

# Newsletter 2020



It's the time of year when I again have great pleasure in introducing the 2020 newsletter.

Despite 2020 being a very strange year OHBS has been continuing its efforts to preserve the maritime heritage of Orkney.

In March the COVID-19 lockdown seriously affected us when all gatherings had to cease. Virtual meetings were able to replace committee meetings however work on boats ground to a halt. In mid-July when restrictions eased this allowed practical work on boats to resume (albeit with strict guidelines entailing the use of PPE, keeping the recommended physical distance and using sanitiser, etc). We adopted a policy whereby each volunteer would work on a different boat ensuring physical distancing and because the building in which we work is large and airy, we have been able to work safely with minimal constraints. The fact that Orkney has remained relatively clear of COVID-19 has allowed us to continue working on the boats despite a second wave of the pandemic hitting the rest of the country.

Progress in restoring boats, researching and amassing historical evidence, the collation of data and the presentation of our increasing knowledge base and understanding of the development of Orkney's Maritime History is largely down to the ongoing hard work and dedication of a few of OHBS members to whom the society is greatly indebted.

I wish to express my thanks to everyone who has helped OHBS over the year.

OHBS is indebted to the property owners who continue to support us by enabling us to store our boat collection in their sheds, without whose generosity Orkney's maritime heritage would continue to be lost.

Thanks also to those who have donated boats, artefacts and background information which have enhanced our collection.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter which I hope you will enjoy reading.

Kind regards Jimmy Clouston – Chairman and editor

## BOAT HAVEN UPDATE – MATTHEW VAUGHTON

At the end of 2019 OHBS submitted an Expression of Interest to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for the establishment of a Boat Haven in Stromness. NLHF did not want to progress the application in its current form. One of the reasons given for not progressing the application was that NLHF thought that OHBS needed a Strategic Partner involved in the project. Since the Boat Haven fundamentally concentrates on Orcadian boats and artefacts OHBS is seeking a local Strategic Partner to join us in the project. COVID-19 restrictions have altered everyone's priorities during 2020 so little material progress has been made during 2020.



Figure 1- Architects proposed design the Orkney Boat Haven at Coplands' Dock

## CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES – MATTHEW VAUGHTON

At the delayed 2020 AGM, held remotely in September because of COVID-19 restrictions, a number of important changes to the OHBS Constitution were agreed. While most of the changes were administrative; correcting typo's or clarifications, the most significant of the changes was to the Purposes of the Society. The previous Purposes of the Society had not kept up with the evolving activities of the Society so it was time for them to be updated. To properly maintain historic boats, it is necessary to invest in auxiliary items such covers, road trailers and power tools. In the previous Purposes of the Society, it was not clear that the Society could actually do this within the terms of the Constitution.

The new Purposes of the Society are:

To advance the preservation, interpretation and communication of Orkney maritime heritage.

To achieve these purposes, the Society will:

1. Collect, restore and preserve boats built in Orkney or that have contributed to Orkney life.
2. Collect, restore and preserve maritime artefacts related to Orkney maritime heritage.
3. Manage the collection of boats and artefacts in a sustainable manner.
4. Build and maintain a set of tools, materials and equipment required to support the restoration and preservation of boats and artefacts in the collection.
5. Restore and preserve the boats and artefacts in the collection using traditional boat building skills and crafts.
6. Preserve traditional boat building skills and crafts through support for education and training.
7. Research and publish information about the boats and artefacts in the collection or related to Orkney maritime heritage.
8. Educate the public about Orkney maritime heritage.
9. Establish a boat museum in Orkney through which the boats, artefacts and related knowledge can be interpreted and communicated to the public.

The full OHBS Constitution is available on the OHBS Website at:

<https://www.ohbs.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/OHBS-Constitution-9-October-2020.pdf>

## FUNDRAISING - MATTHEW VAUGHTON



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Society**

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## OHBS CORRESPONDENCE – JAMES CLOUSTON

Increasingly OHBS is emailed by members of the public from around the world, some to ask for information about aspects of Orkney Maritime heritage, others with queries or information about items in our collection.

I thought it may be interesting for members to read some of the correspondence and see the information, we have shared. Quotations from correspondents are in blue, OHBS in black.

### THE LOSS OF THE KIRK WALL BRIGANTINE “MARGRETHE” – JAMES CLOUSTON

One person seeking information about his family history wrote: -

*‘My great great Uncle was known for much of his life as `Captain William Cooper`, born in Sanday. There is a family story passed on to me that the Captain suffered a shipwreck off Corn Holm (Copinsay) in 1896. Would any of your members know of further details of this incident or would you be able to direct me to any person who might be able to advise me? Yours in hope’*

I forwarded the request to the trustees but receiving no response. I decided to investigate the story myself and was able to provide the following information.

“During a strong south-westerly gale, with heavy snow showers, the Kirkwall brigantine Margrethe was driven ashore and wrecked on the Corn Holm, Copinsay, in the early hours of Wednesday, January 15, 1896.

The Margrethe left Sunderland for Kirkwall the previous Friday with a cargo of coal, paraffin and crockery. When the vessel struck, the crew took to the rigging, and when daylight came, they were able to land on the Holm in the ship’s boat. Later, their plight was observed by the islanders of Copinsay, and a boat was sent to take them off. They remained on the island until next day when the s.s. Fawn arrived and took them to Kirkwall.

The names of the shipwrecked crew were: —William Cooper, master; James Irvine, mate;

William Scollay, cook and A.B.; James Milne, Robert Heddle, John Drever and Peter Hercus, ordinary seamen.

The Margrethe, which was built in Norway in 1875, was driven ashore on Yenstay Skerry, Tankerness, the following year. She was on a voyage from Bergen to Barcelona with a cargo of stock fish. The cargo was salvaged and the vessel, together with her gear, was sold to Captain George Robertson, Kirkwall, for £200. She was refloated and passed into the joint ownership of Captain Robertson and Samuel Reid, who put her back into service; and she remained in their ownership until her total loss in 1896.”

#### Acknowledgements and References:

*‘Orkney’s Wrecked Ships’ by Sinclair Ross: published 1957, p34-35*

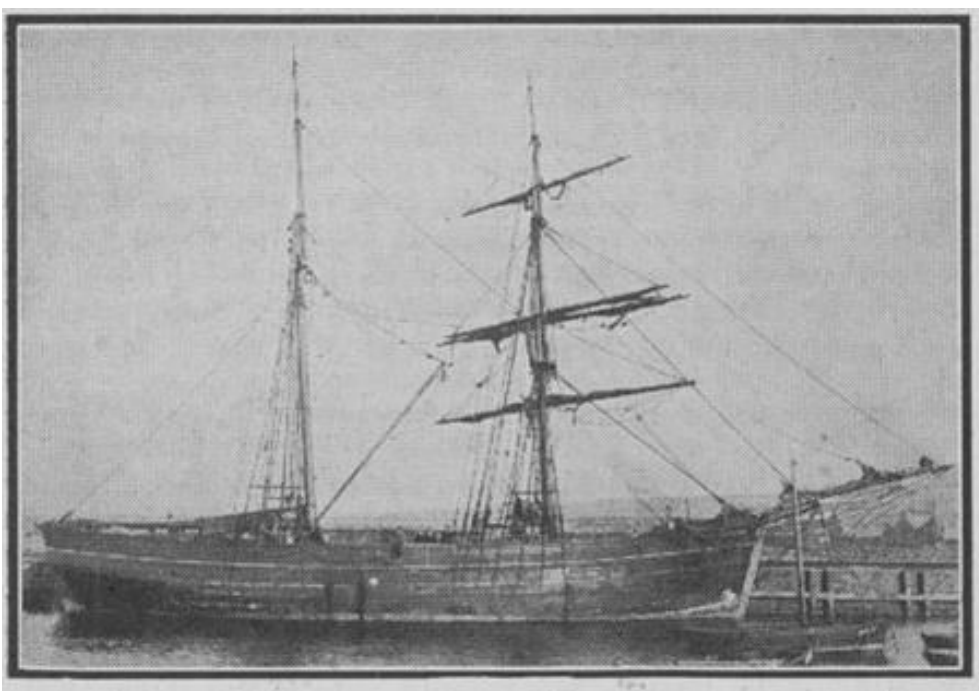


Figure 2- Margrethe at Kirkwall pier.

## PIRATE GOW – JAMES CLOUSTON

An enquiry came from an Associate Professor of Islamic & Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Melbourne. Whilst Islamic & Middle Eastern Studies is his main subject, he has a subsidiary interest in the history of piracy and privateering which he has been teaching for some years.



Figure 3- Salt House/Rent Store. Possibly the original Hall of Clestrain

He has recently become interested in the career of John Gow, the famous Orcadian pirate and wanted information about the original Hall of Clestrain and the ballast from the pirate's ship which had been used in the construction of Kirkwall's 'Groatie Hoose'.

Information from several sources regard, what is now known as, the 'Rent Store or Salt House' as the original 'Hall of Clestrain', the house raided by John Gow and his pirates on February 10th, 1725. The Georgian Mansion house, also known as 'Hall of Clestrain', now being restored by the John Rae Society, was built some 40 years after this event.

I pointed him in the direction of 'CANMORE', the national records of the historic environment of Scotland where it states: -

*The Salt House at Sailhouse Bay, Clestrain*

*"The ruins of a large rectangular structure is located in a field of improved pasture, some 18m from the coast edge. It measures 14m by 7m and has a doorway in either side wall. The walls stand up to 3m high and are 1m in thickness. They are constructed from dressed stone in irregular courses and are bonded with mortar. The doorways have timber lintels, which are in a very dilapidated condition. The roof has completely collapsed.*

*The local placename 'Salthouse' might suggest that this building, or a predecessor, may have been a salt store or that it may have been associated with the fishing industry.*

*Moore and Wilson, 1998*

*Orkney Coastal Zone Assessment"*

The fact that this was a Salt Store is interesting because Robert Honeyman of Graemsay, the Laird, as well as owning Clestrain also owned the island of Cava which, according to 'Fenton', was one of two locations in Orkney, the other being the Calf of Eday, where salt was produced by heating large pans of sea water over peat fires. The reason these two islands were the only locations is that there was a plentiful supply of peat which was surplus to that needed by residents or nearby islands. Salt was a valuable commodity in those times which would have required a substantial, well built, weatherproof building where it could be stored and kept dry. It would be interesting to see further research into whether this house was indeed the original 'Hall' or whether it was simply a store house.

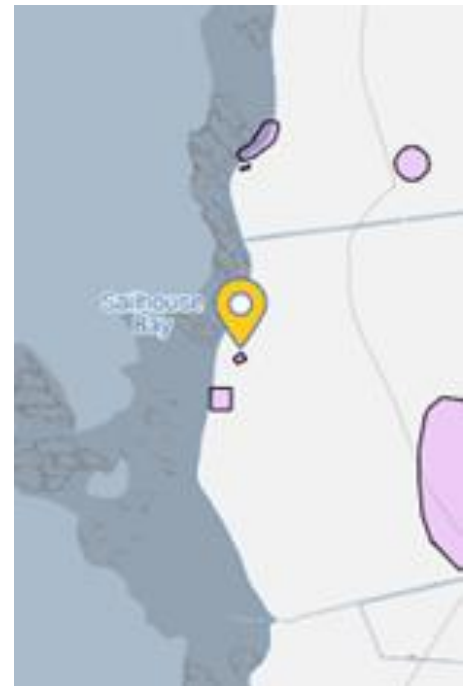


Figure 4- Location of the Salt Store, Sailhouse bay, Clestrain, Orkney.

The story of the ballast of the 'Revenge', John Gow's ship, is interesting. Gow's unsuccessful career as a pirate which began on the Barbary Coast was relatively short. After a few months he decided to sail home to Orkney and switch to robbing large houses. When he arrived in Stromness, he and his crew made out they were a merchant vessel taking shelter. He signed up more crew in Stromness, one of these being a George Pottinger from Westray. After they left Stromness it became clear this was a pirate ship full of cut throats and Pottinger realised he had made a big mistake because this was not the merchant ship he had been led to believe. After their dastardly exploits in Scapa Flow, Gow set sail to the North Isles to raid Carrick House on Eday, home of onetime school mate James Fea, where he believed there would-be riches to be had. Being unfamiliar with the north isles he trusted Pottinger to pilot the ship into the tricky waters of Calf Sound. Pottinger saw his chance to disrupt Gow's plans and through some clever manoeuvres, was able to run the ship aground on the uninhabited Calf of Eday. Over the next days and weeks, the owner of Carrick House, James Fea and a small band of islanders, through bravery, cunning and guile were able to disarm, entice them ashore and capture all 28 pirates and crew of the 'Revenge' without bloodshed.

After months two Royal Navy Men-o-War arrived and took the prisoners on HMS Greyhound to London. The 'Revenge' was towed south by the Sloop of War 'Weasel'. In London, Gow and the ring leaders were hanged.



Figure 5- The Groattie Hoose in its current location in Tankerness House Museum Gardens.

The 'Revenge' had gone aground at the height of a spring tide so when the crew of the 'Weasel' came to re-float her everything had to be emptied out, including the ballast stones, to lighten her enough to be towed off.

The ballast stones were volcanic and obviously had some appeal, being unusual in Orkney. A boatload of these 'collectable' ballast stones were secured by the lawyer and merchant landlord James Traill, a former provost of Kirkwall. He used the stones to build a summer house in the garden of his town house. This summer house was called the 'Groattie Hoose' because the mortar holding the ballast together on the spire, was adorned with exceptionally rare and collectable shells found on Orkney shores, namely, Groattie Buckies. Because this folly was at risk of demolition, in 2005 Orkney Island Council, at the behest of Orkney Heritage Society, had it disassembled stone by stone and rebuilt in its current location in Tankerness House Museum garden to be preserved in a public location.

The correspondent was delighted by the information I was able to send him. However, he would now like to know: -

*" ... Has anyone ever done an analysis of what stones were involved in the Groattie Hoose construction? .... marine archaeologists are quite accustomed to ballast analysis (Israelis seem very accustomed to it). Also, what is the actual evidence for the provenance of these particular stones – how does anyone know that they actually came from the Caroline/Revenge/George? Is it just word of mouth or was it documented? I just gave the full name variations of the ship, ... Caroline was the name in use in Morocco before the mutiny and piracy. I wondered if any of those stones could be traced back to southern Morocco. If you had any ideas about those stones it would be wonderful ..."*

If anyone has further information about these stones, please contact me at: [orkneyhistoricboats@gmail.com](mailto:orkneyhistoricboats@gmail.com)

Acknowledgements and References:

CANMORE - <https://canmore.org.uk/site/297244/salthouse-bay-clestrain>

The Pirate Gow by Daniel Defoe 1725

Stromness a History by Bryce Wilson 2013

The Northern Isles: Orkney and Shetland by Alexander Fenton 1978

## HMS NELSON, FLOOR GRATING – JAMES CLOUSTON

After OHBS acquired Nellie(see page 13), the late Johnnie Meil's cousin Christopher Gee contacted us with the following related story: -

The following is an extract from the book 'A Bootneck's Footsteps, Retracing my father's Royal Marine exploits 1921-46' written by 'Mike Pinnock' 2007

.....Dyke End is a couple of miles northwest across Scapa Bay from Gait- nip, but to get to it I had to walk north to Kirkwall, then south again. Louise had looked Johnny Meil's telephone number up in the directory, and I'd given him a ring. I could see my destination clearly but there wasn't a civilised way to cross Scapa Bay's river plane without a lengthy inland diversion. So by the time I rounded a bend in the lane that wound its way down to Johnny's place almost at the water's edge, I'd trudged a total of fourteen miles that day and was two hours later arriving than I'd told him.

Johnny was an eighty-one-year young, balding, grey-haired, grey- bearded man who stood at the entrance to his workshop wearing pale blue overalls supported by stud, secured braces and for additional security (or perhaps to hold tools) a well-worn, sloppy leather belt. He looked like he'd stepped straight out of a road movie shot in the American mid-west.

Instinctively, I held out my right hand and gripped his firmly, smiling fluorescently - then remembered too late my sheep-shit hand.

His Orcadian accent was so deep and strong that I had to sharpen my ears to understand him. I followed him into the workshop, past two dummy torpedoes that had been washed up in the Flow, to his boat, from behind which he lifted out the deck-board and carried it out to the entrance to his workshop. The part that would have been trodden on by the top brass at the end of the ship's gangplank was a nicely varnished three- sparred wooden frame, in-filled with lattice, but when he turned it over, on the board's central spar, if you looked very closely, you could pick out the faint letters that spelled - NELSON. I photographed the board and ran my hands over it - to feel a bit of the old ship.

'I just touched it-up a bit with a pencil,' Johnny said, 'but you can see it was from *Nelson*.'



Figure 6- Johnnie Meil holding up HMS Nelson's floor grating

On the way to his place, I'd had this romantic image of Johnny pulling the board from the sea himself as a young man, but in fact it transpired that an old salt - an artist - who'd lived over on Hoy, owned *Nelson's* deck-

board and when he died, it had been sold as part of the contents of his house. It had reportedly been washed up at Lyness, but nobody knew for sure exactly when.

*Nelson* herself saw an illustrious Second World War career that included Marshal Badoglio signing Italy's surrender in the admiral's quarters in 1943 - and two years later, Rear Admiral Uozumi signing the surrender of Japan's Penang area forces; She was finally scrapped at Inverkeithing in 1949, but bits of her still survive like donated transplant organs: The ship's bugle rests in the RN museum at Portsmouth, her crests and flags are in All Saints church in Burnham Thorpe - Norfolk (Lord Nelson's birthplace), whilst the ship's silver bell, which was returned to her donors at Tyneside when she was scrapped, now lies in HMS *Nelson* barracks - Portsmouth. Few people knew about this deck board, and I wondered how many more bits of that famous old ship survived around the world in private hands?

Johnny lived with his wife amongst nautical artefacts, books and photographs in a homely boson's locker of a house set above the western shore of Scapa Bay. It was the house he'd been born in and had lived in all his life. I was just glad to sit down on a settee for a moment and relax; the tea and biscuits were a bonus.

'Help yourself,' said Isobel, Johnny's wife - 'we say over here - put in a hand.' I did more than once; the biscuits were accompanied by tasty cheese, and there was even a *Kit Kat*.

Johnny was very knowledgeable about *Nelson*; he knew more about her than I did and remembered the warships in the Flow from his youth.

'They'd get their food brought aboard in big wooden boxes,' he said, 'then they'd take the food out and throw the boxes overboard. All the Orcadians had boxes then - see boy,' he said in a beautifully deep, slow, broad accent.

Johnny and Isobel drove me back to the campsite in their four-by-four.

'Bye,' said Johnny, 'hope you find what you're looking for.'

I smiled then, too late remembered again my yellow glow, and waved as they drove away. They both waved back. ....



Figure 7- Recent photo of HMS Nelson's floor grating

#### Acknowledgements and References:

A Bootneck's Footsteps, Retracing my father's Royal Marine exploits 1921-46' by Mike Pinnock' 2007

## PATSY ANNE FISHING VESSEL – JAMES CLOUSTON

In September we received an enquiry from a Whitehaven boat owner who had recently acquired a de-registered 40ft fishing trawler called Patsy Anne. He plans to convert her into a cabin cruiser. He knew the boat was built in Stromness in 1969 but wanted to know more about the builder and whether there were any plans still in existence.



Figure 9- Stern view showing the cusp transom

Boats of that size from Stromness would have been built at Pia Anderson's boat yard at

Ness so I was immediately able to give him that information

The opportunity to ask Ian Richardson if he remembered the "Patsy Anne" arose at a weekly OHBS restoration session at Ness. He immediately responded, "Oh yes, and she was built right there," pointing to the spot.

He recalled she was an unusual design in that she had a hard chine at the stern but had the normal rounded hull further forward.

Young Pia (Jim Anderson) was contacted and he gave the following information.

*"Patsy Anne was built for a customer from Polperro in Cornwall as an improved version of the Mayflower and was 38 ft x 12 x 5 depth draft of 3ft6"*

*I did read somewhere that she had been heightened and had a watertight deck fitted so she could cope as a prawner. She was never intended to be rigged as a trawler, but you know how some people have ideas of their own. She was built of Mahogany on Iroko double frames with iroko beams. Don't know where the oak beams came from unless it was at the time the depth was increased or to support the watertight deck. The first cusp transom boat (name used by Ewing McGruer) was the Clamhan Dubh clinker vessel built before the move to Ness. The Ewing McGruer came next followed by the Pappa Westray (as a cruiser) for Troon / Arran (she is still in Troon Marina), the DDriag Gogh built for Steve Crane in Anglesey, Arun Venture and Patsy Anne were next, I can't recall any more of that design being built".*



Figure 8- Patsy Anne in Whitehaven harbour

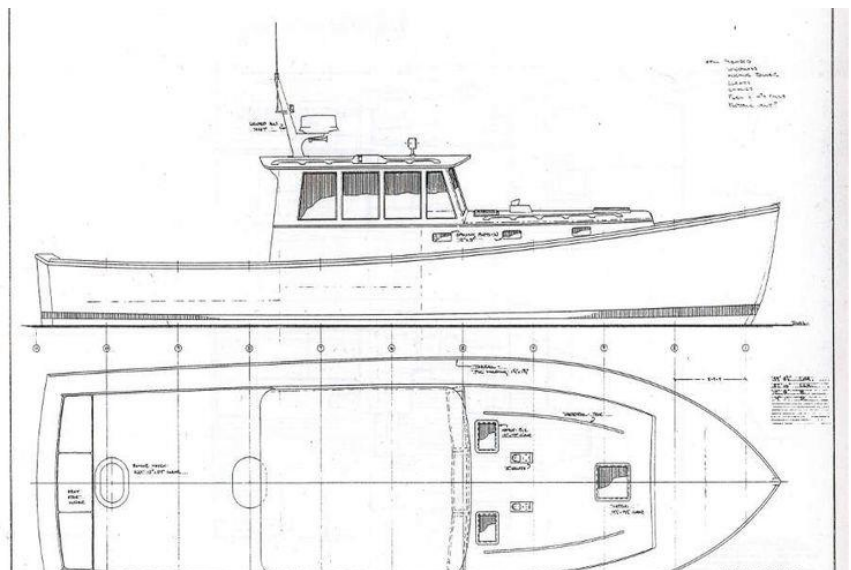


Figure 10- Proposed cabin design drawing by new owner.





Figure 11- Orkney based Ewing McGruer has the same cusp transom design

The Ewing McGruer (which has been meticulously restored and converted into a cabin cruiser by Brian Pottinger) is still in Orkney.

## LE FROG – JAMES CLOUSTON

The following enquiry was received in September and has been left in its email conversation format.

Patrick: -

Dear

I am owner of a 12ft launch manufactured by CHESFORD YACHT AND LAUNCH

His name is LE FROG and his number 109

His engine is a STUART TURNER R3M

Robin EAST say:

*The current owners of Frogmore Boatyard have forwarded your email to me as I built Chesford boats in Frogmore between 1972 and 2012.*

*Regarding Le Frog, she would have been built during the 1960's. I took over the Chesford Yacht and Launch Company in Frogmore in 1972 after the death of the previous owner.*

*He used to order the hulls from fishermen in the Orkneys, which were built by the fishermen during the winters when they couldn't fish. They were sent to South Devon by train to have the engines fitted and finished by the Chesford Yacht and Launch Company in Frogmore*



Is it possible please to find the name of the fisherman who built the boat and eventually other information?

I thank you for your answer

Best regards

Patrick VIOLLEAU

FROSSAY

FRANCE

OHBS: -

Dear Patrick,

.... There were several individuals who built these 'Orkney dinghies' during the 1960s and transported them all over the UK by train. This went on until the 'Beeching cuts' in the 1970's forced the cost of transportation too high effectively killing off the trade.

Is your boat built from Mahogany or Larch?.....

Patrick: -

....LE FROG is built from MAHOGANY

When it come in FRANCE, he was not use with a sail, only an engine

The mast and sail were added in FRANCE.....

OHBS: -

....As it is made from Mahogany there is a good chance it will be a Mackay dinghy built in Stromness.....



## SEA ASTRID – JAMES CLOUSTON

Bill Spence when he was Lord Lieutenant of Orkney contacted us with regard to an Orkney Yole in Aberdeenshire at risk of loss, the details of which had been passed on to him by his friend and colleague James Ingleby, Lord Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire.

The Sea Astrid had initially been rescued from its fate at the small fishing village of Crovie on the North East coast. The plan had been to form a trust and rebuild her in The Boatshed at Portsoy but changing circumstances there meant Sea Astrid was no longer wanted. Rather than abandoning her they thought she should be returned to Orkney and wondered if anyone here would be prepared to take on her restoration.

However, using our acquisition policy and protocol it was clear she did not score enough to be accepted by OHBS.

I approached Robbie Drever, a keen yole restorer I knew was looking for another project. Robbie was enthusiastic when he saw the photos but, before committing himself wanted to know the condition of the keel, stem and stern posts.



Figure 12 - Sea Astrid being recovered from the beach at Crovie



Figure 13 - Sea Astrid being stored in James Ingleby's 'garage'

It transpired Robbie needed to go south with his car so he incorporated a visit to see the boat to assess her condition.

I contacted James Ingleby and explained to him why OHBS were unable to accept her but informed him - I know a man who might be interested.

When Robbie inspected the boat, he sent us photos showing her in storage amongst James Ingleby's vintage car collection.

Robbie decided there was too much work for him but he too 'knew a man who ....'.

Robbie approached Sydney Foubister who in turned got in touch to discuss the boat and possible ways of having her transported to Orkney.

It wasn't long before Sydney had indeed agreed to accept Sea Astrid meaning she was now returning to the parish in which she was built 72 years previously. It transpires Sea Astrid had once belonged to his father, so he had a family interest in the boat.

Although OHBS were unable to accept Sea Astrid we are proud to have been instrumental in helping facilitate her return to Deerness.

Details of Sea Astrid: -

Built in the style of a Stroma Yole in Deerness in 1949 by Willie Ritch.

Auxiliary motor and lugsail. Keel 14ft; length 20.2ft; breadth 7.9ft; depth 3.2ft; tonnage 2.23

Registered for fishing (K92) using lines and creels.

26.05.1949 Registered for fishing (K92) by Willie Ritch, Southernwood, Deerness.

12.04.1971 Registered for fishing by John K Mears, 17 Quoybanks Place, Kirkwall.

25.02.1980 Vessel sold and registration closed. New owner perhaps Sydney's Foubister's father?



Figure 14 - Recovered to its home in Orkney for restoration

## ACQUISITIONS 2020

### WATERWHEEL SHARPENING STONE – JAMES CLOUSTON



Figure 15- Waterwheel sharpening stone donated by the Wilson family.

This sharpening stone was gifted to OHBS by Andrew Wilson. It was his father's stone and has been well maintained and despite being over 100 years old, the stone is still in excellent condition.

This is not the first time the Wilson family have gifted maritime heritage.

Andrew and his son Richard built an immaculate replica of their family Sanday yole 'Lizzie'.

They subsequently fully restored the original *Lizzie* and gifted her to the OIC boat collection at Lyness. This was pre OHBS.



Figure 16- The original fully restored 'Lizzie' at Lyness Museum

### FEBRUARY 2020 – WATERWITCH

Waterwitch is a fully restored Orkney South Isles Yole donated to OHBS by Rod Daniel when he left Orkney and moved to London/Suffolk.

She was built at Longhope and originally named the 'Azalea' by Edward Jamieson of Heckness. Launched in May 1923 and registered for line and creel fishing as K314, she remained registered for fishing until 1988 and left Orkney in the early 1990's.

When found in 2009 in a ruinous state in Helmsdale, Sutherland, she was missing her garboards (bottom or first plank) and was heading for a bonfire.

For more information about her recovery and restoration view the full story on the OHBS website at:

<https://www.ohbs.net/preserved-boats/waterwitch/>



Figure 17- Waterwitch sailing in Stromness Harbour

## FEBRUARY/MARCH - STEAM PINNACE NELLIE – JAMES CLOUSTON

The executor of the late Johnnie Meil's estate approached OHBS to explain that he wished his 25ft WW1 steam pinnace, Nellie, to go to OHBS. As with all donations OHBS Trustees followed our acquisition protocol. Nellie passed the acquisition process and we were delighted to be able to accept the donation.

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and lockdown we couldn't proceed with taking possession of her until August.

According to Johnnie, Nellie is a WW1 pinnace, but it is not known whether she was from the German or Royal Navy.

Although thought to have been a steam pinnace the earliest photo we have, from 1920, shows her with what appears to be an internal combustion engine contained within an engine box.



Figure 18- Nellie (foreground) in Kirkwall Basin 1920

Johnnie Meil bought her from Ian MacInnes, Stromness in 1967, then converted her to steam using a pre-1910 'White' steam car engine made in the USA which he had found in Westray.

As a qualified steam engineer, he made the boiler and all ancillary equipment to turn her into a steamboat.



Figure 19- Johnnie loved to take passengers trips round Scapa bay having converted her to a steamer.

Johnnie was a genius when it came to designing and fabricating anything using materials he had to hand e.g., the steam condenser tubes which were situated parallel and outside the keel of the boat came from HMS Vanguard (an internal cordite explosion sank it in Scapa Flow on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1917). Johnnie who dabbled in salvage



Figure 20- the steam engine used to drive Nellie



Figure 21- Nellie in safe storage at Ness Boat yard

work had retrieved them in the 1960's. As well as designing the propeller shaft to turn the boiler feed pump which pumped cooled condensate back into the boiler, he designed and built a bilge pump, which was operated by the rocking motion of the boat, to keep the boat pumped dry when at anchor.

To read the full story of Nellie and her recovery to Ness boat yard visit the OHBS website at:

<https://www.ohbs.net/preserved-boats/nellie/>

In addition to the Nellie, we were also given her small tender, Linda, used by Johnnie when Nellie was anchored off just below his house. This dinghy was built by Robert and William Mackay at their boat shed in Finstown in 1939 (more about this dinghy later). Included in the bequest were two models of fleet tenders, which were used at different times in Scapa Flow, and a painting of Nellie, all done by Bruce Twatt, a close neighbour and friend of Johnnie's. The models are currently on display in our 'shop window' at 140 Victoria Street, Stromness.



Figure 22- Painting of Nellie by Bruce Twatt

## AUGUST – LINDA – JAMES CLOUSTON

Below are excerpts from an email conversation with Mary Thetford regarding the tender which came with Nellie.

Mary: -

I have been in touch with Kim re our family time living with The Meil's at Dyke End Farm in Orkney during the war years. My husband and I had booked a holiday to visit last June but had to cancel due to the virus. As we are elderly we do not know if we will be able to travel in 2021. Kim mentioned that Johnnie had passed away in February this year and Dyke End was recently sold. The reason I am writing to you is that Kim thinks a rowing boat was given to your Society by Johnnie and was named after one of our family. My sister Margaret will be 90 this weekend, we were Bertrand, Linda, David, Margaret and Mary Smith. Dad worked for Balfour Beatty. As a family we had very happy times in Orkney, Johnnie giving us rides on his motorbike in the lane also making igloos for us when we could not get to school. David my brother would go out in the flow with the fisherman especially at night, he loved the sea and joined the Royal Navy at a very early age. Sadly, he passed away in Australia at the early age of 52 years.

I would be delighted if you could verify the name on the rowing boat.

Thank you

Mary



Figure 23- Dinghy 'Linda' which came with Nellie

OHBS: -

Hello Mary,

Johnnie Meil indeed bequeathed a rowing dinghy to Orkney Historic Boat Society along with his WW1 steam launch 'Nellie'....

I'm glad you have fond memories of Orkney.

Johnnie was a very fine person, and I can fully appreciate you would have had interesting and enjoyable times at Dyke End.....

..... I've been to see the boat in question this morning and had a good look over it.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence of a name on it anywhere.

It has probably been painted a few times since you saw it last and the name has possibly been painted over and not reinstated.

I'm sorry I can't give you the verification you seek.

Mary: -

Thank you, Jimmy, for having a look for the name. Gussed it had been painted over several times, the years have gone by so quickly. Kim thought the name could be Linda (Mothers name) so I am naming it Linda in memory of a Lady who travelled all the way from Norfolk to Dyke End farm arriving in the night with three children in tow and all we could see was the moon on Scapa Flow as we walked down the Lane towards Dyke End and the Meil family

With Kind Regards

Mary

OHBS: -

Hello Mary,

Having thought more about your correspondence I think it would be appropriate if we re-established the name Linda on this boat.

We have names for all our boats but, as yet this one doesn't have a name.

You have given us a wonderful story and there couldn't be a more appropriate name.

We will get the name applied to the boat and send you a photograph.....

Mary: -

Hi Jimmy

That would be wonderful. I will give Margaret the news at her Birthday Lunch today. Thank you again for your assistance in helping me to trace our family life a long time ago.

My Husband and I will be sending a small donation to the Orkney Historic Boats Society.

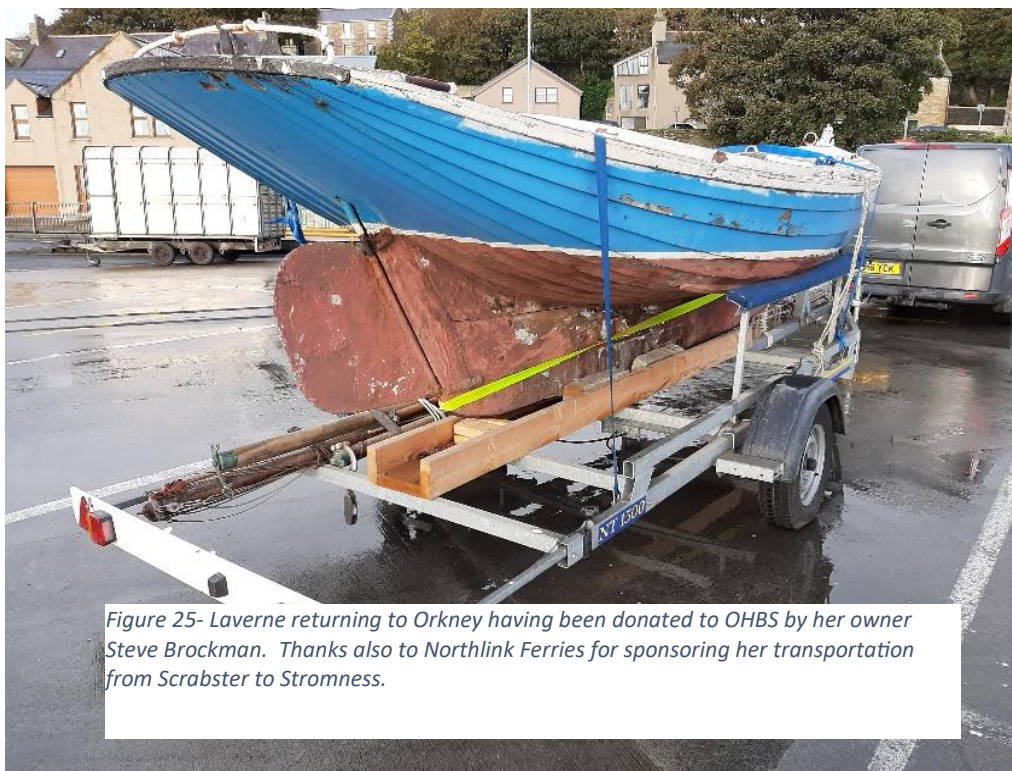
Regards

Mary

## SEPTEMBER – LAVERNE – MICHAEL MCLAUGHLIN

The elliptical-sterned racing yole, *Laverne*, built by John Renton Baikie in 1932, has returned home to Orkney. John R Baikie's grandfather (Thomas Baikie 1806-1882) and father (Edward Banks Baikie 1841-1901) built over 120 yoles and dinghies, perhaps including centreboard boats, in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-C in the family boat shed at 2 South End, Stromness. While John Renton Baikie served his boatbuilding apprenticeship from an early age, as nearly all the sons for at least three generations did, he spent most of his working life in the role of

Stromness Burgh Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector. He was clearly, however, a skilled boatbuilder, with *Laverne's* design and build being well suited to her intended purpose of racing. The boat won many honours in Orkney



*Figure 25- Laverne returning to Orkney having been donated to OHBS by her owner Steve Brockman. Thanks also to Northlink Ferries for sponsoring her transportation from Scrabster to Stromness.*

regattas from 1934 up to the 1970s and was certainly still performing well into the mid-1980s. Not many wooden clinker-built boats can boast such a long run of success, or longevity.

In recent times, *Laverne* had lain in the noust at South End, Stromness, very near to where she was built. Following the death of her owner in 2009, she was sold south to Cullen in Banffshire.



*Figure 24- Laverne sailing in her heyday*

**Editor's note:** - Steve Brockman, the owner of *Laverne* believed she should return to her original home, Orkney. To this end he not only donated *Laverne* to OHBS but went so far as to tow her to Scrabster. For this we owe Steve a great debt of gratitude. We also thank Northlink Ferries for sponsoring her passage to Stromness.



## LAVERNE: WHERE DID THE NAME COME FROM? – MICHAEL MCLAUGHLIN

It is very common for boats to be given a name with some connection to the owner, very frequently the name of a female family member, such as the owner's wife or daughter. So, the question arises, where did John Renton Baikie get the name Laverne from? There is one Laverne in the Baikie family tree, but that is the boatbuilder's granddaughter, born many years after the boat was named – a case of the child being named after the boat, rather than the other way around!

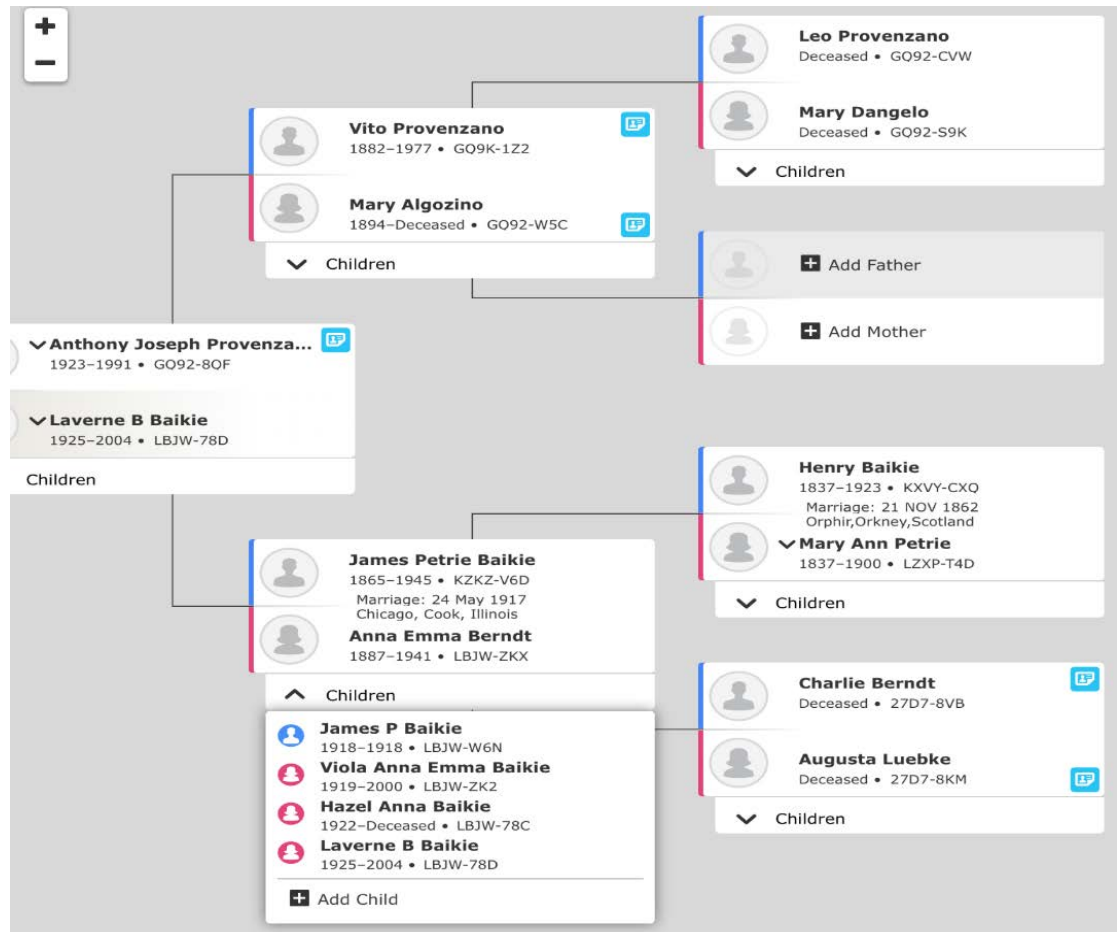


Figure 26- Family Tree of Laverne Baikie

A search on Scottish National Records returns no registered births for any female with the forename Laverne before 1944, when Laverne Baikie was born. A wider search found a Laverne Baikie, born in Illinois, USA in 1925, and her father was a James Petrie Baikie born in Stromness in 1865. So, a promising connection! Born in 1865, James Petrie Baikie (died 1945) was the son of a farm servant, Henry Baikie (1837-1923) and Mary Petrie Baikie (1837-1900), at Grassquoy, Stromness. Henry and Mary had a large family of 9 children, James P being the second eldest. Sometime in the late 1880s, he emigrated to Illinois, USA, as did at least three of his siblings.

He married Anna Emma Berndt (1887-1941) in 1917, and they had four children; James Petrie Baikie (1918-1918), Viola Anna Emma Baikie (1919-2000), Hazel Anna Baikie (1922- deceased) and Laverne B Baikie (1925-2004). James P is on the US 1930 census aged 64, and listed as a school janitor, living at Worth, Cook County,



Figure 27- Memorial plaque for Laverne

Illinois, with his wife Anna and three daughters. Currently we cannot find any direct family connection between John Renton Baikie and James Petrie Baikie, however, they and their respective siblings were of the same generation and all lived in or near Stromness, and would likely have been at school at about the same time. Thus John R may well have known James P, and could have remained in touch with each other.

So, is this the solution to the source of the name for John Renton Baikie's boat Laverne?

## OCTOBER – LABRADORITE – MICHAEL MCLAUGHLIN

### Unusual ballast from the 19<sup>th</sup>C barque Harmony

In the 19<sup>th</sup>C Stromness was frequently the final departure port for vessels heading across the Atlantic to North America. The ships would take on final supplies of fresh water and provisions, and often crew, and wait for a favourable wind for their challenging journey to begin.

From 1863 until 1896, Captain Henry Linklater commanded the three-masted barque Harmony. He came from the small island of Graemsay, in Orkney. Like many other seafarers of that time, he based his family in Stromness while he sailed the world. His Stromness home was on a very small island called the Inner Holm, which was one of two islands forming the eastern boundary of the safe harbour of Stromness.



Figure 29 - Collectable Labradorite ballast stones

A heap of boulders has lain outside Linklater's former house on the Inner Holm for over 100 years, these being the remains of Labradorite rock used for ballast in the ship Harmony.

An attractive aspect of Labradorite is its strong play of iridescence in the sunlight of blue, green, red, orange, and yellow colours. This phenomenon of a spectacular display of colour from the rock is known as "labradorescence".



Figure 28- Labradorite showing some of the interesting iridescent colours

## POST WW2 REGATTA RACING IN ORKNEY: A TIME OF CHANGE – MICHAEL MCLAUGHLIN

From the late 1800s up to the start of WW2, records show a healthy record of regatta boat racing in many Orkney locations, such as Kirkwall, Stromness, St Margaret's Hope and Longhope, as well as some of the North Isles, such as Rousay and Sanday.

These races involved larger keel boats, or yachts, as well as the day-to day working Orkney yawls (yoles) and dinghies. With so many local boatbuilders, who invariably did not build to a plan (at least not on paper!), there were a great many variations within each 'class' of boat, and racing relied heavily on the handicap system, based commonly on length of waterline. In the 1930s, however, boats built specifically for racing began to appear. The elliptical-sterned yoles of Baikie (Laverne) and Linklater (Skua) being two good examples.

But it was after WW2 that things began to change, slowly at first, then more rapidly, so that by the end of the 1950s the scene was almost entirely dominated by 'designed' racing dinghies. In the early days these boats were built locally from purchased plans, using the significant skills of local boatbuilders.



Figure 30- 1935 Stromness Regatta. Mostly traditional 'Orkney' sailing boats

It was not until 1946 that regatta racing began to resume after the war, with Longhope, Stromness and Kirkwall regattas being among the first. The regatta racing classes and boats remained very traditional during 1946 and 1947, but 1948 two 'designed' racing dinghies first appeared – a National 12 called *Sunshine* (E A R Mackay) and a Merlin called *Orcadian* (J Barbour). Then in 1949 two further 'designed' boats joined the fray – a Redwing *Saga* (W Groat) and a Snipe

*Zephyr* (J Simpson). After that, change began to pick up pace, especially popular for One-Design Classes being the Snipe (favoured by Holm Sailing Club) and Merlin-Rockets (favoured by Orkney Sailing Club, Kirkwall).

The 'designed' racing dinghies held a number of attractions for avid recreational sailors: they were smaller, easier to transport, launch and rig, required fewer crew, and, above all, were a more lively and exciting sail. In addition, there was the benefit of all boats in a race being of a single class meaning that no handicaps were required – the first across the finishing line was the winner, something popular with both crews and spectators.

By the end of the 1950s the designed racing dinghies were so popular that there were frequently too few local traditional boats being entered to allow a 'class' to be formed. For example, in the 1960 St Margaret's Hope Regatta, of 31 entries in the all-comers' race, 26 were designed racing dinghies.



Figure 31 - 1950's regattas were mostly 'designed' racing dinghies built in Orkney

## TELL MR CHURCHILL THAT GERMAN U-BOAT MEN ARE NOT THE HEARTLESS MURDERERS YOU ARE LED TO BELIEVE – MATTHEW VAUGHTON

In the Christmas 2019 newsletter Susan Paice gave an account of the sinking of the Motor Tanker Arne Kjøde on the morning of Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November 1939. Several other events occurred on that day which are of historical interest.

On 12<sup>th</sup> November 1939, Hitler authorized a relaxation of the U-bootwaffe rules of engagement. Hitler authorized:

*"the on-sight sinking of any and all enemy passenger vessels of whatever size, known (or seen) to be armed, and any and all tankers, including those of neutral nations (but not American or friends or allies of Germany) which were 'beyond all doubt' going to or from the British Isles<sup>1</sup> or France."*

This relaxation meant that any tanker in British waters could be sunk without warning or without assuring the safety of the crew. Had this order not been issued this day the Norwegian registered, and therefore neutral, Arne Kjøde may well have continued on passage unmolested.

The U-Boat that torpedoed the M/T Arne Kjøde was U-41, a type IX class submarine built by Deschimag AG Weser, Bremen and commissioned on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1939. U-41 undertook three war patrols before being sunk with the loss of all hands on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1940 by HMS Antelope south of Ireland.

Throughout Oct-Dec 1939, German U-Boats left their home port in northern Germany for a war patrol which typically took them north around the British Isles and down the west coast to the Western Approaches. They then reversed the route to return back to their home port to complete their patrol. Each patrol typically lasted around a month. U-41 left Wilhelmshaven for her second war patrol on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1939 under the command of Kapitänleutnant Gustav-Adolf Mügler, she returned to Wilhelmshaven on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1939.

The Fleetwood based Fishing Vessel Cresswell 275t, was a WW1 ex-Admiralty Castle Class armed minesweeper steam trawler built in 1917. Originally named HMT William Beatty she was disarmed and sold off to the fishing industry in 1920.

U-41 sank the Cresswell by surface action using her 4.1" gun on the morning of 12<sup>th</sup> November 1939 at around 07:00. Cresswell had sailed from Fleetwood the previous Friday (10<sup>th</sup> November) under Captain George Bull. It is reported that the U-41 opened fire on the Cresswell without warning, however it is also possible that a warning shot was fired towards the Cresswell to 'get her attention' as the weather was not good with driving rain at the time. It was later learnt that U-41 suspected the Cresswell of being a Q-Ship which would explain the shelling without warning, if this was the case.

When the shelling started the 13 crew of the Cresswell tried to escape the vessel. 10 of the crew escaped on a raft, two clung to a smashed lifeboat and one had a lifebelt. Three of the crew on the raft fell off exhausted, the two on the lifeboat and the other with the lifebelt were all subsequently drowned.

After firing on the Cresswell the submarine disappeared, the survivors thought that she had just left them. In fact, it was prudent for any submarine (of either side) which had just engaged an enemy to hastily distance itself from the point of action in case the commotion had attracted any enemy anti-submarine vessels or

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<sup>1</sup> The term British Isles would have included the then neutral Republic of Ireland, what the Germans may have meant is what we now know as the British Islands.

aircraft. Two hours later the U-41 reappeared and picked up the now remaining 7 survivors. The mate of the Cresswell reported “the U-boat crew did everything to make us comfortable. They gave us clothing, hot food, brandy and other drinks.” The survivors also learnt that the submarine had left to look for a neutral ship which could take them aboard but having been unsuccessful picked the survivors up itself. One crew member, Frederick Lee, stated that it took at least 20 shells to sink the Cresswell.

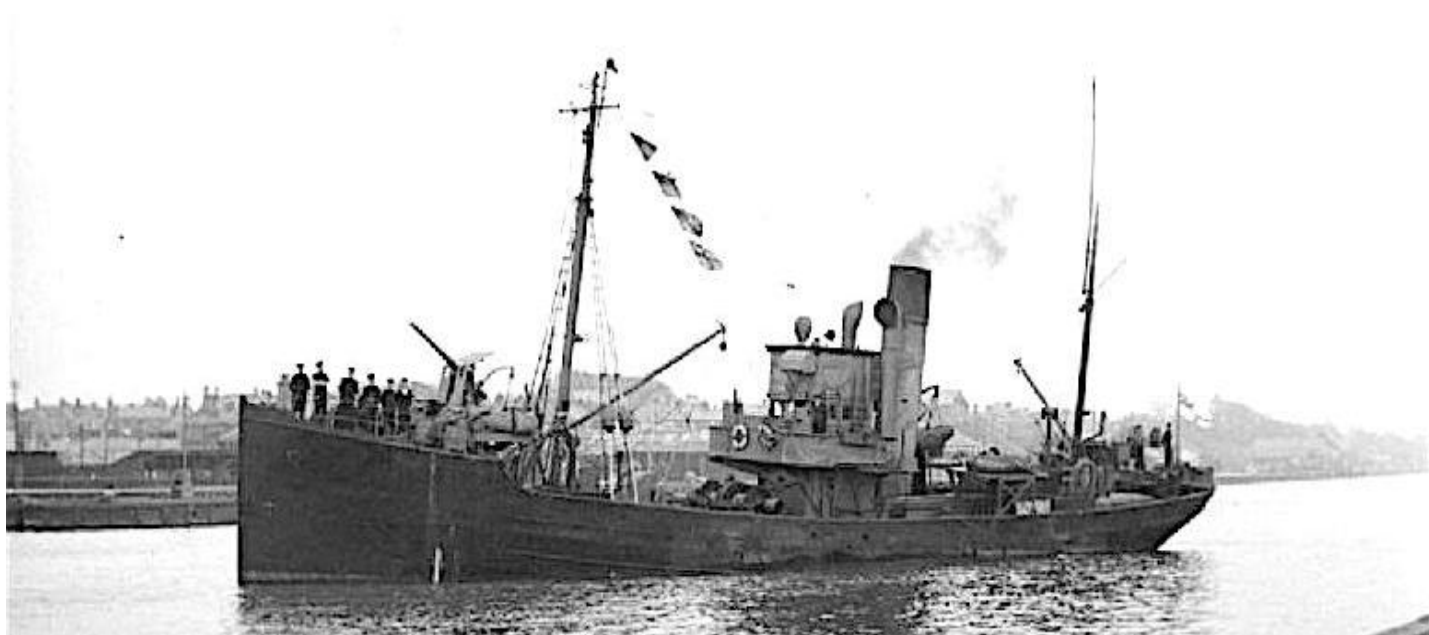


Figure 32- A Castle Class Steam Trawler by Royal Navy official photographer - <http://media.iwm.org.uk/iwm/mediaLib/19/media-19006/large.jpg>  
This is photograph FL 7516 from the collections of the Imperial War Museum

The Cresswell survivors were onboard U-41 for 7 or 8 hours. They had not been onboard U-41 for long when the Arne Kjøde was attacked at around 10:00. Later that afternoon U-41 sighted another British fishing vessel and transferred the now 6 survivors (1 having died while onboard U-41) to the Fleetwood trawler Phyllisia. When departing Kapitänleutnant Mügler of U-41 said to Captain George Bull “Tell Mr Churchill that German U-boat men are not the heartless murderers you are led to believe”.

The Cresswell survivors were among the first British seafarers to set foot on a U-boat in wartime. This attracted the interest of British naval intelligence and the Naval Intelligence Division (NID) subsequently interviewed the Cresswell survivors to see what could be learnt.

Early in the war the Germans suffered from reliability problems with their torpedoes<sup>2</sup>. During her second war patrol in November 1939 U-41 reported firing 11 torpedoes, 9 of which suffered technical failures, i.e., were not just misses. Unfortunately, one of the two torpedoes that did work properly was aimed at the Arne Kjøde.

#### Acknowledgements and References:

*Hitler's U-Boat War: The Hunters 1939-1942* Clay Blair

*No Room For Mistakes – British and Allied Submarine Warfare 1939-1940* Geirr H Haarr

## **NATIONAL HISTORIC SHIPS – MARTYN HEIGHTON AWARD 2020 - ROD DANIEL**

During the challenging summer of 2020 OHBS had the opportunity to submit the restoration of Cingalee as an entry for the National Historic Ships Martyn Heighton Excellence in Maritime Conservation Award. On November 10<sup>th</sup> a virtual award ceremony was broadcast from HMS Belfast at her mooring on the South bank of the Thames in London. Following a brief introduction by TV historian Dan Snow, Hannah Cunliffe, Martyn Heighton’s successor as Director of NHS, announced a number of category winners. Scottish entries for large

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<sup>2</sup> Ironically these torpedo problems were not resolved until after the capture of the British submarine Seal on 5 May 1940 and the Germans had reverse engineered the British torpedoes aboard.

vessel projects did very well and the 'Reaper' restoration for the Scottish National Fisheries Museum, Anstruther was a worthy winner. It was a disappointing omission that 'also rans' were not listed. Clearly large grant funded projects were the favourites.

A tour of HMS Belfast including an interview with her curator from the Imperial War Museum was interesting. Reference was made to Arctic Convoy protection duties without reference to her connection with Orkney. Accordingly, this brief introduction to Cingalee's application, is intended to correct that omission.

HMS Belfast is a Town-class light cruiser. Her keel was laid at Harland & Wolff, Belfast in 1936 and she was launched in 1938 and commissioned on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1939 shortly before the outbreak of WW2.

On August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1939 Belfast was transferred to the 18<sup>th</sup> Cruiser Squadron based in Scapa Flow from where she contributed to the naval blockade of the German coast. Germany invaded Poland the following day leading Britain and France to declare war on September 3<sup>rd</sup>. Belfast's connection with Scapa was significant for whilst she was at anchor in the Flow, she received the message 'Commence hostilities at once against Germany'. On September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1939 Belfast put to sea with Hood, Renown, Edinburgh and 4 destroyers on patrol to intercept German ships returning from Norway. Offshore duties lead Belfast to escort "prizes" into Kirkwall on October 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.

Whilst at anchor October 13-14<sup>th</sup> 1939 HMS Belfast was among the few ships in Scapa during U-Boat 47's torpedo attack which sunk battleship HMS Royal Oak with catastrophic loss of life. The following day Belfast left Orkney for Loch Ewe and was subsequently re- assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cruiser Squadron based at Rosyth.

It was during an outing from her base in Rosyth that HMS Belfast struck a magnetic mine in the Firth of Forth sustaining damage sufficiently serious to lead to her de-commissioning to 'care and maintenance' status. Following extensive repairs at Devonport in June 1940 she returned to Scapa Flow and Arctic convoy protection duties during 1942-43.

During 1944 Winston Churchill proposed taking to sea for a fleet inspection on board HMS Belfast. This was, however, overruled by The King upon the advice of both the First Sea Lord Sir Andrew Cunningham and USA based Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D Eisenhower.

Belfast fired her last aggressive round in July 1944 and saw post war service in Australia, Japan and the Korean peninsula before being de-commissioned in 1963 and later adopted by the Imperial War Museum as a designated floating display in 1971. (Photo; HMS Belfast on her current mooring © OHBS 2020).



Figure 33- HMS Belfast – Now a visitor attraction on the Thames

The narrative below was prepared as OHBS' entry to the above competition. The word

count was limited to 600 words and was a 'Statement of why we believed the work carried out demonstrated excellence and how it fitted within the principles set down by National Historic Ships – UK. Two accompanying documents were also submitted, the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) and 'Details of conservation works/approach carried out'.

Only one photograph was allowed to go with the submission – see below.

**Factors intrinsic to Orkney.** Cingalee, unique in Orkney is almost certainly the last wooden vessel to survive WW1 Naval service in Scapa Flow. Her role as a fleet tender working in Scapa Flow during both world wars can be found on the OHBS website at <http://www.ohbs.net/preserved-boats/cingalee/>. An ambitious project to restore her as a static display began in 2019. A detailed spreadsheet logged over 1000 volunteer hours work on supervised CMP stages 1 and 3. Several volunteers had considerable experience in boatbuilding and shipwrighting. They imparted these skills to others even demonstrating them, during summer displays, to interested members of the public.

The only professional boat building input was by Ian Richardson and Jeff Mackie. Ian decided which parts needed to be replaced and outlined the means of stabilising her original form. Ian's supervision and skill ensured a nationally recognised degree of excellence. Jeff Mackie, Historic Environment Scotland Craft Fellow and IBTC Lowestoft graduate boatbuilder, restorer and shipwright had a significant role in stabilising and restoring the fo'c'sle. Ian and Jeff taught traditional techniques (e.g. cotton caulking carvel seams, raking out and red lead caulking finish, deck laying, rudder and tiller making) to skilled volunteers hence disseminating knowledge.

Fundraising by OHBS reached the target within 4 months. Private and public sector donations were prompt and generous indicating a high level of public support. The principal private sector donation from Repsol-Sinopec allowed a new road trailer to be purchased to enable Cingalee to be taken to public events. The local authority, Orkney Island's Council, were fully supportive awarding a grant to help OHBS display Cingalee. The debut display was 'SCAPA 100



Figure 34 - Cingalee on display 2019

Commemorative Centenary' on 21 June 2019, marking the centenary of the scuttling of the German High Seas Fleet in Scapa Flow, from which Cingalee is now the only surviving small vessel. Additional expertise of some volunteers enabled the creation of a timeline and interactive displays to accompany Cingalee at exhibitions. The interactive display at SCAPA 100 included a caulking exercise. The static information and educational materials are on display in Stromness town centre. The boat, in storage at Stromness can be visited by appointment, free of charge.

**Factors extrinsic to Orkney.** Possibly the only and certainly the oldest carvel hull in Orkney Cingalee was built at the renowned Camper & Nicholsons shipyard in 1905. At that time, Camper & Nicholsons yard would have been one of the UK's centres of excellence. The degree of original material retained, including the timbers, hull

and fo'c'sle planking, attest to the excellence of the quality of craftsmanship and choice of material used. Cingalee is one of the smallest vessels registered as a British merchant vessel, a rare example of carvel construction using light timbers. Ian Richardson noted the very unusual fo'c'sle. Andrew Choong Han Lin, Curator- Plans and Photographs archive RMM Greenwich, Woolwich, commented "I have never seen such a pronounced turtleback on a British naval launch. None of the plans in the general Admiralty service show anything like it". She is the only known example of a purpose-built fast vessel, requisitioned in South England to be transported to Scapa by an RN vessel. The National Archive Kew referenced 'Wooden cutters up to 40' being transported on RN ships as deck cargo'. Cingalee was one of the first vessels under 30' to be fitted with an internal combustion engine when built. The original engine by J.W. Brooke, Lowestoft, who modified road transport engines for marine use on the Norfolk Broads, were experts at marine engine fitting in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> C. The search for an original J.W. Brooke engine is ongoing.

## UNESCO – RON BULMER

### UNITED NATIONS EDUCATION SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANISATION

#### INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE - ICH

For folk resident in the northern reaches of the British Isles, the Scandinavian element is still strongly interwoven in the everyday; from dialect, place names, and traditional crafts. Part and parcel of the everyday, but one can't quite put a finger on it, it's intangible – yet truly cultural, and with the shared heritage, which demonstrates the commonality between Northern peoples.

It has long been known that boats in the Northern Isles have their roots as a result of the Scandinavian expansion. Just by looking at the graceful Shetland yoa, the lines shared with the Viking longboat are evident. However, the Orkney yole, well adapted for strong tides and load carrying, has slightly different lines . . . notice 'yole' and 'yoal'<sup>3</sup>. Both, of course are correct. But, in Shetland 'yoal' is the widely adopted spelling, Orkney has 'yole'. Visible examples of intangible cultural heritage.

An article describing Faeroes traditional rowing boat, described how the traditional clinker built is aiming towards inclusion on UNESCO's The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of People.

"In the past, clinker boats were the very lifeblood of communities; they were used not only for fishing, both in the fjords and offshore, but also for transporting material and people: for instance, grain over the fjord to the mill, fish to towns, worshippers and wedding-goers to churches and for funerals."<sup>4</sup>

Before the advent of RoRo ferries and the motor vehicle, boats were pivotal in maintaining every aspect of a coastal community life. A very familiar story right across the Nordic region.

The Forbundet Kysten, which probably best translated as 'Coastal Federation', is a Norwegian organisation, whose motto is 'Preservation in Use'. Kysten promotes the safeguarding of the Norwegian coastal heritage ranging from traditional boat building [and boat handling – obviously!] to handicrafts to, even, lighthouses. With a flurry of correspondence, it quickly became clear that the Kysten was pulling together a UNESCO ICH bid to include traditional clinker-built boats in 'The North Sea Ring'. An area to include not just the Scandinavian counties, but the Scottish coastline, though, Iceland Greenland and the Faroes are very much in evidence. What is particularly gratifying is the acknowledgement of the work the both the Orkney Historic Boat Society and the Orkney Yole Association do.

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<sup>3</sup> Dr Marc Chivers Moder Dy CIC Shetland

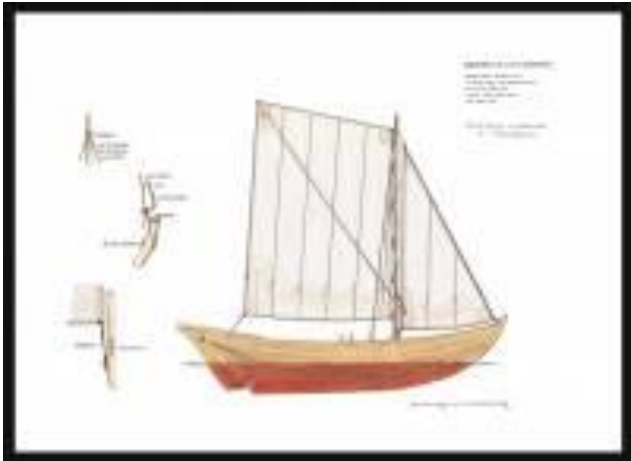
<sup>4</sup> Faroeislands.Fo The Official gateway to the Faroe Islands 14 10 2020



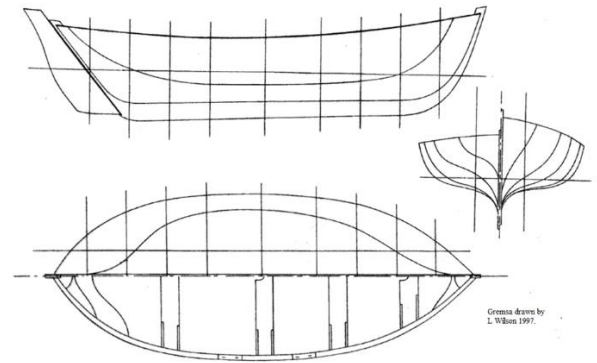
And even more interesting, while there are differences in boat design [inevitably], the similarities are also noticeable. As one traces around the Scandinavian coast. From the Norwegian west coast, the Oselvar [sailed with a spritsail] not dissimilar to the Shetland sixareen, tracing to almost the Oslo fjord where the Orkney yole compares to the Sjekte, a yole like craft, common in the municipality of Stavern, or the lovely Skånesnipa, from south Sweden. There is more that binds us than not. So, Forbundet Kysten we wish you well with the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage bid.

Skånesnipa,

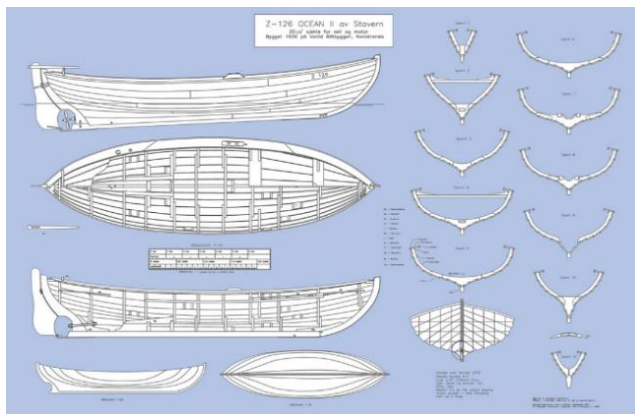
Båtritningar Handelsbolag Björkenäs Jämjö Sweden <sup>3</sup>



South Isles Yole<sup>4</sup>



Sjekte<sup>5</sup>



Acknowledgements and References:

Tove Aurdal Hjellnes	Deputy leader: Forbundet Kysten
Lars A Solberg	Kystlaget Fredriksvern Norway
Roger Andersson	Båtritningar Handelsbolag Björkenäs Jämjö, Sweden
Dr Marc Chivers	Moder Dy CIC Shetland

Classic Boat: "Sweden's oldest fishing boat restored"  
 Len Wilson: "The Building of a South Isles Yole"  
 Nordic Clinker Boat UNESCO Nomination

<sup>3</sup> Roger Andersson Båtritningar Handelsbolag Björkenäs Jämjö, Sweden

<sup>4</sup> Len Wilson: "The Building of a South Isles Yole"

<sup>5</sup> Lars A Solberg Kystlaget Fredriksvern Norway

## BOAT RESTORATION PROGRESS – JIMMY CLOUSTON

Our usual group of volunteers meet weekly to restore several of the boats in our collection to be ready for the day when, hopefully, we can put them on display to the public in an Orkney Boat Haven.

All restoration work conforms to the agreed 'Conservation Management Plan' (CMP) for each vessel or artifact.

### SAGA

Saga, a Redwing dinghy designed by the famous Uffa Fox, was one of the first 'Designed' dinghies to be built in Orkney by Billy Clouston at Waithe Haven, Stenness in 1949. Saga was one of two built by him.

The CMP for Saga included renewing the deck, removing old paint and varnish and re-painting.

Because of problems sourcing the correct plywood for replacing the deck during lockdown it was decided in the meantime to proceed with painting as much of the hull as possible avoiding the area to be re-decked.

Because of excessive staining of the wood the hull had to be painted with colours matching the original, rather than varnishing. Harky Hutchison is the principal restorer on Saga.

For a full progress report on the restoration of Saga visit our website at:

<https://www.ohbs.net/preserved-boats/saga/>



Figure 35 - Paint stripped and drying out, ready for painting.



Figure 36 - Original colours restored



Figure 40 - Set up horizontal board at bow where line to be.



Figure 40- Similarly erect a horizontal board at transom where you want the line to be.



Figure 40- String a line from front board to aft board to be as close to the hull as possible. Transfer marks level with line onto hull every 150mm or so.



Figure 40 - Draw a fair line using the marks with a triangular section thin batten.

## WATERLILY

Waterlily (Lily) is a small North Isles Yole of 14' length and 6' beam. Mast and spars, oars and sails are all believed to be original. Reputedly built in Eday around 1860-1870. Possibly by Robert Miller of Sandybank, who was a boat builder in Eday from mid 1850s to c1910, at the latest, when he was in his late 70s.

Waterlily had been in the Foulis family in Deerness for 5 generations, being used for family fishing trips and leisure. She was never Registered for commercial fishing during their ownership.

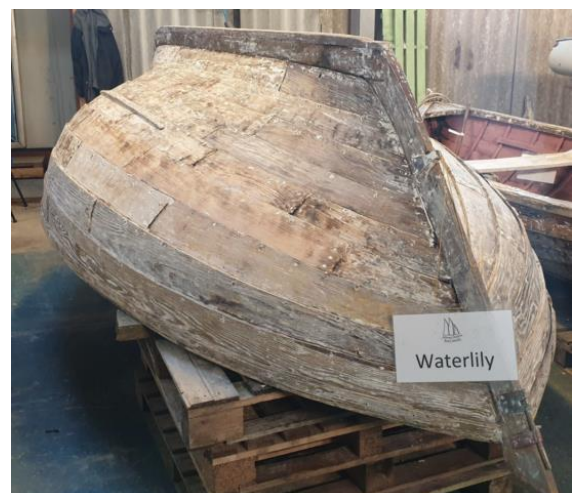


Figure 41- Paint scraped off to allow the wood to dry

All the sails were washed by Matthew Vaughton in a mild detergent solution and given a final rinse with a dilute Milton's Fluid solution. They have been thoroughly dried and are now stored in a dry, warm environment.

The CMP for Waterlily included fully stripping the paint off the hull, spars, oars, etc and allowing them to dry. That task was completed in late 2019 early 2020.

The hull is in good condition considering her age although, some small areas of damage have been repaired. Michael McLaughlin is now in the process of repainting her with primer, undercoat and topcoat marine grade paint.

For a full progress report on the restoration of Waterlily visit our website at:

<https://www.ohbs.net/preserved-boats/waterlily/>



Figure 42 - Painting the hull with primer in progress

## SHAMROCK



Figure 43- Paint scraped and all rotten boards and timbers removed

corroded fixings. Jimmy Clouston and Sue Paice are doing the restoration of Shamrock.

For a full progress report on the restoration of Shamrock visit our website at:

<https://www.ohbs.net/preserved-boats/shamrock/>

'Shamrock' as she has been nicknamed (because of a Shamrock image on the stern) was built by JMW (Jimmy) Mackay in Stromness the late 1940s. It is known that she was actually built by one of Jimmy's employees, Tommy Corrigan.

CMP – Preservation, stage 1 - the hull was stripped of paint and allowed to dry.

Restoration – stage 2 - Rotten areas of timber to be replaced - starboard top stroke, gunwale, rubbing strip and capping plus several parts of ribs. Boards resecured to stem where they had burst away due to



Figure 44 - Top stroke and timbers reinstated

## NELLIE

Nellie is 25' long, 6' beam and 2' 6" draught constructed of carvel Mahogany.

Preservation – Stage 1 - Steam cleaning the inside of the hull – Matthew Vaughton. Further assessment will be carried out once this is done.



Figure 46 - Inside of hull being cleaned with a steam cleaner

For a full progress report on the restoration of Nellie visit our website at:

<https://www.ohbs.net/preserved-boats/nellie/>



Figure 45 - Cleaning in progress

## WHERE YOU CAN FIND INFORMATION ABOUT OHBS

### Orkney Historic Boat Society Website and Facebook page

<https://www.ohbs.net/>

<https://www.facebook.com/orkneyhistoricboatsociety/>

### Previous OHBS Newsletters

<https://www.ohbs.net/ohbs-newsletters/>

### National Historic Ships – Shipshape Network

<https://www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/shipshape-network/region/scotland.>

### New Connections Across the Northern Isles

<https://irc.hw.ac.uk/new-connections.html>

**Contact:** [orkneyhistoricboats@gmail.com](mailto:orkneyhistoricboats@gmail.com)

Orkney Historic Boat Society is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) with Charity Number SC044884

**Our Vision:** To preserve the boating history of Orkney for future generations.

**Our Mission:** To preserve historic boats and related traditional boat building skills and crafts. To collect preserve and communicate knowledge relating to boats built in Orkney or having contributed significantly to Orkney life and to further the education and knowledge of the public in relation to historical Orkney Boats, including establishing a boat museum and workshop.

