

IHBC Orkney Opportunity schedule

We are delighted to be able to confirm our intended timetable of two day-long tours and associated evening events, detailed below. We are also planning a few events for Wednesday 11th, for those who are departing later in the day. Once participant numbers are confirmed, we will be able to make the final arrangements for transport and lunches etc.

Please could you confirm your attendance by Monday 19th May – whilst it may be possible to add people after this date this cannot be guaranteed. Please also let us know if you have any dietary requirements or other needs we should be aware of (such as mobility/access needs). For the walking tours sturdy footwear and waterproof clothing are strongly recommended.



Monday 9th June

0800	<p>Meet in Kirkwall for coach to Stromness</p> <p><i>The modern A965 from Kirkwall to Stromness connects the two largest settlements in Orkney, passing through an ancient landscape showing the legacy of 5000 years of continuous inhabitation. As we make our way to start the day's events in Stromness, we'll take the opportunity to set the scene of Orkney's history, picking out some of the key landmarks as we pass.</i></p>
0900	<p>Tour of Stromness with Andy Hollinrake (Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology & Stromness Tours) and Miriam Frier (Stromness THI Manager)</p> <p><i>Founded in the C17th on the west shore of the sheltered harbour of Hamnavoe, Stromness is one of Britain's most picturesque seaside towns. Still very much a working port, Stromness faces the challenge of modernising and adapting to changing commercial conditions whilst retaining its historic character. Guiding us through the winding streets will be Andy Hollinrake, local archaeologist and tour guide, and Miriam Frier, manager of Stromness THI, which has just concluded a five-year investment programme in Stromness' historic built environment.</i></p>

c. 1030	<p>Tour of Ness Battery with Andy Hollinrake</p> <p><i>Following on from our tour of the town, we will visit Ness Battery, one of Orkney's best preserved WW2 coastal defences. One of a chain of coastal defences which encircled the fleet anchorage at Scapa Flow, Ness Battery still retains the wooden huts which housed the garrison, including a large mural painted by homesick soldier depicting English rural life, recently conserved under the HLF-funded Scapa Flow Landscape Partnership Scheme.</i></p>
1200	<p>Picnic at Happy Valley, Stenness</p> <p><i>The work of one man over 60 years, the garden and woodland at Bankburn Cottage, now known as Happy Valley, is a rare feature in Orkney's open landscape, and is one of the county's few designed landscapes. Weather-permitting, we will enjoy a picnic on the lawn and discuss the role of aesthetic concerns in landscape conservation, as well as the ongoing restoration works of the cottage and its home-made hydro-electric scheme.</i></p>
pm	<p>Tours of the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site with Historic Scotland Custodians, World Heritage Site Rangers and Stuart West (Planning Manager, Orkney Islands Council)</p> <p><i>Orkney is world-famous for the quantity and preservation of its Neolithic archaeology. The Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site, which we will visit this afternoon, comprises the most significant of these monuments: the chambered tomb of Maeshowe, aligned to the setting midwinter sun, the stone circles at Stenness and Brodgar, and the Neolithic village at Skara Brae. We will be guided by the site custodians and the World Heritage Site Rangers, and joined by Stuart West from the Council, who will discuss the planning guidance he wrote which aims to preserve the original design intent of the complex as we understand it.</i></p>
c. 1800	<p>Early tea in Kirkwall</p>
1830 - 1930	<p>Tour of St Magnus Cathedral with Fran Flett-Hollinrake, Cathedral Custodian</p> <p><i>Founded in 1137 by St Rognvald Kolsson to house the relics of his uncle Magnus, St Magnus Cathedral is one of the most outstanding buildings of its era in the Norse Atlantic colonies. Fran Flett-Hollinrake, Cathedral Custodian, will guide us through the long history of this fascinating building, from the Norse sagas to the Reformation, Cromwell's occupation and the repair and restoration work undertaken in the C19th and C20th centuries.</i></p>
2000	<p>Talks in Kirkwall Town Hall on art from, and inspired by, Neolithic Orkney: Rik Hammond (World Heritage Site Artist in Residence) Antonia Thomas (Archaeology Department, Orkney College UHI)</p> <p><i>Archaeological discoveries over the past century, notably during the ongoing excavations at Ness of Brodgar, have uncovered a wealth of Neolithic artwork and decorated objects. Tonight's talks look at these from two different viewpoints: Antonia Thomas will discuss a range of Neolithic artwork from her experience as an archaeologist, and Rik Hammond will talk about how he approaches Neolithic sites as an artist.</i></p>

Tuesday 10th June

c.0715	Meet in Kirkwall for coach to Houton
0800	Ferry from Houton to Lyness <i>The ferry from the former seaplane base at Houton will pass by the uninhabited islands of Cava and Fara, close to the sites of the remaining vessels from the scuttled German High Seas fleet, before arriving at the former naval facility at Lyness on the island of Hoy, where the day's tours will take place.</i>
a.m.	Tour of Melsetter with Elsie Seatter <i>The house at Melsetter, extensively rebuilt by W.R. Lethaby at the beginning of the twentieth century, is the finest Arts and Crafts building in Orkney, and has inspired generations of conservation architects with its sensitive approach to redeveloping the existing buildings without compromising on its modern character. The owner, Elsie Seatter, will show us round the house and its outbuildings, and discuss the challenges of maintaining such a significant building in a remote location.</i>
Lunchtime	Tour of Lyness with Gavin Lindsay (Island of Hoy Development Trust) <i>During the First and Second World Wars Scapa Flow was the main anchorage for the Royal Navy, with Lyness as its administrative centre and refuelling facility. Whilst much of the base was dismantled in the decades after the war, many significant structures survive, such as the piers and one of the large oil tanks. Before and after lunch Gavin Lindsay, Wartime Heritage Officer at the Island of Hoy Development Trust, will guide us around the base area, discussing the development and operation of the site, and the Trust's aspirations for promoting and conserving the island's military history.</i>
Pm	Visit to Rackwick <i>Rackwick, at the north end of the island of Hoy, is Orkney's best preserved crofting township, and was for many years in the later twentieth century a focal point for creative talent (the composer Peter Maxwell Davies lived here for many years). We will enjoy the views and vernacular buildings on a self-guided tour, soaking up the sense of place. There may also be time for the more adventurous to visit the Old Man of Hoy.</i>
1815	Ferry from Moaness to Stromness <i>The short ferry from North Hoy to Stromness will pass by the island of Graemsay, with its distinctive pair of lighthouses to guide vessels into Stromness harbour.</i>

1845	Early tea in Stromness
1930	<p>Talk in Stromness Town Hall on the importance of the art and culture of late-twentieth century Orkney to the modern perception of place: Morag Macinnes Tom Muir (Exhibitions Officer at Orkney Museums & Storyteller)</p> <p><i>The modern perception of Orkney, particularly places like Stromness and Rackwick, has been shaped by the creative works inspired by it, in particular during the second half of the twentieth century by a very active group of writers, artists and musicians, including figures such as Peter Maxwell Davies and George Mackay Brown. Morag Macinnes, a local poet and artist, and daughter of artist Ian Macinnes, will discuss this period and give her personal reflections. Tom Muir, a local curator and storyteller, will read poetry and stories about Orkney which show how the modern idea of place has been formed.</i></p>



Rackwick, Hoy

Wednesday 11th June (subject to demand)

am	<p>Tour of Kirkwall with Chris Gee (Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology) and Tom Hunter (Historic Environment Officer, Orkney Islands Council)</p> <p><i>Founded around 1050 by Earl Rognvald Brusison, Kirkwall is Orkney's largest settlement, and was one of the pre-eminent towns in the Norse world. Whilst still a medieval burgh at its heart, centuries of land reclamation and the development of suburban villas have created a cultural landscape steeped in history. On our guided walk Chris Gee will talk about the growth of Kirkwall from the sagas onwards, whilst Tom Hunter will discuss the Council's plans for conserving the town through the Conservation Area and the upcoming THI.</i></p>
pm	<p>Tour of the Italian Chapel (TBC)</p> <p><i>One of Orkney's most striking wartime buildings, the Italian Chapel consists of a standard wartime Nissen hut decorated with Renaissance-style carvings and trompe-l'oeil paintings, created by Italian prisoners of war on Lamb Holm as their camp chapel. We hope to organise a tour here on Wednesday afternoon, dependent on numbers (please let us know in advance if you would like to go).</i></p>