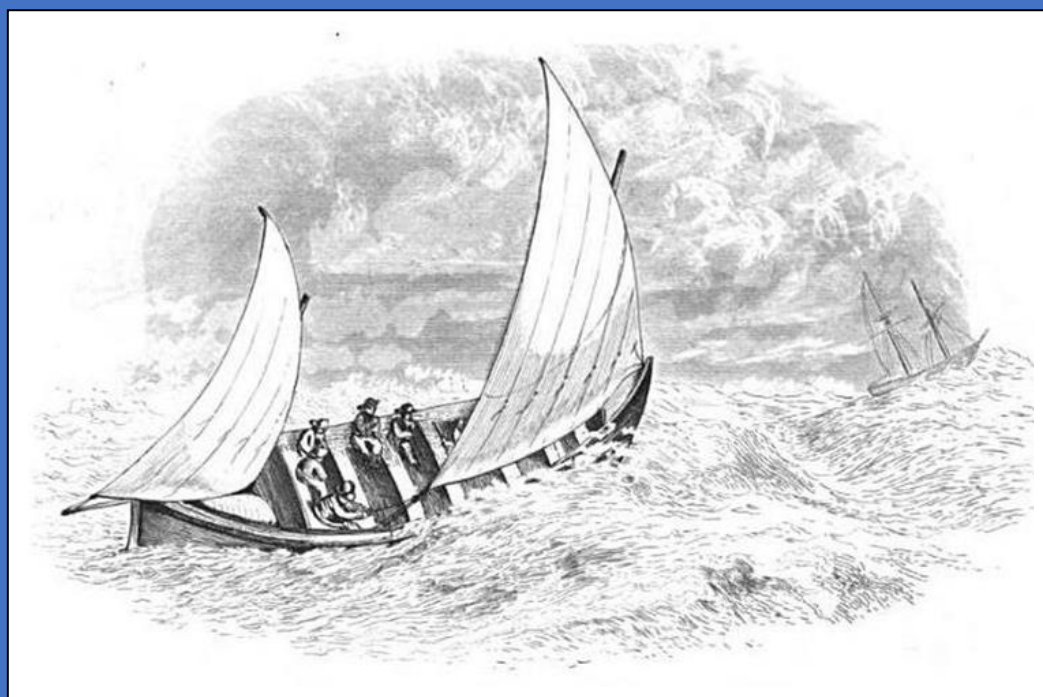


2021-v1

**BANFF & MACDUFF LIFEBOAT  
THE EARLY YEARS  
1860 TO 1877.**



**STANLEY BRUCE**

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*Cover photograph – James Beeching's self-righting Lifeboat (1851). (By Henry Coleman Folkard, from the sailing boat: a description of English and foreign boats (1870)).*

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I can be contacted at [bardofthebroch@yahoo.com](mailto:bardofthebroch@yahoo.com)

**If printing this book, it is best printed as an A4 or A5 booklet.**

## Authors Preface

First, I must say, I titled this book the 'Banff and Macduff Lifeboat' rather than the 'Banff Lifeboat' simply because, although the lifeboat station was first built at Banff Harbour it was always intended to serve Banff and Macduff and the neighbouring coastline.

I'm interested in anything to do with the sea, I grew up with it on my doorstep, and I've always lived near the sea. I served my apprenticeship as a ship draughtsman and was later employed in an Aberdeen shipyard as assistant construction manager, and we built ships to high standards so they would sail safely. Of course, these ships, we built had lifeboats of their own, these could be lowered from davits into the sea should an emergency occur.

I've never been to sea in a RNLI lifeboat, however I have had a look around the Peterhead lifeboat on an open day. I have however done trials on a ship lifeboat in Aberdeen Bay, and done my RGIT Survival course that included time on a lifeboat again in Aberdeen Bay. All, I must say in reasonably good weather, although crossing the bar at the entrance to Aberdeen Harbour on a small boat was an experience I'll never forget.

During sea trials of new-build ships, I have been out at sea in very rough weather, but I must say mostly on relatively large vessels, (662 tons to 6,767 tons), I can't imagine what it would be like on a small cobble or even on one of the sophisticated lifeboats currently stationed at nearby Buckie, Fraserburgh and Peterhead. I have been out on a former small wooden-hulled fishing boat ex BCK 124 '**Sea Wave**' (58 tons) we converted to a pleasure boat MV '**Lisa**', but the weather was good that day.

The difference between a lifeboat of the 1860's and today's lifeboats is like 'night and day', however, the dangers of the sea are much the same, and the bravery of the lifeboat crew's the same. To risk your life to save other(s) in dangerous seas to my mind makes you a hero.

My uncle (23-years old), who drowned when the Fraserburgh lifeboat capsized 9<sup>th</sup> February 1953, ten years before I was born was a hero, but I'm sure his widow (my aunt), and his two small children would rather he wasn't and was back home. I watched an old film of the funeral of the six men who died on the ill-fated "**John and Charles Kennedy**" and it seemed like the whole town came out to honour them and give them the best send-off possible that day, Broad Street was jam-packed with folk.

**Stanley A. Bruce, BSc., I.Eng., I.Mar.Eng., MIMarEST.**

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Whilst I have taken great care in preparing this publication, I have of course relied on some previous historic information by others. Where conflicting information was found, I have added what seemed the most credible, at least to my mind, I therefore accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions.

**BANFF & MACDUFF LIFEBOAT  
THE EARLY YEARS  
1860 TO 1877.**

**BY**

**STANLEY BRUCE**

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## Introduction.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution was founded 4<sup>th</sup> March 1824, but it was another 36 years before the RNLI stationed a lifeboat at Banff Harbour.

It was through the efforts of Captain McDonald R.N. commander of the local Coastguard at Banff that brought the first lifeboat to Banff (and to Buckie). His efforts must be recognised, as



without him it may have been a good few years later before a RNLI lifeboat was stationed at Banff and Buckie.

From the local press articles, we find that the 1860 Banff lifeboat was named the '**John Zell**', after a benefactor, I'm guessing after John Zell Creasy, as this seems to be normal practice for the RNLI, even today. The first Banff lifeboat was 36 feet long by 7 feet beam, had eight oars, and the first lifeboat house was constructed of rubble stone and was at least 40 feet long by 18 feet wide internally and was sited at Banff Harbour.

Prior to the putting into service a lifeboat at Banff Harbour in 1860, there was no official lifeboat between Fraserburgh and Spey Bay, a distance of fifty miles. Any rescues at Banff were performed using a small cobble boat.

From the press articles we find that the Banff and Macduff Lifeboat, if it had not been used in rescue was taken out every three months for training exercises. There would have of course been routine maintenance strictly carried out to RNLI procedures on the boat and carriage at regular intervals.

By 1870, Banff and Macduff had a new lifeboat called the '**John and Sarah**', she was bought with a donation from John Lightfoot of £450 in memory of the late Mrs Lightfoot, this boat was 32 feet long, 7 feet-6 inches breadth and had ten oars.

The lifeboat house was initially built at Banff Harbour in 1860 and remained there until it was taken down after storm damage to its foundations, and the stones reused to construct the new lifeboat house at the east end of Banff Bridge in 1877. The 1877 lifeboat building still stands today and was used by the RNLI until 1923 when the Banff and Macduff lifeboat was moved to Whitehills. In the 1950's it was used as 'Craigmyle's Tearoom', but since it has been converted to a house. The lifeboat remained at Whitehills until 1969.

It was 1974 before a lifeboat was stationed at Macduff initially on a year's trial.

The date stone '1877' and the initials 'RN LBI' can still clearly be seen on the west gable of the former lifeboat building at Palmer Cove (East end of the Brig o' Banff).

This volume consists mainly of newspaper articles, and since this is a historical volume, I didn't think it was my job to rewrite them, but rather to convey the information.

In the Appendices you'll find seaman John McDonald of Macduff who drowned during the rescue of the schooner '**Pearl**' at Banff in 1847. The eastmost jetty at Banff Harbour was named after him. There is a badly eroded carving of sandstone set in the harbour wall which originally read '**McDONALD'S JETTY**'. To my mind this stone should be recut or replaced with a new one. You'll also find the obituary for John Davidson, flesher (Butcher), Banff, who was a member of the Banff and Macduff lifeboat crew, who was on the rescue cobble which rowed out to the '**Pearl**', he was a remarkable man, dying in his 99<sup>th</sup> year.

Another man recognised by the RNLI for his bravery was Robert Burney, chief of the local Coastguard at Banff, I have information regarding him also in the Appendices.

Funding: I have added examples of some subscriptions to the RNLI as stated in the local press, just so you get an idea of who was donating and how much.

At this period Vice-Admiral Fitzroy was instrumental in having fishery barometers issued to fishing ports. Those who could not afford to buy one got there's free (Whitehills) but many other ports had theirs donated by wealthy businessmen (Banff and Macduff). The RNLI knew the importance of such barometers giving warning of storms and in 1860 proposed the fitting of barometers to all their life-boat houses.

In 1851, as part of the '*Great Exhibition*' in the Crystal Palace, London, a competition was organised by Admiral Algernon Percy (1792 to 1865) the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland for the best lifeboat design, the prize was 100 guineas (£15,000 in 2020). The prize was won by James Beeching (1788 to 1858) a boatbuilder from Great Yarmouth. We can assume the Banff Lifeboat was based on his design (tweaked by James Peake). There were 280 entries and 54 designs displayed at the exhibition including a 3-foot long model submitted by Alexander Hall & Co., Shipbuilders, Footdee, Aberdeen. I obtained this model from the former Hall Russell Training Centre and donated it to the RNLI, you will find information on it in the appendices.

As a former shipbuilder I have had some experience at sea, and I have been onboard a ship in heavy seas, and experienced how brutal the sea can be, but I



can't imagine heading out to sea in a small rowing boat in a storm, that must have taken guts. Thank goodness the lifeboats of today are much safer than they were back then. The current lifeboats at nearby Buckie, Fraserburgh and Peterhead are very sophisticated craft costing many thousands of pounds, these boats fare well in heavy seas, however the current lifeboat at Macduff is a much smaller craft which I imagine would be a more exiting experience in a storm.

My aunt Frances lost her husband John Buchan aged only 23-years, when the Fraserburgh lifeboat '**John and Charles Kennedy**' capsized just outside Fraserburgh Harbour 9<sup>th</sup> February 1953, leaving her a widow with two young toddlers. John was one of six volunteers of the crew who died, with only one surviving, Charles Tait. The memorial to lost lifeboatmen at Fraserburgh Harbour reads "*Greater Love hath no man than this, that he lays down his life for his fellowmen*".

With so much interest in family history these days, I have included an index of names at the rear that I hope is found useful.

I found an article in the Aberdeen People's Journal 5<sup>th</sup> August 1882 regarding a ten year old boy John Macdonald, who fell into Banff Harbour in 14 feet deep water. He was in danger of drowning, however local rope-maker Henry Munro (1840 to 1919), later Provost of Banff (1896 to 1902) jumped in and saved him, only for the lad to get up and run off home.

It takes a mighty brave man,  
To row out in a cobble, in a dark stormy sea,  
A gutsy man, a fearless man,  
A man, not afraid of the wail of the banshee.

**Stanley A. Bruce, BSc., I.Eng., I.Mar.Eng., MIMarEST.**

## Timeline.

**1848, 3<sup>rd</sup> November:** *The John o' Groat Journal reported as follows: "Life Lines, and other means of saving life, have been ordered for Banff Harbour. A barometer is likely to be provided also."*

See Appendices for more information on the Banff, Macduff, and Whitehills Barometers.

**1848, 14<sup>th</sup> November:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: "**BANFF HARBOUR TRUSTEES.** – A meeting of the Trustees of Banff Harbour was held within the Council Chambers, on Wednesday last – the Provost in the Chair.....Letters representing a barometer for the Harbour were read from the Clerk, to the Aberdeen Harbour Board, in Aberdeen. In terms of the first mentioned letter, it was agreed to write to Mr Hay, Aberdeen, inquiring what they would charge for such an instrument, including the fitting up in Banff'.

**1858, 1<sup>st</sup> January:** The Elgin Courant, and Morayshire Advertiser reported as follows: "*The Royal National Life-Boat Institution, in their Journal take up the question of the terrible loss of life that recently occurred on the Banffshire coast, when not less than forty-two fishermen perished. They insist strongly of the necessity of having Government aid in the establishment of harbours and ports of refuge for fishing-boats overtaken by storms at sea, also that at all the fishing stations life-boats should be provided.*"

The storms of the last week of November 1857 were summarized as follows:

Town	Fishermen Lost	Boats Lost	Widows Left	Orphans Left
Portknockie	18	2	12	34
Buckie	15	2	8	22
Portgordon	9	1	7	23
<b>Totals</b>	42	5	27	79

**1858, 20<sup>th</sup> April:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: "*The "Life Boat" enumerates among those to whom gold and silver medals have been awarded, since 1824, for humane and intrepid exertions in saving lives from shipwreck, Lieutenant Woodham, Banff; Robert Burney, Banff; and John Gray, Peterhead.*"

The “Life Boat” referred to above I believe was a journal issued periodically by the RNLI. For more details regarding Lieutenant Woodham and Robert Burney please read the Appendices.

**1858, 23<sup>rd</sup> July:** The Elgin Courant, and Morayshire Advertiser reported in a lengthy article that 64 additional life-boats were required on our coast, all 64 were listed including Banff. It also reported *“The average cost of a complete life-boat establishment, such as that provided by the National Life-Society, is £300; - this amount includes the cost of life-boat, life-belts and gear, transporting carriage, and a substantial house for its reception....The Institution already has seventy life-boats...”* (£300 in 1858 = approx. £38,000 in 2020).

**1859, 3<sup>rd</sup> June:** The Elgin Courant, and Morayshire Advertiser reported as follows: *“LIFE-BOATS FOR OUR OWN COASTS. The Royal National Life-Boat Institution, which has already numerous Life boat Stations on the English and Irish Coasts, is desirous to extend its work of usefulness to the Coasts of Scotland, that every part of the United Kingdom may be provided with the means of affording succour to those unfortunate persons who the violence of the storm are cast away, and must, too often, otherwise perish on its shores. To enable the Society to effect this important object, the Committee venture to solicit the pecuniary aid and the general co-operation of the people of Scotland —of her great landed proprietors, the sea boundaries of whose estates are washed by the angry waves — of the Merchants and Shipowners of her Commercial cities — of all humane persons who can feel for and have the power to aid those whom it has pleased Divine Providence to afflict.*

*The objects of the Institution are effected: -*

*1st. — By stationing life-boats, fully equipped with all necessary gear and means of security to those who man them, and with transporting-carriages on which they can be drawn by land to the neighbourhood of distant wrecks—and by the erection of suitable houses in which the same are kept.*

*2d. — By the appointment of paid Coxswains who have charge of, and are held responsible for, the good order and efficiency of the boats, and by a Quarterly Exercise of the crew of each boat.*

*3d. — By a liberal remuneration of all those who risk their lives in these boats going to the aid of wrecked persons.*

4th. — *By the superintendence of an Honorary Committee of residents in each locality, who on their part undertake to collect locally what amount they are able of Donations towards the first Cost, and of Annual Contributions towards the permanent expenses of their several Establishments. To effectually attain these objects it will be manifest that a considerable expense will be incurred; amounting in fact from £300 to £400 for the first Establishment, and to an average of £20 annually on each Life-boat Station. Without, therefore, the pecuniary assistance, and the hearty general co-operation of the Community at large, the objects of the Society could not be carried out. Its Committee of Management, therefore, earnestly appeal to the benevolent people of Scotland to aid them in this necessary and philanthropic undertaking.”*

**1859, 6<sup>th</sup> December:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: **“BANFF HARBOUR TRUSTEES – LIFE BOAT FOR BANFF.** – *A meeting of the Banff Harbour Trustees was held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday last. Present – Provost Adam, Baillie Bannerman, Dr Clayton, Mr Simpson, Mr Forsyth, Mr Munro, and Mr Leask. The clerk reported that £38 13s. 2d. had been paid for cleaning the harbour since last meeting. After disposing of some matters of routine, Provost Adam laid before the meeting a letter which he had received from Captain McDonald, commander of the Coast Guard here, with reference to a life boat being got for Banff, enclosing communications which had been transmitted to the Captain in answer to a letter from him to the Secretary of the Royal Life Boat Institution. In the letter to Provost Adam, Captain McDonald pointed out that there is no life boat on the whole coast between Fraserburgh and the Spey, a distance of fifty miles; and no means exist for saving lives except the mortar and rocket apparatus. He therefore pointed out the desirability of getting a life boat for Banff: and requested the Provost’s co-operation in support of a movement for procuring it. The Provost having spoken in favour of the subject, their appreciation of the importance of which the whole of the gentlemen present were unanimous in expressing, the meeting proceeded to fill up a list of queries forwarded from the Secretary of the Life Boat Institution, and which required to be answered before the matter could be proceeded with. The substance of the information given in these answers was that during the last four years, four wrecks had occurred within a mile of the port; that the beach was partly rock, partly shingle, being steep where there were rocks, and flat where there was shingle; that the distance from high to low water in neap tides from 10 to 12; that there was a suitable spot for a life boat house, and that the site for it, which belonged to the Harbour Trustees, would be given free of charge; that a steady coxswain and crew to be depended upon could be got near the spot*

*where the boat lay; that a carriage would be required for the boat; that a local committee could be formed, who would be responsible for the care of the boat, the gentlemen proposed by the meeting being Provost Adam, Mr Munro, Mr Forsyth, Mr Simpson, and Dr Clayton. With reference to the question as to what funds could be raised for the cost of the boat, no answer was given, but it was stated that it was understood Captain McDonald was to get up a subscription. Neither was any answer given as what amount annually could be raised towards the maintenance of the life boat establishment, but it was suggested that shipowners might agree to a payment of a shilling or eighteenpence by each vessel entering the harbour, towards forming a fund for this purpose, an arrangement which the people of Macduff would likely also enter into. We may only add that the community is indebted to Captain McDonald for bringing this matter under notice, and that we trust an effort will be made in order to secure for the port so valuable a means of saving life as it is now proposed should be procured. The only resolution which the Trustees came to, and the only one, possibly, which as a body they were justified in adopting was to give the site for the boat house, as we have already mentioned, for nothing. The meeting then adjourned."*

I did some research regarding the four wrecks in the past four years mentioned above by Captain McDonald; the nearest I could find in the local press were two at Banff, one at Whitehills and one at Cullen. Not exactly all within one mile, but there may have been others possibly small boats known to the Coastguard but not reported in the Press.

1. **1854, 3<sup>rd</sup> October:** the galliot **'Elizabeth'** (36 tons, built in 1847) was wrecked on rocks westward of Cullen Harbour, all hands were saved.
2. **1856, 30<sup>th</sup> September:** brig **'Charles'** (131 tons, built in 1836) of Aberdeen ran ashore at the back of the North Pier of Banff Harbour, all hands were saved.
3. **1857, 15<sup>th</sup> August:** the **'Earl of Clarendon'** (83 tons, built in 1856), ran on Collie Rock in Banff Bay in fog, two deaths, mate James Trump and seaman Peter Meyer.
4. **1857, 30<sup>th</sup> November:** the **'Janet and Ann'** (19 tons, built in 1844) of Inverness foundered off Whitehills. Master Donald Douglas, Roderick McKenzie and a boy, all of Inverness were lost

**1859, 14<sup>th</sup> December:** The Aberdeen Press and Journal reported as follows: *“BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFE-BOAT. — The proposal to provide a fund for establishing and maintaining a life-boat for the ports of Banff and Macduff is receiving very substantial support. Among donations announced are: — The Earl of Seafield, £10; the Earl of Fife, £1; Hon. G. S. Duff, £5; Provost Adam, Banff, £2; James Simpson, sen., Colleonard, £2; Alexander Simpson, Shipowner, Banff, £1; Baillie Barclay, Banff, £1, &c. &c.”*

**1859, 13<sup>th</sup> December:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: *“Banff Town Council meeting. - Provost Adam suggested that a site might be given by the Council for the life-boat house near the harbour barometer, from which it could be more conveniently moved to other ports in a case of emergency than from the best spot the Harbour Trustees could give. The resolution adopted was to look at the ground, and ascertain the best site the Council had upon their property.”*

**1860, 3<sup>rd</sup> January:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: *“LIFE BOAT FOR BANFF. — Since we last published, the subscriptions got for a life-boat for Banff, the following additions have been made to them: -*

<i>M. E. Grant Duff, M.P.,</i>	<i>£3 0 0</i>
<i>Dr Bremner,</i>	<i>£1 0 0</i>
<i>Captain McDonald, R.N.,</i>	<i>£1 0 0</i>
<i>Mrs McDonald, Clunie Street,</i>	<i>£1 0 0</i>
<i>Mrs Smith, Clunie Street,</i>	<i>£1 0 0</i>
<i>Mr Souter,</i>	<i>£1 0 0</i>
<i>Mrs Bethune, St Ann’s Villa,</i>	<i>£2 2 0</i>
<i>Miss Ann Turing,</i>	<i>£1 0 0</i>
<i>Lieut. Woodham,</i>	<i>£0 10 0</i>
<i>R. C. Nisbet.</i>	<i>£1 0 0</i>

*Captain McDonald gives 10s. of an annual subscription, and Mrs McDonald and Mrs Smith, Clunie Street, 5s. each.”*

(£1 in 1860 = approx. £124 in 2020).

**1860, 17<sup>th</sup> January:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: *“BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFE-BOAT. – The following handsome subscriptions have been received for the Banff and Macduff Life-Boat in addition to those already announced: -*

<i>L. D. Gordon Duff, Esq. of Drummuir, M.P.</i>	<i>£5 0 0 (Pounds, schillings &amp; pence).</i>
<i>A. Morison, Esq. of Bognie,</i>	<i>£5 0 0</i>
<i>Sir Geo. Abercromby, Bart of Forglen,</i>	<i>£5 0 0</i>
<i>F. Garden Campbell, Esq. of Troup,</i>	<i>£5 0 0</i>
<i>Sir Alexander Bannerman of Crimonmogate,</i>	<i>£5 0 0</i>
<i>Miss Grace Duff, Banff,</i>	<i>£1 0 0</i>

*This raises the amount subscribed to about £80.*

£80 in 1860 = approx. £10,000 in 2020.

**1860, 24<sup>th</sup> January:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: *“LIFE BOAT FOR BANFF AND MACDUFF. – We are glad to be able to say that the proposal to hand over a sum to the Royal National Life Boat Association as a condition to that association establishing a life boat here for Banff and Macduff, has been warmly reciprocated by the residents in the towns of Banff and Macduff, and vicinity, and various gentlemen throughout the county. Over £100 have already been raised, mainly through the exertions of Captain McDonald, commander of the Coast-guard. A list of the sub-scribers will appear in the next journal.”* (£100 in 1860 = approx. £12,500 in 2020).

**1860, 14<sup>th</sup> February:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: *“LIFEBOATS WANTED FOR BANFF AND BUCKIE. – A naval officer writing to some southern papers, on the 8<sup>th</sup> instant, urges strongly the necessity of stationing lifeboats at Banff, and at Buckie. Within the past ten years he notices that twenty-five wrecks have occurred off Banff with the loss of many lives. Buckie has a very large fishing population, and employs, with the adjacent villages, upwards of 1,000 persons in large and small fishing boats. A few years ago, 40 lives were lost in one gale, within a few yards of the beach at Buckie, and no means of saving life existed except a small mortar apparatus, which for helping boats is a miserable makeshift. A lifeboat would be invaluable there, as in case boats were caught out in a gale, the lifeboat might rescue the crews some distance off the shore, and let the boats go and take their chance; and in many cases the boats would be washed up on the beach with little damage; whereas now, in running them to beach to endeavour to save their own lives, the boat*

*must be smashed, and great loss of life come, as the beach is very steep, with very great undertow. No later than the Autumn of 1857, upwards of 50 fishermen and sailors perished by shipwreck, between Lossiemouth and Buckie. Shipwrecks and boat-wrecks have also occurred at all the adjoining villages where the crews were wholly or partly drowned. The National Lifeboat Institution has recently established life-boat stations at Fraserburgh and Lossiemouth, but there is an urgent necessity for more lifeboat stations on that part of the Scottish coast. We therefore trust, that the benevolence of the public, will soon enable that Society to extend more largely its field of useful operation on the east coast of Scotland."*

The first Buckie lifeboat was placed in service in November 1860, she was a Peake type SR lifeboat named the '**Miriam**'. She cost £156, (Approx. £20,000 in 2020) and was an open boat which could carry a crew of six oarsmen and a coxswain. She served for ten years and saved 49 lives. The first Buckie lifeboat house was built in 1861.

**1860, 6<sup>th</sup> March:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: "**BANFF LIFE-BOAT.** – *Our readers will learn with pleasure that Captain McDonald, Inspecting Commander of the Coast Guard at this station, has received an official communication intimating that the Life-Boat Institution have granted a life-boat for Banff and Macduff. This is a boon for which the public are mainly indebted to the exertions of the gallant Captain.*"

**1860, 20<sup>th</sup> March:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: "...A plan by Commander McDonald, R.N., as to the position for the life-boat house, was approved of, the Captain having sent it for this purpose to the Council prior to his despatching it to the Secretary to the Life Boat Institution."-

**1860, 20<sup>th</sup> March:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: "**ROYAL NATIONAL LIFE-BOAT INSTITUTION.** *The annual general meeting was held 15<sup>th</sup> March 1860 in London. At the meeting it was declared that the cost of the Banff lifeboat was £180 and the boat was built by Messrs Macfie & Sons.*" (£180 in 1860 = approx. £22,400 in 2020).



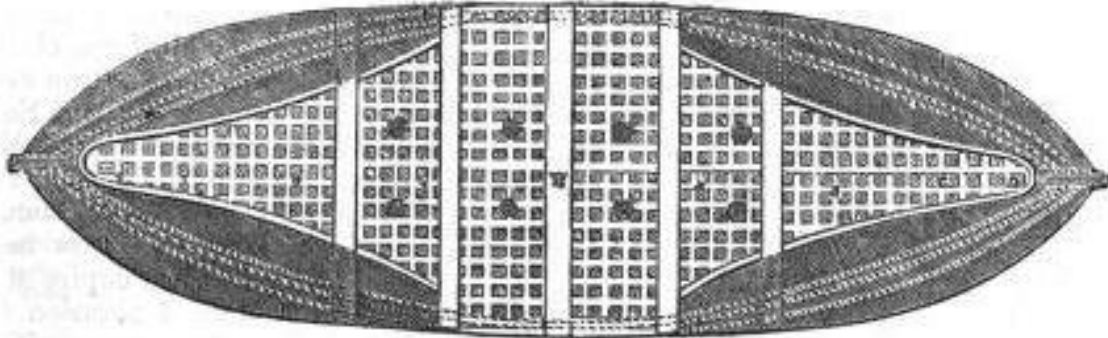
**1860, 17<sup>th</sup> April:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: *“**LIFE BOAT FOR BUCKIE.** – We are glad to hear, that through the exertions of Captain McDonald, commanding the Coast Guard Banff Station, the Royal National Life-Boat Institution have granted a Life-boat for Buckie. The gallant Captain and the benevolent Society alike, deserve, and we are sure will receive, the warmest acknowledgements of our friends in the west for this boon, which to them will be inestimable.”*

**1860, 4<sup>th</sup> September:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: *“**BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFE-BOAT.** — The Life-boat, presented to Banff and Macduff by the National Life-Boat Association, a proportion of the cost being raised by local subscriptions, was received at Banff on Friday last, arriving by the Strathisla Railway. It is a six-oar boat, resembling a whale boat in build, and measures 36 feet from stem to stern, being about 7 feet wide. It has two bottoms, and, we believe, several air-tight compartments, and there are valves for letting out any water that may get into the boat, the valves being constructed so to let out water, but admit none. Along the outside of the boat there are 'life lines', which can be caught hold of by persons in the water, who, if they hold on by these, may be towed in to safety, although it may be impossible to take them into the boat. There are also lines inside for the same purpose, a cork being attached to the end of the line, which will keep it afloat until the person to whom it is thrown may catch it. There are, indeed, 'stores' of every description to render so valuable an apparatus complete. The men who man the boat are furnished with cork jackets, eleven of which are sent along with the boat, as also, a life-buoy. On either side of the stern of the boat are emblazoned the words, 'National Life-boat Association: supported by Voluntary Contributions,' and the same inscription is neatly painted on the door of the house in which the boat is to be kept. This house is no temporary wooden erection, but a substantial granite building, about 40 feet long, and 18 feet wide within the walls, and which cost about £140. The whole of the work has been substantially performed by the contractor, our townsman, Mr Reid, carpenter. The boat is placed on a carriage, the keel resting upon rollers fixed between two beams of wood. The boat can thus be drawn by horses to the spot where it may require to be launched, and 'backed' into the water, will be pushed off the rollers, and then be got afloat without any loss of time. The boat is a valuable acquisition to the sea-faring population of the district. We believe that, as soon as a crew are got together, some trials will be made of the efficiency of the boat, and of their capabilities to man it. We cannot permit the chronicle of the arrival of the boat to pass without recalling to recollection, that it is mainly to the disinterested exertions of Captain*

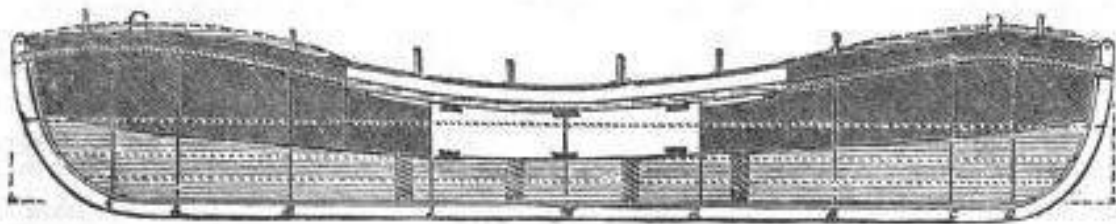
*MacDonald of the Coast Guard, backed, of course, by the liberal contributions of the proprietors and residents and the aid of the Life-boat Association, that the district owes the acquisition of this valuable means of saving life."*

(£140 in 1860 – approx. £17,400 in 2020).

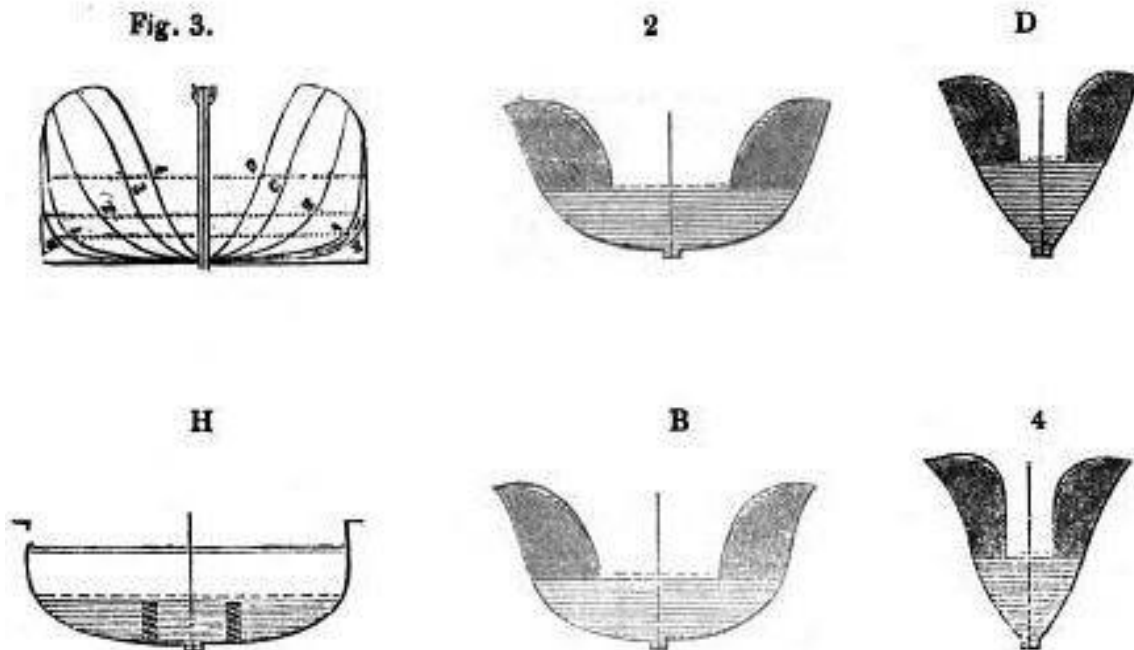
**Fig. 1.**



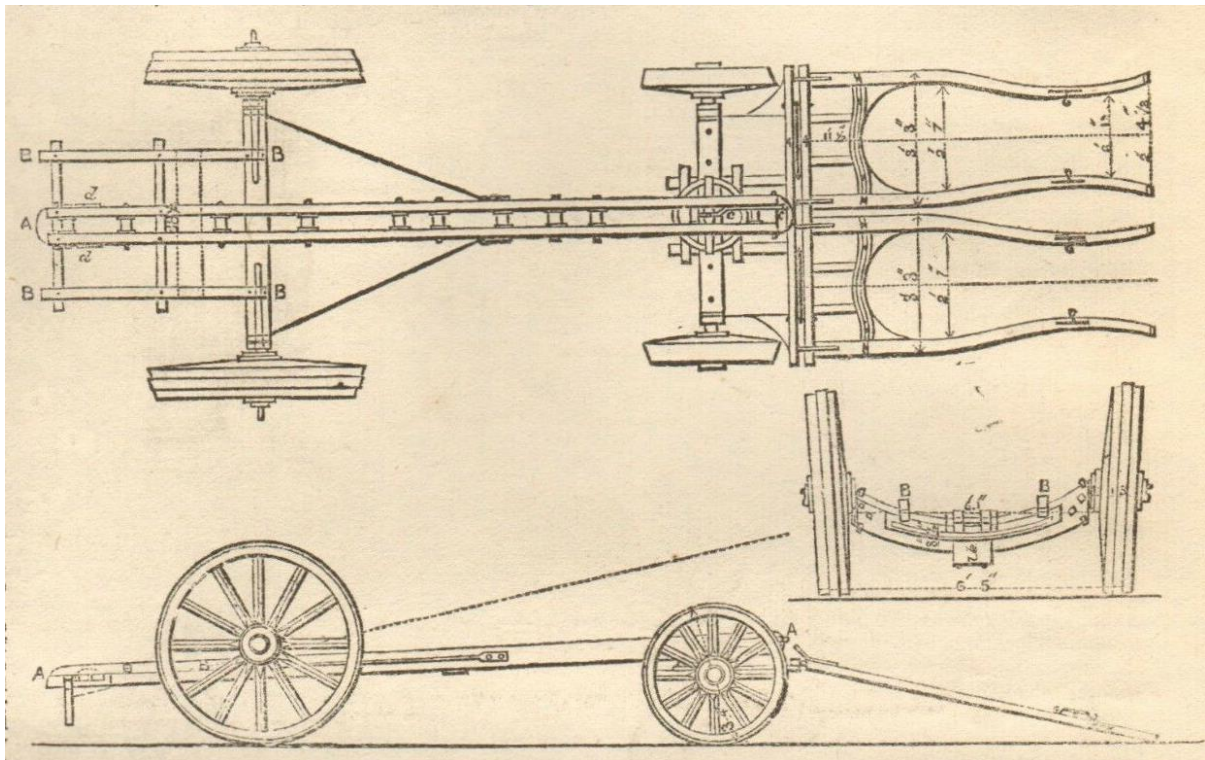
**Fig. 2.**



**Fig. 3.**



*Northumberland Model lifeboat. Final design by James Peake based on submissions by James Beeching and others in the 1851 Great Exhibition. The lifeboat was 36 feet long by 7 feet beam.*



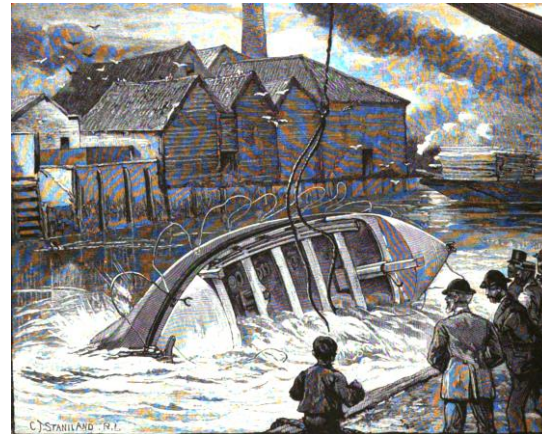
*RNLI horse-drawn Lifeboat Carriage. (Illustrated London News, 1859).*

The above drawing shows the RNLI horse-drawn carriage of 1859, it's very likely that the 1860 Banff Life-Boat carriage resembled this.

**1860, 8<sup>th</sup> May:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: *"...A request from the Royal National Life Boat Institution, through Captain McDonald of the Coast Guard, for a lease of the stance granted for the house to be erected for the Life Boat, was next considered, when it was stated that the Council had no power to grant a lease of any of their property, but it was resolved to give the site in the usual form, agreeing, in the event of removal, to pay the occupier for the buildings erected."*

**1860, 7<sup>th</sup> September:** The Peterhead Sentinel and General Advertiser for Buchan District reported as follows: *"**BANFF LIFEBOAT.** – The National Lifeboat Institution has recently sent one of its best single-banked lifeboats, accompanied with a transporting carriage, to Banff. The boat is 30 feet long, 7 feet wide, and rows 8 oars. A few days ago, a harbour trial of her took place at Limehouse, in the presence of her builders, Messrs Forrestt, the Inspector of Lifeboats to the National Institution, and others. Her self-righting qualities were fully and satisfactorily developed. The water thus shipped was self-ejected through patent valves in about 20 seconds. The cost (£180) of the lifeboat and her*

equipments is the gift of Messrs Macfie and Sons, of Liverpool. A commodious and substantial house has been built for the reception of the lifeboat, her stores, and carriage. In fact, there is probably not a more complete life-boat establishment on the whole coast than at Banff. A free conveyance was readily given to the lifeboat, her stores, and carriage, by the Great Northern, North Eastern, North British, Scottish North Eastern, and Great North of Scotland Railway Companies over their lines. Arrangements will forthwith be made by the local committee for the organisation of a crew, and for the appointment of an efficient coxswain for the boat – who will have the charge of the station, and who will, every time she is required, go afloat in her. Captain McDonald, R.N., Inspecting Commander of the Coast Guard, has been indefatigable in his exertions to obtain public support in aid of the cost of the establishment, which cannot be much less than £400. Indeed, the success of the undertaking, which must always be reckoned as one of our noblest local charities, is mainly to be attributed, and will always remain a monument of his zeal. The National Lifeboat Institution has now 106 lifeboats in connection with it. A truly noble fleet, outnumbered certainly by the navies of commerce and war, but the largest life-saving fleet the world has yet seen. Some of these boats have even this year been instrumental in saving nearly 150 of our fellow creatures from a watery grave. It is therefore evident that a large sum is required by the Institution to maintain its numerous lifeboat establishments in an efficient state, and that the good and sacred work in which it is actively engaged can only be perpetuated by endowments, and continued liberal support of the public at large throughout Scotland.”



Testing self-righting boat.  
(Charles Joseph Staniland).

**1860, 2<sup>nd</sup> October:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: “**TRIAL OF BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFE-BOAT.** – the capabilities of the Banff and Macduff life-boat were tested on Saturday last, when there was a pretty brisk breeze blowing, although the sea was not so stormy as would have been desirable. The boat was out for about three hours; the chief test being made by rowing her over the surf at the mouth of the Deveron. Every-thing went well, the boat working most satisfactorily. A very trustworthy crew have been obtained in the persons of Messrs James Wood, William Thompson, Alexander

*Wood, George and John Cormack, and William Slater, under the command of the harbour-master, Mr James Simpson, who has been appointed coxswain, and to whom the custody of the boat has been handed over by Captain MacDonald, R.N., and Provost Adam."*

**1860, 9<sup>th</sup> October:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: **"DISASTERS AT SEA. ELEVEN WRECKS IN THE MORAY FIRTH, AND TEN LIVES LOST.** *Although we have various at sea to report, the losses have not been so great or so numerous as the magnitude of the storm might have given cause for anticipating. When the wind was at its climax, the sea ran very high, being lifted into mountainous waves and lashed into foam by the powerful gale. The only prospect presented on looking from the shore consisted of an expanse of foam overhung by dark vapour. In the morning several vessels were visible in Banff Bay, among which were the 'William Bartlet' and the 'Glenalva,' both bound for this port. On the gale increasing, both stood away to the eastward. After long run out to sea, the former vessel succeeded in entering Peterhead on Friday; and the 'Glenalva' returned safely, and entered Banff early Sunday morning. About twelve o'clock, the sloop 'Rose' of Inverness entered Macduff harbour, when the sea was running very high. The 'Rose' was bound from Bo'ness to Avoch, with a cargo of coals, and left the former port on Sunday morning. About two o'clock on Wednesday morning, when the gale began, she was off Troup Head, and by five o'clock reached Spey Bay, where the master Mr Alex. McGregor, managed to keep his vessel until 8 o'clock. At this time, the gale greatly increased in strength, and he once resolved to run for Macduff. The little smack behaved admirably, obeyed the helm well, and she did not once ship a sea until at the mouth of Macduff harbour. On the appearance of the vessel in Banff bay, the life-boat was taken out, and various persons volunteered to man it, although the service would have been a hazardous one. The little sloop, however, took the harbour beautifully, and the oldest inhabitant does not recollect of vessel entering Macduff in a storm of equal violence. Indeed the escape made by those on board is something miraculous. There were a large number of persons on shore, ready to volunteer their services in order to secure the vessel in the harbour. It was not, however, considered safe to try to draw her into the east harbour, and an attempt was made to moor her in the western and more exposed basin. These efforts, however, proved futile, and the heavy waves continual to toss the sloop so much that, in course of less than an hour, she was literally broken into spars. The crew consisting of the master, one man and a boy, had, before this, been taken ashore by ropes. A considerable portion the cargo was carted ashore in the afternoon on the receding of the tide, and the*

*sails and some other stores have been saved, and were sold, by auction, on Saturday. The 'Rose' was about 25 tons burthen, and was the property of the master, Mr M Gregor. She was not insured. The cargo belonged to Mr McKenzie, Avoch.*

*Considerable anxiety was felt in Macduff for two youths who, on Tuesday, left that port in a small open boat intending to sail to Leith! It was learned, however, on Thursday that they had put into Fraserburgh before the storm began.*

*.....About 4 o'clock on the morning of Thursday, a Prussian schooner, named the 'Julia,' G T. Kraif, muster, was driven on shore amongst the rocks a mile to the westward of Rosehearty. This vessel (198 tons register) was on her voyage from Dantzic to Belfast with railway sleepers, and on the morning of Wednesday was in sight of Covesea Skerries Lighthouse. During the gale of that day, she was cast upon her beam ends, when, to relieve the vessel, the foremast was cut away. The schooner continued, however, to labour heavily, and ultimately became unmanageable. For a considerable distance down the Moray Firth, all hands were lashed upon deck, and during the afternoon, a boy, one of the crew, died from exposure and fatigue. During the night, the wind veered more northerly, and the vessel came on shore as already noticed. In being driven on shore, the vessel was providentially guided into a channel between two flat ridges of rocks, very much resembling a dock, and where there was great depth of water. The rocks on either side were about the height of the ship's deck, and as she ranged from side to side, the crew had of course to be careful in leaping on to the rocks. Immediately after the ship struck, one of the crew, in his anxiety to get on shore, attempted to leap. The distance, however, proved too great for him. The poor fellow's foot just touched the rock, and he fell backwards into the raging surf between the rocks and the ship's side, and was never again seen. As the tide receded little, the rest of the crew, including the master, six in number, succeeded in reaching the rock. Mr Malcolm Fletcher, of the Fraserburgh Coast Guard, who was on the watch in the vicinity, was soon at the scene of the wreck, and, with the assistance of other parties, had the shipwrecked mariners conveyed to Rosehearty, where they got the shelter and warmth they much needed. This vessel is supposed to be identical with a ship which was seen dismasted passing Banff about six o'clock on Wednesday evening. We should mention that, with characteristic despatch, on seeing the vessel pass this, Captain Macdonald, Commander of the Coast Guard, sent down Manby's apparatus to the Station at Troup, where there is no such means of saving life, in order that it might be used if the vessel went ashore there. In noticing this wreck, it ought to be remarked that, had the vessel gone on shore on any other spot for miles, either eastward or westward, the crew could not have landed with anything like the same facility.*

.....Another wreck was discovered on Saturday. On that morning, as one of the Crovie fishing-boats was returning from sea, the crew observed a small vessel, bottom up, lying in the face of Troup Head. The fact being reported to the coast-guard, Mr Currie, in charge of the station at Troup, proceeded in the fishermen's boat with his crew to the spot. The vessel was laden with American dressed timber for flooring. Attempts were made to raise the cargo, and cut away the bow, in order to gel the vessel ashore; but the flood-tide rising, this could not be accomplished. The vessel is of about 18 or 20 tons. No papers have been discovered, nor can any name be seen upon her. There was no body found.

.....From these reports, it would seem that in all nine ships and two boats have been wrecked, and ten lives lost in the Moray Firth. There may, however, yet be more casualties to be ascertained."

### **Manby Apparatus**

The following photograph shows the Manby Apparatus as used at Banff, as you can see it looks like a dumpy little cannon mounted on a large wooden base. The apparatus for lifting it has four rings, so it must have been quite heavy, needing four men to carry it.



*Manby's Apparatus, Battery Green, Banff. (Bodie).*

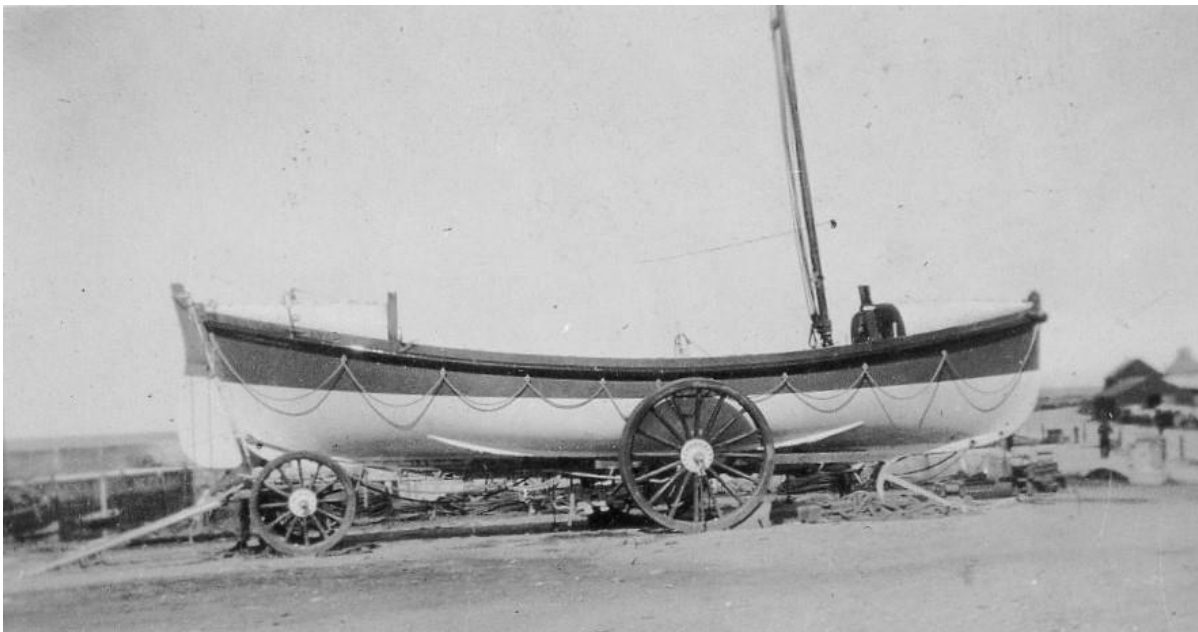
The 'Manby apparatus' aka the 'Manby mortar' was invented by Captain George William Manby FRS (1765 to 1854). His invention was inspired by his witnessing of the grounding of a '**HMS Snipe**' off Great Yarmouth in 1807. Manby's first use of his invention was 18<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1808.

It comprised of a mortar that could fire a ball attached to a lightweight line from the shore to a stricken vessel. Once the line was onboard a heavier line such as

a mooring rope could be pulled ashore and used to guide a lifeboat to the vessel or to mount a Breeches Buoy.

Eventually the Manby Mortar Apparatus was replaced by rockets.

**1860, 13<sup>th</sup> November:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: *“**TRIAL OF THE BANFF LIFE-BOAT.** – On Friday last, the Banff Life-Boat was tested by Captain Ward, R.N. The crew were at the boat-house by 10am. A pair of horses were harnessed to the carriage, and the crew and a large number of volunteer levies dragged it through the streets to the Palmer Cove. And thence along the river bar, down which it was launched. All these operations were performed in about half-an-hour; and it was clear that, with another pair of horses, the movements might have been a good deal accelerated. There was a heavy surf at the time, and the crew and boat both behaved admirably. The Captain, we believe, expressed himself as much pleased with the efficiency of the crew, who only require a little practice to render them most expert. The operations were witnessed by a large number of the Magistrates and residents in Banff and Macduff.”*



*Whitehills Lifeboat and carriage. (Photographer unknown).*

**1860, 13<sup>th</sup> November:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: *“**The Buckie Life Boat.** — The National Life-Boat Institution has just sent one of its best single-banked life-boats, accompanied with a transporting carriage, to Buckie. She possesses, as the Secretary informs us, the usual qualities of self-righting and self-ejecting seas shipped, now adapted by the life-boats built by Messrs Forrestt of London for the National Life-Boat Institution.*



*The boat's transporting carriage is also a very ingenious vehicle, both for travelling on soft ground and for launching and hauling up the boat. The cost (£180) of the life-boat and her equipments the munificent gift of a benevolent English lady, to the Institution. A commodious and substantial house has been built, from designs furnished by C. H. Cooke, Esq., the Honorary Architect to Institution, at cost of nearly £150, for the reception of the life-boat, stores, and carriage. A free conveyance was readily given to the life-boat and carriage by the Great Northern, North Eastern, North British, Scottish North Eastern, Great North of Scotland, and Banff, Portsoy, and Strathisla, Hallway Companies, over their lines. Captain McDonald, R.N., Inspecting Commander of the Coast Guard, has been indefatigable in his exertions to obtain public support in aid of the cost of the boat house, and trusts that the residents of the locality and other places will also assist the Institution to keep the establishment in state of efficiency. The Institution has just sent a similar life boat and carriage to Thurso. On Saturday last, Captain Ward, of the Life Boat Institution, put the crew through great many of their exercises in the management of the boat. The necessary signals of distress were hoisted, the crew were equipped with life belts on, and took their places on the boat after she was drawn to the water's edge by means of horses and bystanders, when, in presence of them and the local committee, assisted by the Coast Guard and others, she was launched from her carriage on the bosom of the briny wave, into which she glided as gracefully as a swan, and, after manoeuvring a little there, she was rowed ashore, placed on the carriage, and launched again into the waves, where she was tried to be upset, and again rowed on shore and finally placed on her carriage and brought back to the Coast Guard station, where she is to lie until the boathouse is ready, which will not now long, as it is ready for the slates. The trials were satisfactory commencement, and anticipate that, with a few more lessons, her crew will be able to their duty in a time of need."*

**1861, 5<sup>th</sup> November:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: "**WRECK AT BANFF.** At Banff, the gale came on very suddenly, and the sea rose rapidly, being lashed quite into foam by the heavy gale. Torrents of rain also fell. About three o'clock afternoon, a schooner was observed off the port, evidently in distress, and it by and bye appeared that she was making for the harbour. Mr Watson, manager of the Gas Company, whose premises are close to the harbour, once saw the danger the vessel would run if she attempted to make the harbour with the wind blowing so strong from the North, and therefore got some men and got the life-boat out; and expecting that the vessel would go to the east of the harbour, he had the life-boat carried near the Custom House.

*At same time, he, along with Captain Paterson and Captain Simpson, master of the life-boat, proceeded to the extremity of the north quay, taking a rope to be ready for the arrival of the vessel. Here, the whole of the fishermen and pilots belonging to the port also collected, and, under the direction of Captain Paterson, signals to the schooner were made by Thomas Crawford, pilot. Guided by the signals, the vessel made for the shore, and was almost at the point of effecting an easy entrance into the harbour, when a sea struck her, driving her against the north quay, where she broke her bowsprit, which, with the rigging attached, floated very dangerously around the bows. At the same time, the main topmast snapped at the girdle, and hung out to windward — the sails flapping uselessly, dangerously, and noisily against the masts. At the same moment, a rope was thrown on board, which being caught by the crew, the vessel was steadied, and a hawser being attached to the rope, the hawser was drawn ashore, and the vessel pretty firmly secured from drifting. Still she laboured heavily, rocking from side to side with every sea. While these things were being done, a gallant body of fishermen belonging to the port — viz, George Crawford, Wm. Thomson, Alex. Sclater, John Thomson, and Robert Sclater — had manned a boat and proceeded out of harbour, when the crew in the schooner threw a line into the boat, which was also secured. Still the boat was too small to carry all the crew of the schooner, who could now be seen to number six men, and the fear was that, if they all attempted to enter the boat, she would be swamped in the surf. The life-boat, however, had now been brought round to the new basin, and a crew was very speedily organised, comprising Captain Simpson of the life-boat; Captain Adam of the 'Ythan,' of Montrose; John McAndrew, seaman, Banff; Maxwell Pirie, seaman, Banff; and Alex. Simpson, Coastguard. As, from the narrow channel and confined space all round, it would have been next to impossible to have worked the boat with oars, ropes were thrown to the life-boat from each side of the harbour entrance. In this way, the boat, amid cheers, dashed out of the harbour, and faced the surf outside. In attempting to take to the north side of the vessel, from which the storm was coming, considerable difficulty was experienced, but the life-boat crew nearly succeeded even in that dangerous attempt. As the boat was nearing the schooner, however, Captain Simpson, reaching up to catch the hawser between the ship and the shore in order to guide the boat, was thrown out of the life-boat, which, at the time, gave a sharp lurch, being raised by heavy sea. For a moment, intense agony was felt by the immense crowd, who by this time thronged the pierheads, and who, for an instant, feared that Captain Simpson, trying to save the lives of others, was about to lose his own. Happily, however, he was clutched at first by Captain Adam, and in another moment by others, who held on with great tenacity, and at last succeeded in dragging him back to the boat amid the cheers of the*

*spectators. Increased relief was felt when it was observed that Captain Simpson was nothing the worse for his immersion, but was engaged as actively as before in the operations in the boat. During these movements, the life-boat was drawn back into the harbour, and another man, Daniel Hamilton of the Coastguard, dropped on board of her. It was now seen that it would be easier to reach the vessel from the leeward side; and accordingly the lifeboat was dragged in that direction. A few paddles with the oar, and little adroit management with the ropes, brought the life-boat under the bows of the schooner; and, every eye was now strained gazing through the dusk and the mist and spray to watch whether the crew would successfully make the descent into the life-boat. As if angry at likely being baulked of its prey, the storm at this instant raged louder than before — surge after surge raising both schooner and life-boat on its white crest, and again dashing them into the trough of the sea, many of the vox waves breaking over the bulwarks and sweeping the deck of the schooner. The men were all gathered in the bows of the tempest smitten vessel and one cheerful voice had during the stormy gusts welcomed the life-boat-men with the cry of ‘All right! come away, my hearties.’ Now, rapidly lines were thrown aboard from the life-boat, down which the crew half slid half tumbled readily and almost merrily, while, as the last man sped safe across the thwarts of the little boat, a loud and enthusiastic cheer broke forth from the crowd, who felt that, come of the vessel what might, the crew were safe.*

*The boat was now speedily brought into harbour, and the men landed. The schooner proved to be the ‘**Auchincruive**’ of Grangemouth, Captain Tait, master, bound from Spey with pit-props for Grangemouth. Saturday morning saw the wreck and cargo of this ill-fated vessel strewn all along the sea-beach from the pier to Deveron mouth. She had broken up during the night, in fact within five or six-hours of her coming ashore. The seamen’s chests, bedding, etc, have all been lost. We believe neither vessel nor cargo was insured.”*

**1862, 21<sup>st</sup> January:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: “**LOSS OF A BOAT AND ONE OF THE CREW, IN BANFF BAY.** – On Saturday afternoon, the steamer ‘**Times**’, from Granton Pier, on her voyage westward, made the usual call off Banff and Macduff, to deliver goods and passengers for these places. A boat from Banff went out as usual to attend the steamer. It was manned by Mr Thomson, the skipper, and two men, named James Proctor and David Rannie – the ordinary crew. After receiving the goods and a passenger sailor on board, the boat dropped astern in tow – Captain Anderson having, at the request of skipper Thomson, agreed to tow the boat as much nearer to the Banff harbour as he could. The steamer had drifted out a

*considerable way during the delivery of the goods, and the Captain would therefore have been the more disposed to grant the favour. The 'Times', however, had not proceeded far when the boat went down. The steamer was instantly brought up, buoys were thrown overboard to the endangered crew, and in a very short time all were safely taken on board, with the exception of Rannie. Poor Rannie, who seems to have been unable to do anything to save himself, went down with the boat and as yet his body has not been recovered. Proctor had a rather narrow escape, and owes his life in a great measure to his expertness as a swimmer. The wonder indeed is, that so many who go to sea neglect such a necessary qualification. The sailor, who belongs to Macduff, was returning home after a long absence, and has, we believe, lost his whole kit. The goods, it seems, were partly for Banff and partly for Macduff, and comprised quantities of cheese, mussels, peas, iron, and other commodities. It may be stated that, at the time the accident occurred, the steamer was about north by east of the harbour, and a stiff breeze was blowing from the south-west. As there was a pretty heavy sea, and the goods liable to get jammed so as to stress the timbers, it is thought not improbable that the boat may have sprung a leak. We have also heard it stated that she was rather overloaded. No blame attaches to Captain Anderson, but every credit for the prompt and effective assistance he rendered to the unfortunate crew. Rannie leaves a family, though not young and helpless, to mourn his loss. His wife died several years ago."*



*Yarmouth lifeboat, carriage, and crew wearing their cork life-jackets. Note the apparatus fitted to the large wheels to prevent them sinking into the sand.*

**1862, 28<sup>th</sup> January:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: "**BANFF AND MACDUFF BRANCH.** – STATEMENT of the RECEIPTS and EXPENDITURE of the BANFF and MACDUFF BRANCH of the ROYAL NATIONAL LIFE-BOAT INSTITUTION from the 1<sup>st</sup> January to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1861:-

### **Receipts**

#### **1861**

<i>During the Year – Amount collected in aid of Annual</i>	<b>£ s d</b>
<i>Expenditure in List annexed,.....</i>	£15 6 0
<i>During the Year – Received from Banff Harbour Master,</i>	
<i>Collected from Shipping,.....</i>	£5 3 0
<i>Nov. 5. Received from R. A. L. B. Institution, .....</i>	£5 7 0
<i>Nov. 5. Contribution Box in Shipping Office, received</i>	
<i>10<sup>th</sup> January 1862, .....</i>	£0 10 10
<i>Nov. 5. Balance on hand from last Account – 31<sup>st</sup> Dec. 1860..</i>	£1 3 6½
<i>Total.....</i>	£27 10 4½

### **Expenditure.**

#### **1861**

<i>March 23. Quarterly Exercise of L. Boat's Crew and</i>	
<i>Coxswain's salary, £2.....</i>	£3 13 0
<i>June 27. Quarterly do. Do., £2.....</i>	3 13 0
<i>Sept. 16. Quarterly do. Do., £2.....</i>	4 3 0
<i>Oct. 7. Undoing and fitting up gear in L.-Boat at</i>	
<i>Time of painting,</i>	0 0 8
<i>Balance of account to Geo. Reid, architect,.....</i>	2 0 0
<i>Oct. 12. Painting Life-Boat outside, inside, and carriage,.....</i>	1 19 0
<i>Nov. 1. Saving crew of schooner 'Auchincruvie' – 6 men.....</i>	5 7 0
<i>Dec. 30. Quarterly Exercise of Life-Boat crew and</i>	
<i>Coxswain's salary, £2.....</i>	3 10 0
<i>Geo. Reid, two panes of glass,.....</i>	0 2 8
<i>During the year – Postages,.....</i>	0 6 0
<i>- Expenses attending Collection,.....</i>	0 13 0
<i>Dec. 31. Balance on hand – paid into National Bank</i>	
<i>of Scotland,.....</i>	2 3 0
<i>Total,...</i>	£27 10 4½

(Signed) J. W. D. McDONALD, Commander R.N., Honorary Secretary.  
 THOMAS ADAM, Chairman.  
 JOHN CLAYTON, Member of Committee.  
 A. SIMPSON, Member of Committee.  
 HENRY MUNRO, Member of Committee.

To the Secretary, Royal National Life-Boat Institution.

**1862, 28<sup>th</sup> January:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser continued:  
*LIST of SUBSCRIBERS to the BANFF and MACDUFF LIFE BOAT for the Year 1861:-*

	<b>Donations</b>	<b>Annual Subscriptions</b>
	<b>£ S. D.</b>	<b>£ S. D.</b>
<i>Sir George Abercromby, Bart., Forglen,</i>		1 0 0
<i>Cosmo Gordon, Esq., Fyvie,</i>		1 0 0
<i>A. Morison, Esq., Bognie,</i>		2 0 0
<i>R. G. D. Abercromby, Esq., M.P., Glassaugh</i>	3 3 0	1 0 0
<i>Major L. D. Gordon Duff. Drummuir,</i>		1 0 0
<i>Mr Murray, Whitehills,</i>	0 10 0	
<i>George Reid, Banff</i>	0 7 6	
<i>Mr Scott, Contractor, Banff</i>	0 7 6	
<i>Alex. Souter, Banff</i>		0 5 0
<i>Garden Campbell, Esq., Troup,</i>		1 0 0
<i>James Wood, Banff,</i>		0 5 0
<i>R. Duncan, Provost, Banff,</i>		0 5 0
<b><i>Captain McDonald, R.N., Roseacre Villa,</i></b>		<b>0 10 0</b>
<b><i>Mrs McDonald, Roseacre Villa,</i></b>		<b>0 5 0</b>
<i>Henry Milne, Banff,</i>		0 5 0
<i>Alex. Simpson, Banff,</i>		0 5 0
<i>Thomas Adam, Banff,</i>		0 3 0
<i>A. Verel, Macduff,</i>		0 3 0
<i>James Wilson, Macduff,</i>		0 2 6
<i>John Brown, Dyer, Macduff,</i>	0 2 6	
<i>A. Henry, Macduff,</i>		0 2 0
<i>Robert Morrison, Macduff,</i>		0 2 0
<i>Thomas Valder, Macduff,</i>		0 1 6
<i>George Gibson, Macduff,</i>		0 1 0
<i>Alex. Carny, Macduff,</i>		0 2 6
<i>John Hossack, Banff,</i>		0 2 6
<i>A. McEwen, Banker, Banff,</i>		0 2 6
<i>John Nicol, Grocer, Banff,</i>		0 2 0
<i>Mr Mortimer, Banff,</i>		0 2 6
<i>Mr Barclay, Solicitor, Banff,</i>		0 2 6
<i>W. R. Gordon, Banff,</i>		0 2 6
<i>H. Rannie, Banff,</i>		0 2 6
<i>John Nicol, Banff,</i>		0 1 0
<b><i>Total amount of Donations and Subscriptions,</i></b>	<b>£4 10 6</b>	<b>£10 15 6</b>

**1862, 4<sup>th</sup> February:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: ***BANFF HARBOUR COMMISSION.** – A meeting of the Banff Harbour Commissioners was held in the Town Hall on Tuesday evening.....Mr Robson stated that he had received a letter from Captain Macdonald, Portsoy, thanking them for collecting the dues for the support of the life boat and expressing a wish that influence would be used to have the life boat money also collected in Macduff free of charge. Captain Macdonald had taken a great deal of trouble in procuring the life-boats, and as they were a great boon on the coast, it would be a pity to let them fall away. He suggested that the request made be complied with, which was agreed to. – Adjourned.*

**1862, 8<sup>th</sup> July:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: ***THE BANFF LIFE-BOAT.** – The Banff Life-Boat was taken out on Tuesday last, for quarterly exercise, by Captain Ward, R.N., who is on his tour of inspection of Life-Boats on the coasts of Scotland. We are glad to know that he found the establishment in an efficient and satisfactory state. We are sorry to learn, however, that this benevolent institution has not been so well supported here, in a pecuniary sense, as in other places. We are informed that a meeting will shortly be convened by Mr Adam, of the Local Branch, for the purpose of adding to the numbers of the Local Committee, and to solicit further support from Banff and vicinity, and trust the appeal will meet with a liberal response.*

**1862, 11<sup>th</sup> July:** The Elgin Courant, and Morayshire Advertiser reported as follows: ***BANFF LIFE BOAT.** – Capt. Ward inspected the Banff Life-Boat last week, and found everything in the best of order. Funds are scarce, however, and efforts are to be made to get up local subscriptions.*

**1865, 31<sup>st</sup> October:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: ***TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘BANFFSHIRE JOURNAL’. MACDUFF, Oct. 15, 1865.** Sir. – I am sorry to say that the ‘**Brandon**’, of Newcastle arrived here on this date, the wind flying dead on the land, and through the loss of canvas, there was nothing left to save life than to run the harbour of Macduff, as there was no lifeboat in their possession, and I am very sorry to say they make poor use of her, and I hope and trust that the lifeboat will be entrusted to those that will endeavour to make more use of her. I am sorry to say that the lifeboat came down by horse from Banff instead of water, as it should have done. So, no more from those that have lost their all and very nigh their lives. Signed A SEAMAN”.*

**1866, 24<sup>th</sup> April:** The Dundee Courier, reported as follows: ***“THE NORTH. Shipwreck at Macduff.*** *On Friday afternoon the schooner ‘Elizabeth and Jane’ of Sunderland in ballast, was being towed out of the harbour of Macduff, bound to the south, the tow-rope parted, and there being little or no wind, the swell drove the vessel on the rocks at the back of the new pier where she stuck fast. In a very short time she fell over and sank with her sails set, and will likely be a total loss. Fortunately her crew were all got safely shore before the rocket apparatus, which was instantly ordered out from the coast-guard station at Banff, could reach the spot, but the poor fellows have, of course, lost everything but the clothes they stand in.”*

**1866, 4<sup>th</sup> June:** In the Minutes of the Town Council *“The Council agree to allow the Board of Trade to erect a shed for Manby’s Apparatus at the west end of the Battery Green, at a ground rent of 10s per annum.”* (Approx. £60pa in 2020).

**1866, 17<sup>th</sup> July:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: ***“NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING.*** *- On the afternoon of Wednesday, a little boy about three years, son of Mr Mackay, High Shore, Banff, was playing at the mouth of the river Deveron, among the shingle the left bank. Going too near the edge, he fell into the water, and was being carried away by the current, when Mrs Black, a neighbour, observing the occurrence, gave an alarm, and the child's mother and she both rushed towards the river. The child by this time had gone down the current about a dozen yards, in fact, was in the tide way, when his mother, quite careless of her own safety, plunged in going perhaps a dozen yards, when she seized hold of him. The mother was, however, herself in great peril, and possibly, her own as well as the child's life would have been sacrificed, had not Mr John Forsyth, who had just passed the place, and hearing the cries, run back, and, going into the water, taken hold of Mrs Mackay, and landed her and the child in safety.”*

**1866, 17<sup>th</sup> July:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: ***“BANFF – LIFE BOAT.*** *– A meeting of the Local Committee of the Royal National Life Boat Association was held at Banff on Thursday last – Captain Wilson, Macduff, presiding. The Earl of Fife was re-elected President. Provost Adam, Banff, who was unavoidably absent, was re-appointed Vice-President. The following were appointed the Committee for the next year – namely, in Banff: - Captain Creasy, R.N.; Messrs Paterson, shipowner; Watson, gas*



*manager; Watson, shipbuilder; John Forsyth, shipowner; and Alex. Ramsay. In Macduff – Captain Wilson, Messrs Dallas, Storm, Anderson, Young and Watt. It was unanimously resolved that the life-boat and station house should be removed from their present site at Banff Harbour to the Palmer Cove. From the beach at Palmer Cove, the boat could be launched with greater facility than from its present site, and would be equally serviceable in case of shipwreck at either of the ports of Banff or Macduff. Captain Ward, R.N., Inspector of Life Boats for the Royal National Institution, was present at the meeting, and exhibited the model of a new style of fishing boat, which was examined, and highly approved of by the members of the Committee. Captain Ward inspected the “John Zell” life boat and gearing. The boat was exercised in the bay, and though the sea was smooth, a number of spectators witnessed her movements. Captain Ward expressed himself satisfied with the efficiency of the Banff Branch of the Life Boat Institution, which is supported by voluntary contributions.”*

It was 11-years later before a new lifeboat house was erected at Palmer Cove.

**Captain John Ross Ward (1813 to 1890):** in 1854 he invented the cork lifejacket, which was the first lifejacket worn by RNLI crew, all crew members were provided with one by November 1854. The strips of cork were sewn into a canvas vest, which came in two sizes to suit different builds. The fishing boat model mentioned above was designed by him, its aim was to induce the fishermen to adopt fishing boats of this special safer design, and so reduce the loss of life which resulted from the use of undecked fishing boats.

**1866, 31<sup>st</sup> July;** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: *“BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFE-BOAT. - ESTIMATES are Wanted for the MASON, CARPENTER, AND SLATER WORK of REMOVING the present BOAT-HOUSE from the HARBOUR OF BANFF to a Site near the PALMER COVE, which will be pointed out on application to ALEXANDER MUNRO, Honorary Secretary, who will show the Specifications on and after WEDNESDAY the 18<sup>th</sup> inst. The Committee do not bind themselves to accept the lowest or any offer. Intending offerers to lodge their offers before Noon of the 36<sup>th</sup> inst. Custom House, July 23, 1866.”*

**1866, 25<sup>th</sup> December:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: *“The Treasurer to the Banff and Macduff Lifeboat acknowledges receipt of £1 from Colonel Gordon of Fyvie, and £1 from Chas. Chalmers, Esq. of Monkshill, in aid of the fund for the new lifeboat house at Palmer Cove.”*

**1867, 15<sup>th</sup> January:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows:

**BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFEBOAT**

**LIST of ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS and DONATIONS for the Banff and MACDUFF LIFE-BOAT for the Year 1866:**

<i>Right Honourable Earl of Fife,</i>	£3 0 0
<i>Sir George S. Abercromby, Bart. of Forglen,</i>	1 0 0
<i>Thomas Adam, Provost,</i>	0 5 0
<i>Captain Creasy, R.N.,</i>	0 10 0
<i>Captain Diggins, R.N.,</i>	0 5 0
<i>Hon. George Skene Duff,</i>	1 0 0
<i>Major Gordon Duff of Drummuir,</i>	1 0 0
<i>Robert Duncan, Esq.,</i>	0 5 0
<i>W. Cosmo Gordon, Esq. of Fyvie,</i>	1 0 0
<i>John Hannay, Esq.,</i>	0 5 0
<i>M. E. Grant Duff, Esq. of Eden, M.P.,</i>	2 0 0
<i>R. W. Duff, Esq. of Fetteresso, M.P.,</i>	2 0 0
<i>F. W. G. Campbell, Esq. of Troup,</i>	4 0 0
<i>G. W. Murray, Esq.,</i>	0 5 0
<i>W. R. Gordon, Esq.,</i>	0 5 0
<i>Dr H. Milne,</i>	0 5 0
<i>Messrs Geddie,</i>	0 5 0
<i>Dallas &amp; Storm, Macduff,</i>	0 10 6
<i>W. G. Bryson, Esq., Cullen House,</i>	0 5 0
<b><i>Mrs John Zell Creasy,</i></b>	<b>0 10 0</b>
<i>Lieutenant Jones,</i>	1 0 0
<i>Hay McDowall Grant, Esq. of Arndilly,</i>	1 0 0
<i>James Paterson &amp; Co.,</i>	0 5 0
<i>Macduff Commercial Company,</i>	0 5 0
<i>Andrew McEwen, Esq.,</i>	0 5 0
<i>A. Morison, Esq. of Bognie,</i>	2 0 0
<i>Alex. Souter, Esq.,</i>	0 5 0
<i>James Wood, Esq.,</i>	0 5 0
<i>Collector H. M. Customs – Subscriptions in box under his care in Customhouse,</i>	<i>0 6 8</i>
<i>Subscriptions and Donations of sums under 5s.</i>	<i>3 0 0</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£27 7 2</b>

JAMES MARSHALL, Hon. Secretary.

**1867, 14<sup>th</sup> May:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: “**BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFEBOAT.** – A meeting of the Banff and

*Macduff Branch of the National Lifeboat Institution was held in the office of the National Banh, Banff, on Friday last – Provost Adam on the chair. There were present: - Captain Creasy, Provost Duncan, Mr John Watson, shipbuilder; Mr Paterson, shipowner; and Messrs Dallas, A. Watt, Wilson, and Anderson, Macduff. Mr Marshall, Customs, the Local Secretary, was also present. It being stated that the present coxswain had failed to man the boat on two occasions, it was resolved to appoint a new coxswain to enter upon his duties at once. Mr Daniel Hamilton, commissioned boatmen, was selected, and unanimously appointed. Mr Watt handed in a donation of £1 to the funds of the Institution; and Mr Anderson a donation of 10s. It was resolved to add the names of Mr Evans, Collector, and Mr James Simpson to the Committee.”*

£1 in 1867 = approx. £115 in 2020.

**1867, 24<sup>th</sup> May:** The Peterhead Sentinel and General Advertiser for Buchan District reported as follows: *“The Trustees of the late Misses Russell of Rathen have given the sum of £10 as a contribution to the funds of the Banff and Macduff Lifeboat Institution and have accompanied the donation with a suggestion that it would be well if the fishermen could be induced to take life-belts with them on all occasions when they go to sea, adding that they will be glad to see a part of the funds devoted to that purpose.”*

**1867, 12<sup>th</sup> November:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: *“**Banff and Macduff Life-boat.** — The crew of this life-boat were exercised in the bay on Tuesday afternoon last. Mr Hamilton was in command, and Captain Creasy accompanied the crew to sea. The boat was launched from the beach at the Palmer Cove. There was a pretty heavy surf, and as the boat proceeded to sea, her capabilities were pretty severely tested. The crew managed the boat admirably. When at sea three of them jumped overboard in succession to try the usefulness of the cork jackets which they wore, and of course were got safely on board again. After going about a mile and a half to sea, the boat turned and entered Macduff harbour. The boat was taken from the boathouse, launched, exercised, brought into Macduff harbour. placed upon the carriage, and lodged in the boathouse again within an hour. The launching and exercise of the boat were watched from the beach by a large concourse of spectators, including - Mrs Creasy, Mr Souter, Mrs Dickson, Captain Jones. Mr and Mrs Borradaile, Bellevue House, Adjutant Crabbe, Rev. Mr Davidson and Mrs Davidson, Provost Dallas, Macduff; Mr Bisset, Macduff Commercial Coy.; Mr Marshall, Secretary to the life-boat; Mr and Misses Rae, etc.”*

**1868, 7<sup>th</sup> January:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows:

***BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFE BOAT.***

***LIST of ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS and DONATIONS for the BANFF and MACDUFF LIFE BOAT for the Year 1867:-***

<i>Mr E. G. Duff, Esq., M.P.,</i>	<i>£1 0 0</i>
<i>Alex. Morison, Esq. of Bognie,</i>	<i>2 0 0</i>
<i>R. W. Duff of Fetteresso, M. P.,</i>	<i>1 0 0</i>
<i>A. McEwen, Banff,</i>	<i>0 5 0</i>
<i>Mr Souter, Banff,</i>	<i>0 5 0</i>
<i>Sir Geo. S. Abercromby, Bart.,</i>	<i>1 0 0</i>
<i>Commander Creasy, R.N.,</i>	<i>0 10 0</i>
<i>Mrs Creasy,</i>	<i>0 10 0</i>
<i>Robert Duncan,</i>	<i>0 5 0</i>
<i>Major Gordon Duff,</i>	<i>1 0 0</i>
<i>Thomas Adam, Esq.,</i>	<i>0 5 0</i>
<i>James Simpson,</i>	<i>0 2 6</i>
<i>Macduff Commercial Company,</i>	<i>0 5 0</i>
<i>Dallas &amp; Storm, Macduff,</i>	<i>0 10 0</i>
<i>The Earl of Fife,</i>	<i>3 0 0</i>
<i>John Hannay,</i>	<i>0 5 0</i>
<i>Henry Milne, M.D.,</i>	<i>0 5 0</i>
<i>James Paterson &amp; Co.,</i>	<i>0 2 6</i>
<i>Joseph Kilgour,</i>	<i>0 5 0</i>
<i>Provost J. Wood,</i>	<i>0 5 0</i>
<i>John Allan &amp; Son, Portsoy,</i>	<i>0 5 0</i>
<i>W. Watson,</i>	<i>0 1 0</i>
<i>Alex. Ramsay,</i>	<i>0 2 0</i>
<i>G. W. Murray,</i>	<i>0 2 0</i>
<i>W. G. Bryson, Cullen House,</i>	<i>0 5 0</i>
<i>Cosmo Gordon, Fyvie,</i>	<i>1 0 0</i>
<i>Francis Diggins, R.N.,</i>	<i>0 5 0</i>
<i>J. Williamson,</i>	<i>0 2 6</i>
<i>John Forsyth,</i>	<i>0 2 0</i>
<i>James Smith,</i>	<i>0 2 6</i>
<i>H. Munro,</i>	<i>0 2 6</i>
<i>Nisbet &amp; Co.,</i>	<i>0 2 6</i>
<i>John W. Simpson,</i>	<i>0 2 6</i>
<i>Gordon &amp; Watt</i>	<i>0 5 0</i>
<i>James Smith, cabinetmaker</i>	<i>0 2 6</i>
<i>Continued...</i>	

<i>John Fraser,</i>	0 2 6
<i>John Nicol</i>	0 2 6
<i>James Rust,</i>	0 2 6
<i>Rev. J. Watson Geddie,</i>	0 2 6
<i>Dr R. Bremner,</i>	0 2 6
<i>R. Morrison,</i>	0 2 6
<i>Hon. Geo. S. Duff,</i>	1 0 0
<i>Dr Manson and Barclay,</i>	0 5 0
<i>Rev. James Davidson,</i>	0 2 6
<i>The Messrs Geddie,</i>	0 5 0
<i>Mr Watt,</i>	0 5 0
<i>John Watson,</i>	0 2 6
<i>Alex. Watt, Esq., Macduff,</i>	1 0 0
<i>W. Anderson, Esq., Macduff,</i>	0 10 0
<i>Subscription Box in Custom House, per Collector</i>	0 6 11
<b>Total</b>	<b>£20 12 11</b>

**DONATIONS TOWARDS THE ERECTION OF LIFE-BOAT HOUSE.**

<i>F. G. Campbell, Esq., Troup, per Mr Ramsay,</i>	£1 1 0
<i>A. Morison, Esq., of Bognie, per Mr Souter,</i>	2 0 0
<i>Lieutenant Jones, R. E.,</i>	0 10 0
<i>Colonel Gordon, Fyvie, per C. Chalmers, Esq., Aberdeen,</i>	1 0 0
<i>C. Chalmers, Esq., Aberdeen,</i>	1 0 0
<i>Captain Diggins, R.N.,</i>	0 5 0
<i>Dr Bremner, Banff, per Mr Adam, Banker,</i>	0 10 6
<i>Hon. G. S. Duff, per Mr Ramsay,</i>	1 0 0
<i>Earl of Seafield, per Mr Bryson,</i>	1 0 0
<i>Sir G. S. Abercromby, per Mr Coutts,</i>	1 0 0
<i>Mr Simpson, Whitehills, Collection in Free Church, Mr Trail,</i>	0 12 1½
<i>Right Hon. The Earl of Fife, per Mr Hannay,</i>	3 3 0
<i>John Hannay, Esq.,</i>	0 7 6
<i>Mr Souter, Turriff,</i>	0 5 0
<i>J. Hutcheon, Turriff,</i>	0 5 0
<i>J. Grieve, Turriff,</i>	0 5 0
<i>J. Morrison, Turriff,</i>	0 7 6
<i>John Cruickshank, D.D., Turriff,</i>	0 5 0
<i>Dr Wallace, Turriff,</i>	0 2 6
<i>Alex. Leslie, Turriff,</i>	0 2 6
<i>Alex. Cruickshank, Turriff</i>	0 2 6
<i>Mrs Chisholm, Turriff,</i>	0 2 6
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7 19 1½</b>

**JAMES MARSHALL, Hon. Secy.**

**1868, 4<sup>th</sup> February:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: *“**LIFE-BOAT SERVICE.** – On the morning of Thursday last, at about a quarter to ten, the Coast-Guard watchman at the Banff Station reported that he observed a sail in the offing, which, from appearances and movements, seemed to be disabled or something wrong on board. The circumstances of the case being reported to Captain Creasy, Inspector and Commander of the Coast-Guard, the Captain, in order to remove all doubt, ordered the life-boat to be floated and to proceed to the vessel. The crew accordingly got the life-boat out and launched about half-past ten. The whole crew were present, and the boat was under the command of Mr D. Hamilton of the Coast-Guard. The vessel was about 9 miles from Banff. There being a pretty fair wind, the boat rapidly approached the ship. On the life-boat nearing the vessel, those on board the ship showed signs of activity by making sail. The life-boat crew hailed the ship, and had a rope’s end from the vessel, and learned that she was the ‘**Lee**’, of and from Montrose, Alexander master, bound to Little Ferry with timber. The ‘**Lee**’ had been blown off during the late gales, and in consequence of the exertions which were then necessary, the crew appeared to be all very much fatigued. This, no doubt, was the reason why the vessel seemed to be out of order, her sails being only partially set, and hanging about in such a manner as might be expected in the case of a vessel in distress. The life-boat crew having ascertained that all was right, turned towards the shore, but the wind being westerly, it was only after a long and hard pull that the crew made Banff harbour at seven at night.”*

**1868, 18<sup>th</sup> February:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: *“**LIFE-BOAT – LOCAL BRANCH.** – At a meeting of the Life-boat Committee of the Banff and Macduff Branch, held on Friday – Provost Wood in the chair – Mr Marshall, honorary secretary, submitted his cash-book, with relative vouchers, from which it appeared that the donations received during the past year from all sources amounted to £30 8s. 9d., the annual subscriptions to £25 12s. 6d., which, added to the balance brought from previous year, £17 1s. 1d., amounted in all to £73 2s. 4d. The total expenditure for the same period amounted to £56 10s. 1d., leaving a balance in hand of £16 12s. 3d., all of which the meeting found correct and approved of. A discussion then took place as to supplying the fishing boats embraced in the district of this branch with life belts, but it was found impracticable on account of the expense to supply the number required, and it was resolved, therefore, in the meantime to order six belts, with rope and other necessary apparatus, five of them to be given to the village of Sandend, where there is no life saving apparatus, leaving any further action in the matter till another year.”*

**1868, 25<sup>th</sup> February:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: *“**WRECK OF A BOAT.** – We regret to report the wreck of the fishing boat ‘**Mary and Will**’, belonging to Burnhaven, of the port of Peterhead. The crew were bound for the cod fishing on the west coast, and, along with another boat belonging to Peterhead, had left Fraserburgh a little after one o’clock on Thursday morning. Being caught in the gale off Banff, the two boats sought to run Banff harbour, but being too far westward, and mistaking the lights of the harbour, the ‘**Mary and Will**’ got ashore among the rocks at the back of the harbour. The advance of the boats had been watched by the Coast-guard, and immediately on the boat striking, the watchman raised the Coast-guard, and the whole Coast-guard crew proceeded in their boat, under the charge of Mr Mather, chief officer, and brought off the crew, consisting of the master, Wm. Buchan, and five other men, along with one woman. The whole were landed safely, and the Coast-guard men, along with the Banff fishermen, proceeded to save the provisions and gear of the boat. The craft was subsequently brought into the harbour, but was found to be very much damaged. The boat which was in company with the ‘**Mary and Will**’ also came into the harbour. The master of the wrecked boat estimates his loss at about £160, of which £60 is laid upon the boat, which was a craft of 17 tons, the other £100 being for material etc. The Honorary Agent of the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners’ Society, seeing the distressed condition of the crew, arranged for their being forwarded to their homes. We may also mention that a sum of upwards of £20 was subscribed for the crew in Banff. Macduff and Whitehills, the money having been collected by Messrs Wm. Sclater, Thomas Crawford, and Charles Cormack, fisherman in Banff, the list being headed by Provost Wood with a subscription of a guinea.”*

**1868, 17<sup>th</sup> March:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: *“**TRIAL OF LIFE SAVING APPARATUS.** – On Saturday afternoon last, the Banff Coast Guard, under the command of Capt. Creasy, Inspector Commander of the Coast Guard, had their usual periodical trial of the life-saving apparatus on the Green Banks. Owing to the damp nature of the building where the apparatus and powder were kept, the firing was not so successful as usual. The first rocket missed fire two or three times, and when it did ultimately go off, it failed to carry the rope along with it. Another rocket was got ready with as little delay as possible, and the result was more successful, the rope being carried across to the other side of the river, where one of the coast guard was ready to receive it, and, on adjusting it, a strong rope was drawn across and fixed to a pole erected for the purpose. The cradle was then got ready, and conveyed over, when a boy got into it, and was drawn safely over. Another volunteer was*

*afterwards got over in the same way. The first attempt to fire the mortar was unsuccessful, the shot being fired, but the rope being left behind. On subsequent trials, the result was more satisfactory, the rope being carried over with great precision. Notwithstanding the delay occasioned by the dampness of the powder, etc., the work was carried on and finished with the greatest celerity."*

**1868, 7<sup>th</sup> April:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: "**REWARD FOR SAVING LIFE.** – *The Directors of the Royal Life Boat Institution have made a grant of £5 to six Coastguardmen at Banff, for their prompt and laudable services in proceeding to sea in their boat, and at great danger, rescuing six men and a woman from the fishing boat 'Mary and Will' of Peterhead, wrecked near Banff on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> February last. The money was received yesterday by Mr Marshall, of the Customs, Local Agent for the Institution, and paid over to the men for whom it was intended."*

(£5 in 1868 = approx. £578 in 2020).

**1868, 8<sup>th</sup> September:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: "**DANGEROUS EXPLOIT.** *Considerable excitement was caused in Banff on Sunday evening last on account of four juveniles having taken a boat from her moorings in the harbour and proceeded to sea. It was known that the youths were incapable of managing the boat, and as they went to sea about four o'clock, when darkness began to set in, fear prevailed that they had met with some mishap, or that, with their ignorance of navigation, they might be unable to bring the boat to land. After the churches were dismissed in the evening, a large crowd gathered on the pier to look out for the missing boat. A few of the pilots at the port ultimately volunteered to go in search of the lads who had so recklessly thrown their friends into a state of anxiety. As they were preparing to leave the harbour at about nine p.m., the missing boat made its appearance in the offing, and the lads were landed in safety. Apart from the questionable proceeding of taking a boat from her moorings without permission, and especially on a Sunday, such reckless conduct is reprehensible, alike for the public anxiety to which it leads, and the danger incurred by the unthinking persons engaged."*



**1<sup>st</sup> December 1868:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: ***BANFF ROCKET APPARATUS AND LIFEBOAT.** – The appliances for saving life, in case of shipwreck on the coast at Banff and Macduff, were exercised and tested on Saturday last. The operations were under the directions of Captain Creasy, R.N., Commander of the Coast-Guard. At half-past eleven o'clock, Manby's apparatus was taken from the station at Battery Green, to the Greenbanks. The Volunteers were at their posts, and in a few minutes everything was got in readiness for establishing communication with a party on the bar between the Deveron and the sea. The first rocket fired carried the line across the river, directly to its destination. The cradle was twice sent across, and brought back passengers, the apparatus being wrought so successfully that the cradle did not touch the water. The mortar was again fired, and a second rope carried across. Immediately thereafter, the lifeboat was launched at the Palmer Cove, and exercised a short distance from the shore, and within easy sight of a large number of spectators. The sea was almost as calm as the river, so that the exercise was more in the nature of a pleasure sail, than a test of the sea-worthy qualities of the boat. The crew did their duties very much to the satisfaction of their superiors, and to the delight of the onlookers. Among the large company who was assembled to witness these interesting operations were – the Marquis and Marchioness Townshead, Lady Alexina Duff, Mr and Mrs Kennedy Erskine, Mr Tayler of Glenbarry; Mr Hannay, Corskie Bank; Capt. Beatson R.N., Fraserburgh; Lieut. Jones, Ordnance Survey; Mrs Creasy, Provost Wood, Ex-Provost Duncan, Banff; Mr John Allan, solicitor; Mr and Mrs Watt, National Bank; Mr and Misses Watt, Macduff; Mrs Crosbie, Mrs Sangster, Mr and Miss Chalmers, Mr Auld, Commercial Bank, etc."*



*Former Bar (Sand bank) at Banff Bay pre-WW2. (Photographer unknown).  
(It was removed to build the runways at RAF Banff during WW2).*



1866 map of Banff showing the Bar.

**1868, 29<sup>th</sup> December:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: "**BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFEBOAT. – ADDITIONAL SUBSCRIPTIONS – YEAR 1868.**

W. J. Tayler, Esq. of Glenbarry,	£1 1 0
John Harvey, Esq. of Carnousie,	£1 1 0
Collected from Shipping in Banff Harbour during Year by Mr Sheriffs, Shore Dues Office	£4 6 0
Found in Donation Boxes at Customhouse, Banff, Boat House, and Office of Mr Wilson, Shipbroker, Macduff,	£0 10 4
	JAMES WATT, Hon. Sec.

Banff 28<sup>th</sup> December 1868."

**1869, 29<sup>th</sup> June:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: "**BANFF – ROCKET APPARATUS.** – On Tuesday last, the Banff Life Saving Apparatus was taken out for practice on the Green Banks, under the superintendence of Captain Wellington Andrews, commander of the Coast Guard. There were present – the Right Honourable the Earl of Fife and Lady Agnes Duff, Mr John Hannay and Master Hannay, Mr W. G. Bryson, Cullen House, and Mrs Bryson, Provost Wood, Mr John Forbes, solicitor, and Mrs and Miss Forbes, Mrs Andrews, Miss Chalmers, Banff; Rev. Mr Manson, and Mrs and Miss Manson, Mrs Geddie, Dr Clark, Mr and Miss Rae, Misses Watt, Banff etc. After the usual preparations, a shot was fired from a mortar which carried a line from the Green Banks across the Deveron to the opposite side. By means of this line, a strong rope was drawn across the river, and attached to a pole erected for the purpose. Over this rope, the cradle was drawn twice in succession, each time

*bringing safely across its passenger. A rocket was then fired, and, as in the former case carried a line safely over the river. This done, the spectators moved leisurely over to the Life Boat House between Banff and Macduff, where the boat was then taken out, and having been manned by about a dozen hands (who wore the red caps, which had been recently provided by the Royal Life Boat Institution) was speedily launched, and behave beautifully on the water, Before proceeding on board the life boat, the crew repeatedly cheered the Earl of Fife, and were heartily joined by the spectators.”*

**1869, 29<sup>th</sup> June:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: **MR WATT**, treasurer, Banff and Macduff Lifeboat, begs to acknowledge the following donations: -

*Trustees of the late Misses Russell, per Mr Smith, £5 0 s. 0 d.*

*Collection from Shipping in Banff Harbour since*

*October, per Mr Sheriffs. £2 5 s. 0 d.*

*Do. From Shipping in Macduff Harbour for past*

*year, per Mr Farquharson. £8 0 s. 0 d.*

“£1 in 1869 = £122 in 2020).

**1869, 16<sup>th</sup> March:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: **“TRIAL OF LIFE SAVING AGENCIES.** – *On Saturday last, the Banff and Macduff life-boat was exercised by the Banff crew. The boat was launched at Macduff harbour about one o’clock, under the command of Mr Charles Cormack, Mr McAlmout of the Coast Guard acting as second coxswain. A considerable surf was running at the time, and the sea-going qualities of the life-boat were more severely tested than at several previous practisings. The boat remained an hour at sea, was proved to be in excellent condition, and then brought back to Macduff harbour. In the afternoon about three o’clock, the rocket apparatus was tried at the Green Banks, under the superintendence of Captain Andrews, of the Coast Guard. The first shot fired carried the line almost direct to the point intended to be reached. The sling buoy was sent twice across the river; and the whole gearing was found to be in an efficient state.”*

**1869, 21<sup>st</sup> September:** *The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser* reported as follows: “The quarterly practising of the Banff and Macduff lifeboat took place on Thursday last. The boat was launched from the beach near the boathouse, and took the water excellently though a heavy sea was running, the wind being N.NW. The boat has recently been painted, and her gearing overhauled. During three-quarters of an hour that the boat was out, she behaved excellently, and the sea was sufficiently high to test pretty severely her capabilities. The practice having been fixed because of the suitability of the weather, and no previous announcement having been given, there were fewer spectators than usual. Provost Wood, Chairman of the Local Committee, and Mr Watt, National Bank, Banff, Secretary, and several members of Committee were present, and expressed themselves satisfied that the lifeboat was in condition for being used in any emergency that might arise. The usual trial of Manby’s life-saving apparatus took place on Saturday afternoon on the Green Banks. The working of the apparatus was directed by Commander Andrews of the Coast Guard. The rope was carried across the river by the first rocket fired, and the gearing appeared to work well, and to be in a satisfactory condition.”

**1869, 21<sup>st</sup> December:** *The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser* reported as follows: “**LIFEBOAT.** – The Banff and Macduff lifeboat was practised in the bay on Friday forenoon last. The time for the trial had been fixed to suit the weather, the sea being then sufficiently stormy to test the qualities of the boat. The launch took place at the beach at Palmer Cove, and the boat was taken several miles to sea. The boat was landed at Banff harbour, where the carriage was in waiting to convey her by land to the station house. The boat and her appurtenances were found to be in a very satisfactory condition. It will be observed that the subscriptions towards the maintenance of the lifeboat for this year are being collected.”

**1869, 21<sup>st</sup> December:** *The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser* reported as follows:

**“ROYAL NATIONAL LIFE-BOAT INSTITUTION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIVES FROM SHIPWRECK – SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1869**

<i>Right Hon. The Earl of Fife.</i>	£10 0 0 (Pounds, schillings and pence).
<i>Alex. Morison, Esq. of Bognie,</i>	£2 0 0
<i>Sir Geo. Abercromby, Bart.,</i>	£1 0 0
<i>R. W. Duff, Esq., M.P.,</i>	£1 0 0

<i>Provost Wood,</i>	<i>£0 10 6</i>
<i>Messrs Dallas &amp; Storm,</i>	<i>£0 10 6</i>
<i>Alex. Watt, Esq., Shipowner,</i>	<i>£0 10 6</i>
<i>James Wilson Esq.</i>	<i>£0 10 6</i>
<i>James Simpson, Esq., Colleonard,</i>	<i>£0 10 0</i>
<i>Alex. Bow, Esq.,</i>	<i>£0 5 0</i>
<i>Rev. Dr Bremner,</i>	<i>£0 5 0</i>
<i>Captain Diggins,</i>	<i>£0 5 0</i>
<i>Robert Duncan, Esq.,</i>	<i>£0 5 0</i>
<i>Rev. J. W. Geddie,</i>	<i>£0 5 0</i>
<i>Messrs J. &amp; W. Geddie,</i>	<i>£0 5 0</i>
<i>Messrs Gordon &amp; Watt,</i>	<i>£0 5 0</i>
<i>John Hannay, Esq.,</i>	<i>£0 5 0</i>
<i>Macduff Commercial Company,</i>	<i>£0 5 0</i>
<i>Dr Milne,</i>	<i>£0 5 0</i>
<i>Messrs G. W. Murray &amp; Co.,</i>	<i>£0 5 0</i>
<i>George Neish, Esq.,</i>	<i>£0 5 0</i>
<i>Messrs Nisbet &amp; Co.</i>	<i>£0 5 0</i>
<i>Jas. Simpson, Jun., Esq.,</i>	<i>£0 5 0</i>
<i>Sums under 5s.,</i>	<i>£2 16 0</i>

*Further subscriptions invited by the Committee.*

*JAMES WATT, Treasurer*

*Banff and Macduff Branch.*

*Banff 20<sup>th</sup> December 1869."*

**1870, 20<sup>th</sup> December: The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: "Banff and Macduff Life Boat. — The Committee of this Institution gratefully acknowledge the following subscriptions for the year now closing: F Garden Campbell, Esq. of Troup, £5; William James Tayler, Esq. of Glenbarry, £1 1s. As the life boat has not been required for service during the current quarter, she will launched for practice in the course of this or next week; and now waits a sufficiently rough day to test her powers. As will be remembered, the boat now at the station is new one, and the crew are naturally anxious to ascertain her capabilities."**

**1871, 13<sup>th</sup> June:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: *“Banff and Macduff Life Boat.—Mr Watt has received £7 5s. for the life boat, from Mr Farquharson, collector of Shore Dues, Macduff, being amount of contribution by vessels entering that harbour for the past year.”*

**1872, April 20<sup>th</sup>** — The Life-Boat magazine reported as followed: *“The brig ‘Trioner’, of Arendal, Norway, was seen in a distressed condition off Banff, during a gale of wind from the N.E. The Banff Life-boat went to her assistance and was enabled to save the crew of nine men shortly before the vessel was wrecked on the rocks to the westward of Macduff Harbour. — Expense of service, £9, 7s.”*

**1872, 1<sup>st</sup> May:** The Life-Boat magazine reported as follows:

**BANFF AND MACDUFF BRANCH.**

President — The EARL OF FIFE, K.T.

Chairman — JAMES WOOD, Esq. Provost of Banff.

Deputy-Chairman — ALEXANDER DALLAS, Esq., Provost of Macduff.

Treasurer and Hon. Sec. — JAMES WATT, Esq.

<b>Annual Subscriptions.</b>	<b>£. s. d</b>
Seafield, Earl of	1 0 0
Abercromby, Sir G. Bart	1 0 0
Ainslie, A. D. Esq.	1 0 0
Anderson, Bailie	- 5 0
Banff Shipping	5 6 6
Bow, Alex. Esq.	- 6 0
Box at Boat House.	1 2 2
Bremner, Dr. & Mrs.	- 5 0
Campbell, F. G. Esq.	1 0 0
Creasy, Capt. & Mrs.	1 0 0
Cumming, George Esq.	- 5 0
Dallas and Storm	- 10 6
Diggens, Capt. R.N.	- 5 0
Duff, R.W. Esq., M.P.	1 0 0
Duff, M. E. Grant, Esq. M.P.	1 0 0
Duff, Hon. G. Skene.	1 0 0
Duff, Major Gordon	1 0 0
Duncan, R. Esq.....	- 5 0
Findlay Mrs.	- 5 0
Forest, Rev. E. G.	- 5 0
Gardner, Rev. Jos.	- 5 0
Geddie, J. and W.	- 5 0

Geddie, Rev. J. W.	- 5 0
Gordon, Colonel	1 0 0
Gordon, Sheriff	- 5 0
Gordon and Watt	- 5 0
Hannay, John, Esq.	- 5 0
Harvey, J. Esq.	1 1 0
Hicks, Robert Esq.	- 10 0
Macduff, Commercial Co.	-5 0
Macduff Shipping	7 5 0
Milne Dr	-5 0
Morrison, Alex. Esq.	2 0 0
Murray, G. W. & Co.	-5 0
Neish, Geo Esq.	- 5 0
Nicol, Andrew, Esq.	3 0 0
Nisbet and Co.	- 5 0
Paterson & Co.,	- 5 0
Promoters of Seamen's Soiree	1 5 0
Russell, Trustees of late misses	10 0 0
Scott, Alex. Esq. ...	1 0 0
Simpson, J. Esq.	- 5 0
Taylor, W. J. Esq.	1 0 0
Watson, John, Esq.	- 5 2
Watt, Alex. Esq.	- 10 6
Webster, D. Esq.	1 1 0
Wilson, J. Esq.	- 10 6
Wood, Provost	- 10 6
Sums under 5s.	3 2 8
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>65 19 6</b>

**1872, 25<sup>th</sup> October:** The Elgin Courant, and Morayshire Advertiser reported as follows: *“A NOVEL "CALL" -- The Committee of the Banff and Macduff Life-Boat have procured leave to use the 24 pounder of the Banffshire Artillery Volunteers at their Battery Green, in calling the crew of the boat to service, inspection, or exercise. One shot is to be fired during the day and two during the night when the crew are wanted.”*



*The man with the spy-glass was known as 'Packety', at the Battery Green, Banff (Pre-1900). Note the small dumpy cannon at his feet, this is a 'Manby Apparatus'.*

**1874, 17<sup>th</sup> August:** The London Evening Standard reported as follows: ***"LIFE-BOAT SERVICES.*** — *A letter from Banff, N. B., states that a heavy gale from NNE sprung up there on Friday morning, and a number of herring fishing boats were in great danger, causing them to run for Macduff Harbour from all quarters. Unfortunately, however, on account of its being ebb tide they could not enter, and had to wait in a cluster at the harbour's mouth for the flood tide. The Banff and Macduff life boat the 'John and Sarah', belonging to the National Institution, was quickly taken afloat to the assistance of the fishing boats, and helped them all day. Three boats were wrecked, but happily all hands were saved by the life boats. One man had a narrow escape, having got into the water, and it was with great difficulty that he was rescued. At Portessie one fishing boat was lost with her crew of five men, and several other boats are missing at the present time. A telegram from Buckie, North Britain, reports that the Life-boat Society's boat on that station, the James Sturm, saved on Friday night, during the strong north-easterly gale, seven men from three fishing boats. She took them safely ashore about two miles to the eastward of Buckie through a high sea. The boat received some damage while landing on the beach."*

**1875, 22<sup>nd</sup> November:** Lloyd's List reported as follows: ***"BANFF, 19<sup>th</sup> Nov.*** - *We have had a strong gale here from the NE since. 8 o'clock this morning. Prior to the wind rising, the fishing-boats, had left early this morning for the fishing*



*ground, and they were forced to return. When they were observed to be making for Macduff harbour, the Banff and Macduff lifeboat "John & Sarah", belonging to the National Institution, was launched so as to be in readiness in case of emergency, but fortunately all the fishing-boats got safely into harbour. The gale still continues and there is a high sea running, but no vessels in sight."*

**1876, 28<sup>th</sup> March:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: *"**Banff and Macduff Life-boat.** —The life-boat will, we understand, be taken afloat for exercise about four on Saturday afternoon. It is a rule of the National Lifeboat Institution that all their boats be afloat for service, inspection, or exercise at least once a quarter, in order to provide for their efficiency."*

**1876, 4<sup>th</sup> July:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: *"**BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFEBOAT.** – The lifeboat was taken afloat for the usual exercise on Friday, being the last day of the quarter. There were a good many onlookers in addition to some of the members of Committee. The various members of the crew, in order to increase their confidence in their lifebelts, put their floating powers to the test by jumping overboard from time to time in the course of the exercise."*

**1876, 17<sup>th</sup> October:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: ***BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFEBOAT.** - A joint meeting of the Lifeboat Committee and the Police Commissioners of Macduff was held on Friday, to receive the report of Mr Farquharson, architect, as to the recent encroachment of the sea on the bar, whereby the Boathouse and road were endangered. There were present, as representing these bodies - Provost Martin, Mr Bow, Mr Watson, gas manager; Mr Paterson, Wanford; Mr A. Simpson, clothier; Mr A. Watson, shipbuilder; Mr G. Strachan, Mr A. George, Mr Farquharson, Mr Mackrell of the Coast-guard. Admiral Robertson, Inspector of Life Boats, was also present. The report was read, and having been discussed, it was the unanimous opinion of the meeting that rather than go in for the expense which it appeared was necessary, it would be better to remove the house to another site, believing that any expense meantime incurred in protecting the foundation of the present house would be only a temporary measure. Various sites were spoken of, but ultimately a deputation was appointed to make application to the Earl of Fife to ascertain whether a site could be got at the opening at the east end of the Banff Bridge. In this view the Admiral concurred."*

**1876, 14<sup>th</sup> November:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: **“BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFE-BOAT. – SUBSCRIPTIONS, 1876,** *intimated to the HON, SECRETARY: - Mrs Morison of Bognie, £2; Mrs Chivas, Aberdeen, per Mr Adam, £1 1s; Sir Robert Abercromby, per Provost Coutts, £1; Mr Hunter, H.M. Customs, 10s.; Mrs Findlay, Aberdeen; Provosts Martin, Wood, and Duncan, Rev. Messrs Geddie and Hunter, Capt. Diggens, Dr Milne, Messrs Nisbet, Murray, Dallas, and Wilson, Mr Hannay, Mr Jas. Simpson, Mr Bow, and Mr Allan, 5s. each. Rev. Mr Davidson, Mr Munro, and Mr Morrison, 3s. each. 12 smaller sums, 29s. 6d.”*

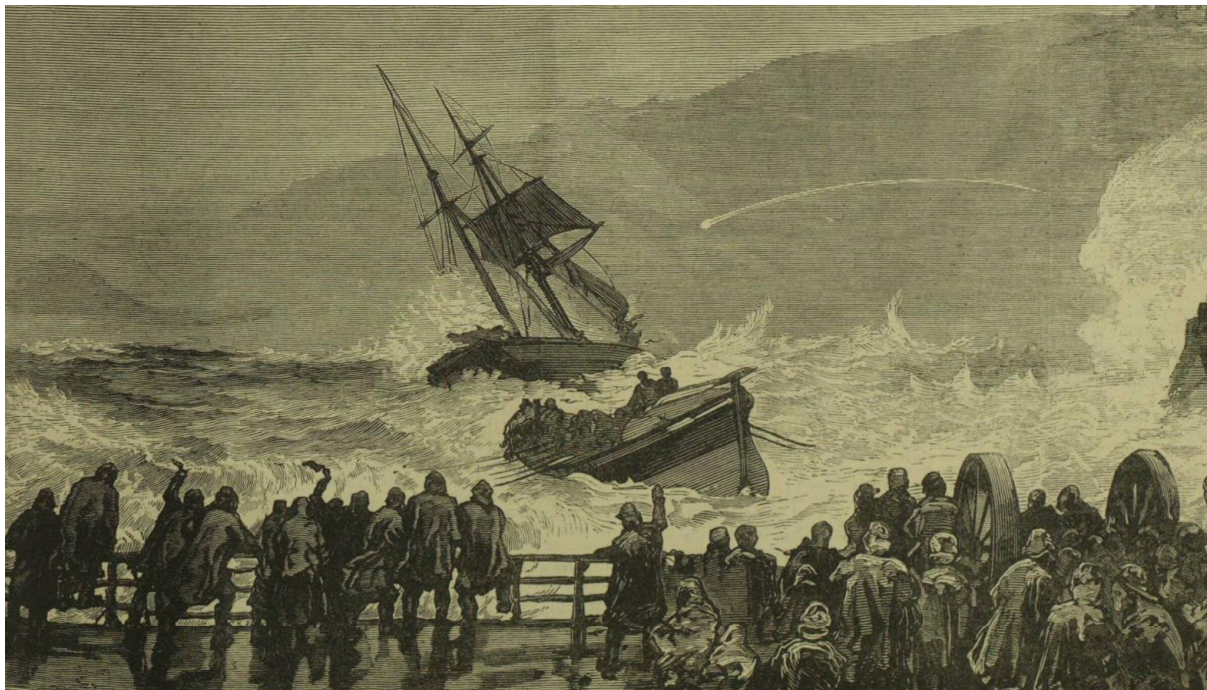
**1877, 9<sup>th</sup> January:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: **“BANFF & MACDUFF LIFE-BOAT. – ADDITIONAL SUBSCRIPTIONS 1876.** *– RUSSELL TRUSTEES, per Mr Smith, Aberdeen, £10; Lord SEAFIELD, Colonel GORDON of Fyvie, Col. CAMPBELL of Troup, and Mr SCOTT, Towie-Barclay, £1 each. Mr TAYLER of Glenbarry and the Hon. Mr DUFF – both per Mr Hannay - £1 each; Misses ABERCROMBY, Aberdeen, per Mr Adam, 10s.; Mr BRYSON, Cullen House, 5s; smaller sums 54 – together £17.”*

£1 in 1877 = approx. £120 in 2020.

**1877, 9<sup>th</sup> January:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: **“BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFE-BOAT.** *The annual meeting of the subscribers to this useful Institution was held in the National Bank, Banff, on Thursday. There was a good attendance, and Captain Diggens, R.N., occupied the chair. The accounts for the year were submitted, showing a favourable balance, from which it was resolved to send, as usual, £25 to the parent Institution in London in aid of the general cause. The accounts were remitted for audit. The boat’s services had not luckily been required during the year, but on two occasions the crew had been mustered, and the boat launched to be in readiness in case of need. Various returns asked were directed to be made. From several causes the Committee had had imposed on them during the year more arduous duties than usual. Their acts were approved, and a vote of thanks accorded to them. The management was then constituted as follows for 1877: - President, Earl of Fife, Chairman, Provost of Banff; Deputy Chairman, Provost of Macduff; Committee – Captain Diggens, R.N., Mr Alex. Dallas, Mr Watson, Gas Coy.; Mr Bow, Mr Henry Munro, Mr Farquharson, architect; Mr Alex. Watson, shipbuilder, Mr Paterson, Wanford; and Mr Mackrell, Coast-guard; Mr James Watt Hon. Secretary. A vacancy was left for the new Collector of Customs when he is appointed. Recent subscriptions were ordered to be acknowledged in the*

*Journal, and it was remarked that the subscriptions came in so regularly that only one or two arrears appeared in the list.”*

**1877, 29<sup>th</sup> February:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: **“NEW LIFE-BOAT HOUSE.** - Plans, have been received front the Life-Boat Institution for the new house for the Banff and Macduff life-boat. The building is to be situated upon the level piece of ground near the entrance to the quarry at the east end of Banff-Bridge. The plan is for a commodious and rather ornamental erection. The gable forming the main elevation will front the road on a line with the bridge. It will show a frame of freestone filled in with bluestone, a tablet will bear the initials of the Institution and the gable will be surmounted with an ornamental finial. As far as possible the material of the old boat-house will be used in the new erection, and the expense will be borne by the National Institution.”



*Lifeboat rescue - Illustrated London News Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> November 1880.*

**1877, 3<sup>rd</sup> April:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: **“BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFEBOAT.** – The Life-Boat not having been required for service during the last quarter, was launched for exercise in terms of the rules of the Institution, on Saturday last. The weather being squally, the crew had a good opportunity of testing her qualities under sail, which they took advantage of, and speak in high terms of her behaviour. From their experience of the boat they have full confidence in her in any weather. She was in charge of

*Charles Cormack, coxswain; and Mr Mackrell of the coastguard as representative of the Local Committee, was as usual active in carrying out the arrangements."*

**1877, 10<sup>th</sup> April:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: "**WRECK OF A BANFF FISHING BOAT AND LOSS OF SIX LIVES.** – A very sad boat accident occurred on Thursday morning on rocks near Banff Harbour, which resulted in the loss of six lives. Tempted by the beautiful weather on Wednesday, a number of the boats sailed for the deep sea fishing. After their departure a telegram was received at the Coastguard Station from the Metrological Office predicting a strong south-easterly wind, and directing that the south cone be hoisted. This intelligence only arrived at Banff at half-past eight in the evening, and the crews of the boats at sea were in ignorance of the approaching danger. Amongst the boats that sailed from Banff at three o'clock on Wednesday afternoon was the '**Amiable**' **B.F. 901**, of which David Falconer was master and part owner along with James Wood, 'Park'. These two fishermen were on board when the craft set out as well as the following: - William Mair, 'Shanker', George Crawford, Thomas Crawford, junior, together with two boys Joseph Falconer, and William Crawford. It may be mentioned that all the Crawfords were brothers. The boat went a good distance out, and on arriving at the fishing ground the crew shot their nets for the purpose of catching bait. The storm, however, by this time had come on, and the men decided to make for home. During the progress of the voyage towards the harbour, the wind increased in violence until it blew a fresh gale from the south-east with tremendously heavy sea and deluge of rain. The boat neared the shore, and it was too much sea, attempted to jib the sail. After they had performed this operation, and had sailed for a moment, they were on the crest of a wave when a heavy squall caught and broke the foremast, which was carried away close over the deck. The anchor was let go, but failed to bring up the boat, and it drifted on to the 'Fauchie' rock. The subsequent occurrence cannot be ascertained with any degree of definitiveness, the excitement of the survivors of the sad casualty having been too great to permit them to collect a distinct idea of their own struggles for life, or of the unsuccessful efforts of their comrades. The men pulled off their boats and prepared for the worst. The boat was dashed from the 'Fauchie' rock on to another ledge further west, immediately beyond the Codlin' Pot. At this latter spot she speedily went to wreck. The conjecture is that all the crew, with the exception of Falconer, the master, and James Wood, 'Park', and the two boys, were either swept into the sea and almost immediately drowned, or were killed by being knocked against the rocks. Falconer and Wood leaped on to the rock, while the two boys were washed ashore on wreckage. The

two men clung to the rocks for some considerable time. A sister of the Crawfords had observed the prognostication of the storm posted up at the Coast Guard Station, and had been waiting and watching all night for the return of the boat. She heard cries coming from the rocks at the back of the harbour very shortly after the boat struck. The alarm was given, and a number of pilots, including Mr Thomas Crawford, sen., father of the three persons of that name on the boat, and one of the Coastguardsmen, were quickly on the spot. A boat was drawn from the harbour, and launched into a creek in the vicinity of the Codlin' Pot called the Boat Hythe. The night was so terribly dark that this party passed the two boys on the rock and did not observe them. It was in vain that they endeavoured to reach the boat, and after some fruitless labour amidst a very heavy swell, they returned. Manby's Rocket Apparatus, under the command of Mr Mackrell, was taken down about 4,30 a.m., and it was then seen that two men were struggling about the wreck. Previous to this time, the boys Joseph Falconer and Wm. Crawford had been found, and the former had been taken to the Bath House, while the latter was conveyed to his home. Both were a good deal bruised. Although there was no mast standing, communication was established with the wreck by the third rocket that was fired; but before this time, one of the men, afterwards discovered to be Falconer, had been swept into the water and drowned. The boat shifted, and the other man got into it. The excitement had now become intense. Morning was breaking, and crowds of people from the town, among them the bereaved, looking for their dead, had come upon the scene. Although the man on the wreck, who was discovered to be James Wood, 'Park', caught the rope from the rocket and held it in his hand, no doubt from exhaustion or numbness he was unable to make it fast. When he did not appear to use the line, a young lad named Mackie Mearns, a sailmaker, courageously volunteered to haul himself off with the rocket line. This he endeavoured to do, having on a life belt, but he was driven back by the surf, completely



Banffshire skipper wearing a cork lifebelt.

*exhausted, and had to give up the attempt. A coble was then brought to the spot, was launched over the rocks, and was manned by James Wood, fisherman; Duncan Clark, seaman; Alexander Findlay, ship-carpenter; J. Watt, ship-carpenter; and James Paterson, from Macduff. The whole of the crew were supplied with lifebelts by Mr Mackrell, who said he would be responsible for any damage done to the coble. Mr Weatherston, tenant of the salmon fisheries, has since informed Mr Mackrell, through his foreman, that he will repair all damage to the coble, and that at any time it may be taken if required for the same purposes. The coble was pulled off by the rocket line, which was secured to the wreck. After a good deal of trouble, the men in the coble brought James Wood, 'Park', ashore about half-past eight in the morning. They returned again and examined the boat to see if any of the bodies were entangled among the wreck. None were found. Wood, who was greatly exhausted, but had stood out the ordeal remarkably well, was attended by Dr Barclay, who was on the scene of the disaster, and who had him carried to Chalmers' Hospital, where it was found that fortunately he was only slightly injured. The six men who have been lost were David Falconer, the skipper, who leaves a widow and two children; George Crawford, who leaves a widow and three children; William Mair, 'Shanker', who leaves a widow and one child; Thos. Crawford, jun. unmarried; Alex. Sivewright, unmarried; and William Thomson, Jun., unmarried. The melancholy occurrence caused the deepest sorrow, not only in Banff, but along the coast, where the unfortunate men were known and respected. Great sympathy is felt for the widows and fatherless, and for bereaved relatives. For the Crawford family especially, much pity has been expressed at their heavy affliction. A strict watch was kept for the bodies, and on Thursday forenoon that of William Thomson was found. On Friday the bodies of David Falconer, William Mair, and Alex. Sivewright were got. The bodies of the brothers Crawford were recovered on Saturday. The remains of William Thomson, jun., were interred in the Old Churchyard, Banff, on Saturday, and on the same day the funeral of David Falconer and William Mair took place at the New Cemetery. Alex. Sivewright was buried on Sunday. The funerals were attended very numerously by the fishermen in Banff, Macduff, and Whitehills, as well as by the other inhabitants of the town. Yesterday, the funeral of George and Thomas Crawford took place at the new cemetery, when there was a very large assemblage. The vessels in the harbour hoisted their flags half-mast high."*

**1877, 17<sup>th</sup> April:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: "**BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFE-BOAT HOUSE.** – Yesterday, a meeting of the Life-boat Committee was held at Banff – Mr Macfarlane, H.M. Customs

*presiding. The Secretary reported that estimates had been approved by the Institution in London for the erection of the boat house at the quarry opposite the east end of the Bridge of Banff. The following being the lowest offers, were accepted; - Mr W. Lawrence, Banff for mason work, £145 10s.; Mr J. Christie, Banff, carpenter work, £64; and Mr A. Walker, Banff, for slater work, £18 – the total cost being £227 10s. The erection will proceed at once.”*

(£227 10s. in 1877 = approx. £27,000 in 2020). Seems pretty good value for money. Perhaps the tradesmen were doing their bit for the community and giving special rates because of the buildings purpose.

**1877, 26<sup>th</sup> June:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: *“BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFE-BOAT. – A meeting of the committee was held on Friday at the new Boat House at the east end of Banff Bridge. Present – Mr Watson, Gas Co., presiding – and Messrs Macfarlane, Munro, Mackrell, and Alex. Watson, shipbuilder. The building was found to be well advanced, and it was stated that the meeting had been called mainly to fix the slope of the floor, which had been left over from last meeting. On consideration, it was fixed at one foot instead of two as originally thought of. It was also fixed that the door sill should be one foot above the road level, Those present then went to inspect the boat within the Duff House grounds, near the Bridge gate, where it is meantime placed under canvas, It was found in a satisfactory state, and directions were given that on the Agricultural Show day, 10<sup>th</sup> July, the boat should be uncovered, and flags displayed on it, and that the Boat House donation box should be affixed to it on some conspicuous part, in the hope that visitors to the show would, by their contributions, give tangible expression to their sympathy with the object of the Institution. This was remitted to Mr Mackrell. The boat was ordered to be exercised on 30<sup>th</sup> June. Thereafter the meeting broke up.”*

**1877, 3<sup>rd</sup> July:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: *“THE Banff and Macduff Life-boat was launched for quarterly exercise on Saturday. The boat was found to be in a satisfactory state.”*



*Former Lifeboat House at east side of Banff Bridge, 'RN LBI 1877'. (S. Bruce).*

**1877, 9<sup>th</sup> October:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, reported as follows: ***"BANFF – LIFE BOAT.*** – *Capt. Gray Jones, R.N., Inspector of Life Boats to the Royal National Life Boat Institution, visited Banff yesterday, and inspected the boat and equipments. He did not put the boat afloat, nor call out the crew,*



*as the quarterly exercise had lately been held. He was met by Mr Watt, the secretary, Mr Mackrell, the superintendent, and by the first and second coxswains. He expressed his satisfaction with the state in which he had found the whole affairs of the branch."*

**1878, 1<sup>st</sup> January:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: "**BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFE-BOAT.** – *The quarterly exercise of the Banff and Macduff Life-boat took place on Saturday. The practice was considered satisfactory.*"

**1924, 13<sup>th</sup> December:** *The Aberdeen Press and Journal reported as follows: "On the instructions of the London Committee of Management the lifeboat-house at Banff Bridge was offered for sale by private bargain, and was purchased by the Banff Town Council for £135."* Equivalent to approx. £8,400 In 2020.

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Macduff Lifeboat Station.

**APPENDIX A****Wreck of the PEARL at Banff, 16<sup>th</sup> November 1847.****Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser - Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1847.**

**“STORM. — WRECK, AND LOSS OF LIFE.** - *After a long tract of mild and calm weather, our coast was, on Tuesday and Wednesday last, visited with a storm of no ordinary severity. The wind blew in sudden gusts, at times with great fury; the thermometer (Barometer?), which had previously ranged about 60° fell as low as 50°, and we had, in consequence, alternate blasts of hail and snow. It is with regret we state that the storm has not been unaccompanied with loss both of property and life, the following narrative will show. At daybreak on Wednesday, parties walking on the shore observed, at a considerable distance from land, a small vessel, labouring hard and apparently in distress. The vessel, which proved to be the schooner "Pearl" of Nairn, belonging to Capt. Mackenzie of that place, bound from Sunderland with coals for Campbeltown, had, as was subsequently learned, encountered the storm early on the previous evening, when up the Frith as far as the Spey. Notwithstanding all the exertions of the crew, the ship was driven down the Firth, labouring dreadfully during the night, and before morning losing her mainboom. With his vessel thus crippled, and the water gaining fast from numerous leaks, and the storm still raging, the Captain had no other resource but to make for the nearest port on the approach of morning. It accordingly became evident to the parties, now rapidly increasing in number, who watched the little vessel, that she was making for our own harbour, and fears were naturally entertained that, owing to the storm, she would be unable to enter. Flags were therefore hoisted near the centre of the bay, in order to direct the attention of the crew to that point, as the one on which it was desirable the vessel stranded, should that desperate course have to be resorted to. From the position, however, in which the flags were placed, the wind blowing keenly, they must have presented to seaward only the appearance of upright lines, if indeed they were at all discernible. Meanwhile, the schooner neared rapidly, under topsail, close-reeled boom foresail, and small staysail; and the intelligence of her danger spreading through Banff and Macduff, great numbers of the inhabitants proceeded to the shore, which, by nine o'clock, was, on both sides of the river, completely crowded. Two flags were now placed at the entrance to our harbour, and these catching the eye of the men at the helm of the schooner, she was observed to direct her course towards them. When a short distance off, she touched slightly upon a bank, and for a second or two her hull was engulfed in the waves, which, rushing over her, dashed the two men who had been lashed to the helm, the one against the companion door, and the other upon the wheel, breaking it in two. Regaining his feet, the mate seized the*

*remaining half of the wheel, and with it would have steered the vessel into harbour, had she not at that moment encountered a furious gust of wind, accompanied with a heavy shower of hail, which drove her to leeward. No course could now be taken but to make for a safe part of the beach, and this was endeavoured to be pointed out by signs from the crowds who had clustered on the pier. These were understood by the helmsman, and the little vessel, obeying the impulse of the rudder, struck out from the rocks lying to the east of the pier, and advanced towards the gravelly beach, where she became fixed, lying right across the mouth of the river. Exertions were now made to rescue the crew, several of whom were observed clinging to the rigging, in order to escape the fury of the waves which swept the decks. A mortar was speedily procured by the Coast Guard, who were upon the spot, under the command of Captain Davies, and several attempts were made, firing ball with line attached, to effect a communication with the vessel. The first shot was well aimed, but the mortar being pointed rather high, the wind carried the rope to leeward. In two subsequent trials, the balls, owing to the thongs which bound the line to the ball having snapped, left the mortar without carrying with them the rope, and in other two cases the result was equally unfortunate, missing by some untoward accident the object aimed at. Meanwhile, a number of individuals, impatient at the want success experienced the Coast Guard with the firing, conceived the project of proceeding the vessel a boat, order to get off the crew. Accordingly, shortly after the fifth shot had been fired, a salmon coble was observed coming down the Deveron, manned by seven individuals, namely, Captain Rhynas, John Raffan, cooper, William Young, seaman, John McDonald, seaman, and John Merson, carpenter, all of Macduff, with John Davidson and Alexander Wood of Banff. A cheer burst from the crowd on both sides of the river, the boat with her adventurous crew, after throwing a rope to each bank, passed the mouth of the river and entered the tide. With anxious mind and bated breath, the bystanders watched the progress of the tiny vessel as she advanced towards the schooner, trembling as it cockered the top of wave, or seemed overwhelmed the surge. At length, the stranded ship was reached, and the boat being fastened by means of rope, it was kept alongside while the crew attempted to leave their ill-fated vessel. Two had entered what they conceived to be an ark of safety, and a third was descending the ship's side, when the boat, with the whole of her crew crowded in her bow, suddenly shooting to the stern of the schooner, encountered a tremendous sea, and was upset an instant. It would be impossible to picture the grief and alarm occasioned this unhappy accident. Piercing screams were uttered by the females on the beach, and tears gushed down not a few manly cheeks. In a few seconds, the unfortunate men appeared on the surface. About half a dozen clung to the ropes hanging from the side of the ship, and one*

*clambered to the top of the boat, which floated keel uppermost, but was almost immediately swept from his position. One individual, a young man belonging to the schooner, got entangled with one of the oars of the boat, and was unable, notwithstanding all his efforts, to disengage himself in order to attempt swimming. This circumstance, which was all the more fortunate, he himself confessed afterwards could not swim, at the same time exposed him to being drifted backward and forward by the tide, which was fast receding. As soon as he was perceived, several individuals made bold attempts to reach him, but failed, being driven back by the heavy surf. At length, a veteran fisherman, Mr Alexander Paterson of Macduff, taking a rope in his teeth, resolutely encountered the surge, going up to his breast in the water, and seizing with one hand the young man, with the other took the rope from his mouth, and watching an advancing wave, came to shore with his prize who was immediately conveyed to the nearest house. Here, with the application of the usual restoratives, rapidly rallied, and was able, we believe, to assist the partial unloading of the vessel in the evening. The men who clung to the ship's side were, but not without much difficulty, hauled on board by the crew; but the rope which Davidson held being very small, snapped with his weight, and was compelled to turn towards the shore for safety. A powerful man, and an expert swimmer, would have reached it, under ordinary circumstances, in a comparatively short space of time; but with the current of the river and the receding tide against him, and encumbered with heavy boots, which filled with water, his progress towards the shore was greatly impeded. To add to his difficulties, when almost worn out, a dog belonging to the vessel leaped upon him, forcing him below the surface. Throwing the animal off, he made another effort to advance. Again, however, the dog returned; and the poor man, his strength completely gone, was resigning himself to a fate that seemed inevitable, when a party of those standing on the beach rushed forward, and saved him from a watery grave. As it was, indeed, doubts were first entertained of his life; but, being conveyed to the house of Mr Duff, baker (most hospitably offered on the occasion), he gradually recovered, under the skilful treatment of our medical practitioners, who were all present, and the cordials and restoratives so provided by Mrs Duff. Mr Davidson so far recovered as to be able to walk home that evening; and he has since improved rapidly, and we, are glad to say, now quite well. This, we understand, is the sixth occasion which Mr Davidson has risked his life endeavouring to save individuals exposed to like danger. The mortar was again put in requisition, and the second shot fortunately threw the line across the jib-boom. A communication being thereby established, the apparatus for conveying the men ashore was arranged, and the entire crew, together with the parties who had got board on the upsetting of the boat, brought safely to land, in an incredibly short space of time. Meantime, a body*

*was suddenly observed at a short distance from the shore, and number of seamen and others, joining hands, rescued it from the waves. It proved be that of one of the crew, a young man of the name of Thomas Shannon, a native of Peel, near Bristol. From the length time he had been in the water, little hopes were entertained of his restoration; but was promptly conveyed to Mr Duff's, and every expedient which medical skill could suggest, was tried to bring back animation; but all in vain. The body was interred on Thursday. The funeral was attended by the Rev. Mr Bremner, and by several of our most respectable shipowners, as well as a number of seamen from Banff and Macduff. Shannon was, we understand, a married man, but with no family. It is with the utmost pain that we are compelled to add that another individual also perished, John Macdonald, a seaman, belonging to Macduff, and who has often been engaged in similar attempts, was among the gallant fellows who manned the boat which attempted the rescue, we regret to state that, after the upsetting of the coble, he was never seen, nor has his body yet been found. He has left a widow to mourn his loss. On the ebbing of the tide on the evening that the vessel stranded, the ship's books, and a considerable quantity of goods, were taken out of the wreck. On the following day, the weather having completely calmed, the spars and sails were removed, and the topmasts have since been taken down. The hull being composed of fir, and being seven years old, it not expected she will hold long together. At present, she completely water-logged."*

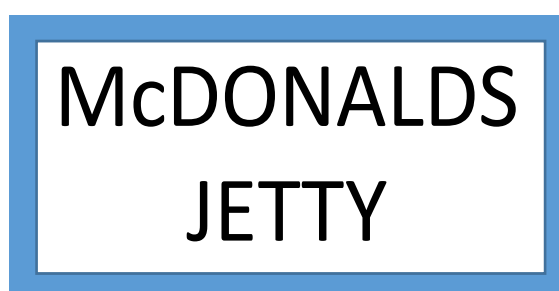
## APPENDIX B McDonald's Jetty.

### Mystery Stone, Banff Harbour.

Many years ago, a resident of Banff told me about this stone and referred to it as the 'Mystery Stone' simply because he knew it once had something carved in it, but he knew not what that was, or what it stood for. The stone (sandstone) is set into Banff Harbour wall on the east pier and is very badly weathered with the text virtually gone. Upon a very close viewing of the stone using a torch, I managed to identify most of the letters of 'McDONALDS JETTY' carved in relief with the word McDonalds sitting on top of Jetty as shown in my sketch.



*Mystery Stone, Banff Harbour, East Pier. (S. Bruce).*



*How the stone is thought to have looked originally. (S. Bruce).*

### Why was this jetty named after John McDonald?

According to the RNLI website for the Macduff Station John McDonald of Macduff drowned in Banff Bay on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 1847 when the schooner 'Pearl' with a five-man crew was driven ashore in an extreme gale. Under the leadership of Lt. William Henry Woodham (b.1794) RN, HM Coastguard, attempts were made to get a mortar line onto the ship but were unsuccessful, and a coble (Small rowing boat) was launched from the shore with seven crew members.

The coble managed to get two men off the stricken ship, however it capsized in the furious surf, and rescuer John McDonald and Thomas Shannon, one of the ship's crew drowned. Lt. Woodham then managed to get the rocket line onto the stricken ship and saved the master and three crew members, he also saved the other six rescuers. Lt. Woodham was awarded the RNLI Silver Medal for Gallantry. John McDonald's widow was given a grant of £5. (Lt. Woodham left the Royal Navy and



*RNLI Silver Medal.  
(Courtesy of the RNLI).*

joined the Coastguard 24<sup>th</sup> March 1829. He moved to the Banff station 5<sup>th</sup> March 1840, from where he was discharged on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1860).

£5 in 1847 = approx. £530 in 2020.

### **What do we know about the ship?**

According to The Marine List, LL, No. 10,509, London, Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1847 the '**Pearl**', was classified as a Schooner and was captained by Smith, from Sunderland, and two persons drowned when she ran aground. (It is recorded that she was heading for Campbeltown with a cargo of coal, and it is thought that she was to make a visit to the port of Nairn on route). The date of loss is cited as 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1847, so it's likely she lay on the shore for six days before breaking up.

Location of loss cited as N57 40.17 W2 30.50.

National Grid Ref: NJ 69 65.

Date Built:	1840.
Shipbuilder:	Leslie, Speymouth.
Length:	56.4 feet.
Breadth:	16.9 feet.
Depth:	9.9 feet.
Port of Registration:	Lossiemouth.
Ship Type:	Schooner.
Tonnage:	75 / 90 tons.

### **What do we know about the rescuers?**

According to the Banffshire Journal dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1847 the seven crew members of the cobble were as follows:

- John Davidson, flesher, Banff. (An extraordinary man who lived to 99-years old).
- John McDonald, seaman, Macduff. (Drowned).
- John Merson, carpenter, Macduff.
- John Raffan, cooper, Macduff.
- Captain Rhynas, Macduff.
- Alexander Wood, Banff.
- William Young, seaman, Macduff.

**Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser - Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> December 1847.**

**“WRECK OF THE “PEARL”.** – *We are happy in being enabled to state, that the “Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Lives from Shipwreck” have awarded and transmitted through Captain Davies, R.N., the sum of £5 to the Widow of John McDonald, who lost his life in attempting to save the crew of this vessel, on the 17<sup>th</sup> ultimo; £1 each to the six gallant survivors who accompanied him in the coble: ten shillings each to two men who so courageously exerted themselves in rescuing other two from the surf; a silver medal to Lieutenant Woodham, conducting the life apparatus; and ten shillings each to the five Coast Guard men of the station. We also learn from Captain Davies, in reference to the foregoing, that Mr Davidson, flesher, who so nobly conducted the boat on the occasion, and who so narrowly escaped, has requested the sum awarded to him should be added to that of the two men who assisted so materially in rescuing himself and another from the surf.”*

The Banffshire Journal also refers to Captain MacKenzie of the schooner ‘**Pearl**’ which differs from other information giving the Captain as Smith of Sunderland. Perhaps MacKenzie was on-board but not the actual captain of the ship.

The jetty was built between 1818 and 1828 when Banff Harbour was extended by Thomas Telford. Telford added the most northerly quay which we now know as the Lighthouse Quay and this jetty to the east to form the harbours most northerly basin. (Although the light wasn’t added until c1935 and replaced a beacon).



*McDonald's Jetty, Banff Harbour. (S. Bruce).*





*McDonald's Jetty Wall, and Mystery Stone (centre). (S. Bruce).*

Wouldn't it be nice to see the carving on the stone re-cut and restored, and an information panel erected aside it giving details of the rescue.



*12-man Lifeboat. (Illustrated London News - Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> April 1860).*

## APPENDIX C

### John Davidson (c1788 to 1886), Flesher, Banff.

In 1847, at the age of 59-years, he, with six others manned a cobble at Banff Harbour to go to the rescue of the crew of the shipwrecked 'Pearl' of Nairn. Sadly crew member Thomas Shannon, and rescuer John McDonald of Banff both died.

#### Article from the Aberdeen Evening Express - Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 1886:

***"DEATH OF THE OLDEST INHABITANT OF BANFF. A REMARKABLE CAREER*** Mr John Davidson, Banff, died yesterday at the advanced age of 98 years. Mr Davidson was in some respects a very remarkable man. Born on Deeside, he was son of the tenant of the Mill of Culter. When a boy had taken to athletic exercises, and gave full bridle to a roaming disposition. As he grew up he developed remarkable physical powers. A man of about five feet ten inches in height, he had a wonderful expansion of chest, with well-set limbs, and a power of grasp that few cared to encounter. While quite a lad his feats of strength and endurance placed him in the front rank of his companions. In the beginning of the century, illicit distillation was very rife on Deeside, and young Davidson became associated with a band of smugglers. Not only did they carry casks of whisky down Deeside into the city of Aberdeen in defiance of the Excise, but they also assisted the import of foreign spirits and tobacco. It was no uncommon occurrence for a little craft to slip down upon the coast in the region of Donmouth or the Black Dog and land a portion of a cargo, which the smuggler's on land received, and found a market for. Ultimately, Davidson became one the mounted gang against whom the noted Excise Officer, Gillespie, directed his efforts. Among his comrades, Davidson was known as "Blood Royal," from the circumstance that he rode a bloodhorse, and was very successful in evading the Excisemen. But he was once caught, tried, and fined £300. In default of payment, he was confined in prison for a year, occupying, however, debtors' quarters in the jail. At the time he was there, were also incarcerated two members of a noble family who had got into difficulties. Davidson found it profitable to act in the capacity of their waiter three times a week, when friends used to come and visit them, providing the means for feast. So regardless had he become through the style of existence, that when the jailor came and told him he was to be liberated, he replied that he had been so very comfortable that he did not wish to go. The imprisonment had, however, given him leisure to reflect on his course of life. He had made several narrow escapes in his encounters with officers of revenue, on one occasion a horse having been shot under him. His imprisonment was in the second decade of the century; had got married, and

*settled down somewhat. At a time that "Resurrectionists" were prowling about kirkyards seeking to disinter bodies for dissection, Mr Davidson became a watcher. He acted for a considerable time in conjunction with old Symon Grant, the Aberdeen detective of that time. One night, the watchers had been at an inn at the Bridge of Don, when two men called for refreshment. Following them, Davidson found, as he had suspected, they were conveying a corpse to Aberdeen. It turned out to be the body of a wife of a fisherman in the parish of Cruden. The people were communicated with and came and saw the remains interred again, and Davidson long kept up intercourse with the family, whose representatives are still living near the Ward. About sixty years ago, Mr Davidson came to Banff, presumably to work at the salmon fishing, for he had as a smuggler sometimes found it convenient to have occupation near the seat of their operations. At all events, in after years, he accompanied Mr Grant Duff of Eden, Mr George Forbes, and Mr Campbell Smith to London to give evidence before a Parliamentary Committee on a Salmon Fishings Bill. Mr Davidson laid before the Committee a silk net he had made, and some improvements he had recommended on the salmon net was by his demonstration given effect to. Mr Davidson had not been long in Banff till he started business as a butcher, occupying for many years premises in High Street and the Strait Path. He did all his travelling on foot, attending the Huntly and Keith markets on the one side ; and the Turriff and Buchan markets on the other, generally leaving home the night before or early on the morning of the market day, and returning home on the market night. In his expeditions he often did wonderful feats. Arriving one day at Turriff after a walk of some sixteen miles, he found he could not get a seat to Banff on the Earl of Fife coach. He had some little fencing with the driver or guard about it, and told them he would be in Banff before them on his feet. Setting out, he ran the whole distance, and crossed the Bridge of Banff alongside of the coach. Mr Davidson was the survivor of the brave men who manned a coble and went to the rescue of the crew of the ship 'Pearl' of Nairn, wrecked to the east of the Harbour of Banff. He had on that morning come home from a long journey, and was very tired; but rather than that the sailors should perish without an effort to save them, he volunteered to man a coble and go to their rescue. When at the wreck the coble was upset, and one of its occupants was drowned. Mr Davidson was carried to the bakehouse of Mr Duff, in Carmelite Street, in the hope that heat from the oven would help to revive him. He remained unconscious till it was proposed he should be removed as dead, but he suddenly revived, and walked home in company with the doctor. He had, however, made a narrow escape. A dog belonging to the ship had been in the boat, and the animal, its efforts to save Davidson, instead of taking hold of his clothes, bit him on the back of the neck. Subsequently, a large growth, that proved permanent but painless, was*

*attributed to the effects of the bite. On several other occasions Davidson was instrumental in saving life. He knew no fear, as he never seemed to have exhausted his strength. One winter day, however, he plunged into the Deveron opposite the Green Banks to rescue a young woman who had fallen through the ice. The chill told upon him, and for six months after he was unable to leave his bed. At another time he took a boy named Bisset out of the current at the mouth of the Deveron, and shortly after, at exactly the same spot saved a woman and her child from drowning. Mr Davidson only absolutely retired from business seven years ago, having made his last transaction at the age of 91 years. Nine years ago, he walked all the way from Banff to Keith and back again. He felt very tired, and it was his last journey on foot. But he was going about till a few months ago; and was able to be out bed and at the door daily till within a week of his death, which, as we have said, took place yesterday, at the age of only two years short of the century. Mr Davidson was married to Isabella Rennie, the daughter of one of a family of well-known salmon fishers at Old Aberdeen. They had five daughters, four of whom survive, and two of whom soothed their father's latest days by carefully attending to his wants. His wife died 16 years ago, at the age of 77 years, and her death made a deep impression on his mind. Ever after his thoughts were away from the earth, and his death came calmly and peaceably. His faculties were quite fresh up to the time of his death. His remains will, on Thursday, be interred beside those his wife in the churchyard of Boyndie. — Banffshire Journal.”*

His wife, Isabella Rennie according to the gravestone died at Lintfield, Banff, 25<sup>th</sup> August 1858, aged 77-years.

This large granite memorial can be seen at the northeast corner of the Boyndie Kirkyard.



*Gravestone of John Davidson and family, Inverboyndie Kirkyard, Banff. (S. Bruce).*

**APPENDIX D****Alexander Hall's Lifeboat.**

*Life-boat model by Alexander Hall & Co. of Aberdeen made for the 1851 Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace, Hyde Park, London. (S. Bruce).*

In the official exhibition catalogue, Class VIII., section 136, Northumberland Lifeboat Committee, Somerset House, London. It reads *“Models of life-boats sent in to compete for the premium of 100 guineas, offered by the Duke of Northumberland, with the names of the designers or builders. Communicated by Captain Washington, R.N., F.R.S.”* Hall’s entry is number 21 on the list of 54 entries displayed at the exhibition. The entry reads *“21. Hall, Messrs., Aberdeen. Model of life-boat. Scale; 1 inch to a foot: length, 33.5 feet, breadth, 8.5 feet, depth, 4 feet.”*

A grand total of 280 models from all over the World were entered into the competition, but only the best 54 were put on display.

The design criteria was as follows:

- a. Being self-righting.*
- b. Being of lighter construction than before and easier to launch and transport.*
- c. Able to free itself of water faster (i.e. self-draining).*
- d. Of lower cost.*

The model submitted by James Beeching (1788 to 1858) an English boat-builder based in Great Yarmouth won Admiral Algernon Percy (1792 to 1865) the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland’s prize of 100 guineas. (Approx. £15,000 in 2020).

Hall's shipyard was already known for making ship models and developing them in a water tank, they did this back in 1839 when they developed the Aberdeen Bow, which was first used on the **Scottish Maid**, a design which was later copied and used on clipper ships all over the World. Therefore, it's more than likely that William Hall (c1807 to 1887) son of Alexander Hall (1760 to 1849) tested or overseen the righting capabilities of this life-boat in a tank. It's not known why they entered the competition; perhaps the job was given to a trainee designer/draughtsman, or possibly simply because they had an affinity with the RNLI. It wasn't because Hall's weren't busy; they built two ships in 1850 and two in 1851.

Studying Hall's lifeboat model, we see that it had 12 oars, which judging by the dimensions of the boat could take 12 / 14 crewmen. The hull was designed so the buoyancy would right the boat should it capsize. Port and starboard sides have buoyancy tanks, with most of the buoyancy being at the fore and aft ends. The floor had holes for drainage, and was hinged in two halves longitudinally, which if the boat capsized would open so any crewmen trapped underneath could get out. Perhaps a good idea, but I imagine that the floor would rise up and down with the swell of the sea and would definitely make the crewmen wet and could possibly trap their legs, or even worse there is a risk that if the floor opened a crew member could fall into the sea and the doors close on top of him, so I can see why this wasn't adopted in the final Beeching-Peake SR (Self-righting) life-boat design. (If the life-boat was truly self-righting then no-one should get trapped underneath for any significant period of time). The hull of the boat was in the form of a catamaran, which would have made the boat very stable, and the final Beeching-Peake design in cross-section was similar although it had the centre section filled-in. All along both sides of the life-boat above the waterline are metal rods for tying survivors to the boat. On the underside of the boat, port and starboard is a bilge keel which I don't think added much to the stability of the boat since it hasn't much depth, but they do offer some protection to the hull should the life-boat be grounded.

In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century life-boats were small very basic clinker built open boats with no deck which were rowed out to sea by their gallant crews, and many crew members were sadly lost trying to save others. In 1824, the *National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck* was founded. In 1849 Prince Albert (1819 to 1861) added his support to the Institution and in 1854 the name was changed to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLBI).

The final RNLI design was Beeching's model tweaked by James Peake and firstly manufactured by the Admiralty. This final design has similar features to that of the model designed by Hall's, and became the standard for RNLI purchase of

new lifeboats. It should be noted that the life-boat was self-righting, which means it could still capsize, as did the Fraserburgh lifeboats of 1919, 1953, and 1970 with the tragic loss of crew members, amongst these in 1953 on the **RNLB 'John and Charles Kennedy'** an uncle I never got the chance to know, crew member John Buchan who left my aunt Frances Buchan as a widow with two young sons, my cousins John and Lawrence.

This lifeboat model was kept for many years in the Hall Russell Training Centre in York Street, Footdee, Aberdeen (Former offices of Alexander Hall & Co.) which was demolished in 2015. Alexander Hall & Co. merged with Hall, Russell & Co., Ltd. in 1955. I spent 2-months in this training centre as a 16-year old apprentice in 1980. Knowing some of the staff, I acquired the model from the Training Centre in 2006 and it was displayed in the 2006 Banffshire Maritime Heritage Association (BMHA) exhibition in Macduff.



*Emblem on the bow of Hall's 1851 life-boat model. (S. Bruce).*

In 2019, after the dissolution of the BMHA, I donated it to the RNLI, they were delighted with it, and believe that it may be the only one that has survived the 150-years, since they didn't have one in their collection.

**APPENDIX E****Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser - Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> December 1879.*****BANFF AND MACDUFF LIFEBOAT. GIFT TO CREW.***

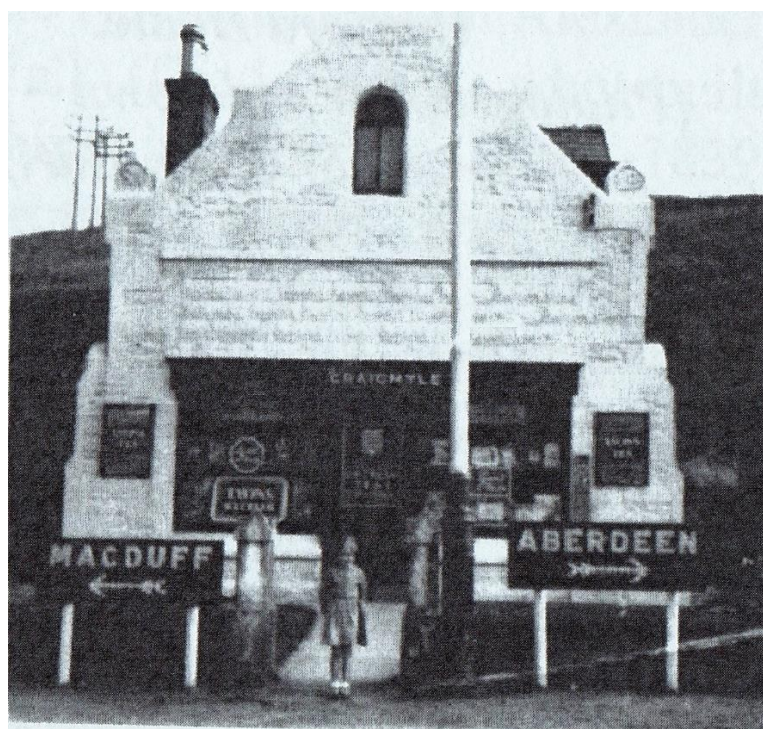
*"It will be remembered that the Mayor of Accrington, Mr Lightfoot, the donor of the Lifeboat presently in use for Banff and Macduff, visited Banff in September last, when he and some friends had a cruise in the boat. On that Occasion he kindly promised to present each of the crew with a copy of the Bible. These came to hand in time to be distributed as Christmas gifts. The Lifeboat Committee met the crew at the Boat-house on Saturday last, when Provost Martin, Macduff. Deputy Chairman, in the absence of Provost Coutts, Banff, the Chairman, made the presentation. Of the Committee and others present were — Mr Watson, gas manager; Mr Munro ropemaker; Captain Watt, Seatown; Mr Alex. Watson, shipbuilder; Rev. Mr Bruce; Rev. Mr Clarke; Provost Martin; Councillor McKay; Mr Clement Gordon, Procurator Fiscal; Mr Auld, banker; Captain Ironside; Mr Watson, merchant; Mr Watt Secretary of the Branch; Mr Reid, Reidhaven Street; Mr A. Murray, Old Castle Gate; Mr Grant, Low Street; Mr McLean, Macduff. etc. After prayer by the Rev. Mr Bruce, Provost Martin said he was sorry that Provost Coutts, Banff, the president of the branch was unavoidably absent, but he had much pleasure in discharging the pleasant duties in his absence. He presumed when Alderman Lightfoot presented the lifeboat to the Institution, he had little idea where the boat was to be placed. Daring Alderman Lightfoot's rambles last summer, however, he came to the Banff and Macduff station, saw the boat, launched it, and had a cruise through the beautiful bay, and was highly delighted with his visit. On that occasion, Mr Lightfoot very kindly left a sum money with Mr Watt, the respected treasurer and secretary, for distribution amongst the crew, so that Mr Lightfoot was not only careful of their temporal welfare, but also of their spiritual. Provost Martin had no doubt it would be a great satisfaction to Mr Lightfoot to know that the Bibles would be made good use of by the crew. (Cheers). He was confident that the boat and the boat-house would bear comparison with any on the coast, and, besides, the boat could be very easily launched. What was perhaps of equal importance was the fact that the boat was well "manned." He had seen several reports regarding the Station and management of the boat of a very gratifying nature, but, the last one by Lieutenant Monteith was even better than any of the previous. (Cheers). This satisfactory state of matters, he had no doubt, was mainly due the efficient manner which Mr Cormack, coxswain, and his assistant discharged their duties in conjunction with the rest of the crew. (Hear, hear). At the time Mr Lightfoot was at Banff and Macduff he had also borne testimony to the efficient manner in which the boat had been kept and equipped. He thought they were all very*



*much obliged to Mr Mackrell, of the Coastguard Station, for the excellent and gratuitous services he had all along rendered to the lifeboat cause, (Cheers.) He concluded by proposing a hearty vote of thanks to Mr J. E. Lightfoot, not only for making the crew of the lifeboat such a handsome present, but for all the munificent gifts he had bestowed in the past, of which the presentation of their boat to the Lifeboat Institution was but a specimen. The committee had very pleasant recollections of the visit of Mr Lightfoot and his friends, and hoped it would soon be repeated. (Cheers). Thereafter the Provost handed the Bibles to each of the men, giving a kindly encouraging word to each as he did so. Mr Wm. WATSON said he had been asked by the coxswain and crew of the lifeboat to thank the Deputy Chairman for the very kindly words he had addressed to them, and through him to thank the Mayor of Accrington for this renewed token of his interest in the crew of the boat '**John and Sarah**. He said 'renewed token,' because he understood some few months ago, on the occasion of his visit to this part of the country, the Mayor divided a liberal sum of money among the men, and now he had manifested a further and still deeper interest in them. (Cheers.) It was because the crew felt themselves unequal to the task of adequately thanking the Mayor for his handsome gift that they had asked him to do so on their behalf, as representing a society with kindred aims to the Lifeboat Institution, the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Society, of which he acted as the local secretary. However inadequately, he nevertheless begged most sincerely, in name of the whole of the men, to advise the Mayor of Accrington that they highly appreciated and felt grateful for the gift presented. (Cheers). Mr Watson mentioned that he understood the present coxswain, Charles Cormack, had held that office for six years, and had been eleven years altogether connected with the life-boats in this district, a fact which bespoke him suitable and skilful pilot in the dangers of the deep. (Cheers). He had associated with him as assistant in the person of Wm. Sclater and a band of men who were all men of kindred spirit, men who he was sure when an urgency arose would not be wanting in that pluck and daring, that calmness and self-possession, that ingenuity and keenness of perception to know the right thing to do and how to do it, which had at all times characterised the British seamen and the British soldier in the moment of peril, whether on sea or on shore. (Cheers). He concluded by saying that he was requested by the coxswain and the whole of the crew to express the hope that the Mayor might be long spared to see the fruits of that good seed which he was sowing with his own hand, and sowing so bountifully in acts similar to what had gathered them together on that accession. (Cheers). The COXSWAIN proposed three cheers for the Mayor of Accrington; and the Assistant Coxswain called for a similar compliment to the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and Committee of the branch, which were heartily given. Mr*

*ALEXANDER MACKRELL, superintendent of the lifeboat, said he was fortunate to have been associated with the crew, and had thus shared in Mr Lightfoot's generosity. He begged, through the Provost, to thank the donor for the Bible he had got., at the same time thanking the Provost for the kind way he had mentioned his name. Mr Mackrell suggested that three cheers should be given for Mr Watt, the indefatigable Secretary, which received a hearty response. The Rev. J. D. Clark, Wesleyan minister, said that, as a minister of the great body of Christians to which the Mayor of Accrington belonged, it gave him great pleasure to be present at such an interesting ceremony. He then made a few practical and seasonable remarks to the crew, after which he engaged in prayer, and the proceedings were brought to a close. In all, twenty handsomely morocco-bound reference bibles, with maps, were distributed to those who formed the crew on the occasion of the Mayor's visit, and to several members of the crew proper who happened be prosecuting the herring fishing. Each copy bears the party's name beautifully inscribed in illuminated letters, to which is added the autograph signature of the Mayor."*

The lifeboat '**John and Sarah**' was condemned and replaced in May 1888 by the larger and more modern '**Help of the Helpless**'. The lifeboat transportation carriage was modified to suit the new boat. The official launching ceremony took place Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> May after a procession of the crew members, the Lifeboat Committee and members of the public, headed by a band proceeded to Macduff, where the boat was launched into the harbour.



*Former Banff & Macduff Lifeboat House as Craigmyle's Tearoom, 1950's.*

## APPENDIX F

### Whitehills Lifeboat Station.

**1923, 2<sup>nd</sup> July:** Aberdeen Press and Journal reported as follows: “**WHITEHILLS LIFEBOAT.** – *The lifeboat formerly stationed between Banff and Macduff was removed on Friday, and is now berthed at Whitehills Harbour, as a crew of Whitehills fishermen have been secured to man it when required.*”

The lifeboat station for the area was transferred from Banff Bridge to Whitehills. Reason for this was that the Whitehills fishermen fished locally so we more available to man the lifeboat, Macduff fishermen in their steam drifters were fishing further away. A new lifeboat the ‘**RNLB George and Mary Berrey**’ was stationed at Whitehills, she was 35’ long, 8.5’ beam and self-righting. She was launched eight times, saved seven lives and served until 1928.

The Whitehills lifeboat house and slip was built in 1933. (Currently converted to a house).



*Whitehills Lifeboat house, 2005.  
(S. Bruce).*

### **Whitehills Lifeboats**

*Oar and sail boat:*

**1924 ‘George and Mary Berrey’.**

*Motor boats:*

**1932 ‘Civil Service No. 4’.** (Wrecked in 1948, no lives lost.)

**1948 ‘William Manyard’.**

**1949 ‘Thomas Markby.’**

**1952 ‘St Andrew’** (Civil Service No. 10).

**1960 ‘Sarah Wood and William David Crossweller’.**

**1961 ‘Helen Wycherley’.** (Transferred to Courtmacsherry, Ireland in 1969).

Whitehills station closed in 1969, when the station was transferred to Macduff.

**Aberdeen Press and Journal - Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December 1936.**

***“THRILL OF THE GALE AT WHITEHILLS. – Man Swept Overboard From Lifeboat; Saved By Gripping Drag Rope. - STORM OF WIND, SLEET AND SNOW SWEEPS NORTHERN SCOTLAND. A man washed overboard from the Whitehills lifeboat was one of the thrills of the gale which swept all parts of the north of Scotland yesterday. In the Shetland Islands the gusts attained a velocity of ninety miles per hour, and there and in other areas there were heavy showers of sleet and snow. Most districts of Buchan had a covering of snow last night, and in Fraserburgh it was lying two inches deep. During the height of a raging north-west gale a mysterious flare was seen in the Moray Firth yesterday morning in a position three miles north-west from East Head coastguard look-out hut, Portsoy. About the same time, what was taken to be a distress signal was observed from Portknockie. It appeared to be about the same position as the flare which the coastguard at East Head hut saw. District Officer Relf, Banff coastguard station requested that the lifeboat at Whitehills should be launched, and she put to sea immediately in the teeth of a howling gale.***

***Search by Lifeboat.***

*She searched in the vicinity of where the flare was seen, but found no vessel in distress. A passing trading steamer, the ‘Dorset Coast’, was hailed, but the reply received from her was that she had not observed any vessel in distress, nor had she seen any signals of distress since she left Inverness earlier in the morning. The lifeboat continued her search for over three hours then decided to return to port. Mountainous seas were running across the harbour entrance at the time, and as the lifeboat approached the channel her progress was watched with considerable anxiety by large crowds who had assembled on the pier. In case of emergency, Coxswain Alexander Findlay ordered a drag rope to be put out from the lifeboat.*

***Grabbed Drag Rope.***

*Mr Alexander Mair, Knock Street, a volunteer member of the crew, was attending to this when a huge wave struck the lifeboat, and he was washed overboard. Fortunately, he grabbed the drag rope and held on, and the engineer who had seen what had happened, scrambled to his assistance. From the pier the crowd saw Mr Mair disappear from view, and the utmost excitement prevailed until the engineer, with the assistance of other members of the crew, succeeded in getting Mr Mair pulled aboard again, and the lifeboat swung in between the pier-heads to safety. Mr Mair, although he had been dragged under water for a short distance, appeared to be none the worse of his alarming experience, and was able to walk home.”*

**Aberdeen Press and Journal - Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 1936.**

**“R.N.L.I. AWARD TO CREW OF WHITEHILLS LIFEBOAT.** *The Royal National Lifeboat Institution has sent a letter of appreciation to Coxswain A. Findlay, Whitehills, Banffshire, and his crew, and has given each man an extra pound above the ordinary scale award of nineteen shillings for their gallantly on December 4, when they were out in severe weather for over three hours searching for a vessel reported to be in distress.”*



*Whitehills Lifeboat “Civil Service No. 4” (1932). (RNLI).*

**1948, 10<sup>th</sup> April:** The Aberdeen Press and Journal reported as follows: **“Whitehills Boat Refloated.** *THE Whitehills lifeboat, which went on the rocks at the entrance to Whitehills harbour when standing by the Leith steamer **Lindean**, was refloated at high tide yesterday. She was pulled into the lifeboat shed by means of a wire hawser. Her rudder was broken and she was holed on the starboard side, but otherwise there did not appear to much damage. The **Lindean** was still fast on the rocks yesterday and appeared to be settling down. During the night she had swung round eastwards and was partly blocking the entrance to the harbour. It looks as if she is considerably holed. Her bow was hard up against the back of the west pier.”*

For some more information on Whitehills lifeboats, please read my book ‘Whitehills Through the Years’ published in 2010, ISBN 978-1-907234-04-0.

## APPENDIX G

### Macduff Lifeboat Station.



*Macduff Lifeboat Station. (S. Bruce).*

**1973, September:** The RNLI Committee of Management decided to station a lifeboat at Macduff, for a year's trial.

**1974, 28<sup>th</sup> March:** The first lifeboat was stationed at Macduff, she was the 52ft long Barnett Class '**James and Margaret Boyd**', this lifeboat had formerly been at Stornoway, Western Isles.

**1975, March:** The RNLI Committee of Management approved a permanent lifeboat station at Macduff.

**1975, 30<sup>th</sup> September:** A 48'6" long Solent Class self-righting lifeboat the '**Douglas Currie**', was stationed at Macduff. This lifeboat had formerly been at Kirkwall, Orkney Islands but un-named. She replaced the '**James and Margaret Boyd**', which had been launched eight times and saved six lives.

**1976, 3<sup>rd</sup> April:** The new Macduff Lifeboat was officially named '**Douglas Currie**' by miss Caroline Currie of London, grand-niece of one of the principal donors.

**1984, 8<sup>th</sup> September:** The Macduff lifeboat was withdrawn, and the lifeboat station closed. The reason for the closure was *“in view of a new lifeboat at Buckie and plans for a new one at Fraserburgh”*.

**1985, September:** An inshore lifeboat station was established at Macduff with an Atlantic 21-Class rigid-inflatable lifeboat.

A special feature of this lifeboat design is – if capsized a member of the crew can activate a gas bottle which rapidly inflates the bag on the roll-bar assembly above the engines. Within seconds the lifeboat returns to the upright position and the water-tight engines can be restarted.

**1985, November:** A garage at Bankhead owned by the Grampian Regional Council was used to accommodate the new Macduff Lifeboat.

**1987, 12<sup>th</sup> June:** A new £30,000 inshore Atlantic 21 lifeboat designated for Macduff was handed-over by the Rotary Club in George Square, Glasgow. She was named the **‘Rotary Club of Glasgow’** (B578) to celebrate the clubs 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. (approx. £86,000 in 2020).

**1999, 21<sup>st</sup> September:** The Duke of Kent, President of the RNLI officially opened Macduff’s new £200,000 Lifeboat Station funded by the Sheila Stenhouse bequest. (approx. £350,000 in 2020).

**2006, 7<sup>th</sup> June:** A new lifeboat the **‘Lydia Macdonald’** (B804) was placed on service at Macduff. She was funded by the R. S. Macdonald Charitable Trust.



*B578 ‘Rotary Club of Glasgow’, Macduff Harbour 2006. (S. Bruce).*

**Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser - Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 1849.**

**“BAROMETER FOR THE HARBOUR.** – It is known to our readers that, some time ago, on the recommendation of Captain Washington, R.N., the Harbour Trustees ordered, through the Messrs Stevenson, engineers a barometer for the harbour. The instrument has been constructed by Mr Adie, of Edinburgh, but has not yet been received here. Meanwhile, we find in the Scotsman the following description of the instrument, together with one intended for the harbour of Wick. Of the two mentioned below, the oblong one is that intended for our harbour: - “Our well known and skilful optician, Mr Adie (says the paper above mentioned), has been applied to by the people of Wick and Banff to make barometers for them, fitted to indicate atmospheric changes on so broad and distinct a scale that old and young may read them at a glance, and he has made two of a very ingenious construction, which we have had an opportunity of examining. One of them is oblong, and the other round. The scale of the oblong one is about thirty inches long, and a change of one inch in the common barometer is magnified in this to six inches. The round one is nearly three feet in diameter, and both in size and appearance resembles a town clock. An inch in the common barometer corresponds in this to nearly two feet. The large scale of the oblong barometer is not produced by machinery as in the ordinary wheel barometer but on a method depending on a principle employed by Reaumur, and which ensures more steady and accurate working. The same principle is employed in the round barometer, but with some modification. Each has points, moveable by the hand, to show the amount and direction of any change while it is in progress. The divisions of the scale are all in green on one side of the point, marked ‘change’, in ordinary barometers and all in red on the other side. These colours have been selected, because the latter is used in the signals of the northern ports to express ‘safe’ entrance to the harbour, the other to indicate the contrary. When the index in the circular barometer, or the visible top of the column in the oblong one, stands at a point considerably on the red side of ‘change’, the fishermen may leave the port in the expectation of having fair or moderate weather: if it stands at a point considerably on the green side of ‘change’ he may look for strong winds: but if the change is sudden and great in that direction, a storm is impending - if he is a wise man he will remain in port. The barometers are intended to be placed in conspicuous situations, accessible to all. The adoption of some plan of this description was strongly recommended to the people of the fishery ports, by Captain Washington, a considerable time ago, and had it been adopted, it is probable that many lives might have been saved.”

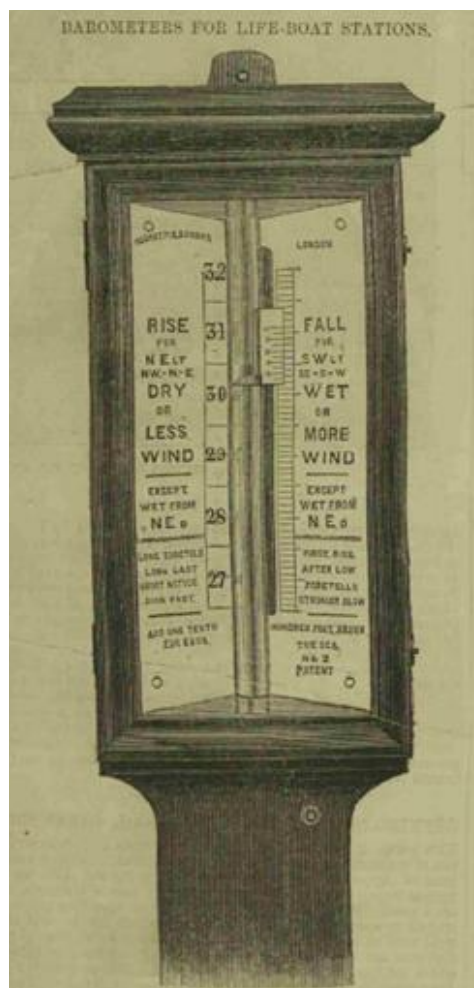


## APPENDIX H

### Barometers for Life-Boat Stations.

#### Illustrated London News - Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September 1860.

*“PUBLIC attention has frequently been called to the invaluable use of a barometer for indicating a coming storm. It not unfrequently happens that a notice of a gale is given by a barometer two or three days before it actually takes place. It seems plain that with such powers placed providentially in our hands the calamities now endured by our fishermen and coasters might in many instances be avoided. A good barometer in a public situation would warn them in time what to expect, and they could thus be frequently able to avoid the terrible consequences of storms so often at present providing fatal to them. Admiral Fitzroy, F.R.S., has compiled a useful and thoroughly practical manual for the use of a barometer, so that seafaring men of very ordinary capacity would soon become perfectly familiar with the indications of the instrument.....Some time since Admiral Fitzroy, who, as chief of the meteorological department of the Government, obtained the sanction of the Board of Trade to supply some forty of our poorer fishing villages with barometers, some of which have been of great service to the fishermen. It is, however, evident that something more is absolutely required in order to make barometers generally available for our fishermen and seafaring population. We are, therefore, glad to learn that this important subject is about to be taken up practically by the National Life-boat Institution. Admiral Fitzroy, who is a member of its committee, has promised the*



*Fitzroy Barometer Head.*



*Admiral Fitzroy.*

*undertaking his cordial and valuable co-operation. The Admiral's own manual, as well as large placards containing extracts from it, will be extensively circulated on the coast, fully explaining the working of the barometer. It is proposed to fix such instruments wherever found useful and practicable in conspicuous positions of the society's life-boat houses, which are situated on most parts of the coast of the United Kingdom. To carry out effectually this plan the institution has, fortunately, the machinery at hand, for to each of its life-boats is attached a permanent coxswain, who receives a small annual salary for his superintendence of the working part of the life-boat establishment. It is proposed to instruct such of these men as are found capable in the indications of the barometer, so that they will act as so many storm-warners in the town or village in which they reside. It will be readily conceived what beneficial results may accrue to life and property among our hardy seacoast population from this important step. It is a lamentable fact that at the present day the masters of our smaller coasting and fishing craft hardly ever think of consulting a barometer, if, indeed, have they an opportunity of doing so. It is estimated that a good barometer cannot be fixed to a life-boat house under £6, so that it will require a considerable sum to carry out effectually the plan of the National Life-boat Institution. We understand that a benevolent gentleman has presented to the institution £50, to be applied specially to the purchase of barometers for its life-boat stations; and we cannot doubt that the public will readily make up what may be further required. The making of the barometers has been intrusted to Messrs. Negretti and Zambra, who have already supplied forty of somewhat similar instruments to the Board of Trade, for various fishing stations on the northern coast, and also a number to the British Meteorological Society, for the coast of Northumberland. The object of the National Life-boat Institution will be to obtain a good instrument, and one that will not easily get out of order in travelling, or require renovating at frequent intervals; in short, a barometer that, having been once set up at a life-boat station, will be a permanent instrument of instruction, and one that will not entail any future expense to the society. In order to meet these requirements, the makers have therefore introduced the following changes in the regular instruments, which, we think, may fairly come under the head of important improvements. The brass or ivory scales that barometers are generally furnished with are here replaced by a substantial plate of porcelain, on which the degrees and figures are prominently engraved and permanently blackened in; so that as far as the divisions and figures are concerned, there will be no danger of their becoming faded or obliterated. This is a very important improvement, especially for an instrument that has of necessity to be placed in an exposed position, where the mariner may be able to consult it at any time, even in the middle of the night, should he wish to do so. The mercurial tube of*

*the barometer is of large diameter, so as to render the mercury easily visible, and show the slightest variation, and is so constructed that the liability of air entering it is, we may say, entirely obviated; for it is a well-known fact that, if a small particle of air by any means finds its way up the tube of a barometer, let the quantity be ever so minute, the indications of the instrument are erroneous, and no longer to be relied upon. To prevent these accidents a trap is laid at the bottom of the tube, near the part called the cistern, so that if any air should find its way into the tube it cannot possibly pass the trap, but is there detained, and the instrument is in no way deteriorated or injured by its presence. These tubes are, moreover, "boiled." The operation of boiling a barometer tube consists in filling the tube with mercury, and then causing the mercury to boil by placing the full tube over a charcoal fire. It is an operation attended with considerable risk to the tube and operator, and for this reason is seldom carried into practice, and in the majority of barometers made it is altogether neglected. The size of the mercurial column averages 4-10ths of an inch, so that altogether instruments of the greatest efficiency will be obtained. A great change has also been effected in the old system of marking the scales with fair, change, rain etc., words which in reality have often a tendency to mislead, and to throw discredit on barometrical indications. The plan to be adopted in the life-boat barometer is shown in the accompanying Engraving. This has been arranged systematically, and after much labour and observation, by Admiral Fitzroy. It is well known that the labours of the National Life-boat Institution, as corollaries to its own immediate sphere of action, in diffusing useful information on the treatment of the apparently drowned, and on the management of boats in heavy surfs and broken water, have already been productive of great public benefit, not only on the coasts of the British Isles but also over many parts of the globe. It may also be fairly anticipated that similar beneficial results would ensue from the establishment of these barometers on its life-boat stations."*

## APPENDIX I

### Banff Harbour Barometer.

In 2011, I personally fixed-up the Banff Harbour barometer box. I fitted new perspex to the door (thinking it would be vandal-proof), new clips, sanded and varnished it and DNV sponsored the cost of the panel with the image of a barometer and the new information panel for the notice board. I was very disappointed when I saw the box had been vandalised. The whereabouts of the original Banff Barometer is unknown.



*Stan Bruce (author) and the newly refurbished Banff Barometer Box. (2011).*

**1848, 14<sup>th</sup> November:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: ***“BANFF HARBOUR TRUSTEES.*** – *A meeting of the Trustees of Banff Harbour was held within the Council Chamber, on Wednesday last – the Provost in the chair.....Letters respecting a barometer for the Harbour were read from the Clerk, to the Aberdeen Harbour Board, in Aberdeen. In terms of the first mentioned letter, it was agreed to write to Mr Hay, Aberdeen, inquiring what they would charge for such an instrument, including the fitting up in Banff.”*

**1849, 23<sup>rd</sup> January:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: ***“BAROMETER FOR FLAGSTAFFS AT PIER-HEADS, etc.*** – *A correspondent sends us a communication on the subject of a barometer intended to be erected at harbours, and in elevated positions. The proposed instrument is extremely simple. It consists merely of a tall pole, or flagstaff, divided into equal portions, as regards colour, the under half being painted black, and the upper portion a pure white. The state of the weather is indicated by black and white hoops (which may be made of iron or wood) placed at different parts of the flag-staff, and which may be worked up or down with haulyards. By means of these indicators every state of the barometer may be shown. Thus a white band placed a third from the bottom of the black part of the staff, and a black band at the bottom of the white portion, would indicate that the barometer was at “stormy.” Other combinations express “rain,” “set fair,” “change,” etc. Of course the instrument, though called a “barometer,” would have to be regulated by the barometer. The advantage to be gained by its use would be, that when erected on pier-heads, or headlands, it would attract the attention of fishermen and*

*seafaring people to observe it when they might not have time, or would not take the trouble, to walk to a barometer, though only a short distance. At sea, also, on the coasts, the flagstaff would be seen at a considerable distance, indicating the changes of the weather. In this latter respect it would also be serviceable to fishermen. The same instrument, when erected at sea-ports, might also be made to indicate the height of the tide within the harbour. At harbours it would be right, perhaps, to place the management of the indicators in the hands of the harbour master; but on headlands it might conveniently and safely be committed to the coast guard service. If a log were kept every six hours, a valuable record of observations might be obtained. – As to the expense, it would be trifling in the extreme. Our correspondent says the whole expense of fitting up a flagstaff could not exceed 30s. An efficient barometer would of course have to be obtained; but as both the Fishery Board and the Admiralty have funds for this and similar purposes, we presume there would be no difficulty felt on this score. The Admiralty have only to issue their order, and the thing is done. – It may be, too, that the matter is worthy the attention of Harbour Trustees.”*

(30s. in 1849 = approx. £200 in 2020).

**1849, 27<sup>th</sup> March:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: **“BAROMETER FOR THE HARBOUR.** – *It is known to our readers that, some time ago, on the recommendation of Captain Washington, R.N., the Harbour Trustees ordered, through the Messrs Stevenson, engineers, a barometer for the harbour. The instrument has been constructed by Mr Adie, of Edinburgh, but has not yet been received here. Meanwhile, we find in the Scotsman the following description of the instrument, together with one intended for the harbour of Wick. Of the two mentioned below, the oblong one is that intended for our harbour: - “Our well known and skilful optician, Mr Adie (says the paper above mentioned), has been applied to by the people of Wick and Banff to make barometers for them, fitted to indicate atmospheric changes on so broad and distinct a scale that old and young may read them at a glance, and he has made two of a very ingenious construction, which we have had an opportunity of examining. One of them is oblong, and the other round. The scale of the oblong one is about thirty inches long, and a change of one inch in the common barometer is magnified in this to six inches. The round one is nearly three feet in diameter, and both in size and appearance resembles a town clock. An inch in the common barometer corresponds in this to nearly two feet. The large scale of the oblong barometer is not produced by machinery as in the ordinary wheel barometer, but on a method depending on a principle employed by Reaumur, and which ensures more steady and accurate working. The same*

*principle is employed in the round barometer, but with some modification. Each has points, moveable by the hand, to show the amount and direction of any change while it is in progress. The divisions of the scale are all in green on one side of the point, marked 'change,' in ordinary barometers and all in red on the other side. These colours have been selected, because the latter is used in the signals of the northern ports to express 'safe' entrance to the harbour, the other to indicate the contrary. When the index in the circular barometer, or the visible top of the column in the oblong one, stands at a point considerably on the red side of 'change,' the fishermen may leave port in the expectation of having fair or moderate weather: if it stands at a point considerably on the green side of 'change' he may look for strong winds: but if the change is sudden and great in that direction, a storm is impending – if he is a wise man he will remain in port. The barometers are intended to be placed in conspicuous situations, accessible to all. The adoption of some plan of this description was strongly recommended to the people of the fishery ports, by Captain Washington, a considerable time ago, and had it been adopted, it is probable that many lives might have been saved."*

**1849, 15<sup>th</sup> May:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: "**HARBOUR BAROMETER.** – *This instrument, which was received some time ago, has been fitted into a niche in the office of the Harbour Master. A slit has been cut in the wall, and a shutter placed upon it, on removing which the barometer is exposed to view. It consists of two tubes, the mercury filling one and a part of the other, and some space being occupied by spirit of wine, the rising and falling of which, according as it is acted upon by the mercury, indicating the state of the weather. We believe the fishermen have begun to examine it, though they have yet to acquire faith in its reports. A crew who went to look at it the other day, began to swear when they saw it giving, what they considered to be, indications of approaching bad weather, and declared that the instrument would not suit them.*"

## APPENDIX J

### Macduff Harbour Barometer

The First Macduff Harbour Barometer was donated by John Murray of London in 1849. It was originally sited on the wall of No. 1 Low Shore, it cost £30 (Approx. £4,000 In 2020), and was made by Adie of Edinburgh.

It is described as a ‘Wheel Barometer’ of great size, its face being three feet in diameter. (Not a Fitzroy Barometer).



Macduff Harbour Barometer.  
(S. Bruce).

**1849, 5<sup>th</sup> June:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: ***“BAROMETER FOR THE HARBOUR OF MACDUFF.** – We have to announce another instance of the enlightened generosity of John Murray, Esq., of London, in connection with Macduff, in the prosperity of which place, and of its inhabitants, he seems to take a special interest. As the heading of the paragraph indicates, Mr Murray being aware of the great benefit which fishermen may obtain from the services of a good barometer, has most kindly given orders to Mr Adie of Edinburgh to make, for the use of the fishermen of Macduff, a barometer of the same size and construction as the one which that skilful optician has just transmitted to Banff. We are aware that Mr Murray is not desirous of having his good deeds blazoned abroad. We know that he is among those who “do good by stealth, and blush to find its fame”; but he must be aware that in these days of newspapers the oblivion which the modest man might envy, he is not always able to attain; and is ought also to be borne in mind that this public intimation is, if not the only, at least the most ellectual way the parties benefitted have of expressing their gratitude. Tis true there is something more required; but in this we hope the fishermen will not be deficient. We allude to the improvement and use which they ought to make of the instrument when it arrives.”*

**1849, 17<sup>th</sup> July:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: "**BAROMETER FOR MACDUFF HARBOUR.** – *The barometer presented to the fishermen of this place by Mr Murray of London, arrived last week. It is a wheel barometer and is of great size, the face being exactly three feet in diameter. The axles are gold, and the bushes are of agate, the metal not being liable to rust, and the precious stone being more durable than the hardest metal. The face is constructed of copper, and the two indices for marking the highest point of the barometer for "to-day" and "yesterday", are also of copper. The indices are moved by bolts, placed at the back of the barometer and they act by pulleys composed of gutta percha. The face of the instrument is covered by a beautiful plate of fine crown glass. As formerly noticed the barometer was made by the Messrs Adie of Edinburgh, at a cost of somewhere about £30. The instrument is reckoned one of the finest for this purpose intended existing anywhere. We ought to notice that one section of the face of the barometer is painted a green colour, indicating "change" and "storm", (changeable and stormy) and the other portion of a red colour, marking "fine". It is proposed to place the instrument at the east end of the harbour, at some little distance from the present new pier. In this position it will be seen by parties passing to either the new or the old quays, and as it will face both basins, it will be seen from almost any part of the harbour. Of course a small building will require to be erected in order to the safe preservation of the barometer. This will cost a few pounds; but we suppose the fishermen – all of whom, we are glad to hear, are delighted with their new acquisition – will be quite ready and willing to provide the necessary outlay for this purpose. Certainly after Mr Murray has been kind enough to make them a present of an instrument so valuable and so perfect, it is not too much to expect that they should be at a little expense in order to secure its safety.*"



## APPENDIX K

### Whitehills Harbour Barometer.

The Whitehills barometer was originally sited in the wall of No. 37 Low Shore. It was a Fitzroy fisheries barometer and was provided by the Board of Trade in 1858 to the fishermen of Whitehills.

The Whitehills barometer was Fitzroy Barometer No. 12, it bears the serial No. F.B. No. 12.

The barometer is now located in the Harbour Masters office beside the harbour / marina.

**1858, 3<sup>rd</sup> July:** The Aberdeen Herald and General Advertiser reported as follows: **“Public**

**Barometer for the Village of Whitehills, Banffshire.** -On Wednesday last, Mr. Stebbing, optician, attached to the Admiralty, agreeably to instructions by the Board of Trade, brought to the village of Whitehills, Boyndie, a barometer, with attached thermometer and Vernier scale, and superintended the adjustment thereof in a handsome house, erected by public subscription for its reception. Mr. Stebbing, also, with much urbanity, explained to the fishermen the mode of reading the scale, and left for their use a considerable number of explanatory books, prepared by Admiral Fitzroy, at the head of the Meteorological Department of the Board of Trade, expressly for the use of fishermen. Mr. Stebbing stated that eight other barometers, prepared and intended for fishing villages, had been brought in his charge to Edinburgh, and left there until these villages shall have erected houses for their reception. The fishing population of Whitehills are, therefore, much indebted to the Rev. L. W. Grant, minister of the parish, for the zeal and success with which he conducted the correspondence and raised subscriptions the noblemen and gentlemen in the neighbourhood, for the readiness with which they responded to the call; to Dr. Robert Grigor, R.N., surgeon, flagship **Sheerness**, a late visitant at the Manse of Boyndie, for the influence which he kindly used with friends in the Board of Trade for the promotion of the object; and to the members of said Board, and especially Admiral Fitzroy, for their ready and due appreciation of the utility to the perilous calling of fishermen, evinced by these appropriate and handsome gifts.”



*Whitehills former barometer box of 1858, No. 37 Low Shore, Whitehills. (S. Bruce).*

## APPENDIX L

### **Robert Burney (d.1840), Chief Coast-Guard Officer, Banff.**

**1858, 20<sup>th</sup> April:** The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported that a medal had been awarded to Robert Burney sometime between 1824 and 1858 for saving lives from shipwreck. I did some research to see what I could find about him. Turns out he was the Chief Coastguard officer at Banff, was married and had seven children, but sadly he died due to ill-health which came upon him after a rescue.

**1841, 29<sup>th</sup> November:** The Shipping and Mercantile Gazette reported as follows: *".....Robert Burney, late chief officer of the Coast-guard, Banff, N.B., while yet a youth, was dragged by a press gang from his apprenticeship, in the merchant service, on board a man-of-war, and served in the Royal Navy with the most distinguished gallantry from January, 1802, till 29<sup>th</sup> January, 1812, after which he was a prisoner of war in France till April, 1814. His conduct in the navy was such as to command the admiration, and even to gain the respect and esteem, of his officers, especially of those under whose eye he more immediately served. "In March, 1809," writes a gallant officer, "the Pallas was stationed in Basque Roads, to intercept the French coasting trade, when a large fleet were observed to run under the land, protected by batteries and armed vessels. The Palla's boats were instantly armed and manned, Burney, as usual, being first in the boats, for cutting out. We pulled in. The largest vessel that had run on shore was boarded, and ultimately brought off to the fleet under Lord Gambier. This prize we presented to the admiral, and she furnished many valuable materials for the destruction of the French fleet anchored in Basque Roads, which was effected about 10<sup>th</sup> April." "In such desperate work Burney was in his element, always ready when anything was to be done." These are extracts from one of his officers. Here follows another: - "December 25, 1811, fell in with part of the wreck of **H.M.S. Hero**, 74, subsequently ascertained to have been wrecked the evening before, on the Haaks, when all on board, 700 in number, perished. Several transports shared the same fate. January 28, 1812, we (the **Manilla**, 42,) struck on the Haaks, seven miles from the Texel, and were employed from 6. p.m. till midnight cutting away the masts, and throwing the guns, etc., overboard. On 29<sup>th</sup>, about two p.m., a Dutch schuyt, under French colours, came out, but the sea around us ran so high she was obliged to anchor about two cable lengths from us. There was no way by which any one could reach this vessel except by rafts previously made, expecting every minute to break up, as all our boats, with officers and men in them, had gone to endeavour to lay out an anchor, which they failed to effect in consequence of the high sea; and not being able to regain the ship, they were wrecked on the Texel Island. The largest raft was launched*

*over the side, when about 60 or 70 men committed themselves upon it. But now came a scene of destruction. The raft got entangled with the masts, yards, etc., every sea washing one or more men off, and crushing them between the raft and ship's side." Then, after detailing the gallant product of a Mr Goldie, the narrator proceeds – "Owing to the smallness of the line and the weight of the raft and sea, it broke, thus leaving the raft and the men upon it to inevitable destruction, as the tide was taking it nearer and nearer to the breakers. It was at this critical moment that Robert Burney intrepidly jumped overboard and swam to the schuyt through the raging surge, and effected a re-connection between her and the raft. Thus, the lives of the men upon it were saved to their country and their friends by the humane and gallant conduct of this one individual." Of course the whole were carried prisoners to France; and the same gallant officer who narrates the above goes on – "I may add, that Burney was much respected by the French authorities, both civil and military, as a good and brave man. He did much to uphold the love of country among those by whom he was surrounded. He kept a school at Saar Louis, in which he taught his shipmates and others all he could, and thus kept many from the temptations without." I fear I am too prolix, but my anxiety for his memory, and the widow and most interesting family of this gallant fellow, and for the honour of the government of this great and rich country which he so nobly served, must be my apology. The foregoing, one should think, constitutes a fair claim on the Admiralty, or, if that board is tied up by stringent regulations, on the British treasury. I now proceed to narrate his claims on the Customs, through the Coast-guard service. In 1822 or 1823 Burney was taken into that service by his former officer in the **Manilla**, who relates her shipwreck, and I cannot do better than copy his words. He was engaged as extra-boatman. "He was soon an established boatman; and for his excellent behaviour and during conduct with smugglers, etc., was subsequently made a commissioned boatman, their chief boatman, and, lastly, a chief officer. A man thus promoted through all the grades of the service, solely for good conduct, requires no better certificate. It may well be said of him. 'he deserved well of his country.' And I cannot believe, if the widow's case is clearly set forth, that a grateful country will suffer her and his children to suffer penury or want, or drive them for relief on the parish." During his career in the Coast-guard service Burney was, under God, the chief instrument, at various times, of saving nineteen lives from wrecks, under circumstances of extreme peril; and his own life ultimately fell a sacrifice to his humane endeavours to preserve those of others. The details would occupy too much of your space, otherwise they would be found most exciting and interesting. Suffice it to say, they have been all fully laid before the Customs, Admiralty, and Treasury, supported by affidavits from eye-witnesses, as well as participators in his dangers – will it be believed – without*

*effect? Burney died Feb. 23, 1840; not indeed, from external wounds or hurts, but by a wound to his constitution; which, although not immediately, yet ultimately, caused his death, as certified on soul and conscience by Garden Milne, M.D., R.N., his attendant in his illness He left a widow and seven children wholly unprovided for, and an eight was born three months after his death. Yet all exertions by application to the different governmental departments have met with a cold, unfeeling repulse, or with no answer at all. Here was a man who spent the spring and summer of human existence in nobly serving his native country. What has been his reward? supercilious neglect! How few of thousands, wallowing in wealth at the country's expense, have done as much for it! Your insertion of this, I own too lengthy letter, will be most gratifying, as it will doubtless call forth public feeling, and, perhaps, additional corroborations of the truths set forth, and pave the way for a fresh application to the new government – the former having been made to that of Lord Melbourne. I am, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant. A CIVILIAN.”*

**1841, 2<sup>nd</sup> October:** the Liverpool Mail reported as follows: **“LLOYD’S.** – *A half-yearly meeting of the subscribers of Lloyd’s was held on Wednesday morning.....£20 to the widow of Robert Burney, of the coast-guard service, whose death was unhappily hastened by his praiseworthy exertions in saving the crews of several vessels wrecked near Banff.”* (£20 in 1841 = approx. £2,125 in 2020).

**1841, 3<sup>rd</sup> December,** the Shipping and Mercantile Gazette, published the following letter to the Editor: **“THE CASE OF ROBERT BURNEY** – *Sir, - I enclose a Post-office order for 10s, to be given as my mite to the widow and seven children of that brave seaman Robert Burney, whose case is so ably stated in your paper of November 29, by “Civilian”; his unfortunate case bears so strong analogy to my own, that notwithstanding I can ill spare anything from a wife and eight children, I am rich in sympathy for the sorrows of the widow and orphan of a brother sailor.”* (10s. in 1841 = approx. £50 in 2020).

**1834, 5<sup>th</sup> February:** The Aberdeen Press and Journal reported as follows: **“SHIPWRECK AND LOSS OF LIFE.** – *The Sloop ‘Brothers’ of Banff, Orcherton, master, sailed from that port on Tuesday last the 28<sup>th</sup> ult. At 2pm bound for London with a cargo of rain, the wind then being fair at N.N.W. She had not proceeded far on her course when the wind shifted N.N.E., and obliged her, when some miles off Melrose Point, to bear up for Banff, which she did about 5pm. Soon afterwards the vessel struck heavily on the west point of the ledge of rocks called Collie, and making a great deal of water, the crew resolved, as the only means of saving their lives, to run her on shore, and accordingly at 7pm she took the beach near the spot called the Palmer Cove. On the alarm being given, a crowd soon gathered, and a fire was instantly lighted and kept burning on the*

*beach. In a very short time the men of the Coast Guard Service arrived with Manby's Apparatus, and a Salmon Coble was launched for the purposes of effecting a communication with the ship. The line from the first shot fell on board, and by this means the coble was enabled to reach the vessel, but it unfortunately soon broke, and a second attempt to throw a line on board was unsuccessful. The men in the coble, however, succeeded in making several trips to the ship, and were thus fortunately able to save the whole crew, with the exception of the master, who, stunned by a blow from a fallen block, and from a mistaken sense of duty, could not be prevailed on to leave his ship, and those who would have been his deliverers were reluctantly compelled to leave him to his fate. The night by this time was very dark and stormy, and the tide having risen and the sea increased, all further attempts to reach the vessel were utterly impracticable, and nothing remained but to wait in the hope that at next low water the unfortunate master might be taken from the wreck; but this hope was not destined to be fulfilled. For although the unfortunate man was seen at intervals through the night, and heard to cry for assistance, no human aid could avail him. About 2am the tide being at the height, and the vessel having been forced on some rocks and fallen on her side, it is supposed, he was washed from the deck, and he was not seen again; and thus perished in the prime of his life, a most industrious and enterprising seaman, leaving a widow and child to deplore his untimely end. The exertions made from the shore were beyond all praise, and though, when all were anxious to do their utmost, it would be invidious to particularize, we yet cannot refrain from bearing testimony to the very spirited conduct of Mr Burney of the Coast Guard, Captain Paterson of the 'Blossom', Captain Scott of the 'Neptune', Mr G. Nisbet, salmon fisher, Mr John A. Cameron, solicitor, William Laing, William Simpson, James Smith, and Joseph Clayton, seamen, all of whom were in the coble, and some of whom risked their lives three different times in performing the gallant service before detailed. The vessel soon became a total wreck, and we are sorry to say that no part of the cargo has been or will be saved, and but a small part of her stores and materials will be recovered. On Thursday morning the body of the master was found on the beach, a considerable way to the westward of the wreck, in a state demonstrating that the vessel had fallen over upon him; and was the same day interred in the Church-yard of Banff. – It is gratifying to state, that a handsome sum has been received by subscription for behoof of the poor widow, who, otherwise, with her orphan child, would have been left in a most destitute situation."*

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