



# Christmas Newsletter 2018



Merry Christmas and a happy new year to all OHBS members

Craft Fellow in Boatbuilding: - (author Jimmy Clouston)



Figure 1 Ailsa packed up ready for the trip south to the Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival

Environment Scotland and local sponsors for Jeff Mackie to train as a boatbuilder and WSC provided the materials required through funding from the Westray Development Trust.

During the year Jeff and Catriona became the proud parents of baby daughter 'Ailsa'. Sam

OHBS Craft Fellow Jeff Mackie completed his training to become a boatbuilder in September. He spent the final year of his apprenticeship working alongside, and learning from, master boatbuilder Ian Richardson. During this time, amongst other things, he built the hull of a Westray Skiff to traditional lines and a very high standard of finish.

The project to build the new Skiff was a partnership project between the OHBS and Westray Sailing Club (WSC). OHBS raised funding from Historic



Figure 2 Jeff Mackie, Sam Harcus, Jimmy Clouston and Ian Richardson at the 'Ailsa' naming ceremony



Figure 3 Jeff and Ian enjoying the sunshine at the Southampton Boat Show.

Harcus of Westray Sailing Club suggested his first boat should therefore be called 'Ailsa'.

Jeff was able to display 'Ailsa' at both the Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival and at the Southampton Boat Show. On completion of the training programme in September Jeff established his own

boatbuilding and repair business. Both Jeff and OHBS wish to acknowledge considerable sponsorship from local businesses, the Westray Community and thank Historic Environment Scotland for providing the Bursary giving financial stability and help towards travel costs and tool acquisition during the Craft Fellowship. Further details of Jeff's work can be found on his Facebook page: -

**Jeff Mackie Boat Builder**

### **New Connections across the Northern Isles - A PhD project: - (author Jimmy Clouston)**

Jimmy Clouston, Rod Daniel and Jeff Mackie have been involved to a greater or lesser extent with seven 'New Connections across the Northern Isles' co-curation workshops run by PhD student Cait McCullagh.

Cait's aim is to link the people and heritage of Orkney and Shetland through their maritime cultures by collating many aspects of the heritage of each archipelago and combining them into a virtual museum. Funded by Museums Galleries Scotland's Museum Development Fund, Heriot Watt University and the Hugh Fraser Foundation, the project is supporting people across Orkney and Shetland to become community curators, creating together a new online exhibition which celebrates the richness and significance of the Northern Isles' maritime past, present and future.

These day long workshops, as well as giving material for Cait's PHD, allowed us to learn many aspects of curatorship and how to handle heritage artefacts to best advantage.

The themes of 'sustainability' and 'intangible cultural heritage' were important aspects of these workshops. A local press release included the following statement made in response to the workshops: -

"We see being involved in the co-curation workshops as an invaluable opportunity to build on our knowledge and expertise for preserving not only historic boats, but also the related skills and crafts of traditional boatbuilders and sharing the stories of the boats they have built. We look forward to the opportunity of developing curatorial skills through learning together with other maritime enthusiasts and experts throughout the Northern Isles. There is so much to be proud of in our boating history and continuing sailing traditions, and we look forward to sharing this more widely via the virtual exhibition".

Please visit Cait's Facebook page '***New Connections Across the Northern Isles***' to get a proper feel for what the project is about.



*Figure 4 A photographic and video session on 'Pearl' one of the artefacts being submitted to the virtual museum by OHBS Photographer - Fionn McArthur*



*Figure 5 The Iconic stone pillars entrance to Copland's Dock Boatyard*

### **Orkney Boat Haven: - (author Jimmy Clouston)**

The sub-group of our management committee dealing with the proposed Boat Haven has had several meetings with Orkney Islands Council throughout the year to progress this project. Our efforts have focused on securing land at Coplands' Dock in Stromness on which to erect a



purpose-built Haven to display the many boats and artefacts we now possess. The council are willing to sell, and we are prepared to purchase the land having had a favorable joint valuation carried out by the District Valuation Service. However, access to the site, which was the location of a boat building yard more than a century ago, is problematic and has yet to be resolved. We hope to have a solution in the near future thereafter the major task of raising sufficient funds will begin.

We have resolved to employ a professional fundraiser who will earn their fee on a percentage basis of what they raise.

**APPEAL** - if any member reading this is a fundraising consultant or know of any who would be willing to get involved in this project please contact me.



Figure 6 Plan view of Coplands' Dock site in relation to the new pier.

## Acquisitions

### Whitewings K375: - (author Michael McLaughlin)



Figure 7 Whitewings in storage after stage 1 basic renovation being carried out.

Whitewings was built in 1937 in Deerness by Davie Eunson for William Sinclair Laughton, Park, Holm. Davie, as well as a fiddle maker, was a talented player and composer who was known to have enjoyed a bit of boatbuilding in his spare time.

Fitted for a lugsail and auxiliary motor, she was registered for fishing on 23 August 1938 by William who used her for setting creels and fishing for haddock in Holm. The registration was continued until 1969 and cancelled when the boat was sold in 1975. Whitewings is an atypical yole, being smaller than a full-sized yole at 10.9ft of keel, 14.2ft in length, 6.3ft in beam and 2.5ft in depth, and her beam is widest well astern of midships, making her 'pear shaped'.

Whitewings is said to have been a good sea boat, but she had not taken to the

water for many years, benefitting, however, from being stored in a well-aired, dry shed on Hoy. While she has retained her lines well, restoration to sea-going standard was deemed not economically viable, and the recent owner, donated her to OHBS in late December 2017.

The boat has been tidied internally, with some stroke and gunwale repairs, is now in storage, and will be given a scrape down and some fresh paint when time is available.



Figure 8 This photo shows the unusual teardrop shape.



**Shownia: - (author Michael McLaughlin)**



*Figure 9 Shownia in temporary storage outdoors.*

This Shetland model was built by Walter Duncan of Hamnavoe, Burra Isle, Shetland, in the winter of 1938/39 for Jack Shearer, a farmer and butcher in Thurso, Caithness. She is one of the last boats to be built by Walter before he handed the business over completely in 1939 to his two sons, Walter Jnr and Phillip. She is 16ft of keel, with an overall length of 21ft.

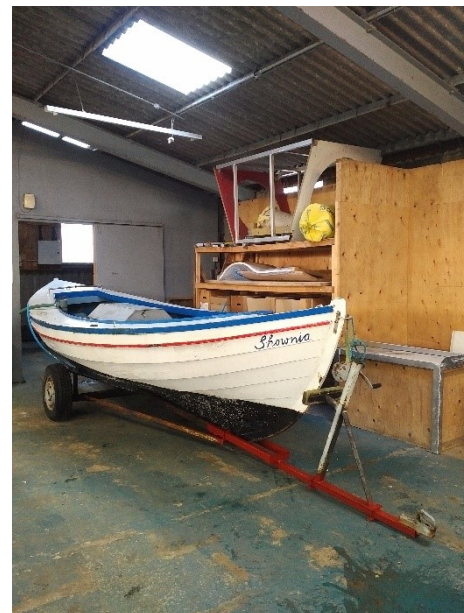
Although intended primarily for sailing, Jack always envisaged fitting an in-board motor, Walter built the boat to accommodate this. A Lister 2 stroke in-board engine

was then fitted at some point.

Shownia spent most of her sailing days based in Scrabster. When Jack died, his daughter, Helen Mackenzie, who was then living in Orkney, shipped the boat over to Orkney on the St Ola.

The Shownia was then acquired by Dr Dohrn, Consultant General Surgeon at the Balfour Hospital, who had the boat moored for many years in Kirkwall marina and used it, along with his two sons, for leisure purposes.

Out of the water for several years now, and in need of some restoration work, she was gifted to the OHBS by Dr Dohrn. She has now been stored indoors and after a period drying out fully, a detailed assessment will be undertaken, and appropriate conservation action plan put in place.



*Figure 10 Indoor storage means she can now dry out.*

**Saga: - (author Michael McLaughlin)**

The Redwing is a 14-foot racing dinghy designed by Uffa Fox in 1939 for Looe Sailing Club, based in south-east Cornwall.



*Figure 11 Jimmy, Harky and Jeff inspect Saga after being recovered from the grass.*

It is a classic Fox hull with a clean run and a waterline stretched to the maximum, but with good freeboard, half-decked and with a substantial breakwater designed to cope with the rough and tumbling seas off the Cornish coast. It also had a 132lb iron drop keel with a 5ft draught, and sail area of 145sq ft.

Originally called the Looe Redwing, it was later renamed the West of England Redwing when the design became popular and was adopted as a national class by the RYA. (The class should not be confused with the Bembridge Redwing, designed in 1896 for sailing in the Solent, which is a much larger keeled boat.) Saga

was built at Waithe Haven, Stenness, Orkney, in 1949 by boatbuilder Billy Clouston, for a keen local



sailor called Willie Groat. Originally from Longhope on the Orkney Island of Hoy, Willie is well-known for being the banker onboard the National Commercial Bank (later the Royal Bank of Scotland) bank boat called *Otter Bank*, which served the northern islands of Orkney as a mobile bank in the 1960s.



*Figure 12 Saga sailing in Longhope bay 1999*

While Willie achieved significant success in local regattas with *Saga*, the class never took on as a local sailing class.

*Saga* has been gifted to the care of OHBS by direct descendants of Willie. Having been out of the water for some time, and stored outside, she needs TLC, particularly around the gunwales and decking, but is a welcome addition to our growing boat collection.

### **Sirius: - (author Jimmy Clouston)**

Sirius, an International Snipe racing dinghy was built by Ali Kirkpatrick and friends from a table of offsets in The Girnol, Kirkwall, now the clubhouse of Orkney Sailing Club.

Ali, a very keen and skilful dinghy sailor, won many trophies with this boat and competed at regattas throughout Orkney from the 1950's onwards.

Ali has kindly donated Sirius to OHBS to add to the collection of leisure sailing dinghy classes popular in Orkney.

She is in very good condition and is ready for display without further work.



*Figure 13 Ali Kirkpatrick who donated Sirius.*

### **Esmeralda: - (author Jimmy Clouston)**



*Figure 14 Esmeralda sailing in Rousay Regatta 1937*

Built in 1934 by James Duncan of Burray, one of the last boats built in their old shed before relocating to the 'new' shed in 1935.

She was commissioned by Sir Walter Grant, owner of the



*Figure 15 Soon after she was bought from John Stout 2008*

Highland Park distillery, Kirkwall, Orkney who lived in Trumland House, Rousay. He had her built for Tom Sinclair, his retained skipper.



Designed by Uffa Fox, one of Britain's most famous yacht designers, for the 17'7" Water Line Length (WLL) class to compete with the racing boats of the day. Esmeralda is in relatively good condition and still seaworthy. She is registered in the National Small Boat Register of the National Maritime Museum (no 1120).

#### **Doris K188: - (author Michael McLaughlin)**

OHBS is delighted to have been gifted this clinker-built Orkney yole which is in very good condition, with all gunwales and decking restored to original condition by the owner at the end of her working life; the work having been carried out by Stromness boatbuilder Ian Richardson.

The boat was built by John Renton Baikie (1872-1947) at Baikie's Boat Shed, Stromness, c1930 or earlier. John Renton Baikie was the brother of David Renton Baikie (1876-1935), son of Edward Banks Baikie (1841-1901) and grandson of Thomas Baikie (1806-1882) who between them built around 120 small boats (mainly dinghies and yoles) in the family boat shed at 2 South End, Stromness.

Doris K188 was first registered for fishing, using lines and creels, in 1931 by John A Johnston, Crookshouse, Graemsay, as owner, with John MacLeod as skipper. She is a South Isles Orkney yole, with overall length recorded of 17.7ft, breadth 7ft and depth 2.8ft. The fishing registration continued until 1958 and was finally closed in 1968. Doris was kindly donated to OHBS by Ollie Sinclair of Stromness.



*Figure 16 Work party moving Doris to her current storage shed.*

#### **Cingalee: - (author Jimmy Clouston)**



*Figure 17 Cingalee on Hatston slip 1973.*

Further to information available last year more research has been done on Cingalee and we have discovered a very interesting history.

Speaking with one of the previous owners revealed that she was registered in Lloyds Mercantile Navy register. As it happened, whilst I was in Orkney discovering this information Rod Daniel was in London and was able to visit the Caird Archive RMM Greenwich and view the actual records showing that she was built in 1905 at Camper and Nicholson's shipyard in Gosport.

First registered owner was one John Mellish de la Taste, of St Leonards, Bury Rd, Gosport, Hants which fits with local oral history of ownership by a French woman who used to supply Naval ships in Scapa flow. An enquiry has been made to the Classic Boat Museum, Isle of Wight, because they are acknowledged as having additional records on small military vessels. Isle of Wight Curator



confirmed that records exist at the Caird Archive RMM Greenwich and within the Hampshire Archives.

Records show that she was fitted with a 20HP 4 Cylinder Petrol engine built by J.W. Brooke & Co of Lowestoft who specialised in building marine engines for fast launches. She was also fitted with a mast and Lug sail.

Cingalee was operated as a 'Navy and Army Canteen Board' vessel supplying the Naval ships in Scapa Flow prior to and throughout WW1, between the wars and during WW2.

2019 will be another year of commemorations in Scapa Flow when the scuttling of the German High Seas Fleet will be remembered on 21<sup>st</sup> June.

We intend to put Cingalee on display, probably in Stromness, as part of the Scapa 100 commemorations.

At 113 years old Cingalee is the oldest Naval Vessel in Orkney and would have been a familiar sight in Scapa Flow. Ian Richardson and Jeff Mackie recently surveyed her and were astonished at the condition of the hull. Despite her age, her hull and unique whaleback deck are still in good condition. This is a testament to the high-quality timber, secured by the Crown, to build her.

We will soon get her indoors to let her dry out and with some basic repairs and a coat of paint we hope to have her ready for the Scapa 100 events in June next year.

**We believe this project is worthy of holding a specific fundraising campaign and as such will be launching an appeal on our website in the new year.**

**Please visit our website [www.ohbs.org](http://www.ohbs.org) to read the full story of Cingalee and help us by donating to the renovation appeal.**



*Figure 18 The process of clearing out unwanted fittings etc and cleaning begins.*

### **Channel 5 Series 'Digging up Britain's past': - (author Jimmy Clouston)**

A Ch 5 Elephant House Studios film crew, currently making a new Archaeology series about the Vikings in Britain visited Orkney on 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> September to film material for an episode on Viking Boats.

They were particularly interested in the connection between traditional Orkney boat building and how this style of building relates back to Viking technology.

Jimmy Clouston was able to show them a typical Orkney North Isles Yole (Bulldog) and speak about Viking building techniques which are still traditionally used in Orkney as well as the individually named



*Figure 19 Channel 5 Film crew interviewing Jimmy Clouston gathered around the Yole 'Bulldog'. Filming took place underneath the hide boat built for the BBC series Britain's Ancient Capita in 2016.*

parts of boats which have their origins in the old Norse language the 'Orkney Norn' spoken in Orkney up to about 150 years ago.

To round off the experience the film crew were taken afloat for a sail in an Orkney Yole.

As it happened, the film crew arrived off the Hamnavoe just as 'Storm Ali' was beginning to blow. Jimmy Clouston, Stephen Flett and Bill Sutherland took the interviewer and some of the film crew in the Yole 'Lily' and another camera crew shadowed Lily in Rod Daniel's Yole 'Waterwitch'. Before we had sailed far the wind increased considerably and very heavy rain lashed down, soaking the film crew to the skin as none of them had appropriate rain gear. It will be interesting to see the result.

**The programme will be aired on Channel 5 on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> January at 8.00pm**

### **OHBS Joins the National Historic Ships, Shipshape Network in 2018: - (author Rod Daniel)**

The National Historic Ships, Shipshape Network is based at the Royal Maritime Museum, Greenwich. 2018 saw OHBS establish a supportive contact with NH Ships which, through the Network, brings together historic vessel owners, skilled craftsmen, heritage organisations, training bodies and businesses interested in Britain's maritime heritage, ship and boat preservation.

Launched in 2010 the Network has promoted key regions across the UK where there is a concentration of skills and historic vessels. A number of regional hubs have been created with the aim being to bring organisations and individual vessel projects together and to assist the sector to achieve more in local areas.

Regional Networks are now based at East Anglia with Lowestoft as a hub, Thames Estuary, Solent, South West, Bristol Channel and Mersey in England. In Scotland the Network comprises Clyde Docks, The Gal Gael Trust, North Sea Ring, Ring Net Heritage Trust, Scottish Fisheries Museum, Anstruther and The Scottish Traditional Boat Festival, Portsoy. OHBS are the latest member and we are invited to contribute 'Latest News' regularly.

Our contribution to the Network is found at; -

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

In April 2018 Rod applied to become a volunteer on the Cutty Sark shipkeepers team at Greenwich. The Royal Maritime Museum have a dedicated team of shipkeepers wholly employed in maintaining the ship and coordinating specialist professionals such as Riggers and Shipwrights on re decking which is currently underway. The volunteers are drawn from a wide background including Curators in training who need hands on experience caring for museum artefacts as practical work experience in preparation for their qualification. Other volunteers are retired folks who have an interest in the ship or maritime heritage and restoration. Rod spends some time in London and at interview explained that he would not be committing to the weekly attendance sessions but would join in, if selected, whenever in London. Part of the logic for joining was to learn about the process of volunteer management from the experts.



*Figure 20 Cutty Sark*

Two references and criminal record bureau clearance are required, and Rod joined the shipkeepers team in May. This year the priorities for volunteers were to assist with sanding the teak deck rails, pinrails, top rails and parts of the original deck housing. These are being stripped of all varnish and prepared for oil finishes in future. This is a massive undertaking which had started in 2017 and progressed well this year during the remarkable summer weather enjoyed in the South for over 4 months. The ship, however, was suffering from some drying out and deck seams and caulked topsides seams in places are opening. When raining we were set too below decks preparing areas in public view



for re painting. During August the volunteers assisted a specialist Gilders team, alongside regular shipkeepers, re fitting the 'gingerbread' decorative carvings after gold leaf gilding in the workshops and fitting the Willis family motto plaque "Where there's a Will is a way" and Star of India motif to the transom. Fun and an unusual learning experience rolled into one.

Rod took the opportunity, whilst at Greenwich, to meet with Hannah Cunliffe, Director of National Historic Ships who he had met through email during fundraising for Jeff's training in 2016. Hannah had directed Rod to the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights who in the event supported the Craft Fellowship. Hannah has now facilitated OHBS becoming a member of the Shipshape Network at National Historic Ships by introducing Rod to senior projects manager Victoria Walworth who takes responsibility for the Network site among other projects. Spending time on site at Greenwich also allowed Rod access to the Caird Archive and staff which assisted in verifying the research on Cingalee which is on- going. Next year a trip to the Brass Foundry annex of the RMMG at Woolwich Arsenal is planned. Millions of documents are archived at Woolwich and a lead suggests that images and possibly plans of Cingalee may be found if we can firm up on her build location at Gosport. So it's another case of watch this space!

#### **Day trip to Swona to recover Falcon Sails - 26<sup>th</sup> June 2018: - (author Rod Daniel)**



*Figure 21 Ian Richardson, Smith Foubister, Jimmy Clouston and Jeff Mackie ready to set out from Scapa Pier on two fast RIB's, Missing from photo Rod Daniel*

OHBS were invited to spend a day on Swona. We were hoping to recover rig and some sails following research and completion of stage 1 refurbishment work on *Falcon* early in the year. Should masts and spars be found in a poor state the plan was to photograph and measure so that replicas could be made. Only six of us were able to fit in to the two RIBs and so a decision to leave friends behind was taken before the trip!

Coordinated by members of the Annal family, and accompanied by Alex, we were very fortunate with a wonderful weather window and good tides allowing for a long day which not only gave us time to survey the *Hood* in detail but also to locate and recover two complete and wholly intact rigs for *Falcon*.

The working lugsail rig includes a sail in excellent condition and the racing 'Bermudan' rig with hollow box section mast and boom is the very same as seen in photographs taken at regattas back in the day. Various sails and the lugsail from *Hood* were found and have kindly been donated for future display. We also found *Falcon's* bowsprit and Samson post as seen on the old photos.

Ian Richardson and Jeff Mackie were able to spend time surveying *Hood* which is now well beyond any hope of

restoration. A photographic survey to contrast with pictures taken some years earlier was carried out. With tide awaited we had time to visit the shed where James Rosie built the *Falcon* and numerous other boats during his productive years during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The roof has collapsed but within the ruinous building some old tools are still to be seen.

There was time for a fast walk to the South end of the island for a peep at the Puffins and other seabirds seen over the backdrop of the Pentland Firth and Skerries, and Caithness. Feral cattle stayed well away from the strangers! The wild flowers were wonderful including a profusion of



Orchids. A memorable experience was had by all. Following a spectacularly successful day we remain grateful to the Annal family for sharing the experience with us and donating the masts, spars and sails which will make a real impact when *Falcon* is fully restored.

Two of the oldest sails have been studied in detail and are the subject of a curator led cataloguing exercise which, when completed, will be applied to all sails and artefacts donated to OHBS. To find such a cache of sails and spars is something very special now as so many of those items have been lost - even if boats themselves have survived and are deemed suitable for refurbishment.



*Figure 22 Recovered sails and spars laid out ready for inspection.*

**Website and Facebook page: - (author Jimmy Clouston)**

Matthew Vaughton took over as Webmaster recently after Roy Bichan found he was too busy to do the job justice. Grateful thanks must go to Roy for the work he has done setting up and running the website over the past few years. Roy continues as a committee member and is currently involved with the fundraising sub-group.

Matthew has changed the look of the website and I would encourage you to visit it at [www.ohbs.org](http://www.ohbs.org) and view the wealth of information about the heritage activities of your society.

Michael McLaughlin continues to make an excellent job of managing our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/orkneyhistoricboatsociety/>. Again, I would encourage you to visit both regularly as they are often updated.

*Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.*

*Jimmy Clouston (Chairman)*

*Michael McLaughlin (Vice Chairman)*

*Rod Daniel (Secretary)*