

ROTHESAY 100 YEARS AGO.

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One hundred years ago Rothesay must have been a quaint little town, with the low and mainly thatched houses clustered round the Castle, and in the streets radiating therefrom. The backs of the houses in Montague Street—or the Laigh Street as it was colloquially called—and West Princes Street, faced the sea, for then there was neither Victoria Street nor Albert Place. But by this time the town was developing as a holiday resort, and the town was beginning to spread out eastwards and westwards along the shore. For example, some houses were built and other were being built beyond Wellpark Road. But from there to Bogany House there was still only the farmhouse of Laigh Bogany—the Plane tree in the garden of St. Regulus marks its site. The site of Wimbleton was the black quarry. Huntly Place was much as it is now. Glenfaull Cottage, now known, I think, as Glenburn Cottage, was not blocked by any high tenement, while Laurel Grove, a large house, stood on the site now occupied by the Glenburn Hydro. It was known as the “Duke’s House,” being the property of Alexander Duncan, known as “Duncan the Duke,” who formerly had a draper’s shop in Montague Street, somewhere about where Lipton’s shop now is. Adelaide House still stands, and from Ashburn to Glenburn Road, the houses then in existence still stand, though some have been altered in appearance. The Battery stood on the site now occupied by the old Aquarium. The houses in Battery Place were large, with gardens attached. Some still stand, though much altered. East Princes Street and the east side of Bishop Street were pretty well built up, and the west side of Bishop Street nearly so. There were some old ramshackle buildings

where the Lorne Hotel now stands. Duncan M’Vicar’s Smithy projected out from about Stewart, the Tobacconist’s corner, and was approached by a long wooden gangway—he lived in the Black Bull Inn, for he was an innkeeper as well as a blacksmith. The Bute Arms Inn stood on its present site at the corner of Watergate and Guildford Street (now Square, so named out of compliment to the Second Marquess of Bute, whose first wife was Maria, eldest daughter of the Earl of Guildford). The Bute Arms Inn had been built by the father of Archd. Moore for his private residence, and was then a three storied building with a two storied wing facing Watergate. The other buildings in the Square were of nondescript type. There was, of course, no Victoria Street. A footpath ran along the shore overlooked from the back of the low-roofed houses along the north side of Montague Street. Gallowgate (colloquially “Needle” Street) ended at Chapelhill Road. In Argyll Street and Argyll Place the houses were larger and of the self contained type—the most prominent probably being the house purchased in 1834 by Tom Douglas, the Chairman of the Western Bank—whose yachts, carriages, flunkies, etc., were the wonder of all the folk in the town. This house was afterwards bought by Neil Campbell and turned into a hotel, and now forms part of the Grand Marine Hotel. The last house in Argyll Place was Hawthorn Park belonging to Lieut. Black, and still the property of his descendants. The area round the Castle was the more densely populated part of the town—High Street to the Old Manse, Watergate, Store Lane, Mill Street, New Vennel, West Princes Street, Montague Street. The Castle was almost surrounded by houses, for there was no water in the moat. Where there were no buildings the Castle grounds served as a receptacle for all sorts of rubbish. The houses in the centre of the town were mainly small—the larger proportion being under £10 rent. The larger houses in the town were mostly in the newer streets—such as East Princes Street, Battery Place, Argyll Street and Place, Argyll Terrace, Huntly Place, etc.—but there were some in the centre of the town itself. In High Street, Springfield House, belonging to Wm. Peddie,

stood on the site now occupied by St. James's Church. The Manse was a new building, only four years old. The Chapel of Ease Manse was almost opposite the Old Manse, and further up High Street was Foley House, then occupied by Archd. Moore, and there were two large houses in the Castle grounds opposite the Estate Office. These were removed when the Moat was restored. Approached from Bridge Street were Chapelhill House, Ivy Bank and Mavis Bank.

In 1833 visitors could find accommodation in about one-half of the 600 odd houses in the town. The principal hotel was the Bute Arms Inn kept by Duncan M'Corkindale. The Crosskeys Inn was kept by Dougall Bannatyne, and occupied the site of the Esplanade Hotel, with the entrance from Montague Street. Two boarding houses kept by Duncan Buchanan at Seabank, Argyll Street, and Miss Mary M'Corkindale, East Princes Street, appear in Fowler's Directory.

The number of licensed premises in Rothesay 100 years ago appears large to us. Every street seems to have had two or three. To name only a few, there was the Clydesdale Inn at the corner of Bishop Street and West Princes Street, where Swanston's shop now is; the Earl Grey Inn in Watergate; the Black Bull Inn in West Princes Street, and another of the same name in Gallowgate. Janet M'Kinlay's public house was where the Clydesdale Bank now stands, with entrances from Guildford Square, High Street and Montague Street. At the corner of Montague Street and Tower Street an Inn was kept by Mrs Linton. When folk sat down too long to talk, she would come in and say, "Be wise boys, and buy gills." The "Thack," in Stuart Street—then a one-storied house—was a resort of farmers, and after the Disruption was known as the Free Kirk Tavern, as it was a favourite resort of Free Church men. Then in Watergate was Semple's Cellar—which did, or was supposed to do, a purely family trade, that is, there was supposed to be no consumption on the premises. But a few were privileged to sit down. There was no separate room in which visitors could sit—there was only the shop premises—so a row of casks was placed out

from the fireplace, and this served as a screen. Here Provosts and Magistrates, past, present and to come, with their trusty friends, met more or less by stealth—to discuss their plans for the betterment of the town. But all unknown they were sometimes watched from the windows of the "London Tailor's" house opposite. And other two taverns should be mentioned. James Smith kept the Flamborough Tavern in Mill Street (near the Lade), and John M'Millan was an ale and porter merchant at the sign of the Three Tuns, at the corner of Castlehill Street and High Street. The descendants of both are still with us, and the great grandson of the former is married to the great granddaughter of the latter. Then there was the Bute Arms Coffee Room, a sort of high-class club. As an antidote to the numerous public houses, a Temperance Society had been started three years earlier. Lieut. Black was preses, Messrs M'Nab and Neilson its patrons.

One hundred years ago the town was at the parting of the ways, struggling to maintain its position as an industrial town and yet beginning to cater for summer visitors. The fishing was becoming centralised in fishing stations in the North of Scotland and was thus affecting injuriously the industry in Rothesay, but still some 60 sailing vessels, ranging from 15 to 280 tons burden, were registered from the custom house of Rothesay, and other vessels, registered from other custom houses, but belonging to Rothesay owners, frequented the Bay and Harbour. Consequently some boat building, block making and kindred trades flourished. One boatbuilding yard was where the houses numbers 30 and 31 East Princes Street now stand, and was occupied by James Black, the great grandfather of A. C. Black, K.C., Sheriff of Dumbartonshire.

There was also throughout the town a number of cooperages—indeed, there was hardly a street without one or more. The coopers had to turn out a specified number of barrels per day, and as the firing of the barrels was very hot work, this was usually done in the early morning before the sun was up. The cooperage of Neil Jamieson in Castle Street—where the

"Buteman" Office now stands—was the site of the "Boothie" built after the Disruption as the meeting place of the Free Kirk.

The Cotton Mills in Barone Road (in the Orphanage grounds) and Mr Doig's Power Loom Factory in King Street gave employment to some hundreds of individuals. Mr Doig's Factory was managed by Mr John Robertson. He was a rather remarkable man, for not only did he advise Mr Doig to build a larger weaving factory in High Street (corner of Russell Street) (1840), but he built another weaving mill in Ladeside Street, afterwards sold to A. & J. M'Kirdy (1848). Then he built Newhall Factory, Glasgow, where he had about 2000 looms and eventually a spinning factory with about 100,000 spindles. He also purchased the Estate of Blairbeth in the Rutherglen district.

The tan work in Queen Street (then known as Leather Lane) was owned by Charles M'Kinlay. This was one of three tanneries in Rothesay and it alone employed about 40 men. The foreman of the tan work was Colin Buchanan, an ancestor of the father of our Town Council, ex-Bailie Buchanan. Charles M'Kinlay built Rockvale on a portion of the lands known as "Buttkie," which belonged to his family for generations, and I presume he was a descendant of the well-known litigant of a former generation, Mungo M'Kinlay. In these days there was no bridge over the Lade at Queen Street, only a narrow plank 30 inches wide. In frosty weather people preferred to cross the Lade at John Street, or the Wee Brae as it was then unofficially known.

There were other industries in the town of minor importance. For example, there were many customer weavers. Wool, as it came from the sheep, was purchased and teased and cleaned at home. Then it was sent to the Mill to be carded—the carding Mill of John Fraser was in John Street (now a grain store). The carded wool was spun at home. It was then taken to the customer weaver, who wove it into blankets or drugget,

Then Thomas Linton, the hosier or stocking weaver, occupied the cottage still standing in Tower Street. This trade used to employ several men and not a few women and girls in their own homes.

The town was well supplied with shops. In those days there were no local papers, and it is more than likely that few Glasgow papers reached the town. So it was the custom of the townsmen to meet in some shop for news and gossip and to discuss municipal and kirk affairs—especially the latter. The best known was the "Mill" shop, a licensed grocer's shop which stood in the Castle grounds near the corner of Castlehill Street and High Street. It earned its name from the fact that workers in the Mill received vouchers which were honoured at the Mill shop. Besides the purely local wholesale as well as retail trade, it had a wide connection throughout the West Highlands. The proprietors were James Miller & Co., and the partners Archibald M'Indoe and James Miller. M'Indoe had a separate business of cooper and fish curer. He lived in a house where now stands the property of Mr Cruickshanks. He was an outstanding man in Rothesay and took an active part in everything that concerned the welfare of Rothesay. James Miller lived above the shop, and also took an active part in local affairs. This shop was the meeting place of the upholders of the "Established principle" against the attacks of the "Voluntaries." Generally speaking, they belonged to the Evangelical section of the Church and were followers of Dr. Chalmers.

At the corner of High Street and Montague Street, in the building then newly erected, was Munn & Stewarts, draper's shop. This is now the Greenock Wool Shop. Dugald Munn and Thomas Stewart were the partners of the firm. This shop also had a wide connection outside the island, and many came seeking the advice and assistance of "Trusty Tam." It was the chief centre for the Rothesay worthies to meet for news and gossip, and again the frequenters were mainly spiritual independence men. Most of the frequenters of these two shops joined the Free Church at the Disruption.

The Voluntaries were represented by Adam Dick and John M'Ewan. Adam Dick's grocer's shop was about where the laides' outfitters shop of Mr Archd. Miller now stands. Mr Dick, who was the grandfather of the late Bailie Macbeth, also had a coffee and news room on his premises. He was a prominent member of the Secession Church, but in those days it was not easy for a Secessionist to take any prominent part in civic life. It is said that the first Secessionist to overcome the ecclesiastical intolerance of his time was John M'Ewen, whose drapery shop was where the Glasgow Warehouse now is. He entered the Town Council and ultimately became Provost (1858-1861). Then there was John Thom, bookseller and stationer, whose shop was where the 6½d Bazaar now is. He was so broadminded for those days as to be dubbed heterodox. He protested against the boycotting of the Sunday steamer, and one Sunday, at a time when all the gangways on the Pier were chained to prevent their being used, he helped to land the gangway from the steamer. There was another bookseller's shop in town conducted by William Glass. It was at the corner of West Princes Street and Watergate, where Miss Kerr's Beauty Parlour now is.

In Gallowgate, about No. 9, there was a licensed grocer's shop kept by a well known man, Neil Campbell. He was a natty, dapper, very precise little man who wore the orthodox frock coat, always a frilled shirt, and an abnormally large silk hat. In a time when everybody had a nickname he was called "Zacchaeus the publican," from his stature. He ultimately became a Bailie, and many thought that with his superfine English and appearance he gave the bench a dignity it never before possessed. By dint of good business habits he amassed a considerable fortune, and purchased the property from the Grand Marine Hotel to Mackinlay Street—some of which is still possessed by his descendants. There was a rhyme about him which began something like this:—

Snugly seated on his sofa, gazing on his gold galore,
Sat a little Brandane nabob, singing this sweet ditty o'er.
Listen, folk of every calling, wealth and power who would be at,
There's a secret worth the telling in the history of a hat,

The curing of herring required salt, and this came in bulk from Liverpool, and was barrelled at the Quay and carted to the various salt stores in the town. An extensive business in this commodity was conducted by Benjamin M'Intosh, familiarly known as Benjie Tosh. The salt was stored below his cottage still standing in Castlehill Street. He was also owner of the three-storied tenement in Tower Street, and kept a quiet going public house with entrances from Tower Street and Castlehill Street. He was moreover the owner and master of a smack, so he must have had his hands pretty full. Yet in after years he found time to enter the Town Council, and was followed in this respect by his son, and his great grandson was the other day elected a Bailie of the Burgh. The Bailie has not only the distinction of being the third of the family to be a Town Councillor, but also the third member to be an elder in the High Kirk.

There were besides all sorts of odd vocations carried on, carters; drivers, e.g., "Peter Struggle," "Parton Gailey," "Charlie Ardmaleish"—of the antiquated springless vehicles; drovers, and quite a number of a type which has almost entirely disappeared, and known as "characters." For example, the close No. 66 High Street is, or was, known as Danny Lismore's close. Who was Danny that his name should thus survive? He was a very well known drover in his time, and was accounted as one of the cutest in the West of Scotland. He came from the Island of Lismore and went under the name of M'Dougall, but his real name seems to have been Mackeith. He was very illiterate—but in money matters he was all there, although in matters religious he was sadly deficient. At one time he wished to have a child baptised and went to Rev. Mr Denoon to make the arrangements. After talking with Danny a little, Mr Denoon said, "There are some questions I must ask you," to which Danny replied, "Weel, weel, she'll be glad to speak to her." Mr Denoon then asked, "What is the chief end of man?" Danny answered, "Noo, Mr Denoon, that's a teuchlar for a start." After asking more questions all in vain, Mr Denoon said, "Ah, Danny! I doubt you're not fit to hold up the bairn." To which

Danny replied, "Hoot, Minister, I could haud him up, an' she'll be as heavy as a two-year-auld stirk."

One name deserves to be remembered—if only for a feat which would be hard to beat even in these days of long swims. John Gordon was a bellsmith, but, I am afraid, not a very skilful one. It is said that one very stormy day, when neither steam nor sailing vessel would venture out, he undertook, at the personal request of the Marquis of Bute, to carry a letter which was of extreme importance, to the mainland, and he swam from Bogany Point to Toward with the letter between his teeth. From Toward he took the letter to the Holy Loch, from which place it was forwarded by another conveyance to Greenock, and then, and not till then, did Johnnie think of himself, his hardships, or his fast, which had lasted 24 hours when he feasted royally on "tatties and saut herrin' washed down with yin or two mugs o' yill."

The Churches in the town 100 years ago were the Parish Church—the parish still included North Bute, as the church there was not built till three years later—the Chapel of Ease in High Street (now part of the Gaswork)—the *quoad sacra* Parish of New Rothesay was erected in 1834—the original Secession Church, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

The Parish Minister was the Rev. James Denoon. He had been Minister of Kingarth, and for ten years was Minister in Rothesay. He was prostrated by an apoplectic stroke in the pulpit at the conclusion of the service, and died on 19th August, 1834.

The Minister of the Chapel of Ease was the Rev. Peter M'Bride, who was afterwards Minister of the West Free Church.

The History of the U.P. Congregation in Rothesay has been written by the Rev. P. Macfarlane, but as this book may not be known to most of you, I may be permitted to give a few facts regarding this congregation.

The first Secession Church was founded by Rev. Ebenezer Erskine and his associates exactly two hundred years ago. The congregation in Rothesay dates from about 1764. Lord Bute in 1748, to encourage better farming, introduced some farmers from other parts of the country, and amongst them were some Seceders. Then there were some Dissenters amongst the workers in the Cotton Mills, and gradually a small congregation grew up. But they were comparatively few in number, without influence or means, and so they worshipped, in dry weather, in the green on the site of their first church, and in wet weather in kilns in Castle Street and Watergate. In 1778 they were able to build a small church in Bridgend Street—which gave to this street the name Wee Kirk Street—on the site now occupied by Bailie Lawrie's Billiard Saloon. They had only sufficient funds to build one storey, but in 1791 they built another storey and put in a gallery. This gallery was much needed for the church was apt to be flooded at high tides, and it is related that one occasion the congregation had to seek refuge in the gallery but the service continued as if nothing unusual had occurred! In 1835 the old church was found to be too small, and it was resolved to build a new one. The site on the opposite side of the street was purchased, and the new church built in 1836. The old church was sold, and the new proprietor converted it into a hall. In the lower part was a public house, and in the upper storey the Episcopalian Congregation worshipped. The Minister of the Secession Church 100 years ago was Rev. Samuel M'Nab. He was a native of Comrie, Perthshire, and a special qualification for a church in Rothesay was that he had a knowledge of Gaelic. One condition of his acceptance of the call was that "he should not be considered as pledging himself by acceptance to remain in Rothesay any longer than the congregation should appear to the Presbytery able and willing to support him duly according to their engagement in this call," and he remained pastor of the congregation for 51 years! It may be interesting to note that while a knowledge of Gaelic was desirable for the Secession Minister in 1815, it

was considered unnecessary for the Parish Minister in 1835. Twenty years had wrought such a change in the Burgh.

The majority of the Old Light and New Light Burghers united to form the United Presbyterian Church in 1874, and the U.P. Church joined with the Free Church to form the United Free Church in 1893. The re-union with the Church of Scotland took place in 1929.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church in High Street was built in 1829. It is interesting to note that one of the founders of the Secession Congregation was John Shankland, tenant of Kilmichael Farm, while the founders of the Cameronian Congregation included Alexander Graham and John Graham, farmers, Scarrel. The Rev. Thomas Neilson was the first minister, and continued so until his death in 1870. The Congregation dissolved in 1875, one year before the majority of the Reformed Presbyterian Church joined the Free Church. In 1880 the Church was sold to the Free Parish Church (now Trinity Church), and it was in turn sold by them to the present proprietors. The building is now used as a carpenter's shop, after all not an inappropriate destiny for a disused Church. There were probably other small dissenting congregations in town, but they had no settled ministers.

The Parish School was at the top of Bishop Street, but it did not include what is now known as the Schoolroom, which was not built till some four years later. The Schoolmaster was the Rev. Daniel M'Beth, grandfather of the late Bailie Macbeth, and a very able teacher. There were other five schools in the town. The most popular of these, judging from the number of scholars, was that kept by Stewart M'Alister, in John Street. He was also Clerk of the Rothesay Friendly Society, the Rothesay Cotton Mill Society, the Bute Friendly Society, and the Coopers' Society. George Grant's School was then in High Street, in a building which has given place to the Police Office buildings. He succeeded Stewart M'Alister in the school in John Street, and is still remembered in Rothesay.

The School in Mill Street, kept by John M'Leod, who afterwards became Free Church Minister of Alloa, was subsidised by Thomas Struthers of the Cotton Mills, and was known as the Cotton Mill School.

In addition to these schools, John M'Kay, reputed one of the best teachers of navigation in the West of Scotland, had a school for that subject in Castle Street, where Trinity Church now stands, while Mrs and Miss Ramsay conducted a boarding school for young ladies in Princes Street.

Banking was conducted by a branch of the Greenock Bank, which was ultimately merged in the Western Bank, and by a branch of the Renfrewshire Bank. This latter failed in 1842, and would have involved the depositors in the Savings Bank in a heavy loss but for the generosity and timely help of Lord Bute. This Savings Bank was managed by a local committee, and when the Courthouse was ready, was open there on Saturday evenings from 8 till 9 o'clock. Archibald M'Lea was the Secretary and Cashier. His annual salary of £7 was paid very irregularly. It has been said that the Savings Bank is a very fair index to the prosperity of the town. If this be so, then the progress has been remarkable. In 1835 the balance due to depositors was £2137. At 20th November, 1933, the balances due to depositors were approximately £539,500.

The Post Office was in Princes Street—at the corner of Bishop Terrace Brae. This street used to be known as the Post Office Brae. There were two deliveries in the day—one from about 9-30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the other from 7 to 9 p.m. There were two departures daily in summer, from 5—7 a.m., and in winter from 8—10 a.m., and another between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. On Sundays the mails were ferried over to Toward, thence by road to Dunoon, and by Ferry to Gourock. There was one postman. The Post Office was open on Sundays from 4—6 p.m., and on week-days from 6 a.m. till 10 p.m.

The health of the inhabitants was attended to by six doctors—whose residences were distributed over the town. Dr. Maclachlan then lived in Colbeck Square. He was a native of Ayrshire and came here about 1818. He was subsequently a Town Councillor (as was also his son Charles), and as acting Chief Magistrate he presented the address to the Queen on her visit to Rothesay Bay in 1847. He was a very popular doctor, as was shown by a presentation to him of £300 on the occasion of his jubilee. He died in 1871, aged 78. It is said that Mr George Hicks was encouraged to start business in Rothesay by Dr. Maclachlan. Dr. Gibson, who then lived in High Street, opposite the present Bute Estate Office, was a skilled physician, a polished orator, and a leader of the Conservative Party. He was elected Provost in 1851. Dr. Simson had also a chemist's shop about 21 Montague Street. He was succeeded in the shop by Archd. M'Intosh. Dr. Macfarlane lived in Sharp's Land, Montague Street. Dr. Lorrain then lived in Argyll Terrace. He had a high reputation as a surgeon, but appears to have been somewhat addicted to the use of strong language. He ultimately sold the practice to Dr. Ford, and went to the West Indies. The Apothecaries Hall, kept by George Hicks, was in Montague Street, about where Mr Gillies, the ironmonger's shop, now is. There was a third chemist, Peter M'Dougall, whose shop was also in Montague Street.

Two outstanding events in 1833 were the laying of the foundation stone of the County Buildings and the Municipal Election. The Tolbooth, even in Blain's time, was almost a ruin and it had reached such a condition that something had to be done to provide adequate Courthouse and Prison accommodation and offices for the various officials. Two obstacles had hitherto prevented the Council from building—difficulty of getting a suitable site, and finding the necessary money. The steamer traffic was rapidly increasing—by this time seven steamers called at the Pier daily, and the Pier was inadequate. Moreover, the steamboat companies declined to pay the dues asked by the Council, and there was no prospect of Pier extensions until the Council had powers to charge dues. For all

this Parliamentary powers were required, so it was resolved to promote a Bill to establish the Harbour Trust, to authorise improvements to the Pier and to charge Pier dues; and with the assistance of Government help, and jointly with the Commissioners of Supply, to build a Courthouse, with office accommodation for the Sheriff Clerk, a Prison and Town Clerk's Office. The Bill was passed in 1831. The buildings in Castle Street, Watergate and High Street, adjoining the old Tolbooth, were purchased and the present buildings erected at a cost of about £4228, some £1228 above the authorised cost. The principal contractors were Andrew Napier, mason; and Archibald MacKirdy, joiner. The foundation stone of the new buildings was laid by John Muir, Bute Estate Factor, on 30th June, 1833. On that day, the Masonic Lodges of Rothesay, Largs, Glasgow, and St. Mungo assembled at the Castle and marched to the Cross, where they were joined by the Sheriff, Provost, Magistrates and Councillors, and others, at 11 a.m. A procession was formed, and headed by three bands (all local). They marched to the Parish Church, and there a sermon was preached by the Rev. John Buchanan, of Kingarth. After the sermon, the procession reformed and marched to the new buildings, where the foundation stone was laid by Mr Muir. Thereafter there was a dinner in the Bute Arms Hotel. The cost to the Burgh of the day's proceedings was £8 3s 2d.

The Tower was not added at the time, probably on account of the estimated cost being so greatly exceeded. It was erected two years later, the Burgh undertaking the work. The cost was met by the Burgh and by private subscription. The Town Council had on more than one occasion to get financial help by subscriptions from individuals, for their sources of revenue were few. There was no power of levying rates for general purposes, and consequently the municipal purse was very light. The ordinary income for the year 1832-33 was £285 3s 11d, and the expenditure £278 1s 2d. Included in the income was a grant of £11 14s from the Convention of Burghs. Included in the expenditure was an item, fortunately of rare occurrence, Cholera Assessment on Burgh Lands—£3 4s 5d.

There was an outbreak of cholera in 1832, the hospital being in a thatched roof building which stood at Glenhead, near where Elmbank now stands. The Municipal establishment was very small. One man was constantly employed in cleaning and repairing the streets, and occasionally additional men were employed when this was considered necessary. There was no public lighting as we know it. Some oil lamps dimly lit the streets. Water was obtained from wells maintained by small voluntary contributions of 6d or 1/- and occasional grants from the Burgh Funds. A famous well was the one below Ivy Bank, known as Jenny Roy's Well. It was resorted to when the other wells in the town ran dry. The jailer was entitled to charge fees from civil prisoners, as well as from the incarcerator (imprisonment for debt was common in those days), but he was so kind hearted that he seldom charged the prisoners—his annual income from the source being only some 12s 6d per annum. And this kindness apparently continued for many years, for Miss Sinclair, writing 6 or 7 years later, says:—"No wonder that when his guests have once conquered their natural horror of disgrace they frequently return to the jailer's careful guardianship where those poor creatures who knew not formerly where to gain a dinner are here at once transported into a comfortable hotel where they meet with kind treatment, fires in every room, excellent sleeping accommodation, regular hours, plenty of food, and nothing to pay. Some of the old women consider it a perfect home and would feel more alarmed at the threat of being turned out than of being shut in."

The jailer—John Gillies or Gailie as he was locally known—was also a bit of a humorist. A story is told that a number of farm servants, who had been imbibing too freely, were locked up. They were rather noisy, and began kicking the door of their cell. Gillies was annoyed at the noise and he went to the cell door and said, "Now boys, it will never do to gang hame wi' yer buits dirty. Pit them ootside the door and I'll brush them before the morn's mornin'." They did this, and then the jailer said, "Noo, kick awa' till yer hearts' content."

In 1833 the Second Marquis of Bute was Provost. John Gillies was Town Clerk. Alexander Irvine, who had been Town Clerk, was appointed Sheriff Substitute in 1829 and resigned the Town Clerkship. But the Sheriff Substituteship was not a whole time job, for Mr Irvine continued to act as Clerk of Supply, and to do some private law practice. When he resigned the Town Clerkship he apparently thought that his assistant, John Gillies, should, without any question, succeed him, and so he wrote to Lord Bute as Provost, saying that he would like to have a commission as Depute Town Clerk (as Blain had before him) in order that he might still prepare the various Charters and other deeds affecting land held on burgage tenure, as "I do think my successor will not be the worse, but the better of being relieved of the care and thought of them." Lord Bute apparently favoured Archibald Macneill, Sheriff Clerk, for the Town Clerkship. Gillies was a man of personality and ability, while Macneill has been described as a jovial man who combined a great deal of pleasure with not over much work. The Town Council apparently did not agree with Lord Bute, and got out of the difficulty by appointing John Muir, the Bute Estate Factor *ad interim*. Muir was an outstanding man in the Burgh, able, in manner somewhat brusque, and probably with a somewhat exaggerated idea of the powers of a factor, but honest, conscientious, and loyal to his friends. On his resignation a few months later, John Gillies was appointed Town Clerk, and Irvine duly got his Commission as Depute. Irvine lived in Castle Street, in the premises now occupied by the Savings Bank. A few particulars regarding John Gillies may not be out of place. John Gillies was born in Rothesay in 1802, his father being a crofter and hand loom weaver. He entered the Town Clerk's office as a boy, and rose to be Irvine's principal assistant. He married in 1829 Isabella Little, whose forefathers were of Huguenot descent. He was a good lawyer, was of a somewhat masterful disposition, and during the voluntary controversy made himself obnoxious to the dissenters, but he became one of the leaders of the Free Church at the Disruption. He had been an elder in the Church of Scotland, and was accordingly

summoned to appear before the Presbytery of Dunoon "for following devisive courses in separating from the Church of Scotland." The original summon is, I understand, preserved in the family as an heirloom. In 1851 he left Rothesay and settled in New Zealand, practising his profession in Dunedin. He held for some time the position of Resident Magistrate and Sheriff, and finally that of Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages. He died in 1872. His house in Serpentine Road is now Trinity Manse.

The Fiscal was Archibald Campbell—the great grandfather of A. C. Black, K.C. He was a very conscientious official who took his work seriously—he was quite devoid of humour. He was best at chamber practice, and was an expert conveyancer, but did not shine as a pleader in Court.

Another official was Archibald MacLea, who in addition to a good law practice, held the offices of Collector of Assessed Taxes, Principal coast waiter of the Custom House, and Secretary and Cashier of the Savings Bank. He lived in his property at Bridge Street, still belonging to his descendants.

But the great event of 1833 was the Municipal Election. From 1469 to that year Town Councils had been self elected. As far back as 1779 a movement started in England to agitate for Parliamentary reform, and strange as it may seem, this demand for political freedom was stimulated by actions abroad. The throwing of some boxes of tea into Boston Harbour (1773) was insignificant in itself, but out of that trivial incident arose the American War of Independence. This war had a considerable influence on the thought and action of England and France, and the issues raised by the war aroused unprecedented interest in public affairs in Scotland. The movement for Parliamentary Reform spread to Scotland, but was widened to include Burgh Reform, and by 1785 Burgh Reform took the leading place. In Scotland this would of course involve Parliamentary Reform, as the Members of Parliament for the Burgh were elected by delegates from the Town Councils, and so a close Corporation like the unreformed

Town Council could return members to Parliament who would not necessarily voice the opinions of the inhabitants. Local Societies were formed throughout Scotland, and based on information supplied by these Societies a report on the practical evils said to prevail in local affairs was drawn up in 1787, and in the same year, according to Blain, "the demon of discord began to throw its poisoned shafts among the members of this happy community," and the election of the following year was challenged by an action in the Court of Session. This action was unsuccessful, but although the demand for reform grew in other Burghs, and in many places riots occurred, the agitation for reform apparently died out in Rothesay. This may be explained by the fact that the great agitator, John Gordon, left Rothesay in 1791, and his friend, Baillie Robertson, and his associates "saw and were convinced of their error and by their subsequent conduct they showed that they had been misled and sincerely repented of what they had done." The French Revolution of 1789 had created a greater interest in politics, and the triumph of liberty and reason over despotism was received by the Reformers with great approbation. But the later excesses in France, and the Napoleonic Wars stayed the cause of Reform in Britain.

The cause of Burghal Reform was again raised in 1817 almost by accident. The election of the Town Council in Montrose had been declared void owing to a technical point, and a new Charter was issued, under which all burgesses were to vote in the first election. In future elections, the merchants, and not the old Town Council, were to be the electors. The Burgh Reformers at once seized on this as an excuse to renew their agitation. Again there were strikes and riots, and Sir William Rae, Lord Advocate and M.P. for Bute, had a difficult time. Ultimately a Parliamentary Reform Bill was introduced into Parliament and passed its second reading in 1831, but was defeated in its third reading, and a second Bill perished in the Lords. In the following year the Parliamentary Reform Act was passed, and was followed in 1833 by the Scottish Burgh Reform Act. By it householders in Burghs rated at £10 replaced the electorate of self elected Town Coun-

cils. After the passing of these Acts there were rejoicings all over Scotland, but so far as records go, Rothesay had not been troubled by either riots or rejoicings. The Act continued the number of Councillors in Rothesay at 17, being the number of Councillors in the old Council according to the Set of the Burgh. The number was increased to 18 in 1852. In addition to the change in the electorate, some changes were made in the qualification for a Councillor, e.g., the Town Clerk was no longer eligible, and the Councillors required to be burghesses resident or personally carrying on business in the Burgh. The first election in November, 1833, must have been a keen one. The electorate numbered 202, and there were 66 candidates. The system of voting was open, each elector handing the returning officer a signed list of his preferences. 182 electors or 90% voted. The poll was topped by Archibald M'Indoe, who beat the Marquis of Bute by two votes. This was a personal triumph for Mr M'Indoe, as he had not been a member of the old Council. The changes in the Council were less numerous than one might have expected. Four old members were replaced by four new ones. Of the old members who retired, Alexander Irvine was Sheriff Substitute, and Archibald Moore had retired from the Factorship of the Bute Estate. The other two were James Muir (farmer, Barone Park), and Ivie H. MacRae, the Agent of the Renfrewshire Bank. The new members were Archibald M'Indoe, John MacKinlay (merchant, and proprietor of a house in Castle Street), Daniel Thompson (merchant, whose property was in High Street, apparently at Broadcroft), and John M'Fie, draper. The Marquis was re-elected Provost, and Mr M'Indoe was elected a Bailie. He afterwards became Provost (1839-45). Other prominent men elected were Charles M'Kinlay, tanner; John Muir, factor to the Marquis of Bute; Archibald Sharp, afterwards Provost (1848-51), and father of Provost Robert Sharp; Archibald M'Kirdy, builder, father of Provost Archibald M'Kirdy; Neil Jamieson, fish merchant, who occupied the Provost's chair from 1845-1848.

In the past 100 years great changes have taken place in the Burgh—changes in the qualifications and number of elec-

tors, which has increased from 202 to 5887. Changes in local government from the old days when the Council's powers were derived from common law till to-day when they are mostly derived from statutes. Changes in the town itself which has definitely ceased to be a manufacturing town and has become purely a holiday resort. The problems which now confront the Town Council and citizens differ in many respects from those of 100 years ago. In the past the private citizen could attend to his own business while the Town Council looked after such Municipal affairs as the common law allowed. Now, when a holiday resort has to be run as a business, it is necessary for private citizens and the municipal authorities to work together if they would have their town gain or retain a place in the race for popularity. And to the extent that the private citizen and Town Council co-operate so will Rothesay progress in the future, and its citizens of 100 years hence look back with pride, and probably some curiosity, on another outstanding year in the history of our Burgh.