

STANEHYVE ·TOLBOOTH TIMES·





Editorial

We were pleased to announce in our last issue that our local councillors on the Area Committee had agreed that Stonehaven Tolbooth Association could take over the whole Tolbooth building for £1. This was subject to approval by another Committee and sadly on 13 June, the Business Services committee over-ruled this and decided that STA could only take over the Ground Floor and the Council would keep the first floor Restaurant. We await the full terms and conditions of this proposal, which is of course contrary to the original application by STA to take over the whole Tolbooth for the Community, and our business plan which showed that the rent from the restaurant would subsidise the operation of the Museum. It also means that we may not be able to proceed with the Museum extension, for which Planning permission was granted. Once we receive formal notification, we can appeal against the decision and this will be fully discussed over the next few months, and you will be kept informed.

Notwithstanding this setback, we are now approaching our busiest time of the year, with increasing numbers enjoying the Museum. As always, we are grateful to all our volunteers who continue to give up their time and ensure a warm welcome to our visitors.

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

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MUSEUM SNIPPETS

- ♦ As part of the Stonehaven Folk Festival the museum hosted an evening with local storyteller Pauline Cordiner which was well attended.
- ♦ A new children's summer trail was introduced at the start of the school summer holidays. This trail is in addition to our very popular dinosaur trail. All children who complete the trail receive a postcard and pencil to commemorate their visit.
- ♦ Our long serving volunteer and former Trustee of the museum, David Fleming, has been awarded the British Empire Medal in the latest King's Birthday Honours list. We congratulate David on this recognition of his many years of service to the museum, his church and local community.
- ♦ Dates for outdoor courtyard events have been delayed this year - not least because of the unseasonably cold and rainy weather. Here are some that have been arranged. Check our social media for further details.

Saturday 27th July—Jack McPherson

Saturday 17th August—Net making & lace making

Sunday 25th august—mackerel smoking

- ♦ As part of an MLitt course in Museum Studies at Aberdeen University, a Canadian student Autumn Pinto has been working on our metal detecting display. In 2025, Autumn will begin a PhD project at the University of Manitoba, working with the Churchill Museum to connect local youth with their heritage. As part of her time spent with us, Autumn gave a short presentation on the new display. The museum wants to thank her for all her hard work in improving our display and wishes her well in her future museum studies.

Front cover image— The view of the Bervie Braes and the boats in the middle harbour as viewed from the museum doorway. © E Ritchie 2023



MUSEUM SNIPPETS

Footfall for the last few months

April saw us welcoming a delegation of 30 Norwegians who were visiting the town. Our summer hours had commenced on 1st of the month but only 2 days later, the museum had to close due to torrential rain,

May saw lots of school visits from P2 Arduthie classes and some members of Banchory Rotary paid a visit.

June saw more visits from Arduthie Primary and from Mackie Academy and then at the end of the month a group from Inchmarlo Retirement Village.

The figures for 2024 below show that we are improving each year since Covid closures. This year is 25% better than same period last year—but we are still approx. 30% down on the pre-Covid 2019 figures

2024	Museum	Clock tower	Total	Days open	Average Daily footfall
April	1307	546	1853	24	77
May	1883	719	2602	28	93
June	2177	633	2810	26	108
TOTALS	5367	1898	7265	78	93

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
April	1747	1172	Covid	Covid	3714
May	2041	1422	354	Covid	3133
June	2017	1809	356	Covid	3535
TOTALS	5805	4403	710	0	10382



James A Bruce deceased

By Gordon Ritchie

I was very sorry to hear of the death of James Bruce, retired Printer and Stationer, Stonehaven. Anyone who was in business in Stonehaven over the past 50 years, or run a local Club or Society or Charity during that time, will always remember the ever helpful Jimmy Bruce when they needed printing work done, whether it was letterheads, posters, syllabus cards, or his specialty, raffle tickets. Nothing was too much trouble, even when you left it to the last minute.

When I formed the Heritage Society in 1987, Jimmy Bruce printed the first book of photographs, 'Stonehaven of Old' and over the next 30 years, several more books, one of the last being George Swapp's book on Stonehaven Street Names. From 2000, he also printed the quarterly Stanehyve magazine, and his helpfulness even extended to pointing out errors which I had missed in the text.

It was always a pleasure to visit his printing works in Cameron Street, entering by the main door, with the staircase piled high with printing orders ready to go out. I always sneaked a look to see what was there, raffle tickets for the WRI, invoices for a local garage, or at election time, piles of posters and flyers. Although he still had what looked to be old fashioned machines, he was also up to date with computers, which has obviously changed the printing industry. He was sadly missed when he retired 5 years ago.

Our condolences go to his wife Thora and family at this sad time. He will always be remembered when you look at one of the Heritage books, with his name at the end.

'Printed by James A. Bruce, Stonehaven.'

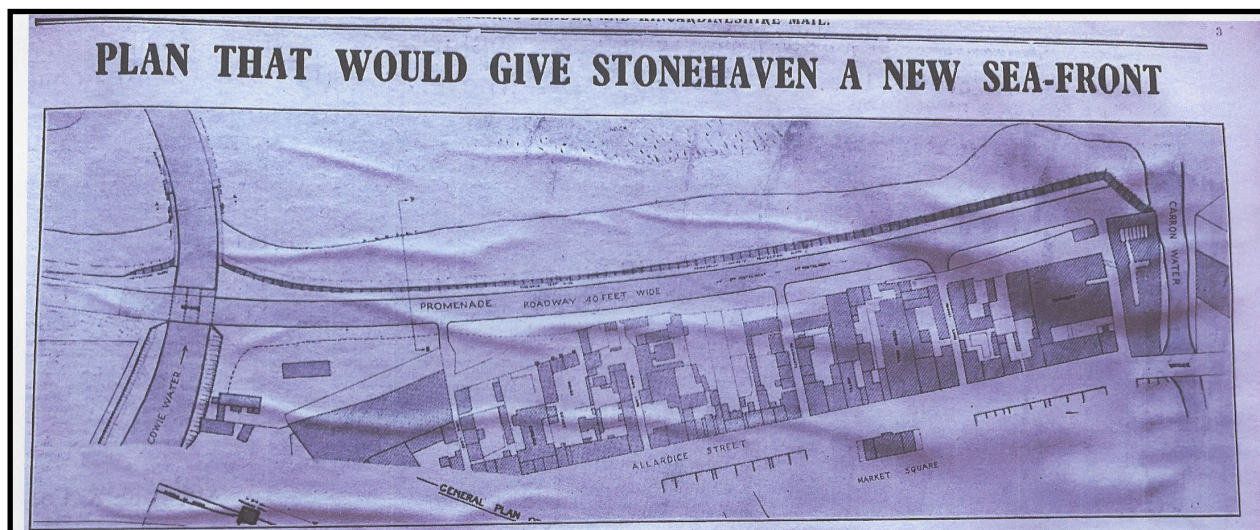


A New Sea Front for Stonehaven

by Gordon Ritchie

The Promenade in Stonehaven is now a popular spot all year round, particularly after the opening of the Aberdeen WPR dual carriageway made it easier and shorter to get to Stonehaven from the west and north of the City. The Beach Promenade north of the River Cowie is always full of cars, and many motorhomes and camper vans, enjoying the sea views and the tasty treats from the Bay Chip shop, Molly's and Aunt Betty's ice cream parlour. If you cross the pedestrian bridge over the Cowie, first built around 1967, and on to the concrete promenade, which has also been there since the 60's, there is a pleasant walk, now extended with a new bridge over the River Carron on to the boardwalk, taking you to Jimmy Malcolm's wonderful metal sculptures and the picturesque Harbour.

But what would we have today if the ambitious plan by Stonehaven Town Council, shown on the attached plan, had come to fruition? The plan shows a new road bridge over the Cowie and a roadway 40 feet running along the line of today's pedestrian walkway and terminating at Salmon Lane, beside the Carron Water. This scheme, designed both to stop sea encroachment, and also provide a handsome Promenade, was prepared by Henderson & Nicol, civil engineers and was costed at £27,000. It does not show a further road bridge over the Carron, and there are connections to the 5 lanes still there today, Ironfield, Cowie, Beachgate, Market and Salmon. The large buildings of the Carron Tanworks can be seen at the south end and the Glenury Distillery bonded warehouses at the north end. Perhaps the bigger plan would have been to bridge the Carron and extend the road all the way to the Harbour? What a difference that would have made to Stonehaven?





A New Sea Front for Stonehaven

by Gordon Ritchie

Can you guess the year this was proposed? Would you believe it was 1934, 90 years ago, and the same year that the Open Air Pool opened. The Pool, which has just celebrated its 90th birthday with a visit on 13 May 2024 from HRH The Princess Royal, had just opened on 2 June 1934 and was an immediate success with 2,300 people attending the opening and 62,263 visitors in the first season. Rather than sit back, Stonehaven Town Council were already looking ahead to further improving the Town, with this planned extension of the Beach Promenade.

At that time, the Cowie made a 90 degree turn where the pedestrian bridge is now and headed south along the front of the Beach to join the Carron and enter the sea. Each of the 5 lanes mentioned had a bridge over the Cowie to join the town to the beach. The works to create this new road would also have involved diverting the Cowie to enter the sea directly as shown on the plan. As it happened, after the War, the Cowie burst through the beach shingle to enter the sea as it still does today. The bridges were removed and in the 60s, the Town Council built the bridge and concrete promenade we still have today. It is a pity that this has never been improved or widened, although there was a proposal recently to heighten the sea wall to prevent flooding.



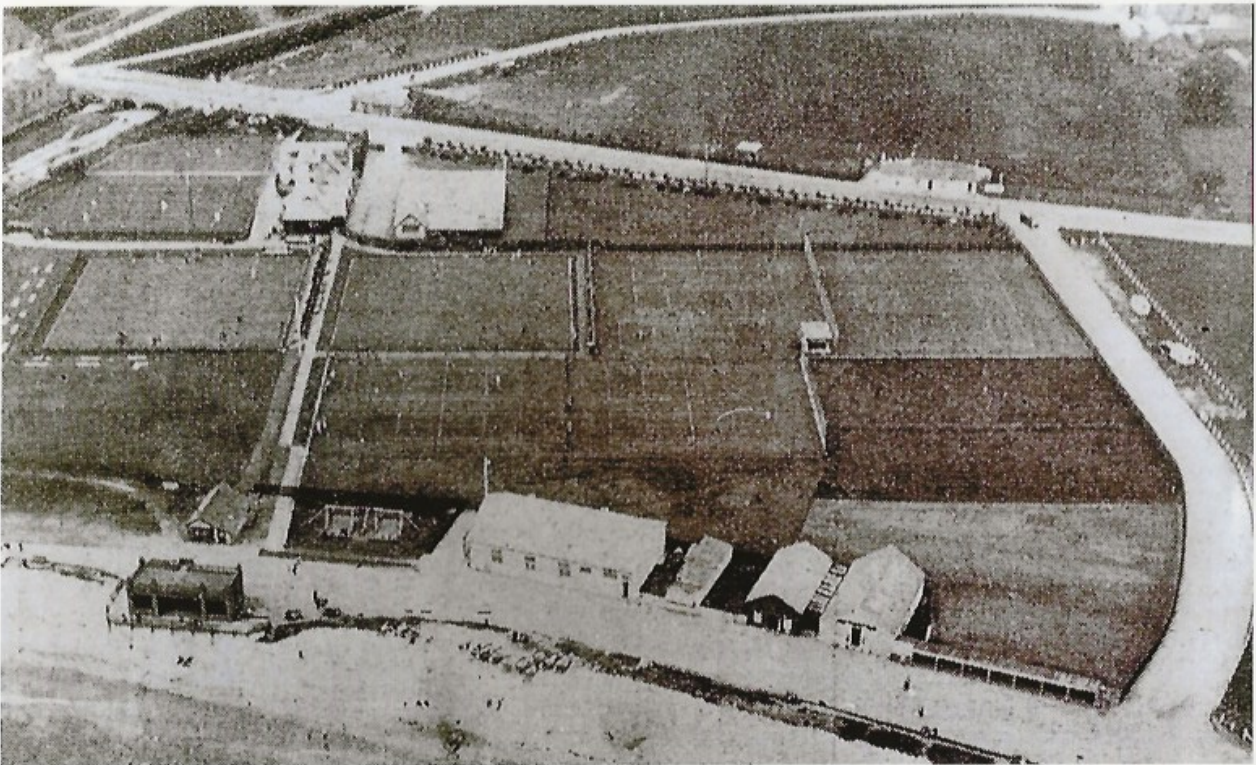
Looking south along the River Cowie when it ran along the beach to join the River Carron. On the right is the Bonded Warehouse for Glenury Distillery, now the site of Turner's Court. The bridge is from Ironfield Lane.



A New Sea Front for Stonehaven

by Gordon Ritchie

Our forefathers in the 1930s had tremendous foresight in trying to improve our Town, with the Open Air Pool still successful 90 years later and it is a pity that the funds could not be found at that time to improve the Promenade. It is very unlikely that the work could still be done today, as the cost would probably be in the millions. However, we can always hope that funds can be found for some improvements to a very popular attraction in Stonehaven.



1933. An aerial view of Stonehaven Beach Promenade with the Red Shelter on the left and opposite the ice cream kiosk and swings. The Pavilion opened in 1930, Shooting Gallery, the Beach Cafe, and Recreation Hut. There are two bowling greens, and 20 tennis courts; both hard and grass. There were two 18-hole putting greens. Boats could be hired on the Beach.



Tennis in Stonehaven

by Gordon Ritchie

It is always good to watch tennis at Wimbledon each year at this time, and to enjoy the spectacle and the beautiful green surroundings. An aerial view of the courts at Wimbledon reminded me that in the first half of the 20th Century, Stonehaven had 20 tennis courts, many of them lawn courts, covering most of the present day caravan site, as can be seen on the attached photo from 1933. It must have had one of the largest tennis centres in Scotland, and a major tournament was held each summer. Until the 1960's, there were still 14 courts and I can recall families from Glasgow coming to Stonehaven for a week to play in the tournament.

For some reason, tennis must have declined in popularity, and the outer courts were gradually taken over by caravans. However, tennis in Stonehaven is still very popular today with a thriving and successful Club and 5 courts still very busy all year round. There are also plans for a covered tennis court for winter play.



Postcard from 1945 with the upper bowling green and tennis courts where the caravans are today.



Postcard from 1913 showing courts where the putting green was later and Bay Hotel prominent.