

A REPUTATION FOR EXCELLENCE

Volume 4: Aberdeen and the Northern Counties

Introduction

A History of the Edinburgh Printing Industry, the first booklet in the series *A Reputation for Excellence*, gives a brief account of the advent of printing to Scotland. It is known that a patent was granted by King James IV in September 1507 to Walter Chepman and Andro Myllar ‘burgessis of our town of Edinburgh’. At His Majesty’s request they were authorised ‘for our plesour, the honour and profitt of our realme and liegis to furnish the necessary materials and capable workmen to print the books of the laws and other books necessary which might be required’. The partnership set up business in the Southgait (Cowgate) of Edinburgh. From that time until the end of the seventeenth century royal patents were issued to the trade, thus confining printing to a select number.

The introduction of printing presses to Scotland proceeded slowly. The beginnings in Edinburgh in 1507 were followed after forty-five years by St Andrews in 1552, Stirling in 1571 (for a brief period), Aberdeen in 1622, and Glasgow in 1638. These workshops were quite small, one-man or two-men shops at the most, and it was not unusual for a printer to collect his gear and move from one place to another.

The three earlier books in this series give accounts of the history of printing in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dundee and Perth. This fourth endeavours to cover a much wider area: the first part deals with the history of printing in Aberdeen while the second part attempts to encompass what we have called the Northern Counties.

During the latter part of this century, the printing scene in Scotland has changed dramatically. In the Scottish cities, including Aberdeen, the number of printing companies is much reduced, due almost entirely to the introduction and ready availability of new technology. This has enabled even medium-sized businesses to undertake their own printing requirements and, in addition, High Street ‘printers’ have emerged to compete with the remaining traditional commercial printing firms.

The picture throughout the Northern Counties is somewhat different. The main suppliers of print have always been the local newspaper firms and they continue today to cater for the needs of their communities. The second part of this booklet is therefore largely devoted to recording briefly the history of local newspapers in the north, many of whom have already celebrated their own hundredth anniversary.

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Part One: Aberdeen

Although printing was first introduced to Aberdeen in 1622 by Edward Raban, due, it is believed, to the initiative of Bishop Patrick Forbes, Sir Paul Menzies, Provost of Aberdeen, and Robert Baron, later Professor of Divinity at Marischal College, the city can claim an earlier association with the establishment of printing in Scotland.

As recorded in the Introduction, in 1507 James IV issued a patent to Walter Chepman and Andro Myllar giving them licence to establish a printing press in Edinburgh and authority to print. Some of their books, the first to be printed in Scotland, appeared in 1508 but the magnum opus of this first Scottish press, issued in 1509-10, was the *Aberdeen Breviary*, the two-volume work which was intended by Bishop William Elphinstone (founder of King's College, Aberdeen) to supersede the *Sarum Breviary*.

Another notable contribution to early Scottish printing was made by a true son of the city, Thomas Davidson. He was a practical printer but where he acquired his knowledge of the typographical art is unknown. Bisset's *Rollment of Courts* states that Davidson was 'one northlandman borne in Scotland, upon the water-side of Dee' from which it is interpreted he was a native of Aberdeen. With the single exception of the *Office of Our Lady in Pity* printed in Edinburgh by John Storey, who is believed to have been the next Scottish printer after Chepman and Myllar, no books have been discovered bearing a Scottish imprint until that of Davidson. He began printing in Edinburgh in the late 1520s and was the first printer in Scotland to use Roman type. Davidson was commissioned by Sir James Foulis of Collington, Lord-clerk-register, to print the *Acts of Parliament* in 1541.

Edward Raban is thought to have been a native of Gloucester who had served as a soldier, and was employed in printing for a short period, in the Low Countries. Evidence for this is to be found in the similarities between his type, devices and ornaments and those of the Pilgrim Press in Leyden.

Details of his career in Scotland, beginning in Edinburgh and moving to Aberdeen in 1622 via St Andrews, can be found in the booklet *The Hero as Printer* published by Aberdeen University Library. The business-like approach of the Aberdeen Town Council in its support for the printer was immediately evident. Raban received a salary from the Town Council of £40 (Scots) per annum, this sum being immediately offset by the £40 (Scots) annual rent charged for his house on the north side of the Castlegate. Raban apparently supplemented his seemingly meagre income by the eight pence he received quarterly from each pupil at the Aberdeen Grammar School, which sum was collected with the school fees.

It is noteworthy that 150 publications (albeit over a period of twenty-seven years) were issued from Raban's press ranging over a wide field. Of these special mention must be made of his *Psalter* of 1625, the first in Scotland with harmonised tunes. Perhaps of greater significance, however, was his *Prognostication or Almanac*, first published in 1623. It continued to be printed annually and its considerable success attracted other Scottish printers to pirate the work.

One incident worthy of mention was the licence taken at that time by early printers. For example, Raban found himself in trouble with the General Assembly in 1640 for shortening the prayer at the

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end of an edition of the Psalms, printed some years earlier. He was called to account and pleaded shortage of paper, humbly asked for pardon, and was dismissed with a caution.

Among Raban's productions were hornbooks (now rare), a single leaf protected by a thin layer of horn, which were used by children in school classrooms. Conditions in schools at that period were relatively primitive and must cause wonderment as to the treatment school books must have experienced. Generally a single fire was all that warmed the earthen-floor room, but even this was dependent on scholars bringing their peats or faggots so that the fire could be lit. At a higher level at that time, university students shivered in their chambers and on Meal Monday they would return home to collect oatmeal to make their porridge.

Raban continued as printer to the town and university until 1649, and a year later was succeeded by James Brown, son of William Brown, minister of Invernochty. His work was largely insignificant except for one publication, viz. *The form and order of the Coronation of Charles the Second; King of Scotland, England, France and Ireland; as it was acted and done at Scoone, the first day of Januarie, 1651*. Several editions of this work were published by Brown in 1651 and some nine years later at least three editions were reprinted in London.

In 1661, three years after the death of Raban, John Forbes and his son of the same name were the next to succeed to the office of printer to the town and university. Forbes senior was thought to have traded as a bookseller, his son being responsible for undertaking the printing. In the following year they issued the famous *Cantus, songs and fancies, to thre, foure, or five partes, both apt for voices and viols, with a brieft introduction to musicke as is taught in the Musicke School of Aberdeen by TD* (Thomas Davidson). Two further editions appeared in 1666 and 1682. *The Hero as Printer* comments that 'this work was the first published edition containing Scottish songs and the only music book which presents the music as well as the teaching method employed in a Scottish music school of the period.'

Much of the success of the Forbes partnership was based on the annual production of the *Almanac* or *Prognostication* first produced by Raban. The continuing success of the *Aberdeen Almanac* resulted in an increase of pirated editions and Forbes was forced to take his case to the Privy Council. A decision was obtained in 1684 forbidding the counterfeiting and reprinting of *Aberdeen Almanacs*. It is claimed that 50,000 copies per year were published by Forbes.

In 1675 John Forbes senior died and his son continued with the business until his death in 1705. The younger Forbes widow succeeded him and was the town and university printer for five years before the appointment passed to her son-in-law James Nicol. His work was not regarded as noteworthy except for a series of *Almanacs* produced by his press.

An earlier booklet in this series, *A History of the Dundee and Perth Printing Industries*, contains an interesting account of how Nicol was commissioned by the town council of the day to send one of his presses, type, and other printing materials to Perth on the orders of the Earl of Mar. During the rebellion of 1715 this plant was used to print proclamations and other documents of the Old Pretender.

Nicol retired because of ill-health in 1736 and his place was taken by James Chalmers, eldest surviving son of Dr James Chalmers, Professor of Divinity at Marischal College.

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He had been apprenticed to Nicol, after which he broadened his experience in London working, it is said, in the printing house of John Watts. On Nicol's demission he immediately made successful application to take over the role of official printer to the Town Council. Shortly afterwards, Chalmers petitioned Marischal College to undertake their printing. He appears to have specialised in printing local sermons and several local publications but no book of any significance came from his press. His one outstanding achievement was the founding of *The Aberdeen Journal*. The first issue is dated 29 December 1747 — 5 January 1748, and the direct descendant of this is today's *Press and Journal*. The first number was a single sheet, folded in half, to give four pages. The early issues of *The Aberdeen Journal* make a notable contribution to local history through the advertisements it carried, which recorded details of local events such as business matters, property sales, notices of sporting events, entertainment programmes and details of ship movements.

The monopoly of printing in Aberdeen ended in 1752 when Francis Douglas and William Murray opened their printing office. Douglas, a former baker turned bookseller, was the real driving force and, when the partnership was dissolved in 1757, he continued the business on his own.

One of the enterprising Douglas's first publications was a newspaper, *The Aberdeen Intelligencer*, the first issue of which appeared in October 1752. The paper continued to be published weekly until February 1757 when it seems a price war, over advertising rates and complaints over the necessity to have to place advertisements in two newspapers, was lost to Chalmers's *Aberdeen Journal*. Another of Douglas's ventures was the launching of the first magazine to be published in Aberdeen. Entitled *The Aberdeen Magazine*, it was first published in 1761 but ran for only twelve months.

However, in contrast to Chalmers, who preferred the security offered by much civic printing, Douglas was more adventurous in a wider field and among his publications are editions of works by Addison, Beattie, Bossuet, Pope and Voltaire. He also wrote a number of works himself, the most notable being *Rural Love, a tale in the Scottish dialect*, which he printed and published in 1759.

When James Chalmers died in 1764 he was succeeded in business by his eldest son, also named James and then only twenty-two. Like his father, he adopted a conservative business approach and concentrated mainly on his *Aberdeen Journal* and to a lesser extent was active in the chap-book market, few of which have survived. He will be best remembered for *The Aberdeen Almanac* which he revived and enlarged in 1771. Later to be known as *The Northern Year Book*, the publication continued until its final issue in 1955-56.

In 1768 Douglas's place as the second printer in Aberdeen was taken by John Boyle. Boyle followed closely the pattern set by Douglas, printing the works of Pope, Swift, Voltaire, etc as well as minor religious publications. He will be best known, however, for *The Family Bible* which he published in parts during 1769-71. This is unique as being the only complete Bible ever to be published in Aberdeen. Boyle's career in printing lasted twenty-six years.

Perhaps the last printer of any note in eighteenth-century Aberdeen was Andrew Shirrefs. After graduating at Marischal College he started work as a bookseller in 1783 before turning his hand to printing. In 1787 he attempted to launch a newspaper, *The Aberdeen Chronicle*, but it was unsuccessful. Another venture was his *Caledonian Magazine* which appeared between 1786 and 1790. Whether or not these failures discouraged him, he left Aberdeen in 1791 to continue his

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career in Edinburgh.

In attempting to research the history of printing in Aberdeen during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is frustrating to find relatively little has hitherto been recorded and published. During the period when labour was in the process of being organised, it is known that the number of printing firms in the city increased to twelve. Prominent among those were Avery, Chalmers, Cornwall and King.

Attempts were first made to organise labour at national level in 1836, when the General Typographical Association of Scotland was formed. The Association continued until the end of 1844 when it was replaced by the Northern District Board of the National Typographical Association. The particular problem of the early 1840s was high unemployment and this was blamed on the lack of control over the large number of apprentices entering the trade. Several disputes arose in Scotland from attempts to introduce apprentice quotas, particularly in Glasgow and Aberdeen; the strike in the latter city was a particularly lengthy one.

The union organisation in the Scottish printing industry suffered badly from these disputes as well as from the continuing high rate of unemployment. In 1847 those factors resulted in the dissolution of the Northern District Board and the downfall of the Aberdeen Branch. Even when the Scottish Typographical Association was in the process of being set up in 1853, Aberdeen expressed its regret at being unable to form a branch. At that time there were only twenty-two journeymen in employment in Aberdeen and, because of the high number of apprentices, the tradesmen felt powerless. At its formation the Scottish Typographical Association consisted of only five branches, but by 1855, when an Aberdeen branch was re-established, the number had increased to twelve. In 1858 the labour force in Aberdeen's printing community consisted of forty-eight journeymen and eighty-one apprentices. Determined efforts were again made to reduce the number of the latter but those attempts were strenuously opposed by employers.

James Chalmers, jun, had died in 1810 and was succeeded at *The Aberdeen Journal* by his second son David. That the newspaper prospered under his guardianship is evidenced by the circulation figures of the *Journal* in the 1830s which, it claimed, exceeded those of national rivals such as *The Scotsman* and *Glasgow Herald*. On the production side he is credited with the conversion about 1830 of the *Journal*'s press to steam, the first Scottish newspaper to do so. When he retired in 1853 he handed over the management of the business to his sons James and John. Over the years the success of *The Aberdeen Journal* and the increasing politicisation of the newspaper press, nationally, had encouraged a number of other publishers to launch their own publications. Among those was *The North of Scotland Gazette*, which first appeared in 1847. Whereas other publications such as *The Aberdeen Observer* (1829) and *The Aberdeen Shaver* (1833) were short-lived, the *Gazette* soon became established and in 1853 was transformed into *The Aberdeen Free Press*. A full account of the keen rivalry between the *Journal* and the *Free Press* is contained in Norman Harper's official history of *The Press and Journal: The First 250 Years, 1748-1998*, published in 1997.

One of the founders of *The Free Press* was George King, a bookseller in Aberdeen who, with his brother Robert, established the printing and publishing firm G. & R. King in Diamond Street in 1840. The business lasted only ten years, but before it reverted to bookselling, a third brother, Arthur, had set up his own printing venture in the city as Arthur King & Co. It was in his premises

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at Broad Street that *The Free Press* was first printed.

After Arthur King's death in 1870 the company was managed by his son for a short time before being sold in 1872 to John Thomson and two partners. Thomson had been apprenticed to one William Bennett who had started in business at 48 Queen Street in 1840 but later moved to 45 Castle Street, subsequently the location of George Cornwall & Son. After completing his apprenticeship Thomson joined *The Aberdeen Journal* where he was to become second foreman before the acquisition of Arthur King & Co.

Thomson soon established himself as the main driving force in the company and by 1887 became the sole owner. By that time the staff had been increased considerably and the firm was undertaking the bulk of Aberdeen University's printing requirements as well as successfully seeking orders from a number of London publishers.

Thomson had antagonised the print unions by introducing female compositors and employing an excessive number of apprentices. This coincided with the introduction of machine composition to the industry in 1890, resulting in the loss of employment for hand compositors nationally. During that year a Thorne composing machine was the first to reach Aberdeen and five years later eight Linotype machines were installed, displacing sixteen to twenty men. This depressing picture was partially offset when it became apparent that, as a result of the introduction of mechanical composition, there was an increase in the numbers employed in pressrooms.

In some areas, notably Edinburgh and Aberdeen, efforts were made to have composing machines manned only by female labour. In fact women compositors went on to secure a near monopoly of the Monotype machine, their wages being less than half the recognised rate for men. Prolonged negotiations at both national and local levels to resolve the problem were unsuccessful. In 1906, however, the Edinburgh and Aberdeen union branches began negotiations on their own and in the following year Aberdeen successfully concluded an agreement under which there was to be no further entry of women to skilled jobs. This was only achieved after a strike of fifteen weeks and the loss of one office. However, women were taken on again for a time to replace male compositors during the First World War.

Meanwhile, back in 1895, *The Aberdeen Free Press* office was seriously damaged by fire. As a consequence of subsequent reorganisation, part of the firm was transferred to a site in Rosemount and this became known as the Rosemount Press. The Aberdeen University Press Ltd, registered as a public company in 1900, was formed to acquire the business of Arthur King & Co. It had as its first chairman Professor (later Sir) William Ramsay of the Chair of Humanity at King's College, Aberdeen. John Thomson remained as a director until his death in 1911.

From its beginning, the Press (widely known by its initials AUP) specialised in difficult typesetting, including foreign languages and mathematical work. Among its most notable productions are *Bibliotheca Lindesiana*, the catalogue of the Haigh Hall Library of the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, and catalogues of the Mingana Collections of Middle Eastern manuscripts.

The founders could not possibly have foreseen the many changes the Press would be subjected to throughout this century, particularly from 1932 onwards. In that year the AUP amalgamated with the Rosemount Press and in 1949 a further acquisition was the business of William Jackson

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(Aberdeen) Ltd, a bookbinding firm which began in 1855. In 1953 the firm John Avery & Co Ltd was added. This company of general printers, which owned the Greyfriars Press in King Street, had begun printing in the early 1840s, becoming a limited company in 1884. Then in 1966 the business of Edmond & Spark, stationers and book-binders, of early nineteenth century origins, merged with the AUP.

In 1970, the AUP was to find itself taken over by the British Bank of Commerce. In that year John Mime, The Central Press (Aberdeen) Ltd, became a wholly owned subsidiary of the AUP, as did C. Cornwall & Sons Ltd with its subsidiary the White Heather Publishing Co Ltd two years later.

The main office and printing works of the AUP were originally in Upperkirkgate and from 1932 they also occupied the works of the Rosemount Press at Farmers Hall. In 1963 Farmers Hall was extended to accommodate the entire Press, and a further extension was added in 1973 to house the business of the Central Press and Cornwalls.

In 1978 AUP became a wholly owned subsidiary of Robert Maxwell's Pergamon Press, but in 1988 the print and publishing divisions were divorced. The former became part of the British Printing and Communications Corporation while the latter became part of the Maxwell Macmillan Publishing Corporation as Aberdeen University Press Limited (Publishers).

AUP Ltd (Publishers) had a short life when it was revealed the assets of the company had become entangled with the failure of Robert Maxwell's publishing empire following his death in 1992. It was discovered that AUP Ltd (Publishers) had accrued debts of over one million pounds and, as a consequence, the company was put into administration in 1992 and ceased trading. In 1993 TAUPIA Ltd (The Aberdeen University Press in Administration) was formed, but later went into formal liquidation and was finally wound up in 1996.

The AUP was not alone in having a century of change. In 1876 the Chalmers brothers had sold their newspaper, plant and premises to form the North of Scotland Newspaper and Printing Co Ltd. This enabled them to commence daily publication of *The Aberdeen Journal* to match that of *The Free Press* which began publishing daily in 1872.

The rivalry between the two newspapers intensified with the introduction of their evening papers in 1879. This had the effect of saturating the market and in 1884 the *Journal* went into liquidation. It reconstituted itself to free capital but this would not have been sufficient to save it if it had not been for a legacy of £10,000 left by John Chalmers to invest in the *Journal's* future.

The shortages both in manpower and materials experienced during the First World War led to a degree of cooperation between the two rival news-papers. This was fortunate as both companies were experiencing financial difficulties in the post-war years and no doubt led to their amalgamation in 1922 and the formation of a new company, Aberdeen Newspapers Ltd. A decision was then taken to name the combined newspaper *The Aberdeen Press and Journal*.

Changes in ownership began in 1928 when first Allied Newspapers Ltd purchased Aberdeen Newspapers Ltd and renamed the company Aberdeen Journals Ltd. It was to change hands again when Roy (later Lord) Thomson took over in 1951 to add to his growing newspaper group. More recently, at the beginning of 1996, the Thomson organisation sold Aberdeen Journals Ltd to

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Northcliffe Newspapers Ltd. the regional-papers stablemate of *The Daily Mail*.

Another two major events mark the recent history of *The Press and Journal*. Firstly there was the transfer from its nineteenth-century site in Broad Street to a new location on the council-owned Mastrick Industrial Estate. That the new building was constructed in fourteen months was remarkable, but even more so was that such a massive relocation was completed without an issue being lost. Although the presses were moved over a period, the Linotypes and other equipment were all transferred over a weekend in mid-November 1970.

The second major event was the introduction of new technology in 1978, which involved scrapping the Linotype machines and replacing them with Apple Mac computers. In 1990 it was the turn of the pressroom when a £10 million Goss Colorliner press, capable of 75,000 copies per hour, replaced the two old Headliner presses. This contrasts with James Chalmers' single-sheet hand-fed press turning out 240 copies an hour.

Commercial printers too were seriously affected by the rapid developments brought about by the introduction of Apple Mac and Postscript page description language. These, linked to laser printers, have made possible the establishment of desktop publishing, enabling former customers to set, make-up, and print their own stationery, brochures etc for relatively small capital outlay.

In spite of those advances Aberdeen can still boast a number of traditional printers offering a service which cannot be matched by non-commercial units. Among those who are noted for the quality of their product one must include Compass Print Ltd. Gilcomston Litho (Aberdeen) Ltd. Grant Print Ltd, Langstane Press Ltd, Printagraph Ltd, Waverley Press (Aberdeen) Ltd and Wiggins Teape Stationery.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Arbroath

It is thought that the first printer in Arbroath was one Peter Cochrane. It appears he was in business at the end of the eighteenth century when the first publisher in the town, John Findlay, launched *The Arbroath Magazine* in 1799. Twelve monthly numbers of the magazine appeared before it ceased publication in 1800. The most important work published by Findlay, and printed by Cochrane, was an edition in two volumes of Holinshed's *Scottish Chronicle*.

A periodical called *The Arbroath Argus* appeared in 1835 but, although edited and published in Arbroath, it was printed in Edinburgh by Peter Brown. The publisher was John Bremnar, bookseller and printer, the editor being John Sands, an Arbroath lawyer. The *Argus* was a four page quarto paper, published monthly, price threepence. It became evident from the success of the *Argus* that there was a need for a newspaper in Arbroath, and so towards the end of 1836 the monthly publication changed its name to *The Arbroath Journal* and became a weekly. Another event of note was the setting up of a printing plant in premises in Homer's Wynd, later Commerce Street, to undertake the printing of the *Journal* in the town. The paper did not exactly flourish and ceased publication in 1842.

In November 1838 the first number of *The Arbroath Herald* was published, consisting of eight pages and priced fourpence-halfpenny. Although a marked improvement on the *Journal*, it encountered financial problems and ran for only thirteen months. During that short life it was edited by Robert Anderson, a young Arbroath lawyer, while James Duff was printer and publisher.

Following the, in the event temporary, failure of the *Herald*, *The Arbroath Guide* was launched in March 1842, first as a four-page newspaper but later varying in extent. The first proprietor and editor was Ben Kennedy, a native of Caithness, who for a period had been editor of *The John O'Groat Journal*. In 1853 Thomas Buncle, who had been acting as manager, was offered a partnership, and on Kennedy's death in 1861 he became sole proprietor. It is interesting that two later editors of the *Guide* also came to Arbroath from *The John O'Groat Journal*. The first of these was D.M. Luckie who served for six years from 1856. He was followed in 1862 by George Hay who is perhaps best known for his *History of Arbroath*.

The ownership of the *Guide* remained in the hands of the Buncle family until 1972 when it was acquired by Jack Neiland. Although in the following years the business expanded into new fields, the *Guide* itself ceased publication in May 1978.

In 1856 *The Arbroath and Forfar News and Angus Advertiser* made a brief appearance. It was printed and published on Wednesdays, price fourpence-halfpenny, by John Mitchell, who had previously edited *The Montrose Review*. Due account had not been taken of initial setting-up costs and, although excellently produced, it survived for little over a year.

The reappearance, in February 1885, of *The Arbroath Herald* was due to the efforts of John Brodie, a Borderer from Selkirk. Having served his apprenticeship with *The Southern Reporter* and subsequently managing the newspaper for about nineteen years, Brodie left Selkirk in 1877 on being offered a management post with Aberdeen University Press. He stayed in Aberdeen for only two years before moving to Arbroath to take over a stationer's firm in the High Street. Following a

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disastrous fire within a few weeks of starting up in business, Brodie began planning new premises at 10 to 12 Brothock Bridge to accommodate both a shop and printing works.

The first issue of the resurrected *Herald* consisted of four pages, but the second number was increased to six pages and it was enlarged yet again after twelve weeks. In those early days the *Herald* was a free newspaper and continued to be published *gratis* until September 1887, when it was sold for one penny.

It was around this time that Brodie was joined by James Salmond to form the firm Brodie & Salmond, with its headquarters at Brothock Bridge. Sadly, the locally popular Salmond died at the early age of forty. Brodie was to suffer a more grievous loss when his twenty-one year old son died a year later.

The young man was being trained for the business and so, following his death, Brodie turned to his twenty-four year old daughter Margaret for editorial help.

During the period leading up to the First World War, and indeed throughout the difficult wartime years, Brodie not only kept the business running successfully but also invested in new plant including a first colour lithographic press. In 1920, when he was seventy-four, John Brodie decided to retire and the Arbroath Herald Ltd company was established with himself as chairman.

Some years before this, working for the firm was George Lowe who had started modestly as a 'paper laddie'. Brodie had taken a liking to the young man and encouraged him to progress through the company with such success that when he died Lowe became an active partner. Miss Brodie continued to hold the editorial reins while Lowe became responsible for the printing operations. In 1958 Miss Brodie died aged eighty-one and was succeeded as editor by George Shepherd.

One of the most prestigious publications of the company is *The Book of the Braemar Gathering*. Lowe's long connection with the Royal Gathering was recognised when he was appointed a member of the Royal Victorian Order in 1982.

In recent times the company has embraced new technology and typesetting is by a computerised system. Photo litho has become the predominant method of printing the *Herald* and other work.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Coupar Angus

The first printing press was established in Coupar Angus in 1835 by William Culross. Unfortunately little is known of the early history of the Culross company except that it remained in the hands of the family until 1923, when it was purchased by Frank Benzies, the father of the present chairman.

The year 1916 was undoubtedly a disastrous period for several Scottish printers. As recorded in earlier titles in this *A Reputation for Excellence* series, Neill's of Edinburgh and Bums and Harris of Dundee both suffered serious fires in 1916. In that year the same fate also befell William Culross. However, in spite of the inevitable replacement difficulties encountered during the First World War, all three firms survived. In 1922 Culross became a limited company, and from the following year until the present time it has been managed by two senior members of the Benzies family. Frank Benzies arrived in Coupar Angus from Glasgow as a wounded airman of the First World War. He was trained by his uncle, John Benzies, in Paisley and was still at business when he died at the age of eighty. He was manager of the local Savings Bank, this being one of the duties which went with the business!

It is interesting to look back at the product range of the company in the 1920s as there was a strong link with the structure of local government, at that period based on central government and parish councils. Culross were publishers of forms which parish councils required to carry out their functions. Copy was authorised by central government as and when legislation changed and the firm were known as Poor Law Publishers. This meant that if anyone required a form to bury a relative, or to admit someone to a lunatic asylum, or to lay drains or build a house, application had to be made on the Culross forms published at one shilling and sixpence per dozen.

The early 1930s saw the aftermath of a recession and the creation of town and county councils. As a result Frank Benzies had to reconstruct the business virtually overnight to commercial printing and bookbinding. The firm also took a lead with machine accounting and the forms for machine accounting became a speciality.

Meanwhile central government was finding difficulties in keeping track of the new councils and asked the firm to produce a directory called *The County and Municipal Yearbook*, and this was launched in 1931. The title remains extant, having changed its name in line with legislation to Scotland's Regions and it is now published as *Scotland's Year Book*. It provides a directory of every organisation active at royal, national, and local level.

Among other notable publications of the company were *The Fair Land of Gowrie*, printed for the author Lawrence Melville in 1936, and the same author's *Errol, Its Land, Legends and People*.

The firm suffered a further fire in 1938 but, strangely, this had beneficial results post-war. At that period many Scottish printers were desperate for plant renewal whereas Culross, following their latest fire, had already installed the most modern Monotype and letterpress plant available. Family connections within the company have always been important. A Mr Dunn was manager when Frank Benzies took over, and one of his concerns was that he did not have a son. Frank Benzies promised that his daughter Georgina Dunn (later Mrs Ameil) would always have employment in the firm. She was a first class compositor, carrying on throughout the Second World War at a time when an

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elderly bookbinder, Bob Doig, turned his hand to Monotype casting. Even more important, he kept production going when supplies were scarce and his boss, Frank Benzies, was a Wing Commander in the Air Training Corps. Mr Doig had a family connection with William Chalmers of Dundee who invented the adhesive postage stamp, and his granddaughter runs the Culross sales data today.

After 1947 the company ran successful stationery businesses in Perth and Inverness but when markets changed they were closed down. Today, with its modern plant in Coupar Angus, the firm operates as colour printers and book printers. The colour boom of recent years has led to further diversification to print-related products and, within ten years, a successful range of melamine tableware has been created under the tradename Strathmore Melamine.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Dingwall

It is thought that the earliest newspaper to appear in Ross-shire was *The Invergordon Times*, managed by a Mr Graham in Invergordon. The date it ceased publication is unknown but with its demise *The Ross-shire Journal* became the oldest surviving paper in Ross and Cromarty.

The founder and first editor of the *Journal*, Lewis Munro, was born in Invergordon in 1852 and spent his early working life with *The Invergordon Times*. After this initial training he moved first to a printer in Edinburgh to widen his experience and then spent a short period in London. He returned to Dingwall in 1872 and three years later founded *The Ross-shire Journal*. The first issue came off the press on Friday, 19 February 1875.

As the business prospered it expanded into book and commercial printing. Notably, Munro became printer and publisher of the Countess of Aberdeen's widely circulated monthly publications. Another of his achievements was the invention of a tapeless folding machine but, unfortunately, he could not obtain the necessary capital to develop it commercially.

Before his death, Munro sold the property of the paper, but not the printing plant, to Sir William Bell of Scatwell who eventually obtained complete control on 13 February 1891.

In February 1897 the paper, plant and buildings were purchased by the Ross-shire Printing and Publishing Company Limited, Dingwall, and remained under their control until 1980 when Mr Peter Fowler of the Scottish Provincial Press Group took over control of the company. W.H. Spence succeeded Lewis Munro in 1891 as editor for a brief period, being followed in 1892 by Donald Hendry, aged twenty-two. After Henry's well-earned early promotion, the prospects of a fruitful editorship were cut short by ill-health and his death in 1898. The next editor of the *Journal* was David Watt, who served in that capacity from 1898 until 1949. His long and distinguished career in journalism began first with *The Montrose Standard*, following which he became editor of *The Fraserburgh Herald* before he joined the *Journal*. He was succeeded in 1949 by his son, Norman, who started life with the newspaper as a Linotype operator. Like his father, he achieved a record of fifty years service with the company. On Norman Watt's death in 1966. Mr A. MacBeath and Mr D.M. Watt were appointed joint editors and managers and served in that capacity until 1991 when the present editor Mr L.A. Ford took over.

Originally, the newspaper was produced in an office in the High Street, Dingwall, but in the mid-nineties of the last century until May 1988 the company was based in property in Castle Street. In that year a move was made to custom-built premises in the West End industrial estate in Dingwall.

Composition was entirely by hand-setting until the introduction of Linotype machines in 1912. Those have now been replaced by an Apple Mac computerised system. At the end of last century, and in the opening years of the present, circulation was limited, for often the old hand press was all the editor had on which to rely for the mechanical side of production.

After the installation of a Wharfedale press, the company progressed to a Miehle and, latterly in their old premises at Castle street, to a Cossar press. In their new premises, a Hunter press prints *The Ross-shire Journal* and several other newspapers in the Scottish Provincial Press Group.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Elgin

The first issue of *The Moray and Nairn Express* (later to be renamed *The Northern Scot*) appeared on 29 October 1880, price a halfpence. In its early years the four page newspaper was printed by *The Aberdeen Journal*, this arrangement continuing when the extent was increased to eight pages in May 1882.

By 1885 the premises at 175 High Street, Elgin, were acquired, the price paid for them at public roup being £1805. The Centenary Supplement of the newspaper contains an interesting description of the location:

The site is a typical mediaeval property stretching from the High Street northwards to the North Back Gait (Blackfriars Road). It bears the marks of its origins by being less than dead straight over its long sides. (Tradition has it that, when Elgin's feus were originally given off the boundaries were marked by a plough pulled by an ox; and oxen had the habit of pulling to the left irrespective of the political sympathies of the feu's eventual owners.)

In July 1885 the decision was taken to establish a printing works so that at least part of the paper could be printed locally. The initial plant consisted of supplies of type, a gas engine, and printing presses of which the most expensive item was a Wharfedale press.

In 1886, when the circulation had risen to 4300 copies, problems arose over the arrangements with *The Aberdeen Journal* which was still printing half the newspaper's eight page extent. After due consideration, and on the recommendation of William Mackenzie, the paper's first editor and manager, it was decided to terminate the Aberdeen agreement. By September 1887 the transfer was complete and this enabled full editorial and production control to be based in Elgin.

Mechanical typesetting was the next major step to be considered, and in 1897 *The Northern Scot* took the decision to have its first Linotype machine. Initially, this was rented for £8 per year but after twelve months the machine was purchased outright for £400.

The introduction of the latest technology was next felt in the pressroom when, at a cost of £750, a new Cossar flat-bed newspaper press was installed in August 1904 to replace the ageing Wharfedale. This new printing machine was the invention of Tom Cossar of Clydebank and is described in some detail in an earlier booklet in this series, *A History of the Glasgow Printing Industry*. The machine made it possible to print from continuous reels of paper instead of using the former, more laborious, and slower method of hand-fed sheets.

The arrival of the Cossar press coincided with the departure of William MacKenzie, who was succeeded by R.G. Miller.

Miller's reign as editor was a relatively short one as he resigned in 1916 to take up a similar post with *The John O'Groat Journal* in his native Wick.

He was immediately followed in Elgin by Victor Mitchell, who served the newspaper during the First World War and until 1919 when W. Sellar Hay, a native of Elgin, was appointed editor and

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manager. Sellar Hay contributed to the newspaper's continuing success, and one of his major decisions was the installation of a replacement Cossar in 1930, on that occasion costing £2784. In 1936 when he decided to move to the south of England his appointment was taken over by R. George Grant who served as editorial manager for four years. During that period he oversaw the purchase of *The Strathspey Herald* and *Forres Gazette* weekly newspapers.

The departure of Grant marked the beginning of *The Northern Scot*'s longest serving editor and manager, Stephen Young. In 1940 he had to contend immediately with shortages of newsprint, depleted staff, and the many restrictions of war-time publishing. In February 1941 the printing of *The Strathspey Herald* and *Forres Gazette* was transferred to Elgin, the move being dictated by the call-up of the Forres staff.

Post-war developments included the large extension to the Elgin works, the purchase of a further Cossar press, and the acquisition of *The Badenoch Record* from Messrs Johnston of Kingussie. The last mentioned enabled *The Strathspey Herald* and *The Badenoch Record* to amalgamate as *The Strathspey and Badenoch Herald* to cater for the developing Spey Valley area. *The Banffshire Journal*, the local paper for the Banff area, was added to the group in 1982.

By the 1970s the growth of *The Northern Scot* brought about production problems which were first tackled by the system known as teletypesetting. Four years later it was decided to switch away from 'hot-metal' typesetting using Linotype and Intertype machines in favour of computerised photosetting. This was made possible by the introduction of photo-polymer printing plates which enabled photo-set material to be printed on the existing Cossar machines. The early 1980s saw the installation of a Lino News web offset press which is still in use today.

Stephen Young was succeeded in 1977 by his son, also Stephen, who has played an important role in introducing the latest technological changes in the company. Today, *The Northern Scot*, with its enlarged capacity from three linked Cossar presses, is publishing a 30- 34-page newspaper - a far cry from its early issues of 4 pages, and is using the very latest in computer software and hardware technology.

In 1990 the company was taken over and became part of Scottish Provincial Press, based in Inverness.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Forfar

In the search - an unsuccessful one - to find when printing was first introduced to Forfar, it was of interest to learn that a library was founded in the town around 1795. Presumably it was a fee-paying one, as Forfar Free Library was not established until 1871. David Adam in his centenary booklet on Forfar Free Library quotes from the preface of an album of the time that the earlier Library was there 'to catch the fugitive idea as it passes and to give it a form which may reflect its merits or defects to the minds of others'. Adam's publication was printed by Oliver McPherson Ltd. a name which will figure prominently in this chapter.

The history of printing in Forfar, as in other northern towns, is dependent on information sourced mainly from newspaper records, few of which are complete. The earliest are of *The Forfar Herald and Kirriemuir Advertiser*, which was first published in 1877, price one penny. It was first printed by Bowman & Ross but a few years later it was being produced by Christie & Nicolson at 13 Castle Street. There was another change of printer in April 1905 when J. & A. McDougal took over. Details of the paper's early ownership history are scanty but it is known that in the early 1890s George S. Nicolson was the sole proprietor. According to the 1923-24 Valuation Roll, David Buchan, a native of Arbroath, was listed as the owner. He had as a partner John Clark, who hailed from the Borders.

Following the First World War, the newspaper's title changed to *The Forfar Herald and County Advertiser* and was printed and published at Osnaburg Street, Forfar. In 1926, when most newspapers closed down because of the National Strike, the proprietors of *The Forfar Herald and County Advertiser* and *The Forfar Review and Strathmore Advertiser* joined forces and were able to produce a local paper. As is mentioned later in this chapter, the *Herald* and the *Review* amalgamated shortly after the strike as *The Forfar Herald*. In 1930 the *Herald* ceased publication but it continued with commercial printing until 1958.

The first issue of *The Forfar Reformer and Kirriemuir and Alyth Mercury* appeared on Saturday 24 February 1883; it was published monthly. In 1884 an advertisement in the first issue of *The Forfar Dispatch* invited subscribers to the *Reformer* to forward their subscription of one shilling and six-pence for the twelve numbers commencing March 1884. The *Reformer*, however, which was printed and published by Alexander Lowson, proprietor, Lamond's Square, Forfar, failed to establish itself and closed down in 1885.

The Forfar Dispatch and Local Advertiser first appeared on Friday 15 February 1884 with a sub-heading 'Guaranteed Circulation 3000 Copies'. Initially it consisted of four pages, measuring eleven inches by eight inches, and was issued gratis. The first page was largely taken up by a leading article with a little local news. The remaining three pages were entirely devoted to advertisements.

Behind the enterprise was Oliver McPherson from Perth, whose first newspaper was 'hand-written, hand-set, hand printed and hand delivered'. The firm, which also undertook commercial printing, was located in rented property at 76 East High Street, but in May 1899 it moved across the street to 85 East High Street. The premises, through the Canton Close, were on three floors. In the basement was the poster department, the machine-room occupied the middle floor, and the top level housed

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the composing-room.

Oliver McPherson had a family of thirteen, four daughters and nine sons. Many of the sons learned the printing trade, and when the father met with a fatal accident in 1892 the editorship of the newspaper passed to his second son, also Oliver. Sadly, this was for the briefest of periods, as Oliver, jun., died during what had been planned as a recuperative trip to Australia after illness.

The eldest son, John McPherson, then took over, heralding the start of a long and distinguished stewardship of the *Dispatch* which was to last nearly sixty years. He was a man of many talents, but perhaps his most outstanding contribution to the newspaper was his regular 'Drummer' articles which showed him to be a gifted writer with a keen sense of humour. Two brothers, Will and Dave, assisted in the business, while another two brothers, Alec and Car, emigrated to South Africa. The former became managing director of the East London *Daily Representative*, and the latter headed a highly successful commercial printing firm.

When John McPherson died in 1953, the firm became a limited company in which H. McC. Johnstone played a leading role. New premises were built at 1-3 St James Road, which being on one floor permitted a much-improved work-flow. The new editor was Arthur Donaldson and subsequent editors were Norrie Millar, Alex Shand and Iain Wallace.

The title was sold in 1975 to the Kirkcaldy firm, Strachan and Livingston, and the format of the paper changed from broadsheet to tabloid. Then followed a move to new premises at 106 East High Street. In 1982 the newspaper was sold again, this time to the then editor, Iain Wallace, and the advertising manager, Alistair McSkimming. The *Dispatch* continued to be published in Forfar but was printed for a period by the Montrose Review Press where web offset facilities were available. With the acquisition of E & D Nicoll's joinery premises in Craig O'Loch Road, Forfar, the firm - now Angus County Press - installed its own web offset press. The additional capacity has enabled the company to undertake the printing of several other titles, notably *The Brechin Advertiser*.

After the sale of the *Dispatch* in 1975, the firm of Oliver McPherson continued with their commercial printing activities, but in 1981 it was sold to George Jolly, bookbinders and paper rulers, of Aberdeen. Ten years later David Winter & Son of Dundee acquired George Jolly and at the same time took over Oliver McPherson Ltd. The latter has recently moved from their long-time base in St James Road to new retail premises in East High Street.

It is thought that *The Forfar Review and Strathmore Advertiser* was first published in 1888 and appeared weekly, on Fridays, price one half penny. It was printed and published by John Macdonald at his printing office in Post-Office Entry, 10 East High Street. The only other known owner of the paper was Mrs Margaret Macdonald in the 1920s. She was probably still in charge when, as mentioned earlier, the *Review* and *The Forfar Herald* co-operated to produce a local newspaper during the General Strike in 1926, soon after which, the *Review* amalgamated with the *Herald*.

The merged newspaper lasted only a further five years, after which it was taken over by *The Angus Herald*. The first issue of the new newspaper, which appeared on Friday 5 September 1930, consisted of 24 pages. It was printed in Perth and published by the proprietors, The Munroe Press, at 36 Castle Street, Forfar, price one penny. It was announced with much publicity as 'Forfarshire's Weekend Illustrated Newspaper' and 5000 copies were printed of the first number.

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D. C. Thomson saw the newspaper as a threat to their own publications, mainly because of its low price of one penny. They launched a vigorous campaign against the new newspaper in advance of publication including, it is said, the threat of withholding all their publications from any newsagent in Forfar who stocked the *Herald*. The result was that the first issue of the newspaper was distributed free by newsvendors on the streets. Although the price was increased to twopence within a short period, the newspaper was short-lived. On the death of Henry Munro in 1933, it ceased publication.

In 1974 the *Dispatch* found itself with a competitor with the appearance of *The Forfar Times*. This was the brainchild of Jack Meiland who a few years earlier had taken over *The Arbroath Guide* and in 1974 *The Kirriemuir Free Press*. The enter-prise soon encountered financial difficulties and, when wound up in 1978, this also marked the end of the *Times*.

Mention has already been made that the long-established firm of Oliver McPherson, now a subsidiary of David Winter & Son Ltd, Dundee, continues to trade at its new location in East High Street. However, two letterpress printers were in business in Forfar much earlier than Oliver McPherson during the last century according to Pigot's *Directory of Scotland 1825-26*. They were Alex Anderson in Coutties Close and Peter Rankin & Co in Castle Street. No details are known of those companies except it is thought the former closed down in March 1848 when Alex Anderson died, aged 56.

Another Forfar printer who began in the last century was William Shepherd, then located at 39 Castle Street. It has not been possible to establish exactly when the business started but an advertisement in *The Forfar Herald* of 1896 indicates it was trading in that year. For a time the firm undertook much of the printing required by the county council and it had the distinction of being patronised by H.R.H. The Duchess of York, now her Majesty The Queen Mother. One of the senior members of Shepherd's staff, J.N. Strachan, is credited with playing a leading role in the setting up of printing classes at the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee.

Today, in addition to those provided by *The Forfar Dispatch*, the town's printing requirements are served by Oliver McPherson, Neil Robertson and A. & A. Slinger.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Fort William

Little, if anything, has been recorded of the early history of printing in Fort William and so the Trust is indebted to Gordon Pearson, Managing Director of Nevisprint Limited for his recollections since arriving in the town in 1965. Even at that time there was only a small one-man printing company called Lochaber Printing Services, managed by the local tourist officer, one J.U. McInnis. Universally known as 'JU', he was a popular local character and was usually to be found proudly wearing his kilt.

The business was accommodated in a bedroom where a small Adana printing press had been installed. At some stage, there was a move to premises in New Pier Terrace, behind a popular chip shop. It was then that a second-hand Heidelberg platen was acquired.

JU's son, Malcolm, having served an apprenticeship in the company, named LPS, took over from his father around 1962-63. He was ambitious and in 1969 transferred to larger premises in Claggan Road, at the same time re-named the firm LPS (Colour Printers) Ltd. Malcolm's next step was to introduce computerised typesetting and for that purpose purchased a Harris 1200 typesetter.

Two years later, the firm moved again to yet larger premises in the Claggan Industrial Estate where it became known as Computatype Limited. Additional plant was acquired in the shape of a 4-colour Crabtree press, another Harris typesetter and, most interesting of all, one of the earliest OCR machines. The optical character reader is thought to be one of the first to be operated in this country.

Unfortunately, the company was soon to encounter financial difficulties. Without the sound financial base necessary to support the expansion of the business, coupled with teething and technical difficulties with the new technology, the company was forced into liquidation in 1974.

Not to be denied, a consortium was found by Malcolm, his sister, brother-in-law, and Ken Merry (a Harris engineer) to buy out the assets from the liquidator. The new company was called Computacomp Limited. It appears that disagreement soon arose within the family, possibly over financial control, and this resulted in Malcolm Clines leaving the company.

When the collapse of Computatype occurred in 1974, five members of staff, together with one outsider, decided to set up a company of their own. Four of the five had been offered re-employment with Computacomp but all declined. Inevitably, this led to some bad feeling with Computacomp but that was of short duration as Computacomp soon withdrew from printing altogether to concentrate solely on typesetting.

Nevisprint Limited, the company set up by the ex-employees of Computatype, began business in 1975, occupying the 1000 square feet premises in Claggan Road which Malcolm McInnis had acquired in 1969. The building was in need of restoration following a fire, after which second-hand plant was acquired and installed with the support of family funding and the Highlands and Islands Development Board. In the first year, the new company had a turnover of £40,000 and this generated a small profit.

Since these small beginnings, the firm has moved twice to new locations and now occupies large

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premises at Caol Industrial Estate in Fort William. The staff has increased to almost sixty employees and the forecast turnover for 1998 was approximately £3 million.

Today the company is equipped with five Apple Mac DTP systems in its origination department. Last year they became the first B2 house in Scotland to install a complete CTP system in the pre-press and currently the main printing units are two Speedmaster 74s.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Golspie

It would be difficult to find a greater contrast than that between the original premises of *The Northern Times* and the impressive building now occupied at Golspie Industrial Estate facing Main Street.

Founded in 1899 by Wick bookseller, Donald Mathison, *The Northern Times*, affectionately known as 'The Raggie', began life in Station Road. Its birthplace has been described as an ancient wooden shed with a corrugated iron roof. Heating was dependent on a cast-iron stove in the middle of the floor, its chimney penetrating the roof and glowing dangerously in mid-winter. Three sides of the room were lined with cases of well-worn typesetters type while the central area was occupied by two ageing Linotype machines.

The newspaper was printed on a Wharfedale flatbed press - later to be replaced by a flatbed Heidelberg cylinder press - which came to life on Wednesdays and Thursdays, shaking the building in the process. On the first day the machine printed four pages on one side of the paper and the final four pages on the reverse side the next day. The full sheet had to be hand-folded twice to give an eight-page newspaper, leaving the reader to slit the top to obtain separate pages. Restrictive practices were unknown in those days and all hands were involved on publication day in folding 'The Raggie' to get it on the street on time.

The lifeblood of the production line was the two elderly Linotype machines which were in constant need of nursing. Without the ready availability of a service engineer, a great deal of ingenuity was required to sustain their continued existence. It is recorded that razor blades, string, and even a spring clothes-peg were required to ensure delivery of the metal slugs. Another problem encountered daily occurred around lunch-time. The metal pots were heated by gas jets and as the village housewives switched on their cookers, gas pressure would drop.

The first editor-manager of *The Northern Times* was Elgin-born J.K. Mathison, son of the proprietor, who emigrated to Canada in 1911. In that year the newspaper was purchased by Donald Macdonald who was to become owner and editor of *The Highland News* at Inverness in 1919.

Andrew Clark, a native of Alloa, who had been with 'The Raggie' since its second issue in 1899, was the next editor and remained in that post until ill-health forced him to retire in 1947. During his reign neither the National Strike of 1926 nor the serious shortages experienced throughout the Second World War interrupted the production of the newspaper.

Following Andrew Clark's retiral, the paper was edited for two years by William Cumming before D. Bruce Weir took over the editorship. It was in that year, 1949, that the Countess of Sutherland's family acquired what had then become an ailing company. In 1963 the Countess was elected chairman.

Bruce Weir did much to promote the paper's modern approach between 1949 and 1975, in which year he was succeeded by James Henderson, a native of Wick. It was in his early years of editorship that the move to new premises was planned. These had been created by the Highlands and Islands Development Board from seven factory units at a cost of £210,000. In addition to converting

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premises, the HIDB assisted in the purchase and installation of new plant. This consisted of two Roland 201 sheetfed offset presses, a Bonelli K56 combination folder and a Wohlenberg 76 guillotine.

Composition of *The Northern Times* at that time was undertaken on Compugraphic equipment but in September 1997 this was replaced by Apple Mac computers and an editorial system based on Quark XPress and related software. The Apple Macs are also used for setting most of the newspaper's other publications and commercial work. Two other firms were linked with *The North Times* at its new location through shared direct namely Method Publishing Company Ltd and Seaforth Photo-Litho Ltd. The former are specialist publishers for Army periodicals while the latter produced printing plates for custom throughout Scotland.

In 1998, the year after the move to new premises the Countess of Sutherland sold *The Northern Times* to Iain Carmichael, chairman and managing director of Method Publishing Company Ltd. He remained in control until 1994 when he sold both companies to Scottish Provincial Press. Shortly thereafter Seaforth Photo-Litho Ltd ceased making plates for *The Northern Times* and in 1997 the firm closed down.

James Henderson retired as editor in July 1996 after a period in hospital and was succeeded by Duncan Ross who had been acting editor for several months. He belongs to an Inverness family of which four generations have now been connected with local and national newspapers over the past one hundred years or so.

The printing of *The Northern Times* at Golspie ended in 1995 when production was switched to *The John O'Groat Journal* presses at Wick. Two years later another transfer took place and the newspaper is now printed at the premises of *The Ross-shire Journal* at Dingwall. However, commercial printing operations continue at the *Times* premises at Golspie.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Inverness

The Inverness Journal and Northern Advertiser

The Inverness Journal and Northern Advertiser was the first newspaper to be printed in Inverness. It was launched as a weekly in August 1807 by John Young, printer and bookseller, and consisted of four pages, double crown folio, price sixpence. Young also printed and published several works in Gaelic and English, perhaps the most notable being the edition of *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Language* by Dr Robert Couper of Keith, published in 1804.

For a short period Young was solely responsible for the newspaper until the editorial function was taken over by David Carey, a native of Arbroath. Carey was also recognised as an author of some versatility - a poet, novelist and pamphleteer. Among his writings is *Craig Phadrig: Visions of Sensibility with Legendary Tales and Occasional Pieces*, published in 1810, a volume containing much information on the early history of Inverness.

Carey relinquished the editorship after nearly five years, and around 1814 the *Journal* obviously changed hands as a new imprint appeared announcing it was 'published for himself and other proprietors by James Beaton'. A few years later another new imprint appeared announcing that the newspaper was published for the proprietors by James Fraser.

It was understood the proprietor was really Lachlan Mackintosh of Raigmore who continued his interest in the newspaper until his death in 1845. On Mackintosh's death the *Journal* ceased publication for several months but reappeared in 1846 under the management of Donald Macdonald. The rebirth was short-lived as the newspaper closed down when Macdonald died two years later.

The Inverness Courier

On Thursday 4 December 1817 the first number of *The Inverness Courier* was published as a four-page weekly. This first edition of the newspaper was printed in a room above William Ettles' bookshop at 22 High Street. Newspaper publishing at this period was an expensive business because of the severe taxes imposed by the government. There was a paper duty of threepence per pound weight, a stamp duty of fourpence on each copy, and a further duty of three shillings and sixpence on advertisements. It was not until the 1830s that these duties were reduced, thus making it possible for the *Courier* to reduce its cover price from sevenpence to fourpence-halfpenny.

During its first seven years the newspaper was edited by a married couple, Mr and Mrs John Johnstone, and when they left to launch a newspaper in Edinburgh they were succeeded by one James MacKay. His four-year reign was not a successful one and this was reflected in a serious drop in the newspaper's circulation.

Fortunately, in 1828, Robert Carruthers, a Borderer, joined the *Courier* and was successful in turning things round, first as editor and three years later as sole proprietor. This was the beginning of a long and distinguished career at the newspaper which lasted until his death in 1878.

A milestone in the paper's history was reached in February 1838 when Carruthers decided to move the expanding business from the High Street to larger premises in Bank Lane. Even today this

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impressive old building is still known locally as the *Courier* office.

The *Courier* was the first newspaper in the north to discard the hand press. In the 1840s Dr Carruthers introduced the 'Belper' press which was fed and rolled manually from both sides. It printed 400 to 500 sheets per hour, one side at a time. A few years later the 'Belper' was replaced by the 'Kirkcaldy' which took three men to operate, and this press continued in use until the introduction of steam.

By 1853 when his fourth son, Walter, joined him from the London *Morning Chronicle*, Carruthers had doubled the extent of the newspaper to eight pages. A few years later Walter became a partner and co-editor and his elder brother, Robert jun., took over the management of the business. At this point, the firm known as Robert Carruthers & Sons was born, the name the *Courier* still trades under today.

The circulation of the *Courier* had reached nearly 4000 copies per week by 1860 and was still selling at fourpence-halfpenny a copy. Thanks to a further reduction in taxes on the industry, the price dropped to threepence, but then competition was encountered from emerging daily newspapers costing one penny. With a relatively small population it was apparent that Inverness could not sustain a daily newspaper and so a decision was taken in 1880 to convert the *Courier* into a penny journal published several times per week. At first a thrice-weekly publication was tried, coming out on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, but this did not prove a success. In 1885 the newspaper became bi-weekly, publishing on Tuesdays and Fridays, and this has been the pattern since that date.

It was in that year Walter Carruthers died, aged 55, and the journalistic direction of the *Courier* was inherited by James Barron, a native of Moray, who had joined the reporting staff in 1865 when he was eighteen. A few years later Barron became principal partner in the firm and by 1910 he was the sole owner. He died in 1919 four years after his intended successor, his eldest son James, was killed during the First World War.

It then fell to his youngest son, Evan, a lawyer by profession to take over the *Courier*. It is claimed he did much for the tourist trade in Inverness-shire, for it was he who, in 1933, attracted the world's attention to what he was inspired to call 'the Loch Ness Monster'. Although not physically strong, Evan Barron managed the business for 46 years until his death in 1965.

He was succeeded by his redoubtable niece Eveline, who, war service excepted, had worked on the *Courier* in one capacity or another since 1935. Her father, the late James jun., had stipulated in his Will that there should be a place for her in the family firm if she so desired. She presided over the 150th anniversary celebrations in 1967 and remained in firm control until 1987 when she suffered a break-down in health. She then decided to seek a purchaser for the firm who 'would not destroy the character of the paper' and her choice fell on Stewart Lindsay. He was the reporter in the north for *The Glasgow Herald*, and when he took over in April 1988 that also marked the end of the Barron family's 123-year association with the *Courier*.

Although Lindsay inherited a supportive and loyal readership he was to find that production methods were still based on hot metal composition and letterpress printing. By this time most newspapers had embraced the new technology and Lindsay took immediate steps to invest in a

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computerised system for the *Courier*. New premises were acquired on the Longman industrial estate in Inverness to house the editorial, advertising, production and administration departments, and the printing of the publication was contracted out to Moray & Nairn News papers in Elgin.

In September 1990 Lindsay was bought out by the Scottish Provincial Press Group and the smooth change-over in ownership ensured the continuing success of the *Courier*. Since then Scottish Provincial Press has invested heavily in improvements and the newspaper is now more influential than at any time in its long history.

The Highland Printing and Publishing Group Ltd

It was in 1880 that the Highland Temperance League was formed with the aim of serving the Inverness and Oban areas. The lowering of the tax on spirits earlier had created widespread alcoholic abuse, particularly during the latter half of the century. One of the League's first steps to combat the 'curse of Scotland' was to launch a newspaper and on 8 October 1883 the first issue of *The Highland News* appeared. It was a four-page weekly, priced one penny. The imprint made known it was 'Printed every Monday morning by Lewis Munro, Dingwall, and published by him at 5 Castle Street Inverness'.

Under the masthead of the paper there appeared views of both Inverness and Oban, as well as a subtitle 'The Organ of the Highland Temperance League'. A leader set out the aims of the newspaper which were 'To supply news principally gathered from all parts of the Highlands on the only day of the secular week on which no other newspaper is published in our midst and to assist in advancing the moral and social well-being of the people'.

In John Noble's *Bibliography of Inverness Newspapers and Periodicals* published in 1903, Munro is described as 'conducting' the paper with occasional contributions from friends engaged in the temperance movement. It is improbable that Munro edited the *News* as he had founded *The Ross-shire Journal* in Dingwall in 1875 and had there a dual role of editor and occasional reporter. It is more likely he was no more than the contract printer and publisher of *The Highland News*.

The first edition of the *News* was said to be a very 'readable product', first columns of editorial matter on the front page and an equal number of columns devoted to advertising. Surprisingly, the temperance propaganda was limited, occupying only about one-third of the total content of the newspaper.

Thirteen months after the launch, the imprint was altered to read 'Printed for and published by Philip Macleod at the office of *The Highland News*, 11 Castle Wynd, Inverness'. With the change, in fact only the second and third pages of the paper began to be printed in Inverness, the other two pages continuing to be printed by Munro in Dingwall.

On 30 May 1885, the *News* ceased being published as the organ of the Highland Temperance League. Instead, it announced it was now serving all the northern counties. In June of the following year, Macleod became proprietor and editor and the newspaper was both printed and published in Inverness.

Macleod continued as owner until 1904 when he was joined by Edward J. Taylor, who became

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editor, and James C. Stewart as director and business manager. Two other members of the staff were William Grant and his brother Duncan. The former was the Stornoway correspondent for the *News* when, in 1916, the brothers had a serious dispute with the owners over the printing and publishing of the first edition of *Lewis Roll of Honour*. This resulted in them severing their connection with the *News* and going off to found *The Stornoway Gazette*. It is rather ironic that, when a new syndicate of local businessmen bought *The Highland News* in 1933, they persuaded Duncan Grant to return to the paper, first as joint managing director and subsequently managing director of the company. The new owners modernised the paper and installed a Cossar printing press to replace a flat-bed, hand-fed letterpress machine.

In the first half of this century the local press in the Highlands was largely operated by small independent units. The trend towards larger groupings started in 1946 when *The Highland News* merged with *The North Star*, Dingwall, both papers retaining their separate identities. That same year this partnership bought *The Caithness Courier* and shortly afterwards *The Forres News*. Thus the Highland News Group came into existence with Alexander MacRae, former editor and proprietor of *The North Star*, as managing director.

In 1948 the *News* and *The Football Times* became the first Highland newspapers to be printed on a rotary press when new plant was installed in Hamilton Street, Inverness.

Roy (later Lord) Thomson, who was already owner of *The Scotsman*, emerged on the northern printing scene with the acquisition of *The Aberdeen Press and Journal* in 1951. When offered the Highland News Group in 1957, he quickly accepted and in the following year *The Northern Chronicle*, Inverness, founded in 1881, was also bought.

The year 1959 was an important one for the Group. A new company called Highland Printers Ltd was formed and moved to spacious premises in Diriebught Road, severing a connection with Hamilton Street lasting more than sixty years. The newspapers published were *The Highland News* and *The Football Times*, Inverness; *The Northern Chronicle*, Inverness; *The Northern Star*, Dingwall; *The Caithness Courier*, Thurso; and *The Forres News*, Forres. In 1960 *The John O'Groat Journal* was added to the list.

The 1960s were difficult years for local newspapers and perhaps it was not surprising that several ceased publication. The first to go was *The Northern Chronicle* and a year later, in 1970, it was followed by *The Forres News*. Next to close down was the once circulation pot-boiler, *The Football Times*.

In January 1983 Highland Printers Ltd was purchased from Thomson Regional Newspapers by Peter Fowler, chairman of Peter Press, Wallingford, and the Stephen Austin Group, Hertford. On 1 July 1983, Highland Printers Ltd was merged with John G. Eccles to form the Highland Printing and Publishing Group.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Montrose

It was in 1776 that David Buchanan introduced printing to Montrose. Bearing in mind the limited equipment he had available, it is remarkable that he was able to print and publish such works as Hume's *England*, Burke's *On the Sublime*, and two editions of *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The next recorded publication in Montrose was *The Literary Mirror* which appeared between 1793 and 1815. It was published by Murray of Montrose but no other details of the work are known. Another early publication was *The Angus and Mearns Register*, an annual published by John Smith, bookseller, on the west side of Montrose High Street. It first appeared in 1808 but was later assumed to have merged with the *Remembrancer*.

The Montrose Review was first published on 11 January 1811 and was known then as *The Montrose, Arbroath, and Brechin Review and Forfar and Kincadine Shires Advertiser*. It consisted of eight pages and the price was sixpence, including stamp duty. It was printed and published by James Watt at his High Street office and is thought to be the first newspaper printed in Montrose. In its early days, the paper contained very little local news, its contents consisting mainly of overseas items, parliamentary reports, London fashion news and reports of accidents and offences.

James Watt appears to have been an enterprising person, for on 2 August 1811 he opened a Public Reading Room in the town. The papers he made available, in addition to the *Review*, were *The Globe*, *The Caledonian Mercury*, *The Edinburgh Weekly Chronicle*, *The Observer*, *The Aberdeen Journal* and *The Dundee Mercury*. The yearly subscription was one pound, with a reduction to ten shillings and sixpence for 'gentlemen occasionally in town'.

On 3 January 1812 the price of the paper was increased to sixpence halfpenny. The proprietor expressed the hope that this 'would not be regarded as an infringement on the liberality of the respectable readers of the *Review*'. He explained that the increase was to provide 'an accession of beautiful types cast on purpose for this paper'.

On 14 March 1822 there was a change of printer as, according to the imprint that day, the paper was then printed and published by William Scott opposite the Port Well. However, less than a year later, in January 1823, the imprint changed ye again to read 'Montrose, printed and published every Thursday evening by John Mitchell for the proprietors. Price per annum, 32 shillings sent by post, 31 shillings and sixpence delivered in town and 30 shillings and fourpence called for'.

As well as having these changes of printer, the newspaper also moved to different locations. In 1836 it transferred from Port Well to Lady Balmain's Street, and then in 1844 it relocated to the east side of the High Street.

In 1836 the price of the paper had been reduced to fourpence halfpenny and it was further reduced in 1854 to threepence. In that year Mitchell left Montrose for Edinburgh and was succeeded by Alex Dunn whose first action was to change the publication day to Friday mornings.

Fifteen years later control of the paper passed to James Ross, Sheriff Clerk of Forfarshire, who had been a regular contributor to the *Review*. Dunn continued to print the newspaper for the new

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proprietor at 97 High Street. Ross, who managed the business with distinction for many years, died on 1 January 1888.

It was during Ross's ownership that the Foreman family began their long association with the Review. Joseph Foreman served his apprenticeship as a compositor with the paper but then turned to journalism for a career. To gain experience he served for a short period in Kelso before returning to Montrose to take up a post as reporter on the *Review*.

After three years Foreman, with his brother Robert and his brother-in-law Alexander Balfour, bought the *Review* from Ross. A few years later, they formed a limited company and adopted the name A. Dunn & Co. Joseph Foreman eventually became sole proprietor and was managing editor and director until 1919 when the ownership passed to his son James. In 1951 the *Review* was sold by James Foreman to Mr and Mrs W. H. Robertson, both journalists, who had worked on several Fleet Street publications.

The 1959 national printers' strike did not affect the *Review* but during that year The Mearns Leader was acquired by the Robertsons. This was followed in 1965 by the acquisition of *The Kincardineshire Observer*, and resulted in all three newspapers being printed at the Montrose office.

When Mr Robertson died in 1972, a limited liability company was formed with John Butchard as chairman and managing director. He served in that capacity until his death in 1980 when he was succeeded by his deputy Jack Smith. In 1922 a management buy-out took place and the new board remained in control until the company was purchased in 1997 by Scottish Radio Holdings plc.

Like other local newspapers in Scotland, the production of the Review has progressed from the early hand-setting days of James Watt's 'accession of beautiful types' through the age of mechanical composition by Intertype. In the early 1980s Apple Mac systems were introduced and those have been updated in recent years.

Similarly, during the greater part of last century the handpress was the only means of printing the newspaper. For many years the hand power required to print the Review was provided by two of the town's lamplighters, Willie Allen and Jimmy Macintosh. In time they were displaced by the introduction of a gas engine before electric power became available. For most of this century the paper was printed by letterpress machinery but this gave way to a Litho Web Coldset press. More recently a 9-unit Goss Community press has been installed.

Among several other newspapers published in Montrose over the years were *The Montrose Courier and General Advertiser for the Counties of Forfar and Kincardine* and *The Montrose Chronicle or Angus and Mearns Advertiser*. The *Courier* first appeared in May 1815 and was printed and published by Smith & Hall on Friday mornings, issue gratis. It did not succeed in establishing itself and ceased publication in May 1816.

The first issue of the *Chronicle* is dated 19 November 1819. It was a weekly and consisted (eight pages. The imprint read 'Printed for the Proprietors by Smith & Hall and published at the shop of J. Smith'. Its short life ended in 1823.

A more successful newspaper was *The Montrose Standard and Angus and Mearns Register*, which

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was launched on Thursday 10 June 1837. It was printed by William Bennett at Innes Close and published on Thursday mornings, price fourpence halfpenny. In 1840 the production of the newspaper was take over by James Watt at his printing office at Jolly' Close, 32 High Street.

In 1847, publication of the paper became the responsibility of James Lawson. When he was succeeded by Charles Booth, Lawson continued to edit the *Standard*.

It appears that the Macaskie family took over the newspaper in 1864 as the imprint changed to 'printed by James Macaskie residing at St Peter's Place, Montrose'. Macaskie had received his training at the *Scotsman* office in Edinburgh. When he died in 1874, control of the *Standard* passed to his widow and then later to his two sons J. and C.B. Macaskie.

In 1888 the *Standard* was purchased by John Balfour who remained proprietor and editor until his death in 1922. He too was succeeded by his widow who continued to manage the newspaper for the next twenty years. On her death in 1942 a limited company was formed in which Balfour's granddaughter had a controlling interest with her husband, Duncan Fraser. The *Standard* continued to appear until 15 January 1970 when it ceased publication.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Nairn

According to George Bain's *History of Nairnshire*, the first newspaper in Nairn was launched in 1841. There was a great deal of discussion at the time as to what the title of the paper should be and among those involved was Sheriff Falconer. It is said that when shaving one morning he suddenly had the idea that a suitable name for the newspaper would be the *Mirror* and that was the title adopted.

The paper's first editor and proprietor was Charles Mc Watt who had been a pupil of Straith's and later graduated at Aberdeen University. To begin with, the paper was published once a month, on market day, but soon afterwards the frequency was increased to fortnightly.

In 1853 *The Nairnshire Telegraph* was launched as a weekly newspaper by James Wilson and a year later the *Mirror* and the *Telegraph* were amalgamated under his management, adopting the *Telegraph* as its title. Sadly, McWatt, who had not been in good health, died shortly afterwards.

Wilson carried on the business until 1864 when he emigrated to China, no doubt influenced by his uncle, Alexander Wilson, who was in business in Hong Kong. James Wilson went on to set up a newspaper in Shanghai but he died shortly before the first number was published.

In the meantime James's cousin, Hugh Wilson, had taken charge of the *Telegraph* and continued to manage the business for several years before seeking pastures new. Along with his two brothers, James and John, he moved south to Edinburgh where the trio established *The Edinburgh Evening News*.

Over the following years, control of the newspaper passed through several hands. First of all Patrick Rose Smith, a licentiate of the Church of Scotland, was connected with the *Telegraph*. He was reputed to be a person of outstanding literary ability but after a brief period he moved to London where he worked for the *Athenaeum* and other literary papers.

David Law from Edinburgh was the next editor but, like his predecessor, he did not remain long in the post. He emigrated to India and for a period was sub-editor of *The Bombay Gazette* before returning to London to study law. Having qualified as a barrister it is said he obtained an important position with the *Times* and continued in that role until his death.

Patrick Smith, a nephew of James Wilson, succeeded Law and managed the *Telegraph* for several years, but remarkably he was to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor. First of all he accepted a post on *The North China Herald* and then returned to London to study law and also became a barrister. For a time he was employed in literary work by Herbert Spencer, the philosopher. However, the Far East must have had a special attraction for him, as he returned there to take up a legal appointment in Hong Kong but died shortly afterwards.

The *Telegraph* was acquired in 1869 by George Bain who continued to manage and edit the newspaper with his sister until his death in 1926. Throughout his long life, George Bain devoted much of his energy and time to furthering the interests of Nairn. He was curator of the museum of the Nairn Literary Institute for many years and his most notable publication was *The History of*

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Nairnshire. On his death, his sister, Jessie, continued to manage the newspaper until 1933.

George Bain's nephew, also George, who had emigrated to Canada, returned to Nairn in 1933 and managed the newspaper until his death in 1959. For the following twenty-eight years Alastair Bain was in charge of the *Telegraph* and in 1987 he was succeeded by the present editor, Iain Bain, who had been editor of *The Geographical Magazine* for a period.

It is perhaps unique that the newspaper was hand set until the early 1920s when a Linotype was acquired. Later, two Intertypes were added and this method of composition continued until 1988 when it was replaced by a DTP system. Until 1979 the *Telegraph* was printed on a Wharfedale and then for a few months the paper was produced on *Northern Star* presses at Elgin. In 1980 a Heidelberg SBGZ was purchased but eight years later the newspaper returned to Elgin to be printed.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Oban

It may be of interest to learn that, prior to the eighteenth century, Oban had no existence. In his book, *The Story of Lorn, its Isles and Oban*, Hugh Shedden states that in 1701 Oban is mentioned as a creek. He claims the word is derived from the Gaelic 'Ob' (creek or bay) with the diminutive 'an'.

It has not been possible to establish exactly when printing was first introduced to Oban but Shedden records the appearance of a weekly newspaper in the town around 1860. It was called *The West Highland Journal* and is thought to have been printed and published in Oban for circulation in the west and north. It was edited by J. Ford MacKenzie, and could have been one of those newspapers which at that time were being printed at one centre, containing general news, with each district adding its local news.

In 1861 *The Oban Monthly Pictorial Magazine* was launched, price one penny. It was owned and printed by James Miller at premises in George Street. In 1866 the *Oban Monthly* became a weekly and changed its name to *The Oban Times*, although also frequently referred to as 'The Highlander's Bible'. A few years later Miller transferred his printing plant to the top of John's Lane. He is also known as the author of *The Royal Tourist's Complete Handbook*, published in 1877.

Soon after Miller's death in 1881, the newspaper was acquired for £4,000 by Duncan Cameron of the Edinburgh company Macniven and Cameron and his eldest son Duncan, jun. Although somewhat distant from Oban, Duncan Cameron's interest in the town and its newspaper sprang from the fact that his ancestral home was Ballachulish.

Duncan Cameron, jun., had assumed the editorship of the newspaper but this arrangement was of short duration when he was recalled to the head office in Edinburgh. He was succeeded by his younger brother, Waverley, who was tragically drowned in a boating accident off Lismore in June 1891.

Previously, in 1886, the newspaper had been enlarged to seven columns on each of its four pages and some two years afterwards the extent was increased to eight pages. At that time the paper was printed on a hand-fed Wharfedale Press.

In 1898 the first Linotype machine in the Highlands was installed in the *Times* caseroom. Up until then all composition had been by hand. Another innovation was the acquisition of a Lancaster reel-fed machine to replace the ageing Wharfedale. The new press was capable of printing eight pages in one operation.

On the death of Waverley Cameron, his elder sister Mrs Flora Blair became responsible for the management of the paper and for more than half a century did more than anyone to raise the profile and status of *The Oban Times*. She was widowed and in 1911 married George Macaulay of the Edinburgh police. Following his retirement, the couple moved to Oban when the now Mrs Macaulay assumed full control of the newspaper. In 1924, when he retired from Macniven and Cameron, Duncan Cameron, jun., joined his sister in running the paper.

In the 1920s and 1930s the circulation of the *Times* was around 15,000 copies but this dropped to

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nearer 13,000 copies following the outbreak of the Second World War. As was the experience of other local newspapers at that time, Mrs Macaulay and her brother, both by then in their eighties, encountered increasing difficulties arising from staff call-ups and a shortage of newsprint.

Alan Cameron, the youngest son of Duncan Cameron, jun., joined the editorial staff of the *Times* in 1934. After war service he re-joined the newspaper and, following an accident suffered by Mrs Macaulay in 1952, he was appointed editor. Later, when assuming the additional responsibilities of managing director, he set about modernising the plant. His first major acquisition was a Cossar press, and this was followed by the purchase of new Linotype machines.

When Alan Cameron took over, the print run of the newspaper had risen to 22,330 copies and this continued to increase until October 1973 when it stood at nearly 27,000 copies. However, in that year, a major crisis arose over the continuing avail-ability of newsprint which was only solved when agreement was reached with a Scandinavian company to ship supplies direct to Grangemouth. A further difficulty was encountered when British Rail announced the closure of the town's goods yard where the *Times* newsprint reels were stored.

An application to the Town Council for a site at Lochavullin was successful and in April 1975 entry was made to a new building which not only stored the newsprint reels but also could accommodate a modern press. This new Goss Community four-unit web offset press, capable of handling a 16-page issue, was installed and running by December 1975.

Sadly, before the end of that year, Alan Cameron suffered an accident which resulted in his decision to relinquish control of *The Oban Times*. Among several companies interested in acquiring the newspaper was the Johnston Press, Falkirk, and ownership passed into their hands in June 1976. Ian Nicolson became editor for a short period before being succeeded by Stewart Fairlie.

The control of the *Times* by the Falkirk group was of short duration and it reverted to private ownership in 1983 when it was purchased by its present owner, Howard Bennett. Since that date over £100,000 has been invested in computer typesetting and finishing equipment.

Recently, the Goss Community press was sold and the printing of *The Oban Times*, with its other companion papers, is now undertaken by the Johnston Press at Falkirk.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Orkney

When researching the history of the Scottish printing industry for this series, it became evident that in quite a number of cases early printers, like publishers, had their origins in already established booksellers and bookbinders. *The Orcadian's* early beginnings come into that category. Magnus Anderson started a bookbinding business in Kirkwall in 1798, the year before his son James Urquhart Anderson was born. It is thought his business was founded on importing printed sheets, mainly of a religious nature, from Edinburgh, binding them in Kirkwall, and selling the bound copies throughout the islands.

James, who attended the local Grammar School, left Kirkwall to serve a bookbinding apprenticeship with a firm in Leith. It was during that period he became interested in printing and spent several weeks with a Mr Heriot learning the basic principles of the craft.

He returned to Orkney to join his father's business but his experience in Leith had left him with a strong desire to print as well as bind books. The opportunity came sooner than he could have anticipated when several local gentry brought to Orkney a small hand-press and a quantity of type.

It is uncertain whether they meant to indulge in printing as a hobby or whether they intended to donate the equipment to Kirkwall Grammar School but, in any case, it found its way there.

James Anderson was quick to respond to a call from the school for help with their new printing plant as it gave him an opportunity to put into practice the elementary skills he had acquired from Mr Heriot. A short time later he took over the equipment and in the 1820s the Kirkwall Press was established.

Over the succeeding years the business was built up and when his eldest son, also James, was old enough he was sent to Edinburgh to serve a printing apprenticeship. On completion of his training, James jun. took up a post with *The Newcastle Chronicle* before returning to Kirkwall in 1854. In the meantime his father has acquired additional supplies of type and a larger press and so was equipped to launch a newspaper. On Saturday 14 November 1854 the first newspaper to be printed and published in Orkney came off the press from a small workshop in Kirkwall's old, narrow Victoria Street.

To begin with *The Literary and Commercial Advertiser for Orkney and Zetland*, as it was subtitled, appeared monthly in order to minimise the crippling newspaper tax of the time. When the tax was abolished a year later *The Orcadian* became a weekly, as it has remained ever since.

In 1856 a new concept was tried out to speed up production of the four-page newspaper. The two inside pages containing world news were printed in London and sent to Kirkwall by train and boat. The two outside pages containing local news, advertisements, etc were already set up and ready to be run off to complete the issue. A year later, when the same procedure was being continued, the printing of the inside pages was switched to Edinburgh. This composite printing continued until 1860 when speedier communications and improved equipment allowed the paper to be completely printed in Kirkwall.

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James Anderson jun. took over the newspaper in 1874 when his father died. Around this time the printing works moved temporarily to Queen Street while a steam press was being installed in the old premises.

In 1877 W.R. Mackintosh arrived from Ayrshire to join the editorial staff. Soon afterwards he married a daughter of James Anderson jun. and, when his father-in-law retired in 1895, he acquired the business. He continued to manage the company until his death during the First World War.

He was succeeded by his son, James Anderson Mackintosh, who controlled the business and the newspaper until 1938.

During the latter part of that period he was responsible for many technical changes, not the least of those being the introduction of Linotype composition and in 1931 the installation of a Cossar press.

For six years after his death in 1938 the company was managed by his widow. When she died in 1944 the business was run jointly for the next five years by Mrs Robert Miller (then Miss Elizabeth Mackintosh), a daughter of James Mackintosh, and her sister Thelma. In 1949 Mrs Miller took complete control of the firm.

In 1980, after studying business management and journalism, James Miller a great-great-great-grandson of the founder of *The Orcadian*, returned to his home in Orkney and one year later entered into partnership with his mother Elizabeth. In 1987, when *The Orcadian* became a limited company, James was appointed Managing Director and continues in that role today.

The company suffered a serious set-back in 1972 when the printing works were gutted by fire but service was soon restored at its original location in Victoria Street. In 1996, however, a new print centre was opened at Hatston which houses a fully operational computer suite incorporating the latest family of Apple Mac hardware. The centre-pieces of the print room are a four-colour Heidelberg press and a four unit Lem Lino News web machine, which are in marked contrast to the original press operated by the founder of *The Orcadian*, James Urquhart Anderson.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Peterhead

Masterminded by H.G. Reid and J. McArthur, *The Buchan Observer* was launched on Friday 16 January 1863. The former was responsible for editing the newspaper and the latter managed the practical and commercial side of the business. The first edition was printed and published at 33 Queen Street, Peterhead, and consisted of four pages, price twopence. Reid, who was knighted several years later, was the first President of the Institute of Journalists and author of at least nine publications.

The firm, Reid and McArthur, was in business for just over two years when Reid purchased *The Stockton and Middlesbrough Gazette* and moved to Middlesbrough. He sold his share of the *Observer* to James Annand, a local Longside blacksmith, who surprisingly gave up his forge for a career in journalism. Annand successfully edited the *Observer* for about six years before departing for London where he became a political writer of some note. After unsuccessfully contesting the parliamentary seat for Tynemouth in 1892 he attempted again to enter parliament in 1906 and on that occasion won East Aberdeenshire for the Liberal party. Sadly he died suddenly in London before he could take his seat in the House of Commons.

McArthur, who had taken over Annand's shares, became the sole proprietor and continued in charge of the paper until 1875. In that year R.C. Annand, a brother of James, purchased the company from McArthur who then moved to Edinburgh to become sub-editor of *The Scotsman*.

In March 1875 the price of the *Observer* was reduced to one penny and on 1 October that year the title was changed to *The East Aberdeenshire Observer*. It became a bi-weekly in December 1878 and at the same time the price was reduced again, this time to a halfpenny.

There was another change of ownership in 1882 when W.B. Lunan bought the company and changed its name to W.B. Lunan and Co. He had managed the business for just over five years when his health broke down and he left for an extended recuperative holiday in Australia. Sadly, he never recovered and died in Melbourne in February 1888.

During Lunan's absence the paper was edited by A.W. Cullen, who afterwards was to become sub-editor of *The Aberdeen Journal*. On Lunan's death the ownership passed to his mother for a brief period and then, in December 1889, the newspaper was acquired by Peter Scrogie. It was printed and published at the office in Broad Street under the editorship of A. Watt, and the bi-weekly issues were discontinued. In March 1893 the paper was enlarged and became known as *The Buchan Observer and East Aberdeenshire Advertiser*. It was enlarged again in November 1896, the price remaining at one penny, the price to which it had been raised in 1889. That year a move was made to its present premises in Chapel Street.

The business suffered a serious loss in 1903 when Peter Scrogie died at the early age of forty-five and as a consequence a Trust was formed to act for the Scrogie family. William Hackett, who had been works manager, was appointed managing director of the newspaper and works. He continued in that role until his death during the Second World War. It was at that point the managing directorship passed to Walter Scrogie, youngest of the family, who had acquired his knowledge of printing and publishing in London.

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The immediate post-war years were difficult ones not only for the *Observer* but also for the Buchan's other local weekly *The Fraserburgh Herald*. In 1948 the *Herald* came on the market and was acquired by P. Scrogie Ltd and, in due course, the printing of both papers was undertaken at Peterhead.

Walter Scrogie recognised the need to modernise the plant to meet the new demands of printing two newspapers. However, when deciding on the installations required, Scrogie also took into account the option to have the facility to handle long 'jobbing runs'.

On the death of her husband, Mary Scrogie continued the modernisation programme until she herself died in 1979. She was succeeded by her daughter Patricia Scrogie who, as chairman, has been responsible for even more rapid changes with the introduction of new technology.

The company has depended on both Linotype and Intertype installations for its composition but these have now been replaced by the latest Apple Mac systems. The separate editorial staff at Fraserburgh and Peterhead are linked by modem with the newspaper printing which continues to be based at Peterhead.

In 1960 a Linotype Miehle press had been acquired to cope with increasing demands and it continued in service until 1986 when it was replaced by the latest Lino News.

Perhaps the two most significant events during the present decade have been: first, the launching of *The Ellon Times*, a weekly which is printed at Peterhead. The second was the acquisition of the company by the Eastern Counties Group based in Norwich. As a consequence, the firm is now a division of Community Media Ltd which has its registered office in Bath.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Shetland

The first newspaper to appear in Shetland was *The Shetland Journal* but it ceased publication at the end of its first year. It was printed in London for its founder, Arthur Anderson, who attempted to extend his readership in *The Orkney and Shetland Journal* but it appeared for only a few months.

A further effort to establish a newspaper was made by Charles Jamieson in 1862 at 68 Commercial Street. It was given the title *The Shetland Advertiser* and consisted of four pages. The early demise of the *Advertiser* was said to be due to difficulties of communication throughout the islands.

The type and plant lay idle until 1870, by which time the islands were linked by telegraph. With the new facilities available, Jamieson decided to try again with a paper called *Telenews* and was encouraged by the response from advertisers. Sadly, on the very date the first number was due for publication, the telegraph cable broke and it was impossible to obtain the news to fill the paper.

The launching of *The Shetland Times* was largely due to the influence of Charles Duncan, the procurator fiscal, who recruited Donald Stephen from *The John O'Groat Journal*. Using two hand presses, Stephen produced a four-page newspaper on 17 June 1872 under the title *The Zetland Times*, but this was changed to *The Shetland Times* soon afterwards. The aim was to publish the weekly newspaper on Saturdays, but at times this was delayed until Mondays depending on the arrival of mail from the south with advertisements and the latest news.

Within a year the hand press was replaced by a cylinder machine but at this early stage the *Times* encountered competition from two rival newspapers. In the event neither *The Peerie Times* nor *The Lerwick Times* survived for long.

When Stephen's health was failing in 1875 he left Shetland and the business was taken over by Christopher Sandison who moved to new premises near the Market Cross. The ground floor was occupied by a bookseller and stationers with the composing room and printing department upstairs. When Sandison died in 1883 his brother, Andrew, who had become a partner the previous year, took control of the firm.

Within a year, however, Basil Johnson, the foreman printer, and Peter Greig, the only reporter, had taken over and moved to another location near the then Bank of Scotland building. It was there that the first power-driven press was installed. The partnership had plans for expansion and a new building was erected in Mounthooly Street for which additional plant was acquired. This allowed the paper to be increased in size from four to eight pages and soon afterwards the first Linotype machine was installed and hand-setting of the paper ceased.

At this point in the history of *The Shetland Times* it seems appropriate to examine events related to *The Shetland News*. In 1884 Thomas Manson and his brother, James, were employed at the *Times* office. Both were printers but the latter had the distinction of being the first shorthand writer in Shetland. That year Thomas left the *Times* and set up on his own as a jobbing printer. A year later his small business and plant were purchased by the newly formed Shetland Newspaper Company. Thomas was engaged as works manager, James was appointed reporter, and the editor was J.B. Laurence. The plants of *The Orkney and Shetland Journal* which had ceased publication and the

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defunct *Shetland Advertiser* were also purchased.

In 1886 the Shetland Newspaper Company went into liquidation and the Manson brothers acquired the business. James became the editor of the *News* and continued in that role until his death in 1907. Thomas then added the editorship to his responsibilities as general manager and was assisted by his nephew Robert Inster as reporter. Although *The Shetland News* ceased publication on 27 September 1963, the company T. & J. Manson continued as general jobbing printers for several years.

To return to the *Times* history, Basil Johnston edited the paper from 1894 until the First World War, with Peter Greig as the sole reporter. In April 1915 the newspaper suffered a serious blow when the premises in Mounthooly Street were burned down. The difficulties in obtaining replacement machinery during war-time cannot be exaggerated but, with the assistance of a Glasgow engineer, second-hand plant was found. The old infant school in Prince Alfred Street was available and the replacement equipment was installed there. Eight weeks after the fire occurred, publication of the *Times* was resumed.

During the First World War the proprietors' sons, Bertie Johnson and Bob Greig, saw active service before returning to step into their fathers' shoes, the former as editor and manager and the latter as sole reporter. Greig's death in 1938 was a serious blow to the paper and four years later a further loss was suffered when Johnson died suddenly. The business was left to his sister, Mrs H.B. Wishart, who formed a private limited company in 1942.

Several interim editors were employed until 1946 when Mrs Wishart's son, Basil, returned from war service. He was joined on the paper by Hugh Crooks who had helped out at various times during army service in Shetland. This successful partnership brought about many changes. Until 1968 the newspaper was printed on a sheet-fed Wharfedale press. In that year a Duplex press was installed, capable of printing sixteen pages but still flat-bed letterpress. On 4 July 1980 the first issue printed on a newly acquired Goss Community press was published. At that time typesetting was generated on Compugraphic Editwriters which had replaced the Intertype and Linotype hot metal equipment.

The paper now averages forty pages, is made up on screen, and complete pages output on film. A wide range of software is used on Apple Mac equipment, and halftones are scanned on an Agfa scanner. For commercial colour work, an ICC 350 vertical drum scanner is employed, with output to an Agfa Accuset imagesetter. Latest advances include the development of an Internet site.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Stornoway

Youngest among the newspapers included in this booklet is *The Stornoway Gazette*, founded in 1917 by William Grant. An Inverness man, he arrived in Stornoway as a reporter for *The Highland News*. During his early working life he was first employed as a printer's devil before entering an architect's office where he acquired a knowledge of shorthand, typing and bookkeeping. Those skills enabled him to obtain a post as *The Highland News* representative in Stornoway.

William Grant quickly settled into the life of the island and for many years combined the duties of reporter with part-time work at the Nicolson Institute as well as with the roles of official short-hand writer to the Sheriff Court, local observer for the Meteorological Office, and for a period Burgh Treasurer.

Despite the multiplicity of jobs, he was unable to acquire sufficient capital to start a Lewis newspaper, which was one of his ambitions. However, the opportunity to found *The Stornoway Gazette* came when his brother Duncan, who had been employed as a printer in Nuneaton, returned to the Highlands and went into partnership with Norman Macrae, the editor of *The North Star* in Dingwall. This family link with a mainland newspaper made possible a local paper for Lewis, and William Grant decided to sever his connection of nearly a quarter of a century with *The Highland News* and launch his own paper. In the first week of 1917 *The Stornoway Gazette* appeared.

For the next thirty years or more the *Gazette* was printed in Dingwall or Inverness by *The North Star*, *The Highland News*, *The Inverness Courier* and the defunct *Inverness Citizen*.

When William Grant died in 1932 at the early age of fifty-nine, his widow became proprietor and his younger son editor. James Shaw Grant had just graduated at Glasgow University when he was recalled to Stornoway. He continued to edit the newspaper until his appointment as Chairman of the Crofters Commission in 1963. The editorship of father and son covered more than 46 years of the paper's history.

Shortly before the outbreak of war in 1939 plans were made to print the *Gazette* in Stornoway and some machinery was purchased for that purpose. However, the national emergency caused those plans to be deferred and it was not until 1948 that the newspaper was printed and published in Stornoway.

The capital required to invest in new plant and machinery was not readily available and this is evident from a comment by James Grant that 'my early printing office was a museum of industrial archaeology'. One of the two Linotype machines installed was over seventy years old and the newspaper was printed on a flat bed press and folder which required each copy to be fed in by hand three times.

The installation of this first press was not without moments of crisis. First of all it had to be dismantled in Dingwall, shipped to Stornoway, and then re-erected and running in time for the next weekly issue. The only access to the ex-naval canteen which served as a printing office was through a narrow close, so the printing press had to be reduced practically to nuts and bolts to get it in. That episode was not the end of the story as the press had to be dismantled again when the *Gazette*

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moved to its present headquarters.

The *Gazette* is now produced on a semi-rotary press from a continuous web of paper, in marked contrast to the early period when sheets were fed by hand. Additional modern plant has been installed to cater for the needs of local industry.

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Part Two: Northern Counties, Wick

It is claimed that the first printer in Caithness was one William Todd, a saddler, who acquired the necessary type and press in 1825 and installed them in his shop in Thurso. His first publication, *Three Sermons by the late Rev James Renwick*, appeared twelve months later.

Some four years passed before he published the first Caithness book, *Poems: English and Scottish on various subjects*, a volume of 208 pages which was sold by subscription. The author was a Wick schoolmaster, James Hay, whose by-name was 'Flogger Hay'. In 1830 Todd moved to Wick, where he continued to print in a shop just off Bridge Street. Two years later his business closed down, soon after Peter Reid began printing in the town. Peter Reid was born at Gallowhill, near Wick, in July 1809, a son of a local Pulteneytown fishcurer. At the age of seventeen he left home for Dundee and obtained employment with a Mr Miller, a printer and publisher. After three years training in the art of printing Reid returned to Wick in 1829 and set up as a bookseller and stationer in a shop which was formerly the offices of the British Fisheries Society. The premises at the Bridgend, Union Street, are to this day the home of *The John O'Groat Journal* or, as is more widely known locally, the 'Groat'.

For four years before *The John O'Groat Journal* was first published, Reid developed the printing side of his business. He was particularly active in the production of pamphlets mainly commissioned by ministers and other educated members of the community. Much of this work had previously been undertaken by William Todd but, as mentioned above, by 1832 Todd's printing business failed.

On an early visit to Edinburgh, Reid visited the well-known printers and publishers W. & R. Chambers when they were introducing a new typeface for their *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*. He purchased the discarded type and, when the Groat was launched in February 1836, the first issues were almost facsimiles of the famous Chambers magazine. Reid had adopted the same format, namely an eight-page large quarto with three columns to the page, and the title displayed in a similar semi-circular form.

In October 1836 a rival newspaper, *The Northern Star*, was published in Wick by John Stewart. It adopted an opposing political line — the *Groat* was Liberal, the *Star* Tory — and it is said 'competition was vigorous, verging on the vitriolic'. There are a number of stories told of the *Star's* struggle for survival during its short two years existence, including one relating the theft of ink from its rival newspaper.

Benjamin Miller Kennedy was the first editor of the *Groat* and had a reputation as a trenchant and fearless writer. However, he remained in that office for only six years before moving to Arbroath where he became the proprietor and editor of *The Arbroath Journal* and later founded *The Arbroath Guide* which succeeded it.

Kennedy's successor was Edward Roverscroft, an Englishman, who stayed only three years before John Mackie took over. For five years Mackie edited the *Groat* then left in 1850 to found and edit his own newspaper in Wick, *The Northern Ensign*. He was soon to encounter financial difficulties and in 1853 William Rae bought the newspaper. Mackie's services were retained as editor and he

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continued in that role until his death twenty-six years later. *The Ensign* ceased publication in 1926.

The John O'Groat Journal has had seventeen editors during its long history, each contributing in his own way to the success of the newspaper. Special mention should perhaps be made of two of them, namely R. Miller and David Oag. Miller had two spells of editorship amounting to forty-seven years in all, while Oag served the *Groat* for fifty years, thirty of them as editor. During the latter's period as editor, the newspaper was taken over by the Highland News Group.

The Caithness Courier was already a member of the Group and was being printed at Inverness with its editorial office in Thurso. In 1965 a decision was taken to print the *Courier* in Wick on the *Groat* presses, and in 1977 the editorial functions were also transferred to the *Groat* office. Since then the two newspapers have been produced along the lines of a bi-weekly with each retaining its own title.

Mechanisation was almost unknown when many local newspapers were launched during the last century. The introduction of steam power in the pressroom was a major step forward but composition was entirely by hand until the beginning of this century.

Writing in the 150th Anniversary Supplement of the *Groat*, George Harold, who worked in the caserom for half a century, described conditions when he began his apprenticeship in 1928. Starting at 6 am his first job was to light the gas jet, then the gas pots for melting the lead. Two Linotypes were in use, powered by a gas engine, but much of the work had still to be set by hand. The presses were hand-fed, one side of the sheet being printed on Thursdays and the reverse side in the early hours of Friday mornings.

The first major change in the pressroom was the installation of a Cossar press in 1952 at a cost of £12,000.

The most revolutionary transformation occurred in 1985, however, with the switch from hot-metal setting to photo composition. A Linotype system was installed consisting of two Linotronic 100 series typesetters, one Linoscreen Composer II and four APL II terminals. Additional equipment included several Processors and a Superautomatic Camera. The newspaper is now printed on a Solna Offset RP 36 Distributor.

The *Groat* management is to be applauded for their decision to set up a replica of the earlier hot-metal caserom in the Heritage Centre Museum in Wick. It consists of a Linotype machine and ancillary equipment including cases of type and the last front pages of both the *Groat* and *Courier* in type in their chases. In addition, North of Scotland Newspapers have had a video film made showing the old and the new production methods.

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