

Galloway Preservation Society

The Changing Face of Gatehouse

Margaret Wright

Mill on the Fleet
23 April 2022



View of Gatehouse
by Robert George
Kelly. 1852

The Changing Face of Gatehouse

How the town developed

- Planned by James Murray
- Access by Road and Sea
- Early Industries & Trades
- Water-Powered Mills Expand the Industrial Base
- Some of Those Who Built Gatehouse
- Differing House Styles in Different Streets
- Larger Houses had Colonial Pasts
- Competition from Steam-Powered Mills
- How the Population Grew and then Declined
- Some Properties have Remained Unchanged
- Some Properties have Altered
- Buildings have Disappeared
- Modern Buildings
- Tourism : More Cars and Holiday Homes
- Railway Came and Went. Bypass reduced congestion
- Personal transport & reduced population led to shop closures
- Gatehouse 50 Years Ago
- Gatehouse 50 Years From Now



Slide 2 How the town developed

We are here to talk about the **Changing Face of Gatehouse**, how the look of the buildings changed as Gatehouse developed from a small hamlet to a thriving industrial town, and how these changes affected the residents who lived there.

The slides I will be showing have a dual purpose.

- *Firstly they are to help re-enforce what I will be saying*
- *Secondly we will put them on our website for anyone to peruse afterwards.*

In the interests of brevity I will quickly gloss over some slides on which there is too much text for the talk.

James Murray of Broughton

(1727 – 1799)

James Murray inherited Cally Estate in 1751.

He built Cally House in 1763.

He also laid out the planned settlement of Gatehouse in 1763 and began issuing feus in that year.

This painting of him is by Sir Joshua Reynolds.



Cally House c.1900.
The portico entrance was
added in 1835

Slide 3 James Murray of Broughton

Gatehouse is a planned estate village, the idea of James Murray, the **10th laird of Cally**. He inherited the Cally Estate in **1751**.

This was a time of great change in Britain. New ideas and inventions had changed agriculture. New crops, use of fertilisers and the enclosing of fields was leading to increased productivity and profits from farms but also meant that fewer workers were needed. As a result **many families lost both their livelihoods and their homes**.

One solution that became popular with large landowners was to **plan and build a village** to provide both housing and employment for their displaced workers. Between 1730 and 1850 there were over 80 planned estate villages in Dumfries and Galloway.

At the same time many of the landowners were looking to improve their own lifestyles with new grand houses and gardens. James Murray built his **new house at Cally in 1763**, the same year that the first feus for new housing were issued in Gatehouse.

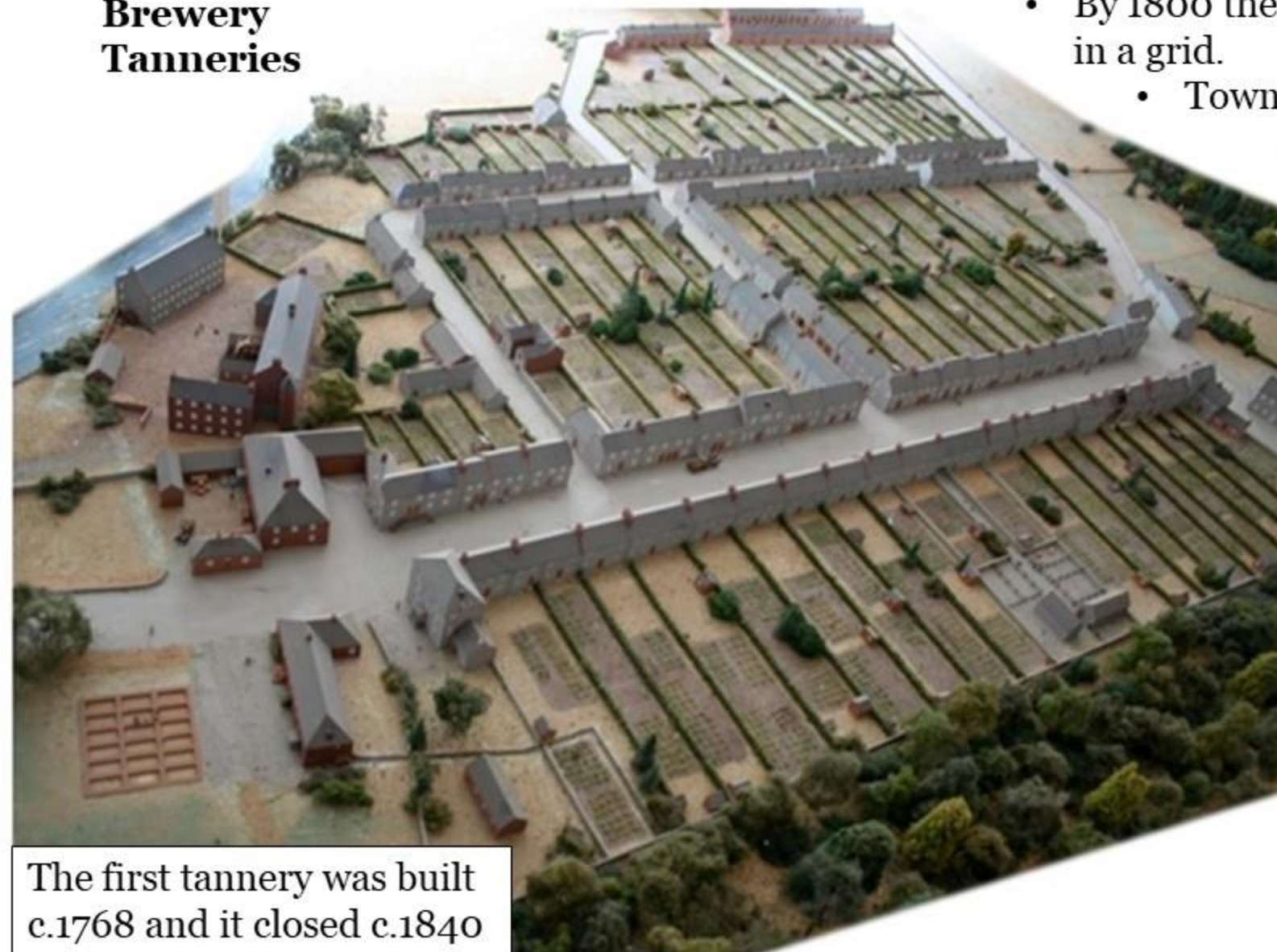
The site of Mr Murray's new village, about a mile from his new house, must have seemed ideal. The so-called '**great road**' from **Carlisle to Portpatrick**, the seaport for Ireland, passed through the area and crossed the river Fleet by a stone bridge. The old ford still remained and there was an **inn, a toll house, a farm and one or two cottages**.

Early Industries

Mills
Brewery
Tanneries

The “Wee Toon” c.1800

- In 1760 Gatehouse did not exist
 - By 1800 the streets were laid out in a grid.
 - Town entered via Ann Street
 - Road to Cardoness Castle was complete.



The first tannery was built
c.1768 and it closed c.1840

Slide 4 Early Industries - The Wee Toon

James Murray's plan was to build a village on a **grid system** – a fairly wide main street, parallel back streets for housing, cross streets for trades.

He realized the importance of providing employment.

The tannery – bottom right - opened in **1768**. - used locally sourced hides. Large herds of cattle were regularly driven along the road on their way to cities in England so there was no shortage of hides.

It is now the Spar Shop and Galloway Lodge. The tan pits are under the town car park.

A second tannery was built across the river and is now a house.

The brewery, which was part owned by James Murray was opened in **1769** using local grain. It is middle right.

Behind the brewery is the mill complex.

Early Industries

The Old Brewery

Built c.1769

Closed c.1900



Aerial view
taken 1978



Flats at the Old Brewery
as seen from the north

Slide 5 Early Industries - The Old Brewery

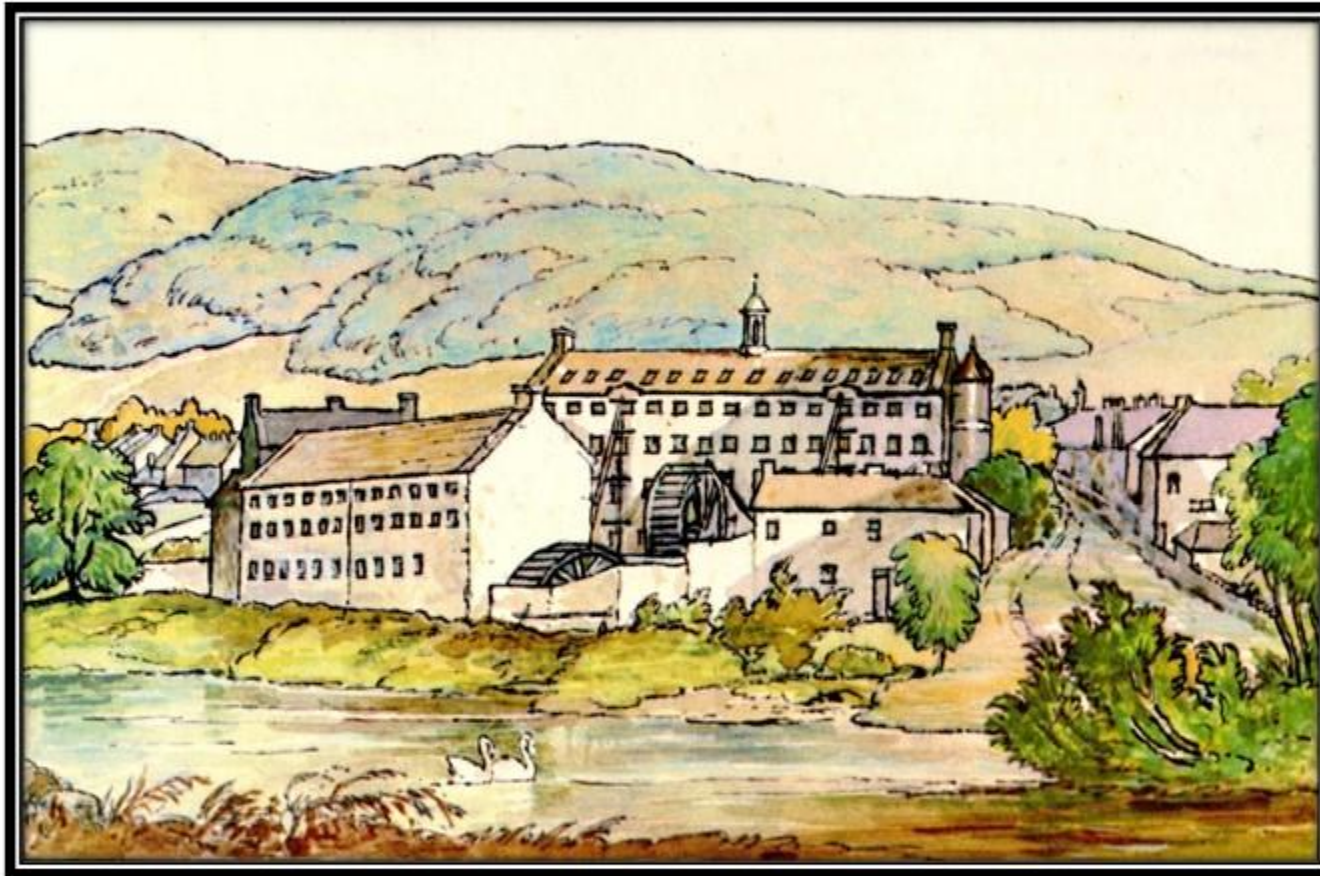
Here is a closer view of the brewery. After its closure about 1900 it was used as garaging and stores before being converted into flats.

The Deil's Elbow. The small inlet to the right of the brewery is known locally as the Deil's Elbow (Devil's Elbow), supposedly because of its reputation as the red light district of Gatehouse in the past.

In the 1881 census it was named as **Hunter Square** and in 1901 as **Murray Square**, both names of the owners of the brewery at those times.

Early Industries

1785 Birtwhistle's Cotton Mill



James Murray contracted with the Birtwhistle family to build a Cotton Mill.
This created a significant number of new employment opportunities.

Slide 6 Early Industries - Birtwhistle's Cotton Mills

It was the introduction of the **cotton spinning industry** that led to the expansion of Gatehouse.

In 1785 James Murray signed a contract with the **Birtwhistle** family, a cattle droving family from Yorkshire who were looking for an investment opportunity

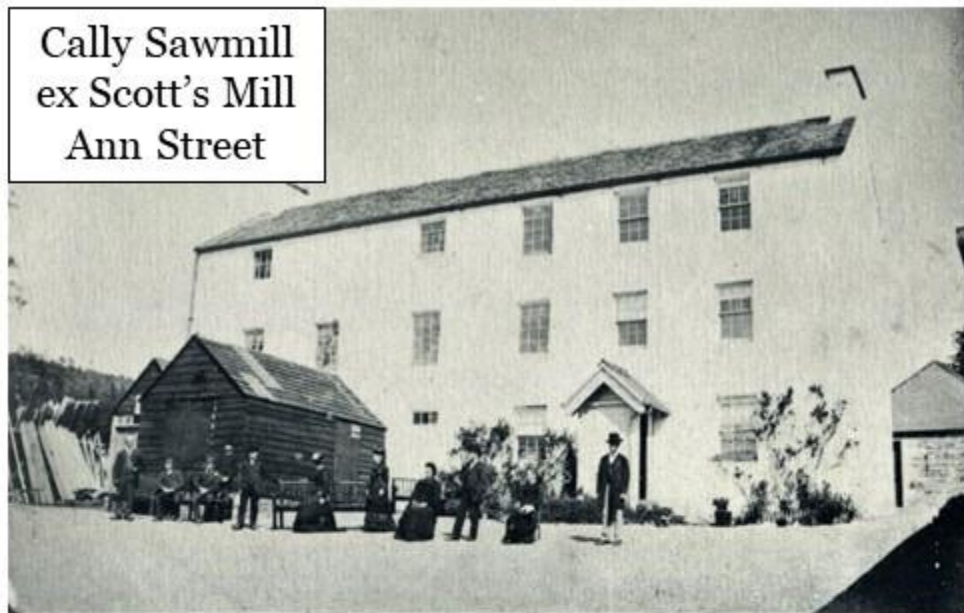
As part of the deal James Murray was to provide **water power**. The River Fleet has an erratic flow and is tidal so was unsuitable, Murray arranged for water to be brought to Gatehouse via natural streams and manmade water courses (**lades**) from Loch Whinyeon up in the hills above Gatehouse to a large millpond at the head of the town.

By 1794 some 500 people were employed in mills in Gatehouse. The Birtwhistle Mills closed in 1810 but when **Mr Davidson** reopened them **in 1832 they still employed about 200 people.**

From **1839 to 1938** the top mill was a **bobbin mill**, while the bottom mill was a bark mill and store.

Today the bottom mill is the Mill on the Fleet visitor centre while the roofless top mill houses the Wheels of Fleet bicycle project.

Cally Sawmill
ex Scott's Mill
Ann Street

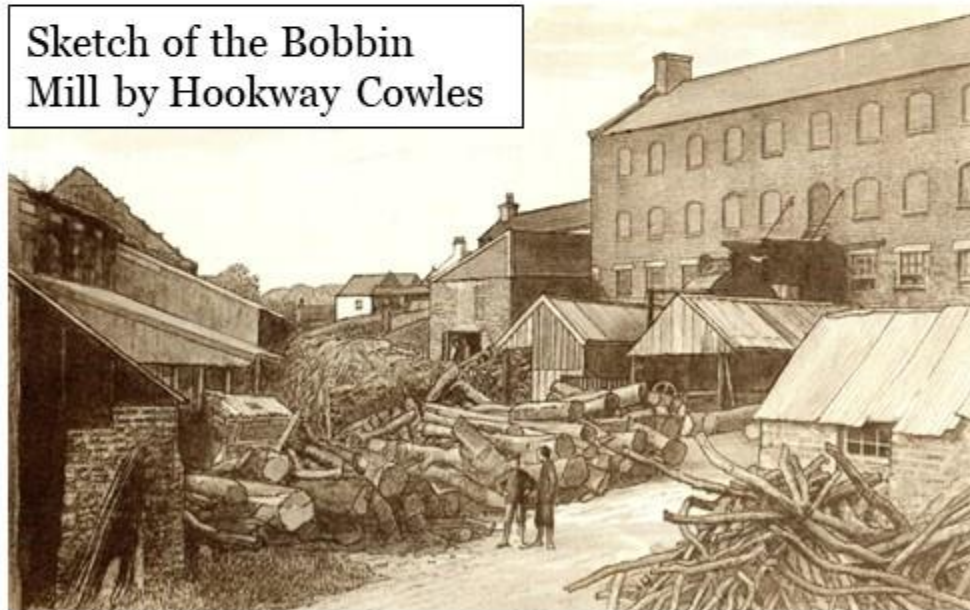


Water-Powered Mills



Scott's Mill halfpenny

Sketch of the Bobbin
Mill by Hookway Cowles



Other small mills operated for a short time e.g.

- Mr McWilliams Mill, adjacent to the Birtwhistle Mills.
- John Pape's Mill in Fleet Street

Slide 7 Other Water - Powered Mills

The Birtwhistle Mills were not the only cotton mills in Gatehouse.

A Mr **McWilliam** ran another Mill near the Birtwhistle Mills but that closed by 1811.

Scott's Mill in Ann Street operated between 1790 and 1810 then becoming the Cally Estate sawmill and has now been converted into flats.

John Papple a local surgeon opened a cotton manufactory in Fleet Street though it too was short lived and soon became housing.

A bit of Gatehouse history - Scott's Mill got round the problem of paying workers in small coins by using a trade token, known as the **Gatehouse Halfpenny**, which could be used to buy goods from local shops. Although common in bigger mill towns, this is the only trade token used in SW Scotland.

1813



Transport (shipping)

1824



1836



Slide 8 Transportation - shipping

Any industry relies on accessing raw materials and then transporting finished goods to a market.

The raw cotton for the mills came from America – transported on large ships to ports such as Glasgow and Liverpool before being brought to Gatehouse on smaller coastal vessels.

The original harbour was at **Boatgreen** but it was small and only accessible at high tide. Some of the many meanders on the River Fleet (top left picture) were straightened in the early 1800s to make access to Boatgreen easier but it was not until **1824 the a much longer canal was built** closer to the estuary. The new harbour **Port McAdam was built in 1826**. (bottom left picture) Sadly rather late to help the cotton industry in Gatehouse.

Travel by road, particularly for bulk goods was very difficult so shipping was very important and many of the merchants in the town owned or had interests in a ship at this time.

How did we find out who lived where ?

Main Sources

1. House deeds
2. Gravestones
3. Parish Records
4. Census Returns
5. Valuation Rolls

Further Info

1. Trade Directories
2. Newspapers
3. Magazines

HIGH STREET - GATEHOUSE-OF-FLEET

KIRKPATRICK - GATEHOUSE-OF-FLEET

Slide 9 Sources - How did we find who lived where?

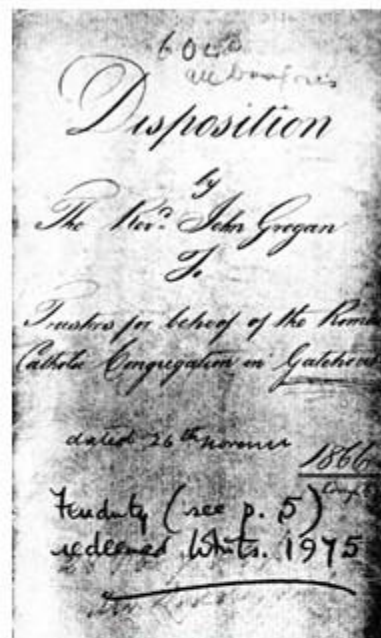
Now we are going to look at some of the Gatehouse buildings more closely.

On our website we try to work out who owned which houses and who lived in them. A somewhat inexact science as few house numbers were used until the 1930s.

Here is a list of some of the documents that we use.

Note the name ' Kirkpatrick'. (bottom right of background photo) The Kirkpatrick family owned a drapers and stationary shop about for 160 years - the longest ownership by one family in the High Street. The shop is on the right hand side to the left of the lamps at the Town Hall. The Kirkpatrick's were also ship owners and are remembered in Gatehouse for providing money to start a town band - known as the 'I'll Mak Siccar Brass Band'.

Information Sources



Disposition to
Catholic Church
in 1866

newspaper : marriage

1841 Girthon Census

Back Street 2

1841 census

Surname	First Name	sex	age	occupation	birthplace
Munro	William	m	44	innkeeper	Scotland
Munro	Jane	f	42		Kirkcudbrightshire
Munro	Annabella	f	14		Kirkcudbrightshire
Munro	Margaret	f	12		Kirkcudbrightshire
Munro	Jessie	f	8		Kirkcudbrightshire
Munro	Mary	f	6		Kirkcudbrightshire
Munro	William	m	3		Kirkcudbrightshire
Munro	Hectorina	f	1		Kirkcudbrightshire

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY STANDARD AND ADVERTISER, JULY 16, 1845.

At Gatehouse, on the 11th inst., by the Rev. George Murray of Girthon, Alexander Douglas, of the Royal engineers, to Annabella, third daughter of Bailie Munro, Blue Bell Inn, there.

10 Catherine Street

- Blue Bell Inn
- Upper floor
was Catholic Church,
now a home
- Ground floor is a home



gravestone

Erected by Mary Munro in loving memory of her parents, William Munro, **Blue Bell Inn**, Gatehouse-of-Fleet, born 7th July 1796, died 29th August 1846, and his wife Jane Thompson, born 7th January 1799, died 11th April 1852.

Slide 10 Information Sources - The Bluebell Inn, 10 Catherine Street

Here is an example of how we use the sources of information.

In the 1841 census **William Munro** was an inn keeper in Back Street, now called Catherine Street. Notice it is **2 Back Street** – that was the second household that the enumerator visited, not house no 2 Back Street.

The wedding of his daughter from an 1845 newspaper mentions the **Bluebell Inn** as does the gravestone at Girthon cemetery.

After William Munroe's death the property was bought by **the Roman Catholic Church** as a place of worship. Many Irish families had moved to Gatehouse for work and most were Roman Catholics. There was no church for them until this property was purchased. It was the RC church until 1971.

Differing House Styles in Gatehouse

High Street (aka Front St.)

- Most houses in pairs – different roof lines
- Owned by Shopkeepers & Tradesmen

Catherine Street (aka Back St.)

- Many houses rented

Birtwhistle Street & Swan Street

- Built by Birtwhistles to house their workers

Digby Street & Victoria Street (aka Cross St.)

- Trades (blacksmiths, builders, joiners etc.)



Slide 11 Differing House Styles in Gatehouse

In James Murray's plan the different streets in Gatehouse had different purposes.

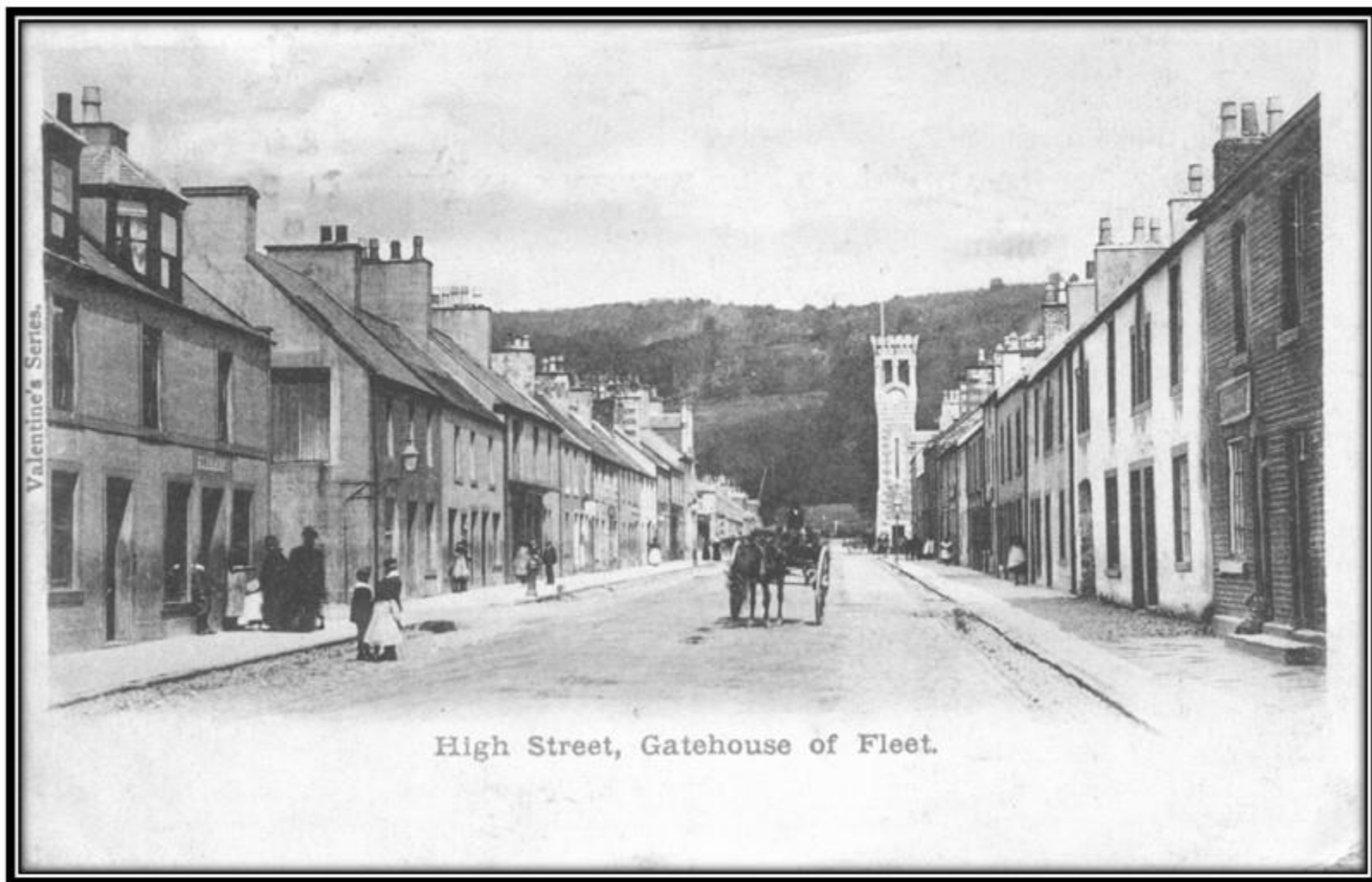
The **High Street** – larger 2 story houses for shop keepers and merchants

Catherine Street – smaller houses of different sizes, often rented

Birtwhistle Street and Swan Street for Mill workers

Cross Streets for tradesmen's workshops.

High Street c.1910



Slide 12 View of the High Street about 1910

James Murray laid down strict conditions with his feu contracts.

All the houses in the Front Street, as it was called at first, were to be **2 storeys high**. Notice that they are all slightly different heights as they were built by different people at different times.

There were to be **no outside stairs or dung heaps**.

Each feu is slightly different and The houses were often built in pairs - either 2 houses or a house and shop. Slightly lower windows probably indicate an old shop window.

The dark building on the right was a **bakers from 1792 to 1976**. It is now the Bakehouse - an arts venue.

High Street feued between 1763 and 1788



Most buildings were feued in pairs, one as a house and the other as a business. The darker building is nos. 12 and 14 High Street. 14 was previously a butchers shop. The white building on the right, no.16, is one of the few single feus.

Slide 13 High Street houses feued between 1763 and 1788

The stone building is 12/14 High Street. The **walls are made of whinstone** - part of the feu contract forced stone to be used, often from **Lochans Quarry** at the edge of the town.

Slate roofs were also required. Many Gatehouse houses have attractive graded slates - small at the peak of the roof to large at the bottom.

Most houses have an entrance to their back garden, known as a **pend**. Sometimes this was shared between 2 house or like this one (on the right of the building) which also gave access to a stair to the upstairs and a workshop at the rear.

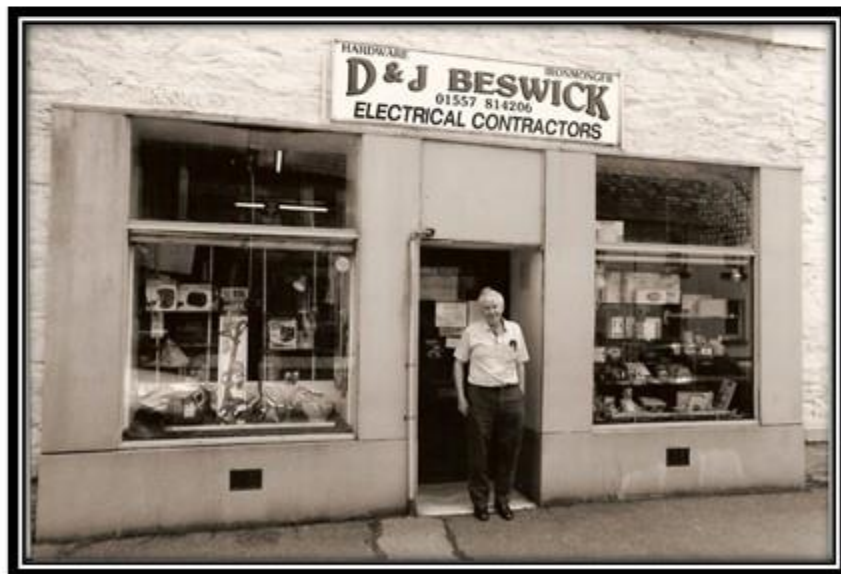
The **double front doors** are a feature of many High Street houses. Many of the front doors open onto a passage at the foot of the stairs. The narrow doors helped make use of a tight space.

16 High Street - the white house on the right, is one of the smaller houses. Both these properties were originally feued in 1767 by Robert Richardson, a shoemaker.

The larger house was a shoemakers home and business for nearly 200 years, then a butchers for 40 years before becoming just a house.

High Street Shops (1) 8-10 High Street : Ironmongers

James Bain
Silver snuff box



Slide 14 8 -10 High Street: Ironmongers

Some properties have remained as the same business type for many years.

8/10 High Street was an ironmongery for over 170 years. The first ironmonger was **James Bain** who was a **watchmaker and ironmonger**.

He and his **wife Agnes** also had a grocery and are also listed in trade directories as **spirit dealers**. (Grocers and spirit dealers often went together) Apparently this drinking establishment was a favourite with the gentry. Certainly James seemed to do well – here is his rather smart silver snuff box. **James Bain also owned a ship.**

In 1879 the property was bought by **James Stark**, a watchmaker and ironmonger. He died in 1884 and for many years the business was run by his wife Katherine Stark with the help of her nephews James & Edward Ewan.

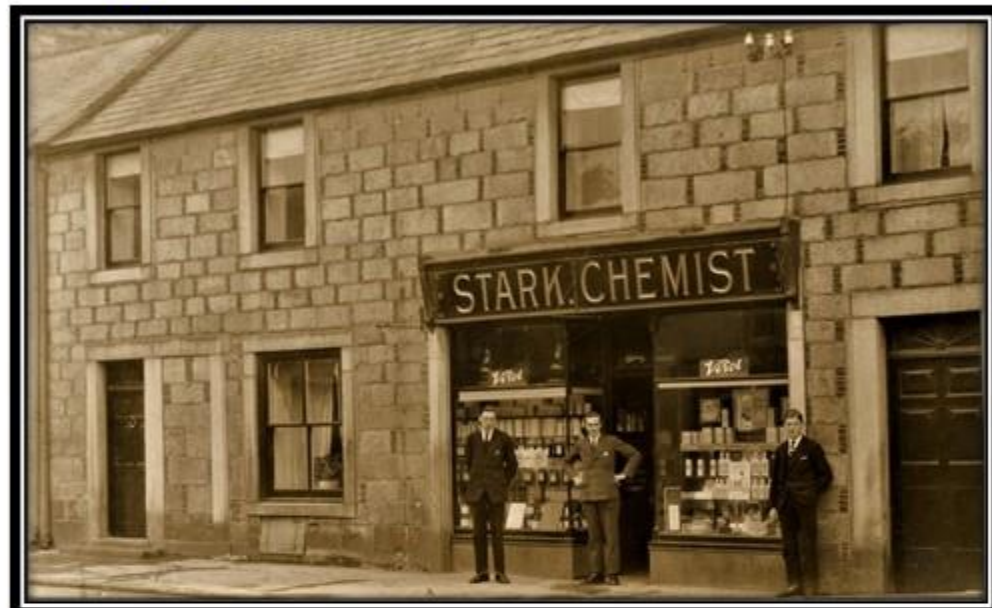
By 1912 the ironmongery was being run by the **McMurray brothers, George & Wellwood**, who also repaired and maintained watches, arranged eye tests, published postcards of their own photos and mended bicycles. They also had a petrol pump, in the days before Gatehouse had a garage.

The last ironmonger was David Beswick who finally closed the shop in 2001.

High Street Shops (2) Chemist



Apothecaries Hall



Stark Chemist



John Hall



Now Boots

Slide 15 High Street 18-20: Chemist

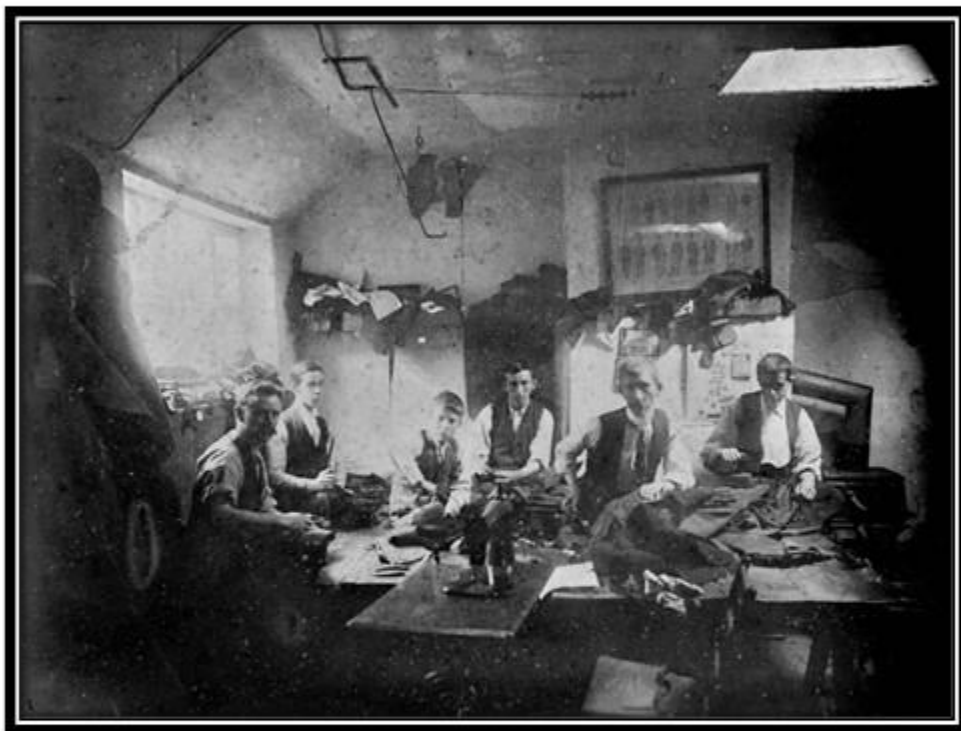
The shop at **18/20** High Street has been a chemist since 1873 when it was run by **John Hall**.

Notice the sign above the door - **Apothocaries - Hall**

George Stark took over running it in 1901. He was the son of the Anwoth school headmaster and not related to James Stark the ironmonger. Years later the shop was run by his daughter **Verna Edwards**, who had trained as a pharmacist. It is now a branch of Boots the Chemist.

High Street Shops (3)

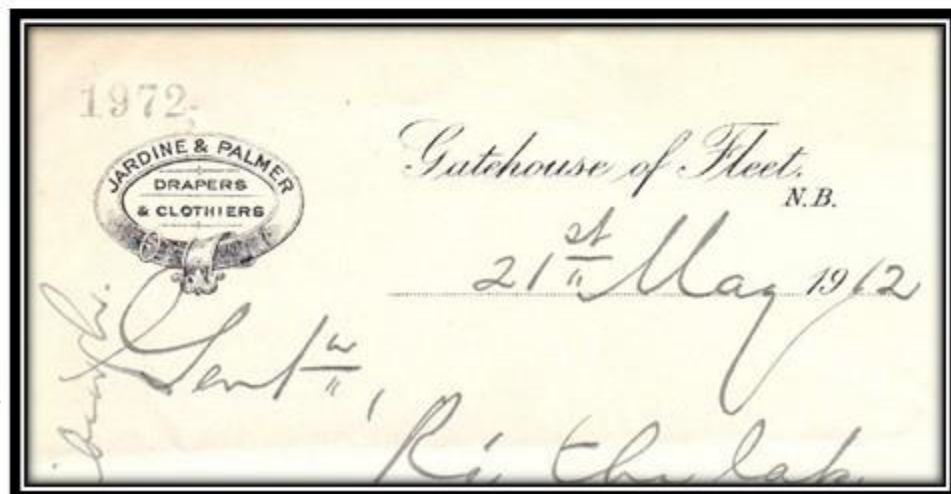
27-29 High Street



6 tailors working in a room
at rear of 31 High Street



Jardine & Palmer family

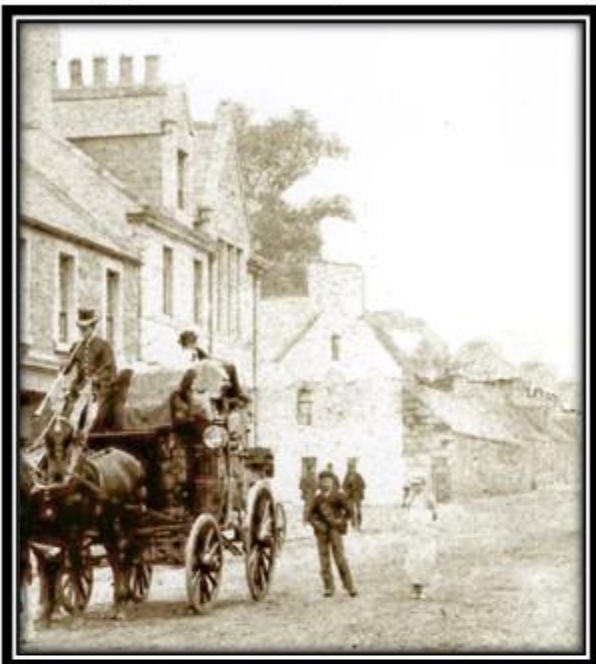


Jardine &
Palmer headed
notepaper

Slide 16 High Street 27-29: Drapers - Jardines

For many years 27/29 High Street was a **drapers**. The Jardine family who ran the business made money as **Scotch drapers or credit drapers** in Bedfordshire before returning home and joining forces with Maxwell Palmer to open the shop. (Robert Jardine was born in Luton in 1854 but his father Robert Jardine and mother Rebecca Tait were both from Gatehouse.)

The company also owned 31 High Street next door where the tailors' workshop was situated.



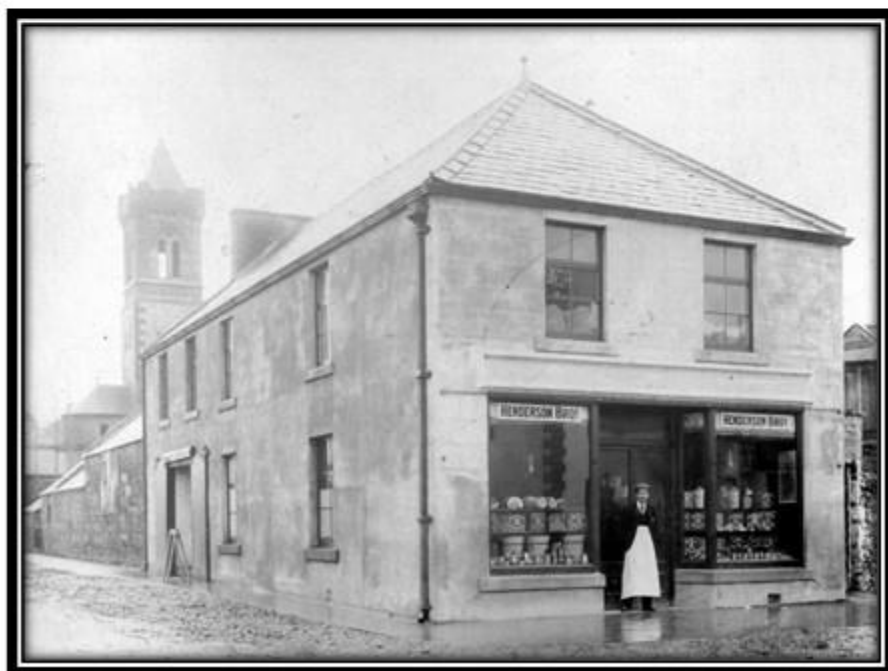
Evolving Gatehouse Hendersons

Left – before shop frontage

Below – Grocer's Shop

Right – “Lunky Hole” Gift Shop

has also been a “Co-op”
is now “The Scone Kitchen”



Slide 17 **Horatio Square shop. Evolving Gatehouse**

Some buildings have **changed use several times** .

This building originally faced Church Street with the gable end facing High Street. In the 1800s it housed several families as well as a small shop.

In 1894 it was bought by father and son John and Andrew Henderson and renovated it to become a grocery store. It was called **Henderson Brothers** but seems to have been mainly run by Andrew, seen standing at his shop door. His brother John, like their father John, was a carter.

In 1947 it was purchased by the **Dumfries and Maxwelltown Co-Operative Society** who apart from the grocery also had a butchers and a carpet/curtain shop in Gatehouse.

Mrs Murray Usher bought the property in 1968 opening a gift shop – ‘**The Giftie Gie Us**’.

Since then it has been used by various gift or deli type shops. The Lunky Hole, Galloway Lodge Preserves, Gatehouse Deli and now the Scone Kitchen.




Joiner's workshop (c.1910)




Private residence (2014)

The Bay Horse – no.9 Ann St. was a public house in 1861 census



Bay Horse
ANTIQUES
GATEHOUSE OF FLEET telephone 461



WHY NOT SPEND A LEISURLY HOUR BROWSING
THROUGH THE PAST AND PRESENT IN THE
STABLES OF THE OLD BAY HORSE 1767
THEN REST A WHILE IN OUR

COFFEE GALLERY
WHERE YOU CAN VIEW AND BUY ANY OF OUR
PAINTINGS AND PRINTS ON SHOW

Good Quality Furniture, Porcelain, Paintings, Etc.
Purchased at High Prices

OPEN DAILY INCLUDING SUNDAY FROM
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Antiques Shop 1973

The Bay Horse

**Bed & Breakfast
Accommodation**



An 18th century listed building situated
in Gatehouse of Fleet's historical Ann
Street, surrounded by parkland and oak
woods. Choice of nearby hotel bars,
restaurants and pub.

All luxury facilities including central
heating, TV and en-suite bedrooms.
Scottish Tourist Board – 3 Stars.

Proprietors: Charles and Carol Jackson
Tel: 01557 814073

Bed & Breakfast 2000

Slide 18 The Bay Horse, Ann Street.

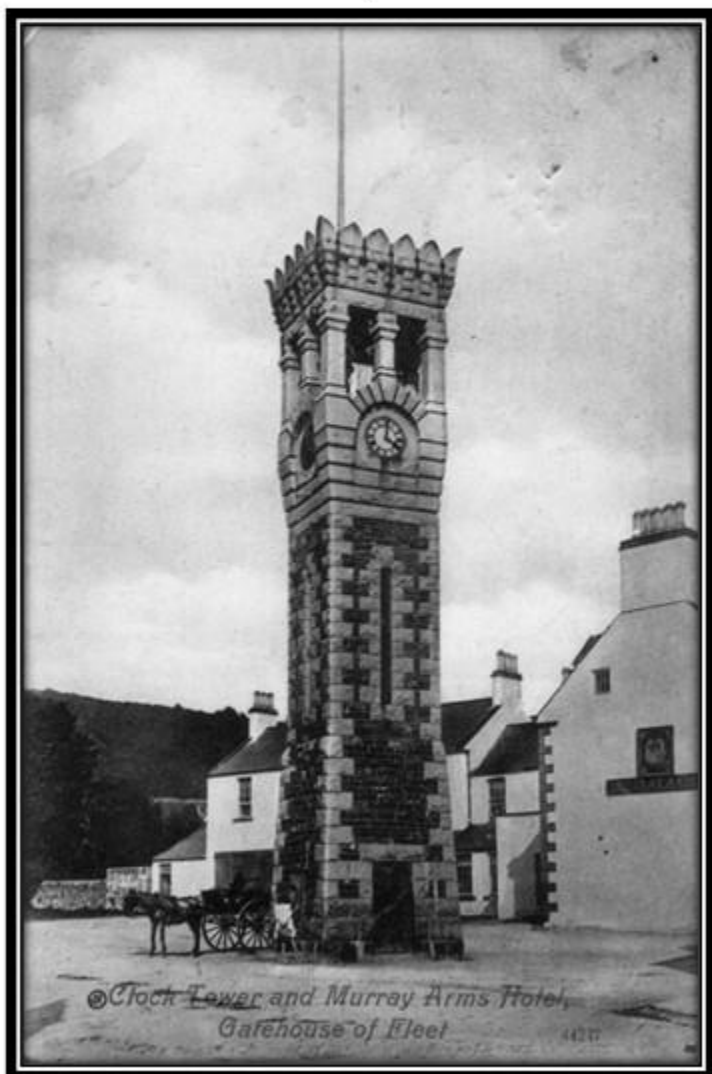
The Bay Horse Inn on Ann Street was a **pub** from 1787 until 1896. It was in a good position being on the main entrance road into the town at that time.

From 1896 until 1971 it was a **joinery workshop**.

Since then it has been an antique shop, a bed and breakfast and is now a private home.

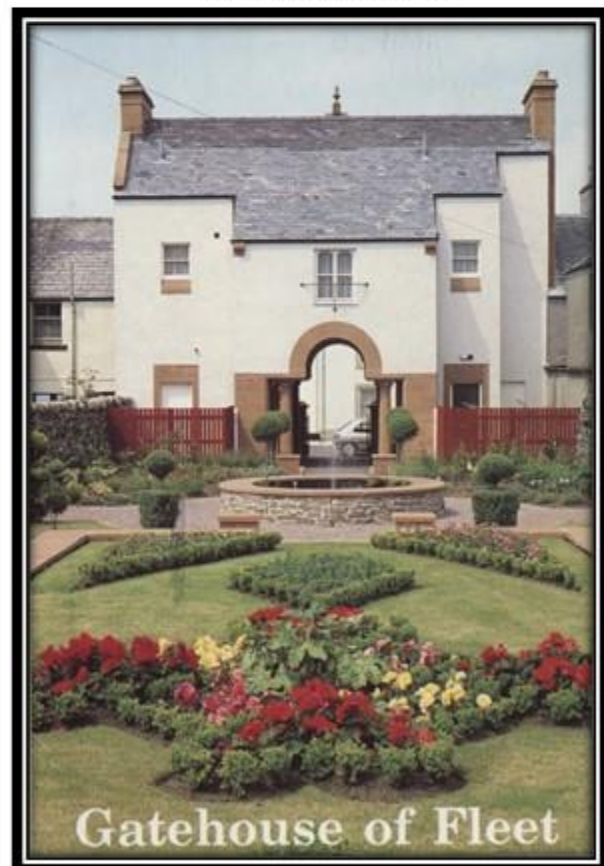
High Impact Buildings

Clock Tower, built 1871



Town Hall, built 1884.
Main building
demolished

Newly planted
Town Hall
Gardens, 1994



Slide 19 High impact buildings.

Some of you may have noticed on the model of the Wee Toon that, in 1800, Gatehouse had no churches. This was because both Anwoth and Girthon churches were at their respective clachans outside the town.

In **1816 Girthon Church** was built albeit without a tower which was added in the 1890s.

The Free Church of Scotland was built in 1844 (now the Rutherford Hall)

Anwoth Church remained outside the town.

The two buildings which gave the town a distinctive feel were the **Clock Tower built in 1871** and the **Town Hall in 1884**. Both were built by public subscription.

The Town Hall was built on the site of a pub – the Commercial Inn – in the High Street. Sadly the building seemed to suffer from structural problems and it was demolished in 1978. The facade remains with a garden behind it.



Catherine Street

West End showing 40-42,
now demolished

East End showing 1-7,
now demolished



Catherine Street, Gatehouse-of-Fleet

Slide 20 Catherine Street, formerly Back Street

Here are 2 views of the street – from either end.

The view from the east looks quite different today as this line of tall buildings was demolished in the 1940s to make way for council housing.

One of the buildings was run for many years as a **lodging house** by the Fitzpatrick and the McClymont families. They were both Irish Catholic families who had come to work in Gatehouse. Many who used the lodging house were single Irish labourers.

The appearance of Catherine Street is quite different from High Street with **different sizes of houses** and many houses built of brick. Although mainly residential there were a couple of **pubs** e.g. the Bluebell Inn and also some **small shops**

Mrs Oliver's – wife of sea captain Robert Oliver ran a shop at 38 Catherine Street.

The name 'Heron' above the door to the right in the bottom picture was probably also a shop but nothing is known of it.

There were also some **trades people**. This house 6 Catherine Street was a joiners workshop for over 100 years with access to the wood yard from Church Street It was run by the Henry family and then the Hunters.

McGaw the builder lived at the other end of the street with his stone yard in Victoria Street.

A Change for the Better

The Hermitage, corner of
Old Ford Lane & Swan Street



Slide 21 A Change for the Better: Birtwhistle Street and Swan Street

As part of the contract with James Murray, the Birtwhistles were given access to clay to make a terrace of **brick built workers houses**. These were different in style to other Gatehouse homes – more akin to mill workers homes in England.

This part of Swan Street, which is an extension of Birtwhistle Street, was derelict in 1990s and used as a store by the local builder, but you can clearly see the old bricks.

Most houses had at least 2 families per building and in many cases also a working weaving loom. They usually shared an outside toilet.

Many of the houses in the back streets and some in High Street had multi occupancy and were very crowded.

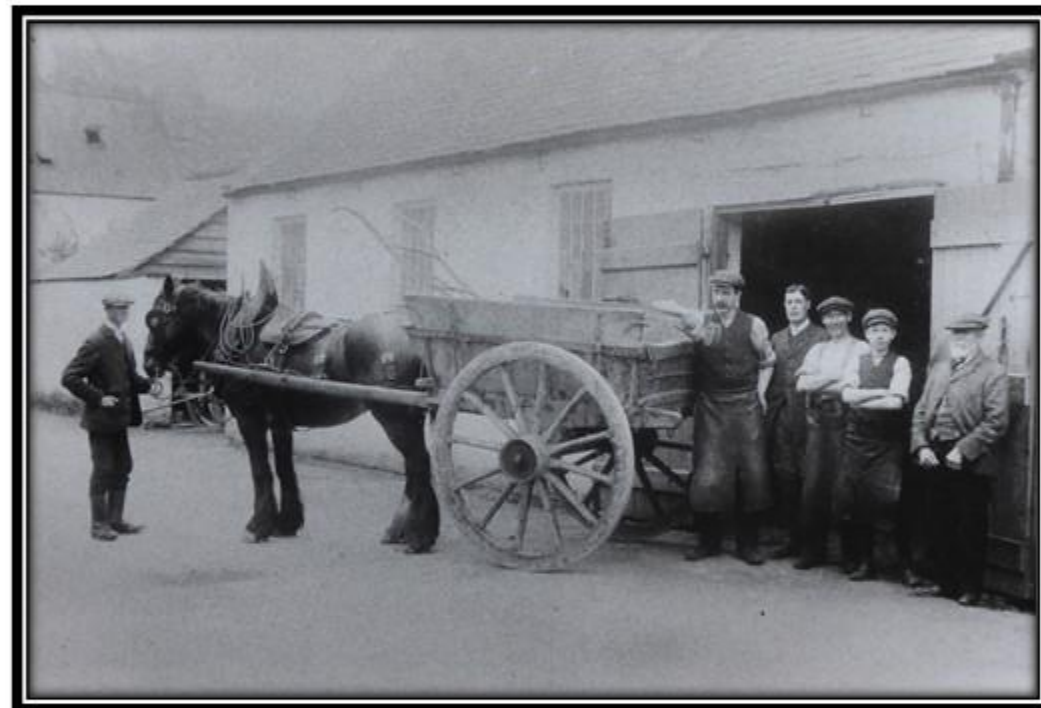
Businesses that have Disappeared

Blacksmiths



MacDonald's, Digby St. c.1900

now a holiday home



Anderson's, Victoria St. c. 1920s

now a home, The Smithy

Slide 22 **Cross Streets - businesses that have disappeared.**

Blacksmiths

The cross streets were intended to accommodate tradesmen.

Upper Cross Street – now Digby Street, for many years had a blacksmiths. There was also a grain store owned by the Belford family, who were ship owners.

At one time an electricity generator was housed in an old building.

These are all gone now replaced by housing and **youth services** – the Scout Hall and the Drop- in Centre.

Lower Cross Street – once Bankhead Street, now Victoria Street also had a smiddy from 1877. The Campbell family owned a house on the corner of High Street and Victoria Street and built the smiddy at the bottom of their garden, next to the lade. Prior to this the Campbells seem to have used the building on the opposite side of Victoria Street, which is sometimes called the **Brass Works** but little is known of this building.

In the more recent past the **Police Station and the Fire Station** were in Victoria Street. They have now disappeared but there are still some trades men - a plumber, a joiner and a builder with workshops in the street.

Both Digby Street and Victoria Street have had **pubs** in the past – the Rabbie Burns in Digby Street and the Victoria Inn in Victoria Street - and both had **salt houses** showing the importance of salt for preserving food in the past.

Horatio Square



Rosebank (now Cheritonwood)



Owners with Colonial Connections (1)



Roseville, Ann Street



Angel Hotel

Slide 23 Owners with Colonial Connections: McNish

It will come as no surprise that a town with cotton mills had connections with the slave trade in America. Several of the larger houses in the town were lived in by people with these connections.

The McNish family owned **Horatio Square** from 1799. **William McNish** owned a rice plantation in Georgia, called the Gatehouse Plantation, while his brother had the Cairnsmuir Plantation in Jamaica. The brothers contributed to their sister Jane when she built **Rosebank** in Ann Street in 1827.

Roseville, also in Ann Street, was owned for many years by the Campbell family. **William Campbell** was awarded nearly £2½ thousand pounds as compensation after freeing his enslaved persons in Tobago in 1833.

The **Angel Hotel** was owned by James Wood of Savannah, Georgia between 1824 and 1850.

Owners with Colonial Connections (2)



East & West Neilson



Left is 'Back Neilson' before demolition



Fleet-Bank. Gatehouse of Fleet

Fleetbank

1841 Census

Neilson Square was occupied by
6 families, 11 people.

Back Neilson had
13 families 60 people

Slide 24 Owners with Colonial Connections: Neilson

The Neilson family were from near Laurieston. Mrs Neilson's family already had a successful printing business in Quebec, Canada and several of her sons spent time there.

William Neilson was only there for about 3 years between 1795 and 1797 before coming back to Gatehouse and investing his savings in housing. He built **Neilson Square in 1812** (and probably also **Back Neilson**) as well as owning several other houses in the town.

The 1841 census shows how crowded these houses were – particularly Back Neilson which was eventually condemned in the 1930s.

William was keen to support education of the poor in Balmaghie - the parish of his birth. He gave the ownership of 15 Fleet Street to the Balmaghie School Board to provide funds.

William's half brother **Nathaniel** who owned a sugar plantation in Jamaica bought the **Ship Inn** in Fleet Street in 1834. The Ship Inn was built in 1794, the first building in Fleet Street The inn was run by his wife Barbara. The house **Fleetbank**, which had been built 1824 at the end of the Ship Inn feu, was probably also included in this sale.

Fleetbank has had an interesting history. At different times it has been a manse for the Wee Kirk across the road, John Newbiggin, the cotton mill manager's house in the 1840s, and the home of Mary Faed, the mother of John and Thomas Faed, the Victorian artists.

Gatehouse Builders - Hume



Alderlea



Elderslie (now Glenlea)



Lath inscription from Glenlea which says
"This House was built in the year 1850 and also was Mr Hume's"

Slide 25 Gatehouse Builders - Hume

Records don't exist to tell us who built the first Gatehouse buildings but we know of two families of builders who lived in the town for many years The **Hume and the Hornsby families**.

Robert Hume was born in Gatehouse in 1809, the son of a mason. By the 1851 census he was a master builder employing 16 men, some being his own sons. The Humes owned a large piece of land at the west end of Fleet Street which included the **brickworks** They built these two houses - Alderlea and Elderslie - and probably also Planetree, the house behind them.

Notice how fancy Alderlea looks - are these examples of their building skills?

The lath was discovered when Elderslie, now called Glenlea, was being renovated.

Like many builders the Humes had often to look for work elsewhere. Robert Hume is known to have built the **Little Ross Lighthouse** at Kirkcudbright in **1843** using Gatehouse bricks and also **Ardnamurchan Lighthouse in 1849**.

Gatehouse Builders - Hornsby

Moravia, 29 Fleet Street



37 Catherine Street
aka Hornsby Hall

Slide 26 Gatehouse Builders - Hornsby

The **Hornsby** family came to Gatehouse in the 1780s. They were known for their brick building skills examples of which can be seen in their house at **37 Catherine Street**, which was nicknamed Hornsby Hall by the locals.

When John Papple's cotton mill in Fleet Street failed, John Hornsby moved there and probably built this house (29 Fleet Street). Again notice the details round the door and although you can't see it, there is fancy ironwork in the gutters and above the downpipes. Were these examples of his workmanship?

Problems Facing Industrial Development

- **Financial**

- Failure of Bank of Ayr (1772)

- many shareholders from Gatehouse

- **Trouble at t'mill**

- End of water-powered cotton boom

- Birtwhistle Mill closed (1810)

- Scott's Mill closed (1811)

- Lower Birtwhistle Mill re-opened as cotton mill by
James Davidson (1832-1850)

- Mill Fires : Cotton Mill (1840), Bobbin Mill (1919)

- **Shipping Improvements**

- Too little too late

- **Transportation**

- Railway arrived (c.1861) but station 6 miles away

Slide 27 Problems facing industrial development

Not everything went to plan in the development of Gatehouse.

In **1772 the Ayr Bank failed**. James Murray had borrowed heavily from this bank.

A number of Gatehouse householders had borrowed from other bank shareholders who demanded to be repaid.

Some people had to sell their homes. James Murray put the brewery up for sale.

All construction in Gatehouse was **halted** and did not start again until **1781**.

The lack of money trickled down to affect everyone and times were hard.

Many people left Gatehouse to find work elsewhere.

In **1799 James Murray died** and the estate was inherited by his son Alexander who was only 5, so the estate was run by **trustees until 1811**. Not ideal.

The era of **water powered industries was coming to an end** and Gatehouse, away from any coalfields, could not compete with the larger steam driven mills.

Also the **supply of raw cotton** was affected by **abolition of the slave trade** (1807) and **wars** e.g. the American Revolution (1775-1783)

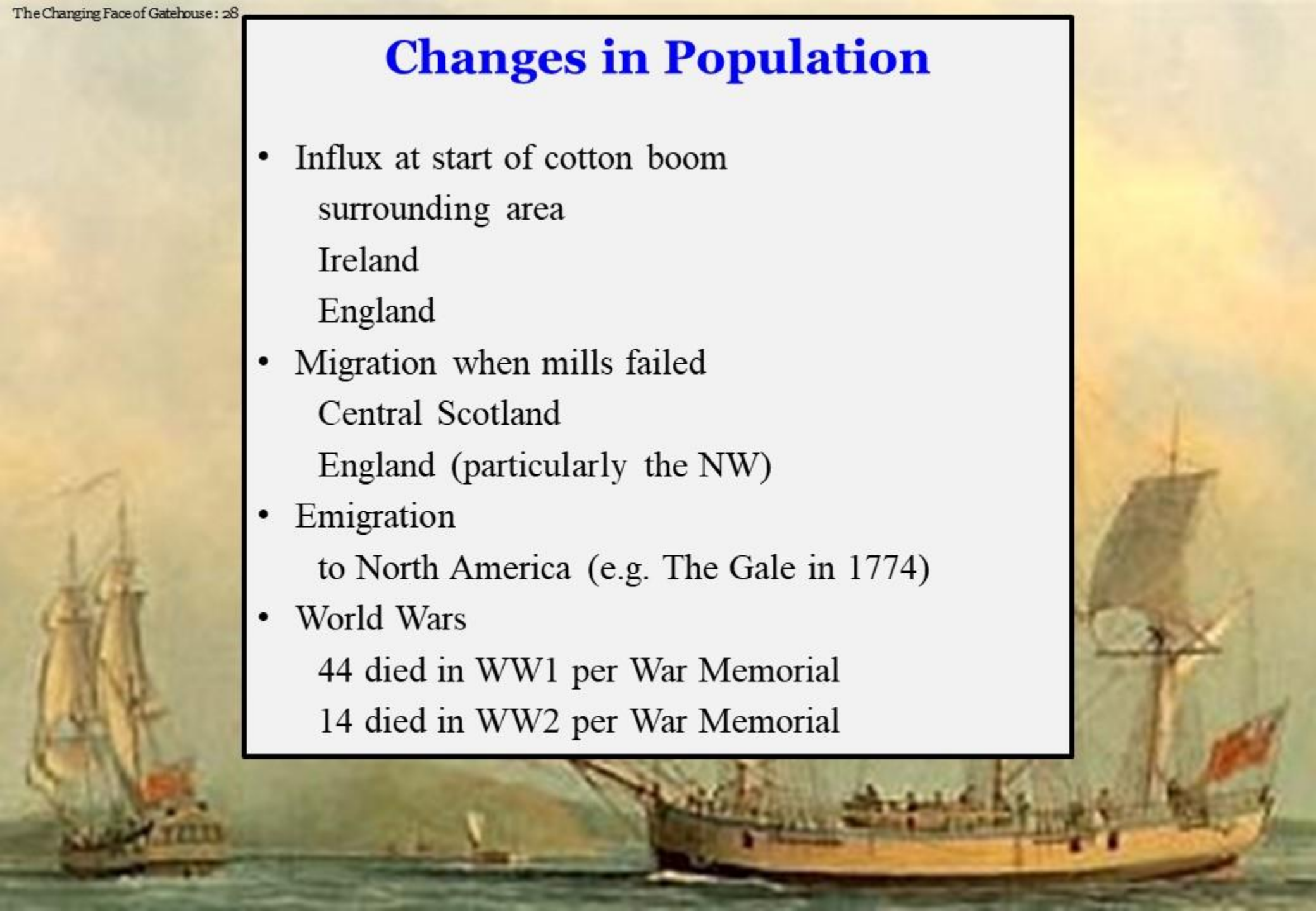
Fires in mills were a constant danger and the Birtwhistle Mill was badly damaged in 1840.

The bobbin mill (which opened in the upper Birtwhistle Mill c. 1859) had a serious fire in 1919.

Communications were still a problem. The roads were poor and the improvements to the river with the canal in 1828 and harbour in 1836 came too late to save the cotton mills, Gatehouse's main employer.

Changes in Population

- Influx at start of cotton boom
surrounding area
Ireland
England
- Migration when mills failed
Central Scotland
England (particularly the NW)
- Emigration
to North America (e.g. The Gale in 1774)
- World Wars
44 died in WW1 per War Memorial
14 died in WW2 per War Memorial



Slide 28 Changes in Population

Who were the people who came to Gatehouse originally ?

Between about 1760 and 1800 the population rose from almost **nothing to nearly 2000**.

Some were **locals**, perhaps displaced from farms or looking for better paid work.

A large number of people came from **Ireland** – some from the Murray's Estate at Killibegs, Co. Donegal.

Some came from the **north of England** – often mill workers.

When times were hard many moved away from Gatehouse to **central Scotland** or to **England**.

When the Provost James McTaggart was collecting money to build the town clock in 1871, he travelled to Glasgow and Edinburgh as well as Liverpool and Manchester to collect subscriptions from people with Gatehouse connections.

Some families **emigrated to America** such as those who boarded The Gale on 1774. Others followed after hearing good reports of life in America.

By about **1900** the population had gradually dropped to about **1000** and still remains about that level.

The World Wars also affected **the proportion of men** and some women such as Verna Edwards the pharmacist and Norah Henderson, who drove a van for her father's grocery shop, took over some jobs previously done by men.

Gatehouse now has an ageing population.

In 1911 11% of the population were over 65.

In 2011 this percentage had risen to 35%.

Many of these people have moved to Gatehouse on retirement. Quite a number would have known the area well, having spent holidays in the area for many years.

Others may have been brought up in Gatehouse, moved away but have returned in later life.

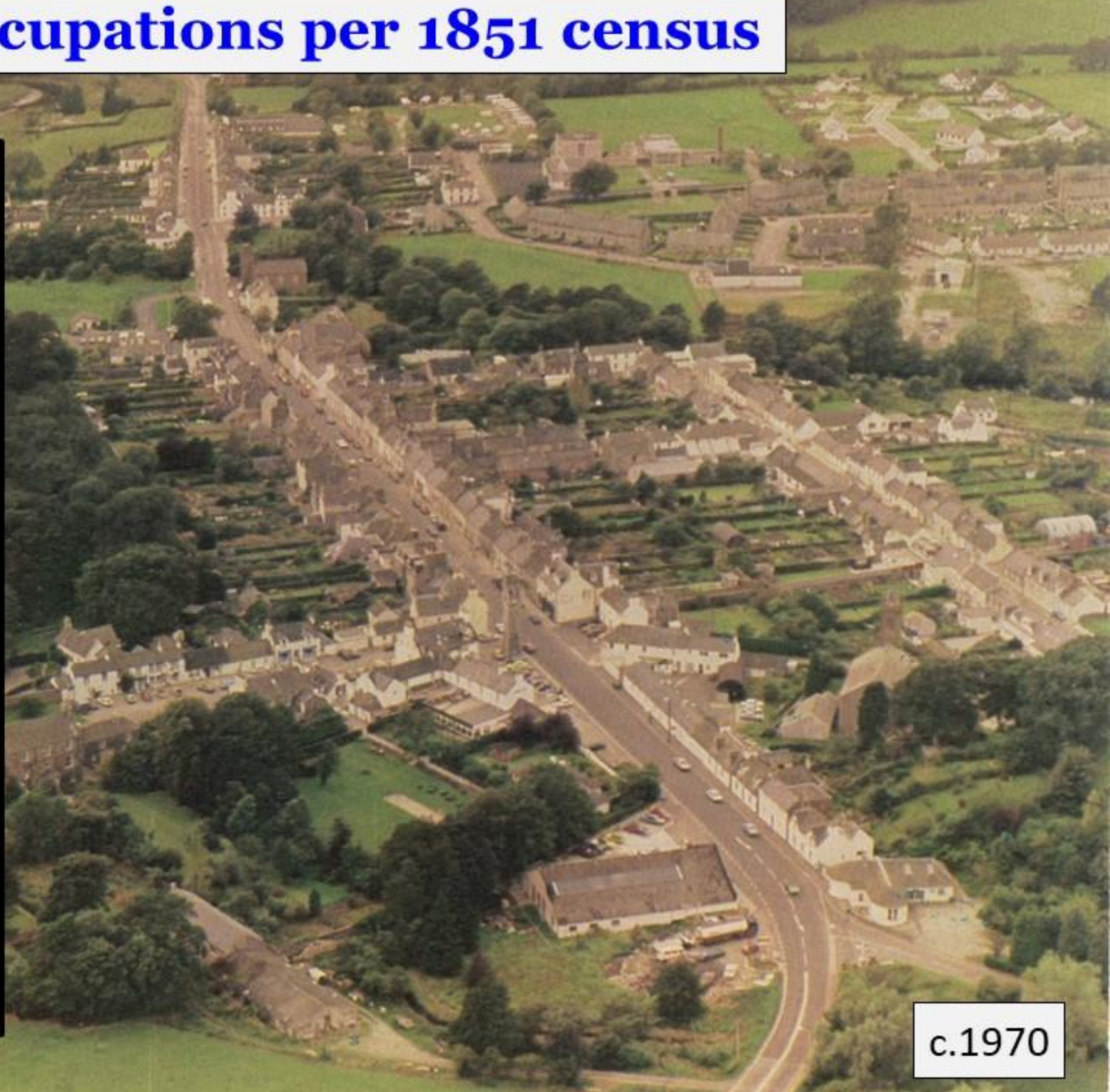
This has had an effect on the local school.

The primary school now has less than 100 pupils about half the size it was in the 1950s.

The secondary school closed in 1981 and the children now attend Kirkcudbright Academy.

Occupations per 1851 census

Hairdresser / barber
78 weavers
19 dressmakers
16 seamstresses
17 boot &
shoemakers
16 grocers
12 masons
4 bricklayers
8 blacksmiths
1 tinsmith
5 inn-keepers
5 spirit dealers
6 joiners



c.1970

Slide 29 Occupations per 1851 census

A brief look at some occupations in the 1851 census.

Most of the occupations were for males. Most married women did not work, unless they were very poor.

All the clothes and shoes were handmade and many women were dressmakers or bonnet makers. Notice the number of spirit dealers and inn keepers – there was at least one pub in most street.

Disappearing Occupations

Rabbit Catcher
Mole Catcher
Blacksmith
Tanner
Ostler
Copper Miners
Sieviewright
Cartwright
Mill Mechanic



"Rabbit Catches" by John Faed

Dressmaker
Bobbin Turner
Cotton Weaver
Basket Maker
Seamstress
Hoop Maker
Laundress
Pirn Winder
Carder
Dyer

Slide 30 **Disappearing Occupations**

And here is a list of long lost occupations – many connected with the cotton and bobbin mills.

There were a number of copper miners - the mineral was found nearby. Another short lived industry.

Hoop makers and basket makers used local timber.

The man in the picture is Sandy Inglis – a retired farmer who lived at Back Neilson He was a favourite model of John Faed, the Victorian artist who lived in Gatehouse.

Disappearing Businesses



The sign above the door at
53 High Street once read
"J McNEIL TAILOR"

uncovered 2020



The sign above the door at
24 Fleet Street once said
"J HYSLOP"

Slide 31 **Disappearing businesses**

We come across some mysteries such as long lost businesses.

These 2 signs have appeared above doors in the last couple of years.

J. McNeil may be the James McNeil born in 1830 in Birtwhistle Street who moved to Preston before 1851 to work as a tailor. He seems a bit young to have started a business in Gatehouse before he went to Preston, but who knows?

Likewise J. Hyslop at 31 Fleet Street may be the John Hyslop, a grocer who lived for many years on the other side of Fleet Street but we have found no proof of this.

Newer Gatehouse Building

Originally Council Housing

- Market Hill
- Riverbank

Private Developments

- Baker's Dozen
- Beechwood
- Boreland Wood
- Bracken Wood
- Laurieston Road
- Mansewood
- Meadowside
- Planetree
- Ramsay Wood



Fleet Street, Gatehouse.

Slide 32 Newer Gatehouse Buildings

So far we have talked about old Gatehouse when the town remained much the same size until 20th century.

The first new builds were the **local authority houses** - council houses at Market Hill built in 1930s and over the river at Riverbank, in the late 1940s & 50s. These were built to rehouse many of the families who lived in some of the town's overcrowded houses which often had poor sanitation. They also encouraged **new people** to the town such as teachers, bankers, forestry workers and even the local doctor lived for a time at Riverbank while his house and surgery were being built.

Later several estates of **privately built houses** were built on the edges of the town often by **retirees**.

In **1795** Gatehouse became a **Burgh of Barony**. James Murray had great hopes that his estate village would develop into ‘ **the Glasgow of the south**’ so the boundaries were set some distance outside the town – out to Cardoness Castle and up the Fleet valley as far as Goatend and Fleuchlarg. All these estates, bar one, are still within the old Burgh boundaries.

Beechwood, built on the old Academy lands, is behind the Cally Estate wall, and technically not within the burgh, but ironically is the closest development to the centre of town.

The background of this slide shows Fleet Street.

Fleet Street is in the parish of Anwoth - most of Gatehouse lies in the Parish of Girthon on the other side of the River Fleet.

Fleet Street developed later than the High Street - the first building was the Ship Inn built in 1794. The Ship Inn, sometimes known as the Anwoth Hotel, was not the only pub in the street. The house beside the bridge ran as the Crown and Thistle for many years and a pub known as the Anchor was also in Fleet Street but its whereabouts is unknown.

There were also a number of shops - butchers, groceries and a fancy goods shop. The young lads on bicycles are outside a popular cycling cafe.

Access by Road



Pre-1921 : **The Cut**
opened in 1823



Early-1920s :
War Memorial
erected in 1921.



1986 : **Gatehouse Bypass** opened.
Less traffic in High Street.

Slide 33 Access by Road.

Many types of roads for example, military roads and turnpike have passed through Gatehouse at different times taking slightly different routes.

The old entrance from the **east** came down **Ann Street** but this was replaced in **1823 by the Cut**.

The old route to the west via Anwoth clachan had been replaced in **1709 by a coastal route** via Cardoness Castle and Ardwall.

This more direct route eventually became the **A75**, the main road between Stranraer and Carlisle.

From the 1930s car ownership and transportation by lorry became more popular. Traffic on the **A75** increased and Gatehouse became a bottleneck.

In **1965 Fleet Bridge**, which had become very dangerous for pedestrians to cross, was widened and footpaths added.

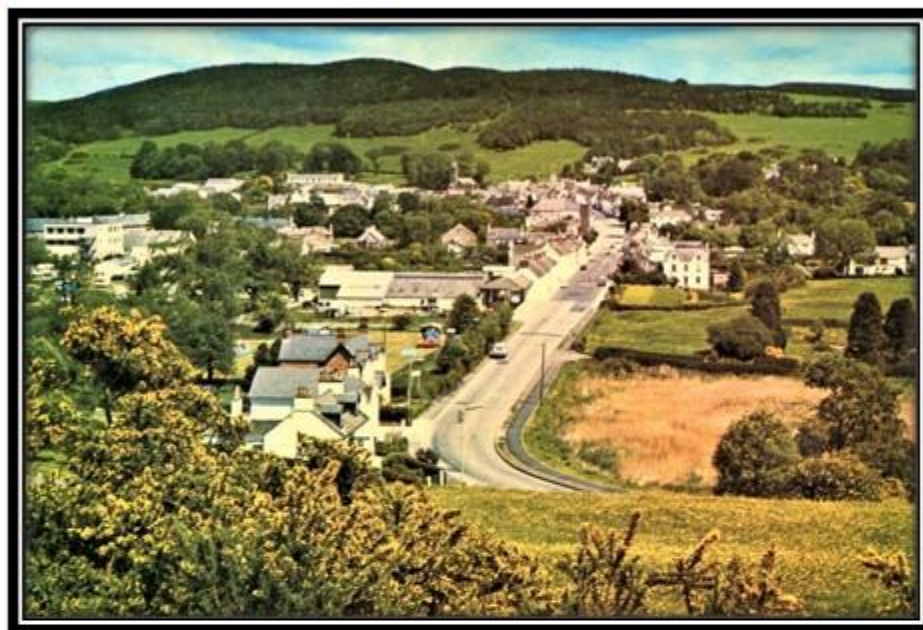
After much discussion in **1986 the Gatehouse bypass** was opened, taking through traffic away from the town.

The road through Gatehouse is much quieter now but despite a large town car park the streets are still lined with parked cars.

Gasworks & Garages no longer exist



Fleetside School (left centre),
Gasworks (centre)
both demolished



Market Hill & New School
+ Campbell's Garage



Crosbie's Garage

Slide 34 Gasworks and Garages no longer exist

With the increase of cars in the 1930s, Mrs Murray Usher (the laird of Cally) encouraged the building of 2 **garages** – one at either end of the town. Both the **Campbell and Crosbie** families had been involved in transportation in Gatehouse for many years.

Campbell's Garage in Fleet Street replaced the gas works. It is now the site is Fleet Valley Care Home.

The **Crosbies** built a garage on one of the drained mill ponds at the foot of the Cut. The garage has been demolished and awaits development.

Disappearing Gatehouse

Ann Street

Back Neilson

High Street

Town Hall

Catherine Street

Nos. 1 to 7 (east end)

Nos. 40 & 42 (top of Digby Street)

Garden Street

No. 2 (next to Fleetbank)

North View (health centre)

north side (community centre)

Fleet Street

Gasworks

Campbell's Garage

(now Fleet Valley Care Home)

Woodside

Crosbie's Garage

Castramont Road

Fleet Farm building demolished
(now Stelage Court)

Birtwhistle Street

Parts demolished and incorporated
into larger houses :-

East View, West View & Woodlyn

Digby Street

Nos.12-18 replaced by council houses
(now 4 private homes)

Smiddy – now a holiday home

Victoria Street

Smithy – now a home

Slide 35 Disappearing Gatehouse

We tend to think of Gatehouse as remaining much the same but there have been a surprising number of buildings have disappeared.

A number of houses in Catherine Street and Digby Street were demolished to make way for local authority housing.

Fred Heron's house in **Garden Street known as Northview** has been replaced by the **health centre**.

The other buildings on the north side of Garden Street were demolished when the new Gatehouse School was built in the 1920s.

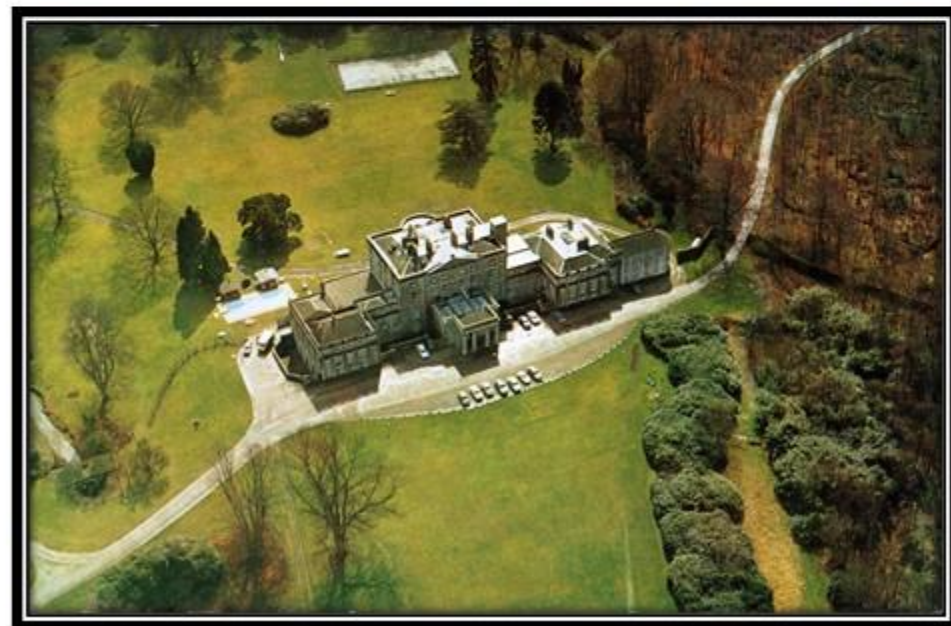
There was a **farm** next to Girthon Church which was demolished in the 1970s. It was a useful place to buy a pint of milk if the dairy shop in the High Street was closed. The site now has **sheltered housing**.

Gatehouse once had 2 banks but now both are closed. More and more money transactions are dealt with online although the Post Office still deals with money transactions in person.

Cash can be obtained from an ATM but it is becoming used less and less, in favour of card transactions so maybe an actual bank is no longer needed in a small town.



Tourism



Slide 36 Tourism

Gatehouse seems to have been a tale of industries which have come and gone. Tanneries, the brewery, cotton mills and forestry nursery.

Today most people have work connected in some way to **tourism**.

Long before the first postcards were sent in the early 1900s people visited the area for the clean air and the scenery.

There were **3 long established hotels** – the Murray Arms, the Angel and the Ship Inn or Anwoth Hotel.

After Mrs Murray Usher sold large parts of the Cally Estate in the 1930s, Cally House became a classy hotel - the **Cally Palace**. After World War 2 further improvements were made to the Cally with a outdoor swimming pool in added in 1969. This was later enclosed when an extra wing was added. A 18 hole golf course was opened in 1991.

The **Youth Hostel**, beside the river near the old ford, opened in 1930 but it was the popularity of family cars which led to several **caravan parks** opening nearby including one in Gatehouse, in Garden Street.

Local shops responded to this new market by sending vans to the caravan sites. Others shops stocked postcards and gifts.

Bed and breakfast establishments opened up such as the **Bank of Fleet** which was formerly Alexander Birtwhistle's home and then later a bank.

Much encouragement was given by **Mrs Murray Usher** who owned the Murray Arms Hotel, 2 caravan parks and gift shops.

We can't talk about the changing face of Gatehouse without mentioning **Mrs Murray Usher, 15th Laird of Cally**. She had strong ideas on how Gatehouse should look. She was known to have asked householders to change the covering on their roofs or the colour of their house paint if it did not fit in.

Shops in the 1960s

Hairdresser / Barber

4 Grocers

2 Butchers

Fish Shop

Baker

Dairy

Ice Cream etc.

Confectioners

2 Drapers

Shoe Shop

Newsagent

2 Banks

Post Office

High Street, Gatehouse.

Slide 37 Shops in the 1960s

In the 1960s Gatehouse **High Street was a bustling place**. Mums pushing prams, children on bikes, men chatting at the bank corner.

Most things we needed could be bought in Gatehouse. Our mums shopped most days as fridges and freezers were rare. There was a good choice of food shops – grocers, butchers, a fish shop, bakers etc.

We could get our Clark's sandals, wellies, and dancing pumps from Trainers, skirts, jumpers and trousers from Fergussons or Jardines the drapers.

Like many Scottish towns we had an Italian ice cream and fish and chip shop – Frullanis.

And for our pocket money a choice of 2 banks and the post office.

Sadly today we only have fewer shops - 2 convenience stores, a post office and a chemist although we have a few different kinds shops – a flower shop, an upholstery shop and a couple of book shops and gift shops.

Perhaps a reflection of how shopping has changed for everyone in recent years. Ownership of cars makes it easy to travel further afield for shopping, and now, particularly since the pandemic, internet shopping which delivers products directly to your home has greatly increased.

Encouragingly, not all deliveries are from afar such as Amazon or Tesco, as some businesses in nearby towns now regularly run delivery vans to Gatehouse with fresh meat, fish and vegetables. Long may that continue.

The Changing Face of Gatehouse

The town has changed over 250 years

- From a hamlet to a planned industrial village with a steep rise in population.
- Water powered industries could not compete with steam power.
- Isolation and poor transport led to industrial demise.

- Physical size remained stable until mid 1930s, although population decreased.
- Some buildings underwent a change of use and some were demolished.
- The town expanded providing new housing.
- Sea and rail came and went. Roads completely changed access.
- Holiday lets and second homes affect the year round population and need for shops.
- Modern shopping has changed with the private car and now internet sales.
- Problems caused by parked cars and by recycling.
- Homes need to be sustainable (green) yet retain character of the town.

Slide 38 The Changing Face of Gatehouse

We have seen how Gatehouse changed from a tiny hamlet to a bustling industrial town in the space of about 40 years. Estate villages were not unusual at that time but what is more unusual is that when the expansion halted, Gatehouse remained much the same size until recently.

Access is now only by road as the shipping and the railway no longer exist.

The **railway station** which opened in 1854 was six miles outside the town and did not play a big part in the development of the town. It closed in 1965.

The town still has problems to face - the need to **encourage employment opportunities** - perhaps more **remote working** will help with this.

Parked cars are a problem in all the streets as most families have at least one car., and the streets were never designed to take parked vehicles.

The need to **recycle** causes problems with bins cluttering the streets. Not all houses have access to the street from their back gardens.

The need to make our **houses greener** can alter the appearance of houses with solar panels and double glazing.

Many houses are only occupied part of the year, such as second homes and holiday lets, so out of season the town and the shops are very quiet. We need to maintain a healthy balance.

**We need to preserve the best of
Gatehouse for future generations**



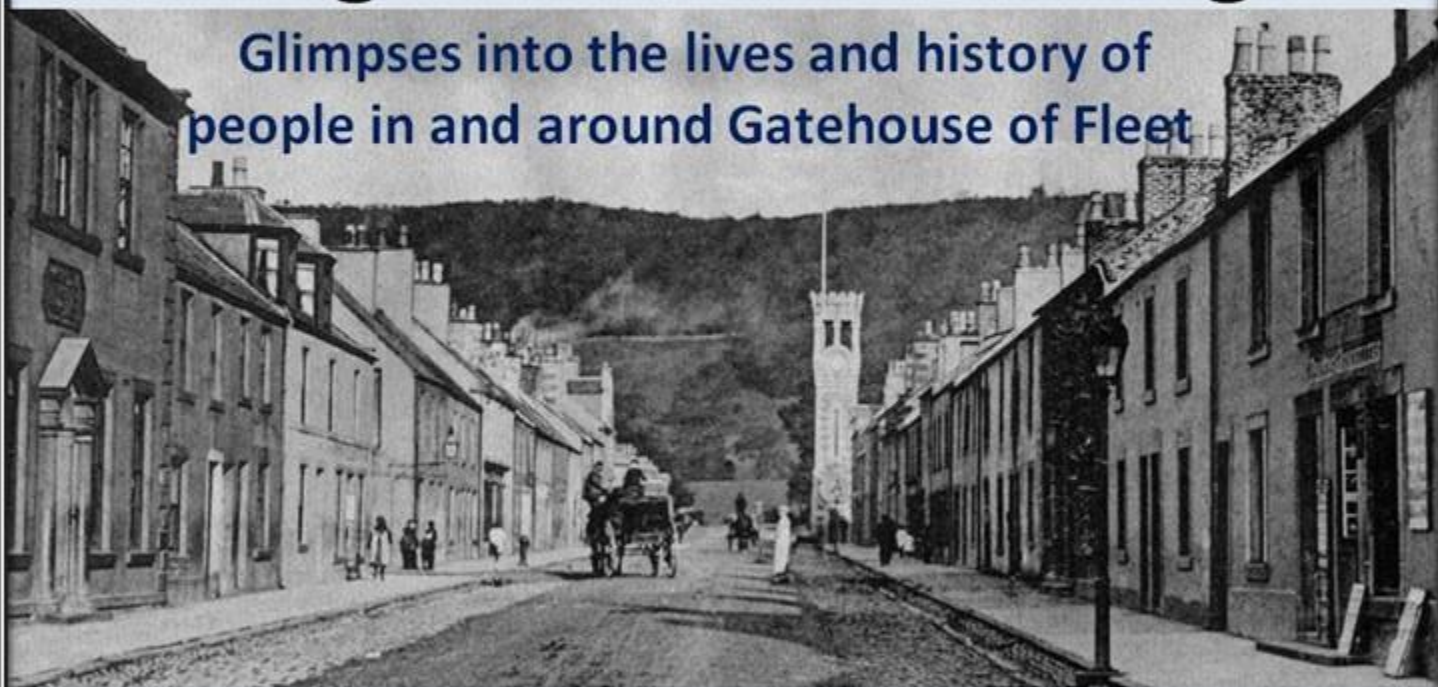
Slide 39 Gatehouse is a special place

But **Gatehouse is a special place** and we must endeavour to preserve its **best features** for future generations to enjoy.

Find out more

www.gatehouse-folk.org.uk

Glimpses into the lives and history of
people in and around Gatehouse of Fleet



Graham and Margaret Wright

4 Victoria Street, Gatehouse of Fleet, DG7 2HT

01557-815022