

Roond About Birsay

“ News for and by the people of Birsay ”

MAY 2019



ISSUE 56

BARONY MILL GEARS UP FOR BUSY SUMMER 2019 SEASON AFTER RECENT DOUBLE TV SUCCESS

- 2018 saw more than 4000 visitors to the mill

The Birsay Heritage Trust are gearing up for another busy summer season as they prepare to open to the public again on Wednesday 1st May. Demand for Beremeal continues to grow as the Barony Mill recently featured twice on national television screens with ITV and BBC Alba.



James Martin (pictured left with Nick Nairn), famously known for his Saturday morning television cooking, took the first episode of his new series *The Great British Adventure* to Orkney where Beremeal was high on the menu. *Continue reading on page nine.*

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT APPROVE COSTA AND HESTA HEAD WINDFARMS

Read more on page four



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INSULATION GRANT

A Government grant is now being offered to cover the entire cost of having all loft rooms insulated to current building regulations whereby a property has a room in the roof or attic room which is accessed via a fixed staircase. 'Insulation King' will be working in the islands to raise awareness about the scheme and offer this free-of-charge service. Insulated areas are plastered and left with a painted finish and the work is fully certified by a government body. *Find the online link on page two.*

GRAB A COPY — I'M FREE!

BIRSAY FC DRAW 2018 FINAL RIVALS IN THE FIRST ROUND OF THE PARISH CUP 2019

Birsay and St Andrews will meet in the first round of this year's *The Orcadian* Parish Cup in a repeat of the 2018 final. Birsay will begin their quest for back-to-back titles at home, with the competition commencing on the weekend of May 11th and 12th.



OIC OVERTURNED ON COSTA AND HESTA WINDFARMS BY SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

The decision by the OIC to reject two proposed windfarms by Hoolan Energy at Costa Head in Birsay and Hesta Head in South Ronaldsay has been overturned by the Scottish Government. The Costa Head proposal is four turbines up to 125m from base to blade tip in height.



NEW 19M VIVIER CRABBER CARVELA K751 LAUNCHED FOR BIRSAY FISHERMAN

A new shelter-decked vivier crabber for Birsay fisherman Ronnie Norquoy of Celtic Dawn Fishing Limited has been built and recently launched by Parkol Marine Engineering. The Mitsubishi engined *Carvela* K751 and fitted for eight crew will be fishing from Stromness.



ARMY RESERVISTS STEP IN TO HELP IMPROVE SAINT MAGNUS WAY ROUTE

A team of ten made up of Lovat Scouts, Field Troop RE, 71 Engineer Regiment and the Army Cadet unit of 1st Battalion Highlanders ACF from Orkney and Shetland Battery have been hard at work to build a series of steps, paths and hand rails at Whitaloo, Northside in Birsay.





Kenny Spence

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of Roond About Birsay. Thankfully winter seems to be behind us with lambs appearing in the fields and a few cattle as well. Sowing is well advanced but the ground is very dry and the farmers will likely be needing rain soon to get the grass to grow and the grain to germinate, seems no time since the ploughing matches were being postponed because it was too wet! There are a lot of interesting articles from around Birsay in this edition of the newsletter – happy reading!



Jack Norquoy

Welcome to this the first *Roond About Birsay* of 2019 and my second as volunteer newsletter administrator. Hope you enjoy the revamped design layout and the new features, including the return of *Councillor Chat* and news from the Orkney Vintage Club. Please get in touch if you have any suggestions for new features and contributions. We live in a busy parish so I'm sure there is much more we can feature!

Dates for the diary

ST MAGNUS WAY WALK DAYS – ALL WELCOME

Birsay to Dounby, 11th May Dounby to Finstown, 17th August

Egilsay, 17th August Finstown to Orphir, 27th July Orphir to Kirkwall, 14th September

ST MAGNUS MARATHON – 7th July

ORKNEY VINTAGE CLUB RALLY – 3rd and 4th August

BIRSAY SWI MEETINGS – 14th May and 11th June, 7.30pm in Birsay Hall

BIRSAY PARENT AND TODDLER GROUP SESSIONS – Every Friday 9.30am to 12pm in Birsay Hall

The Community Council members are still the same, Kelly Coghill, Richie Delday, Marty Hay, Stevie Spence, Allan Spence (Planning Rep), David Scarth (Vice Chairman) and Kenny Spence (Chairman). Nerys Philips has been appointed as our new clerk. The last Community Council meeting was held on the 28th March. The meeting was attended by councillors Duncan Tullock and Rachael King.

The councillors were asked about the situation regarding the headstones in the kirkyards, there have only been a couple of tops removed in the kirkyard at Oxtro but there have been a few stones and tops laid down at St Magnus Kirk. Duncan said that the council were going to put the stones that were post 1950 and less than a metre high back up first followed by the older and taller ones. The stones that were in a condition that meant they could not be re-erected safely would be laid face up but level with the grass so that they could be cut over with a mower, they envisaged that the work would take some time but would eventually all be done. We have been made aware of a grant scheme that is available for loft insulation, details can be found on the website below.

NEW CEMETERY WATER-BARREL

Some folk might have noticed that we have put a water barrel with a tap in the cemetery beside the wooden shed with a pipe to catch the rain water off the roof for folk to use to water flowers.



SKIBA GEO POTHOLES

The very poor condition of the road out to Skipi Geo has been brought to our attention and we have hired a contractor to fill in the potholes.

The new signage for the fisherman's huts at Marwick has been made and will be installed very soon, thanks to Mick Unsworth for making the laser cut slate top at a very low cost and to Robbie Rendall for building the base for free.

Finally, an update on the proposed Costa Head Wind Farm again. As everybody will be aware the OIC's decision to refuse planning permission has now been overturned by the Scottish Government and SSEN have submitted their application for the substation outside Finstown, we will just have to wait and see how it all progresses.

New association committee members appointed

The Birsay Community Association held their Annual General Meeting in November where new committee members were elected.



With the departure of our former chair-person, Val to Canada and other committee members needing to take a step back, the Community Association have a couple of new elected members to introduce; Chairperson Ony Tullock (*left*) and Treasurer Sue Barnard (*right*). The committee were delighted that Ony and Sue were willing to take up these positions.

WE CONTINUE TO HOLD WHIST & 500 ON THE LAST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH, WITH THE EXCEPT OF DECEMBER.



COUNTDOWN TO 2019 ST MAGNUS MARATHON

- UK's most northerly marathon enters fourth year

The annual St Magnus Marathon, 10k and 5K will take place this year on Sunday 7th July as the Community Association reports the UK's most northerly marathon has attracted good entry numbers for the fourth year. The marathon route follows that associated with the journey undertaken by Magnus Erlendson's followers after the martyrdom of the Viking Earl to the ancient Christ's Kirk in Birsay, finishing at the nearby Birsay Community Hall and starting from the front of Kirkwall's historic Cathedral.

This year there is a new relay to be introduced in which a limit of ten teams had to be set as tickets were sold out within an hour of opening. The teams are made up of 3, the first runner starts along with the main marathon runners, they then handover to their team mate in Finstown, runner number 2 then follows the marathon route to the Evie Primary School where they meet runner number 3, who then takes on the last stretch finishing at the Hall.

**Volunteers
needed!**

We are always on the look out for new volunteers to assist on the day. If you would like to help, please contact Caroline Atkinson on 07762301428 or email info@runstmagnus.org



Tystie (left) and Wigeon (right) by Christine Hall

It's coming to the end of winter and mild panic has crept back in to the office as we all consider the survey season ahead of us. Although one of the best times of year it does feel overwhelming as you balance on the praecipe of hen harrier, seabird, lowland wader, bumblebee and red-throated diver surveys getting underway, but let's look back on what happened over the winter.

Each month through the winter at The Loons and Loch of Banks and Marwick we carry out Wetland Bird Surveys (WeBS). This involves walking to vantage points and counting the number of wildfowl and waders seen on and around the water bodies. It's usually a beautiful way to spend the morning and shows what important wintering sights these areas are for wader and wildfowl species alike. Some of the highlights from the 2018/2019 WeBS counts at the Loons were 2 little egrets at the Loons, 349 curlew, 266 lapwing, 53 Greenland white-fronts, 412 teal and 276 wigeon. These species will now slowly disperse to their breeding grounds and we look forward to carrying out surveys through out the spring to monitor waders and wildfowl.

Marwick is a very seasonal reserve. Although it's a great place for a walk at anytime of year, it really comes in to its own with return of the seabirds in spring and summer. We carried out our first seabird survey of the year in the first week of April. Surveying for Tysties off the cliff, although there were no records for the reserve we surveyed the next section between Latha Skerry and Skidge and had 13 birds recorded in breeding plumage. Soon the cliffs will be alive with the sound and smell of seabirds and there will be a great deal of monitoring carried out by staff and volunteers.

Carmen and Luise are working for the next four months on seabird monitoring, they are surveying 25 seabird species and walking km's of coastline with a focus on surveying Tysties, storm petrels, skuas and gulls. If anyone is interested in volunteering to help them then you will see them around or you can contact Carmen on Carmen.Biondo@rspb.org.uk. We will also have volunteers through the spring and summer who will be monitoring the productivity of Orkney's seabirds something which is vitally important as their numbers continue to decline.

Birsay SWI



The members of Birsay SWI have been busy over the winter months, learning new skills such as bag making, and hearing about a wonderful cruise trip to Alaska. We also had a very enjoyable Christmas meal out in January at the Merkister Hotel, where President Joanna Fornear made a surprise presentation of certificates and badges to our long serving members, who had been members for over 40 years. These nine ladies have over 550 years of service between them. The arrival of spring saw our annual plant and flower show as well as a talk about the amazing life under the waters around Orkney with Penny Martin. We also had a thoroughly entertaining evening with Firth Flower Club and watched them make beautiful flower displays.



Photo of our long serving members left to right: Evelyn Moar, Maureen Plowman, Alice Garson, Margaret Spence, Elsie Spence, Jean Leisk.

Missing from the photo are Jean Gaudie, Gertie Watt and Mabel Mainland.

Our May and June meetings will see us learning how to keep ourselves safe with Trading Standards and being entertained by Stromness SWI, if you would like to know more we welcome anyone to come along even if its just for the night see to what we get up to behind closed doors at the Birsay Community Centre our meetings are always held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm.

CLIMATE OBSERVERS LINK

Anybody who has a weather station and records the monthly data might be interested in joining the Climate Observers Link (COL). COL is UK wide with a few contributors from outside UK. There are about 400 people who send monthly data to COL and these observations are published in a monthly journal. You do not have to submit data to be a member and even if you only record temperatures or wind then these can be sent into COL. If you are interested you can get in touch with Keith Johnson on 771328 or have a look at their website; www.colweather.org.uk



Historic Environmental Scotland advertising for a second craft fellowship

Historic Environment Scotland are advertising for a second craft fellowship alongside current miller Ali Marcus. Interested applicants or anyone wishing to find out more should visit the Barony Mill during working hours or contact Birsay Heritage Trust Chair, Issy Grieve on issy.grieve@btinternet.com

The craft fellowship announcement comes at an exciting time for the Barony Mill as the Trust, who operate the mill, are in the early stages of supplying Bere to a distillery. Over next winter the Trust will be sharing with local farmers the progress the mill is making and seeking further acreage to support us in this new venture.



ADMISSION CHANGES AT MILL AHEAD OF SUMMER

The mill opens to the public on the May 6th for visitors and mill tours. The Birsay Heritage Trust are to introduce an entry charge of £3.50 per adult and free entry for school age children. For locals and regulars there is a loyalty card scheme available where payment on only the first visit of the season is required. Those wishing to buy Beremeal will not be charged and are welcome anytime during opening hours. The Trust is also to introduce a new timetable for guided tours with these taking place on the hour and every half hour with the last tour of the day at 4.30pm. The Trust say the changes are necessary to help meet the costs of running the mill and paying wages. Also arriving for the summer season is a temporary portcabin at the mill to provide better visitor facilities. Anyone in the parish who would like to volunteer in the portacabin, which will function as the shop and ticket office, are encouraged to contact Issy Grieve or through the Barony Mill Facebook page – interested volunteers are warmly welcomed.

- Open everyday 11am to 5pm
- Local friendly and knowledgeable tour guides
- Currently #1 of things to do in Birsay on TripAdvisor and a five star rated experience
- Activities for children available



NEW BARONY MILL WEBSITE IS LIVE AND NEW SAVOURY BISCUIT HITS THE SHELF

**BUTTER
BISCUIT**

**GINGER
CRUNCH**

**BEREMEAL
OATCAKE**

**NEW
SAVOURY
BISCUIT**

The Barony Mill now have four biscuits in their range which you can find in local shops or you can get them from the mill. Last year saw the trail run for the Ginger Crunch, Bere Oatcake and Butter Shortcake and following their huge success a new savoury biscuit has been introduced. The parmesan, tomato and red chilli flavoured biscuit is proving very popular. On a recent trip to the mill and as part the new James Martin's series on the BBC, Nick Nairn told trustees it was one the best oatcakes he had ever eaten – *we certainly agree*.

The new up-to-date and modern Barony Mill website, baronymill.com, is now live and features a nation-wide stocklist map, online ordering details and everything you need to know about the historic site.

There has been some less success with the first round of funding applications for the plans to renovate HMS Tern, however the Heritage Trust say they will continue to work hard on this.



The Barony Mill will have a stand at the Turriff Show, so please let your friends and family in Aberdeenshire know that the Mill will be there and delighted to see them.

[... continued from front cover] Airing on BBC One on February 11th, James Martin featured a wide selection of Orkney produce including Birsay's own Beremeal. James Martin was accompanied by Scottish chef and regular TV presenter Nick Nairn who visited the mill and was shown the ropes of the mill process and the unique history and nutritional benefits of Bere by summer guide and local lad, Jack Norquoy. As part of the programme, James Martin baked an Orcadian twist on the sweet favourite brandy snaps with Beremeal, describing it as "quality" flour.

The Barony Mill was to hit TV screens soon after James Martin with BBC Alba's *The Kitchen Coves* airing an episode length visit to the mill, airing on Thursday 28th March. Uisdean and Roddy visited the Barony Mill last August to film the cooking of their take on Orkney scallops, buffalo and lamb – all with a Beremeal element. Commenting on the two events, Chairperson of the Birsay Heritage Trust Issy Grieve said it had been "a super experience for all our volunteers at the mill."



Since it's humble beginnings over thirty years ago the Club has gone from strength to strength and now has well over 300 members. We hold many events throughout the year such as the tractor working and cultivation days which this year were held at a field on the Heathfield farm. There are also road runs including a regular Orkney Cavalcade and September run which allow many of the members to take their vehicles out for an airing and enjoy the company of like-minded enthusiasts, usually finishing off at a local restaurant for an evening meal. It also gives the public a chance to see vehicles from the past that their parents and even grandparents may have once owned. This is not to say that only 'Vintage' vehicles are catered for as the Club encourages anyone with a vehicle of general interest.

In the winter months we have occasional guest speakers encompassing a wide range of interesting topics and these are always open to the general public. If you have any ideas of things you would like to see on the calendar or if you might have a bit of time to spare helping out at the events, especially the Rally (now called the Orkney Classic Motor Show) please feel free to contact one of the committee members – *help is always welcomed!*

The annual rally in August has grown beyond all recognition from those early days at Walliwall farm and many exhibitors travel from far flung parts of the country and sometimes even from abroad to attend this well respected event. This year we will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Mini, together with the 50th anniversary of the Ford Capri, although there had been a different car produced in the 60's bearing the same name.

For the first time this year the event will be held over two days , 3rd and 4th August which is at the beginning of the show week rather than at the end as has been the tradition for many years. Exhibits will include tractors and implements, cars, motorcycles, stationary engines and in the hall there is always a large number of fascinating exhibits from times gone by in Orkney.



The members of the Orkney Men's Shed have been busy this year making new benches for the visitors to sit around the parade ring when the exhibits are shown at there very best – *actually on the move*. This collaboration was brought about because quite a few members of the Vintage Club also belong to the Men's Shed in Finstown.

As a fairly recent 'Ferrylouper' (only been here about 14 years) I am amazed at the sheer number of very well cared for vehicles and artefacts here in Orkney, some dating back more than 100 years – *I wonder if there might be an appetite for an Orkney Transport and equipment Museum?*



Weather



By Keith Johnson

Hundasaeter Weather Station Report

The graph on page 20 shows the following autumn months of September, October and November for the years 2000- 2018. The average temperature (red) for the three months with the red dotted line showing the average of the averages; the scale is on the right side of the graph. The average wind speed (blue) for the three months with the blue dotted line showing the average of the averages; the scale is on the right side of the graph. The total hours of sunshine (yellow) for the three months with the yellow dotted line showing the average of the totals; the scale is on the left side of the graph. The total rainfall (green) for the three months with the green dotted line showing the average of the totals; the scale is on the left side of the graph.

2018 experienced average temperatures although it was thought to be a fine summer; August let the summer down with poor average temperature. However it was a drier and sunnier year.

Temperature January, February, March were all well below the average temperature for the month as was August, September and October. The other months were all above the average. The highest temperature was 24.0°C in June. Air frost was slightly above average as was the ground frost experienced. The minimum grass temperature was -9.6°C on the 19 March.

Rainfall 2018 was the lowest rainfall since 2010 and gave the ground a good opportunity to dry out. There were no exceptional falls of rain with the greatest in one day - 25.0mm - in March

Sunshine The sunshine in 2018 was the highest since 2009. February, April, June, August and November were all sunnier than average with other months about average. On June 30 there was 16.6 hrs of sunshine the most we have had in one day in the 19 years of record keeping.

Wind The average wind speed was slightly above the average by 0.4 mph. The highest wind was 79 mph on 27 January. The number of gales was above average. Most months the wind direction was from an easterly direction. Snow and hail were both below average. *All the average used are for the period 2000 - 2017)*

Councillor Chat



Roond About Birsay are pleased to introduce the Councillor Chat feature back into the newsletter. Each edition we will hear from one of the West Mainland's elected representatives on the Orkney Islands Council.

“ Councillor Duncan Tullock

Welcome to my first councillor chat. If you recall *Roond About Birsay* used to have this item when Keith Johnson was our councillor, so it is nice to be back. Things will be a little different this time around as the election boundaries have changed in the meantime and we now have four councillors representing all of the West Mainland parishes, less Orphir. It has been decided that each councillor will take a turn at keeping you up to date with what is going on inside of School Place and I have been selected to be first so here goes.

I see no point in going back to May 2017 when I was elected other than to thank you for your confidence in me. The biggest and most recent problem to come our way was the debacle of the laying down of grave stones in our cemeteries. The council quite rightly have issued a full apology for this and an enquiry into how it was allowed to happen will be held by the Monitoring & Audit Committee. Unfortunately this will only be happening in the Autumn which in my opinion is too long to wait. Thankfully we have set up a Member Officer Working Group (MOWG), to progress the restoration of the cemeteries effected, to their proper state. I am a member of this group along with Harvey Johnston and Owen Tierney so the West Mainland are well represented and quite rightly so as it was badly affected. The work of restoration has, I am pleased to say, already begun starting with Hoy and proceeding then in the order they were laid down. The work will be carried out in three phases, phase one- all stones under 1 metre high and all those with internments post 1950. Once these are completed work will commence on phase two. When the work of inspecting all the other cemeteries not yet inspected begins, it will be advertised locally and community council's will be advised when inspections are to commence.



No stone will be laid down before the utmost effort is made to contact any living relative. Where there is an imminent danger to the public the stone may have to be cordoned off until work can be carried out, any other stone with a problem will be marked to allow relatives to contact the council or vice versa so that a plan of repair can be agreed. As you can well imagine this is going to take some time but hopefully it will return our cemeteries to the appropriate condition.

As I write this article word has come from the Scottish Government that they have overturned the decision to refuse planning permission for the wind farm at Costa Head. As a member of the planning committee I am curtailed in what I can say regarding planning decisions but what I will say is that I am disappointed that once again local democracy is held in such little respect by the Scottish Government.

Duncan ”

If you would like to contact any of your Orkney Councillors you can find all contact details on the OIC website www.orkney.gov.uk



Dounby Boys Brigade

NEAR THREE THOUSAND XMAS CARDS DELIEVRED BY DOUNBY BBs IN 2018

The Dounby BBs ran their Christmas Post again in December and raised over £800 for their local company funds with over 2700 cards being sorted and delivered across the West Mainland. Anchor Boys and Juniors in the Dounby Boys Brigade took part in the North Scottish Christmas card competition, with two boys winning a first prize.



The company boys laid the wreaths at the Birsay, Harray and Sandwick war memorials on Remembrance Sunday and also did very well when they took part in the Armistice concert in the theatre in Kirkwall that afternoon. We hosted the Battalion Anchor boys fun day in Dounby in March with fifty boys from Dounby, Finstown and Kirkwall taking part.

Our Award service for the boys to get the badges they have worked for was held in the Milestone Kirk in March, David had a very good service which involved the boys drawing emojis. Junior and Company boys did the bible readings, Edith Aitken presented the badges to the boys, a total of 34 badges were awarded. We had a good turnout of boys at Bag the Bruck at the Bay of Skail on the 20th April. We have a few meetings after the Easter holidays and we will be taking part in the Battalion Parade in Kirkwall at the end of April. BBs will start again in October with new boys all welcome.

DOUNBY JOINT FIRST IN ROBERTSON TITLE

Dounby Boys Brigade have taken part in the usual competitions this past year with the other companies in the Orkney Battalion. Dounby's Junior Section came third equal in the indoor football, third in the bible reading and second in the BB quiz. The Company Section were second overall in their bible reading competition. On Sunday 28th April, Dounby were awarded the Robertson Trophy in first equal place.



The Dounby Boys Brigade is nearly finished for our summer break. Numbers have been a slightly less this year, there have been ten Anchor Boys, seven Junior Section and four Company section boys who have attended regularly.

Kenny Spence

Birsay Kids Club



We have had a busy year with the kids club from a range of outings, crafts, community projects and more.

The kids club is thriving at the moment and it is the help from the parents and the kids themselves that make the club for the kids work so well.

They are a brilliant bunch of kids, that's when they aren't running havoc and causing Jennifer, Nerys and I to hide in a cupboard till it's all over but we wouldn't have it any other way (we don't really hide in cupboards)!

Here is what we have been up to over the past year or so...



OCTOBER

In October last year we had our local Halloween party. We have had the Halloween party for a couple years now. We have games, crafts, best carved neppy lantern or pumpkin, best dressed girl and boy and best dressed adult. We were also invited along to the Alpaca farm to meet Sean Batty in aid of the big Scottish Breakfast which fundraises for helping a child get a breakfast in Scotland.



NOVEMBER

In November we had a mini harvest home. We made cheese, bannocks, and made some bird feeders and other crafts. For supper we had some mince, tatties and skirlie. 

JANUARY

In January we had a burns supper. We had haggis, neeps and tatties and also a toast to the haggis. We kindly received a bag of tatties from Ronnie Ballantyne, so a big thanks to Ronnie.





FEBRUARY

In February (2018) we had an outing to the cinema to see Jumanji. We hired the Dounby Community bus to take ones in and the rest was with the help from parents. We hired an area at picky where we all had a chippy and we provided them with snacks for the cinema.

MARCH

In March (2018) we had our annual Easter Egg Hunt at the Birsay palace. We receive a lot of donations from parents and businesses which helps make it a success for the kids and they love it. We have to say a big thanks to the Dounby Coop, Phillips Heating Services, Grays in Kirkwall and Tesco for their donations last year, it's the kind donations which makes it possible. We have had our easter egg hunt for a couple years now and nearly every year it has rained, but we feel its part of the tradition now. We are planning to have our Easter egg hunt in April.



MAY

In May we went to the Fit for Fun day where there is a range of activities organised from Archery, Trampolining, climbing, crafts, kickboxing and much more. The kids pick their choices beforehand and they get a lot from the day. We hired a bus for the day to take us there and back.

JUNE

In June we went to the circus. All the parents helped with taking kids in and the kids loved the circus. It was great fun and we were told that we were the VIP guests when we arrived.





SUMMER FUN!

We usually stop for the summer holidays and our tradition is to have a water slide. This year we had our water slide and a BBQ in the local play park at the Birsay Hall which is open to everyone in the public. Other things we have done was the community veg garden where we grew our own vegetables. It was for members of the kid's club and members of the community to help themselves and we will be giving it a go again this year. We received top soil from J&S Hay and James Guadie kindly delivered it for us. We are always thankful for donations, so if anyone has surplus vegetable plants we would happily try and grow it. We also have made a fairy garden which is situated in the play park. At the Birsay Hall we also have a fairies garden where there is a post box for kids that visit can write to the fairies and receive a letter back. So far, we have had about ten letters and replied to them all with a bottle of fairy dust included with their letter.



Thanks to the **Tesco Bags of Help** scheme we have been able to purchase some football goals and other sports equipment. In total we received £2000 for our projects from Tesco after we came second in the funding scheme. In the Kid's Club we also have a couple of the kids who have started golf after our attendance at the open day in 2016. The kids have really enjoyed the golf and have all gone on to win medals and trophies. The Stromness Golf Club offer coaching on a Monday night which we attend and encourage any interested kids or parents who would like to start to come along. Thanks to the Tesco funding we were also able to purchase a driving range for our keen golfers to practice.

December 2018 saw our Christmas party where thanks to a very generous donation from the Birsay Community Council we were able to buy the kids presents for Christmas. All the kids received a variety of books and a selection box each. We also held a raffle on the night to win a Christmas cake which we raised a grand total of £106 which was donated to the Orkney Charitable Trust.

So as you can see, we have done a lot over the past year! We will continue to do so for the kids and are always coming up with new ideas and ventures – *so 2019 looks like it may be as busy and fun as last year!* If any interested kids or parents would like to come along to the Birsay Kids Club, please get in touch with Aimee Robertson.

Birsay Community Play Park

Sarah Scarth



It's been great to drive past the hall in the recent nice weather and see the play park busy with kids enjoying themselves. The play park was a real community project. The initial fundraising started with the Birsay toddler group however the original toddlers are now teenagers!

With funding from the CDF, Leader and Tesco the play equipment was secured. A huge thank you must go to Gary Flett and Steven Wylie for installing the equipment and to all the other volunteers who helped to pull the project together. There are too many to mention all by name, but you know who you are and thank you.



The community council has agreed to fund the on going grass cutting costs. However there are plenty of other gardening and jobs that need doing if any individuals or groups would like to get involved, please get in touch.

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I	Q	F	H	O	W	E	N	D	K	D	A	O	L	A
N	U	C	V	Y	K	J	S	E	R	J	E	A	M	E
E	O	Y	O	U	Q	A	E	B	G	H	A	C	N	B
R	Y	B	B	O	L	E	L	A	D	A	K	R	U	D

Birsay Road Names...

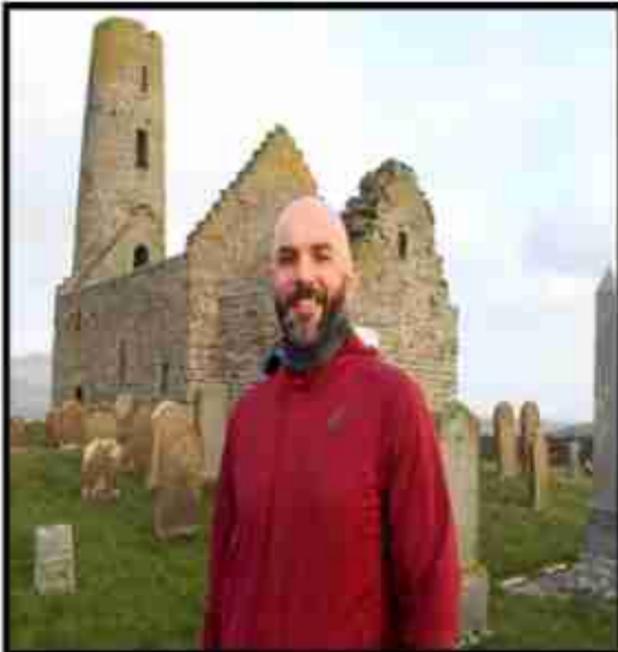
You have 15 Birsay road names to find! Do you have the skill? Answers will be revealed in next Round About Birsay. Good Luck!

LAST EDITION'S 'LANDMARKS'

1. BOARDHOUSE LOCH
2. BROUGH OF BIRSAY
3. WHALEBONE
4. BARONY MILL
5. MARWICK HEAD
6. BIRSAY BAY
7. HMS HAMPSHIRE MEMORIAL
8. MANS WELL
9. EARLS PALACE
10. THE LOONS
11. ST MAGNUS KIRK
12. KIRBISTER FARM
13. MARWICK BAY
14. SKIBA GEO
15. FISHERMANS HUTS



ULTRA MARATHON RUNNER TAKES ON ST MAGNUS WAY



Ultra marathon runner Mark Calder took on the St Magnus Way on 16th April to fundraise for Embrace the Middle East, a Christian charity that together with local Christian communities are bringing lasting change to the Middle East, as part of his fourteen pilgrimage routes challenge.



NEW APP AVAILABLE

The new and upgraded app for the St Magnus Way is now available to download on iOS and Android. Featuring more information, mapping and much more, the app is an essential and handy resource to have when on the route.

WHITALOO IMPROVEMENTS

Work has recently been completed at Whitaloo Point, Northside to improve a section of the St Magnus Way. A team of ten men from (Lovat Scouts) Field Troop RE, 71 Engineer Regiment and the Army Cadet unit of the 1st Battalion Highlanders ACF, Orkney and Shetland Battery (Lovat Scouts) who, despite terrible weather, have built a series of steps, paths and hand rails at the grips.



WALK DAYS

Birsay to Dounby
11th May

Dounby to Finstown
17th August

Egilsay
17th August

Finstown to Orphir
27th July

Orphir to Kirkwall
14th September

St Magnus Kirk

Since the last edition of Round About Birsay we have held two of our annual services in the kirk, writes Greer Norquoy.



The annual Christmas service was held in the church in December led by David McNeish. Orkney Rocks led the community singing as well as entertaining the audience with sets of their own favourites. Their enthusiasm was infectious and the rafters rang with Christmas wonder and celebration. Readings by Issy Grieve and Duncan Tullock told the story. This is always a popular social event and brings families from the local community and further afield – *with mince pies and fruit punch to finish!*

The 23rd Annual St Magnus Day Service took place in the kirk on St Magnus Day 16th April 2019. David McNeish led the service commemorating the life of St Magnus over 900 years ago. The Stromness Choir, who have joined us in worship for all twenty three St Magnus Day Services, were joined by members from the Milestone Church on this evening. The collective voices of the two choirs united in singing the psalms of old leading us in Easter worship.

Robin Barr accompanied all singing on the organ as well as giving us a rendition of Tune to St Magnus on the fiddle. Taking this well known ancient tune as the basis of his own composition we were transported along with the oarsmen on their trip through calm waters and sudden squall on their way to Egilsay that fateful day. This musical composition is one part of Robin's 'Fit as a Fiddle' project last year, 2018 – *which can be found online!* The fiddle rang true in the great acoustics of the kirk interior. David McNeish brought guitar accompaniment and melody to one of the traditional psalms. Poetry and prose were shared with Jenny Johnson, Greer Norquoy and Duncan Tullock.

Pictured left to right:

Duncan Tullock, Greer Norquoy, Robbin Barr, David McNeish and Jenny Johnson.

By Michael Moar

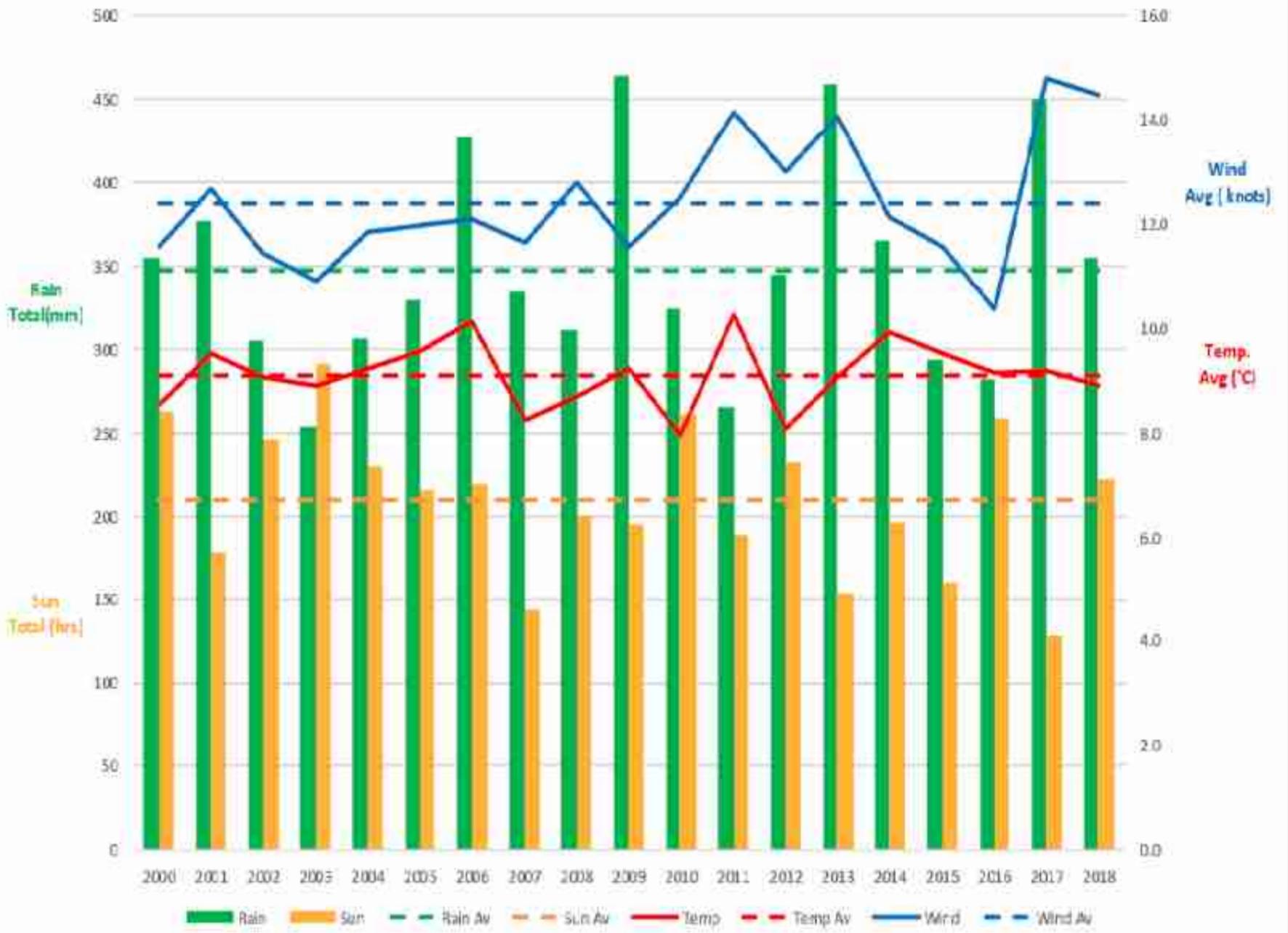


The St Magnus Way is a 55 mile pilgrimage route throughout the mainland of Orkney, linking together important sites in the story of Magnus Orkney's patron saint. For most folk completing the St Magnus Way in stages is a challenge, but completing the pilgrimage in one day is amazing. David McNeish travelled to Egilsay with Mark Calder on the morning of St Magnus Day and ran beside him on the first leg of the pilgrimage. Who is Mark Calder I hear you ask? Mark Calder is running pilgrimage routes, fourteen in one year, across Scotland and the north of England to raise money and awareness about the even bigger challenge that Iraq's Christians face as they try to rebuild their country after wars.

Embrace the Middle East is a Christian charity that together with local Christian communities are bringing lasting change to the Middle East. If you want to learn more about this you will find information on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, look up the Church of Scotland website too.

It was hoped that Mark would finish in time to join us for our St Magnus Day evening service however the really strong windy conditions slowed down the last leg of his marathon. However he and David were in touch as the service ended and he had succeeded in finishing his challenge – a great effort indeed.

AUTUMN QUARTER (SEP, OCT, NOV) 2000-2018



WINTER QUARTER (DEC, JAN, FEB) 2000-2019

