardeners of East Lothian](#)
- [Free Gardeners of Fife](#)
- [Free Gardeners of Edinburgh](#)
- [Free Gardeners of Midlothian](#)
- [Free Gardeners of West Lothian](#)

- **The Fraternity of Gardeners of East Lothian**
- THE FRATERNITY of Gardeners of East Lothian was in existence as early as 1676. On 16 August of that year a surviving minute book records the organisation's constitution, which clearly lays out the aims and intentions of the body. Article Quatro (four) states a 'sufficient Quorum of the Fraternity appointed' shall examine any 'professing to be handie labouring and working Gardeners' 'that noblemen, Gentlemen, and others may be sufficiently served with well qualified Gardiners'. The rest of the 15 rules stipulate the fraternity's administration, regulate members' behaviour as gardeners and towards each other, and lay down benefits and eligibility. There is some suggestion from the form of words used that the fraternity was merely restating existing rules in a new minute book. For example, article decimo quinto (15) contains the leading phrase 'in respect there is frequently a thin Meeting', which suggests the article is an amendment based on experience. The entry money for a gardener was a Merk (13 shillings and 4 pence Scots or around one shilling Sterling) but gentlemen paid half a crown (2 shillings and 6 pence). The gentleman member was there to learn topical methods and cultivation to apply to his estate. An undated (eighteenth century) later article emends the entry money to the advantage of 'labouring gardeners': they paid 5/- and gentlemen 10/- Sterling.
- The fraternity was based in Haddington where they purchased a property on a corner in Market Street. It contained an inn, which is still known as the Gardeners' Arms today. However, the membership was predominantly resident at their workplaces on the estates surrounding the town and nearby Dunbar (members there petitioned to be allowed to meet in that town owing to the difficulty of appearing at Haddington; as they were liable to fines for non-attendance the compromise was accepted). Their main meeting hall above the Gardeners' Arms was used for business meetings, dinners, and lectures as well as to store documents and their moveable property.



- The fraternity elected officers from the first. A chairman (sometimes called President or Preses) and an unknown number of Joint Masters are the first to be noted, together with an appointed Clerk. In the

middle of the eighteenth century a Box-master (treasurer) was necessary. In the nineteenth century the officers' titles included Grand Master (President), Depute GM, Treasurer, Secretary (formerly the Clerk), as well as Keyholders (treasurer's assistants), Guards and Stewards. All can be identified in regalia purchased from the Edinburgh silversmith George McHattie in 1825-6. The senior positions and junior positions were vacated annually, but the more administrative posts of treasurer and secretary could be held for considerable periods. Also during the nineteenth century the Fraternity became commonly known as 'the Ancient Fraternity of Free Gardeners of East Lothian' reflecting both their seniority amongst a growing number of similar societies and the ever-increasing preponderance of non-gardeners amongst the membership. Despite this, the fraternity maintained from 1772 an annual programme of two competitions, extended to six during 1847. The programme was maintained (not without difficulty) until 1939.

- The fraternity acquired traditions over the years. Many of them parallel the practices of freemasonry, to which free gardening bears a superficial comparison. Thus members were differentiated by degrees. Master and Prentice appear in the 1676 constitution and mention of 'Servants' may indicate the intermediate degree of journeyman. All members possessed a 'Word', which was used to identify them where they might be unknown and to gain access to formal meetings. How essential this was in the restricted world of East Lothian horticulture is open to question. The fraternity paraded through Haddington before their annual dinner led by the town piper and a costumed 'Jock in the Green', who carried a bower of flowers to represent the Garden of Eden. For many years 'Jock' was the sole prerogative of succeeding members of the Nisbet family. Flower shows and quarter meetings were also usually celebrated with a meal. The fraternity had a seat, or box, in Haddington parish church, painted 'a neat green colour' and decorated with painted flowers. The box was shrouded with black cloth when a member died. They also appear to have taken the lead in a number of tree planting ceremonies celebrating Queen Victoria's long reign and participated in the customary public activities of the town.



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- On public occasions the members wore long gardener's aprons made of blue serge cloth. Two sets survive, one plain and one with gold fringes and embroidered devices that match a set of superlative sashes. The officers wore the sashes and the devices denote their position - halberds for Guards, bunches of grapes for Stewards, a briar rose for the Depute Grand Master, and the last crowned for the Grand Master. In addition there were the silver insignia mentioned above. These were worn on blue neck collars. The Fraternity commissioned decorative jugs from a nearby pottery for private occasions and their important documents were kept in a box with an identifying brass plaque on top (their third box, commissioned from a local cabinet maker by a minute of 13 December 1815, survives). Medals and trophies were acquired for the competitions.



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- With time, new members were attracted to the fraternity for the benefits it provided; the constitution allowed them as 'gentlemen' members - the 'free' gardeners. Scales of sickness benefit and annuities were published and if men, of any profession, could meet the fees while they were working then they received regular payments when in need. The fraternity's death grant not only covered the immediate costs of a funeral but also the needs of 'distressed widows or orphans' for a few weeks. For many years the fraternity

earned income from its accumulated funds by making loans to members 'from the box'.

- In terms of a resolution passed on 22 February 1953 the 23 surviving members of the fraternity were unanimous in agreeing to wind up the organisation. Mindful of their rich history, their minute books were deposited in the National Archives of Scotland (until such time as proper accommodation could be found in Haddington). The regalia were passed to the East Lothian Antiquarian Society for preservation; trophies and property were returned to the donor families or presented to individuals.



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- For more than 277 years the fraternity had regulated the profession of gardening in East Lothian. At first its members took care to ensure that knowledge and new varieties of plants were spread amongst the membership and that entrants to the profession were suitably qualified and diligent in their working life. They looked after their poor, sick and the dependants of deceased members. Later, this aspect became the main attraction of the fraternity and the membership widened beyond the gardening profession, although they maintained some of their colourful old traditions. The introduction of state benefits and the Welfare State during the twentieth century reduced universally the demand for friendly society benefits and the declining membership voted to bring their unique society to a close.

- **The Society of Gardeners in and about Dunfermline**

- THE SOCIETY was founded in 1716. Like many early gardeners' associations, it may have grown out of an earlier body. It used a variety of names over the years. It is often recorded as the Dunfermline Gardeners' Society or, more formally, the Ancient Society of Gardeners in and about Dunfermline.
- The Gardeners were not numbered among Dunfermline's incorporations and trades guilds. Hence their status was at first sight lesser. In partial compensation, their rules were more flexible. That the society could not be an incorporation in law does not appear to have bothered the founders unduly as their 'bond of union' follows almost exactly the form of an incorporation's seal of cause and they refer to themselves throughout as both a fraternity and an incorporation. The senior officers were at first a Deacon and a

number of masters, also just like incorporations. Later, the most senior position was titled 'Chancellor', which is believed to reflect the growing influence of non-operative members.



- The society was popular from the outset. From the first local 'gentry' enlisted in some numbers, although they paid different rates than practicing gardeners. This essentially gave the society a cachet or social position that was unavailable to the town's incorporations, which were restricted solely to craftsmen. Other professionals - lawyers, military men, ministers and doctors - also joined the Gardeners. In a history published at the society's centenary a complete membership list was printed. It emphasised the titled and professional men, who were headed by a duke, a marquis, 6 earls, 7 lords, 8 knights and hundreds of professionals (soldiers, ministers, advocates) and other landowners or lairds. The list appeared regularly, with additions, during the society's second century. Interestingly, upper class interest was at its greatest during the first fifty years of the society; few notable additions were made to the first published list. By the end of the eighteenth century such illustrious company had faded away except for a leavening of Dunfermline based professionals.

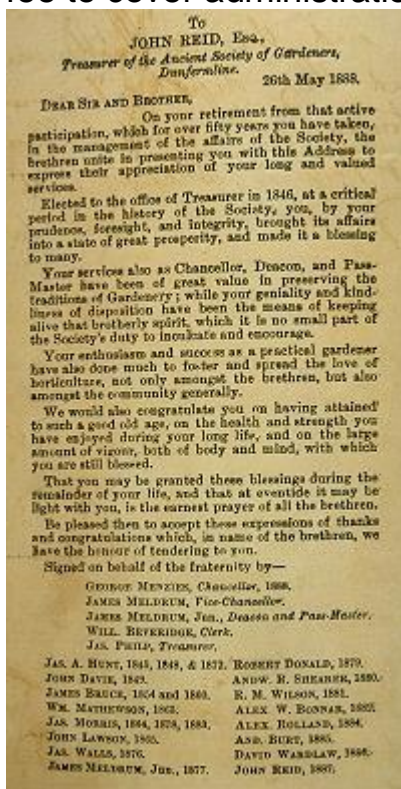
The image shows a handwritten document titled "Robert Carruthers" with a table of financial data. The table has columns for years and amounts. The data is as follows:

Year	Amount	Amount
1751	1 2 6	1 2 6
1752	1 2 6	1 2 6
1753	1 2 6	1 2 6
1754	1 2 6	1 2 6
1755	1 2 6	1 2 6
1756	1 2 6	1 2 6
1757	1 2 6	1 2 6
1758	1 2 6	1 2 6
1759	1 2 6	1 2 6
1760	1 2 6	1 2 6
1761	1 2 6	1 2 6
1762	1 2 6	1 2 6
1763	1 2 6	1 2 6
1764	1 2 6	1 2 6
1765	1 2 6	1 2 6
1766	1 2 6	1 2 6
1767	1 2 6	1 2 6
1768	1 2 6	1 2 6
1769	1 2 6	1 2 6
1770	1 2 6	1 2 6
1771	1 2 6	1 2 6
1772	1 2 6	1 2 6
1773	1 2 6	1 2 6
1774	1 2 6	1 2 6
1775	1 2 6	1 2 6
1776	1 2 6	1 2 6
1777	1 2 6	1 2 6
1778	1 2 6	1 2 6
1779	1 2 6	1 2 6
1780	1 2 6	1 2 6
1781	1 2 6	1 2 6
1782	1 2 6	1 2 6
1783	1 2 6	1 2 6
1784	1 2 6	1 2 6
1785	1 2 6	1 2 6
1786	1 2 6	1 2 6
1787	1 2 6	1 2 6
1788	1 2 6	1 2 6
1789	1 2 6	1 2 6
1790	1 2 6	1 2 6
1791	1 2 6	1 2 6
1792	1 2 6	1 2 6
1793	1 2 6	1 2 6
1794	1 2 6	1 2 6
1795	1 2 6	1 2 6
1796	1 2 6	1 2 6
1797	1 2 6	1 2 6
1798	1 2 6	1 2 6
1799	1 2 6	1 2 6
1800	1 2 6	1 2 6

- The Society was able to invest surplus cash in land. It purchased a substantial plot just outside the then boundaries of the burgh of

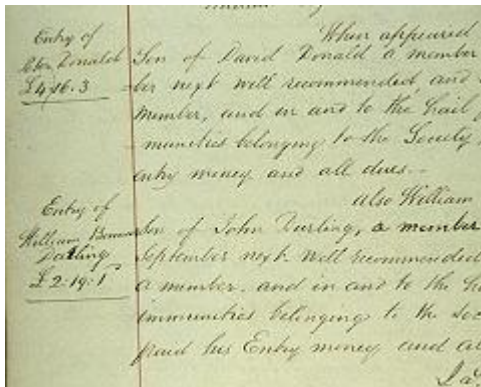
Dunfermline in the first half of the eighteenth century. Business minutes record in detail expenditure relating to the administration of the property and the subsequent revenue that the society earned from it. Although at first some of the land was let in the short term, providing rental income, the society's sustained wealth was secured by selling feus on the land. Each feu provided both a once and only lump sum in cash and a continuing feu duty, which was still being levied into the 1990s.

- At the end of the eighteenth century, the rules of society were emended to enhance its role in providing sickness, funeral and widows' benefits; to some extent the original gardening objectives were neglected. However, for many years a horticultural fund was maintained with a programme of exhibitions and prizes. In the nineteenth century this was reformulated as a separate 'Horticultural Section' with separate membership terms and dues - a small annual fee to cover administration of the events and prizes.



- By 1828 the society had feued fifty individual plots on its land. They received in return annual sums ranging from 17/6 (87.5p) to £9.17.6 (£9.875), around £80 in total. Other income was realized from interest on investments and rentals from land that still remained in their own hands. The feuars could build on their feus and sell them if they wished and with the agreement of the society. Any new purchaser also owed feu duty to the society and sometimes 'entry money', a one-off charge. This steady income influenced the development of the society.

- In 1832 the reforming zeal of a new secretary transformed the society once more. Sickness benefit and charitable donations were abolished, as was the quarterly subscription that had mostly sustained these payments. Instead, the society concentrated on providing annuities or pensions to members over the age of 65: the society's land wealth and admission rates served to cover outgoings.
- The minute books and ledgers of the Society are held at Dunfermline Local Studies Library. They are remarkably complete. They can be used to follow the development of the society as a whole, both its changing role and its membership. They provide an insight into the development of a part of Dunfermline that was still open land when the society purchased it but which was fully developed when the society celebrated its 200th anniversary in 1916 by marching the boundaries of their property. And they throw light on the social history of families and individuals in Dunfermline.



- To single out just one member, Peter Donald was 38 when he joined the Society on 10 June 1864. Consequently, he paid high entry money - £4.16.3 (£4.81). Entry was charged at different scales for the first and subsequent sons or sons-in-law of members. Neutrals, those with no connection to the Society at all, paid even more. Entry money was also age dependant, reflecting the likely risk that older entrants would be on the society's outgoings. Tables indicating charges were published to keep members informed. Despite his age at entry, Peter Donald was able to benefit from his membership for many years. He was admitted as an annuitant (pensioner) of the Society on 31 October 1891 aged 65. At that time he was resident in New York. He died there on 9 April 1915 (aged 89). During this time his benefit totalled more than £150 - a good return on his investment.

Account Book of Gardeners' Association
 List of Annuitants for year ending 31st April 1910.

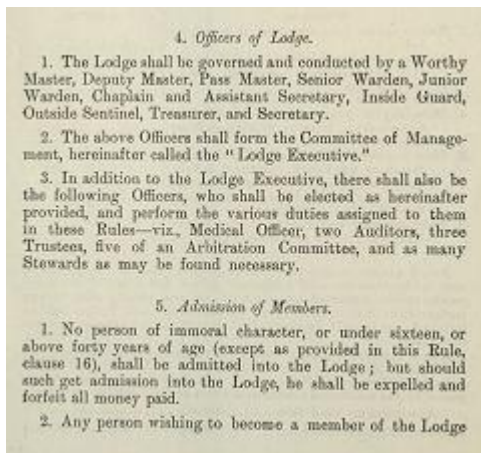
1	Miss Donald	100 York	£ 10	
2	W James Rivers	264 Avenue	£ 10	Dec 20/1910
3	Jas. Harkerston	5 High Wycombe St.	£ 10	Dec 20/1910
4	Thomas Hoag	High St.	£ 10	
5	David Henderson	Washburn St.	£ 10	
6	David Hoag	Albany St.	£ 10	
7	James Hughes	St Margaret St.	£ 10	
8	Wm. Gordon	257 Green St.	£ 10	
9	George Green	222 Spring St.	£ 10	
10	John Gibson	1250 St.	£ 10	

Discharge Continued
 Dec. 1910

By Bal. brought forward for 1910	10	10	2 179 4
By Mrs. W. S. Lawless for ditto	3	6	8
By Mr. J. Forster, ann. 1910	10	0	10
By Mrs. J. Galt, ann. ditto	2	5	6
By Mrs. C. Cairns ditto	1	2	5
By Mrs. J. C. Cairns ditto	1	7	11
By Mrs. J. C. Cairns ditto	3	2	1
By Deduction of £. 20 for	7	14	
By Bal. of Cash for ditto			35 13 5
By Bal. for the use of the building			2 5
By Bal. for the use of the building			2

£ 914 7

- Later members were not so fortunate. After the First World War and during the rest of the twentieth century inflation began to outstrip the growth in the sum that the society could distribute. By the 1980s, it was costing more to administer the Society's business than was paid out in annuities - £133.85 against £125. The remaining members expressed an interest in closing the society, which was first voiced at the annual general meeting of 1983. The next year the Clerk (a local solicitor) reported the opinion of the Registrar of Friendly Societies in Edinburgh that as 'the society owned the superiority of large subjects' there was 'no way of winding up'. As the value of annuities was further eroded, the society appears to have withered and died.
- **Edinburgh Gardeners**
- THE SOCIETY and Association of Gardeners in the Shire of Midlothian was the first gardeners' style group in the city. However, although the membership included working gardeners its aims appear to have been commercial. They leased and let land at Dalry (near Romilly Place and Gardner's Crescent) as market gardens. The Society appears to have failed in the 1730s.
- It was succeeded by the Caledonian Gardeners' Lodge of Edinburgh also known as the Caledonian Gardeners' Friendly Society. This body was formed in 1782. Like its neighbours in Dunfermline and Haddington it admitted non-gardeners from the first although on different terms to working gardeners. Writing in 2000, Forbes Robertson in [Early Scottish Gardeners and their Plants](#) recognised that the 'traditional aspects of a craft guild' were not as important as the continuing 'need for mutual support in times of stress'. So the association was mainly for mutual aid. Great care was taken to admit only those who were already known to members, or who could provide certificates of age and health. In any event, there were upper limits of 40 years for admission (as Dunfermline) and 32 in the case of non-gardeners.



-
- In 1849 the Ancient Order of Free Gardeners was formed with headquarters in Edinburgh. The Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directories include a separate Friendly Societies Directory that can be used to follow the fortunes of the Order and the city based lodges. For a long time Grand Lodge shared premises with the Oddfellows in Forest Road. In the 1880s there were five Edinburgh and three Leith lodges affiliated: St Cuthbert's, Barony of Broughton, Athole, St Andrew's, St George's, Archibald Stewart, Leith and St Antony.



-
- The Ancient Order faced competition from the British Order of Free Gardeners based at the Free Gardeners' Institute at 10 Broughton Street and later 12 Picardy Place. They eventually mustered 19 lodges in the city, joined later by associated juvenile and female only lodges. They began their push into the Edinburgh area around 1880. The Order's offices ceased to be listed after 1973.
- Also in Edinburgh was the Masonic Depot of AM Jockel and Company. Based in George Street, this firm supplied military, ecclesiastical and Masonic necessities as well as 'Regalia for all

other societies - Free Gardeners, Foresters, Shepherds, always kept in stock' according to an advertisement in 1900.

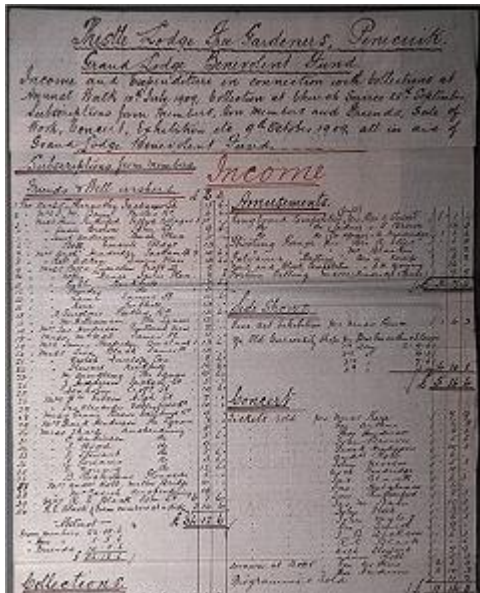
- **Midlothian Gardeners**

- PENICUIK THISTLE Lodge was for many years the most vigorous of the free gardener societies in the county and perhaps in Scotland. The lodge was founded in 1822. A century later they recalled that a deputation from Auchterarder came to Penicuik bringing a dispensation to local gardeners allowing them to begin the lodge. In the words of the lodge song:

- oor neighbours thocht tae keep us back,
but we'll be wi' them in a crack,
now Auchter lads hae come tae mak,
us a' free maister gairdners.

THISTLE LODGE No. 479 PENICUIK, B.O.A.F.G.	
NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE.	
Income and Expenditure for year 1920.	
BENEFITS	
	INCOME
To Balance brought forward	£ 20 0 0
.. Cheques from Donors	350 18 7
.. Repayment of Benefit overpaid	6 2 4
	£ 376 11 11
	EXPENDITURE
By Sickness Benefit—Men	£ 183 9 0
.. Do—Do—Men	24 2 1
.. Sickness—Women	32 2 2
.. Do—Do—Women	15 5 2
.. Maternity—Men's Claims	80 10 0
.. Maternity—Women's Claims	13 9 8
	£ 351 11 11
.. Balance in hand	25 0 0
	£ 376 11 11

- This lodge took a leading role in opening Grand Lodge in 1849. Several Penicuik men became leaders of the organisation. Penicuik contributed to the Grand Lodge Benevolent Fund many times by raising money from events, such as concerts. Despite participating in the Order, the lodge became a friendly society in 1874, from which time it was registered. Audited annual accounts have survived from this period. Benevolence was the most important aspect of the society's finances, but its day to day running and payments to the Grand Lodge were also significant.



-
- Continuing its tradition of seeking the best deal for its members, the lodge took a new path in 1912. In 1911 the Liberal Government, under David Lloyd George, introduced a scheme that provided for the elderly, unemployed and sick. Prompted by this change, Penicuik Thistle Lodge affiliated to the British Order of Ancient Free Gardeners, East of Scotland District in order to participate in the National Insurance Act. However, it maintained its 'craft' links with the Ancient Order. Members could join simply for benefits (the friendly society) or for the non-statutory pleasures of the craft.
- The lodge's participation in public life in Penicuik became one to the traditions of the town. Each year, usually in July, the lodge paraded through the main streets led by a costumed character, 'Old Adam', and a number of 'Virgins'. 'Buskets of floo'ers' were carried by some members - the best won a prize. Families of members played a part in the celebrations, joining in dancing on the green of Penicuik House and other related events. The day's festivities were always reported in the local press.



-
- The lodge remained strong for a few years after the second world war even though many friendly societies were finding the times difficult. However, by the late 1960s, the availability of universal national insurance and changing social expectations were having

their effect on numbers. Although one of the last free gardener lodges in Scotland the writing was on the wall and the lodge closed./p>

- **Gardeners in West Lothian**

- THE GARDENERS of West Lothian are very obscure, but enough survives to outline the history of several lodges.
- There was a cluster of lodges, perhaps associated, that used the descriptive term 'olive' in their titles: Bathgate Olive Lodge, Armadale Olive Lodge, and Whitburn Olive Lodge, which were founded in 1863, 1880 and 1891 respectively. Evidence from surviving artefacts shows the affiliation of some of these. Armadale was a lodge in the Western Grand Lodge of the Scottish Order of Ancient Free Gardeners and was probably thus also affiliated to the St Andrew Order of Ancient Free Gardeners Friendly Society, the order's benevolent rather than craft arm.



-
- In contrast, the Willow Tree Lodge of Linlithgow was affiliated to the British Order of Ancient Free Gardeners where it was number 200. It was established in 1889 with twenty members and a capital fund of £8. An early piece of regalia appears to be home made, but the lodge flourished and was able to afford to purchase official equipment at some later date. Some has been identified as manufactured by the firm of Kenning and Company of Manchester.
- All the lodges appear to have closed at relatively early dates. Bathgate closed in 1915 but records show Armadale survived until at least 1943.

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- **The Grand Lodges - Free Gardeners as Unity Friendly Societies**
- THERE IS no systematic way of finding out which order a particular lodge of free gardeners belonged to, if any. Some lodges moved between one order and another and the orders themselves adopted different names at different times reflecting splits and unifications in the movement. The orders proliferated in the UK in the second half of the 19th century, creating themselves amidst universal enthusiasm for unity friendly societies and assisted by legislative changes that acted to promote their growth and regulate their transactions.
- Workers' 'combinations' had always been viewed with suspicion by Britain's ruling classes. In the late eighteenth century this was particularly so as revolution swept America and France and the UK

experienced unrest on the back of industrialisation. Acts were passed to prevent the formation of working men's organisations - their names give an idea of their intent: the Combination Act, the Illegal Societies Act, and the Seditious Meetings Act. However, societies 'for security' were allowed in 1793 under the first so-called 'Friendly Societies Act'. Many societies were careful to state that they operated 'as the Act allows' in their Articles. Even so, they had to be approved by Justices of the Peace. Further legislation followed in 1809, 1819, 1829 and 1834. A succession of Acts was passed in the Victorian period. Their effect was to sometimes promote and sometimes hinder the growth of friendly societies. The main impetus of the legislation was to promote larger organisations at the cost of smaller, local bodies. Small organisations (gardeners lodges in this instance) with a similar outlook banded together to protect their identity and survive: they created Grand Lodges. In 1875 an Act was passed to modernise audit and registration of the sector, which had grown to include nearly 30,000 bodies with millions of members!

BENEVOLENT FUND			
Grand Lodge of Scotland	£2 0 0	By Passage, etc.	10 2 10
St Andrew's Lodge, Edinburgh (Prize Money)	1 0 0	Stationery, etc.	0 5 0
Traill's Lodge, Paisley	2 8 6	Gifts on Year	18 8 3
St Andrew's Lodge, Edinburgh	0 7 6		
St Andrew's Lodge, Glasgow, S.A.	0 12 0		
Interest from Savings Bank	12 10 1		
Interest from War Loan	18 10 6		
	15 0 7		
	£18 10 1		£18 10 1
Accumulated Funds, 31st March 1923			
In Edinburgh Savings Bank		£111 6 10	
5 per cent. War Loan		186 11 6	
Cash in hand		7 12 8	
		£221 7 0	

Examined, 26th March 1923—24, the undersigned, having examined the Books and Vouchers for the past year, find the same correct as per above statement and Abstract.

THOMAS BENTON,
EDWARD H. BLAIR,
Auditors

-
- The twentieth century brought further changes. These first assisted and then, more or less, destroyed the whole edifice of friendly societies, leaving very few survivors.
- In 1908 the first Old Age Pensions Act came into force, providing 5/- (25p) weekly for those over 70; this acted against the friendly society sector, whose members had been in effect paying privately for their own provision. Then in 1911 the Liberal Government passed a National Insurance Act. Every worker between 16 and 70 had to join, paying a small weekly sum themselves, to which was added an increment from their employer and another from the State. In return they were guaranteed sickness benefits. Prior to the Act only those who had joined a friendly society had had this protection. The Act had to be administered and the friendly societies, that had been the 'private sector' providers up until its introduction, were enlisted to operate the new scheme. Societies became 'approved societies' and were responsible for delivering National Insurance: their membership grew to around 14 million. To be 'approved' a society required more than 10,000 members: this drove many of the smaller societies to affiliate or close. In 1945 a Ministry was created and civil servants

took over the delivery of National Insurance and the days of friendly society mass membership passed away.

The Orders of Free Gardeners in Edinburgh and the Lothians

INFORMATION about the various orders of free gardeners has been compiled during the SHELF Project. Information was collated from the Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directories, which from 1875-1974 had a separate Friendly Societies list.

Publications by individual lodges sometimes neglect to mention the order to which they affiliated. At other times they provide detailed information about the grand lodge of their affiliated order. If a district organisation is mentioned, care must be taken to ensure the correct order is traced - there appears to have been at least three parallel bodies named 'East of Scotland District No 2', operating at the same time, in different organisations (Ancient, St Andrew and British). Additionally, in the early 20th century, a lodge might be affiliated to one order for 'craft' purposes but another for the operation of the National Insurance Act.

Where an order had characteristic insignia these have been indicated. They provide a means of identifying the provenance of artefacts and can sometimes help the identification of the affiliation of a lodge.

- [The British Order of Ancient Free Gardeners](#) (founded before 1817)
- [The Ancient Order of Free Gardeners](#) (founded 1849)
- [The St Andrew Order of Ancient Free Gardeners Friendly Society](#) or Western Order (founded 1859; refounded 1878-9)
- [Others](#)
- [Independents](#)
- [Elsewhere](#)
- [Gardeners reborn](#)

The British Order of Ancient Free Gardeners (founded before 1817)

THE BRITISH Order returned to Scotland from England, planting many lodges during the nineteenth century. It is believed that Scottish militiamen carried the concept of free gardening to the Newcastle area in the Napoleonic period and founded lodges there, which took root and spread. A Lodge numbered 99 was opened at Newton Heath, Manchester in 1817. The Order thus predates any attempt to create a grand lodge and corresponding order in Scotland.

In the middle 1880s the Order began a significant recruiting drive in the Edinburgh area and soon had around 20 affiliated lodges.

In 1912, the Order formed a subsidiary that was approved under the Insurance Act: the British Order of Ancient Free Gardeners Approved Society. By the end of September it had enlisted 26 'branches' in the East of Scotland District. Most of these were lodges that had been opened under the Order some years previously. Others were long-standing lodges that retained 'craft' connections to one of the Scottish Orders (e.g. Penicuik Thistle of the Ancient Order).

The PO directories show that the order's first home around 1885 was Buchan's Hall, 114 High Street, Edinburgh; six lodges were listed. In 1890 it was the Free Gardeners' Institute, 10 Broughton Street, Edinburgh. It then listed 15 lodges and a further 8 juvenile lodges (it appears to be the only order to have a youth wing). By 1900 it was installed at 12-14 Picardy Place, where the office adjoined the relocated Institute. The Order's East of Scotland District, later the East of Scotland Centralised District was also based there. The Order ceased to appear in the Directory after the 1972/3 edition.

The Ancient Order of Free Gardeners (founded 1849)

In 1849 St Paul's Lodge of Free Gardeners in Lasswade invited delegates to a meeting in order to consider the establishment of a Grand Lodge. Five lodges attended. From this initiative was created the Ancient Order. The National Library of Scotland holds the Report of the 79th Annual Conference of the Grand Lodge of the Ancient Order of Free Gardeners, dated 1928, placing the origin of that body in 1849.

Minutes 1915-48 for the East of Scotland District No2 of the Order are in Edinburgh City Archives.

In 1912 three bodies described as the Ancient Order, the Western Order (St Andrews) and the 'Scottish Order' combined for the purposes of National Insurance Act approval creating for the purpose the Ancient Order of Free Gardeners (Scotland) National Insurance Association. However, each participating lodge (and order) maintained its own identity and traditions.

The Order first appears in the PO Directory in the 1880s as the Ancient Order of Free Gardeners located in Edinburgh and Leith. Grand Lodge was based at Good Templar Hall in Edinburgh. Seven lodges are named. Within five years it appears under the title Ancient Order of Free Gardeners and the Order's registered office became Oddfellows Hall, Forrest Road in

Edinburgh although 'moveable meetings' were held in other places. It was still at Oddfellows Hall in 1958/9 when Edinburgh St Andrews was listed as the last remaining city lodge: it met at Shepherds' Hall in India Buildings. That was the last year the Order appeared.

This Order maintained close links with South Africa and at its demise the Order's artefacts went there. The Grand Lodge chartered South African lodges, which appear within the numbered lists of the Order. By 1912 the order had also chartered 91 lodges in Australia.

The St Andrew Order of Ancient Free Gardeners Friendly Society (refounded 1878-9; founded 1859)

THE NATIONAL Library of Scotland has records relating to the Grand Lodge of the Order. Extrapolating from these Rules, Reports of Annual General Meetings, and Balance Sheets, some of which are both numbered and dated, the Order originated in 1878-9. However, evidence from the PO Directory and archival holdings can be used to outline a fuller history.

More than 100 gardener lodges are known to have attended a meeting in Edinburgh during 1859 to discuss the organisation of the existing Grand Lodge of the Ancient Order. It would be reasonable to suppose that irreconcilable differences caused a schism in that year, creating the bodies known first as the Ancient Order of Free Gardeners (Western Grand Lodge) and the Ancient Order of Free Gardeners (located in Edinburgh and Leith). An Eastern and Western Grand Lodge appear from this date in several sources. A minute book of the latter dated 1859-84 supports the above inference. It is in Glasgow City Archives.

In the Edinburgh PO Directory for 1885/6 an entry for the Ancient Order of Free Gardeners (Western) appears with one affiliated lodge, Archibald Stewart Leith. Later, the same lodge appears with others under the St Andrew Order and the Western attribution has disappeared. In the late 1890s the St Andrews Order appears with the additional information 'affiliated to the National United Order of Free Gardeners (England)', which persists into the 1900s. The registered office of the St Andrew Order was in McFarlane Street, Glasgow, where it remained. In the late 1890s the East of Scotland District (No2) had settled in offices at 5 Hope Park Terrace, Edinburgh, where they remained until after 1974/5.

Others

THERE WAS a Western Grand Lodge (Glasgow based) and an Eastern Grand Lodge (Edinburgh based) reported in press commentary in 1911,

that also mentions the Scottish Order of Free Gardeners. The first two are accounted above; the latter is curious, as it nowhere appears in the PO Directories for Edinburgh and Leith.

Occasional references suggest that bodies operating as the Thistle Order of Free Gardeners and the Caledonian Order of Free Gardeners existed in the nineteenth century, but it has not been possible to confirm or refute their veracity.

In the PO Directories a short-lived organisation appears, the Husbandman Gardeners (Knights). A single lodge affiliated to the Husbandmen, Ninians Leith, is recorded in the mid-1880s.

Independents

THE ANCIENT societies of Dunfermline and East Lothian remained aloof from all of the orders, despite being required to conform to the same legislation that had prompted the creation of the latter. Some other lodges also remained independent.

Elsewhere

National United Order of Free Gardeners

THE NATIONAL Board and Branch Records for this Order between 1851 and 1940 are held at Northamptonshire Record Office. The Order may be related to the United Order of Free Gardeners that provided the lifeboat Emma at Redcar in 1876. This order is known to have lodges in England and Ireland in the 19th century and it associated with the St Andrews Order in Scotland.

The Free Gardeners survived in Africa and Australia into the 21st century. The Grand Lodge of Free Gardeners (Africa) was based in Cape Town, South Africa. The Grand United Order of Free Gardeners of Australasia Friendly Society Limited represented the Australian lodges. Both were affiliated to the Ancient Order. Other lodges were started in the United States, Canada and the West Indies, with varying degrees of success.

Gardeners Reborn

IN THE FIRST few years after 2000 a growing interest in the history of free gardening amongst freemasons prompted a move to revive the style and ethos of the movement in Scotland. In May 2002 Lodge Countess of Elgin at Kirkcaldy was inaugurated and three others followed quickly.

A List of Free Gardener Lodges

THIS LIST was compiled during the SHELF project, mainly from Ian McDougall's book on Scottish Labour Records. The information is not complete and dates are only approximations until further research adds to our knowledge: the records of the Registrar of Friendly Societies held in the National Archives of Scotland would doubtless be worthy of a detailed survey. Many of the lodges are listed year by year in the Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directories: again a detailed survey would be a worthwhile exercise.

Most of the lodges are known only by name, as they appear in directories or newspaper articles or surviving documents. Others, such as Haddington and Dunfermline have left comprehensive records from which detailed histories can be drawn.

The Orders noted beside each lodge are presented as a guide. Some lodges changed affiliation to secure the best terms for their members. Some lodges never affiliated to any of the Orders.

[List of Free Gardener Lodges](#)

Download list as an [Excel spreadsheet](#) [41k
Free_Gardener_Societies_da.xls]

Affiliation	Lodge name	No.	Location	Founded	Closed
Independent	Ancient Fraternity of Free Gardeners of East Lothian		Haddington	1676	1953
Independent	Ancient Society of Gardeners in and about Dunfermline		Dunfermline, Fife	1716	c1983
Independent	Lodge St James		Brechin	1769	unknown
Independent	Lodge Vine		Hamilton	1863	unknown
Independent	unknown		Ballieston	1822	unknown
Independent	unknown		Doune	1819	unknown
Independent	Lodge Philanthropic		Cambuslang	1823	unknown
Independent	Lodge Solomon		Saltcoats	1828	1911
Independent	unknown		Parkhead	1845	unknown
Independent	Olive Lodge		Dalry	1820	unknown
Independent	Olive Lodge		East Kilbride	1827	unknown
Independent	unknown		West Kilbride	1829	unknown
Independent	unknown		Dunse	1829	unknown

Independent	unknown		Stevenston	1864	unknown
Independent	unknown		Cambusnathan	1796	unknown
Independent	unknown		Arbroath	1796	unknown
Independent	Union and Crown Lodge Independent Gardeners' Friendly Society		Glasgow	unknown	c1920
Independent	Royal Oak Lodge (later name)		Greenock	1724	unknown
Independent	Hume's Lodge		Edzel	unknown	c1928
Ancient Order	Grand Lodge		Edinburgh	before 1849	after 1849
Ancient Order	St Paul's Lodge	1	Lasswade	1821	after 1921
Ancient Order	Thistle Lodge	2	Penicuik	1822	c1960
Ancient Order	St Cuthbert's Lodge		Edinburgh	unknown	after 1921
Ancient Order	Barony of Broughton Lodge		Edinburgh	unknown	after 1925
Ancient Order	St Cuthbert's Lodge		Duddingston	unknown	after 1849
Ancient Order	Thistle Lodge		Newcraighall	1844	unknown
Ancient Order	Thistle Lodge		Niddrie and Portobello	1880	after 1885
Ancient Order	Thistle Lodge		Auchterarder, Fife	c1800	unknown
Ancient Order	unknown		Kirkmuirhill	1856	unknown
Ancient Order	St Giles	97	Edinburgh	1921	c1930
St. Andrew's Order	Vale of the Esk	53	Musselburgh	1888	after 1935
St. Andrew's Order	Ivy	73	Leith or Dalkeith	unknown	after 1897
St. Andrew's Order	Holyrood	74	Edinburgh	unknown	after 1936
St. Andrew's Order	Stirling Castle	77	Stirling	unknown	unknown
St. Andrew's Order	The Trades House of Glasgow Lodge	1241	Glasgow	unknown	unknown
St. Andrew's Order	St Anthony		Leith	unknown	after 1911
St. Andrew's Order	St Andrew's		Glamis, Angus	1802	after 1831

St. Andrew's Order	St Andrew's		Dundee	1815	after 1836
St. Andrew's Order	West of Scotland District Juvenile Gardeners		West of Scotland	unknown	unknown
St. Andrew's Order	Adam's Lodge		Fife	before 1820	after 1820
St. Andrew's Order	Hope of the North	62, 81	Aberdeen	unknown	after 1909
St. Andrew's Order	Shamrock		Aberdeen	unknown	after 1901
St. Andrew's Order	St Paul's		Arbroath	1878	after 1898
St. Andrew's Order	Sweet Briar		Stevenston	unknown	after 1900
St. Andrew's Order	St Clement's		Lochee, Dundee	unknown	after 1904
St. Andrew's Order	Elm		Anderston, Glasgow	1879	after 1929
St. Andrew's Order	Hawthorn		Bothwell, Glasgow	before 1796	after 1900
St. Andrew's Order	Mountain Ash		Glasgow	unknown	after 1900
St. Andrew's Order	Rowan Tree		Dalserf	unknown	after 1901
St. Andrew's Order	Rising Star		Wishaw	unknown	after 1891
St. Andrew's Order	St Johnstoun		Perth	c1881	unknown
St. Andrew's Order	Scoon		Scone	unknown	after 1903
St. Andrew's Order	Fern of Ladyburn		Greenock	before 1883	after 1888
St. Andrew's Order	Cathcart Castle		Renfrew	unknown	after 1901
St. Andrew's Order	Earl of Zetland		Grangemouth	unknown	after 1889
St. Andrew's Order	unknown	479	Lanark	unknown	unknown
St. Andrew's Order	St Andrews Order Juvenile Lodge		unknown	fl. 1920	unknown
British Order	East Of Scotland District	2	Edinburgh	c1885	c1975
British Order	St Paul's	1	Lasswade	1821	c1925
British Order	Thistle	2	Penicuik	1822	c1960
British Order	St Cuthbert's	3	Edinburgh	unknown	c1921
British Order	Barony of Broughton	6	Edinburgh	1845	after

					1925
British Order	St Paul's	7	Arbroath	unknown	after 1925
British Order	Caledonian	8	Prestonpans	1820	after 1925
British Order	St Andrew's	14	Edinburgh	unknown	c1925
British Order	Tay Union	16	Dundee	unknown	1864
British Order	Leith	17	Leith	unknown	c1925
British Order	St George's	23	Edinburgh	unknown	1916
British Order	St Anthony	25	Leith	unknown	c1925
British Order	Rose of Grange	30	Bo'ness	unknown	after 1916
British Order	Flowers of the Forest	36	Bo'ness	unknown	c1925
British Order	Olive	41	Lochgelly	1876	1928
British Order	Sons of Eden (move to St Andrews)	45	Dundee	unknown	after 1900
British Order	Olive	46	Mid Calder	unknown	after 1925
British Order	St Clement's	50	Dundee	unknown	unknown
British Order	Albion	55	Broxburn	unknown	after 1925
British Order	Robert Burns	58	Kilmarnock	unknown	after 1916
British Order	Pride of Fife	60	Leven	unknown	after 1916
British Order	Abbey	61	Dunfermline	unknown	after 1925
British Order	Pride of Midlothian	63	Gorebridge	before 1889	after 1921
British Order	Ramornie Vine	79	Windygates	unknown	after 1925
British Order	Lily of the Vale	85	Crossgates	unknown	after 1924
British Order	Eden	87	Dundee	unknown	after 1916
British Order	Rose of Edinburgh	94	Edinburgh	unknown	after 1948
British Order	Ivy	109	Edinburgh	unknown	after 1913
British Order	Rosebery	184	Aberdeen	unknown	after 1900
British Order	Dalry Myrtle	196	Edinburgh	unknown	after 1889
British Order	May Queen	197	Glasgow	unknown	unknown

British Order	Newtonshaw Thistle	212	Clackmannanshire	before 1890	c1933
British Order	Rose of Lebanon	259	Dundee	unknown	c1931
British Order	Cluny Hill	379	unknown	unknown	after 1913
British Order	Newington Geranium	417	Newington	unknown	after 1913
British Order	Thistle o' Edinboro'		Edinburgh	unknown	unknown
British Order	Rose of Leith		Leith	unknown	unknown
British Order	Thistle o' Portobello		Portobello, Edinburgh	unknown	unknown
British Order	Flower of the Forth		South Queensferry, Edinburgh	unknown	unknown
British Order	Eden		Edinburgh	unknown	unknown
British Order	Rowan Tree		Edinburgh	unknown	unknown
British Order	Lily of Leith		Leith	unknown	unknown
British Order	Queen Mary's Bower		Edinburgh	unknown	unknown
British Order	Lily of St Leonard's		Edinburgh	unknown	unknown
British Order	Daisy		Leith	unknown	after 1909
British Order	Pansy Blossom		Bo'ness or Linlithgow	unknown	after 1933
British Order	Broughton Lily		Edinburgh	unknown	unknown
British Order	Fuchsia Blossom		probably Edinburgh	unknown	unknown
British Order	Willow Tree		Linlithgow	unknown	unknown
British Order	Garden of Eden		Broxburn	unknown	unknown
British Order	Spring Flower		Bathgate	unknown	unknown
British Order	Old Oak Tree		Leith or Edinburgh	unknown	unknown
British Order	Rose of Gorgie		Edinburgh	unknown	unknown
British Order	Rose of Dunedin		Leith or Edinburgh	unknown	unknown
British Order	Palm Leaf		Wallyford or Musselburgh	unknown	unknown
British Order	Forres		Forres, Morayshire	unknown	unknown
British Order	Mormond		Mormond, Aberdeenshire	unknown	unknown
British Order	Rose of Alva Glen		Alva, Clackmannanshire	unknown	unknown
British Order	Palm		Leith	unknown	c1929
British Order	Heatherbell (Juvenile)		Aberdeen	unknown	after 1894
British Order	Early Primrose		Rosehearty	unknown	after 1902
British Order	St Paul's		Arbroath	1878	after

					1898
British Order	Rose of Glaisnock (Juvenile)		Cumnock	unknown	after 1923
British Order	Doon Lily		Dalmellington	1883	after 1889
British Order	Lainshaw Rose		Stewarton	unknown	after 1895
British Order	Cherry Leaf		Kirkintilloch	unknown	after 1894
British Order	St Andrew's		Dundee	unknown	after 1836
British Order	Shamrock		Edinburgh	unknown	after 1893
British Order	Young Oak		Leith	unknown	after 1903
British Order	Speedwell		Anstruther	unknown	after 1897
British Order	Palm		Auchterderran	before 1905	c1910
British Order	Bee Hive		Buckhaven	c1885	c1910
British Order	Thistle		Burntisland	before 1891	after 1892
British Order	Malcolm Canmore		Dunfermline	unknown	
British Order	Guarantee Society		Glasgow	before 1900	c1910
British Order	Blue Bell		Glasgow	unknown	after 1891
British Order	Glasgow First (Juvenile)		Glasgow	unknown	after 1891
British Order	Glasgow United		Glasgow	1844	unknown
British Order	Knights of St Joseph Lodge		Broxburn	unknown	c1918
British Order	Rose O' Gala		Gala	unknown	after 1896
Order Unknown	Black Agnes (associated with the Ancient Fraternity of East Lothian)		Dunbar	1773 and 1865	1913
Order Unknown	Dalkeith Greenhouse Lodge of Gardeners		Dalkeith	1808	unknown
Order Unknown	Solomon		Dalkeith	unknown	after 1823
Order Unknown	Bucleuch		Dalkeith	unknown	unknown
Order Unknown	Olive (British Order?)		Loanhead	c1869	c1882
Order	Star of the East (British		Loanhead	c1880	c1887

Unknown	Order?)				
Order Unknown	St Joseph's		Loanhead	unknown	unknown
Order Unknown	Dundas		Poltonhall	c1885	after 1913
Order Unknown	Gardener Fraternity of Old Aberdeen		Aberdeen	c1794	after 1879
Order Unknown	Ellon True Blue Gardener Friendly Society		Ellon, Aberdeenshire	1816	after 1832
Order Unknown	Muir of Rhynie Free Gardener Society		Muir of Rhynie, Aberdeenshire	1812	after 1834
Order Unknown	Adam Lodge of Gardeners' Benevolent Society		Peterhead	1843	unknown
Order Unknown	George		Turriff, Aberdeenshire	1810	after 1852
Order Unknown	Olive		Brechin	1842	after 1880
Order Unknown	Thistle		Brechin	unknown	after 1832
Order Unknown	St Paul's		Forfar	1810	after 1852
Order Unknown	Kirriemuir Brotherly Lodge Free Gardeners		Kirriemuir, Angus	1806	after 1851
Order Unknown	Dalmellington Thisle Lodge	335	Dalmellington, Ayrshire	unknown	after 1911
Order Unknown	Dalry Free Gardeners' Friendly Society		Dalry, Ayrshire	1820	after 1850
Order Unknown	Largs Adams Lodge Gardeners' Society		Largs, Ayrshire	1810	c1854
Order Unknown	Friendly Society or Free Gardeners' Society of Saltcoats		Saltcoats, Ayrshire	1828	after 1842
Order Unknown	Eden		Saltcoats, Ayrshire	unknown	unknown
Order Unknown	Solomon's Lodge or the Gardiner Friendly Society of Banff		Banff, Banffshire	unknown	unknown
Order Unknown	St Paul's Caledonian Lodge of Free Gardeners and Friendly Society		Dundee	1813	after 1832
Order Unknown	Star of the East Friendly Association of Free Gardeners		Dundee	1872	unknown
Order Unknown	Friendly Society or Caledonian Gardeners'		Edinburgh	1782	after 1836

	Lodge of Edinburgh				
Order Unknown	St Cuthbert's		Edinburgh	1824	after 1852
Order Unknown	St Cuthbert's		Duddingston, Edinburgh	1828	after 1843
Order Unknown	Friendly Society of the Caledonian Gardeners		Anstruther Easter, Fife	1825	after 1833
Order Unknown	Friendly Society of Strath Eden Lodge of Gardeners		Letham, Fife	1815	after 1852
Order Unknown	Strathleven		Leven, Fife	1821	after 1832
Order Unknown	Eden's Lodge of Gardeners of Inverness		Inverness	unknown	1807
Order Unknown	Douglass Inchmarlo Lodge of Gardeners		Kincardineshire	1811	after 1832
Order Unknown	St John's		Drumlithie, Kincardineshire	unknown	after 1829
Order Unknown	St Paul's		Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire	1791	after 1831
Order Unknown	Solomon Lodge Society of Free Gardeners of Stonehaven		Stonehaven, Kincardineshire	1790	after 1836
Order Unknown	Caledonian Union		Coupar Angus, Perthshire	1822	after 1853
Order Unknown	Dunblane Gardeners' Society		Dunblane, Perthshire	before 1830	after 1834
Order Unknown	Caledonian Gardeners' Friendly Society of Dunkeld		Dunkeld, Perthshire	1818	after 1858
Order Unknown	Falkirk Gardeners' Society		Falkirk, Stirlingshire	1725	after 1884
Order Unknown	Society of Gardeners of Linlithgow		Linlithgow, West Lothian	1796	after 1833
Order Unknown	unknown		Beeslack, Midlothian	unknown	c1922
Order Unknown	Ballieston		nr. Glasgow	unknown	unknown
Order Unknown	Cambuslang Free Gardeners' Philanthropic Society		Cambuslang	unknown	c1929
Order Unknown	Olive		Hamilton	unknown	after 1851
Order Unknown	Rose of Ballochmyle	132	Mauchline	unknown	after 1922
Order Unknown	Olive		Stoneyburn	1919	unknown
Order	Adelphi	21	Ballieston	before	after

Unknown				1873	1900
Order Unknown	Greenhouse Lodge		Airdrie, Lanarkshire	unknown	unknown
Order Unknown	Norwood Violet		Alloa, Clackmannanshire	unknown	c1938
Order Unknown	Thistle		Armada, West Lothian	c1830	after 1898
Order Unknown	Olive		Cupar, Fife	unknown	unknown
Order Unknown	Eden		Cupar, Fife	unknown	unknown
Order Unknown	Gethsemene		Cupar, Fife	unknown	unknown
Order Unknown	East of Scotland Juvenile Gardeners' Friendly Society			unknown	c1946
Order Unknown	Archibald Stewart		Leith	unknown	after 1889
Order Unknown	Eden		Gilmerton	unknown	after 1889
Order Unknown	Thistle		Musselburgh	unknown	after 1889
Order Unknown	Thistle		Kilbirnie, Ayrshire	1836	after 1885
Order Unknown	Bluebell		Uddingston	unknown	after 1874
Order Unknown	Livingstone Thistle		Blantyre	unknown	after 1877
Order Unknown	Daisy		Bellshill	unknown	after 1876
Order Unknown			Bannockburn	unknown	after 1897
Order Unknown	Sir William Wallace		Stirling	unknown	unknown
New Order 2002	Countess of Elgin	105	Kirkcaldy	May-02	extant
New Order 2002		2	Edinburgh	2002	extant
New Order 2002		3	Brora	2002	extant
New Order 2002	Adelphi Bluebell	4	Uddingston	Oct-02	extant

Free Gardeners social activities

IN EDINBURGH, the home of free gardening was the Free Gardeners' Institute in Picardy Place, the headquarters of the Edinburgh District of the British Order. The older, Scottish-based Ancient order of Free Gardeners leased offices in Oddfellows Hall in Forrest Road and used the facilities there. In most towns and villages round about the gardeners had a favoured meeting place. In Haddington it was the Gardeners Arms public house, which the fraternity had owned for most of the 19th century.

These venues hosted social events as well as business meetings, everything from dances and concerts to lectures and magic lantern shows. Some lodges kept a reading room or small library for the use of members.



Free gardeners often secured for themselves a privileged role in public ceremonies. Just as Masonic lodges turned out when a foundation stone was laid, gardeners paraded when commemorative trees were planted. Many lodges kept their profile in the public eye by an annual celebration.

In Penicuik the lodge paraded through the streets accompanied by 'Old Adam' and a number of 'Virgins'. Members produced extravagant 'buskits o' floo'ers', for which the best was awarded a cash prize. Although women could not join the lodge, the annual walk was a family event, open to all.



In Musselburgh the lodge participated in the Riding of the Marches held every 21 years. In 1916 Dunfermline free gardeners celebrated their bicentenary by marching the boundaries of their own property, the land that provided the society with its main source of income.



Anniversaries were a general cause for celebration. Penicuik celebrated a full programme of events in October 1922 when the lodge passed its centenary. The celebrations included a dance with a concert. Robert Black sang the original lodge song that celebrated its foundation charter.

Gardeners' benefits

SOMETIMES, it is possible to make a detailed study of the benefits that member could receive by joining the free gardeners.

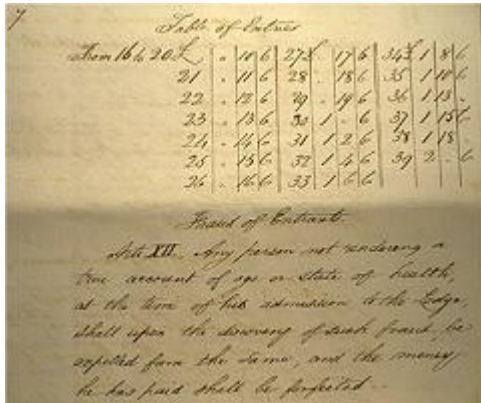
Peter Donald joined the Ancient Society of Gardeners in and about Dunfermline on 10 June 1864. He was then 38 years old - just one year below the upper limit for membership. Most societies placed limits on the allowed entry age, to minimise risk to their funds; older members were a bigger drain on resources. It cost Peter £4 16 shillings and 3 pence to join (now £4.81), but that was the only payment he made to the society. Dunfermline was unusual because it did not need to ask for regular contributions from its members. It could fund its commitments from the regular revenue it received as a landlord in Dunfermline.

Ancient Society of Gardeners Dunfermline
List of Annuitants for year ending 31st April 1910

1	Alex Donald	New York	£ 10	
2	James Miller	Bank Street	£ 10	paid 20/10/10
3	John Henderson	High Wycombe	£ 10	paid 17/10/10
4	David Gray	Kirk St.	£ 10	
5	David MacLennan	Widdell St.	£ 10	
6	David Gray	Albany St.	£ 10	
7	James Lough	St Margaret St.	£ 10	
8	Mrs. Cairns	Goldsmith St.	£ 10	
9	George Quinn	St. Andrew St. Kirk	£ 10	
10	John Quinn	St. Ann St.	£ 10	
11	James Meldrum	Victoria Place	£ 10	

Despite his age at entry, Peter was able to benefit from his membership for many years. He was admitted as an annuitant (pensioner) of the Society on 31 October 1891. In 1910 his annuity was paid to him in New York, USA,

where he was resident. He died there on 9 April 1915. Over the years his benefit totalled more than £150 - a good return on his investment.



Other societies had different terms and conditions, for example at Letham in Fife. The rulebook of the Stratheden Lodge set out the entry terms and entry money. It continued with details of sickness payments. These were paid to members at the rate of 4/- (20p) weekly for up to thirteen weeks. The member had to show that he was unable to 'earn his daily bread' due to illness or accident and not because of self-injury. After that time the benefit dropped to 2/- (20p) weekly for a maximum of nine months. After that it was only 1/- per week.

SOURCES		EXPENDITURE	
By Subscribers - 1st Quarter	£11 5 6	By Subscribers - 1st Quarter	£11 5 6
" " " " 2nd " "	11 5 6	" " " " 2nd " "	11 5 6
" " " " 3rd " "	11 5 6	" " " " 3rd " "	11 5 6
" " " " 4th " "	11 5 6	" " " " 4th " "	11 5 6
Total Income	£45 12 4	Total Expenditure	£45 12 4

After the introduction of the National Insurance Act in 1911, lodge accounts and administration became more complicated. The Penicuik Free Gardeners' Friendly Society published their accounts annually. In 1946 the lodge administered three funds - the Sick and Funeral Fund, the Management Fund and the Lodge Fund. The expenditure section of the sick and funeral fund is a good example of lodge benevolence to members and their families. Payments amounting to £755 10s 10d (£755.54) had been made during the year.

Glossary of Gardeners Terms

Annuity

a regular payment received by pensioners of a society. The annuity could vary up and down from year to year as it was usual to divide

the sum available amongst those who qualified. Both the sum and the qualifiers changed annually. Annuities might be paid annually, twice yearly, or quarterly.

Annuitant

a person receiving payments from an annuity.

Apprentice

a novice subject to a formal agreement of training between himself (or his guardians) and a master for a set period of time and for a set fee. Each apprentice would be examined by a number of masters at the end of their training. Successful apprentices graduated to journeyman.

Articles

the set of rules and regulations to which all members of a society agreed. The modification (or modernisation) of articles was a big step, subject to extended debate and ratification by the entire membership. 'Interjunctions', dispensation, and 'bond of union' are also terms that were used.

Craft Lodge

a lodge dedicated to the esoteric knowledge of an Order. Likely to be kept separate from any 'friendly society' functions of the Order. More about Gardeners and freemasonry. (Insert Link to p24 here)

Deacon

the senior elected official of an incorporation; many societies and fraternities also elected deacons. Societies and fraternities also used the terms president (preses), chairman, chancellor and master. By the nineteenth century the terms grand master, past grand master and depute grand master were in common use to describe the current, immediate past and scheduled next leaders; these terms were borrowed from freemasonry. The annually elected president of an order was termed 'right worshipful master', another borrowing from freemasonry. More about Gardeners and freemasonry. (Insert Link to p24 here)

Eden

the original garden, used as an archetype from which free gardening derived much of its mythology. Often applied in conjunction with the initials of the names of the four associated rivers Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel (Tigris) and Euphrates. The letters A, N and S are also used. They refer to the words of each degree - Adam, Noah, and Solomon. Eden (Adam), Noah and Solomon are also referred to by symbols the tree of knowledge for Eden (Adam), the ark, dove and rainbow for Noah, and pillars for Solomon.

Fraternity

a mutual aid organisation sometimes, but not always, associated with a single craft or trade. In common use in the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries, the term was by the end of that time usually synonymous with 'friendly society'.

Free gardener

a member of a society that admitted both operatives (working in the trade) and non-operatives to the benefits of the society.

Friendly Society

according to the Oxford English Dictionary, the original friendly society was a particular (London) fire-insurance company. During the eighteenth century the term became to be applied to a wide variety of mutual-aid associations, whose members paid a regular sum to insure financial help. More about Friendly Societies. (Insert link to p23 here)

Gardeners' March or Walk

an annual celebration held by many lodges. Walks were subject to wide variations from place to place, each garnering their own traditions. Members participated in a formal public parade, usually following a set route as part of a day of festivities, often in conjunction with a celebration feast and organised sports. Many lodges marched with at least one costumed character 'Jock in the green', 'Old Adam, and St Andrew are known. Some paraded with bowers, garlands or 'buskits o' floo'ers', for which prizes were awarded.

Grand Lodge

the main legislative body of an Order. The members of a Grand Lodge usually comprised delegates from participating lodges, annually elected officers and surviving previous office-holders.

Guild, Gild

see incorporation.

Incorporation

a body that regulated a specific craft (trade) or group of crafts in a geographic area, usually a burgh and its trading area. The term incorporation is analogous to the terms guild and gild. The role of each incorporation was defined in a 'seal of cause' or charter issued by their local authority. Each was a local monopoly, which was strictly enforced for the benefit of their members. Incorporations also provided mutual aid and security to members and their dependants. Nineteenth century legislation repealed exclusive trade privileges and many incorporations closed; those that survived tended to emphasise their mutual aid aspects. Many also became free or friendly societies to survive.

Journeyman

a qualified craftsman working in a subordinate position and answering to a master gardener. Originally derived from the practice of travelling from master to master to learn different aspects of a trade.

Lodge

a body of craftsmen in one locality, ruled by an elected set of officials. In relation to gardeners lodge was synonymous with the terms society and fraternity.

Master

a fully qualified craftsman working to his own right. A master employed journeymen (servants) and was able to take on apprentices. A master gardener might be an employee of a landowner.

Non-operative

a member of a gardeners' society who was not a working gardener (operative); sometimes called speculative or gentlemen members; the terms actual and honorary gardener were also used. More about Gardeners and freemasonry. ([Insert Link to p24 here](#))

Operative

in relation to free gardening, an 'operative' member was one whose income was wholly or in part derived from horticulture, including market gardeners, foresters, estate gardeners, nurserymen, and greengrocers.

Order

a number of lodges banded together under one constitution for mutual support and the purposes of promoting brotherhood and craft practices.

Secret

the esoteric knowledge imparted to different classes of member including ritual formulae, words of recognition, knocks, handshakes and others. [More about [Gardeners and freemasonry](#)]

Speculative

see non-operative.

Free Gardeners and Freemasons

FREE GARDENERS were not freemasons, but both philosophies came from a common source: the association of craftsmen with their brethren, joined later by interested outsiders.

The Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Scotland was created in 1736. There were then already around 100 mason lodges. In the succeeding century freemasonry spread until it was firmly rooted in many towns and villages. In Scotland the lodges retain their own distinctive procedures, regalia and ritual, which is a reflection of the piecemeal growth of the order. Each lodge still remains semi-autonomous, despite being chartered by Grand Lodge. The order continues to celebrate its connection with the craft of stone masonry.

From an early date the mason craft in Scotland had begun to admit non-masons. As early as the first half of the seventeenth century the membership of some lodges was mostly 'gentlemen' or 'speculative' masons. The reason why men became 'free' masons is indeed a matter for speculation. Both curiosity and social reasons have been put forward. The craft of stone masonry appears to have differed from other Scottish crafts and incorporations by developing their concept of the lodge, or meeting place. Early documents also hint that stonemasons could identify themselves to each other through secret knowledge. The 'esoteric' knowledge professed by the craft was attractive and complex. A lodge provided a forum free from many of the prevailing social conventions or political debates. The presence of titled or otherwise important men gave the organisation legitimacy and reflected status on the humbler members.

The reasons that gentlemen joined the Gardeners were perhaps the same, but probably did have a practical purpose as well. The owners of country estates in the 18th century were often concerned to reflect the latest advances in style and taste in their grounds. The 1676 statutes of the gardeners in Haddington indicate that they were concerned to spread knowledge of plants and advances in horticulture. So by joining the fraternity the gentleman amateur could participate in the same knowledge as his employee, the craftsman. Then as now, the interested amateur could best learn directly from the masters of the craft.

Why free gardening did not survive to rival free masonry is also unknown. However, some reasons can be proposed.

There was a lack of any unifying structure that could encompass all the lodges. As late as the end of the 19th century there were three competing organisations in the east of Scotland. Many lodges did not join.

In the 19th century practical gardening or horticulture became almost completely divorced from free gardening. Horticultural societies appear almost everywhere that there were free gardener lodges. To a large extent they succeeded to (or usurped) the demonstrations of practical gardening or produce exhibitions and competitions formerly the domain of the free gardeners. Without the panoply of ritual they appealed to a wider audience. Prospective free gardeners now had choices - a horticultural society for gardening interests and a wide variety of competing friendly societies for benevolence. All free gardening had to commend loyalty was its ritual.

The esoteric knowledge of free gardeners seems to have become heavily contaminated or mixed-up with that of freemasonry during the 19th century. Freemasonry had not only a head start but also a richer vein of mystery for the interested amateur to tap. Free gardening could not compete.

Many lodges concentrated on benevolence and mutual aid. This placed them in an environment where there were many competitors. The survival of lodges was down to luck or local strengths: a strong lodge could sustain the competition, the weaker ones withered. The mutual element was a significant factor in the organisation of Grand Lodge and the creation of the Ancient Order, but coming so late as the mid 19th century the organisation failed to hold on to the loyalty of all the lodges. Some preferred different patterns of mutuality or disagreed with the strategy of Grand Lodge. Subsequent changes in friendly society legislation created a separate layer of gardener unity friendly societies, again emphasising the economic aspect to the detriment of tradition.

Free gardening in Scotland was all but dead by the last quarter of the 20th century.

Gardeners collections

MOST LOCAL History and Archive collections in the Lothians and Fife have some records about free gardeners in their area. Almost all local authority museums have some artefacts relating to individuals or lodges. Almost all these bodies have contributed material to the SHELF project. [LINK](#)

In addition to the resources on this website, much more was surveyed and can be found on [Resources for Learning in Scotland](#), of which SHELF was just a part. Only a proportion of the existing gardeners' records were selected for inclusion because SHELF looked at the whole idea of self-help. The material that was included can lead back to the original collections held in museums, libraries and archives across the Lothians and Fife.

Other significant collections are held in national institutions. Many records have been deposited in the National Library of Scotland. The National Archives of Scotland have the holdings acquired by the Registrar of Friendly Societies and other deposits. For example, records relating to the Ancient Fraternity of Free Gardeners of East Lothian from 1676-1953 are held under reference GD420. Some university libraries also have material of interest.

However, much is still tucked away in cupboards in homes or lying forgotten in halls and club-rooms awaiting discovery.

The Literature of Free Gardening

A good starting point to discover what is in your area is the survey by Ian MacDougall published as A Catalogue of some Labour Records in Scotland and some Scots Records outside Scotland (Scottish Labour History

Society, Edinburgh, 1978). A recent survey of the Free Gardeners was researched and published by Robert Cooper as *An Introduction to the Origins and History of the Order of Free Gardeners* (Q.C. Correspondence Circle Ltd., London, 2000). *Early Scottish Gardeners and their Plants 1650-1750* (Tuckwell Press, East Linton, 2000) by Forbes W Robertson contains a chapter on gardeners societies. Your local library will be able to find copies of all these books.

Some lodges included short histories in their booklets of rules and regulations or have been the subject of a local study. For example, both Dunfermline and Haddington are the subjects of short accounts: *History of the Society of Gardeners in Dunfermline* by anon (A Angus, Dunfermline, 1816) and *the Ancient Fraternity of Free Gardeners of East Lothian* by Charles Martine and WH Brown (ed.) (East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society, Haddington, 1975).

However, rulebooks have only survived by chance and your lodges may have left no record. Many documents relating to Gardeners are catalogued along with material relating to Freemasonry.

Your local press is often a good source to build a picture of Gardeners' business and social activities. Many local papers have been microfilmed and are available in local history centres. Directories and annual registers often list lodges, addresses and office holders.