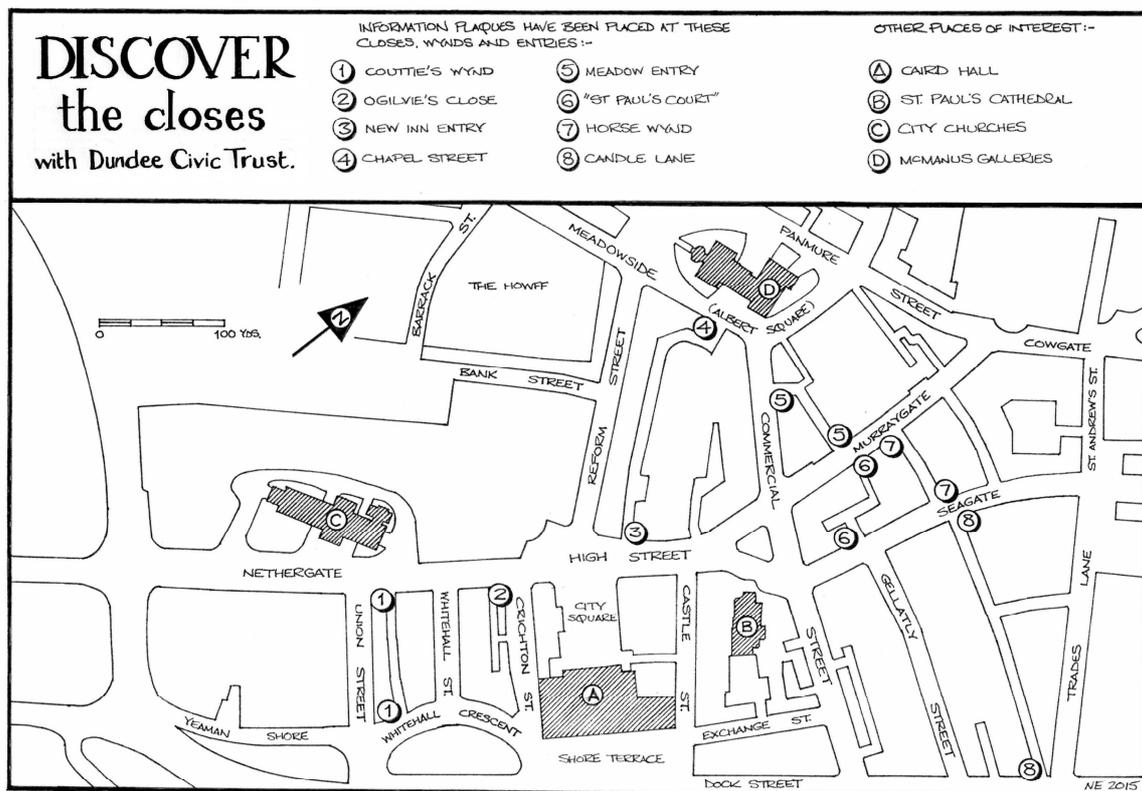


DUNDEE'S HISTORIC CLOSES



The Closes' information plaques - what they say

1 Coutties Wynd

This was the principal route connecting Town Centre and Harbour and is the oldest surviving North South thoroughfare within Dundee City Centre, dating from before 1200. In 1200 it was chosen for the site of the mansion of David, Earl of Huntingdon. It later became known as Abbott's Wynd when the monks of Arbroath Abbey acquired property at its Northern entrance. The close originally ran from the Harbour, up to the Nethergate, past the East gable of St Mary's Church, along Tally Street, across the Overgate, along Friar's Vennel to the Howff and the Meadows.

Later known as Spalding's Wynd after Richard Spalding who settled in Dundee prior to 1342 and became Lord Provost in 1376, it became known as Couttie's Wynd in 1521 when William Couttie, butcher, acquired property here on the West side of the Wynd.

Originally a narrow lane, curved for weather protection, it was widened in 1769. Later between 1837 and 1858 the South-West frontage was developed and between 1871 and 1900 the North-East frontage was rebuilt, enabling the widening of the central part of the wynd.

Shop and house windows originally lined both sides of the Wynd and although long since blocked up, the outlines of these can still be seen to this day.

2 Hary Ogilvies Close/Scotts Close

Identified by William Crawford Snr. in his map of 1776 this close's title probably derives from the name of the proprietor of a public house which adjoined the close at the West corner of Crichton

Street. This close formerly met Fish Street at its Southern end, but was blocked when that street was demolished for the construction of Whitehall Crescent around 1886.

A blocked-up 17th century stair tower lies immediately to the South, although the building facing Crichton Street in which it is contained was extensively altered in the 19th century.

There are attractive windows throughout this close and looking North you can get an impression of the 6-storeyed medieval city which Dundee used to be.

Don't miss the side pend which leads out on to Crichton Street along the South side of The Pillars public house.

3 New Inn Entry

As recently as 1776, this was an important public access from High Street to the Meadows. Although in 1793 the West frontage of the lane was built up with tenements and gardens by William Wilson, a wood merchant, it remained a main thoroughfare until supplanted by the construction of Reform Street in 1832. It still provides a sheltered access to Meadowside. The close was named after the New Inn (now the Arctic Bar), erected in 1845 by John Hill behind the 1790 tenement conversion which fronts the High Street.

In the Arctic Bar basement there remains an original cobbled floor and also an interesting stair leading up to ground and first floors of the former warehouse and granary.

At 20-22 New Inn Entry can be seen the remains of a church meeting house, converted from an earlier theatre in 1799.

In the 19th century this street was the home of several publications including the Dundee Courier & Argus, the Northern Warder, and the Weekly News. By the start of the 20th century the East frontage was occupied by Keiller's confectionery works, producing the marmalade to be found on the breakfast tables across the British Empire.

Demolished in the 1970s, Keiller's site was redeveloped as the Forum Centre.

4 Chapel Street

In 1835, on the site immediately behind you, a Baptist Chapel was built on the East side of Chapel Street – surely the shortest street in Dundee! Prior to that date what is now known as Chapel Street was simply the continuation of New Inn Entry, connecting the High Street to the Meadows.

In direct and unabashed opposition to the Baptist Chapel, the Gaelic Free Church was built in 1858 on the West side of Chapel Street.

Immediately to the South of the Baptist Chapel was the General Session School.

The importance of New Inn Entry as a major route from the High Street to the Meadows was diminished by the construction of Reform Street and subsequently Commercial Street.

5 Meadow Entry

Originally this was a route leading all the way from the Meadows, across Murraygate, through St Paul's Close to Seagate and down Candlemaker's Wynd to the seafront and harbour. Had you been

living in medieval Murraygate you might have herded your cow along here on the way to pasture at the Meadows. In 1775 the close was widened to offer passage for carts from the Meadows to Murraygate. It was further developed in 1783 by the construction of a simple tenement by David Rait, wright, who laid out the West side of the entry and Thomas Wood, mason, who laid out the East side.

Until 1874 the close stretched from Murraygate to Ward Road, but with the construction of Commercial Street in that year it was curtailed and re-aligned to the West to meet Commercial Street, as it remains to this day.

6 St Paul's Court

The name of this close derives from a tradition that the first church in Dundee was that of St Paul's which was established at some point after the 8th century. St Paul's Court was once part of a route connecting the city meadows to the seafront and linked with Meadow Entry and Candlemaker's Wynd.

Script written in 1776 states "St Paul's Church stood betwixt Murraygate and Seagate streets and is said to have been a stately building, a closs stood at mouth of the broad Murraygate street over againt the Closs. A coach road came from the house of Dudhope straight over to this church".

This appears to refer to the predecessor of St Paul's Cathedral which now stands at the junction of Commercial Street and Seagate. A more visible - if less venerable - historical remnant is the "True Rest Furniture" sign* above the entrance from Murraygate – a reminder of the retail traders who once thrived here and whose blocked-up shopfronts and doorways can be seen to this day.

** The sign was taken down and put into safe keeping when the adjacent building was demolished following a fire in December 2014.*

7 Horse Wynd

In ancient times this was one of the few routes between Murraygate and Seagate.

As early as 1449 it is recorded that buildings even then lined both sides of the wynd. A Charter dated 1465 describes it as "King's Vennel, anciently called 'Horse Wynd'".

In those days this passage would have given easy access from Murraygate to what was then the commercial centre of the town.

The Bank of Scotland building to the North-West was built in 1868 and connected to an earlier structure – that of Beattie's Close, the remains of which can be seen to this day (with the permission of the owner!) to the rear of the Bank building.

8 Candle Lane

2 centuries ago at this point you would have been standing only a short distance (approx. 70m) from Dundee's then waterfront. The reason why you are now so far inland is that, as the city and its port thrived, the need for improved wharfage after 1815 led to docks being established to the South of Dock Street.

Land thus reclaimed became occupied by all manner of maritime-related activities including the Bonded Warehouse and the Town Sugar House to the East.

From the late 18th century whaling had become a growth industry and huge blubber-boiling yards sprang up around the Seagate. One “spin-off” gave this lane its name, viz. the candleworks established by Joseph Sanderson in 1780. These were located on what was then the Eastern edge of the town to avoid the obvious hazards of fire.

At the South end is the Sailor’s Home and Chapel, relocated from its former site in the old seaman’s quarter around the present Whitehall Crescent. This is the sole reminder in the lane of an important part of Dundee’s maritime history.