

**A Few Background Comments on the Contents  
of this Issue of Northern Studies**

Our new President, Mr Aubrey Halford-Macleod, is contributing to this issue with an article on the Hebrides. This is Macleod country and also where he stays for part of the year. He has spent a number of years in Iceland.

This year's Northern Studies conference will take place in Harris and Lewis during the first week in April. Members will have received a circular about this.

In November 1973 Professor E.F. Halvorsen of Oslo University visited Edinburgh as a Northern Scholar. His article on Medieval Court Literature in Northern Europe is a summary of the lecture he gave then.

Professor W. Glyn Jones of Newcastle University addressed our society last November and a shorter version of his lecture, on the Faroese Ballad, is included in this issue.

Archaeology is full of surprises! Those who read the notice about the excavation at the Knap of Howar on Papa Westray in the first issue of Northern Studies will remember that a Pictish date was suggested for this site. In her report on the 1973 excavation Dr Anna Ritchie now indicates a much earlier date for it.

Since our visit to Orkney and the Stones of Stenness last Easter, Dr J.N. Graham Ritchie of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland has been excavating on this site and gives us a report of what has been done so far. The editor hopes that his appeal for information will not be neglected by our readers.

For this issue of Northern Studies Dr Ian Morrison has produced a special map which is relevant to most of the contributions.

We invite our readers to send us contributions, notes and queries — they will all be most welcome.

**The Editor**