

## DUNDEE SHIPBUILDERS

Hamish Robertson for Abertay Historical Society 2009

An important basic reason for Dundee and river Tay becoming an important port and river is that, apart from Dundee there was no other safe refuge between St Abbs Head and Buchan Ness. Small ports were not available in the prevailing east winds and the Forth, for example was fully exposed to easterly winds.

Dundee and River Tay, however, had protection from the outer banks of Buddonness and Tentsmuir, and the inner Gaa Bank and Drumlaw Bank further upriver.

From early history, the initial settlement at Dundee, or was it at 'the Ferry'? and, anyone walking the sands of Monifieth at low water today and takes time to study the line from Broughty Castle to Dundee Law, may do some guesswork to visualise a small sea-going craft arriving off Buddonness from the east or south east to note the prominent hill now known as Dundee Law, and that would be a readily recognisable navigation landfall for the future. Navigators are resolute and imaginative!

Proof that fishing settlements existed from very early history and certainly before the Romans arrived, was found when, some 120 years ago and during ongoing work at Stannergate between the railway line and the river there was the disclosure of a large shell bed or 'kitchen midden' measuring about 100 feet by 60 feet containing a large number of edible mollusc shells, bones and deer horns etc., This certainly pre-dated the Roman occupation because Roman stone coffins were also found eight feet above the 'kitchen midden'.

Just last week I was discussing with a friend this aspect of Dundee's history and he mentioned a pre-historic wooden boat that had been found in the Tay and opinion was the boat dated from out 4,000 BC. Further, instead of the bow and stern of the boat being pointed (that being the standard form for all early boats) the boat found in the Tay had a transom and that may indicate the Tay boat had been steered by a rudder, or by a steering oar pivoted on the upper edge of the transom.

Now, that Tay boat was, for many years, displayed in either the Victoria and Albert Museum, or in the Dudhope Museum, but my informant cannot remember which. Now that we are nearing the possible re-opening of the McManus Galleries, or whatever name has been decided, I wonder if it is possible that 'our' pre-Roman/Prehistoric boat could again be revealed for a more appropriate and detailed appraisal and then placed on permanent display. I suspect this boat is one the many artefacts that, a one time were on display, but are now either lost, or hidden, or 'donated' elsewhere?

In fact, another version could be drawn from the arrival of Romans, again by sea and perhaps landing between Carnoustie and Monifieth and then marching inland to about the line of the Dundee/Arbroath Road, from where the presence of Dundee Law is again an important mark to be noted and recorded to assist following 'visitors' from afar. And they found, close to the slopes of that prominent hill, a safe and secure anchorage, or at least safe and secure when compared with the open and substantially unprotected east coast of Scotland and the lands to the South thereof.

Then there is the tale of the Danes arriving in river Tay found a kindly settlement on the north shore, which they probably promptly wrecked and proceeded westwards along the Carse until they met strong opposition and were defeated. I rather like the story of the King of the time rewarding the head of the defence of his realm and at a site close to the river and just west of Errol by releasing a hawk and saying that from the point of release to the place where the hawk landed would be the property of the general who defeated the Danes. In fact I recall a house further along the 'low road' west of Errol has the word 'Hawk' as part of the name of the property.

Having recently read some new sources of early history on Dundee and River Tay it is clear early visitors arrived in Dundee in what has been described as the 'Middle Ages' and I had to pursue a definition of that period and found one that said that period was from about 400 to 1500, which struck me as being a wide ranging period of time and then I recalled the Picts had been here, and the Romans, a long time before the Middle Ages

After the Romans came seafarers from Scandinavia (now known as Denmark, Norway, Finland, & Sweden), also from Russia (which, in those days included a large amount

of the Baltic eastern shore, and from countries further south including Netherlands, Belgium and France.

Another aspect of these later visitors could have been due to the admirable custom of sharing with fellow seamen information that would assist safe navigation and render the seas safer and thus help to develop trade.

The Roman and post Roman period led to the need to feed and maintain a garrison on the banks of River Tay and of course there was also the need to provide and supply the men in these garrisons. And as fish would be an important part of the diet it was a natural development for the settlement on the north bank of River Tay. In addition, the settlements on the south side of the Tay also provided supplies to the Romans and other visitors

In 1040, ships of Malcolm Canmore arrived at Dundee to land men in pursuit of Macbeth.

The earliest Charter to the Burgh of Dundee was given by William the Lion and confirmed by Robert the Bruce who granted a free harbour to the Burgesses thus implying a harbour had been in existence for some years.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> Century there were several laws and Acts introduced which, when applied to Dundee's presence as a port and ship building and repair centre were important and included:

1600

A Charter was granted to the inhabitants of Dundee to uplift 12 pennies on every ton of goods brought to Dundee and every ton loaded at Dundee. Monies to be used for placing tuns in the water mouth of Tay, as meiths [marks] and signs to designe the danger therein.

1608, 30 June

An early indicator of recognition of the importance of shipping was the Act of the Privy Council of Scotland of this date recorded that the Lordis of Secrete Counsale gave powers and commissions to the `burrowis' [Burroughs] of sixteen Scottish ports (of which Edinburgh was first and Dundee second, and Edinburgh was not even a port\*) 'to make acts and ordinances for advancement of the trade of navigation and for correcting the abuses thereof ... and to do all other things that may tend to the advancement of ,sailing and traffic in time coming'. (\*Never mind the recent attempt to have part of Leith named 'Edinburgh Port'. My daughter lives in Edinburgh and she reported the Leithers were furious about that proposal and the Leithers won!)

1666

John Man of Dundee produced a marine chart of the Firth of Tay.

1687 24 February

Following the recording of a further chart of River Tay by John Adair, an Act of the Privy Council of Scotland (again!) this time Warranted and allowed the Fraternity to erect and maintain lights one or two lights on Buddonness.

So the seeds were sown and development over the next 400 years can now probably be thought of as 'slow', but the development was slow because the risks were high and the watchword 'caution' was instilled in all who ventured to sea, aided and abetted by owners and insurers, who preferred to have a vessel complete a voyage, even when longer than planned, rather than lose a ship, a cargo, or some crew. I am always reminded the Shackleton was nicknamed 'Cautious Jack' and the early mariners of Dundee were undoubtedly of that nature. I can assure you the same cautious spirit was evident in Ben Line not so many years ago, but caution was not seen, or necessary when the visibility was good, the position was known and there were no 'cowboys' near. Perhaps that aspect can be summarised by the words, No Risks! But these early mariners did not lack courage,

Moving on to more available information, we find the port of Dundee and river Tay just did not 'happen' but developed under the guidance and experience of the civic administration i.e. 'the cooncil' aided and abetted by those experienced in matters of pilotage on arrival, berthing, stevedoring for loading and discharge, storage of goods for loading and after discharge, employment of seafarers, and repair and maintenance of ships, and it is this last

item that reminds of the ever present need for stocks of good timber and other materials necessary for the repair and maintenance of ships, always bearing in mind that many ships were on voyages of many months or years and also in ships that were not very large. So, as well as these aspects of shipping, there was also the obvious need for ship repair and ship building and it can be wondered which came first, the building or the repair of ships.

1717

A wreck lying (near the) harbour of Dundee was brought to the attention of the Lord Provost and Council of Dundee to the dangers arising from this wreck and requesting the wreck be removed.

1720 2<sup>nd</sup> June

As an example of the problems facing incoming specialists in trades relating to ships the Fraternity petitioned the Provost and Council of Dundee on behalf of James Watt, Anchorsmith, who had lately arrived in Dundee, for the Council to grant a Burgess ticket and thus allow James Watt to enter as a Master to the Hammerman trade and thus be serviceable to the petitioners.

1721 09 August

A similar petition was made by the Fraternity on behalf of John Adamson, shipbuilder. The Council granted him a Burgess Ticket and ground at West Shore for a Shipbuilding Yard.

1728 28 October

A similar petition was made by the Fraternity in regard to the urgent need for an Anchorsmith and named John Duncanson of Airth, and asked the Council to set apart so much ground at the west end of the Dock or Timber Yard as would build a smiddy for commencing of his employ. The Council granted him a gratis ticket for his own lifetime, and delayed considering the other part of the petition.

1767

Sloop PEGGY built and launched in Dundee. Was sold in 1862 after 95 years service.

1781

Sloop ISABELLA built and launched in Dundee. In 1820 was owned by John Allan of Dundee and in 1862 by Thomas Milne of Dundee. Broken up 1869 after a total of 88 years service.

1783

Shipbuilders and Boatbuilders:

William Stromont, West Shore

David Robertson, West Shore (boatbuilder)

Trades and Related Businesses:

Blockmaker; Foundries; Coal Brokers; Shipowners; Shipmasters; Seamen.

1792

(Partly from the Statistical Account for that year):

In shipbuilding, two Masters were employed with 31 journeymen and apprentices, and six were employed by two persons who built boats.

The main manufacturing activities related to cotton, linen, wools, calypso, estridge and Tay yarn and, shipbuilding.

Shipbuilding provided direct employment for 69 men and 116 vessels of a total of 8,550 tons were launched.

Port of Dundee recorded 34 foreign ships, 78 coasting ships and 4 whale fishing vessels were owned in the port of Dundee.

The cordage and ropery industries employed about 30 persons.

1799

In that year the shipping was described as being 'wonderfully increased', a shipbuilding dock was described as being well occupied during the year and a vessel of 300 tons was built in Dundee.

LORD DUNCAN built at Dundee for Dundee Shipping Company.

1809

Shipbuilders and Boatbuilders:

John Coleman, Burnhead

Kewans and Horn

Related Trades:

Carver and Gilder; Smith & Ironmonger; Block maker; Cooper; Gunsmith.

Shipping:

15 ships belonged to port of Dundee.

1815

The whale fishing companies each had individual boiling yards for whale oil processing and these were described as the name of the company or the name of a ship, e.g. the Advice yard/the Horn yard/the Rodney yard/the Friendship yard, the Calypso yard, the Estidge yard and the Tay yard.

[Note: re 'try' pots in Dundee for boiling and further refining of whale oil and other whale products, can anyone remember the circular foundations for such 'try' pots that were to be seen just due south of the Apex Hotel, and would have been adjacent to the old dry dock and beside the old 'Heinz' building?]

1818

Shipbuilders and Boatbuilders:

James Smart, Shipbuilder, Craig

Shipping:

15 ships belonging to Dundee, 16,158 24 tons, 1,289 men and boys

Related Businesses and Trades:

2 carver and gilders, Sailcloth manufacturers; Insurance brokers: Cork cutters and nail manufacturers;

Related business:

Cordage; Copper; Cork; Cotton yarn; Hessians; Hemp; Hammocking; Logwood; Iron; Hemp; Codilla; Coal; Lead.

1820

The Ferry steamer 'The Union' built by Brown of Perth, engine and boiler was designed and built by Carmichael of Dundee.

1823

The Ferry steamer 'The George IV' built by Brown of Perth, engine and boiler was designed and built by Carmichael of Dundee.

1824 24 November [Or was it 1825?]

The first 'wet Dock' formally opened when the smack LORD KINNAIRD, a Dundee and London trader entered the lock. The dock was named King William's Dock.

1824-1825

Related Businesses: 2 Carver and Gilders, 3 Ropemakers; Blockmaker; Lath Splitter.

1826

A new ship building company was formed with a yard at the foot of Trades Lane with James

Horsburgh as Manager.

1829-1830

Shipbuilders and Boatbuilders:

Thomas Adamson, Shipbuilder

Captain Buchan Hermitage, Croal's Docks, Ferry Road John Calman, Shipbuilder

Union Shipbuilding Company, Trades Lane

Related Businesses and Trades:

3 Machine Makers 2 Carver and Guilders; 2 Brass Founders; Ropeworks; Rope Maker;

Related businesses:

White Lead; Blockmaker; Linseed oil/Turpentine/Whale oil/Tallow/Whitening. Tarpaulins, sailcloth and canvas

Shipping:

225 vessels belonging to Dundee, 27,150 tons, 2,000 men and boys.  
Largest ship 360 tons and smallest 15 tons.

1830

Lifeboats stationed at Buddonness and Broughty Ferry were independent of the RNLI and subsequently transferred to RNLI in 1861.

1833

A comparison of shipping numbers and tonnages was:

1792	116 Vessels	8,550 tons Registered Tonnage
1824	165	17,940
1829	225	27,150
1833	284	35,473

**1828**

Thomas Adamson moved from Grangemouth to take over the shipyard owned by James Smart.

1829

The Dundee Foundry Built DP&L's first steam tug SIR WILLIAM WALLACE. He foundry was late sold to Gourlays.

Earl Grey Dock opened and thereafter the Harbour Waters were extended to the east and filling in from the previous 'soft' shore line, and embanking in a more permanent form was part of those works.

Shipbuilders and Boatbuilders:

Thomas Adamson, Seagate;

Adamson's Repairing Slip, the only Slip in Scotland benefiting from a steam engine;

David and Alex Brown, East Harbour;

John Calman;

David Calman, Seagate

Garland & Horsburgh Shipbuilding Company;

Related businesses and Trades included:

17 Ironmongers; 21 Blacksmiths; 3 Rope and Sailmakers; 1 Iron Chain Cable Maker; 14 Marine Insurance Brokers,

12 Brass Founders.

Chronometers — Admiralty instructed their Hydrographic Agent to advise Alex. Cameron in Dundee to select stock of new chronometers.

Shipping:

284 vessels belonging to Dundee, 36,473 tons and 7 vessels on the stocks.

Trade:

9 vessels in the Dundee/London trade;

6 vessels in the Dundee/Glasgow trade;

4 in the Dundee/Leith trade; 3  
in the Dundee/Perth trade; 3  
in the Dundee/Hull trade;

8 in the Dundee/Newcastle trade; 3 in  
the Dundee/Aberdeen trade;

5 in the Dundee/Liverpool trade;

2 in the Dundee/Kirkcaldy trade;

Regular ferry services from Dundee to Newport, Tayport and Newburgh;

**1832** 9<sup>th</sup> August

Earl Grey's Dock opened. It is recorded that in the south west corner of the dock, a silver plate reposes in its stone bed, bearing an inscription couched in enthusiastic and comprehensive terms.

[Note: The dock may have been erected on a stone bed and, if so, then possibly Victoria and Camperdown docks are similarly erected.]

**1834**

Dundee Harbour Trustees levied Light Dues on River Tay at 10/- per hundred Register Tons.

In the year to 31 May 1834 the tonnage of shipping entering the Tay was 201,803 tons and Light Dues charged were £1,009. Then thought to be a sum far beyond what was necessary for the purpose.

Key & Rattray in business as Chainmakers and shipsmiths.

Shipbuilding Yard opened by Peter Borrie and Thomas Adamson at foot of Trades Lane, Dundee. NOTE This would be in the area close to the present Dock Street.

**1836**

The vessel VULCAN left Dundee for the Baltic but, for some reason was forced to return to Dundee in ballast and owners refused to pay Light Dues on the inward voyage. Owners were required to pay Light Dues on the Inward passage to Dundee.

**1837**

Shipbuilders and Boatbuilders who opened businesses were: Thomas Adamson at Seagate;

John Calman at the East Shore;

David Calman at Peep O'Day Lane;

Alexander Brown at the East Shore;

James Horsburgh at Foundry Lane

Related active businesses and Trades included:

Robert Baxter, Ship-joiner, Seagate, rope and sail maker;

William Calman, Collector of Merchant Seamen's Society's Fund. Harry Chalmers, manager of a Shipbuilder at East Seagate.

George Livie, block and pump maker, West Shore. One Carver and Gilder.

Nine Sea Insurance and Ship Brokers.

There were 319 vessels registered at the port of Dundee, 39,965 tons.

### **1840**

Notwithstanding the five shipbuilders named as having opened for business in 1837, it would appear the shipbuilders of Broughty Ferry moved quickly because in 1840 it was recorded the following shipbuilders and foundries were in business:

At the east corner of Douglas Terrace;

Near Broughty Castle sail and steamers were built at Peter Borrie's yard on the east-west shore between Broughty Castle and the pier to the west [Railway Pier];

A foundry at the north corner of Queen Street and Claypotts Road.

### **1841**

Mr Borrie's yard at Broughty Ferry completed an iron steamer of draught and power to allow two hours from Dundee and Perth and return in one day. Named LASS OF GOWRIE, draught as launched 13" and as loaded 30".

### **1840 – 1841**

Maritime related occupations and businesses included:

Ship Builders.	Carvers and Gilders.	Ship Masters.
Engineers.	Ship Owners.	Mariners.
Rope and Sail Makers.	Tide Surveyors/Customs.	Ship Agents.
Teachers of Navigation.	Lloyd's Surveyors.	Iron Merchants.
Tin Plate Workers.	Wire Workers.	Harbour Office.
Carpenters.	Ship Chandlers.	Pilots.
Pilot vessel crews.	Stevedores.	Tallymen.
Carters.	Carpenters.	Wood Merchants.

And the list goes on and on.

## **1842 – 1843**

14 Ship Brokers.

6 Ship Chandlers.

4 Staymakers (Ladies')

Maritime related industries included: 6 Sailmakers.

17 Rope/Twine Makers.

4 Wire Workers.

6 Ship Builders.

3 Ship Smiths.

## **1843**

When the East Railway Station opened, the station was substantially on a peninsula with the waters that became Victoria Dock (then a shallow basin) to the south and water to the north up to Seagate and Blackscroft/Broughty Ferry Road.

Mr. Purves of Hilltown, Dundee invented a paddle wheel for vessels where the lifting of backwater is entirely obviated thus increasing the power of the engine one fourth and speed one fifth.

## **1844**

Alexander Buick, Rope & Sail Maker in business at No. 1 Dock Street.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> April**

A meeting of Shipwrights, Blacksmiths, Blockworkers, etc., connected with Port of Dundee, met to discuss a Parliamentary memorial regarding "An equal share of naval work to be done in Scotland".

## **1849 6<sup>th</sup> February**

Peter Borrie's yard at Broughty Ferry (located at the foot of St Vincent Street on the site of the present park) launched a Railway Ferry for the Broughty Ferry to Tayport service and the yard closed down later that year.

## **1851 14<sup>th</sup> August**

CORREO, the first screw steamer built in Dundee was launched from J. Brown's yard. Engined by Gourlay & Mudie with two engines each giving 9 knots under steam and reached 12 knots under steam and sail.

## **1852 – 1860**

When the Wet Docks were completed and Dock Street fowled, a shipbuilding yard and a Private Graving Dock had to be cleared. Shipyards were opened near the Patent Slip [just to the west of the present Victoria Dock, part of that Graving Dock is now concealed by the Hotel now there, and south of Victoria Dock. Seven or eight yards were opened and included Alexander Stephen; Brown and Simpson; W. B. Thompson and also Pearce.

## **1853**

Gourlay and Company opened a shipyard in Dundee and the company continued in business to 1904/05.

At that time Alexander Stephen who had a shipyard in Moray, moved to Dundee and built timber sailing whalers and, in later years, converted these to steam power.

Initial records are incomplete but in January 1856, the first vessel launched was ALMA of Dundee, a sailing schooner 119' 6" in length. A second vessel was launched in May 1856 and named PAVO, 89' 9" long and the engine had 145 Nominal H.P.

The third vessel, LONDON of Dundee, was launched on 5 July 1856, 243' 9" long and 145 N.H.P.

Launch No. 25 was DUNDEE of Dundee launched in October 1864 and delivered on 25 May 1865.

#### **1854**

Lilybank Foundry sold by James Steele to Messrs. Pearce and Neish.

#### **1855 29<sup>th</sup> June**

Brig LUTHER launched from Dundee Shipbuilding Co's yard. Owner John White of Dundee. Figurehead John Wynd of Dundee.

#### **1857**

Camperdown Dock work commenced. (Completed 1865 as a tidal dock.)

Shipwrights of the port were on strike from April to August and some yards gave jobs to those out of work, but at wages reduced from 26 to 27 shillings per week to 22 to 23 shillings per week. There was also some trouble over working on Saturdays and, as a result many shipwrights left Dundee for work elsewhere.

#### **1860**

The first purpose built steam whaler was built jointly by Gourlay and Alexander Stephen with a wood hull.

Thereafter all whalers built in Dundee had wood hulls which was thought to be ideal for work in the Arctic due the weight and mass of the hull helping when whalers were attempting to 'butt' their way out of pack ice. A degree of insulation in the sleeping quarters was also a benefit of a wood hull.

#### **1861**

During the year, Lifeboats originally stationed at Buddonness and Broughty Ferry (from 1830), were this year transferred to RNLI.

#### **1862**

Schooner TAY, Length 68', launched for the Dundee Pilotage Committee. On 23 September 1865 the schooner was sold for the last time to E. Broderick, Sunderland after 57 years of service.

#### **1863**

At the opening of Baxter Park, the procession included:

500 Shipwrights, every man carried a flag, a Carpenters tool or a small model ship. Tay Shipbuilding Company men carried flags and ship models.

John Brown Shipbuilding Yard, 40 men carried a model of the new pilot cutter and a model of a Chinese war junk (property of Fraternity?).

Gourlay Brothers Shipbuilding Yard, men carried flags and models of ships ADRIATICO, SCOTIA, ORONOCO and ANGLIA.

Alexander Stephen's Shipbuilding Yard, 130 men carried the full code of Captain Marryat's Code of Signals and a model of the GREAT EASTERN.

Men of Dundee Shipbuilding Company and Matthew Shields' Boat Building Company also participated in the procession.

### **1864 18<sup>th</sup> October**

Gourlays launched DUNDEE of Dundee (Yard No 25), delivered 25 May 1865.

### **1865**

Whaler ERIK built by Alexander Stephen & Sons, Dundee and used in 1901 as a store ship for the Greely Expedition.

### **1867**

Brown & Simpson's yard in Dundee employed 200 workers.

### **1868**

Gourlays also built engines and to this year engine details were limited to 'Nominal H.P.' and later a 'Patent Lever Engine' was recorded.

The shipbuilding yard of Alexander Stephen & Son, Dundee was destroyed totally by fire.

### **1870 28<sup>th</sup> May**

From Gourlay's Yard, No. 46, VIVIGO, was launched and the engine was described as Engine Lever Compound of 220 HP. There is a note that the pitch of the propeller was reduced from 28 to 26 feet and the ship run the distance from Hamburg to Dundee in two hours less time. So even two hours saved in a voyage of about 450 miles was thought to be worthwhile, so you cannot say ship-owners ignored the detail!

### **1870 to 1872**

Engines built by Gourlays were described as 'Compound Lever Surface Condensing, of 115 HP', and the 345' steamers, Nos 55 KENILWORTH and 56, ABBOTSFORD were launched and No. 55 had an engine 'Compound Surface Condensing' and ABBOTSFORD had an engine 'Inverted direct acting surface condensing compound'. It would therefore appear Gourlays were leaders at development and innovation and this is endorsed by reference to the engine numbers installed in ships and many more engines were built than ships were launched.

Apart from steam vessels, sailing ships were also built and No 68 was STRATHEARN a 220' barque launched in November 1874, then 75 & 76, STRACATHRO & ARTHURSTONE, were also 220' barques

### **1869**

Harbour Trustees were authorised to construct a tidal basin and entrance to Camper-Down Dock; to extend and alter the River Walls; to construct a sea wall from the entrance to Camperdown Dock to Stannergate; to construct a Graving Dock between Camperdown Dock and Victoria Docks; to deepen and complete Victoria Dock; to reclaim and use for Harbour purposes the ground to the South of the railway, from Camperdown Dock to Stannergate. These were the main points authorised.

Between 1872 and 1874 the Harbour Trustees purchased the rights of various proprietors to the foreshore between East Dock Street and Stannergate Point, and reclamation works proceeded.

### **1875 1<sup>st</sup> August**

Caiman's Yard and Carmichael's Yard were to be found far up river near the modern railway bridge, and there were three yards at Broughty Ferry, two belonging to Thomas Borrie and one to Peter Borrie.

Victoria Dock completed and the vessel STRATHEARN of Thomson Line was the first vessel to enter the dock.

### **1875 16<sup>th</sup> August**

At separate ceremonies four whalers were launched, one each from the yards of Thompsons, Gourlays, The Tay Shipbuilding Company and Brown & Simpson.

### **1876**

Gourlays

Four of the ships launched that year were:

No. 77 AURORA of Dundee, launched 26 February, 245 foot screw steamer. No. 78 STRATHTAY of Dundee, launched 26 July, 245 foot screw steamer. No.79, BRITANNIA of Dundee, launched 21 September, 205 screw steamer.

No. 80 BONNIE DUNDEE of Sydney launched 09 November, and left Newcastle for Sydney 29 March 1877.

The three masted barque GLAMIS was launched by Alexander Stephen & Sons for Dundee Clipper Line.

NOTE: On 19 August 1913, after 37 years service, GLAMIS was wrecked off the Cayman Islands, West Indies.

In 1880 it was noted the lengths of ships launched increased from 150' to 250' to 350' and 400'. By March 1880 a high percentage of ships were in excess of 350'.

### **1883 15<sup>th</sup> May**

No 119 INVERTAY launched for Charles Barrie, Dundee

No 120 was MARTOS of Valencia launched 30 April and described as "Double bottomed steel screw steamer (P.F. and B. DRS) Rig Double Topsail Schooner." A note records: No Plimsoll mark put on ship (assumed freeboard taken from Lloyd's tables).

### **1884**

In that year, three ships were launched under the 'Three Deck Rule'. The ships were:

No 122 INDUS launched 2 June 1883,

No 123 DRACONA launched 16 October 1883,

No 124 ESCALONA launched 19 December 1883.

Available records do not include the names of owners, but I suggest it is fair to assume these three ships were built for a single owner.

The sealer TERRA NOVA was launched from the yard of Alexander Stephen & Sons for Dundee Clipper Line. L 187'; B 31'; Depth 19'.

TERRA NOVA sailed in the 1902-03 Relief of the British Antarctic Expedition; the 1903 AMERICA Relief Expedition and was the core ship in the 1910-1911 Antarctic Expedition when Scott and his party were lost.

In 1943, after 59 years service, TERRA NOVA sank returning from Greenland to USA. All crew rescued by US Navy Cutter.

### **1881**

Lieutenant Adolphus Greely of the American Army commanded the International Polar Year Expedition to Ellesmere Island and Dundee built ships played the major part in the transport of the expedition to Ellesmere Island and, in 1884, the eventual rescue of the survivors. The rescue fleet comprising the whalers THETIS & BEAR, and a merchant collier LOCH GARRY, was piloted through the Davis Strait to Ellesmere Island by the Dundee whalers ARCTIC, AURORA and WOLF. A recognition of the sea and ice-worthiness of Dundee built ships.

### **1885**

No 128 DUNDEE of Dundee launched 08 May and delivered 07 November 1885, described as 'Steel screw steamer, Short Poop, Quarterdeck, Bridge Deck and long forecastle. Rig Schooner. Length 244' 00"

### **1886**

THEODORA launched 12 October and delivered 07 May 1887, described as 'Steel Screw Yacht 165' 00. Flush Deck. Schooner Rig.'

## **1888**

DEAN of Dundee launched 17 August, delay in launch due to Engineer's and Labourer's strike.

## **1889**

Labourer's were on strike for five weeks in January, February and March.

In recent years, ports of Registry of ships built by Gourlays included Adelaide, Marseilles, Fiume (Finland), Constantinople, Singapore, Cephalonias, Calcutta, and Archangel.

## **1893**

NEWFIELD was the last vessel built by Alexander Stephen & Son, Dundee.

## **1894**

No 160 launched 04 April and delivered 06 June. Three weeks of the building time were lost through a Joiner's strike.

No 171 HESPERUS launched 09 July and delivered 22 October. Steel raised quarter deck twin screw steamer for lighthouse service [Northern Lighthouse Board]. 175 feet long, rig schooner and engines developed 1245 HP.

No 162/305 JUNO of Singapore launched 12 October and this vessel lay on the stocks till sold, from 29 December to 24 May 1895. It therefore appears this vessel was built and fitted out on the stocks, in contrast to later procedures when vessels were basically built on the stocks then launched, and fitted out at a separate berth.

### **10<sup>th</sup> April (Wednesday).**

D. B. Livie, Boatbuilders received an order for a 16' boat for Skye and the completed boat was despatched on Friday 12 April.

### **August.**

The Federation of Sail Makers held their Fifth Annual Conference in Dundee, Robert Henderson of Dundee was President.

Ten delegates represented 1000 members of the Federation and it was noted membership was 1500 in 1855, then down to 1287 and now 1000.

There was a difference regarding the use of sewing machines in sewing sails.

## **1895**

During the year, D.B.Livie, boatbuilders, built:

12 gigs, each 24 feet for Admiralty; 6 gigs, each 34 feet for Admiralty;

Yacht for Royal Tay Yacht Club; Coastguard boat towed to Stonehaven and delivered there; And other craft for commercial customers.

## **1896**

This year W.B.Thompson sold his shipyard on the south side of Victoria Dock to P.S. Browne and James Tawse who formed the Caledon Shipbuilding and Engineering Co., Ltd., and probably continued to build ships at that site before moving to a site in line with the concrete road bridge close to the junction of Roodyards Road and Dock Street.

Then in 1917, a large area of ground at the harbour became available for industrial purposes and the Caledon leased about 20 acres and this was the site for what became known as the Stannergate shipyard. The original site of the Caledon shipyard was retained until about 1930 when the Caledon gave up a large portion of the original yard including the slipways but retained the boiler shop and other works where the 150 ton crane was erected and used to lift main engines and boilers into ships being fitted out. Then the 150 ton crane was also demolished for scrap.

1897

Gourlays

EXCELSIOR of Dundee launched 28 October and delivered 17 February 1897 but lay in dock for two months after completion when registry was transferred from Dundee to Sydney.

BATAVIER of Rotterdam launched 11 March and delivered 17 August. L 244', engine 1711 I.H.P. Steel coasting steamer, well deck, high bulwarks and upper bridge. Note that specifications included the lower tween decks included 3990 emigrants quarters

### **1899**

During the year:

- 19 vessels were launched from Dundee;
- 11 for building were in hand;
- 18 triple expansion engines were completed;
- 3 triple expansion engines were in hand.

### **1900 March.**

Keel of DISCOVERY laid at yard of Alexander Stephen's yard.

Alexander Stephen's yard was taken over by Dundee Shipbuilders Co.

During the year.

55 Vessels arrived at Dundee with flax and hemp from the Baltic ports of Riga, Libau, Reval, Konigsberg and Archangel.

31 vessels arrived at Dundee with jute from India.

128 vessels, including 26 sailing vessels a total of 101,943 tons were registered at Dundee.

James Bell & Sons, Rope and Sail makers, Dundee (in business from 1869).

During the year, there were 1,128 landings from trawlers at Dundee. This means that each week about 20 trawlers landed fish. It is remarkable that little has ever been written about that particular trade. It is even more remarkable when it was possible no fish were landed on the Sabbath.

### **1801 — 1900**

Some 45 whalers were built in Dundee, of which more than 20 were built in the second half of the century.

During the century whaling was very important to the development of Dundee, firstly as a ready source of orders for new whalers, secondly for the maintenance and repair required when the ships returned after a season in the Arctic and thirdly to provide whale oil which proved essential for the softening of jute and the development of that trade as a substitute for the loss of flax from Russia and the resultant linen trade that was an immediate consequence of the Crimean War.

In addition, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 greatly reduced the voyage times for the raw jute being imported from Bengal.

### **1901**

Gourlays

No 197 was laid down as DEN OF SEATON for Steamship Den of Seaton Co Ltd (C. Barrie & Son, Managers), Dundee and sold on the stocks on 3 July and in August was launched as MONTEVIDEO for Hamburg-Sudamerikanische D.G. Hamburg and completed August 1914.

### **1903**

No. 210 ALICE of Dundee launched 24 April and delivered 31 October 1903.

No 211 NEPTUNE of Dundee launched 03 November and delivered 13 February 1904.

### **1904**

28 January No 212 No. 1 Hull, and No 212 No. 2 Hull, both Steel screw tugs and water boats, each 65' long launched and delivered 18 May 1904.

### **1905**

No 214 DEN OF KELLY (1) launched for Steamship Den of Seaton Co Ltd (C. Barrie & Son, Managers). 1907 sold to Hamburg-Sudameriknische D.G. Hamburg.

No 215 DEN OF MAINS launched 05 June for Steamship Den of Airlie Co Ltd (C. Barrie & Son) Dundee and completed in July.

According to records this was the last vessel built and launched at Gourlays of Dundee, shipbuilders and engine builders.

Thereafter, shipbuilding in Dundee continued but the writing was on the wall and during the next twelve years

### **1917**

Caledon leased a site for development and this became known as the Stannergate Shipyard.

### **1922**

The Dundee Shipbuilding Company (formed in 1906) closed down.

### **1932**

Lilybank Foundry produced its last marine engine.

During this year, five of the eight sealers to Newfoundland had been built in Dundee, namely:

SAGONA; NEPTUNE; THETIS; TERRA NOVA and RANGER..

### **1937/38**

Trade and Societies related to the shipbuilding industry in Dundee include, .  
Boilermakers; Drillers; Engineers; Foundry Workers; Grinders; Pariors; Iron Dressers; Sail Makers; Shipwrights; Dockers and Wood Workers.

In concluding this very short talk about shipbuilding in Dundee ...

The Caledon achieved a high and well earned reputation for building excellent ships and this continued during the Second World War, and in later years. However, time precludes adequate discussion on the Caledon and the history of that famous yard must be left for another time and another person.

But, living in South Baffin Street, I can readily recall the phalanx of men who walked Up the street after 5. PM each day, all in working clothes (for many discarded sports jackets and trousers) covered in rust and paint and evidence of their skills. Many were small men, small in stature but not small in those skills. And many was the time they were wet through by rain and no wonder many spent a lot of time in the pubs, but only after they had been home for their 'tea'. We were always on the 'mooch' for chalk —to the girls to draw out boxies or bits of metal for pinnars and if we were playing some version of football with the goals between a lamp post and a building and there was always a man who would dash from the steady walk and dribble the ball for us and that always got a cheer. There as a carpenter who lived in our close and as a 'homer' he made a box for my bagpipes, it was the work of a craftsman and so many of them always, and I mean always, were smoking and when it was raining they were soaked and in winter must have been very cold. My word they were tough but they were also well trained and skilled and they all built ships of a very high standard and reputation.

During the war we could see the ships on the slipways then being fitted out and then the ships left (we never seemed to see one sail) and the process continued at a high rate throughout the war.

After the war, a launch was a great occasion and I remember seeing many a launch and wondered why such dramatic events always took place about 1615 or 1630, and it was only years later when a Caledon man explained that a 'launch' was an excuse for a more casual afternoon with everyone more or less taking an afternoon on half time.

The reason for the timing of the launch, which must have required a close look at the tide tables, was in recognition of the fact that after the launch there was little chance of getting the work force back to work and so the launches were arranged for as close as possible to 1700 to ensure the troops could all depart early without the loss of too much time! On the other hand the launch had to be timed so that the ship could be berthed at the Fitting Out Berth without payment of overtime!