



Christmas Newsletter 2019



Dear OHBS Member

This has been a very busy year for the society. 2019 saw the 100th anniversary of the scuttling of the German High Seas Fleet in Scapa Flow. In commemoration of this, three days of activities were to be held in Orkney in June. Because of the connection of *Cingalee* to WW1 the society decided it would be appropriate to restore her in time to be on display during the commemorations as a boat that was working in Scapa Flow at that time (the full story of which is in the article below). The other major project has been the work towards establishing an Orkney Boat Haven, see the story so far on page 4. Research and restoration continue as we work to preserve Orkney's boating heritage.

Feedback for last year's newsletter was extremely positive with members enjoying the variety of articles. I hope you will find this year's content equally interesting and enlightening.

I wish you all pleasant reading and a happy Christmas and a peaceful new year to all OHBS members.

RESTORATION of *Cingalee* 2019 by Rod Daniel & Matthew Vaughton

Last December Jimmy summarized the verifiable history and commented on *Cingalee's* condition. Following rescue from destruction in November 2017 her impressive story took over a year to unearth and by December 2018 it was clear that a substantial restoration was both justifiable and achievable if OHBS could secure dedicated funds. The Trustees pledged to work towards the target of presenting *Cingalee* to the public at the proposed Scapa 100 commemoration. This event, planned by Stromness Dive Boat skipper Emily Turton, to commemorate the scuttling of the German high seas fleet 21/06/1919 involved 3 days of activities centered on the Stromness Pier Head presenting a great opportunity for OHBS, along with a significant challenge in terms of funding and timely delivery. The first 8 months of this year were dominated by the project.



January; Cleaned off the worst dirt and moved *Cingalee* to shelter at Ness point for drying out. A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) was drawn up and a sub-group of Trustees tasked with fundraising and managing delivery as a 'ring fenced' project to safeguard OHBS core funds. Objectives were set which were only to be met and exceeded upon receipt of formal pledges of donations. Brian Pottinger and Roy Bichan took the lead on private fundraising and a grant application to OIC Scapa 100 Culture Fund respectively. Jimmy Clouston, Matthew Vaughton and Rod Daniel shared remaining tasks with Jimmy focusing on local oral and verifiable history and Matthew applying for a National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) First World War

Centenary grant. Matthew and Rod paid a visit to the National Archives, Kew where we searched for any further

information on *Cingalee* and in particular how she travelled from Portsmouth to Scapa Flow. The detailed story as now known can be seen on the OHBS website (ohbs.org). Go to Boats->OHBS Boats->Cingalee. We are as sure as can be that she traveled North up the W coast of Scotland as deck cargo on a yet unidentified RN ship. Several cargo manifests were seen to include 'wooden cutters' up to 40'. *Cingalee's* Official Logbook for 1914 shows her homeport changed from Portsmouth to Kirkwall on 1 August 1914 – the same week that the UK declared war on the German Empire.

Following National Historic Ships guidelines and conservation principals the emphasis was firstly on preservation – retaining the fabric or at least the salvageable fabric of the boat as far as possible in its existing state. Secondly restoration – returning existing fabric or parts of the fabric to a known earlier state and restoring form with minimal introduction of new material.

February - March: Phase 1 of the CMP broadly covered deep cleaning and stripping of all non-original material as judged by Ian Richardson. This phase was completed in late March with all rotten wood, unwanted non-original materials, old defective caulking, fittings and paint removed or stripped. During this month Brian received the 'Bingo' news that a major donation of roughly half our financial target was pledged by Repsol Sinopec, currently Flotta Oil Terminal owners, who effectively match-funded the other donations pledged and received. At the same time both the OIC Scapa 100 Culture Fund and NLHF granted *Cingalee* further significant funds, altogether allowing the sub-group to recommend to the Committee of Trustees that a bespoke trailer be purchased for *Cingalee* and possible uses on other large boats. Orders for marine quality paints from Jotun and general materials from another sponsor Wishart's of Stromness assisted us in moving forward with the CMP.



April: Phase 2 progressed with professionals Ian Richardson and Jeff Mackie becoming involved along with a corps of regular volunteers attending Ness shed, a storage facility donated, as a payment in kind to the project, by Angus Sinclair of Stromness. New larch was sourced, and new gunwales and aft deck beams were fitted by Ian Richardson to stiffen her sheer which was at risk of drooping. The lengthy task of re-caulking above and below the waterline and preparing the seams for a red lead traditional finish was a learning experience for a few of us who had not had the opportunity to carry out this type of traditional ship righting task previously. Other jobs such as cleaning the propeller and original metal parts including bollards and portholes, after taking them off,

were shared along with preparing a pattern for a traditional transom hung tiller and rudder assembly.

May: With less than two months until the Scapa 100 deadline *Cingalee* was moved to Ian/Jeff's shed so that working side by side professionals and volunteers could progress the work as fast as possible. Ian fitted new deck beams from aft and as far forward as the fo'c'sle whilst Jeff started repairing the unusual carvel 'turtle or whaleback fo'c'sle itself working from inside and out. Surrounded by a team of up to 6 volunteers working up hull finishes and completing various tasks was on occasion an exercise in choreography! A pier head location adjacent to the new library and Warehouse building in



Stromness was to be made available for the centenary event. A condition of some grants was that the restoration would be displayed to the public at venues across the County. Now the pressure to deliver an advanced 'work in progress' was officially on.



June: Ian cut the rudder roughs from new larch and volunteers under supervision shaped, assembled and finished the rudder and tiller. Care had been taken to keep fragments of the deepest and therefore assumed to be oldest colours seen on stripping the paint back to bare wood overall. An unusual green "antifouling" and an almost "British Racing Green" on the gunwales and rubbing strakes were obtained by customizing the Jotun products as nothing quite right was to be found in

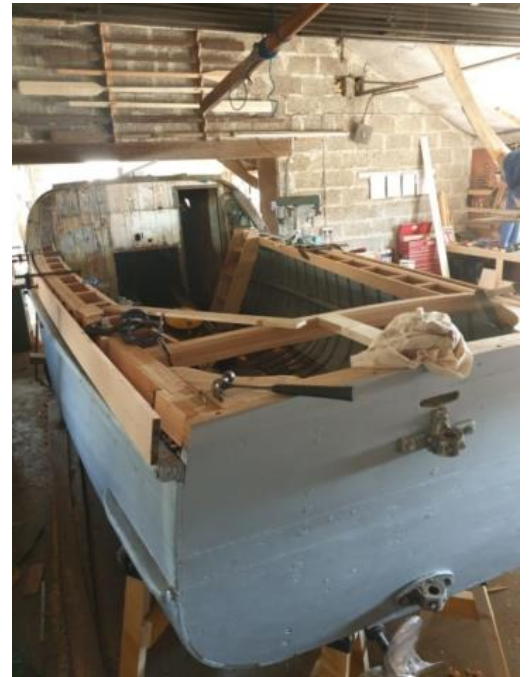
the current colour cards. In the run up to June 21st teams of volunteers were on *Cingalee* daily. The original mast, tracked down in Kirkwall, was found to have a solid brass peak staff which polished up nicely. Various metal fittings were either donated or 'sourced' and by Thursday 20th she was deemed ready and presentable albeit as clearly a 'work in progress'. A Trustee donated an Orkney flag burgee. Hemp for running rigging was bought from the Rope Centre, Stromness. *Cingalee* was positioned on station at 12.00 June 21st.

Feedback from the Scapa 100 visitors was very positive. In addition to the restoration work Matthew had built three display consoles and prepared a 'Timeline' historic presentation covering 1905-2019 and a children's 'interactive' terminal. Also, on display at the Stromness pier head, where the newly repainted OHBS marquee was set up, were hands on 'caulking' exercises for those who were interested.



July: *Cingalee*

returned to Ian & Jeff's shed where the fo'c'sle repairs were finished and side deck work tidied up. Caulking below the waterline was finished working around the trailer and she was back on the road for the Orkney Classic Motor Show, Dounby and County shows where it was clear that she attracted public interest. After the County show she returned to Ness and awaits caulking of the new side decks and some further work fitting flooring.





Thanks go to our principal sponsors, as listed on the website ohbs.org and in particular to the early and substantial donations which allowed strategic purchasing decisions to go ahead in time for us to deliver the project on schedule. **see ohbs.org for extensive detail and photos.**

Orkney Boat Haven *by Matthew Vaughton*

The Orkney Boat Haven will be a heritage centre for the collection, restoration and preservation of boats built in Orkney or that have contributed to Orkney life. The aim of the project is to construct a visitor centre and a heritage boat storage facility in Orkney.

For a long time OHBS has had a constitutional objective to establish a Boat Museum in Orkney. Initially we are proposing a Boat Haven as opposed to a fully accredited museum. While museum status remains our long-term objective, in the short-term we want to keep the project scope achievable.

Two years ago, with grant funding, OHBS commissioned a professional feasibility study and has since been working with Orkney Islands Council to agree a suitable site and access. Currently the preferred site for the Boat Haven is the old Copland's Boat Yard on the side of the Hamnavoe in Stromness.



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During 2019 OHBS ran a competition to find an architect for the project, Reiach and Hall Architects of Edinburgh were selected as the most suitable. Meetings have also been held with local professionals to provide specific project services. Orkney Islands Council support the Boat Haven being at Copland's Boat Yard and the project was well supported by Stromness residents in the 2019 Stromness Local Place Plan.

We are now at an early stage of determining how to raise the substantial funds that will be required to establish a Boat Haven at Copland's Boat Yard. The challenge associated with raising the funds needed to progress the project are significant, so we are maintaining a flexible approach and alternative plans have not been entirely ruled out.

Launching New Connections Across the Northern Isles – a virtual maritime museum by *Cait McCullagh*

Located at a crossroads in the North Atlantic, the Northern Isles have participated in long-distance trading, exchange and migrations of people, ideas, knowledges and cultures for millennia. Today, they are sometimes described as peripheries. The 'New Connections Across the Northern Isles' project focused on assembling a more resilient perspective from the centres of these North Atlantic crossroads, bringing together 24 people from communities throughout each island group, all of whom are sustaining engagement with their environments and cultures through caring for and about the local and global maritime heritages that are found across Orkney and Shetland. The Orkney Historic Boat Society was well-represented by Jimmy Clouston, Rod Daniel and Jeff Mackie, sharing their knowledges, expertise and curatorial skills in and for Orkney's traditional and historic boats.



Drawn from several islands, these co-curators, representing, alongside members from OHBS, Shetland Museum and Archives; Westray Heritage Centre; the Orkney Museum; Old Haa, Yell, and Cunningsburgh History Group; along with members of their wider communities, came together in hands-on and video-conferenced workshops to co-curate a virtual museum of people and the sea in the Northern Isles that includes new interpretations, photography, films, 3D models, and artworks.



The virtual museum launched in May of this year, accompanied by temporary exhibitions in both the Orkney and Shetland Museums, as well as a half-day conference in each location. In all, forty-plus people participated at each event. The Society's Chair, Jimmy Clouston was invited to speak at the Kirkwall Conference, and gave an inspiring account, both of OHBS' work and vision, and of the value of collaborating with others to compare, contrast and share the perspectives on the cultural resourcefulness of maritime pasts, present, and hoped-for futures to the fore.

The co-curation of this new resource was facilitated by PhD student, and OHBS member, Catherine (Cait) McCullagh, of Heriot-Watt University. Through Cait's research, "New Connections" drew on contributions from around 100 people including: boat builders, sailors, merchant mariners, fishers, archaeologists, musicians, marine spatial planners, historians, folklorists and storytellers, people who work in tourism, and many others. Together with them she has been exploring how maritime heritages and heritage-making can help to sustain what are often called fragile environments.

The new virtual museum, part-funded by Museums Galleries Scotland, shares stories, objects, images, music, making, and islands-based knowledge from these centres shaped by surrounding seas. The contemporary interpretations include 3D models of objects that are not normally on public display, historic and new sound recordings, and new creative responses - including new artworks by Shetland-born and Stromness-based artist John Cumming.

There are also seven new films that bring us up-close to people practicing and celebrating their maritime cultures, including wooden boat building in Orkney with Jeff Mackie; sailing on the Shetland sixern Vaila Mae with Ailish Parham; exploring Marwick Bay with singer and songwriter Sarah Jane Gibbon; and celebrating maritime musical exchanges across the North Atlantic with Shetland fiddler Catriona Macdonald. In other films, co-curators Ruth

Peace, Hughie Adamson, Pat Christie, Jimmy Clouston, John Cumming, Rena Nisbet and Jenny Murray share personal reflections on why being involved with maritime cultures and the environment of the sea both matters now, and for sustaining people in Orkney and Shetland into the futures that they hope for.

Visit the 'New Connections' Virtual Museum at <https://irc.hw.ac.uk/new-connections.html>

ACQUISITIONS 2019

June – ORCADIAN *by Jimmy Clouston*

An early Merlin racing dinghy built 1949-50 at Lyness. Orcadian is reputed to be the first of the Merlin/Merlin Rocket class of racing dinghy to hit the leisure sailing scene in Orkney. Plans for racing dinghies designed by famous designers such as Ian Proctor, Jack Holt, Uffa Fox, etc could be bought relatively cheaply and any competent amateur boat builder could build highly competitive boats that were light to launch and fast to sail. Designs such as the Merlin, Merlin Rocket, Redwing and International Snipe were emerging and the days of keelboats, Orkney Yoles and Orkney Dinghies were drawing to a close.



Permission (license) to build a Merlin was obtained from Yachting World Magazine in January 1948 by Jock Barbour who lived just north of Lyness at Mill Bay. Yachting World had sponsored the design of a new light weight dinghy; decked for stiffness but capable of being easily handled both on the water and on land and towable by the average family car of the time when fuel rationing was still in force.

The dinghy was built by Davy Wilson at Ore, Lyness mainly from old floorboards using plans purchased from the designer Jack Holt. As a result of re-using old materials the boat was slightly on the heavy side which meant she was best sailed with a tall weighty crew in a fresh breeze.

Orcadian was sailed by Jock Barbour and Jimmy Wylie at most regattas in Orkney during the early 1950s winning many trophies. When Jock Barbour left Orkney he left the boat to Jimmy Wylie who continued to sail her successfully for many years.

The 'Rousay Regatta' report in the Orcadian newspaper of 1951 stated that Jimmy Wylie, originally a Rousay man, had sailed 'Orcadian' from Lyness to Scapa, arranged a lift for his boat on the back of a lorry from Scapa to Kirkwall and then sailed from Kirkwall to Rousay to attend the regatta – quite a feat in a tippy 14ft sailing boat.

July - 'Shamrock' dinghy *by Michael McLaughlin*

'Shamrock' is a 13' larch on oak transom dinghy built in late 1940s at the Stromness boatyard of J W Mackay, a third generation boatbuilder originally from the small island of Fara. Research has identified that the actual builder was one of Jimmy Mackay's employee boatbuilders, a Tommy Corrigan from Walls, who was also Jimmy's brother-in-law. While the boat is in reasonable condition, she has suffered some deterioration due to lying upturned in a grassy spot, open to the elements. The stem is beginning to open starboard and the gunwales show some rot, but all strokes and the stem, keel, transom are good. She was originally fitted for a lugsail mast, but there is no evidence that she was ever used for sailing.



She was originally owned by Stromness fisherman Willick Sinclair, who bought her for £27 from Jimmy Mackay in 1948, when he was 14 years old. This was Willick's first boat, and he used her to row across to the Holms (two small islands forming the east side of the Stromness harbour) after school, on suitable tide conditions, to collect whelks. Later, he used her to fish for eels in Stenness Loch, before moving on to creel fishing in bigger boats at the age of 16. Willick is still fishing today - at the age of 85! - in his 38ft square-sterned creel boat, Merlin 11, built in Pia Anderson's yard at Ness Point, Stromness, in 1969.

August - Waterlily (known as 'Lily') *by Michael McLaughlin*

A small North Isles yole of 14ft length and 6ft beam. With dipping lug sail and jib. mast and spars, oars and sails, she is a rare example of a 150-year-old traditional wooden boat in original condition. The only 'alteration' being that she was re-nailed with copper nails to prevent any danger to her strength and form by the inevitable deterioration of her original iron nailing. She was re-nailed just after the turn of the 19th century by an uncle of the family who owned her when he worked as a boatbuilder in the famous Maxwell's boatyard in Kirkwall

Reputedly built in Eday around 1870-1880, possibly by Robert Miller of Sandybank, who was a boat builder in Eday from the mid-1850s to c1910.

Waterlily had been in the Foulis family in Deerness, Orkney, for 5 generations, being used for family fishing trips and leisure sailing. The boat was never registered for commercial fishing during their ownership.





OHBS decided to save the *Arne Kjøde* lifeboat (AKL) because of its significant background story regarding the sinking of the *Arne Kjøde*, the story of which can be read in the following article. Because of its subsequent history in Swona the AKL is a unique part of Orkney maritime heritage.

According to Cyril Annal, who donated the lifeboat, it survived an attempt to sink it, by a British trawler fitted with a gun, after the occupants were rescued. When the AKL didn't sink, the trawler towed it

to Stroma. Once adjacent to the harbour the trawler blasted its horn, at 6.00 in the morning, until islanders came off on a boat and towed the swamped lifeboat ashore.

The Stroma men were going to use the timber to build hen houses but James Rosie of Swona, across for a visit, said he could repair the damage and subsequently bought her. He repaired the damage and fitted an engine, cabin and seating, etc with the intention that she would be used as a backup ferry for the Hood, their usual ferry. As it turned out, due to difficulty securing a reliable engine, she was hardly ever used and has lain on the shore at Herston for many years. Surprisingly the timber of the hull is still in very good condition with no signs of rot. The fact that she was built using copper fastenings has helped her survival.

Several work sessions by Matthew, Rod and others took place at her location on the shore to remove the cabin, bench seats and the engine in order to make her light enough to haul further up the slope and be liftable by a Hiab Lorry. Once cleared of all bruck she was successfully lifted onto the lorry and transported to storage in Stromness for a period of drying out.

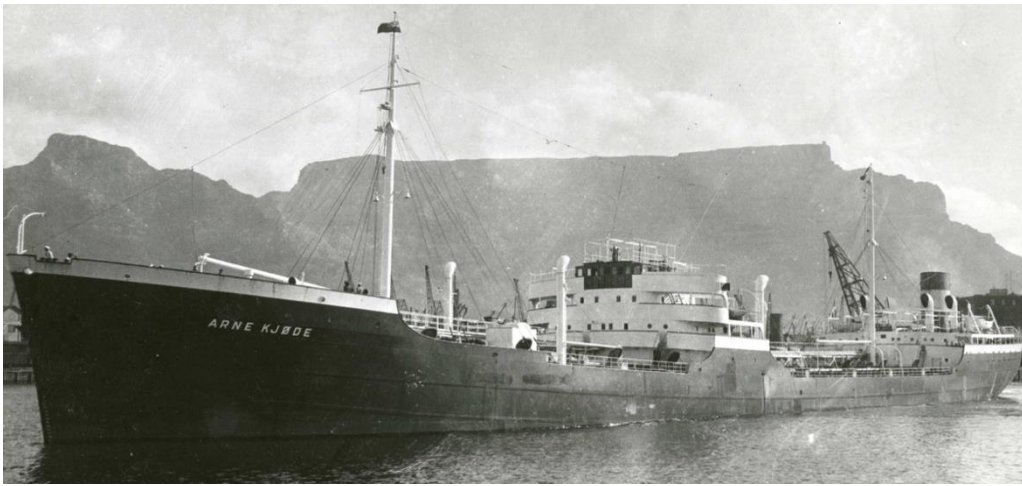
When under cover further work was done to clear out the last vestiges of debris and to remove all non-original additions such as the propeller and shaft. You can view the full story of her recovery on the OHBS website at ohbs.net/preserved-boats/lifeboat-ex-arne-kjode/



All non-original material was removed before transporting to Stromness.



AKL in her new home

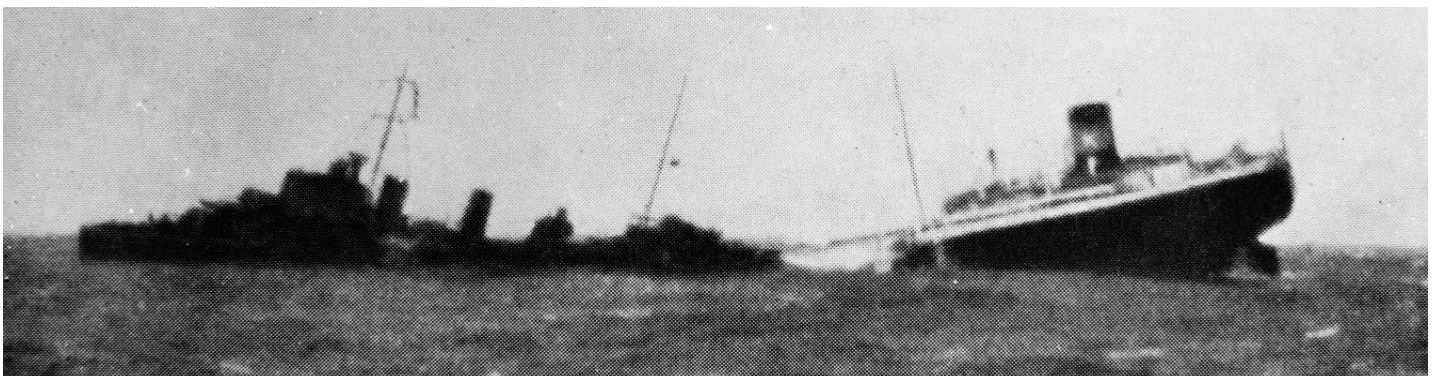


The M/T *Arne Kjøde* was a Norwegian motor tanker, registered in Bergen and with an all Norwegian crew of 40. The ship departed Aruba (Southern Caribbean) on the 27th October 1939 bound for Nyborg (Denmark) with a cargo of gasoil. The passage was uneventful until the 12th November when, NNW of the Outer Hebrides, the ship was hit by a torpedo, from a

U-boat, which caused a mighty explosion. The crew all rushed to the lifeboat deck aft and begun to swing out the two lifeboats. The ship broke in two just aft of the midships bridge and the two sections floated away from each other.

The starboard lifeboat fell during the lowering process, flinging all the occupants into the water and injuring some of them. The port lifeboat was lowered successfully and rescued the crew in the water. Some of the crew transferred to the starboard lifeboat once it had been bailed and its contents rescued. The two lifeboats set off together with 23 men in the port boat, led by the First Officer, and 17 in the damaged starboard boat led by the Captain. The compass in the starboard boat had broken so the port boat took in tow and they began to sail southwards to reach land. The seas rose during the night as they headed towards Butt of Lewis lighthouse which they could now see to the east. In the early hours of the 13th November the tow broke and the boats drifted apart. By morning the two boats were no longer in sight of each other. The port boat re-raised its sail and continued to sail until they were picked up by the Grimsby trawler *Night Hawk* in the early hours of the 14th November and taken to Stornoway.

Meanwhile, the damaged starboard lifeboat, which needed constant bailing due to damage at the waterline, also raised its sail on the morning of the 13th November and attempted to sail towards land using the sun as a guide. However, the weather worsened so they lowered sail and lay to a drogue. During the morning of the 14th the boat, which was floating heavily due to a waterlogged air tank, was rolled by a large breaker. 10 of the crew managed to get on to the upturned hull, and when they righted the boat, they found two more crew alive under it. However, the captain and the steward drifted away, the injured galley-boy and the cook drowned, and another boatman was left unconscious and eventually died. The remaining crew attempted to hold the boat's head up to the wind with the one oar remaining. In the afternoon of the same day they were spotted by an aircraft and then rescued by *HMS Isis* somewhere north of Cape Wrath. The aft section of M/T *Arne Kjøde* was still drifting eastwards and was taken in tow by *HMS Isis* before the wind and sea rose too much so the tow had to be cut. *HMS Isis* fired at the aft section to sink it, and it caught fire immediately and did sink. *HMS Isis* then sailed to Scapa Flow where the 12 survivors were transferred to the hospital ship *Greenwich*.



HMS Isis & the aft section of Arne Kjøde, (presumably taken from HMS Guardian as it was the naval ship which went along to take over the tow, hung around while HMS Isis sank it, and then went back to Scapa Flow in company with Isis. Reproduced with kind permission of Bergens Sjøfartsmuseum

November - Venture by James Clouston

c1960 Yachting World Catamaran

“Yachting World” magazine sponsored the design of a small, cheap, one-design catamaran in the early 1960s. The catamaran was designed by the prolific multi-hull designer James Roderick MacApline-Downie (1934 – 1986).

Venture was built in Kirkwall by Jim Taylor around 1960 and probably launched in 1961/2. Venture is one of the last surviving examples of an Orkney built YW Cat from a one-time fleet of around a dozen in Orkney. The YW Cat was purely used for racing and when introduced in Orkney caused a bit of a stir within the traditional mono-hull racing community.



Jim Taylor borrowed the mould for building his two hulls from Donald Thomson who had to build the moulds before he could build his own YW Cat. Jim Taylor is reputed to have complete and launch Venture the day before Donald Thomson launched his first boat *Osprey*.

All the YW cats had identical hulls and sails which kept the racing close and competitive. One YW Cat is reported to have recorded a speed of 24 knots on the radar of a Fishery Protection Vessel at a Stromness Regatta.

Venture had lain at Longhope for some time before being recovered by OHBS. Some restoration is required to the decking and paint work, but she is otherwise in a recoverable state.



OHBS Workgroup Activities Blog

All members can follow the progress of the regular workgroup volunteers who like to do work renovating and restoring our boat collection. This is in the form of an online Blog which can be accessed at

<https://ohbsworkgroup.blogspot.com/>

Mackay Boatbuilders of Fara, Finstown and Stromness by Michael McLaughlin

James Stout Mackay (McKay) (1854-1900) was a boatbuilder from, Stony Quoy, later Deep Geo, on the island of Fara in Scapa Flow, Orkney. Son of a farmer Robert Mackay, he married Isabella Simpson, daughter of master carpenter/boatbuilder William Simpson of Cauldhame, Flotta. It is likely that James learned his boatbuilding skills from his father-in-law. He is known to have started boatbuilding in Fara during the late 1870s and continued until his death in 1900, age 46.

James and Isabella had three sons, James, Robert and William, who all became boat carpenters. Their elder son, James Simpson Mackay (1877- until about 1925, when is last recorded in Peace's Almanac as a boatbuilder in Fara. He is then next recorded in Peace's Almanac as a boatbuilder at North End, Stromness, in 1929. James married Isabella Manson of Flotta in 1905 and they had two sons, James William Mackay and George Calder Mackay.



James (Jimmy) William Mackay (1905-1982) became a third generation boatbuilder, working with his father in Stromness, originally at Oakdene in the North End, before taking over the business himself under the name J W Mackay. He married Ellen Corrigan from Walls in 1936, and they had a daughter, Eleanor Mackay, born in 1945.

JW Mackay's boat yard at the Transit Shed in Stromness. Jimmy Mackay on the right and George Mackay varnishing the dinghy

In the early 1940s, Jimmy moved to building boats in a former kippering house on the harbour front below Victoria Street. After the war he discovered a lucrative export market for mahogany clinker-built dinghies, and began specialising in this area, moving to bigger premises in part of the former 'Thornley Binders' factory at the North Pier. He moved south to Ayr with his family in 1963 and continued to build dinghies in Ayrshire for many years. The J W Mackay boatbuilders business in Stromness was firstly taken over by Len Wilson, and then in 1965 by Arthur Sinclair, who had served his time with Stromness boatbuilder, Pia Anderson. Arthur then built a series of lobster fishing boats, up to 36ft in length, throughout the 1970s, before the yard finally closed.

James Simpson Mackay's two younger brothers, Robert (1880-1941) and William (b1881) moved from Fara to Finstown in Mainland Orkney in 1910, setting up a boatyard at Maitland Place under the name of R & W Mackay, where they continued building boats until about 1940.

National Historic Ships – Shipshape Network

Rod continues to post regular 3 monthly updates of our activities to the national Historic Ships -Shipshape Network website at <https://www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/shipshape-network/region/scotland>.

Website and Facebook page

Keep up to date with all our activities by visiting our website at ohbs.org and/or our Facebook page at

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

Wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year
Jimmy Clouston - Editor