

The Friends of the Orkney Boat Museum Newsletter – June 2004

Introduction: Welcome to the Friends of the Orkney Boat Museum. It is little more than a month since our inaugural meeting and a hectic month it has been. In addition to the open evening at Clestrain, there has been background filming for the 'Restoration' programme and the committee have met several times to set up the groundwork for the Friends' organisation. This administration work is time-consuming and as a result we do not yet have membership cards for distribution. However, your membership number is on the address label with this newsletter. So this, the first of what I hope will be a series of newsletters, must also serve as an initial acknowledgement to the more than 300 new Friends.

Administrative Stuff: The committee now numbers 14 and as we work through the application forms we are aware that some of you offered to serve on the committee. You have not been overlooked; your offers are very much appreciated and I hope that we may call on your assistance in the future. In the meantime, we are producing a draft constitution which will need to be ratified by members at a general meeting. This will be called as soon as possible. Once we are properly constituted, we will be able to set up our own banking arrangements. One of our aims will be to offer to collect subscriptions by direct debit and other electronic methods. We ask those of you who asked for direct debit arrangements to bear with us a bit longer. Jack Drever, our Secretary, has pointed out that, when processing details of 300 members, inevitably some errors will creep in. If we have your name or address wrong on the label with this newsletter, please let Jack know at the address below.

Open Evening: Aside from the administration tasks we were obliged, in the current idiom, to hit the ground running. Less than two weeks after our formation we held an open evening at the Hall of Clestrain. The weather was far from perfect, although we did escape the downpour which affected Kirkwall. Nevertheless about 450 people attended. We were entertained by the Stromness Royal British Legion Pipe Band and Hadhirgaan; fed on burgers, rolls and seafood; and treated to a taste of Orkney wines and beers, courtesy of a number of local businesses and individuals. More businesses and individuals provided prizes for a splendid raffle. Our sincere thanks go to everyone who contributed, not least the Craigie family without whom nothing would have happened. As a result of all this generosity we were able to put on a splendid show for Endemol, the TV production company who are making 'Restoration' for the BBC. They also filmed the children of Primary 6 at Papdale School presenting letters of support for the project.

Finances: Overall, on the open night, we took in more than £2,100 of which £900 alone was in new memberships. Incidentally, at £50 life membership is a bargain which we will not continue to offer for long. We felt it was important to recruit such members early but the cost to the Friends of maintaining life membership will be quite high over time - so get in soon as the price will rise in the near future.

Contacts: Now that we are beginning to stand on our own feet, points of contact will change. Hugh Halcro-Johnston will concentrate on his duties with the Trust and

contact with the Friends will be through the Chairman, (myself) Mick Bain, and the Secretary, Jack Drever. Our details are given below.

The Future: As to future plans, these fall into four areas:

- The committee will complete the setting up of the constitution and banking arrangements.
- There are a number of immediate tasks associated with 'Restoration'; we must maintain a high profile to ensure the maximum vote. Members can help in this – please lobby all of your friends and family (especially those outside Orkney) to phone in votes for Clestrain. We are organising posters and leaflets to remind everyone and are hoping to have a photo opportunity for the local press nearer the date - William Bremner will be relaunching his venerable Stroma Yole "Daisy" and we hope to have her sailing in company with two modern yoles off Clestrain.
- We need to remember that after we win the Scottish heat, we have to mobilise the vote for the finals in August. The BBC and the Friends are also keen that we are seen to carry on campaigning after the broadcast; this is no problem to us as we are determined to paraphrase Donald Dewar, that "There will be an Orkney Boat Museum." We will be having a mini open day at Clestrain on Sunday 18th July at which we will have a few volunteers on hand to show visitors around the site, hopefully including the boat noust and the proposed slipway. Light refreshments will be available.
- For the longer term, we are planning meetings and lectures over the winter period and I am sure that there will be a dance or something similar to brighten up the dark nights.

Finally: once again, welcome to the Friends; thank you for your magnificent support to date; keep up the good work and

Vote for Clestrain

Our programme will go out on 13th July and you can vote from the early hours of that morning through to the night of the 14th. The number is 09011 332222. Follow the old Irish maxim: Vote Early, Vote Often.

MICK BAIN
CHAIRMAN

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