

Meet Team Cooke

Richard Groat

Richard Groat is a local Stronsay man with a passion for his craft and his community. The Supervisor/Skipper works on both the salmon farms on the isle and celebrated five years with Cooke in 2025.

What attracted you to join Cooke?

After 25 years of having my own creel boat and building my business, I was looking for a new challenge. The job with Cooke was a good fit as it allowed me to use my skills and training I had already completed. The Stronsay sites were brand new and I was keen to be involved from the start, to be part of building the new project - from installing the grid of pens, to seeing the first fish through the cycle.

What are the benefits of being able to work and live on the isle?

I enjoy working on the sites. The main benefit for me is that the job allows me to be employed in an industry I enjoy, with the added benefits of a good salary and being home at night with my family when I finish work.



Richard Groat, Stronsay Supervisor/Skipper

What would you say to someone looking to start a career in aquaculture?

I would always say go for it! There are so many career paths and opportunities within aquaculture. There are lots of courses available to help build your career and progress.

What do you like best about Cooke?

It's a great community to be part of. There are so many different folk you work with. No two days are the same and there are always opportunities to learn something new. I like being on the sea and working on boats, but it's also the feeling I get from playing my part in producing a great product, using the skills and training I've learnt in aquaculture over the last five years.

What do you like about Stronsay?

I love island life, the music, the scenery, the folk, the community spirit, and of course it is a safe community where my wife and I can raise our family.

[Start Your Career with Cooke Here](#)

Cooke on Stronsay

A Family Company Committed to Scotland's Northern Isles.

Salmon farming has been etched into the history and culture of the Scottish northern isles for decades.

The strong tidal waters surrounding the islands make them the perfect place to rear the world's finest salmon, with one of the lowest carbon footprints of any farmed livestock. From what started in 1985 as a humble family aquaculture company in Canada, Cooke has grown into a global seafood leader. But what has remained a constant, is its commitment to sustainability and its communities.

Cooke Scotland was established in 2014 after it acquired the successful seawater assets in Orkney. Three years later, the community of Stronsay approached the business to enquire about bringing Atlantic salmon sea farm sites to the island.

"Our communities are at the heart of what we do," said Stewart Rendall, Orkney North Isles Area Manager at Cooke. "And so it was important to work with local residents on the island to see what could be accomplished by bringing salmon farming to Stronsay which would in turn lead to more jobs, help maintain the local population and continue to sustain the uptake of local ferries, shops and businesses."

Two years on from the initial meetings with the people of Stronsay, both seawater sites at Mill Bay and Bay of Holland were granted planning permission and Cooke has



Stewart Rendall, Orkney North Isles Area Manager at Cooke Scotland

reared organic salmon here ever since. Cooke is the largest producer of premium organic Scottish salmon, farm-raised exclusively in Orkney.

Sustainability

As part of its commitment to sustainability, the Mill Bay site was selected to be the first of Cooke Scotland's barges to install a [hybrid feed barge](#). "We raise our fish with care, and that includes ensuring we are using the latest technology to sustainably feed them," Stewart continued. "We saw immediate results, a reduction of fuel consumption by 40 per cent, and this therefore made a significant difference to the site's Greenhouse Gas emissions and fuel usage."

The success led to two more hybrid systems being installed on salmon farms in Westray and Shetland.

Careers with Cooke

Vicci Laird, Head of Human Resources at Cooke is based in Orkney. "As one of the biggest employers across the northern isles, we employ more than 140 people in Orkney," she said. "The

majority of whom are native Orcadians which means we are creating local jobs for local people, helping to keep remote communities viable. As a family-owned company we understand that the jobs we provide matter. They keep people and their families on the islands, attract new people to live here, and help businesses to thrive and schools to stay open." For the remote islands especially, a new farm can be transformational in terms of tackling local depopulation. Seven members of staff work for Cooke at Stronsay sites, with three living on the island and another Stronsay resident based on sites in Westray.

Community

The Cooke Community Benefit Fund has regularly sponsored the Massive Weekend event, and provided laptops for [Stronsay Junior High School](#) to ensure every student had access to their own device. Cooke further supplied funding for defibrillators on the isle, and aided Stronsay Community Association with a significant financial donation to help build a new hall extension on the [Stronsay Hall](#).



Bay of Holland Atlantic Salmon Farm, Stronsay

Cooke
SCOTLAND

Visit cookescotland.com