

Art Fund prize nomination

The Shetland Museum and Archives has been nominated for the Art Fund prize, as one of 10 entries in the long list. The prestigious award of £100,000 will go to the museum or gallery whose project demonstrates the most originality, imagination and excellence.

You can add your support and help us win this year's Art Fund prize in two ways.

The judges are keen to receive comments from the public about the Shetland Museum and Archives and its benefits to the community. They will take all comments into consideration when making their final selection & your vote counts!

You can vote for us also in an independent poll carried out by Culture 24. While this poll will not influence the judges' decision, it will reveal who the public thinks should win.

To take part, visit our homepage at www.shetlandmuseumandarchives.org.uk, where there are links to both Art Fund and Culture 24 websites. We also have provided access to the Art Fund prize website in the Archives Searchroom.

The Art Fund prize will be awarded on 22nd May. The results of the Culture 24 poll will be posted on their website on 21st May.

The Art Fund Prize 2008
for museums and galleries

Watch the craftsmen at work

The boat sheds at Hay's Dock are bustling with activity as boatbuilders Robbie Tait, Jack Duncan and Malcolm Hutchison construct two new boats, the first to be built in the sheds for more than 100 years. Visitors are welcome to watch the men work and find out more about traditional boatbuilding. The boats will be finished by mid April and will be used to teach visitors and schoolchildren boat handling skills. The men are working in the boat sheds every week day from 9am -1pm and from 2pm-5pm.

Daily photographs can be seen on www.shetlopedia.com



Robbie and Jack

Photo: Billy Fox

What's On Guide

March

4th: Course: 'How to Manage a Museum or Heritage Shop'. Free, but booking essential & details from info@heritage-skills.co.uk.

7th: Course: 'The Curriculum for Excellence'. Free, but booking essential & details from info@heritage-skills.co.uk

8th: The Discovery Box, workshop with artists Jo Jack and Anna Horne, for 4-7 year olds, 11am - 12.30pm, Learning Room, free but booking essential

8th: Jellyfish Sculpture workshop with artists Anna Horne and Jo Jack, for 8-12 year olds, 1.30-3.30pm, free but booking essential

15th: Course: 'Friends and Fundraising'. Free, but booking essential & details from info@heritage-skills.co.uk

15th - 14th April: Exhibition, "Aspects of Shetland" by Sam Davis, Avril Thomson and Peter Biehl. Da Gadderie

16th: Film: 'The Italian Job', 2.30pm, Film £4.00, pre-film Italian lunch in Restaurant. Film & Lunch: £13.00.

20th: Going Potty!, workshop for 3-4 year olds, 10.30-11am, Learning Room. Free, but booking essential

24th: Going Potty! workshop for 3-4 year olds, 2.00-2.30pm, Learning Room. Free, but booking essential

27th : Talk: 'Delving into Lerwick's past', with Douglas Sinclair. 7pm in the Archives.

April

19th -19th May. Exhibition: '7 Minutes of Explosion' by Barbara Ridland and Jeannette Sandler. Da Gadderie

13th: Film: 'Easter Parade'. 2.30pm, Film £4.00, pre-film Easter lunch in Restaurant. Film & Lunch: £13.00

Look in local press for our Easter holiday events for kids!

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.

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

Archives opening times:
Monday-Friday 9.30am-4.30pm
Saturday 10am-1pm **Sunday** closed

Hay's Dock Café Restaurant opening times:
Daytime: **Monday-Saturday** 11.00am-5pm
Sunday 12pm-4pm
Evenings: **Thursday-Saturday** 7pm-9pm.
To book call 01595 741569



Visitor services assistant Zuzanna O'Rourke with the 1770 rental.

Balfour's rental

One of the most striking documents in the Archives is a rental drawn up by William Balfour, an Orkney gentleman, in the early 1770s.

It sounds as dry as dust; but Balfour's rental, an account of the estates of Sir Lawrence Dundas in Shetland, is crammed with information. It is also a beautiful piece of penmanship.

Balfour's job was to find out if Dundas was getting as much revenue from his estates as he should. So he tramped all over the islands with his notebook, and made meticulous notes about the places where his master had lands.

It was an arduous task. Visiting Tuby in Weisdale, now deserted, he remarked that it was "mean in every respect, indeed the worst in Shetland, & accordingly the lands have been waste, or what is the same thing, the rent unpaid, for ages."

It was, he said, "in the middle of a boggy moss, and when inhabited it is commonly by some wretch who can find shelter no where else."

Some places were better, but most had drawbacks of one kind or another. At Hoove in Whiteness, according to Balfour, the soil was "exceeding good, so that there are few if any so good lands in Shetland, if there was a common to which they had right and free access, but in both these respects the scatald is of very little value to them."

Balfour wasn't just a land surveyor: he had shrewd remarks to make about Shetland's whole political economy. He saw that a society where most people were in debt could never be very profitable for a landowner, and he said so at length in his rental.

When he got home he got a clerk to write down his notes – about 60,000 words of them – in a large book, 70 centimetres high by 40 centimetres broad. It is one of our best sources about Shetland in the late eighteenth century. **Brian Smith**

Profile: Derek Jackson, archives volunteer

Retired aviation product manager Derek, from Dunrossness, has been volunteering in the Archives for the last year.

Q. What does your job involve?

A. Transferring data into the Archives database, so people can find things easily. There are many things in the Archives that people don't know are there.

Q. What makes you spend three days a week doing that?

A. In my previous job I was so busy, and after retiring and moving to Shetland I felt I still had something to offer. Coming to the Archives keep my mind active. I worked away from home a lot during my career, so my wife and I are used to doing our own thing. This helps keep me out from under her feet! Also, I've met a lot of new people who I enjoy working with.

Q. What's been the best document you've worked with?

A. When I first started, the Archives had just acquired the papers of Major



Derek Jackson

Denis Rollo. This included a huge amount of material on the military history of Shetland. I worked in military aviation for 50 years so I was particularly interested to find out more about the impact the military had in Shetland, from early days until the 1960s. Major Rollo spent a long time studying this and had acquired lots of original documents. He also wrote his own chronological account about the military in Shetland.

Q. Anything you'd like to add?

A. Coming to the archives has given me a crash course in the history of Shetland, something I couldn't have got any where else.

I've seen many museums and I have to say the facilities where I now work are amazing. And I'd still like to see more about how the military has affected Shetland.

Give us a clue!



The Shetland Classic Motorcycle Club are preparing for this year's Classic Motor Show on 6th – 9th June. They are planning to use this photograph, taken by J. D. Ratter. Can you help identify the man, bike and location? Contact Tommy 01595 741557 if you have any information.

Mark calendar for St. Ninian's celebrations

In partnership with the National Museums of Scotland, the St. Ninian's Isle treasure will be back in Shetland and on display between 4th July and 5th October. A conference on the treasure,

to mark 50 years since its discovery, will be held the weekend of 4th - 6th July in the Museum and Archives. Further details will be advertised in the next issue of *Unkans*.

New talks on Archives collections

Archives staff members are offering a number of informal events to local heritage groups.

Several short talks have been developed to help introduce the archives collections to people who haven't used them before, or who aren't familiar with the new facilities.

Groups can choose from a general introduction to the archives, an evening focussing on Shetland's literature, or a talk on the life and work of musician Tom Anderson.

All these talks are available in the archives, or archives staff can visit your group. For more information or to book please call Joanne Wishart on 01595 741 553



Recent Donations: Mourning Brooch

Since we opened, visitors have been inspired to donate objects, having spotted similar things on show. Jean Jarmson, Whiteness, saw the display on the 19th century church, and amongst that, the mourning jewellery. A hundred years ago there was something of a mortality cult, and it was customary for the family of a deceased person to use symbolic mourning. A woman might wear a black brooch, a man an armband, and at the most extreme, women wore black clothing, sometimes for the rest of their life if their husband had died. We have a couple of brooches already, made of jet (a kind of black rock that can be carved and polished), and most are in the form of floral bouquets. The brooch Jean has donated is more interesting in two ways: it is of a more detailed construction, and the full story of the piece is known. It is oval, with a silver-alloy mount around the edge, and in the centre is a memorial with the wording "IN MEMORY OF MY DEAR CHILD". This brooch belonged to Betsy Sandison, from Gremista, in the Herra, Yell. Betsy and her husband Jeemie had a son born in January 1913, but the child was disabled with spina bifida (a defect of the backbone), and the boy, Andrew Sandison, died on the 28th, aged 19 days.

Dr Ian Tait, Curator of Collections

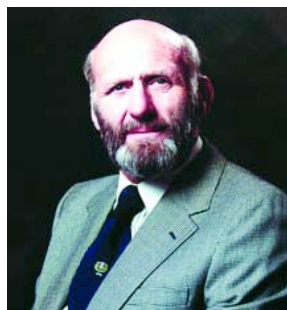
Art needed for Robson show

Many Shetlanders were saddened last year by news of Adam Robson's death. Adam, who lived in Dollar, Clackmananshire, had strong connections with Yell and returned most years to absorb island life.

He was an extremely accomplished artist and his paintings and drawings of Shetland croft scenes, boats, and seascapes were much admired and collected.

Adam was planning a retrospective show in the Museum and Archives gallery on what would have been his 80th birthday. Before his death, he and his family strongly wished that the retrospective go ahead.

The museum will be contacting known owners of his paintings in hopes of borrowing them for the exhibition. If you have one of Adam's works that you could lend us for the show, please contact Tommy Watt or John Hunter at the museum. The show will open in Da Gadderie in July.



Adam Robson

COMMUNITY HERITAGE NEWS

Unst funding success

Unst Heritage Trust has funding from HIE Shetland's Investing in Unst Fund and the SIC. The £20,866 funding grant will be used to make improvements to the Heritage Centre and Boat Haven. Plans include improving collection care, updating interpretation and focusing on the unique aspects of Unst's story.

SHA AGM

The Shetland Heritage Association held its AGM on 16 February. Mike McDonnell (Old Haa, Burravoe) was voted in as chairman, Robin Hunter (Cunningsburgh HG) as vice-chairman, Barbara Isbister (Isleburgh Exhibition) as Treasurer, and Barbara Anderson (Bressay HG) and Pat Christie (Cunningsburgh HG) as co-secretaries. Other members of the Executive Committee are Rosemary Inkster (Sandwick HG), Davy Cooper (Shetland Storytelling Society), and Susan Johnson (Shetland Guild of Spinners, Weavers and Dyers/Sandsting HG). There was a lively discussion about a wide range of topics including developing links as part of the Heritage Hub, the possibility of an annual heritage publication, and the problem of finding core funding for all SHA members.

Burnt mound fund raiser

Bressay History Group will hold a social evening on Wed., 12th March from 7-9pm at the Bressay Heritage Centre to introduce their new project to relocate a Bronze Age burnt mound. The event will include an exhibition, raffle and refreshments.

Muckle Flugga help

Unst Heritage Centre is researching the history of Muckle Flugga lighthouse for a new display. Do you have information which could contribute to their research? Please contact Rhoda Hughson, Millagord, Uyeasound, 01957 755 244, if you can help.

Support across the miles

The Shetland Textile Working Museum has been given a morale boost by the kind efforts of knitters half-way across the world. Visiting Shetland last summer, the knitters heard of the temporary closure of the museum while Shetland Amenity Trust tries to raise funds to renovate the rest of Voe House in Walls for the new museum. The American knitters presented the STWM case at the Madrona Fiber Arts retreat in Tacoma, Washington, USA, in February, to help raise funds and support.

Funds to Inspire

The Scottish Arts Council has introduced a new lottery scheme, the Inspire Fund, to aid arts organisations, voluntary, and community groups who seek funding aid to help the public better engage with the arts. They are particularly interested in hearing from groups who want to support arts access with children and schools. See www.scottisharts.org.uk/1/funding/inspirefund.aspx for more information.

New funding approach aimed at collections

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation has developed a new funding strategy to focus funds toward specific areas of interest. One area is the Museum and Heritage Collections strand, which is for time-limited documentation, research, and conservation on collections. For more information, phone 020 7297 4700, or see www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/funding/funding-strands.html.

Lost memorial on show again

As the Shetland Family History Society prepares to publish booklets recording various memorials, a chance remark from a visitor set me on the trail of the little-known Anderson Institute World War I Roll of Honour.

The list is a tribute to the pupils and ex-pupils of the Institute, who were lost during the Great War.

I found it languishing in the School's basement suffering water damage and a splintered frame, and began the long task of transcribing the names and researching those listed.

The artwork and lettering on the Roll of Honour was carried out by two pupils, Irene Ganson and Magnus Peterson, under the guidance of Miss Campbell and Miss Mathewson. It was

unveiled at the school prize-giving and reported in the Shetland Times of 5th July, 1919.

Despite being such a sad document, the listed names brought to light some interesting facts:

I discovered that many Shetland families kept alive the memory of lost relatives by calling their children or grandchildren by the same Christian names in subsequent generations.

Some of the regiments into which men were recruited also proved interesting – for example, what was the Royal Fusiliers Sportsman's Battalion and, why would a Shetlander join the Scottish Horse?

John Hercules Johnston, a pilot in the Royal Air Force and from Haroldswick, Unst, died on June 9th, 1918, aged 22 years, only a couple of months after the formation of R.A.F. itself.

Alexander Inkster, listed on the Vimy Memorial, and Francis Inkster both served with the Canadian Contingent, Alexander being the elder brother of Mrs. A.K. Reid of Walls and Francis from Ingaville, Scalloway.

Brothers Bertram and Thomas Scott were with Australian Regiments, whilst another brother, Frank, was with the Royal Scots. They were sons of Capt. John Scott, King Harald Street, who had another six sons fighting in various regiments.

George William Tulloch from Craigielea, Lerwick, died aged 22 years, having been awarded the Military Medal. Most names are listed in the Shetland WW1 Roll of Honour and it has been possible to identify some on the Commission for War Graves website but some cannot be identified, as men did change regiments. Though faded now, it is still a worthy memorial to the Institute pupils and ex-pupils.

It has been re-framed and is once again hanging in the school.

For anyone interested, viewing can be arranged by contacting the Anderson High School. The roll is included in the UK National Inventory of War Memorials, list number 8882.

A transcription may be obtained by contacting Elizabeth Angus, Shetland Archives, or Anderson High School.

Elizabeth Angus
Secretary
Shetland Family History Society



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 10th April. If you would like to stock our newsletter or distribute copies to your group, let us know.

Email: info@shetlandmuseumandarchives.org.uk Telephone: 01595 695057 Fax: 01595 696729

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