

Ghost Buildings of Inverness II: The Maggot



The original Waterloo Bridge. Still locally known as the Black Bridge due to the dark nature of the wood used to build it in 1808. Built to connect the growing village of Merkinch, which was incorporated into the burgh of Inverness the same year. Although never a sturdy structure (according to the newspaper reports of the time), it withstood the flood of 1849 that washed away the Ness Bridge. Replaced by the current bridge in 1896.



Plan of the harbour areas, 1729. The old harbour (in the middle of the plan) was built in the mid-17th century and the later harbour (to the right of Cromwell's Fort) started in 1725. The Fort was built in the 1650s and could house over 1000 soldiers. It was demolished soon after it was completed.

The remains of the Ness Viaduct after the river washed away the central spans on the morning of 7th February 1989, following two days of heavy rain which raised the river by several feet. The viaduct was originally built in 1862 to carry the Inverness and Ross-shire Railway over the river.



Images are from the Am Baile photographic archive on the Highlife Highland website, unless otherwise specified.



Inverness Gas Works from Farraline Park. The Inverness Water and Gas Company started supplying gas to Inverness in 1826. The Town Council took over in 1875. When a new plant was opened in 1966, these buildings were demolished. This picture is by William Glashan (1903-1981), an architect who recorded many of the buildings in Inverness that were scheduled for demolition.



The Old Gaelic Church, now Leakey's Bookshop. The original building was built in 1792-3 but much altered in the 1800s. There had been a previous church on this site, St Mary's Gaelic Church, built circa 1649. The Gaelic Church was also once called Greyfriars Free Church.

It had a richly carved oak pulpit built by Dutch craftsmen, known as 'The Black Pulpit'. Unfortunately, it was removed to a warehouse where it was broken up by vandals.

The Gaelic Church caused controversy in the 19th century by appointing a minister who could not speak Gaelic.



This was the second Episcopalian Church in Inverness, situated on the east side of Church Street between the junctions of Union Street and Queensgate. The Church was demolished in 1903 but the tower remained until 1958. Parts of this church were incorporated into the third church of this name built on Southside Road. The first St John's Church was erected opposite the Gaelic Church on Church Street in 1801.

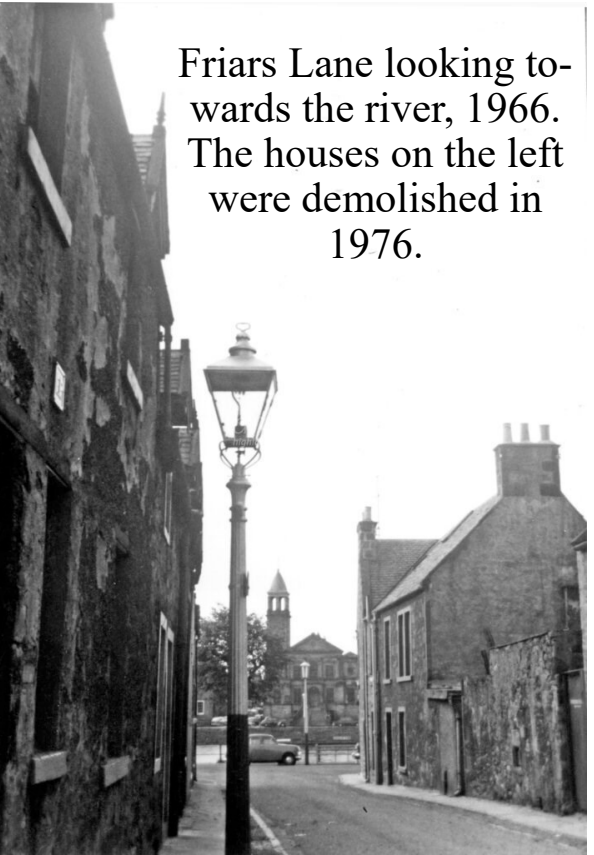
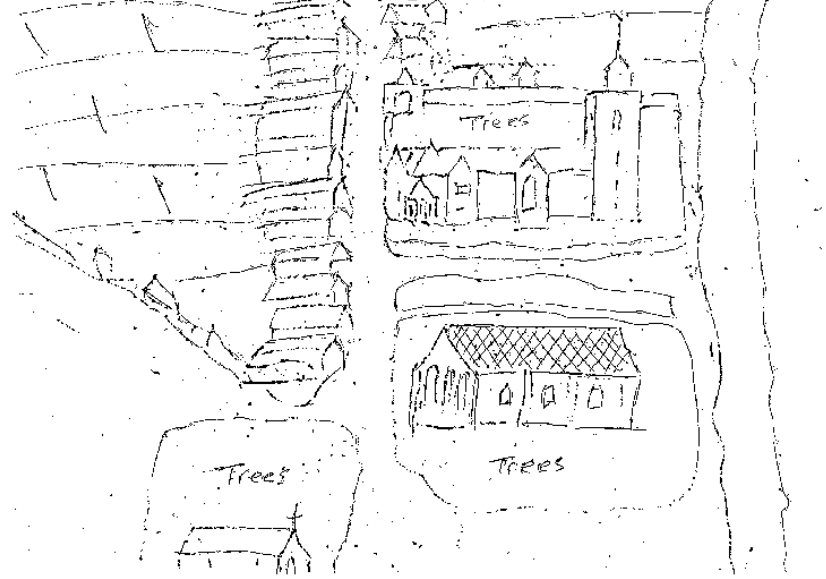
Before that Episcopalian were meeting in secret in a small meeting house on the Maggot, because of persecution after the Glorious Revolution of 1688.

Inverness Friary was founded in 1233. It was the site of many important events, including it is thought the location of the signing of the Treaty of Inverness between Robert the Bruce and representatives of the King of Norway in 1312.

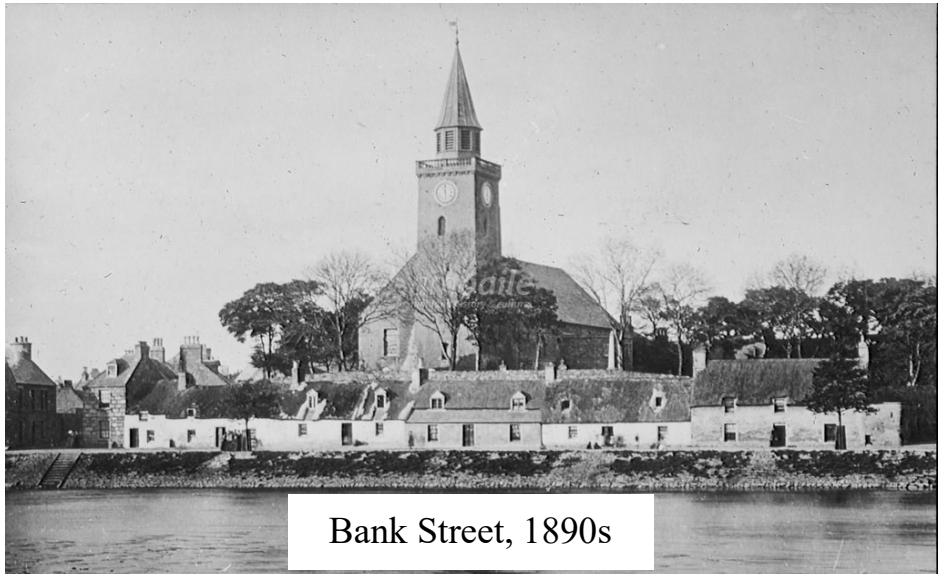
The Friary had a chequered history, destroyed by fire in 1372 and in a ruinous state by 1436. Closed down in the reformation in the mid-16th century, the building was robbed of stone to build Cromwell's Fort a century later.

The map on the right also shows St Mary's Chapel in Chapel Yard. After the Parish Church, St Mary's was the main place of worship in Inverness in the medieval period. It went the same way as the Friary in the 1650s when it was used for building materials for the construction of Cromwell's Fort.

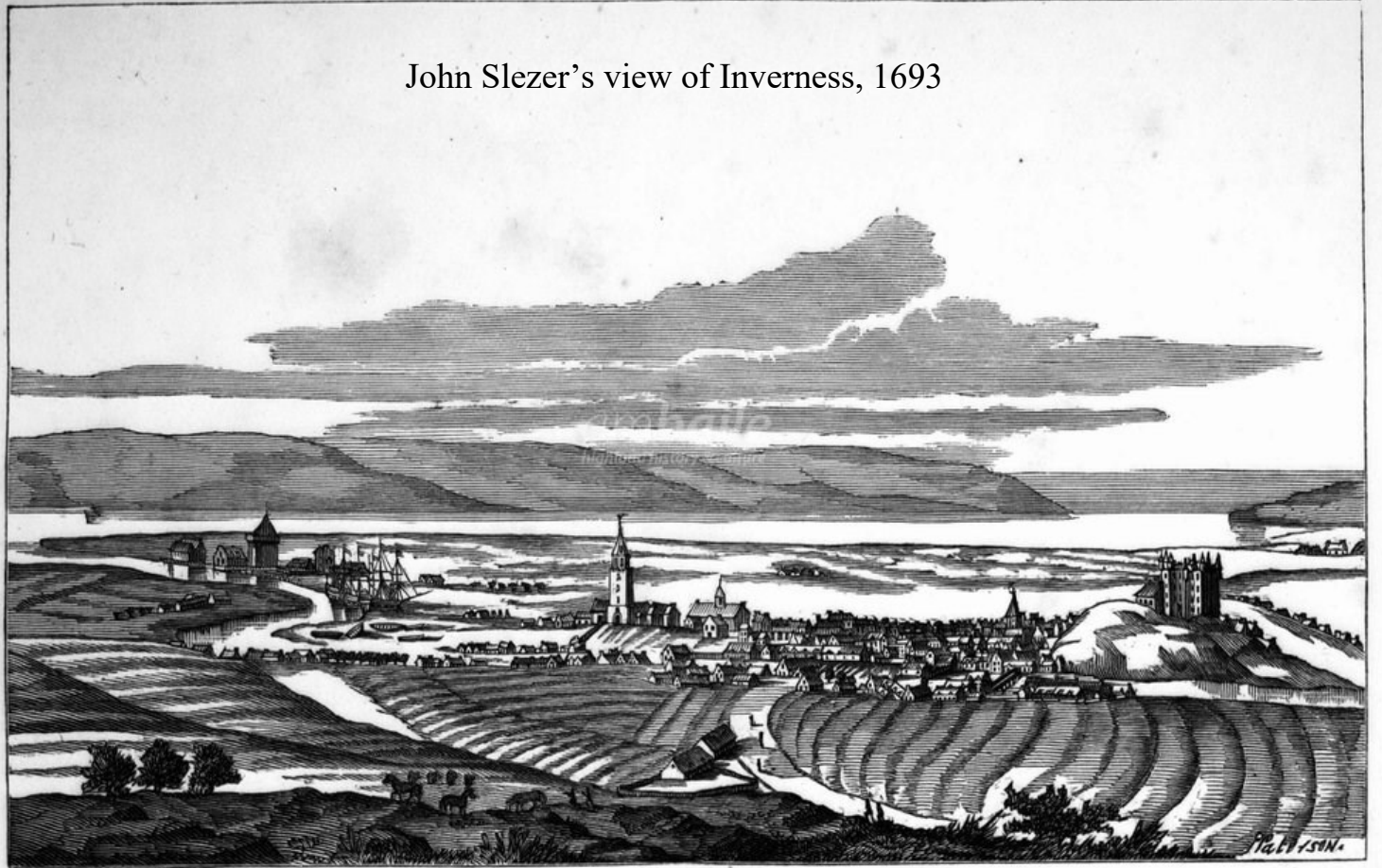
The only known image of Inverness Friary from James Gordon's map, circa 1650.



Friars Lane looking towards the river, 1966. The houses on the left were demolished in 1976.



Bank Street, 1890s



John Slezer's view of Inverness, 1693



Houses on Green Row in the Maggot, late 1800s. By 1910, many of the thatched cottages in this area had been demolished.

It is unclear where the name, Maggot, for this area of Inverness came from. The most likely source is it is derived from the Gaelic Magh, meaning a plain, flat area. It developed as a part industrial, part working class neighbourhood being close to the original harbour. Massively altered in the 20th century, little of its historic past survives.

Photo below from the 1950s shows from the left 'The Destructor' (a refuse incinerator providing power to the town), the swimming pool and the gasworks. The swimming pool was a much loved facility, which included private baths and a laundry when built in 1936. Remodelled in the 1980s but demolished in 2000.

