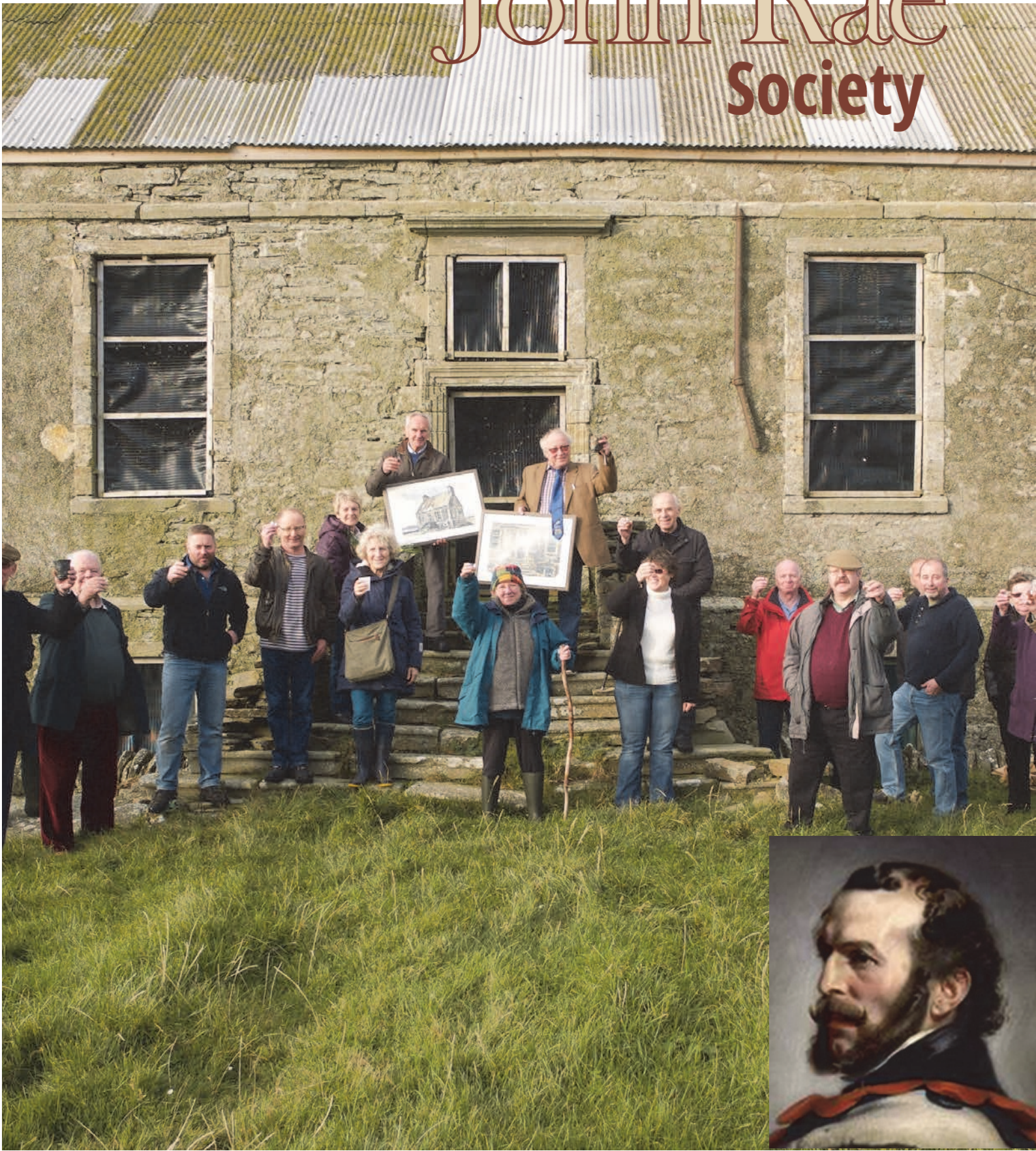


Aglooka Advisor

Spring/Summer 2017
Issue No. 5

The
John Rae
Society



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Rachel Boak

A Word from our President

Dear Members,

Firstly you will notice in this fat envelope some 2017 John Rae Birthday Draw tickets. Sales of tickets are going encouragingly well in supporting our ambitions. The fine selection of prizes is extremely tempting too!



I must say how delighted we are with all the events in our first

John Rae Festival from 5th to 9th May. A launch of Jane Hamilton's new book, *Finding John Rae*, was well-received. University of Rhode Island lecturer, Dr Russell A. Potter, delivered two fascinating public presentations. The open weekend at the Hall of Clestrain was also very well attended...Read more from Rachel on this.

Progress with the Hall of Clestrain is now running apace! Very soon we will have a survey completed of the timber and woodwork inside the Hall to assess fully its particular needs for restoration. This will cost around £5K, but is so necessary for our guidance and grant approvals. We have a JustGiving page set up especially for this to help with the expenses. <https://www.justgiving.com/johnrae-society>

This is to raise money to complete the purchase of the Hall. Well over £1,000 has come in already, and is a fine start. Private donations also help us come ever closer to our goal.

Our Society has recently been honoured with a special visit from Michael Palin, who is researching his forthcoming book on Franklin's ship HMS *Erebus*. He was delighted with his visit and **will return**.



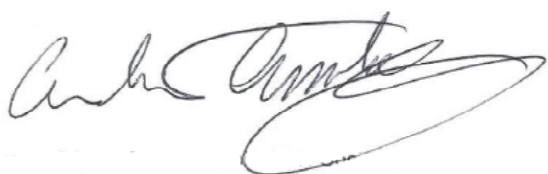
The Events Working Group is arranging some open afternoon events with refreshments and information at the Hall this summer. We anticipate these being popular with locals and visitors alike. It is such a beautiful setting, with splendid views to Hoy, Graemsay and Stromness.

Over the weekend of 30th September-1st October 2017 - John Rae's 204th birthday - we are planning more events. On the evening of Friday 29th September, Dr Claire Warrior, Senior Curator of Exhibitions at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, will speak about their exhibition, *Death in the Ice: The Shocking Story of Franklin's Final Expedition*, developed by the Canadian Museum of History, in partnership with Parks Canada and the National Maritime Museum, and in collaboration with the Government of Nunavut and the Inuit Heritage Trust. At midday on Saturday 30th September we will have our traditional gathering around John Rae's grave in the Kirkyard of St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall. The afternoon will see us back at Clestrain again for another special time. We will get back to all of you with a fuller agenda, which will be rather exciting.

So... we are a very busy and active Society. Progress at the Hall has spurred us on! In future we hope to have archaeological surveys done of the area around Clestrain. This is to shed light on how the immediate grounds were used and to ascertain what might be hidden to us. The Orkney Archaeology Society is keen to support this exciting project.

Apart from money, we now need more active volunteers to help in this teamwork. If anyone has skills and time to offer, please do get in touch. Our achievements are **SO** rewarding.

Yours aye,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Appleby', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Andrew Appleby



John Rae Festival, 5th to 8th May 2017

Last year, the John Rae Society took the first financial step towards the acquisition of Rae's birthplace, the Hall of Clestrain. It plans to restore the Hall as a centre celebrating Rae's life and the wider context of his work and discoveries for local people, visitors to Orkney, and Orcadians around the world.



Jane Hamilton speaking to pupils at Orphir School

To raise awareness of this project the Society held a John Rae Festival from 5th to 8th May, combined with the launch of *Finding John Rae* by long-term supporter, and Rae's great-great-grand-niece, Alice Jane Hamilton, from Penetanguishene, Ontario.



Russell Potter speaking at Orphir School

The John Rae Society was also thrilled to welcome Dr Russell A. Potter, Professor of English and Media Studies at Rhode Island College, and author of *Finding Franklin: The Untold Story of a 165-Year Search* (2016).

The first to hear this exciting combination of speakers on Friday 5th May were the pupils of Orphir School, perhaps the most important audience of all, as future custodians and promoters of Orkney's historical legacy. Feedback suggests that the children are well-aware of the

importance of John Rae's achievements, and hold the Hall of Clestrain in great affection as a familiar sight in the Orphir landscape.

The Festival was formally opened that evening by the Rt. Hon. Alistair Carmichael, MP, at the Stromness Hotel. He spoke movingly of Dr Rae's approach to life and his

respect for other communities, affirming that the Orkney community is still outward-looking and willing to learn from others. The speakers were introduced by Tom Muir, local author and storyteller, and Exhibitions Officer at Orkney Museum. Jane Hamilton gave a brief introduction to her new book and how she came to discover her family connection to John Rae.

Dr Potter then spoke on 'The Habit of Exact Observation': the Legacy of Dr John Rae, concentrating on Rae's 1854 journey in search of Sir John Franklin, the relics and testimony he collected from the Inuit, and the reception of his findings on his return to Britain. He also talked about current research into the final months of members of Franklin's expedition, including the tracing of modern-day descendants using DNA technology and social media, and brought us right up-to-date with the recent discoveries of Franklin's ships, HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror*, whose last British port of call in 1845 was Stromness.

Both Jane Hamilton and Dr Potter answered an interesting range of questions from the audience and the stage was set for more discussion and discoveries over the Festival weekend.



On Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th May the John Rae Society held an open weekend at the Hall of Clestrain. The inside of the Hall is not yet accessible for safety reasons, but visitors were shown the outside of the building and surrounding land. This enabled people to gain a much better idea of how the restored Hall might look and function as a flexible display and study space, which would be open to the public, but also used as a venue for events and community groups.

Thanks to the generosity of Ivan and Jean Craigie, the Society was able to set up a range of stalls and offer refreshments from the shelter of a marquee and garage. We also had portaloos, conveniently provided by Casey Construction.

Jane Hamilton signed copies of *Finding John Rae* and Skail House Falconry showed birds of prey to equally enthralled adults and children. Following in the footsteps of Dr Rae, chef, Samuel Britten, gathered wild plants and talked about foraging and living off the land.

The open weekend also included the chance to view the John Rae Society's



education box, full of books and objects relating to Dr Rae's life, the history of the Hudson's Bay Company, and Arctic exploration. The box is available to schools in Orkney and many of the items were generously supplied by Hudson Bay Company.

Perhaps the most enjoyable aspect of the weekend was the chance to chat to people over tea and coffee and to discover the varied connections and interests of those who came to the Hall, whether friends and family, local residents, holidaymakers, or John Rae Society members and supporters.

On Monday 8th May Dr Potter gave a presentation to the students at ICIT in Stromness, focusing on underwater discoveries in the wrecks of *Erebus* and *Terror* by Parks Canada.

The Festival closed with a public evening lecture at the Town Hall, Kirkwall. Tom Muir opened with a review of the weekend's events and Jane Hamilton again introduced her book, this time expressing the hope that friendships forged during the Festival would lead to ongoing conversations between Orkney and Canada.

Dr Potter spoke on 'Things Worthy of Record': the Legacy of Dr Rae, covering Rae's correspondence with the American Geographical Society, various scientific journals, artists and explorers in the years following his discovery of the fate of the Franklin expedition.



Skaill House Reception, 9th May

On Tuesday 9th May there was another chance to celebrate John Rae's legacy with a performance of John Rae's Reel by the Maureen Findlay School of Dance, followed by a fundraising evening at Skaill House, hosted by Major Malcolm Macrae. Guests were treated to music by Kate Fletcher, Corwen Broch and the Wrigley sisters. There were canapés by Samuel Britten, with a mouth-watering list of ingredients, including lobsters from Orkney Fishermen's Society, beef from Dounby Butchers, organic gravadlax, courtesy of Orkney Salmon and Jolly's of Orkney, and bere products from Barony Mill. Drinks were provided by Rob Hill at Swannay Brewery, and the wines and



The Wrigley sisters performing at Skail House

cordials were sponsored by Harry Potter and Skarabooks. The evening ended with a charity auction, providing a fitting finale to the weekend's festivities.

The John Rae Society is thrilled with the response to its inaugural Festival and grateful for everyone's interest

and goodwill. Over four hundred people from Orkney, the wider UK, the US, Canada and Germany, attended events, and friendships have been formed which, it is hoped, will open up further opportunities to raise awareness of John Rae and the Hall of Clestrain. Through sales of raffle and lottery tickets, books, merchandise and donations, the Society raised over £4000 during the Festival, with more money continuing to come in.

The restoration of the Hall of Clestrain is a long-term project and, with this encouraging beginning, the John Rae Society will continue fundraising to secure the future of this important building.

Rachel Boak



Orkney Nature Festival

As part of the 2017 Orkney Nature Festival, I led a Family John Rae Explorer Trail around Stromness on Friday 19th May, with Alison Nimmo from the RSPB.



Trail attendees looking for birdlife in Stromness harbour

The trail was inspired by John Rae's account of his boyhood and the skills he learnt, and about how the Orkney landscape, wildlife and weather helped him to cope with Arctic conditions. We also included other explorers from Orkney, and explorers who passed through Stromness en route to the rest of

the world. Dr Rae kept a journal as he was travelling, recording the birds and animals he saw, and the published account of his 1846-1847 Arctic journey included lists of specimens and samples of mammals, birds, fish, plants and rocks. The children and

grown-ups on the trail were encouraged to record animals, birds and plants as we walked through the streets of Stromness, and there is a surprising amount of wildlife to be seen.

We began with an introduction to John Rae in the children's area at Stromness Library and then viewed his statue. We stopped off at the whale skull on Victoria Street, the rookery at the top of Church Road, explored the history behind the names of Franklin Road, Khyber Pass and Rae's Close, and marked on a world map the places to which Orkney explorers travelled. Activities included designing a boat, based on Rae's fond memories of *Brenda*, the Orkney yole he shared with his brothers. We also learned four different ways of identifying north, and tried our hands at making a compass using a needle, magnet and dish of water.

The trail ended outside Stromness Museum, where many of the stories included in our walk are told in more detail. The Museum was founded 180 years ago in 1837 and the first floor is given over to the natural history collection of animals, birds, shells and rocks from the local area. We drew parallels between 19th-century methods of classifying species and using the Museum collections to help identify the creatures we see when we are out and about.

From the Broad Noust outside the Museum, we took up binoculars and looked across the bay to see what kinds of birds were on the water. We were able to identify red-throated divers, black guillemots and Arctic terns, among others, and it was an exciting end to the event. The trail attendees went home with lists of all that they'd seen and the opportunity to complete other activities in their own time, such as designing a sign for a street named after them, and writing a story about being an explorer.

It was a really enjoyable afternoon and we hope to develop the John Rae explorer trail into a leaflet that can be picked up and followed by anyone visiting Orkney.

Rachel Boak



Update on work at the Hall of Clestrain

Before and After removal of pigeon guano by Casey Construction, June 2017



Pigeon guano stored in the pig pens in the basement of the Hall of Clestrain. It has now been moved outside



The floorboards revealed for the first time in years.



Steve Wood of David Narro Associates, Edinburgh, undertaking a structural survey of the Hall of Clestrain January 2017



For more details see our
web site at
www.johnraesociety.com
or our Facebook page



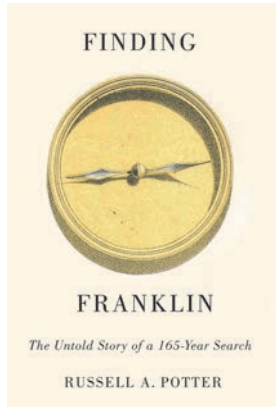
Recent Publications

Russell A. Potter, *Finding Franklin: The Untold Story of a 165-Year Search*,

McGill- Queen's University Press, 2016

Summary from McGill- Queen's University Press website

<http://www.mqup.ca/finding-franklin-products-9780773547841.php>



The full story of those who have searched for Franklin since his expedition disappeared.

In 2014 media around the world buzzed with news that an archaeological team from Parks Canada had located and identified the wreck of HMS Erebus, the flagship of Sir John Franklin's lost expedition to find the Northwest Passage. *Finding Franklin* outlines the larger story and the cast of detectives from every walk of life that led to the discovery, solving one of the Arctic's greatest mysteries.

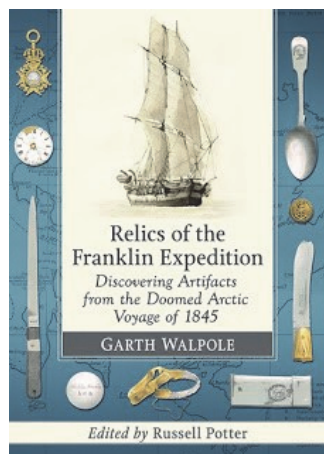
In compelling and accessible prose, Russell Potter details his decades of work alongside key figures in the era of modern searches for the expedition and elucidates how shared research and ideas have led to a fuller understanding of the Franklin crew's final months. Illustrated with numerous images and maps from the last two centuries, *Finding Franklin* recounts the more than fifty searches for traces of his ships and crew, and the dedicated, often obsessive, men and women who embarked on them. Potter discusses the crucial role that Inuit oral accounts, often cited but rarely understood, played in all of these searches, and continue to play to this day, and offers historical and cultural context to the contemporary debates over the significance of Franklin's achievement.

While examination of HMS Erebus will undoubtedly reveal further details of this mystery, *Finding Franklin* assembles the stories behind the myth and illuminates what is ultimately a remarkable decades-long discovery.

Garth Walpole *Edited by Russell Potter*

Relics of the Franklin Expedition: Discovering Artifacts from the Doomed Arctic Voyage of 1845, McFarland, 2017

Summary from McFarland website <http://www.mcfarlandbooks.com/book-2.php?id=978-1-4766-6718-8>



About the Book

Sir John Franklin's Arctic expedition departed England in 1845 with two Royal Navy bomb vessels, 129 men and three years' worth of provisions. None were seen again until nearly a decade later, when their bleached bones, broken instruments, books, papers and personal effects began to be recovered on Canada's King William Island. These relics have since had a life of their own—photographed, analyzed, cataloged and displayed in glass cases in London.

This book gives a definitive history of their preservation and exhibition from the Victorian era to the present, richly illustrated with period engravings and photographs, many never before published. Appendices provide the first comprehensive accounting of all expedition relics recovered prior to the 2014 discovery of Franklin's ship HMS *Erebus*.

About the Author(s)

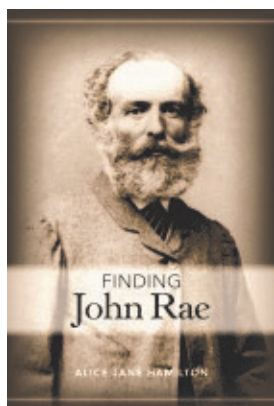
Garth Walpole was born in 1961 in Hobart, Tasmania. He earned a degree in history and archaeology at the University of Bangor in Wales, where his fascination with the lost Arctic expedition of Sir John Franklin began. He died April 7, 2015, not long after completing this book.

Russell Potter lives in Providence, Rhode Island.

Alice Jane Hamilton, *Finding John Rae*, Ronsdale Press, 2017

Summary from Ronsdale Press website

<http://ronsdalepress.com/findingjohnrae/>



John Rae was known as the “Arctic Fox” for his ability to trek vast distances in a short time across the Arctic. On one such mapping expedition to the Boothia Peninsula in 1854, Rae discovers both the link to the Northwest Passage and the fate of the missing Franklin Expedition — learning from Inuit hunters that Franklin’s ships had been beset by ice, and that the crew, starving in the cold, had resorted to cannibalism. When the Scottish-born scientist and

Hudson’s Bay Company Chief Factor reports the details in private to the British Admiralty, his statement is secretly but deliberately released to the newspapers. Led by such well-known figures as Charles Dickens and Sir John Franklin’s widow, much of the population rises against Rae and his Inuit informants. Alice Jane Hamilton goes on to explore how Rae, through bitter disappointment and soaring hope, rebuilds his life, all the while defending the integrity of the Arctic natives who brought him the evidence of cannibalism.

See also Alice Jane Hamilton’s website <http://www.findingjohnrae.com/>



Recent John Rae Society Publicity

The John Rae Festival received the following publicity:

The Orcadian – article in 16th March edition, p15; letter in 20th April edition; article on p11 of 27th April issue and programme in Out & About p14; programme in Out & About p 14 on 4th May; ‘Shield presented to dance school’ on p15, ‘Celebrating John Rae’ on p18 and thank you letter on p31 of 11th May edition; full review of Festival by Rachel Boak on p16 of 18th May edition; review of Orkney Nature Festival, including John Rae trail on p17 of 25th May edition.

The Orkney News – the Society’s coffee morning and Festival were mentioned in an article on John Rae on 5th April, <https://theorkneynews.scot/2017/04/05/dr-john-rae-arctic-explorer>. Fiona Grahame reported on Dr Potter’s first lecture in a review published on 7th May, <https://theorkneynews.scot/2017/05/07/finding-franklin-at->

the-john-rae-society-festival.

Radio Orkney – Andrew was featured talking about the Festival on the Around Orkney breakfast programme on 6th April. Both Jane Hamilton and Russell Potter were interviewed on Around Orkney during the week of the Festival.

Living Orkney – the John Rae Society had a double-page article about the Festival written by Rachel Boak and an advert on pp18-19 of the May 2017

The Orkney Advertiser –full-page Festival advert in May 2017 edition.

Orkney.com – the Festival was mentioned in the May e-newsletter, <http://www.orkney.com/whats-new/may-2017-newsletter> The Orkney.com team would like to make a film about the Hall of Clestrain to feature on their website in the autumn.

Visit Orkney.com – Festival listed on events page.

Stromnessorkney.com – Stromness Hotel lecture listed on events calendar.

Festival featured on **Orphir Community Association** What's On Facebook page and mailing list.

The following article is an extract from a Press Release about the current special exhibition at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich and we hope it will be of interest to John Rae Society members. After London, the exhibition will travel to the Canadian Museum of History and to a venue in the USA to be confirmed.

PRESS RELEASE

DEATH IN THE ICE: THE SHOCKING STORY OF FRANKLIN'S FINAL EXPEDITION

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

14 July 2017 – 7 January 2018

From 14th July, the National Maritime Museum (NMM) is hosting a major exhibition, developed by the Canadian Museum of History (CMH) in partnership with the NMM and Parks Canada, and in collaboration with the Government of Nunavut and the Inuit Heritage Trust, exploring the mysterious fate of Sir John Franklin and his crew on their final expedition - a mystery that still remains unsolved today.

With over 200 objects on display from the superlative collections of the NMM and the CMH, alongside finds from HMS *Erebus* - whose resting place was only

discovered in 2014 - on show for the very first time in Europe, the exhibition promises to advance our understanding of the expedition, to reveal the Victorian fascination with the Arctic, and to begin to answer questions about what may have happened to those men on their fateful journey to the Arctic all those years ago.

The exhibition will emphasise the significant role of Inuit in uncovering the fate of the Franklin expedition, showcasing Inuit oral histories relating to the European exploration of the Arctic Archipelago. Numerous Inuit artefacts, including some incorporating materials of European origin, which were traded from explorers or retrieved from abandoned ships, will also be on display in the exhibition, highlighting the interactions between the search expeditions and the Inuit.

Death in the Ice: The Shocking Story of Franklin's Final Expedition is developed by the Canadian Museum of History, in partnership with Parks Canada and with the National Maritime Museum, and in collaboration with the Government of Nunavut and the Inuit Heritage Trust (see notes below).

Exhibition information for visitors:

Venue: National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

Dates: 14 July 2017 – 7 January 2018

Opening times: Every day, 10.00 – 17.00

Visitor enquiries: 020 8858 4422 / www.rmg.co.uk/franklin

Adult £12, Child £7, Concession £11, please see www.rmg.co.uk for online discounts and further details

Notes:

- Located on the shores of the Ottawa River in Gatineau, Quebec, the **Canadian Museum of History** welcomes over 1.2 million visitors each year. The Museum's principal role is to enhance Canadians' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the events, experiences, people and objects that have shaped Canada's history and identity, as well as to enhance Canadians' awareness of world history and culture. www.historymuseum.ca
- **Parks Canada** manages one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and cultural areas in the world including 46 national parks, 4 national marine conservation areas, 171 national historic sites and 1 national urban park. Parks Canada works to ensure that Canada's historic and natural heritage is presented and protected for the enjoyment, education and appreciation of Canadians and visitors from around the world today and in the future. www.pc.gc.ca/en/index

- Established in 1999, the **Government of Nunavut** represents over 40,000 “Nunavummiut” living sparsely on a land nearly two million square kilometres in size. Nunavut is Canada’s largest territory and the newest member of Canadian confederation. Nunavut (Inuktitut for “Our Land”) has a rich and complex human history spanning nearly 5,000 years, and highlighted by the remarkable ability of Inuit and their predecessors to adapt and to thrive in one of the world’s harshest and most challenging environments. www.gov.nu.ca

A programme of events will accompany *Death in the Ice*. See www.rmg.co.uk/see-do/franklin-death-in-the-ice for more details.

Sir John Franklin's Erebus and Terror Expedition by Dr Gillian Hutchinson is published by Bloomsbury, price £18.99. See bloomsbury.com/uk/sir-john-franklins-erebus-and-terror-expedition-9781472948694 for more information.

The Canadian Museum of History has produced a guidebook to accompany the Death in the Ice exhibition, in collaboration with the National Maritime Museum, costing £5.00. Both publications are available online from the National Maritime Museum's shop.



John Rae's Birthday Celebrations 2017

John Rae's 204th birthday is on the 30th September. The John Rae Society commemorates this event every year, but, this year, we want to extend the celebrations over a whole weekend, with events centred on the Hall of Clestrain. Below is a draft programme:

Friday 29th September – Dr Claire Warrior, Senior Exhibitions Curator from the National Maritime



Museum in

Greenwich will give an evening lecture at Stromness Town Hall on the exhibition

Death in the Ice: The

Shocking Story of Franklin's Final Expedition. There will be refreshments and opportunities to buy raffle and lottery tickets. We are grateful to The Cuminga

Charitable Trust for their support of this event.



Saturday 30th September – We will have our traditional graveside commemorations at St Magnus Cathedral around midday, but we will also be treated to a performance of the John Rae Reel by dancers from the Maureen Findlay School of Dance.

On Saturday afternoon, we will be at the Hall of Clestrain for an open afternoon, with refreshments, raffle and lottery tickets and tours of the Hall.

Sunday 1st October – Open afternoon at the Hall of Clestrain.

STOP PRESS

On Thursday 6th July it was announced that Orkney Islands Council is awarding Dr John Rae a posthumous honour of The Freedom of The County of Orkney. This will be formally celebrated in the autumn - check the John Rae Society website and social media for more news.



Short Passages

Tesco Bags of Help Scheme

TESCO

Bags of Help

We are pleased to announce that the John Rae Society's Hall of Clestrain project has been selected as one of the local causes to go forward to the next stage of the Tesco Bags of Help Scheme.

Tesco teamed up with Groundwork to launch its community funding scheme, which sees grants of £4,000, £2,000 and £1,000 – all raised from the 5p bag levy – being awarded to local community projects. Greenspace Scotland is working with Groundwork to support Scottish communities.

Bags of Help offers community groups and projects across the UK a share of revenue generated from the 5p charge levied on single-use carrier bags. The public will now vote in the Kirkwall store during July and August 2017 on who should receive the £4,000, £2,000 and £1,000 awards.



John Rae Society Membership update

Type of Membership	Number
Annual	32
Standing order	70
Life	136
Total	238
Members by Area	Number
Orkney	79
Scotland	70
UK Other	61
Overseas	28
Total	238



Forthcoming John Rae Society Events

Open afternoons at Hall of Clestrain – Sunday 23rd July and Sunday 3rd September 2017. If anyone is interested in volunteering to sell raffle and lottery tickets, recruit new members, help serve refreshments, or just to be there to talk to folk, please contact secretary@johnraesociety.com

Dounby Show – Thursday 10th August. Come along and visit us at the JRS tent. Volunteers welcome to help out on the stand.

John Rae's Birthday – Friday 29th September to Sunday 1st October (see draft programme above). If anyone is interested in volunteering at the Hall of Clestrain open afternoons over the birthday weekend to sell raffle and lottery tickets, recruit new members, help serve refreshments, or just to be there to talk to folk, please contact secretary@johnraesociety.com



We would like to thank Colin and Denise Bullen for all they have done for the John Rae Society – Colin for his contribution as a Trustee and on numerous committees, and as editor of this newsletter, and Denise for her hard work as Membership Secretary. They have both supported the Society in so many ways. We are sorry to lose them, but grateful for their continued friendship and enthusiasm.



We hope to produce the next Aglooka Advisor in autumn 2017. If anyone has anything they'd like to contribute, please contact secretary@johnraesociety.com