2 Aberdeen City: Davidson Cultural & Sporting Links

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Many Davidsons and their descendants have left their mark in Aberdeen as writers, artists, and sportsmen and women. This is a city which has a rich cultural heritage. It has excellent museums, and art galleries, and sporting facilities.

Majel Davidson, 1885–1969, the daughter of Thomas Davidson of Aberdeen, was a distinguished Scottish painter and potter whose work is only just beginning to be recognized. She trained at the Grays School in Aberdeen and then in Paris. She worked briefly in Canada after World War 1, before returning to Cults where she set up a pottery. She served in the First War with the VAD/FANY in France.

These examples of her work are held in private collections in Scotland.

Aberdeen Art Gallery holds examples of Majel Davidson's pottery in their collection, as well as some fine portraits of other Davidsons. This Gallery is well worth a visit for its permanent collection and its temporary exhibitions.

Aberdeen Art Gallery

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"Robert the Bruce", 4ft sculpture, by Anne & James Davidson located in the Bruce Room at the Aberdeen Town House.

Anne and James Davidson are Aberdeen based artists. Their work can be seen in public buildings, schools, churches, and private collections. They can be contacted via their website (see our Useful Links page), which also includes a detailed on-line gallery of their work.

Robert the Bruce played a major role in the early history of Aberdeen and is commemorated with a collection of historical and modern artifacts located in the Bruce Room at the Town House.

The poet Lord George Gordon Byron 1788–1824, had Davidson ancestors. Alexander Davidson of Newton, born in 1707, changed his name to Gordon of Gight, his mother's maiden surname. Byron was a great grandson of this Davidson. Byron had part of his early education in Aberdeen at the Grammar School from 1794–98.

The Old Grammar School buildings have long been replaced but the school still exists, and is proud of its famous former pupil. Today there is a prominent statue of Byron by the famous Scottish sculptor Pittendrigh MacGillivray on display at the school.

Byron Statue: Aberdeen Grammar School

Memorial Plaque to Lord Byron

The Old Grammar School Building: Aberdeen

Gight Castle today, located between Fyvie and Methlick.

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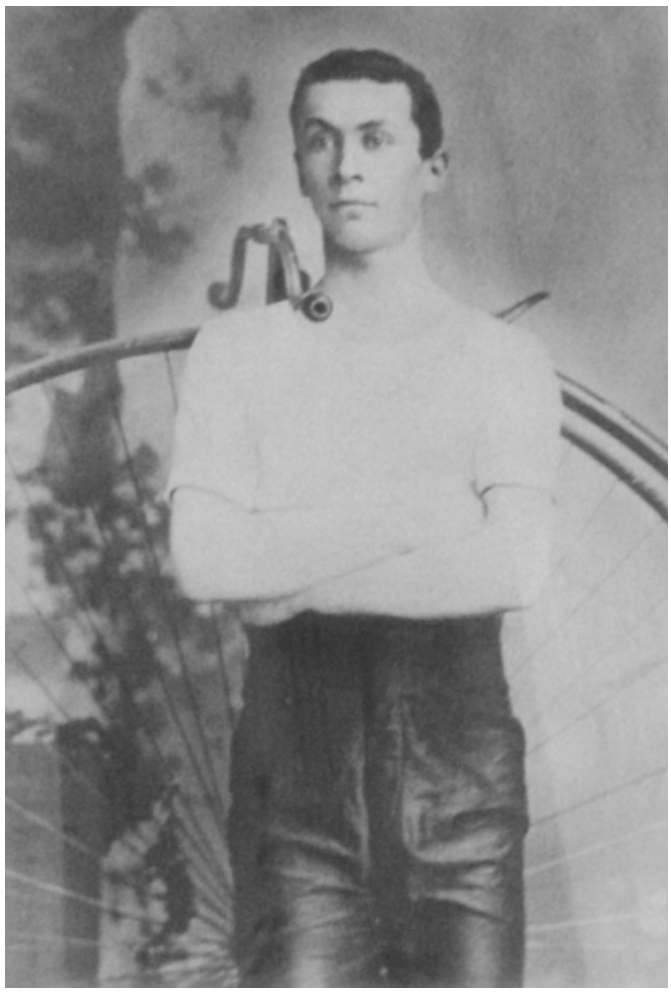
William Florence Davidson, 1866–1915, was an Aberdeen Athlete & Sportsman. He gained fame as a "Spider" from the High Bicycle Racing craze of the 1880s.

William Florence Davidson who came from a very humble background in Oldmeldrum went on to become a remarkable Aberdeen athlete in his early twenties. William Davidson was one of the most successful amateur cyclists in Scotland. He began cycling in the autumn of 1884, and joined the Bon-Accord Cycling Club in 1885. For many years, he enjoyed great success not only in Northern Scotland, but also in Glasgow and other parts of Scotland, holding his own against some of the most skilful and daring racing cyclists of the day.

Later, William Davidson was to play a major role in the organization and creation of the first professional football clubs in Aberdeen.



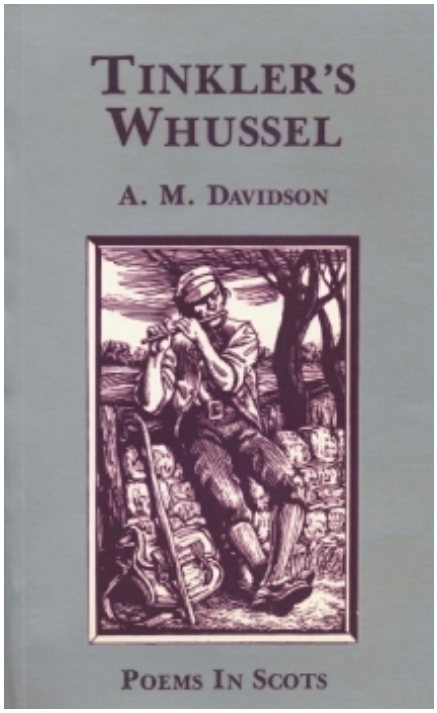
William F. Davidson standing in front of his High Bicycle.

Pittodrie Stadium, the home of Aberdeen Football Club, one of the most important football clubs in the Scottish Premier League.

Alexander Mackenzie Davidson 1897–1979 was a renowned Doric poet. His father was a merchant, born to Midmar crofters. His mother was from Kilkenny in Southern Ireland. Schooled in Aberdeen, Alexander Davidson started his adult career as a clerk in a large legal and commercial office, but later worked in the Public Library. He started publishing poetry in the 1920s, publishing his first Doric poem in 1932. However it was not until the early 1960s that he really began to make his mark in the *"Mither Tongue"*.

As well as publishing long poems such as *"The Thirlin Mull"* he also became a regular feature contributor in the *"The Press & Journal"* where his Doric poems reached a mass readership.

His principal theme was conservation and he used his Doric poetry to great effect when tearing into the town planners who "rugged doon the New Market and muckt up the Green".



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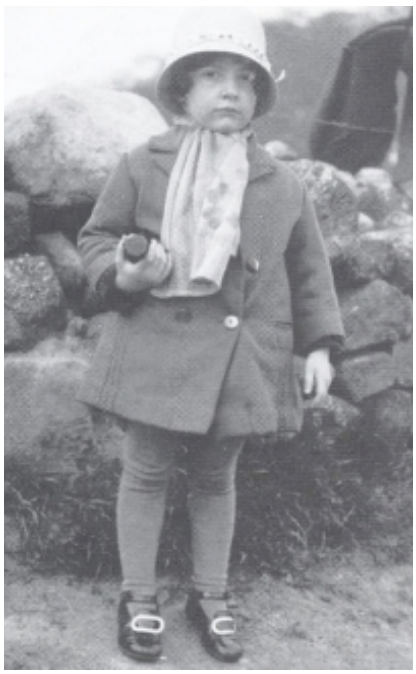
Doris Davidson is a well known and popular author of best-selling popular novels. Born and bred in Aberdeen, Doris has also written a down-to-earth autobiography about her childhood and adult life, which gives a very informative insight into life in Aberdeen in the 20th century. Much has changed in Aberdeen but not the spirit of the citizens of this major city.