Historic Forfar

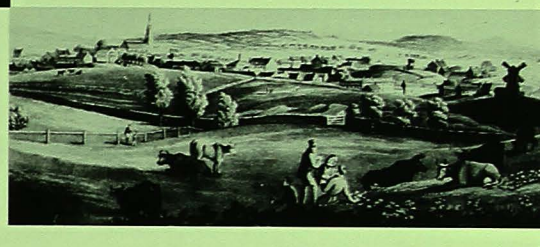
E Patricia **Dennison**

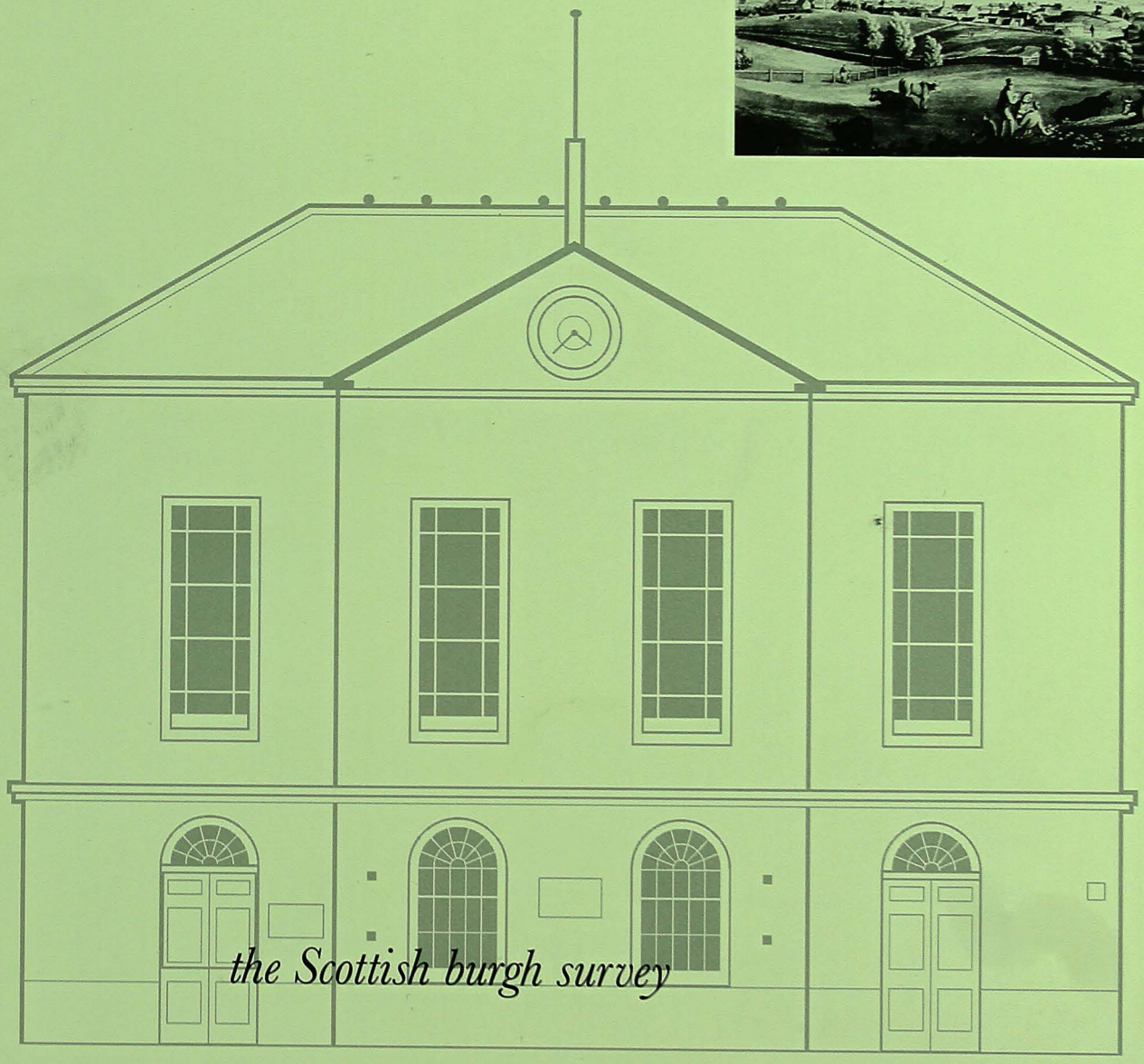
Russel **Coleman**

THE Town of Forfar

drawn by I Clarke

1824





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cover note

A lithographic print depicting the town of Forfar drawn by I Clark, 1824. Reproduced by kind permission of The Meffan Institute, Forfar.

Historic Forfar

the archaeological implications of development

E Patricia **Dennison**

Russel **Coleman**

the Scottish burgh survey

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contents

figures

ADC	*The Acts of the Lords of Council in Civil Causes*, edd T Thomson *et al* (Edinburgh, 1839 & 1918–).
ADCP	*Acts of the Lords of Council in Public Affairs, 1501-1554: Selections from Acta Dominorum Concilii*, ed R K Hannay (Edinburgh, 1932).
APS	*The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, edd T Thomson & C Innes (Edinburgh, 1814–75).
CDS	*Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, edd J Bain *et al* (Edinburgh, 1881–1986).
CSP Scot	*Calendar of the State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots*, 13 vols, edd W K Boyd *et al* (Edinburgh, 1898-1969).
DES	*Discovery and Excavation in Scotland.*
ER	*The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, 23 vols edd J Stuart *et al* (Edinburgh, 1878–1908).
Fasti	*Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae*, edd H Scott *et al* (Edinburgh 1915–81).
Gazetteer	*Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland: a Survey of Scottish Topography*, ed F H Groome (Edinburgh, 1886).
HS	Historic Scotland.
NMRS	National Monuments Record of Scotland.
NAS	National Archives of Scotland.
NSA	*The New Statistical Account of Scotland*, edd The Committee of the Society for the Benefit of the Sons and Daughters of the Clergy (Edinburgh, 1845).
OSA	*The Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791–1799*, ed J Sinclair. New Edition, edd I R Grant & D J Withrington (Wakefield, 1973).
Pryde, *Burghs*	Pryde, G S (ed), *The Burghs of Scotland: A Critical List* (Oxford, 1965).
RCAHMS	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.
RCRB	*Records of the Convention of Royal Burghs of Scotland*, ed J D Marwick (Edinburgh, 1866–1918).
RMS	*The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland (Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum)*, edd J M Thomson *et al* (Edinburgh, 1882–1914).
RPC	*The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, edd J H Burton *et al* (Edinburgh, 1877–1970).
RRS	*Regesta Regum Scottorum*, edd G W S Barrow *et al* (Edinburgh, 1960–).
RSS	*Register of the Privy Seal of Scotland (Registrum Secreti Sigilli Regum Scotorum)*, edd M Livingstone *et al* (Edinburgh, 1908–).
SBRS	Scottish Burgh Records Society.
SBS	Scottish Burgh Survey.
SHS	Scottish History Society.
SRS	Scottish Record Society.
SUAT	Scottish Urban Archaeological Trust.
TA	*Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, 13 vols, edd T Dickson *et al* (Edinburgh, 1877–).

The Centre for Scottish Urban History is indebted to a number of people for their assistance and advice.

Especial thanks go to the staff of both the **Meffan Institute**, Forfar and the **Forfar Library** and to the Director of Cultural Services, Mr Gavin Drummond, and Forfar Librarian, Mr Ian Neil. Miss Jacqueline Blackie and Miss Heather Munro were particularly helpful at the Meffan Institute; as was Miss Aileen Rodger at the Library. Our thanks go also to **Adamson Stationers**, 121 Castle Street, for access to the key to the Cross, and interesting information.

In particular, the advice of Mr Norman Atkinson, Head of Support Services, Cultural Services, **Angus Council**, is greatly appreciated. Mrs Fiona Scharlau, Archivist, Cultural Services, was especially supportive, with suggestions for areas of research in archival material and in her kindness in agreeing to check our seventeenth-century text. Mr Paul Mitchell, Conservation Officer, Angus Council is thanked for commenting on the draft report.

We would also like to extend our thanks to Mr David Perry of the **Scottish Urban Archaeological Trust**, and to the Director and the rest of the staff. Colleagues at Edinburgh University have given invaluable support and advice; in particular, we would like to mention the **Centre for Field Archaeology**, the **Department of Scottish History** and Dr John Bannerman.

The **Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland** has been supportive, particularly Mr Robert Mowat for his work on Scottish logboats. The staff of the **National Library of Scotland**, at both George IV Bridge and the **Map Library** at Causewayside, have been extremely helpful. The staff of the **National Archives of Scotland** have been supportive. To all of these we extend our thanks.

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Forfar was an important residence for early Scottish kings being an established royal centre and the seat of a sheriffdom by the twelfth century. The settlement which grew up around the royal castle may have received burgh status as early as the reign of David I (1124–53). Until the sixteenth century the parish church of Forfar was Restenneth priory, just to the east of the town. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Forfar continued to function as a small, inland market town, not financially very secure, and often at loggerheads with its neighbours over trading rights. By the mid eighteenth century Forfar was still a relatively small town with only about 300 families. A large quantity of flax was grown around the town which the local people spun for sale to the weavers. In the second half of the century the town grew rapidly, largely due to the growth of the linen industry, and by the early nineteenth century Forfar's average osnaburg production exceeded that of Dundee. This increased wealth allowed the town to invest in a new parish church and municipal buildings. The introduction of power looms revolutionised the textile industry and factories housing hundreds of workers were established, producing finer fabrics, and Forfar linen became famous. The town expanded in the twentieth century, with numerous suburbs developing in all directions.

Historic Forfar is one of a series of reports on the historic burghs of Scotland—known collectively as the *Scottish Burgh Survey*—all of which have been commissioned by **Historic Scotland** and its predecessors. The main aim of the survey is to identify those areas of the present and historic burgh which are of archaeological interest and therefore require sensitive treatment in the event of any proposed development or other ground disturbance. It is designed primarily as a manual for the use of local authorities and archaeological curators. However, as an essential prerequisite to this assessment of the archaeological implications of development, it also describes and illustrates the geography and topography of the town, its known archaeology and history, its historic standing buildings and the origins of its street names—all of which will be of interest to the wider public, be they inhabitant, visitor or student.

This report was prepared within the **Centre for Scottish Urban History**, under the supervision of its Director, Dr E Patricia Dennison. The Centre is part of the **Department of Scottish History, University of Edinburgh**. Dr Dennison and Mr Russel Coleman, of the **Scottish Urban Archaeological Trust**, are co-authors of the report. Mr Kevin Hicks, of the **Centre for Field Archaeology**, University of Edinburgh, is cartographer and illustrator. Research assistance was received from Mr Robin Macpherson, Miss Susan Gillanders, Mr Todd Trapnell, all postgraduates of the Department of Scottish History, and Mr Philip Stout, graduate of the Departments of Scottish History and History, University of Edinburgh. The project is supervised by the Head of Department, Professor Michael Lynch, and managed for Historic Scotland by Ms Olwyn Owen, Senior Inspector of Ancient Monuments.

The research on historic Forfar was carried out between August and October 1996. The survey was entirely funded by Historic Scotland with help from the Centre for Scottish Urban History. The report has been published with financial assistance from **Angus Council**. Further copies may be obtained from **Tuckwell Press**, The Mill House, Phantassie, East Linton EH40 3DG.

Historic Scotland
March 2000

the Scottish burgh survey

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summary

1 Use the colour-coded maps on the foldouts at the back of this book **figure 26a & 26b** and/or the **general index** to locate a particular site (normally the site of a development proposal).

2 If the site is in a **blue area**, any development proposal is unlikely to affect significant archaeological remains. No action is needed.

3 **Red areas** are Scheduled Ancient Monuments or properties in the care of the Scottish Ministers, and are protected by law. Consult Historic Scotland.

4 **Green areas** (light and dark green) are designated as potentially archaeologically sensitive. If the site is in a green area, it is possible that a proposal involving ground disturbance may encounter archaeological remains. Seek appropriate archaeological advice as early as possible.

5 Use the map on p 40 **figure 16** to determine into which area of the burgh the site falls (one of Areas 1–2), and turn to the relevant area in the **area by area assessment** for a fuller account (pp 39–70).

6 Use the **general index** and, if appropriate, the listing of **street names** (pp 81–3) for rapid access to information specific to a site, street or named feature of the town.

step 1

As a working manual, the first point of reference is to the colour-coded maps on the foldouts at the back of the book **figure 26a & 26b**.

The **red areas** are **protected by law**. Under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 all development proposals which affect them require the prior written consent of the Scottish Ministers (Scheduled Monument Consent) in addition to any planning permission required. These provisions are administered on behalf of the Scottish Ministers by Historic Scotland. **All applications for planning permission which affect either the site or setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (red area) must be referred to Historic Scotland**, acting for the Scottish Ministers in terms of Section 15(j)(v) of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Scotland) Order 1992 and Section 5(e) of its Amendment (No. 2) Order 1994. *All enquiries regarding prospective development proposals in or adjacent to red areas should be referred to Historic Scotland for advice at as early a stage as possible.*

The **green areas** are **potentially archaeologically sensitive** and may retain significant sub-surface archaeological information. *Consultation should take place with the local authority planning department, where any development proposal or enquiry involving ground disturbance is being considered*, including car parks, road schemes, environmental improvements, landscaping and drainage schemes, as well as the usual range of development and re-development proposals in built-up areas. There is no necessity for a consultation where ground disturbance is not in prospect, such as applications for change of use of a building. There may, however, be a requirement to obtain *planning permission* or, in the case of a listed building, *listed building consent* or, if demolition works are proposed within a conservation area, *conservation area consent*. In such instances, early consultation with the staff of the local authority planning department will always be helpful.

If in doubt whether consultation is necessary, please refer to the local authority archaeologist and the local authority planning department. It is important to note that sub-surface disturbance within historic standing buildings may also affect archaeological remains, and that some standing buildings may retain archaeological features within their structures. Please seek advice as required.

The **blue areas** denote those parts of the historic burgh which **may be archaeologically sterile** and where archaeological consultation is probably not necessary. In practice, there is rarely a hard dividing line between the green and the blue areas. If in any doubt, check the account of the relevant area in the **area by area assessment** (*see* step 2), and seek archaeological advice as appropriate.

step 2

In this new series of burgh surveys, each survey has been organised locationally, in order to assist speedy consultation on any proposed development site. In the case of Forfar, the historic core of the town has been divided into two arbitrary areas, Areas 1 and 2, which are shown in **figure 16**. The second step for the user, then, is to consult this plan and to determine into which area a specific enquiry falls.

step 3

Each area is assessed individually in the **area by area assessment** (pp 39–70). The commentary for each area is prefaced with a detailed plan of that area. Archaeological, historical, geographical and geological factors of particular relevance to the area are all discussed and an assessment of the archaeological potential made. For ease of reference, even if a dividing line between areas is shown as the middle of a street, discussion of the area includes any elements within the street up to the opposite frontage. The importance of an integrated approach to the historical and archaeological information is implicit in the design of this report: the history and archaeology are presented together on each page rather than consecutively.

This integrated, area-based approach has involved some repetition of information in the area by area assessment, in order that users are not required to cross-reference more than necessary when dealing with a specific enquiry. Although such repetition would not be normal in a work of interest to the general public, it was felt that it would be permissible here in order to facilitate the work of primary users: local authority planners and other curators of the archaeological resource.

historic standing buildings

historic buildings reinforces the above sections by providing basic historical and architectural information about the historic standing buildings of the town; where relevant, it also provides the area location and an assessment of the archaeological potential of specific buildings. *It should always be borne in mind that historic standing buildings may also contain archaeological remains, both beneath their floors and within their structures.* Some of these buildings may be listed and consequently subject to listed building control. Where listed buildings contain, or may contain, architecturally or archaeologically significant building fabric, the planning authority is obliged to make efforts to ensure that this is preserved and not adversely affected by proposed building works.

objectives for future fieldwork and research

Any report of this nature cannot be definitive. During its preparation, a series of archaeological and historical objectives for future fieldwork and research have been identified (listed at pp 77–9). They will be of particular interest to urban historians and archaeologists, and to those responsible for management of the archaeological resource in historic Forfar.

referencing

The **notes** to the background chapters detail *all* the documentary and archaeological sources used (*see also* the list of **abbreviations**). The **area by area assessments** are not footnoted separately but references are provided for the previous archaeological work and chance finds listed at the end of each area assessment. The report contains a comprehensive **general index** as well as a listing of **street names** giving basic historic information and, where relevant, area location. A **bibliography** and a **glossary** of technical terms have also been included.

The data accumulated during preparation of this survey and draft copies of the completed work, as well as all unpublished reports of any small-scale excavations and watching briefs, are housed in the **National Monuments Record**, John Sinclair House, 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh, EH8 9NX, telephone *0131* 662 1456, facsimile *0131* 662 1477/1499.

full reference to this report

Dennison, E P and Coleman, R 2000 *Historic Forfar: the archaeological implications of development*, published by Historic Scotland in association with Tuckwell Press, East Linton. (Scottish Burgh Survey, 2000).

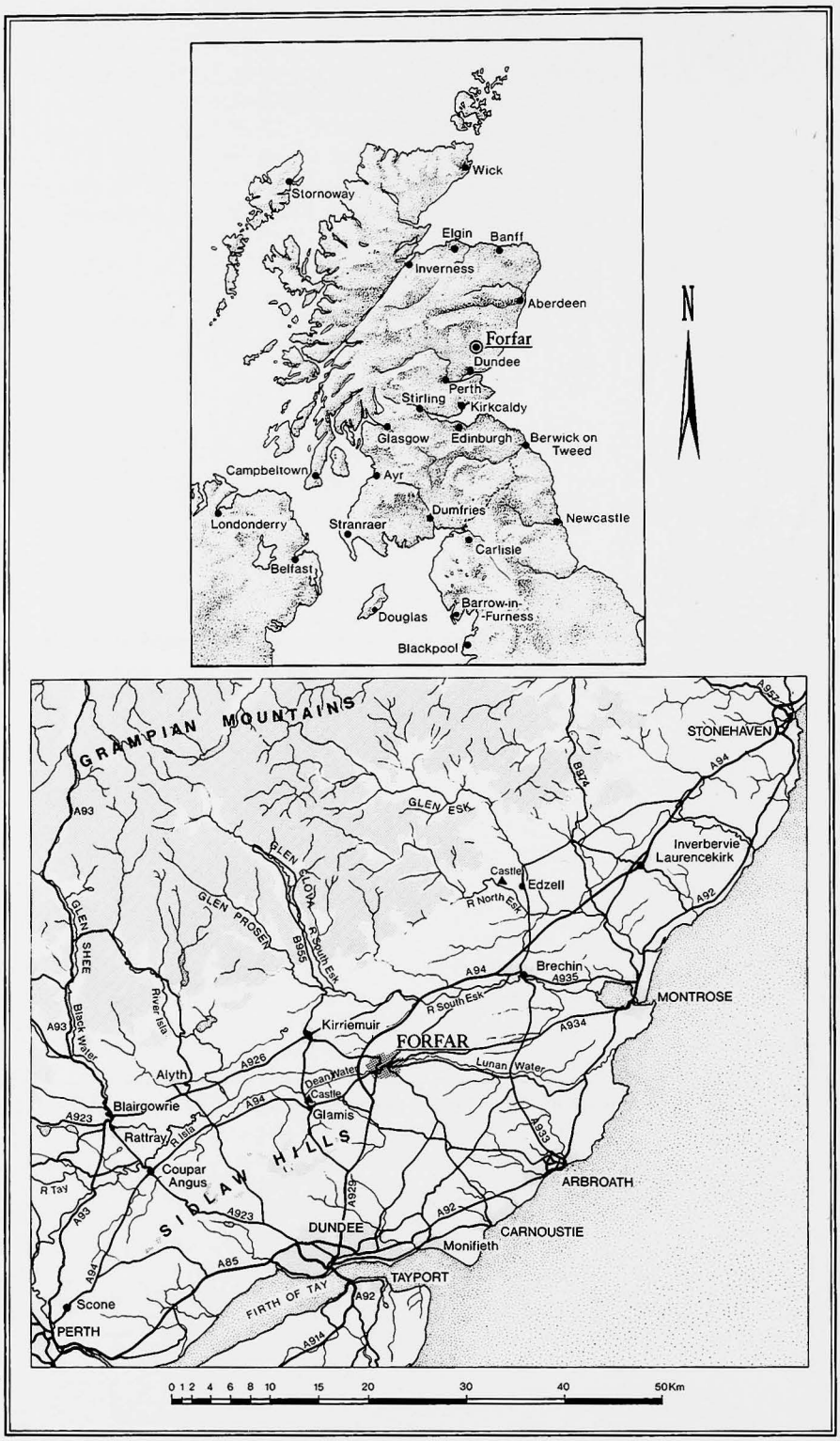

figure 1
Location of Forfar

Forfar: its site and setting

The royal burgh of Forfar is situated some 21 km north of Dundee in the rich, arable lowlands of the Vale of Strathmore **figure 1**. An established royal centre and the seat of a sheriffdom in the twelfth century, but with royal patronage possibly going back even earlier to Malcolm Canmore (1057–93), Forfar was clearly an important residence for early Scottish kings (*see* the early medieval period, pp 12–13). The site they chose for their castle was a strategic land bridge across what was then a marshy area. In turn, the castle provided the protection and economic stimulus for settlement, which may have received burgh status as early as the reign of David I (1124–53). The popularity of Angus with the Canmore dynasty is reflected in the number of burghs founded here **figure 1**; contemporary with medieval Forfar were Dundee (founded 1191x95), Arbroath (1178x82), Brechin (1165x71) and Montrose (1124x53). Arbroath and Brechin were also major ecclesiastical centres. Other, late medieval neighbours include the baronial burghs of Kirriemuir (1458x59), Glamis (1491) and Edzell (1588), all within a radius of 25 km of Forfar.

Today, Forfar is the administrative centre of Angus. Lying as it does at the heart of Strathmore, the Forfar Auction Mart is a long established centre for livestock trading in the area. Manufacturing industry has an equally long history in the town, the former linen, flax and jute works now producing polypropylene for today's market. Natural spring water is also bottled here, but the town is arguably most famous for its bridies, thousands of which are made and sold each week.

administration

The town of Forfar was at one time within the earldom of Angus, and later formed part of Forfarshire. Forfar was the county town of Forfarshire until the Local Government Act of 1928, when the administrative unit reverted to the County of Angus. Bounded by Perthshire to the west, Aberdeenshire to the north and Kincardineshire to the north-east, Angus comprises much of Strathmore, the Sidlaw Hills and a coastal plain which stretches some 60 km from Dundee on the Firth of Tay along the North Sea coastline to Montrose. After local government reorganisation in 1975, Angus was absorbed into the newly created Tayside Region, in which Angus was one of three District Councils. In 1996, Angus Council was resurrected as a unitary authority.

geography

Strathmore, measuring some 80 km in length and 13 km in width, forms the main line of land communication through this part of Scotland, and runs north-east to south-west through Angus into Kincardineshire.[1] It also lies parallel to the major physical features of the region, the Grampian Mountains and the Sidlaw Hills, which separate Strathmore from the Angus coastal plain to the east and the Carse of Gowrie to the south. Although now some of the richest agricultural land in the country, Strathmore was, until the Improvements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, an area of bog and shallow lochs, and settlement was mostly confined to the gentler slopes. To the north-east, the Vale of Strathmore sweeps down to sea level at Montrose, while to the south-west it merges with Strathearn west of the River Tay. The area around Forfar drains into Forfar Loch, which empties into the Dean Water. This flows south-west through the southern half of the Vale of Strathmore before joining the River Isla near Meigle.

geology

The basic rock formations creating the landscape around Strathmore are Dalradian metamorphic rocks in the Grampian Mountains, Devonian Old Red Sandstones in Strathmore, and igneous rocks in the Sidlaw Hills.[2] The broad open valley of Strathmore extends from the River Tay to the Mearns (north of Montrose), and is underlain by soft sandstones, worn down by fluvio-glacial activity.[3] These sandstones have been the

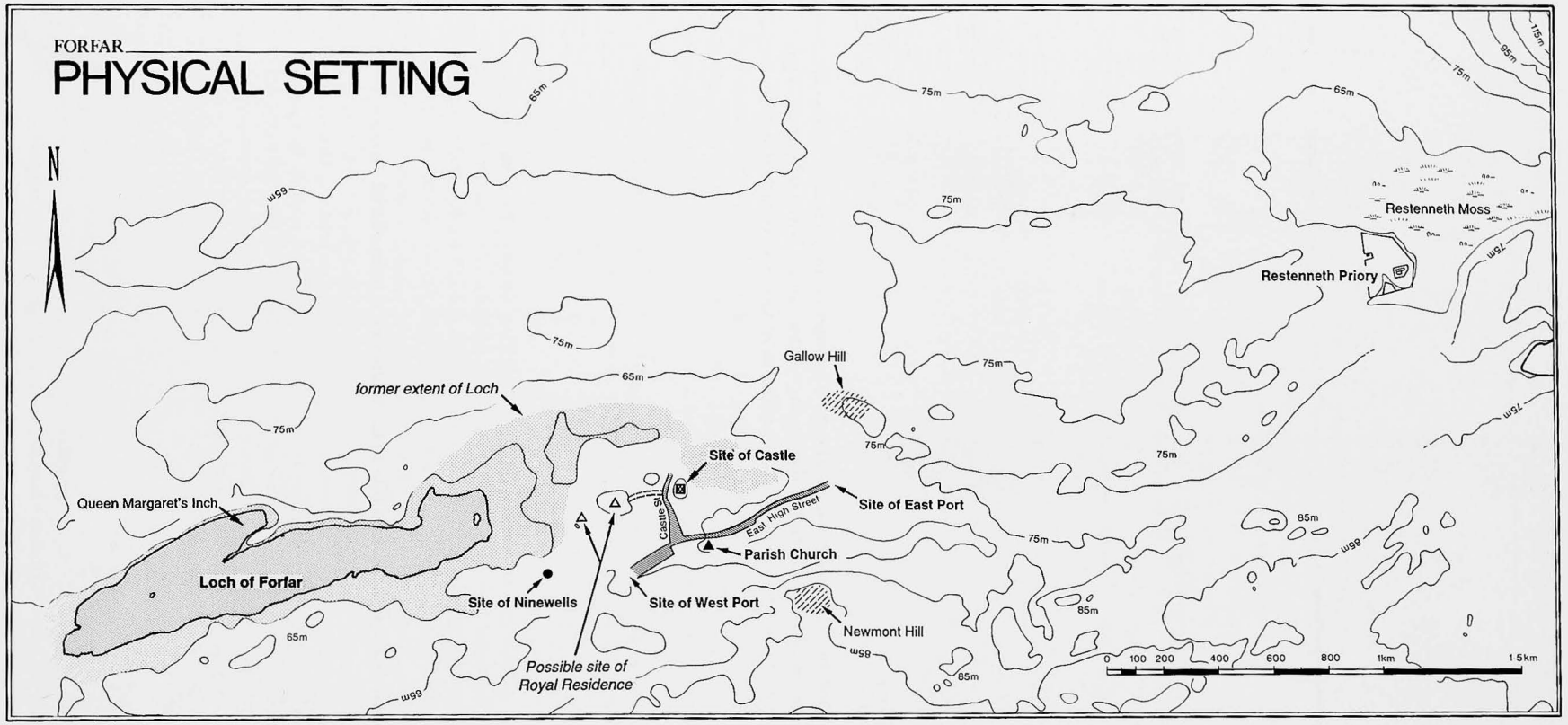

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figure 2
The physical setting of Forfar

figure 3
Forfar from the air
vertical view

traditional building material in Forfar. The main features of the present-day landscape were probably in place by the end of the Tertiary period (around two million years ago), but were considerably re-shaped during the subsequent Quaternary period; a result of successive glaciations caused by large-scale and long-term variations in the climate. After the last Ice Age, boulder clay, sands and gravels were deposited by the meltwaters during the retreat of the ice, and on the lower ground these deposits gave rise to drumlins and glacial drainage-channels.

The two sandstone-built market towns of Forfar and Kirriemuir were the birthplaces of two of the great geological pioneers, John Playfair and Charles Lyell.[4]

soils and agriculture

The varying landscape is reflected in the types of agriculture practised: hillfarming in the glens of the Grampian Mountains and on the higher tracts of the Sidlaws; stock farming with a little arable land along the Highland boundary fault and on the other ranges of hills; and arable farming and feeding farms in Strathmore and the Angus coastal plain.[5]

Much of the valley of Strathmore is undulating lowland, lying between 40 m and 100 m OD, but with some low, rounded hills to the south-west. Fluvio-glacial deposits comprising sands, gravels and clays mask the underlying rocks and give rise to a range of soil types.[6] The sand and gravel sub-soils produce naturally free-draining land, whilst the clay sub-soil tends to retain water. The latter soils, which are concentrated in the south-east of Strathmore and along the lower slopes of the Sidlaw Hills, have been extensively improved since the early nineteenth century.[7] The soils of Strathmore are normally fertile red loams renowned for their high yields of hay, corn and root crops, while the sheltered south-facing slopes of the vale around Kirriemuir, and particularly Blairgowrie, support intensive soft fruit growing.[8]

topography

The topography of Forfar today is very different from that of the medieval period, when this was an important landbridge across an otherwise boggy region. Partly encircled by Forfar Loch, with Newmont Hill to the south-east and Gallow Hill to the north-east,

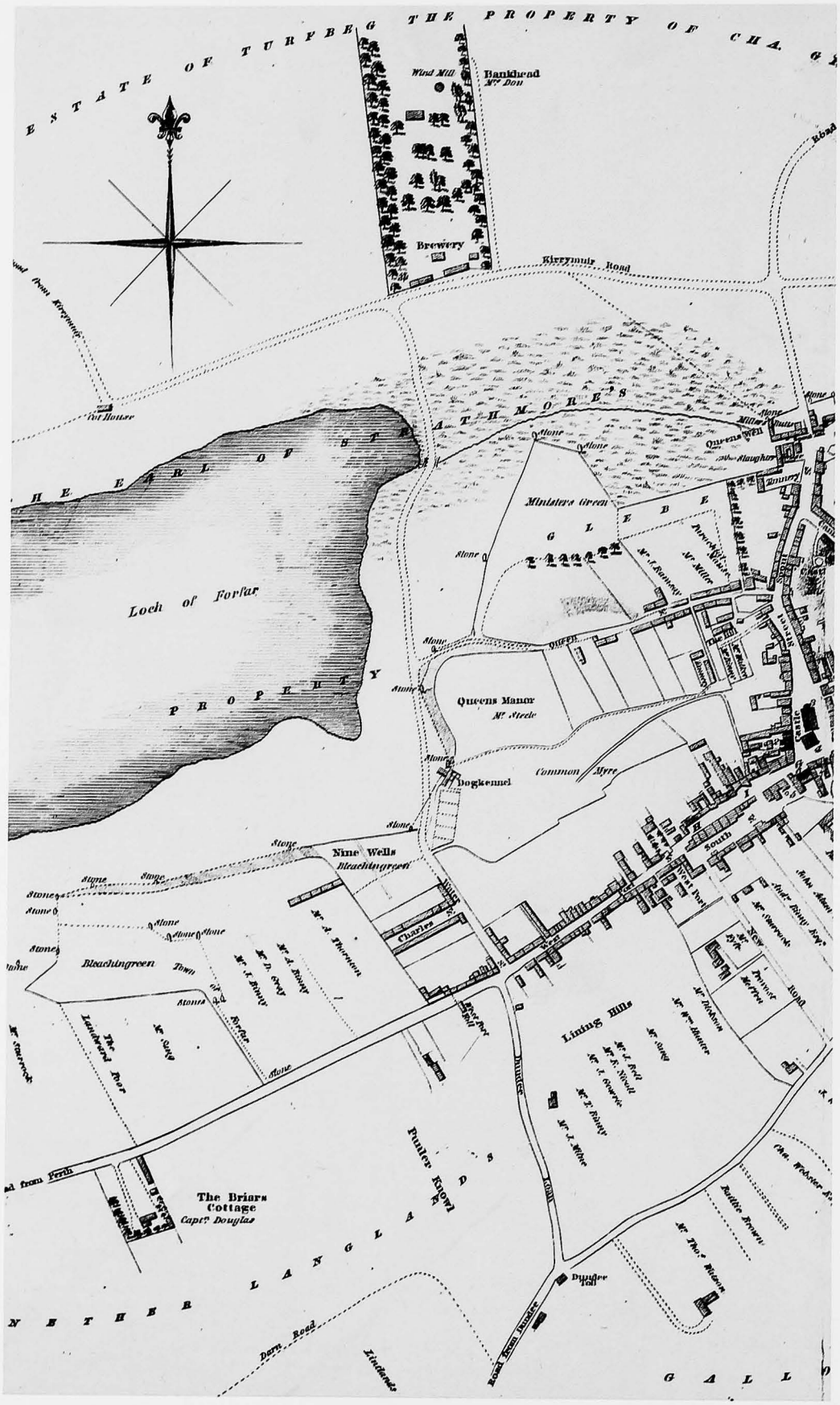
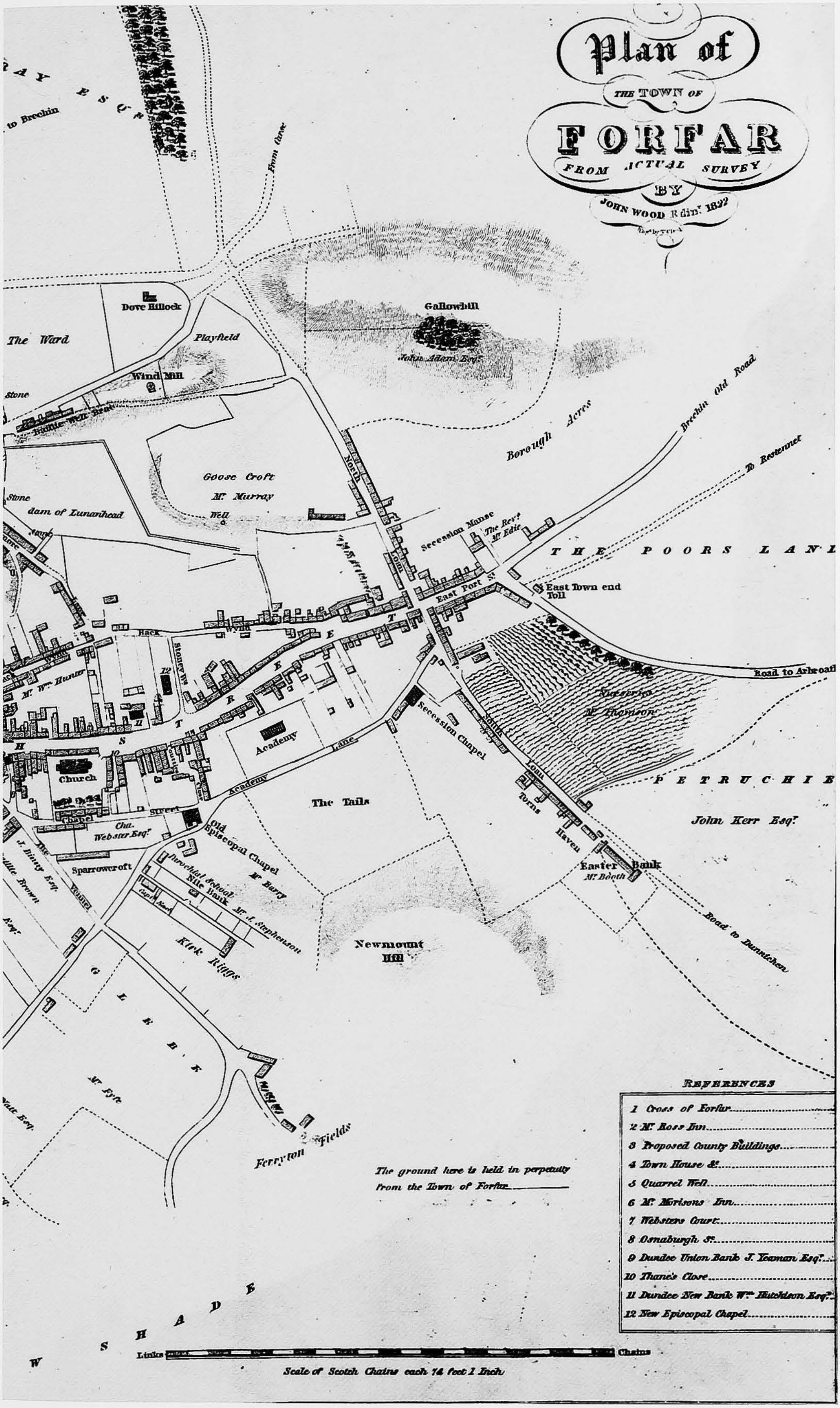


figure 4
John Wood's plan of Forfar, 1822


Plan of
THE TOWN OF
FORFAR
FROM ACTUAL SURVEY
BY
JOHN WOOD Edinr. 1822
to Brechin
Dove Hillock
Gallowhill
The Ward
Playfield
Wind Mill
Borough Acres
Brechin Old Road
To Restennet
Goose Croft
Mr. Murray
dam of Lunanhead
Secession Manse
THE POORS LAND
East Town end Toll
East Port St.
Road to Arbroath
Academy
Secession Chapel
Church
The Tails
PETRUCHIE
John Kerr Esqr.
Easter Bank
Mr. Booth
Sparrowcroft
Old Episcopal Chapel
Kirk Riggs
Newmount Hill
Road to Dunnichen
GLEBE
Ferryton Fields
The ground here is held in perpetuity from the Town of Forfar
REFERENCES
1 Cross of Forfar
2 Mr. Ross Inn
3 Proposed County Buildings
4 Town House &c.
5 Quarrel Well
6 Mr. Morisons Inn
7 Websters Court
8 Osnaburgh St.
9 Dundee Union Bank J. Yeaman Esqr.
10 Thane's Close
11 Dundee New Bank Wm. Hutchison Esqr.
12 New Episcopal Chapel
WSHADE
Links
Chains
Scale of Scotch Chains each 74 feet 1 Inch

Forfar was a superbly chosen site for a castle, below which the burgh subsequently developed **figure 2**. The castle is thought to have stood on Castle Hill, which is presently bounded by Castle Street, Canmore Street and Queen Street. There is nothing to be seen here today, but the re-sited market cross now marks the traditionally supposed spot.[9] The medieval core of the burgh developed below (south of) the castle forming a T-plan **figure 3**, with settlement extending between the West Port, on West High Street (by custom, said to be approximately where St Margaret's parish church stands today, *see* p 17),[10] to East Port, on East High Street (approximately, it has been claimed, where High Street meets North Street, or near the top of Coutties Wynd/Green Street *see* p 17). The spine of the inverted T-plan is formed by Castle Street, which probably continued up towards the castle, but over time gradually extended beyond it as far as Canmore Street. The market place, with market cross and tolbooth, stood at the junction of the two sections of High Street and Castle Street. Both East and West High Streets slope down to The Cross, which sits in a natural hollow. There are marked kinks in the alignments of Castle Street and East High Street which may indicate stages of growth in the development of the medieval town. The most noticeable is at the junction of Castle Street and Manor Street, which may mark both the northern end of settlement and the southern boundary of the enclosure around the castle or royal manor. Similarly, the kinks in the alignment of East High Street, near Green Street and further east at Queen Street, may also mark extensions to the burgh (*see* pp 29, 62 & 67).

Forfar was also a major crossroads on the King's Highway, the great road from Perth to Aberdeen. At Forfar, roads entered the burgh from Glamis and Perth (West High Street), Dundee (St James' Road) and Arbroath, Brechin and Aberdeen (East High Street).

Wood's 1822 Plan of Forfar shows the former extent of Forfar Loch as marked by a series of stones set around what had been its eastern shore **figure 4**. Drainage had, in fact, begun in 1767 when Lord Strathmore began exploiting the marls from the loch bed for agricultural purposes, although there is evidence of earlier drainage measures (*see* pp 18 & 22). Flowing into the east end of the loch were the Don Burn and the East Burn, the latter flowing more or less east to west through the centre of the burgh, emptying into Forfar Loch at the west end of present-day Myre Road. Its course follows Myre Road before cutting across the south-west corner of the market place. Chapel Street and Academy Street delineate its eastern end.

Much of the land to the north of the Lord Burn and to the west of the castle may have been too marshy for settlement, although there is a ridge of slightly higher ground, and it is here that a royal residence, the 'Queen's Manor' and another manor (*see* p 14), are thought to have stood. On the north side of the loch, there is another site with historical associations. A narrow peninsula which juts out into the water is known locally as Margaret's Inch **figure 2**. Originally, this was an island, but over time the gap between the island and mainland has been filled in. The Inch has been postulated as the site of the castle, or a second castle or that of a chapel associated with Margaret, wife of Malcolm Canmore. That it was the site of a chapel is now accepted, but whether there is an association with Queen Margaret is unclear. The site is now the home of Forfar Sailing Club.

notes

1 J Whittrow, *Geology and Scenery in Britain* (London, 1992), 305.
2 B Walker & G Ritchie, *Exploring Scotland's Heritage: Fife and Tayside* (Edinburgh, 1987), 9.
3 RCAHMS, *South-East Perth: an Archaeological Landscape* (Edinburgh, 1994), 2.
4 Whittrow, *Geology*, 307.
5 Walker & Ritchie, *Exploring Scotland's Heritage*, 10–11.
6 RCAHMS, *South-East Perth*, 2.
7 *Ibid*, 2.
8 Whittrow, *Geology*, 306.
9 *Gazetteer*, 36.
10 DT Adam, *Reviews of the Administration of the Town's Affairs by Successive Town Councils, 1660–1965* (Forfar, 1967), 79.

Today, there is little to see in Forfar that reminds us of its medieval past. Since the 1970s, however, there have been a number of relatively small archaeological excavations within the medieval burgh (*see* pp 39–70) and on Margaret's Inch, which have shed some light on the medieval town and the possible pre-burghal origins of the area. The few prehistoric finds that have been documented from in and around the burgh also offer a glimpse into the more distant past. A full gazetteer of archaeological sites and finds from the Forfar area can be found in the RCAHMS computerised National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS).[1] The Royal Commission's *Exploring Scotland's Heritage: Fife and Tayside* also details sites and monuments of interest of all periods.[2]

prehistory

The Forfar area is rich in sites and finds from all periods of prehistory and history. Stone circles, burial mounds, rock carvings, hill forts, souterrains, Pictish carved stones, castles and churches are among the more visible traces of thousands of years of settlement.[3] The first real evidence of possible settlement in Forfar dates to the Bronze Age (*c* 2500 BC–*c* 700 BC), and of the many prehistoric finds discovered in the town, most can be dated to this period. 'The Forfar Story', a permanent display in the Meffan Institute, West High Street, Forfar, exhibits a number of these finds. The majority came from Castle Hill and the lower slopes of Newmont Hill **figure 2**.

Castle Hill, on which the medieval castle was later built, may also have been a focus for prehistoric communities. In 1760, a conical vessel, a 'bunch of arrows' and a 'pit of hewn stones', containing human remains, were discovered.[4] The description suggests that this was a cist burial, and typical of the Bronze Age. Workmen digging a drain in 1840, near the same spot, also unearthed a number of bronze artefacts. This hoard, which may have been lost, hidden for safekeeping and subsequently forgotten, or deposited as a votive offering, comprised four socketed axes and a spear head with a leaf-shaped blade. A flat axe and a small 'brass half-length female figure' were also recovered.[5] Both the hoard and the burial imply that this natural eminence was a notable landmark at the head of Forfar Loch.

Several prehistoric burials have been found in and around Forfar. A cinerary urn containing calcined bone was discovered in the late nineteenth century in South Street.[6] In 1867, a cinerary urn and cist were found during digging at Nursery Feus, east of South Street.[7] Two cists were also discovered at Newmont Hill cemetery, at the south-eastern edge of Forfar **figure 5**. Both contained skeletal remains and Food Vessels, a distinctive type of Bronze Age pottery.[8]

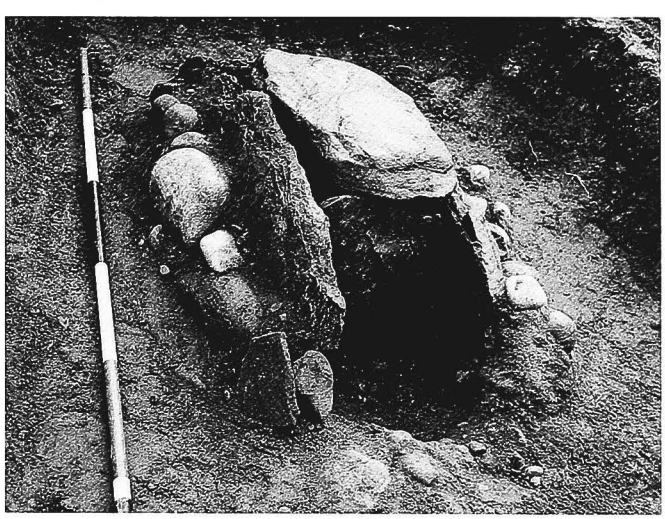


figure 5
Bronze Age cist, Newmont Hill cemetery

Many other prehistoric finds have been recorded from Forfar but, unfortunately, exact locations were not recorded. The finds include a socketed axe and knife, a bronze finger ring, a decorated spindle whorl, a stone axe, a carved stone ball and a flint arrowhead.[9] A number of objects recorded as having been found in Forfar, including a bronze axe, a stone implement, three 'spinning whorls' and nine other objects from a cist, flint arrowheads and a stone cistern or font, were also sold as a private collection by one John Sturrock in 1889.[10]

There is little evidence for the Iron Age, when many of the hillforts in the area would have been occupied.[11] Aerial photography, however, has revealed the existence of a souterrain, which may have been contemporary with the occupation of some of these hillforts, on the southern edge of the town in a field where other cropmarks have also been identified.[12] The native Iron Age tribes of Angus undoubtedly came into contact with the Romans who arrived in Strathmore in AD 83. There is a tradition of a Roman camp at Forfar but, as yet, no evidence, although there is a 63 acre (25.5 ha) temporary camp on the edge of the burgh at Lunanhead.[13] This was just one of a series of marching camps established along the length of Strathearn and Strathmore and is attributed to the military campaign of the Emperor Severus in the early third century AD.

the early medieval period

Forfar lay in a province known as *Circenn*, now Angus and the Mearns, and nearly one hundred of the carved symbol stones so typical of this period have been found in Angus. None has been discovered in Forfar itself, but the Meffan Institute holds an important collection of Class II and Class III stones, mainly from the cemetery at Kirriemuir (they were moved there after the demolition of the old parish church) and from the church at Menmuir.[14] Collections of stones can also be seen nearby at Meigle and St Vigeans, and *in situ* at Aberlemno, Cossans, Eassie and Glamis.[15]

Forfar may have Pictish connections. St Nynia, or one of his followers, is documented by Bede, writing some 300 years after the event, as having converted the southern Picts to Christianity in the fifth century AD. Place-name evidence has been used to identify church sites which may have been associated with Nynia, and *Ninewells* is thought to have preserved a recognition of the ancient Nynia rather than the more modern Ninian. There are, in fact, two sites which may fit, one in Dundee, the other in Forfar.[16] The latter is recorded by John Wood on his plan of the town in 1822 **figure 4**, by which time it was in use as a bleaching green, but the site lies close to another ancient site, the Queen's Manor, traditionally linked to Malcolm Canmore's queen, Margaret **figure 2.**

Another connection may be the parish church of Forfar, which was, until the sixteenth century (*see* p 20), at Restenneth, approximately 2.5 km east of Forfar **figure 1**. The ruins of the twelfth-century Augustinian priory stand on a promontory of land which once projected out into the Loch of Restenneth, now a marshy hollow **figure 6**. This priory, however, may have replaced an earlier foundation, dating back to the seventh or eighth century. Between AD 710 and 716, Nechtan mac Derile, king of the Picts, sent messages to Ceolfrid, abbot of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, asking him to send masons to build a church of stone, dedicated to St Peter, and Restenneth was thought to have been this very church. The lower portions of the square tower are clearly much older than the upper sections, but in recent years a date contemporary with Nechtan mac Derile has been rejected in favour of an eleventh-century, or slightly earlier, date.[17] The priory may have been founded by David I in the second quarter of the twelfth century, as a daughter house of Jedburgh Abbey, and the upper parts of the 14 m high tower are probably of that date. The choir and nave are thirteenth-century in date, as may be parts of the monastic buildings.

Pictish kingship came to a formal end in AD 843x848 when it was united with Dalriada under the Scottish king, Kenneth mac Alpin (the Scots had arrived from Ireland in the fifth century AD), who established his court at Scone. The Scottish kings from Kenneth mac Alpin onwards were based mainly in Strathearn and Angus, as the later medieval

figure 6
Restenneth Priory

concentration of royal estates in the Gowrie and Strathmore areas indicates.[18]

Other than the possibility that Ninewells may be an indication of an early Pictish church, if not a settlement, there are other clues to pre-burghal settlement at Forfar. A logboat was discovered in 1952 by workmen digging a drain in East Greens, a short distance to the north-east of Castle Hill.[19] On excavation, it was found to have been scooped from a single oak tree and backfilled with stones.[20] The boat was assumed to be of prehistoric date, but it was only in 1987, when the boat was being conserved, that a radiocarbon of AD 1090±50 was obtained. The stones are thought to have been used to keep the boat below the water level, to stop the wood drying out and thus keep the wood supple. A similar boat was found nearby in the 1860s, but there are scant records. It was apparently found on the site of the present Castle Street Motors Garage, and on removal lay in Forfar cemetery, where it was used as a large flower pot before finally disintegrating. The water level of Forfar Loch is known to have dropped nearly six metres when it was drained in the late eighteenth century, so in earlier times boats like these were probably in regular use, ferrying people across the loch. These boats may pre-date the formal founding of the burgh and, as such, could indicate the existence of a castle on the adjacent higher ground at Castle Hill, and an associated settlement. The north end of Castle Street is thought to have been a ford across the loch in earlier times, and the discovery of the two boats suggests that it was also a ferry crossing.

the middle ages

The medieval town of Forfar owes its origins to a royal castle. Sited on a hill, which at one time may have been an island,[21] the fortress was in a highly defensible position. This site, and the supposed antiquity of the name 'Forfar', led to a suggestion that it derived from the Roman *or* or *orrea*, meaning a town situated on a lake. Alternatively, it has been argued that 'For-fuar' means a cold village, the Pictish prefix signifying a dwelling, homestead or hamlet. Both theories, however, are suspect.[22] It is unclear when the first castle was erected on this site, although a number of claims are made for a date of at least the eleventh century. By the reign of William I (1157–1214) or, possibly, that of Alexander II (1214–49), it was said to have been 'old',[23] thus giving rise to some claims that there were two castles, one old and one new, but this seems very unlikely. Malcolm II (1005–1034)

figure 7
J Paterson's early nineteenth-century view of the Inch and Forfar

reputedly granted a charter to the bishop of Mortlach from Forfar in October 1011.[24] A number of local traditions also link Malcolm III (Canmore) and his wife, Queen Margaret, with Forfar. Malcolm Canmore, it is claimed, held a parliament in Forfar in the first year of his reign.[25] It was said, at the end of the seventeenth century, that Forfar was 'a very ancient toune and we find in historie the first parliament that was ryden in Scotland, was kept ther also King Malcome Canmore had a house and lived frequentlie there, the ruines of the house are yet to be seen in a place called the Castlehill. at litle distance is ane other litle mott where the Queens lodgings were, called to this day Queen's Manore [sic]'.[26] Queen Margaret reputedly came to the Inch at the north end of Forfar Loch for solitary contemplation. Before drainage works in the eighteenth century (*see* pp 28–9), the Inch was an island, sometimes called the Isle of St Margaret, Queen of Scots **figure 7**.

The date of the first settlement in Forfar is also unclear. A royal residence would certainly have attracted a population, not only because it offered a measure of protection to those clustered nearby, but also because a royal presence and attendant court would have created a demand for supplies and services. Assuming the existence of an early royal residence, it is probable that some form of township existed at Forfar before the granting of burghal status in the reign of David I; and this would appear to be confirmed by the logboat evidence cited above (*see* p 13). It was from Forfar that David I granted a charter to the bishop of Aberdeen in 1127.[27] Forfar was also one of the first seats of a sheriffdom, as early as the reign of David I, the others being Clackmannan, Dunfermline, Crail, Scone and Perth.[28]

The favour also placed on the town by the continued presence of Scottish kings suggests that Forfar was a well-established and flourishing burgh by the early thirteenth century. In the reign of William I, for example, forty-five acts were dated from Forfar, the same number as for Perth, while only forty-four were dated at Stirling, thirty-four at Edinburgh and twelve from Dunfermline.[29] The town continued to be the residence of kings and their sheriffs throughout the thirteenth century: Alexander II is known to have been in the burgh on a number of occasions;[30] Alexander III (1249–86), for example, spent over half of 1263 in Forfar;[31] he imported wine from Dundee to the town, for his sojourn there in 1266;[32] and he issued a number of letters both from Forfar and to his sheriff, in residence there.[33] The references to the queen's household accounts at this time have led to the suggestion that Queen Joanna, wife of Alexander III, had a separate dwelling on the Inch, as Queen Margaret and the widow of William the Lion, Queen Ermengarde, reputedly had done before her.[34] This would, however, seem unlikely, as, by 1234, two Cistercian monks from Coupar Angus were supported financially to maintain perpetual divine service on the Inch at the Chapel of the Holy Trinity (*see* pp 17 & 67).

With the granting of burghal status, there was, in all probability, a formal laying out of the township into tofts or burgage plots, on which the burgesses were to build their homes within a year and a day. The laying out of the new town was certainly effected early in the burgh's life, as there is soon evidence of the granting out of tofts to favoured subjects. In 1153x1162, the monks of Coupar Angus were granted a toft in the town; as was Bishop Jocelin of Glasgow in 1187x1199; and Lindores Abbey by 1195.[35] The holding of tofts in the town by other important personages is further indication that the burgh was considered to be of note. In 1189x1199, for example, Hugh, the chancellor of the King of Scots, granted his toft to the Church of St Thomas the Martyr in Arbroath, although he retained at least another toft in the town; and the Bishop of Caithness held a toft here before 1204x1214.[36]

Much more was implied in burghal status than the right to a burgage plot. To be a full member of burghal society, as a burgess, brought a number of privileges, as well as obligations. The most important obligations were obedience to the law of the town and maintenance of its defence. Failure to co-operate could result in harsh retribution at the burgh court and even banishment from the town. On the other hand, only burgesses had the right to attend the head courts of the town, which were held, normally, three times a year, and at which major decisions were made. Once the community of burgesses gained a level of independence in their choice of burghal officers, it was only this small privileged group who would participate in the running of the town, the majority of the townspeople being merely indwellers, with no formal rights. When the *prepositus*, the principal officer of the town, is stated to be an armourer, in 1327, this may suggest that he was not a specifically royal official; but the records do not make it clear whether, as yet, the town officials were royal or burghal appointments. Certainly, it was the king's sheriff, rather than a burghal officer, who forwarded £141 18s 5d as a contribution to the peace funds in 1329, although this sum was, probably, a shrieval, rather than burghal, contribution and raised at a time of unrest during the renewed struggle between the Bruce and Balliol families for power.[37] The following year, however, 17s 2d of the town's previous account was remitted to the *prepositus* of Forfar by the Exchequer. It appears that Forfar was in some financial embarrassment at this time: in 1332, it owed £10 13s 4d to the Exchequer at the Pentecost term; but at Martinmas a mere £4 was accepted on account of war damage.[38] By 1393, however, the burgh was considered to be of sufficient competence to run its own financial affairs and was granted feu-ferme status. This meant that Forfar took responsibility for raising its dues to the crown, without assistance from a royal officer, and paid these dues annually. The sum of £8 13s 4d was raised each year from the town rentals, tolls or dues for the use of the burgh market, burgh fines, petty customs (that is duty on small goods) and some greater customs, such as those on wool and hides.[39] The grant of feu-ferme may merely have been a formalisation of an already existing practice; and the names of a number of different bailies, of well-known local origin, in the latter decades of this century also suggest that the burgh officers were now 'of the people' rather than the crown. The burgh was, moreover, represented in parliament from 1471.[40]

One of the most important liberties granted at the foundation of a burgh was economic privilege. This normally brought the right to hold a weekly market and freedom from payment of toll, throughout the country. Reference is made to Forfar's market place as early as 1230, when an infant of the rebel 'race of mac William' was struck against the shaft of the market cross, in the market place, and had her brains dashed out.[41] The medieval market was held on a Sunday;[42] and all within the hinterland of Forfar were obliged to attend this market for the sale of goods. Overlapping economic jurisdictions, however, meant that there was constant dispute over precise market rights. Dundee, for example, received a charter from Robert I (1306–29), giving its burgesses the sole right to trade, throughout the sheriffdom of Forfar, in wool and skins, two of the staple commodities in the Scottish economy; it lay down that all goods brought by foreign merchants to the shire should first be offered for sale at Dundee; and it decreed that all foreign merchants in the sheriffdom were to trade only with Dundee burgesses 'reserving the rights of the other burghs within the said sheriffdom'.[43] Here was clear potential for

disputes, not only between Forfar and Dundee, but also with the merchants of Montrose and Brechin, denied their due privileges.[44] In 1372, in an attempt to protect some of their threatened privileges, Forfar entered into a free trade agreement with Montrose, to the exclusion of Brechin.[45] Rivalry between the towns lasted into the fifteenth century and beyond.[46] Forfar's position as an inland town, however, meant that although it continued to function as a small market town, it inevitably lost out to the east coast ports of Arbroath, Montrose and Dundee. A 1373 taxation assessment placed Aberdeen at £2,322, Dundee at £1,516, Perth at £1,249, Montrose at £601, Brechin at £80 and Forfar at a mere £30.[47] In 1485, there was little change: Forfar's position relative to Dundee and Arbroath was indicated in a taxation imposed by the Convention of Royal Burghs: Forfar was stented at £1 6s 8d, compared with Dundee's £26 13s 4d and Arbroath's £2.[48] The reluctance of Forfar to pay annuities to David, fifth earl of Crawford in the 1470s and to agree to comply only after specific instructions from the king to the custumar and bailies of the town, in 1483, would likewise suggest financial embarrassment.[49] This was largely confirmed by Hector Boece (1465–1536) from Dundee, who argued that although Forfar had once had a strong castle and been the residence of kings, it was, by his time, 'bot ane popil [poor] town'.[50]

The records do not give a clear impression of the townscape in the middle ages. It was certainly initially dominated by the castle on the hill to the north. In 1291, Edward I of England (1272–1307) visited. His view of the town, as he wrote in his diary, was that Forfar was a 'bone ville', which was high praise from one who had seen many impressive towns.[51] The king demanded of Gilbert de Umfraville, earl of Angus and keeper of the castles of Forfar and Dundee, that he should hand over the keys of the castle.[52] In spite of his refusal, the castle fell into the hands of the English and Edward I, who placed it under the custodianship of Brian de Fitz-Alan.[53] There is an unconfirmed tradition that William Wallace took the castle in 1306 and effected some damage;[54] but events would suggest that, if he did, he could not have held it for long.[55] In 1308, Forfar was the first major English-held castle, south of the Mounth, to fall to Robert I,[56] through the good services of Philip, the Forester of Platane,[57] and it was later destroyed on the king's instruction.[58]

This did not, however, mean the immediate cessation of royal visits. Robert I issued a number of acts from Forfar;[59] and there is reference, in 1327, to the 'King's House', where the king's fowler, Jeoffry, was to be entertained, whenever the king was in residence.[60] David II (1329–1371) was at times resident at Forfar and issued a number of acts from there.[61] Robert II (1371–1390) also spent time in Forfar, although he claimed that he did 'not make [his] residence at Forfar as often as [his] predecessors'; he, therefore, specified that instead of the annual 300 cartloads of peat, he would merely accept sufficient fuel whenever he was resident; and this was to be delivered to his *manerium* of Forfar.[62] This 'manor' had been referred to in primary documents during the two previous reigns in 1329 and 1365, as well as in 1372; and presumably was the replacement dwelling for the kings of Scots after the destruction of the castle.[63] Whether it was sited on the hill to the west of Castlehill, called 'Queen's manor', is unclear; and whether it was one and the same as the King's House is likewise uncertain. The court may, on occasion, also have resided at Glamis Castle and the Priory of Restenneth, as charters were granted at both places, in the presence of royalty.[64]

Other features in the townscape come to light only rarely. A chapel was dedicated to St James the Great in Forfar, in 1241, by the Bishop of St Andrews, David de Bernham. It was attached to the Augustinian priory at Restenneth, the church of which functioned as Forfar's parish church throughout the middle ages.[65] It is presumed that the chapel stood on the site of the present old parish church, south of East High Street.[66] The open market place, with its market cross, probably stood in its later position, to the north of the High Street, at the foot of the pathway leading north to the castle. The High Street, running west to east, probably following the approximate alignment of the modern High Street and functioning as the main thoroughfare, was lined with burgage plots.[67] These ran in herring-bone pattern back from the single main street, which in time developed back lanes. The dwellings on the frontages would have been simple, probably single-storeyed

structures. The fact that the town could be almost totally destroyed in 1244, by accidental fire, would suggest that building materials were wood and thatch.[68] By 1359, a mill in the town was under construction, or possibly undergoing major repair;[69] six years later, it is known that there was an eel pond in the town;[70] and by 1384, there was at least a second mill.[71]

There is no evidence that the town was walled. Scottish medieval towns were not surrounded with strong stone walls but, at most, by ditching and wooden palisading. The backlands of the tofts may well have been so protected at their 'heid dykes', perhaps punctuated with small gates giving burgesses access into the town crofts and pasturage beyond; but the tofts to the north of the main street may initially have merely backed on to marshy ground (*see* p 10). From later evidence, it appears that the town had only two ports or gates, one at the east end of the High Street and the other at the west. These were not intended to be truly defensible, but served rather as psychological barriers between town and country; offering useful collection points for the tolls paid to use the burgh market; and enclosing the town at night during curfew or when danger, such as plague, threatened. There is reference to the 'gate' of Forfar in 1296, where one Alan of Blye was required to answer to the accusation of theft of a cow; but whether this gate was a town port or an entrance to the castle is unclear.[72]

There is an unproven tradition that there was a chapel at the royal manor, dedicated to St Marie. Whether this stood on the site now called the Queen's Manor or, indeed, whether it ever actually existed is unclear. A little south of the town, stood the Chapel of St Boniface. Little is known of its history and connections with the town, although its foundations were still visible in the early nineteenth century.[73] A further chapel was sited on the Inch in Forfar Loch **figure 7**. Whether or not this site had been frequented by Queen Margaret and later queens (*see* p 14), by 1234, Alexander II granted ten pounds revenue yearly from the lands of Glenisla to the monastery of Coupar Angus. Of this, ten marks were to go to the support of two Cistercian monks who were perpetually to celebrate divine service in the Chapel of the Holy Trinity on the island in the Loch of Forfar.[74]

the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

A clearer picture emerges of the small town of Forfar as more documentation survives in this period. It is difficult to gain a full overview, however, until the second half of the seventeenth century, as all of Forfar's burgh records were destroyed during the Cromwellian occupation, in 1651 (*see* p 21). It is clear, however, that Forfar continued to function as a small, inland market town, not financially very secure, and often at loggerheads with its neighbours over trading rights.

A measure of its financial difficulties may be seen, when even Brechin, not a royal burgh and also an inland centre, was assessed for taxation higher than Forfar. In 1533, charges were imposed for the maintenance of the king's artillery: Dundee supported thirty-six men at £108 per month; Montrose eight at £24 per month; Brechin five at £15 per month; Arbroath four at £12 per month; and Forfar only one and a half at £4 10s monthly. In 1535, the burghs in the Tay region paid 29.2% of a national taxation. Of this, Dundee's share was 9.7%, Montrose's 2.7%, Brechin's 1.8%, Arbroath's 1.4% and Forfar's only 0.5%. Brechin, moreover, was assessed at forty crowns to support an embassy in 1550, whereas Forfar paid a mere twelve crowns. In 1587, Forfar was exempted from attendance at the Convention of Royal Burghs for three years, on account of 'povertie and greitt penurie'. A further exemption, for the same period of time, was granted in 1593. And, four years later, the Convention assessed Forfar at 6s 8d, compared with Arbroath at 13s 4d and Brechin at a rate of 23s.[75]

Disagreements between Arbroath and Forfar resulted in Forfar being fined for non-compearance at the meeting of the Convention of Royal Burghs in June 1582. Sympathy was clearly with Arbroath, as it was granted the Forfar fine for the repair of its church, pier and shoreworks.[76] Forfar would again be fined for absence in 1605 and 1609.[77] The

records, however, indicate that Forfar was not alone in failing to appear at the Convention. Brechin and Elgin, for example, were also fined, along with Forfar, for non-compearance in 1591.[78] Disagreements arose also with Dundee. In 1589, Forfar raised an action against Dundee, claiming that the magistrates of Dundee were forcing payment of customs on the people of Forfar, when these were not legal. Although the matter took until 1609 to resolve, the commissioners found for Forfar.[79] In 1606, Forfar found itself in dispute also with Perth and Brechin. It was maintained that these two burghs were charging Forfar inhabitants higher customs than were due, preventing them selling their wares.[80] The argument with Brechin was taken even further, in 1610, when the burgesses of Forfar maintained that they were being molested at Brechin fair and prevented from conducting their lawful trade, particularly by the cordiners (shoemakers), who tried to make the Forfar cordiners pay customs, fees or tolls, for use of the market. Forfar appears to have had right on its side. Two years later, the commissioners insisted that the deacons of the cordiner craft in Brechin had no right of malicious 'inspection' of the cordiners of Forfar, with the real intent of ruining their sales, although the right of Brechin magistrates to maintain control of quality and confiscate sub-standard workmanship offered for sale at their market was confirmed.[81]

Forfar was not without fault. It was warned, in 1612, to exact more diligence against unfree traders. These were people who came to the market without being burgesses or having paid the due fees, or tolls or customs.[82] A year later, the town exhibited its efficiency in checking market abuses, by preventing the inhabitants of Kirriemuir from dealing in merchandise at the market of Forfar, to which they had no right.[83] This had been so serious an on-going source of tension between the two towns that, in 1581, their dispute had been brought before the Court of Session; and Edinburgh Burgh Council considered Forfar's case of such import that they decided to support the clerk of Forfar, at the Session, by two bailies and some of their council members.[84] As a result, two years later, the bailies, council and community of Forfar successfully escheated the goods of four indwellers in Kirriemuir for selling timber and staple goods, contrary to the decree of the Lords of Session.[85] There was clearly a precise hierarchy of economic privilege in the network of towns in the Angus region.

It is known that a market cross had stood in the town for some centuries (*see* p 15). Whether this was the same one as that in the market place in the sixteenth century is uncertain.[86] Any parts of the cross made of wood would, in all probability, have had to be replaced over the previous three centuries or so. The cross, however, was still the focal point of the burgh market, which in 1593 was changed from the traditional Sunday to a Friday.[87] The market was later to be transferred from a Friday to a Saturday, as a Friday Forfar market interfered with Dundee's great weekly market.[88] The town fairs were held, by 1618 at latest, on the 'mure of Forfair', where there would have been much less congestion.[89] If this was a reference to the tract of common land that lay to the west of the town, and which reputedly had once been under water, it was, clearly, no longer even marshy in the early seventeenth century. Indeed, it is possible that the muirs around the town had been naturally drained for some time, since, in 1590, John Brown, younger, of Fordell in Fife heritably infeft of the lands of Craignethy in the shire of Forfar, maintained that he and his predecessors had been in peaceable possession of the right to pasture and digging for divots on the 'common moor of Forfar, called the King's moor, past the memory of man'.[90]

Such bullying or interference by local lords and their kindred was a common experience of many burghs. This incident in Forfar was one such case in point; much of Brown's wrath was directed against Thomas, master of Glamis, whose servants had molested the tenants of Brown.[91] The Master of Glamis had influence in Forfar, as did, even more so, the earls of Crawford. John Maitland of Thirlestane, chancellor of King James VI (1567–1625) from 1587 until 1595, was happy to manipulate this rivalry, with Forfar a pawn in a larger game. The injustice done on Forfar by the Master of Glamis was sufficient for the Convention of Royal Burghs to give £70 to the town for its action against Glamis before the Lords of Session, where it was to be claimed that there had

been 'greitt hurtt and preiudice of thair liberties'.[92] In the same year, 1590, another issue was brought before the privy council, in the form of a bond of caution of 5,000 merks, by David, eleventh earl of Crawford, Harry Lindsay of Carrestoun and David Lindsay of Barneyairdis for the provost, bailies, council and inhabitants of Forfar, that the tenants and servants of the lands of Sir Thomas Lyoun of Auldbar should not be molested by the inhabitants of Forfar. It was a further example of tension in the locality over land rights and influence.[93]

It was considered by the Convention of Royal Burghs that it was the duty of all burghs, not only to roup out their common good, such as the town fishings or the multures, for the greatest profit, but also efficiently to perambulate their marches, so as to ensure that no inroads were made into the burghal territory. Forfar, along with other towns, was deemed, in 1603, to have failed to safeguard these important elements of the town's inheritance; it was accordingly fined £20 for the transgression by the Convention.[94] Four years later, however, on a perambulation of their marches, all the inhabitants of the burgh, said to number 300, led by the provost and bailies, successfully and enthusiastically ejected the servants of Sir Peter Young of Seaton, whose family 'past memory of man' had possessed part of the muir. Dressed in protective clothing, such as jacks and steelbonnets, and armed with spears, halberds, lances, swords and other weapons, they 'cuttit and destroyit the haill turves and devattis' and, not surprisingly, put the servants of Seaton in fear of their lives.[95]

It was one of the primary duties of the provost and bailies that peace should be maintained within the burgh and the burgh lands; and, to this end, a further bond of caution was registered for the provost and bailies of Forfar, with the Privy Council, in 1590, that they would build and maintain 'ane sufficient wardhous for prisonaris and keeping of thame'.[96] It would appear that this was complied with and that the tolbooth was upgraded,[97] for twelve years later, in 1602, Thomas Bruce, servant of John Scrymgeour of Kirktoun, was securely 'held in ward in the burgh and kept in stocks', for attacking the minister, Joshua Durie.[98] Nine years after this, there is further reference to a prisoner being 'committed to ward in the burgh tolbooth'.[99] And, in 1627, the town had not only its 'wardhouse', but also a 'thieves hole', which would have been a secure cell, into which the prisoner was lowered by rope, or dropped.[100]

The tolbooth was the principal municipal building and the focal point of burgh life, along with the market cross. It not only functioned as a prison; it was also the collection point for market tolls, along with the town ports, and the meeting place for the burgh council. Forfar, in spite of its relatively small size was also the seat of the constable of Forfar, a position that had survived the destruction of the castle. There is evidence that the constable fenced, or gave legal authority to, courts in the tolbooth,[101] and that, on occasion, justice courts were also held here, as one of the principal buildings of the district.[102]

In 1631, Forfar maintained, with some justification, that it was 'the head burgh of the shire of Forfar... standing almost in the verie heart and middes of the sheriffdome...[it was] the most commodious place for holding the sheriff courts, and [had] in all times and ages bygone possessed the liberties, freedome and privileges proper and due to other head burghs...' It argued that the sheriff court should also be held in its tolbooth, since this was a right granted by parliament. This was opposed by the sheriff and lords of the shire, who maintained that they knew nothing of this grant; and that, in any event, Dundee was the traditional residence of the sheriff court as well as the most convenient. The latter factor was, apparently, of most interest to the defendants. The crown found for Forfar. The provost and bailies of Forfar had equal success when they argued that the sheriff should reside in the town or appoint a deputy to do so. The verdict went to Forfar, although complaints on both matters rumbled on.[103]

The town, on occasion, received more important visitors than the sheriff of Forfar. In 1617, the townspeople were to have twenty fed oxen ready to be sold to the king's officers, in preparation for the visit of King James VI.[104] Nine years later, at the St James' Day Fair (24 July), the market prices for young plough oxen was forty to fifty merks a piece, a

merk being 13s 4d, whereas an old oxen raised thirty to forty merks a piece.[105] This was, therefore, a fair income for the town. When Charles I (1625–49) visited in 1633, the town was instructed to supply twenty fed nolts, or oxen.[106] The people of Forfar also played a role, albeit small, in national defence. Musters for the Border campaigns summoned men throughout the sixteenth century from as far north as Forfar;[107] and in 1597, for example, Forfar indwellers were ordered to join the levy at Linlithgow.[108]

The street lay-out changed little over these two centuries, the basic plan remaining a single street with back lanes, with, possibly, a pathway leading northwards past Castle Hill. The street pattern is the most enduring aspect of a town plan; and Forfar's appears not to have altered even after the burning of the town, along with Dundee, as a consequence of the treasonable dealings of Alexander Whitelaw of Newgrange with the English in 1548.[109] Secular lands and offices were alienated by the crown on a number of occasions during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, but their transfer of ownership had little effect on the townscape. The Little Mill and Loch Mill of Forfar, for example, passed to a Mr William Lyon in 1511;[110] to Patrick, Lord Gray, went lands and offices, one of which was that of constable of Forfar, in 1524;[111] and in 1540, James V (1513–42), on the forfeiture of John, Lord Glamis, transferred various lands to James Watson, surgeon, and his wife.[112] On being brought back into favour, in 1567, his son, John, eighth Lord Glamis received back from Queen Mary (1542–67) lands including the Loch of Forfar, with all its pertinents, such as fishings, eel park and the like,[113] all of which was confirmed two years later by Regent Moray, on behalf of the young James VI.[114]

After the Reformation there was a further redistribution of ecclesiastical land and property. Amongst the lands once pertaining to the Abbot of Jedburgh (as erstwhile superior of the priory of Restenneth), granted to Matthew Home, in 1566, were the crofts of Forfar.[115] In 1614, Thomas, Viscount Fentoun received some of the remaining lands of the priory of Restenneth, namely a proportion of the burgh fermes or rentals and lands in the town.[116] Nine years earlier, in 1605, James VI granted to Mungo (Kentigern) Murray, son of John, Lord Murray of Tullibardine, the island, or inch, which once housed the Chapel of Holy Trinity, now called the Island of Queen Margaret, in Forfar Loch and all the pertinent lands on the mainland.[117] This would suggest that the chapel had not survived the Reformation. There had, indeed, been signs of some neglect, along with concern for the chapel's maintenance, when, in 1508, a writ to sir Alexander Turnbull, chaplain of the Isle of St Margaret, instructed him to repair and maintain the chapel and its buildings, plant trees and build stone dykes for protection of the buildings and trees against the encroachment of the waters of the loch.[118]

In about 1568, a new church was built on the site of the medieval chapel of St James, probably partially replacing it.[119] By May 1586, in the *Book of the Universal Church*,[120] Forfar and Restenneth were entered as separate parishes; this suggests that there was an intention to make them distinct. In 1591, it was agreed that the church at Forfar should replace that at Restenneth as the parish church of Forfar **figure 6**.[121] The argument that prompted this was 'the great inconvenience and skaith sustained by the parishioners in attending the kirk in the wicked and evil days of winter, and of the want and deficiency at the said kirk of accommodation for rest and refreshment for man and beast, and of the distance of many of [their] residences therefrom'.[122] In 1643, the glebe was transferred to Forfar parish church.[123] The incumbent, Mr Thomas Pierson, succeeded in exchanging the original glebe for a four-acre plot of land at the Bread Croft, near Forfar.[124] The name Restenneth, however, was not dropped from the parish name until 1652, when the town council purchased from Sir George Fletcher of Restenneth the patronage and tithes of the church of Forfar.[125]

Of the castle on Castle Hill, only remnants still existed. A visitor in 1612 spoke of the town as having 'an old castle', but it was probably only ruins that remained. Certainly, by 1674, one writer argued that the castle had been ruinous 'now long time';[126] and, by 1689, scarcely the ruins remained to be seen.[127] One major advancement in town life since the early middle ages was the sinking of wells. According to early sources, the townspeople had relied on springs in Forfar Loch, as well, presumably, as rain barrels, for

their water supply. By the early sixteenth century, there was at least one well in the town, the Quarrel Well, which stood to the south of the High Street *see* **figure 18.H.**[128] As well as the two water mills, a windmill was erected in 1644.[129] It is known that there was a school in Forfar by the sixteenth century and that, after the Reformation, the running of the school and appointment of schoolmaster was in the hands of the town council.[130]

Political events in the seventeenth century were to have a profound effect on the townscape and prosperity of the people. Forfar showed its sympathies clearly on 1 February 1639, when James Graham, fifth earl of Montrose, as the covenanting colonel for both Perthshire and Forfarshire, arrived in the town to carry out an assessment of the county. All present in the tolbooth refused to sign a covenant abjuring episcopacy; and when the question arose of an assessment of the lieges of the county for suitably armed levies, the response was that they were not subject to any other authority than the crown, since 'thay wer all the kingis men'.[131] An assessment of the fencible men in the neighbouring parishes placed Forfar at 200 men, compared with Glamis, for example, at the same number, Tannachie at 160 and Aberlemno at eighty. Although one of the largest parishes in the presbytery, Forfar was clearly not highly populated.[132]

Forfar remained largely for the Royalist cause during the Civil War. In 1683x1722 it was said of the town that it had been 'very famous for [its] loyaltie especiallie in that base transaction when King Charles the first of ever blissed memorie was delyvered over by our Scots Parliament to the Inglish at Newcastle'.[133] This loyalty was displayed by Provost Alexander Strang, also commissioner of the burgh to the parliament of 1647,[134] in his objections to the handing over of the king to the rebel cause. Loyalty to the crown resulted in English forces, under Colonel Ocky, moving on Forfar, after taking Dundee in 1651, pillaging the town, opening the prison and burning all the burgh's charters and records.[135]

In the late 1640s, Forfar, along with other towns, was stented for its quota of supply. Not only did this cause financial hardship, but the town's relative poverty becomes clear. In 1645, for example, Forfar was assessed at £54, compared with Arbroath at £90, Brechin at £180, Montrose at £477 and Dundee at £1,674. A similar assessment was made in the following year. But, in 1647, reductions were made 'because sundry shires, or parts therof, [were] burnt, wasted or so ruined that they [were] not able to make real and ready payment'. Forfar and its neighbours appear to have suffered: all paid less than previously, but Forfar's reduction was, proportionately, the greatest—Forfar £27, Arbroath £81, Brechin £120, Montrose £324 and Dundee £1,200. The following year, the quotas were the same; but, because of 'burnt and wasted lands', some could not even pay these sums. Forfar was one such and paid a mere £8. The two quotas imposed in 1649 saw little improvement in the town's relative hardship. Added to these financial exactions, billeting exacerbated the problems. Irish companies were, for example, quartered in the town in 1649. In the same year, the town appealed to parliament 'craving Colonel Innes's Regiment be removed from the...town and that, in regard not only of the oppressions, plunderings, local and transient quarterings endured by the...town, but also the scarcity of both meat and fuel', the regiment was removed to Dundee for its winter quarters.[136]

The town was rewarded for all its hardships and loyalty to the crown when, in 1665, King Charles II (1651–85) issued a charter of confirmation, *novodamus*, (ratified in 1669) of all its former liberties to the town. A further royal favour highlighted the esteem of the king for Forfar. In 1684, a new market cross **figure 8** was erected in the town, at the crown's expense, although local labour was also used.[137] At the time, it was described as 'very stately' and, certainly, considerable effort had been put into its construction. All the inhabitants of the town were obliged to help bring stone to the building site, in January 1683; and Alexander Adie was despatched a month later to inspect Dundee's cross and take measurements.[138] Two years later, a minor hitch had to be rectified: Alexander Craw, mason from Glamis, was sent for, to inspect the king's arms, sculpted by Alexander Adame. These were to be placed on the cross; but some correction was needed as the arms were 'not rytlie done'.[139]

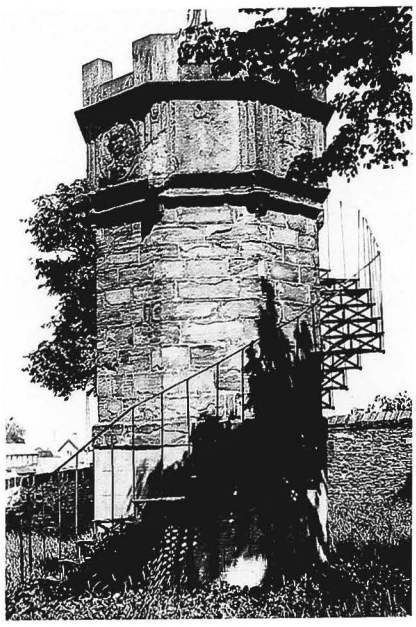


figure 8
Base of Forfar's market cross

The same visitor, who found the cross 'very stately', also commented on the 'many good stone houses', which were slated; the 'good tolbuith with a bell', which had also three booths, an east booth, mid booth and west booth;[140] the 'large church and steeple well finished with bells'; as well as the town's trade in 'cremerie ware [small goods sold to pedlars] and linen cloath', weekly market and four great fairs. It is unclear whether the decision of the council to bring in one John Miller from Brechin to set up 'keirts' [carts] in the churchyard suggests that extra space was needed for the market and fairs.[141]

The records confirm that efforts were being made to improve the townscape. One of the most significant moves was the decision to drain part of the muir, in 1665; a stank was to be built for the purpose of draining away all the water, an interesting forerunner to the successful draining of the loch in the following century (*see* pp 28–9).[142] In 1680, also, calsaying of the main road from the west to the east port was under way; and two years later, the town's masons were instructed by the town council to investigate the possibility of opening up a new quarry to the south of the town.[143] In 1687 and 1689, the council instructed that all of the townspeople who had horses and carts should assist with the mending of Dundee Loan, presumably by transporting stone to the building work.[144] Further improvements were planned at the turn of the century. A piece of land, called 'Laughterslade', was purchased, for the purpose of erecting a shambles and a meal market; but it is possible that the former was not completed until 1724, when Alexander Walker, mason, was reimbursed for his 'workmanship in building the shambles'. The council also decided to sink a well on the High Street, beside David Binney's house (location uncertain) and one at the west end of the town, beside Thomas Huntar's house.[145]

In June 1661, it was recorded that there was to be a new fair called St Peter's which was to last for eight days. Four years later, it was announced that the St James' Fair was 'to be taken in by the whole inhabitants in their best clothes and armour—horse and foot'. The following year, by decree of the Court of Session, this fair was in the hands of Patrick, third earl of Kinghorn, who became Earl of Strathmore, as constable of Forfar fair, to whom the council paid eighty merks for the rights. This practice was to continue, almost uninterrupted, until 1779, when the council purchased the rights of the fair for 300 guineas.[146]

Interestingly, the writer, Sir Robert Sibbald, in 1684, accounted for the public revenue and ability to support the local poor, as coming from the bounty of some of the townsmen, 'who going abroad became rich'.[147] Two such benefactors were two brothers, relations (some say brothers, others, sons) of Provost Strang (*see* p 21).[148] In 1657, after the death of Robert, a fine bell was despatched for the church steeple of their home town. Tradition has it that this was seized by the people of Dundee, as being too good for Forfar.

It eventually reached its destination, but, apparently, without its silver clapper.[149] The town, however, paid its part in the provision of services: the schoolhouse and schoolmaster, for example, were maintained by the town. In 1660, the master's salary was £200 Scots per year; but presumably his service proved not to be adequate, as he was dismissed four years later,[150] possibly because his mother was accused of being a witch.[151]

The 'good tolbuith with a bell' was to hold a number of unfortunates in its prison cells. It was also here that the stocks were sited, where culprits might be set for the ridicule of their fellow townspeople. Trials of witches were commonplace in many towns in this century.[152] But Forfar was the only Angus burgh to participate in the final great witch hunt of the seventeenth century, that of the 1660s.[153] A special commission, appointed by the crown in 1661 to seek out witchcraft, resulted in forty-two people being brought to trial in Forfar and at least six being put to death.[154] In this year, the town was divided up into eight districts, with a councillor in each district 'for setting and changing the gairds for the witches'.[155] Given the smallness of the town, this revealed a great determination on the part of the witch hunters. The nature of many of the bizarre 'confessions' that were made in Forfar have led some to believe that they had much more in common with the European witch hunt trials than elsewhere in Scotland.[156] In February 1663, it was reported to the Privy Council that two women had been held in the tolbooth, accused of witchcraft, for eighteen months without a trial.[157] In fact, one, Janet Howat, was not released until 1664, after four and a half years' imprisonment, from the age of thirteen to eighteen. Their stay was one of, at very best, extreme discomfort, as, in the June of the previous year, there had been complaints that the prisoners in Forfar had 'scarce so much clean straw as to rest upon'.[158] Also, in 1661, it had been decided that anyone imprisoned for witchcraft should not have either fire or candle in his or her cell,[159] as well as being subject to the ritual 'pricking', lack of sleep, food and companionship.[160] The last person to be burned as a witch in Angus was Helen Guthrie, who, while a suspect herself, provided a continuous flow of names of other reputed witches.[161]

A clear picture emerges of the town's finances in 1692. A total annual income was gained from rentals and feu duties, petty customs, customs from the St Peter's fair and the leasing of common lands and the windmill. This amounted to £570 7s. The accounts of disbursements and debts, however, showed a worrying aspect. The schoolmaster's salary was £48 per annum; £56 was owed to the church; town officers, such as the pundler (who impounded livestock), herd, fifer, bell ringer, bellman (town crier), drummer and the clock keeper, all needed to be paid and supplied with uniforms—amounting in total to £123 14s. A further £250 was required to send commissioners to parliament, with all related expenses, but it was perhaps the last item which was the most telling. Although repairs to the school and windmill were included in this sum, £549 15s 8d was required for 'necesar expences debursed upon the town's accompt and for expresses with lettres to and from his Majesties forces and furnishing of necessairies to thair gairds when they lay in the towne'—a deficit, in total, of £457 2s 8d for the year.[162] It would seem that the billeting of troops in the town could, indeed, be onerous. It was reported, for example, that when, in 1689, a regiment of King William's (1689–1702) forces was quartered on the town, they ate and destroyed victual to the value of £8,000, requisitioned horses and carts, imposed free quarter to the value of £2,000, and left the tolbooth and schoolhouse in a state of ruin.[163] The town had also to assist in voluntary taxations for the army, as well as quotas of supply and general taxations. All of these assessments confirm that Forfar was a relatively poor town.[164]

This seems at first sight to sit uneasily beside the information that emerges for the Hearth Tax assessment of 1692. In that year, it was claimed, there were no poor in the parish of Forfar. Even though the Hearth Tax assessment did not distinguish between the town and the landward part of the parish, this seems unlikely to have been true; it specifically contradicts the evidence of the visitor of 1684 to the town mentioned above (*see* p 22). Other information that emerges from the census is more enlightening. There were only 530 properties in the parish; this immediately indicates that Forfar was a very small town, with a tiny population. In the parish, only nineteen houses had one hearth,

the remaining properties being significantly more substantial. Eleven had four hearths, six had five, three contained six and three had seven. There was, however, even more imposing property. Three dwellings had eight hearths; and the owners of two of these properties were described as 'bailie' or 'late bailie'. When it is noted that the provost had a property that could boast fourteen hearths, it is very clear that the town officials were men of some substance. Other properties had nine hearths (two), ten hearths (one), eleven hearths (two) thirteen (one) and twenty-three (one, although, along with this clearly highly substantial house in Forfar town, the ground of Hackerston was also taken into account). Forfar may have been small and had trouble balancing its books but, clearly, the visitor already mentioned was correct in his assessment of some good stone houses in the town and the presence of some wealthy townspeople (*see* p 22).[165]

Most of the Forfar inhabitants were of much humbler origin, pursuing mundane trades. A number of brewers, for example, were active in the town. In 1677, there was a complaint, accusing them of selling inferior beer at illegal prices. This they confessed to.[166] Bakers and fleshers were also an essential part of town life. During the time of the Commonwealth, for a short while, a part of the army was stationed at Glamis Castle. The bakers of Forfar were ordered to supply 'fower dussen of wheate breade for each day in the weeke' and the fleshers 'beefe, mutton, or lambe, each Munday and Wedensday' [sic]. If they did not oblige, the same would be forcibly exacted. A number of lime pots, or pits, for example, to both the west and the east of the road leading north from the tolbooth to the Spout Mill, suggests a high level of ongoing leather tanning.[167] Forfar was, perhaps, most famous for the manufacture of shoes. These were of a type called 'brogues', from the Gaelic *brog*, meaning a shoe, and were light and hard-wearing, made of horse leather, rather than cow. Other trades included tailors, glovers and websters (weavers). These three, along with the shoemakers, received official incorporation in 1653; but the shoemakers were considered to be the oldest and wealthiest of the four trades.[168]

modern times

Forfar entered the eighteenth century in apparently straitened circumstances. In July 1705, the town appealed to the Convention of Royal Burghs: a 'great ryott' had taken place at the market cross and along the High Street, when certain gentlemen of the neighbourhood had set upon the town's magistrates. Unfortunately, 'the poverty of the burgh was such that they could not afford money to prosecute the said ryott'.[169] This 'poverty' would seem to have been genuine. In 1711, the town requested a reduction in its taxation; in 1723, £4 was deducted from the taxation assessment 'due to the decay of trade'; and this reduction was granted in the following two years.[170] The town had to ensure its own security, no matter what the state of finances. In 1737, the magistrates and council resolved to purchase twenty stands of firearms, with twenty bayonets and forty halberds.

As in much of the north-east, there was seemingly widespread support, whether active or passive, for the Jacobite cause at the time of the rising of 1715. Sympathisers included the influential magnate David, fourth earl of Northesk, who was Sheriff Principal of Forfarshire.[171] The legacy of lingering support for Jacobitism may have underlain the widespread dissension within the burgh council, which seems to have marked the 1740s. By then, it was split in two; each party proceeded to appoint its own provost, bailies, treasurer and councillors. One side accused the other of illegality, bribery and corruption, to be greeted with the removal of the key to the council chamber, the town's seal, colours, registers, charters and other records. This was then met with a new lock on the council chamber door. A case in the Court of Session followed, but a final outcome was not reached until March 1745, when the election of the first party (that originally accused of illegality, bribery and corruption) was declared null and void. As only the minutes of the approved party survive, the true state of Forfar in these years is unclear.[172]

The ''Forty-five' uprising was, according to the council minutes of May 1746, deemed to be 'a most wicked rebellion'; the town was 'under the influence of a military force and

overawed by many numbers of rebells [*sic*]', which suggests an undercurrent of Jacobite sympathy, whatever the official line. Andrew Binnie, a prominent burgess, for example, was imprisoned for failing to become anti-Jacobite. Once calm was restored, the council welcomed the 'peace...established in the country by the blessing of God and the good conduct of His Royall [*sic*] Highness the Duke of Cumberland'. James Johnstone, *aide de campe* of Prince Charles Edward Stewart, passed through Forfar on his flight to France. His view of the town was unequivocal: 'There is a small town called Forfar, one of the most famous for Presbyterian fanaticism, and the inhabitants had lately signalised their holy zeal by contributing to arrest Colonel Ker'.[173]

A visitor to the town, in 1743, commented that there were only two public buildings in Forfar—the church and the tolbooth. The church he described as having two aisles, one to the north, the other to the south; and a fine steeple of slate on the west, which still housed two bells, one of which came from the Strang family (*see* pp 22–3). There were, however, other, less prominent, public works to be maintained. The schoolhouse needed constant upkeep; 300 merks, for example, was borrowed by the council in July 1752 for its repair. The decision to set it up for public auction four months later suggests that it was becoming too great a financial burden on the town. The water supply to the town was still dependent on wells. The Quarrel Well and that in front of Thomas Huntar's house (*see* pp 21 & 22) served the west part of the town; but there was a great scarcity of water at the east end; and, in 1751, the council took the decision to dig a new well there.[174] In spite of some expansion of the town to the east, Forfar was, clearly, still a small town, with, it was claimed, only about 300 families, which, if correct, probably accounted for a population of around 1,200 to 1,300.[175] According to a census taken at this time, there were 2,450 people in the parish as a whole, so this estimate of the town's population was possibly accurate.[176] Interestingly, in spite of the evidence of the Hearth Tax (*see* pp 23–4), the visitor deemed that 'there [were] neither gentlemens houses the house of Lowre which [was] about two miles to the southward of Forfar excepted...in this paroch worth the notice'.[177] Certainly, in the first half of the century there were so few men of standing that it was feared that 'a penury of fitt persons for representing the magistracy may happen'.[178]

Pococke, visiting seventeen years later, in 1760, was equally unimpressed. Forfar, he felt, was 'a poor illbuilt small town of farmers, innkeepers and linen manufacturers'. He noted the large quantity of flax grown around the town, which the local people spun for sale to the weavers. The unbleached green cloth was then sold on and exported to London and, from there, mostly to north Africa.[179]

By 1799, visitors to Forfar saw considerable improvements. The population had risen to over 3,400, an increase of over 1,000 inhabitants in the twelve years following 1781.[180] Grain of every sort flourished in the fields, but it was flax that abounded—there was 'perhaps more flax raised than in any space of the same extent in Scotland'. The flax was then manufactured into osnaburgs and other linen goods by the inhabitants.[181] Osnaburg was a loosely woven, coarse lint or tow-based, low-grade unbleached linen cloth, which had been made originally in Osnabruck in Germany; it was extremely popular in the West Indies and North America, both rapidly expanding markets.[182] This introduction of the manufacture of osnaburg, from Arbroath in 1738–9, was boosted in the 1740s by subsidies from the government on coarse linen exported, payable on all linen that was valued at under 18d per yard. Osnaburg was normally priced at between five to twelve pence per yard.[183] The weaving industry in the town increased rapidly; there had been forty looms early in the century, but by 1750 there were some 140, and, by the 1790s, between 400 and 500. The booming industry attracted migrants to the town and the nature of the workforce changed as a consequence; there were more male textile workers than earlier in the century, when the trade had been dominated by women.[184] Between 1819 and 1822, Forfar's average annual figure of 2.6 million yards of osnaburg was to outrival even Dundee's 2.1 million.[185] The picture in the early nineteenth century is in stark contrast to that of 100 years earlier when, in 1737, there had been a complaint that the yarn and cloth that came from the county of Forfar was 'uneven and slackly spun' and that it was of small measure.[186]

figure 9
The parish church, built in 1791

Forfar still continued in its role as market town for the surrounding country districts. A weekly market was held every Saturday, where, as well as routine sales and purchases, much country business was also done. As a result, branches of both the Dundee Banking Company and the Bank Company of Aberdeen had been established. A weekly market was held on the street on a Wednesday between Martinmas and Candlemas, when fat cattle were sold; and on the same day, at seed time, work horses were sold. There were, moreover, still well-attended fairs held on the town's muir. All of these occasioned 'the spending [of] a great deal of money in the town by the country people who [attended] them'.[187]

The increased wealth of the town had a marked visual impact on the townscape. A new parish church was built in 1791 to a design of Samuel Bell, who later became burgh architect of Dundee **figure 9**.[188] It was to benefit from a new west spire in the early nineteenth century; alterations in 1836;[189] and it underwent further remodelling and improvements in the 1880s.[190] Yet much of the present structure reflects the eighteenth-century church. The episcopalians had also built their own church, or chapel, sometime between 1771 and 1775, having continued to worship in the parish church until the late seventeenth century; from 1721 until 1745 in the old church at Restenneth; and after that in private houses, secretly, because of the 'Penal Laws' passed against Scottish episcopalians in 1718, 1746 and 1748, in the aftermath of the Jacobite Risings of 1715 and 1745.[191] This building was purchased in 1835 by the presbyterians, who were finding their own parish church overcrowded.[192] Forfar was also home to a number of seceders. John Jamieson (1759–1839) of *Scottish Dictionary* fame was minister of the secession congregation from 1780, when a meeting house was erected,[193] until 1797.[194]

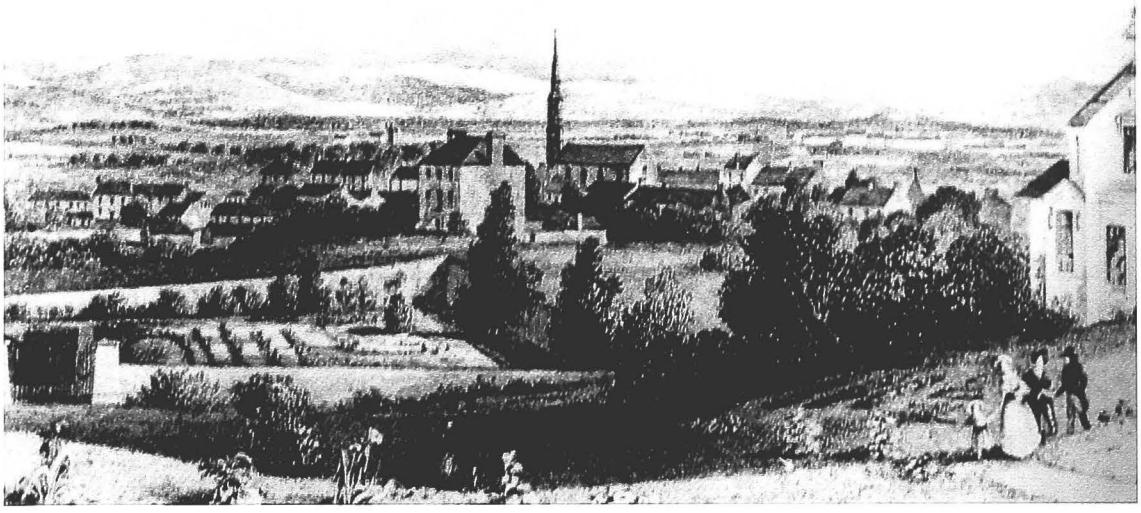


figure 10
Early nineteenth-century view of Forfar, looking north

The town also invested in municipal buildings and improvements **figure 10**. The tolbooth had been a constant drain on the town's finances. Repairs were effected in 1712, 1717 and in 1718; in 1722, the roof to the north side was found to be faulty; six years later the council called for estimates for the repair of the stair; and, in 1736, Mr Gray, painter, was to colour the council room. In 1743, the tolbooth was described as consisting of 'a closs prison and some shops off the street. In the second story [*sic*] [was] another prison on the east, in the middle, the town house in which the sheriff and head courts sit, a council house upon the west end of the building'.[195] By 1756, the sheriff of the county was complaining that the outer tolbooth of the burgh, where public meetings of the county were held, was in great disrepair. The council agreed to some repair work and efforts to make the tolbooth more handsome, but this was to be executed at the least possible expense to the town. In the event, the costs came to £53 25s 9d, but the council felt this to be inflated and agreed to pay only £48. By about 1780, the tolbooth was so ruinous that its replacement was essential.

At this time, the council started to purchase property and areas of land near to the tolbooth. Some £300 was disbursed, as it was felt that the site of the old tolbooth was too cramped; and there was a desire for a building that would accommodate both town and county in a town hall, with rooms for the sheriff court, sheriff clerk's office and town clerk's office, as well as public areas and prison facilities for both debtors and criminals; with facilities for a butter market at the rear. Subscriptions were raised from gentlemen of the county, to the sum of £846 17s, to which the town added 400 guineas, inclusive of £120 for the purchase of a house at the west end of the tolbooth. In 1785, it was decided to approach Mr James Playfair, architect in London, son of the minister of Liff and Benvie parish, and father of William Henry Playfair. By 1788, the project was completed.[196] It did not meet with the approval of all. The façade was considered, by the local minister, to have 'an agreeable effect', although the cupola conveyed 'a mean idea of the genius of the architect'. The building housed a large upper room for 'public business and amusement'; but the prison cells, according to the minister, were 'damp, dark and dismal and almost excluded from the sun and the free circulation of air'.[197] In the event, the cupola was not successful, allowing such quantities of rain into the building that the roof beneath was liable to collapse. By 1804, it was replaced with a balcony above the centre of the front wall; a clock was added to the pediment on the front of the hall; and early photographs show a belfry with a weather vane over the clock, but this, too, was taken down in 1879, because of its dangerous condition **figure 11**.[198]

The market cross stood in front of the tolbooth but, although the council considered it to be 'a piece of elegant antiquity', it was removed to Castle Hill in 1799 as it was causing a serious obstruction to traffic **figure 8**. In 1777, the West Port had been demolished for the same reason. The cross had served an additional function to that of focal point of the burgh market and place of proclamation; in 1789, Robert Campbell, merchant and

figure 11
Townhouse
or County Hall

candlemaker in Forfar, was allowed the privilege of the cross for drying and bleaching his candles. Resited at Castle Hill, it was to be the setting, in 1827, for the last public hanging, that of Margaret Wishart.[199] All that now remains of the market cross is the tower on which the cross was surmounted. The carved finial that surmounted the cross was in the form of a castellated tower. It was later found built into a garden wall, then placed at the base of the tower, where it was damaged, then disappeared and is no longer traceable.[200]

There were two established schools in the town, although numerous others existed, some not legally. In 1727, the schoolmaster complained that 'adventure' schools had opened and were teaching writing and arithmetic, without authority, to his disadvantage. The council decided that, under pain of imprisonment and a fine of £40, such schools should instruct only in reading. In 1770, a petition was placed before the council, stating that girls were 'shamefully neglected, and seldom or never in [the] town [received] the proper rudiments of education, finding the loss thereof all their lives'. No action was taken on the petition; but, without doubt, some girls were receiving education at the adventure schools. Some indication of conditions within the schools is revealed in the sources. In 1771, for example, the council announced that the children of the town should be allowed to play in the kirkyard, as there was no playground for them.[201] The council decided, in 1794, that one of the schools should be held in the upper storey of the school building, leaving the ground floor vacant for storing coal and other fuel used by the school.[202] The grammar school,[203] which was situated in Couttie's Wynd, had had a very good reputation in the middle of the century, but deteriorated through the guidance of inadequate masters. Although the masters in the 1790s were 'tolerable appointments', in the established schools 'the master [was] permitted to teach all the branches of education promiscuously, a method calculated to perplex himself and obstruct the improvement of his pupils'.[204]

Other factors that would have improved the lifestyle of the Forfar people would have been a well regulated police force, a suppression of the numerous ale houses, the cleaning and the lighting of streets and the introduction of piped water.[205] The slaughter house, which had stood in the centre of town had been removed to the north edge; this, it was felt, 'must contribute to the health of the inhabitants'.[206] In 1790, also, the authorities took the important step of ordering the inhabitants to remove dung from in front of their houses; and they divided the town into three sections, each with a tacksman, who undertook to rake the streets twice weekly, frost excluded, from 1 October until the end of March and weekly for the rest of the year, and to remove the raked dung in sacks. The backlands of the houses were to be raked by the inhabitants within one day and disposed of, if they wished; otherwise, the tacksman would remove the same to a piece of ground set aside for this purpose and sell it annually.[207]

Another useful innovation noted was the draining of the Loch of Forfar of about six metres depth of water in the latter decades of the century. This gave ready access to rich

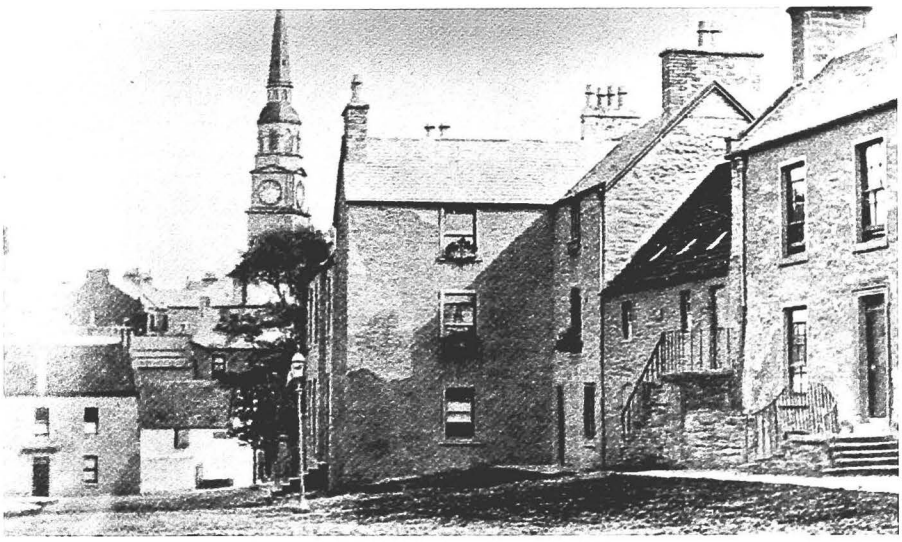


figure 12
Houses in
Little Causeway

marl on the drained bed and also by machine in the submerged areas. This marl was used to fertilise the surrounding fields. Another immediate advantage was the peat that could be gained from the drained loch bed. This was used as fuel, a scarcity in the Forfar area, coal having to be brought in from Dundee or Arbroath at great expense. A small cartload of dried peats, delivered to the door, could be had for half a crown.[208] Reclaimed land to the north of the Castle Hill was also turned to use—as bleaching greens.

A further proposed measure was the construction of a canal to connect Forfar with the sea; and, in 1770, James Watt spent several weeks in Stathmore, surveying for a canal between Forfar and Perth.[209] The Turnpike Act for the Forfar region was enforced from 1789; and, although initially there were objections to the tolls that would be charged at the turnpikes or toll houses of these newly improved roads, it was soon felt that such measures could only be of benefit to Forfar's trade; and the roads to Dundee and Arbroath were the first to be completed.[210] By 1795, a new line of road from Forfar to Brechin was also proposed, which would eventually follow the line of Castle Street; and, four years later, estimates were taken for the cost of covering the ditch to the south of the town, to the east side of the chapel and making a road adjoining the ditch.[211]

It was not merely public works that improved the townscape. Private dwellings also highlighted the increasing wealth and attention to the built environment **figure 12**. Whereas, in 1745, few houses had been slated, most were now roofed with slate from the numerous quarries nearby.[212] Totally new houses had also been constructed; and their masonry was deemed to be 'neat and substantial'. Care was also being taken that building regulations were enforced in the rapidly extending part of the town; and, in the older section of the town, irregularities, such as failure to conform to the building line, were removed when rebuilding took place. Such was the expansion in the town that the magistrates and council encouraged development of the south muir, by the offer of advances of money to tenants to build houses there.[213] Houses on the north side of Back Wynd and east of Canmore Street first appeared in 1789 and there were buildings on the north side of Little Causeway by at least 1790. Couttie's Wynd was opened up off the High Street by 1766 and Osnaburg Street was constructed in 1783 **figure 13**.[214] From 1793, the town streets benefited from lighting, after John Goodall, tinsmith from Montrose, was ordered to produce street lamps, but whether these functioned on candle or oil the records do not say. A lamplighter was appointed the next year, being paid five shillings per week; but gradually the inhabitants shared the cost of lighting and the savings were put to poor relief.[215] Most of the houses for the trades people were two-storeyed, with four rooms and a garret, each room being about sixteen feet square. For this a rental of between twenty and forty-five shillings per annum was paid, depending partly on how close the property was to the market place, the hub of town life.[216] To protect the town property, in 1795, the authorities invested in a fire engine; and, a little later, a shed to keep it in, at the east gate of the church.[217]

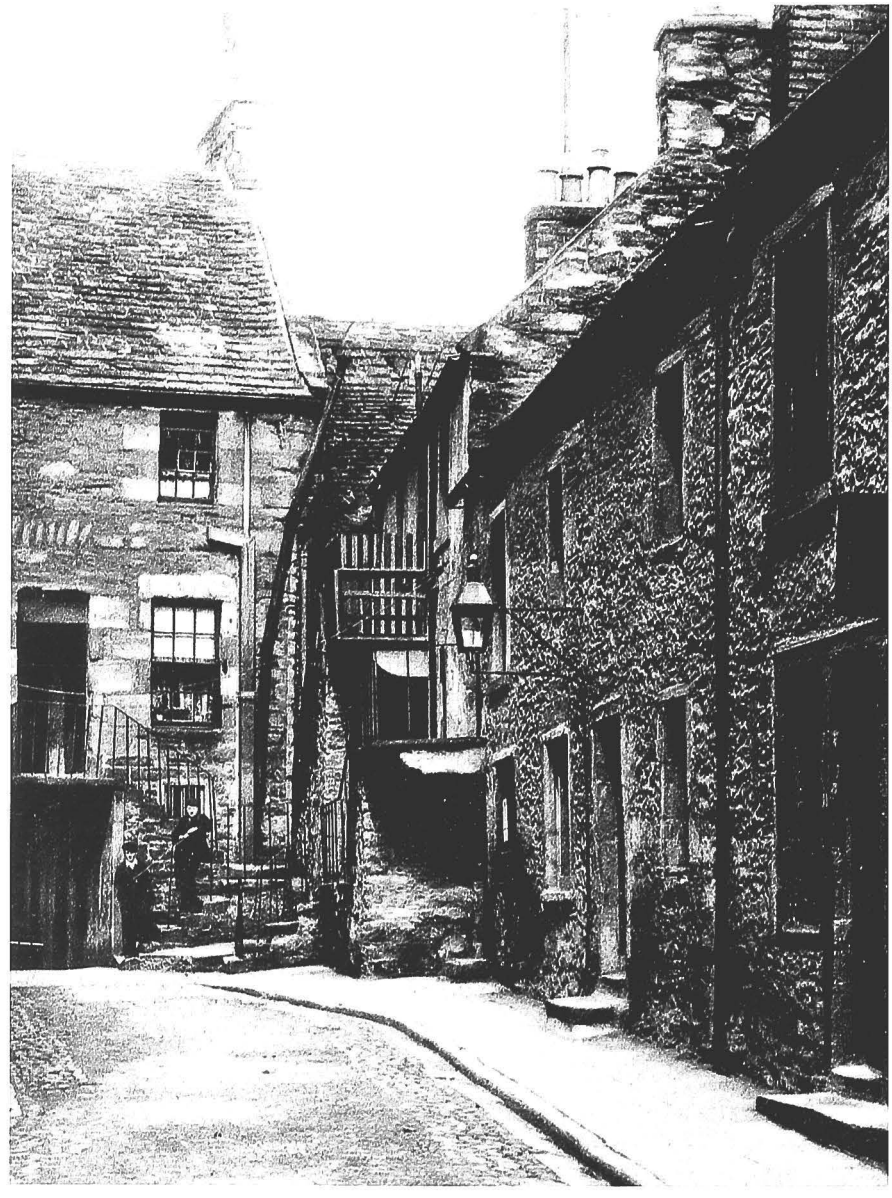


figure 13
Osnaburg Street

Life styles also improved with the incoming of wealth to the town. It was claimed that, in the 1730s and 1740s, there were no more than seven tea-kettles, seven hand-bellows and as few watches in Forfar. By the 1790s, 'tea-kettles and hand-bellows [were] the necessary furniture of the poorest house in the parish, and almost the meanest menial servant [had to] have his watch' **figure 14**. Although the price of food had doubled and even, in some cases, trebled, in the twenty years before the 1790s, the working people were, nevertheless, able to purchase all they needed; and they were better able to pay than when provisions were cheaper. There were, however, a number of poor in the town, who were supported from the profits on land bought with the donations of the Strang brothers (*see* p 21) by weekly collections at the church door and certain savings. This provided the poor with a monthly dole, supplies of shoes, clothing and house rent.[218] Although certain more substantial individuals might on occasion experience financial hardship, 'it [had] been observed, to the honour of the merchants of Forfar, by the people from a distance who[had] had long and extensive dealings in this country, that there [was] no town in Angus, where they [found] fewer bankruptcies and more punctual payments'. As recently as the 1770s and 1780s, it was said, 'it was no uncommon thing to see the wife of a wealthy burgess going to church arrayed in a rich silk gown covered by a homely plaid'. By the 1790s, however, silk mantles and bonnets, and fashionable headdresses [were] no

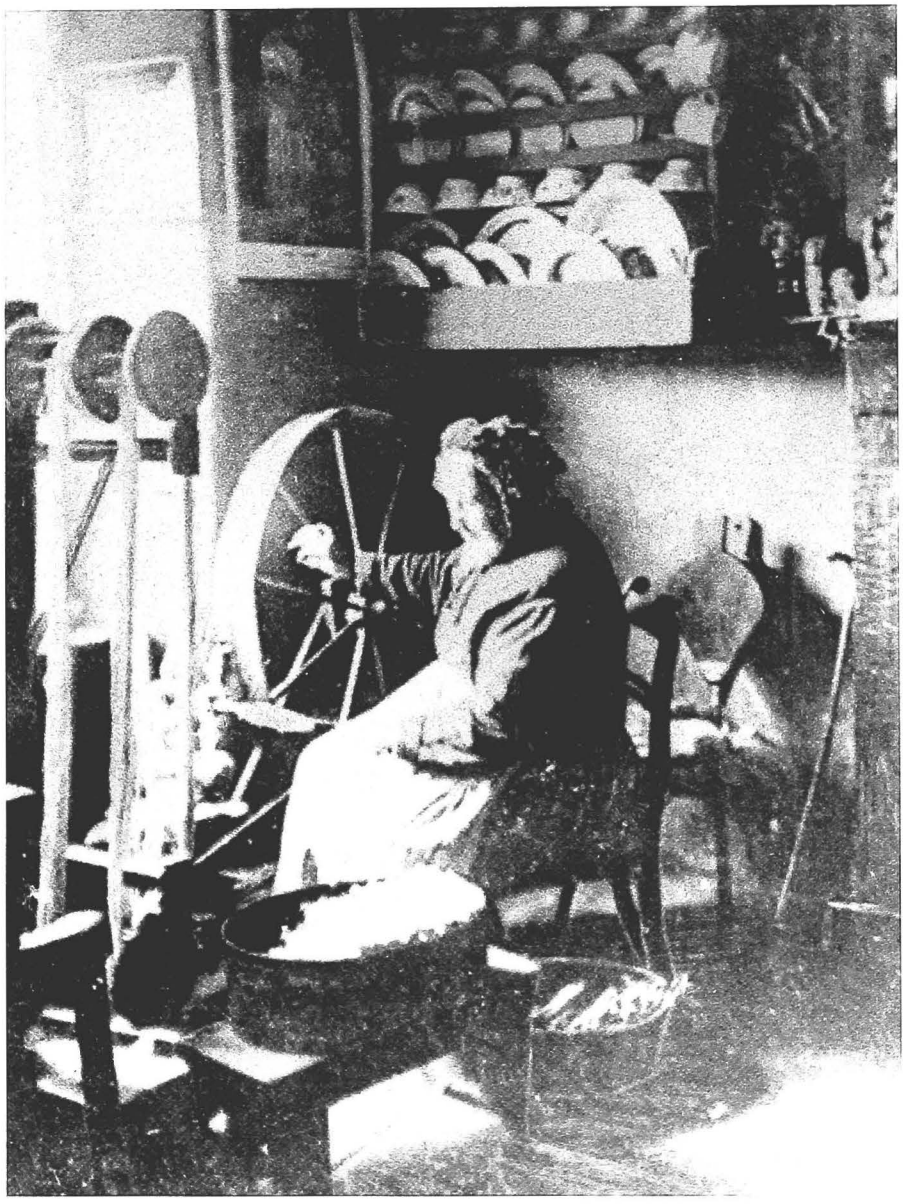


figure 14
Interior of a nineteenth-century house

rarities; and even the servant girls [began] in this respect to ape the dress of their superiors'. Balls had been held in the town on only one or two occasions per year, but, by the 1790s, entertainments were held throughout the year, and particularly in the winter season, when a monthly concert of Italian and Scots music, followed by a dance, was attended by 'a company of ladies and gentlemen dressed in the modern fashion'. Subscriptions to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the *Bee* and scientific, religious, moral and political periodicals were also increasingly commonplace and had 'shed an evident lustre on the conversation of many'.[219]

post-script

The townscape of Forfar was to see much change in the next two centuries, although the central core holds, to this day, reminders of the town's historic past, both in the street pattern and in some of its standing buildings (*see* pp 71–5).

One major change, at the very heart of the town, was the erection of the sheriff court house, to the rear of the townhouse, around 1824, on the 'spoot' of Castle Street *see* **figure 24**. This was designed by David Neave, who later became burgh architect of Dundee. The partial function as a gaol at the centre of the town was superseded by the construction of a

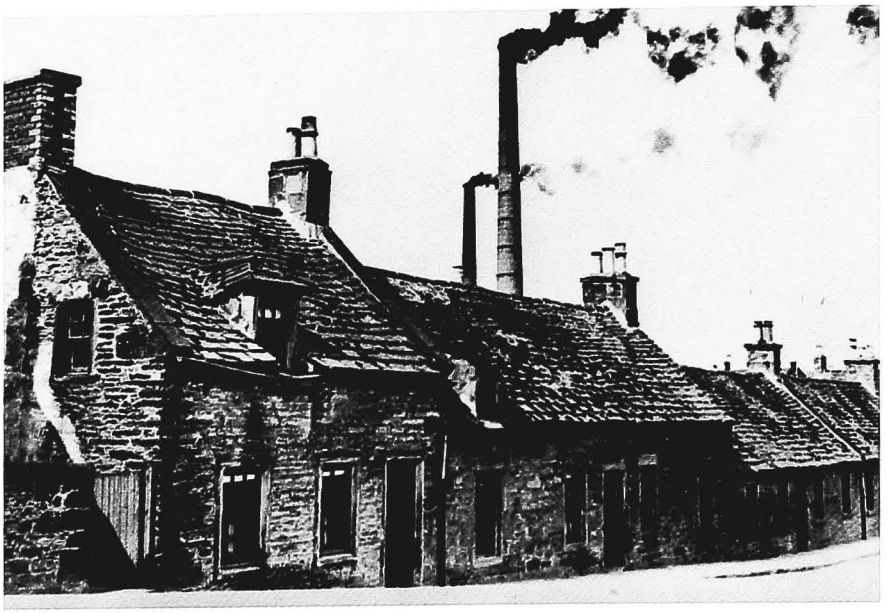


figure 15
South Street

prison on the south side of the old town muir; and the town council purchased the old gaol portion of the hall for £200 in 1843. The present arrangement of the town and county hall dates largely from about 1847 and, in the nineteenth century, the town buildings had numerous functions, from concert hall to library, as well as serving as municipal and shrieval offices.

The parish church was endowed with a new steeple, some of the stones of which, according to local tradition, came from the ruins of the old castle. 'Lang Strang', the bell shipped from Stockholm in the seventeenth century, was given pride of place in the new steeple.

Domestic buildings also benefited from the opening up of new quarries. It was from these that 'the stones of which the houses of Forfar are built, and the slates, or rather sandstone flags, with which they are covered, and the pavement for the footpaths in the town, are obtained'.[220] To this day, many of the town's buildings are of the pinkish-brown sandstone from the town's own quarries on Balmashanner Hill and from Brechin.

In 1877, an important major improvement was effected in the town. Until this time, waste water was channelled into the loch in open ditches. The streets had small open ditches, which fed water into two main ditches: one, the Lord Burn, came from the east end of the town, following the approximate line of Academy Street and Chapel Street, before crossing West High Street and passing to the west of Castle Street. The other, called Cadger Burn, ran from Paddock Myre, along Don Street and met the loch at roughly where the Reid Hall now stands. Domestic refuse and dirt was disposed of in dry privies and ash pits. Culverted disposal of noxious waste made a radical improvement in the townscape;[221] but sewage now entered the loch entirely untreated, which, in turn, would bring its own problems.[222] Another major innovation, which transformed the lives of the people, was the introduction of piped water. Until 1880–81, water was accessed by wells, both public and private, and by collecting rainwater in butts. After samples from thirteen wells were taken in the town, in 1871, and only one found to be totally satisfactory, the authorities held a plebiscite; it found the majority against piped water. In spite of this response, the Police Commissioners, charged with responsibility for water, wisely moved ahead.[223]

Manufacturing would be revolutionised by the introduction of the power loom; and factories, housing hundreds of workers, appeared **figure 15**. In the factories, finer fabrics took the place of osnaburgs and scrims; and Forfar linen became famous, albeit with a tendency to instability and fluctuations in the fortunes of the business.[224] Building societies, banks, public halls, a new Burgh Academy and infirmary would also add to the transformation of the townscape.

Communications improved with the arrival of the railway in 1839, the opening of a direct railway line between the town and Dundee in 1867 and, soon afterwards, with a

branch line to Brechin. This went some considerable way to overcoming the lack of seaboard or waterway in the town and 'removed the last traces of that isolation which in other days handicapped it in almost every form of competition save the making of brogues'.[225] Steam power, telegraphs and the penny post also brought closer contacts.

The twentieth century was to see the expansion of the town in all directions, with numerous suburbs developing outside the central core. The famous description of a walk around Forfar at the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth centuries is a fine reminder of the smallness of the town before major development in the twentieth century transformed it. To cover the entire town, one had merely to go 'east e' toon, wast e' toon, doon e' spoot and hame'. The heart of the burgh, however, retains, to this day, many features of the early town that had once been an important medieval royal centre, later a small market centre, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries an important manufacturer of osnaburg, and, throughout its history, a burgh that was determined, no matter how small, to hold its own against its neighbours:

Bonnie Munross will be a moss,
Brechin in braw borrough toon,
But Farfar will be Farfar still
When Dundee's a' dung doon.[226]

notes

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2 B Walker & G Ritchie, *Exploring Scotland's Heritage: Fife and Tayside* (Edinburgh, 1987).

3 For a recent discussion of rock-carvings in Angus and a gazetteer of find spots, *see* J Sherriff, 'Prehistoric rock-carving in Angus', *Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal* (Glenrothes, 1995), i, 11–22.

4 A Reid, *The Royal Burgh of Forfar: a Local History* (Paisley, 1902), 256.

5 *Ibid*, 253.

6 *Ibid*, 256.

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8 *DES* 1961, 4.

9 NMRS NO 45 SE 21, 20, 85, 27, 95, 114.

10 J Sturrock, *Sale Catalogue. Catalogue of the Unique Collection...formed by the late John Sturrock Esq., FSA Scot, of Dundee & Monikie, Forfarshire, To be Sold by Auction, Mr Dowell...No 18 George Street, Edinburgh...29th, 30th & 31st October, 1889.*

11 Hill forts in the area include the Brown and White Caterthun, Finavon Hill and Turin Hill; *see* Walker & Ritchie, *Exploring.*

12 NMRS NO 45 SE 117 & 118. Examples of souterrains can be seen at Ardestie, Carlungie and Tealing; *see* Walker & Ritchie, *Exploring.*

13 NMRS NO 45 SE 11.

14 Pictish stones have been sub-divided into several categories or classes. Class I stones are boulders or roughly prepared slabs, which bear groups of incised or pecked symbols; Class II stones are more carefully finished slabs, on which a cross as well as symbols have been carved; Class III stones are later in date and carry only the cross.

15 *See* Walker & Ritchie, *Exploring.* For a discussion of the importance of Meigle and Aberlemno in the early medieval period, *see* A Ritchie, 'Meigle and lay patronage in Tayside in the 9th and 10th centuries AD', *Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal* (Glenrothes, 1995), i, 1–10.

16 For a fuller discussion, *see* N Atkinson, 'The coming of Christianity to Angus', *The Society of Friends of Brechin Cathedral Book of the Society,* (Trinity, 1994), xliii, 5–14.

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19 For details on the Forfar logboats and others, *see* R Mowatt, *Logboats of Scotland: with Notes on Related Artefact-Types* (Oxford, 1996).

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21 Reid, *Forfar*, 2.
22 *Ibid*, 3–4.
23 *Liber Cartarum Prioratus Sancti Andree in Scotia*, ed OT Bruce (Bannatyne Club, 1841), 354.
24 A Lawrie (ed), *Early Scottish Charters, prior to 1153* (Glasgow, 1905), 5.
25 Reid, *Forfar*, 7–8, quoting Hector Boece, 164.
26 W Macfarlane, *Geographical Collections Relating to Scotland*, 3 vols, ed A Mitchell (SHS, 1906–08), ii, 25.
27 Lawrie, *Charters*, 89.
28 A A M Duncan, *Scotland: the Making of the Kingdom* (Edinburgh, 1975), 169.
29 *RRS*, ii, 28.
30 W Bower, *Scotichronicon*, ed DER Watt (Aberdeen, 1987–93), Book ix, 81, 117, 181 & 183
31 Reid, *Forfar*, 11.
32 *ER*, i, 8.
33 *CDS*, i, 451; ii, 22, 63.
34 Reid, *Forfar*, 11–12.
35 Pryde, *Burghs*, 12.
36 *Liber Sancti Thome de Aberbrothoc*, ed C Innes & P Chalmers, 2 vols, (Bannatyne Club, 1848), i, 53, 7, 13.
37 *CDS*, iii, 314.
38 *ER*, i, 340, 418.
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42 *APS*, iv, 39.
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135 *Gazetteer*, iii, 36; *NSA*, xi, 696
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184 *OSA*, xiii, 253.
185 Whatley, *Osnaburgs*, 21.
186 *RCRB*, v, 634.
187 *OSA*, xiii, 264–5.
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189 *Fasti*, v, 284–5.
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193 *NSA*, ix, 701
194 *Gazetteer*, iii, 36.
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199 *Ibid*, 4, 5.
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217. Adam, *Reviews of the Administration*, 26.
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219 *Ibid*, xiii, 255, 256, 258, 273.
220 *NSA*, xi, 692.
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area by area assessment

pp 39–59

area by area assessment

For the purposes of this study, Forfar has been divided into two areas (Areas 1 and 2), with the east sides of Castle Street and Osnaburg Street providing the dividing boundary **figure 16**. The western half of the medieval town is contained within Area 1, the eastern half within Area 2. Some features of interest which lie outside the study area, notably St Margaret's Inch, have also been discussed.

Here some topics of relevance to both areas—the street pattern; town fortifications; water supply; industrial sites and local employment; and housing—are first discussed.

the street pattern

The date of Forfar's first settlement is unclear. The royal residence on Castle Hill (*see* **area 2, figure 21. D**) would certainly have attracted a population, not only because it offered a measure of protection to those clustered nearby, but also a royal presence and attendant court would have meant a demand for supplies and services. It may, therefore, be safely assumed, on the presumption that there was an early royal residence, that some form of township existed at Forfar before the granting of burghal status in the reign of David I, possibly near to the present High Street, as the area of land around the Castle Hill may well have been under water at this time. The evidence of logboats would confirm pre-burghal settlement (*see* p 13). With the granting of burghal status, there was, in all probability, a formal laying out of the township into tofts or burgage plots, on which the burgesses were to build their homes within a year and a day. The laying out of the new town was certainly effected early in the burgh's life, as there is soon evidence of the granting out of tofts to favoured subjects. In 1153x1162, the monks of Coupar Angus were granted a toft in the town; as was Bishop Jocelin of Glasgow in 1187x1199; and Lindores Abbey by 1195. The holding of tofts in the town by other important personages is further indication that the burgh was considered one of note. In 1189x1199, for example, Hugh, the chancellor of the King of Scots, granted his toft to the church of St Thomas the Martyr in Arbroath, although he retained at least another toft in the town; and the Bishop of Caithness held a toft here before 1204x1214.

future development

street frontages

Buildings situated in the core of the historic burgh were almost certainly constructed on the site of, or directly over, earlier buildings, a sequence possibly going back to the medieval period and continuing up to the present day (*see* also standing buildings pp 71–5). Although there have been no opportunities archaeologically to examine any of the street frontages in Forfar, evidence of earlier, possibly medieval, structures may be expected sealed beneath eighteenth- or nineteenth-century standing buildings along High Street and Castle Street and vennels leading off from them. If development proposals for sites on these streets involve demolition or the removal of existing floor levels, these should prompt an archaeological response.

An interesting feature of Forfar is the many corners, or neuks (*eg* **area 2, figure 21. I**), along High Street, a product of shifting building lines over the centuries. There are many reasons why street frontages shift. The stalls or booths that once lined the medieval market place encroached out into the street in an effort to lure potential buyers. Similarly, the stairs providing access to the upper floor of a tenement often stood tacked onto the front of the building and, over time, the building line often moved forward. Fine examples of this process can be seen in St Andrews, where some properties have moved forward to enclose the stair-towers (often referred to as forestairs) within their fabric, while others have not, leaving the stair-tower standing forward of the main building line. This process also has archaeological implications. As building lines move forward over time, earlier structures can be preserved some distance back from the new frontage. As a result, they

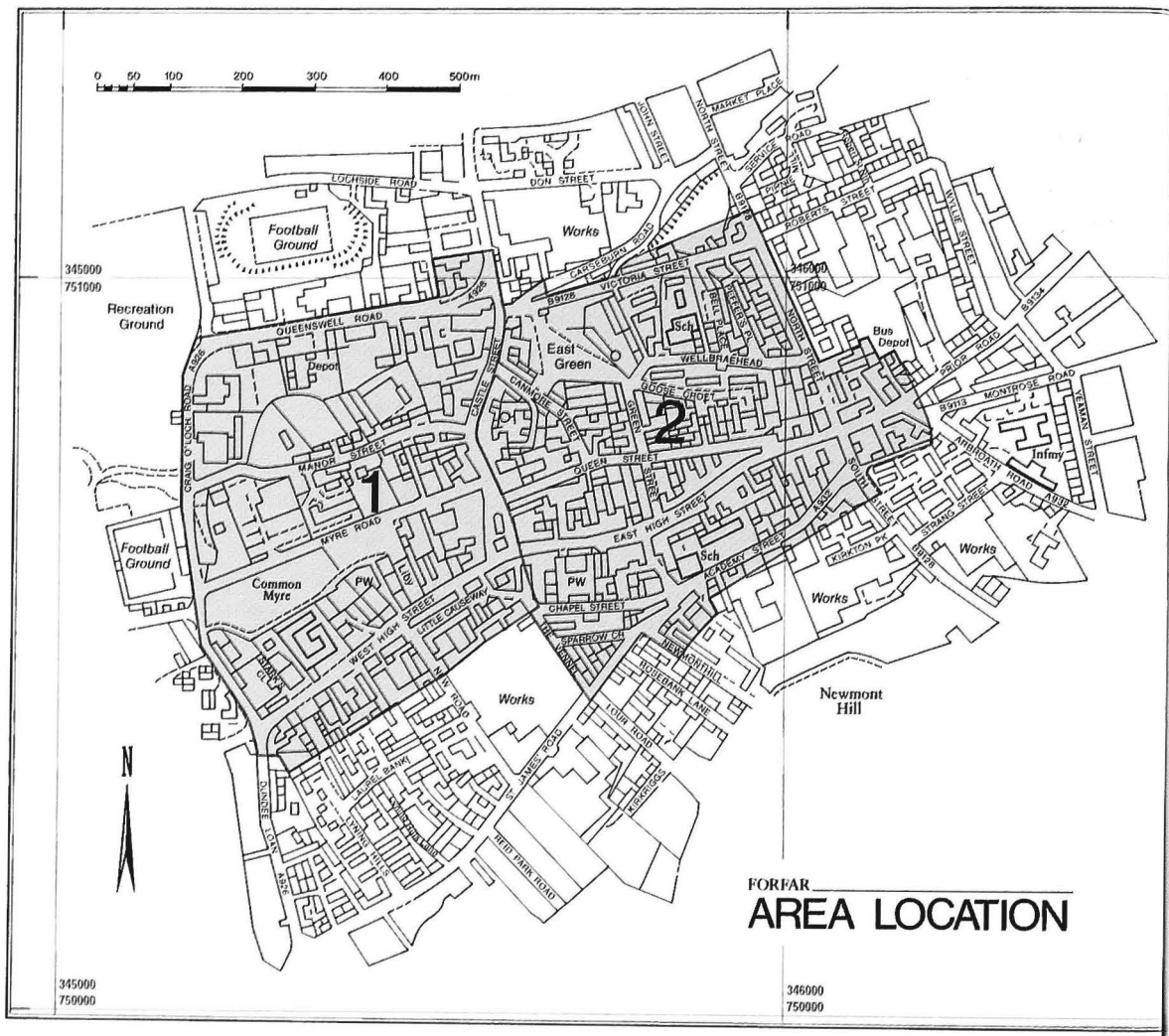

figure 16
Area location map
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The main medieval thoroughfare was High Street, running west to east, probably following the approximate alignment of the modern High Street, and this was lined with burgage plots. These ran in herring-bone pattern back from the single main street, which in time developed back lanes. It is possible that the main market area was, in medieval times, a large open thoroughfare, with the properties now on the south of West High Street and to the north of Little Causeway being later additions to the street pattern. Properties may have fronted burgage plots running east–west at the southern end of what would later be called Castle Street; but it is doubtful if these stretched far up the track towards the castle, as this area may well have been water-logged. Indeed, it is said that the deeds of some of the present properties on this site still retain fishing rights on the loch at the end of the tofts.

The street lay-out changed little in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the basic plan remaining a single street with back lanes. The street pattern is the most enduring aspect of a town plan; and Forfar's appears not to have altered even after the burning of the town, along with Dundee in 1548.

It was not until into the late eighteenth century that the street pattern showed significant change, largely as a result of the sudden increase in population (*see* p 29). Such was the expansion in the town that the magistrates and council encouraged development of the south muir, by the offer of advances of money to tenants to build houses there. Houses on the north side of Back Wynd (*see* **area 2, figure 21**) and east of Canmore Street (*see* **area 2, figure 21**) first appeared in 1789 and there were buildings on the north side of Little Causeway by at least 1790 (*see* **area 1, figure 18**). Couttie's Wynd was opened up off the High Street (*see* **area 2, figure 21**) by 1766 and Osnaburg Street **figure 13** was constructed in 1783 (*see* **area 1, figure 18**). By 1795, a new line of road from Forfar to Brechin was proposed, which would follow the line of Castle Street **figure 4** (*see* **area 1, figure 18**); and, four years later, estimates were taken for the cost of covering the ditch to the south of the town, to the east side of the chapel and making a road adjoining the ditch (*see* **area 2, figure 21**). From 1793, the town streets benefited from lighting, after John Goodall, tinsmith from Montrose, was ordered to produce street lamps, but whether these functioned on candle or

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can often escape the destruction caused by the digging of new foundations. Earlier cobbled street surfaces and contemporary buildings have been found several metres behind the line of the modern street frontage in Perth and at Abroath. Similarly, if building lines move back, as a result of street widening, earlier structures can be preserved beneath modern street levels. Both situations are possible in Forfar, particularly along the southern frontage of East High Street.

burgage plots

Behind the frontages of Castle Street and West High Street were the backlands of the burgage plots **figure 23**. Over time, these were gradually built over as pressure for space within the town increased and the frontages were filled up (a process known as repletion). Open, undeveloped gardens, the property boundaries of which often 'fossilised' those of earlier medieval burgage plots, are rapidly disappearing in most Scottish towns. Few examples survive within Area 1, but fortunately, a number of gardens still survive in Area 2, particularly on the north side of East High Street between the junction of Queen Street and a point opposite the parish church. There has, however, been a considerable terracing towards the end of these plots, which would have terminated at Queen Street (formerly Back Wynd), to counteract the sharp slope here. In places, this will have preserved archaeological deposits, while in other places it will have largely destroyed them.

Evidence of burgage plots survives buried beneath modern buildings and car parks as well as in private gardens. They are a valuable source of information to the urban historian and archaeologist, as they often document the activities and conditions of

oil, the records do not say. A lamplighter was appointed the next year, being paid five shillings per week; but gradually the inhabitants shared the cost of lighting and the savings were put to poor relief. Care was taken that building regulations were enforced in the rapidly extending part of the town; and in the older section of the town irregularities, such as failure to conform to the building line, were removed when rebuilding took place **figures 20, 22 & 23.**

The twentieth century was to see the expansion of the town in all directions, with numerous suburbs developing outside the central core. The heart of the burgh, however, retains many features of the early town. The famous description of a walk around Forfar at the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth centuries is a fine reminder of the small size of the town, before major development in the twentieth century transformed it. To cover the entire town, one had merely to go 'east the toon, wast the toon, doon the spoot and hame'.

town fortifications

The town of Forfar owes its origins to a royal castle (*see* **area 2**). Sited on a hill, which at one time may have been an island, the fortress was in a highly defensible position. A fortified royal residence would certainly have attracted a population, not only because it offered a measure of protection to those clustered nearby, but also a royal presence and attendant court would have meant a demand for supplies and services. In 1308, however, Forfar was the first major English-held castle, south of the Mounth, to fall to Robert I, after having been taken by Edward I of England, through the good services of Philip, the Forester of Platane, and it was later destroyed on Robert I's instruction. Although royalty was, on numerous occasions, present in the town after the destruction of the castle, the burgesses were henceforth dependent on their own forms of defence.

There is no evidence that the town was walled. Scottish medieval towns were not surrounded with strong stone walls but, at most, by ditching and wooden palisading. The backlands of the tofts may well have been so protected at their 'heid dykes', perhaps punctuated with small gates giving burgesses access into the town crofts and pasturage

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everyday life in a medieval town. For this reason, all development in them should be monitored. Excavations in other medieval towns in Scotland, such as Perth, Aberdeen and St Andrews, have revealed middens, rubbish pits, cess pits and vegetable plots as common features of medieval backlands, alongside craft workshops and industrial features such as kilns. A series of three excavations at Canal Street, in Perth, for example, showed that the boundaries of these plots were not rigid. They appear to have been moved regularly, revealing a fascinating sequence of continually shifting plot boundaries and properties being amalgamated and sub-divided throughout the medieval period. The ends of the burgage plots were sometimes marked by small walls, wooden fences or ditches, and beyond that there may have been a back lane. These often survive, as at present-day Queen Street, Chapel Street and Academy Street.

wells

The location of many of the wells that served the townspeople in historic towns are unknown, and Forfar is no exception. Occasionally, they are discovered by accident, as in 1990, when a well was discovered under the pavement outside the Clydesdale Bank in Castle Street (*see* **area 1, figure 18.Q**). It had, in fact, been found some twenty-five years earlier by workmen and covered over again. The oldest well discovered (Quarrel Well) was located south of High Street (*see* **area 1, figure 18.H**), and another (Queen's Well) was established by 1822 at the north end of Castle Steet. The latter may now lie under the busy junction of Queenswell Road/Castle Street (*see* **area 1, figure 18.I**). A well, named the 'pump well', was discovered in Dundee Loan **figure 17.**

beyond; but the land to the north of the northerly burgage plots on the High Street may initially have been marshy. Until 1877, waste water from the town was channelled into the loch in open ditches. The streets had small open ditches, which fed water into two main ditches: one of these was the Lord Burn, coming from the east end of the town, following the approximate line of Academy Street and Chapel Street, before crossing West High Street and passing to the west of Castle Street. Whether this had any relationship to an early defensive ditch is unclear.

It appears that the town had only two ports, or gates, one at the east end of the High Street and the other at the west. John Wood's plan of 1822 indicates a narrowing of the street at the junction of North Loan and East High Street (*see* **area 2**). Similarly, in West High Street, at the point that Wood marked as 'West Port', there is constriction **figure 4 & 18.E**. These may indicate the sites of the ports, but probably not their original positions. Forfar was a very small town and it is unlikely that settlement stretched far along the main street in the middle ages. Ports were not intended to be truly defensible, but served rather as psychological barriers between town and country; they offered useful collection points for the tolls paid to use the burgh market, and enclosed the town at night during curfew or when danger, such as plague, threatened. There is reference to the 'gate' of Forfar in 1296, where one Alan of Blye was required to answer to the accusation of theft of a cow; but whether this gate was a town port or possibly entrance to the castle is unclear. The West Port was removed in 1777, as it was obstructing traffic; but there are no details of its construction. Wood's map indicates 'Spout Toll' at the north end of Castle Street (*see* **area 1, figure 18.F**). This was probably not an early control point, but rather an eighteenth-century addition, after the new road to Brechin was constructed (*see* p 29).

figure 17
'Pump well', discovered in Dundee Loan

water supply

The site, and the supposed antiquity of the name 'Forfar', has led to a suggestion that it derived from the Roman *or* or *orrea*, meaning a town situated on a lake. Alternatively, it has been argued that 'For-fuar' means a cold village, the Pictish prefix signifying a dwelling, homestead or hamlet. Certainly, the loch played an important part in the lives of the people. According to early sources, the townspeople had relied on springs in Forfar Loch, as well as, presumably, rain barrels, for their water supply.

One major advancement in town life was the sinking of wells. By the early sixteenth century, there was at least one well in the town, the Quarrel Well, which stood to the south of the High Street (*see* **area 1, figure 18.H**). Private wells may also have been sunk in the backlands of tenements. In 1700, the council decided to sink two further wells, one in the High Street (location unknown) and another at the west end of the town. Although the Quarrel Well served the west part of the town; there was a great scarcity of water at the east end; and, as late as 1751, the council took the decision to dig a new well there. Ninewells (*see* **area 1, figure 18.R**) may also have been the site of a well dedicated to St Ninian. By 1822, according to John Wood's map **figure 4**, there was a well at the top end of Castle Street, named the Queen's Well (*see* **area 1, figure 18.I**). In the twentieth century, council employees discovered a further old well, the 'pump well', while working at Dundee Loan **figure 17**.

In 1878, a major innovation transformed the lives of the people—the introduction of piped water. Until 1880–81, water was accessed by wells, both public and private, and by collecting rainwater in butts. After samples from thirteen wells were taken in the town, in 1871, and only one found to be totally satisfactory, the authorities held a plebiscite; it found the majority against piped water. In spite of this response, the Police Commissioners, charged with responsibility for water, wisely moved ahead.

crafts and industry

Of the many crafts and industries in Forfar that would have supplied goods and services to the castle and the royal manor, most activities would leave little structural evidence in the archaeological record. The best source for these activities comes, in fact, from the contents of rubbish pits and middens where, in the right conditions, organic materials such as leather, wood and textiles, both the waste and finished products, can survive. Rubbish pits and middens are commonly found in the backlands of burgage plots and are often our sole source of evidence for crafts such as weaving (loom weights), shoemaking (leather off-cuts), coopering (wood shavings) and boneworking (horn cores and antler off-cuts).

There were two mills serving Forfar by the fourteenth century, although their locations are still not known. They do, however, require a source of water, so they must have been close to either the Lord Burn or the Don Burn. Little is known of medieval mills in Scotland, as few have been excavated. Two that have been excavated were found on very different sites. The remains of a flour mill were found at the Saracen Head Inn in Glasgow, three metres below the present ground surface, while the other was found during the excavation of a Bronze Age henge monument at Balfarg, Fife. In the former, a timber-lined channel drew water from the old Poldrait Burn to power a vertical mill wheel, an impression of which survived in the stream bed. One of the paddles and a stone socket for the axle were also found in the stream. The mill itself was timber-built with a porched loading bay for carts. Where there are mills there are also weirs, leats (lades) and mill races. A weir was required to divert water from a river or stream to a channel, or leat. A 'tail race' returned the water that had been through the mill to the river, to prevent 'back-water' impeding the mill-wheel. The tail race of a mill was found at Balfarg.

More intensively industrial processes, however, such as malting and tanning, stand a better chance of survival, as they require tanks or vats and kilns, all of which were sunk below ground level and later backfilled rather than demolished. A malting operation, comprising a watertight, clay-lined vat for germinating the barley, and a kiln for drying

was found in the backlands of Canal Street in Perth, and a tanning works has more recently been discovered adjacent to the castle at St Andrews. A tannery is recorded on Wood's 1822 plan of the town at 139–45 Castle Street (*see* **area 1, figure 18.P**). This area has been much developed in recent years, but tanks may survive below ground, as they did at a similar site in Crieff. Here, a series of inter-connected wooden tanks, which may have been installed in the late eighteenth century, survived several developments on the same site until they were discovered by accident in 1993. The tanks were found to contain huge quantities of the oak bark used as a preserving agent.

A windmill is known to have been built in 1644 at the north end of the town, beyond Forfar Loch. This was still standing when the railway arrived in 1839 and was apparently incorporated into the fabric of one of the depots (*see* **area 2, figure 21.P**).

The East Green area, where the logboats were discovered, is also referred to as *limepots* (*see* **area 2, figure 21.Q**). The close proximity of this area to the site of the castle has led to the suggestion that masonry from the castle complex was being broken up here after it was sacked in the fourteenth century. The lime from the mortar would have been useful for other building works and for agricultural purposes. Spreads of rubble may be all that survives of this operation.

industrial sites and local employment

The first dwellers in the town probably found occupations supplying the nearby castle with food and services. After its demise in the early fourteenth century, this form of employment would not totally have ceased, as royalty continued to visit the town (*see* p 16). It may safely be assumed that food and drink production continued to hold an important part in community life. The making of clothes and spinning and weaving of material for the same was probably home based, although the production of leather for shoes and jacks may have been a specialist craft. The *prepositus*, the principal officer of the town, was stated to be an armourer in 1327, which is indication of a level of specialism in the town.

By 1359, a mill in the town was under construction, or possibly undergoing major repair; six years later, it is known that there was an eel pond in the town; and by 1384, there was at least a second mill; all of which would gave provided a measure of employment to the townspeople. By the early sixteenth century, the mills were called the Little Mill and the Loch Mill. As well as the two water mills, a windmill was erected in 1644 (*see* **area 2, figure 21.P**).

There may have been a surgeon in the town. In 1540, James V, on the forfeiture of John, Lord Glamis, transferred various lands around Forfar to James Watson, surgeon, and his wife, but whether this implies that he was resident in the town is unclear.

An important craft in the town by the seventeenth century, which may well have had its origins in medieval times, was that of the cordiners or shoemakers. Dispute arose with Brechin in 1610, when the burgesses of Forfar maintained that they were being molested at Brechin fair and prevented from conducting their lawful trade, particularly by the cordiners, who tried to make the Forfar cordiners pay customs. Forfar appears to have had right on its side. Two years later, the commissioners of the Convention of Royal Burghs insisted that the deacons of the cordiner craft in Brechin had no right of malicious 'inspection' of the cordiners of Forfar, with the real intent of ruining their sales, although the right of Brechin magistrates to maintain control of quality and confiscate sub-standard workmanship offered for sale at the market was confirmed. Forfar was perhaps most famous for this manufacture of shoes. These were of a type called 'brogues' from the Gaelic *brog*, meaning a shoe, and were light and hard-wearing, made of horse leather, rather than cow.

A number of brewers were also active in the town. In 1677, there was a complaint accusing them of selling inferior beer at illegal prices. This they confessed to. Bakers and fleshers were also an essential part of town life. During the time of the Commonwealth, for a short while, a part of the army was stationed at Glamis Castle. The bakers of Forfar

were ordered to supply 'fower dussen of wheate breade for each day in the weeke' and the fleshers 'beefe, mutton, or lambe, each Munday and Wedensday [*sic*]'. If they did not oblige, the same would be forcibly exacted. The lime pots sited both to the east and west of the main route north past Castle Hill suggests leather tanning (*see* **area 1, figure 18.J** and **area 2, figure 21.Q**). Other trades included tailors, glovers and websters (weavers). These three, along with the shoemakers, received official incorporation in 1653; but the shoemakers were considered to be the oldest and wealthiest of the four trades.

Other minor industrial activities and employment are highlighted in an assessment of the town's finances in 1692. The school master's salary was £48 per annum; town officers, such as the pundler, who impounded animals, the herd, the drummer, fifer, piper, bellringer, the clock keeper and the bellman or town crier, needed to be paid and supplied with uniforms—amounting in total to £123 14s.

Pococke, visiting in 1760, was not impressed. Forfar, he felt, was 'a poor illbuilt small town of farmers, innkeepers and linen manufacturers'. He noted the large quantity of flax grown around the town, which the local people spun for sale to the weavers. The unbleached green cloth was then sold on and exported to London and, from there, mostly to north Africa.

By 1799, however, visitors to Forfar saw considerable improvements. The population had risen to over 3,400, a rise of over 1,000 inhabitants in the twelve years following 1781, alone. Grain of every sort flourished in the fields, but it was flax that abounded—there was 'perhaps more flax raised than in any space of the same extent in Scotland'. The flax was then manufactured into osnaburgs and other linen goods by the inhabitants. It was this introduction of the manufacture of osnaburg, from Arbroath in 1738–9, that resulted in a booming weaving industry: compared with forty looms in the early eighteenth century and some 140 in 1750, by the 1790s there were 400 to 500 looms in the town. This boom also attracted migrants to the town and the workforce changed, with men now becoming involved in the trade, which earlier in the century had been dominated by women.

By 1792, there had been considerable draining of the Loch of Forfar, of about sixteen feet depth of water. This not only gave employment, but also ready access to rich marl on the drained bed and, by machine, in the submerged areas. This marl was used to fertilise the surrounding fields. Another immediate advantage was the peat that could be gained from the drained loch bed. This was used as fuel, a scarcity in the Forfar area, coal having to be brought in from Dundee or Arbroath at great expense. A small cart load of dried peats, delivered to the door, could be had for half a crown. An area of reclaimed land, to the north of Castle Hill also proved useful—as bleaching greens. The market cross (*see* **area 1**), also, served a further function to that of focal point of the burgh market and place of proclamation: in 1789, Robert Campbell, merchant and candlemaker in Forfar, was allowed the privilege of the cross for drying and bleaching his candles.

By the early nineteenth century, as seen on Wood's map **figure 4**, the tannery (*see* **area 1, figure 18.P**) and slaughter house (*see* **area 1, figure 18.S**) had both been removed to the north end of the town, away from the more populated areas.

In the nineteenth century, manufacturing would be revolutionised by the introduction of the power loom; and factories, housing hundreds of workers, would appear **figure 15**. Finer fabrics took the place of osnaburgs and scrims; and Forfar linen became famous, albeit with a tendency to fluctuation in the fortunes of the business.

housing

With the granting of burghal status, there was, in all probability, a formal laying out of the township into tofts or burgage plots, on which the burgesses were to build their homes within a year and a day. The properties erected on the tofts of important burgesses would have been considerably more comfortable than those of the common burgesses and indwellers (the non-privileged residents), whose homes would have been simple, probably single-roomed structures, often shared with animals. The fact that the town could be

almost totally destroyed in 1244, by accidental fire, would suggest that building materials were wood and thatch.

There is little or no evidence of the style of houses throughout the middle ages. Taxation assessments in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries confirm, however, that Forfar was a relatively poor town. This seems at first sight to sit uneasily beside the comments of a visitor to the town, in 1684, that there were 'many good stone houses', which were slated, and from the information that emerges for the Hearth Tax assessment of 1692. In that year, it was claimed, there were no poor in the parish of Forfar. This seems unlikely to have been true. Other information that emerges from the census is perhaps more enlightening. There were only 530 properties in the parish; this immediately indicates that Forfar was a very small town, with a tiny population.

The eighteenth century was to see increased wealth in the town (*see* pp 25–31). Private dwellings highlighted this wealth and attention to the built environment. Whereas, in 1745, few houses had been slated, most were now roofed with slate from the numerous quarries nearby. Totally new houses had also been constructed; and their masonry was deemed to be 'neat and substantial'. Care was also being taken that building regulations were enforced in the rapidly extending part of the town; and in the older section of the town, irregularities, such as failure to conform to the building line, were removed when rebuilding took place. Such was the expansion in the town that the magistrates and council encouraged development of the south muir, by the offer of advances of money to tenants to build houses there. New streets were opened up, to accommodate the homes of the increasing population. Houses on the north side of Back Wynd and east of Canmore Street first appeared in 1789 and there were buildings on the north side of Little Causeway by at least 1790 (*see* **area 1**). Couttie's Wynd was opened up off the High Street by 1766. Osnaburg Street **figure 13** was constructed in 1783 (*see* **area 1**).

Most of the houses for the trades people were two-storeyed, with four rooms and a garret, each room being about sixteen feet square. For this, a rental of between twenty and forty-five shillings per annum was paid, depending partly on how close the property was to the market place, the hub of town life. To protect the town property, in 1795, the authorities invested in a fire engine; and, a little later, a shed to keep it in, at the east gate of the church **figure 9** (*see* **area 2**, **figure 21.G**).

The nineteenth century was to see further improvements. Domestic buildings benefited from the opening up of new quarries. It was from these that 'the stones of which the houses of Forfar are built, and the slates, or rather sandstone flags, with which they are covered, and the pavement for the footpaths in the town, are obtained'. Many of these buildings can still be seen today (*see* pp 71–5).

area 1

Queenswell Road/Craig o' Loch Road/rear of properties West High Street/Chapel Street/east side of Osnaburg Street/east side of Castle Street/Reid Hall **figure 18**

description

Area 1 is the less developed of the two areas, and much of it is open ground comprising an industrial zone, gardens, car parks, allotments and playing areas. Topographically, Manor Street (formerly Queen Street) follows the spine of a natural, east to west aligned ridge, from which point the ground falls away on either side, while West High Street, the other principal street in this area, slopes down towards The Cross **A**, the medieval market place. For descriptive purposes this area can be sub-divided into three smaller blocks: north of Manor Street, between Manor Street and High Street, and lastly south of High Street. Much of the land north of Manor Street has been reclaimed from Forfar Loch, and is presently an industrial zone, home to garages, workshops and factory units. Many of these line Queenswell Road, effectively an extension of Craig o' Loch Road, which together form a by-pass taking traffic away from the town centre. In places, the land falls

figure 18
Area 1

away quite sharply from Manor Street, but with the gentler slopes occupied by allotments and the Strathmore Bowling Club. The Castle Street frontage has the usual mix of shops and restaurants, but becomes more industrial towards the north end. Manor Street itself is cobbled for much of its length, fronting onto which is a mixture of tightly-packed cottages, interspersed with some recently built sheltered housing developments.

South of Manor Street, the land falls away towards Myre Road. At the west end of Manor Street, the former jute and linen works has been replaced by a supermarket, and another block has been refurbished as flats. At the eastern end of Manor Street, large private gardens extend from villas set back from the street frontage down the slope to a flat area occupied by the Common Myre recreation ground, Myre Road and a large car parking area. From here, the ground slopes up towards West High Street, and provides a good vantage point to view some of the former burgage plots as they extend back from High Street. The western end of West High Street is occupied by the Strathmore Springs bottling plant, the police station and the Bank of Scotland, all of which would have lain just outside the limits of the medieval town. The official western entrance to the town is thought to have been approximately where St Margaret's Church stands today **B**. There has been some new development on the north side of West High Street, namely the post office and the library. The Meffan Institute, the local museum and art gallery and venue for the 'Forfar Story', is also to be found here. The Castle Street west frontage is busy, with shops, a small supermarket and the Royal Hotel facing onto an island of buildings in The Cross. Here stand the Town and County Hall **C**, built in 1788, and the former Sheriff Courthouse **D** built in 1821–4.

West High Street appears to have been much wider than it is today, and the island of nineteenth-century buildings that forms its southern frontage is thought to have its origins in medieval encroachment, perhaps as early as the fourteenth century. This block of buildings has a double frontage, as houses also front southwards onto Little Causeway. Formerly known as Common Street or South Street, Little Causeway is now an attractive cobbled courtyard. Equally attractive is Osnaburg Street **figure 13**, essentially a pend opened up in 1783 which leads off from Little Causeway/Chapel Street and which enters onto High Street just east of The Cross. South of, and overlooking, Little Causeway, is one of the many former textile works, recently extended by Don and Low Ltd, and which now produces polypropylene.

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area 1

future development

There are several properties on West High Street and Castle Street that are currently vacant or that are occupied but which may be subject to planning applications in the near future.

archaeological potential

Features of interest, which fall within this area, include the site of a royal manor, the market place, complete with market cross, tolbooth, and tron, the West Port, Marketgait, Ninewells, and the site of the only controlled archaeological excavation to have taken place to date within the burgh.

The area most sensitive to development, essentially the medieval town, is defined by Castle Street (including The Cross) as far as Queenswell Road, and West High Street as far west as St Margaret's church. The southern limit is more difficult to identify, as the back lane that once marked the end of the properties extending south from West High Street has now disappeared; and identification is further complicated by the insertion of Little Causeway. The historic (medieval) core of the town has largely escaped the developments commonly found in many other towns, such as shopping centres, multi-

markets and fairs

One of the most important liberties granted at the foundation of a medieval burgh was economic privilege. This normally brought the right to hold a weekly market and freedom from payment of toll, throughout the country. Reference is made to Forfar's market place as early as 1230, when an infant 'of the race of mac William' was struck against the shaft of the market cross, in the market place, and had her brains dashed out. The medieval market was held on a Sunday; and all within the hinterland of Forfar were obliged to attend this market for the sale of goods. Overlapping economic jurisdictions, however, meant that there was constant dispute over precise market rights. Dundee, for example, received a charter from Robert I giving the burgesses of Dundee the sole right to trade, throughout the sheriffdom of Forfar, in wool and skins, two of the staple commodities in the Scottish economy; it laid down that all goods brought by foreign merchants to the shire should first be offered for sale at Dundee; and decreed that all foreign merchants in the sheriffdom were to trade only with Dundee burgesses, 'reserving the rights of the other burghs within the said sheriffdom'. Here was clear potential for dispute, not only between Forfar and Dundee, but also with the merchants of Montrose and Brechin, who were being denied their due privileges. In an attempt to protect some of their threatened privileges, Forfar entered into a free trade agreement with Montrose, to the exclusion of Brechin, in 1372. Forfar's position as an inland town, however, meant that although it continued to function as a small market centre, it inevitably lost out to the east coast ports of Arbroath, Montrose and Dundee.

The medieval market place, with its market cross, probably stood in its later position, to the north of the High Street **A**.

It is clear that Forfar continued, into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to function as a small, inland market town, not financially very secure, and often at loggerheads with its neighbours over trading rights. A measure of its financial difficulties may be seen when even Brechin, not a royal burgh and also an inland centre, was rated higher than Forfar. In 1533, charges were imposed for the maintenance of the king's artillery: Dundee supported thirty-six men at £108 per month; Montrose eight at £24 per month; Brechin five at £15 per month; Arbroath four at £12 per month; and Forfar only one and a half at £4 10s monthly. In 1535, the burghs in the Tay region paid 29.2% of a national taxation. Of this, Dundee's share was 9.7%, Montrose's 2.7%, Brechin's 1.8%, Arbroath's 1.4% and Forfar's only 0.5%. Brechin, moreover, was assessed at forty crowns to support an embassy in 1550, whereas Forfar paid a mere twelve crowns. In 1587, Forfar

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storey car parks and new housing. Where these are to be found, they lie outwith the historic core. The archaeological potential of Forfar is, therefore, perhaps higher than in many other Scottish towns.

royal manor

There is sufficient documentary evidence to suggest that there may have been a royal residence or manor, in the fourteenth century, in Forfar other than the castle, but exactly what it would have looked like is not so clear. The traditionally accepted site for this residence is Manor Street, which runs along the spine of a natural ridge or spur that would have been largely surrounded by Forfar Loch **K**. Although this afforded a certain degree of natural defence, an additional ditch would have provided added security. Within this possible enclosure may have stood a range of timber or, more likely, stone buildings.

There have been few examples of such sites excavated, while of the type of building that may have served as a royal residence, most have been found on mottes, where earlier timber buildings had been replaced in stone. A possible comparison may be with Rattray, Buchan, where a complex of four stone buildings was established on the top of the motte probably in the 1320s. The focus was a large, single-storeyed hall, 23 m long, with clay-

was exempted from attendance at the Convention of Royal Burghs for three years, on account of 'povertie and greitt penurie'. A further exemption, of the same period of time, was granted in 1593. And, four years later, the Convention assessed Forfar at 6s 8d, compared with Arbroath at 13s 4d and Brechin at a rate of 23s.

Disagreements between Arbroath and Forfar resulted in Forfar being fined for non-compearance at the meeting of the Convention of Royal Burghs in June 1582. Sympathy was clearly with Arbroath, as it was granted the Forfar fine for the repair of its church, pier and shoreworks. Forfar would again be fined for absence in 1605 and 1609. The records, however, indicate that Forfar was not alone in failing to appear at the Convention. Brechin and Elgin, for example, were also fined, along with Forfar, for non-compearance in 1591. Disagreements arose also with Dundee. In 1589, Forfar raised an action against Dundee, claiming that the magistrates of Dundee were forcing payment of customs on the people of Forfar, when these were not legal. Although the resolution of the matter took until 1609, the commissioners found for Forfar. In 1606, Forfar also found itself in dispute with Perth and Brechin. It was maintained that these two burghs were charging Forfar inhabitants higher customs than were due, preventing them selling their wares. The argument with Brechin was taken even further, in 1610, when the burgesses of Forfar maintained that they were being molested at Brechin fair and prevented from conducting their lawful trade, particularly by the cordiners (shoemakers) who tried to make the Forfar cordiners pay customs. Forfar appears to have had right on its side. Two years later, the commissioners insisted that the deacons of the cordiner craft in Brechin had no right of malicious 'inspection' of the cordiners of Forfar, with the real intent of ruining their sales, although the right of Brechin magistrates to maintain control of quality and confiscate sub-standard workmanship offered for sale at their market was confirmed.

Forfar was not without fault. It was warned, in 1612, to exact more diligence against unfree traders. These were people who came to the market without being burgesses or having paid the due fees, or tolls or customs, for the use of the market. A year later, the town exhibited its efficiency in checking market abuses, by preventing the inhabitants of Kirriemuir from dealing in merchandise at the market of Forfar, to which they had no right. This had been so serious an on-going source of tension between the two towns that, in 1581, their dispute had been brought before the Court of Session; and Edinburgh Burgh Council considered Forfar's case of such import that they decided to support the clerk of Forfar, at the Session, by two bailies and some of their council members. As a result, two years later, the bailies, council and community of Forfar successfully escheated

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the goods of four indwellers in Kirriemuir for selling timber and staple goods contrary to

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bonded walls. There were simple, mortared architectural mouldings for the doors and windows, which were probably glazed, and the roof appears to have been thatched. The hall had been sub-divided into three rooms, the largest being the central room, with two benches set facing each other. A kitchen lay off the main hall to the north, and around the main buildings were ranged a number of furnaces and ovens.

Demonstrating the long history that these sites had, the stone hall was found to have replaced an earlier timber-framed hall. This 20 m long and 10 m wide, three-aisled hall was supported on clay and rubble foundations. A stone base for a bench with an adjacent hearth was found at the east end of the main, central room. This was not, in fact, the earliest phase of occupation on the motte, as a timber palisade and bank around the edge of the motte had been partly flattened to accommodate the timber hall in the early 1200s. Interestingly, the artefacts and animal bone assemblage recovered from Rattray suggests that the manorial complex served as a base for hunting. Red, roe and fallow deer, wild boar, hare, rabbit and wolf bones were found, along with arrowheads and hunting horns.

A watching brief was carried out in 1995 during the conversion of a former store to a house, at 3 Manor Street **M**. This site lies on the southern side of Manor Street just to the west of its junction with Castle Street, and was the first opportunity to investigate a possible approach to the site of the royal manor. The results were negative, revealing

the decree of the Lords of Session. There was clearly a precise hierarchy of economic privilege in the network of towns in the Angus region.

It is known that a market cross had stood in the town for some centuries (*see* p 50). Whether this was the same one as that in the market place in the sixteenth century is uncertain. Any parts of the cross made of wood would, in all probability, have had to be replaced over the previous three centuries or so. The cross, however, was still the focal point of the burgh market, which in 1593 was changed from the traditional Sunday to a Friday. The market was later to be transferred from a Friday to a Saturday, as a Friday Forfar market interfered with Dundee's great weekly market.

The town fairs were held, by 1618 at latest, on the 'mure of Forfair', where there would have been much less congestion. If this was a reference to the tract of common land that lay to the west of the town, the common muir **G**, and which reputedly had once been under water was, clearly, no longer even marshy in the early seventeenth century. Indeed, it is possible that the muirs around the town had been naturally drained for some time, since, in 1590, John Brown, younger, of Fordell in Fife heritably infeft of the lands of Craignethy in the shire of Forfar, maintained that he and his predecessors had been in peaceable possession of the right to pasture and digging for divots on the 'common moor of Forfar, called the King's moor, past the memory of man'.

In 1684, a new market cross was erected in the town, at the crown's expense. At the time, it was described as 'very stately' **figure 8**. The same visitor also commented on the 'many good stone houses', which were slated; the 'good tolbuith with a bell'; the 'large church and steeple well finished with bells'; as well as the town's trade in 'cremerie ware [small goods sold to pedlars] and linen cloath', and its weekly market and four great fairs.

Forfar continued in its role as market town for the surrounding country districts into the eighteenth century. A weekly market was held every Saturday, where, as well as routine sales and purchases, much country business was also done. As a result, branches of both the Dundee Banking Company and the Bank Company of Aberdeen had been established. A weekly market was held on the street on a Wednesday between Martinmas and Candlemas, when fat cattle were sold; and on the same day, at seed time, work horses were sold. The butter market was held at the rear of the townhouse. There were also still well-attended fairs held on the town's muir. All of these occasioned 'the spending [of] a great deal of money in the town by the country people who [attended] them' **figure 19**.

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natural sands and gravels only *c* 0.12 m below modern ground level, at the western end of the site. They were slightly deeper down, *c* 0.9 m, at the eastern end of the site, and were found to have been sealed by garden soil that had been brought onto the site. A light brown sandy clay, *c* 0.1 m thick, was visible between the garden soil and the natural gravel, and may represent an old ground surface. No artefacts were recovered.

market place

The tolbooth is thought to have stood on or near the junction of High Street and Castle Street. This area now contains the Town and County Hall **C** and the former Sheriff Courthouse **D**, the foundations of which are most likely to have destroyed any remains of former structures on the site. It is possible that the tolbooth may have been incorporated into the fabric of the present buildings in this area, or beneath them, as the sixteenth-century parish church had probably incorporated part of the chapel within its new fabric **figure 9**. There is also a tradition of the tolbooth standing on the corner of Castle Street (west frontage) and West High Street. Any development of this building would allow this to be tested archaeologically.

The tolbooth is also a useful reminder that The Cross itself was the centre of activity and should not be forgotten when considering, for example, environmental improvements and the insertion of new services. Evidence of medieval street levels may be preserved, either as metalled surfaces or as accumulated midden deposits. The remains of other

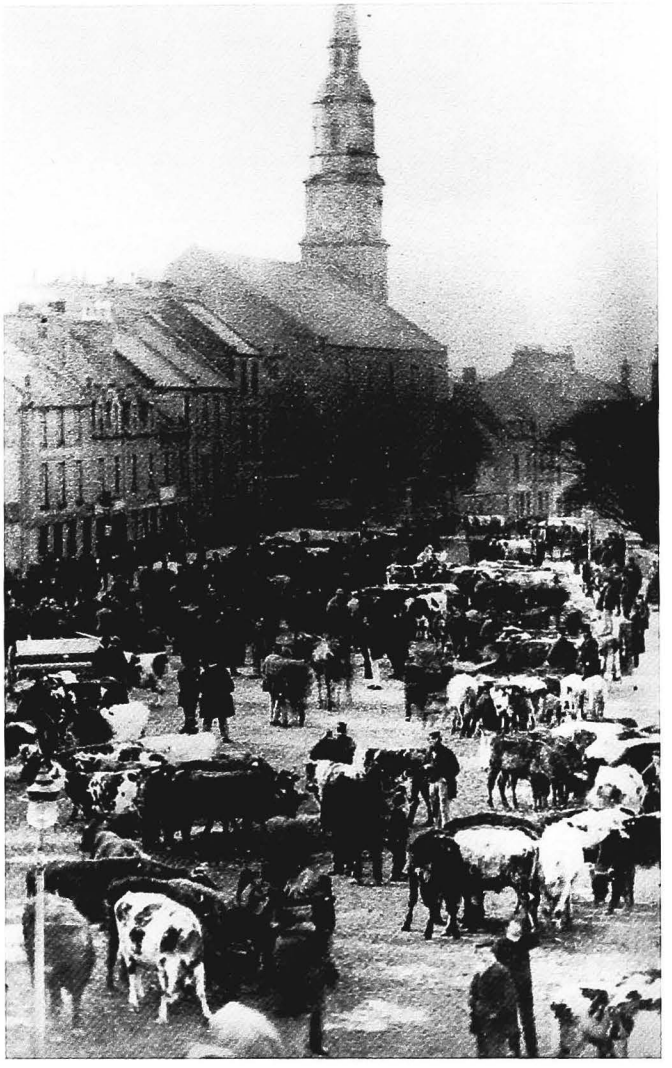

figure 19
Cattle market, High Street
c 1870

archaeology

important features of the medieval townscape may also be sealed beneath the present road surface—the bases or plinths for the market cross and the tron, which stood outside the tolbooth—of which no archaeological evidence has yet been found.

17–21 Castle Street

There have been two opportunities to examine the burgage plots within this area, both of which clearly demonstrate that evidence for activity within burgage plots can survive beneath more modern buildings and car parks. The only controlled archaeological excavation to have taken place in Forfar to date was in 1979 at 17–21 Castle Street **P**, the results of which have since been published (Spearman, 1982). The excavation was carried out in advance of redevelopment, the area investigated lying some 55 m west of the Castle Street frontage. Natural sub-soil was found in the 6 m^2 trench, 1.5 m below present ground level in the western half of the site and 1.7 m in the eastern half. The major implication of this site for the archaeological potential of Forfar is the considerable depth of deposits which had accumulated over time, effectively sealing and preserving earlier, medieval levels. The excavation area was small, but the remains of two rather flimsy timber-built structures were identified. The earliest comprised a series of post-holes and an associated floor surface, which appears to have formed the corner of a building. This structure seems to have gone out of use, and a property boundary, in the form of a shallow gully, was established on the same line as one of the earlier walls. In turn, the gully

Although the council considered the market cross to be 'a piece of elegant antiquity', it was removed to Castle Hill in 1799 as it was causing a serious obstruction to traffic. Resited at Castle Hill, it was also, in 1827, to be the setting for the last public hanging, that of Margaret Wishart **figure 8**. All that now remains of the market cross is the tower on which the cross was surmounted. The carved finial that surmounted the cross was in the form of a castellated tower. It was later found built into a garden wall, then placed at the base of the tower, where it was damaged and subsequently removed; and it is now no longer traceable.

the tolbooth

The tolbooth **C** was the principal municipal building and the focal point of burgh life, along with the market cross. It functioned as a prison; as the collection point for market tolls, along with the town ports; and as the meeting place for the burgh council. Forfar, however, was in spite of its relatively small size, also the seat of the constable of Forfar, a position that had survived the destruction of the castle. There is evidence that the constable fenced, or gave legal authority to, courts in the tolbooth; and that, on occasion, justice courts were also held here, as one of the principal buildings of the district.

It is not known when the first tolbooth was built in Forfar. A bond of caution was registered for the provost and bailies of Forfar, with the privy council, in 1590, that they would build and maintain 'ane sufficient wardhous for prisonaris and keeping of thame'; but it is known that there was a tolbooth in the town by at least 1568. It would appear, however, that the bond was complied with and that the tolbooth was upgraded, at least, if not built, for twelve years later, in 1602, Thomas Bruce, servant of John Scrymgeour of Kirktoun, was securely 'held in ward in the burgh and kept in stocks', for attacking the minister, Joshua Durie. Nine years after this, there is further reference to a prisoner being 'committed to ward in the burgh tolbooth'. And, in 1627, the town had not only its 'wardhouse', but also a 'thieves hole', which would have been a secure cell, into which the prisoner was lowered by rope, or dropped.

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was abandoned, and the second of the two structures built. Partly robbed out, only the north-west corner was visible, the foundations comprising slot trenches rather than post-holes. The floor surface was formed by a thick dump of sand that had been used to seal the gully. There was a possible entrance through the east wall, and outside the building to the west lay a yard area. A hearth was also identified within the building and a possible rubbish pit in the yard. When this building went out of use, gravel was spread across the whole area.

Thick dumps of garden soil lying above the gravel indicate that the use of the backlands was subsequently turned over from providing domestic accommodation or workshop space to cultivation, and brings to a conclusion the medieval history of the site. In the seventeenth century, a wall was built, alongside which were a series of slots. These were in turn replaced by a second series of slots, dateable to the nineteenth century, which have been interpreted as latrine slots. Finally, more garden soil had accumulated, over which were spreads of rubble, probably derived from the demolition of stables behind the County Hotel when the Woolworths store was built.

The lack of rubbish pits on the site, normally so typical of medieval backlands, meant that there were few finds. There was also no evidence for organic preservation on site and the animal bone recovered was in poor condition. Out of a total assemblage of 149 sherds of pottery, only 57 were medieval, and the absence of imported pottery meant that no accurate dating of the medieval assemblage was possible.

In general, the pattern of medieval activity on this site is quite typical of medieval backlands, with land use changing from domestic accommodation to horticulture, and property boundaries shifting over time. Buildings sited so far back from the street frontage are more unusual, as is evidence for occupation in the seventeenth century. This period is

Forfar maintained, with some justification, in 1631, that it was 'the head burgh of the shire of Forfar...standing almost in the verie heart and middes of the sheriffdome...[it was] the most commodious place for holding the sheriff courts, and [had] in all times and ages bygone possessed the liberties, freedome and privileges proper and due to other head burghs...' It argued that the sheriff court should also be held in its tolbooth, since this was a right granted by parliament. This was opposed by the sheriff and lords of the shire, who maintained that they knew nothing of this grant; and that, in any event, Dundee was the traditional residence of the sheriff court as well as the most convenient. The latter factor was, apparently of most interest to the defendants. The crown found for Forfar. The provost and bailies of Forfar had equal success when they argued that the sheriff should reside in the town or appoint a deputy to do so. The verdict went to Forfar, although complaints on both matters rumbled on.

Political events in the seventeenth century were to have a profound effect on the townscape and the tolbooth played a role in these. Forfar showed its sympathies clearly in 1639. On 1 February of this year, James Graham, fifth earl of Montrose, as the covenanting colonel for both Perthshire and Forfarshire, arrived in the town to carry out an assessment of the county. All present in the tolbooth refused to sign a covenant abjuring episcopacy; and when the question arose of an assessment of the lieges of the county for suitably armed levies, the response was that they were not subject to any other authority than the crown, since 'thay wer all the kingis men'.

Forfar remained largely for the Royalist cause during the Civil War. In 1683x1722 it was said of the town that it had been 'very famous for [its] loyaltie especiallie in that base transaction when King Charles the first of ever blissed memorie was delyvered over by our Scots Parliament to the Inglish at Newcastle'. This loyalty was displayed by Provost Strang, also commissioner of the burgh to the parliament of 1647, in his objections to the handing over of the king to the rebel cause. Loyalty also resulted, however, in English forces, under Colonel Ocky, moving on Forfar, after taking Dundee in 1651, pillaging the town, opening the prison and burning all the burgh's charters and records, kept in the tolbooth for safe-keeping.

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often missing from the archaeological record, as Victorian building and levelling usually destroys these levels. Unfortunately, as urban archaeology has been primarily rescue-driven, there have been very few subsequent opportunities further to investigate medieval Forfar.

Royal Hotel

Trial excavations were also undertaken in the car park to the rear of the hotel in advance of a proposed extension **O**. The four trenches excavated in 1994 revealed the remains of the former buildings (stables) which were demolished about ten years previously. The remains of the stable block were represented by a wall, aligned north to south, and quantities of demolition rubble which had been used for infilling and levelling. Below the building remains, at a depth of 0.7 m, was a 0.4 m thick layer of loamy soil. This was found to contain pottery sherds dating from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, and is further evidence for cultivation in the backlands during the medieval period. Natural subsoil was reached at a depth of about 1.1 m.

ports

The west port was removed in 1777 when it was considered to be an obstruction to traffic **E**. The nature of this gateway into the town is not clear and it is unlikely that much would survive. Similarly, the Spout Toll, at the north end of Castle Street, is also likely to have been lost, although this may have been an eighteenth-century addition to the town **F**. It now lies under, or near, the busy Queenswell Road/Castle Street junction. Environmental improvements, or roadworks, should, however, be monitored as the foundations of these

It continued to function as a prison; and it was here that the stocks were also sited, where culprits might be set for the ridicule of their fellow townspeople. Trials of witches were commonplace in many towns in this century. A special commission, appointed by the crown in 1661 to seek out witchcraft, resulted in forty-two people being brought to trial in Forfar and at least six executed. In this year, the town was divided up into eight districts, with a councillor in each district 'for setting and changing the gairds for the witches'. The nature of many of the bizarre 'confessions' that were made in Forfar have led some to believe that they had much more in common with the European witch hunt trials than elsewhere in Scotland. In February 1663, two women had been held in the tolbooth, accused of witchcraft, for eighteen months without a trial. Their stay was probably far from comfortable, as, in the June of the previous year, there had been complaints that the prisoners in Forfar had 'scarce so much clean straw as to rest upon'; in 1661, it had been decided that anyone imprisoned for witchcraft should not have either fire or candle in his or her cell.

In 1684, the tolbooth was described as a 'good tolbuith with a bell'; but the billeting of troops in the town could be onerous. It was reported, for example, that when, in 1689, a regiment of King William's forces was quartered on the town, they ate and destroyed victual to the value of £8,000, requisitioned horses and carts, imposed free quarter to the value of £2,000, and left the tolbooth and school house in a state of ruin.

In the eighteenth century, the tolbooth was a constant drain on the town's finances. Repairs were effected in 1712, 1717 and in 1718; in 1722, the roof to the north side was found to be faulty; six years later the council called for estimates for the repair of the stair; and, in 1736, Mr Gray, painter, was to colour the council room. In 1743, the tolbooth was described as consisting of 'a closs prison and some shops off the street. In the second story [*sic*] [was] another prison on the east, in the middle, the town house in which the sheriff and head courts sit, a council house upon the west end of the building'. By 1756, the sheriff of the county was complaining that the outer tolbooth of the burgh, where public meetings of the county were held, was in great disrepair. The council agreed to some

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structures may have been incorporated into eighteenth- or nineteenth-century road surfaces, which in turn have been sealed by modern road surfaces.

Ninewells

Forfar may have Pictish connections. St Nynia, or one of his followers, is documented by Bede, writing some 300 years after the event, as having converted the southern Picts to Christianity in the fifth century AD. Place-name evidence has been used to identify church sites which may have been associated with Nynia, and *Ninewells* is thought to have preserved the ancient Nynia better than the more modern Ninian. Ninewells, west of Common Myre (and Craig o' Loch Road), is recorded by John Wood on his plan of the town in 1822 **figure 4**, by which time it was in use as a bleaching green **R**. Today, this area is largely residential housing, but West Green remains one of the few undeveloped sites in the area. The site may have more ancient origins, and any further development here should be monitored.

St Margaret's Inch **figure 7**

In November 1995, archaeological trial excavations were undertaken in response to the proposed development of a small site located on the south-east part of St Margaret's Inch. The site, approximately 100 square metres, was formerly occupied by a large shed which had recently burnt down and had been badly eroded by rabbit burrowing. The Forfar Sailing Club proposed to erect a new stores building, measuring approximately 7 m by 5 m to replace that which had been destroyed by fire. To the east and south of the new building, trees were also to be planted.

repair work and efforts to make the tolbooth more handsome, but this was to be executed at least expense possible to the town. In the event, the costs came to £53 25s 9d, but the council felt this to be inflated and agreed to pay only £48. By about 1780, the tolbooth was so ruinous that its replacement was essential.

At this time, the council started to purchase property and areas of land near to the tolbooth. Some £300 was disbursed, as it was felt that the site of the old tolbooth was too cramped; and there was a desire for a building that would accommodate both town and county in a town hall, with rooms for the sheriff court, sheriff clerk's office and town clerk's office, as well as public areas and prison facilities for both debtors and criminals; and a butter market at the rear. Subscriptions were raised from gentlemen of the county, to the sum of £846 17s, to which the town added 400 guineas, inclusive of £120 for the purchase of a house at the west end of the tolbooth. In 1785, it was decided to approach Mr James Playfair, architect in London, and father of William Henry Playfair. By 1788, the project was completed. It did not meet with the approval of all. The façade to the market place was considered, by the local minister, to have 'an agreeable effect', although the cupola conveyed 'a mean idea of the genius of the architect'. The building housed a large upper room for 'public business and amusement'; but the prison cells, according to the minister, were 'damp, dark and dismal and almost excluded from the sun and the free circulation of air'. In the event, the cupola was not successful, allowing such quantities of rain into the building that the roof beneath was liable to collapse. By 1804, it was replaced with a balcony above the centre of the front wall; a clock was added to the pediment on the front of the hall; and early photographs show a belfry with a weather vane over the clock, but this, too, was taken down in 1879, because of its dangerous condition **figure 11**.

One major change, at the very heart of the town, was the erection of the sheriff court house, to the rear of the townhouse **D**, around 1824, on the 'spoot' of Castle Street **figure 25**. The partial function as a gaol was superseded by the construction of a prison on the south side of the old town muir; and the town council purchased the old gaol portion of the hall for £200 in 1843. The present arrangement of the town and county hall dates

history

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archaeology

The three trial pits excavated revealed archaeological levels close to the present surface and down to a depth of at least 1.1 m. The archaeological deposits comprised well stratified layers and more diagnostic features such as a stone wall and spreads of stones. Dating for this activity is uncertain, but the pottery recovered would suggest the medieval period.

The archaeological excavations have also shown that the site is seriously riddled with rabbit burrows and is very unstable. The trial work has established that the site contains well-preserved archaeological levels close to the present surface.

In recognition of the documentary evidence for this site, the nature of the artefactual assemblage recovered over the years (*see* previous archaeological work below) and the results of the trial work, St Margaret's Inch has been designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and is protected by law. The area scheduled covers the majority of the Inch, and extends into the water.

previous archaeological work

N *17–21 Castle Street, Forfar,* NO *455 507*

Trial excavations were undertaken in advance of redevelopment in the backlands of Castle Street in 1979. Remains of two successive medieval timber structures were found, as well as property boundaries and pits. Post-medieval garden soil was disturbed by nineteenth-century latrine slots. Few finds were recovered, mainly medieval, post-medieval and modern pottery and clay pipe fragments. Animal bone fragments were also recovered but were found to be poorly preserved. Spearman (1982), 455–64.

largely from about 1847 and, in the nineteenth century, the town buildings had numerous functions, from concert hall to library, as well as functioning as municipal and shrieval offices.

the Queen's Manor

Considerable uncertainty surrounds the Queen's Manor. The area between Manor Street and the common mure is traditionally accepted as the site of the manor **K**. It was said, at the end of the seventeenth century, that Forfar was 'a very ancient toune and we find in historie the first parliament that was ryden in Scotland, was kept ther also King Malcome Canmore had a house and lived frequentlie there, the ruines of the house are yet to be seen in a place called the Castlehill. at litle distance is ane other litle mott where the Queens lodgings were, called to this day Queen's Manore [*sic*]'. Whether this early tradition was correct is unclear, as is the possibility that this area of raised land was surrounded by water.

In 1308, Forfar was the first major English-held castle, south of the Mounth, to fall to Robert I; and it was later destroyed on the king's instruction, in the first decades of the fourteenth century. This did not, however, mean the immediate cessation of royal visits. Robert I issued a number of acts from Forfar; and there is reference, in 1327, to the 'King's House', where the king's fowler, Jeoffry, was to be entertained, whenever the king was in residence. David II was at times resident at Forfar and issued a number of acts from here. Robert II also spent time in Forfar, although he claimed that he did 'not make [his] residence at Forfar as often as [his] predecessors'; he, therefore, specified that instead of the annual 300 cartloads of peat, he would merely accept sufficient fuel whenever he was resident; and this was to be delivered to his *manerium* of Forfar. This 'manor' was

history

referred to in 1329, 1365 and 1372 in primary documentation; and presumably it was the

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archaeology

O *Royal Hotel, Castle Street, Forfar, NO 4552 5068*

Trial excavation in the backlands in 1994, in advance of an extension to the Royal Hotel, revealed a layer of garden soil, about 0.4 m thick, containing medieval pottery, sealed beneath demolition rubble and remains of a late eighteenth- or nineteenth-century stable block. *DES* (1994), 82.

M *3 Manor Street, Forfar NO 4552 5079*

Archaeological monitoring of contractors' trenches in advance of development in 1995 revealed natural sand and gravel at a maximum depth of 0.9 m below garden soil. A possible old ground surface was found beneath the garden soil, but no dating evidence was recovered. *DES* (1995), 93.

Q *Castle Street, Forfar, NO 456 508*

In 1990, a well was discovered during excavation of the pavement outside the Clydesdale Bank. It was 3.5 m in depth and 1 m in diameter, constructed of red sandstone blocks and capped by two sandstone slabs. A lead pipe led into it from the NNW. It was probably a public draw-well, because the facing was worn. It was disturbed by workmen in 1965 , and may be post 1750 in date. It was covered over when the pavement was replaced. *DES* (1990), 40.

figure 20
Castle Street

replacement dwelling for the kings of Scots after the destruction of the castle. Whether it was sited on the hill to the west of Castlehill, called 'Queen's Manor', is unclear; and whether it was one and the same as the King's House is likewise uncertain. There is an unproven tradition that there was a chapel at the royal manor, dedicated to St Marie. Whether this stood on the site now called the Queen's Manor; or, indeed, whether it ever actually existed is unclear.

history

archaeology

outlying sites

St Margaret's Inch, Forfar, NO 440 506 **figure 7**
Trial excavations in 1995, undertaken in advance of a proposed development, revealed archaeological remains to a depth of 1.1 m, in the form of stratified layers and features (stone walls and stone spreads). Medieval pottery was also recovered.

This was not, in fact, the first archaeological investigation of this site. In 1781, silver ornaments, thirty to forty chessmen and some bronze vessels were discovered on St Margaret's Inch. They were subsequently placed in Glamis Castle. Little circles of horn, some with brass nails, were also donated to the National Museum of Antiquities. In 1868, the Earl of Strathmore carried out some excavations on the Inch which suggested, at that time, that it was an artificial island or crannog made entirely of natural gravel reinforced with timber and stone. Evidence of settlement was recovered from the highest point of the ridge, and midden remains were recovered from a large part of the Inch. A paved road or causeway, previously identified as leading from the Inch to the shore of the loch, was, in fact, a natural ridge.

In 1974, midden material, including burnt daub and six sherds of medieval glazed pottery, from at least five vessels, was recovered from some of the numerous molehills across the site, and between 1991 and 1995, twenty-five sherds of medieval pottery, a piece of china, six fragments of calcined bone and four pieces of burnt daub were also retrieved from molehills. *DES* (1974), 9; *DES* (1996), 12; SUAT (1996).

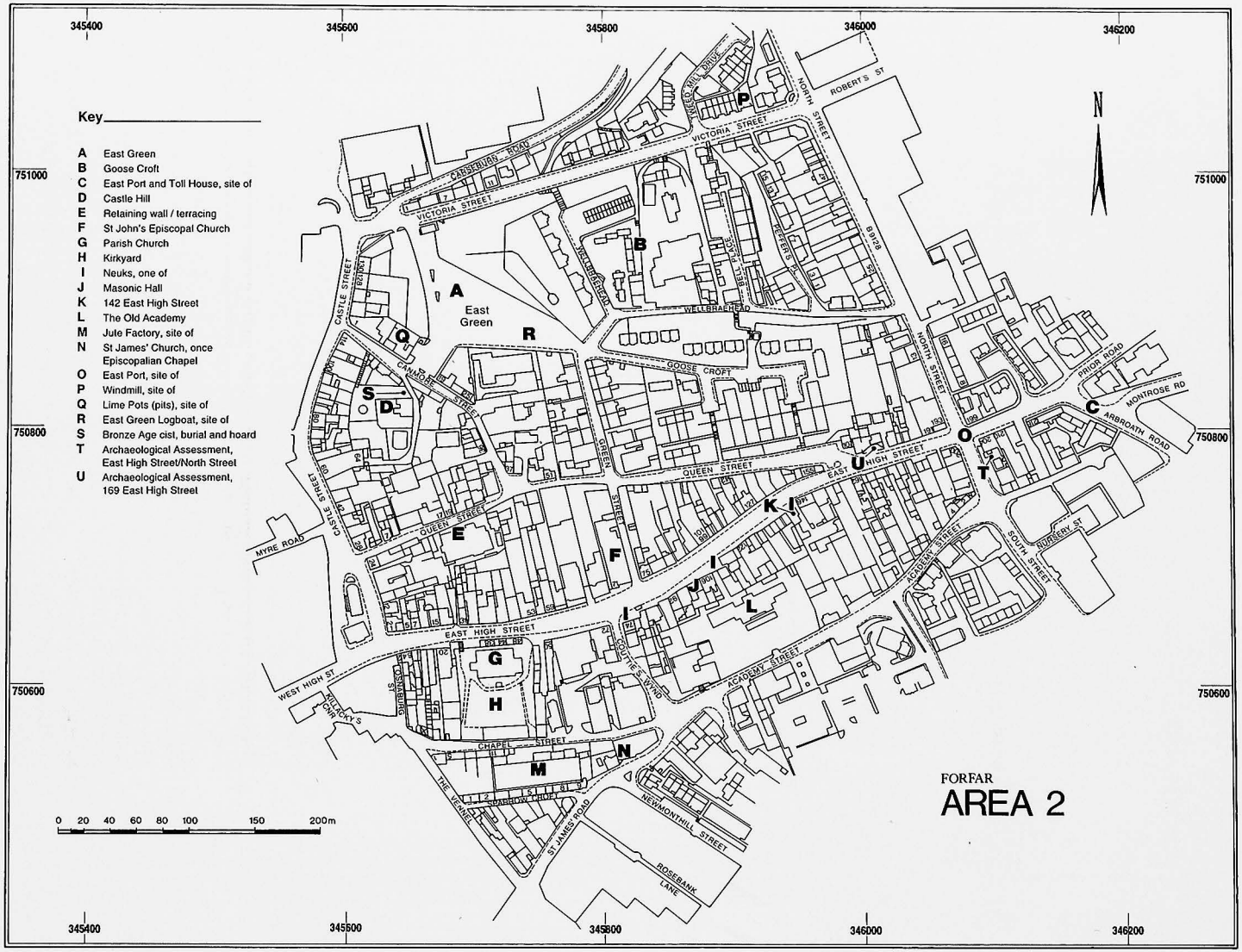

figure 21
Area 2
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area 2

east side of Castle Street/east side of Osnaburg Street/The Vennel/St James' Road/Newmonthill Street/south end of Chapel Park/south of Academy Street/south and east of Priory Court/North Street/North of Victoria Street/Carseburn Road **figure 21**

description

This area is considerably more built-up than Area 1 and mostly comprises residential housing. For descriptive purposes, Area 2 can be sub-divided into three smaller blocks: north of Canmore Street/Queen Street; the block between Canmore Street/Queen Street and East High Street; and, finally, south of East High Street.

Topographically, East High Street occupies an east–west aligned ridge which slopes down both to the former loch (East Green **A** and Goose Croft **B** area), and more gently towards The Cross from its highest point at the junction of High Street with Montrose Road and Arbroath Road, approximately where the nineteenth-century toll house stood **C**. Castle Hill is a prominent landmark, rising some 50 m above the surrounding area, and provides a good vantage point from which to view the town **D**. South of East High Street, the ground slopes to Chapel Street/Academy Street before climbing up again to Newmont Hill.

The area to the north of Canmore Street and Queen Street has been largely reclaimed from Forfar Loch. Since the town council acquired this land in the 1950s, East Green **A** has been turned over to car parking and Goose Croft **B** to residential housing. Cottage-type housing fronts onto the northern end of Canmore Street, while at the southern end there are some larger villas, set back from the street on the east side. The east end of this block contains a short section of East High Street, including the junction of East High Street and North Street. Much of this is modern, and there are extensive gardens to the rear.

The central block is dominated by Castle Hill **D**, its summit crowned by the column of the old market cross **figure 8**. Built in 1684, it was removed and re-erected here in 1799. The hill has gradually been developed since the nineteenth century, with older larger villas on the summit and more modern housing on the slopes. There has also been a

future development

There are several vacant properties in this area including some on Castle Street and East High Street. There are also gap sites at 183–87 East High Street and on Green Street (east frontage), where the property extends from behind East High Street to Queen Street. There is already planning permission for housing on the garage site at the north end of Castle Street, backing onto the East Green car park. There are other properties on Castle Street which are currently occupied, but for which there may be planning applications in the near future.

archaeological potential

Features of archaeological interest which fall within this area include the sites of the twelfth-century castle, the old parish church **figure 9**, the east port, industrial sites and prehistoric finds. The area most sensitive to development, essentially the medieval town, is defined by Canmore Street, Queen Street, Academy Street and Chapel Street. The historic (medieval) core of the town has largely escaped the developments commonly found in many other towns, such as shopping centres, multi-storey car parks and new housing. Where these are to be found, they lie outwith the historic core. The archaeological potential of Forfar is, therefore, perhaps higher than in most towns.

considerable amount of terracing on the hill and elsewhere in this area, particularly along Queen Street. Here, a retaining wall behind the bingo hall shows how much higher East High Street is, and how much terracing has taken place **E**.

The west frontage of Castle Street and the north frontage of East High Street are the usual mix of shops and businesses, with the occasional newer development. St John's Episcopal Church was built in 1879–81 but minus its intended spire **F**. A number of gardens still survive behind East High Street, the stone-walled property boundaries of which may have 'fossilised' former medieval burgage plots.

The southern block within Area 2 is dominated by East and Old Parish Church **G**, which is thought to have been built over an earlier, medieval chapel. The present church was built in 1791, with several later additions, including the steeple which houses bells, one of which was donated in the 1650s **figure 9** (*see* pp 22–3). The houses to the east of the church back straight onto the kirkyard, which contains some interesting stones. The ground level in the kirkyard **H** is noticeably higher than adjacent properties, perhaps indicating long use. The south frontage of East High Street, mostly shops, is mainly mid nineteenth century in date, but of most interest is the irregular building line. This has formed several corners, or neuks **I**, which were used to accommodate cattle markets in the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century **figure 19**. Another interesting feature is the use of painted windows to liven up blank walls, and two examples of these can be seen, at the masonic hall **J** and at 142 East High Street **K**.

Set back from the Academy Street frontage lies the Old Academy **L**, now a primary school. Complete with Doric columns, the core of the building was built in 1815, with wings added in 1900 and 1910. South of Academy Street and Chapel Street were textile mills, some of which have now been demolished, while others are still in use. Opposite the Old Academy, the former linen works have been cleared and the site redeveloped as a shopping complex, with car parking and a petrol station. Further west, they have been cleared for residential housing. On Chapel Street, however, the first jute factory in the town still stands, partly occupied as smaller workshops **M**. The adjacent church of St James is unoccupied and in an unfortunate state of disrepair **N**. Behind the former jute works is an attractive row of nineteenth-century cottages lining Sparrow Croft.

the castle

history

Origins of the town are closely linked to the existence of a royal castle. This fortress, sited on a hill which may at one time have been an island, was in a highly defensible position **D**.

archaeology

castle

As there are so few documentary references to the castle, it is not even clear where it stood, when it was built, or what form it took. Stone foundations were apparently found on Castle Hill in the eighteenth century **D**, and stone houses were recorded as being visible here in the late seventeenth century. Early this century, during extensions to the rear of shops on Castle Street, a masonry wall, a section of which appeared to be part of a gate, was uncovered. On an adjacent site, in 1935, the remains of a very thick wall were also found. If Malcolm II or Malcolm III (Canmore) had established a royal residence here in the eleventh century, it may have looked similar to the circular stone tower-like structure in Pittencrief Park, Dunfermline. This has traditionally been associated with Malcolm Canmore but, unfortunately, recent archaeological excavations there could not attribute a date earlier than the fourteenth century for occupation.

A more likely form, and perhaps a replacement for an earlier structure, is that of a motte. Over 300 of these earthwork fortresses have now been identified in Scotland, many of which were built in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Very few have been excavated and, of these, only a small number have been examples of medieval castles in an urban medieval setting.

figure 22
Frontages of houses, East High Street

When the first castle was erected on this site, however, is unclear; although a number of claims are made for a date of at least the eleventh century. By the reign of William I (1157–1214) or, possibly, that of Alexander II (1214–1249), it was said to have been 'old'. This has given rise to some claims that there were two castles, one old and one new, but such a theory seems very unlikely. Malcolm II (1005–1034) reputedly granted a charter to the bishop of Mortlach from Forfar in October 1011. A number of local traditions also link Malcolm III (Canmore) and his wife, Queen Margaret, with Forfar. Malcolm Canmore, it is claimed, held a parliament in Forfar in the first year of his reign. It was said, at the end of the seventeenth century, that Forfar was 'a very ancient toune and we find in historie the first parliament that was ryden in Scotland, was kept ther also King Malcome Canmore had a house and lived frequentlie there, the ruines of the house are yet to be seen in a place called the Castlehill. at litle distance is ane other litle mott where the Queens lodgings were, called to this day Queen's Manore [*sic*]'.

history

A royal residence would have attracted a population, not only because it offered a measure of protection to those clustered nearby, but also a royal presence and attendant court would have meant a demand for supplies and services. It may, therefore, be safely

archaeology

Mottes often utilised natural features, such as the glacial mound which forms Castle Hill. The summit of the motte is usually circular or oval in form, with a defensive ditch encircling the base of the mound, the spoil from which was often used to heighten the mound itself. A timber palisade may have formed a defensive circuit around the top edge of the mound, and access to the platform would have been provided by a flying drawbridge, cobbled pathway or gate tower. On the summit would probably have stood a timber hall or tower, which may have been replaced in stone over time. An example of a motte in an urban setting was excavated at Peebles. This royal castle was built *c* 1150, and comprised two substantial buildings on the summit of the motte, one of which was circular. This 12 m diameter building may have been a hall or a tower, its foundations comprising a ring of vertical timbers set within a trench with extra 'corner' posts bearing most of the load. A smaller, rectangular, three-bay building may have been a stable.

Secondary enclosures, or baileys, were often associated with these early castles. The bailey would have lain adjacent to the motte, again protected by a ditch, and would have housed ancillary buildings, livestock, and the domestic quarters of servants and staff. In 1979, there was an opportunity to investigate the north face of the hill and three possible post-holes were identified but, unfortunately, no dateable finds were recovered. Since only archaeology will ever reveal the nature of this important royal castle, any further development on Castle Hill should be monitored.

figure 23
Backlands of houses, East High Street

assumed, on the presumption that there was an early royal residence here, that some form of township existed at Forfar before the granting of burghal status in the reign of David I (1124–1153). This is confirmed by the discovery of two earlier logboats, suggesting a ferry crossing (*see* p 13). It was from here that David I granted a charter to the bishop of Aberdeen in 1127. Forfar was also one of the first seats of a sheriffdom, as early as the reign of David I, the others being Clackmannan, Dunfermline, Crail, Scone and Perth.

The honour placed on the town by the continued presence of Scottish kings suggests that Forfar's castle was well favoured by the crown and that the town was an established and flourishing burgh by the early thirteenth century. In the reign of William I, for example, forty-five acts were dated from Forfar, the same number as for Perth, while only forty-four were dated at Stirling, thirty-four at Edinburgh and twelve from Dunfermline. The town continued to be the residence of kings and their sheriffs throughout the thirteenth century, Alexander III (1249–1286), for example, spent over half the year in Forfar in 1263; imported wine from Dundee to the town, for his sojourn there in 1266; and issued a number of letters both from Forfar and to his sheriff, in residence there.

In 1291, Edward I visited. His view of the town, as he wrote in his diary, was that Forfar was a 'bone ville', which was high praise from one who seen many impressive towns. The king demanded of Gilbert de Umfraville, earl of Angus and keeper of the

history

castles of Forfar and Dundee, that he should hand over the keys of the castle. His refusal

archaeology

logboats

A logboat was discovered by workmen digging a drain in East Greens **R**, a short distance to the north-east of Castle Hill in 1952. On excavation, it was found to have been scooped from a single oak tree and backfilled with stones. The boat was assumed to be of prehistoric date, but it was only relatively recently, when the boat was being conserved, that a radiocarbon date was taken from the wood. The date provided was ad 1090±50. The stones are thought to have been used to keep the boat below the water level, to stop the wood drying out and thus keep the wood supple. A similar boat was also found nearby in the 1860s, but there are unfortunately few records. On removal, it lay in Forfar cemetery until it disintegrated. The water level is known to have dropped nearly six metres when the loch was drained in the late eighteenth century so, in earlier times, boats like these were probably in regular use, ferrying people across the loch. This boat may pre-date the formal founding of the burgh and, as such, would indicate at the least the existence of an early castle, on the adjacent higher ground at Castle Hill, if not a settlement. The north end of Castle Street is thought to have been a ford across the loch in earlier times, and the discovery of two boats here suggests it was also a ferry crossing.

probably hastened the castle falling into the hands of the English and Edward I, who placed it under the custodianship of Brian de Fitz-Alan. There is an unconfirmed tradition that William Wallace took the castle in 1306 and effected some damage; but events would suggest that, if he did, he could not have held it for long. In 1308, however, Forfar was the first major English-held castle, south of the Mounth, to fall to Robert I, through the good services of Philip, the Forester of Platane, and it was later destroyed on the king's instruction.

After this, the castle probably proved a useful quarry. There is a local tradition, for example, that the steeple of the parish church **G** was built of stones from the castle and that these were even partially recycled into the nineteenth-century steeple, which still stands (*see* p 32) **figure 9**. Only remnants existed, however, by the seventeenth century. A visitor in 1612 spoke of the town as having 'an old castle', but it was probably only ruins that remained. Certainly, by 1674, one writer argued that the castle had been ruinous 'now long time'; and, by 1689, scarcely the ruins remained to be seen.

market cross

In 1799, the market cross was moved from its traditional position, because of congestion it was causing in the market place. (For a discussion of the market cross prior to this date, *see* pp 50–4.) Re-erected at Castle Hill **D figure 8**, it was also to be the setting for the last public hanging, that of Margaret Wishart, in 1827. A year later, it was surrounded with a stone wall. All that now remains of the market cross is the tower on which the cross was surmounted. The carved finial that surmounted the cross was in the form of a castellated tower. It was later found built into a garden wall, then placed at the base of the tower, where it was damaged and subsequently removed. It is no longer traceable. Adapted for use as an outlook tower, the tower has now an iron stair affixed on six of its sides.

chapels and churches in the historic core of the town

A chapel was dedicated to St James the Great in Forfar, in 1241, by the Bishop of St Andrews, David de Bernham. It was attached to the Augustinian priory at Restenneth, the church of which functioned as Forfar's parish church throughout the middle ages **figure 6**. It is presumed that the chapel stood on the site of the present old parish church, south of East High Street **G**.

history

In about 1568, a new church was built on the site of the medieval chapel of St James, probably partially replacing it. By May 1586, in the *Book of the Universal Church*, Forfar and

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archaeology

The discovery of two logboats demonstrates the archaeological potential of the East Green area, and all further development here should be monitored. There is presently one vacant site, near the junction of Castle Street and Victoria Street, which may be subject to development in the near future.

prehistoric finds

Castle Hill may also have been a focus for prehistoric communities. In 1760, a conical vessel, a 'bunch of arrows' and a 'pit of hewn stones' containing human remains were discovered here **W**. The description suggests that this was a cist burial, and typical of the Bronze Age. Workmen digging a drain in 1840 near the same spot also unearthed a number of bronze artefacts. This hoard, which may have been lost, hidden for safekeeping and subsequently forgotten, or deposited as a votive offering, comprised four socketed axes and a spear head with a leaf-shaped blade. A flat axe and a small 'brass half-length female figure' were also recovered. Both the hoard and the burial imply that this natural eminence was a notable landmark at the head of Forfar Loch, and other finds may be uncovered here in the future.

Restenneth were entered as separate parishes; this suggests that there was an intention to make them distinct. In 1591, it was agreed that the church at Forfar should replace that at Restenneth as the parish church of Forfar. The argument that prompted this was 'the great inconvenience and skaith sustained by the parishioners in attending the kirk in the wicked and evil days of winter, and of the want and deficiency at the said kirk of accommodation for rest and refreshment for man and beast, and of the distance of many of [their] residences therefrom'. In 1643, the glebe was transferred to Forfar parish church. The incumbent, Mr Thomas Pierson, succeeded in exchanging the original glebe for a four-acre plot of land at the Bread Croft, near Forfar. The name Restenneth, however, was not dropped from the parish name until 1652, when the town council purchased from Sir George Fletcher of Restenneth the patronage and tithes of the church of Forfar.

A visitor to the town, in 1684, accounted for the ability of the burgh to support the local poor, as coming from the bounty of some of the townsmen 'who going abroad became rich'. Two such benefactors were two brothers, relations (some say brothers, others, sons) of Provost Strang (*see* pp 22–3), who had prospered in Stockholm. At some time, probably in the late 1650s, a fine bell was despatched for the church steeple to their home town. Tradition has it that this was seized by the people of Dundee, as being too good for Forfar. It eventually reached its destination but, apparently, without its silver clapper.

Another visitor, in 1743, commented that there were only two public buildings in Forfar—the church and the tolbooth (*see* pp 54–8). The church he described as having two aisles, one to the north, the other to the south; and a fine steeple of slate on the west, which still housed two bells, one of which came from the Strang family.

The increased wealth of the town by the end of the eighteenth century (*see* pp 24–31) had a marked visual impact on the townscape. A new parish church was built in 1791 **figure 9**. It was to benefit from a new west spire in the early nineteenth century, some of the stones of which, according to local tradition, came from the ruins of the old castle. 'Lang Strang', the bell shipped from Stockholm in the seventeenth century, was given pride of place in the new steeple. Alterations were made in 1836; and it underwent further remodelling and improvements in the 1880s; but much of the present structure reflects the eighteenth-century church.

The episcopalians had also built their own church or chapel between 1771 and 1775 **N**, having continued to worship in the parish church after 1699; from 1721 until 1745 in the old church at Restenneth; and after that in private houses, secretly, in response to the 'Penal Laws' against Scottish episcopalians (*see* p 26). This building was purchased in 1835 by the presbyterians, who were finding their own parish church overcrowded.

history

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archaeology

east and old parish church

The present church **G figure 9** is thought to have been built over the old parish church. The first ecclesiastical establishment on this site was that of a chapel dedicated to St James in 1241. It appears that a new church, built in about 1568, incorporated all or part of the earlier structure. This church was in turn demolished, except for the tower, in the late eighteenth century and a new church erected in 1791. The tower was itself replaced in 1815 by the present steeple. Other than internal improvements, the church remains as it was built in the late eighteenth century **figure 9**. It appears, then, that successive phases of the church occupied the same site, and even incorporated existing structures into the new fabric. Structural elements of the earlier phases of this church may, therefore, be preserved beneath the present building, rather than lie elsewhere in the church grounds. Significant development here is unlikely, but environmental improvements, floodlighting or the insertion of new services, both within the church and in the graveyard **H**, may expose features associated with medieval phases of the church. The ground level of the graveyard to the south is noticeably higher than adjacent properties, suggesting a long history of use. Along with the natural eminence of Castle Hill and the ridge occupied by Manor Street, the land on which the church is situated is probably the site with the best

Forfar was also home to a number of seceders. John Jamieson (1759–1839) of *Scottish Dictionary* fame was minister of the secession congregation from 1780, when a meeting house was erected, to 1797.

religious foundations outwith the town

Alexander II (1214–1249) granted ten pounds revenue yearly from the lands of Glenisla to the monastery of Coupar Angus. Of this, ten marks were to go to the support of two Cistercian monks who were perpetually to celebrate divine service in the Chapel of the Holy Trinity on the island in the Loch of Forfar. Alexander III was often in Forfar. The references to the queen's household accounts at this time have led to the suggestion that Queen Joanna, wife of Alexander III, had a separate dwelling on the Inch, as Queen Margaret and the widow of William the Lion, Queen Ermengarde, reputedly had done before her. This would, however, seem unlikely, in view of the 1234 grant.

In 1605, James VI granted to Mungo (Kentigern) Murray, son of John, Lord Murray of Tullibardine, the island, or inch, which once housed the Chapel of Holy Trinity, now called the Island of Queen Margaret, in Forfar Loch and all the pertinent lands on the mainland. This would suggest that the chapel had not survived the Reformation. There had, indeed, been signs of some neglect, along with concern for the chapel's maintenance when, in 1508, a writ to sir Alexander Turnbull, chaplain of the Isle of St Margaret, Queen of Scots, instructed him to repair and maintain the chapel and its buildings, plant trees and build stone dykes for protection of the buildings and trees against the encroachment of the waters of the loch. The Inch is now occupied by the premises of the local sailing club.

A little south of the town, stood the medieval chapel of St Boniface. Little is known of its history and connections with the town, although its foundations were still visible in the early nineteenth century.

There is also an unproven tradition that there was a chapel at the royal manor, dedicated to St Marie. Whether this stood on the site now called the Queen's Manor; or, indeed, whether it ever actually existed is unclear (*see* **area 1**).

schools

It is known that there was a school and a schoolhouse in Forfar by 1576; and from the scant records available, it appears that this continued into the seventeenth century, the

history schoolmaster receiving a salary of £200 Scots in 1660. His conduct was apparently not

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archaeology archaeological potential in the town. As these other hills were chosen for the castle and royal manors, earlier origins for the church should not be discounted.

east port

East Port **C** is shown on Wood's 1822 plan of Forfar **figure 4**, but lies a considerable distance from The Cross, the commercial centre of the town. Its supposed position would also make Forfar a medium-sized town in the medieval period, whereas its population is known to have been fairly small. This suggests that the nineteenth-century location of East Port is probably a later addition to the town plan, perhaps resulting from the growth of the town eastwards. There are also several kinks in the alignment of East High Street, at Green Street and Queen Street, which may again reflect staged growth. To date, there have been two opportunities along East High Street for archaeology to address this question, but no archaeological deposits were identified on either site **T** & **U**. Either both sites had been levelled in advance of construction in the nineteenth century, or earlier this century, or medieval Forfar never extended this far east. Further opportunities for archaeological excavations along East High Street may recover sufficient dating evidence to address the question.

adequate, however, since he was dismissed in 1664 and the council forbade 'the whole inhabitants from putting children to him'.

By the eighteenth century there were two established schools in the town, although numerous others were begun, often unofficially. In 1727, the schoolmaster complained that 'adventure' schools had opened and were teaching writing and arithmetic, without authority, to his disadvantage. The council decided that, under pain of imprisonment and a fine of £40, such schools should instruct only in reading. In 1770, a petition was placed before the council, stating that girls were 'shamefully neglected, and seldom or never in [the] town [received] the proper rudiments of education, finding the loss thereof all their lives'. No action was taken on the petition; but, without doubt, some girls were receiving education at the adventure schools.

Some indications of conditions within the schools are revealed in the sources. In 1771, for example, the council decided that the children of the town should be allowed to play in the kirkyard, as there was no playground for them. The council also decided, in 1794, that one of the schools should be held in the upper storey of the school building, leaving the ground floor vacant for storing coal and other fuel used by the school.

The grammar school, which was situated in Couttie's Wynd, had had a very good reputation in the middle of the century, but deteriorated through the guidance of inadequate masters. Although the masters in the 1790s were 'tolerable appointments', in the established schools 'the master [was] permitted to teach all the branches of education promiscuously, a method calculated to perplex himself and obstruct the improvement of his pupils'.

The following century was to see considerable improvement not only in the quality of teaching and the numbers of pupils receiving education, but also in the proliferation of school buildings, the most notable being the opening of the Academy, sometimes now

history

called the Old Academy, with Doric columns in Greek style, in 1815 **L**.

previous archaeological work

archaeology

D *Castle Hill, Forfar, NO 456 506*

Early this century, during extensions to the rear of shops on Castle Street, a masonry wall, part of which appeared to be a gate, was uncovered. On an adjacent site, in 1935, the remains of a very thick wall were found, but no proper investigation was carried out. The collapse of a revetment wall on the north side of the Castle Hill provided the opportunity to clear a 5.5 m by 1.6 m section at the summit of the hill. Below 0.2 m of garden soil was 0.15 m of stratified deposits. These rested on the sand and gravel which composed the rest of the section. Three possible post holes appeared in section. No pottery or other dateable finds were recovered. *DES* (1979), 41.

T *East High Street, Forfar, NO 461 507*

Trial excavation in 1995 revealed no archaeological remains. The site was considered to be significant due to its location at the East Port; five trial trenches were opened by machine, hand cleaned, recorded and backfilled. The excavations revealed that the site had been levelled for development in the early nineteenth century. *DES* (1995), 93.

U *169 East High Street, Forfar, NO 4601 5078*

Archaeological monitoring of a foundation trench in 1996 revealed natural sub-soil at a depth of only 0.5 m, under modern deposits; nothing of archaeological interest was recorded. The site was found to have been extensively truncated by nineteenth- or twentieth-century development. *DES* (1996), 12; SUAT (1996).

the archaeological potential of Forfar a summary **figure 26a & 26b**

On present evidence, there is good potential for the survival of archaeological remains and deposits within the medieval core of Forfar, but the extent to which they survive in different parts of the town is difficult to predict accurately. Nevertheless, routine monitoring and excavations in many other Scottish towns, especially in Perth and Aberdeen, but also in some smaller burghs, have demonstrated that medieval and later archaeological remains often survive beneath the modern town. Therefore, the site of any proposed ground disturbance or development along the main street frontages in the historic section of Forfar must be accorded a high archaeological priority, and arrangements made for the site to be assessed, monitored and, if necessary, excavated in advance of the disturbance or development scheme. Similarly, any proposed ground disturbance of the surviving streets and wynds themselves (for instance, for essential repairs, access to services, or environmental improvements) should also be monitored routinely, because the remains of important features of the medieval townscape may be sealed beneath them—for example, the original sites of the market cross, tolbooth, tron, ports and wells, of which no archaeological evidence has yet been found.

To date, little archaeological work has been undertaken within Forfar. The conclusions and recommendations expressed here should, therefore, be regarded as provisional; this survey will require periodic review in the light of results from any future campaigns of archaeological fieldwork (assessment, monitoring and excavation) and from other types of sub-surface investigations (for example, engineers' boreholes).

It is important to stress that the survey was limited to the core of historic (medieval and early modern) Forfar. There is a recognised, though unquantifiable, potential for the discovery of prehistoric and early historic archaeological remains, both within and outwith the confines of the historic burgh, but this is not assessed in **figure 26a & b**.

Finally, the potential for archaeological features and deposits being preserved both beneath the floors and within the structures of historic standing buildings in Forfar (*see* pp 71–5) must not be forgotten. The archaeological potential of Forfar's standing buildings is *not* shown on **figure 26a & b**, but the potential of individual buildings is considered in the next chapter.

Turning to the specific areas of Forfar (as identified in this survey), previous archaeological work and documentary and cartographic evidence have demonstrated the archaeological potential of both Areas 1 and 2, the core of the medieval town. It should be noted that the limits of the medieval burgh remain uncertain.

figure 26a & b distinguishes between areas of known potential (shaded green) and unknown potential (shaded lighter green). *All green areas should be treated as potentially archaeologically sensitive. Areas designated red are Scheduled Ancient Monuments* and are protected by law. Effectively redeveloped areas (shaded blue) are probably archaeologically sterile.

area 1

The overall archaeological potential of Forfar is good, as the medieval core of the burgh has largely escaped re-development. The parts of Area 1 (the western half of the burgh) most sensitive to new development are Manor Street, Castle Street as far north as Queenswell Road, and West High Street as far as St Margaret's Church. This zone, essentially the probable limits of the medieval burgh, incorporates the main street frontages and associated backlands, the probable royal manor, the market place, the west port and the former shoreline of Forfar Loch.

Most modern development in Area 1 has taken place outside the probable limits of the medieval burgh, but there has also been some development in the most sensitive zone, most notably along Manor Street. Here, possibly on the site of a royal manor, part of the former textile mill complex has been demolished for a new supermarket, and part refurbished as residential housing. There has also been some new sheltered housing built along Manor Street itself and some small developments behind the frontage at the southern end of Castle Street.

The Cross itself is also a priority area. Large-scale development here is unlikely in the foreseeable future, but any environmental improvements, such as pedestrianisation or the insertion of new services, might also expose earlier street levels, as well as evidence for the tolbooth, market cross, tron and wells.

area 2

This area has experienced considerably more development than Area 1, again, largely concentrated outwith the limits of the medieval burgh. The archaeological potential of Area 2 is also generally good. The parts of Area 2 most sensitive to new development are East High Street as far as the North Street/South Street junction, with Chapel Street and Academy Street forming the southern limit, and Castle Street as far north as Victoria Street. This zone, essentially the limits of the medieval town, incorporates the main street frontages and associated backlands, the castle, the chapel and old parish church, the east port and part of the former shoreline of Forfar Loch.

Most modern development within the limits of the medieval burgh in Area 2 has been concentrated along the southern side of East High Street, east of the parish church. Here, a supermarket with associated car parking, and some other small developments have gradually begun to fill up the backlands. Similarly, there has also been much infill within the backlands at the eastern end of East High Street, between the Old Academy and South Street.

In contrast, the north side of East High Street has seen considerably less modern development. From a point opposite the parish church to Queen Street, a virtually unbroken stretch of open gardens may have preserved the boundaries of the medieval burgage plots, and this area has perhaps the highest archaeological potential in Area 2. North of Queen Street, where the burgage plots would have terminated, is now occupied exclusively by residential housing on land reclaimed from Forfar Loch.

Castle Hill has gradually been encircled by properties extending back from Castle Street, Canmore Street and Queen Street, and there has also been some newer development around the summit. This is the site of the castle and is highly sensitive archaeologically.

St Margaret's Inch

This site is now occupied by the Forfar Sailing Club, which, several years ago, built a new clubhouse. The majority of the Inch and its shoreline has been designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and is protected by law.

historic buildings and their archaeological potential

Forfar has many reminders of its historic past. Its street pattern, essentially aligned following the medieval town plan, is reinforced by a number of buildings that give clues to the town's history. There is physical evidence that older buildings are incorporated in some later structures. For example, the former Congregational Chapel incorporates what was almost certainly a single storey house. Likewise, the Osnaburg Bar at 23 Osnaburg Street began life as a two storey building but has an additional storey built onto it. There are many impressive features in the historic core of Forfar that have much to tell of the town's success in the nineteenth century. Buildings such as the Meffan Institute, the Burgh Academy, St James' Road School, the Congregational Church, the many banks and the Manor Works are fine indicators of the prosperity of the town at this period; but for the purposes of this survey, the focus is on the earlier buildings still standing and what they may tell us of this historic county town.

One of the oldest features is the relocated remnant of the *market cross* **figure 8**. Built in 1684, as a replacement of a medieval cross, it was transferred to its present site on Castle Hill in 1799, because it was causing traffic congestion on the High Street. The market cross of the town, along with the tolbooth, later called the townhouse, was the heart of the town, where all important secular business was transacted. All that now remains of the market cross is the column on which the cross was surmounted. The carved finial that surmounted the cross was in the form of a castellated tower. It was later found built into a garden wall, then placed at the base of the column, where it was damaged and removed and is no longer traceable. In 1827, the cross was the setting for the last public hanging, that of Margaret Wishart. A short time later, it was surrounded with a stone wall. This twenty-foot high ashlar column now has an iron stair affixed on six of its sides, having been adapted at one point for use as an outlook tower. Although this perhaps spoils the appearance of the structure itself, the stair affords ready access to the top of the column, from which a panoramic view of the setting of Forfar and its loch, now much reduced, gives an insight into the topography and physical development of the town.

The column on Castle Hill also marks the site of the medieval castle. Probably constructed in the twelfth century, it appears to have been abandoned in the fourteenth century (*see* **area 2**). As the tower stands on the very summit of Castle Hill, it is more than likely to have been built over the main complex of buildings within the castle. The remains of these buildings, of timber or stone, may lie buried beneath the tower.

Still standing in its prominent position at the very hub of the town is the *Town and County Hall* **figure 11**. Built between 1785 and 1788, to a design of James Playfair, it replaced an earlier tolbooth and shops. The building was designed to accommodate both town and county, with rooms for the sheriff court, sheriff clerk's office and town clerk's office, as well as public areas and prison facilities for both debtors and criminals; and a butter market at the rear. The two-storeyed façade reveals most of its original dignified design, although a cupola was not successful, allowing such quantities of rain into the building that the roof beneath was liable to collapse. By 1804, it was replaced with a balcony above the centre of the front wall; a clock was added to the pediment on the front of the hall; and early photographs show a belfry with a weather vane over the clock, but this, too, was taken down in 1879, because of its dangerous condition. At the rear, the four segmental arches in the north wall indicate the site of the weigh house and butter market.

A reminder of Forfar's role as chief town in the shire is the building to the north. This was erected in 1821–4 as the *Sheriff Court House* **figure 24**, the Playfair building to the south proving to be somewhat confined for the many roles demanded of it. The two-storeyed red ashlar building, designed by David Neave, has a northern bow gable facing up Castle Street, once called 'the Spout'.

The tolbooth, market cross and tron are thought to have stood in The Cross, and the most likely spot is where the Town and County Hall and Sheriff Courthouse stand today. Both buildings are substantial and their foundations have most likely destroyed any underlying archaeological deposits. It is possible, however, that one of these may have incorporated part of the earlier tolbooth into its fabric or reused its walls as foundations, evidence for which may come to light during any refurbishments or environmental improvements.

figure 24
Sheriff court house

Another important landmark in town life was the *parish church* **figure 9**. Just as the tolbooth, or townhouse, and market cross were the secular expression of corporate burghal life, the parish church was central to the community. A chapel dedicated to St James the Great, in 1241, by the Bishop of St Andrews, David de Bernham, probably stood on the site of the present church. It was attached to the Augustinian priory at Restenneth, the church of which functioned as Forfar's parish church throughout the middle ages **figure 6**. In about 1568, a new church was built on the site of this medieval chapel of St James, probably partially replacing it. By May 1586, Forfar and Restenneth were documented as separate parishes; this suggests that there was an intention to make them distinct. In 1591, it was agreed that the church at Forfar should replace that at Restenneth as the parish church of Forfar. The name Restenneth, however, was not dropped from the parish name until 1652, when the town council purchased from Sir George Fletcher of Restenneth the patronage and tithes of the church of Forfar. At some time, probably in the late 1650s, the Strang brothers, or probably more correctly, one surviving brother, who had prospered in Stockholm, despatched a fine bell for the church steeple to their home town.

A new plain gothic parish church was built in 1791, to a design of Samuel Bell; and when it was endowed with a new ashlar classic west spire, in 1813–14, some of the stones of which, according to local tradition, came from the ruins of the old castle, 'Lang Strang', the bell shipped from Stockholm in the seventeenth century, was given pride of place in the new steeple. Alterations were made in 1836; and it underwent further remodelling and improvements in the 1880s; but much of the present structure reflects the eighteenth-century church.

It appears that the sixteenth-century church had, in fact, incorporated part of the earlier thirteenth-century chapel into its fabric, but whether any of this composite structure survived the building of the eighteenth-century church is not clear. It is possible that the remains of earlier phases of the church may survive preserved beneath the present floor levels, or that earlier walls were reused as foundations, and these may be exposed during refurbishments or the insertion of new services.

figure 25
1–5 Castle Street and County Hotel

The *graveyard* to the south houses a collection of monuments, several dating back to the eighteenth century. The ground level within the graveyard is significantly higher than in adjacent properties, which suggests a long history of use. The earliest known date for a chapel here is of the thirteenth century, but given that royal patronage in Forfar may date to the eleventh century and that this site is one of the most prominent in the burgh, an earlier foundation cannot be ruled out.

Domestic and commercial properties in the central core of the town reflect Forfar's standing as the county town. The building on the corner of West High Street and Castle Street **figure 25**, for example, retains much of the character of an imposing, late eighteenth-century, three-storeyed building, with a centre gablet and doorpiece displaying original fanlight and woodwork. Next door, the *County Hotel* **figure 23**, built about 1800, has most of its original features, such as a fanlight doorpiece, with cill, lintel and moulded eaves courses and two small dormers. The original polished ashlar was revealed when the building's stucco finish was removed a few years ago. The building played an important part in Forfar life, as a three-storeyed coaching inn, in the days before the arrival of the railway. During renovation work at 1–3 Castle Street, an ashlar-constructed basement was found which has a stone bench running round three (or four) sides. The seat of the bench is polished stone with a round nosing and is very narrow. There are also the remains of stone steps which lead down into the basement (Paul Mitchell, pers comm).

Across the road, on the corner of High Street and Castle Street, in a prime site beside the market cross (before relocation), is a three-storeyed property, dating from the eighteenth century. *Nos 1–3 East High Street & 2 Castle Street* is now much altered, with modern cementing and shops at the ground floor, but its High Street frontage, with gablet, is a reminder of how imposing the properties at the cross were in times gone by. *10–14 Castle Street* is another property built in the late eighteenth century, at the very heart of burgh life. Two-storeyed, ashlar with pinnings and modillioned eaves, *no 14* now functions as a wine bar and the two properties to the south as a butcher's shop. These latter, however, have lost much of their early character due to over-zealous modernisation.

Two interesting properties further up Castle Street, on the west side, are shown as 'The Hill' on Wood's 1822 map **figure 4**. Set back from the street frontage, *75 Castle Street* are two properties, one two-storeyed, the other three, both with basements. Original features, such as the stair projections at the rear, one a cavetto splay staircase bow, the other semi-octagonal, set these houses out as quality dwellings, built *c* 1800, near the centre of town.

Manor Street is set off to the west of Castle Street. *Nos 2, 4 & 6 Manor Street* is a typical eighteenth-century dwelling, with its original small, two over two sash windows, two storeys and attic. It was the home of John Nevay, the poet (1792–1870). A little further up at *10 Manor Street* is an important house in Forfar's history. Now a bed-and-breakfast

establishment, this was once the old manse. Built in the early seventeenth century, when Forfar became a parish apart from Restenneth (*see* p 72), it was reconstructed a hundred years later; and it still reveals many early features, such as its small, two-over-two windows.

Manor Street is also important in that this is the supposed site of a royal manor. The nature and exact location of this site remain obscure, but it is possible that some of the buildings along Manor Street may have been established over the royal manor.

The High Street has been the main thoroughfare of the town from the middle ages. Many excellent nineteenth-century properties are still standing, with, here and there, some of an earlier period. *2 East High Street* is particularly worthy of note, not merely for its attractive late eighteenth-century architecture, but also for the pend within it that leads down to Osnaburg Street, opened up from 1873, when the town began to expand both in population and wealth, due to its production of osnaburg fabric (*see* p 25). Next door, at *4–8 East High Street*, are properties with original ground-floor shops. One has been unspoiled by modernisation and is a good example of the type of commercial property to be found on this prime site, at the market centre, around 1800.

Further along, Albion Place stands to the south of High Street. The properties here form an attractive group. Numbered *50 East High Street* or 3,5,7,9, Albion Place with property opposite, they all date from the 1770s and 1780s. On both sides, the two-storeyed stuccoed dwellings have adjoining stables, a reminder of the common form of transport at the time. The stable at *no* 7–9 now has a bricked-up entrance, which destroys some of the potential charm of this little close. The main property, however, does retain its original double doors and the dwelling across has its original attractive arched tripartite doorpiece, with original fanlight.

An interesting group of two-storeyed houses, the one at the east with its gable projecting to the street, stands at *74–82 East High Street.* Finished in painted stucco and slate, they house shops on the ground floor and mostly date from the eighteenth century. Nearby, *100 & 102 East High Street* is a two-storeyed, three-windowed rubble and slate structure, with a large blind Venetian window at the centre first floor. This was built originally as the masonic lodge.

West High Street, likewise, still retains properties of distinction from the eighteenth century, as well as many from the nineteenth. *1–5 West High Street* was built around 1800 as a three storeyed rubble property. It still has its original door and ground-floor shops. *Nos 15 & 17 West High Street* is an eighteenth-century, two-storeyed, painted stucco property, with Victorian ground-floor shops. Although the façade is in somewhat poor repair, it still retains its very attractive small-windowed chimney gablet. Nearby, *23–27 West High Street* was originally built in the early eighteenth century, but reconstructed in the middle of the next century. Two-storeyed, it has three six-over-six windows at first floor level and two shops of later date at ground level. *29 West High Street* is also two-storeyed, with Victorian shops at ground floor level. Its original three windows at first floor level have been spoiled by later glazing. Further along, *35 West High Street* was also originally eighteenth century, but the two-storeyed stuccoed stone building has since been altered. Next door, *37–39 West High Street* was originally of the same period but has, also, been much altered at the ground floor and has modern roofing, although it does retain the grotesque head skewputt at the mutual gable with *no* 35.

Other properties along West High Street still reveal their eighteenth-century character. These include *45–47 West High Street*, a two-storeyed, three-windowed house, with a gable with moulded skewputts and *53 West High Street* which dates from the eighteenth century, although later it was Victorianised and recently, modern glazing and doors have further altered its character.

Buildings situated in the core of the medieval burgh, such as those that presently front onto High Street and Castle Street, were almost certainly constructed on the site of, or directly over, earlier buildings, a sequence possibly going back to the medieval period and continuing up to the present day. Structural elements from earlier buildings have also been found to have been incorporated into later buildings, or walls reused as foundations, for example. Although there has been no opportunity archaeologically to examine any of the

street frontages in Forfar, evidence of earlier, possibly medieval, structures may be expected sealed beneath or within eighteenth- or nineteenth-century standing buildings along High Street and those streets and vennels leading off from it.

At the Abbot House, in Dunfermline, recent excavations uncovered a whole section of the medieval street itself, inside and sealed below the floor of the standing building. Up to six phases of street surfaces were revealed, each separated by thick dumps of midden, containing broken pottery, leather, animal bone and oyster shells. Earlier walls had also been incorporated into the fabric of the later building, and a number of previously hidden structural features, such as windows, cupboards and doorways were also uncovered during refurbishment works. Archaeological research may reveal similar remnants in Forfar.

To the rear of West High Street, and possibly once joined to the High Street, forming one large, open thoroughfare, is one of the most attractive parts of old Forfar, Little Causeway **figure 12**. Still cobbled and now pedestrianised, the properties here are, in the main, attractive seventeenth- and eighteenth-century buildings and as a group are a strong reminder of eighteenth-century Forfar. *4 & 5 Little Causeway* **figure 12**, sometimes called 'The Friarage', is of seventeenth-century origin. A three-storeyed L-plan, with harling and glazing partly diamond paned, it is said to have been a brandy house. Next door, *6 Little Causeway* **figure 12** has lost some of its character by the removal of its eighteenth-century forestair, to insert a garage. *8 Little Causeway* is a very attractive large, two-storeyed and basement property, with a doorpiece with a lugged architrave and fanlight and double stair to it. A pend with channelled Roman doric pilasters stands at its west side. This is a fine example of eighteenth-century quality building that was to be found in the town. Next door, *9 Little Causeway* also dates from the eighteenth century, but is a plainer building, somewhat altered by modern windows. *11 Little Causeway* and *14 Little Causeway* are of similar date, being late eighteenth century. Plain, two-storeyed buildings, *no* 11 has altered fenestration. *20, 21, 22, 23 & 24 Little Causeway* are all two-storeyed, eighteenth-century dwelling houses. As a group, they form an attractive setting. In spite of a modern tile roof on one property and some inappropriate glazing here and there, they retain their attractive eighteenth-century construction of stucco and rubble and stone, and slate roofs.

Osnaburg Street is another picturesque group of buildings **figure 13**. Entered from the south or, from the north by a pend from the High street, the properties here are eighteenth or early ninteenth century; and reflect the type of housing sought after at the time of the boom in production of osnaburg (*see* p 25). *Nos 3–9 Osnaburg Street* form a very attractive feature at the north end of the street, in spite of the stucco finish on one property. *Nos* 3–5 are two-storeyed, with a raised, railed front area that connects with the lower block at 7–9. A forestair leads to the first floor at 3–5. *11 Osnaburg Street* and *13–17 Osnaburg Street* are two-storeyed, stuccoed dwellings, *no* 13–17 still retaining its original glazing.

A small row of houses, nearby, is also reminiscent of eighteenth-century housing, even though it does not appear on John Wood's 1822 plan. *1–7 Chapel Park*, off Academy Street, were remodelled in the mid nineteenth century and have had their windows enlarged. They retain, however, their original character, of two-storey, rubble-built houses, with slated roofs, apart from one property which has been harled.

Sparrow Croft is another row of attractive housing. Mainly nineteenth century, *No 2 Sparrow Croft* may just be late eighteenth century. A single-storeyed building with an attic, it has piended dormers recessed into the stone-slated roof. Originally stuccoed, it is now harled. A fine house still standing at the foot of Couttie's Wynd is *13 Couttie's Wynd*. It was built around 1800, Couttie's Wynd having been opened only by about 1766, to ease the increasing pressure for dwellings in Forfar's town centre. A two-storeyed dwelling of two parallel rubble-built blocks, with a crenellated triangular section in the re-entrant angle, its south-facing façade has three windows, with a central architraved doorpiece with fluted frieze and a centre wallhead chimney. A low, two-storeyed wing at its west has original glazing. This is a further example of quality building to be found in the booming osnaburg-producing Forfar.

suggested avenues for further work

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historical research objectives

Forfar has a long history, predating its existence as a royal burgh. Its importance to the Scottish crown, in the earlier medieval period, is known by the favour of the presence of royalty at the castle and the manor, or manors, of Forfar. Of both the manor and castle, however, little is known, through lack of documentation. This survey has attempted to assess all the primary sources available for the medieval period; but there may be further light to be shed on the burgh in the middle ages in the Crawford Muniments, the property of the Right Honorable, the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, which have been consulted, but merely superficially. An analysis of the Glamis Muniments, in the keeping of Blair Athol Archives, might also prove fruitful. It seems, however, that as a result of the loss of records in the mid seventeenth century (*see* p21), much of our further understanding of Forfar's medieval past must await archaeological research.

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archaeological objectives for the future

Preparation of the Forfar burgh survey has highlighted a number of directions for future archaeological work. These can be broadly divided into management objectives, priorities for future fieldwork, and other areas which merit further research. Any such list cannot be exhaustive but it should cover the main areas of concern in the foreseeable future.

management objectives

1 Wherever possible, it is important to monitor the impact of any development (in its broadest sense) on the potential archaeological resource (the **green areas** on **figure 26**). This will require the routine provision of site-specific, desk-based assessments, through to watching briefs, trial excavations and, where necessary, controlled excavation, post-excavation analysis and publication. Over time, the cumulative results will 'calibrate' this assessment of the archaeological potential of the burgh, providing evidence about the burgh's origins, and its physical, economic and social development through the centuries.

2 Developments should similarly be monitored to shed more light on the prehistory of the Forfar area.

3 The degree and nature of cellarage along the main streets, notably East and West High Streets and Castle Street, were not systematically examined during the preparation of this report. More accurate information would be most useful to managers/curators of the archaeological resource in assessing the archaeological potential of these and other main street frontages in the burgh.

4 Engineers' boreholes offer a convenient glimpse of the depth and nature of sub-surface deposits, man-made or not, ancient and modern. It would be useful if the results obtained from engineers' boreholes in and around the core of the historic burgh could be gradually collected and collated. Borehole results, especially those in the hands of private contractors, have proved difficult to access, and it might be worth considering mechanisms by which such information could more easily (and preferably routinely) be made available to managers/curators of the archaeological resource.

5 Opportunities should continue to be taken to increase public awareness of the potential archaeological interest of Forfar, both generally and within and beneath historic standing buildings.

The town has a wealth of surviving records from the seventeenth century. These have been used in the survey's assessment of the development of Forfar. They would merit deeper analysis than this project could justify, as they are a rich source of information. Many recently rediscovered, they contain such documents as the 1654 protocol book of Thomas Robertson; information on certain decisions of the town court in the period from 1640 to 1662; miscellaneous documents dating from the sixteenth century; and numerous potentially fascinating pieces of documentation recently acquired by Angus Archives.

history

Forfar's transformation in the second half of the eighteenth century is discussed in this survey; but an in-depth assessment of how the lives of the ordinary indwellers were

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archaeology

6 Periodic review and updating of this survey would be desirable to take account of the results of any future archaeological work, and of the comprehensive collection and collation of other types of sub-surface investigations, such as engineers' boreholes, and the systematic survey of cellarage on the main street frontages. In particular, the colour-coded map **figure 26a & b** should be revised and re-issued at regular intervals.

priorities for future fieldwork

Although a limited amount of archaeological work, all rescue-orientated, has now been undertaken within the medieval core of the town, the priorities for future archaeological fieldwork within the burgh remain fairly rudimentary. The following priorities should be borne in mind during preparations of future project designs.

1 Identify any pre-burghal activity. Forfar was clearly a place favoured by early Scottish kings and there may be evidence for a settlement which pre-dates the formal founding of the burgh.

2 Recover any evidence for the castle, its form, chronology, development and abandonment.

3 Ascertain the existence of a royal residence (or residences) thought to have been sited along present-day Manor Street.

4 Define the limits of the medieval burgh and the character and date of any burgh boundaries.

affected by these radical changes to the townscape would be interesting; particularly if this was compared with the recessions that hit the town in the nineteenth century. An assessment of the material in Dundee University Archives, dealing with the growth of the textile industry, would merit serious consideration; as would the Brechin Diocesan Archives, also in their keeping.

The town's evolution in the nineteenth century has, of necessity, been neglected. There is a mass of documentation available for this period. All of the repositories mentioned above hold pertinent material; and these sources, along with contemporary newspapers, town plans and ordnance surveys, would afford a closer understanding of nineteenth-century Forfar.

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archaeology

5 Identify any sequence of planning in the layout and expansion of the burgh and infill within the burgage plots and determine any variation in street alignment and width.

6 Locate important features of the medieval townscape—the earliest tolbooth, ports, market cross, tron and wells, for example, of which there is little archaeological evidence.

7 Assess the nature of the burgage plots in the burgh.

8 Identify the site of the chapel of St James the Great, thought to lie close to or under the present parish church.

9 Recover any evidence for the chapel of Holy Trinity, St Margaret's Inch, and for the more ancient island on which it was built.

10 Recover any evidence for medieval and post-medieval craftworking and industry: leatherworking, weaving and milling, for example.

11 Survey the remaining textile mills. These will be of interest to industrial archaeologists.

areas for further archaeological research

1 A reconstruction of the layout, extent and physical setting of the burgh would be useful for our understanding of the development of Forfar. This would be particularly useful when assessing the impact of future development and in presenting the current state of knowledge.

street names

pp 81–3

Academy Street

Area 2
This street developed as a back lane to the rear of rigs on the south side of High Street, east of Couttie's Wynd, and was known as The Backsides prior to the establishment of the academy. It formed part of the road from Dundee to Brechin, along with St James' Road.

Albion Place

Area 2
Formerly Thane's Close, Albion Place lies just to the east of the parish church. According to some sources, it was here that Charles, sixth earl of Strathmore, was killed accidentally during a drunken brawl in 1728.

Canmore Street

Area 2
The former name of this street, Limepots, may indicate the presence of limepits in the neighbourhood, or may be derived from activity related to the dispersal of the castle remains and rebuilding in the town. Land was feued for housing on the east side of the street only from 1789; before then the loch had extended this far.

Castle Hill

Area 2
This was the site of the royal castle of Forfar. The castle was destroyed in the early fourteenth century, on the instruction of Robert I. Remains were visible until the latter part of the seventeenth century.

Castle Street

Area 2
Formerly called Cowgate, this street led northwards towards the castle from the market area at the Cross. The southern end of the street broadens out to form part of the market area, and the tolbooth formerly stood on an island here.

Chapel Street

Area 2
This street developed as a back lane to the rear of the rigs on High Street, west of Couttie's Wynd. Its name may be derived from the medieval chapel of St James the Great, which stood on the south side of High Street, on or very near to the site of the present parish church.

Couttie's Wynd

Area 2
This street was developed in 1766 and widened in 1868.

Craig o' Loch Road

Area 1
Formerly known as Horsewater Wynd, this road skirted the western side of the burgh, beside the Loch of Forfar, before the loch was partially drained.

The Cross

Area 1
This was the market area of the burgh. A cross may have existed as early as 1230 when the baby daughter of the rebel mac William was dashed against it. In 1684 a new cross was erected, as a replacement to the medieval cross, which stood until 1799 when it was removed to Castle Hill. A shambles or fleshmarket was sited in the town centre until the late eighteenth century, when it was moved to the north side of Forfar.

Dundee Loan

Area 1
This street, also known at one time as Albert Street, approached the West Port from the south. A well was discovered here by workmen earlier this century **figure 17**.

East High Street

Area 2
The street was the main thoroughfare of Forfar east of The Cross, as far as the East Port. Beyond the port, the original location of which is uncertain, a prolongation of the street continued as the road to Arbroath.

Green Street

Area 2
This was originally known as Stoney Wynd.

Little Causeway

Area 1
This small street lies south of West High Street and has formerly been known as South Street and Common Street. Buildings first appeared on the north side of the street by at least 1790. It seems to have had a central line of buildings along it, which were bought by the council in 1816 and 1818, and demolished to allow street widening.

Manor Street

Area 1
This street derives its name from the supposed former Queen's Manor of Forfar.

Myre Road

Area 1
This street lead from Castle Street to the common myre (mure) on the north side of West High Street.

New Road

Area 1
This road was built in 1812 to link St James' Road and Little Causeway.

North Street

Area 2
This was originally a narrow lane, continually developed in phases until 1883. In the past, North Street has also been known as North Loan.

Osnaburg Street

Area 2
This street was formed in the 1783 and probably indicates a weavers' settlement here. Osnaburg is a coarse woven cloth, initially produced in Osnabruck, Germany. The north end of Osnaburg Street is known as The Pend.

Queen Street

Area 2
This street was called Back Wynd until 1889. It linked Castle Street and East High Street, possibly serving as a back lane to the rear of the rigs on the north side of East High Street. The north side of Back Wynd was feued for housing only from 1789.

Queenswell Road

Area 1
This road was established on land reclaimed from the loch and was named after the Queen's Well, which is depicted on Wood's 1822 plan of the town.

West High Street

Area 1
This part of High Street was the main thoroughfare west of the Cross as far as the West Port. The street continued beyond the port as the road to Perth.

Windmill Brae

Area 2
This lane is now part of Victoria Street and led to a windmill erected in 1644 and demolished in 1838 to make way for a railway depot.

glossary

pp 85–7

aerial photography Technique used to identify archaeological sites (*see also* cropmark).

artefacts Objects made by human workmanship.

backlands The area to the rear of the burgage plot behind the dwelling house on the frontage. Originally intended for growing produce and keeping animals; site of wells and midden heaps. Eventually housed working premises of craftsmen and poorer members of burgh society.

bailies Burgh officers who performed routine administration.

baxters Bakers.

boundaries *see* burgage plot

burgage plot A division of land, often of regular size, having been measured out by liners, allocated to a burgess. Once built on, it contained the burgage house on the frontage (*see* frontage) and a backland (*see* backlands). In time, with pressure for space, the plots were often subdivided—repletion. Plots were bounded by ditches, wattle fences or stone walls.

burgess Person who enjoys the privileges and responsibilities of the freedom of the burgh.

cinerary urns A form of burial dating to the Bronze Age, whereby the cremated remains were placed in urns.

cists Stone-lined graves.

close *see* vennel

cordiners Leather workers.

craft Trade.

cropmark Crops planted over buried archaeological remains grow at differing rates and can show up as marks on aerial photographs.

cross-slab Sculptured stone bearing a cross in relief.

documentary sources Written evidence, primary sources being the original documents.

drumlin Mound formed by glacial activity.

façade Finished face of a building.

fluvioglacial Combined action of water and ice.

food vessel A distinctive type of pottery dating to the Bronze Age, often found accompanying burials.

frontage Front part of burgage plot nearest the street, on which the dwelling was usually built.

gap sites	Burgage plots not built up or 'biggit'; in a modern context, undeveloped space between two buildings.
guild	Organisation or fraternity for mutual support, whether economic, religious or social.
gully	A shallow ditch, often used to define the boundary of a burgage plot in medieval towns.
hinterland	Rural area around a burgh, to which the burgh looked for economic and agricultural support; hinterland likewise dependent on burgh market.
hoard	A collection of material deposited in the ground, often buried for safe-keeping but never recovered.
igneous rock	Rock produced by volcanic agency.
Improvements	A process taking place during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when land was being drained to provide more land for agriculture.
indwellers	Unprivileged, non-burgess dwellers in a town.
infilled	Vacant and later developed.
in situ	An archaeological term describing layers of soil or features undisturbed by later activity.
mark, merk	13s 4d, two-thirds of £ Scots.
metamorphic	Rock that has undergone transformation by natural agencies.
midden	Rubbish heaps consisting of mainly food debris and other waste products, often found in the backlands of medieval properties.
natural	A term used by archaeologists to describe the sub-soil, undisturbed by human activity.
palisade	Timber fence.
prehistory	Period of human history before the advent of writing.
radiocarbon dating	Technique used in archaeology to date organic materials.
rampart	An artificial earthen or stone bank.
repletion	*see* burgage plot
sherd	Fragment of pottery.
souterrain	Stone-built underground passage dating from between the late first millennium BC and the early first millennium AD.
spindle whorl	A weight used in spinning.

temporary camp	Often called marching camps, these were constructed each night by the Roman army on military campaigns.
terracing	Cutting into a slope to level the ground surface.
toft	*see* burgage plot
tolbooth	The most important secular building; meeting place of burgh council; collection post for market tolls; often housed town gaol.
tolls	Payments for use of burgh market.
townhouse	Principal modern civic building.
tron	Public weigh-beam.
urban nucleus	Original site(s) from which town developed.
vennel	Alley; narrow lane.

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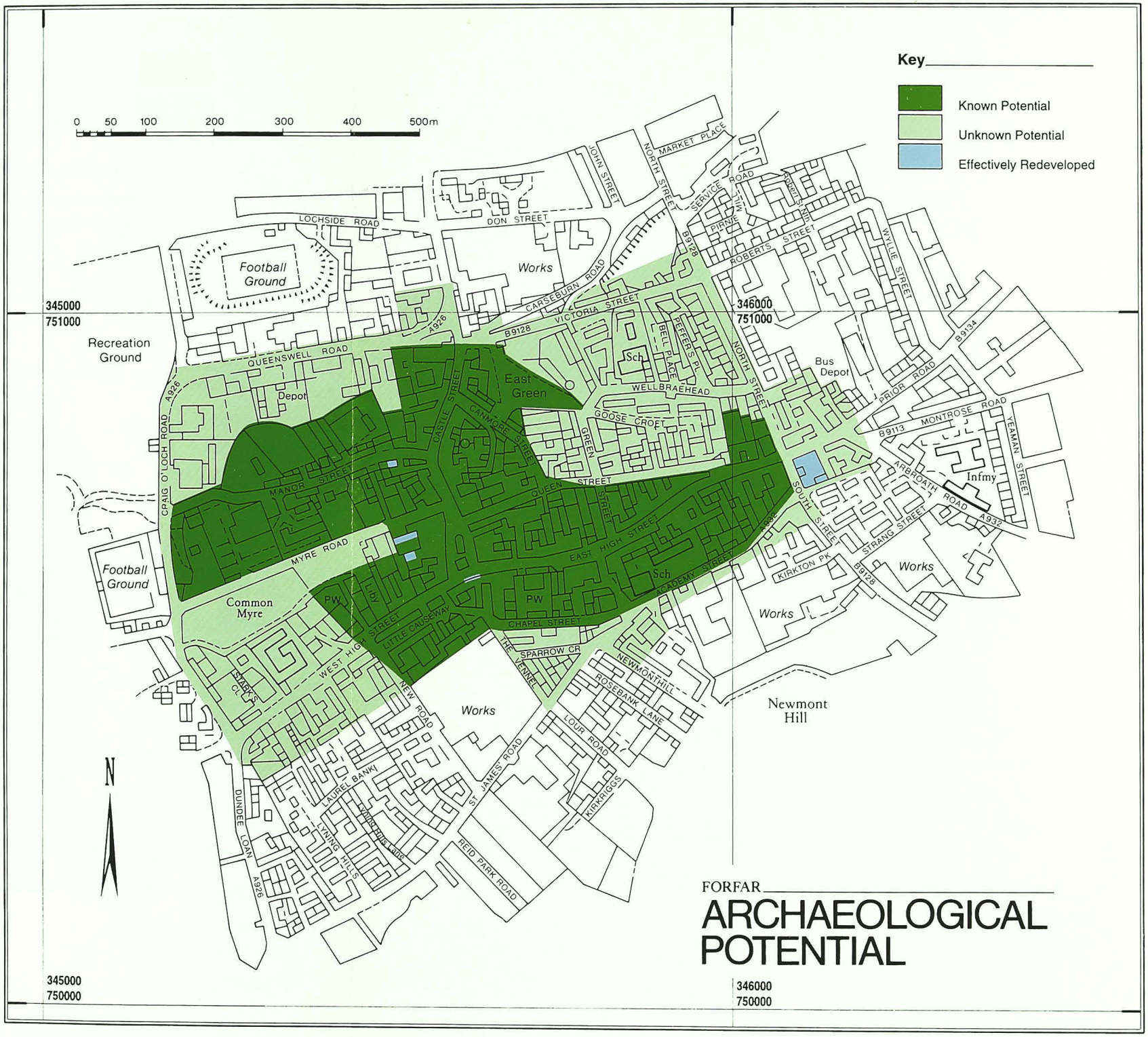

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figure 26a
The archaeological potential of Forfar

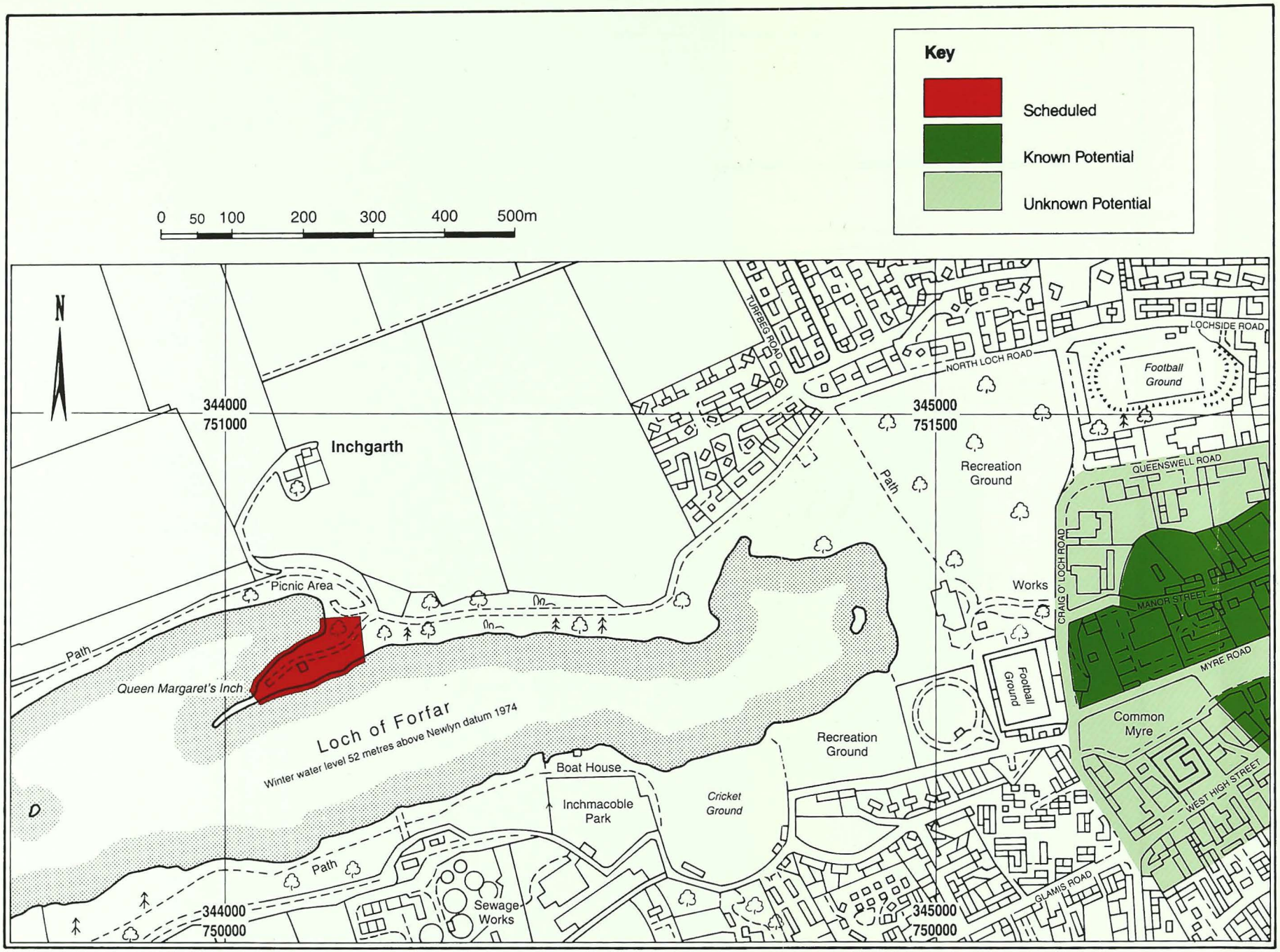

figure 26b
The archaeological potential of Forfar

GD03032G/2000

Historic Forfar

Historic Forfar traces the fortunes of this historic burgh from early medieval times to the present. Forfar was an important residence of early Scottish kings, and may have received burgh status as early as the reign of David I (1124–53). In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Forfar remained a small market town. The growth of the textile industry in the latter part of the eighteenth century saw the town begin to expand until, by the nineteenth century, it was a major linen-producing centre. In this volume the history and archaeology of the town are described, as are its historic buildings, and the origins of its street names.

Historic Forfar traces the fortunes of the town, describing its history and archaeology, its historic buildings, and the origins of its street names.

This book is part of the **Scottish burgh survey**—a series designed to identify which areas of Scotland's historic burghs are of archaeological interest.

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