



ORKNEY U3A

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2013 - 2014

We have had what I think is another successful year with a full programme of general meetings and some quite intensive activity in the Groups with some new ones starting up and a slight increase in our numbers from 91 to 94 at the last count. We have also had some very good publicity in the Orcadian and through Radio Orkney for our meetings.

The first thing I want to do is to thank the members of the committee who have worked hard for the U3A here to maintain something which I hope we all can value. I want to give mention to Allan Way for his work as Membership Secretary and Treasurer, work which has been done quietly and without complaint since we started. Hilary Morrell has been an excellent Secretary during the past year both in maintaining the administration of the U3A here and particularly in organising our Christmas lunch which is a grand occasion to mark the year. Kate Barrett has taken on publicising our activities and John O'Shea has volunteered to organise the tea and coffee rota.

Sally MacKintosh, Hilary Morrell and Effy Everiss (SHE) have continued to maintain our website for us on the Orkney Communities site as well as the Facebook page which helps both with maintaining a visible presence and as a crucial means of communication. I have continued with the chairman's blog – 20 editions so far to date which follows up committee meetings and, on occasions, the general meeting to keep everyone as up to date as possible.

The Committee has met six times this year. As well as the normal business of the finances and membership, some of the things we have discussed are:

- The future programme of events which I'm pleased to say we have available for you today
- Communicating with you the members
- Our links with the other U3As
- The difficulty in maintaining attendance at the all Scotland meetings of the U3A
- Agreement to join Voluntary Action Orkney
- The possibility of signing on to Fair Trade

Allan will be reporting on our finances so I need say little more than they remain in a healthy state to the point that we are able to maintain subscriptions at their present level for another year.

We currently have fifteen groups:

- Photography 1 and 2
- Crafts

- Music
- Botany - quiescent
- Play reading
- Scrabble
- Bird watching
- Creative Writing
- Amblers (gentle walks)
- Archaeology - quiescent
- Fishing
- Art and painting
- The folk band
- Family History

There is always room for more if anyone is interested in starting up one or indeed in reviving any of those which have lapsed since we started 5 years ago. The groups meet regularly and their activities are publicised on the website and on Facebook, supported by some excellent photographs of the activities. The groups contribute to the website's very helpful guide to getting a cup of tea and refreshment in Orkney and indeed in Caithness.

Last year we had a varied programme of meetings, usually on the third Thursday on the month which has been very well supported. I hope that the next year's programme which will be available at the AGM on the lavender cards will be as successful in combining interest and enjoyment.

This is my last meeting as the Chairman as I stand down after 3 years' in post. I have thoroughly enjoyed my spell in the chair and so it only remains for me to thank you all for your support in attending meetings and participation in the groups' activities. I hope that the Orkney U3A will continue to be a thriving part of what is to me very important in maintaining healthy and enthusiastic self help in keeping our brains active and, with the outdoor groups, our bodies too.

Richard Thomas
Chairman
1 March 2014