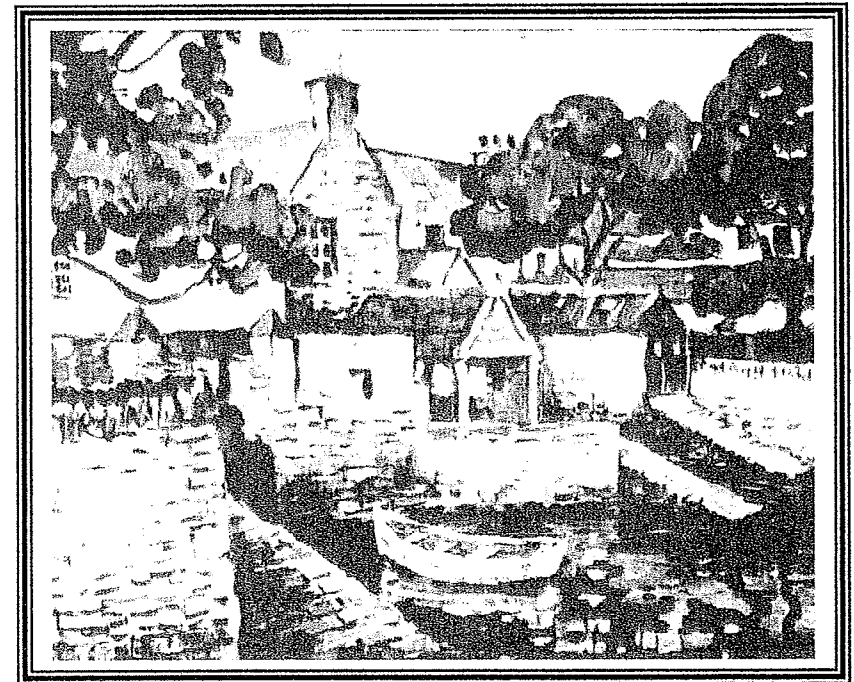


Orkney Heritage Society



Newsletter 2002/2003

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Objectives of the Orkney Heritage Society

The aims of the Society are 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 promotion of schemes of a charitable nature

Committee 2003

President	Mr. I. M. Heddle, Clelyan, Ireland Road, Stenness
Vice President	Mr. A. J. Firth, Edan, Berstane Road, Kirkwall
Chairman	Dr. W. Hamilton, Innistore, Dundas Cres. Kirkwall Tel.01856 878603
Vice Chairman	Mrs. A. Brundle Hillside School, Twatt, Orkney
Secretary	Mrs. S. Wenham, Langwell, Orphir
Treasurer	Mr. N. A. D. Mc.Cance, West End, Burray
Membership Secretary	Mr. Wm. Groundwater, Clowigar, St.Ola
Committee	Mrs. M. Banks, Mayfield, St, Margaret's Hope Mr. B.M. Clark, Westwood, Berstane Rd, Kirkwall Mrs. H. M. Firth, Edan, Berstane Road, Kirkwall Mr. C. Gee, Brinnifea, Orphir Mrs. R. Jenkins, Ballasquoy, Arwick Road, Evie Mrs. D. Lorimer, Scorradaile House, Orphir Fr. K. Nugent, Chapel House, Main St, Kirkwall Mr T. Rendall, 22, Craigie Crescent, Kirkwall Mr. A. Tulloch, 29, Reid Crescent, Kirkwall
Archæologist Archaeologist's - Office	Mrs. Julie Gibson, Hullion, Rousay Orkney Archaeological Trust, c/o Orkney College, Weyland, Kirkwall KW15 1LX Tel. 01856 569341

Front Cover: - Painting by Ian McInnes who has kindly permitted it to be printed.

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Editorial

Greetings to all! It is with sadness that we say farewell to our highly respected Chairman of many years, Mrs. Daphne Lorimer, but she is still on the committee, so her brilliant ideas will not be lost, and we welcome the new chairman Dr. Bill Hamilton who has already proved his worth by offering to undertake, in the long term, a history of the Society – a huge task as you will guess from my outline here. We hope he will be with us for many years to come.

We send apologies to Beverley Ballin-Smith and co-author Iain Banks for our inability - for a variety of reasons - to include a review of their excellent book on the Iron Age. See Tam's Tally on page 8 for details.

For some years the Fereday Prize results have been decided just after this news-letter was published. This year, in a catch-up situation, you will find two years results for this very worthwhile project on pages 12 and 13.

A big thank you to all contributors, particularly Mrs. Anne Brundle for her cartoon and sketch, without them there would be no articles. As ever, we will be happy to consider any contributions for the next edition. We know that plenty is happening in the various Heritage Societies throughout the Islands. Secretaries, please tell us about it. We would really like a regular section devoted to this. Deadline for the next edition is January 31st 2004.

As the new library building nears completion we send our best wishes to the staff as they transfer, and arrange, the vast number of books and documents at present in store. We anticipate seeing some exhausted, but extremely happy, librarians and archivists wandering about in a dazed condition later in the year. We also wish Phil. Astley a happy and successful time in his new Archivist's post in Wick and thank him for all the hard work he has done for Orkney and the Heritage Society itself.

Many years ago the Society was stressing the unique importance of archaeology in Orkney, then in the last years of the 20th century the Orkney Archaeological Trust was born. This was followed by the Friends of the Archaeological Trust, the membership of which is fast increasing. Thanks to the generous donors of bursaries and together with Daphne, the University of the Highlands and Islands and our hard-working Archaeological team, a fully ratified University Degree Course, based at Orkney College, has been launched and the baby has come of age. Orkney Heritage Society sends it off into the world with many blessings for a long and happy life.

Watch out for coming events advertised under our Logo on the front cover. Don't miss out.

Hilda M. Firth and Iris E. Heddlie

EYNHALLOW TRIP 2003

Subject to weather conditions, this Year's Eynhallow Trip will take place on Friday 11th July, leaving Tingwall Pier at 7.15 p.m. and returning from Eynhallow at 10.15 p.m.

Cost is £12.00 per adult and £6.00 for children under 12 – No concessions as this is a Society Charter

Tickets are on sale from Kirkwall and Stromness Tourist Offices as from 28th June. Having proved uneconomical, there is no bus to or from Tingwall

There are no roads on this uninhabited island, therefore suitable footwear is strongly advised.

It is hoped that an archaeologist will be there as usual to give a talk on the ruined chapel, and an R.S.P.B. representative has been invited to discuss the varied bird population.

NO DOGS are permitted as this island is a Bird Sanctuary.

NOTE Tickets are in two parts as the outward half is handed in on boarding at Tingwall and the return half when boarding at Eynhallow.

If in doubt about the weather, telephone Evie 751 360 to confirm on the morning of sailing.

Refunds are subject to cancellation of the trip or re-sale.

**Orkney Heritage Society, c/o Mr. A. J. Firth,
Tel. / Fax (01856) 872537**

Chairman's Report by Daphne Lorimer

The Year 2002 has been one of quiet recuperation after the excitement of organising the Iron Age Conference, but nevertheless individual events by the Society as a whole and by members individually have continued to benefit the heritage of our islands.

Minehowe Knowhow - Foot and Mouth Disease having precluded our Minehowe Knowhow Open Day at the Iron Age Conference the event was enlarged, expanded and held with great success (especially with the children and school groups) at the end of May. It was organised by Mrs. Arlene Isbister of Art Discovery, assisted by Friends of the Archaeological Trust and involved iron and bronze smelting, gold working, amber working, iron age pottery, iron age cooking, possible iron age music and the use of sound and Lithuanian folk song. Jackie Wood recreated the Orkney Hood which was on exhibition with the original at the Orkney Museum. We also had a Cree Indian Sweat Lodge experience. (The willows for the sweat lodge were cut from my garden with Cree Ritual and I swear they have grown with added vigour ever since!) Arlene raised considerable funds to cover the large costs of transporting the Demonstrators for which we were very grateful.

Publications - The Proceedings of the Iron Age Conference, in the capable hands of the joint editors, Anna Ritchie and Jane Downes, is nearing completion. It is hoped to be ready for publication in May at the latest.

The second volume of the New Antiquarian Journal has been published and well received and the third volume is due to be printed soon. Papers for Volume Four are starting to be received.

Awards - The society again continued with the awards schemes.

The **Marjorie Linklater Award** for a piece of original writing is proving very popular and producing outstanding work.

Entries to the **Fereday Prize for Local History** research were solely from Stromness Academy as Kirkwall Grammar find problems with time-tabling. Ways round this are actively being sought. We are greatly indebted to Dr. W.P.L. Thomson who has executed this award since its inception. It is a mammoth task which has now kindly been taken over by Mrs. Sheena Wenham.

As the **Laura Grimond** is bi-annual, it did not take place in 2002, but is already underway for 2003.

Orkney Community Planning - This group has been very active throughout the year. The secretary has a draft of the year's proceedings.

Eynhallow Trip - In the absence of Sandy Firth on the day, Tom Rendall led the trip, which was enjoyed by all.

Members activities

1. As a result of Philip Astley's trip to Canada, we received a visit from Anne Morton, Head of Research and Reference in Winnipeg in April and have been gifted. Microfilm copies of the Hudson's Bay Servants' contracts and are co-operating in the production of a joint website. The Canadian section is going.

from strength to strength

2. Tom Muir has nearly completed his transcription of the papers of the late George Marwick (author of the *Roman Plough*)

3. Tom Rendall has been given a grant and an interest-free loan to aid his PhD Research into Orkney Dialect. He is to keep us abreast of his studies with a series of lectures.

Young Archaeologists Club - The Society has offered help and encouragement to this newly-formed club, which is well under way and has an imaginative programme for 2003-4

Orkney Archaeological Trust is now - to the delight of the Society - so firmly established in its own right that there is little need to report here except to say that the Archaeologist has now moved her office to Orkney College, which will be to their mutual benefit. The Trust has been heavily involved with Television Companies in the production of History /Archaeological Programmes.

Finally, this is my last Chairman's report. I feel the Society needs fresh blood and new ideas. I have enjoyed every minute of the job and would like to thank the Committee and all of the members for making it so much fun.

Report from Dr. W. Hamilton

It is with some trepidation that I take over the chairmanship of the Heritage Society from Daphne Lorimer. I am very aware of the enormous contribution that she has made to the Society over the years when I have been a member of the committee. I can only hope to maintain the momentum that she has engendered. Fortunately there is a lot of experience on the committee and some new blood has been introduced, which I hope will bring in fresh ideas. Events to look out for in the coming year are the publication of the proceedings of the Iron Age Conference held in September 2001, and the third volume of the New Orkney Antiquarian Journal.

The Society is keen to encourage the youth of Orkney to take an interest in their heritage and has for many years sponsored the Fereday Prize for projects on local history. For the past few years only Stromness Academy pupils have entered but we hope that through the offices of Sheila Garson, newly appointed Link Liaison Officer for Museums and Schools with emphasis on 13-14yr. olds, we will once more receive submissions from others.

Elsewhere in this newsletter Hilda Firth has written an article about the history of the Heritage Society. This is a valuable resource for those of us who have not long been members, and who are perhaps unaware of some of the achievements of the Society in times past. I should like to build on this by the creation of an archive recording the past and continuing work of the Society. Finally I hope that I can contribute to the realisation of the aims of the Society in raising awareness of and preserving Orkney's rich heritage.

Obituaries

Maurice Hayes

Members of the Society and his many friends were saddened to hear of the sudden death of Maurice Hayes at the age of 78 on Friday 18th October 2002. He was a long serving Committee Member of the Society and its activities particularly so at the conferences. He was also involved in the Camera Club, Orkney Field Club, Friends of Orkney Archaeological Trust, where he was Vice-Chairman, and the RSPB where he was Chairman / Group Leader for a number of years.

Maurice was a native of Kings Lynn and after army service in the Far East at the end of the last war, and for a period after, he spent his working life in the automotive industry. He and Edith, his late wife of more than 50 years, spent many holidays in Orkney. On retirement they moved to live permanently in Burray where they immersed themselves in local activities.



His many friends can take comfort from the fact that Maurice retained his independence to the end, in fact, following the death of his wife, he developed an extreme dose of wanderlust travelling to China, Italy, Egypt, Australia, New Zealand and the USA. He also continued to drive with his customary verve and attended concerts, the St. Magnus and Science Festivals and the meetings of the many societies with which he was connected. His unique sense of humour which enlivened many a Committee Meeting will remain in many a memory.

He was buried in the cemetery at Burray in the presence of his many friends, following a well attended service in St. Lawrence Kirk, Burray, on Friday 25th October. To his son Martin and family we extend our deepest sympathy.

Neil McCance

Bill Cormack

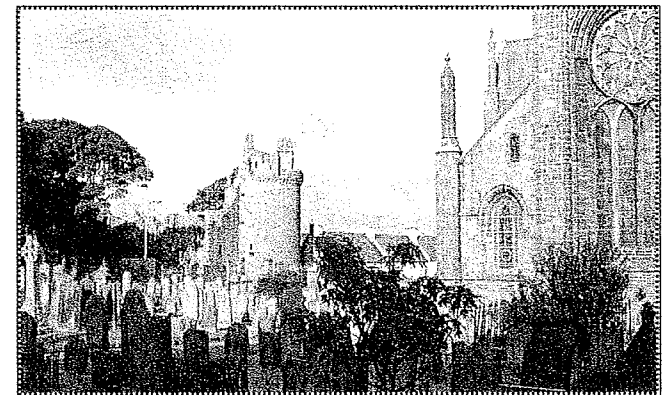
I first met Bill Cormack at a weekend course on the Mesolithic at Rewley House, Oxford and came under the spell of his enthusiasm for archaeology in all its aspects and his love of Orkney where he was stationed for a time during the war. Bill was enthusiastic about the Mesolithic. He had added many sites round the Solway Firth to the record and was convinced that research would produce an equal abundance round the shores of Orkney.

It was not only the Mesolithic that interested him: his interests were wide ranging and each year, on his annual pilgrimage to the islands, he entranced his many friends with some meticulously researched facet of his own excavations which had relevance to Orkney, such as the discovery of porphyry or the exciting find of chain mail buried in front of the altar at Barhobble, the chapel he spent five years excavating near his home. Bill was convinced that this find was of religious significance and that the chain mail associated with Cubby Roo's castle on Wyre must have come from a similar spot in the associated chapel site and not the castle itself. With his usual tenacious detective skills, he proved just that. Many readers will recall his rediscovery of the original report on the Norse calendar in Skail House, republished in the Heritage Society's Journal

Bill, a retired writer to the Signet, did mammoth work for archaeology in the south-west of Scotland, near his home in Lockerbie, for which he received the MBE in 1995 and later, the Dorothy Marshall Medal. He inspired many people and the annual visits which he and Sheila, his wife, paid to Orkney will be much missed by his many friends in the islands

D.H.Lorimer

St. Magnus Cathedral Churchyard - Photo by A.J.Firth



Tam's Tally-Orkney Books 2003			
Available at Stromness Books & Prints 1, Graham Place, Stromness			
Will Your Anchor Hold	R.L.Sutherland	Currently in Reprint as paperback edition.	
Seven Years o' Yule Days	Hazel S. Parkins		£ 9.95
Fatal Passage(John Rae & Franklin Expedition)	Ken McGoogan	Bantam	£ 7.99
A Jar of Seed Corn	Jocelyn Rendall	Orcadian	£ 9.99
Orkney and the Sea	Ed. Kate Towsey	Orkney Heritage	£15.00
The Secret Scroll	Andrew Sinclair	Birlinn	£ 9.99
Twelve Light Years	Margaret Aitkin	Birlinn	£ 6.99
For Freedom and Honour	Col.Esson	Information Plus	£ 8.99
Orkney and Shetland Steamers	Alistair Deayton	Tempus Publishing	£12.99
The North Boats	Alistair W. McRobb	Ferry Publications	£ 6.99
Six Lives of Fankle Cat	G.M.B.(Reprint)	Floris	£ 4.99
Letters from Hamnavoe	G.M.B. (Reprint)	Steve Savage	£ 7.50
Orkney and Shetland	James & Deborah Penrith	Vacation Work	£11.95
Papar in the North Atlantic	Ed. Barbara E. Crawford	Univ. of St. Andrews	£15.00
Orkney Bird Report 2001	Ed. Jim Williams	Orkney Bird Report	£ 6.00
SCAPA Flow	Malcolm Brown /Patricia Mechan (Re-print)	Pan Macmillan	£ 7.99
Hogboon o' Hellihowe	Told by Tom Muir	Orcadian	£ 4.95
In the Shadow of the Brochs.-The Iron Age in Scotland	Beverley Ballin-Smith & Iain Banks	Tempus	£ 25.00

The Papar in the North Atlantic; Environment and History, by
Barbara E. Crawford
 Reviewed by **W.P.L.Thomson**

The term 'papar' was the name given by the Norse to the clerics of the pre-Norse church, and it gives rise to eight Orkney *papa*-place-names, and to similar names in the Hebrides, Shetland and Iceland.

There is no mention of these clerics in Orkneyinga saga, but the *Historia Norvegiae* written about the same date (c.1200) tells us that invading Vikings found the islands inhabited by Picts and papar when they first arrived. The *Historia* describes how these people were utterly destroyed by Viking attacks, but actually it had no very clear memory of events 400 years earlier and so cannot be taken at face-value.

The study of the papar has to tackle two main problems. Did the Vikings really destroy the Picts and their pre-Norse church, or do papar-names indicate some kind of continuity from the Pictish to Norse period? And what kind of people were they? Did they settle on inhospitable sea-stacks on the hermit-sites which undoubtedly exist in both Orkney and Shetland? Or were they clerics living comfortably on rich estates as might be deduced from the fertile land associated with such papa-names as Papdale, Paplay (Holm), Paplay (South Ronaldsay) and both the Papay islands?

Jocelyn Rendall's chapter on Papa Westray reviews much that has been written in recent years about the Pictish church in Orkney. The papar-name of the island is associated with the dedications to the pre-Norse saints, Boniface and Tredwell which seem to commemorate a mission sent c.715 AD from Northumbria to Pictland.

These dedications may originate directly from this mission, but another possibility is that they arise from a later medieval cult. Whether the papar themselves were an 8th century reality or a 12th century myth is tackled in a chapter by Christopher Lowe describing his excavation of St Nicholas Chapel on the Papa Stronsay. On this site at any rate continuity between Pictish and Norse Christianity seems doubtful.

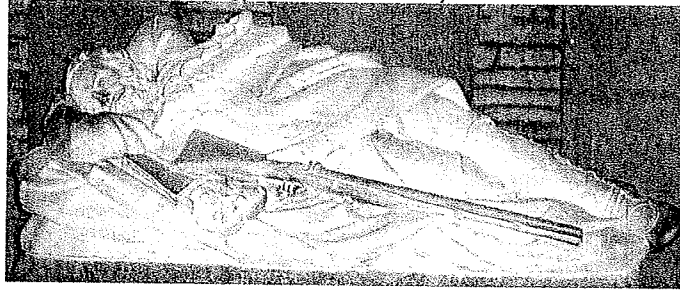
Barbara Crawford is to be congratulated in editing an excellent set of papers which are full of interest for Orkney readers. This book follows very soon after her *Papa Stour and 1299*, and shows that retirement has increased rather than diminished her historical output.

(St John's House Papers No.10, 2002. Available from the Department of Mediaeval History, 71 South Street, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9AL, £14 + £2 pp. 143 pages.)

Fatal Passage by Ken McGoogan - Reviewed by Ian Heddle

I was delighted to receive this book as a Christmas present from Iris. Having read it thoroughly, I am pleased to recommend it to everyone who has heard of Dr John Rae and also to bring it to the attention of those who are unaware of the true facts about the North-West Passage.

Dr. John Rae's Effigy on his tomb. Photo by A.J.Firth



Previously I have read "Dr John Rae" by Richards and "No Ordinary Journey" by The National Museum of Scotland which are accounts of his amazing trips in northern Canada, travelling economically and safely in the arctic. Rae lost one man, which he always regretted – Franklin lost one hundred and forty!

Ken McGoogan stresses the dreadful bigotry which existed in Victorian times. The Crimean war was being waged when Rae returned with the sad news of Franklin's fate. Victorian Britain heard about "The Charge of the Light Brigade" and the pathetic efforts for survival in King William's Land at about the same time.

Lady Franklin was a domineering woman, who drove her husband (then aged sixty!) into leading the expedition, in effect expecting him to repeat his actions of thirty years of age. She used all her power and guile to denigrate the name of John Rae, simply because he told the truth about the final desperate efforts of Franklin's men to survive. John Rae's report was confidential but his trust was blatantly brushed aside by people who could not grasp the ghastly situation which faced the starving, lead-poisoned, scurvy-ridden crew trying to remain alive in arctic conditions.

Ken McGoogan has produced, with infinite care and intense research, a gripping story of heroism by Rae and biased arrogance by Victorian "society". As a boy I admired John Rae's lovely memorial and I always refer to him as Orkney's greatest son. This is a splendid book!

(Published by Bantam Press at £7.99 320 pages)

Lovely Limpets by Stronsay School- Review by Iris Heddle

This is a delightful brochure written and illustrated by the children of Stronsay Junior High School, about their island. Support and encouragement

driver, Bertie Allen, usually knew far more of what was going on than he Schools Enterprise Programme have resulted in a first class production. It contains good prose, lovely photographs and abundant evidence of the children's love of the island.

The curriculum pack produced by Orkney Islands Council, had sparked off the whole venture. This brochure should be made widely available to all visitors to Orkney but meanwhile it can be obtained from the publishers- Stronsay School for £6.00 plus 50p postage for those outwith the island. (21 pages)

Review of Two Westray publications by Mrs. Nancy Scott

"Fae Quoy Tae Castle - The Buildings of Westray - an Orkney Island's Snapshot in Time" is a 160 page A4 book recently published by Westray Buildings Preservation Trust. Printed throughout in black and white this is a photographic record of every house in Westray in 2002 (including the ruins of homes of yesteryear), the shops, stores, public buildings, and, of course, the Castle and Noup Head Lighthouse. Wherever possible there is also an old photo if a house has been modernized. There are interesting old photos such as the spinning machine that used to be at Gorn, and memories include going into the joiner's on the way home from school to watch him making the coffin for the recently deceased and then lying in it to try it for size! Another age group recall going to dances at Gallowhall where during the war, because of the curfew, you had to arrive before 11 p.m. and could not leave before 6 a.m.!

The text along with each photo varies in length and content according to the age of the house and how much the members of the Trust were able to find out about each house and its occupants. Present occupants are named along with as many previous ones as possible.

This book-a hard cover limited edition of 700 is now sold out but a soft cover edition is under consideration.

A Natural Audit for the Island of Westray, Orkney, was commissioned by the Westray Development Trust, and placed in the hotels and heritage Centre where it is accessible to the public. Given that Westray is visited by so many thousands of birds each spring/summer it is no surprise that there are seventeen pages itemizing and describing the breeding birds and another seventeen tell of the passing birds. A further two pages list the rare visitors. Occasional colour photos add to the text. Only three pages are needed to list the Westray mammals and their habitats. The Flora of Westray fills fourteen of the A4 pages, giving Latin as well as English names. A very interesting read for the naturalist this publication is not for sale. However in the Westray Heritage Centre for only £1, there is the A6 sized "Comprehensive Guide to the Birds of Westray". Giving virtually the same information on the birds, this little book has a black and white drawing of each bird and a space in which to record where and when you first saw it.

The Fereday Prize 2002 by W.P.L.Thomson

Class 2 pupils of Stromness Academy, the only participating school, have again been taking part in the local studies project sponsored by Orkney Heritage Society. The Society is impressed by the amount of research, and the obvious enthusiasm shown by many of the entrants. As usual it was difficult to pick winners as many entries neared the standard of the first, second and third.

The competition provides an opportunity for pupils to research a topic of their own choice. Copies of many of the best projects over the last twenty years are placed in Orkney Archives with the consent of the authors. As a result it holds a large number, covering an astonishing range of subjects. Written by 13-14 year-old school pupils they provide a wealth of original material.

Often the best projects are those which record memories of parents and grandparents. Besides being a splendid opportunity for real historical research, these projects can create a permanent family record by answering questions which most adults wish they had asked their elders.

Winner is Natalie Hourston's 'Then and Now'. Her project involves Orkney people over four generations - herself, her mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. For each generation there is a description of lifestyle, home and school, and the study is rounded off by a thoughtful summary of how people's lives have changed over the years.

Second prize goes to Lizzie Pendry's 'Dentistry in Orkney; Now and Then'. As she says in her introduction, it is a subject about which virtually nothing has been written. Her informative interviews with past and present dentists and anaesthetists will bring back memories to many of her readers.

Third prize is awarded to Stuart Bevan for his project 'Stromness in World War Two' which is mainly based on interviews with people who remember the war years. Besides recording much information about wartime sites, a particularly commendable feature is the scanned illustrations taken by the author using a digital camera.

Very Highly Commended. - Emma Stevenson - 'The History of Costa School.' Samantha Rendall- 'Granny as a Servant Girl.' Anna Huggard- 'Health in Orkney since 1940.' Kayleigh Archibald- 'Skail House.' Niamh Delaney- 'Stromness Drama Club.' Jessica Seyd- 'History of Orkney Naturalists.' Alexandra Ashman- 'History of St Magnus Festival.'

Highly Commended. Andrew Kemp, Samantha MacNair, Leona Herdman, Robbie Brass, Cheryl Kelday, Shona Stanger, Eric Wilson, Craig Gillon, Lorraine MacConnachie, Bryony Muir, Charlotte Leask, Jennifer Ross, David Stockan, Joanna Grieve.

Commended certificates were awarded to a further 19 entrants.

The Fereday Prize 2003 by Sheena Wenham

Although there is a change of presenter of the 2003 results of this project, there is certainly no change in the impressively high standard of the work presented. The near equality of the standard of the best entries has again made the choice of winner very difficult.

Some topics have been covered which have not been chosen before. This has made very interesting reading, though new angles on familiar subjects always appear, as we all see things in a different light.

Asking elderly relatives, neighbours or friends about their youthful memories can not only throw up enlightening thoughts but it stimulates them to think up more and hopefully record them on paper or tape.

Due to a new Orkney Islands Council Scheme, it is hoped to have someone encourage more pupils to compete next year. Meantime here are the current results. They are all from pupils of Stromness Academy.

Winner is 'Hairst' by Inga Seator. This is a well-researched and beautifully illustrated history of farming seen through her parent's experience, written in such a way that one can vividly imagine those days.

Second is 'The Home Guard in Orkney' by James Stevenson. As there are not many members who remember this time, he has had to rely on interviews with the few he could reach. He has used their memories to give us an insight into what happened in Orkney, backed up by archive documents.

Third Prize goes to 'The History of Finstown' by Steven Aim, who has traced the rapid evolution of this village through its churches, harbour and other aspects. Interviews with residents past and present help to enhance his well illustrated entry.

Very Highly Commended Entries- Joannah Fergusson- 'The History of Ensa in World War Two.' Kristan Harvey- 'Wattle Farm.' Karen McIver- 'The Atlantic Coastline of Sandwick.' Nicola Morgan- 'Childhood in Orkney in World War Two.' Lorraine Nicholson- 'Hettie Scott.' Helen Norquoy- 'The History of the Parish of Herston.' Emma Pottinger- 'Island Lights.' Jon Ross- 'My Grandad the Whaler.' Jenny Skene- 'Orkadian Writing and Languages.' Katie Stevenson- 'The Janet'

Highly Commended- Mark Harcus- 'P&O in Orkney'. Finlay Hamden- 'Melsetter House.' Jennifer McKinley- 'Radio Orkney.' Inga Pirie- 'Orkney's Traditional Fiddle Music.' Aimee Smith- 'The Dounby School Through the Ages.'

Commended Certificates were awarded to a further 11 entrants.

An Outline History of Orkney Heritage Society by Hilda Firth

Horrified by the then current vogue of demolishing old properties and building new, the late Lady Laura Grimond created Orkney Heritage Society, the aims of which are set out on the first page of this newsletter. It would take a great deal of time and research to list in chronological order everything which has been initiated by the Society since its inception, so the many trips to islands and places of interest and the earlier conferences will have to wait for the intended detailed investigation. For brevity, Orkney Heritage Society is hereafter referred to as OHS. Meantime, in alphabetical order, this is an indication of its great variety of past and present activities and regular features: -

- **Annual Eynhallow Trip** - organised as a one-off by Mr. A. Firth it has now become a popular annual event. It is dependant on time, tide and time-tabled boat schedules and therefore cannot be a fixed annual date.
- **Fereday Prize Award** - initiated by Dr. Ray Fereday when teaching History in Kirkwall Grammar School, to encourage second year pupils in any Orkney School to research a local history subject through details obtained from relatives or other means, then produce an essay on it. With the consent of pupils some of this excellent work is stored in the archivist's office where it may be seen on request. Teachers cream off the best entries, which are then judged by selected committee members. The winner receives a book token and runners up are awarded certificates of appropriate merit.
- **Field Walking** - in the 1990's, under the guidance of Mrs. D. Lorimer and using areas suggested by the archaeologist, some very successful events took place, one event in Orphir was even filmed for a television Programme. This interesting pastime has now been passed on to Orkney Archaeological Trust.
- **Laura Grimond Award** initiated by Mr. Ian Heddle, President, as a memorial to Lady Grimond, this takes the form of a bi-annual award for features of architectural excellence in completed new or restored buildings, which blend well with their surroundings. Rules and regulations are detailed in *The Orcadian*. Photographs and a video of all entries are judged by the president, another committee member, two architects, a planning officer and a Grimond family member. Entrants receive a suitably worded certificate.
- **Marjorie Linklater Writing Award** - initiated by Mr. A. Firth, Vice-President, as a memorial to Mrs Linklater, this is an award for an original piece of writing submitted by a pupil or student of 5th or 6th year secondary school age. Their English teachers present the best entries, which are then judged by a member of the Linklater family, members of the OHS committee and an independent judge. The winner receives a book token and a certificate. Runners up receive certificates of merit as deemed appropriate.
- **Lectures** - since the inception of the society, countless lectures have been presented on a wide-ranging variety of subjects. Vice Chairman Mrs. Anne Brundle currently arranges a series of monthly lectures when possible.
- **Newsletter Sub-Committee** - The Annual O.H.S. Newsletter is currently edited by Mrs. H. Firth (Tel. 872537) and Mrs. I. Heddle (Tel. 850 988) who are always happy to receive articles or suggestions for possible inclusion.

• **Orkney Archaeological Trust with the supporting Friends of the Archaeological Trust. (OAT and FOAT)** - Lady Laura Grimond foresaw the real need for Orkney to have its own Archaeologist to create a record of all the sites and monuments in Orkney and successfully raised funding to this end. First appointee Dr. Raymond Lamb created this, publishing six booklets. In 1982, he organised a very successful conference in Birsay. Mrs. D. Lorimer when Chairman, threw herself wholeheartedly into the promotion of archaeology in Orkney. Orkney Archaeological Trust (OAT) with the Friends of the Trust (FOAT) were set up by OHS. The Society organised two highly successful Archaeological Conferences - one Neolithic and one Iron Age. Proceedings of the first are now a reference book of note. Proceedings of the second are about to be published. OAT and FOAT now stand firmly on their own feet, and it is wonderful to know that Mrs. Lorimer is to be awarded the MBE for her services to archaeology. There is now a County Archaeologist, who is in charge of the Sites and Monuments Records, two Archaeologists working in Orkney College and a new Archaeological Degree Course has commenced.

- **Orkney Countryside** - an OHS committee representative attends all the meetings of this committee which meets about four times a year and presents a short report on it at the following OHS committee meeting.
- **Orkney Heritage Property Trust** - this was set up to hold the title deeds of current OHS property and to hold that of any other property which may be acquired in future, to conserve and protect it from future sale or demolition.
- **Planning Sub-Committee** - Orkney Islands Council Planning Dept. sends plans for any changes to listed buildings or property within the Conservation area in the East and West Mainland, to committee members who study them.
- **Publications Committee** - this group of people collects and collates papers and articles before publication in the New Orkney Antiquarian Journals.
- **Publishers** - In 2001, Orkney Heritage Society became publishers, with a production of a limited hardback edition of Low's History of Orkney edited by Olaf Cuthbert. It is hoped that this will shortly be followed by "Collective Papers of George Marwick" by Tom Muir.
- **Street Furniture** - Initiated by Mrs. D. Lorimer, a committee member collects photographs or sketches of articles currently in use on the roads and countryside which are likely to disappear with modern developments. If you have any ideas please contact Christopher Gee Tel.811 377.
- **The St. Boniface Trust Fund** -The late Lady Grimond and Marjorie Linklater attended a meeting in Papa Westray where a St. Boniface Restoration Committee was set up. Hundreds of letters were sent by OHS and island members, raising a fund to help in the restoration. To save expense and delay in starting restoration, this Fund was husbanded by OHS.
- **Uranium Mining** - Marjorie Linklater led OHS in the organisation of a petition to ban uranium mining in Orkney. The late Ernest Marwick left a sum of money to the Society for the sole purpose of fighting any future attempts to mine uranium in the county, the interest to be spent in furthering the causes of the Society.

WILLIAM McGONAGALL

This renowned poet spent a few years of his youth in South Ronaldsay. He died in the year 1902, exactly 100 years before the Jubilee Year of our own Queen Elizabeth II, so it seems fitting to review the poem he wrote to Queen Victoria for her Jubilee. The sentiments expressed in his inimitable fashion

(he was to poetry what Flora Foster Jenkins was to opera) are as appropriate to the 2002-3 newsletter as they were in his day. Surely all members of this society admired the stamina of our queen in her past celebrations and echo Mr. McGonagall's "Long Live Our Queen!"

AN ODE TO THE QUEEN ON HER JUBILEE YEAR

Sound drums and trumpets, far and near!
And let all Queen Victoria's subjects loudly cheer!
And show by their actions that her they revere,
Because she's served them faithfully fifty long year !

All hail to the Empress of India and Great Britain's Queen!
Long may she live happy and serene!
And as this is now her Jubilee year,
I hope her subjects will show their loyalty without fear.

Therefore let all her subjects rejoice and sing,
Until they make the welkin ring;
And let young and old on this her Jubilee be glad,
And cry "Long Live Our Queen!" and don't be sad.

She has been a good Queen, which no one dare gainsay,
And I hope God will protect her many a day;
May He enable her a few more years to reign,
And let all her lieges say --- Amen!

Let all hatred towards her be thrown aside
All o'er dominions broad and wide;
And let all her subjects bear in mind,
By God kings and queens are put in trust o'er mankind.

Therefore rejoice and be glad on her Jubilee day,
And try and make the heart of our Queen feel gay;
Oh! Try and make her happy in country and town,
And not with Shakespeare say, "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

And as this is her first Jubilee year,
And will be her last, I rather fear;
Therefore, sound drums and trumpets cheerfully,
Until the echoes are heard o'er land and sea.

And let the innocent voices of children at home and abroad
Ascend with cheerful shouts to the throne of God;
And sing aloud "God Save our Gracious Queen!"
Because a good and charitable Sovereign she has been.

Therefore, ye sons of Great Britain, come join with me,
And welcome in our noble Queen's Jubilee;
Because she has been a faithful Queen ye must confess,
There hasn't been her equal since the days of Queen Bess.

Therefore let all her lieges shout and cheer,
"God Save our Gracious Queen !" for many a year;
Let such be the cry in the peasant's cot, the hall,
With stentorian voices as loud as they can bawl.

And let bonfires be kindled on every hill,
And her subjects dance around them at their freewill;
And try to drive dull care away
By singing and rejoicing on the Queen's Jubilee day.

May God protect her for many a day,
At home or abroad when she's far away;
Long may she be spared o'er her subjects to reign,
And let each and all with one voice say --- Amen!

Victoria is a good Queen, which all her subjects know,
And for that may God protect her from every foe;
May He be as a hedge around her, as He's been all along,
And let her live and die in peace --- is the end of my song.

"And her subjects dance around them at their freewill;"



The Late Queen Mother in Orkney by Gillian Wylie

Over a year has passed since the people of Orkney paid their last respects to her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. Her death on March 30th 2002, at the age of 101, marked the end of a special relationship between Orkney and the Queen Mum, who loved to visit the county regularly from her private residence at the Castle of Mey. In all, she made the short flight to the islands seven times between 1956 and 1992 – always in August.

Her first official visit was on Lammastide day in August 1956, when she opened the St George VI playing fields, where the Pickaquoy Centre now stands. The coverage in *The Orcadian* of August 16th was as effusive as the welcome for the Queen Mother was warm. She, in return, expressed her delight in visiting the islands for the first time. “Whenever I go to Caithness”, she told those present, “And look through my drawing room window, I find that my gaze is ever drawn northward to the islands of Orkney. I always look at them with pleasure, and today it is a great happiness to set foot upon the land which has beckoned me so often.” Her husband, she said, had often spoken of Orkney.

In 1970, she returned to the islands for an altogether more sombre occasion – the unveiling of a bronze memorial at Walls Old Kirk to the men who had lost their lives in the Longhope lifeboat disaster the year before. As Longhope relived its darkest hour, the Queen Mother met the widows and families of the men who had lost their lives.

August 1974 saw her back in the county at a thanksgiving ceremony led by the Rev. Bill Cant, marking the completion of restoration work at St. Magnus Cathedral. Her association with St. Magnus Cathedral continued, when on a very stormy summer’s day in 1980, she welcomed the Cathedral’s second phase of restoration and opened St. Magnus Fair.

An account of the event read: “The wind was so strong during the morning that not only did it impede the erection of the stalls in Kirkwall, but at one time, the Union Jack on the Town Hall was carried away.” It was, we are assured, made fast before the ceremony itself.

The weather could not have been more contrasting, when in August 1985 she was back on a glorious day to present trophies at the centenary of the County Show. The Queen Mother, who had a special interest in Aberdeen Angus cattle, was said to be very impressed with the standard of the cattle in general – and the winner in particular.

In 1987, almost exactly two years later – and a week after her daughter Queen Elizabeth visited Orkney – the Queen Mother greeted Norwegian Monarch, 84 year old King Olav V, as he stepped onto the Cornslip at Kirkwall Harbour.

Her final brief visit to Orkney was in August 1992. It was her first engagement after her 92nd birthday, when she toured the Elf Oil Terminal at Flotta. Although her visit was brief – one and a half hours in total – the impression she left was strong. As she passed through the processing part of the terminal she remarked on its beauty. “I thought it was a wonderful remark, and an imaginative one,” observed terminal manager Mr. Geoff Nicholson.

The “Liberty’s” Cannon in Stromness? by Iris Heddle.

In Stromness there is a little cannon. It sits on a tiny lawn beside a seat overlooking the harbour, on the street which runs through Stromness. This gun was fired by the Hudson’s Bay Company agent when one of their ships sailed in to the harbour. The sound of this gun informed the population, both in Stromness and the surrounding area that the ship was in harbour looking for men. A curiosity today, it was once a serious weapon. How it is said to have come to Stromness is a fascinating story.

An American privateer named Scourge captured the Liberty, a British vessel. He fully intended that the vessel, and any booty she might seize, should be sailed back to America, so he put a prize master and twenty or more crew on board. However, on the last day of December 1813, a severe gale forced the boat to take shelter in Stromness harbour. As soon as she had been made fast, Mr. Flett of H. M. Customs, boarded her. The crew offered no resistance and they were taken by military guard to Kirkwall and placed in custody. Then a problem arose. What exactly was the vessel’s status as a prize? Could Mr. Flett and Stromness claim the full prize money or were they only entitled to the salvage rate? The original English owners wanted her returned to Hull immediately. Mr. Flett appealed to the Vice-Admiral Depute in Crantit. He was asked to send men able to make a true valuation of the boat and its contents while she was still moored in Stromness. Mr. Flett also asked that the estimates be given on oath before a local J.P. and so save the time and expense involved in their having to go to Crantit.

The warrant was granted for the survey. Mr. Beaton and Mr. Pottinger, shipmasters, and Messrs. William and John Wards, ships carpenters, were appointed. They were all residents of Stromness as was Edward Clouston the J.P. The inventory and valuation were accepted as “reasonable and fair to all parties concerned” by the Vice-Admiral Depute and the Clerk of Court made a copy. The surveyors took this to the J.P. on the 17th March 1814.

There had been no sign of any cargo, or the British crew, when the boat arrived in Stromness. The details of the inventory are listed as 50 separate items, which were valued at £2094.6s.3d. Amongst them were “5 Carriage Guns, and all Apparatus” valued at twenty pounds. The old ship’s gun, at the southern end of Stromness, is probably one of these. There is a strong local tradition that it came off an American privateer. Another cannon, in Rackwick, is possibly from the same source. There is no record of what happened to the prisoners or how the financial problem was finally resolved. This information is probably still somewhere among the County Court records.

[The information for this article was taken from *Orkney Shipwrecks & other Maritime matters*. Dr. Derrick Johnstone obtained a copy from Archives. I am most grateful to him for lending them to me. I.E.H.]

1903 and all that...by Bill Spence

One hundred years ago Parliament passed the Motor Car Act 1903 which, *inter alia*, made it compulsory for all road vehicles to be registered and to display plates, fore and aft, showing their numbers. (This Act also increased the speed limit from 12 to 20 m.p.h and introduced driving licences) Britain was not the first to have vehicle registration; that honour goes to Holland in 1899 and the German state of Baden is reputed to have had a registration system in 1896. The Act, which became effective on 1st January 1904, placed responsibility for the administration of registrations and driving licences on local authorities. Orkney's County Clerk, Duncan J. Robertson, set up the system which continued more or less in its original form for seventy years, until 1974 when the procedures were centralised at the D.V.L.A. in Swansea.

To facilitate the issuing of registrations local authorities were allocated codes of one or two letters. Codes with G, S, or V in them were originally reserved for Scottish Councils. Orkney County Council was allocated BS. Each code was to be followed by a series of numbers of up to four digits and Orkney County Council had to keep three separate registers; one for motor cars, one for 'heavy motor cars' (lorries and buses) and one for motorcycles which formed the biggest group in Orkney at the outset. It was possible to register vehicles after promulgation of the Local Government Board's Circular dated 20th November 1903, which set out the minutiae of the Motor Car Act and some keen motorists did so in late November and December 1903, especially in London, and there was some competition for low numbers. In many Counties the coveted figure '1' was secured by a member of the Council – Orkney was no exception with the Councillor for St Ola William MacLennan of Grainbank booking BS-1; in some Cities the first number was allocated to the Provost or Mayor's civic car. Originally there was a hyphen between the letters and the figures – thus BS-1 – as on the plate held by Mrs Margaret MacKay of Grainbank, Kirkwall which came off J.M. F. Groat's 1921 Crossley.

The system was initially much looser than it is today. For instance, if the owner of a vehicle moved to another County, or if a vehicle was sold across a local authority boundary it could be, and often was, re-registered. It was also possible for persons living outwith the County of Orkney to apply for a BS registration and a great many of the early BS numbers went out of Orkney. This practice was stopped by The Roads Act of 1920, and from 1st January 1921 (BS-646 onwards) the series was confined to Orkney. By May 1905 ten thousand motor vehicles had been registered in London whereas in Orkney the series had only reached BS-26, which had been allocated to a 12 h.p. Panhard car owned by John C. Gow of 17 Palace Road, Kirkwall. Void numbers could be re-issued until the Roads Act of 1920 put a stop to that practice; in response to a growing demand for 'cherished' numbers, in 1955 the Ministry of Transport allowed local authorities, on request and on payment of £5, to re-issue a registration mark if they were satisfied that the

vehicle to which it had originally been issued had been destroyed or exported. This concession was discontinued in 1962. During the period 1955-1962 quite a number of old Orkney registrations were re-issued.

William MacLennan's 8 h.p. Peugeot car carried BS-1 from 15th March 1904 until 28th March 1908 when it was transferred to his 9h.p. Airex Car. The Airex was sold to the Headmaster of Kirkwall Burgh School (as it was then), Dr John McEwan on 8th June 1912 who had the car and number until 12th April 1916. Five days later, on 17th April 1916, George Drever Manager of the National Bank obtained BS-1 for his 8 h.p. Humberette (a picture appears on page 22 of *The Orcadian Book of the 20th Century*). This car with the number appears to have been bought by Charles Matthew Haydon of Lynnfield in 1920. Haydon transferred BS-1 to his new Crossley in 1921. The Crossley, with BS-1 was sold to John Robert Cursiter of Victoria Street in Stromness eight years later; then in early 1930 the car was sold to John M.F. Groat of Moasound in Longhope. As an inquisitive teenager the writer first saw BS-1 on the old Crossley in JMF's coal store under a pile of dusty coal bags in the late 1950s (circa 1958) shortly before it left Orkney to go to Sheffield after it was sold to Bob Stanley. Afterwards, sometime in the 1960s, Billy Smart (Senior) of Circus fame obtained the number which he transferred to his striking new purple Rolls-Royce Corniche convertible in the early 70s. (It was about this time that Billy Smart gave permission for BS1 to be used in the television series "The Persuaders". It was the perfect plate for the Aston Martin driven by Roger Moore as Brett Sinclair - the English gentleman). For about 30 years, until 2001, the number was on Billy Smart's Rolls-Royce; now Billy Smart (Junior) lives in the U.S.A. and the writer obtained BS1 in August 2001. It was placed on his Jaguar XK8 on 15th March 2002 - the number's 98th birthday.

The first car to be registered in Orkney was actually BS-3 on 21st January 1904 with BS-4 next on 27th January. Thereafter BS-5 on 2nd February, BS-6 on 2nd March, BS-7 on 3rd March and BS-1 on 15th March. BS-2 was a latecomer on 25th June 1904. It appears that BS-7, which was on a 3½ h.p. Benz car owned by W.R. Tulloch of New Scapa Road (Orkney's Ford Dealership still bears his name) was the first car to be taxed in Orkney on 8th March 1904 with BS-5 the day after. BS-1 and BS-6 were both taxed one week later on 15th March. W.R. Tulloch also had BS-42 on 17th May 1906. BS-77 on 2nd February 1909 and on 12th July 1910 was allocated BS-97 for a 12 h.p. car he had built in Orkney and registered as a "St Magnus Car" (see page 24 of *The Orcadian Book of the 20th Century*).

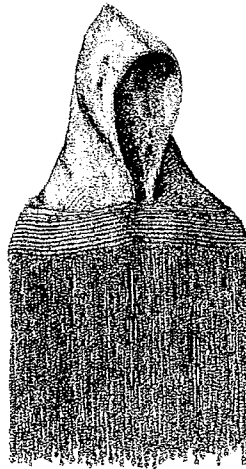
If enough support is forthcoming it is proposed to hold a "reunion" of old BS registrations in Orkney during the springtime of 2004 to mark the Centenary of the County's registration system.

By the way, 1066 and all that... BS 1066 was allocated to the well known Kirkwallian Thomas Flett of Anchor Cottage in December 1926.

The Orkney Hood by Anne Brundle

The woollen hood found in a Tankerness peat-moss in the 19th Century has been found to date to the Late Iron Age, thanks to carbon dates obtained by the National Museum of Scotland. It seems to have been made sometime between the third and seventh centuries AD.

The head covering part of the hood is shaped like an old-fashioned pixie hood, but it is joined on to a yoke that covers the wearer's shoulders, and it has a long twisted fringe. Further research by experimental archaeologist Jacqui Wood has revealed fascinating details. The hood is small and was probably made for a child of about eight or nine. The main part of the fabric is a twill weave, but the diagonal line of the twill changes direction irregularly. Careful measurements showed that at each direction change, the number of threads per inch also changed. It seems that the cloth was being woven with hand-spun yarn which varied in thickness, and the changes in direction were being used to mask these variations. The fringe is part of a tablet-woven braid, and both the cloth and the braid must have come from other, better made garments which must have been cut up to make this child's hood. One imagines that the child then left the hood in the hill – maybe they were working peats? Or would the child have been herding animals? Or maybe it blew off the washing line – maybe at Minehowe? The possibilities are endless.



(Picture from Tudor's "The Orkneys and Shetland.")

Jacqui's discoveries about the hood will be published in the Proceedings of the Orkney Heritage Society's Iron Age Conference Sea Change, which took place in 2001. The original hood is in the Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh but the replica by Jacqui Wood is on display in the Orkney Museum.

Three Kings in One Day! by A.J.Firth

The recent completion of the £2.3 million housing complex at the Kiln Corner has stirred memories of stories and events surrounding this important road junction.

My story concerns rumours on the 'grapevine' and my being in the right place at the right time. During the war - it now seems incredible - a primary school child could travel from Shapinsay to Kirkwall to attend a chiropodist for treatment on his own. Such, however, was the case. I came in on the "Iona" from Shapinsay to Kirkwall and in the town I had an aunt to visit. My Uncle's shop was John Scott, Licensed Ironmonger and Grocer. Now he had a contract to supply beer to many camps and headquarters. His lorry

cared to admit On this particular day I was told that the King had been up seeing his Fleet and that he was due to fly south sometime during the afternoon. After my appointment I headed to the Kiln Corner as this was by far the most likely place to see any one going out to HMS Sparrowhawk, HMS Tern, or for that matter to RAF Skeabrae. After lunch I headed back to the Corner. There were about twenty folk (nearly all men) standing about.

Suddenly there was a flurry and an escort of Redcaps with a light coloured staff car, came along Junction Road and round on to the Ayre Road. The car carried a blue and white flag. The docker next to me said, "That was the Greek Flag, wasn't it?"

A short while later another escort party appeared and travelling more slowly, was a large black staff car with the Norwegian flag. The man in the back wore an admiral's uniform and waved, but it wasn't our king.

An hour passed and folks were drifting away when slowly round the corner came another escort and a huge black car with a wee union jack. Our King George raised an arm heavy with gold braid and saluted us all as the car manoeuvred round the corner and picked up speed, heading out to Hatston.

On that day, in May 1943, I had seen King George 11 of Greece, King Haakon V11 of Norway and our King George V1 all pass me on one corner as they headed home from being with their ships – and I had missed my boat home!

Finance Report Oct. 2001/2002 by Neil Mc Cance

At the AGM the Treasurer presented the statement of Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st. July. He hoped that it was self-explanatory but drew members' attention the following points/transactions.

Balances

Current Account	£ 3,807
St. Boniface Kirk Restoration Fund	£ 20,324
Abbey National Building Society	£ 28,132
Abbey National Building Society	£ 1,000
Abbey National Charities Bond	£ 27,000

As usual a major source of income was the interest received from Bank and Building Society. Total Interest received by the Society amounted to £3,326 of which £ 1,688 was earned by the Charities Bond. Income of £1,356 earned by the St. Boniface Kirk Restoration Fund was from interest and sales. The Iron Age Conference repaid a loan of £ 4,000. On the winding up of the Northern Studies Centre the Society received £500 to fund a series of lectures. 2002 was the last year that the Society received £ 8,000 from the Elf / Talisman Covenant.

Contd.

The payment of £ 8,000 to OIC as a contribution towards the Archaeologist's salary was also the last. Grants of £500 and £200 were made respectively to Minehowe Know How and to AOP for the plaque in the airport commemorating the life and work of James Petrie Chalmers. £ 4,795 was expended from the St. Boniface Fund mainly for the purchase of chairs. Otherwise expenditure was in line with previous years.

“Fore” for Four in Orkney by P D Chipper

Angus and Kathleen Sutherland have enjoyed national success in a nationwide golfing competition. The International Pairs competition is an event open to golfing pairs throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland so the tournament has a very large field of entrants. Initial qualification takes place at the competitors' home club over 18 holes. The winning couple then get the chance to progress to the semi finals, which have been held on various courses in Ireland. The competition was first held in 1999 as the “millennium pairs”. Angus and Kathleen were successful in the first round, qualifying to play at KILKEE CASTLE. They did not make the final in that year.



In 2000 another Stromness couple David and Doreen Garson were successful in qualifying to play at MOUNT WOLSLEY golf club. They scored well enough to reach the final stages at SLIEVE RUSSELL golf club. As the events have national media coverage both the Sutherland's and the Garsons have made appearances on Sky television's “Golf show”.

In 2001 Angus and Kathleen made it through again, this time playing the semi-final at St. Helen's Bay. They successfully qualified for the final at Mount Wolseley. In the final they became Scottish mixed pairs champions. This meant they became holders of the handsome crystal trophy for a year. As a result of their success Angus and Kathleen were invited to compete in the champions' tournament at Carnoustie. This also meant a night's stay in the luxurious Carnoustie Golf Hotel. Despite enjoying a round on the world famous links they were not amongst the prize-winners.

As defending Scottish champions the pair were invited back to the semi-final stages in 2002. Once again they competed at Mount Wolseley. Angus and Kathleen again progressed to the final at a very wet Mount Wolseley. Another excellent performance saw them retain their Scottish Championship.

Further success ensued as the couple were voted “Team of the year” at the 2002 Orkney sports awards dinner.

Throughout the year nearly all our meetings have been concerned with access issues and the discussion of the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill. Many references have been made to roadside verges and the Local Plan and there was a presentation on the Council's environment strategy. However, the greatest emphasis was to do with the Orkney Countryside Committee being appointed as the Local Access Forum. The Constitution was altered to increase the membership so that all interested organizations could be represented. There have been relatively large attendances at most meetings. A survey of rights of way and an audit of paths are being undertaken and we look forward to these being updated.

Our Chairman, Mr. Eric Meek, attended a seminar in Alloa on the running of local access forums, and was the only chairman of a local Access forum to attend. He related how, in some areas, these forums appeared too large to be manageable. There was talk of forming sub or core groups and this he was to discuss with Mr.R.MacKay and Mrs. C. Skene of the O.I.C. With the setting up of the local access forum some other issues have had to take a back seat. Mrs. Skene has always kept us updated on forum issues. Having sent out questionnaires and received some worthwhile responses, she is holding public consultation meetings in the islands and parishes on the subject of core path networks.

Mr. David Parkin, planner, OIC, gave an illustrated talk, on the Draft Fish Farming Framework Plan. Discussion followed with some points being raised. What mechanism exists for updating charts for vessels from outwith Orkney? There are navigational problems where fish farms are not always picked up by radar. The Harbour Dept. more often gets complaints about the untidiness of shoreline bases rather than about the actual fish farms. This is more of a SEPA issue and cannot be considered by the Planning Dept. He anticipated many new applications for fish farms, as there is a need for sites to be left fallow, whilst some smaller sites might seek to expand. There is a definite limit to how many sites there can be in Scapa Flow, so they might have to consider other areas.

Special areas of conservation can be designated at sea, e.g. for seals, and it's recognized that where there are large concentrations there might be an issue to be addressed. Special protection areas, especially for birds, can be designated on land but not at sea, so there might need to be some special recommendations for particular areas.

Some methods of fish farming are more environmentally friendly than others and these will be encouraged, along with a reduction of stocking levels. The impact of Fish farming on other fish has to be considered. The only apparent consideration up till now seems to have been how many jobs could be created. There is evidence of a major environmental impact on wild salmon and wild trout.

We meet approximately four times a year and usually there is some other quite diverse business which crops up under the heading of AOCB.

Gardening For Television by Paul Newman and Janet Ireland

In January we had not anticipated being asked to design a garden, let alone doing it for television. Christine Laird, Assistant Chaplain at Balfour Hospital, persuaded Tern TV to include a new Chaplaincy garden in their Beechgrove Community Garden series and we were asked to design it.

The garden serves the needs of patients and staff and is open to visitors. The design provided a central focus of raised beds, and ways of moving through the garden whilst maintaining an overall unity. The idea of journeys through the garden was seen to echo life journeys. The design was also to cater for those with disabilities.

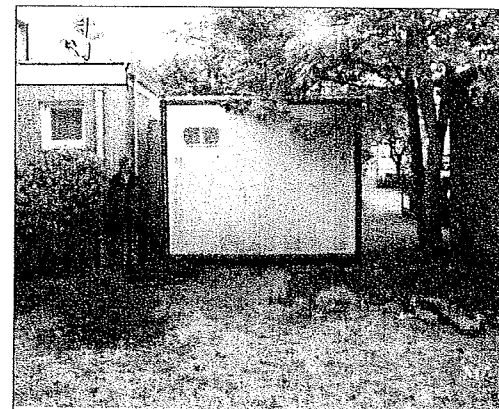
The biggest problem was creating a space with distinct character overcoming the starkness of the site and unifying the space. A new conservatory enhanced the corridor space leading to the chapel and provided an entrance to the garden.

Two raised beds constructed of local stone incorporated stone seating and carved text. To facilitate wheelchair use, two areas of paving were provided linked by a flagstone path incorporating a contrasting river of small stones. This was repeated in a starburst pattern in front of the seating area. A pergola in one corner added height and a structure for climbing plants. Fencing and trellis for more climbing plants screened the walls. The woodwork was painted in a sea-green wood-stain and this has the effect of pulling the design together. The hard landscaping was built by local craftsman, Kenny Pirie, and the lettering carved by local artist, Tracey Laurenson.

As this is a small garden it was important to keep the colour scheme simple. Green and white planting was chosen in keeping with the restful contemplative nature of the garden. Adding some purple foliage created depth to the basic scheme.

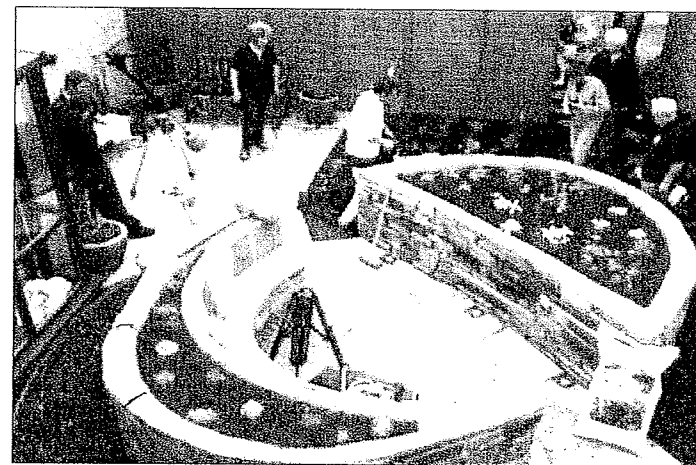
Most work had been done prior to filming. In these two days we learnt a lot about the demands of television. Shots were repeated resulting in plants being planted and uprooted many times. A small area of fence was repeatedly painted. There was a scene where attention was diverted from Carole Baxter and Jim McColl's discussion to a Paul beavering away at a tree root. The 'celebrity' garden presenters worked as hard as anyone on the set and the whole team was a pleasure to work with.

Despite hard work and the steep learning curve involved in televising both the Chaplaincy and our own gardens, the experience has been rewarding. We look forward to seeing the Chaplaincy garden flourish and mature.



Paul photographs
Janet in
deep thought
as she
surveys
the
cleared
site and
wonders
if they
were
perhaps a

little too ambitious with their lovely
plan, but No! - near completion,
Paul again photographs



Janet gazing at
the garden
now fully
rewarding the
hopes of all
those creators of
this haven for tranquil contemplation.

Twelve Years of Science Festivals by Howie Firth

It seemed a bit strange when the suggestion came from Josh Gourlay and Orkney Tourist Board. "We're trying to build up a pattern of festivals, to promote Orkney through the year and encourage visitors, and we'd like a science festival in September, as it's traditionally a shoulder month of the season."

But there was a logic in it. Orcadians are of course naturally attuned to festivals. It may come from the energy and commitment that is required for so many aspects of island living. Working life which may involve a fishing boat in an unsettled sea or a cow with a difficult calving requires total commitment to the task in hand, and that same commitment goes into the enjoyment of events which bring the community together.

The sheer enthusiasm and creative energy you find in Stromness Shopping Week or the Young Farmers Concert Competition or a community play confirms the truth of Edwin Muir's observation that in Orkney the lives of living men turn into legend.

When I had the challenge of creating a new type of festival, a science festival, for the city of Edinburgh in 1989, I kept coming back to the images in my mind of such events. A festival has to have mixtures of people of diverse interests and backgrounds, and events that bring them together and always a few surprises, and I tried to build in to Edinburgh the kind of mood I was so familiar with from Orkney.

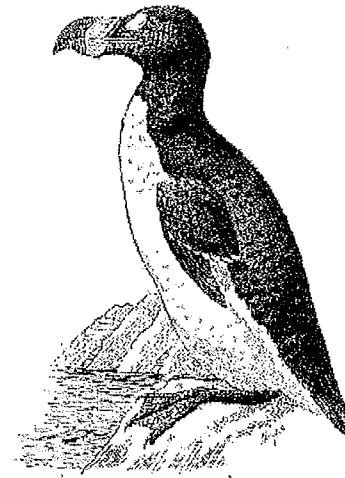
However, a science festival in Orkney itself seemed more difficult. Edinburgh had the resources of several universities and numerous companies and establishments, and a long tradition of scientists which included James Clerk Maxwell, ranked by Einstein as one of the world's four greatest physicists. (The others were Galileo, Newton and Faraday.)

But Orkney had many people who use science in their lives – who have to think and assess the environment around them, on the land or at sea. Also Orkney has many people who look at the stars on winter nights and the Northern Lights flickering in the sky and wonder about the origin of it all. Schrödinger, who along with Einstein would be amongst the extraordinary few to place alongside their four great predecessors Einstein listed, said that the whole of science came down to a single question, set out by the philosopher Plotinus in the 3rd century: "Who are we?"

So putting it all together, Orkney seemed right for a science festival, and the warm and enthusiastic support of so many people, in attending events, organising and managing them, providing sponsorship and resources and venues, and assisting in so many other ways, have all confirmed it time and again.

The Last Great Auk by Jocelyn Rendall

Lot 43 Great Auk. *Alca impennis* – A very fine specimen of this exceedingly rare bird, killed at Papa Westray, in Orkney, the only one taken on the British coast for many years, and an egg, in glass case. Dr Leach £16 5s 6d



In 1819 William Bullock, antiquary and naturalist, sold off his "museum of curiosities" in London and the Papay great auk ended its travels in the British Museum. Its collection had been a major achievement for Bullock; in the British Isles the bird survived only in very small numbers in St Kilda and the pair sighted at Fowl Craig on Papay for "several years" before the summer of 1813 were extremely rare visitors. George Low, on his travels in the North Isles in the 1770s, could find no-one who had ever seen one.

When Bullock came to Orkney on a collecting trip in the summer of 1812 he was told that the "King and Queen of the Hawks" (auks) had been seen in Papay. The female had been killed with a stone

while sitting on her egg but the male was still in the vicinity of Fowl Craig. Bullock "chased him for several hours unsuccessfully with a six-oared boat" and had to leave the island empty-handed, chagrined at being out-manoeuvred by a flightless bird. He left behind, however, a distinct impression of the value of a dead great auk, and when the solitary male returned to Fowl Craig in 1813 he had a price on his head.

Great auks could be caught with neolithic equipment, as their bones found at Knap of Howar testify, and the ease with which they could be clubbed to death on land had led to their extermination in their once-huge breeding colonies off Newfoundland. The lone survivor that found his way to Papay had learned wariness, however, and repeated attempts to approach close enough to capture or shoot it failed. It was William Foulis of Mayback who finally shot the bird from his fishing boat and Miss Traill of Holland had it skinned and sent the delighted Bullock his "fine specimen" of the last great auk seen in Orkney.

Decades later James Hourston of Whitelooms pointed out to the naturalist Harvie-Brown the cave where Foulis tracked down the auk "and when the King louped doon aff the shelve into the sea, there's whare he shotten him".

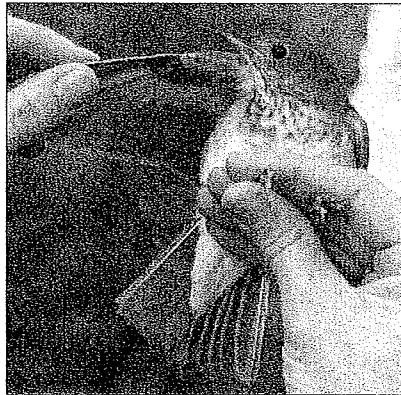
"With thanks to Erik Meek for directing me to T. E. Buckley and J. A. Harvie Brown: *A Vertebrate Fauna of the Orkney Islands* 1891." J. R.

Rare Birds Passing Through Orkney by Dr Kevin Woodbridge North Ronaldsay Bird Observatory

Increasing attention is being paid to the phenomenon of rare birds occurring in the UK, and the popular recreation of 'twitching' these birds is becoming synonymous in some peoples' minds with the more general hobby of bird watching and even professional ornithology. Of course, twitching has little to do with conservation or science, more to do with fast travel and lists, but it has helped to extend the frontiers of bird identification and widened interest in avian taxonomy.

Orkney residents, through the geographical position of the islands, are fortunate in that rare birds occur on their 'patch' far more frequently than in most other areas of the country. Migrating birds use geographical landmarks as an aid to navigation, and coastlines are one of the major features of the landscape that they follow. As a consequence, where the land ends, migrants make their landfall or gather before departing in high concentrations. Migrant watchers and Bird Observatories charged with monitoring migration are therefore also found at such sites, particularly on peninsulas such as Point Pelée in Canada on the north of the Great Lakes, Portland Bill in Dorset, or Spurn point on the north side of the Humber estuary.

The islands of Orkney and Shetland can be viewed as a broken peninsula of land at the very end of Britain, which acts as a funnel for coasting migrants and explains why the isolated, narrowest points at North Ronaldsay and Fair Isle are particularly favoured as concentration sites, though spectacular movements of birds can on occasion be viewed throughout the islands. Moreover, the islands are a veritable crossroads of migration, with birds regularly passing through on their way to and from their breeding grounds predominately in Fenno-Scandia, but also extending from Canada to Northern Asia, with winter destinations as far away as Africa and



The Veery
the Oriental (Rufous) Turtle Dove in Stromness last December, the Veery on North Ronaldsay in October, or the Siberian Blue Robin there in 2001!

And with this volume and variety of migration, the rarities are common! Not of course the really major national rarities, but we are so well off in that we can regularly expect to see exotic birds like Red-backed Shrike, Icterine Warbler, Common Rosefinch, Wryneck and numerous other species rarely seen elsewhere in Britain. As for the real glamour birds, hardly a year passes without the county producing something to fire up the twitchers' adrenalin and clog the transport system with those eager to see such extreme rarities as

World Heritage Status Lecture

—on Tuesday 27th May at 7.30pm in Orkney College

One of Orkney's major features, attracting visitors world-wide, is the proliferation of well-preserved monuments from each major period of the human past. Orkney Archaeological Trust plays an important part in the promotion of archaeology, which is greatly enhanced by the recognition of the "Heart of Neolithic Orkney" as being of World Heritage Status.

What does this mean? Who decides which sites merit it? Where are the other World Heritage sites? These questions and others will be answered on May 27th when Susan Denyer, from the International Council on Monuments and Sites, (ICOMOS) comes here to give an illustrated talk. Organised by the Friends of Orkney Archaeological Trust, it is open to all. A small charge will cover the cost of light refreshments.

In 2003 the UK group of ICOMOS is to hold its AGM in Orkney, together with a trip round the monuments of the World Heritage sites and a public seminar on ritual landscapes. More details will be available nearer the time.
Caroline Wickham Jones.



The Marjorie Linklater Writing Award 2003 by A. J. Firth

Thirteen entries have been received for this year's competition, which is for a piece of poetry, being the candidates own choice of subject. The only stipulation is that it has to have some bearing on Orkney.

These have been judged by the Linklater family, the Chairman and the Rev. Ron Ferguson, to all of whom we are indebted.

The 2003 winner, by a close vote, is "*Kye at the Morning*" by Katy Chalmers of Kirkwall Grammar School. This poem shows excellent use of onomatopoeia.

There are three Highly Commended Entries:

"*Bryan*" by Katie Grant of Stromness Academy.

"*Grandmother's Gravy Salt*" by Karriz Rendall of Kirkwall Grammar School.

"*My Island*" by Rick Lidderdale of Kirkwall Grammar School.

Next year's Award will be for a piece of prose.

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Orkney Heritage Society

There is no Application for Membership Form attached this year as a completely new form is under consideration.

In the meantime, if anyone wishes to join, or members have any queries, please contact the Treasurer, Mr. Neil McCance, or the Membership Secretary, Mr. W. Groundwater. Their details are to be found in the list of Committee members inside the front cover.

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