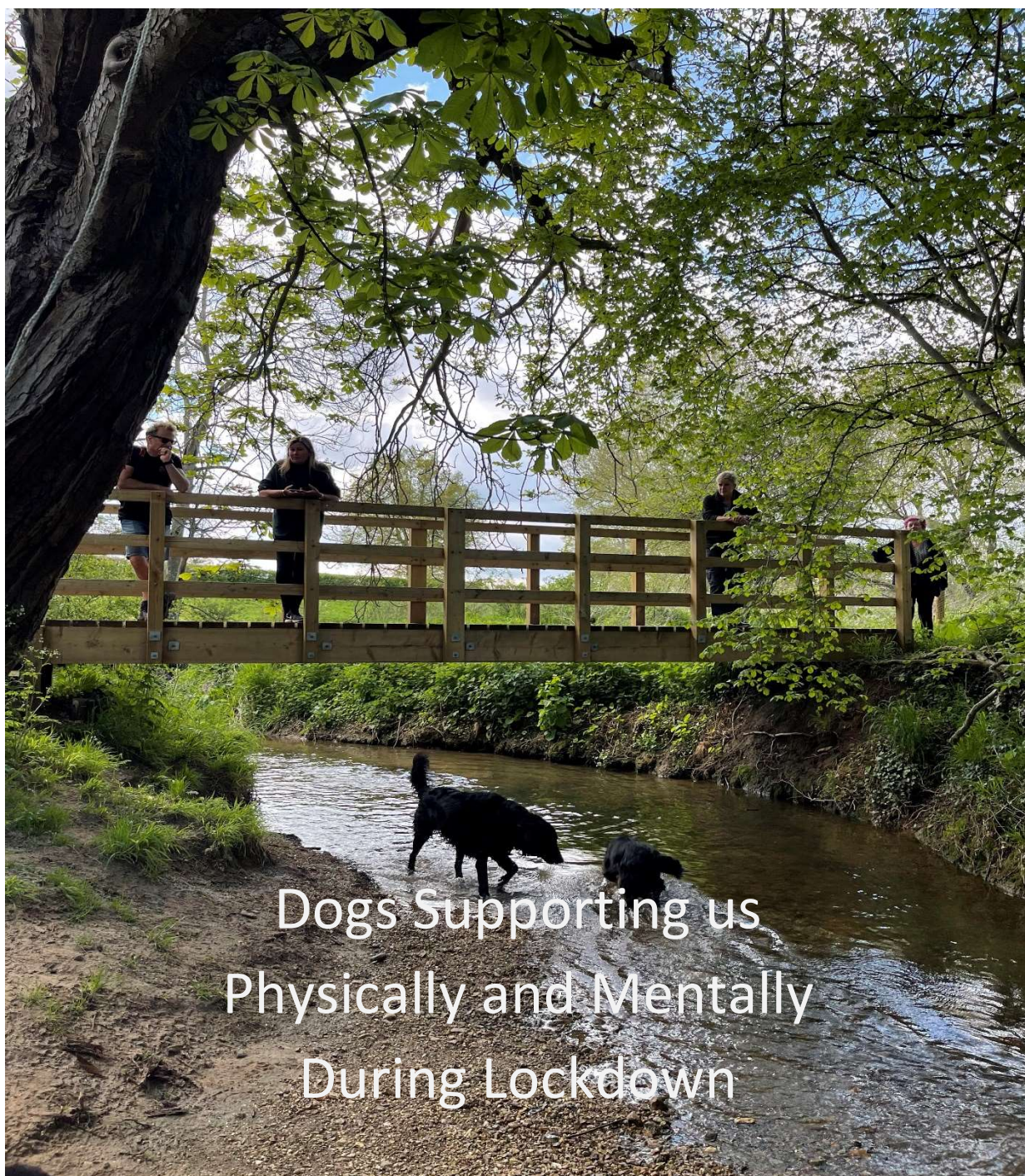




# The Flame



Dogs Supporting us  
Physically and Mentally  
During Lockdown





## DEAR FIREBIRDS,

I hope this newsletter finds you and yours well and in good spirits.

As always, a big thank you to the contributors, who – despite the excitements of tennis, football and Olympics – have found time to put 'pen to paper'.

We hear from Jane Sawyer, who is telling us how she arranged a fundraiser for 'Mind' and found out what a difficult time Charities are having at the moment.

Jane Orr, who is one of the helpers with the vaccination programme, is sharing her experiences with us of vaccinating a younger generation, compared to the 'oldies' at the beginning of the programme.

Vicky Nugée, our Chairman, has been thinking about London's Street Food through the ages and has come up with some very interesting tit-bits. It makes me want to go out straight away and find a cart with an 'organic quinoa gluten free vegan wrap with samphire pickle' (please forgive me, I know this would not be most people's choice).

Last but not least, Georgina Hall is telling us a bit more about her recent staycation holiday to Orkney. What can I say, it definitely made me want to put my travel boots on to visit this wonderful place.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and have an enjoyable summer.

With best wishes

Erika Gloyn

[firebirds.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:firebirds.newsletter@gmail.com)

## FORTHCOMING FIREBIRDS EVENTS

### AUTUMN 2021

There are currently no plans for Autumn/Winter 2021 activities, but El will let us know about future events after the summer holidays.

### MOST RECENT EVENT

The garden visit to Hilary Goodridge's Garden on 23<sup>rd</sup> July was a great success. Vicky Nugée and Georgina Hall have very kindly supplied prompt written and photographic reports for all to enjoy.



### VISIT THE FIREBIRDS WEBSITE

on  
[www.firebirds.london](http://www.firebirds.london)

The views and opinions expressed by the authors and those providing comments are theirs alone and do not reflect the views and opinions of the Editor or the Firebirds Committee.

# BEING INSPIRED

by Jane Sawyer (Scientific Instrument Makers)

Times are challenging and it is disappointing that we still are not able to connect more normally with people, despite the vaccination programme. There is so much information flying around, that it is hard not to get embroiled with it all, but I have found it doesn't help in any way. We are where we are - wherever that may be.

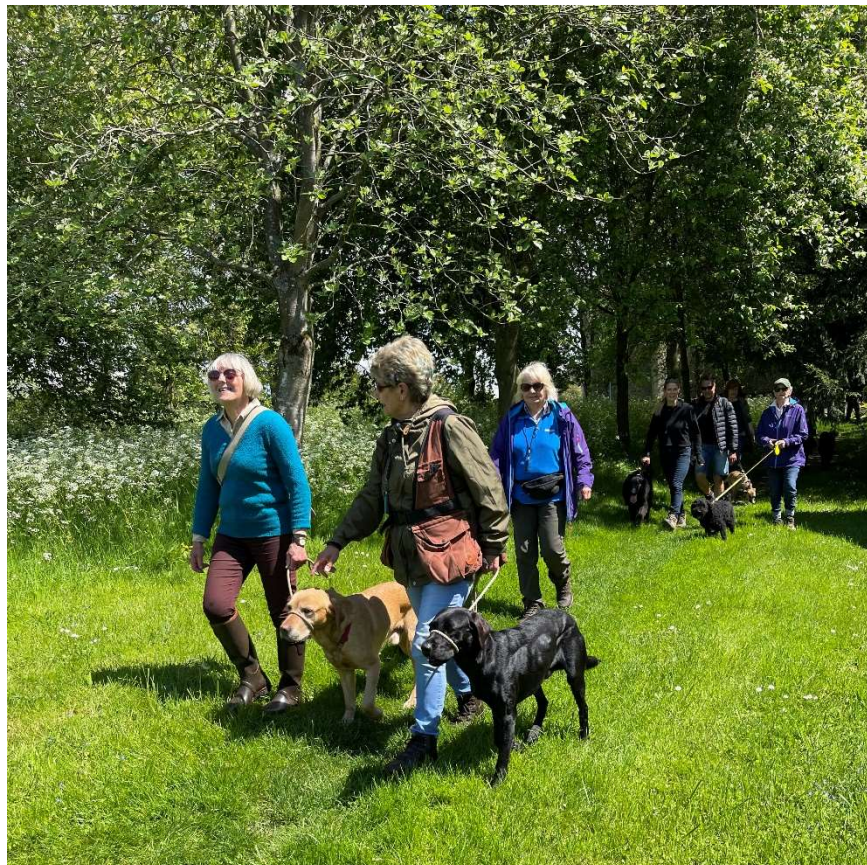
May 17th was an easing milestone, we were allowed gatherings outside of up to 30 people, and out of that was born my idea. A Dog Walk followed by afternoon tea in my garden.

Mainly it was to help people get together again (even friends were struggling with the idea of it!), but also to raise money for Mind. The inspiration came from an article I read in the Kennel Club newsletter. It was telling us how our dogs have helped us so much during lockdown, both physically and mentally.

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, we set off from my house, thirty of us, keeping to Covid guidelines. We left from my front drive, crossing the road over into the Church yard and proceeded for an hour and a half walking through public country paths, surrounded by fabulous views of the surrounding countryside. We eventually got to the gate at the top end of my garden, which is a paddock I have been "wilding". I am very fortunate to live in such a beautiful area in Suffolk. We arrived to sandwiches and cake, all individually wrapped, tea and coffee. With tables and chairs strategically placed in groups of six, it really looked like a Tea Garden. The banter and laughter was just lovely to hear. I did ask for a donation of £10 to Mind, some donated slightly more. In all, I raised £700 that afternoon. I was delighted and so was everyone else. It was such a simple but effective thing to do.



There is a bitter sweet ending to this. I received an email from Justgiving thanking me for what I had done. The money raised had put me in their top 15% of fundraisers in May. £700! It just shows you how dire things are in the Charity world.







## FIREBIRDS' VISIT TO HILARY AND MICHAEL GOODRIDGE'S GARDEN

By Vicky Nugée (Weavers) and Photos by Georgina Hall (Water Conservators)

What a joy it was to meet Firebird friends in the flesh! (That sounds like the opening of a saga – but I'll keep it short!) After such a long time it was a great pleasure to be catching up on news and gossip with real people who were neither muted nor interrupted by other conversations. The weather was particularly kind to us as the enervating heat of the previous few days had given way to pleasant English summer.

Hilary's garden (I can call it Hilary's as she's definitely the head gardener) was looking wonderful in the drowsy afternoon sunshine. I won't go into much detail about the flowers as Georgina Hall's super photographs speak for themselves. Hilary has divided the space into 'rooms' so that there's a gravel garden with grasses, a White garden, a millennium garden, a vegetable garden, water features, including two wells, all divided up by majestic specimen trees and huge flower beds – delphiniums 9 feet high! It is all a great testimony to many hours daily, for years, of Hilary's dedicated hard work and expert knowledge. I think we all appreciated that.



We had tea in the garden – three sorts of home-made cake! – under the shade of an enormous beech tree, and it was all perfectly delightful. This was a particularly good gentle introduction to meeting in groups again and I was glad to see a good turnout, though saddened that two couples had to drop out because they'd been 'pinged'. I think we all went home with renewed determination to do war on our weeds and to fill our beds with colour.

Thank you so much to Hilary who graciously welcomed us to her garden, made cake for us, and gave us a perfectly charming afternoon.





## MIKE AND I BOUGHT OUR HOUSE 33 YEARS AGO ...

By Hilary Goodridge (Arbitrators)

Mike and I bought our house 33 years ago. The garden had quite a bit of storm damage from the 1987 storm plus a lot of stinging nettles and mares tails. There were ducks on the decorative pond and chickens wandering about plus a sheep in a small paddock when we first viewed the house and garden.

We were lucky enough to start off with an amazing gardener called Graham Titchmarsh, who is distantly related to Alan, and certainly had the genes. Graham taught me so much and helped stock the garden with unusual shrubs and specimen trees. Graham worked for us for 16 years and in that time we created the millennium parterre garden with pond, the gravel garden and the White garden, apart from creating new mixed and herbaceous borders, the snowdrop and hellebore apple tree walk, the Laburnum walk and various arbors and the herb garden and stumpery. Graham got married and, unfortunately for us, moved to Devon. We worked our way through a succession of unsuccessful gardeners, but now have three lovely gardeners who work for four hours each once a fortnight. One works on the vegetables and weeding, another the heavy work such as compost heaps and digging out roots, mulching etc. the third is very knowledgeable, so we design together and do all the pruning etc. I would say I am full time and passionate about the garden. Mike mows all the lawns and is general maintenance man, with pond pumps, fencing etc.

The incentive is opening the garden to the public through the National Garden Scheme, now only for groups between 10 and 50. Except during lockdown. However, when we were allowed last summer, we invited couples by appointment to visit the garden for free and I managed to sell around £1000 worth of plants.

We have been opening the garden for very nearly 30 years. We went to a funeral and someone suggested we opened our garden. He opened his; so we went to look and decided our garden was better than his. This gave us confidence to do so. We haven't looked back and have raised thousands of pounds for charity. The NGS raises money for nursing charities, especially Marie Curie, McMillan, Hospices and many others, such as Parkinson's. Tea money can go to a charity of your choice.

There is an NGS website and you can see virtual gardens and find out gardens open near you. Well worth googling.

I was working, teaching in Adult Education, when we first opened so had less time to garden.

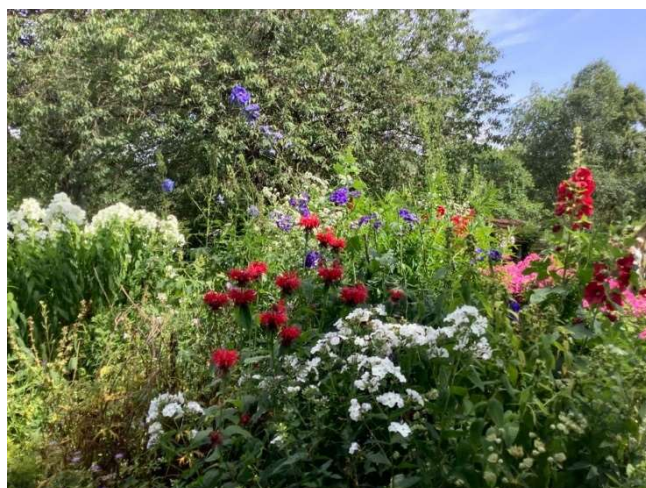


I also had two horses and was competing at dressage. I was Mayoress for a year and had plenty of functions to attend with Mike, including being Mistress Arbitrator of course. I also played, and still play, tennis twice a week and do embroidery in the winter months, so a pretty full life.

On retiring from work I realised selling plants was an excellent way to raise money. So I started to grow plants from seed and divide plants in the garden and pot them up.

I sold one of my horses and the other one died of old age last October, hence I now concentrate on the garden. The garden kept both of us sane throughout lockdown.

It was wonderful to have a group of Firebirds and Pheonix Past Masters for tea recently, but disappointing that several couples had to isolate, so missed out. Thank you to those that were able to come and enjoy the afternoon.





# VACCINATIONS IN GLOUCESTER

by Dr Jane Orr (Glovers)

As some of you know, I have been a Covid vaccinator since January. I started working at Gloucester Royal Hospital which was a good training and also a good way to get to meet other healthcare professionals as most of the patients were hospital and care home staff. There were other people too – I tried to work out what one solemn gentleman, dressed all in black, did for a living, but then it became obvious – undertakers are also professionals at risk of catching Covid due to their work.

After about a month, I began to find that the amount of paperwork that we had to get through with each patient was becoming rather frustrating. We took 10-15 minutes per patient and I was sure that there must be more efficient ways of working. It was then that an opportunity appeared to start working at a Community Centre – what a difference! Here, we average 4 minutes for a first jab and 3 minutes for a second one (there are less questions). However, we still give everyone time to ask any questions they might have, and I hope they do not feel they are on an impersonal conveyor belt. It is extremely rewarding work, as so many people are genuinely excited and delighted to be there. The other staff and volunteers are lovely colleagues. One of the volunteers recognised me from my days as Cadets' Medical Officer, Sandhurst, in 1976! As he is in charge of the cake and biscuits during our coffee break, I get very well looked after!

Over the last few weeks, there has been a very noticeable change as we have moved onto younger patients. Most are again delighted to be there, but we have had some dragged in by a parent or friend in floods of tears or shaking all over. Whereas an older person might say "I am not going to look as I don't like needles", the younger ones say "I suffer from severe needle-phobia". In one day, we had 18 out of 1,200 patients faint, mostly immediately after their injections. It can become catching, so that if one person passes out in the post-jab waiting area, we can guarantee that at least one other will join them on the floor. No-one has been hurt and they can usually go home after half an hour, but we are having to reduce the number of injections planned for each day as it is quite time-consuming.

At the end of April, the county of Gloucestershire was the leading local authority in the country with the highest percentage of the population vaccinated. We have dropped down slightly since then as some of our supplies were diverted to other areas that were behind us. This was obviously frustrating as we had to cancel clinics at short notice, but we are still in the top 25% of the country.

I do hope that you have all now had at least your first jab and that any side effects were short-lived. If anyone wants to discuss the vaccination programme with me, please get in touch.



JANE IN ACTION

# LONDON'S STREET FOOD – A BRIEF HISTORY

by Vicky Nugée (Weavers)

Cravings for London's street food seem to be insatiable and, much like the waistbands of its patrons, future expansion is guaranteed. *'Time Out'* lists 30 best street food markets and food halls, showing that, Covid aside, Londoners are really keen to eat on the hoof. However, this foodie phenomenon is not a new fad; its roots can be traced back through the history of the City of London to Roman times.

## Roman London: Oysters aplenty

Many of the inhabitants of Londinium did not have access to a kitchen and so were forced to get their sustenance on the streets. Street vendors quite literally fuelled London's growing society, and their food became the primary source of nourishment for lower class citizens. Unfortunately, there isn't much evidence of the variety of street food, but Roman excavations within the Square Mile nearly always include oyster shells – a ubiquitous food eaten by the lower classes at a time when the shellfish was more freely available in British waters.

Aptly, the site considered the centre of Roman London is now Leadenhall Market, formerly a 14<sup>th</sup> Century meat bazaar and still today a source of food for hungry City types.

## Medieval London: Hot shepe's fete and strabery rype

The tradition of street food continued through the middle ages, where we have evidence in this 15<sup>th</sup> Century poem *London Lickpenny* of the variety available and the din caused by competing vendors:

*"Hot pescods!" one can cry,  
"Strabery rype, and chery in the ryse!" ...  
Then come there one, and cried "Hot shepes fete!" ...  
One cried, "Ribes of befe, and many a pie!"*

But alas! The hungry visitor to London in the poem was foiled by the business acumen of the sellers. Oysters were still cried in all parts of the streets as well as mackerel, codfish, bread, ale and wine. Hot codlings (baked apples) were also popular.

## Stuart and Georgian London: Cherries and filth

According to Liza Picard's *Restoration London* many street sellers of this era carried their wares on their heads, leaving the food horribly exposed to birds and anything flung out of an upstairs window. With all this filth around, cherries were a welcome sweetener and were sold on sticks to the cry of



'Cherry Ripe-ripe-ripe!' This cry is echoed in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century song by Robert Herrick:

*Cherry ripe, cherry ripe, / Ripe I cry, / Full and fair ones /  
Come and buy.*

Cakes and pastries were available everywhere, and the ditty about the Muffin Man (who lives on Drury Lane) was first recorded in the late Georgian period. There are drawings and etchings which show vendors selling pickled Newcastle salmon from a head-mounted basket, the nut woman with her sturdy barrow, and a Turk trading rhubarb. Street hawkers paid no rates or taxes and would move around the town, often visiting the customer's house. Their lives made interesting subject matter for contemporary writers and artists, and *The Shrimp Girl* remains one of Hogarth's most famous works.



## Victorian London: Whelks, pea soup and hot eels

During Victorian times London's population boomed at an unprecedented rate. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century there were about 865,000 Londoners, and by 1871 there were over 3 million. The new London crowds were predominantly industrial workers, and they needed to be fed. Just like the Romans, they had little access to cooking facilities, and so the demand for London street food grew rapidly. It is thought that there were over 6,000 vendors working in the city, serving up a veritable feast of pea soup, hot eels and pickled whelks as well as more familiar offerings such as pies of all sorts. It was during the Victorian era that fish and chips first began to be sold together as a meal, although they had been available separately for some time. Charles Dickens mentions 'fried fish warehouses' in *Oliver Twist* and refers to 'husky chips of potato' in *A Tale of Two Cities*.

## 20<sup>th</sup> Century: cometh the hour, cometh the van

Street food in the early part of the century carried on much as in Victorian times, with warm, hearty British fare dominating the selection. There are some wonderful illustrations of London's street characters depicted on a set of cigarette cards from 1934:



*"Baked Chestnuts!" With the approach of autumn, the Baked Chestnut Man wheels his barrow with its glowing fire – over which the chestnuts pop and sizzle – to a frequented spot where the appetising smell of his wares tempts pennies from the pockets of the passers-by.*



*The Ice Cream Vendor – the old-fashioned ice-cream barrow is dying hard, despite the rivalry of mass-production. Ice-cream 'merchants' were usually Italian and gaudy representations of Lake Como and the Rialto decorated his stall. Invariably called 'Johnnie', he met the demands of his youthful clientele, of messenger boys and the like – to whom ice-cream makes an irresistible appeal – with exemplary patience and good humour*

As London rebuilt itself after the destruction of the two World Wars, there was a new surge in population as a result of immigration. London became more multi-cultural, and its culinary tastes began to reflect this. Suddenly the fish and chip vans stood side-by-side with vendors offering interestingly spiced West Indian, American, Indian and Asian cuisine. Britons themselves became more cosmopolitan, thanks to more affordable travel, and people learned to be more adventurous with their food.



## To the present day

Whether walking round in togas or designer suits, London's population tends to be in a rush. We have historically worked long hours, sometimes for very little pay, so street food – cheaper and quicker than a proper 'sit down' meal – has long been a necessity for many. Luxuries like the humble microwave and even the electric oven are still very modern additions to kitchens. Less than a century ago many didn't even have a kitchen, let alone gadgetry.

The modern growth of street food might also reflect a sense that contemporary Londoners are simply tired of the 'haute cuisine' of the 1980s and 1990s. Paying a lot for very little is so passé. There is little doubt that the burger and kebab vans of the 1970s onwards did much to line and refill the stomachs of London clubbers during this era. Indeed, Britain has taken to the street food trend so much that it even has its own Oscars, The Street Food Awards, and has proved itself to be more than lucrative, with estimated earnings for the most successful vendors at around £1,000 a day.

The recent popularisation of street markets and their traders has been described as a revolution in eating. In reality, the preparation, purchase and consumption of food on the street has been a consistent feature in London for thousands of years. It is the types of food served that reflect the state of modern day London, a demographic with both varied and refined tastes. You can probably still find a sheep's foot for sale. But move along one van and you'll be offered an organic quinoa gluten free vegan wrap with samphire pickle.



# STAYCATION VERSUS THE GREEK ISLES

By Georgina Hall

Sanday – where the sand meets the sea and sky

Admittedly there is not the same promise of blue skies, but there are plenty of lovely beaches and azure clear water around the coast of the UK, with so much more to compensate for lack of sun. The islands I have in mind is the archipelago of Orkney off the coast of Northern Scotland, just 10 miles across the Pentland Firth from mainland Scotland. Twenty inhabited islands, all connected by ferry or air or both.

Orkney is for those who are interested in anything that is interesting and who enjoy getting out and about rather than sitting around a pool or on a beach all day. The island has a designated World Heritage Site for the many Neolithic monuments (Skara Brae and Maes Howe being just two of many), a thriving craft community, artisan food, is excellent for walking, wild flowers, birds - with 12 RSPB sites - as well as a Wartime Heritage, unique to the UK, around Scapa Flow, to mention just a few of the major sites of interest.



SKARA BRAE 3000BC



SCAPA FLOW PROTECTED BY THE CHURCHILL BARRIERS



ITALIAN CHAPEL

Kirkwall, the gateway to Orkney by air on Mainland Orkney is a thriving *small* town with a magnificent sandstone cathedral, St Magnus, the home of an annual Music Festival in June. The other two towns, Stromness and St Margaret Hope both have ferry connections to Mainland Scotland.

Mainland Orkney is linked to Lamb Holm and Burray by causeways known as the Churchill Barriers. Churchill defied the Geneva Convention by having these barriers built by Italian prisoners of war to keep German submarines from Scapa Flow, a large deep water harbour used by the Royal Navy. Churchill argued, successfully, they were roads linking

the islands and nothing to do with the war. The Italian Chapel on Lamb Holm was built by these prisoners from materials available to them, i.e. concrete, metal and bits of barbed wire. (At the end of WW1 the German Fleet surrendered and were held in Scapa Flow, where they were scuttled.)

Of the largest islands, Hoy, Rousay and Shapinsay are easily reached by ferry while Eday, North Ronaldsay, Sanday, Stronsay, Westray and Papa Westray are reached by either ferry or air. Most of these islands have tours which meet the ferry and the plane.





**WALKING THE OLD ROAD THROUGH THE GLEN TO  
RAICKWICK ON HOY**

Hoy, reached by ferry, has two of the highest hills in the archipelago and is excellent for hillwalking, including a hike along the cliffs to see the Old Man of Hoy sea stack, with birds, including eagles and arctic-alpine flowers along the way. A splendid view of the Old Man can be seen from the Stromness to Scrabster ferry.



**THE OLD MAN OF HOY**

A thriving community lives on Rousay, accessible by a short ferry ride from Tingwell. Known as the 'Egypt of the North', it has 160 cairns and chambered tombs dating from 4000 years ago. The island has just one 14 mile circular road around it.

The Isle of Sanday where the sand meets the sea and sky is an hour and a half by ferry or just 20 minutes by air from Kirkwall. You could lie on the beach in your bikini and Firebirds would not know from your WhatsApp posts that you weren't in the Caribbean unless they expanded the picture to see your goose pimples!

A visit to Papa Westray, one of the most northerly isles, is a must. Reached by either ferry or the World's Shortest Scheduled Flight from Kirkwall via Westray. (A slow trip on this route with the wind in the wrong direction is two minutes flying time. A return trip by air to Papa Westray from Kirkwall will set you back £36.00.) The highlights include an 11<sup>th</sup> century church, an RSPB reserve and the Knap of Howar, a 5000 year old house which when walking inside, you can imagine Mum cooking, getting the children to bed and putting things away on shelves.

While many of Orkney's attractions are historically based, Orkney is also the home of many pioneering renewable energy projects, leading the way globally, to harness the enormous energy in the waves and tides. They are very near to producing an inter-island aeroplane that will run on hydrogen which hopes to be in service within the next 5 years. Orkney Islands Council is actively pursuing its infrastructure strategy for renewable energy with electric vehicles and renewable energy for households and businesses and islanders coming to Kirkwall are able to pick up an electric car at the airport and quayside - a car version of 'Boris Bikes'.

Beware if you do visit Orkney, there is a high possibility you will fall in love with the island and its people and will return many times!