



MONTROSE PAST & PRESENT



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Acknowledgments: The Society are particularly grateful to Awards for All for their most generous grant towards the cost of Montrose Past and Present.

Neil Werninck's additional photographic material has been essential and we are grateful for his time and his professional expertise. Thanks go to Syd Walker for the use of his picture of the Playhouse Cinema and also to Davie Paton for his painting of fruit sellers in Mill Road. Thanks also go to The Montrose Review and to DC Thomson & Co Ltd for their kind permission to utilise material having their copyright. Mrs Betty Doe typed the photograph lists and the script and we are grateful for her time and her enthusiasm.

The Mill Lane pic (any acknowledgement)

Printed by J Thomson Colour Printers

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M O N T R O S E P A S T & P R E S E N T

Foreword

by the Duke of Montrose


I AM DELIGHTED THAT THE MONTROSE SOCIETY HAS PRODUCED THIS PICTORIAL RECORD OF THE ROYAL BURGH OF MONTROSE.

SINCE EARLY DAYS THE TOWN AND CITIZENRY OF MONTROSE HAVE LAID A BURDEN ON ALL ITS MEMBERS TO SEE THAT ITS NAME IS KNOWN AND HELD IN HONOUR. THIS THEY HAVE DONE ON BOTH LAND AND SEA AND FROM BACK STREET TO PALACE SO THAT THERE IS NOW A PROUD HERITAGE TO BE MAINTAINED.

IT IS A TRIBUTE TO THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE MONTROSE SOCIETY THAT OVER THE YEARS SINCE THE INCEPTION OF PHOTOGRAPHY A RICH TROVE OF MATERIAL HAS BEEN ACCUMULATED. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT IT BE MADE EASILY AVAILABLE TO

MONTROSIANS AT HOME AND WHEREVER THEY MAY BE FOUND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. IT IS IMPORTANT ALSO THAT PEOPLE SHOULD OCCASIONALLY REFLECT ON WHETHER ALL THE CHANGES AROUND THEM HAVE BEEN NECESSARILY FOR THE BETTER.

THIS PUBLICATION WILL STIMULATE, AMUSE AND INTEREST ALL WHO HAVE AN AFFECTION FOR THE TOWN AND NAME OF MONTROSE.



MONTROSE

Introduction

The Society moved into publications a few years ago with the twin aims of using its extensive photographic archive and the raising of its public awareness.

The Archive was recently extended by the Society photographing the entire Royal Burgh in 1999 and the combination of the past and the present was a logical next step. The material herein gives an insight into the town's heritage, what we have now and, just as importantly, what has been lost.

We hope that all who look at these pages will find something which strikes a chord.

Montrose Past - Never to Return

Every town changes continuously. For the most part we have been able to show not only what was but what it has become since. Some things, however, have gone forever, because there is no longer a need, because it would have been uneconomical to retain them, or because of changes in society's demands. These photographs are some examples of changes in commerce, industry, recreation and the town itself.

The Toorie Hoose served many purposes, including a barracks for the Jacobites during the '45 Rebellion. It was demolished in 1956 after a long battle to have it preserved. Failure to save it led to the founding of the Montrose Society.



Montrose is renowned for its closes. This is thought to have been taken around 1870 and to be near Mill Lane. The photograph appears to be from a glass negative and is probably the oldest picture in this book. The outside tap can be seen by the dazzling white skirt; the water is filling the pan at the lady's feet.

This is the first motor van built in Montrose. It used a Ford chassis which had been made in America.

The price to the purchaser was £170. Note the beautiful sign-writing on the side; no doubt Mr.

Hurry needed the van to give a service worthy of his name. The van is outside his premises which, it is thought, are by the Port.



Montrose Aerodrome was established in 1913 as No. 2 Flying Training School of the Royal Flying Corps. This photograph is of the first biplane to arrive at the Aerodrome, on the 26th February, 1913. Given that there were practically no monoplanes in those days most of those present would have expected a biplane.



This is the victorious Montrose VAD team in 1933.
 The Scouts were probably used as patients and, as such, were not considered worthy of identification.
 Left to right, the ladies are:
 Back row: E Wilson, Dot, J Fyfe
 Front row: AB Thomson, ??

The Ladies Golf Club, probably around 1930.
 Left to right, the ladies are:
 Back row: Miss B Lyell (Hillside), Mrs MacGregor,
 Miss MHH Balfour (Mall House), ?,
 Miss Hope Pass (Links House), John Smart,
 George Smart (Bogside Edzell)
 Middle Row: Sitting: Ethel Woodward with Jock, Mrs. Edway
 Millar, (wife of Rector of St Mary's & St Peter's),
 Mrs Ella Lyell, Mrs. Conway Fletcher
 Front Row: Three boys - can anyone identify them?





Ladies in, it is thought, Paton's Mill some time in the late 1940's, early 1950's. It appears that some instruction is going on, perhaps with new machinery.



Friday - Market Day. The mart was at the bottom of Hume Street and burned down in the late 1980's. Sat down in the centre-right background is Reg Clark, well known photographer.



It is thought that the Montrose Lifeboat Station was the first of its type in Scotland. This was another building which had served its purpose.

This is the Empire Theatre which was at the north end of Castle Street. In its time, after serving as a theatre, it became the home of the Montrose Amateur Athletics Club, which was actually a boxing club. It was demolished and replaced by the Castlegait Surgery.

The Playhouse Cinema was an important example of art-deco architecture. It was built in the 1930's, in the heyday of the cinema, and, of course, had its commissionaire as well as uniformed usherettes.



The end of the Playhouse in 1991 and, therefore, the end of the connection with cinema in Montrose. Given the resurgence of the cinema and the absence of facilities in Angus is there not an opportunity for a local entrepreneur?

The High Street

Montrose's High Street is, possibly, the broadest of the main streets of the Scottish burghs. However, before the West side buildings were added on to the existing 16th and 17th C structures it was even broader than it is today. Even during the late 19thC much of the road was unsurfaced with fine cobbles at crossing points. The recent re-surfacing pays homage to these cobbles. In the past, much more of the Town's life took place in this beautiful street.



The High Street looking south. The Hume statue and the gas lighting date this as possibly post 1870. The road surface is dirt with cobbled crossings for convenience. Does the ornate lamp in the right foreground suggest the residence of a Town Councillor - it appears to be outside Peel House?



Today, the road surface is improved and we have flower beds - the cobbles have been moved South! The architecture remains, the street is as wide as ever but the shop fronts and their contents are very different.

This is the Royal Bank of Scotland in its purpose-built premises in 1962. The door on the left led to the apartments above, which are believed to have been occupied by the Bank Manager and his family and, possibly pre-war, their servants. Was this a taxable benefit? This building later became Cooper's, the Grocers, and then a supermarket, Finefare.



Boots took over the building in the early 1980's and the external modifications they made can be clearly seen. The first and second floors are now used only for storage.



This is a typical example of local pageantry, occurring in, probably, all towns in Scotland at this time which appears to be the early 1960's. It is noteworthy that Robert Fulton Birss was a tailor offering bespoke suits for both men and women - made on the premises - another service gone from Montrose. This photograph gives a wonderful impression of the local community interest and involvement.



This very old building, the Dun Town House, was the town house of the Erskines of Dun. When this photograph was taken its role had changed, as can be seen from the shops.

Following its demolition it was replaced by a building which was originally a bank but is now two private residences although the future of the ground floor is uncertain.





Today, the view is substantially the same,
apart from the presence of traffic.

This view of the High Street
looking North dates from around
1900. The building butting on to
the Ball House was the last of
three and, of course, has since
been removed although the mark
of its gable is still visible.



Taxi! To make use of these vehicles was actually a rather more refined procedure. There were no meters and the contract was by time; the drivers look exceedingly well dressed but imagine changing a wheel in that sparkingly smart white suit.



Descendants of Mr. Milne & Son?
The taxis today offer a greater variety of vehicle, higher speeds and admirable reliability but they are not in the High Street. However, they do point towards it and we are fortunate to have them positioned so conveniently.

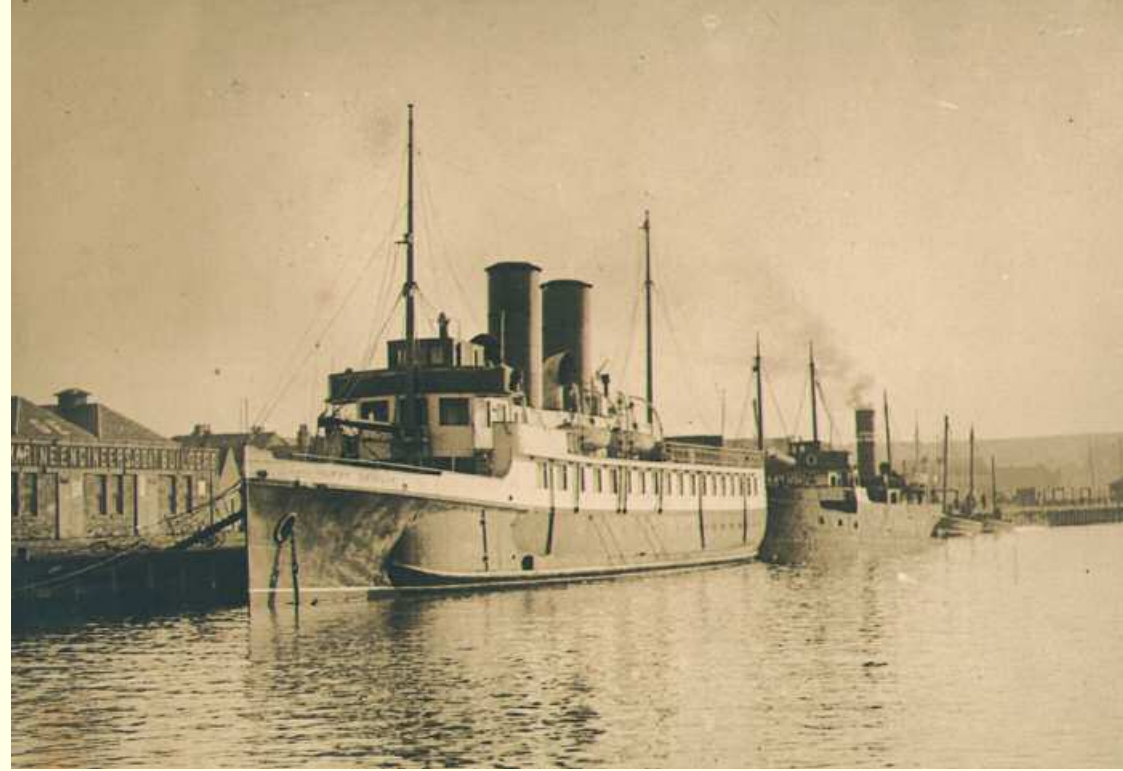
Maritime Montrose

Montrose has been a major seaport from 1000AD and, until the 16thC, was one of the most important Scottish seaports. Trade with Europe and Scandinavia was the dominant activity but in more recent years boat building, ship-building and fishing added to the business. Indeed, Montrose exported salmon to London and the Continent for centuries. Most of this has now gone but new life has come to the port through the advent of North Sea oil. Use of the Basin as a recreational area gives a new dimension to Montrose's relationship with the water.

The first photograph, taken about 1875 (?) shows an almost unimaginable amount of shipping in the harbour. A paddle-steamer can be seen in the middle of the picture. As well as the overseas trade, the harbour was home to many fishing boats; here is the scene from Ferryden.



This picture is of steamers in the harbour; the dockgate can be seen. Who were the Motor, Marine Engineers and Boat Builders and why the bulge on the steamer's hull?



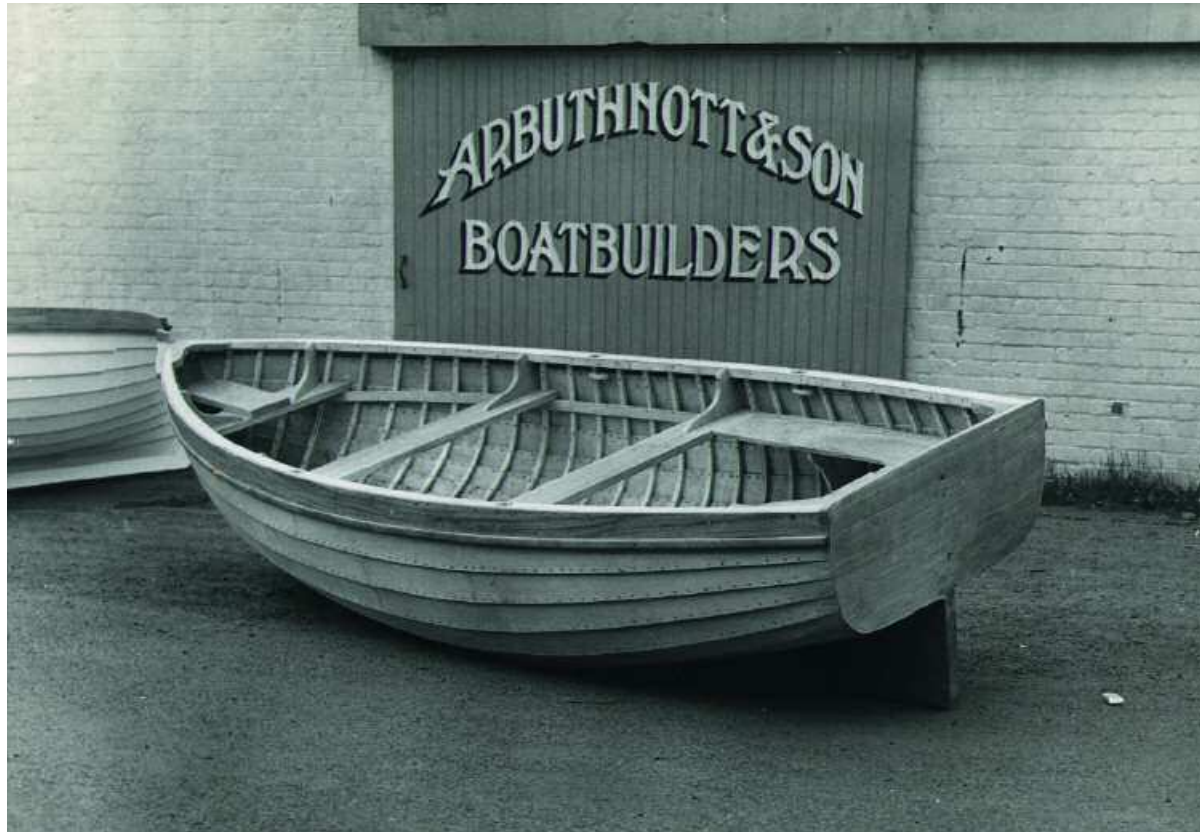
As well as the overseas trade, the harbour was home to many fishing boats; here is the scene from Ferryden.



Until recently Montrose engaged in boat-building



Arbuthnott & Son built life-boats in wood and aluminium and here we see their craftsmanship, in wood from the bottom up. What a pity this no longer happens in Montrose.



Here we see the finished article.



The Basin has been used for many things over the years. Here we see sailing boats but does Montrose do enough to promote this leisure activity?



Every picture tells a story. Here is the same view taken in 2002.



We believe this to be a Royal Navy minesweeper launching in the mid 1950's. Councillor Glory Adams was present at the ceremony, extreme left; the Royal Navy Officer (his command to be?) keeps a very low profile in the background. Photographer Kenneth Hay took this excellent shot of the launch. The shed is now in the Ecclesgreig estate, near St. Cyrus and is used for grain storage. Does anyone know the lady who swung the bottle?

Montrose's shipyard, owned by John Lewis, was on the real Rossie Island, today's oil base site.





Progress in shipping, and in this 1990's picture, at the North Quay, is the Sunbrisa (Limassol). Let us hope that Maritime Montrose continues to flourish and to build on its past.



This is an example of what happens nowadays in Montrose Harbour, on the South Quay. An oilrig component is being loaded.



The Inner Harbour was at the bottom of Ferry Street and the dockgates made it independent of tidal conditions. These photographs show the gates and shipping using the harbour. The Inner Harbour could not take large shipping and was filled in around 1982, to provide ground for warehousing.

This is the Inch Water seen from Ferryden sometime in the 1960's.



The associated Inch Bridge is now underneath the large roundabout on entering Montrose from the South. The large double building on the left is the John Lewis ship-sheds referred to earlier. By the 1980's the Inch Water was gone, in order to develop the land for servicing the oil industry.



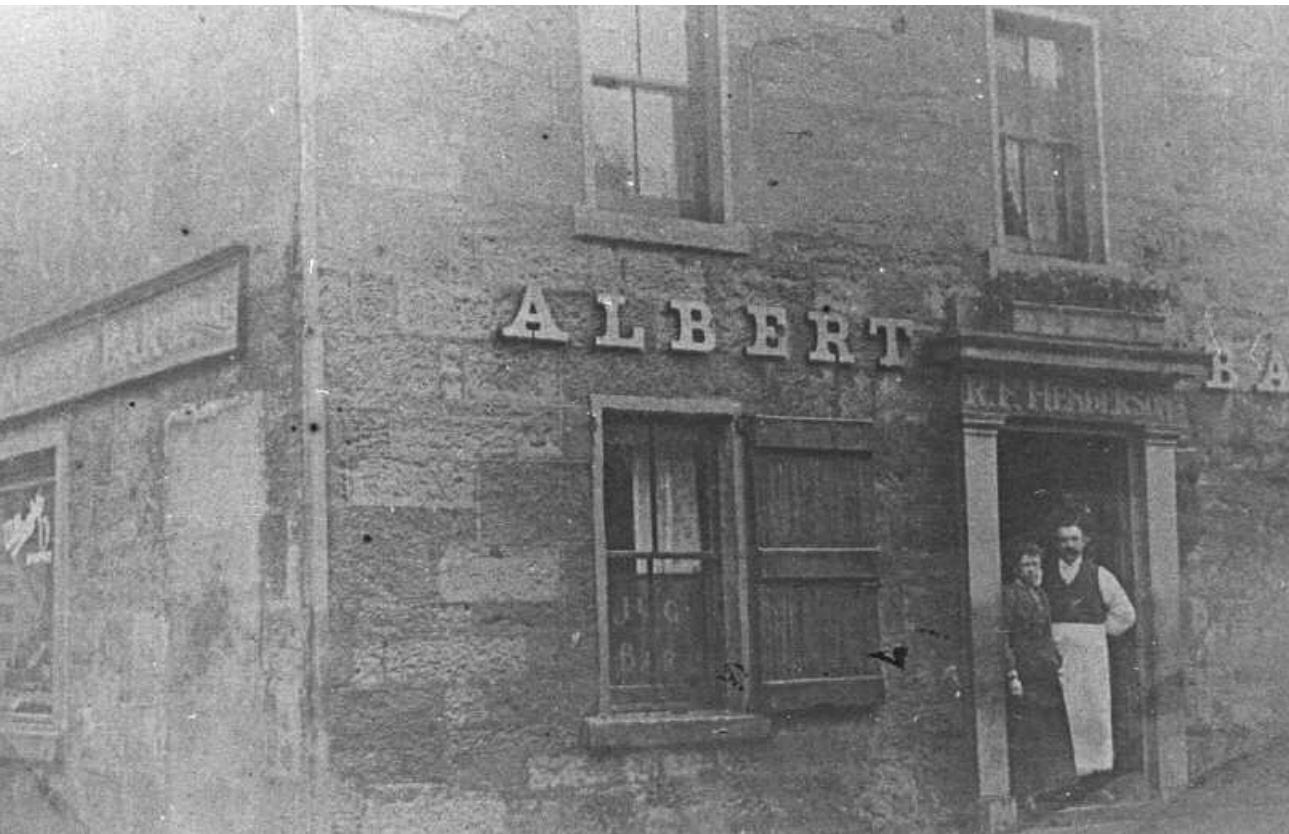
Montrose's salmon fishers occasionally caught something unexpected. Here we see a porpoise at the Boddin, possibly in the 1960's.



Fishing at the mouth of the South Esk, probably in the late 1980's. It looks tranquil but the work is demanding and the profit hard-earned.

Some Pubs

Quenching of thirst has never been a problem in Montrose, provided some money is to hand. One or two pubs have never changed apart from decor. Others have changed appearance but not their purpose. Regrettably, one or two have gone and have been replaced by buildings serving different customers.



The Albert Bar in the late 19th/early 20thC. It is thought that the Mr and Mrs Henderson seen here were the parents of Davy and Willie who had the Albert later on.



Today's Albert Bar with its attractive modern exterior. The upstairs windows seem to be unchanged, however, which is a testament to their construction and the care given to them by the owners over the years.

In this picture, the gentleman in the black top hat at the left was Mr. Jack, the veterinary surgeon, while the man in the grey top hat, towards the right, was a Mr. R.S. Batchelor, famous for the fact that he had fourteen children, eight of whom lived to be over ninety. Presumably his wife had something to do with this! Note the tiny black horse.



Unlike the Northern Vaults on page 27, the Black Horse, at the corner of Murray Street and Lower Hall Street is now a very different structure.





The Eagle Inn was an hostelry of the late 19thC which stood at the corner of an undeveloped George Street and a very dilapidated South Esk Street.



It has been replaced by the present George Hotel.



It is known that the Northern Vaults was originally the Brown Horse. Since changing its name, it can be seen that the Northern Vaults has altered but little. What is interesting about the old photograph is the beautiful open carriage (what was the event?) and the screens informing patrons that the licensee, Mr D Mackie, imported cigars and wines.





In coaching days the Star Hotel made sure that it was not missed by any passing trade or its intending visitors. The arch over New Wynd was an important feature of early 20thC Montrose.



The modern picture shows it has, regrettably, been removed. It would be nice to see it replaced.

The Changing Face of Montrose

The changes are differing examples of the need for change. The suspension bridge was replaced in the 1920's owing to traffic demands and now we will shortly have another bridge - for the same reason. The slum housing decayed and had to be replaced. School buildings were outmoded by the changing educational system. Other changes have been dictated by commercial considerations.



Between the Wars Montrose was one of the most popular holiday resorts in Scotland. During the Glasgow Fair it was almost impossible to get on to the beach. All facilities were there - donkeys, bathing huts, ice-cream and miniature train.

Taken from the same spot but at high tide, in 2002, the changes are obvious and, it is thought, much for the worse. The reinforcement was necessary to prevent further massive erosion and, of course, cheap air travel means going to near-guaranteed sun.





Cappers' Wynd in the 1950's and
as it is today.



This re-development was only part
of a major change to this part of
Montrose in the late 1950's early
1960's. This was a much-needed
improvement.



The splendid North Links School, built in the late 19thC, a typical form of primary school common throughout Scotland in the first half of the 20thC. It had a gymnasium, a swimming pool and central heating and accommodated 600-700 pupils.



The interior of the School - the middle floor looking to the North stairway, which was the girls' entrance. The woodwork was spectacular.



On the site of the School there now stands sheltered housing. The weather vane and the railings from the school have been retained.



The second bridge over the South Esk, an early suspension bridge, built in the 19thC and demolished by 1930 owing to traffic demands.



The present bridge - Montrose's future past. Despite its appearance this is a cantilever bridge built from reinforced concrete. This is (was) the only bridge of its type in the world. Its problems are mainly structural, caused by chemical interactions between the concrete and its reinforcing. The bridge's useful life is now coming to an end.



The demolition of the suspension bridge - note the steam cranes. The temporary bridge is clearly visible - a similar situation will soon be with us.



In 1773, in this building, Robert Brown was born. He became, in the first half of the 19thC, the most celebrated botanist in the world. He is still commemorated by 'Brownian Movement' of which he gave the first necessary observations. The house was built in the form of a cross and Brown's father was the Episcopal minister who preached in the house owing to his refusal to pray for George III. The building was certainly standing in the 17thC, and was the manse of the Episcopal Church in Montrose. But it had been adapted for other purposes by the time of this illustration. It was situated at the corner of the High Street and Mill Road.



Montrose Library was built with Andrew Carnegie money in the early 1900's and is a fine example of Edwardian architecture. It is built on the site of Robert Brown's birthplace. The Society would like to see replaced the railings along the frontage which were removed during WW2.



Panmure Barracks was built in 1779 and was originally an asylum, later replaced by Sunnyside. It became a Barracks for the Angus and Mearns Militia, in the mid 19thC. It was demolished between the wars.

House Builders (Montrose)Ltd warehouse stands on the site of the Barracks; local Council housing also occupies some of the site. Before the latest developments the Marine Hotel was there; this gave way to the requirement for a GSK car park.





The original Caley station was owned by the Caledonian Railway which eventually became part of the London Midland and Scottish system. There were links to Inverbervie, Brechin and Forfar.



The station was closed in the 1960's and was used as a scrapyard. It is now amenity and sheltered housing but the main station building has been incorporated into the design.

The middle part of Wharf Street was demolished in the 1960's to be replaced by Council housing. Today, the wharf is concrete and has been extended.



This is a view of the harbour with Wharf Street in the background, taken, probably, in the 1950's. Cappers Wynd can be seen centre picture; note the wooden wharf in the foreground.



There can be no doubt that the demolition improved Union Street. The private housing now on the site is in sympathy with Union Street and does not dominate it as did the Maltings.



This photograph was taken around 1976/7 and shows the Maltings at the east end of Union Street. The building was demolished in 1978; it had been out of use for some time before this.

We have been unable to date this photograph of Seagate East, despite study of the bicycle. It is thought that these houses may well have been sub-divided internally and that internal sanitation may have been non-existent.



Possibly today they might have been completely renovated but they were demolished in the late 1950's, early 1960's to be replaced by Council housing. The character of the street may have been lost but the amenities have been improved.

The Old Lithouse stood at the corner of Murray Street and the South corner of Lower Hall Street. We do not know the origin of 'Lithouse' but flax dyers worked there till the mid 19thC, Angus having a thriving flax industry at that time. This photograph was hand-tinted and published in Saxony, accounting probably for the novel spelling of Barclay which can be seen as 'BARKLAY'.



This site is now occupied by the YMCA building,



At the bottom of Hume Street stood the Auction Market. This picture shows the building which contained the auction ring and an arcade of stalls for potato merchants, grain merchants, seedsmen, et al. There was a large stockyard to the South, to the rear of the old bowling green.



On the site but not on its precise position now stands Tesco, formerly Willie Low's.



This is John Street, before photography, and is dated pre-1835. St John's Church is on the left and beyond it can be seen what is now the Park Hotel. Mill chimneys smoke in the background, one of which is thought to be the rope and sail works.



Today shows a very different aspect, most of the development dating from Victorian times.



This blacksmith's shop in New Wynd photographed prior to 1920, stood at what is now the entrance to the Co-op car park in New Wynd. The Company is to be congratulated on still being in business, albeit in different premises, in New Wynd. The fifth generation is now working in the business; the photograph shows the first generation, Joe Maiden.

This is New wynd as it is today looking up towards the Albert Bar.





These houses stood in Kincardine Street, on the corner of Queen Street. The lady standing at the door was Maria Gow - are there any descendants still in Montrose? The date is probably pre-World War 1 but modern living required a different approach.



Here we see today's lock-ups and the new housing, together with the inevitable cars.



This is thought to be a painting of Mill Road from a photograph taken in the early 1900's. Fruit sellers can be seen. Mill Road linked Bridge Street with a mill which has since been replaced by the house called 'Millnamair'.

This photograph of North Street was taken in the 1950's - a Humber Sceptre, perhaps, in the foreground. North Links School dome is discernible. As in other parts of Montrose (and in other towns) the character of a street has been altered by the demolition in the 1960's early 1970's. In this case some of us think there has been a decided improvement.



Mill Road today still fulfils a vital communications function connecting as it does the main thoroughfare with a supermarket and a bowling green.





This picture of 32/36 Murray Street was taken in 1896. The family group to the right of the centre door shows Mrs Grieve. To her left is Jessie Ann Grieve who became Mrs James Scott. To her right are the Lockhart family. Are there any descendants still in Montrose?

The building has been extensively changed and the main part is now the Citizens' Advice Bureau, the remainder being used by Turriff's for storage.





This shows the West side of Castle Street in the late 19thC. The building in the middle with the tall chimney is thought to be a butcher's. Another interesting feature is the triangle to the right of the door in the foreground which is thought to be a drying frame for fish.

This side of the street was replaced by the Johnston buildings sometime in the early 20thC. We are a hundred years or so on - how long will they remain?





The Canale family will be interested to see this photograph of 99 Murray Street. Here are their antecedents who came to Montrose at turn of the 19th/20th C like so many others from Italy. The jars of sweets can be seen in the window and the shop also provided tobacco, particularly Players cigarettes.

The shop still exists. It is Flairs, a flower shop, at the corner of Upper Hall Street (formerly known as Dummy Ha's Wynd).



Once again we see Glory Adams, present this time at a tree-planting ceremony in Panmure Gardens in the Mid-Links by Rabbie Burns' statue. It is thought that the Provost is Mr Cameron and that the time is the early 1950's. The occasion has not been identified, but perhaps it is the Coronation of 1953.

The tree still stands, considerably taller.





This shop stood at the corner of Seagate and Apple Wynd and was one of many such local shops scattered around the town. As might be expected the stock was of a diverse nature, feeding stuffs (for animals?), confectionery and the main grocery content. The picture dates from 1900 approximately. Are there any descendants of James Gibson's still in the town?

The premises are long gone and we see now today's council housing.





Here we see houses in Baltic Street at either side of the Kirkyard Walk, taken from Museum Street. The foreground buildings stand today. The old buildings were demolished when the Walk was re-laid. It is safe to say that the demolition represented a significant improvement as can be seen from today's photograph. Note the growth of the trees masking the Congregational Church.



Lloyd's TSB stands on the site of Milne's Eating House. It is noteworthy that the Milne family combined the Eating House business with joinery, wood-carving and antique-dealing. It is thought this was taken in the 1920's.



Milne's Eating House and the building on its right were demolished at the beginning of the last century and were replaced by today's bank building. Italian stone masons were commissioned to work the stone which is particularly ornate.

