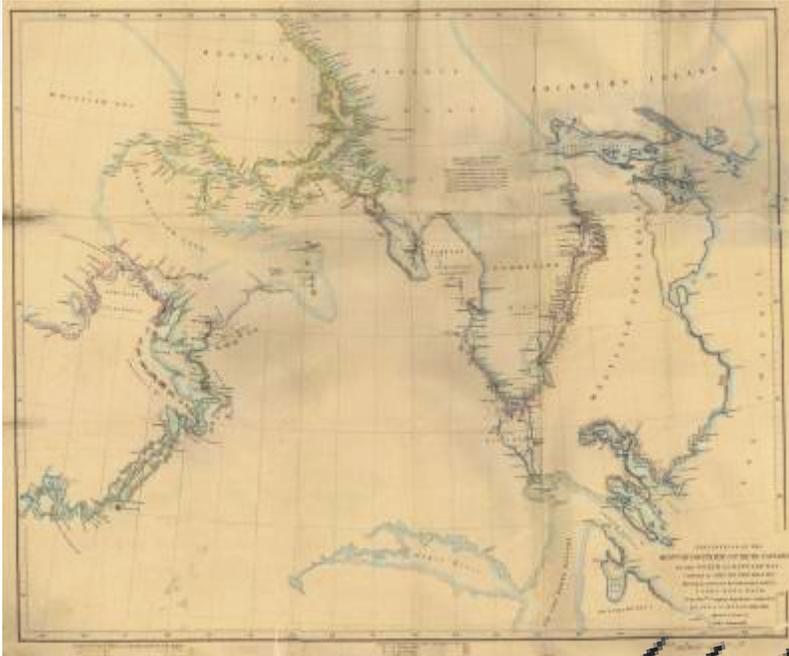


# AGLOOKA ADVISOR

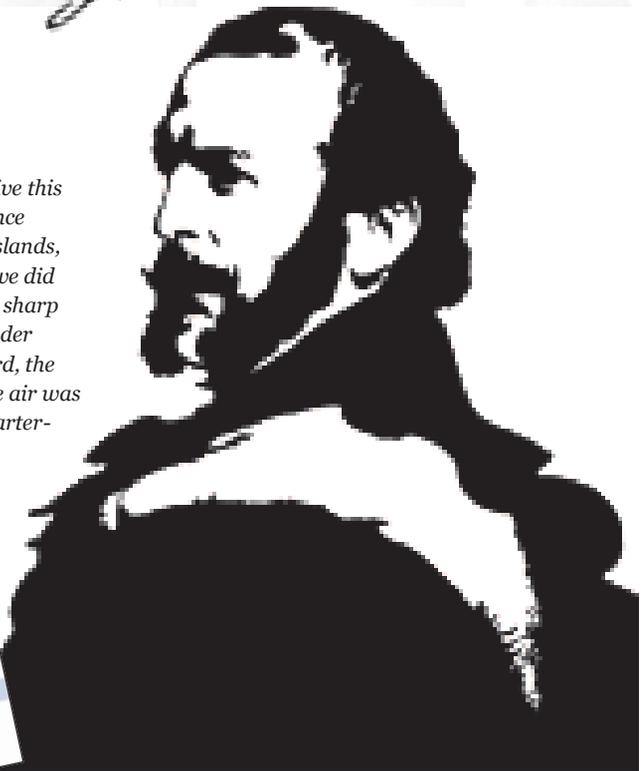
Easter 2014

Issue No 1



*John Rae*

*Having pulled along shore all night, we cast anchor at half-past five this morning to take breakfast and give rest to the men. Our course since crossing Wager River had been among a number of small rocky islands, between which we had some difficulty in threading our way, but we did not see any signs of a second opening into Wager Bay, although a sharp look-out was kept. A light air of fair wind springing up, we got under weigh at a few minutes before eight, and stood on to the northward, the ebb tide again running with us. At mid-day the temperature of the air was 45°, water 32°. In the afternoon the breeze increased, and at a quarter-past seven we rounded Cape Hope, and ran into Repulse Bay.*



Newsletter of The John Rae Society    Registered Charity No SC044463

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## **Patrons**

O. Peter St John, The Earl of Orkney  
Ken McGoogan. Author

## **The Board of Trustees**

(alphabetic order by surname)

Andrew Appleby	Josh Gourlay	David J Reid
Colin Bullen	Joe Horrocks	Alexandra Shearer
Anna Elmy	Anne McCreath	Norman Shearer

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## Welcome to The John Rae Society!

Dear Members,

Welcome to our first Newsletter.

I do hope you enjoy it and feel that you might contribute to it in future. Of course, you may already have, in which case, thank you.

As you know, some months ago it was decided to form a John Rae Society. We have received great support and considerable backing from The Friends of The Orkney Boat Museum, which will cease when we and the proposed Orkney Historic Boat Society have Charitable Status.

Our new society came into existence in the year of our Hero's 200th birth. This was timely indeed as the John Rae Conference, so wonderfully orchestrated by Stromness Museum, was to be in full swing.

Before this, however, suggestions for a society in his name had been earnestly mooted. Now we are there, we are ready to help and encourage others' activities, as well as our own, to promote the reputation and knowledge of our magnificent Arctic Explorer.

Since our inauguration we have had many members join us. Others come naturally, having been paid up supporters of FOBM. It is so encouraging too that interest is of a greater nationwide and international compass. Of course we need local membership to help with practical projects here in Orkney, but these can be inspired by ideas from different parts as well.

One field of practical research comes from Scotland. It is to digitally scan The Hall of Clestrain and the surrounding terrain. Results will give us important information on the architectural detail and construction of the Hall itself. Past scans on other buildings have revealed details previously un-recordable with more traditional means. This is something that The John Rae Society will back financially and practically, and we will be able to publish the fascinating results in a future Newsletter.

The Board of Trustees is also pledged to help with educational needs too. A possible slant to this could be to have replicated the kind of artefacts that would have been used by John Rae himself and his Inuit colleagues. These can be incorporated into 'John Rae Boxes' and made available to schools and institutions for handling and use in project work.

Of course the subject of John's grave itself is one of huge significance. Yes...it's been commented that the stonework is in poor shape. We agree. However, this is not actually an easy fix. A project to conserve the monument is afoot. FOBM had been looking at this, now we shall take it forward. Project Leader, Colin Bullen will be able to report more fully soon.

We have a programme of events in the process of being finalised, including the task of pigeon-proofing the Hall. But does anyone have information on the Doo Cot that was on site years ago? It would be handy to know more.

Both our Patrons visited Orkney in recent months; Ken McGoogan attended September's conference and in November, O. Peter St. John arrived with his wife, Barbara Huck, to launch her novel. We were so lucky to have them over from Canada.

It's taken us slightly longer than we anticipated to get our structure in place, so thank you for your patience and understanding. Now, to the task of giving 'Aglooka' his rightful place.

**Andrew Appleby**



# Society's First Open Night in Finstown

The Society held its first open evening in The Pomona Inn, Finstown on Thursday, 27 February, 2014 when around thirty people gathered to hear Dr Kate Johnson talk about 'The Changing Face of Rae's Arctic.'

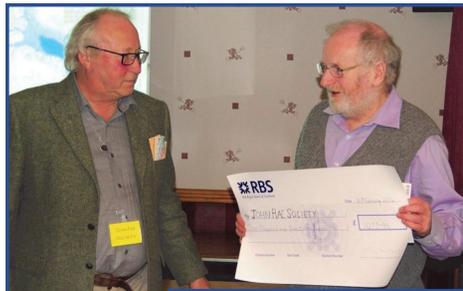
President Andrew Appleby began the evening by welcoming members and non-members alike, and accepted a cheque from Jack Drever, Secretary of the Friends of Orkney Boat Museum. In total FOBM has now granted £4,000 to the Society, for which we are truly grateful. In appreciation, the Society presented Jack with a pen made from wood from 'HMS Victory' for his contribution in helping us get off the ground.

Andrew briefly described the progress made since the first public meetings, and the delays experienced along the way. He introduced Dr Kate Johnson of Heriot-Watt University's International Centre for Island Technology.

In a very stimulating and thought-provoking talk, Dr Johnson emphasised climate change and the retreat of the ice sheet created a new challenges for life in the Canadian Arctic. Natural resources and shipping routes once thought unusable will begin to become economic possibilities, having far reaching consequences for the region and its Inuit peoples. And at the heart of the affected region, now established as Nunavut, are the areas explored by Dr John Rae.

Rae is a common factor in a shared heritage between the people of Nunavut and those of Orkney. He leaves behind a detailed record of his journeys and the ruins of his 'Stonehouse' in Repulse Bay, lying exactly on the Arctic Circle. From here Dr Rae based two of his most important expeditions - 1846/47 and

1853/54. At this time Nunavut was largely unknown and at the climactic limit for human occupation. Today, Repulse Bay is a thriving regional centre and Rae's 'Stonehouse' the focal point of a tourist trail.



Top: Andrew & Jack "Cheque" Drever;  
Mid: Nunavut;  
Bottom: Dr Kate Johnson



In her talk, Dr Johnson looked at the prospects for renewed and expanding links between Nunavut and Orkney. The Rae and Hudson Bay Company heritage provide a foundation for both cultural and educational exchange but many modern issues are common to both. Both live at the northern periphery of their respective countries and display a shared ambition for capacity to succeed economically while retaining tradition and their way of life.

Dr Johnson went on to describe Nunavut - the place, the people, how it is governed, its traditional economic activity and the prospective industries. She also considered how the Orkney/Nunavut links might be built up. Dr Johnson finished by saying that: "A shared heritage in John Rae is the foundation for an Orkney/Nunavut link, but mutual interest and friendship in the modern world are the cement which could hold it together for many decades to come. It is only left to make a start to build on the existing contacts."

After a Questions & Answer session, Dr Johnson was thanked for her excellent talk by Andrew.

Thereafter, the company enjoyed food and refreshments and a number of lucky people went home with some wonderful raffle prizes.



# Mary and Jane

Dear Andrew,

We are honored by your invitation to contribute to this inaugural newsletter.

We are direct descendants of John Rae's sister, Marion Sibbald Rae, and her husband Dr. John Hamilton. After the death of Marion's mother, Margaret Glen Rae, in Stromness, in 1855, Dr. and Mrs. Hamilton and their children immigrated to Canada. Their son Colin was our great grandfather; his son Rae Macaulay Hamilton and wife Margaret Alice McIntosh were our grandparents.

Several years ago we discovered our ancestral link to Dr. John Rae. How this piece of family history eluded us for so long, or why it had vanished from our family lore, remains a mystery to us. In searching for answers, however, we were inspired to learn as much as we could about our 'Uncle John'. We read books by contemporary Canadian writers Pierre Berton, Peter Newman and Ken MacGoogan, and we watched John Walker's documentary film, *Passage*. All acknowledged John Rae's extraordinary skills and significant contribution to the shaping of northern Canada, and the role he played in the story of the ill-fated Franklin expedition.

Recently we went to Stromness, Orkney and attended the JohnRae200 conference. There we discovered the pride Orcadians have for one of their most famous citizens. We visited John Rae's birthplace and childhood home, the Hall of Clestrain. We walked

through the fields where John and his brothers hunted, and continued down to the beach where we saw the remains of the sail shed and the noust where John and his brothers kept their sailboat, the *Brenda*. As we stood in this landscape looking out on Hoy Sound, we imagined John Rae, the boy, as he watched ships leaving Stromness harbor, bound for the Arctic.

At the conference, two hundred years after John Rae's birth, we met people from all over the world who came to celebrate this man, our great, great grand uncle. We learned more about his career with the Hudson's Bay Company, his love of the sea, skills as a physician, explorer, and surveyor. We heard again that John Rae was denied his rightful place in Canadian and British history because he reported the truth about the fate of the Sir John Franklin expedition, a truth that was met with hostile incredulity by 19th century Victorian England.

But more significantly for us we heard people talk about his compassion, integrity, intelligence, and his extraordinary physical strength and stamina. He was a man not bound by the traditions of his day, but was one who intuitively 'went native' and respected the skills, traditions and culture of the Inuit people of the Canadian Arctic. It was Dr. John Rae's character that shaped his deeds, and his legacy is one we are proud to share with our children and grandchildren.

*Mary Davey     Jane Hamilton*

## Orkney to Nova Scotia to Nunavut

When Mary and Jane visited Orkney, they collected a few pieces of sea glass as mementos from the noust beside the Stromness Museum.

In November, Keith Mitchell, a friend of Mary's, went to Repulse Bay, Nunavut, to provide Ground Search & Rescue training to Inuit volunteer teams. Keith told Mary that he was going to visit the ruins of the stone house John Rae built in Fort Hope in

1846. Mary gave him two of those pieces of sea glass 'one for her, and one for Jane, to place with love' somewhere on the ruins, symbolically closing a circle for them.

Keith and his team of four Inuit volunteers made the two-hour trip from Repulse Bay to Fort Hope by snowmobile and completed the task.

You can see a video of the event on the Stromness Museum facebook page.

**Artistic  
Rewarded  
Talent**

## Logo Competition ♦ Prizes

Do you have the talent to create a simple graphic that looks as good on clothing as it does on paper?

The John Rae Society needs a Logo. We would like to offer you the chance to design it. And we'll even give out prizes for the best entries.

There are two categories, one for under sixteen years, the other for sixteen years and over. The Board of Trustees will select the winning entry in both and the overall winner will be used thereafter on our letter-heads, newsletter and merchandising.

The prize for sixteen years and over is £50 cash and for those under sixteen years, a £25 voucher for art materials.

Why not have a go? Make sure your submission can be printed both in black and white and in full colour. Entries should be placed in an envelope no bigger than C4. Mark the envelope 'JRS-LC' in the top left-hand corner.

Send your entry to:-

The John Rae Society  
7 Church Road,  
Stromness, Orkney KW16 3BA

The competition closes on 31 July, 2014.



## Explorer Search



On the left are a few words associated with our hero. They're all in the grid below, except one. Can you find the missing answer? Solve the puzzle and send your answer to the Stromness address above before 31 July, 2014. We'll pop all the correct answers into a pot and draw the lucky winner who'll get a mystery prize.

WORD LIST	K	G	R	A	G	L	J	O	H	N	R	A	E	K	I
Aglooka	U	R	S	M	G	E	C	A	R	I	B	O	U	C	L
Caribou	E	T	I	U	M	R	V	T	C	K	T	S	K	X	K
Cree	N	A	O	A	E	R	S	T	V	C	E	M	T	U	A
Esquimaux	A	U	O	E	E	I	G	U	E	O	O	G	S	A	K
GeorgeRivers	C	K	S	A	I	H	G	T	H	K	E	R	I	M	O
HudsonBay	I	Y	E	I	T	P	K	S	L	L	S	U	T	I	O
Inuit	M	E	V	U	L	R	W	I	M	M	T	U	E	U	L
JohnRae	M	N	C	S	O	O	U	T	V	O	E	G	M	O	G
LoginsWell	E	K	E	E	N	R	L	K	S	G	M	K	G	S	A
Metis	P	R	S	S	R	E	V	I	R	E	G	R	O	E	G
MooseFactory	M	O	O	S	E	F	A	C	T	O	R	Y	C	U	L
Musket	K	L	A	M	R	E	P	U	L	S	E	B	A	Y	E
Orkney	K	T	S	M	L	O	G	I	N	S	W	E	L	L	A
Orphir	O	G	I	N	S	W	E	L	L	A	I	N	U	I	T
Pemmican															
RepulseBay															
Snowshoes															

# Graveside Tribute on 200th Birthday

On the occasion of John Rae's 200th birthday, the 30th September, 2013, the Society organised a small and well-attended tribute to our hero. It was a crisp, but beautiful autumnal afternoon, just before 12.30, when a goodly crowd gathered, informally, in small groups or as individuals, in the eastern section of the St Magnus Cathedral kirkyard to the evocative sounds of a lone piper from the Stromness Royal British Legion Pipe Band.

After a short address welcoming the assembled company on behalf of the Society, Andrew Appleby introduced Ken McGoogan, one of our Patrons, over from Canada for the John Rae 200 Conference and writer-in-residence for the Stromness Museum John Rae 200 Exhibition.

Standing at the foot of John Rae's grave, Ken sprinkled a wee dram of Highland Park upon the grave before he paid a very appropriate and fitting tribute to our hero, concluding his eulogy with an emotional reading from his award-winning book, *Fatal Passage: The Untold Story of John Rae*.

The piece he chose was Kate Rae's letter to her niece in Canada, Jessie Hamilton, the last section of which ends: *"I sat beside him all night, dearest Emily and the nurse wanted to sit with me for they wouldn't go to bed till it was morning, but I wanted to be alone with him. There was such a noble look on his beautiful features, I would have given anything if I could have had him painted, none of his photographs,*

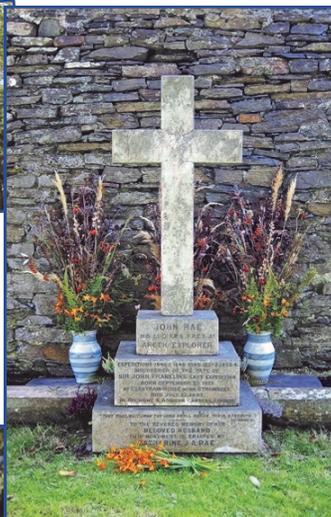
*none of his pictures are half so beautiful as he was in this illness, and his eyes were glorious, you will not think me silly. Everyone who saw him towards the end of his illness said the same. The doctors were to say when they saw him so bright and full of life, your husband is a marvellous man. You could not believe he was leaving us."*

After a short period of quiet reflection, Board Member David Reid presented Ken with a specially labelled, 'John Rae' limited edition of Highland Park in appreciation for his support of the Society.

Quotation from *Fatal Passage: The Untold Story of John Rae* is reproduced here with the kind permission of the author.



Top: Piper Mark Weymss  
Mid: John's Grave  
Bottom: One of only thirty 'John Rae' Highland Park



## Headstone Restoration Update

In the short term an annual clean in the spring or summer with warm sugar soap solution and brush is necessary. Given the headstone's condition and its relatively shaded position, there is a need for this type of annual cleaning unless or until re-polishing of the stone is carried out. A sensitive trial clean is

to be arranged after discussions with OIC Cathedral maintenance staff.

Longer term re-polishing to restore the original bright marble condition will involve considerable work including removing around 1-2 mm of the stone surface and replacing the lettering.

These works will obviously involve significant costs.

# OSCR, he say “Yes!”

Charity  
AWARDED  
Status

An application by The John Rae Society to become a Registered Charity has been successful. This means it is now an incorporated body having charitable status under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

The legal standing as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) was registered by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator on 2 December, 2013, the charity number being SC044463.

The organisation’s purposes within this new legal framework are:

[1] To advance the education of the public in the life and achievements of John Rae, as the discoverer of the final navigable link of the Northwest Passage, and as one of the greatest arctic explorers; and

[2] To advance the arts, heritage, culture and science by promoting the life and achievements of John Rae to foster friendship and understanding between members of the public, the people of Orkney, and those in Canada, particularly, but not exclusively, those areas associated with John Rae, through a broad range of activities.

Now its structure has been established, the Society can progress and develop a number of fields of interest to achieve its aims and increase the awareness of Dr John Rae.

## Stromness unveils statue to Dr John Rae

To mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Dr John Rae, a statue of the Arctic explorer was unveiled



at the pierhead in Stromness on the evening of 28 September, 2013.

The work of Orkney sculptor, Ian Scott, who hails from North Ronaldsay, the statue is mounted on a plinth of local granite, and shows Dr Rae looking out over Hamnavoe towards his home in Orphir.

After addressing a large crowd, the donor, Mr Alan Twatt, a Stromness-born businessman who now lives in Aberdeenshire, watched as the statue was unveiled by May Stockan, to enthusiastic applause.

## Society Website Now Online

We now have a website. Just point your mouse and click on:

[www.johnraesociety.com](http://www.johnraesociety.com)

The site will gradually build up through time but we are open to suggestions as to any content.

Please contact any Trustee with your proposal.

## Diary Date

The First Annual General Meeting  
**12 November 2014**

**Royal Hotel, Stromness**

**7.30 pm**