PEOPLE & PLACES
ABERDEEN

A guide to Aberdeen's commemorative plaques

ABERDEEN INVESTLIVEVISIT

Aberdeen's Heritage Trail Leaflets

Granite Trail
March Stones Trail
Maritime Trail
North Sea Trail
Old Aberdeen Trail
Sculpture Trail

Picture Credits

Cover Provost Skene's House

This page Thomson's House, Archway

No.7 'Titian Preparing to Make his First Essay in Colouring', by William Dyce, 1856-7, Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums Collections

No.18 Photograph by George Washington Wilson, Aberdeen Library and Information Services

No.26 George Jamesone, self portrait, 1637, Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums Collections

No.33 Portrait of Thomas Reid, date and artist unknown, after Raeburn, University of Aberdeen

No.35 Portrait of Patrick Manson, date and artist unknown, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

No.37 'The Bridge of Don', by William Daniell, date unknown, Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums Collections

INTRODUCTION

Plaques exist in a variety of different guises and in many different locations in and around Aberdeen City. They commemorate people and places that have shaped Aberdeen; people who have made outstanding achievements in their field; and streets, buildings or events of particular historical prominence.

From the nineteenth century plaques have been erected in Aberdeen often through the auspices of individuals or societies. These plaques are described as 'non-standard'. In the 1970's, the City Council introduced a degree of regularity, standardising most plaques erected to commemorate people as a distinctive round plaque design, whilst court plaques commemorating streets of historical importance are rectangular with a domed top edge.

This leaflet draws attention to a number of plaques in the city centre and Old Aberdeen. A list appended at the end of this leaflet provides basic information on other plaques in alphabetic order.

The plaque numbers on the City Centre map indicate a suggested walking trail. Most surfaces along this route are generally level. Following the suggested route will require crossing busy roads and it is the responsibility of members of the public to ensure their personal safety. We recommend the use of pedestrian crossing points where available. Most plaques are visible from public areas, but please be aware that some are located on private property.

Aberdeen City Council is always pleased to accept sponsored nominations for new plaques. Guidelines for this process and information on all of our other plaques can be found at *www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/plaques*

All plaques are accessible for people with disabilities unless indicated by the symbols below.

Accessible from street indicated

Accessible via ramp or steep slope

Not wheelchair accessible

Plaque Styles

Round Plaque

Non Standard Plaque

Court Plaque

Stone Tablet

1 John Forbes White 1831-1904

Flour Merchant and Patron of the Arts

60 Frederick Street

Educated at Aberdeen Grammar School and Marischal College, he became an innovative flour miller and corn merchant. He held the Directorship of the North of Scotland Bank and Aberdeen Jute Company, became President of the British and Irish Association of Millers in 1888 and was Vice-Consul for Sweden and Norway. White was awarded an honorary LLD from Aberdeen University in 1886. He is also remembered as a pioneer amateur photographer and sponsor of Aberdeen Art Gallery. He was also an influential writer on art, a collector of innovative contemporary art and patron to many young artists whose career flourished as a result.

2 Bishops Grant and Geddes

Catholic bishops

Chapel Court off Castle St (Castlegate)

Grant was the fourth Catholic priest in Aberdeen following the Reformation. By the 1770s, his growing congregation needed a permanent place of worship. A site near the Justice Port in the Castlegate was bought in 1771, upon which a chapel and house was erected. Geddes, one time rector of Scalan College, was instrumental, along with Priest Gordon, in arranging the erection of St Peter's Chapel. Geddes was uncle to Priest Gordon.

3 Mother St Basil 1827-1878

Mother Superior of the Poor Sisters of Nazareth

Chapel Court off Castle St (Castlegate)

During the first year of their existence, Victoire Larmenier (later Mother St Basil) became Mother Superior of what we know as the Congregation of the Poor Sisters of Nazareth. The order provides care for the elderly and poor. The Aberdeen foundation was the second of the order. Between 1862 and 1872 they occupied the presbytery of St Peter's Chapel, which at that time was not in use.

4 John Barbour 1316-1395

Poet and Author

53 Castle Street

In 1357 he became the Archdeacon at St Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen, and travelled frequently to Oxford to study. He was the author of the metrical **The Brus**, a life of Robert the Bruce and the now lost **A Chronicle of Scottish History**.

5 George Thomson 1804-1895

Clipper Ship Owner

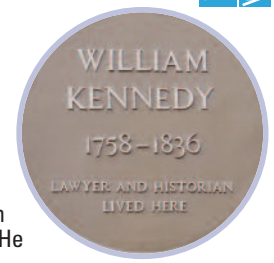
35 Marischal Street

Born in Woolwich and educated at Aberdeen Grammar School, he developed his own business as a Ship Insurance Broker in 1825. He became principal owner of the world famous shipping line, 'The Aberdeen White Star Line', which included the fast tea clipper the 'Thermopylae'. He was elected Dean of Guild in 1840 and Lord Provost of Aberdeen in 1847.

6 William Kennedy 1758-1836

Lawyer and Historian

46 Marischal Street



Born in Aberdeen, he practised as a lawyer in the city. He is best known as a local historian who compiled a three-volume alphabetical index to the council registers of Aberdeen City Council from 1398-1836. He is principally remembered as author of the two-volume **Annals of Aberdeen**.

7 William Dyce 1806-1864

Artist

48 Marischal Street

Educated at Aberdeen Grammar School and Marischal College, he worked with oil and watercolour, in fresco, and designed stained glass. His finest easel pictures are of religious subjects. He was elected an Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1835. He is remembered as a leader of the High Church Movement and as a chorister and composer.

'Titian Preparing to Make his First Essay in Colouring', by William Dyce

8 Exchequer Row

Exchequer Row

This commemorates the site of the Royal Exchequer and possibly Aberdeen's mint, which functioned intermittently in Aberdeen from the reign of David I (1124-1153) to James III (1460-1488). Coins issued in Aberdeen bore the name of the mint, 'Villa Aberdon'.

9 Catherine Hollingworth 1904-1999

Speech Therapist and Child Drama Pioneer

31 King Street

Born in Brechin and educated at the Royal Academy of Music, she became Aberdeen's first teacher of speech in 1941. In 1942 she created the Aberdeen Children's Theatre which attracted international recognition for its pioneering work in the field of child drama.

10 Concert Court

off Broad Street

This commemorates the site of a nearby hall in which the city's first organised concerts were held. They were organised by Francis Peacock, dancing master, and Andrew Tait, organist, who had founded the Aberdeen Musical Society in 1748. In 1749, the Society leased a house, the 'New Music Room' in adjacent Huxter Row. The Society came to an end in 1806.

11 Alexander Cruden 1699-1770

FROM QUEEN ST

Compiler of the First Concordance to the Bible

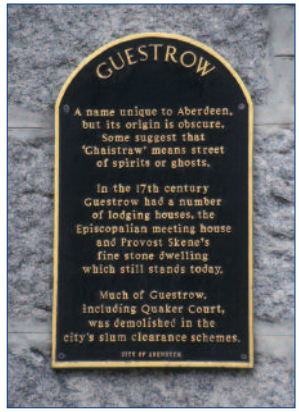
Cruden's Court, off Concert Court, Broad Street

Born in Aberdeen and educated at Marischal College, he worked in London as a bookseller to Queen Caroline and completed his concordance in 1737. He became known as the self-styled 'Alexander the Corrector', believing himself to be commissioned from heaven to reform the morals of the nation and put himself forward as a candidate for the General Election in 1754.

12 Guestrow

off Broad Street

This intriguing name, which is unique to Aberdeen, is a little obscure in its origins. One of the main suggestions is that it refers to the street of the spirits or ghosts, and that it was originally given in a form like 'Ghaistraw'.



13 Samuel Seabury 1729-1796

Episcopalian Bishop

Marischal College, Quadrangle, Broad Street

Born in Connecticut and educated at Yale College, Newhaven, he was later created Episcopalian Rector in New York. After American Independence he was elected the first Episcopalian Bishop in America and consecrated in 1784 by Bishops Kilgour and Skinner in Aberdeen.

14 Sir Alexander Robertson 1908-1990

Veterinary Surgeon

Marischal College, Quadrangle, Broad Street

Born in Aberdeen and educated at Marischal College, he became Director of the Royal School of Veterinary Surgeons and Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Professor of Tropical Animal Health at Edinburgh. In 1954, he was elected President of the British Veterinary Association.

15 Kirkgate Court

Upperkirkgate

John Farquhar and David Gill, Painters and Glaziers, bought adjacent land in 1828. Farquhar and Gill Colour Works operated until 1972. Kirkgate Court is also known as Farquhar's or Painter's Court.

16 Drum's Lane

Upperkirkgate

This commemorates the location of Lady Drum's Hospital. In 1633 Marion Douglas, Lady Drum, mortified the sum of 3,000 merks for a commodious house for poor widows and aged virgins. Building began in 1671. By 1721, the house also accommodated daughters of Burgesses of Guild. In 1798 the area was redeveloped and Drum's Lane was laid out.

17 Flour Mill Lane

Flour Mill Lane

This commemorates the site of the Royal Burgh of Aberdeen's Upper Mill. The mill, fed by the mill burn, stood nearby from the thirteenth century until 1865. The mill not only provided wheat, rye and malt for the burgh but also revenue through the lease.

18 Thomson's House, Archway

Provost Skene's House, Guestrow, off Broad Street

This commemorates an archway and date stone from a seventeenth-century house. The archway was erected in 1637 by Andrew Thomson, Advocate and Sheriff-Depute in Aberdeen, as the gateway to his house in Guestrow. His initials and those of his wife, Agnes Divie, are on the panel built into this wall. On demolition of the properties in Guestrow, in 1931, the archway was rebuilt in Union Terrace Gardens, from where it was taken in 1970 and re-erected here.

19 Benholm's Lodge 1600-Present

Netherkirkgate

Also known as the Wallace Tower, Benholm's Lodge, a fortified tower, was built on this site about the year 1600. In 1965, through the generosity of Lord Marks, the corporation were enabled to remove the building and re-erect it in its original form on a site at Tillydrone Road, Old Aberdeen, where it is preserved for posterity.

Benholm's Lodge

20 Adelphi Court

off Union Street

This is named after the Adelphi in London, located off The Strand. The London Adelphi was laid out by the brothers John and Robert Adam and the name commemorates this relationship: Adelphi is Greek for 'brothers'.
The street was laid out on the crest of St Katherine's Hill in the early nineteenth century. Other Aberdeen streets named after London streets are: Whitehall; Spring Garden and Mile End.

21 John Smith 1781-1852

Architect

Kirk of St. Nicholas Colonnade, Union Street

He trained in Aberdeen and London becoming Superintendent of Works (the office of which later became City Architect) in 1807. He designed St Nicholas Church frontage colonnade and buildings in King Street, often working as both rival to, and in collaboration with, Archibald Simpson.

22 James Clerk Maxwell 1831-1879

Natural Philosopher

131 Union Street, Back Wynd Steps

Born in Glenlair, Galloway and educated at Edinburgh Academy and Edinburgh and Cambridge Universities, he contributed to the analysis of colour perception. He became the first person to print a colour photograph, but he is best known for his work on electricity and magnetism. Maxwell served as Professor of Natural Philosophy at Marischal College and London University.

23 Correction Wynd

FROM ST NICHOLAS ST

Back Wynd, off Union Street

This commemorates the location of the House of Correction which was founded on the initiative of Provost Jaffray in 1637 and stood nearby until 1711. It provided vagrants and delinquents with lodgings and employment in the cloth industry.

24 Edward Raban 1579-1658

FROM UNION ST

Printer

Kirk of St. Nicholas, East Wall of kirkyard

He set up Aberdeen's first printing press in the Castlegate in 1622. He produced Scotland's first book of fully harmonised psalms and the **Aberdeen Almanac**, as well as printing over 250 works between 1622-1649.

25 James Gibbs 1682-1754

FROM UNION ST

Architect

West Kirk of St. Nicholas, Union Street, West Wall

Born in Footdee, Aberdeen, he studied in Italy and his **Book of Architecture** helped to spread the Palladian style throughout the New World. A friend and disciple of Sir Christopher Wren, in 1713, Gibbs became one of the commissioners for building new churches in London. He went on to design St. Martin-in-the-Fields (1726), St. Bartholomew's Hospital (1730), The Senate House for Cambridge University (1730), The Radcliffe Camera for Oxford University (1737-47) and West Kirk of St. Nicholas in Aberdeen (constructed 1752-55). He was made a Burgess of Aberdeen in 1739.

George Jamesone

26 George Jamesone 1588-1644

Portrait painter

22 Schoolhill

There are two plaques at this location. Born in Aberdeen, it is believed

that he studied with Rubens in Antwerp. He was Scotland's first indigenous portrait painter of any note and was commissioned to paint a portrait of Charles I at his coronation in 1633.

27 James Leatham 1865-1945
Socialist, politician and propagandist
68 Schoolhill

Born in Aberdeen, Leatham was apprenticed to a firm of printers and then established his own printing shop in 1889. A militant advocate of free speech, he published **The Workers' Herald**, Scotland's first socialist newspaper and became editor of **The Peterhead Sentinel** in 1897. Leatham served as Provost of Turriff 1933-1945.

28 Mary Slessor 1848-1915
Missionary
Nandos, Former United Presbyterian Church (now part of Academy Shopping Centre) Belmont Street
Born in Aberdeen, she was the daughter of a cobbler. She entered employment in Dundee's Jute Mills. She sailed with the Foreign Missions Board to the Calabar Estuary (now South Nigeria), aged 26, and worked in the capital, Duke Town, and in the Okoyoung District.

29 Alexander Gordon 1752-1799
Obstetrician
17 Belmont Street
Born in Peterculter, he gained his MA at Marischal College before reading medicine at Aberdeen Infirmary, Edinburgh and Leiden. He worked as a surgeon in HM Navy prior to studying midwifery in London. Gordon was appointed physician to the Aberdeen Dispensary in 1785 and published **A Treatise on the Epidemic Puerperal Fever of Aberdeen**, 1795.

30 Sir John Ninian Comper 1864-1960
NO LEVEL ACCESS
Church Architect
17 Spital, St Margaret's Convent
Born in Aberdeen, the son of an Episcopalian clergyman, he was educated at Trinity College, Glenalmond. He studied art at Edinburgh, Oxford and the Royal College of Art London, and was apprenticed to an Ecclesiastical Architect's Practice in 1887. He designed the chapel of the Convent of St Margaret of Scotland, Spital in 1891 and the Seabury Memorial Restoration, St Andrew's Cathedral.

31 Ronald Center 1913-1973
Composer
16 Elmbank Road

Born in Aberdeen, he served as Organist at High Hilton Church and taught at The Gordon Schools, Huntly. He is remembered as a composer of string quartets and piano works, **Lachrymae** for string orchestra and the cantata **Dona Nobis Pacem**.

32 Helena Mennie Shire 1912-1991
Scholar of the Literature and Music of Scotland
98 Leslie Terrace

Born in Aberdeen and educated at Aberdeen and Cambridge Universities, she taught in the English faculty at Cambridge where she researched medieval and renaissance music and literature. She was appointed Emeritus Fellow of Robinson College, Cambridge in 1980.

33 Thomas Reid 1710-1796
Enlightenment scholar and philosopher
Pend of King's College Quadrangle, High Street, Old Aberdeen

Thomas Reid

Reid studied at Marischal College, where he was later librarian. He was to found the school of 'common sense' philosophy and was a great contributor to the Scottish Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. He later taught at King's College.

34 William MacGillivary 1796-1852
Ornithologist
110 High Street, Old Aberdeen
Born in Old Aberdeen, he was educated at King's and Marischal Colleges and appointed Regius Professor of Natural History at Aberdeen in 1841. His five volume **History of British Birds**, along with his work with American bird artist James John Audubon laid the foundations of modern ornithology. His observations about birdlife were also used by Charles Darwin for his work on **The Descent of Man**.

35 Sir Patrick Manson 1844-1922

Pioneer of medical science

Cruickshank Building, Old Aberdeen

Sir Patrick Manson

Born in Oldmeldrum, he attended school in the Gym (Chanonry House) School in Old Aberdeen. He later graduated from Aberdeen University as MD in 1866. He was the first person to recognise that insects carry diseases and he set up what would become Hong Kong University's Medical School as well as being instrumental in founding the London School of Tropical Medicine.

36 Francis Masson 1741-1805

Botanist and explorer

Cruickshank Botanical Gardens, Old Aberdeen

Born in Old Aberdeen, he obtained an appointment at Kew Gardens and travelled the world collecting botanical specimens. He published **Stapelliae Novae** in 1796 and died in Montreal.

37 Brig o' Balgownie c.1280-Present

Brig o' Balgownie

Brig o' Balgownie

This plaque provides information about this venerable structure which was scheduled as an Ancient Monument in 1971. The bridge that stands today was the result of rebuilding the older bridge in three stages between 1607 and 1611. It is unknown exactly when the original bridge was built, but local legend suggests that it dates from either the later thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

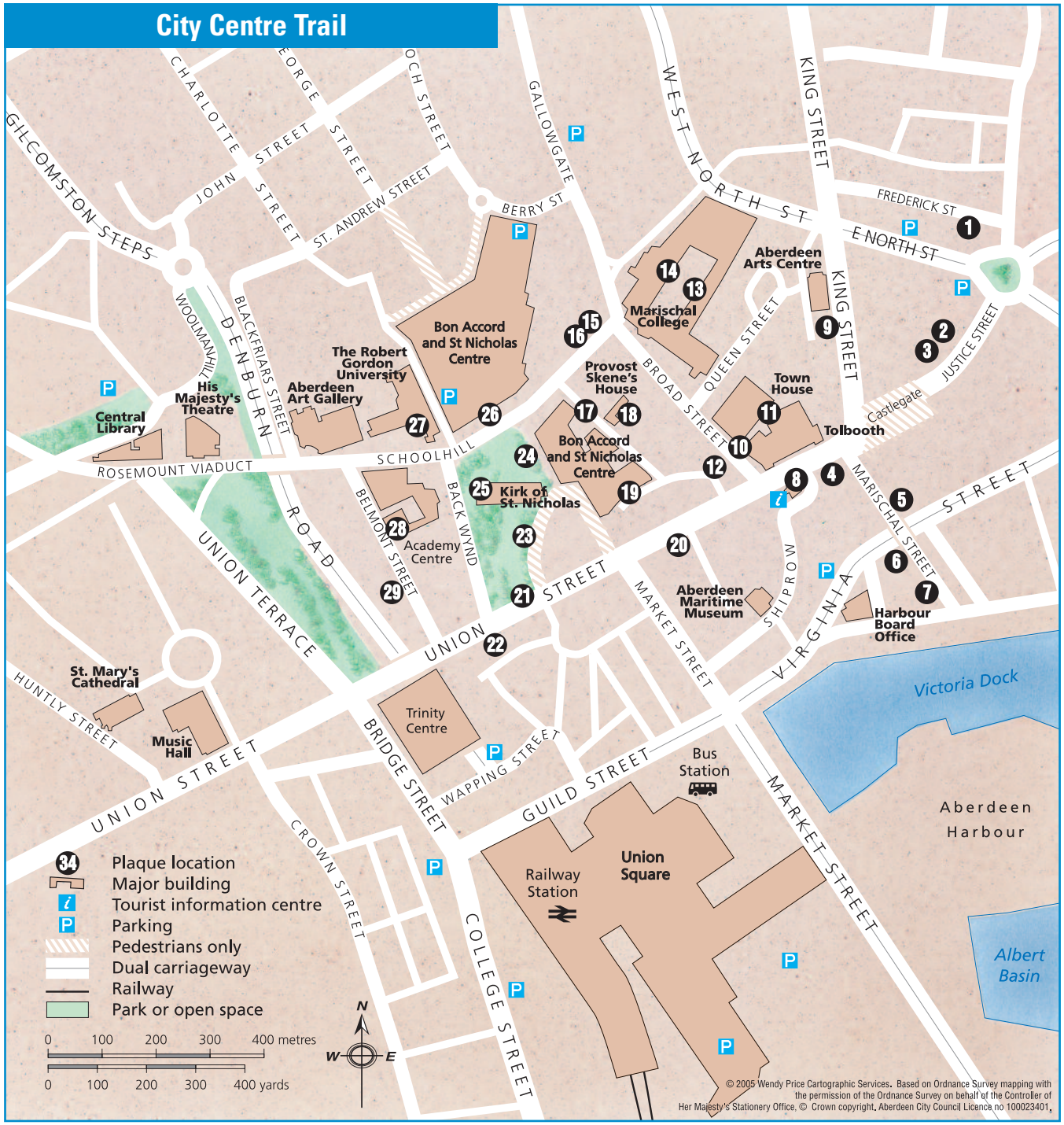
38 Thomas Blake Glover 1838-1911

Industrialist and entrepreneur in Japan

Glover House, Balgownie Road

Born in Fraserburgh and educated at the Chanonry School, Old Aberdeen, he travelled to Japan in 1859 and later imported the first steam locomotive. He helped to establish the Mitsubishi Nagasaki Shipyard and received the Order of the Rising Sun from the Emperor in 1908.

City Centre Trail



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Other Plaques in Aberdeen

Round Plaques

William Alexander, 3 Belvidere Street
Dugald Baird, 38 Albyn Place
May Baird, 38 Albyn Place
John Boyd Orr, Director's Residence, Rowett Institute, Greenburn Road
David Smith Cairns, Former Christ's College, Alford Place
James Cowie, 8 Fonthill Road
Alexander Ellis, 66 Springbank Terrace
Mary Esslemont, 30 Beechgrove Terrace
Elizabeth Latto Ewen, 26 Chapel Street
Ian Fleming, 15 Fonthill Road
George Milne Fraser, Central Library, Rosemount Viaduct
Mary Garden, 41 Dee Street
James William Giles, 64 Bon Accord Street
David Gill, 48 Skene Terrace
Lewis Grassic Gibbon, 5 St Mary's Place
William Jackson, Thorngrove, 500 Great Western Road
Robert Laws, 39 Thistle Street
John James Rickard McLeod, 32 Cairn Road, Cults
James Matthews, 15 Albyn Terrace
Hugh Mercer, Marischal College Quadrangle, Broad Street
Francis Peacock, Peacock's Close, Castle Street
William Penny, 1 South Crown Street
George Reid, Gordon Highlanders' Museum, Viewfield Road
Jeannie Robertson, 90 Hilton Road
Thomas Scott Sutherland, 27 Albyn Place
Robert Sivell, 51 Whitehall Road
Lilias Gillespie Skene, Religious Society of Friends' Meeting House, Crown Street
William Robertson Smith, Former Christ's College, Alford Place
Rachel Annand Taylor, Harlaw Academy, 18-20 Albyn Place
George Paget Thomson, Marischal College Quadrangle, Broad Street
James Cromar Watt, 71 Dee Street
George Washington Wilson, 1 Queen's Cross
James Fenton Wyness, 45 Salisbury Terrace

Non Standard Plaques

John Abercrombie, Abercrombie Jetty
Alexander Anderson, North Pier *(Not Accessible To The Public)*
Bannerman's Bridge, Marischal Street
The Blockhouse, Pocra Quay
Carmelite Friary, Car Park off Rennie's Wynd
James Chalmers, Aberdeen Journals Building, Lang Stracht
Crabstane, Langstane Place
George Davidsone, St Clement's Church, St Clement Street
Mary Garden, Craigie Loanings
Grammar School, Robert Gordon's College, Schoolhill
David Grant, St Clement's Church, St Clement Street
Hardgate Well, Hardgate
John Phillip, 21 Skene Square
Provost Ross' House, Aberdeen Maritime Museum, Shiprow
Archibald Simpson, Bon Accord Square
Templar Religious House, Rear wall of exterior of St Peter's Churchyard

Court Plaques

Brebner's Court, Castle Street
Fittie Wynd, Castle Street
Poultry Market Lane, West wall of Aberdeen Arts Centre, King Street

PEOPLE & PLACES
ABERDEEN

one of a series of themed trails
being developed around the City.

Further details about these trails can be found at:
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/heritagetrails

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For further information contact

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Aberdeen Visitor Information Centre.
Contact **01224 288828**
www.aberdeen-grampian.com

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