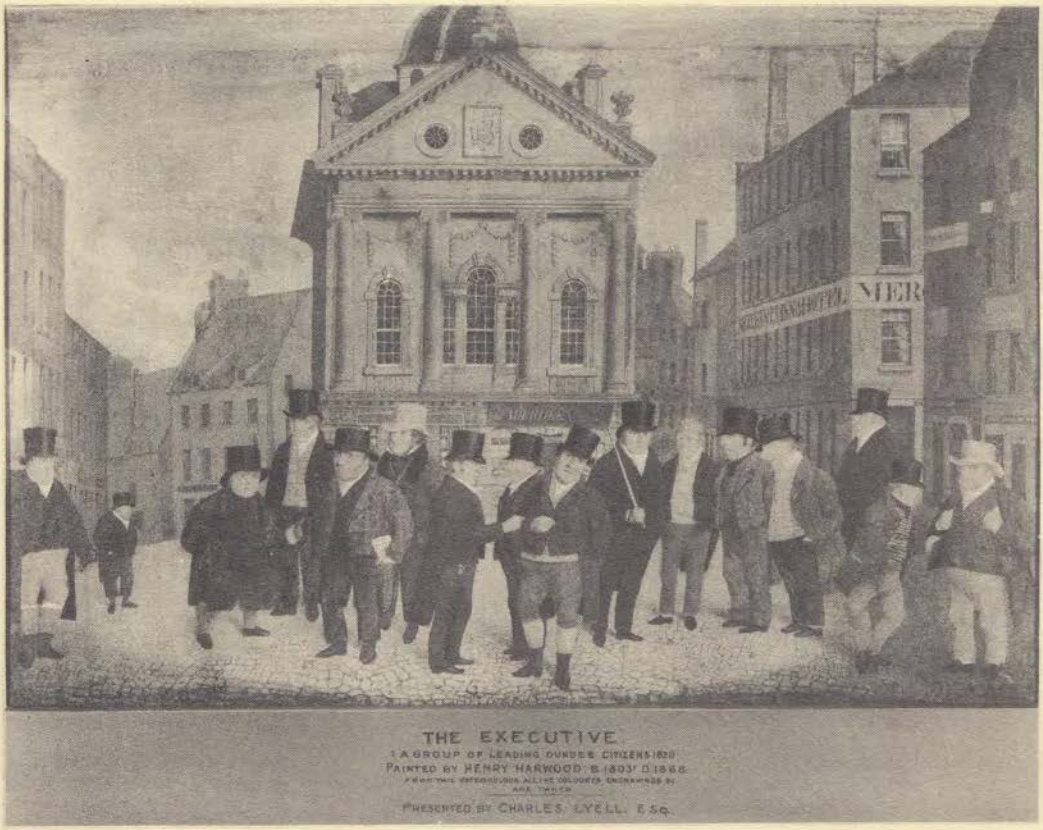
ONE ARTFUL and AMBITIOUS INDIVIDUAL

ALEXANDER RIDDOCH (1745 -1822)

(Provost of Dundee 1787-1819)

ENID GAULDIE



Abertay Historical Society *Publication number 28* *Dundee 1989*

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Cover illustration:
'The Executive', a group of prominent Dundee citizens painted by Henry Harwood (1821).

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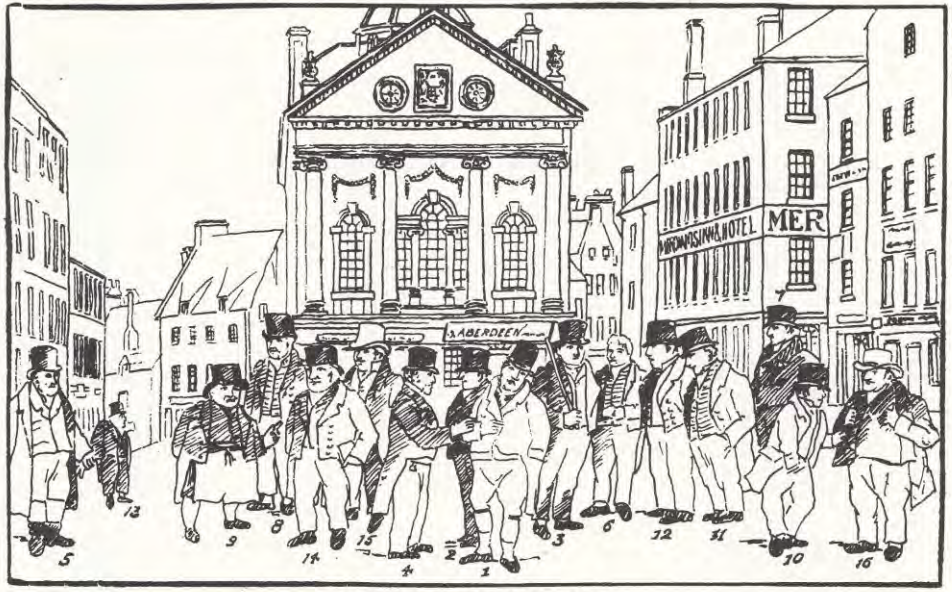

THE EXECUTIVE.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GUILDRY, NINE INCORPORATED TRADES, AND BURGESSES OF DUNDEE,

This Print is Humbly Dedicated by their Most Obedient Servant, HENRY HARWOOD.

1. D. BLAIR, Esq. of Cookstone.
2. Provost BELL.
3. Provost ANDERSON.
4. Provost BROWN.
5. ALEXR. REID, Merchant
6. GEORGE ROUGH, Glover.
7. Rev. J. THOMSON.
8. ROBT. CHRISTIE.
9. Deacon CATHRO, Dyer.
10. SAM. ADDISON, Butcher.
11. JAS. HOWIE, Shoemaker.
12. T. SPALDING, Manufacturer.
13. JOHN BAXTER, Writer.
14. WALTER THOMSON, Auctioneer.
15. ROBERT MUDIE, Teacher.
16. GEORGE CLARK, Shipowner.

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Enid Gauldie
Waterside
Invergowrie

Subsidised by the Scottish Arts Council
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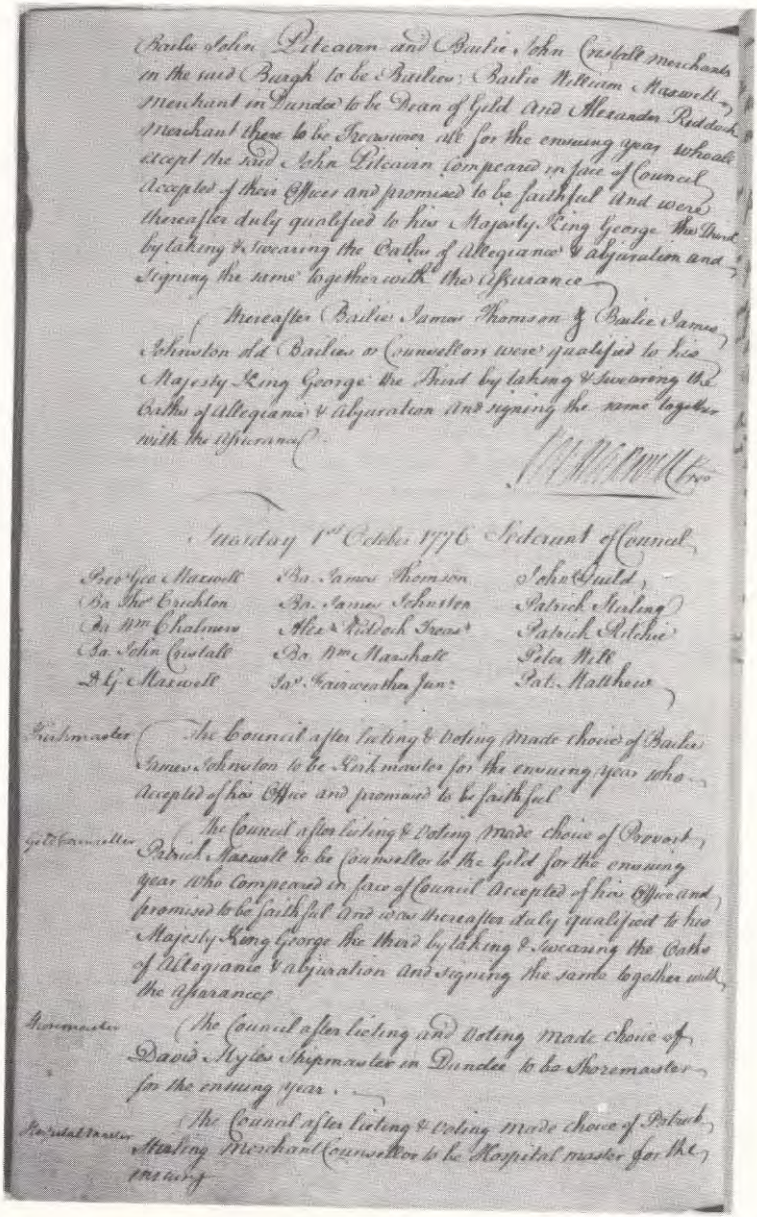


Plate 1. Minute from Dundee Town Council books which records Riddoch's election as Treasurer. Dundee Archive and Record Centre

CHAPTER 1

EARLY LIFE AND BUSINESS ACTIVITIES
'A ketteran bit callan'

Alexander Riddoch was one of three sons born to John Riddoch and Isabel Dow and christened on the same day, 1 September 1745, in the village of Comrie, Perthshire.[1] The old myth of the penniless Scots boy who rose to fortune remains, in his case, undemolished by later research. His father is described in the parish register as 'in Cultybraggan'[2] which must have been either a croft or a very small farm in hilly country a few miles from Comrie. When Alexander came to Dundee he was described as 'a ketteran bit callan, wha starved in the Hieland' with his 'wee tattered kiltie scarce covering his knee'.[3] It was, of course, common to exaggerate the humble origins of Scotsmen who succeeded in business and the lampoonist had cause to emphasize his vulgarity, but there is no reason to suppose any degree of prosperity in Riddoch's background. Comrie and the lands around it belonged in 1745 to the Dukes of Perth and was let to a number of small tenant farmers[4] but after the '45 the Forfeited Estates Commissioners put most of the small farms into the hands of one farmer and displaced a number of small tenants, making it necessary for their sons to leave the neighbourhood in search of work.[5]

Alexander had left home before he was 23, when he married Margaret Scott in Lethendy and was described as living in Scone[6] and, by the time he was 31 he was established as a merchant in Dundee and had been appointed Treasurer to Dundee Town Council. Within another year he was Provost, a position from which nothing shifted him for the next forty years except the constitutional need to alternate in office with a colleague subject to his own influence. He was virtually in control of the town, administering it according to his own views of what was best for it. Yet he died an old man full not of honour but contumely, his failures vaunted, and his achievements belittled, the victim of a new morality. The judgment of the 1820s has not so far been questioned and the time seems ripe for a reappraisal and perhaps a vindication of Provost Riddoch who reigned over the town during the period when its mediaeval street patterns were destroyed, and first modem thoroughfares planned. The chief accusation against Riddoch at the end of his career was that he corruptly benefited from speculation in Town property. Before considering the justice of that it is worth following his own separate path in Private business.

His election to the office of Treasurer, at a time when Dundee's finances were so low that a Treasurer was expected to dip into his own pocket to keep the town running, already implies the possession of some capital in 1776. We do not know what Riddoch was doing between 1768, when he married, and 1776 when his first child was born in Dundee, but we do know that the market traders of his home village were accustomed to 'traffic in oatmeal, barley meal and whisky and get in return flax, linen yam and wool'.[7] In Dundee Riddoch traded in spirits, linen and meal and it is not unreasonable to presume that he had been doing so with some success before he reached town. He

was well established as a member of the merchant class, dealing in brandy, gin, teas and tobacco, all expensive imported goods, before he joined the Council.[8] He lent the Town £300 in 1778 and continued to provide capital sums to tide over until the end of his career.[9]

It is possible that George Dempster took an interest in the young Riddoch. Dempster was born in Dundee in 1732 and inherited the family estate of Dunnichen, near Forfar, in 1754. He was member of parliament for the Fife and Forfar burghs from 1762 until 1790 and member of Dundee Town Council until 1782.[10] He was in attendance at the Council meetings when Riddoch was appointed[11] and their political views and interests were close. Dempster, for instance, bought property on his account near the hospital with the intention of building there[12] and it was he who advocated the building of Crichton Street. The two were associated in the founding, housing and management of the Dundee Banking Company, which grew out of Dempster's earlier venture, George Dempster and Company. If Riddoch caught from Dempster, for whom 'bribery formed a normal part of his political management of burghs'[13] a rather cavalier attitude towards place making and palm greasing in public affairs, it was an attitude so common that a man of his acuity would certainly have picked it up elsewhere very quickly indeed. Although Riddoch was later accused of having made money by exploiting his position on the Council, he had, in fact, already established himself as a relatively prosperous merchant before he had any opportunity to benefit from such exploitation of the public.

It is impossible not to get the impression, from his letters and from his reported speech, that Riddoch enjoyed business. Whatever he sold he was successful in his dealings and it was his ability to smell out a possible profit, to buy when the market was low and to benefit from a rise in prices which was the foundation and the stay of his success in life. Of course, he arrived in Dundee at a good time, when the town was beginning to pull out of a long period of recession and to benefit materially from the rising demand for coarse linens created by the continuing wars of the last quarter of the 18th century. By far the largest quantity of coarse linens manufactured in Scotland came from Dundee and district.[14] The quantity doubled between 1760 and 1790, the period crucial for Riddoch's pursuit of fortune. Between 1784 and 1799 linen production in Scotland rose from £835,081 in value to £1,047,598 and the increase, according to the reports of the Board of Trustees for Manufactures was 'all upon the coarse'.[15] This meant not only that a new class of prosperous linen merchants and manufacturers was emerging in Dundee in the last quarter of the 18th century but that the working people, the hecklers, spinners, bleachers and handloom weavers, even the poorest, the winders and sack sewers, had some money to spend. There was a growing demand for every kind of product from basic foodstuffs to house accommodation. A clever young man had the opportunity for dealing in every kind of commodity and Riddoch very soon had an interest in a wide spectrum of business activity.

Sailcloth was in great demand for Navy orders during the wars with the French, Riddoch, of course, had a partnership in a sailcloth manufactory. He wrote to Graham of Fintry, in 1793, of his delight in 'the victory we have got over you in the sailcloth business as I would have considered it a national loss besides a little interference with

my own private interest which has its own weight'.[16] This refers to a failed attempt in 1792 by David Blair, the Dundee stamp-master, to bring sail canvas under the same rigorous quality control regulations which applied to other linens.[17] Riddoch was part owner of a manufactory with Thomas Webster in the Hawkhill of Dundee. By 1781 Riddoch, Webster and Alexander Strachan were partners in that factory,[18] in a rope work next door[19] and in one or two other ventures including a whale fishing company.[20] So he had a share in what was then a growth industry, developing fast and yielding good returns.

Those with a small amount of capital were able to grow prosperous fairly quickly during the interval between the mechanisation of spinning and the application of power to weaving. The linen manufactories of those days were simply sheds housing a group of hand loom weavers employed by a master. The employer of these wage-paid weavers was able to compete for customers on favourable terms with those many cottage hand loom weavers who worked on their own account. Riddoch's interest in the linen industry began before the invention of the spinning frame in 1787 at a time when spun yams had to be bought and gathered in from domestic country spinners. He was already established and ready to benefit from the quicker production of spun flax and the consequent demand for speedier production of webs when it came.

While mill spinning was still a process of the future, Dundee was the centre of another branch of the linen industry which was to be killed outright by the coming of cotton spinning mills. In 1783 there were 3,000 people employed in the making of linen thread in Dundee.[21] That is almost one fifth of the entire population. Only four firms are listed as thread manufacturers, which supposes either that each was a large scale employer or that many thread makers worked from home.[22] One of them employed 132 women and boys in this work using the product of 1,400 cottage hand spinners.[23] Until the 1760s thread twisting had been entirely a hand process using a quite cheaply provided hand twist mill.[24] Again, Riddoch arrived in Dundee at a good time, in his period Dundee became the only producer of coloured linen thread in Scotland.[25] Water powered twist mills allowed the involvement of entrepreneurs in what had been a domestic industry. The number of twist mills in Scotland more than doubled between 1762 and 1776 when, 'thread production became increasingly dominated by firms, not individuals'.[26] Riddoch had an interest in two thread manufacturing firms, Thomas and Riddoch in the Murraygait by 1780,[27] and John and Thomas Wemyss in the Seagait by 1777.[28] This last was certainly a water powered twist mill because here was some discussion between the Town Council and Wemyss and Company over the use of the Castle Burn.[29] Wemyss' mill lade was reducing the volume of water available as a public supply for the houses in the area and the town was forced to dig two new wells.[30] The success of cotton thread manufacture in Paisley eventually put paid to the production of linen thread in Dundee, but Riddoch had never put all his eggs in one basket.

One of his other ventures was the wood yard which he shared with Bailie Peddie, situated on the shore at the foot of the Castle Rock. There timber was imported and cut into planks in a saw mill. This yard was to occasion much of the blame with which

Riddoch was later assaulted during the harbour controversy. The opening up of Castle Street, the filling in and embanking of the foreshore and the improvements to the old piers and harbours at the base of the Rock enhanced the value of Riddoch and Peddie's yard many-fold. But the rent paid to the council for the land was not raised to take account of the rise in land values, and that fact gave ammunition to those looking for a stick to beat the Provost. In the meantime, however, the wood yard brought in an income to add to Riddoch's other funds.

He was also a partner in the Glass Works at Carolina Port which was begun in Dundee in the 1790s.[31] It produced bottle and window glass and employed something like 100 men. At a time when the building trades were very active and large areas of the mediaeval town centre were being rebuilt or repaired there was inevitably a brisk demand for both sawn timber and window glass.

Riddoch was involved then, to varying degrees in linen weaving, thread spinning and rope making, in tea, brandy, tobacco importing, in whale fishing, glass making and timber production and, as far as we can tell, was successful in all his ventures, either making money from their successful development or pulling out his capital before they failed.[32] Entrepreneurial activity made the basis of his fortune. It was because he already had money at his disposal and because he was eminently creditworthy that he was able to take advantage of the opportunities for property speculation which came his way as a member of the Town Council.

Whether or not he acted properly in buying land from the council and selling it sometimes to his own profit is one matter. First it is necessary to discuss the extent of his investment in property.

CHAPTER 2

PROPERTY DEALING
'The Laird of Blacklunans'

The *Register of Sasines* shows forty-three transactions involving Alexander Riddoch between 1781 and 1819. In the evidence submitted to the Select Committee on the Royal Burghs in 1819, during which the current accusations against Riddoch were given a public airing, seventeen transactions within Dundee are mentioned. Many of these involve very small pieces of property, for instance 'the Toofall cellar on the south side of Marketgait' in 1799, or 'the first flat above the shops with the middle third part of the garret' in 1804.[33] But, because Dundee's population was growing fast during the period of Riddoch's activities, housing was in short supply and great demand. Property values rose even without the improvement of surrounding areas and in districts where road making and paving and the demolition of dilapidated mediaeval dwellings had increased the amenity, prices rose fast. Property bought in the early eighties could hardly fail to appreciate in value by the turn of the century. After that prices rose and fell as trade fluctuated with the fortunes of war, but Dundee experienced rises in general until 1811.[34]

There seems to have been very little direction to Riddoch's property dealings. He simply picked up bargains when he noticed them, a flat here, a whole block there, a piece of unused land here, a piece of shore there. Very often he disposed of them almost immediately and was evidently content with small profits and slow returns.

On his death he left to his widow not only a fine house and garden in the Nethergate but also two merchant booths at the cross, a tenement of land in the Marketgait, two cellars in the Overgait, a coal shed, stable and loft in Tay Street, three shops 'with the small apartment in the staircase behind the middle shop' in Castle Street and numbers of other scraps of property. These, of course, all brought in a rent and provided a useful additional source of income.

One of the forty-seven transactions recorded was the purchase of the lands of 'Blackqueens and Drumforks, now called Blacklunans' in 1796.[35] This was Riddoch's own bid to become a country gentleman, to be upsides with the county landowners he met at meetings of the Turnpike Trustees and at election meetings. From then onwards he was often mockingly referred to as 'Blacklunans' according to the habit in Scottish rural districts of calling the laird by the name of his property. 'Blacklunan's now to London gone', they sang at the time of the enquiry to the tune of 'The Minstrel Boy'... 'in Westminster Hall you'll find him.'[36]

Dabbling in industry and acquiring property which enhanced his social or financial position were not his only speculations. He had money to spare and he used it to advantage. He lent money on interest to the Town and to many individuals. There was some £2,000 owing to him on his death from loans to some of the best known names in the town at very variable rates of interest, from the almost negligible to about 7%.[37]

Plate 2. Riddoch's House in the Nethergate.

At times when hardship in the town necessitated the purchase by the Council of meal to supply the market, Riddoch bought large quantities of barley and meal from his own pocket and the Council agreed to repay him with interest.[38] So he must have been in a position to provide ready money and to lie out of it for long periods because the Town was at no time prompt in paying its debts.

Riddoch was one of the early directors of the Dundee Banking Company and on his death had an account there of £900. The British Linen Company's bank in Dundee was opened in 1811 and Riddoch had £1,720 deposited there.[39]The total amount of cash left in his will was £13,012.[40] These sums, together with the property he left, did indeed represent a fortune in Dundee terms in 1822, tiny though it might be compared to the £500,000 which Smout quotes as 'the biggest pile that a Glasgow man had as yet scraped together'.[41] The next largest sum left in Dundee during that period was £7,407 by a Dr. Ross, roughly half Riddoch's amount.[42]

Perhaps it was not only the amount of his capital but also the style of his living which aroused comment. The cashier of the Dundee Bank, dying in the same year, left £4,710 but the value of his household furniture was only £160.18s. while Riddoch's was valued at £1,038.18s.9d. Thomas Simson of Carolina Port left £2,152.4s.7d. but his household furniture and clothes amounted only to £18.5s.9d. Miss Barbara Constable left £6,596.3s.3d. but her household furniture and body clothes were valued at £63.18s.9d.[43]

Riddoch had raised himself to a position of great prosperity. His house was furnished with the best of furniture, with silver plate, paintings, books and prints. His cellar was well stocked with wines and spirits and his wife dressed in expensive clothes and jewellery.[44] His second marriage to a merchant's daughter of education and cultivation[45] was a sign of his achievement rather than a step up the ladder for him. He was by then 54 years old and already well established. For those to whom the years had been less kind his prosperity gave cause for resentment and for those anxious for their own purposes to accuse him of corruption it gave reason for suspicion.

Were the suspicions justified? Did he buy property at low valuations knowing that it would be enhanced by improvements and before that knowledge had become general?

One circumstance which led people to suspect that Riddoch was buying property from which he would later benefit was the very casual way in which the Town's business was generally done. As Treasurer, Riddoch had street and coffee table conversations with those willing to sell their little shops and houses. During 1782, for instance, he constantly carried out transactions preparatory to the making of Crichton Street. Sometimes they were purchases, sometimes exchanges of one bit of Town's property for a piece of someone else's which lay in the line of the road. In each case he bought on behalf of the Town but gave his own bill or acceptance for it. The Council entrusted him with the purchasing and sale of properties, agreeing to pay him thereafter.

After the street was made there were, inevitably, some pockets of land and buildings left over unwanted and it was because Riddoch often ended up owner of these that he was suspected of underhand dealing. During the period of street making there seems no evidence of his buying before plans were known. What happened afterwards can be followed in some detail.

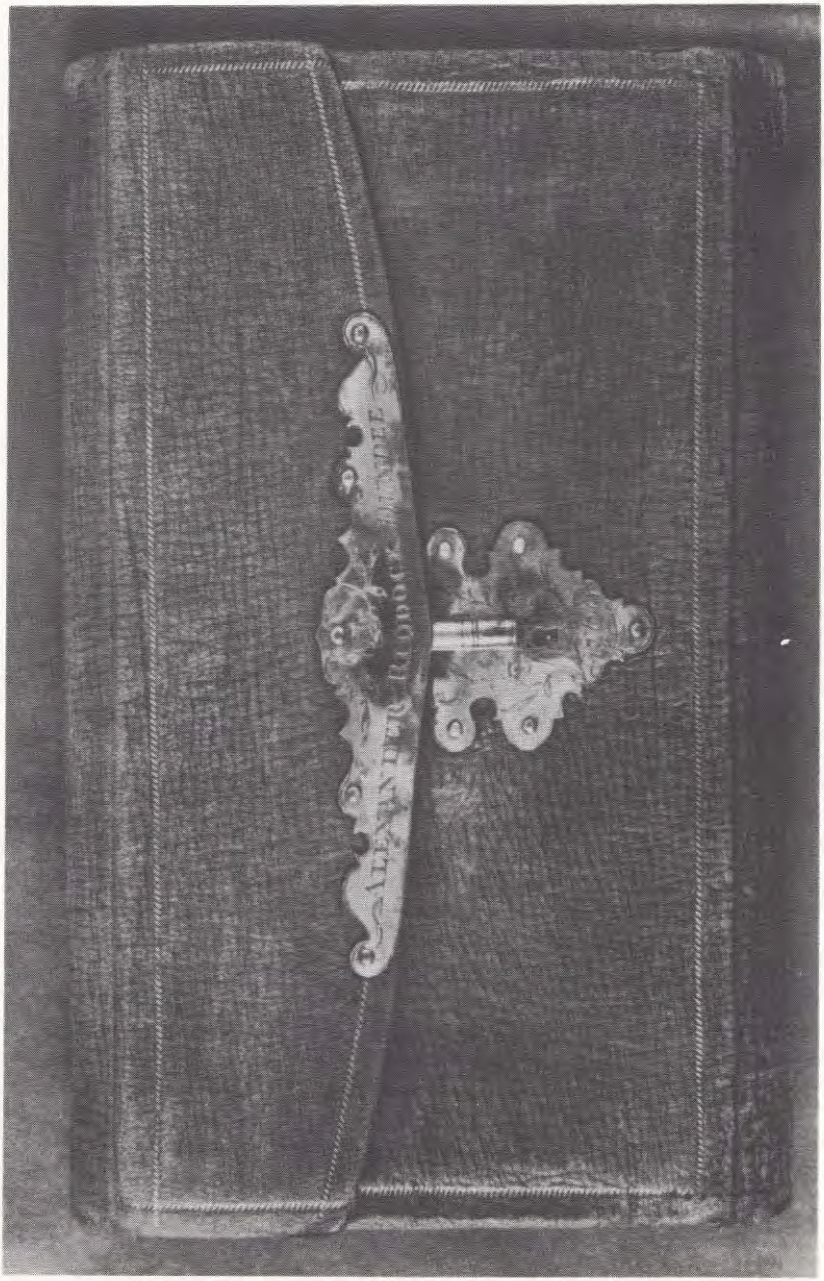


Plate 3. Riddoch's wallet, now in Dundee City Museum.

On 17 June 1782 the Council were told that it would be necessary to purchase two houses, Robert Angus' and Widow Gray's, 'part of both of which would be absolutely necessary for the proposed new street and the remaining part could be sold by the community on very advantageous terms'.[46] They paid £221 for the Angus house and £180 for Widow Gray's. In July the Council decided to sell off what was left after building the street. In the case of the Gray house this amounted to a piece of ground 16' by 32' by 16' by 19'. Another house which had belonged to Robert Pattullo, ship master, of which a piece 27' by 15' by 7' by 5' remained, was to be rouped at the same time. Gray's house came up for sale in October. The Widow's house was exposed for sale, after advertising, at the upset price of £180, the price for which the Council had bought her whole property. There were no takers. In March of the following year it was exposed again at the reduced price of £120 and bought by Robert Wilkie, a wright, for £120. This seems no bad bargain for the Town. At the same roups Pattullo's house was first exposed at an upset price of £140, found no takers, was reduced to £80 and finally bought, when no one else offered, by Riddoch for £97. Robert Angus' house was sold at the first offering to Walter Bain, mason, at £230 'except for so much of the land as will make the new street'.[47]

This was typical of all the transactions required for the acquisition and disposal of land required for street improvement. The Council was able to take such ground as it needed and to sell off what remained, sometimes at a profit. Riddoch often acquired small pieces for himself but in most cases only after they had failed to attract another purchaser. The facts as shown in the Council minute book and as recorded in the *Register of Sasines* seem to back up Riddoch's own evidence to the committee of enquiry. When asked whether he thought it proper for members of Council to acquire property from the town he answered, 'I think they have a right to do so if they are the highest bidder certainly; it was by keeping up the property that I got into some of these burgages; I had no intention of buying them'.[48]

Of course, we cannot tell at this stage how widely the sales were advertised or whether the roups were perhaps purposely held in places and at times inconvenient to the general public. It is not likely that any Town Council would show things of that sort in its minutes. However, it can only be answered that Dundee was a small town with a very tight knit business community and to keep such arrangements secret would have been difficult.

Although Riddoch's property dealings were brought out in evidence against him during the subsequent fight between the Guildry and the Town Council, it is fairly clear that they were not a matter of great concern to any of the parties. They were simply used as extra fuel to stoke a fire whose main source of heat was elsewhere. In the first place, the period during which he was most actively acquiring property and making money was not that in which opposition to him was at all evident. It is almost certainly the case that most of Dundee's citizens accepted with some equanimity, even with a degree of admiration, the fact that the Provost was bettering himself. A number of them were busily occupied in improving their own positions in a similar way. George Dempster, *Honest George* as he was known in the House of Commons, was himself the purchaser

of property in the improvement area[49] as was David Blair, later to be one of Riddoch's sharpest critics. Perhaps only those who were, or felt themselves to be, directly losers by his property transactions, were in any way critical. Of course, over a period of years the number increased of those who had sold land and buildings and thought they might have done better.

But during the same period other considerations of greater importance to Dundee's citizens served to mobilize opinion against him. A political struggle between reformers and established government, a class struggle between an emergent middle class and an about to be submerged working class, an economic conflict between one advancing section and another, merged into a very confused battle ground. In Dundee, the air eventually cleared to make the need for a new harbour, about which everyone was in fact in agreement, seem to be the one important issue. In Parliament there was a good deal of bewilderment about why most of the other issues had ever been raised. The administration of the burgh may indeed have been reactionary and corrupt but then every other burgh was the same so that was hardly matter for concern. Riddoch's self-enrichment was even less noteworthy. The sums, the members of the Select Committee noted, were so very small by the standards of other towns. It was evident that, while questioning Riddoch critically, they found it difficult to see why such a fuss was being made about his petty transactions. In the face of the evidence from other towns, Riddoch seemed more justifiably accused of niggardliness with the Town's money than with undue profligacy.

But this exposure of his property transactions meant that his dealings in land and buildings could no longer be discreetly profitable. He would be uncomfortably under the public eye thereafter. It was inevitable that he would be unseated at the next election, if only because none of his erstwhile cronies dared any longer support him. When he demitted office in 1819, he was already 74. He died three years later, a man of reduced influence but unaffected wealth. He had not, it is true, lost by the town improvements he had carried through, but then neither had Dundee.

CHAPTER 3

MANAGEMENT OF TOWN FUNDS
'A most frugal hand'

When town councillors are under attack the accusations come not in single spies but in battalions. Consistency was not a characteristic of Riddoch's enemies and they managed to accuse him both of getting rich out of the Town's funds and at the same time of mismanaging them. In fact, it would have taken very clever management to grow rich on the funds available.

The resources of the Town were always inadequate, which is why Riddoch used either his own money or his own credit to carry on the Town's business throughout his period of office. Until new, 19th century pressures forced more open accounting, no one, not even the Treasurer, knew what money was available to the Council. Where expenditure became necessary it was customary for the Council to borrow from whoever had money available as much as was immediately needed. The obtaining of credit was generally difficult in Dundee, as in the rest of Scotland, until the establishment of banking facilities in the town from 1763.[50] Even after the founding of the bank the Town continued to borrow in the same haphazard way, raising a new loan to pay off an old one only when the first lender grew impatient. Riddoch seems to have made some attempt immediately upon taking office as Treasurer to regularise the position and to obtain better terms and lower rates of interest. In 1777 it was reported that the Treasurer had no money in hand to pay the men building the new Shambles and the Council agreed to ask the bank to make £250 available for him to draw upon. But the bank charged 5% on loans and the Treasurer was able to find a farmer willing to lend at 4½%.[51] There seemed to be no shortage of those, often farmers in the hinterland of Dundee, who were willing to lend the Council money. Borrower money was used for the business of the Town, the payment of builders, constables, pensioners, teachers and ministers of the church as well as the purchasing of land and the carrying on of improvements. Where the funds for repayment were to come from was rarely considered.

The annual revenue of Dundee amounted to something like £2,000, a sum very small compared to the extent of the burgh, and altogether insufficient for the necessary purposes of the municipal government'.[52] This sum was made up of the proceeds of farming out the shore dues, from the rents of houses and mills, from the tacksmen of the salmon fishings and the sale of street dung, from the admission dues of burgesses and from a tax of two pennies on a pint of ale imposed for the purpose of maintaining the ancient hospital. Apart from this twopence on the malt the citizens were not taxed for the administration of the town. The habit of the Council had traditionally been to square their expenditure with the revenue at the end of the year, generally repaying to the Treasurer some smallish sum then found to be owing to him.

It was only as the population increased in numbers and the more prosperous

merchants began to aspire to a more modem way of living that the resources **of** the town became obviously inadequate. Funds which had paid a few ill-qualified school teachers proved insufficient to build and staff an academy of the kind needed for a new breed of merchants' sons. Money which had paid for street sweeping could not be stretched to cover street building. The few old watchmen paid to patrol the old city centre were incapable of policing the growing, stretching and overcrowded town. The citizens began to demand drained and paved streets instead of muddy tracks, publicly maintained lighting instead of dark closes lit only by the house windows, security from hooligans and burglars. These amenities could not be achieved from the traditional resources of the Town Council. It was Riddoch's way to make the money go as far as possible, well aware that the citizens, while anxious for improvement, were not clamouring to contribute financially towards that improvement. It was the threat that there would have to be an assessment to cover town improvements that began the questioning of the management of town funds,[53] just as it was the threat to raise the shore dues to cover harbour improvement that provoked opposition to the Council's own Harbour Bill.

To sum up the argument, there was no large amount of money for Riddoch to squander. The other side of the accusation is that the funds available would have been larger if properly managed. In particular, it was suspected that higher rents could have been charged for the letting of the shore dues. Thomas Bell and Alexander Balfour had farmed the pack house and shore dues for a period before 1793 at a rent of £560. The tacks were let by private bargain to the highest bidder every three years. In 1793, apparently in response to public pressure, there was a public roup of the rents and Bell and Balfour were again the highest bidders but at a greatly increased rent of £960 a year. This gave rise to the accusation that Mr Bell and Mr Balfour, as cronies of Riddoch's, had benefited for a long period from unduly low rents at the expense of the Town's common good. The accusation seemed well founded when, in 1796, Messrs Bell and Balfour were outbid by William Wilson, not a member of the Town Council, who offered £1,550 a year.[54] Dundonians were convinced that this steep rise was the result only of competition and that the larger amount could have been raised previously if the rents had always been open to public auction. On this they chiefly based their accusation of mismanagement of the town's funds.

But, to look at the matter in a larger context, rents had been generally rising everywhere. Smout notes that rents for land began to rise after 1763, doubled from 1783 to 1793 and doubled again from 1794 to 1815.[55] So the shore dues had simply been rising in accordance with the rise in prices, wages and rents everywhere else. That Dundee had been participating in the general rise is shown by the increase in business at the banks where the amount deposited rose from £59,690 in 1793 to £131,043 in 1796.[56] As for the suggestion that Riddoch had favoured his friends with low rents, neither Bell and Balfour were among his biddable allies and Balfour in fact proved an effectual part of the opposition to him.

The general rise in prices accounts for the widespread feeling in the town that profits were being made and that revenues were not going as far as they once had. None of the accusations against Riddoch for mismanagement proved more substantial than this, and he had little difficulty in disposing of them.

'On my finally retiring from office' he addressed the Council in 1817, 'the records of all the acts of a long public life will be open to the inspection of my successors... It will be found that while I was in Council the Funds of the Town have been husbanded with a most frugal hand and if one of the charges against me, that I have been leader of the Council for forty years be true, I shall be entitled to some merit for having out of a revenue more scanty than that of any town of equal size in Scotland, expended very considerable sums in making new streets, widening old ones, and otherwise improving the Burgh without diminishing its public resources.'[57]

CHAPTER 4

THE SETT OF THE BURGH
[6]An amicable adjustment[9']

Of the many accusations against Riddoch the most bitter was against his long, autocratic and complete control of the Town Council. 'His rule was as absolute in effect as that of the Sultan of Constantinople over his subject slaves.'[58]

At the end of his career he was accused of having usurped the powers of the Guildry, of having organised a self-perpetuating oligarchy with himself at its head and of having run a corrupt and unrepresentative council. To discover whether he was justly accused we should first consider whether the conduct of municipal affairs under his rule differed from the custom of preceding generations and secondly whether that custom and his conduct differed from what was habitual in other Scottish burghs of the time.

The sett or constitution of Dundee in the form in which it had been accepted since 1469 was recorded by the Convention of Royal Burghs in 1705. That Act of James III, 1469, c.30, by the Scots Parliament, applied equally to all the burghs of Scotland.[59] By it the Town Council consisted of twenty men, including a provost and four baillies or magistrates, the Dean of Guild, the Treasurer and representatives of the Guildry and the Incorporated Trades. Elections were held annually. Each Michaelmas eight new councillors fell to be chosen from among the retiring council, five from the merchant guild and three from the trades. The four *baillies* became automatically members of the next year's council. The Provost and the Dean of Guild could be chosen only from among those who had already been baillies and baillies had by necessity to have first served as merchant councillors.[60] Only the Treasurer could be appointed to the Council without having first served in another capacity, a fact which may have been important at the start of Riddoch's career.

A short list, or *leet*, was drawn up each year from those eligible for office and the final choices were made at a meeting of all the old and new councillors together with the deacons of the Nine Trades. This meeting, therefore, effected the appointment of Provost, Dean of Guild, four baillies and a Treasurer. There were already three baillies remaining in office from the preceding year. The new body, entirely self-elected, then chose another two members to complete the Town Council for the ensuing year.[61]

Alexander Riddoch was first elected to the Council on 24 September 1776 and appointed Treasurer at the same meeting.[62] In the following year his partner, Thomas Webster, was made Treasurer but 'found from many circumstances it would be very inconvenient for him to give that attention and perform the duties of that office as he would wish and he prevailed upon Alexander Riddoch, late Treasurer, to act for him'.[63] Riddoch had got hold of the reins of office.

It was, then, entirely true that the council presided over by Riddoch was self-elected and self-perpetuating. Equally, it was inevitable that any strong interest group or anyone

with a pliable following, once having achieved a place on the council, would be hard to dislodge. This was written into the constitution by act of parliament, had the tradition of three hundred years behind it and had seldom, if ever, been departed from. It was in no particular an invention of Riddoch's. In the uproar of criticism hurled at Riddoch and his council in the second decade of the 19th century it must have appeared that the existing state of affairs was of his own creation and unique to Dundee. That the public was inclined to believe so was, in fact, a result of the efficiency with which he had used existing machinery to consolidate a position of power. The truth is, however, that Riddoch had run the town during his period of office according to the same rules which had governed it since 1469 and there was no important particular in which Dundee's constitution or its custom differed from those of other Scottish burghs. The state of affairs in Dundee was reflected to a greater or a lesser extent in every burgh in Scotland. Dundee was considered, in fact, to contrast favourably with the other large centres of population in that 'the revenue, the expenditure, the works, the debts, the concealments, have all been on a petty scale'.[64] It was concluded that no outside interference with the town's affairs was required because the magistrates and burgesses were already 'communicating and negociating (sic) with a view to an amicable adjustment'.[65]

Those communications and adjustments had for the past decade been far from amicable. The determination of the merchant body to have more say in the running of the town and in particular to regain for themselves the right to elect their own Dean of Guild and to administer their own funds had resulted in complaints about the constitution of the Town Council.

The powers of the Guildry, the association of merchants, had once been very considerable. Formed by the merchants to protect their own interests, particularly where they conflicted with those of merchants from other burghs or with those of the tradesmen, the Guildry had won control over most functions of burgh administration early in the 16th century. They had the power to regulate weights and measures. The Town Council was bound to take their advice on the level of burgh taxation and on the use of the revenue, on the choice of a parliamentary candidate and on the submission of grievances or requests to the Convention of Royal Burghs.[66] Most importantly, they had control over the physical development of the town. According to one historian of Scottish town planning, later abuses in land use and building development were only made possible because of the demise of that mediaeval institution the Dean of Guild Court.[67] This would, of course, depend on judgment of what constituted abuse. It is indeed likely that Alexander Riddoch would have been hampered in his course of demolition and street creation if the Dean of Guild in his day had not been his own creature. Whether the Town would have been better for such a limitation on his plans is questionable, but that the merchants would have preferred to have power to control him is in no doubt.

Traditionally, the Dean of Guild's Court had had 'cognisance of all buildings within the burgh. No new buildings could be erected or alterations and additions made to old

buildings without his warrant.'[68] This gave the Merchant Guild, through their Dean, virtually complete control over the urban environment. But these powers and privileges and the choice of their own Dean had already fallen into abeyance, or rather into the hands of the Town Council, early in the 17th century. In the first years of the Guildry's history the whole body of merchants convened to choose their Dean. This proving unwieldy, the powers of electing a Dean were delegated to a number of assessors. These assessors were usually also members of the Town Council and, in 1590, the magistrates enacted, apparently without protest from the Guildry, that henceforth the choice of Dean should be made by three baillies 'most wyse, and of greatest gravitie'.[69] By 1606 the magistrates and Town Council had taken over the whole business of appointing a Dean and had ceased even to consult the Guildry about their choice. The management of Guildry funds thereafter became the province of the Town Council.[70]

It was certainly, then, the case that the magistrates and Town Council had, as they were accused, taken upon themselves the appointment of the Dean of Guild and the administration of Guild funds. But that usurpation of Guildry rights and privileges could not be laid at the door of Riddoch's council nor of his predecessors within the 18th century. It was accomplished and complete two centuries earlier, a circumstance which remained unchallenged until the end of Riddoch's long career as Provost.

Dundee was in no way unusual in having a Town Council which usurped the power of the Merchant Guild. It was very general throughout Scotland for the Dean of Guild courts to fall into disuse or to be taken over by the Town Council.[71]

That the merchants allowed this to happen seems due to two causes. The first is that town councils of the 16th century had been so largely composed of merchants, inevitably the most prosperous and influential of citizens, that a shift of power from Guildry to Council was barely distinguishable and not at all threatening. Secondly, in the succeeding two centuries, through the upheaval of Civil War, Jacobite risings and the long recession of trade, the wealth and influence of the merchant class declined to the point where their members showed little interest in the administration of the burgh, certainly not sufficient interest to make them resent the use of their past powers by the Town Council.

It would, of course, be foolish to set up Alexander Riddoch as a model of purity and integrity. He was not ashamed of, nor did he ever apologise for, making money. A clever man and an enterprising one, able to communicate his ideas, he was good at getting on with ordinary people as well as with the gentry and he delighted in the kind of negotiation best effected by personal contact, a word in the right ear at the right time. He was a man of his time. Conniving, secret dealing, and the use of influence were the ordinary means of conducting business in national and local affairs as in industry and trade. But the particular accusations made against him do not stand up now and were not able to be substantiated in his own time. He countered and deflected them all.

The question of interest is why, after centuries of complaisant acceptance, the Guildry became moved, in Riddoch's time, to protest. It would seem that one ingredient of the campaign to unseat him and his self-elected council was the revival of trade at the end of the 18th century and the consequent growth of confidence among the town's merchant class. Those men who made money out of linen dealing during the French Wars, those who prospered in com dealing and those who benefited from overseas Adventures' were no longer willing to see the town's affairs managed in the old, traditionally inefficient ways.

CHAPTER 5

GROWING STRENGTH OF THE MERCHANT CLASS
'The alien cattle'

On the face of it, the most prosperous part of the merchant class of a town seems an unlikely seed bed for the development of a political reform movement. That it nearly became so is an indication of the changing and developing state of the trading class.

As, during the 18th century, new scientific ideas about agriculture reached Forfarshire and the Carse of Gowrie, those gentlemen whose estates bordered the town, the Grahams of Fintry, the Guthries of Wallace Craigie, the Hunters of Blackness, the Mylnes of Mylnefield, the Wedderburns of Bullion and the Clayhills of Invergowrie, were beginning to see themselves as country lairds, aligned with the country rather than with town, having fewer shared interests with the townsfolk of Dundee. The interests of the estate sometimes conflicted with the interests of the town. Guthrie's attempts to improve the boat pier at the shore at Craigie interfered with the Town's salmon fishery there and made it difficult for them to find a tacksman for the fishing at St. Roque's.[72] Mylne's wish to ship the product of his newly fertile land to feed Graham's army regiment was countered by Provost Riddoch who told him the townspeople were in need of victual and would not tolerate its export.[73]

But the process was far from complete. While a number of gentlemen might have moved out of town, others remained. William Douglas of Brigton still had a house in the Seagate in 1783, as did Charles Hunter of Burnside. Lady Ballinshoe lived in the Nethergate and Lady Blackness in the Murraygate. Henry Crawford lived in the Hawkhill and William Gray of Baledgarno at the Cross, among the merchants.[74] The Laird of Strathmartine and George Dempster of Dunnichen were still much involved with town business. George Kinloch met his friends in the town bookshops.[75] But the trend was for those with landed estates to lose interest in the town and to become more preoccupied with agriculture and county politics.

As this stratum of society moved out, it left room for the next to rise on the town's social scale. Those who were beginning to prosper in the textile trade began to feel their own importance, to live on a more lavish scale and to look for some acknowledgement of their more secure standing in the town's hierarchy. Trade, both domestic and overseas, was on the increase. Sailcloth for the Navy, sacks and shirting for the cotton plantations of America and the sugar crops of the West Indies, tarpaulins and sheetings and ropes were all in demand. Individual Dundonians established themselves in London, Liverpool and St. Petersburg, prosecuting the trade of their native town, sending back not only orders but information about what was talked about in other towns. The sons of Dundee families were sent to the Scots College at Hamburg to learn commercial practice.[76] A new generation of professional men began to emerge, men whose fathers had been modest tradesmen whose success in business allowed them to educate their sons. The Ivory cousins, for instance, gained distinction outside their own

town but continued to take an interest in its affairs.[77] And as a result of increasing opportunity there was also an influx of new men into the town, men like William Lindsay, a corn merchant who settled in Dundee, prospered and lived in some luxury at the Bottleworks and became active in the cause of burgh reform.[78]

Some dilution of the old merchant class had been happening throughout the 18th century. One way of considering what kind of changes, if any, had been taking place in Dundee's merchant community is to study entry to the burgess roll, the *Lockit Book*, to see how far burgess rights which had once been 'jealously guarded to favour the kinsmen of established families' were gradually extended to include outsiders.[79]

There were five categories entitling burgess-ship, by right of father, or, sometimes grandfather, by right of spouse, she being the daughter of a free burgess, by payment of 100 merks, by payment of £40 Scots plus the serving of a free apprenticeship, and 'for services to the good town of Dundee' which could range from acting as its member of parliament to putting out a fire in the Town House. After 1800 the two forms of payment were replaced by a payment of £10 sterling.

A count shows that, between 1750 and 1822, that is in the period before Riddoch's coming and until his death, 75% of those becoming burgesses in Dundee did so by family connection, 25% by purchasing the right. Of that 25%, 30% gained entry by right of apprenticeship to a free man plus payment of £40 Scots, while 70% paid 100 merks and had no such recommendation. However, roughly 60% of all those purchasing burgess-ship between 1800 and 1822 did so in the single year of 1822. The figures are:

Purchased Burgess-ship 1750-1822

1750-1800	183
1800-1821	119
1822	165

Another interesting point emerging from the record is that, between 1750 and 1800, more men were entered on the Dundee burgess roll through privilege of their spouses than by any other means, but this changed after 1800.

Modes of Entry to Burgess Roll

	1750-1800	**1800-1822**
By right of spouse	283	125
By right of father	225	278
By payment	158	298

So, the need for family connections was still very strong after 1800. 403 entered the roll this way while only 298 bought entry; 57% had family connections, 43% bought entry. Before 1800, 508, or 60% had family connections while only 158 or 40% bought entry. There had been a change but not a large one.

However, what did change was the rate of applications for entry. There we 666

entries in the 50 years from 1750 to 1800 and 701 entries in the 22 years from 1800 to 1822. It would appear that the rate of entry had doubled. In fact, closer inspection shows very little variation in the numbers entering each year until 1815. The number entering by all means in 1814, a not untypical yea was 16. In 1815 that jumped to 64.

Numbers entering burgess roll by all means 1814-1822

1814	16
1815	64
1816	34
1817	157
1818	98
1819	28
1820	17
1821	26
1822	176

These variations coincide with the campaigns to muster support for different harbour bills and would seem to illustrate the determination of the Guildry to find sufficient votes, both in Council and Guildry, to defeat Riddoch and his supporters.

There is little sign of any change in the traditional way of handling entry to the Burgess Roll in the period immediately after Riddoch's own election to the Council in 1776. In the 26 years 1750 to 1776, 218 entered by family privilege while 77 bought entry. In the following 26 years, 1777 to 1803, 283 entered by family privilege while 59 bought entry, a slight increase, if anything, in the numbers using their right to burgess-ship through having a parent or parent in law already on the roll and certainly no sign of Riddoch rustling up support from incomers to the town without family connections.[80]

On the other hand, if the balance was still in favour of family connection there was no great difficulty put in the way of an individual with the will and the purchase price to become a burgess. Alexander Riddoch was admitted to the burgess roll in the same year that he joined the Council, Tor having paid 100 merks in full of his freedom'.[81] In 1780 Thomas Bell was admitted burgess for having been a free apprentice to Alexander Riddoch and having paid 40 pounds Scots.[82] Riddoch's second marriage would have entitled him to burgess-ship by privilege of spouse. Ann Morison was the daughter of an established Dundee merchant family, her father in the linen trade, her brother a merchant in London. But by the time of his marriage Riddoch was 54 and had been a burgess in his own right for 20 years. For him marriage into the merchant community followed commercial success rather than adding to it.

Similar, if not identical results have been found for Scotland as a whole. In the period up to 1750, 'while major barriers existed to easy entry to the official merchant class ... the merchant elite was eroded and penetrated by new names' and the merchant community was 'a milieu in which status depended on commercial ability as well as inherited rank'.[83]

By Riddoch's day, entry to the merchant class had become even more flexible and commercial ability had better outlets but the existence of ill- defined class barriers may explain an apparent conflict. The merchant class was expanding and admitting those born outside the town. Some of these new entrants were in the forefront of the opposition to Riddoch. And yet part of that opposition to him seems to have been based on a dislike of outsiders by native born Dundonians. One of the causes of Guildry resentment against the Town Council was the habitual resentment of old established townspeople against incomers. The Guildry, after all, had been founded for the very purpose of protecting the rights of Dundee merchants against unfreemen and foreigners. As it attempted to regain its power it found itself in conflict with a Town Council of whom only four were native Dundonians. This fact is mentioned so often as to show how much it seemed to matter.[84]

Of the most active members of the Council, Riddoch was born near Comrie, in Perthshire, both Thomas Bell and Alexander Balfour were Fifers. Colin Symers came from Alyth and David Blair from Brechin. 'Oh dule for the ruin of Bonnie Dundee!' one of the parodists cried, to the tune of the *Flowers of the Forest.*

> 'The natives kept under and aliens now plunder
> And make the poor wreck of her glory their prey.
> Arouse then Dundee men! be bold! and be free men!
> United and steady you'll carry the day;
> Ne'er cease from the battle till these alien cattle
> Who've fed on your vitals be weeded away.'[85]

The puzzle of why a Guildry which had shown itself willing to accept incomers should be so opposed to the fact that the Town Council was now largely composed of those incomers can be resolved if objections arose from resentment of a *nouveau riche*. Riddoch and his friends were, to the old families of Dundee, country boys seeking their fortunes in competition with those who had the right to trade as their inheritance and there are certainly indications that they were thought uncouth and uneducated by the older merchant families. Riddoch's 'uncultured mind' is referred to even in his obituary.[86] He is often referred to contemptuously as 'the Gudeman' as a mocking allusion to his country origins.[87]

Simply being entered on the burgess roll and paying guild dues was not enough to gain a man social acceptance in Dundee. When troubles multiplied against Riddoch the fact that he was an outsider told against him. The extreme 'respectability' of the merchants who opposed him is referred to over and over again, by themselves, by the parliamentary examiners and, rather mockingly, by Riddoch himself:

> Q: Are there not Baxters and Jobsons, men of the first respectability in the town, who have signed that petition?[88] Riddoch: They are very respectable men.
> Q: Are not all the persons now mentioned considered to be the head of society in Dundee?
> Riddoch: No, I do not think that.[89]

To some extent, then, the surge of protest by the Guildry against the Town Council and the Guildry's backing of the cause of burgh reform showed a determination to consolidate the gains of the merchant class and to have its interests well represented. But economic reasons underlay the discontent.

CHAPTER 6

LAW AND ORDER
'An uncommon spirit of riot and licentiousness'

The Cowgate merchants, those linen and flax merchants who habitually met and had their offices in the east end of the town, where Murraygate, Cowgate, and Seagate joined, began at the turn of the 18th century to feel some competition from the growing number of smaller manufacturers operating in the west end of the town around the West Port and near the new turnpike road to Perth.[90] When Riddoch, who had partnerships in the west, in the Overgate and Hawkhill area, took up the case of the west end linen men, the old established Cowgate fraternity felt threatened.

All linens for export had to receive a stamp of recognised quality from the Board of Trustees' representative. When a stamp office was first established in Dundee it had been centrally placed, presenting no difficulties to the weavers who carried their webs there for stamping. As trade grew in volume and importance, however, and the wealthier merchants and manufacturers chose to operate in the area near the Dens Bum with easy access to the harbour, the stamp-master moved his office to the Cowgate and, later, set up another office close by, with assistants to deal with the increasing load of work. This meant that the poorer manufacturers in the Hawkhill and its environs had to carry heavy webs a considerable distance for stamping and, although they did not have the commercial strength and influence of the Cowgate men, their numbers were greater.

In 1787, ostensibly at the instruction of the Town Council, Riddoch began to solicit the support of members of the Board of Trustees in Edinburgh for a new linen stamping office in the west end of Dundee. He asked either that there should be an additional office or that one of the east end offices should be moved. This aroused howls of protest from the Cowgate, not least from David Blair, the stamp-master.[91] Blair was one of Riddoch's supporters and he remained so but there were times in the succeeding years when his support wavered. As the linen trade had increased in importance, so had he. By the late 1780s he had become a man of some substance and dignity and he was not anxious to cede any of it to another stamper at the far end of the town.

The row grew in bitterness and continued over a period of years. In 1789 Riddoch wrote to Graham of Fintry on the subject: 'It is with the utmost regret that I continue a correspondence on a subject where I feel myself too warm. Were I to consult my own ease and quiet I would at once drop it. My own personal interest is in no ways connected with it and without any view of profit I shall certainly incurr the displeasure of those gentlemen who consider themselves so very respectable... Our plea, simply and without any ornament, is this, a number of respectable merchants and buyers are situated at the west end of the Town. Many manufacturers of late years have planted themselves there and are rapidly increasing in that direction who carry on the manufacture to a great

extent... Why refuse it to us for no other reason but because our opponents private interests' would suffer by it and they have moved Heaven and Earth to make friends at the Board.'[92]

Attitudes were beginning to harden, the old merchants within the city boundary, where the Guildry had jurisdiction, against the newer merchants outside the Royalty,[93] the merchants against the magistrates, Blair against Riddoch. The stamp-master reported to his employers in Edinburgh that 'the vast majority of respectable linen dealers want no change'.[94] Blair, although appointed by the Board of Trustees, was paid by a fee for stamping and inspection from the manufacturers.

Riddoch answered, in a letter to the Board 'I own that the gentlemen who subscribe the letter are respectable, but I must be allowed to say that they are not more so than the gentlemen who oppose them'.[95] By November he was growing angry. He wrote, 'It is a well known fact that the Combination of Murraygate Merchants taking to themselves the name of the Trade are a burden upon the manufacturer and the trade by taking a proffite between the manufacturer and the exporter and in a short time would ruin the manufacturers and the trade were it not for orders that comes from the exporters from London, Liverpool Bristol and Glasgow to buy with ready money. Were the whole Combination sent to Botany Bay our Manufactory and Trade would go on better.'[96]

In the next month Riddoch again wrote to the Board complaining that 'the pointed and personal attack by the east end merchants upon the other magistrates and me was unprovoked'.[97] Succeeding years made clear the extent to which the older merchant class of Dundee felt themselves provoked by Riddoch and threatened by the new circumstances of life in the changing and developing burgh. Economic and political considerations became entangled and added greatly to the confusion. George Dempster ceased to be member of parliament for the Fife and Forfar burghs in 1790, leaving those greedy for patronage to squabble for the favours of Sir David Carnegie and William Maule of Panmure.[98] The spectacle of an established bourgeoisie fighting for its interests under the banner of radical reform became at times almost comic. The richest town merchants and the county gentlemen became allies in a campaign which used radical slogans about fair representation and the abolition of privilege against a town council most of whose members were without good family connections. The town council, while in practise finding it expedient to placate the unfranchised citizens, was forced into a defence of the undemocratic *status quo* and was represented by its enemies as the last bastion against liberty and equality.

Anger at the proposal to move the stamp office away from their own end of town was soon followed by anxiety on the Cowgate merchants' part that stamping would cease altogether and that with it would go the bounty on linens stamped for export. From the point at which the removal of the bounty was first discussed until its abolition in 1823 the Board of Trustees endured resolution and counter resolution from Dundee. Those wealthier merchants who were engaged in the export trade were most anxious to

keep the bounty while those who supplied the home market with cheaper goods would have been happy to see inspection removed. The exporters were among the Cowgate men and it was their need for strength that stimulated them to band together in attempts, not at first wholly successful, to found a Chamber of Commerce.[99] Similarly the need for improved port and harbour facilities to support the growing export trade prompted the revival of the Guildry so that the merchants could have some say in the design of the new harbour and have a united voice against the Provost's own, limited harbour plans.

Economic reasons, then, underlay the opposition to Riddoch that was growing at the turn of the century. The fact that the economic need coincided with a period when there was much talk of burgh and parliamentary reform and much exchange of liberal ideas, made Riddoch, the 'archdeacon of the self-elected' a target and a focus for attack. Cooperation in the cause of the Guildry gave the established merchants what they had not previously experienced, a united voice and some hope of making that voice effective against the entrenched town councillors. But there were few merchants with any real commitment to the radical cause which they for a while espoused in their fight against the old Town Council. They deplored loudly the tradition of self election but were extremely quick to deny any involvement with those who campaigned for parliamentary reform. When asked by the Select Committee on the Royal Burghs 'Do you think that the burgesses and inhabitants of Dundee ... were at all influenced by a wish to change the constitution of Parliament or are what are called Parliamentary reformers?', James Ivory answered, 'I am perfectly satisfied that there is no such wish on the part of the burgesses'.[100]

This was in direct contradiction of Riddoch's evidence which had remarked on considerable support in the town for the reformers. He told the committee that there had been 'a vast number of discontented people at the constitution of the country altogether'. But he thought that, by 1819, when the committee sat, 'if an alteration of the sett of the borough was obtained by proper authority, the people I think would be perfectly well satisfied and reconciled'.[101]

By 1819 it had become dangerous to support Reform and the burgesses had become anxious to have the radical element among the working people suppressed. One of the sticks they used to beat Riddoch with was the Town Council's failure to pay enough constables to put down riots in Dundee. The merchants' choice of the law and order banner, their wavering move from radicalism to conservatism, reflected both their own muddled motivation and the changing circumstances which made alliance with the radicals after 1793 dangerous and unwise.

There had always been a readily whipped up froth of street violence in Dundee as in other towns, ranging from the high jinks of apprentices to minor violence and regional rivalry.[102] The area around the Cowgate, for instance, was almost always unsafe after dark because of running fights between 'the lads from the hill and the lads from the Murraygait'.[103] Riddoch found this roughness tolerable but the Guild merchants were beginning to look for dignity and peaceful streets and to demand patrol and control.

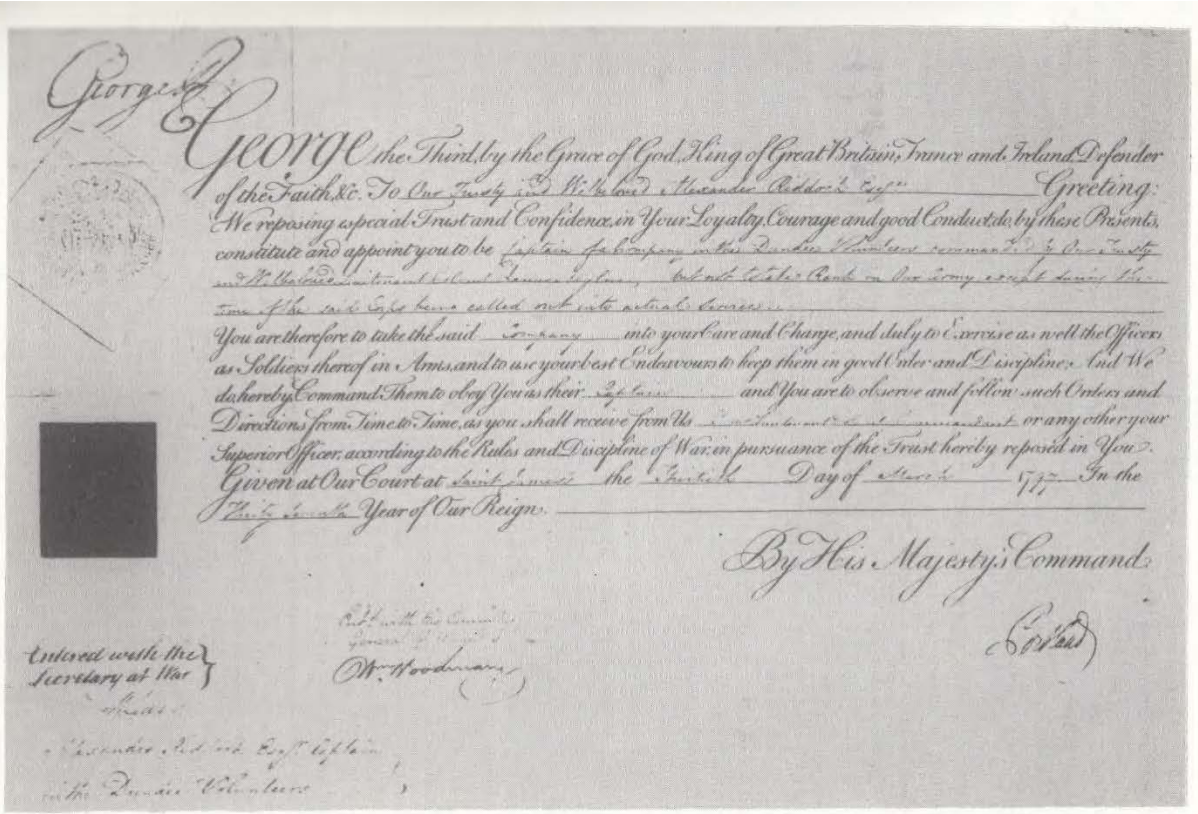
Reasonably good tempered crowds were easily transformed into angry mobs during times of scarcity and high prices. The best known of the meal mobs took place in 1772 when the Invergowrie house of Thomas Mylne, who had been exporting corn, was attacked and sacked,[104] but Dundee was affected, like the rest of the country, by sporadic meal mobbing and street rioting throughout the 18th century. In 1773 customs officers sent for troops to help them protect vessels laden with barley 'because an uncommon Spirit of Riot and Licentiousness has of late appeared in this part of the country and if we take off the guard these vessels will be tom to pieces in one night's time'.[105]

The riot of 1792 was one of the largest and perhaps most potentially dangerous in Scotland and had a more overtly political motivation.[106] Riddoch was much mocked for his part in it because he fell in with the rioters' need for drama and marched round the bonfires with them shouting for Liberty. He refused to be much alarmed and afterwards said the town had merely 'a fancy for a Tree of Liberty'.[107] After the passing of the Militia Acts, Riddoch put 'two or three young lads in scarlet frocks',[108] but to the rage of the more respectable burgesses he did not take the rioting seriously or feel threatened by it. 'These riots do not last at all', he said, 'it is just a run of discontent... a run upon meal sellers and com merchants.'[109] It was less easy for the corn merchants to bear the riots with such equanimity. In 1812 John Duncan was attacked in his house by 'a mob of women'.[110] And in 1816 William Lindsay's rather grand house in the Carolina Port was attacked and plundered, the looters staggering away from it with whole hams and cheeses.

The burgesses began to feel real alarm but there remained a marked contrast between the attitude of the judge who later tried the 1816 rioters and Riddoch's assessment of the outbreak as quite unthreatening. The judge thought the Dundee riot one of the most alarming of modem times which suggests either that Riddoch's assessment was faulty or that the judge was in receipt of false information from those who wanted to emphasize the terrors of the riot because that would stress the need for more policing and support their campaign against Riddoch. Witnesses reported the presence of a few men in the crowd who waved flags and shouted about Liberty and Equality but most of the evidence seems to point to a food riot which blew itself out after an hour or two of thieving and vandalism.

It was taken seriously because the courts were being fed worrying information about the state of affairs in Dundee. There were informers in the town whose interest it was to stress trouble as there had been for the last twenty years.

Riddoch showed confidence in his own judgment by going down alone into the town to disperse the rioters. He had no personal fear of the mobs and continued to believe that there was no need to bring in troops or to increase the constabulary. He stayed calm, still feeling himself in control of the situation and quite able to control the mob by appearing in the streets himself, talking to the people and telling the ships masters to call their prentice boys home.[111]



George the Third, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c. To Our Trusty and Well-beloved Alexander Addock Esq^r Greeting:
We reposing a special Trust and Confidence in Your Loyalty, Courage and good Conduct, do, by these Presents, constitute and appoint you to be Captain of a Company in the Dundee Volunteers commanded by Our Trusty and Well-beloved Lieutenant Colonel James Ogilvy, to act in Water Park in Our County of Forfar from the time of the said Corps being called out into actual Service.
You are therefore to take the said Company into your Care and Charge, and duly to Exercise as well the Officers as Soldiers thereof in Arms, and to use your best Endeavours to keep them in good Order and Discipline. And We do hereby Command Them to obey You as their Captain and You are to observe and follow such Orders and Directions from Time to Time, as you shall receive from Us Lieutenant Colonel Commandant or any other your Superior Officer, according to the Rules and Discipline of War, in pursuance of the Trust hereby reposed in You.
Given at Our Court at Saint James the Twenty Sixth Day of March 1797 In the Thirty Seventh Year of Our Reign.

By His Majesty's Command

Entered with the Secretary at War

Alexander Addock Esq^r Captain in the Dundee Volunteers

Plate 4. Militia certificate, 1797.

He became, perhaps, in his old age, complacent about his ability to contain and handle trouble. This complacency, and his refusal to believe that the riots in the early 19th century were politically motivated, particularly annoyed the merchant class because they had adopted the supposed breakdown of law and order as a main part of their campaign against his rule. Their argument was that his mismanagement of town finances had left Dundee without funds for proper policing and that policing was sorely needed. The truth might seem to have been that, far from there being any new and threatening breakdown of established order, there had been instead a continuation of the usual cheerful disorder. Riddoch was happy to tolerate it because he saw it as controllable and unthreatening. The merchants, however, wanted to change and improve the unpoliced burgh whose habitual roughness and violence now seemed unsuitable to their new status. They objected to having their hats knocked off. Riddoch, apparently, could bear it with good temper.

Rioting was no serious danger to Riddoch's position in the town until the coming to Dundee of George Kinloch, a young laird inflamed with the passions of the French Revolution[112] and the radical Robert Rintoul who was appointed editor of the *Dundee Weekly* Advertiser in 1808.[113] These two enlisted the interest and friendship of the Baxters, Jobsons and Blairs, used those of whom Riddoch had already made enemies, like James Saunders[114] and William Lindsay, and found issues to cause dissension even among Riddoch's erstwhile supporters like Alexander Balfour. Making the need for a new harbour into a burning cause, they used the Council's slowness to provide one as an illustration of the need for a new 'democratically' elected Town Council and the end of Riddoch's autocratic rule.

CHAPTER 7

PLANS FOR THE HARBOUR
'The famed Howkerie'

Dundee at the end of the 18th century had a growing population, sometimes disturbed by food shortages and lack of employment, a growing economy which nevertheless suffered severe fluctuations in trade, a resurgent merchant class pushing for greater influence and an infrastructure inadequate for its changing needs.

At the beginning of Riddoch's term of office he had been required to deal with a traffic problem. The mediaeval town had evolved around a system of pack-horse delivery. Closes and entries which had been wide enough for single-line horse traffic were sadly inadequate when carts became widely used, as they did for the first time in the last quarter of the century. When goods had to be unloaded from their carts and manhandled to pass from the market place to the dock or from the old Pack House on the quay to the new mills, a change was plainly needed. Riddoch was a practical man and he set about the widening of streets between market and docks and between town centre and the new turnpike county roads. With that nearly accomplished he was faced with another problem, the inadequacy of the harbour for the increased volume of shipping.

He did not fail to recognise the problem, but he misjudged its scale. Quite early in his programme of town improvement, he began the rebuilding of piers and jetties and the paving of approach roads. In 1780 improvements were begun at the 'Singing Pier' to make it safer and easier 'for boating horses and other bestial'.[115] In 1781 a new sloping pier was built at the Craig to improve landing facilities at the cost of £190.8s.2d.[116] In June 1782, after reports on the 'present ruinous condition of the south pier of the bason at the Shore and after repeated experience, being fully sensible that no repair can be made on it which could be of any duration', the Council agreed to rebuild a pier 8 feet thick to a height level with the main shore at a cost of £94. In 1784 estimates were taken for widening the east pier because it 'has been much damaged by storms this year and the arches thereof particularly injured ... and considering that the present breadth of the pier is altogether insufficient for the purpose of the trade carried on thereat'. Thomas Wood's estimate of £830 was accepted and the architect Samuel Bell appointed to oversee the work. In the same year the passage leading from Slate Wynd to the harbour was repaired.[117] During the years 1784 to 1787 a process of embanking and reclaiming ground at the Shore was undertaken. In 1789 it was agreed that an additional pier be built because 'the present Harbour is not sufficiently large and safe for the vessels belonging to the port'.[118]

But these were piecemeal improvements, slowly and frugally carried out because the town's revenues seemed to allow no other course. They proved insufficient to satisfy merchant demands for improved harbour facilities.

Questions began to be asked about the manner in which the town's funds were being spent and the reasons for their inadequacy.

In 1789, during a winter in which extra constables had been appointed and 'the whole inhabitants told to illuminate their windows' to prevent 'riots and disturbances in the streets'[119] the Provost was required to read a letter to the Council. It was signed by Patrick Stirling and Ebenezer Anderson[120] and came from the Dundee Reform Committee. It suggested mismanagement of revenue and alienation of property and demanded production and inspection of the town's account books. 'There is one point on which the Town Council and the Burgesses differ... and that is to the number and respectability of the friends of reform, it being well known that here almost every burgess has subscribed the petition except those that are members of the Town Council.'[121] The Council replied that no law compelled them to make their books open to examination. In September the Provost received a printed order from the House of Commons demanding to know the amount of cess levied for the past ten years, the gross revenue of the burgh for 1788 and an account of the lands sold since the Union. The Town Clerk was accordingly requested by the Council to go through all their books since 1707.[122]

Meanwhile Riddoch continued to make small improvements to the harbour on his own account. Although a number of other contributory factors stimulated discontent, some of them the result of new philosophical attitudes, some straightforwardly economic in origin, the focus for combined protest became the need for harbour improvement. Riddoch had in fact not been slow to see the need for improved port and docking facilities but he had, typically, gone about providing them in his own way.

After the completion of Castle Street, he had still on his hands a number of small properties in the area, each of which, as he acquired it, must have seemed to the seller of small monetary value, but, held together in the hands of one proprietor, gave considerable strategic advantage. He had, over a number of years, bought garden ground, giving access to the river from one man, an old jetty and heckling yard from another, a few cellars and a coal yard from another and some sheds and old buildings from yet another. Together they gave him ownership of the whole river front from the old Craig yard to the Castle Rock, beyond which it was not possible to progress eastwards on dry land. He proceeded to fill in part of this enclosed beach, to build new piers and jetties and, most importantly, a graving dock within the old timber yard for the purpose of ship repairs. It must have seemed to him that he was providing a useful service to the town, if one from which he could hardly fail to benefit financially.

He was, however, on this occasion ill-advised, or perhaps careless. It may have been that, growing older, he was not as quick as he once would have been in adjusting to the changing needs of the town. His graving dock was indeed a useful extra facility, but the primary need of the growing import and export trade was for deeper water for berthing larger ships and for more extensive warehousing.

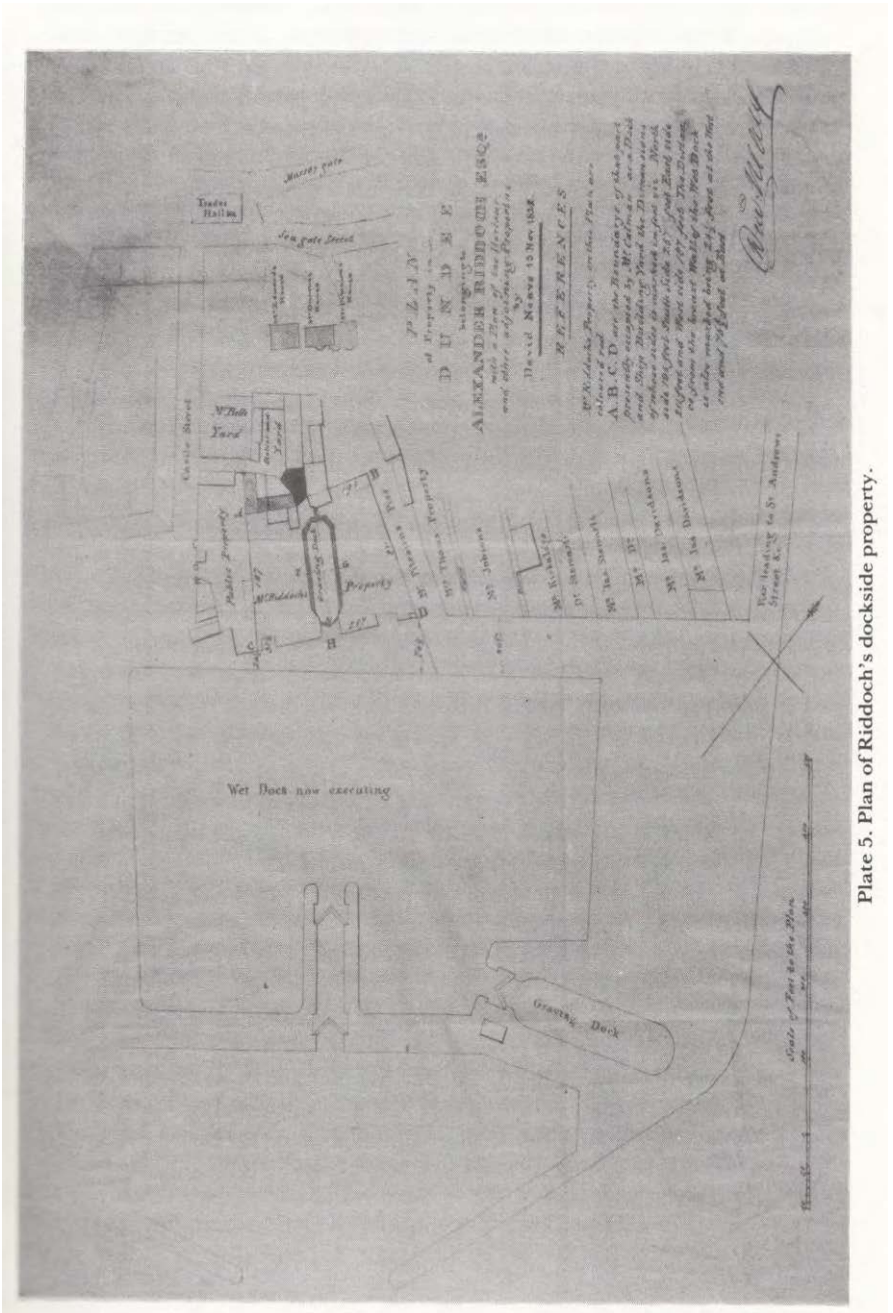


Plate 5. Plan of Riddoch's dockside property.

The harbour was desperately in need of deep dredging and longer piers and the old Packhouse hopelessly inadequate for incoming cargoes. Riddoch's ownership of so large a section of the sea front made further development difficult (see plate 5). However, the anger might never have found a focus if his scheme for infilling his part of the beach had no caused the town so much expense.

At the western end of the town, at the Seabraes, the Town Council, advised it must be said, by the architect Samuel Bell, a respected and admired figure who had designed the new Trades Hall,[123] had purchased ground and opened up a new stone quarry. The primary purpose of the purchase was to provide stone for a long sea wall to keep back the water and support the new turnpike road coming in from Perth. The stone, however, proved inadequate for building purposes, the quarry was filled in again and the ground acquired by the town was sold again for building stances. In the meantime, Riddoch, always an opportunist, bought the stones already quarried, from the Town Council to use as infill at the bottom of Castle Street, where the stone from the blasting of the Castle Rock had already been used for embanking. Riddoch paid £100 for stone which cost the council some £800 to excavate.[124] It gave the pamphleteers their chance and the songs about it circulated Dundee:

> 'He open'd up Crichton Street, Tay Street and Castle Street,
> Syne gat the stanes frae the famed Howkerie,
> Sell'd himsel stances, grew rich and his creatures
> Set up o'er the natives o Bonnie Dundee.'

He might have avoided the subsequent and long lasting wave of protest if the Town Council had not then decided to raise a two-penny tax on ale to pay for more harbour improvements. Annoyance at the extra tax joined with a generally held suspicion that the money raised would be spent, not on the much needed harbour improvements, but on reducing the debt into which Riddoch's latest extravagances had led the Town Council. The result was that, when the Town Council published its proposed Harbour Bill in 1810, the opposition to it was immediate and powerful.[125]

There were indeed reasonable grounds for objection to this first bill. It proposed the setting up of a Board of Trustees for the Harbour on which the old Town Council would be so strongly represented as to forestall any opposition to their plans.

It proposed the appointment, without competition, of an engineer of the Town Council's choice, to draw up the plans of improvement.

And it provided that, within a short period of years, the Board of Harbour Trustees should be wound up and the control of the harbour and its revenues returned to the Town Council.[126]

Opposition to the Bill was well organised and had some powerful support. Riddoch was able to act injured innocence, and with some justification because in fact the motives for the opposition to his plans were confused in the extreme.

Among those who opposed him were some who were indeed farther sighted than he

and who wanted, for straightforward economic reasons, wider ranging and longer lasting harbour improvements than his plan envisaged.

But there were also those who had been bested by him in business dealings and who resented his success. This group were very quick to use the new arguments about municipal reform as a stick to beat him with. People who had happily participated in the affairs of the old council now became enthusiasts for a new constitution of the burgh and zealous in the criticism of the old abuses. Importantly, none of the differing groups within groups were anxious to pay for the improvements they wanted.

The Town Council had finally decided to build a complete new pier 'stretching to eastward from the eastmost point of the new pier in the east harbour' in 1804.[127] But the Treasurer was forced to announce four months later that 'by the expense of building the new pier at the Harbour of Dundee he was already considerably in advance for the Town and would be more so as the work continued'.[128] Small improvements continued to be made by the Council to the structure of the piers and the surrounding docks until 1810 when the Council agreed to apply to Parliament for an act allowing them to levy a tax for the improvement of the harbour. The town was by then so heavily in debt in consequence of its large scale purchases of property for street improvements that doubts were raised among a merchant class already incensed by the slowness of the harbour works about whether money so raised would in fact be used for its intended purpose. When the books were finally examined they betrayed the fact that between 1764 and 1814 the Town Council had collected £38,696 in harbour dues of which only £9,468 had been spent on pier improvements, the rest having gone to the general fund of the town.[129] This was later to engage the attention of eminent counsel for both sides in the dispute, the Council contending that they were in no way bound to spend harbour dues entirely on the harbour. In 1810 the amounts involved were not known for certain either to the Council or to the opposition, but the town was full of rumours about the extent of the Town's revenues and the way in which they had been spent. There was a widely held suspicion, current since the seventeen-nineties, that the rent of the shore dues had been kept deliberately low to suit the pockets of Riddoch's cronies. One reason, then, for the volume of protest about the first Harbour Bill was lack of confidence in the Town's ability to manage and apply the new funds appropriately. So, when Riddoch advertised in the county newspaper that he intended to apply to Parliament for permission for 'building additional piers and other improvements in the Harbour of Dundee and augmenting the shore dues',[130] the merchants immediately gathered to oppose it. Their chief objection at this time seems to have been to the proposed new table of shore dues. It was only later that the opposition was orchestrated into general criticism of the inadequacy of the plans.

In the meantime, the Council was running into deeper and deeper trouble with its plan for the widening of the Nethergait. Earlier street improvements had been pushed through without too much discontent on the part of displaced proprietors. But when it became necessary to purchase properties standing the way of the Nethergait

improvements the position had changed. There had been a general rise in the value of property and, because of the Council's long programme of purchasing in the centre of town, house owners were more aware of the kind of price they could ask. In addition, they were, at least in some cases, dealing with a different kind of property and with a different class of person, a kind less likely to move to suit the Council. There were some well-to-do people living in the old, narrow Nethergait. In the case of Alexander Garland, a prosperous tobacconist, the Council made the mistake of pushing too hard. He rejected their first offer; they took out a compulsory purchase order. He called their bluff and applied to the Sheriff for a ruling. The Sheriff awarded him a very much larger price than the Council had ever contemplated having to pay.[131]

Then questions were asked about what had happened to monies collected by the Council for the Army of Reserve and which in the event had never been required.[132] The Council were forced to agree to pay the sum to the Dundee Lunatic Asylum Fund. There were other court fees to pay, one over the town's salmon fishing rights, one for damages caused by a meal mob.[133] Unexpected demands upon the Council's funds multiplied at the very time when their outgoings were at their highest and when the company of merchants were most committed to watching the Town's every expenditure with suspicion.

In 1811 the Council announced that 'considering the different value of houses since the valuation thereof was taken and upon which the annual assessment proceeds ... do resolve that a new valuation should be made of the whole heritable properties of the town'.[134] The Turnpike Road Trustees were threatening at the same time to double Dundee's road assessment. So, the merchants were being faced with higher costs and few of them were at that time in a position to bear them. Trade was very bad from late 1810 until mid 1811 and again from autumn 1812 until 1813 and some once important traders went bankrupt.[135] George Dempster wrote to a friend on 7 February 1811: 'The commercial credit of Angus is shaken to its foundations and Perth I fear is far from secure'.[136] This uncertainty of trade sharpened opposition to what was seen as profligacy and extravagance by the Council.

CHAPTER 8

STRENGTHENING OPPOSITION
'An uncalled for warmth of expression'

In 1811, and again in 1813, the magistrates made further attempts to frame a bill for improving the harbour which would be acceptable to the 'committee of respectable merchants' who had so far always opposed their plans. In 1814 Robert Stevenson, the eminent engineer, was appointed to survey the harbour and to draw up a plan of the intended improvements (see plate 6).[137]

The new application to parliament was announced in November 1813. By February 1814 when the Council was informed of parliament's acceptance of their petition, there were already complaints that Stevenson had been tardy in drawing up his plans. By the 14th his plans had been engraved and circulated among interested parties. Another committee of merchants, including David Blair, John Baxter, Alexander Balfour, Isaac Watt and Robert Miller, had met with the magistrates and reportedly come to some agreement about the rates to be charged. 'Some objections, it was true, had been stated by others to the Bill but, as they seemed to arise chiefly from misrepresentation or from the parties having rashly formed an opinion without enquiring into the facts of the case and as the utility and indeed the indispensable necessity of improving the harbour were admitted by all there was no reason to apprehend that any obstacle would occur to prevent the improvements being executed.'[138]

This reference to 'others [who] stated some objection to the Bill' is another indication of the split which was appearing within the merchant campaigners for harbour improvement. We have seen that there were some reasonable grounds for objection to Riddoch's proposed harbour bill and that opposition to it had united groups confused in motivation and objectives. A committee of merchants and shipowners had been formed whose meetings attracted the most 'respectable' and prosperous sections of society. At various times subcommittees of the original body were formed, especially, it would seem, when there appeared to be a need to press forward quickly to avoid dissent. The committee was serviced by James Saunders as its clerk who provided information on which it might act, legal advice on procedure, contact with influential agents and, most importantly, the motive force behind the whole campaign.

This merchant committee planned to put their own, alternative bill through Parliament. They had three main objectives. The first was to make sure that money raised for harbour improvements could not be used by the Town Council for other purposes and, in particular, for paying off the Town debt accumulated by the Town through its property acquisitions. To preserve the harbour funds from Council meddling, the merchants, advised by James Saunders, pressed for an autonomous board of trustees for the harbour. In this they succeeded, and Saunders became the first Clerk to the Harbour.

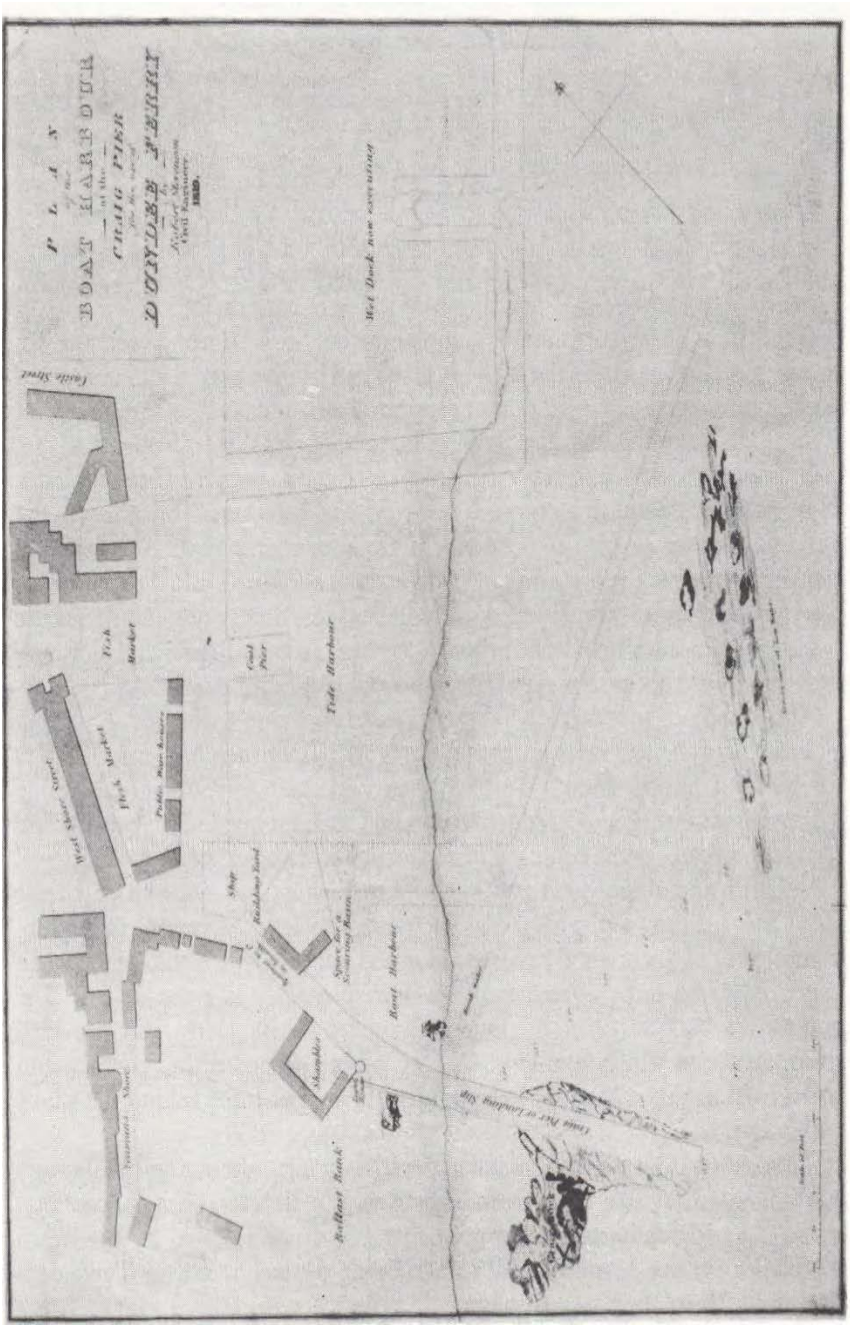


Plate 6. Stevenson's plan for the harbour (amended 1819).

Secondly, they wanted to ensure that the town had the best possible harbour facilities designed by the most distinguished engineer of the day and that its administration should be put on a footing which ensured a prosperous future free of trouble from the Town Council.

Thirdly the merchants wanted to make sure that Alexander Riddoch would not benefit financially from the transaction. It was this that made them press for the rejection of Stevenson's first plan, fearing that Stevenson had been too closely briefed by Riddoch, and insist upon another engineer. They were somewhat discommoded however by Telford's assumption 'that the construction of this wet dock would interfere with private property which could not be taken for such a purpose'[139] and his adapting of his plan to preserve Riddoch's interests.

It is difficult at this stage to disentangle truth from rumour. That both Stevenson and Thomas Telford, brought in as competitors to each other and therefore having apparently no underhand reason for agreement, should have drawn their plans so as to leave Riddoch's property *in situ* might suggest that it was in fact advantageous to do so. On the other hand, it might equally suggest, as the committee of merchants believed, that both engineers had been seduced by Riddoch into favouring his advantage.

Telford however was appointed in preference to Stevenson, the committee having made certain that he was briefed by the merchants and ship-owners who were to use the harbour, rather than by the magistrates. They instructed him on 14 May 1814 that the town needed accommodation for 15 to 16 thousand tons of shipping, that a wet dock with a permanent depth of 17' to 18' would be needed for the larger class of foreign ships, that a dry dock would also be needed for 90 vessels of 75 tons each used in the coasting trade and they emphasized that he was 'not to be limited by any consideration of private property'.[140]

His plan at first delighted them (see plate 7). Its fourth section planned the building of a wet dock which, as well as providing depth for their larger ships, would have effectively blocked off Riddoch's dock from access to the river. Their disappointment was extreme when they found, five months later, that Telford proposed to leave the carrying out of the fourth section of his plans to a period some seven years ahead to see whether the projected increase of trade would be enough to justify the considerable expense of the wet dock.[141] What had been disappointment turned to something like fury when they discovered that Telford now planned not only to preserve Riddoch's two launching slips and graving dock but to build a cast iron moveable bridge to allow movement of ships through the new quay between Riddoch's dock and the new harbour. They protested, 'In the hurry and bustle of a West India or even a Baltic importation the business would be interrupted with "You can't pass this way, the cast iron moveable bridge is up to let a ship into dock" [142] It was insisted that Riddoch's whole property must be purchased by the public at a price set by a jury and that Mr Telford must meet the committee to hear their views on the inadequacies of his plans.

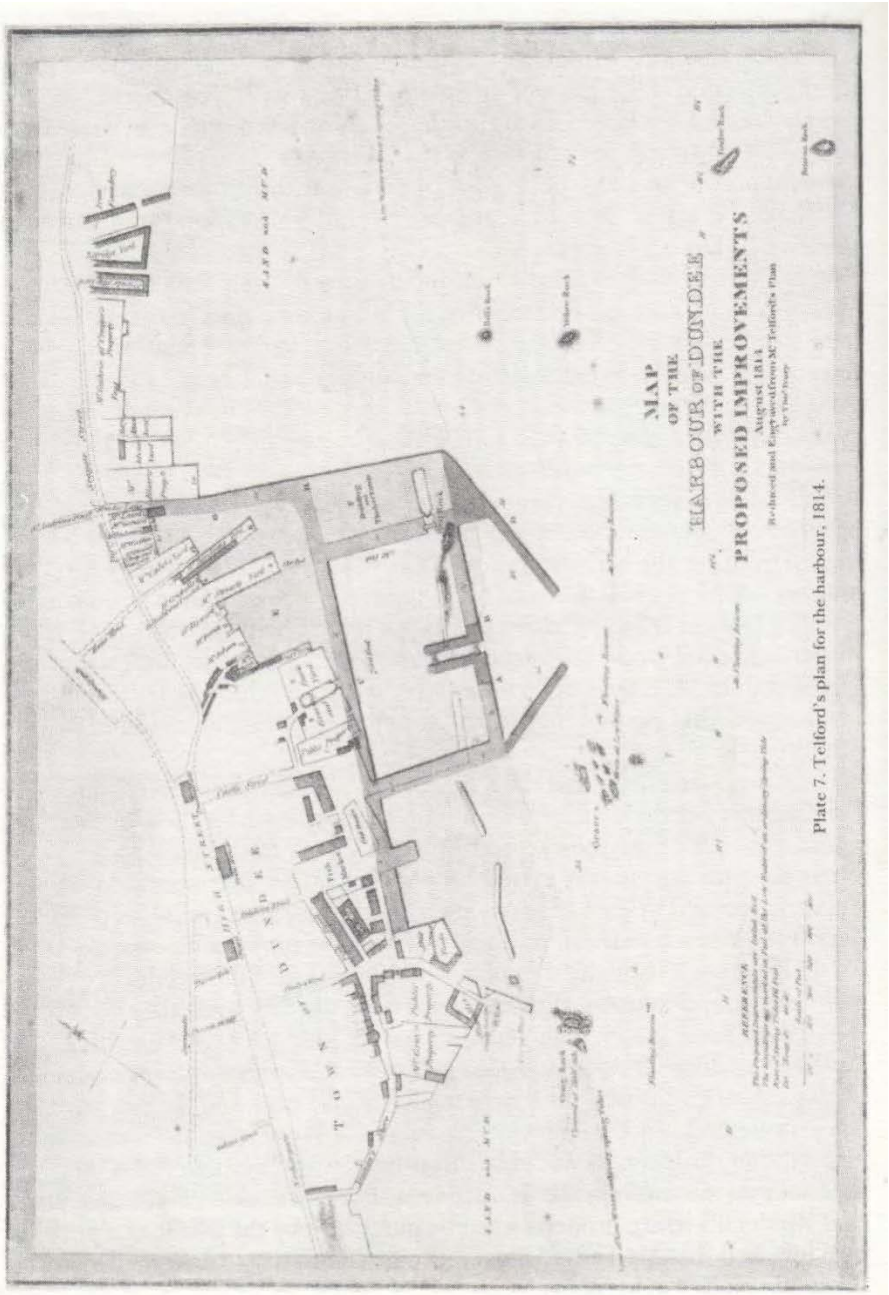


Plate 7. Telford's plan for the harbour, 1814.

James Saunders reported to his committee at their next meeting that there had been 'an extraordinary occurrence'. Mr Telford had visited Dundee the day before, but the news of his visit had not reached the merchants' committee. Or rather it had not reached those members of the committee who formed the most bitter part of the opposition to Alexander Riddoch. Isaac Watt and Alexander Small, however, had known of his visit and had conversed with him on harbour business. Watt had been praeses of the earlier meeting at which the committee had adopted Telford's plan but criticised it for sparing Riddoch's property and Small had been involved all along in the merchants' case.[143]

The fact that these two should have chosen to visit Telford without the knowledge of Saunders in particular shows something like a crisis in the management of the merchants' affairs. While many of the merchant class were unwilling to see Riddoch prosper and were anxious to have a new harbour, they were neither anxious to participate in Saunders' political campaign nor to dip too far into their pockets to support improvement. It is quite clear that there was an element in the town, led by James Saunders, determined to oppose Riddoch in person and the magistrates' harbour bill however much the magistrates might be disposed to adapt to the merchants' wishes. It is equally clear that another set, a group even more firmly ensconced at the centre of the merchant establishment, were unwilling to be involved in radical politics, unwilling to support expensive campaigning against Riddoch and anxious to reach a compromise agreement with the magistrates that would allow them to proceed with harbour improvement.

When Telford made his unannounced visit to Dundee in early November 1814, Watt and Small certainly chose to avoid letting Saunders' faction know of his presence. Provost Guild, alternating as *locum* for Riddoch that year, said next day that he did not know Telford had been in town. Telford himself said that he had been 'a prisoner in Merchant's Inn from 4 o'clock of the preceding day waiting an "attack from the Committee" ', so he was well aware of the opposition to his plans. When Saunders finally got to him he was about to catch the steam boat to Perth, refused to wait until the committee could be summoned and told Saunders that 'his mind was made up on the subject of which it was their intention to speak'.[144] It turned out later that it was made up in favour of preserving Riddoch's dock and deferring construction of the expensive wet dock until increased revenue should justify it. Whether Riddoch and he had conversed during the evening of his stay at Merchant's Inn is not known but may be guessed at.

After Telford's visit the harbour row developed a new bitterness. The committee accused the engineer of 'partiality to an individual and neglect of instruction' and claimed that 'his authority on this point does not weigh a feather'.[145] The magistrates, keeping cool, 'regret[ed] to observe a warmth of expression which really does not appear to have been called for. Without calling into question the purity of the motives by which you are swayed cordially join with you in the opinion that no private interest ought to stand in the way of the projected improvements. They likewise trust that as little obstruction will arise from the influence of party spirit.'[146]

Saunders' answer to this was to set about enlisting support among his brother lawyers for the idea that the magistrates could be compelled by law to put the whole income from the shore dues to the immediate construction of a new harbour. Unfortunately for him, there was some difference of legal opinion on this score. It was clear enough that the magistrates were bound to maintain the old harbour in good repair, less clear whether or not they must spend the whole harbour income on such repairs and not at all certain that they could be obliged to spend any of it on constructing a completely new harbour. Saunders then set about raising a voluntary subscription to finance opposition in parliament to the magistrates' proposed harbour bill. By this move he split the merchants and lost a great deal of his support. Differences on the subject occurred even within families. David Blair of Cookston, for example, the linen stamp master, supported the magistrates, while his son Captain David Blair, junior, was a devotee of the radicals led by Saunders. Alexander Balfour was always anxious to avoid unnecessary expenditure and became something of a thorn in Saunders' flesh, questioning at every turn his need for more money. In particular he insisted that there was no need to raise money to oppose the bill until they found out 'whether the magistrates will arrange the bill without rendering opposition necessary'.[147]

From this point on it became unnecessary for Riddoch to oppose the merchants' cause. The squabbles within their own committee weakened their case and allowed him to take up a position as a reasonable man only too willing to adapt himself to the requirements of the public. And, because the council gradually gave way on all the points demanded by the merchants' committee, Riddoch agreeing to sell his dockside property at jury valuation and the council agreeing to go ahead with the fourth section of Telford's plan, so long as the expenditure was kept within reasonable bounds, Saunders was forced out into the open. He was plainly determined to oppose Riddoch on any grounds, whether he had general support or not.

It was at this point that he enlisted the help of his friend George Kinloch, who attended a meeting of the merchants' committee on 10 November 1814 with a set of resolutions ready drawn.[148] Kinloch's resolutions involved the raising of a subscription to oppose the magistrates' harbour bill and to push forward a new bill 'on liberal principles'. David Blair offered alternative resolutions 'which were of a conciliatory nature'. Blair was seconded by Isaac Watt and had the support of John Baxter of Idvies, William Lindsay the corn dealer, William Baxter, Alexander Balfour, John Alison, David Martin, John Gray, Alexander Reid, Robert Millar, jnr., Thomas Courtenay, John Collier, Thomas Mitchell, James Watt, James Smith, James Soutar and Andrew Pitcairn.[149] Of these only Balfour, Mitchell and Pitcairn were associated with the east end of town. The others were all Cowgate merchants. Blair took the wind out of Kinloch's sails by informing the meeting of Riddoch's cheerful willingness to give up his dock to the harbour commissioners but Kinloch still insisted on the need for a voluntary subscription to oppose the bill.

The next week Saunders called another meeting to press the need to raise the subscription immediately. 'The object of raising the subscription is not, as some members have imagined, to declare a premature hostility to a bill of the terms of which the public and the Committee are ignorant. It is only as a measure of precaution dictated and justified by a recollection of all the past conduct of the Magistrates in this business.'[150]

That hostility was a prime mover is made quite clear by the fact that Saunders and Kinloch did everything possible, including the lobbying of members of parliament, to prevent the passage of the magistrates' harbour bill even after Riddoch had given way on every point required of him and even though they did not, in fact, have the wholehearted support of the burgesses. Some of the merchants felt that they had been pressured into accepting Kinloch as their leader and, when Blair junior suggested a vote of thanks to Saunders for enlisting Kinloch, Balfour moved 'that he had been paid for his trouble and consequently deserved no thanks on the subject'.[151]

Saunders, Kinloch and Robert Rintoul, editor of the *Dundee Advertiser*, arranged a meeting with Mr Maule[152] and were annoyed to find that David Blair, senior, John Baxter of Idvies and Isaac Watt of Logie had anticipated them. The radicals wanted their own version of the bill pushed through parliament, ensuring that the magistrates did not have too powerful a representation on the new Harbour Commission and could not acquire control of the harbour dues. Blair, Baxter and Watt refused to make public the substance of their representation to Maule. However, their motive seems to have been to let him know that the magistrates showed, as Balfour said on 19 November 'every disposition to make a Bill agreeable to the Public' and that the radical party did not have the support of the merchant class in general.[153]

Saunders solicited support from the Nine Trades and from the Seaman Fraternity, and he continued to whip up opposition to the magistrates even after they had agreed to all the merchants' demands.

This chapter of the harbour bill's history closed in February 1815 with the magistrates putting before the merchant committee a copy of their proposed bill and requesting the committee 'to say definitely whether or not they intend to concur in the application to Parliament for a Harbour Bill. The Magistrates will be happy to receive their cooperation. But if they are resolved upon opposing the Bill the magistrates will of course take their own measures.'[154]

It was with great fury that the merchants thereafter discovered that, although the magistrates had indeed instructed Telford, in writing, to amend his plan to provide for a wet dock he had decided 'that after the most mature consideration he saw no reason to alter the position of the wet dock'.[155] It must have seemed that Riddoch had won after all even though he had appeared, publicly, to have yielded his ground gracefully.

The merchants' committee protested that Telford should be sacked. 'Whether the original deficiencies arose from want of skill in the Engineer or from his having acted under private instructions that he is ashamed of or not at liberty to avow' or whether 'his plan for an outer harbour was the offspring of a puerile or trifling taste or rendered

necessary for the private property which Mr Telford wished to secure', Telford was to go.[156]

The squabble over Riddoch's ground continued even after the setting up of the new harbour commission. A letter of 1816 suggested that those who opposed Riddoch had, in fact, been no more disinterested than he. David Blair, junior, it turned out, owned riverside property to the east of Riddoch's and was annoyed that the harbour improvements had not been effected in such a way as to enhance the value of his land 'like those to the north of the harbour'. Saunders had gone behind the Harbour Commissioners' backs in attempting to persuade Telford, who had not, after all, been sacked, to allow a large stretch of embankment at the Commission's expense but to Blair's advantage. Rintoul and Saunders had lobbied for the appointment of a superintendent of works who proved wholly unsuitable and whose chief qualification was that he was neither David Brown, who was Telford's choice, nor David Neave, who was Riddoch's. Blair, Saunders and Rintoul were publicly accused of backing this man, Raffield, 'because of their disappointments and resentments'.[157] It is hard not to believe that in this case Riddoch's choice, however self-interested, was certainly the better. Neave proved himself a competent man of some skill and vision while Raffield added only to the muddle and shame which surrounded the whole Harbour campaign.

CHAPTER 9

REVIVAL OF THE GUILDRY
The 'Old Hawk' retires

In spite of all the ill feeling the Harbour Act was passed in 1815. Saunders, however, continued to attack the magistrates on every possible opportunity. The Act provided for nomination to the Harbour Commission of five representatives from the Guildry in addition to those nominated by the magistrates and by the landed proprietors. But, as things stood in 1815 the Guildry was under the control of the Town Council. The choice of Dean, the appointment of his assessors and the administration of the Guildry funds were all controlled by the Council. In such circumstances the Harbour Commission, and its increased revenues, would automatically have become another province of the Town Council and its Chief Magistrate. To prevent this, Saunders and Rintoul set about reviving interest in the almost defunct Guildry and its powers. Rintoul's part of the campaign was open and avowed. He dedicated the *Advertiser* to the cause of resuscitating the Guildry and reforming the Burgh Council and he wrote, printed and published a number of pamphlets advocating the cause. Saunders worked in a different way, organising meetings and forming committees of which he became convener and clerk and advising about the best methods of putting pressure upon the Town Council.

Early in 1815 Guildry meetings sought to recover their ancient rights from the Town Council and, as a first step towards that recovery, asked leave for a committee of the Guildry to inspect the records of the burgh and in particular those pertaining to the Guildry. The magistrates countered this at first by suggesting the appointment of a differently based committee but in March conceded the Guildry's committee, including Saunders, the right to examine the records.

Riddoch's policy in dealing with the radicals and those who backed them was to avoid confrontation, to give way readily where his own principles and interest were not too heavily involved but, where he felt pushed unwillingly into undesirable changes, to delay all concessions until the last moment. He was faced by this time with many different groups, again temporarily consolidated by Saunders and Rintoul into one campaign to oppose the Town Council.

In the spring of 1815 the Trades Incorporations and the county landowners joined with the merchants in insisting on representation upon the new Harbour Commission. Their combined strength was enough to ensure that 'the Magistrates and Council should be relieved of the obligation to borrow money for the purposes of the Act and that this obligation should be undertaken by the Commissioners'.[158] The fight to make sure Town Council representation did not swamp the other interests was won by combining groups more naturally opposed to each other. The true radicals allied themselves with the deeply conservative. Those who called for Reform and Liberty joined those who called

for increased policing and law and order. The anti-corn-law movement, supported by manufacturers who wanted com prices low to keep wages low, joined gentlemen farmers who wanted grain prices high. Tradesmen found temporary common cause with their employers.[159] But Saunders was not able, for long, to hold these disparate groups together, especially as Riddoch was astute enough to yield just enough to make it seem unnecessary to sustain opposition towards him.

By the autumn of 1816 the numbers favouring moderation had increased. There was a general tiredness with the bickering which had beset the town for so long and perhaps there was some apprehension on the part of the moderate middle classes that the discontent being stirred up in the town might rebound upon them. A group of gentlemen led by John Baxter of Idvies, 'Gentle John' as the pamphleteers called him, and uncle of the Baxter brothers, offered to mediate in the dispute between the magistrates and the Guildry. 'The Provost received them most graciously and, after having heard the object of their calling, thanked them in the warmest terms for coming forward to endeavour to effect so obvious a good as the restoring of peace and harmony in the town, frankly allowing those to be his best friends who should engage themselves in the same good cause.'[160]

Riddoch was not, however, willing to concede immediately. It would appear that he had by now genuinely convinced himself that he would be failing him his duty as chief magistrate if he allowed the power of his office to be diluted and that restoring the Guildry's right to appoint a Dean to the Council would represent such a dilution. It was, of course, true that he was only attempting to maintain the state of affairs he had found when he entered the council, not one he had himself created. So, while he negotiated with Baxter and made clear that he wished not 'to show a hostile temper to the public'[161] he continued to delay any agreement.

Saunders, meanwhile, had persuaded the Guildry that the only way to force concessions from the Town Council was by taking legal action for the restoration of Guildry rights and privileges. Baxter and his sub-committee promised Riddoch on 19 November that they would delay the legal action until further mediation had been tried and arrangements were made for further meetings.[162] But before negotiations could proceed Saunders, without consulting the whole Guildry and behind the backs of John Baxter and his sub-committee, instructed the Edinburgh lawyers, Gibson, Christie and Wardlaw, to issue summons against the magistrates.[163] This underhand action by Saunders showed his own hand too clearly and further split the merchant community. But then the Guildry, advised by their Edinburgh lawyers, decided to combine their wish for restored Guildry rights with pressure for a police bill for Dundee. By this means those who wanted burgh reform were again united with the law and order brigade in pressing the Town Council for action. Riddoch, however, coped with that in his usual way. He 'took the opportunity of some verbal communication and correspondence with ... Mr Duff the Sheriff Depute of the County' who had 'lately been in this town

employed in examining witnesses respecting the late riots'. Riddoch told the Sheriff 'a police bill on liberal principles might be attended with great advantage to the town'.[164] It is notable that both sides in the war between Council and Guildry use the phrase 'on liberal principles' to mean 'sympathetic to our wishes'. Mr Duff let the Provost know that Parliament was more than likely to favour a request from Dundee for a police bill and 'suggested that it might even be carried through this present session of parliament if an immediate application was made'. In the existing state of unrest in the country at large, parliament was indeed likely to smile upon attempts to control it, as Riddoch very well knew. But he made clear to the Sheriff that 'the bill proposed by the Guildry could not go forward because contained within it was a clause allowing the Guildry to choose their own Dean and manage their own funds which was totally inadmissible'.

The Council agreed, upon hearing Riddoch's report of his meeting with Duff, not to proceed with an application to Parliament for a police bill in the meantime but that 'every inquiry should be made in burghs where such laws had been obtained as to the tenor of them'.[165]

It was 1819 before the Guildry achieved the restitution of its rights and the victory came about as a result of agitation within all the burghs of Scotland which culminated in a parliamentary report on the constitutions of the burghs. Even then, when the sett of the burgh had been changed to allow them to elect their own Dean, Saunders set about raising a petition 'for more extensive change'.[166] Support for reform had been further weakened by intervening events and Saunders was forced to attempt to justify to the Guildry his organising of the petition.

Running parallel with the dispute between Town Council and Guildry had been another wrangle in which Balfour, Riddoch and Saunders had begun as allies, to protect the Magdalen Green as a pleasure ground for the inhabitants. Mrs Watt of Crescent wanted to drive a cart road over the Green; Saunders was factor to Thomas Hunter of Blackness who had grazing rights there. A Committee for improving the Magdalen Green was formed in June 1816 and a process of declarator taken out against Mrs Watt. Unfortunately, the courts found for Mrs Watt and awarded costs against the Town Council. Saunders was anxious to appeal against this decision but the Town Council, already in financial difficulties, refused to take the case further. Saunders claimed that he was £199 out of pocket in legal expenses and tried to drum up money from the public for the pursuance of the case and the payment of his own expenses.

He singularly failed to rouse interest in his cause, either from the Guildry or from the general public. On 14 June 1816 he wrote to Riddoch saying town money 'would be well employed in protecting the only form of pleasure ground which the inhabitants of Dundee have. You will not deem it *high treason* in me to have made this suggestion.'[167]

The case fell, but it became clear that Saunders was less interested in preserving a pleasure ground than in making sure that Dundee's main forum of political protest was not destroyed. In January 1815 the Town Council received a requisition asking their

permission to hold a meeting on the Magdalen Green Tor the purpose of Reform in Parliament'.[168]

Saunders, Kinloch and Rintoul had come into the open as leaders of the radical party in the town, campaigning for the overthrow of the established government and enlisting the support of the populace. Their participation in the defence of Guildry rights and the campaign for harbour improvements was shown to be incidental to their main interest and pursued chiefly as a means of enlisting the support of the 'respectable' merchants against Riddoch and the Town Council as representatives of the old order.

The opposition to Riddoch during his reign, then, can be seen to have come from some disparate groups.

There were those who, for quite petty and unthinking reasons, herded with the others when they saw the attack on the old chief begun. Among these were men who felt themselves to have been cheated, or at least outwitted, by his property dealings and others who simply envied him his personal success. There were those who had been bested by him in business or in other petty squabbles over, for instance, the siting of the stamp office, church patronage and appointments to the Academy. The pettiness of the case against him was remarked on more than once by those outsiders called to judgment on him. 'The works, the debts, the concealments have all been on a petty scale' said the parliamentary report.[169] William Baxter reproached the *Advertiser* for promoting its sales 'by gratifying the private spite and resentment that one part of the community may have towards the other. He warned the burgesses that 'little, mean, dirty borough politics cannot be separated from ... personal malice, calumny and abuse of private character'.[170]

Then there were those whose muddled political idealism led them to see Riddoch as the Arch Devil of all that was retrograde and corrupt. By their careless and ill-timed efforts to enlist popular support for their clouded vision of equality some of these gentlemen brought Dundee to a point of siege. Troops were marched in, spies paid, and citizens armed. 'Some few individuals whose names are not unknown to you have been very industrious in inflaming the minds of the common people ... and it is astonishing the notions they have instilled in the minds of the common people, such as the meaning of the word Liberty and Equality is nothing else than an equal distribution of property, a relief from taxes and other such stuff.'[171]

Riddoch was, in fact, closer to the common people, had more genuine care for them and, more important, was a better judge of when and how to act. He knew that actions which would result in the bringing in of troops could only make the town's problems more acute.

There were also, amongst those opposing Riddoch, some genuine radicals, honest believers in the cause of parliamentary reform. Open middle-class support for them fell away as the government's fears of uprising on a national scale led them to suppress every little local outburst with harsh severity. Riddoch made plain his contempt for 'respectable gentlemen' who deserted the radical cause when it got dangerous and

turned their attentions to burgh reform and to his personal sins as a softer target. He also made quite plain his own position. In a speech which stole most of the opposition's thunder and left his own position safe he proposed that the Council should apply to Parliament for a new sett of the burgh. 'The Government', Riddoch pointed out, 'so far from opposing, highly approve of the Scots Boroughs themselves reforming their own setts agreeably to the wish of the inhabitants... It is not without a great sacrifice of feelings to an imperative sense of duty that I bring forward such a proposal at this particular time. The Council are aware that from the beginning of the political disputes which now agitate the Town, the System has been attacked chiefly through the Members of Council and that almost the whole force of opposition has been directed at me as chief magistrate and your leader.'[172] Even the *Advertiser* admitted that 'he left on record a testimony in favour of municipal reform, the clearest and most emphatic ever uttered'.[173]

In 1819 a select committee of the House of Commons met to consider several complaints about the conduct of affairs in Scottish burghs. Among those was a petition from the burgesses of Dundee to ensure whose representation Robert Rintoul and James Saunders journeyed to London to give evidence. Alexander Riddoch was called upon to answer questions put to him by the select committee. That committee's report, when it appeared, made clear the need for municipal reform but showed, what perhaps the burgesses of Dundee had not all understood, that their own town was by no means singular in having a self-elected oligarchy at its head. Attempts to attack allegations of corruption and self-interest to individual members of the council failed. As Saunders pointed out, although he and Rintoul believed the charges to be true, 'It was quite another matter to convey the impression to strangers'.[174] An anonymous letter to the parliamentary committee, written by 'A Reformer of Abuses' summed it up by saying 'I would further take leave to observe to your Lordship that you will make little of the old hawk [Riddoch]'.[175]

The old hawk seemed to enjoy his visit to London. Rintoul who, although by far the younger man was ill and tired, remarked with some asperity that Riddoch had regarded 'the summons of the Honourable Committee as the passport to health and pleasure'.[176] Riddoch had by this time accepted the idea of retirement and showed signs of relishing the role of an old man above the fray.

The fray continued after his departure from the Council. Patrick Anderson,[177] who succeeded him as Provost, found it necessary to take Rintoul, Saunders, Edward Baxter and others to court for libel as they continued to attack the magistracy. Bitter arguments continued between Harbour Commission and Town Council for the next fifty years.

But the old hawk, the Gudeman of Blacklunans, the Archdeacon of the Self-elected, the ketteran bit chiel frae the Hielands, sat back in his house in the Nethergait among his silver and his books and his paintings, not wholly dissatisfied with his life's work. He had not, it is true, presided over the creation of a new classical town as his more

profligate contemporaries in Edinburgh had done. But he left behind him a pleasantly laid out burgh with some fine buildings, well suited to its commercial function. Had he not lived through and age in which the whole foundation of political morality was shifting and changing he might have died honoured as well as rich.

NOTES

ABREVIATIONS

DPL – Dundee Public Records
DTC – Dundee Town Council
OPR – Old Parish Records
OSA – Old Statistical Account
SRO – Scottish Records Office

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[1] SRO, OPR, Comrie. The christening of the three boys on the same day does not necessarily imply that they were triplets. Considering the date and the terrain it may have been easy for the parents to bring sons born earlier into Comrie for christening.
[2] SRO, OPR, Comrie.
[3] DPL., Local History Section, *Lamb*, 433/v.
[4] OSA., X11, 273
[5] OSA., X11, 273, 286.
[6] SRO, OPR, Lethendy.
[7] OSA., X11, 272.
[8] DPL, *Lamb,* 433/v
[9] DTC, Minute Books, Dundee City Archives, 1775-1822 show regular transactions of this kind.
[10] W. Norrie, *Dundee Celebrities of the Last Century* (Dundee, 1873), 26.
[11] DTC, Minutes, 24 September 1776.
[12] DTC, Minutes, 1 October 1776.
[13] R.M. Sunter, *Patronage and Politics in Scotland,* 1707-1832 (Edinburgh, 1986), 186.
[14] A. Durie, *The Scottish Linen Industry* (Edinburgh, 1979), 24.
[15] SRO, NG 1/7, Vol. 8, 25 December 1784 – 16 July 1801; see also E. Gauldie, *The Dundee Textile Industry,* (Scottish History Society, 1969), xviii.
[16] SRO, RH 119/12.
[17] Gauldie, *Dundee Textile Industry*, xix.
[18] SRO, *Register of Sassines,* 28, 345, 4386, 4472, Forfar.
[19] SRO, AD/4/16/58.
[20] DTC, *Minutes,* 18 September 1783, 31 March 1784.
[21] *Dundee Register of Merchants and Trades* (Dundee, 1782), 8.
[22] Ibid.
[23] D. Loch, *Essays on Trade* (Edinburgh, 1778-9), 1, 248.
[24] Durie, *Linen Industry*. 77.
[25] A. Warden, *The Linen Trade, Ancient and Modern.* (London, 1867), 585.
[26] Durie, *Linen Industry*, 77.
[27] DTC, *Minutes,* 31 July 1780.
[28] SRO, *Register of Sassines*, 3622, 9095.
[29] DTC, *Minutes,* 29 May 1777.
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] SRO, RH/119/12.
[32] One exception was a small spinning venture at Baldovie with Alexander Ireland of which it was said at his death little could be expected; 'Registered Trust Settlement by Alexander Riddoch Esq., 19 March 1822'.

[33] SRO, Register of Sasines, Forfarshire, 4769, 3729
[34] DTC, Minutes, 29 June 1809; C.W. Boase, A Century of Banking in Dundee (Edinburgh, 1867), 33.
[35] SRO, Register of Sasines, 3729; Registered Trust Settlement by Alexander Riddoch Esq., Inventory of Personal Estate of Alexander Riddoch, SRO, CC 3/5/7/298; Testament of Alexander Riddoch, Dundee, SRO, CC 3/16; Inventory of Personal Estate of Mrs Ann Riddoch nee Morrison, SRO, SC 45/31, Vol. 7, Fol. 565.
[36] DPL, Lamb, 433v
[37] SRO, CC 3/5/7/298.
[38] DTC, Minutes, 23 February 1801.
[39] SRO, CC 3/5/7/298; Dundee Register 1793.
[40] SRO, CC 3/16.
[41] T.C. Smout, *History of the Scottish People,* 1560-1830 (London, 1975 ed.), 363.
[42] SRO, SC 45/31/467, 468.
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] SRO, CC 3/5/7/298.
[45] Ann Morison left bequests of books to a number of her friends and a book of poems by herself which shows extensive reading and some ability. Her father was John Morison, a Dundee merchant and her brother Alexander was a merchant in London.
[46] DTC, *Minutes,* 17 June 1782.
[47] DTC, *Minutes,* March to October 1782.
[48] *Report from the Select Committee on the Royal Burghs of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1819), 58.
[49] A.H. Millar (ed), *The Roll of Eminent Burgesses of Dundee, 1513-1886* (Dundee, 1887), 220.
[50] Boase, *Banking,* 501.
[51] DTC, *Minutes,* 29 May 1777.
[52] *Select Committee, 1819*, 39.
[53] DTC, *Minutes* 14 October 1782, 4 October 1784.
[54] *Select Committee 1819*, 37; DTC Minutes, 31 January 1787, 31 January 1796.
[55] Smout, *Scottish People*, 289; OSA, XIX, 500.
[56] Boase, *Banking*, 565.
[57] DTC, *Minutes,* 13 October 1817.
[58] *Dundee, Perth and Cupar Advertiser*, 19 December 1822.
[59] *Select Committee 1819*, 5
[60] J. Thomson, *The History of Dundee* (Dundee, 1847), 248.
[61] DTC, *Minutes*, 1776-1819.
[62] DTC, *Minutes*, 24 September 1776.
[63] DTC, Minutes, 23 October 1777.
[64] *Select Committee 1819*, 38.
[65] *Ibid*, 5.
[66] A.J. Warden, *Burgh Laws of Dundee* (Dundee, 1872), 5; *Roll of Eminent Burgesses*, 105.
[67] R. Rodger, 'The Evolution of Town Planning' in G. Gordon and B. Dicks (eds.), *Scottish Urban History* (Aberdeen, 1983), 80; see also Rodger, 'The Invisible Hand' in D. Fraser and A. Sutcliffe, *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London, 1983), 204.
[68] Warden, *Burgh Laws,* 105.
[69] Thomson, *Dundee,* 256.
[70] *Report on the Guildry of Dundee by a Committee appointed to Ascertain the Rights of that Ancient Body* (Dundee, 1815).
[71] Rodger, 'Town Planning', 80.

[72] DTC, *Minutes,* 13 July 1786, 20 October 1801. This was a continuing dispute.
[73] SRO, GD 151/11/29.
[74] *Dundee Register*, 1783.
[75] DTC, *Minutes,* 1 October 1776, 4 January 1787 etc; C. Tennant, *The Radical Laird* (Kineton, 1970), 71. George Miln's bookshop was a well-known meeting place, see also Norrie, *Dundee Celebrities*, 63.
[76] SRO, RH 4/119/12/4.
[77] Norrie, *Dundee Celebrities*, 27, 71. Sons of Watchmaker brothers Sir James, the mathematician, partnered William Douglas of Brigton in his early flax spinning venture and James, Lord Ivory, became a judge in the Court of Session.
[78] William Lindsay, 1767-1849, came to Dundee as a corn merchant in 1792. He claimed to be descended from the Earls of Crawford and became the first post Reform Bill Provost of Dundee. Henry Harwood painted his portrait. *Old Dundee Exhibition Catalogue*, 1892-3; *Roll of Eminent Burgesses*, 234.
[79] T.M. Devine, 'The merchant class of the larger Scottish towns', in Gordon and Dicks, *Urban History*, 93
[80] *The Lockit Book of Dundee, 1513-1981*, Dundee City Archives.
[81] DTC, *Minutes*, 24 September 1776; *Roll of Eminent Burgesses*, 226.
[82] *Ibid*, 230. See also Devine 'Merchant Class' for decline of formal apprenticeship.
[83] *Ibid*, 99, 101, 107.
[84] *Select Committee 1819*, 39, 74.
[85] DPL. *Lamb,* 433v.
[86] *Dundee Advertiser*, 19 October 1833.
[87] DPL, *Lamb*, 433v.
[88] The Baxter referred to are the merchant/manufacturer family who founded Baxter Brothers. David and Edward, sons of William of Balgavies and nephews of John of Idvies, were among those who joined the rush to become burgesses in 1817. The Jobsons were another well-known family. Robert Jobson became Dean of Guild in 1815, having been elected burgess in 1807. Before that he had been for some years abroad. His father was cashier of the Dundee Bank. He was a supporter of George Kinloch and in 1819 bought a large house at Rosemount near Blairgowrie.
[89] *Select Committee 1819*, 48-49.
[90] The memoirs of Peter Carmichael of Baxter Brothers provide a good description of the early days of the Cowgate. See E. Gauldie, *Dundee Textile Industry*, 20-21. Warden is good for later years, Linen, 629. It should be remembered that the Cowgate was the resort of the 'respectable' merchants because it was within the confines of the old burgh while the are beyond the West Port, up the Hawkhill and the Chapelshade, was outside the Royalty and non-freemen could set up business there.
[91] David Blair, later known as 'Justice Blair, of Cookston and Unthank', 1750-1836, was born in Brechin, son of a minister. He came to Dundee at 16 to learn the linen trade, prospered as a merchant and was appointed stamp master. He was a long serving member of Riddoch's council whose position was made difficult latterly by dissentions with the other merchants about linen stamping, by the ambition of his son-in-law, Patrick Anderson to replace Riddoch as Provost and by his own son's friendship with George Kinloch, the radical laird. See frontspiece.
[92] SRO, RH 119/12, 19 December 1789.
[93] Among them Thomas Webster and Company in which Riddoch had a share.
[94] SRO, RH 119/12, 19 December 1789.

[95] SRO, RH 119/12, 21 December 1789.
[96] SRO, RH 119/12, 7 December 1789.
[97] SRO, RH 119/12, 19 December 1789.
[98] Sunter, *Patronage and Politics*, 134-138.
[99] Gauldie, *Dundee Textile Industry*, xix-xx.
[100] Select Committee 1819, 85.
[101] *Ibid*, 76
[102] Carmichael is good on this; Gauldie, *Dundee Textile Industry*, 25.
[103] *Dundee Advertiser*, 6 December 1816.
[104] S.G.E. Lythe, 'The Tayside meal mobs, 1772-3', *Scottish Historical Review*, 1967, 26-33; W. Morison, *Dictionary of Cases* (Edinburgh, 1801), xxxi, 13180; E. Gauldie, *The Quarries and the Feus* (Dundee, 19810, 35-6.
[105] *Letter Books*, Dundee Custom House, 28 January 1773.
[106] See K. Logue, *Popular Disturbances in Scotland 1780-1815* (Edinburgh, 1979), 30, 46.
[107] J. Myles, *Rambles in Forfarshire* (Dundee, n.d.) quoted Norrie, *Dundee Celebrities*, 32; but see also Logue, 46.
[108] SRO, RH 118/2/258.
[109] *Select Committee 1819*, 41.
[110] *Ibid*, 15
[111] SRO, AD 14/16/58, Inventory of Precognition as to Dundee Riots, 196.
[112] Kinloch was born in Dundee in 1771 and visited France in 1793. Exiled after the 1819 riot in Dundee he returned to his estates in 1823 and became Dundee's first Member of Parliament in 1832, dying the year after.
[113] Robert Stephen Rintoul was born in Tibbermore near Perth in 1787. He was apprenticed to an Edinburgh printer and there made the acquaintance of a group of radical lawyers, among them Francis Jeffrey who founded the *Edinburgh Review*. In 1808 he came to Dundee as printer and editor, brought in by James Saunders. He made the *Advertiser* into a distinguished Liberal paper and in 1828 went to London to become first editor of the *Spectator*.
[114] James Saunders was born in 1783, son of one of the masters of the Dundee Academy, who along with James Ivory, learnt antagonism to Riddoch over the 'Academy Row'. A convinced radical, he trained as a solicitor and took up a position as factor to the estates of Thomas Hunter of Blackness.
[115] DTC, *Minutes,* 1 December 1780.
[116] DTC, *Minutes,* 19 March 1781, 23 February 1782.
[117] *Ibid*, 31 March 1784. 19 April 1784.
[118] *Ibid*, 22 January 1789.
[119] *Ibid,* 19 March 1789.
[120] Ebenezer Anderson was a Murraygate merchant, a member of the Speculative Society, Stirring was a wood engraver.
[121] DTC, *Minutes*, 29 September 1789.
[122] *Ibid.*
[123] *Ibid*, 20 March 1811; D. Walker, *Dundee Architects and Architecture* (Abertay Historical Society).
[124] *Select Committee 1819*, 62.
[125] DPL, *Lamb*, 433v.
[126] *Ibid*, 248(1-5).
[127] DTC, *Minutes,* 29 February 1804.
[128] *Ibid*, 16 June 1804.

[129] DPL, *Lamb*, 248 (2); Thomson, *Dundee*, 276.
[130] DTC, *Minutes*, 5 September 1810.
[131] Thomson, *Dundee*, 139; DTC *Minutes*, 13 May 1812; *Select Committee 1819*, 68.
[132] DTC, *Minutes*, 13 May 1812.
[133] *Ibid*, 4 July1812; 18 January 1813
[134] *Ibid*, 10 December 1811.
[135] Boase, *Banking*, 250,278
[136] SRO, GD 151/4/156.
[137] DTC, *Minutes*, 15 February 1814.
[138] *Ibid.*
[139] Thomas Telford, *First Report respecting the Harbour of Dundee* (Dundee, 1820) Reports on the Plans.
[140] *Minute Book of The Harbour Committee,* Vol 1, 1814-15, GD/DH/1, 14 April 1814.
[141] *Ibid*, 6 October 1814, 12 November 1814.
[142] *Ibid.*
[143] *Ibid*, 4 November 1814.
[144] *Ibid*.
[145] Ibid, 12 November 1814.
[146] DTC, *Minutes*, 8 November 1814.
[147] *Harbour Minutes*, 17 November 1814.
[148] *Ibid*, Tennant, *Radical Laird*, 69-70.
[149] This is the same Lindsay whose house was attacked by the mob the following year; David Martin, a flax dealer, became a member of the Town Council for one year in 1816; John Alison was Distributor of Stamps for Dundee and district.
[150] *Harbour Minutes*, 19 November 1814.
[151] *Ibid*, 10 November 1814.
[152] William Maule, 1771-1842, Later Lord Panmure, Member of Parliament for Forfarshire, 1805-1831. This journey is amusingly described in Tennant's *Radical Laird*, 60.
[153] *Harbour Minutes*, 19 November 1814.
[154] *Ibid*, 19 February 1815.
[155] Telford's (Second) Report, 4.
[156] *Harbour Minutes*, 28 February 1815.
[157] *Ibid*, Appendix.
[158] DTC, *Minutes*, 25 February 1815.
[159] An Act of 1815 preventing importation of corn until prices reached 80 shillings a quarter caused economic distress and demands by weavers for increased wages. Dundee Manufacturers thereafter campaigned against the Corn Laws. DTC, *Minutes*, 9 December 1816 refers to 'fears and apprehensions of scarcity'.
[160] *Memorandum of Proceedings since the General Meeting of the Guildry Relative to Disputes between them and the Magistrates* (Dundee, 9 October 1816), Lamb, 195 (3).
[161] *Ibid*, 9 November 1816.
[162] *Ibid*; DTC, *Minutes*, 21 November 1816.
[163] *Ibid*.
[164] DTC, *Minutes*, 20 January 1817.
[165] *Ibid.*
[166] *Petition of the Guildry Incorporation of Dundee* (Dundee, 1819).
[167] *Letter to the Guildry from James Saunders*, 1 October 1816; *Lamb*, 195 (2). The underlining is his.

[168] DTC, Minutes, 8 February 1817.
[169] *Select Committee, 1819*, 38.
[170] W. Baxter, *Letter on Parliamentary Reform* (Dundee, 1817), 39.
[171] SRO, RH 4/119/3.
[172] DTC, *Minutes*, 13 October 1817.
[173] Dundee Advertiser, 19 December 1822.
[174] *Report of the Joint Committee of the Burgesses of Dundee* (Dundee, 1819), 1; *Lamb,* 241 (9).
[175] *Ibid*, 6.
[176] *Ibid*, 4.
[177] See frontispiece

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