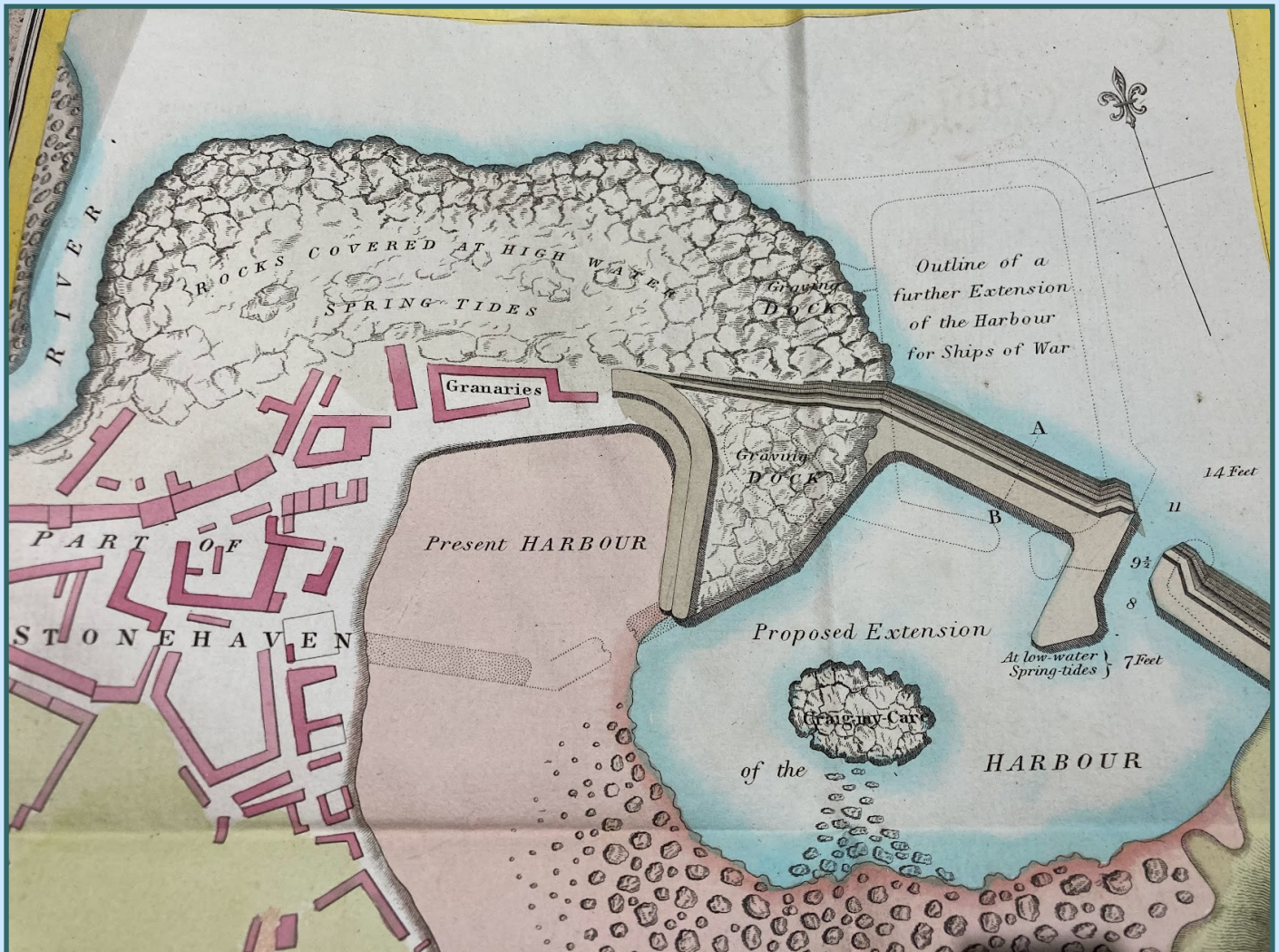


STANEHYVE

·TOLBOOTH TIMES·



Stonehaven Harbour Report 1812

By Robert Stevenson



Editorial

I recently had a meeting with Katy Kavanagh of Aberdeen City and County Archives, based in Old Aberdeen, as she had some items which were duplicated in their Stonehaven collection and which she thought would be of interest to the Tolbooth Museum. These relate mainly to the Harbour and the most fascinating document is the Report on the Harbour prepared in 1812 by Robert Stevenson, Civil Engineer, Edinburgh. I have given more details of this Report in this issue.

I am always fascinated by the amount of old documents which have been preserved and which prove a fascinating resource for future generations. You can see examples of this in the current series of 'Who do you think you are' on TV, especially military records. Many of these are also online and if you join one of the large family history companies, you will be surprised at how much information on your family has already been posted by other, usually, distant cousins. I managed to get details of my maternal grandfather's emigration to New Zealand in 1894, and his later service in the Boer War and World War 1.

Katy has agreed to receive for the Archives some of the documents held by Connors and which I referred to in our last issue. These include the Minutes of Stonehaven Heritage Society from 1987 to 2019. The Archive is well worth a visit if you are interested in the history of our fine Town.

Gordon Ritchie MVO DL

Editor

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 gritchie626@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

The list of events is expanding and still more to be added. So far we have

- **Saturday 8th July**

Ian Balgowan will give a talk on net making and repairing

Martin Sim will be talking about collecting and restoring Dinky model cars

- **Saturday 29th July**

Demonstration of corn dolly making

- **Sunday 6th August**

Garry Brindley will be entertaining children with funny stories

Angus Mackintosh will be performing magic tricks

- **Sunday 20th August**

Mackerel smoking demonstration

- **Sunday 27th August**

Stonehaven Harbour Festival

Clare and Mary are still trying to finalise dates for Stonehaven Bodgers Group and Stonehaven Folk Club to visit us in the Courtyard.

Volunteers

We are trying to open 6 days per week during the summer (excluding Tuesdays) but are finding it more and more difficult as the holiday season gets going. If you are a regular volunteer, would you perhaps consider volunteering for 1 more shift each month? If you are a member of the Tolbooth Association but have not yet committed to volunteering we would ask that you seriously consider coming on board. The bigger the pool of available volunteers, the smaller the risk that we cannot open and deprive visitors of a great attraction in town. Please get in touch if you think you can help. Contact details are on previous page. Thank you.



MUSEUM SNIPPETS

Footfall for the last few months

April saw the museum change to summer opening hours—1.30pm to 4.30pm every day except Tuesday. As highlighted earlier in the newsletter, the main issue is always finding enough volunteers to open the museum 6 days per week.

For the 3rd year in a row, national tour company Globus Tours has since 23rd April been paying twice weekly visits to the museum for private tours for their customers. We see approximately 40-50 visitors visit the museum each week (Wednesday and Sunday) between 5-6pm. As well as a fixed fee from Globus, we usually also have shop sales, but again this requires volunteers to take on these duties.

Whilst the figures for April to June 2023 are still low compared with pre-Covid figures, they are showing a 31% increase on the figures for same period in 2022. And after a gap of almost 3 and a half years, the Clock Tower is now open again for visitors.

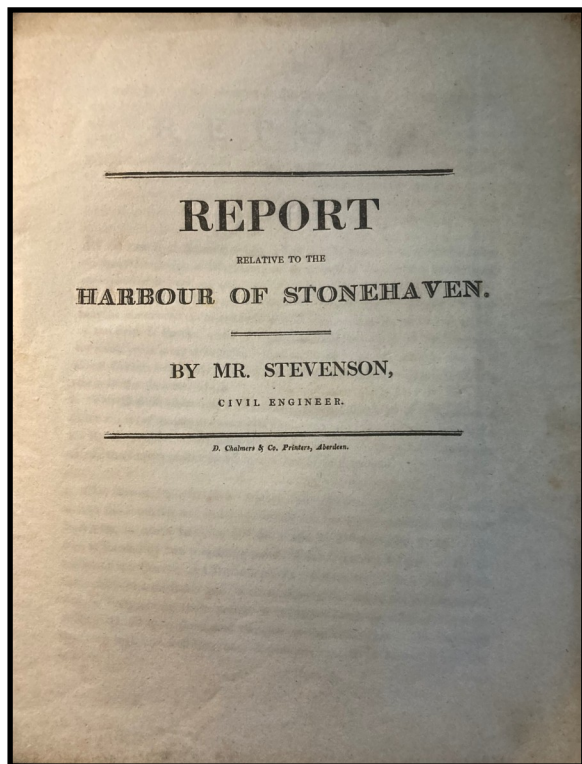
2023/24	Museum	Globus	Total	Days open	Average daily footfall
April	1692	55	1747	26	67
May	1837	204	2041	26	79
June	1819	198	2017	27	75
TOTALS	5348	457	5805	79	73

	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
April	1172	Covid	Covid	3714	3087
May	1422	354	Covid	3138	2919
June	1809	356	Covid	3535	2920
TOTALS	4403	710		10387	8926



STONEHAVEN HARBOUR

By Gordon Ritchie



In 1812, Robert Stevenson was one of the foremost civil engineers in Scotland and it must have been quite a coup for the Magistrates of Stonehaven to acquire his services in connection with their Harbour. Born in 1772, he was at the height of his profession and from 1807 to 1810 had supervised the construction of the Bell Rock Lighthouse, off Arbroath. In November 1811, he had been inspecting the bridge at Marykirk, when he was invited to report on the state of Stonehaven Harbour. An invitation 'which pleased him not a little, as the improvement of this harbour may be considered as intimately connected with the safety of navigation of the Firth of Forth, a subject which has occupied much of his attention for some years past.'

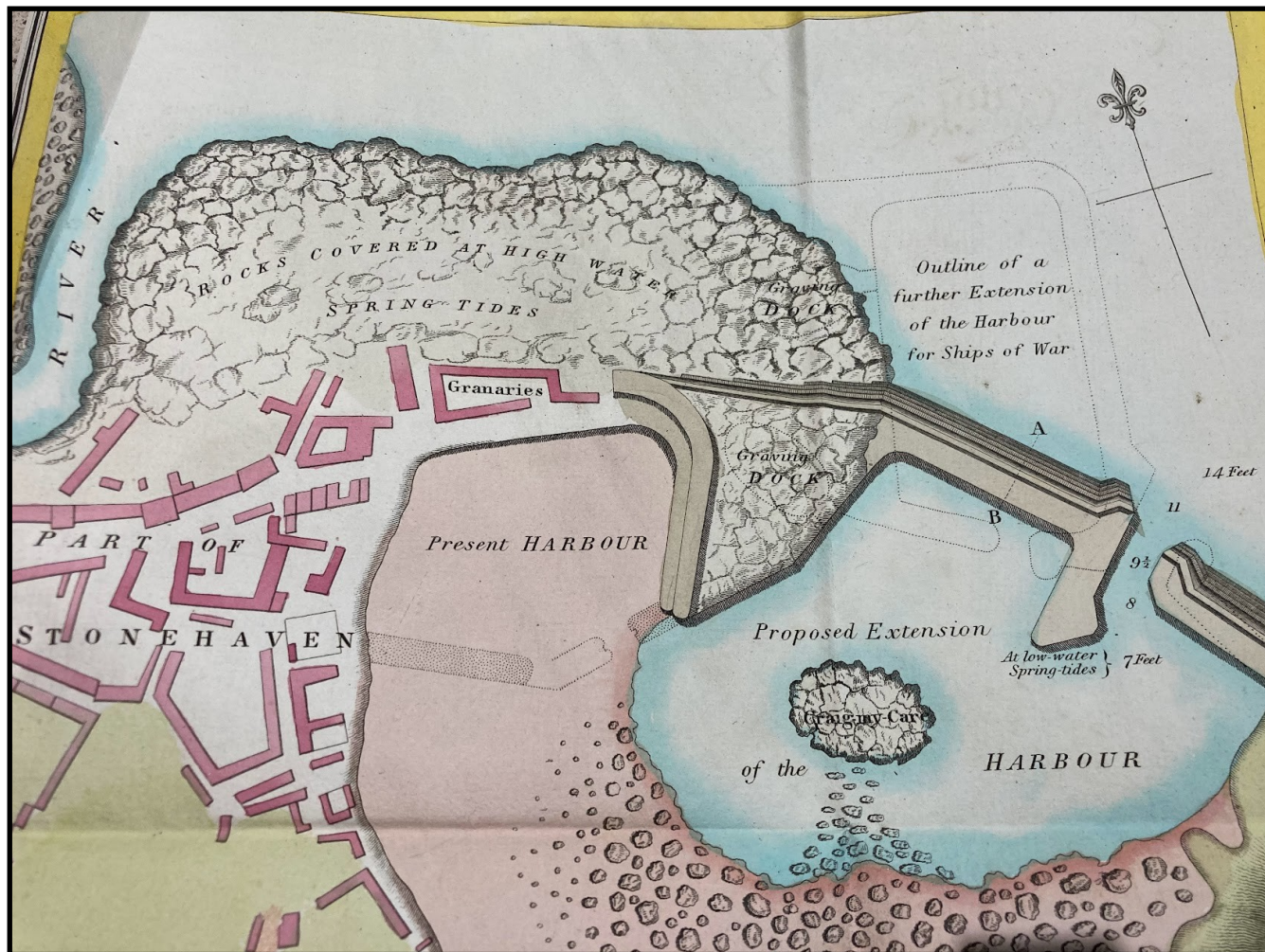
He describes the Bay, the land and shores and the depth of water. However, the harbour had a problem.

'The access to this harbour is much incumbered by a large insulated rock, which is covered at high water, and lies about 20 fathoms south east from the pier head. At low water of spring tides, it exposes a surface of about 50 by 30 yards, while its greatest height above low water mark, is about 7 feet. On the north side, the tide does not leave it, but on the south side, it is connected with the shore by large loose stones which appear at low water. This rock is emphatically called 'Craig-my Care' and has been the occasion of many fatal accidents.'

Stevenson's Plan shows new Piers southwards from the Tolbooth and eastwards to form a new entrance with a short pier from the south east shore. These works were costed at £4046, equivalent to £233,000 today, so seems a reasonable figure, and probably in line with what Stevenson thought the Town could afford. However, the Harbour improvements which were eventually done were not as on this plan. Work was eventually started in 1826 when the sum of £8000 was borrowed, for a much larger scheme to create the Harbour we have today with the double inner basins.



STONEHAVEN HARBOUR—cont'd



You will also see on Stevenson's Plan the outline of a further extension for Ships of War and a Graving Dock, but as he had insufficient time, he did not cost these works. He does stress the advantages of having a larger Harbour. 'The establishment of a harbour capable of admitting coastal vessels at all times of tide, and the lower classes of His Majesty's ships of war at high water, are advantages which few harbours upon the east coast of Britain possess.'



STONEHAVEN HARBOUR—cont'd

He concludes his Report with fine words.

'These matters, when duly considered, hold out great inducements for the town of Stonehaven, and the landed interest in its neighbourhood, together with such advantages to the shipping and commercial interests in general, and likewise to the public service of the country, that it is hoped, means will be adopted for raising the necessary funds to carry into effect a work of such unquestionable utility. There cannot be a more useful work between the Thames and the Orkneys, than the establishment of a safe and commodious harbour near the entrance of the Forth of Forth, such as the one which is the subject of this Report.'

It is great that we now have an original of this Report, still in excellent condition. There is a bigger story to tell of Stonehaven Harbour over the years, and hopefully someone will take on this task for the benefit of future generations, who will undoubtedly continue to enjoy our beautiful Harbour.





NEW KINCARDINE COLONY 1873—2023

by E Ritchie

A recent conversation with local historian and genealogist Lorraine Stewart highlighted to me that an important anniversary for Stonehaven was happening in 2023. She went on to explain about an almost unique mass migration of several hundred people from Stonehaven, The Mearns and N.E. Scotland to New Brunswick in Canada that took place - 150 years ago.

Mentioning to her that I had never heard of this episode in Stonehaven's history, she agreed to help the museum put together a display, which would give visitors the background as to why this exodus took place, details of their voyage to Canada and what happened when they arrived at their destination.

Over the years since 1873, the name Kincardine Colony fell out of use, but there is still a very active group in New Brunswick, which calls itself The Scotch Colony and has strong links to those early settlers from Stonehaven and the surrounding area.

The impetus for the migration came from a 'Stoney loon', Capt.. William Brown and he had negotiated with the authorities in New Brunswick to acquire land for settlers from N.E. Scotland.

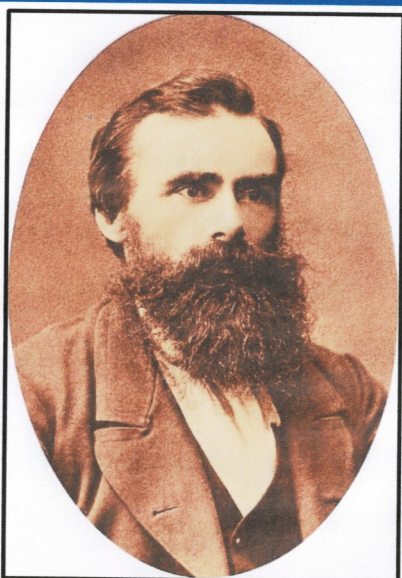
Perhaps in researching your family history, you have hit a brick wall in the late 1800's. Perhaps you cannot find any trace of your family after 1873—perhaps your ancestors moved to Canada?

From **Monday 17th July** the story of the New Kincardine Colony will be on display in the museum. Set out on the next page are just 2 of the stories. To find out more about this little known part of our history, we do hope you will visit our new display.



NEW KINCARDINE COLONY 1873–2023 (cont'd)

Captain William Brown (1834-1899)



[Photograph ©Steve Richer]

- Born Stonehaven in 1834
- Employed by the Anchor Line, initially sailing ships between Glasgow and New York, and later as a business promoter travelling world-wide for the company
- Died in San Francisco in 1899

He had the idea for a large group emigration and he chose his native Kincardineshire as the source for this project, organising land for them in New Brunswick, and establishing "The Scotch Colony" in 1873.

Having set himself up as Manager of the New Kincardineshire Colony, he was assisted by two well known Stonehaven residents in organising the emigration project:

- Robert Stewart, Tenant Farmer at Newlands, Dunnottar, acted as Director
- David Taylor, Editor of the Stonehaven Journal, acted as Secretary

Arrival in Canada



Photograph taken in Quebec by Alexander Henderson.
From album belonging to George Taylor, New Brunswick.
Reproduced with permission of
New Brunswick Provincial Archives.

The New Brunswick authorities had negotiated the land grant with Cptn. Brown in good faith BUT they did not sincerely believe that he would succeed in his endeavours to attract several hundred emigrants to come to Canada.

Therefore in the autumn and winter of 1872 they did not put much effort in to keeping their promise to clear land and build roads and cabins.

In January 1873 however, the authorities were alarmed to find out that not only had Cptn. Brown succeeded in finding approx. 600 willing emigrants, but they had all paid their monies and would be arriving in 4 months!!

Early 1873 saw a lot more urgency by the authorities to try and fulfil their commitment but the winter was fierce and snow lay deep for many months and hampered their efforts. Of the 78 cabins contracted for, only 40 had been started by the time of their arrival in May and more alarmingly only 2 had been completed!!