

Unkans

The newsletter of the Shetland Museum and Archives
and the Shetland heritage community

FREE

November 2007
Issue 5

museum
Shetland
archives

Shop ahoy!

Like our galleries, the Museum and Archives shop reflects local ingenuity and craft with a treasure trove of interesting items for everyone on your gift list. Much planning went into the initial selection of items for the shop, to best reflect themes and objects held by the museum and archives collections. As much as possible, items were sourced from local artists and craftspeople and relate to Shetland heritage, from knitted socks to wooden boats.

The shop sells a wide range of books, cards, and toys, and specialty items such as model boats and jewellery designed directly from objects in our collections. Again this year, we have produced a



calendar, with each month for 2008 based on the twelve zones in the galleries. Come by for a browse, and take advantage of our gift-wrapping service.

A selection of the gifts available at the Museum and Archives shop.

NEW WINTER HOURS

Museum opening times:

Monday-Wednesday, and Friday 10am-5pm
Thursday 10am-7pm **Saturday** 10am-5pm **Sunday** 12pm-4pm

Archives opening times:

Monday-Wednesday, and Friday 9.30am-4.30pm
Thursday 10am-7pm **Saturday** 10am-1pm **Sunday** closed

Hay's Dock Café Restaurant opening times:

Daytime: **Monday-Saturday** 11.00am-5pm **Sunday** 12pm-4pm

November evenings: **Thu-Sat** 7pm-9pm. To book call 01595 741569

December evenings: **Tue-Sat** 7pm-9pm. To book call 01595 741569

Note: the building will be closed 25 & 26th December 2007 and 1st & 2nd January 2008. Happy Holidays!

What's On Guide

November

Mon.-Sat.: Museum highlights tour. 11am and 3pm (each tour lasts approx. 40 minutes). Meet at reception.

3rd-26th: Exhibition: 'The MacDougall Collection on tour'. Da Gadderie.

3rd: Introduction to Archives. 1-2pm.

8th: An Evening of Shetland Literature. With Mark Ryan Smith. 7-8pm.

10th: Introduction to felting (for adults). 10am-1pm. Booking essential. £10.

17th: Christmas card-making workshop for adults. 10am-1pm. Booking essential. £10.

17th: Contemporary jewellery-making for adults. 2-5pm. Booking essential. £20.

December

Mon.-Sat.: Museum highlights tour. 11am and 3pm (each tour lasts approx. 40 minutes). Meet at reception.

1st-29th: Exhibition: "Family Values", the Ford Family'. Da Gadderie.

1st: Christmas festivities and activities for the whole family. 11am-3pm

All events are held at the Shetland Museum and Archives, unless otherwise specified. There may be a charge for some events. For more information phone 01595 695057 or just pop in.

Helping young adults with career choices

As part of its overall education service, Shetland Museum and Archives has been actively involved this autumn in careers advice for local young people. In early October, Lifelong Learning Officer Kirsty Kennedy offered careers information at the Careers Convention held at Clickimin. More recently, the Museum and Archives have participated in the work-experience programme run by the Shetland Islands Council Education Dept.

Three students each had a week of varying activities and tasks within the Museum and Archives. Robert John Anderson, a 4th-year student from Aith, gives an account of his week: "Monday I helped mount text signs in the galleries, shadowed the visitor services assistants, and helped with some of the interactive exhibits; Tuesday I learned about the Archives and used their resources to research an exhibition planned for January; Wednesday I got experience with the photographic database, scanned photos and updated information; Thursday I worked in the museum store, preparing objects for storage; and Friday I helped Kirsty with preparations for the Big Draw activities. It's been a real eye-opener of what goes on behind-the-scenes!"

As Kirsty points out, "we believe the work-experience programme is a valuable tool for young people, to give them information and experience about the kinds of careers available in history, archives, and heritage management. Although both the Museum and Archives participated in this programme separately in the past, we have been able to provide a more varied work experience within our new joint service".



Robert John, at the end of a busy week.

Shetland Heritage and Culture Brand

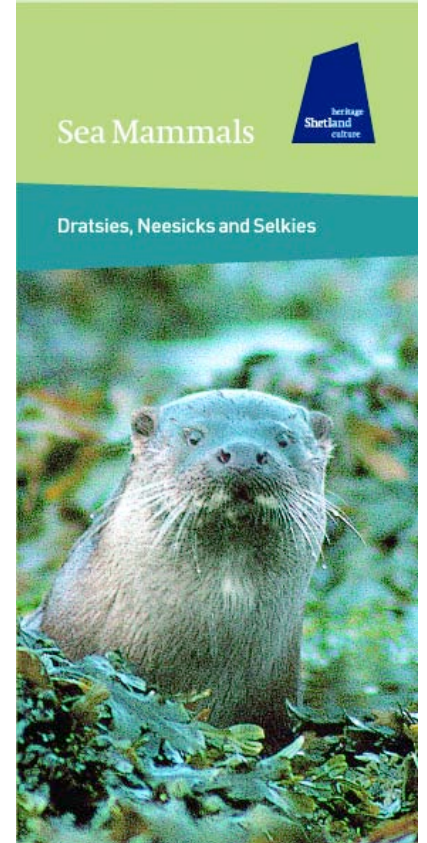
Following the opening of the Shetland Museum and Archives, and as Shetland Amenity Trust approaches its silver jubilee, this is a fitting point at which to pause and reflect on the future.

The opening of the new facility is not an end but a beginning – a catalyst – creating new opportunities which will encourage access to heritage throughout Shetland. SAT is promoting an integrated, strategic approach for Shetland's Heritage and Culture. At its heart is the Shetland Museum and Archives, as the Heritage Hub and the gateway for discovering Shetland's past. The new facility will be linked to, and promote, other heritage facilities in Shetland through heritage trails, interpretive panels and web portals, encouraging visitors to discover more about the islands.

As part of this process, the Trust has developed a brand for Shetland Heritage and Culture which is being woven through all SAT activities and available to others operating within Shetland's heritage and culture sector. A strong identity for heritage, encapsulated by the Shetland Heritage and Culture Brand, is critical if Shetland's cultural and natural heritage is to be promoted in an exciting and distinctive manner.

The Trust is creating information packs about the brand for heritage organisations. If you would like to receive a pack, please call SAT on 01595 694688. The use of the brand is voluntary, but we hope it will become a recognised symbol to guide visitors through Shetland's network of sites and indicate the quality of products and services under its banner.

Alan Blain
Deputy Manager



A heritage and culture leaflet under the new brand.

Give us a clue!

Beginning with this issue of *Unkans*, we'll be printing an image from our photographic archive in the hope that you can help us identify it. To browse the 71,097 other images in our photographic archive, go to <http://photos.shetland-museum.org.uk/index.php> or come



in and use the access points in the museum and archives.

Can you identify this two-storied house with a wooden porch? The photo was taken about 1900, photographer unknown (photo R03452). See back page for contact details.

16th century document visits Shetland

In early October, I travelled to Bremen to borrow a document from the Staatsarchiv to display here. It is a licence by Olla Sinclair, the governor of Shetland, to a Bremener called Johan Kordes, allowing him to trade from Baltasound in 1561.

In the 16th century, merchants from North Germany came to Shetland every year to buy fish from the local inhabitants. The local government here made sure that the merchants were distributed throughout the islands, to ensure that all Shetlanders had access to them. Kordes and his countrymen were in charge of virtually the whole of Shetland's

fish trade, and it was a serious matter for a community if one of them didn't turn up. And because Shetland was so productive of fish, a trading post in the islands could be lucrative for the merchants. Some of them came back to Shetland every year for decades.

The licence is on display in the lower gallery. It is a paper document, written by Olla Sinclair's clerk, and Olla's paper seal is attached. It will be here for several months, and, as a record of Shetland's important trade with Germany, it is well worth a look.

Brian Smith, Archivist



Visitor services assistant Trevor Jamieson places the mounted document on display.

Shetland Heritage Association members day

The Shetland Heritage Association sponsored a luncheon and discussion day on 26th August for all members. After a hearty and tasty meal at Hay's Dock Café Restaurant, members heard talks about Hamefarin 2010, local projects by community heritage groups, and the current situation of the SHA. A lively brain-storming session followed with members suggesting ways that SHA can continue its work with heritage groups and in the larger heritage-tourism community. Ideas from this session have been sent to members, with an extraordinary AGM to follow.

Holiday fare at Hay's Dock

With Christmas fast approaching, too fast for some, Mike and the team are putting together the finishing touches to seasonal menus. The main feature will be the absence of turkey and trimmings and other ubiquitous Christmas fare. Instead the team is concentrating on traditional winter flavours of cinnamon, nutmeg and sherry, married to comfort-style food.

From 4th December to Christmas Eve the restaurant will be open again from Tuesday to Saturday nights, with fixed-price specials. Bookings can be taken for lunch and evening sittings on 01595 741569.

A peek at Textile Museum collection

The Shetland Textile Working Museum closed in October 2006 after 10 successful years at Bonhoga Gallery. Without immediate new premises, Shetland Amenity Trust stepped in to help with plans to complete the renovation of Voe House, Walls and provide purpose-built premises for STWM. Planning permission has already been granted, and SAT is currently searching for funding to begin building works.

In the meantime, STWM have stored the majority of their collection in the Shetland Museum and Archives store. Owing to the fact that it may be several years before the building is complete and ready for occupancy, our curatorial team offered STWM the 'loan' of four display drawers within the Museum's new textile display area. Carol Christiansen, Curator and Community Museums Officer, has been working with Bess Jamieson and Winnie Balfour of STWM, to select, mount and install garments within the drawers. STWM chose garments of 1930's style to compliment textiles from our collection in the case above the drawers. These are now ready for viewing, and the accessibility of the drawers makes them ideal for studying the garments at close range.



Textiles from the Shetland Textile Working Museum collection on display at the Museum and Archives.

Shetland's first Jamaican

The first Jamaican to live in Shetland, as far as we can document, was James Innes. His father, also James Innes, was born in 1747, son of Alexander Innes, a surgeon. A half-brother, Peter Innes, became a landowner, and was able to style himself "of Frackafield." James senior left Shetland and was apprenticed to a merchant in Edinburgh, unhappily as it turned out. He sought advance abroad, and the archives has a letter written to his friend James Hay, as he is about to leave Greenock for Jamaica.

Once in the Caribbean he worked in the plantations, and settled in Portland parish, Jamaica. Some letters home survive, and they are exhibited currently in the Museum and Archives. One letter, of 15 April 1796, speaks of "600 acres of land good quality, I have forty slaves young and old." It is one of his few explicit references to how he earns a living.

James Innes Jr. is described in his father's will as a "quadroon boy slave". His mother goes unnamed, but was presumably from previous unions of white men and African women. Whether she was James Innes' property or not is unclear, but James Innes Jr. was born around 1793.

The boy's freedom was bought, there were various financial provisions made for him in the will, and he was sent to Great Britain. About 1804 he arrived in Shetland to stay with Thomas Bolt, a relative of James Innes Sr. by marriage. His home would have been either at the Haa of Cruister in Bressay, or the Bolt town residence where the present day Shetland Times shop is. Thomas Bolt's letter books for this time survive and in 1808 he says young Innes had been "kept closs at school" and "is now at navigation ... his inclination is for the sea."

Thomas Bolt wrote to a fellow Shetlander, David Smith, probably a son of Gilbert Smith of Fetlar who worked in the shipping trade in London, requesting that he find Innes Jr. an apprenticeship at sea. Thomas Bolt had a reputation for advising and nurturing young men – Arthur Anderson

of P&O fame was one. He intended James Jr. to train as a ship's officer, in the "Jamaica trade in preference."

In the final letter from Bolt, 2 July 1808, James has been kitted out to be sent south, David Smith having offered to find a suitable shipmaster. There are various remarks and urgings. James, "a smart clever boy" had not completed his navigation, and further tuition was to be sought. Bolt proclaimed, "I shall readily pay." He was to go south, on the *Venus*, Peter Lesslie, master.



The Haa of Cruister, taken in the 1880s, where James might have lived.

The letter is the last we hear of James Innes Jr., who may have died during his apprenticeship, like so many. In common with almost all those enslaved or born slaves, his own voice is never heard.

The will of James Innes senior can be found online at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/wills.asp>

James Innes' letters home are on display, along with other material relating to the slave trade, in the display case outside the Archives searchroom. The exhibition runs until the end of November.

Angus Johnson, Archives Assistant

This page is dedicated to research on all aspects of Shetland's history and heritage. Contributions are welcome.

Get in touch

We are keen to include contributions from anyone who has something interesting to share about Shetland's heritage. Deadline for the next issue is Friday 30th November. If you would like to stock our newsletter or distribute copies to your group, let us know.

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Post: Newsletter, Shetland Museum and Archives, Hay's Dock, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0WP

