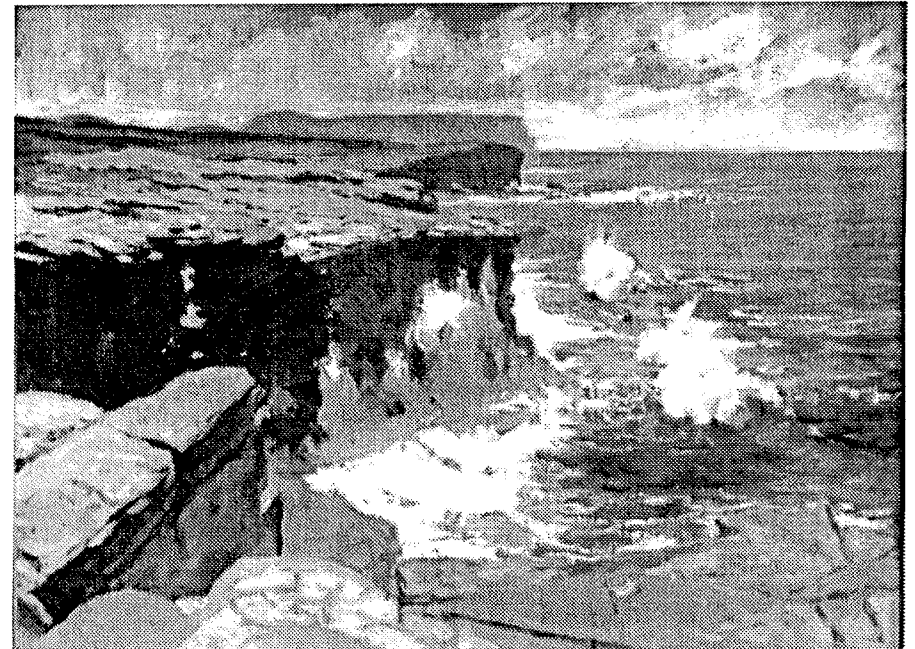


# Orkney Heritage Society

## LIFE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY

Mrs. A. Brundle	Mrs R. Leslie	Mr. Eoin F. Scott
J. Leslie Burgher	Mrs. Agnes Liddell	Mr. R.E. & Miss A.T. Selfridge
Prof. & Mrs. John Boyes	Mr. G. Linklater	Mr. A.J.H. Shearer
Miss. Thora Bain	Mrs. M. Linklater	Mrs. H.M.L. Shearer
Mr. & Mrs. A. Bevan	Mrs. D. H. Lorimer	Mr. & Mrs. Simison
Mrs. E.A. Bain	Mrs. E. M. McDonald	Miss Mairaine T. Sinclair
Dr. Ronald Cant.	Mrs. D.J. McInnes	Mr. Roy H. Sinclair
Miss G.M.M. Carter	Mr. & Mrs. Ian McInnes	Mr. P.G. Skea
B.M. Westwood Clark	Sir Peter Maxwell Davies	Mrs. Beverley Ballin-Smith
Miss Ivy Cooper	Mrs. Norah Meyer	Mr. & Mrs. J.W. Spence
Mrs. Maureen Cowie	Miss I. E. Morris	Alan MacGregor Stewart
Mrs. B. Crawford	Miss Jean Mitchell	Mrs. M. D. Street
Mrs. Inga Croy	Mr Kevin Mackay	Miss Margaret Sutherland
Drs. O & M Cuthbert	Captain W.B. Mackay	Mr. Paul Sutherland
Brigadier Malcolm Dennison	Col. Sir Robert Macrae	Mrs. E. G. Sutton
Mr. Bruce Dunnett	Ms. Jacqueline Marwick	Mrs. I.M.B. Swanney
Dr. Ray Fereday	Mrs. Sigrid Mavor	Mr. & Mrs. A. Tait
Mr. & Mrs. A. J. Firth	Mr. & Mrs. I. Nelson	Mr. Colin J.S. Taylor
Dr. Nigel Firth	Mrs. Rita M. Nicolson	W. P. L. Thomson
Robin A. & Jinny M. Fletcher	Mrs. I. Oag	Mr. J.A.B. Townsend
J. R. Flett	Mr. D & Mrs. R. Oddie	Mrs. E. Twatt
Mrs. S. Flint	Miss J. C. Petrie	Mr. A.W. & Mrs. A.O. Wright
Mrs. Hazel Foubister	Mr. N. Price	Mrs. S.B. Wenham
Mrs. Julie Gibson	Mr. C.B. Quinn	George T. Wylie
Magnus Grimond	Prof. John Radford	Mrs. A.L. Wallace
John Grimond	Mr. & Mrs. W.A.M. Ramsay	Mr. & Mrs. D. S. Wallace
Mr. Ian Heddle	Mr. J.F. Ravenshear	Mr. B. Wilson
Mr. James M. Irvine	Prof. A.C. Renfrew	Miss Sonja Wishart
Wm. Irvine	Miss Elizabeth Robertson	Mr. Marcus Wood
Dr. & Mrs. D.D. Johnstone	Mr. D.J.T. Robertson	Miss I.S. Work
Mr. Stuart Kemp.	Mr. & Mrs. J.D.M. Robertson	Mrs. B.M. Walthew
Mr. Tom King.	Ms. Andrewina B. Ross	
Dr. Raymond Lamb.	Mr. Brodie Ross	
Mr. P. Leith	Mrs. Sybil Sarel	



Newsletter 1995

## 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.

## COMMITTEE

President	Mrs. Marjorie Linklater, 20 Main Street, Kirkwall.
Vice President	Mr. Ian Heddle, Cletyan, Ireland Road, Stenness.
Chairman	Mrs. Daphne Lorimer, Scorradale, Orphir.
Vice-Chairman	Mrs. Anne Brundle, Hillside School, Twatt.
Secretary	Ms. Andi Ross, Outer Dyke, Stenness.
Minutes Sec.	Mrs. Sheena Wenham
Treasurer	Mr. N.A.D. McCance, West End, Burray.
<b>Committee</b>	
	Brig. Malcolm Dennison, Roeberry, St. Mgts. Hope.
	Mr. Alistair Tulloch, 29, Reid Crescent, Kirkwall.
	Mr. Jack Rendall, Glen, Rackwick, Hoy.
	Mrs. Hilda Firth, Edan, Berstane Rd., Kirkwall.
	Mr. Sandy Firth, Edan, Berstane Rd., Kirkwall.
	Mr. Peter Leith, Langbigging Cottage, Stenness.
	Mrs. Elizabeth Bevan, 9 Ness Rd., Stromness.
	Mr. Maurice Hayes, Summerlea, Burray.
	Mr. Gordon Linklater, 5 Craigiefield Park, St. Ola.
	Mr. Phil Astley, 35A, Albert Street, Kirkwall.
<b>Archaeologist</b>	
	Dr. Raymond Lamb, Skethquoy, Tenston, Sandwick.

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Stromness. Orkney. KW16 3AN.

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## Message from the Chairman

Ian Heddle's knowledge, expertise and diplomatic skills guided the Heritage Society with a sure touch through many successful years and he will be much missed. It was with some trepidation, therefore, that I stepped into his shoes last December.

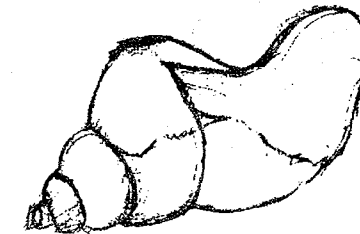
I stepped, in fact, into a quicksand - or, rather a sand dune! The question of sand extraction poses a moral problem for every inhabitant of Orkney. Sand is, itself, a valuable economic commodity, but when it is gone, the money is gone and removal may have (and in fact, probably has) caused the destruction of part of Orkney's natural and archaeological heritage. These, the foundation of the Tourist industry, are the economic resource of tomorrow. Is the immediate profit for one or two people, today, worth the livelihood of the many in the future?

The Heritage Society is very anxious to involve as many of its members in its activities as it can, and the Programme Secretary, Anne Brundle, has an exciting series of monthly talks planned for the winter season. She is also poised to grab every visiting archaeologist and historian and persuade them into giving a lecture, into the bargain. (So, do listen to the "What's on Diary" on Radio Orkney and watch for notices). As soon as the fields are ploughed, it is hoped to start field walking again and Julie Gibson is going to talk on cliff watching and, we hope, will make use of helpers. Next summer we hope the very successful Eynhallow trip will be joined by trips to Wyre and, perhaps, other islands.

It is a sad fact that archaeological reports take a long time in gestation. Archaeologists come to a district, dig happily away, are taken into the hearts and homes of the community. Then one year they don't come back and the reports, when they are published, rarely filter through to the people who gave so much interest in and hospitality to the excavation team. With this in mind, the Directors of all the excavations that have taken place in Orkney in the past ten years have been contacted and have enthusiastically agreed to supply a lighthearted update of the state of progress of the report and a few news items about the diggers. These were being put together by the late John Brundle into a series of "Heritage Handouts". Photocopies will be available to members at the Tankerness House Museum on request.

It is to be hoped that 1995/6 will be a busy, happy and successful season. The Heritage Society cares deeply for all aspects of Orkney's life, but it is surprising what a lot of fun and enjoyment can be had out of doing the caring.

Daphne Lorimer



# Editorial

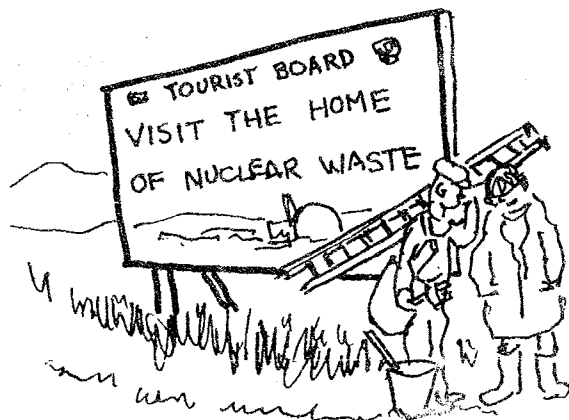
Changes to our Office Bearers list on page 1 will be noted. Ian Heddle having sought a back seat, has given way to Daphne Lorimer who has acknowledged his sterling worth to the society. The recent AGM saw Sandy Firth also standing down as vice-chairman in favour of Anne Brundle our indefatigable programme secretary. All would wish to thank Sandy for his "official" service, hoping, indeed knowing, that he will continue to contribute his energy and local expertise.

Changes are forthcoming too in the secretarial field. Mairaine, in a new job, is unable to continue as minute secretary and deserves our thanks for stepping so efficiently into the breach left by her mother, Mona. Andi is now also finding a heavy workload after five faithful and active years with us. We hope she will not down tools too soon and thank her for all she has done so cheerfully and well. Very latest and welcome news is that Mrs Sheena Wenham is willing to join the secretarial team and we look forward to that.

The Newsletter should perhaps be more frequent than once a year and from the editorial chair goes out a plea to all members for suggestions, or preferably finished contributions, for same. . . Even better, a new editor!

Access to an Apple Mac and the essential help that goes with it from Graham Bevan made the actual process relatively painless and is gratefully acknowledged. But we would be very happy to have more membership participation in the form of articles, news items, cartoons and illustrations or anything you think relevant! If an idea occurs please make contact with the editor or any officebearer.

EB



"THEY'RE HOPING TO CASH IN  
ON THE AMERICAN MARKET"

Ian MacInnes

# Obituary

On November 1st. last year the Society bade a sad farewell to a very sincere and dear friend. Margot Heddle had fought the cancer which claimed her life with the quiet grace which was the mark of her whole personality.

Margot, a sergeant in the W R A F, married Ian, a humble Corporal, whilst they were both serving at R A F 16 M. U. Stafford in 1944. After demobilisation they made their home near Colchester, where Ian was involved in the family business. Their summer holidays were spent mostly in Orkney visiting Ian's relations and their two sons both grew up treating Orkney as a second home.

Several years before Ian's retirement they started to look for a suitable house to restore for an Orkney home. A chance remark whilst visiting Bill Groundwater one evening sent them out to the Mill of Eyrland where they fell under its spell, realising its huge potential. The Mill was purchased, and from then on every trip north turned into a real working holiday, with Margot barrowing out the previous centuries' soot from the Kiln, and helping manhandle the stones which had to be shifted. Ian's expertise as a craftsman in the building industry made the transformation from a Mill to one of Orkney's most desirable residences a miracle to behold.

For 15 years the Mill of Eyrland was the Heddles' home, and there was never a more welcoming home, where Margot always gave the impression that she was expecting you to drop in. The extensive garden along the burn caused many a Tour Bus to stop for a photo opportunity, and the vegetable garden belied

these northern latitudes. The courtyard with its workshop/garage, greenhouse and flower boxes was never untidy.

The conversion of the mill earned the Heddles an A.P.R.S. award, against huge competition, and was the frequent destination of outings from W.R.I s, Guilds, and similar organisations. There was open house for all with a collection box at the foot of the stairs for the R.N.L.I. Over the past three years, despite the loss of her son Adrian, Margot was able to enjoy her garden, her friends, and Robbie the Labrador. As lifetime sweethearts, one of their happiest moments must have been their Golden Wedding in May 1994.

Our sympathy goes out to Ian, son Christopher and family with our best wishes for Ian's new life in another house, but still in Stenness.

As we gathered at the Stenness Kirkyard in the calm after a shower of rain a flock of plovers flew low over the company, giving a graceful and natural farewell. How Margot would have loved that.

S.F.

We extend our sympathy also to our new Vice Chairman Anne Brundel. The untimely death of her husband John was a shock to the community and to this society for whom he did much work behind the scenes helping and supporting Anne in all the work she does with such charming enthusiasm.

# Orkney Heritage Society Local History Projects Results

1994 and 1995

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. '200 years of Light'<br>by Tracey Norquoy         | 1. 'The History of the Short Sea Crossing'<br>by Andrew Cromarty       |
| 2. 'The History of the T.G.B.'<br>by Lorraine Foulis | 2. 'Shipwrecks between S. Ronaldsay & Caithness'<br>by Alexander Annal |
| 3. 'William Tulloch'<br>by Helga Tulloch             | 3. 'The Changes in Horrie Farm' 1924 - 1994<br>by Derek Manson         |

Above are the top results of two years' Fereday projects which have become a regular feature of work in Orkney schools. We regret that due to pressure of space, we could not list the many others who tackled their subjects so well and also that the layout of these projects has been condensed. The projects are open to pupils in the second year of secondary schools and we are particularly pleased that good entries have come not only from the two town schools but also from North Walls and Stronsay.

Studies are often based on interviews with people who had first hand knowledge of the relevant subject - you may as a member have been involved! This makes the exercise not only a school one but also a record of interesting information which might otherwise be lost. The Society is grateful to all those adults who help students with their projects - teachers and friends or relations. We congratulate all second year pupils who 'had a go' at a thesis and hope they gained enjoyment and local knowledge from their research.

Since there is a tentative plan to put together a maritime series from this project and possibly also one on 'people we have known' we print this year the work that took third place in 1995 and one out with the first three from 1994, both of which focus on areas not previously given much coverage - Toab and Firth.

## Fereday Project

# The History of Tree Plantations in Firth

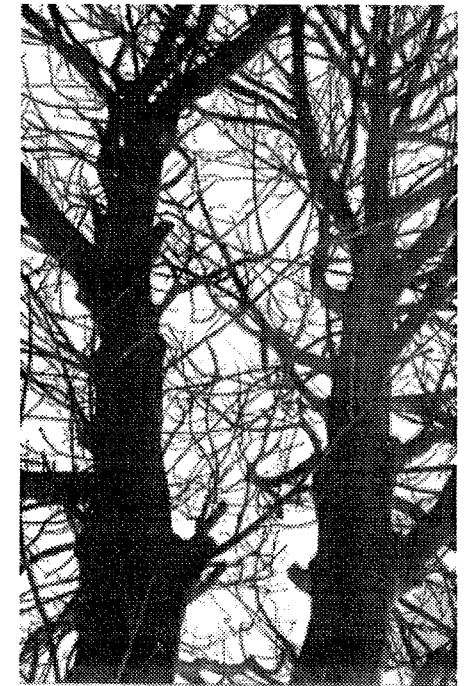
by Marie Sinclair

In this investigation it is interesting to note that the three main tree plantations in Firth - Binscarth, Redland and Geo - were all planted for different reasons. Binscarth's main wood was planted to go with the house (although the new section was planted because of the grant scheme). Redland was planted because of the landowner's interest in trees and the benefits it could provide. Geo was planted because of the landowner's interest in trees but also because of the grant received in doing so. There are many hundreds of other trees scattered around the parish of Firth especially around the Victorian houses as that was the age of planting trees with houses. Each of the owners of the tree plantation that I spoke to believed that there is a bright future for trees in Orkney.

### Varieties of trees.

Despite there being quite a large difference in the age of the plantings they all grow much the same varieties of trees because of the climate and weather conditions in Orkney. Basically the land that the tree plantation is within is in three sections: Hilly land with thin dry soil, wet marshy land (beside the burn), good land.

The hilly land with the thin dry soil is most suited to trees such as Sitka Spruce, Rowan, Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Larch and Chestnut. The wet marshy land is suited to Cherry, Willow, Alder and Ash. The good land is suited to Horse Chestnut, Beech, Whitebeam and Rowan. Sycamore will grow almost anywhere and is the most common tree that is planted around houses as it grows so well.



### Tatter Tests

The tatter test is a test used for measuring exposure. It is a piece of fabric on the end of a stick which is then put in the ground. After the winter if the fabric is tattered then it is an unsuitable place to plant trees but if the fabric remains much the same then trees can be planted there. This very simple method of measuring exposure was first used in 1845 at Binscarth by Robert Scarth. At first it was used to decide where to build the house but then they used it to decide where to plant the trees. The Forestry Commission use this test to decide where to plant trees throughout Britain.

**The Tree plantation at Geo**

Where? The plantation at Geo is about 2 miles from Finstown, just half a mile along the road from Redland.

When? The trees were planted in two sessions. The first batch of 500 were planted in 1988 and the second batch of 400 were planted in 1989. The plantation covers two and a half acres.

Who? The trees were planted by the owner of the land, Tom Sinclair, his wife and children. There are also a few 40-50 year old trees which were planted by Ernest Sinclair, Tom's father.

Why? The trees were planted to be part of a "wild life corridor" which was granted by the Agricultural Development Programme. Also because the landowner was quite interested in having a tree plantation.

Problems Rabbits are the main problem, so instead of using the rabbit netting, tree guards were used. They are biodegradable and break down in 6-7 years. The guards have kept the rabbits away from the trees but unfortunately have made the trees go to height instead of being nice and bushy.



Where did the young trees come from?

The trees were bought from Banff and Buchan Nurseries Ltd.

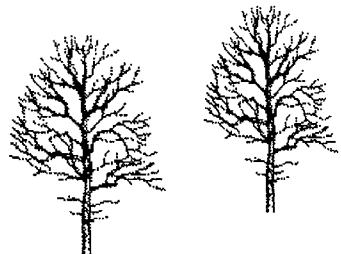
Future? More trees are planned to be planted in future to create a larger plantation.

**The Tree Plantation at Redland**

Where? Redland is a farm of around 600 acres about two and a half miles from Finstown.

When ? The first of the tree planting at Redland took place just 17 years ago. Redland is a fairly young plantation. The planting took place in three different sessions, the first being in 1977. Seeing that it had been a success, a further batch was planted in 1983. The third planting was in 1985 and included two palm trees which the rabbits ate because of their sweet taste.

Who? Fully 10, 000 trees in total were planted, which covered 10 acres, by just three people - Eoin Scott, Dorothy Tulloch and Robert Tulloch.



Why? The reason for the planting was that the farmer applied for a grant to set up an agricultural shelter belt. He didn't receive one so he decided to plant the trees anyway because it would provide great amenity for the future.

Problems?Rabbits were again the main problem so netting was put up. No tree guards were used. As they were digging a hole for a strainer they came across part of a Stone Age building just at the very top of the planting. The dog also came across some sort of building, so they decided to get it investigated. Ernest Marwick from Rendall was to come and investigate, but died before he managed to come. They have never had it investigated.

Where did the young trees come from?

The trees were mainly bought from Forres but trees from Aberdeen seemed to grow better in Orkney perhaps because they seem to have much the same conditions as they are both near the sea. The price of trees has stayed much in line with inflation.

The Burn. The burn that runs though the planting has quite a bit of history as well. On an overhanging cliff on the edge of the burn there is a Betrothal Stone dating as far back as the 1700s. There are between 20 and 30 initials on it. There are four waterfalls and they each have their own name:Campre Rower,



Gaiffers, Slap of Lannigar and Slap of Geirons. These names are very old and were told to Eoin Scott by Mary Harvey from Eastabin ( a house just up the road) when he was a boy.

Future? The plantation at Redland is always having new trees planted there and will hopefully continue to do so for quite a while into the future.

**The Tree Plantation At Binscarth**

Where? The plantings at Binscarth are just a small distance to the West of the village of Finstown.

When? The first trees were planted just after the house was built in the 50s so a lot of trees are well over 100 years old. The rest of the trees were planted in sections afterwards and any trees that died got replanted. There was also a large planting in 1952 when a gale blew down around 2000 trees. The newest part on the north end of the woods was planted in April 1990.

Who? Robert Scarth who lived at the house planted the 9 acre main wood ( the oldest part) with the help of his employ-ees. The new part was planted by Malcolm Macrae. He managed to plant 2500 trees in a week.



Why? The old woods were planted for future pleasure, the trees would go with the house and it was the Victorian age of having a wood with the grand house. The people who stayed in the house liked to entertain in the woods. A servant who used to work at the house can remember having to take every single piece of the silver tea set into the woods so the Scarths could entertain their guests. The new plantings on the end of the wood were because of the grant scheme that is set up by the agricultural development programme (A. D. P. ) and because it would make the plantings larger and it will provide amenity for the future.



Problems Rabbits are the main problem as they damage the trees so rabbit netting has been put around the new part to protect the young trees. In the old wood the larger trees collect a lot of rain water around the roots. Then when the wind blows it slackens the roots by blowing the trees and in time the tree falls over.

The main road to Harray used to go through the woods. A gardener was employed to keep the road tidy and free from fallen twigs. None of the public who used the road were allowed in the woods.

The Gardener also gathered sticks and twigs to burn up at the house. Only the sticks and twigs on the ground were gathered - nothing was pulled off trees that were still alive.

Binscarth has one of the largest trees in Orkney which is a Sycamore.

In the woods there is a 70 year old Monkey Puzzle tree.

Future? Binscarth woods has quite a bright future. In this spring there is going to be a 1/2 acre shelter belt planted.

There are always trees dying which need to be replanted so there will always be wood at Binscarth.



*The following article on the 'Lyking Dig' is reprinted from the April edition (No. 142) of Current Archaeology ( six issues a year for £12 from 9 Nassington Rd. London NW3 2TX) which was sent by Jane Downes BA, A. I. F. A. in response to our Chairman's request for archaeological news.*

## Linga Fold

The Neolithic in Orkney is well known, but the Bronze Age, by contrast, is often forgotten. Yet approximately 480 Bronze Age burial mounds are located across the islands, varying from large disc barrows to small cairns, and these form the greatest concentration of Bronze Age funerary monuments in Scotland. Many of these barrows cluster together in cemeteries and on visiting a number of these cemeteries I was shocked by their condition, damaged not only by ploughing, but, most visibly, by a combination of rabbits and cattle which can quickly reduce a mound to ruins. As a response the Orkney Barrows Project was formulated.

The aim of the project was firstly to quantify the scale of the damage to the mounds by visiting and recording each mound, and then to carry out the excavation of a whole barrow cemetery with mounds of varying size and in varying conditions to provide a gauge for judging the archaeological potential of other mounds just by looking at their surface remains. The third phase of the project will be salvage excavation and sampling of mounds all over Orkney which are in poor condition, and the fourth to consolidate and preserve a selection of mounds chosen through the survey results. Historic Scotland was aware of the problem, and trying to work out what to do, so they accepted the project proposal and have so far funded the first two phases.

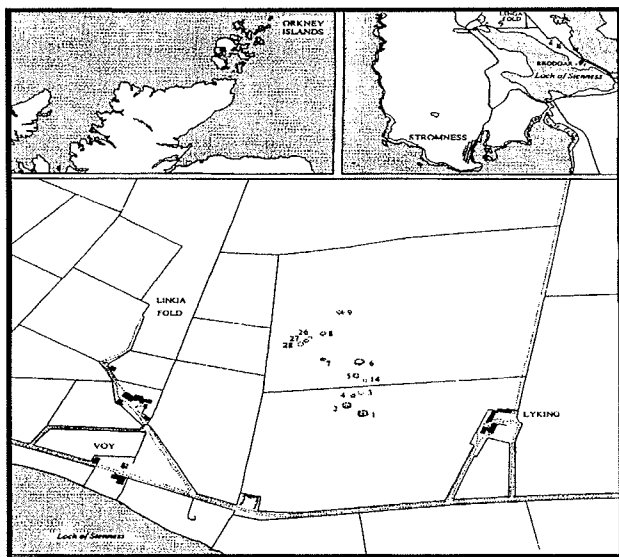
Running in tandem with the cultural resource management issues was the wider academic aim (curiosity!) to learn more about Bronze Age burial rites. It was with all these issues in mind

that I chose Linga Fold, a large cemetery originally comprising sixteen mounds (reduced to nine through ploughing). Two of the mounds had already been excavated in 1839 by the Rev C Clouston and reported in the *New Statistical Account* for 1839 (summarised in the *RCAHM Orkney* volume). Mound 1 is said to have contained a large flag which covered an inverted urn and "about a hat-full" of burnt bones. Mound 2 contained six burials, five within cists, the other in a pit with a stone cover. The cemetery lay within sight of the Ring of Brodgar, and is likely to be part of the complex landscape of exotic mounds and large cemeteries spreading up the peninsular with Brodgar henge at one end. Geophysical survey succeeded in relocating the ploughed-out mounds, and showed that the majority of other potential deposits were positioned immediately around the mounds and not some distance away.

In July 1994 the excavation commenced with a team of graduates derived mainly from Glasgow University. The excitement was great at the prospect of what we might discover, and the unusually fine weather sustained high spirits throughout the excavation. Excavation had to be timetabled around the presence of cattle in the field, so the first barrows to be opened were the northernmost, Mounds 8 and 9. Mound 9 was the worst damaged by rabbits but the contents of the cist survived undisturbed and it provides a good example of a typical Orcadian burial. At the centre was a cist, that is a stone box, and in it was a cremation lying on a large flat stone which had been used as a

lid for a pot. After the cremation had been inserted, a corbelled roof was constructed over the cist, a kerb was built around it and the whole was covered by a mound of clay. A second cist was then inserted into the mound above and off centre to the first and a second kerb was then constructed and the mound was again enlarged.

This double sequence continued to be a pattern, and a similar sequence of events could be traced at Mound 8. A large cist at the centre was surrounded by kerb and mound, and then a second stone box was built



Above. Plan to show the position of the cemetery adjacent to the Loch of Stenness.

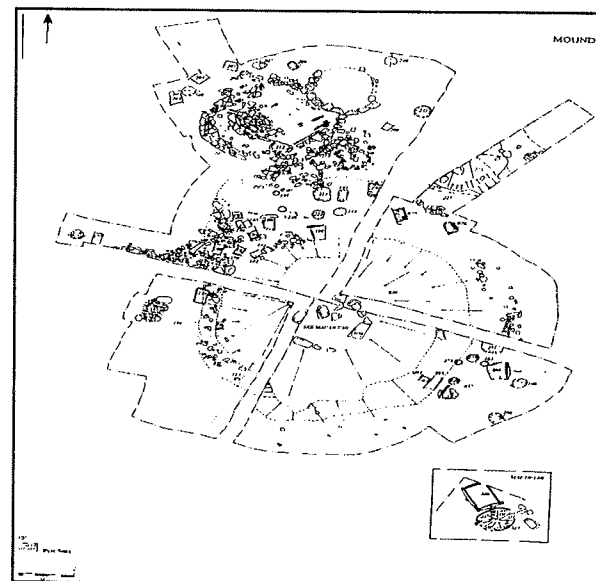
outside the kerb; this contained some sort of burnt offering - burnt organic material but no burnt bone. A more substantial kerb was then built around the whole thing and the mound was then enlarged.

We then moved on to mound 7 which proved to be the most complex of all: not only a burial mound but also what we interpreted as a mortuary building adjacent to it. It began with the construction of a large cist; a funeral pyre was then built right adjacent to it scorching the side of the cist. Burnt bone, presumably from this pyre was placed in the cist and the mound piled up over the top.

A clay platform was then laid in a crescent formation around the north of the mound, and the most interesting features were those built on this platform. First there was a ring cairn and then abutting it what we have interpreted as a round building. This had been substan-

tially robbed and truncated by ploughing and was therefore difficult to interpret, but it had a double skin wall similar to house wall construction of the late Neolithic. Internally there was a paved area to the south overlying a cremation pyre, while to the north some small snapped uprights suggested that there may have been a long piece of furniture. There was no hearth within and no domestic rubbish was associated. Was it a mortuary building where the body would have been laid out before being taken to the pyre to be burnt?

Between this mortuary house and the mound there were numerous secondary burials in cists and pits. Some of the small stone boxes may have been postholes rather than cists. Did they act as grave markers? - the cists and pits did not intercut. A path of small stone slabs led into the cemetery from the west. Stone tools and decorated pottery were strewn along the path and were also found within the stone kerbs



Above. Plan of Mound 7 with the mortuary structure (?) at the top.

- especially the large stone tools known as mattocks. We then moved on to mounds 5 and 6 both of which had been excavated in the past though the excavations are unrecorded.

We excavated a quadrant of each and found that in each case the excavators had encountered large central cists. However these were both secondary and in both cases the primary burials below were undisturbed.

Grave 5 was notable for a very large grave slab which due to its size and weight had to be lifted by inserting ropes underneath. The slab covered a long grave cut suitable for a skeleton. However as everywhere there was no inhumation: the body had been burnt and along the length of the grave were spread large fragments of cremated bone and lumps of cramp (vitreous material often associated with crema-

tion in Orkney). The grave slab was also covered by pyre material including very large pieces of cramp.

The primary burial underneath mound 6 was the most remarkable of all. A large funnel shaped pit had been excavated, and a very large urn containing cremated bone had been inserted into it. This urn was made of steatite - that is soap stone - and it proved extremely difficult to extract it from its pit, as it was both heavy and fragile; but eventually it was placed in a specially constructed case which could then only be lifted by four particularly strong people.

The steatite from which the urn is formed is a soapstone for which the closest source is Shetland. It was hard to imagine how this was transported; whether as a large block and then made into a vessel in Orkney, or as a ready made urn. The urn has since been excavated in the laboratory, and a big surprise was in store - it was constructed from two different pieces of steatite, one placed on top of the other. Four holes had been bored through each part, presumably to allow the two parts to be lashed together. Further work will be carried out to investigate what the urn may have held previously.

The pit was sealed by an orange clay, surrounded by a stone kerb, and both were covered by a grey clay mound. Once again there were secondary burials; the most notable of these was an elongated cairn covering a small boatshaped arrangement with a large pit containing cremated bones at the centre and four smaller pits to the south west. The boatshaped

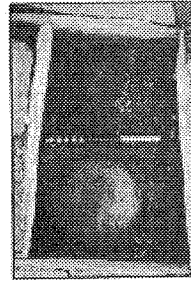


## Linga Fold

setting is a miniature version of those found in Scandinavia, but this is the first time that such a boatshaped burial has been found in Scotland from a demonstrably Bronze Age context.

All the many burials excavated were cremations: some were in cists and some were in pits but there were many other cists and stone boxes which did not contain bones. It would appear that material from the pyres was being carefully sorted and put into different features. The complexity of the mounds together with the unexpected discovery of a mortuary structure provides a clearer understanding of funerary rites in Bronze Age Orkney.

**Right. The central cist of Mound 9 showing the pot lid on which the cremation was placed.**



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*12th May 1995: In a letter to Daphne, Jane wrote from Glasgow University:*

Re Linga Fold (excavated by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Robertson, Lyking), as you can see, the article in current archaeology is out, as is the Structure Report, and Historic Scotland have approved the post excavation programme so that is underway. The first piece of work to be undertaken is the sieving of the samples which has been a bit of a headache due to the number of bulk samples it was necessary to take, and the amount of material within them. The samples go up to our sieving station on the shores of Loch Lomond to be wet sieved, at which time organic material such as charcoal for the radiocarbon dating floats off, and the silts are removed. The samples are then brought back to the Archaeology Department where some of the archaeologists who worked on the excavation (and I think even their love of the site cannot see them through this task without losing patience!) sort through them - picking out even the smallest fragments of burnt bone, cramp etc. As there were so many deposits of cremated bone and burnt material this is a very time consuming process. The burnt bone will then be sent off to Jacqui McKinley, who is based in Wessex, but has analysed burnt bone from many Orcadian cremations, and indeed often worked on excavation on Orkney. A programme of DNA analysis will be undertaken by the team from Cambridge University who are studying ancient DNA from Orkney. The pottery is also being looked at, and after recording each piece analysis regarding the source of the clay and what the vessels may have contained will begin. Linga Fold will be published in a journal upon completion of this work.

With regards the survey of all the Bronze Age burial mounds I carried out before the excavation, the results have been very informative, both with respect to the condition of the mounds, and also how the Bronze Age people positioned the mounds in relationship to the landscape and topography. This is interesting not only because it can provide clues as to where people lived (and very little is known about this in the Bronze Age), but also how ideas about where the dead should be placed appears to have changed through the Bronze Age. This work will come out as a document for Historic Scotland and an article in a national journal.

While carrying out the survey of all the mounds, human remains were found at Hermisgarth, Sanday, which Caroline Hunter (recently of Stromness, just moved to the Borders) and I then excavated over a short period. Parts of skeletons were found in three cists along the shore, and two small stone settings close by were excavated which proved to be places where bodies were cremated. Following analysis of the skeletons and burnt bone (by your good self and Sarah King at Glasgow University respectively), the bones have been sent off for radiocarbon dating. The results are due back shortly, and I'm excited to learn whether this unusual site will be Bronze Age or maybe much later.

And finally, the kerbed cairn from Mousland, Stromness, (Mr and Mrs Chalmers) which I excavated a few years ago (during the final season at Barnhouse if I remember rightly), has gained fame by being used as a colour plate in the Batsford book on the Bronze Age by Michael Parker Pearson, which is read avidly by students and interested non-specialists alike. The report for this site was completed three or even four years ago and will come out in the Proceedings of the Society Antiquaries Journal this November - this illustrates the kind of waiting list there is for publication and gives some idea of why it seems to take so long between the time you see people excavating a site and the day when the report comes out.

That's all for now. I will not be carrying out excavation in Orkney this year as I am chained to my desk working on the results from Linga Fold among other things. I hope to be back in the field next year.

*Jane Downes*

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## ON THE HORIZON

Plans for a prestigious Neolithic Conference in about three years' time organised by the Society are looking optimistic. Important speakers are showing more than interest and funds are being sought. This initiative is the brainchild of our chairman Daphne Lorimer. After her nasty illness this summer she is again enthusiastically engaged in the planning for that (and much more!), backed by Dr Raymond Lamb, Anne Brundle, Julie Gibson and the Tourist Organisation.

An anonymous donation of £400 will lead to the setting up of a fund to finance a lecture series to be run in Caithness, Orkney and Shetland on a regular basis. A ripple of excitement and approval went through the committee at this recent announcement and further ideas on the maintenance of such a fund were discussed.

Plans should soon be approved for the new and greatly enhanced access to Skara Brae and Skail House which is preliminary to the restoration of this historic house and better provision for our prime ancient monument. A heritage centre, perhaps incorporating a full scale model of the ancient village, is also a possibility for the future, which could seem superfluous until the thought arises that, with the increase in western coastal erosion in recent years, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that another great tourist asset - never mind our greatest heritage!

STOP PRESS: advance notice of a talk on January 11th by Frank Bargett -

“The Reformation in Orkney.”



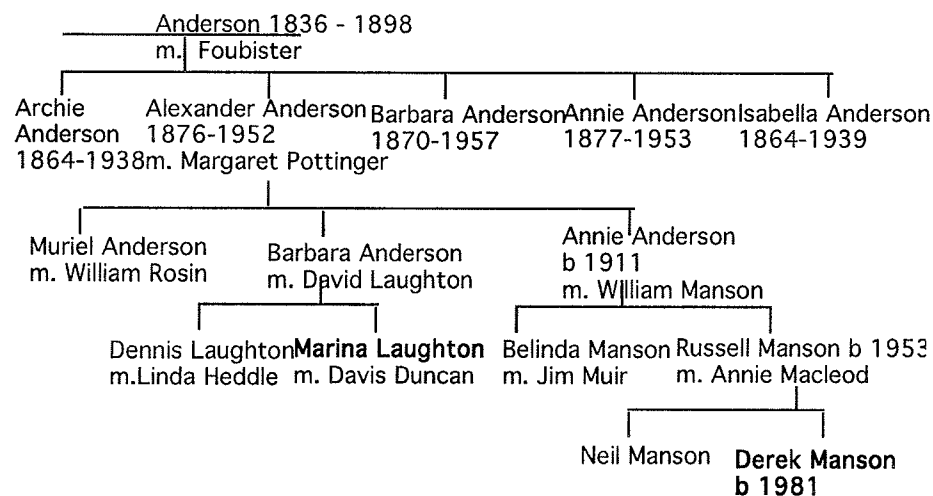
# Horrie Farm 1924-1994

by *Derek Manson*

I chose this investigation because I was very interested in finding out how my parents, Grandparents and great Grandparents lived, since they were all brought up at Horrie.

Shown below is a family tree showing the Andersons.

## The Anderson Family Tree



## HOW OLD IS HORRIE FARM?

The first reference I could find about Horrie Farm was in Storer Clouston's "Records of the Earldom of Orkney 1299-1614 in the Orkney Room in the Library.

In 1510 the land given by Sir David Sinclair to John Adamson in lieu of Horrie turned out to be the Kings land and he was removed from it.

The period I want to study begins in 1924- when the farm became owner occupied.

## WHEN DID THE FARM BECOME OWNER OCCUPIED?

To find out when the farm became owner occupied I went to the lawyer who held the title deeds and discovered that Archie Anderson had bought the farm for the sum of £290 from the Earl of Zetland in 1924. I do not know who else lived at Horrie during the 1920s but when I looked at the papers from the lawyer I noticed that Alex Anderson had bought the nearby croft called Haggieha in 1924 and he lived there with his family.

Shown below is a picture of Archie Anderson with his bicycle in front of Horrie (stone built thatched roof).



## WHO LIVED THERE AT THAT PERIOD?

I was unable to find out any further information about the inhabitants of Horrie during the 1920s. However in 1934 two important events took place -

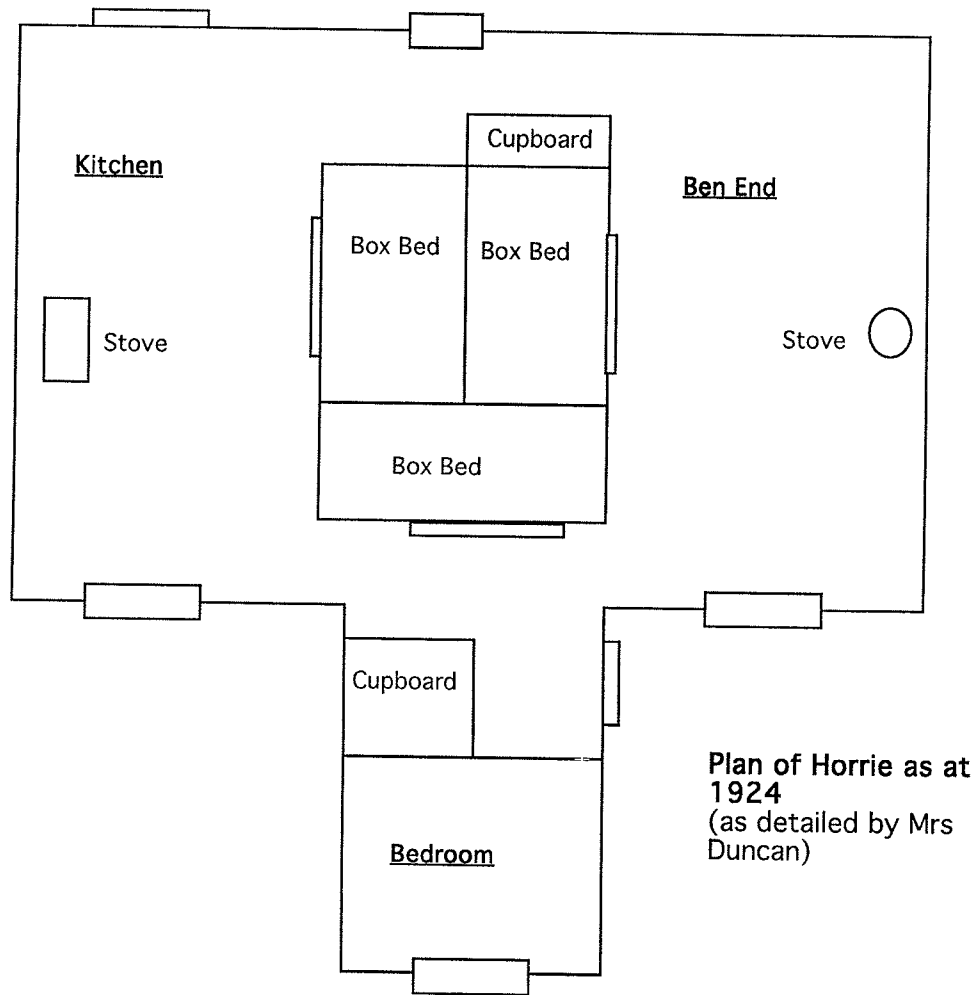
- (1) This was the year that Archie Anderson retired from the farm.
- (2) This was also the year that Horrie Cottage was built.

Horrie Cottage was occupied by Archie and his sisters, Isobella, Barbara and Annie. When he retired he disposed the farm to his brother Alexander (my great grandfather).

Fereday Project : Horrie Farm 1924 - 1994

Annie and Barbara had spent much of their lives working as house servants in London. Alexander, Margaret (nee Pottinger), Annie, Barbara and Muriel all moved into the original stone farmhouse.

Shown below is a plan of the farmhouse as described by Mrs Marina Duncan.



**WHAT WAS HORRIE LIKE WHEN MY GRANNY WAS YOUNG ?**

To find out what changes have taken place during the last 50 years I decided to interview my cousin Mrs Marina Duncan who lived on the farm until she was 10 years old, and continued to visit over the years.

She remembers that the byre and stable were very close to the house and were low stone buildings. Every Saturday they went to the Sebay Mill with oats to get milled into meal. This was used for feed for both themselves and the stock. There was a well about 50 metres from the house but that usually went dry in the summer so they had to go to the neighbouring farm for water.

The only transport they had was a horse and cart and bicycles, but vans came round weekly selling groceries and other goods. People very seldom went into Kirkwall for goods. The vans that she remembers came from Quoyburray (now a restaurant and pub) and Flett and Sons (The Store and VSO Orkney).

The wireless was the main form of entertainment - but was only put on to listen to the news as it was battery powered and the batteries had to be charged up in Kirkwall. There was no electricity and tilly lamps were used for light.

During the 1939 - 45 War the Kings Own Scottish Borderers were camped at the Breck - a field on Horrie Farm. Marina remembered getting lifts to school in the Army lorries and went to parties at the Army camps. There were Italian prisoners of war at Occester - 2 miles away, and they came round houses selling jewellery and other goods which they had made. They were very good at making rings from coins.

**FARMING DURING THE 40S**

While looking through Granni's old photographs I found a small green notebook which showed details of all the crops grown and animals kept from 1941-1949. The labour was farmer, wife and daughter.

The farming was mixed and did not change much during the Forties. The most noticeable change was the increase in the numbers of poultry kept. In 1941 there was no mention in the return but in 1949 there were 400; the most fowl they ever had was in 1948 when there were 561. The sale of eggs was an important part of the farm income. The hens were looked after by the women.

**WHAT WAS HORRIE LIKE WHEN MY DAD WAS YOUNG ?**

To find out what was happening in the 50s and 60s, I interviewed my Dad.

**Interview with Mr Russell Manson born 1953**

**Who put up all the buildings?**

Bill and Annie Manson with some help from Jake Anderson. For the byre the concrete was mixed by hand using shovels-they did not have a cement mixer at this time. To get gravel they went to the beach with the tractor and trailer and loaded it with shovels.

**Where did they keep the hens?**

The hens were kept in an old barn-now site of the dutch barn and a purpose built shed on a nearby field. This shed was made of concrete so they didn't lose too many hens in the gale of 1953.

**In what way did the children help on the farm?**

In the Winter time I cleaned out the byre after I came home from the School. I remember with great joy when my parents decided to get a shed door that would get a tractor in and out to get out the cows' waste.

**What jobs were done in the summer?**

The jobs done in the summer were fencing, hay making and harvesting the oats.

**Were there ever any paid workers on the farm?**

There were never any workers employed on the farm - it has always been a family business.

**What event sticks out in your mind clearly?**

The event that sticks out in my mind most clearly is that of a brand new tractor coming home. It was a Ford Dexter and it cost £693. Another event that comes to mind is a new Commer Cob van coming home. It was quite expensive to run only doing 20 miles to the gallon but petrol was cheap in these days.

**What animals did you have on the farm?**

The animals I remember on the farm were various kinds of hens, some cross Aberdeen Angus cows, a pure Angus bull and some Border Leicester sheep used for breeding rams for sale. In 1963 my parents purchased some land at the site of Rysick because they needed more land for animals. With this extra land they were able to grow more oats and hay for winter fodder. When my Granny and Grandad came back to Horrie in 1947 after working and living at Lyness during the war, they put up a sectional chain hut which had been an officers mess hut at Lyness. Materials were very scarce after the war so it was quite common for Defence properties to be bought and converted into living accommodation.

They blocked round it with concrete blocks and lived there until 1974. My Dad's granny lived in one end of it until her death in 1968.

The house was demolished in 1991 and the flats were built in its place.

**WHAT CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE THEN ?**

**The 70s**

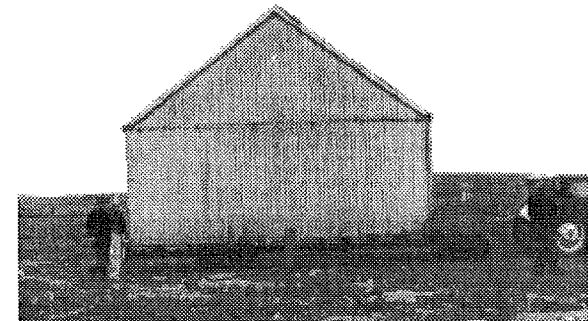
My Grandfather's health was deteriorating and he was unable to farm it. He sold off his livestock and rented the land out on a seasonal basis. He died in 1973 and my Dad took over the running of the farm. This was also the year that Horrie Cottage was resited to a position next to the main road. The reason for this was to enable my Granny to be near the bus route because my dad was going off to university to study civil engineering.

During the time my Dad was away the land was rented out seasonally for grazing.

Shown below are some photos of the house being moved.



1937 Horrie Cottage on  
Original site



1973 Shifting Horrie Cottage

### The 80s

When my Dad returned from university in 1978 he got a job at the Flotta oil terminal working shifts. On his rest days he used to work on the farm and had 25 cattle.

During the 80s major changes took place on the farm. My Dad got married, and built a house called Suilven next to Horrie Cottage. In 1985 Dad demolished the barn, which was part of the original farm buildings, and built a Dutch Barn. This was used to store barley, straw and hay. A grain drier was built in 1986 to dry the cereals grown. Oilseed rape and winter wheat was grown over the winter and spring of 1986-87. The wheat was sold to the Boardhouse Mill and ground into flour. The flour was used by a Stromness bakery to make biscuits. The oilseed rape was sold to a milling company in Glasgow.

In 1987 a midden was built with a grant from the Agricultural Development Programme. The A.D.P was money from the EEC to help farmers to become more efficient. In 1988 a general purpose shed was built again with help from the A.D.P.

### The 90s

During the 90s further building work took place on the farm. After my Granny's death Horrie Cottage was rented out for tourist accommodation.

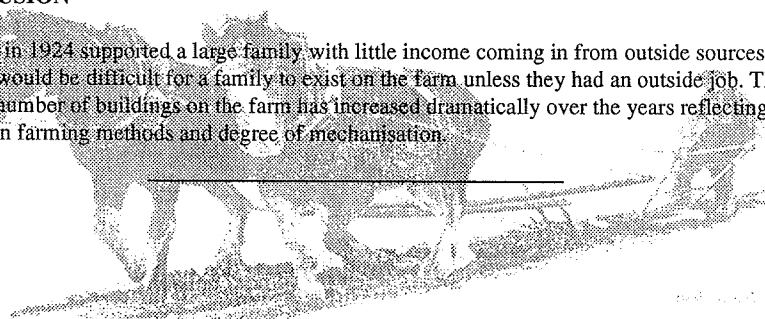
This proved to be quite profitable so my mum and dad decided to diversify into tourism. With the help of a grant and loan from the Tourist Development Scheme they decided to renovate the farm house that my granddad built and make it into two flats.

The farm house was finished in 1992 and is now rented out to tourists in the summer time.

To improve the appearance around the house a large concrete area was laid in front of the house and the road leading up to the holiday flats was tarmaced- this was done again with help from the A.D.P.

### CONCLUSION

The farm in 1924 supported a large family with little income coming in from outside sources. Today it would be difficult for a family to exist on the farm unless they had an outside job. The size and number of buildings on the farm has increased dramatically over the years reflecting the changes in farming methods and degree of mechanisation.



## OVER THE PAST YEAR

"Working parties" were established. Any member with suggestions or input for the subject areas please contact the relevant committee member in charge, i. e. for  
Archaeology - Sandy Firth  
Events & Publicity - Anne Brundle  
Publications - Maurice Hayes  
Due to Anne Brundle's enthusiasm and her strategic position at the heart of things in the Museum Service, we had many interesting and informative illustrated talks.

These have been warmly received and mostly well attended.

Anne wants to emphasise that the speakers were mainly here on other business (but quite amenable to being nobbled!) and were available to us courtesy of Historic Scotland, the Royal Commission on Ancient Historic Monuments, Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities and our own Museums Service.

A list for 1996 will soon be made but a known firm date already is: 11th January - Frank Bargett on The Reformation in Orkney.

Please note that ideas and suggestions for meetings are very welcome - just make contact with Anne!

Some of the lectures and events we enjoyed (or, sadly, missed!) over the year are as follows:

In May, on the 4th Dr Graham Ritchie provided fascinating insight, as Deputy Curator, into the work of the National Monuments Record, with special reference to the Howe excavation and the mass of information that had to be distilled by Beverly Ballin Smith for the subsequent publication.

And on the 29th three talks made up a conference in honour of the bicentenary of Sir John Sinclair's First Statistical Account. Mr Don Withrington, of Aberdeen University's Centre for Continuing Education vividly brought to life this worthy man and his work, ably supported by Willie Thomson and Tom Muir,

whose homely "piece" is included here.

Later in the summer we had Bruce Walker on Thatched Building Traditions, and in August Colin Richards on Symbolic Construction of Maeshowe.

Most recently Maureen Barry enlightened us on the building of the new Museum of Scotland.

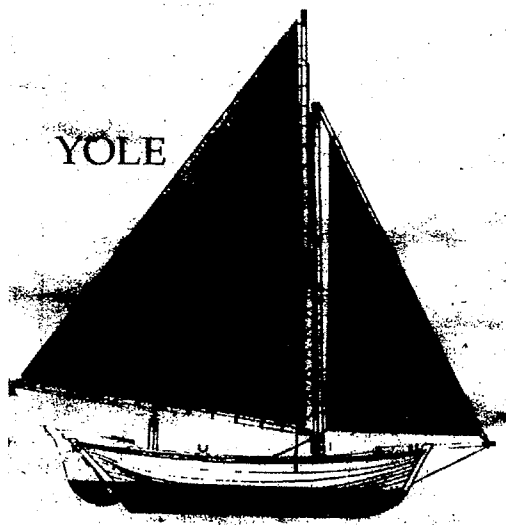
Then the usual "Eynhallow Trip" was enjoyed in June. Thanks again to Sandy for all the arrangements and to Raymond for being on hand with his invaluable information.

The committee welcomed a visit from Belle Drever of the Education Department. Ideas were exchanged and possible ways discussed on how to further involve the interest of young people in their heritage.

The desirability of preserving wartime defences, or at least some specific examples, such as Hoxa Head battery, was acknowledged. This was considered in the society some time ago but little action seems to have followed. Maybe this time?

Discussions took place between OHS and Orkney Tourist Organisation with a view to more collaboration, OTO are having a visitor survey to confirm the usefulness of archaeology as a factor in tourism.

Lastly, though this is not a comprehensive list of events, a new experiment, FIELDWALKING, probably caused some amusement and raised some eyebrows! We were initiated into this investigative procedure by Colin Richards and friends with talks and projections. Forays into fields were subsequently carried out, with the approval of the farmers. (we hope?)



YOLE

STROMNESS CLASSIC BOAT TRAIL

## GOOD TO SEE. ....

Stromness Museum's expansion and roof restoration.

The return of the old Cathedral clock presumably as a museum piece.

Orkney Buildings Trust's restoration of Nos. 1 & 5 Dundas Street, Stromness.

Stromness Shopping Week's Classic Boat Rally and Trail, a bright idea initiated in 1994 which proved so interesting, attractive and appropriate that it was repeated this year. Let's hope it can be a regular feature of this festive Western week.

The setting up of The Westray Buildings Preservation Trust with its own heritage centre planned for St George's Hall. Anyone wishing to help this business on can send donations to Nancy Harcus, Yraber, Gill Pier, Westray.

## FINANCE

*Mr. John Laughton who for 4 years has been our valuable treasurer is now unable to continue. We thank him for his competent work and wish him well.*

*We are fortunate and grateful that Mr. Neil McCance has agreed to take over.*

*The following report was submitted by John after the 94'AGM. To bring you up to date we include below the latest statement.*

Our Annual General Meeting was duly held in the Town Hall, Kirkwall on 1st December and the Accounts for year ended 31st August, 1994, as audited by Mr. A. Shearer were submitted and approved.

During the year we transferred the bulk of the Society's funds from the Royal Bank of Scotland to the Abbey National Building Society who could offer a much more attractive rate of interest of 4.5 percent. The Ernest Marwick Account of £28,000 has also been transferred and is now held in its own separate account as formerly. The Current Account is still held with the Royal Bank into which are made the day to day transactions of subscriptions received from members and the usual running expenses. The interest from the Building Society is credited on 1st September each year so that the interest from this source will only be reflected in next year's accounts.

We also transferred to Dr. Lamb's Archaeology Account with the Royal Bank the sum of £3,600.

This sum represents an amount due to Dr. Lamb mainly as travel expenses in his capacity as county archaeologist.

Opening balance brought forward from last year amounted to 62,423.55 on all bank accounts and £69,145.34 at the end of the year.

Income for the year amounted to £10,693.47 comprised as follows: Subscriptions from members £472, Elf Covenant £6,000, tax recovery £2,000, Eynhallow trip net £414.55, share of church collection - late Laura Grimond £167.80, legacy bequeathed from the estate of the late Patrick Gorie £100, miscellaneous income £5.50 and bank interest £1533.62. Donations to St. Boniface Kirk Restoration Fund Account amounted to £11,299.68.

Expenses during the year amounted to £8924.90 as follows: £8,000 for Dr. Lamb's Salary, Advertising £55.27, Printing & Stationery £141.74, Subscriptions & Donations £115.84, Insurance £338.40, Newsletter £42,85, Fereday Prize Certificates £121.00, Rent of rooms £38.10, Secretary's expenses £41.00 and Miscellaneous £30.70 Repair expenses to St. Boniface Kirk, Papa Westray amounted to £2746.46

Finally I would be grateful if any members who have not yet paid their annual subscription of £5 could do so at an early date. Subscriptions rates 1995. The rates for 1995/96 membership are as follows:

Ordinary £5    Family £10  
Life £50

Thank you for your assistance.

J.L.

## STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDED 31/8/1995.

### INCOME

Opening balance	£ 69145.34
Subscriptions	319.00
ELF Covenant	6000.00
Tax reclaimed on above	2000.00
Eynhallow Trip - Net	401.00
Legacy from Laura Grimond's Estate	500.00
Collection from Members night, etc.	39.90
Interest	767.59
Do. St. Boniface Kirk Restoration Fund.	1345.30
Donations to above Fund	7200.00
	<b>£ 87718.13</b>

### EXPENDITURE

Dr. Lamb - Salary	£ 8000.00
Advertising	190.73
Printing and Stationery	50.82
Subscriptions and Donations	126.00
Insurance	1499.53
Fereday Prize Book Tokens	60.00
Rent of Rooms	84.30
Secretary's expenses	233.38
Miscellaneous expenses	28.50
Loan to Westray Buildings	
Preservation Trust.	500.00
Solicitors fees reconveyancing of property at the Strynd.	242.31
Natural History Society's expenses	53.69
Entertainment expenses- Dr. G. Ritchie	29.45
Filing Cabinet & Tiles	
and Camcorder	531.98
Repair expenses to St. Boniface Kirk	3683.43
Balances -	

Current Account	£67.73	
Abbey National	28000.00	
Do	24175.12	
St. Boniface Kirk		
Restoration Fund	20161.16	72404.01
		<b>£ 87718.13</b>

## SUCCESS STORY

In 1992 the front cover of the newsletter bore the drawing of a delapidated St. Boniface Kirk and inside we had a most interesting article by Jocelyn Rendall. Today just over three years later, it is restored and in use. The people of Papay are to be congratulated on the realisation of a long held dream to achieve this renovation. Marjorie Linklater after her recent visit reported on the marvellous work done to

## ENERGY

The renewable energy experiment (O S P R E Y) mentioned in our last newsletter, which ran into difficulties in August, has not been abandoned. Indeed this project at Dounreay, the brainwave of engineer Allan Thomson, will get off to a bigger and better start with a new station which will benefit from the experience gained from the previous prototype. Sufficient funding has again been found, though not directly from government. It is heartening that support in various ways came from the Atomic Energy Authority at Dounreay.

This would seem to be a healthier function altogether than the reprocessing of the world's atomic waste which is the questionable follow-up to the reactor shutdown to keep jobs going in Caithness. Surely it must be possible to devise SOME alternative kind of employment which would not, in the event of even one accident, put the lives of future generations of Caithnessians and Orcadians, at the very least, in jeopardy.

*SHOULD WE BE  
CONCERNED ABOUT THIS?*

E.J.B.

date and on further plans. One exciting feature is a mosaic tile work carried out by the young people there depicting the story of St Boniface. The Society is gratified that a simple slate plaque will be part of the furnishing along with a specially commissioned lectern to commemorate the part played by Laura Grimond in fundraising for and encouraging this historic project.

## BOOKS

**Some new reading from the past year :-**

**HOWE- Four millennia of Orkney pre history** edited by Beverly Ballin Smith published by The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, describes the 1978 - 82 rescue excavations at Howe in Stromness which revealed the remains of a sequence of occupation ranging over the time indicated in the title. A great achievement for Beverly, previously chairman of our archaeological committee, and an interesting addition to Stromness lore.

**Kitty Berdo's Book of Orkney Nursery Rhymes**, carefully collected by Margaret Flaws and published by her own company Pinnsvin, Wyre, with very attractive coloured illustrations and calligraphy by Bridget and Heather Woodford is a very welcome first compilation of local rhymes for "peedie folk" and indeed for their mither's an' fethers as weel!

Lastly, newly launched, **The Life and Letters of an Orkney Naturalist** by Dr. Olaf Cuthbert on the Rev. George Low, who pioneered the study of our history and environment and who died 200 years ago, is published by the Orkney Press and will be a valuable addition to Orkney bookshelves.

## The Orkney Archives - a Gift to the Local Historian

**O**RKNEY possesses a singularly good Archive Department, the first of its kind purpose built for a local authority outside the four main cities in Scotland. It is situated in Laing Street as an extension of the Public Library and it is open to readers, by 'appointment, from Mondays to Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2p.m. to 4.45 p.m. The staff are helpful and informative and consist of the Chief Archivist, an Assistant Archivist (who is the Sound Archive Specialist) and the Photographer who maintains the Photographic Archive.

Many documents are fragile and must be stored with constant temperature and humidity. All need careful handling, so the reader must not mark or lean on the documents, must use a pencil only (an excellent pencil sharpener is available) and must not write on notepad placed on the document in question! Maps can, however, be traced with permission from the Archivist and photocopies of most documents can be obtained on request and at a fee of 15p a sheet. Since copyright and confidentiality are paramount, some archives (such as School Log Books etc) are sealed for an appropriate number of years.

Originally started by the Chief Librarian, Evan MacGillivray, in the 1960s, the Archives became funded by the Orkney Islands Council in 1972 in accordance with the Local Government Act of that year and a trained Archivist appointed in 1973. The official purpose of the archive is to collect and preserve, primarily, the Council Records. These may be from the present Orkney Islands Council, the Kirkwall and Stromness Town Council and the Orkney County Council which, in 1880 replaced the original Commissioners of Supply. These Commissioners (principally the Heritors) were instigated in 1667 to maintain roads, bridges and ferries and to collect national taxes. Their duties however, gradually increased and were supposed to include such things as enforcing the Heritors (usually themselves) duty to set up Parochial Schools! The County Archives also include those of the Commissioner of Police.

To the local historian, these records, although very valuable, pale into insignificance beside the wealth of other material, some of which was formerly held in Edinburgh, but is now lodged in Orkney. These include the records of the Church of Scotland (Minutes of the Synod, Presbytery and Church Sessions), the records of the United Presbyterian Church, the Anteburghers or Free Kirks which "came out" at the time of the Disruption of 1843 and the other Non-Conformist Churches. There are Court records which cover everything from fatal accidents and crimes to particular pleas and disputes and the Register of Deeds and the Register of Processes in the Orkney Sheriff Court. There is a series of Letter Books from the Local Collector to the Board of Commissioners of Inland Revenue (later Customs and Excise) and, in Orkney, the Collector kept the Registers of Shipping and Sea-fishing Boats for the Registrar-General of Seamen and Shipping.

Last, but not least, the Archives include a fascinating collection of gifts and deposits from members of the public, local societies and groups, organisations and businesses and from the great families and estates (e.g. the Balfours, the Sutherland-Graemes and the Earl dom of Orkney), not to mention the papers of local historians and academics.

## The Orkney Archives - a Gift to the Local Historian

Material too delicate to survive constant handling, such as news papers and documents held centrally in Edinburgh and London are available in the Orkney Archive room on microfilm. The papers include The Orcadian, The Orkney Herald, The Orkney Blast, Orkney and Shetland, Shetland American, Orkney and Zetland Chronicle, The Shetland Journal and The John O'Groats Journal. The records include the Census Returns for 1841 to 1891, the Old Parish Registers, The International Genealogical Index, the Poor Law Enquiry Commission of 1843 and the history of Scapa Flow as a fleet base.

The Sound Archive covers a vast range of topics and tapes are available for study in the Reading Room. The Photographic Archive is reached through the Reading Room and up stairs and has a large selection of photographs of life, people and places in Orkney from the 1880s onwards.

The reader will find catalogues of the archives in the Reading Room adjacent to the Archivist's Office. Having obtained the reference number of the required document, this should be entered with its details and the name of the reader, on a request slip available in the room (only one item would be entered on each slip) and given to the Archivist. A limited number of documents can be studied at any one time and care must be taken not to disturb the order of the papers.

The Orkney Archives are easy to use, the Reading Room pleasant to work in and the local historians of Orkney are fortunate to have such a resource at their disposal. D.L.

## What's in a name?

*This is part of a talk given by Tom Muir at a conference in honour of the bicentenary of Sir John Sinclair's Old Statistical Account held at the Stromness Academy lecture hall on Monday 29th May 1995. The theme was the parish identity and traditions.*

I would like to talk to you about the parishes and islands of Orkney, and pose the question, "What's in a name?" Each area has its own traditions and identity, especially the islands, where boundaries are so well defined. These characteristics gave rise to the use of TEU-NAMES or EKE-NAMES, for the different parishes. These nicknames are old, though it is impossible to say how old exactly. They have in the past been attributed to the Norse period of our history, though it may go back even further. Bones of animals and birds have been found in some of the Neolithic tombs in Orkney suggestive of tribal totems. Isbister in South Ronaldsay more popularly known as The Tomb of the Eagles, is famous for its white

tailed eagle bones and eggshells, while Cuween contained twenty four dog skulls, earning it the nickname of "The tomb of the Beagles"! If people from a certain area were associated with specific animals could this mean that they would also bear their name? I am not suggesting that these nicknames date back to the Neolithic, only that there is a parallel in our history.

Teu-names were applied to the parishes as a mild form of insult, some stronger than others. It was common at one time to shout teu-names at people from another parish. This insult was payed back in kind by the outraged parishioners. As a small boy I used to spend

holidays in my mother's native isle of Westray. At the pier as the "Orcadia" left, the people on the boat would shout, "AAKS, AAKS", while the Westray folk retorted "STIRLINS, STIRLINGS"! As half my family came from Westray I did not join in the shouting, and as I was not a "Stirling" anyway, it was not an insult to me. Not only the parishes had their teu-names but the old townships too. Their names are mostly forgotten now though a few remain: Clestrain was CATS, Woodwick was WITHERED BLABES while Ireland was SKITTERY KAGS - the less said about that the better! Broughston in Sanday was SOOKENS, a shortened form of "sookeners", a district attached to a mill. Tenants tied to a mill had to help in its upkeep. Local tradition has it that the mill of Bea in Sanday was needing "tekkin", (thatching) and this information was passed on from the kirk pulpit in the following manner:

"Ye sookeners o' the Mill o' Bea,  
Come tae her the morn wi' simmons an' strae"

Birds seem to have been popular as teu-names; there are no less than eight. Kirkwall folk are STIRLINGS, birds that tend to gather in large flocks. Westray has AAKS (auks) as already mentioned, and there's no shortage of them at Noup Head. The Westray folk used to "swap for aaks" from the craigs using a net attached to a long pole. This was an important supplement to their food and a source of oil for lamps. Eday folk are SCARFS, (cormorants or shags), St Margaret's Hope is SKOOTIES, (Richardson's skua) while the South Parish of South Ronaldsay is TEEACKS, (lapwings). People

from Walls are LYRES (Manx shearwaters) though they were later called COCKLES. Hoy is HAWKS though they earlier seem to have been called TAMMIE NORRIES (puffins). Last but not least in this list of bird names is Graemsay where folk were called GOSLINGS, though I am informed that they were better known as LIMPETS, the same as Stronsay.

Food from the sea played a hugely important role in the life of the ordinary Orcadian and this is reflected in no less than fourteen teu-names. Birsay folk are DOGS or HOES meaning dog fish, as they were fished in large numbers for their oil that fueled lamps. Deerness folk have the wonderful name of SKATE RUMPLES; rumples means the rump bone or tail. Deerness is the nearest land to an area of sea famous for its skate and locally called "the skate hole". The North End of Sanday, called the Nort' Waa has its own name, RUGGIES, while Papa Westray is DUNDIES; both names mean spent cod. Flotta folk are FLEUKS (flounders).

Shellfish are represented too. Firth is OYSTERS, after the fine oyster beds that used to thrive in the BAY of Firth until modern times. The rentals for 1595 show three farmers paying over a thousand oysters between them as part of their rent. Wyre is WILKS (welks) while Gairsay is BUCKIES, a species of large welk. Stronsay, as already mentioned, are LIMPETS while the folk of Faray were SPICKOS - big limpets. I say "were" for Faray because it is now sadly uninhabited. The people of St Andrews are called SKERRY SCRAPERS because they were said to scrape a living from the skerries in the form of shellfish and seaweed. Another

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similar name is BIRKIES from Sandwick in South Ronaldsay. This name seems to refer to the large quantities of tangles washed ashore there. The thick lower ends were called "birken tangles", and were eaten by the local people. Another suggestion for the origin of the name is that it means boaster.

North Ronaldsay folk are SEALS or TANGI WHESSOS, the old dialect name for seals. Other tea-names for North Ronaldsay are HOYDES (hides), and RULLIES, which may be like the Icelandic word "rolla" meaning an old ewe in poor condition (Hugh Marwick, Orkney Norn). This would refer to the islands native sea-weed eating sheep.

The most famous (or infamous), nickname is CRABS for Harray. The name is a sarcastic one as Harray is the only Orkney parish that does not border the sea. The name has been given many origins, all nonsensical. The popular one is of the fisherman passing through Harray who inadvertently drops a crab from his creel. A Harrayman finds the creature but does not know what it is. The oldest, wisest man in the parish is summoned to identify the monster, and declares - "Hid's a firey dragon! Tak me home.!" Another ending to the story is that the old man identifies the creature as the scorpion from the scriptures, and all the Harraymen fall on the beast with pitch forks and graips. In another crab story an unfortunate Harrayman gets nipped by the crab, and says "let be for let be again", in other words "if you let me go I'll let you go." Another version of the name's origin comes from a story about the translation of St Magnus' bones from Birsay to Kirkwall. The party stopped at various places on the way, helped along by the local people. When they reached Harray they found the locals were late. The Bishop remarked that they

came scuttling from their huts like crabs in the ebb. The name does have a tragic edge to it too though. As Harray had no shoreline it suffered badly in times of crop failure and famine.

The Harraymen's graves on the side of a Rendall hill bear silent witness to this. The graves are said to be those of a group of men from that parish who were on their way back from the Rendall shore where they were allowed to gather sea-weed and shellfish. They were caught in a sudden snow shower and, unable to continue, they lay down and died. They were buried where they were found.

Seven other names derive from foodstuffs. Stromness has BLOODY PUDDEENS while Orphir has YIRNEENS, a type of liquor made from the dried stomachs of calves and used to curdle milk in cheese production. Other older names for Orphir were SHEEP-GRIPPENS and SHEEP-BINDERS. Egilsay has the rather horrible sounding name BURSTIN LUMPS, though it is not a medical condition, but lumps of burstin - kettle dried corn mixed with milk. Sanday provides another two names: GRUELLIE BELKIES, literally porridge bags, refers to the island as a whole and shows that corn production was very important to the island's economy. The other name KIRNERS, applies to the parish of Burness. An old rhyme goes

"The Kirners O' Burness,  
Whan they geid tae thir wark,  
A silken ruff aboot thir necks,  
An' feenty bit o' sark."

A bit like the expression about all fur coat and no.....undergarments! Stennessians were called KIRN LICKERS, though they were

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also known as the MERRY DANCERS (the aurora borealis), which is a much nicer name. The last name may not really apply to this list at all. It is the name for an Evie person which is CAULD KAIL, meaning a cold, proud person rather than a dish.

The remaining names do not fit into any pattern, so they are in no particular order. Sandwick has ASSIE PAITTES, a rather obscure name which has been suggested as meaning a type of cake baked in the hot ashes of the fire, which also suggests the word ASSIEPATTLIE, the ash raking lad who killed the mester stoor worm in the popular folk tale and generally given to a lazy idol person..

Scapa had its own name too - LUGGIES - while Rendall had the slanderous name of SHEEP THIEVES. Holm has the strange name of HOBBLERS, the meaning of which is lost. There are Shapinsay SHEEP and

Rousay MARES - the story behind this name is that a man from Rousay was sent to the horse market to buy horses to establish a breed on the island. He returned in triumph with his purchase but it was short lived when it was discovered that he had bought only mares, having forgotten the need for stallions.....A Burrayman is an OILY BOGY, a type of skin bag used as a buoy for herring net. Burray had a thriving fishing fleet up until World War I, when blockships were sunk in the sounds between the south islands to protect Scapa Flow from submarine attack.

The final tea-names come from South Ronaldsay. Widewall has WITCHES though why this I don't know. Herston has HOGS while Grimness has GRUTIES, a name that has been examined as either from the Norse word prautr meaning porridge, or more insultingly, people who live on groot, dregs or rubbish!

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