

Walk 3: Market Square to Harbour loop



Starting from the Market Square Car Park, turn right along Allardice Street towards Stonehaven Old Town.

The bridge spanning the Carron River originally built in 1781 is the traditional line marking the old and new towns of Stonehaven. The milestone on the building to the south of the bridge is inscribed with the same design as the original keystone.



The Court house directly ahead of you was built in 1863 and was used for its original purpose until 2016. It now houses local small businesses and offices.

Turn left and then immediately right between the police station and Dunnottar Primary school and follow it to Victoria Street leading off to your right. The path leading up and away from you has some interesting tombstones built into the wall at the bottom of the brae. They date from 1608 and 1648 and it is thought they are in memory of people who died of the plague.

The burial ground for those that died of the plague is directly behind the police station, extending towards the garages now built at the bottom of the brae.



Heading back past Dunnottar school turn right onto High Street and head towards the sea. This street is famous for the fireball ceremony held here every Hogmanay (New Year's Eve). This ceremony sees locals march up and down the street swinging homemade fireballs above their heads before throwing them into the harbour. It's quite a spectacle and around 10 thousand people come to watch it each year.



The steepled Town House dates from 1790. It has a bell and the clock that can be seen in the steeple was moved to its present position from on the wall in 1894. It was refurbished in 2016 and when open there is a display inside which gives some information about the building. The barometer above the door of the tower would have been very useful to the fishermen of Stonehaven before the advent of the weather forecasts of today.



Carry on to the harbour and on your left hand side is The Tolbooth building. Now a restaurant upstairs and a museum downstairs, it is likely the oldest building in Stonehaven. Built as a storehouse by George Keith, 5th Earl Marischal near the end of the 16th Century, it was probably used to store provisions and equipment for nearby Dunnottar Castle. In 1600 the building became the Sheriff Court for the local area with a prison and continued as such until the building of a new court in 1767. The Tolbooth once again became a store and after falling into disrepair over the years was restored and opened up again in 1963.



Note the sundial across from the Tolbooth at the head of the steps from the beach to the Old Pier. It has the date 1710 on it.

Heading back towards the Shorehead many of the buildings which made up the Old Town can still be seen. The Ship Inn dates from 1771 and the Marine Hotel, much later at around 1890 has re-used stone gargoyles taken from Dunnottar Castle in its frontage. A leisurely stroll back past the Ship Inn, perhaps popping in for a beer or a wee dram, takes us back towards the Tolbooth. Take a left down the alleyway to reach the boardwalk with its sculptures and great views of Stonehaven Bay and turn left to make your way back over the river Carron and to the start point of the walk in the square.

