

**Shawfield Mansion**  
COLLEN CAMPBELL, 1712

The Shawfield Mansion at the bottom of modern day Glassford Street faced onto Argyle Street. It was purchased in 1760 by John Glassford (1715-83), one of the most wealthy and influential of Glasgow's Tobacco Lords. A native of Paisley, Glassford's rise in Glasgow society was spectacular, even though he probably did not begin trading in tobacco until the 1730s. He was involved in other industries such as Pollokshaws printing and the Glasgow tanworks. He also helped found the Glasgow Arms Bank and the Thistle Bank.

Glassford's main business was the Virginia trade in tobacco, an industry built on slave labour and this was where he made and lost most of his fortune. Neil Jamieson, Glassford's factor, was also involved in the slave trade to the Carolinas. When Glassford died in his mansion he was more than £50,000 in debt, ruined by his losses in America.



**Jamaica Street**

Jamaica Street, named after the largest slave plantation island in the Caribbean, was opened in 1763 at the height of Glasgow's rum and sugar trade. Jamaica was Glasgow's premier sugar producing centre. It is therefore no surprise that the street was given this name by West Indian merchants in Glasgow.

Richard Oswald and Co. applied to the town council in 1756 regarding the purchase of land surrounding their bottle works at the Broomielaw, which had been operating since 1730.

The Broomielaw was used as a dock to land tobacco and sugar from the larger ports at Greenock and Port Glasgow and the new street became an important thoroughfare on the way to many Glasgow warehouses. Jamaica Street rapidly became one of Glasgow's busiest streets. Its establishment testifies to the city's early development due to slavery and slave dependant trade.



**Buchanan Street**

Buchanan Street, arguably the most potent symbol of modern Glasgow's image as a cosmopolitan city, is named after the Tobacco Lord, Andrew Buchanan (1725-1783). The Buchanans had considerable wealth and social status in 18th century Glasgow, and Andrew was a leading partner in both 'Buchanan, Hastie and Co.' and 'Andrew Buchanan and Co.' for a time two of the most powerful Virginia trading firms, although they folded in 1777 due to financial difficulties.

Andrew Buchanan purchased the land now known as Buchanan Street in 1760, and lived there for a number of years. He later sold some of the land around his property. The first tenement in the area was built in 1774. The common entrance to a subsequent tenemental development formed part of the modern entry to Buchanan Street at Argyle Street. It is ironic that a street originally sold off in small value plots due to its distance westward from the business centre of town (originally at Trongate) is now arguably the wealthiest street in Glasgow.



**Cunninghame Mansion**

The Cunninghame Mansion, now at the core of the Gallery of Modern Art, in Royal Exchange Square, was built for William Cunninghame of Lainshaw (d.1789), one of Glasgow's most prominent eighteenth century merchants. Cunninghame had interests in both the Virginia tobacco trade and the West Indies sugar trade. Both, of course, were built entirely on slave labour.

Cunninghame purchased three plots in what is now Queen Street but was then Cow Loan, a country track. He spent £10,000, a huge sum, on his townhouse. Described as 'one of the most splendid houses in the west of Scotland', it stood in stark contrast to the semi-rural conditions that prevailed close to the centre of Glasgow. Cunninghame had the motto *emerge* – to emerge – etched on the mansion, a boast of his own rapid rise in society.

In 1829, the mansion, much altered by the architect David Hamilton (1768-1843), sometimes known as the 'father of Glasgow's architecture', took on a new lease of life as the Royal Exchange. It fast became the centre of commercial life in Glasgow, trading in commodities such as coal, iron, cotton, sugar and chemicals. In 1996 the building entered a third major phase of its history, as the Gallery of Modern Art.



**Merchant's House**  
7 West George St. JOHN BURNET, 1874

The Merchant's House is an impressive monument to Glasgow's global trading. An organisation of Glasgow merchants was established in the seventeenth century.

In Glasgow's golden age of tobacco, it was central to the development of the city's commerce across the world. It was behind the deepening of the River Clyde to allow large shipping vessels to dock and it helped recruit troops in the American War of Independence to protect the tobacco trade.

The globe, with a sailing ship, flanked by two female figures, which adorns the top storey of the building was copied from the original Merchant's Steeple (1665) near the Trongate. In the Trongate Glasgow's merchants waited on their tobacco ships to return which explains the Merchant's House motto, engraved in stone, *Toties redeunt es eodem* ('So often returning to the same place'). On the walls are carvings of Neptune, and ornate compass drawings, with the Glasgow coat of arms – all helping reinforce the historic role of Glasgow as the second city of the world's most powerful Empire.



**West George St. Chapel**  
JAMES GILLESPIE GRAHAM, 1818

The West George Street chapel sat just south of the modern Queen Street railway station. Constructed at a cost of £10,000 for the Congregational Church and capable of holding 1,600 people, its first pastor was the Rev. Ralph Wardlaw (1779-1853), one of the founders of the Glasgow Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. By 1830, Wardlaw had rejected the moderate stance which saw the abolition of slavery as a gradual process and became the leading Scottish campaigner for immediate abolition.

Wardlaw's sermons and speeches about the evils of slavery were not always popular because of Glasgow's longstanding connections with the West Indies and led to a decline in membership of his church and attacks in the press. Nonetheless, he became active in the campaign for global emancipation after the Emancipation Act of 1833. He became a Vice Director of The Glasgow Emancipation Society, which focused its attentions on America. Wardlaw was central to a campaign that became truly international in its scope. David Livingstone (1813-73) attended his lectures on slavery and he hosted various abolitionists in Glasgow such as William Lloyd Garrison (1805-79) and Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-96).



**City Chambers**  
WILLIAM YOUNG, 1890

The City Chambers is one of most impressive buildings in Scotland. Completed in 1890 its grandeur reflects what was then the most powerful empire in the world. Great Britain's economic development was built on trade with her colonies and this is dramatically portrayed in the Chambers' architecture. On the topmost triangle on the main façade a statue of Queen Victoria is flanked by native peoples bringing gifts from the Empire. Its is a striking symbol of Victorian Glasgow's claim to be the second city of the Empire. Yet like other major ports on the Atlantic seaboard such as Bristol and Liverpool, much of the city's early wealth was built on a global trade which ran on slave labour.

By contrast Glasgow's position as a leading abolitionist city is symbolised by the statue of James Oswald (1785-1853) in George Square. Oswald, who came from a merchant family which had been deeply involved in the tobacco and sugar trades since the 1730s, served as a Glasgow MP from the time of the 1832 Reform Act. In 1836 he supported the petition of 30,000 residents of the city to end the apprenticeship scheme in the West Indies that had continued a form of slavery after its formal abolition by Parliament in 1834.



**Tobacco Merchant's House**  
42 Miller St. JOHN CRAIG, 1775

The Tobacco Merchant's House, at 42 Miller Street, is the oldest surviving house in the Merchant City. Miller Street was named after John Miller of Westerton, a land speculator who first laid out the street in plots in the 1750s. A variety of merchants built townhouses there. Plot 6 was acquired by Mr Robert Hastie, an extensive American merchant, on 6th May 1772. After Hastie's firm 'Robert and William Hastie' failed, like so many others in the 1770s, the land was sold to John Craig, a wright.

No.42 was subsequently occupied by other prominent merchants such as Robert Findlay of Easterhill (1748-1802), a tobacco importer who lived there from 1780 until 1802. The only one of its kind to survive, the house, a small scale interpretation of the mansions designed by Andrea Palladio in Italy's Veneto region, illustrates the eighteenth century living conditions of 'average' merchants – sometimes called Tobacco Lairds in contrast with the grander Palladian homes of the much wealthier Tobacco Lords. The building was restored as offices by Glasgow Building Preservation Trust in 1995.



**Virginia Galleries**

The Virginia Galleries, in Virginia Street, sat at the centre of what was once the commercial heart of Glasgow. The Galleries, built from 1817 until 1819, were originally the Tobacco Exchange, and later the Sugar Exchange. The building, one of the most important in the city, demonstrated the important link between the colonial trade in tobacco and sugar and Glasgow's continuing economic growth in the nineteenth century. Sadly the building was demolished in 2003.

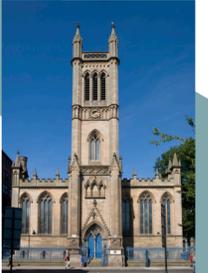


**Virginia Mansion**

Virginia Street and 'The Virginia Mansion', which was situated on the site of the modern-day Corinthian in Ingram Street, were a testament to the wealth and influence of successive generations of the same Glasgow merchant family. Andrew Buchanan (1690-1759) and his two younger brothers had, by 1730, established a firm, Andrew Buchanan, Bros & Co, which was the largest tobacco importer in Glasgow. Both the tobacco trade and the West Indian sugar trade, in which the family also had interests depended on slave labour.

Andrew, appointed Lord Provost twice in 1740-42, was one of the consortium of merchants which founded the Ship Bank, Glasgow's first bank, in 1750. He began to lay out a new street called Virginia Street in 1753, although he died before his son, George Buchanan of Mount Vernon (1728-62), built the opulent mansion. Buchanan Street, laid out in 1780, was named in 1756 after Andrew Buchanan (1725-83), another of his sons.

The mansion was sold in 1770 to another tobacco merchant connected with the same family. Alexander Speirs of Elderslie (1714-1782), sometimes called 'the mercantile god of Glasgow', married Mary Buchanan in 1755. Speirs began his career in Virginia as a plantation owner and returned to Glasgow in the 1750s, already a rich man. Another Tobacco Lord, he was involved in the West Indian sugar trade, banking, printing and the iron industry. Unlike many in the Buchanan family, he died with his fortune still intact.



**Ramshorn Kirk**  
THOMAS RICKMAN, 1826

St David's Church, at no. 98 Ingram Street, now the Ramshorn Theatre, is an early example of the Gothic architectural revival. The older Ramshorn cemetery, now partly covered by Ingram Street, was the 'fashionable' – and expensive – place to be buried in Glasgow in the eighteenth century. A variety of prominent merchants were buried there, including two Tobacco Lords, John Glassford (1715-83) and Andrew Buchanan (1690-1759), one of the founders of The Ship Bank, Glasgow's first bank.

Other notables buried here include Robert (1707-76) and Andrew Foulis (1712-75), Glasgow's leading booksellers, printers and publishers in the age of the Enlightenment, producing 586 editions between 1774-75. They founded an Academy of Fine Arts in Glasgow, based on a large collection of paintings acquired on their European book selling tours. It opened in 1753 with the financial help of Glassford and Archibald Ingram (c.1699-1770), another Tobacco Lord. The first of its kind in Scotland, it gave tuition in drawing, painting, engraving and sculpture. It also helped bankrupt the brothers, who are located under the pavement in Ingram Street, the place marked by the initials RF & AF.

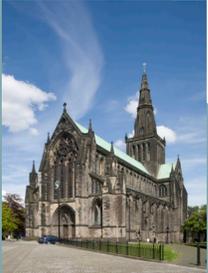


**City Halls**  
Albion St. GEORGE MURRAY, 1841

The City Halls became the first performance venue for the public in Glasgow, a focus for events ranging from concerts to rallies and anti-slavery meetings. The venue helps illustrate Glasgow's truly international contribution to universal emancipation. Frederick Douglass (1818-95) was an African American who, after escaping from slavery in Maryland in 1838, became a leading campaigner in the Foreign and American Anti-Slavery Society. After a series of lecture tours in the USA, Douglass spent two years on a circuit of churches, chapels and lectures throughout Great Britain and Ireland between 1846 and 1848.

Another example of Glasgow's leading position in the global campaign for universal emancipation was the appearance of Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1853. Beecher Stowe (1811-96) was an American abolitionist and novelist, whose novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, sold over 300,000 copies in the USA in the first year after it was published in 1852. Over half a million people signed the welcoming address to her lecture tour of Great Britain.

The Glasgow Emancipation Society started the Uncle Tom Offering, which was introduced to make up royalties Beecher Stowe could not receive in Britain. She appeared in Glasgow as a guest of the Glasgow Female New Association for the Abolition of Slavery. The same society hired a series of American black abolitionist lecturers before and after Harriet's visit. Those before included J.W.C. Pennington in 1849-51. A later guest of the same society was the Rev. Josiah Henson (1789-1883), a slave who had escaped to Canada in 1830 and was the inspiration for the fictitious 'Uncle Tom'. He was given



**Cathedral**

Glasgow Cathedral, also known as 'St Mungo's' or 'The High Church' is the oldest church in Glasgow and has various memorials to tobacco and sugar merchants, despite the fact that both trades were built largely on slave labour. There is a stained-glass memorial to Alexander Spiers of Elderslie (1714-82), one of the original Tobacco Lords and sometimes called 'the mercantile god of Glasgow'. There are also memorials to Sir James Stirling of Keir (1740-1805), who owned plantations and slaves in Jamaica, and to Andrew Cochrane (1692-1777), a Virginia Don, who owned the King Street Sugarhouse and was six times Lord Provost of the city. The burial plot of Andrew Buchanan (1725-83), after whom Buchanan Street is named, is located at the entrance. The Oswald family, who have links to both the slave trade and the abolition movement, have a burial plot within the Cathedral.



**Necropolis**  
JOHN BRYCE, 1833

Glasgow Necropolis was modelled on Pere-Lachaise in Paris and has been described as one of the true marvels of historic Glasgow. It was opened in 1833, the idea of James Ewing, a prominent West Indian merchant.

Ewing's father, also James Ewing, owned the largest sugar plantation in Jamaica. Ewing junior assumed control in 1814. He also served as Lord Provost, Lord Dean of Guild and was an M.P. for Glasgow. He proposed the idea for The Necropolis in 1828, and The Merchants House took control of the project.

Lord Provost Ewing laid the foundation stone in 1834. He died in 1853 and left £280,000, which has been estimated to be equivalent to more than £22 million today. His granite sarcophagus in the Necropolis was sculpted by John Mossman, the pre-eminent Glasgow sculptor of the age.

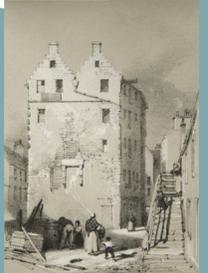
In time the Necropolis became the most fashionable place to be buried in the burgeoning Victorian city. Many merchants were buried there. In contrast to the many whose memorials were funded by slave income, Glasgow's opposition to slavery is represented by the memorial to the Rev. Ralph Wardlaw who became one of the leading slavery emancipationists in Britain after 1833.



**Old College**  
Glasgow University, High Street

Glasgow University, originally situated in the heart of the city on High Street, played an active part in campaigning against slavery. Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) studied there and his lectures, after he was appointed Professor of Moral Philosophy in 1729, provided a moral critique of slavery, which inspired abolitionists on a global scale. His successor, Adam Smith (1723-90), attacked slavery on economic and moral grounds as the 'vilest of all states'. In June 1788, the University presented one of the first anti-slavery petitions from the West of Scotland. Its importance in the road to emancipation is demonstrated by the career of James McCune Smith (1813-65), who became the first African American to graduate MD anywhere and was also the first to practise medicine in the USA.

Smith was a leading member of The Glasgow Emancipation Society, which campaigned for universal emancipation. It helped fund his education, after many universities in the USA had rejected him, demonstrating Glasgow University's long and honourable history as a place of learning for the disenfranchised and the dispossessed.



**Old Sugar House**  
138 Gallowgate

Sugar boiling was one of the mainstays of Glasgow's fast-growing economy in the second half of the seventeenth century. 'The Old Sugar House' was built in 1699 and named 'Easter Sugar House' to distinguish it from another sugar refinery nearby. This five-storey, crow-stepped gabled, building was owned by Robert McNair (1703-79) and his wife, Jean Holmes (b 1703) who were prominent shopkeepers in eighteenth century Glasgow. Amongst their wares were refined and expensive sugar products such as candies, syrup and treacle. There was another side of the story of their success as the West Indies sugar trade was built on slave labour from plantations in Jamaica, which were owned and overseen by Scots. A number of sugar traders, refineries and shops in Glasgow were dependent on this trade.



**ILLUSTRATIONS AND SOURCES**  
 Culture and Sport Glasgow, Museums  
 Glasgow University Special Collections  
 The Mitchell Library (Culture and Sport Glasgow)  
 Museum of Edinburgh  
 National Archives of Scotland  
 Peoples Palace  
 Strathclyde University Library

**ADDITIONAL THANKS TO**  
 Rosie Elliot, Veronica Low, Ruth Oliver, Gill Stewart, Theresa White

**RESEARCH AND COPYWRITING**  
 Stephen Mullen  
 Anne McChery, Jatin Hata  
**EDITOR**  
 Neil Baxter  
**HISTORICAL ADVISOR**  
 Professor Michael Lynch  
**DESIGN & PHOTOGRAPHY**  
 Jon Jardine  
**ARCHIVAL/ILLUSTRATION RESEARCH**  
 Dr Irene O'Brien



“It wisnae us!”

**TRAIL GUIDE**

**Tobacco, the Slave Trade and Abolition**  
 Glasgow's built heritage,

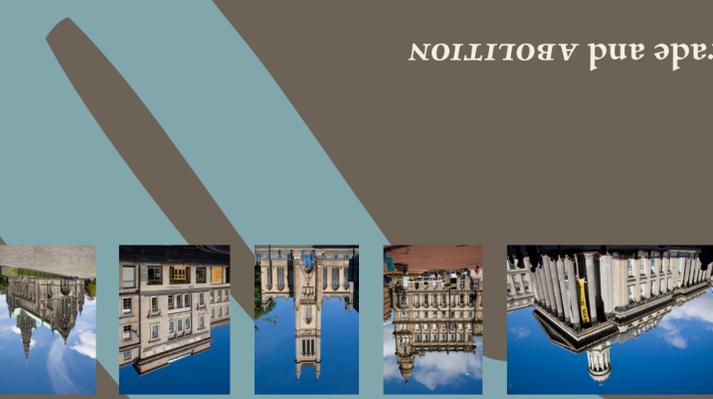


“It wisnae us!”  
 Glasgow's built heritage, the Slave Trade and Abolition

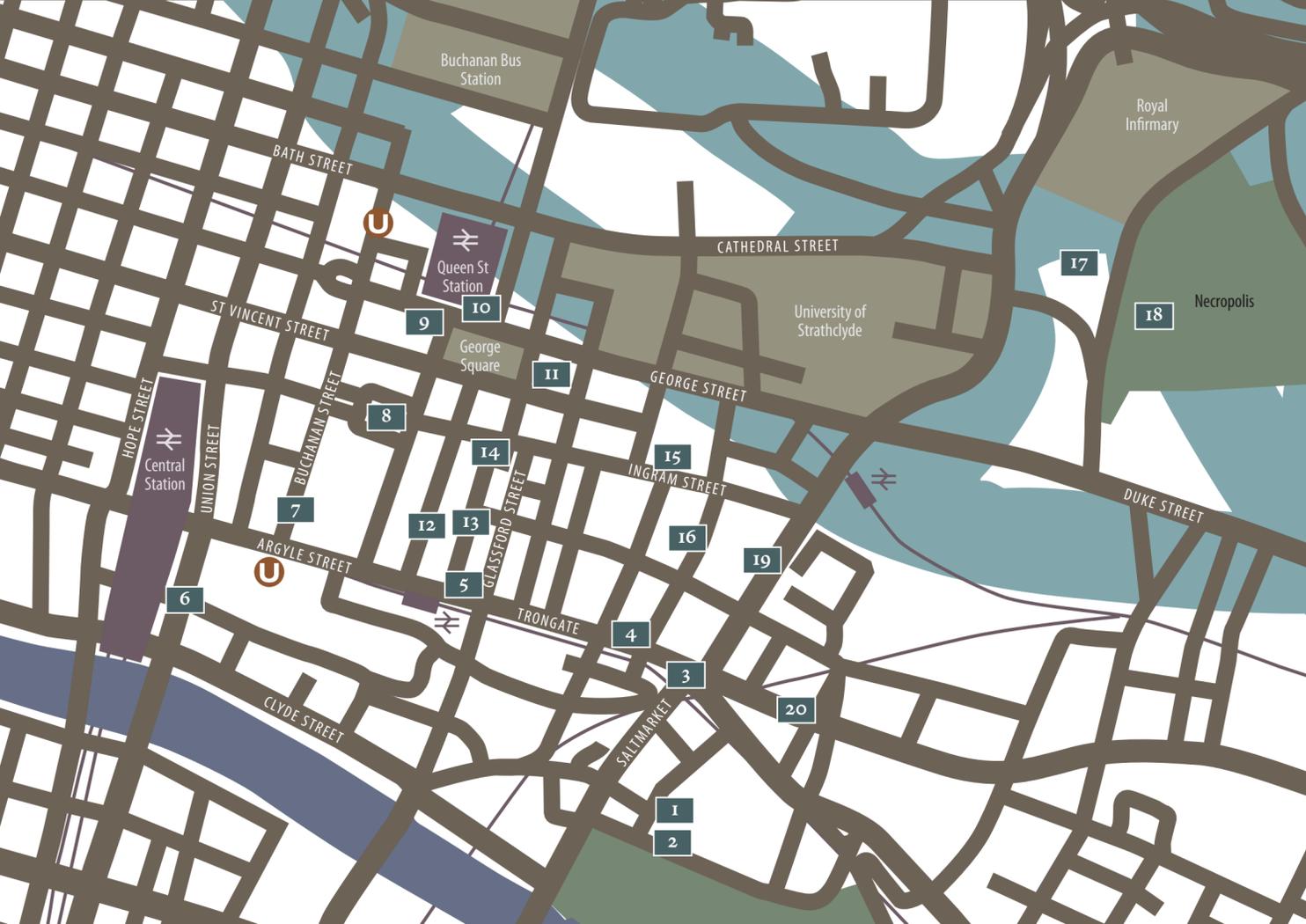
Union with England in 1707 removed the legal barriers that prevented Scotland from participating in trade with the New World. This allowed Scottish merchants access to new markets. By the mid eighteenth century, Glasgow dominated Britain's tobacco and sugar imports. The city was also involved in the slave trade. Around nineteen slave ships left from Port Glasgow and Greenock, the city's satellite towns. Many Scottish merchants also funded slave ships from other ports such as London, Bristol, Whitehaven and Liverpool, in what became known as the triangular trade. British ships traded manufactured goods for slaves in Africa, and then on to slave plantations in America and the West Indies.

The direct trade with these colonies, the largest of which were in Virginia and Jamaica, led to major economic growth for Glasgow. Much praise has been heaped upon the merchants' business acumen while the brutal reality, that sugar and tobacco were produced almost exclusively on slave labour, has been almost casually dismissed with a crite, "it wisnae us". Only recently has the brutal truth of this episode in Glasgow's economic past been examined and properly acknowledged.

The golden age of tobacco created the Tobacco Lords, who accumulated great wealth and became the Glasgow elite. They constructed townhouses, built churches, endowed public buildings and developed estates around the city that, even today, testify to their wealth. Some of these buildings are described in this guide. They illustrate the opulence in which the Tobacco Lords lived from day to day, where they socialised and where they prayed. Exploring this history gives us an extraordinary insight into the role of slavery in Glasgow's mercantile past. It is ironic that a city that developed through plantation economics should play a major role in the abolition of slavery. The Glasgow Enlightenment produced a powerful and sustained critique that inspired abolitionists across the globe. Anti-slavery societies grew up across Great Britain and, in spite of vested interests, Glasgow became an influential centre for political agitation. The built heritage of



Glasgow also illustrates how individuals and organisations worked towards the abolition of the evil of slavery. This map guide takes the reader on a historical journey of discovery that highlights the largely untold story of Glasgow and slavery.



**St Andrew's in the Square**  
 DREGHORN/NAISMITH, 1756

The Church of St Andrews in the Square was constructed from 1739 to 1756, at a cost of £15,000 to £20,000, a huge sum. The building was modelled on St Martin-In-The-Fields in London. An Act of Parliament in 1768 suggested the cost was met by the magistrates and council. It could be assumed that tobacco merchants contributed to this cost; the Spanish mahogany interior was imported by these merchants.

A square of three-storey townhouses, described as 'perfect examples of elegance and splendour', was laid out around the Church in 1787 'for the use and resort of merchants and others'. This became, with Virginia Street, one of the most fashionable and expensive places to live in Glasgow. The Square's position however, as the mercantile headquarters of Glasgow was short-lived, as the leading merchants gradually moved west in the early nineteenth century. The Glasgow Building Preservation Trust purchased the building in 1993 and embarked on an ambitious programme of redevelopment to create Glasgow's Centre for Scottish Culture.



**St Andrew's by the Green**  
 HUNTER/PAUL/THOMSON, 1750

St Andrews by the Green or the Whistling Kirk, was built at a cost of £1250 and is similar in style to Glasgow's Georgian villas. Richard (1687-1763) and Alexander Oswald (1694-1766) were heavily involved in its foundation. The Oswalds came from Caithness and assumed a prominent position in Glasgow society based on trade in tobacco, sugar and wine. Alexander was the chapel's first patron. They are both buried at Glasgow Cathedral, testimony to their position in society and their loyalty to the government during the Jacobite rebellion in 1745-6.

The Oswald family had extensive links with the tobacco and sugar trades, both built on slave labour. In addition, they employed their cousin, Richard Oswald of Auchincruive (1705-84) as their factor in the Caribbean and Virginia before he returned to Glasgow in 1741 as a junior partner in their firm. After moving to London in 1746, Richard branched out into horses, sugar and slaves, including four plantations in the Caribbean, over 30,000 acres in East Florida, and Bance Island in Sierra Leone, which he used as a base for transporting Africans into slavery in South Carolina. Ironically, the Oswalds' nephew, James, was an M.P who supported a petition moving for the abolition of the apprenticeship scheme in 1836.



**Trongate**

The Trongate, named after the old public weigh beam or 'tron' at its east end, was one of the original eight streets in Glasgow before the city's eighteenth century expansion. It was here that the early merchants in Glasgow had their commercial headquarters. Close to here is the 'Bridgegate' or 'Briggait' and the Merchants' Steeple. This was the old Merchants House which was used as a look-out for merchants awaiting the arrival of their cargoes from Virginia and the West Indies.

Goods were weighed at the Tolbooth on their way to merchants' warehouses – a demonstration of Glasgow's role in what is sometimes called a 'warehouse economy'. From there, cargoes would go to English and European markets, particularly France. The Trongate contained a paved area known as the 'plainstones', where the Tobacco Lords liked to convene. It was not an area for Glasgow citizens of a lower social scale. The street was also the location of the later Town Hall and the Tontine rooms, which in the 1780s became the social and commercial headquarters of Glasgow, at a time when this area was fashionable and affluent.



**Tontine Rooms**  
 WILLIAM HAMILTON, 1781

The Tontine rooms, were located in what is now the Trongate. The 'Tontine Society' of Glasgow was formed in 1782. Various prominent Glasgow merchants were amongst the original subscribers to what was, in effect, the forerunner of the later Royal Exchange. They included John Glassford (1715-83) and George Bogle of Daldowie (1700-84). These rooms, which included a hotel, coffee room and assembly hall, became the social and commercial headquarters of Glasgow at a time when this area was fashionable and affluent. The famous Tontine heads were located above ten arches on the Tontine, and survive to this day (in the garden at Provand's Lordship). The Tobacco Lords were said to stroll around the Tontine Piazza, resplendent in their scarlet cloaks and gold tipped canes. Citizens of lesser standing moved out of their way.