

# STRONSAY LIMPET

ISSUE 9 JANUARY 2006





#### IN MEMORY OF RALPH FOTHERINGHAME

It would be no exaggeration to say that Ralph could be regarded as the archetypal Orcadian, well educated, widely read, widely travelled but still remaining faithful to his native island.

Ralph was born on 25 –08-1930 at Bella's cottage, Boondatoon, a property owned by his grandparents and at that time incorporating a general merchants shop as well as the farm. He attended Stronsay primary school, later attending secondary school in Kirkwall to the age of seventeen. On leaving school he returned to Stronsay where his love of the outdoors was encouraged by his uncle Bill with whom he went to the creels in the summertime and in the winter with his uncle Jim (known to all as Pye and the composer of the Stronsay

waltz), trapped rabbits as a commercial venture having acquired rights on the Bu links.. Also acquired from his uncle was the art of catching lobsters in the ebb where they could be found in their favourite hiding places under boulders or in cracks in the rocks.

In 1949 Ralph had successfully applied and been accepted for employment with the Hudson Bay Company but before being able to take this up he was conscripted for National Service. In this, as in all else, Ralph applied himself wholeheartedly signing up for regular service with the RAF in order to take advantage of better training facilities. A large part of his service was spent in Southern Rhodesia –now Zimbabwe where as a wireless mechanic he was posted to a navigation beacon station for night flying aircraft. As compensation for this remote posting the staff had an unlimited, free supply of ammunition for hunting.

Ralph returned home in 1954 and on Xmas eve 1956 married Caroline Fiddler, the daughter of the local school teacher. They eventually bought Morven where they spent the next 16 years, moving to Minerva on Xmas eve 1975. He worked mainly in the building trade where his versatility allowed him to provide a complete service from initial design to the laying of the final floor covering. During this time he also served as a Coastguard for 37 years. He was a keen sportsman, playing both hockey and baseball while in the RAF and in the Orkney County football team against Shetland and being approached by a scout for one of the professional clubs from the South. He maintained his wide range of interests throughout his life, including playing the accordion with the local band, an interest in conjuring and an interest in rockets. In this latter hobby Caroline remembers more of the



failures than the successes-some quite spectacular.

Although he developed a serious health problem in later years he never let this interfere with his love of life. As in all else he read up on his illness, kept records of his progress and was totally conversant with the intricacies of his illness. During this time hospitality at Minerva remained superb. Both he and Caroline welcomed newcomers to the island into their home and enthusiastically shared with them their extensive knowledge of Orkney in general and Stronsay in particular. One of his last projects was to welcome Ukranian novitiates in the local religious community to his home and to help them improve their English language skills.

Although the community is saddened by his passing this is made easier by the knowledge that all who came in contact with him felt enriched by the experience.

# NANA'S SNIPPETS FROM THE PAST

#### Threshing day at Housebay, Stronsay.

Before silage and modern feeding cattle were fed on straw and turnips, extra feeding being bruised oats and oilcake so that meant the oats had to be threshed. In the morning of a threshing day the time was spent carting in the sheaves into the south end of the barn, using two carts (with horses) two men loading, one pitching on the sheaves and one stowing them in the barn. After one o'clock the real work started with one man feeding the mill and two laying the sheaves up on the sheaf- board which he took alternately. Laying up the sheaves was important as we had to cut the string, tying them at the knot and keeping the string which was later tied in bundles for making rope. The mill was driven by an International tractor the first in Stronsay I believe (someone correct me if I am wrong) but at one time the Housebay mill was driven by water, the wheel still being at the back of the barn in 1945 but was later removed. My husband attended the tractor, the workings of the mill, belts etc, the oats coming down the chutes and keeping the chaff house clear. Two men packed the straw coming down in the north end of the barn and that was a really hard job. Counting it up it took ten people to keep it all going on a threshing day and as sometimes the women helped at the sheaf board I took my turn with them and quite enjoyed it as it was a good crowd working together.



PHOTO SUP-PLIED AND STORY WRITTEN BY NANA PEACE

# **LIBRARY**

NEXT VISIT FEBRUARY 14th-15th

TUE WHITEHALL 15.30-17.30 SCHOOL 18.00-20.30

WED SCHOOL 08.00-10.00

#### ADVERTS

PRIVATE ADVERTS UP TO
25 WORDS £1
25 WORD ADVERT WITH PHOTO £2
25-50 WORDS £2 AND SO ON
Lost & Found free
To be placed by (date) 8th February
Tel:- Yvonne 616375 Heather 616453
e-mail:- hfazak@btinternet.com
Letter:- Lower Leaquoy

#### FOR SALE

LEXMARK X1190 PRINTER, SCANNER, COPIER IN ONE 6 WEEKS OLD £50 PHONE MICHELLE 616484

#### FOR SALE

NEW UPDATED STRONSAY TELEPHONE LIST £1 EACH OR 3 FOR £2 CONTACT THE SCHOOL 616246

#### FOR SALE

EXTENDING NURSERY FIREGUARD
BEDROOM UNIT (2 x double wardrobes and vanity unit) DARK BROWN VGC.

(2.3 mtrs wide x 1.83 mtrs high x 51.5 cms deep)
OFFERS

PHONE DORIS 372 or HAZEL 231

DON'T FORGET YOUR
VALENTINE MESSAGES
FOR FEBRUARY'S PAPER
ONLY £1 FOR UP TO
25 WORDS

# BIRTHDAYS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
LEANNE 13 ON THE 1st FEBRUARY
WITH LOVE FROM
JODY XXX

#### FOR SALE

CASIO CT640 KEYBOARD MAINS OR BATTERY £30 PHONE ELSIE 616331

#### FOR SALE

GLASS DISPLAY CABINET £20
DOUBLE DIVAN BED WITH WHITE
HEADBOARD £20
OLD FASHIONED ALL WOOD HIGH
ENDED DOUBLE BED £20
VAX VACUUM CLEANER WITH WASHER
ATTACHMENT £10
ALSO
FIRESIDE CHAIR HIGH SEAT WOODEN
ARMS, 2 DOUBLES DOOR WARDROBES &
2 DRESSING TABLES FREE TO GOOD
HOME
CONTACT ARNA 616322

#### FOR SALE

FUND RAISING COLOUR CALENDAR
IN AID OF NORWAY TRIP FOR ISLAND
CHILDREN HIS SUMMER
ONLY £5 EACH VIEWS OF NORWAY &
ORKNEY MADE TO ORDER
AVAILABLE FROM THE SCHOOL

## THANK YOU

George, Daran, Butch, Steve and families would like to say a BIG thank you to Carol & Al for the wonderful spread that they provided for us on Christmas Eve. It was enjoyed by everyone you did us proud and we've started saving again for this year.

#### LOST

A BOOKLET ON THE NEW ZEALAND CHALMERS FAMILY TREE. IT WAS LOANED TO SOMEONE IN STRONSAY AND CAROLINE FOTHERINGHAME WOULD LIKE IT RETURNED AS IT HAS GREAT SENTIMENTAL VALUE PHONE CAROLINE 01856 852967

# LOCAL BUSINESSES

#### STRONSAY ARTWORKS

Original paintings of Stronsay Landscape;
Limited edition prints, greetings cards and
postcards which are available for sale at local
shops, Post Office,

Hotel, B&B's and the Fishmart. Commissions taken. Tel. 616282

#### INSTANT PHOTO'S

Passport, visa, travel pass, driving licence, gun licence, etc.

Personalised birthday, Christmas & get well cards with your own special message or photograph. Business/Invitation cards.

You name it! Tell me what you want & I'll

supply it. call Bill Miller 616420

### STRONSAY FISHMART

Cafe, Hostel & Interpretation centre.

Hostel open all year round. Hot meals, light snacks, home bakes, teas, coffees refreshments.

Thursday 12pm - 2pm
Friday 5pm - 7pm
Saturday 12pm - 2pm & 5 pm - 7pm
Sunday 12pm - 7pm
Special occasions catered for by
arrangement Tel 616386

#### SPARKY

For all your electrical & Plumbing needs Contact John at 11 Whitehall Tel: 616466

DOGHOUSE DESIGN
Cards for any occasion
Hand made to order
Also on sale at the Post Office
Tel. 616453

#### FOR SALE

Fresh Lobsters & Crabs available Contact William Caithness 07833682077

#### GOING AWAY?

Do you need someone to look after your animals at your house?

I have 8 years experience with all kinds of animals.

Contact Beth Erdman 616339

#### RENEWABLES

"Anyone wishing to see the Application put forward to the Lottery Fund for money towards the proposed Hydrogen Project can contact E.Stevenson on 616216 or W.Caithness on 616220

# **USEFUL NUMBERS**

DOCTORS	616321/308	<b>B&amp;B CLESTRAIN</b>	616340
NURSES	616453/232	B&B AIRY	616231
HYDRO	616335	CAMPING BARN	616314
<b>DENTIST STATION RD</b>	01856879683	COMPANIONS	616307
BALFOUR HOSPITAL	01856888000	GALA	616463/339
DENTIST KING STREET	01856875348	REGISTRAR	616239
VET - FLETT & CARMICHAEL	01856872859	STRONSAY ARTWORK	S 616282
VET - NORHTVET	01856873403	FISHMART	616386
THE MANSE	616311	HALL BOOKINGS	616446
STRONSAY HOTEL	616213	POST OFFICE	616217
MAURICE'S	616255	SPECIAL CONSTABLE	616216
EBENEZER STORES	616339	STRONSAY LIMPET	616375/453

#### SHORT STORY.....Part 3

Soon he reached the top and followed the faint path leading to the gentler slope towards the rocky cove he sought. Up here the wind was stronger, blowing from the east, chilling any warmth from the sun. Looking west he could see his home town seven or eight miles distant and behind it some low rounded hills. To the east nothing but endless sea, the coast hidden behind the furthest point of the headland.

The path led him downwards in a zig-zag pattern down the moderately steep grassy slope. Now off the summit of the headland, he was again sheltered from the wind and the warmth again noticeable. Finally he arrived at the junction of the grass with the rough stony beach of the cove. Having decided to walk the full length of the beach he followed the edge of the grass and soon was startled as a large brown bird rose awkwardly from a hollow in the grass nearby. He had found his first ever eider - or "dunter" as they were known in the village - ducks nest. There lay the large clutch of eggs in their down lined nest. Passing on quickly to allow the duck to return he soon reached the end of the cove. Down at the waters edge, in the shelter of the great headland, there was barely a ripple on the sea. Further up on the stones lay what he was looking for - some nice sized pieces of driftwood. Selecting only the best pieces he carried them back to where the path joined the beach. Then on to the other side to complete his beach combing. Finally he had a good sized bundle. These he laid lengthways across the cords he had brought with him and soon built up a reasonable bundle which was then lashed tightly with the cords ready for the journey home. Hoisting it on to his shoulder, having first had another quick look at the eiders nest, he started on the uphill stretch. What had taken ten minutes on the downward journey, now with the added burden took most of an hour. However he was in no hurry. Laying down his bundle of firewood he would gratefully lower himself into the short sweet smelling grass and sit gazing out over the waves as they marched westward in never ending ranks. Even at this age, unable to express his feelings, he felt the ties of his past to the land around him. This, an unspoken sense of belonging, was adequate reward for his lack of companions. Peace, tranquility, a deep sense of continuity was, at least occasionally, more rewarding than the hectic scurrying and shouting of his rag-tag bunch of pals. Several times he stopped, sat ate some of his provisions and gazed at the scene below. He was aware that it would remain etched forever on his memory but never in his wildest dreams did he expect to share it with anyone else. Finally, sweating, limbs aching, the steep path slowly flattened out before him. Another few steps and the path led once more downhill. A great sense of exhilaration, tinged with a slight sadness, as his steps now lengthened covering the ground surely and easily, the weight of his burden now unimportant. Down the hill he strode, down to the rounded, well worn stones of the bankhead and the short walk home.

"Far hiv ye been?" asked his granny.

"Och, I jist walked oer tae Greenside and took hame a birn o sticks tae ye" was the proud reply.

"Ach, ye daft craitur, whit are ye deein chavin yersel wi that" she said.

However there was a smile and a twinkle in her eye

– all the thanks likely to be expressed by the quiet
self-contained little woman that was granny and all
the thanks he needed.



# GROUPS, CLUBS AND ORGANISATIONS

CLAY PIGEON SHOOTING
EVERY OTHER SUNDAY
ON BU LINKS
STARTS AT 1pm
£6 to shoot 25 rounds
For more info phone Mike on 616345

FRIDAY NIGHT GAMES CLUB
STARTED AGAIN LAST FRIDAY
CHILDREN AGE 10 AND OVER
£1 ENTRY PLENTY TO DO
COME AND HAVE SOME FUN THIS FRIDAY 8pm - 10pm
TEL: YVONNE 264 or SHEENA 306

#### DARTS

WILL BE HELD IN THE HALL ON 4th
FEB. PROMPT 8.pm START
JUNIOR DARTS, EUCHRE, 100 CLUB
AND RAFFLE. NAMES FOR CHALLENGE
CUP IN BY 9pm THAT NIGHT

#### COMPANIONS

Stronsay Companions. Not sure what to do on Monday afternoons why not come to the companions which starts on Monday 6th February in the hall from 2-4pm. You can play cards, games or just come and chat if you wish and have a cup of tea or coffee & eats. Anyone age 50 & over are welcome. If you wish any information contact Jeano on 616307 or Wilma on 616261. LUNCH CLUB. Our first lunch club will be on Monday 20th February in the hall at 1.00pm anyone age 50 & over are welcome and under no obligation to stay to the companions. Price is £3.00 for a splendid two course meal & tea, coffee & biscuits. We must have your names in by the Friday before each lunch club, contact Jeano on 616307 or Wilma on 616261.

STRONSAY SINGERS
STARTS AGAIN ON
MONDAY 16th JANUARY 7.30 pm
at the HALL
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
BRIAN CROWE 616464

MOTHER AND TODDLER GROUP
Thursday 9.30-11am All welcome

#### OCTOPUSH DATES

(FOR EXISTING MEMBERS ONLY) TUESDAY JANUARY 31st FEBRUARY 7th, 14th & 28th MARCH 7th, 14th & 28th

SWIM CLUB
HAS STARTED AGAIN
TELEPHONE SHEENA 616306
FOR MORE INFORMATION

#### COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Fantastic new disco equipment, disco ball, spotlights and smoke machine. Now available to hire at Community Centre. £10 per hour (Hall & equipment) + Hydro. You must also use one of our recommended DJ's. Ideal for parties & birthdays.

# VALENTINE'S DAY MEAL AT

THREE COURSE VALENTINE MEAL WITH FREE GLASS OF WINE AND CUP OF COFFEE

ALL FOR £12.50
MEALS SERVED UNTIL 9pm
BOOKINGS ONLY

PHONE CAROL 616213

#### SANTA FLOAT

On Saturday the 17th December 2005 Santa Claus came to Stronsay. His float took him through the village. It was a typical December night, wet and windy but this not affect the jovial atmosphere.

At the end of his ride through the village Santa stopped off at the Hotel where he enjoyed a mince pie and glass of sherry to fortify him for his journey home. He joined in with some Christmas carols and was presented with a gift from the Friday games club. The float raised £140.75p which was collected by some young helpers from the games club. The children suggested that the money be donated to MacMillan cancer unit in Kirkwall, as they felt it was a good cause. Thanks were given to Carol and Al who laid on food for everyone.



#### HANDEL'S MESSIAH

On 17<sup>th</sup> December, Stronsay had the great good fortune to host the Sanday Fiddle Club and Choir in a performance of Handel's "Messiah" which took place in the Kirk under their conductor Mike Newman. Despite icy weather and other pre-arranged activities more

Newman. Despite icy weather and other pre-arranged activities more than forty people assembled for what proved to be a wonderful afternoon's music.



Unfortunately, due to indisposition, guest soprano Penelope Chalmers was unable to take part and two of the arias had to be omitted but the remaining soprano solos were sung very well by choir member, Kate Howe. The second guest singer was John Hayward, tenor, who had sung the part professionally in the past and imparted a feeling of confidence from the very beginning. The contralto part was taken by Julia Young, one of the violinists, who sang very movingly, whilst Mike Newman himself gave a polished performance of the bass solos.

The choir sang with great enthusiasm but also expressively, giving real meaning to the words, and the orchestra, led by Bethan Newman, played extremely competently despite the young age of some of the players, and everyone was clearly enjoying themselves. During the great Hallelujah chorus the audience were invited to follow tradition and stand which they did. After the last Amen the orchestra and singers received a standing ovation for what was probably the first ever performance of the work on the island.

Our thanks are due to the Minister, Jennifer George, for permission to use the Kirk and also for her help in arranging refreshments etc. for the performers. Our thanks also go to those who actually provided and served these, those who helped with transport for the visitors and all who helped in any other way to make the afternoon a success. A collection at the door raised £126 which after the deduction of expenses will be given to charity.

This is a story written in 1989 by the late. Margaret Jane Miller, nee Rendall, who was born at Odness, and later lived at Glenmanna, about how the Stronsay roads were made in the 1920s.

#### Blocking The Roads in the 1920's

When I was walking up past the Cathedral one day and saw the huge machinery being used to re-surface the road, my thoughts went back to when I was a child at Odness, Stronsay, and the road making then.

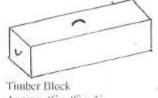
Two quarries, at Kirbister and Hunday, supplied the stone. Men with picks, large hammers and crowbars used to break up the rocks from the quarry into smaller pieces which were then transported by horse and cart to different places. Next, the island men would sit with small hammers and break those stones down further, into pieces measuring about one and a half inches across. On a summer evening you could hear the tapping of the hammers as the men worked. The small stones were then built into long 'cairns' about three feet high, the workers being paid by the yard. This 'metal' as it was called, was put on the roads, after having been mixed with a clay like substance. It was hard labour for the men, and if it was too wet for them to work, they got no pay.

My brother Willie Rendall and I then had the job of 'blocking' a bit of the road between our home at Odness and the South School. The blocks used were made of wood and were about three feet long by nine inches wide and nine inches high. They were set on the road surface on alternate sides of the road, as in the diagram, so that the traffic had to take a zig zag course between them. Our father had already put wire staples on the end of each block, and on our way to school in the mornings, we carried a stick with a 'cleek' on the end. With this stick we would pull each block a short distance along the road surface and place them in position. This meant that a different part of the road from the day before would take the traffic. On our way home at night we had to take the blocks off the road as they would have been dangerous in the dark.

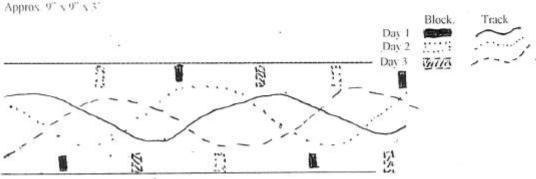
I well remember one particular day when we were coming back from school, we saw a steam road roller with smoke belching from the funnel, working at the Hunday quarry. It was making such a noise we were scared stiff – the like of this had never been seen on Stronsay before. Not only we bairns but horses too were terrified at this monster and used to run away from it. Two men came out from Kirkwall to work the roller, and they lived in what was called the road roller but. At that time there were no cars in Stronsay – the folks had gigs, phaetons, governess carts, and spring carts. The first car I remember coming to Stronsay was a huge Ford.

A bit later a stone crusher came to the island and it crushed the stones into chips. A tar boiler too was fixed up at Hunday quarry. The men used special forks to spread the tarred chips on the roads – they heated the forks in a drum filled with burning coal. This method made lovely roads and there was no longer any need for 'blocking'.

By now motor bykes were on the go. One man caused a good laugh the first time he tried his byke. Off he went, but unfortunately he didn't know how to stop the engine. He had to run round and round the roads until he ran out of petrol.



Two years ago (1987) I was home in Stronsay and I went to Odness where they had started up a new quarry. The huge machinery there was a sight to see and the quantities of chips made by the machines was unbelievable. It was some difference from what I remember when I was a peedic lass.



## DORIS AND NAINE'S KITCHEN FRUITY STUFFING

6oz breadcrumbs

2oz peanuts

2oz melted butter

Juice & rind of an orange

1 level teaspoon curry powder

Salt & pepper

Parsley

4oz chopped apricots

6oz chopped onions

1 egg

Mix all the ingredients together and bake in a moderate oven for 30 minutes.





Unit 9/10 HAMISH MACLEAN FARM PRODUCT Sycamore Cottage Orkney Auction Mart

Kirkwall, Orkney

KW15 1RE

Mobile 07710526153

Tel 01856 871700

Orkney KW17 20U Tel/Fax 01856 861214

MINERALS AND PROTEINS

Orkney natural protein

Orkney finisher Orkney general purpose

Orkney pre-calver Orkney builing mineral

Orkney universal hi-spec Orkney dairy mineral.

Orkney sheep mineral Superfeeds for ewes and finishing lambs

MEDICINAL

\*Tribex fluke drench Ovispec wormer S & C Supaverm fluke and worm \*Cattle pour on - various

\*Crovect Dectomax

Spot On Selenium and cobalt drench

A, D & Einjection

De-horning paste

TRACTOR SPARES & WORKSHOP

New/secondhand tractor spares inc: mudguards, wheels and tyres WD-40 - light bulbs - gloves -grease - hand cleaner - welding rods - goggles and masks
\*Paint including farm oxide

Anti fraeze - batteries - cutting discs - pressure washers

torches - hammers - pen-knives - Easy Start - trailer boards etc.

FEED

Ewe rolls Call nuts Young stock mix Calf creep mix Lamb creep mix

Tup mix Bull mix Hen food HORSES

Pasture mix and nuts (D&H) Hi Fi - Alpha A

Budget pasture mix and nuts Shavings and garlic powder Mineral licks

Feed buckets Haynets etc.

VARIOUS

Rat balt - cattle clippers -Colostrum - oilskins - calving machines - scour capsules boiler suits - ear tags - Formalin boots (all kinds) - milk (call and lamb) - hypochloride; spades, forks and shovels - troughs - coal bunkers - observation systems dustbins - drinking bowls - seat covers -

**BOLUS ETC** 

Coppasure - cow and calf Copinox - ewe and calf Tracesure - calf and cow Tracesure - lamb and ewe

Dog and cat bags of complete feed or tins Rabbit food

Peanuts Bird seed Cat litter

JANITORIAL AND HOME

Washing powder and fabric conditioner, toilet rolls, J-cloths, bleach, dishwasher tablets, floor cleaner, drain cleaner, washing upliquids, traffic film remover, blue rolls and much, much more

\* Denotes items on special offer. This is just a sample of our stock please come and look around. General public, trade customers all welcome- 9-5 Monday - Friday Hamish's next visit to Stronsay is next week, (beginning 23rd Jan)

#### **QUIZ**

#### JUST FOR FUN

- 1. What name is given to the Japanese art of paper folding?
- 2. In the London version of Monopoly, which is the cheapest property?
- 3. How many points are scored with a try in rugby union?
- 4. A 'royal flush' is the top hand in which game?
- 5. With how many pieces does each player begin in the game of backgammon?
- 6. What do Americans call the game of draughts?
- 7. In which city were the 1992 Summer Olympics Games held?
- 8. In which game would you play a 'rubber'?
- 9. In which card game would you meet 'Mr Bun the Baker'?
- 10. In the Nintendo game, what was Mario's trade?

Answers to Decembers quiz. 1. The Advent 2. The Grinch 3. Jacob Marley 4 Capricorn

5. Holly 6. Hollywood 7. Twelfth Night 8. Indian Ocean 9. Cupid 10. Sir Isaac Newton

# FIRST AID COURSE

As promised Dr McKay has been in touch with the Red Cross and at the moment he is in negotiation about a suitable course for Stronsay (Hopefully for Febuary or March)

Anyone interested please contact the

Surgery 616321 during normal hours

#### With regards to first

aid course. So far we have only had interest shown by 3 people. Unless more people show an interest, it will not be possible to run the course

#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"THAT'S WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL A FAIRLY GOOD CATCH OF RENEWABLE ENERGY."



3,6,9 or 12 monthly subscriptions, available at 75p an issue which includes post & packing for friends or family living away. If your Group or organisation is having an event or there is anything going on why not tell us so we can tell Stronsay. No event is too small or insignificant, we are trying to give out local information but cannot do it unless YOU tell US. Have you got a story or a poem or old photo's of Stronsay to share with other islanders.

If so Pleeeeeeease

CONTACT EITHER YVONNE, 375 OR HEATHER 453

email hfazak@btinternet.com Or by letter to Lower Leaquoy

#### USEFUL INFO AND DATES

POST OFFICE TIMES- MON & THURS 9am-4pm TUE, WED, FRI & SAT 9am-1pm NEXT SPECIAL RUBBISH COLLECTION FEBRUARY REPLACEMENT BIN BAGS TEL: 01856 873535

SUNDAY SERVICE AT THE KIRK SUNDAY 11am

OUR LADY'S CHAPEL, PIER HEAD. - DAILY MASSES 7am SUNDAY 9am

The Stronsay Development Trust is supported in its activities by Orkney Enterprise, Orkney Islands Council, Communities Scotland, The Crofters Commission and Orkney Community Planning Partnership.

## 11 BIRD NEWS

An unusual species for the island - a Dabchick (Little Grebe) - has been seen several times in the Waterworks Pond at the Ayre of the Mires during mid-January. It seems to prefer the corner nearest to the picnic table and may be seen well from there although best viewed from inside the car as the species has the infuriating habit of resurfacing some considerable distance away when disturbed. The bird is smaller than the Moorhens which may also be seen on the pond. A Water Rail was in the Southbank garden on Boxing Day and another individual of this very secretive species was seen in the Holland road in early January. No doubt others are present!

There have been regular sightings of both male and female Hen Harriers during midwinter from various parts of the island and many hundreds of waders - including Curlew, Golden Plover, and Bar-tailed Godwits - are present, mainly in farmland among the fields of short-cropped grass. The godwits - which are often in a 'tight' flock - are somewhat smaller than Curlew with long, slightly upturned bills, and the upper parts are a silvery-grey colour. Herons may be seen around the shore-line at this time of year.

Other birds to look out for in mid-winter are Snow Buntings among the stubble-fields (and also on the beach near the old Lifeboat slip); both Red-throated and Great Northern Divers (particularly in Mill Bay), and Merlins -often perched on road-side fence posts. One or two Kestrels (Moosey-hawks) are overwintering and may be seen hovering over areas of unharvested crop in particular in their search for rodents, and a few Redpolls have been seen -three at Linkshouse and one flying over Castle. 29 Ravens were seen between Mt.Pleasant and Bomasty Bay in mid-month. At least twenty Redwings and over a hundred Fieldfares are overwintering and may be seen in the fields of short grass, mainly close to the road in the Russland and Rosebank areas. Black Guillemots - in their grey winter plumage - have been seen on the pier this winter, appearing very different to the striking black-and-white birds we are all familiar with in summer.

P.S. There were no further sightings of the Horney (Honey) Buzzard which was seen last autumn!

We have just completed printing the 2005 Stronsay Bird Report and copies are now on sale at £5 (including an up-to-date island bird list; original cover-sketch, and colour-plate of the rarities seen in 2005). If anyone who does not already receive a copy is interested in purchasing one, please let us know as soon as possible.

Stronsay Bird Report 2005



John & Sue Holloway

#### LIBRARY

NEXT VISIT FEBRUARY 14th-15th

TUE WHITEHALL 15.30-17.30

WED SCHOOL 08.00-10.00

SCHOOL 18.00-20.30

# REFIT TIMETABLE 2006

Sunday	Departs Kirkwall 1540 via Sanday arriving Stronsay 1750. Departs Stronsay 1800 via Eday arriving Kirkwall 2000.
Monday	Departs, Kirkwall 0700 via Sanday arriving Stronsay 0910 Departs Stronsay 0925 via Eday arriving Kirkwall 1130. Departs Kirkwall 1145 arriving Stronsay 1320. Departs Stronsay 1330 via Eday arriving Kirkwall 1530. Departs Kirkwall 1500 via Eday and Sanday arriving Stronsay 1735. Stays overnight.
remove env	Departs Stronsay 0700 via Eday arriving Kirkwall 0905.
Tuesday	Departs Kirkwall 1300 via Eday arriving Stronsay 1505. Departs Stronsay 1515 for Kirkwall arriving 1650.
Wednesday	Departs Kirkwall 0845 arriving Stronsay 1020. Departs Stronsay 1035 via Eday arriving Kirkwall 1240.
	Departs Kirkwall 1640 via Eday arriving Stronsay 1845 and stays overnight.
Thursday	Departs Stronsay 0700 via Sanday and Eday arriving Kirkwall 0935.
	Departs Kirkwall 1620 via Eday arriving Stronsay 1825 and stays overnight.
Friday	Departs Stronsay 0815 via Sanday and Eday arriving Kirkwall at 1050.
	Departs Kirkwall 1105 via Sanday arriving Stronsay 1315. Departs Stronsay 1325 via Eday arriving Kirkwall 1525. Departs Kirkwall 1600 via Eday & Sanday arriving Stronsay 1835. Departs Stronsay 1845 for Kirkwall arriving at 2020.
Saturday	Departs Kirkwall 0800 arriving Stronsay 0935. Departs Stronsay 0950 via Sanday and Eday arriving Kirkwall at 1225.

# REFIT TIMETABLE 2006

Sunday	Departs Kirkwall 1540 via Sanday arriving Stronsay 1750. Departs Stronsay 1800 via Eday arriving Kirkwall 2000.
Monday	Departs,Kirkwall 0700 via Sanday arriving Stronsay 0910 Departs Stronsay 0925 via Eday arriving Kirkwall 1130. Departs Kirkwall 1145 arriving Stronsay 1320. Departs Stronsay 1330 via Eday arriving Kirkwall 1530. Departs Kirkwall 1500 via Eday and Sanday arriving Stronsay 1735. Stays overnight.
	Departs Stronsay 0700 via Eday arriving Kirkwall 0905.
Tuesday	Departs Kirkwall 1300 via Eday arriving Stronsay 1505. Departs Stronsay 1515 for Kirkwall arriving 1650.
Wednesday	Departs Kirkwall 0845 arriving Stronsay 1020. Departs Stronsay 1035 via Eday arriving Kirkwall 1240.
	Departs Kirkwall 1640 via Eday arriving Stronsay 1845 and stays overnight.
Thursday	Departs Stronsay 0700 via Sanday and Eday arriving Kirkwall 0935.
	Departs Kirkwall 1620 via Eday arriving Stronsay 1825 and stays overnight.
Friday	Departs Stronsay 0815 via Sanday and Eday arriving Kirkwall at 1050. Departs Kirkwall 1105 via Sanday arriving Stronsay 1315. Departs Stronsay 1325 via Eday arriving Kirkwall 1525. Departs Kirkwall 1600 via Eday & Sanday arriving Stronsay 1835. Departs Stronsay 1845 for Kirkwall arriving at 2020.
Saturday	Departs Kirkwall 0800 arriving Stronsay 0935. Departs Stronsay 0950 via Sanday and Eday arriving Kirkwall at 1225.