

Scotland's Cities: Dundee

The Scottish English Podcast – Episode 23



LANGUAGE LEARNING

*Transcript & Upper-intermediate and Advanced
Vocabulary Guide*

Below is the transcript with all selected B2, C1, and above vocabulary and phrases in **bold**. After the transcript, you'll find a table with definitions, British English pronunciation, and useful collocations/idioms for each highlighted word or phrase.

Transcript: Scotland's Cities: Dundee

Before the world knew Dundee for videos and digital innovation, this city on the Tay was known for something entirely different: the **relentless** hum of jute mills, the scent of marmalade, and the headlines from its famous newspapers.

Dundee's story is one of remarkable **transformation**. From 'Juteopolis', the global capital of a tough Indian fibre to Scotland's **undisputed** tech capital, and a creative **powerhouse** shaping the digital future.

Welcome to the Scottish English Podcast, the show where you can learn about Scotland's history, culture, and accents. If you want to follow along a little bit more easily with this episode, check out the transcript, which you'll find through the link in the description, which has some vocabulary from this episode along with their descriptions, pronunciation, and some idiomatic usage as well. And if you haven't subscribed already, hit that subscribe button so that you know when the next episode of the Scottish English Podcast comes out.

I'm Claire. And today is the third episode in our tour of the Scottish Cities. And today we are in Dundee, the city where I grew up.

We'll **trace** the city's journey from its industrial past to its rise as a world leader in gaming, tech, and creative industries.

The age of jute. Let's wind the clock back to the 19th century. Dundee's industrial heritage is **summed up** in the famous three Js: Jute, Jam and Journalism.

But it was jute, a tough fibre **imported** from India, that put Dundee on the world map.

By the late 1800s, Dundee was known as Juteopolis, with over a hundred mills employing up to 50,000 people. That was half of the city's working population.

The city's location on the Tay meant it was ideal for importing the raw jute itself, but also whale oil, which was essential for processing the fibre.

Jute was everywhere in sacks, ropes, and carpets, and even in wagon covers for America's westward expansion.

The industry didn't just provide mill jobs, it powered engineering firms, foundries and bustling docks.

Dundee's Mills were also unique in their workforce. By 1911, 75% of jute workers were women, including many married women, which was really unusual at that time.

The city's industrial skyline was **dominated** by **landmarks** like Cox's Stack at Camperdown Works, the largest jute factory in the world. Verdant Works, now a museum, preserves this legacy, letting visitors experience the sights and sounds of a Victorian mill. But **prosperity** had a price. The wealth of Juteopolis was built on the labour of workers in Dundee and in Bengal, where the raw jute was harvested and then later processed.

Scottish jute barons began to shift production to India, which **accelerated** Dundee's industrial **decline**.

Decline and reinvention

By the early 20th century, the jute industry began to falter. Cheaper production in India, changing global markets, and the end of government protections led to mill closures.

By the 1970s commercial jute production in Dundee was over. Many mills were demolished or repurposed, and the city faced the challenge of reinventing itself.

Dundee's **resilience** showed in its ability to **adapt**. The city's other Js remained important with jam, thanks to Keiller's Marmalade and journalism with DC Thomson's comics and newspapers. But new industries were needed.

The digital revolution.

The seeds of Dundee's digital future were sown in the mid 20th century with companies like Timex, which brought electronics manufacturing and later played a crucial role in the city's emerging tech scene.

The real **breakthrough** came in the eighties and nineties with DMA design, a local studio that went on to become Rockstar North, that created global gaming hits like Lemmings and the original Grand Theft Auto.

These successes put Dundee on the map as the birthplace of modern video game development.

Abertay University **cemented** the city's reputation by launching the world's first degree in computer games technology in 1997. Today it's recognized as Europe's top video game school, attracting talent from across the globe.

Scotland's Tech Capital.

Fast forward to today, and Dundee is a **thriving** hub for digital media, gaming and tech startups. The city's transformation is supported by collaborative spaces like the Flour Mill and Abertay CyberQuarter and by initiatives such as Techscaler, which nurture entrepreneurship and innovation.

Dundee's tech **ecosystem** is diverse **spanning** gaming, life sciences, clean energy, and data analytics.

Major investments like the £1 billion waterfront development, and the new 5G Innovation Hub, are helping Dundee shape the future of **immersive** technology, virtual reality and cybersecurity.

The city's creative energy is also visible in its **vibrant** art scene with the V&A Dundee Museum standing as a symbol of this new era.

A city that keeps reinventing itself.

Dundee's journey from jute to digital innovation is a story of **resilience**, creativity, and community spirit. The city's ability to **adapt**, whether in the face of industrial **decline** or the demands of the digital age, has made it a model for **transformation**.

From the echoing mills of Juteopolis to the buzzing studios of game designers and tech entrepreneurs, Dundee continues to lead Scotland into the future.

That's all for today's episode of the Scottish English Podcast. If you've enjoyed our journey through Dundee's, past and present, don't forget to subscribe.

The next stop on our tour of Scotland's cities is Inverness: the gateway to the highlands. That's next week on the Scottish English Podcast. Thanks for listening.

Vocabulary Table

Term/Phrase (in transcript in bold)	Definition	Pronunciation (UK)	Useful Collocations & Idioms
relentless	Continuing without becoming weaker or less severe	/rɪˈləntləs/	relentless pursuit, relentless pressure
transformation	A thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance	/ˌtrænsfəˈmeɪʃən/	digital transformation, undergo a transformation
undisputed	Accepted without question; not challenged	/ˌʌndɪˈspjuːtɪd/	undisputed leader, undisputed champion
powerhouse	A person, group, or thing of great energy, strength, or power	/ˈpaʊəhaʊs/	economic powerhouse, creative powerhouse
trace	To follow the course or development of something	/treɪs/	trace the origins, trace the journey
heritage	Valued objects and qualities such as cultural traditions passed down from previous generations	/ˈhɛrɪtɪdʒ/	cultural heritage, heritage site

sum up	To describe or express the important facts or characteristics about something or someone	/sʌm ʌp/	sum up the situation, sum up in a word
imported	Brought into one country from another	/ɪm'pɔ:tɪd/	imported goods, imported products
dominated	Controlled or had a commanding influence on	/'dɒmɪneɪtɪd/	dominated by, dominated the market
landmark	An object or feature of a landscape or town that is easily seen and recognized	/'lændmɑ:k/	historical landmark, become a landmark
prosperity	The state of being successful, usually by earning a lot of money	/prɒ'spɜ:ti/	economic prosperity, bring prosperity
legacy	Something handed down from the past; a lasting impact	/'legəsi/	leave a legacy, cultural legacy
accelerate	To increase the speed of something	/ək'seləreɪt/	accelerate growth, accelerate the process

decline	A gradual and continuous loss of strength, numbers, quality, or value	/dɪˈklaɪn/	economic decline, decline in numbers
reinvention	The action or process through which something is changed so much that it appears to be entirely new	/ˌriːɪnˈvɛnʃən/	reinvention of self, corporate reinvention
resilience	The ability to recover quickly from difficulties	/rɪˈzɪliəns/	show resilience, resilience to change
adapt	To change, or to change something, to suit different conditions or uses	/əˈdæpt/	adapt to change, adapt quickly
breakthrough	An important discovery or event that helps to improve a situation or provide an answer to a problem	/ˈbreɪkθruː/	make a breakthrough, scientific breakthrough
cemented	Made something certain or permanent	/sɪˈmentɪd/	cement a relationship, cement one's reputation
thriving	Growing, developing, or being successful	/ˈθraɪvɪŋ/	thriving business, thriving community

ecosystem	A complex network or interconnected system	/ˈiːkəʊˌsɪstə m/	tech ecosystem, business ecosystem
spanning	Extending across a period of time or a range of subjects	/ˈspæniŋ/	spanning decades, spanning continents
immersive	Providing, involving, or characterized by deep absorption or immersion	/ɪˈmɜːsɪv/	immersive experience, immersive technology
vibrant	Full of energy and life	/ˈvaɪbrənt/	vibrant city, vibrant culture