

REV. JAMES POTTINGER

100 YEARS AGO

Another of the few remaining links of the last generation has broken. The Rev. James Pottinger passed away to his rest on Sabbath morning, the 28th of April, in the 80th year of his age. A brief sketch of his life may be of interest to many of your readers both at home and in distant lands.

He was born at Gletness, in the parish of Nesting, on the 26th of August, 1815. The Pottinger family had dwelt in Gletness for over two hundred years, the subject of this sketch being the seventh in an unbroken male line.

At the time of Mr Pottinger's boyhood there were few educational advantages in this country. Especially was this the case in Nesting, and three month's schooling was all that fell to the lot of young Pottinger, but of the few advantages within his reach he made the most. His father was a crofter and fisherman, and he, like most young men of his time, adopted the same line of life. In 1831, when 16 years of age, he joined a haaf boat, of which his father was skipper. They were providentially preserved amidst the general disaster of 1832. He continued to prosecute this hazardous and unremunerative calling for 17 years, when he gave up the sea, and went to learn the trade of a mason.

Nesting at this period was not only almost destitute of the means of acquiring education, but religious services were few and far between. One service in three weeks was all that fell to the lot of Nesting. Feeling deeply the latter want, local effort had been put forth to minister to people. The late Arthur Laurenson, of Vassa, especially, conducted meetings in his own house. None appreciated these services more than Mr Pottinger. He hungered after the Bread of Life. He thought little of taking his ears in his hand on a Sabbath morning and pulling to Lerwick to attend the services held in the Congregational Chapel.

In 1840, when 25 years of age, he experienced that change of heart and life commonly called conversion. In 1842 Mr Pottinger began to preach not only in Nesting, but occasionally in the neighbouring district, and for 12 years he continued to do so without any remuneration whatever. In 1854 he was appointed by the Congregational Union to minister in the districts of Nesting and Tingwall, which he did for nearly half a century.

Stimes 12.5.1995

NESTING. d. 28/4/95

THE LATE REV. JAMES POTTINGER. — The remains of Rev. James Pottinger, Independent Minister, Gletness, Nesting, were laid in their last resting place, in the Churchyard of Garth, on Wednesday. He was born in 1815, followed the occupation of fisherman for several years, being at sea in the famous storm of 1831—and in 1842 consecrated himself to the office of the Ministry. He faithfully discharged the duties of a preacher for over half a century, no weather ever preventing him from appearing twice every Sunday in the Chapel of Vassa. He was laid aside from active service in 1892, worn out with advanced years and family affliction. He received a presentation a few years before from the people of the district as a token of respect. Mr Pottinger was an almost entirely self-educated man, yet without was a fair all round scholar. He kept a day and night school for several years at a time when there was no regular place of instruction in the district. Mr Pottinger was a man of a strong determined will, yet distinguished by a simple faith and unostentatious piety, which caused him to be highly esteemed. He never pretended to any culture in his sermons, yet there was a fearless independence in the manner he delivered his message that raised him to the platform of natural eloquence, and was very impressive. He passed quietly away last Sabbath morning, full of years and honour, leaving an unblemished character, and a bright example of duty, performed under a hard discipline.

Hindsey Robertsons
great grandfather

Grandfather of
William Irvine in Canada.

The Shetland Times, Friday, 12th