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**JOHN DICK,
SHIPBUILDER,
BANFF HARBOUR
1838 TO 1842.**



STANLEY BRUCE

Cover photograph – A schooner and several Zulu fishing boats in Banff Harbour, late 1800's. (Photographer unknown).

This book has been published on an entirely non-profit basis and made available to all free of charge as a pdf. The aim of the book is to make the history of vessels built by **John Dick**, shipbuilder, Banff available to a wider audience.

If you have any comments regarding this book, or any further information, especially paintings of vessels where I have none. It would be historically good to show at least one for each vessel; and since this is an electronic edition, it will be possible to update and include any new information.

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First Digital Edition.

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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.

Please treat all dimensions as approximate.

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BY

STANLEY BRUCE

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Introduction.

John Dick held the lease of the Banff Harbour shipyard and Patent Slip from 1838 to 1842, and during this period he built at least six vessels, possibly seven; six schooners and one sloop. As the tenant of the patent slip it is more than likely he also did some ship-repair work, but I could not find any specific details. In 1836, the nearest patent slips, according to the Aberdeen Herald, were Aberdeen and Sunderland, so **John Dick** in Banff was in a prime location to carry out much-needed ship-repair work. It was 1842 before a patent slip was erected at nearby Fraserburgh, offering some competition.



The schooner '**Blossom**' (111 tons NM) was built in 1840 by **John Dick**. The local press reported as follows: *"The model is beautiful, and the workmanship first-rate; Lloyds' Surveyor having declared that he never was on board a finer or better built vessel"*. So, from this we can be confident that **John Dick** built a very fine vessel. The '**Blossom**' was classified 6A1 by Lloyds Register of Shipping, this was a reasonably high classification for the type of timber used at this period.

I found it interesting to learn that when **John Dick** gave up his shipbuilding career, he returned to sea and became a ship-master. However, after about twenty-years at sea he emigrated to Quebec, Canada and worked as a foreman at **Pollock, Gilmour & Co.**, shipbuilders. Was shipbuilding in his heart or did he just return to shipbuilding in order to start a new life in Canada?

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

Former Shipbuilder, Hall Russell Ltd., Aberdeen, 1980 to 1991.

Abbreviations.

GRT	Gross Registered Tonnage.
N.M.	New measurement, with reference to tonnage.
O.M.	Old measurement, with reference to tonnage.
LRS	Lloyds Register of Shipping.

Ship Classification.

At this period classification symbols used by Lloyds Register of Shipping were as follows:

For the hull - A, Æ, E & I. (With A being the highest and I the lowest).

For equipment - 1 & 2. (With 1 being the highest).

Preceded by the number of years that class could be held.

The vessel '**Tom Duff**' (1839) built by **John Dick** had symbols of classification as 8A1.

Meaning class could be held for 8-years.

The hull symbol 'A' is the highest hull symbol.

The equipment symbol '1' is the highest equipment symbol.

Most of the vessels built by **John Dick** were given a reasonably high Classification by Lloyds Register of Shipping, mainly based on the type of timber used for construction.

Equipment refers to – anchors, chains, and hawsers.

Timeline

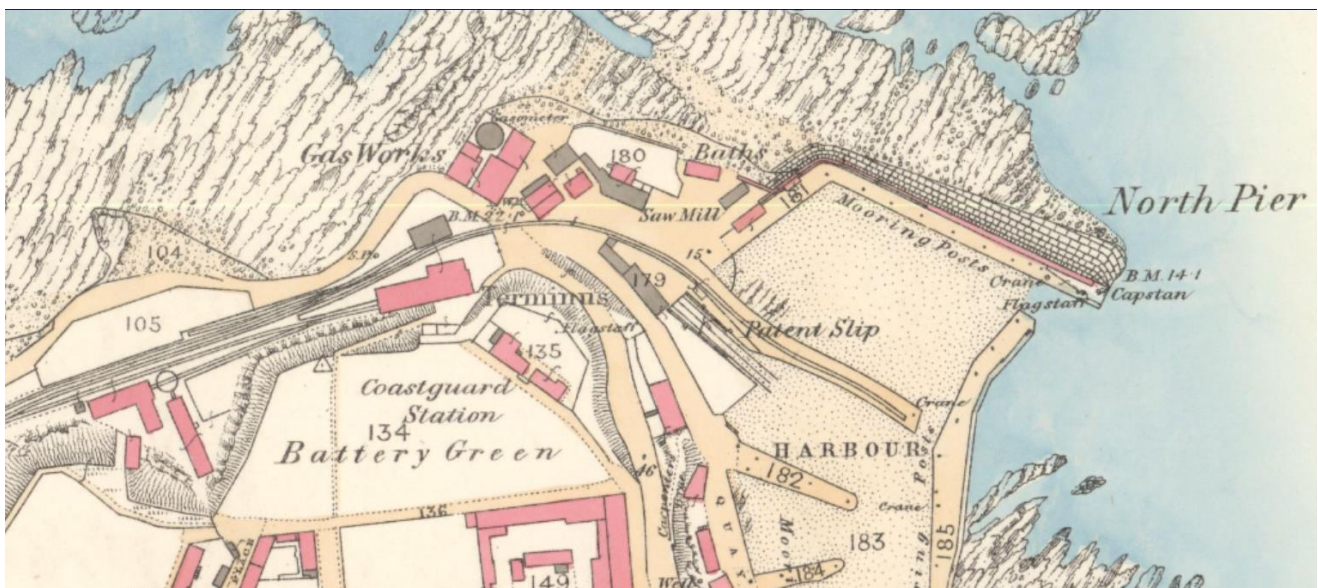
c1814/1815: John Dick was born in Banff; his father William Dick (1788 to 1861), was a shoemaker and his mother was Mary Herd (c1781 to 1853).

c1833 to c1836: Francis Dockar (1797 to 1862), shipbuilder held the lease of the shipyard at Banff Harbour, where he built at least two schooners, one of 107 tons in 1833 (name unknown) and the **'Boyn'** in 1836.

1833, 20th December: The Inverness Journal and Northern Advertiser reported as follows: *"The schooner 'Louise', Captain Bruce, bound for Pultenytown, Wick, was overtaken by the gale of Thursday, the 28th ult., off the Fair Isle, running under a single reefed boom foresail, and close reefed fore-topsail. The latter sail having been split by the violence of the gale John Dick a native of Banff, the ship carpenter, and two of the crew, were sent aloft, to secure the tattered fragments – while thus employed, Dick fell from the yard-arm upon the lee bulwark of the vessel, and from thence into the sea; by his fall, one of his legs was fractured – but having lustily struggled to regain the vessel, a wave providentially dashed him against its side, and with presence of mind rarely witnessed, he caught hold of the chains from whence, with the assistance of his shipmates, he was taken on board."*

John Dick was a very lucky man to survive such a fall. Many sailors have fallen from rigging and died, and many of those that have fallen in the sea have never been seen again, lost, and drowned. I found this accident very interesting, and I wondered whether **John Dick** gave up going to sea because of it.

1836: The Morton Patent Slip at Banff Harbour was installed; it had a lifting capacity of 200 tons. This was large enough to accommodate a typical schooner of this period and easily take a local fishing boat or two. See Appendix B for more information on the patent slip and its designer Thomas Morton.



1867 map Banff Harbour showing the location of the Patent Slip. (Courtesy NLS).

1836, 6th April: The Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser reported as follows: *“BANFF, March 31. – In a former number we had occasion to mention that a company had been formed here for the purpose of laying down a patent slip at this harbour. We are now happy to state that the work is to be commenced immediately, and the necessary preparation for that purpose is now making. As we formerly mentioned, we have no doubt, but this will turn out a profitable speculation for all concerned, as hitherto all vessels wanting repairs had to be sent to Sunderland or Aberdeen; but now, as the proposed slip will be capable of receiving vessels of 200 tons burthen, the saving must be great, particularly to all connected with the Moray Firth, coasting, and other trades. We hope the magistrates and harbour committee will take some means to improve the harbour of Banff, that it may, as far as possible become a port of shelter as well as a place of repair to all vessels visiting this coast. – Aberdeen Herald.”*

1836, 18th May: The Aberdeen Journal reported that *“The apparatus for completing the new Patent Slip at the Harbour of Banff arrived there last week, and the work is going on with all expedition, and will speedily be completed. It is expected that this Patent Slip will prove a great accommodation to the shipping of the port, as well as to other vessels frequenting that part of the Moray Firth.”*

1836: The first tenant of the Banff Patent Slip was **Robert Innes** of Leith, who held the lease until 1837.

1836, 24th August: The Aberdeen Journal reported as follows: *“Morton’s Patent Slip is now in full employment at Banff and has been so ever since it was finished. There are two vessels upon it at present undergoing very extensive repairs, and a third preparing to be put on. Nothing could be more gratifying to the proprietors than to find that whatever way the undertaking may remunerate them, it will be of the greatest benefit to the shipping interest in the Moray Firth. The active and talented shipbuilder, **Mr Innes** from Leith, is using every exertion to complete his building-yard and premises in a manner that, for convenience and comfort, will be equalled by few in the south.”*

1838: John Dick took over the lease of the Banff Harbour Patent Slip and shipyard premises and held it until 1842. He was followed by **William Anderson** who held the lease until January 1843. I could not establish who held the shipyard and slip lease between 1843 and 1848, or whether it lay unused. In 1848, **John Watson** formerly of Whitehills took over the lease and held it until he went bankrupt in 1879. It was then held by **John** and **William Geddie** from 1881 to 1895, they also had a shipyard at Duffus Hillock, Banff. **Stevenson and Asher** (established in Macduff c1883) held the lease from 1895 to 1936, and initially built mostly Zulu design sailing fishing boats and from the early 1900’s steam drifters, and latterly motor-boats.

1838, 22nd August: *The Aberdeen Press and Journal published the following advertisement: “MORTON’S PATENT SLIP, BANFF. In reference to a paragraph, which appeared in the Journal lately, with regard to the Patent Slip here, I, as Tacksman of*

the same, am highly gratified with the employment I have received from the Shipping interest in this quarter, and I trust my work has proved satisfactory. The ease and safety with which Vessels can now be repaired has only to be seen. And as to dispatch, it shall be my most earnest study to forward the interests of my employers. Banff, August 9, 1838. J. Dick."

1840, 15th July: The Aberdeen Press and Journal reported as follows: "**Shipbuilding-Yard, and Patent Slip. AT THE HARBOUR OF BANFF, TO BE LET. THE SHIPBUILDING-YARD and PATENT SLIP, at the Harbour of Banff, as presently possessed by Mr John Dick, are to be let, for such period as may be agreed on from and after the 2nd January next.**

Besides the necessary recommendation for the slip, the yard contains sufficient space for building a vessel of considerable burden; also, a saw-pit, with loft above, and accommodation for laying down timber – the whole enclosed within substantial stone walls.

The slip, which was laid down in 1836, is in excellent order, and capable of taking on vessels of the burden of 200 tons, O.M. It has hitherto been well employed: and as the number of vessels belonging to Banff has increased very rapidly of late, and still continues to increase, and there being no similar convenience for repairing ships in the Moray Firth, a tenant of enterprise would find the present opening worthy of his attention. Scaled offers will be received by JAMES SMITH, TOWN-HOUSE, Banff, until WEDNESDAY the 9th September next, when they will be opened in presence of all interested: and, in the meantime, further particulars may be learned, on application to the said JAMES SMITH.

Banff, 9th July, 1840."

This practice of offering the lease of the patent slip and yard for auction, was also the normal practice adopted in Aberdeen for the shipyards there which were owned by the Aberdeen Harbour Board. Seems strange to my mind, as anyone could put a bid in, get the lease, then the current tenant would have to move out. This obviously never happened in 1840 as **John Dick** held the lease until 1842.

1840, 16th December: The Aberdeen Press and Journal published an advertisement of shares for sale in the **Banff Morton Patent-Slip Company** as shown.

		For Sale,
T	THE following	STOCK:—
	10 SHARES of the	ILLINOIS INVESTMENT CO.
2	BANFF & LONDON SHIPPING COMPANY.
2	BANFF GAS LIGHT CO.
2	BANFF MORTON PATENT-SLIP COMPANY.
2	ABERDEEN FIRE AND LIFE ASSURANCE CO.
2	BANFF BATH CO.
2	NORTH BRITISH FIRE & LIFE ASSURANCE CO.
ALSO,		
All and Whole, that FEU TENEMENT, situated on the West side of the Burn of Portsoy, as formerly occupied by the late Peter Walker, foot-post betwix Banff and Portsoy, and now by his widow and others.		
For all necessary information respecting the Shares of the different Stocks above mentioned, application may be made to Messrs OSWALD, GEORGE, & Co., 43, Marischal Street, Aberdeen: or to GEORGE PETRIE, Solicitor, Banff. And with regard to the Portsoy Property, application may be made to the said GEORGE PETRIE, who will shew the Title Deeds.		
Banff, 10th Dec. 1840.		

1842, 11th February: The John o' Groat Journal published an advertisement offering the sloop 'Mary' of Banff for sale as follows:

I could not confirm if **John Dick** built 'Mary' (23 tons). **John Dick** was building vessels in 1840 at Banff Harbour, so it is possible. He may have built her speculatively, many shipbuilders of this period, built vessels speculatively just to keep the workforce employed.

1842: John Dick gave up the lease of the Banff Harbour shipyard and the patent slip.

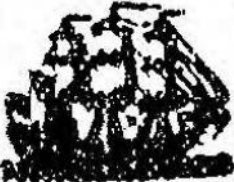
>**1842:** It seems that **John Dick** sometime after this date returned to sea, serving as a seaman and gained his captain's ticket. I did a search and found the following vessels with a master named **Dick**:

1842 to January 1843: The tenant of the Banff Shipyard and Patent Slip was **William Anderson**.

1842 to January 1843: The tenant of the Banff Shipyard and Patent Slip was **William Anderson**.

1843, 1st February: The Aberdeen Press and Journal published the following advertisement: (note the former tenant of the Patent Slip was **William Anderson**).

Banff Patent Slip to Let,
AND SHIPPING MATERIALS FOR SALE.



THE whole SHIP-BUILDING MATERIALS belonging to the Trustees of Wm. ANDERSON, Tenant of the Banff Patent Slip, will be Sold, by Public Roup, and *without reserve*, on TUESDAY 7th February next; the Sale to begin at noon. They consist of Baltic Framing Oak Timber, sided; Scots Oak; Pine Plank; Tar; Pitch; Rosin; Varnish; Dantzic Treennails, &c. &c. Also, an excellent Bogle, and a Boat. At the sametime, the SLIP and YARD will be Let for the current year, ending 2d January 1844, and if a suitable Rent is given, the term will be prolonged for other four years, with liberty to the Tenant to quit *at the expiry of any one year*, on giving six months' notice in writing.

There being no other Patent Slip within a great distance, it is almost sure to be occupied with numerous repairs, and seldom can a more promising opportunity offer, for an active, well qualified Ship-builder, possessed of moderate capital, especially in the present dull state of the trade.

The Slip is capable of receiving three Vessels at once.

1848, 27th June: The Banffshire Journal published the following advertisement regarding lease of the Banff Harbour Patent Slip:

PATENT SLIP.

THE BANFF MORTON'S SLIP COMPANY having resumed possession of their Slip and Yard, will LET the same Temporarily to Persons wishing to Clean or Repair Vessels, at the following Rates of Dues:—

First Day—2d. per Register Ton.
Next Fourteen Days—1d. per do.
Every Lawful Day thereafter— $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per do.
The charge in no case to be less than 10s. 6d. in whole.

The Slip takes up Vessels not exceeding Two Hundred Tons o.m.

The conditions will be shown by JAMES SMITH, Clerk to the Company, with whom Vessels may be Entered for the Slip.

BANFF, June 19, 1848.

c1862: John Dick left Banff for Quebec, Canada and worked as a foreman at Pollock, Gilmour & Co., shipbuilders.³

1867, 7th June: William, eldest son of **John Dick** died at No. 3 South Castle Street, Banff aged 23-years. The Banffshire Journal deaths notice refers to **John Dick, shipbuilder**, Quebec, late of Banff.

c1867: A memorial gravestone in Inverboyndie Kirkyard reads as follows: *“Erected by **John Dick, Shipbuilder**, Quebec, in memory of his father, William Dick, Shoemaker, Banff, who died 17th April 1861, aged 73 years; also of his mother Mary Herd, who died 26th July 1853, aged 72 years; and of his son, William Dick, Clerk, Quebec, who died in Banff, 7th June 1867, aged 23 years.”*

Exact dates unknown: John Dick worked as the port-warden of Quebec.

1892, 13th January: **John Dick** (b.c1814/1815), former shipbuilder of Banff died at Montreal, Canada.

1892, 9th February: The Banffshire Journal reported with the following obituary: *“DEATH OF A NATIVE OF BANFF IN CANADA. – Our obituary today includes the name of **Captain John Dick**, who for many years held the post of port-warden of Quebec, and who died at Montreal, on the 13th ult., at the age of seventy-seven. **Mr Dick** was at one time a shipbuilder in Banff, and carried on an extensive business. From his yard, were launched several famous clipper-schooners for the Banff and London Shipping Company. The most notable vessel built by **Mr Dick** was the ‘**Sovereign**’. About thirty years ago, **Mr Dick** left Banff for Quebec, where he carried on shipbuilding for the firm of **Messrs Pollock, Gilmour, & Co.**, and where he afterwards received the appointment of port-warden. The deceased was a brother of Mrs Watt, Railway Inn, Banff.”*

I could only find one vessel that he built for the Banff and London Shipping Company and that was the schooner ‘**Sovereign**’, which at 185 tons was the largest vessel he built at Banff.



Railway Inn, Banff. (S. Bruce 2005).

Vessels Built by John Dick, Shipbuilder, Banff.

I did not find a builders list, so this table has been made up from scratch. There may be more; if you know of others please get in touch.

Date	Name	Rig	GRT	Owners	LRS	L x B x D
1839	Tom Duff	Schooner	85 NM	William Hossack & Co.	8A1	62' 8" x 20' 1" x 10' 4"
1840	Blossom	Schooner	111 NM, 129 OM	Mr Bartlet, Banff.	6A1	69' x 20' 9" x 11' 9"
1840	Mary	Sloop	23 NM	Unknown, Banff.	N/A	Unknown
1841	Clunie	Schooner	101 NM, 117 OM.	Paterson, Bartlet, and Captain Ironsides.	Unknown	Approx. 66½' x 20½' x 10¼'
1841	Lady Duff	Schooner	93 NM, 132 OM	Provost Scott & Co., Banff.	5A1	78' 9" x 19' 8" x Approx. 11'
1842	Sir Alexander Duff	Schooner	65 NM, 104 OM	Provost Scott & Co., Banff.	5A1	68' 5" X 18' 9" x 9' 9"
1842	Sovereign	Schooner	185 OM	Banff & London Shipping Co., Banff.	5A1	82.8' x 22.7' x 10.7'

Tom Duff (1839).

According to the Lloyd's survey report for her build she was the first schooner built by John Dick. She was named after Thomas A. Duff of Glassaugh, near Portsoy. (Glassaugh is a mansion house (currently derelict and unroofed) in the parish of Fordyce, 2½ miles WSW of Portsoy.



Glassaugh House, Portsoy.

She was built for coasting and trade to the Baltic and carried general cargoes such as grain, timber, herrings, salt, coals, potatoes, apples, onions, and hoops. She is known to have traded at a long list of ports, including: Banff, Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Aberdeen, Portgordon, Lossiemouth, Burghead, Inverness, Helmsdale, Wick, Stornoway, Charlestown, Anstruther, Dundee, Burntisland, Grangemouth, Kenetpans, Leith, Alloa, Bo'ness, Prestonpans, Wemyss, Seaham, Hartlepool, Cuxhaven, Dysart, Blyth, Newcastle, Sunderland, Hull, Middlesborough, Liverpool, Drogheda, Goole, Runcorn, London, Copenhagen, Dantzic, Hamburg, Altona, Memel, Texel, Konigsberg, Archangel, Petersburg, Krautsand, Rostock, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Gothenburg, Stettin, Stralsund, Swinemunde, Colberg, Warnemunde, Colbergermunde, Faaborg, Wolgast, Elsinore and Florence.

DUTCH APPLES AND ONIONS.

The Subscriber daily expects the arrival from Rotterdam of the schooner "**Tom** Duff," Captain H. Watson, with about

1200 HAMPERS FINE APPLES;
200 Do. ONIONS.

ALSO,

The regular trader, "City of Rotterdam," Captain James Lee, with about

800 HAMPERS FINE APPLES.

All of which will be sold on arrival on moderate terms.

Apply on board the Vessels; or to

GEO. R. BAXTER & SON,
Trades' Hall.

Dundee, November 23, 1849.

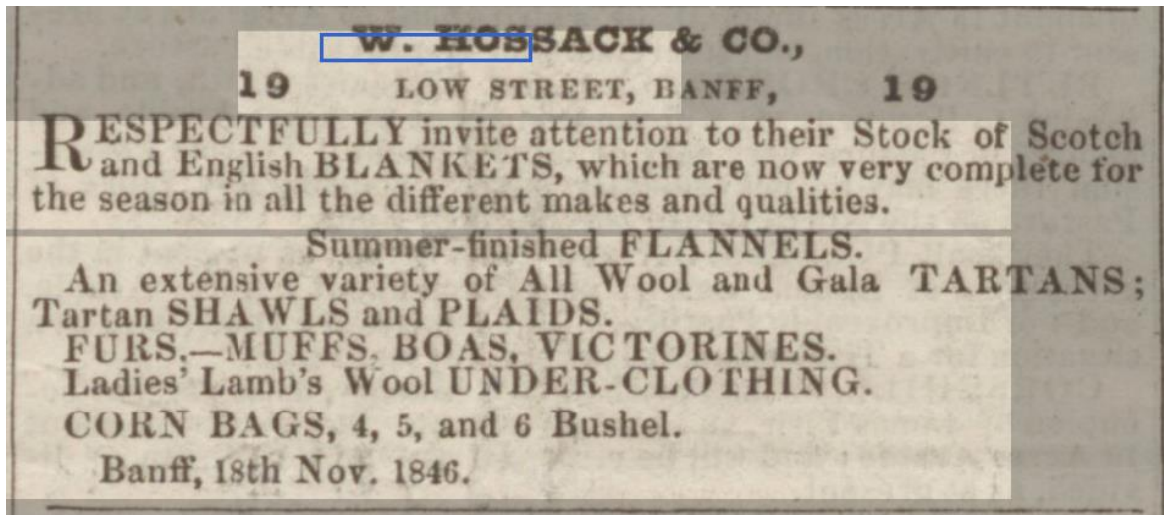
Advertisement (Dundee, Perth, and Cupar Advertiser, 23rd November 1849).

Unfortunately, I could not find a press article covering her launch.

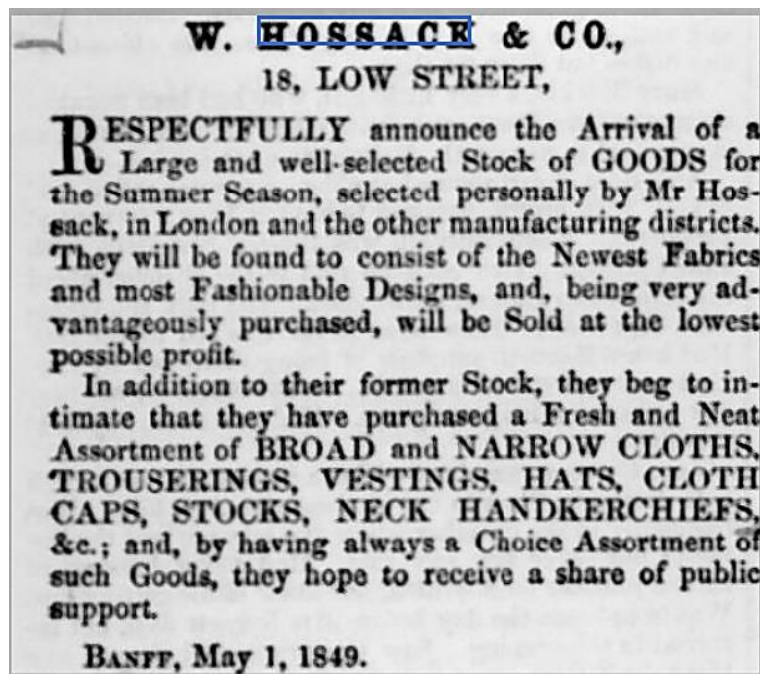
Tom Duff (1839). (Continued).

Vessel Name(s)	Tom Duff.
Rig	Schooner, 2 masts, 1 deck, probably a square stern, and a standing bowsprit.
Launch Date	Circa 24 th July 1839.
Owner(s)	William Hossack & Co. , merchant, 18 Low Street, Banff.
Registered Port	Aberdeen. Official No.: Unknown.
GRT	85 tons NM.
Length	62 feet, 8 inches (19.10m).
Breadth	20 feet, 1 inch (6.12m).
Depth	10 feet, 4 inches (3.15m).
Construction	Wood, carvel construction. English oak, Baltic oak, and Baltic fir.
Figurehead	Unknown.
Classification	Lloyds Register of Shipping. Class: 8A1. LR Surveyor: James McDonald. 1878, November: Class Æ1.
Other information	1839: Master James Findlay. (<i>Others 1844, December: Sinclair, 1845, October: Wilson, 1845, November: Slaker, 1846, November / 1847, February: Rhynas</i>). 1848, February: Master Captain H. Watson. 1848, 4th April: The Inverness Courier 2 nd May reported that a sailor named William MacDonald of Burghead fell from the jib-boom at Cattegat and was drowned. It was also reported that he was the only support of his widowed mother. The vessel was on passage to Stettin and travelling at 7 knots at the time of the accident, it was thought that he struck against the vessel during his fall. He had only joined the vessel 14 days beforehand. 1850, May: Owned by Mr Alexander Winchester, Inverness, master Gray. 1850, 25th September: The Glasgow Chronicle reported that on passage from Konigsburg to London, at the Cattegat she sprung a leak, and put into Gothenburg for repair. 1851, June: Master, Falconer. 1852, 18th September: — Whilst on passage from Inverness to Burghead, due to a furious gale, she dropped both anchors, but was still driven on the beach 1 mile east of Findhorn. However, around the end of September, she was got off and towed into Burghead Harbour. 1853: Master Captain John Christie, registered in Aberdeen. 1858: In LRS her GRT is recorded as 110 tons. 1867, April: Master, Henderson.

	<p>1868, 25th March: The Dundee Courier reported on a fatal accident on 23rd March, where David Deverall, mate of the ship 'Tom Duff', fell through an unsecure hatch on deck into the hold. He fractured a leg and sustained severe injuries about his head. He was taken to the Infirmary in an unconscious state; and died on 24th March.</p> <p>c1871, August: Master Nelson.</p> <p>1873, 3rd November: She was detained in Aberdeen harbour by the Board of Trade surveyor and deemed unseaworthy.</p> <p>1877, 18 September: The Scotsman newspaper reported that on the 17th September "<i>...the schooner 'Tom Duff', Captain John Christie, of and for Aberdeen from Sunderland with coal, put into the Tyne damaged and disabled. The captain reports that when at sea off St Abb's Head on Friday, being overtaken by a terrific gale and high seas, which struck the vessel and carried away maintop-mast and split several of his sails, besides doing other damage, he was obliged to discontinue the voyage, and run for the Tyne for repairs</i>". She was later towed to Aberdeen by the tug 'America'.</p> <p>1881: Owner and master Captain William Christie, described as a coaster, and GRT 110 tons. (LRS).</p> <p>1882, February: Master James Groat.</p> <p>1883, 25th February: Captain James Groat aged 37-years (Home address Regent Quay, Aberdeen), master of the vessel drowned at Hendon Dock, Sunderland when he fell overboard while proceeding to the vessel. (He left a widow and family). Vessel owned by William Christie, 38A Virginia Street, Aberdeen.</p>
<p>Date Scrapped / Lost</p>	<p>1883, 30th March: On passage from Sunderland to Aberdeen with a cargo of coal, master Captain Christie, due to a violent gale, at 5am while attempting to enter Aberdeen Harbour she stranded on the North Pier, Aberdeen Harbour and became a total loss. Three crew were saved by the rocket apparatus and two by the lifeboat. Wind SSE10. Site of loss, National Grid Ref: NJ 963 060. The schooner 'Queen of Inverness' suffered the same fate.</p>

Tom Duff (1839). (Continued).

Typical advertisement placed by W. Hossack & Co., for goods transported on the 'Tom Duff'. (Aberdeen Press and Journal 18th Nov. 1846).



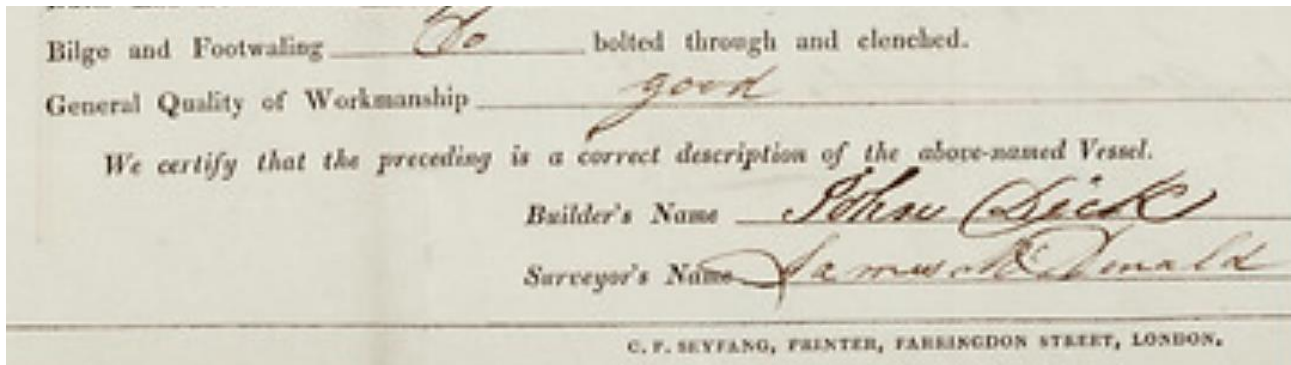
Typical advertisement placed by W. Hossack & Co., for goods transported on the 'Tom Duff'. (Banffshire Journal, 1st May 1849).

Lloyds Surveyor – gave the following general remarks from her survey report dated 28th September 1839:

"This schooner is the first that the young man has built here. I have seen her every day since her keel was laid down and a finer vessel cannot be built, for her frame of timber is all good quality and free from sap, she is all English oak above the water and three planks inside opposite the water and three inches and iron bolted, she is all fastened agreeable to Rules and all her timber most seasoned, the timber being seasoned here on the spot, has fitted her out with every article of the very best quality I am certain that you will give such a fine vessel every justice in classifying she has been a long time in the building so that the frame has had all the Summer to season and she has been

all caulked in the best of weather she is a very quality vessel with a head she is very strong.

Signed, James Mcdonald, Surveyor, 28th September 1839."



John Dick and LRS surveyor James McDonald signatures on the LRS survey report dated 20th September 1839 for the schooner 'Tom Duff'.

1883, 30th March: The Aberdeen Evening Express reported as follows: **“WRECK OF THE TOM DUFF.** The **‘Tom Duff’** was first sighted in the offing shortly after four o'clock, and at that hour it was thought by those on the look-out at the pier that the vessel was making for the harbour. The wind meanwhile was blowing hard from S.S.W. Towards five o'clock the vessel had approached considerably nearer, and was seen to be making round the South Breakwater. Owing to the direction of the wind, the sea fortunately was not unusually rough, but the men, exhausted as they must have been with their night's toil, were unable to manage the sails. With the rolling motion of the ship, it was indeed scarcely possible for the men to maintain their footing on board. So soon as the vessel rounded the South Breakwater it was seen, from the direction in which she was drifting, that she was in extreme danger; and in an incredibly short time she was driven right across the entrance channel to the North Pier, where she struck heavily. The crew thereupon hoisted signals of distress. Meanwhile the lifeboat was lying in the channel in readiness for any emergency that might arise, and had, indeed, been in-waiting since the rescue of the crew from the **‘Queen’**. The tugboat **‘Heather Bell’** was also lying near with steam up, ready to render assistance, and taking the lifeboat in tow proceeded to the rescue of the crew of the **‘Tom Duff’**. At the pier the swell was so great that the vessel was driven right on to the platform, and then carried right over it. The lifeboat first attempted to reach the vessel from the port side, but was almost immediately driven back. The second attempt was even more dangerous and exciting, the boat being carried right over the bows of the vessel, and the crew had a very narrow escape. Fortunately, the boat kept her position, but in the strenuous efforts to reach the ship several of the oars were smashed. While the **‘Tom Duff’** was still lying on the platform lines were thrown by willing hands from the pier, and with considerable difficulty three of the men were rescued by this means. Just as the remaining two men were about to avail themselves of the means of escape a huge wave swept the vessel from the platform into the entrance channel. The situation was

now critical; the vessel in the hands of two men could not be guided. She was driven helplessly along the channel. The lifeboat, however, was now able to get near, and after several unsuccessful attempts, ultimately succeeded in rescuing the men. The whole of the crew were, of course, greatly exhausted, and they were taken to the Fishers Square, where their wants were attended to by the fishermen. David Low, the mate of the **'Tom Duff'**, states that they left Shields about seven o'clock yesterday morning. bound for Aberdeen, with a cargo of coal for the Northern Agricultural Company. When they left the harbour a strong breeze from the south was blowing, the wind freshening as it continued. All day it gradually increased in force, until by eleven o'clock last night it had become a complete hurricane, the sea had also risen, and was now running very heavy, the waves breaking over the ship every few minutes. Most of the ropes were washed overboard, and the galley was also carried off. The only boat they had was stove in, and owing the sky-light being smashed the cabin was in a flooded state. This condition of matters continued all the night. About four o'clock this morning they caught a glimpse of the Girdleness Light, and they gradually edged the vessel round the Ness, and tried to make for Aberdeen Harbour. Although pitched about in a fearful manner by the waves, which were running to a great height, and being more than once in a position that was eminently critical, they at last succeeded in getting over the bar in safety. Arrived in the channel they found that the worst of their difficulties were, however, only coming. The wind having "headed" on them, they attempted to sail in under close-reefed sails; but their utmost endeavours were completely baffled in consequence of the wind giving out, combined with the fresh in the river, and their vessel was driven slowly, but not less surely, on to the North Pier. This was about five o'clock. After striking the pier they were drifted some distance up by the force of the sea, which, about this time, carried away the jibboom. The ship then heeled over toward the pier, and those on board hoped that she might swing close to. The waves, however, got hold of her quarter and it was thought she was to go over in midchannel. They managed get a line thrown on to the pier, which was secured by those standing anxiously watching the proceedings. They then hauled a small hawser on board, as all their own ropes were gone and they also got a tail block, and secured the end for pulling ashore. Seeing no sign of the lifeboat coming to their assistance, the crew had by this time taken to the rigging. The life-saving apparatus, however, speedily arrived, and after it had been secured three those-on board were taken safely off by means of the cradle. These were Alex. Glass, the cook (who was the first to come ashore), David Low, and Daniel Skinner, a seaman. They left the master, A. Christie, and a man, G. Thomson, dinging to the rigging. They were, however, afterwards rescued by the lifeboat after some difficulty. Low says he was considerably hurt about the thighs through being struck by the boat, which was knocking about on board, while he was securing the rocket apparatus. **The 'Tom Duff'** was a schooner of 110 tons, and was undoubtedly one of the oldest vessels belonging the port, having been built in 1839. She was the property of Mr William Christie, who is a brother of

the captain. The vessel now lies close to the pier about midway up the channel. She, is apparent, has suffered great damage, and will likely go to pieces in the course of the next tide. Great praise due to Captain and the members of the lifeboat crew, they having experienced considerable danger each case; but notwithstanding the time of the wrecks, the severity of the weather, and every other circumstance, they rendered excellent service, and, as stated, succeeded in saving every member each crew. About half-past one o'clock the wind changed from south-west to north-west, but it is not blowing nearly so violently it was this morning. A heavy sea, however, is still running, and the channel is strewn with large quantities of wreckage from the 'Tom Duff', which is rapidly breaking up. With the incoming tide the sea continually making breaches over the vessel, sweeping it from stem to stern. The 'Queen' is also breaking up, but not so rapidly as the 'Tom Duff'."

1883, 7th April: The Aberdeen Weekly News reported as follows: **"WRECK OF THE TOM DUFF.** *The 'Tom Duff' was first sighted in the offing shortly after four o'clock, and at that hour it was thought by those on the lookout at the pier that the vessel was making for the harbour. The wind meanwhile was blowing hard from S.S.W. Towards five o'clock the vessel had approached considerably nearer, and was seen to be making round the South Breakwater. Owing to the direction of the wind, the sea fortunately was not unusually rough, but the men exhausted as they must have been with their night's toil, were unable to manage the sails. So soon as the vessel rounded the South Breakwater it was seen, from the direction in which she was drifting, that she was in extreme danger; and in an incredibly short time she was driven right across the entrance channel to the North Pier, where she struck heavily. The crew thereupon hoisted signals of distress. Meanwhile the lifeboat was lying in the channel in readiness for any emergency that might arise, and had, indeed, been in waiting since the rescue of the crew from the 'Queen'. The tug-boat 'Heather Bell' was also lying near with steam up, ready to render assistance, and, taking the lifeboat in tow, proceeded to the rescue of the crew of the 'Tom Duff'. At the pier the swell was so great that the vessel was driven right on to the platform, and then carried right over it. The lifeboat first attempted to reach the vessel from the port side, but was almost immediately driven back. The second attempt was even more dangerous and exciting, the boat being carried right over the bows of the vessel, and the crew had a very narrow escape. Fortunately, the boat kept her position, but in the strenuous efforts to reach the ship several of the oars were smashed. While the 'Tom Duff' was still lying on the platform, lines were thrown by willing hands from the pier and with considerable difficulty three of the men were rescued by this means. Just as the remaining two men were about to avail themselves of the means of escape a huge wave swept the vessel from the platform into the entrance channel. The situation was now critical; the vessel in the hands of two men could not be guided. She was driven helplessly along the channel. The lifeboat, however, was now able to get near, and*

after several unsuccessful attempts, ultimately succeeded in rescuing the men. The whole of the crew were, of course, greatly exhausted, and were taken to the Fishers Square, where their wants were attended to by the fishermen. The 'Tom Duff' left Shields on Thursday morning for Aberdeen with coal."

1883, 12th April: The Evening Gazette (Aberdeen) reported as follows: **"Serious Occurrence at Aberdeen Harbour. Dredger Capsized. ENTRANCE CHANNEL BLOCKED.** *This morning a very serious accident befell one of the basket dredgers belonging to the Aberdeen Harbour Commissioners. About six o'clock, while the dredger (No. 3) was being towed down the channel by a hopper for the purpose of dredging the silt from the harbour entrance, she was driven by the current against the bow of the hulk of the schooner 'Tom Duff', which has lain athwart the channel since she was wrecked. The dredger was moving slowly at the time, and the collision was not thought to have been of a serious nature. The blow was inflicted on the "bilge" of the bow of the vessel immediately below the fender. On investigation, however, to the alarm of those on board, the vessel was found to be making water rapidly. The vessel being constructed in compartments, the water accumulated only on the side which had been damaged. Seeing the alarming state of matters, and fearing that the craft would capsize, Dredging Inspector Craig gave orders to lower the dredging ladder and buckets with the view of keeping her upright in the water. This was found to be impossible, however, as by this the water had gained so rapidly on them that the vessel was beginning to heel over. The dredger by this time had been drifting slowly down the channel with the receding tide. When about opposite the flagstaff on the North Pier she capsized, leaving the crew barely time to save themselves by means of the boats. The craft is now lying on her side parallel with the Pier and near the centre of the channel. The deck is facing the North Pier and at low water the half of the hull could be seen above water. Beyond the injury sustained to the hull of the dredger it is beyond a doubt that further injury must have been caused by the displacement of the heavy machinery and gearing which took place when the craft heeled over. The vessel is constructed of iron at the point where she received damage, and the exact extent of the injury has not yet been ascertained, but it must have been of considerable magnitude judging from the short time that elapsed between the collision and the capsizing of the vessel. It is most fortunate that the vessel was not athwart the channel when the accident befell her, or the entrance would have been entirely blocked. As it is, however, navigation will be rendered a matter of some difficulty. To the south side of the channel lie large fragments of the steamer 'Duchess', to the north, in an almost complete condition, the battered hull of the 'Tom Duff', and now an additional encumbrance of considerable size has been added by the casualty that took place this morning. Shortly after the accident happened operations were*

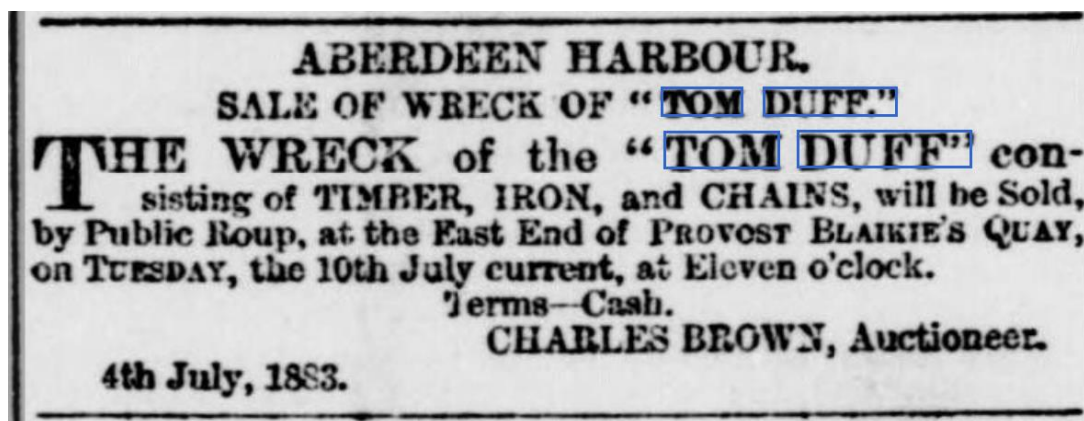
commenced by gangs of workmen, under the superintendence of the Harbour Engineer, to have the vessel righted. The operation will, however, be one of tremendous difficulty owing to the position in which the vessel is lying, and some time must elapse before she can be raised and the fairway cleared."

1883, 19th April: The Aberdeen Evening Express reported as follows: "**THE WRECK OF THE TOM DUFF.** *This wreckage, still lying in the channel, is of some danger to passing vessels. This morning a French fishing-boat, while putting to sea, was driven on to the wreck by the force of the south wind, and it was found necessary to secure the assistance of a tug to get her off. This was done, the boat being taken back to Point Law; but on examination it was discovered that she had not sustained any damage. She was accordingly taken in tow by the tug and safely towed down the channel. It is certainly fortunate that no damage was done, but the consequences might have been as serious as in the case of the dredger presently lying in the channel."*

1883, 23rd April: The Aberdeen Evening Express reported as follows: "**THE WRECK OF THE TOM DUFF.** *Today operations are being carried on for the purpose of removing the wreck of the 'Tom Duff' from the fairway of the channel. Six pontoon buoys were attached to the wreck at low water, so that at high water the hulk might be floated. At the time of high water, however, the vessel did not float as was anticipated, but the workmen were engaged in hauling the wreck ashore, and after successive efforts they were rewarded by finding that she had been lifted a distance of thirty feet. Operations were then suspended with a view of ascertaining the position of the hulk. For this purpose two divers went down and made a careful examination, and also secured several of the chains which and given way. Two of the ropes to which had been attached two of the buoys were found to be loose, and these were immediately made as secure as possible, but the state of the wreck is such that it is with great difficulty that appliances are made fast. The work will be resumed next tide, but it may be stated that the wreck is already out of the fairway of the channel. The operations this afternoon were watched by a large number of spectators."*

1883, 24th May: The Evening Gazette (Aberdeen) reported that the wreck of the schooner 'Tom Duff' had today been removed from the entrance channel of Aberdeen Harbour. It was refloated using two lighters and taken up channel.

1883, 5th July: The Aberdeen Evening Express published the following advertisement regarding the public rroup of the wreck of the 'Tom Duff':



Blossom (1840).

She was built for coasting, carrying general cargo. She is known to have traded at London and at the Baltic.

1840: The Aberdeen Press and Journal reported as follows: *“On the 19th ult., a fine new schooner, named the ‘Blossom’, 111 tons, new measure was launched from the building-yard of Mr John Dick, Banff. The vessel is admitted to be a most handsome mould, and is expected to be a very fast sailer, and does the greatest credit to the abilities of the builder, Mr Dick.”*

Vessel Name(s)	Blossom.
Rig	Schooner, 2 masts, 1 deck, probably a square stern, and a standing bowsprit.
Launch Date	19 th May 1840.
Owner(s)	Principal and managing owner, Mr William Bartlet of Banff Brewery, Banff.
Registered Port	Banff. Official No.: Unknown.
GRT	111 tons NM, 129 tons OM.
Length	69 feet (21.03m).
Breadth	20 feet, 9 inches (6.32m).
Depth	11 feet, 9 inches (3.58m).
Construction	Wood, carvel construction. English oak, Baltic oak, American white oak, larch, beech, and yellow pine.
Figurehead	Unknown.
Classification	Lloyds Register of Shipping. Class: 6A1. LR Surveyor: James McDonald.
Other information	1840, 12th May: According to the LRS survey report of this date, her master James Paterson was one of the principal owners. 1864: Master still Paterson.
Date Scrapped / Lost	Unknown.

Blossom (1840). (Continued).


1840, 27th May: The Aberdeen Press and Journal reported as follows: *“On the 19th inst., a fine new schooner, named the ‘Blossom’, 111 tons, new measure, was launched from the building-yard of Mr John Dick, Banff. The style in which she took the water clearly evinced that her element was not “high and dry”, and we trust it may be long ere she be here again. The model is beautiful, and the workmanship first-rate; Lloyds’ Surveyor having declared that he never was on board a finer or better built vessel. She is to be commanded by Captain Paterson; and belongs to a company (Mr Bartlet, principal owner). – Owing to the inclemency of the weather, the launch could not take place on Monday; but a dinner was given on that day, by the owners, in the Banff Hotel, to a very numerous party of their friends, on which occasion the chair was filled by the managing owner, Mr Bartlet of the Banff Brewery – the duties of the Vice-chair being discharged by Mr Longmore of Rettie, another of the owners. The festivities of the evening were kept up till a very late hour, and many a bumper was quaffed to the prosperity of the new ‘Blossom’, and to the health and success of her spirited owners, and worthy commander. A perfect model of the vessel, entirely constructed by a poor sickly boy in the town, with no other aid than that of a knife, was exhibited after dinner, and it was stated that the model was built in every respect the same as the vessel, the young builder having kept pace, in all respects, and proceeded from frame to frame, and plank to plank, with the progress of the vessel on the slip. The model was much admired, and having been handed round the company, was returned with a cargo of silver, which will add somewhat to the comforts of the ingenious constructor. The vessel herself is admitted to be a most handsome mould, and is expected to be a very fast sailer, and does the greatest credit to the abilities of the builder, Mr Dick.”*

The replacement schooner ‘**Blossom**’ (105 tons) was built by **John Watson**, Banff for William Bartlet and launched in April 1862 at Duffushillock, Banff.

Blossom (1840). (Continued).

Ship for Sale.

To be sold, by public roup, on *Friday, 11th February next*,
at One o'clock, within **GORDON'S HOTEL**, here,



THE Schooner "**BLOSSOM**" now lying in
the Harbour of Banff, 129 Tons old, or 111
Tons new measurement, carries a large cargo,
and sails fast. This vessel is in excellent order,
well fitted, and ready for sea. For further par-
ticulars, apply to
Mr **W.M. BARTLET**, Brewery, Banff.
Banff, 31st January, 1848.

Adjourned Sale of Stranded Schooner,
BY AUCTION,
AT FRASERBURGH.

*Schooner 'Blossom' for sale advertisement.
(Aberdeen Press and Journal, 2nd February 1848).*

1861, 26th November: The Banffshire Journal published the following advertisement:

Foreign Timber.

THE SUBSCRIBERS are in course of discharging ex-
actly a Cargo of Dantzic **RED FIR**, of superior qua-
lity, in Logs and Deals.
Deals, 3 by 9, and 3 by 11, various lengths.
On hand, a large supply of Best **RED** and **WHITE NORWAY**
TIMBER, and **DRAMMEN FATTENS**, also **RED** and **WHITE**
FLOORING, $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, **LININGS**, &c.
Prices moderate.

JAMES PATERSON & CO.

Banff Saw Mills, 14th Oct. 1861.

Deal: In the UK; a plank of wood, 9 inches wide, not more than 3 inches thick, and at least 6 feet long.

Mary (1840).


She was built for coasting and to carry 40 tons of general cargo. It's not clear whether she was rigged as a sloop (1 mast) or a smack (2 masts).

According to an advertisement in the John o' Groat Journal, 11th February 1842 she was built in 1840. The advertisement advised to contact **John Dick**, shipbuilder, Banff if interested in purchasing her. I cannot confirm 100% that she was built by **John Dick**, but it is very likely, therefore, I have added her here.

Vessel Name(s)	Mary.
Rig	Smack / Sloop, 1 or 2 masts, 1 deck, probably a square stern, and a running bowsprit.
Launch Date	1840.
Owner(s)	Unknown, perhaps built to John Dick's own account.
Registered Port	Banff. Official No.: Unknown.
GRT	23 tons NM.
Length	Unknown.
Breadth	Unknown.
Depth	Unknown.
Construction	Wood, carvel construction.
Figurehead	Unknown.
Classification	Unknown.
Other information	---
Date Scrapped / Lost	Unknown.

SLOOP FOR SALE.

That Fine Fast-Sailing Smack,
“MARY,” OF BANFF,
 23 Tons, N.M.,
 AND WILL CARRY 40 TONS.



The “MARY” is only Two Years Old, built from the best materials, and fitted out in a most expensive and superior manner.

For further particulars, apply to Mr **JOHN DICK**, Shipbuilder, Banff; or to **DANIEL LOUITTIT**, Agent, here.

Pulteneytown, 27th Jan., 1842.

Advertisement in the John o' Groat Journal, 11th February 1842.

Clunie (1841).

She was built to carry general cargo and is known to have traded at Banff, Fraserburgh, Burghead, Dundee, Leith, Wick, Grangemouth, Sunderland, Newcastle, Hartlepool, Hull, Middlesborough, Dublin, Liverpool, London, Lowestoft, Carlsrona, Landsrona, Elsinore, Dantzig, Riga, Stettin, Konigsberg, Swinomunde, and Pillau.

1841, 18th February: The Shipping and Mercantile Gazette reported as follows: *“LAUNCHES – There was launched on Monday forenoon, from the building-yard of Mr. John Dick, Banff, a fine new schooner, called the ‘Clunie’. She measures 117 tons, O.M.; 101 N.M. She glided into the water in fine style.”*

Vessel Name(s)	Clunie.
Rig	Schooner, 2 masts, 1 deck, probably a square stern, and a standing bowsprit.
Launch Date	8 th February 1841.
Owner(s)	Paterson, Bartlet, and Captain Ironside.
Registered Port	Banff. Official No.: Unknown.
GRT	101 tons NM, 117 tons OM.
Length	Approx. 66½ feet (20.27m).
Breadth	Approx. 20½ feet (6.25m).
Depth	Approx. 10¼ feet (3.12m).
Construction	Wood, carvel construction.
Figurehead	Unknown.
Classification	Unknown.
Other information	First master, James Mathieson (for many years). Sold to Wick and known to have traded from Caithness to London.
Date Scrapped / Lost	Unknown.

Lady Duff (1841).

She was the first clipper schooner built at Banff. Being referred to as a clipper tells us that she had fine lines and perhaps an ‘Aberdeen Bow’, similar to that first used on the ‘**Scottish Maid**’ (142 tons) built by **Alexander Hall & Co.**, Shipbuilders, Footdee, Aberdeen in 1839. She is known to have traded coastally and to the Baltic.

1841, 25th September: The Shipping and Mercantile Gazette reported as follows: *“BANFF, Sept. 16. – There was launched today, from **Mr Dick’s** building-yard, a clipper-built schooner, 93 tons (N.M.), called the ‘**Lady Duff**’. Being the first vessel which has been built within the Deveron for a very long period, and the day being fine, an immense crowd was attracted to witness the launch.”*

Vessel Name(s)	Lady Duff.
Rig	Schooner, 2 masts, 1 deck, probably a square stern, and a standing bowsprit.
Launch Date	1841.
Owner(s)	Provost William Scott & Co. , Banff.
Registered Port	Banff. Official No.: Unknown.
GRT	93 tons N.M. 132 tons O.M.
Length	78 feet, 9 inches (24m).
Breadth	19 feet, 8 inches (6m).
Depth	Approx. 11 feet. (3.35m).
Construction	Wood, carvel construction.
Figurehead	Unknown.
Classification	Lloyds Register of Shipping. Class: 5A1. 1847, 27 th February: Class Æ1.
Other information	Her first master was Mr James Gow. 1850: Owner still W. Scott and master still James Gow. 1850: 33 feet of her after keel replaced. Sold to Orkney owners.
Date Scrapped / Lost	1872, 2nd June: Carrying a cargo of coals, she stranded on a sand bank in the River Tay, all hands were saved. She was registered at Dundee and her master was Captain Laurie. (Location of loss cited as: N56 27.00, W2 50.00).

1848, 7th November: The Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser reported as follows: *“**ACCIDENT AT SEA.** – On Friday evening last, as the ‘**Lady Duff**’ of this port was off St Combs, a village near Peterhead, a young man, an apprentice, of the name Bremner, belonging to the Boyne, while aloft stowing the sails, fell from the topmast to the deck. The captain immediately ordered the vessel, which was bound for Banff, to be put about, and stood for Aberdeen, to procure medical assistance. On his arrival there, a surgeon was procured, who, on examining Bremner, found that though very severely bruised, no bones had been broken, and gave the liveliest hopes of his speedy*

Lady Duff (1841). (Continued).

recovery. Though young, Bremner is a most able seaman, noted for his activity and boldness.” Bremner was very lucky not to have had serious injury or loss of his life.

1872, 3rd June: The Dundee Courier reported as follows: **“WRECK OF A SCHOONER IN THE TAY.** *At an early hour yesterday morning another addition was made to the list of shipping disasters which have occurred in the Tay by the wreck of the schooner ‘Lady Duff’, Captain Lawrie, of Dundee. She had left Sunderland for Dundee with a cargo of coals, and had up to the time she entered the river experienced a favourable voyage. When Captain Lawrie found the fairway buoy there was a fresh breeze blowing from the south, and the sea was by no means heavy. It was, however, quite dark, and the weather was somewhat hazy. The vessel proceeded safely on her course till about three o’clock, and up till that time the captain had taken the Buddonness Lights as his guide in steering. However, he suddenly either lost sight of the lights, or the lights had been put out owing to daylight having dawned, and before he could fairly discover the real position of his vessel he found to his surprise and alarm that she was inside of No. 2 Buoy at the Abertay Sands. He at once endeavoured to run the vessel out into the fairway, but in this he unfortunately did not succeed, as she shortly afterwards took the ground close to and south of No. 3 Buoy, and remained fast. The shock, which was very severe, had started some of the timbers, as when the pumps were sounded the vessel was found to be making water very fast. A considerable time before she struck, she was observed by Captain Strachan of the three-masted schooner ‘Charlotte’, of Banff, which was also making her way up the river, and though the ‘Lady Duff’ appeared at the time in a critical position no signal for assistance was displayed nor was any attempt made by the crew to leave the vessel, which they could have done had they wished. The ‘Charlotte’, therefore, continued on her course. On reaching Broughty Ferry, however, the captain and the crew gave the alarm that there was a vessel in danger at the mouth of the river, the crew making all the noise they could on board by bawling, firing guns, etc. Whether any one on shore was aroused by this or not is impossible to ascertain, but it was not for some considerable time afterwards that the lifeboat was launched to give assistance. Meanwhile the tug steamer ‘Sensation’, Captain Coulson, which was on her way to Dundee from Shields with two crews for vessels lying in Camperdown Dock, had come to the rescue of the crew on board the ill-fated schooner. Captain Coulson had seen her aground a long way off, and on coming nearer to the spot where she lay, he bore down towards her. The unfortunate crew then left their vessel in a small boat, and rowed to the steamer, and were thus picked up. When the crew left the schooner, the water had risen to a considerable depth in her hold, and the breakers were occasionally breaking over her. Captain Coulson lay near the vessel for some hours thinking that he might perhaps be able to tow her off; but not withstanding all his anxiety to do this, he found it impossible to reach her from the water being so shallow. He had therefore to leave*

Lady Duff (1841). (Continued).

the vessel to her fate, and proceeded on his way to Dundee. After having steamed up the river several miles the lifeboat was met on its way to the vessel, and as the crew had already been picked up, Captain Coulson towed it back to Broughty Ferry. The crew were landed at Dundee. The ‘Lady Duff’ became a total wreck in the course of the morning. Captain Coulson deserves the greatest praise for going to the assistance of the shipwrecked crew, as but for his timely appearance at the scene of the disaster, the men, whom he was the means of picking up, might have perished in the river. The crew of the ‘Lady Duff’ numbered five in all – all told. The master is also the owner. She was built in Banff in 1841, and was 93 tons register.”

Sir Alexander Duff (1842).

She was built for coasting, carrying general cargo.

Described as a sister ship to the ‘Lady Duff’, since owned by the same owner, but she was smaller than ‘Lady Duff’. Unfortunately, I could not find a press launch article for this vessel. Her launch date I got from the Lloyds survey report.

Vessel Name(s)	Sir Alexander Duff.
Rig	Schooner, 2 masts, 1 deck, probably a square stern, and a standing bowsprit.
Launch Date	12 th May 1842.
Owner(s)	Provost William Scott & Co.
Registered Port	Banff. Official No.: Unknown.
GRT	65 tons N.M. 104 tons O.M.
Length	68 feet, 5 inches (20.85m).
Breadth	18 feet, 9 inches (5.71m).
Depth	9 feet, 9 inches. (2.97m).
Construction	Wood, carvel construction. Larch, beech, elm, pine and fir.
Figurehead	Unknown.
Classification	Lloyds Register of Shipping. Class: 5A1. LR surveyor - James MacDonald.
Other information	1 st master – John Liddle. 2 nd master - James Lovie of Whitehills.
Date Scrapped / Lost	1847, 7th December: During a severe gale she broke from her moorings, a buoy in the middle of Peterhead’s South Harbour and became adrift and was wrecked in Peterhead Bay. (Master – Slaker).

1848, 21st March: The Banffshire Journal published the following notice: *“All those having claims on the owners of the late schooner, “SIR ALEXANDER DUFF” of Banff, are requested to lodge them with Provost Scott, within fourteen days from this date, when they will be paid, if found correct. Banff, March 20, 1814.”*

Sovereign (1842).

Shew as built to carry general cargo for the Banff and London trade, and is reported to have been one of the fastest local vessels of her day.

She is known to have traded at Banff, Leith, London, and Archangel (Russia).


1842, 16th November: The Aberdeen Journal reported as follows: *“BANFF. – Upon Tuesday week, there was launched from **Mr Dick’s** building-yard at Banff, a large new clipper schooner, the property of the Banff and London Shipping Company, intended for the London trade. This very handsome vessel is of the burden of 184 tons, N.M., and is so constructed as to render her speed a matter of certainty, while her rig is so contrived as to combine with great lightness of spars the spread of an immense breadth of canvas. She was named the ‘**Sovereign**’, and glided from the ways into the water amid the cheers of thousands of highly gratified spectators.”*

Vessel Name(s)	Sovereign.
Rig	Schooner, 2 masts, 1 deck, probably a square stern, and a standing bowsprit.
Launch Date	8 th November 1842.
Owner(s)	Banff & London Shipping Co., Banff.
Registered Port	Banff. Official No.: 304.
GRT	122 tons NM. 185 tons OM. 200 tons deadweight.
Length	82.8 feet (25.24m).
Breadth	22.7 feet (6.92m).
Depth	10.7 feet (3.26m).
Construction	Wood, carvel construction. Hull sheathed in copper.
Figurehead	Unknown.
Classification	Lloyds Register of Shipping. Class: 5A1.
Other information	<p>Master: William Turner.</p> <p>1843: A piece of her keel, which had split, was replaced at London.</p> <p>c1844: Owned by William Turner and the first mate George Bruce.</p> <p>1845, 30th December: She had a near miss and was saved from being a wreck at Banff. (See below for press article).</p> <p>1856, 11th December: On passage from Banff for London, she went ashore at Cairnbulg Head, Master Captain Cravie. The Dundee Courier 17th December 1856 reported as follows: <i>“FRASERBURGH – VESSEL ASHORE AND SUICIDE OF THE CAPTAIN. – On Thursday night, the schooner ‘Sovereign’ of and from Banff for London, with grain, went ashore on Cairnbulg Head, but was got off on Friday morning, and towed into the harbour, with considerable damage. The crew are all saved, but she will have to discharge. Captain Cravie was found hanging in</i></p>

	<p><i>his cabin on Friday morning. It would appear that Captain Cravie had taken the catastrophe so much to heart that he had determined, rather than meet his friends in Banff under such circumstances, to do away with himself. Captain Cravie was much respected for his good character, and was justly relied on for his ability as a practical seaman. He leaves a wife and family to mourn his loss. – Peterhead Sentinel.”</i></p> <p>1857: Master was Captain Peter Shepherd of Fraserburgh.</p> <p>By 1865: She was owned by James Gilchrist, Banff.</p> <p>c1866: She was owned by John Clayton, Banff.</p> <p>By 1869, November: She was owned by James Longmore, Alex. Walker and others, Banff.</p> <p>1869, 12th November: On passage down the River Thames, master William Turner, from London for Leith with a cargo of manure, in the evening she collided with the steam collier ‘Trevethick’ near the Ovens, Gravesend Reach, and sank quickly, all hands were saved but they lost the whole of their effects.</p> <p>1869, 22nd December: Her water-logged hull, as it lay on the northern bank of the River Thames was sold at auction.</p> <p>1870: She was owned by Michael Harrington, Poplar, Middlesex, and registered at London. (She seems to have been refloated and repaired).</p>
<p>Date Scrapped / Lost</p>	<p>1871, 30th November: Whilst on passage from Dublin for London she was abandoned after being dismasted and leaking, location approx. 49°00'N 10°35'W (c200nm WSW of Scilly Isles). Five of her crew of six were picked up by the American ship ‘Anna Decatur’ on passage for Boston USA. The other crew member was picked up by the ship ‘Kiltearn’ to Demerara.</p>

1846, 2nd January: The Elgin Courier reported as follows: *“**NARROW ESCAPE FROM SHIPWRECK.** On Tuesday the 30th ult. the ‘**Sovereign**’ of this port, Captain Bruce, arrived in Banff Bay, with a cargo of goods from London. On her making for the harbour, a sudden squall got up, which, deranging some part of the cordage, rendered the ship for the time unmanageable, and drifted her, despite the efforts of the crew, rapidly to the shore. When the ship appeared to the numerous crowd of anxious gazers who lined the beach to be inevitably running upon the rocks the back of the outer pier, which would have caused her certain shipwreck, the anchor, a last resource, was promptly heaved, the ship was stayed from drifting farther on the land, the tacklings were repaired with expedition, and, during a favourable turn the breeze, the chains the anchor were cut, and the ship was enabled to steer off the rocks, and bear round the harbour safety. Had it not been for the praiseworthy promptness and activity of the captain and his crew, the ship would have been inevitably lost.”*

SALES BY AUCTION.

On account of whom it may concern.
At LLOYD'S CAPTAINS' ROOM, ROYAL EXCHANGE,
On WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1869, at Half-past Two o'Clock.

THE Schooner SOVEREIGN, of Banff,
 114 tons per register, as she now lies in a damaged condition from collision on the North Shore of the Thames, opposite Northfleet; together with her masts, spars, and stores on board, and also those stores now lying at the Thames Conservancy Wharf. She was built at Banff in 1842; partly copper fastened, and carries about 200 tons.
GEO. BAYLEY and WM. RIDLEY,
2, Cowper's-court, Cornhill, E.C.

Advertisement published in the Shipping and Mercantile Gazette - Saturday 18th December 1869.

1872, 26th March: The Shipping and Mercantile Gazette reported as follows: "**AWARDS TO CAPTAINS.** – The Board of Trade have also awarded a binocular glass to Captain J. M. Richardson, of the American ship '**Anna Decatur**', in acknowledgement of his humane services to the Master, Mate and three seamen of the schooner '**Sovereign**' of London, whom he rescued from the wreck of that vessel about 30 miles W. by S. of the Scilly Islands on the 30th November last, and landed on the 15th January, 1872, at Boston, United States."

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1. Various newspapers as mentioned within the book text.
2. Lloyds Register of shipping – various years.
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Acknowledgements

John Cowie, Aberdeen for photo of Hall Russell Ltd. Patent Slip used in Appendix B.

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www.electricscotland.com **The Shipbuilders of Aberdeen.** Free to download, currently 23 volumes of Aberdeen shipbuilding books and shipbuilding poetry by Stanley Bruce.

www.electricscotland.com **Banff and Macduff History.** Free to download, currently 4 volumes of local history by Stanley Bruce.

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/AAGM/collections/aberdeen-built-ships
 Information on > 3,000 Aberdeen built vessels.

www.clydeships.co.uk
 Information on > 40,000 Scottish built vessels.

Appendix A

Happy Return.

According to Lloyds Register of Shipping (LRS) the smack **'Happy Return'** (64 tons) was built at Banff in 1800. She is the earliest vessel that I could find officially registered and built at Banff, however I did not establish who built her. Banff obviously had vessels registered at the port long before 1800, and small fishing boats were built at Banff prior to this date, however this is the earliest vessel that I found in Lloyd's Register of Shipping. (Small fishing boats did not need Lloyd's classification).

In Lloyd's Register of Shipping (LRS) 1843 she is described as an 'Aberdeen Coaster' and her master was Captain Alexander.

In 1843, it states she was owned by a merchant, probably in Aberdeen.

LRS Classification at 43-years old, in 1843 = Æ1.

9	Happy Family	D. Keith	209	Sndrld	1837	Henry & C	London	Lon. Trieste	5	A	1
60	Return	Sk Alexandr	64	Banff	1800	Merchant	Aberdn	Abn. Coastr	—	Æ1	F.1
1		I. Martin	48	Tschm	1814	I. R. Lake	Falmth	Fal Coaster	—	Æ1	

Extract from Lloyds Register of Shipping, 1843.

Aberdeen Post Office Directory entries:

1831 / 1832: Her master was James Sellar, home address No. 1 Links Street, Aberdeen.

1833 / 1834: Her master was James Sellar, home address No. 41 Quay, Aberdeen.

1835 / 1835: Her master was James Sellar, home address No. 1 Links Street, Aberdeen.

1842 / 1843: She is recorded as a sloop, and her master as Alexander, and her owner is Ar. C. Watt. (Ar. Alexander / Arthur?).

1843 / 1844: She is recorded as a sloop, her master as Law, and her owner is still Ar. C. Watt.

Appendix B

Morton's Patent Slip

A cheap and advantageous substitute for dry docks.

The following was published in the Scotsman 20th November 1833.

“Samuel Morton, Leith Walk, Edinburgh, begs to intimate to the Shipping and Mercantile Interests, that the manufacture of the Patent Slip for hauling vessels out of the water for repairs – the invention of his late brother Thomas Morton – is carried on at the premises, Leith Walk, as formerly, by the Subscriber and his son, Hugh, who has been bred as an engineer.

The advantages of the Slip have now been thoroughly proved. The following, among others, deserve particular notice: -

1. *Its cost is not above a tenth of the expense of a Dry Dock; and a Slip can be laid down in situations where, from natural causes, a Dry Dock cannot be constructed.*
2. *It can be removed from one situation to another, or be carried on ship-board.*
3. *A number of vessels may be repaired on it at once, without any such interruption as is caused by opening the gates of a dock.*
4. *The vessel being entirely above ground, the air circulates freely round her bottom – there is better and longer light than in a dock – the men work with greater comfort – and much expense is saved in the conveyance of materials.*
5. *The vessel is blocked on her keel, without any previous preparation of bilge-ways; and she suffers no strain, as the moving power is attached to the carriage.*
6. *A ship may be hauled up – inspected – and launched again the same tide, at an expense of 40s. Six men are sufficient for every hundred tons.*

In the Session of Parliament 1832, the merits of the invention were brought under the notice of the House of Commons, who appointed a Select Committee, of which Sir George Cockburn, Sir George Clerk, Sir Thomas Byam Martin, Admiral Adam, and other distinguished naval and scientific men were members), to enquire and report. After examining a number of witnesses the Committee reported to the House that “after giving to the whole the most mature consideration, your Committee have come to the following conclusion: - That Mr Morton’s invention of the Patent Slip in question, is of the most ingenious and valuable description, of the highest advantage to the shipping interests of this maritime country, (insomuch that the operation of placing a ship in a situation to be repaired, which, previous to this invention, cost £170, can now, by this means, be effected for 33), and it is equally valuable and applicable for the larger ships of war as for the mercantile marine. The committee farther expressed a hope that some means may be adopted to obtain for Mr Morton a more adequate pecuniary recompense for the great benefits his invention has conferred on the public, than he

had yet received". Acting upon this recommendation, the House of Commons, in the last Session, voted a sum of £2,500 as a reward for the invention.

The Patents for England and Scotland having recently expired, a new Scale of Prices has been constructed at the lowest rates of charge, For instance, the charge for a Slip calculated for two vessels of 500 tons is only £900, and other sizes are in proportion – at which cheap rates, the Subscriber is enabled to furnish Slips only from his having an establishment fitted up exclusively for their manufacture, and a complete assortment of Patterns.

Many of the home Ports are still in great want of Slips, and they are peculiarly well adapted for the Colonies, where the accommodation for repairing vessels is very deficient. In those Colonies particularly where there is little ebb and flow, or where, from the open nature of the soil or rock, Docks cannot be constructed, Slips offer the very greatest advantages.

Apply to Samuel Morton, Leith Walk, Edinburgh, 18th Nov. 1833.

Thomas Morton (8 Oct. 1781 to 24 Dec. 1832) a native of Leith, invented his patent slip in 1818 and built the first one at Leith, he patented the design in 1819. In 1821 he installed a patent slip at Bo'ness. He built a total of 45 slips in Scotland, England, and Ireland.

The patent slip, was simply a cradle for the vessel to sit in that ran on three rails, pulled up by a winch with wires that ran around two large sheaves on the top of the cradle.

Banff Harbour patent slip was installed in Banff Harbour in 1836 and had a lifting capacity of 200 tons. This was an adequate tonnage for the size of vessels at Banff at this date. Below is a photograph of the **Hall Russell Ltd.** Footdee, Aberdeen Patent Slip on a foggy day, courtesy of John Cowie former ship repair manager. (I could not find a photograph of the Banff Patent Slip carriage).



Appendix C

Francis Dockar, Shipbuilder, Banff, c1833 to c1836.

Francis Dockar (1797 to 1862) shipbuilder, held the lease of the shipyard at Banff Harbour c1833 to c1836, where he built at least two schooners, one of 107 tons in 1833 (name unknown) and the '**Boyn**' in 1836.

1797: Francis Dockar was born at Gamrie, his father was James Dockar (1754 to 1814) and his mother Elizabeth Findlater (1764 to 1846).

1833, 29th May: The Aberdeen Journal reported as follows: *"A fine schooner of 107 tons register, built by **Mr Francis Dockar** at Banff, was launched there on Tuesday last (21st May). A vast crowd assembled on the occasion, and all seemed highly delighted with the fine style in which this handsome vessel bounded into her proper element. Their wishes for her future good fortune were expressed by a succession of the most deafening huzzas. The owners, with a party of their friends, dined in the Royal Oak Tavern, and the carpenters concluded the day with a merry dance in St Andrew's Lodge."*

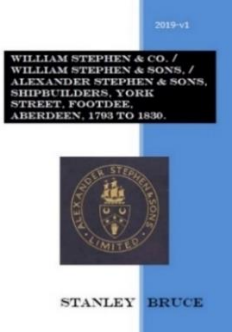
1836, 20th January: The Aberdeen Journal reported as follows: *"BANFF. –.....a large and beautiful vessel on the stocks here nearly ready for launching, which, in mould and workmanship, does great credit to **Mr Francis Dockar** (1797 to 1862), by whom she is built. Indeed, from the increase of tonnage and favourable state of our shipping trade, we would strongly recommend to our Magistrates and Harbour Committee to get the inner basin of the harbour deepened; and, from the many judicious savings they are making in the expenditure of the town's revenue, they can be at no loss for money, as any sum laid out for this purpose would be a safe investment. We hear it is in contemplation to have a Patent Slip laid down. This will be of the greatest utility and advantage, and we are sure it will pay all concerned remarkably well. Last week, four vessels left our harbour, corn-laden, for the London market; and this week there are four more ready to sail with similar cargoes for the same port."*

1836, 10th February: The Aberdeen Press and Journal reported as follows: *"BANFF. - We were gratified here on Wednesday (3rd February), by a sight rarer than it used to be, the launch of a large and beautiful vessel, intended for the carrying trade to London, and which glided into her future element in magnificent style under the name of '**Boyn**', amid the deafening shouts of the spectators, who, despite the badness of the day were very numerous. The construction of this vessel reflects the highest credit on the skill and talents of the builder, **Mr Francis Dockar**; and persons of judgement and experience pronounce that she is one of the handsomest vessels that ever swam in the waters of the Moray Firth. Her name is given in compliment to the agriculturists in the important neighbourhood of the Boyn, for whose accommodation she is chiefly intended, and a number of whom were after the launch entertained at dinner by her spirited and active owners, whose exertions, we have no doubt will be duly appreciated, and will receive the reward they deserve."*

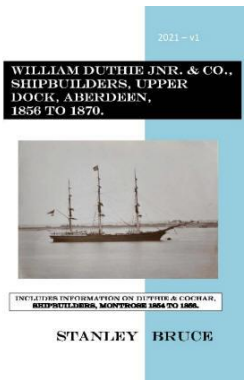
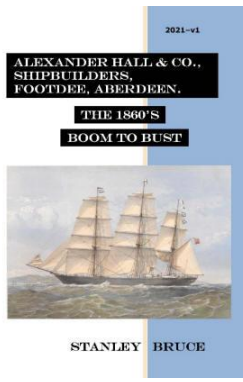
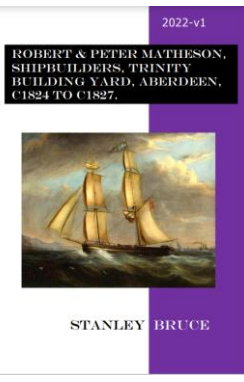
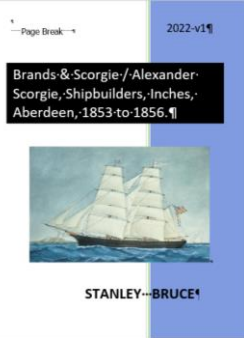

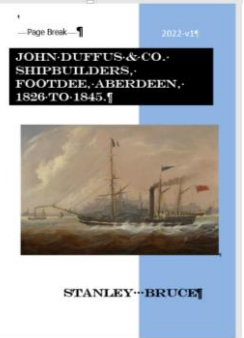
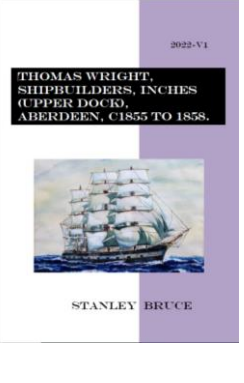
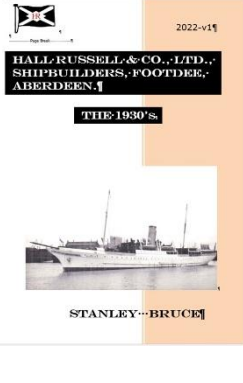
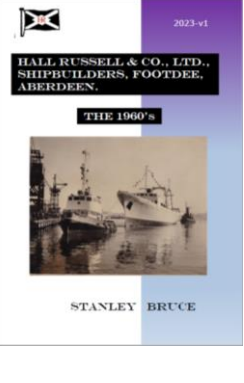
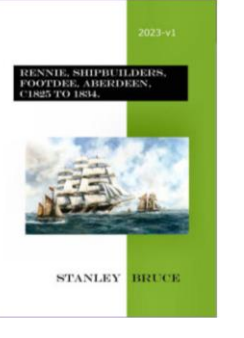
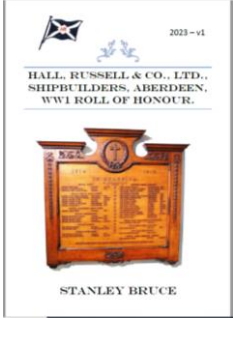
1862, 17th May: At Banff, **Francis Dockar**, shipbuilder, died aged 65-years.

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A total of 2,226 pages of Aberdeen shipbuilding history available online to date:

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Further Books in The Shipbuilders of Aberdeen Series.

Further books in this series are planned and will all be available to read online or download as a pdf, free of charge at www.electricscotland.com on 'The Shipbuilders of Aberdeen' page.

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And you'll find some of my shipbuilding poems on 'The Shipbuilders of Aberdeen' web page on www.electricscotland.com

THANKS FOR READING

~~~~~ THE END ~~~~~