

**JOURNAL OF THE**  
**TILES**  
**& ARCHITECTURAL**  
**CERAMICS SOCIETY**

**The national society responsible for the  
study and protection of tiles and  
architectural ceramics**



Above: Detail of the frieze supplied by James Duncan Limited for fishmongers, 126 Nithsdale Road, Glasgow (Lindsay Lennie).

Cover: Tiles designed by Lewis Foreman Day for Pilkington's Tile & Pottery Company (private collection, photograph courtesy Chris Blanchett).

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# Journal of the Tiles & Architectural Ceramics Society

## Volume 15 2009

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## Contents

<b>Lindsay Lennie</b> The Tiled Shops of James Duncan Limited	<b>3</b>
<b>Barry and Angela Corbett</b> Tile Designs by Lewis Foreman Day for Pilkington's Tile & Pottery Company	<b>14</b>
<b>Mario Baeck</b> Toulouse: Capital of Architectural Terracotta in Early Nineteenth Century France	<b>29</b>
<b>Jaume Coll Conesa</b> The Museo Nacional de Cerámica "González Martí" and Ceramic Tile Collecting in Valencia	<b>38</b>

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# The Tiled Shops of James Duncan Limited

Lindsay Lennie

The name of James Duncan Limited is associated with almost one hundred years of ceramic tiling in Scotland. Although the firm's contribution to Scottish tiled interiors is widely recognised, information about one of the country's greatest tile firms has proved elusive and knowledge of surviving examples sporadic. A survey of shops in Scotland has revealed that although surviving numbers are not extensive compared to those originally executed, some significant examples do remain.<sup>1</sup> This article aims to enlarge upon current understanding of the surviving legacy of James Duncan's distinctly Scottish tiled shops and to assess them in terms of their condition, location and vulnerability.<sup>2</sup>

## Tile firms in Glasgow

The name James Duncan first appears in the Glasgow Post Office directories in 1877–8 as 'Duncan, James, mosaic, encaustic and geometrical tile layer and art tile merchant, 106 West Campbell Street; ho 370 Great Western Road'. This entry was under the general directory and it was the 1885–6 directory before there were sufficient tile firms to warrant a separate category for 'Tile layers, Mosaic and Encaustic'. In that year there were six other tile firms listed and Duncan has an additional entry under Minton Hollins & Co stating 'depot at James Duncan, 106 West Campbell Street' indicating that they were agents for Minton Hollins.

The number of tile firms gradually increased in response to demand for ceramic tiling for public, commercial and domestic buildings (Fig. 1). By 1889 there were 14 tile companies listed, and the number continued to rise until it reached a peak of 30 firms in 1904. Some offered particular services such as John Youden & Co advertising 'special designs' and J. Winton Mackie, who advertised 'pictorial and ornamental tile work of every description for churches, schools, public buildings, house and ship work, also for dairy, butcher, fishmonger and provision shops &c'. The number

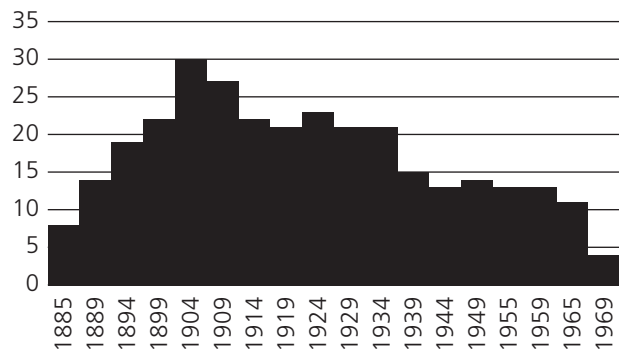


Figure 1. Graph showing changes in number of Glasgow tile firms 1889–1969 (Information sourced from Glasgow Post Office directories)

of firms reduced slightly to 22 during the period of World War I and maintained that level throughout the interwar years, although some began to specialise in other materials such as terrazzo, a popular ceramic material in the 1930s. In the post-war period there was a significant decline with 21 firms operating in 1934–5 but only 13 in 1955–6 and 11 in 1965–6. By 1969–70 there were only four firms, James Duncan having ceased to operate after 1965. His firm is last listed in 1965–6 as 'Scottish Tile and Marble Manufacturers Association'.

## The growth of tiled shops in Scotland

The growth in tile firms at the end of the nineteenth century mirrors a growth in grocers, dairies and butchers. With the rapid urbanisation of Scotland during the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century, people needed supplies of fresh produce, an opportunity first capitalised upon by Thomas Lipton and subsequently by other Scottish firms including Massey's, Templeton's and the Buttercup Dairy. English retailers such as Home & Colonial Stores and the Maypole Dairy Company also established shops in Scotland. These were the pioneers of the modern-day chain stores. As shop numbers increased, competition became fierce and retailers recognised that the presentation of their

shops in terms of display, lighting and visibility was of crucial importance in attracting customers. The impression of a clean and hygienic interior was made possible through the use of tiles. Chain stores developed their own corporate livery for their network of shops and this included tile schemes. In contrast, independent retailers often preferred individually commissioned tiles to improve their shops. This dramatic growth in shop numbers at the end of the nineteenth century allowed James Duncan to expand and become one of Scotland's most significant tile firms.

### James Duncan Limited

The firm of James Duncan appears to have been established around 1865, but it was 1902 when they became a limited company with a share capital of £2000.<sup>3</sup> The company directors were James Sloss Duncan ('Draughtsman'; died 1929), John Lapsley Duncan ('Tile Layer'; died 1946) and George Gabriel Duncan ('Silversmith'; died 1967). The company objectives included not only tile laying but also other building activities including plastering, slating, marble cutting and wood block flooring, together with fireplaces and kitchen ranges.

It has been widely understood that James Duncan Limited did not manufacture their own tiles but decorated machine-pressed blanks purchased from T. & R. Boote of Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, and Maw & Co of Jackfield. However, a lack of company records from James Duncan Ltd makes it difficult to clarify the exact nature of the work done by the firm in terms of tile design, decoration and supply. Cartographic evidence suggests that there was no kiln on the premises of James Duncan's showroom at 106 West Campbell Street; for instance the Goad Fire Insurance Plan for Glasgow (1890) indicates this location as a 'tile warehouse'.<sup>4</sup> Therefore it would appear that Duncan's did not carry out tile decoration at West Campbell Street. There is also some uncertainty about the input of the firm in the area of design. Yoshimura suggests that 'The designs were drawn up in Glasgow but executed by tile manufacturers in Staffordshire' and certainly Mr Ian Duncan confirmed that Boote's were involved in decorating tiles for Duncan's.<sup>5</sup>

The tiles were consistently decorated by tubelining and the predominant colour schemes were

green and white. There is a recurrent influence of the art nouveau movement, with flowing plant forms and heart motifs incorporated into the designs, and the murals can usually be easily identified by the signing of Duncan's name either as 'James Duncan Ltd' or 'JD Ltd'. Although signing normally indicates responsibility for the decoration, it is possible that Boote's and Maw's carried out the decorating and firing based on designs supplied to them, with Duncan's asserting their copyright through the signature.<sup>6</sup> Maw's are known to have supplied tiles and mosaic on behalf of Duncan's directly to Buttercup Dairy shops during 1915–17. In 1917 alone, nine locations were sent tiling by Maw's, including the still-extant shop at 48 Warrender Park Road in Edinburgh.<sup>7</sup> Thus it seems most likely that Duncan's were tile suppliers and fitters who were involved in the design of the tiles, rather than being decorators themselves. The extent of their design involvement is still difficult to discern, and may have varied during the lifetime of the firm.



Figure 2. Painting by Tom Curr

The James Duncan style is both distinctive and recognisable, yet all the shops were different, as King states: 'Duncan commissions were tailored to suit the individual shop and while their style has similarities, no two Duncan shops are ever the same unless they are part of a chain'.<sup>8</sup> This individuality offered Duncan opportunities at a time when the emerging arts and crafts movement encouraged a backlash against mass production. Yoshimura suggests that 'the lack of sensitivity in mass-produced materials heightened an awareness and demand in the middle classes for hand-crafted

work. James Duncan & Co Ltd prospered under this demand'.<sup>9</sup> His firm therefore took advantage of the mass market offered by retail premises, but could provide customers with a certain level of individuality.

The work of James Duncan Ltd was not confined to shops as they also provided tiles for numerous domestic fireplaces and, more significantly, for the many 'wally' or tiled closes which predominate in Glasgow. While some were no doubt 'off the peg', others were individually designed such as the closes at The Esplanade, Greenock, which featured a Clyde scene with ships. Yoshimura suggests that the rapid growth in tenement building did not allow time for these individually commissioned murals to be widely used in tenements.<sup>10</sup> However, this combination of tiled closes, fireplaces and shops must have offered considerable work for Duncan's firm from the late nineteenth century through the interwar period.

### The Buttercup Dairy Company Ltd

What surely must have been Duncan's most lucrative contract was for the Buttercup Dairy Company, who eventually owned some 400 shops across Scotland. Andrew Ewing set up the company in Leith, Edinburgh in 1908 and initially specialised in a few key items namely tea, margarine, butter, cream, eggs, condensed milk and cooking fat.<sup>11</sup> First based at Constitution Street, Leith they soon created their headquarters at Easter Road. The greatest growth took place in the 1920s and by 1927 there were at least 35 premises in Edinburgh and East Lothian and five in Aberdeen, amongst others.<sup>12</sup> Growth in Glasgow seems to have been slower than in the east of Scotland. This may perhaps be attributed to the strong and established presence of similar companies in the Glasgow area, notably, Lipton's, Massey's, Templeton's and Ross's Dairies. This may have made the city a more challenging proposition for expansion, particularly for an Edinburgh-based firm.<sup>13</sup>

The east of Scotland was certainly where the company established a strong foothold, notably in Aberdeen, Dundee and in the towns of Angus and Fife as well as East Lothian and the Borders. By the 1930s the company was well established and from listings in various trades directories it seems that they survived the difficult trading times during World War II. This is perhaps because they were



Figure 3. Buttercup Dairy Company mural

innovative, being one of the first Scottish retailers to introduce self-service.<sup>14</sup> It is understood that Andrew Ewing sold the company in 1949 and the shops were offered to the managers. The 1955 Edinburgh Post Office Directory lists 14 premises although by 1959 this was reduced to the Easter Road headquarters and one other shop. By the 1960s they remain listed at 382 Easter Road but after 1970 there is no listing, the company having ceased to exist.<sup>15</sup>

### The Buttercup Dairy shops

The architect James Davidson Cairns (1866–1947) of Edinburgh designed buildings for the Buttercup Dairy Company including offices, warehouses, workshops, garages, cold storage rooms and poultry farm buildings, all in Leith. He also designed shops throughout Scotland in the Buttercup Dairy Company corporate style.<sup>16</sup> The shops varied depending on their location and the style of the parent building, but they have some common elements, most being single-fronted with offset, recessed door, fluted console brackets and sometimes a clerestory of stained glass. Each shop has a lobby floor, the initials 'BDCo' with art nouveau plant forms set into the mosaic, and usually a green and

white tiled stallriser. The notable feature is a tiled lobby panel featuring a girl feeding a buttercup to a brown cow in a rural setting. With considerable competition from rival dairies and grocers, the aesthetically pleasing and extremely distinctive tiling must have been a great asset to the company.

The image depicted on the tiles was taken from a painting which hung in the Leith headquarters of the firm.<sup>17</sup> The original painting was by Edinburgh artist Tom Curr (1887–1958) who worked for colour printers McLagan and Cumming, who were also based in the city. He designed images for retail businesses including the iconic Scott's Porage Oats picture of a man in a kilt with the shot putt. He was a central figure in the Boys Brigade and painted images for their organisation as well as being a cartoonist for the *Edinburgh Evening Times* newspaper. It seems that he attended the Dublin Street Baptist Church in Edinburgh where Andrew Ewing was also a member, which may explain why Curr painted the image.<sup>18</sup>

Curr's painting features an idyllic rural scene of a blonde-haired girl holding out a buttercup to a brown and white cow (Fig. 2). The girl is wearing a blue bonnet and a pink and white dress with the buttercups gathered in the folds of her skirt. The background is a rustic farmyard setting with a thatched barn and trees beyond.<sup>19</sup> In James Duncan's mural, the essence of the original picture is certainly retained, although the background scene is altered to be more in keeping with the Duncan tradition of Scottish scenes with water, trees and hills (Fig. 3). The tiled lobby panels all have a number of common features (Fig. 4):

Raised 'rail' tiles at the top and bottom of the panel featuring leaf and curving plant forms or stylised egg and dart.

A horizontal panel comprising the top quarter with a cream base tile and with swags of buttercups topped by a pink bow surrounding the letters 'B', 'D' and 'Co' and 'Ltd'.

The majority of the panel is devoted to a green background tile with a central oval panel with a mural of a girl with a brown cow. Art nouveau inspired hearts and floral details are located at the equivalent of 12, 3, 6 and 9 o'clock. A dark green band of narrow tiles surrounds the mural.

The majority of the tiles used are 6 inch but smaller rectangular white, dark green and light green tiles form borders around the panel.

Both the upper name panel and the pictorial panel are typically signed. Normally there is a 'JD Ltd' below the picture and 'J Duncan Ltd Glasgow' in the upper panel. The position and style of these signatures varies.

Dark green tiles along the base of the panel.

What is most notable about the Buttercup Dairy shops is that, unlike some modern shop designers who ruthlessly impose their design regardless of the consequences for the parent building, in the case of the Buttercup shops there appears to have been some flexibility, notably in the size of the lobby panels and mosaic floor. Perhaps this can be attributed to the work of J. D. Cairns as architect of



Figure 4. Lobby panel at 138 High Street, Dunbar

the shops but credit must also go to Duncan for adapting the tile schemes to suit each shop. It is certainly a lesson for modern retailers and shopfitters that a flexible and sustainable approach can be achieved without loss of the corporate brand image.

The panels not only vary in size but also in execution, so not all the murals are the same. Although they may appear at first glance to be identical, there are subtle differences between the pictures. In some the feet of the girl are not visible and certainly the face of the girl varies from one panel to another. Close examination indicates that there are minor differences in the background scenes of trees, clouds and water as well as the smaller details like the buttercups. This presents an interesting impression of the involvement of different tile decorators over several years during which the shops were installed and each with their own interpretation of the image they were producing. It shows the individuality of the tiles which on first impression appear to be mass produced, but clearly represent a time when tiles were individually crafted. On a macro level they reflect the corporate image of the company across the whole of Scotland, but on a micro level reflect the individuality of the tile decorator. The powerful, distinctive and instantly recognisable image of the girl with the cow overrides any slight variation in trying to make the tiles fit into the existing space.

### Surviving former Buttercup Dairy shops

A survey of shops in Scotland identified 22 former Buttercup Dairy shops which still survive, although the degree of retention of original features varies from almost fully intact to retaining only the mosaic floor (see appendix 1) (Fig. 5). In some cases the removal of the Buttercup Dairy image has been brutal. In Cupar, the name and image have been removed and replaced with modern green tiles. In Cardenden, Fife, all that remains in a modernised shop is the lobby panel, badly damaged and out of context; it is a peculiar tiled island within the shop. In others, the alterations have left the aesthetically pleasing image of the girl but the name panel has been covered up or removed as in Carnoustie and North Berwick. In Bo'ness, only the upper name panel is visible above timber panelling but it has been painted over, and it is not clear whether the



Figure 5. Map showing approximate locations of surviving tiled shops by James Duncan Limited (Reproduced from Ordnance Survey map data by permission of the Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2001.)

pictorial panel survives. In Campbeltown, Montrose, Stewarton and some examples in Edinburgh the panels may survive beneath later panelling but only further investigation will establish the condition and extent of surviving tiles.

The only Buttercup Dairy shop which retains its stained glass is at 48 Warrender Park Road in Edinburgh. This appears to have been one of the last shops to operate as a Buttercup Dairy shop, remaining listed in the Edinburgh Trades Directory in 1959, which may explain the intact nature of the shopfront. With the other surviving shops, the only discernible pattern is that most are located in eastern Scotland and it is possibly as much chance that they still remain, perhaps related to the type of occupiers who have been in the premises and their acceptance of the tiles.

Some shops were created as a pair, a good surviving example being at 40–44 High Street, Selkirk. The right hand shop has pictures of cows and pigs, presumably for a butchers, but the left hand shop is the normal Buttercup Dairy design. They have matching doors and mosaic lobby floors; in this case number 40 has the initials 'JAW' for J.A. Waters. A further example in Brechin has had the tiles largely replaced with modern tiling.

### Other James Duncan tiled shops

Other than the Buttercup Dairy Company shops, Duncan executed some designs which, while all



Figure 6. Detail of frieze at 25 Kempock Street, Gourrock



Figure 7. Tiled counter, Sanquhar

individual, have elements in common (see appendix 2). There is sometimes a frieze around all of the shop walls at ceiling height and these are both distinctive and notably Scottish in inspiration. They often reflect idyllic Highland scenes with lochs, mountains and Highland cows, all executed in Duncan's tube-lined style. It is reputed that the designs were taken from postcards of local scenes and certainly the images depicted on the tiles could well reflect this.<sup>20</sup>

Number 25 Kempock Street, Gourrock retains a striking frieze around the walls of the shop. A former butchers, it depicts a river valley with images of steamers reflecting the location of the shop near the River Clyde (Fig. 6). Although in need of some conservation work to damaged and lost tiles, the frieze is relatively intact. A butchers shop in the small Dumfriesshire village of Sanquhar retains an impressive frieze of Highland scenes around three walls of the shop. Below the frieze is a double band of green and white tiles, the remaining tiles being plain white. The shop also has a tiled counter, similar to another Duncan shop located in Linlithgow (Fig. 7).

The butchers T. D. Anderson, at 165 High Street, Linlithgow, dating to 1912, differs from the two other shops with its pair of elaborate panels featuring local scenes of Linlithgow Palace – located almost opposite the shop itself – as well as the nearby Avon Viaduct (Figs. 8 and 9). Unlike Sanquhar and Gourrock, the upper wall frieze comprises bulls heads with swags of flowers and bows. This design echoes the Minton China Works 'Arrangement for Butchers Shop' of around 1880.<sup>21</sup> The shop also has two diamond-shaped panels in the window which are reminiscent of those used by both Minton's and Pilkington's. Sanquhar and Linlithgow have in common a large



Figure 8. Panel showing Linlithgow Palace at 165 High Street, Linlithgow



Figure 9. Panel showing Avon Viaduct at 165 High Street, Linlithgow



Figure 10. Detail of frieze at 126 Nithsdale Road, Glasgow

fixed, marble-topped counter with a tiled frontage which appears to match, but a closer examination indicates that although the scenes of mountains, lochs and Highland cows are very similar they are not identical. Both however make use of the same green pilasters and the egg and dart border tiles used in numerous Duncan shops.

Two further butchers shops at Dunoon and Tollcross Road, Glasgow have more modest panels either 4 or 10 tiles in size featuring cows and sheep, with a black and white chequered border, a colour scheme often favoured by butchers.

126 Nithsdale Road, Glasgow is a rare example of Duncan's work for a fishmonger, Alex Reid, in 1894. The lobby panel of a classical female figure was removed by Glasgow Museums for protection following vandalism.<sup>22</sup> However, the interior remains, and depicts a seascape with mermaids and sailing boats negotiating a stormy sea. Currently used as a dry cleaners, this interior is unusual because it departs from the usual green and white scheme prevalent in most Duncan shops. Instead, the border rail tiles are in blue and the main tile scheme is an aquamarine colour (Fig. 10).

In the Ayrshire town of Maybole, the former Carrick and District Co-operative Society building erected at 19–29 Whitehall in 1931 is now lying vacant and in a poor state of repair.<sup>23</sup> The building must have been a significant feature in the townscape when first erected and has a lobby panel by James Duncan. The scene depicted here perhaps hints at being inspired by English village life with thatched half-timbered cottages, a country church and cows wandering along a rural lane. An unlisted building awaiting redevelopment, the future for such a tile scheme remains uncertain.

A Co-operative building which is in better condition is the former Paisley Provident Co-operative Society, Causeyside Street, Paisley. It is perhaps the most impressive James Duncan scheme to survive and comprises an elaborate entrance to the offices above with a mosaic floor and wall tiles depicting heraldic arms and female figures in a blue, nautical style (Fig. 11). The interior hall and three flights of stairs have a green and white scheme with roses reminiscent of the 'Glasgow Style'. This remarkably fine interior dates to 1907–8 and is in excellent condition.

The tiled scenes in these shops display a similarity to each other in terms of colours and designs yet at the same time are unique to each shop. Duncan appears to have captured a market where he could



Figure 11. Part of tile scheme at former Paisley Provident Co-operative Society

supply shops with locally distinctive designs while retaining an element of uniformity that must have made the tiling more economic. It is surely no coincidence that the shops mostly use a green and white colour scheme and that the same border and rail tiles frequently recur.

### Condition and conservation

Tiled shops face many threats, a lack of understanding of the significance of the tiling being a contributing factor to its removal. Although some of the shops discussed are listed buildings and therefore protected, others are unlisted and are vulnerable to removal and damage. The tiled shops of James Duncan show an uneven pattern of both survival and appreciation. From anecdotal discussions with shop occupiers, it is evident that while many were proud of the interiors, others had less knowledge of the origins of the tiles, their age or significance, perhaps reflecting the transient



Figure 12. Lobby panel at 138 High Street, Dunbar before conservation



Figure 13. Lobby panel at 138 High Street, Dunbar after restoration using Craven Dunnill tiles

occupation of some premises. It is often the case that in shops where there has been a long business association with the building, such as at Linlithgow, the tiles have been well preserved.

Certain owners have however, taken a particular interest in their shopfronts. The Buttercup Dairy mural seems to have captured the imagination of many of the shop owners and they have subsequently developed an interest in the history of the tiles and the dairy company. Some have actively tried to prevent vandalism by using a lobby gate when the shop is closed. These can be effective but their fixing and positioning needs careful consideration so that the tiles are not damaged. Relevant planning permissions and listed building consents may also be required in some cases.

The raised rail tile causes particular problems if the tiles are covered over. The profile is not flat and therefore is vulnerable to damage when hardboard or a similar covering is applied. In these cases there is also usually evidence of holes where screws to hold covering panels have been drilled in, causing the tiles to become chipped. The tiles at the edge of the lobby panels are also extremely vulnerable and frequently become loose, cracked and chipped.

The only restorative conservation work undertaken on a James Duncan shop that the author is aware of is to a former Buttercup Dairy shop in Dunbar, completed in September 2008. A particularly good surviving example now occupied by Amos Building Surveyors, it had been damaged by a previous occupier through the fixing of a timber panel to hide the tiles. These were restored with grant assistance from the Dunbar Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) and matching tiles were supplied by Craven Dunnill of Jackfield (Figs. 12

and 13). It is hoped that owners of other James Duncan tiled shops will follow Dunbar's lead and undertake restorative work; plans are currently underway by Bo'ness THI to investigate the possible restoration of their Buttercup Dairy shop. Ultimately, while statutory measures and grant assistance play a key role in the conservation of tiled shops, education and understanding are essential in promoting good practice and in increasing an appreciation of their rarity and significance.

### Conclusion

The firm of James Duncan Limited was finally dissolved in 1977. In their 100 year history they brought a particular and distinctive style of tiled shop to Scottish retailers, one of individuality and of quality which tapped into a Scottish pride in the nation's landscapes, whether real or imagined. The beautiful murals of mountains and lochs or of ships and viaducts unashamedly celebrate these idyllic rural scenes and bold engineering works. In this same vein, the Buttercup Dairy girl is one of a picturesque, bygone age reflecting the gentle Tom Curr image from which it was derived.

King's remarks that 'no two Duncan shops are ever the same' extends to all his shops, including the Buttercup Dairy as each one was individually crafted and therefore bears the hallmarks of the tile decorators who executed the work. These are mass-produced tiles which retain a level of individuality, albeit with common elements evident between the different schemes, which must have kept them cost-effective.

There remains much speculation about the work of Glasgow's greatest tile firm. Despite this, it is clear that their contribution to tiled shops in Scotland is extremely significant. However, with some shops unlisted and located outside conservation areas, their vulnerability is a real concern, particularly given the small number which survive. Undoubtedly further research would help to enlighten the work of this important Scottish company and perhaps even help to uncover hidden examples of the tiled shops of James Duncan Limited.

### **Appendix 1: Surviving former Buttercup Dairy Company shops**

The shops are unlisted unless otherwise stated.

#### **Angus**

- 1) Allen's takeaway, 5 Keptie Street, Arbroath. Tiles largely removed or covered by modern tiling.
- 2) Chiropodist/pet shop, 12-14 High Street, Brechin. Listed Category B. Constructed as a pair of matching BDCo shops although many tiles have been replaced.
- 3) 91 High Street, Carnoustie (possibly vacant). Mosaic tiled floor and lobby panel but with timber panelling around it.
- 4) W. R. Hardy, gunsmiths, 155 East High Street, Forfar. Former Buttercup Dairy shop but only lobby floor survives and possibly panel behind timber boarding.
- 5) 148 High Street, Montrose (occupant unknown). Listed Category C(S). Some remnants of BDCo shop, mosaic floor and possibly lobby panel hidden behind timber panelling in entrance.

#### **Argyll & Bute**

- 6) Argyll FM, 29 Longrow, Campbeltown. Listed Category B. Some remnants of BDCo shop including mosaic tiled floor, lobby panel possibly hidden behind panelling in entrance.

#### **East Ayrshire**

- 7) The Groom Room, 19 Lainshaw Street, Stewarton. Lobby floor survives and possibly panel behind timber boarding.

#### **East Lothian**

- 8) Amos Building Surveyors, 138 High Street, Dunbar. Listed Category C(S). One of the most intact BDCo shops; tiles have recently undergone conservation work partly funded by Dunbar Townscape Heritage Initiative.
- 9) Stove Shop, 6 Court Street, Haddington. Good surviving shop with mosaic floor, lobby panel and tiled stallriser.
- 10) Cut n' Colours hairdresser, 102 High Street, North Berwick. Lobby panel survives but altered by addition of marble surround. Some tiles damaged. Mosaic floor lost.

#### **Falkirk**

- 11) Opticians, 101 North Street, Bo'ness. Mosaic floor survives, two-thirds lobby panel hidden by timber boarding, upper section visible but painted over.

#### **Fife**

- 12) David Sands supermarket and post office, 183-185 Station Road, Cardenden. Lobby panel only survives within a modernised and extended shop.
- 13) Barbers shop, 19 Bonnygate, Cupar. Listed Category C(S). Former Buttercup Dairy shop but tiles altered and panel removed.

#### **Edinburgh**

- 14) Craiglea Clocks, 88 Comiston Road. Lobby panel, mosaic floor, some interior fittings but unclear whether they are Buttercup fittings.
- 15) Moviebank Video Hire, 3 Glanville Place. Listed Category B. Lobby floor survives and possibly panel behind timber boarding.
- 16) Shelter Charity Shop, 104A Raeburn Place. Lobby floor survives and possibly panel behind timber boarding.
- 17) Meadows Lamp Gallery, 48 Warrender Park Road. Listed Category C(S). Good shopfront with stained glass, lobby panel and tiled tallriser but original mosaic floor has been lost.
- 18) Formerly Bloomfresh, 3 Willowbrae Road. Former Buttercup Dairy with good console brackets and tiled stallriser and cill panel; lobby may survive behind closed roller shutters.

### **Inverclyde**

- 19) 14 St James Terrace, Kilmacolm, Lobby panel survives together with mosaic floor. Panel has been painted over in the past but this has recently been removed. Lobby floor survives. Also has a separate painted tile panel in the window depicting fish signed R. W. Jones, 1906, which must predate it as a Buttercup Dairy shop.

### **Moray**

- 20) The Barbers, 167 Mid Street, Keith. Lobby panel survives but little else of the shopfront. Mosaic floor lost.

### **Scottish Borders**

- 21) Sculpture Gallery 94 High Street, Innerleithen. The only surviving Buttercup Dairy shop to have two lobby panels. Mosaic floor also survives.
- 22) Cameron's bakers (40), Bridal Shop (44), 40–44 High Street, Selkirk. Listed Category B. The best surviving paired shops. Good intact tiling to both shops with scenes of farm animals at number 40. Both mosaic floors survive along with good shopfront features.

## **Appendix 2: Other surviving James Duncan tiled shops**

The shops are unlisted unless otherwise stated.

### **Argyll & Bute**

- 1) A. Kent, butchers, 95 Argyll Street, Dunoon. Small panels in lobby and windows of cows and sheep in Highland setting similar in style to 40 High Street, Selkirk and to Tollcross, Glasgow. No tiles visible in main shop interior.

### **Dumfries & Galloway**

- 2) Walkers butchers, 15 High Street, Sanquhar. Wall friezes around whole shop depicting Highland scenes. Tiled butchers counter. Tile scheme intact and in good condition.

### **Glasgow**

- 3) Capers Dry Cleaners, 126 Nithsdale Road, Pollockshields, Glasgow. Listed Category B. Was originally Alex Reid fishmongers in 1894. Wall friezes of mermaids and ships in a stormy sea. Blue tile scheme. Interior largely intact although some damage. Lobby panel removed to Glasgow Museums.

- 4) McCallum's butchers, 1008 Tollcross Road, Glasgow. Has 4 and 10 tile panels with a black and white chequered border. Pictorial panels in lobby and in window depict farm animal in rural or Highland scenes. No other tiles within the shop. Some damaged or missing tiles. Very similar scheme to Kent's butcher in Dunoon.

### **Inverclyde**

- 5) Original Artists Gallery and gift shop, 25 Kempock Street, Gourock. Wall friezes around whole shop depicting Clyde steamers and Highland scenes. Some damaged tiles but overall in fair condition.

### **North Ayrshire**

- 6) Shields Butchers, 29 Glasgow Street, Millport, Great Cumbrae, butcher's with plain tiled interior (information from Mr Ian Duncan).

### **Paisley**

- 7) 25–29 Causeyside Street, former Paisley Provident Co-operative Society building, now occupied by Scottish Enterprise. Listed Category B. Impressive entrance lobby with mosaic floor, heraldic and nautical scenes on wall tiles. Interior has encaustic tiled floor and wall tiles with pink roses and a green and white scheme which extends up three flights of stairs. Excellent condition.

### **South Ayrshire**

- 8) Formerly Carrick and District Co-operative Society (now vacant), 19–25 Whitehall, Maybole. Lobby panel with a rural village scene. Vulnerable and in poor condition.

### **West Lothian**

- 9) T. D. Anderson, butchers, 165 High Street, Linlithgow. Listed Category B. Wall friezes of bulls heads around walls of shops, panels of Linlithgow Palace and Avon Viaduct, diamond window panels of sheep. Tiled butchers counter. Tiles installed in 1912. Intact tile scheme in good condition.

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I would like to thank Mr Ian Duncan and Mr Euan Duncan for providing information about James Duncan Ltd and for suggesting sites to visit. I am

also grateful to Dr Lynn Pearson for her considerable assistance in the preparation of this article. Finally, thanks go to the numerous shop owners who gave up their time to talk to me about the history of their shops.

## Notes and References

- 1 The research for this article was carried out as part of a three-year research fellowship funded by the Technical Conservation Group, Historic Scotland, investigating the history and development of historic shops in Scotland. All photographs are by the author.
- 2 The remaining known stock of non-Duncan's shops with tiled murals or pictorial tiles in Scotland is small. It includes a former Lipton's in Arbroath, a fishmongers in Edinburgh (panels possibly Craven Dunnill), shops with Maw panels in Edinburgh and Perth, a butchers in Coldstream (probably Dutch tiling) and a butchers (1922) in Blairgowrie. The number of surviving James Duncan shops is significantly larger, and many other shops with plain tiled interiors remain.
- 3 King, E. (1991). *Peoples Pictures: The Story of Tiles in Glasgow*. Glasgow: Glasgow Museums, p. 9; Pearson, L. (2005) *Tile Gazetteer: A Guide to British tile and architectural ceramic locations*. Shepton Beauchamp: Richard Dennis, p. 457. King (1991) *People's Pictures*, p. 9, states that James Duncan Limited was established in 1865, but the firm does not appear in trades directories until 1877–8. National Archives of Scotland, West Register House, Edinburgh, BT2/1977/111 holds the returns under the Companies Act from 1902 to 1977 for James Duncan Ltd.
- 4 National Map Library of Scotland, Goad Fire Insurance Plan of Glasgow, 1890, S4–55 has the description 'Tile Warehouse' with tenements above for 106 West Campbell Street.
- 5 Yoshimura, N. (1990) *Victorian Tiles in Glasgow*. Unpublished paper held in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow; the paper does not identify the sources used. However, Mr Ian Duncan, a relative of the Duncan family, confirms that T. & R. Boote of Burslem carried out the decorating of the tiles.
- 6 van Lemmen, H. (2008) *Art Nouveau Tiles*. Oxford, Shire Publications, p. 25. A similar case concerns the tile supplier A. M. A. Heystee in Amsterdam around 1900; they provided tile panels bearing their own signature in addition to that of the firm producing the panels. My thanks to Hans van Lemmen for this information.
- 7 Shropshire Archives, Maw Abstract Book 28.
- 8 King (1991) *Peoples Pictures*.
- 9 Yoshimura (1990) *Victorian Tiles*.
- 10 Yoshimura (1990) *Victorian Tiles*. A wally close probably by James Duncan can be seen at 385 Victoria Road, Glasgow. It is not signed by Duncan but it has his trademark designs of art nouveau style green and white tiles and distinctive egg and dart rail tiles.
- 11 Information from the People's Palace and Winter Gardens, Glasgow. The People's Palace museum has a recreated Buttercup Dairy Company shop as part of a permanent exhibition on shopping, although the pictorial lobby tile panel is not on display.
- 12 Information from Post Office directories for Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen; various years from 1865–1970.
- 13 The Glasgow Post Office directories only list the Buttercup Dairies under individual addresses and not under a separate entry for dairies. It is therefore more difficult to ascertain how many premises there were.
- 14 Information from the People's Palace and Winter Gardens, Glasgow.
- 15 Edinburgh Post Office directories.
- 16 J. D. Cairns set up his own practice based at 63 George Street, Edinburgh, from 1908 but became J. D. Cairns and Ford from 1928 when James Fulton Ford entered the partnership. Dictionary of Scottish Architects (online, cited 18th November 2008). <<http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk>>.
- 17 van Lemmen, H. (1979) *Tiles: A Collector's Guide*. London: Souvenir Press, p. 134.
- 18 I am grateful to Dr Sandy Brewer of Galloway who provided information from her extensive research on Tom Curr.
- 19 Craiglea Clocks, Comiston Road, Edinburgh kindly allowed the painting held in their shop to be photographed for this research.
- 20 Information provided by Douglas Hunter of Hunter Tiles, Jedburgh.
- 21 Lockett, T. A. (1979) *Collecting Victorian Tiles*. Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, frontispiece and p. 119.
- 22 The Glasgow Story (online, cited 21st October 2008). <<http://www.theglasgowstory.com>>. This panel was illustrated in van Lemmen, H. and Malam, J. (eds) (1991) *Fired Earth: 1000 Years of Tiles in Europe*. Shepton Beauchamp, Richard Dennis, pp. 132 and 172 (catalogue number 422), where it was dated as c1925, although it has generally been thought to date from 1894.
- 23 Dennison, E. P., Gallagher, D. and Ewart, G. (2005) *The Scottish Burgh Survey: Historic Maybole*. Edinburgh: Historic Scotland.