



SIB FOLK NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ORKNEY FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

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And a good time was had by all

Another year nearly over and here are a few pictures high-lighting some of our activities over the past 12 months or more.

The top row shows part of our premises within the New Library at Junction Road.

Next we have a corner of the Orkney Room and adjacent is the Orkney Archive. The smiling girl is our new chairman, Anne Rendall ready to whip the committee into shape. The happy group at the phonebox were enjoying an outing to one of the island while our next picture shows Nan and Irene Miller deeply engrossed in affairs of state on the boat to Westray. Nan again on her retreat as Chairman of OFHS being presented with a bouquet by Brigadier S P Robertson.

An unusual sight in Orkney was the teepee pitched in Kirkwau by the Cree Indians as part of their 'Home-coming' celebrations. It looks as if our Research Secretary, Adrienne Leash has negotiated a bargain while shopping in Papa Westray

A triumphant Dave Higgins glad to set foot in Orkney again after his solo charity walk from Land's End to John O' Groats and a group of our members praying the elements on the trip to Graemsay.

**ORKNEY
FAMILY HISTORY
NEWSLETTR**

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From the chair



Has everyone managed to sign on to the new members' page on the web site? I hope that our overseas and "doon sooth" members will find it useful and give them an idea of what information is available in the office. We will be monitoring the useage and will be very pleased to have your feedback.

We have had a very busy summer with visitors to the office and a large percentage of them joining the society on the spot. We were very pleased to get a visit from the Earl and Countess of Orkney in October, and they went away with a membership form. They are very keen to start up an Orkney Society in Manitoba Canada next year so no doubt we will be hearing more about that in the coming months.

Our September meeting was held in the

Orkney College where Donna Heddle gave us a very interesting talk on old maps showing us that Orkney was recorded on some of the earliest maps produced.

As you will see later on in the newsletter our October meeting was given over to the launch of James Irvine's latest book "Trace your Orkney Ancestors", a very useful tool for finding out where to look for information.

If you have any comment, information or queries that you want printed in the Sib Folk News please send them to the editor.

I hope everyone has a very happy Christmas and a good new year, and I hope to see you at our meetings or if you are in Kirkwall, do come into the office and see us.

Anne Rendall

Chairman



Dellin Roots in Shetland

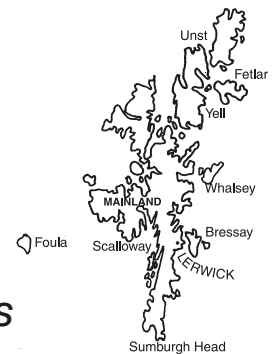
Nan Scott reflects on her visit to the SFHS

From 29th May—5th June 2004 the Shetland Family History Society put on a great family history week of talks, events and outings for its members. One hundred and twenty members in total were involved, seventy coming from outside Shetland. They came from North America, Australia, New Zealand and the length and breadth of the United Kingdom including the Channel Islands. Thankfully they did not all try to get into the SFHS premises at 6 Hillhead at one time!

I was the only Orkney member to enrol but was never allowed to feel lonely. I had previously had help from the secretary, Elizabeth Angus, and the research secretary Merryn Henderson. The chairman Tom Goudie was quick to give a welcome, as was Florence Grains who had been the chairman when the society was inaugurated in 1991. It was also good to see Mary Barron,

Shetland's SAFHS representative from Edinburgh, whom I had met each time I had been to SAFHS meetings there. Then the treasurer, Olivia Tulloch said, "I think you stayed with my aunt the first time you were in Shetland". She was right and that had been in 1955. Everyone was so welcoming and we all felt at home.

As we were taken on the various coach tours I couldn't help comparing the Shetland of fifty years ago with the present day one. The tidy whitewashed croft houses had been replaced by much bigger colourful bungalows. the occupants now spending their energies tending beautiful gardens instead of "dellin" small runrigs. Gone were the tethered beasts and there were fewer peat stacks. Oil and modern technology had probably made the difference.



The huge success of the SFHS is in some measure thanks also to modern technology. The office has an ever-increasing list of resources which include the standard Census / IGI / OPR microfilms and fiche for all Shetland, Scotland and some English Counties.

They have films of some old newspapers, Sheriff Court & Fiscal lists and Captains & Whaling lists as well. All the graveyards have been recorded and booklets are for sale. There are also many assorted books and documents of local interest. The volunteers who work so hard are to be congratulated on what they have accomplished. I came away with the story of "The 1832 Shetland Fishing Disaster" as told by Robert C Johnson among other things.

Shetland seems to be awash with History Groups and Museums in many of the districts. Members of the History Groups were on hand to help at some of the events during the week.

I'd like to tell you some of my best memories. My own research was to be in Dunrossness where my Mowat ancestors came from. I found gravestones to photograph including the famous Betty Mowat's one. It was a great privilege to visit Mary Black who had been the last one of the Mowat descendents to correspond with us. She was now one hundred years and eleven months old. She was from a family of eight and could tell me the names and occupations of them all and much more.

On the coach tour to that area we had an excellent guide, Robin Hunter, who spoke very clearly in perfect Shetland dialect. We visited the Croft House Museum and the excellent Quendale Mill meeting some of the Local History Groups.

Another day I went on the tour to the island of Fetlar. Again Robin was our guide and I was surprised to find that he knew as much about the north of Shetland as he had done about the south where he now lived. To get to Fetlar we drove through Yell the homeland of the late Bobby Tulloch a famous ornithologist, naturalist, photographer and guide. As I listened to Robin I was constantly reminded of Bobby and I am sure Robin's worth like Bobby's will not go unnoticed in the future. The Fetlar Interpretative Centre was worth going miles to see and it would have taken more time than was available to take it all in. There was evidence of the clearances of the 19th century here. Then there was a big house and a Victorian folly for a laird, Sir Arthur Nicolson. Another big house was built in 1900 for Sir William Watson Cheyne, a prominent surgeon of his day who had helped Lord Lister in his pioneering work in antiseptic surgery. The highlight of that day for me was stopping at Loch Funzie (pronounced Finny) and watching several red-necked phalaropes feeding along the shore. They are very friendly, colourful birds and were not put off by several photographers from goodness knows where, taking video pictures at

close quarters. It's a delight to watch them swimming buoyantly as they catch insects on the water's surface. Their heads bob all the time and sometimes they will even spin around. They will wade with quick movements as well. After that days filming some will appear on foreign television programmes I should think.

On the last day of the Conference tours had been arranged for Bressay, Hoswick and Sandwick, and Burra. I chose Bressay where we had the company of Alan Beattie who is the editor of "Coontin Kin" SFHS's quarterly magazine. Earlier in the week he had given a talk on Shetland's Maritime History and prepared a CD-Rom to hand out. We were made very welcome at the Bressay Heritage Centre.

There were two evening events probably missed by no one who was invited! The first was the Civic Reception on the Tuesday. Florence Grains who is now Vice Convener Shetland Islands Council, hosted this. After the meal there followed a talk by Brian Smith, Shetland Archivist, on the Shetland Clearances. The second was on Saturday the final night of the Conference. As if the SFHS hadn't done enough for us already they now hosted a Farewell Foy where there was a buffet and an opportunity to chat to old friends and new. It was an emotional evening and words failed to express the gratitude of all for the welcome and kindness shown to all the visitors.

During the week there were opportunities to see some of the Shetland culture. We heard young musicians, saw displays of Up Hellya items etc, and saw evidence of the crafting, knitting and fishing traditions. I twice got caught in the "Spiders Web" where they sold quality Shetland Knitwear. I also discovered two new Shetland writers for myself.

Under my arm when I left Shetland I had John J. Graham's novel "Shadowed Valley" based on the Weisdale Evictions and Christine De Luca's poems in English and Shetland dialect. On my back



Front Page

Thanks to George Gray, Adrienne Leask, Joyce Mahoney, Ian & Betty Cameron and anyone else who contributed photographs for our front page montage. Ed.



NEW WEBSITE

Just as we were going to press we received information about a new website devoted to UK research and products sourced entirely in the UK.

Visitors can log on to the site at www.GenealogyMarketplace.co.uk

Site information is fairly sparse at present but there is a short overview plus details of a competition. The launch date of Dec. 25th will no doubt reveal more when members can judge the value of the site for themselves.

There were seven of us in our family

By Isabella Tomlinson Muir



Isabella as a teenager in her 'Sunday best'.

My father was James Donaldson, the eldest son of Wemyss Donaldson of the farm of Greenock.

Grandfather belonged to Egilsay and I think some of my father's family were born there before he came to Greenock. He was a big heavy man—bigger than any of his sons. I only remember him as an old man of course. He came to see us quite often and we called him 'faither'. Sometimes when he walked from Greenock to Vedder on a warm day (a distance of over two miles) he would seat himself in father's chair, and after having asked for everyone and how things were doing, he would settle back and have forty winks. Mother never took any notice of this, but went about her work of getting tea and, by the time it was ready, 'faither' would open his eyes and take part in the conversation again as though he had never been asleep. He lived to be an old man—I think he was eighty-four when he died.

Mama of Greenock died when I was about five. I dimly remember her as being short of stature and rather stoutish. She was Mary Eunson of Upper Greenock, but no relation to my mother whose name was Eunson also. Mama's father was James Eunson and her mother's maiden name was Annie Dishan.

It was thought that the Donaldsons were of Spanish origin. Certainly, their features

and their sparkling black eyes could have hailed from Spain. But I can only go back as far as my great grandparents.

Wemyss Donaldson's parents were John Donaldson and his wife Bell Peace and they lived in Egilsay. Grandfather had an uncle (or perhaps it was a grand uncle) who went to Peru and made a fortune in fruit farming. He was married to an Orkney woman but left no family and died intestate. The Government took possession of his wealth. Perhaps if my grandfather had gone to Peru and claimed his share, we might have been well off and I would not be writing this story now. But Grandfather did not have the money to take him to Peru, nor to engage a lawyer to take up the matter.

My father was a rather stocky man with black hair, small black beard, bright black eyes and sharp features. The sharp features, I think, he took from his mother's family. He was the eldest. Then came Aunt Mary, Aunt Maggie, Aunt Jessie, Uncle Robbie and Johnnie. My father had a genial nature and, though inclined to sulk a little, he never kept up a grudge. He had sound principles, took an intelligent interest in world affairs and politics (he was a staunch liberal) and could crack a joke and tell a story with gusto. He was always friendly with his neighbours and ever ready to assist them, and he was also a good father.

Uncle Robbie was more like my grandfather, with a broad face and high cheek bones. He was also dark, but not so dark as my father and Johnnie.

I always thought Johnnie a handsome man with his black hair and moustache and laughing black eyes, and he had the high cheekbones of the Donaldsons. He was a very pleasant, good tempered man and we all looked on him more as an elder brother than as an uncle.

Uncle Robbie and Johnnie both married sisters. Betsy and Maggie Budge of the Round,

Aunt Mary was like her mother. She was in service in London with Dr Rae, the explorer, but came back to Orkney to marry Samuel Petrie and they lived at Groatster.

Aunt Maggie looked typically Spanish with her raven black hair and flashing eyes. She was a tall woman and inclined to be heavy. She went to London when in her early twenties and spent thirty years of her life there and, although she was two or three times engaged, she was never married.

Aunt Jessie was tall also, but not good looking like Aunt Maggie.



Jeffrey Hamlett

We are indebted to Isabella's grandson Jeffrey Hamlett, a former member of OFHS who now lives in the USA, for the unrestricted use of his grandmother's manuscript. Isabella's reminiscences were written by her in 1942 and describe her early life on the farm of Vedder in Tankerness and continue up to her marriage to James Muir in 1918 in the Parish Church of St Andrews, Orkney

She had dark hair and steely grey eyes; she also lived and died a spinster.

My grandmother on my mother's side was the only member of her family in Orkney. Her parents and brothers (she was an only daughter) all emigrated to Australia shortly after my grandmother married William Eunson, and grandfather Eunson would not leave his native land to seek his fortune in sunny Australia. From what I've heard my mother say, I think Mama missed her parents and brothers very much. Her father's name was John Miller and her mother's maiden name Sally Scott, both of Stronsay. Grandfather Eunson's father was a grieve at Wideford and his wife's name was Kristy (Christina) Allan.

Mama had been a handsome woman in her day, although I only remember her as an old woman, plump of body and rather sharp of tongue. She was a good woman in a religious sense as was also mama of Greenock. In all her seventy-five years she was never attended by a doctor and she had little faith in doctors' medicines, so I've heard my mother say. She was known to say on more than one occasion "the Lord has been my physician all my life and He'll be it till the end." And it was so, for mama died early one day in March 1894 after only a few hours' illness (heart attacks).

I never saw any of my mother's brothers. Uncle James died 4½ years before I was born. He was never married.

Uncle William went to Edinburgh when he was a boy. He stayed with Maria Mair, a cousin of his father's, and learned to be a shoemaker with Mr Paterson. When Mr Paterson retired, Uncle William, still a young man, took over the business and was comparatively wealthy when he retired. He was a town councillor in the ward of St Leonards, Edinburgh and also a J.P. He was a strict teetotaler and a non-smoker. He died in Chalmers Hospital, Edinburgh, when he was in his sixties and we all received a small legacy from him.

I was named Isabella Tomlinson after his wife who predeceased him by a few years. Uncle William sent me £50 after she died and Ella Tomlinson, Edinburgh and Bella Eunson, Adelaide (Uncle David's youngest daughter) each received the like sum.

Uncle William compiled a book after he retired which he called "Thoughts coined from the ages". He lost a good sum of money on the printing of the book—money that might have been better spent surely.

Uncle David wrote him a letter when he received a copy, criticising it and its author and making fun of the whole thing. He said it would make a good footstool (it was a large volume). Uncle William was deeply offended at the letter and did not reply to it, nor did he write to Uncle David again.

Uncle William took Uncle David to Edinburgh when he was a boy, and had him apprenticed to the shoemaking trade with him. But Uncle David was a gifted singer and his companions were not those of Uncle William's. Uncle David was a precentor in a church in Musselburgh for some years before he left Edinburgh for Adelaide, Australia.

Uncle Johnnie was already in Australia. Mother always spoke affectionately of her brother Johnnie

My Family

There were seven of us. It was often Mother's regret that Uncle William, who was childless and well off, had not seen fit to help give us a higher education as we were all well-gifted intellectually. I think if our parents could have afforded it, the four sisters would have gone in for teaching. My brother Willie would have made a good vet Jimmy a lawyer and Johnnie perhaps an architect. As it was Willie and Jimmy had to follow farming and Johnnie learned to be a joiner.

Barbara, my eldest sister, lived with mama, and on her mama lavished the wealth of her affection. Barbara was fair and slender and the essence of neatness and like all little sisters I looked up to her. I do not remember much about her until she came to teach in the Tankerness School. Before that she was in Kirkwall for a time, learning dressmaking in J & J Smith's, then with the Rev David Webster's family for a short time, and finally nurse to Master Robert Cowan (afterwards Robert Baikie). She was appointed Assistant Teacher and sewing mistress of the Tankerness School as successor to Miss Garrioch in November 1894 and remained in that position until she married Robert Eunson of Grimster in December 1896. By the time Barbara came to teach I had long got over my fears of the school. Being my teacher, I suppose, made me have a certain amount of respect for her and I admired her greatly, but I did not love her as a sister until after she had married.

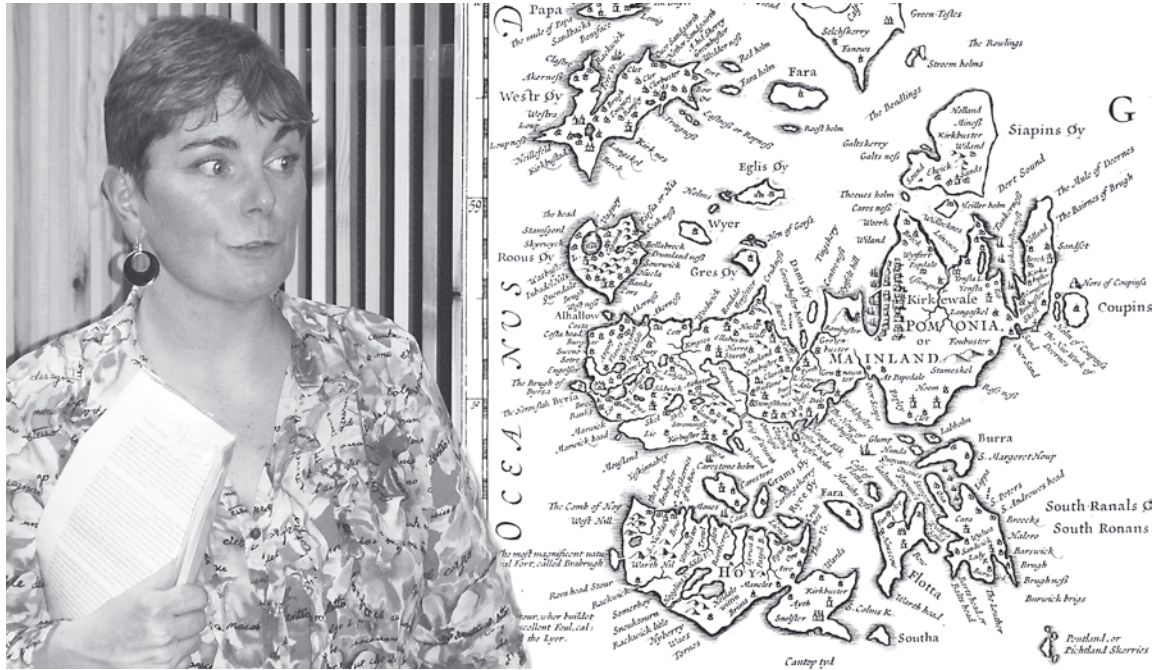
When she left school my sister Sarah went to Greenock to help grandmother who was failing, and afterwards to Kirkwall where she was housekeeper to the Agent of the Commercial Bank until she married Peter Brass. Sarah was as dark as Barbara was fair, but they had a similarity of features. Sarah had jet black hair and shining brown eyes. Both sisters were of medium height and both handsome, As Sarah was away from home most of the time after she left school until she married in 1895, I did not know her very well until I went to live with her in 1898.

Turn to page 7



Did you know...

that the Dwarfie Stone on Hoy was hurled by a giant in Caithness who was angry at the Orkney people— yes I know it is hard to believe that anyone could be angry at the Orkney people but I digress— He surely had not had his porridge that morning for the stone never cleared the Hoy Hills but landed below Hoy's Ward Hill, the highest hill in Orkney. What! You don't believe it? Well there are no other rocks of similar size in the valley. But there's more— Housing being what it was in Hoy at that time a troll and his wife spotted the stone and liked the location. Postponing his child stealing and pain -in-the-neck activities he turned his skills instead to carving two sleeping chambers out of the solid rock, one of which even contains a rock cut pillow. You still doubt the veracity of my tale? Well I can only say that the evidence is still there on Hoy for all to see, exactly where the stone landed in the valley all these thousands of years ago.



On the border of this massive r und

A talk given by Donna Heddle, lecturer at Orkney College

Members of the OFHS sat in rapt attention at the September meeting as Donna Heddle, a lecturer at Orkney College, took them on a fascinating journey of map making through the ages.

Donna started by telling us that the earliest artifact that could be termed a map was a wall painting from some 8000 years ago. This was discovered at Catal Hyuk, a stone age settlement near modern day Ankara, and it depicted houses, streets, and a nearby volcano.

She explained that earliest map making activities were confined to local features and land measurements as was revealed in early Egyptian maps from around 1300BC. Babylonian clay tablets from about 600BC shows Babylon and the immediate area depicted in a circular form surrounded by water, which fits the religious image of the world in which the Babylonians believed.

Donna then moved on to the Greek influence in map making. Pythagoras in the 6th century BC is believed to be the first to put forward the belief in a spherical earth. About 350BC Aristotle put forward six arguments to prove that the Earth was spherical and from that time on scholars generally accepted that indeed it was a sphere. One hundred or so years later

Eratoshenes measured the circumference of the earth with great accuracy and used a grid system to locate the position of places on the earth.

The final Greek contribution of note and perhaps the most important was made by Ptolemy, a noted mathematician who in 140AD wrote his major work *Guide to Geography*, in eight books in which he dealt with the problems of map projection, that is mapping the sphere onto the plane, and attempting to map the known world giving coordinates of the major places in terms of what are essentially latitude and longitude.

Donna then demonstrated with the aid of computer projected maps just how Orkney fitted into all this.

It appears that the earliest mention of Orkney was in the writings of the Roman geographer Diodorus Siculus who described the world as it was known in his time—56BC. His knowledge of Orkney, or Orca came from a report by a Greek sailor Pytheas of Massila who was reputed to have sailed round Britain some 300 years earlier and had found Orca ‘a place of great waves’.

Developing the Roman connection Donna then showed the Pomponius Mela Map produced in the first century AD and containing the first mention of ‘Orcades’.



Did you know. . .

that the first recorded wreck on Orkney was on Shapinsay about 80AD. It was a ship from the fleet of the Roman General Agricola, the Governor of the Province of Britain. The ship struck a rock off the west coast of Shapinsay at a place called Grukalty subsequently corrected to Agricola. A reputed find of Roman coins has been used to give credence to the tale.

Orcades was also known to the second of the Roman Emperors Claudius and the Roman General Agricola, both of whom claim to have subjugated the Orkneys although later writers dispute that the Orkneys were ever conquered.

Moving on to the 14th century Donna touched on the Italian or Portolan maps, from the Italian word for a sailing manual. These were produced by sailors using a magnetic compass and showed wind direction and information for seafarers.

Donna concluded her talk by introducing many of us to the Joan Blaeu Atlas produced in 1654. This was the first Atlas of Scotland* containing 49 engraved maps and 154 pages of descriptive texts. The text on Orkney contains highly detailed information on each of the Orkney Islands and gives a fascinating insight of life in the Orkneys in the 17th century. The following description of the people of Orkney is taken from the Atlas and although written about 1650 could almost have applied in its entirety just one hundred years ago:-

“In their daily life the common people, especially in the countryside, still retain much of the old parsimony. And so they enjoy great and almost continuous health of mind and body; diseases are rare among them, and many die weakened only by old

age. Ignorance of luxuries, deriving from honourable poverty, does more among them to safeguard health or to restore it if lost, than does the art of physicians (of whom they have none) among other peoples. Most have a quite intelligent nature, capable of learning any skill or discipline; many are distinguished by a tenacious memory, an elegance of form, and a tallness of stature, cheerful in , strong and spirited, and display strength and a fearless spirit for fighting privately or publicly, when the occasion presents itself. They are themselves acute speakers according to their education, or avid listeners to and retailers of what is put forward acutely by others. They either express or try to express the humanity and civility which they have taken from the Scots who live among them. Even the country people listen carefully to the sermons, and by mutual repetition of what has been heard recall them to mind in a surprising manner.”

Certainly, the audience in the college were avid listeners and their appreciation of Donna's talk was recorded in the applause following the vote of thanks by our past chairman Nan Scott.

**If you are interested in discovering more about the Blaeu Atlas and its coverage of the Orkney Islands try <www.nls.uk/digitallibrary/maps/early/blaeu> for some fascinating reading.*

Continued from page 5

My brother Willie was almost a stranger to me during my early years, as he too had to go from home to earn his living. He went first to Wethick, then to Grimster, where he married Maggie Eunson of Grimster. Willie was like father in stature and also in face, but not so dark. He worked at Berstane after he married until he became a tenant of the farm of Valdigar, which was not far from Vedder.

My sister Maggie also went from home for a short time to help Mrs Banks of Calsit, who had a bad leg; but later was required at home to help her mother. I was grown up when Maggie married Willie Bews of Swartabreck so that I had her companionship during my early teens.

Jimmie and Johnnie were twins, and not a bit like each other. In fact they would not have been taken for brothers.

Jimmie was never away from home, but Johnnie went to Burnside when he was quite young. He was named after John Chalmers and Mrs Chalmers meant

Johnnie to have the farm after them.

When first he went to Burnside she told him where to sit “that's your chair, Johnnie, now and forever”. But Mrs Chalmers died and John Chalmers married again. Johnnie went from Burnside to Ness, thence to Kirkwall to learn joinery. He was married some years later to Agnes Wilson of Kirkwall and they went to Canada. Father required Jimmie's help on the farm and in addition Jimmie was the local postman. He married Mary Ann Cooper of Cott of Holland, Tankerness.

Singing came naturally to us. I believe Sarah and Maggie might, with training, have been great. Musical instruments were not very plentiful then, but we always had a fiddle and most of us scraped on it. Willie later learned to play the bagpipes.

It is difficult writing about my family. I was fond of them all. In trying not to be sentimental, I may have been too stiff. We Orcadians are so afraid of showing our affections.

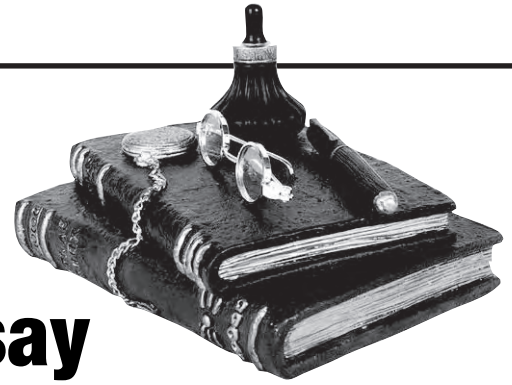
In our next newsletter Isabella returns briefly to her schooldays in Tankerness and tells of picnics, trips and prize-giving days. Then there is the big adventure of going to the Burgh School in Kirkwall and her memories of the teachers and the friends she made there. Some of these names might well be familiar to some of our members and if you have anything to add to Isabella's tale we will be delighted to share it with our readers.



Dave Annal

When Dave Annal, Member No 410, visited Orkney in 1980 he happened by chance to see the 1821 Census for South Ronaldsay. Dave subsequently acquired a copy which he could peruse at leisure and little did he think then that he still would be unravelling the tale 20 years later; and what a tale it turned out to be. Great bit of detective work Dave as I am sure our readers will agree.

The mystery of the 1821 census for South Ronaldsay



Peter Nicholson McLaren, was the Parochial Schoolmaster of South Ronaldsay, Orkney's southernmost island parish at the time of the 1821 census. As the enumerator, it was his responsibility to make an accurate count of the number of people living in South Ronaldsay, Burray, Swona and the Pentland Skerries on the night of 28 May 1821 – just as hundreds of enumerators the length and breadth of Great Britain were doing for their own districts.

This was the third decennial census to have been taken in the United Kingdom, following those in 1801 and 1811. Each successive census asked more detailed questions as the government sought to gather information about the UK's growing population but there was no requirement to list the names of the inhabitants in this census and there wouldn't be for another twenty years.

However, for one reason or another, a number of conscientious enumerators decided to make full lists of the names, ages and occupations of the people living in their districts and we are fortunate not only that South Ronaldsay's schoolmaster was one of these, but also that the fruits of his labours have survived to the present day.

The story of this census is a fascinating one, and discoveries made in the summer of 2004 have shed a whole new light on its history.

I first saw the document in the early 1980s when I visited Orkney and met my cousin Sandy (Alexander Taylor Annal). I say "cousin" but it is a distant relationship, our common ancestor William Annal having been born around 1750. I only got a fleeting glance at the document on that visit but Sandy was kind enough to supply me with a photocopy of the whole census which I then spent hours poring over, transcribing and indexing after returning to England.

Although I consulted the census frequently over the next twenty years and found much useful information in it about my South Ronaldsay ancestors, I didn't really give a great deal of thought to the origins of the document itself, or to the story of how it had survived for over a hundred and sixty years and now came to be in Sandy's possession.

Then, a few years ago, thanks to the miracle that is the World Wide Web, I made contact with Lisa Conrad in Seattle, USA. Lisa has a number of South Ronaldsay

ancestors and was in the process of developing her website on South Ronaldsay and Burray Civil Death Registers. Lisa mentioned that she was also working on a much bigger project, researching everyone who was living on the island at the time of the 1821 census. She was planning to make the information freely available on her website, providing an invaluable tool for anyone with South Ronaldsay ancestry. Out of this came the idea of digitising my photocopy of the census and creating a searchable online database.

Scanning the pages and emailing the images to Lisa in Seattle was quite straightforward and although the same can't quite be said for the monumental task of transcribing and indexing the names, ages and occupations and creating the necessary webpages, Lisa was able to launch the website in June 2004.

There was now just one problem to overcome. My photocopy of the census had one page missing and since my dad (Eric Annal) was due to visit Orkney in July and would be paying a visit to Sandy I asked if he could somehow get me a copy of the missing page. One evening, a few days after my dad's arrival in Kirkwall, I got a phone call to say that his mission had been accomplished – not only had he been able to get a good photocopy of the page but Sandy had actually allowed him to borrow the document. And this was where the story of the 1821 census of South Ronaldsay took an unexpected twist.

As far as I am aware, my dad was the first person for years, probably decades, to have been given unrestricted access to the document. And it was this freedom to peruse the volume at leisure that enabled him to consider it in a critical light. I had known from my own photocopy that the original was written on what appeared to be an accountant's ledger. Indeed, the first three pages of my copy consisted of accounts dating from the 1860's and 1870's and Sandy had annotated it with the words, "This cover page is a shop keeper's credit notes (using spare pages in our census book)."

As my dad looked closer at the document he began to develop a theory that the census had in fact been written onto spare pages in the shopkeeper's book and not the other way round. He also noticed that the handwriting on the accounts pages and the census pages appeared to be identical.

He then came across a note on the 'History of the Manuscript' written by Sandy at the end of the census, which reads as follows: "This copy of the 1821 census was in the Post Office at Quoys shop kept by Mr Thomson from 1821 until 1923 when William Thomson his Grandson died app age 57 leaving his widow and one daughter. Alex T Annal of Stensigarth retrieved this book from a bonfire – it is the only record of its kind in existence. Signed by his son – Alexander Taylor Annal – 1997 at the age of 90 years."

This was clearly something that required further research; who was Mr Thomson and how did the census come to be in the possession of a shop keeper?

A few days later my dad was in St Margaret's Hope talking to a local historian, George Esson when George showed him a copy of 'Church Life in South Ronaldshay and Burray' by Rev. J B Craven . As he looked at the dedication in the book, the following words jumped out at him;

**TO THE MEMOR Y OF
JAMES THOMSON OF QUOYS ,
OUR WARM-HEARTED FRIEND,
AN ACCOMPLISHED ANTIQUAR Y,
EVER HELPFUL, SINCERE AND TRUE**

So, was this our Mr Thomson? If so, he was obviously a bit more than just a shopkeeper.

Research into various South Ronaldsay sources provided some basic information about this James Thomson. He was born at Quoys in the South Parish of South Ronaldsay, the son of Donald Thomson, a farmer, and his wife Ann (née Gray) who were married in South Ronaldsay on 22 February 1809. James was baptised on 10 October 1819 and is found in the census returns for 1821 aged 1.

Later censuses provided the following details about James Thomson:

YEAR	ADDRESS	AGE	OCCUPATION
1841	Quoys	20	Shopkeeper
1851	Quoys	31	Merchant
1861	Quoys	41	Grocer
1871	Wst Quoys	51	Merchant
1881	Quoys	61	Merchant
1891	Quoys	71	Gen Merchant

AGES ROUNDED DOWN TO THE NEAREST 5

This is clear evidence that James Thomson was working as a merchant/shop keeper at the time the accounts in the 'census book' were written. Sandy's story places the document in the possession of this

family. The logical conclusion must therefore be that the account book belonged to James. The evidence of the handwriting suggests that James was also the 'author' of the census returns themselves - not that he compiled the original data (he was, after all, some five months short of his second birthday at the time!) but rather that at some time, probably in the 1880's, he copied the details of the census from a document which probably no longer exists into his old account book.

Before we move on to look at why James Thomson might have done such a thing there are a few more important pieces of evidence to consider. We know that the original enumeration was carried out by the schoolmaster, Peter Nicholson McLaren. As we have already seen, the government did not require official returns of names, ages and occupations so no pre-printed forms were available for McLaren to enter all the details on. He evidently decided that he wanted to record these details and as a schoolmaster he would presumably have had access to a large selection of notebooks - so why would he choose to use a shop keeper's account book? Most important of all why would he start writing some distance into the book – the first census page is numbered 23! It's clear to me that what we're dealing with is not the 1821 original but a transcription in a shop keeper's account book which was no longer required for its original purpose and that the handwriting is that of Thomson and not McLaren.

Further research revealed that James Thomson died on 21 October 1900 leaving a substantial will . However, the most crucial discovery was that of a letter written by Thomson to John Gray of Roeberry on 20 May 1870. I am enormously grateful for the assistance of Sarah Jane Grieve and Alison Fraser of the Orkney Library and Archive who were able to uncover this vital document as well as offering my dad support and advice. The letter, which is signed by James Thomson of Quoys confirmed two things; first of all that James Thomson had an interest in the people and history of South Ronaldsay and secondly that the handwriting in the 1821 census was undoubtedly Thomson's. A comparison of the two documents leaves little room for doubt. The final proof that we were on to something significant was the discovery of a lengthy obituary in The Orcadian , covering nearly two whole columns of the broadsheet newspaper.

Turn to page 11



Did you know. . .

that St Mary's Burwick, an isolated church on the edge of the bay in South Ronaldsay, contains a stone, four feet or so long, with a pair of shod feet carved into it.

Local legend has it that sinners were made to stand on the stone and confess all.

It has been established however that the stone is certainly pre-Christian and probably Pictish. Its original use would have been as an inauguration symbol where the new king would step into his predecessor's shoes to mark the line of succession.

His faither wis fae Shapinsay

By member No 588

It's amazing what a browse around the Orkney Room of the Library throws up.

I had a vague recollection of having heard that Washington Irving, author of those wonderful tales of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle" had an Orkney connection and there it was in black and white; he was the son of William Irving of Quholm and grandson of Magnus Irving and Catherine Williamson all of Shapinsay. If Washington had taken the trouble, and there is some evidence to say he did, he would have no doubt been delighted to discover that he belonged to a very old family of Scoto-Norman extraction that has evidently been traced back to William de Irwin, secretary and arrow bearer to Robert The Bruce.

The Shapinsay Irvings are a branch of the Irvings of Sebay; the first Irving of Shapinsay being Magnus. Now this was probably the same Magnus who along with two other brothers were dispossessed of their lands at Sebay in 1584 by the hated Earl Robert Stewart, the bastard son of James V of Scotland. Another brother, William who was a supporter of the Earl was installed in Sebay in their place. Magnus' son William was recorded as the first Baillie of Shapinsay in 1627.

The Irvings held the lands of Quholm in leu from the Bishopric at least until 1827 when the Bishopric lands were taken over by the Crown.

Now Magnus, Washington Irving's grandfather, was probably dead by 1746 when the land is recorded in the rentals as being in the possession of John Irving, son of Magnus and brother of William, father of the author. William was a seafarer and during the French War he was engaged on board an armed packet-ship of His Majesty plying between Falmouth and New York.

It was here he met his wife, the daughter of an English clergyman, and they were married in Falmouth in May 1861. Two years later they emigrated to America and landed in New York on the 18th July 1763. William gave up the sea and entered trade and by the time Washington was born in 1783 in New York City, near present day Wall Street, his father was a wealthy merchant.

Irving, the youngest of a family of eleven,



Did you know

that the *St Ola 1*, built in 1892 by Hall Russell, ran for almost 60 years between Stromness and Scrabster. For 31 of these years she was commanded by Captain George Bain Swanson. Captain Swanson skippered her through the dangerous years of WW1 and WW2 when on more than one occasion she had to return to port owing to U-boat activity in the Pentland Firth. He was a native of Longhope in Hoy being born there in 1870 and he died in Stromness in 1945.

He was a legend in his own lifetime, familiar with every ripple and mood of the Pentland Firth acknowledged by seafarers the world over as one of the most dangerous stretches of water in the world.



Washington Irving 1783-1895

had many interests, however, he was the first American to make a living solely from writing and is said to be 'the father of the American short story'. His output was prolific and by the 1820s he had gained a reputation throughout Europe and America as a great writer and thinker and he gained many honours both at home and abroad. In 1842 President Tyler appointed him Minister to Spain, today the equivalent would be ambassador. This meant that he travelled extensively as a diplomatic representative of the United States.

In 1832 he returned to New York and established a new home at Sunnyside in Tarrytown. He never married but over the next twenty-five years shared his home with his brother Ebenezer and Ebenezer's five children.

On November 28, 1859, the eve of the Civil War, Washington Irving died surrounded by his family. He was buried at Sleepy Hollow Cemetery at the Old Dutch Church in Sleepy Hollow, N.Y.

New lease of life for Fiona's ancestors

When Fiona Williamson Pearson, OFHS Member No 424 discovered an intriguing ancestor it sparked off an idea for a novel. The result is 'Merrybegotten' a work of fiction loosely based on the events of three generations of one family.

Fiona describes it as a 'tapestry of life and death set on the unique landscapes of Fair Isle and Orkney, where fatalism, joy and blind emotion play havoc with harsh realities.' 'Merrybegotten' is available from www.orcadian.co.uk/bookshop or www.amazon.co.uk or from the publishers www.kennedyboyd.co.uk

Continued from page 9

The obituary concentrates on James's spiritual life and in particular, his involvement with the Free Church in South Ronaldsay which was clearly a very significant part of his life. The 'obituary' is in fact a transcript of the sermon preached by the Reverend Alex Goodfellow, minister of the United Free Church in South Ronaldsay, at James Thomson's funeral service. In it he stated that;

"He has been with us from the beginning – since the Free Church was started in 1870. And but for him there might have been no Free Church in this island. He undoubtedly was the main mover..."

In 'The Soul of an Orkney Parish' there is a short section about the Free Church which includes the following paragraph:

"In the official records of the Free Church, reference is made to Mr. James Thomson of Quoys, who assisted the Church early in his life, and continued to collect for its Sustainment Fund until he was well into his eightieth year."

Interesting as this may be, it didn't give us any further clues about Thomson's possible involvement with the census. However, the 'obituary' also provides a fascinating insight into areas of his life which are of more concern to us here;

"Let me tell you something more about the life and history of this remarkable and memorable man of God, for undoubtedly he was "above many" if not above all in this island. He has not left his life behind him. His figure and personality were outstanding, for in bodily presence he was neither weak nor contemptible, while his mind was active and vigorous, and his memory was prodigious. His general knowledge was very great, for from his youth up, he was a

devourer of books and papers, and all kinds of information. Many, after meeting with him, have declared that he was a "walking encyclopaedia." All who wished to know about the antiquities of these islands, about the ministers of past and present generations, about the old family histories, and curious stories of bye-gone days, would apply to Mr Thomson—a self-taught man, and one who did not seek after great things, for he was contented to stand behind the counter and to be familiarly known as "the merchant." He has not written a book, but he has spoken volumes. His shop for long was like a public reading room, and then he was in his element, pouring forth all the news of the political, religious and social world."

Now this was more like it! Surely 'the merchant' is a very likely character to have been responsible for transcribing the 1821 census and surely this is as close to absolute proof as we will ever get that Sandy Annal is the proud owner of a document written by James Thomson in the 1880's and not the 1821 original.

I am personally convinced that this is the case. It does nothing to devalue the document in any way. If anything it makes it more interesting, giving it a human touch which is normally lacking in documents like this. Nor is there any reason to believe that it is anything other than an accurate transcript of the original – and remember that this has probably long since disappeared. Without the efforts of James Thomson, his son William Alexander Thomson and two generations of the Annal family, the information would have been lost forever and those of us with an interest in the history of South Ronaldsay would have been robbed of one the most important documents the island has ever produced.



Lord Kitchener

Did you know

There is a huge tower of a monument at Marwick Head in Orkney dedicated to the memory of Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, and paid for by the contributions of Orcadians, to which the British government contributed not one brass farthing.

Kitchener lost his life on June 5th 1916 when the cruiser HMS Hampshire mysteriously blew up off Marwick Head, en route to Russia. The grief of the nation at the loss of this great man could be compared with that experienced in recent years with the death of the Princess of Wales. Many rumours circulated as to the cause of the explosion—German spies; mines; Sinn Fein agents; sabotage even murder at the hands of the British Secret Service.

What is fact however is that 643 lives were lost while Orcadians were held back at gunpoint by the British army and prevented from attempting a rescue.

Even more wicked, the crew of the Stromness lifeboat was evidently threatened with the charge of mutiny if they went to the aid of the Hampshire.



If you have Hudson Bay ancestors you'll be interested in this reunion

As part of the 175th anniversary the Lower Fort Garry Volunteer Association is planning a reunion of descendants of Manitoba's original fur trade families who settled in the Red River settlement.

This will be held from August 13-21 2005 to celebrate their heritage and to re-establish connections. The committee is currently attempting to locate descendants from all over the world and especially from Orkney with its strong links with the Hudson Bay Co. If you are interested please e-mail the organisers at rr.reunion@3web.net

The event at the Lower Fort Garry will have various activities as well as bus tours. They will also collect and compile stories of the early employees for publication. More info and downloads can be found on the reunion website at www.redriverdescendantsreunion.org. Our thanks to David Sutherland of Manitoba Genealogy Soc. for this information.



The Orkney builders of Lambton County

By Bruce G Jameson Member No 581

LAMBTON COUNTY ONTARIO

Lambton County is located in south-western Ontario and is bordered on the north side by Lake Huron which flows into the St Clair River, the county's western boundary and part of the Canadian / USA border.

It was one of the last regions of S.W. Ontario to be developed and its natural resources, extensive waterways and rich soil attracted many immigrants from the British Isles. Agriculture still sustains many of the small towns in the interior of the county but the petro-chemical industry is arguably the most important section of the county's economy. Other parts of the county rely almost exclusively on tourism and the lake and river areas attract many thousands of tourists throughout the summer.

A number of Orkney men have settled in the Watford area since the late 1800's and have married Lambton county ladies. The first of this group was William Marwick (1855 – 1922) born on April 1, 1855 at Fursin in Evie Parish in the Orkney Islands. He was the fifth child born to David Marwick (1820 – 1863), a tea merchant and farmer, and Margaret Isbister (1831 – 1914). William was only seven years of age when his father died. Eventually his older brother, James, took over the farm and store at Fursin. In 1873, when William was 18, he emigrated from Orkney to Canada. It is hard to understand what drew this young Orcadian to flat, forested Lambton County about 1880. It certainly didn't remind him of the barren, rolling, wind-swept beauty of the islands he left behind. Orkney is a group of about seventy islands across the Pentland Firth from Caithness and Sutherland in northern Scotland. Less than half of the islands are populated. Orcadians are a hardy people who earn their living from raising sheep and cattle. William probably was drawn to the Watford area by the opportunity to utilize the skills he had learned in Hamilton, Ontario where he apprenticed as a brick mason. We don't know just when he came to Lambton County. He was here in 1881 because the 100th anniversary report of the Brigden United Church (formerly Presbyterian) in the Sarnia Gazette, January 7, 1981 stated that William Marwick did the brick work on the church. He was a very successful builder and built many homes and other buildings in Lambton and Middlesex Counties.

In 1885, William married Alice Josephine Zavitz (1860 – 1944), daughter of George Zavitz and Jane Elizabeth Borley who farmed in Brooke Township. William and Alice moved into a brick house on the Egremont Road at the NW corner of Old School road (about 1½ miles east of Warwick Village). Daughters



William Marwick family of Watford, Ontario, taken about 1905
Left to right: William, Maude, Ruth, Bruce, Alice, and Mary Hazel.

Mary Hazel (1886 - 1983) and Maude Alice (1891 - 1975) were born while they lived in this house. Before their son Bruce David (1893 – 1986) was born, they had moved to a new large brick house in the village of Watford. Their fourth child, Ruth Ann (1896 – 1989) was also born there. Mary Hazel married Edward

Kidd (1887 – 1973) of Brooke Township. Maude was a schoolteacher and taught in both Alvinston and Watford. She never married. Bruce was a schoolteacher and became principal of the high school in Cochrane, Ontario. He married Allie Stinson (1886 – 1956) of Rutherford, Ontario. Ruth Ann married Dr. Harold Taylor (1893 – 1985), a dentist in London, Ontario. William, Alice and Maude are buried in the Watford Cemetery along with two of Bruce and Allie's infant daughters.

It is much easier to understand why the other Orcadians came to the Watford area. William made a number of trips back to Orkney to recruit young men to come to Canada to learn the brick mason trade. In 1888, three of William's cousins, William Bruce (1863 – 1900) and John Bruce (1869 – 1938) of Schoolhouse, Birsay Parish and John Stanger (1869 – 1953) also of Birsay Parish arrived in Watford, Ontario. They all apprenticed as brick masons with William Marwick. William Bruce did not marry and died in 1900, when he was 37 years of age. He is buried in the Watford Cemetery. In the 1890's, John Bruce married Sarah Louise Shannon (1871 – 1961) and John Stanger married her older sister, Rebecca Shannon (1866 – 1941) John and Sarah Bruce had at least two sons William (b. 1895) and John (b. 1898). John and Rebecca Stanger had one daughter Mary Ann (1896 – 1991). Mary Ann never married. The Stanger family are all buried in the Watford Cemetery as are John and Sarah Bruce.

Continued at the foot of page 12



Trace Your Orkney Ancestors

A new book by James M. Irvine

reviewed by Sheena Wenham Member No 422



Tracing your family tree has become a popular pastime worldwide in recent years, as increasingly people want to discover from whence they came. But where to begin? In this book James Irvine guides the reader through the astonishing number of sources available to the serious family history researcher in Orkney. Although some of Orkney's relevant records remain outwith these islands, we are fortunate that our library houses the Orkney Archive, the Orkney Room and the Family History room where a treasure trove of documents and books are to be found and where further help and guidance is available.

Those familiar with researching data for their family trees in Orkney will find this book an essential part of their library. Included in the book are sections on access to sources, research principles, handwriting, language and technical terms, census returns and substitutes, births, deaths and marriages, transfers of land ownership and other sources such as estate and church records. The appendix gives us useful information on the contents of the Orkney Archive and also plenty of valuable background information. All of this will be of use not only to the family history researcher but also to the social and economic historian.

The novice and those in Orkney for a short time may find the layout of the book a little daunting. The close set type, the detailed lists and the frequent use of initials requires serious concentration and I would like to have seen a simplified summary of each section. The beginner, therefore, may find it best to read the book in conjunction with a more generalised volume on family research.

Tracing your family history can be a fascinating but frustrating experience as sometimes an exact family connection can be

irritatingly difficult to prove, but it is always good to deepen the research on the names you already have. The attractive cover of the book depicts a selection of various Orkney books and documents etc that the researcher may consult. Inside the book the pretty comprehensive list of sources will enable the reader to 'flesh out' the dry bones of their ancestors. It is most rewarding to find out more about what life was like in their time. Sometimes you may hit the jackpot. When perusing documents such as church records, estate correspondence or the evidence given to the Crofting Commission, some small nugget of information about a named ancestor may leap out at you from the page. The name immediately becomes a personality and this is to me one of the most rewarding aspects that makes family and local history such an enjoyable pastime.

James Irvine is to be congratulated in providing us with an invaluable tool to assist us in tracing our Orkney ancestors and giving us the sources to broaden our picture of their lives.

'Trace Your Orkney Ancestors' is available from the 'Orcadian' Bookshop at £8.50.

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In 1902, William Marwick (1883 – 1968) of Fursin, Evie, Orkney, eighteen-year-old son of James Marwick (1850 – 1916) and Agnes Williamson (1849 – 1907), a nephew of William, arrived in Watford to learn the brick mason trade. About 1910, while they were building a house for James and Elizabeth McMurray in Enniskillen Township, young William Marwick met Lettie May Clark (1892 – 1976) daughter of Joseph Clark (1846 – 1896) and Mary Valdora Smith (1854 – 1932) of Warwick Township. Lettie was Elizabeth McMurray's younger sister. William and Lettie were married in 1914 and had a large family.

Their first three children, Agnes (1916 – 1989) (Flegg), William, (1918) who died a few hours after birth, and David (b. 1920) were born in Watford. William obtained work as a brick mason at the Sarnia Refinery of Imperial Oil in 1920 and moved his young family to a house on S Brock Street in Sarnia where Mary (b. 1922) (Hosegrove), Laura May (1924 – 1925), Ruth (b. 1925) (Round), Lawrence (b. 1927), Annabelle (b. 1928) (Jameson), John (1931 – 1986) and Robert (b. 1933) were born. William Marwick retired from Imperial Oil at the end of 1948. William, Lettie, Laura May and John are all buried in Lakeview Cemetery in Sarnia.



While Orcadians were not guilty of supplementing their income by luring ships on to the rocks, a minister of the island of Sanday was reputed to have prayed; 'oh Lord, we do not ask Thee to make any wrecks. But in Thy providence Thou seeist fit to make any, we ask Thee to remember the poor Parish of Sanday.'

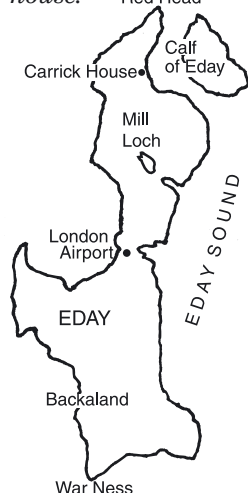
Readers of the magazine not familiar with the islands of Orkney might be interested in learning a little bit more about Eday.

It occupies a fairly central position in the North Isles and is about seven miles long from north to south. It is rich in peat deposits and these provided an income in the past from neighbouring islands and whisky distilleries throughout Scotland.

Eday is hilly in the middle and agriculture is concentrated mainly round its shores at the north and south ends of the island.

The island and its adjoining Calf are rich in prehistoric archaeology with many chambered cairns and tombs. Carrick House on the main island dates originally from 1633 when it was built and owned by John Stewart, brother of the hated Earl Patrick Stewart. It also featured in the capture of Gow the pirate when his ship 'Revenge' ran aground opposite Carrick House. The ship's bell is still preserved in the house.

Red Head



A young toon lad on an island croft



Marion's sister and their mother picking flowers at Maltbarn in the 1960s.

Reminiscing on his early years in Eday my father remembers Retta Peace (who married William Wallace), who had a small shop at Roadside, deciding to put on a community play in Eday. She managed to get hold of a play called "The Worm Turned" and many of the folks in the south of the island were commandeered to take roles and be involved in it. My father was dragged into this and can just remember having to learn some lines and all of them speaking out lines while dressed up on a sort of stage in front of the population of the south end of Eday—he cannot remember what the play was about though.

A neighbouring house was Windywall, owned by John G Shearer's family. John started up his coal merchant's business in Kirkwall and delivered coal to the islands on a boat. He didn't call at Eday as the Eday folk used peat instead of coal but when the ship sailed near the south end of Eday, on route to the other islands, they blew the boat's whistle as a greeting to the family on Eday. (John Shearer's grandson, Jackie Shearer, bought the house my father built, Aquarius, St Ola, Orkney, many years later). John Shearer's sister, Annie was recruited as a "home help" to assist with the daily duties at Maltbarn when it was getting difficult for my father to cope with the three ladies in advancing years and declining health. Annie was called to Maltbarn one day each week to do the cleaning, washing and cooking. Rainwater from the house roof was saved into barrels normally, but when Annie started working at Maltbarn there had been no rain for some time and the barrels were empty. My father used to have to go to the well more often after that as she was forever needing water to do more washing.

Marion McLeod continues her tale of her father Ernie Wishart, who, as a young lad of 14, found himself running a croft on Eday

Granny lost one of Maltbarn's cats about this time and Annie suggested that, as there were plenty of wild kittens at Windywall, my father should go and collect one. He took Granny's wicker shopping basket as it had a wicker lid on it and thought this would keep the kitten secure on the journey back. The Shearers put the kitten in the basket and tied the lid down with string but the kitten got out and shot off and they couldn't find it. He called at Windywall a few days later to collect a kitten and this time he took a sack with him. The kitten was duly placed in the sack, the

sack tied and he got back to Maltbarn with the kitten alright. He undid the sack tie and the kitten shot out and went completely mad dashing back and forth and then shot up into the barn rafters, where it remained for several days. They could not even entice it down with food. It eventually came down from the rafters and wandered around and eventually came into the house where Granny took charge of it and said it was the most peaceable and nice cat she had ever had.

On the subject of cats—one day my father was helping John Rousay with his threshing at Costahead. Johnny's sister Jessie called them for tea but said that they might not get a cup of tea as she couldn't get any water out of the tap in the barrel which stood outside the house. Johnny and my father went outside to look at the tap. They turned the barrel over and tipped the water out to get at the tap. Jessie shrieked "what's that?" as they tipped the water out. On the ground amongst the draining water from the barrel, was what had been a cat! Jessie said she wondered where the black and white cat had gone as it had never come home about a year previously.

Great Granny, her sister and sister-in-law all being so old, had a method of summoning help if they needed it. She had two different cloths she would hang in her house window. A white cloth meant she needed help in a hurry and a coloured cloth meant she needed help but there was no hurry. If the weather was too bad for anyone to see her house and the cloths (e.g. fog or mist) she used a whistle to summon help. When the whistle was used Johnny Rousay's dog, Podge, would bark and let the Rousay family know that Maltbarn needed help. This worked fine for many years until Johnny's dog, Podge, died and the replacement dog he got was a deaf dog!

In the winter of 1936, after Granddaughter Mimie had gone back to Westray to live with her own family, it was decided by great Granny that Jeannie (who was now totally bedridden) should be moved into the house from the barn where she had lived for many years. My father decided that the best way to move her, as she was completely bedridden, was by wheelbarrow. He got her into the wheelbarrow but the wheel stuck fast in the mud midway between the barn and the house and it was pouring rain. He had to carry her on his back from there to the house. When the family moved to Kirkwall (to live with my father's parents and family) the following year, he had to get her onto the boat for the journey. He got the next farm's gig and pony to transport her to the pier. When they arrived at the Eday pier she exclaimed that it was a very large boat. She had never seen any boat so large before and had never left Eday in her life. With help from some friends they got her up the gangway and into the Captain's cabin on deck where there was a bunk she could lay down on. Jeannie was very worried about the boat trip and wanted to know how long it would take. My father told her it would be about one and a half hours and she asked when she would know that the boat had arrived at Kirkwall. He told her she would feel a bump as it got into and touched the pier. She was also frightened that she would just be left on the pier and he had to reassure her that his parents would be there to meet her and that this had all been arranged beforehand. On her arrival at Kirkwall his

parents were there to meet her and took her to their house.

Back at Maltbarn in Eday, great Granny and my father then had to pack and box their belongings, which took another week, then my father had to get this and great Granny to the steamer as he had done with Jeannie. He then had to remain at the farm for another two weeks on his own and sell off all the livestock before the new owners arrived. He gave his 3-year-old dog, Bob, to neighbours on the island when he left. Bob had liked to cool off when it was hot and all that could be seen of him on hot days was his head sticking out of the sea, like a seal, in the bay in front of the house.

While my father was dealing with animals in the byre he would tie Bob on a long bit of rope. One evening Bob was very quiet and my father went to see what was wrong. Bob had jumped over one of the slate upright dividers in the byre and was hanging by the rope with his feet barely touching the ground. His eyes were showing their whites and his tongue was hanging out of his mouth and he was nearly a goner. Soon after my father had left Eday, after selling Maltbarn, he heard that Bob had been shot for worrying lambs but it transpired that he had found a dead sheep on its back in marshy ground and had a free feed.

My father's grandparents had been strong tee-totallers and never touched any alcohol but they kept a small half-bottle of whisky for the sheep they said. My father never found out what use the whisky was for the sheep but the bottle sat in the cupboard in the house for using on the sheep only. Once, when he was attending some function on the island, he sneaked the bottle out of the house and had a swig or two from the bottle, topping it up with water before returning it to its proper place in the cupboard. He never saw the bottle being taken out of the cupboard or the whisky being used in all the time he was at Maltbarn. After Maltbarn was sold and the old ladies removed to Kirkwall, he had to empty the house and dispose of things. He took the bottle out of the cupboard and drank what was in it and threw the bottle away.

In our next issue

Marion Mcleod concludes the tale of her father's experiences at Maltbarn and describes in detail what little profit could be expected from a year of back-breaking work—and that was just 67 years ago.



DUPLICATION OF RESEARCH MATERIAL

From time to time we find that members are forwarding enquiries to both the Orkney Family History Society and the Orkney Library Archive. This often means that researchers from both

groups are working on the same material which is a wasteful use of resources. Please ensure that your enquiry is sent to one source only to avoid duplication of effort.



Lynton Heddle



Lynton's
GGGrandfather John
Gillen Heddle b.on
Shapinsay 8.9.1831,
emigrated to
Australia on board
the 'Oregon' in 1851

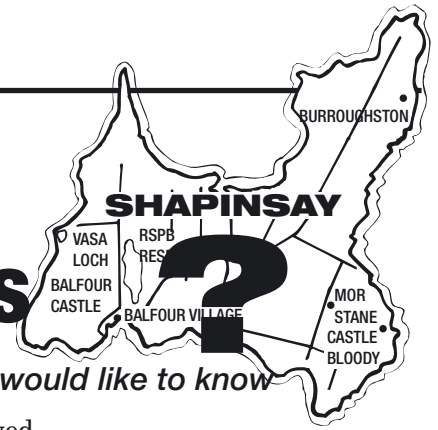
HELP PLEASE

Now that I have made a start I am really desperate for more leads. George Gray at OFHS was really helpful but now I have caught the bug I can't let it go. The information I have is as follows:

"My" John Heddle was a child of John Heddle and Isabella Shearer (b about 1802) who married on Shapinsay 21st Feb 1826. Their children were Margaret (b 28 Nov 1826), William (b 30 Jul 1829), "my" John (b 8 Sep 1831) and known in Australia as John Gillen Heddle, Isabella (b 14 Jul 1834), Malcolm (b 23 Jul 1837), and Robert (b 24 Sep 1839).

Where are the Shapinsay Heddles

Lynton Heddle, Member No 1129 from Adelaide, would like to know



After reading Noel Cook's article in the September issue, I have been inspired, for the first time in my life, to write to a publication. I too, this year travelled to the Orkney's – and what a great experience. I intended travelling to Europe and never having been to my ancestral home, I decided the itinerary should include the place where the Heddles came from. My GG Grandfather, John Heddle who was born on Shapinsay in 1831, emigrated to Adelaide (Australia) in 1851, leaving a widowed mother and siblings behind.

Having made previous email contact with some Orcadians, I felt that at least there was someone there who would point me in the right direction. After touring Europe, England, Wales and Scotland for the previous 2 months, my wife and I, together with our daughter and her fiancé, on 8th June, experienced a mild one hour ferry crossing from Gills Bay to St Margaret's Hope. Then an incredible drive across the Churchill Barriers, to Kirkwall, where we spent the next 3 nights (definitely not long enough).

The following morning we made the short ferry crossing to Shapinsay and can still recall the awesome experience of that first sight of the island as it came into view through a fairly thick mist. On disembarking, we found the village quieter than we had expected, but nonetheless interesting and familiar – back in Australia we get your UK television programs which show a typical fishing village such as this. Then there was the grandeur of Balfour Castle, eerie in the stillness of that morning fog. Unfortunately, it was not open whilst we were there, but that didn't stop us taking a few photos.

We then drove to the north east part of the island, through the still persisting sea mist and light rain, to the Broch of Burroughston, a magnificent archaeological site. Our first archaeological experience of this type, so again, more photos. Unfortunately the timid seals took to the sea

as we arrived.

With some locals providing directions, we found our way to the farm of Linton, the home of the Tait's who treated us to an inspection of the farm and the old house, in which "my" John Heddle resided in 1851, prior to emigrating. Although still standing, the old house is now a storeroom and tool shed. None, the less, it was awe inspiring to



Lynton Heddle in the doorway of the old farmhouse of Linton Farm Shapinsay where John Heddle resided in 1851.

walk in the footsteps of my ancestor, some 150 years later. It was an incredible comparison of places - Shapinsay to Adelaide. Of course many photos were taken even though it was in misty rain and our thanks go out to Edith, Ian and Julian for their hospitality. It was interesting that Edith advised me that that Linton farm has been in her ancestor's family (the Hepburn's) since at least 1841.

Next onto Jean and Robert Wallace's "Girnigoe", where Jean as Registrar, went out of her way in not just bringing out the Shapinsay records for me to peruse to obtain valuable genealogical information, but also provided afternoon tea for all of us. The time just flew whilst with the Wallace's and when we emerged outside, the fog had lifted to bathe the island in bright sunshine – splendid in its green covering, a contrast to my home town at the beginning of summer.

We then located the old churchyard cemetery so we could investigate a few of the Heddle gravestones. The ivy draped ruins of the church that overlooks the sea and the many lichen covered gravestones surrounding the ruins made a surreal picture, especially when encircled with the green, green paddocks – oops, I believe you call them fields! And - the stone fences – we may have very small pockets of them scattered throughout Australia, built in the 1800's – but in Scotland, they just go on and on, and obviously so old. They make great contrasts against the green fields and great for our photos.

After some further sightseeing, we made the afternoon ferry crossing back to Kirkwall with some vivid memories of the lovely island of Shapinsay.

Back in Kirkwall for more sightseeing and investigations. The long summer nights meant we forgot about our evening meal and nearly went hungry that night. We managed however to locate the Hill of Heddle, the Heddle Quarry and Heddle Village but Heddle Cottage, that we had located on an old map, unfortunately eluded us. We were however fascinated by seeing so many places with our name, almost unknown in Australia, and the surrounding green fields with their stone fencing and housing made spectacular photos.

The next morning I visited the OFHS in its well appointed (fairly new, we understood) premises, only to discover that the OFHS opened in the afternoons. However, the staff in the Archives were most helpful and whilst there, George Gray, with whom I had previously had email contact, arrived. Well I spent quite a few hours with George and he was most obliging by providing information about the siblings of my GG Grandfather. Of course, seeing such a wealth of information that lies within the OFHS, I had no choice but to immediately become a member. I just hope that my joining will lead to locating some descendants of my GGG Grandfather – also a John Heddle.

The next day, after more sightseeing around lovely Kirkwall, we investigated areas such as the Standing Stones of Stenness and the Ring of Brodgar – such incredible stone age type relics that had the camera shutters going overtime. Unfortunately, by the time we planned on walking around Stromness the rain had set in, preventing us from getting a real feel for the town. Consequently, we only saw it from a car window, but what we saw was a lovely fishing style location. Time was marching on and we decided that the Orkney's should be placed on the agenda for our next trip, considering that there was so much we hadn't seen. Our itinerary just didn't allocate enough time on this occasion, however – next time.

So from Stromness, we made for the ferry at St Margaret's Hope. The ferry crossing was spectacular in that we sighted killer whales and seals, plus numerous rafts of birds. It was a fine way to finish our first trip to the Orkney's and we will be planning a longer stay next time, although it may be a year or two down the track.

Where are the Heddles of Shapinsay – there are more trees on the island? I do hope that anyone who may have details of any connection to "my" Heddles will contact me. "I really would be grateful to hear from anyone with some information.

Lynton Hedde | Member # 1129
Adelaide South Australia
<heddle@micronet.net.au>



Did you know...

That the first civilian to be killed in WW2 was James Isbister who died when a German bomber jettisoned its bombs over the Brig o' Waithe in Stenness on the 16th March 1939. The farm buildings and houses nearby were also the first buildings to be hit in an enemy air attack on Britain. The first German plane to be shot down in Britain was on the island of Hoy when an Orkney anti aircraft gunner brought down the Junkers 88 on the 17th October 1939. Both these incidents resulted from the Luftwaffe attacking the British naval base of Scapa Flow.

Thanks to OFHS Janet Kennedy went home with loads of family history

My maternal grandmother died when my mother was very young, and all I knew was her maiden name, Isabella Harper, and that she had been born in Orkney in 1863. As I was finding it very difficult to trace her, I joined the Orkney Family History Society, and I am so glad I did.

In April, 2004, my sister, Isabella Harper, and I had a long weekend in Kirkwall and just before we arrived George Gray of the Society spent a lot of time researching and actually traced our grandmother, no easy task, as her true surname, Morrison, had been dropped and her father's middle name, Harper, had been used. She had been born at Neigheads, Stenness.

On our arrival at Kirkwall we met with Adrienne Leask who passed on all George's information plus more from herself and her

friend, Margaret

We drove to St Margaret's Community Centre which was very pleasant and

there took us to a lady who she said would tell us all about Stenness. This was Adrienne's friend, Margaret Watters, and she had more information all ready for us! We had a very interesting chat with her (our ancestors were connected back along the line), and she gave us copies of family trees etc. relating to our grandmother and her help was absolutely invaluable.

I would like the Society to know how much I appreciate the time that all your members must spend researching. We had a lovely time in Orkney and were thrilled with the scenery history and friendliness of the people. Janet Kennedy Member # 1067



Just a minute

Minutes of the September and October meetings of the Orkney Family History Society recorded by Gillian Mooney



Minutes of Open Meeting held in the
Lecture Theatre of Orkney College
9th September 2004 at 7.30pm

Anne Rendall welcomed everyone to her first Open Meeting as Chairperson. There was a good turnout for a bonny summer night. Thirty four people attended including visiting members Bridget and Peter Hunter from Cambridgeshire. Sandy Firth sent his apologies. The office volunteers had spent a busy summer, Anne said, and she counted 180 names in the visitor's book since June. There will be reports of the summer's events in the magazine from the new editor John Sinclair.

There was a successful graveyard recording in Firth in July which was completed in one evening and now just needs to be checked.

October 14th was a meeting for members and invited guests only. It will incorporate the launch of James Irvine's new book, *Trace your Orkney Ancestors*.

The Kirkwall Hotel has been booked for our annual meal on Nov 11th and the cost will be £12.50

In January there will be an EGM immediately before the monthly meeting to discuss the revised constitution.

Treasurer, George Gray, then read some queries for help which included a William Tait who joined the Hudson's Bay Co. He was one of fourteen children. Also Alexandra Richter born in Bridge St. Kirkwall in 1871 and query on a connection between Heddles in Stromness and Shapinsay.

George also mentioned that there seemed to be a shortage of Family Trees from the Orkney members and pointed out that the Trees were very helpful when visitors came to the office.

Anne then introduced the invited speaker for the evening—Donna Heddle, a lecturer at Orkney College. Her talk *On the borders of this massive round* was about very old maps. Apparently Orkney was well-known and often mentioned a long time ago. Claudius added Orkney to the Roman realm. The ancient Greeks knew about Orkney. There is a map of Britain which has three parts with Orca at the top. There is also a map showing Orcades and Inde (Orkney and India) as the Western and Eastern ends of the world. Editor, John Sinclair, has written a separate report on the talk.

Nan Scott gave thanks to Donna for her talk and to all who work behind the scenes arranging the meeting etc. before we gathered in the foyer for the usual bletcher over tea and biscuits.

Minutes of Meeting held in the MacGillivray
Room, Orkney Library & Archive
14th October 2004 at 7.30pm

Chairperson, Anne Rendall, welcomed seventy people to the meeting which incorporated the launch of James Irvine's book *Trace Your Orkney Ancestors*.

There were apologies from Marion and Alfie Flett, John Sinclair, Ian and Betty Cameron and Helen Manson.

This meeting was intended for members and invited guests only.

The next meeting will be the annual dinner in the Kirkwall Hotel on 11th November.

Anne said that Dave Higgins had been working like a Trojan since his long walk working on the website entering information on what is in the office. She then introduced James who, she said, seemed almost annually to be churning out books.

Trace Your Orkney Ancestors was a very comprehensive list on how to find information especially for anyone with no idea where to start. James expressed his appreciation for their warm welcome and for Anne in allowing the launch. Evan MacGillivray was one of the people who had inspired him, James said, so it was fitting that the launch was taking place in the MacGillivray Room. He said it was the late Janice Sinclair, the society's original research secretary, who first encouraged him on how to do research in Orkney. His book is primarily designed for folk who have started already to come up against a brick wall but was also relevant to local historians such as Willie Thomson. The book was printed by the *Orcadian* but he had to publish it himself.

James then mentioned several folk who had helped, namely his brother Bruce for the photography of the front cover, his own wife Sally who was there at the launch with him, Orkney Islands Council for grants, local booksellers, people like Willie who 'shoot me down when I get too strong', Alison Fraser from Orkney Archives, Alison Work for food, his brother-in-law for wine and Diane and Cheryl Kelday who were on hand selling books and serving wine.

The assembled guests then continued to enjoy a pleasant evening with wine and nibbles. Teas were also available thanks to Mags and Annie.

Gillian



Did you know

that Orkney has the shortest scheduled air flight in the world—between Westray and Papa Westray—the journey lasts under two minutes

Are you a Hooshon or a Hewison?

asks Tommy Robertson member No 292 from Finstown.

The thought occurred to him as he was researching his Westray forbears. He realised then that many surnames have been altered through the years.

The original surnames written according to local pronunciation, are becoming forgotten. Names like Hooshan has become Hewison, Forgus is Fergus and the original Hercus has given way to Harcus.

Tommy points out that when his Gt. Gt Grandfather got married the entry in the O.P.Rs spelt his wife's name as Mary Caetar which is how Seatter is pronounced in Westray.

Do any of our readers have anything to add to this. I certainly remember that 'doon sooth' the Smellies were suddenly transformed into Smillies. Ed.



NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

The OFHS Newsletter depends entirely on a constant flow of articles, long or short, from Society members. Twenty pages takes a bit of filling. Even allowing for pictures we still require in excess of 15,000 words for each issue.

LENGTH

Your submissions can run to one or two pages, or if longer can be serialised over two or more issues. Generally about 750 words are required per page and this allows for a heading and a picture. Pictures make the story far more interesting so photographs please wherever possible.

Shorter submissions are equally welcome—even a paragraph is useful in filling a corner.

'DID YOU KNOW'

snippets fit well into the narrow column on each page.

LETTERS PAGE

A regular letters page is something we hope to establish—looking for long lost relatives, friends or families—whatever takes your fancy.

SUBMISSIONS

If possible please type your article, plain text would probably be best, and send on floppy, disc or as an e-mail attachment—

CECIL SINCLAIR

Member No 155

It was with sadness that we heard of the death of Cecil Sinclair who passed away at his home on the 18th October. His father was an Orcadian from St Margarets Hope where he was Post Master for many years.

Cecil qualified in law and throughout his career was an archivist in Edinburgh.

Many will be familiar with his 3 books published by H.M.S.O. which were guides to family and local history researchers.

In recent years he suffered from chronic asthma.

His interests were in the art world with an especial love of the Theatre and he took part in productions by the Edinburgh University Graduates Amateurs.

I am sorry to say that through lack of space we've had to hold back some articles in this month's newsletter. Well to tell the truth I'm not really sorry because it is great to have some material in the pipeline to start off our next issue. So apologies to Janette in Australia who has sent in some information on the Brass family of Sandwick and the Fletts who arrived in Australia on board the 'Marmion' in 1852 (How's the weather with you Janette?) and to Laurie McClanahan in the US of A (we're trying to find out more about those elusive Irvines Laurie) and nearer home to Allan Taylor who has another tale to tell of the misfortunes of poor Robbie. But remember readers that still leaves lots of pages for you to fill and share with your fellow members. So it just remains for me to wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year from all your friends at the Orkney Family History Society. Ed.

Word is fine. Also include a hard copy in case I cannot open the file. Remember hand-typed submissions have to be retyped and may be delayed

PICTURES

Send originals if possible (**but not your only copies**). Include a stamped addressed envelope if you wish them returned. Alternatively send on disc or as an attachment as a JPEG, keeping the quality 'high'. Photocopies of photographs are not suitable as they do not reproduce satisfactorily.

Please address all submissions, discs and floppies to:-

The Editor, Orkney Family History Society Newsletter, Orkney Library & Archive, 44 Junction Rd, Kirkwall, Orkney. KW15 1A
E-mails and attachments can be sent directly to the editor at <sinclairjasz@aol.com >

VIEWS EXPRESSED

Views expressed in contributions are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Society.

The Editor reserves the right to amend any copy submitted.

SUBMISSIONS for MARCH NEWSLETTER by the 17th JAN. PLEASE

The Orkney Family History Society

Orkney Family History Society was formed in 1997 and is run by a committee of volunteers.

It is similar to societies operating worldwide where members share a mutual interest in family history and help each other with research and, from time to time assist in special projects concerning the countless records and subjects available to us all in finding our roots.

The main objectives are:

1. To establish a local organisation for the study, collection, analysis and sharing of information about individuals and families in Orkney

2. To establish and maintain links with other family history groups and genealogical societies throughout the UK and overseas

3. To establish and maintain a library and other reference facilities as an information resource for members and approved subscribers.

4. To promote study projects and special interest groups to pursue approved assignments.

We are located on the upper floor of the the new Kirkwall Library adjacent to the archives department.

Our own library, though small at the moment, holds a variety of information including:

The IGI for Orkney on microfiche.

The Old Parish Records on microfilm.

The Census Returns on microfilm transcribed on to a computer database.

Family Trees.

Emigration and Debtors lists.

Letters, Articles and stories concerning Orkney and its people.

Hudson Bay Company information.

Graveyard Surveys (long term project)

This material is available to members for 'in house' research by arrangement.

Locally we have monthly Members Evenings with a guest speaker.

We produce a booklet of members and interests to allow members with similar interests to correspond with each other if they wish.

We also produce a newsletter 4 times a year and are always looking for articles and photographs of interest. A stamped addressed envelope should be included if these are to be returned. Back copies of the magazine can be purchased at £1 per copy.

We can usually undertake research for members who live outwith Orkney but this is dependent on the willingness of our island mem-

Membership of the Society runs from 1st March to 28th/29th February and subscriptions should be renewed during the month of March. All subscriptions should be sent to the Treasurer at the OFHS address below.

New members joining before the 1st December will receive back copies of the three magazines for the current year. From 1st December new members will receive membership for the remainder of the current year, plus the following year, but will not receive the back copies of the magazine.

The present subscription rates are as follows:

ORDINARY	
Family membership	£10.00
FAMILY MEMBERSHIP	
Spouse, Partner and Children under 18	£15.00
SENIOR CITIZENS	
Single or couple	£7.00
OVERSEAS	
Surface Mail	£12.50
OVERSEAS	
Air Mail	£15.00

Overseas members should pay their fees in sterling or its equivalent. If it is not possible to send pounds sterling please check the exchange rate. Our bank will accept overseas cheques without charging commission. Receipts will be issued with the next magazine. Members residing in the United Kingdom may pay their subscriptions by Bankers Order and if they wish can have their subscriptions treated as gift donations. Forms will be sent on request.

Cheques should be made payable to:
ORKNEY FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY
and forwarded to

ORKNEY FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Orkney Library & Archive

44 Junction Rd, Kirkwall, Orkney KW15 1AG

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Treasurer. Mr George Gray (e-mail george.gray@unisonfree.net)

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