

STANEHYVE 'TOLBOOTH TIMES'





Editorial

At this time last year ,we were looking back on 2019 as being a momentous year for the Tolbooth Museum with a record number of visitors, a successful merger with Stonehaven Heritage Society and a wonderful visit by The Duke and Duchess of Rothesay. Little did anyone know what 2020 would bring.

The coronavirus pandemic meant that the Museum closed in March and would not re-open until July , but then only at weekends. It had to close again in August but a group of hardy volunteers have helped the Museum to open again most weekends. However it will be no surprise to learn that visitor numbers are much reduced.

As this year draws to a close, we can only hope that 2021 will bring improved times. In the meantime, some changes have been made to the Museum. With funding from the Co-op Community Fund, new display boards for the Heritage photos have been installed ,with plans for more to come next year..

You will find in this issue, details of a new book **Stonehaven Shops 1960—2020** by **Donald Mitchell**, published by the Museum and which is issued in time for Christmas. Having helped Donald with this project , I can certainly recommend it to you.

With best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Gordon Ritchie, MVO

Editor



MUSEUM SNIPPETS



During the 12 months to October 2020, the Museum had been selected to take part in the annual Co-op Local Community Fund and therefore earned money each time you shopped at any of the 4 local Co-ops.— assuming of course that you had selected the Museum as your chosen local charity.



On a sunny Saturday in November, all masked and suitably distanced, Christian Croll (manager of David St branch) presented the Museum with a cheque for **£7772**. Also present was Stewart Aitken who is the local coordinator for the Co-op Community Fund. Part of these funds will be going towards the cost of the new display boards for the Museum and part towards upgrading the signage and quality of the Heritage Society photographic archive now held by the Museum.





STONEHAVEN SHOPS 1960-2020

by Donald Mitchell

A new book, published in time for Christmas, will bring back memories for generations of Stonehaven folk, telling the story of the many shops and businesses in the Town over the past 60 years. It has been written by Donald Mitchell, who is well known for running a very successful hairdressing salon 'Hair Care' in the centre of the Town for over 40 years. Donald moved



to Stonehaven from Turriff at the age of 11 when his parents George and Ella Mitchell took over the Star Inn in Rodney Street, at that time one of the busiest pubs in the Town. The book takes you on a tour around Stonehaven, describing the shops that were there in 1960 and the many changes over the

years. He tells us about the shops and the many characters to be found. Maggie Arthur had a sweetie shop at Bridge of Cowie, very popular with kids at Fetteresso School just up the hill and which is today the Community Centre. Maggie never bothered with the weights on the scales, an extra handful was just fine! Or Bunty Donald who ran Yule's Toy and Gift Shop on Allardice Street, where Donald spent his pocket money on Airfix model kits and Corgi Toys. And John Marshall whose bike shop in the High Street of the Old Town kept your bike on the road with many Stonehaven boys and girls getting a 'new' Marshall's bike for their Christmas or birthday.

The book is well illustrated with old and new photographs, and adverts from the past, and brings you up to date with descriptions of the present shops in Stonehaven today. Donald describes Stonehaven in 1960, as a prosperous self-contained town with a population of 4,500, busy with all the traffic to and from Aberdeen, thundering through the town, day and night, before the By-pass was built. It was well served with shops of all kinds and very busy in the summer with holiday visitors, particularly from Glasgow and the west. Donald also tells us of the many hotels and public houses at that time. The Town has grown over the years, with the population now around 12,000 but still remains a popular place to stay with the Beach and Harbour busier than ever with day trippers, particularly since the AWPR opened.

Stonehaven Shops is published by Stonehaven Tolbooth Association who run the Tolbooth Museum, and is available priced £4 from the Museum (open weekends 12.30 to 3.30), from Giuilianotti's in Evan Street, from Ritchie Leasing at 3 Market Square and from other outlets. It can also be ordered by leaving a message with name and address on the Tolbooth website and paying on the donation page £4 plus postage of £1.40.



GUIDES TO STONEHAVEN—PART 3 (1951—1963)

by Gordon Ritchie

I concluded part 2 of this story by referring to '[Catch the Sun in Stonehaven](#)', the guide published in 1949.

The '[Stonehaven Official Guide](#)' was '*illustrated throughout*' and published around 1951. It has a colourful cover with a painting of a bathing beauty at the pool and was published by the Simmath Press of Dundee,. It contains 42 pages, of which 24 comprise advertisements but there are only 11 photographs—so perhaps not quite '*illustrated throughout*'!



An advert for Fetteresso Castle Guest House run by Mrs. Chrystal Muir and her daughter Geraldine reads '*while every effort has been made to retain the historic atmosphere, it offers every comfort and convenience consistent with modern standards*'. The food was described as '*excellent*' with cream, eggs, poultry and vegetables supplied by the Home Farm. Sadly the Guest House may not have been viable , as the Castle was sold to a demolition company around 1952 and became a roofless shell until its eventual reconstruction in the 1990's.

The foreword tells us that the Guide was published '*to call attention anew to Stonehaven's many-sided appeal as a seaside holiday resort which has something to please every taste*'. It is described as a '*desirable resort with a reputation for its recreational facilities and its healthful air, combining all that is best in mountain and sea breezes.*' Another object was to draw attention to Stonehaven's many and varied business undertakings.



Guides to Stonehaven Part 3 (continued)

The Guide contains the usual descriptions of the town, its mild summer climate with high sunshine average and low rainfall, the facilities including river angling and sea fishing, the recreation grounds, swimming pool, paddling pool, two eighteen hole putting greens, four hard tennis courts, two bowling greens and the golf course. Dunnottar Castle, the Old Town and Cowie are all briefly described. A visitor's day ticket for the golf course was three shillings (15p) and an adult season ticket for the pool was £1 and for either Bowls or Tennis it was thirty shillings (£1.50).

The adverts are interesting and give a flavour of what was available in the town. J. McIntosh & Son, Butchers at the Market Buildings, had the most up to date shop in town. Stonehaven's most popular hotel was the Queens with excellent food, comfort and service from A. McArthur, Resident Proprietor. A popular guest house was Rutlands at 11a Arduthie Road, owned by Mr. William Ewing. Angling permits were issued by R.H. Thomson at 74 Barclay Street who also sold sports goods, fishing tackle, Meccano and cigarettes. Fresh milk was available twice daily from the Stonehaven Dairy (Prop.H.W. Peters) at 15 Mary Street. Henderson Bros. were electrical contractors, wireless engineers and joiners at 13 Evan Street.

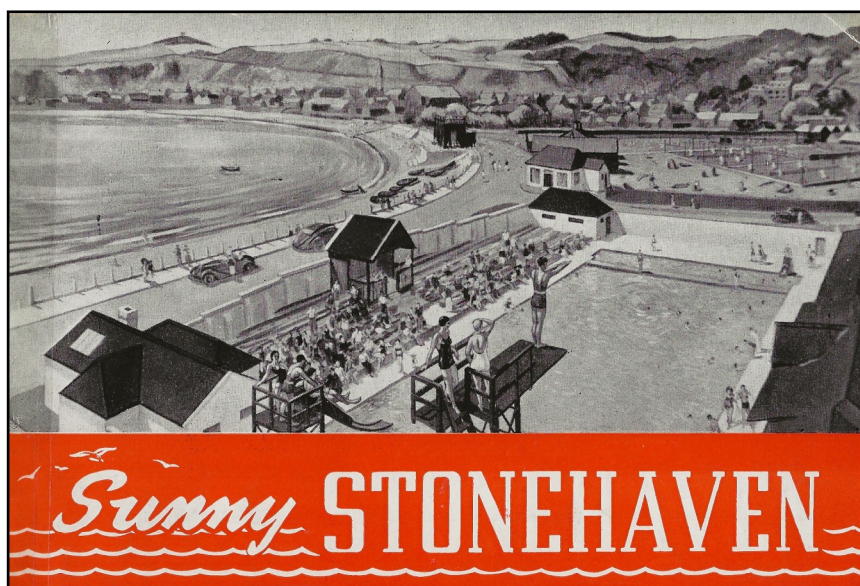
'Sunny Stonehaven' is a Guide published around 1955 by Mearns Publications of 7/9 Union Row, Aberdeen. The cover is a wonderful painting of Stonehaven, printed in black and white, but probably originally in colour, by Alistair Burns, son of former Provost Dr. Charles burns. This is stated to be an Official Guide, issued under the auspices of the Town Council, and contains fifty pages, 25 of which are adverts, and 18 photographs are by local photographer George Wood whose studio was in Evan Street. The centre pages give a superb panoramic view form Mains of Cowie on a fine summers day with a full caravan site, packed car park at the pool, travelling fair on the site which later became the Commodore Hotel, the tennis courts and Recreation Grounds and the view over the town and the bay towards Downie Point.

The foreword contains yet an other glowing description of the town. *'Snugly set on the sheltered shores of a sweeping bay of the North Sea and protected on the landward side by encompassing heights, Stonehaven has long enjoyed an enviable reputation as an ideal family seaside resort'*.



Guides to Stonehaven—Part 3 (continued)

In Stonehaven itself, while the strident unceasing clamour and bustle of a busy city are absent, the amenities associated with a progressive town—modern shops, garages, cinema, well-appointed hotels and boarding houses—are notable features. Above all; there is an appealing charm—for Stonehaven has characteristics that are quite distinctive. Here is a community who have inherited from forebears nurtured on age-old traditions of the sea, a legacy which is reflected in the hospitable welcome extended to the visitor. Stonehaven greets you and invites you to come and share in the abundant pleasures that you will leave with such reluctance.'



The town is well described, with the most recent innovation being the spacious and sheltered caravan park. Another feature not mentioned in the previous guides is a Dance Hall, with a photograph of dancing in the Town Hall.

'Happy, healthy and unforgettable' was a holiday on horseback at Carronbank Riding School at the top of Cameron Street, run by Miss Beatrice Findlater. Or you could enjoy a knickerbocker glory or a 99 at the Stance Cafe in Barclay Street. D.A.H. Donald, Newsagent at 24 Evan Street, had Glasgow evening papers from 5.30pm daily. Andrew Buchan, Grocer and Wine Merchant at 1 and 8 Market Buildings offered choicest Wiltshire and Ayrshire bacon. At Garron View in Baird Street, you would receive personal attention, good plain cooking, comfortable beds and a friendly, homely atmosphere from Miss Napier, Proprietrix. Miss Napier, as well as filling Garron View, also 'farmed out' guests to other houses in the neighbourhood, and who returned to Garron View for their lunch and evening meal. John Allardyce & Sons, Motor Engineers at 2 David Street supplied Regent petrol and oils. Mitchell's Central Garage at 64/68 Barclay Street were agents for Morris, Austin, Ford, Vauxhall and Rover.



Guides to Stonehaven Part 3 (continued)

In 1960, a new edition of the Guide appeared, very similar and with the same painting by Alistair Burns on the cover. Simply entitled ‘**Stonehaven**’ with the slogan ‘**for fun and sun beside the seaside**’ with a blue tinted cover, it was also published by Mearns Publications, Aberdeen, on behalf of the Town Council. The text is much the same as the previous guide but adverts are different. The centre pages are a double spread colour photo of the Harbour but unfortunately looking a bit grim. The harbour is almost empty with less than 20 boats and the Tolbooth is roofless. Not a good advert for Stonehaven!



The same Guide was reprinted around 1963 but with an orange tinted cover and the only changes were to the adverts. The same harbour photo was still used sadly!

When looking back at these old Guides, it is important to remember how important the holiday visitor was to Stonehaven in the past. Many hotels and barding houses relied on visitors in July and August so that they could survive the long winter months, and the Town Council took the lead in trying to make the Town as attractive as possible for visitors.



With the sad news that the 2020 Fireball Celebrations will not be taking place this year, here is a poem/song by our Treasurer Dennis Collie which conveys the spirit of a Hogmanay on the Old High Street. Although Dennis has composed original music to accompany his lyrics, the words alone must suffice here.

STONEY FIREBALLS

By Dennis Collie

It's hogmanay in Stoney and the bells are nearly here
The town is bursting full of life to welcome the new year
Auld freens meet along the street as aff'n times afore
And others quietly reminisce 'bout those who are no more

chorus

Bagpipes skirling - Fireballs whirling
It's Stoney's hogmanay.
Town bells ringing, Fireballs swinging
Hip hip hip hooray

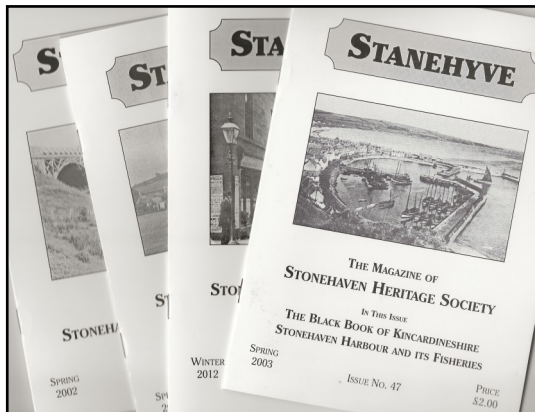
The count-down starts, the crowd goes quiet and counts from ten to nought
And then it's midnight and we hear the clock tower bells ring out
Down at the slip the balls are lit, the fires begin to flare
Then flames stream out behind them as they circle through the air

Down the High Street swingers march, till at the cannon turn
Between the pressing crowds they go while still the fireballs burn
The flames rush past, they scorch your face; sparks fly through your hair
With every one that passes by the crowd gives out a cheer

A bottle goes from lip to lip, and the age-old toasts we hear
"a the best tae ane an a'", "tae a' a guid new year"
Handshakes, kisses, hugs all round, we're a' each other's friend
Let's hope it's not another year till we meet up again



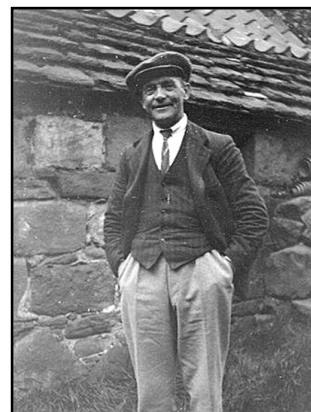
The **Stanehyve Magazine** was started by Gordon Ritchie when the Heritage Society was founded in 1988 and appeared quarterly until the Society merged with the Tolbooth Museum in 2019. From 2000, it was printed as an A5 booklet by James Bruce, latterly in colour. It has always contained many articles on local history and an index was prepared by local accountant Charles Sands a few years ago. It is intended to complete an index of the contents over the years and to make this available on the Museum website.



In the next edition—

Famous people of Stonehaven

A series about famous or maybe not so famous people of Stonehaven. People who are well known in their field of expertise - or perhaps people known only to the locals of Stonehaven, who had a hidden talent that has reached round the world. People like Willie Main - Artist.



If you have any stories or information you think could be included in future editions, please get in touch with either

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