

STONEHAVEN - HISTORICAL NOTES

Stonehaven, the county town of Kincardineshire, stands on the coast where the Carron and Cowie Waters meet the North Sea. The older part of the town lies south of the Carron Water in Dunnottar parish and grew up as a fishing village. The harbour nestled in a sheltered inlet behind the rock of Craig-ma-Cair - which by tradition gave rise to the name Stonehaven, the 'Steenhyve'. During the 17th and 18th centuries the harbour was very small, with just one pier at the north side. In 1825, when the south pier was constructed and the harbour deepened, the rock of Craig-ma-Cair was blown up.

George Keith 5th Earl Marischal, had Stonehaven created a burgh of barony in 1587. It was probably at the same time that the Earl built the pier at the harbour and a store-house there. As a result of a plea made to Parliament (possibly engineered by the Earl seeking the aggrandisement of his new burgh), Stonehaven became the county town in 1600 and the Earl Marischal's store-house was elevated to a new dignity as the County Tolbooth. The outstanding moment in the Tolbooth's history was when three Episcopalian priests were imprisoned there in 1748-49. The County Buildings were built in 1767 to replace the old Tolbooth. The steeple of the Flemish-style Town House in the High Street was erected in 1790.

The newer part of Stonehaven lies north of the Carron Water in Fetteresso parish. The estate of Arduthie, between the Carron and Cowie Waters, was purchased in 1759 by Robert Barclay of Ury, whose son planned a new town here. Originally called Links of Arduthie, 'New' Stonehaven was laid out on a grid-iron street plan, the streets generally being named after family members. The new town was united with the old town in 1889 as the Police Burgh of Stonehaven.

Albert Lane, Wallace Wynd and Castle Street preserve the line of the old road south from Stonehaven Harbour to Dunnottar Castle. The turnpike from Montrose to Aberdeen through Stonehaven was constructed in 1797 and followed a gentler gradient from the south down the Bervie Braes. After crossing the Carron Water from the old town, the turnpike ran north along Allardice Street, and this and the Market Square have since been the commercial centre of the new town. At the east side of the Square are the Market Buildings, dating from 1827. The arcades on the ground floor were originally for market stalls; the upper floor later became a hotel. The railway came to Stonehaven in 1850.

During the course of the 19th century the old town became more and more dominated by fishing. The herring fishing grew from about 5 boats in 1842 to 88 in 1875. The 1880s saw the industry at its height. The herring season in July and August brought in extra sailing drifters, coopers, gutting crews, packers, carters, buyers and sellers, swelling the town's population by some 1300. The winter months were spent line fishing for white fish such as cod, haddock and whiting, in the narrow lanes and courtyards around the Shorehead and High Street fisherfolk redded (cleaned) and baited lines, with several hundred hooks, for the next day's fishing. After 1888 the fishing industry began to decline and by 1902 the number of sail fishing boats registered at Stonehaven had fallen to 32 as a result of the growth of the steam drifter fleet at larger ports elsewhere.

Small industries, meanwhile, developed in the new town. These tended to locate along the Carron and Cowie Waters for easy access to water power and supply. At the southwest edge of the town were the Carron Woollen Mills, on the former site of the Tannery. Further down the Carron was the ancient Corn Mill beside the Mill Inn. From here a system of mill lades fed water to an aerated waters factory and a spinning mill in Arbuthnott Place. Mowat's Tan Works, at the southeast end of Allardice Street, was one of the principal employers in Stonehaven at the beginning of the 20th century. The Cowie Brewery, beside Cowie Bridge, was one of two breweries in Stonehaven, the other being beside St James' Church in Arbuthnott Street in the old town.

As the population of Stonehaven increased during the 19th century, there was a steady building of churches, particularly after 1860. Fetteresso Parish Church was transferred in 1812 from the Kirktown to Bath Street. St John's was built in 1860 in Evan Street as a chapel-of-ease for Fetteresso Parish Church; it was closed early in the 20th century. The United Presbyterian Church in Ann Street was built in 1862, and the Free Church in Cameron Street in 1868 - these both became United Free Church in 1900. Following the reunion of the U.F.C. with the Church of Scotland in 1929, the church in Cameron Street became the South Church, and the Ann Street building the North Church; the North Church was later closed. St James' Episcopal Church in Arbuthnott Street and St Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Arbuthnott Place were both built in 1877. Nearby St Bridget's was opened in 1888 as a chapel-of-ease for Dunnottar Parish Church.

Basic education was provided at the two School Board schools: Dunnottar School, built in 1889 next to the County Buildings, and Stonehaven Public School, erected in 1876 in Ann Street. The Episcopalians made separate provision with their school, built in 1851 in the High Street. Mackie Academy, in Arduthie Road, was opened in 1893 to provide a place of secondary education in the town. The Episcopal School was closed in 1939 and merged with Dunnottar School. Mackie Academy moved in 1969 to a new building on the outskirts of the town; the old Mackie building, renamed Arduthie School, became a new primary school replacing the old Stonehaven Public School. Carronhill and Mill o' Forest Schools were built after the coming of the oil boom to the Northeast in the 1970s.

The Combination Poorhouse (later known as Woodcot Hospital) was built in 1867 at the western edge of the town by the thirteen southern parishes of Kincardineshire. The Isolation Hospital was built in 1901 and opened in 1903 as an infectious diseases hospital. Carron Lodge, the home of the former Stonehaven Provost James Mowat, was opened as a nursing home in 1927. All have now been closed and replaced by the Kincardine Community Hospital or services transferred to Aberdeen.

By 1902 tourism was becoming important to Stonehaven, almost as a replacement for the declining fishing industry. The harbour, the old Tolbooth, and the fisher quarter of the town provided a picturesque attraction. The long beach between the Cowie Water and the North Sea was linked to the town by a series of footbridges, while a bandstand was erected at the north end of the beach. Also popular with visitors were rambles up the Carron Water to Dunnottar and Fetteresso.

During the course of the 20th century Stonehaven's industrial base declined. The woollen

mills and the ropeworks were early losses, followed by the networks, tannery, lemonade factory and distillery after the Second World War. Increasingly, people travelled to Aberdeen to work and the oil boom of the 1970s resulted in Stonehaven becoming a dormitory suburb of Aberdeen

Upstream from Stonehaven, along the Carron Water, is the Kirktown of Dunnottar. Dunnottar Parish Church, St Bridget's, was first erected in 1394, rebuilt in 1593 and again in 1782. The Marischal Aisle, the burial place of the Earls Marischal, is the surviving remnant of the second church, in the graveyard is the Covenanters' Stone, the inspiration for Sir Walter Scott's novel *Old Mortality*. To the south, in the grounds of Dunnottar House (built 1806), is the Callow Hill, a Bronze Age burial cairn which was used after 1600 as the site of the County Gallows.

On the northern side of the Carron Water is the Kirktown of Fetteresso with the graveyard and ruins of St Ciaran's Church. St Ciaran's was first built in 1246 on a site of probable older ecclesiastical importance, but most of the ruins date from the 17th century. The church fell into disuse after the present Fetteresso Parish Church was built in Bath Street in 1812.