

STANEHYVE ·TOLBOOTH TIMES·

1900 approx



1950



2020 approx



The Tolbooth building over the years



Editorial

When I retired from business in 2019, I retained a Store Room at my former offices at 50 Allardice Street, in order to keep business files and also documents and items belonging to Stonehaven Heritage Society. The week before Christmas, I was stunned to hear that there had been a burst pipe in the roof space above the Store, causing extensive damage. I have therefore spent the last 2 months or so trying to salvage as much as possible. In the Store was the collection of Mearns Leader volumes dating from 1930 to 1978 and sadly the 1930s volumes were worst affected. However, I have managed to dry these out although the covers are bent. What has been lost however are back issues of Stanehyve magazine, although all these had been saved to disc, and classic postcards.

The good thing to come out of all this is that I have found many items I had forgotten or did not know that I had. Details follow in this issue about the Literary Society and Fetteresso School. But I am still fascinated by the old Leader volumes and have spent far more time than I intended browsing various years. There are lots of stories about Stonehaven and its residents to fill Stanehyve for years to come.

Gordon Ritchie MVO DL

Editor

Front cover –Image from 1950's (before renovation work) - see the brick built building in the courtyard and store for fuel for the wartime flame thrower which was mounted on the concrete base at the corner of the Tolbooth opposite the sundial.

If you have any stories or information you think could be included in future editions, please get in touch with either lizmkritchie@gmail.com or gritch626@gmail.com

Stonehaven Tolbooth Association
Old Pier
Stonehaven AB39 2JU
Phone: 07512 466329
Email: enquiries@stonehaventolbooth.co.uk
Scottish Charity No. SC043279



MUSEUM SNIPPETS

Summer at the Courtyard

Mary Sutcliffe and Clare Thomas have already organized some names for our summer series of outdoor events in the courtyard. Further details will be posted on our various social media accounts but dates for your diary include

- **Monday 8th May**—Coronation Weekend—mackerel smoking demonstration with Wes Lewis of Seafood Bothy.
- **Saturday 17th June**—lace making demonstration.
- **Sunday 9th July**—BBQ by Seafood Bothy—to be confirmed

New Kincardine Colony

2023 sees the 150th anniversary of the mass emigration from Stonehaven and the North East of several hundred intrepid adventurers, who sailed to New Brunswick in Canada to set up a 'New Kincardine Colony'. Local genealogist and historian Lorraine Stewart is helping us to prepare a display for the museum which will give more detail on this perhaps forgotten part of Stonehaven's history. More details in the next issue.

Children's Trails

Our dinosaur trail within the museum has proven very popular over the years with both local and visiting children. This year we also have an Easter Egg trail and to coincide with the Coronation we have a Royal trail leading you to find out more about royal artefacts within our collection.

Tolbooth Restaurant

As you will no doubt already be aware, the museum has some new neighbours upstairs. The lease for the restaurant has been taken over by Paul Mair, owner of both Café Bohème in Aberdeen and the Old Pier Café here at the harbour. The Trustees and Volunteers wish Paul and his staff all the very best as they re-open the restaurant in April.



MUSEUM SNIPPETS

Footfall for the last few months

The winter month always see fewer visitors, with a few notable exceptions. Hogmanay was very busy with many visitors in town to witness the first Fireball Celebrations for a few years. The Clock Tower sadly continues to be closed and we are still awaiting clarity on when necessary repairs will be carried out. Globus Tours have confirmed that they will again be visiting the museum as part of their tours of Scotland - after hours on a Wednesday and a Sunday afternoon from April 23rd. On 11th March 2023 the museum hosted an Open Day as part of an outreach requirement for our Community Asset Transfer (CAT) application to Aberdeenshire Council. Over 100 visitors came to hear more of our plans for the museum and over 40 people completed a questionnaire which showed almost 100% approval for our CAT proposal.

2022/23	Museum	Globus	Total	Days open	Average daily footfall
December	434	0	434	9	48
January	669	0	669	10	67
February	628	0	628	8	79
March	645	0	645	12	52

	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
December	254	Covid	1218	1777	858
January	Covid	Covid	1056	1119	962
February	438	Covid	813	1562	831
March	444	Covid	180	1595	1242

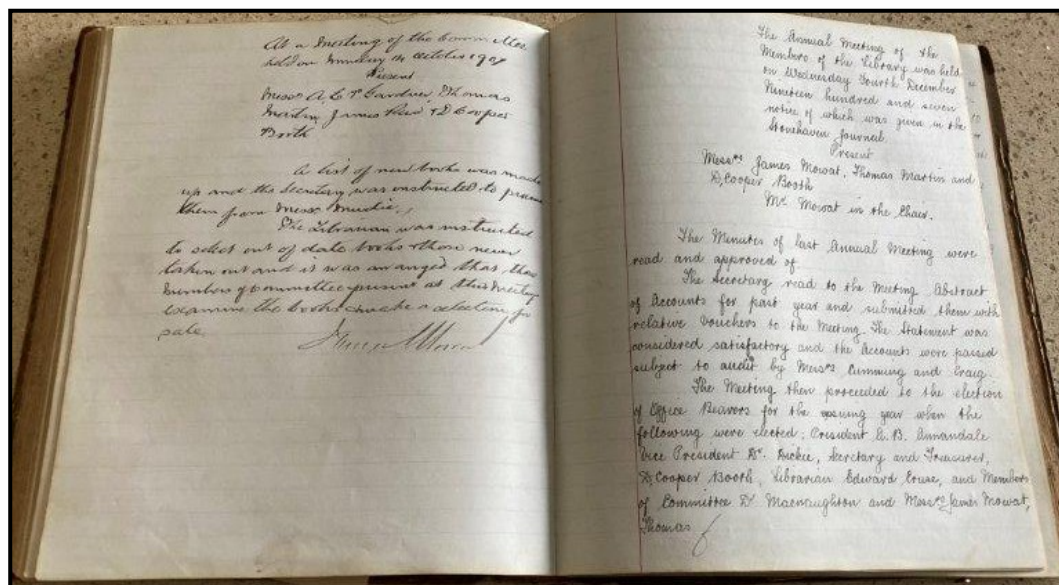


STONEHAVEN LITERARY SOCIETY

by Gordon Ritchie MVO

When my former office of Connons, Solicitors, closed in 2019, it brought to an end over 150 years of legal services in Stonehaven. James B Connon was a farmer's son from Elfhill at Glenbervie and he opened his first office in the Market Buildings in December 1905, later moving to 50 Allardice Street in 1930. He was joined by Grant McRobert and Arthur Bisset, with the firm changing its name to Connon, McRobert & Bisset. In 1959, they took over the legal firm of Scott & Gardner at 20 Ann Street, and which had been established around 1850. The Gardners were well known locally and built several large houses including Arduthie House in Ann street, Cardowan in Slug Road and Avilion in Robert Street. In both these firms, nothing had ever been thrown out and over the years, I have found lots of interesting documents and items.

One of these is a tin box labelled Stonehaven Literary Society. Very appropriate in these present times when our libraries are threatened with closure, (thankfully not yet in our Council area), the Literary Society was formed to establish a Library with members paying an annual subscription. It was established in 1828 and I have Minute book dating from 1848. The Town seems to have been well served for cultural groups at the time as, in addition to the Literary Society, there was the Mutual Improvement and Debating Society and the Athenaeum Newsroom. The Athenaeum was the Music Hall located at 9 Cameron Street, and after the Town Hall was built, became a Bakery and later Leslie's furniture store before conversion to flats recently. I am not sure of the location of the Library but in 1879, it moved to the new Town Hall, where the Hall keeper also acted as Librarian. The Library Reading Room was on the ground floor, where the toilets are now located.



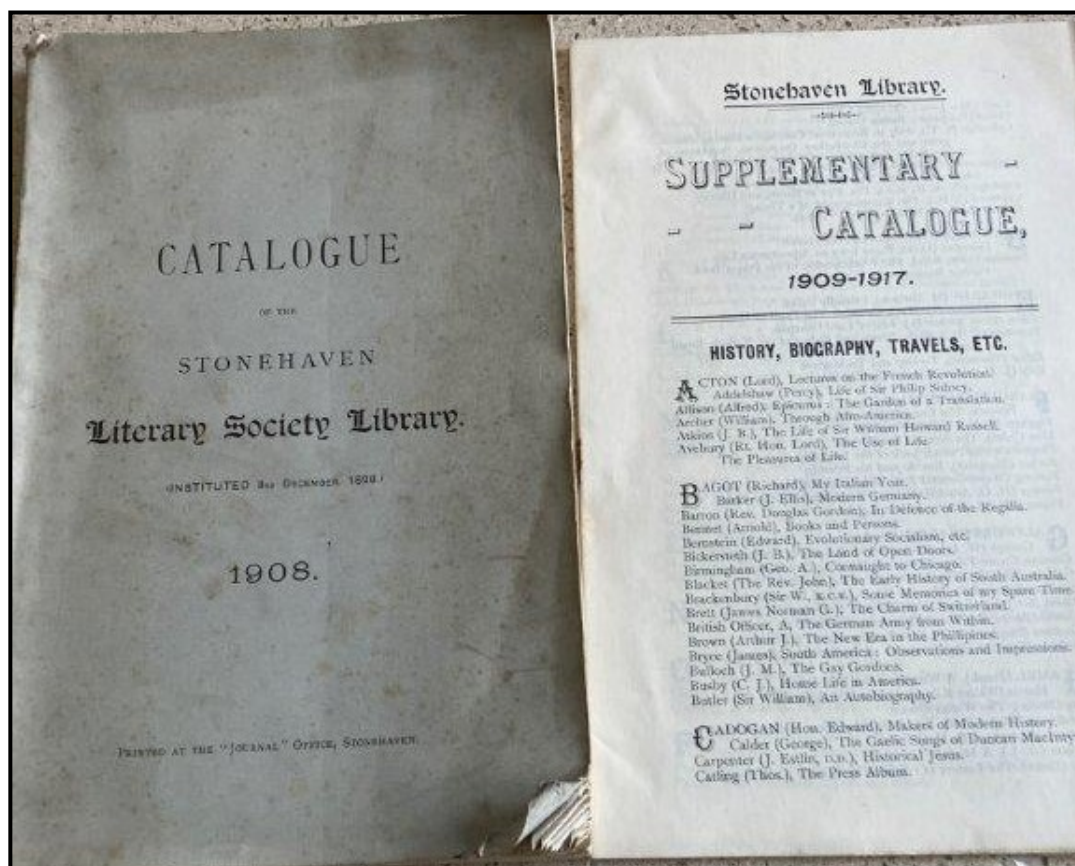
RH page—1907 Annual Meeting of Members of Library



STONEHAVEN LITERARY SOCIETY cont'd

In 1908 the subscription for the Library was 10 shillings yearly with 2 books permitted at a time. The Catalogue (see below) extended to 96 pages with a supplement of another 20 pages, with a wide range of titles. However, times were changing and the generosity of Andrew Carnegie meant that free public libraries were spreading through Scotland. In 1928, when the last Secretary and Treasurer was William Gardner, Solicitor, the Society accepted an approach from the Forfarshire and Kincardineshire Joint Library to take over the Stonehaven Library and, just short of its Centenary, the Society was wound up.

An interesting footnote is that the remaining funds in 1928 were £28 and it was decided to divide these between the Aberdeen Joint Hospital Fund and Stonehaven Nursing Association. When I came to Connors in 1980, one of my tasks was to administer the Nursing Association which was not really necessary after the NHS was formed and I was involved in winding it up and using the remaining funds to supply one of the first defibrillators to the Medical Centre.





STONEHAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOL

by Gordon Ritchie MVO

If you ask any of the older generation brought up in Stonehaven as to which primary school they attended, they will tell you either Fetteresso, Dunnottar or Mackie Academy. But Mackie was a secondary school, you will say? But until the new Mackie opened at Ury in 1969, Mackie had a small primary department in the same building on Arduthie Road, and for which school fees were paid, giving it a different status.

Fetteresso and Dunnottar were the old Parish schools. The first Fetteresso school was in the Kirktown, next to the Old Kirk and the Schoolhouse is still there today. When the new Fetteresso Kirk opened in Bath Street in 1812, the new Parish School was directly opposite and is today also a private house, Ardgour. As the Town grew and more pupils attended, a new School was built at the bottom of Bath Street, and as it also took pupils from other schools, it was named Stonehaven Public School. But everyone still called it Fetteresso School, and did so until it closed in 1971. It then became the Community Centre and has been a busy place since then.

Dunnottar School has been in the same building since 1890 and was previously in a building on the opposite side of the High Street, later a Drill Hall. Another school in the Old Town was the Episcopal School which closed in 1939 and later became the Sea Cadets HQ, and is now awaiting another use.

I attended Fetteresso and some years ago was approached by Ian Shand, retired janitor, who asked if I wanted the Dux boards from Fetteresso and which had been stored in Arduthie School, but were at risk of being lost. I have had these since then and still hope that we can find a space for them in the Tolbooth Museum. As you will see there are 2 boards, one for the Duxes (or 1st in Primary 7 Class) and the other named Proxime Accessit (2nd in Class or 'nearly made it' as it was described to me).



STONEHAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOL cont'd

STONEHAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOL	
DUX MEDAL	
FRANCES MITCHELL.	1955.
GERTRUDE DAVIDSON.	1956
DENNIS SMITH	1957
DAVID STONEY	1958
MARGARET MACAULEY	1959
DENIS LESLIE	1960
ERIC LACHOWSKI	}
MARGARET CARR	
WILLIAM LEITHEAD	}
ANN BOYTER	
EWAN COOPER	1963
PATRICIA FOSTER	1964
GORDON RITCHIE	}
ROBERT GUILD	
LORNA BIRSE	1966
STUART NORRIE	1967
FIONA MCGREGOR	1968

PROXIME ACCESSIT	
GORDON A WATT	1955
CATHERINE EWING	1956
DOREEN KEILLAR	1957
SHEILA DONALD	1958
LINDA J MITCHELL	1959
MORAG MCGILLIVRAY	}
ISABEL GRAY	
DIANE DELLANZO	1961
ALEXANDER DUNCAN	1962
ELIZABETH LACHOWSKA	1963
GRANT NICOL	1964
MARGARET DUGUID	1965
MALCOLM RITCHIE	1966
DAVID GAVIN	1967
RODERICK GRAY	1968

Looking at the Dux names, Dennis Smith stayed in Carron Terrace and was a very clever lad, eventually having a senior job at the National Library in Edinburgh and Editor of the 3rd Statistical Account for Kincardineshire, published in 1988. Eric Lachowski and his sister Elizabeth were one of the Polish families who came to Stonehaven after the War, and lived in Ann Street. Isobel and Roderick Gray were daughter and son of Rev. Robert Gray of Fetteresso Church. Patricia Foster's father Ken was Manager of the Radio Station. Diane Dellanzo still lives in the town. Grant Nicol's father Charlie was the County Architect and Grant emigrated to Australia about 30 years ago.

You may know some of the other names on the boards and I shall be pleased to hear more news of them.



STONEHAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOL cont'd



Leaving Fetteresso School, Stonehaven

Images from Mearns Leader in April 1971 showing pupils leaving the school for the last time and the accompanying article.

End of Fetteresso School After 95 Years

For 95 years the classrooms and corridors of Fetteresso Primary School, Stonehaven, have resounded to the laughter — and sometimes the tears — of generations of pupils.

But sounds like these will be heard no more, for the school is to become a Community Centre, and after the vacation Mr Joseph W. Simpson, the headmaster, his nine teachers and the pupils will move into the bigger and better Arduthie School.

But there was no hint of sadness as Mr Simpson, who has been in charge of the school for three years, told the "Leader": "There is not a great deal to complain about. The main fault of this school is not the building but the number of pupils — the building is overcrowded."

A closing ceremony in Fetteresso Church on Tuesday was attended by teachers, pupils and former pupils.

OPENED IN 1876

The school, widely known as Stonehaven Primary, was opened in September, 1876, and the "Stonehaven Journal" of that time described the premises as of the "Elizabethan style constructed of Brechin

stone with Morayshire free-stone dressings which together form a harmonious contrast".

The report continued: "The building occupies what has for many years past been a most unsightly piece of waste ground at the north end of Ann Street, and the architect has not only erected on it a fine looking structure but has taken advantage of the irregularities of the ground."

The school's log book records such national events as Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897, the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 and the proclamation of King Edward VII at Stonehaven cross in 1901.

FORMER PUPILS

Mrs Isabella Fotheringham, the longest serving primary teacher in the county, has been teaching at Fetteresso for 15 years. Mrs Fotheringham was a pupil at Fetteresso, and has taught in all Stonehaven's primary schools.

Her mother, Mrs A. Rae, who is 91, is probably the oldest living former pupil of the school.

On Friday Mrs Fotheringham was presented with a necklace from the teachers, and on Monday she received a mirror from her pupils to mark her retirement.

Miss B. W. Clark, also a former pupil, returned as a teacher 19 years ago and was there on the last day. Her uncle, Mr A. Wilson, was enrolled at the school on the first day when he was five.



JESSIE SEYMOUR IRVINE - Composer

By Douglas Cusine



Whether religious, or not, there can be few in the UK and further afield who are not familiar with the tune, “Crimond,” to which the 23rd Psalm, “The Lord’s my Shepherd,” is most frequently sung. The last occasion of note was at the funeral of the late Queen Elizabeth II in Westminster Abbey.

Crimond is a village, a few miles north west of Peterhead on the Fraserburgh road. The composer of the tune, Jessie Seymour Irvine, was the daughter of the Rev. Alexander Irvine, who was the minister at Crimond at the time.

The minister, who was born in 1804, had his first charge at Dunnottar Church, Stonehaven, where Jessie, his daughter, was born on 26 July 1838. Her father then moved to be the minister of the Parish Church at Peterhead and then took the charge at Crimond, where he died on 12 July 1884. Both he and his daughter, who died on 2 September 1887, are buried in a family grave in St. Machar Churchyard, Aberdeen.

Although some dispute whether Jessie was the composer, the balance of evidence indicates that she was. The tune was composed in 1871 when she was training in Banff to be an organist. She had asked David Grant to harmonise for her and some attribute the composition to him and, indeed, there was a hymnal published which had him as the composer. This position was challenged in 1911 by Jessie’s sister Alice. Since, then, most but not all hymnals and the like, record her as the composer. She was yet another former resident of Stonehaven of whom few may have heard.



ABERDEENSHIRE MUSEUMS— STATISTICS

The table below details the visitor numbers for the various museums run/funded by Aberdeenshire Council and how they compare with Tolbooth numbers. Each of these museums will have complied with government regulated lockdowns but other opening times will vary.

Winter sees Tolbooth only opening at weekends and this has not changed in recent years. In the past our summer opening hours were based on 6 days per week from April to September. The last 2 years however have seen us only manage 4 days per week in the summer months.

	2022	2021	2020	2019
Peterhead—Arbuthnot Museum	0	0	579	5537
Mintlaw—Museum HQ	0	0	23	177
Aberdeenshire Farming Museum	9706	2225	1269	19141
Hareshowe	0	0	0	3779
Banchory Museum	0	0	343	2159
Banff Museum	543	241	60	1015
Maud Railway Museum	622	108	0	673
Sandhaven Museum	4	36	0	0
Stonehaven Tolbooth Museum	13720	5429	2542	28862

The monthly visitor numbers are slowly improving as people's confidence recovers from enforced lockdowns and the aftermath of the Covid pandemic. In 2023 we are already seeing encouraging signs with 153 visitors coming in on Good Friday!