

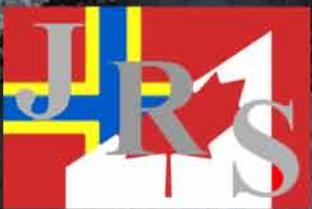
# Aglooka Advisor

Summer 2018

Issue No. 7

The  
John Rae  
Society

*Winter Draws on for the Hall !  
Time to make her Wind and  
Watertight !*



# Aglooka Advisor Summer 2018 Issue No. 7

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*The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Editor or the Board of Trustees of the John Rae Society.*



## A Word from our President

Dear Members,

In this mini-Newsletter you will see just how much the John Rae Society has achieved in only the first part of this year. This is all thanks to the hard work and dedication of our devoted Board Members and volunteers. However, we have had a very sad loss, which you will read of further on.

We are so near to making the final payment for the Hall of Clestrain! At the last count we only needed around £12K. This figure will diminish as funds from our activities come in. Our John Rae Birthday Draw is always a greatly needed boost for our funds. This year we are including a couple more books of tickets in the hopes of raising this vitally-needed sum. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could complete the payment on John Rae's 205th birthday?

Our September events are shaping up very well. On Saturday 29th September we have an open day at the Hall of Clestrain. On Saturday evening there will be a JRS reception at the Pier Arts Centre, Stromness, where Dr Barbara Rae RA will be exhibiting her Northwest Passage paintings, created while she was artist-in-residence on one of the major cruises. Ian Ritchie CBE RIBA will also be showing complementary works at Stromness Library. It is a great privilege to have such eminent artists and designers making these strides for JRS.

Sunday 30th September brings us to John Rae's birthday. There will be a service in St Magnus Cathedral, which will honour him, followed by our traditional graveside gathering. On Sunday evening we have

the John Rae Birthday Draw in the brand new Orkney Distillery function suite in Kirkwall, with music, finger food and a charity auction. The long-awaited lucky tickets will reveal the winners of our 2018 lottery. Let's see if we can raise enough money here to finalize our purchase of the Hall of Clestrain!

If you feel we have sent you more books of lottery tickets than you can handle, please don't worry. You can return them to the address (with postcode) printed on the tickets. If you would like more, please don't hesitate to ask. This is our final push for Clestrain!

With all good wishes,

Andrew Appleby



## Stop press appeal!



Photo John Welburn ABIPP

Two days ago we received our urgently needed estimate to WIND AND WATERTIGHT The Hall of Clestrain... Yes! Winter Draws on! £12,350 plus VAT will secure the Hall of Clestrain's future until full restoration takes place.

We can't afford to have another tempest strewn and gale ridden WINTER. If you can help please do go to our website [www.johnraesociety.com](http://www.johnraesociety.com) or come to me, Andrew Appleby. JRS

## Xandra Shearer – A Tribute



*Photo Norman Shearer*

We were very sad to lose Xandra Shearer just before the John Rae Festival weekend in early May 2018. She was a Trustee, chair of the events working group, and a stalwart at all of the Society's events, as well as being a great friend and support to fellow Board Members.

She had a wicked sense of humour, and was unfailingly kind and generous in giving her time, wisdom, and help in practical ways, such as her wonderful baking.

Xandra's funeral took place the weekend of the John Rae Festival, so not as many of us were able to attend as would have liked to be there. However, we know Xandra would have wished the Festival events to go ahead as planned, and she was honoured in a speech given by Andrew before Ken McGoogan's lecture at the Orkney Theatre on the opening night of the Festival.

She is much-missed by us all, and our thoughts are with Xandra's husband, Norman, Chairman and Trustee of the John Rae Society, and their family, as they continue to adjust to life without her.

**Rachel Boak**



## John Rae Society Recent Events Reports by Rachel Boak

### Screening of Passage

*at Gable End Theatre, Hoy, 2nd February 2018*



*Photo Mark Newton*

A few intrepid John Rae Society members made the short crossing to Hoy on Friday 2nd February for a screening of John Walker's 2008 documentary film about John Rae, Passage. As reported in Issue 6 of Aglooka Advisor, JRS members, Ian and Jocelyn Ritchie, kindly bought from the Canadian Broadcasting Company a copy of the film, along with the rights to show it anywhere we wish to raise funds for JRS.

We had a wonderful welcome from our hosts at the Gable End. An audience of about forty attended the screening and contributed to the following discussion, as well as being enthusiastic supporters of the raffle. Refreshments were provided by the Theatre committee, and Xandra Shearer brought some of her ever-popular cakes.

We hope to follow up this event with screenings of Passage in other parts of Orkney.



## In the Wake of John Rae:

*a talk by Tom Muir at Stromness Town Hall, 2nd April 2018*

An audience of around fifty enjoyed a talk by Tom Muir, In the Wake of John Rae, at Stromness Town Hall on Monday 2nd April. Tom is Exhibition & Engagement Officer at Orkney Museum, and a renowned storyteller and writer.

Tom said, "When the John Rae Society asked me to reprise the talk that I did for Stromness Museum in November 2017 about my trip through the Northwest Passage I was glad to do so.



*Photo Tom Muir*

"It was a journey that gave me a greater appreciation of the incredible feats that Dr John Rae achieved, living off the land which at times looked barren and savagely hostile. Once you began to really look you found that life clings on amongst the rocks and scree-covered slopes, although it seems hardly sufficient to support the musk ox and caribou that Rae hunted. It was a great privilege to stand and gaze at the Franklin graves on Beechey Island, to see a mother polar bear and her cubs on the sea ice and visit abandoned Hudson's Bay Company huts.

"Joining me on this amazing voyage was the internationally-renowned artist, Dr Barbara Rae CBE, who pulled the necessary strings to get me a place on the cruise, in return for lecturing on Dr John Rae."

Tom showed astounding images of the Arctic, including spectacular ice bergs, bleak cliffs, expanses of beach, and clustered houses in the settlements they visited. There were several questions afterwards and audience members were very generous in their donations towards the John Rae Society's project to restore the Hall of Clestrain.

We are grateful to Tom for agreeing to repeat his talk and for his ongoing support of the Society.



## John Rae Festival

*4th to 6th May 2018*

Following the success of the inaugural Festival in May 2017, the John Rae Society held another John Rae Festival from 4th to 6th May 2018. We were thrilled to be joined by Canadian author and Patron of the John Rae Society, Ken McGoogan, whose 2001 book, Fatal Passage, told John Rae's story in vivid detail and has inspired many who have read it to campaign for better recognition for Dr Rae's achievements, and to join the John Rae Society.

We were delighted with the response to the 2017 Festival and grateful for everyone's interest and goodwill. Over

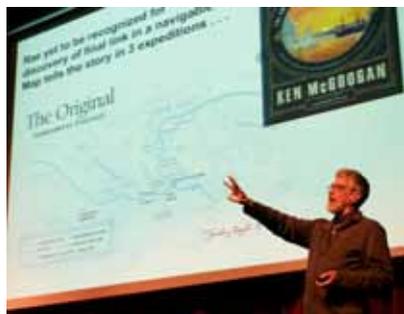


*Photo John Welburn ABIPP*

four hundred people from Orkney, the wider UK, the US, Canada and Germany, attended events, and

friendships were formed which have opened up further opportunities to raise awareness of John Rae and the Hall of Clestrain.

This year nearly three hundred people came to the events over the weekend.



*Photo John Welburn ABIPP*

Attendees were a mixture of local folk, visitors on holiday, and John Rae Society members from

Orkney and mainland Scotland, some of whom had travelled to Orkney especially for the Festival.

On Friday 4th May, we were treated to an evening lecture by Ken McGoogan. Ken is a widely-travelled writer with an award-winning career as a journalist spanning two decades. A long-time literary editor at The Calgary Herald, he has also published three novels and Canada's Undeclared War, a controversial work of non-fiction.

Ken spoke about his research for *Fatal Passage*, which began twenty years ago with a fellowship at the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge. His travels also took him to Orkney and the Arctic, where he placed a plaque commemorating John Rae's achievements on the shores of Rae Strait. He gave an overview of John Rae's story, arguing that Dr Rae solved the two great mysteries of Arctic exploration: the fate of the Franklin expedition, and the final navigable link in the Northwest Passage.

Ken brought the audience right up to date with his latest publication, *Dead*

*Reckoning: The Untold Story of the Northwest Passage*. In this book he charts the history of Arctic exploration, from the sixteenth century to the present day, examining well-known figures from the Royal Navy, but also including John Rae, Roald Amundsen, and the huge contribution of the Inuit. Ken had kindly supplied the John Rae Society with a limited number of hardback copies, which sold out that evening.

Ken's lecture ended with a plug for the "next chapter" of the story, an expedition in spring 2019 with Scottish explorer, David Reid, to retrace John Rae's steps in the Arctic. Find out more at <https://www.arcticreturn.com/> and [http://kenmcgoogan.blogspot.co.uk/p/home\\_11.html](http://kenmcgoogan.blogspot.co.uk/p/home_11.html).



*Photo John Welburn ABIPP*

On Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th May the John Rae Society held open days at the Hall of Clestrain where visitors were shown

around the Hall and were able to hear about our plans for its restoration. Tea, coffee and cake were on offer, and we had support from the Scouts, who gave visitors a friendly welcome and escorted them to the Hall. The wonderful sunshine and heat on Saturday were replaced by cold wind and rain on Sunday, but a good number of intrepid visitors still made their way to the Hall.

The final event of the 2018 Festival on Sunday evening was a screening in Stromness Town Hall of *Passage*, John Walker's film about John Rae's search for Franklin. The film is familiar to many in Orkney, and the John Rae Society has shown it twice before, but this time we

had an introduction from Ken McGoogan and Tom Muir, both of whom appeared in the 2008 film. They also answered questions afterwards and gave fascinating insights into the making of the film.

All of the Festival events were free to attend, but audiences were generous with their donations and support of the raffles and lottery. We gained several new members, sold copies of the ever-popular *Finding John Rae* by Alice Jane Hamilton (our 2017 speaker) and *Pemmican* by Kjell Lundin, and launched the first products exclusively designed for the John Rae Society by Shetland artist, Gilly Bridle (see Issue 6 of *Aglooka Advisor*).

The John Rae Society is really pleased with the numbers of people who came to Festival and with their enthusiasm. In all, we raised nearly £2000. This is another milestone in our project to restore the Hall of Clestrain.

We would like to thank Ken and Sheena McGoogan for travelling to Orkney for the Festival weekend, Tom and Rhonda Muir, Ivan and Jean Craigie, Norrie Rendall, John Leith, Anne Lea and the Trustees of the John Rae Society for their tireless support. We would also like to acknowledge the generosity of Orkney Islands Council's Culture Fund, Paddy Casey, and all those who donated raffle prizes.



## Sir John Richardson and Dr John Rae: Scottish Doctors and Explorers in Search of Franklin

*A talk by Adam Doskey, Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Wednesday 11th July 2018*

We were pleased to welcome Adam Doskey to the Royal Hotel in Stromness on 11th July for a talk jointly hosted by the John Rae Society and Stromness Museum.



*Photo Adam Doskey*

Adam Doskey is Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where one of the collections he cares

for is the library of Sir John Richardson. Adam researches the reading habits of Arctic explorers and works to reconstruct their libraries from documentary evidence.

Adam was in the UK to speak at the Library and Information History Group's conference, *The Allies of Books: Keepers, Curators & Collectors in Victorian Britain* at the St Bride Foundation in London. Adam's paper was titled 'Sir John Richardson: Arctic Explorer and Builder of Libraries', and he adapted his talk for Orkney to include references to John Rae, William Balfour Baikie, and similarities between Richardson and Rae.

Though born 25 years apart, these two explorers of the Arctic shared much in common, including medical training in

Edinburgh. In 1848, Richardson and Rae led the first search for the lost Franklin Expedition, whose fate Rae discovered on a subsequent expedition. Adam's talk focused on Richardson, but examined the lives of the two explorers in relation to one another, through the books and documents they left behind and the Arctic explorers who followed in their wake, particularly those who were inspired by John Rae.



*Photo Mark Newton*

The talk was very well attended by around seventy people who enjoyed the

insights gained by looking at 19th-century Arctic exploration through the eyes of an older, establishment figure who sailed with both Sir John Franklin and John Rae. Several questions were asked afterwards before the raffle which, with donations, raised money for the John Rae Society and Stromness Museum.

While he was in Orkney, Adam was also able to visit the Hall of Clestrain, Orkney Library and Archive, and Stromness Museum, where he was shown Arctic-related material from the collection.

We are very grateful to Adam for his generosity in coming to Orkney and speaking to us, and we hope to maintain links with Adam and the University of Illinois and to be able to share digitised Arctic material from the library.



## A Coincidental January Tourist

I had two reasons for visiting Orkney in January 2018 and, in a curious way, they came together in the grand view from the Hall of Clestrain across to the entrance to Scapa Flow.

My home is in Revelstoke BC. I lived in the Yukon, but my only Arctic experience was a ski mountaineering trip to Inugsuin Fiord, Clyde in April 1976. However, I have always followed the fortunes and misfortunes of Arctic Euro exploration.

After the issue in Canada of a John Franklin postage stamp (2016), I was in touch with Andrew Appleby of the John Rae Society. For many years I thought Dr John Rae was 'the man' and wondered, "Where is his commemorative stamp?" He is definitely one of the ten most-wanted on my dinner party list! I'm sure he would bring a nice dram.

Last year, the new Canadian Coastguard ship was named Sir John Franklin. I thought, for various reasons, that this was inappropriate. For example, a superstitious sailor might not be happy on CCGS Franklin. I exchanged emails with Ken McGoogan and Andrew Appleby about it. Andrew said, "John Rae didn't need a Canadian steel ship." Franklin needed two.

Ken McGoogan's new book, *Dead Reckoning*, was the first in the series, *Hot off the Press*, put on by the Vancouver Maritime Museum in October 2017. My Dad's WW2 memoir, *In Action with Destroyers*, was recently published in the UK and was in the same VMM series. I wanted to hear Ken McGoogan talk about his book and get a sense of the museum

venue. When I cheekily asked Ken how long his talk was going to be, he said, "How long do you want?" He was spot-on 47minutes. Later he told me his answer came from channelling his inner Marlon Brando, who was asked by a passerby in Rebel without a Cause, "What are you rebelling against?" His reply was, "Waddya got?"



*Photo John Welburn ABIPP*

After these recent coincidences - the stamp, the ship, and Ken's new book - I thought, "I want to go to Orkney." I worked in Scotland for the Scottish Avalanche Information Service for nearly ten winters and never went to the northern islands. I had wanted to go to Up-Helly-Aa, but it was doubtful I could have made it back in time for work with the post-celebratory survivors on the ferry to Aberdeen.

Another incentive (coincidence?) to visit was that my Dad served on HMS Griffin and HMS Savage in WW2 and spent time in Scapa Flow. My Dad came into Scapa with his crew in the captured German ship, Polares, which had the first recovered Enigma codes.

Earlier in January I took a little 'side trip' for my 70th birthday. I wanted to be in Crete and hand over a copy of Dad's book

to the National Maritime Museum there. I had a nice reception from Commodore Emmanuil Petrakis, the Museum Director. HMS Griffin had hard days during the Battle of Crete. I had easy days: rental car, credit card, and no bombs or U-boats. After a wonderful few days there I took ferry, bus, ferry, train and a flight from Frankfurt to Aberdeen, and then to Kirkwall.

Sigrid and Andrew met me in Kirkwall and took me to the Hall of Clestrain. I was very moved, knowing that these hills were where John Rae spent his youth, and looking across Scapa Flow, where my Dad had also been. What a wonderful, wintry Scapa day, with some snow patches on the tops of the hills, a dusting of new snow, with good wind, rain and a friendly greeter dog - a very fine day.

Since being home I have watched Passage, talked to everyone I know about Rae (again), and will work on getting the commemorative postage for John Rae stamped, licked, franked, and on its way...

Thank you to Sigrid and Andrew for a very special day. I hope to be back in Orkney soon.

**Alan Dennis**



## Short Passages

### Scottish Arctic Club Annual Gathering and Supper

The ANNUAL GATHERING and SUPPER is held each November to bring together members, guests and young expeditioners. Its purpose is to encourage the exchange of information and advice for the planning of future expeditions and to enjoy the company of like-minded Arctic enthusiasts. We organise an afternoon programme of talks and slide shows on recent and historic expeditions by members and by recent SAC grant awardees. Plenty of time is also allowed for the informal exchange of information and experience, as well as eating and drinking! Our AGM is also held at the Annual Gathering.

The 2018 Annual Gathering and Supper will be held at the Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William in November 2018. Members and guests are also invited to an informal get-together on the Friday evening. A booking form will be circulated with the Newsletter or please contact the Secretary for further information.

<http://www.scottisharcticclub.org.uk>



## John Rae Society membership update

Type of Membership	Number
Annual	51
Standing order	87
Life	156
Total	294
<b>Members by Area</b>	
Orkney	93
Scotland	85
UK Other	79
Overseas	37



### Forthcoming John Rae Society Events

We will have a stand at the Dounby Show on 9th August.

Our next big event is John Rae's birthday weekend at the end of September.

On Saturday 29th September we will have an open day at the Hall of Clestrain, followed by a JRS reception at the Pier Arts Centre, Stromness, where there will be an exhibition of Northwest Passage paintings by Dr Barbara Rae RA. Ian Ritchie CBE RIBA will also be showing complementary works at Stromness Library.

Sunday 30th September is John Rae's 205th birthday. There will be a service in St Magnus Cathedral, which will honour him, followed by our traditional graveside gathering.

On Sunday evening the John Rae Birthday Draw will take place in the brand new Orkney Distillery function suite in Kirkwall, with music, finger food and a charity auction.

We always welcome volunteers to help with events. We need help with serving refreshments, selling raffle and lottery tickets, and being a friendly face, happy to chat to visitors. If you are interested in helping, please contact [secretary@johnraesociety.com](mailto:secretary@johnraesociety.com)



**We hope to produce the next Aglooka Advisor over the 2018/2019 winter.**

**If anyone has anything they'd like to contribute, please contact [secretary@johnraesociety.com](mailto:secretary@johnraesociety.com)**



*Arctic Canda Tours*

*Photo John Welburn ABIPP*

## STOP Press

A couple of months ago we had an email from the Travel company Adventure Canada Tours to ask if we could arrange access for 200 of their holiday makers who were arriving in a few days on one of the cruise ships. All the Trustees pulled together and with a couple of helpers Anne and Martin we managed to stage an open day just for them. It was a busy day with the visitors arriving in coaches at various times in the day, but everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and were very interested in our plans for the Hall of Clestrain.

A few weeks later we had another email informing us of Adventure Canada Tours very generous donation of £3,500 and pledge of future support.

"Dear Andrew, It was indeed a pleasure to meet you in Kirkwall. I'm so happy we connected!

Our guests loved the experience at the Hall of Clestrain. I'm really looking forward to seeing the modifications for next year. .... We've got a total of \$2782 as a direct result of the auction. We'll match the funds for an additional \$2782 CAD bringing our auction total to \$5564 CAD. Andrew, we really do appreciate the time that you and your team put towards our visit..... I'd like to top this up to an even \$6,000 CAD.

..... we would like to include the John Rae Society as one of the organizations that we fundraiser for an provide support to. We'd like to profile the organization directly to our clients, but also on our website (new one to launch at the end of the summer). If you are agreeable to this it would be excellent to be able to use your logo when speaking about you and the organizations that we work with.

Warmest regards, Cedar"