



Stow Baillie

Newsletter

October 2008

As you are probably aware Stow was an ancient place of sanctuary. A Charter to the church of Wedale by King Malcolm IV confirmed the privilege of sanctuary.

In the 1600's the poor of the parish were fed at times of great need from a local tax called "a stent". This was not in fact money but an amount "of meal". The assessment on the amount to be given was calculated half yearly and it was the heritors and the tenants that were responsible for maintaining this. To ensure this happened there was always the threat of sending the Baillie out for non-payment of a stent.

Allowances were also given to the poor through the church. Numbers seemed to vary depending on how harsh the time and from around 10 to 25 souls seemed to be in provision of these allowances from about the 1770's to the 1820's. When considering these allowances the church session allowed so much a-week and these figures and a list of who was in receipt of these allowances was read from the pulpit each Sunday. The session clerk was also appointed to write testimonials of those who were "allowed to goe," that is to beg.

Over the centuries many took shelter here including several Jacobites on their return from Derby in 1745. There was also an overnight shelter in Stow whose purpose seems to have been to house tramps and travellers, It was located just off the bottom of Earlston Road (Stow Brae). It seems to have survived the clearance of older building in 1862. There are several news reports of the time regarding navvies and drunkenness. In 1887 its presence seems to have incensed some locals with conflicting views.

The Tramp Nuisance 1887

A Stow correspondent writes us that tramps are becoming a regular pest in the village and alleges, as a reason for this is that tickets are given regularly to the same persons for admission to the shelterhouse.

Stow Shelterhouse

Sir, Someone writes in your paper wanting to put the tramps out of the shelterhouse. If these tramps have no legal right of relief they have no right to starve. They are God's creatures. The poor cannot live on nothing. If they were better looked after there would be less crime. They cannot be all bad; when they have no work some will go back to crime. Your correspondent would not like to shelter along with them, so why have any ill feelings towards them? Those who have it in their power to give them work should consider the poor.

Sheriff Summary Court 1897

An old man named John Scott Nichol pleaded not guilty on a charge of having on the previous Saturday night broken into the Free Church Manse at Stow with intent to steal. The accused who was under the influence of drink said in his defence that he had been told it was a lodging house. The Rev. Thomas Blackmore stated that he had been awakened by the noise of glass breaking and found the accused climbing through a window. On passing sentence of 8 days imprisonment the Sheriff said that it was a sad thing to see at such an age.

Latest additions to the archive:

We are very grateful to a number of people who are giving the Archive copies of photographs and who are kindly allowing us to record their stories. We will present a proper inventory of the Archive holdings in the next couple of months. If you have something you think that will be of interest, please do not hesitate to get in touch with any stalwarts of the Archive Group: Chris Wemyss, Debbie Crawford (Galabank), Mary Craig, Neil MacLennan, Robert Thomson (Fountainhall), Wendy Ball.

We are delighted to have made contact with Ian Anderson of Glasgow and David Weedall of Liverpool who have both been investigating family links to Stow.

Everyone is invited to Stow Parish Archive night

Strange but True

Saturday, 1st November 2008

7.30 for 8.00pm at Stow Town Hall

Recitations and audio visual displays of local strange but true stories and various spooky extravaganzas.

featuring

historian Mary Craig launching her new book "The Border Burnings" the true account of witchcraft trials in the Borders 1600 – 1700

Not for the faint-hearted! Restorative refreshment will be available.

Watch out for the posters and newspaper announcements for more information

