

IRK GATE

WATERGATE

NS LANE

GEORGE ST.

AL VENNEL

KING JAMES PL.

KING ST.

ALBERT CLOSE

HOSPITAL ST.

GRAYBANK RD.

T ST.

**WHAT'S
IN A
NAME?**

a survey of
Perth street names

ST JOHN ST

VICT

RS WYND

WEST M

LIAM ST.

SCOTT ST.

GUARD

JAM

OUSE LA

T. E

ST. CATHERINE'S SQUARE

NOULL CAUSEWAY

MARKET ST

COW VENNEL

STREET

WATER VENNEL

What's in a Name

A survey of Perth street names

compiled by

PUPILS OF PRIMARY VII OF CALEDONIAN ROAD SCHOOL

Cover designed by T. D. Berthon



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FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to write the foreword to this excellent booklet, which makes fascinating reading. It contains information which is essential for anyone who admires Perth and wishes to know more about its history, and Miss Fothergill and her Primary VII Pupils of Caledonian Road School must have been tireless in their research of the history of the city.

It is refreshing to know that young people have been stimulated to find out and record such interesting information about the place in which they live. The investigation of the origins of the street names has been an excellent idea and follows on from the previous project in 1976 on the mediaeval city and the restoration of the Fountain Close in South Street.

The Perth Civic Trust are grateful to Miss Fothergill and her pupils and are delighted to publish this booklet.

DAVID K. THOMSON,

Chairman, Perth Civic Trust.

March, 1979.

What's in a Name

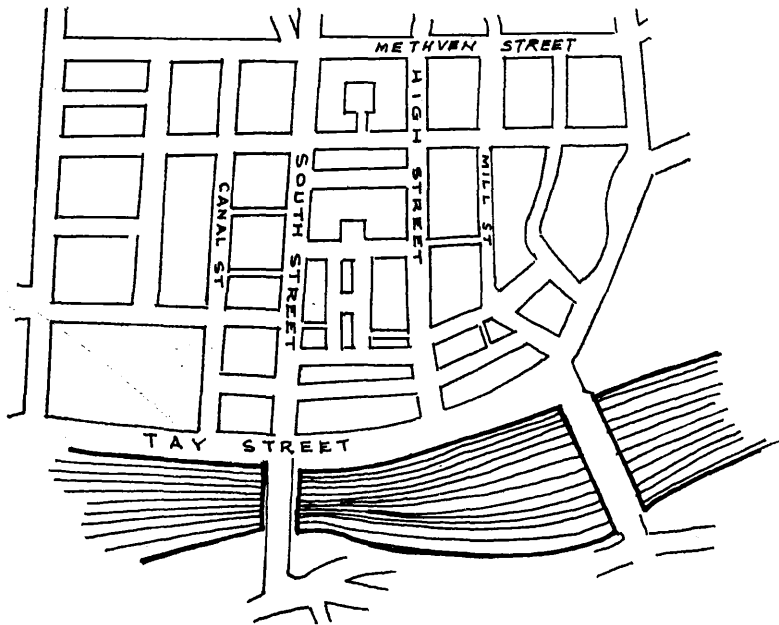
This is a survey—brief and by no means complete— of the more interesting vennels and street names in Perth. The older streets in the centre of our city take us back into history but some of our newer housing areas have had their streets named in quite an interesting way, connecting geographically with parts of Perthshire and indeed Scotland. The streets of the newer housing area of North Muirton take their names from the islands off the west coast of Scotland while to the south-west of the city the roads are named after Scottish glens. To the north is the area of Letham where many streets remind us of the northern parts of Perthshire.

However in the oldest central part of our city the vennels and closes tell us of the trades carried on in mediaeval times by the citizens of the royal burgh. Some thoroughfares took their names from the owners of the adjoining properties as in Horner's Lane and Oliphant's Vennel. On the other hand the directional position of the street, or the village to which it led the traveller, has often determined the name as in South Street, the North Port and more obviously Glasgow Road, Crieff Road and Dunkeld Road.

We have tried to study and consider the street names found in the city of Perth in order to find out why they are called today by these names. It is sometimes difficult to find out exactly why a street or vennel was given a certain name but we offer here some explanations and facts which may be found interesting by the inhabitants of Perth and by the visitors to our city. Many of the older buildings of our ancient city no longer stand. They have had to make way for more modern edifices or for roads. However, in the names of our streets and vennels we have a link with our past and particularly with mediaeval times in Perth. The visitor to our city is at once aware of the history that lies within the Royal Burgh of Perth. For over two thousand years and earlier than that history has been closely linked to Perth and indeed the development of our people and their lives. The Picts and the Scots were in the vicinity of Perth. The struggle against English dominations in the wars of Independence brought Wallace and Bruce to Perth. Later still Charles Edward Stuart sojourned within the walls of our town.

We know that by the 13th century Perth was a city with a wall. This might mean that Perth was not just a village but an important town which was worth defending. Perhaps however the wall was there because at time of flood the surrounding lade rose and the water from the lade would have washed over the town. The old mediaeval

town of Perth is the area bounded by Mill Street, Methven Street, Canal Street and Tay Street. It is within this area that the visitor will find the interesting mediaeval street and vennel names. Why were these names chosen? Frequently the trades carried on in the vennel determined the name, as for example Skinnergate. Possibly a street might be named after the person who owned the land thereon. The use to which the passageway was put might also have an influence in its naming, for example the Cow Vennel from South Street to Canal Street was used by the citizens to herd their cattle out of the town to the South Inch pasture for daily grazing. The town's guard marched along the Guard Vennel from High Street to the north wall of the city in mediaeval times. In the 19th century horse carriers from the Horse Cross, the name given to the area behind the museum, lodged in the Britannia Inn at the north end of the Guard Vennel.



The layout of our mediaeval city is shown in the map above. Mill Street on the north, Canal Street on the south and Methven Street on the west. The High Street and South Street run east to west in the rectangle. The vennels, wynds and closes linked Canal Street, South Street, High Street and Mill Street and ran north to south. Vennelle is a French word which gives us the word vennel. It reminds us of the time when there was a great friendship between France and Scotland and takes us back to the Auld Alliance.

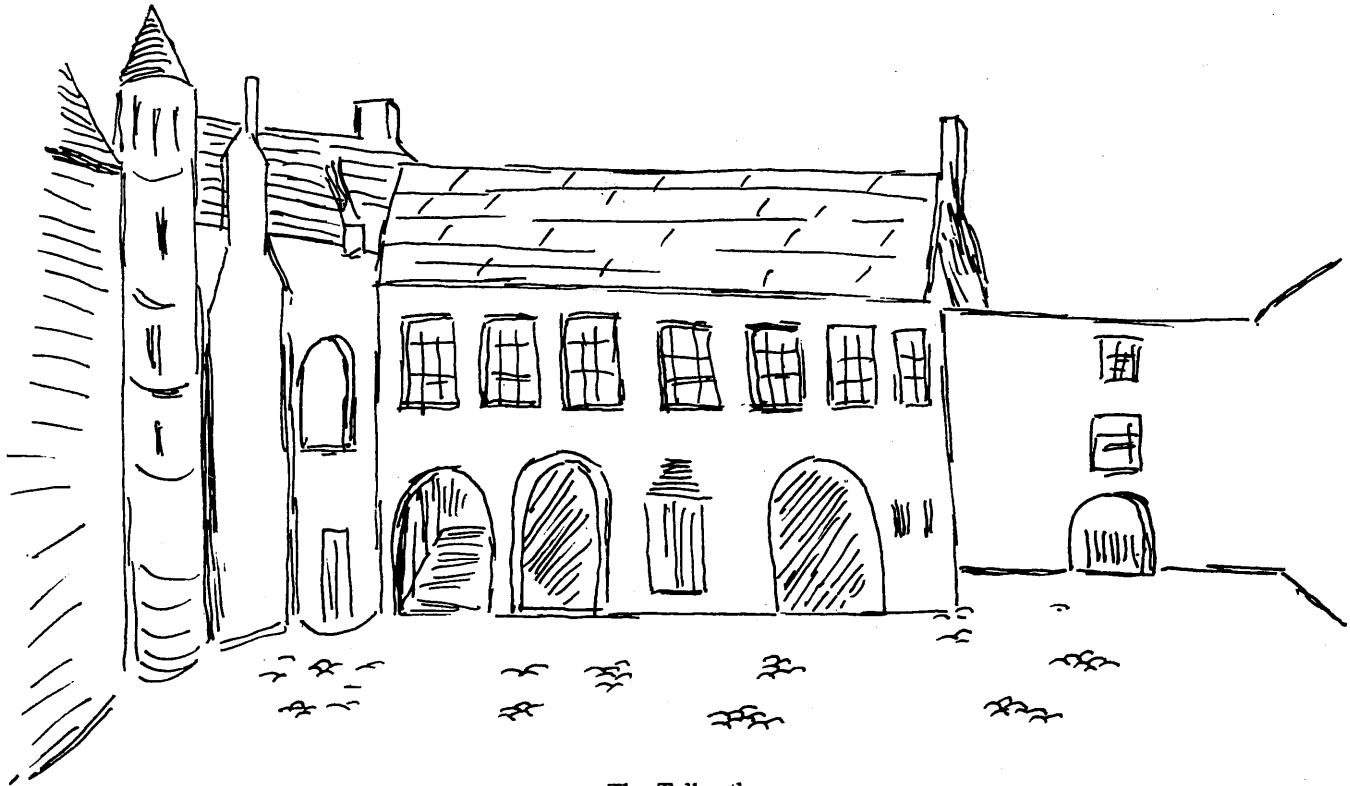
Perth was an important trading centre and by 1180 we know that the town had a South Port and a North Port and there was a castle

and a church. Most of the people lived at the east end of the High Street and in the Watergate. Naturally trades would be near the port at the foot of the High Street. Perth was at the highest point of the tide on the river Tay and it was easy to go north, south and west from the city. Perth appears to have had the greatest income from trade in the 12th century. It had more money from trading than any other Scottish town.

HIGH STREET

In earlier times across the foot of the High Gait were stretched the buildings of the Tolbooth and the offices of the port of Perth. There was at this point only one entry to the city by means of a doorway in the building. In this way all goods entering or leaving the city could be checked. In an alcove near the gate there is said to have been a large tron or set of scales. The Tolbooth may at times have been used as a meeting place for the Scottish Parliament as well as a meeting place for the civic fathers of our city. The Tolbooth was used too as a prison, and at the time of the '45 Rebellion there is evidence that as many as 79 Jacobite prisoners were held there. Lord George Murray, in the early part of the rebellion, stored gunpowder in the Tolbooth and later, pursued by the Duke of Cumberland, Lord George suggested exploding the magazine and thereby blowing up the Tolbooth of Perth in order to prevent its seizure by Cumberland. The fears of the citizens of Perth for the loss of the town's Tolbooth were not realised fortunately. In 1878 the Tolbooth was pulled down and the Municipal Buildings, designed by Andrew Heiton, were erected on the site.

At the west end of the High Street there was one of the ports or gates of the city. When the traveller left the city by this gate in the wall it was necessary to cross the town's lade which was done by the Turret Brig. It is interesting to note that in 1950 during repairs in the foundations of St. Paul's Church nearby, workmen came upon the stone flagging of a quay and tying posts for boats beside the waters of the lade. There is evidence in earlier records that small boats travelled from the Tay by the south arm of the lade to this west port of the waterway. No doubt coal from the Coal Shore at Canal Street would be transported by such means. On a site at the east end of High Street stood the Mercat Cross. An early Mercat Cross was pulled down by Cromwell during his visit to Perth in 1651 and the stone was used to build the citadel on the South Inch. A new Mercat Cross was erected and unveiled in 1667 during the Provostship of Sir Patrick Thriepland of Fingask. It was octagonal and stood twelve feet in height, with a terrace on top. There was a round shaft of one complete stone rising twenty feet high and surmounted by a thistle. Lions and griffins decorated the lower part and it is said that wine poured out of their mouths to regale citizens on festive days! It was from this Mercat Cross that Prince Charles had his father, "the Old Chevalier", proclaimed King James III on 4th September, 1745, when the Jacobites arrived in Perth. Records tell us



The Tolbooth.

that the tenement on the High Street and the south-west corner of Skinnergate was in process of erection when Charles Edward Stuart entered Perth in triumph at the beginning of the '45 Rebellion. Many gathered in the building to watch the scenes of jubilation at the Mercat Cross opposite. Perth's Mercat Cross was removed in 1765 by order of the Magistrates and Town Council as it was causing obstruction to the free passage of the street. Today its site is marked by a circle of stones set in the road. After his triumphal entry into our city Charles Edward Stuart was given hospitality and lodging in the house of Lord Stormont. This house stood on the north side of High Street on the site of the present Royal Bank of Scotland. The town house of Lord Stormont was then a wooden-fronted edifice. The headquarters of the Jacobite army were in the King's Arms Inn adjacent. At the east end of the High Street there also stood the town house of the Mercers of Aldie. The fine Georgian building of c. 1799 on this site now at the north-west corner of Watergate has on its facade the coat of arms of this well-known family who are said to have given the North Inch as a gift to the citizens of Perth. In 1544 a skirmish took place on the bridge which then spanned the River Tay from the foot of the High Street to Bridgend. The antagonists were the followers of two rival provosts, Ruthven and Charteris.

Near the present day Perth Bridge the northern branch of the city lade can be seen flowing into the Tay. This area at the lade was known in earlier times as the Diddledan from "The Deadlands" which was the common burial ground for the poor of the burgh. Before Tay Street was formed in the nineteenth century there was a walk, called Lady Mary Walk, which led from the High Street northwards and crossed the lade by a narrow high-crowned bridge. Thereafter the walker passed under the westmost dry arch of Perth Bridge onto the North Inch. The walk was called "The Lady Walk" because on the site of the City Chambers at the east end of High Street there stood St. Mary's Chapel, parts of which were built in the thirteenth century.

A number of closes still link the High Street with Mill Street. In mediaeval times there would be many such closes but unfortunately with building work and the advance through the twentieth century some of these "links" have disappeared. There is, however, Cutlog Vennel which it is believed is a corruption of Cutlug—shades of gangland indeed and terror by night when the citizens were liable to attack. Would an alternative explanation of the name be found in the fact that in mediaeval times roadways were sometimes paved with trunks cut lengthways and embedded in the earth? In 1755 Cutlog Vennel, previously Masterton's Vennel, was widened. When walking eastwards we come to Burt's Close. Who was the property owner by the name of Burt? We are not sure but we do know that it was in this close that the business of Pullars of Perth had its humble beginnings. It is interesting to note that the High Street entry of the close was named Burt's Close but the Mill Street end of the same close took the name of Blair's Close from the property of Mr. Blair, manufacturer, in Mill Street but

adjacent to the aforesaid close. Continuing on our way we see Guard Vennel, a close where there stood until 1811 the house of the Town Guard or Watch. Their patrolling preserved the security and safety of our walled mediaeval town. At the north end of this close there stood in the nineteenth century the Britannia Inn which was a hostelry patronised by the horse carriers who did business at the Horse Cross nearby. Perth Museum and Art Gallery is on the site of Perth Castle, destroyed by flood in 1210. The site of the Castle yard adjacent to Castle Gable was utilised for centuries by horse carriers' carts. This was outwith the city walls but convenient to the Mercat Cross and the trading centre of the Burgh. It was in the Guard Vennel that the house was situated where General Wolfe—the hero of Quebec—stayed when stationed in Perth as a Lieutenant of the 20th Regiment of Foot. General Wolfe is indeed an honoured freeman of our city. Also in Guard Vennel at the Perth Mint and Assaye Office sterling silver was stamped with the double eagle of the Burgh Arms. Parliament Close also ran due north towards Mill Street but did not actually go through into Mill Street. This close took its name from the fact that a large merchant's house situated in the close is believed to have been used as a meeting place for a Scottish Parliament. The house belonged to a man called Bunch and the close was also known as Bunch's Close. Parliament Hall was demolished in 1805 but the close remained until 1976.

We will at this point mention Perth Parliaments. In mediaeval times it was the custom for the reigning monarch to hold Parliament in whichever town he was residing when Parliament was called. As Kings of Scotland frequently sojourned in Perth, Parliaments were held in our burgh. As the Castle of Perth was overwhelmed by flood waters in 1210 the King had no royal residence in which to hold Parliament. When using the Monastery of Blackfriars as a royal home, Parliament was held there after 1210. There is record that Parliaments were also held in the Tolbooth or in Gowrie House.

The nearby alleyway of the Skinnergate leaves the visitor in no doubt as to the occupation of its residents. One is reminded of one of the most important of all the mediaeval crafts carried on in Perth—that of tanning leather. In the Skinnergate, or as it was once called 'Castle Gable within the town', was the home of the skinnners. Huge vats steamed and it is said that the stench of curing leather was almost unbearable. The skinnners' yards associated with the glover trade were here. The Fair Maid's House in Curfew Row was once used as a meeting place of the glover incorporation. Curfew Row recalls the custom of sounding curfew and nightly securing the burgh ports. The Skinnergate leaving the burgh by the Red Bridge Port led by the 'Castle Gable without the town' and the North Port to the old historic Highland Road through the North Inch. A little way to the east of Skinnergate, Old Ship Close naturally took its name from the hostelry which was frequented by merchants and sailors from the ship quay



Old Ship Close.

of the burgh at the foot of the High Street. The great Perth mercantile family of Mercer had their headquarters nearby and the area abounded with Ship Chandlers and allied shipping interests. The Close and Inn have existed from at least 1665. In the Close in 1857 steam power was first used in our city to motivate the printing press of Robert Whittet. This press survived until 1912.

Adjacent to the City Chambers is King's Arms Close. The property above the close was built by Robert Graham the then Town Clerk of Perth at the time of his marriage to Elspeth Cunningham. Their initials may be seen on the pediment of the attractive Georgian entrance to the Close. The date of the Close and property is 1699 and the scallop shells were part of the crest of the Graham family. The King's Arms Inn was considered the principal hostelry of the Burgh of Perth. It was situated to the rear of the Close until 1892 when it was demolished. It is interesting to note that the close is also known locally as the Cunningham-Graham Close.

Mill Street runs along over the north line of the city lade which was used as a source of power for the city mills lying just beyond the west wall of the burgh. The city mills were originally the King's Mills and are believed to have been given by the Mercer family to the King Malcolm Canmore. They were later returned to the city fathers by Robert III. Methven Street now lies on the line of Perth's west wall and presumably took the traveller westwards to Methven and Crieff. Canal Street and Crescent cover the south section of the lade and thus mark the line of the southern boundary wall of the mediaeval town. Tay Street was constructed in the development of Perth in late Georgian times when the gardens of houses in Watergate and Speygate were built up to give Perth a fine river frontage.

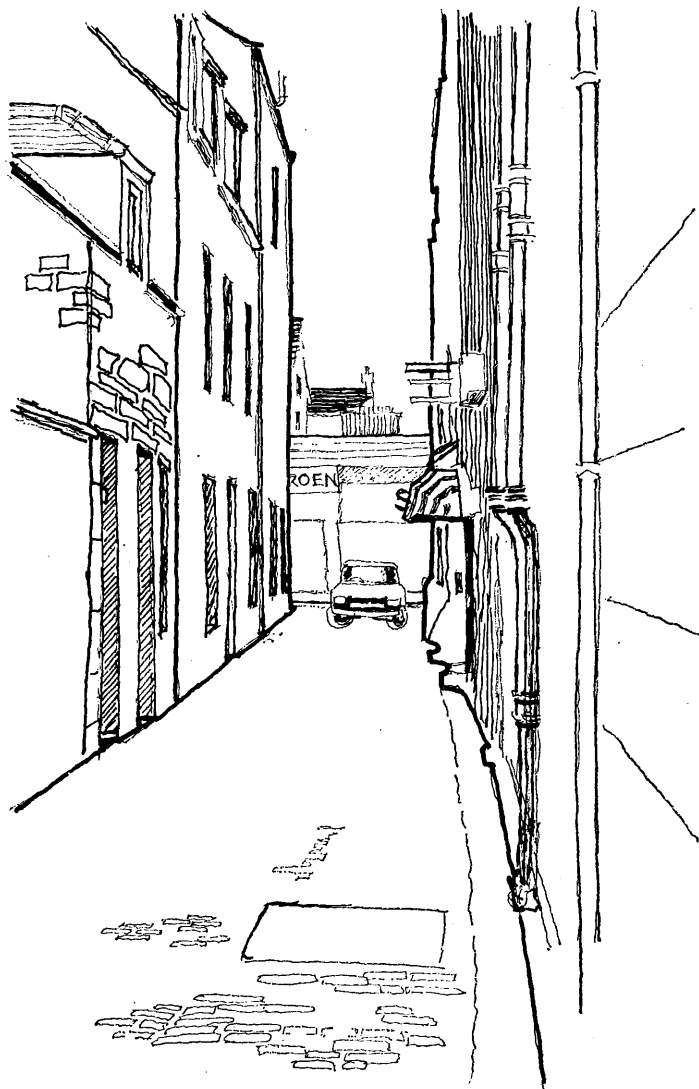
In Albert Close, which was formerly called Albert Tavern Close, there is a plaque inscribed "Portion of the old city wall". It is doubtful whether the wall bearing the plaque is very old but it may be that the foundations of it date from the early city wall. This close was also known as Barret's Close, probably again denoting property ownership.

SOUTH STREET

The visitor walks along South Street, which was once known as Shaegate, where a horse market was held and where at the west end of the street stood the south gate port leading south and west. The word "gait" appears often in Perth street names and means a way or road. South Street was at its west end the site of the town's fish market for a period. The Speygate or Spygate led from the east end of South Street to Canal Street and the Spy Tower on the south wall of the city. This was presumably a lookout post to guard the South Port from which the road crossed the South Inch towards Edinburgh. It was in Speygate that the Stewart Earls of Atholl's Town House was situated. There was also a ship's chandler as this road was near to the Coal Shore

at the foot of Canal Street and the Lime Shore at the South Inch. Later the County Prison was situated in Speygate on the site of the present car park. The female block was at the south end and the male block at the north end while the governor's house was central.

Many of the old closes and vennels which led from South Street to High Street have disappeared within the last one hundred and fifty



Fleshers' Vennel.

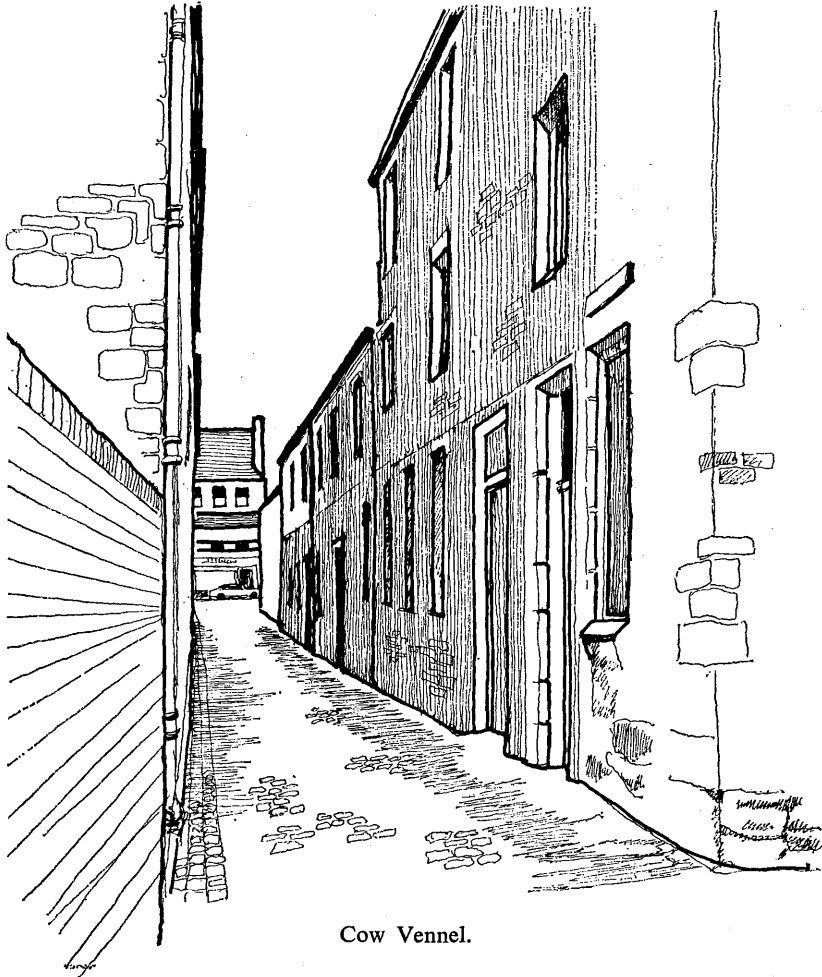
years. Scott Street was laid about 1876, wider and more able therefore to cope with the increasing traffic of our burgh. Kennedy's Close marked on the older maps would presumably be the land of Kennedy while there was an area on the north side of South Street referred to as Weaver Land. After the '45 Rebellion came the burgh's involvement in the Industrial Revolution and it was seen by some as a developing centre of the textile industry. While Graham's Close and Gordon's Close have disappeared to the west of Meal Vennel, the latter thoroughfare from South Street to High Street remains. An Irish colony settled in the Meal Vennel which derives its name from the millers trading there. Flesher's Vennel reminds us of the ancient guild of fleshers or butchers plying their trade in mediaeval Perth. The Flesher's Vennel led from the north side of South Street to the Fleshmarket held in mediaeval times in the market yards beside St. John's Kirk. The Fleshers or Butchers had a strong incorporation in the city and much of the poverty of Cow Vennel belonged to them and the incorporation sign can be seen on the front of the building in South Street between Princes Street and Cow Vennel. The Fleshers made a levy of one penny on each beast sold and this supplied the candles to St. Peter's altar in St. John's Kirk where each guild had its altar in pre-Reformation times. This was referred to as Patie's Pence—St. Peter being the patron saint of Fleshers. To the east of Cow Vennel there is Princes Street, a modern development with its name presumably taken from the name of the Prince Regent. The Parsonage House for the clergy of St. John's Kirk stood on the south side of the church at the north-east end of Flesher's Vennel, previously known as Barber's Vennel.

South Street was also known as the South High Gait, being the second main road in the mediaeval burgh. St. Ann's Lane was one of the Kirk Vennels leading from South Street to the burgh Kirk of St. John the Baptist partly through the mediaeval kirkyard. In the vennel was situated the chapel of St. Ann, who was mother of the Virgin Mary. The site of the chapel was later occupied by the famous Grammar School of Perth. The so-called School Vennel saw the early scholastic days of the "Admirable" Crichton, Lord George Murray of the '45, Lord Mansfield, Lord Chief Justice of England, and many other distinguished persons. In 1810 the school became the town theatre where Mr. and Mrs. Henry Siddons, Mr. Macready and other famous actors of the period appeared. A centre of the early tourist traffic in the coaching era, the lane contained Champion Inn with stabling for four horses and the large buildings facing South Street were built as an hotel in 1825. The Perthshire Constitutional and Journal was published in this close from 1835-1948. The newspaper was owned by the Hunter family, Sir Thomas Hunter being Lord Provost and Member of Parliament in the 1930s. During excavations when workmen had been digging a hole they found human bones and pieces of leather. These were really in the churchyard which used to surround St. John's Kirk. From about 1600 onwards Greyfriars Ground was used as the town's burial yard as the area round St. John's Kirk was full. When coaches



St. John's Kirk before the Reformation.

and more traffic required roads to be made in Perth the graveyard at St. John's Kirk was cobbled over. No human bones were found in April/May 1975 when St. Ann's Lane was excavated because the excavation site was outside the area of St. John's Kirk graveyard.



Cow Vennel.

At the west end of South Street there were a series of linking closes running from Canal Street to South Street. Coming from the west there was Colville Close. It took its name from the landowner. Shuttlefield Close was near to Weaverland. Powerloom weaving came to Perth about 1785. Bankers and rich men invested money to build factories. Shuttles were made of wood and a factory to make these was set up in

Shuttlefield Close. In Weaverland Close the handloom weavers of Perth had their Weavers' Hall where business was done. Another close was Malloch Close. In 1876 when Scott Street was planned the houses in the Malloch and Shuttlefield Closes were described as "of very inferior description" and "in a state of delapidation". To the east of Shuttlefield Close was a vennel known as Candlemaker's Close, leaving no doubt as to the occupation of the inhabitants. It is interesting to note that making the wicks for candles was one of the ways in which the weavers of Perth kept their trade from flagging.

Horner's Lane and Ropemaker's Close run northwards from Canal Street. Presumably the lands of Horner's Lane belonged to one called Horner. At the south end of the lane there once stood the Canal Street and Horner's Lane Brewery. Ropemaker's Close took its name from the trade carried on there and there were in the close livery stables and a posting establishment. Several tenements in South Street and neighbouring closes were demolished to make the broader Scott Street which honoured the illustrious writer of the Waverley novels. Of the more modern streets King Edward Street was named after Edward the Seventh and in the newer western suburbs one finds appropriately Alexandra Street.

WATERGATE

In mediaeval Perth the Watergate was a very fashionable street where nobles and gentry had town houses. The gardens of these houses extended to the banks of the River Tay. King James IV had a house there and it was in the Watergate that Mary of Guise, the Queen Regent resided during her visit to Perth at the time of the Reformation. Oliver Cromwell, when he held Perth during the period of the Commonwealth, also lodged in this street.

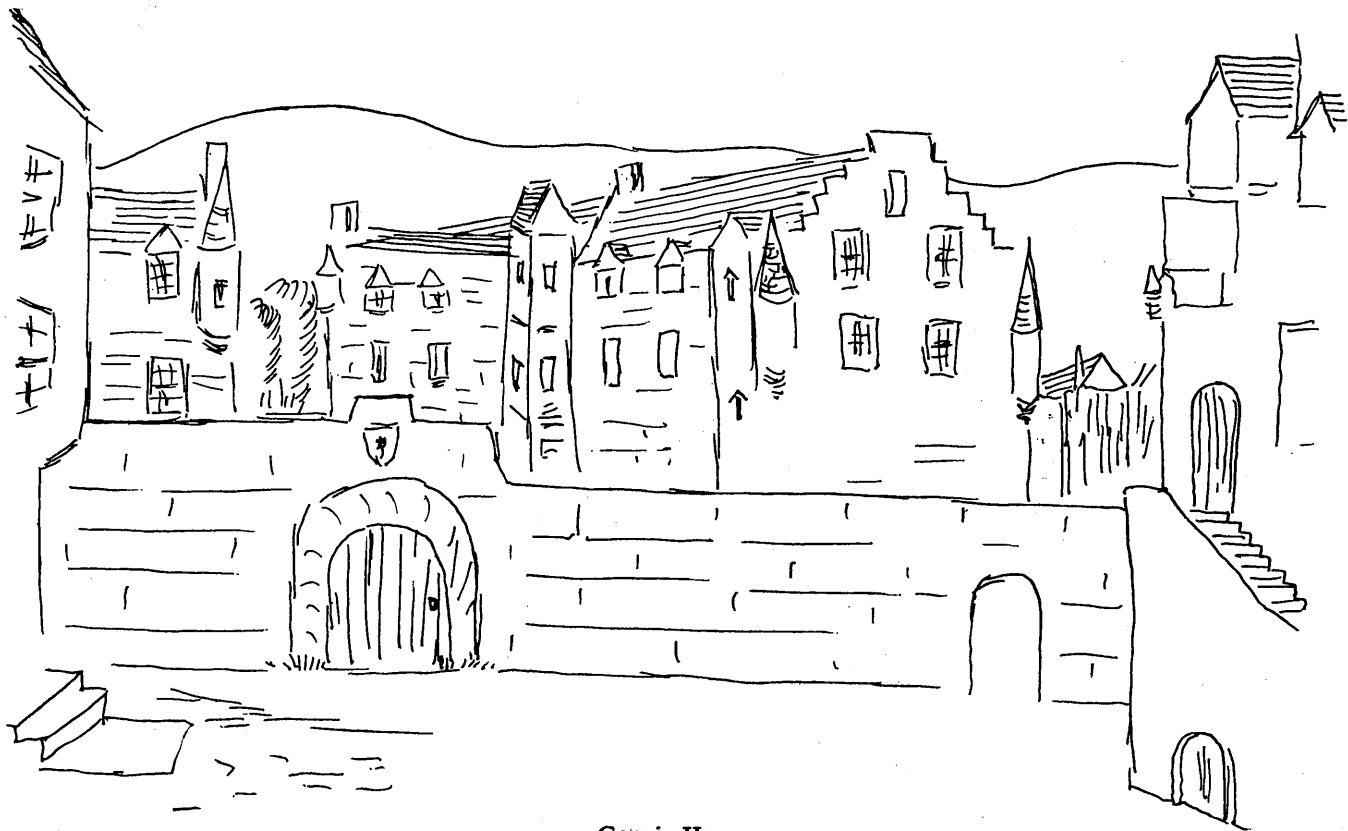
The first Earl of Kinnoull, who was Lord Chancellor of Scotland, had his town house at the south end of the Watergate, adjacent to Gowrie House. It was a fine building with a timber front and projecting upper storey. In 1725 the Wright Guild built a tenement on the west side of Watergate, and on the top floor of the tenement was the meeting hall of the Guild. One of the most well-known families in Perth in 1800 was the family of Dr. Stewart of Bonskeid. His dwelling was one of the fine houses of the Watergate and it is easy to imagine how convenient the doctor's garden house was on the banks of the Tay for the deposition of bodies for anatomical research by the body-snatchers who plied across the Tay from the old churchyard of Kinnoull with their gruesome burdens. The doctor's wife was the sister of the famous songwriter Caroline Oliphant, later Baroness Nairne. Miss Stewart of the Watergate was the doctor's daughter who later married Mr. Sandeman, a prosperous merchant carrying on his business in the burgh. Mrs. Stewart Sandeman lived in one of the fine mansion houses of Isla Road which look across to the North Inch from the east bank of the

Tay. In the south-west corner of Watergate stood the Earl of Errol's town house. This building is said to have contained secret chambers not unknown in mansions of older times. When the artillery were stationed in Gowrie House two of the men who had misbehaved decided to desert and gained a hiding place in Errol's house as they appear to have been on good terms with the person who occupied that portion of the house where the secret chamber lay. The chamber was entered by a vent above the hearth, so they were hidden "up the lum", and search was made for them in vain. In the Watergate there was also situated the Bishop's Palace, town house of the Bishop of Dunkeld. The Palace was reached by way of Fountain Close at the east end of South Street. Near Fountain Close there is another dog-leg close leading from South Street to Watergate, such closes being features of old Perth.

The Water Vennel is believed to have taken its name from the fact that the inhabitants of Perth had the right of way by this vennel from Watergate to the Tay for obtaining their water. When Gowrie House was built it was on condition that this narrow passageway to the north of the house be made to allow the citizens access to the Tay. The Water Vennel forms the north boundary of the former Town Mansion of the Earls of Gowrie built in 1520 by the Countess of Huntly of the family of Gray of Kinfauns. This vennel replaced an ancient way "The Provost of Methven's Vennel" leading to the river from South Street. In the century and a half before the building of the Perth Bridge small ferry boats or cobbles plied from the foot of the vennel to the Bridgend shore, the lane being often called the South Boat Vennel. The North Boat Vennel also ran from the Watergate to the banks of the Tay at a point north of South Boat Vennel.

GOWRIE HOUSE

This was a large turreted mansion in extensive gardens with a river promenade on the town wall and whose grounds terminated at the Monk's Tower situated on the banks of the Tay. The house was built in 1520 by the Countess of Huntly of the family of Gray of Kinfauns. The main gate faced South Street. Later the property of the Earls of Gowrie, it was the scene of that most mysterious event in Scottish history, "The Gowrie Conspiracy" of 1600. Confiscated by the crown with the Gowrie lands it became town property and housed briefly King Charles I in 1633 being referred to as "the King's Great Lodging in the Speygate". It was during this visit that the King witnessed the Morris Dance by thirteen brethren of the Glover Incorporation on a floating stage of timber on the River Tay. Presented by the town council to the Duke of Cumberland, after the Battle of Culloden H.R.H. quickly disposed of it to the Board of Ordinance who utilised it as an Artillery Barrack until its demolition in 1806. The town council of our city repurchased Gowrie House in order to carry out the demolition. The County Hall and Sheriff Court was subsequently built on the site in 1816-1819. This notable Georgian building was designed by Sir



Gowrie House.

Robert Smirke. It is an interesting reflection on the character of the Duke of Cumberland to note that when he was presented with Gowrie House he enquired if "that piece of land the Carse of Gowrie went with it". It seems strange that a man whose character is shown by the nickname 'Butcher Cumberland' should also have a flower named after him called Sweet William.



Baxter's Vennel.

Oliphant's Vennel leads from Watergate to St. John's Kirk and took its name from the fact that the Perthshire family of Oliphant had their town house in the close. The Oliphants of Gask will long be remembered for their Jacobite sympathies and for the fact that they gave to Scotland one of her greatest song writers, Baroness Nairne. She it was who as Caroline Oliphant, a young child of about six, was allowed to come downstairs in the Auld Hoose at Gask in order to see the Young Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart. Some of the most poignant Jacobite

songs flowed from her pen. Baxter's Vennel runs parallel to Oliphant's Vennel from Watergate to St. John's Kirk. Presumably the property here was owned in mediaeval times by Baxters, the guild of bakers.

The narrow mediaeval streets of Skinnergate and Kirkgate linked the Burgh Kirk of St. John the Baptist to the Castle of Perth which, until 1210, was situated at the north wall of the mediaeval town. The Kirkgate would in early times lead people to the church then surrounded by the green sward of the graveyard. In a small close leading off Kirkgate was the manse of St. John's Kirk which was used until about 1850. If the Skinnergate contained the shops of glovers and other merchants in leather goods then it was to the Kirkgate that the people of Perth went to find the principal drapers and grocers of the town.

KIRK VENNELS

The kirk vennels as they are called are the five or six streets and closes which in the mediaeval town would be traversed by the citizens on their way to worship in St. John's Kirk. These closes linked High Street and South Street to the religious centre of the mediaeval burgh. These vennels were Oliphant's Vennel, Baxter's Vennel, St. Ann's Lane, Kirk Close, Kirkgate and Rotten or Ritten Row. Kirk Close runs from High Street to the square now in front of St. John's Kirk. The main feature of the close is the dog-leg bend about half-way through. This was a shape often found in mediaeval alleys and was possibly used as a means of hoodwinking and escaping from pursuers. By the side of St. John's Kirk to the west the merchants set up their booths. This was then the market place of our burgh and separated from the church by a passageway known as Kirkside. The road to the south of the church was also Kirkside. Leading to the market place from the High Street was Guild Hall Close. Guild Hall had been built at the north end of this vennel in 1908. Kirk Close and Kirkgate also brought the citizens of our town from the High Street to the market booths and between these two ways there was another, the White Bull Close. In this close stood the Black Bull Inn, a popular tavern. Running parallel to Kirk Close and again leading from the High Street to the market area was Bluebell Close. This is yet another of the many closes which have disappeared or are in the process of disappearing. This close took its name from the Bluebell Inn. A Mr. Peter Gray of Bluebell Close claimed to be the last handloom weaver of Perth.

Like St. Ann's Lane, Ritten Row was one of the Kirk Vennels but was superseded by St. John's Street in the late eighteenth century. The name is a corruption of the words routine row, the route or processional way to the church of St. John for the many religious festivals and processions of pre-Reformation times. Lying between St. Ann's Lane and Ritten Row was the Salt Vennel, named presumably from the trade plied there. The Salt Vennel appears to have been a collection of tumble-down tenements crowded with the lowest class citizens. Like



St. John's Kirk, 1774.

most of the streets and vennels in mediaeval Perth the Salt Vennel was paved with rounded stones from the Tay. It is interesting to note that in 1619 the Session of the church decreed that "stakes of great timber be set up in the mouths of the Kirk Vennels nearest the Kirkyard that no horse with sleds or carts get passage thereat". Events which led to this decree were firstly the use of the closed cemetery around St. John's Kirk as receptacle for the filth of the neighbourhood and secondly causeways being laid through the burial ground. It was to prevent these causeways being broken up that the decree was issued.

ST. JOHN'S KIRK IN ST. JOHN'S PLACE

This thoroughfare in our city takes its name from the burgh church of St. John the Baptist. The early church was granted in 1126 to the monks of Dunfermline Abbey by David I, the "Sair Sanct for Scotland". It is doubtless true that a church existed on this site, however, long before 1126. The present church was restored in 1928 by Sir Robert Lorimer and the restoration work was done as a memorial to those of Perth and Perthshire who gave their lives in World War I. The church is a most fascinating and interesting place to visit and has watched over Perth in many troubled times. The clock of the church marks time for the citizens of Perth today but there are records to show that the "knock" or public clock of St. John's was once the pride of the city. Indeed it seems that the clock was renowned for its accuracy as there was a saying "Sun and moon *may* gang wrang, But the clock o' St. Johnstoun *canna* gang wrang." When the tower first boasted of a clock is uncertain but records in the seventeenth century mention the knock. The tower of St. John's now houses a carillon of 36 bells, one of the finest sets in the land. In the Middle Ages people who attended church stood or they brought their own stools with them. It was the Wrights Guild who first were given permission to put seats in the north transept of St. John's Kirk. In 1596 a seat was provided for the scholars of the Grammer School which was near the church. In mediaeval times there were burials within the church of St. John's. The Mercer family lie buried in the vault. They are supposed to have been given this privilege in return for the gift of the North Inch to the people of Perth or for the gift of the city mills to King Malcolm Canmore. By 1587 the population of Perth was growing and galleries were put into St. John's Kirk so that the magistrates and councillors could sit there. There was another gallery called a cockloft and that was where the public hangman sat. Part of St. John's Kirk was used as a prison for women. They were put into Halkerston Tower. Before the end of the 16th century St. John's Kirk had been divided into three churches and remained divided until 1926 when Sir Robert Lorimer re-designed and restored the church as the War Memorial.

THE GUILDS

The guild signs are very interesting and although the signs were essentially the same there were slight differences from town to town.

The guild signs can be seen on the tombstones of guild members and there is a good collection of them in Greyfriars Churchyard. In the Council Room of Perth City Chambers guild signs decorate the ceiling. The signs can also be seen on the Mercat Cross in King Edward Street.

The Hammerman Guild had a hammer with a crown above and the Cordiners or Shoemakers had a curved knife with a crown above. The Weavers' Guild of Perth had three shuttles on their sign and the Glovers a pair of gloves. The Tailors had many of the tools of their trade such as scissors, needles and irons. The Bakers often had a sheaf of wheat with two long-handled shovels with which they used to take the bread from the ovens. The Fleshers had the tools of their trade such as butcher's knives and hatchets for breaking bones. The Wrights' sign which can be seen in St. John's Kirk is very complicated with four quarters each showing instruments for measuring like dividers, rulers and set squares.

Each guild had a mortkist, which was a large wooden chest. It contained usually a Bible, a black cushion and a mortcloth. In mediaeval times coffins were not used for the dead. The body was wrapped in leathern shrouds and carried to burial on a flat piece of wood. To cover the corpse decently a piece of black velvet was placed over the body in the procession. This was called a mortcloth. It was borrowed from the guild by the relatives of the dead for the funeral day. The Bible could also be borrowed. Any badges of office of the dead man would be carried in the procession on a black velvet cushion. Each guild had a banner on which was the guild sign. On fair days and in times of trouble the guild members would gather round their banners which were made of wood, but later on there were flags beautifully embroidered. Many of these banners, the mortkists and the mortcloths can be seen in Perth Museum. Also there can be seen one of the money boxes of the guilds. There are also chairs of the deacons of the guilds.

In Perth there was a very strong merchant guild, the body of men who did the trading. Perth harbour was always a busy port and it seems that much of the trade was with Europe. In the 12th century we know that ships brought dyed cloth and articles for household use like pottery and took away wool and hides. Perth seems to have been the centre of an agricultural area and would have many cattle. By the 14th and 15th centuries the variety of goods had increased and dyed materials including linen, knives, soap and wine were imported. Indeed there was a committee of wine tasters appointed annually. The export of wool and hides continued and deer skins and salmon were also important exports.

MONASTERIES OF PERTH

To the west beyond the wall of the city was built the Carthusian Monastery. This was also known as the Charterhouse and we remember it today by the name Charterhouse Lane, which runs from

King Street to Canal Crescent. The monastery stood on the site of the present King James VI Hospital. The monks dressed in white observed the rule of silence and seldom left their monastery. The monastery was founded by King James I of Scotland in 1429. The founders of the monastic order came originally from Belgium and it was under the jurisdiction of the Grande Chartreuse. It is interesting to note that in early maps Charterhouse Lane is marked as Charteris Lane. Charteris was a local name and indeed the family provided many of the provosts of the burgh.

Perhaps one of the most interesting names in our city is Pomarium. This is yet another link with France. Lying to the south of the site of the Carthusian Monastery, this area was the apple orchard of the old monastery. Some years ago work was being done in this area and workmen came upon what must have been the kitchen midden of the monks. Large quantities of oyster shells were discovered.

Nearby South William Street is named after the Royal uncle of Queen Victoria and the Queen herself is remembered in Victoria Street. James Street is an attractive street with Regency cottages. The area on which these were built was from King James VI Hospital which owned a good deal of land adjoining the Hospital. Nelson Street celebrates the hero of Trafalgar. Hospital Street takes its name from King James VI Hospital. The fine Georgian style building was erected in 1750 and was restored in 1975, costs being largely met by the Gannochy Trust and by a state grant. It served in a charitable sense the needs of Perth from 1750 onwards. A new medical hospital, now the County Offices in County Place, was built in 1836. This in turn was superseded by Perth Royal Infirmary in 1914.

The Franciscans or Greyfriars were the last to establish their monastery in the vicinity of mediaeval Perth. It was founded in 1460 by Lord Oliphant. The order of Greyfriars was founded by St. Francis of Assisi. It was to Greyfriars Monastery that the mob rushed from St. John's Kirk after the sermon preached by John Knox in 1559. The monastery was destroyed and the riches found therein distributed to the poor of the city. The ruins and grounds remained deserted until the old burial ground of the monastery became the town's burial ground in the late sixteenth century. The car park at the corner of Princes Street and Canal Street was made over the older Greyfriars Lane.

The Blackfriars Monastery lying to the north of the Burgh and extending to the North Inch was founded by Alexander II in 1231. Blackfriars Street reminds us of their monastic establishment. In the adjacent area there is Carpenter Street and Union Lane—a rather modest place to chronicle the Union of Scotland and England!

The Carmelites or Whitefriars came to Scotland in 1257 in the reign of Alexander III. They were Mendicant Friars and the original monastery was founded at Mount Carmel where dwelt the great prophet

Elijah. It was on the land of Tullilum that they established the first monastery of their order in Scotland. It was the smallest of the four Perth monasteries. The last prior of the Carmelite Monastery in Perth seems to have joined the Reformation and became later minister of Tibbermore.

Dovecotland became a small suburb of Perth in the 17th century. This was the site of the Carmelite Monastery and took its name from the columbarium of the Whitefriars or Carmelites. These dovecots were often found near monasteries providing an extra item on the monks' menus. In earlier times there was a colony of weavers at Dovecotland. There were one or two colonies of weavers established outwith the city wall, another being at Pomarium to the south-west of the city. These weavers may have chosen such places of residence so that they might carry on their trade but escape payment of dues exacted by the Incorporated Trades of Perth.

PERTH BRIDGES

Perth is at the tidal point of the River Tay. In olden times the river would be much deeper and we know this because the harbour was once at the foot of the High Street. Maybe the Romans then bridged the Tay. This is very likely and it would be a wooden one. The Romans might have also had a ford across the Tay north of Perth where the river would be shallower and narrower. Earlier people like the Picts would likely use a ferry. A wooden bridge was standing over the Tay in the 13th century because it was swept away by flood with the castle in 1210. Other bridges were destroyed in the same way in 1589 and 1621. For about 150 years no bridge crossed the Tay at Perth and ferrymen used to take passengers from the Perth side to Bridgend. One of these ferrymen is buried in Kinnoull Churchyard and on his stone is carved a picture of himself rowing his boat. In 1772 the Perth Bridge was completed. In 1849 the first railway bridge across the Tay was built. Perth's third structure, the Victoria Bridge, was built in 1900 and replaced in 1960 by the present Queen's Bridge.

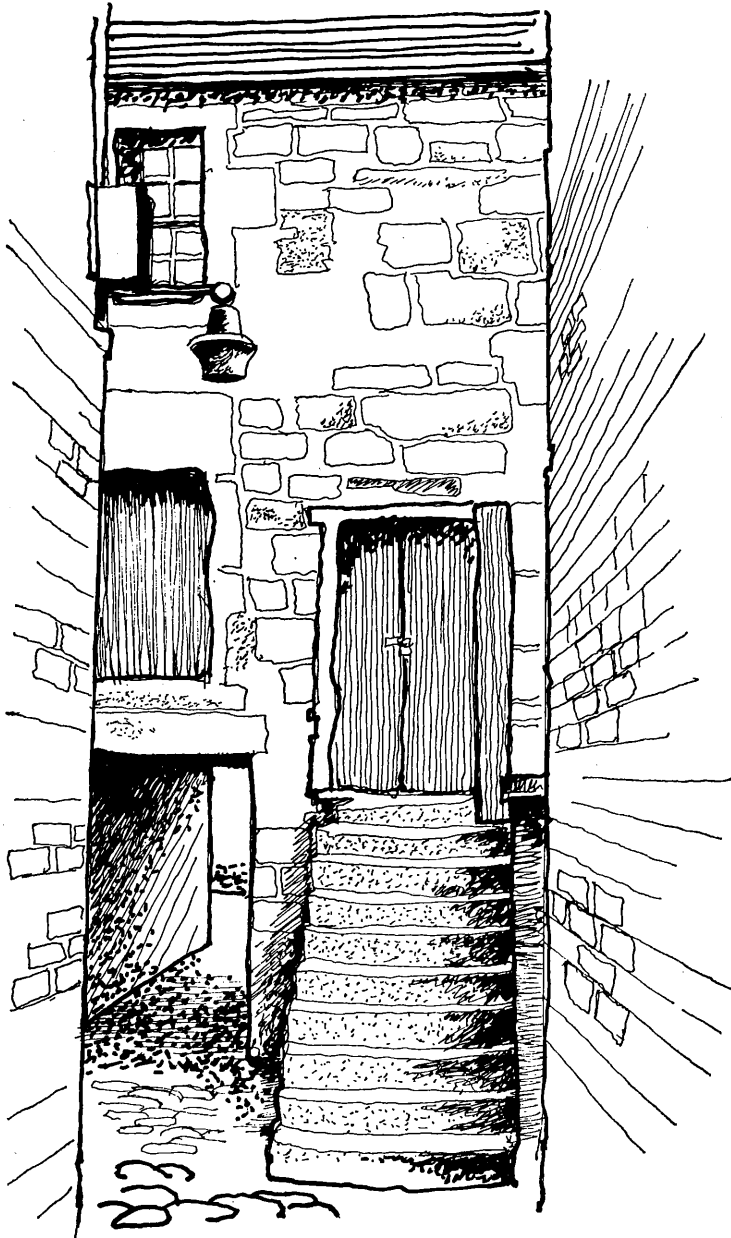
THE HARBOUR

The harbour of Perth in mediaeval times was at the foot of the High Street but by the end of the 15th century Dundee, Aberdeen and Leith were beginning to take trade away from Perth harbour. One reason for this was the long stretch of the River Tay which ships had to sail before they reached Perth. Dundee, Aberdeen and Leith are much easier to reach and nearer the open sea. Also the Tay was gradually becoming shallower and narrower because silt was being laid down on the river bed. A later harbour was at Canal Street and was called the Coal Shore because of the goods unloaded there. Later the Lime Shore was at the South Inch and nowadays the harbour is even farther down stream from its original position.

SUBURBS OF PERTH

In the sixteenth century there appears to have been two "suburbs" of Perth. To the north of the city wall lay Castle Gable, the narrow vennel on the site of the Old Perth Castle, and Curfew Row nearby. One suggestion is that Curfew is a corruption of the French *carrefour* meaning the intersection of the ways. This northern suburb was reached by the Red Brig which crossed the lade. The second suburb lay on the west along the public road or Lang Causeway leading from Turret Bridge at the High Street Port. Kinnoull Causeway, leading previously from the South Gate Port westwards to Burghmuir, was earlier known as Cow Causeway, no doubt used by the cow minders to drive the cattle from the town onto the Burgh muir for grazing. In Kinnoull Causeway there was a tenement in which practically every home had a handloom in it in the seventeenth century. This was known as the 'Causeway Factory and stood on the site of the present playground of Caledonian Road School. The name causeway denoted a better made road with causeway setts. Westwards Kinnoull Causeway leads to Earl's Dykes, marking the limit of the lands of the Earl of Kinnoull. Also in this vicinity is Elibank Street. Lord Murray of Elibank married in the eighteenth century Miss Oliphant the heiress of Pitheavlis and Bachilton and presumably this street marks one limit of the Pitheavlis lands. The New Row, formerly called Barker's Row, lay in mediaeval times outwith the city wall and is at least as old as the fifteenth century. Hal o' the Wynd's Close would in the eighteenth century run through the city wall which by then would be dilapidated and in ruins. This is said to take its name from a house called Hal o' the Wynd's, the blacksmith of the "Fair Maid of Perth". It is unlikely however that Hal o' the Wynd would live outside the city wall. Running parallel to Hal o' the Wynd's Close but south of it was the Well Close which ran from Methven Street to the New Row. At the New Row end of the close there was a well in the street from which citizens obtained their water. Local inhabitants called it the Wallie Close. It, like Hal o' the Wynd's Close, would traverse the remains of the city wall. In 1799 the last parts of the city wall were demolished and it was then that Methven Street came into being. This became the new road to Crieff through Methven. The old road to Crieff was formerly by the High Street Port and Burghmuir.

In Georgian times Perth, like Edinburgh, expanded as the bounds of the mediaeval town were being burst by an ever-increasing population. The Georgian town grew around the mediaeval town at first on the north and south and later to the east when Tay Street was constructed. In 1772 Perth Bridge was erected. The engineer was William Smeaton and the cost of the edifice was £20,631 12s. 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., over £7,000 of this being raised by subscription. George Street, of elegant proportions, was designed to link Watergate to the bridge. Named after George the Third, this street to this day contains many fine examples of Georgian architecture. Not least of these architectural gems is the domed and pillared Art Gallery, formerly called the Marshall Monument, as it was



Hal o' the Wynd's Close.

erected by the citizens of this town in memory of Thomas Hay Marshall, the Lord Provost of Perth, who did more than any other to encourage and inspire the building of the Georgian surround of our city. It was he who called upon the skill of Sir Robert Reid who designed houses in Rose Terrace and Marshall Place. The latter street facing the South Inch honoured the Provost while Rose Terrace was named after the Provost's wife, Rose Marshall. The very fine building on the corner of Rose Terrace and Atholl Street with its splendid views of the North Inch was the town house of the Marshall family. In George Street the visitor should note the fine bank building designed by Andrew Heiton. The Exchange Coffee Rooms, designed by Wm. Mackenzie, city architect, were in the building now occupied by Cameron, House Furnishers.

In Barossa Street and Barossa Place the name commemorates the battle of Barossa during the Peninsular War when Thomas Graham of Balgowan won a great victory. Graham of Balgowan had his home near Methven. He raised a regiment of volunteers on the North Inch of Perth and the fountain beside the River Tay is in memory of this regiment which was known as "Graham's Greybreeks" because of the colour of their uniform. This regiment later became part of the Cameronians. The name of the great Perthshire family of Atholl is remembered in Atholl Crescent, Atholl Place and Atholl Street. It was the 4th Duke of Atholl who was the moving spirit in the building of the Marshall Monument in George Street and the County Buildings in Tay Street. The foundation stone of the Marshall Monument was laid by the Duke. These streets are adjacent to the North Inch and the old road to the north and the lands of Atholl crossed the Inch. Stormont Street takes one of the family names of the Earls of Mansfield. The family had the title Viscount Stormont until 1800, when George Stormont was created Earl of Mansfield. The title of Viscount Stormont passed to his eldest son.

Marshall Place faces the fine expanse of the South Inch. During the sitting of the Red Parliament of Perth in 1606 a battle took place on the South Inch between the followers of the Earls of Eglinton and Glencairn. On the South Inch in mediaeval times there were archery butts where the citizens of Perth could practice efficient use of their bows and arrows. Now a pleasant parkland for the people of Perth it is interesting to note that this area was nearly lost when there were plans to use it as a depot by Perth Railway Company. It was James Murray Patton, nephew of Provost Marshall, of Marshall Cottage beside the Tay who was then Sheriff Clerk of Perthshire who fought this particular "battle" of the Inch with the Railway Company. On the north-east corner of the South Inch Oliver Cromwell built his citadel. Many houses of Perth were torn down to make this fortification and also headstones from the nearby Greyfriars burial ground. It was built in 1652 and most of it was pulled down in 1661 except for one portion which was used as cavalry stables for the military. The South Inch was planted with trees in 1727 and it is on record that these trees came mostly from

the continent. When Queen Victoria visited Perth in 1842 a great triumphal arch and gateway was erected at the foot of Princes Street. Provost Sidey presented the keys of the gateway to the Queen when she approached in her carriage. These keys are kept in the City Chambers.

The Mill Wynd, a narrow close, led from the gate of the city, the West Port, to the City Mills. A company, The Mill Wynd Manufacturing Company, was formed in 1782 and built factory buildings for the manufacturing of linen and damasks. Hand-loom weaving was also carried out extensively in this suburb outwith the city walls. The city wall, by then dilapidated, stood between the Wynd and Methven Street and was bisected by Hal o' the Wynd Close adjoining. The remains were finally demolished towards the end of the 18th century. Sir Walter Scott, who was advised by local antiquary and publisher David Morison, selected the house with the attractive gable as fictitious setting for the home of Hall o' the Wynd, the redoubtable blacksmith hero of his novel "The Fair Maid of Perth". The house has features reminiscent of Flemish influence—a link with the burgh's centuries of trade with the Low Countries and their rich weaving and dyeing tradition, still perpetuated in Messrs. Pullars of Perth incorporating the firm of P. & P. Campbell whose first works were also on this site.

County Place, leading from the South Street Port to the Glasgow Road, probably took its name from the County Bar, now the County Hotel. York Place presumably was named after the Duke of York, the son of George III, the "Grand Old Duke of York" of song fame and was one of the newer roads leading out beyond the old mediaeval city. The home of Perth Foundry which used the fall of Perth Lade as motive power was in Thimble-row, off Old High Street where there was also a small settlement of weavers just outwith the mediaeval town wall. In a short row of cottages the weavers did their work. The settlement may have been outside the city boundary for the sake of avoiding duties. In the nineteenth century a Tow Mill, a three-storey building, stood in Thimble-row. Caledonian Road takes its name from the Caledonian Railway Company which in the early days of steam trains gave Perth its first railway service.

Farther west lay Riggs Road. The riggs were the lands or gardens of a property and this old Scots word remains alive in the name of this street. The Glover's Guild must have been one of the most important guilds in mediaeval Perth as there was a great deal of curing and preparing of skins within the city. We have already mentioned the Skinnergate where much of the skin was made into gloves or shoes and in recent excavations at Perth High Street several pieces of leather belts decorated with pattern were found. When the guilds and incorporated trades became rich they often bought land and built property as an investment. Much of the property in the Cow Vennel belonged to the Flesher's Incorporation. The land on which Glover Street and its houses now stand was feued from the Glover Guild and this gave the street its name.

In St. Magdalene's Road it is interesting to note that one of the oldest gravestones in the burial ground of Greyfriars is marked 1580 I.B. I.B. are the initials of the Johannes Buchan. The family of Buchan, long connected with Perth, farmed at one time the land of St. Magdalene. The continued development to the west of the burgh was due to the railway boom of the late nineteenth century. At that period Pitheavlis Castle lay west surrounded by a group of small cottages. Before the railway existed Earl's Dykes was the western boundary of the city. Land to the west not used for cultivation was used for the taking out of clay. The lands of the Whitefriars Monastery at Tullylumb and Wellshill became the playfields of Perth. In the vicinity too lay Pickletullum House and farm. This is said to have been a one-time pickle of lint-land added to the other land near—tillim, i.e. a small hill. One may wonder about Needless Road. The story goes that as the Perth carriers for the south of long ago passed out of Perth westwards the first refreshment for horse and man was at the corner of Wilson Street, but it was 'needless' to have a drink so early. A mile further on and Cherrybank was reached. The brae was steep and high so it was a 'necessity' to have a rest and replenishment at such a point. Hence the name Necessity Brae.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Perth was encircled by tollbars on every road and at every point of the compass. There was one on the Edinburgh Road at Craigend and at Barnhill for the Carse Road. Tollbars existed too on the Dunkeld, Crieff, Glasgow and Coupar Angus roads. The paying of these tolls was a great irritation to travellers who often had to rout the toll-keeper out of bed to pay the necessary due!

In the land to the west of the city of Perth there is a residential area where the name of Oakbank occurs. There was presumably a stand of fine oaks there originally, and indeed there is still an avenue of oak trees beside Perth Academy. Here too is the name of Viewlands, and from this higher part the visitor can certainly obtain a fine panoramic view eastwards to Kinnoull Hill. The name of Cherrybank occurs in the west part of Perth and although there are few wild cherry trees to be seen now it must be that there were numbers of them at one time in this area.

To the east of the river lies Bridgend and here many of the streets have been named from the large houses of the area—Kincarrathie House, Pitcullen House, Potterhill House and Annat House. Corsie Hill and Kinnoull Hill are beauty spots and favourite picnic areas. Close beside the Tay there is Commercial Street and here in the nineteenth century there was a considerable reputation held for shipbuilding.

The Muirton area of Perth lies at the north of the town and was presumably in early times a wide open space or muir. There was a considerable hamlet or cottar town at Muirton and this hamlet came under the ownership of the Balhousie Barony. There were low thatched

farm steadings with stables, byres and barns. The necessary midden hole was at the front of the house. Each family kept a cow. In the late sixteenth century record has it that football players desecrated the Sabbath by playing football on the Meadow Inch of Muirton. A record of 1616 tells of a King of the Beggars setting up court in the Muirton. This said king was by name Patrick Crombie. A mean, penny-pinching farmer of the Muirton is said to have added fresh kail to the previous day's brew, latterly reputedly seven years old, for his workers who naturally complained about the increasing staleness of their soup. This gave a local saying "As auld as the Muirton's kail". There is now one of Perth's newest housing areas at North Muirton and streets have been named after the various islands off the west coast of Scotland.

As new areas of houses appear on the ever expanding outskirts of Perth it is necessary to find names for the streets, crescents, avenues and drives. Several provosts have been remembered in this way and we have Primrose Avenue, Hunter Crescent, Nimmo Avenue and Buchan Drive.

In Mercer Terrace we have commemorated one of the outstanding families of Perth. An early member of the family gifted the city mills to Malcolm Canmore. These mills were later returned as a gift to the town by Robert III. It is said that the Mercer family gave to the citizens of Perth the North Inch which land formed part of their property. It is thought that in return for this generous act the family received the right of burial in St. John's Kirk and the Mercer vault now lies below St. John's Place at the north end of the north transept of the church. An amusing old rhyme reads:

Folk say the Mercers tried the town to cheat,
When for twa Inches they did win six feet.

We have by no means mentioned all of the streets of our town but we hope that what is included here will be of interest to our readers. The study is endless and fascinating.

We should like finally to express our thanks to all who helped us including Mr. J. E. R. Macmillan, Curator of the Black Watch Museum, in our efforts to collect information about the street names of our royal burgh of Perth. We should like to express our gratitude to Perth Civic Trust who by their financial support enabled us to publish our small booklet.

* * *

BAXTER'S VENNEL

K

GLOVER ST.

STAN

ME

ROPEMAKERS' CLOSE

MILL ST.

UNION LAN

TO FAIR MAIDS HOUSE

NE

MILL WYND

SKINNERGATE

SCOT

TO FAIR MAIDS HOUSE →

BLACKFRIA

FLESHERS' VENNEL

S. WI

BLACKFRIARS WYND

FOUNDRY LANE

CHARTERH

← TO FAIR MAIDS HOUSE

CARPENTER S

CUTLOG VENNEL

KIN

OLIPHANT'S VENNE

NEWBOW

WHITEFRIARS