



"Roond Aboot Birsay"

News for and by the people of Birsay

Editorial

Well, here we go once more but in a slightly different format this time. I am still editor, whatever that might mean, but Sam Payne is going to do the hard work now. I usually say a few things about the weather over the time since our last issue but I'm almost afraid to men-

tion weather this time. This past season must qualify for a place in the worst weather awards list. It never stopped raining for more than a day or two at a time with the result that the harvest must rank among the worst ever. We of the Birsay Heritage Trust had been get-

ting several enquiries about bere for malting so we went for it, renting fields all

over the place, wherever Marty could find some. Then -disaster! Rain, rain and more rain until the whole lot was a complete wash out, to coin a phrase. Ah well maybe next year.

April 2016, Issue 48



Photo: Kay Morgan

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Birsay Community Council

Well, we are still keeping busy in the Community Council. There is a big scheme on the move at the moment in the form of wind energy. A group called Hoolan Energy have plans for a big scheme in Orkney. They plan to erect turbines on two sites in South Ronaldsay, which won't make much difference to us, but they also plan to erect six turbines in Birsay, up above Swannay and up towards Costa Head. They will be fairly big, about 2 to 3 MW each and up to 126.5 metres to the tip of the blades. The one good thing

about them is that they are not too obvious or intrusive from most of Birsay, being away up where they are planned, and there are not many houses near them. At the moment, they are erecting a meteorological mast, to record the weather conditions in the area and see what effect the weather might have on the turbines. They seem keen to involve us in the scheme and are keeping us informed of their progress. We will be interested to see what transpires. The other big event coming up is the centenary of the sinking of

the Hampshire off Marwick Head. This has led to extensive renovations at Kitchener's Memorial which has been falling into disrepair in recent years. There is also a memorial wall being erected to commemorate the hundreds of servicemen who also lost their lives in that disaster. Just prior to that will be the National Commemorations for the Battle of Jutland so I would think there will be a tremendous amount of activity in Birsay in the end of May and the beginning of June.

Johnny Johnston
Chairman

Special points of interest:

- Family History p4
- Jo Philby to return p10
- Farming Focus p12
- Hundland Loch Climate Station p15

BIRSAY HERITAGE TRUST



The Birsay Heritage Trust AGM will be held on Tuesday 10 May at 19:30 in the Birsay Hall. Everybody is welcome

We are pleased to be contributing to the new “Roond About Birsay” and wish the editorial team all the best with the publication.

This has been and will continue to be a very active year for BHT and I will give you an idea on what is planned for the year ahead.

Barony Mill

After attending the Speciality Food Fair in Glasgow in January we have found that the Barony Mill has had an increase in orders from organisations throughout the UK which is very gratifying and is something we need to build on.

Sam Britten the Craft Fellow trainee miller is very enthusiastic about the mill and its products and under the expert guidance of Rae Phillips is picking up the craft of milling in a water mill. Historic Environment Scotland regularly visits the mill to support Sam and work out a training schedule for him. We hope to have another busy summer tourist season with the help of our volunteer guides when Sam and Arthur have time off.

Stockans have launched a beremeal oatcake which they have high hopes for and should it prove a success we will have to increase production of beremeal to keep up with demand. We understand that there may be a number of other beremeal products in the pipeline from Orkney producers. **Keith Johnson—Chairman**



Boys Brigade

Our annual BB service was held at the Milestone Kirk on the 13th March. The boys were a credit to their families and we were delighted that Johnny Spence agreed to present them with their badges. 1st Dounby Boys Brigade meet in the Dounby Centre on Tuesday evenings from October to April and new members are always welcome.

Anchor Boys for boys in P1 - P3 meet from 6 - 7pm
Junior Section for boys in P4 - P6 meet from 7 - 8.30pm
Company Section for boys in P7 - S3 meet from 8 - 10pm



Pilgrimage



It is hoped the pilgrimage route will help in telling the stories of our heritage and encourage reflection on spiritual matters

We are at the early stages of proposals for a St Magnus Way pilgrimage route in Orkney. This would be in four sections:

- ◇ Evie to Birsay, following the route of St Magnus body after his death on Egilsay
- ◇ Birsay to Finstown via Harray, following the route of St Magnus bones. The mansie stones run out after Finstown and it is possible this is because they travelled by boat from Finstown to Kirkwall
- ◇ Finstown to Orphir, reflecting on Hakon's pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Round Kirk he built on his return
- ◇ Orphir to Kirkwall - ending at St Magnus cathedral.

It is hoped it might be possible to launch the route as part of the Magnus 900 celebrations next year. Further updates will follow later in the year, along with a more formal community consultation. It is hoped the pilgrimage route will help in telling the stories of our heritage, encourage reflection on spiritual matters, appeal to walkers from near and far, and be a further tourism boost to businesses on the route. The exact route is still being determined and anyone with an interest in helping with this project is encouraged to contact David McNeish on 771599 or dmcneish@churchofscotland.org.uk

ST MAGNUS CHURCH BIRSAY TRUST

CONNECTIONS

Although what we used to call the new cemetery was opened in 1919 and there were only half a dozen burials in St Magnus churchyard after that, it doesn't mean that the family history recorded there has come to an end.

DUTHIE

For example, in 2015 another name was added to the Duthie gravestone, which you will find in the row nearest the sea. George Duthie was Headteacher at Birsay Public School, which was usually referred to as Oxtro, for 34 years, from 1877 until his death in 1911. Only he and his wife are buried in the churchyard, but the names of most of his children, and some of his grandchildren, are inscribed on the stone. The name added last year was that of a grandson, Walter B Duthie, who lived from 1912 to 2014.

ROBSON

Towards the end of October, two Australians, Janet Reibelt and her daughter Julie, spent a few days in Orkney, during which they came to Birsay. They are descendants of George and Janet Robson. George Robson was schoolmaster at the Old School at the Palace from 1853 until Birsay Public School opened in 1877. The visitors saw the Old Schoolhouse, the rosebush which George Robson brought with him from Rousay and which is still flourishing in the garden after more than 160 years, and the track along which the Schoolhouse cow was taken to graze at Schoolcroft.

In the churchyard they saw the gravestone of George and Janet Robson, and in the church they saw the baptismal bowl presented by Alexina Sabiston in memory of her grandparents.

In our little gallery there is a print of a painting of the Old Schoolhouse by Mrs McPherson, who designed the 1904 stained-glass window. I knew I had recently seen photographs of some of the paintings in the gallery, and I wondered if there might be one of this picture. There wasn't, but to my surprise I found a second copy of the print, and Janet was thrilled to be able to take it back to Melbourne where, she says, it will be a treasured possession in the family for generations.

LINKLATER

In mid-November a wreath was laid to commemorate the death 110 years previously of Mary Linklater of Cavan. She is buried in a graveyard in Dinard in Brittany, but her name is also inscribed on the family gravestone in St Magnus churchyard. Mary was a ladies' maid, and in November 1905 she was travelling with her employer to Dinard for the winter. They sailed on the steam packet *Hilda* from Southampton in the late evening of 17th November. Next morning they ran into fog, which cleared, but as they approached the port of Saint Malo in the evening, a strong wind rose, and with it a blinding snowstorm. The *Hilda* struck a rock and sank, with the loss of over 125 lives. There were only 5 survivors. Most of the passengers were 'Onion Johnnies' returning from their autumn season in the UK, where for many years their bicycles were a familiar sight in the streets and on



The sinking of the Hilda left many communities devastated

the roads of England, Wales and Scotland. Many families, and indeed many communities, were left devastated by the loss of their wage-earners.



MARY LINKLATER

Mary Linklater lived at Cavan over 110 years ago.

For some years, Bertha Mainland, a great-niece of Mary Linklater has been in touch with 'l'Association le Hilda', set up some years ago to honour the memory of those who lost their lives in the disaster. In July 2014, the president of the Association, Michele Segura-Coz, visited Orkney, and Bertha brought her to see the inscription of Mary Linklater's name on her parents' gravestone. With Michele was Estelle Champeau, who is doing research on the Onion Johnnies.

A commemoration of the 110th anniversary of the sinking of the Hilda was due to be held in Brittany in November 2015, but Bertha, who had already visited Dinard, decided not to go. Instead, she and her sister, Jenny Johnson, came to St Magnus churchyard to lay a wreath at the family gravestone. Very appropriately, Bertha had made a wreath of white lilies and onions. A few days later, Bertha brought her great-nieces to visit the gravestone, so that the story was passed on to a fourth generation.

This is not just a piece of family history, but a piece of Birsay's history; the news of the sinking of the Hilda must have had a profound effect on the community in 1905, especially as people would have remembered that Mary's younger brother, John, had died of a fever on the s.s. Mozart, sailing from Liverpool in 1893.

For the full story, see The Orcadian of July 24, 2014, or visit the website www.histomar.net and follow the links to the s.s. Hilda and Mary Linklater.



The wreath of lilies and onions



Bertha with her great-nieces

VISITORS

Since early October there have been very few visitors to the church. This has become the normal pattern since the very severe winter of 2010, and in the rain and wind we have had this winter, it would have been unreasonable to expect many tourists to be around.

EVENTS

Come Caroling on 15 December was well attended. As usual, the Bea Choir from Stromness sang a wide selection of Christmas music, which gave variety in among the well-known carols. We were delighted to have pupils from both primary and secondary schools reading Christmas poems, and to see a good number of children in the audience.

Though the winter was quiet, there should be plenty of activity over the coming months.. Our usual St Magnus Day service will be on April 16th at 7.30 p.m., and Jack Norquoy, one of Orkney's Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament, will read *The Real Earl Hakon* by George Mackay Brown, which tells how Hakon was affected by the murder of Magnus and eventually became a good ruler of the islands. The following afternoon, at 3.00 p.m., Camerata will give a concert in the church. On both days the Birsay Bay Tearoom will be open until 6.30 p.m. And on Monday 18th April, Sarah Jane Gibbon will give a talk on *Magnus – Journeys and Pilgrimages*, which will be introduced by Tom Muir.

Throughout the summer and going on into next year there will be a community archaeology project taking place in Birsay. This will include a 'walkover survey' in the village to locate and record red sandstone from the church which has been re-used in other buildings. There are some very obvious large pieces in the Earl's Palace, but there are many more in walls nearby. This will be of great interest to tourists and to Birsay people of all ages. Do join in!

BERTIE HARVEY, Secretary





DOUNBY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Alastair Forsyth—Head teacher

FAIR TRADE - On 2nd March Primary 3 enjoyed putting on a Fair Trade assembly for other classes in the school this morning. Recently we have been learning all about Fair Trade and in our assembly we told the story of Foncho, a banana farmer from Columbia. We have found out all about where different foods come from and have used this to learn more about different lifestyles around the world.

Thinking
Learning
Community



TLC

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP - P3 4th March

Following our work in class on Fair Trade, we were joined by Steve Roberts and Hannes Sundkvist from the Montgomery Centre in Aberdeen to learn more about Fair Trade and how this relates to Global Citizenship



On 6th March Primary 3 with Primary 1 held a Fairtrade breakfast and invited staff.



There is always information about what we have up to on our blog.
You can access our blog here:

<http://dounbycommunityschool.blogspot.co.uk/>

Dounby Flower Club - *Yvonne Paice*, Secretary

Meetings are usually held on the third Tuesday of each month, in the Dounby Centre, at 7.30pm.

Do come along, everyone is made very welcome.

April 19th—Visit from Firth Flower Club

May 17th - Swap shop. "Mix n Match" workshop

June 21st - AGM. "Set in Stone" workshop with Pat Kirkpatrick & Corina Taylor

July 19th - Outing to be arranged.

August 16th - "The Four Fs" workshop with Cindy Miller

September 20th - "Ikebana" workshop with Karen Johnston & Bebbie Kirkness



April opening hours:

Wednesday to Sunday

10:30am to 4:30pm

May to end of September:

Every day

10:30am to 17:30pm

01856 721399

[Www.birsaybaytearoom.co.uk](http://www.birsaybaytearoom.co.uk)



Special prizes at Palace Stores. For every £5 spent in store you will receive entry into our free prize draw. There are a range of prizes for April so why not pop along and have a look.

Www.palacestores.co.uk; 01856 721351

Birsay Antique Centre



We've had a successful 1st year at Birsay Antique Centre and have exciting plans for 2016. We visit auctions in Scotland to stock our shop and we also undertake house clearances all over Orkney at competitive prices. Drop in and say hello, browse our antique room and our new garden section.

Alec and Gill Harding

April: Open Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 11-5pm; Open more days as the season goes on

Birds about Birsay

There's a fantastic variety of wildlife within the parish so it's hard to keep this within the word limit! We look after three varied nature reserves in the area: the moorland and farmland of the Birsay Moors, the wetland at The Loons and Loch of Banks and Marwick Head's seabird cliffs.

One winter highlight has as usual been the hen harrier roost at Durkadale, with up to 15 birds gliding across the hillside at dusk to drop into the heather, making it one of the largest roosts in the UK. Meanwhile I hope those who drop into The Loons hide have enjoyed watching the progress of the mural by artist Anne Big-

nall – a great addition and nearly finished now.

Looking ahead, with the seabird breeding season fast approaching you can already see kittiwakes, guillemots and razorbills back on the cliffs at Marwick Head on many days, and it won't be long until the full clamour and chaos of the colony has built up again.

Local events coming up

- On Sunday 17 April, 9.30 am, there'll be a guided walk on the Birsay Moors with the RSPB Local Group, looking out for sky dancing hen harriers and other moorland wildlife.
- We'll have a hide session at The Loons hide on Tuesday 26 April, 1-4.30 pm. There's always a variety of birds to see and learn about, and the songs of waders preparing to breed make this a wonderful place simply to relax over a cup of tea.
- From the start of May we'll be running regular seabird walks at Marwick Head.

Please have a look under 'Events' at www.rspb.org.uk/orkney or give us a ring on 850176 for all the details (some walks need to be booked). Everyone very welcome and we can always lend you binoculars if you want.

- During the Nature Festival (16-22 May) there'll also be a Field Club event on the afternoon of Wednesday 18 May looking at peat – what it's made of, what lives in it, on it and around it – at the Birsay Moors. Please visit orkneynaturefestival.org to book.

Nigel Harding, RSPB Scotland Mainland Warden

01856 850176 / nigel.harding@rspb.org.uk

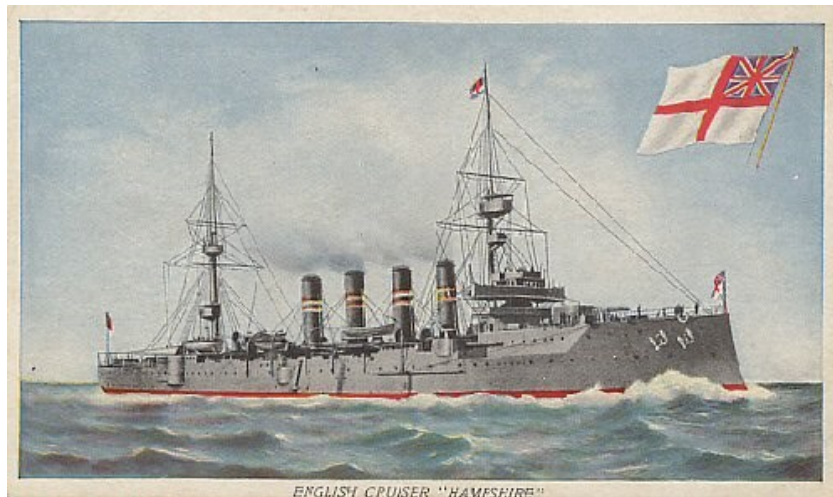


Hen harrier (female) credit **Derren Fox**



Guillemots on ledge, credit **Eric Meek**

HMS HAMPSHIRE



The Hampshire weekend takes place on 3-6 June and it is going to be a real Birsay community event with many organisations helping with the arrangements.

BHT is having a small exhibition of memorabilia on display in the Birsay Hall along with official plans of the ship and a model of the Hampshire. (if anyone has any items of interest referring to the Hampshire or Kitchener which they are willing to loan to BHT

The Hampshire weekend takes place on 3-6 June

then please let me know on 771328 or ak.johnson@btinternet.com

We will be asking for volunteers to supervise the exhibition when it is open and also for volunteers to provide food and drink refresh-

ments on at least one of the days. If anyone is willing to help please give your name and contact details to Anne Mathison (annemathison@me.com).

A book about the Hampshire is in the making and a preview of the book will be available at the exhibition. It will only be completed after the rededication of the Kitchener memorial and the unveiling of the wall of names.

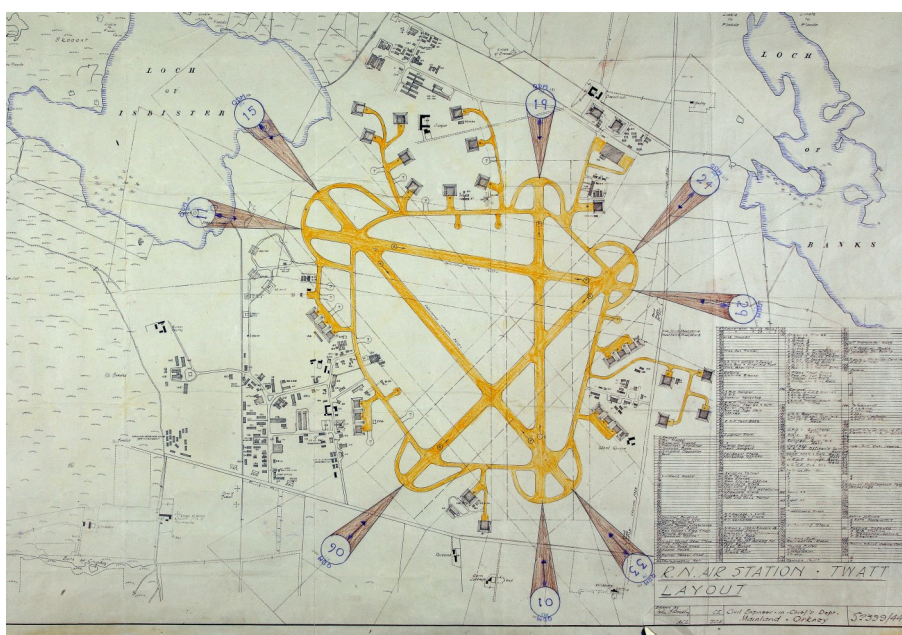
HOT OFF THE PRESS—JO PHILBY TO RETURN TO ST MAGNUS CHURCH

Following their highly successful concert in St Magnus Church last summer, folk singer Jo Philby and her band will again be sharing a concert on Wednesday 22nd June with award winning duo Gnoss. Look out for posters for more information.

HMS TERN

We are starting a pilot scheme this year of guided tours in HMS Tern around the parts of the airfield which are in BHT lease. We hope this might lead to more interest in this old WW2 site. A subgroup of BHT has been formed to take forward ideas for improving the old

wartime site along with fund raising for restoration of some of the remaining buildings. If anyone wants to help with cleaning up some of the buildings, paths etc please let Alan Manzie know (07753117741 or alan.manzie@vaorkney.org.uk)



BIRSAY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The Birsay Development Group meets quarterly, with the next update planned for the middle of June, and a number of projects are moving forward to bring more visitors into Birsay on both day-trips and for longer stays, and, in particular, to use the Community Hall and visit the St Magnus Church

Starting very soon with the refurbishment of the Boat Hoose at Skiba Geo, picking up from the great work led by the Dounby School in 1989, (now nearly 27 years ago!) plans are being developed for folk interested in archae-

ology to get practically involved with Birsay's heritage; for example, workshops will be run by the Archaeological Institute in the early summer to carry out walkover surveys to begin to better understand the way the village of Palace has developed over the years

If you'd like to be involved with these, or a practical introduction to geophysics, at areas in and around the village, (workshops in the autumn) please let Alan know on 07753 117741, or via alan.manzie@vaorkney.org.uk

FARMING FOCUS

By Ian Tait

I was delighted to be asked to write the first farming related article for the newly re-vamped "Roond about Birsay". Keep it light, newsy and positive was the brief. With the fields again flooded and a "guddle o' gutter" as far as the eye can see, spring is still reluctant to show it's face. Calving is progressing at great speed here at Ingsay, to be half done by the first week in April is unheard of for us. Silage stocks are lasting better than expected and the quality has been surprisingly good. Lambing always brings some unforeseen disaster. We had our first ever ceaserean on a ewe with little success but we were fortunate to get 5 live lambs from another ewe. Having spent 2 hours a day bottle feeding lambs ever since, I'm beginning to question how lucky it really was. Ellis is the sheep enthusiast and puts a lot of time into her much loved woolies.

The ploughing match took place in February. This event continues to be well supported in Birsay with local ploughmen going on to do well at both the West and County matches in the following weeks. The standard of work produced is outstanding, young lads in their teens completing rigs to a very high standard. Driving around the parish, it is plain to see how the standard of ploughing in general has improved in recent times. These high standards don't stop at the field gate, pride and passion can be seen in the livestock and steadings from Norton to Marwick and from Swannay to the Hillside.

Birsay has for some time bucked the trend, with many of the parish farms now run by men in their 40's. New steadings appear almost on a monthly basis. Many constructed by our locally based builders Mark Norquoy and Stewart Spence. A new slatted byre is a huge investment but helps keep the farm viable for another 20 or 30 years. Anything which reduces the time spent forking silage is money well spent!

Over the past few weeks I've done some work in the Palace shop. It's under new ownership and has a very welcoming atmosphere. I was surprised at just how much local produce they stock and especially surprised at how much of it is produced in Birsay. Bere meal from our own mill, Beer from our own brewery, some even made with Birsay grown grain. The owners have some great ideas and it's good to see them supporting local producers.

We now have a licensed seed merchant in the parish with J & S Hay supplying home grown and home dressed seed. Seed is again in short supply this year with many varieties sold out. I'm sure that having a local supplier will be of benefit to many of our growers.

In recent months we've seen young local men with promising careers take steps onto the farming ladder. I admire their confidence and wish them well in their ventures.



Ellis with Jacko, one of her lambs



Evan Tait ploughing in the ploughing match at Twatt and ploughing the fields at Birsay



Volunteers' Week; June 1st – 12th 2016 - Time to celebrate!

Once again the time has come to celebrate the contribution volunteers make to Orkney's communities by taking part in Volunteers' Week, which takes place from 1-12 June 2016.

This national celebration of volunteering provides an opportunity for all organisations who are managed by or whose work is delivered by volunteers to say 'thank you' publicly. It also presents an opportunity to promote the work of Birsay's local organisations.

We have a thriving voluntary and community sector here in Orkney, with almost 600 organisations listed in the Orkney Community Directory, with a number active here in Birsay; volunteers and volunteering are the glue which holds the Orkney community together.

Fraser Devine, VAO's Team Leader for Volunteering said, "....this is the time of year for all local organisations who have volunteers, to do something throughout the week to show their support and thanks to them. We hope that Volunteers' Week 2016 is going to be a real success, and we would love to hear about any plans organisations may have. VAO has some exciting ideas so keep an eye on the VAO Facebook Page for some interesting posts."

It is up to each organisation to decide exactly how they join in; the list of ideas is endless, but if organisations would like information or advice, they should contact Fraser at Voluntary Action Orkney, on 872897; fraser.devine@vaorkney.org.uk, or visit the Volunteers Week webpage at www.volunteersweek.org.uk/, where posters, logo's and certificates can be downloaded.

BIRSAY SWRI

The year seems to fly by these day's, May 2015 arrived with Russell & Naomi's Herd of Water Buffalo (No not literally) but there was an excellent tasting of Buffalo sausage rolls. Visiting Branch Orphir saw us very well entertained in June as did another couple from Orphir did in August, Caroline & Kevin Critchlow spoke of their beloved garden and of the fund raising they do for the Neuro Ward at ARI, they also judged our Veg Show, with Margaret Spence taking 1st with the Cup. September came with the arrival of Fiona Mitchell from Castaway Crafts with many items of her handiwork. As usual our AGM was in October, and we also had a Fun Quiz. In November Penny Park took us far and wide with her photographs and descriptions of unusual trees from all over the world. The December meeting was taken up with final arrangements for our annual Xmas Bingo, which had an excellent turnout on a very blustery Friday night. On to February 2016, Diane & Avril Hay treated us, to a lovely presentation of Alison Moore's Jewellery, as Alison herself was away on business. Our Annual Plant & Flower Show in March 2016 was well supported by members, with Alice Garson 1st with the most points, and we were well entertained by Charlie's Angels.

Entries for competitions in 2015 was outstanding, last year was 92 with 80 entries the year before, this year we achieved a staggering 107 entries, so well done to everyone that entered, The Cup & Tro-

phy joint 1st place going to Jean Leisk & Joanna Fornear and a further 92 entries were put forward in the Letter / Photo of the Month Competition, with joint 1st place going to Alice Garson & Jean Leisk, this coming year we have "Recipe of the Month" to contend with.

The Baking Show in October 2015 got us another good result of 1st place for the Community entry, with several entries from our members.

During the year we had another Xmas Bingo (Dec 15) and another successful day at the Birsay Big Day Out (June 15) with home bakes etc. for sale and a raffle. In September the Burray Quiz went "on the road" with Birsay being its first stop, it was great to show all the members that came, how to entertain in our new hall, the evening was enjoyed by all and a big thank you to all that helped. Birsay had 2 teams, which gained a respectable 6th & 8th place out of the 20 teams that entered, believe it moves on to Costa this

coming year.

Our usual July summer trip this year, we elected to take on Monday 29th June, which was 90 years to the day that the Birsay SWRI Branch started. A lovely meal at the Barony Hotel with a celebration cake and a gift each for all the members to commemorate the occasion. The cake, which was made by Eileen Evans (Secretary) was cut by Elsie Spence (our longest serving member) and Lorraine Mowat (President). Our Xmas Party in January was held at the Standing Stones Hotel with a lovely meal and entertainment.

Our next meeting on 12th of April is a Travel Talk on Cambodia, a notice will also be put on the notice board at the hall of our coming meeting dates and programme details, please come along and join us for an evening as a visitor if you wish, our meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm – 8pm if you wish to miss out the business element.

Eileen Evans



Loch of Hundland Climate Station Summary 2015

Rainfall

Rainfall was 115% of the 15 year Birsay average and was the fifth wettest year since records began in 1841. The wettest months were Jan, Nov and Dec. There were no days with exceptional rainfall amounts. The exception this year was May which was the wettest May on record since 1841 except for 1931 (0.4mm more). Conversely September had the least rain since 2002. The number of days with rain was 273, slightly above the average.

Sunshine

The hours of sunshine (1069.0) were the lowest since 2005. Four months were close to average; other months were below average with the exception of December which was above.

Temperature

The average temperature was exactly the 15 year Birsay average. Feb, Oct, Nov, Dec were all above average with July 1.5°C below the average. There were 5 days when the temperature was above 20°C.

Frost

Air frost days were well below average (44% of average for Birsay). Ground frost was closer to average but with no prolonged hard frost. There were 7 months free of air frost and four months free of ground frost.

Wind

The average wind speed was 0.6 knots above average with Jan-Mar, May, June, July and December all above average. The prevailing direction was SSE. There were 16 gale days which 133% of Birsay average.

Air Pressure

Air Pressure ranged between 952.7mb and 1038.6mb

Snow.

There were 11 days when snow/sleet fell and 1 day when snow lay on the ground.

Orkney-wide Rainfall

This year we had eleven gauges with one in Kirkwall relacing Birsay #2. The site with the highest rainfall was Sandwick (1429.7mm) and the lowest once again Deerness with 1006.3mm. The average for the 11 sites was 1218.9mm. The highest monthly rainfall was for January in Rendall at 230.5mm.

Keith Johnson

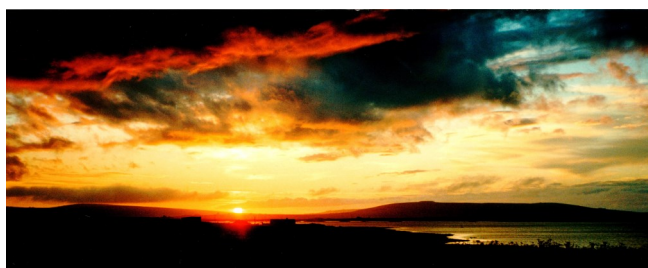


Photo: Sam Payne



News for and by the people of Birsay

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Birsay on the World Wide Web

The Development Group is planning to launch a new website to support Birsay's presence on the internet for the benefit of our local folk and visitors alike; that should be up and running in the next two or three months. In the meantime, lots of folk look at -

The Community Association website, for all that's going on in the Hall - www.birsayhall.com and their Facebook page -

www.facebook.com/Birsay-Community-Association-133073626702917/?fref=ts

Their **St Magnus Marathon** also has a Facebook page -

www.facebook.com/groups/1105554526151597/

The Heritage Trust website—www.birsay.org.uk

The Barony Mill Facebook page—

www.facebook.com/BARONYMILLSORKNEY/?fref=ts

For news about **the Kitchener Memorial** rededication, **the new Memorial Wall**, and information about **the loss of HMS Hampshire**—

www.facebook.com/Kitchener.Memorial/?fref=ts

and **HMS Tern**, opening in April to guided tours -

www.facebook.com/HMSTernOrkney/?fref=ts

Birsay, Harray and Sandwick Guild

The 2015/16 session is almost at an end. We held our AGM in March when we also had a successful sales table – the proceeds being divided between Malawi Women's Group, Dementia Friendly Orkney and the current Guild project which aims to help women and girls in Kenya as they fight the horrendous practice of Female Genital Mutilation.

At our April meeting we look forward to welcoming members of the Stromness Guild who will provide the evening's entertainment. Two events are planned for May – an end of session meal (details not yet finalised)

and a coffee evening which will be held in Milestone Community Church..

Once again we participated in the Blythswood Shoebox Appeal when Guild members and friends spent time covering and filling shoeboxes with toiletries, stationery and other useful items for distribution to Asian and Eastern European countries in time for Christmas. We were delighted with our 2015 total of 103 boxes. Little knitted teddies are also sent to these countries and handed out to children visiting clinics or hospitals.

Guild meetings are held in the Milestone Community Church

at 7.30pm on the first Monday of each month from September to April. Our numbers remain steady at around 35 but there is always space for new members and visitors (male or female) to come along and share in fellowship and friendship – we look forward to welcoming you.

Merle Walls Convener

