



ORKNEY ARCHAEOLOGY FESTIVAL

9-13 September

Welcome to Orkney Archaeology Festival 2026

A celebration of discovery, community and the remarkable stories written into Orkney's landscape. Across the islands, this year's programme brings together expert insight, hands-on experiences and unforgettable opportunities to explore the places, people and ideas that make Orkney one of Europe's most extraordinary archaeological destinations.

Whether you are a local resident, a returning visitor or discovering Orkney's archaeology for the first time, we hope the festival inspires curiosity, sparks conversation and offers fresh ways to connect with the islands' rich heritage.



BOOKINGS: For full details of all events, including for booking and buying tickets where this is required, go to the festival website: <https://orkneyarchaeologyfestival.org/>



ACCESS DETAILS: See the website for individual events.

Diary of festival events

Events running throughout, before or after the festival



10.00am-11.00am daily until 18 September

HES Ranger Walk – Stones of Stenness

Join a Historic Environment Scotland ranger at the Stones of Stenness for an introduction to one of Orkney's most iconic Neolithic monuments. *Free.*



1.00pm-2.00pm daily until 18 September

HES Ranger Walk – Ring of Brodgar

Discover the archaeology and setting of the Ring of Brodgar on a guided ranger-led walk. *Free.*



3-9 September

Orkney International Science Festival (OISF)

On Tuesday, the OISF has three talks on the Ness, plus the Toast to Lord Colin Renfrew from Professor Mark Edmonds during the OISF lunch. See: <https://oisf.org/>



9-18 September | 10.00am-4.30pm

Hall of Clestrain, Orphir — Archaeology Open Site

Watch exploratory archaeological investigations uncovering the origins and development of the Hall of Clestrain, the family home of Arctic explorer John Rae. *Free.*



13-28 September

Northlight Gallery, Stromness — Concrete and Stone Exhibition

An exhibition by Mark Wrigley exploring the relationship between concrete, stone and Orkney's landscapes and heritage. *Free.*

Wednesday 9 September



9.30am-12.30pm & 2.00pm-4.00pm

St Magnus Centre — Make a Viking Leather Bag

Learn traditional leatherworking skills and create your own Viking-inspired belt purse. **OISF event.** £20, *booking essential.*



10.00am-11.00am

St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall — Ground Floor Highlights Tour

Explore the cathedral's history, architecture, memorial stones and stained glass on a guided highlights tour. £10.40, *no need to book.*



11.00am-12.00noon

Ness of Brodgar public car park – Tour of the Ness with Nick Card

Join Ness of Brodgar director Nick Card on a walk around the site, to learn about its position within a wider landscape, and to hear at first hand the latest news of what they've now found. **OISF event.** £15, *booking essential.*



1.30pm-3.00pm

Community Room, Sanday Community School — Life at the Coast 200 Years Ago

Tom Dawson explores William Daniell's coastal voyage from Land's End to Orkney and the changing shoreline heritage of Britain. *Free.*



2.00pm-3.30pm & 5.00pm-6.30pm

Orkney Museum, Kirkwall — Behind the Scenes at Orkney Museum

Enjoy exclusive access to collections stores and artefacts rarely seen by the public. £25 *booking essential.*

Thursday 10 September



9.15am-All Day

Papa Westray — Guided Archaeology Walk on Papay

A full-day archaeological tour including the Knap of Howar and a boat trip to the Holm of Papay. £95 *including boat trip, but not travel to Papa Westray, booking essential.*



10.00am-11.00am

St Magnus Cathedral — Ground Floor Highlights Tour

A guided tour showcasing the cathedral's most significant features and stories. £10.40, *no need to book.*



11.00am-12.15pm & 2.00pm-3.15pm

St Magnus Cathedral — Upper Levels Tour

Venture into hidden areas of the cathedral and climb to the tower for panoramic views. £15.60 *booking essential.*



11.00am-12.30pm

UHI Orkney — Emerging Research at the UHI Archaeology Institute

Meet students and staff and hear about current archaeological research projects. *Free.*



2.00pm-4.00pm

Bay of Ireland, Stenness — Submerged Landscapes Walk

Dr Scott Timpany leads an exploration of Orkney's drowned prehistoric landscape. Meet Finstown carpark. *Free, booking essential.*



2.00pm-3.30pm & 5.00pm-6.30pm

Behind the Scenes at Orkney Museum

Discover how museum collections are researched, preserved and interpreted. £25, *booking essential.*



3.00pm-4.30pm

King Street Halls — Managing World Heritage for Local Communities

Dr Anne Allen (Durham Castle and Cathedral UNESCO WHS) discusses community-centred approaches to World Heritage management. *Free.*



7.00pm–8.30pm

King Street Halls — David Drever Memorial Lecture

Professor Colin Richards examines V. Gordon Childe, Skara Brae and the development of Neolithic archaeology in Orkney. *Free.*

Friday 11 September



9.15am–All Day

Papa Westray — Guided Archaeology Walk on Papay

A second opportunity to explore the archaeology of Papa Westray and Holm of Papay. *£95 including boat trip but not travel to Papa Westray, booking essential.*



10.00am–11.30am

Behind the Scenes at Orkney Museum

Exclusive access to collections and archaeology stores. *£25 booking essential.*



11.00am–12.30pm

Tomb of the Eagles — Walk and Talk with Professor Colin Richards

Explore the celebrated chambered tomb and hear about its future as a community heritage site. *£10, booking essential.*



2.00pm–3.00pm

St Magnus Cathedral — Historic Graveyard Tour

Discover the lives and stories of notable individuals buried in the cathedral kirkyard. *£10.40, no need to book.*



2.00pm–4.00pm

Burgar Hill & Costa Hill — Energy Walk

Dan Lee and Neil Kermode explore the archaeology and history of wind power in Orkney. *Free, booking essential.*



2.00pm–2.45pm

King Street Halls — In Hind Sight

Kath Page presents new research into Neolithic red deer movement and deposition practices. *Free.*



3.00pm–4.00pm

King Street Halls — Shaping Scotland's Past

Dr Helen Spencer discusses archaeological research frameworks and island collaborations. *Free.*



6.00pm–8.00pm

Scapa Beach — Viking Experience

Enjoy Viking food, storytelling, crafts and games in a family-friendly living history event. *£25/35/45 booking essential.*



7.00pm–8.30pm

St Magnus Centre — The Cairns: Twenty Years of Discovery

Martin Carruthers reflects on UHI's final excavation season at The Cairns Iron Age site. *Free.*

Saturday 12 September



10.00am–12.30pm

Pierowall, Westray — Discovering Pierowall

Hazel Moore and Graham Wilson guide a walk exploring archaeological sites and research in Westray. *Free, booking essential.*



11.00am–1.00pm & 2.00pm–4.00pm

Lyness, Hoy — Explore Lyness and surrounding area

Discover wartime heritage, photography and local history with artist and photographer, Mark Wrigley. *Free, booking essential.*



11.00am–3.00pm

King Street Halls — Ness of Brodgar Public Family-friendly Drop-In

Meet the Ness team and take part in hands-on activities and discussions about the site's future. *Free.*



1.00pm–4.00pm

Wideford Hill — Immerse Yourself in the Neolithic

Experience the Neolithic landscape and visit the remarkable Wideford Hill chambered cairn. *£15/12 booking essential.*



7.00pm–8.30pm

King Street Halls — Skaill Farm Lecture

A UHI Archaeology Institute presentation exploring current research linked to Skaill Farm. *Free.*

Sunday 13 September



11.00am–4.00pm

HMS Tern — Come Train with the Fleet Air Arm!

Take part in interactive wartime-themed activities and discover life on a Royal Navy air station during the Second World War. *Free/£5 for dark room event.*



2.00pm–3.15pm & 3.45pm–5.00pm

St Magnus Cathedral — Upper Levels Tour

A final opportunity to explore the cathedral's hidden spaces and tower. *£15.60 booking essential.*



2.00pm–3.15pm

St Magnus Centre — Music, Magic and Mash-ups

A Magico-musical culture exchange in the Viking World: a talk by Kate Fletcher and Corwen Broch, illustrated with musical performance. *Free.*



3.00pm–5.30pm

Barony Mill & Birsay Community Hall — Workshop: Step into Orkney's food heritage

Discover Orkney food heritage through milling, storytelling and hands-on traditional baking. *£35, booking essential.*



Key festival locations

King Street Halls, 4 King Street, Kirkwall, KW15 1NN
St Magnus Centre, Palace Road, Kirkwall KW15 1PA.



For all other locations, see the festival website.

Thank you

Our thanks go to everyone who has helped make Orkney Archaeology Festival 2026 possible: the speakers, guides, volunteers, venues, partner organisations, local communities and all those who have given their time, energy and support. Your enthusiasm and generosity are at the heart of the festival.

Specifically we want to thank Orkney Archaeology Society, UHI Archaeology Institute, Historic Environment Scotland, Orkney Islands Council and Orkney Time Travel.

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HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

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Looking ahead to 2027

We look forward to welcoming you back in 2027 for another inspiring festival of archaeology, discovery and shared celebration across Orkney. Watch the festival website for more details: <https://orkneyarchaeologyfestival.org/> or follow us on Social Media.