



STRONSAY LIMPET

FUNDED BY STRONSAY DEVELOPMENT TRUST

ISSUE 54 - DECEMBER 2009

Published on the last Thursday of the month



**A merry Christmas and a very happy New Year
to all readers of The Limpet.**

CHRISTMAS 2009—OPENING HOURS

- Stronsay surgery: closed Fri, Sat, Sun and Mon (25-28 Dec)
closed Fri, Sat, Sun and Mon (1-4 Jan)
- Stronsay Arts & Crafts Shop: closes at 6pm on Thu 24 Dec, reopens at 10pm Sat 2 Jan
- Other Stronsay businesses: See list below
- Rubbish collection: as usual on Mon 28 Dec and Mon 4 Jan
- OIC Customer Services: closes at 3:30pm on Thu 24 Dec, reopens at 9am Tue 5 Jan
- Orkney Library & Archive: closes at 1pm on Thu 24 Dec, reopens at 9am Tue 5 Jan.

(Note changed times for Ebenezer on Fri 1 Jan & Sat 2 Jan)

Date	Post Office	Ebenezer	Hotel	Fish mart	Olivebank
Thu 24 Dec	8:30—12:30	7:30—7:30	Normal hours	12—2 5—7	8-30—7:30
Fri 25 Dec	Closed	Closed	12:00—16:00	Closed	Closed
Sat 26 Dec	Closed	10—12	Closed	Closed	Closed
Sun 27 Dec	Closed	10—1	Normal hours	5—7	Closed
Mon 28 Dec	Closed	7:30—7:30	Normal hours	Closed	10:30—12:30
Tue 29 Dec	8:30—12	7:30—7:30	Normal hours	12—2 5—7	8:30—6:30
Wed 30 Dec	8:30—12	7:30—7:30	Normal hours	5—7	8:30—6:30
Thu 31 Dec	8:30—4	7:30—7:30	Normal hours	12—2 5—7	8:30—6:30
Fri 1 Jan	Closed	10—12	Closed	Closed	Closed
Sat 2 Jan	Closed	7:30—7:30	Normal hours	Closed	Closed
Sun 3 Jan	Closed	10—1	Normal hours	5—7	Closed
Mon 4 Jan	8:30—4:15	7:30—7:30	Normal hours	Closed	10:30—12:30

The next edition of The Limpet will be published on Thu 28 Jan. Items for inclusion in that edition should be submitted no later than Sat 23 Jan. Contact details are on back page

STRONSAY GP—UPDATE

By Karen Crichton

NHS Orkney Interim Community Health Partnership General Manager

NHS Orkney has reported that they are delighted with the response to the campaign to recruit GPs and Nurse Practitioners to a number of islands including Stronsay and Eday. 21 GP application packs and 32 Nurse Practitioner packs have been requested. The closing date for applications is Friday 18th December 2009 with short listing taking place on Monday 21st December.

Interviews will be held on Monday 11th January 2010 and all candidates who are invited to attend for interview will also be invited to visit Stronsay and Eday prior to the interviews. NHS Orkney is writing to all Community Councils to ask them to be involved in introducing candidates to their islands.

There will be an update on the recruitment of a GP for Stronsay and a Nurse Practitioner for Eday in the January edition of *The Limpet*.

AMBULANCE UPDATE

By Andy Rose

As many will know we have had an ambulance/community bus on a trial period from the Scottish ambulance service to see how it could be utilised on the island. After consultation with NHS Orkney, OIC and SAS it seems that there is a use for such a vehicle on the islands.

On Monday 14th December a replacement vehicle was delivered to Stronsay. It's a peedie bit older and has a few more miles under its belt than the assessment vehicle, but it is better than our previous ambulance.

I've been told that the assessment ambulance has now returned to Aberdeen but if anyone sees it on the other islands please let me know!

I hope the community will carry on using the vehicle although any groups/clubs wishing to do so will now have to find the funding for running costs, maybe the community council or the development trust can help?

No profit can be made from this vehicle but the purse strings are tight and NHS Orkney will not pay for everything.

If anyone requires more information please contact Andy Rose on 616277

Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

STRONSAY SCHOOL—DECEMBER 2009

A very big Thank You; to all who supported the curry night to raise funds for school trips. It was a huge success.

School Dates for your diary

Burn's Supper (in School) – Saturday 23rd January 2010, watch this space for more information.

Visitors to the school this term

Once again it has been a busy term and we have had quite a few visitors to the school.

Jenny Taylor from the Orkney woodland projects visited the school to talk about the native trees in Orkney.

Marion Macleod visited the upper primary to help them with their Green Project and their composting.

The French and German assistants have both visited the school this term, continuing their great work in supporting pupils studying modern languages.

A Curriculum for Excellence

The school is currently making great progress with implementing “A Curriculum for Excellence”. If you would like to learn more about what ACfE means for education please follow this link:

www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentsaspartnersinlearning/about/cfevideos.asp

Also watch this space, as we will be inviting you into school to see “A Curriculum for Excellence” in action in the near future.

Stronsay the past, present and future -The Challenge

Over the past few months the secondary pupils at Stronsay School have been working together, with staff, to develop a project which encompasses Crofting Connections and the STEM project. The basis of this work has the pupils and staff focusing on a core aspect which is the development of an outside area in the current wild area. This core activity will also be supplemented with shorter workshops, this will all work together to enhance the learners Knowledge, Understanding and Skills. The main emphasis of the project will be on traditional crofting and new technologies, which can provide the learners with more sustainable opportunities within their local environment.

On behalf of everyone at Stronsay School, we would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

KIRKWALL FISHING BOAT WRECKED ON STRONSAY

DECEMBER 2009

The Kirkwall fishing boat “Spring Tide” owned and skippered by John Hay, of Hatston Park, Kirkwall, is expected to be a total loss after ending up on the rocks called “Spencie”, on the North-East corner of Odiness Bay, Stronsay, on the evening of Friday 11 December 2009.

Fifty year old John had been dredging for clams to the east of Stronsay all day, and as darkness fell, he stopped fishing, brought the dredges on board, and tidied the decks in preparation for the trip back to his home port of Kirkwall. As he put the engine in forward gear, it stopped dead, and despite several attempts to cure the problem, he was unsuccessful.

Within minutes, and in total darkness, he found himself bumping in over the rocks of “Spencie”, and eventually the boat came to a stop up against a ledge of rock. Although the weather was quite good, there was a heavy swell in the bay, and very soon the boat was being pounded on the rocks, resulting in her being holed on the port side and filling with water very quickly. After informing the coastguards of his plight, John boarded his inflatable life-raft and attempted to reach the shore.

Recalling his frightening experience, John said, “The swell was so great that one minute I would be up on the top of the wheelhouse, and worried that some sharp object might puncture the raft, and then the next minute I would be out over the rocks. In the dark, I could not see if I was on a skerry or actually on the shore, so I was a bit reluctant to get off the life-raft. Eventually I did climb out onto the rocks and made my way for about a hundred yards over the rocks to dry land. I had seen the lights of a quad byke coming down over the fields, so I headed in that direction and met up with Patto Dennison. I am really a lucky man. I was not injured, and hardly got my feet wet.”

In the meantime, Kirkwall lifeboat, under the command of Coxswain Geoff Gardens, and the coastguard helicopter from Shetland, were heading for the scene, and arrived shortly after John had reached the safety of the dry land.

Peter (Patto) Dennison, who farms Odiness, had been made aware that a boat was in trouble on Odiness Point, and, there being no coastguards on Stronsay anymore, had made his way over the fields on his quad-byke to render assistance, meeting John as he made his way up over the rocks in the dark.

The helicopter arrived on the scene about this time, and Patto directed them into the middle of the field where it was safe for them to make a landing. John was then airlifted to Kirkwall and after a brief examination at the Balfour Hospital, was found to be none the worse for his ordeal. The Kirkwall lifeboat also arrived at the scene, but was unable to get close enough to the boat to render any assistance, and therefore returned to Kirkwall.

On Saturday morning John returned to Stronsay by ferry, accompanied by Ian Lindsey, Orkney Sector Manager of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, and together we returned to the scene and examined the boat.

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She lies on her port side and is obviously severely damaged on that side as the water ebbs and flows through the hold. She has come in over a ledge of sharp rocks and is hard up against another ledge about four feet high. Even if the damage could be patched by divers from the inside, any attempt to tow her back off the rocks would no doubt result in further serious damage to the hull.

The forty foot boat was built of larch on oak in 1960 by Nobles of Fraserburgh, and has been owned by John Hay for the last five months.

Ironically, Ian Lindsey was in Stronsay at the weekend to present certificates to five ex volunteers of the Stronsay Coastguards, which was disbanded in April, 2009, due to “Corporate Risk”, or in other words problems complying with health and safety regulations, and who between them had notched up 135 years of invaluable service and devotion to the safety of others, had a vast amount of local knowledge, and who are now no longer required!

Bill Miller, Glenmanna, Stronsay.



END OF AN ERA FOR STRONSAY COASTGUARDS

After faithfully serving the island of Stronsay for over 100 years, the Stronsay coastguard unit has finally reached the end of the road.

In April, 2009, the last remaining five voluntary members were told that their services were no longer required. Apparently this decision was made by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency due to “Corporate Risk”. It would appear that health and safety regulations make it necessary for each coastguard officer to undergo training once a month. Having reduced the Orkney Sector Managers from two to one, they now have no-one available to train the men. No doubt this will make the agency much more efficient!

On Sunday 13th December, Orkney Sector Manager Ian Lindsey welcomed the five Stronsay officers to the Stronsay Community Centre and presented them with “Valedictory Certificates” to mark the invaluable service rendered by them to the Coastguard Service.

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Pictured from the left: Garry Dennison (5 years service), Ian Cooper (31 years), Kenneth Shearer (29 years), Donald Peace (42 years), and Patrick Shearer (29 years)

Following this presentation, Kenneth Shearer, on behalf of the Stronsay unit, then presented Don Peace with an inscribed hip flask to mark his outstanding contribution to the service.



Well done to all of you, and thank you for your professionalism and dedication to this essential rescue service.

Bill Miller, Glenmanna, Stronsay.

JOHN HOLLOWAY'S BIRD REPORT

A Common Buzzard (quite rare on Stronsay) first recorded in the Whitehall/Hunton area by visitor Bob Wilson in late October, then by Jim and Michelle near Spion Cop, was seen again on 17th December feeding on a dead rabbit by the roadside near the Waterworks. The Buzzard is a very useful species in open farmland, feeding almost entirely on rabbits and this individual is almost certainly the 'large brown' bird of prey reported by several people during the last two months.

Many of the birds mentioned in the last report are still present and with no real extreme weather recently, no new species have arrived, but as ever - and quite unexpectedly - there was one surprise find during the period, this time a Little Auk, found stranded in the Airy Road by Hazel and Norman on their way to the ferry at 5.45pm on 18th December. Fortunately they had time to pick it up and drop it off at Castle. The bird was very 'perky' with no obvious injuries or evidence of oiling and a procession of residents called at the house to see this tiny auk species which breeds in huge numbers in the High Arctic, before the bird was released into the sea between the piers. Sheila at Helmsley was particularly keen to see the bird, having made a recent trip to Spitzbergen and seen huge numbers of Little Auks in the breeding grounds there. On release the bird flew twenty yards or so and began diving almost immediately - floodlit by the pier lamp-posts! Little Auks winter in the waters around the British Isles, spending the whole time well out to sea, but occasionally individuals are found inshore, a few 'getting it wrong' and becoming stranded on dry land. Unless found quickly these stranded birds are doomed.



The Little Auk at Castle

It is a natural reaction - and generally the right thing to do - to put injured/distressed birds in a cardboard box to keep them quiet, but given this species' almost wholly oceanic lifestyle, keeping the box in a cool porch is certainly preferable to the other natural reaction of placing it by a warm stove - an almost certain recipe for 'killing by kindness'!

Other than the Little Auk, the most interesting sighting in December - so far - was a party of 10 Goldfinches seen by Bill and Belle at Springwell on 10th.

STRONSAY TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

The ceremony took place on Sat 12th Dec on a beautiful evening. The tree lights were switched on by local nurse Linda Smith and this year's new school lights were switched on by school pupil Joanne Rendall. Everyone then made their way into the community centre where they were entertained by the Stronsay Singers, Stronsay's Silver Darlings, the school children and several other talented locals. A supper of mulled wine and various goodies was provided and the evening was rounded off by an impromptu music session.



L-R: Linda Smith, Joanne Rendall



School children singing

CHEQUES FROM LODGE KILDINGUIE TO THE SILVER DARLINGS AND THE GAMES CLUB

At the tree lighting ceremony on Sat 12th Dec Bill Miller took the opportunity to present two £500 cheques from Lodge Kildinguie. One cheque went to the Games Club who will use it to purchase more equipment for the Games Club. The second cheque went to the Silver Darlings who will put the money towards the production of a second CD.

Both groups send their thanks to Lodge Kildinguie for their kind generosity.



L-R: Sheena Cooper (Games Club), Bill Miller (Lodge Kildinguie), Gaynor Smith (Silver Darlings)

COMPANIONS CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Stronsay Silver Darlings entertained at the Companions Christmas Party. Including a singalong with the partiers it was a huge success. Jingle Bells: Rudolph the red nosed reindeer and Little Donkey were very popular. Pass the parcel and a quiz kept everyone busy for hours. Wilma Stout, Margaret Miller, Carwin Miller, Linda Smith all organised cooked and served the three course meal and Heather Fazakerly arrived in time for the big washing and clearing up. There were 22 guests at the party plus the Silver Darlings who were the icing on the cake!



James Stout gets a present from Santa at the Stronsay Companions Christmas Party



The Silver Darlings entertained at the Companions Xmas Party

MANSE REPORT DECEMBER 2009

This month has been a good one for the Manse. We finished concreting all of the wall-heads which enabled us to think about getting the roof on. Patsy and John came on Friday 11th to make a start along with myself, Steve, Craig and Wayne. Once the weekend was by, the weather was good and we finished the front roof on Wednesday. Every evening Steve, Jim 'O' Hunton and myself have been busy in the shed holing slates, all 10,000 of them. It was a monotonous job but one that had to be done. Today, Thursday 17th Dec we finally took most of the scaffold away from the front of the house and erected it at the back. We will hopefully have the back roof done soon, but there is a far larger area to cover and a lot more lead work to do.

We would like to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a good new year.

Steve & Yvonne



SANTA'S VISIT TO STRONSAY

Stronsay games club held their annual "santa float" on Sat 19 Dec. The snowy showers made it even more festive and, despite the wintry conditions, a good crowd turned out to follow Santa through the village and into the Stronsay Hotel for carol singing and supper. Thanks once again go to Jim for the use of his shed and yard, Ingram for driving, Steve and Yvonne for decorating the trailer and the Stronsay hotel for their kind hospitality, also to everyone who made the effort to come along.

The children decided this year's collection would go to CLIC sergeant (which cares for children and young people with cancer) and the fantastic sum of £75 was raised - well done!



HEALTHY LIVING CENTRE MOST FREQUENT ATTENDEE

As promised, we wanted to reward our most loyal client with a “thank you” gift. Here she is!! Linda Caithness below, receiving her prize; a Boots voucher for £20 and a goody bag from Stronsay HLC staff. Linda, an annual card member, has clocked up an impressive 104 visits since we opened our doors in March this year. Well done Linda!

Are you a regular visitor? Well you never know, you could be the next recipient of an award just for coming along and doing what you enjoy doing, losing weight, gaining strength and stamina, firming up those flabby bits or defining a few muscles!

While we are on the subject; ladies why not come along and learn how to improve your bust, banish those bingo wings, get a pert bottom and trim down that tum? Absolutely NO weigh-ins and NO lectures! You will be able to see the results yourself in the mirror every week with results obtainable in six to eight weeks.

Why not make it your new years resolution? A New Year, a new and improved you! Anyone who thinks that they can't do it – talk to Linda! She will tell you, “If I can do it, anyone can.” Just look at the photograph – doesn't she look great?!!



A wintry view from the Old Manse of a well known Stronsay landmark that won't be seen again (*Photo by Yvonne Weaver*)



MONTHLY REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

FROM TONY WITHERS LDO.

Merry Christmas to everyone in Stronsay.

Just to update you on my main activities since the last issue, it is fair to say things are a little less manic than when the Turbine funding was still being worked on. However other projects and issues have kept us all busy at the Trust.

The signing up of two new potential board members last week is most welcome! To keep the Development Trust effective we need more of you to step up to the mark and consider joining the board and help us improve our lot on Stronsay.

Marion our Powerdown Officer assisted by Julia Crocker (SDT Chair) hosted a well attended evening with regard to a Community Greenhouse. There is potentially excellent funding available from the Climate Challenge Fund for this type of project so an open meeting was held to find out whether it might be a well supported facility on Stronsay. There were slides and plenty of opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of a Keder greenhouse(see photo below). Many useful suggestions were offered and will be taken forward. Thanks go to all who attended and to Nicola for laying on a magnificent spread for us at the Fishmart. Formal application for funding will now be completed.



I have made an application for funding for a pilot project to explore the viability of using dried and compressed and treated tangles made into fuel pellets and logs for multi fuel heating systems. If anyone has an interest in this idea and is willing to assist let me know on 616300.

I will be sending out a short survey form to all farmers asking them if they are interested in the mobile slaughterhouse idea. This is in response to a very mixed reaction to the proposal and I wish to know if there is enough support for the idea or if the status quo is preferred. If the response is positive then this aids securing funding if not I will put the idea into the long grass!

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The Trust has asked me to conduct a feasibility study into the purchase of the light haulage side of Jim Holland's business on behalf of the community as a social enterprise employing local people to run it. Should this lifeline service go to a mainland contractor the service is very likely to suffer and be more expensive. This proposal is considered so important that it will receive a great deal of my work time in an attempt to secure funding. More to follow...

Finally I have received confirmation from the authorities that Whitehall's open sewage pipes will not be replaced by main sewerage for at least ten years!!! Mike Erdman has started a petition at the shop for you to sign in protest at this decision. A copy of the letter about it is also there for you to read. The more fuss we make the sooner this situation is likely to be rectified. Kettletoft got theirs done because they shouted louder!

TONY'S TIP OF THE MONTH!

Would you like to learn how to use a computer and surf the net? If yes let me know because I wish to set up a night class once a week starting in the spring tutored by a qualified instructor. If you are interested register your name with me on 616300 now and I will give you more info. Remember if you want to stay slim and attractive like me don't eat or drink too much this Christmas!!! Now where did I leave those 48 mince pies?

ORKNEY ACTION FOR WARMER HOMES GRANT

Do you spend more than 10% of your income on heating your home?

If the answer to this is "yes" and you either own your own home or rent from a private landlord you may be eligible for a grant of up to £10,000 to improve the energy efficiency of your home.

You will need to show proof of your income and heating costs as you go through the initial application. If you meet the criteria your home will then be inspected to proceed further.

For an initial application form contact The Orkney Energy Centre on 01856 870536. Please mention that you heard about this from Stronsay Community Powerdown.

A big thank you to so many of you that have been so helpful during my first 6 months with Community Powerdown on Stronsay.

Christmas Greetings and Best Wishes for the New Year to all residents!

Marion



HOW TO GET REAL HELP WITH YOUR ENERGY COSTS THIS WINTER

Scotland has always been known for its ability to feature four seasons in one day, particularly in summer, but the onset of winter always runs like clockwork. Now that the leaves are turning and the clocks have gone back it won't be long before the winter chill sets in.

For many families and older people winter marks the beginning of their struggle to afford to heat their homes, often suffering in cold, badly insulated and draughty homes. Mike Thornton, Director, Scotland for the Energy Saving Trust, explains how a new initiative from the Scottish Government can help provide real financial and environmental benefits to those struggling to heat their homes:

“We are all looking for ways to make our fuel costs lower and our homes warmer this winter and the Energy Assistance Package has been designed to do just that and is open to everyone in Scotland.”

“The package is a completely new approach to saving money and saving energy and provides real benefits – from cost savings on gas and electricity, to home insulation or even a whole new heating system.”

By calling the Energy Assistance Package hotline on *0800 512012* applicants can find out about the combination of offers that might be available to them, including:

- Energy advice – assistance to find out how to make your home as energy efficient as possible.
- Help to find out if you are entitled to more money through benefits or tax credits.
- Help to switch to the lowest-cost gas or electricity rates for those who qualify.
- Loft or cavity wall insulation.
- Other measures to make your home warmer – such as additional insulation, central heating and renewable heating systems.

Mike continues: “Everyone who feels the pinch should call the Energy Assistance Package hotline on *0800 512012* to find out how they can benefit from this unique and easy to access energy package.”

For more information call *0800 512012* (free from landline phones), or visit www.energyassistancepackage.com

LEO HOJBJERG (1929 – 2009)

On Thursday 10th December Leo passed away peacefully after a long illness.

Together with his beloved wife Pauline they spent many happy years at Hescombe Cottage before returning to her natal Grimsby to be close to their family.

Born in Denmark, Leo left his village home as a young lad to go to sea, ending his maritime career as skipper of the Macandy, Grimsby, during better fishing times.

Leo was a larger than life character who could appear somewhat daunting to those who didn't know him. But underneath the seemingly gruff façade he was a very kind and generous man with a sharp sense of humour and a delightful accent. He would often regale us with stories about the past and we think he wouldn't mind at all if we tell one about the time when he had more money than he could cope with.

It was 1999 and the media was full of hype about the possibility of the "Millenium Bug" bringing computers to a standstill. The problem was that the 'experts' seemed unsure if the programmes which clicked up the dates and year changes would become confused when it came to 2000. If this happened, then everything would be in chaos, not least the banking system. One morning, Leo abruptly announced to his wife he was going to Kirkwall on the boat and returned that evening with 2 carrier bags containing the totality of their life savings. A few days later he was seen boarding the boat again, accompanied by 2 carrier bags. On his return he was a changed man. He announced he hadn't been able to sleep nights due to the burden and strain of it and had simply had to put it all back in the bank and felt much better that he could relax once more.

After a life well lived, we wish him God speed on his Journey.

Jack & Simone

WHAT SORT OF DOG OWNER ARE YOU?

Are you a Public Enemy who allows their dog to foul in an open public place (this includes roads, footpaths, roadside verges and play areas) or are you a Regular Retriever who uses a pooper scooper and bag to pick up their dog's faeces and take them home? Pooper scoopers and bags are available free of charge in Ebenezer, Olivebank and the Post Office.

Dog fouling is not only unpleasant it is unhealthy—dog faeces contain toxocariasis, an infection of the roundworm *toxocara canis* which most commonly affects children between 18 months and five years. The eggs of the parasite can be found in soil or sand that is contaminated with faeces, if the eggs are inadvertently swallowed they can result in infection that lasts between six and 24 months. Symptoms include eye disorders, vague ache, dizziness, nausea, asthma and epileptic fits.

It's worthwhile remembering that under the terms of the Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003, a person in charge of a dog that fails to remove and dispose of faeces appropriately when the dog fouls in any open public place is committing an offence.

STRONSAY HEALTHY LIVING CENTRE

Tracey & Julie would like to wish all our clients a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

We would also like to extend a warm welcome to Elaine Dennison who will be joining staff at the Healthy Living Centre. Elaine has very kindly offered to cover periods when we are both away, such as Monday 21st December and at other times as required until 10th January 2010.

DATE	OPENING
Wed 23 rd Dec	10-12noon
Thu 24 th Dec	10-12noon
Christmas Day	CLOSED
Boxing Day	CLOSED
Sun 27 th Dec	CLOSED
Mon 28 th Dec	10-12noon
Tue 29 th Dec	10-12 noon
Wed 30 th Dec	10-12noon
Thu 31 st Dec	10-12noon
New Years Day	CLOSED
Sat 2 nd Jan 2010	CLOSED
Sun 3 rd Jan	CLOSED
Mon 4 th Jan	10-12noon
Tue 5 th Jan	10-12noon

Tel 616449 during opening times or Julie 335, Tracey 350 or Elaine 331

NEEDED FOR STRONSAY POOL TO REMAIN OPEN AFTER CHRISTMAS

We urgently need people to train as lifeguards. The training consists of 1 session of 2 hours per month. The more lifeguards we have means more people on the rota, therefore not too demanding a commitment. For more information phone John on 616253.

Merry Christmas from all at the pool.

ANOTHER LIFEBOAT STORY

By John Holloway

The recent heroic events during the assistance given by the Coastguard Helicopter and Kirkwall Lifeboat to the stricken yacht 'Innana' in Mill Bay reminded me of my first visit to Stronsay back in 1967 although - certainly on my own part - there was no heroism, just a trust in the lifeboat crew that they knew what they were doing!

Marooned on Fair Isle with my pal Roger due to stormy weather in late October 1967, we were surprised to see the lights of a boat at the island pier in the North Haven one evening when visiting the Bird Observatory. It turned out to be the 'Grace Paterson Richie' returning south to Orkney after a courtesy visit to Shetland.

Knowing we were anxious to continue our holiday - next stop Orkney (via Shetland of course) - the observatory staff suggested (tongue in cheek!) that the Lifeboat crew might give us a lift, so more out of bravado than expectancy we strode off towards the pier in the dark. We felt quite safe - surely no-one could 'hitch a lift' on a Lifeboat could they? Anyway we knew that it was probably 50/50 as to which direction the lifeboat was heading.

We were soon knocking on the wheelhouse door, while the observatory staff peered at us in amazement through the windows of the old military billet huts nearby. A young crew member (I remember his first name was Ian) answered our knocking and, after listening to our half-hearted request for a lift, said he would have to get the skipper. Then came the bombshell!

Much to our amazement the skipper said he would be happy to take us but said that if there was a call out we might have to, quote: 'Pull on a rope', and then added that they were heading for Orkney. This gave us an escape route and it would have been very easy to say: 'Thanks but we're heading north for Shetland.', but with a SW7-9 forecast at the time, would a few hours on a 70ft lifeboat to Orkney be better than waiting - perhaps several days - for the 50ft Good Shepherd to take us to Shetland followed by a 25-mile journey to Lerwick in order to catch the St Ninian back to Kirkwall? There was no contest. Roger and I had been sleeping on hard ground for over ten days and although my pal was prone to sea-sickness, the thought of soft bunks in a lifeboat - even for just a few hours - was irresistible, so we agreed to be at the pier at 9am the following morning.

When we arrived at the North Haven it looked as if the island was being evacuated but we were soon to discover that the crew of the island's mailboat 'Good Shepherd' had been offered a trip round the island before the Lifeboat departed for Kirkwall. The majority of the island's population had come down to the pier for this unique occasion.

Half way round the island Roger was sick, and I began to wonder if we should get off with the Good Shepherd crew after that initial hour-long trip. But Roger would have none of it, ensconced himself in one of the soft bunks and by mid-morning we were heading south towards Orkney.

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I spent much of the first 3 hours in the wheelhouse where I met Dr Peace from Mainland Orkney - many of the older residents of Stronsay will remember him - who often joined the lifeboat crew. He informed me that he had a problem with his inner ear which rendered him immune to sea-sickness. 'Lucky devil' I remember thinking as I too eventually succumbed and headed for a soft bunk. The engines had been cut to half speed quite soon into the journey but with the boat heading more or less into the wind the motion was to say the least interesting, with waves constantly crashing against the wheelhouse windows in various amounts.

After five hours the motion eased and an hour or so later we tied up at a pier where the crew rustled up a meal for us all. Roger and I were so relieved we didn't ask where we were but had noticed what appeared to be a small lighthouse near the end of the pier. All we were interested in was a good night's sleep in a soft bunk and when we awoke next morning the boat was already under way. After a short run round in the inflatable off Shapinsay we landed at Kirkwall and said our goodbyes to the crew.

Almost exactly nine years later Sue and I arrived on Stronsay to look at houses for sale and as I stepped ashore I had a feeling of *deja-vu* - but there was no mini-lighthouse on the pier! Norrie Firth - whose house Jubilee Cottage (now Strynie) we bought shortly afterwards - soon put us right. There had been a small 'pillar' on the pier but it had recently been demolished. He also remembered well the Grace Paterson Richie tying up at the pier that October evening back in 1967. I had been here before!

Alec Strutt (who died a few years ago) was the engineer at the time and some 20 years or so later I noticed him on the *St Ola* - he looked the same, and the blazer with the RNLI badge was a bit of a giveaway. I went across to speak, wearing sports jacket etc - very different to my camping gear of the late 60s. "I'll give you £10 if you can remember when you last saw me." I said. Alec's expression suggested that he thought he was encountering the local 'nut-case'! Before he had time to respond I added: 'Fair Isle in October 1967'. His face lit up. "That was the worst trip we ever had in that boat." he said, and then added "Oh, but we did have another just as bad to SE Iceland a few years later". Alec died several years ago but we did meet him back on Stronsay during the lifeboat open days in the 1990s.

And as for my pal Roger? Having recently retired from his job as body-guard in the Royal Household he now sails all round the world - without suffering sea-sickness! (His photo of the Grace Paterson Richie at the Fair Isle Pier features in 'Stronsay's Garden Birds' page *vi*.)

One final link: in his early years in the Metropolitan Police Roger did some of his training alongside Bill Miller.

THE EVANGELINE DISASTER (Part 2)

The jury in the fatal enquiry returned the following finding :- “That the fishing boat Evangeline, BF1952, of Portknockie, Banffshire, was wrecked on the morning of Tuesday, 17th January last, during a storm of exceptional violence, by striking a rock near the point of Griceness in Stronsay: that out of the eight members of the crew of the said boat, those whose bodies were washed ashore on Stronsay, and identified, were drowned while in the course of their employment as fishermen on board the said fishing boat, and that there is no evidence at present as to the fate of the two remaining members of the crew. The jury further desires to add that the dangerous character of the coast at the place in question, is increased by the want of any guiding light on Papa Stronsay, at the place indicated by the witnesses”.

The Sheriff stated that copies of the evidence and verdict would be made available to any fishermen who wished to forward it to any quarter with reference to the desirability of a light.

A lighthouse was erected on Papa Stronsay in 1907 by the Stevenson brothers, and a lifeboat, the John Ryburn was stationed at Stronsay in 1909. However, experienced fishermen who gave evidence at the enquiry were of the opinion that it was doubtful if a lifeboat would have been able to go to the assistance of the Evangeline, had they known of her plight, due to the ferocity of the gale, and the mountainous waves involved.

On Thursday, 19th January, two Portknockie steam drifters, the Blue Bell and the Trident, left Stronsay harbour at 12.30 pm, carrying the bodies of the five crew-members who had been recovered. Alexander Mair (Shavie) and James Mair (Shanker) were still missing at that time. The coffins were covered in black cloth bearing name tickets for the purpose of identification, with the wearing the clothes they were washed ashore in.

The time of their departure had been forwarded to Portknockie, and all, day, local fishermen waited around the harbour discussing the terrible tragedy, and calculating the probable time of their arrival. The distance from Stronsay to Portknockie being about ninety miles, and considering the tidal conditions which they would encounter, it was agreed that they would arrive somewhere between 10.30 pm and midnight.

The night was calm and when the moon rose, everything was lit as if by electric light. At about 11.30, lights were seen to seaward, and eventually flares were seen which indicated the arrival of the two drifters. Large crowds, including women and children, lined the streets and the hill overlooking the harbour, as the Trident rounded the quay and silently came alongside at 11.57 pm with her foremast lowered and her ensign flying at half mast from the mizzen.

Without a word, moorings were passed ashore and secured, a flare was lit, and as the hatch was lifted, a crowd gathered around on the deck. With great care, the bodies of William Mair (Shanker), and Alexander Mair (Bobbin), were lifted from the hold and transferred by willing hands to the quay. They were then taken up by the mourning parties who left for the stiff climb up the road to the top of the brae.

(concluded on next page)

By this time, the Blue Bell had also arrived and tied up outside the Trident, and the same sad ceremony of landing the bodies took place. David Wood (King), his nephew John Wood (King), and George Findlay (Hooker) were borne on the shoulders of four strong fishermen, and the ascent of the steep hill to the village commenced, with the bearers being relieved at short intervals. A special party was present to carry the body of young George Findlay to his home in Cullen.

All eyes were concentrated on the parties making their way uphill with their burdens, their progress being clearly outlined in the moonlight.

At the top of the harbour road, the women gave way, and permitted the parties to march between two lines of them for a considerable distance, till each broke off for the homes of the deceased. The arrival of the remains at home was the signal for fresh outbursts of grief and weeping. On the following day, funeral arrangements were made, and the work of completing the coffins, and preparing the bodies for burial, was entrusted to the local undertaker, Mr Joseph Sutherland.

The following day, Saturday 21st January, the coffins were removed to the street in front of their respective dwellings and rested on chairs. Groups of mourners gathered round them while a service was conducted. Then at ten past two, the procession left the West end of the village for the mile long walk to Hillhead Cemetery. Each coffin was raised on a couple of stretchers, which enabled four bearers on each side of the coffin, while a ninth man supported the head of the coffin.

The bearers were relieved by others every few hundred yards, and those relieved passed on to the front, so that as journey progressed, the coffins gradually wore towards the centre of the procession. The mourners were walking twelve abreast, and it is estimated that four thousand people attended the funerals.

At 2.40 pm the procession reached Hillhead Cemetery and the coffins were placed on trestles beside the five open graves. Relatives stood next to each coffin, and the mourners stood around in a large ring while the bodies were committed to the ground, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust".

Meanwhile, in nearby Cullen, the body of young George Findlay (Hooker) was similarly conveyed to the cemetery, with large crowds lining the route.

In January, 2009, I visited the graves of the crew in Hillhead Cemetery, and photographed the three headstones there, and recently, I cleaned up the headstone in the Bay cemetery for James Mair (Shanker). May they rest in peace.

Bill Miller, Glenmanna, Stronsay

MERRY CHRISTMAS LIMPETS

By Christine Richings.

Snow flakes were gently falling into the limpets rock pool home, it melted as it touched the pool but around the edges where the seaweed grew the snow had started to lay. The limpets watched skywards at the falling snow making patterns, darting this way and that, each flake individual never seeming to bump into each other as they gently fell to the ground. The sky was full of pinks and greys there seemed to be a quiet stillness it was a bitterly cold morning so the limpets did not stay out of their shells for very long. The tide came in and as it did it washed over the rocks taking the snow with it and pushing it up onto the shore. Here the waves left uneven patterns along the beach. Tilly the limpets friendly pet dog came bounding along the beach as usual she did not seem to mind the snowy weather in fact she was really enjoying herself chasing the snow flakes barking and jumping up trying to catch them. She splashed through the rock pool “no time to stay for a chat today, but Merry Christmas to you all” she barked her master was calling for her in the distance she ran up the beach along her usual track leaving foot prints in the snow as she went. She was eager to get home for she new she would get the scraps left from the Christmas dinner and as always there would be a treat for her to open. She was in such a hurry not looking where she was going and my what a surprise she got to find herself suddenly in a snow drift with only her head poking out. Her owner saw her disappear and could not help laughing but soon came to her rescue. Tilly looked like a snowman but she shook the snow from her fur from the tip of her nose to the end of her tail then continued on her journey home none the worse for the experience.



FIVE FESTIVE SHEEP.....AND A BLACKBIRD NOT IN A PEAR TREE!

NOTICE TO QUIT

Nobody lives in my street now.
Well, no one else but me.
My neighbours were given new housing
in a street down by the quay.
I have stuck to my guns and told the council
I was here before the war.
Hitler's bombs couldn't shift me.
Don't bother me any more.
All my memories are in these walls.
I have had some good times in here.
I have lived with my wife and brought up the kids
plus all my old mates live near.
An atom bomb wouldn't move me now.
'No, but a bulldozer will'
Said an angry young job with a big droopy gob
and a horrible look fit to kill.
'I want you out by the weekend'
'You are stopping a new motorway'.
I told him to build it around me
Cos my house is here to stay.
You see, I'm now one hundred and four
I'll never move from here,
You would have to kill me first.
And of that I have no fear.
Taking on the powers that be
is a very scary thing,
But at my age, you have no idea
the pleasure it can bring.
The reason I'm not shifting just yet
and pretending to defy the lot
Is, let's face it man, at one hundred and four
What other fun have you got.
It's my Christmas present to myself.
I'll give in on Boxing Day.
Then the triumph when I shift
Will be "I DID IT MY WAY".

ME ROBIN

By Ellie from Newfield

There's a robin in the copse
And he's singing fit to bust.
He sticks his scarlet chest out,
Oh boy, doesn't he just!
So the blackbirds show their envy
By chasing him around.
He's the colourful little begger
While they're all dressed down.
But they beat him at the singing
As the blackbirds are the greatest,
Our redbreasts tucked up long before
While the blackbirds sing the latest

The robin's on the hop
Popping seeds on the table.
He's bathed and ready and able,
He's perched a-top the wall
Singing out his well-being.
And now the world is silent
Because Gizzy is all-seeing.

Spit him out please, Gizzy
Or the Pet Rescue I will ring.
They'll pick you up tomorrow,
You should have let the begger sing!

LOCAL BUSINESSES

INSTANT PHOTOS

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 on 616420

STRONSAY ARTWORKS

Original paintings of Stronsay Landscape;
Limited edition prints, greetings cards and
postcards which are available for sale at lo-
cal shops, Post Office, Hotel, B&B's and
the Fishmart. Commissions taken.

Phone Jenny on 616475

STRONSAY ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOP

WHITEHALL VILLAGE

Winter opening days are Thursday, Friday
and Saturdays.

Plus we shall be open on Tuesday Dec
22nd, Wed 23rd and Thurs 24th and then
closed until Jan 2nd.

Thank you to the many artistic and nimble
fingered Stronsay producers of fine goods
for the shop.

Tel 616434

www.stronsayartsandcrafts.co.uk

FREE RANGE EGGS

Produced and packed on Stronsay

Available only from Olivebank

Ministry approved free range eggs from
The Hill

Production site ref: 1UK335SCO

Business adverts

Up to 25 words - £1.50. 25 word advert with photo - £3. 25 to 50 words - £3 and so on.

Private adverts (for sale, wanted, birthday greetings etc)

Up to 25 words - £1.00. 25 word advert with photo - £1.50. 25 to 50 words - £1.50 and so on.

Adverts for the next (January 2010) edition of *The Limpet* must be placed by Saturday 23 January

Contact details for *The Limpet* are on the back page

Maureen & Bruce Fletcher
(not forgetting Surrey, Claremont's cat)
hope that you all have a happy Christmas
and a healthy New Year

Mary Middleton wishes the people of
Stronsay a wonderful Christmas
and a happy New Year
God bless you all

John and Madge wish everyone on
Stronsay a merry Christmas
and a very happy New Year

Jack and Simone would like to wish
everyone a warm, safe, fun Christmas
and a prosperous New Year

Doreen & George Weaver (Roadside)
wish everyone a merry Christmas
and a happy New Year.

Margareth and Al wish you all
a happy Christmas and
a healthy New Year

Lisa, Jonas, Emilia and Josephine
would like to wish everyone on Stronsay
a merry Christmas and
a prosperous New Year

Linda and Heather would like to wish
everyone on Stronsay
a wonderful Christmas and
a happy, healthy New Year

Marion and Caroline would like to wish
our friends on Stronsay and mainland
a happy Christmas
and best wishes for 2010

Stronsay Arts and Crafts Shop
A Very Happy Christmas to everyone and
Best Wishes for 2010

We can't believe our first year has passed and what a year! A lot of ups and only a few downs but you need that balance don't you? Many new friends have been made in the twelve months and all have made us very welcome. We'd also like to thank everyone who has helped and supported us.

A big thank you must go to Linda and Heather because without their generosity in giving up their home for the first six months we probably wouldn't have moved in the first place.

We wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a very happy New Year. Looking forward to many, many more,

Andy, Pam, Chris & Nat

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GROUPS, CLUBS & ORGANISATIONS

CHRISTMAS EVENTS AT MONCUR MEMORIAL CHURCH

THURSDAY 24th DECEMBER Watch Night Candlelight and Carol Service

11:30 pm-12:15 am in the church

FRIDAY 25th DECEMBER Informal Christmas Service

11 am in the church hall

STRONSAY KIRK—LIFT TO CHURCH?

Would you like a lift to church during the winter months? We would be more than happy to organise the Ambulance, which is also meant to be used by the wider community, to come by for you on Sundays, to take you to the service and back home again. If you would like to be added to the list of passengers, please let either Jennifer George (616311) or Elsie Dennison (616331) know as soon as possible.

EVENING CLASS

“Singing techniques” - tutor Michael Lee

Next 10 week session starts in Stronsay Community Hall at 7:30pm on Mon 18 Jan

All you need is enthusiasm

Previous experience not necessary

Ability to read music not essential

Please contact Brian Crowe on 616464 for more info

KEYHOLDERS NEEDED!

Can you spare one evening every month? At the moment there are not enough keyholders for the swimming pool to open regularly. Full training will be given.

Please contact Yvonne on 616375 for more info.

FRIDAY NIGHT GAMES CLUB

Friday night 8pm until 10pm

Entrance £1

Come along for a fun filled night

Air hockey table

Pool table

Play station 2

Nintendo Wii & Sing Star

Snooker

Juice, crisps and sweets available

Announcements by charities, local groups, clubs and organisations are FREE!

Items for the next (January 2010) edition of *The Limpet* must be placed by Saturday 23 January

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GROUPS, CLUBS & ORGANISATIONS (continued)

MOBILE LIBRARY

Next visit—Tuesday 5 January 2010

Council Houses: 9.00am-11.00am

Stronsay School: 11.30am-2.00pm

Stronsay Kirk: 2.30pm-4.30pm

Stronsay School: 6.30pm-8.00pm

Kirkwall library contacts - 01856 873166 or general.enquiries@orkneylibrary.org.uk

Kirkwall library website - <http://www.orkneylibrary.org.uk>

Kirkwall library online book catalogue - <http://212.219.208.10/TalisPrism>

STRONSAY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Rooms for hire from only £2 per hour plus hydro charge.

Special event coming up? Why not hire the disco equipment with rotating glitter globe and pulsating coloured lights for only £5 plus room and hydro charge? A DJ from the Hall list must be used.

Also available for hire: badminton, table tennis and snooker all at £2 per hour plus hydro. All equipment provided.

Adult supervision (over 18) must be present during hire.

For details and booking contact Colin on 616446.

NEEDED FOR STRONSAY POOL TO REMAIN OPEN AFTER CHRISTMAS

We urgently need people to train as lifeguards. The training consists of 1 session of 2 hours per month. The more lifeguards we have means more people on the rota, therefore not too demanding a commitment. For more information phone John on 616253.

Merry Christmas from all at the pool.

DO YOU RECEIVE *THE LIMPET* EVERY MONTH?

If you live on Stronsay and your house doesn't receive a regular copy of *The Limpet* just give your name & your address to either Ebenezer Stores, the Post Office or Olivebank and a copy will be there for you on the last Thursday of each month. If you would like to receive your very own copy of *The Limpet* every month via Royal Mail or you would like to send a copy to someone else then you can take out a postal subscription, details are on the back page of every edition of *The Limpet*.

Announcements by charities, local groups, clubs and organisations are FREE!

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USEFUL INFORMATION

POST OFFICE OPENING TIMES

(See front page for Christmas & New Year opening times)

Monday, Thursday 08:30—16:15

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday . 08:30—12:00

Saturday 09:00—14:00

Post collection times 07:30, Monday to Saturday

Replacement bin bags. Telephone OIC (Technical Services) on 01856 873535

Sunday service at the Kirk 11 am

Our Lady's chapel, pier head Daily Masses at 7:30 am and every Sunday at 9 am

Special Collection dates 05 Feb 2010

Doctor 616321/308

Nurses 616225/232

Registrar 616239

Hall bookings 616446

Post Office 616217

Companions 616307

Kirk 616311

Stronsay Hotel 616213

Fish Mart 616386

Olivebank 616255

Ebenezer stores 616339

Castle Bird Reserve 616363

Balfour hospital 01856 888000

Hydro 0800 300 999

Kirkwall Library 01856 873166

Kirkwall Police 01856 872241

Vets:

Flett & Carmichael . . . 01856 872859

Northvet 01856 873403

Dentists:

Great Western Rd 01856 879683

King Street 01856 875348

HOW TO CONTACT THE LIMPET

Send an email to ricardian@btinternet.com, phone Bruce Fletcher on 616297 or write to *The Limpet*, Claremont, Stronsay, KW17 2AR

The Limpet is published on the last Thursday of the month. Items for inclusion in *The Limpet* must reach Bruce by the Saturday before the last Thursday in the month. The cut-off date for the next (January 2010) edition is Saturday 23 January.

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE LIMPET

Why not send a subscription to a friend or relative for a birthday present?

12 editions for £10.00 including P&P

Please make cheques—UK banks only—payable to “Stronsay Development Trust”

(UK only. Non-UK subscriptions, please ask for a quote)

Contact Bruce, details above

The Stronsay Development Trust, a Scottish Charity SC038888

<http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/SDT>

Supported in its activities by HIE Orkney, Orkney Islands Council,

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