



Orkney U3A



Dear Members,

You will already have received the Agenda for this year's AGM and the Minutes of that for 2019, and also the financial report from the Treasurer. Having decided to cancel the meeting itself, our aim now is to complete the business by mail and by e-mail. To this end I now enclose two documents so that you can read what would have been presented to you at the meeting. These are the Chairman's report and the reports from various group leaders. But there is also the proposal to change the constitution in two respects, as explained in the Agenda: to allow the committee to meet three times a year rather than four, and to create the post of Meetings Secretary, so splitting the work currently carried out by the Chairman. These changes have been proposed and seconded as follows:

	PROPOSER	SECONDER
Changes to the constitution	J.Graham	G.Alsop

The other business is to elect a new committee. Those nominated, with their proposers and seconders, are as follows:

	NOMINEE	PROPOSER	SECONDER
Chairman	Barbara Todd	G.Alsop	T.Wright
Vice-chairman	Judy Fryer	E.Slater	N.Traill-Thomson
Secretary	Phylida Wright	V.Pomfret	J.Graham
Treasurer & Membership Secretary	Ronnie Johnson	N.Traill-Thomson	E.Slater
Meetings Secretary	Trevor Kay	B.Todd	V.Pomfret
Committee Members	David Appleton) Sally MacKintosh) Judy O'Connor)	T.Wright	B.Todd

As only one nomination has been received for each position, no election will be required. I hope there will be an opportunity for discussion next time we meet but, meantime, if you have any questions or comments, please could I receive them by midday on Monday 23rd March, at which point I hope we can declare the AGM satisfactorily, if somewhat unconventionally, concluded.

You will notice from my report that we have cancelled the next two general meetings, and that may be necessary for later ones too. The new committee will I am sure keep you posted.

(pjbs@st-and.ac.uk) 19th March 2020

Orkney U3A Chairman's Report 2019-20

Once again, this year, we have had a highly varied programme of meeting talks, starting in notable style with an introduction to the concept of voice from the world's leading expert on the subject, Kristin Linklater, who used demonstrations and readings to illustrate brilliantly how the concept differs from that of speech. Next, in May, Fiona Grahame introduced us to the Orkney suffragists, an active and committed group of which few of us had heard but which made a notable contribution to the drive for universal suffrage. Then, in June, Tom Miller gave us an entertaining perspective on the United States from a New Yorker living in Stromness.

August brought us a talk from our MSP Liam McArthur who gave us an insight into the rather arcane workings of the Scottish Parliament, and then in September Penny Martin told us of the colourful underwater life in the seas round Orkney, illustrated with her stunning photographs. In October, Lynn Bartlett introduced us to the making of stained glass, demonstrated how she does it and even let some of us try our hand. In November, David Taylor gave us an account of how people struggled for survival in 18th century Orkney, clearly illustrating just how tough life was in those days – and how different, perhaps best illustrated by the annual cabbage crop on Eday of some 16,000!

As usual in December we had no talk, but a very convivial lunch in the Kirkwall Hotel, expertly organised by Judy O'Connor, to whom many thanks. This took us in to the new year where the first talk was on dietetics, given by Caitriana McCallum, who covered a lot of ground very clearly and initiated a great deal of discussion. Most of us left with ideas on how to mend our ways. Which brings me to our final talk of the year, last month, by Peter Breingan, about life in the Shufat refugee camp in Palestine and the efforts that the Orkney Friends of Palestine have been putting in to make it more tolerable. A real eye opener to most of us, I think. And so to the AGM which sadly we've had to run without meeting, and so to miss one of Tim Wright's wonderful photo quizzes which hopefully we'll be able to experience ere long.

We are very grateful to those who have come to speak to us. Thanks too to Barbara Todd for organising the tea rota, and to the small team of people who take it in turns to provide accounts of the talks for the Orcadian. In the last few months David Appleton has started putting these accounts on the Orkney U3A website for those who have missed them in the paper. David and Sally MacKintosh comprise our web-team and keep the website up to date. If you go there you will find any information you might want about the U3A in a very clear and well organised format. Many thanks to the two of them for this, and also for the lovely email posters they produce each month to tell us what is in store.

Quite a few other people deserve thanks. Group leaders do much to keep things going and are also invited to our committee meetings where they report and contribute. With our increasing membership there seemed to be scope for new groups and I am very grateful to Trevor Kay, who stands down as Vice Chairman at this meeting, for looking into this, and helping to set up three: History and Archaeology, Moths and a second Play reading group. Where they are not oversubscribed, members are encouraged to join those groups that interest them. In addition to Trevor I must also thank other members of the committee, most notably Phylida Wright and Ronnie Johnson who, as Secretary and Treasurer respectively, make sure that everything runs smoothly. In addition to Trevor and myself, the other member of the committee whose term of office has come to an end is Glenys Alsop, and I'd also like to thank her for her help over the past three years.

Members were saddened during the year to hear of the death of Allan Way. Allan was our first Treasurer who, despite a long illness, remained a stalwart member until very recently. He will be sadly missed.

Times are uncertain and, although we have a complete programme of speakers signed up for the rest of this year, the first two have been cancelled, and subsequent ones may also have to be. With luck many of those speakers will be prepared to have their names added to the end of the list so that we can still look forward to their talks once things have returned to normal.

20th March 2020

Peter Slater

Reports from Interest Groups

Botany group: The Botany group now has 16 members, about half of whom attend regularly. During 2019 we met on eight dates between May and August. In addition to visiting various sites on the Mainland, in July we had an excellent trip to the Hill of White Hamars in South Walls. At the end of July we had a tutorial on grasses and sedges from John Crossley along the track up towards Wasdale from Refuge Corner. Peter Slater

Music Appreciation group one: It was decided to split the music group into two during 2019, the original group having been unable to bring in those on its waiting list because of lack of space in most of its members' houses. Glenys heads this group, and Valerie Pomfret the new one. Group One continues to meet on the first Monday of each month. Very sadly, we lost Alan Way, one of the founding members of the Music Appreciation Group, during 2019, and this year David Lea has, to everyone's regret, decided he is no longer able to attend. However, our remaining group of eight is probably the ideal size to be hosted in members' houses, and we continue to enjoy a very eclectic mix of music (themes chosen by members in turn) each month. We all delight in hearing not only well-known compositions, but – perhaps particularly – music that, heretofore, we had no knowledge of. Glenys Alsop

Tuesday music group: The Tuesday music group meets from 2 - 4pm on the second Tuesday of the month. There are currently six members. The format is for each member to bring music, usually on CD, on a particular subject chosen beforehand. We all have very different musical tastes, leading to considerable variety in the pieces chosen. We meet in the homes of group members, so need to keep the group to a suitable size. We have room for two more members, if anyone else would like to join us. Valerie Pomfret

Scrabble group. We still have 12 members, 2 having left and 2 new ones joined. We meet every Friday in the library from 10am-noon. Everyone welcome. We are not competitive, but we like to win!!! Barbara Todd

Play reading group one: Plays read since March 2019: Caucasian Chalk Circle (Brecht); As you like It (WS); Hay Fever, Fallen Angel and Easy Virtue (Noel Coward); Lady Geraldine's Secret (Suffragist Play) (Beatrice Harraden); How the Vote was Won (Suffragist Play) (Cecily Hamilton); House, Garden and Things we do for Love (Alan Ayckbourn); The Insect Play (Karel Czappek); The Wasps (Aristophanes); Possums Universal Robot (Czappek Brothers); The Provoked Wife (John Vanbrugh); Voices from over the Sea (Noel Coward); Streetcar Named Desire (Tennessee Williams); Androcles and the Lion (GBS); The Plough and the Stars (Sean O'Casey). The group still has around 11/12 members, its maximum possible membership, and is at present managing to meet regularly but may need to reassess this in view of the present circumstances. Jeanne and John Graham

Walking group: We had a successful year with many walks some of which were even dry. We walked The Gun Walk in Stromness and from Yesnaby to Skail. We went around the Orphir Round Church walk twice at either end of the year and visited the Cairn on a walk around Wideford Hill. We went from Binscarth Woods to the Refuge corner and did a circular walk around by the Rendall Doocot, while on the Covenanter's circular walk we got soaked. We also had a quick trip to the Brough of Birsay and around by Skipi Geo. Anywhere between 15 and 7 people came and experienced the Orkney countryside and then warmed up with a cup of tea in a local hostel. Tim Wright

Photographic Group one: Dounby was the destination on three occasions this year, once to take photographs and twice to go to the Dounby Centre's old computer room and, on two very rainy days, to look at presentations from the members of the group. Other venues this year included St Magnus Cathedral with an interesting tour, Happy Valley, and Corrigall and Kirbuster Farm Museums. The Stromness trip included a list of 20 items to be found and photographed while Fern Valley had a variety of mammals and reptiles awaiting a picture. We had a lovely day in Shapinsay visiting Boroughstone Brough as well as the Balfour Castle Gardens. The piece de resistance though was the overnight trip to Tongue. We managed to get to Lotte Glob's ceramic sculpture garden as well as, for some of us, Cocoa Mountain in Balnakeil. The hotel was lovely and the weather reasonably kind for the 14 who made the trip. Tim Wright

Photo group two: Since the last AGM we have managed to increase our number to 6, so as its leader I am much happier as we can now meet even with a couple away on holiday. With the new advice on coping with the coronavirus we are likely to be quite restricted on our meetings. This year amongst

other places we have visited Graemsay, Stromness Museum, Papa Westray, Finstown and Yesnaby. We have cancelled a number of times due to severe weather. John Graham

Straw-work group: The straw group has been meeting as usual on every Friday morning in my house. We have 6 members and don't have any space for more at the moment. There have been baskets of various sizes produced this year and one member is about to start on a doll's cradle! Unfortunately due to the current circumstances we have made the decision to stop meeting for now and hopefully will get back on track in the autumn. Sandra Higgins

Craft group: The craft group meets on a weekly basis at Kirkwall library from 10am until midday. There are currently 10 ladies who attend when they can; they work on their own projects but are always happy to share knowledge, encouragement and give advice where they can. Some of the crafts that have been undertaken are card making, paper folding, quilting, knitting, crochet, embroidery, decoupage, silk painting, latch hook rug making, lamp shade making, straw work and several other skills. Pam Woodcock

Bird group: This group consists of about 20 people and meets for walks every month through the year. This year, in addition to walks on the Mainland, we had two nights on Papa Westray, including a visit to the Holm, and a day trip to the RSPB reserve at Trumland, followed by a drive round Rousay. Sadly, on a trip down the barriers we failed to see the blue rock thrush that had been frequenting the quarry on Lamb Holm, but we did see lots of other birds.