

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SAINT MAGNUS – AN ORKNEY EXPERIENCE

Wednesday 3rd to Monday 8th April 2019



Orkney, an archipelago just off the north of Scotland, is rich in history from Neolithic archaeology to Viking times and across the centuries; the evidence is all around you there. Its life has been fed by a deep spirituality – the martyrdom of the Norse Saint Magnus, the 20th C. poetry of George Mackay Brown, the simplicity of the Italian POW chapel, and the spirit that somehow suffuses the whole of Orcadian life.

The College ran a course here several years ago. We (modestly) think it was a huge success – and participants talk of it still. The opening up of *The St Magnus Way*, a pilgrimage route through Mainland Orkney, has encouraged us to think now might be time for another one. We hope that you might agree!

Orkney has much to offer – beautiful and varied scenery with the water never far from sight; a thriving musical and artistic life; sagas, myths and story telling that come across the centuries; a place of undoubted refreshment and renewal. And in Kirkwall, we have the most northerly United Reformed Church, the Peedie Kirk.

We shall be getting out and about in Orkney but also have space for being together at the lovely, modern accommodation of the Kristin Linklater Voice Centre, on a hillside with panoramic views over lochs, fields, coastal cliffs and bays. (Linklater is Professor Emerita of the Arts Division of Columbia University).

The course team is led by Jack Dyce, Emeritus Professor of Nordic Theology in the College, together with Sue Kirkbride, minister of the Peedie Kirk URC. Sue and her husband live and work in Orkney (where he has opened up the local post office in Finstown) and Jack studied Viking Studies with Orkney & Shetland studies through Orkney College. The programme will draw however on a whole host of local experience and knowledge and understanding from different corners of the Orcadian community.

Costs are still being explored though we would aim to keep these as low as possible. We are mindful that participants will have travel to pay for. Active ministers of the URC are reminded that, if they act NOW in discussing this with their Synod Training Officer, they may allocate EM3 funding for this year (if not already spent), 2019 and 2020.

If you are as keen on this as we are, do let us know by registering your interest through an email to Scottishcollege@urcscotland.org.uk as early as you can – now, if at all possible – so that we can get on with the practical planning.

*‘A world where the bonds of sworn friendship cannot be broken’
(Pálsson and Edwards’ introduction to the *Orkneyinga Saga*)*

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