



The Fair Maid's House

*The story of a building, a trade,
a city, and a fair maid*

Foreword

The origin of this publication is a talk on The Fair Maid's House given to the Community Affairs Group of Perth University of the Third Age (U3A) by Andrew Driver of Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust. He suggested that there is still much that we do not know about the building. That was our cue, as a group of largely novice local history researchers, to initiate a project in partnership with the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS) and produce this booklet about The Fair Maid's House, its associations and its history.

Disclaimer: Every precaution has been taken in the preparation of this booklet to ensure accuracy and to obtain permission to use copyright material. If we have failed in any respect we offer our apologies.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The Fair Maid's House is often described as the oldest surviving secular building in Perth, though only the back and gable end walls of the present house date from the 17th century.

In medieval times, the Dominican Monastery occupied land in the vicinity of the present building, until its destruction in 1559. Members of the Dominican Order became known as Black Friars, because of their black hood over a white habit, and the monastery is generally described as Blackfriars.

The property owes much to Sir Walter Scott. His novel, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, published in 1828, is a romantic tale set around 1400. It tells the story of Catharine Glover, the fictional daughter of Simon Glover – also fictional, though there was a Simon Glover, a burgess of Perth, in 1291.

The novel embraces royal intrigue as well as the story of Catharine and her eventual husband, Henry Gow, known as Hal o' the Wynd. It includes a depiction of the Battle of the Clans which took place on Perth's North Inch in 1396. Scott immortalised the battle, though the facts of the real event are shrouded in mystery.

This booklet tells the story of The Fair Maid's House from its medieval origins up to the early 21st century when the House and adjoining premises were converted for use by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS) as its headquarters and a public visitor and education centre.

It starts with a look at medieval Perth and its importance in the political, religious and commercial life of Scotland. Recent evidence is used to give a sense of the complex history of the building. There is a detailed account of the owners and occupants of The Fair Maid's House including a section about The Glover Incorporation of Perth, who owned the building from the 1620s for over 200 years. The booklet also considers Scott's impact on the society of his time, and particularly on Perth, which has become known as "the Fair City" largely as a result of his novel.

In the course of researching this publication, information has been discovered which differs from some earlier accounts. Every effort has been made to minimise speculative comments not supported by firm evidence, though secondary sources have been used in places. Some repetition is unavoidable.

Setting the scene: medieval Perth

Visitors to the headquarters of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society may find it surprising to recall that this now quiet area, lying to the north of the one-time city walls, once contained Perth Castle and later the monastery and lands of the Dominican Order of Friars Predicant (known as Black Friars), who occupied it for over 300 years.

The importance of medieval Perth

The exact origins of Perth are unknown. Certain early historians maintained that it was founded by the Romans.

Others believed that it originated as a Pictish settlement in which St John's Church (now commonly referred to as St John's Kirk) and Perth Castle had been established by the 7th century. However, there is no evidence linking the Church and Castle to the 7th century.

Leading contemporary historians take a different view. Although missing, Perth's original foundation charter is widely assumed to date from the 1120s, when King David I was founding his new burghs on established and thriving centres of settlement.

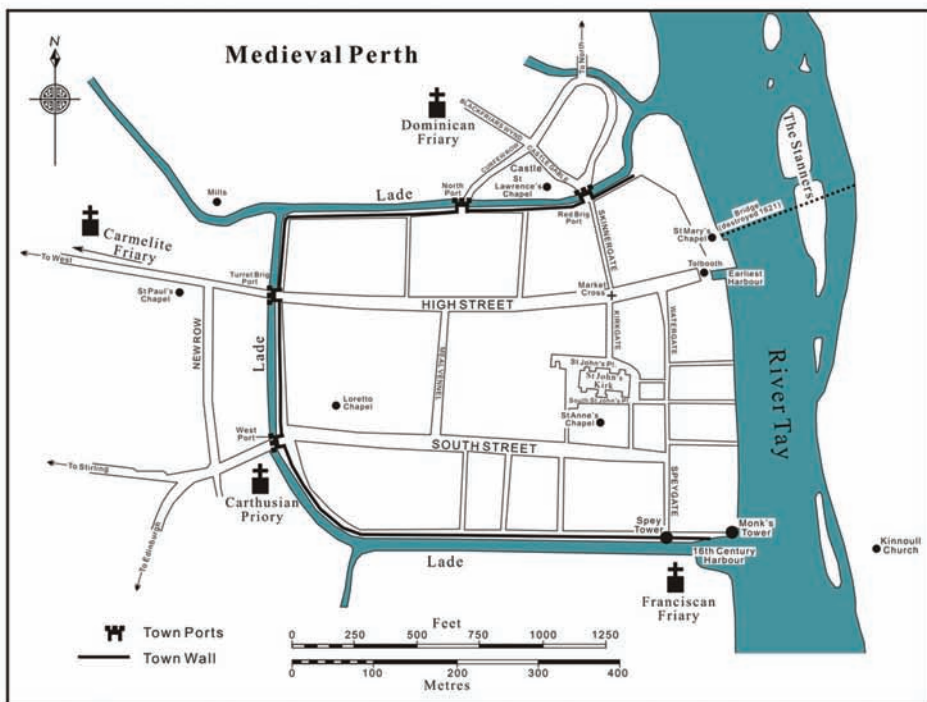
“Go on great Tay
through fields,
through towns,
through Perth.
The wealth of that
city supports the
kingdom.”

*“Transis ample Tai, per
rura, per oppida, per
Perth. Regnum sustenant
illius urbis opes.”*

Alexander Neckham (1157-1217)
Abbot of Cirencester

Archaeological evidence, in the form of miscellaneous carbon dated finds, also points to settlement in Perth during the 11th century, taking advantage of the convergence of routes at the lowest fording and highest navigable point of the River Tay.

Enjoying the economic power and status of a royal burgh (essentially that of a city today), Perth played an important role in the political, diplomatic, ecclesiastical and commercial life of Scotland from early times.



Representation of medieval Perth showing the lade. The Fair Maid's House is located near the Dominican Friary.

The medieval burgh occupied the area between the lade (millstream) under Mill Street to the north, the River Tay to the east, the lade under Canal Street to the south and the lade running under Methven Street to the west.

By modern standards, medieval life in Scotland was grim. Frequent famines and, from the mid 14th century, plague epidemics made life precarious. Houses were wooden and crowded together. Dirt, stench and noise made medieval Perth

a very unpleasant place. Despite this, the burgh was renowned for its excellent fairs and markets to which visitors came from far and wide. Ships could easily sail up the River Tay to Perth, at this time a busy inland port, for the export of hides, timber and fish.

Perth also housed craftsmen weaving wool and an important leather industry. Skinners and glovers occupied the Skinnergate, which led north out of the city towards the castle.

Setting the scene: medieval Perth

Medieval Scotland did not have an established capital in the modern sense. Because Blackfriars Monastery was a popular royal residence until 1437, Perth was a centre of court life. Here the monarch usually held parliaments and presided over meetings of the Scottish Exchequer. Most of the national councils of the Pre-Reformation Church were convened in Perth.

Treaties negotiated at Perth (usually in the Blackfriars Monastery) included the 1266 Treaty with Norway, which ended hostilities over the Western Isles.

Another was the 1428 Treaty with France, concerning renewal of the Auld Alliance and the marriage of King James I's daughter Margaret to Dauphin Louis (later King Louis XI) of France. A Royal Mint was established in Perth in 1373.

After the assassination of King James I in Blackfriars Monastery in 1437, Perth enjoyed less royal favour, although parliaments continued to be held there for many years.

Towards the end of the 15th century, Edinburgh came to be recognised as Scotland's principal royal burgh.

Blackfriars Monastery

From its establishment in 1231 until the 1550s, Blackfriars Monastery occupied a pre-eminent position, receiving gifts of land and goods from kings and wealthy members of society and offering lodgings in the Friary's guest quarters to successive kings. It is clear that, during the 14th century, the Black Friars' lands contained both secular and ecclesiastical buildings.

From 1487, when Scotland became a province of the Dominican Order, the Provincial Prior usually resided at Blackfriars. The Dominicans may have continued to hold all their important meetings there until the 16th century.

During the 1550s, Blackfriars Monastery, along with other religious houses, suffered much public criticism, although John Knox himself compared the behaviour of the Dominicans favourably with that of the Franciscans.

In 1559 however, Blackfriars and other religious establishments in Perth and Scone were sacked during the uproar of the Reformation. A representation of this event can be seen in David Simon's painting, reproduced overleaf.



Setting the scene: medieval Perth

The sacking of Perth was part of an orgy of destruction which followed disturbances in St John's Church after a sermon by John Knox on 11 May 1559. Mary of Guise, the Queen Regent, attempted unsuccessfully to suppress the rebellion. Fighting between her troops and the Protestant reformers continued for several months.

Towards the end of this fighting, 300 Perth citizens, many of them glovers, marched to protect Stirling from the Regent. All wore lengths of hangman's rope, dubbed St Johnstoun Ribbons, to signify their willingness to die. It is reported that a musical air, *The Glover March*, was composed for the occasion.

After the Reformation in 1560, the Dominicans, like members of other religious orders, were deprived of all their property and pensioned off. Many became clergy in the Reformed Church. All church lands

were taken over by the Crown. In Perth, the King James VI Hospital was established by a royal charter in 1569, partly from the Black Friars' assets, to carry out the charitable functions previously undertaken by them.

The Fair Maid's House

The Fair Maid's House is located in a narrow street near the modern Concert Hall, on land formerly owned by Blackfriars Monastery. It owes its fame to Sir Walter Scott's best-selling novel, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, set in 14th century St John's Town of Perth (or St Johnstoun, the name by which Perth was known in medieval times due to the presence of St John's Church).

The Fair Maid's House shares with Juliet's House in Verona the distinction of popular association with a fictional heroine.

LEFT: The radical reformers have responded to John Knox's sermon by stripping St John's Church and then plundering the friaries. Representation of Perth on 11 May 1559 by David Simon, commissioned by Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust.

Development of the House

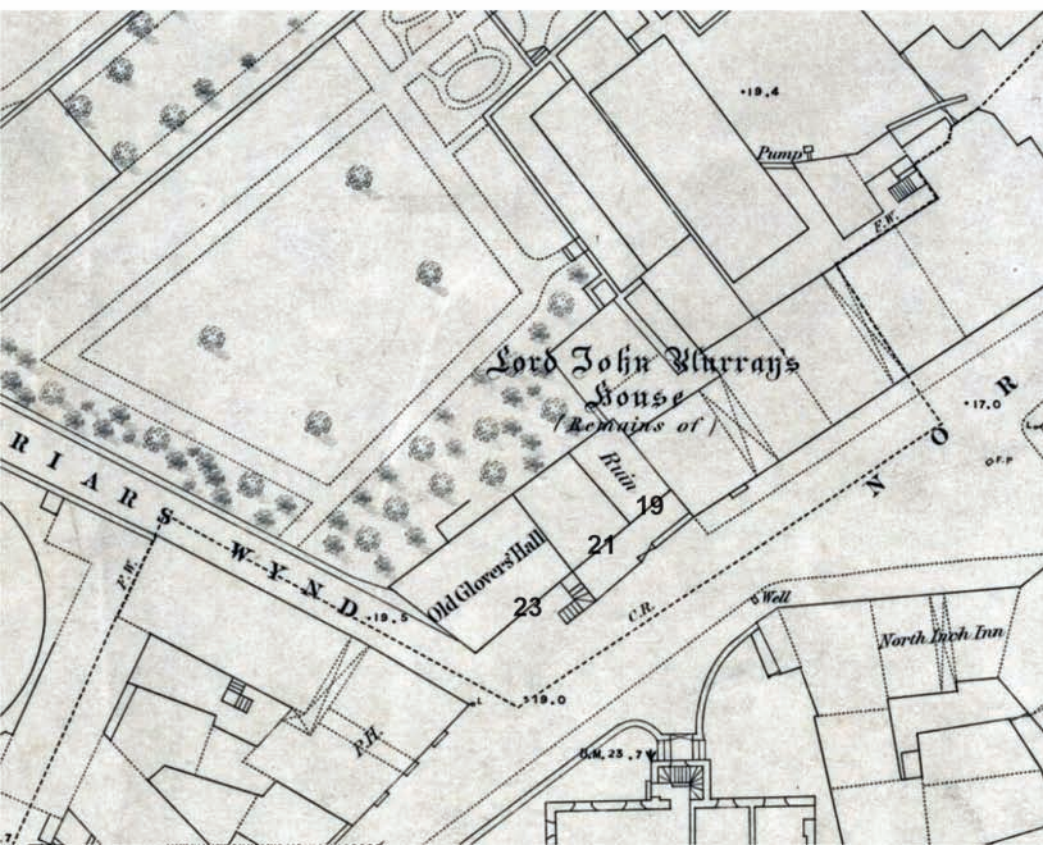
In this section a brief outline is provided of some of the findings from an archaeological study of the site prior to RSGS taking up residence, of a few features of the present building and of an interesting artefact.

An archaeological watching brief (the term for an investigation) about the site was commissioned in 2010. The main aim of the investigation was to record any features of archaeological interest during the

redevelopment of the House in 2010-1 by the RSGS. The beginning of this section uses material from Alder Archaeology's report on the Watching Brief.

The Fair Maid's House

The Fair Maid's House was originally described as being in Curfew Row. Older legal documents generally place it at the corner of what is now called Blackfriars Wynd and in the vicinity of the Castle Gable.



Development of the House

However, nearly all the written references of a later date place it in Curfew Row, even up to the time when the 19th century directories record it as being in North Port – though with varying numbers. For this publication it will be referred to by its present address of 23 North Port.

The House adjoins 21 North Port, which in turn adjoins 19 North Port, now known as Lord John Murray's House, after the owner who sat as Member of Parliament for Perthshire from 1734 to 1761.

The House now contains the RSGS reception area and Earth Room on the ground floor with a new extension, forming an education room, built on what was a garden area. The upper floor is now accessed by a staircase in 21 North Port. The Blackfriars Wall, described below, can be viewed from these stairs. The Cuthbert Map Room and the Explorers Room occupy the first floor.

LEFT: Part of the Ordnance Survey 50 inches to 1 mile map published in 1863 showing the Old Glovers Hall with its outside staircase, 21 North Port with an annexe in front, and Lord John Murray's House.

The medieval property

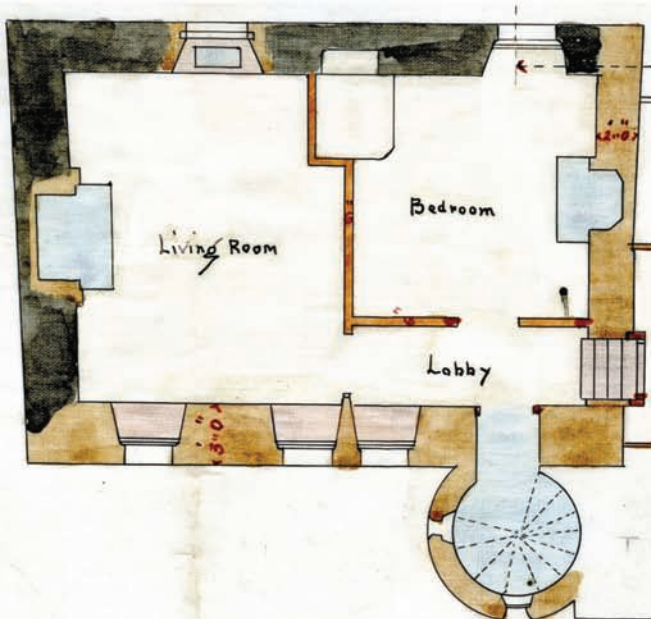
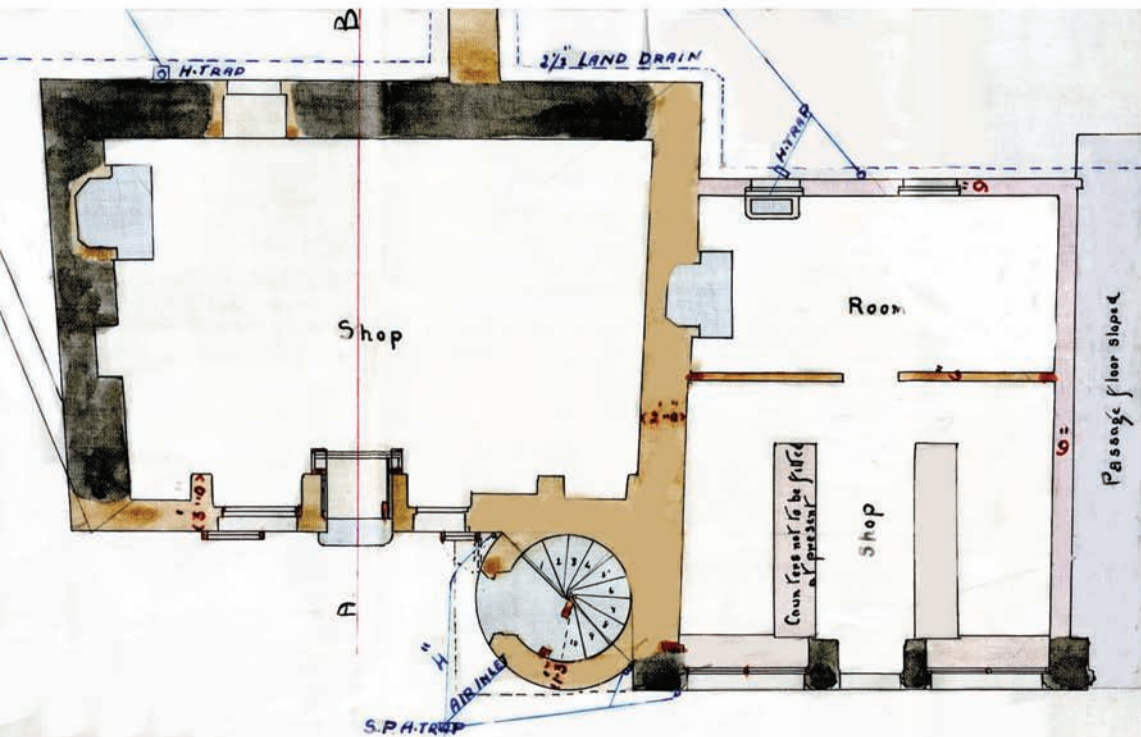
The Fair Maid's House is a B-listed building dating from at least the 17th century. The site is first recorded in 1475 when the Black Friars granted their land, described as "one hall with annexed chamber and two cellars", in two equal halves to John Kinloch (spelt Kinlocht in the 1475 charter) and John Frew. The west half, granted to Frew, is now The Fair Maid's House; the east half, granted to Kinloch, is now 21 North Port.

The chamber (bedroom) and the hall (or public room) would have been on the upper floor with two cellars on the ground floor. The chamber probably included the surviving upper fireplace in the Blackfriars Wall.

The upstairs rooms, where The Glover Incorporation of Perth met, used to be accessed by an outside stair which was later replaced by an enclosed spiral staircase.

The interest generated by Sir Walter Scott's best-selling novel, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, gave the property a high profile and between 1892-4 the building was substantially altered by the owner William Japp (see plans overleaf showing his ideas).

Development of the House



These plans, dated May 1893, show Japp's ideas for the remodelling of the ground (above) and upper floors of the House. The black shading shows parts of the building to be left untouched. The orange shows parts to be rebuilt or altered. The spiral staircase and central wall of the ground floor plan mark the boundary between the original house and 21 North Port, which has now been incorporated into it.

Development of the House

Architectural history

A survey undertaken by the *Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland* in 1972 suggested that these buildings have a complex architectural history and may incorporate some medieval architecture.

For example, the exposed Blackfriars Wall (*pictured*) is thought to be an original late medieval gable end wall. The location of two fireplaces and a stone corbel (a bracket comprising a solid piece of material built into a wall), on the interior wall indicates that the original floor levels were approximately 600 millimetres below the present levels of the Cuthbert Map Room.

The difference in the levels of the fireplaces in the Blackfriars Wall and The Fair Maid's House is due to the gradual build-up of the ground surface over the years. It is not, as has sometimes been suggested, as a result of the gradual silting up of the area when the river repeatedly broke its banks.

The north (back) wall of The Fair Maid's House is set on foundations which are deep relative to the present day ground level. Three pieces of Redware pottery (a major

medieval pottery from the late 12th or 13th centuries to the 17th or 18th centuries) were wedged on the edge along the faces of the walls.

The similarity of the foundations under the back wall of The Fair Maid's House to those of the demolished back wall of 21 North Port suggests that the foundations of the earlier building were reused by The Glover Incorporation of Perth.



Development of the House

The garden area to the rear of the building was lowered for the construction of an extension to house the RSGS collections. Medieval pottery and animal bones were recovered from the garden soil. The back garden was accessed directly from North Port through a passage between 19 and 21 until it was incorporated into 21 North Port.



Features

An interesting feature of the House is the carved motto of The Glover Incorporation of Perth, "Grace and Peace", which can be seen above the external door (*pictured*). This does not date back to the building's use by The Glover Incorporation of Perth, being part of Japp's alterations and restoration.

During the redevelopment of the building, the fittings on the external door handle were removed. There was a 'tirling-pin' (or knocker, sometimes called a 'dirling-pin') fitted on the door and consisting of a ring and a twisted rod, along which the ring could be rattled (*pictured*). It is now stored in the building along with

three original wooden lock casings and a door handle.

Of architectural interest is the small niche in the wall of The Fair Maid's House underneath the eaves on the left (*pictured*). This niche, it has sometimes been suggested, once housed Perth's curfew bell which may have tolled each night at 8.00pm to signal that fires should be dampened down and the city gates secured. Since The Fair Maid's House was outside the town's boundaries, this is unlikely to have been the case.



One of a series of eight lithograph views of Perth published by J & D Nichol in 1841, showing 21 North Port as part roofed and part ruined, with a lean-to in front (as in the OS First Edition). The three storey building to the right of 19 North Port has since been demolished and is presently car parking.



Nichol Litho. Edin.

GLOVERS' HALL & CURFEW ROW, PERTH.

Timeline 1475 to 1899

1475	Building, later to become The Fair Maid's House, acquired by the Frew family from the Black Friars.
1475-1620	In a succession of private ownerships. 1537: Christina Frew has sasine (possession) as heir to her grandfather, John Frew, from the Black Friars. 1543: Christina Frew and John Hamilton, her husband, have joint possession from the Black Friars. 1557-8: John Hamilton pays the annual feu-duty (rent) of 30s (£1.50) in two halves of 15s to the Black Friars. Late 16th century: John Anderson pays feu-duty to the King James VI Hospital. 1606-20: Harry Ruthven pays feu-duty to the Hospital.
1621-1622	Came into the possession of The Glover Incorporation of Perth. Thought to have been partially, or largely, rebuilt about this time. Used by The Glover Incorporation of Perth as a meeting hall for around 200 years thereafter.
1829	Sold by The Glover Incorporation of Perth to John Miller, former clerk to the Glovers.
1845	Bought by James Condie, solicitor.
1858	Re-purchased by The Glover Incorporation of Perth.
1863	Some internal alterations by tenant James Bell, cabinetmaker.
1868	Adjoining property (21 North Port) bought by The Glover Incorporation of Perth. The two remain in the same ownership thereafter.
1871-1881	House empty. Adjoining property used by various businesses.
1881-1890	Both buildings occupied by James Whittet, tea merchant.
1890	Bought by William Japp, solicitor.
1892-1894	Substantially restored and re-modelled by William Japp.
1895-1899	James Allan's tobacconist shop.
1899	Bought by Perth Town Council.

The House from early times to 1899

Little is known of the origins of a building which, until its relatively recent claim to fame, was an ordinary home and later a workshop and meeting place.

In 1475 what is now The Fair Maid's House was transferred by the Black Friars to the Frews and 21 North Port became Kinloch's property. From the description in surviving papers we know that it was a typical late medieval 'hall' house.

It has been suggested that its location at the entrance to the lane leading to the Friary means that it could have been a porter's lodge to control access to the Friary, with a business room where rents could be paid and other secular business transacted.

The records of payments made by successive owners tell us that the House remained in private ownership until, in 1621-2, it came into the possession of The Glover Incorporation of Perth. The previous owner, Harry Ruthven, continued paying the feu-duty (rent) until 1620.

There is a great deal of doubt about how much, if any, of the 'hall' described in 1475 survives in the structure of the present-day House and it seems to have gone through a

major re-build at about the time The Glover Incorporation of Perth took it over.

Meeting place for The Glover Incorporation of Perth

The Glovers' minutes of 16 September 1622 (reproduced on page 29) record for the first time that they met in the 'craftis house', indicating that they took it over some time in 1621-2.

A document dating from 1688 describes The Fair Maid's House as the "common convening house of the Glover Craft", thus giving an insight into what it was used for after that time.

The minutes of The Glover Incorporation of Perth confirm that their business meetings were normally held there for many years, although the Glovers' papers give few other details of how the House was used during the two hundred or so years that they owned it.

We have no more evidence of dealings relating to the House until its sale in the 19th century, but there were one or two occasions when it nearly fell into other hands.



Prospectus Civitatis BERTI. The Prospect of y^e Town of BERTI.

The House from early times to 1899

Sale of the House falls through

In October 1758, the Glovers were told that Lord John Murray proposed to buy their hall at a “reasonable price”. After debating the probable costs of building a replacement hall, the meeting decided on a sale price of £120, but no sale took place. In May 1786, the meeting was told that a Mrs Miller wanted to buy it, but this sale too appears to have fallen through.

In October 1786, The Glover Incorporation of Perth decided to build a new hall on land fronting George Street. For the next 2-3 years, the construction and fitting out of the new building took up much of their attention. However, this was a short-lived enterprise and the building was fairly soon disposed of due to structural faults. What had now become known as the Old Hall was still used for Glovers’ meetings and remained in their possession until the early years of the 19th century.

LEFT: *The Prospect of ye Town of Perth*, an engraving by John Slezer (1650-1717) from his *Theatrum Scotiae* (a pictorial record of Scotland in the 17th century), 1693.

Sale of property in 1829

By this time, the building had deteriorated significantly, with reports of the total collapse of some parts of the interior. This may partly explain why, in May 1829, The Glover Incorporation of Perth finally accepted an offer to buy it from Mr John Miller, a ‘writer’ (or lawyer), for the sum of £100.

In addition, the purchase, in 1818, of a third hall in another part of George Street had clearly reduced their dependence on the oldest one.

In 1845 the House was purchased by a local solicitor named James Condie, but by 1857 he had been declared bankrupt and it was put up for sale by auction a year later.

Re-purchase by The Glover Incorporation of Perth

The Glover Incorporation of Perth, on hearing that their Old Hall (23 North Port) was back on the market, authorised the Boxmaster and Deacon to attend the sale and purchase it, if they could do so at a reasonable price. They were successful.

The House from early times to 1899

At the same time, 21 North Port was bought by James Bell, a cabinetmaker, who also became the tenant of the Old Hall for the next ten years. He also bought the long strip of land, formerly part of the Monastery garden, which lay to the rear of both buildings, and simultaneously sold the half of it behind the House of Simon Glover (as the Old Hall had then become known) to The Glover Incorporation of Perth. Although he carried out some internal alterations to the House in 1863, it remained in a bad state of repair.

Postcard sent on 12 April 1907 showing the House under lease by James Bell, and the ruin of 21 North Port. (Fair City Series.)

The Glover Incorporation of Perth buys adjoining property

In 1868 James Bell moved to Glasgow and sold his property to The Glover Incorporation of Perth. Thereafter, the joint property was owned and changed hands as one unit, but was frequently used and occupied by different people and organisations.

The tenancy was briefly held by another cabinet making enterprise, Messrs Crombie & Archibald. Then it remained empty until, in 1881, the House and the adjoining shop were taken over by James Whittet, a tea merchant.



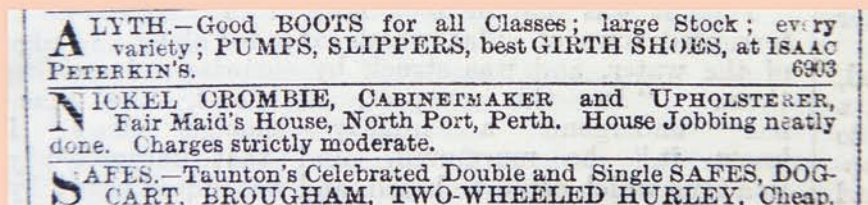
The House from early times to 1899

What's in a name?

It is a matter of speculation when the building became known as The Fair Maid's House. In September 1853, a local newspaper referred to it as Simon Glover's House and further newspaper articles show that it

seems to have retained this name throughout the 1850s and 1860s.

The first use of the name Fair Maid's House discovered so far is featured below in an advertisement in the *Dundee Advertiser* on 29 April 1871, for Nickel Crombie, cabinetmaker.



Accessed via *The British Newspaper Archive*.

Purchase by William Japp

In 1890 the House and the adjoining property were bought by William Japp, a solicitor and the Chief Magistrate (a post comparable to Provost) of Alyth.

In the late 1880s and early 1890s, the condition of both the House and the locality left a lot to be desired. In January 1886, it was reported that the town's Sanitary Inspector, commenting that a recent newspaper article about the House might well bring more visitors to Perth during the summer, had suggested that the "handsome little

midden", which the Local Authority had placed in front of it, should be removed.

In September 1892, a letter appeared in no less a publication than London's *Pall Mall Gazette*, lamenting the condition of the "picturesque House of the sweet Fair Maid of Perth".

The anonymous correspondent wrote that: *Great holes have appeared in its roof; the glass of its windows has been smashed; the casements are not even worthy of the use to which the House is put - that of a great lumber chamber.*

The House from early times to 1899

Fittis and Murdoch

The sale of the house by The Glover Incorporation of Perth, in 1890, prompted an extensive correspondence in the local press between the local historian, Robert Scott Fittis, and John Murdoch, the Deacon of The Glover Incorporation of Perth.

In 1883 Fittis, who had researched all manner of historical topics and published a great deal of material, wrote a six-part history of The Fair Maid's House which appeared in the *Perthshire Advertiser*. Some of the content was repeated in his *Ecclesiastical Annals of Perth* (1885).

The two men disagreed on several key points and their exchanges were heated. Murdoch chided Fittis for stating that the House had belonged to the King James VI Hospital and that the Hospital had sold it to The Glover Incorporation of Perth in 1629.

Murdoch explained that the Hospital had not been the owners of the property, but the "superiors of the ground", to whom the feu-duty was payable.

He also criticised Fittis for his error in saying that the House had been sold in 1758 to Lord John Murray, explaining why the sale had not taken place.

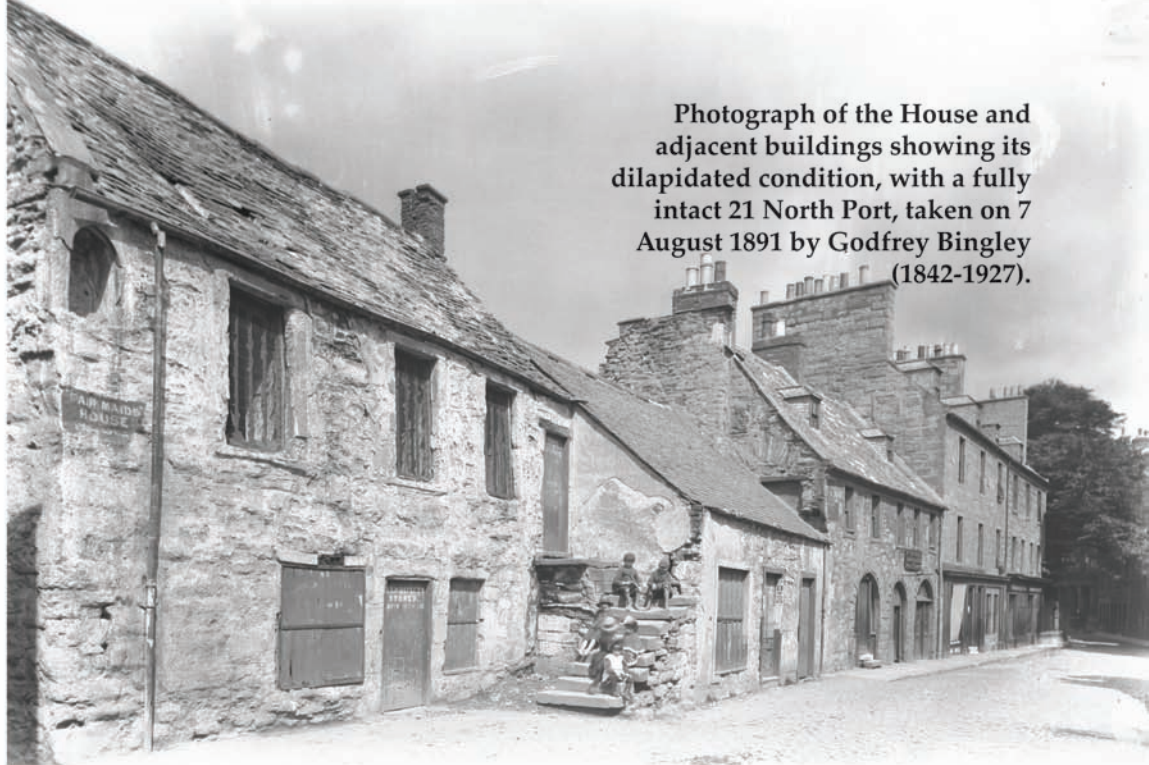
Fittis accepted the correction of these mistakes, acknowledging that his source of information must have been unreliable.

At the same time, Murdoch described the layout of the House as it had been in the early 19th century.

The ground floor, he said, was used for storing alum (a form of salt used in dyeing and tanning) and other items used by the workmen. The upper room was a workshop for finishing various kinds of leathers.

The attic, then known as the 'cock laft' (or 'loft'), was only about 5 feet high at the highest point and was reached by a trap stair. Surprisingly, it was in this confined attic space that, according to Murdoch, the Glovers' meetings were held – and had continued to be held until the present hall in George Street was acquired in 1818.

Photograph of the House and adjacent buildings showing its dilapidated condition, with a fully intact 21 North Port, taken on 7 August 1891 by Godfrey Bingley (1842-1927).



Japp's renovation work

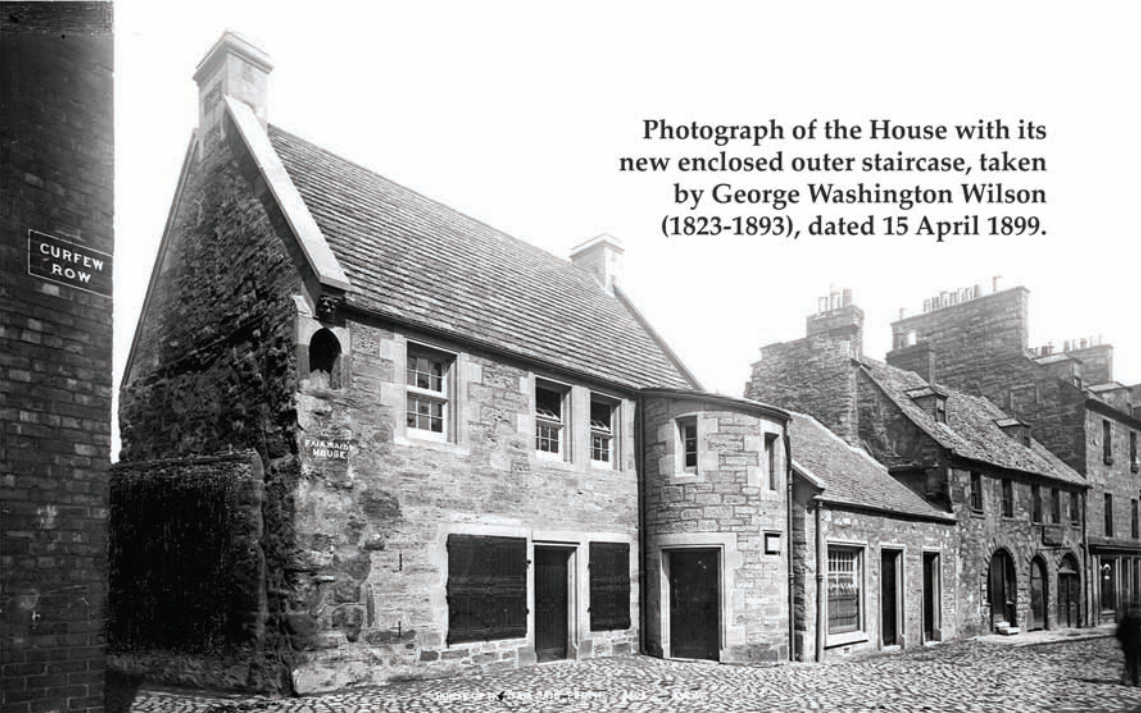
Between 1892 and 1894, the House was substantially rebuilt and repaired, the external flight of steps being replaced by an enclosed, circular staircase. Japp's motives were – in part – to make the House appear as a reader of Sir Walter Scott's novel, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, might have expected it to look.

Newspaper reports tell us that on 30 May 1894, the renovated building was reopened by ex-Lord Provost Whittet, the tea merchant who had used it for some years. According to these reports he was pleased to see it restored and under the charge

of a new tenant, Mrs Allan. Some of the speeches are on record. It was stated that "certain liberties have been taken with the building", a reference to the replacement and enclosure of the outer stair and the insertion of wooden panelling.

House firmly on tourist agenda

From 1895 to 1899, the House served as a tobacconist's shop, run by James Allan. It was now firmly on the "tourist agenda" with one newspaper recording a visit, in December 1897, by members of the Scottish Football Association, on their way to watch a cup match between Perthshire and Forfarshire.



In July 1898, *The Arbroath Herald* reported that a replica of the House had been a prominent feature of a major exhibition at Earl's Court in London - created on the instructions of Sheriff Dewar of London (son of John Dewar Sr, founder of the Perth distilling company) as an advertisement for his whisky.

Whether or not this turn of events had an influence on the future of the property is uncertain, but in December 1898 the Town Council was told that Mr Japp wished to sell both properties to them - without making any profit from the transaction. The offer was considered but some doubts were raised about the benefit to the town.

The Glover Incorporation of Perth

This section looks at the history of the Glovers, their connection to The Fair Maid's House and their various artefacts. It draws on a range of source material, including the *Annals of the Glover Incorporation of Perth* (1905) by G. Wilson.

The Glover Incorporation of Perth was the largest of the ancient trades in Perth. It was responsible for making gloves for many centuries and has been closely associated with The Fair Maid's House throughout much of the House's history.

Origins of The Glover Incorporation of Perth

It is not known with certainty when The Glover Incorporation of Perth came together for mutual protection and profit but it is widely accepted that craftsmen were around at least from the 12th century.

They probably formed themselves into organised crafts from the late 14th century to protect their interests against the merchants who were seeking to control prices and wages. An Act of Parliament in 1425 ordered the election of deacons for each craft in burghs by the craftsmen and the burgh council (merchants).

Royal charters

It is stated in the *Annals* that there is proof that they were an organised Guild in the 10th and 11th centuries and were granted Royal Charters to this effect by the early Scottish Kings, Alexander I and David I.

A charter giving privileges to the burgesses in general was granted by King William I, known as The Lion, dated 1210 (subsequently dated by Professor Archie Duncan to 1209). It gave "free rights and privileges of being merchant burgesses, in addition to their peculiar rights as incorporate craftsmen". The statement in the *Annals* is, however, in conflict with the evidence concerning the origins of The Glover Incorporation of Perth quoted in the previous paragraph.

Some Scottish official papers from the 13th century were lost when, in 1296, Edward I of England, known as Hammer of the Scots, directed that all the archives of Scotland not already confiscated and destroyed should be sent to London. The vessel carrying most of Scotland's remaining historical documents subsequently sank. This may account for gaps in the documentation from this period.

The Glover Incorporation of Perth

By the 12th century skimmers, glovers and other crafts had become a prominent section of the community, but it was the merchant burgesses who gained the greatest privileges from the 1209 charter and retained their power until much later.

Incorporated status

The magistrates of royal burghs had the power to grant incorporated status to a trade guild effectively providing them with a monopoly and protection from enterprises outside the burgh.

The incorporations set strict guidelines controlling the quality of workmanship and entry to the trade. Each incorporation was governed by a dyken (deacon), with the aid of a boxmaster (treasurer) and a council of craftsmen who were elected yearly.

Members of incorporations did not follow just one occupation. A number of kindred occupations, which were known as sciences, were united as one body.

This was the case with skimmers and glovers when, in 1485, a decision by Perth Town Council to approve the trade undertaken by skimmers meant



The Glover Incorporation of Perth coat of arms, with the inscription: "To God only be all Glory".

that this trade became part of The Glover Incorporation of Perth.

Location in medieval Perth

There was a vibrant leather industry in medieval Perth making gloves, shoes and breeches. This led to the growth of the related trades of skinner, tanner and glover. The Glover Incorporation of Perth formed a small community, mainly resident in Skinnergate, Castle Gable and Curfew Row.

The area became the centre for the tanning of hides with glovers occupying many of the booths and shops there to sell their wares.

The Glover Incorporation of Perth

Business was lucrative as it was the main thoroughfare to the north of the city and their gloves were renowned.

Because Curfew Row was outside the burgh defences, it developed as an industrial neighbourhood attracting maltsters, tanners and other trades. Curfew Row would not have been a pleasant place to live or work due to the environmental pollution and it was reputed to be a rough and dangerous area.

Wealthy traders and landowners

There was a flourishing trade in gloves in Perth until the late 18th century. Members of The Glover Incorporation of Perth produced up to 30,000 pairs of gloves in 1795 making them the richest of the eight crafts in Perth.

The Glover Incorporation of Perth was also amongst the principal landowners at that time and had an extensive portfolio of properties including ones in George Street, Skinnergate and Curfew Row. Their name still features in Glover Street in the Craigie area of Perth.

The Fair Maid's House

In the 1620s, The Glover Incorporation of Perth acquired the building and turned it into their hall, meeting in the premises for about the next 200 years until they acquired their present hall in George Street in 1818. The House was in an ideal situation for the Glovers being in the middle of their part of the town and opposite the old Glovers Yaird.



LEFT: Stained glass window in the current Glovers Hall showing their motto: "Grace and Peace".

The Glover Incorporation of Perth

The Yaird lay to the south of The Fair Maid's House, bounded by Castle Gable, Horse Cross and what in around 1800 became Mill Street. The Glovers Yaird was the first of their known possessions.

On 11 August 1629, The Glover Incorporation of Perth was granted a charter by the King James VI Hospital of Perth, setting an annual payment of 34 Scots shillings in feu-duty, for: *the Tenement of Land therein described as bounded betwixt the land of James Berne, skinner on the east, the King's commonway and the vennel leading to the place of the Predicatory Friars on the south and west, and the garden of William Anderson, skinner on the north parts.*

The House became known as the Old Glovers Hall, the Craft House or the Calling's Meeting House. The Glovers may have been the first of the trades to possess a hall as, until this time, trades are thought to have met outside in the open air at places such as the Gilten Arbour (also known as the King's Garden). This belonged to the Blackfriars Monastery.

Rev. James Scott, in a document dated 4 June 1803 (now held in the archives of Perth Museum and Art

Gallery), provided a description of it. 'Gilten' may indicate that it had gilded decorations and there was possibly a bower or summer house there. In the Dominican charters it is referred to as the Golden Herbar (or herb garden) and it was probably the setting for archery, Morris dancing and other activities.

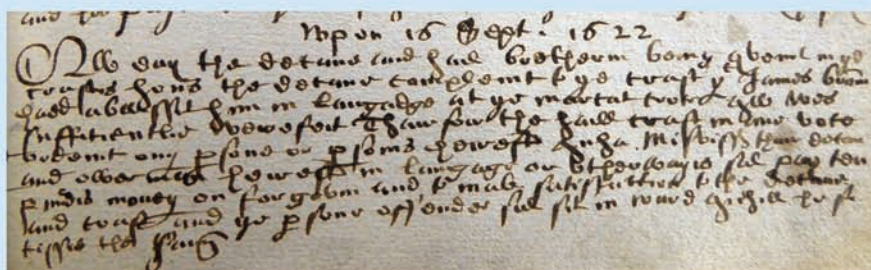
According to an ecclesiastical manuscript now in the Divinity Library in Edinburgh, there was an amphitheatre visited by kings, nobles and gentry up to the death of King James I in 1437. The friars seem to have used the ground as pasture until 1535.

The principles of the Glovers

The Glover Incorporation of Perth was known for its integrity, good sense and a leaning towards good citizenship. The care it took of its members and their families shows how important these principles were in the conduct of their affairs.

The Glover Incorporation of Perth used some of its investment income to help deceased members' families and any existing members who found themselves in need of their support.

The Glover Incorporation of Perth



Extract taken from minutes of the Glovers' meeting dated 16 September 1622, indicating the strict principles which members were expected to uphold. A current transcription would read:

Upon 16 Sept. 1622

Which day the deacon and all the brethren being convened in the craftis house, the deacon complained to the craft that James (Brain) had abused him in speech at the market cross, which was sufficiently verified. Therefore the whole craft in a vote ordained [that] any person or persons who misused their deacon and superior hereafter in speech or other ways shall pay ten pounds money in full and make satisfaction to the deacon and craft, and the offending person shall sit in custody until he satisfies the same.

Church attendance seems to have been almost mandatory. Dishonesty was detested and intolerable bad behaviour was punished. For example, one skinner caught stealing skins not only lost his freedom but was ordered to be whipped with the tawse and banished from the town. Another found drunk and hurling abuse at his seniors was suspended from voting and attending meetings for a year.

Leisure

Glovers did not usually take part in festivals and processions but they were renowned for displays of Morris dancing.

They frequently performed for royalty and nobility, notably in front of Charles I in 1633 – an occasion now marked by a commemorative stone in Tay Street.

The Glover Incorporation of Perth

The Morris dancer costume (*pictured below*) was last worn in public in 1863 at the marriage of the Prince of Wales with Princess Alexandra. Afterwards the dress was permanently loaned to Perth Museum and Art Gallery. The photograph is on display in the Glovers Hall. The wearer is William Blair, skinner and freeman Glover.

Glovers also liked their sport, in particular archery, football and golf. Their sport of choice was football, but as they often indulged in it to excess, the games occasionally resulted in disorderly conduct!



The Glovers' role in Perth's history

The Glovers had close links with the Carthusian monks and Dominican friars. The friars sold indulgences, pilgrim souvenirs and agricultural produce from their estates.

After 1559 The Glover Incorporation of Perth grew in importance and had at least two representatives on the Town Council - the Deacon and a Trades Councillor.

They also played a part in struggles for civil and religious liberty in Scotland. There is evidence that, like most pre-Reformation Scots, they were patriotic and loyal to king and country.

Prior to the Reformation, the Glovers were supporters of the Roman Catholic faith. Later, many were imprisoned for their adherence to the reformed Confession of Faith (the Scots Confession), which was approved by parliament in August 1560.

The Glover Incorporation of Perth had an altar dedicated to St Bartholomew, Patron Saint of Glovers, in St John's Church which is believed to have been the richest of all shrines there.

The Glover Incorporation of Perth



A stained glass window in the current Glovers Hall with the same inscription as their coat of arms: "To God only be all Glory".

St Bartholomew, Patron Saint of Glovers

St Bartholomew was one of the twelve apostles. He was martyred by being skinned alive and in many pictures is represented with a flaying knife in his hand.

The Saint's portrait, (*pictured overleaf*) painted for The Glover Incorporation of Perth in 1557, is held by Perth Museum and Art Gallery. It has been repainted several times and now only part of the face is original. During the Reformation, The Glover Incorporation of Perth saved the painting from destruction. There is a copy of it dating from the mid-19th century in the Glovers Hall in George Street, and also an oil painting of the saint dating from 1829.

Tradition has it that The Fair Maid's House was part of a chapel dedicated to St Bartholomew and that there may have been an effigy of the Saint in the niche visible on the front wall. The ownership records make no reference to a chapel. It is unlikely that the niche would have contained an image of a saint after 1560 as such images were banned, but if the niche dates back to Blackfriars Monastery it may have held a saint's image or a bell to summon the porter in that period.

The St Bartholomew's Tawse (a whip with a wooden handle and five leather tails), used to discipline glovers' apprentices and also at times borrowed by the Town Council to be used for disciplining the townspeople, is also kept in the hall.

The Glover Incorporation of Perth

Artefacts of The Glover Incorporation of Perth

Artefacts of the Glovers' history include the Auditor's table at which only the Boxmaster and positors (persons making a statement or providing information) are allowed to sit during meetings of the Incorporation, which take place twice a year. The table is covered with the 'green cloth'. The first one which dates from 1628 is kept in Perth Museum and Art Gallery. The Glover Incorporation of Perth intends to make a new one for the 400th anniversary in 2028.



Also in the Glovers Hall is a delicate remnant of an old flag (*above*) bearing the date 1604 and displaying the Glovers' coat of arms, which has



Saint Bartholomew, titular saint of the Glovers' Incorporation. Original oil dated 1557, extensively repainted in 1870 by James Hall Cranstoun (1821-1907) and the British (Scottish) School. Gifted to Perth Museum and Art Gallery by The Glover Incorporation of Perth in 1967. (By courtesy of Perth Museum & Art Gallery, Perth and Kinross Council.)

a pair of gloves on a shield beneath three stars and the inscription: "The perfect honour of a craft or beauty of a trade is not in wealth, but in moral worth, whereby virtue gains renown".

The Glover Incorporation of Perth

A glass case in the Glovers Hall contains, amongst other relics, an ostrich egg (*pictured below*) which, according to their traditions, was brought back from the Crusades; and a Bible, dated 1752, said to have been used by the Deacon of the Incorporation at services in St John's Church.

The ostrich egg and the picture of St Bartholomew (*left*) are thought to have been saved from the pillaging of St John's Church by one of the Glovers who took them to the Old Glovers Hall where they hung for many years.



There is a stool in Perth Museum and Art Gallery at which it is believed apprentices were required to sit as part of their induction, and a well-used tawse, probably discarded when it wore out.

Pictures on the wall of the Glovers Hall include *The Fair Maid's House* by Cranstoun (*pictured overleaf*). There is a photograph of the actors

portraying Catharine Glover and Hal o' the Wynd in the play, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, at one of its productions in Perth.

The end of an era

Free trade legislation was introduced in 1823. By 1826 there were no restrictions on imports of foreign manufactured gloves and many glovers lost their livelihood with increasing imports of foreign goods and the growth in smuggling. By 1836 the "last working glover in Perth" had died and what was left of the once flourishing trade was taken to Dundee by his son.

Although no longer responsible for the making of gloves, the Incorporation continues to function as an organisation. Membership numbers range between thirty and forty, with only a few living in Perth.

They come from all walks of life, and continue to meet twice a year in the Glovers Hall in George Street, where they conduct their meetings in the same fashion as their ancestors.

They no longer take part officially in public affairs but give generously to good causes and pay annuities to past members and their widows as they have always done.

The Glover Incorporation of Perth



The Fair Maid's House, oil painting by James Hall Cranstoun, 1893. (By courtesy of Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth and Kinross Council.)

The Incorporation has office bearers including its Boxmaster, Peter Wilson, great grandson of George Wilson (author of the *Annals*), and a Deacon. Entry to The Glover Incorporation of Perth continues to be passed from father to son when the latter reaches the age of 14.

To quote from a minute of The

Glover Incorporation of Perth written some centuries ago: *The meeting takes this opportunity of expressing the high respect and grateful feelings with which they cherish the memory of their departed brethren, who, during that long period, had managed the Calling's affairs with so much integrity, prudence, independence and good sense.*

Timeline 1900 to present

1900-1904	William Greig's confectioner shop.
1905-1924	John Taylor's stationer shop.
1927-1959	Alexander Scott's stationer and curio dealership.
1962-1968	Used by Thos. Love & Sons, auctioneers.
1969-1993	Scottish craft shop of Mesdames Lumsden, McDonald, Thomson and Thorburn.
1998-2004	House empty and looking neglected.
2004-2006	Perthshire Art Association Arts Centre.
2006	Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS) agreed terms for the future use of the House, with no. 21, as a visitor and education centre; and 19 North Port as their headquarters.
2010	Archaeological survey and renovation.
2011	RSGS opened visitor and education centre.

The Fair Maid's House and 21 North Port, open for business as the RSGS visitor centre. The flat-topped Blackfriars Wall can be seen immediately to the left of the red brick chimney.



The House from 1900 to the present

The Fair Maid's House tenants

After coming into the hands of the Council, the House was leased out as retail premises. In 1905 it became a stationer's and continued to be one at least until 1937. John Taylor ran it until 1924 and in 1927 it was taken over by Alexander Scott, who had a long connection with the House from that time.

Other people lived there, probably above the shop. They included James and Catherine Murdoch, (née Greig), who were embroiled in a court case in 1906. Mr Murdoch sought nullity of his marriage – and lost the case!

From 1909 to 1924, a Miss Farquhar lived in the upper part, while the adjacent premises were occupied by The Licensed Victuallers' Golf Club until 1909, followed by the Perth Artisans up to 1936.

Early 20th century life

For most of the first half of the century, this part of Perth was densely populated. The area now occupied by Perth Concert Hall was known as the Castle Gable (Gavel in earlier times).

In 1909-10, the area housed a publican, a dairy keeper and her cows, dressmakers, a coachbuilder and many other small businesses and residents. During the First World War and over the subsequent depression years, a temperance bar, golf club maker, fireman and postboy were all to be found in this crowded area.

A U3A member, born in 1925, and her older brother liked to wander into the Horse Cross and Castle Gable area, despite parental disapproval, from their home in George Inn Lane, because: "There was always something interesting to see".

The Horse Cross was a big open space at the top of the Skinnergate and local carters would deposit goods and parcels there and just leave them to be collected some time or another. They could water and rest their horses in the square.

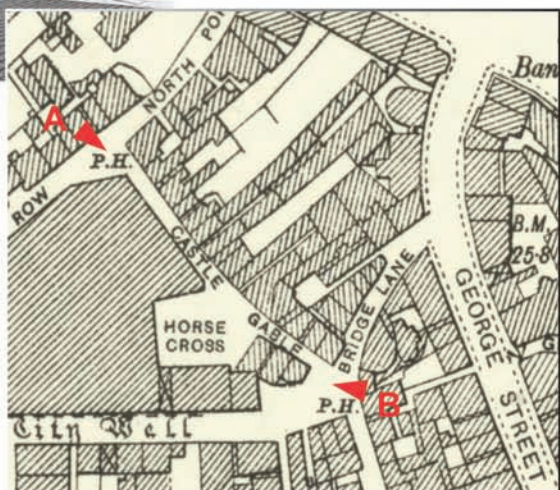
Norwell's Shoe Factory was nearby, as well as little shops such as Mrs Black's bakery, where the children might buy a white scone to keep them going. A bill poster's business was on the corner. Pullar's Dye Works, a part of which has now been incorporated into the present Premier Inn, dominated the area up to Kinnoull Street.

The House from 1900 to the present



LEFT: Looking along Castle Gable from the junction of Bridge Lane and Skinnergate, 1930. (Marked as B on the map below.)

RIGHT: Part of the Ordnance Survey 25 inches to 1 mile map published in 1931 showing the Horse Cross/Castle Gable area.



LEFT: Looking along Castle Gable from North Port, early 1930s. (Marked as A on the map above).

The House from 1900 to the present

Alexander Scott's stationery shop in The Fair Maid's House did not register much with our informant, except for the tirling-pin on the door, which made a loud sound when scraped, to announce a visitor. She liked to make it do that, then run off towards the battered two-storey tenements of the Castle Gable near the North Inch.

Among the attractions of the Castle Gable were a pet shop and a garage where both motors and carts were repaired. The street curved round into Bridge Lane and the children often saw cows being driven to the Inch to graze, or back through a close at the back of Charlotte Street to the dairy.

The old Castle Gable buildings were demolished in 1931-2, whilst the U3A member, whose recollections these are, was in Burghmuir Hospital with diphtheria.

A new extension to the Museum and Art Gallery was built on part of the site. This was completed in 1935 and opened by the Duke and Duchess of York, later King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

Many of the residents of the Gable were rehoused in new council houses at Friarton, off the Edinburgh

Road. Bigger workshops and a garage subsequently occupied the rest of the site.

References to the House

Over the years, newspaper reports shed more light on the use of the House. In 1922 the obituary of Mr N. Crombie, a retired cabinetmaker and prominent local councillor, noted that it was his first workshop, before it was renovated by Japp.

A film of *The Fair Maid of Perth* was made in 1923, and its cast, headed by Russell Thorndike (brother of Dame Sybil) and Sylvia Caine, visited Perth.

In September 1932, the *Dundee Courier* pictured Miss Mary Shields sitting at the "original altar" in the House. She was to play the Fair Maid in the production of *The Fair Maid of Perth* during the 1932 celebrations marking the centenary of Sir Walter Scott's death.

There was a steady stream of visitors to the building and by 1937 Alexander Scott and his wife were selling curios and souvenirs of the story. Mr Scott was also an inventor and held patents for several ingenious artefacts both in the 1930s and later.

The House from 1900 to the present

He did not make his fortune out of them however, since later reports showed that he was a postman as well as looking after the House.

In 1939, the *Dundee Courier* reported that: "Alex Scott, Perth postman, Fair Maid's House, found a Mills bomb on the pavement in Alexandra Street". It was painted and looked as if it was a souvenir, though it still had its pin! Some souvenir!

They continued selling souvenirs from the house and, in 1946, a report quoted Mr Scott as saying that a large proportion of visitors were honeymoon couples, in the course of house-hunting. Mr and Mrs Scott remained in residence until sometime in 1959.

Later tenants

Between 1962 and 1968 the building was used by Thos. Love & Sons, Auctioneers. Their retail shop was in South Street and the auction rooms were in Canal Street.

It was eventually leased by the Council in 1969 to Mesdames McDonald, Lumsden, Thomson and Thorburn as an art and crafts retail business, with Mrs Eva McDonald listed as the proprietor.

The Fair Maid's House



OF Sir Walter Scott's Famous Novel, "The Fair Maid of Perth," stands at the corner of Blackfriars Wynd and Curfew Row, near to where once stood the historic Blackfriars Monastery (where King James I. of Scotland was murdered, 1437) and the Castle of Perth, in the time of King William the Lion, 1210.

¶ In 1396, Simon, the Deacon Glove Maker, sold his Special Make of Gloves: To-day, we sell our specially-made SOUVENIRS in Brass, Silver, E.P.S., China, Photo Frames and Photos, etc.

ANTIQUES, ETC.

Visit The Fair Maid's House when in Perth

PROPRIETOR: A. SCOTT

Advertisement showing an early reference to The Fair Maid's House. Reproduced from *Perth and Sir Walter Scott* by P. Baxter (1932).

The House from 1900 to the present

The House became a tea-room for a short time and was then leased to Mr D. Behan of Lintrathen, a village in Angus. It is not clear what he used it for. Between 1998 and 2003, the building was empty and looking increasingly dismal.

In 2003, the Perthshire Art Association began to hold classes and some exhibitions there, and the Music, Arts and Drama (MAD) Group was reported as also making use of it. Once again this did not prove permanent.

Future is secure

Both The Fair Maid's House and Lord John Murray's House have now found a suitable and permanent function.

In 2006 Perth & Kinross Council entered into an agreement with the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS), with a view to the Society establishing its headquarters there. This has now been achieved, after archaeological research and sensitive modernisation.

Since 2008 Lord John Murray's House has been the RSGS offices. In July 2011, The Fair Maid's House opened as an education facility and visitor centre. It is used for educational purposes all year round and, in the summer months, members of the public can visit and be shown round by volunteers. The Society's archives and map collection are held in the Cuthbert Map Room upstairs, along with the Explorers Room (*pictured*).



Sir Walter Scott and the Fair Maid

But for Sir Walter Scott, the building known as The Fair Maid's House would not exist today, or indeed be known by that name. The link with Sir Walter Scott's novel, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, undoubtedly saved it from demolition.

Early life

Scott was born in 1771. His father was a lawyer who built up a successful practice in Edinburgh and his parents were both from notable Border families. Scott spent his early life in the Borders and became instilled with a love of Border history, tales, myth and poetry - knowledge which sustained him throughout his literary career.

At university in Edinburgh, Scott studied classics and then law. He was an apprentice in his father's law firm and became an advocate (the Scottish term for a barrister) in 1792, practising between 1792 and 1796.

Scott was a member of many organisations including the Speculative Society, a debating club set up largely around Edinburgh University. He had a genius for friendship and was on good terms with men and women from all ranks of society.

His memory was phenomenal. He once recited all 88 stanzas of *Gilman'scleuch*, a ballad by James Hogg, known as the Ettrick Shepherd, without a mistake. He also wrote quickly, a skill doubtless learnt as a law apprentice.

Scott the author

Scott was a literary sensation, first for his poetry and then for his historical novels, beginning with *Waverley*. He was arguably the most popular British author of the 19th century, as well as the first anywhere to write historical fiction in a realistic manner.

His success was all the more remarkable as he was always a part-time writer and he did not publish anything of note until 1802, when he was 31.

By 1811, after the success of several major works, Scott was able to buy the land near Melrose on which he built a new home, Abbotsford House, where he lived for 21 years.

Scott mainly wrote poetry until 1814, but the sudden rise to fame of the poet Byron led him to switch to writing novels, a change Scott was not likely to have regretted.

Sir Walter Scott and the Fair Maid

Scott published all of his novels anonymously from 1814 until 1827. This was to protect his reputation in case they received bad reviews, but also because prose was then regarded as inferior to poetry and not an appropriate field for gentlemen of rank and position.

Scott's first novel, *Waverley*, published in 1814, was the most

successful novel ever published at the time. Many more followed, with Scott writing 27 novels in 18 years. Dickens wrote 16 in 34 years and George Eliot's output was 7 in 17 years. Scott also wrote more lines of poetry than Shelley and Keats combined.

Byron, Goethe and Heine all wrote admiringly of his work. For his contemporaries, there was only one writer to whom Scott could be compared - Shakespeare. Scott, in characteristically down-to earth fashion, said: "The blockheads talk of my being like Shakespeare – not fit to tie his brogues".

By 1826 the printing and publishing businesses that Scott had become involved with went bankrupt, leaving him with personal debts of £130,000. Scott was an honourable man and did not declare himself officially bankrupt, but instead signed a special trust deed for his creditors allowing him to retain Abbotsford while working to pay them in full.

“ I will involve no friend, rich or poor. My own right hand shall do it. ”



Sir Walter Scott and the Fair Maid

He worked harder than ever, but the effort took its toll. Scott had never been the healthiest of men. In 1831 he had his first stroke. He went to Italy later that year to avoid the excesses of a Scottish winter, but his health continued to decline and he was brought home, where he died at Abbotsford on 21 September 1832. His debts were eventually paid in full, though only after his death.

Scott's worldwide influence

Scott had a huge impact on the way the world views Scottish history and culture. Some lines of Scott's poetry were used in the USA Presidential Anthem, *Hail to the Chief*.

Edinburgh celebrates two of Scott's novels in the names of Waverley Station and Heart of Midlothian Football Club. The Scott Monument in Edinburgh, completed in 1846, is the largest in the world to any writer and his picture is still on Scottish bank notes.

LEFT: Statue of Sir Walter Scott on the South Inch, Perth, originally located at the foot of the High Street. Made by Cochrane Brothers of Perth and bought at a sale in 1845 by the Town Council.

“Cervantes has done much for Spain and Shakespeare for England, but not a tithe of what Sir Walter Scott has accomplished for us.”

Edinburgh Evening Courant, 1832

In 1822, George IV made the first visit to Scotland by any British monarch since 1651. Scott, as an acknowledged expert on Scottish history, culture and manners, was asked to plan and superintend the whole affair. He put on such a display, dressing the King in full Highland regalia, that Scott's image of 'Scottishness' acquired a new prominence throughout Great Britain. Almost single-handedly, he created a conception of Scotland which still prevails.

What he did for Scotland can be seen in microcosm in Perth. Throughout *The Fair Maid of Perth*, he called Perth "the Fair City", a description with little or no currency before then, but much used since.

Sir Walter Scott and the Fair Maid

The Fair Maid of Perth

The Fair Maid of Perth was written in 1827 and published in 1828, when Scott was working extremely hard to pay his creditors.

Its principal characters include Simon Glover, a glover, and his daughter Catharine. They are both fictional characters living in Perth at a date not made clear in the novel, but which must lie in the period 1396-1406, as the action of the novel includes historical characters and events that occur during this time. These being the Battle of the Clans on the North Inch in 1396; the murder of the Duke of Rothsay (spelling as in the 15th century) in March 1402; and the capture of the young Prince James and the death of his father, Robert III, in March-April 1406.

Catharine is known as The Fair Maid of Perth; and the House that she and her father lived in is described as being in Curfew (or Couvrefew) Street. That street did exist and the current building had, by Scott's time, long been associated with The Glover Incorporation of Perth, so it was natural that the building came to be identified as the house in which the fictional Catharine Glover had lived.

From novel to play

The novel was very quickly adapted to be staged as a play. Its first performance was at the Royal Coburg Theatre in London on 23 June 1828, a mere six weeks after publication of the novel.

The first performance in Perth was at the Theatre Royal, Atholl Street, on 23 September 1828, the playbill for which is pictured right, taken from a book by local historian Peter Baxter, who notes that: *At the time there was a very Scottish and patriotic club in Perth called The Corroddie Club which met in the Old Ship Inn, and they greatly rejoiced over The Fair Maid of Perth being produced for the first time in Perth.*

This local production caused quite a boom in theatre attendance and attracted packed audiences, a fact reiterated by the text at the bottom of the playbill pictured right, which reads: "Fair Maid of Perth" was one of Mr Bass' greatest successes during his lesseeship of Perth Theatre Royal, the piece running for nine nights and having to be afterwards repeated. During its run the Convener Court of the Glovers' Incorporation attended officially one night, and the audience was an overflowing one.

Sir Walter Scott and the Fair Maid

THEATRE ROYAL, PERTH

TUESDAY, 23rd September, 1828,

AND FOLLOWING NIGHTS,

GRAND PRODUCTION OF SIR WALTER SCOTT'S

"FAIR MAID OF PERTH"

(Dramatized by Mr C. BASS, Lessee, Theatre Royal, Perth).

A Prologue by a Perth Gentleman.

Harry Wynd, - Mr C. BASS. Conacher, - Mr HARRISON.

Oliver Proudfoot, - Mr MACGREGOR.

Duke of Rothesay, - Mr PRITCHARD.

Catherine Glover, - Miss NICOL. Glee Maiden, - Mrs BASS.

Mr Macgregor will appear as "Oliver Proudfoot" in the identical dress of one of the Morris-dancers who appeared before Charles I. when that monarch visited Perth. This ancient relic belongs to the Glover Incorporation of Perth.

"Fair Maid of Perth" was one of Mr Bass' greatest successes during his lesseeship of Perth Theatre Royal, the piece running for nine nights and having to be afterwards repeated. During its run the Convener Court of the Glovers' Incorporation attended officially one night, and the audience was an overflowing one.

Playbill for the first production of *The Fair Maid of Perth* to be staged in Perth in 1828. At some point the spelling of Catharine in the novel has been altered to Catherine, as evident above. Reproduced from *Perth and Sir Walter Scott*, by P. Baxter (1932).

The Fair Maid of Perth disappeared as a play, though it later became the subject of an opera, *La Jolie Fille de Perth* (1867) by Georges Bizet.

It was some time before the play was performed again in Perth. But at the Sir Walter Scott Centenary celebrations in 1932, a play in four acts by William Heggie, adapted from the novel, ran for seven nights in The Premier Playhouse. There were 27 main characters and a further 21 actors. Trumpeters from Perth Silver Band and pipers from Perth and District Pipe Band also took part.

The play was staged for the third time in Perth between 24 November and 7 December 1967. Perth Repertory Theatre presented it in association with the Scottish Arts Council, Perth Town Council, the Gannochy Trust and the Cross Trust.

There is reference to the presentation of a pair of gloves to the actress who played Catharine Glover in 1932 by The Glover Incorporation of Perth, and to a similar gift in 1967. It is unlikely that Mary Shields, the 1932 Catharine, can be traced, but there might be a chance that the Catharine of 1967, Sandra Buchan, still treasures her Fair Maid gloves!

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Illustrations

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THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

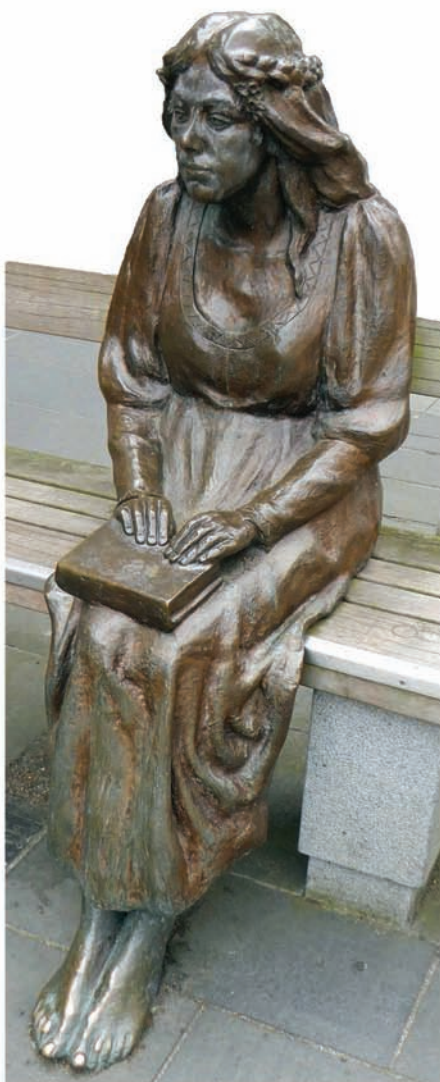
The University of the Third Age (U3A) is a self-help organisation of people no longer in full time employment. It provides educational, creative and leisure opportunities in a friendly environment.

Local U3As are learning cooperatives committed to the idea of lifelong learning. They draw upon the knowledge, experience and skills of their own members to organise and provide interest groups covering a wide range of topics.

Perth U3A has been in existence for around 30 years and presently has a membership of 500, with 60 interest groups covering arts and crafts, practical subjects, the written word, keeping active, languages, recreational activities and thought-provoking themes.

The project on The Fair Maid's House is an example of a Shared Learning Project, investigating a chosen subject in collaboration with one or more non-U3A partners.

To find out more about Perth U3A, go to the website at:
www.u3asites.org.uk/perth



Life size bronze sculpture of The Fair Maid of Perth by Graham Ibbeson, 1995, located on the High Street, Perth.

To enquire about membership, go to the Contacts page and message the Membership Secretary.



For further information and for details on how to become a member go to www.rsgs.org or contact RSGS at Lord John Murray House, 15-19 North Port, Perth PH1 5LU. Tel: 01738 455050 or e-mail: enquiries@rsgs.org

The Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS) has been working since 1884, with the support of thousands of members, to inspire people to want to find out more about the world.



It is an educational charity which promotes an understanding of the natural environment and human societies, and their interactions, making the connections between people, places and the planet, and aiming to inspire positive long-term change.

Geographical understanding is vital to the growth of responsible and sustainable global citizenship, helping us to interpret critical issues such as population dynamics, ecosystems, natural resource limits and urbanisation.

RSGS has been based in Perth since 2011, and has developed visitor and education facilities in The Fair Maid's House, including the Explorers Room, the Earth Room and the Cuthbert Map Room, which houses the society's large collection of maps.

13 local groups throughout Scotland arrange programmes of meetings with guest speakers. The society publishes *The Geographer* magazine and the *Scottish Geographical Journal*.