

## Rev. Robert Connell 1871 - 1957

Robert Connell was born of Scottish parents in Liverpool, England, in 1871, and came to Canada at the age of 17. After work in various short-term jobs, he was ordained into the priesthood in 1895, and, following his marriage, moved to Victoria in 1901 as a vicar, retiring from the pulpit in 1923.

Connell had a wide range of interests, and displayed a breadth of talents. He taught botany at Victoria High School and wrote a newspaper column on geology and nature. He was also a gifted painter, and taught art at St. Michael's private boys school. During this period he became associated with the Island Arts and Crafts Society, founded in 1909, and exhibited in the Club's 1913 annual show.



*Rev Robert Connell (L), Society Pres 1937-39  
Royal BC Museum Archives, DA-04603*

Subsequently, he turned to a career in politics, joining the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in 1932. After successfully running for the provincial legislature in the following year, he became leader of the Opposition until 1937, when he failed to be re-elected. At this point, he was sought out by Josephine Crease, Honorary President of the now ailing Island Arts and Crafts Society, to lead the Society and assist in its reorganization.

During the tenure of his presidency, 1937-1939, Connell was able to reactivate his painting skills, and his work was on show at the Society's exhibition in 1937 and 1938. His depiction of Christ Church Cathedral is in the permanent collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

The Reverend Robert Connell began the last phase of his career by returning to the spiritual world, and in 1940 became Archdeacon of Comox on Vancouver Island. He died in 1957.



Christ Church Cathedral, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, K03280