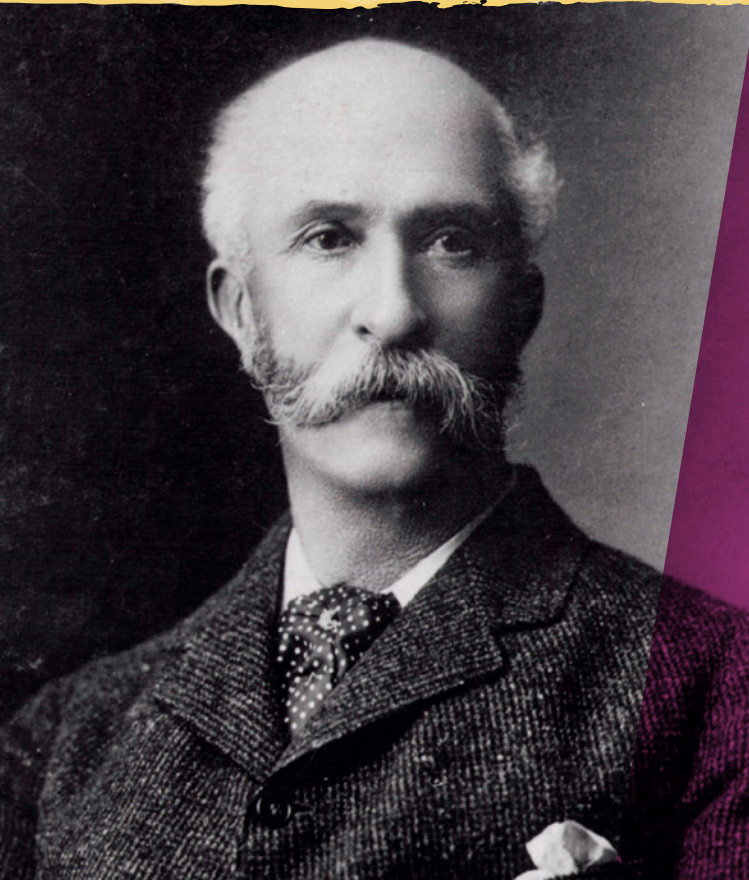


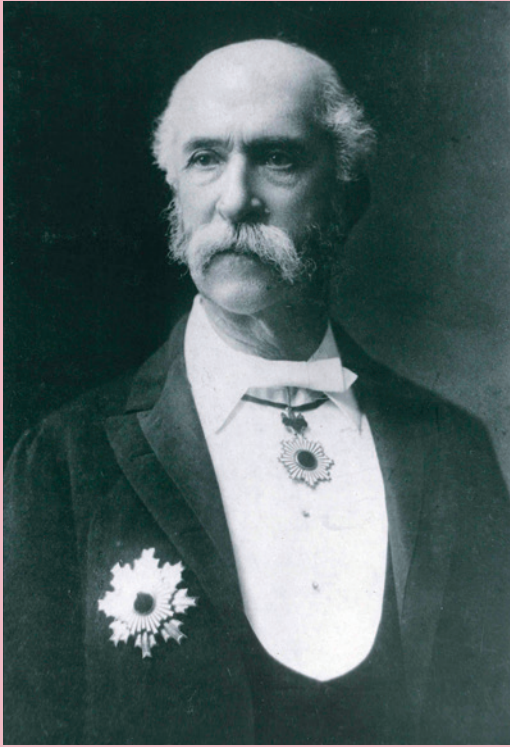
Scottish Samurai Trail

The story of Thomas Blake Glover



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Above: Thomas Blake Glover wearing the Order of the Rising Sun
Courtesy Nagasaki Museum of History and Culture

Cover: Thomas Blake Glover
Courtesy Glover Garden

Accessibility

 This trail is accessible but has occasional steep parts / uneven ground.

Transport

First Bus 20 runs through Old Aberdeen to Don Street near Brig O' Balgownie.
First Bus 15 runs to Footdee, returning by York Street. First Bus 1 & 2
run to Bridge of Don via King Street and Ellon Road.
All services go to/from Union Street.

Stagecoach 67/68 runs between Fraserburgh and Aberdeen Bus Station via
King Street and Ellon Road. Aberdeen and Fraserburgh are 40 miles apart
and by bus takes one and a half hours each way. Either trail can be
done in a day trip from Aberdeen or Fraserburgh.



Model of Jho Sho Maru

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Much has been written about the life and times of Thomas Blake Glover, and many myths have grown up around him. This guide has been produced to introduce his story and to inspire you to learn more about the era, the man, and some of places associated with him. Thomas's links with Japan, and the changes that country went through in the latter half 19th century are rightly celebrated there, and his home in Nagasaki is preserved as a museum, in extensive parkland known as Glover Garden. Both Aberdeen and Fraserburgh have connections to Glover and this trail guide covers both locations. Enjoy discovering about Thomas, his early life in Scotland, and finding out about our connections to Japan!

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Thomas's parents, Mary and Thomas Berry Glover, in 1875

The Glover Family

Thomas' father Thomas Berry Glover was born in London and joined the Coastguard in 1827. His first appointment was to Sandend, Banffshire, where he met his future wife Mary Findlay. In 1835, he became Chief Officer at the Coastguard Station in Fraserburgh. Their son Thomas was born in 1838 in the family's home in Commerce Street.

Following two short postings near Grimsby, the family returned to the North East at Collieston in 1847 and then Bridge of Don in 1849. Thomas attended the Gym at Chanonry House School in Old Aberdeen (see entry 6), and his name appears in a surviving school register for 1854.

Aged 19 and mid 1857, Thomas left for Shanghai, China to work for the Scottish firm Jardine, Matheson and Co, one of the largest British trading firms in the Far East at the time. His family moved to "Glover House" on the River Don in 1864 (see entry 9). Thomas only returned briefly to Scotland on business trips.

1829 3 July Thomas Blake Glover's father, Thomas Berry Glover and mother, Mary Findlay marry

1838 Thomas Blake Glover born – he had six brothers and a sister: Charles Thomas **1830**, William Jacob **1832**, James Lindley **1833**, Henry Martin **1836**, Alexander Johnston **1840**, Martha Anne **1842**, and Alfred Berry **1850**

1857 Thomas arrives in Shanghai in the middle of the year

1865 James and Charles set up a firm Glover Brothers (Aberdeen) Shipbrokers Ltd, at 19 Marishal Street. *Owari*, a ship built for the Shogunate government launched at John Smith's yard and the warships, *Ho Sho Maru*, *Jho Sho Maru* and *Wun Yo Maru* constructed in Aberdeen for the Japanese navy

1877 Thomas moves to Tokyo to act as a consultant to Mitsubishi, the company he had earlier helped set up

1885 Thomas is involved with the Japan Brewery Company, Ltd. Their Kirin Beer is today one of the countries' oldest brands of beer

1908 Thomas is awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, becoming the first foreigner to receive this prestigious award

1911 16 December Thomas dies and is buried in Nagasaki.



Thomas with leading members of the Mitsubishi Company taken about 1890

Japan, the East, the West and Imperialism

In Japan, real power lay with the Shogun (or Tycoon) rather than Emperor. Under the Shogun's government were the major clans, each headed by a *Daimyo*. The largest and most powerful were the Satsuma and Choshu Clan. Each ruled their own domains but some had limited influence nationally.

The Shogun's policy kept Japan strictly closed off from external influences for hundreds of years. Japan fell behind Western technological advancement with little or no industrialisation during the 18th and 19th centuries. With modern Western gun boats and naval technology arriving in their waters, tensions among the Clans began to surface.

In July 1853, an American fleet visited Japan to promote open trade. The purpose of this visit with a number of warships, was clear: trade was coming one way or another. The Shogunate opened up three treaty ports to allow Western merchants in to trade. The key ports which were opened up were Nagasaki, Kanagawa (Yokohama) and Hakodate.

Thomas Glover in Japan

With the opening of these Treaty Ports, Thomas went to Japan. He arrived in Nagasaki on 19 September 1859 as an agent of Jardine, Matheson and Co and began to trade and learn Japanese. This was a bold and brave move because there was considerable resistance to westerners in Japan. In 1861, there was a Samurai attack on the British Legation in Edo (Tokyo).

It was in this context of political and social turmoil that Thomas began to operate, at first for Jardine, Matheson and Co and then as an independent merchant. He initially traded green tea out of Japan and was involved in property, but gradually moved into arms and ship brokering. 1864 to 1867 was a time of great prosperity for him.

Thomas and his brothers, built Japanese ships in Aberdeen for the Shogunate and the Clans. In 1863 and 1864, they brokered the *Sarah* and *Satsuma* for the Satsuma Clan. The *Satsuma* launched from William Duthie's shipyard in Aberdeen. They sold 20 ships to Japan from 1864 to 1867. Thomas also brokered arms deals for the Clans, often personally buying weapons in Shanghai and Hong Kong.



Tsuru Glover, Thomas's wife

In 1863, Thomas helped organise the trip of five young, but senior, Choshu Clan members to Britain. This trip was illegal as it had not been approved by the Japanese authorities. The trip was mostly based in London but two clan members Hirofumi Ito and Inoue Kaoru, visited Aberdeen early to mid 1864.

Later, the 'Choshu Five' played an important role, arguing against opponents of Japan opening up to the West. Ito would become very senior in the regime that replaced the Tokugawa Shogunate. Thomas also helped the 'Satsuma Nineteen' unofficially leave Japan for Britain that year.

In 1865, a total of 12 British-built ships were sold to Japan, five by the Glovers. In June 1865, Thomas ordered Armstrong guns, manufactured in Newcastle upon Tyne, for the Shogunate at an eventual profit of \$40,000. At the same time, he made around \$100,000 available to Japanese rebels in Britain. He also arranged for the construction of three modern warships in Aberdeen for the Japanese navy, including *Ho Sho Maru*, *Jho Sho Maru* and *Wun Yo Maru*.

The Meiji 'Restoration'

In 1866, the Chosu and Satsuma Clans signed a pact to work together. With all sides now armed, a civil war was inevitable and resulted in a new regime. The new Emperor was enthroned and the capital moved from Kyoto to Tokyo. Meiji Japan was determined to close the economic and military gap with the Western powers through far-reaching reforms.

The new government aimed to bring democracy to Japan with equality for all its people and the boundaries between the social classes were gradually broken down. The Samurai suffered most as they lost all their privileges.

Thomas later claimed that he had been the most rebellious of all those who had opposed the former Shogunate. Whilst he was allied with the



Thomas with family members. His son, Tomisaburo, is standing on the far left. Hana, his daughter, is seated in the middle

rebels before the Restoration of 1868, he traded with all sides and there is no real evidence for his political views from then. He was, after all, a business man. However, before the Meiji Restoration, he had allied himself more and more closely with the rebellious Satsuma Clan.

Kirin Beer, Crombie and Mitsubishi

William Copeland, a naturalised US citizen of Norwegian descent, arrived in Yokohama in 1864. In 1869, responding to the large foreign demand for domestically brewed beer, Copeland opened the Spring Barley Brewery. By 1884 he had closed the brewery, having been dogged by misfortune, and sailed for the United States.

A year later two foreign entrepreneurs established a partnership with two Japanese businessmen to reopen Copeland's brewery, with help from Thomas Glover. With sound financial backing, the newly-formed Japan Brewery Company, Ltd soon became a profitable enterprise. By 1888 all of its beer featured the 'Kirin' label – the mythical Kirin, according to ancient Chinese legend, is a mystical hybrid creature and brought good fortune to those who caught a glimpse of it.

Despite the success of Kirin, Thomas found it difficult to adjust to the changes in trade that occurred with the Meiji Restoration including the economic decline of the port of Nagasaki. Glover attempted to expand his business activities including brokering construction of a patent slip dock in Aberdeen. The dock was disassembled and brought over to Nagasaki, which lacked modern facilities for repairing ships.

Thomas later sold his share in the venture to the Japanese government, which in turn leased the dock to Mitsubishi in 1884. He also became a partner with the Hizen Clan in developing the Takashima coal mine. The deal, although a good prospect, was very one-sided and his debts grew.

Thomas with Yanosuke Iwasaki, chairman and younger brother of the founder of Mitsubishi

Thomas's Nagasaki trading firm, Glover & Co, was declared bankrupt in August 1870 and the Netherlands Trading Society acted as Trustees. This has been attributed to a lack of managerial ability as well as to the change in the politics of Japan, but it also needs to be understood in the context of fierce competition for trade among Westerners and with the Chinese, who accounted for around half of all of Nagasaki's export trade.

After bankruptcy, he continued to work at the Takashima coal mine, which was eventually bought by Mitsubishi. Thomas's former 'students', the Clan youngsters, may have used their new positions of power to keep his later businesses going. Either way, Thomas continued to work hard and after seven years of work at Takashima cleared \$500,000 of debt.

In the 1870s, Thomas was also the agent in Japan for the world famous Crombie cloth, made at Crombie's Mill on Donside, near Glover House.

In this period, Thomas also became involved with the development of Mitsubishi. The company's second president, Yanosuke Iwasaki, a former Tosa samurai, had business dealings with Thomas before the Restoration and remained friends. Thomas moved to Tokyo and acted as a consultant for Mitsubishi in various ways from 1877 until his death in 1911.

In 1908 Hirofumi Ito and Inoue Kaoru recommended Thomas be awarded the Order of the Rising Sun (Second Class) – the first time a foreigner had received Japan's first national decoration. On 16 December 1911 Thomas died of Bright's Disease (kidney disease), and was buried in Nagasaki.

Thomas driving an early car in Japan



Aberdeen



1 Aberdeen Maritime Museum

Aberdeen Maritime Museum has a display on Thomas Glover containing objects that reflect his life and achievements in Japan, as well as looking at the lives of other British people present in the country at the same time. The display also explores the links between modern day Japan and Scotland, highlighting the lasting legacy of Glover's life. This award-winning museum is on the city's historic Shiprow and incorporates Provost Ross's House, which was built in 1593. The Maritime Museum houses a unique collection covering shipbuilding, fast sailing ships, fishing, and port history. It is also the only place in the UK where you can see displays on the North Sea oil and gas industry.

2 19 Marischal Street

The 1864-5 Post Office Directory for Aberdeen lists No 19 Marischal Street as the offices for Thomas's brothers' firm, Charles T Glover's Ship Insurance Broker Company. It was from here that important ships such as the Jho Shu Maru and the Ho Shu Maru were brokered for Japanese interests. Marischal Street was

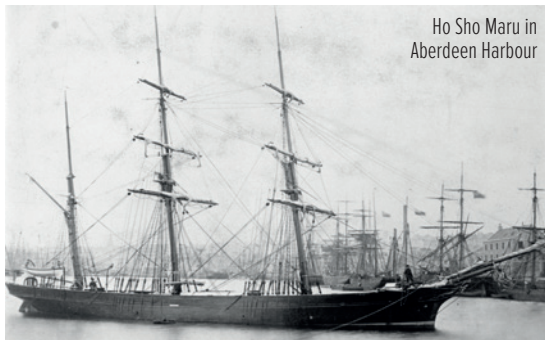
one of Aberdeen's first purpose-built streets in the 18th century, linking the commercial heart of the city to the expanding harbour. The Jho Shu Maru and the Ho Shu Maru were subsequently donated by their respective Clan owners to the Imperial Government and served in the Imperial Japanese Navy as men-of-war.





3 Alexander Hall Shipyard

Alexander Hall & Co were Aberdeen shipbuilders from 1790 to 1957. The firm is best remembered for its development of the Aberdeen or Clipper Bow in 1839, designed for greater speed and seaworthiness. The Glover brothers brokered ships for the Japanese government and clans through a number of Aberdeen's shipyards. One of Hall's best-known ships was the Jho Sho Maru, a barque-rigged steamer which was built in 1868. This wooden corvette had a belt of iron armour plating at the waterline and carried eight 64-pounder guns and two 100-pounder guns. Unfortunately, due to a miscalculation of costs, the firm actually lost £500 on the project. Hall's yard also built the Ho Shu Maru. On 22 August 1868, the Aberdeen Herald described its trial trip: 'The Ho-So-Maru, a new steam gunboat, built for the Japanese Government by Messrs. Hall & Co. made a trial trip in the bay on Thursday, leaving the harbour about noon, and returning again about four o'clock. The anticipations which existed regarding her speed were fully realized. For the first half hour after leaving the harbour she made eight knots an hour before the wind, and during the second half hour, nine knots. When the vessel was put about, she steamed with bare poles over seven and a half knots, in the face of a stiff breeze, although the engines were not working anything like their full power. The hopes maintained regarding her speed were thus fully met. Nothing could have exceeded the manner in which the Ho-So-Maru conducted herself, both under canvas and steam.'



Ho Sho Maru in
Aberdeen Harbour



Aberdeen Harbour circa 1872

4 Duthie Shipyards

William Duthie first leased a shipyard from the Town Council in November 1817. It was a family business – his partners were his younger brothers John and Alexander. All three seem to have served apprenticeships with the Hall shipyard before going into business together. The company ceased to trade in 1925. It was from their yards next to Alexander Hall that the Glover Brothers-brokered ship Satsuma was launched.

5 St Peter's Cemetery

A memorial to father and mother, Thomas Berry Glover and Mary Findlay is located at St Peter's Cemetery on King Street.



6 Gym School

The Gym School in Old Aberdeen was involved in the story in a number of ways. It was here that Thomas himself was educated and some of Thomas's visiting Japanese students later attended this school. On 5 October 1867, the Aberdeen Herald noted that 'several Japanese gentlemen' had recently been studying in Aberdeen. The records of the Gym note that five 'pupils' were at the school, but naming only two, Nagasawa and H. Heiki.



Gym School, Old Aberdeen

7 St Machar's Cathedral

Brother Charles Thomas Glover and his family are commemorated in Oldmachar Churchyard at St Machar's Cathedral.



Fraserburgh



8 Glover House

The Glover family lived here from 1864 for some twenty years. Whilst Thomas didn't live here, he visited this house on a number of occasions and it no doubt played host to some of Thomas's Japanese 'students' when staying in Britain. Thomas Blake Glover probably stayed here when he was in Aberdeen negotiating the contract on behalf of the Jho Sho Maru for the Higo Clan. It is a dignified granite house of the later 19th century sitting on a high bank of the River Don to the north of Aberdeen city.

9 Site of Coastguard Station

Following two short postings over three years near Grimsby, the Glover family returned to the North East of Scotland, to Collieston in 1847, and then to this Coastguard Station in 1849. The buildings were exactly in line with the present day ones and ran the full width of the Donmouth Gardens loop including the road either side.



Coastguard House, Bridge of Don

10



School in Saltoun Place

This school building was opened in 1838 and it was here that Thomas first went to school before the family left Fraserburgh. Today, as seen below, the building is little altered in external appearance.



11 Commerce Street

By popular repute, Thomas was said to have been born at No 15 Commerce Street. There is, however, no evidence to back up this claim. Whilst the 1841 census records the family as living at Commerce Street the exact address is not listed in Coastguard records, suggesting Thomas Berry Glover rented the property privately. Unfortunately, No 15 was bombed during a Luftwaffe raid in 1941 and the remains of the house were later demolished. However the remainder of Commerce Street retains a 19th century feel to it. A plaque on a building on the street bears witness to the Glover connection.



12



11 Dalrymple Street

The 18th century World's End building was used as a hiding place for Lord Pitsligo Alexander Forbes after the 1746 Battle of Culloden during the Jacobite Rebellion. Thomas is reputed to have worked here.

13 49 Mid Street

Today this building is known as St Andrews 2000 Halls. It was the site of St Paul's Episcopal Church in the 1830s and Thomas Blake Glover was baptised here on 12 July 1838. This is also marked with a plaque.



14 Fraserburgh Heritage Centre

Fraserburgh, known locally as 'the Broch', celebrates the life and career of one of its most famous sons in Fraserburgh Heritage Centre. The centre tells the story of Fraserburgh and its heritage and it is here that Thomas Blake Glover's career can be seen in the context of the development of the town.



FRASERBURGH ▲

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Glover Garden, Japan

The story of Madame Butterfly

Thomas had lived with his Japanese 'wife', Tsuru, and their daughter, Hana, born 1876. At that time, these associations were seen as informal 'marriages', which generally ended when the man returned to the West. He also had an earlier relationship with a woman named Kaga Maki and had a son, Tomisaburo, 1870. When Tomisaburo was six Thomas brought him into the home he shared with Tsuru.

Thomas has been linked to Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly*. The original short story was written by John Luther Long. One possible inspiration is Pierre Loti's novel, *Madame Chrysanthème* – a French naval officer in a temporary marriage with a geisha. Puccini saw a version of Long's story as a play in London. He abandoned his original idea of an opera based on *Oliver Twist* and developed *Madame Butterfly* instead.

Thomas's story does not seem to be the inspiration for *Madame Butterfly*: neither Kaga nor Tsuru were geishas nor was Thomas the callous man of the opera. However it is perhaps reasonable to see *Madame Butterfly* (at least the original story) as criticism of the way in which Western men treated Japanese women.

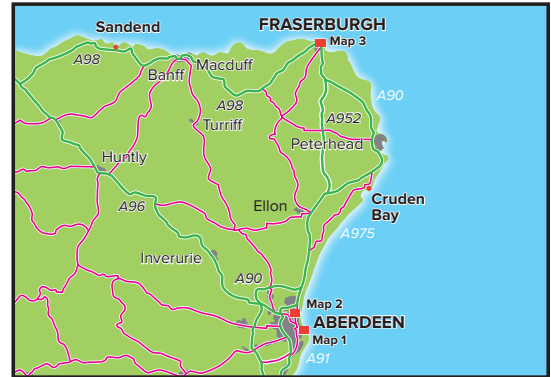
The association of Thomas with *Madame Butterfly* probably arises from American soldiers after the Second World War who dubbed his old home 'Madame Butterfly House'. To the soldiers, it probably looked like the imagined house in the opera. The opera was set there, in Nagasaki and a statue of Puccini stands in Glover Garden, now a park.

Thomas Blake Glover's Legacy

Elements of Thomas's life appear strange to us today but we should not judge the man or his times. He was loyal to Japan and the connections he had made earlier in his life stood him in very good stead when his circumstances changed. His reputation remains high in Japan today and he is remembered in many different ways. In Aberdeen and Fraserburgh there is an interest in his story and a desire to understand this man and his place in Japan's fascinating history.

Scottish Samurai Trail

The story of Thomas Blake Glover



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This is one in a series of themed trails in Aberdeen City, visit the website to see more: www.aberdeency.gov.uk/trails

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