

John James Shallcross, Charter Member and first President of the Island Arts Club (IAC) in 1909, was a prominent businessman and influential figure in the community and able to offer impressive leadership to the new organization.

Born in Liverpool, England in 1858, Shallcross arrived in British Columbia in 1893 and became a partner in a lucrative insurance and import business, Shallcross, Macaulay & Co. He served as President of the Victoria Board of Trade and was an Oak Bay alderman and a Victoria City councillor, also accepting a war-time commission in the Victoria Fusiliers.

After purchasing land in Oak Bay from the Pemberton estate, in 1908 he engaged his IAC colleague Samuel Maclure to build him a home, which he named *Tor Lodge*. Carefully restored in 2008, this magnificent residence still stands on its rocky site at [935 Foul Bay Road](#), capturing magnificent sea and mountain views, an example of the Arts and Crafts/Chalet architectural style to which Shallcross, like Maclure, was devoted.

Although not an artist himself, Shallcross held trenchant views on the subject of art. In a 1917 lecture, entitled “Art after the War,” he predicted that Cubism and Futurism would disappear, a view strongly supported by his equally traditionalist friend Dr. Edward Hassell, but much to the resentment of the few “progressives” in the IAC such as Emily Carr.



The Irish-born wife of Shallcross, Ethel Maude, also an IAC Charter Member, was a competent watercolourist whose works were featured in the IAC annual exhibitions from 1912 to 1917.

Shallcross was succeeded as IAC President by Dr. Hassell in 1914 and died in 1921 while still an Oak Bay alderman. His wife survived him until 1948.



*Tor House interior as it appears today*

~ John Lover