

Orkney Hosts International Group of Bryologists



Ascending the Glen of Greor, Ward Hill, Hoy

Bryologists - people who study mosses, liverworts and hornworts. In August this year Orkney was the destination for the summer meeting of the British Bryological Society. The society has an international reach and the party of 12 included visitors from Spain and the Netherlands. Locals comprised John Crossley and Barrie Hamill.

The weather was beautiful throughout and the destinations – Hoy, Graemsay, Rousay and South Ronaldsay, did not

disappoint. Some of the visitors were especially drawn to the northeastern face of the Cuilags in Hoy, for their first sight of the globally rare (and beautiful) Viking Prongwort *Herbertus noreus*. At least eight new species for Orkney were found in the course of the meeting, most of them on Kierfea Hill in Rousay. A full report will appear in the 2026 Orkney Naturalist.

The visit provided that special experience of learning in the company of other enthusiasts. The visitors included people of a wide range of ages and abilities, including two or three renowned experts generous with their knowledge and some near beginners.



Viking Prongwort Herbertus noreus

Subscriptions

A gentle reminder that annual subscriptions are due in January for anyone not already paying by standing order. Many thanks to all who have already renewed.

Orkney Field Club

Founded in 1959

Aim: To encourage the study and conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the County.



Orkney Field Club is a Registered Scottish Charity and SCIO No. SCO12459

❄️ ❄️ Newsletter December 2025 ❄️ ❄️

There are many ways to get actively involved with Orkney Field Club: outdoor events or evening in person talks or zoom talks. In February 2026, we are trialing an extra Wednesday early afternoon talk and hope this event will prove attractive to members.

Your new committee for 2025/6:

Chair: Alexandra Wright

Vice Chair: Liz Fricker

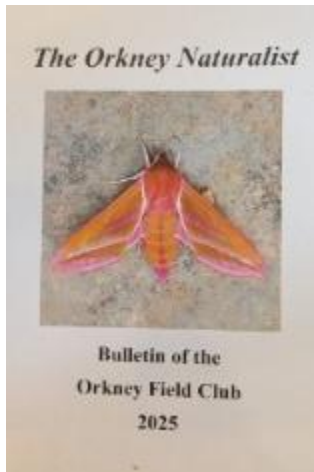
Secretary: Helen Aiton

Treasurer & Membership Secretary: Brian Ribbands

Committee Secretary: Jenny Taylor

Members: Robin Bruce, John Crossley, Katy Firth, Anne Gascoigne, Penny Martin, Eleanor MacLeod, Callum Rankine, Steve Sankey and Nicola Williams.

Orkney Field Club Bulletin 2026 – Call for Articles



The Editorial Group hopes you enjoyed the 2025 Bulletin. We're now inviting members to contribute articles or short notes for the 2026 edition.

If you'd like to discuss an idea or potential contribution, please contact Helen Aiton (ofcsecretary20@gmail).

The deadline for submissions is the end of February 2026. Thank you!

Your Records for 2025

With the arrival of winter's short, dark days, it's time to gather all your flora and fauna sightings from the past year and send them to the relevant recorders. This allows them to include your observations in their annual bulletin reports. A list of recorders can be found in the 'Records' section of our website, where you can also download recording forms and find guidance on the details to include.

Whether you have hundreds of records or just a few, each one is valuable and very welcome.

Stromness Museum Embarks on 24-Month Natural History Digitisation Programme

Stromness Museum is soon to get underway with a new Natural History Collections Digitisation Project. Gareth Squire (currently OFC Echinoderm recorder) has been appointed as the Natural History Collections Assistant, and over the coming 24 months the project will digitise around 5,000 natural history specimens in alignment with the Natural History Museum's DiSSCo UK initiative. This work will further the Museum's commitment to developing decolonial practice by exploring the historical contexts that have shaped the natural science collections.

Alongside this work will be upgrades to the museum website including an enhanced "Nature Portal" section, and an exciting engagement and outreach programme.

This has been possible through funding from The OIC Crown Estate Community Led Development Fund, Birsay Wind Turbine, Scottish Fisherman's Trust, Pebble Trust, NILPS, The Orkney Fund and Orkney Renewable Energy Ltd.

Some Dates For Your Diary - Winter 2026

Please keep an eye on OFC emails and our Facebook page for zoom links to the talks and any updates, changes, or additions.

Weather Dependent Outings

New Year's Ramble

Join us for our traditional New Year Ramble some time during "Twixmas". It's always good to get outside, stretch our legs, socialise and to see what wildlife we can find in midwinter. As usual, we'll keep an eye on the weather forecast and decide on date/location at rather short notice - so expect an email and updates on social media.

For more news and updates from Orkney Field Club see our Facebook page and our website at www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/fieldclub

Hoy Hares

Mountain hare walk in February or March. Date is weather dependent.

JANUARY

Friday, 16th January 2026, 7:30pm via Zoom

Two Non-Native Species Control Programmes: Orkney and Rathlin Island

Tom Hadley from the Orkney Native Wildlife Project will provide an update on local work, and former RSPB Papay Officer, Alusia Malinowska will share findings from her PhD research on the short-term impacts of rat and ferret eradication on Rathlin Island, Northern Ireland.

FEBRUARY

Friday, 6th February 2026, 7:30pm via Zoom

Resilient Seaweed Forests: Insights From Orkney and Beyond with Ruby George

From Portugal to Orkney, researchers are working together to understand how seaweed forests withstand increasing storms and heatwaves. Ruby, a PhD student at Swansea University, will share some intriguing findings from this collaborative project, including surprising differences in how Orkney's seaweed forests cope compared with those in other regions.

Wednesday, 25th February 2026, 1:30pm in the Friends Room at the St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall

Peatland Restoration on Orkney with Iolo Jones

Come along to this early afternoon talk and hear about the work RSPB Scotland is doing to improve the condition of Orkney's peatlands. As part of this talk we will cover why peatlands are important, what we can do to help them, and how the RSPB are doing this at present and into the future.

MARCH

Friday, March 20th March 2026, 7:30pm at the St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall

Nature Showcase

Tim Dean will give a presentation on Bats in Orkney and John Crossley will tell us about new botanical finds.