



# THE STEEPLE

Newsletter of The Montrose Society

SUMMER 2007

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## Committee Members

2006 - 2007

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Tony Sutton

### Vice President

John MacPherson

### Committee

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## Awards Evening 11th May.

Over forty people attended the event, including three of the newly elected Montrose Councillors. I was pleased to meet George Chree, the new head of the Planning Department at Angus Council, as well as representatives of the Community Councils and the Montrose Partnership.

We were delighted to have the expertise of architect Prof. Fred Stephen on our awards panel. His practice is based in Glamis, and apart from a very busy commercial schedule he is an Honorary Professor of Architecture at Duncan of Jordanstone School of Architecture and University of Dundee. He gave comments on the winning projects and also showed some of the award winning designs his practice had been involved in. The top Civic Award this year went to the Sheltered Housing complex in Provost Johnston Road. This was commissioned by the Angus Community Care Charitable Trust, and a director of the trust, Jim Watt accepted the certificate and gave a short speech of thanks. The building was designed by the architects Baxter, Clark, and Paul of Dundee, and director Roy Clark collected the certificate and the Montrose painting they will hold for the coming year. He has since sent a very appreciative letter and they are clearly delighted with the award. The other winners in this class were Law of Craigo Steading and The Wharf Street/Bamse Project.

The new brochure 'A Guide for Shopfront Improvement', produced by the Society, was launched. It is a well illustrated guide to design and décor to assist new businesses in achieving an image appropriate to the architecture and history of our High Street. Despite this being a very important part of promoting the retail sector it has been a difficult area to stimulate interest. None of the winners of the Commendation Awards turned up, with only one bothering to send their apologies.

This apathy has to be overcome if the High Street is to achieve the status and level of visitors it deserves.

The fifteen feet long photographic mural of both sides of the High Street was also on display and provided an effective background to the evenings activities. It was very much enjoyed by all, and I must thank the committee members who helped with its setting up and the running of the event.

*Tony Sutton, President.*

## Montrose High Street Shopfront Improvement Guide

Montrose High Street is unique amongst Scottish Towns. Its wide thoroughfare, distinguished architecture, and historic closes are a source of pride, yet we cannot overlook the number of empty shops and the poor external state of many buildings and closes. Restoration and long term preservation of these precious assets are an essential aspect of the economic prosperity of the town.

Montrose has great potential as a diverse speciality shopping area, but has yet to exploit this opportunity. Both visitors and locals alike come to the High Street to sightsee and shop, and the the historic character of the town is internationally recognised. Much can be done to encourage a vibrant and attractive infrastructure that will benefit the community and bring new quality businesses to the area. Shopping is a major leisure activity so making the shops as inviting as possible is one of the best ways traders can improve their business. The appearance of shops also reflects the character of the area, and the more attractive the area the more people will be drawn to it.

The Montrose Society's "Guide for Shopfront Improvement" illustrates the diverse range of styles, colour schemes and materials that can be used and is intended as a guide to shop facades appropriate to a historic town centre. Many modern shop fronts are ill-considered, poorly made and from the cheapest materials and fail to provide a fitting environment for the goods or activities they aim to display.

To further encourage good quality and attractive shop front development in the High Street the Montrose Society has an annual competition open to existing businesses planning to refurbish as well as new enterprises.

To obtain a copy of the Shopfront Improvement Guide along with an application form for the Montrose Society's Business Facade Awards contact any committee member or write to The Montrose Society, c/o Straton House, Castle Place, Montrose DD10 8AL

## MEETINGS

are held in the Legends Suite, George Hotel, Montrose at 7.30pm.

Annual membership is £8.

Visitors £1.50 per evening.

Juniors are free.

Coffee and Tea available.

Meetings are held from September to March.

*Do please come along to any/all you are interested in. You will be made very welcome.*

## A Guide for

# SHOPFRONT

## Improvement



## LOCHSIDE BREWERY

The award winning and highly regarded beer, Deuchars IPA, is brewed in Edinburgh by the Caladonian Brewery Co. Ltd. The Deuchar name has been associated with Edinburgh beers since the 1890s when Robert Deuchar ran breweries in both Edinburgh and Newcastle.

The name Deuchar is recorded as being descended from Gilchrist MacDuncan of Deuquhyr, said to be the nephew or cousin of the first Lord Ogilvy. In the 12th century, Gilchrist was granted, by King William the Lion, the lands of Deuquhyr in Angus from which the descendants took their name. Directly descended through many generations of farming families in Angus., David Deuchar of Haughhead and Guthrie, in 1830, married Jane Wilson. They had ten children of whom four brothers, Robert, George, Alexander and James were to play prominent parts in the history of brewing and the licensed trade in Northumberland and Scotland.

And so to the connection with Lochside Brewery in Montrose. In the 1860s the family moved to Tyneside. Robert (1831 - 1904) became a successful brewer. The company which he created was eventually acquired in 1953 by Newcastle Breweries Ltd. James (b. 1850) commenced his career as a public house licensee and in time purchased his own breweries, hotels and licensed premises. James Deuchar Ltd unfortunately fell into the hands of liquidators, but a reconstructed company of the same name was formed in 1898. This company prospered and after the Great War purchased from William Ross and Co., the Lochside Brewery, or Deuchars Brewery as it also came to be known. The brewery provided the company's 150 pubs with their own Lochside 'Scotch' Pale Ale. The writer still recalls the sight and smells of the 'beerie' boat which up to the Second World War era, left Montrose harbour twice a week, bound for Tyneside.

James died in 1927, a very rich man and substantial landowner. In 1955 the company was acquired by Newcastle Breweries Ltd., principally for their tied houses. The careers of Robert and James Deuchar and their successors had come full circle. Soon afterwards the brewery closed and in 1957 was sold to Macnab Distillers Ltd.

At the time of closure the Lochside Brewery consisted of five ninety-barrel brewing (wort) coppers, five mash-tuns, each of eleven-to-fifteen quarters capacity, one three-copper hopback and twenty-four fermenting vessels of ninety barrels capacity. All the beers brewed at Montrose were boiled to gravity. Lochside brewery with its great ornate square tower was a dominant landmark at the North End of Montrose. Its subsequent history as a distillery and its eventual demolition is another story.

*Charles Ferguson*

Acknowledgements: Alexander D Deuchar: The Deuchar Family Tree, 1981 Charles McMaster: Scottish Brewing Archive [www.caledonian-brewery.co.uk](http://www.caledonian-brewery.co.uk)

## DIFFERENT, UNUSUAL & AFFORDABLE GIFTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Also: Rustic Occasional Furniture, Interior Design Pieces,  
Mirrors, Lamps, Artificial Flowers, Antique Reproductions,  
China, Glass, Miscellany, Etc.

# Farrago

176A High Street,  
Montrose  
Tel. 01674 677602

The Montrose Society was founded in 1956. Its stated aim is to provide a forum for those interested in the town of Montrose and its immediate area, and who want to know more about its history, its people, and the events which have shaped its character and will influence its future.

An important part of the Society's work is the preparation and publishing of research into local history, covering areas such as cultural and social history and townscape.

The Society seeks to encourage the highest quality design and preservation standards within the built environment by maintaining a "watching brief" on new development.

The Society runs an annual CIVIC AWARDS programme.

## FERTILISER AND MONTROSE

The earliest mention of fertiliser I could find was in David Adams' book "The Port of Montrose" where it states that in 1633 shore dues were levied on lime, along with salt and small coals. Whether the lime was for agricultural purposes is unknown!

What is certain is that the town has had an involvement with the agricultural fertiliser industry at least since Victorian times. In 1860 it is recorded that 20 cargoes of bones (the exporting country is not stated) and a number of boats of guano from Peru were brought in through Montrose harbour.

After the Second World War many farms were deficient in phosphate and the best and most economic way to correct this was the application of Basic Slag. Although the steelmaking process in the UK at that time supplied large quantities of high grade slag the demand was such that considerable quantities had to be imported, mainly from Belgium. Montrose was one of the main ports used. This trade continued until the mid 1970's when, due to the changes in the method of steelmaking, high grade slag was no longer available. The last two cargoes of slag were imported in 1980 although small quantities continued to come in by train for another two or three years.

Until the mid 1960's nearly all the compound and nitrogen fertilisers used in the area were supplied by S.A.I. and Fisons, while Shell and a few smaller manufacturers made up the balance. From about 1968 onward quantities of imported fertiliser started to appear in the market place. Initially most of these imports were from Western Europe and were a few pounds cheaper than home produced product. In 1970 sixteen cargoes, about 8,000 - 9,000 tons, came in through Montrose. Many farmers, always with an eye for a bargain switched and the tonnage of imported fertiliser throughout the country rocketed. Soon imports were arriving from Eastern Europe and although the quality was variable the relatively cheap price attracted buyers. By the mid to late 1980's the tonnage of compound and nitrogen fertiliser coming in through the port had risen to well over 130,000 tons.

1972 saw the start of a new venture when in conjunction with J.& H. Bunn of Great Yarmouth, W.J.Reid opened their fertiliser blending plant in Cobden Street. This was the first plant of its type in Scotland and was an immediate success. While such plants did not always produce quite the same quality of product that the large manufacturers could provide they did allow for a wide range of analysis and gave the farmer a choice of product which could be tailored to suit his particular requirements. Over the years the quality of blended fertilisers has improved considerably and is now the most common form supplied.

Imports continued to grow at the expense of home manufacturers. Angus Fertilisers factory in River Street, Montrose and in 1986 a second blending plant was opened by Angus Fertilisers initially at Polmood and in 1992 they opened a second and larger operation in the old Chivers factory in River Street. In 2001 the Montrose plant was taken over by Carrs Fertilisers of Cumbria.

The large UK manufacturers found the going difficult and in 1981 Fisons Fertilisers was bought by the Norwegian company, Norsk Hydro. This was followed by Kemira of Finland taking over Shellstar. In 1993 SAI ceased trading and production is now mainly in the hands of overseas producers and blenders like Angus Fertilisers and W.J.Reid.

Today, although fertiliser use has declined, more than 113,000 tons were imported through the port of Montrose in the last year. Agricultural fertilisers therefore continue to play an important part in the commercial life of the town.

*Kenneth Fairweather*

*If you would like to contribute to our newsletters or feel you have something to offer the Montrose Society by way of information or artefacts please contact any committee member or come along to a meeting.*

