



SIB FOLK NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ORKNEY FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY Issue No 75 September 2015

**ANNE CORMACK
WONDERS WHY
SHE CAN'T
SING A
NOTE**



**MINISTERS &
MUTINEERS a
Great Granny,
and a Dominie
with 13 kids**



**not a bad haul
for a week's
break in
Shetland**

says Peter Russell

**NAN SCOTT'S
RETIRAL DO
WAS A GREAT
SUCCESS**

**but we'll just say
au revoir and not
goodbye**



**GREGOR LAMB MAY HAVE
FOUND ORKNEY'S
FIRST REHAB
CENTRE**



**READ ALL
ABOUT IT-
ONLINE TOO!**



**STROMNESS
MAN LOSES
HIS HEAD TO
A SOLOMON
ISLANDER**

**LYNDA ASKS if
THERE ARE ANY
GOSLINGS
IN YOUR
FAMILY?**



**WITCHCRAFT,
SUPERSTITION,
LOOTING AND
LARCENY. Just
an everyday
story of
countryfolk at
SAVISKAILL
in ROUSAY**

**HOW GREAT AUNT
JANE GOT THE RENT
REDUCED ON
HER SANDAY
CROFT**



**PLUS
LOADS
MORE
INSIDE**

**PLUS A GREAT
IDEA FOR A
BRILLIANT
XMAS PRESENT**
that cannot fail to please



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FAMILY HISTORY
NEWSLETTER No 75**
September 2015
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From the Chair

Welcome to our September issue of the Sib Folk News. I hope you've all had a good summer, unlike here in Orkney where we've had an exceptionally cold and wet one. The silage was at least a month late and the harvest looks like it is going to be the same. The Auction Mart had to put on an extra sale to enable the farmers to sell their cattle early. They were running out of fodder as they couldn't put them out as the fields were too wet. I suppose 100 years ago that would have been the kind of circumstances that would make people decide to emigrate and find a better life. Do any of you know the reason your ancestors decided to emigrate, and if so why not tell us about it.

We have had a busy time in the office again this year with members and visitors looking for information about their families, and thanks to the hard work and knowledge of our volunteers a large number of them went away happy.

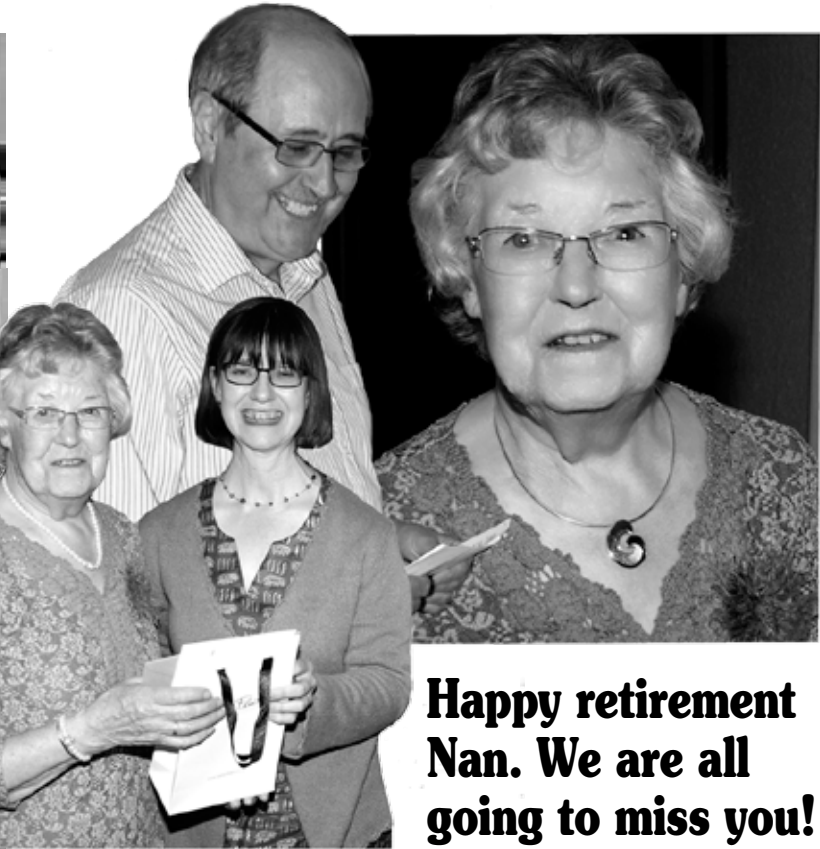
If you have come to a brick wall in your research why not post a message on the 'members queries' on the web-site or email us at the office and maybe we can help.

We hope to see you at our open meetings this winter and maybe join us at our annual dinner in November.

Anne Rendall



Photos and Graphic: John Sinclair



Happy retirement Nan. We are all going to miss you!

What a grand night we had on the 24th July at Nan Scott's house when she hosted an evening to mark her retirement as a founder volunteer of the Orkney Family History Society.

Committee Members, past and present, were there, together with friends and fellow volunteers who had, over the years, helped make the OFHS such a success, and many an anecdote was shared as we tucked into a mouth-watering buffet provided by the hostess.

Nan was a founder member of the Society when it was formed in 1997 and has been an active participant in its activities and a regular contributor to the Society's newsletter ever since.

The evening could not pass without those years of service being acknowledged and another founder member, George Gray, was soon on his feet and had the guests laughing at his witty reminiscences. This led to further hilarity as George exchanged remarks with certain members of the audience.

Finally George managed to restore order and asked our present chair-person Anne Rendall to make the presentation. This was a beautiful piece of Orkney jewellery from the Sheila Fleet collection.

For once Nan was almost at a loss for words as she thanked the Society for their generous gesture.

Cameras flashed from all directions as the event was recorded, as they say, for posterity.

It had been a wonderful evening—a glorious summer one too and they have been few and far between this year.

The evening was over but I am sure it will be long remembered.

Off we all went on our separate ways, some of us perhaps regretting that second helping of pavlova.

John Sinclair, Editor.



John Sinclair, Member No 588

For days the open boat had drifted aimlessly in the South Pacific finally beaching itself on Manaoba island off the north east coast of Malaita in the Solomon Islands. The year was 1867 and the Solomon Islands were regarded as 'the most savage place on Earth'.



Where it all happened

Thirty-four days earlier four men had deserted from the American guano boat, the Reynard, on which they found themselves after having been drugged and shanghaied in San Francisco.

The desertion had been ill planned and they lacked provisions and water. During the voyage they relied on rain-water and the little food they managed to obtain from the sea including a small shark that they enticed to the boat by one of the men dangling their feet in the water.



A typical artificial islet built from coral.

natives of the islet of Sulufou and he was sold to **Chief Kabbou** who initially kept him alive for his novelty value. This survivor was **John Renton**, a Stromnessman whose father had a tailor's business in Melvin Place not

far from the Hudson Bay Company agent's office.

His mother came from Stroma, the most southerly of the islands in the Pentland Firth, now deserted and home to a herd of feral cattle.

John was one of twelve children and as soon as he was old enough he was off to join a ship, and soon became a competent hand thanks to his familiarity with the sea.

Renton was a quick learner and soon became fluent in the native language and customs. He was to spend the next 8 years of his life on Solufou which was an artificial islet constructed by the natives from coral laboriously collected on rafts. These islets were typical of the area and were generally about 2.5 acres in extent with a population of about 400. They were built on sand cays some two or three hundred yards from shore as a stronghold against attack and also to escape the hazards of the malaria ridden jungles. Renton was to become a useful member of the tribe and taught them net making, fishing and farming, skills

he had become familiar with as a boy in Stromness.

The natives soon accepted him as one of their own but after his long stay Renton was growing weary of the life and yearned for civilisation.



A dwelling such as this would have been home to John Renton for some 8 years.

About this time the sugar cane plantations were opening up and European ships were scouring the south seas looking for slaves. One of these had anchored a safe distance from the island and Renton managed to persuade the Chief to allow him to contact it. He wrote a message in charcoal on a piece of driftwood that read 'John Renton please take me to England'.

The message was taken out to the ship by the islanders and it is now in the National Library of Australia.

Local island oral history has Renton being picked up by his uncle, a Captain Mori. It transpires, however, that he was picked up by a Scottish ship skippered by a **Captain Murray** and he subsequently arrived in Australia to a hero's welcome and instant fame.

By 1876 he was back in Orkney beguiling the Orcadians with his tales of adventure. ▶

◀Among the trophies he showed them was a spear (still in an Orkney collection) and a necklace of 64 human teeth – a symbol of his acceptance in Malaita – which is now in the National Museum of Scotland.



The war dance of the Solomon Islanders, a ritual in which Renton probably participated.

man who quickly realised that to avoid being killed, and no doubt eaten, he would have to 'go native'. He was fortunate too that the chief eventually took a liking to him and adopted Renton as his number one son.

According to the Australian biologist Mike McCoy who has lived among the Solomon islanders for over 26 years "There is no doubt that Renton became a headhunter. He would have had to for the sake of his 'street cred' and even today tales are told of his prowess in battle". The oral history of Malaita credits him with having taken part in many battles and he is still revered as a fearless warrior.

Despite his longing to leave the Solomon Islands and return to Orkney he soon found that he could not settle in his native land and he longed for the islands again. It also concerned him that he had promised the islanders

It turns out, however, that while Renton relayed tales of his adventures the story he told was a sanitised version of what really happened.

He was obviously a quick witted young

that he would return with goods that would make their lives easier. Within six months he was back on Sulu-fou with iron roofing sheets, axes, hammers, barrels of nails and a grindstone which was evidently still in use in 1960. He did not, however, renew his headhunting career but instead got a job with the Queensland government to assist in their campaign to regulate the slavers whose trade in human cargo had become the scourge of the South Pacific.

In 1878, when only 30 years old, John Renton was to meet the fate that he had avoided just 10 years earlier. When his ship arrived in Aoba in the New Hebrides, Renton and a fellow shipmate went ashore for fresh water. When they failed to return a search party was sent to look for them. They found Renton and his companion — be-headed.

When the news was received in Malaita the islanders were incensed. War parties were formed and they demanded to be taken to the New Hebrides to avenge Renton's death.

There is no record that this ever happened but there is no doubt that John Renton's name will live on forever in the folklore of the Malaita people. ■



John Renton of Stromness 1848 - 1878. He would have been 27 in the photograph

Some free genealogy sites worth exploring

www.freebmd.org.uk

A searchable index to birth, marriage and death records for England and Wales. You'll need the reference number from here to order your ancestors' BMD certificates via the General Register Office. FreeBMD is an ongoing volunteer project, part of FreeUKGen initiative, so keep checking back if you can't find your ancestors listed.

www.freecen.org.uk

Sister site to FreeBMD aimed at making 19th-century census records free online. Part of the FreeUKGen project, along with www.freereg.org.uk (concentrating on parish registers).

www.familysearch.org

The world's largest, free, genealogy site with billions of searchable historical records and research guidance via its Research Wiki, online courses and more. Provided by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also known as the Mormon church).

www.onlineparishclerks.org.uk

An umbrella site for a collection of websites run by volunteers who collect genealogical information about a specific parish and answer email enquiries for free. 11 counties are covered by individual sites, which can contain a vast amount of parish information.

www.genuki.org.uk

The UK and Ireland Genealogical Information Service is a virtual

reference library of genealogical data, with links to all the county record offices in the UK, family history societies and much more.

www.londonlives.org

Delve into the lives of 18th-century Londoners on this fantastic, fully searchable site, run by the universities of Sheffield and Hertfordshire. Featuring manuscripts from eight archives, and giving access to 3.35 million names. Its sister site www.oldbaileyonline.org is equally fascinating, detailing almost 200,000 criminal trials of ordinary folk at the Old Bailey 1674-1913.

www.cyndislist.com

This remarkable site, a labour of love by American Cyndi Howells, is an enormous, constantly updated, categorised index of more than 325,300 genealogical links worldwide. So whether you're tracing American or Scandinavian ancestry, or anything else in-between, this is a great jumping off point.

www.visionofbritain.org.uk

Not such an obvious one perhaps, but this website is just brilliant for anyone researching ancestors from 1801 onwards. It's a national online library for local history and includes everything from historical maps to census reports and travel writing. A feast for the mind, its free sister maps site, www.oldmapsonline.org, is equally a must.

Some interesting connections



between Tingwall, Shetland, and Orkney

By Peter Groundwater Russell, Member No 161



Margaret Russell Dennison (right) at Grindischool, Bressay, taken 1925 (Author's collection)

My great-grandmother, Margaret Russell, daughter of **Thomas Russell** and **Euphemia Bruce** (from South Ronaldsay), was born at Courthall, Shapinsay, on 21 July 1859. In middle age she married James Dennison, born Borrowstone Hill, St Ola, eldest child of **James Dennison** (from Sanday) and **Margaret Sutherland** (from Walls). Soon after they were wed the Dennisons moved to Bressay, Shetland in 1911 where for many years James



Gunhall, Bressay - modernised since Margaret Dennison lived there (Author's collection)

was the driver of the small ferry that plied between the island and the county town of Lerwick. He died in the Gilbert Bain Hospital, age 63, on 24 August 1924. Great-grandma passed away, after one day's illness, aged 96, at Gunhall,

Bressay, on 28 November 1955 and was interred in the burial ground at Bressay Kirk on the 1st December.

I suspect that a comparatively small number of Orcadians 'emigrated' to Shetland - North America, Australia and New Zealand being deemed to be far more attractive destinations - but James and Margaret Dennison were certainly not alone in going against the flow.

In the summer of 1991 my wife, Sopharana, and I finally set foot in Shetland and, after paying a poignant visit to Bressay, we looked forward to exploring the rest of these diverse and rugged northern isles. Our week-long holiday included a morning in the Mainland parish of Tingwall, and I was amazed to discover its many historical links with Orkney; some of which are highlighted below.

The Stewarts of Massater, South Ronaldsay

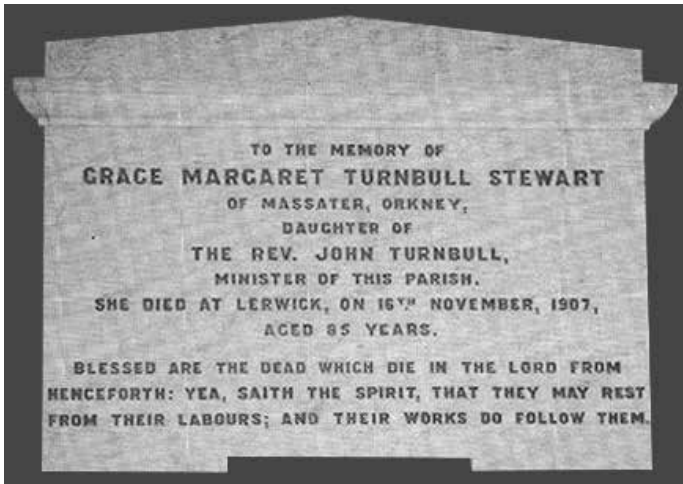
Jean, only daughter of **George Stewart** of Massater (or Masseter), South Ronaldsay, and **Jean Orem**, married **Robert Sands**, minister of Hoy and Graemsay sometime before 1740. **James Sands**, the eldest of a very large family, was born in Hoy on 28 September 1742 and ordained Presbyterian minister of Lerwick in 1767. Two years later he took Elizabeth, daughter of **James Craigie** of Stebbigrind, to be his wife. In 1793 he succeeded the **Rev William Mitchell** as minister of Tingwall Parish and, following his own death on 20 December 1805, was in turn succeeded by **John Turnbull**, a native of Ancrum, Roxburghshire. Co-incidentally, Turnbull had previously been an assistant to the minister in Bressay. On 26 December 1811 he married 19-year-old **Wilhelmina Sands**, daughter of the previous incumbent.

Tragedy was to strike the Turnbull family with a vengeance on 28 December 1836, when Wilhelmina, her two youngest children and a servant were drowned while incautiously taking a short cut across the frozen Loch of Tingwall when the ice broke beneath them.

Mary Stewart (1780-1870), the youngest daughter of **Alexander Stewart** of Massater and **Margaret Richan** (of Linklater, Sandwick), the wife of **Rev John Barry** (1783-1853), minister of Shapinsay, succeeded to the title of Massater jointly with her three sisters, and surviving them obtained a Crown Charter of Confirmation. By will, dated 12 September 1857, she settled Massater on **Henrietta Maria Stewart**, daughter of her late brother **Walter**, in what is called 'life-rent' and thereafter to a distant relative, 34-year-old **Grace Margaret Turnbull**, the only child out of eight to survive their father, the former minister of Tingwall. In 1882 she succeeded to the estate of ▶

◀ Massater on the death of Henrietta but under the terms of Mrs Barry's settlement Miss Turnbull was required to adopt the surname of Stewart, which she did.

Grace Margaret Turnbull Stewart of Massater, Orkney, a devout Christian, President of the Church of Scotland Young Women's Guild and on the committee of



Memorial plaque to Grace Margaret Turnbull Stewart, Tingwall Kirk.

the Shetland Society of Promoting Ready amongst the Blind, died unmarried in Lerwick on 16 November 1907. An impressive engraved tablet to her memory can be found on the pulpit wall in Tingwall Kirk.

Midshipman George Stewart, HMS *Bounty*

Perhaps the rightful successor to the Massater estate was a descendant of Mary Stewart's brother, **George Stewart**, a midshipman on the celebrated mutinous HMS *Bounty*. George was born in South Ronaldsay in 1766 but the family moved to the White House, Stromness, while he was a boy. The story of the mutiny on the *Bounty* is well known although the young Orcadian's part in this unfortunate affair remains clouded in mystery. He was accused of siding, at least tacitly, with Fletcher Christian and his gang, and while still in chains on his way to face a court martial in England, went down with the HMS *Pandora*, which was wrecked on the Great Barrier Reef in August 1791. During his time in Tahiti he 'married' a native girl, known as **Peggy**, who gave birth to his child sometime after September 1789. Allegedly Peggy died of a broken heart on hearing about George's cruel fate aboard the *Pandora*.

It is widely accepted that, at around the age of 18, George and Peggy's orphaned daughter, named **Charlotte**, left Tahiti with an American sea captain, **George Washington Eayrs**; spending the next five years at sea. The story goes on to say that during this time Charlotte gave birth to a daughter, **Maria Josefa de los Remedios Eayrs**, and after the errant sea captain had been incarcerated in a Mexican prison for several years, mother and child were left to fend for themselves in California. In May 1815, Charlotte was baptised in the Catholic faith in San Diego and took the name **Maria Carlotta de la Ascension Stewart**. She was to marry three times, bear ten more children, and die in Santa

Barbara, California, on 30 January 1871 leaving a large number of grandchildren.

There are some however who think historians have a hard time supporting the *Bounty* link, romantic as it is.

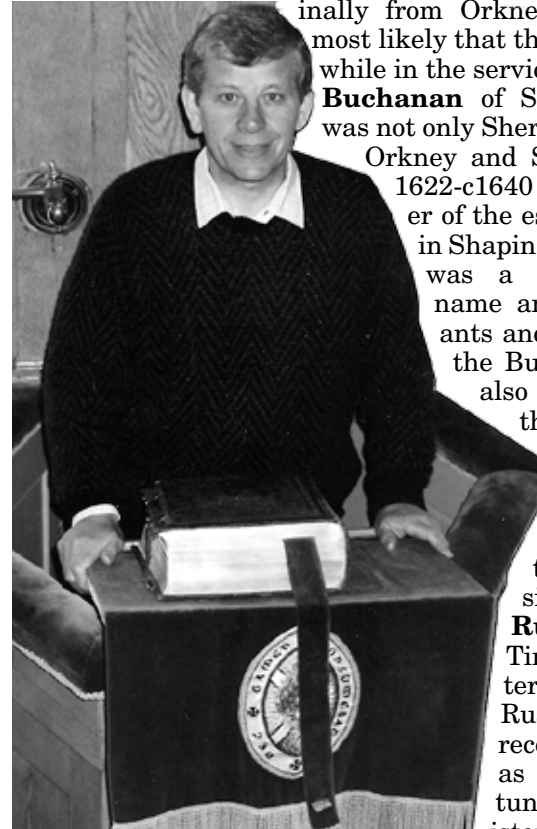
The Ruslands of Tingwall

The surname Rusland (more generally spelt 'Rusland') is derived from the district of that name in the parish of Harray, and it is not unreasonable to speculate that the

Ruslands of Tingwall came originally from Orkney. If so, it is most likely that they came north while in the service of **Sir John Buchanan** of Scotsraig who was not only Sheriff-principal of Orkney and Shetland from 1622-c1640 but also owner of the estate of Sound in Shapinsay? 'Rusland'

was a common surname among his tenants and the fact that the Buchanans were also proprietors of the township of Rusland during the 17th Century adds weight to my supposition. **Agnes Rusland** of

Tingwall, daughter of Robert Rusland, is on record as early as 1714 - unfortunately the register of baptisms only dates from 1709 - but the



A young Peter Russell tries out the pulpit of Tingwall Church for size.

family had almost certainly flourished in the parish from a much earlier date. In 1806, **George Rusland** of Berry, near Scalloway, a stalwart member of the Tingwall Congregation, named one of his eight children Turnbull, after the newly-appointed parish minister. Like their Orcadian cousins the Ruslands of Tingwall subsequently 'anglicised' their name to 'Russell',* although a small nest of Ruslands was living on the island of Yell at the turn of the 20th Century, one of whom, **Robina Hoseason Rusland**, died aged 92, in Lerwick as late as 8 August 1932.

(*): My g-g-grandfather, Arthur Rusland, son of William Rusland and Elspeth Boag, bapt. in Shapinsay on 4 April 1780, had changed his surname to Russell by the time of his marriage to Elspith Michall on 26 December 1805.

A Schoolmaster from the parish of Stromness

Charles Clouston Beaton, youngest child of ten to **David Beaton** and **Catherine Brown**, was born at Clovigarth, Kirbister, Stromness on 27 November 1822. As early as 1845 he was teaching school at South Hamarsland (or Hammersland), Tingwall. He married ▶

◀**Jane Linklater Taylor** (of Linkster), in Scalloway in November 1855 who bore him 13 children. In the 1861 census he is recorded as a teacher and farmer of 56 acres, employing 4 men and 1 boy. The Beattons lived in the schoolhouse at South Hamarsland until around 1870 when they moved to Gott, in the same parish, and where the two youngest children were born. Charles had the distinction of being the first Inspector of Poor (1845); was Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages for the district from 1857 and Tingwall Kirk Session Clerk. He died in Scalloway on 14 November 1895. Jane, his widow, died aged 67, also in Scalloway, on 8 April 1899.

(a) Beatton children born at The Parish Schoolhouse, South Hamarsland, Tingwall

1. **David Beatton** - b. 30 October 1856; teacher's assistant (1881) who, on the death of his father, took on the roles of Inspector of Poor and Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages until 1920; d. unmarried, Tingwall, 1924.

2. **Gilbert Taylor Beatton** - b. 27 March 1858; received a Master of Arts degree from Edinburgh University (1878); was tutor to the children of Surgeon-Major (later General) **Charles Edwin McVittie** (1835-1916), Indian Army, at Busta House (now a hotel), Delting, Shetland, home of **Thomas Gifford**, factor of the Busta estate (1881). McVittie was appointed honorary physician to **Queen Victoria** in 1898. Gilbert graduated a Master of Surgery from Edinburgh University in 1887 before entering into a partnership with **Samuel Montgomery** as Surgeons and Apothecaries in Halifax, Yorkshire, which was dissolved on 5 February 1891. He practised as a GP in Bradford, Yorkshire, for many years during which time he married **Ada Elizabeth Callas** in Reading, Berkshire, in 1905. They had two children: **Roma Eunice Jean Beatton**, b. Bradford, 1906 and **Gilbert Thomas Alfred Beatton**,** b. Bradford, 1908. Gilbert, Sr., d. Caversham Heights, Reading, 18 January 1946. His widow, Ada Callas Beatton m. **John A. Betts** in Wantage, Oxfordshire, in 1957 and d. Wallingford, Oxfordshire, in 1967.

[Both David and Gilbert Beatton were original members of the Orkney & Shetland Old Lore Society, which first published the scholarly Old-Lore Miscellany journal in 1907.]

3. **Charles Clouston Beatton** - b. 13 September 1859; d. unmarried, Newcastle [upon-Tyne], 1910.

4. **William Hay Beatton** - b. 22 April 1861; d. Parish Schoolhouse, South Hamarsland, 1863.

5. **Jane Linklater Beatton** - b. 1 July 1862; housekeeper to her uncle, Henry Moncrieff, Dennistoun, Glasgow (1891); d. unmarried, Newcastle, 1940.

6. **William Hay Beatton** - b. 8 July 1863; newsagent and in-patient in the Royal National Sanatorium, Bournemouth, Hampshire (1901); d. unmarried, Parish Schoolhouse, South Hamarsland, 1904.

7. **John Turnbull Beatton** - b. 5 August 1864; d. Parish Schoolhouse, South Hamarsland, 1873.

8. **James Robertson Beatton** - b. 3 August 1865; m. **Mary Jane Kirkness Robertson**, b. 11 December 1874, daughter of **Joseph Robertson** and **Margaret Garson, Laith**, Sandwick, Orkney, on 14 August 1907. He was a traveller for a tobacco company and lived in

Jesmond, a suburb of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1911. They had four children: **Margaret J. Beatton**, b. Newcastle, 1911; **Charles H. Beatton**, b. Tynemouth, 1914, d. Tynemouth, 1923; **John G. Beatton**, b. Tynemouth, 1916, d. Tynemouth, 1923; **Mary E. Beatton**, b. Tynemouth, 1919. **James d. Benton**, Newcastle, 25 June 1952. **Mary Robertson Beatton** also d. in Benton, 11 December 1962.

9. **Thomas Taylor Beatton** - b. 7 September 1866; grocer's shopman (1891), newsagent and stationer's assistant (1911); d. unmarried, North Shields, 23 August 1947.

10. **Catherine Brown Beatton** - b. 27 August 1868; knitter (1891); sub-post-mistress (1911); d. unmarried, at the home of her brother, Thomas, 3 June 1941.

11. **Peter Samuel Beatton** - b. 6 May 1870; chemist shopkeeper (1891 & 1901); d. unmarried, Port Glasgow, 1928.

(b) Beatton children born at the Schoolhouse, Gott, Tingwall

12. **Alexander Bayne Beatton** - b. 15 November 1871; law clerk (1891); owner of a drug store (1901); d. unmarried, Newcastle, 28 November 1943.

13. **Margaret Helen Beatton** - b. 28 March 1876; d. Public Schoolhouse, Tingwall, 1879.

*(**) There is no record of a marriage for Gilbert Thomas Alfred Beatton, above, and he may well have been the last surviving male Beatton of the Tingwall branch of the family.*

Tingwall Kirk

A place of worship has stood on the site of the present church for over 800 years. The original building, dedicated to **Saint Magnus, Earl of Orkney**, was one of three steeple-kirks built in Shetland, similar to St Magnus on the island of Egilsay. It was clearly a building of some standing, as signified by the rich red sandstone brought from the Head of Holland, near Kirkwall, being the same as St Magnus Cathedral.

In contrast, the present church, which dates from 1790, is "a conspicuous white harled object, plain, oblong and Presbyterian, with a belfry." The sole remains of St Magnus Church is the burial aisle, or vault, of the Mitchells of Westshore, Scalloway (see photo) which was opened in 1952, and contains several ancient tombstones including that of **Andrew Crawford, Master of Works to the infamous Patrick Stewart, Earl of Orkney and Lord of Shetland**. Crawford supervised the building of Scalloway Castle, Tingwall (ca.1600), and is also credited with designing the Earl's Palace, Kirkwall, "that masterpiece of Renaissance architecture" - yet another connection with Orkney.

Tingwall Kirk lies in a fertile limestone valley some two miles north of Scalloway and should be high on



anyone's list of places to visit in Shetland. In 1883, the well-known author **John Tudor** wrote, "The view from the churchyard looking south is very beautiful." More than a hundred years

later, on a warm and sunny August morning, one could not help but agree with him. ■

Peter Groundwater Russell September 2015

Barbara Simpson	1890	7	75	Matthew Simpson	Probably suffocated	James Simpson	1890
Simpson	Flotta		years	James & Diabot made as cart by (deceased)	Innocent Wilson	Flotta	May, 22nd
Spinning & Weaving	about 1/2 lb. of P.B. (Angles)			Margaret Simpson	M.D. Ed. Longrigg	Flotta	At Parthenon
	The Commons of Flotta			Ch. de Scott (deceased)	Heldyke Flotta	Flotta	Flotta

The tragic death of Barbara Simpson

By Cathleen Spence, Member No 57

During 2013 I did a bit of research on my husband's Robertson and Simpson relations in Flotta. His grandmother was **Thomasina Robertson**, her mother was **Margaret Simpson** and Margaret had an aunt **Barbara Simpson**. I was intrigued by the cause of death on Barbara's death certificate as it simply stated "Probably suffocation". The Register of Corrected Entries didn't give much more information – just that, aged 75, she died in a field or piece of ground at Commons Flotta on 22 May 1890. My imagination had been working overtime, thinking all sorts of foul play, but the further note that the cause of death was "suffocation - accidental", reassured me.

At the time I didn't follow through to find out what had happened, but mentally filed it under "things to research later". (I have a lot of these files!)

So, a year and a half later I was astonished to find the answer in the Orcadian. The local newspaper has a feature every week called "The way it was", which comprises a look through the past 150 years of the Orcadian archives. It was in their 28 May 2015 issue under 125 years ago. Poor Barbara had been pinned to the ground by a set of harrows that she had been carrying. What a tragic death.

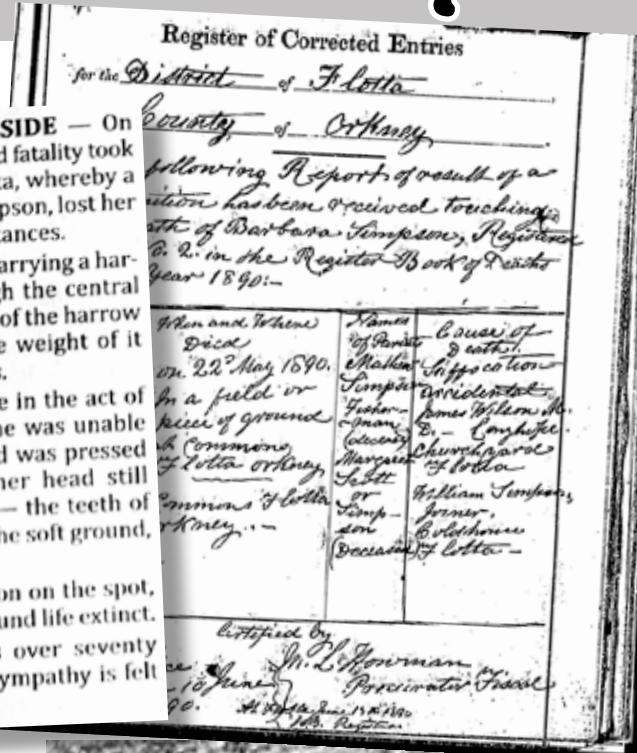
FATALITY ON THE HILLSIDE — On Thursday the 22nd inst., a sad fatality took place on the hillside of Flotta, whereby a woman named Barbara Simpson, lost her life under peculiar circumstances.

It appears she had been carrying a harrow, with her head through the central division and with the teeth of the harrow pointing upwards, and the weight of it resting upon her shoulders.

It is supposed that while in the act of laying it on the ground she was unable to withdraw her head, and was pressed against the earth with her head still entangled in the harrow — the teeth of the harrows sinking into the soft ground, thus causing death.

Dr Wilson, who was soon on the spot, examined the body and found life extinct.

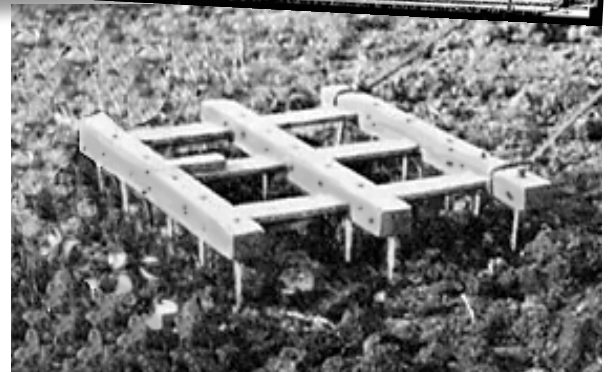
Barbara Simpson was over seventy years of age, and much sympathy is felt for the relations.



The Harrow

It would have been an implement similar to this, constructed in wood or probably metal, that caused Barbara's death.

It is designed to break up clods and is usually pulled by ox with a man or woman standing on the harrow, when necessary, to provide additional weight.



The www.oldbailey.org is great for finding information about people convicted in the UK in the 1800s.

If you search at www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/Guides.jsp you will also find tips, links and guides to enable you to find further information about detainees from newspapers, prison registers and other sources.

The National Archives web pages - www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/looking-for-person/prisoner.htm and www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/looking-for-person/transportees.htm may also provide interesting information about any black sheep in your family. Thanks to 'Generation' Queensland, Dec 2014 for info.



How great great Aunt Jane fought for a rent reduction

By Evelyn Buchanan, Member No 3401

The change from the old runrig system of communal land tenure to the crofting system is said to have started in Argyll as early as the 1770s and to begin with crofts were of a size that might provide a living for a family.

In due course the crofting system of tenure was generally adopted as a feature of so called improvement programmes. This enabled landlords to bring the smallholder population directly under their own tenurial control and move them at will to clear large areas of land for the creation of commercial sheep farms.

Until the passing of the Crofters' Act in 1886 there was no separate legislation governing crofting. In the eyes of the law the crofter was an agricultural tenant in occupation of a piece of land owned by a landlord on a year to year basis.

Until 1886 the landlord could terminate a crofter's tenancy and recover the land, together with any buildings and other permanent improvements made to the croft.

The main features of the 1886 Crofters' Act were, first and foremost, security of tenure.

The only conditions of a tenancy were that the crofter should pay his rent regularly, could not assign his tenancy or allow the buildings to deteriorate. He could not sub-divide his croft without the landlord's consent and should not become bankrupt.

The Act applied to the seven crofting areas of Argyllshire, Inverness-shire, Ross & Cromarty, Sutherland, Caithness, Orkney and Shetland.

The Crofter's Commission visited Orkney between the 14th August and 28th September 1888 to hear evidence from, and inspect the land rented by 443 Orkney crofters. The evidence and the decisions made were compiled by **William R Mackintosh**, editor and later proprietor of the Orcadian newspaper and were published in 1889 by James Anderson of the Orcadian office as the *Orkney Crofters*.

The contents now provide a mine of information for family historians.

Evelyn Buchanan, Member No. 3401, was intrigued to find that her great great aunt, Jane Slater of Crotrave on the island of Sanday, appeared before the commission and this is an account of the statements and evidence as compiled by W R Mackintosh:-

Jane Slater, Crotrave, deponed : I have five and

three quarter acres arable, I have 1 cow, 1 calf, 1 ewe, and a lamb.

My rent is £2 6s 6d. I succeeded my father and mother. We all broke in the land, and we erected the whole buildings, which cost £41 18s, and the proprietor gave £15 3s.

Mr THOMSON read a statement from the witness to the effect that during her mother's lifetime she used to make kelp, but one year she was laid up with erysipelas. She was unable to make kelp, and on that account a summons of removal was served upon her mother.

Mr BRIMS : That is not the case.

Sheriff BRAND : Stop, now, Mr Brims. You can make any statement afterwards.

Witness, continuing, said that it was only after promising in future she would make kelp, that the summons was withdrawn. The statement is true.

By the COURT : It was Mr Swanson who threatened us with eviction. I told him that I was not able to make kelp, but he would not believe me. He told me I had to work at the kelp, though we always paid our rent.

Examination continued : My brother and my mother refused to take the summons.

Q. - What was done with the summons?

A. - The sheriff-officer tied it to the door. (Laughter.) My brother afterwards took it in.

Cross-examined : I stopped making kelp about ten years ago.

Sheriff BRAND : You have not cross-examined witness about the summons, so we may take it that her statement is true?

Mr PATULLO : No, we deny it; and we will put the factor in the witness box to deny it.

Re-examined : **Q.** - Who served the summons upon you?

A. - It was **David Sinclair**, Appiehouse.

Mr BRIMS said no authority had been given for ▶

◀*this summons being served upon this lady. There had never been a summons served upon this estate for the last 30 years, and he was not aware that any one had been served with a summons. The late Mr **Swanson** was in the habit of writing all sorts of letters.*

*In reply to Mr **THOMSON**,
WITNESS said the man who acted along with the sheriff-officer was his son.*

***Sheriff BRAND** : Well, we have now got it that this summons was served by Mr **David Sinclair**, Appiehouse, and that his son acted as a witness.*

The subject then dropped.

Decision. - The rent was reduced from £2 6s 6d to £2.



Although there is no land with it now, Crotrive once had 5¾ acres. It lay empty from around 1960 until a family bought it in around 1990. At that time, someone commented that there WAS a roof on it, but that only the box bed was holding it up!

Martin Guthrie has lived in Crotrive (Crotrave?) for four years.



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Ancestry.co.uk

Offers access to 1 billion searchable UK family history records. It is part of the Ancestry.com global network of family history websites.

Scotlands People

Access online indexes of births, marriages and deaths from 1st January 1855 on a pay as you go basis.

National Archives of England and Wales

Offers a wide variety of public records including PPC wills from 1384 - 1858, WW1 campaign medals, service registers of Royal Navy seamen 1873 - 1923 etc.

The International Genealogical Index. (IGI)

This huge (and FREE) database from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) contains numerous baptisms and marriages transcribed directly from parish records around England and Wales.

The Genealogist

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Some of these sites may be available as links on our website



Max Fletcher—Rousay Remembered

Saviskaill is an ancient farm between the Loch of Wasbister and the beach at Saviskaill Bay, Rousay. Mentioned in the Early Rental of 1503 as Savirscale, the name comes from the Old Norse *søvar-skáli*, 'sea-skaill,' i.e. hall or house by the sea. The presence of two *skáli* names in this part of Rousay – Saviskaill, the *skáli* or hall by the sea, and Langskaill, the long *skáli* – is significant, pointing, it may be suggested, to early Norse settlers of chieftain or semi-chieftain class. The very situation of the former – not in the heart of the old Wasbister tunship, but on its outskirts on the seashore – would seem to imply that the head of the settlement was not unmindful of his responsibilities, and wished to be as near as possible to his longship in case of need.

An old Rousay legend survives about a witch called Katho. This lady is said to have been churning in the house of Saviskaill one day. She churned away harder and harder until at length the milk foamed up over the lid. She then stopped and exclaimed:



"Tara gott, that's done; Saviskeal's boat casten awa on the Riff o' Saequoy." And sure enough at that time the boat was wrecked. It would seem that 'Katho,' the notorious Orkney witch **Katherine Craigie**, was a healer in the Rousay community. According to the Register of the Privy Council of Scotland during the Orkney Witchcraft Trials in

1643, almost half of the accusations made against her by her neighbours were to do with healing someone and curing them. With this in mind it would appear that Katho was a relatively 'good witch'. Her case was similar to many other witch trials in that she was accused of cursing animals and people which resulted in their deaths. Although she was accused of having the devil as her master, there were no suggestions in the proceedings that she ever met him. Katherine Craigie was sentenced to death on 12th July 1643 "for airt and pairt of the using and practeising of the witchcraftis, sorceries, divinatiounes and superstitiounes...". She was then tak-

en by the lockman "hir handis behind hir back, and caryit to the place of execution and thair wirreit at a staik and burnt in ashes".

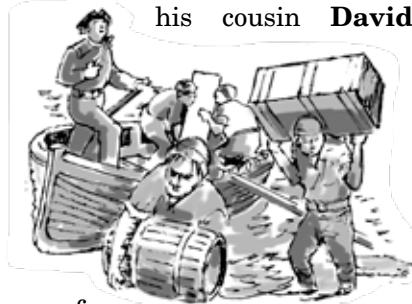
A ship was wrecked close to Saviskaill in 1783. Subsequent occurrences on the island must have aroused suspicions in official quarters because a man with seafaring experience was sent from Stromness to Rousay to make enquiries and to report. He found the stranded vessel to be one of 33 tons, which had been carrying a cargo of brandy, gin, and tea. All the cargo had been removed from the vessel before his arrival but he saw about 50 casks, which were still on the scene. Some were offered to him for sale but he declined to buy. In the house of **Alexander Marwick** of Saviskaill the investigator saw two books lying on a window ledge. Both books were soaking wet from seawater and he suspected they had come from the stricken ship. Not so, replied Marwick. Both books were his and had got wet when they fell into a tub of water. Marwick did admit having

Here's another tale from the pen of Max Fletcher with all the ingredients found in a novel of the gothic genre; witches and witchcraft, superstition and shipwrecks, looting and larceny all set on the island of Rousay. A fascinating tale from Max, to whom, my grateful thanks, for allowing me to use this gem from his 'Rousay Remembered' series.

some casks of spirits and the captain's chest in which he found six ruffled shirts, a half guinea in gold, a pair of silver buckles and a silver watch.

Taking possession of these items from the ship must have troubled him less than having the water-soaked books. Nigh on a hundred people were busy breaking up the ship, and among them were Alexander Marwick, his son **William** and

The investigator warned them that they would be called to account for their actions but he was told that the wreck was God's send and that coming between them and such divine providence was no business of his. He considered it prudent, 'being a stranger in the place,' to say no more. Several people told the investigator that Alexander Marwick was the first to ▶



◀discover the wreck and that one member of the crew, although found floating in the water, had still been breathing. 'For the sake of the wreck,' it was alleged Marwick gave the man no assistance and allowed him to die.

Another inhabitant of Saviskaill was **John Inkster**. Originally from nearby Innister, he was married to **Barbara Marwick** and they had seven children, born at Saviskaill between 1794 and 1810; **Margaret** was born in 1794/5, **James** in 1796, **William** on January 24th 1799, **Robert** on December 7th 1801, **Janet**, on July 19th 1803, **Hugh** on October 20th 1807, and another, who was born on November 13th 1810.

The rocky shore of Saviskaill Bay claimed another victim in late October, 1811. The German registered barque Juliana Catharina, skippered by **Capt. Wallis**, carrying flax and hemp, came to grief with the loss of eight of her crew.

James Inkster born in 1796 was the tenant of Saviskaill according to the census of 1841. He married **Barbara Mainland**, daughter of **David Mainland** and **Margaret Sinclair** of Tratland, who was born on December 27th 1799, and they had four children. The three eldest were born when they lived at Lerquoy in Wasbister; **John** was born on November 8th 1821, **James** on February 4th 1827, and **Margaret** on April 3rd 1831. **David** was born on September 21st 1823 after they moved to Saviskaill.

By 1851, a 23-year-old farmer named **Samuel Seatter** from Evie was head of the household at Saviskaill. 56-year-old **John Flett** was farm overseer, and they employed four farm servants – **David Inkster**, **William McKinlay**, **John Craigie** and **Margaret Craigie**. **Margaret Baikie** was the housekeeper, and **Janet**

Craigie was a servant in the house.

In 1861, 34-year-old **William Seatter** was farming the 236 acres at Saviskaill. His wife **Jane** was 28 years old and they had a one-year-old son, **Frederick**. They employed four domestic servants; **Margaret Baikie** (77), **Margaret Flett** (26), **Margaret Cerston** (18) and **Janet Kirkness** (12). **John Flett**, was a 67-year-old farm servant, and there were also three ploughmen; **Hugh Inkster**, **Malcolm Leonard**, and **John Yorston**, all in their early 20s.

By 1891 William had died and the land at Saviskaill was farmed by his widow Jane and her 18-year-old daughter Emily. They employed three servants; **Jessie Taylor** (27),

Alexina Sinclair (19), and **Samuel Marwick** (18). They also had two boarders staying with them who existed upon private means, **Robert G. Gordon**, and **William Wotherspoon**.



A much later occupant of Saviskaill was **Hugh Grieve**. I came across him as he was repairing a stone dyke near Grithen in 1975. The last of my photos shows his son **Colin** in 1999, beaching his boat at Saviskaill after another successful day at the fishing. ■



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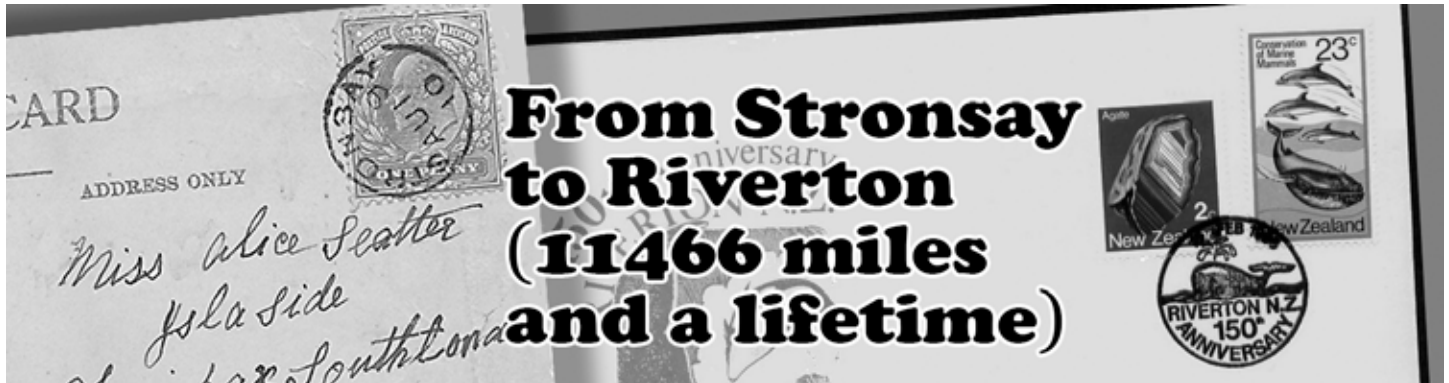
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By Murray McKenzie, Member No 3206

Nestled on the southern coast of Southland, New Zealand, and some 25 minutes drive from Invercargill, Riverton (Maori name Aparima) is a quaint fishing port surrounded by outstanding natural beauty.

The township is some 200 years old and the population today includes a mix of retirees, artists and fishermen. The first Europeans were engaged in whaling and sealing from the 1830s then, from the 1850s, the focus turned to farming. Riverton became a popular holiday and retirement destination and continues to be today.

The Riverton cemetery, located just outside the town, is a typical country cemetery, neatly maintained and final resting place of many who have interesting histories to share. One of the gravesites at Riverton is concreted within low walls and bears the single inscription **SEATTER**.

Access to Southland burial records is available free of charge via the internet using either the Southland District Council or Invercargill City Council websites. Accessing the Southland District Council site enables identification of those interred in this grave: **Margaret**



William Fergus Seatter and Ann Davidson Brodie of Airy, Stronsay

Frances Mary Seatter (died 10/08/1989 aged 89), **William George Seatter** (died 15/12/1935 aged 33), **Mary Bell Seatter** (died 24/10/1947, aged 78) and **George Seatter** (died 12/08/1949 aged 84).

George Seatter was my great grandfather. He had made the lengthy journey from his birthplace of Whitehall Village, Stronsay, to New Zealand. Who was

George Seatter, why did he strike out for New Zealand, did he travel alone, did he retain contact with family back home and what was life like for him in New Zealand?

George was the second child of **William Fergus Seatter** and **Ann Davidson Brodie**, residents of Stronsay. William Fergus Seatter was born in 1835, the eighth child of **George Seatter** and **Elizabeth (Betsy) Stevenson** of Braebest, Westray. William went to the local school and later began work as a farm labourer.

On Westray he met Ann Davidson Brodie who was working as a house servant. Ann Davidson Brodie was the third child of **John Brodie** and **Ann Brown** who resided at Airy on Stronsay. Some time after their marriage, William and Ann moved to Stronsay where they lived at Gateside. There was a strong Stevenson connection to farming on Stronsay with an uncle of William's (**William Stevenson**) managing the Holland Farm for many years. This may have assisted William Seatter in acquiring work on Stronsay.

The first daughter of William and Ann Seatter, Ann, was born on Westray in 1863 and the following four children were born on Stronsay: George (1865), **Margaret**

Jane Caskey (1871), **David Brodie** (1873) and **William** (1882). **Joseph Caskey** was the local minister, explaining the "Caskey" appearing in Margaret's name.

Unlike George, the other siblings did not depart for "far off shores". Ann married **John Shearer** and they worked in the fishing industry in Orkney (John was a cooper) and eventually



George Seatter circa 1930



Whitehall Village, Stronsay where it all began. The house called "Seaview" is marked with a cross

◀ built the house of Seaview in Whitehall Village. **Ann** and **John** are buried in the main cemetery of Stronsay. **Margaret** and **David** moved to Leith, Edinburgh where they lived the majority of their lives. Margaret's husband, **William MacKenzie**, was a journeyman mason and David who married **Catherine Munro** worked as a brewery warehouseman. Both Margaret and David are buried in Edinburgh, Margaret in the Eastern Cemetery. **William** junior died aged 2 and is buried with his parents (he is referred to as "**Little Willie**" on the headstone which still stands) in the Bay Cemetery on Stronsay.

I am not at this time able to identify the date that George emigrated to New Zealand (A reader may be able to help). He can be identified on the 1871 Census but not the 1881 Census. This could mean, but it is not conclusive evidence, that he left Stronsay at a very young age. Clearly employment would have been a significant issue for George, but the likely influence in deciding to embark to such distant shores was that several members of the Stevenson and Brodie families also emigrated to New Zealand.

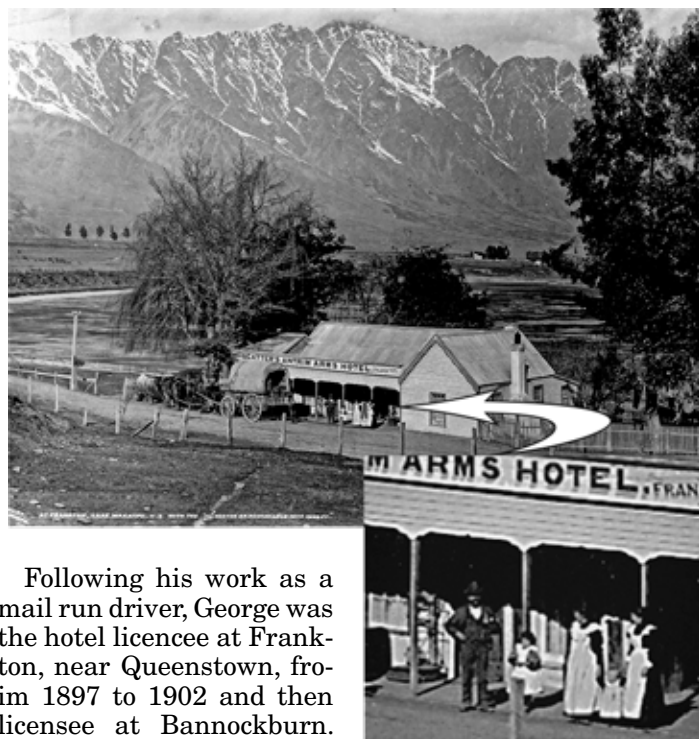
A first cousin of **William F Seatter**, **Stewart Stevenson**, married I (elder sister of Ann Davidson Brodie). Several of the children of Stewart and Isabella emigrated to New Zealand. These included **James, William, Frances, Robina, Stewart** and **Maria**. James and William farmed large land holdings on the Crown Terrace near Arrowtown.

In 1894 Stewart and Isabella emigrated to New Zealand to join their children. Stewart died in 1907 and Isabella in 1923. They are buried in the beautifully located Arrowtown Cemetery in Central Otago which has something of an Orkney flavour.

Two brothers of Ann Davidson Brodie and Isabella Brodie, **Robert Brodie** and **David Brodie**, also emigrated to Central Otago and are buried in the Arrowtown cemetery. The attraction of farming large tracts of land compared with that available on Orkney must have been very appealing and many of these Orkney families went into farming.

So George is likely to have been swept up in the family migration. Did he go with relatives or alone? I am unable to say at this stage. What is clear is that his subsequent life followed a vastly different path to that of his siblings.

Piecing together information at hand, George is likely to have worked initially as a labourer on farms on the Crown Terrace. He was listed as a mail run driver when he married **Mary Bell Johnston** at Waikaia on 12 July 1893. Mary was a daughter of **John Johnston** and **Elizabeth Bell** who married in Taieri in 1858. John Johnston was a farmer at Waiwera, Clutha.



Following his work as a mail run driver, George was the hotel licensee at Frankton, near Queenstown, from 1897 to 1902 and then licensee at Bannockburn. The current hotel at Frankton contains a large framed photograph of the old hotel with George Seatter identified as the proprietor.

My grandmother had fond memories of growing up at Bannockburn where George was the hotelier. Postcards sent by George's siblings, his mother and his brother-in-law, **John Shearer**, to George and his children are addressed to homes in Bannockburn, Dunedin and then Fairfax, Southland in the period 1900 to 1910. I am unsure of George's employment status during his brief stay in Dunedin but after his career in hotel ▶

Enlargement shows George Seatter outside with two of his staff. The children are likely to be my grandmother and her brother.



management and by 1910 he had moved to Fairfax where he farmed (most likely dairying and sheep).

George and Mary had four children. Two (**Margaret Frances Mary** and their only son **William George**) remained unmarried and are buried with their parents at Riverton. Thus the name Seatter disappeared from this branch of the

and his Orkney family back home. The postcards I have suggest a high level of communication in the period when George's children were young. I assume that continued. The burial places of George (at Riverton) and his mother, father and brother "Little Willie" (on Orkney) are strikingly similar. They are isolated, peaceful, often very cold and windswept but stunningly beautiful.

George Seatter undertook the long journey from Whitehall Village to Riverton and lived a rich and varied life.

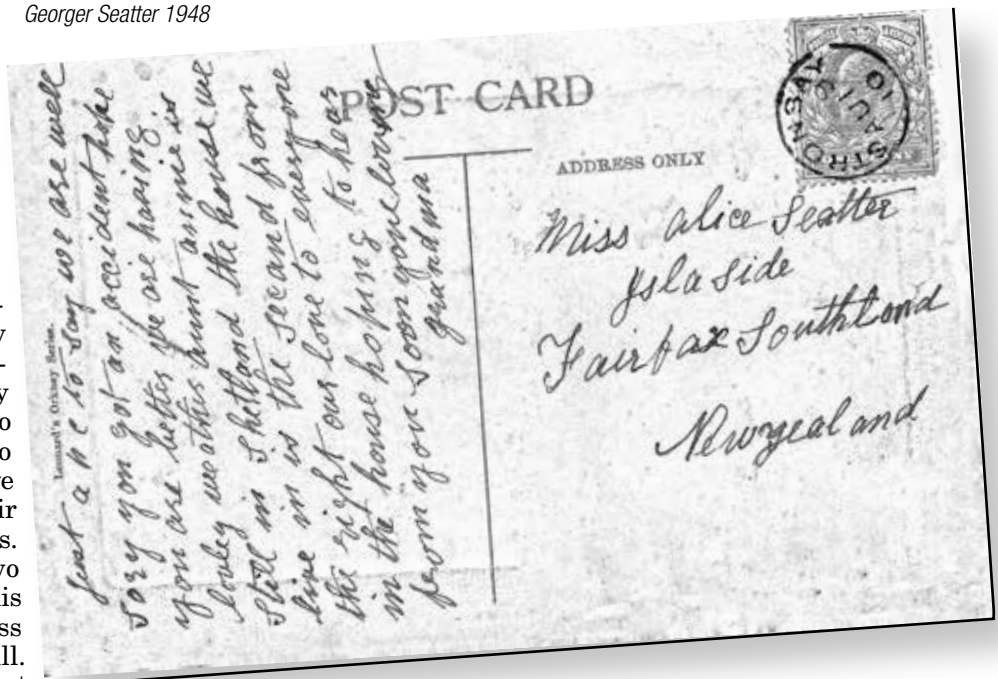
The author, **Murray McKenzie** (Member 3206), is a great grandson of George Seatter. His interest in George Seatter and Orkney was initiated when he inherited property of George Seatter via his daughter Margaret Frances Mary. These included a number of postcards that originated in Stronsay and Edinburgh and were sent to New Zealand between 1900 and 1910. The card below was sent from Stronsay by Ann Davidson Seatter to her granddaughter Alice in 1910. Murray has visited Orkney twice, in 1996 and in 2011. ■

Georger Seatter 1948

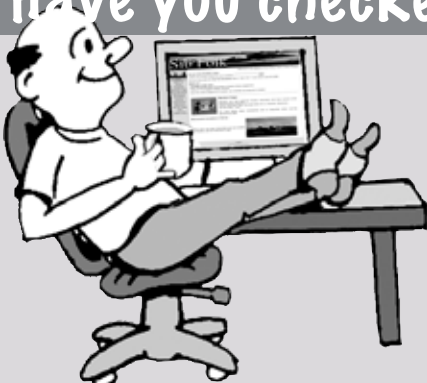
family. The other daughters (**Effie Annie Elizabeth** and **Alice Joan (Midge)**) each married and had several children. Effie was my grandmother.

On retirement from farming (likely in the 1920s), George and Mary retired to Riverton. My father recalls visiting them for holidays. Mary used to make lunch for George who would walk to the local bowls club to play cards with his friends. George and Mary were looked after by their daughters in the twilight of their lives. When George passed away almost two years after Mary he was living on his daughter Effie's family farm at Myross Bush which is just outside Invercargill.

It would be interesting to know what level of communication was maintained between George



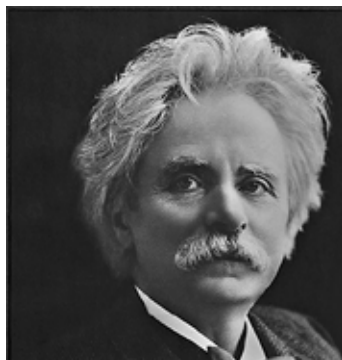
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“you know, of course, that we are connected to the composer Edvard Grieg.”

By Anne Cormack, (nee

My paternal grandfather, **James Greig**, was born at 1 Young Street, Kirkwall, (now part of Cromwell Road nearest the harbour) in 1869. He was the only child of **Robert Nicolson Greig**, a seaman, and his second wife, **Barbara Sandison**. I never knew my grandfather, who died about a quarter of a century before I was born, but as a child in Glasgow I often heard my grandmother talk of him - she was particularly proud of the fact that he was from the same family as the Norwegian composer **Edvard Grieg** - or at least so she claimed. I never quite believed this story, even when she said that photos of the two showed family likeness, as indeed they did.

The only time that my father's sister went abroad was to Norway, in the early fifties, and she came home excited by the discovery that Grieg in Norwegian was not pronounced 'Greeg', but very similarly to our own Scottish surname Greig. That made my grandmother even more sure of the relationship, although as a youngster I was still unconvinced. I never gave the matter much thought for years and years until some time ago when I met a far out, half cousin, here in Kirkwall. She is a descendant of my great-grandfather, **Robert Nicolson Greig**, and his first wife **Margaret Heddle**. She had a far more complete Greig family tree than I did and brought it round one night for me to copy. While we were chatting she said, "you know, of course, that we are connected to the composer, Grieg."

I was amazed to hear this claim again - a claim which could only have originated from Robert Nicolson Greig, our common ancestor. Where had Robert got the story from?

Robert Nicolson Greig's great grandfather (and my four times great-grandfather) was **Thomas Greig** who married in Kirkwall in 1754 (the first time he appears in Kirkwall records). He was supposed to have come to Orkney from Aberdeenshire - at least that's where my grandmother had always said the Greigs originated. She had also said that members of the same Greig family had gone from Aberdeenshire to Bergen, and it was from them that Edvard Grieg

If that's true, I thought, why can't I sing?



Greig), Member No 73

was descended. Was Thomas the key? The next time we were in Bergen, staying with our Norwegian friend **Bjørn Kahrs** and his wife, I mentioned this supposed Greig/Grieg link in my family. To my utter astonishment, he said, "My mother was a Grieg before she married - and all the Griegs in Norway are descended from the one Greig who came over from the north east of Scotland." Bjørn even had a little booklet which gave Edvard Grieg's ancestry. The composer's great-grandfather, **Alexander Greig**, was born in Cairnbulg in 1739. He emigrated to Bergen around 1770, entered the British Consul's office there and went on to found the Grieg dynasty. (The spelling was changed from Greig to Grieg in Norwegian so that the correct Scottish pronunciation was kept - as my aunt had already discovered). Alexander Greig's father was **John Greig**, also born in Cairnbulg, around 1704. A photo of John's gravestone in Rathen churchyard was reproduced in the booklet Bjørn had - John died in 1774 and the stone was "erected by his surviving children".

I assume that my great-grandfather Robert Nicolson Greig had heard of the Norwegian connection from his father or his grandfather who had been told of it by Thomas Greig, Robert's great-grandfather, who had come to Orkney 'from Aberdeenshire'. Was Thomas closely related to Alexander Greig who had emigrated to Bergen? They could have been brothers, both sons of John Greig of Cairnbulg - Alexander was born in 1739, Thomas (married in 1754) was born possibly c1730. Or they could have been cousins, as apparently various Greig families, all related, occupied several farms in the Cairnbulg district.

Whether John Greig of Cairnbulg was Thomas' father and hence my five times great-grandfather I doubt if I'll ever know, nor will I know if my grandfather James Greig and the composer Edvard Grieg were therefore third cousins once removed. I would, however, like to think that my grandmother's story was true, which would make our good friend Bjørn in Bergen a very distant cousin of mine. But as to musical talents . . . *I'm tone deaf* ■



By Lynda Hodgkinson, Member No 2201

About twelve months ago, I wrote out all the Births and Marriages for Stromness, Hoy and Graemsay up until 1854 for the surnames of Mowat, Oman, Moar, White, Thomson and Linklater.

When I received certificates showing my ancestors were born or married at **St. Side** I could not find that place but now realize the name is **Sandside**.

I decided to find out how many families were living at Sandside between 1789 and 1854.

These are the names of the people I have found living there between those years. I have only included names of people born at St. Side and their parents and people who were from St. Side and married and their spouses names.

THOMSON:

John Thomson and Margaret Smith had these children born at St. Side – James born 1789; Benjamin 1791; John 1794; Margaret 1797; Chirstian 1800; Isobel 1804. These children are also of a John Thomson and Margaret Smith but possibly a different generation – Margaret 1820; James 1823; John 1825.

MOWAT:

Hugh Mowat and Chirstian Oman both from St. Side were married at St. Side in 1800. and these children were born at St. Side – Henry 1799; Hugh 1801; Edward 1802; Ann 1805; Joseph 1807; Margaret 1810; Chirstan 1813; Masery 1815.

Edward Mowat who resided at St. Side and Isabella Rich residing at Windiwalls married 2 December 1828. Henery Mowat who resided at St. Side and Isabella Linklater residing at Quisigar were married 11 February 1830.

Ann Mowat who resided at St. Side and James Linklater residing at Fillets were married 28 December 1830.

THOMSON:

James Thomson who resided at St. Side and Mary Rich residing at Garson were married 23 March 1813 and these children were born at St. Side – James 1813; John 1824.

MACKENZIE:

James MacKenzie and Barbara Davidson who resided at St. Side had children – Mary Mowat MacKenzie 1851; William Ballantine MacKenzie 1854.

THOMPSON:

John Thompson and Margaret Cromerty who resided at High Lighthouse St. Side had a daughter – Margaret 1852.

FULLERTON:

Daniel Fullerton and Flora Ritchie who resided at High Lighthouse, St. Side had children – James Campbell Fullerton 1852; Daniel Fullerton 1853.

YOUNG:

Zachrey Young and Jane Sutherland who resided at St Side had a son – James 1854.

DAWSON:

Thomas Dawson and Margaret S. Jack who resided at High Tower, St. Side had a daughter – Isabella 1854.

MOWAT:

James Mowat residing at St. Side and Jannet Lyon residing at Bennelhall were married 7 December 1801.

YOUNG:

John Knarston residing at Quoys and Jacoba Young residing at St. Side were married 28 January 1806.

OMAN:

Joseph Oman residing at St. Side and Isobella Lyon residing at Upper Quise married 1 January 1822

OMAN:

James Linklater residing at Fillets and Margret Oman residing at St. Side were married 5 February 1833.

SUTHERLAND:

William Skinner residing at Quoys and Kathrin Sutherland residing at St. Side married 14 December 1851.

I hope to study the history of Sandside in the not too distant future. ■

If anyone is researching those names and looking for a particular one, they can email me on lynda.hodgkinson@bigpond.com.

If you were puzzled by the reference to 'goslings' on the front cover, it is the teu name for people from Graemsay

The First Orkney Rehab?

By Gregor Lamb, Member No 1620

The small farm of Dale on the east side of the Loch of Swannay has been in the parish of Birsay for over a hundred and fifty years but it is said that the original boundary of Evie and Birsay passed down the middle of the loch and placed Dale firmly in Evie. It took a long time for Evie folks to accept that they had lost part of their parish and locals always referred to Dale being in the Costa district of Evie. It was certainly in the postal district.

When, fifteen years ago, Alistair Marwick brought out his lovely booklet, *Costa Heritage*, in which he reminisced about Costa at the beginning of the 20th century, it is no surprise that he included some interesting tales about Dale. According to the Census, in 1881 John Paterson, a widower, lived in Dale. He was born in Bervie in Kincardineshire. In the same year that the Census records him in Dale, *The Orcadian* newspaper carried an interesting and unusual report on that farm. It was stated that John Paterson had a twenty year old apple tree in his garden which had produced 800 apples, 600 of which were huge! The tree had originally come from John Sim in Skogar in Birsay who dug it up because it was making his house damp. How did it come about that John Sim had an apple tree in his garden and such a prolific apple tree at that? This John Sim, like John Paterson, was an incomer who moved to Orkney with his wife, their children and his aged father from Aberdeenshire. It is said that they had been encouraged to come by Rev. Samuel Traill, minister of Birsay, himself an Aberdonian, who was related to the Traills of Frotoft who held much land in Birsay and from whom he bought, among other properties, the land of Skogar. John Sim in turn bought this farm, moved north and it seems brought this amazing apple tree with him. The Patersons and the Sims had a close relationship since John Paterson was married to John Sim's sister. Unfortunately she died at a young age and Mary Yorston, my grand aunt, became his housekeeper. My mother had many tales to tell about Mary, a strong character like her sister Hughina, my grandmother. One day a servant boy came in and said, 'Whit's fur dinner the day Mary?' 'Soup about a dead hen,' she replied. 'Ah'm no hivan soup made about a dead hen,' he replied. 'Wid thoo want me tae mak soup about a livan wan than?'

I was very ill with 'burncadis' when I was a peedie boy and one day when lying in bed my mother asked me if I would

"Whit's fur dinner the day Mary?"

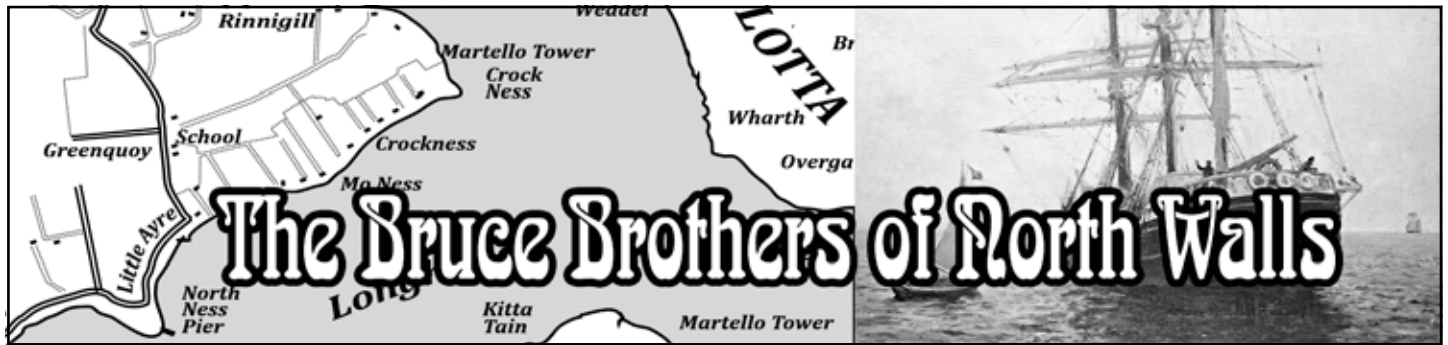
"Soup about a dead hen," she replied



like to read a book. 'No,' I replied, 'tell me anither story about yir Auntie Mary.' Around about 1910 my mother left the Rendall school and went to work at Dale as a servant lass with Mary. She told me that John Paterson spoke with an Aberdeenshire accent and was going blind in his old age. As she passed him one day sunning himself outside he asked her, 'Dae ye see onyane shavvan today Jessie?' My mother didn't know what he meant. It turned out that he meant, 'sowing'. I was always intrigued to hear my mother speak of a retired army captain who lived there at the time and if she gave me an explanation of why this was the case, I had forgotten. Alistair Marwick explains why in his book. There were two alcoholics boarding here and they had come to Orkney for a 'cure'! They had their own rooms and a sitting room and bells to summon help if needed. At Dale, their consumption of alcohol was restricted, Captain Moncur for example being given a daily allowance of porter.

I have done a little research from the Census to add some more interesting information about these guests. Captain John Moncur from Rattray in Perth was, at the age of 41, a retired army captain in the Dragoon Guards. Charles Watt came from Edinburgh. He was a former solicitor and merchant, trading in oil and produce. Watt's attempt at rehabilitation was not very successful, sometimes setting off to the Arsdale shop and ending up legless. Part of these men's cure was what may be described as a return to nature. They fished on the Loch of Swannay and made small boats to sail on the loch. Watt made walking sticks and acquired a ferret which he kept in his pocket and would wander the hills catching rabbits for the pot.

What brought these men to Orkney is not known, but for me it is almost unbelievable that such an establishment existed in this very remote corner of Orkney at the beginning of the 20th century. ■



By Jane Harris, Member No 1503

Benjamin Bruce c.1795 - 1875 (H)elen Corrighill c. 1795 - 1872

ABRAM (1821 - 1875) m. Janet Blair (Greenock)	BENJAMIN (1823 - 1872) m. Ann Corrighill (The Ha')	JOHN (bp1825 - 1900) m. Ann Corrighill (Stonequoy)	SUSANA (bp1829 - 1902) m. Walter Ross	GEORGE (bp1831 - 1878) m1. Jemima Ross m2. Ann Malcolmson	ROBERT (bp1833 - 1871-81) m. Isabella Gray
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Though I am not related to the Bruces, except by marriage, I find them a fascinating family, producing three sons (or so I thought initially) who all became master mariners, from a small impoverished part of Orkney with ongoing issues in securing schoolmasters. My research on them is a work in progress; updates are likely to be published on my website www.janealogy.co.uk where there is a section on North Walls and Brims.

To start at the beginning, **Benjamin, George** and **Robert Bruce** were the sons of **Benjamin Bruce** and his wife **Ellen** or **Helen Corrighill** who probably married in the early 1820s but for whom there is no marriage record in the Orkney old parish registers (OPRs). The Walls OPRs contain baptisms for four children: **John, Susanna, George** and **Robert**. From Walls marriage and death records, as well as censuses, it was clear there was another son, **Benjamin**, born around 1824. In the 1841 census, Benjamin senior, a fisherman, Ellen, Susanna, George and Robert, were recorded at Little North Setter, Walls. By 1851 Benjamin senior had become a farmer while George and Robert were both farm labourers. Ten years later in 1861, only John, a fisherman, remained at home and his father Benjamin was then a retired fisherman and farmer of four acres. The three seafarers and their sister Susanna were recorded, together, in Bird Street, in what is now the Tower Hamlets area of London (see my article, A corner of Orkney in East London, Sib Folk News, June 2012). John was always in Walls at census time, described variously as a male servant, handloom weaver, fisherman, crofter and farmer.

North Setter seems to have been an alternative name for Greenquoy, now the site of the school in North Walls, so Little North Setter was presumably close by. The 1851 census includes no address for the family though they appear to be in the Crockness area again while the 1861 census records them at Little Ayre. Given its location, this could be another name for Little North Setter.

With basic biographical details established, other sources need to be checked. From 1845 there was a voluntary system of examination for masters and mates of foreign going vessels, which became compulsory in 1850

and was extended to the home trade in 1854. In the very early days, if a man had sufficient experience as a master or mate, he could be granted a certificate without examination. These records (BT122-126, National Archives, Kew, England) are available on Ancestry in the Masters and Mates Certificates, UK and Ireland, (1850-1927) collection, and proved very useful. Benjamin's certificate of competence as a mate on the basis of previous service was granted on 10 March 1851. It is a very interesting document providing not only the details of his service since he went to sea in 1838 but also his birth date, 22 July 1823 at Longhope. His handwritten statement of service, completed at Longhope on 30 December 1850, was witnessed by **G W Jobson**, Longhope, and gives Benjamin's address as Greenock though the certificate was to be transmitted to the Custom House of the port of Bristol. (George Jobson was customs officer at Longhope at this period.)

According to this statement of service, Benjamin began his seafaring career on the *Expert*, a 93 ton coaster from the port of Stromness, before going on to the foreign trade. In March 1852, he applied for his master's examination and gained his certificate on 15 March. The statement of service accompanying that application notes that the first three vessels on which he sailed were lost by shipwreck: *Expert* of Stromness, *Stephen Wright* of Hull and the *Mayburgh* of Newcastle, as well as a later vessel, the *May* of North Shields. The official record of those losses should be in *Lloyds List* but newspapers are another source, sometime with more colourful detail. The *Morning Post* (London) of 21 March 1844 recorded that the *Expert* "Spence, of Stromness, from Dublin to Shields, was wrecked on the island of Mull, 8th instant [March] - crew saved". According to Benjamin's record of service, he left that vessel in 1842 however. A letter from the master of the *Stephen Wright*, **J S Jackson**, originally in the *Shipping Gazette* then published in the Hull Packet, 21 November 1846, describes that rather exciting shipwreck and events after it. The *Stephen Wright*, a brig, struck the Cattaras rocks in the River Plate "three leagues east from Monte Video" [Uruguay] on 12 August 1846 (I think this should be Carretas rather than Cattaras). Some of the crew ▶

◀perished while trying to reach the shore but the rest remained in the foretop and were rescued the next day by boats “sent by **General Oribe**, Commander-in-chief of the besieging army of Monte Video” and taken to the port of Buco. Once again though the date of the shipwreck does not match up with his stated dates of service.

George, the next brother, was examined for Only Mate and Master certificates in 1856 and 1861 respectively, taking the latter examination in London a few weeks after the 1861 census, when he was still resident at 7 Bird Street, St Georges in the East. “Only mate” meant that he was competent to take control of a vessel if the master were incapacitated. His birth date on those records is 18 November 1832 while the Walls OPRs record his baptism date as 19 November 1831. This could mean that his birth date was actually 18 November 1831. Unlike Benjamin, George first sailed on a Dundee boat, the *Alexander*, rather than one from Orkney, probably going to sea not long after the 1851 census when he was still a farm servant (see above).

I have yet to look at Robert’s records in detail but my search of the Masters and Mates records uncovered yet another brother, **Abram**, born Longhope, Orkney 1821. Again no baptism record was found in Walls but his death record (8 March 1875, Greenock) names his parents as Benjamin Bruce, farmer, deceased and Helen Cargill, deceased. Parents’ names are sometimes wrong on death registrations but the match here is so close, with Cargill presumably a west of Scotland take on the very Orkney surname Corrigan. There were Bruces in South Walls, possibly related, but not, as far as I can see, another Benjamin and Ellen/Helen pair.

Abram’s service record shows further evidence of a family connection. Like Benjamin, he began his sea-going career as an apprentice on the *Expert*, probably overlapping briefly. Both served on the *Romulus* of Greenock at least from 1849-50, Abram as Master and Benjamin as Mate. When Benjamin was granted his Master’s certificate in March 1852, his address was 29 Nicholson Street, Greenock, the address at which Abram’s twin children **Abram Cargill Bruce** and **Agnes Bruce** were born in 1858 and his address in 1854 when the birth of a daughter was announced in the *Greenock Advertiser*.

The Register of Seamen’s Tickets (BT113 National Archives, Kew, England, available on FindMyPast) provides a physical description of Abram, as well as narrowing his birthday down to October 1821. He was 5 feet 8½ inches tall, with a fair complexion, blue eyes and light brown hair. There is a similar record for Benjamin and less detailed records, in BT116, for George and Robert. All four could write, though many seamen at the time were illiterate. A Benjamin Bruce, born Walls, Orkney, 25 September 1795, who went to sea in 1811, served one year in the Royal Navy, had never been in the foreign trade, and whose address when not at sea was Walls, Orkney, was also found in those records. No voyages were recorded for him 1845-1855. This Benjamin also had marks (tattoos probably), BH and HC, on his right arm. Surely this must be the father of the four master mariners, with the HC tattoo standing for their mother, Helen Corrigan?

What became of the brothers?

Abram married **Janet Buchan Blair** in 1848 in Greenock and was based there for the rest of his life, dying of “disease of the liver” in 1875. The other three may have travelled the

world but they chose wives from their home parish. Benjamin married his first cousin, **Ann Corrigan**, daughter of his uncle **John** (Hall of South Seater, commonly The Ha’). Family gatherings must have been quite confusing as Benjamin’s brother John married another **Ann Corrigan**, daughter of another uncle, **Donald** (Stonequoy). George’s first wife **Jemima Ross** was from North Ness (her mother was yet another Corrigan, connections not yet investigated!). After her death, he married a Crockness woman, **Ann Malcolmson**. Robert ventured slightly further afield in the parish, choosing **Isabella Gray** from the Mill at Rysa.

Benjamin retired to North Ness, North Walls, where he became a merchant and died there in December 1872. In 1871 he bought land in the Osmundwall area of South Walls which was managed for his widow, Ann, by **Captain Edward Corrigan**, probably related to both of them if his surname is anything to go by. As far as I know Benjamin had three daughters; **Catherine** and **Susanna** died in Stromness, unmarried, in the 1910s, the third, **Ann**, wife of **Alexander McKenzie**, harbour-master, died at Paisley in 1886 aged 27.

After his second marriage, George was based in Liverpool where at least three children were born in the 1870s. He drowned on 21 September 1878 while master of the barque *Ringdove* of Greenock. From a brief article in the *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 18 November 1878, this occurred at Iquique, Peru, when “he was thrown into the water by the capsizing of a small boat” (Iquique is in fact in northern Chile). The 1881 census records his widow Ann, along with four children and her mother and sister, **Christina** and **Margaret Malcolmson** [sic], at 22 Upper Park Street, Toxteth Park, a very long way from Crockness for the 80 year old **Christina**. Ann and her sister Margaret were still living in the Liverpool area at the time of the 1911 census.

Robert was also dead by the 1881 census for his wife Isabella was recorded as a widow and ship stewardess at 35 Grinshill Street, Toxteth Park. I have not yet found details of his death. Members of his family appear in the Liverpool area in the 1911 census.

So far my research has only scraped the surface of the story of these Bruce brothers but I hope it shows, for one thing, how valuable seamen’s records can be for family history in seafaring communities like Orkney. One question I would really like to answer is what happened to **James Bruce**, born Colombo, Sri Lanka, c1866, son of George Bruce and Jemima Ross, first cousin of my great grandfather. I know his older brother Benjamin became a master mariner but James is more elusive.

You will find more on families and people related to these brothers in these articles from Sib Folk News in recent years: Mrs Sangster’s visitors’ book (September 2013); Does anyone remember **Janet Mowat**? (September 2013) The Orkney Chair and the Quest for Great Aunt Catherine (March 2012); A Closer look at North Walls & Brims: Death, Emigration and Other Mysteries (March 2012). There is a mass of North Walls seafarers, spouses and descendants there. ■



Well Spotted



From: Irene Stewart to: Jackie Harrison, secretary, OFHS

Hello Jackie

I believe, the cover of the recent magazine was done by D Simpson for Hugh Boyd who owned the Lynnfield. My husband, was Hugh's nephew and also a cartographer. Years later he asked Alistair to redraw the map as a retirement present for Doc Gordon. The original may still be in Orkney. We tried to trace D Simpson, but the only story we had was from Hugh who said he had once been a regular customer or visitor to the Lynnfield.

When computerised map making became possible Alistair redrew the map extending it and acknowledged making further 'depravations'. Some folk in Orkney have a copy of this map.

Kind regards Irene Stewart



From Bob Testa
 Thanks for referencing our visit to the Orkney Family History Society offices in Kirkwall in our quest to pursue the roots of the Pottinger family in the Society's June 2015 Newsletter. While Ann doesn't have any brooches similar to the one featured in the article, she does bear an uncanny resemblance to Isabella Bews, the wife of the emigrant George Pottinger, featured in your Newsletter Issue No. 54. I have attached photos of George Pottinger and Isabella Bews, and their daughter Helen Pottinger for your files. Keep up the good work you are doing in Kirkwall!

With warm regards, Ann and Bob Testa, Member No. 3323

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No! We're not after your money: we're after your words in the form of an article for your newsletter. That's the lifeblood of Sib Folk News and without these life-saving donations we would cease to operate.

Every issue requires a transfusion of stories from our members.

Please give what you can - nothing is wasted.

Donations please to the Editor John Sinclair by October 24th for our December issue. Email him at :- johnsin@gotadsl.co.uk

If you have never sent an article to Sib Folk News before the following will be helpful.

First of all length. It can be half a page, a page or more. A very long article can be spread over a number of issues. A rough guide is 900 words or so per page. This allows me to produce a suitable graphic header. Subsequent pages should be around 1100 words which would allow for a photograph. The more photos the less words.

Articles should be produced in plain text without any formatting. A Word doc is quite suitable. Photographs should be scanned at 300dpi or highest quality and larger than you envisage them in the article. Email these separately. Do not embed in position in your article.

You can, if you wish, send me **copies** by 'snail mail' and I will scan and retouch for you. My address is:-
 John Sinclair, Burnbrae, 21 Burnside,
 Kirkwall, Orkney. Scotland KW15 1TF



Photo - John Sinclair

Back row from left: Inga Gibb (Grieve, Rousay), Myrtle Drever (Stevenson, Westray), Nettie Laughton (Marwick, Rousay), Sheila Lyon (Mainland, Rousay), Wilma Pottinger (Stevenson, Westray), Annie Taylor (Drever, Stronsay), Annie Jean Muir (Baikie, Sanday) and Jenny Mainland (Scott, North Ronaldsay).

Front row from left: Mimes Manson (Slater, Sanday), Bessie Muir (Scott, North Ronaldsay), Rhoda Stephen (Spence, South Ronaldsay), Muriel Wylie (Drever, Stronsay), Patsy Dickinson (Dunnet, Egilsay), Morag Black (Learmonth, Sanday) Nan Scott (Pottinger, Westray) and Mabel Taylor (Rousay).

Morag Black (nee Learmonth, from Sanday) was the first Head Girl in the Hostel and chaired the committee meetings that had representatives from each school year present. Although living in Huntly now she tries to get to what is now an annual reunion, if at all possible.

She sent us these thoughts recently:-

The lively group of "Old Girls" (pictured above) meeting for their umpteenth reunion. We were the original residents of the Hostel in Old Scapa Road in 1947. Although our meals were less than generous, we did not feel resentful as we all had lived through a war and were accustomed to shortages of some things.

Moving from lodgings in town to the hostel was quite difficult for some girls as they had enjoyed a greater degree of freedom before. Four of us had been with Mr

and Mrs W Groundwater at Johnston's Buildings in Junction Road and our landlady was quite strict, not allowing us out on school-day evenings, and there was a curfew at week-ends. Luckily for us Mrs Groundwater was an excellent cook and baker who could make our rations go far.

Those of us from the North Isles who were unable to go home at week-ends were not bored in K G S Hostel. We had a table tennis table in the big Rec. as well as a gramophone with records for dancing. We knitted, sewed and read, and some of us actually spent time studying.

At our latest Reunion we all agreed that we had fond memories of the Hostel especially of friendships forged there and again we all agreed that we are fortunate to be able in our eighties (sorry, Bessie, only 79) to continue enjoying the good things of life. ■

Have your circumstances changed?

You don't need to let us know because you can simply update them yourself. Log into www.orkneyfamilyhistory.co.uk with your password. Now click on 'Members Page'. When this opens click 'My Details'. To change any of these click the box 'Edit Details' and make the necessary changes. Now click 'Save Changes' and in the box that finally appears just click OK and you are done.



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).

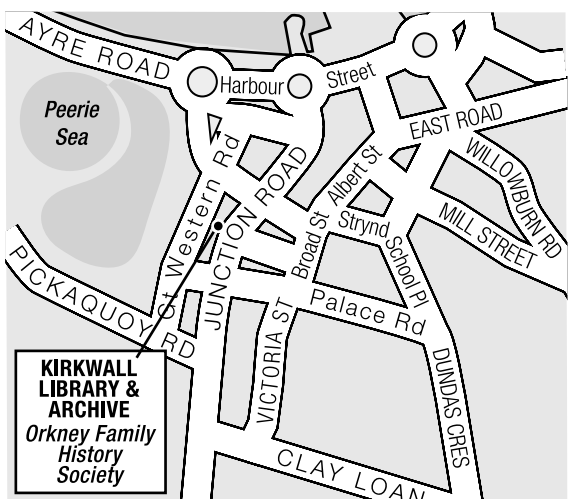
This material is available to members for 'in house' research by arrangement.

Locally we have a Members' Evening, most months, 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. Any costs incurred, such as fees for certificates, will require to be reimbursed by the member.



KIRKWALL LIBRARY & ARCHIVE
Orkney Family History Society

NEW MEMBERS

Membership of the Society is through subscription and runs for a period of 12 months from date of application.

Our magazine, 'Sib Folk News' is available to members every 3 months unless they have agreed to 'opt out' (see new rate structure) as all issues are now available online. Our 'Members' Directory' can also be found online at www.orkneyfhs.co.uk following links *members page/ Members' Directory*. This lists members' contact details and their research interests.

Members will receive a password to access the members' pages on the website, details of which are shown on the Home Page.

A great deal of research can be achieved through these resources at www.orkneyfhs.co.uk.

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General Secy. Jackie Harrison (e-mail: jackie.harrison@orkney.com)
Research Secy. Enquiries should be sent to George Gray until a new research secretary is appointed

Editor. John Sinclair (e-mail: johnsin@gotadsl.co.uk)
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