

STONEHOUSE HERITAGE GROUP NEWSLETTER 13

Stonehouse Petitions against Union of 1707

This year Scotland witnesses the 300th Anniversary of the Act of Union in 1707. However, what most residents will not be aware of is the fact that during the deliberations on the Act, the people of parish of Stonehouse sent a petition of 108 names opposing the prospect of a union with England.



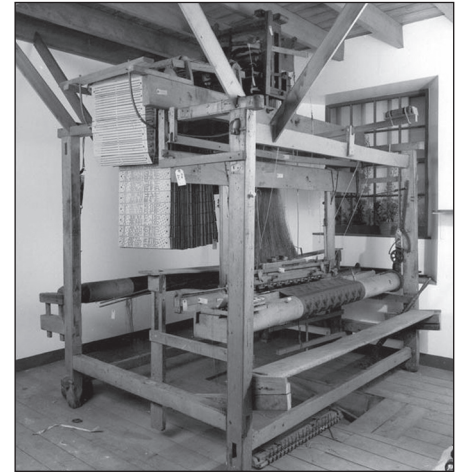
Memorial headstone in auld kirk cemetery

Subscribed to at Stonehouse Kirk on the 28th October 1706, the address (letter of petition) was read out in Parliament on the 10th November of that year. The petition included heritors (landowners), church elders and the common man, of which some did not have the right to vote. The document details the passionate views of the people of our village and their wish to remain an independent nation.

The text as shown within this article has not been altered to provide the reader with an accurate translation of the document as written. This petition also includes a list of all those adherents to the document and their position within the community. For further research this list is available through the Heritage Group.

Despite the protestations of the people throughout Scotland, the liberties and freedom of our country were signed away the following year by the privileged few who voted to relinquish Scotland's independence; or as Burns put it "a parcel of rouges". For a full list of Stonehouses representatives in Parliament dating back to 1357, you can reference this information in 'Damn few an' they're a' deid'.

(PTO for copy of address)



The Worlds first computer programme originates from Stonehouse, now housed in National Museum.

Heritage Website

The heritage groups latest project assisted by a lottery grant is to develop a heritage website for Stonehouse allowing searches on the information data-bases that the group holds. Work is progressing slowly due to the different formats that the databases are held in, however the initial goal of having the site up and running by the end of May 2007 is not possible unless we can quickly change the format of the information held. June 2007 is more likely to be more achievable and a press announcement will be made when site is launched. Members of the group will be provided with access to the web site allowing unrestricted access to all information on the site, non members will be able to access sample sets of information with a link to the groups subscription page. Currently all the census information, OPR /Paterson church records, the 1890 schools admission register, list of autographs, newsletters, pit deaths and old St Ninian's graveyard have been transferred to the web site. It is hoped that by having the information on our website it increases the accessibility of this information for the minimal cost of membership to the group.

www.stonehouseheritage.co.uk

Copy of address to Parliament

“Unto His Grace James Duke of Queensbury her Majestie’s High Commissioner and the most Honourable Estates of Parliament, The humble addresse of the Heretores and Comoners in the parish of Stonehouse within the Shire of Clidesdail.

That it being the priviledge of all subjects to petition as the same is declared in our Claim of Right we crave Liberty to lay our mind before your Honours as to the great matters you have now in hand which concern us all.

In the first place we are not against ane Honorable and Safe Union with England consistant with the being and civill libertys of this ancient Kingdome whereof we are natives in which the providence of God hath preferred as a Distinct nation for almost 2000 years when many other greater people than we have been scattered, ruined and ther memorie extinct, and consisting wt our Covenanted work of Reformation for which our fathers have wresteld and spent their blood and laid down their lifes and in defence of which we resolve to venture our lifes and all that is dear to us.

And in the next place we heartly owne her Majestie’s authority over us as our lawfull sovereign and the government under her to which we have payed and are still ready to pay all dew subjection in the Lord and to spend our dearest blood in defence of her majestie’s person and authority but we must in like manner declare unto your Honors that We cannot subject our consciences to any mortal, nor yet our fundamental rights and priviledges which belong unto us by Right of Nature and are confirmed and established by law and we now perceiving that ther is ane Treaty of Union with England laid before Your Grace and the Honourable Estates of Parliament which overtures do evert the very constitutione of this antient kingdome suppresses our monarchay extinguishes our parlaiment subverts all our fundamental rights overthrows our Religion and Liberty destroys the Government of our Church and the purity of ye gospel and its ordinances and surrenders our precious interests and

all that can be dear to us as Christians or men to the Wil of the English in a British Parlaiment which is contrary to ye Honour and the law of the nation, making this Antient and Honorable Kingdome a poor despicable addition and pendicall of England, and which is contrary to our most solemn covenants to the most high God. We cannot sit silent upon so great a desolation and impendent ruine without incurring the dreadful crime of perjury and drawing upon ourselves the curse of God and the stain of infamy to all after generations. We do crave leave with all our right hearted countraymen humbly to supplicate your Grace and Honors that no Union be heastily entered into with England untill upon mature deliberation it be known to be honorable and safe and that the Treaty agreed on betwixt the Comysioners for Scotland and the Comysioners for England and now prented may be rejected as carrying in it destruction to this Kingdom in opposition to which we are oblidged in conscience and natural duty by vertue of the lawe of God and of the land and of the bonds of the oath of God upon us to joyn at heart and hand with all our feathfull brethren and fellow subjects for the preservation of Religion and liberty and of the undoubted fundamental rights priviledges of Church and State undermin and ruind by the said Treaty and for the asistance and defence of all such noble patriots as shal appear for the same good cause whose name shall be renouned to all posterity.”



Parish Council Offices Wellbrae c1900

For more information on this article and any other articles provided in previous newsletters please contact the Heritage Group at the Heritage Centre, c/o The Library at 4/5 The Cross. Annual subscription to the Heritage Group is £6.00.

Stonehouse Community Council

Is the elected statutory body which meets on the third Monday of each month at 7.30pm in the Public Institute Stonehouse to discuss local issues which affect the village. If you have something to say in the way the local authority or any other public body or organisation delivers its services why not raise it at a community council meeting. Future meetings for 2007 are:

21th May 18th June
20th August 17th September
15th October 19th November
17th December

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Members of the National Association of Memorial Masons

The Heritage Group is a registered charitable organisation who:

- Research, collect and document all areas of local heritage and make its findings public.
- Monitor current developments within the locality and by research, communication and education in order to safeguard our local heritage and environment.

Robert Hamilton MM of Stonehouse

Born at Kittymuir Farm on 30 12 1892, at the age of 16 in 1909 Robert sailed for New Zealand to work. After a few years he sailed to Australia, working as a ranch hand at Uranas NSW. At the outbreak of war he intended to return to Scotland to join up. The elite Australian Light Horse (Mounted Infantry) were recruiting locally and at 5/- per day, less 1/- per day (paid at end of service) Robert decided to join up in Australia. On 14th September 1914, better getting shot at for 5/- a day as opposed to the British 1/- per day. You had to prove your riding and shooting ability before being taken on. After a few weeks training the regiment sailed from Sydney on HMAT Star of Victoria (A16) on 19th October for Egypt with stops for coal and supplies at Albany SW Australia and Colombo Ceylon. They disembarked in Egypt on 8th December 1914 for the defence of Suez. The regiment was next deployed on HMAT Caledonian to Alexandria, for onward journey to Gallipoli as dismounted infantry. They then embarked 25 officers and 447 other ranks at Alexandria on the 9th May 1915 on HMAT Devonha for Gallipoli. They landed at 6.00am on the 12th May, 200yds South of Fisherman's Hut at ANZAC Cove. Their first post was Pope's Hill, they mounted a defensive role for most of campaign. On 7th August some 200 1st Light Horse men launched an attack on the Turkish position known as the Chessboard, 147 of them became casualties. The Regiment left Gallipoli 21st December 1915 for Egypt where the Regiment joined the ANZAC Mounted Division and was deployed to protect the Nile Valley from the pro Turkish Senussi Arabs. On 14th May 1916 they were tasked with defending the Suez Canal, the 1st light Horse Brigade played a significant role against the Turks at the Battle of Romani 4th August. Robert then joined the Allied advance across the Siani in November and were involved in the Battle of Maghdaba December 1916 and the Battle of Rafa January 1917. The next major Battle was the abortive second Battle of Gaza in April. Some 18 miles North East of Beersheba, in the battle at Tel el Khuweilfeh, on 3rd November, Sergeant Robert Hamilton was awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field, his citation reads,

"On 3rd November 1917 at Tel. el Khuweilfeh this NCO took forward a Hotchkiss gun detachment to a forward flank position and considerably helped to keep down the enemy's fire, and carried in a wounded man under very heavy fire. His coolness and bravery set a fine example to his men all day. Recommended by Lt Col Granville. 2 weeks after this award Robert was wounded with a Gun shot wound to the neck."

After the collapse of Turkish position in Southern Palestine the regiment moved on Jaffa and then on to clear and occupy the West Bank of the Jordan River. The regiment then led the raids on Amman 24-27th February 1918 and Es Salt 30th April - 4th May and the repulse of major German and Turkish attacks on 14th July. The Regiment then fought on east of the Jordan. Turkey surrendered on 30th October and the first Light Horse sailed for Australia on the 12 March 1919. Robert had already embarked on HT Bermudian at Port Said, and disembarked at Southampton on 19th December 1918 for leave. He was discharged on 15th March 1919 in London with the rank of Regimental Quarter Master Sergeant and overseas service of 4 years 187 days.

He returned home to Stonehouse and married Annie Naismith (grand daughter of Robert Naismith, author of Stonehouse Historical and Traditional) of Cross View. They set up home in Hamilton Ferme at the Cross and had eight of a family; Minnie, (my mother) Robert, James, William, Ian, Douglas, Evelyn and Norman. Robert along with his brother-in-law, James Watson of Thorndale, Manse Road, set up a bus company. The Admiral, ran Lancier's from Strathaven to Cathedral Street in Glasgow. They eventually gave up the service due to the practise still used today of competitors running buses a few minutes in front of them. Robert then took on High Lanrig Farm for a year. When the Council houses were built in Newfield Road, Robert moved into number 4 in December 1927. He bred Greyhounds and had kennels down at the oil works under the viaduct. He also had prolific winner in a dog named Avonhope (known as the rent payer). He started working for Sam Park of Lesmahagow and his business partner George Reid of Larkhall, as a Racing Manager / Handicapper at Larkhall Greyhound Stadium 1936 till 1964 when it closed down.

At the outbreak of WWII Robert was Section Commander of the Local Defence Force, No 5 Coy. No 22 Platoon Section 1. Names of platoon members taken from his diary 26 August 1940 include; David Brown, Alexander Bambrick, James Cryan, William C. S. Whitelaw, Henry McFarlane, David Finnie, George Harrison, Archibald Miller, David Miller, James Miller, Walter Mitchell, Henry Speirs, Andrew McLellan, Walter Lang, Thomas Moffat Hugh Boyle, John Whitelaw, and George Spence.

Robert retired in 1964, kept bee's, went fishing and carried out maintenance on the vehicles of his sons fruit & veg business and did some handicapping for Shawfield Stadium. Robert died in 1970. *Article by William Mackie (Grandson)*



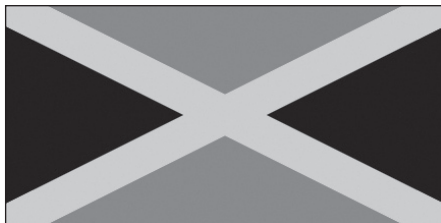
The Jamaican flag: the Stonehouse Connection

Taken from extracts of letters from John McGhie, son of the Rev. William R. F. McGhie (d. 1968) who served as the minister of St. Ninian's Church from 1952 until 1956. Rev. William R. F. McGhie also served as an Army Chaplain during second world war. In 1957 he accepted a call for missionary work in Jamaica. He also undertook a research project to trace the history of the church in Stonehouse from 1560 to 1956 which is available through the Church in Stonehouse.



History of the Flag

In 1957 the Rev William R.F. McGhie went out to Jamaica to work as a missionary. Shortly before Jamaica got her independence from Great Britain the Jamaican Prime Minister Sir Alexander Bustamante, who was a friend of William, showed William designs of the proposed Jamaican flag. It was to be a green, black and gold tri-colour (i.e.. vertical stripes). William commented that as a Christian country the flag should contain a cross to reflect that fact. William then sketched the St Andrew's cross replacing the colours of the Scottish flag with the green, black and gold of the Jamaican flag as it is now. Sir Alexander Bustamante agreed that this would be better and the previously proposed flag.



Rev. William R. F. McGhie was one of Alexander Bustamante's chaplains. Sir Alexander called him 'Padre', and he talked with the Prime Minister often, both on the telephone and in person. Sir Alexander was an ambassador of Jamaica's Rum industry usually gave that title to many 'men of the

cloth', whose advice he often sought after. The first official release of the Jamaican flag (3 horizontal lines) was not well received at all by the Jamaican public. William was only one of the citizenry calling for a design change, but he did indeed recommend to Sir Alexander that the redesigned flag should have a cross, signifying the history and influence of 'the church' in Jamaica's past. Sir Alexander asked William to submit ideas for an alternate design. William son John remembers his father one morning in his study, tracing the St. Andrew Scottish national flag from an encyclopedia, and applying the existing colours of Green, Yellow and Black into the St. Andrew's cross.

Prior to Jamaica gaining its independence in 1962, the colonial flag (Union Jack) served as the country's official flag. The Jamaica National Flag came into use on August 6, 1962, Jamaica's Independence Day. It was designed by a bipartisan committee of the Jamaica House of representatives. The Flag has a diagonal cross or saltire with four triangles in juxtaposition. The diagonal cross is in gold and one-sixth of the length of the fly of the flag; the top and bottom triangles are in green; and the hoist and fly triangles are in black. "Hardships there are but the land is green and the sun shineth" is the symbolism of the Flag. Black stands for hardships overcome and to be faced; Gold, for natural wealth and beauty of sunlight; and Green stands for hope and agricultural resources and lush vegetation of the island. It is John McGhie's view that the choice of colours incorporated in the flag (black, yellow and green) were of Jamaican origin, based on the descriptions associated with the country i.e. dark days in the past (slavery), green (the land of wood and water), and of course, sunshine.

Snippets from the Past

- The present A71 Strathaven Road between the two villages was not the earliest road between our two communities. The original road between Strathaven and Stonehouse ran from the top of Strathaven (formerly Flemington), across Netherfield to Glasford, thence down the brae over the present road at Glasford brig onto the old Stonehouse Road to Glasford Brig right of way, then cut back into Stonehouse at the present head of the village. The present road was constructed sometime between 1816 and 1859. It has been suggested that part of the foundations of the road were built using stone from the decaying castle at Strathaven though this has not been substantiated. It may be that the lower, present road was prone to flooding due to its proximity to the river Avon. Improvements and damming of the water ways however have since enabled progress in enabling a more direct route between the two communities



Strathaven Road (Glesart Brig) c1900

- In June 1975 over 1000 worshippers from Stonehouse and Blackwood gathered for a conventicle at Tanhill. During the service attended by many denominations, the late Pastor Jack Glass attempted to disrupt the event unsuccessfully.

- William Melvin's (Blacksmith, Holding No.1 Sidehead Road) wife was the first woman to vote in Stonehouse. Still shoeing horses in 1973 William was still using an anvil which was said to be 150 years old formerly belonging to a Tom Taylor of Swinhill. He stated that when he was 20 years of age there were over 20 unemployed blacksmiths working in Stonehouse.