

Chrismo



Chrismo is traditionally the last place in Evie where the coffin of Magnus was rested and where the Birsay men came to continue the procession. There is a story that the Birsay men and Evie men fell out here.

In reasonable proximity to Chrismo, is another place-name indicative of a resting place and that is Wheelans. It is the name given to the steep brae on the road between Costa and Swannay. The name derives from Old Norse 'To rest' and is one of a number of Wheel-names across Orkney denoting coffin resting places.

Marwick suggests the name Chrismo means either 'Christ's Moor' ON Krist Mór, though he can give no explanation why or ON grís, young swine moor. If the former is indeed the etymology of the name then it suggests the moor in which the house stands was a recognised part of the medieval Christian landscape of Orkney.

Chrismo stands on the border of the parishes of Evie and Birsay and it is said that the boundary ran through the house so that one could sit in Birsay on one side of the sitting room and Evie on the other.

References

Marwick, E. nd Archive Papers. Orkney Archive. D31/37/1/1 'An Island Saint', 5

Marwick, H. 1952 Orkney Farm Names. W. R. Macintosh, Kirkwall, 127

Marwick, H. 1957 'Antiquarian Notes and Queries IV' in The Orcadian, 14th February 1957, p.4

Marwick, H. 1970 The Place Names of Birsay. Aberdeen University Press, Aberdeen, 44