

# STANEHYVE ·TOLBOOTH TIMES·



## STONEHAVEN HARBOUR

Fishing and cargo boats in the Inner Harbour.



## Editorial

Stonehaven joined the rest of the country and indeed the World in mourning the death of our dear Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September and we noted the many tributes made to her long years of dedication and service to the Nation. The Queen only ever made one official visit to Stonehaven, in August 1998, when she opened Kincardine Community Hospital.

Our new King Charles III and the Queen Consort Camilla did, of course, make a memorable visit to our own Tolbooth Museum in October 2019. Hopefully, we will be able to welcome our new King back to Stonehaven, at a future date.

Now that we are into Autumn, the Museum changes to Winter opening times, and we are always still very grateful to our volunteers who will continue to turn out and ensure that the Museum stays open for visitors. New volunteers are always welcome and if you are interested, please contact our Chair, Cressida Coates. - [enquiries@stonehaventolbooth.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@stonehaventolbooth.co.uk)

**Gordon Ritchie MVO**

**Editor**



October 2019—Chair Cressida welcomes the then Duke and Duchess of Rothesay to the museum and the Duke and Duchess chat with volunteer Ian Balgowan

If you have any stories or information you think could be included in future editions, please get in touch with either [lizmkritchie@gmail.com](mailto:lizmkritchie@gmail.com) or [gritchie626@gmail.com](mailto:gritchie626@gmail.com)

**Stonehaven Tolbooth Association**  
**Old Pier**  
**Stonehaven AB39 2JU**  
**Phone: 07512 466329**  
**Email: [enquiries@stonehaventolbooth.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@stonehaventolbooth.co.uk)**  
**Scottish Charity No. SC043279**



## MUSEUM SNIPPETS

### Summer Courtyard Events 2022

Starting in June with the children's art competition and storytelling with Pauline Cordiner, the outdoor series of events also included fishing net demonstrations from Ian Balgowan, fireball making demonstration from Martin Sim, magic tricks from Angus Mackintosh, storytelling from Garry Brindley, a short concert by members of Stonehaven Folk Club, a demonstration by members of the Grampian Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers and a choral concert by the Mearns singers. As part of the Harbour Festival on 28th August we had Wes Lewis of Seafood Bothy doing mackerel smoking demonstrations and as part of Aberdeenshire Doors Open Days in September, Pauline Cordiner returned for more storytelling. A wonderful varied programme and so a big thank you to Mary Sutcliffe and Clare Thomas who organized all the events.

### Quiz Night 28th October

The museum is hosting a quiz night at the British Legion on Friday 28th October. Doors open 7.30pm. Quiz starts at 8pm. Tickets are now available from the museum at £5 each.—or contact us on Facebook messenger. Teams of 4-6 people. Raffles, Nibbles, Bar.

### Guest speaking

Volunteer Liz recently gave a talk to the Fordoun Ladies Group who meet at Castleton once a month. A small selection of portable exhibits from the museum, were taken along and discussed in detail. Even Millie the millipede fossil had an outing. One or two of the exhibits elicited a lot of response. The Albyn Plastics items stirred up interesting stories of working at the factory from one lady and others spoke about growing up and helping mothers to make their own butter. with butter pats. A lot of wrong guesses were made before they finally figured out the use of the methylated spirit heated hair curler. If you know of any groups that are looking for guest speakers to talk about the museum and its artefacts, please email the museum at [enquiries@stonehaventolbooth.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@stonehaventolbooth.co.uk).

### Winter Opening Hours

From Saturday 1st October, the museum will operate winter opening hours

Weekends only 12.30pm to 3.30pm





## MUSEUM SNIPPETS

After 2 years of restrictions , the museum has been seeing a steady increase in the number of visitors returning over the summer. The numbers have however not yet reached those of 2019—the last full year we were open. It may take until 2023/2024 to get back to those numbers of more than 24000 visitors per annum. As well as museum visitors, this summer the museum hosted a wedding in July (*the grandson of our late volunteer George Strang*), had twice weekly after hours visits from coach tour company Globus , had end of term visits from all 3 local primary schools, and of course took part in the Stonehaven Harbour Festival and Aberdeenshire Council Doors Open Days events. It has been heartening to read the visitors book and see again it has names from lots of different overseas countries – including Ukraine, and from further afield, New Zealand and Japan.

The clock tower is sadly still closed and so the figures set out below are just for the museum and based on our regular summer opening hours of 3 hours each day, 4 days per week. The lower table shows comparison with earlier years

### Footfall for the last few months

	Museum	Globus	Total	Days open	Average daily footfall
May	1256	166	1422	20	71
June	1657	152	1809	22	82
July	1964	159	2123	23	92
August	3089	171	3260	21	155
September	1307	92	1399	15	93

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
May	1422	354	0	2705	2359
June	1809	356	0	3027	2774
July	2123	638	78	3912	3309
August	3260	2134	50	5718	3926
September	1399	1048	83	3728	2288



## Stonehaven Ships by Gordon Ritchie

There has of course been a Harbour in Stonehaven for hundreds of years , and the Tolbooth Museum has many photos of boats filling the Harbour, particularly at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. My father, George F Ritchie researched Fishing Boats of Stonehaven ,and



Photo circa 1890—prior to breakwater being built.  
Notice the washing drying on the Braes

this was published by the Heritage Society some years ago. However, I have never seen much about cargo ships which worked out of Stonehaven, exporting grain and potatoes, and bringing in coal, mainly from Newcastle.

George Wood of Torry worked at Hall, Russell, the Aberdeen shipbuilders and has built up a database of Aberdeen Ships, both built there and registered there, from the Register of Ships, now held in the City Archives. He has concentrated mainly on the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and has sent me details of ships

with Stonehaven connections. He asked about Stonehaven shipbuilders ,but I have not come across references to any in the Harbour area. Sandy Clark had a boatyard on the beach near Cowie, where the Beach Pavilion is today, but that seems to have been demolished around 1930 when the Pavilion was built.

He was unable to help me identify any of the large ships shown in Harbour photographs around 1900, but he has given me a list of ships and owners from 1824 to 1886. Names of shipmasters include Anderson, Bonner, Brebner, Bridgeford, Brown, Cowie, Davidson, Forbes, Henderson, Jack, Lees, Leighton, Leslie, McPherson, Milne, Morgan, Sherriff, Thomson and Wyness. Some well known local names there including Jack who built up a large fish curing business and later built St Leonard's on Bath Street and Morgan who owned property on the Shorehead.



Cargo vessels in the inner harbour circa 1900



## Stonehaven Ships by Gordon Ritchie—cont'd

Price 7d] WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24. 1830. [No. 4289.

On Thursday the 11th inst. a fine schooner of nearly 80 tons per register was launched from the building yard of Messrs Bower and Leslie. Stonehaven, being the only occurrence of the kind that has taken place there at least for the last century and a half. Considering the growth of commerce in that town, there is little doubt that so long a period will not elapse again before the recurrence of such another scene. She glided in fine style into her future element, amid the cheers of hundreds of admiring spectators assembled to witness the novel spectacle. She was, with the usual solemnities, named the "Defiance." It is understood she has been purchased by a few individuals of that place, and is to be employed in trading to and from the port.

One ship built in Stonehaven in 1830 was the **Defiance**. The builders were Alex Bower and Alex Leslie but no details as to the location of their shipyard. It measured 55 feet with breadth of 17 feet and nearly 80 tons, so quite a large ship, described in the Register as one deck, 2 masts, hermaphrodite rig, standing bowsprit, square stern, carvel British built, no gallery no figurehead. The attached cutting from the Aberdeen Journal gives more details. There were 12 owners originally divided into 64 shares as follows:-

<b>John Forbes</b> , Stonehaven (merchant)	<b>John Main</b> , Stonehaven (blacksmith)
<b>John McPherson</b> , Stonehaven (shipmaster)	<b>George Jack</b> , Stonehaven (merchant)
<b>James Burness</b> Stonehaven (writer)	<b>Arthur Kinnear</b> , Stonehaven (writer)
<b>Alex Bower</b> , Stonehaven (shipbuilder)	<b>Alex Leslie</b> , Stonehaven (shipbuilder)
<b>James Christie</b> , Mains of Catterline (farmer)	<b>Robert Thom</b> , Castleton of Fordoun (farmer)
<b>John Davidson</b> , Dunnottar (gardener)	<b>James Logan</b> , Mains of Dunnottar (farmer)

A real cross section of Stonehaven business men and who all wished to invest in a local venture.. Writers were lawyers. By 1836 **George Jack** owned all 64 shares but sadly the ship was wrecked on rocks off Hartlepool in 1839. The crew were all saved.

I shall be interested to hear of any other Stonehaven Ships. In a future issue, I shall tell the story of SS Locksley belonging to R V Mitchell of Stonehaven, whose master was Martin Sim's grandfather, and which was lost in 1938, thankfully without loss of life.