

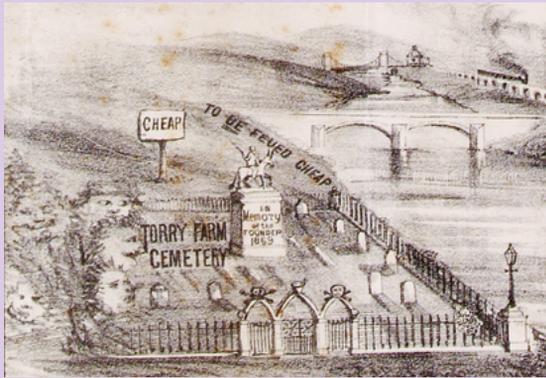
# Torry Local Area Trail

The town within a city



#aberdeentrails





## Picture Credits

All images © Aberdeen City Council unless otherwise stated

**Above:** Late 19th century political cartoon, arguing against purchasing Torry farm. © Aberdeen City Archives

**Cover:** The Victoria Bar at the corner of Victoria Road and Menzies Road.

Images at **3, 5, 8, 10, 14 (inset), 22, 23 & 39** are used courtesy of Aberdeen City Libraries/Silver City Vault [www.silvercityvault.org.uk](http://www.silvercityvault.org.uk)

**1** Wellington Suspension Bridge in the 1930s  
Photograph taken by Leonard Pelman

**9** A plan of the City of Aberdeen by Alexander Milne, 1789

**20** Sketch of Torry St Fittick's Church from Alexander Gammie's  
The Churches of Aberdeen, 1909

**28** Reconstruction of St Fittick's church and manse, in the  
late 18th century, painting by Claire Agnew

**41** *Rainbow Warrior* by Ot CC BY-SA 4.0 from Wikimedia Commons

**44** Launch of the trawler *Summerlee* from John Lewis in 1956

**Historical maps:** Reproduction courtesy of the National Library of Scotland

## Accessibility

 Mostly accessible but covers uneven ground and some steep slopes

## Transport

This trail is intended to be walked or cycled but the following buses link Torry with central Aberdeen:

**First Bus 12:** One-way circular route covering Market Street, Victoria Bridge, Victoria Road, Balnagask Road, Oscar Road and Walker Road

**First Bus 20:** There-and-back route covering Market Street, Menzies Road Victoria Bridge, Wellington Road, Girdleness Road and Balnagask Circle

**Stagecoach 59:** One-way circular route covering Market Street, Victoria Bridge, Victoria Road, Balnagask Road, Tullos Place, Grampian Place, Grampian Road

# #aberdeentrails

Torry historically began as two separate areas Lower Torry and Upper Torry. Lower Torry was an old medieval settlement, located around the east end of Sinclair Road, and this developed into Old Torry in the early 19th Century. Upper Torry was in the area at the west end of Sinclair Road. Torry is first mentioned in a document dated 1484 although by that time the town was probably already of some age.

The Torry name may derive from the Gaelic 'torran' indicating a hill, or hillock. Likewise for nearby 'Tullos', whilst 'Balnagask' likely derives from Gaelic and Pictish elements meaning 'town in the hollow' and 'Nigg' from the Gaelic for a bay.

In 1495, King James IV made Torry into a Burgh of Barony and it remained so as a separate town until as late as 1891. In that year, the three Burghs of Torry, New Aberdeen, Old Aberdeen and Woodside Parish were joined to form what is now the City of Aberdeen. Even today, Torry has the character and spirit of a town in its own right.

Enjoy exploring this historic and characterful part of the city!

**Top:** Victoria Road junction at Menzies Road with Victoria Bar on the corner. This is reputed to be the old site of the Torry Farm duck-pond.



Show off your photos on  
Instagram @aberdeen\_cc

#beautifulABDN



### 1 Wellington Suspension Bridge

As Aberdeen expanded, the 1799 Aberdeen-Stonehaven turnpike opened up access to land in Torry where the Menzies of Pitfodels family wanted to develop farms. They and the heritors of Nigg Kirk planned this suspension bridge in 1829, linking Ferryhill with Torry's high bank of Craiglug, replacing the Craiglug ferry. Traces of the bridge's original toll house are on the Ferryhill north side. Known locally as the 'Chain Bridge', it was refurbished in 1930. However, due to safety concerns, it shut to vehicles in 1984, and completely in 2002. The strengthened bridge reopened to pedestrians and cyclists in 2008. The Bridge of Dee upstream is from the 1500s but a 1384 charter lists an earlier bridge which fell into disuse by mid 1400s. The location is unknown but Craiglug is one possibility. The Queen Elizabeth Bridge, also known as Wellington Bridge, is early 1980s.



### 3 River Dee

The river's course here has been deliberately changed, shaping both Aberdeen's docks and Torry itself. Originally it flowed northward from Wellington Suspension Bridge, following the railway to today's Union Square car park, then eastwards to sea. The map at the back shows its original course. Aberdeen Harbour Act of 1868 allowed the Harbour Commissioners to divert it to its current route and the first turf was cut by Lord Provost Leslie on 22 December 1869. This photograph shows the dam built on the Torry side (left) to allow excavation of the new channel, with Wellington Bridge in the background (centre right). Work was mostly carried out by hand with men using picks and shovels. It was following its new course by the beginning of 1873. There are footpaths both sides of this stretch of the river.



### 2 Boathouses

Aberdeen Boat Club was formed in 1865, based in a railway arch near Bank Street, Ferryhill. When the river was diverted (3), the club moved to a new boathouse at Polmuir, now demolished. In 1924, it bought the University boathouse which still stands. Its current home, the distinctive A-frame of 1982 was extended to two A-frames (above) in 1994. The architect Mike Rasmussen is a former club member. The other boathouses are the Student Association Rowing Club, University Rowing Aberdeen and Aberdeen Schools Rowing Association. Their crews are often out training and there are also boat races. D & A Ogilvie's South Bank Pleasure Boat Houses, built late 1800s, stood where the new bridge now crosses. They and their successors constructed and rented out small leisure boats until the late 1960s. These are most likely the source of the many boats in the top picture (1).



### 4 Torry Tram Depot

From 1891, public transport to and from Torry was by a horse bus service, taking passengers at a penny a time (creels a penny more). As Torry expanded, demand for a tram route grew. The first in Torry, from Guild Street to St Fittick's Road, opened on 10 October 1903 and extended to Bridge Street on 15 July 1905. The Torry Tram Depot opened in 1904, built in pink Corennie granite and drew some criticism for its extravagance. After 1910, it became the paint shop for the Dee Village central tram works with the tram cars moved to Queen's Cross. The Torry tram route was eventually closed on 28 February 1931 as numbers had been falling steadily, especially after the introduction of buses in 1921 to parts of Torry not served by trams. The depot is now part of the Bridge View office development.



## 5 Victoria Bridge

This was erected following the Dee Ferry Boat Disaster (37), which claimed the lives of 32 people on 5 April 1876. There had been plans for some time for a new bridge across to Torry but the tragedy provided the final impetus for building one. The bridge was formally opened 2 July 1881, partly funded by public contribution and partly by the Corporation of Aberdeen. Unlike the earlier and less central Wellington Suspension Bridge (1), it allowed direct access from Torry, via Market Street, to the heart of Aberdeen. Its opening was very timely and greatly facilitated the rapid expansion of Torry in the following years. The bridge retains its original cobblestones and gas lamps, now electric. A memorial plaque, added in 2005, marks the ferry disaster.



## 6 Torry Street Art

Part of the VictoriArt Road project, inspired by the murals of NuArt Aberdeen. These artworks greet visitors and locals alike as soon as they've crossed the river to Torry. 'Welcome to Torry' is by the artist Stuart Allan, known as Stallan, while the cheerful trawler (above) is by the collective Ugly People. Stallan also decorated the painted Anchor at the corner, originally part of a series of 20 by different artists marking the 20th anniversary of the charity Friends of Anchor. Other VictoriArt Road projects are highlighted along this trail and look out for others along the way. Like all street art, these are subject to change with new work appearing while others in time disappear.



## 7 Mission Hall

This is one of three surviving mission halls in Torry. A number of others were used by a variety of churches at different times, but no longer exist. This one was built between 1903 and 1925 and remains in use today. When it was originally built it was part of the great evangelical Christian movements of the late 1800s and early 1900s.



## 8 Victoria Road

This was one of the first streets when 'new' Torry began to develop in the late 19th century. As Aberdeen's population grew and fishing industry advanced, there was a need for new space. After very controversial debate, a private company, The Torry Land Association, purchased the land previously occupied by Torry Farm (see cartoon in introduction). The first houses on what would become Victoria Road, Nos 104 and 110, were built after 1883. However, the original villas have since been demolished and replaced by tenements. The next streets to develop were Menzies Road and Walker Road. Victoria Road retains something of a village feel to it along with its grand 1800s tenements. Many of the frontages retain tram rosettes (inset) where overhead power lines for the trams were fixed into the wall.





### 9 Upper Torry (site of)

Upper Torry, shown above on Milne's map of 1789 was one of two settlements from which modern Torry developed with Lower Torry (39) being the larger. These were both on lands, stretching down to Cove, which belonged to the Abbot of the Abbey of Arbroath from the 12th century until the reformation in 1560. In 1495, the Abbot received a charter from James IV erecting Torry into a Burgh of Barony. This was to help develop services for travellers coming to Aberdeen. The building of the Bridge of Dee in the 1520s by-passed Torry and it never fully developed as a Burgh but the community continued to grow. Torry's very first pub was 'le Sandy Velle', first noted in 1535. Upper Torry was also the later site of Torry Farm (see 8).



### 10 Torry Cinema (site of)

As early as 1910, Torry had its own cinema. The Torry Skating Rink Syndicate used its Sinclair Road premises, calling them Torry Picture Palace but WWI eventually ended this venture. After the war, on 2 May 1921, a new cinema opened, the Torry Picture House, later Torry Cinema, on Crombie Road. Throughout the 1920s, a band played accompaniment to the films shown at the Picture House. 'Talkies' were introduced on 15 September 1930 with 'The Trial of Mary Dugan'. The cinema closed on 24 September 1966.

### 11 Victoria Carpets Mural

Weaver Frieda Strachan, with assistance from the community, produced this eye-catching and tactile outdoor patchwork tapestry whose glittery threads catch the sun. Fabrics are a highly unusual material for street art and this unique work definitely pushes the boundaries. It is sited on the wall of Victoria Carpets who commissioned it as part of the VictoriArt project.



### 12 Victoria Gospel Hall

The second surviving mission hall was built by subscriptions from local people. It works closely with the other churches in the Torry area and the first meeting in this building was held on 13 October 1928. Prior to the hall being opened, the congregation met in the basement of what was the Co-op building from 27 May 1902. After this, they had temporarily moved into a small hall in South Esplanade West. The Victoria Hall has two entrances, Victoria Road and Crombie Road.

### 13 Fit Like

'Fit like', says one of the colourful characters by the artist Honk on this vibrant VictoriArt shop frontage. It's a universal greeting in Doric, the local dialect of Scots language, meaning 'how are you' or 'what's up' in English. A ubiquitous Aberdeen seagull, decked out in a nautical outfit, echoes back 'Skwak Like'!





#### 14 Torry Library

The plans for a reading room in Torry were designed by Messrs Brown and Watt Architects and approved by Aberdeen City Council on 15 November 1901. A verandah was planned for the end of the building to allow open air reading, but was never built. Provost James Walker opened the reading room on 19 December 1902. Initially, as it was not a lending library, members requested books which were fetched from the Central Library on Rosemount Viaduct by a man with a hand cart. The reading room was a great success from the start with some 31,367 visitors in the first 9 months. The willow tree sculpture commemorates the closing of Torry Academy (23).



#### 15 St Peter's Episcopal Church

The advent of steam trawling brought many fishermen to Aberdeen and Torry. This influx included Episcopalians leading to a need for a new church. A temporary mission hall was hired, opening on 28 January 1883 but it was not until 1893 that a permanent church was opened. St Peter's Episcopal Church was designed by the practice of Harold Ogle Tarbolton and John Kinross and approved by the Town Council on 11 March 1897. The congregation of St Peter's Church commissioned a model boat, named the *A153 St Peter and St Andrew*, to celebrate and commemorate the fishing connection. The model hung from the roof and was 15 feet long. It was produced by James Cordiner's yard on the banks of the Dee for £22.50. The church building itself was converted into flats in the 1990s, and the congregation now meets in the church hall at the rear. The model was moved to St Peter's Church, Fraserburgh.

#### 16 Torry Church

This has been both a Free Church and latterly Church of Scotland. As the congregation of the Free Church grew, it outstripped the capacity Sinclair Road church. In 1890, the much larger one on Victoria Road was built, costing £2,500. The foundation stone was laid by Sir William Henderson, October 1889, and opening service held 22 June 1890. In 1898, church halls were built and a back gallery added in 1903, to accommodate the growing congregation. As early as 1926, negotiations began to reconcile the United Free Church which had joined with the United Presbyterian Church in 1900 and Church of Scotland. However after long negotiations for a union, a further division was precipitated and more than 100 members formed the United Free (Continuing) Church (19). Initially they stayed on in the church but from October 1930 it was clear that the church was to be Church of Scotland. The building itself continued to house the Church of Scotland congregation until the 1990s. It was previously a crèche but is now Jesus House Torry, the Redeemed Christian Church of God.



#### 17 Salvation Army (site of)

The Salvation Army was formed by William Booth in London after the 1850s and has been active in Aberdeen since the early 1880s. For many years this was their Torry corps (or church) which provided a range of community works but has since closed. They continue to meet at the Salvation Army citadel in the Castlegate.



### 18 Sacred Heart

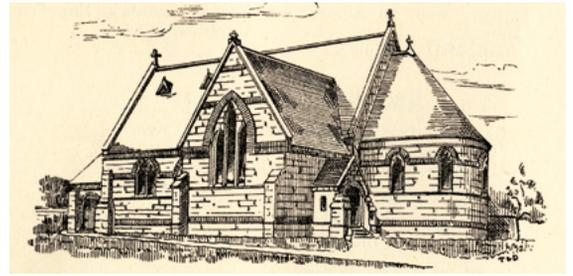
This Roman Catholic church was designed by Charles Jean Menart (also spelled Mennart and Ménart), a Belgian architect (c.1876-c.1937) and built by David Weir. Menart's work was mostly for the Archdiocese of Glasgow,

including, St Aloysius, Garnethill and Sacred Heart, Bridgeton. His work was mainly described as Roman baroque whilst this church has been described as Auvergne Romanesque. This is really the most distinctive church in Torry. Indeed at the time of its construction it attracted much attention due to its unique style and appearance. It is built out of red Clinterty granite and is completed with red tiles. No square stones were used in its construction but only what was described as 'rock faced rubble work'. It cost £4000 to build and had an initial seating capacity of 350. Sacred Heart was opened on 19 November 1911 when High Mass was celebrated by Bishop Chisholm.



### 19 Torry United Free (Continuing) Church

Following the early 20th century reunion of most of the United Free Church and the Church of Scotland, the break away United Free (Continuing) Church required a new place of worship. After some negotiation, the foundation stone for a new church was laid on 25 June 1932 and the first service was held on 15 April 1933. In 1934, the church was extended when a hall was added. The foundation stone for the hall was laid on 23 June 1934. The church itself has a number of features including the altar table which is modelled exactly on that in the church they had just vacated in Victoria Road (16). The church remains in use today as a United Free (Continuing) church.



### 20 Torry St Fittick's

Nigg Kirk, built in 1829, served south of the River Dee but the main population developed closer to Aberdeen. From 1894, fortnightly services were held in a wooden hall near the pierhead but attendance dwindled due to its poor conditions. In March 1896, the new church's foundation stone was laid by Lauchlan McKinnon Jnr, convener of the Presbytery's Church Extension Committee. The Gothic church was designed by A.H.L. Mackinnon and planned with 818 seats for £2,000. However, it was not entirely finished and opened providing 550. The church's dedication service was 24 November 1899 with a permanent minister, the Reverend Archibald Macintyre who was appointed on 27 June 1900. For many years after it was burdened with its building debts. The church has an 18th century bronze bell from old St Fittick's church (20) which cost £153 and 4 shillings. The inscription in Latin, tells that the bell was made by John Mowat in Old Aberdeen in 1759 and reads 'Sabata pango funra plango' – 'Sabbaths I proclaim, funerals I toll'.



### 21 Walker Road School

After Victoria Road School, this was the second school to be opened after Torry had been incorporated into Aberdeen (1891). Walker Road School was opened on 8 March 1897 with a roll of nearly 600 pupils, and James Campbell was the first head teacher. During WWI troops were billeted here and at Victoria Road Primary, before being shipped off to war. The school buildings were altered in 1934, school meals were introduced in 1941, and indoor toilets were provided in 1964.



## 22 Craiginches Prison (site of)

Built in 1890, this was later known as the medium-security HM Prison Aberdeen, which closed in 2014. The last man to be hanged in Scotland, Henry John Burnett (see **Bloody Aberdeen Trail**), was executed here on 15 August 1963. Peterhead's new HM Prison Grampian replaced both it and Peterhead Prison, which now houses a prison museum. The old Craiginches clock stands in the garden of the housing development that replaced it and uses granite blocks from the prison's huge perimeter wall. Designed by Lina Khairy, from Robert Gordon University's Scott Sutherland School of Architecture, her design is called 'Break Free' and topped a public poll of Torry residents.

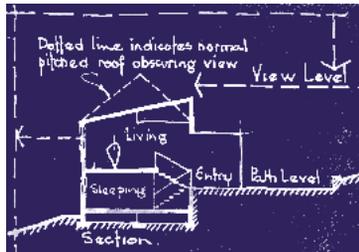


## 23 Torry Intermediate School/Torry Academy

Built from Peterhead granite on the brow of Torry Hill, it opened on 29 August 1927. After WWII, the rear block was expanded and under the comprehensive system, it became Torry Academy in 1970. It was extended to the front in 1977 due to growing numbers of pupils. To mark its July 2018 closure, a willow tree was created by artists Margaret and David Preston with an engraved gold leaf for each pupil and staff member in Torry Academy's final year. The copper windings on the tree will, in time, oxidise with the colours reflecting the school tie: blue, aqua and silver. Torry and Kincorth Academies closed to make way for the £47 million Lochside Academy. The tree is now on display outside Torry Library (see 14).

## 24 Balnagask

Balnagask Estate was developed for housing in the mid 1960s, whilst Aberdeen's first timber-framed housing was built on Balnagask Road in 1974. The innovative design has



living spaces upstairs and shallow pitched roofs to avoid blocking neighbouring views. The area also had prefabricated houses, built in the post WWII housing crisis. They were only supposed to have been used for 10-15 years but remained in use for more than twenty.



## 25 Tullos Primary School & Mural

This vibrant VictoriArt project is by the artist Honk (13), aka Fitlikeart, and 340 pupils of this school. Herring are known as 'silver darlings' in Scotland and like these, shine in the sun. Construction of this splendid art deco style school began in 1938 but WWII delayed building work and it opened in 1950. It was designed by the architect John Alexander Ogg Allan, responsible for a number of other notable schools in Aberdeen, such as St Peter's on King Street and Frederick Street School. The grounds house Tullos Swimming Pool with a modern 25 metre pool and smaller learner one. A footpath under the nearby railway leads towards the neighbouring Tullos Hill (26).



## 26 Tullos Hill

Together with the adjoining Kincorth Hill, these are the foothills of the majestic Grampian Mountains, one of Scotland's three major mountain ranges. Known locally as 'The Gramps', they bring a touch of the Highlands and hill walking to the area, with waymarked footpaths. A Local Nature Conservation Site it is home to wildlife and history, including Bronze Age Burial Cairns from around 2,000BC. Both hills are included in **Kincorth & Tullos Hill Trail**.





## 27 East Tullos Burn Wetlands

In 2014, this previously unattractive burn was transformed into a meandering course, with wetland areas and ponds, a mix of wetland flowers and better access. This project complemented other improvements in St Fitticks Park including the planting of trees for wildlife as well as shelter and interest for people. A footbridge over the railway, beside the water treatment centre, leads to Tullos Hill (26). Before the last ice age, the River Dee would have flowed into the sea through St Fitticks Park.



## 28 St Fittick's Church

The oldest church in the area, part of William the Lion's late 1100s endowments to his newly founded Abbey of Aberbrothoc (Arbroath). 'St Fittick' may be an amalgam of two saints, Fotin and Fiacre. The current ruins may date to late 17th, early 18th century and feature a possible chain for a joughs, or scold's bridle, a form of ecclesiastical punishment. One north side window is in a style known as a 'leper squint' although leprosy no longer existed here by this time.

Throughout the medieval and early modern period, it served as far as Cove. An 18th century map of Tullos Hill shows 'Cove resting cairn', where a funeral party would rest whilst bearing the deceased to St Fittick's. The church was in use until 1829 when a new one was built in a more suitable location for the communities it served and it also houses St Fitticks 18th century bronze bell (20). A manse and stables were originally beside the church.



## 29 Girdleness

In contrast to urban Torry and busy harbours, this cliff-top coastal walk features natural habitat and wildlife. Torry Point Battery, an 1860s fort, stands guard over the sea with an aquatic VictoriArt mural and Girdleness Lighthouse has a foghorn fondly known as the 'Torry Coo'. Walker Park (previously Torry Park/Girdleness Park) is currently closed. For full details of this area, see the [Aberdeen Coastal Trail](#).



## 30 Balnagask Golf Course

This municipal 18 hole golf course is home to Nigg Bay Golf Club. It totals 6,200 yards covering approximately half the headland. The club house displays a VictoriArt mural by artist Katie Guthrie, known as KMG Yeah, inspired by her grandma's love of the game.

## 31 Torry Farming

Although best known for fishing, Torry was largely agricultural until relatively recently. The oldest farming legacy is distinctive markings left by medieval farmers at Balnagask Golf Course. Their open fields had a patchwork of furlongs, as the plough was dragged in one direction, year after year, leaving a distinctive pattern. The long narrow furlong strips were 'rigs' and the pattern 'rig & furrow' (ridge & furrow in England). Below is North Kirkhill Farm in the 1880s and today's allotments next door continue the horticultural tradition.





### 32 Marine Laboratory

The Fisheries Board for Scotland was established in 1882 to research fishing techniques and ways of enhancing North Sea fish stocks and this evolved into today's Fisheries Research Services. The first Laboratory was at Bay of Nigg in 1898, moving to Wood Street in 1923. The operation expanded following WWII and, in 1948, a sister organisation, Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory, was established at Pitlochry with later field stations at Lochs Ewe, Torridon and Duich on the west coast. Today, the principal means of collecting specimens and data is the Fisheries Research Vessel *Scotia* (below). The lab has researched fish cultivation and disease, fishing gear and fish behaviour, helping to design efficient ways of sustainable fishing. The institution's work



assists in the setting of the North Sea's yearly Total Allowable Catch limits. The site also hosts a VictoriArt mural by Isla Valentine Wade (top) reflecting Torry's links with the sea and the role natural environment plays in our wellbeing.



### 33 Balnagask Motte

This is thought to be a motte, an earthen structure which once supported an early wooden castle, sometimes with lower enclosed area known as a bailey. That type of castle design was brought to this country by the Normans and many were constructed throughout Scotland, England and Wales from 11th century onwards. According to legend, the motte is associated with one Cormac de Nugg, whose name appears in a 13th century charter, but there is no evidence to relate him to this area. The former Balnagask House's summerhouse, built early 1900s, crowned the top. This building probably altered the shape of the upper mound, which has never been excavated by archaeologists but is an interesting minor hill and vantage point.

### 34 Bruce Garden

Named in memory of William Bruce, Torry's first Sub-Postmaster who lived with his family in his home which stood here until 1965 – this little green space really was his garden. The cottage also originally served as the post office until a new one was opened at the north east corner of Abbey Road and Baxter Street.



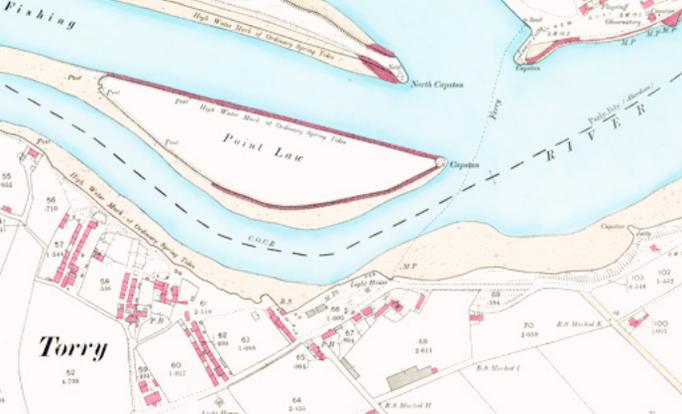
### 35 Abbey Road/Victoria Road School

The parish of Nigg had its parish school from the 18th century. The first school, that we know the location of, was opened near Nigg Kirk in January 1849, with Mr Barnet as headmaster. Torry Public School opened on 2 May 1873 on Abbey Road and the local Fishermen's Association had voted £1400 towards its construction. As the population grew in size, there was a need to expand the school and in 1905 the old Abbey Road school was extended considerably, at a cost of £8700, and renamed Victoria Road Primary School. Part of the old building was incorporated into the infants' section of the 'new' school.

### 36 Old Torry Community Centre

The third surviving mission hall in Torry, built in the 1930s. A former fisherman's mission, it is now a registered charity and also helps keep the Old Torry name alive. This multi-purpose space is run by volunteers and can also be hired for events.





### 37 River Dee Ferry Boat Disaster

This shore, where the modern concrete pier ends, is largely unchanged from the days of the ferry boat. For centuries, it shuttled between Footdee's Pocra Quay and Torry. The original route shown above on the 1868 Ordnance Survey map, along with Old Torry Village (39). However it later crossed in two stages, pulled by wire cable, via the tip of Point Law – the island on the map above. There was a feast day holiday on April 15th 1876, with a fair at Torry and the busy ferry was overloaded with over 70 passengers. The River Dee was in spate and crossing this part the ferry started to shake, its cable was loosened but it capsized. Some swam to safety or were rescued, but 32 drowned (see also **Bloody Aberdeen Trail**). The public inquiry led to Victoria Bridge (5) being built but motor ferries continued even after the bridge and two routes are shown on the lower map opposite.



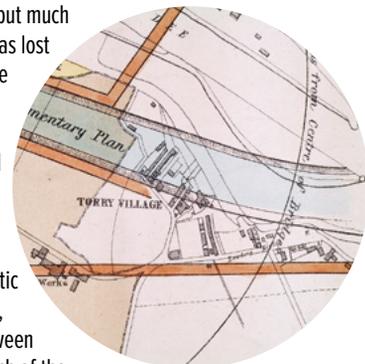
### 38 Leading Lights

These were erected in 1842, marking the correct angle to enter the navigation channel into the harbour, when both are aligned. They show red when safe to enter, green when dangerous. Thought to be amongst the oldest cast iron lighthouses in the world, for many years a keeper of the lights lived in a cottage by the western light. That tower was relocated in the late 1800s as harbour improvements altered the position of the safe navigation channel. They are now controlled from the Marine Operations Centre across the harbour at the base of the North Pier. They lights are marked on the old maps on these pages, a useful guide to the position and features of Old Torry village (39).



### 39 Old Torry Village & Harbour (site of)

This is the location of the former Torry Harbour and Torry Quay (shown on the 1901 Ordnance Survey map below). Old Torry Village was mostly to the west of the harbour and an information panel, with photographs, is further along Sinclair Road behind perimeter fencing opposite the western leading light (38). 'Old Torry' village developed from Lower Torry but much of this quaint old fish town was lost in 1871 when the course of the River Dee was diverted (inset right). Paradoxically a lot of new ground was also created at that time. Essentially a fisher community, its houses mostly dated to the 1800s and included very characteristic narrow streets and forestairs, where a house was split between down stairs and upstairs. Much of the remainder of the village (below), was lost in the 1970s when the harbour and quay area again expanded, this time with the oil trade. Only one or two streets (such as Abbey Road and Wood Street) and a few houses are left from old Torry, although none earlier than 1800s. Below Ordnance Survey 1901, note the ferry routes top left and right.





#### 40 Inverdee House

A modern landmark waterfront building by Kepple Design, 2010. It highlights best practices in environmentally sensitive construction and has many energy saving and sustainable technologies. The Aberdeen headquarters of the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, it also houses Scottish Natural Heritage and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. It is also the site of the former Torry Research Station (41).

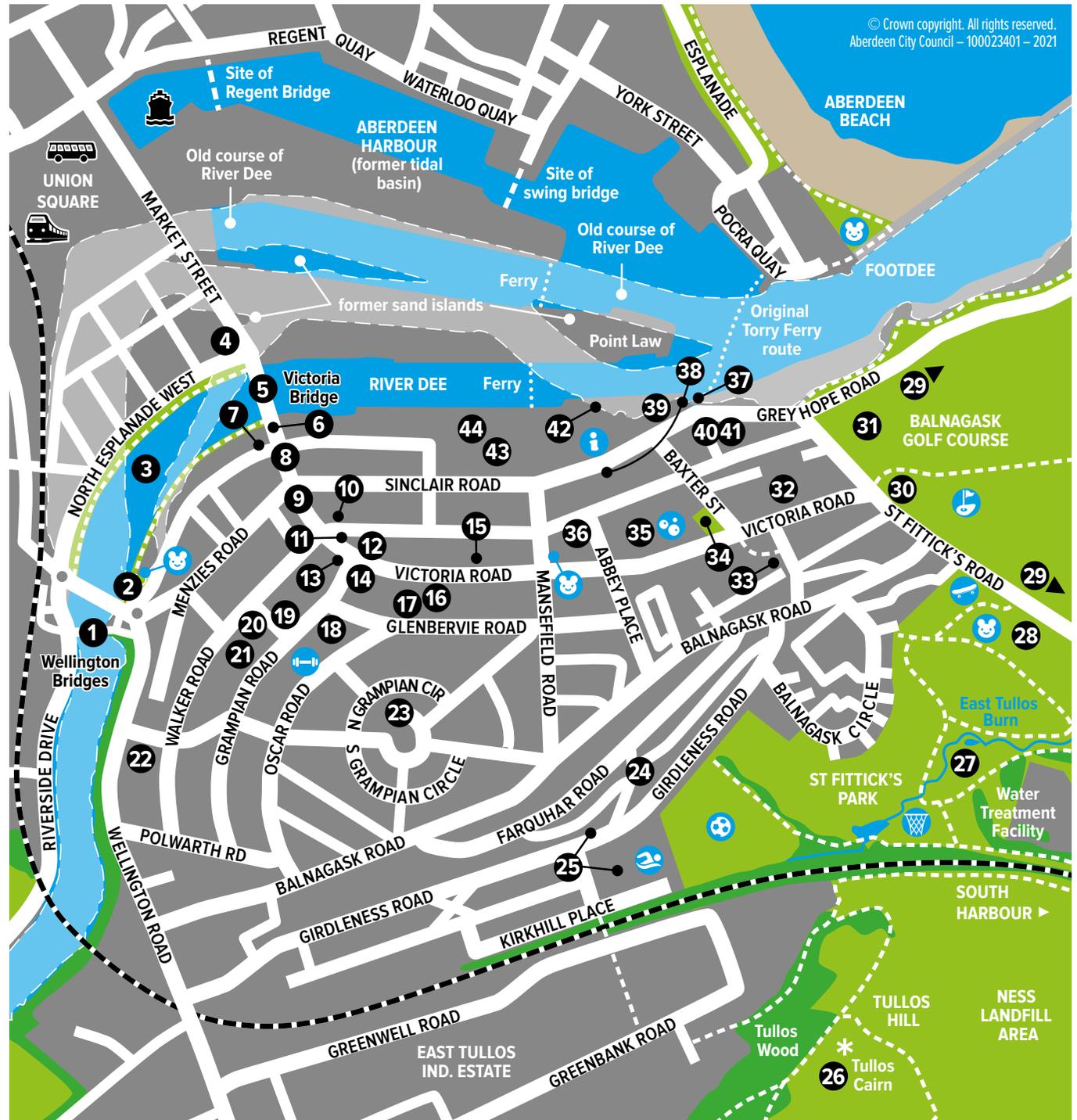


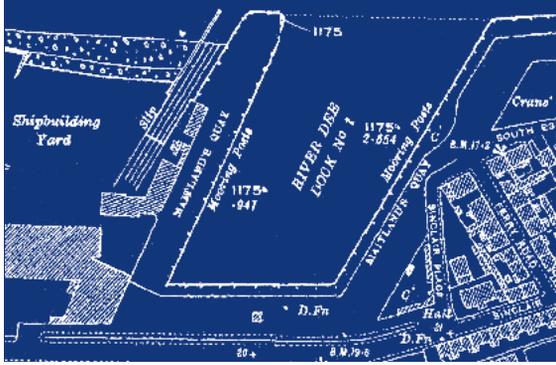
#### 41 Torry Research Station (site of)

Part of The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food (MAFF), specialising in research and development of fish processing. Closed in 1996, its functions were dispersed to the Marine Laboratory (32) and other institutions. MAFF's own research ship *Sir William Hardy* (above right), constructed at former Aberdeen shipbuilders Hall Russell & Co Ltd was launched 29 November 1954, the UK's first diesel-electric trawler, designed for carrying out pioneering work on fish as food. In her second life, sold to Greenpeace in 1978 and renamed *Rainbow Warrior*, she pioneered early environmental activism before being notoriously sunk by French secret agents in Waitemata harbour, Auckland, New Zealand just before midnight 10 July 1985. The ship's photographer Fernando Pereira drowned in the attack. *Rainbow Warrior* was refloated but unrepairable and was scuttled, to become an artificial reef for marine life. Above left is the raised ship, after the explosion, to the end registered in Aberdeen.

#### 42 Torry Syphon House (no access)

This small but important granite structure is part of the Girdleness sewage outfall system, a massive engineering project started in 1900. Over three miles in length, with two sections, north and south of the Dee, joined by a tunnel through which sewage is syphoned beneath the river. This little house sits over the shaft on the Torry side of the tunnel and together with its companion across the river, at Point Law in Footdee, is still in use.





### 43 River Dee Dock (site of)

By early 20th century, Aberdeen was Scotland's leading white fish port and this was built in 1909-1915 to service the fishing fleet, later the oil industry. It was removed as part of Torry Quay development to create deep-water berths more suitable for modern shipping. The above 1925-26, Ordnance Survey map shows various nautical features including shipbuilding yards and part of Old Torry Village (39).

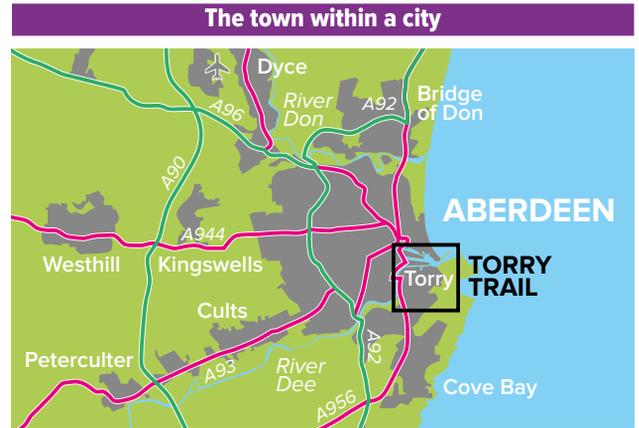


### 44 Torry Shipbuilding

John Lewis & Sons Ltd, 1907-1976, initially specialised in marine engine production and repair, constructing their first ship in 1917, due to WWI demand. They built more than 30 vessels during WWII including minesweeper trawlers and patrol boats. Notable ships are the *Fairtry*, the world's first purpose-built factory stern trawler and in 1968, Aberdeen's last sailing ship, the training vessel *Malcolm Miller*. In 1972, Wood Group, which had fishing industry origins, took them over. However, they were expanding into oil industry services and in 1976, constructed a new 1600-ton slipway to repair offshore supply vessels, while still building occasional ships until the 1980s.

John Duthie Torry Shipbuilding Co Ltd was last in a succession of Duthie-owned shipyards and operated 1904-1925. John had been a partner at the Footdee yard of John Duthie, but in 1904, set up in partnership with his brother-in-law, Walter G Jameson, and John Fiddes, who worked for the Footdee firm. The yard's output consisted almost entirely of fishing vessels, many for North-east owners.

# Torry Local Area Trail



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Aberdeen City Council – 100023401 – 2021

## #aberdeentrails



This is one in a series of themed Aberdeen City trails. All are available via the free **GoABZ** mobile app and at [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/trails](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/trails)



### For further information contact

Visit Scotland Aberdeen iCentre  
01224 269180 [www.visitscotland.com](http://www.visitscotland.com)

Visit Aberdeenshire [www.visitabdn.com](http://www.visitabdn.com)  
follow on Instagram @visitabdn

For public transport information contact Travel Line  
[www.travelinescotland.com](http://www.travelinescotland.com)

For a large text version contact  
**03000 200 293**

