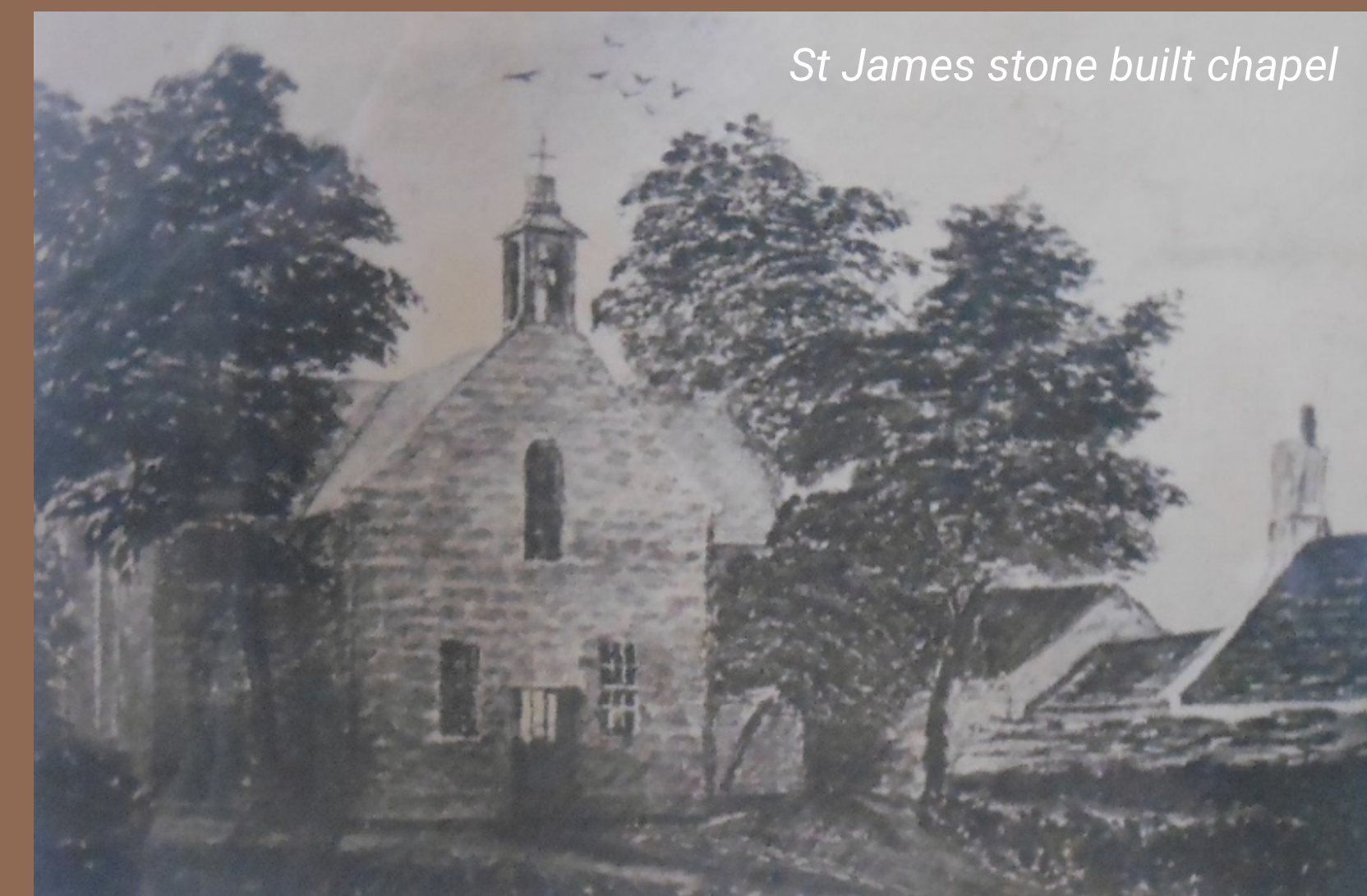


1737 onwards

THE FIRST CHAPEL AND THE BURNS CONNECTION

Building a chapel (twice)

Having been ejected from the now Presbyterian Church of Scotland churches at Fetteresso and Dunnottar by 1709, the remnant Episcopalian congregation initially worshipped in an upper room of the Tolbooth at Stonehaven Harbour.



The Episcopalians were strong enough to build a chapel in the High Street in 1737. George Straton, a manager of the High Street Chapel, bought the large Bible you see in the case below.

The Episcopal chapel only lasted for 9 years until, in 1746, it was ransacked by the Duke of Cumberland's men, and then used as stables. The site was re-acquired by Revd John Watt on behalf of the Qualified Congregation in 1751, and there they erected the stone-built chapel that lasted until the current St James was built in 1877.

In the picture above, one can clearly see the belfry, part of whose stone is preserved and sits in the Baptistry here. This is also the site when in 1788 a bell was hung. That bell was removed and re-hung in the new St James' church, and is the one found during recent work on the roof, and is currently being restored.

Meanwhile, the 'Scottish', 'non-juring' Congregation, in defiance of the Penal Laws, met in various houses in the High Street, such as Major Thomson's or Peter Christian's houses.

The Burns Connection

The father of Robert Burns, Scotland's most famous poet, William Burness was born in Drumlithie just south of Stonehaven in 1721. Anne Cushnie, who was an Episcopalian, married a cousin of Robert Burns and also inherited the Bible displayed below from George Straton, her grandfather. William left the Stonehaven area for Ayrshire in about 1755, soon after marrying and before the birth of his first child, Robert.



More information can be found by visiting our website www.stjames-stonehaven.org.uk