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

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July 2009

Issue 15

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Shetland
archives

告別揚帆 Farewell to Sails



Shetland Museum and Archives is part of an international exhibition commemorating the 60th anniversary of the last voyage around Cape Horn by a cargo-carrying sailing ship. The exhibition was developed by the Åland Maritime Museum, Finland, and follows the four-masted barques *Passat* and *Pamir* on their final voyages from Australia to the UK. Each banner in the exhibition marks an event or experience onboard on a particular date. The exhibition is being shown simultaneously in 10 other museums, including New Zealand Maritime Museum, Marstal Maritime Museum, Denmark, National Maritime Museum, Cornwall, the South Australia Maritime Museum and the Hong Kong Maritime Museum. Fairwell to Sails runs until 4th September.

Opening Hours

Museum: Monday-Friday 10am-5.30pm; Saturday 10am-5pm; Sunday 12pm-5pm

Archives: Monday-Friday 10am-4.30pm; Saturday 10am-1pm; Sunday closed

Hay's Dock Café Restaurant: Daytime Monday-Saturday 10.30am-5pm; Sunday 12-5pm; Evenings Thursday-Saturday 7-11pm, last orders 9pm; To book, phone 01595 741569

Croftthouse Museum: Daily 10am-1pm & 2pm-5pm

Böd of Gremista: Wednesday-Sunday 10am-1pm & 2pm-5pm

What's On Guide

July

Daily: Highlights Tours, 45-60 mins., contact Reception for times: 01595 741562. **Throughout month: Film: Thomas Fraser, Shetland Lone Star,** contact Reception for times: 01595 741562. **Sundays:** Traditional spinning and knitting demonstrations, 2-4pm.

6th: A night by the fireside, storytelling by Elma Johnson: Croftthouse Museum, 7-9pm, £12/£6 under 12s (children must be accompanied by an adult), booking essential.

8th: Erik the Viking, storytelling and watercolouring with Jo Jack and Ana Horne: 10-11.30am or 2:30-4pm P1-4, £3, booking essential.

13th: A night by the fireside, storytelling by Elma Johnson: Böd of Gremista, 7-9pm, £12/£6 under 12s (children must be accompanied by an adult), booking essential.

20th: Weaving friendship bracelets, with Jo Jack and Ana Horne: 10am-4pm, P5-7, £5; booking essential.

20th: A night by the fireside, storytelling by Elma Johnson: Croftthouse Museum, 7-9pm, £12/£6

under 12s (children must be accompanied by an adult), booking essential.

23rd: Veer North workshop, create a woven art work using recycled and found objects, with Jo Jack: 10:30am-12:30pm or 2-4pm, all ages (children must be accompanied by an adult), £3, booking essential

24th: Veer North workshop, explore abstract interpretations and the use of colour for painting the Shetland landscape, with Kristi Cumming: 10am-4pm, all ages (children must be accompanied by an adult), £5, booking essential.

27th: Bruck weaving: make woven structures using found objects, with Jo Jack and Ana Horne: 12-5pm, P5-7, £3, booking essential.

30th: Felted pictures, family workshop with Jennie Bradley and Verinia Fraser: 10am-1pm, or 2-5pm, 6yrs+ (children must be accompanied by an adult), £3, booking essential.

31st: Felting treasures, make keepsakes inspired by St. Ninian's Isle Treasure, with Jennie Bradley and Verinia Fraser: 10am-12:30pm or 2-4:30pm, 7-10 yrs., £3, booking essential.

August

Daily: Highlights Tours, 45-60 mins., contact Reception for times: 01595 741562. **Throughout month: Film: The Last Cape Horners,** contact Reception for times: 01595 741562. **Sundays:** Traditional spinning and knitting demonstrations, 2-4pm.

1st: Butterfly feeder workshop, part of CBeebies Green Balloon Club Week: 10:30-11am, 12-12:30pm, or 2-2:30pm, 3-7 yrs., free, booking essential.

2nd: Family weaving workshop, with Jo Jack and Ana Horne: 12-5pm, £5 per family, booking essential.

8th: Archives open day, view archival documents and see behind the scenes: 11am-3pm, all ages, free, drop in.

8th: Introduction to the Archives workshop, talk by member of Archives staff: 11am-12pm, adult, free, booking essential.

8th & 9th: Papier mache treasure, make your own silver bowl, inspired by the St Ninian's Isle Treasure: 1pm-4pm [Note: spread over 2 afternoons], 8-12 yrs., free, booking essential.

10th: A night by the fireside, storytelling by Elma Johnson: Croftthouse Museum, 7-9pm, £12/£6 under 12s (children must be accompanied by an adult), booking essential.

13th: Going potty, make your own clay pot using ancient techniques: 10.30-11.30am [ages 4-7 yrs.], 2-3.30pm [ages 8-12 yrs.], £3, booking essential.

14th: Thor's Hammer, find out about the Viking god Thor and make a Thor's hammer clay pendant: 10-11am & 12-1pm [ages 4-7 yrs.], 2-3pm [ages 8-12 yrs.], £3, booking essential.

17th: A night by the fireside, storytelling by Elma Johnson: Croftthouse Museum, 7-9pm, £12/£6 under 12s (children must be accompanied by an adult), booking essential.

24th: A night by the fireside, storytelling by Elma Johnson: Croftthouse Museum, 7-9pm, £12/£6 under 12s (children must be accompanied by an adult), booking essential.

All events are held at the Shetland Museum and Archives and are free, unless otherwise stated. To book call 01595 695057. No booking is necessary for drop-in events.

Gunnister Man returns soon

The remains of Gunnister Man, a burial found by two Northmavine peat diggers in 1951, will return to Shetland for the first time since it was found. Shetland Museum and Archives are launching a major exhibition of all objects found with the burial, on loan from the National Museums of Scotland. The exhibition runs from 12 September to 1 November in Da Gadderie. A conference will be held on 19 September, with the keynote address on 18 September by T.C. Smout, Historiographer Royal in Scotland, exploring the many questions surrounding this unique find. Look for details in the local press.

Website LIVE!

The new Shetland Museum and Archives' website is now live! The updated website reflects the many services we provide, as well as current and upcoming events. It also contains the popular photographic archive, where you can research Shetland's pictorial history from home. Go to: www.shetlandmuseumandarchives.org.uk



The big task in collections this summer is the overhaul of the archaeology store. Summer student Jake Watt finishes putting up the new racking. Over the next month the entire archaeology collection will be repacked.

Accessions display at Archives

The current Archives' focus display, entitled 'Preacher, Postman, Soldier, Seaman', features archival accessions from 2007-2008. The display shows the interesting and variable nature of the donations we receive – from Shetland Home Guard military identity cards and the World War diaries of James Pottinger, to a collection of photographs of Shetland post offices, school log books and admissions registers. The Museum artefacts include a communion cup

from 1847, a whalebone ink pen from the early 1900s, and a date stamp and ink pads from the Eid post office. Shetland Archives collects many kinds of records about life in Shetland. The records are stored in an environmentally safe and secure room, and are looked after very carefully. We are always looking to add to our collections so if you have something you think might be of interest, please visit the Archives.

Give us a clue

In 1849-51 the Board for Relief of Destitution in the Highlands & Islands, using the expertise of the Royal Engineers, constructed the first road network in Shetland. Most of the routes are still in use today, so many of the 19th century structures haven't survived in original form. But there are instances where streams were bridged, but roads not made, leaving the original structure intact. Such an example is between Burland and the Houbans, Sullom in Northmavine. The bridge in this photo is another one, but where is it? Please contact us if you know, details are on the back page.



Hamefarin

The Shetland Museum and Archives are developing a temporary exhibition to celebrate the Hamefarin in 2010 and we need your help. The exhibition will tell the stories of islanders who emigrated from as far back as the 1500s right up to today. We want to include artefacts, paintings and documents that Shetlanders took with them on their journey. We are also looking for photographs of people who left Shetland in their new lives in Britain or abroad. The exhibition is being coordinated by summer student Helen Witham. If you have anything relating to your emigrant ancestors which we might be able to use, please contact Helen on 01595 741564 or email: helen@shetlandmuseum.org.uk.



COMMUNITY HERITAGE NEWS

New SHA executive

At the recent Shetland Heritage Association AGM, new executive members were elected. Pat Christie and Robin Hunter from Cunningsburgh History Group are Chairperson and Vice Chair, respectively, Barbara Anderson of Bressay History Group is Secretary, Barbara Isbister from Islesburgh Exhibition continues as Treasurer, and other members include Rosemary Inkster, Mike McDonnell, Susan Johnson, and Laughton Johnson. Financial issues facing the volunteer sector, the Hamefarin, the SHA website, and renewable energy sources for local heritage centres were some of the issues discussed at the meeting.

VSA's go south

Visitor Services Assistants at Shetland Museum and Archives familiarised themselves with heritage venues in the south of Shetland recently, to better inform the public about the many heritage experiences on offer.



The group started at Jarlshof and worked their way northwards, stopping at Quendale Mill, Hoswick Visitor's Centre, the Mousa waiting room, among other sites. They even managed to climb to Catpund Quarry.

MGS funding available

Remember that registered museums can take advantage of funding from Museums Galleries Scotland. Their Small Grants Scheme offers up to £2,000 for projects to improve museum service – from leaflets to exhibitions. Deadline for Round 3 is 28 August (decision 9 Oct); Round 4 is 13 November (decision 18 December).



Ponies on display

The Pony Breeders of Shetland Association are holding the Shetland Pony Festival from 15th to 23rd August (www.shetlandponyweb.com). The Association has worked with museum staff to develop a display on pit ponies for the first floor galleries. The exhibition highlights the use of Shetland ponies in Britain's coal mining industry and the effect this had on pony breeding in Shetland. Unst Heritage Centre launched their pony display earlier in the year, complete with a model pony for bairns and a large display about the importance of ponies in Unst agriculture.

Recycled objects at airport

The display case at the Sumburgh Airport lounge has been changed again. This year's theme is recycling, showing how people in the past took manufactured objects and re-fashioned and re-used them in different ways from their original purposes. They include a chair made from a telegraph pole, a number of objects made from ammunition collected during World War II, and two stone objects that were reshaped and reused during the medieval period. One of the more interesting pieces is a

compass made from a tobacco tin and parts from a watch and clock. It was made by Captain William Stewart of North-a-Voe, Yell, while he was a prisoner of war in Germany during WWI. He made it as part of his preparations for an escape attempt, but the war ended before he had a chance to use it. The objects come from collections throughout Shetland, most on loan from registered community museums and including artefacts from Shetland Museum and Archives.

Shetland men on the Beagle

2009 is the 200th anniversary of the birth of the naturalist, Charles Darwin. His many publications included *Origin of Species*, which caused controversy at the time but led to a major change in how we viewed the world. The anniversary has led to a proliferation of items about Darwin and his famous voyage on HMS Beagle. Reading through the crew list of one such on-line publication I was amazed to see that not one, but two of the crew were from Shetland.

HMS Beagle sailed from England on 27 December 1831 under the command of Robert FitzRoy. The Quartermaster was John Peterson, aged 44, and born in Shetland. This position would suggest that he had been at sea with the Navy a long time and indeed, Peterson had previously been on HMS Wasp. It is quite possible that he first served with the Royal Navy during the French Wars (which ended in 1815).

HMS Beagle called at Tenerife and the Cape Verde Islands, before reaching South America. On the 20th of June 1832, whilst at Rio de Janeiro, John Peterson was put in charge of the launch and became Coxswain of the small boat. He was still to be

paid at the rate of Quartermaster. The implication is that Coxswain of the launch was a lower rank, but one that John Peterson was especially adept at.

Darwin noted in his diary that he owed Peterson a net.

Who was John Peterson? The Shetland Family History Society database would suggest that he was born in Silwick in 1787, the son of Patrick Jamieson and Mary Johnsdaughter.



The Beagle sailed down the east coast of South America, round the Falkland Islands and Cape Horn, and then headed north along the west coast of South America. On the 31st of October 1834, John Peterson returned to the role of Quartermaster.

The following day a second Shetland man joined the crew. He was Andrew Hunter, aged 25 years. Both Shetland men therefore were present for the

formative visit to the Galapagos Islands (September - October 1835) and the Cocos Islands (1-12 April 1836).

Turning to the Shetland FHS database I found two possibilities for this Andrew Hunter. The first Andrew Hunter was born 1812 and died 1837, son of Peter Hunter and Grace Nicolson or Arthurson from Bressay. The second Andrew Hunter was born 1810, the son of Henry Hunter and Barbara Jamieson of Weisdale. This latter Andrew was a sailor and in 1838 married Barbara Graham. His sister Margaret Hunter married Barbara's brother Henry Graham, my great-great-grandparents, making him doubly a relative to me. HMS Beagle returned to England on the 2nd of October 1836, so either Andrew could be the man. The two Shetland men were discharged from the Beagle on the 17th of November and the information trail on them stops.

I would be very pleased to hear from anyone with further information about either man.

If you wish to read more about Darwin and the voyage of the Beagle, the Shetland Library has a selection of books available.

Alan M Beattie

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.

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

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE IS 14TH AUGUST 2009