Art on the line

Article

Local defence volunteer: the painting and criticism of Edward Baird 1939-1945

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Abstract

The paper outlines the circumstances of Edward Baird's career and focuses in particular on his work completed in Montrose during the Second World War.

Three paintings in particular are analysed closely. In *LDV*, *Montrose from Ferryden*, and *Unidentified Aircraft*, we see the emergence of an aesthetic that can be considered as part of a 'British' artistic response to the war. However, the works are double coded. We can also analyse them in terms of their reflections on contemporary Scottish identity, and of the urban and rural working classes who shouldered the burden of the war effort.

It is suggested in conclusion that these paintings, seen together, provide a discrete Scottish contribution to the British war effort, emblematic of an outlook that anticipated re-engagement with the European mainstream, in Scottish terms, in the post war period.

Introduction and background

Today, Edward Baird is a substantially overlooked figure in the history of twentieth-century Scottish art. This is perhaps surprising given the artist's profile during his lifetime. Baird was a regular exhibitor at both the Royal Academy and its Scottish counterpart in the 1930s and 1940s, having been the top student in his year at Glasgow School of Art. Yet at the same time any success he enjoyed was predicated on a painstakingly slow method of working and perfectionism to the point of never considering anything finished. He rarely gave interviews, and he largely shunned publicity outside local newspapers. The net result of these trends is that more than half of his life's work is still in a few private collections; he is not represented at all in public galleries outside Scotland.

Perhaps the most important reason for the artist's little-known status, however, is the persistent ill health that confined him to his hometown of Montrose for all but six years of his short life. Montrose is a small Scottish coastal town, in the county of Angus, about halfway between Dundee and Aberdeen. In the mid-1920s, a local newspaper observed that: 'The East of Scotland is a bleak climate for budding genius and the plants that have blossomed there into artistic fame are not

over-many'.[1] Montrose gained a reputation in the inter-war period as a pleasant holiday venue, with reasonably stable employment in fishing and light industry. It had a surprisingly high cultural profile, too, being the birthplace of the 'Scottish Renaissance' movement in the early 1920s, surrounding the poet Hugh MacDiarmid and novelists such as Edwin Muir and Violet Jacob.

However, with the outbreak of the Second World War it quickly found itself in the front line of home defence. In the first months of the war thousands of evacuees arrived from Dundee, causing much friction locally.[2] With the German advances of 1940, Montrose found itself within range of the Heinkel bombers of Hermann Goering's *Luftflotte 5*, based at Stavanger in occupied Norway. Between late 1940 and 1944 the town was the subject of frequent morale-sapping nuisance raids by small bomber formations. The High Street was machine gunned by low-flying Heinkels in 1940, and there was considerable material damage to light industry, shipping and housing, with many civilian casualties.[3] The local RAF fighter base steadily grew in importance throughout the war.[4]

Initially, then, while many artists associated with the English avant-garde in London found the quitting of the capital in August-September 1939[5], and the subsequent lack of materials and time to work, a painful experience, the outbreak of war did not noticeably disrupt Baird's working patterns. He continued to make the short daily journey from his home above the Montrose telephone exchange at 121 High Street, to a rented studio in Bridge Street, where he would progress slowly with the canvas in preparation. As the war developed and Britain found herself isolated, the artist became increasingly involved with the local Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, and helped to organise two major showings of modern British art in 1941 and 1942. These were much commented on in the two local newspapers and Baird's pungent critique of pre-war modernism was reported extensively. The CEMA exhibitions gave the artist a public platform for these counter-hegemonic views and brought him into contact with figures such as Eric Newton and Muirhead Bone.

These contacts saw Baird appointed as an official war artist in March 1943.[6] His best known image, *LDV* of 1939, was bought by the Ministry of Information for use as Allied propaganda, in addition to appearing on the front cover of *The Listener* in 1941.[7] Paintings such as these, and the chalk and pastel studies of munitions workers completed in 1943–44, fulfil a fascinating dual function. At face value they illustrate the determination of individual Scots to resist the threat of Nazi Germany as part of a broader British war effort. *LDV* was certainly used by the Ministry of Information in this context. Yet, for Baird, the figure in *LDV* was emblematic of a particularly Scottish identity, one very resistant to the standardising yoke of English/Britishness. As I shall demonstrate in what follows, paintings such as *LDV* and *Unidentified Aircraft* are double coded examples of this artist's 'war within a war'. Whilst contributing to the British visual war effort, Baird at the same time dissents from it in promoting a discrete kind of communitarian Scottish identity.

Local defence volunteer

Until the declaration of war on 3 September 1939 Baird had been having a good year. A small composite study of Montrose, entitled *Monros*, was finished early in the year, and exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy in the summer of 1939, where it received favourable comment. Further, a large-scale portrait that he had been working on for two years, provisionally called *The Gamekeeper*, was nearing completion.

As *The Gamekeeper*, the portrait was an affectionate tribute to one of Baird's oldest friends in Montrose – the labourer, wildfowler

and occasional poacher James Davidson. Known locally as Pumphy, the original title would have amused many locals, as Davidson was known to be a skilful poacher who sailed on occasion close to the breeze in terms of prosecution.

Yet the portrait is much more than a likeness of a friend. Baird shows Davidson seated, staring into the middle distance, with a black Labrador at his side, set against the backdrop of the Angus hills and a lowering sky. As spectators we have a good idea of Davidson through the minute recording of his facial features and hands and his dress, with the checked jacket rather too neatly offset by a spotted neckerchief. Yet this is not an intimate portrait. The spectator is separated from Davidson's space by the rigid angle of the shotgun; although the sitter looks over the head of the spectators, the dog gazes intently at us, as though guarding against our intrusion.

Throughout his career Baird painted ordinary people, as far as possible in their working surroundings. Davidson is presented as a man who works on the land, but whose character is also synonymous with his surroundings. The composition of the portrait leaves us with the impression that the sitter is emblematic of the more distant landscape behind. At first glance this is an idealised, depopulated landscape; yet the figure of Davidson shows us that, for all its beauty, the countryside of Angus was still a working area with a significant economic contribution to make, rather than a passive spectacle of tourist beauty.

We must treat assessments of this painting as conservative with some scepticism. Baird had been active politically in Montrose since the end of the 1920s, firstly with the fledgling National Party of Scotland, then in the second half of the 1930s with cross-party organisations such as the Workers' Education Association. With both Socialist and Scottish Nationalist sympathies, Baird was passionately interested in the conditions of working people and the unemployed during the difficult depression years in Scotland from around 1934 onward. In this context *The Gamekeeper*, as originally conceived, was a comment on the resilience of itinerant and casual workers such as Davidson in the face of considerable material hardship and financial uncertainty. Such factors may point to a Socialist Realist perspective, but again this would be inaccurate. Baird was interested in trends in modern painting and well informed about them. Yet, as we shall see, he remained profoundly distrustful of modernist ideas and was particularly contemptuous of some of the more vapid theoretical claims made on its behalf. Baird saw in modernism an unforgivable divorce from reality, a distance from his own Platonic conceptions of beauty and, consequently, a distance from the vast majority of its potential audience.

The outbreak of war added a new dimension to *The Gamekeeper*. Davidson, too old for the Army, was one of the first men in Montrose to enlist in the newly created Local Defence Volunteers, and arrived at Baird's studio one day proudly wearing his new armband. At once, the artist incorporated this detail into the painting and the title of the work changed accordingly.

This detail profoundly altered the reception of the painting in 1940–41. The local and class issues of *LDV* were, understandably, superseded by the immediate context in which it was seen. A typical reaction to the showing of *LDV* at the 1941 Royal Academy exhibition appeared in the *Dundee Evening Telegraph*:

> One of the most striking pictures in the exhibition comes from Montrose. Mr Edward Baird's study of a Local Defence Volunteer watcher on the hills has a powerful appeal. It suggests the strength of determination of Scotland and the part she is playing in the national effort. The tweed clad ghillie – who has imparted his martial spirit even to his dog – is typical of the resolve to defeat any attempt to invade the sombre fastness of Scotland portrayed in the picture.[8]

This, and other reactions in the media, shows how easily the image was incorporated into Britain's wartime 'Culture of Defence'. In 1941, with London under imminent threat of invasion, the Royal Academy show was one way of claiming business as usual in the nation's cultural diary. *LDV* was exhibited in a gallery themed as ' War Subject by Lesser-Known Artists'. The response of the *Dundee Evening Telegraph* shows the ease with which the painting was interpreted in terms of stereotypical Scottish identities; 'tweed clad', 'martial spirit' and 'sombre fastness'. This was certainly the opinion of the Ministry of Information who bought the rights to reproduce the painting.[9] The image was used as propaganda in the Middle East, presumably as an illustration to colonial subjects of the determination of the 'mother country' – Britain – to see the conflict through to the end. The themes that had animated the painting when it was known as *The Gamekeeper* were entirely lost in the more urgent discourse of the struggle between cultured freedom and culture-less tyranny.

With high culture playing an increasingly important role in maintaining the morale of the population, a branch of the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts was established in Montrose. Together with the Workers' Education Association, this body mounted two highly successful exhibitions of contemporary art in the town during 1941 and 1942. Baird and his immediate circle of friends were very much involved in these efforts, to which I now turn.

Baird, the CEMA and modern art in Montrose, 1941-1942

By May 1941, the Montrose branch of CEMA had appointed an executive to oversee the installation of an exhibition of modern art at the Upper Memorial Halls in Baltic Street. Chaired by James Carson, the committee featured John Rothnie, a close associate of Baird's from the Workers' Education Association and the well-known local sculptor William Lamb, alongside Baird himself. James Carson made the purpose of the exhibition clear at the time:

> We are fighting for our very material existence, but in the long run we are fighting for much more than that. We know that should the Germans get the upper hand it will be the end of everything we know in the way of spiritual and artistic matters as we appreciate them here.[10]

The exhibition itself opened in July and there was a strong Scottish presence in the works exhibited. Baird showed *Monros* and Montrose from Ferryden, completed in 1941. Alongside the Colourists JD Fergusson and SJ Peploe were younger Scots painters such as William Gillies, William MacTaggart, and John Maxwell. James Cowie, by then head of the Hospitalfield School in nearby Arbroath, contributed three canvases. These were placed in a broader British and European context by the presence of images by Wyndham Lewis, Maurice de Vlaminck, and Raoul Dufy. The committee had had access to the collections of Aberdeen Art Gallery and the collection of John W Blyth at Kirkcaldy.

Clearly, then, this was an act of cultural defiance in the face of possible invasion. Such a representative contemporary exhibition was quite unprecedented for Montrose, which until then had only seen displays of local and amateur artists.[11] Baird gave two well-attended lectures on the selection of works and reports of these talks were extensively documented in the local press.

The high profile art critic Eric Newton opened the exhibition, and in his remarks he had some criticism for Baird. Newton contrasted Baird's two canvases in a defence of modern painting:

> The word 'modern' had received an almost objectionable flavour these days … a distinguished artist who was at the exhibition that day had proved that they could paint a picture which looked exactly like a photograph. Into another picture the artist had put all sorts of

> imaginative qualities and probably the artist himself would say that the imaginative one was better. Artists should not try to act as a super colour camera.[12]

In two subsequent lectures, Baird provided a comprehensive rebuttal of this rather literal interpretation of *Montrose from Ferryden*, and outlined his dissatisfaction with modernism. Baird also had little time for Newton as a critic; his personal copy of Newton's popular survey, *European Painting and Sculpture*, which was published in 1941, is littered with disparaging remarks pencilled in the margin at some of Newton's less convincing paragraphs on form and meaning.

Baird argued that pre-war modernism was 'an attempt to escape from a life which is too dreadful to face'.[13] Criticising the high number of still life paintings in the show, he suggested that:

> This type of painting is popular. A man can hang it in his house and so escape from the world. He could look at it without getting any unpleasant reminders of the war … Fundamentally, it should be the artist's purpose not to permit that escape.[14]

For Baird, as is evidenced by *Montrose from Ferryden*, art was a direct appeal to the intellect as well as having educational and political functions. Art's appeal to the senses and to pleasure were very much incidental and secondary functions. To a contemporary viewer, *Montrose from Ferryden* would indeed have suggested parallels with Socialist Realism and the Mass Observation movement, but such labels seem to have been incidental to the painter. For Baird, this image was a critique of the dehumanising standardisation and separation of modern life, and the consequent erosion of community life. The artist had the privileged position of being able to undermine such trends:

> The modern world was becoming increasingly divided up and specialised; and the only man who could record its real unity was the artist – the painter, the writer, the musician, etc. Only they could show the man at the south end of the town what it was like to be a man at the north end of the town.[15]

In this light, *Montrose from Ferryden* can be read as a defence of communitarian values against the specialisation and separation of the modern, a trend exacerbated in conditions of war. The painting's documentary qualities would have been particularly legible to those residents of Ferryden who knew the view, and the characters in the foreground, very well. At the same time, the painting functions as a legible narrative of everyday life for those not familiar with the area, and the trade that the town was built on. For both locals and casual visitors, the painting stands as a passionate engagement with contemporary reality, setting it apart from escapist modernism. In his lecture on the painting, Baird laid great stress on his research into the development of Montrose:

> … he took great pains to show, in a scientific way, how the town was built up. First he drew the town itself … The pier and the boats on the foreshore were introduced, to counteract the tendency of the picture to run off at the right hand corner. He wanted the eye to alternate between the foreground and the distance, so he introduced the group of children in the foreground and gave one of them a pink dress, of exactly the same shade as one of the houses in the distance. Instinctively the eye went from one to the other and that was the whole purpose of the group of children. There was something super-sharp and super-ordered about the whole painting and this was intentional. He was trying to show the order which underlies the world.[16]

This last observation is very telling. Coupled with the tightly controlled composition of this work, Baird seeks to convey an impression of order and calm, linking a local scene to a much broader desire for peace and stability. The painting stands as a deliberate engagement with a highly idealised scene from con-

temporary life, subtly political yet readily legible for an audience unfamiliar with the language of modern art. The painting is both defensive of the community around Montrose harbour that made their living from the sea and related trades,[17] and on the offensive against the forces of modernism and tyranny that threatened to overwhelm it.

The following August, there was a second exhibition of war art at Montrose that had a much broader, British focus. Baird did not show work himself, as he had been preoccupied with a commercial showing at Reid & Lefevre's gallery in London in May 1942. However, he had been involved with the selection of work and again gave well-attended lectures on the show during August 1942. The chosen paintings reflected Baird's input in their documentary style and war subjects. Amongst the works were John Piper's interior of Coventry Cathedral, Edward Bawden's impression of the North African battlefield at Mersah Matruh, and John Nash's *Damaged Submarine in Drydock*. The painter was quick to see these as evidence of a move away from high modernism in art:

> … previous to the war, when you went into an art gallery, you saw skill of the highest artistic value but seldom did you see work of any merit which admitted that we had unemployment or even that we lived in a machine civilisation. The present exhibition shows a sudden turn about, a sudden turn to something very old; for, when art was at its strongest, it was not ashamed to serve civilisation.[18]

Dissent from Britishness

Monros, shown at the 1941 exhibition, had first appeared at the Royal Academy in the previous year. In 1940 the annual exhibition was even more a symbol of cultural resistance to a foreign threat. *Monros* was displayed alongside work by Lowry, Paul Nash, Muirhead Bone, and James McIntosh Patrick, placing Baird, appropriately, amongst artists of varied academic and modern credentials. This time, the critics emphasised the historical aspects of the painting:

> It might be described as a composite picture, for it embodies the principal landmarks of the town in a very unorthodox manner. The old suspension bridge, the river and the steeple – three old features of the town – are all worked in but no attempt has been made to place them in their relative positions. Instead, the artist has given a picture of how old Montrosians would visualise their native town and an impressive work of art he has made of it.[19]

The historical aspects mentioned in this comment are important. Baird has produced a very selective, composite view of the town in *Monros*. The distinctive steeple at centre right, and the detailed harbour in the foreground, are highlighted; the North End of the town is notably absent in a jumble of generalised houses and chimneys. At the extreme left of the canvas, Baird has included the old road bridge of Montrose, built in the nineteenth century and demolished in 1926 to make way for the current suspension bridge. This inclusion of a historical anachronism is further evidence of the painter's determination to reflect popular memories of the town. What was not generally known at the time was that *Monros* was the third of four such views completed by Baird during his career. Baird completed two important views from Craig Hill, above Ferryden, as a student, and again used this vantage point in his canonical wartime canvas, *Unidentified Aircraft*.

Unidentified Aircraft stands as a complete statement of Baird's vision of art, and also the role he saw art as fulfilling in wartime. It is likely that the painting was begun in the second half of 1941, given the length of time it took Baird to complete his work: the completed painting was exhibited at a group showing of 'Six Scottish Artists' in London in 1942.[20]

The view in *Unidentified Aircraft* is familiar, being almost identical to that in Monros. This was the settled view of the town that

Baird had been working on since the mid 1920s. Here, we are separated from the town by the wide expanse of the River Esk, and by the three heads pushed up against the picture plane in the foreground. Initially, Baird had included searchlights and a bomber in the painting, but painted these out when he realised that the aeroplane would hardly be unidentified if caught in searchlights. The angular and unusual townscape of Montrose is isolated on its peninsula and, in the steely light of a 'bomber's moon', appears fragile and vulnerable. The limply hanging cloud, transplanted almost directly from Monros, augments the mood of eerie stillness and calm.

The upturned heads at the edge of the picture plane heighten the unreal atmosphere of the work. For many years these were thought to be a group of different individuals. In fact, they are three views of the same man – Peter Machir, a longstanding friend of Baird's who lived on Wharf Street by the harbour. Baird thought that Machir had beautiful hands and wanted to include them in a painting, which in part explains the disembodied hand at centre left.

Without this biographical detail, however, Machir comes to signify the population of Montrose in this painting. The repeated heads give a sense of anxious movement, straining upwards toward the sky to try and pinpoint the aircraft. The upturned palm lends the piece a quasi-religious air of supplication. With the central actor – the aircraft – absent from the painting, our focus shifts on to Machir as a dramatic emblem of the dangers and worry faced by the civilian population in wartime. The painting also reads as a record of the important landmarks of the town for Baird in case of extensive bomb damage.

Subsequent critical responses to the painting have named contemporaries such as James Cowie, the Flemish miniaturists and the Italian 'primitives' as important forerunners of the work. Although these are important to some extent, the real impetus behind this work lies in the coincidence of Baird's passionate identification with the town and community of Montrose, and the threat that the passage of the war posed to that. The documentary and imaginative elements identified by Eric Newton complement one another perfectly here. The painting also underlined his growing reputation as a painter who spanned both traditional and modernist idioms. Writing in *Horizon*, the critic John Tonge asserted that:

> Edward Baird, who with his tighter handling and austere palette recalls Mantegna rather that the Frenchman working *a premier coup*, takes – and holds – his place amongst them … Baird is a sympathetic and penetrating portraitist, and paints the coasts and moors of Angus with a subtle stylisation … He is an interesting bridge between the traditional draughtsmanship of Bone and the modern movement.[21]

Encouraged by Tonge, and by his acquaintance of Muirhead Bone, Baird sent four pastel drawings to the WAAC in late 1942. Another portrait of Davidson, entitled Home Guard, was purchased immediately, but the committee was hesitant on the quality of the other submitted drawings. In a letter, Bone rather casually informed Baird that he would be kept in mind for future work in the north-east of Scotland, but that in the opinion of the committee the pastels other than the *Home Guard* were 'somewhat dull and stiff'. For his part, Baird was scathing of the reasons behind the WAAC's selection of *Home Guard* for purchase. In a letter to Tonge, he suggested that:

> … it happened to fit in with the romantic dependable rustic role for which the English have cast the Scottish nation … for the subject not to fit this role is of course to be dull, and for the style not to be romantic is stiff.[22]

It was not difficult to appropriate *Home Guard* into stereotypical discourses of Scottishness, as happened in the critical

response to *LDV*. It is more difficult to do so with other contemporary images such as John Angus or Ann. These portraits of friends and close family were personally significant as Machir-style emblems of the local community, but this did not translate to a wider audience. Nonetheless, Baird did complete three commissions for the WAAC during 1943–1944 of munitions workers, using much the same documentary portrait technique. In works such as *Clydeside Munitions Worker*, and *Mrs Barbara Garth, BEM*, Baird continues to dissent from Britishness and a received view of the Scots by portraying them in a factual, unsentimental light. The methods he developed in portraying Montrosians as emblematic of their community extended, in his commissioned war art, to a broader reflection on the faces of contemporary Scotland.

Conclusion

Edward Baird took advantage of the growing profile of high culture in Montrose during the war and the development of a discrete local arts scene through the auspices of CEMA and the WEA. These bodies, as happened elsewhere in the United Kingdom, helped transform a rather adhoc and dislocated pre-war art world into a unified group working hard, for the first time, to bring art to local people who had previously had little opportunity to see it. As such, during the war provincial artists ceased to gravitate towards Edinburgh and London, and helped build a patchwork of local scenes that helped found a more democratic and inclusive post-war cultural polity.

Writing in *The Studio* in 1943, the curator and critic Tom Honeyman observed that: 'There are many people in Scotland who are opposed to nationalism as a political philosophy, but many more who are completely in favour of nationalism as a cultural enterprise'.[23]

For Baird, nationalism was the political philosophy that helped to shape his wartime cultural enterprise. While images such as *LDV* and *Home Guard* were very readily interpreted as expressions of familiar Scottish subjectivities within the broader British war effort, canvases such as *Unidentified Aircraft* acted to undermine such cosy assumptions. Here, history, popular cultural memory and the use of an ordinary working man as a symbol of a community under threat, all combined to provide significant dissent from the standardising cultural narratives of wartime Britain. While *Unidentified Aircraft* superficially tied in with the difficulties faced by Britain on the home front, the triple portrait of Machir and the painstaking composite view of Montrose lend the painting a uniquely Scottish aspect. Yet this painting was no parochial, reactionary intervention. By linking contemporary Scottish art with mainstream European art history and practice, Baird's wartime art looked forward optimistically to the time when Scotland could re-engage with a liberated Europe on cultural, rather than military terms.

1 *Montrose Review*, 30 March 1925.

2 See Morrison, D, and Reynolds, I (eds), *Changed Days in Montrose*, Montrose Old Kirk: Open Door Committee, 1999: 2. In 1939 it was generally feared that the outbreak of war would be swiftly followed by massed German air raids on large conurbations.

3 'Air Raids on Montrose', *Montrose Standard*, 16 January 1942. Several of the older Montrose residents still remember the raid where the High Street was machine-gunned. The *Montrose Standard* reported: 'The last of the 1940 raids and the only one in which more than a single bomber took part was in the early evening of 25 October, when three planes in formation made a double run over the town and dropped about forty bombs … bombs fell in the river and one demolished a corner of the premises of Messrs Chivers and Sons. Machine gunning all the time, the raiders dropped several other bombs at the North End of the town, went to St Cyrus and machine gunned there, then circled the basin and came over Montrose again … It was probably one of the most exciting nights in the history of Montrose'. Other raids saw Sunnyside Royal Asylum bombed; a trawler called the Duthie sunk in Montrose

harbour; and a failed attempt to destroy the road and railway bridges, which killed three civilians.

4 There had been an airfield at Montrose since 1912, when the Royal Naval Air Service established a presence to the north of the town centre. Montrose served as a 'rest and re-fit' base early in the war. Squadrons badly mauled in the Battle of Britain in July-September 1940 spent weeks recovering at Montrose. As the war developed Montrose became a base for Spitfire squadrons. Baird sketched the fighters and their pilots many times from 1942 onward; Spitfires appear in the watercolour *South Esk* of 1943.

5 The pre-war London avant-garde was dispersed widely following the outbreak of war. Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth and Naum Gabo moved to St Ives; Herbert Read to Beaconsfield in Oxfordshire; Henry Moore made his base at Much Hadham near Bishop's Stortford, permanent. In 1940 the studios of Piet Mondrian and Frank Dobson suffered bomb damage, an event which precipitated Mondrian's departure to the USA. Other familiar names from the inter-war avant-garde found themselves in the armed services, including the likes of John Skeaping and Maurice Lambert. For further information on the impact of war on the avant-garde, see Button, V, *The Aesthetic of Decline: English Neo-Romanticism* c1935-56, unpublished PhD thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 1991, chapters 1-4; Lewison, J & Button, V, *Ben Nicholson*, exhibition catalogue, Tate Gallery, London, 1993; Curtis, P & Wilkinson, A G, *Barbara Hepworth: a Retrospective*, exhibition catalogue, Tate Gallery, Liverpool, 1994: 79-88; King, J, *Herbert Read: The Last Modern*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1990; Nicholson, V, *Maurice Lambert*, London: Lund Humphries, 2001.

6 Imperial War Museum, File GP/55/276, letter dated 30 March 1943.

7 *The Listener*, vol 25, no 643, 8 May 1941.

8 '*LDV* Grimly Keeping Vigil All Night', *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 3 May 1941.

9 '*LDV* in the Royal Academy – Local Artist's Striking Portrait', *Montrose Review*, 2 May 1941.

10 *Montrose Review*, 2 May 1941.

11 Montrose had a lively local arts scene in the inter-war years. Key to the organisation of local exhibitions was the house painter and amateur artist George S Cathro. Cathro had premises at Bridge Street and regularly organised showing of work, including the sculpture of William Lamb, alongside his own paintings and those of E D Mackie, Renee Simm and Violet Jacob. Baird exhibited only once at a Cathro show, when he showed *Birth of Venus* in September 1935.

12 'Large gathering at Modern Art Exhibtion', *Montrose Standard*, 11 July 1941.

13 'Local Artist's Outspoken Criticism', *Montrose Standard*, 11 July 1941.

14 *Montrose Standard*, 11 July 1941.

15 'Over 1500 adults visited art exhibition – Complete Success of Wartime Venture – Talk by Mr Baird', *Montrose Standard*, 2 August 1941.

16 2 August 1941.

17 Baird was descended from six generations of seamen on his father's side. Captain Baird was lost with his ship whilst Edward was still an infant. Edward's brother David served in the Merchant Navy during the war and many of his closer friends made a living in the vicinity of Montrose harbour.

18 'Art Exhibition: More than Thousand Visitors during the week', *Montrose Standard*, 2 September 1942.

19 'Montrosians' Success in the World of Art', *Montrose Standard*, 3 May 1940.

20 The exhibition lasted throughout May 1942. The other exhibitors were Robert Colquohoun, Robert MacBryde, William Gillies, John Maxwell, and William Johnstone. Baird also showed *Portrait of Dan Crosse* and *Monros*.

21 John Tonge, 'Scottish Paintings', *Horizon*, V, 29, May 1942: 331.

22 Unsent draft of a letter from Baird to John Tonge, dated 20 December 1942.

23 TJ Honeyman, 'Art in Scotland', *The Studio*, CXXVI, 606: 65.