

The Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney
St. Mary the Virgin Church, Stromness



Landscape around Stromness

Appointment of House for Duty Priest
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

21st February 2020

THE ORKNEY ISLANDS

'Orkney crowned best place to live in the UK in Halifax quality of life survey'

2019 National Press headline

Here's why.....

Location

An archipelago comprising some sixty-seven islands, of which eighteen are inhabited, Orkney lies just off the northern mainland of Scotland. Stunning scenery and rolling hills make up much of the landscape. A mere six miles of Pentland Firth separate South Ronaldsay (the most southerly island) and John o' Groats in Caithness.

See: <https://www.orkney.com>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orkney>



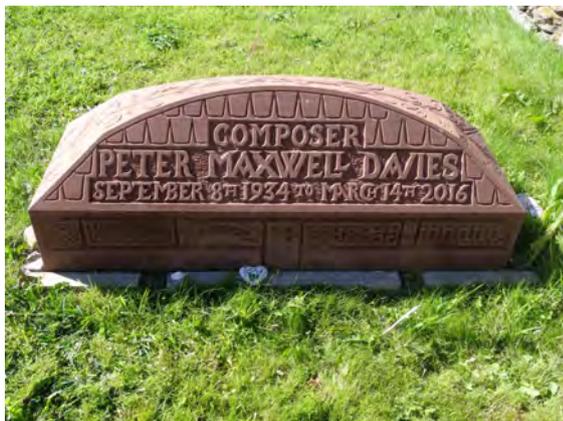
The Old Man of Hoy

Population

The total population of the Orkney islands is just over 22,000 of which most live on Mainland Orkney (the principal and largest island). The City of Kirkwall is home to some 8,500 inhabitants; Stromness some 2,200. Although the population is increasing, Orkney still has the lowest population of all the Scottish counties, giving a sense of space and tranquility.

Community

Orkney is noted for its strong community spirit - much appreciated by island visitors. During the occasional winter gales, Orkney folk are quick to support and help each other. Low levels of crime and unemployment, good schools and health care all contribute to a general sense of wellbeing. The quality of light inspires local artists; sports centres, cinemas, theatres provide excellent recreational facilities; amateur dramatists, writers, musicians of all genres, wildlife enthusiasts, walkers, climbers and divers – all are able to join active local groups. The opportunities are endless and limited only by the time available to pursue them!



'Max's' final resting place



Musicians gather at the Reel in Kirkwall

Most Orkney shops and cafes are locally owned apart from three national supermarkets.

Supply and delivery lines to Orkney are excellent and efficient.



Orkney winter sports!

Climate

The benign influence of the Gulf Stream and a maritime climate, result in the islands seeing little snow and frost in winter. Indeed, the average temperature in January often exceeds that of London, though it rarely exceed 20°C in summer when the sky never totally darkens.

Unlike Western Scotland and the Hebrides, Orkney rainfall is not especially significant and we are seldom plagued by midges for any length of time.



Ring of Brodgar

Whilst Atlantic storms can occasionally be fearsome, they provide dramatic coastal scenes! Calm, bright and sunny days offer a breathtaking contrast,

History

Orkney's history can be traced back at least 5,000 years. The BBC television series *Britain's Ancient Capital* and Channel 4's *Time Team* experts have suggested *‘that if the surface of Orkney is scratched, it bleeds archaeology’*

Parts of Orkney's West Mainland has been declared a World Heritage Site. This includes the magnificent Neolithic village of Skara Brae, the standing Stones of Stenness, the Ring of Brodgar, and the chambered tomb at Maeshowe. Ongoing excavations at the now renowned and mysterious site of the Ness of Brodgar will challenge archaeologists for years to come.



Skara Brae Neolithic Village



Ness of Brodgar Excavations

Following centuries of Norwegian rule, Orkney became part of Scotland in 1468 when accepted by King James III in lieu of an unpaid dowry. Strong Viking influences can still be felt in place names around the islands and the Orkney flag closely resembles that of Norway.

Orkney was a centre of significant military activity in both world wars: the natural, almost land-locked, anchorage of Scapa Flow was the base for the Royal Navy's Home Fleet. To prevent access by German U-Boats, Winston Churchill constructed a series of concrete block 'barriers'. Today, these link Orkney Mainland to Burray and South Ronaldsay and the ferry port of St Margaret's Hope.



Scapa Beach 2018: Orkney remembers....

Commerce and Industry

The largest employer is Orkney Islands Council (OIC), followed by the NHS. Main industries are agriculture (beef, dairy and sheep farming), and fishing (offshore and shellfish), tourism, arts and crafts.



North Ronaldsay (seaweed-eating) sheep

Orkney plays an increasingly important role in renewable energy with many local initiatives in wind and wave technology.

Other industries include the production of world class award-winning local produce - beef, cheese, ice cream, fudge, oatcakes, whisky, gin and beer.



FESTIVALS



The Orkney Folk Festival in full swing

Locals and visitors, alike, relish our annual Festivals. The main ones are:

<https://www.orkneyfolkfestival.com> ,

<https://www.stmagnusfestival.com>

the Science Festival <https://oisf.org>

but there are many others - Blues, Rock, Jazz, Nature, Story Telling, Nature

<https://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/ORKNEYNATUREFESTIVAL/>



Orkney's finest fiddlers – the Wrigley Sisters

Our wildlife and scenery are world-class with frequent sightings of Orca (killer whales), dolphins, seals, porpoises, and otters. Orkney is a birdwatchers paradise (puffins, curlews, nesting white tailed eagles).



Some of Orkney's wildlife residents

Orkney has been voted the best cruise destination in Western Europe, reflecting visitors' positive experience of warm welcome and high quality visitor experiences.

Transport

Transport links are excellent: two ferry companies cross the Pentland Firth up to six times a day and there is a thrice weekly service to Aberdeen and Shetland. Residents enjoy discounted travel on these services in addition to two annual return ferry crossings to Scotland.

Inter-island passenger and vehicle ferry services are provided served by OIC-owned Orkney Ferries. Loganair offers daily flights to and from the outer isles.



The Hamnavoe setting sail from Stromness

Loganair flies from Kirkwall to Aberdeen and Inverness (30 mins.) and to Edinburgh and Glasgow (1 hour) and, seasonally, to Manchester and Bergen. Again, residents get discounted fares on flights to the main Scottish airports.

Orkney's infrastructure is amongst the best in Scotland and provides an excellent network of well-surfaced roads on both Mainland and the islands.

Health

Health care provision is excellent. Orkney's new hospital, The Balfour, opened in June 2019 and offers a wide range of specialist services, including surgical, cardiac, gynaecological and rehabilitative care. Single en-suite rooms are provided for all in-patients. The care and professionalism of our medical staff is second to none .

Patients requiring treatment and investigation that cannot be provided locally are referred to larger hospitals on mainland Scotland. Flights are arranged and paid for by the NHS.

Education

The islands are blessed with first-class educational facilities. Most rural communities have a primary school (ages 5-12) and some of the islands have a junior secondary (ages 5-14). Kirkwall and East Mainland secondary students attend Kirkwall Grammar School and West Mainland students the Stromness Academy (described by an inspector as '*a small school which delivers a lot*'). Stromness also has a very good primary school.



View of Stromness

Orkney College in Kirkwall (a campus of the University of the Highlands and Islands) offers everything from vocational skills to degree courses and is a major centre for archaeological studies. There are also numerous opportunities to attend OIC and independently-run Adult Education courses.

Conclusion

Life in Orkney is vibrant, enriching and never dull. Great emphasis is placed on community spirit.

The incomer who is ready to enjoy the Orcadian way of life, climate, and relative remoteness of Orkney is assured of a wonderful, fulfilling, and enriching future.



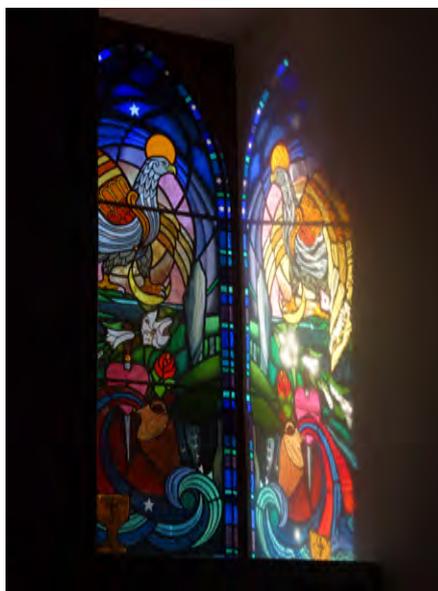
HISTORY OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, STROMNESS

St. Mary's began in 1885 as a mission to "churchmen residing in Stromness, tourists and shipping", and, along with its sister church of St. Olaf's in Kirkwall in the previous decade was part of the resurgence of the Scottish Episcopal Church after more than a century of proscription. At the time, Stromness was still a thriving harbour for whalers and trading vessels to the Continent and to North America, most notably as the last port of call for ships that serviced the Hudson's Bay Company enterprise in Canada.

The first priest-in-charge was the Rev. James Stuart and services were held at 8 Alfred Street, in a building referred to as *The Humph* after its owner Mrs. Humphrey. *Inter alia*, this had served as a military hospital, ballroom and school. The present church on Church Road, situated within a complex of buildings then called *Hutchinson's Quoy*, was purchased by the Diocese in 1888. It had previously housed the Masonic Lodge Mercantile and, before that, the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Cameronians). Parts of St. Mary's are among the oldest structures in Stromness; its medieval baptismal font was given to the church by the Marquess of Zetland.



St Mary's Medieval baptismal font



One of the stained glass windows

St. Mary's was firmly established by 1906 at which point it had 45 members and 24 communicants. Sunday morning services were pretty well attended, though it was the evening service that drew impressive numbers (60 to 70), according to reports.

In the late 20th century, the parish magazine tells of Bible Study, Sunday School, and social events involving an active membership. The Rev. Ingrid Cosby, already active in the ministry of St. Mary's Church, was one of the first women to be ordained deacon in the Scottish Episcopal Church in 1986, and became the first woman in Orkney to be ordained priest in 1996. She took pastoral responsibility for St. Mary's, working with the Rector of St. Olaf's to strengthen Episcopal ministry in Orkney. Along with her husband David, she contributed to the material well-being of St. Mary's and in the year before her death in 2014 initiated a substantial renovation of the church.

St. Mary's exquisite stained glass windows, by Shona McInnes, were installed in 1996 as memorial to Dr. Richard Petrie, longtime physician in Stromness – a legacy from his daughter Adeline. At the same time, Peter Davis, art teacher and organist at St. Mary's, created the church's distinctive and much valued Stations of the Cross. Patricia Bain's quilted hanging - now behind the altar - also dates from this time and was a gift from David Cosby.



*The stained glass windows and a collage of the life of St Magnus made by the pupils of Stromness Primary;
Patricia Bain's quilted hanging*

St. Mary's Congregational Life

St Mary's Church is situated half way up Church Road, in the centre of Stromness. The town has a winding narrow main flagstone street with shops, cafes, B&Bs, the Pier Art Centre and two hotels. Stromness is a gem, with quirky streets, and individualistic buildings - a magnet for visitors.



Victoria Street, Stromness

Worship and the Congregation

At St. Mary's we aim to:

Celebrate the love of God

Care for each other

Cultivate personal growth

Communicate the Gospel in words and actions

Our congregation comes from all walks of life and most of us have our roots in other parts of the UK. There are 28 on the church roll, compared to a handful five years ago and the average attendance has grown from 5 to 12 at the 10.30 am Sunday Eucharist though, of course, visitors increase those numbers during summer months.

Comments left by visitors to the church provide ample evidence of St. Mary's welcome – amongst them:

'Lovely welcome, joyous worship, fab cake!'

Lancashire

'Blessings - O so wonderful'

Alaska

'A very welcoming church - a little gem'

Gloucester

'We were so pleased to worship God here with you today'

Australia

Visitors from all over the UK and the World seek us out and are always made to feel wanted and welcome.



Welcoming a visitor from Switzerland

There is a vibrancy at St Mary's, and though small, congregational numbers are steadily rising. A principal tenet of church life here is to make everyone feel welcome – whether Orcadian or visitor - so that all feel part of the life of the church. We are hopeful that this aim is being achieved, as witnessed by the following comments from new members of the congregation:

- *'welcoming of everyone who is drawn to the church - regardless of gender or background.'*
- *'sense of openness, acceptance and adventure'*
- *'a feeling of joy & hospitality - which seem so important - backed up by deep spirituality'.*
- *'a very caring and special place of which I am very glad to have been welcomed as a member'.*

In March 2015, Tom Miller, a retired priest from America, arrived as locum. He had been Canon for Liturgy and the Arts at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York and knew St. Mary's and Stromness from summer visits over a number of years. In September of that year he was appointed Priest-in-Charge.

In addition to Sunday services, St. Mary's introduced weekday prayer and meditation as well as ecumenical services and events in co-operation with Stromness Parish Church and Stromness Baptist Church.

St. Mary's hosts ecumenical Carol Services and Hymn Sings at Pentecost and other occasions. Members also participate in the Holy Week Walk of Witness.

Our worship is firmly grounded in the traditions of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Sunday services follow the 1982 Eucharist of the SEC - for the most part spoken - with hymns and sermon. Our Organist, Kate Lewis BA ARCM, has set some of the Eucharist to music with an eye to creating a full St. Mary's Mass setting. The congregation is musically literate and enjoys singing. Other resources, such as *Common Worship* and other Anglican books of Common Prayer, are also drawn upon. Generally open to exploring the range of traditions, the congregation is also provided with *Hymns Old & New with Common Worship*, which includes the lectionary and texts of hymns.



Kate Lewis at our new Allen organ

Two of our number are licensed to take Services and two are Lay Readers. A lay member is also authorised to lead worship when clergy are away. We ensure that newcomers are welcomed at the door and that clear guidance is given on following the Order of Service.

Lay participation in worship is positively encouraged with members leading prayers of intercession and lesson reading. Worship at St. Mary's could be described as 'middle of the road' Episcopalian, enthusiastic - yet relaxed.

St. Mary's is fortunate to have excellent bakers amongst its congregation: tea, coffee and home bakes are served in the hospitality room after each Sunday Service and Thursday Meditation - lively discussion usually ensues! A surprisingly wide range of topics emerge - offering great chance to engage with visitors and congregation alike.

St. Mary's has good relationships with local arts organisations, including the Stromness Writers' Group and the West Mainland Fiddlers, who meet regularly in the church.

An ambitious music programme is emerging with a series of recitals prompted by the new organ. St. Mary's has become a venue for local performers; a songwriting workshop for young composers is now a regular feature, as is an annual *Foy*, (a music and poetry event involving the community). The George Mackay Brown Fellowship, among others, has used St. Mary's for readings and *renga* sessions. Given the number of artists, writers and musicians in Stromness, there seem to be endless possibilities for bringing people into St. Mary's through the arts.

St. Mary's is also exploring a call to ministry through retreats, quiet days and pilgrimages. A committee including Orkney Episcopalian has formed to plan a series of events in the coming year, and St. Mary's supports the work of The Well, a branch of the Epiphany Group already well established in Orkney. During Lent there have been discussion groups for members of the congregation and it is hoped that this will continue during Advent and, possibly, other times of year.

Cordial relations are enjoyed with the other churches in Stromness: Baptists, Church of Scotland and the independent Grace Church Orkney.

St Mary's Finances

St Mary's has been blessed by generous and thoughtful congregational members – past and present – both in terms of time and funding. Significant endowments by both a former incumbent and a member of congregation provided funding for major building works and our Priest's home - Quarrybrae.

During an interregnum some ten years ago, when the regular congregation was reduced to two, through the faith and hope of those individuals, the church was kept open, the fabric maintained and improved.

Regular, generous, donations help cover day to day outgoings whilst also enabling us to build up reserves which enabled us, for example, to buy the new Allen organ in 2019.

St Mary's finances are in good health and continue to be prudently managed by our Vestry Committee.

The Vestry Committee

This currently comprises:

Chair	Priest in Charge (<i>ex officio</i>)
Vicar's Warden/Diocesan Lay Rep	Nick Lewis (<i>ex officio</i>)
Treasurer	Paul Cooper
Communications/Outreach	Carrie Dodge
Secretary	Kate Lewis

Vestry meets every quarter, to review finances and maintenance of the church and adjacent vestry building. Refurbishment of the latter's external surfaces has just been completed on budget.

Our next project will be the internal refurbishment of the Vestry Building to provide improved space for hospitality (on the ground floor) and a meeting/conference room upstairs.

Musical events are helping us raise St. Mary's profile in the community and, we hope, will encourage both congregation and regular giving to grow.



A Reel Fiddlers concert at St Mary's

Quarrybrae, Hillside Road, Stromness, KW16 3HR



Quarrybrae was bequeathed to the Diocese in 2014 by the estate of The Rev. Ingrid Cosby, who with her husband David were long-time generous benefactors of the church.

Built around 1980, Quarrybrae is a detached bungalow situated in a quiet residential area. Hillside Road is about one mile from the church. It is close to the Stromness Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre.

The property has been fully refurbished and decorated throughout. A new study with external access has been created.

The house comprises two double bedrooms and one single, a bathroom with shower and WC, separate WC, living room, a good sized kitchen/dining room and a study.

Approximate dimensions in metres:

Entrance lobby	1.8 x 6 (plus two walk-in cupboards)
Bathroom	1.8 x 2.2
Guest WC	1.9 x 1.3
Bed 1	4.8 x 2.8 (plus walk-in cupboard)
Bed 2	2.9 x 4.1
Bed 3	3.2 x 2.6 (plus walk-in cupboard)
Dining	4.2 x 2.5
Kitchen	4.2 x 2.8
Living	5.3 x 4.2
*Study	4 x 2.7
Garage	6 x 3.6

There is a large and easily accessible attic which has been floored throughout and previously used by a model railway enthusiast!

A driveway leads to a small garage; mature gardens surround the front and rear and there are impressive views towards Scapa Flow.

The kitchen is fitted with cooker, fridge/freezer, washing machine, dryer and dishwasher. Heating and cooking are electric. The house includes essential kitchen and dining equipment and furniture such as beds, armchairs, bedside tables and a piano but, if required, the property can be left unfurnished.

Quarrybrae is perfect for either a couple or a small family and is ideally located: it is close enough to the church for easy access but sufficiently distant to allow a measure of privacy.



Kitchen



Study



Sitting Room



Bathroom



Guest Toilet



Bedroom 1



Bedroom 2



Bedroom 3