

BROUGHTY FERRY TO 1913

By Professor Hugh M Begg

Introduction

The history of Broughty Ferry and has always been intimately linked with that of Dundee as a place of resort, later as a haven for the wealthy, and later still has a residence for commuters. The annexation of Broughty Ferry by its near neighbour, Dundee, on 5th November 1913 has renewed interest in the history of the former Burgh. The general outlines have been well rehearsed elsewhere and these provide a framework within which further research in greater depth and more detail can usefully be undertaken. The notes which follow have been prepared with two purposes in mind: first, to draw together for the benefit of future local historians the array of authoritative work which has already been undertaken; and, second, to place that history within a geographical framework. A bibliography has been appended to demonstrate what has so far been achieved and in the hope that it will encourage further work in areas not yet adequately covered.

With the above purposes in mind these notes something of the chronology of events in Broughty Ferry until the enactment of the Dundee Boundaries Bill in 1913. It draws particular attention to the role of planned development in shaping the structure and morphology of the settlement. The principle actors in that process were the land owners who fued grounds and, by way of their agents, set and enforced requirements for its development. By the start of the twentieth century much of the street pattern and many of the existing buildings were in place within the areas currently identified as West Ferry, the Central area and Hillside (Malcolm1910).

1801-1911

There are few mentions of Broughty Ferry before the late eighteenth century. However, James Graham, who became the first Marquis of Montrose, while a student at Saint Salvator's College, St Andrews University took part in archery contests with his friends on Broughty links. He lost twelve shillings in August 1628, and a week later was again on the losing side. His steward recorded: "...in Bruchtue links my lord being at the archerie with my Lord Kingorne, the losse being for payment of wyne that come from Dundie, my Lord bearing part of Reyes laying by heid , 36 shillings."

By the eighteenth century Broughty Ferry Castle had been restored after the siege of General Monck's troops in 1651 (Mudie F, Walker D M, MacIvor I, 2010); and the hamlets of East and West Ferry made up the settlement of North Ferry with South Ferry locates in the area now known as Tayport.

The population of East and West Ferry was reported in the Old Statistical Account in the 1790s as 240 (114 males and 116 females). A plan drawn for General Charles Hunter of Burnside in 1801 proposed the establishment of a "New Town" at "the North Ferry". The plan is interesting not only because it shows the geography of the settlement at that time but also because of the great influence which Hunter's proposed arrangements had on the evolving structure of Broughty Ferry over the next century and more. Broughty Castle is clearly shown and provides a reminder that there was already a long history of settlement in the area. Its strategic location at the mouth of the Tay helps to explain the long established

ferry service between Fife and Angus close to the site and also the construction of successive fortifications (McKean and Walker, 1993). For many years the salmon fishing rights were a principal asset (Davey 1991).

The plan also shows a scatter of fishermen's cottages in the area of Fisher Street together with a number of more substantial properties apparently following a pattern laid out sometime earlier. The proposed "New Town" was to be laid out following a grid and the major streets were named for royalty (King Street and Queen Street), the builders of the original castle (Gray Street), and to commemorate the recent naval victories in the Napoleonic Wars (Fort Street and St Vincent Street).

The fashion for sea bathing was well established by the early nineteenth century (Durie, 2003). Furthermore, families from Perthshire often took houses or rooms in Broughty Ferry in winter. For example, The Dundee Advertiser society columns noted "arrivals at Broughty Ferry for the season" in October 1808.

In 1825 Hunter produced a further proposal for a planned extension to the existing built up area. This plan proposed an elaborate arrangement of crescents and a square at the eastern end of the town. This was a variation on the original rectilinear grid and incorporated avenues with sites for villas and secluded mansions. The proposals are reminiscent of aspects of the development of Bath and the Edinburgh New Town.

In marked contrast to Hunter's plan of 1801 the proposals incorporated into the 1825 plan had little or no impact. At first sight this is rather surprising since all the evidence suggests that by the mid-1820s Broughty Ferry was emerging as a thriving community with a strategic location and an attractive site. It was connected to Dundee and Monifieth by road and in 1826 a regular coach service was operating 3 times daily from Dundee Post Office to the Eagle Inn. Regular steamer services were established in the early 1820s and special Sunday services for bathers and day trippers from Dundee in 1828.

The problem in implementing the 1825 plan was that these links with the growing city of Dundee were unsuited to daily travel. Consequently, the sorts of people who might have settled in Broughty Ferry kept their main residences in town close to their place of business. The building of the Dundee and Arbroath Railway invited commuting to Dundee but the building of the spur line for the Edinburgh and Northern Railway removed all possibility of fulfilling Hunter's "grand design" since it cut across the land identified for that purpose.

1841-1871

The Census of 1841 recorded a population of some 1980 persons resident in Broughty Ferry. A plan of the time shows something of the development of the settlement in 1845. A comparison with the Hunter plans of 1801 and 1825 shows how the built up area had been extended.

The Dundee and Arbroath Railway had received its Parliamentary Act on 19 May 1836. It was expected to serve local needs and hence was planned as narrow (5 ft 6) gauge railway. The line was completed in stages: 14.5 miles from Arbroath to a temporary terminus at Craigie which was opened on 6 October 1838; a 1.5 mile extension to Roodyards, at the east end of Dundee, opened on 3 June 1839; and the final section, of only 0.75 miles to Trades Lane opened on 2 April 1840. It soon

became obvious that financial viability depended on connection to the emerging national network: and the rails were converted to standard gauge and the Trades Lane station was replaced by Dundee East on 14 December 1857.

In 1846 the Edinburgh and Northern Railway promoted a Private Act of Parliament which secured for them the ancient ferry rights from Tayport to Broughty Ferry and permitted the building of a harbour close to the castle. This substantially altered the configuration of the coastline in the vicinity leaving the position much as it is today. Under the terms of the enabling legislation no structure was to project into the estuary beyond a line drawn from the high water mark at the castle and extending eastwards to the outer extremity of a wooden jetty which was sited close to the present lifeboat station. In May 1848, the short branch to Broughty Ferry Pier opened as the northern terminal of the ferry service across the Firth of Tay from Ferryport-on-Craig. Operated by the Edinburgh and Northern Railway, the branch closed when the Tay Rail Bridge came into use in 1887.

Broughty Castle lay largely in ruins until it was purchased in 1855 by a Government reacting to threats, real and imagined, of possible invasion by the French. Restoration had been largely completed by 1861 and the castle was armed with nine heavy guns.

The arrival of the railway in Broughty Ferry enabled the wealthiest of Dundee's citizens to move away from the deteriorating urban environment of the rapidly industrialising city. Mansion building on a grand scale started with Reres House (1849) and by 1870 some 50 or so very large residences were completed on sites along the route ways into Dundee, in West Ferry and on Hillside. Thus, for instance, in 1850 Joseph Grimmond, a pioneer of the jute backed carpet, purchased Kerbet House and transformed it over a number of years into Carbet Castle sparing no expense and employing, among others, the French artist Charles Frechou who decorated some of the ceilings. Then again, Gilroy's Castle Roy was completed in 1870 and, standing in 20 acres of landscaped gardens, it overlooked central Broughty Ferry for the rest of the nineteenth century.

Acting under the General Police and Improvements (Scotland) Act 1862 the community formed itself into a Burgh. This was a major step in local government and provided the basis for putting in place a variety of improvements including paving, lighting, and cleansing as well as policing. Warden notes that: *After much opposition from parties within and without the district, the first boundaries were fixed on 4th June 1863, and after a poll, at which great excitement prevailed, certain clauses of the Act were adopted on 12th February 1864. However, the Commissioners soon found that, without adopting the whole Act, proper sanitary and other improvements could not be effectively carried out and by a resolution in June 1864, confirmed by the Sheriff on 15th June 1864, the whole act was adopted.*

In the years following there was rapid progress in the provision of basic infrastructure. Of particular interest, in 1866 the fishing community in Broughty Ferry suffered severely from the cholera epidemic which swept the country as a whole. The old burial ground was closed with interments continuing at St Aidan's churchyard and, later, at a new facility at Barnhill (Webster 2013). Potable water was authorised to be supplied from Monikie reservoir under the Dundee Water Act 1869. The Broughty Ferry Gaslight Company had been formed by 1853; and in 1870 the burgh took over the gas works and subsequently achieved considerable economies in its production and supply.

However, it was not 1902 that electric lighting was installed under the " Broughty Ferry Electric Lighting Order of 1900."

Although in 1841 the population was around 1980 in 1841 it had risen to some 3500 by 1861. However, contemporary plans show that Broughty Ferry was still set in predominantly rural surroundings and an interesting characteristic was the extent and quality of the nurseries close to the built up area. In 1868 Reres Hill, extending to about 6½ acres, was obtained by the Burgh from Lord Dalhousie for use as a public park. The cost of laying out walks and making other improvements were met by the sale of wood in the necessary thinning of the existing tree cover.

1871-1911

Over the 40 year period 1871 to 1911 the population of Broughty Ferry continued to grow from some 5800 to just over 11000. The increment was accommodated not only by substantial infilling of vacant plots but also by clearing and rebuilding at a higher density on established sites.

F.H. Groome, Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland (1882-4) provides a first hand contemporary description: *Broughty Ferry, a watering-place and little seaport of Forfarshire, partly in Dundee parish, but chiefly in that of Monifieth..... A police burgh since 1864, it is governed by 3 magistrates and 8 commissioners; is well supplied with both gas and water; and has a post office under Dundee, with money order, savings' bank, and insurance departments, a railway telegraph office, branches of the Royal and North of Scotland Banks, a local savings' bank, 2 chief hotels, a library, a masonic lodge, a volunteer hall, a lifeboat, and several clubs. The principal buildings are the Public Hall (1869), the Young Men's Christian Association (1874), the British Workman's Public House (1873), the Good Templar Hall (1874), and, near the Cemetery, the Dundee Convalescent Home (1876), an imposing pile with lofty central tower, erected for 50 inmates by the late Sir David Baxter and his friends. The Castle Links and Reres Hill are pleasant recreation grounds, 3 and 6 acres in extent; the latter was given by the tenth Earl of Dalhousie. Fishing, employing fully 100 decked boats of 20 tons each on an average, is the only extensive industry; and not more than 40 small vessels annually enter the harbour, which, opened in August 1872, has a stone pier 30 feet wide and nearly 200 long, with a wooden platform and slip.*

In the presbytery of Dundee and synod of Angus and Mearns, Broughty Ferry is apportioned into two quoad sacra parishes, the first erected in 1834, and the second or St Stephen's in 1875. Brook Street Established church (1826-75) has a fine organ, as also has St Stephen's (1871-80), a cruciform Gothic edifice, with a spire 112 feet high; and, in the graveyard of the first-named church, a granite obelisk (1860) marks the tomb of the author of the Christian Philosopher, Thomas Dick, LL.D. (1774-1857), who spent his last 20 years at Broughty Ferry. There are also 3 Free churches--West (1844), East (1865), a good Second Pointed structure, and St Luke's or West Ferry iron church (1878); 2 U.P. churches--Fort Street (1847) and Queen Street (1876), geometrical Gothic in style, with organ and spire; a Congregational church (1864); a Baptist chapel (1876); and St Mary's Episcopal church (1859-70), which, designed by Sir Gilbert Scott in Early English style, is rich in painted glass by London, Munich, and Belgian artists. Besides the Collegiate boys' school and 4 young ladies' seminaries, there are 3 public schools--Eastern, Southern, and Western--which, with respective accommodation for 300,357, and 184 children, had (1879) an average attendance of 411,229, and 171...

Of continuing importance in the evolution of the built environment were the differences between the fishing settlement located on the bank of the Tay and the developments around it. In 1857 there were 62 fishermen and in 1871 some 110. They and their families were closely packed in the area along the shore between Fisher Street, Gray Street and Church Street. They maintained a distinctive way of life and their dwellings had more with the fishing communities along the Angus coast than with those in their immediate vicinity (Webster 2013).

The wealth of the merchant princes in the mansions on the hillside to the north was in stark contrast to the extreme poverty sometimes experienced by fisherfolk: *“ A painful case of destitution was brought to light in the fashionable and aristocratic burgh of Broughty Ferry. A fisherman together with his wife and their family of five children, had been living in a house of one apartment in Dundas Street for some time in very indigent circumstances .. no food.. little or no clothing and, of course, their education had never been dreamt of, the eldest of them never having been to school.”* (Dundee Advertiser 5 June 1872).

Compare that with a contemporary description of the mansions: *“Some of these edifices are quite palatial mansions in size and grandeur. Their exteriors being characterised by great architectural beauty, and higher in decorating the interiors, whilst in the beautifully laid out grounds adjoining, are greenhouses filled with rare exotica, fountains throwing up their tiny jets, and goldfish glittering in the water below”* (Broughty Handbook 1874).

One example of a man of substance who made his fortune in Dundee but preferred to live in Broughty Ferry was James Guthrie Orchar. His company, Robertson and Orchar, amongst other innovations, patented a sack sewing machine. In 1886 Orchar was elected to Chief Magistrate of Broughty Ferry (re-titled Provost the following year) a position which he held until his death. Whilst in this role Orchar instigated a number of improvements to Broughty Ferry, including, in 1887 to mark Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, designing the ironwork and paying the substantial sum of £1000 for a new park entrance to Broughty Ferry's Reres Hill; his friend the architect T.S. Robertson designed the stone archway. Two years later he purchased and established New Park (6.5 acres now known as Orchar Park) just south of Reres Park on Broughty Ferry's Monifieth Road. He was also significantly involved in a number of charitable ventures including establishing a trust to aid orphans and widows of drowned fishermen. On his death, he gifted his extensive private art collection to be displayed in Broughty Ferry.

Other notables who made their home in Broughty Ferry included Dr Thomas Dick the astronomer and Christian philosopher who lived in Hill Street (Begg 2013), Reverend James Moffatt the producer of the Moffatt Bible while Minister at the East Church, and William Adams reputed to be “the most famous whaling captain in the world” who built a mansion in West Ferry (Begg 2013). To those must be added Colin Gilray who grew up in Castle Terrace and, before becoming Headmaster of Scotch College in Melbourne, was the only man to have played rugby for Scotland and New Zealand.

Mansion and villa building for the wealthy continued until the turn of the century with examples such as Aystree (1903). However, in the main, they did not have the same visual impact as those built in the period 1850-70. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century now it was not only the wealthy and their servants along with the fisher community who made up the majority of the growing population of Broughty Ferry. Many of the tenements built around this time replaced

earlier single storey buildings and Douglas Terrace and The Esplanade (formerly Newington Terrace) were completed along with an array of refurbished and newly built churches (Davey 2013).

The Commissioners engaged in other land acquisitions: at Claypotts, 2½ acres then including a skating pond was acquired in 1886; and the grassy beach at West Ferry, extending to about 2¾ acres above high-water mark, and over 5 acres below, was secured in 1901. The Esplanade, a favourite promenade, stretching for nearly a mile along the shore, was made by the Commissioners in 1894 at a cost of £2495. On the other hand, in 1901, the 3 acres of ground at Castle Links which had been acquired by the Commissioners from the Caledonian Railway Company in 1869 for recreation purposes were sold along with the fishing rights, after arbitration, to the War Department who already owned the Castle.

The "Town Councils (Scotland) Act, 1900" came into force in March 1900 and Broughty Ferry was divided into four wards: Ward I., occupying the north-west corner of the burgh; Ward II., extending south of the railway and west of Fort Street; Ward III., east of Fort Street and south of Brook Street; Ward IV., east of Forthill Road and north of Brook Street. By then Broughty Ferry was well established as a shopping and local service centre serving the needs of its residents and those in the immediate vicinity. Customers came on foot or by carriage and were served in an array of small independent stores and other businesses which could provide for an extensive range of requirements. While the vast majority of these are long gone a few of the old names remain including D & W Coullie the joiners (1886), Gillies the auctioneers and house furnishers (1895), Goodfellow and Stevens the bakers (1896), and Robert Samson Ltd the funeral directors (1913).

Throughout the period the town remained a place of resort and in the summer months to the resident population were added day visitors and holiday makers. Indeed, in 1904 a current publication "Broughty Ferry Descriptive and Illustrated Guidebook" referred to it rather ambitiously as "The Brighton of the North". After The Esplanade was constructed in 1894, a golf course was established in 1896 with the help of the Open Champion and at a cost of £80. At first there were 18 short holes but after reconstruction these were reduced to nine with four holes west of Bridge Street -now the Rock Garden- and five holes to the east- now open space with the recent addition of a small play park.

By the early twentieth century Broughty Ferry central Broughty Ferry, West Ferry and Hillside had taken on much of their current appearance. In 1902 that electric light was made available under the Broughty Ferry Electric Lighting Order. Broughty Ferry Power Station Electricity Works were built by the Broughty Ferry Town Council in 1902. The opening in 1905 of the Dundee, Broughty Ferry and District tramway completed the process by which the modern infrastructure of Victorian and Edwardian times was installed. The tramway also ensured that Broughty Ferry, although still physically separate, could be considered to be, de facto, a suburb of Dundee.

Malcolm provides a description of Broughty Ferry in 1910 which includes the following: *Since its incorporation as a burgh Broughty Ferry has had its boundaries extended five times, and its area is now 1454 acres. With well-laid-out streets, good sanitation, and an abundant water-supply, the town, with its favourable situation, its beach, parks, and links, has commended itself to the moneyed classes as a residential locality, as is evidenced by the many mansion-houses within its boundaries.*

Broughty Ferry is well provided with benevolent and useful associations and institutions. For the benefit of the fishing community there is a branch of the East Coast Fishermen's Association, and there is also the Fishermen's Benevolent Society. Other benevolent institutions are – the Broughty Ferry Benevolent Trust, instituted in 1897; the Beach Mission and Free Nursing of Sick Poor Society; St Margaret's Cottage Home; and, under the management of the Directors of the Dundee Royal Infirmary, the Convalescent Home at Barnhill, founded in 1876 by the late Sir David Baxter, Baronet of Kilmaron. The Merchants, the Associated Carpenters and Joiners, the Operative Bakers, have their societies. A Masonic Lodge, and Lodges of Free Gardeners, Ancient Shepherds, Good Templars, Rechabites, and Foresters, and a Yearly Society, have all a standing in Broughty, and in their respective ways are instrumentally of benefit to their members. Other societies, political, ecclesiastical, for building, for horticulture, for cage birds, all in their diverse ways appeal to various sections of the community.

Sport of various kinds has its votaries. The members of a bathing club, "Ye Amphibious Ancients," prosecute their favourite pastime the whole year through, and on New Year's Day, undeterred by wintriest weather, hold gala in the water. There are yachting and rowing clubs, angling, bowling, curling, and football clubs, and cricket is represented by the Forfarshire Eleven at Forthill, one of the leading teams in Scotland. (Malcolm 1910)

Post Script

In 1913 the Dundee Town Council promoted as private legislation The Dundee Boundaries Bill with a view to annexing Broughty Ferry and Monifieth. It was successful in the former objective but not the latter. The basis of the case was that for practical purposes Broughty Ferry was an integral part of Dundee and so it was appropriate that part of the cost of providing and improving services for the city as a whole should be borne by those living in Broughty Ferry.

The evidence presented showed, inter alia, that there was now substantial commuting between Broughty Ferry and the city centre of Dundee, that Broughty residents were dependent on Dundee for the provision of utilities including water and the trams, and that they took advantage of a variety of services provided in Dundee including parks, museums, baths, wash-houses, libraries, fire brigade, and the fish, meat, fruit and vegetable markets.

Although the Bill was vigorously opposed by many residents who were concerned that incorporation would necessarily involve a rise in local taxes and a corresponding fall in property values the City of Dundee won the day and in the years that followed Broughty Ferry was consolidated in its role of a suburb of Dundee (Davey 1992).

Concluding Remarks

This short paper began life as part of one of a series of essays produced to mark 100 years of town planning in Dundee (Begg ed. 1992) and interest was continued with preparation of the set of essays published to mark the centenary of the annexation of the former Burgh of Broughty Ferry by Dundee on 5th November 1913 (Begg H M, C J Davey and N Davey, 2013) As indicated in the Introduction it has no pretensions to be a comprehensive history of the Burgh of Broughty Ferry. It merely brings together in one place the results of some previous work with a particular focus on urban geography. There are particular areas of considerable interest which remain for others to research.

There are some matters of interest whose link with Broughty Ferry is at best tenuous and, indeed, in danger of confusing fact with interesting fiction. These include: Macbeth and his crossing of the Tay-one of Walter Scott's Tales of a Grandfather; the surgical dissection of Florentia the elephant in 1706 (Drummond 2008); the visit to Broughty Ferry of Chevalier de Johnstone after the Battle of Culloden in 1746; and the notion that Princess Charlotte Augusta daughter of the future George 1V gave birth to a stillborn son on 5th November 1817 in West Ferry and died the following day (memorialised in a plaque on the wall at the foot of Victoria Road).

An overview which focusses mainly on social history has been undertaken by Nancy Davey (Davey 2013). In addition to that, some particular matters have been the subject of detailed work. These include: the description of Claypotts Castle and its place in medieval Scottish history and present condition (Apted 1980); and the definitive history of Broughty Castle (Mudie et al, 2010). Other publications with a general focus on Dundee as a whole have included references to buildings in Broughty Ferry notably McKean and Walker (1993). Churches proliferated in the nineteenth century (McCraw 2000, McCraw 2002) and some have been the subject of detailed study (e.g. Campbell 2001). The Old Burial Ground has been the subject of recent authoritative research (Martin and Martin 2006), (Webster 2012), Webster (2013).

There is an array of personalities who were either born or made a home in Broughty Ferry (Norrie 1873). To these should be added, in due course, biographies of the succession of Provosts of Broughty Ferry. Of these the most notable was Provost Orchar whose name continues in his donations of the Orchar Park and the former Orchar Gallery (now a care home).

Of particular interest is the Cowans family who used their family wealth to develop large parts of the Links area where at one time they managed a portfolio of around 200 properties. Then again, there was James MacLaren who as architect and surveyor to the Panmure estate had control over the feuing of much of Broughty Ferry and Barnhill. His son, George, who set up house in Invermark Terrace, Barnhill, retained his father's management of the Panmure feus for the Dalhousie Trustees and concentrated his interests in Broughty Ferry where he had become a parish councillor and a burgh commissioner, successfully promoting the a scheme for a municipal gasworks.

The Edwardian era is of special historical interest as a period of social, economic and political transition; and it is the first to be brought to life by the extensive series of photographs and postcards characteristic of the period (Brotchie and Herd 1980), (Cronshaw 1998), (Brotchie 2007).

One area which can lead to interesting insights is the tracing of the history of particular properties by way of deeds and other sources; and work is already underway in producing an authoritative record of the naming of streets in Broughty Ferry (Webster 2014)

These are only a few of the subjects in which local historians may become interested in the future. There are many others. This paper has depended largely on secondary sources. However, primary sources abound including the Dundee Directories and copies of local newspapers written as "the first draft of history".

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