

Grantown Heritage Plaques: Speyside House

Speyside house, was once, briefly, Grantown's main inn and later the home of Lady Anne, Sir James Grant's mother-in-law. The "big hoose" became the Grammar School in 1787 and in 1796 the Speyside Charity School, the first orphanage in the Highlands.

One schoolmaster who applied for the first post in this school was John Elliott, who had taught successfully in the Borders for some twenty years previously. Sir James enquired from the Canonbie Parish minister about his academic abilities and his ability to acquire the respect of his pupils and control them without resort to "manual severity". Elliott got the post and his wife that as schoolmistress. John Elliott made a good impression in his early years in Grantown and had his salary raised to £30.

Whilst some pupils were taught for without charge, most paid fees. Rates per quarter in 1787 ranged from "Reading English and Orthography 1/6d" through 4s and 6s for such subjects as Latin and French respectively.



Speyside House "the Orphanage"



Early photographs of the Square showing buildings on the South Side and the water pump.

The building was almost completely rebuilt in 1824, with the clock tower financed largely from an unused 1813 local collection for "Russian Sufferers" of the Napoleonic Wars.

The Orphanage closed in 1975 and was sold to Highland Council, who opened it as a Heritage Centre. However, legislation required that function to be taken over by the District Council and the building was sold again for conversion into flats.