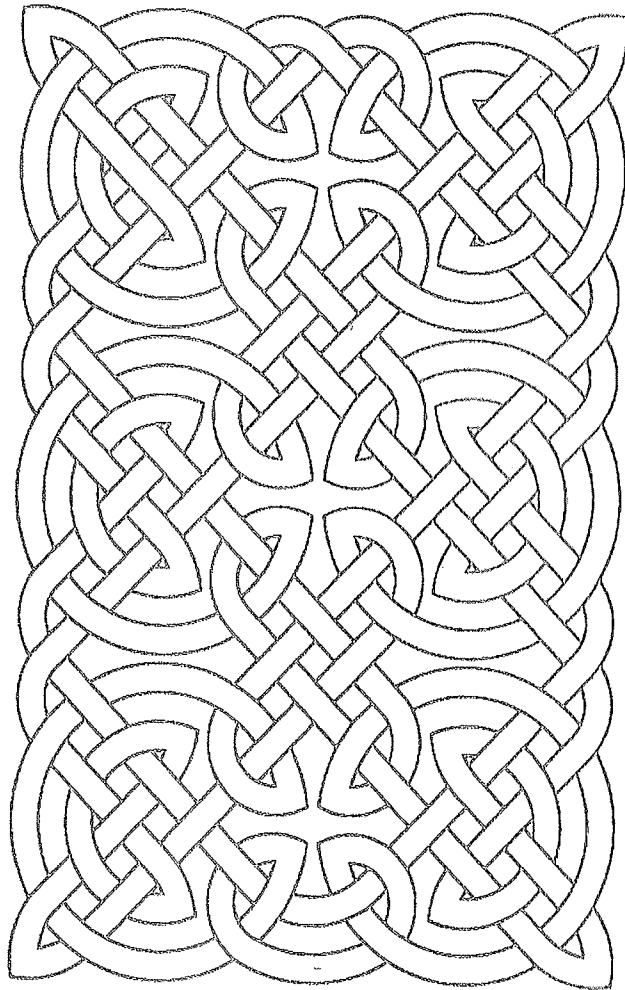
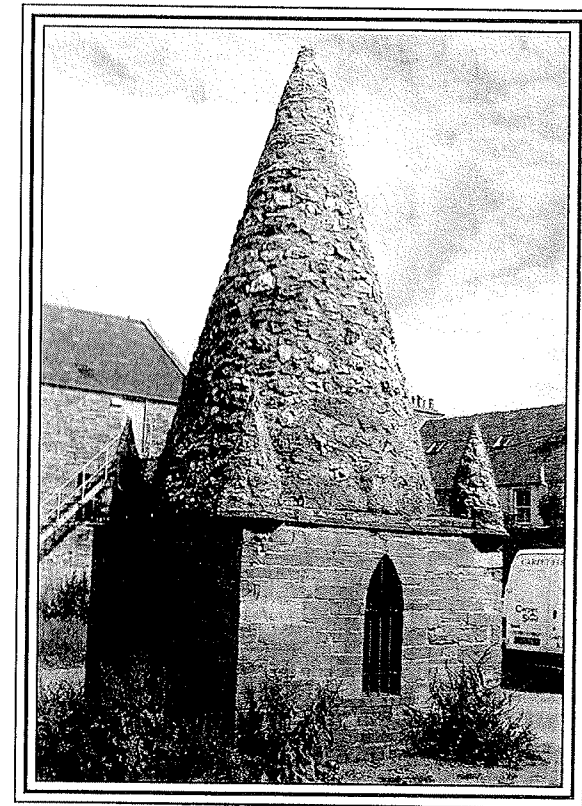


Orkney Heritage Society



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Newsletter 2004/2005

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 2004-5

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, Stromness
Vice Chairman	Mrs. A. Brundle, Hillside School, Twatt, Orkney
Secretary	Mrs. S. Wenham, Langwell, Orphir
Treasurer	Mr. N. A. D. McCance, West End, Burray
Membership Secretary	Mr. W. Groundwater, Clowigar, St.Ola
	Mrs. M. Banks, Mayfield, St. Margaret's Hope
	Mr. B. M. Clark, Westwood, Berstane Road, Kirkwall
	Mrs. H. M. Firth, Edan, Berstane Road, Kirkwall
	Mrs. C. Foden, Cubbie Roo, Cromwell Road, Kirkwall
	Ms S. J. Grieve, Langamo, Harray.
	Mr. N. Leask, Smerquoy, St. Ola
	Mrs. R. Jenkins, Ballasquoy, Arwick Road, Evie
	Mr T. Rendall, 22, Craigie Crescent, Kirkwall
	Mrs. B. Thomson, 13, Craigiefield Park, Kirkwall
	Mr. A. Tulloch, 29, Reid Crescent, Kirkwall

Front Cover:- Groatie Hoose - see article on Page 25

The Society would like to thank Mrs. E. A. Gilmore and Orkney Library Photographic Archivists for their invaluable help and advice.

Opinions herein expressed by contributors are their sole responsibility. Orkney Heritage Society and the editors of the Newsletter cannot be held responsible for the use of any information.

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Editorial

Mrs. Daphne Lorimer had to resign from the committee in 2004 due to ill health. Sadly she has since died and we send our deepest sympathy to her family. She has left a big gap in many of our lives and we are indebted to her relatives for writing their perceptive obituary here.

This year, many contributors have remarked on the restriction in space allowed for their entries, so there may be a change of format next year to allow for full use of all their research. At least one member, Mrs. Betty Thomson, is thinking of publishing a booklet on her subject- Traditional Dancing, so hopefully we may look forward to others following her example.

We often hear of the wartime or other foreign adventures many Orcadians have had during their lives, so 'A long way from home.' has been launched by reminiscences from our President. Have you got something to tell us?

I hope you will agree that there are some very interesting articles this year - many are from the committee, or suggested by them, but there is a big welcome to any member who wishes to contribute. The deadline for next year's magazine is 31st January 2006. Contact one of the editors for details.

In these days of changing rules and regulations it is possible that a future North Isles boat may not be able to disembark passengers on the beach at Eynhallow, so please note this year's date -see page 6- for the trip to the island.

Unfortunately, it has proved difficult to arrange definite dates for coming lectures, but there are many in hand, please watch out for them in local papers and on Radio Orkney, under our logo on the front cover. We look forward to meeting you there.

Hilda M. Firth and Iris E. Heddle

Chairman's Report 2003 – 2004 by Bill Hamilton

During the past year two members, Daphne Lorimer and Christopher Gee, have resigned from the committee. Sadly Daphne has recently died and her obituary appears overleaf. I should like to pay tribute to Daphne for being the mainstay of the Society for many years, including 8 as chairman. Her contributions include her work in the founding of the Orkney Archaeological Trust and the organising of the Neolithic and Iron Age conferences. The committee will miss her knowledge, her experience and most of all her enthusiasm for Orkney's heritage.

Christopher's much appreciated collection of Street Furniture will, I hope, be a continuing project.

Heritage seems to be very topical at present. Archæology and History TV

programmes and numerous articles in newspapers and magazines all raise the profile of Heritage. It was not always so and it is salutary to read the article by the late Evan McGillivray in volume 3 of the New Orkney Antiquarian Journal, published by the Heritage Society in January 2004. I would like to think that the Heritage Society has played a significant role in the changed attitude to Heritage in Orkney and will continue to promote its appreciation in the future.

The Society acquired a web presence in January by joining the orkneycommunities.co.uk website. At present our web pages contain only basic information but this will grow over time. We would be grateful for any photographs of heritage interest that we could include in our web library. I am a member of the Steering Committee that manages the orkneycommunities website and I would welcome any comments and suggestions pertaining to the website in general. The Heritage Society is contributing to the Community Planning process. A group comprising representatives from the Society, the Visitor Attractions Forum and the OIC Museums and Heritage Department will be responsible for writing and reviewing the Heritage section of the Community Plan, Orkney 2020. Two meetings of this group have been held to date.

The post of County Archæologist was originally set up by the Heritage Society which had the contract of employment. However when OAT was formed the archæologist was seconded to OAT, which entered into a Service Level Agreement with OIC for the provision of archæology services. The committee therefore agreed that the archæologist's contract should be transferred to OAT.

The Heritage Society responded to a request from Kirkwall Community Council to assist in a project to restore the Groatie Hoose and relocate it in Tankerness Gardens - see article page 25.

Every year the Society receives a number of requests for grants for specific projects. During the past year grants have been disbursed for: The preservation and display of a burial cist at Nether Onston in Stenness; provision of minibus transport for First Nation representatives participating in the "Coming Home" event in September and a memorial to George Mackay Brown in Makar's Court in Edinburgh.

Members assisted with: transport and stewarding at the Sagas and Storytelling conference held in January; publicity for the bid to restore Hall of Clestrain; the launch of the book, "Stones, Skalds and Saints" published by the Scottish Society for Northern Studies.

The Society has continued its regular events and projects including the Eynhallow Trip, the Grimond, Linklater and Fereday Awards and the scrutiny of planning applications.

Finally I would like to once again record my thanks to all committee members for their invaluable contributions to the Society over the past year.

Obituary to Daphne Home Lorimer

by **Hugh Halcro-Johnston**



Much has been written about Daphne's life, work and achievements so I felt it would be appropriate to give a more personal view of my cousin from a family perspective. Her love of Orkney and of our built and natural heritage began with her visits to Orphir House to be with my mother (her favourite "Aunt Marjorie") in the years following the last war. My mother was the youngest of nine children raised by their Freeth father in London. He was a feminist in a time before the term had been invented. His sons all joined the family business and succeeded or failed by their own efforts while the girls received the best possible education. Daphne had one aunt who was a Fellow of the Royal Society, another who trained British agents operating in occupied France (including the famous Odette Churchill) and my mother who qualified as an electrical engineer in the 1920s and was a member of the team that developed the first photocell. Little wonder then that Daphne should have achieved some prominence in her chosen scientific field.

In fact there was an earlier family connection with Orkney as Daphne's father (my Uncle Wilfred) had been stationed at the seaplane base at Swanbister

during the first war. He married a Home and Daphne was always proud of her family connection with the former Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas Home. Daphne's mother was a proud woman who always liked things to be done properly. She was an excellent hostess and clearly passed on these talents to her daughter. Daphne met her husband Ian on the plane coming to Orkney. They married and bought the former Old Kirk Manse at Scorradales. Theirs was an ideal marriage based on a meeting of minds and mutual interests. Although Ian always claimed to be reclusive and intolerant of both children and animals, he was loved by both and very many Orkney people can testify to the warmth of the welcome and the excellence of Scorradales hospitality both before and after Ian's death.

After losing both her mother and her husband, Daphne could have been excused if she had retired from public life, but in 1994 she became Chairman (Daphne hated the term "Chairperson") of the Orkney Heritage Society, a post she held until 2002. It was a period during which the Society flourished. In 1997 the Society set up the Orkney Archaeological Trust (OAT) and the Friends (FOAT) with Daphne at the helm. The successes of the Neolithic Conference in 1998, the Iron Age Conference in 2001 and the Minehowe Know Howe event in 2002 were the result of her enthusiasm and drive. She was a signatory to the UNESCO Intent to protect Orkney's World Heritage Site and during her time as Chairman Ian Heddle established the Laura Grimond Award for architectural excellence and Sandy Firth initiated the Marjorie Linklater Writing Award. Volumes 1 and 2 of the New Orkney Antiquarian Journal were published and a project to record Orkney's street furniture was begun. Throughout this period Daphne's warmth, energy, leadership and organisational skills were an inspiration to the whole Society.

As a child I can remember Daphne when she worked as a radiographer and indeed she once treated me at the Royal Free Hospital in London. In 1951 she and Ian took my brother and myself to the Fun Fair at Battersea and to the Festival of Britain. Their incredible generosity towards two very demanding small boys at a time of post-war austerity is an abiding memory. Her work as a radiographer laid the foundations for her great knowledge of human anatomy and its application to the study of human archaeological remains. But it will be for her generosity that she will be best remembered, generous with her time, with good advice and with friendship to so many people who came to know her. She was always very conscious of her position in Orkney as an incomer and made sure that she never assumed a position in any local organisation before being invited to take it. When she did become involved she was efficient and effective and always put the interests of Orkney and its people before any personal considerations. She has been a worthy Orcadian and I am proud to have been able to call her cousin.

ORKNEY HERITAGE SOCIETY EYNHALLOW TRIP 2005

Subject to weather conditions, this year's Eynhallow Trip will take place on **Wednesday 6th 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 under 12's – No concessions** as this is a Society Charter. **Tickets are on sale from Kirkwall and Stromness Tourist Offices as from 22nd June.** Having proved uneconomical, there is no bus to or from Tingwall. Refunds are dependent on the trip being cancelled by the society.

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

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.

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

Design Matters by May Banks

To design successfully in an environment such as ours, the architect has to understand the background and why the landscape and urban fabric looks the way it does – remembering that it is always changing. Tradition could be seen to be synonymous with security and lack of change. Traditional buildings are the product of a slow evolution, something for individuals to relate to in an increasingly fast changing world. The simple buildings such as cottages and farm buildings make up a far more subtle expression of social history and tradition. They illustrate much more completely the day-to-day activities of ordinary people and how they live. The everyday environment is so often taken for granted because of its apparent dullness and neglected appearance.

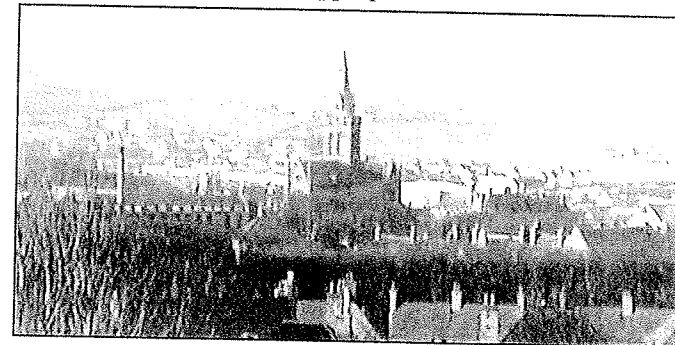
George Mackay Brown said, 'A man may write the history of a town like Kirkwall in a book - Hossack did it - but really the legend of a town is everywhere,

to be known and relished wherever one lingers; a 900 year old saga in stone.' Orkney's towns are not just beautiful stone patterns. They are patterned by the events of the year, the people and the characters – the physical aspect contains the spirit. Can you imagine the Ba' being played in and around Hatston or the suburb of Lynn Park?

To be a good designer you have to be a little aggressive because it demands conviction and confidence to question accepted thoughts and dogma. Good building design respects its neighbours by utilising sympathetic materials and recognises that it has to fulfil practical as well as aesthetic needs. It has to recognise raw material, form and function as well as colour and texture and all of these with the setting in which the building is to be built. A well designed house fits easily and naturally into the environment. It also brings out and sometimes creates certain desirable features, in other words, it enhances its surroundings which would otherwise not exist or not be noticed. An example of this could be a country house or a wind turbine. Natural materials always improve in appearance with age as they weather and take on a patina, whereas synthetic materials only deteriorate in appearance.

When I am asked to draw up a set of plans, these are merely the end product of a creative process which analyses and explores a number of issues, rather than being an end in itself. Orcadians are travelling further afield – talking holidays abroad is the norm. They are seeing things afresh and therefore expectations at home are rising.

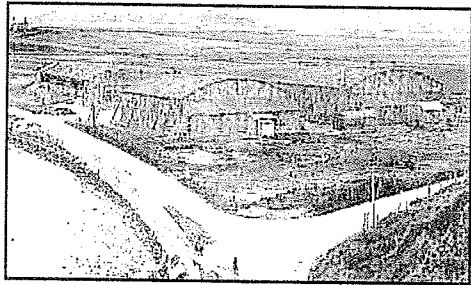
A JCB can demolish an old stone cottage in a matter of hours which would have taken over a year to build. This can never be replaced. Small details which give old buildings their character are being removed and not replaced when buildings are being renovated. This continuous erosion which most people do not even notice until it is too late must be taken in hand with much firmer planning controls and heavy penalties for people who do not comply. We must wake up to the fact that the character of our towns and countryside is disappearing at an alarming rate and we have the advantage of seeing results down south, so we should be able to take the appropriate action..



This photograph of the supermarket within the curtilage of the historic cathedral is surely the result of not thinking through the implications of poor design. Taken from Berstane Road.

Scapa Sanatorium by Bill Hamilton

The use of aircraft for military purposes began in the 1st World War. The Navy mainly used them for reconnaissance and before the development of aircraft carriers it was necessary to establish shore bases for the planes. Thus a seaplane station was established on Scapa Bay in late 1914. At first the planes were sheltered by tents and marquees but these were wrecked by a storm in November 1914 and were replaced by the buildings shown in the photograph left (Orkney Archive).

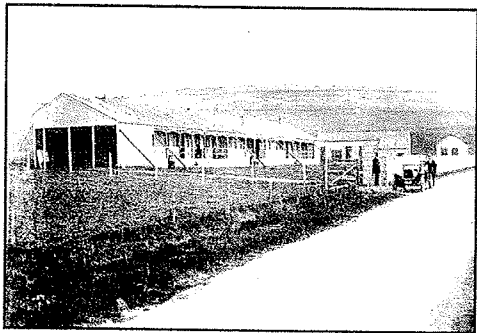


and maintenance.

Despite this lack of success in its original role, the Seaplane Station did have a useful future as a Tuberculosis Sanatorium. In his report for 1920, Orkney's Medical Officer of Health, James Adam, drew attention to the need for a sanatorium in Orkney and the Scottish Board of Health gave provisional approval for the use of the Seaplane Station.

Thomas Smith Peace, a Kirkwall architect, supervised the conversion and the result was a wooden building with two four-bedded wards and four single rooms. In addition the building provided accommodation for staff, comprising a matron, two nurses, a maid, and a cook. There was also a porter who lived elsewhere. The hospital was opened in the autumn of 1924 and by the end of 1925 it had admitted 25 patients. The total cost of running the hospital was £800 a year, including staff salaries.

Photograph below - Scapa Sanatorium c. 1930 (Orkney Archive)



Unfortunately the Scapa site proved unsuitable because the large expanse of beach exposed at low tide made it difficult to get the seaplanes to the water for taking off. It was thus mainly used for storage

and maintenance.

In those days tuberculosis was an important cause of ill health and death: in 1922 there were 61 new notifications and 23 deaths and in the following year 110 new notifications. Treatment consisted of rest; good and sufficient food; fresh air (of which there was no lack at Scapa) and light exercise in suitable patients. In 1925 Doctor

Bannerman the then MOH, expressed the hope that some of the patients might do some gardening!

In the early days several deaths occurred in quick succession which, Dr Bannerman observed, made patients reluctant to come into the hospital. However there were also some successes and he stressed the educational benefits of a stay in hospital. To quote his 1925 report: "Everyone who is admitted and discharged from Scapa has been educated in the way of managing himself so that when he or she returns home, the risk of infection for others is very greatly reduced and in some cases might be considered negligible. This is, in my opinion one of the most vital points in the endeavour to control tuberculosis. I hold strongly to the view that it is the undiagnosed and uneducated cases of TB that are the prime factors in spreading this disease." This fits with the modern view that environmental improvements were at least as important as drugs in the decline of tuberculosis as a public health problem.

Scapa Sanatorium continued in use for nearly a quarter of a century. Latterly it admitted only cases of respiratory TB, non-respiratory cases going to the Balfour Hospital. In 1937 Scapa became redundant when Eastbank hospital was opened and the site where it once stood is now occupied by the Harbours Authority building.

Traditional Dance in Orkney by Betty Thomson

When scanning a folder of Ernest Marwick papers in the Orkney Archives Department to my surprise I found 'Some notes on dancing in Orkney'. The cutting was the 5th of 6 articles from the Orkney Herald which was published from August-October of 1956; the author was Dr. Tom Flett. In 1953 he had changed his career to a collector of folk dances starting in the Outer Hebrides, Scotland, and Orkney. He was told the old reels were long out of use. Instruction booklets were brief. However he went to older people who were known to remember dance steps from seventy-five years ago (1880) and seven reels were saved. Most people could do the 3 popular reels. The FOURSOME REEL was danced the same as the people in Scotland, but in the SIXSOME and EIGHTSOME REELS Orkney dancers had a version of their own. In fact there are always small differences in parishes and islands, which make their dance unique.

Dr. Flett quotes 'We went to the island of Flotta, which is unique in our experience. There, until about 1890 the islanders only knew one dance, the Orkney Sixsome reel. This sounds almost unbelievable, but was confirmed by all the older people on the island. One elderly lady on Flotta recalled a wedding held in her own home about the year 1888, where there were about twenty couples present. The only dancing space available was about 12 feet by about 15 feet, and here the

company danced six at a time, with the fiddler sitting in one corner. When all the sets had had their turn the first set began all over again.'

Soon after, Flotta had a dancing tutor, Mr. William Smith, for two weeks. The people of Flotta arranged tuition in a newly built house, with wooden walls and floor and not yet partitioned, as a hall. They danced every evening except Sundays in a packed hall and they soon knew 15 new dances. This could have been their Programme: Foursome reel, Reel of Tulloch, Petronella, Flowers of Edinburgh, Triumph, Hay Maker's Jig, Rory o' More, The Quadrilles, Lancers, Waltz, Highland Schottische, Dutch Polka and the Ninepins Reel. Other teachers of dance came to teach over the county: Mr. Chalmers, Mr. MacDougall, Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. and Mrs. Roy and Ivy Scott.

Ernest Marwick must have been very interested because the Axum Reel (old Eightsome over the rest of Orkney) - being the most intricate of the Reels - was the subject of the 5th article. Roy Scott, a native of North Ronaldsay, learned it from his father. Ivy, a schoolteacher in Rendall and North Ronaldsay taught dance out of school hours to the youth of the island. It is said that the Axum Reel was still going in the 1950s in North Ronaldsay.

Dances were always part of social gatherings, be it a concert, harvest home, wedding, or in the house. In 1982 a group of Deerness people wanted to dance more. Moira Eunson instructed the fortnightly classes in their hall, which was mostly packed. In spring 1983 dancing classes started in Stromness, Stenness and Rendall. The British Legion started 5/4/83. Jim Leslie, Jim While, and Robin Anderson were the musicians on the opening night. Brian and Margaret Flett were the tutors until they left Orkney. Monday dances fortnightly in the winter suited most people. There has been a rota of men and women who take turns to call the dances each Monday and this is continuing to work very well. Wilma Taylor also set up teaching sessions in Finstown, Dounby, Orphir and Stenness. The islands were not left out as Wilma took 10 sessions in Hoy and Rousay and others in Stronsay, Sanday, Eday, St Margaret's Hope and North Ronaldsay. Westray held



3 dance weekends over three years, which Wilma also arranged. She also brought a group of dancers down from Shetland in 2002 and it was so much enjoyed that a return visit was arranged the next year.

All dancing in Orkney is great fun - you are never too young or too old to enjoy yourselves - all are welcome.. OTDA gave Wilma a lovely gift on her recent retirement- See photograph left. She has promised to help or advise if needed.

Long Way from Home by Ian Heddle

Burma, during W.W.2 is my *long way from home*. Life as an airman in the 'forgotten army' was a bit basic. Burma was a beautiful country but, unfortunately, the facilities did not match the scenery so we devised all sorts of methods and devices to make life more comfortable

I was in charge of a mobile Signals Unit in the RAF and, as the wireless mechanic, I was also the most practical person in the crew. Firstly, we needed beds so we went into the jungle and cut lengths of bamboo the size of scaffolding tubes. These we lashed to form frames and then wove in *Don 8* telephone wire to make the supporting mesh. Our bedrolls went on this. We could not say they were comfortable but they were a great deal better than sleeping on the ground!

Tea making was, of course, an essential. We needed a kettle, teapot and a strainer for this so I soldered up old potato and vegetable tins which I obtained from the cookhouse. I **insisted** that the kettle must be full before putting it on the fire so that the solder would not melt. It lasted for about two months before someone, who just wanted enough water for a shave, forgot to fill it properly..... RIP kettle. All our dirty washing was, of course, done in public. We just did it like we'd seen it done in India and banged our soapy clothes on rocks in the nearest river. At Synthe I remember swimming across the river to just under the rocks where about forty vultures were resting. I splashed about a lot to make sure they would not get the wrong idea about me! By this time our skins were nut brown so we always swam and bathed in white shorts. At Magwe there was a well which we and the locals all used. The well ring had been constructed from petrified teak and the grain clearly obvious.

In Tamu, in order to keep the flies away from the latrines, petrol was poured in at frequent intervals. A number of notices saying "no smoking" were put up. Army boys, calling into our camp for food after dark couldn't, of course, read the signs. They discovered that trying to cover the usual aromas with cigarette smoke was not a wise move and, **yes**, we all heard the explosion!

My wireless equipment was installed in a Ford V8 - 15 cwts truck and consisted of a T1083 transmitter and R1082 receiver. Whilst at Magwe I had a lot of warts on the backs of each hand and having heard about radio cautery, I decided to tune up my transmitter at about six megahertz with an artificial aerial. Taking a heavily insulated lead I tackled each wart in turn, watching the smoke rise up!! I left them all carefully alone for a week or so and they all healed up. I've never had a wart since.

Burma was where I first met scorpions. I still shudder when I see a picture of one.



Don't look Ian!

Dr. John Rae and Edinburgh by Margaret Street

No doubt, like many others, on our first family visit to Orkney in 1965, we made the acquaintance of Dr. John Rae through the exhibits in Stromness museum and then, by seeing his striking memorial in St. Magnus Cathedral, placed there so soon after his death, to the great credit of his fellow Orcadians. Years later in the company of George Mackay Brown, an enthusiast for its restoration, I saw Rae's birthplace, the Hall of Clestrain, wonderfully sited and impressive, despite the sad condition and was at once convinced of the need for its renovation to serve Orkney once more and commemorate a great man.

A Borderer by birth, interested since childhood in connections with Sir Walter Scott and having had the pleasure of knowing his direct descendants, the delightful Maxwell Scott sisters of Abbotsford, I was fascinated by the account of the Wizard's famous visit in 1814 with the Commissioners of Northern Lights and the hospitable reception at Clestrain by John Rae's father and mother. There was also the story of the Pirate Gow and the suggestion that Scott might have based two characters on John's elder sisters. At that time though, John himself was not quite a year old.

We know that he attended classes at Edinburgh University and afterwards under the auspices of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh of which he became a licentiate, qualified for his employment with the Hudson's Bay Company. His student lodgings in Salisbury Street have been demolished, unlike his London home for 24 years, 4 Addison Gardens for which we have applied for one of the famous blue commemoration plaques, with the support of the President of the Royal College of Surgeons: a favourable reply has been received warning of up to three years investigation of a full historical report.

Later this year, the College will celebrate 500 years of existence with an exhibition in the Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh and we hope that the small portrait of Dr. Rae in academic garb by Stephen Pearce, presently on show in the gallery near the larger one of Admiral Sir John Ross, Rae's colleague in arctic exploration, may be included.

At present, in the Royal Museum of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh, there is a display case, devoted to John Rae, including items he was able to retrieve from the ill-fated Franklin expedition of 1845. Despite controversies and problems encountered and the fact that he received no knighthood or Westminster Abbey recognition, he must have been pleased when, on the occasion of the installation of Thomas Carlyle as Lord Rector in 1866, Edinburgh University honoured him by bestowing on him an LLD.

For the centenary of his death in 1993, he was the subject of lectures and a splendid Festival exhibition. The accompanying book is entitled "No Ordinary Journey". Surely we must agree that Dr. John Rae was no ordinary man, either.

Restoration of the Hall of Clestrain by Hugh Halcro-Johnston

The project to restore the 18th Century Hall of Clestrain as the centrepiece of a new Orkney Boat Museum was conceived towards the end of 2003. For many years the Hall, built by Patrick Honeyman in 1769 has been recognised in Orkney as an architectural gem. Its dilapidated condition has been a concern to all who have seen it. But who could afford the Millions needed to restore it to its original condition and what could it be used for?

The answer lies in the need to provide a place to house and display Orkney's wonderful collection of traditional and historic boats: some 40 in total spanning 5,000 years from a Neolithic log boat to the skiffs and yoles still used today. Museums don't attract much funding in the way of grants but, by combining it with a restoration project, funding can be found and a use for the old Hall identified. Add the fact that as the birthplace of Dr John Rae, the Hall is of interest to thousands of people on both sides of the Atlantic and we have the potential for a major visitor attraction.

The Hall will be used as the administrative centre for the Museum complex. One room will be restored as John Rae would have known it and will commemorate his achievements as perhaps the greatest of all British arctic explorers. And the battles he fought with Lady Franklin and Charles Dickens to obtain some recognition for his efforts. Other rooms will tell the story of Orkney boat building design and development over the years including the Norse influence and the involvement with the Hudson Bay Company. There will be a shop, cafeteria and the usual offices.

The High Dykes will be restored to provide a magnificent walled garden in which a carefully designed new building will house the boats themselves. This will be done in such a way as to minimise the impact on the appearance of the Hall. We will create a "Living Museum" with a boat-building workshop in the former coach house and with events staged on the water where John Rae and his brothers once raced their boats. A new access road, car and coach parking and a small harbour will form part of the project.

The BBC Restoration programme has been enormously helpful in raising awareness of the project. Realistically we never expected to win the big prize, but we have recruited over 400 "Friends" and already raised more than £16,000. With this level of support and the dedication of our Committee we are confident of success.

Orkney Boat Museum

A Company Limited by Guarantee. Reg. No. 273109 Chairman Hugh Halcro-Johnston CBE, Orphir House, Orphir, Orkney KW17 2RD.

Tel: (01856) 811200 Fax: (01856) 811229

GB150NRL - A Special Event by Marian Chesters

The "New" Lighthouse on North Ronaldsay was first lit on 1st September 1854. As part of the celebrations to mark its sesquicentenary a Special Event Amateur Radio Station was operated from within the lighthouse over the weekend of 4th/5th September 2004. The intention was to make contact with other radio amateurs especially those interested in lighthouses or islands and to give the public the opportunity to participate.

Transmission by amateur radio license holders is tightly regulated and operators must normally identify themselves during transmission using personal callsigns. It is also possible to apply to the Radiocommunications Agency for a callsign to be used by amateurs operating a station on a special occasion and we were fortunate to be allocated the callsign GB150 NRL - 150 years of North Ronaldsay Lighthouse.

For long range communication amateur radio stations depend largely on reflection of radio waves by the ionosphere. This reflection varies with the time of day and year as well as being subject to longer-term changes related to the Sun Spot Cycle. Radio propagation was poor throughout the weekend of the event, with the strongest signals coming from Central Europe. This was also the

weekend of the UK National Field Day and we had to compete with a large number of stations transmitting at the same radio frequencies.

Despite these difficulties one hundred and seventy-four contacts were made from twenty-nine countries as far apart as USA to the west, Russia to the east, Faroe Islands to the north and Brazil to the south.

Many Radio Amateurs like to have a card confirming a contact and cards (see left) have been sent both to stations contacted and to Short Wave Listeners who listened to our station and have requested a card.

As a native of North Ronaldsay whose great-grandfather was Principal Keeper at North Ronaldsay Lighthouse some ninety years ago it was my privilege



to be able to contribute to the celebrations. I would like to thank the other operators Stuart and Derek for their invaluable help.

The Fereday Prize by Sheena Wenham

The Fereday Prize attracted the usual very high standard of work from second year pupils at Stromness Academy, and we were delighted that some pupils from Kirkwall Grammar School have also engaged in local studies research projects this year. As usual, material that might otherwise go unrecorded will be photocopied to form a valuable record for the Archive Department at the library. The results are:

First prize: 'The Role of Women in Lyness during WWII' by Izzy Whitford. - was an outstanding piece of research with an impressive bibliography. Attractively presented, with plenty of illustrations, the work of WRENS at the base and in the communications centre during WW2, together with descriptions of their social life and living conditions are vividly described.

Second prize: 'The Creamery: 1945-2005' by Callum Stevenson - records the first post war cheese factory and the development of the Creamery from 1958. His photographic record of his tour of the new Creamery, and his interview with the Manager and a factory worker gave an excellent understanding of the day to day production work.

Third prize: 'Harray: 1975-2005' by Inga Nicolson records the social and economic life of an Orkney parish over the last thirty years. Her well illustrated project encompassed building changes, the establishment of a farm museum, the trend towards larger farms, archaeological excavations, building improvements, and current and past social activities in the parish of Harray.

Very Highly Commended: Paige Archibald-'Witchcraft & Witch Trials in Orkney'; Russell Gilmour-'Orkney's Forgotten Rolls Royce'; David Grant-'Power in the Orkneys'; Gavin Fraser-'Military Airfields in Orkney: The Two Wars'; Charis Hourston-'Hundland School'; Paul Johnston-'Dounby School 1877-2005'; Ian Nelson-'The RAF & WAAF in Orkney 1939-1945';

Highly Commended: Michael Gillian-'Shipping in Orkney Eynhallow Sound 1760 - 1840'; Danni Whitford-'The Longhop Lifeboat'; Rebecca Harold-'Childhood in World War 2'; Graham Slater-'Skea Brae through my window'; Holly Sonabend-'John Rae'; Michael Price-'A History of Orkney Whiskies and their Distilleries'; Stephen Sclater-'Costa Kirk 1895-2005'; Nicola Watt-'Stromness Shopping Week'; Craig Morgan-'The Hudson Bay Company'; Donald Cowan-'Orkney Sailing Club'; Ryan Trumpness-'The M.V. Invincible'; Terri Reid-'The History of Cruan'; Ellis Inkster-'St. Peter's Kirk'; Karoline Bain-'The Orkney Branch of the Pony Club'; Calvin Wilson-'Tormiston Farm.'; Jenna Harper-'My Granny's Childhood Years in Firth'; Emma Dunsmuir-'North Ronaldsay Lighthouse'; Stephanie Spence-'Through the ages with my Granny.'

We congratulate all of the above and also the sixteen entrants awarded **Commended** certificates for a wide ranging collection of local history projects.

The Line That Never Was by Bill Groundwater.

On Saturday, 5th July, 1873, two gentlemen from Edinburgh, Mr. Philip, S.S.C., and Mr. Buchanan, a Civil Engineer, called at the office of Mr. J Macrae, Solicitor, in Kirkwall. They carried with them a letter of introduction from Sheriff George H Thoms, who chanced to be in Edinburgh at the time. Mr. Philip was acting on behalf of the Caithness and Sutherland Railway Company, who were in the latter stages of constructing the line from Inverness to Wick and Thurso. This Company, through Mr. Philip, was anxious to explore the possibilities of establishing a railway in Orkney, *'to develop the resources of the county'*, and wished to consult with local gentlemen of influence. Mr. Macrae arranged that the visitors met with some local dignitaries, in Kirkwall on Monday, 7th July, and in Stromness on Tuesday 8th July, when, according to the 'Orkney Herald' of July 9th, 'the project was discussed at length'. At these two meetings, the proposal met with broad approval, and was referred to the Town Councils of Kirkwall and Stromness, and to the Commissioners of Supply, for further consideration, and in the meantime, Mr. Buchanan was asked to prepare a formal Report. He did not delay; his Report, dated 15th July, was forwarded to Kirkwall, and arrived in Mr. Macrae's hands on 30th July. Somewhat to Mr. Macrae's dismay, he found his firm's name appeared as a subscriber to this Report, although he had 'not yet maturely considered the Scheme'. Nevertheless, he forwarded the Report to Colonel Balfour, Chairman of the Commissioners of Supply, who was also, incidentally, Provost of Kirkwall.

The Report envisaged the line as, initially, connecting Kirkwall and Stromness, though future extensions in the directions of Holm and Birsay might well follow. The proposed line would commence from the Ayre, close to the 'Peerie Sea', and follow the course of the highway by Finstown and Stenness, terminating at or near the 'present Steamboat Quay at Stromness'. The line should be of 3ft. gauge, costing £3000 per mile approx. and, at a length of 14.5 miles, and with terminal stations at Kirkwall and Stromness, and intermediate stations at Finstown and Stenness, would cost an estimated £50,000. Rolling Stock would cost about £15,000, bringing the total capital outlay to £65,000. Mr. Buchanan quoted statistics regarding the likely demand for the railway, taking into account local population, number of tourists, and the economy of the islands, as evidenced by the quantity and value of the various exports, and had no doubt that the line would generate sufficient profit to yield at least 5% on capital, as well as meeting running costs. His conclusion was that such a Railway would greatly benefit the community and the economy of Orkney.

The local Press received the report with enthusiasm, and there can be little doubt that, to the public of Orkney, with no means of land transport save that provided by horse or human leg-power, the proposal must have brought

excitement. The Town Councils of Kirkwall and Stromness considered the proposals to be worthy of support. However, there remained doubters in the community, some of them, apparently, in high places. Their doubts must have been expressed to the proponents of the Railway, because, on 27th August, an attempt to answer these doubts appeared in the form of 'A Supplementary Statement to the Commissioners of Supply.....' in which further figures relating to likely traffic of passengers and goods were quoted in support of the scheme.

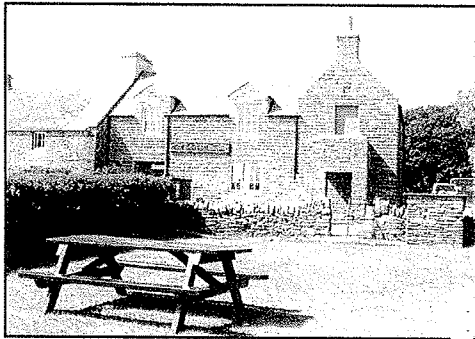
On 3rd September met the Commissioners of Supply, chaired by Colonel Balfour. The minute of that meeting shows lengthy discussion of the merits and demerits of the proposal, but the Commissioners remained unconvinced of the viability of the Railway, and decided that *'it would be premature to express any opinion on the subject at present and that if further enquiries were made and further proposals made which met the necessities of the case, the scheme of a Railway between Kirkwall and Stromness would deserve and should receive further consideration'*.

There the public record ends. The subject is never again mentioned in minutes of Commissioners of Supply meetings, or of meetings of either Town Council. Neither of the two local newspapers carries any further mention of the Railway. Considering the nation-wide enthusiasm for railways at the time, and the undoubted success they displayed in opening up the countryside to passenger transport and to fostering trade and industry, I find it rather surprising that the idea of the Kirkwall to Stromness Railway should have disappeared so abruptly and so completely. Presumably, the local gentlemen of influence, and, of course, of capital, were not persuaded by Mr. Buchanan's optimistic forecast of the likely return on their investment.

But what if....??? Had the courage, and the capital, been assembled to construct the Railway, can one doubt its success in promoting travel and trade within Orkney? I think not, at least certainly not in the thirty years before motorised road transport began to appear. Indeed, up to World War I, I feel the Railway would have enjoyed modest success, and during the War, perhaps even more so. Between the Wars, with increasing motor traffic, and improving roads, the Railway would have been in decline, but would in all likelihood have had a huge resurgence during and immediately after World War II. With nationalisation, the Orkney Railway would have become part of Scottish Region of British Railways, and would have suffered the same inexorable decline in business as other parts of the national network. Dr Beeching, I fancy, would have had little time for the Orkney line - but imagine the local clamour which might have met proposals to close the line. Might O.I.C. have stepped in to save the day, using some of the 'Oil Money'? Who knows what matters the Transport Committee of the Council might have had on their agenda at the present day!!!

Update to the Shapinsay Heritage Centre by Sheila Garson

The Shapinsay Heritage Centre at The Smithy, Balfour Village, run by the Shapinsay Heritage Trust, opened its doors again in July 2004 having been closed for major refurbishment. While the exterior appearance and character of this listed building has been retained, the interior has undergone a much needed upgrade including the provision of disabled facilities. The Heritage Centre has moved to the extended upstairs where the open plan space is light and airy. Part of this area is a retail outlet for island crafts, while downstairs now houses the restaurant and toilets. Access to the building has been greatly improved with the creation of a door directly off the village street.



Our new space is very different from the old and we are slowly working to develop it. Having packed up our large collection of items of local interest, prior to the refurbishment, we are now gradually taking them back into the new centre. However there is still much work to be done checking, sorting and cataloguing items as well as cleaning and conservation.

We have been fortunate in securing a grant from Awards for All towards the purchase of new display cases as well as bookcases and tables and comfortable chairs for our archives area and children's corner.

Already a considerable amount of work has gone into making our photograph and document collections more user friendly and to make a comfortable environment for visitors to browse. Our large photo collection has been categorised and sorted into ring binders making it much easier to find individual photos. A wide range of documents and papers relating to the island are also available, many unpublished and not easily accessible elsewhere. For example we have the island kirkyard records, censuses, ploughing match results and the first Ordnance Survey map of Shapinsay, dating from the late 1870s. Together this provides a wealth of information for anyone with an interest in the island or for those tracing families with Shapinsay connections.

The Trust are keen to make the Centre more family friendly and have a children's corner with building blocks, Lego and drawing materials to help keep younger visitors busy.

The newly refurbished Smithy will be officially opened later this year and we look forward to developing our Heritage Centre in its new setting. If you're visiting Shapinsay in 2005 please come by and see us!

Trace Your Orkney Ancestors by James Irvine

A Review by Willie Thomson

Most people have a need to understand where they come from, and have a curiosity about the way of life of their forebears. In recent years the opportunity to research one's roots has been made easier by the internet and the development of Orkney Archive. The growing membership of the Orkney Family History Society and the frequency with which visitors combine a visit to the islands with a search for their relatives demonstrates a need for a book of this kind. They will find it a concise, comprehensive and practical guide.

An introductory section describes where information can be found on the internet, in Kirkwall, Edinburgh and elsewhere. It gives good advice on research and provides assistance in reading old-fashioned handwriting. The following five chapters provide short descriptions of the huge variety of sources in which information might be found.

The sheer range might be a bit off-putting for the beginner, although an easy start can be made with the census returns and records of births, marriages and deaths. The book really aims at those who have worked through this stage. The more experienced researcher is guided through the use of church records, rentals, estate papers, newspapers and many other possible sources. Captain Irvine's list of sources is amazingly exhaustive - but you wonder how many of his readers will find their ancestors in the dog tax returns of 1797-8.

A final chapter deals with Orkney history and encourages the researcher, not simply to collect names and dates, but to find out more about the way of life of their ancestors. As well as being a guide to the genealogist, the book is full of information which local historians will use. The book ends with 19 full-page tables which provide an index of the archive references for a large range of useful documents. There is also a description of weights, measures and land units, as well as the vagaries of Old Style and New Style dating.

Trace your Orkney Ancestors is attractively produced with a bright cover and colour photographs of Orkney Archive. No other county has a book of this kind devoted to the sources of its family history, so this ground-breaking volume is greatly to be welcomed. It follows one year after *The Orkney Poll Taxes of the 1690s* which is an indication of Captain Irvine's industry and productivity.

James M. Irvine, *Trace your Orkney Ancestors*, 75 pages, £8.50.

Underwater Archaeology by Bobby Forbes

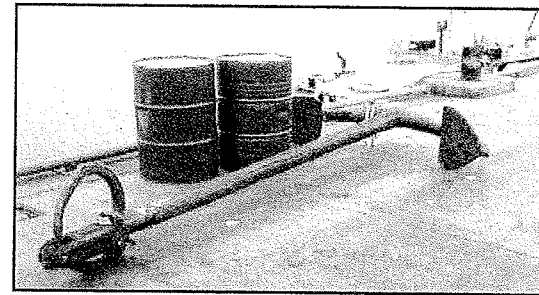
- Scientific Underwater Logistics and Diving (SULA Diving)

Most people will tend to think of shipwrecks when the term underwater archaeology is mentioned. This popular image has stemmed from the need to recover cargos from sunken vessels throughout the ages and "Exploration" of such submerged sites is therefore as old as diving itself. One of the first records of such an enterprise was the use of a diving bell in the 1640s to recover 42 cannons from the Swedish ship of the line *Vasa*, lying in 132 feet of water in Stockholm Harbour. The bell had no air supply other than that it contained. Divers would descend in the bell, swim out and attach lines to the cannons for recovery.

Underwater archaeology encompasses much more than shipwrecks, and includes other submerged structures and submerged landscapes both in marine and freshwater. Some of the first recorded "archaeological investigations" were undertaken in the lakes around Zurich by Dr Adolphe von Morlot and at Cherry Island in Loch Ness by Father Odo Blundell examining submerged lake dwellings (crannogs) using diving helmets. However, these attempts at the collection of relics were a far cry from what we now view as the modern discipline of archaeology. True modern underwater archaeological investigation only started becoming a field in its own right following the invention of Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus (SCUBA) in the 1950s. However, in its infancy some of the practices adopted by the then leaders in the field of underwater exploration would today make a modern-day grown archaeologist cry. Since archaeology underwater is fundamentally no different from that on land the same stringent scientific principles apply. On 24th April 1961 following these protocols the *Vasa* was raised to the surface for preservation and display (www.vasamuseet.se). Much of the work of underwater archaeologists is not related to excavation but involves surveying maritime sites, assessing archaeological potential, making management recommendations and in interpreting the sites to the wider community.

In respect to Orkney, little work has been carried out on underwater sites in the past and to date this has centred around the German High Seas Fleet scuttled in Scapa Flow. However, Orkney waters abound with wrecks from a variety of periods. Scapa Flow itself has been used as a harbour since the early days of sea voyages. The first recorded use as a "harbour" is associated with King Hakon's great Viking fleet in 1263. Since then it has been a major anchorage used by Hanseatic merchants in medieval times, for convoys to the Baltic during the Napoleonic wars and as Britain's naval base for the North Atlantic Fleet in both First and Second World Wars.

However, other areas around Orkney are beginning to reveal sites of significant importance. In 2003 an anchor was trawled up by a local fishing vessel and has tentatively been dated by the Archaeological Dive Unit at St



Andrews University as belonging to a 17th century vessel. A piece of Chinese porcelain has recently come to light from a further site again dated to the early 17th century. Undoubtedly there are many wreck sites to be discovered.

In addition to the wrecks there are other possible submerged structures. Several records exist of artificial islands (crannogs) in Orkney's lochs. This would appear to be relatively few when you consider the number of lochs and compare this to their distribution in Mainland Scotland. Recent investigations by SULA Diving has shown that some of the islands in Orkney lochs previously considered natural are indeed artificial and date back to late Bronze / early Iron Age. It is hoped that funding can be secured from Historic Scotland to continue this work.

Due to sea level rise since the last glacial period Orkney's coastline has changed significantly with large areas inundated. The Bay of Firth for example would have been dry land. Such areas may reveal built structures of some significance or in the case of Sanday a submerged forest. There are also reports of submerged peat beds in the Bay of Skaill and other locations. SULA Diving is hoping to carry out further research into these sites. Through the Nautical Archaeology Society it is also attempting to increase the awareness amongst the many visiting recreational divers for the need for the conservation and protection of our underwater cultural heritage.

Orkney Countryside Committee by Alistair Tulloch

Over the past year, opening formalities over, we welcomed new representatives from the various societies and associations, also saying goodbye to, among others, Miss Mabel Eunson. Miss Eunson had been a faithful member of the Committee over a great number of years and her contributions had been much valued.

At most meetings, focus has been fairly well channeled towards our role as Orkney's Local Access Forum, and have had extensive discussion on a topic such

as the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. This having been considered at one meeting, a response running into several pages was submitted to SNH. The high hopes of approval of the Code by the Scottish Executive, and that the access legislation already passed would soon become active, were dashed yet again. However, for unknown reasons, there have been more delays and the Code is probably not yet in place, the uncertainty due to us not having convened for several months.

Meanwhile, SNH began work on developing a local Code for Orkney. SNH produced a consultation paper on the establishment of a National Access Forum for Scotland, this being responded to by recommending an association of forums. OIC received guidance from the Scottish Executive on various access issues, for example on core path networks and the establishment of Local Access Forums. We were relieved to learn that our LAF appears to follow along similar guidelines.

A major issue that was discussed this year was OIC's draft Minerals Strategy. This was extremely well presented and made for very interesting reading, containing a wide variety of materials relevant to Orkney. These ranged from stone in all its forms, through peat to oil, with the possible presence of even uranium rearing its ugly head. After debating this, a set of recommendations was submitted back to them. Another mammoth discussion session was held when OIC's Renewable Energy Strategy came before us at a meeting. Again, the quality of presentation on this consultation document was outstanding, making it so much easier to respond to.

There were comments on such things as order of layout, descriptions and what would be the best policy. Suggestions were also made on: sensitive landscapes, archaeology, underwater archaeology, impact, commercial viability and planning approval. Also envisaged were potential conflicts, OIC should administer this, on-shore versus off-shore and OIC should do everything to encourage Research in support of the Strategy.

These apart, discussion as usual, ranged widely, and included such issues as eel-fishing in the Peedie Sea and the perennially thorny subject of roadside verges and their maintenance in a manner that would provide for conservation and ultimately preservation. Regular updates on the various countryside projects being carried out by OIC, especially those in the Isles, made for interesting content and discussion.

Our chairman, Eric Meek, stated in his report how OIC and agencies such as SNH value the Countryside Committee as a forum where ideas can be tested and debated before proposed strategies are then put in place. It was his belief that the Committee had fulfilled that role admirably throughout 2004 and will continue to do so in the future.

The Marjorie Linklater Writing Awards 2005 by Sandy Firth.

2005 sees the award being standardized on a piece of prose, as all future awards will be. Candidates choose their own subjects and preferred method of presentation. The only proviso is that the work must have some bearing on, or connection with Orkney.

The Society's sincere thanks go to the same panel of three judges who undertake the marking. This year only Stromness Academy presented entries. There was unanimity in the selection of this year's winner, and the result was:

1st place and Winner:

"Writing and Sand Castles" by Martha McGill

Highly Commended:

"Short Story" by Kayleigh Archibald.

"The East / West Divide" by Alexandra Ashman.

"Dying to Win" by Bryony Muir

Commended:

"A Historic Day for Orkney" by Tim Ross.

All who entered are to be congratulated by Orkney Heritage Society and thanked for submitting their excellent entries.

Spitzbergen - Miners from Spitzbergen were taken to Lyness in the Second World War to build the underground storage tanks. Photograph by S. Firth



Orkney's First Entrepreneur – Robert Garden by Bryan Clark

Robert Garden was born 1846 in Aberdeenshire, left school at 10 years old and after various farm jobs moved to Newcastle as a slater. There he met an Orcadian who told of the problems country people had shopping in Orkney. Garden recalled a pedlar coming with his cart to the farm and selling goods to the farmer and his neighbours. He saw the potential in this for Orkney. In 1873 he arrived in Orkney with £19 in his pocket, bought a horse and small spring cart and a stock of groceries, and set off to make his fortune. His services were welcomed and soon he expanded with larger vans and then on to motorized vans.



Photograph from Orkney Archives

Garden sold his groceries at only a small profit and created further good will through buying surplus eggs, butter and cheese from the farms for resale as he travelled. Business boomed. Then he saw another gap in the market. In 1884 he bought the schooner Zuna, packed it to the gunnels with goods and set off for the south Isles. This floating shop was the start of a 30-year period which saw that one vessel become a fleet of ships and a chain of shops. He extended his territory, venturing as far as Shetland. Each ship was divided into three departments – groceries, drapery and cattle feed plus cereals. He maintained his barter system and the ships returned with shellfish, knitwear and farm produce.

By 1894 he had a chain of shops stretching down the N.W. coast of Scotland. His ships went as far south as Loch Broom. It was a mammoth operation, personally supervised by Garden who had an uncanny knack of anticipating what his customers would require. Oatmeal and beremeal from his Ayre Mills contributed to this success. The Orcadian newspaper described him as “Orkney’s premier merchant prince” He also had three large shops along Bridge Street selling drapery, groceries and china plus hardware. Behind these was his house and in his garden stood the Groatie Hoose. Story has it that he suffered from insomnia and when he felt like 40 winks during the day he would go and rest in the Groatie Hoose - See front cover.

At the bottom of East Road he had a lemonade factory also producing jam and marmalade. Garden understood the value of his staff and built houses for them in Garden Street and St Catherine’s Place. He died in 1912. In his memory his widow and family built the Garden Memorial Building forming part of the Balfour Hospital. The cost was £12,000 plus architects’ fees of £20. His son Willie

continued the business. Eventually it was made into a limited company with Gilbert Archer as chairman.

His family did not carry on the business which was bought by the Archer family of Tod Holdings. In 1937, a major fire destroyed the draper and grocery shops in Bridge Street. These were not replaced, leaving the present square, part of one side of which can be seen in the photograph-left by S.Firth



Sadly, in 2004 the trading name of R. Garden Ltd. finally disappeared.

The Groatie Hoose by Sandy Firth

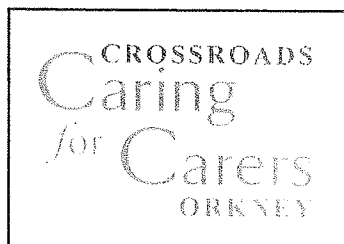
Tankerness House Gardens have been a scene of great activity recently. Builders have been fulfilling a long cherished dream of Orkney Heritage Society. The “Groatie Hoose” has been shifted stone by stone from its home for over the past two hundred years to a new site at the bottom of Orkney Museum’s Garden. Hiding behind the former Gardens Bakery, this neat little square tower, with gothic windows on three sides has a conical roof which was constructed from some of the ballast which was jettisoned from the Pirate ship “Revenge” when she was re-floated off the Calf of Eday. This ballast is a conglomerate, full of inclusions. At some time the spire was decorated by the addition of hundreds of sea shells and these are probably the source of the name it acquired. The “Revenge” was commanded by Gow, the last pirate to be hanged for piracy on the high seas, in Britain.



Many years ago, at the behest of the then owners, the Society in conjunction with the Community Council and Museums Office located a site for its removal to Tankerness House Garden. Plans were well under way when a letter to “The Orcadian” from an ill informed, but very influential individual against the move, completely stifled the plan. We are delighted to have been able to help the Community Council to fulfil this move at long last and so preserve a part of our heritage for future generations.

The photograph above by S. Firth shows the Groatie Hoose under reconstruction in the Gardens of Orkney Museum.

Crossroads (Orkney) by Mrs. Mairhi Trickett



Crossroads Orkney aims to improve the quality of life for carers and those for whom they care by giving information, emotional support and practical help. Over the past ten years we have developed a range of services for carers to try and meet these aims. There is no charge for the basic services.

Our Crossroads respite care scheme gives carers 'time off' from caring by either looking after their dependant at home or taking them out. We care for people of all ages and illnesses/disabilities and our staff is trained to deal within each caring situation.

The Orkney Carers Centre at Anchor Buildings provides a 'drop-in', phone or 'home visit' service to any carer needing advice, information or emotional support. We can help with accessing other services, filling in forms or provide Advocacy for carers.

During the Easter/Summer holidays we have been joining with the Pickaquoy Centre to run a playscheme on 3 days a week for children within the Autistic Spectrum. By providing extra staff, expertise and training we enable the children to join in the fun of the playscheme alongside children without special needs.

In Orkney, as well as elsewhere in Britain, some carers are children under 18 years of age. We have a Young Carers Support worker who raises awareness of young carers' issues in schools and among other professionals. She also runs three support groups for children affected by caring with an age range of 6-17 years of age. The groups meet to have fun but also for support and help in their caring situation.

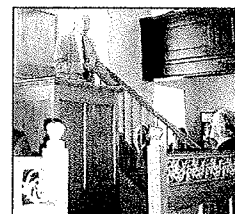
The Orkney Carers Centre also runs an Independent Living Project which supports elderly/disabled people and their carers who are in receipt of Independent Living Fund or a Direct Payment. This support may take the form of assisting with recruitment, training staff or other employment responsibilities.

Crossroads (Orkney) has a Board of Directors who are all local people who meet every six weeks – half of the board are carers or ex-carers. They are responsible for forming policies and overseeing the services provided. They are also active in both raising funds and the profile of our service. The organisation receives grant funding from Orkney Islands Council and NHS Orkney. We also receive money from Talisman Energy (UK) Ltd. and other local organisations as well as Lottery funding and other grant sources. Local donations and fund raising also add to our funds.

ST PETER'S KIRK, SANDWICK by Victoria Collison-Owen

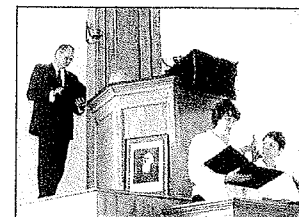
When I was writing about the Scottish Redundant Churches Trust's plans for the renovation of St Peter's Kirk in the Newsletter 2000, I had, in my mind's eye, a picture of how the transformed building might look. Gone were the blank boarded up windows and the crumbling exterior, replaced instead by clean glass and crisp harling. There was a fear that something of the special quality of the kirk would be lost, as retaining character and atmosphere during historic building renovation presents a huge challenge and requires tremendous vision, a lightness of touch, and a highly skilled workforce.

Four years on, and with work completed, it appears that at St Peter's the challenge has been met. Certainly, many of those who come to experience and enjoy the kirk comment on the special quality that the building has, and the sense of history that it gives them. The work carried out has also attracted considerable praise from the heritage world, for the way in which the building has been sensitively and skilfully conserved, using best practice and with a minimum of impact on the original fabric. St Peter's has now won three awards: a Conservation Commendation from the Royal Institute of British Architects, a European Union



Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award, and a Laura Grimond Award. The latter two were presented in a ceremony in September 2004 at the kirk, by Professor Sir James Dunbar-Nasmith, [Photograph by S. Firth on left.] Vice President of Europa Nostra, and Ian Heddl, President of Orkney Heritage Society.

The event included *Kirk and Parish*, arranged by Leslie Burgher and Kristen Norquoy, with music and readings related to the Kirk History; extracts from records of the Parish of Sandwick and the Stastical Accounts of Scotland cleverly combined into a lively, dramatic and amusing series of performances – this was living history at its very best. [Photo of performers on right, by S. Firth]



The awards received for the renovation of St Peter's honour the contribution of all those who worked on the building and those behind the scenes giving support and encouragement. But the real success of the project lies not in the awards received, but in seeing the kirk alive again and being used and enjoyed by people.

St Peter's Kirk is available for use for concerts, recitals, exhibitions, lectures and other community events. It is also available for weddings. No fee is charged for the use of the building. Contact the SRCT for further details: telephone 01334 472032 or email contact@srct.org.uk

Lyness in 1944 remembered in 1998 by Mrs. Una Wallace, a WRNS Cypher Officer

My sister and I had stayed in Orkney two or three years before the war started. Having gone to Hoy for a picnic we sat on a grassy slope, beside the sea. There wasn't a living soul to be seen, only the cry of seagulls and the sound of lapping water. It was an experience I will never forget. Later, to my surprise, after three and a half years as a Cypher Officer, I was put in charge of the C-in -C's Cypher Office at Lyness.

I was flown to Hatston, very nearly taking off the top of St. Magnus Cathedral as we came down. At Scapa Pier a magnificent sight awaited us. Anchored in the flow were several battleships. They rose to enormous heights above us as our boat puffed its way across to Hoy.

Lyness then was a large village, heavy with smoke and a harbour with rusty iron steps going up the wall of the quay. The WREN Quarters was a large anteroom and dining room. In another hut, raised fairly high on stilts, were the sleeping quarters. They consisted of a very long passage with cabins on either side and washrooms near the door. I was later taken to Wea Fea where the cypher office was situated. We entered by a side door, went down steps to the basement and along a concrete passage to the last door. Behind this was the cypher office. It was a big open room with long desks down one side and a small one at the end. The other Cypher Officers were extremely friendly and keen on their work. If an urgent message came in, and those on duty were all busy, I was able to do the deciphering, which I loved. It was fascinating to see the message grow under your hand.

On my half-days I would get on my bike and see the real Hoy. Farmers' wives sometimes let me buy spare eggs which I later put in preservative and then took home in a hatbox when I went on leave. They were much appreciated. When I had the whole day off I went to Kirkwall. There was always some kind man who would lift my bike down on to the ferry. I often pedalled my way from Scapa to Kirkwall and back in a gale. It was such a thrill to gaze into shop windows and sit in the beauty and peace of the Cathedral.

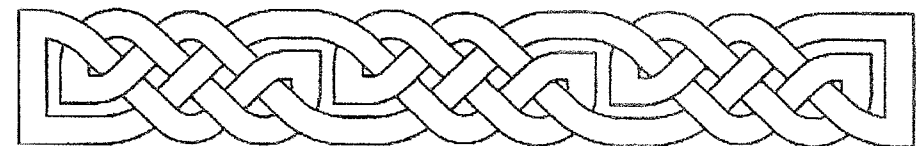
My husband and I went to Lyness a year after the war ended. I hardly recognised it. We climbed up to Wee Fea and found the door down to the cypher office unlocked so we went down to the lower passage and found that the concrete had all been broken up and it was a perilous journey to the cypher room door. We found a big empty room, but above the small desk at the end a notice, in my handwriting, was pinned to the wall. It was an eerie feeling to realise that something of mine was still there after all these years.

Abridged by Iris Heddle

Tam's Tally of Orkney Books 2005

Orcadiana	Gregor Lamb	Bellavista	14.95
Another Wag	Gregor Lamb	Bellavista	9.99
Interrogation of Silence	Rowena/Brian Murray	John Murray	25.00
Kirkwall Ba'	JDM Robertson	Dunedin Academic Press	25.00
Rhubarb, Kittens & Me	Kate Barrett	Felix Books	7.95
In Another Light	Andrew Greig	Weidenfeld & Nicolson	12.99
Finstown: Village at the Crossroads	Allan Taylor	Allan Taylor	14.99
Maggie's Book	Maggie Harcus	Papay Books	7.99
Orkney Bird Report 2003	Orkney Bird Report	Orkney Bird Report	6.00
Lines on the Landscape	Trevor Garnham	Tempus	17.99
Greenvoe (Reprint)	George Mackay Brown	Polygon	6.99
Stroma Yoles	Alastair R Walker	Orcadian	9.99
Simmans, Sookans & Straw Backed Chairs	Janette A Park	Orkney Heritage	6.50
Whit Lassyz ur Inty	Alison Flett	Thirsty Books	6.99
A Celebration of Sunrise at the Tomb of the Eagles	Babette Barthelmess	Orkney Museums and Heritage	18.00
Clear Day on the Black Crag, Orkney	Yvonne Gray	Braga Press	4.50

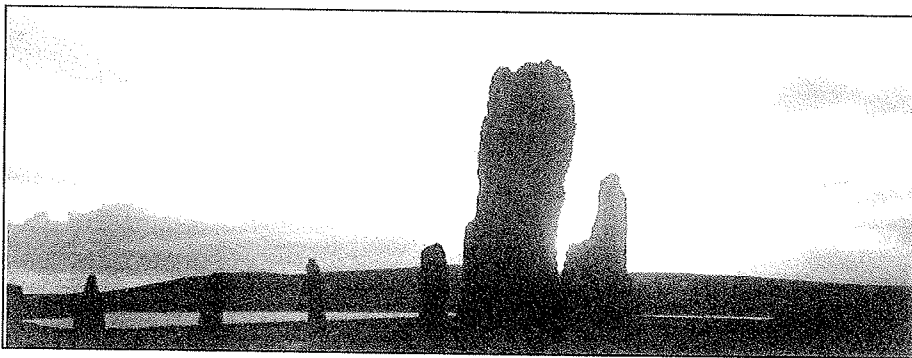
Available at Stromness Books & Prints 1, Graham Place, Stromness



Personal Observations on Brodgar by Peter Leith

As a copy of an Orkney Telephone Directory lay in front of me showing a very good photograph of the double stone at the Ring of Brodgar, I suddenly thought the sight line enclosed by the stones pointed in the direction of sunrise on the shortest day. Investigation with an Astro-compass (a type of sextant used by aircraft in the war) confirmed the possibility. It was sometime in the spring that I noticed this and as on the longest day the sun sets in the opposite direction to where it rises on the shortest day, it would be interesting to see if my idea was correct.

The days lengthened and in the old saying, "the sun sets a cock stride north every day", I kept watch on the evenings when the sun was visible as it set. Sadly, on the longest day, the sun was down before it reached the sight line through the stone. The hills got in the way and the sun was out of sight before it reached the true horizon.



Photograph by Peter Leith is of the midwinter sunrise at the Double Stone at Brodgar 2005, taken six days before the shortest day.

The hills to the SE are higher and six months later, as the shortest day approached I began to watch again and about a week before the shortest day the sky was clear at the horizon at sunrise. The tip of the sun appeared just marginally short of the sight line and there was good hope that on the 21st it would be perfectly in line. But there were about three weeks of cloudy skies and no hope of seeing the sunrise and being sure of the fact.

This seems to confirm that the shortest day was important when the monument was built. The standing stones were probably used as a gathering place to mark the occasion. It has been said that Orcadian skies are so often seen to be

cloudy that there can be no connection between the stones and sun observation, but the opposite is true. There is no definite weather change to indicate spring had arrived, so even if the exact day could not be observed it could still be said when the day had passed. There is a slight difference in the sunrise now and when the standing stones were put up. That difference is less than a degree. In other words, less than the width of your thumb at arms length. It can be measured with modern instruments but can be ignored while surveying with the old-fashioned eyeball - especially if watching the sun without shades and when you only get one glance and then it is too bright.

The marking of the shortest day, the day that marks the turning point when the days lengthen and there is hope of renewed life in the ground, implies a great deal of study of the sun paths through the year. The size of the monument indicates that when it was built there were scholars to design and leaders to finance the building and possibly imposing taxes for paying the keeper.

It is known that in Orkney in Neolithic times barley was grown and the summer in Orkney is long enough to grow and ripen this crop, if you sow it at the proper time. If it is sown late it can mean an unripe crop at harvest time and disaster for the community. When communities were small and self-contained they probably each had their own mark to show when it was time to sow. A stone viewed from the house door, or a notch on the horizon would have been sufficient. At that time every mark of importance would have its own name with no need of a standing stone to mark it. The time to sow crops was much more important than just the academic marking of the shortest day. In historic times it was usual to have the year start about the beginning of the growing season and not at some time dictated by the scholars. In Scotland, New Year's Day was the 25th of March until 1599 when the king* declared that it should change to what we know today. On a Norwegian staff calendar summer began on April 14th and St. Magnus Day was April 16th when traditionally "spring work started."

There is only one double stone in the group to give a sight line and this is not to be confused There with one nearby that is split. Whether by accident or design, this lines up at sunrise on the shortest day. Perhaps there was even a celebration to mark the event. It has been said that the enclosed area at a henge monument gives an idea as to how many people gathered there. If this is correct, then Orkney in those times, must have been well populated!

* King James VI decided that Scotland should come into to line with,"other well governt commonwealths" and have New Year on 1st January instead of 25th March. *Scotching the Myths*, by Jim Hewison.

Finance Report 2003 / 04 by Neil McCance

Although the Treasurer had been unable to attend the AGM he had arranged to have a number of the audited Statements of Income and Expenditure for the Year Ended 31st August 2003 made available for Members attending. These were, hopefully, self-explanatory.

Opening balances were £55,502 and closing balances were £63,988. The increase was to a large extent explained by the receipt of a grant of £9,746 from the Esmee Fairburn Foundation destined to be paid to the Kirkwall Community Council towards the cost of moving the "Groatie Hoose" and not paid until the current financial year. However the Society will have gained from the interest accrued.

The following major amounts were also received during the year: £500 from the Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust, grants of £975 towards Publication costs of the "Sea Change Orkney" publication, Abbey National Interest £1,959 of which £1,080 was interest on the Fixed Rate Charities Bond and £2,225 from the sales of the OHS Journal. Members' subscriptions totalled £1,124 of which a large percentage was represented by New Life Memberships. Tax relief to the amount of £207 was also received on Gift Aid donations/Membership subscriptions. Profit on the Eynhallow Trip 2003 came to £270.

Major outgoings consisted of £3,120 on building works for St. Boniface Kirk, insurance premium of £1,520 of which £912 was recovered from OAT, £500 paid to OIC from the Gordon Fraser Trust, £350 grant to Ron Wishart for reclamation of a burial kist, awards and prizes totalling £292 and £3,175 Journal publication costs. Administration and advertising costs totalled £326.

Applications for Membership

The Application Form for Membership has been found to be too detailed to fit into this page. For those paying annually, the cost is £10 and for life members £100. If you require a form for yourself or for a friend who wishes to join or should you have any queries, please contact Neil McCance the Treasurer as above, or the Membership Secretary, Bill Groundwater. Their details may be found in the list of Committee members inside the front cover.

Any other queries, contact either Hilda Firth at the address given in the Committee details, or Iris Heddle at Clelyan, Ireland Road, Stenness, Orkney. KW16 3EZ.

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