



Tolbooth Times Spring



Stonehaven Tolbooth Association 2019

From the Editor

We are now at the start of our summer season when the museum is open every afternoon from 1:30—4:30 except on a Tuesday. It's been a busy Winter session, with numerous visits to the Tolbooth from a variety of organisations. This issue contains articles about the forthcoming exhibition at St. James' Church, **SMILE** at Amazon and the excellent work of two of our volunteers to create the Army Land Girl display. I hope you'll find these interesting, together with the other news. We've also welcomed two new volunteers, Alex Cormack and Murray Marshall.

Tom Macpherson

Jan– March 2019

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The Exhibition Spaces at St James



It's all very exciting. After over three years of detailed research, and much hard work by many volunteers, plus generous support from a number of funders, the Exhibition Spaces at St James are underway.

There will be seven Bibles and Prayer Books, the earliest dating from 1716, and one dated 1737 which was owned by a cousin of the bard, Robert Burns. Soon, you will also be able to see most of the beautiful silverware and pewterware, some dating from the 1600s, which have been used in the chapel and church, and which lain unseen in our cupboards for decades.

Texts, pictures and graphics explain the long and fascinating history of the Episcopal Church in Stonehaven starting from 1688 and running through to the present day. There is also be an interactive Virtual Reality app for your smartphone, so that you can stroll round the church and hear details of some of the key features of the church in front of you, so bring along your smartphone or tablet.

The Exhibition Space devoted to the organ will have material from the John Wardle archive. John built the St James' organ (which is still in use) and was Organist and Choirmaster for 58 years from 1882 to 1941. We are fortunate in receiving from John's great-grandson a mantelpiece clock and vases given to John for 25 years' service in 1907.

Further displays will explain how a church organ works, and why it is such an important musical instrument. John built over 150 church organs during his time in the North East and as the agent for Edward Wadsworth of Oldham, and details of all these installations (and others that John tuned and maintained) will be shown.

David Fleming

SMILE at Amazon —and help the Tolbooth Funds

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices and shopping features as **Amazon.co.uk**. The difference is that with **AmazonSmile**, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the museum at no cost to yourself.

You may remember last July I included an article about Amazon's **Smile** website, where charities can benefit from purchases. The Tolbooth is participating in this offering and so far has received a modest sum resulting from members' purchases. The committee has asked me to remind volunteers about this valuable source of income and use it if possible.

Just in case you have forgotten how to do so, I've included the instructions from last July. Millions of products on **AmazonSmile** are eligible, You will see products marked "Eligible for smile.amazon.co.uk" on their product detail pages, , so if you are an Amazon shopper, please consider using the **SMILE** option and help the museum's funds. You can learn more on <https://org.amazon.co.uk>.


How to join.

- Enter **smile. Amazon.co.uk**. into Google, instead of Amazon.co.uk.
- Login using your normal Amazon username and password.
- Once logged in, select the charity of your own choice. This only happens the first time you login to Smile.
- In the "pick a charity of your own choice" just put "Stonehaven Tolbooth" and click Search. On the next screen click "Select" beside Stonehaven Tolbooth Association and you're done.

The selection screen doesn't appear on future logins and logging into **smile. Amazon.co.uk** is identical to logging into Amazon normally— except that we will receive 0.5 % for any eligible item you purchase at no cost to yourself.

DVD Player

It was reported that the Fireballs video had stopped playing . The video usually plays from a DVD in the TV's internal player and I couldn't find any problem with that. However the external DVD player was unserviceable and investigation revealed a faulty drive mechanism.

The DVD player has been replaced and the handset is in the drawer under the glass cabinet. To start the DVD player after switching on (button on LH side) simply press the PLAY button  on the control panel at the RH side. I will attach the se instructions to the top of the player. Any problems, please let me know.

Tom

Footfall January to March 2019

Month	Museum	Tower	Combined	Days Open	Museum Avge	Tower Avge
Jan	858	251	3087	9	95	28
Feb	1184	378	1562	10	118	16
Mar	1276*	319	1595	10	128	32
Totals	3318	948	4266			

Accumulative 2019 Totals

Museum 3,318
Clock Tower 948
Both Attractions 4,266

Comparative 2018 Totals

2,460
575
3,035

* Includes school visit

Land Army Girls



In 2017 volunteer Jim Bruce acquired two mannequins. One was placed in the Victorian bath in the East Room, while volunteers Jean Skinner and Shona Barclay suggested that the other be dressed to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the SWRI and volunteered to dress “her” accordingly. This proved to be a great success and last year our two artistic members again dressed the mannequin, this time as a Suffragette, to commemorate 100 years of the movement..

This again was a great success and so this year the mannequin has been dressed to recognise the Land Army Girls. The Women's **Land Army** (WLA) was active during the First and Second World Wars with women working in agriculture, replacing men called up to the military.

WLA members were commonly known as **Land Girls**. Their work was vital to produce and maintain home-grown food supplies, when German U-boats were sinking convoy ships in the Atlantic to blockade food supplies from overseas.

Jean and Shona tell me that this year was particularly challenging as the mannequin's elegant stance, while suitable for a suffragette, didn't really match the image of a Land Girl! However, with the assistance of Jean's husband Bill and Jim Bruce, some “surgery” on the mannequin's legs solved the problem.

Shona commented— *“Jim and Bill Skinner ended up helping us - we wouldn't have managed on our own - and we had quite a hilarious time. You can imagine the comments.”*

Jean said *“We would have had great difficulty getting “her” dismantled and put back together and dressed if Jim Bruce and Bill Skinner had not been there - it was such a laugh. George Strang, who was in the museum with friends at the time said he wished he'd had his camera! !!”*

Congratulations to Jean and Shona for another excellent result.

Special Visits

On Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th February Arduthie school pupils visited the museum. Firstly on Monday 26 pupils and 9 staff/helpers from P1A came along. The class was divided into smaller groups. Their topic was Robert Burns, so in addition to visiting the different museum areas, each group spent some time with Gwynne Stewart to speak about the poet. Volunteers on Monday were Clare Thomas, Gwynne Stewart, Bill Emslie, David Fleming and Tom Macpherson.

David Fleming brought his 16th Century bible, which features in our front page article highlighting the St James' Episcopal Church exhibition. On Tuesday there were 27 children and 7 adults, who were welcomed by Clare Thomas, Douglas Samways, who spoke about Robert Burns and David Fleming., who once again showed the children the St. James Episcopal Church 16th century bible.

There was a visit by **Language Travel Tours** Spanish students from Gran Canaria and they heard about the Fireballs and Stonehaven history. I wasn't there but I believe all went well apart from some language barriers! We also hosted a small group from Mackie Academy who were interested in tourism visited. We have asked them if they would like to come again when there are visitors in the museum and maybe help with questionnaires. Finally, P6 Dunnottar pupils came along on 27th March. Their topic was Victorian Times and they asked many questions about our artefacts.

One positive outcome of the new AWPR bypass appears to be an increase in visitors from Inverurie, Kintore, Peterhead and Fraserburgh, now that it doesn't need a tortuous drive through Aberdeen City Centre or over (pothole- festooned) country roads. A number have commented on how easy it is now to spend a day in Stonehaven and hadn't realised that it contained our unique museum.

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 share close ties with Stonehaven Heritage Society, so it is with great sadness we report the impending closure of the Society. It was founded in 1987 by local solicitor Gordon Ritchie, who was also a member of the Tolbooth committee.

The Dunnottar schoolbooks have proved so popular that they are beginning to suffer badly from wear and tear. The committee have accepted an offer from Jim Bruce to provide A3 folders with plastic inserts, to ensure visitors can continue to safely examine them.

Frances Swanson, Aberdeenshire Council, has expressed her gratitude to the Trustees and volunteers for all the work involved in opening, and closing the Clock Tower for visitors.

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 108 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!
