

Whitehills & District Community Council



Housing & Infrastructure - Part 1

The prosperity of any community, large or small, can usually be judged by its growth in a number of areas including its business sector, its increased population and, its property development. This is true for Whitehills.

In the 19th century the village was more or less confined to the immediate Seatown, with small houses accommodating large families in rather primitive conditions. Houses with no proper sanitary facilities, red tiled roofs, earthen or flagstone floors, coal fires which also doubled as means of cooking, and paraffin lamps or candles, were the order of the day.

Conditions in many houses remained the same well into the 20th century, although by then new developments with modern facilities were slowly appearing. Knock Street, Seafield Street and Reidhaven Street – where the success of the fishing industry began to bring improvements, especially to the more wealthy members of the community, were early examples.

Boat owners, fish merchants and others with successful business interests boosted by the success of the fishing industry, put their financial gain to good use by building modern homes which demonstrated to everyone that the village was slowly moving away from the primitive “but and ben” style houses.



Main pictures:
Top: Chapel Street
Bottom: Loch Street
1. Mother and child at water pump
2. Reidhaven Street
3. Seafield Street

Whitehills & District Community Council



Housing & Infrastructure - Part 2

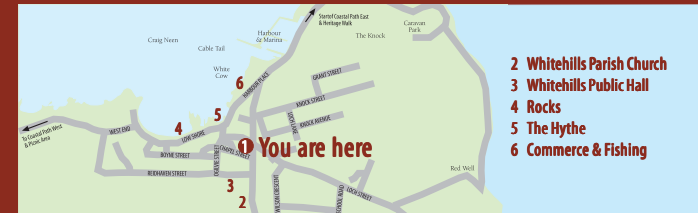
It was not until the 1930's that many of the poorer members of the community were able to enjoy an improved lifestyle by moving into modern accommodation, thanks to a housebuilding scheme promoted by Banff County Council under its slum clearing policy. Homes were built in Loch Street and a new scheme, named Wilson Crescent, went ahead in 1937. Tenants moved from their poor accommodation to what was then ultra-modern homes offered at a rent of half-a-crown (12.5p in present currency) per week. For the first time in their lives the tenants, many of them elderly, enjoyed the benefits of inside toilets, bathrooms and modern cooking facilities. Wilson Crescent quickly became known by locals as "The Lambeth", after a hit tune of the day "The Lambeth Walk".

For the first time in the village, four flats were built, nicknamed "The Queen Mary" after the liner of that name. It was not until well after the Second World War that more council house building took place, including a number of pre-fab houses on Knock Avenue, Knock Street and Reidhaven Street, and later Jubilee Crescent – a continuation of Wilson Crescent – which now forms the southern boundary of the village.

All of this, together with additional private housing for example in Seafield Street, Reidhaven Street, Grant Street and Craigneen Place has resulted in the village doubling in size in the past 70 years.

A gas supply was piped to the village in the 1920's and many households were quick to take advantage of the new source for lighting, cooking and heating. In the late 1930's an electricity supply arrived but it was not until the end of the war that electricity became the favoured energy source in homes, businesses and for street lighting.

All in all, a lot of change and growth since the last thatched house in the village became disused in the 1930's.



Main picture:
The New Road c. 1923 (now called Boyne Street)
1. Whitehills and Knock Head
2. Outside the "House of Parliament"
3. Mending nets