



SIB FOLK NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ORKNEY FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

ISSUE 35 SEPTEMBER 2005



A fine sunny day in Finstown

**ORKNEY
FAMILY HISTORY
NEWSLETTER**

Issue No 35
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From the chair

We have had a very busy summer in the Office again with over 160 visitors, some of whom wrote and told us they were coming, which was great as it gave us a chance to get some information ready for them when they arrived, sometimes even a cousin or two lined up to meet them.

As you will see from the AGM minutes Nan Scott was appointed as our Honorary President in recognition of all her hard work in helping to found a very successful and popular society with over 800 members worldwide.

Our annual summer outing was to Eday this year and I would like to thank everyone in Eday who helped make our day so enjoyable. There is a full report of our visit on page 4.

We haven't managed a gravestone recording evening this summer as the weather has been so unpredictable, hopefully we'll have better luck next summer.

We now look forward to our monthly meetings starting in September with James Irvine as guest speaker and Joyce Peace in October. ■



Anne Rendall



Gillian Mooney - Secretary

There were apologies from Adrienne Leask, Dave Higgins, Helen Manson and Davina Brown.

Minutes of the EGM as well as the 2004 AGM and a statement of accounts were circulated. Adoption of the Minutes of the AGM was proposed by Alan Clouston and seconded by Helen Angus, Adoption of the Minutes of the EGM was proposed by Nan Scott and seconded by Sheila Spence.

Arising from the Minutes of the AGM Hugh Halcro-Johnston expressed the gratitude of the Friends of the Orkney Boat Museum for OFHS's help and support. Their group has now raised £17,000 so are able to make their first applications for grants.

Anne gave thanks to the committee, the volunteers and a few members working very diligently at home and also to Steven Sinclair

Chairperson, Anne Rendall, welcomed thirty-six people to the meeting on a bonny night again.

for auditing the accounts.

Most of the committee meetings had been taken up discussing the constitution, she said, and Alan had done a lot of work drafting it.

The society had advertised itself more this year placing an advertisement in the 'Islander' and leaflets designed by John Sinclair had arrived home and were being distributed to various relevant locations. Web-master Dave Higgins had kept a close eye on the society's web-site. Three hundred and twenty-eight members had logged on so far.

Forthcoming Events:-

June 26th - Summer outing to the island of Eday.

July - Graveyard recording.

August - Anticipate having a stall as usual at the Vintage Club Rally

Sept 8th - James Irvine will give a talk.

October 13th - Joyce Peace, whose father was a Norwegian on the 'Shetland Bus'

November 10th - Annual Dinner. ✍

Cover picture

Our picture this month features Finstown, or 'Finstoon' as it is pronounced in Orkney.

According to legend Finstown was founded by David Phinn an Irish veteran of the Napoleonic wars. He had been stationed in Orkney, married a local girl and ran a small inn known as the Toddy Hole. Phinn's skill in storytelling made this a popular house but within four

years he had left Orkney after a disagreement with his partner who ran the Mill of Firth. The inn was popularly known as Phinn's and, as the village grew around it, a name was required. And what better than Finstown after the popular landlord.

Finstown is a sought after location, green, pleasant and scenic. It is ideally positioned about midway along the main road linking Kirkwall and Stromness.

☞Treasurer, George Gray, gave his report saying the main reason we had done so well financially this year was because we had less expense due to our position in the new Library & Archive. Adoption of the Statement was proposed by Anne and seconded by Hugh.

The healthy bank balance meant there will be no need to raise fees. This was proposed by Hugh and seconded by Alan.

Brigadier S P Robertson had intimated that he wished to stand down from his position as Honorary President and Anne expressed very grateful thanks to him for all his support. The committee had agreed that it would like to put forward a recommendation that Nan Scott be elected the new Honorary President reminding us that Nan had been a major factor in making the Society what it is today. Brigadier S P Robertson proposed that Nan be elected his successor. There seemed to be unanimous agreement with Alan remarking that it was thanks to Nan that we were all here. In reply Nan said that the Brigadier had been a great encourager. She had noticed that he always kept his word, had a sense of humour and a genuine interest in folk and she would try to be the same. The Brigadier showed this sense of humour when he replied that he never knew he was such a nice chap. Nan said she would like to remain a volunteer in the office and help any way she can. She also expressed a wish to be invited to 'sit in' on committee meetings occasionally.

As Gillian wished to step down from the position of secretary and there were no other proposals or offers from the floor Alan suggested that ten members be elected to the committee and a secretary be chosen from the ten at the next committee meeting. Gillian agreed to remain as acting secretary

until that meeting.

The new committee is:-

	Proposed	Seconded
Dave Higgins	Hugh Halcro-Johnston	George Gray
Adrienne Leask	Alan Clouston	Nan Scott
Gillian Mooney	Nan Scott	Helen Angus
Alan Clouston	Hugh Halcro-Johnston	Anne Rendall
Helen Angus	Joyce Moore	Pat Sinclair
Hazel Goar	Betty Cameron	Helen Angus
Betty Thomson	Alan Clouston	Ian Cameron
John Sinclair	Nan Scott	Alan Clouston
Helen Manson	George Gray	Gillian Mooney
Hugh Halcro-Johnston	Nan Scott	S P Robertson

There were no other nominations.

Anne then introduced Sarah Jane Grieve who had been invited to give a talk and to show slides on 'Parish Churches and Parishes in Medieval Orkney'. Sarah had been studying towards a Ph D and exploring medieval Orkney by looking at churches. As she pointed out a lot of our source material came from records held by the Kirk. She had found that there were thirty-five parish kirks and posed the question, 'Why is this church here and not there?' and looked at how they were situated in the landscape. She discovered that about twenty-six are next to high status settlements, near properties with names like Bu, Skail, Bea or ending in by or bay. Most of the kirks were on lands associated with Earls or Chieftains - perhaps to show that they were practising Christians. Also tithes were created to be paid to the owner of the land.

Sarah has promised to supply a separate copy of notes on her talk.

Before the usual teas etc. from Mags and Annie Anne thanked Sarah very much for her interesting talk and expressed appreciation for her hard work. ■

Gillian.



Did you know?

James Petrie Chalmers was born in the parish of Tankerness, Orkney in 1866.

His father was a grocer but young James did not follow in his footsteps; instead he began his working life as an apprentice printer with the Orkney Herald. This early taste of publishing probably determined the future course of his life.

As a young man he emigrated to the USA and settled in New York. It was here, in 1907, that he published the first world film magazine called the 'Movie Picture Guide'.

He was instrumental in transforming the cinema from a sideshow attraction to a popular form of entertainment. He succeeded in preventing Thomas Edison from placing restrictive constraints on various aspects of film technology which would have prevented the medium being made available to wide audiences.

He died at the age of 46 in a tragic accident in Ohio where he fell to his death down a liftshaft. He was mourned by the greats of the industry and it was said of James Chalmers that he was 'the saviour of the cinema who put his livelihood and home at risk to advance the industry'.



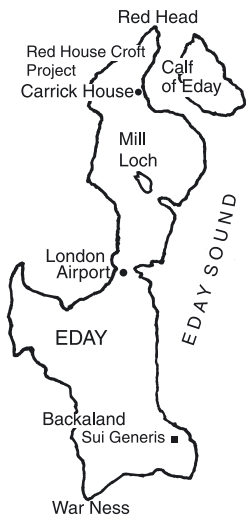
Brigadier S.P. Robertson steps down as Honorary President and recommends Nan Scott as his successor.

Anne then asked Nan to take the chair for nomination of officials on the committee.

Position	Proposed	Seconded
Chairperson		
Treasurer	Helen Angus	Betty Cameron
	George Gray	Hugh Halcro-Johnston
		Gillian Mooney

As Gillian wished to step down from the position of secretary and there were no other proposals or offers from the floor Alan suggested that ten members be elected to the committee and a secretary be chosen from the ten at the next committee meeting. Gillian agreed to remain as acting secretary

From time to time we find that members are forwarding the same enquiries to both the Family History Society and the Orkney Library Archive. This means that researchers from both groups are working on the same material. Please ensure that relevant enquiries are sent to one source only to avoid duplication of effort



Eday is situated in the centre of the Orkney Islands with views of Sanday, Stronsay, Westray, Rousay and Shapinsay.

It is approximately 8 miles long and 3 miles wide. It is hilly in the middle and agriculture is concentrated round the edges.

The island and its adjoining Calf are rich in prehistoric archaeology with many chambered cairns and tombs.

Carrick House on the main island dates 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 the Revenge ran aground opposite Carrick house. The ship's bell is still preserved in the house.

Nan Scott reflects on our trip to Eday

On the 26th June the members and friends of the OFHS, twenty-six persons in all, made their way to the island of Eday. In the morning the weather was cool and the sky overcast but the rain held off until the afternoon. On reaching Eday some "kent" faces were spotted including Charlie Tulloch, a former serviceman and retired Pier master. Alan Stewart of Stackald and Sue Thomson of Pulhoy were waiting with the buses to take us on our adventures. The first stop was at the old Churchyard. Time was spent taking pictures and trying to decipher inscriptions. This was made difficult by the abundance of lichen and moss growing in the pure Eday air. Next the bus drivers were waiting to take the party on to visit the Kerrs at Redbanks. They run a fine furniture makers business that is well named "Sui Generis" Colin, Sherry and their son Leo are all involved in making the beautiful, unique items that furnish their home and also the pieces that are for sale. Samples of their skills can be found far and wide including St Magnus Cathedral. Sherry provides tourist accommodation and again nowhere else could one find similar furniture and furnishings. Tea and coffee, beautifully served, was enjoyed by all before leaving Redbanks.

We were soon at the School and the lovely warm smell of food greeted us. Ena Hewison and Jacqui Laughton were waiting to ladle up the del-

icious soup from a seemingly bottomless pot! This was followed by the usual island hospitality of sandwiches, homebakes and clootie duff (Ena's speciality).

The party were next conveyed to Carrick House. The owners, Peter and Rosemary Joy, showed them over the entire garden and the house. The house dates from the 17th century and there is a coat of arms above the gate in the wall of the courtyard dated 1663. With such a long history the house manages to feel welcoming, warm and lived-in. A modern touch was the table set as it was for the visit of the Duchess of Gloucester in 1988.

It was from "big hoose" to "peedie hoose" when the party visited the Red House Croft Restoration Project. There was an Interpretative centre with information on local history, archaeology, natural history and genealogy. Betty Thomson had helped with the latter. Peter Mason who had met us when he was wearing his Pier master's hat was in charge. The croft, built of red sandstone, is famous for its water driven mill wheel.

The visit ended with another stop at the school for tea and goodies, then we joined a very busy ferry bringing a crowd of people from a week-end of music in North Ronaldsay. Would a visit there be a good idea for an outing in the future we wondered!

The trippers are very grateful to all the folks who made the day so very special.



The inspiration behind my novel 'Merrybegotten'

by Fiona (Williamson) Pearson. Member 424



Fiona Pearson

An intriguing ancestor from Fair Isle led me to a new venture – novel writing.

Mysteries within my great-grandmother's unsettled life fed my imagination, fuelling my thoughts with ponderings and wonderings until an unstoppable flow of fiction poured from my fingertips and into my computer. Loosely based on facts my document developed and thrived until, with publication, my novel entitled "Merrybegotten" was born. I wonder now what my great-grandmother might say about my recreation of her – if she could return from her unmarked grave in an Orkney cemetery – for I have given her new life, a different identity, and an essence of eternity.

My name is Fiona Pearson; my pseudonym Fiona Williamson Pearson is in tribute to my Williamson ancestors from Fair Isle who migrated and segregated time and time again around the far northern isles of Scotland. This desire to research my Scottish roots began long before the recent spate of 'Who Do You Think You Are?' style television programmes where celebrities are encouraged to research their ancestry. I knew that as a boy my father and his family used to visit relatives in Orkney, and as a young man had cycled there from Glasgow, but as is often the case with family historians it was only after the death of my parents and their siblings that I became curious about my ancestors.

I joined both the Orkney and the Shetland Family History Societies, where kind volunteers unearthed details from birth, marriage and death certificates, and I obtained census reports. I discovered that my great-grandmother was born in 1860 on Fair Isle, part of the Shetland archipelago. As an 18-year old farm servant she was working far from home in Orkney when shunned by her lover, who deemed her "too lowly" to marry.

So my grandfather, William Williamson, was born illegitimately in 1879 on the island of Westray in Orkney, and the life of my great-grandmother, and that of her merrybegotten son, was resolutely set out of kilter. The word 'merrybegotten' indicates an illegitimate bairn. My fascination grew. With an acorn of facts my family tree emerged – and on its branches I began to hang a story.

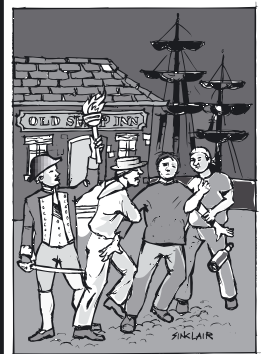
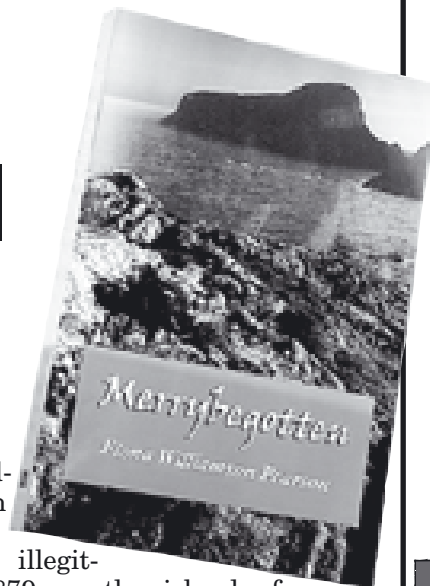
Initially I knew very little about the tiny island of Fair Isle, its name synonymous with yoke-patterned natural wool jumpers and Radio 4 fishing reports. On a map I found Fair Isle to the far north of the Scottish mainland, sitting like a stepping stone over twenty miles equidistant betwixt the archipelagos of Orkney and Shetland. My imagination was captured by such a microcosm of life in such a remote 19th century fishing community.

'Merrybegotten' is a tapestry of life and death, a tale woven around different kinds of love, where fatalism, joy and blind emotion play havoc with harsh realities in a story spanning three generations.

Dave Wheeler, host of the wonderful www.fairisle.org.uk website, very kindly gave me two of his evocative photographs of Fair Isle for the front and back covers.

'Merrybegotten' is published by Kennedy and Boyd in Glasgow and is also available in a Large Print version.

You can contact me on:
fcppearson@hotmail.com ■



Did you know?

The Press Gang was a party of seamen commanded by an officer who forcibly recruited men into the Navy against their will. It was legally based on the Royal right to call men up for military service and was necessary as no better way had been found to provide crew for ships. It continued until 1815 when it was supposed to have been discontinued. During the Napoleonic wars over 2000 Orkney men served in the Royal Navy, many of them press ganged. This figure represented about 10% of the population of the islands at that time.



WANTED

If you have a family tale to tell we would love to hear about it. Long or short, you decide. Contributions for the December newsletter by October 17th please to allow for Christmas holidays and mailings.



Kirks, Picnics and my first dance

By Isabella Tomlinson Muir



In 1942 Isabella Tomlinson Muir (née Donaldson) completed the reminiscences of her years at the farm of Vedder in Tankerness, Orkney.

In this, part 6, she tells of the important part religion played in the lives of her family and neighbours.

On a lighter note she recalls leaving school at fourteen and being allowed to go to her first dance...with a partner. This episode finishes with the celebration of the coronation of King Edward VII which took place in 1901.

When first I remember, most of the Tankerness folks went to the U.P. Church in Kirkwall. A few families went to the Free Church in St Andrews and a very few went to the Established Church or 'Auld Kirk.'

The Turfuses of Wethick went to the Free Church in Kirkwall. From Ness to Rerwick - the two furthest corners of Tankerness - they went to the U.P. Church in Kirkwall. They did not go just once in a while: they went regularly. Some went by cart, but most people went on foot - anything from five or nine miles each way. They went for the forenoon service and stayed for the afternoon service (and sometimes for the evening services too) and in the winter time it was dark before they came home. It must have been a glorious walk in summer time. I can remember seeing the 'Kirk folk' coming over the 'Brae of Savily' on a fine summer evening, quite a crowd of them too, in little groups of twos and threes. When they went out of sight at the White Dyke it was time to put the kettle on and set the table. Religion was part of people's lives. There was nothing blatant or ostentatious about their religion; it was used like an everyday garment. It was natural to go to church, to read the Bible and other religious books, and to hold family worship. There was no hypocrisy about it; it was part of the routine of life.

Family worship had no particular meaning to me when I was a child, but as I grew older I listened to my parents' prayers and to this day I can recall certain parts of them, and very often I come across quotations used by my father and mother in their prayers in the old and new Testaments; in fact, much of their prayers consisted of scriptural quotations. My mother very often started her prayer with 'Most merciful Father, what can we render unto Thee for all Thy goodness to us' to be followed by such affirmations and exhortations as 'Thy long-sparing and tender mercies have been over us and ours during another day, and it is of Thy mercies that we are not consumed... they are new unto us every morning and fresh every moment. Great, oh Lord, is Thy faithfulness... Whom have we in Heaven beside Thee? And there is none upon earth that we desire before Thee.

Thou art our God and our guide and our upmaking portion, through life and through death and through all eternity... Give us peace, oh Lord, give us joy and peace and believing in Thy thrice holy name. Do make our peace like a river, and our righteousness like the waves of the sea... Do Thou keep our feet from falling, our souls from sin and our eyes from tears. Soften our hard hearts, warm our cold hearts and remove the darkness and doubt from our minds and enable us to see light out of Thy light clearly.' These are some of their prayers I recall at the moment. There was never any hesitancy in their prayers, for they had such a good knowledge of the scriptures that they were never at a loss. Family worship was on Sunday evenings. We never dreamt of reading a newspaper on the 'Sabbath Day' or any book save a religious one, and as for sewing and mending, it was never done. The 'Christian Herald' was the popular week-end paper.

When first I remember, Sunday School was held in the Temperance Hall for all the children belonging to the U.P. Church, Kirkwall. I did not go very long to this Sunday School for after the union of the U.P. and Free Churches most of the U.Ps. went to the U.F. Church, St Andrews, whose minister was the Rev. James Cheyne. I do remember going to the Sunday School in the Temperance Hall, however, with Maggie, whose teacher was Jean Banks. James Eunson of Whitecleat, mother's cousin, was my teacher, and James Spence of Aikers taught the big boys.

Prayer meetings were held in some houses, especially at Scarpigar. There Mr Cheyne came in his gig on a Sunday evening. Mrs Cheyne with him, and when he gave out the psalm or paraphrase, he would turn to Mrs Cheyne and say 'Helen, raise the tune.' (In later years at Guild meetings and the like, when there was no male singer available, Mr Cheyne sometimes said to me 'Bella, raise the tune.'

A baptism in the house was another occasion for a prayer meeting or religious service. It would be intimated from the pulpit that a service would be held at a certain house when the Sacrament of Baptism would

be dispensed. Before the union of the churches, the minister from Kirkwall came out to visit his country congregation (not very often be it said) and to hold a service for them at the Temperance Hall or school. The Parish minister, the Rev. Oliver Scott, visited us once in a while. He was a distant cousin of my grandmother's. He was a patriarchal looking man with a flowing white beard, and a sense of humour which even his ministerial office could not suppress. He drove a four wheeled carriage - a kind of brougham, I think. The Laird had the same type of carriage. After the union of the Churches, our family left the U.P. (or Paterson Church, so called after the Rev. Dr Paterson, a former pastor) and went to the United Free Church, St Andrews, which was fully three miles from Vedder.

SCHOOL DAYS OVER

I was fourteen and a bit when I left school. My sister, Maggie, had been appointed assistant teacher the previous summer, so mother really required my help.

I was at my first dance shortly after leaving school. Girls only went to dances with partners then. My partner was Johnny Mowat from the Barns, and Bobbie Stevenson was Jeanie Banks' partner. I felt grown up, and Jeanie who was a year and nine months my senior put her hair up for the occasion and remained grown up ever after. I remember how attractive she looked with her black hair piled on top of her head. The pleasure of the dance was somewhat marred by a rather unfortunate, though slight, accident, which befell me. It was a lovely frosty morning when the dance was finished and Jeanie and I decided to walk home in our shoes (we didn't have dancing slippers then) and carry our boots. Our young escorts were not lacking in manners, so they carried our boots. Surely my parcel was not sufficiently secure, for when I arrived home there was only one boot in it. Johnnie Mowat had dropped the other boot near Whitecleat, and the Eunsons had found it; but I received such merciless teasing about the incident at the time that I would not go to Whitecleat for it. So my first dance cost me a pair of boots.

I joined the Good Templars when I was fourteen and was a regular attender at the Lodge for many years and took part in various activities and offices.

Life at Vedder went along quietly and happily after I left school. I was at home to help mother, Jimmy to help father, Maggie was teaching and Johnny was home at the weekends. We were a happy family.

I often visited my sister Barbara at Grimster. They were living in the old house of

Grimster then, and I have many happy memories of it. I liked the old house of Grimster with its big, old fashioned kitchen and open fireplace. The back window looked out towards the Old Road and beyond it to Inganess Bay. The kitchen table, which was a long one, stood opposite the window, and there was a long wooden seat at that side which held at least four people during meals.

When I was a little girl, I often spent a night at Grimster and on a winter evening, before supper, they would get me to sing to them. 'When London Sleeps' was a favourite. For supper they always had bere bread broken in small pieces in a bowl, with hot milk poured over it and supped with a spoon; but as a reward for my singing Mrs Eunson (Rob's mother) would give me loaf bread instead of bere with the milk. Little did she know that I much preferred the bere bread! Home baked bread at Grimster was always good, especially bere bread.

The new dwelling house at Grimster was built soon after I left school. My sister then had two children, Daisy and Nanny, and Bobbie was born in the new house. It was a two-storey building, a very nice house, but there was something homely about the big rambling old house that never, to my mind, found its way into the new house. I have happy memories of Mrs Eunson (mammy) when I was a child. Whenever I came to the house, she took down the biscuit tin and gave me something to eat as 'bairns were always hungry' she said. My brother Willie, and his wife Maggie, were in the farm of Valdigar when I left school, and had two children, Billy and Minnie. George was born later at Valdigar. The house of Valdigar was not attractive, but Maggie had a knack of making a place look homely. This she did with Valdigar, and many pleasant evenings I have spent there. The great game at both Grimster and Valdigar in the winter evenings was 'Tiddlywinks' and Maggie was such an adept at the game. We played 'Tiddlywinks' at Vedder too as well as card games.

My sister Sarah had three small boys at this time and she and they spent many of the summers days at Vedder; Peter coming out at the weekends. Afterwards, the Brass children came to Vedder for their holidays.

The Coronation Picnic (King Edward's) was held at Nearhouse the year after I left school. Maggie was still teaching, and Uncle William gave the children of the Tankerness school enamel Coronation mugs. Maggie had been to Edinburgh the previous summer and spent a holiday with Uncle William and she went again the summer following the Coronation. There was a huge bonfire at Mount Pleasant the night of the Coronation and another at Fea■



Did you know?

*Noltland Castle
In 1560, Adam Bothwell, the last catholic bishop of Orkney, granted lands in Westray to his brother-in-law Gilbert Balfour, founder of the Balfour family of Orkney. Soon Mary Queen of Scots was to make Balfour Sheriff of Orkney. Now Balfour had made many enemies in his life and to protect himself he built Noltland castle in Westray. This was indeed a stronghold with the walls of the lower floors pierced by 71 gunloops. In 1567 James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, married Mary Queen of Scots and some sources contend that Noltland Castle was to be her refuge after her defeat at the Battle of Langside. More confusion arose over names and position when the Queen bestowed the title of Duke of Orkney on her husband. After yet another defeat at the Battle of Carberry Hill near Edinburgh, Bothwell fled to his new dukedom in Orkney but his plan was thwarted by Gilbert Balfour who turned the guns of Kirkwall Castle on him, driving Bothwell out of Orkney and to his eventual imprisonment and death in Norway. After twenty years of imprisonment Mary was beheaded at Fotheringay Castle. Gilbert Balfour met a similar end in Sweden but his family went on to have a long and honourable association with Orkney until 1961 when the line died out with the death of David Ligonier Balfour in 1961.*

From my books

By Nan Scott Member No 8

I have recently read three interesting books. Interesting from a family history research point of view in general rather than Orcadian. "Knowing Your Grandfather Joseph William Wilson 1879-1958" was a Christmas present. Malcolm Cant, the author, probably just newly retired, sets out to learn about his grandfather's life before he had come to Edinburgh where he was a policeman. Malcolm had a difficult task. His grandfather had been one of a big family born to a shepherd in Minnigaff, Kirkcudbrightshire. They were living in Creewood Cottage at the time and Malcolm was thrilled to come across the carved lentil stone of Creewood and it now adorns his patio in Edinburgh.

Malcolm's research of the lives of his grandfather and grandmother took him all the way from Minnigaff through Ayrshire and the Borders to Newington Cemetery where his Grandparents are buried. He spent a lot of time visiting the relative areas where he met helpful people. He spent time in New Register House and he searched Valuation rolls, Edinburgh City Police records, hospital, school, and church records etc. In the latter I found an Orkney connection! One of the family had been a member of Duncan Street Baptist Church. I too was a member there when at college and I sat in the same pew as John and Jeannie Rendall from Westray. John was also an Edinburgh policeman. Maybe he knew Joseph Wilson as he was about the same age. Today Duncan Street people know all about Orkney as one of the deacons and their minister of fifteen years spent time in Westray to which they often refer.

The book has a hard cover and contains many black and white pictures of buildings, artefacts, people and family trees and portraits. It has many helpful ideas for the family researcher.

My next book was, "As it was (Sin Mar A Bha)", An Ulva Boyhood by Donald W Mackenzie. He came to the island of Ulva as a baby, the son of a minister, in 1918 and left it in 1929. He gives an interesting and detailed account of the people, the happenings, and the customs of the years that he lived there. The MacQuarries were an important family in Ulva and this rang a bell. A MacQuarrie from Ulva had been a lighthouse keeper at Noup Head in Westray. His sister was his housekeeper until she married Alexander Bain, the general merchant, who delivered the groceries. They built a house in Pierowall and called it Ulva Cottage.



pictures but has an Appendix of poetry and songs composed by people of Ulva. When I mentioned this book in the OFHS office one day to my surprise Leslie Thomson waxed poetical with verses from "Lord Ullin's Daughter" by Thomas Campbell. Sure enough this describes an incident in Ulva when a young couple tried to elope with disastrous results. Many people of a certain age had to learn this poem by rote. Donald Mackenzie has printed his collection of poems in both Gaelic and English.

My third book was "A School in the Hills" by Katharine Stewart. This is the history of the school at Abriachan, which is about ten miles south of Inverness along the north side of Loch Ness. It was similar to the story of other one and two teacher schools in out of the way places where children have to move away for further learning. No Orkney connection here until Katherine mentioned that Mollie Hunter, the author of children's books had lived at Abriachan for a time. I could not recall having heard of her so looked in the library and found two of her books one set in Orkney and one in Shetland. It may be that I am in my second childhood but I enjoyed both. The Orkney one was "The Stronghold" that being the original broch. The Shetland one was "A Stranger came ashore" the story of a selkie man.

Katharine's book has several pictures of places and people including school groups. There is one drawing of a sculptured grave slab found nearby at Kilianan which reminds me of the "Westray Stone" I think there is a museum near the school now and from the map it looks as if you can reach it from the A82 from Inverness.

Those of you who have read to the end of my story will have noticed that I have read five books! ■



Do you know?

Which son of an Orkney father appears every night at the London Palladium?

Peter Russell, member 161 came up with this teaser and the answer is revealed on page 15.



Oradians John Cummin and his brother William, both born on the seven mile long island of South Ronaldsay beside the Pentland Firth, sailed to North America in 1857, making their way to Chicago from where they started working their way around the United States, eventually freighting on the Oregon Trail.

This pioneering route across the American continent, from Independence in West Missouri to the Columbian River country of North Oregon, was utilised throughout the 19th century and measured around two thousand miles.

John met and married Martha Starcher in 1864. She was of Pennsylvanian Dutch descent from West Virginia where her parents had been plantation owners. During the Civil War, her father and mother had been on their way by covered wagon to Oregon when they met the Orkney boys on the big trail.

The Cummin brothers took out homesteads in Kansas and the deeds were signed by President Grant himself. On one memorable occasion, the redoubtable Jesse James and his gang of outlaws galloped pellmell into John's front yard and traded horses leaving their exhausted mounts behind. Naturally no-one objected!

John sold out in 1872 and, with his wife and infant son Alexander, headed west once more by covered wagon.

Another son, William, was born on the trail at Pilot Rock in Oregon and from there the family settled down on a farm in Washington State for 20 prosperous years, producing six more children, until they were hit by three years of bad weather.

So once again John and Martha loaded up their covered wagons and headed with six of their family for Canada (two of the girls stayed behind).

One wagon was drawn by six horses, and the other by four; and they were heavily laden with machinery and household effects. Martha and the youngest children travelled in a separate carriage.

On the rear of one wagon an extension had been made by a smithy especially for the trip. There was also a large wooden box built on this wagon and at each campsite it was

filled up with timber so that they would have dry fuel at the next stop.

There was also a box for provisions built on the rear of the other wagon and it contained supplies of dried fruit and vegetables, cured meat, sugar, flour and soap. Their bread on the trip was always sourdough buns.

The family trekked like this across Idaho and came to a lake they had to swim their outfit across. Since they were herding 50 head of extra horses, it must have proved a hazardous task.

They always camped near water and at night the herder kept the campfire going. Mosquitoes and coyotes were a nuisance but the smoke helped keep them at bay.

One stretch became scary as it took two days to find any water. A small can of drinking water was all that was left and the restive horses were becoming hard to control.

At the end of the second day, and with time running out, they spotted a number of cattle congregating at a water hole. They were wild beasts and became terrified of so many parched horses galloping down on them. The cattle stampeded and the boys took off their shirts and waved them frantically at the maddened animals, turning them just before they smashed into the wagons.

On the treeless prairies of Montana they used dried buffalo chips for fuel while the boys whittled wood from telegraph poles for kindling.

At the border on entering Canada they were met by six Northwest Mounted Police-men, all splendid in their distinctive scarlet uniforms, who performed inspection duties.

It was nearing the end of June and some of the horses had become ill through so much exhausting travelling. Progress was held up while these sick animals were treated.

By now everyone was feeling weary from the long trip but continued onwards finally arriving at their destination, Wetaskiwin in the northwest territories (now Alberta) on July 26th, 1891, the summer before the first railway came in. The trip had been 900 miles and had lasted ten weeks.

For a year they lived in the Gwynn ↗



Did you know?

In the great storm of 1952 seven thousand henhouses were destroyed and 86,000 hens died as hurricane force winds, in excess of 120mph, left a trail of destruction that made headlines worldwide.

In today's terms the damage to Orkney ran into millions of pounds and was so severe that the then Lord Lieutenant of Orkney set up an emergency relief fund and made a general appeal for donations.

The response from the British public was immediate and generous.

The King and Queen sent messages of sympathy and followed this up with donations to the fund. Princess Elizabeth, The Duke of Edinburgh and the late Queen Mary also made contributions.

Despite an appeal in Parliament, by the Orkney and Shetland MP Jo Grimmond, for more state aid this was refused by the Secretary of State and government support amounted to a big fat zero.

This naturally caused resentment as Orkney and the Orcadians were left to pick up 90% of the bill.



It is no exaggeration to say that almost every person who has been to Orkney and probably nearly every Orcadian has visited the Italian Chapel; many more than once.

The chapel was a gift to Orkney from the Italian prisoners of war of Camp 60 on Lambholm, a tranquil spot just across the first of the Churchill barriers.

After one has seen the chapel it is difficult to believe that the talents of the prisoners could transform two Nissen huts with scrap scrounged from the old block ships and bully beef ration tins into a chapel of such outstanding beauty.

The moving force behind the project was Domenico Chiocchetti who did most of the artistic work including the painting of the Madonna and Child which he based on a holy picture, Madonna of the Olives, that he had carried with him throughout the war.

In March 1960 after an appeal on Italian radio Chiocchetti was traced and he returned to Orkney where he and a local man set about restoring the paintwork of the chapel. On the last Sunday of his visit a service of rededication was attended by 200 Orcadians. Over the years a number of prisoners returned together with members of the Chiocchetti family to renew the strong ties of friendship with the people of Orkney. The chapel is still used for services.

Robbie's keeping mum . . . and mum's not pleased!

by Allan Taylor, member No 1055

Robbie o' Northoose wiz gan about his wark, singan awa and aafil plaesed wi himsel; an there wis his auld mither winderan whit it wiz that wis mackin him sae blide.

She tried tae speer him but aal he wid dae wiz gae a smirk an mak for oot. It wisn't till she went tae the van on Monday night that she fund oot the reason. Wha wis there at the van but peedie Babbie o' Windywaas an anither gentry luckan wife, turned oot in a grand plaited skirt an button boots, an apin her heid a hat like ye wid see at the kirk or a waddeen, but no at Jock Yorston's van.

"Whit's all this tae do wi Robbie luckan sae plaesed wi himsel?" Robbie's mither speered o' Babby when the unkan wife wis mackin for home. "An whar came she fae anyway?"

"Weel" said Babby, "They say she's up fae sooth an cam fae America an she's aired Upper Bigging fae auld Davy. Thou'll remember that aafil windy Wednesday efternuin? Weel



that's why Robbie is luckan sae plaesed wi himsel. We saw the unkan wife settin oot fae her hoose wi her twa white barkin dogs, peedie bits o' things— jist fur luckan at an no workin. Your Robbie wis watchin her fae ahint the peat stack and the wind got up jist as she cam oor the brae. Weel her coat gaed up ower her haid an the peedie dogs wir gan like heather coves, nearly liftin aaf the grund. There she wis, no

sein whar she wis gaan an skrekin "You, young man, can you HELP?" Well it wis then that thee Robbie cam gigglin fae ahint the peat stack an no kennan whit tae do. When the wife heard Robbie commin, doon she gaid on her back on the whins at the sde o' the burn wi Robbie standin gappin at her.

Weel when I saw she wisna hurt and widna be needin my help I made for home but thee Robbie's been keepin his eye on Upper Bigging ever since". ■

Valley before moving to the John Knox district. A corral was built to contain the horses and that first winter they lived mainly on rabbits. Having no guns or ammunition they dug a pit about four feet deep, covering it with small branches and twigs and then put some hay on top. When the rabbits came along to eat the hay, they fell into the pit and were unable to get out.

Meals were necessarily plain. There was a small log cabin just large enough for a kitchen and living room so that the family slept in their tents while a larger habitation was being constructed.

This new house was the biggest in the district and soon became the focal point of celebrations. During the winter of 1896, for instance, they held a big party and the neighbours for miles around attended: but before the festivities were over, the weather turned nasty and cold so Martha would not let anyone go home until dawn.



John & Martha (Staecher) Cummings

As an alternative they feverishly danced until daylight just to keep themselves warm and left after a hearty breakfast of pancakes and home cured ham.

John became caretaker of the Government Barometer for years and some winter readings showed record lows of around -60 degrees F.

Martha, meanwhile acted as county midwife and never refused a call for help, no matter how cold it got or how far away the expectant mother lived.

John and Martha stayed on the farm for several years before moving into town. They prospered and never regretted their long trek to Canada.

John had a stroke and passed away in September 1914, at the age of 81. Orkney must have seemed a long way away by then.

Martha later remarried but spent her last years in a wheelchair because of a broken hip that did not heal properly. She passed away in 1940 at the age of 93. They bred them hardy in those far off days. ■

General Custer and the Orkney connection



Part two of the article by Peter Groundwater Russell. Member No 161

In the June 2005 issue of Sib Folk News the story of the legendary General George Armstrong Custer's alleged connection with Orkney was traced to the Kirkwall businessman, John Cursiter (1819-1886). Many members will no doubt be surprised therefore to learn that an even bolder claim of kinship was made in an obituary published in *The Orcadian*, December 23, 1882, under the heading **Death of an Orcadian in Manitoba**. It reads as follows:

The *Marquette Review* of Nov. 17, published at Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, referring to the death of Mr David Cusiter, says:- "Mr David Cusiter, one of the first settlers in this district, died after a short illness [inflammation of the lungs] at his residence near the Assiniboine [River] yesterday morning.* Mr Cusiter came to the Portage about twenty-two years ago from British Columbia, making the journey across the [Rocky] Mountains. He originally came from the Orkney Islands, and was engaged in the Hudson's Bay Co.'s service in British Columbia for a number of years, and witnessed many bloody encounters with the Indians and white settlers in that country during the earlier days of its history. Mr Cusiter succeeded in saving considerable money while in the company's service, and came to Manitoba with a large band of horses and quite a fortune in money. For some time after arriving in the Portage he kept a trading store, and then settled on a farm near the river, where he resided until his death. Mr Cusiter was a hard-working and persevering man, and during his life he amassed a colossal fortune. He had a generous nature, and was a kind neighbour. He leaves a wife and twelve children and a large circle of friends to mourn his untimely death. He was an uncle of General Cusiter (sic) who made himself celebrated in the Indian wars of the North Western States a few years ago, and who was killed during an encounter with a band of Indians under Sitting Bull. From a second source, the *Weekly Review*, another Manitoba paper, we learn that Mr Cusiter was born in the parish of Rendall, Orkney, in 1827, and in 1844 went to British Columbia in the service of

the Hudson's Bay Company, where he remained until 1859....."

Contrary to his obituary, David Cusiter (often also spelt 'Cusitar' or 'Cusitor') was actually born on February 17, 1822 at Nether Inkster, Rendall, son of John Cursiter (originally from the parish of Firth) and his second wife, Ann Rendall. They had three other children, Ann, Mary and Magnus, the last of whom became tenant in the farm of Gorn, in Rendall. John already had three sons surviving from his first marriage to Ann Gray, namely William, James and John. According to Cursiter 'family oral history' William, a millwright by trade, emigrated to America around 1819 and sometime later was joined by his brother, James, who followed the same line of work. They owned a paper mill in New York City but were ruined financially when it burned to the ground in a disastrous fire. The story goes on to say that they decided to move 900 miles west and one of these brothers was the father of General Custer.

Clearly if William or James was the father of General Custer then, of course, David would have been his uncle. But, alas, this is not the case.

The facts surrounding Custer's immediate lineage are well documented and no longer in dispute. For the record, his parents were Emanuel Henry Custer (1806-92), a blacksmith, and Marie Kirkpatrick Ward (1807-82). He was born on December 5, 1839 at New Rumley, Harrison County, Ohio, which is nearer to 400 than 900 miles west of New York City. If further proof were needed, recent Y chromosome DNA studies do not support him being of Orcadian descent but he didn't enjoy the benefit of modern-day forensic science, the World Wide Web, the IGI or family history societies and it seems perfectly reasonable to hypothesize that, for the last nine weeks of his incredible life at least, General George Armstrong Custer was happy to believe that his ancestors came from these northern isles. ■

Note (*): The inscription on his tombstone reads: "In Memory of David Cusitar born in Scotland, Feb 17, 1822. Departed this life Nov 16, 1882. His reward was Peace."



No longer 167 but a dashing 161

Peter Russell tells me that on renewing his lapsed membership he expected to retain his old number 167 which he used in part 1 of his Custer article in Sib Folk News No 34. He informs me, however, that he has been allocated a new number 161 and asks me to point this out to fellow members to avoid confusion. Ed

ON FLANDERS FIELD

SINCLAIR

by George Gray. Member No 14

an incredible coincidence

A few years ago while reading George Esson's book "For Freedom and Honour" I realised that one of the names on the South Ronaldsay war memorial was a relative of mine. He was Private Gilbert O. Thomson who was a first cousin of my grandmother. He was a son of Gilbert Thomson and Margaret Gilmour. Gilbert Thomson and John Gilmour were both lighthouse keepers who had been sent by the Northern Lighthouse Board to be keepers on the Pentland Skerries. John Gilmour had taken his sister Margaret with him as his housekeeper and Gilbert Thomson had taken his sister Jane with him. The Gilmours had travelled from Wigtownshire and the Thomsons had come across from South Ronaldsay. Romance must have blossomed on the Pentland Skerries as Gilbert Thomson married Margaret Gilmour and John Gilmour married Jane Thomson. Both marriages were in 1886.

I was surprised to find Gilbert O. Thomson's name on the South Ronaldsay war memorial as I had thought that he had never set foot on South Ronaldsay. He had been born on 8th July 1890 on Islay when his father was lighthouse keeper at Lochindaal Lighthouse. A few years ago the Lighthouse Board had kindly sent me service details for all of my Gilmour and Thomson relatives. They told me that Gilbert Thomson Snr had retired from the Lighthouse Board on health grounds on 1 May 1896 at the age of 44. I then found out from George Esson that Gilbert Thomson had in fact died on 18th May 1897 in South Ronaldsay. On his death his widow Margaret and son Gilbert went to live with some of her relatives in Port Patrick, Wigtownshire. My family records showed that Gilbert Thomson Senior had been married twice. He had two daughters from his first marriage and one son, Gilbert, from the second marriage. However after my trip to Flanders I am now wondering if Gilbert had a brother.

In May my wife and I decided to have a holiday in Bruges, Belgium. My sister-in-law accompanied us. We took the overnight ferry from Rosyth to Zeebrugge where a bus met us and transported us to our hotel. We were to be there for 5 nights but had made no plans for our stay. My sister-in-law expressed a wish to take a trip to the Fields of Flanders. We were surprised to find that we could do this in a day trip, which included a visit to the Menin gate. I booked us on the trip. I thought this would be my chance to see Gilbert O. Thomson's name on the Menin Gate. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission Website had given me all the information I needed to find his

name. However as I had not realised that I would be visiting the Menin Gate I had not taken my records with me.

At 9am the mini bus picked us up and we set off. There were 19 on the trip. There were people from Scotland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Our drive/guide was a young woman.

After travelling for an hour we stopped at a lay-by our guide told us that we were in the middle of the area where the first Battle of Ypres had taken place from October to November 1914. The area was not what I expected. I had imagined the whole battlefield area fenced off, as I realised there must be many unexploded bombs lying buried in the area. Instead the whole countryside was covered with farms and green fields full of cattle. The guide explained that the area was still quite a dangerous place. Many farmers had come across unexploded bombs. At one stop she told us we were between the opposing trenches, the area called "No Man's Land" This was the area where, on Christmas Day 1914 a spontaneous truce took place and men, who were officially enemies, came out of their trenches, talked and exchanged gifts. Such a thing never happened again as the spring of 1915 brought an event

that was to severely embitter the Allied soldiers against the Germans.

We then saw the area where the second battle of Ypres took place in the spring of 1915. The Germans were determined to break through to the Channel ports and on the evening of 22nd April 1915 they used a secret weapon against the French troops. The Canadian troops, to the right of the French, saw a yellowish cloud drifting in the wind towards the French soldiers. It was a poisonous gas (chlorine) and such a thing had never been used as a weapon of war before. The French troops were unprepared and ran back towards Ypres leaving the Canadians to deal with the threat as well as they could. We visited the Canadian memorial at St Julien, which commemorates the brave actions of 2000 Canadians who had died during the gas attacks on 22nd April 1915. It was only then that I remembered that Gilbert Thomson must have been one of the many Canadian soldiers who died as a result of the gas attack. He had died on 22nd April 1915 and had served with the 2nd Eastern Ontario

Battalion 1st Canadian Infantry Division. We visited Tyne Cot Cemetery where 11500 soldiers are buried. It was beautiful and peaceful. The rows of white headstones are uniform in size and design and where known carry the name, age, rank of the soldier and the date of death. The badge of his service is also included. The flowers and grass are kept in immaculate condition.

We visited several other places including the Field Dressing Station dug into the canal bank. It was here that John McCrae, a Canadian Medical Officer worked to save the lives of wounded soldiers during the second battle of Ypres in 1915. He wrote his now famous poem on a page torn from a dispatch book. This poem inspired the use of the Flanders poppy as a symbol of remembrance for those who died in the war.

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the dead, Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields*

John McCrae 1915

While I was walking through Tyne Cot Cemetery the tour guide asked me why I had come on the trip. I told her that I was hoping to see the name of my grandmother's cousin on the Menin Gate. I explained that although he was born in Scotland he had been fighting with the Canadians. I had not told her his name. She turned and asked, "His name wasn't Thomson was it?" I was quite surprised at her question as there are almost 35,000 names on the Menin Gate. How could she know his name was Thomson? She went on to explain that last year she had attended a funeral for a Canadian soldier killed in the First World War and whose body only recently had been dug up by a local farmer. They had found documents on him which gave them enough information to identify him as James Robert Thomson, a Canadian. They managed to trace some of his relatives in Canada and they had travelled over to Belgium to

attend his funeral. This had been a very sad occasion but had been attended by hundreds of local people. The guide asked me if James Robert Thomson could have been Gilbert Thomson's brother. As Gilbert was born in 1890 and his father died in 1897 it is possible he did have brothers.

We travelled on to the Menin Gate where the guide showed me Gilbert Thomson's name on Panel 18. There are registers to help you find the panel number, number and rank of the soldier. Every night at exactly 8.00 p.m. the traffic going through the Menin Gate is



George finds Gilbert Thomson's name

stopped by the police and some of the members of the local fire brigade step out into the roadway beneath the archway and sound "The Last Post" on gleaming silver bugles. We could not

The Menin Gate

stay for the ceremony but the guide explained that the shrill notes of the bugle brought the sacrifice and suffering of those years between 1914 and 1918 into the midst of the modern world. They help to carry the warning "Never Forget"

When we returned to our hotel we agreed that we had spent a very sad and emotional day which we would "never forget"

Now that I am home my task will be to find out if Gilbert O. Thomson had a brother James Robert Thomson who fought with him in the First World War or was it just a coincidence that the two Canadian soldiers were Thomsons.

The only disappointment we had was that we had visited too early to see the poppies blow in Flanders Fields. However when we stepped off our bus back in Bruges we found poppies flowering at the side of the bus stop! ■



Part 2 Of the two Sergeant Stoves by Judy Stove

The male line continued in Australia. Robert in 1883, at his marriage in Sydney, described himself as a farmer, even though by April 1882 he was on the payroll of the NSW police force. But David was killed by a fall from a horse, on 31st October 1883. Did the accident change Robert's plans about continuing to farm with his new wife, Sarah Ann Sinclair? Did the prospect of supporting a family incline him to seek more reliable employment in Sydney?

Sarah Ann Sinclair was 23 years old when she married Robert Stove in Ross Street, Forest Lodge, Sydney, in 1883: "just landed from Orkney, Scotland", as it breathlessly says on their marriage certificate. She was old enough, then, to marry whom she chose, even as far away as Australia. Her brother, Edward P. Sinclair, was one of the witnesses; they emigrated together.

Sarah's father, also John Sinclair, was a ship's carpenter. He was the son of another John Sinclair, "pilot and formerly seaman in the merchant service", and Isabella Johnstone, who married in Stromness in 1826. Old John and his wife were both still alive, living in Alfred Street in Stromness, at the census in 1881, and their son John – perhaps just back from a voyage – was with them on census day. The father was now 77, and blind; cared for by his wife, and their unmarried daughter (also Isabella) aged 49.

Meanwhile, young John's wife Sarah, daughter of David Petrie (d. 1883) and Katherine Hourie (d. 1882), stayed with her children at her childhood home, Stonehall, in Deerness. In about 1760, the farm had been bought by one James Petrie (b. 1740), and it remains in the Petrie family to this day.

Once he retired, John Sinclair and his wife, Sarah (née Petrie), travelled to Australia, but returned to Orkney; John died at Stonehall, Deerness, in 1899, whereupon Sarah returned to Australia. This visit was remembered by one of her grandchildren,

Agnes Stove, who was about nine years old. Sarah returned to Orkney before her own death, at Stonehall, in 1913, of liver cancer.

Orkney's newspaper, The Orcadian, kept family members informed of significant events in the lives of the islanders who emigrated and these clippings were carefully preserved by relatives back home; thus we have this account of a Christmas brawl at Bondi in 1884. Clearly, riot control for NSW police is nothing new.

"On Boxing Day, the principal holiday in the colony of New South Wales, and on which a great deal of drinking takes place, there was a fight at Bondi, near Waverley, a suburb of Sydney. Sergeant Stove, a native of Deerness, being on duty at the place, along with two other constables, went into the mêlée and tried to restore order. The mob however pelted the constables with stones, and Sergeant Stove was severely cut about the head. He was taken to the Infirmary, and after his wounds were dressed he was taken to his home, where he lay at the time the intelligence was dispatched, in a very precarious condition."

A hiatus in the salary records occurs, with the next recorded entry occurring for 1903. By this time Robert had moved, with Sarah Ann and their seven children, to Newcastle. He was being paid 9 shillings and threepence a week. That year, Robert and Sarah Ann's eldest daughter, also Sarah Ann, died at the age of 19, of the then untreatable illness, juvenile diabetes.

In September 1907, as a sergeant, Robert had his pay increased to 9 shillings and ninepence, as a special decision, presumably in recognition of his service. Police salary records for the First World War years are scanty. But thanks to another Orcadian article from 1919, which draws heavily from The Newcastle Herald (NSW), we have an account of Senior Sergeant Stove's retirement.

"Senior-Sergeant R. Stove was the guest ↗



Did you know?

In 1865 Captain George Robertson of Stronsay took the money he had made during his years in sailing ships and used it to provide a steamer service to the North Isles of Orkney. His first vessel, the Orcadia, plied to the islands from 1868 to 1931 and was the first to run to a proper schedule replacing what had been up until then a haphazard and unreliable service.

Our thanks to Nan Scott for this item.

...of a number of citizens at the Newcastle Council Chambers last evening, says the Newcastle Herald, Australia, and was the recipient of a presentation of a wallet of money as an appreciation of his work in the police force and of his work as a citizen of Newcastle for the past 18 years.

Alderman R. Gibson, the Mayor, presided, and in making the presentation to Sergeant Stove, said that no function he had presided over had given him more pleasure. 'I have known our guest for many years', said the Mayor, 'and during my long experience of men I have never known a whiter man.' The Mayor referred to Sergeant Stove's record in the police, of which he had been a popular and valued member, and [to] his fine standing as a citizen. He hoped that Sergeant Stove would live long to enjoy the good things of this life. He had pleasure in handing over the wallet and contents to Sergeant Stove on behalf of his many friends in the city. The health of Senior-Sergeant Stove was then toasted.

Senior-Sergeant Stove said that he deeply appreciated the gift, which he accepted with thanks to the Mayor personally and to the citizens of Newcastle.

He had spent 18 years of his service in the New South Wales police at Newcastle, and was proud to have earned the esteem of its citizens.

Senior-Sergeant Stove, who is now upon extended leave, prior to his retirement from the



Little Millhouse - Deerness 60 Gloucester

Road no longer exists; neither does the house nearly opposite, at number 53, where their son, my father's Uncle Dave, and his family, lived. Many Federation houses of the period survive in the street, however. It is easy to imagine the time when the dark red brick houses were new, offering a cool and dim interior against the sun's blaze outside ("Deerness" faced west). It is curious that the old Orkney houses where Robert and Sarah were born—Little Millhouse and Stonehall—survive, but the Sydney house which they built has succumbed to progress. ■

Answer to Peter Russell's Palladium teaser on page 8



The Washington Irving blue plaque is affixed to the front of the theatre in Argyll Street, London.

"On the borders of this massive round" was the intriguing title of Donna Heddle's talk, featured in our December 04 newsletter. When I told Nan Scott I still had a peedie corner to fill she said she thought that readers might be interested in this poem by William Fowler (1560–1612) which provided the source for Donna's title.

IN ORKNAY

UPON the utmost corners of the world,
and on the borders of this massive round,
quhaire fates and fortune hithier has me harld,
I doe deplore my greiffs upon this ground;
and seing roring seis from roks rebound
by ebbs and streames of contrair routing tyds
and phebus chariot in their waves ly dround,
quha equallye now night and day divyds,
I cal to mynde the storms my thoughts abyde,
which ever wax and never dois decress,
for nights of dole dayes joys ay ever hyds,
and in their vayle doith al my weill suppress:
so this I see, quhaire ever I remove,
I change bot sees, bot can not change my love.
harld: drawn dole: woe



Did you know

St Olaf Haraldsson, born 995, Patron Saint of Norway, was killed at the battle of Stiklestad in 1030. Two statues of St Olaf and St Magnus were discovered during last century's restoration of St Magnus Cathedral and they can be seen in the Orkney museum, Tankerness House, Kirkwall. This modern wooden figure which can be seen in the north choir aisle of St Magnus Cathedral is a copy of the stone figure from the Cathedral of Nidaros in Trondheim. St Olaf has a crown and orb as signs of his kingship and he treads underfoot the dragon – a symbol of evil. The axe is a symbol of the saint and legend has it that he was slain with this weapon. St Olaf is considered to be the patron saint of sailors.



Well that completes the final part of my article and I look forward to hearing from anyone who has an interest in' my families'.

I am particularly interested in finding out what happened to William Foulis, b1862, son of William Foulis and Mary Craigie. He was on both the 1871 and 1881 census returns for ? In 1881 he was a 18 years and a grocer's assistant but does not appear on the 1891 returns. Did he die or migrate or what?

While I am in touch with some descendants of the following families I am keen to broaden my contacts:- Thomas Walls 1834-1835, Jemima Foulis 1834-1910 and about eleven children. Also James Baikie and Janet Mowat Foulis and two children. John Foulis and Elizabeth Gray, nine children. Help with any of the above queries would be appreciated.

*Janette M. Thomson
Member 121.*

*janmax@alphalink.
com.au*

THE HAZARDS OF CLIMBING ONE'S FAMILY TREE

My great grandfather, James Cumming FOULIS, was the second Orcadian on my father's side to arrive in Adelaide, South Australia. He was the son of John FOULIS (Papa Westray, Capt) and Janet SLATER, (Sanday) who married in Kirkwall in 1834. His paternal grand-parents were Oliver Foulis & Ann Reid of Papa Westray and his maternal grand-parents were James Slater & Jane/Jean Muir of Sanday. He was the fourth child, third son, being born on 24th October, 1841, baptised on 28th November, 1841, by Rev Peter Petrie. His siblings were Jemima (m. Thos. Walls); William (Capt. m. Mary Craigie); John, (1839-1848, bur. St Magnus); Janet (m. Jas. Baikie), Robert Christie, (m. Lillias Keith); Barbara Logie, (m. Wm Logie); John, (m. Eliz. R. Gray).

When young, James lived at 2 Young St, Kirkwall, overlooking the harbour. His father, John Foulis, was a ship's master, registered on Lloyds Masters' List and sailed & traded along the English & Scottish coast and on the Baltic. Later, brother, William, was also a ship's master on similar routes.

A great story was told to us in 1998 in Kirkwall by Bill Irvine! (member no 62). William's wife, Mary, was told that her husband, Capt. Wm. Foulis, had died of an accident on board, when he slipped hitting his head. Being a grieving widow she rushed out to buy her widow's weeds. Imagine her surprise when the ship docked to see her husband well and hearty having survived the fall! Incidentally, I'm told, he died at sea some years later.

It is uncertain when James arrived in South Australia. His name is not on any of the arrivals of immigrants' indexes, but as he was a sailor he may have come as a crew member on a sailing ship about 1870. He was not on the Scottish 1871 census but was in Adelaide by 1872. His death certificate, for length of residency in Australia, suggests that he arrived in Adelaide during 1870. He obtained his Master's Certificate of Competency in Adelaide in October, 1872.

James Cumming Foulis married Annie Campbell at the residence of her mother, Mrs Anne Campbell, (Slater), of Roseworthy, S.A. on 24th September, 1872. They lived at Portland Estate, near the port of Adelaide for the early period of their married life. It was at their home at the Portland Estate that Annie's cousin, Angus Christian Slater, (b. OKI) married Jane Manson Mackie on 4th Feb, 1873.

By July, 1874, James & Annie were living in Melbourne, Victoria, where entries in Victorian Directories state their location as Emerald Hill, (now South Melbourne) & Ascot Val. Here James was in partnership with a man named Blair. They sailed and traded along the east coast of Australia and to the Pacific islands.



Capt. James Cumming Foulis and Annie Campbell

James was the sailing partner whilst Blair obtained business etc, but on his return after one trip James discovered that the business had been sold, even the ship which he was sailing. His partner and the money had disappeared. (family folk-lore)

It was here that the first four of their six children were born. William Campbell on 15th July 1874, who died on 10th May 1879, Emily Annie on 9th October 1876, and died 16th June 1878 James Hamilton on 16th September 1878, and died on the 13th March 1879 and Alexander Campbell on 25th December 1881. Annie's mother, Anne Campbell and two of her sisters, Emily Grace and Agnes Petitia

visited the Foulis family in Melbourne on a number of occasions, no doubt making the journey by coastal steamer from Adelaide, after spending days travelling by coach from Laura, S.A.

By 1883 James, Annie and baby Alexander Campbell Foulis were living in Maryborough, Queensland. What a sad time for the young couple leaving their first three children buried at Melbourne General Cemetery

James was again venturing into shipping, trading up and down the east coast of Australia carrying timber, mainly for Wilson, Hart & Co mills. During this period, when sailing out of Maryborough and along the east coast there were no lights, it was customary to send a boat's crew ashore to start a fire in order to provide a guiding beacon till dawn.

Tragedy struck the family once again. Their fifth child, Sydney Slater was born on 7th July, 1883 but died some months later on 15th March, 1884 from diarrhoea and convulsions. Sydney Slater had been named for his two grandmothers, Annie & Janet. He is buried in the Maryborough cemetery.

On 28th May, 1885, JCF was granted selection No.141, Smithfield of 1280 acres, part of the present day Yorkey's Knob area and ↗

Just north of Cairns, Northern Queensland. (an up-market sea-side residential and holiday area). To retain this land it had to be worked so he employed an overseer, to live and work there.

This same year, saw the birth of Herbert James on 18th August, 1885 at Maryborough. Later that year, the family of four moved to Cairns, living on the Esplanade. (now high rise hotels). After moving to Cairns, James entered the timber trade procuring cedar from the Atherton Tableland—a rain forest range west of Cairns. One adventure was to assemble the logs until the Barron River was in flood and then float them over the falls, down the river to the coast. As James related later, this experiment was a failure as only a few logs reached the mouth of the river intact.

He was also principal in undertaking to procure cedar from the Daintree district. now Heritage Listing. (the 'greenies' would certainly demonstrate against this!).

He continued to conduct his shipping business, venturing to the Pacific Islands and for a short while to South American ports and making frequent trips south along the east coast to Melbourne.

Much of the cargo was timber, cedar from Mareeba and Daintree areas, back loading with heavy machinery and any obtainable cargo.

In 1903, he bought and used the first steam traction engine at Mareeba on the Atherton Tableland.

In the early 1900s he became a member of the Cairns Harbour Board and in 1907 became Marine Superintendent, a position he held until his death.

They educated their two sons at Scots College, Rose Bay, Sydney which entailed a sea trip and boarding.

On leaving school in 1897, Campbell worked for Burns Philp, as a junior clerk rising by promotion to the position of book-keeper to the Island Department, until his marriage in 1904. He also served for intervals aggregating 12 months as superintendent of cargo on the island steamers. No doubt it was during this period that Campbell met his future wife Beatrice McLeod.

On his marriage to Beatrice in 1904 he had to resign as company policy, in those days, was to employ single men only. He obtained employment as an auditor with a large accounting & auditing firm until early in 1906, when he became ill as a result of rheumatic fever suffered when a child.

After his recovery, until 1910, he was employed once again with another Sydney firm of accountants, but on becoming ill again was granted four weeks leave & promised a position with the firm again when in good health.

So in March, 1910 with his wife, Beatrice and two small children, Wm. Campbell, (Roger) aged 4 years and Olwen Anne aged 2 years sailed on "Wyreema" for Cairns to stay with his parents and hopefully improve his health.

Campbell and his family arrived in Cairns at the end of March to be welcomed by his loving and very concerned parents.

Sadly he did not have the expected return to good health for on the 20th May, 1910 he died of cardiac disease at the home of his parents, The Esplanade, Cairns. He was buried at the Cairns Cemetery, now called The Pioneers Cemetery, (MacLeod St).

After Campbell's death, his widow Beatrice and her two children lived with James & Anne in Cairns, although they made frequent trips to Sydney to visit her parents, Wm and Barbara McLeod.

Their youngest son, Herbie, married Ida Prewett in 1911 in Cairns. They had a son, Herbert, and two daughters, Edna & Joan. Their son, Herbert died aged 21 years, in 1934. James Cumming Foulis died on 27th June 1920 after a short illness. His obituaries in the Cairns papers stated that he had been involved with sounding the channel into Cairns harbour only a few days before his death and that the deceased was one of the oldest pioneers on the Queensland coast. It went on to state that, 'he was famous for a trip made from Melbourne to Maryborough in the brig, Janet Stuart which he accomplished in five days'. On the deck was a large Lancashire boiler for one of the mills in the Maryborough district. Immediately after leaving Melbourne a heavy gale arose & continued all along the coast but there was nothing to do except to run before it and take what care was possible of this heavy piece of deck cargo. Running before the gale an im-migrant steamer was passed, some days later both captains were in each others company and this story was related by the steam ship's master and that he would like to shake the hand of the master of the brig who showed this remarkable handling and seamanship and that he himself wished he was able to handle a ship in the same efficient manner.

James' funeral service was held at St Andrews Presbyterian church and he was buried with his son, Campbell, in The Pioneers' Cemetery, on 28th June, 1920. Both men are remembered on the Pioneers' Plaque in the Rotunda at the cemetery. The following year, Anne, while visiting her sister Jemima Campbell and daughter-in-law, Beatrice, Roger and Olwen, passed away in Sydney. She is buried at Waverley cemetery with her uncle Peter Campbell, her cousin John, and later Jemima.

As well as being an adventurous man evidently with a true pioneering spirit, who was willing to take risks and work hard, he was also well-read, if one can judge by his many classical books that have been passed onto his grandchildren. He bred into Campbell's children a love of all things Orcadian.

Orkney's loss of him as a young man was Australia's gain.

There is still much research to complete. Any information gratefully received. ■

janmax@alphalink.com.au

Did you know

it is said that 'runes' were invented by Odin, the god of the runes, and were supposed to have magic qualities. When a word was written in runes it was supposedly empowered and was said to ward off evil spirits. That is why many Norsemen would finish their runic inscriptions with their names, followed by 'wrote this'. The very act of writing something in runes was believed to be a spell in itself. Many fine examples of runic inscriptions are to be found in the Neolithic tomb of Maeshowe, carved by the Vikings who broke into the tomb in the 12th century. Eight-hundred years later we can still discover that



'Ingigerth is the most beautiful of women' and that 'crusaders broke into this howe' and another modest fellow informs everyone that



'These runes were carved by the man most skilled in runes in the Western Ocean'.



More on emigration from Shapinsay to South Australia

Evelyn Swenson (Member No. 150, eswenson@connexus.net.au)

I was very interested to read James M. Irvine's article on Migration to South Australia in 1851 in Sib Folk News No. 33 (March 2005), as William SKETHEWAY was my 2 x great grandfather.

Mr Irvine mentions that religious and family associations may have been important in the choice of South Australia as the destination, but the association between the Shapinsay emigrants is stronger in some cases than indicated, through the family of my 3 x great grandparents John LIDDLE (c1771-1853) and Janet WILLIAMSON (c1772-1855) who lived at Gorn. John and Janet LIDDLE were evidently early members of a dissenting church, as from 1801 their children were baptized in the Anti-Burgher Congregation in Kirkwall. These baptisms are recorded in the Shapinsay Parish Register in words along the lines of "...baptized by Rev Mr Broadfoot before an Anti-Burgher Congregation".

Three of the LIDDLE daughters were married to Elders of the Shapinsay United Associate/United Presbyterian Church - Janet to James REID, Christian (Christina) to William SKETHEWAY, and Frances (Fanny) to James SHEARER. After the Muckle Harvest affair of 1847 to which Mr Irvine refers, James REID and James SHEARER evidently apologised to the laird and his factor, and were allowed to stay on the island, but William SKETHEWAY and family went to Kirkwall, where Christina died in August 1848. William and the eight children left for Australia in 1849. In 1851 they were followed by two of the children of James REID and Janet LIDDLE - John Scarth REID and his wife Ann(e) Bell STEVENSON were accompanied on the "Marion" by his sister Mary Balfour REID and her husband Alexander Russell WILLIAMSON. In 1852 James SHEARER, Fanny LIDDLE and their five children also emigrated to South Australia. Of the 27 grandchildren of John LIDDLE and Janet WILLIAMSON, 15 went to South Australia.

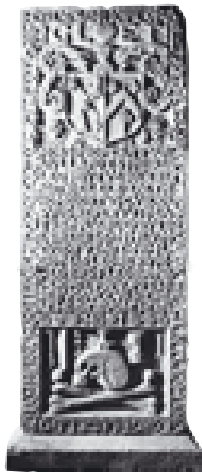
Why William SKETHEWAY and his family decided to go to South Australia is not known, although the existence of a United Presbyterian congregation in Adelaide may have been a factor. The Colonial Land and

Emigration Commission scheme for free and assisted emigration to SA in operation between 1849 and 1851 allowed older emigrants to receive assistance, whereas under the previous scheme only adults under 40 were accepted. On the passenger list William, who had put his age down by 10 years, to 42, was said to be single, rather than widowed, and this possibly meant he was barred from the family quarters on the ship. If so, who looked after the four children under 13? Perhaps an exception was made for him.

It would be interesting to know how many of the other emigrants from Shapinsay were members of the United Presbyterian church. Lynton Heddle has told me that his 2 x great grandfather John HEDDLE was baptized by Rev. James Brown, the UP Minister, so the HEDDLE family were evidently members of the UP Church. Additionally, in 1851 John HEDDLE was living at Linton in the household of yet another LIDDLE daughter, Marion (Mary), who had married James HEPBURN, so he would have had ready access to news from the SKETHEWAY family.

Mr Irvine suggested that the apparent drop in the numbers of emigrants from Orkney to SA in 1852 could have resulted from the gold rush in Victoria. According to figures in Appendix A of Douglas Pike's Paradise of Dissent - South Australia 1829-1857 (MUP, 2nd ed., 1967) there was no obvious decrease in the numbers of either assisted or unassisted immigrants to SA from the UK in and after 1851, although the ultimate destination of many immigrants to SA may well have been the goldfields. The population of Victoria rose from about 70,000 in 1851 to nearly 500,000 in 1858 and not only did almost every male passenger on some ships go straight to the goldfields after arrival at Port Philip, but many crewmen deserted as well.

As a final twist, yet another REID sibling may have emigrated to Australia, perhaps tempted by the gold rush. Janet REID, third daughter of James REID and Janet LIDDLE, married William IRVINE in 1852; he was evidently not from Shapinsay and I know nothing of his ancestry. On 24 May 1853 Janet Jemima IRVINE was born in Johnston St., Collingwood, Victoria, father William



Did you know?

Some of the finest stone memorials to be found in Britain can be found in St Magnus Cathedral. Dozens of them line both sides of the interior of the Cathedral. These grave markers contain all the classic symbols associated with death; skulls, bones, hourglasses etc.



A curiosity which hangs in the nave of the Cathedral is this Mort Board. In times past this board was hung outside a dwelling to mark a death in the family

The old books reveal their secrets

Anne Cormack (Greig) No 73.

Like a lot of folk I hate throwing out books of any kind, and when I had to clear out my parents' house that rule applied. One of the books I kept was a prize won by my grandmother, Lizzie Jane Ledingham, who attended the old Glaitness School in Kirkwall. It was awarded to her in the Orkney and Zetland Association Examination of 1888 and is signed John C. Dundas, President. The book is entitled "Noble Women of Our Time". It celebrates the virtues of hard work, enduring one's lot, puritan morality and religious faith. Nowadays it would be considered the most boring read imaginable for a young lass. However, from my memories of my grandmother, it undoubtedly had an influence on her!

When the North Perthshire Family History Group held a 'Bring along an Heirloom and Talk about It' evening I decided to take the book as my contribution. I was flicking through the pages beforehand wondering what I would say about it when out fluttered some very fragile dried rose petals that I hadn't known were there. I realized that they must have been 'pressed' by my grandmother as a young girl over a century ago and that she could have

been the last person to touch them before me. At that moment the past and present came together in a way it is hard to describe other than 'spooky'.

Another book I kept from my parents' house was "Tom Brown's Schooldays" which had belonged to my father and which he, too, had won as a prize as a boy. He gained it for 'Religious Knowledge' - his mother Lizzie's influence coming through, perhaps! In this book I found not 'pressed' petals but a photo which my father had presumably used as a bookmark. It was of a middle-aged man and looked to date from the late nineteenth century. It had been taken in Leith. Who was the photo of? I can only guess that it might be my father's grandfather, Robert



Nicolson Greig, who, a few years after Lizzie won her prize at Glaitness School, became her father-in-law. Robert was a seaman and as well as being the father of my grandfather, James Greig, was also the father of Robert Greig, the Stromness Lifeboat Coxswain, who gained fame for the Shakespeare rescue in 1907. It is Robert Greig who is depicted in the well known Stanley Cursiter painting of Greig and Linklater.

To go back to Robert Nicolson Greig, seaman, my great grandfather, I have never been able to find out anything about where he sailed. He lived firstly in Victoria Road and then in Young Street in Kirkwall, and

at the four censuses of 1861, 1871, 1881 and 1891 he was listed at home. Did this mean he worked on small local fishing vessels or for the Orkney Steam Navigation Company? - or, if the photo taken in Leith is of him, on the 'North Boats' at least for a time? This is one family history mystery I have still to solve. ■

♣ IRVINE, 29, mother Janet REID, 24, both born Orkney. The child died 6 months later and I can find no further obvious trace of William and Janet in Victoria or SA. They were possibly the couple William, 27, and Janet IRVINE, 23, who arrived in Pt. Philip on the "Sea" on 15 May 1853. Also on the "Sea" were Thomas COCK and his wife Ann IRVINE, who went to the goldfields at Bendigo, and Alexander IRVINE and his wife Mary, all from Orkney. I have not tried to research these other IRVINEs, but perhaps an IRVINE researcher will know what happened to them.

There are several other members of OFHS who are interested in these LIDDLE

descendants. Anne Beaumont (#501) has done extensive research on the SA descendants. Derek Wells (#993) is a descendant of John and Ann REID and Sheila Johnston (#617) is also a REID descendant, through Frances REID and Magnus HUTCHISON. With their help, I have been able to fill in some of the missing information on members of the family who stayed on Shapinsay, a task made considerably easier by the Census transcription and MI booklets produced by OFHS. As a result of this combined research there is now a reasonably complete record of at least the first few generations of the descendants of John LIDDLE and Janet WILLIAMSON. ■

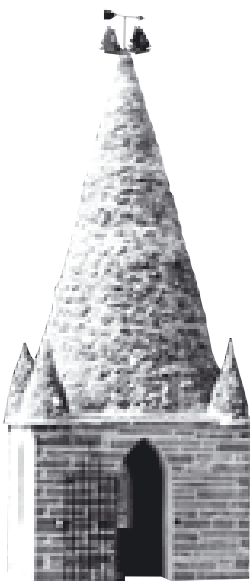


Did you know?

The first thing you notice about North Ronaldsay is the dyke that circles the island. This is not built to keep the sheep in—in fact just the opposite; it serves to keep the sheep on the beach where they enjoy their favourite diet of seaweed.

The North Ronaldsay sheep are descendants of the original Norse sheep, small and short tailed, and are one of the rarest breeds in the world. The dyke round North Ronaldsay has been the saving of the breed which was once common to Orkney but died out through crossbreeding.

It is only during the lambing season that the ewes are brought inside the dyke where they are fed on grass for 3 or 4 months. Lambs and mothers are then returned to the beach. The meat of this breed has a distinctive flavour; sweet and tender, and it features on the menus of some of the most expensive restaurants in the country.



Did you Know?

In 1725, John Gow the Orkney pirate, set out to attack Carrick House on Eday in his ship *Revenge*. The *Revenge* ran aground on the Calf of Eday and Gow and his men were captured and executed later that year in London.

The *Revenge* was refloated and the volcanic rocks, used as ballast, were left behind. James Traill, an Edinburgh lawyer and merchant bought an old house in Bridge Street, Kirkwall in 1730 and had it rebuilt. Part of the work included a summer house, the spire of which included the stones from the *Revenge*. It was decorated with shells, called groattie buckies in Orkney, and became known as the Groattie Hoose.

The house was eventually purchased by the Kirkwall merchant Robert Garden and many years later, in 1938, it was destroyed by fire.

The site was built over but the Groattie Hoose survived and this year it was moved to Tankerness Gardens and restored to its former glory.

More 'Strange' goings on . . .

From Ken Harrison

Isobel Irvine's comments in the June issue of the newsletter on the Sir Robert Strange article which appeared in our March edition caught the eye of Canadian member, Ken Harrison no 108, of North Vancouver.

Ken tells us that his own research into the Keith family (Edward Keith married Sibella Strang, one of the children of David Strang and Jean Scollay) reveals that the father of

Jean is given as 'Malcolm' by Hossack in the 1695 Poll Tax and in records for the Elphinstone family. Ken points out, however, that in Roland St Clair's 'Orcadian Families' the father is described as 'John (read Malcolm)'. Ken has been puzzled by this strange (he obviously couldn't resist the pun) entry and thinks that the answer is that St. Clair also found the discrepancy regarding the name of the father but chose to consider the more likely name being John.

Would any reader care to comment? ■

From Peter Russell

This time from Peter Groundwater Russell, Member No 161.

Peter e-mailed me to say that where the original article indicated that Sir Robert Strange was born on the mainland of Orkney, he was in fact a Kirkwallian. Peter also clarifies the place of Robert Strange's marriage to Isabella Lumisdén, as Edinburgh. They were both buried in the churchyard of St Paul's, Covent Garden and Peter enclosed an extract from *The Times* dated July 9th, 1792, and a photograph of the handsome memorial tablet erected in their honour.

Now Peter also tells me that he has a 'strange' story linking James Fea, Sixth of Clestran to Robert and Isabella. He promises to reveal all in an article planned for the March 2006 edition of the newsletter as this marks the 250th anniversary of the death of James Fea. Ed. ■

and from Bruce Gorie

Member no 961, Bruce Gorie from Edinburgh was so intrigued by the Robert Strange article that he decided further investigation was required and the following is an extract from his letter on the subject.

"I checked the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland, held at the Court of the Lord Lyon in Edinburgh, and found an entry for Sir Robert. He matriculated Arms (that is, he proved his right to bear Arms previously recorded by an ancestor) on 20th December 1791. It states that he was 'Heir male and Representative of the ancient family of Balcaskie in the County of Fife and chief of that Sirname (sic) only son and heir of David Strange or Strang of Kirkwall Esquire and Jean, daughter of Malcolm Scollay of Hunton Esquire'. Frustratingly, but typical of the period, the entry only gives basic details of his descent, his father being the eldest son and heir of James Strange or Strang, who was the eldest son of Andrew



STRANGE On Thursday last about one o'clock died, after having been long in a declining state of health at his house in a Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn fields, SIR ROBERT STRANGE, Knight. His nice feelings of honour, probity and benevolence are greatly imprinted in the minds of all who had the happiness to know him: whilst his elegant and masterly engraving will be a lasting monument to transmit his name to prosperity

*Extract from The Times,
Monday July 9th 1792*

Strange or Strang of South Ronaldsay, who was the eldest son of Sir David Strange or Strang of South Ronaldsay, who was the younger son of the Strangs of Balcaskie. As genealogical data recorded in entries in the Public Register (which was established in 1672) must be confirmed by suitable documentation, such as certificates of baptism or birth, marriage and death certificates, to prove the genealogy in the Petition seeking a grant or matriculation of Arms from the Lord Lyon, the entry in the Public Register is as close to a cast iron guarantee that the details given in it are correct.

I hope that this helps clear up the descent of Sir Robert's mother, Jean Scollay". ■

Hi members! If you are a Norquay or a Cromarty this might be of interest

Janette Thomson, Vermont, Australia. Member No 121



I was recently looking through a book "in progress" (the group involved hope to publish it soon) when "born in Orkney" jumped out at me. The book that the entry was taken from was "Good Country", p.59, a history of some pioneer families of

Cranbourne, once a country area, now the outer edges of the southern suburbs of Melbourne. Entries in italics are actual dates on Cursiter's site).

Hope it is of some interest to someone out there.

NORQUAY, Alexander, b. 1813, Orkney, d. 1890, Dandenong, (then a country market town north of Cranbourne but now a suburb of Melbourne)

Parents: John NORQUAY & Jane Ross.

Arrived : Victoria, 1852

Occupation: Farmer

Married Barbara CROMARTY, b. 1815,

d. 1891, Dandenong.(marr 13 June 1836, Manse, Sth Ronaldsay.)

Chdn: William, b.1836, (b. 4 Nov 1836, chr. 6 Jan 1837)

Mary b. Scotland, (b. 28 Dec 1841, chr. 10 Jan 1842, Herston. Sth Ronaldsay)

John, b. about 1848, (b. 29 June 1848, Herston, Sth Ronaldsay)

James, b. 1856, Lynhurst, (nr Cranbourne)

Anna Bella, 1857, Cranbourne.

Alexander bought and farmed land at Eumemmerring, (near Cranbourne Dandenong area).

William NORQUAY, (first son as above). b. 1836, d. 1918, Malvern. (suburb of Melbourne)

Farmer at Lynhurst, Lang Lang & Koo-wee-rup. (last two country farming areas south of Cranbourne)

Married Susanna VESSY, b. 1839, d. Koo-wee-rup.

Chdn.: William Charles, 1866, Lynhurst

Mabel Barbara, 1868, Brighton, (suburb of Melbourne)

Laura Jessie, 1872, Brighton.

Nellie Beatrice, 1878, Cranbourne. ■

They just don't make women like this any more

John Sinclair. Member No 588

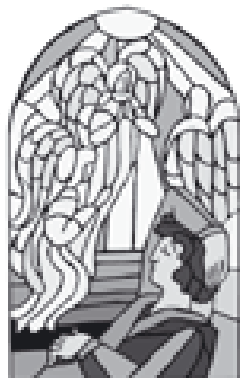
Isobel Traill, daughter of James Traill of Westove, was first married to James Fea of Clestrain, Stronsay; and second to the Rev John Wilson, second minister of Kirkwall, who was deprived of his right to exercise the ministry because of his 'adhesion to Epicopacy.'

She died in 1702, and her husband wrote the following epitaph to her (Craven's "History of the Episcopal Church in Orkney. 1688-1912).

"Stop traveller and know. Here lies the Remains of a Woman of an untainted Fame and unstained Virtue, Isobel Traill, Daughter to

James Traill of Westove, Reflect of James Fea of Clestrain, Spouse to John Wilson, Minister of the Gospel at Kirkwall, of a Stature Tall and Erected, and of a beautiful Countenance, Conspicuous for her Piety towards God, Love of her Neighbour, Charity to the Poor and peace with all.

For Virginal Chastitie, Contineny in



Widw hood and coustancy in a married state signal. In labour industrious, in

Affections Patient, In Enjoyments singularlie Temporate. In

Governing her Tongue, Family, and substance singular.

Towards her husbands, Children and Friends Lovely and Loving. In

Prosperity Composed. In Adversity with more than a Manly Courage

Magnaminous. For smart-ness of Wit, Prudence, Integrity, Veracity,

Modesty and Hospitality and goodness of Nature famous.

An ornament to her sex and surname, a Comfort to her Friends

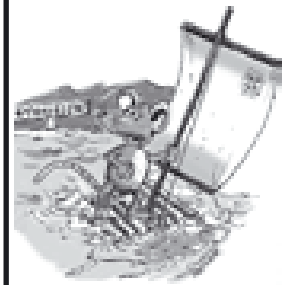
and a support to her kindred. Who not having arrived at the age of 61 years left

Time and removed to Eternity, born June 24, 1643, departed this Life November 14

1702.

Go on Traveller and imitate. Written by her husband privy to the Truth of all this, from

nearly 19 years' experience (sic). ■



Did you know?

Of all the Orkney islands there is only one whose name does not end in 'ay' and that is Eynhallow. At one time it was known as the vanishing isle and it would rear out of the sea only to vanish from sight before any human could reach it. It was then a kingdom of the fin folk and they called it 'Hildaland'. It was here that they spent their summers, returning in winter to Finfolkaheem, their majestic city under the sea. The humans tried in vain to reach the island for it was known that the spell could be broken by a man who took a boat through the fierce tides, looking steadfastly at the island and holding steel. Many tried and failed but one man succeeded, landed and Hildaland never vanished again.

The finfolk may have taken revenge as it was said that cats, rats and mice avoid the island and that blood flows from corn cut after sunset.

In 1851 an epidemic struck the island, probably typhoid fever. The people were evacuated and the roofs were taken off the buildings to make them uninhabitable. One was discovered to be a 12th century church and there may well have been a monastery prior to this which would explain the name Eynhallow; from the Norse - Eyn Helgg; or Holy Isle.



Did you know?

When Earl Hakon Paulsson returned from the Crusades in the early twelfth century, he built a church on his estates in Orphir in Orkney. Known as the round church it was thought to be Hakon's attempt at atonement for the sin of murdering his cousin Magnus some years earlier.

The church is modelled on the design of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre which Hakon had visited on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

The round church is older than St Magnus cathedral and is the only one of its kind in Scotland.

Unfortunately in the 18th century the church was plundered of most of its stone in order to build a new church which, ironically, has long been demolished. All that remains of Hakon's church is a semi-circular apse and part of the circular wall.

Visitors to the site will be interested in the Orkneyinga Viking Saga Centre which is situated near the church. A video at the centre introduces the Norse period and the relevant sites throughout the islands.



Medieval Parish Churches in Orkney

By Sarah Jane Grieve, Archivist at the Kirkwall Library

This subject is of interest to anyone with knowledge of Orkney as the medieval parishes are the same as those used today and they form the backbone of the community within the island archipelago. The subject of churches is of further interest as much of the material used in genealogy comes from ecclesiastical sources be it Old Parish Registers, church minutes, poor registers or surveys of graveyards.

As a means of better understanding the churches I investigated their locations within the parishes and studied what the churches were near in terms of old buildings and natural features. The results showed that the original parish churches were either built close to old settlements, many with the place-name elements 'Bu' and 'Skail' (indicators of high-status medieval settlements) or built centrally within the parish without an adjacent large farm.

The association of church and 'bu' or 'skail' indicates a link between high-status settlements and parish church sites, and early sources validate this with most of these settlements having belonged at one time to the earls of Orkney and their kin. So why were the churches built on land belonging to the earls and other influential members of society? It seems that the churches were built on these sites primarily because of spiritual, but also because of financial, benefit to the landowners. By owning a parish church these people would be considered closer to God and would also be

exempt from paying the tax of tithe which all other people attending the church would pay. Many of these churches are found in corners of parishes away from the majority of settlements and were clearly located for the convenience of the owner. The example at the top of the page is of such a church — St Andrew's parish church, St Andrews. Located in the far corner of Tankerness and amidst the farm steading, this church was clearly part of the old estate of the 'Bu of Tankerness' owned in saga times by Erling a kinsman of the Earls.

But what about the centrally placed churches? These churches are found in parishes where there are no large earldom properties and it seems likely that they were built centrally to best accommodate the majority of the population. An excellent example is shown at the foot of the page — St Michael's parish church in Harray. Situated on the top of a hill in the middle of the parish and visible from all corners of the parish it is clearly built to be seen and in an easily accessed place.

In conclusion the parish churches were an integral part of medieval society. Founded by the earls and their kin the churches formed the uniting factor in the newly created parishes of the earldom from the twelfth century. The legacy of the importance and significance of the churches and the parishes is their continued existence and the central role which they still hold within the islands today, some eight hundred and fifty years after their creation. ■





Check out this New

FLOTTA WEBSITE

Are you interested in the island of Flotta or do you have Flottarian ancestors? The Flotta Web Guide has just been launched this year and is dedicated to the promotion of Flotta and its heritage. The site features links to websites of use in researching your family tree, as well as books of interest and a bibliography of Flottarian authors. There is also a photo page, message board and articles about the island.

You can find the site at

www.flottawebguide.co.uk

and we would be delighted to hear from you.

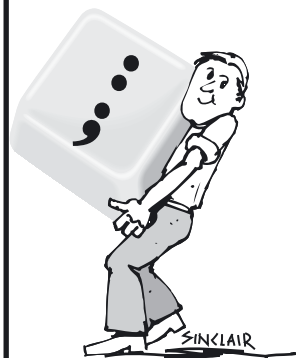
You'll find lots of interesting material on our website. Have you logged on yet?

www.orkneyfhs.co.uk



Do you know anything about this man?

Can anyone help to trace the gentleman in the above photo. He is Constantine Harold St Clair who married Annie Marie Schneider on 17 March 1883 in N.S.W. Australia. His marriage certificate states that he was a joiner who was born in the Orkney Isles about 1834. His parents are shown as Harold St Clair, Inspector of Police and Maria Heydon. Anyone who can help should contact the research secretary at OFHS.



Apologies! Seems we were a colon short of a website in our June issue. James Irvine tells me that the Bostwick Family site referred to on page 23 of the June newsletter can be reached at:-
<http://www.tilley.dynodns.net:8000>

note the colon after net!! Also on the same page we mentioned that Mike Bostwick's site had a new feature 'Old parish Records' that avoids the IGI agenda—This should have been IGI addenda.

You say addenda and I said agenda. Sorry James I couldn't resist it. Reminds me of the old army chestnut of the message that started off as 'send reinforcements we're going to advance' and having lost something as it travelled down the wire ended up as 'send three and fourpence we're going to a dance'.

Ed.

SUBMISSIONS for DEC NEWSLETTER by the 17th OCT PLEASE

Your newsletter depends on a constant flow of articles, long and short, from members. Twenty to twentyfour pages requires around 17,000 words, even allowing for pictures and headings.

LENGTH

Submissions can run over one or two pages or if longer can be serialised. Generally about 750 words make up a page and this allows for the inclusion of a picture. Shorter submissions are welcome too; even a paragraph can fill a corner.

DID YOU KNOW

These fit well into the narrow columns on each page.

LETTERS

I would still like to establish a letters page so this is something to keep in mind.

SUBMISSIONS

If possible please type your article, 'Word' is fine and send on floppy, disc or as an e-mail attachment. If possible let me have a hard copy in case I cannot open your attachment. Remember hand typed submissions have to be retyped and may be delayed.

PHOTOGRAPHS

If possible please provide an original image (but not your only copy). If you want to provide scanned material, pictures should be scanned as greyscale. 300dpi images. Do not send 72 or 96 dpi JPEG files. If

sending JPEGs they should be saved at the highest quality, largest setting or at highest resolution—240-300dps

LINEART or BLACK & WHITE IMAGES

These should be scanned at a minimum of 600dpi.

VECTOR GRAPHICS

Can be sent as EPS files with any text converted to curves or paths.

PHOTOCOPIES

These are not suitable and cannot be used.

IF YOU WISH MATERIAL RETURNED PLEASE INCLUDE A STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE

Please address all submissions to:-

The Editor, Orkney Family History Society Newsletter, Orkney Library & Archive, 44 Junction Rd. Kirkwall. KW15 1AG.

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.

Members should ensure that any material submitted does not infringe any copyright.

I hope this is helpful. Ed.

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 Kirkwall Library next to the archives department and are open Mon–Fri 2pm–4.30pm and Sat 11am–4.30pm.

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's 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 members giving up their spare time to help.

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

Telephone 01856 873166 extension 3029

General enquires should be addressed to the office in writing or to Gen. Secy. Mrs Gillian Mooney (e-mail olaf.mooney@virgin.net)

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Orkney Family History Society website— www.orkneyfhs.co.uk

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