



King's Profiles: William Stewart Cruikshank

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William Stewart Cruikshank was born in Aberlour in 1855. His father, Alexander, was a carpenter, or "Wright", as it is written in the 1861 census. William was one of nine surviving children, and he likely learned the tricks of the trade from his father before moving to Edinburgh between 1871 and 1877. He married Jane in 1877 and went on to have six children. Professionally his entrepreneurship expanded, with his census occupation starting at joiner in 1881, builder in 1891, joiner and builder in 1901, and builder, contractor and employer by 1911. By 1906, his son Stewart had joined the family firm and their company was named W.S. Cruikshank & Son, as featured in the message in a bottle. William was a successful businessman, living at 5 Westhall Gardens, Edinburgh, from 1901 until his death in 1928.

By 1895, William Stewart Cruikshank owned stables and stores in Lower Gilmore Place which he let out. 1920 Valuation Roll for 3 Lower Gilmore Place shows that, as well as his own business premises there, he had a stable and five motor car houses, all of which were let out. He also had a store, the tenant of which was the King's Theatre.

As well as the King's Theatre, W.S. Cruikshank & Son built tenements in Leamington Terrace, Viewforth Gardens and Terrace, Montpelier Park, Gilmore Place, Arden Street, Warrender Park Road and Lauderdale Street. He also built the Commercial Bank at the West End, the United Services Club in Shandwick Place, James Gillespie's School (then Boroughmuir School) and the Cavalry Barracks at Dunbar. This information was given in "The Scotsman" 25 June 1928. The article also says that for 15 years the firm was engaged in building contracts in different parts of the country. In November 1910 he and his son, Stewart, were admitted to membership of Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and Manufacturers.

W S Cruikshank set the stage for his son, and when the original contractor for the King's went bankrupt, he stepped up and took on the project under the promise that he could carry on with the King's as Managing Director when it opened.