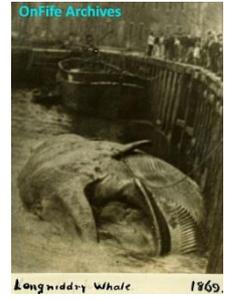




## Mr Tait's Whale



The fact that Kirkcaldy was once a whaling port is now almost lost in the mists of time – the thoroughfare close to the harbour named Lord Gambier's Wharf is one of the few tangible reminders of the industry.

It was in 1813 that the *Lord Percy*, which is recognised as Kirkcaldy's first whaler, left for the fishing grounds. In January 1866, *The Brilliant*, was sold to the firm of N & N Lockhart which was based in Rose Street at the time. The price paid was £1135 and the sellers, *The Kirkcaldy Whale Fishing Company*, then ceased trading. Lockhart's steam whaler *Ravenscraig* continued the activity for a few more years but, despite the name, was based in Dundee meaning she was not classed as the last Kirkcaldy whaler.

The industry and in particular, *The Kirkcaldy Whale Fishing Company*, had suffered a major blow when all the Kirkcaldy based whalers were lost in October of 1862. The *Fifeshire Journal* of the 23<sup>rd</sup> October of that year carried a report sent to the Company, by way of a telegram, from Captain W. Couldry of the *Lord Gambier*.

He had arrived safely in Copenhagen along with 10 of his crew, another 28 from the *Chieftain*\* and a number of hands from the *Resolution*. The *Abram* and the *Alexander* were also missing but no word of her fate was known at that point. It later transpired both were lost.

\* Captain Allan eventually became the skipper of the *Ravenscraig*.

The *Brilliant* appears to have been bought to maintain a modest whaling presence in Kirkcaldy. The *Peterhead Sentinel* of the 21<sup>st</sup> January 1863 mentions that she was a barque and was sold to a Kirkcaldy company with the specific intention of fishing for whales in the Davis Straits. The industry appears to be nearing its last legs as the *Fifeshire Journal* of the 5<sup>th</sup> August 1863 reveals that the Company's Boiling House and Store Room had been surveyed by the military but was found unsuitable for their purposes.

So, while Kirkcaldy was certainly prominent in the industry, this month's object was certainly not harpooned and caught by one of the town's whalers! Many readers will be aware of the whale which became stranded at the west end of the town's beach in 1904. Many will also have seen the photograph of the 50 foot whale surrounded by hordes of townspeople. The whale was alive when it became beached and two former whalers despatched the creature with the aid of a hedge-bill. Whaler Shand is the man given the 'credit' for the fatal blow. The carcass was sold for £2.

However, there had been an earlier incident involving a whale and we were delighted when this month's guest author, Kerry Briers, accepted an invitation to tell this tale. This is another example of how sometimes arduous research has a positive and enjoyable outcome.

Kerry was born on the Nottingham/Derbyshire border and we are under strict instructions to ensure that she is described as Nottinghamshire born – even if it was only by a quarter of a mile! When Kerry turned 16 she became involved with her local library and was enthused by a colleague into taking an interest in all matters relating to local history. Her debt to the

colleague has never been forgotten and soon a career in librarianship was underway.

Having been born in England, it was to Wales that Kerry turned to secure her degree. Studying at the University of Aberystwyth, Kerry secured her BSc (Econ) in Information and Library Studies. Kerry has worked in a number of libraries over the years including Ilkeston Public Library – which is highlighted here as it is a Carnegie Library. The UK could not always hold Kerry and she enjoyed a spell working in a library in Brussels. In the main, Kerry has been involved with academic libraries and at present is engaged as an assistant with the University of Dundee library in their Kirkcaldy Campus.

Kerry and her husband Rob, who commutes to work in Edinburgh, live in Kirkcaldy along with their two daughters. Kerry tells us that her favourite pastime is walking with her family but she does have a dark secret when admitting that eating cakes runs walking very close! When Kerry and Rob, who first met at university, moved to Kirkcaldy they were convinced that they were moving to an area without any family connections. To their astonishment a little research revealed that ancestors on Rob's side had once lived in Dysart!

Since 2018, Kerry has been a volunteer with Fife Cultural Trust working with both the Kirkcaldy Local Studies Team and also the Archives Unit at Bankhead. It was in this capacity that the genesis of this story took root. Opening a long forgotten red box, Kerry came upon papers and some diaries relating to the Oliphant family – whose name is steeped in Kirkcaldy's maritime history, even having a terrace, close to the harbour, named after them. The diary made reference to a whale and that set Kerry off on a path to find out more.

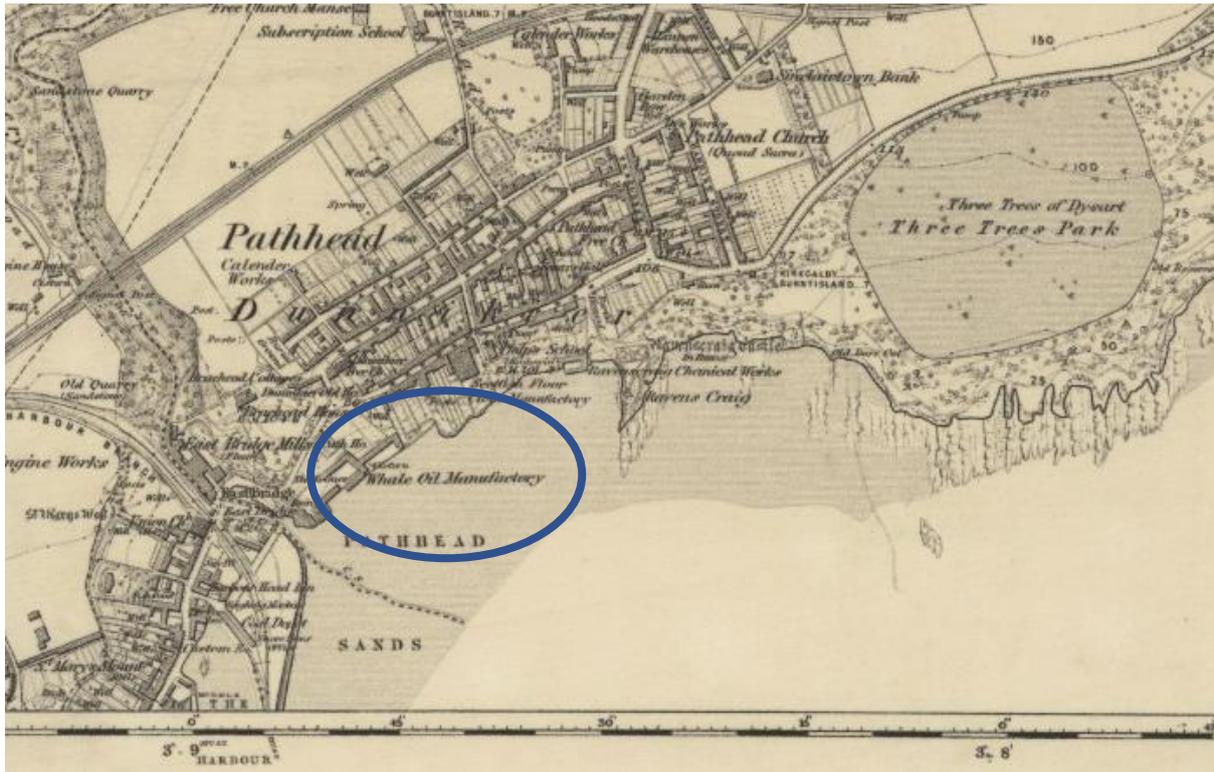
This is another example of a story which at the outset of the project was never considered for inclusion – simply because we did not know of its existence! Time without number we have stumbled on a story which demands to be told and is being told here. The following is the result of Kerry's labours and makes for an interesting, enjoyable and informative read. Kerry – over to you:-

\* \* \* \*

In Kirkcaldy, November 1869 Henry William Hutchison (son of Mary Oliphant and Robert Hutchison, corn merchant) wrote in his diary that:

“Mr Wilson came up at night to tell us about whale.” Over the next few days, he mentions the arrival of the whale in Kirkcaldy harbour and the great crowds of people who went to see it. This was the first I had heard about the whale which according to the journalists of the *Fifeshire Advertiser* we must credit Mr Tait for purchasing and thus causing “one of the greatest sensations that has ever been known in Kirkcaldy”.

Mr Tait, an oil merchant, purchased the blue whale at an auction on the beach at Longniddry where it had been stranded. The *Fifeshire Advertiser* (Nov. 13<sup>th</sup> 1869) suggested that “surely this monster of the deep had gone to the wrong side of the Firth, and mistaken Longniddry for the Lang Toun”. The whale had been swimming in the Firth of Forth for a few days before it came ashore on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November, at Gosford beach. It is perhaps better known as The Longniddry whale – but the *Fifeshire Advertiser* did suggest “Sensation whale” or ‘Mr Tait’s whale” as alternatives. It was brought to Kirkcaldy to be processed at the oil house located not too far from Kirkcaldy harbour on Pathhead Sands.



Location of whale oil manufactory in Kirkcaldy.

<https://maps.nls.uk/view/228777640#zoom=5&lat=817&lon=5878&layers=BT> Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland, <https://maps.nls.uk/index.html>

### **A whale – stroll to the tail**

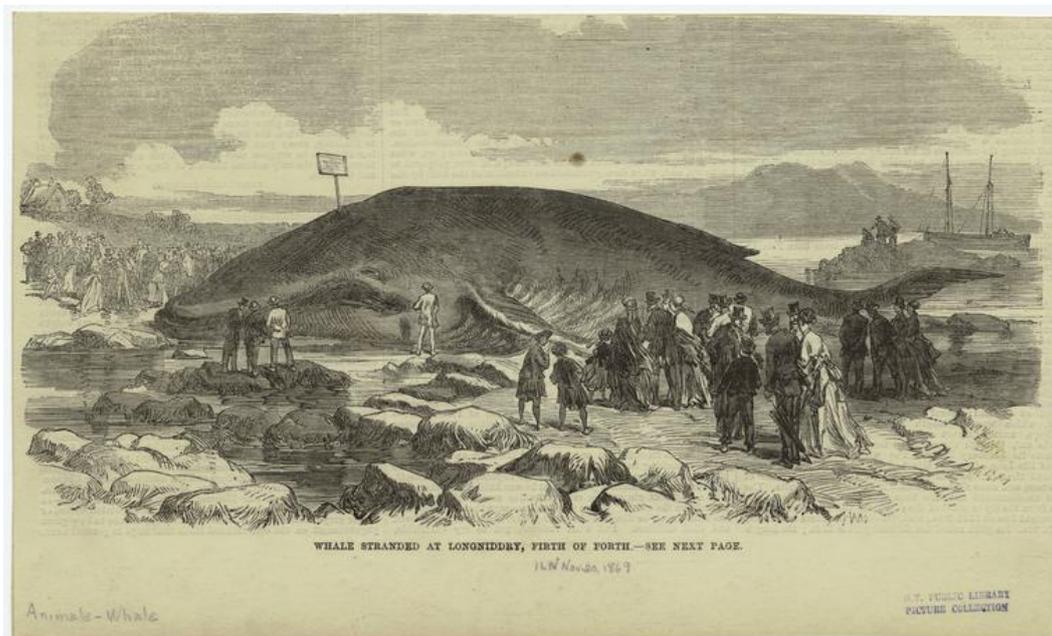
The location of the whale stranded on a beach close to Edinburgh meant it was very convenient for a large number of people to go and see it. The North British Rail company encouraged them to travel by train, and *The Scotsman*, (Nov. 10, 1869) reported that the company had conveyed 3050 passengers to Longniddry over a four-day period. Many also went by carriage.

The shore at Longniddry was rocky but it was possible to see the whale from the links if you did not want to scramble over the beach. The *Fifeshire Advertiser's* correspondent suggested that people were keen to get a closer look but he was not impressed by the smell which was described as “stupendous odours of offensiveness”. It looked, he suggested, like the bulk of a sloop with it's keel upmost. He would have liked to of had the opportunity to provide a more

detailed description of the whale's backbone but as many women were walking on the top, he thought it best not to look. He did explain that there were men and boys walking on the top of the whale, but the correspondent showed less concern that they may fall down and do serious damage to their "necks, limbs and modesty".

Press reports in both *The Scotsman* and the *Fifeshire Advertiser* mentioned that the position of the whale also meant that it was exposed to the attacks of people anxious to obtain "momentos" of the sea monster. They were chopping bits of the whale off and taking away pieces of flesh and enamel. This prompted someone to write to *The Scotsman* (Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>, 1869) lamenting that a complete skeleton was no longer an option as the "exposed baleen has been sadly sacked and plundered". Naturalists, the letter urged, were to make the most of this opportunity to dissect and make anatomical observations of the internal anatomy of the whale, an opportunity missed in Ostend in 1827 for a similar sized individual of this species.

A sign was eventually placed in the whale's blowhole forbidding visitors from cutting the carcase.



Whale stranded at Longniddry, Firth of Forth.

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e0-d039-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

## **The Auction**

The Custom-House authorities instructed the receiver of wrecks, Mr John Hill, to take possession of the carcass and auction the whale. It was "exposed for sale by public auction" on the beach where it lay on Thursday, November 11<sup>th</sup>. The North British Railway company were very keen to ensure that no one missed out on the possibility of seeing the whale at Longniddry, possibly for the last time, and placed advertisements in *The Scotsman* with the times and prices of departures from Edinburgh for trains that would arrive in time for the auction at noon.

Reports in both the *Fifeshire Advertiser* and *The Scotsman* suggest that a great many people had taken the opportunity to travel by train to witness the sale of on the beach. Mr Freeman of Her Majesty's Custom Leith conducted the roup or auction. He stood upon the whale and read out the conditions of sale: the winning bid would have to be paid on the ground, and at that moment the whale was to become the risk of the purchaser. The sale of the whale opened at thirty pounds and each bid being five pounds. There were five bidders, bidding was brisk but Mr John Tait had the winning bid at £120.

**Classified Ad 70 – No Title**

*The Scotsman (1860-1920); Nov 11, 1869; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Scotsman*  
pg. 4

**NORTH BRITISH RAILWAY COMPANY.**

**WHALE ASHORE ON THE BEACH  
AT BOGLEHILL, NEAR LONGNIDDRY STATION.**

**TRAINS AT CHEAP FARES  
T O - D A Y . ( T H U R S D A Y . )**

**As the Sale of the Whale is announced for Twelve o'clock To-Day, this will probably be the last opportunity of seeing it.**

	Regular Train.	Special Train.	FARES TO LONGNIDDRY AND BACK.	
	A.M.	A.M.	1st Class.	Coys. Carriages.
EDINBURGH...dep.	10.30	11.0	} 2s. 6d.	1s. 3d.
SOUTH LEITH, "	10.30	—		
PORTOBELLO,.. "	10.39	11.10	2s.	1s.
INVERESK,.... "	10.49	11.20	1s. 4d.	8d.
PRESTONPANS, "	10.59	11.29	9d.	5d.
LONGNIDDRY, arr.	11.8	11.40	Children ½-Fare as usual.	

**The Special Train will leave Longniddry on return at 2.0 p.m., thus allowing Visitors ample time to inspect the Whale. The Excursion Tickets will also avail to Return by Regular Trains leaving Longniddry at 3.11 and 7.13 p.m.**

**SAM. L. MASON, General Manager.**

**Edinburgh, November 1869.**

North British Railway Company advert for trains to see the whale ashore on the beach. November 11, 1869.

Both newspapers reported that the whale was to remain at Longniddry following the sale until Monday. The plan was to tow the whale across the Forth to Kirkcaldy; this was expected to be difficult considering the conditions of the rocky shore and the location of the whale, but as the whale was not to be removed until Monday the North British Railway company would continue to run special trains until that time. The strong smell now coming from the whale did not prevent the *Fifeshire Advertiser* from suggesting that the flesh of the species, (scientifically designated as *Balaena sieboldii*) may be suitable for dietary purpose and perhaps it would be a favourable opportunity for Dr Dewar to give his townsmen "a practical illustration of the great benefits to be derived from his new patent meat preserving process".

## How do you transport a whale?

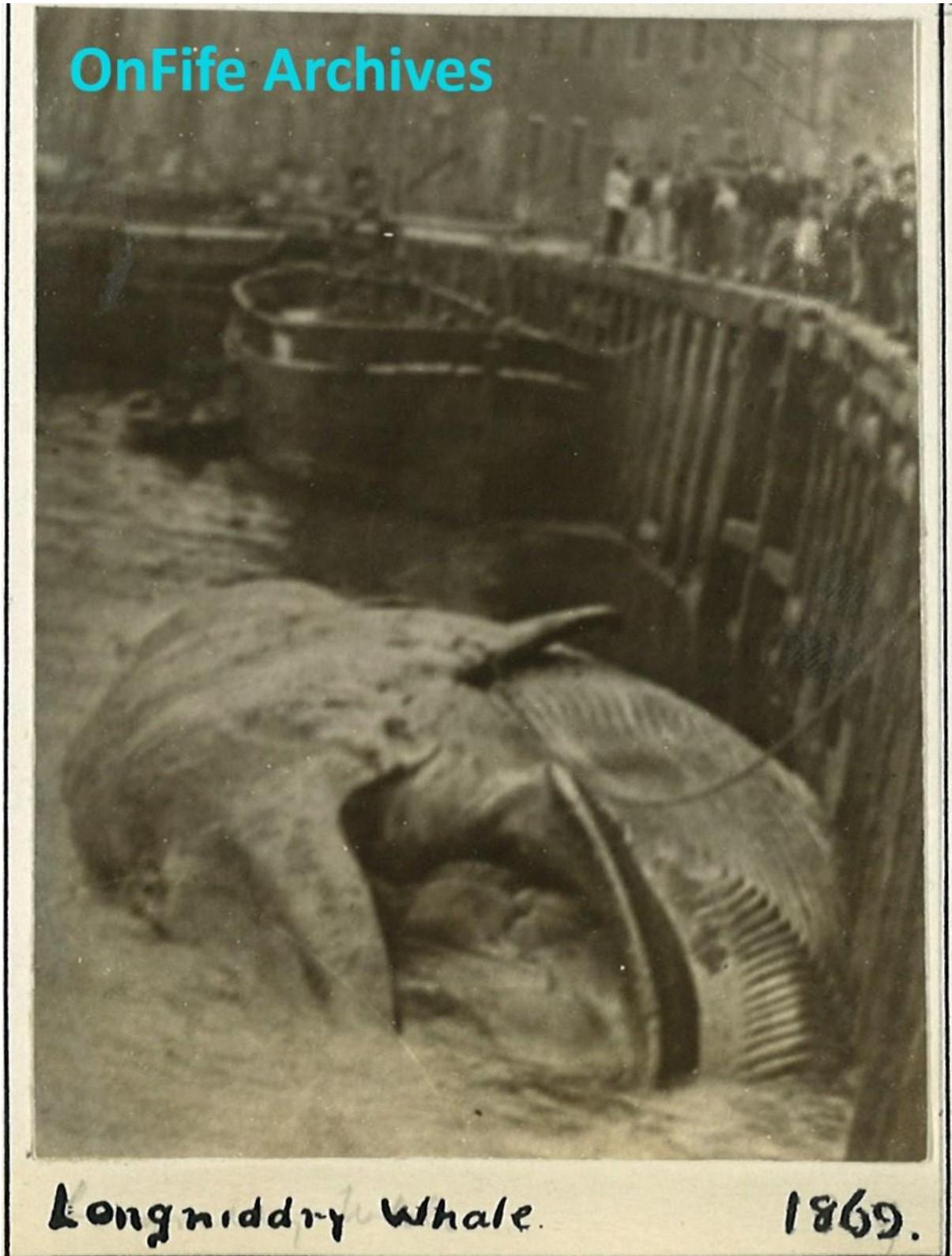
Mr Tait had previous experience of purchasing whales and arranging for them to be transported to Kirkcaldy. A fortnight earlier the *Fifeshire Advertiser* (Oct. 30<sup>th</sup> 1869) reported that Mr Tait had purchased a fin whale cast ashore at Newbiggin for about £100. After the rousp he arranged with the North Eastern Railway company to have the carcass taken to Kirkcaldy by rail for processing.

Mr Tait travelled across from Burntisland on the Monday morning so he could accompany the whale across the Forth to Kirkcaldy (*The Scotsman*, Nov. 16, 1869). Professor Turner in his account of the Great Finner Whale explained how the whale had a strong rope attached and “secured around the root of the tail, and when afloat at high water, it was towed by a powerful steamer to Kirkcaldy”. The steamer was called the Express, belonging to the North British Railway company and worked with a tug from Leith to tow the whale. A little after noon “when it was full tide the steamers steamed off in the direction of Kirkcaldy and the whale followed” (*The Scotsman*, Nov. 16, 1869).

On Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> of November, Henry William Hutchison recorded in his diary that “The whale came across at ½ to 2. Joanna (*his sister*) and I went down to the harbour to see it”. Visibility was poor on the day, but a little after two o’clock the smoke from the steamers became visible. The steamer threw off the tow rope a little distance off the harbour and the tug brought the whale into the harbour. The whale had a welcoming party, as the *Scotsman’s* correspondent described:

“Thousands of persons were congregated on the East pier, and wherever there could be standing room obtained it was occupied by spectators, many of whom had come from a great distance in order to see the strange denizen of the deep. Hundreds of spectators had also taken position on the west pier, and many were stationed along the promenade west of the harbour. The whale was safely brought

into outer harbour, near to one of the cranes, so as to give facilities for it's being cut up."



The whale in Kirkcaldy harbour, and some of the crowds. Taken from: *Kirkcaldy Harbour: an historical outline.*

## **The whale as entertainment?**

On Tuesday as the tide started to recede a well-known 'harbour character' with a wooden leg mounted the whale and did a series of somersaults on the animal "to the great amusement of the onlookers". The *Fifeshire Advertiser* reported that the whale had started to smell rather unpleasant. "It would be difficult to tell how many girls have nearly lost themselves by fainting away in their mother's arms at the mere sight and smell – not to speak of a touch of the great leviathan."

Henry William Hutchison recorded in his diary (Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November) that a "Great many townsfolk come to see whale" and complained with all the excitement dinner guests such as David Russell did not remember their invitations. *The Times* reported (November 17, 1869) that the quays were "lined with thousands of people, large numbers having come from Dysart, Wemyss and other districts." The North British Railway Company announced cheap trains from various stations on the line to Kirkcaldy to encourage more people to view the whale. Amongst these visitors were many photographic artists, whom the *Fifeshire Advertiser* suggested "exercised their art in conveying a likeness of the leviathan form to paper. Among others, Mr Douglas, The Vineyard, has been highly successful in taking views of the monster, suitable either for the album or the stereoscope".

The whale was also commemorated in two poems published in the *Fifeshire Advertiser* which you can read at the end of this article.

## **Two for the price of one**

Mr Tait did not purchase one whale but two. Professor Turner reported in his account of the *Great Finner Whale* that the flensing soon revealed that the "whale was in the gravid state". The foetus was a male. It was exhibited for a short time at the boiling house on Pathhead Sands for threepence during the day and a penny in the evening. Press reports suggest a considerable number of people did

go and view, but it was not a huge financial success. On Wednesday night a long wooden coffin shaped box was used to convey the young whale to Kirkcaldy Railway station where it was to make another journey across the Forth, initially by train and then perhaps the boat train at Burntisland onto Edinburgh and then Edinburgh College where it will “form an object of useful studies”. (*The Fifeshire Advertiser*, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 1869)

### **The Jaw Bones**

*The Scotsman* (Nov. 12, 1869) reported the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Wemyss purchased the jawbones and later donated them to the Science and Art Museum in Edinburgh. When Professor Turner presented his preliminary account at the second meeting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the report in *The Scotsman* resulted in Professor Archer writing a swift letter to the editor. The report had implied that the jawbone and the skeleton had been a personal donation of Professor Archer to the Science and Art Museum. Professor Archer wanted to clarify that he had purchased the skeleton on behalf of the government but had read a letter at the meeting, written by, and with permission of the Earl of Wemyss explaining why he had relinquished his claim on the jawbones. The Earl of Wemyss had intended to erect “the whale’s jaws on an elevated part of the coast where they would have been conspicuous, and remained as a memorial of the event”, but after considering the request from the Museum thought it would be better to ensure that the skeleton remained complete.



Francis Wemyss-Charteris, 9th Earl of Wemyss, picture © National Portrait Gallery, London, licenced under Creative Commons, <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw131066/Francis-Wemyss-Charteris-9th-Earl-of-Wemyss>

The jaw bones subsequently became part of the collections of the National Museum of Scotland (<https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/collection-search-results/blue-whale/460443>) but are on display at the former entrance of the Anatomical Museum of the University of Edinburgh.



Photos used with permission from Malcolm MacCallum, University of Edinburgh.

### **An object to remember what...?**

This object can help us remember one of Kirkcaldy's greatest sensations, a visit from a blue whale in 1869.

The *Fife Advertiser* at the time of the whale's arrival was keen to encourage credit to be given to Mr Tait "for causing one of the greatest sensations that has ever been known in Kirkcaldy: for exciting in the highest degree the curiosity of the curious; and for affording a spectacle which human eyes rarely indulge in in this part of the globe."

The newspaper hoped that Mr Tait would be rewarded with plenty of oil from the whale as a suitable recompense for his trouble.

Professor Turner whilst addressing the Royal Society of Edinburgh in December 1869, mentioned that Mr Tait had estimated he had collected 10 tonnes of oil from the blubber, and 6 tonnes from the inside fat of the whale. Whale oil was worth £40 a ton, so the 16 tonnes, without transport and labour costs, meant a substantial return on the initial £120 investment from Mr Tait.



Photograph of Mr Tait – (source Kirkcaldy Civic Society)

Mr Tait had an interesting working life. He was initially a butler at Dunning House, working for J. Townsend Oswald in the 1851 census. Henry Hutchinson's father Robert Hutchison, whose diary extracts I have used, and Mr Tait in the early 1860s had similar business interests, both being listed as manure merchants in Westwood's directory. Mr Tait also emphasised that in addition to a manure merchant he was also an oil and grease merchant. From that profession he went into the floor cloth industry. He subsequently served as Provost and was involved with the establishment of the Infectious Diseases Hospital (now Victoria Hospital). He died at the age of eighty in 1903, thirty-four years after the whale.

In death the anatomy and skeleton of the whale contributed to the scientific understanding of whales. The reporting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh meeting demonstrated how little was known about the different species of whales and how they reproduced. *The Scotsman* (Dec 21, 1869) diplomatically reported that at the meeting "Professor Turner read an interesting notice of the great finner whale which came ashore recently at Longniddry, in the Firth of Forth. Professor Macdonald, St Andrews, took exception to the some of the views stated by Professor Turner, and provided some curious ideas about the paper for the consideration of the meeting". The reporter present suggested everyone laughed at Professor Macdonald as he argued that the whale was perhaps a marsupial and carried offspring in a pouch. The fact that the doubts were seriously raised is a reflection on how little as known by those working in anatomy at the time and perhaps this skeleton, along with others, did help to advance the understanding of the species.

The jawbones of this whale help us to remember a November day when a whale was towed into Kirkcaldy by its tail, but perhaps they also help us to remember Kirkcaldy's wider involvement in the whaling industry. Henry Hutchinson's uncle William Oliphant had been the captain of *Viewforth*, one of the whale ships which sailed from Kirkcaldy and became trapped in the ice (from September – January) around the Davis Strait in 1835. Robert Oliphant, William's father, was involved in running the Kirkcaldy company, the Greenland Whale Shipping Company. He insured ships such as *The Rambler* to sail to the Davis Straits to hunt whales. Henry William Hutchison did not have to travel as far to see a whale, he had to only stroll down the hill from Braehead (his family home) to the harbour. Mr Tait's whale allowed many to see a whale in Kirkcaldy up close and perhaps also smell one decomposing.

The jawbone of the whale can remind us that whales still occasionally swim in the Firth of Forth, let us hope they continue to swim on the right side of the Forth so we can spot them from

Kirkcaldy and perhaps we can take inspiration from the early photographic artists, take some photos of the whales to help identify them so we do not have to rely on their skeletal remains.

\* \* \* \*

We can only thank Kerry for what is undoubtedly an interesting, informative and enjoyable read. It relates an event in the Town's history which was almost forgotten - and thanks to a bit of luck in opening a box - we have an unexpected and welcome addition to the 50 Objects!

There can be no doubting the quality of the research undertaken or the skilful manner in which the narrative has been structured. Kerry also undertook the recording of the audio which supports this Object - the first time a female voice has been heard and that is also very welcome.

Kerry has immersed herself in the production of this narrative and the results speak for themselves. Feel free to leave a comment on our Facebook page - our guest author certainly deserves such an accolade together with our appreciation.

## **Resources**

*Unpublished diary*, Henry William Hutchison, 1869, OnFife Archives

*Kirkcaldy Harbour: an illustrated history*, Carol McNeill, 2018, Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing.

*Kirkcaldy Harbour: an illustrated outline*, John Young Lockhart, 1940, publisher unknown.

*Westwood's parochial directory for the counties of Fife and Kinross containing the names and addresses of gentry, and of persons in business, etc.*, A. Westwood, 1862.

An Account of the Great Finner Whale (*Balaenoptera Sibbaldii*) stranded at Longniddry Part I. The Soft Parts. W. Turner, *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, 26(1), 197-251, 1870, doi:10.1017/S0080456800026454

## **Newspaper articles**

*The Fifehire Advertiser*

*The Scotsman*

*The Times*

## **A creative response to a cetacean**

The following poems were published about the whale in the *Fifeshire Advertiser*.

A poem – “The Great whale” (A New version) (Tune: The whale)

'Twas the year of sixty-nine  
November the fifteenth day,  
That two steam-boats, towing a great big whale,  
Were seen in Kirkcaldy Bay  
    Brave boys etc.

It was full eighty feet in length,  
In girth it was thirty-four;  
It had a tail like a ship's mainsail,  
And a mouth like a Poor-house door.  
    Brave boys etc.

On it's back with a harpoon in his hand,  
Stood its owner Mr Tait,  
Who looked like the wraith of an old sea king;  
Or Neptune riding in state.  
    Brave boys etc.

And as he sailed through the harbour mouth  
A happy man was he,  
For the catching of that great whale fish  
From the bottom of the deep blue sea.  
    Brave boys etc.

The Provost and Town council sage  
Were sitting at the Jail,  
When Comic Bogie says - “I propose  
That we go and see the whale.”  
    Brave boys etc.

Treasurer Anderson – “I second that,  
With all my heart , I say:  
It's better than trailing to the Kirk  
Likes sparrows in a dirty day.”  
    Brave boys etc.

So away they went, both one and all,  
At the proper official rate,

To where the great sea monster lay,  
And had a tete a tete.  
    Brave boys etc.

Now, as it happened at the time  
That it was just low tide,  
Says Bailie Barnet, with a wink of glee,  
"Suppose we get inside."  
    Brave boys etc.

With their proverbial promptitude,  
No sooner said than done:  
The Provost leading on the way,  
They crawled in one by one.  
    Brave boys etc.

Bogie declared his opinion was –  
And by it he'd abide  
That never till now had a whale been known  
To have a Fin inside  
    Brave boys etc.

Lockhart proposed they should send for drink,  
And have a right good spree-  
A motion which was carried out  
By a large majority.  
    Brave boys etc.

So to the shore J. Stocks was sent  
To fetch a large supply:  
And then they spent a jolly night,  
And the hours flew quickly by.  
    Brave boys etc.

With toast and song some spent the time,  
And some enjoyed a rabber?;  
But a few declared they felt down in the mouth  
And somewhat inclined to blubber.  
    Brave boys etc.

How they at last got safe ashore  
Is more than I can tell.  
But, enough to know, they did get out,

With a somewhat unpleasant smell.  
Brave boys etc.

They heard remarked by a cheeky boy,  
Who seemed no person respecter,  
That "If he were them, he would steer clear  
For a while of the nuisance inspector."  
Brave boys etc.

The talk this wonderous spree produced  
All round and in Kirkcaldy,  
So preyed on the mind of the bidding man,  
That he went out of his wits, poor body.  
Brave boys etc.

By a Well Known Kirkcaldy poet  
Published in the *Fifeshire Advertiser*, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1869

#### "THE WHALE"

The story of his mighty whale  
Is very memorable;  
It's capture at Longniddry, and  
The wonder of the rabble.

The sage remarks of solemn fools,  
And then the wags' (facetime?)  
About the monstrous bulk and hulk  
Of this ill starred cetacen.

As long as an attorney's bill,  
And heavy as a sermon  
It stinks just like the water (rate?)  
And it's confounded vermin.

It's tails as broad as Sawney's speech,  
And strong as when he smiles;  
It's jaw as long as Gladstone's own  
And tongue as foul as Bright's.

It's Maw capacious as the Whigs',  
That ne'er cries "Hold, enough!"  
It's gullet fitted like their gulls

To bolt down any stuff

But more 'twere needles to describe  
This festering mass disrupt,  
Which, like the agitator, shines  
Most when it is corrupt.

Yet it had forethought in it's day  
Was careful for it's kind  
And hearing much of Dr -,  
Came south to be confined

But being wrecked upon the way  
It suffered - dismal fate -  
Caesarean operation by  
The famous Dr Tait

The baby was still born alas:  
The doctor grieved to fail:  
But had it lived he would have been  
A dry nurse to a whale.

Then Hip, hurray long live the Queen:  
The doctor long live be:  
And when he next doth catch a whale  
May I be there to see.

Kirkcaldy, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 1869. S.Q. Lapier  
Published *Fifeshire Advertiser*, Nov. 27<sup>th</sup> 1869, page 3 col. 8