

THE CAUSEY MOUNTH .

Apart from the sea route which for centuries linked Aberdeen with Leith , London , and European ports , communication with the South was extremely difficult

This would explain why this region had much more cultural and commercial ties with the Baltic States than with England .

Until the 19th century , when Roads began to dramatically improve, the only access to Aberdeen from Stonehaven was via the Causey Mounth .

The Causey Mounth was the principal pass from north to south . It was about ten miles long and was traversed by a very rugged road which , before the era of turnpikes , was the principal highway leading from Stonehaven to Aberdeen . During the winter season this road would have been impassable , but for the elevated rock causeways !!! which were built to carry the road over boggy ground .Thus the ancient old Drovers road was created .

Mounth ??? The name is a corruption of the Scottish Gaelic monadh which in turn is akin to the Welsh

Mynydd and may be of Pictish origin . meaning
Heathery , Mountainous , Moorland .

Captain Franks , a caustic observer , who made a tour
to the North of Scotland in 1658 and journeyed from
Stonehaven to Aberdeen says in his Northern Memoirs
“in reference to the causeways “ (but what do we
have here ?? Causeys uncartable , pavements
unpracticable , pointed with rocky , stumpy stones and
daubed all over with dingy dirt that make it impassable
, and the fields as I conceive , are ten times worse ,
because overspread with miry clay and encumbered
with bogs that would Bury a Horse))).

In later years

the two causey ports or gates at either end were
removed due to the increased use by wheeled traffic
but the name still exists through the Shand”s
Causeyport Farm . . .

I personally still have a belief in learning from history
even though this scenario is approx. 2,000 years old ..

The Roman Generals Agricola and Severus had already
sussed out the Portlethen Moss problems and had
moved their Armies north from Raedykes in a more

westerly direction through Netherley as they headed for Normandykes i.e. "Peterculter " .

In the year 1162 King Malcolm 1V traversed the Mounth to Aberdeen to meet with Swein Asleifsson

The last and greatest of the Vikings . Here they remained feasting for a whole month ..

On the 14th of October 1716 a Kirk Officer was given eight shillings for carrying a poor distressed supplicant on horseback first to Aberdeen then on to Causeyport .

The Causey Mounth also saw the first engagement in the civil war in 1639 when the 9,000 strong Covenanter Army led by the Earl Marischal and The Marquis of Montrose crossed into Deeside .

Samuel Johnson in the company of Boswell drove along the Causey Mounth in 1773 . He found the country south of Aberdeen naked and Hard , so generally ploughed that he found it difficult to imagine where Grass could be found for the horses that tilled the fields .

So far as we know Walter Scott visited Aberdeen only once in August 1773 in his capacity as a young Advocate in attendance on the court circuit .Crossing

through the moorland , sometimes known as The Moor of Drumforskie , he was struck by some feature in that bleak landscape , which he reproduced as the Moor of Drumthwacket in “A legend of Montrose” ..

The rough marshy ground was not the only hazard facing travellers to and from Aberdeen .In the Southern approaches to Aberdeen , “near the Den of Leggart “, a notorious gang would come out of the burgh before the Ports were open , meet the pack horses some distance from town and buy products at cut prices , before the Port dues had been paid , from this practise is derived the word “fore –staller .Other gangs would plunder from unfortunate travellers as the Slow moving coaches negotiated the steep gradient down towards the River Dee ..

p.s.

Around 1590 , the Official Postman , clad in a Blue uniform with the Burgh”s coat of arms on his sleeve, WALKED to Edinburgh with the mail via the Causey Mounth pass. In 1667 he was provided with a Horse .A hundred years later relays of Horses made an almost daily journey to Edinburgh and on to London with mail.. For ordinary travellers , the Aberdeen and

Edinburgh fly “see drawing “ began to make journeys in 1794 , taking 34 hours to reach Edinburgh , a carrying passengers at a charge of 2 guineas .

The railway progressed through our area in the 1850/60”S .

The first Telegraph was installed in Aberdeen in 1854 , the first Telephone in 1881 ,

In 1908 a Motor Car drove to London in 24 hours .

1910 saw the first Radio message being received in Aberdeen .

In the 14th Century John Crab Burgess of Aberdeen , made an annual payment from his lands of Findon for “ the use work and maintenance of the Causey of the mounth “

In 1463 Andrew Alanson , burgess of Aberdeen granted a foundation of 16s- 8pence for the support of the Causeway .

1634 was the year when Tolls were introduced and Gates and Turnpikes were built at intervals on the roads where payment could be exacted at the

following Rates . A man on foot -2d Scots . A horseman-8d . A cow -4d . every ten Sheep -8d .A cart 2/- Scots . One turnpike was near Causeyport farm ..

In the seventeenth century , local Justices and Commissioners were empowered to levy highway money from Landowners!!!! at the rate of ten shillings per hundred pounds of valued rent , to pay for road repairs . This work was then carried out by the Tenants without payment , for up to six days per year , but one could avoid this duty, by the payment of three pence a day . The rota of work was proclaimed on the Sabbath by the preceptor following divine service ..

!!!! The Landowners at the Cowie end of the Mounth were Ury , Cowie , Muchalls , and Elsieck .

Prior to the Bridge of Dee being built in 1527 , the Causey mounth would have exited on to Leggart terrace and continued eastwards along the river bank towards where" today"s football pitches are , then crossed the DEE by the Foords coming out on the

North bank (where the Church of Scotland”s Hostel was on Riverside Drive) the mounth terminated at this point the North West fork passing through the lands of Ruthrieston towards Braemar , and the North fork towards the Hardgate , Langstane Place , and Windmill Brae to the Green .

The History and Stories of The Causey Mounth are so voluminous that I must stop now . To read all the research work , please visit our Heritage corner in Portlethen Academy Library .