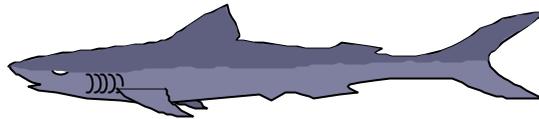

"Roond Aboot Birsay"

News for and by the people
of Birsay



September 2005
Issue 27

Editorial

Hi there again. Its time for the autumn edition of our Newsletter and I seem to be on my own once more. The main problem with that is that I can't blame anyone else for the mistakes. Not to worry, at least quite a lot of contributions have come in this time so that makes it all worth while. Thanks to all who contributed.

Johnny Johnston - Editor (with L plates)

Birsay Community Council

Time for an update on what we have been doing over the summer (or what was supposed to be summer!) Mostly it has just been routine things again. We are still waiting for the new toilets to appear in Dounby but it seems that none of the local contractors want to do the job for the price that the Council thinks is right. No doubt they will put it out to tender again and maybe have better luck next time.

Most of you will have noticed by now that the bottle bank has moved. It is now round the back along with several other recycling bins for an assortment of things. This is, of course, just a

temporary home until the permanent site is ready.

You will also all have been aware of the problems Scottish Water has been having with the water from Boardhouse Loch. It does seem to be unfortunate that after all the millions of pounds

they have spent there, the water was worse. Still, it does seem to have improved lately so we will keep hoping. The new Care Centre in Dounby is now up and running, with its first residents moving in last month. We wanted to call it St. Magnus House but we were outvoted on that so Smiddybrae House it is. There was an open day there in June so people could see what it was like

inside and that attracted a huge number of folk. It is very nicely done up and everyone was most impressed with it. The Dounby Surgery has now moved there as well and it also appears to be a big improvement.

I'm sure most of you will have noticed the number of new houses which are springing up all over the place now. There certainly seems to be a housing boom at the moment. There are plans for another six houses at Quilco as well so that will bring more people here.

Finally, there is now a Community Councils website you can look at. You can access it by following the links from Orkney Islands Council website on www.orkney.gov.org. You can also speak to any of us any time.

That is all for now - I'll be back in the spring.

Johnny Johnston - Chairman.

News from the Dounby Centre

The Centre starts this year with another "Change of State". Our contract with the "Picky Centre" was terminated by mutual consent in April 2005. The Committee gained a lot of expertise during this time in terms of Policies for health and Safety etc. but the experience was not without its problems. Our new set-up is very much as before with the Dounby Centre becoming an OIC enterprise again with the Centre Committee now in an Advisory rather than a Management role as before. We shall be glad to get back to putting the public first - with income generation second.

Currently we are in the process of increasing the staff - James Kirkpatrick continues to be the main man ably helped by Steven Spence but with the heavy winter programme approaching more staff are being recruited. A big project we have ongoing at the moment is the replacement of the Dounby Centre minibus - (a £26,000.00 purchase!) - hopefully arriving in the near future.

Building on the successes of last year - the Computer Education class was a particular hit - we hope to have another busy session. Please tell James or any member of the Committee if there is any activity that you would like put on and we will do our best to arrange it.

See you in the Centre!!

Malcolm I A Beaton - Chairman.

Birsay Church Flower Club

March

"Pot Black" was the title of our March workshop by Rene Isbister. Now don't let your imagination run away with you, Rene hasn't taken up snooker as well as flower arranging!

April

Workshop by Barbara Nieto. Barbara gave us a good many ideas for flower arrangements depicting songs.

May

Swap shop; the swapping of plants etc. by members. Then Cindy Miller had the novel idea of "Musical Flowers", where everyone started an arrangement and then passed it on to the next arranger when the music stopped - very good fun.

June

AGM followed by a workshop with Maureen Venables entitled "My Favourite Things". This involved doing arrangements in her favourite containers.

July

Club outing to a flower demonstration in Stromness. An evening enjoyed by all.

August

Birsay Flower Club ladies renewed their membership and did their own thing with flowers from their gardens.

If anyone would like to come along to a meeting a big welcome would await them. Please come along on the third Thursday of every month at 7.30pm in the Twatt Kirk. Local shops have the posters a week in advance giving the programme.

Maureen Venables - Hon. Secretary 771263

Birsay, Harray and Sandwick Churches

Two farmers once got talking about matters of faith and the church, one of them a church goer, the other not. "I wouldn't come to church up there", the non church goer said, "I know old Jock. He's a church goer who claims to be a Christian and Jean, too, goes to church and claims to be a Christian, and they don't live any differently from me. I'm as good as they are". Everywhere this farmer went, he talked about hypocrites in that church.

Months passed and the church going farmer went to see the non-goer again. "I want to buy a pig," said the church goer. The farmer showed him all the pig hogs. Then they came to the runt. "I believe I will take that one," the church going farmer said. The other objected "But you don't want that one, he's the worst runt in the litter". "I sure do!" said the church going farmer and they loaded the runt into the truck. "Now" said the church goer, "what if I take this pig here from your farm and ride all over this area telling folks that this is the kind of hogs you raise?" "That's not fair!" exclaimed the other, "I have some nice hogs and you want to show people that runt?" The church going farmer replied "If it's fair for the church, it's fair for the farm!"

So don't lob the church with criticism, join in and do better if you can. We all would be glad to see you any time and need your input, ideas and strengths to run the church and to ask the probing questions of life. There is plenty to do for everyone.

Dates for your diary

Sunday Club starts again 28 August 05 and runs during school term.

Forum for children in P4-P7 on every 2nd Sunday night in Twatt Church Hall.

Youth Group Meetings for all in Secondary School on every other Sunday night. Places vary.

Boy's Brigade Meetings in Dounby School from 20 September 05 for boys P4-P7.

Birsay Guild meets in Twatt Church every third Thursday in the month from 8 Sept. 05

Sunday Club Open Evening for parents wondering about bringing their children to Sunday Club on 14 September in Harray Kirk at 7.30pm

Video Night for adults to watch and chat about "Man Dancin" in the Manse 25 September 05 at 7.30pm

CH4byBHS a musical evening in Twatt Church on 30 September 05 at 7.30pm

Church Christmas Sale in Birsay Community Centre 12 November 05 from 2pm

Wreath Laying at Birsay War Memorial 13 November 05 at 10am followed by Remembrance Sunday Service in Harray Church.

And every Sunday a Morning Service in either Birsay, Harray or Sandwick at 11am – posters in the shops and Post office will keep you right.
I hope to see you and God bless you.

Andrea Price - Minister for Birsay, Harray and Sandwick.

Birsay, Harray and Sandwick Church Sunday Club

The Sunday Club meets every Sunday at the same time as the Church Service. The children take part in the service for the first 10 minutes and then go into the hall where they have various activities on a theme set down in their Leader's notes – these include games, stories, worship sessions, discussions and songs.

At Christmas, the children stage a Nativity Play with every child taking part. Every year the younger children have a party and the older children go for an outing at Christmas. Last year they went bowling. During the past year, in the lead up to Easter, the children travelled through Lent learning what each Sunday meant by stories and activities. They took part in various Church Services and learned about life in Bangladesh.

The Sunday Club year ends with an outing and a special Sunday Club Closing Service. Children aged 3-12 are always welcome to come along to Sunday club. There is also a crèche for the younger children.

Children from Primary 4-7 meet fortnightly in a Children's Forum. These Forums were set in place by the Church of Scotland to give older children a voice in what happens in Church, both locally and globally. The children have great fun discussing various topics and have taken part in Church services and helped at different events. Over the past year, the children have covered lots of different issues:

Fair Trade - they compared farming methods in Orkney and the Sudan.

Learned about the Street Children in South America and sent greetings to them at Christmas.

Discussed topics from Church of Scotland Board of Parish Education and returned their answers to where they would be collated and given voice at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

The children enjoy their Forum where their opinion matters. They enjoy games, crafts and of course food! Children of Primary 4-7 are very welcome to come to the Forum. More details of Sunday Club and Children's Forum can be had from:

Andrea Price - 771803

Clair Newton - 771464

Birsay Heritage Trust - The Barony Mill

Considering the poor summer weather and the high fuel prices, it is not surprising that visitor numbers and donations to the Mill are down from the previous year. While the drop of 27% in numbers is disappointing, commercial meal sales have been steady and sales at the Mill are down only slightly.

Our beremeal and oatmeal are versatile, high quality products and we appreciate your continued support in encouraging their use.

R.I.P. Mrs. Levi Furblack, C.A.T. to the Barony Mills

The Miller and the Friends of the Mill note with sadness that Mrs. Furblack met her untimely end on the road. We ask drivers to be on the lookout for Sir Charles de Moulin (Charlie) who has been co-opted to the post of C.A.T. Thank you.

Frank Zabriskie - Secretary BHT

Stars over Orkney

Winter comes! Who will be where in the heavens above? The usual suspects - the Pleiades, Taurus, Gemini will appear and later, Orion and Leo. Drifters - the planets - are scarce this year: Venus, often so astoundingly bright, is visiting the Southern Hemisphere now and essentially invisible from our latitude. Jupiter is hiding behind the Sun (conjunction on 22 October) but it will appear as a morning star mid December and throughout the winter low in the sky. Saturn shows nicely as the only bright "star" between Gemini (identified by the stars Castor and Pollux) and Leo (Regulus). Acute observers may remember that this spring the "Twins" were triplets, for Saturn was near the heart of Gemini, making a striking configuration, disturbing to some astrologers. The crisis is past but will return in 2035 (Saturn's orbital period is 29.5 years). Mars takes centre stage this autumn. It should be visible all night, weather permitting, as a bright orange-reddish star a hand's spread south of the Pleiades and a short distance west of Taurus, the Bull. Opposition occurs 7 November and the distance to Mars from the Earth will be the least. This also means that Mars will appear to drift away from Taurus (retrograde motion) before turning and drifting toward and even past Taurus early next year.

As always, especially in the autumn, keep an eye open for aurorae. If you try digital photography, I would be interested in your results. Two websites may be of interest; geo.phys.uit.no/geomag.html gives on-line reading of the Earth's magnetic field (The station at Tromso may be the nearest to us) and www.dxdl.com/solar is a site maintained by radio amateurs that gives solar activity reports and forecasts.

Frank Zabriskie.

The St Magnus Church Birsay Trust

A Flurry of Folsters

In spite of the poor summer there have been a great many visitors around. This year we have seen very few coach parties but there seem to be more cyclists and back-packers and certainly more visitors taking advantage of the bus service to spend a few hours in Birsay before moving on elsewhere.

Over the last year there seems to have been a flurry of Folsters returning to see the birthplace of their forebears, but there is no indication that they know of each other's existence. I wrongly said in the last issue that the one I met last year was from Australia: she was in fact from New Zealand, but there have been two other Folster descendants from different parts of Australia and one from Canada. The countries most frequently represented in the visitors' book this year seem to be Australia, Italy, the

Czech Republic and the Netherlands. There are many of the usual comments in the book, e.g. "Thank you" and "Peaceful" but this year there have been quite a number of visitors for whom the church seems to have had a deeper meaning: "Unforgettable", "I thank God to be here", "A long time since I have seen a proper church" "I felt at peace immediately", "We brought our son Thorfinn from Somerset to see his namesake's Kirk and the Palace – our miracle? – the sun shone brilliantly". (Well, that was a miracle – BH) "What a perfect day and perfect memories", "What a delight to find this wee gem off the beaten track"

A Feast of Festivals

This year we have had the privilege of being associated with three of Orkney's increasing number of festivals: the Jazz Festival, the St Magnus Festival and the Science Festival. The annual Jazz Festival was as popular as ever, attracting a large attendance from all over Orkney. Bill Crichton was the popular speaker for the third year in succession and Bill Salmond and his Louisiana Ragtime Band were in their usual splendid form. The St Magnus Festival concert was one of the most successful events ever for the Trust. The weather was perfect and the brass department of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama can always be relied on to give a first-rate performance. They also held a workshop in Dounby School, which was a tremendous success. We had the honour of hosting the opening of the 15th Science Festival on September 1st, with Dr. Duncan Heddle performing the opening ceremony and presenting "From the manse to the Shore". Starting with a summary of the life of George Low, he went on to speak of other natural historians of the same period. The various sections of his talk were interspersed with readings by Iain Campbell, fiddle music by Kristan Harvey, recorded psalms and music from the time of George Low and accompanied by slides shown by Michael Moar. It was a very enjoyable evening for the audience who had come from as far away as the south of South Ronaldsay. The Science Festival generously gave the donations - £190 – to the Trust. Tina Norris, a photographer commissioned by the Scottish Executive, was also there. She is taking photos for the Executive's website, promoting Scotland as a good place to live. Her photos will appear on posters and flyers as well as on the website.

Joy and Sadness

This year we have had a wedding blessing and two weddings and we have three weddings booked for next year. We were saddened by the deaths of John Brown and May Low and deeply grateful that the substantial donations from their funeral services were given to the Trust. From the inauguration of the Trust onwards, May was one of our most loyal supporters. With her excellent memory, she was able to give us an enormous amount of help with information about and identification of old photographs when we held our exhibitions. May loved meeting people and she helped us greatly by giving up hours of her time to welcome people at our exhibitions in the Guild Room.

Volunteers?

Speaking of exhibitions, I am gradually getting the old photographs organised in archive binders so that we can have them in an accessible format. Most of the photographs are now in place but there is still the small matter of typing out the identification of about 300 of them. Are there any volunteers? Phone me on 721241.

The Birsay Bay Project – Vols. 1 and 2.

These books cover all the excavations done round the Bay of Birsay from 1976 to 1982. We have access to the remaining copies held by Glasgow University and can offer them at the amazingly low price of £14 for the set of two volumes. (The individual books were originally over £20). So far, we have sold over thirty sets and if we have a sufficient number of firm orders, we could arrange another delivery.

Bertie Harvey - Secretary.

BIRSAY OUTDOOR CENTRE

Dounby Primary School - Class 6

Thursday 14th April

(Preparing to go)

Dear Diary,

The whole week long we have been preparing for our outdoor trip to Birsay. All the girls are in the same room, the room is called Marwick because it is facing there. I am in a good group because they are all my friends and are all nice and supportive and kind. I have fears about many things – about sleeping. I think I will be supportive to the group.

Alanna Swanney

Monday 18th April

climbing/Abseiling



(Rock

Just starting to settle in..... The first activity we did today was climbing and our instructor was Joe. I remember just checking my clips thinking “I’m the first up. Yes! I’m at the top! Just about to abseil down. Wheeee”.

Jack Rowe

Tuesday 19th April



(Kayaking)

After last night I was kind of tired. We also had breakfast duties. When I got through to the dining room I had begun to wake up. I was feeling a bit nervous about going kayaking in case I tipped over. We had to get a wet suit which was SO horrible and it was hard to walk in. We then had to get all the safety gear (it weighed a tonne). When we arrived at Via Quarry I was nervous, I got in the kayak and started to group together but I began to float away. It was so annoying. *Sarah Mowat*



Wednesday 20th April

(Ward Hill)

This is the third day of the outdoor week. The weather has been excellent. We climbed up Ward Hill in Hoy today. Ward Hill is 479 metres above sea level and we climbed right to the summit. I found it very boggy and rocky. We stayed up there for a short time then we went down where it was a lot steeper. When we were quite near the bottom everyone was allowed to roll back down but I ran! We climbed the fence and headed back to the boat.

The boat was a small boat called the Golden Marianna. It was a one-roomed boat which meant you could see the captain. The boat arrived back at the pier in Stromness just in time for going to the Barony for our evening meal.

Daniel Sandison

Thursday 21st April

(Free Choice Activity)

Haven chosen to do another session at kayaking, we got a quick reminder of how to paddle and sit and then got into a kayak, pushed in one by one, and we were off. First we did some games and at the end



the bit I was looking forward to, jumping in!! At first we were told to try and stand up in the boat, which I did but unfortunately fell in. On camera it looked deliberate but it was actually an accident! BIG mistake – when I got back in my boat I stood up in my boat and jumped in (deliberately) but the water was deep and I had jumped in quite far out – I thought I would freeze but I managed to swim into the side. When I changed my clothes they stuck to me like wet bubblegum. It was horrible but when I got other clothes on it felt fine even though I had very wet hair. *Annabella Penny*



Thursday 21st April

(Environmental Studies)

We had lunch then went to do environmental studies in Binscarth Woods where we looked at different beetles. Then we went back and had our final meal at the Barony. In the evening we did camp craft and archery. After supper that night we slept in the tent. I felt it was a really good day.

Abigail Harcus



Friday 22nd April

(Raft Building/Home)

Today we are raft building. It sounds fun. The A team had Joe helping them, Katie helped the B team and Dave helped our team, team C. Dave showed us how to tie knots properly. Alanna, Lauren and I pulled the rope so tight it hurt our hands. When we were finished building the raft we checked if it was safe and wouldn't fall apart. When we got back to the hostel we started packing to go home. Thank you Joe, Katie and Dave very much for being our instructors. I had the time of my life, you're so cool!!! Thank you.

Parnell Inkster

RSPB

The Loons

Earlier this year, a wonderful group of Primary 7 pupils from Dounby School helped to complete the RSPB Centenary Hide Project at the Birsay Loons. On a glorious April day, twenty pupils enthusiastically planted a selection of locally grown shrubs and trees including hawthorn, rowan, wild rose, juniper, bird cherry, gean and holly on a small patch of ground by the Loons Hide. Overhead, Teeicks (lapwings) displayed, whaups (curlews) bubbled and called while out on the water were shoveler, mallard, teal, wigeon, gadwall and tufted ducks, coots and assorted gulls.

Jenny Taylor, Orkney Woodland Development Project Officer, Keith Fairclough, RSPB Senior Site Manager and myself helped to inform and inspire the pupils as they planted, to ensure that the plants would have the highest possible chance of survival.

The aim is to provide an attractive area of varied plant cover and encourage inhabitation by an assortment of insects including bees, butterflies and moths and birds such as wren, robin and blackbird. The plants were checked recently to see how they had fared since planting and, sadly, this summer has not provided ideal conditions for them to establish. A few have not survived but most are growing

well. Non-survivors will be replaced next spring with high hopes for a glorious summer in 2006 during which we can all blossom!

The new Loons Hide had been officially opened on 8 July 2004 by Brigadier Sydney Robertson to mark the celebration of 100 years of the RSPB's work in Scotland. It is accessible to wheelchair users and is big enough to accommodate large school groups.

The Dounby Primary 7s have now moved on to become part of the S1 at Stromness Academy and we wish them all the best along with many thanks for their willing endeavour. Thanks also go to class

teachers Mrs Rendall and Anne-Marie Connor who gave this project their enthusiastic support. The pupils were Rhiannon Phillips, Teri Hamilton, Scott Hamilton, Gary Stanger, Robbie Norquoy, Mark Spence, Wayne Kirkness, Braden Cox, Callan Harvey, Mark Foubister, Michael Brass, Keith Johnstone, Jade Ritch, Paula Ross, Lara Hourie, Hazel Hourston, Andrew Flaws, Meriel Miller, Sam Archibald and Graham Morgan.

A selection of photos taken on the day will be mounted in the Hide early in the New Year.

Aileen Ross - RSPB Orkney Field Teacher

The local RSPB reserves news for this summer.

Marwick

You will have seen a lot about seabirds and their predicament in the local and national press lately and Marwick's colonies tell a similar story. The season started poorly when it looked like birds were not even going to settle on the cliffs at all. Fortunately, they eventually settled some 4 weeks later than normal, although this still gave cause for concern. Seabirds have quite a restricted breeding season, so, when they start late there is always the possibility that their food sources would disperse before they had fledged their young. This indeed appeared to be the case as kittiwakes in particular started to fail with chicks in the nest, in alarming numbers. Even the normally robust fulmar has struggled this year. These events have been mirrored nationally across both the East coast populations with which the Orkney populations are most closely associated and the west coast populations, even those of St Kilda.

Birsay Moors

Seabird problems extended to the moors where Bonxies and Arctic skuas nest, both species much reduced this year, although both did produce small numbers of young in contrast to the worse season of 2004. Up on the hill-top lochans, red-throated divers thwarted the problems associated with other seabirds (breeding red-throated divers feed on the sea) and the 16 pairs fledged about 12 young. Hen harriers have been doing relatively well over the past 4 years, some 14 territorial females established themselves on the Birsay Moors and Durkadale. Males were less numerous resulting in only 4 of these nests fledging young. Merlin had a great year with 3 out of 4 pairs fledging young. We'll be hoping for a better winter this year, to enable us to carry on with the muirburn trials up in Rusht. Also several neighbouring farms have been putting in footpaths as part of their Land Management Contracts with SEERAD, we hope to be able to link in with some of these to provide some good circular walks across the reserve in the near future.

The Loons and Loch of Banks

Breeding waders and wildfowl continue to be the highlights at this superb wetland reserve, especially the pintail and the more recently established black-tailed godwit. Wader numbers are good but we are struggling to keep those numbers up for example lapwing fluctuate between 70 and 80 pairs (71 in 2005), but redshank fluctuate between 20 and 45 pairs (28 in 2005), both showing an overall downward trend. This is linked to the level of grazing being attained on site, the shorter the grass in Autumn the better. The recent extension of grazing at Loch of Banks demonstrates this well with a significant increase in the numbers of lapwing nesting there, bucking the overall trend.

Andy Knight, Site Manager.

NEWS FROM ORKNEY VINTAGE CLUB

Another summer, if we can call it that, has almost slipped by and the Club's outdoor events are about over as well. In spite of the mixed weather, we were lucky, as were all the agricultural shows, in having good weather for all our outdoor events.

The Tractor Working Day was held at Muckle Crofty in Tankerness and took place on Sunday 3rd April. It was a great success, although I'm rather ashamed to admit it was the first one I've missed out of the twelve that have been held so far. I think I hinted in a previous article that it would be fine to return to the West Mainland again. If anyone can provide a suitable field, please let me know.

The Orkney Cavalcade, held this year on Sunday 22nd May, started off from Finstown and on to Stenness, where they took the Brodgar Road to Sandwick. Turning left at Lyking and right towards Voy, they passed Kierfiold to their first port of call, the Orkney Brewery in Quoyloo. Suitably refreshed, the passengers that is, they headed for Dounby via the Swartland Road. Turning left at the crossroads, they went through the Northbigging Road, and then on to Harray Stores for soup and sandwiches.

Setting out again, they headed over Stoneyhill and visited Stewart Moar Jewellery on the Bigswell Road. From here they journeyed through the Germiston Road to Orphir and then on to Kirkwall, past Scapa Beach and through Holm Branch Road to Tankerness and Deerness. Crossing the Hurtiso Road, everyone called past Alfie and Allie Eunson. Alfie is a valued founder member of the Club and, although no longer able to take part in events, still takes a great interest in what is going on. With time catching up on them, the cavalcade set out from Millhouse for the short last leg to Kirkwall, where the vehicles were lined-up on the pier, while their occupants rounded the day off with a meal at the Queen's Hotel.

Three weeks later, the motoring fraternity took to the sea and paid a return visit to Sanday. It is difficult to believe that ten years had passed since the Club first visited the island. It was another excellent day out, with lots to see. A special thank-you is due to those who provided the food for the visitors. It is always nice to be able to put something back into a place when you visit.

On 24th July, a change from the scheduled date, the trip to Flotta was organised by Richard Shearer. It started with a walk to the Golta Peninsula and also took in other wartime places of interest on the island. Richard provided everyone with details of the sights they would visit, and we are hoping he will enlarge on this and provide an article for the newsletter for those who were unable to make the trip.

Since the first rally at Walliwall in 1983, the Club has borrowed things like posts, ropes, seats and, since the move to Orkney Auction Mart, pay-booths each year from the West Mainland Agricultural Society. In return for this favour, we have always put on a small display at the Dounby Show. This year the emphasis was on tractors, implements and engines. William Drever, the Club's Treasurer & Membership Secretary, drove his 1948 Allis Chalmers Model B all the way from his home at Berstane Road in Kirkwall. It has a top speed of 7½mph and each journey took about two and a quarter hours.

The Club was favoured with good weather for the Annual Rally, the 22nd overall, and the 6th at the Mart. It is always difficult to judge the event when you are involved in the organising and running of it, but there was certainly a record crowd through the gate. The number of exhibits seemed to be about the same as previous years, and it was heartening to see so many 'new' exhibits, i.e. ones making a first appearance at the Rally. The windmills were also an added attraction. The Indoor Display theme of Music and Sound, along with the displays by other craftsmen and organisations, was greatly praised by several people I met. It had fallen on me to video the event and the time constraints of getting everything recorded, prevented me from seeing things in more detail. I was too late to capture the Birsay Boys on film, and I would have liked to spend time with Colin, Birsay's very own fiddle-maker (I'll make a point of visiting him over the winter instead). Now that things are still fresh in our minds, planning for next year's Rally is already underway, as we are continually striving to improve each year.

The last outing of the year is a Road Run on Sunday 18th September, which will take in a visit to Ness Battery in Stromness. The winter round of meetings will then commence with the A.G.M and a showing of the DVD of the Firth School Harvest Project and the rally video. Come along and join us if you wish.

Submitted by Harold Esson

PEACE'S ALMANAC and COUNTY DIRECTORY - 1939

BIRSAY

(Population - Birsay & Harray 1608)

District Councillor:

John Johnston, Sunnybrae.

School Management Committee -

Sandwick, Birsay & Harray:

Mrs Learmonth, Pow, Sandwick,
W. Corrigall, Northbigging, Harray, chairman,
J. G. S. Flett, Nistaben, Harray,
J. C. Kirkness, M.A., Schoolhouse, Dounby,
J. Johnston, Sunnybrae, Dounby,
J. Fraser, Feaval, Birsay,
W. Harvey, Wattle, Birsay,
T. H. Wylie, Swartland, Sandwick,
Mrs E. J. Ritch, Myrtle Dene, Sandwick, clerk.

Teachers:

Birsay Public School:

Miss M. Stanger, M.A.,
Miss G. Baikie, assistant.

Hundland Public School:

Miss Margaret H. Farquhar.

Registrar:

James M. Scarth, Twatt.

Clerk to Heritors:

F. Buchanan, solicitor, Kirkwall.

Sandwick, Birsay & Harray Nursing Association:

Pres.,	Mrs H. W. Scarth of Breckness,
Vice-pres.,	Miss Harvey, Wattle, Birsay, Mrs Linklater, Ingleueuk, Harray, Mrs Robertson, Lyking, Sandwick,
Hon. secy./treas.,	Miss Scarth, Twatt,
Queen's Nurse.,	Miss MacNicol, Dounby.
<u>Post Offices:</u>	R. Comloquoy, Palace, Miss K. Scarth, Twatt, Mrs M. A. Hunter, Swannay.

Twatt Church Guild:

Pres.,	P. C. Ballantyne, Quoylonga,
Vice-pres.,	Charles Hourston, Beaquoy,
Secy.,	Miss Katie Scarth, Twatt,
Treas.,	Fred Hay.

S.W.R.I.:

Pres.,	Mrs Spence, Glebe,
Vice-pres.,	Miss K. Scarth, Twatt,
Secy.,	Mrs R. Harvey, Palace,
Treas.,	Mrs T. Comloquoy, Linkshouse,
Press secy.,	Mrs G. Walker, Strathyre.

Resident Justice of the Peace:

John G. Stanger.

Badminton Club:

Pres., Rev. W. G. Weir, M.A.,
Secy./treas. G. Walker, Strathyre.

Twatt F.C:

Pres., Rev. W. G. Weir, M.A,
Capt., vacancy,
Vice capt., F. Hay,
Secy./treas., G. Walker, Strathyre.

National Farmers' Union &

Scottish Chamber of Agriculture - Birsay:

Branch Pres., Chas. Hourston, Beaquoy,
Vice-pres., Wm. J. Harvey, Wattle,
Secy., Geo. R. T. Scarth, B.Sc., Biggings.

School Attendance Officer:

Miss Adamson, Palace.

Draughts Club:

Pres., John Comloquoy, Grindally,
Vice-pres., R. Harvey, Palace, Secy.,
Treas., Geo. Spence, Palace,
Delegate, D. C. Flett, Walkerhouse,
J. Moar, Barnhouse.

Ploughing Match Society:

Pres., John Fraser, Feaval,
Secy./treas., R. S. Harvey, Wattle.

Lighthouse Attendant:

Stanger, Walkerhouse.

T.

Insurance Agent: N.F.U. Mutual Insurance Soc. Ltd.,
Geo. R. T. Scarth, B.Sc., Biggings.

TRADES ETC

Agricultural Implement Agent:

Geo. R. Meadows, West Green.

Boat Hirer for Trout Fishing:

Wm. Borwick, Durkadale.

Blacksmiths:J

Jas. Hay, Folster,
J. Martins, Boardhouse,
J. R. Sabiston, Scrutabreck.

Building Contractors:

J. D. & W. Moar, Vinbrake.

Cartwrights:

John Moar & Sons, Vinbrake,
J. & T. Linklater, Beaquoy-side,
P. Harvey, Ravie Hall.

Cattledealers:

David Taylor, East Quoys,
Geo. Phillips, Velzian.

Cycle Agents & Repairers:

Chas. Hay, J. Gaudie, G. Meadows,
W. Hourston, J. Grieve, J. R. Sabiston,
J. J. Marwick.

Dressmakers:

Mrs Alexander, Ritquoy,
Miss Mary Muirden, Newhall,
Mrs Walker, Strathyre.

Egg Merchants: Jas. Gaudie, Netherskaill,
J. Whitelaw, Ocean View.

Grain Merchant: R. Garden Ltd., Sabiston.

Gravedigger: John Grieve, Runa, Twatt.

Hotel: Barony Hotel, Major J. M. Shearer.

Ironmongers: J. & T. Linklater, Beaquoy-side,
G. Meadows, West Green.

Joiners: J. & T. Linklater, Beaquoy-side,
P. C. Ballantyne, Quoylonga,
P. Adamson, Marwick,
J. Harvey, Banks,
P. Harvey, Ravie Hall,
Jas. Johnston, Banks,
Jas. Spence, Greeny,
A. Harvey, Beaquoy-side,
J. Moar & Sons, Vinbrake.

Letter Carriers: J. Comloquoy, Grindally,
Wm. Taylor, Gaitnip,
J. M. Scarth, Twatt,
P. Flett, Dounby.

Masons: G. Brown, Queena,
G. Harvey, Beaquoy-side,
R. Linklater, Cavan, Twatt,
John Johnston, Muce,
H. Phillips, Velzian,
James Taylor, Branchouse,
J. Martins, Seaview Cottage,
J. Linklater, Palace.

Merchants: Rob. Harvey, Palace,
John Whitelaw, Ocean View,
James Gaudie, Netherskaill,
J. & T. Linklater, Beaquoy-side,
Miss M. Moar, Mearon,
Wm. Johnston, Old School, Twatt.

Millers: John Phillips, Boardhouse,
R. Garden Ltd., Sabiston.

Millwrights: John Moar & Sons, Vinbrake,
John Spence, Beaquoy-side,
John Taylor, Flaws,
Harold Stanger, (Eng.), Wranglehall.

Motor Haulage Contractors:

J. Moar & Sons, Vinbrake.

Motor Hirers: Wm. Johnston, Old School, Twatt,
P. Harvey, Palace,
J. Leask,
J. Whitelaw, jun., Ocean View,
J. Gaudie, Netherskaill.

Motor Agents: W. Hourston, Dale Cottage, Dounby,
Jas. Gaudie, Netherskaill,
G. Meadows, West Green,
J. Grieve, Twatt,
J. R. Sabiston, Scrutabreck,
J. J. Marwick, Fernlea.

Motor Mechanic: John Taylor, Flaws.

Photographers: J. & J. Linklater, Beaquoyside,
John Taylor, Flaws.

Private Lodging Houses:
Mrs Comloquoy, Linkshouse,
Miss Janet Couper, Palace,
Mrs Adamson, Marwick House,
Miss Janet Sabiston, Murray House,
Mrs Bias, Bayview,
Mrs Walker, Strathyre,

Radio Dealer: T. Hourston, Dale Cottage.

Sewing Machine & General Agents:
P. C. Ballantyne, Quoylonga,
John Spence, Beaquoyside.

Shoemakers: Peter Phillips, Sabiston,
W. Taylor, Steadyaquoy,
J. Adamson, Glower,
Wm. Hourston, Dale Cottage,
Robt. Scott, Chocolate Cottage,
Wm. Johnston, Old School, Twatt.

Tailors & Clothiers:
Thomas Harvey, Nether Place,
James Linklater, Beaquoyside,
Joseph Spence, Thorn Cottage.

Travelling Merchants:
A. Oag,
R. Garden Ltd,
T. Flett,
W. B. Firth,
J. Flett & Sons,
J. M. Sinclair,
J. G. Whitelaw,
J. Gaudie,
J. Baikie,
I sbister Bros,
J. & W. Tait,
Lipton Ltd,

J. M. Moar.

Undertakers: J. Moar & Sons, Vinbrake,
Peter Harvey, Ravie Hall.

Watchwright: John Spence, Beaquoyside.

Well-Borers: J. Moar Howally,
J. Martins, Seaview Cottage.

Submitted by Harold Esson

Councillor Chat

There are some occasions when I find it difficult to give any meaningful comment on Council business and this is one of them. There is no point in giving pages of detail which councillors have to go through when coming to their decisions. I am always conscious that the public wants the correct outcomes from the Council rather than to know the minute detail of how the outcomes are achieved.

More often than not, especially in the present climate, the provision of services by the Council comes down to several factors:-

- the amount of money which is available
- can we continue the service in the future
- can we recruit people to provide the service
- are we instructed by government to provide the service.

None of these issues are easy to deal with and any decision made is usually made after a balanced view of all these factors has been considered.

For instance if we were to think about building the Dounby care home now we would struggle to satisfy all the above criteria. This is the case of a smaller care facility in St Margaret's Hope; we are unable to find the money to run the facility without cutting our services in other areas. Can we afford to run the isles ferry service as we do at present? How much do we spend on running the Picky Centre or the library or the swimming pools? Do we have too many primary schools? Councillors have to decide what is most acceptable to the Orkney public.

A different issue is the renewable energy planning framework. The Council has produced a consultation document. What is noticeable is the fact that we have so many houses spread over the countryside that the buffer zones advised between houses and large wind turbines mean there are unlikely to be any turbines at or near houses. Also much of the Orkney mainland comes under one or other of the land designations for protection of flora and fauna. This therefore leaves little ground for development of big wind farms. If people feel strongly that wind farms/wind generators are a good or bad idea then they should let the Council know by contacting the planning department.

What about a flag for Orkney! I think it would be no bad thing to cement our distinct Orkney identity with an Orkney Flag. Central government wants us all to be the same as the central belt to make life easy for those in the Scottish Executive so we must make sure that we have an identity. Personally I like the idea of the yellow and red flag and if we cannot get it recognised by the Lord Lyon then add the Old Man of Hoy (or some other well kent symbol) to one corner to make it different. Everybody will have a chance to make their wishes known so please do.

If you have a problem with any Council service or any other public service please get in touch by phone, e-mail or call along Hundasaeter.

Keith Johnson

Tel: 771328;

e-mail: ak.johnson@btopenworld.com

Hundasaeter Weather Station

The first 6 months of 2005 have been fairly kind to us with no long periods of frost, lasting snow and only 9 gale days with 6 of those days in January. The rainfall was about 10% more than the 50 year average for Grimsetter and sunshine was about 4.5% down on the average with January being a particularly dull month.

MONTH	Max TEMP	Min TEMP	mm RAIN	hours SUN	knots MAX WIND
January	11.0	-2.5	133.3	13.6	82.6
February	9.2	-4.8	75.0	66.7	59.1
March	14.4	-2.3	96.9	97.5	47.8
April	14.8	-1.0	62.6	133.3	63.5
May	16.2	0.0	49.3	195.0	41.7
June	21.4	0.8	56.0	119.8	36.5

Keith Johnson

Sep 2005

One man and his Dog

Orcadians are noted for being fairly quick witted and one Birsay farmer would come pretty near the top of the league. This farmer had recently got a new sheepdog called Flossie and, as she still wasn't very old, she was allowed to sleep in the house at night. On the Saturday night before Christmas last year, the farmer got rather the worse of the wear at the Smithfield Hotel and was trying to be as quiet as possible when he got home so as not to let his wife know the condition he was in. He was just slipping into bed when his wife put out her hand and said, "Is that you, Flossie?" As he told his cronies afterwards, "Min, I just had the presence o' mind tae lick her hand!"