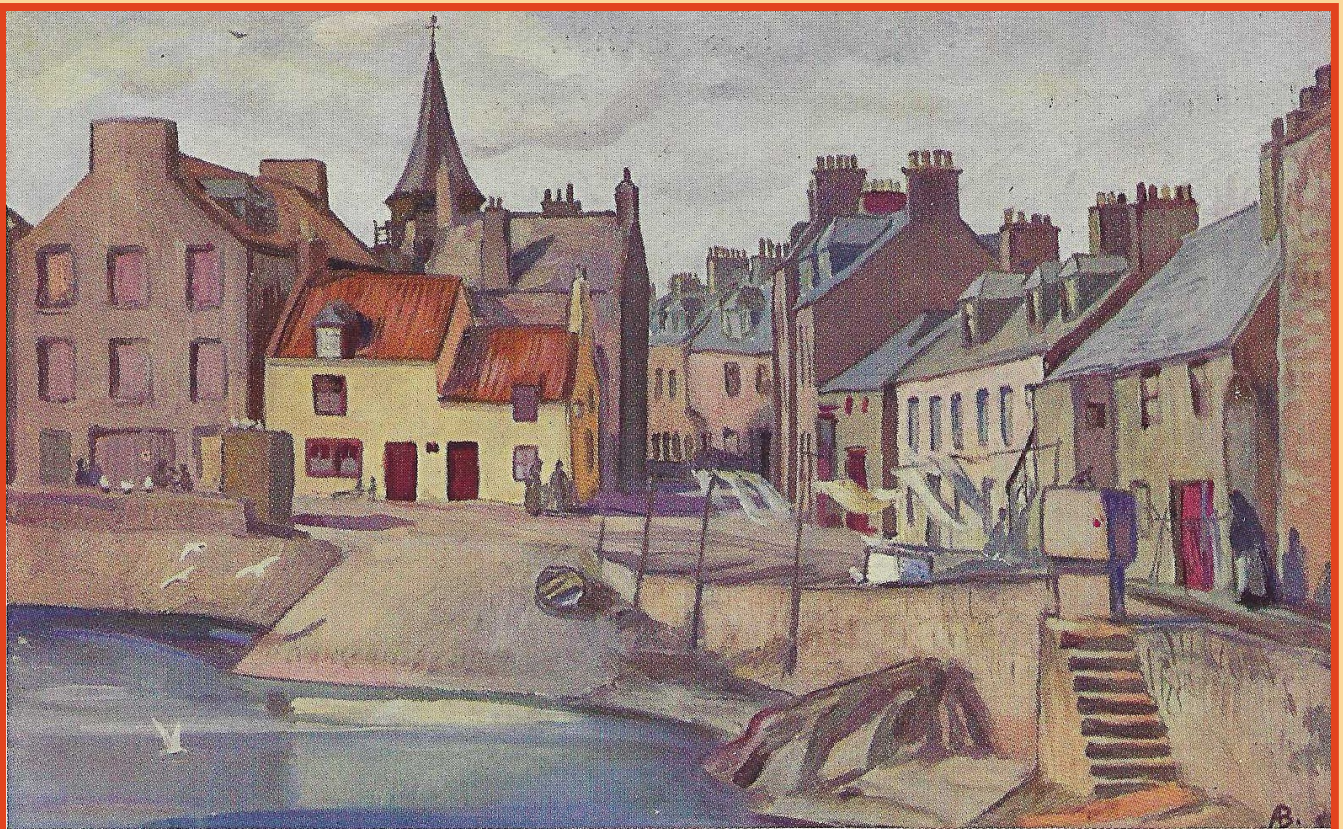


STANEHYVE ·TOLBOOTH TIMES·



SHOREHEAD, STONEHAVEN.

From an Oil Sketch by Alastair Burns.

Shorehead, Stonehaven in the 1930's



EDITORIAL

When I am visiting other towns and places, I am always keen to see other museums, mainly to find out more about the location, but also to see how they do things, compared with our own friendly Tolbooth Museum in Stonehaven. On a recent Hillman Imp rally in North Wales, we visited the Fifties Museum in Denbigh, a fascinating and very full collection of everything connected with the 50s, (and later) from cars, trucks, clothes, fashion, furniture, tv's and radios, kitchen equipment, cameras to toys and games. The list was endless. It was a private museum, started by a serious collector who could not stop. We could all recognize things from the past. 'We had one of those' was a common cry. Admittedly, although they had more space than us, it was crammed full, with little space to move. Still, it was a fascinating visit.





EDITORIAL CONT'D

I was surprised to read recently that, according to a survey by Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS), 17% of museums in Scotland fear their venue could be forced to close within the next year, and 40% had 3 months or less of reserves. As we heard at our recent AGM, our Tolbooth Museum is in a healthy financial position, even faced with the extra costs we now face after taking over the building from the Council. However, we cannot be complacent, and I am sure we will be able to continue to run our museum in an efficient manner with the assistance and support of our many volunteers. Thanks to all who are involved.

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 gritchie626@gmail.com

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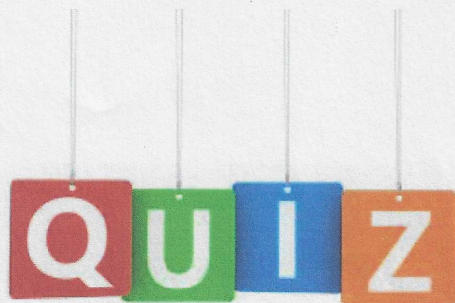
Email: enquiries@stonehaventolbooth.co.uk

Scottish Charity No. SC043279

Front cover image; A fine view of the Shorehead, Stonehaven, looking west from the front of the Tolbooth and probably dating from the 1930s, by Alastair Burns, who I think was the son of Dr Charles Burns, a local GP who was Provost of the Town in the 1920s. The large Store or granary next to the Ship Inn and the cottages were demolished around 1950 and replaced by the present houses.



EVENTS



On Friday 23rd October

**At British Legion Function Room,
Stonehaven**

Doors Open 7.30pm

Quiz Starts 7.45pm

**Tickets £5 per person
Tables of 4-6**

Raffle ~ Nibbles ~ Cash Bar

***Tickets available from Tolbooth Museum
Email: enquiries@stonehaventolbooth.co.uk
Or
Message us on Stonehaven Tolbooth Facebook***





EVENTS

Tolbooth Coffee & Catch-up!

Where; Tolbooth Museum

When; Tuesday 27th October

Time; 1030am – 12 noon





MUSEUM SNIPPETS

By Andrew Newton

July saw the museum enter our summer season and we ran a number of events, both indoors in the museum and in the courtyard. Over the last 3 months we have held workshops on corn dolly making, lace making, storytelling by Pauline Cordiner, seaside art for children, two days of Jack McPherson singing in the courtyard and a demonstration of mackerel smoking by Wes and Maris Lewis (Seafood Bothy). The latter was attended by just under 1000 individuals, as part of the Harbour Festival. In addition, we hosted a further 471 visitors during the September Open Doors event.

We welcomed Dawn Black, the newly elected MSP for the region and a couple of hours were spent on discussing the role of museums in the local community. ScotRail approached us requesting permission to feature the museum in a short promotional video relating to train travel. The video was recorded on the 13th August and is now used extensively on ScotRail's promotions encouraging travel to areas of Scotland out with the Central Belt.

Our footfall was encouraging with 2215 visitors in July, 3853 in August and 1673 in September. Examining our Visitor's Book it never ceases to amaze us over the origins of our visitors. In August alone we welcomed individuals from 30 different countries; for example, the usual European countries – Norway, Denmark, Germany, Italy, France and Spain. From further afield we welcomed guests from the Philippines, Nepal, India, Mexico, Taiwan and Malaysia. One visitor was of particular interest. Kimberley Oates hails from NSW, Australia and was visiting Scotland with her family to trace their family history. She was overwhelmed to discover that the museum already held information about her most famous ancestor – Alexander Wood.

Last year Douglas Cusine, one of our trustees, had undertaken research into Alexander Wood's life story and discovered the following. Alexander was born at Fetteresso in 1772. He was apprenticed to a clothier in Aberdeen, but in 1793, he emigrated to Canada, where he spent 4 years in York (now Toronto) and rose to prominence, becoming a city magistrate. His original home in Toronto was on King Street in the heart of what is now the financial district. He opened his own store in 1801 importing goods from London and Glasgow. In 1810 he briefly returned to Scotland; however, in 1812 he went back to York and resumed his position as a magistrate, and continued with his civic duties. He finally returned to Scotland in 1842 and died on 11th September 1844 at Woodcot. He had never married and died intestate.



MUSEUM SNIPPETS CONT'D

By Andrew Newton

Because he had no will, this resulted in a court case involving two sisters (Wilcox) on the one hand, and another relative (Farrell) on the other who had been appointed as his heir. Both parties claimed to be his nearest relatives. The case was principally about his house which in 1844 was valued at £40,000 (a minimum of £6.6M at today's prices). In 1848, *The Scotsman* reported the he had "accumulated a large fortune." The case had many hearings in the Court of Session and an appeal to the House of Lords (now The Supreme Court). The reason for the litigation was that, at that time, there was no system of registration of births, deaths and marriages and in its absence one had to look at the Parish Registers which were kept by parish ministers, some of whom were diligent; while others not so. In the end, after a hearing which lasted 12 days, a decision was made in favour of a first cousin once removed (Farrell) who had been appointed as his heir but it took 7 years to reach a final outcome.

The Registration and Marriage Acts of 1836 standardized the recording of births, deaths and marriages in England and Wales. Unfortunately Scotland lagged far behind, especially in relation to estates. The Aberdeen Society of Advocates complained of '*great difficulties in tracing pedigrees and otherwise ascertaining questions of succession to both real and personal estates, in consequence of the Registers ... not having hitherto been kept on a complete, regular and uniform plan*'. There were many other instances cited of failures in the then existing Scottish system but Wood's case, which lasted 7 years, highlighted the problems. It is probably fair to state that Wood's legacy to Scotland was that the civil case arising after his death contributed significantly to the eventual establishment of the Scottish Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages in January 1855.



AGM REPORT

By Gordon Ritchie

2026 Annual General Meeting

Our AGM on 23 September in St James' Hall was well attended and heard excellent reports on the continuing success of our own Tolbooth Museum.

Chairperson Cressida Coates expressed thanks to all for attending and especially to all our volunteers. Last March, we eventually took over from the Council ownership of the ground floor museum and the courtyards, although this meant that we were responsible for payment of all utilities, but after a lot of hard work, this was now in place. In January 2026, the Council had awarded the contract for repairs to the Tolbooth building and this had meant emptying the artifacts to a container in the courtyard and then putting everything back, after a thorough clean. Thanks to all who helped with this task. It had been a good time to address what needed to go back and make new displays. The Mens' Shed had made a new sign for above the front door. The area around the pews to the rear had been updated with donated paintings. A memorial bench for the late Ian Balgowan had been made by Jimmy Malcolm and located in front of the large white door overlooking the harbour as a fitting tribute to a lovely and sadly missed chap. Several events had been held throughout the year including school visits, children's art workshop and recently the Doors Open day which saw 481 visitors to the Museum.

The Shop had been revamped with some new items for sale and thanks to Lorna and Dennis Collie for maintaining the Shop. Various areas of the Museum were being looked at for improvement including a panel on the history of the Tolbooth building, more information on the Jail Cell, improving the Education display and our new display on Stonehaven Worthies. If you are interested in helping with these, please let us know. There was a new version of the Fireballs film, which included other films. Thanks to Gordon Ritchie and Louise Coates for producing the quarterly Stanehyve Tolbooth Times. We are no longer involved with opening the Clock Tower.



AGM REPORT CONT'D

By Gordon Ritchie

Moving forward, we hope to have monthly catch-ups with volunteers over a coffee or tea and allow us to keep in touch and answer any concerns from volunteers. We will investigate the potential of attracting Cruise line visitors and of course encouraging more people to volunteer with us. Cressida expressed a final thanks to all who put in the work and time to run the Museum, planning events, producing publications, maintaining social media, applying for grants etc., all greatly appreciated.

3 of our 12 Trustees were re-elected. The present Trustees are Cressida Coates, Andrew Newton, Dennis Collie, Douglas Cusine, Clare Thomas, Mary Sutcliffe, Louise Coates, Gordon Ritchie, Neil Smith, Lindsay Petrie, Tony Dodds, and Lorna Collie.

Our Treasurer Dennis Collie presented Accounts for the Year to 31 March 2026. These showed income for the year, including donations and grants, of £24,772 against expenditure of £20,619, with a surplus of £4,152. With the transfer of the building, we now had to pay for all services including electric, water and buildings insurance, plus any maintenance, and this meant that we had to maximise our income. However, our reserves are very healthy.

The AGM closed with a comprehensive vote of thanks to all who helped make the Tolbooth Museum a success.



1905 PHOTOS

EVAN STREET 1905



Around 1905, a fine view looking down Evan Street from the junction with Robert Street towards the Market Square with the Crown Hotel and a glimpse of the sea. On the left are 2 fine buildings, the Aberdeen Town & County Bank, designed in 1854 by Wiiliam Smith, architect of Balmoral Castle at around the same time, and the North of Scotland Bank from 1875 (until recently the Clydesdale Bank). The Town & County Bank failed around 1915, and it was later the offices of Kincardine County Council and converted to flats in 1990. On the right, the tall house is the residence of a local Doctor, and all this side down to Ann Street were later cleared to build the shops of the Northern Co-operative Society.



1905 PHOTOS

MARKET SQUARE 1905



Stonehaven's Market Square also around 1905, with the elegant Market Buildings and the Steeple.



1905 PHOTOS

SLUG ROAD 1905



A horse and cart looking to be struggling up the Slug Road around 1905 with a heavy load, maybe headed to Urie House. The houses on the left are Cardowan, built in 1903 for local Solicitor A E P Gardner and designed by James Souttar who was also responsible for others in the area including the Heugh, Maxieburn and Fetteresso Lodge. Next is Ardlui, built for the owner of the Marine Hotel, and the row of houses which form Urie Crescent.