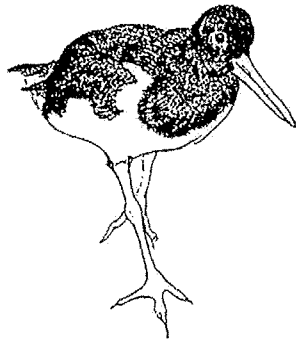


Orkney Heritage Society



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Printed by Herald Printshop, Kirkwall

Newsletter 2003/2004

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 2003-4

President	Mr. I. M. Heddle, Cletyan, Ireland Road, Stenness
Vice President	Mr. A. J. Firth, Edan, Berstane Road, Kirkwall
Chairman	Dr. W. Hamilton, Lyking Cottage, Sandwick Tel. 01856 841657
Vice Chairman	Mrs. A. Brundle Hillside School, Twatt, Orkney
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Front Cover: - Did you guess? It's Mrs. Daphne Lorimer just having received her M.B.E. at the Palace. Our congratulations to her!

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Editorial

What a superb year of fine weather we have enjoyed here on the Islands! For one of our Editors it was also a voyage into the almost unknown – changing from a much-used Word Processor to the use of E-mail and the intricacies of Microsoft Publishing on a newly installed computer. The construction of this Newsletter is one of the results and it is thanks to the patience, co-operation and constant advice and encouragement from a number of people that it has come to fruition at the usual time.

Our thanks go out to all those who have kindly given us their time in the writing of the articles. We think you will agree that the subject area is quite far ranging. We are always on the look out for new aspects. If you run a group, or society and would care to tell us about it we would love to hear from you. Our deadline date for next year's Newsletter is January 31st 2005.

Our deepest sympathy is sent to committee member Mrs. E. Thomson on the loss of her husband Jimmy, who was so well known in so many fields. He will be a big miss to the community as a whole.

Committee Meetings are missing the warm personality of Mrs. Daphne Lorimer, due to illness, but it is to be hoped that the warmer weather will see her back among us when she is able. Her happy face on our cover as she receives her well-deserved honour will cheer us all each time we look at it.

The book reviews and Tam's Tally show a wealth of talent both within and outwith Orkney that will keep us all reading for a long time. There are more to come throughout the year and the fourth volume of the Orkney Antiquarian Volume is already under way. The writing ability shown by the school children in the Ray Fereday and Marjorie Linklater Award schemes also bodes well for the future. Congratulations to them all.

It is dangerous to anticipate a summer as wonderful as the last two have been but hopefully we will all be actively enjoying it and not having quite such a quiet day as Richard Groundwater in the Falklands. (See P. 13.) Fare Well.

Iris Heddle & Hilda Firth.

Chairman's Report 2002-2003 by Bill Hamilton.

Currently the Society has 187 members of whom just over two thirds are life members. There have been some committee changes during the year. Phil Astley left Orkney to take up a post in Caithness and Bill Groundwater volunteered to take over his duties as Membership Secretary. Father Ken Nugent has been forced to give up committee work because of ill health and will not be standing for re-election.

In December the committee invited Sue Whitworth and Kathleen Ireland to make a presentation on the proposals for a Young Archaeologists Club in Orkney. The committee expressed its support and it is gratifying to note that the club has been successfully launched and is being enthusiastically supported.

In April Kim Foden attended a committee meeting to inform us about an event entitled "Coming Home" to be held in Orkney in September 2004. This involves a visit, during the Science Festival, by 25 First Nations people from Saskatchewan who will be performing dances, singing and telling stories. The committee has agreed to make a grant to assist this project.

Other grants have been made to AOP (Another Orkney Production) towards a video on the history of Scapa Flow and to the Whithorn Trust towards a memorial to the late Bill Cormack. Bill Cormack, whose obituary appeared in last year's Newsletter, co-edited the article on the Scandinavian Stave Calendar in volume 2 of the New Orkney Antiquarian Journal. The memorial will take the form of a maintenance endowment for the early mediaeval church site at Barhobble in Wigtownshire.

The proceedings of the 2001 Iron Age Conference were published in July 2003 in the form of a book entitled "SEA CHANGE: Orkney and Northern Europe in the Later Iron Age AD 300-800". The Society is grateful to the editors, Anna Ritchie and Jane Downes and also the publishers, Pinkfoot Press, for producing a very attractive volume, which has been much admired. In addition to the papers presented at the conference the book contains a lavishly illustrated section on the Minehowe Know How event. Publication was greatly aided by grants from various bodies, OIC, Historic Scotland, National Museums of Scotland, RCAHMS and in particular by a generous grant of £2,500 from the Strathmartine Trust. The book was launched at an event held in Orkney College in August.

Preparatory work on volume 3 of the New Orkney Antiquarian Journal has now been completed and it should be published by the time this newsletter goes out. Thanks are due to Willie Thomson for the effort and energy he has put into editing this work.

Finally the Society has continued to organise a number of recurring annual activities as reported elsewhere in this newsletter. I am grateful to the committee members who ensure their continuing success.

Obituary

Ian MacInnes
1922 – 2003

by Bryce Wilson



Ian MacInnes was a notable figure in Orkney life and culture throughout the second half of the 20th Century. As an educationalist, he made his mark both locally at Stromness Academy – where he served for many years as principal teacher of art and finally as headmaster – and nationally, on the committees of the Educational Institute of Scotland and the General Teaching Council.

An active and energetic socialist, he applied his beliefs to the founding of the Orkney Fishermen's Society, the co-operative which has supported the local fishing industry since the 1950's and gamely stood for parliament as Labour candidate against Jo Grimond in 1964. He was a leading Orkney participant in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

Ian served on the Stromness Town Council in the 1950's. At a time when the words "conservation" and "heritage" were not in common currency and concrete was God's gift to town planners, he succeeded in halting the replacement of flagstone street paving with concrete slabs – a first step in the journey which led to the town being designated a conservation area. He was a founder member of the Orkney Heritage Society and a leading member of the campaign that defeated Rio Tinto Zinc, saving Yesnaby - and Orkney - from the disastrous consequences of open cast uranium mining. He served for many years on the committee of Stromness Museum.

It is however as a painter and teacher that Ian MacInnes will be best remembered. In the days when Orkney artists were few and far between, Ian became a familiar figure with his easel on the cliffs of Yesnaby, the piers of Stromness and the shore of Rackwick: his landscapes and seascapes grace many homes in Orkney and farther afield. He was also a fine painter of portraits, to be seen in the studies of George Mackay Brown and Robert Rendall which hang in the school where by example he encouraged many young Orcadians to make a career in the visual arts.

Eureka! by Ray Fereday

When I edited and supplemented The Autobiography of Samuel Laing of Papdale 1780 1868 (Bellavista publications, 2000), I worked from a typescript copy of Laing's manuscript since the original had disappeared. In 2003 it turned up and the mystery was solved. The story runs as follows.

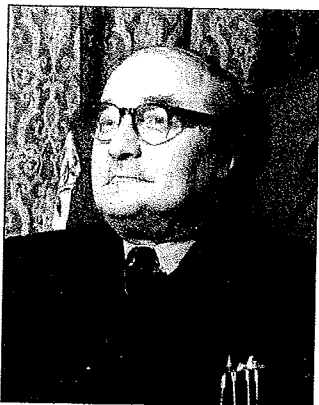
In the mid twentieth century the volume was in North Devon owned by Mrs. Mollie Somerset, who lent it to her cousin, Dr. M. J. Ingram, so that he could decipher the manuscript, have a typescript made and give carbon copies to relatives.

Forty years later, when I was asked to edit a copy of the 1957 typescript for publication, I enquired about the original manuscript, only to be told that it had disappeared. After Dr. Ingram's death his house had been cleared without the Laing manuscript having been discovered, so presumably he had returned it to Mrs. Mollie Somerset. I traced Mollie to a nursing home in Bampton, but her memory was quite gone. Sadly both her husband and their son were dead. A grandson and close friends said they had no knowledge of any handwritten book.

The solution of the mystery lay in the fact that Mollie had a daughter by a previous marriage, a daughter not very close to the Somerset family. When Mollie entered a nursing home in 1989 and her house was being cleared, the Daughter - Mrs. Annie Bricknell – came from afar to save a few family items, including a manuscript bound in green leather and eleven old letters. In 2003, Anne Bricknell was widowed and began to sort out papers that she might pass on to her three sons. She realised that the autobiography of Samuel Laing was of interest, but it was difficult to read and she knew little of his background. Seeking enlightenment she consulted her local librarian and discovered that the autobiography had been published in 2000, the text being based on a typed copy because the original manuscript had vanished long ago. Realising that she possessed the missing volume, she telephoned me.

I congratulated her on having preserved her ancestor's manuscript and eleven letters, then suggested that she might place them all in the care of the Orkney archivist. After talking to her sons, Anne Bricknell generously agreed to deposit the Laing autobiography and the letters in the Orkney Archives on indefinite loan. The letters proved to be of great interest. One was from Danish antiquaries to Samuel Laing in 1834, the other ten were from Charles James Fox, to Malcolm Laing in 1800 – 1804.

Memories of John D. Mackay – by Howie Firth



The final lecture of the Annual Orkney Science Festival has been traditionally dedicated to the memory of the late John D. Mackay. At the request of the editors and for the benefit of those who may wonder why if they never had the good fortune to meet him, Howie Firth has kindly written this revealing character sketch of the outstanding man..

I remember so well my first meeting with John D. Mackay. I was in my early teens, and the world seemed to be divided into two modes. One was study, which I enjoyed but which sometimes seemed to taper off into bleak areas – for instance I liked modern French novelists, but after too much Sartre and Camus I felt the greyness of their worldview washing over me. And on the other hand, there was life itself, with all its humour and adventure; something to enjoy – but what was it all about at its deeper levels?

Amongst the joys that life offered was to open *The Orcadian* or the *Orkney Herald* and read the letters of John D. Mackay. And what letters! Not the dreary sounding-offs that you sometimes find today, but elegantly crafted masterpieces, to read out aloud like the addresses of Gerard Hoffnung to the Oxford Union. Subjects ranged from nuclear weapons to the new Papay pier, from Third World poverty to North Isles development; they combined incisive thinking with glorious humour, philosophy with island anecdotes; and I often used to wonder who the writer could be. Then one day my father, who travelled round the islands as an optician and knew many people, asked if I would like to meet the man himself, the almost legendary occupant of the Sanday Central Schoolhouse. And so he came to stay with us, and I can remember that first evening so clearly. Other visitors might talk about the news or the weather; John D. took us on an enchanted journey through many worlds. Sometimes we would be in Sanday, joining local discussions; at other times, in Papay, visiting the ancient archaeological sites; then we were in the Mediterranean, in a distant time, to meet the Battle Axe people who brought bronze north; and

eventually on to the far future, seeing the new level to which humanity could evolve, in the vision of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

In an evening the light had been lit; a bridge had been built between the worlds of study and of life. John D. brought the life and humour of the day-to-day world to intellectual ideas; so that the ideas were not grey and abstract, but real and alive; and the ideas provided substance and understanding to daily issues.

This ability to link the two worlds, of abstract ideas and daily life, is something that has to go back a very long way. For those abstract ideas originally came out of everyday events, in the Ice Age hunting band or amongst the Neolithic star-watchers, with the problems of food or shelter providing a stimulus to abstract thought, and intellectual ideas providing a resource towards practical solutions. And there were times listening to John when you felt that you were in touch with the thinking of a much older era. And he was there when Orkney needed him, back in 1967 when the future looked so dark. Government amalgamations had put the future of Orkney's local government – indeed Orkney's very identity – in jeopardy. Then came an April Fool's Day exchange of messages between diplomats about a possible return of Orkney to Norwegian or Danish rule; they shared the joke together, but in the Sanday Schoolhouse a gleam of light had been seen in the gathering gloom. John had worked out that the only way to get attention for Orkney was to develop a campaign providing enjoyment for the media – and irritation for the government. So began his classic letter to *The Orcadian*, making the case for a return to Denmark, showing how all the problems of government bureaucracy and lack of development would be solved at a stroke. The national media took it up, journalists went out to Sanday to find out the story, and took photographs of the man himself, accompanied by his cat (who was rather providentially named Ho Chi Minh).

And the political parties responded, and when Edward Heath was elected in 1970 he kept his word and gave Orkney its own 'most-purpose' authority in the new local government system.

John wasn't old when he died, and I often think how good it would have been if he could have lived longer, to see the developments towards a university in the north, the birth of the renewable energy industry, and the arrival of a radio station and a new newspaper and a science festival established to promote ideas in the way that he did so well. But then I think that our universe is so rich and diverse that in some far corner of it a group of philosophers will be gathered, talking of nature and life and politics; and then I can see a well-known face there with them, opening up the discussion with a warm glow; at home amongst the immortals.

Boreus Domus, Mare Amicus -
The North Wind our Home, the Sea Our Friend.
By Willie Groat



The Latin motto refers to the Isles of Orkney, located at the confluence of the Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea, a staging post for seafarers between Europe and America. Stories of bizarre sightings on the high seas are not new – ghost ships, monsters, sirens, islands that disappear, floating banks....Floating banks? Surely not! But in May 1962 the National Commercial Bank, now

amalgamated with the Royal Bank, launched the first floating bank, to serve their customers in the North Isles of Orkney.

For skipper we chose a native of Sanday, Captain David Irvine, who as a boy had sailed on his father's ketch and was familiar with the Isles. For me there could be no escape from that clarion call to crew the boat, for had I not been baptised with salt water, had I not fished for cod in the Pentland Firth.

In my new role as floating banker, I recorded on ciné some of the salient features with a suggestion that here was sufficient material to make a new film depicting our range of services. This was taken up by the Head office who enlisted Spectator Films, London. The resulting film, "Bank Ahead", received Oscar's in London, New York and Vienna. That success proved to be the Swansong of the boat, as the bank had acquired its own Airline, Loganair, and our time of travel to the islands was reduced from hours to minutes.

With such favourable publicity, "Otter Bank" was a much sought after craft and eventually ended up alongside the wharf at Prescott, Lancashire, there to be admired by her new owner, Captain Colin Butterworth, and his wife and family. Also on the quayside was a young lady newspaper reporter, complete with notepad, but the last thing Colin wanted was publicity, for he had just discovered a secret steel safe behind an innocent looking mahogany door. "Perhaps the previous owners had been using it for illicit purposes." "Not at all," said the young lady, "That was a floating bank up in the Orkneys, my father helped to make the award-winning film, "Bank Ahead" in the 1960's."

-And so the "Otter Bank" continues to be in popular demand for further epic films, whenever she can be spared by the Butterworth Family.

Origins of Loganair & the Islander by John Firth

The Islander/Loganair story has many roots, but it started in Orkney. In the early 1960s, a major Orkney Tory objective was the restoration of the Air Ambulance service. This had been set-up by Capt Fresson with local support in the 1930s and abolished by Labour's nationalization of the airlines after WWII. One problem was a suitable aircraft to replace the de Havilland Dragon and Dragon Rapides which Fresson and his colleagues had used with such success.

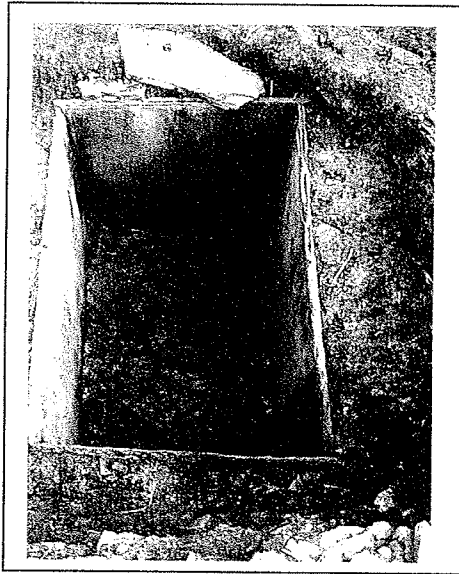
Bill Logan (son of William Logan), based in Muir of Ord, Ross-shire, was trying to build the Tay road bridge. The unions were determined to stop him. Duncan MacIntosh, former chief test pilot on the Miles M.100 Student programme for the RAF Basic Trainer Contract (which went to the Jet Provost), repeatedly had to fly in welders from the Muir to Dundee Riverside to keep the work on the bridge going. For this purpose Logan had a twin-engined Piper Aztec and a single-engined Piper Tri-Pacer based at Turnhouse, Edinburgh.

I was involved in the Air Ambulance campaign, having learned to fly at Oxford. As a newly-qualified Houseman at St Thomas's Hospital in London, subject to availability, the Tri-Pacer was used with the BEA London-Edinburgh Shuttle to get home at weekends and back for Monday morning rounds. It did not take long for me to realise that survival, flying light aircraft around Orkney and Shetland, all-year in all weathers, required greater flying skills than those of a PPL, Private Pilot's Licence. Taffy Taylor, who had set up the team which became the Red Arrows suggested that I join the Tiger Club at Redhill and learn to fly 'properly' – that is aerobically.

Over the tea kettle at the back of the Redhill hangar I met two other Tiger Club members, John Britten and Des Norman. Their air operations in West Africa were compromised by the non-availability of more Rapides or a similar appropriate replacement aircraft. Difficult men to defeat, they had designed the aircraft they wanted. Their problem was that the banks would not give them a loan to build it unless they had a firm order from someone else. Sketching the aircraft on the back of a brown envelope, it seemed that this was the ideal aircraft for the Air Ambulance in Orkney and just what Logan and MacIntosh required to supplement or replace the Aztec on the Tay Bridge operation.

Armed with the envelope I suggested this to Duncan. The bridge would get a tailor-made, cheap and rugged aircraft. When the bridge was finished there would be business for it in the North. Jokingly, we could start an airline (one of Duncan's ambitions): could even call it 'Loganair' to flatter the boss. It took the time for Bill Logan to find ink and chequebook to get John & Des their order. With it they went to the bank and the rest is history.

The Kist at Nether Onston by Iris Heddle



Late in the summer of 2002 a field of barley at Nether Onston, Stenness, was being harvested. Suddenly the combine lurched. On investigation Ronnie Wishart realised that the big wheel had broken through some large slabs and was resting over a void. He says that he felt no surprise for he had always suspected something man-made about the landscape of that part of the field. Apart from moving the combine away he left the area alone and got in touch with Peter Leith. He came round to view it and then phoned his daughter, Anne Brundle, at the Orkney Museum. Julie Gibson and Jane Downes came the following day to identify it as a stone lined kist. They took great care to protect it from further deterioration.

Beverley Ballin-Smith & Gert Peterson did the actual excavating over the next three or four days with the aid of several friends and relations of the Wisharts who helped in whichever capacity was required. The mound was checked with the aid of geo-physics but nothing else of archaeological significance was found.

The report, written by Beverley, describes the construction of the kist as a "fine piece of workmanship. The dovetailing of the wings and notches in the stone is quite unusual. The stones are good quality flagstone, although thin...." Although the kist was empty it had been used to hold human remains. There was no evidence of cremation or grave goods. The slabs used to roof the kist had been only about fourteen inches below the surface and had been weathered enough to have become friable.

Margaret and Ronnie were asked, at the end of the dig, if they would like it all back-filled but they decided that it would be a pity – as the work was of such good quality. It has now been fenced off and has a protective covering as a temporary measure. They hope to build a good dry stone wall around it and cover it with a see-through lid - possibly hinged.

Beverley acknowledges in her report that "without Ronnie and Margaret Wishart of Nether Onston the work would not have been possible. They provided the team with unparalleled hospitality and help, and through them, their friends and relatives, the job was completed on time."

[This article was written after an interview with Ronnie Wishart.Ed.]

My Introduction to Amateur Archaeology by Carole Hoey

Who would have thought that standing at the kitchen sink could lead to such an adventure? But it did. On that particular day, I glanced up occasionally from preparing the vegetables to watch a plough passing up and down the Tait's field. A change of tone in the tractor engine caused me to glance out yet again and I watched, transfixed, as the plough was lifted, complete with a large rectangular stone slab firmly lodged between its discs and blades. With great difficulty, the slab was removed from the plough and laid to one side.

Later that afternoon I saw Arnie Tait walking the field and told him what I had witnessed. He went over to the stone and noticed that it had indentations along one of its lengths. He decided that it warranted further investigation and so contacted the archaeologists.

The next piece of excitement was a few days later, when Julie Gibson appeared in the field with a man carrying a set of dowsing rods. They were hoping to find the place from which the stone had originated as it was assumed to be the lid of a kist which had been dislodged by the plough. A very strong signal was detected and the place marked. I was asked if I wanted to try to dowse and to my joy and amazement, the rods swung wildly in the same area.

Some few days later, Beverley Ballin Smith and Gert Petersen from Glasgow University were commissioned to investigate the site. I introduced myself to them and could barely contain my excitement when they asked if I wanted to help them with the dig.

What emotions did I experience during that dig? Sheer terror, that in my inexperience I might do more harm than good? I need not have worried. Beverley and Gert were good teachers and they kept a very close eye on me. Excitement as we started excavating in the place indicated by the dowsing markers, to discover stonework below it? Amazement, as what looked like two large concentric walls were revealed? This was no kist! Awe as internal angled walls within the structure caused Beverley and Gert to speculate that we had uncovered a dwelling similar to one of the Barnhouse dwellings? Humility as I realised that I was the first person in thousands of years to set eyes on the part of the structure that my trowel was uncovering? The experience was all of the above and much, much more. Not least of the emotions was an almost unbearable sense of loss and sadness when the dig was concluded and my first experience as an amateur archaeologist was finished.

Renovation of *Kingshouse*, Hoy by Katie Holmes



My mother was born in Hoy, and many happy childhood holidays there filled me with a love of the island. In November 2001, I was lucky enough to purchase Kingshouse, a small quarried stone cottage nestling at the foot of Ward Hill, with panoramic views over Scapa Flow.

It had been unoccupied for several years and was in a very sorry state. The leaky front porch was added to house a chemical toilet. The original But and Ben had two rooms with wood clad ceilings, back to back box beds and a small scullery, electricity and one tap supplying water from the hill.

I was assisted in my renovations by three Johns; "Geriatric John" –husband-who created all the design drawings, outside drainage and whom I'll keep occupied for years with wall and path building; "John the Builder" a master craftsman and "John the Joiner" without whose massive appetite for work and happy disposition I don't think I could have completed the project. I was co-ordinator, painter, plasterer, gardener, curtain maker and jack-of-all-trades, the most complicated of which was organising the transport of materials to Hoy. At times towing huge loads along single track roads was a costly, nerve-wracking experience.

In April 2002, "John the Builder" and I started chipping off all the plaster, both inside and outside the house and then re-pointing the stone. We have left the inside walls in stone, opened all the old fireplaces and re-instated fire surrounds found exposed to the elements in the outhouse. Two outside walls facing the road are also in the original stone, but due to its porous nature, we have had to wet dash the rest. The back extension built on the site of the original outhouses was started in late June and completed by September. It has a big kitchen with exposed beams, bathroom and large store cupboard. We also built a septic tank and were connected to the mains water supply. Work then almost halted due to transport problems in winter timetables, but restarted in April 2003 with the demolition and rebuilding of the porch.

Here "John the Builder's" skills shone in the use of old stone from the outhouses in the new gable wall, sills and lintels to match the old cottage. We were fortunate to obtain old Welsh slate from the 'Highland Park' to entirely re-place the Caithness slate roof. With "John the Builder's" skilful use of box-beds, wood clad ceilings etc. the old atmosphere of the cottage is well retained.

It now has a pitched roof and gable to match in with the nearby church and old school, now the Hoy Outdoor Centre. On hearing that they were to build the Hoy Hostel, a previous occupant was heard to remark that her neighbours would then be Salvation, Education and Damnation. Hopefully I'll soon be able to lie on my chaise-longue with only one thought - "Relaxation!"



A Quiet Day at M.P.A. by Richard Groundwater (Duty Forecaster)

The Falkland Islands, in the south Atlantic, lie some 550 kilometres to the east of southern Argentina and are centred near 52 degrees South and 59 degrees west. Mount Pleasant Airfield is situated on East Falkland, about 35 miles west of Stanley and 3 miles north of Mare Harbour and is a purpose built facility constructed 'to deter military aggression' soon after the conflict in 1982. Army, RN, RAF, RFA and seconded civilian personnel work together throughout the islands. I volunteered for my second tour to MPA in order to get away from the Aberdeen winter and do some fly-fishing.

This particular April morning I was up at 0630. Looking north from my room I could see the first rays of the morning sun on Wickham Heights. The sky was gin clear. After breakfast the day shift team drove the four miles around the airfield perimeter to the Met Office.

At 0730 Steve, the night shift forecaster, was pleased to see me although he still had an hour and a half of morning briefings to attend to. The hand over was straightforward. There were no warnings in operation, flying conditions were good as reflected in his current TAF (Terminal Airport Forecast, in international code), the only concern was the outlook for the evening and night. "There's a small swirl of cloud showing on the 'sat pic' which will need watching but it's well to the southwest – so a quiet day for you." With that Steve was away to brief the squadrons.

Dave, my duty observer, got on with the routine jobs and prepared a radio sonde for launch at 1100 GMT. I started my analysis. To snow or not to snow tonight, that was the question. The satellite takes one hour and 43 minutes to orbit and the next 'pass' would be straight overhead. A very clear signal and a perfect set of infrared and visible images were received. The cusp of cloud had moved towards MPA at around 25 knots. That gave me a fix of 1900 hours this evening so that the next TAF contained some snow showers and the appropriate warnings issued to the 'blacktop team'. The day passed quietly as we watched the cirrus cloud thickening from the south.

Returning to the mess in the evening the headlights picked up the first flurry as we crested the ridge.

"It's 15 minutes early," said Dave. I replied, "That's fine by me. We'll pick up the pieces tomorrow."

The Fereday Prize 2004 by Sheena Wenham

Pupils in their second year at Stromness Academy once again deserve our congratulations for producing some outstanding pieces of original research that reflect different aspects of the past in Orkney. Some of the entries contain information that might otherwise go unrecorded and the best will be photocopied to form a record for the Archive Department at the library.

The standard of work this year would hearten Ray Fereday, former head of the history department at Kirkwall Grammar school, who set up the prize to encourage pupils to research and record different aspects of their heritage in Orkney.

The Winner - Burness: Past and Present by Sigurd Stevenson was an outstanding piece of work, detailing the history of both a farm and its occupants over the last couple of centuries. The piece was thoroughly well researched, mainly from older family members, and presents much factual material which might otherwise go unrecorded.

Second - Pill Boxes in Orkney by Andy Ross. This project contains material that, so far, has gone unrecorded. The author has done the fieldwork himself, visiting various sites and taking photographs to illustrate his points. He even found one hitherto unrecorded site. This original material will become of future value for reference.

Joint third - The History of my Family in Hullion by Rhona Norquoy gives us an insight into everyday life in the past in Rousay. The research is mainly derived from older family members. **The Secret Society of Horsemen in Orkney** by John Davidson who did well to extract information from anonymous sources about a lost cult which has now vanished in its original form.

Very Highly Commended The Northern Lighthouse Board in Stromness by Laura Manson, Boat Building in Stromness by Ewan Johnstone, The History of Robertsons Orkney Fudge by Caro Stockan, Living Memories of Skail by Kate Jenkins, Robert Rendall by Alison Breck, Copinsay by Hetty Jenkins, Weather-Eye on Orkney: Ian MacInnes by Phemie Mathieson, A Woman of Substance by Emma Grieve, Orkney West Mainland Agricultural Society by Shona Kemp, BBC Radio Orkney by Caron Oag, The History of Rendall by Carrie Stevenson, A Traditional Orcadian Wedding by Natalie Flett, The Stevensons of the Bu by Nadine Headley, Dr John Rae by Vashti Mayborne, A Brief History of Orkney Trees by Alex Pendrey.

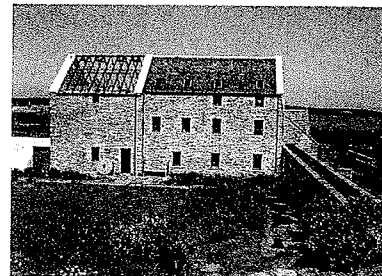
Highly Commended Fishing in Orkney by William Clouston, The Churchill Barriers by Roseanne Drever, James Flett & Sons by Ruth Flett, The Garson Trio by Gemma Garson, Auld Times in Orkney by Kirsty Grieve, Brough through the Ages by Averil Marwick, The Orkney Pirate by Joseph Miller, The Way it Was by Katrina Pottinger, The St Olas by Catherine Ritchie, Sandwich at War (1939-45) by Laura Stanger, The Orphir Junior Secondary School by Kerri Thomson, The History of the Orcadian by John Wallace.

Commended certificates were awarded to a further fourteen entrants.

The Laura Grimond Award 2003 by Ian M. Heddle

When the awards began in 1999, we had nine entries for the five years since Laura died. The results were well received, but we had been feeling our way somewhat and various suggestions from our judges helped us to use a better routine. In 2001 we had eleven entries with similar pleasing results. In 2003, we had nearly twenty applications, but we felt that some of them had been submitted too early. I contacted each entrant asking if all ground-works and surroundings were completed, pointing out that any lovely building would be judged lower if surrounded by rubbish or unkempt gardens. As a result of my enquiries, five or six were thought to be more suitable for 2005 and I have retained all applications for the next time round. It was very obvious that the 2003 entries included works of the finest possible quality and the Orkney Heritage Society must feel very happy that the form, which the awards now take, meets with general local acclaim. In Westray - the Trenabie Mill, in Finstown - the New School, in Sandwich - the Skail Kirk, in Harray - the Russland Mill were all popular choices with the local people. It is my firm belief that the Laura Grimond Awards are now having a beneficial effect on the way that people think about restoration and the design of new construction. Our judges all say that they enjoy being involved and the Orkney Heritage Society is very grateful for the care they take in their task.

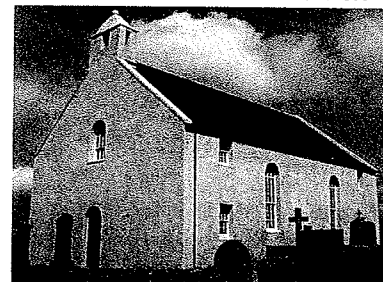
Trenabie Mill - Westray



Firth School - Finstown

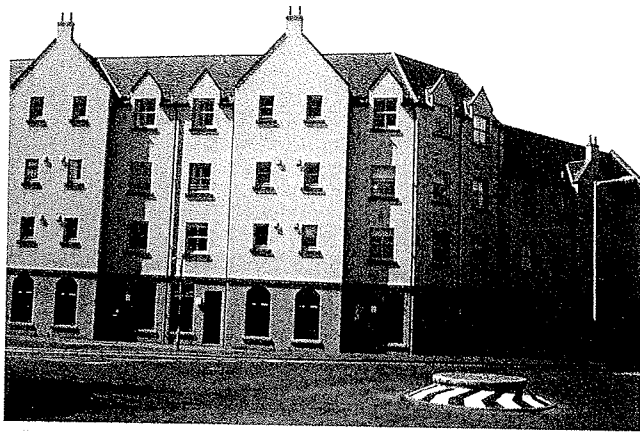


Skail Church - Sandwich



Russland Mill - Harray

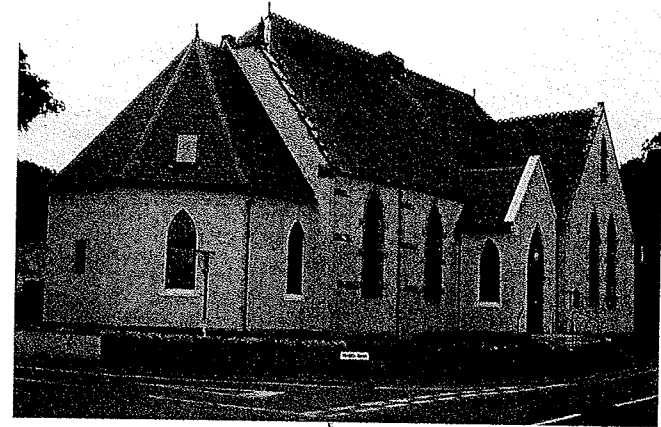




Laura Grimond Awards

← Kiln Corner Flats - Kirkwall

Firth Church - Finstown →



← The Slap - Burray

Summerhouse, Eunson Kloss
- Kirkwall →



← Newhouse, Newbiggin -
Burray

R.N.L.I. Branch H.Q.
- Stromness →



Laura Grimond Entries 2003 – 4



Community Centre
Harray

Sands Motel, Burray



Bis Geos Holiday Cottages- Westray



The Marjorie Linklater Writing Awards 2004 by Sandy Firth

2004 sees a return to the submission of a piece of prose. As usual the candidates chose their own subject with the proviso that the work has to have some bearing on, or connection with, Orkney.

Subject to a panel of three judges with a set marking scheme the results were:-

1st. Place: “Dons” by Harry Giles of Kirkwall Grammar School.

Because of the close marking in the rest of the field it has been decided to award both **Highly Commended** and **Commended** awards as follows:

From **Stromness Academy**:

Highly Commended: “The Harraymen’s Graves” by Ben Chaddock.

“ “ “The Memorial” by Ian Ritch.

Commended: “Changed Days” by Darren Kirkness.

“ “By the Power” by Karen Garrioch

“ “Oglaby” by Hannah Wilson.

From **Kirkwall Grammar School**:

Highly Commended: “The Hoose of the Famous Poet” by Karlie Robinson.

Commended: “True North” by Hannah Beaven.

Orkney Heritage Society congratulate the winners.

Magnus Linklater, in a letter, says that he was delighted with the standard of entry.

Firth School - Finstown

by **Hilda Firth**, based on information from **John Moar**, Headmaster.

There have been many awards won by this school in recent years, so I asked Mr. Moar for some details. He told me that as it was so close to the sea, near a tidal basin, moors, and woods and surrounded by fields, it was an ideal location for any environmental studies involving children, parents and local people.

A wonderful windfall occurred when a farmer who owned a landfill site found that if he paid part of his taxes into a particular charity, it would hand most of it back to the school. With this start, equipment was bought to enable the setting up of a website with an environmental focus. Through the Millennium Forest scheme, a second website was built, devoted to the study of trees, followed by a third website set up to assist the Biodiversity Officer to publicise conservation work done in schools. A different school sent in reports monthly which were put on the web to exchange ideas with schools worldwide.

With the co-operation of parents, 2000 trees were planted - one for every year of the millennium as a shelter belt round the grounds with a belt of local trees within it, with intent to create food and shelter for birds and other wildlife. A "Learning Path" or educational path was an idea adopted from a Belgian school, taking the form of a raised wooden path with a lip for the help of wheelchair users. Also with wheelchair space, there is a bird hide, from which the children have spotted hares amongst other wildlife and also seals in the bay. The school co-operated in a local community scheme to build a pathway round the tidal basin. which might in future join up with the school path.

To promote ideas for a cleaner environment, £1000 of school funds was used to start building an aerogenerator. With enormous help from the Energy Efficiency Centre this was completed and used to power tape players and lights in the school. When it became necessary to build a new school in the grounds of the old, it was based as far as possible on the old one - see photo on page 15. For the opening, the children wrote two poems which were set to music by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and an eye-catching work in felt was commissioned by a local artist.

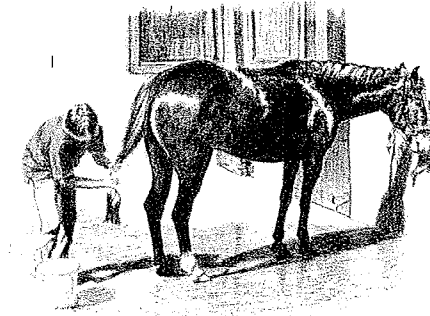
With all projects, visits to places were made to see how their ideas applied to real life. Ambitious schemes exist far into the future to plough the field round the new school using traditional methods; get the children to form a company to buy seed; plant black oats and other crops needed in local crafts; get tuition in these crafts and possibly sell finished products at craft shows or even surplus crops to craftsmen.

Horse Management Courses

by **Iris Heddle** - based on an interview with **Diane Walker**.

The North Highland College, based in Thurso, has recently introduced a flexible learning equestrian course to its long-standing portfolio of horse management courses. These are being delivered throughout Scotland by recognised professionals. The tutor for Orkney is Diane Walker.

[Drawing: Diane grooming at her base in Bracke House, Stenness]



Her students are aged from sixteen upwards – although a small number of fifteen year olds have been included after they had obtained special permission from the College. The meetings are on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings and Wednesday and Friday mornings. Each student chooses to attend either once a

week or fortnightly but they are all so keen that they always choose the former. There are between six and ten students in each class and each session lasts for two hours. The work is done in twelve modules - two of which are entirely practical. All the others also contain theory with oral and closed book tests. Written assignments are set as work at home and Diane marks these before they are sent off to the College for verification.

The syllabus includes: handling of horses; stable routine; horse health; care of the horse foot and basic care of horses at grass; watering and feeding stabled horses; horse clothing; transportation; lunging and long-reining; grooming and care of the stable-kept horse; saddling and harnessing; equitation 1 and equitation 2. For these last two the tutor and students go to Thurso where the horses are used to being ridden by students.

To obtain the National Certificate for basic horse management the student has to pass in ten modules and these must include the lunging and long reining.

The course is proving to be extremely popular in Orkney and is being enjoyed by horse, pony and non-owners alike. Since April 2002 eighty-three students have taken part in the course and many an equine friend must bless the day it started.

Orkney Countryside Committee by Alistair Tulloch

Starting off with the Committee's meeting last November, Mrs. Christine Skene gave us an update on the Access strategy and the Core Path Network. She provided details of the public meetings that she had been attending around the parishes and islands and the results of questionnaire surveys of both residents and visitors. Kate Barrett also gave an account of her meeting with a representative from the Scottish Rights of Way Society.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Bill was approved by the Scottish Parliament in January 2003. At the meeting in March it was Chris Skene again who took the Committee through various aspects of the Bill. It was emphasised that although it was now approved, the legislation would still not come into effect until some time in 2004. A Scottish Countryside Access Code, prepared by Scottish National Heritage, has yet to be approved. Chris also presented some procedures which have been suggested for dealing with disputes regarding access.

We met again in April to discuss the Outdoor Access Code when Ms Julia Partridge from SNH gave us a presentation on the proposals. Debate revolved around four generalised questions posed by SNH. The opinion was that the Code was a good first attempt but required more detailed discussion at the next meeting in June. Twenty-four specific issues were then covered and the outcome submitted to the SNH. The representative from the SWRI pointed out that considering Orkney's unique position in this situation there was a need for more specific advice regarding safety, liability and ways of keeping the pastures disease free. A consultation paper had been produced by SNH suggesting ways that a National Access Forum for Scotland could work along with local access forums and liaise directly when and where necessary.

Mr Roddy Mackay of OIC met with us to discuss a Minerals Strategy for Orkney. He pointed out that the Council are legally responsible for the control of mineral extraction here. He detailed the main purposes of such a strategy and these were then gone through, at considerable length, showing how each might affect Orkney. Sand, hard rock, flagstone, peat and any other metal or other specialised minerals, even oil, would all come under their remit. Mineral extraction would be kept to a necessary minimum whilst still meeting the reasonable needs of the construction industry. Included would be the protection of special sites and encouragement of high quality progressive restoration of worked areas after the extraction of the minerals. Recycling materials such as building stone and construction waste is also important. The strategy would have to ensure that, within the appropriate regulatory framework, the traditional rights of communities are respected. Setting out a development control criteria and yet trying to foresee the mineral demands that might arise, e.g. the proposed Trans Shipment Port at Flotta, is going to be rather difficult.

Other issues, such as the SNH Discussion Paper of Scotland's Future Landscapes, Towards a Planning Framework for Renewable Energy Developments, and Biodiversity of Isles Roads' Verges – Outcome of Study, are all pertinent material at our meetings.

Finance Report 2002 / 20003 by Neil McCance

At the A.G.M. the Treasurer presented the Statement of Income and Expenditure for the year 1st Aug.2002 to 31st August 2003. He hoped that it was self explanatory but drew Members' attention to the following points / transactions;

Opening Balances £53, 263

Closing Balances £55, 502

Again a major source of income was interest/receipts from bank and building society totalling £2,869. Of this total £1,440 was received from the Abbey National's £27,000 Charities Bond.

When the Journal Account was closed on the departure of Phil Astley, the balance of £3,730 was transferred to the main account from where it will be operated in future. Income of £633 was generated by the St. Boniface Kirk Restoration Fund through sales and donations. Sales and grants towards the publication of the proceedings of the "Sea Change" Conference totalled £3,775.

The combined insurance premium for OHS and OAT was £1,297 of which the Society's share was £519. Publication costs for the Conference publication were £4,962 but it is anticipated that the gap will be considerably closed by the continuing sale of the stock of books still held. A £1,000 study grant was made during the year. £433 was expended on miscellaneous grants and prizes. Other expenses were in line with previous years.

CHARITABLE GIVING THROUGH THE SELF-ASSESSMENT TAX RETURN

In future, Members taxed through SA can make donations of tax repayments to the Society by quoting the unique code RAL42AG. This method of giving to charity will only be available on Self-Assessment returns from next year i.e. the returns for 2003 / 2004 issued in April 2004.

This new scheme does NOT replace the existing Gift Aid scheme.



Late News

The Society congratulates
Sir Peter Maxwell-Davies
on his appointment as
Master of the Queen's Music.
May he enjoy the next ten years.

ORKNEY HERITAGE SOCIETY
EYNHALLOW TRIP 2004

Subject to weather conditions, this Year's Eynhallow Trip will take place on Saturday 3rd 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 19th 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.

As usual an archaeologist will be there to give a talk on the ruined chapel. An R.S.P.B. representative has been invited by the society to discuss the varied bird population.

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

NOTE: - Tickets are in two parts. The outward half is handed over on boarding at Tingwall. The return half is handed over when boarding at Eynhallow.

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

There are no refunds unless the trip is cancelled by the society.

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

or c/o Mr. Bryan Clark
Tel (01856) 872659

Tam's Tally of Orkney Books 2004

Available at Stromness Books & Prints 1, Graham Place, Stromness

Orkney Family Names	Gregor Lamb	Bellavista	14.95
The Orkney Book	Donald Omand	Birlinn	25.00
A Creek to a Haven	Capt. R.L. Sutherland	Orkney Fisherman's Society	7.00
Profit Not Loss	Bryce Wilson	Orkney Heritage	8.50
Fine That	Julia Welstead	Treb Publishing	14.99
Orkney Poll Taxes – 1690's	James Irvine	Orcadian	9.95
The Shore & Roond About	Dave Tinch	Orcadian	13.99
North Atlantic Front	James Miller	Birlinn	20.00
Orkney Dictionary (Reprint)	Gregor Lamb & Margaret Flaws	O.I.C	9.99
Orkney Bird Report 2002	Ed. Jim Williams	Orkney Bird Report	6.00
Cruise of the Betsey	Hugh Miller	Nat. Museums Scotland	20.00
White Head Hunter	Nigel Randell	Constable	14.99
Shipwrecks of the North of Scotland	R. N. Baird	Birlinn	25.00
Reluctant Reformation Of Clarence McGonigall	Ron Ferguson	Savage Publishers	5.99
Fear & Loathing in Lochgelly	Ron Ferguson	Famedram	9.99
Sea Change: Orkney & N. Europe in Later Iron Age	Ed. Anna Ritchie	Pink Foot Press	18.50
Stones, Skalds & Saints	Ed. Doreen Waugh	Scottish Soc. for Northern Studies	14.00
Undelivered Letters to Hudson's Bay co. Men 1830 – 57		University of British Columbia	17.95
Towers in the North: Brochs of Scotland		Tempus	15.99
New Orkney Antiquarian Journal Vol. 3	Ed. W. Thomson	Orkney Heritage Society	12.00

A review of The New Orkney Antiquarian Journal Vol. 3.
by **Sandy Firth.**

Jointly published by Orkney Heritage Society and Orkney Archaeological Trust Vol. 3 matches its predecessors in shape and size. Edited by Dr. W.P.L. Thomson we find information on our Heritage in a series of diverse and fascinating papers.

The list of contributors speaks for itself, we have: Colleen Batey of the University of Glasgow, an expert in Icelandic archaeology; Paul G. Johnson, now working with Northern Archaeological Associates at Barnard Castle; The late Evan MacGillivray, First Museums Officer and County Librarian, an Orcadian dedicated to making fellow islanders aware of their Heritage and place in European history; Brian Smith well known Shetland Archivist and author; and Paul Newman an Architect and former Lecturer at Edinburgh University who has made Vernacular building an interest and hobby, with special reference to Orkney farm buildings and their roofs.

Brian Smith's opening 'Holy Moses!' brings alive the relationship between A. W. Johnston, J. Storer Clouston and Hugh Marwick. All of whom made major contributions to the understanding of Medieval Orkney. We are shown three scholars who argued and squabbled over Medieval Orkney and how they thought the few strands of existing information should be interpreted. The title comes from a letter to Hugh Marwick, which shows just how acrimonious feelings could get at times. Each left valuable building blocks in the uncovering of our turbulent past. Smith's summing up is a masterpiece of innuendo.

In an important paper on the Earl's Bu in Orphir, Colleen Batey, using extensive illustrations and sketches, lays a foundation for future research of this complex site. She collates two centuries of records and fragmentary articles previously almost impossible to understand. This is complemented by introducing the extensive work of Paul Johnson, whose Geophysical survey of the site maps out and explains those areas in need of exploration.

Evan MacGillivray's "Before Orkney Heritage Society" covers such diverse subjects as the restoration of Tankerness House; the founding of the County Library; Archive; Museum; the saving of the Palace Road houses; St. Olaf's church Archway; Spence's Square and the Earl's Palace in Birsay - a case of "The right man in the right place at the right time".

The concluding paper, by Paul Newman, deals with old Orkney farm buildings and roofs. His sketches and pictures show in detail the fascinating history of rapidly vanishing methods and how far we have come since the buildings of our grandfather's day.

This book should find space in Orcadian bookshelves. **CORRIGENDA**

26 P.26.) In 'The New Orkney Antiquarian Journal' review it states that Evan MacGillivray was the first 'Museums Officer' this is not the case. He lived in Tankerness House, but remained County Librarian - on his retirement Bryce Wilson became first Museums Officer

Profit Not Loss. The Story of the Baikies of Tankerness by Bryce Wilson A Review by **Mrs. Sheena Wenham**

Around the middle of the sixteenth century Bishop Robert Reid built a number of church manses opposite St Magnus cathedral on land reclaimed from the Peerie sea. Later two of these were bought and combined by Archdeacon Gilbert Foulzie who had embraced the protestant religion at the Reformation and thus retained his job. The Foulzie family lived there throughout the turbulent years of the Stewart earldom, but eventually in 1642 James Baikie, laird of Tankerness, purchased the property and renamed it Tankerness House.

This engrossing book spans a period of three hundred years when merchant lairds dominated the social and economic life of Orkney, and it is not surprising that the Baikie family made this town house their main residence. After all, the buildings occupied a prime position from which to trade both locally and outwith Orkney and soon James Baikie's successful import/export business set the Baikie dynasty on a firm footing.

Bryce Wilson gives us a remarkable insight into the lives of the twelve lairds of Tankerness. Three hundred years of Orkney's history are brought alive by his vivid description of intriguing incidents and small details that combine to give us a real flavour of the times. In common with most leading families of the period, there are stories of disagreement and debt but, for the most part, the Baikies were popular men who made solid contributions to the community in which they lived. Three served as Provost of Kirkwall and one was briefly Member of Parliament. Others were gifted in the literary or musical fields and some had strong religious convictions. Several family members served abroad and Bryce Wilson gives a fascinating account of the life of Dr William Balfour Baikie who sailed up the Niger and was influential in the formation of Nigeria.

By the twentieth century the days of most Orkney estates were numbered. The Tankerness estate was no exception and soon after World War I Alfred Baikie began the process by which his estate farms were gradually sold off. Tankerness House itself was finally bought by Kirkwall Town Council in 1951 and the building eventually opened as Tankerness House museum in 1968.

This excellent publication is lavishly illustrated with photographs that complement the text. Bryce Wilson is to be congratulated on an informative and enjoyable book that is easy to read. It is highly recommended to all those who value Orkney's heritage.

P27.) In the review of 'Profit Not Loss' Published by Orkney Heritage Society' should read Published by Orkney Heritage.

A Review of James M. Irvine, *The Orkney Poll Taxes of the 1690s*,
2003 by **Willie Thomson**

The poll tax, which we remember, was the unsuccessful attempt by the Thatcher government to alter the way local government was financed. It was not the first occasion on which taxes were raised in this way: in the closing years of the 17th century national taxation was raised on the basis of a head count in order to pay for the expensive wars against the French.

Levying a poll tax requires the drawing up of lists of those liable to pay, and so the 1860's lists enumerate the adult population by name and residence. It is easy to appreciate what a valuable source this provides. The oldest list readily available to family historians has hitherto been the 1841 census, but the poll tax opens the prospect of adding another century-and-a-half to many people's family tree.

James Irvine's book transcribes these long and difficult 17th century documents and presents the material in a format which the family researcher can use without difficulty. His editorial task has not been an easy one: bureaucracy was still in its infancy, and so the way the poll tax lists were drawn up varied from parish to parish, with the result that a statistical comparison of parishes requires careful interpretation. There is the additional problem that the lists from several Orkney parishes failed to survive.

Besides their attraction to family historians the poll taxes are also invaluable for demographic studies and, although they have been already used in some parts of Scotland, the Orkney material has not previously been available. Before the first census we are on uncertain grounds even when trying to estimate the total Orkney population. Unfortunately, such are the pitfalls in the poll tax records that they do not provide a basis from which better estimates can be made. Some lists contain information about family members, household size, occupations, rent, and the number of paupers, and from these samples Captain Irvine provides tables analysing various aspects of social structure.

The 16th century Stewart earls have been the subject of detailed research, and there is no shortage of good 18th century studies. The 17th century is Orkney's neglected period, and so it is good to see a new source made available which makes a major contribution to the study of this period.

Published by *The Orcadian*.

A review by John Roy Towers of *Sea Change-
Orkney and Northern Europe in the later Iron Age AD 300-800*

Is the film as good as the book? Or, in this case, is the book as good as the conference? The problem with publishing books of conference papers is the loss of the contributors' physical voices; the nuances, the intonations, even the verbal stamping of feet. One solution is to have very good contributors and communicators in the first place.

That is what the organisers of the Sea Change conference accomplished and it is the legacy which makes this book of the conference so very good. Just as inspired was the choice of core subject. A good deal of work has been done on the Neolithic and this must surely continue. But it was high time for a rummage around in the Iron Age, and in particular the post-Broch period. Nothing stands still in archaeology (other than the publication of certain sites) and thinking on the later Iron Age continues to move ahead.

Minehowe is a prime example. The very thought of the "significance of space and place in the Iron Age" is stimulating and the paper by Nick Card and Jane Downes provided the essential background for an appreciation of the most recent work at the site, much of which is still being evaluated.

Distinguished archaeologists are not always the most humble of folk. To find the admirable Anna Ritchie willing to re-visit her site at Buckquoy in the company of the local experts, Anne Brundle and Daphne Home Lorimer, shows that re-examination is good for the soul, but also good for archaeology.

And some of the lively voices fairly leap from the pages. Brian Smith could re-write the Shetland 'phone book and make it interesting. Let him loose on the subject of just what happened when the Vikings came visiting and the sparks begin to fly. D.C. Cowley's assault on the perceived assumption that some Orkney sites in the Iron Age enjoyed uninterrupted occupation is more than welcome. His criticisms of parts of the Howe publication are over-robust, but the Howe team are well able to defend their own corner. The value lies in the stimulation to thought.

There is too much that is good in this book to deal with adequately in a small space but, as has already been said, there is something here for everyone. The sections on experimental archaeology are engrossing and Tom Muir's quirky mound creatures provide the perfect ending. The book does indeed do full justice to the conference, and to the Later Iron Age in Orkney and Northern Europe.

Published by *Pinkfoot Press* on behalf of Orkney Heritage Society

ORKNEY TODAY

Orkney Today, the county's first new weekly newspaper in 42 years, was officially launched by Big Brother Winner Cameron Stout, in October 2003. Branded as a "pro-active campaigning community-based newspaper" by editor John Ross Scott, it has already made its mark on island life, with full Orkney-wide coverage of key issues.

At the start of 2004, 'Orkney Today' marked a further milestone by consolidating its sound customer base, moving from its confined space at 51 Victoria Street, Kirkwall, to new premises at Unit 1, Kiln Corner; taking on two new members of staff and the installation of state of the art newspaper publishing system.

The slogan for the Newspaper is "Putting Orkney First" and the philosophy is to give the best possible service directly to the people of Orkney. The project was the brainchild of freelance photographer Ken Amer, of Orkney Photographic, while the financial backing to make it a reality came from the Robertson Group of Companies, which has its headquarters at Dunkirk, Shore Street, Kirkwall.

So what prompted the drive for a new newspaper? Ken explained: "Orkney deserved a newspaper that truly reflected the islands' way of life. It had been proven in Shetland that two newspapers can survive and thrive together. We are not only showing that we can survive but are breaking new ground and competing effectively against opposition." Editor John Ross added: "The arrival of 'Orkney Today' has given added value to people and businesses in Orkney through the benefits of increased choice, increased news coverage and more competitive advertising rates."

Other members of staff include Chief Reporter, Robert Leslie - a former editor of 'The Orcadian', reporters Brian Flett and - from March - Mary Turner, Mathew Whittles and Iain Gibson on Pre-press; George Stout (commercial manager), Glynis Amer (office manager) and Jenna Tait (advertising assistant).

In February, 'Orkney Today' gained its first accolade when chief reporter Robert Leslie picked up the 'Sports Writer of the Year' award at the Highlands and Islands Media Awards.

Life Members	Neil Leask	Mr. Bryce Wilson
Mr. & Mrs. A. Appleby	Mr. P. Leith	Miss Sonja Wishart
Mrs. E. Bain	Mrs. R. Leslie	Mr. & Mrs. A. Wright
Miss Thora Bain	Mrs. Agnes Liddell	Mrs. D. S. Wallace
Mrs. B. Ballin-Smith	Mrs. D. H. Lorimer	Dr. & Mrs. F. Zabriskie
Mr. & Mrs Jon Barker	Mr & Mrs.N.Mc Cance	
Mr. & Mrs. A. Bevan	Capt. W.B. & Mr. K. Mackay	Ordinary Members
Mrs. J. Boyes	Mr. & Mrs. S. Manson	Mrs. Helen Angus
Mrs. A. Brundle	Ms. J. Marwick	Mrs. G. Armer
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Dr. B. Crawford	Mrs. R. Nicolson	Mrs. Eve Clouston
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Dr. Ray Fereday	Mr. J. Ravenshear	Mr. & Mrs. I. M. Flaws
Mr. & Mrs. A. J. Firth	Mr. & Mrs. J. Rendall	Mr. Christopher Gee
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Mr. Max Fletcher	Mr. D. J. T. Robertson	Mr. J. P. Godwin
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