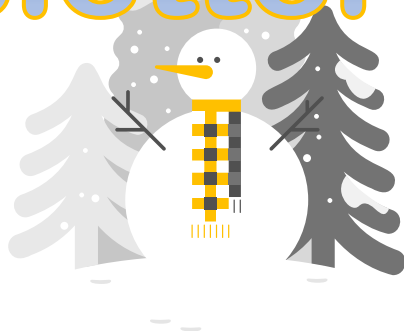


Newsletter

2023



2023 represented a return to more normal activities for OHBS, albeit with a successful change of our main working and storage location. Our move to the Old Herring Factory in Stromness required some work altering the building internal layout and the installation of a few new facilities. While an existing loading bay door allowed us to move a number of the smaller boats into the building, we are still waiting for contractors to complete the installation of a larger boat door. Once that has been completed, we should be able to move some of the larger boats & trailers into the main work & storage area.

During the early part of 2023 we were largely occupied with getting the Old Herring Factory fitted out and operational. We did however manage to hold an Open Day in-conjunction with the Orkney Men's Shed which allowed local visitors to come into the building and see what we were doing. The arrival of the summer, with better weather, allowed us to show off a few of our boats in Stromness. Three boats were displayed at the Old Northern Lighthouse Board Pier in Stromness during the Stromness Shopping Week.

Work has been continuing on finding a location for an Orkney Historic Boat Haven. A request for space made in early 2023 was turned down by the relevant council board by 3 votes to 2. We are at present working with a consultant at Voluntary Action Orkney to progress our request for suitable space using a different approach.

OHBS remains indebted to the property owners who continue to support us by allowing us to store our boat collection in their sheds. Without their generosity, Orkney's maritime heritage would be lost forever.

Matthew Vaughton

OHBS AGM 2023

At this year's Annual General Meeting in September the current in-post officers remained unchanged. The OHBS Chair is Michael McLaughlin, the Vice-Chair is Jimmy Clouston and the Treasurer is Harky Hutchison. Sue Paice remains Minutes Secretary and Matthew Vaughton continues looking after Membership, Media and Communications. There are currently 12 members serving as trustees of the Society.



The Old Herring Factory – The First Year

With a 10 year lease finally signed in October 2022 we could officially start work at the Old Herring Factory. We had been permitted to store some materials in the Old Herring Factory prior to the lease being signed but we were not permitted to do any work on the premises.

One early job was to remove some internal walls which was necessary to allow us to move small boats into the storage area via an existing loading bay door.

A lot of work was required to remove all the old plumbing fittings which were no longer used and we did not require. Pipework, valves, sinks, large storage tank and a pressure vessel were all removed from our area.



Having removed a lot of items we then had to install all the facilities that we required. High on the list of necessities were a couple of long-life fire extinguishers and the provision of numerous safety notices and signage.



Having previously been a factory almost all the electrical sockets in our area were positioned on the ceiling so we installed extension cables to bring the power down to more accessible wall mounted sockets. We also installed a centrally positioned cable reel which allows a heavy electric cable to be pulled out enabling us to cover all of the main work area. Motion sensor activated lights in several areas were found to be unreliable so were removed in favour of conventional light switches.

A small amount of plumbing work was required to get cold water available in our kitchen. This is important for both cleaning and tea making.

Seized lock barrels on a number of storage rooms were broken out and replaced with new barrels so that we now have a couple of lockable storage rooms for our power tools and other equipment. Modifications to other doors to add or reattach pull handles made them more user friendly.

Coat hook rails were relocated to more useful positions for our use and old OHBS banners, and donated charts, were put up on free wall space to add interest.

Outside a new sign was acquired to mount on existing poles at the front of the building to show where we were located. A further sign, by the OHBS entrance door, was constructed using recovered 100 year old wood. Having not received any maintenance for over 10 years the surrounding gravelled area was treated with weed killer. The rear compound was cleaned up which required the removal of numerous trailer loads of inherited rubbish followed by the pressure washing off of accumulated plant material.



The Old Herring Factory is more weather resistant than our previous work location so more comfortable to work in. We are finding work now starts earlier in the morning which allows time for the all-important tea break.



We are still waiting for the large boat door installation to be completed. The outside ramp has been built and the steel door frame installed. The roller door and associated electrical work still needs to be finished, then the old wall can be cut through and edges trimmed. Once completed we will be able to move some of the larger boats and trailers into the storage area.



Removing inherited rubbish from the rear compound

A more detailed record of volunteer activities can be found on the OHBS Workgroup blog here: <https://ohbsworkgroup.blogspot.com/>



Bookan Emptied

For many years OHBS has stored some of its boats, trailers and other artefacts free of charge in a farm shed at Bookan Farm just north of the Ring of Brodgar. With the availability of the Old Herring Factory which has both inside and outside storage space we have been able to move all our boats & artefacts from Bookan to the Old Herring Factory and start to consolidate the Orkney Historic Boat fleet in one location. OHBS remains indebted to the owner for the use of this storage space.



The last boat moves out of Bookan



Nellie & AKL in the Ness Shed

The Ness Shed

While OHBS has moved out of Bookan we still have a few boats in storage in the Ness Boatyard Shed. These boats may eventually be moved to the Old Herring Factory but not before the large boat door installation has been completed. We are not currently working on any of the boats still at Ness. Cleanup and painting of Nellie stopped when we moved to the Old Herring Factory but we will recommence work once we can get her inside at the Old Herring Factory.

Nellie gets a special visit

In July Nellie received a very special visit from a lady, now in her 90s, whose family at one time owned Nellie. As a young girl aged 9-10, in the early 1940's, she used to crew on the boat to assist with steering if the engine faltered, as it sometimes did, on trips out of Kirkwall to the North Isles. She noticed several alterations which had been made since she had last seen Nellie many years ago.

Find out more about Nellie here:

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



An Orkney Historic Boat Haven

Newsletter 2021

“OHBS is also working with the council on the establishment of a Boat Haven in Stromness which will be open to the public. The site currently under consideration as a Boat Haven is the Old Buoy Store at the Pole Star Pier in Stromness.”

Newsletter 2022

“We are currently in the process of formally requesting a lease on the premises and hope to have a response from the council early in the new year. If successful with the request there will still be many hurdles to be overcome as the building will require a ‘change of use’ planning application, a build warrant and then to be fitted out as a public location.”

Well, here we are again in 2023!

Our discussions with Orkney Islands Council (OIC) regarding acquiring the lease of the long-time vacant Buoy Store on the Pole Star Pier in Stromness for use as an Orkney Historic Boat Haven have been ongoing for over two years now. A lot of work was put into the formal request in January this year, but this was rejected by the Asset Management Sub-committee by a 3 to 2 majority. The subsequent advice from OIC officers was that we need to produce full plans for our proposed use of the building, together with architectural plans and a fully fleshed out business case.

The advice also encouraged us to work with Davie Campbell, based at Voluntary Action Orkney, who has a very strong track record of securing funding and developing business cases, and would be willing to assist us. We have met with Davie regularly since September, and progress is being made.

Recent developments have given us the ‘go ahead’ to make another attempt at acquiring the use of the vacant Buoy Store. There will, of course, still be many steps to take and many challenges ahead before we can create a Boat Haven.

We hope, however, that by the time of writing the 2024 Newsletter, there will be some exciting news regarding our long-held aspiration to have an Orkney Historic Boat Haven, where we will be able to display the boats, together with the history of their uses, as well as the stories of the many skilled boatbuilders in Orkney over the years, and much more!

Waterwitch is 100

Waterwitch was 100 in May 2023. Having been stored inside for the past three years at Bookan Farm it was time to get her a little damp again and let the timbers absorb some moisture. We brought her down to the Old Herring Factory in early March (in the snow) and she has been stored outside through the summer. The engine needs a service and some paintwork needs touching up but we are waiting until we can get her inside before we start this work.



Waterwitch featured at the Open Day event held at the Old Herring Factory in March and at the Stromness Shopping Week event in July.

To find out more about the story of Waterwitch see the OHBS website: <https://www.ohbs.net/preserved-boats/waterwitch/>

Open Day at the Old Herring Factory

In March, in conjunction with Orkney Men's Shed (who share space in the Old Herring Factory with OHBS) we held an Open Day. Visitors were free to roam around the OHBS area, look at the boats which we had inside and outside, and see the restoration work currently in progress.



Boatbuilders' Workbench

Our original plan had been to construct two work benches of similar size but, once we had access to the Old Herring Factory to properly assess available space, we decided that one large work bench would be more useful. The required materials arrived at the Old Herring Factory in early February 2023. Work then started on fabricating the leg units. Since we needed three identical leg units of a heavy construction these were built off-site using a jig which ensured all the leg units came out exactly the same size.

The two sides of the work top of the bench were glued up on the floor at the Old Herring Factory. These work top boards were then attached to the leg units with large bolts. Additional structural members were added to keep everything ridged. A trough was positioned in the middle of the work top (to help to stop tools rolling off the bench top) and a shelf was added below the worktop.

Finally, a heavy wood-working vice was fitted at one end of the table and a skirt board added around the vice. The completed work bench was moved into its final position in early April and has been in use ever since.



Materials arrive



Design plans



Building the leg units

Part of the cost of constructing the workbench was met by £550 received from the Orkney Islands Council Culture Fund.



ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL



Putting it all together



Glue up of the worktop



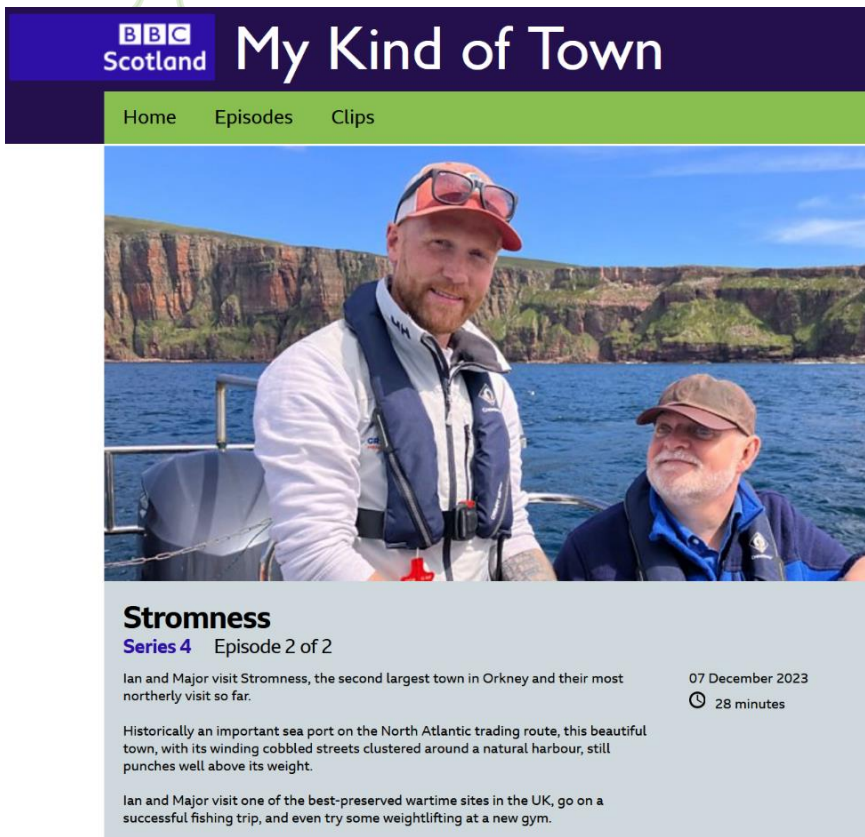
Testing prototype

All complete



My Kind of Town

In August OHBS was visited by the broadcaster Ian Hamilton, along with his guide dog 'Major' and his production team, as part of their visit to Stromness. Stromness features in Series 4 of the BBC Scotland programme 'My Kind of Town' and the Stromness episode first aired on the 7 December 2023. It remains available via BBC iPlayer.



The screenshot shows the BBC Scotland website for the 'My Kind of Town' programme. The header includes the BBC Scotland logo and the title 'My Kind of Town'. Below the header is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Episodes', and 'Clips'. The main content area features a large photo of two men on a boat in Stromness. Below the photo, the title 'Stromness' is displayed, followed by 'Series 4 Episode 2 of 2'. A short description reads: 'Ian and Major visit Stromness, the second largest town in Orkney and their most northerly visit so far.' The date '07 December 2023' and duration '28 minutes' are also shown. A longer description follows: 'Historically an important sea port on the North Atlantic trading route, this beautiful town, with its winding cobbled streets clustered around a natural harbour, still punches well above its weight.' The final line of text states: 'Ian and Major visit one of the best-preserved wartime sites in the UK, go on a successful fishing trip, and even try some weightlifting at a new gym.'



Stromness Shopping Week

Initially inspired by Stromness being designated a 'Cruise in Company' port for this year's Tall Ships Race, we planned a display of a small selection of our traditional Orkney yoles at the Pole Star Pier in Stromness on the Thursday, Friday & Saturday of Stromness Shopping Week. The pier, formerly owned by the Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB), is referred to locally as the Pole Star Pier, which reflects its use as the home base of the NLB's lighthouse tender Pole Star.

Three boats were prepared for display; Lagertha, Laverne and Waterwitch were all spruced up before being towed through town to the pier. The council had given us permission to leave the boats inside the old Buoy Store on the pier at night so there was no need to keep towing them backwards and forwards daily during the three days on which they were on display to the public. We had a good number of folk come in to see and talk about the boats while they were on display.



Lagertha, Laverne & Waterwitch



Lagertha inside at the old Buoy Store

Lagertha - A Viking Shield-Maiden

Early in the year OHBS was offered a donation of an Orkney yole named Lagertha together with her road trailer. The yole was built in 2017 at the Boat Building Academy in Lyme Regis, Dorset to plans supplied by OHBS trustee Ian Richardson. The builder was Roderick Anderson Boyle, a bushcraft specialist who wanted to learn wooden boat building. Rod had died suddenly in January and having connections with Orkney, the family offered the yole and road trailer to OHBS.



Lagertha in the sun at the Dorset boatyard

The trustees decided that OHBS should accept the offer and bring Lagertha up to Orkney. As there was no direct connection with Orkney, OHBS accepted the donation as an asset rather than as an addition to the historic fleet.



Although built to traditional Orkney yole lines Lagertha was built using modern materials and techniques. Instead of the traditional clinker (overlapping) planking supported by rivetted timmers (ribs) Lagertha was built using a new timber technology in the form of Vendia marine plank from Finland with planks being glued together so no timmers were required.

The main raw material of Vendia is slow grown Finnish pine. Planks are made of sliced veneers. Face veneers are made of knot-free pine or 'A' grade

mahogany and core veneers of pine. Face veneer options are crown cut or quarter cut. Vendia is both strong and resilient and has the ability to take modern finishes and glue plank seams. It produces a durable boat which is better for dry sailing (no need to swell the planks to seal the joints) but with the appearance of a traditionally planked clinker boat.

Lagertha has an oak centreline and is Gaboon marine ply below the waterline.

Lagertha had been in covered storage for five years, having only been in the sea once or twice in 2017/8, and came with spars & sails so was in a "as new" condition. The boat was stored at a boatyard in Dorset a few miles north of Weymouth. The next problem was how to move Lagertha 575 miles from Dorset to Orkney as cheaply as possible.



One OHBS volunteer flew from Kirkwall to Bristol a couple of days before we had arranged to meet with the family donating Lagertha, at the Boatyard in Dorset. We all met up at the boatyard in very pleasant weather on a Saturday morning. Our boatyard contact was Geoff Bowker of [Bowker Marine Services](#). Geoff was of great assistance all the time we were at the boatyard. The plan was to service the trailer, hook up to a borrowed tow vehicle and depart Saturday evening. Now the fun started...

While checking the trailer in preparation for the long road trip we discovered that one wheel bearing was partially seized and grinding badly, there was no hope of this bearing going to survive a 575 mile road trip. So, we had to remove the wheel, easy, we then had to remove the brake drum. However, there was no way that the brake drum was going to come off without the brake shoes coming off with it. Lack of use had caused the inside of the brake drum to corrode and 'trap' the pads inside the drum. Despite having a fully tooled up machine workshop at our disposal we ended up pulling the brake drum and brake shoes off at the same time with some springs getting bent as a result. We then pushed the old bearing out of the brake drum and tried to find a replacement late on a Saturday afternoon. It was apparent that we were not departing that day so we had to adjust our plan and stay over a few days longer.



After several days of searching, ordering consumables & spares we had all the bits we needed to fix the problem so the following Wednesday we returned to the boatyard in Dorset to rebuild the trailer. Unlike the previous Saturday, which had very nice weather, we now had atrocious rain and poor visibility. With no wheels the trailer was stuck in the open so we got a little damp while fixing the brakes and re-attaching the wheels.

With everything fixed and tied down we managed a late afternoon departure from the boatyard for the long drive north, albeit in heavy rain. The overnight drive was uneventful and the rain cleared as we crossed into Scotland. We caught the evening ferry from Scrabster to Stromness and arrived at Ian Richardson's shed around 21:30 to park Lagertha.

Lagertha was subsequently moved from Ian's shed to the Old Herring Factory compound. She has since been experimentally rigged and also appeared in public alongside the traditionally built yoles Laverne & Waterwitch during

Stromness Shopping Week. Lagertha is a fine example of the evolution of the Orkney yole design making use of modern materials and techniques while retaining a proven hull shape.



At Ian's Shed

Geoff Bowker with the 8' Gartside Pram he was building in oak & mahogany

Lagertha boat builder - Roderick Anderson Boyle (1966 -2023) and his Orkney connection

research by Michael McLaughlin

The story of Mary Tulloch (1872-1961) who came from North Ronaldsay

Roderick's interest in, and love for, Orkney were inspired by his paternal grandfather, William Boyle (1911-1981). He was very proud of his Orkney heritage, and this resulted in many visits to Orkney over the years. Although he knew that his grandfather's mother was born in North Ronaldsay and that his grandfather had contact with a cousin from North Ronaldsay, by the name of Lizzie Tulloch, as far as we know he did not manage to make direct contact with descendants of the family or put together the family connections.

Research work by OHBS has managed to 'fill in the blanks' and put together the Boyle family connections with North Ronaldsay.

William Boyle's mother was a Mary Tulloch who was born in North Ronaldsay in 1872, her parents being Mary Swanney (1841-1884) of Upper Cott and Thomas Tulloch (1830-1880), a farmer/fisherman of Westness. Mary's father, Thomas, died in 1880 at the age of 50, when Mary was still very young. She appears in the 1881 Census at Westness, age 8, along with an elder brother Thomas (age 9), younger sister Sarah (age 5), and her widowed mother Mary (age 39), who worked a small farm of 9 acres.

Times would have been very difficult for the family but were to become much more difficult for the children, when their mother died only four years later in 1884 at the age of 43, and Mary was only aged 12. In the 1891 Census, her brother Thomas (age 20) and sister Sarah (age 15) are living at the farm of Cott with an uncle, William Swanney, their mother's brother. At this time Mary (age 18), however, is to be found living at Eastbrae, Kirkwall, and working as a domestic servant in the household of the widow Alexina Spence and her three unmarried daughters.



In the 1901 Census, Mary (age 28) is now found living at 7 Inverleith Row, Leith, Edinburgh one of five domestic servants (laundry maid) in the household of Robert W Wallace W.S. (Writer to the Signet = Solicitor? - ed)

Later that same year, however, she married John Boyle, from Cavan, Ireland, who was a Marine Coal Trimmer, based in Leith Docks. Mary and John remained in the Leith/Edinburgh area and had four children, all boys, with Roderick's grandfather, William, being the third child, born in 1911. In the 1911 Census the family were living at 3 Union Place, Trinity, Leith, and John continued to work as a Marine Coal Trimmer.

In 1921, the family were living at 3 Bathfield Road, Leith, and John is now recorded as a dock labourer employed by the North of Scotland Ship Co - or The North of Scotland, Orkney & Shetland Steam Navigation Company, to give it its full title. It's possible that this change of employment could well have been brought about as health consequences of his many years of very physical work in cramped conditions, full of coal dust.

Roderick's great-grandmother, Mary (Tulloch) Boyle, died in Newington, Leith, in 1961 at the age of 88 years, while his grandfather, William Boyle, died in Edinburgh in 1981 at the age of 70 years.

The story of Lizzie Ann Tulloch (1905 -1986)

The search for Roderick’s grandfather’s cousin started with the knowledge that she was called Lizzie Tulloch, and that she was believed to be unmarried and continued to live in North Ronaldsay.

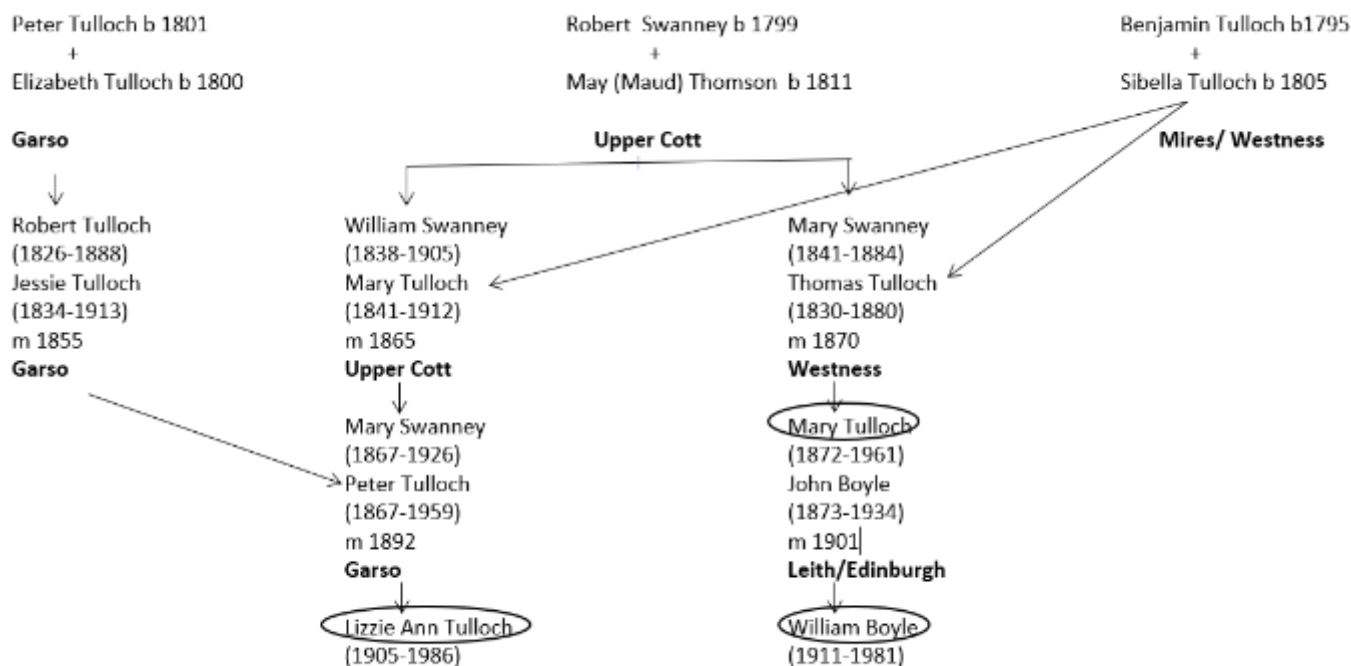
It also helped in this instance of research that the name Lizzie turned out not to be a diminutive of Elizabeth, but, in fact, was her ‘given’ name at birth, being recorded on her birth certificate as Lizzie Ann Tulloch. It is interesting to note that she is subsequently listed as ‘Elizabeth’ Ann Tulloch on her death certificate!

Lizzie Ann Tulloch was born in 1905 at Garso, North Ronaldsay, to parents Peter Tulloch, fisherman/crofter, and Mary Tulloch (m/s Swanney). This Mary Tulloch (m/s Swanney), originally from Upper Cott, being a first cousin of Mary Tulloch (m/s Swanney) now at Westness. So, the direct connection was not actually through the Tulloch family line, but through the Swanney family.

Mary’s father was William Swanney of Upper Cott, who was an uncle of Mary Tulloch, now at Westness, and he took in Mary, together with her brother and sister, following the death of their widowed mother Mary (Swanney) Tulloch in 1884.

Lizzie Ann Tulloch was one of seven children of Peter and Mary Tulloch. She never married and died at Garso in 1986, aged 80 years.

She was a 2nd cousin of William Boyle, born in 1911 in Edinburgh.



New Acquisitions in 2023

Sheena - donated by Kenneth Nicolson

Sheena was built for William Nicholson of Balfour village, Shapinsay and launched at Kirkwall from the James Maxwell yard in May 1947.

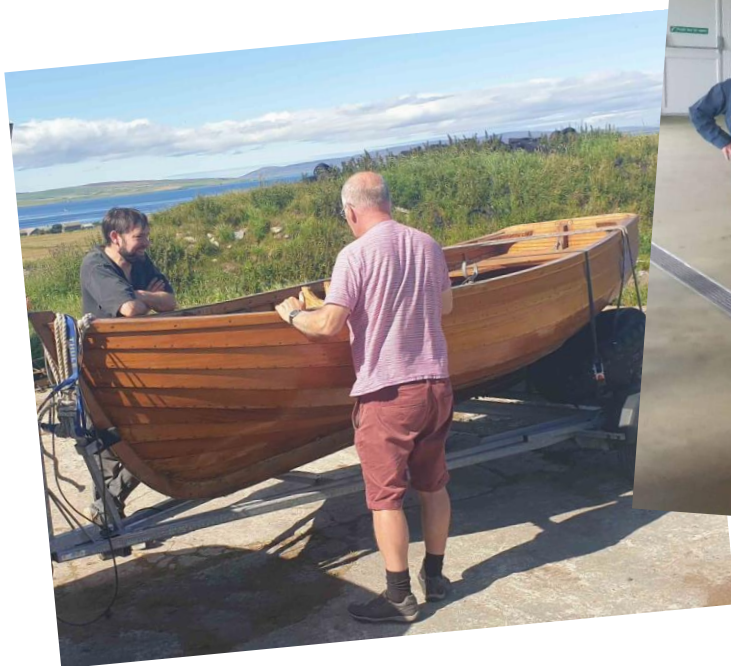
William Nicholson intended to use Sheena for hiring purposes between Shapinsay and Kirkwall and the isles in the summer months.

Sheena was lengthened by 5' in the head in the late 1940s or early 1950s as part of a repair after she burst some of her planks when returning home from a trip to Auskerry. This alteration improved her seakeeping and made her an excellent sea boat.



Ruby – donated by Kevin Gauld

A dinghy in very good condition. Built in the 1960s by Alex Stout at North Grinaby, Westray, Orkney for a Capt Burgher. Ruby is 12' long and 5' in beam and has mahogany planking on oak stringers. The inside of Ruby was vacuumed out and given a wash, she is now almost as good as new.



Restoration Progress

White Wings

A lot of work has been done on White Wings this year. She has been stripped and repainted. Some detailing work remains to be completed such as repainting the boat name. There is also some woodwork that needs to be completed on the inside of the boat.



To find out more about the story of White Wings see the OHBS website: <https://www.ohbs.net/preserved-boats/whitewings/>

Shamrock

Shamrock has been stripped, topside repaired and repainted this year. The keel was not in a good condition so has received the most recent work. Painting of the hull exterior is currently taking place.

To find out more about the story of Shamrock see the OHBS website: <https://www.ohbs.net/preserved-boats/shamrock/>



Saga

Progress has been steady on the re-decking of Saga. The new coaming has been installed although the top edges still have to be rounded off. New rubbing strakes have been added. Once the decking work is complete, we will varnish the deck. Some repainting of the previously painted hull will be required to complete the restoration.

To find out more about the story of Saga see the OHBS website:

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



Waterlily (Lily)

Much of the stripping of old paint and repainting was undertaken before Lily was moved to the Old Herring Factory early in 2023. Having located all the spars, sails and rigging we re-rigged Lily in early December inside, out of the weather, just to see how she looked. There are still one or two planks waiting to be replaced but we need to secure a supply of suitable wood to be able to do this work.

To find out more about the story of Waterlily see the OHBS website:

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



Hide

After being moved from Bookan to the Old Herring Factory, Hide was given a thorough clean as the birds had left their marks. Hide is now resting on a flat surface and some re-tensioning of internal structure has been done to help restore her original shape. While at Bookan it had been necessary to suspend Hide from the rafters, as the local rats had taken a liking to the tallow covered hide, and she lost some of her original shape while suspended.



How did the neolithic folk stop the rats from eating their boats?

To find out more about the story of Hide see the OHBS website: <https://www.ohbs.net/preserved-boats/hide/>



Table Saw & Planar Refurb



During the year OHBS received a donation of a table saw & planar/thicknesser. Although well used and in need of some refurbishment these were gratefully received since we didn't have any wood working machinery. The table saw was stripped down and all mechanicals cleaned and lubricated. The electrical wiring was all removed and replaced and a new on/off safety switch installed. The drive belt and saw blade were also replaced. The planar/thicknesser just required a cleanup and with the aid of an acquired instruction manual was got working in both modes of operation.

Longer term OHBS will require a number of larger, heavier duty and more capable woodworking machines. In particular we will need (i) a dust extraction system (ii) large band saw (iii) larger table saw (iv) larger thicknesser & planar.



*** STOP PRESS *** The Big Boat Door

While the outside ramp was constructed in July no progress was made on the big boat door itself until very recently. In mid-November a steel frame was constructed inside the Old Herring Factory, there was then no further activity for a couple of weeks. In early December there began a whirl of activity as parts of the old interior roofing was removed, the roller door was installed and a hole cut through the outer skin. Exterior edge trimming and some concrete work remains to be completed. Finally, the door electric motor needs connecting to a 3-phase supply. We are hoping to be able to move some of our larger boats inside early in the new year.



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/>

OHBS volunteers Blog (weekly activities)

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

Contact: 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.

