

The Area Around Stonehaven



Stonehaven sits in an area called "the Mearns". The name 'Mearns' comes from A Mhaoirne meaning 'The Stewartry' and was formerly in the county of Kincardineshire.

The Mearns area of Aberdeenshire has a wonderful mix of countryside and coastline. Its vast landscape and fertile soil sustains a strong agricultural economy while its coastline is dotted with what were once traditional fishing villages and where you'll still appreciate the bond between the sea and local communities.

Explore bustling towns and villages such Fettercairn, Laurencekirk, Inverbervie, St Cyrus and Johnshaven and you'll discover a real sense of place.

The Scottish author Lewis Grassic Gibbon, born James Leslie Mitchell, was strongly influenced by his life in The Mearns. His book *Sunset Song* is one of the most important Scottish novels of the 20th century. The book, set in a fictional village in the Mearns, drew heavily from Mitchell's upbringing in Arbuthnott where there is now the Lewis Grassic Gibbon Visitors Centre. One of the key features of the book (and some of his other writing) is the balanced and immersive use of the distinctive local Doric Scots dialect spoken in the north east Aberdeenshire which you'll still hear in towns and villages across Mearns.

In Fettercairn, which featured in Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Sunset Song*, see the distinctive Royal Arch erected in 1864 and don't miss the white-washed buildings of Fettercairn Distillery.



Laurencekirk is the historic settlement once known as 'Conveth'. It's most famous landmark is the Johnstone Tower that sits on the Garvock Hill. The tower was constructed in 1812 with materials left over from the building of a nearby mansion house.

Balmakewan, found in the lowlands of Glen Esk nearby to Laurencekirk, is a 1600's mansion house and farm. In its picturesque natural surroundings it has its own tea room, farm shop and even a beer festival!

There are any more places to visit in the Mearns – for more information go to www.visitmearns.com .