

ORKNEY HERITAGE SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER 1994

THE SOCIETY'S OBJECTIVES

The aims of the Society shall be to promote and encourage the following objectives by charitable means, but not otherwise:

- a) To stimulate public interest in, and care for, the beauty, history and character of Orkney.
- b) To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest.
- c) To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in Orkney.
- d) To pursue these ends by means of meetings, exhibitions, lectures, publications, conferences, publicity and the promotion of schemes of a charitable nature.

OFFICE BEARERS

- Hon President - Mrs M. Linklater
- Chairman - Mr I. Heddle
- Vice - Chairman - Mr A. Firth
- Secretaries - Ms A. Ross and Miss M. Sinclair
- Treasurer - Mr J. Laughton

- COMMITTEE - Ms K. Mainland
- Mrs D. Lorimer
- Mrs A. Brundle
- Mr P. Leith
- Mr M. Hayes
- Mr A. Tulloch
- Brig M. Dennison
- Mr J. Rendall
- Mr P. Sutherland
- Mrs E. Bevan

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"I see some scientist has been
doubting our Viking ancestry"

From your Chairman

At our committee meeting on March 15th, we asked Marjorie Linklater to become our President. Elsewhere in this Newsletter you will find an obituary for Laura, but I would like to add a personal note. We met in June '68 at Sule Skerry of all places, being first ashore on a Field Club trip, from Alfie Sinclair's boat Evelyn. Laura was with me for nearly an hour as I photographed puffins and kittiwakes, and those slides were among the showing which I gave in the Arts Theatre at her request in Spring'70. She was a wonderful lady and a dear friend, for whom I would have done anything.

Over the last few years there have been two "projects", which have seemed to be forever distant; I refer to St. Boniface Kirk and the Hall of Clestrain.

There has now been great progress in Papay and a lot of money has become available for the refurbishment of the Kirk, thanks to the generosity of various Trusts, some local firms, and individuals. The Orkney Islands Council has made the building safe from the elements, and it will soon be possible for it to be made suitable for use as a centre of pilgrimage, in conjunction with the Beltane House complex. We hope this will bring people to the peacefulness of Papay in the quieter parts of the year.

The centenary of Dr. John Rae's death last year, had created the right atmosphere for us to try once again to get some progress towards the restoration of the potentially exquisite Hall of Clestrain. Margot and I, together with Sandy Firth, had the pleasure of receiving Dr. Deborah Mays, of Historic Scotland, at the Mill and we asked her if Clestrain could be upgraded. She suggested that I should write to her officially, setting out the facts, and asking for its National Importance to be recognised. That it was reclassified to Grade A shows how importantly it is regarded by Historic Scotland! We shall do all we can to encourage its gradual restoration, now that major grant aiding is available.

With one of these major projects under way, and the other being given the 'green light', we need to think of ways to raise new membership within the outer isles, so that we shan't be looked upon as being "Mainland Oriented". I hope that members who know like-minded people will let me know, so that we can make contact. If we can get more representation in the Outer Isles, we shall be able to exert more influence from within, rather than being seen as suggesting what they should do from afar.

I welcome Marjorie to the Presidency and I wish her great pleasure in that office!

Ian Heddle

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EDITORIAL

SINCE the last newsletter - and we apologise for the long delay in producing this one - Orkney Heritage Society has mourned the loss, not only of several other valued members, but of its Secretary and its Honorary President. We are fortunate that these posts did not have to remain vacant for long. Mona and Tommy Sinclair had nurtured their daughter in the heritage faith and we now treasure Marraine as Minute Secretary. Laura's unique energy, enterprise and expertise had been shared by our Vice-President; Marjorie now ably and appropriately takes the place of her dear friend. Our thanks go to them both for their willingness to serve.

One way to show our gratitude for such dedication is for us, the membership, to renew ours. Many members are active in their own chosen fields, not necessarily through the auspices of the Society; many no doubt subscribe to our objectives as a way of life without being specific. From the Society's point of view it would help greatly if members' enthusiasm for these objectives could be channelled at least through attendance at the AGM! That is the time to arrange for much needed injections of new blood, hopefully some of it youthful. Support at this meeting ensures a healthy, thriving society where members feel they are playing their part and making their opinions known, at the same time easing the

strain on the core workers. Please try to make it this autumn....

It is gratifying and satisfactory that our concerns are now shared and acted upon by other bodies, both statutory and voluntary. However, this should not mean we can sit back and not be vigilant; not while carefully considered and publicly approved planning policies can be shoved on to the back burner at a whim or to please one individual; or while suggestions come forward for expensive changes in museum presentation which can quickly be out of date fashion-wise, along with requirement for higher fees for southern visitors in particular. The latter attitude could lead to treasured Orcadian hospitality no longer being part of our heritage. Heritage would be a product to be efficiently marketed. Is this our wish and what our departed friends worked so hard for?

There is still plenty for O.H.S. to think and be positive about. The committee welcomes feedback from members. Our archaeologist and secretaries care greatly and work hard. You can help by keeping in touch and encouraging younger people especially to be interested enough in the aims of the Society to want to join and help realise them. Replenishing the ranks would be our best appreciation of the valuable work achieved by the stalwarts who have gone before us.

Elizabeth Bevan

Laura and Jo Grimond



Seldom can a county have lost within a six month period a couple such as Lord and Lady Grimond.

Both meant so much to Orkney Heritage Society. In their long association with what became their homeland as well as ours they gave unstintingly of their talents and caring. Orkney's heritage would have been in a less healthy state without their participation. We mourn their loss and extend our sympathy to all the family, while also welcoming with best wishes its latest young member. Members will identify with the following tributes by Marjorie Linklater to our President Laura and our Secretary Mona.

Laura Grimond 1918 - 1994

Laura was one of those dynamic personalities who, by proximity, inspire ideas, effort and action on behalf of whatever vital cause she upheld. If Laura asked for assistance in any particular project, no one said no. Laura had only to scribble a note to an appropriate charity to receive an immediate response in the affirmative.

Her finest achievement, on behalf of the society, was the rescue of the Strynd, the oldest inhabited dwellings in Kirkwall. Single handed she raised funds to buy these properties—which were doomed to demolition by an insensitive local authority — and devoted them as a memorial to her mother, Lady Violet Bonham-Carter.

Her latest inspiration was the renovation of St Boniface Kirk, a 12th-century church in Papa Westray. She and I were appointed by the society to promote the idea. Not that we would—or could—interfere with the local imaginative efforts. But the years were passing and the people on Papa Westray were losing heart. With the renovation of the historic kirk now well under way Laura is never far from my thoughts or from those of anyone in Orkney who came under her spell.

Mona Sinclair (1932-1993)

Mona was Secretary of the O.H.S. from 1985. She joined the Society along with her husband Tommy who was an enthusiastic member until he died in December 1983. She then unobtrusively but positively took his place on the Committee. When I say that Mona was Secretary from 1985, she was, in fact Minutes Secretary at a time when I was finding myself to be an unreliable Secretary - particularly when attempting to record accurate minutes of committee meetings. Mona was a god-send to any organisation in that capacity.

However this was a small but important part of her life. She was born at Quanterness, Mona Allan Tait, but lived her life from early childhood at Skaraness, 1 Quadrant, Kirkwall. She started her working life in 1951 with the Hydro- Electric Board, at that time fairly recently established in Kirkwall. It was here she learnt the skills which brought her to the final stages of her career as Secretary in the firm of T.P. & J.L. Low, solicitors.

She left the Hydro when she was married in early 1967. In 1968 her daughter, Marraine, was born and two years later her son, Roy. By this time Mona was not only looking after her two children but also her mother and previously her grandmother who also lived at the Quadrant. (Marraine and Roy claim to be the fourth generation inhabiting No.1.) Also while the children were young she worked part-time from home doing the book-keeping for C.T.Stewarts'.

This tale of domestic devotion is a fraction of the many interests in Mona's life. Her hobbies were photography, gardening and handicrafts, particularly

sewing and tapestry. The family spent their summer outings in their caravan on the edge of the Harray Loch, taking with them their pets, a golden retriever and a budgerigar - now aged 15!

Mona's recreations included the Field Club - a family hobby. She was also a treasurer of the Swimming Club, and a Secretary in the Guides during the time of the building of the new Guide Hall. She herself was a Guide in the early days after the war. Also she was keenly interested in the Sea Cadets where Roy's taste for seafaring was nurtured. Charities she supported included the RSPB, the RNLI and the Leprosy Mission. Her return to professional life was with T.P. & J.L. Low as part-time secretary and receptionist to start with but finally as an indispensable secretary. In 1993 she retired, aware no doubt that her health was failing. Marraine gave up her employment in Edinburgh and was immediately recruited into the daunting task of clearing "Skaraness" of "bruck" accumulated over 50 years. It was as though Mona knew that time was short for her, and in her usual methodical way she literally "put her house in order". It must have been a great comfort to her that Marraine immediately found employment at Flotta.

Mona was admitted to the Macmillan Ward at the beginning of February 1993, where she died on the 15th of that month.

Marjorie Linklater

We regret also the passing of the following members.

- | | |
|------------|-----------------|
| Pat Gorie | Donald MacInnes |
| Sandy Tait | Peter Twatt |

FEREDAY PRIZE

The essay following collected the 1993 Fereday prize in the annual Local Studies Project Competition first sponsored nine years ago by Orkney Heritage Society as a tribute to Ray Fereday's constructive teaching and well-researched publications on Orkney's history.

It is rewarding for the Society that such a number and variety of locally related subjects are chosen and researched by pupils each year. The project ties in with the existing second year work in Kirkwall Grammar School and Stromness Academy. O. H. S. thanks the teachers for supporting the participants, also the archivists whose services are obviously much used, and last but not least, all friends and relations whose memories are tapped to such good purpose by their young folk.

The judging is never easy and we are pleased to congratulate not only Jane but all who worked hard to complete their projects.

Due only to lack of space we have had to omit chapters on THE FREE SCHOOL and FROM TWO SCHOOLS INTO ONE. Photographs in the original are also excluded due to difficulty in reproduction.

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION IN DEERNESS (1703 - 1967)



by Jane Skea

The purpose of my investigation is:-

- To research and gather information on the subject because many of my ancestors were educated at the Deerness Schools. I also wanted to know more about the schooling system in those days and to discover if and how it has changed over the years, indeed centuries.

The last used school in Deerness is soon to be demolished and therefore I feel it is important that its history is recorded before it disappears in to the rubble.

SOCIETY SCHOOLS

"An early reference to a school master in Deerness is found in Kirk Session minutes of 1703. In that year David Horry was given 12/- for teaching two fatherless children." (Rev. H. L. Mooney: Orcadian, September 7th 1967.)

In those early days Education (or schooling) was not compulsory and those children who did attend school had to pay, (no record of how much, has been found, but in some areas 2d). Mr Mooney's article goes on to say:-

"It is not known who appointed David Horry, but in 1735 Thomas Purse was teacher under the Society of Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. In 1737 we find John Louttit as schoolmaster. He did not give satisfaction, for in 1743 his salary was withdrawn; it was restored later. The next S. S. P. C. K. teacher was George Louttit who, like John seems to have spent more than thirty years in Deerness. In 1796 the Society reported that George Louttit had 101 scholars in his school at Yarpha.

In 1803 George Louttit got into trouble in connection with a wrecked ship. He was described as a "known plunder of wreck".

During my research in the "Orkney Room" I found further information on Mr Louttit in the old statistical account 1791-99. Quote "The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge have a school in Deerness with a salary of £15. The schoolmaster who is a sensible man and successful in

teaching, gets no fees from his scholars. He was brought up in a decent manner, a family of 10 children. David Vedder, probably an ex-pupil of George Louttit wrote "Orcadian Sketches" many of them based on his native parish, Deerness. One of these sketches tells of his former schoolmaster who was dismissed for adopting dissenting principles and had to surrender his post. It was said that following his dismissal he set up a private school at Sandaiken, near the boundary of the

parish of St. Andrews. The site of this school is on the farmland of Stonehall where my Granny was born and brought up. Granny remembers playing around the ruins at Sandaiken, she also said that her parents remembered tinkers living there when it still had a roof. Around about this time there was also a school at Millhouse where the name School Green still survives as the name of a field on the farm. It is thought that this was probably the site of the

Society School after Yarpha. The last Society School which closed in the early 1870s is now a family home known as the Old School.

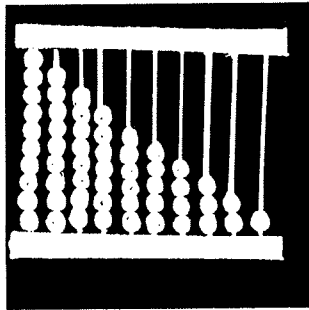
DEERNESS PUBLIC SCHOOL

During the first eighteen years of the new Public School a number of schoolmasters taught there in quick succession, namely Messrs Ross, Wilson, Wood and Munro. Mr Munro sometimes preached in the Free Church and eventually gave up teaching and became a minister. In 1890 Magnus Spence, one of Orkney's notable teachers became



Headmaster of the Deerness Public School. Mr Spence was strict on discipline and had outstanding success with clever pupils. For example Robert Wallace became Principal of Queens University, Kingston, Ontario and another of his pupils David Clouston became Agricultural Adviser to the Government of India.

MY GREAT GRANNIE'S SCHOOL DAYS



My Great Granny who we call Mama Petrie has just celebrated her 92nd birthday; she can remember well attending the Deerness School when Magnus Spence was schoolmaster. Mama Petrie used to walk 3 miles to school, she wore boots on her feet in winter, and shoes in summer, but some of the children whose parents could not afford shoes or boots walked to the school in their barefeet. On her way to school from Breckan Mama Petrie used to meet the "lasses" O'Aikerskaill (my Grand Aunties) at the Lighthouse Corner. My Grand Aunties Molly and Ada told me that when passing the end of the neighbouring farm road they made a mark in the dust or gutter to let the "bairns" O'Poole know that they were away, "so hurry and catch us up!" All of them had great fun on the way to

and from school and have great memories of these times together. In Mama Petrie's class there were nineteen pupils. They were taught:- History, Geography, Arithmetic, English, Art and Music. The girls were also taught sewing and knitting and the boys got gardening. The gardening was done in the schoolmaster's garden where they grew many types of plants. Mama Petrie went to no other school apart from Deerness, where she completed her schooling at the age of fourteen in the year 1914.

THE SCHOOL IN THE 1920S & 1930S

In 1920 Mr William Moar was appointed Headmaster and he, like his predecessor Magnus Spence, came from the parish of Birsay. Mr Moar was in Deerness until 1939 and he and his wife made many friends during their time in the schoolhouse, taking an active part in many of the activities in the parish. During Mr Moar's time as Headmaster several relatives of mine attended the Deerness School - my granny, two grand aunties and a grand uncle on my mother's side of the family and my Nana and Dada, two grand aunties and four grand uncles of my dad's family. In school at that time children were taught many subjects; these included the usual ones such as Geography, History, English, Arithmetic, Poetry, Cookery and Sewing. Music and P. E. (Physical Education) or Drill, as it was known in those days, were occasionally given. Drill was done outside in the playground often with the children wearing their heavy boots. During the summer months some teachers would take the children long

nature walks to the shore or the moss. Punishment for bad behaviour was more severe in those days. If you were caught talking, giggling or were late for school you were given a rap across the knuckles, or other more tender parts with a wooden cane or else a leather belt (the strap) across the hand. Pupils in those days ended their schooling at the age of fourteen except for the clever ones who went on to further their education at Kirkwall Grammar School. It was not possible to travel daily to Kirkwall and those who attended the Grammar had to find lodgings, where they stayed during the week. At the weekends they travelled home by bicycle or if they were lucky they got a lift in a pony and trap. Landladies when possible were paid in kind with fresh butter, cheese, eggs, poultry, vegetables etc. The pupils were seen once a year by a school doctor to check the children for disease etc. Inspectors came annually to examine the pupils and teachers work; the maintenance of the school building was also checked. A "roll caller" visited the school at the end of each month to check the pupils' attendance. If a child had a poor attendance he would visit their home to find out why. Common reasons for absence were:- ill health, either their own or a parent, and farmwork e. g. harvest or springtime. Two roll callers well remembered were the men of Newbanks, both called Jimmy Foubister.

COPINSAY SCHOOL

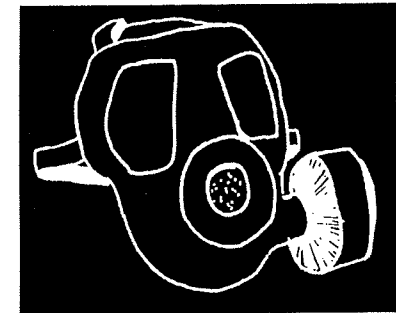
Copinsay is a small island just off the coast of Deerness. In 1927 a family from Deerness moved out to the only farm on the island. As the children had to be educated a school was opened. It consisted of 8 pupils, some of which

were families from the lighthouse, and one teacher. They were taught in a room at the end of the farmhouse --it was called the Schoolroom. Education on Copinsay was not much different from that in Deerness; the only subject they didn't get was Cooking as there was a shortage of stores. On a nice day the teacher would let the children take their desks outside where she would teach them.

The teachers stayed at the lighthouse during the week, then went back to the mainland at the weekend.

In 1937 the family from the farm moved out of Copinsay so the school was closed. Between 1927 - 1937 was the only time there had been a school on Copinsay and during those years there were seven teachers, all women.

SCHOOL DURING THE 2nd WORLD WAR.



'Owing to the national emergency and outbreak of war all schools have been closed for the present week.' (W. J. Moar - Deerness Public School Log.)

My grand uncle remembers thinking as a young boy that this war was a great thing if it meant no school! However, soon after war was declared,

Jock Marcus who was the Air-raid Warden in Deerness went round all the households and fitted the children with Gas masks. Children carried their gas masks to and from school each day during all the years of the war. During the summer of 1940 two air raid shelters were built in the back playground - the purpose was to protect the schoolchildren in event of an air raid. My Granny remembers several practises. You had to line up in your classes, then march out to the shelters with your gasmask in your hand.

The children did their bit for the national service by collecting newspaper which was sent away in big quantities to be recycled as paper was scarce, because most of the timber needed for pulp to make the paper was imported from Scandinavia which was difficult to get to.

There were several war camps in Deerness so army trucks frequently picked up children and dropped them off at the school when passing. My Granny remembers this as being good fun!

Pupils were involved in concerts and fund-raising events in aid of various war causes. . . For example:

14th June - "Today was observed as a holiday throughout the parish, a picnic and a fancy dress parade staged by the schoolchildren being held in aid of SALUTE THE SOLDIER WEEK. "

(Deerness School log.)

The school log also tells us that on the 8th and 9th of May 1945 the school was closed for V. E. DAY (VICTORY IN EUROPE) also on 15th and



16th August for V. J. DAY (VICTORY ON JAPAN.)

POST WAR TO CLOSURE

Since 1939 there were five headmasters at the Deerness School before it closed in 1967. There were : Messrs. TAYLOR , FLETT, MICHIE, McINNES and MACLEOD. During this time there were some significant changes at the school.

Firstly , soon after the war, school transport was introduced and was provided by the local bus contractor "Davy o` the Ha. "A car or small bus collected the pupils in the winter months who lived more than two miles from the school. This also meant that those attending the Kirkwall School no longer had to stay in the town during the week.

The next changes were the raising of the school leaving age to 15 and from 1951 onwards pupils from Deerness went to the St Andrews School or Kirkwall at the age of 11 or 12 for their secondary education.

In 1953 my Dad started the Deerness School and remembers being taught in the Peedie Room by Mrs Bews whilst his older sister Margaret was in the Big Room with the older pupils under Mr Michie who was the Head Teacher.

Later he remembers going into the Big Room himself where the Headmaster at that time was Donald McInnes. One of the things my Dad remembers most vividly was sitting his ELEVEN PLUS Exam; this was the test which determined whether pupils went to St Andrews or Kirkwall schools.

The first years my Dad went to school he used to take a PIECE (packed lunch). In 1957 School Meals were brought from the kitchen at St Andrews School. These were eaten in the then surplus classroom and were served by Grace Hepburn, now Wylie.

Dad thought they were very good and usually went for seconds.

During the period between 1955 and 1967 the School Roll dropped dramatically. In the last session before the closure there were only 24 children attending Deerness School. The teachers at that time were Mr MacLeod, Headmaster, and Mrs Marcus who taught the infants. Due to the fall in roll and the Education Authority's policy of closing smaller schools throughout the County, the Deerness School was closed.

So it was, that 25 years ago, in early July 1967 when the schools in Orkney broke up for the Summer holidays, the children left the school for the very last time.

No more ringing of the school bell, no longer the sound of children's laughter and shouting in the playground -- just silence. . . . This must have been quite a sad occasion in the parish when you consider that pupils had attended the Deerness Public School for the previous 95 years.

Other Fereday Entries

Tied for second place were: Jocelyn Hamilton writing on "**Melsetter House**" and Jacqueline Bresant on "**Wrecks of the Pentland Firth**"

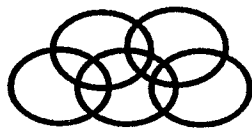
Three tied for fourth place :-Rachael Ludgate -**Trade in Evie and Rendall** Sarah Thompson -**The Orkney A. I. Service** Erlend Wood -**The History of Berridale, S. Ronaldsay**

Highly Commended Works:

Christopher Bain	-	Introduction to W. W. 2
Roy Bichan	-	The Finstown Post Office
Raymond Brown	-	Life at School in W. W. 2
Emily-Jane Budge	-	Stoneyquoy
Alan Clarke	-	Flotta Oil Terminal
Judith Cromarty	-	St Peter's Kirk , S. Ronaldsay
Erlend Eunson	-	The Hall of Tankerness
Cecil Garson	-	The Stromness Fire Station
James Green	-	The Development of the Seaweed Industry
Kay Hume	-	The Orcadian Thro' the Ages
Sally Kirkland	-	Glimpses of Stenness History
Leon Lambert	-	Lyness from the 2 World Wars
Debby McKeown	-	Lyness Naval Base
Greg McLaren	-	Wings of Orkney
Alan Muir	-	What was School like during Wartime?
Shona Ritch	-	The Working Life of my Grandad
Craig Smith	-	North Ronaldsay's Shipwrecks
Susan Stanger	-	Rendall Schooling 1926 - 1935
Rachel Tricket	-	Medical History of Hoy
Tanya Wright	-	Orkney Distillers

Puzzles from the Past

Bronze Age Olympics in North Ronaldsay?



WHEN the Bronze-Age woman with her Bronze-age toe-ring was excavated from the beach at Bustatoun, North Ronaldsay in 1992, a man's bones were also found. He was probably about thirty-five to forty years old when he died, about five feet nine inches in height and had not only led a very active life, but had injuries to the right ischial bone of his pelvis similar to those which, today, are principally found in hurdlers.

The shaft of his femur, or thigh bone, was very flattened from front to back, a common condition found among older populations and thought to indicate nutritional deficiency, (there not being enough bone in relation to the area needed for muscle attachment). On the anterior part of the neck of the femur, near the head, was a deep impression (Allen's fossa) which is made by pressure from the capsular ligaments of the hip-joint being wound tightly round the femoral neck. This is caused by frequent running, or even walking, down a steep slope and would appear to be a strange activity in North Ronaldsay. Stranger still, was the considerable enlargement of the tuberosity of the right ischium (the part of the pelvis on which we sit). There was gross periostitis or inflammation of the fibrous membrane on the surface of the bone and healed lytic lesions. X-rays, however, showed no changes in the marrow cavity.

Had the condition been on both sides, it might have indicated "weaver's bottom", (a chronic inflammatory condition found in weavers, coachmen and bargees and one incidentally, made use of by a rather unkind, if witty, Shakespeare in "A Midsummer Night's Dream"). In the man from North Ronaldsay, however, the left ischial tuberosity was perfectly normal. The cause, then, was an activity involving the right leg only and it is suggested that the appearance, to use medical jargon, was that of an avulsion injury of the apophysis of the ischial

Continued...

O^HSCARS TO:

ORKNEY ENTERPRISE for the interesting renovation of Leonard's old shop.

EVERYONE involved in the renovation of St Boniface.

ORCADIANS for using their Bottle Banks. Let's hope we can move on to cans, plastic and paper in time...

tuberosity due to violent contraction of the hamstring muscles. When the leg is violently hyper-extended (as, for example in hurdling) the ligaments, together with fragments of bone, can be torn away from their attachment to the ischium.

These fragments are subsequently incorporated into the bone where it heals, producing bizarre skeletal overgrowth. A possible healed injury to the superior rim of the acetabulum, the socket of the hip-joint, was also noted. This suggested damage to the cotyloid ligament which is attached to and serves to contract the opening of the

socket and give more surface for articulation with the head of the femur. Such injuries are found in present-day hurdlers. They can also be produced by accident when skidding down hill with one leg doubled up and the other shooting out in front - both of which seem rather unlikely exploits on a rather flat island. It is a pleasing conundrum - Bronze Age man did not travel much, but could he have done it on another island? Was it a battle injury? Was it a farming accident? Or did they, indeed, try their prowess at games? Any suggestions?

Daphne Lorimer

AND...O^HSCAR TO:

SHAPINSAY COMMUNITY for "Where the Sea Freezes", their successful play on John Rae, another link in that cycle of events which started for O.H.S. in 1987 with pleas in the Newsletter from Chairman and Editor for the restoration of the Hall of Clestrain, Rae's birthplace. Last year saw the prestigious centenary exhibition in the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, which appropriately followed on to Tankerness House and is probably now in Canada. Let us hope that the recent Grade A listing will encourage further links in the chain necessary for the completion of this desirable project.



REPORTS 1993

A. G. M.

At the A.G.M. on 4th November Honorary Chairman Ian Heddle opened the meeting with a tribute to Mona Sinclair who, as Minute Secretary, but much more, had been working for the Society right up until her admission to the Macmillan Ward. He went on to welcome her daughter Mairaine who had agreed to take her place. Also mentioned were Pat Gorie, who had been a constant supporter, and of course Jo Grimond with whom Ian had been corresponding about St Boniface and The Strynd up till the time of his death. The apparent progress at that time of our treasured Honorary President, Laura, was noted with warmth.

The renewal of the Elf Enterprise Covenant in April was welcomed and they, along with Orkney Islands Council were thanked for this help which finances the valuable work of Dr Raymond Lamb.

Trips to Eynhallow and Hoy were successful in every way.

St Boniface and Clestrain progress was detailed and the recurring idea of outer isles membership and representation again promoted.

The Chairman's report closed with thanks to the Vice Chairman Sandy Firth, the secretaries Andi and Mairaine, the auditor Mr. Alan Shearer and the committee members for their work and effort over the past year.

FINANCE

At our Annual General Meeting on 4th November the accounts for year end 31st August 1993 were submitted and approved. These showed an opening balance of £51,096 on all bank accounts and a closing balance of £62,423. This latter balance included the sum of £6,746 which represents contributions received during the year when an appeal was made for the St. Boniface Kirk Restoration Fund. This fund is, of course, ear-marked specially for the purpose intended - that of restoring St Boniface Kirk in Papa Westray. It has been included in the Society's accounts to show to members the state of progress in the fund raising to date. Since 31st August two further large donations of £1,000 and £5,000 have been received and the fund presently stands at £12,796.07.

Total income for the year amounted to £14,125 which comprised: subscriptions £495; Elf covenant £6,000; tax recovery £2,000; Eynhallow trip net £447; computer grant received from the Scottish Office £2,500 and bank interest £2,683. Total expenses amounted to £9,544, the main item being £8,000 as our share of Dr. Lamb's salary. Net income then is £4,581, but this of course includes the non-recurring item of £2,500 for the computer grant. When this sum is deducted we are left with £2,081 for the year which is quite satisfactory. Full details of the financial position are available on request.

Finally I would be grateful if any members who have not yet paid their annual subscription of £5 could do so at

continued ...

FINANCE REPORT(Continued)

an early date. It has been noted on going over the bank's statements that a certain number of members have still not increased their banker's standing orders to bring them in line with the present rates of subscriptions. It would be appreciated if this could be attended to as soon as possible.

Subscription rates 1994

The rates for 1994 are as follows:-

Ordinary member	£5
Family member	£10
Life member	£50

Thank you for your assistance.

Mr W.J. Laughton
6 Royal Oak Road
Kirkwall
Orkney
KW15 1RF

Members Please Note

At the recent April committee meeting members expressed a wish to commemorate suitably the work done by Laura Grimond for the Society. The research generated by the Fereday project has been so rewarding that ideas along these lines were discussed. Thoughts from any other members would be most welcome before a decision is finally taken.

Art Work Credits

Ian McInnes : Cover, a piece of 'heritage', being an illustration for a Drama Festival programme of many years ago. Cartoon, Canoe illustration.

Sylvia Wishart: Extract of print of the Strynd. A limited number of these prints belonging to O.H.S are still available. Tel. 850426 for information.

Carolyn Bevan : various sketches.

More O^HSCARS to:

MARJORIE LINKLATER for passing her 85th milestone; with our best wishes and thanks for all she does so charmingly and enthusiastically.

EVERYONE involved in stone dyke renovation and renewal of paving stones ...though alarm bells were faintly ringing in the headlines of the Feb. 10th Orcadian - "Orkney hit by dearth of flagstones," and the closing remark in that article, "Don't let's feel we have to put flagstones everywhere." Not EVERYWHERE obviously, but there ARE priorities and these are - the streets of conservation areas where they have always been a distinguishing feature and no problem when maintenance was regular. If we forget that we will be turning the clock back 40 years and detracting from a real factor in tourist attraction. Another S.O.S. - SAVE OUR STONES.

O.I.C. for the greening of The KIRK GREEN...

O.I.C. for the eventual success with restoration of the Cathedral spire - suggested guessing game :- when does that go green?

And for much else of course in spite of our occasional gripes!

THE ORCADIAN CANADIAN CONNECTION



From Johnnie Pottinger, Longhope, comes the following contribution which seems appropriate in the year that these links are to be strengthened by the visit to Canada of five Orkney Natural History Society Members. In May, Alice King, Katrina Mainland, James Troup, Len and Bryce Wilson will present papers on the Orkney connection with the Hudsons Bay Company at a conference in Edmonton, Alberta under the auspices of the Rupertsland Research Society. This conference is held every two years and in 1990 the venue was Stromness. O.H.S. hopes to feature some at least of these speakers in future public meetings. Members will remember Bryce Wilson's fascinating lecture on Hudsons Bay given five years ago

Johnnie's items have been garnered from old issues of "The Orcadian" and he writes :-

ORKNEY over the centuries, has had continuous connections with Canada- Stromness in particular, by its forged links with the Hudson's Bay Company, The Moravian Mission, Labrador and, of course, the Greenland and Davis Straits whaling.

Besides these, last century in particular, and this century earlier, saw many Orcadians emigrating to Canada. Indeed, the Orcadian influence extended throughout the land of their adoption as reflected in the various island place names. Even among the indigenous Indian tribes are many such familiar names, all of which form the Dominion's history and relate most interesting background details and Island interconnections. A few incidents, as follows, bear this out:-

"HUSKIE" SAUNDERS.

From The Orcadian , Mar 5th 1936

"William Saunders, son of a Stromness man with the Hudson's Bay Company who had married an Indian, sent his half-breed son 'Huskie' (as he became known), at the age of seven, around 1886, back to Stromness to be educated there. He stayed with his grandparents. His grandfather, Tom Saunders, was a blacksmith at Stanger's Shipyard, Ness and lived at 17 South End, a low cottage since demolished, near Logan's Well.

Continued ...

"Huskie" attended Stromness Public School under Mr D.F. Reith, Headmaster. He had much natural ability and abounding energy but did not take kindly to book-learning. However he applied himself sufficiently well to enable him to pass the examinations for the four years he spent in Stromness. He was a contemporary of the Provost J.G. Marwick and of John Folster. The wild open spaces had great appeal for him and he indulged in exploits along with a band of Stromness boys who were greatly attached to him. Those were the days of school fees when scholars had to bring the cash for their quarterly fees to school with them. One outstanding point of his stay in Stromness was the occasion when he spent his fee-money and treated all his friends with a supply of the tempting local confection of Gundy - or "Claggum" as it was locally known. His grandfather, hearing of his grandson's escapade, meted out severe punishment for the crime when he returned that evening from playing truant all day. The door of the house was fastened while Huskie was to receive a sound thrashing. This so much concerned his playmates to hear Huskie's howl that they climbed upon the low roof of the house and one of the boys - Arthur Peel, son of Charlie Peel, placed his well-worn coat over the chimney so that the room below filled with smoke to such an extent that the door had to be thrown open. Huskie saw his chance and made his escape where he soon joined his pals.

In 1889, he returned to Canada, sailing on the Hudson's Bay ship "ERIK" of London where he went to live a full and free life as a hunter and trapper in the Nor' west.

His chums came sorrowfully to see him off, for he was well-liked, and they ran along the shore at Ness when the ship sailed out of Hoy Sound giving him a rousing farewell.

He never returned to Stromness and married in Canada where he had a family of two sons and six daughters. He made his home on Leaf River, Ungava Bay and was employed by the French company Revillon Freres as a hunter and trapper."

(N.B. - There is a photograph at present displayed in Stromness Museum of the above 'Huskie' Saunders outside his grandparents cottage at 17 South End along with one of his wee pals, believed to be the late John Folster, fisherman.)

Another similar event is recalled below:-

From: The Orcadian, Sept 24th 1936.

George S McTavish was born at Albany, Rupert's Land, not far from Moose Factory, 74 years ago. He was the son of an official of the Hudson's Bay Company and was sent to Stromness for his schooling in the "Subscription School" at the foot of Hellihole, built in 1789: (He and his wife returned to visit his old schoolhouse when on his last European trip). After, he took passage on the barque PRINCE OF WALES and sailed the northern seas to

Continued ...



DRYSTANE DYKE CONSERVATION

By Len Wilson.

Hudson's Bay for six months and returned to Stromness where he refused to return to school, so found himself a job in a lawyer's office in Stromness.

In 1879 he sailed on the OCEAN NYMPH for York Factory to start in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company. He served the northern country during the days when York Factory was a busy distribution point. While in the H.B.C. service he went to British Columbia. In 1892 he left the H.B.C. to join the B.C. Canning Company.

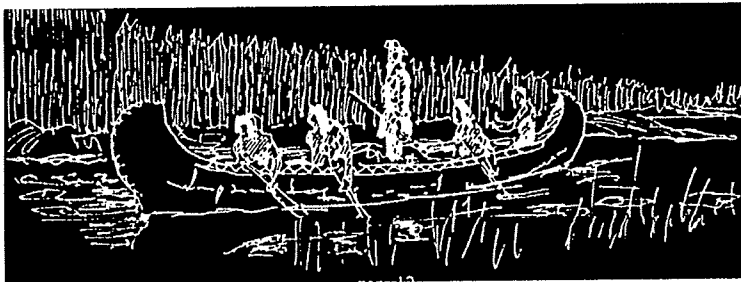
Just after the first World War he formed his own cannery at River's Inlet.

From: The Orcadian, Mar 21st 1946:-

Masonic Funeral Rites on George S McTavish of North West Canada, buried Stromness Churchyard (schooled at Stromness, returning to Canada, Factor with the Hudson's Bay Company.) Buried in the grave of Mrs Jobson with whom he stayed as a boy, who died in 1893 (her maiden name was Isabella Hourston), also Cecilia Hourston (last teacher at the "Subscription School") died 1882. Also Elizabeth Jobson, wife of R. Wilson, who died 1894. Also this inscription: "Erected by G.S. McTavish as a mark of regard for their care and kindness during his boyhood."

From: The Orcadian, Oct 22nd 1936 (accompanied by photograph not shown here):-

"John Buchan, Baron Tweedsmuir, shown meeting Chief Drever, grandson of a famous Cree tribe leader of the Saskatchewan Indians at the Fort Carlton Treaty. Chief Drever who speaks English with an Orkney accent is a grandson of Mistawasis (Big Child) the Cree tribe leader. It is believed that Chief Drever had a paternal ancestor who was an Orkney-born boatman with the Hudson's Bay Company."



THERE has been some encouraging movement in council circles towards the protection of Orkney's drystone dykes. Members will have read in The Orcadian that moves are afoot to make conservation of dykes a condition in planning consents for new developments.

The Planning Department is currently working up proposals to be laid before O.I.C., hopefully before summer, and aspects under consideration are:- repair of existing dykes, traditional construction of new dykes, and the possibility of setting up a Countryside Fund to assist with dykes, hedging, trees, etc., together with the aforementioned planning protection.

An Enforcement Officer has been recently appointed and he will be

responsible for monitoring all new developments to ensure that they conform to the Council's conditions. The outlook is promising. O. I. C. and their Planning Department are to be congratulated for their support, and for their recognition of this valuable conservation project. Unfortunately though, the desecration does not stop overnight, and not too long ago a dyke was demolished in the Deerness Road just outside Kirkwall, to be replaced with a concrete monstrosity. This was part of a new development too, and the Planning Department were not happy that work had commenced before consent was given, so it is clear that members should continue to be vigilant and report promptly to O. I. C. Planning Department - TEL. 873535, if they see any damage taking place.

SOME THINGS WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE

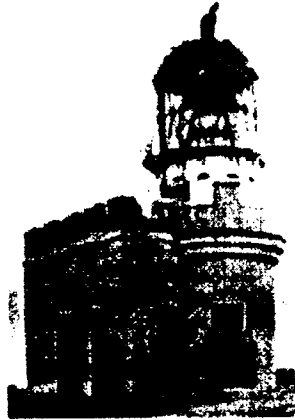
Removal of oil tanks from Shore Street. Marjorie Linklater lobbied hard for years; nobody seems to want them there (except presumably B.P.) but they still are.

Bere grown at Kirbister and Corrigal Farm Museums, as well as elsewhere.

More sympathetic lighting in conservation areas; it can be done in other small towns in Scotland. Why not here? For this type of enhancement and other desirable improvements, should we be considering an Amenity Trust as in Shetland?

10 YEARS AGO...

THE Brough of Birsay lighthouse lens was donated to O.H.S. by the Northern Lighthouse Board Commissioners when that light was automated. (Now we hear of the Pentland Skerries automation) Although the lens is safe in the custody of the Museums' Service, a final resting place has yet to be found. With the focus this year on the centenary of Robert Louis Stevenson's death, it would be appropriate for us to consider afresh a venue for this valued gift, considering the light-house building tradition of that author's family - the new leisure centre, or library perhaps?



What Lighthouse-Brough of Birsay

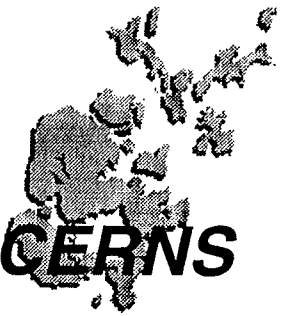
The "Double Houses" pier, Stromness was very badly storm damaged. Start on repairs took a number of years but it was eventually very handsomely rebuilt, incorporating a sewage pumping station, and is weathering well.

The secrets of the Broch at Howe Farm, Stromness were revealed by Beverly Smith after a five-year excavation period started by John Hedges. She found not just a broch tower surrounded by dwellings, but a broch on top of a round house, on top of a Neolithic tomb! All that and treasure too, which provided inspiration for local silversmiths. And now the "pickie knowe" is no longer the throwie landmark which gave its name to the farm.

SOME MORE THINGS WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE

Restoration, not only of Clestrain, but of Quholme in Shapinsay, birthplace of the father of Washington Irving, styled "America's first man of literature" and creator of the famous Rip Van Winkle story which may indeed have been based on an old Orkney fable. See letter from Peter G. Russell in "The Orcadian March 1993".

AND FINALLY ON GOING CONCERNS



Storm damage: Much greater help is needed for our coastal archaeological areas where storm damage is increasing at an alarming rate.
S. O. S. - Save Our Sites.

Alternative power: windmills can be controversial but we will watch with interest the progress of THE OSPREY wave device designed in the Highlands, backed by Hydro-Electric and due to be anchored off Dounreay by September, after summer shore trials. Also the experiments by various distilleries, including an Orkney one, with POT - ALE. . .

Waste recycling : we welcome the ongoing interest albeit sporadic, since the conference we sponsored in the 1991 Science Festival. For example, the work of S. W. A. G. and the recent lecture on farm waste disposal by Ivo Sroboba of the Scottish Agricultural college. But we can not rest on our laurels over this subject which has such significance for the future.

Tree conservation : we are not quite certain whether that was in the minds of those who engineered the drastic pruning of the trees at Stromness Primary. Whether through bureaucracy or not, perhaps information should be more readily available in the county on the management of trees and why they are such a valuable asset, both environmentally and aesthetically, and not only to the crows which can admittedly become a nuisance.

Remember.....

1. OHS Newsletters and Periodicals are available in Kirkwall and Stromness Libraries.
2. All committee members are approachable!
3. OHS welcomes discussion on any topics relevant to the Society, which might be more diverse than people think.
4. If you think we are irrelevant, and you are not already a member, please JOIN and make us less so, especially if you are young! Look out for the green forms or contact our treasurer.

Contact us and make your ideas Orkney Heritage Society's business.