



# Tolbooth Times



## Stonehaven Tolbooth Association 2017

### From the Editor

January brought a really mixed bag of weather, ranging from bitterly cold winds and driving rain to a number of spring-like days with higher than average temperatures for the time of year. Fortunately, apart from a light dusting of snow, we escaped the heavy snow which fell further inland.

This seemed to be the pattern for the first three months and as a result visitor footfall decreased in comparison with the same period last year. However, congratulations to the volunteers who braved the worst of the weather to keep the museum open and provide somewhere for visitors to Stonehaven to enjoy and to escape from the inclement weather.

There have been a number of things happening and articles about these can be found in this edition of the Tolbooth Times.

As you read this we should have started our summer season with increased opportunities to meet both visitors and each other. I look forward to catching up with you all over the summer.

*Tom Macpherson*

Issue: April—June 2017

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### Museum Extension Update



The planning application for the extension to the Tolbooth was validated by the Council at the beginning of November and following the guidelines laid down by the Scottish Parliament Aberdeenshire Council was due to give a decision by 31<sup>st</sup> January. However, the Tolbooth is a grade A listed building and the Planning Department required a more rigorous examination of the application and insisted on extra detailed drawings and two further surveys.

Our architects are producing the additional drawings but STA had to commission 1) a survey on the fabric of the building and 2) a survey on the condition of the existing building. The fabric survey was awarded to the internationally renowned Lime Centre (based in Fife) and this entailed taking core samples from random sandstone blocks at the Tolbooth. These samples will be sliced and diced and the microstructures matched with samples on the Lime Centre database.

The upshot is that we will be able to source and use compatible stone in the new build; thus preserving the 'look' of the Tolbooth. We had arranged a condition survey a few years ago but the Council required an updated version. The actual survey was undertaken on 10<sup>th</sup> February and STA is just waiting for the report.

All this extra work has pushed back the time scale for the planning decision; however, we have a legally binding deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> April. At the same time it has been agreed that the decision will be made by derogation; in other words the Planning Department will make the decision without recourse to the Area or Full Committee – this will shorten the whole process.

*Andrew Newton*

## History Scotland "Podcasts"

In late 2016 the museum was visited by local academic and writer Neil McLennan. Neil is a former History teacher who writes regularly for the History Scotland Magazine and is also a member of their editorial board. In the latter part of 2016 and early 2017 Neil travelled around Scotland for History Scotland to discover "hidden" historical gems in the form of the smaller museums and attractions and record interviews with staff and volunteers who look after them. These were turned into podcasts on the History Scotland website.

Neil said "I have written for the History Scotland magazine for a few years and now sit on their editorial board. The opportunity to continue writing, but also supplement this with interviews with some great people across Scotland, is a great one. Moreover to share a passion for the past and keenness to communicate about it is a real privilege."

### Podcast– what's a Podcast?

For those who may not have heard of Podcasts, or have heard the name but don't know what they are, this simple explanation may help. A Podcast is an audio show, a form of broadcasting in the form of a digital audio file. It can be downloaded and listened to on a computer or MP3 player just like a music track. It is usually spread across a number of episodes, usually with a theme just like a serial on radio. The name, created in 2004, is a combination of 'iPod' and 'broadcast'.

History Scotland series editor and Assistant Editor Rachel Bellerby added, "History podcasts such as Dan Snow's have been growing in popularity. We are delighted to now offer a Scottish History series. Neil has been seeking out and meeting with fascinating people in really interesting places." During his visit to the Tolbooth Neil recorded interviews with Cressida Coates, the museum chairperson, and other volunteers.

The podcasts are a valuable addition to the Tolbooth's visitor profile and History Scotland have said they would welcome any future information about the museum that might be considered suitable for publication.

It's quite simple to listen to the podcasts. Just copy this link and paste it into Google. A link is also available on the Museum Facebook page.

<https://www.celebrate-scotland.co.uk/articles/local-history/listen-to-the-history-scotland-hidden-histories-podcast>

## Stonehaven Heritage Society

Following a meeting with Chairman Douglas Cusine and Hon. Secretary Gordon Ritchie of the Heritage Society, Gordon agreed to be co-opted on to the Museum Committee. Both joined us at the February meeting and Gordon was co-opted as a committee member. This should result in a greater co-operation between the two organisations to their mutual benefit.

During the meeting Gordon showed some captioned photos with a fishing theme and suggested that there could be a selection of photos displayed which was changed every few weeks/months. They are all on Heritage website and there are about 400 in the archive. There are also many postcards but these are difficult to display. Copies could be taken but there are no negatives for reprints.

## Upcoming Events

- St Machar Academy wish to visit the Museum. Clare Thomas is awaiting a response about a date.
- Clare Thomas also reported that she have been in touch with a couple who wish to hold a Commitment Ceremony in the Museum in August 2018.
- A group of Girl Guides will visit the Museum on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.
- George Strang is giving a talk to Ladies Probus on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at their AGM. They are also wish to visit the Museum and they will be in touch once their Committee has decided on a date

## Tolbooth Museum Facebook page

You may not be aware that the museum has a Facebook page, in fact, it has at least two Facebook pages! At some time in the past a page was created, it's not sure by who. However, this page was not regularly updated. As a result it contains little information. However, we now have a new page created and maintained by committee member Clare Thomas. The new Facebook page is well worth a visit, as it contains a wealth of information about past, present and future events. To reach the correct Facebook page, just copy and paste this link into Google.

<https://www.facebook.com/stonehaventolbooth/>

## New Lighting System

We have received a cheque from the Meikle Carewe Wind Farm trust for £4,000 as a contribution to the new lighting system. We now have the full funding required for the project. However the project continues to remain at a standstill as a result of continued lack of communication from the council lighting inspector, despite further emails to him.

It was intended to carry out the lighting replacement during the winter season when the museum is closed during the week and before the busy summer season, when we open 6 days a week. However, due to this further delay the work will now have to be fitted in outwith summer visitor hours. This is both inconvenient and disappointing.

## Kincardineshire Scottish Women's Institute Mannequin

2017 is the 90th anniversary of the Kincardine branch of the SWI. The SWRI was founded in 1917 as the Scottish Rural Women's Institutes, part of the movement of rural women's institutes started in Stoney Creek, Ontario in 1897. In 2015 the name changed to Scottish Women's Institutes, to reflect the membership of all women, not just those in rural areas.

Jim Bruce donated a mannequin to the museum and it was decided to dress it in the fashion of an SWRI member in the early years to mark the Kincardine branch's 90th anniversary. The task was undertaken by Shona Barclay and Jean Skinner, both volunteers with the museum and also SWI members.

SWI members apparently wore their "best clothes" to meetings and the mannequin is dressed accordingly. Shona said that it was her and Jean's first experience of dressing a mannequin and I'm sure you'll agree that they did an excellent job. Do come in and see her!

### SWRI Tartan

The SWRI tartan was designed by Kinloch Anderson and is based on the sett of the Blair tartan in acknowledgement of Catherine Blair, the founder of the SWRI. The colours include blue and yellow (associated with the SWRI) and green for the "Rural." It was officially launched in 1995.

### The Luckenbooth Badge



The winning design for the badge came from Glamis WRI and was adopted in 1919. It was based on an old Scottish love token. The design incorporated four jewels, each bearing a letter to read SWRI and the motto "For Home and Country." The white heart stands for purity and the gold crown of womanhood stands for courage and steadfastness. A new badge has recently been introduced.



## Footfall October to December 2016

Month	Museum	Tower	Combined	Days Open	Museum Avge	Tower Avge
Jan	882	276	1185	11	80	25
Feb	600	202	802	8	75	25
March	695	246	941	8	87	31
Totals	2177	724	2928	27		

### Accumulative 2017 Totals

Museum	2,177
Clock Tower	724
Both Attractions	2,901

### Comparative 2016 Totals

2,591
923
3,514

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## Stonehaven Tolbooth Association

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The Stonehaven Tolbooth is thought to have been founded by George Keith, 5th Earl Marischal (c. 1553–1623), with the original purpose of the rectangular building being to act as a storehouse during the construction of the nearby Dunnottar Castle. In 1600, an Act of Parliament provided that the building become a Tolbooth.

After 1624, the town business functions were conducted on the upper level of the Stonehaven Tolbooth, with the ground floor being used as the prison. It remained a courthouse (upper floor) and prison (ground floor) until 1767 when these activities were relocated.

The building then reverted as a store until the 1950s by which time it had fallen into disrepair. In 1963 the building was renovated and officially re-opened by Her Majesty the Queen Mother. In 1975 the lower floor was converted into a museum reflecting Stonehaven's long history. Currently the museum occupies the ground floor whilst a separate restaurant operates on the upper floor.

*Entry is free.*

### Snippets

We extend a warm welcome to new volunteers Fiona Hill and Kim Grenfell and hope they will enjoy taking part in the museum activities and meeting our many visitors.

The museum will again sponsor the Land Train in 2017. This will provide valuable advertising of the museum on the train to ensure our visitors know about us!

The 3rd wedding ceremony in the Tolbooth took place on 17th March, when Cressida Coates, Chairperson and local registrar conducted the marriage of Malcolm Paterson and Ann Birse.

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### Become a Tolbooth Volunteer!

The Tolbooth museum is supported by Aberdeenshire Council, but managed and operated entirely by a team of volunteers.

The museum is visited by over 22000 people a year of all ages, and from 88 countries across the globe, as we can see from our visitors book. We regularly have visitors from Europe, Asia, Australasia, the USA and Canada and many other parts of the world.

Volunteers play a vital role in providing a warm greeting to visitors as they arrive and in answering the many questions about items in the museum.

Also, we frequently act as an information service, including providing directions to other attractions such as the castle.

We have a dinosaur hunt for the children with a small prize at the end which they find great fun.

No experience is necessary, just an interest in being part of an enthusiastic team dedicated to preserving and sharing this incredible piece of history.

We're a friendly bunch and volunteers are on duty while the museum is open. Most volunteers do one or two afternoons a month, but you can do as many or as few as you choose.

The museum's opening hours are

#### Summer Season

Daily except Tuesday,  
13:30 — 16:30

#### Winter Season

Saturday & Sunday 12:30—15:30

**If you'd like to join us, you can complete the form on the website or drop in when the Tolbooth is open.**

**You'll even get one of the famous red fleeces!**

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