

A Century of Shopping along Fortrose and Rosemarkie High Streets

by
Fortrose and Rosemarkie
Local History Group



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Photographs courtesy of
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Photograph of Daniel Fraser (front cover)
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Thank you,

Chris Rendell,
Chair, Fortrose and Rosemarkie History Group,
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A Century of Shopping along Rosemarkie High Street

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Introduction

There have been many changes to the shops and shopping along Fortrose and Rosemarkie High Streets over the last century.

Throughout the UK High Streets have lost their small independent shops to the out of town retail park and now the internet on line shopping is threatening the continued existence of the 'High Street' as we have known it. Rosemarkie has lost 80% of its shops since 1900 while Fortrose is surviving quite well having lost only 40%.

Although Rosemarkie is the older of the two settlements there has historically been more opportunities to prosper in Fortrose since Bishop Robert the Elder moved his Palace and Cathedral to the hamlet of Chanonrie some time in the thirteenth century. Chanonrie became the Royal Burgh of Fortrose in 1590.

In both Rosemarkie and Fortrose the nature of retailing has changed. Shops that serve the local population with their everyday needs stand alongside those that cater for both the day visitor and the caravan-staying holidaymaker.

Before the watershed of the First World War, the better off families like the Mackenzies and the Fowlers had always been accustomed to importing quality goods, like furniture or clothes and fine wines, from Edinburgh or London. As farmers grew wealthier through improved farming practices, there was a growing demand for superior agricultural

implements and machinery beyond the capacity of the local blacksmith.

Local people have always travelled into Inverness for special items. A shopping trip to Inverness by bus or train in the first half of the twentieth century would have been a whole day expedition. Ladies no doubt looked forward to a visit to town where they could dress up to see and be seen. High quality, personal service was the priority then so a lady's purchases would be delivered to the railway station by the 'boy' to be picked up on the way home.

A time traveller from the past would be amazed at today's brightly lit, colourful shop interiors with their wide range of branded goods on display. But they might wonder where was the chair for a lady to sit on while she made her purchases and regret the limited opportunity for conversation with friends and neighbours.

Today's time traveller going back to 1900 might have difficulty recognising which premises were the shops since many were still just a front room in a house or indistinguishable from a workshop. The first purpose built shop in Rosemarkie, 'Steavenson's General Merchants' of the mid 1800s, became Hugh Home's 'High Class Grocery' then Mary Ann MacGillivray's 'Store'. It is now a private home, 'Doric House'.

The late Victorian era saw a boom in the construction of purpose built shops throughout the whole country. The development of plate glass in 1834 meant that shop windows increased in size to maximise light and could be used to

display goods. In Rosemarkie, Dornkop was built as a detached house and shop in the 1890s. Dornkop, built with money from South Africa, went on to house William Robb's 'Cash Grocery' and Daniel Fraser's 'D. & G. Fraser Grocers' (see front cover) then Mrs Jones 'Shoe Shop'. Today it is the home of 'Panacea'.

Stuart's 'Grocery and Drapery' claimed, in an advertisement in the Ross-shire Journal, to be the oldest shop in Fortrose and appears in the 1881 Census. Stuart's may well have been the first purpose built shop on the High Street but the 1871 census, however, shows John Smith, Clothier, open for business in Union Street. John Smith later had a draper's shop on the High Street itself, opposite Cathedral Antiques.

Stuart's continued to be a retail outlet until 2012 but the nature of the shop and its business changed through the years and reflects the overall pattern of shopping both nationally and on the Black Isle. From being a draper/grocer/general merchant, selling a comprehensive range of goods it became a grocery store and then a MACE supermarket. Finally, meeting the needs of the visitor rather than local residents it became a Belgian Chocolatier's.

A Century of Shopping along Fortrose High Street

Fortrose is an attractive small town on the Black Isle. Once a small hamlet on the Chanonry peninsula in the parish of Rosemarkie it owes its prominent position to the building of the Cathedral there in the twelfth century. Fortrose became the focus of ecclesiastical affairs with the parishes of the Black Isle represented in the manse that surrounded the Cathedral building. Following the Reformation and the destruction of the Cathedral, Fortrose continued to be a popular place of residence for annuitants and pensioners, a practice that persists to this day.

The building of the Telford harbour in the early 1800's consolidated Fortrose's prosperity as a market town with a weekly Wednesday market and three annual fairs. The town was linked to Inverness, Aberdeen and London in the 1840's by the weekly steamer, 'Northern Star' and was in a unique position to serve the commercial and industrial needs of the locality. When the coastal shipping trade began to decline, the town's importance was maintained by the opening of the Highland Railway branch line in 1894 linking Fortrose to Inverness and north to Dingwall.

Fortrose had a well-established commercial base along the High Street by 1900. There were purpose built shops supplying a variety of products and services like the Post Office as well as the Caledonian Bank. For many towns and villages the First World War was a watershed with few shops surviving the price rises and shortages of the war years and the problems of the Depression that followed. Fortrose's

unique position, fertile farmland, geographically attractive with rolling hills and rocky coastline and still so socially acceptable that incomers were attracted into the town, meant that the High Street continued to thrive.

The low point in Fortrose's shopping history came in the last quarter of the twentieth century when many shops closed. The opening of the Kessock Bridge in 1982 improved access to the superior retail opportunities of Inverness and the local shops could not compete. The town kept its essential shops, the bakery, the butcher's and the Co-operative Store but many others were turned into storage or offices.

Then in 1986 Mr and Mrs Alexander decided to retire and the bakery closed. There had been a bakehouse and bakery at 45 High Street from the 1870's. It was symbolic of the trade craftsmen who had served their community and a link with the past had been broken. The shop stood empty for some time until it was taken over by the new type of shop to rejuvenate the High Street. 'Cathedral Antiques'. This antique shop and the 'Fat Frog' coffee bar in 'The Studio Jewellery Workshop', appeal to a different sort of customer, the leisure shopper, who comes to Fortrose for a relaxing experience as part of a holiday to see the dolphins at Chanonry or visit the Cathedral for the annual St Boniface Fair. But the High Street has been rejuvenated and the local customers still have their butcher, two new baker's shops and a chemist.

Follow the stories of these shops, past and present, using the ***History Trail*** along the High Street.

Start the trail by the Union Tavern and walk as far as the Co-operative Supermarket. Then cross over the road and walk back to the site of the Mercat Cross and end the trail by enjoying refreshment in the Eilean Dubh Restaurant.

Look carefully for the sheaf of wheat on the gable end of the bakery. If you are very observant you may find evidence of John Smith's 'clothiers' shop. A useful indicator of previous use is an extra large window in a private house. This might have been a shop.



Sheaf of wheat plaque
above the Cromarty Bakery

A Century of Shops and Shopping History Trail

Fortrose High Street

23 High Street

Bank of Scotland

Formerly the Caledonian Bank. The Bank Agent and his family lived above the bank.

27 High Street (now a private house)

Alexander McIver, *Shoemaker* appears in the 1901 Census but has gone by 1911 (Slater's Trade Directory).

The Union Tavern

The 1901 census records Margaret Smith as the spirit dealer at the Union Tavern. Her son Simon (a tailor) and niece, Mary Young (a dressmaker) lived with her.



The **Union Tavern** was one of several 'tippling houses'. There was also 'The Ship Inn', Academy Street, 'Fraser's Arms', Main Street (now High Street), 'The Grapes', North Street and the 'White Horse' at Chanonry Point.

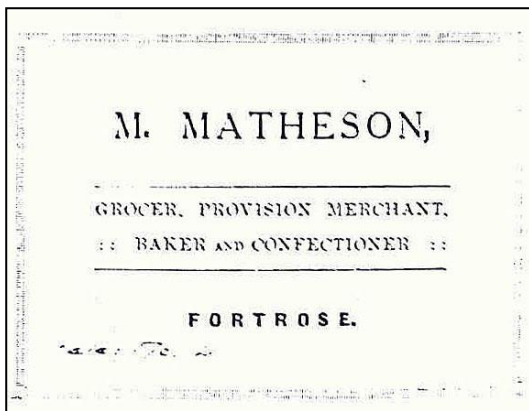
The Union Tavern, 2012

Tavern House site

Murdoch Matheson, *Grocer, Baker and Tea Rooms*

Murdo described himself as a 'grocer, provisions merchant, baker and confectioner. In the 1930s Murdo sold butter, sugar, black and white puddings. (Val Roll 1931-39)

He was a bit of a joker too. Once when he suspected someone of 'pinching' the occasional black pudding, he tied the black puddings all together so that the next time this person tried to slip one into her pocket, a trail of black puddings followed her out of the shop.



**Murdoch Matheson's
advert in the
North StarGuide
(1930)**

Murdo Matheson also had a grocer and bakery shop at Macdonald's 49 High Street for a short time.

Murdo was still in business 1955/6 (Val Roll 1955-56).

The Home family who ran the High Class Grocery in Rosemarkie owned several properties between the Union Tavern and Cathedral Antiques.

The only shop remaining is **Harry Gow, Bakers.**

This shop opened about 2007.

31 High Street (now a private house)

James McKeddie

This was a **café** for a short time, mid 20th century, run by the McKeddie family (Val Roll 1960, 65/6).

33 High Street (now a private house)

James Wilson, *Plumber* rented the property from Helen Bates Home in the 1930s. He lived at Clematis Cottage.

Roddy Sangster, *Plumber* displayed plumbing accessories and sanitary ware here (Val Roll 1955/56, 1965/66 1971/2). Sangster also owned a store and workshop down at the shore. By 1985 number 33 was used as a store only



Ferrier, *Greengrocer*

35 High Street (now a private house)

Ray and Pat Ferrier, *Greengrocer*

In the 1970's the Ferrier's sold fruit and vegetables here but by

37 High Street (now a private house)

James Munro, *Butcher* is recorded in the 1901 Census and 1903 Slater's Directory employing his wife Mary and a young man, John McIntosh.

39 High Street (now a private house)

In 1935/6 the property was owned by **R.Home**, the ***Blacksmith*** on the Shore. **Alex Duncan, *Barber*** had his barber shop there in 1971/72 before moving to the back of the chemist's shop on Station Road.

43/45 High Street

For most of their life these premises have been used as a bakery, bakers shop and tea rooms.

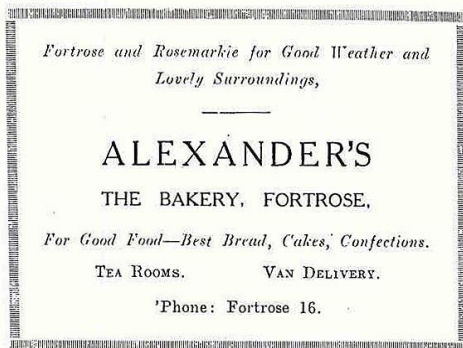
James Fraser had a bakery with Alexander Anderson, his foreman baker, living above the shop (1901 Census).

James Fraser's wife worked in the baker's shop and was known by the bi-name of Mrs Bappy after the baps she sold.

Cathedral Antiques



When James Fraser retired he sold the business to Harold Alexander who advertised his bakery and tearooms in the North Star Guide. Declaring 'Fortrose and Rosemarkie for Good Weather and Lovely Surroundings' the advert recommends a visit to **Alexander's** for 'Good Food – Best Bread, Cakes and Confections.'



Harold Alexander's Advert in the North Star Guide

Thomas Johnston Ure, took over the bakery and tearooms in 1935 until handing over to **Mr and Mrs A. A. Alexander** (no relation to Harold) in 1946.

Alexander Alexander started work in the bakery at 2-00am so that Hannah Alexander had bread ready to sell when the shop opened at 9-00am. Alexander produced a wide variety of breads but the local favourites were his small rough loaves, milk loaves and bread rolls. Coming from the other side of the Moray Firth he was particularly noted for his Wine Biscuits, a speciality of the Moray coast and similar to modern butter biscuits. Mr Alexander also enjoyed decorating any wedding cakes requested and was happy to display the wedding photographs in the bakery. By the late 1980s the Alexander's had retired and the shop stood empty until taken over by Cathedral Antiques who sell a range of antiques.



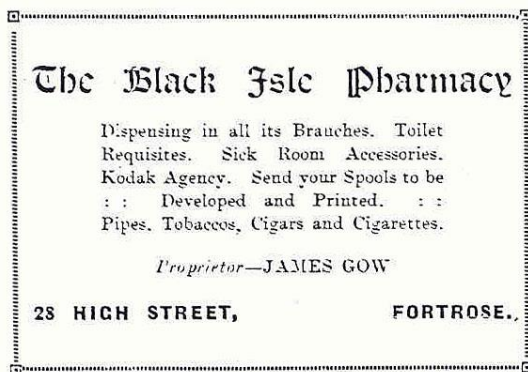
Hannah Alexander (left) with Catherine Wilson and Eve Taylor. Hannah and her staff in traditional baker's outfits, selling their popular biscuits and cakes at the annual St Boniface Fair in the late 1980's.

47 High Street



Boots the Chemist

This has always been a pharmacy/chemist/druggist. At the beginning of the 20th century the druggist was **James Robertson**. By the 1930s the proprietor of the 'Black Isle Pharmacy' was **James Gow**.



Black Isle Pharmacy Advert, North Star Guide 1930

Angus Gow joined his father some years later to not only dispense medicines but also to sell toilet requisites, sick room accessories, pipes, tobacco, cigars and cigarettes.

The Pharmacy also acted as a Kodak Agency to develop and print photographs. Angus was a keen photographer and displayed pictures of local events in his shop.

Still ‘Gow the Chemist’ in 1985 by 1995 the new chemist was Mohammed Shafi.

There used to be a ‘dole’ office at the back of the Chemist’s shop in Station Road, where young men went to register for the army.



The Chemist’s shop opposite John Smith’s Clothiers

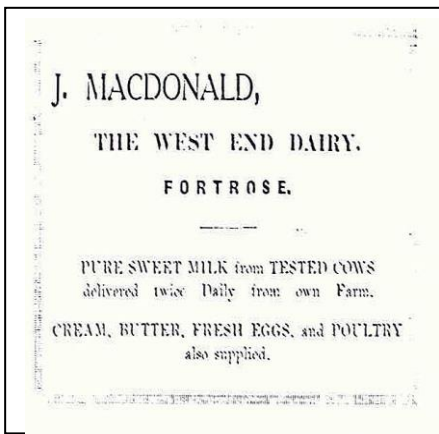
49 High Street



The sheaf of wheat plaque on the front wall of this shop tells us it started out as a Bakery and although still a bakery today has seen many changes over the century of shopping.

Cromarty Bakery

In 1911 the **baker** was **John Macleod**. After John's death Mrs Macleod rented the shop and bake house to Murdo Matheson, the baker/grocer next to the Union Tavern



John Macdonald took the shop over in the 1930s. and renamed it '**The West End Dairy**'. The dairy sold 'pure sweet milk from tested cows' as well as cream, butter, fresh eggs and poultry.

John Macdonald's Advert in the North Star Guide

John's brother, Tom Macdonald had a dairy farm under the railway bridge at the top of Bishop's Road and he delivered milk from a van or you could take your own pail to the farm to be filled.



Tom Macdonald's Farm overlooking Fortrose from the ridge above the railway

In the late 1930s, Dorothy Kate Macdonald's father, **Kenny Macdonald**, had the shop as a bakery again. George Brooks rented it for his electrical business in 1946. Dorothy Kate Haytor (nee Macdonald) inherited the family home but the shop stood empty through the 1950's and 60's.

More recently it was **Ina Anderson's *Hairdressers*** (1970s); a private residence; then for several years in the last two decades of the twentieth century it was the office of the **Highlands and Islands Fishermen's Association**. Recently it was, briefly, the '**Farm Shop**' and now (since 2010) it is a shop outlet for '**The Cromarty Bakery**', all the baking being done in Cromarty.

51 – 61 High Street

The **Library Buildings and Victoria Buildings** are now private houses but the Valuation Rolls and trade directories show several have been used as shops

John Fraser, *Tailor*

John Fraser's tailoring business is recorded in the 1901 Census and Slater's Trade Directory for 1903 and 1911.

Mrs McLennan, *Fancy Goods*

The Inland Revenue Survey, 1911, records this as a fancy goods shop probably including sales of stationery.

Much later, we find **Dorothy Brooks** running a hairdressing salon. 1971/72. Dorothy Brooks' husband, **Ross Macdonald** had an *Electrical Shop* there.

A.R.Ross (1971/72)

The Valuation Roll records only that the shop was owned by Mrs Smith. No information on what was sold there. Later Mrs Smith acted as a collecting agent for the payment of bills.

George Munro, *Shoemaker*

Charles Macandrew, *Shoemaker*

Charles MacAndrew is recorded as living at 'Loandhu'.

There were several shoemaker or boot makers in Fortrose at the beginning of the 20th century. Slater's Directory 1911 and the Census for 1901 list John Ross, Donald Ross, Andrew Paton, Thomas Ross, Alexander Fraser, Alexander McIver, George Davidson and Donald McDonald as boot and shoemakers.

Hannah Alexander remembers George Munro and Charles MacAndrew as shoemakers in the 1930s. Both men had lost a leg and took up shoemaking in rehabilitation.

George Murray, *Stationer* (Val Roll 1931/2)
Miss Alex Murray, *Stationer* (Val Roll 1938/9)



Alexander Watson , *Barber*

Alexander Watson, *Barber* rented 'Loandhu' from Charles MacAndrew during the Second World War (Val Roll 1942/3). The red and white pole which used to be outside Victoria Buildings, is the traditional sign for a barber/surgeon. Find the building (opposite the 'Anderson') by its window style and double door.

61 High Street

This appears to have been a butcher's shop for many years. Originally it was **Harpers the Butchers** and was then taken over in the 1960's by **John Butchart, *Butcher***.

After Butcharts left **Sandy Jack** took over the business, running it successfully for some 40 years (Val Roll 1971/2,1985,1995)



Sandy Jack, *Butcher*

The shop is now owned by **John M Munro**, a local butchery chain and is still run as a butchers.

Kate Evans, Jack Stuart's daughter, is said to have had a toy shop here, next door to her father's business at 63 High Street. No record can be found of this in the Valuation Rolls so it may be that her shop was in a corner of her parents' establishment sometime in the 1930's.

63 High Street



The oldest shop

This imposing building was originally **John Stuart's Grocery and Drapery**.

The Stuarts claimed this to be the oldest shop in Fortrose and appear on the 1881 Census but John Smith, a Draper, was listed in 1871, although not on High Street.

Jack Stuart ran the grocery

part while his wife had the drapery section.

By the 1930s they were describing themselves as 'draper, family grocer and wine merchant' stocking 'all proprietary brands'. Stuart also arranged holiday lettings in and around Fortrose. Orders were both collected and delivered to customers.

In 1950's the Stuarts' business was taken over by **Jessie Maclean** who sold it on to **Alex Young**.

Alex came from Aberdeen and played football for Ross County between 1958 and 1965.

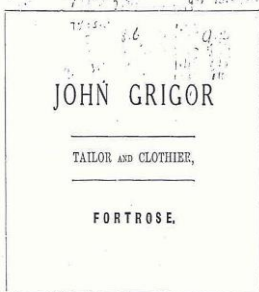
Mr and Mrs. Young were still in Fortrose, running the shop as traditional family grocers in 1972.

After the Youngs left the building was vacant or used as a store through the 1980's and 1990's until it became the **MACE Supermarket**.

Finally, when the Mace moved out, the **Belgian Chocolate Shop** took over the building, before closing down in 2012.

65 High Street (demolished)

John Grigor, *Draper*



John Grigor is recorded in the Slater's Trade Directories in 1903 and 1911

By the 1930s he is advertising himself as a 'Tailor and Clothier'. The building was demolished in the post war period as part of a general plan to improve vehicular access to the town centre and into Church Street.

67/69 High Street

There was a shoemaker and a tailor here before the First World War. '**Old Donald Nelson**', from Glasgow, repaired bicycles in the house/shop behind number 69, Viewfort House

Rory Mackenzie, 40 High Street, expanded his business in the 1930s from his Fleshers across the road to include a **Butcher's Shop** at **67 High Street** and his family lived above Viewfort House.

By 1955 **George Brooks** had moved his '**Electrical Store**' here. George Brooks had rented premises in various places along the High Street and in Castle Street before he purchased Viewfort House.

The Valuation Roll 1971/72 records the Electrical Shop and Store as being run by his son, **David Brooks**.

In the 1980s **Mario Pagliari** ran an **Off Licence** from number 67 while David Brooks continued at number 69. The buildings were partly demolished in 2001 and then rebuilt for the Co-Op to relocate from further along the High Street. The present site includes car parking spaces.



67/69 High Street, The Co-operative Stores

44 High Street (demolished)

On the other side of the High Street, at the junction with Castle Street **Andrew Paton, *Bootmaker*** had a shop and workshop. Andrew Paton is recorded in the Census 1901 and continued in business until at least 1932 (Val Roll 1931/32)



Andrew Paton, *Bootmaker*

The building was demolished, like John Grigor's, to improve vehicular access into Castle Street.

42 High Street (now a private house)

Robert Miller, *Flesher* had his butcher shop here in 1911 before moving to The Cross. **William Mackenzie, *painter*** rented this property in 1938/9.

For many years following the war it was **Sammy Munro's, *Shoemaker***. In the 1800's Fortrose was famed for its shoemakers with premises in and around the High Street. Sammy Munro was the last shoemaker in Fortrose and he lived and worked here until he moved to a new workshop on Station Road in the 1960's.

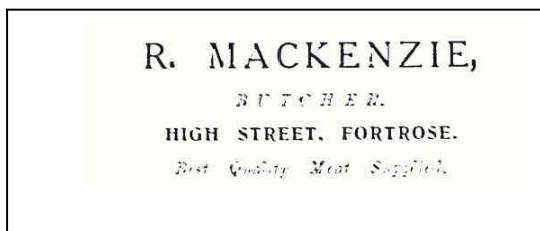
His '**SHOEMAKER**' sign can still be seen on the corner wall of Boots the Chemists shop.



40 High Street

Roderick known as Rory, Mackenzie, *Flesher*

Rory Mackenzie wintered sheep at Craiglands and had some sheep at Tomatin. The Mackenzie family lived at Viewfort House above Rory Mackenzie's butcher's shop and Hannah Mackenzie (later Alexander) remembers their shepherd lodger. (Val Roll 1909,1914,1939).



Alexander (Dodo) Wilson, *Plumber* opened a shop in number 42 when Sammy Munro moved out and later bought Number 40, using it to store his goods and tools.

38 High Street,

McGinty's Fish and Chips

In the 1930s Fortrose was a popular holiday destination so there were several cafes and tea rooms like **Margaret Rennie's Restaurant**, at 38 High Street, serving breakfasts, luncheons and teas at 'moderate' prices. Indeed Mrs Rennie is listed as running 'refreshment rooms' at number 38, as early as 1911.

Mrs Rennie also sold sweets and Hannah Alexander remembers buying 'pandrops', an acid drop sweet from her.



Just before the Second World War the **Pagliari family**; Enrico, then Charlie and later his nephew Mario and wife, Carla, opened the '**Merrythought Café**' here. They sold delicious Italian ice cream and sweeties from big jars (Val Roll 1938,1965,1995). They sustained the business to the end of the century. Then it became a series of fish and chip shops with several different owners before McGinty successfully took it over in 2005.

The Anderson

There has long been a ‘hotel’ or ‘public house’ here known by various names. In the Slater’s Directory of 1911 **Walter Grant** is named as host at the ‘**Royal Station Hotel**’.



In 1911 the Hotel had 2 dining rooms and 3 public rooms on the ground floor with a further 2 public rooms upstairs. There were 16 bedrooms. At the back there were two stable blocks catering for 5 and 6 horses respectively. There was also a harness room, byre, turnip shed and coal shed.

In more recent times it has been known as ‘The Anderson’ after its American owner, **Jim Anderson**.

The Anderson is known for the wide range of whiskies served there

Mackerchar Drill Hall and Picture House

The Volunteer Drill Hall was built in 1881 by John Robertson and was still in use as a drill hall for First World War volunteers. It was very popular from the 1930s onward as a cinema. Pictures were shown Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. Queues would stretch down as far as Hugh Penney’s house (Springfield). It would be a packed house for films showing George Formby or Laurel and Hardy. Lyall Hunt and Jimmy Lumsden showed the films. It was also put to good use for fancy dress balls at Christmas.

The Fancy Dress Dance, Christmas Night 1930, the Master of Ceremonies was Bert Miller the Butcher from the Cross.
It was also used for concerts and in more every day use as a gym for the school children.



**The Volunteer Drill Hall,
now the Church of St Peter and St Boniface**

32 High Street, Post Office



The Post Office moved to 32 High Street from 24 High Street when the postmaster, John Protheroe, retired. Post Offices often sold something else like stationery as well as dealing with the mail. This building has seen many changes. In the

1901 census it was home to Dr William Maclean who held his surgery there.

Twenty years later it was the family home of the Ross family. In the 1930s **Isabella or Isa Ross** described herself as a '**Draper**'. Isa Ross was still selling wool and baby clothes until the late 1960s. (Val Roll 1931 – 1965).

Then **Mr Moyes** had it as a **Drapers** selling jumpers and knitting wool.

Leslie Smith opened **Fortrose Hardware Store** at 32 High

Street after the closure of 'West End Stores' on Canonbury Terrace at the top of St Andrew's walk. He was still running the Hardware store at the end of the century and lives nearby in Cathedral Square, Fortrose.



30 High Street (now a private house)
John Smith, *Tailor and Clothier*



You can still read the faint words ‘tailor’ ‘clothier’ written above the door which relate to John Smith, Draper, in Slater’s Trade Directory, 1911.

John Smith owned several properties including two shops while he, himself lived in Academy Street. By the 1930s John Smith was dead and his High Street property was under repair.

28 High Street (now a private house,)

The OS map (1904 edition) records a ***Post Office*** here.

Ann Mackenzie was Assistant at the Post Office (1901 Census). Later **Mackenzie, *Jeweller*** (Mrs Mackenzie.

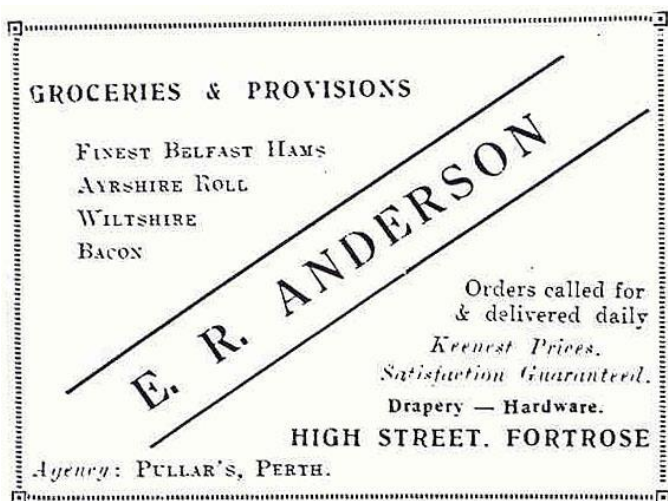
Widow)(Val Roll 1931-39) then Mr **Jan Baginski,**

Watchmaker occupied these premises. He was a Polish man who had settled here after the war. His house had a door onto the High Street and his workshop for mending clocks and watches was in one of the front rooms.

The Fat Frog in the Exchange Building

Now a jewellery and tourist type gift shop, 'The Studio Jewellery Workshop' used to be a much-frequented local shop. It is an imposing building with the Institute above. This had always been a Grocer/Draper shop.

At the beginning of the 20th century it belonged to **William Geddies**. The Geddies family lived here and his daughter, Elizabeth was a shop assistant. Sometimes in the 1920's the property was taken over by **E.R.Anderson**. Ebenezer Readie Anderson sold the 'finest Belfast hams', 'Ayrshire Roll' bacon and 'Wiltshire' bacon. He also sold drapery and hardware and acted as an agency for Pullar's of Perth. (Valuation Rolls 1931-39).



Allan B. Ramsay ran a **General Merchant's** here during the Second World War.

This shop was to be Fortrose's first 'chain' store when it was taken over by the SCWS in 1946 The **Co-operative Store** sold almost everything. There was a drapery department as well as the grocery store.

Members of the Co-op had a number so that they could claim their dividend, "It was something you had to remember.

When you made a purchase, the assistant wrote your number on a slip of paper for you to keep."

This was proof of entitlement to dividend, a payout from the Co-op based on how much you had spent. Local shoppers commented that prices seemed to be more stable in those days.

The Co-op was also to become the first self-service shop in Fortrose, where you served yourself to pre-packed goods and went to the till to pay.



The Fat Frog

The SCWS Co-operative Store moved to a purpose built self-service supermarket in 2001 at 67/69 High Street.

The Co-operative Store continues to serve the local community today.

Highland Podiatry Services



Dorothy Kate MacDonald who married Ted Hayter, from Newfoundland, sold books, toys, gifts, stationery, newspapers and sweets. (1942).

Willie Turnbull, known as ‘Willie Toot’ delivered papers for them.



Wartime customers outside Macdonald's



**Dorothy Macdonald,
*Newsagent***



Outside Macdonald's



**M. & F. Hooper,
*Newsagents, Confectioner
and Stationers***

This building has a very recognisable pair of windows and separate single window on the other side of the door.

The shop was later owned by Mr and Mrs. Graham (Val Roll 1972, 1985) and then Martin and Fiona Hooper (Val Roll 1995), still operating as a Newsagents/Stationer. Now, no longer a shop, it is Highland Podiatry Service.

24 High Street

Milk from **Blairfoird Dairy** being delivered from a churn. Look closely to see the large jug in the milkman's hand which he used to measure out the milk for each delivery



Penney's had a *fruit and vegetable* shop here but this had gone by 1935 The Post Office was in a room in Hugh Penney's house but with its own door onto the High Street.



The Postmasters were **John Smith**, then **John Protheroe**. The Penney family continued to run the Post office (Val Roll 1985, 1995) until it moved into what had been Leslie Smith's Hardware Store at number 32.

Penney, Greengrocer **24, High Street**

The large front widow is useful evidence that this used to be a shop

20 High Street, The Cross (now a private house)



Alex Mackenzie Tea Rooms & Refreshment

at the start of the
20th century.

It is not known
what
proclamation was
being read out by
the Provost.

The Tea Room at the Cross



Bert Miller. *Butcher* at the Market Cross.

Meat was cut on great big
wooden slabs. Only chickens
were killed on site. He had a
van in which he used to travel
around the outlying areas
selling meat. There had
always been a 'Miller the
Butcher' in Fortrose.

Robert Miller was a butcher
in 1911 and was at the Cross
in the 1930s. He was followed
by **Ian**, who wore a wig and
then by his grandson Burt.

Miller, *the Butcher*

18 High Street



Ona Matheson, *Draper*

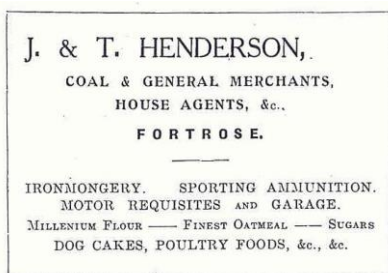
This is the site of **Ona Matheson's *Drapers*** shop. Johanna Matheson had a draper's shop on the corner of Academy Street and High Street in the 1960s and 70s. Her shop was crammed full of men's, ladies, children's and baby clothes, knitting and sewing accessories and gifts. The Academy pupils went there to get kitted out in their school uniforms

Eilean Dubh Restaurant



At the end of the 20th century it became the '**Tea Cosy**' run by Susan Comfort but is now known as the **Eilean Dubh Restaurant** and is a popular eating place for both visitors and local residents.

West End Stores, Canonbury Terrace (listed building)
 'The Store' was owned by **J & T Henderson**. Shopping in the first half of the 20th century was very different to today. Everything had to be weighed out on purchase. Flour and oatmeal was sold by the boll, a boll being about 140 pounds. Customers would make their own jams, picking fruit in season and buying 1cwt of sugar. They also sold 'millenium' flour, the finest oatmeal, sugars, dog cakes, poultry foods etc'. Henderson's advertised themselves as Coal and General Merchants, House agents etc. as well as selling 'ironmongery, sporting ammunion, motor requisites and garage'

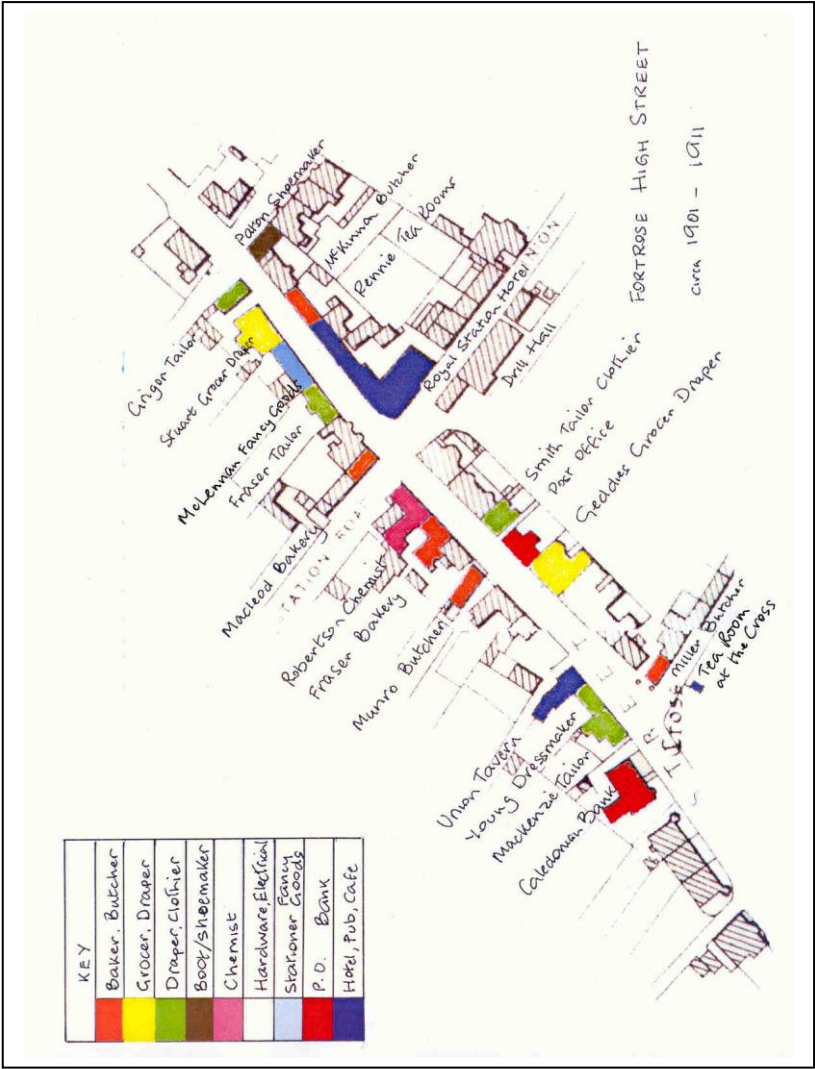


'The Store' was owned by the **Mackay** family from the mid 50's until circa 1980. In addition to hardware and household goods in the shop, one could buy paraffin and agricultural supplies.

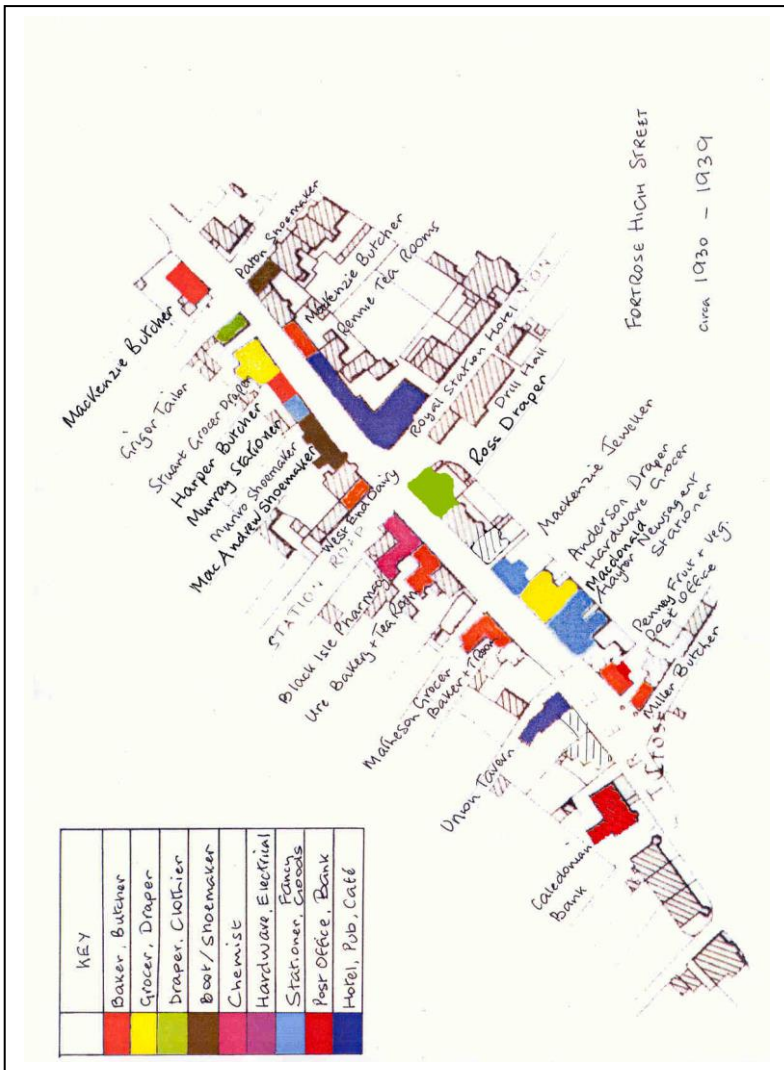


The West End Stores

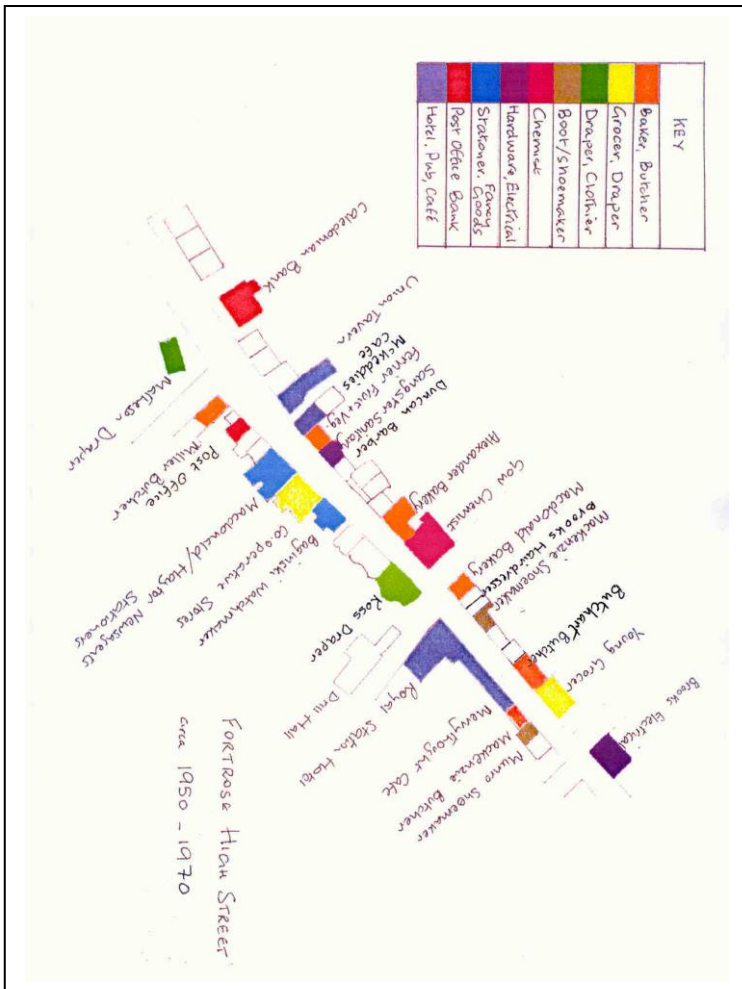
Fortrose High Street circa 1901-1911



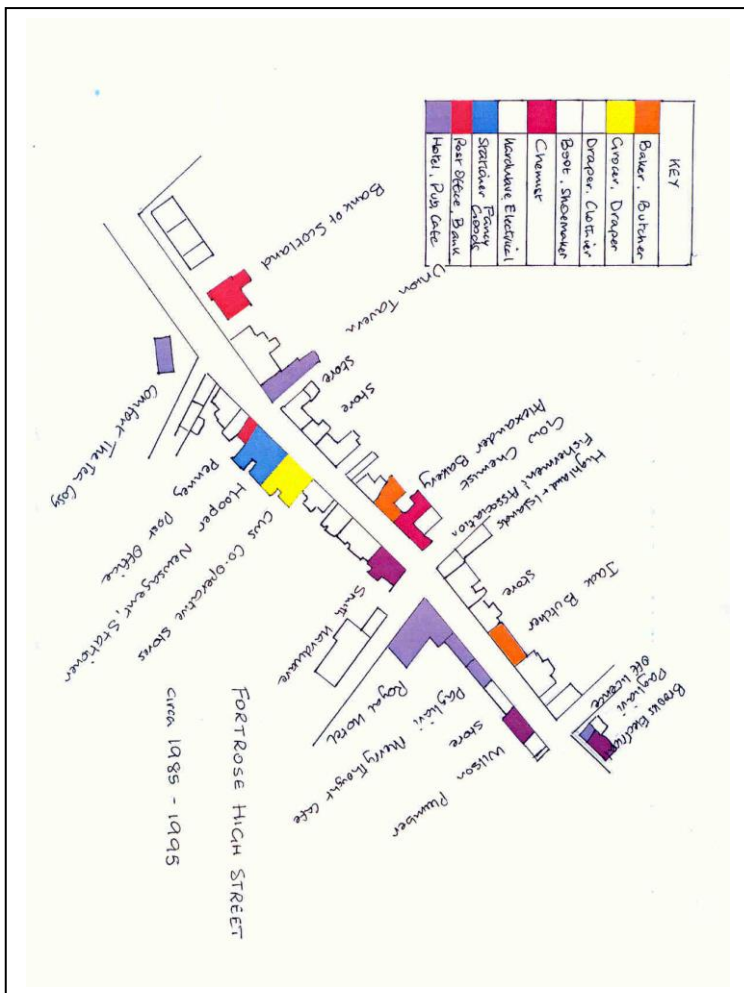
Fortrose High Street circa 1930-1939



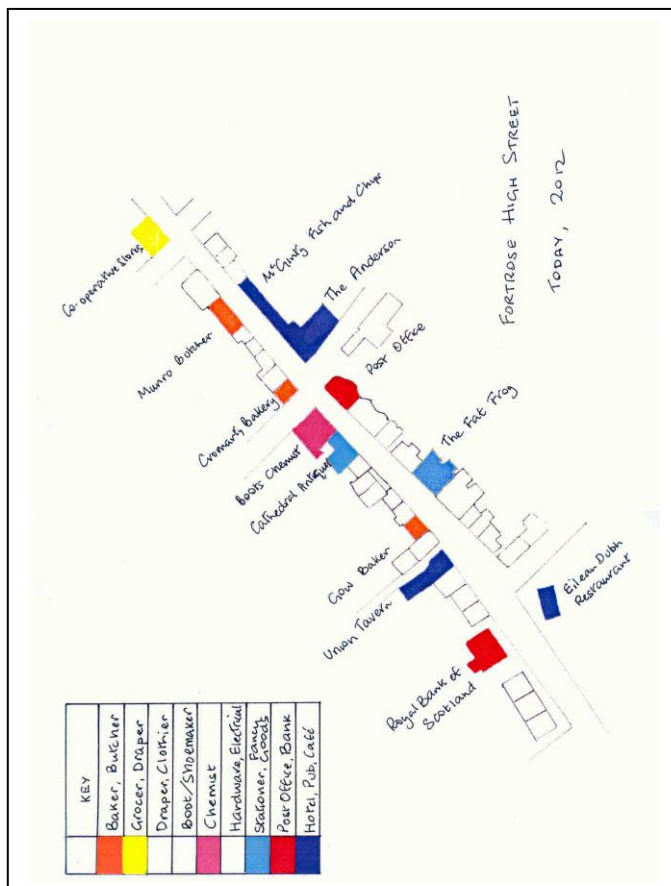
Fortrose High Street circa 1950-1970



Fortrose High Street circa 1985-1995



Fortrose High Street, 2012



A Century of Shopping along Rosemarkie High Street

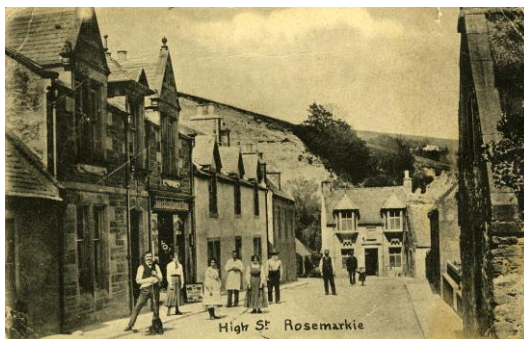
Rosemarkie today is a quiet, sleepy coastal village very popular with the holidaymakers from the nearby caravan sites who wander down the quaint High Street with its interesting old buildings. The impression of continuity with the past comes from the houses, many still gable end on to the street, which recall the ancient roods of the burgage holdings in this old Royal Burgh but this is an illusion for villages are always changing and evolving and this has been very true for Rosemarkie. Gone are the monks in the Pictish monastery. Taxed out of existence are the linen weavers with their retting ponds or ‘pows’ as they were called and the salmon fishers along the shore have almost disappeared.

Even the holidaymakers have changed. Most now come for the caravan and camping rather than to stay in a big hotel like the Hawkshill, now the Marine Care Home. But the greatest changes have come about in the buildings themselves, some have decayed and disappeared, many altered or extended while others have been completely rebuilt. Nevertheless there are many clues remaining as to a buildings’ previous function. You will see the house with one big window or another with what looks like a shop front. Exploring the High Street, talking to local residents and researching the Census, the Valuation Rolls, Slater’s Trade Directories and the Inland Revenue Survey (1911), it has been possible to trace the history of a century of shopping along the High Street from the 15 establishments in 1901 to the 3 remaining today.

In the first decade of the twentieth century there were 4 major shopkeepers who between them employed 12 shop assistants who lived in Rosemarkie and probably others from within the locality. The Big Four were Hugh Home, Grocer and Ironmonger, William Robb, Grocer, George Macfarlane, Baker and Kenneth MacRae, Master Tailor.

Some of their establishments continued as shops for half a century and one William Robb's Grocers, is still a shop today as 'Panacea' at the bottom of the High Street.

Hugh Home's grocer/ironmonger is still the most impressive building on Rosemarkie High Street but has been a private residence since the 1960s. Kenneth MacRae's tailoring business continued for over half a century and survived both Mr MacRae's death and the destruction of his house/workshop in the 1940s so that it was always known as 'the burnt house'. The shortest lived shop belonged to George Macfarlane as he went out of business, bankrupt, in 1915



Rosemarkie High Street at the beginning of the Twentieth Century

George Macfarlane, *Baker*



The old bakery at Tigh-an-Aigh

The Bakery –George McFarlane (Slater's 1911) had a house and shop with a bake house in the rear. George McFarlane was a baker and confectioner employing his wife, Elizabeth, Donald Macdonald, journeyman baker and James H.F.Fraser, apprentice baker.

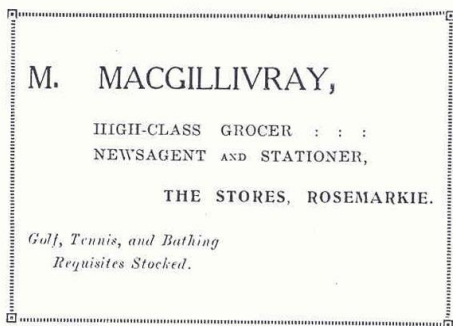
George McFarlane went bankrupt in 1915.

Local legend has it that James Fraser the Baker in Fortrose purchased the property to prevent it being run as a bakery in competition with him. Understandable perhaps as when George Macfarlane went bankrupt there were three bakers in the village as well as two bakeries in Fortrose.

James Fraser retired to Rosemarkie before the Second World War, to live in 'Seafield House '. When he sold up his Fortrose business he also sold his defunct Rosemarkie bakery to Harold Alexander, Baker in Fortrose. But again the bakehouse was never used as a bakery.

Miss Mary Ann MacGillivray took over as tenant in 1915 and renamed it **Tigh-an-Aigh**. She ran her general store in the premises opposite, now called Doric House. Ice cream was sold in the summer months from Tigh-an-Aigh, the house that even now looks so much like a shop, but it continued to be a private residence.

Freda Bassindale, *Rosemarkie People and Places*, describes how the bricks from the oven have been used to create a paved area at the back of the house.



37 High Street



Panacea, Herbal Remedies which sells tourist type items like rocks, gems, and aromatherapy. Panacea, Herbal Remedies removed from Dingwall about 2007.

The interior of Panacea with the original boarding and shelves from when it was a grocery shop.



In 1911 the shop was a *Cash Grocers* run by **William Robb**. Note the 'cash' grocer banner, this was not a high class establishment like Hugh Home's who served the middle classes paying on account.

In the 1930s Rosemarkie boasted a high-class ironmongery, grocery and provisions, D. & G. Fraser. **Daniel Fraser** rented the shop at 37 High Street according to the Valuation Rolls for 1931- 39 and 1942. Daniel specialised in *grocery and provisions*. He set up his brother George, who had been gassed in the Great War, as *ironmonger* ‘up the street’ at number 18 High Street



Daniel Fraser

Later, it became **Jones the shoe shop**.

Catherine Macpherson Cormack Jones sold everything one could possibly need in the drapery line.

(Valuation Roll 1946,55,65,85)

Mrs Jones had a mobile van and was still selling shoes, drapery and haberdashery around the Black Isle in the 1970s.

Sandra Jack described going into the shop as

‘entering Aladdin’s cave’.

Ivy House, renamed ‘Doric House’



Hugh Home, Grocer and Ironmonger

This imposing classical building with its pillars and steps up to the door was built by Andrew Steavenson, a General Merchant. Steavenson was Provost of Fortrose in 1837. John Carpenter Steavenson, General Merchant sold rifles, furniture and watches and leased salmon fishing from Mr Hogarth who bought Drummarkie. Hogarth changed the name Drummarkie to St Helena when he planted willow cuttings from Napoleon's grave there. It has reverted to its original name but the willow tree is believed to be still there.

Hugh Home had his Grocer, Ironmonger business there.

His son **Michael** ran the **Post Office** according to Slater's Trade Directory 1911 and the 1911 Census. At the beginning of the twentieth century, service was everything and Hugh Home employed several assistants. Although the hours were long, over seventy hours per week and the wages low,

working in a shop was seen as better than going into domestic service. There would be a variety of tasks to be done as well as serving the customer for grocery supplies came in large amounts by the barrel and had to be hand packed for the individual customer. The 'boy' would then deliver the goods purchased on his bike.

When Hugh retired in 1913 it was occupied by **Mary Ann MacGillivray**, a '*High Class*' *Grocer, Newsagent and Stationer*. 'The Stores' also sold golf, tennis and bathing requisites. Rosemarkie was a popular holiday location at this time. Mary Ann's establishment also kept very long hours and was known to stay open, on occasion, to midnight. The Shop Act of 1912 attempted to limit the numbers of hours worked by shop assistants by instigating half day closing but could not prevail over enthusiastic owners. The delivery 'boy' then was Jimmy Lumsden. Mary Ann MacGillivray retired in 1944.

SCWS *Grocery and Drapery* was in place for about ten years. The Scottish Co-operative Society was established in 1867. By 1900 one in ten Scots were members and shareholders but it did not reach the Black Isle until the Second World War. There was usually grocery and provisions, drapery, a butchery or fleshing and a bakery.

1960 **Kenneth Cumming** had his **butchery** there before moving next door to what is now 'Crofters Foods'.

3 High Street home of Rod Anderson, *Tailor*.



Rod Anderson, who was employed by Mrs Margaret MacRae (widow of Kenneth MacRae, *Master Tailor*), built a shed in his back garden so that he could continue working after the War Department, World War Two, requisitioned the MacRae's former home of Craigview. In 1944 Polish soldiers accidentally burnt down the house in Bridge Street and it was always afterwards called the 'burnt house'.

The property Rod Anderson rented, 3 High Street, was classed as uninhabitable by 1955 and his shed valued at only £2. He was still working as a tailor there, however in 1960. There are several tailors, drapers and dressmakers recorded in the 1901 Census for although most people made their own clothing, men might own one tailored suit for best and women would use a dressmaker for special outfits. The 1901 Census shows **William Young** (18) draper's apprentice and

Daniel Fraser (24) tailor, boarding with a washerwoman, Isabella Corbett, at this address.

In 1911 there were nine clothiers in the village. The villagers at the beginning of the 20th century would have been astounded at the number of clothes people own nowadays. They were familiar with natural materials, linen, cotton or wool. Nylon began to be available just before the Second World War but the wide range of man made materials available now did not come in until the late 1950s. However Master Tailor Kenneth Macrae who employed 4 tailors, would probably not have been very impressed with the quality of modern clothing in our throw away society.



Kenneth MacRae, *Master Tailor*

The other tailors, particularly the ladies dressmakers and seamstresses ‘worked from home on their own account’.

Margaret Stewart and **Barbara Bonnyman** as dressmakers were a cut above **Isabella Clark** and **Janet Ross** who could only sew seams.

There were also several other individuals, both men and women, who worked from home on their own account. These were **Alexander Fraser, *Boot and shoemaker***, **Alexander MacAllan, *Shoemaker*** in Bridge Street and **Thomas Ross, *Shoemaker***.

The Ross family rented a half house, shop and garden (Val Roll 1909) to **John Denoon, *Flesher***, (famed as the last surviving Rosemarkie Veteran of the 1st Inverness Volunteers who had attended Queen Victoria's 'Wet Review' when he died in 1942) and later to **Robert Miller, *Butcher*** (Val Roll 1911/12).

Their home is described as an 'old thatched cottage' next door to Groam House, now the museum. Thomas Ross is recorded as shoemaker in both the 1901 and the 1911 Census. He was still working aged 78 (1911). His wife Margaret (70) had 12 children but 10 died. His surviving son, William, was a mason's labourer.

The hand- made shoes were called 'Black Isle Boxies' they were so shapeless. This meant that they could be changed from foot to foot to even the wear. Boot and shoe making was revolutionised by the invention of the sewing machine in 1846. By the end of the nineteenth century the mass manufacture of boots and shoes threatened the livelihood of individual boot and master shoe -makers but there was still a steady demand for shoe repair. Boots and shoes would have the sole and/or the heel replaced several times.

Christine McIver, *Grocer* ran her small shop from a room in the family home. **Catherine Wilson (79)** was a ***Grocer***

shopkeeper at her home with the help of her grand-daughter Catherine Home (24).

John Gordon, Grocer had bigger premises as his property is described as a shop and house and he was an employer employing his niece Lizzie Miller (23) as shop assistant. In the same way **Jamesina ‘Minnie’ Gray** worked as a *Confectioner* from her Aunt Madalina Arthur’s home in the High Street and **Jeannie Shearer** is described as a *‘Baker’s shopkeeper’* working from her home in Church Place in the 1901 Census.

It has not been possible to locate these shops precisely except where there is a good description like **Miss Lizzie Macgegor, Fancy Goods and Stationery** which was reported to be a ‘stone house, slated and appeared to have attic rooms’, according to the Inland Revenue Survey (1911). This has been identified as the newsagents in the left-hand part of Albion Cottages in Bridge Street..

Named premises are much easier although names are often changed with new owners. **Annie Douglas McLean, Grocer** ran her drapery, millinery and stationery business from Groam House.



The unusual name ‘Groam’ was chosen by Mr Maclean, a *Merchant*, when he moved to Rosemarkie from Groam, Kirkhill.

Miller's Hotel

Miller's Hotel at the top of the High Street was run, in 1911, by **Miss Margaret Miller**, *spirit dealer* and was owned by Margaret and her brother John who lived in Rose Cottage.



Elizabeth Sutherland, local historian and author, writes that Miller's Hotel was a 'coaching inn with four horses, wagonettes and a phaeton.

Miller's Hotel

The New Year's Day 'Bools' game used to start here with men from two teams hurling a small iron ball down to the Ness and back for a celebration drink'.

The Plough Inn

A long established public house, extensively renovated by **John Robb** in 1907, Robb was still the publican in Slater's Trade Directory, 1911.

John Robb bought the disused meal mill, 'Ootseys', at the bottom of Mill Road and turned it into a Laundry, washing

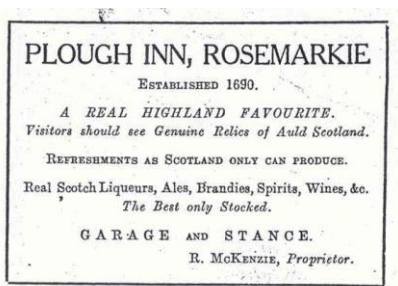
bedding for the army at Fort George. He employed 26 workers, 20 of them women. The bedclothes were transported to and fro by ferry from Ardesier to Chanonry Point. Several carters were employed to collect laundry from Cromarty, Invergordon and Inverness as well as Fort George. It is said that although the sheets were put round the mill wheel and wetted the blankets just got a good shake before being returned as 'clean'. Sheets and blankets were spread out on the grass along the sea front from the mill right down to the Chanonry lighthouse.



The Plough

The Plough continues to be a public house and also serves good quality food in competition with the 'Crofters', a bistro type restaurant in what used to be the Baths and there is also the 'Beach Café' at the mouth of the Fairy Glen, which sells ice cream and sandwiches.

An advert for the Plough Inn from The North Star Guide 1930



Back Road

Alexander Ross, *Blacksmith*

Recorded in Slater's 1911 and marked on the OS map 1904 edition as 'Smithy' next to the junction on Courthill Road.

Jenny Paterson can remember a smithy there when she was a child in the 1930s. Alexander Ross owned both the smithy and the adjacent cottage. He employed William Alexander as a journeyman blacksmith. He rented several rigs of land in the locality. His son Alexander was joint tenant in 1931/2 but Alexander Ross died in 1936, aged 71. and by 1938/9 the smithy is recorded as 'empty'. The buildings both house and smithy are described as 'old', constructed from stone with a slate roof. (IRS 1911)

The blacksmith was an important man in the village for he would manufacture many iron items for use on the farm or at home as well as shoe horses.

Kenneth Jack took over as village blacksmith in the late 1930s. He is recorded as living at 2 Bridge Street 1938/9



Bridge Street Cottages

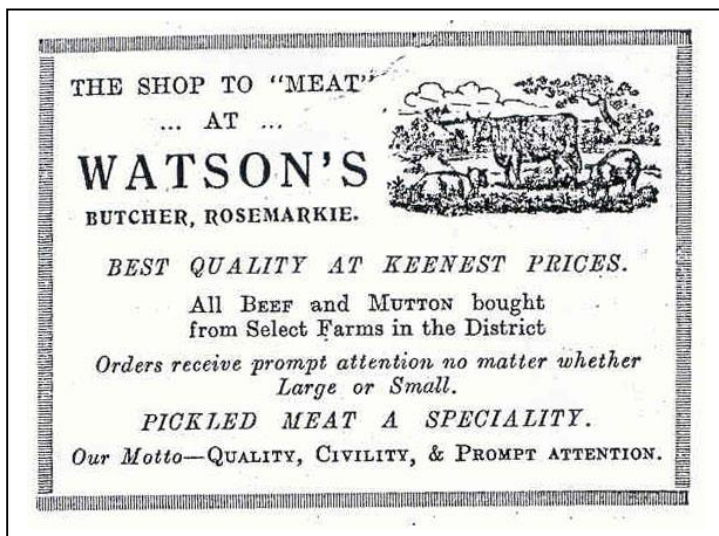
Folk memories can persist for a long time. The first ‘shops’ evolved from the medieval market stalls and began to replace the twice-yearly fairs allowed by Royal Charter. Although the market was last held in the early 1800s, villagers in Rosemarkie still remember its location ‘up the Brae Cross’. In Fortrose the St Boniface Fair, with its festival atmosphere, survives to the present day.

Several locals mentioned a ‘glover’ working from home and selling gloves at the market or bringing gloves to the Cross to be sent further afield. At first it seemed that this might be **Miss Mary Mackenzie**, Cloy Cottage, who is recorded in the 1901 Census as a ‘**ladies maid**’ since she would have had the appropriate fashion knowledge. But the 1911 Census records her as working as a nurse so this seems unlikely. A man called Davidson worked as a Glover from Lilac Cottage in 1760. The First Statistical Account, 1791 records two glovers in Rosemarkie parish. There is no recent record of ‘glovers’.



Lilac Cottage

In 1930 the North Star published a booklet promoting Fortrose and Rosemarkie as holiday destinations with a series of adverts including this one.



THE SHOP TO "MEAT"
... AT ...
WATSON'S
BUTCHER, ROSEMARKIE.

BEST QUALITY AT KEENEST PRICES.

All BEEF and MUTTON bought
from Select Farms in the District

*Orders receive prompt attention no matter whether
Large or Small.*

PICKLED MEAT A SPECIALITY.

Our Motto—QUALITY, CIVILITY, & PROMPT ATTENTION.

Nobody seems to recall a Watson's the Butcher who advertised 'pickled meat' a speciality, but a Robert Watson of Rosemarkie was declared bankrupt in 1945.

One business whose location at a certain date can be relied upon, is the Post Office. The 1904 edition of the Ordnance Survey map of Rosemarkie records its position on the High Street. Not requiring any large specialist equipment like a bakery or smiddy means that the Post office can be quite mobile and need not stay in one set location.

1904. Post Office, 9 High Street
1911. Post Master Michael Home, 12 High Street
1920's. Post Office between the Plough Inn and Seafield,
 Post Mistress Jane or Jeannie Macandrew
1931-36. P M Jeannie Macandrew, 20 High Street,
Late 1930's. Post Mistress, Mabel Fraser, 9 High Street,
Post 1945. Post Master, Daniel Fraser, 18 High Street
1971. Post Master, Alexander Alexander, 18 High Street
1985. Post Master Cormack, 37 High Street,
1995. Post Master Straw, 37 High Street
2001. Post Master McLoughlin, 37 High Street
2005. Post Office closed.

Post Master Straw had the terrifying experience of being robbed at knife- point by two drug addicts from Alness.



9 High Street or
 'Limetree' was the
 Fraser family home.

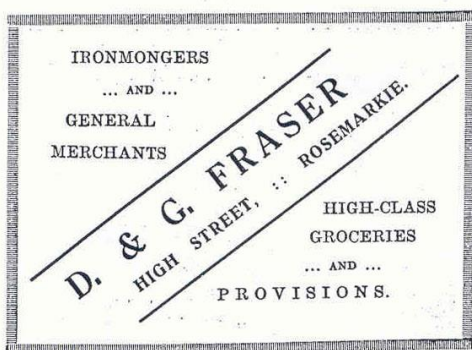
George and Mabel Fraser
 lived here with his
 mother, Jessie and his brother
 Daniel. His brother and
 business partner in
 D.& G. Fraser,
 Ironmonger/Grocery
 and Post Office.

The Post Office

#

In the Highlands, isolated communities could only survive by being virtually self-sufficient. Markets were far apart and transport, except by sea, difficult. Progress in the form of manufactured goods, pre- packaged items, chain shops and self service supermarkets came late to this area.

Shops that sell a bit of everything persist even into the twenty- first century on the Black Isle. In Rosemarkie this one-stop shop role was played by the Fraser brothers. **Daniel and George Fraser** had a high class ironmongery, grocery and general merchants selling a variety of provisions.



Daniel concentrated on grocery and provisions at 37 High Street until he moved up the street in place of his late brother George at number 18.

George had been a baker's apprentice but having been gassed in the First World War, his health was not good enough to sustain the physical demands of bakery so he ran the ironmongery section in the family shop. After his brother's early death at the age of 47 in 1938, Daniel managed both parts of the business for a time. He closed his shop at 37 High Street in the mid 1940's and transferred Mabel's PO business to complement the range of services provided at 18 High Street. Daniel Fraser was still at number 18 in 1955.

The building stood empty for some years in the mid 1960's. The shop was re-established by **Alexander Alexander** the Fortrose baker in the early 70s. He kept the Post Office and added fresh bread to the grocery section. Then **Kenneth Cumming, Butcher** moved in from Doric House next door (Valuation Roll 1985, 1995).

Rosemarkie came close to losing its butchers shop when Kenneth Cumming closed his butcher shop in 2009. Various individuals took over but were unable to make a butcher's shop profitable until Richard Comfort expanded it into a first class 'deli' specialising in haggis, sausages, pies and ready made meals to unique recipes. It has very recently been taken over by Penelope Keith's husband and the shop is managed by their son.

Crofters Foods with its excellent range of goods is once again providing Rosemarkie with a one-stop fresh food shop selling meat, vegetables, and bakery goods.



**Crofters
Foods**

After the First World War the number of shops in Rosemarkie shrank to only six. In the first half of the twentieth century there were to be tremendous developments in the way we shop. Gone are the small shops in private homes, many in towns replaced by purpose built shops and shopping arcades.

Nineteenth century industrialisation generated a new type of High Street. Mass produced tinned goods changed the emphasis on what we bought. Shoppers began to demand goods with brand names like 'Bird's Custard' or 'Keiller' Marmalade and 'Hovis' Bread.

The drop in demand for home baking and cooking curtailed the entrepreneurial opportunities for families to make some extra money from their garden produce. Times were hard. By 1930 there were 3 ruinous buildings, 2 uninhabitable as well as a further 2 unoccupied in the High Street, nearly a fifth of the 40 or so buildings on Rosemarkie's High Street were not lived in. The shops that survived were D & G Fraser's Ironmongery and Grocery, Mary Ann MacGillivray's General Store with its emphasis on the holiday trade, the Post Office and a butcher. Kenneth Macrae continued his tailoring business in Bridge Street.



A new shop came to Rosemarkie in the 1930s with first **Margaret Fraser** (1931/2) and then **Christina Fraser** (1935/6, 38/9) *making and selling hats* from 26 High Street.

At that time all ladies wore hats so a milliner's was a useful addition to the range of village shops. Nevertheless the improved transport network meant that ladies could travel into Inverness to shop by either bus and ferry or train from Fortrose.

Fortrose station opened in 1894 with a branch line to Muir of Ord where it joined the main track to Dingwall and the north, or Inverness and the south down to Edinburgh. It was possible to travel by bus to Cromarty or Inverness and back in one day. The establishment of a comprehensive rural bus network by the 1930s encouraged the village shopper to try out alternative shopping opportunities for a range of everyday goods as well as specialist items.

By 1950 there were only four shops along Rosemarkie High Street. There were two grocers still, Daniel Fraser, Grocery and Ironmongery at 18 High Street and Lewis Grant opposite at number 17. Kenneth Cumming, Butcher at 14 High Street (Doric House) and Catherine Jones, shoes, drapery and haberdashery at 37 High Street. Rod Anderson was still working from home as a tailor.

Lewis Grant ran a traditional *grocery*, buying in fresh rabbit meat from schoolboy, Mark Grigor, who caught the rabbits on his father's farm before going onto school. It was a bright cheerful shop with a modern extension but it was proving ever more difficult for village shops to meet their customers' needs. Grant's had modernised by delivering their customer's groceries by van rather than by bicycle.

The increased ownership of the motorcar would have a powerful influence on where we live and work as well as where we shop. Owning a car made living in a village like Rosemarkie an attractive proposition again, slowing the move away from the village as agricultural jobs declined with the mechanisation of farming. New houses began to appear on the edges of the village towards the end of the century. Similar new builds began in Fortrose and the local population has increased and continues to increase with more new estates planned.

The changing nature of the village population with more and more people travelling to work and shop in town since the opening of the Kessock Bridge in 1982, means that while the local shop continues to be essential for those without transport, like the elderly, for the majority of the inhabitants, the village shop may be used only for items which have been ‘forgotten’ in the main weekly shop at the supermarket.

By 1985 Grant’s premises had been taken over by **Macdonald’s of Avoch, Bakery**. The shop was not just an outlet for the bakery but continued to sell a range of grocery goods using the services of the SPAR voluntary wholesaling group. These wholesaling groups promote recognised brands and give the independent grocer the benefits of better purchasing power as well as allowing participation in marketing initiatives.

In Rosemarkie it was this grocery shop that was to take the next big step to modernisation. In 1993 the new owners, Mr and Mrs Phillips, who still live in the village, introduced ‘self- service’. When Mr and Mrs Phillips bought the SPAR

they were anxious to preserve as much as possible of the original shop while at the same time bringing it up to date. Inside the shop the wooden cladding on the walls and the wooden shelves could remain but the counter across the middle had to go to allow for self-service.



The SPAR Supermarket, formerly Grant's Grocery and Macdonald's Bakery

When the Grants lived above the shop, customers were accustomed to knock on the door for service if the shop was shut. As the Phillips lived several doors away this was not convenient but to maintain the level of service Mr Phillips would open up on Christmas morning while Mrs Phillips was at home cooking Christmas dinner. That two hour period had the highest footfall of the year as Mr Phillips was kept busy supplying the batteries needed for the new toys the children were desperate to play with or the cigarettes for the adults.

The change to self- service reflects the faster pace of life and the rise of individual independence. Modern shoppers are in a hurry. Time is seen as a scarce resource when doing essential shopping. They do not want to queue and be given the items requested. There had been several Acts of Parliament to try to

regulate and protect customers through standardised weights and measures and so give them a fair measure of unadulterated goods but customers prefer the freedom to browse and to choose their own apples or pears without intervention from the shopkeeper.

One big advantage of the pre-packaged self service item was the price label. When prices were stable and housewives knew to a farthing how much their shopping would cost, they might trust the local shopkeeper who would not have had any prices showing. Haggling or ‘higgling’ over the price was common. Customers in rural areas continued to barter into the 20th century. But in times of rapid inflation, totalling the amount to be paid before reaching the till, saved the customer from potential embarrassment.

The individual, independent retailer in the village High Street is struggling to compete with the chain stores in an increasingly uneven battle. By 2006, independent grocers could claim less than 3% of the grocery trade.

In the 1950s and 60s Rosemarkie had had its own electrical store, **Andrew Lawrie, *Electrics*** on the corner of Bridge Street, now a private residence, his white goods and electronics evolved from the traditional hardware shop but require an expensive range of stock. There has been such great competition for white goods that even chain stores like ‘Comet’ have gone to the wall.

Not only has the number and range of shops declined but villages are no longer self-sufficient in the services provided. Workshops, which were an extension of a master crafts man’s

home, have disappeared. Rosemarkie has lost its blacksmith, tailor, dressmaker, shoemaker, milliner, miller, carpenter and plumber.

Some new services emerged over the century like carter/carrier and garage but these too struggle to compete with the national chains. Petrol or diesel is always more expensive at the nearest local garage like that at Tore, than it is at Tesco or Morrisons and the garage in Bridge Street is long gone.

The decline in self-sufficiency in the village means villagers can no longer rely upon their neighbours to supplement their family skills and garden produce. They themselves are no longer vital to the social network which knits a community together. Rosemarkie has endeavoured to replace this community interdependence with community activities based around the Gordon Memorial Hall like the SWRI and special exhibitions like that celebrating the linen weaving which had been Rosemarkie's main industry in the eighteenth century.

The modern shopkeeper understands the need to offer specialist services and produce to attract customers. The three shops surviving in Rosemarkie today are the SPAR, self-service supermarket; the Crofters 'Deli' with its unique, high quality fresh produce and Panacea the Herbal Remedy establishment which is much more than just a shop selling herbs as it offers a range of meditational services like Reiki, a hands on form of alternative medicine. There is also a shop hidden in the Groam House Museum, selling a wide range of books, cards, jewellery and holiday souvenirs.

Shopping has become a favourite leisure activity for many, even a social ‘ritual’. Shoppers flock to the giant shopping malls, which provide all-inclusive ‘entertainment’ when shopping for specific items like clothing or electronics. The number and range of out of town retail outlets continue to grow at the expense of the traditional High Street. Shopping is now such a ‘fun’ activity that people expect to enjoy shopping even when on a camping holiday at the seaside so the Groam House Museum shop, Panacea, the Plough Bistro and The Crofters Restaurant all add to Rosemarkie’s attractiveness as a holiday destination.

The First World War has been recognised as a watershed in the history of shopping. Never again would Rosemarkie or Fortrose have so many retail outlets/workshops. The changing nature of shopping with its emphasis on mass-produced brand names plus the improvements to the transport network has led to a steady decline in High Street shopping. The ease and convenience of Internet shopping may spell the end for many town as well as village High Streets. The recent closure of many Post Offices is a dismal reminder of how fragile trusted institutions have become in the twenty-first century. Post Offices, which were once seen as essential to a community’s well-being, are no longer needed in our virtual world.

Fortrose is currently fighting to preserve its High Street and a public meeting held mid 2013 demonstrated the depth of public feeling. There has been a proposal to build a new, larger, Co-operative Store with more car parking space plus other retail outlets, to create a retail park on the outskirts of

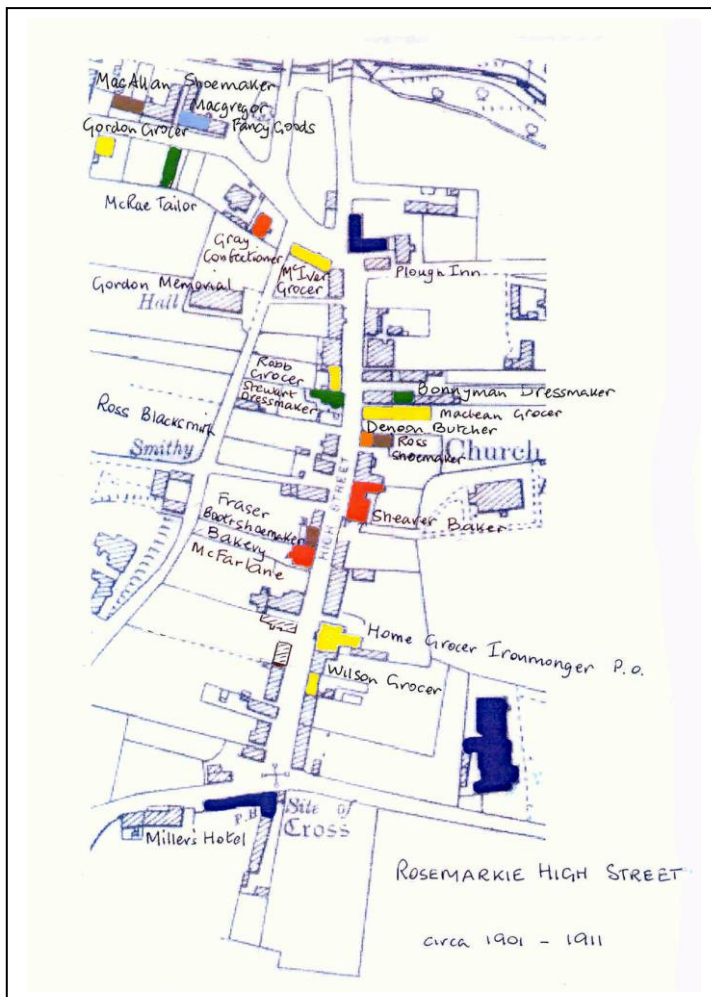
Fortrose on a green field site opposite the school playing fields.



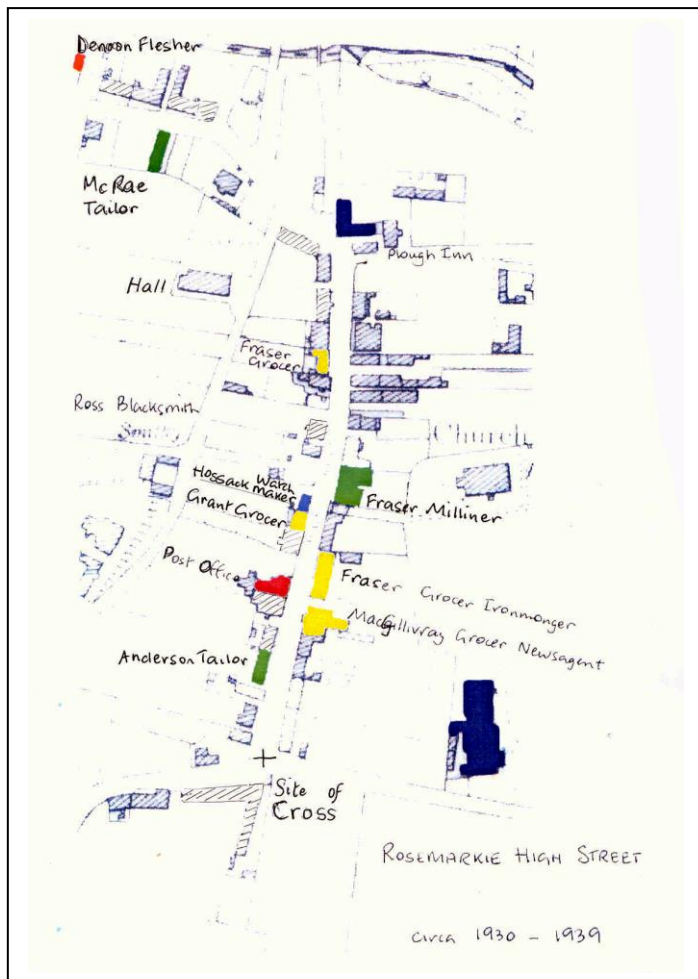
Fortrose High Street mid century

The traditional village trade and craft skills may be long gone but there will always be goods for sale and individuals making their living serving the needs of their community even though it may take unexpected forms like the Internet shopping on 'eBay' or the 'House of Bruar' type of total experience for the leisure shopper, rather than the High Street we have known in the past.

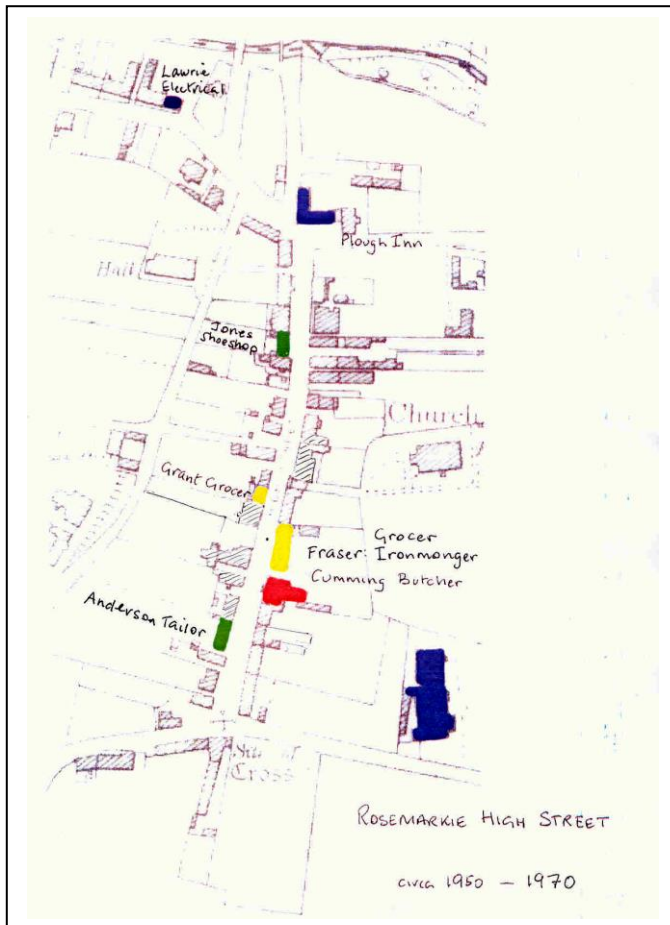
Rosemarkie High Street circa 1901-1911



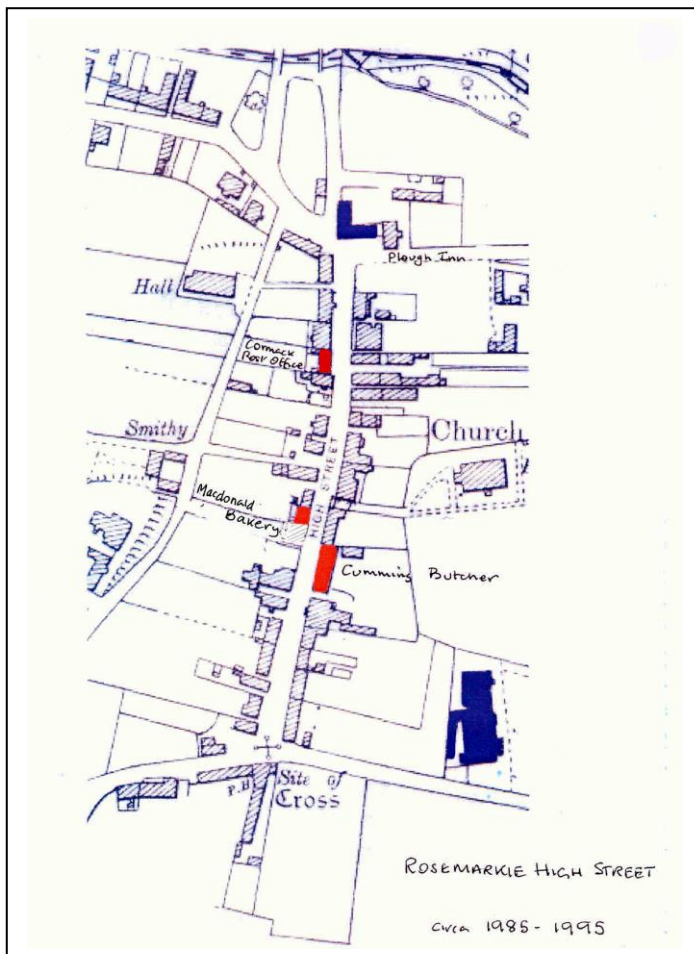
Rosemarkie High Street circa 1930-1939



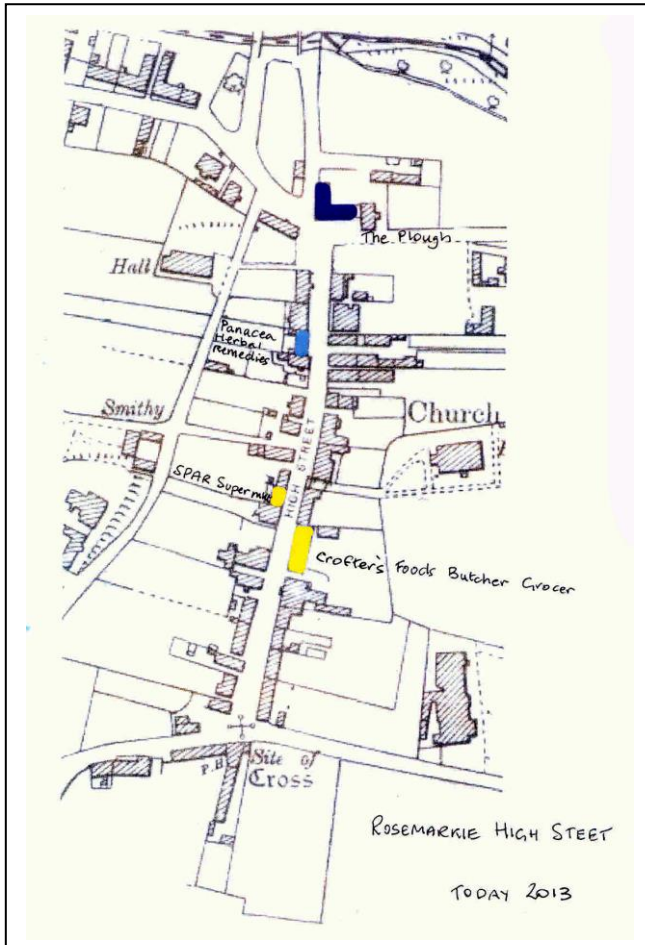
Rosemarkie High Street circa 1950-1970



Rosemarkie High Street circa 1985-1995



Rosemarkie High Street, 2013



Source Material

First Statistical Account 1791

Rosemarkie Parish: Rosemarkie and Chanonry

Merchants 7, shoemakers and apprentices, 32, linen weavers 35, square wrights 4, mill wrights 2, tailors 4, masons 2, glovers 2, smith 1, butchers 2, writer 1, teachers, 4 minister1.

1901 Census, also recorded but gave no precise location:

Fortrose: Alexander Mackenzie, master tailor and son Alexander, journeyman tailor, High Street, Donald Ross, shoemaker, High Street, Duncan McFee, butcher; High Street; John Ross, shoemaker, Castle Street; George Davidson, shoemaker, Union Street; Donald Macdonald, Shoemaker, Academy Street. **Rosemarkie:** Alexander Sinclair, grocer, Gregory Kemp, Innkeeper, Kemps Lane, Roderick Mackenzie, butcher.

1911 Slater's Directory also records, but exact location not known: **Fortrose:** Thomas Fraser, tailor, High Street, John Fraser, tailor, Station Road; John Goodlad, watchmaker; Michael Home, blacksmith, Shore; John Mackenzie, watchmaker, High Street; Roderick McKinnon, butcher; Miss Margaret Williamson, dressmaker; Neil Wilson, plumber.

1930s adverts; Fortrose: Taylor and son, Carpenters and Undertakers, West End; John Fraser, tailor, High Street. Market gardens growing fruit and vegetables: Bill Fulton, Precincts Road; Isa Ross's father, vegetable nursery.

Rosemarkie: Robert Watson, butcher.

Valuation Rolls Exact location of shops not known,

Fortrose:

1909 John Goodlad, watchmaker, High Street; Neil Wilson, plumber, Academy Street;

Rosemarkie: Alex Sinclair, merchant.

1911 Fortrose: Alex Watson, barber, West End; George Sutherland, tailor, High Street; Thomas Fraser, tailor, The Shore; Robert Home, blacksmith and cycle agent, The Shore; Simon Macpherson, watchmaker, Viewfield Place; Mackenzie Alexander, tailor, West End; John Fraser, tailor, Academy Street; Mrs White, photographic studio, Castle Street; William Davidson, painter, High Street; Simon Ross Nelson, watchmaker, High Street;

Rosemarkie: Daniel Wilson, plumber.

1914 Rosemarkie: Robert Singer, tailor, Alexander Sinclair, grocer

1938/9 Fortrose: Neil Wilson, plumber; Simon Nelson, watchmaker; John Mackenzie, watchmaker ; Alex Mackenzie, The Cross; Wm Davidson, painter; Mrs White, photographic studio

1955/6 Val Roll Fortrose: Alex Mackeddie, painter, High Street; William Mackenzie, painter, High Street;

1982 shopping survey of Fortrose by G.P.Willis: chemist, bank, newsagent, baker/grocer, grocer (2), hardware store, draper, post office, café, shoemaker, and hairdresser.

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*Welcome
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on the second Monday of the month
from September to May at 7-30pm.
All visitors welcome.

Details of this year's programme of speakers and
activities can be found on the website
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