

Stephen Clackson's Letter from School Place

— 150th Issue —

The 150th issue of my *Letter* is perfectly timed to report on the 75th North Isles Sports, which took place in Sanday on the day of the summer solstice. This year, competitors and spectators came from Eday (after a long absence), North Ronaldsay, Sanday, Stronsay, Westray and Papa Westray. (One day I hope to see Papa Stronsay compete in the tug o' war and maybe teams sent from the inner North Isles.) The weather was changeable during the day, but remained clement, apart from the fog that prevented the North Ronaldsay folk getting home. Well done to Westray for winning the Primary Cup, Schools Cup, Junior Relay Quaich, Senior Relay Quaich, Challenge Cup and Millennium Cup; to Sanday for winning the junior netball, senior netball and junior football; and to Papay for winning the senior football. Congratulations to Boys' Champion Tristan Hoque, Girls' Champion Lizzie Marcus, Men's Champion Conner Marcus, and Women's Champion & Best Adult Millie Dennison. And well-pulled to Stronsay for winning the tug o' war. (And bravo to my bees, who kindly refrained from swarming until the following day!) You can find a wealth of information about the previous 74 North Isles Sports in Roderick Thorne's 340-page "75 Years of Orkney's North Isles Sports" (price £15). My fellow North Isles councillor, Heather Woodbridge (N Ron) won joint bronze in the women's high jump, but no member of the Clackson family competed in the 75th, however Frideswide Clackson's past glories, along with those of a host of others, are detailed in Rod's well-illustrated and informative book.



On midsummer morning, I landed at a foggy Sumburgh Airport (photograph above) for a meeting of the Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board that afternoon in Lerwick. One thing that came up at the meeting was the poor response so far (only 45%) for postal vote re-applications for UK parliamentary elections. If not renewed, these expire in January! It will also soon be time for this year's annual electoral register household canvas. Make sure to complete it. **Don't lose your right to vote!** You never know when an election may be sprung on you (from community council by-election to snap general election).

Our last General Meeting before the summer recess saw a disgraceful denial of democracy. Cllr James Moar's notice of motion requesting earlier cutting of roadside verges was unable to be considered thanks to 8 councillors refusing to vote for the necessary suspension of standing orders (which requires a two-thirds majority). This is the first time our longest-standing councillor (Cllr Dr Steven Heddle) has known such a vote be used to block open debate in the Council chamber. Shameful!

Other meetings I attended before our recess included: a special Policy & Resources Committee meeting concerning delivery of our Strategic Housing Investment Plan; and seminars on the Orkney World Heritage Site Programme and on Flotta Oil Terminal decommissioning. I went to the Shapinsay Community Council meeting, and later I arranged to meet the Deputy Harbour Master at their ferry slip on the Kirkwall side with some of the community councillors to discuss parking issues there.

As you are no doubt aware, there have been some other games going on in Orkney (also nicely timed for this 150th issue). I took part in a civic reception with dignitaries from the participating islands and was able to talk over with the Faroese Prime Minister Aksel V Johannesen my idea of establishing some cultural linkage between their island of Sandø and our island of Sanday. He promised to pass some material from me on to the island's municipalities. The Faroese team came top of the medal table in the XXth International Island Games, and the Faroe Islands will be hosting the next Island Games in 2027.

Other council business I undertook during the councillor recess was to travel to Thurso for a meeting of the Dounreay Stakeholder Group (on which I represent OIC).

Stephen

Cllr Dr Stephen Clackson
Member for the North Isles Ward,
Depute Convener Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board

West Manse, Sanday
stephen.clackson@orkney.gov.uk

Letter from School Place is also
available on-line at clackson.info

Photo & image credits: John Ross Scott, OIC and
<https://stronsaylimpet.co.uk/ISSUE83May2012.pdf>



Letter from School Place

Well, I'm in — and on first preferences alone, so there was no doubt this time. A big thank you to all who voted "1" for Clackson! But whether you voted for me or not, I am now in School Place to represent you. You can drop me a line at: West Manse, Sanday, Orkney KW17 2BN or at the Council Offices, Kirkwall, Orkney KW15 1NY. My council e-mail address is: stephen.clackson@orkney.gov.uk.

At the time of writing this, I am still in the throes of "induction", which means I'm spending a lot of time away from home in Kirkwall. We have had our first statutory general meeting, and a new convener was elected, Dr Steven Heddle. Like me, Steven has a PhD in physics, so he should be able to tackle anything!

I have been placed on the following committees: Policy & Resources; Education, Leisure & Housing, and Licensing. I've also been appointed to the Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board, and I'm OIC's representative on the University of the Highlands and Islands Foundation.

I plan to attend community council meetings and parent council meetings from time to time on your island, so look forward to seeing you then.

Cllr Dr Stephen Clackson