



SIB FOLK NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ORKNEY FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Issue No 74 June 2015

CORKNEY



**ORKNEY
FAMILY HISTORY
NEWSLETTER No 74**

June 2015
COVER
'Corkney'

PAGE 2
From the Chair

PAGE 3
Press Gangs
and Emigration
to Caithness

PAGES 4 & 5
The Melsetter
Mineralogist

PAGES 6 & 7
Granny Lived Here
in 1874

PAGES 8 & 9
The Orkney Sailor
Andrew Ross

PAGE 10
James MacDonald
a Tooloom Gold Miner

PAGE 11
They're all Wearing
Kathleen's Brooch

PAGES 12, 13 & 14
Part Two
Origins of the Orkney
Family Name of
Cromarty

PAGE 15
Julie's lost in the
Woods Family Tree

PAGES 16 & 17
Peter Groundwater
Russell and the
Tomison Tragedy

PAGES 18 & 19
Of Saints
and Mostly Sinners

PAGES 20 & 21
The Pottingers of
North Ousness

PAGE 22
Bobby Hall and the
Kirkwall RNLI

PAGE 23
Free Resource
from James Irvine

PAGE 24
Membership Details



From the Chair

We have reached that time of year again when we have our AGM and submit the audited accounts to year ended February 2015 to our membership, and elect the new committee and office bearers. This year two of our committee members have indicated that they don't wish to stand for re-election; I would like to thank them for giving up their time for the last few years, it is much appreciated. I would also like to thank our Secretary and Treasurer for all their hard work in the past year it makes my job as chairman very easy. The society would not be the success it is without the hard work of the committee and volunteers who give up their time to help out in the office.

The Society is still growing at a healthy rate with many new members joining since this time last year. Most now join online making use of the resources we have available there. Our Facebook page continues to get more 'likes' with people using it to pass on information.

'Sib Folk News' continues to be enjoyed by our members in magazine form and online, some members tell me that is the sole reason they keep their membership because they enjoy the quarterly newsletter. We are very grateful for the hard work John Sinclair, our editor, puts into producing the magazine for us every quarter.

We have had a busy time last year with our usual stand at the Vintage Rally in August and shortly after four of us went down to 'man our stand' at the ECC Glasgow 'Who do you think you are?' live 2 day exhibition. We all thought it was well worth going as we had a very busy time at the event.

In September we held a two-day to mark the 100th anniversary of the start of the Great War. There was hardly a family in Orkney that had not been touched in some way by that conflict and many Orcadians kindly loaned us precious items of memorabilia which were displayed at our exhibition.

The Archives also have an ongoing WW1 exhibit, which they are adding to each month, following the events of the war, including stories of local peoples' experiences told in newspaper reports, letters and diaries.

We look ahead to another busy summer and hope to welcome our members from home and abroad to the office with their queries.

Anne Rendall



Thanks to Bill Wilson for this issue's front page illustration. Bill tells me that many moons ago he worked at Scottish Telecom in Edinburgh and that 'Corkney' appeared on the back cover of their house magazine. Being an Orcadian himself it took Bill's fancy so he decided to rescue it for posterity and for many years it has been tucked away safely in Bill's archives (which is evidently a box in the garage). Posterity, however, arrived in the shape of Sib News and Bill thought that it might raise a smile with our readers. Cheers Bill. Ed.

Press Gangs and Emigration to Caithness



by Anna Rogalski. Member 1719

I enjoyed reading **Anne Cormack's** article, *When I finally got around to opening the box*, in Issue 73 of Sib Folk News. I already knew about the Freedom Tickets which protected men from the Press Gangs, because I had come across the following when I was doing some research in the Orkney Archives in Kirkwall:

30 December 1812

The Incorporation of Hammermen acknowledge receipt of five pounds sterling from **John Wishart**, wright in Stromness, for a Freedom Ticket to be a safeguard from the impressment which raged in Orkney this year. (Ref. Orkney Archives D/35/2/1).

I decided to find out a bit more about impressment and learned that, other than voluntary service, there were two methods of recruiting men for the navy; Impressment and the Quota Acts.

Since Elizabethan times, impressment had been authorised by the state for obtaining personnel for military service on land or sea. On being seized by the press gang, a man was offered the choice of signing on as a volunteer and receiving the benefits that came with being a volunteer (advance payment etc.) or remaining a pressed man and receiving nothing. "Protections" against impressment were issued, mainly by the Admiralty and Trinity House, for specific types of employment. These protections had to be carried at all times and shown to the press gang on demand, to prevent the holder being impressed. In times of crisis, such protections became invalid. I wonder if the Freeman's Ticket would have become invalid then, too.

In times of war, another method was used. In 1795, during the French Revolutionary War, the Quota Acts were introduced. These meant that each county in Britain had to provide a quota of men for naval service. The number of men demanded was dependant on the county population and the number of seaports it contained. As an inducement, many counties offered a bounty.

I also read about the caves in South Walls, named the Halls of Garth, where local men hid from the Press Gangs. These caves could hold ten men.

I had always wondered why my 3 x great grandfather, **John Chalmers** (born to **Henry Chalmers** and **Helen Mowat** in 1781) had come from Walls, Hoy, to Latheron Parish in Caithness, where he married Elizabeth Polson on 13th February 1817. Originally, I wondered if a lack of farming land for his generation had prompted John's move. Between 1788 and 1794, seventy-one people moved to Walls because of the Sutherland Clearances; this may have led to pressure on the land. There was near famine in Orkney in the years 1803 and 1804, which may have been a factor but, of course, I do not know exactly when John left Orkney, nor if

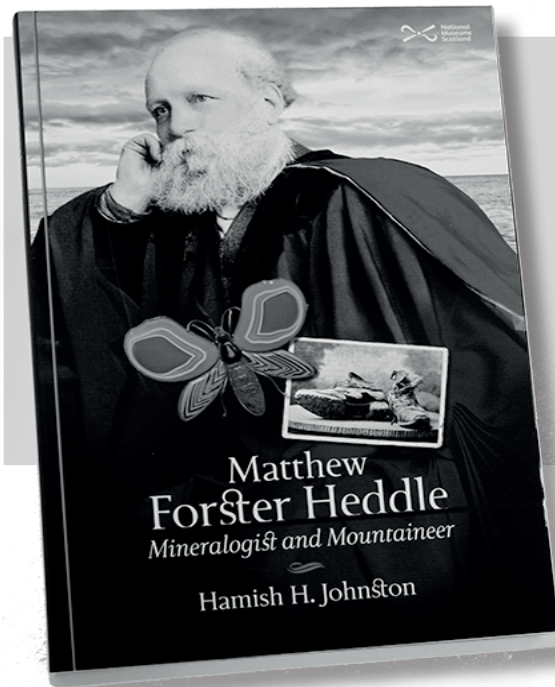
he went directly to Latheron Parish.

Now this new information made me wonder if he could have come to Caithness to escape the Press Gangs. More research followed! I read **James Miller's** book, *A Wild and Open Sea, the Story of the Pentland Firth*, and found mention of a **William Chalmers** (p101) and his run-in with the Press Gang. In 1805, Sheriff **Robert Nicolson** in Kirkwall had been petitioned by five pressed men; **John Bews, James Anderson, John Oman, George Loutit** and **William Chalmers**. Lieutenant **Laurence Smith**, the captain of the recruiting tender, *Mary*, where the men were held, brought them before the sheriff. Some claimed they were needed at home to support family. Some claimed they had no experience of the sea. **William Chalmers** referred to "last season, when almost famine raged in Orkney", and forced him to go to the Greenland Fishery. He stated that this was his only experience of being at sea, that he had two brothers already in the Navy and that he was the sole support of his widowed, bedridden mother. Sheriff Nicolson accepted all five men's excuses and ordered that they be set free. A few weeks later the sheriff was reminded firmly by Rear-Admiral Vashon, who was in charge of Scottish waters, from his base at Leith, that Orkney had not fulfilled its quota of men for service! (Ref Admiralty ADM 1/689).

Although I had no details of where the "pressed man", **William Chalmers** lived, I wondered if he might have been my ancestor's brother (a **William Chalmers** was born on 28 June 1778 to **Henry Chalmers** and **Helen Mowat** in South Walls). I even wondered if my John was one of the two seafaring brothers mentioned by William. Lately, I discovered that William was a farm labourer at Stenness so I am probably on the wrong track - but I enjoyed all the reading!

Living in South Walls would have carried a high risk of being "pressed" but the Press Gang was operating in Caithness, too (though less active there, according to James Miller) and "my" John would have had to live inland to escape their attentions. I do not know when he made his journey to Caithness, but his first child was born in 1817 at Lybster, on the coast of Latheron Parish. By then the Napoleonic Wars had ended so perhaps he would have been safe enough. Did he come over earlier and live inland, or did he arrive nearer 1817 and go straight to Lybster?

I intend to study the records of crimes held in the Orkney Archives (well, you never know - and it is an excuse for another trip over the Pentland Firth) but I suspect that I may never find the reason why John left Orkney. My other problem is that I cannot get any further back than John's parents, **Henry/Harry Chalmers** and **Helen Mowat**. None of the very few OFHS members who share my tree seem to have done either, but I'll keep looking. ■



The Melsetter Mineralogist; a biography by his great-great-grandson Hamish H. Johnston

*114 years after it was published, **The Mineralogy of Scotland** (1901) remains the bible of Scottish mineralogy, and its author, **Matthew Forster Heddle** (1828-1897), who was born and brought up at Melsetter on Hoy, is regarded as Scotland's greatest mineralogist. It is surprising that until now nobody has written his biography.*

Heddle is my great-great-grandfather. I became aware of him as a young boy because my mother sometimes wore a butterfly-shaped brooch fashioned from agates. She told me that it was made for her grandmother Cecilia, one of Heddle's daughters, perhaps by Heddle himself. Although my mother was born twenty years after Heddle died she absorbed his aura from holiday visits to St Leonards House in St Andrews where her aunt Clementina still lived. I attended St Andrews University knowing that my ancestor had once been Professor of Chemistry there. More recently, then-living relatives passed on Heddle family stories and, most important, showed me letters and other family records.

When I retired from work I was able to spend time finding out more about Heddle. The only reliable published biographical information came from the obituaries written by his colleague **John G. Goodchild**, and a memoir for *The Mineralogy of Scotland* written by **Alexander Thoms**, a friend of Heddle who later married Clementina. The authors of later papers on Heddle's scientific work used these sources for biographical information. St Andrews University was an obvious place for me to make enquiries, as was National Museums Scotland, which holds Heddle's great collection of Scottish minerals. These enquiries led to contact with academics, curators past and present and, through them, other mineralogists. All had fascinating things to tell me about Heddle's role in mineralogy, but, to my frustration, I seemed to know more about Heddle than they did - despite my awareness of the many gaps in his story.

There was only one answer - to research his life myself, follow up all the leads I had, look for new ones and fill in the gaps. A two-year period devoted almost exclusively to this work saw me travel to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Elgin, Kirkwall and St Andrews to spend many days in the libraries of Universities and Museums, and in the National Archives of Scotland and the Orkney Archives. In London I spent time in the National Archives at Kew, the British Library and the Natural History Museum. In between, endless searching of the internet threw up more information (some of it trustworthy) and references to Heddle in all sorts of publications. Much information came from the online British Newspaper Archive and the archives of the *Scotsman* and *Times* newspapers. I also had the considerable benefit of information and records from

family sources.

Until now I was researching and writing for my personal interest and that of my family, but one day in mid-2013 I went to Edinburgh to meet an eminent mineralogist who was a devoted fan of Heddle. He was the author of a modern book on Scottish minerals that included an excellent section on Heddle, and in 1987 had been instrumental in naming a newly-identified mineral *mattheddleite* after the great man. I brought with me what I had written so far, hopeful that he would add to my knowledge. After looking at my material he said it contained much that he did not know, and that my work was too important for me to keep to myself. "This must be published," he declared. I was taken aback, not least because I still had much work to do and hitherto had published only a few journal papers. My new friend's confidence and enthusiasm overwhelmed my reservations, however. I continued with my research, prepared a synopsis and chapter plan, and, satisfied with these, he took charge of the vital tasks of reviewing the draft chapters as I produced them and finding a publisher. And now, two years later, the book - *Matthew Forster Heddle: Mineralogist and Mountaineer* - is being published.

It is impossible to compress the anecdotes, personalities and rich detail of the book into a brief article, but one can give a flavour of Heddle's colourful life. Chapter 1 tells of his Orkney ancestry on Hoy and South Ronaldsay. His father Robert left a Kirkwall lawyer's office to join the army as a paymaster. He was stationed in West Africa during the Napoleonic wars, and at the time when Britain banned slave-trading. Robert left the army to become a merchant and returned in 1818 with a fortune worth £5 million today. Melsetter, on Hoy, the estate of bankrupt **James Moodie**, was for sale, and Heddle bought it. He also married Moodie's daughter Henrietta, who earlier had been engaged to the local minister, her family's poverty precluding a better match. Robert and Henrietta had eight children and Chapter 2 describes their family life. My subject was named after **Matthew Forster**, his father's friend who was the head of the largest company trading with West Africa. **Robert Heddle** continued to buy up estates all over Orkney, becoming a major landowner, constantly engaged in politics, business deals and litigation. Despite agricultural improvements implemented by Robert Heddle, his tenants led ▶

◀a hard life. By 1842 both Forster Heddle's parents had died and he was supervised by curators led by Kirkwall lawyer **W. H. Fotheringhame**. Always known as Forster, not Matthew, he was sent to school in Edinburgh, first at the Academy, then at Merchiston Castle. The Chapter ends with Heddle's decision to become a doctor.

Thanks to Edinburgh University records and Fotheringhame's letter books Chapter 3 provides a detailed picture of Heddle's medical education and his character as a student. This was a great period in the city's medical history, and Heddle was taught by eminent professors, including **James Young Simpson** who introduced anaesthesia for surgery and for women in childbirth. On graduating in 1851 Heddle practised in the area around the Grassmarket. The official *Report on the Sanitary Condition of Labouring Population of Scotland* and the papers of the St Cuthbert's Medical Relief Committee provide material for a vivid picture of the conditions in which Heddle worked as a doctor. Heddle was not cut out for this profession, however, and Chapter 4 explains where his true interests lay. Even as a medical student Heddle spent all his spare time engaging in mineralogical activities. Aged 18 he presented a collection to the new Orkney museum. He studied for a while in Germany and on his return was elected president of the Edinburgh Geological Society at the age of 23. He joined other learned societies and published a number of papers, making a reputation in scientific circles as a mineral chemist. All the while he was trying to escape from medicine by applying for University posts in chemistry and mineralogy. He even applied to be curator of the Manchester natural history museum.

Heddle's chance came in 1856 when **Arthur Connell**, Professor of Chemistry at St Andrews University, fell ill. Heddle was employed to teach his classes, and when Connell retired in 1862 Heddle became professor in his own right. Chapter 5 describes Heddle's career and life in the famous Fife town between 1856 and 1883. He married **Mary Mackechnie** and they were to have ten children. Heddle's teaching style is described by his students. He regularly supported student activities, sometimes to the annoyance of the University authorities. At a time when all students were male, Heddle admitted a woman to his class - none other than **Elizabeth Garrett (Anderson)** who was to become famous as Britain's first woman doctor. From the start Heddle had a hard time with his employer and colleagues. His post, being funded by a private endowment, was badly paid and more than once his classical professor colleagues voted to exclude chemistry from the curriculum. Heddle's evidence to Royal Commissions in 1872 and 1876 presents a vivid picture of his trials. St Andrews University was at a low ebb in those days, with student numbers down to 130. Heddle strongly supported the establishment of a science faculty in Dundee as a way of saving the University. Unhappy, he tried unsuccessfully to secure work elsewhere.

Chapter 6 covers the same years as the previous chapter but describes Heddle's geological and mineralogical life. Every year he had the six summer months to explore and collect. His mood was transformed. He was so busy in the field that he published only one paper in the years to 1876. Sometimes alone, sometimes in company he covered the length and breadth of the Scottish mainland and islands in the days before proper maps, and when roads were few and poor. He used yachts to access much of the mainland as well as the islands. Some of the journeys he made were prodigious in their length. 1876 was a big year for Heddle. Keen to support mineralogy in the post-Darwin era, he was a co-founder of the Mineralogical Society, and began to publish large numbers of important papers on Scottish mineralogy in its

Magazine and through the Royal Society of Edinburgh, which, in 1879, recognised his achievements by awarding him its prestigious Keith Prize. Heddle was particularly fascinated by the county of Sutherland, and was a player in the major geological controversy that was then raging over the geological structure of North-West Scotland. Heddle knew all the major geologists of the day. Behind the pleasure he gained from all his achievements, however, Heddle was struggling to cope with his meagre salary and now began to encounter problems with his health.

Chapter 7 breaks the chronology of Heddle's life and covers his role as a mountaineer. This was an inevitable consequence of his mineralogical explorations, but he also enjoyed hill-walking and climbing for their own sake. He recorded in detail 80 peaks he climbed as part of his Sutherland work. Between 1879 and 1882 he undertook major expeditions for weeks at a time for the Royal Society of Edinburgh's Boulder Committee. Heddle was greatly admired by **Hugh Munro**, compiler of the *Tables of the 3000-Foot Mountains of Scotland*. Munro wrote that nobody knew the Scottish mountains as well as Heddle, and that he had climbed more of them than anyone else. Heddle was nearly the first Munroist instead of **Rev. A. E. Robertson** - by 1891 Heddle had climbed 350 Scottish mountains over 3000', while in 1897, when Heddle died, Robertson had climbed barely 100.

The chronology of Heddle's life is resumed in Chapter 8. Rescue from his troubles at St Andrews came from South Africa when in 1883 he was given leave from his University post to accept a contract to advise a new London-based gold mining company. When he got to the Transvaal he found the company had exaggerated its prospects so he left, and was promptly sued. When Heddle threatened to countersue, threatening to expose the company, it withdrew. Heddle was lucky that his pay and annuity had been secured because the company soon went bust. Heddle retired from his professorial chair in November 1884. There followed several idyllic years when he went on Hebridean and Faroese cruises with his friend, the naturalist **John Harvie-Brown**, and concentrated on pulling together what would be his great work, *The Mineralogy of Scotland*. He also spent time enjoying the social and intellectual life of St Andrews. The ravages of time were making their mark, however, and Heddle's wife Mary died in 1891. The final Chapter describes the steps Heddle took to secure the future of his great collection and the various intrigues that led to it going to what is now National Museums Scotland. It also describes his final years, and how after his death *The Mineralogy of Scotland* came to be published in 1901. Finally it reviews Heddle's reputation: when H. M. Queen Elizabeth was a girl she was instructed in Scottish minerals and agates, her tutor using a copy of Heddle's book!

Although I have incorporated into the book all the important substantive information I could find on Heddle I doubt if this biography is complete. Heddle was a meticulous man and scientist who recorded everything he did and saw. The few letters that survive show he conducted voluminous correspondences with his friends and colleagues. Unless his many notebooks and letters lie unrecognised in a museum or library basement somewhere it seems that most of them have been lost. Perhaps one day some of these things will turn up, but in the meantime my book must suffice. Whatever its deficiencies may be, it is the first full biography of Hoy's famous son, Matthew Forster Heddle.

Matthew Forster Heddle: Mineralogist and Mountaineer, by **Hamish H. Johnston** (ISBN 978 1 905267 98 9) is published by NMS Enterprises Limited, and is available from bookshops and from www.nms.ac.uk/books, price £14.99. ■

Granny lived here in 1874

By Carol Pert, Member No 2545

No 30 Victoria Street Kirkwall is where I discovered the Orkney granny of whom my late husband often spoke and who, he told me, liked nothing better than to reminisce about her childhood in Kirkwall.

Granny, I am sure, would be delighted to know that her old home is still standing and that it now houses that most worthy of charities, Clan Cancer support, together with its various ancillaries and a charity shop that brings in many thousands of pounds every year.

When my husband died five years ago I had the urge to try and discover more about this woman of whom he spoke so warmly. Striking while the iron was hot I joined the local family history group and was soon off and running in my quest to discover more about Granny Henderson.

Well, not so much running, more like staggering along and, I suppose, like most researchers hoping that I might unearth a famous, or even better an infamous, forebear in my travels..

No such luck, and it even proved difficult to pin granny down. Eventually, however, the eureka moment arrived and I found her variously recorded as Hellan/Hellen/**Helen Scott** b 1874 on the 1881 census at 30 Victoria Street, Kirkwall and not only Helen but also her father **Thomas Scott** (1851) and mother, also Hellan (1848) and sisters who all lived at the same address

Thomas was born on 17 December 1850 at Eday, the son of **Malcolm Scott** (1812) of Eday and his wife **Sarah Swanny** (sic) (1813) of North Ronaldsay. Parish records show Thomas' grandfather, Malcolm was born about 1786 at Eday and married **Jean Fotheringham** b 1788 in Sanday, (the daughter of **John Fotheringham** and his wife **Jean Sinclair**). Malcolm and Jean had nine children, including Malcolm (1812), all born in Eday. I have been unable to trace the birth of Sarah Swanny or her marriage to Malcolm, but perhaps some other readers have the answers. Malcolm and Sarah appear in the 1841 and 1851 censuses at Upper Fernny Brae, Eday with their children Malcolm 1838, Ann 1842, James 1849 and Thomas 1850. A further brother John was born in 1855. Malcolm himself appears in the UK Merchant Navy Seaman Records as have given military service from 1845 to 1854. Through the index of interests in the Sib Folk News I made contact with relatives of Thomas' sister, Ann, who married **Robert Miller** in 1861 and I was rewarded with some information about that branch of the family.

Sadly in the 1861 census Sarah Scott is recorded as head of the household and Malcolm is recorded as being insane. Thomas aged 10 is working as herd/servant at Little Heatherquoy and brother James aged 13 working as a servant at Haccow, Deerness. Both Malcolm and

Sarah were missing from the 1871 census and I could find no record of Malcolm's death in Orkney. Eventually I tracked down his death in the Royal Edinburgh Asylum on 11 August 1861, the result of what was then termed General Paralysis of the Insane. His widow, Sarah, remarried. Unfortunately, her marriage to **William Dearness** in 1865 was short-lived as she died on 4th January 1868 aged 55 years.

On 13 May 1870, **Thomas Scott**, by then aged 20yrs. married **Hellen Campbell**, 21yrs. (b Harpsdale, Caithness or Lanark), and living at Bridge Street, Kirkwall. Hellen was the daughter of **John Campbell**, soldier and **Jane Christie**. The witnesses were **Edward Campbell** and **Edward Foubister**. Tragedy struck the family again when on 23 August 1870 a newspaper report records that "a hawker woman, Jane Christy or Campbell, met her death by accident. It appears she missed her footing while descending a stair near the old custom house in Thurso and fell to the ground, being thereby so seriously injured that she died in about half an hour. The woman and her husband are residents of Orkney." The Campbell family appear on the Orkney censuses of 1851 and 1861 with their family, all listed as beggars (on the 1851 census, even the baby only a few months' old!). Jane is listed as having been born in Lanark and her husband in Reay, Caithness or Cape Town, S Africa. I have not been able to trace the births of either John or Jane, nor their marriage, nor John's service record, but I was surprised and delighted to find John's death certificate on the Orkney FHS website amongst the strays. He had died the year after his wife in January 1871 at Bridge Street, Kirkwall. The bare facts contained in the records cover a lot joys and sorrows!

Thomas and Hellen appear in the 1871 census, Thomas as a farm servant at Hall of Clairston Ophir and Hellen with baby Sarah Jane (born 10 March 1871) living at 78 Victoria Street, Kirkwall. They again appear in the ►



◀ 1881 census living at 30 Victoria Street with children Sarah Jane (1871), Hellen (1874), Susan (1877), Tomima (1879) and Johanna (1881)

Sarah Jane Scott, the eldest daughter, married **George Hitchcock** in Leith in 1888. George was the son of **John George Hitchcock** and **Georgiana Beetles**. John originally came from the Oxfordshire area, but his work as a telegraph engineer brought him to Orkney and the family appear in the 1881 census for Kirkwall. George and Sarah had three children: **Charles Samuel Hitchcock**, **Helen Caroline Beetles** and **Sarah Jane Beetles** and seem to have reverted to the surname Beetles around 1891. Locating them in the records is further complicated by the fact that Beetles is mis-transcribed as Butler!

Another brick wall I encountered was trying to find Thomas and Hellen in the 1891 census. I was able to trace Hellen and family living at 174 Hilltown, Dundee census, but there was no record of Thomas and there were two further children: Edward born 1883 in Kirkwall and Lizzie born 1890 in Leith.

I discovered that Thomas' brother, Malcolm (1838,) and his wife Mary (Polly) had moved to 31 Bowling Green Street, Leith where he worked as a Rigger in the shipyard. It appears that Thomas had also found work there, as in 1889 his youngest daughter Elizabeth was born at Bowling Green Street, Leith. The question remained, "What had happened to Thomas?" With the help of the GRO we eventually found a death certificate and a procurator fiscal's report which showed Thomas was tragically drowned off Roseheart when the sail of the herring boat he was working on knocked him overboard. An article in the Aberdeen Journal of 22 August 1890 stated that the boat had been making for Fraserburgh about 3pm when the accident had occurred. A crew member had prepared to leap overboard, but although the boat had circled the area for half an hour, Thomas had never surfaced. It was conjectured that the blow on the head had rendered him insensible. His widow Hellen 47 yrs., was now responsible for six children, aged 1yr to 16 yrs.

The 1891 census shows that they had found work in the jute mills in Dundee: Hellen 17 yrs. was jute preparer, Susan 15 yrs. a jute spinner and Thomasina (Tomima) 13 yrs. jute shifter. The family's troubles did not end there as mother, **Hellen Scott** (Campbell), died at 75 Rosebank Street, Dundee on 23 May 1897, leaving daughter Hellen in charge of her younger brothers and sisters and a little girl of her own. The 1901 census shows her, aged 26 yrs., working as a jute preparer, with sisters Jemima (Tomima), Jean (Johanna), brother Edward, sister Lizzie and daughter Mary Ann, all living at 288 Hilltown.

In 1899 Susan Scott married **Alexander Mackenzie** in Leith. In 1901 She is living with her husband and son

Alexander (1900) at Uphall, Broxburn. As well as being recorded on the Dundee census, her sister Hellen is also recorded on the Uphall, as visiting her along with her second daughter Thomima on the day of the census.



Helen (daughter), Granny Hellen holding great granddaughter Maureen and Granny Herlan's daughter Williamina.

The 1911 census shows three branches of the Scott family living at 288 Hilltown, Dundee: Hellen with her three daughters, Mary 18 yrs., Thomasina 14 yrs. and Williamina 7 yrs.; her sister Johanna (Joan) and her husband, **James Cook**, in an adjoining flat with their children William 8 yrs., Robina 6 yrs. and Helen 2 yrs. (William, **Willie Cook** who became a professional footballer and Scotland international cap); and a third sister Jemima (Thomasina), husband, **James McElvenna**, and daughter Susie 6 yrs. in another flat in the same tenement. In 1912 Hellen married **George Henderson** and in 1923 her brother Edward married **Elizabeth Grattan**. I have not yet traced a marriage for their sister Elizabeth. Hellen's daughter Mary married **William McCallum** in 1914 and, when widowed, married **Joseph McGrath** in 1922. Williamina married in 1923 and continued to live in Dundee. The family grapevine remembers that Hellen's second daughter **Thomasina Thomson Scott** married a **Jack Laurie** (?) and moved to Ontario, Canada after 1914. She had several children including a Helen, a Hazel and a Graham, but she died when only in her forties. After this, the families lost touch and, in spite of searching, we still cannot find out what happened to them after their mother's death. Current descendants of the Scott family now live in USA, Australia and New Zealand as well as Scotland, England and Wales. The Orkney roots have spread far and wide. ■



That's the deadline for your article if you want it to appear in the September issue of Sib Folk News.

A rough guide to length would be 900 words or so for the first page. This allows for a header which I would produce. Subsequent pages can be around 1100 words. This would allow for the inclusion of a photograph. The more photos the less words. Articles should be produced

in plain text without any formatting. Send as Word doc. Photos should be scanned as 'highest quality' JPGS and supplied separately. Do NOT embed in article.

If you wish I will scan for you but better not to send originals. Everything can then be emailed to me at:- jjohnsin@gotadsl.co.uk

We can only publish with your help!

The captain trained his dogs to bite him While Ross for mercy he did pray. . . .



Story and graphics John Sinclair, Member No 588

When **Henry Rogers**, Master of the British merchant ship the *Martha and Jane*, condoned and participated in the unspeakable cruelty to the young seaman **Andrew Ross** it would never have crossed his mind that he, together with his first and second mate, would stand in the dock at Liverpool Assizes facing a charge of murder.

It had almost become the norm for some masters and officers to use and abuse their crews with complete impunity from reprimand. This time, however, the results were so horrendous that the government was forced to act and the following statement was made:-

The recurrence of oppressive tyranny, and disgusting cruelties on the part of Captains of Merchant Ships, particularly of the smaller class, has unfortunately, of late, become so frequent, that Her Majesty's Government felt it imperatively their duty to undertake the prosecution of Captain Rogers and his two mates, Miles and Seymour. With this view, they have entrusted the management of the trial to **F.J.Hamel**, Esq., the able and energetic Solicitor to the Board of Customs, who was specially deputed to act as Solicitor to the Treasury in this case **The Queen v Henry Rogers, William Miles and Charles Edward Seymour** which opened in Liverpool Assizes in July 1857.

The Attorney-General, Mr **Bliss**, Q.C., opened the case at Liverpool Assizes as follows:- "Gentlemen of the jury, the three prisoners at the bar stand indicted for feloniously and of their malice aforethought killing one Andrew Ross on the high seas between 11th May and 5th. June 1857. The prisoner, Henry Rogers, was the Master of the ship the *Martha and Jane*; the prisoner, William Miles, was the chief mate; and Charles Edward Seymour was the second mate. Andrew Ross

The Ballad of Andrew Ross

The Orkney sailor

*Come all you seamen and give attention
And listen for a while to me
While I relate of a dreadful murder
Which happened on the briny sea*

*Andrew Ross, an Orkney Sailor
Whose sufferings now I will explain
While on a voyage from Barbado
On board the vessel, Martha Jane*

*Oh think of what a cruel treatment
Without a friend to interpose
They whipped and mangled, gagged
and strangled
The Orkney sailor, Andrew Ross*

*The mate and captain daily flogged him
With whips and ropes, I'll tell you true
While on Andrew Ross' bleeding body
Water mixed with salt they threw*

*For twenty days thus ill they used him
Oh think, what sorrow, grief and
shame
Was suffered by this gallant sailor
On board the vessel Martha Jane*

*The captain trained his dogs to bite him
While Ross for mercy he did pray
And on the deck, his flesh in mouthfuls
Torn by the dogs they lay*

*Then in a water tank they put him
For twelve long hours they kept him
there
While Ross for mercy he was pleading
The captain swore none should go
near*

*The captain ordered him to swallow
A thing thereof I shall not name
The sailors all grew sick with horror
On board the vessel, Martha Jane*

was an able seaman on board and the means of death, a series of violences and outrages committed by the three prisoners upon the deceased, by beating and ill treating him."

Mr Bliss went on to explain that the *Martha and Jane* had sailed from Hartlepool in 1856 for Calcutta, then Demerara and from there to Barbados where both Henry Rogers, as replacement master, and Andrew Ross joined the ship.

Ross was immediately put to some duty by the second mate, Seymour, who found fault with him and beat him so severely that Ross was advised by some of the crew to leave the ship and he ran away.

He was brought back by the police on the 9th or 10th May and the vessel sailed on the 11th. The day after she sailed Ross was again beaten by Seymour, the chief mate also and the Captain who all beat him on the same day.

From that day until the last outrage, about two or three days before his death, he was beaten by the three accused almost every day with a rope and a whip, when in irons and out of irons. To keep him quiet an iron bolt of considerable size was forced into his mouth and secured by a gag. The Captain had a dog on board and he taught the dog to bite the young sailor. He first set him on with command and afterwards whenever the Captain approached with his whip the dog would fly at the man and bite him. When he tried to protect himself with his hands, the dog would bite them too. Evidence was given that Ross was sent aloft naked to furl the sail and that the chief mate followed him up whipping him so severely that the blood flowed in several places. When in irons he asked leave to go forward to the bows to relieve himself and this was refused. Unable to do otherwise he defecated on the deck and the Captain then beat.

◀The mate and the captain beat him and the latter ordered two men to hold Ross upon his back and called for a spoon. He took a 'fid' — a wooden pin — with which he forced the excrement into the deceased's mouth and up his nose.

A day or two after, this was repeated several times. The Captain then ordered the carpenter to knock the head out of one of the smallest water casks on the ship but as he was not quick enough he and the mate did it themselves. They brought Ross to the cask and pushed him in. They then lashed the cask to the side of the ship and there the deceased remained from twelve at noon till twelve at night. When he begged for water and showed great signs of distress members of the crew tried to help him only to be threatened with the same treatment by the Captain. The last act perpetuated upon Ross by the Captain and two mates was to put a rope around his neck and hoist him up the main mast nobly letting go when his face became black, his eyes protruded from their sockets and foam came from his mouth. This was apparently the last outrage he was to endure.

After this his body and mind gave way. The crew got him down to the foc'sle but he was so crazy they were obliged to tie his hands. On the morning of the 5th June, two or three days after the hanging, they got him up on deck to wash himself. An hour or two later they came back to get him but he was dead. He had wounds all over his body from the biting of the dogs and the whippings. These wounds had festered, there were maggots in them and the body was

When nearly dean they did release him

*And on the deck they did him fling
In the midst of pain and suffering
"Let us be joyful," Ross did say*

The captain swore he'd make him sorry

*He chained him with an iron bar
Was that not a cruel treatment
For an honest British tar*

*A timber hitch the captain ordered
All on a rope to be prepared
And Andrew Ross' bleeding body
Was then suspended in the air*

*Justice then did overtake them
Into Liverpool they came
And there found guilty of the murder
Committed on the briny ocean*

*Oh think of what were the captain's feelings
When both his mates they were released
To think that he alone should suffer
He could not for a while believe*

*"Oh God," he cries, "Is there no mercy
Must my poor wife and children dear
Be hounded out by public scorn
It nearly drives me to despair"*

*Soon after that an hour arrived
Captain Rodgers had to die
To satisfy offended justice
And hangs on yonder gallows high*

*I hope his fate will be a warning
To all such tyrants who may suppose
Who would treat an Orkney sailor
As what was done to Andrew Ross*

in such a state that the crew were loath to touch him. They dragged him with ropes aft and in an hour or so the Captain ordered him thrown overboard.

The ship made land on the 9th June. Information was given and the Captain and mates were arrested. The facts were brought to the notice of Her Majesty's Government and they instituted the prosecution.

The trial proceeded with five of the crew being called as witnesses. They were thoroughly examined by the prosecution and defence lawyers and despite a spirited final plea by a Mr **Monks, Q.C.**, for the defendants, the jury took only a short time to give a distinct verdict of murder against each of the prisoners.

All three were sentenced to be hanged. The punishment of the two mates Miles and Seymour was subsequently commuted to penal servitude for life but Captain Rogers was executed at Kirkdale Gaol, Liverpool on Saturday, September 12th 1857 before a large gathering of seamen in a crowd numbering some 50,000.

The government subsequently published the trial in a condensed form presumably to show Masters, owners and anyone else connected with Britain's Merchant Service, that although every protection would be afforded to them in the legitimate maintenance of order and subordination on board, retribution will follow if they abused these powers. It also established that British seamen would be protected in law no matter how distant they might be from their native shores. ■



If William Broadbent Dearness means anything to you, Pam Irving, Member 830, has his marriage certificate

Re; Anne Cormack's note about William Dearness shoemaker in the latest issue (73) of Sib Folk News.

I have a collection of card indexes, made some years ago of all the references I could find to DEARNESSES, as I researched my own DEARNESS

ancestors who settled in England in the early 1850's (of the 11 DEARNESSES in England in the 1881 census 6 are from the family of my great grandmother).

From my records it seems entirely possible that the William DEARNESS, who wrote the letter Anne reported on did make it to London. I have the marriage certificate of a William Broadbent DEARNESS, tailor, to Harriet

JAGGER on 7th February 1852 at St Botolphs, Aldgate London. His father on the certificate is given as William Dearness, shoemaker.

There is a death in the death index in the March quarter of 1863 at Mile End, 1C 436 which I didn't send for having established this wasn't the William DEARNESS I was looking for, which could be either the father or the son as there is the record of a marriage of Harriet, widow of Wm Broadbent DEARNESS in the June quarter of 1875, Croydon 2a 346 [or maybe 364?].

I would be happy to pass on a copy of the certificate if anyone can claim a connection to it.

You can contact Pam at <pamirving@hotmail.com> ■

James MacDonald a Tooloom Gold Miner

By Velzian Todd, Member No 781

James MacDonald was a man for whom the bright lights of the cities, even a reasonably comfortable bed, held no appeal. Gold fever remained forever in his blood, and it seemed he was only ever happy when washing a dish or two in the streams for a few specks of gold.

Great Uncle Jim was born in Harray in the Orkney Isles on the 5th August 1857. He was the youngest of three sons, – Donald (always known as Daniel), Alexander and James, born to **Donald MacDonald** and his wife **Margaret Ann Watt Velzian**, who farmed a small holding of about 10 acres at Appiehouse near present day Dounby.

James immigrated to Australia as a young man of 19 years on the *St. James* in 1876. The journey from Glasgow seems not to have been all that comfortable for complaints were made by some of the single male passengers on disembarkation in Brisbane. An enquiry was held by the Immigration Board into, 'the scarcity of water, provisions, and hospital accommodation,' on the *St James*.

Nevertheless James must have quickly adapted to new conditions and a new country, and no doubt wrote home with glowing reports as Daniel, my grandfather, followed in 1878, on the sailing ship *Nairnshire*.

Little is known of the early days of the two brothers in Australia. It seems likely that they went first to the gold fields of the upper Clarence River in northern New South Wales.

Tooloom had been a timber getting area but shot to fame with the discovery of the 'Lady Bowen' nugget of 110 ounces in 1859 which caused quite a stir at the time.

THE 140 OZ. NUGGET "LADY BOWEN."

On Thursday last, we were favored with an opportunity of inspecting this fine and valuable nugget, which was found at the Tooloom Diggings on the 15th instant by James Templeton and George Boyes, two Brisbane men, who had been at work on the diggings for 10 months, and had been otherwise unsuccessful.

The nugget weighs 140 ozs. in the gross, and appears to be nearly all virgin metal, quartz being observable only at the place where it was struck by the pick. In shape it is a flat oval, nearly 2 inches thick in the thickest part, and is perfectly smooth on the surface, as though it had been much subjected to the action of water. The lucky finders have named their prize the "Lady Bowen," and when it came down by the escort to Ipswich on Wednesday last, it was publicly exhibited to numbers at one shilling per head.

It soon had a population of about 5000 hopeful diggers and was worked intermittently until the Great War. When the MacDonald brothers came in the late seventies it had three pubs and an annual two day race meeting. Daniel married in Warwick over the border in Queensland in 1883 and presumably his active mining days ended then though it is

known that the brothers owned a shaft mine and some machinery which they attempted to sell later. Soon Daniel left Warwick for Brisbane and resumed his old craft of stonemasonry but James remained.

Uncle Jim did not marry but in the thirties he would come to Brisbane occasionally to visit his relatives. He was a shy man who when asked to dinner to see his nephew, 'another Jim' would wait in the trees opposite our home until my father came home from work. My elder brother would go and sit with him but he had little conversation with my mother and myself. He died in Warwick on 30th September, 1937. My father went to Warwick to settle his uncle's affairs. Uncle Jim left no property or possessions except a silver fob watch. He is buried in Warwick Cemetery and his epitaph states, 'Tooloom Gold Miner'. That was his life, lonely but his choice.

The Tooloom area is now a National Park and much the same as it was 175 years ago before the timber getters and miners moved in – quiet, tranquil and beautiful. Of the town itself there are just ruins softened by trees and lush growth and some surrounding traces of the old bullock tracks. The only maintained structure is Jack Payne's pub, a large wooden building with wide verandahs. The present owners have sympathetically restored it, keeping the old metal numbers to the rooms that were accommodation.

Jack Payne's pub



I visited Tooloom and experienced its haunting beauty. I was sad that there was no one but myself to remember or honour Uncle Jim to whom this story is my tribute. ■

*Give the dish a twirl around,
Let the water swirl around
Man's the sport of circumstance,
However he may wish—
Fortune are you there now?
Answer to my prayer now,
Drop a half-ounce nugget
in the bottom of my dish.*

"The Diggers' Song'. Barcroft Boake



Velzian Todd, No 781, June 2015

They're all wearing Kathleen's brooch



By Nan Scott (nee Pottinger). Member No 8

Last year I was delighted when we had three representative lots of Pottinger families visit our offices in Kirkwall.

Being a Pottinger from Westray myself I was pleased to discover that they all had information linking their ancestors to the island.

First of all we had **Bob Testa** from California and I am pleased to report that he is now No 3323 on the membership roll. Bob's wife is descended from the **George Pottinger** that our Chairperson, **Anne Rendall**, wrote about in SFN No 54. George had gone to Canada as a schoolteacher and some of his family later moved to the USA.

Next, from Canada, we had **Keith, Carole and Theresa Pottinger**, who are my own first cousins once removed and could have joined us for our annual outing in June if it had not been cancelled. Keith's grandfather **John Pottinger** of Knugdale, my uncle, had left Westray with wife and daughter in 1910. He joked that his trip was the original emigration in reverse but he was not going to stay as he had lovely grandchildren in Canada. They had always lived in Manitoba and had never seen sea before. Now they were flying over it and sailing through it for the first time!

Our third visitor was **Vera Jess** (nee Pottinger), Member No 3158 from Lanark in Scotland. Vera has sent four old photographs that had been found among the belongings of a relative who had died leaving no family. We both thought that some of them had a 'Pottinger look' about them and **John Sinclair**, our editor, thought it worth while to include them in SFN No 73 under the heading 'Possibly Pottinger People'.

So far we have drawn a blank on names but thanks to **Kathleen Stephen**, Member No 1711 we still think that we are on the right track.

Eagle eyed Kathleen noticed that two of the ladies in the photographs were wearing brooches similar to



Vera's photograph No 1

the one that her Auntie **Teenie Hibbert** had given her. It had been sent to Kathleen's great granny, Jane Pottinger (nee Stout) and then passed down to Teenie. She did not think that any of her four sons would value the brooch so she passed it on to Kathleen. Now Teenie and of course Kathleen's mother are Pottingers from another family. Kathleen had a search through her old photographs and found the one she was looking for — **Isabella Feather Pottinger** wearing the brooch on what is possibly her wedding dress. We both think that Isabella is remarkably like the lady wearing the brooch in Vera's picture. Isabella came from London, went to Chicago and married **John Stout Pottinger** who was Kathleen's granduncle. If this is the same brooch it may help Vera to identify her pictures. It shows us that it is really a good idea to put names on our photographs! I have mentioned four different branches of the Pottinger family and local research shows they are all descended from **William Pottinger** and **Christian Davidson** who lived



Vera's photograph No 2

somewhere in the north of Westray. Keith Pottinger and I are descended from their son John and his wife **Margaret Reid**, the family home being Knugdale. Bob Testa's wife, Vera Jess and Kathleen Stephen are descended from another son William and his wife **Mary Couper**; the family homes here being possibly Hardbraes, Muckenzie and North Ouseness. Vera is looking forward to another Orkney holiday this year and there will be more relatives to meet I am sure!

Isabella Feather Pottinger



Merchants from Walls in Orkney to Bergen in Norway

By Lars Maersk Hansen, Member No. 3390

1. Introduction

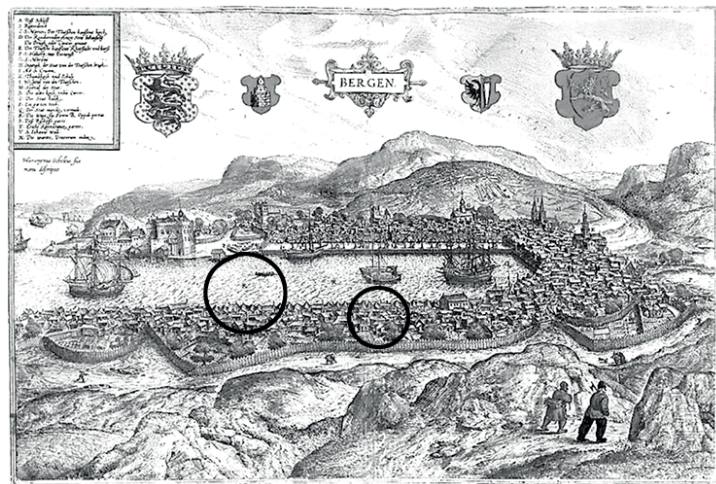


Figure 1. Prospect of Bergen by Hieronimus Scoleus, dated ca 1580. The circles show the approximate location of the landed estate of the Bergen Cromerties before 1632. The smaller circle - Residence and the larger - Warehouse. (Wiesener 1936)



Figure 2. Harbour of Bergen (Bergens Waag) late 19th century. The warehouses to the right were located near the residence of Thomas Cromerty Jnr. in 1645. They have, at large, the same design as in the 17th-18th century, allowing for easy access for ships, and smaller vessels could enter the "hoops" between the warehouses. University Library of Bergen. Photo by Knud Knudsen.

After the pledge of Orkney in 1469 by the Dano-Norwegian king Christian I, many Orkney merchants and craftsmen settled in Bergen, continuing into the early 18th century. Figure 1 shows a prospect of Bergen in 1580. The harbour is called "Bergen's Waag" (same word as "wall" in Kirkwall and Walls, Orkney), meaning a bay good for the sheltering of ships, and hence the ideal place for trade and for mooring of ships next to warehouses, as shown in Figure 2. Old records in Norway may confuse. Until the 1870s, the use of father's name with a suffix -son or -daughter was common instead of a heritable surname, and still is predominant in Iceland. In the following text and genealogy charts, both father's name and surname are used for the Cromerties. The spelling Cromerty with an "e" is used, which is a common form in sources concerning this Cromarty lineage in Walls and Bergen.

2 Thomas Cromerty

In 1572 "Thomes Thomesen Krumedi" (Thomas Cromerty) became burghess of Bergen, Norway and so did, Anders Krumthi (Andrew Cromerty) in 1588. Of the latter we only have a few court records on inheritance conflicts, but no records are known to the present author on his origin or descendants. So he is now out of the saga.

Only a few records exist mentioning this first documented Cromerty in Bergen, but he may have been some 30 years old in 1572, and early 1540s can be a good guess. According to a letter of disposition he was a merchant and had earlier resided in the "yle of Wallis, Orknay" (GD195/49, GD195/50, NAS). From his patronymic Thomesen we know that his fathers name was also Thomas, probably born ca. 1510.

We can conclude that Thomas was a wealthy man, because in 1585 he was owner of goods valued 900 guilders on a ship captured by John de Mher, master of a pirate ship "the Golden Dragon" owned by Walter Luson (Leveson), Southampton. The event caused King Frederick I of Denmark to take action and write to Queen Elisabeth and complain, and the owners of the captured ship and goods were compensated by Luson in 1588 for their loss. England was aware of the threat from the Spanish Armada, and Elisabeth had to keep good relationships with other monarchs.

In the Court records of Bergen, a case is mentioned concerning Thomas Thomasen Cromerty. Rubbert Göttri (Robert Guthrie) sued Anna Calender at the Bergen town court in 1594 for the inheritance after Peter Reffuen (Ruthven). He claimed that Peter was his half-brother, being illegitimate son of James Ruthven and Robert's mother Anna Simson, and presented papers to support this, signed by Henry Elder, scribe of Perth, and also a grant from King James VI on Peter's property. Thomas, Anna Calender's son in law, had her warrant at court and claimed that in 1567, Anna Calender had come to "the town of St Johannes" (Perth) on behalf of Peter's widow and had

bought from John Reffuen (Ruthven), son of Walter his inherited property in Bergen after his uncle Peter Ruthven, who had died in Bergen some years previously. Thomas also demonstrated papers, signed by the same Henry Elder, witnessing that ten men, including Roberts Guthrie's father John, had sworn that Peter and Walter were legitimate brothers, and that John Ruthven was Walters closest heir. The outcome of the case is not known, as parts of the court book have been lost. Thomas Cromerty Sr died before 1599, when his Son, Thomas Cromerty Jr, became Burgess, "Thomas Thomassen Krummedij" says the burgess book of Bergen.

3 Thomas Cromerty Jr.

A case in "Court of Session" Scotland between William Carmichael, merchant in Kirkwall and William Law's heirs, dealt with an "obligation contening the soume of tua hundreth and sextie dolouris of Thomas Cromertie and his moder made to Andro Bruce of Wester Maul in Orknay" and other bonds from Thomas Beg and James Milne in Bergen. All of these bonds had been passed over to Magnus Cromertie of Caray and from him to Carmichael, as payment for goods or services. Carmichael had paid William Law's journey to Bergen in "jayvict yeiris", (1600) in order to cash the bonds or obtain goods. Carmichael claimed not to have received neither the bonds nor money or goods, and sued the heirs.

As Thomas Cromertie is named with his mother, we may conclude he was not of age (20) when they issued the bond, and also that his father was dead. Probably Thomas became burghess as soon as he reached the age of 20, and we may conclude he was born in 1578 or 1579. So the bond must have been issued in the time span 1595-1598, which, consequently, also is the time span of his father's death.

In 1640, "Thomas Cromartie (jr) merchand burges of Bergen in the kingdome of Norroway" sold "ane farthing udall land in the toun of Kirk in the yle of South Ronaldsay" to William Stewart of Maines (GD195/49 & 50, NAS). His father (Thomas Sr) was "sumtime indwellar in the yle

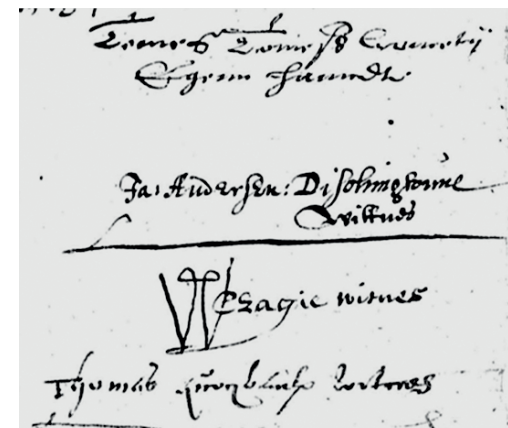


Figure 3. Signatures of Thomas Cromerty and witnesses on a contract of sale of land in Orkney.

of Wallis" and "heretabill udallar" of the sold land. Thomas signed the document by his own hand - "Tomes Tomess. Cromerty Egeen Handt" (Figure 3). Witnesses were James Andersen Dishington, merchant and Thomas Johnson Quoybanks, cooper; both burgesses of Bergen with origins in Orkney and William Craigie of Gairsay, Orkney, who authored the letter of disposition. From this document, we can conclude that Thomas' father, who became burghess in Bergen in 1572, came from Walls, Orkney. The document shows us that the Cromarties of Walls had udal property in South Ronaldsay, as well, and maybe Adam mentioned in the following document is identical to Adam of Kirkhous, Widewall.

Thomas was a member of the Bergen court by 1613, and became councillor of Bergen in 1617. In 1634 he was a registered partner in

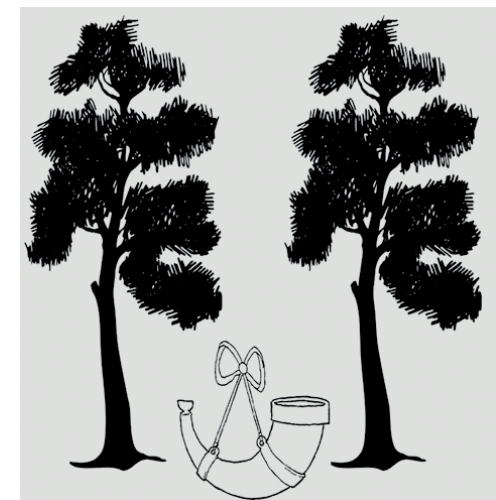


Figure 4. Sketch showing the Heraldic Symbols of the Cromarty Seal: a stringed hunting horn between two trees.

Cromerty, namely a hunting horn between two trees (Figure 4).

4 Daniel Thomesen Cromerty

Thomas' spouse was Emmiche Jansdatter (daughter of John) who gave birth to 24 children (Edvardsen). both of them died in 1647, and very little is known of their children. In the tax rolls from 1645, many persons are styled "Thomas son" and "Thomas daughter", but it may mean any Thomas, so but for a few particularly named Crometi, most of them are uncertain. In any case, a son Daniel inherited residence, business and warehouses. Daniel Thomasen became burghess in 1646, and was member of the Bergen Court. Town regulations dated 1649 were signed by him together with the rest of the town court and council, including rules such as: "young men listening to musicians after 10 pm or who turn themselves into "night-ravens" running along the streets, yelling, shouting and screaming, shall be taken into custody by the night guardians".

Daniel had seven surviving children and died in 1666, one year after his wife, Ael Berendtsdatter Middelstorp. Daniel's eldest son Thomas succeeded him in the business. He and his descendants will be treated in a subsequent article. Figure 5 overleaf, shows a chart of the first four Cromerty generations in Bergen.

5 Origin in Walls Orkney

From Walls exists an abstract of a deed: "William Cromerty in Kirbuster in the ile of Wallis "sone naturall & ane of the lawfull airis of umq[uile] Thome Cromerty in Kirbuster in Wallis, with cons(ent) of his sp[ouse] Jonet Thomis dochter, & Thome Cromerty, James, Adame, Thome younger, William and Magnus Cromerty, my sounis, & Elspett Cromerty my dochter & all the rest of his sons and daughters lawfully begotten or to be begotten betwixt him and his said spouse; & also taking burden upon him for my brether sounis, sik as ar James Cromerty in Aithe in Walls, sone of Alex:r Cromerty in Kirbuster in Wallis, and all the rest of his sounis & dochteris, Hutcheoun Cromerty & all his bairnis, Thome & all his bairnis, and all others whatever pretending title to lands in question. W. C. sells ½ mk of land in Clouston in Stenhous quhilk land I and the utheris foirsaidis airt efter my umqll father undoubtit heritor of the foirsaidis lands to his well beloved friend James Leisk now present occupier of the said land." (Orkney Archives D23/5, 25). Williams's nephew Thomas was most probably identical with the first Thomas in Bergen, — ►

◀ Thomas in Bergen, and Hutcheoun owned udal lands in Ronaldsvoe, South Ronaldsay (GD1/236/2).

In 1632, William Cromerty in Bergen sold lands in Aith, inherited from his father Thomas Cromerty in Kirbister. This shows the close connection between the Cromarties in Walls and in Bergen. As lands in Aith were owned by Alexander's son James, William was most probably a grandson of Alexander in Kirbuster, and James' nephew. In Bergen also lived "Joel Mognsen Crometi" a baker from Orkney who became burgess in 1641. No connection to any Magnus in Skea or Cara at that time can be shown. Both of them had sons named John, but they lived in Orkney. Joel could be grandson of William or of Hutcheoun, who both had sons named Magnus. He had children, but none of them seem to have descendants. The same is the case for William in Bergen. The family relationships derived from the sources, are shown in Figure 6. Two more Alexanders could be added (Orkney Commissariat Records 1556 and 1565). They are probably first cousins, grandsons of Alexander in Kirbister who died 1598, but any two of Alexander's three sons, Thomas, William and Alexander could be their fathers (as mentioned before the oldest brother James had no children).

REFERENCES

- *Bergens Borgerbog, fol 41, 202, 202b.* Bergen Byarkiv
- GD195/49 & 50, *National Archives of Scotland*
- GD1/236/2 – *The Uthell Buik of Orkney*
- *Thott Collections, Royal Library, Copenhagen*
- *Calendar of State papers, Elisabeth I. Foreign series 1586-1588.* London
- *Reg Privy Seal of Scotland 1593*
- RS 43/6/67f, *National Archives of Scotland*
- *Edvardsen, Edvard. Bergens Beskrivelse, Bergens Historiske Forening Nos. 55-56, 1949-50*
- *Tax rolls of Bergen 1645 Bergens Historiske Forening, No 41, 1935 and No 42, 1936*
- *Orkney Archives D23/5, 25. Savedale Papers. Abstract by J S Clouston*
- *Orkney testaments and inventories," SRS NS6 pp. 91-92, NAS.*
- *Orkney Commissariat Records*

6. Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to Diane Baptie, who searched and transcribed several NAS documents mentioned in this article; Yngve Nedrebø with staff, SAB, who guided me in the Bergen Archives; Margaret Watters with whom I have had fruitful communications in the matter. ■

Figure 5. Chart of the first four Cromerty generations in Bergen.

Figure 6. Pedigree of Thomas Cromerty in Kirbister. Four generations showing the relationships between the Cromertys in Kirbister, Walls and the first Thomas Cromerty in Bergen together with his known children and other relatives there.

FIGURE 5

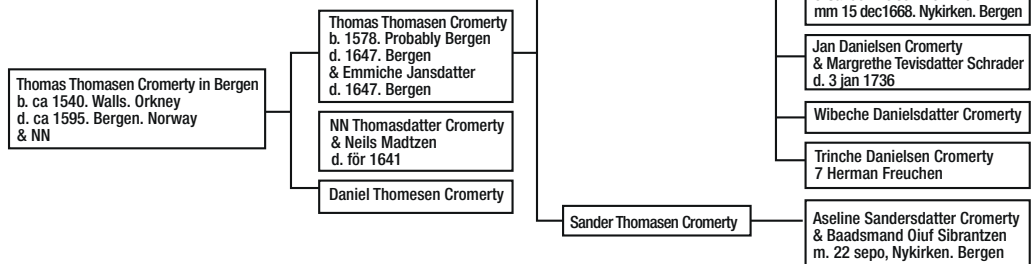
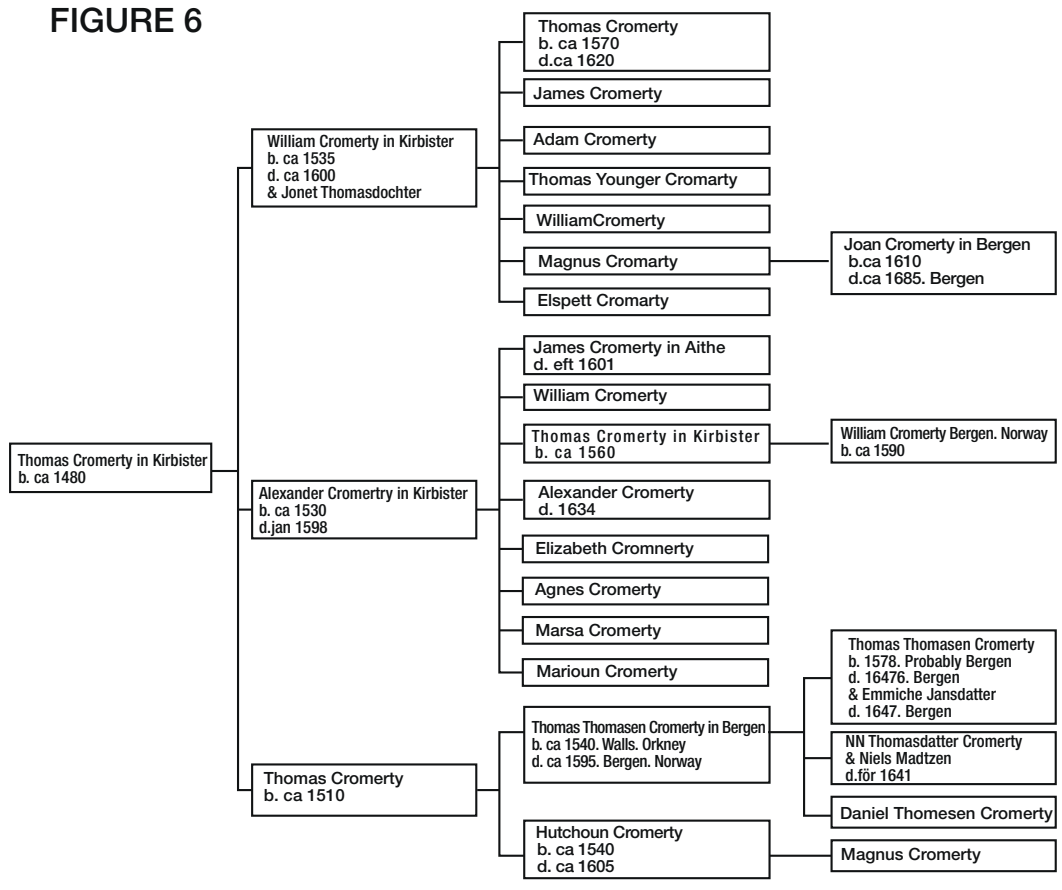
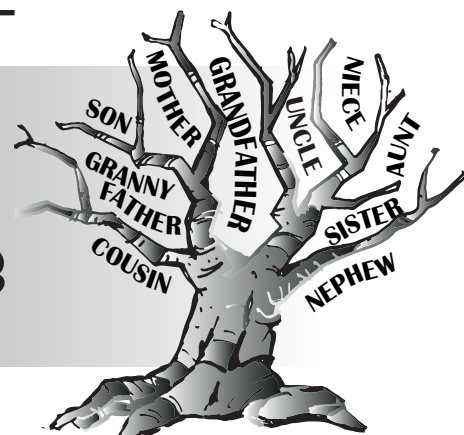


FIGURE 6



Julie's lost in the Woods Family Tree



An appeal for help from Julie Hunstone, Member No 2309

Julie Hunstone, Member No 2309, tells me she has reached her 'brick wall' when it comes to researching her Orcadian side of the family and hopes that her fellow members might help her break through. She tells me that her mother is still alive and Julie would like to be able to show her that she has managed to trace some of her family.

This is everything that Julie knows about this side of the family:



Arthur Ardill Wood

Grandfather **Arthur Ardill Wood** 1891 - 1961 was born in Parramatta Australia.

His father, Gt Grandfather **Thomas Wood** 1870 - 1939 also born in Australia.

His father Gt Gt Grandfather **William Wood** was born in Stromness in 1831. His wife was a **Christian Condie** born in 1837 in Dysart, Fife. They were married in Nov 1860 in NSW where they lived in the southern highlands in



Christian Condie

his father as **Thomas Wood**, farmer, deceased and his mother as **Christina Wood ms Spence**, also deceased.

Julie would be interested to know if anyone can help her find out anything more about Hugh Wood or is it Thomas?

You can contact Julie at allanjulieh@spin.net.au

a place called Pambula.

His father, Gt Gt Gt Grandfather **Thomas Wood** for whom I have a certificate showing he was christened in Stromness on 25th June 1797. It appears that he married a **Catherine Stanger** on the 7th December 1797.

His parents were **Hugh Wood** and Christiana Spence. Thomas married **Catherine Stanger** 7/12/1826 in the Parish of Stromness.

I have a death certificate for a **Thomas Wood**, fisherman, who died on 6th May 1866 Stromness but on the certificate it gives

his father as **Thomas Wood**, farmer, deceased and his mother as **Christina Wood ms Spence**, also deceased.

Julie would be interested to know if anyone can help her find out anything more about Hugh Wood or is it Thomas?

You can contact Julie at allanjulieh@spin.net.au



Thomas Wood and Matilda Mary Brandon

I CAN'T WRITE MY ARTICLE FOR SIB FOLK NEWS!

Your worries are over! HERE is the ANSWER!

Contains every word you could possibly require. All you have to do is put them in the right order for a stunning result

DARLING IT'S THE BEST YOU'VE EVER WRITTEN

AND IT'S ALL THANKS TO DICTIONARY

Peter Russell was interested in this article in issue 73 . . .

ORKNEY
HERALD
APR. 1868

MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT FIVE MEN DROWNED

A melancholy boat accident, resulting in the death by drowning of five men, occurred on the evening of Saturday last,¹ off the Ophir² coast. About nine o'clock a woman who resides near the shore heard cries of distress coming from the sea: and on giving an alarm, a boat manned by Alexander and William Thomison, father and son,³ immediately put off in the direction from which the cries seemed to proceed. At a distance of two gunshots from the shore, they came upon a boat which had apparently righted after being overturned, and which contained two men, one of whom appeared to be supporting the other. The men were taken on shore, and it was then found that one of them was quite dead; and the other was in a very exhausted state. On the survivor being conveyed to the house of Dr. Still⁴ in Ophir, he recovered sufficiently to be able to tell that he was captain

of the barque Excelsior, of and from Sunderland for Newhaven (U.S.)⁵ then lying at Panhope⁶ in Flotta, and that four of his crew and one passenger were in the boat besides himself when it capsized. Capt. Atkinson, who appears to have received some internal injury from a stroke by the boat, was not in a fit condition to give any particulars of the lamentable accident. It was considered strange how the boat should have capsized, as the wind was very moderate, and there was no sea in the Flow.⁷ The captain and crew came in their boat from Panhope to Scapa on Saturday for the purpose of purchasing some stores for their boat in Kirkwall. Between five and six o'clock in the evening they left the town in the direction of Scapa, laden with purchases, and the next intelligence about them was the rumour of their loss as now described. One body has been washed ashore.

1.2 May 1868.

2.Orphir, a parish in the West Mainland of Orkney overlooking Scapa Flow.

3.William Thomison, father, and Alexander, his son.

4.Dr. Charles S. Still, Smoogro House, Orphir, a former army surgeon, landlord of Andrew Groundwater. J. Storer Clouston (1870-1944), historian and author of *The Lunatic at Large* (1899), and numerous other stories, died at Smoogro House 23 June 1944..

5.Lloyd's List reported 1 May 1868 the Excelsior arriving off Staxigo[e] (Wick, Caithness) on 27 April 1868 and on 30 June 1868 the ship arriving at New London (not Newhaven), Connecticut, USA, from [South] Shields (not Sunderland) on 13 June 1868.

6.Pan Hope lies on the east side of the island of Flotta.

7.Scapa Flow, famous for the scuttling of the German Fleet 21 July 1919.

10

The tragic loss of three generations of the Thomison family

By Mike Clouston, Member No.37

William Thomison, my g-g grandfather, was born in Flotta in 1784, a son of John Thomison and Janet (née) Smith. He was married to Mary Burnett, born 1791. She also came from South Shetland. As far as I can discover they had seven children. Their second daughter was Isabella Thomison. Their fourth son was Alexander Thomison. At some time between the 1840s and the 1850s, William is described as a carpenter. He is living at 14 Duke of Street, Glasgow, in 1861. He is living at 14 Duke of Street, Glasgow, in 1861. He is living at 14 Duke of Street, Glasgow, in 1861.

SHIPWRECK AT ORPHIR.
On the morning of Saturday last (2 July), William Thomison, Orphir, his son Alexander, and his grandsons, aged ten years, were out in a small boat, the name of which was the *Excelsior*, and all were well. When the crew went off to land their goods to sell, the boat was blown away from the shore and grounded in water. They reached the bottom, but the boat was so full of water that they could not get out. They were all drowned. The bodies of the three generations of the Thomison family were found on the shore. The bodies of the three generations of the Thomison family were found on the shore.

THREE MEN DROWNED.
On the morning of Saturday last (2 July), William Thomison, Orphir, his son Alexander, and his grandsons, aged ten years, were out in a small boat, the name of which was the *Excelsior*, and all were well. When the crew went off to land their goods to sell, the boat was blown away from the shore and grounded in water. They reached the bottom, but the boat was so full of water that they could not get out. They were all drowned. The bodies of the three generations of the Thomison family were found on the shore. The bodies of the three generations of the Thomison family were found on the shore.

FIVE MEN DROWNED.
A melancholy boat accident, resulting in the death by drowning of five men, occurred on the evening of Saturday last, off the Ophir coast. About nine o'clock a woman who resides near the shore heard cries of distress coming from the sea: and on giving an alarm, a boat manned by Alexander and William Thomison, father and son, immediately put off in the direction from which the cries seemed to proceed. At a distance of two gunshots from the shore, they came upon a boat which had apparently righted after being overturned, and which contained two men, one of whom appeared to be supporting the other. The men were taken on shore, and it was then found that one of them was quite dead; and the other was in a very exhausted state. On the survivor being conveyed to the house of Dr. Still in Ophir, he recovered sufficiently to be able to tell that he was captain

. . . for Peter Groundwater Russell, Member No 161 is a direct descendant of the family through Isabella Ross Thomison who married Peter's g-g grandfather Andrew Groundwater after whom Peter is named.

Peter remembered that he had briefly researched the tragedies some years ago and some of this material is reproduced here together with his explanatory notes.

The Colonist.

NEW ZEALAND 28th July 1868

BOAT ACCIDENT BRAVE RESCUE

Four sailors and a passenger of the barque Excelsior, of Sunderland, were drowned on May 2nd, off Scapa, Orkney, Scotland, through a squall upsetting their boats. Soon after midnight, cries for help were heard on the shore of Smoogrow, Orphir, and Alexander Thomison and his father (an old man beyond seventy) launched their small boat and proceeded to sea, and after pulling nearly a mile, found the boat full of water, with the captain and one man who had died only a few minutes before. The Thomisons managed at great risk to themselves to get the captain and the dead body into their boat, and landed safely.

BOAT ACCIDENT AT ORPHIR. THREE LIVES LOST.

ORKNEY
HERALD
JULY 1870

On the morning of Saturday last,¹ William Tomison,² Muirhouse,³ Orphir, his son Alexander, and his grandson aged ten years, were out in a small boat hauling dogs,⁴ when, by some mischance, the boat capsized, and all were lost. When the crew went off to haul their nets, the wind was blowing a smart breeze off the land, but not so much as to cause anxiety. They reached the fishing ground in safety; but by the time they had got their nets on board, they had drifted considerably to lee. Sail having been made, they had again got pretty well up; but, while effecting this, the boat was observed to ship several heavy seas and it is supposed that, being previously overloaded with nets and fish, the water had made the boat dangerous. At all events, an attempt was made to shorten sail, and the mainsail was got down, but before the foresail could be taken in, the boat sank. She, however, directly re-appeared, and after turning twice over, floated on the surface, bottom up. On seeing the

accident, William Ballantine⁵ and his crew immediately put off to render assistance, but, when they reached the scene of the disaster, no trace of the men could be found. Subsequently Mr. Fortescue's⁶ yacht went out and brought the boat to land; but, although dredged for on Saturday, none of the bodies have been found. We understand William Tomison leaves a widow and grown-up family, and his son, Alexander, the eldest, Alexander, being the young lad drowned. We need hardly say that the melancholy event has cast a deep gloom over the whole parish and much sympathy is felt for all the relatives who had so suddenly been bereft of support. We are informed that some two years ago, while the captain and crew of a ship, anchored in Longhope,⁷ was proceeding to Kirkwall for stores, they were overtaken by a squall, which capsized the boat, but were rescued by the men whose sad death we this day chronicle. July 1870.



Swanbister House, Orphir, built by Arthur Fortescue ca. 1845



Smoogro House, Orphir. South Elevation

1. 2 July 1870.
2. Also spelt (more commonly) 'Thomison' and (rarely) 'Thomesson' - see inscription on Isabella Thomison Groundwater's gravestone in Orphir Cemetery.
3. Muirhouse lies close to the eastern shore of Swanbister Bay less than a mile southeast of Smoogro House on the Veness peninsula.
4. Dogs, or 'dogfish,' caught on handlines in Scapa Flow during the summer months.
5. William Ballantine (b. 1827), husband of Margaret Clouston.
6. Archer Fortescue, later Irvine-Fortescue (1819-1907), Swanbister House, Orphir. Andrew Groundwater (1824-1917), g-g-grandfather of this writer, was born in Piggar, on the Swanbister Estate. Groundwater married Isabella Ross Thomison (1826-1899), daughter of William Thomison and Mary Barnett (1791-1880) - g-g-g-grandparents of this Peter Groundwater Russell - on 14 February 1845.
7. Earlier reports stated Pan Hope, Flotta, not Longhope on the island of Hoy.

Readers may be interested to know that Lloyd's List (1 May 1868) reported the *Excelsior* arriving off Staxigo[e] (Wick, Caithness) on 27 April 1868 and on 30 June 1868 the ship arriving at New London (not Newhaven), Connecticut, USA, from [South] Shields (not Sunderland) on 13 June 1868. Details of the *Excelsior* are somewhat vague but it seems most likely that she was both built (1855) in her home port of Sunderland. The expression in third newspaper account of 'hauling dogs' refers to 'dogfish,' which were caught on handlines in Scapa Flow during the summer months.



of SAINTS and mostly SINNERS

By Jane Harris. Member No 1503

A look at some Kirk Session Minutes

(Information not found in the minutes but known from other sources has been added [in square brackets].)

Kirk session minutes can provide a fascinating opening into the world of our ancestors in days long before the welfare state, the NHS and all-intrusive media. I've worked my way through the Walls Kirk Session minutes, 1837-1865, creating an index of the people mentioned (Walls Kirk Session Minutes 1837-65. National Records of Scotland. CH2/1105/1. Also available at Orkney Archive OCR28/1). Some names crop up frequently, mainly the ministers and elders who formed the kirk session, the local court of the established Church of Scotland. Other names occur only once or twice: new communicants; fornicators, ante-nuptial or otherwise; intemperates, Sabbath breakers; very rare poor relief cases.

Women are often mentioned for unmarried mothers frequently take centre stage. Morals were undoubtedly a good part of the equation, but also the Session did not want to be left to support the mother and child financially so fathers were sometimes pursued with a thoroughness that puts the UK Child Support Agency to shame. The case of Euphemia Sandison [Halyiel] rumbled on for over two years, even though she named the father, Cathel Ker [sic], right at the start. She was even referred to the presbytery of Cairston, the next level of court, as this was a "trilapse" case. In other words, it was the third time that she was guilty of fornication, which may account for the tenacity of the session. At length, in January 1855, the minister William Anderson, produced a letter from his counterpart in the parish of Assynt, in the remote west of Sutherland, enclosing a letter from the schoolmaster at Drumbeg, a settlement in that parish, who stated that he had seen the said Cathel and he acknowledged that he was the father. At that point Euphemia, having submitted to discipline, was "restored to church privileges", meaning she was allowed to take communion once again.

A more extreme case than most but the general principles varied little: find out who the father was, rebuke one or both parties and move on, with the mother sometimes admitted as a new communicant quite soon thereafter. Sometimes the alleged father would deny the child was his, though he might admit the sin of fornication. This could have been a ploy to avoid financial responsibility and it certainly carried the implication that the woman was slack in her morals (some other man could be the father). And too often it was only the women who were censured, sometimes because the men simply did not comply with the summons to the session or, less frequently, because they were far away. John Laird

from Reiss, Caithness, had left for Australia almost two months before his daughter with Betty Gray was born on 6 July 1853, and long before Betty came before the Session. Rank must also have played its part in the apparent lack of summons or rebuke for William Banks, factor at Melsetter, father of Margaret Maxwell [Sutherland]'s child born 4 May 1852.

If the father would not admit his responsibility, he could be taken to a civil court, as Jessie Manson did with William Robertson, a ropemaker from Wick, father of her child, born April 1854. These paternity cases (or actions of affiliation and aliment as they are more formally known) aimed to compel the father to provide financial support. Since she had taken this step, Jessie was duly rebuked and restored to church privileges.

The cases vary considerably, with almost unseemly detail on occasion, though some of that detail can sometimes be very interesting from a historical perspective. The James Fiddler/Margaret Anderson case, December 1854 onwards, reveals long gone social conditions when it talks of the "sleeping apartment appropriated both for men and women" at the Bow [Bu] of Hoy. James and Margaret may have been working at this large farm on a seasonal basis. Elizabeth/Betsy Park provided the Session with an account of her 'misdeed' with only one date in a format we regularly use now: she had left the parish "Martinmas last", but was guilty of fornication with James Manson, gardener at Melsetter, "about Lammass last" and was expecting a child "about Beltan or 12th of May next" (26 March 1854 entry). In other words, she left the parish about 11 November 1853 having committed the sin about 1 August the same year.

Most cases are very brief, with immediate admission of guilt followed by rebuke and restoration to church privileges. One or two are considerably longer with witnesses also involved.

The minutes provide almost no evidence for public rebuke or penitence in Walls and none at all of fines being imposed for fornication, unlike some other Scottish parishes. The fine for fornication in Duirinish, Isle of Skye was 16 shillings 8 pennies in 1845, for example (Duirinish Kirk Session Minutes. National Records of Scotland. CH2/877/1. 11 July 1845) or £2 Scots in Orphir in the 1760s (Orphir Kirk Session Minutes. National Records of Scotland. CH2/1093/2)

Fortunately there are other types of enquiry too, though far fewer. Samuel Millar was alleged to have stolen peats from a Captain Robb (7 June 1857), intemperate behaviour followed but the case then goes silent for there were undoubtedly some meetings which were never recorded. In December 1849 John Cromarty, William Sutherland and Edward Robertson came under censure for taking whisky to ships in Longhope on a Sunday. John stated he had to make reports to the editor of the Shipping Gazette ►

◀ so was grudgingly let off, likewise William who said he had taken out bread [ie a necessity] but he had done wrong by accompanying the whisky-bearer. So Edward was the bad one! Detail can be frustratingly sparse. I would love to know the 'other account' on which my great great grand mother, Helen Ritch, was reprov'd and admonished in June 1840. At least I think it is her, she would have been Mrs Ralph Nicolson, Brims, by that time but maiden and married names are not used consistently and addresses or other descriptors are infrequent. That very inconsistency is part of the appeal, with a surprising amount of useful (and unsalacious!) detail suddenly included. In the minutes of 1 July 1841, Mary Ann Unthank, wife of William Wilson, was admitted as a member of the Church of Scotland and we are told that she had "Lately come to the island", having been a member of the Methodist church in Hull for two years. Lots of clues for any relatives there, not least due to her very unusual surname which is very much a north-east England name. (From the 1841 census, this Wilson family was at the Wing, South Walls.)

As well as church discipline, the minutes also record matters of church administration, with regular lists of new communicants. In the earlier years names of those added to or removed from the list of male heads of families are recorded, though there is no complete list at any point unfortunately. Also in the earlier years, those who had been irregular in attendance were named and shamed.

The names of the elders and the frequency with which they attended meetings are also interesting, especially if your ancestor happens to be one of them. At various periods between 1837 and 1865, Alexander Bain, James Daas [sic – had moved to parish by July 1840], Alexander Groundwater [Mucklehouse/Ore], James MacKenzie [Little Cletts?], Benjamin Macolmson [sic – possibly Scarton], George Robson/Robertson, Benjamin Smith [Hurliness – smith], Sinclair Sutherland [Upper Garson] and James Wilson were all elders.

So what is the value of kirk session records overall? The key thing to bear in mind is that there is no set format for these records; surviving records vary between parishes. Some, like Orphir, focus more, but not exclusively, on financial matters with frequent lists of those in receipt of poor relief as well as mortcloth fees and various fines, another source of names and dates. Others contain a good deal of parish register information, baptisms, marriages, burials or mortcloth fees that may not be recorded in the OPRs at all. (Diane Baptie's Parish Registers in the Kirk Session Records for the Church of Scotland, published by the Scottish Association of Family History Societies, is useful in identifying such records or you can check the catalogue of the National Records of Scotland by searching for the parish of interest.) Much depends on the minister, the session clerk and the ravages of time. If you do find your relatives, the mention could well add colour and depth to your picture of them, or narrow the period in which they died. In amongst all the poor relief and income figures in the Orphir minutes there is a note on 8 March 1831 "John Sclatter in Grind allowed 10 shillings for the trouble he and his wife had in keeping Elizabeth Sclatter". From that nugget, I know that my x3 great grandfather and his wife were still alive in March 1831.

Sometimes, the minutes may yield information not available anywhere else. The most obvious example is the name of the father of an illegitimate child. Jean, daughter of the Betty Gray and John Laird discussed earlier, was baptised on 3 July 1854 but no father was named in the record, his name is only stated in the Session minutes. Some baptism records do include the errant father's name but where they don't, it is worth checking the kirk session minutes.

There is also value in the 'sightings' of people that these records can provide. John Thomson, Elder, was removed from the list of male heads of families in Walls on 24 July 1840 because he had died. There is no more information to identify him but, in a parish with sparse or no death/burial records, that piece of information might help to narrow down the period when an ancestor died. In fact, the Walls death records are quite good and there is a John Thomson who died in late 1839, aged 97. Very probably the same man, though

he was not listed in any Session meeting before that date, no doubt on account of age or sickness. On the same date, 24 July 1840, James Yule was added to the list of male heads as he had joined the church the previous year. The 1841 census for Walls, taken just over 10 months later, lists only one James Yule, aged 70, at Melsetter. If this is the same man, then the Session minute may indicate when he moved to Walls unless he joined the church at an advanced age. In other parishes, you may find someone mentioned as in receipt of poor relief, possibly with some detail on their circumstances.

Even if you don't find your own ancestors, these records are a glimpse into the very different world in which they lived so

your time will not be wasted.



The Stool of Repentance

was set aside from the rest of the congregation so that all could gawk at the

offender while the minister delivered his hell and damnation tirade against the offender. This could continue for weeks or months until the repentant repented, paid the fine and was restored to the bosom of the kirk.

The stool illustrated is from Holy Trinity, St Andrews Cathedral and looks as if has seen plenty of action

Where to find Kirk Session records

First the bad news, they are not online nor are they indexed generally. Digital copies of minutes from most Scottish parishes are available at the National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh, and in archives around Scotland who also have access. This includes Orkney Library and Archive (see <http://www.nas.gov.uk/about/101101.asp> for full details). Local archives in each part of Scotland usually have their own Kirk Session minutes too. There are plans for wider online access, but the planning stage has lasted a long time.

Without indexes, you potentially face a long search through the minutes unless you have a specific event and date in view. However, full or partial indexes or transcriptions do exist for a few places in Orkney

- Birsay Kirk Session Minutes 1784-1847 (contains baptisms 1855-67 and marriages 1855-68), Minutes 1853-1868
- List of communicants in Harray 1836 – Both on the Orkney Family History Society website
- Walls Kirk Session Minutes 1837-1865 (includes very few mentions of Flotta people) - <http://www.janealogy.co.uk/north-walls-and-brims/kirk-session-records/> I plan to index volume 2 also.

For other areas, it is worth doing a search to see if anything has been done for a parish of interest to you. The Scottish Indexes (www.scottishindexes.com) website includes non-OPR Births/Baptisms, Banns/Marriages and Deaths/Burials Indexes for the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway areas. ■



The Pottingers of North Ousness

A combined effort from Nan Scott, Member No 8 and Kathleen Stephen, Member No 1711

All the censuses from 1841 record Pottingers staying at North Ousness in Westray. The last person to be born there was **Rowena Pottinger**. She was born to **Robert** and **Lizzie Pottinger** in 1929. She was in my class at Pierowall School and although we had the same name I did not know until recently that we were related.

She was of a very happy disposition. Maybe this was because she grew up like a single child as her nearest sibling was thirteen years old when she was born.

This old photograph shows, from left to right, **Rowena Pottinger**, **Cissie Pottinger** and their parents' **Rob** and **Lizzie Pottinger**. ▶

Pottingers of North Ousness Westray	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	
	age	age	age	age	age	age	age	age	
James Pottinger (snr)	45	57	67	-	-	-	-	-	Farmer
Isabella Pottinger	55	64	76	-	-	-	-	-	
George Pottinger	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
James Pottinger	-	-	45	52	64	74	-	-	Farmer (nee Rendall)
Margaret Pottinger	-	-	50	59	70	80	-	-	
Margaret Pottinger	-	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	Servant Fisherman
Isabella Pottinger	-	-	21	30	40	50	-	-	
James Pottinger	-	-	-	28	37	48	58	68	
Jean Pottinger (Jane)	-	-	-	28	38	48	58	69	Servant/Epileptic Farmer/Fisherman (born Stromness)
George Pottinger	-	-	-	5	15	-	-	-	
John Pottinger	-	-	-	3	13	-	-	-	
James Oliver Pottinger	-	-	-	1	11	-	-	-	
Barbara Pottinger	-	-	-	-	8	18	-	-	
William Pottinger	-	-	-	-	4	14	-	-	
Margaret Pottinger	-	-	-	-	-	9	19	-	
Robert Pottinger	-	-	-	-	1	11	-	31	
Lizzie Pottinger	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	
Teenie Pottinger	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	
Jemima J Pottinger	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	
John R Pottinger	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	
Lily M Pottinger	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
George Pottinger	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	

◀ The 1871 census shows that Rowena's grandfather James had returned to North Ousness to work with his father. He had been a farm labourer and had married Jean Stout whose parents had come from Fair Isle and settled at East Cloudy. All the sons left home. We do not know what happened to George the oldest. **John Stout Pottinger** emigrated to Chicago about 1882 and he helped his younger brother, **James Oliver**, to emigrate in 1883. John married **Isabella Rendall Feather** who had emigrated from London to Chicago. They had five children and it is remembered that a daughter-in-law, **Peg Leach**, Mrs John Foulis Pottinger, was niece of a Niagara daredevil **Bobby Leach**!

At fourteen years old James Oliver was a blacksmith in Racine, Wisconsin. His wife, a minister's daughter, had been born in Norway and their family are still in Racine. The youngest son, Robert, left home to work on Orkney Mainland and became a skilled mason. While he was there he met and married Lizzie Kirkness and then had to return to Westray where he continued his trade and worked the farm of North Ousness.

In twenty five years they produced eight children. The oldest was Charlottina who was known as Teenie. She married **James Leslie Hibbert**, who was custodian of the Earls Palace and the Bishops Palace for many years. They had four sons. The next was Jemima known as Minnie. She married **John Robert Hay** and lived in Lyness. They had one son and two daughters. One of which is **Kathleen Stephen**, OFHS member 1711.

Then there was **John Robert** who emigrated to Canada. He had his money stolen when he arrived and he hitch hiked to Calgary. He fell in with a German farming family who gave him work but could only afford to give him food and accommodation in return. When he left them to join the Canadian Forces his boss gave him a calf and promised to look after it until he was demobbed. When he returned the calf had had two calves and prosperity followed! In 1990 the Municipal District of Rocky View in Calgary nominated him as an outstanding citizen. The award he received was to honour those who gave unselfishly of their time and effort to make the community a better place in which to live. His attitude, it was said, represented the true spirit and strengths of rural Alberta.

Lily, known as Sissie, came next. She was cook at Balfour Castle at one time. While she was there her sisters Teenie and Minnie worked at Berstane Lodge, near Kirkwall. When grand events were planned at either place the Pottinger sisters were called to do the catering. Sissie married **Davy Davidson** a well known millwright in Orkney, and she died in childbirth leaving a young son also called Davy. Davy (jun) was brought up by his aunt Rowena and he is now owner of the Barony

Hotel in Birsay so perhaps he has inherited the Pottinger genes.

Then there was George who farmed at Braemar, Aberdeenshire and had three daughters and one son. He died in 1989. William went to Aberdeen and had one daughter. He served in the navy in wartime. His job latterly saw him delivering oil all over the country. He died in Aberdeen in 1998.

Annie, who lives in Edinburgh, married **Robert Marr**. She will have celebrated her ninety ninth birthday on 18th May this year. Her daughter **Rae Mustard** is member no 1993 in our society. I am waiting to hear what Annie thinks of my story as she is the last of a generation.

Rowena and her parents left North Ousness about 1947 to look after young Davy Davidson. His father wanted him brought up in Sandwick. As well as mothering Davy, Rowena married **John Spence**, a farmer from Sandwick and had a son, George, and a daughter, Elizabeth.

Since 1947 North Ousness has stood empty like several other old homesteads in that district each of them with stories to tell. ■



A friend painted this picture for Kathleen Stephen of North Ousness, circa 1970, when it was fast deteriorating. Sad to say that this has continued and North Ousness today is little more than a ruin as can be seen from this recent photograph taken by the author.



This 'Tumbledown' contribution from Nan Scott and Kathleen Stephen was most welcome and I hope that it will encourage other members to 'have a go' at something similar.

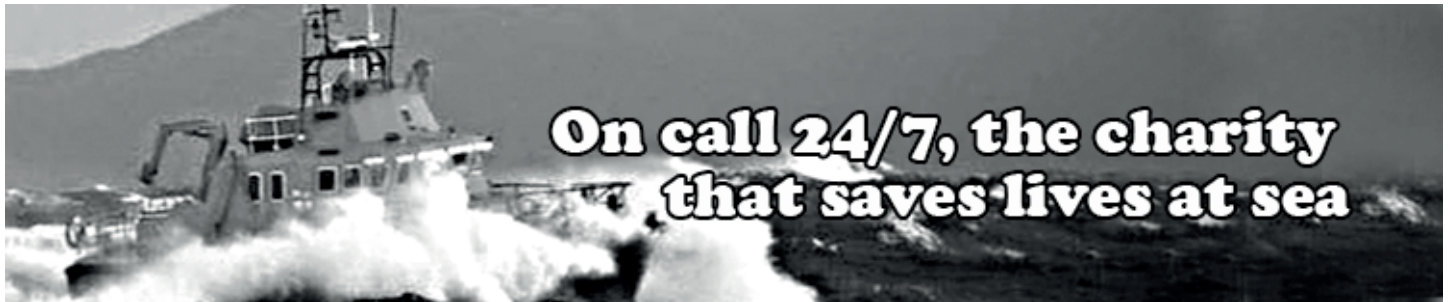
'Tumbledown' was started by a previous chairman Alan Clouston, and Alan produced a regular flow of these on old Orphir family homes which were mostly derelict.

Alan breathed new life into them, albeit on paper, by documenting

the history of the property and the generations of families who had lived there as far back as records would allow.

When Alan's stint as Chairman was over he hoped that other members would keep the series alive and certainly Mabel Eunson has contributed, but sadly, no one else.

Maybe this appeal will change that so if you have a family worth investigating I would love to hear from you. Ed.

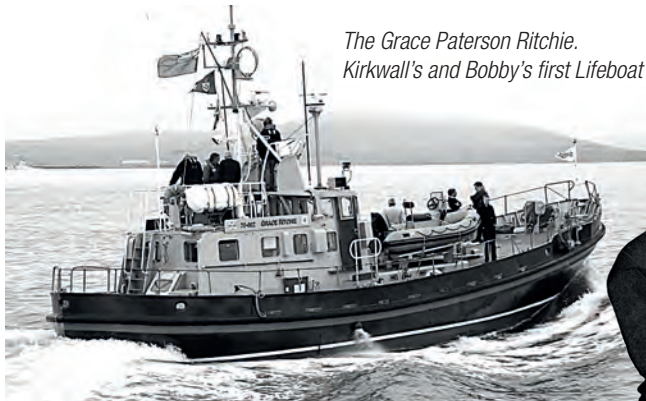


By Nan Scott. Member No 8

Bobby Hall told us something about it at our open Meeting on the 19th March. Bobby is a member of that true band of heroes—the RNLI Lifeboatmen—not that you would ever know it for it was only with a great deal of persuasion that we got him along to speak to us. However, a small gathering of members sat enthralled as Bobby gave a fascinating account of his involvement with the Kirkwall Lifeboat. It is almost forty eight years since Bobby did his first service as a crewman on the Kirkwall Lifeboat and he has been at more launches than most in that time.

He talked rather emotionally about what it was like to be called out as a young man with a young family to a casualty perhaps on a dark stormy night. As with all lifeboat men when they get the call their first thoughts are with those who are in danger and in need of help. Apart from the full time engineer all the crewmen are willing volunteers.

Although Bobby's first service was in 1967 RNLI Kirkwall Lifeboat Station was not founded until 1972. The late Duke of Athol who was Convener of the Scottish Lifeboat Council asked none other than our previous Honorary President, the late Brigadier S.P. Robertson, to found a Lifeboat Station at Kirkwall.



*The Grace Paterson Ritchie.
Kirkwall's and Bobby's first Lifeboat*

He was very keen to do so and later became Hon President of the Kirkwall Branch. There is a great "Lifeboat Family" in Orkney and loads of money is raised by Ladies Lifeboat Guilds and many other groups.

Here in Orkney we fully appreciate the work done by these brave volunteers who set off in the roughest of weather, saving others while putting themselves at risk. Those who heard Bobby talk were touched by the humble way that he told his story and he did not forget to commend the bravery of his comrades.

He finished his talk by focussing mainly on one particular service in 1973 when a trawler, "Navena", with twelve men on board went aground on Copinsay Island. He compared the official record with his own memory of the incident. They had

been called out about six in the morning. There were squally wintry showers and a NNW gale force 12 wind. They located the wreck not long before a helicopter arrived. The lifeboat stayed on the scene and watched as the vessel's crew were lifted off by the helicopter. The lifeboat returned having spent six

hours in extreme weather conditions. All felt great that no lives had been lost but they had to smile when it was officially reported that Kirkwall Lifeboat "stood by".

I am sure many were sorry to miss Bobby's talk but those who are interested could find details of the services of the Kirkwall lifeboats in Stephen M Manson's excellent book (1966-2001). The story of the rescue of the crew and the loss of the Aberdeen trawler, Navena is told in another excellent book, "Almost an Island" a history of Deerness.

Thank you Bobby. We are now awaiting your book!



*MFV Navena aground
on Copinsay.*



Bobby Hall and his fellow crew members of the Grace Paterson Ritchie with guests on the occasion of Magnus Work's retiral in April 1987.

Back Row left to right: Robert (Bobby) Hall, Jimmy Mitchell, Alex Strutt, S.P. Robertson, Albert Scollay, Magnus Work, Visitor, Geoff Gardens, Robert Mainland.

Front :- Billy Sinclair, Dan Grieve, Mickie Foulis and Mike Drever.



Members will be interested in the two new resources that have recently been published on Orkney family history. The first, on a CD, is ***Orcadian Families***, edited by James M Irvine and Alison Fraser. The text, now published for the first time by The Orkney Library and Archive, lists the pedigrees of 85 of Orkney's old and prominent families, together with short notes on a further 58 families. It was compiled circa 1909 by Roland St.Clair (1862-1923), best known for his book *The St.Clairs of the Isles*, and transcribed circa 1928 by George Reid, who wrote of it:

Though not always accurate, it is a wonderful compilation and must have entailed an extraordinary amount of laborious work.

The historian J Storer Clouston wrote to St.Clair:

Johnston has sent me the MS of your book & I am reading it with the greatest interest. I'm very sorry to see that you have so few subscribers promised. This must be remedied & the book published sooner or later. It is too interesting & too valuable to remain in MS.

Alas St.Clair failed to find a publisher, but his manuscript and associated papers, and those of Reid, eventually passed to what is now the Orkney Library and Archive. Many genealogists have been inspired by Reid's transcript of their relevant family pedigree, kindly photocopied for them by successive Archivists.

St.Clair's work remains the most extensive single study of Orcadian genealogies (its pedigrees name over 3,200 individuals), and there has long been a need for it to be available to a wider readership. However both St.Clair and Reid would concur with the present editors on three notes of caution on the use of their data by genealogists today:

- This genealogical work was a pioneering effort, and both St.Clair and Reid recognised it contains many inaccuracies: sometimes a generation is omitted, sometimes one generation is telescoped into another. Nor is the work consistent: the same event is sometimes given different dates in different pedigrees.
- The work less comprehensive than it may seem, for pedigrees of many branches of the surnames included have not been researched.
- Genealogists should always work "upwards" from known facts of their immediate ancestors, rather than "downwards" from earlier studies such as St.Clair's material on their namesakes.

But despite these important limitations, the pedigrees still serve as useful introductions to modern readers with little prior

knowledge of Orkney family history and its sources. They are also an excellent example of both the possibilities and the constraints of genealogies derived from contemporary records, and will surely inspire students of both genealogy and local history in their endeavours to unravel further the mysteries of Orkney's colourful past.

The editors have not attempted to correct all of St.Clair's inaccuracies. However they have reproduced Reid's transcription verbatim, and have added many footnotes plus mini-biographies of St.Clair and Reid. The resulting work runs to 284 A4 pages.

The pedigrees listed in *Orcadian Families* are:

Aitken, Baikie, Balfour, Beaton, Beinstoun, Bellenden, Birston, Buchanan, Clouston, Cock, Colville, Corrigill (2), Covingtrie, Cromarty, Cursetter, Dishington, Douglas, Elphinstone, Fea, Flett, Fotheringham, Fulsetter, Garson, Gordon, Graham, Groat (2), Halcro, Heddle, Henrysone, Honyman, Hourston, Ireland, Irvine, Johnston, Kaa, King, Knarston, Laing, Leask (2), Liddell, Linklater, Logie, Louttit (2), Mackenzie, Marwick, Maxwell, Menteith, Moncreiffe (2), Moodie, Mowat, Murray, Nisbet, Omond, Pottinger, Prince, Redland, Rendall (2), Richan, Scarth (2), Sclater, Scollay, Sinclair (5), Smith, Smyth, Spence (2), Stewart (2), Strang/e, Sutherland, Trail, Tulloch, Watt and Young.

The CD is available for £8.50 plus postage and packing from The Assistant Archivist, Orkney Library and Archive, 44 Junction Road, Kirkwall, KW15 1AG, tel. 01856 873166, e-mail archives@orkney.gov.uk.

The Royalties have been donated to the publishers

The second resource is the updated edition of ***Trace Your Orkney Ancestors*** by James M Irvine. This second edition takes the opportunity to correct several small errors, incorporate important developments at the National Records of Scotland and Scotlandspeople, update various other websites and contact details, add a brief section on DNA, and introduce many minor refinements. However the basic structure and 76 A4 page format remain unchanged, with the text primarily aimed at established genealogists, but catering for beginners and local historians as well.

James, a long time member and supporter of the Orkney-Family History Society, and the Society's Committee have kindly made this updated version of this work FREE to members of the Society. Dave Higgins, our Webmaster, is busy preparing it for our website and by the time you receive this newsletter you should also be able to access ***Trace Your Orkney Ancestors*** at www.orkneyfhs.co.uk

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).

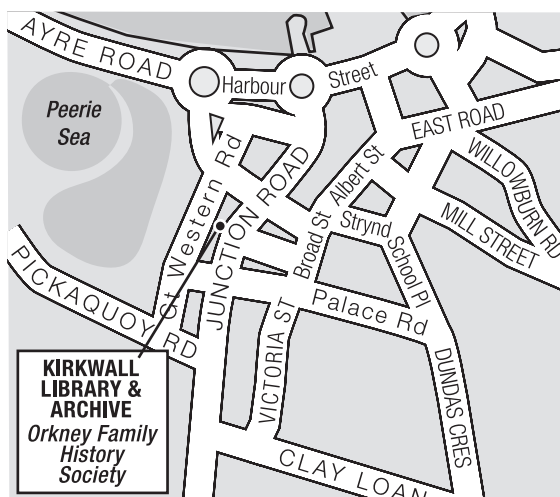
This material is available to members for 'in house' research by arrangement.

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.



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.

RATES FROM 1st SEPTEMBER 2013

1. All UK Membership and overseas members opting out of receiving a printed copy of Sib Folk News (available on our website)	£10.00
2. OVERSEAS - Surface Mail	£15.00
3. OVERSEAS - Air Mail	£18.00

NEW MEMBERS - DOWNLOAD THESE and SEND WITH YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

Visit www.orkneyfhs.co.uk/docs/mempack.pdf where you will find a New Membership Application form and a blank Family Tree. Please complete these, print and send with the appropriate subscription to The Treasurer at the address below.

EXISTING MEMBERS CAN RENEW ONLINE

Existing members wanting to renew their subscription can now do so online. Just Log In and use the link from My Details on the Member's Page. You can, of course, still send your subscription to the Treasurer at OFHS.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Overseas members, paying in their own currency, should check the exchange rate to ensure the correct amount is forwarded. Our bank will accept overseas cheques without charging commission. We regret that foreign Postal Orders are not acceptable in the UK.

Members residing in the UK may pay their subscriptions by Bankers Order and if they wish can have their subscriptions treated as Gift Aid donations. Forms are available on request.

Cheques should be made payable to:-
ORKNEY FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY
and forwarded to The Treasurer
ORKNEY FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY
Orkney Library & Archive

44 Junction Rd. Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1AG
Scotland.

Telephone 01856 879207

General enquires should be addressed to the office in writing or to Treasurer George Gray (e-mail: george.gray147@btinternet.com)
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)

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

Articles in the newsletter are copyright of the Society and its authors and may not be reproduced without permission of the editor. The Society is a registered charity in Scotland and a member of the Scottish Association of Family History Societies. The Society's newsletter, *Sib Folk News* is registered with the British Library under the serial number ISSN 1368-3950.

The Orkney Family History Society
is a Registered Charity in Scotland SC026205