

# REEL deal

For some genuine folk music – two-steps and nine-pins as well as Strathspeys and reels – try the bars and community halls of Orkney. Local vets, doctors, farmers, shopkeepers, gardeners, fishermen, waitresses and postmen play their hearts out till the wee hours. A country dance, especially out in the isles, is a never to be forgotten experience. The Folk Festival, every May, is a great time to hear a lot of great music in just a few days. Equally packed with world class music of a different kind is the St Magnus Festival, which takes place every midsummer, and each year features musicians and premiers of genuine world importance.

For the farming community, the agricultural shows of early August are of more than world importance! Culminating in the grand County Show in Kirkwall, this is where the finest cattle, sheep and poultry are seen, the latest machinery examined, and tales of the past year exchanged. It's also the excuse for a huge funfair, several beer tents and homebake stands, and all kinds of entertainment and revelry.

Smaller events are just as interesting, and often quite unique. The steam and brass of the Vintage Rally, for instance, the flags and friendship of Norwegian Constitution Day, and the Riding of the Marches. The traditional Kirkwall Ba games on Christmas Day and New Year's Day are an amazing spectacle. And the monthly Farmers' Market, is full of delicious local treats from organic beef and vegetables to fattie cutties and home made fudge!



The Chair



The Ba

## January

### The Ba - 1st

Traditional street rugby, played by the Uppies and Doonies with a much prized locally made leather ba' (ball). The Ba' is thrown up outside St. Magnus Cathedral and the game ranges through the town. The Ba starts on Broad Street with the boys' game beginning at 10.30 and the men's at 13.00. [www.bagame.com](http://www.bagame.com)

## February

### Thoroughly Modern Millie - 10th to 14th

Kirkwall Amateur Operatic Society presents a rendition of Thoroughly Modern Millie. The story follows the un-modern Millie fresh off the bus from Kansas to New York in search of a new life and her adventures in the razzmatazz of Jazz Age Manhattan.

## March

### Scarecrow Festival - First week in March

Organised by the Orkney Branch of the Red Cross. Brightly dressed scarecrows enliven fields, gardens and other public areas. The week culminates in a celebration fundraiser and display on Sunday 1st March at Orkney Auction Mart in Kirkwall, with music and entertainment.

### Brown Trout Season opens - 15th

Fishing is free, with a choice of lochs to suit most tastes. Subscription to the local Trout Fishing Association supports the fishery and gives access to loch side facilities. Various competitions from May – September. [www.orkneytroutfishing.co.uk](http://www.orkneytroutfishing.co.uk)



Brown Trout



Rugby Sevens

## April

### Orkney Ceilidh Weekend - 10th to 13th

Orkney Traditional Dance Association have organised a programme of dance events with various dance workshops throughout the day including the popular Scottish Country, Old Time, Ballroom and Shetland Folk along with this years specials 'an Orkney Wedding Dance', Papa Stour Swords and Shetland Lancers and Quadrilles. The evening Ceilidhs bring each day to a conclusion with music from local bands plus Colin Dewars Band. On the 8th & 9th supporting fringe events in Rousay and Hoy. [www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/OTDA](http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/OTDA) t: (01856) 873534 or (01856) 791 359

### Ferry Inn Pink Weekend - 23rd to 26th

A 'pink themed' weekend of charity events raising funds for various cancer charities. e: [adrian@ferryinn.com](mailto:adrian@ferryinn.com)

### St Magnus Day Service - 16th

The annual St. Magnus Day Service of Praise, commemorating the life and influence of St. Magnus, takes place at St. Magnus Church, Birsay at 19.30.

### Orkney Jazz Festival - 24th to 26th

Based at the Stromness Hotel, this is a weekend of mainly traditional jazz by visiting and local performers, which includes the now traditional Annual Jazz Festival Service of Praise at St. Magnus Church, Birsay, led by Bill Salmond's Louisiana Ragtime Band. t: (01856) 850298 f: (01856) 850610 [www.stromnesshotel.com](http://www.stromnesshotel.com)

### Captain E. E. Fresson, Pioneer Aviator. 75th Anniversary of Air Mail Services to Orkney

Captain Fresson revolutionised life in the islands by introducing Orkney's first air service and Britain's first air mail. Held in Orkney Museum, Tankerness House in Kirkwall. April – September 2009. Free Admission. t. (01856) 873191.

### The Adventures of Jack Renton Orkney's White Head Hunter

The amazing story of the survival of a young Stromness sailor, washed up on the Solomon Islands who 'goes native'. Held in Stromness Museum, 52 Alfred Street, in Stromness. April – September 2009. Admission Charge. t. (01856) 850025.

## May

### Rugby Sevens 2nd

Orkney Rugby Club Annual Sevens tournament [www.orkneyrhc.co.uk](http://www.orkneyrhc.co.uk)

### Norwegian Constitution Day Celebration - 17th

A programme of events celebrates Norway's Constitution Day. Parade of flag waving people from Kirkwall Pier at 14.30, along with piping, singing, dancing and other events.

### Orkney Folk Festival - 21st to 24th

The Orkney Folk Festival celebrates 27 years of bringing the best in modern and traditional folk music to Orkney. With visiting artists from around the globe and a healthy sprinkling of local musicians filling the island venues with live music. The festival includes ceilidhs, stomps, festival clubs, workshops and informal sessions. Based in Stromness with events also staged in the rural areas and smaller islands. t: (01856) 851331 [www.orkneyfolkfestival.com](http://www.orkneyfolkfestival.com)



St Magnus Festival

## June

### **The Orkney Fine Wine Festival 1st to 6th**

An informal celebration of good wine, food and the matching of the two. Now in its third year expect dinners and tastings with leading international winemakers, as well as informative and casual tasting events. [www.longship.co.uk](http://www.longship.co.uk)

### **The St Magnus Festival - 19th to 24th**

The prestigious St Magnus Festival, Orkney's midsummer celebration of the arts, is renowned for its unique blend of world-class performance and community participation. The Festival attracts capacity audiences from throughout the UK and further afield to events held in Kirkwall's magnificent St Magnus Cathedral and in other lovely venues throughout the Orkney islands. Artists appearing in 2009 include the Royal Scottish National Orchestra with French conductor Stéphane Denève, the Endellion String Quartet, French pianist Eric Le Sage, Scottish percussion virtuoso Colin Currie and accordion wizard James Crabb. Musical ensemble Psappha presents Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's intriguing chamber opera *The Lighthouse*, based on the Flannan Isles mystery. Running alongside the Festival, Orkney Conducting Course and St Magnus Composers' Course attract the cream of international young talent.

Contact: Angela Henderson, Festival Administrator, 60 Victoria Street, Kirkwall, KW15 1DN. t: (01856) 871445; e: [info@stmagnusfestival.com](mailto:info@stmagnusfestival.com) [www.stmagnusfestival.com](http://www.stmagnusfestival.com)

### **Taste of Orkney Ceilidh - 26th**

The ceilidh is a great opportunity to participate in the life of the County. Enjoy watching local performers and traditional Scottish dancing, with a supper of equally traditional Orkney fare.

### **Hoy Half Marathon - 14th**

Scotland's most scenic and friendly Half-Marathon. Various age categories, including veterans, and children's events for those aged 5-17. Transport provided from the Orkney Mainland.

### **Stromness Golf Club Competition - 20th**

Midnight foursomes, starting approx 20.00. Enjoy the light night and Orcadian hospitality at its best! [www.stromnessgc.co.uk](http://www.stromnessgc.co.uk)

### **Stronsay Sailing Regatta - 5th**

### **Finstown Regatta - 13th**

### **Round Shapinsay Yacht Race - 20th**

### **Rousay Sailing Regatta - 28th**

## July

### **Orkney Craftsmen's Guild - throughout July**

An exhibition and sale of Crafts which is held to show the large variety of crafts produced by locals including jewellery, knitwear, photography, cross stitch, felt, sheepskins, cards & many more.

### **Stromness Golf Club, Shopping Week Open - 19th**

Men, Women & Juniors. Visitors welcome – please bring handicap certificate. [www.stromnessgc.co.uk](http://www.stromnessgc.co.uk)

### **Orkney Golf Club, Kirkwall Open - 25th (men) & 26th July (ladies)**

An annual open 36 hole golf competition. No handicap restrictions. £15 entry includes lunch, free drink and golf ball. A fun day and usually a fun sociable evening! [www.orkneygolfclub.co.uk](http://www.orkneygolfclub.co.uk)

### **Stromness Shopping Week - 19th to 25th**

60th Anniversary of this Community Gala Week run by local volunteers, with many varied events involving the community and visitors. The emphasis is on family fun, with lots of sporting and novelty competitions, music, sideshows, children's entertainment, and a firework celebration on the last night. The Orkney Handcrafts Show organised by Orkney SWRI and the Stromness Ladies Flower Club Show run from Monday – Friday during Shopping Week. [www.stromnessshoppingweek.co.uk](http://www.stromnessshoppingweek.co.uk)

### **Longhope Sailing Regatta - 4th**

### **Holm yacht and single handed dinghy Regatta - 11th**

### **Stromness Sailing Regatta - 18th**

### **Westray Sailing Regatta - 25th**

### **Annual Agricultural Shows**

When the farming community meet to exhibit, compete and socialise. With stock showing, judging and show jumping, a wide variety of trade stands and stalls, and sporting events, there is entertainment all day for all tastes.

### **The Sanday Show - 31st**

The island's judging of cattle, sheep, horses, poultry, dogs & goats. There are also trade stands and industrial & horticultural shows exhibiting vegetables, baking and hand crafts etc.

## August

### **The East Mainland Show - 1st**

This show takes place in St Andrews, Tankerness and includes an annual livestock show, pet events, and trade stands. The parade of show winners and presentation of the champion starts around 15.00.

### **The Shapinsay Show - 4th**

### **The South Ronaldsay & Burray Show - 5th**

This show takes place at the St Margaret's Hope Community School.

### **The West Mainland Show - 6th**

This event takes place in the village of Dounby.

### **The County Show - 8th**

This is the biggest event in the agricultural calendar, with stock showing, judging and show jumping, a wide variety of stands and stalls, sporting events, and entertainment. Family fun and a real glimpse of the rural life of the county. This event takes place in the Bignold Park in Kirkwall.

### **Riding of the Marches - 9th**

A recently revived tradition, over 500 years old, celebrating the granting of Kirkwall's Charter as a Royal Burgh. Horses and riders process via Scapa Beach, to re-assert the Kirkwallians' ancient right of Admiralty and Jurisdiction.

### **Stromness Golf Club Amateur Open - 1st (men) & 2nd (ladies & juniors)**

Visitors welcome – please bring handicap certificate. This competition gets booked up early in the season – please send completed entry form, available from [www.stromnessgc.co.uk](http://www.stromnessgc.co.uk) ASAP.

### **Kirkwall Sailing Regatta - 31st July, 1st & 2nd August**

### **Holm Sailing Regatta - 15th**

### **Port to Port Sailing Race - 16th**

### **Mowat Memorial trophy (round Gairsay yacht race) - 29th**

### **Vintage Rally Show - 9th**

Fascinating display of vintage cars and tractors, steam engines and motorcycles, held at the Orkney Auction Mart. [www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/orkneyvintageclub](http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/orkneyvintageclub)

### **County Flower & Vegetable Show - 15th to 16th**

Flower and vegetable show including floral art and juvenile sections

Boys' ploughing match



### **South Ronaldsay Boys' Ploughing Match & Festival of the Horse - 15th**

This spectacular event has its origins in the days when heavy horse ploughing matches were held. Children dress in beautiful, ornate costumes to replicate the horse in its finery and the boys plough with miniature ploughs in the sand. [www.clix.to/boysploughingmatch](http://www.clix.to/boysploughingmatch)

### **Orkney Beer Festival - 22nd to 24th**

A chance to try out a wide range of guest beers and cask-conditioned ales, and Orkney's own ales, based in Stromness Hotel. t: (01856) 850298 f: (01856) 850610, [www.stromnesshotel.com](http://www.stromnesshotel.com)

## September

### **Orkney Middle Distance Triathlon - early September**

This middle distance triathlon is a Scottish ranked (open water) event and is one of only two such events in Scotland. This middle distance triathlon promises to be a unique experience, taking competitors around many world heritage sites on the Island. The swim takes place at Scapa Beach in Kirkwall. Distances: 1.9km swim / 100km Bike / 20km Run [www.orkneytriathlon.co.uk](http://www.orkneytriathlon.co.uk)

### **Orkney International Science Festival - 3rd to 9th**

A kaleidoscopic mix of fresh insights, challenging ideas and lively activities. Topics range from astronomy to zoology, from renewable energy to rural transport, with world-class speakers from many places. Activities include talks and exhibitions – plus concerts, outings, art, music and ceilidhs.

**As part of the Scottish Homecoming - 'For A' That':** A presentation of the earth charter in relation to Robert Burns's vision of respect for all living creatures. With spectacular images of Australian wildlife and environment, the Mussared & Scott Families from New South Wales, and music from Kirkwall Pipe Band. [www.oisf.org](http://www.oisf.org)

### **Errol Bruce & Kemp Cup Sailing Race - 12th**

### **Chrysanthemum, Dahlia & Industrial Show - 19th & 20th**

Chrysanthemum and dahlia show. Also handicrafts, baking, floral art and juvenile handicrafts.

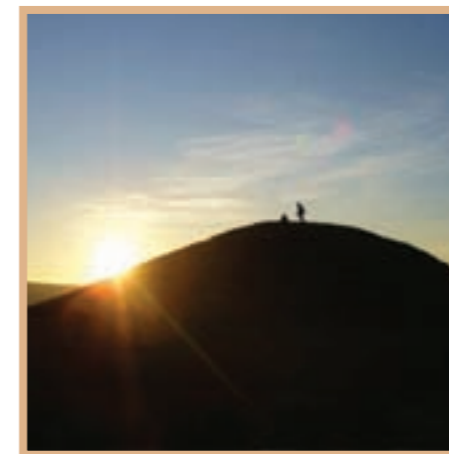
## October

### **Harvest Homes throughout the county**

The annual celebration of the summer's bounty, with prize-giving for the local agricultural show winners, with eating, drinking, and lively traditional music and dancing.

### **Close of Brown Trout season**

Time to hang up the gear till next year!



Winter Solstice at Maeshowe

## November

### **Maeshowe Winter Solstice**

From November to late January you can view a webcam broadcast of the light from the winter sunset shining into the ancient chamber of Maeshowe. [www.maeshowe.co.uk](http://www.maeshowe.co.uk)

## December

### **Norwegian Lights, Christmas Tree Lightings - first week in various towns & villages**

Locals gather to see the lighting-up of magnificent Christmas tree outside St Magnus Cathedral gifted by Orkney's twinned area of Norway, Hordaland. Other tree lightings throughout the week include Stromness, Westray, Dounby, St Margaret's Hope and Finstown with gatherings around their trees.

### **Messiah - 14th**

St Magnus Festival Chorus and Orkney Camerata combine to perform Handel's masterpiece in St Magnus Cathedral. For further information contact St Magnus Festival, 60 Victoria Street, Kirkwall, KW15 1DN. t: (01856) 871445 e: [info@stmagnusfestival.com](mailto:info@stmagnusfestival.com)

### **The Ba - 25th**

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### **Hogmanay Celebrations - 31st**

Crowds gather in Kirkwall and Stromness before 'the bells' at midnight. The clock of St. Magnus Cathedral on the Kirk Green, and the ships' whistles in Stromness Harbour let us know when to raise our glasses, and to go 'First Footing' to bring in the New Year in traditional style.



St Magnus Cathedral



Middle distance triathlon

## All year

**Wrigley Sisters Centre of Music** every Saturday traditional music sessions, every Thursday at 19.00 the Orkney Strathspey & Reel hold practices playing traditional Scottish music with a particular emphasis on Orcadian music. Visitors welcome – playing or listening. Every Friday night varied music sessions including jazz, blues, singer sessions. [office@wrigleysisters.com](mailto:office@wrigleysisters.com)

**Orkney Library** various events throughout the year and Free Internet Access. Regular Bookstart Rhymetime events (Fri mornings, once a month), Storytime for children (Sat mornings, once a month), Kirkwall Reading Group (1st Wednesday, lunchtime of each month), Stromness Reading Group (Thursday evening of each month). [www.orkneylibrary.org.uk](http://www.orkneylibrary.org.uk)

### **The Orkney Ramblers' Club**

meet on alternate Sundays throughout the year. Walks vary from 5 to 10 miles exploring the coast, hills & moorlands of Orkney's mainland and in summer months trips to the outer isles. All welcome. Contact Mrs Brenda Blunn on (01856) 761 085. [www.orkneypics.com/ramblers](http://www.orkneypics.com/ramblers)

**Orkney Field Club** hold monthly meetings during the summer in widely varying localities on all aspects of Orkney's wildlife. Contact Dick Matson, Secretary, t. (01856) 751 426. See OCEAN Environmental Calendar for other events.

**The Pier Arts Centre** in Stromness holds various exhibitions throughout the year. [www.pierartscentre.com](http://www.pierartscentre.com)

**Farmers' Market** usually takes place on the last Saturday of each month in the West Castle Street Car Park, Kirkwall.

### **Orkney Accordion & Fiddle Club**

musical get-together and practices every Wednesday at 20.00 in the Ayre Hotel. Visitors welcome – playing or listening. Contact Peter Brass (01856) 811273 or the Ayre Hotel (01856) 873001.

**Orkney Triathlon Club** holds events throughout the Summer. Time trials (10miles) every Wednesday evening at 19.00m, meeting at Firth School. Contact Cycle Orkney on (01856) 875777 or Becky May (01856) 875183 for further details.

### **Sea Angling Association Competitions**

Various sea angling competitions take place from May to September. For details go to [www.anglingorkney.co.uk](http://www.anglingorkney.co.uk)