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MONIFIETH Heritage Trail



The Burgh of Monifieth

Over the centuries the spelling of 'Monifieth' has altered many times, as has the possible reasons for the name. The registered coat of arms features a stag and a hill, signifying the combination of two Gaelic words Monadh Feidh. However, the earliest form of the name "Monifod" would suggest that it derives from the gaelic words "moine" and "foide", meaning moss or bog of the peats.

In 1841 the population of the parish of Monifieth was 3,461, including the inhabitants of Broughty Ferry, Drumsturdy and the surrounding country districts. In 1862 Broughty Ferry put forward an application to be considered as a Burgh and became independent in 1864.

The village, known as 'Kirktown of Monifieth', had over the centuries grown into a small but busy industrial township. Iron founding, jute mills and associated trade supported many skilled workers. In 1895 Monifieth ceased to be a village and was registered as a Burgh and the first Provost, David Stewart, was elected.



Motorbike racing on the beach 1930s

- 1 The trail starts at the Angus Council Access Office, which was previously the premises of the Dundee Trustees Savings Bank and before that, the site of Monifieth Burgh Police Station.
- 2 The former Royal Hotel was originally a coaching inn. A metal hook on the gable end of the building is a relic of the days of the Monifieth Tramway Service (1905-1931). Its function was to assist in the 'slinging over' of the power cable, enabling the tramcar to be turned around on the rails for its return journey back to Dundee High Street.
- 3 Monifieth Library was opened in 1954 as the headquarters and offices of Monifieth Burgh Council, which were no longer required when Monifieth became the responsibility of Dundee Council in 1975. The library moved into the council offices in 1984.
- 4 At the Tay Street/High Street Junction is the former Tramway terminus. Note the Victorian Post Box located in the Library boundary wall.
- 5 The garage at the junction of Brook Street is the former business premises of Bummy Crighton, where the planes used for 'flights from Monifieth links' were housed. He also organised motorbike races on the beach.



Monifieth beach c. 1900



Railway station



Monifieth Parish Church

- 6 The former Dairy in Brook Street is one of several within the Burgh which made daily deliveries to the homes of customers.
- 7 What is now St Brides' Church Hall has changed many times over its long history. Thomas Erskine of Linlathen opened this building as the Erskine Female School in the 1850s. It was sometimes referred to as the 'Pinny School' as the girls were issued with a uniform of aprons and sleeve protectors. It closed in 1878 when the teachers transferred to the newly rebuilt Monifieth Public School. Later it served as a Mechanics Institute after having been a Salvation Army Citadel. In 1898 it was to become St Brides' Roman Catholic Church.

The adjacent modern building of St Brides was built in the early 1980s. The old building still plays a part of church life as a meeting place.

- 8 Beside the Panmure Hotel, which was built on the Golf Course, is the railway underpass. To the left is now the running track. In the late 1930s this was a large sand dune known locally as "Hill 60". It was used for filling sandbags at the start of World War II.
- 9 Tayview Caravan Park is on the site of the former 'little foundry' Low & Duff, Brass Founders. In 1902 the Beath family took over the vacant premises of the Lyell brothers, who from 1873 had operated a spinning/ weaving mill in what was later known as the Albert Works. Housing had been provided for the workers, known locally as 'The Bricklands'. Low & Duff replaced this accommodation with more desirable houses. They were named Albert and Windsor Terraces.

Low & Duff, Brass Founders engaged mainly in the production of machinery for the confectionery industry and were operational until the 1970s. The Albert Works and the Terraces were eventually demolished and the area cleared for the Caravan Holiday Park.

- 10 The Dundee to Arbroath Railway opened in 1838. It was one of the first in Scotland and said to be the reason for the awakening of a 'sleepy rural village' into an industrial centre. The Victorian railway station was removed and is now at Bo'ness Rail Museum.
- 11 Monifieth Foundry by the sea was established by James Low and Robert Fairweather by 1800, in an open field on what later became the High Street.

The firm became internationally known for the production of machinery used in the weaving industry, at one time exporting to over 27 countries and employing approximately 2,000. The manufacturing premises covered 15 acres in the centre of the town. Part of the site is now the location of a supermarket.

- 12 On the corner of High Street and Maule Street is Invertay House, formerly Monifieth Public School. According to Parish Church Records the first schoolmaster was appointed in 1599. The old sandstone school house was demolished in 1878 for the erection of the building we see today.

Rev. Dr James Gerard Young was chairman of the committee who advocated that a larger school was needed. Despite some objections that the planned school was too large, the chairman was proved to be right when within his lifetime another storey was added to the building.

- 13 Opposite the Gerard Hall and Church Street is Mill Lane, which was the route taken via a level crossing to the Albert Works, by employees of the Lyell brothers and Low & Duff as well as the residents of Albert and Windsor Terraces. The access was blocked in the late 1970s.

On the Maule Street and Albert Street junction, opposite the War Memorial, access to the West End Links is made by the bridge over the railway line. The links were purchased by Monifieth Burgh Council in 1903, to meet the leisure pursuits of the residents. In 1905 the level crossing was replaced by the metal bridge.

- 14 The Monifieth War Memorial was erected in 1922 after what was believed to be 'the war to end all wars'. It was unveiled by the Earl



Milton Dairy 1908



Monifieth Foundry Workers



of Strathmore. The bronze figure sculpted by Herman Cawthro of London enhances the stone Cenotaph designed by Charles G Soutar.

- 15 One of several simple crosses can be found in the wall in Maule Street. These crosses once marked the land of the Abthane of Monifieth. The Abthane was the land which the church owned, originally granted by the Mormaers of Angus.
- 16 At the corner with Church Street is Ashbank. The name derived from a tree, standing on a hillock to the north of the present Victorian villa, it overshadowed the Parish Church steeple. A well known landmark to sailors when entering Monifieth Bay, it was removed in 1897 and the site is now built upon.

In 1864 the owner of Ashbank found a stone when digging a well in his garden. This proved to be a shaft of a free standing cross decorated in Celtic style.
- 17 Gerard Hall was built in 1882 as a church hall and is named after Rev. Dr. James Gerard Young who was minister for more than 25 years.
- 18 Monifieth Parish Church was known as St Rules from 1929. According to the St Andrews foundation legend, St Rule brought over the relics of our patron saint and he visited the nearby Ecclesmonichto, opposite Balmossie Mill, and the church was later dedicated in his name. The Celtic Culdee monks were established near this site and were not disbanded until 1242.

A pre-Reformation Church was demolished to make way for the present church built in 1813. Inside are stained glass windows, which include the 1939/1945 War Memorial by John M Aitken.

Five Pictish sculptured stones were discovered during the demolition of the church and the refurbishment programme. These stones can now be seen at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.

The church was remodelled in 1873 and a porch and vestry added. Within the church are several memorial plaques and heraldic stones relative to the many local families of distinction who worshipped here.

In the churchyard, there are many old gravestones with inscriptions revealing information about local families who made their homes in the area.

- 19 Jenny Barrie's Inn was in its day the local ale house. Kirk session records reveal that although Sabbath drinking was banned by the pulpit, it was far from unusual. The attraction of Jenny Barrie's 'front room' and the few yards separating it from the long sermons could have been overpowering. The end of summer bull sales were recorded as having taken place in Jenny's hostelry. Celebrations could last from the time a sloop left the bay for Newcastle and returned with another cargo for unloading.
- 20 In 1868 application was made for a 'preaching station' in Monifieth, following 25 years of walking to the Hillocks Church at Kingennie. In 1872 the South Church was built. A wooden bell tower housing a bell purchased for £3 from a shipyard was blown down in a severe gale. In 1884 the present stone tower was built and a gallery installed in the main building. The Manse, in Queen Street, was built in 1874.
- 21 Seaview House was home to the Low family who were mainly responsible for the industrialisation of the Burgh. The Monifieth Foundry of James F Low was recognised worldwide and prior to 1856 it also housed engineering apprentices sent by mill owners to obtain the best possible training prior to becoming responsible for the management of their own businesses. At one time there were 37 indoor and outdoor staff at Seaview. Other Low family homes were Tighnamurin and Ashlea.

In 1928 the mansion was purchased by the Education Board and used as an annex for Monifieth Public School.



Monifieth War Memorial

- 22 An ancient Quern Stone is built into the wall at the Hill Street, North Union Street (Barrie's Brae) Junction. This was discovered when workmen were digging the foundations for the Victorian villas in Hay Avenue. Other pieces of glass etc were also uncovered, which gave indications of an early settlement in the area.

Barrie's Brae was probably the name of the path, prior to the formation of streets in 1896. David Barrie ran a shop at the corner of Union Street and Maule Street, hence Barrie's Brae.

- 23 South Church Hall on the High Street can be identified by close inspection of the sculpted ornate stonework above the door. It is obvious there have been alterations. At one time it was the United Free Church of Monifieth, built in 1858.

In 1872 the South Church in Hill Street was built, leaving the High Street building to be used as hall accommodation.



High Street c. 1900

Angus Heritage Trails

Angus has a unique heritage and its towns are well preserved, unspoilt and full of character. Each of the main towns has a heritage trail as well as a variety of museums, galleries, historic sites and buildings to be enjoyed.

It is easy to travel to Angus thanks to good transport links.



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