

Every object has a story

Donations find their way to our collections in a number of ways, but during the past month we received three objects which came to us by chance, fate or otherwise extraordinary means.

A visitor to the Eid Charity Shop got more than she bargained for when she bought a piece of rug canvas to use for a craft project. When the canvas, which cost just £3, was unrolled the unsuspecting buyer found a rare 17th century map inside which she has kindly donated to the Archives. The map dates from 1646 and was produced by Johannes Janssonius (1588-1664). It was published in volume IV of his *Atlas Novus*. The original engraving was done by Janssonius' father-in-law Henricus Hondius and was first published in 1612. The two men worked together on various cartographic projects using Hondius' original copper plates.

In early October the Museum

received a donation by post from Devon. Neatly wrapped in its original brown paper was a cod tail – salted and dried in the late 1950s. The donor had been on holiday at the St. Magnus Hotel in Hillswick in August 1960. While cycling around Northmavine she purchased the cod from a local man. She kept it in a dry environment over the years, and decided to send it back 'home'. Museum chef, Mike Skinner, inspected the fish and said it was as good as the day it was cured. Diners in Hay's Dock café will be disappointed to learn the cod will not be going on the menu, but has been added to the Museum's collection instead.

The latest donation to the Museum is a classic Shetland knitted cap, of a type traded for goods by Fair Islanders in the mid-19th century. It may be one of the oldest pieces of Fair Isle knitting now in the collection.



Mike with
50-year-old
salt cod

It was donated by Masami Yokoyama, who was in Shetland for this year's Wool Week. She found the cap on eBay in March, and paid £7.39 for it. The seller had found the cap on a rubbish heap in Kent. We are very grateful to Masami for donating the cap to the Museum.

Opening Hours

Archives

Monday-Friday 10am-4pm

Saturday 10am-1pm

Museum

Monday -Friday 10am-4pm

Saturday 10am-5pm

Sunday 12pm-5pm

Hay's Dock Café Restaurant

Daytime:

Monday -Friday 10.30am-3.30pm

Saturday 10.30am-4.30pm

Sunday 12-4.30pm

Evenings:

Friday and Saturday 6.30pm-9pm
(last orders)

December evenings:

Tuesday -Saturday 6.30pm-9pm

To book call 01595 741569

What's on Guide

November

daily, to 20th: Exhibition:
'Drawings', by Ron Sandford,
Da Gadderie.

daily, to 4th Dec: Exhibition:
'Memorial Lecture Exhibition',
paintings by Tommy Watt,
Foyer Corridor.

3rd: Lecture: Tommy Watt
Memorial Lecture: 'The
Northern Landscape', by Prof.
Duncan MacMillan, 7.30pm,
booking essential, free.

10th: Lecture (Centre for
Nordic Studies series): 'A Saga
of Sea Eagles', by John Love,
7.30pm, free.

17th: Lecture: 'Shetland
Whalers', a night of
reminiscing and photos with
Mitchell Arthur & Gibbie
Fraser, booking essential, free.

17th: Viking Feast, at Hay's
Dock Café Restaurant, 3

courses, £29.95 per person,
booking essential.

24th-25th: Lovely Lighthouses:
Mootie Moose workshops,
10.30-11.30am & 2-3pm, ages
2½-5, £7.50 for three Sept-Nov
sessions, booking essential.

24th: Lecture (Centre for
Nordic Studies series): 'Viking
Graves in the Northern Isles',
by Dr Stephen Harrison,
7.30pm, free.

26th- Dec. 31st: Exhibition:
'Thomas Woore: sketches of
Shetland, 1828', Da Gadderie.

December

1st: Lecture: 'Whatever
happened to the skjo, and
why?' Dr Ian Tait, 7.30pm,
booking essential, free.

3rd: Lecture: 'Thomas
Woore', by Dr Ian Tait, 2pm,
Da Gadderie, free.

10th: Singing Saturday,
including Bell's Brae school
choir, Boat Hall, see local
press nearer time for details.

8th-23rd: Exhibition:
'The Wonderful World of
Weaving', new work by
Emma Blain, Foyer Corridor.

15th-16th: Merry Mootie
Christmas: Mootie Moose
workshops, 10.30-11.30am
& 2-3pm, ages 2½-5, £7.50
for three Dec-Feb sessions,
booking essential.

28th-31st : New Year
Guizing, craft activities,
Learning Room, drop-in, free.

All events held at Shetland
Museum and Archives.
To book, or for more
information, please visit
Reception or call 01595
695057.

Neolithic World



Archaeologists visit Staneydale.

Shetland Museum recently hosted the 2nd network meeting of Northern Worlds, a project led by the National Museum of Denmark (NMD). The Shetland part of the project looks at the northerly edge of Neolithic farming in Europe. Participants visited the Staneydale and Pinhoulland sites, which are being re-surveyed as part of the project. Papers were presented

by specialists from NMD, National Museums Scotland, University of Dublin, and Shetland Museum, to local archaeologists. Papers from the first network meeting, also held at Shetland Museum, are available for download at http://nordligeverdener.natmus.dk/fileadmin/site_upload/nordlige_verdener/pdf/Farming_on_the_edge_rapport_web.pdf.

‘Ironing’ out the creases

Behind-the-scenes work at SMAA concentrates on protection and care of artefacts. Staff must deal with the conditions artefacts were previously stored in, and can be found hoovering a stoorie kishie, removing soiling from old books, or repainting a yoa.

One major current project is flattening

rolled paper items. The objects range from 17th century maps to late 20th century public notices. Following training from paper conservator Helen Creasy of the Scottish Conservation Studio in Edinburgh, we began the time-consuming process of flattening the items for better storage and accessibility.

Eight items can be flattened at once and the process takes place over a week. Moisture is applied to cloth before carefully layering the paper artefacts between conservation materials. Layers are placed under heavy glass, topped by large books. Over the week the damp gradually softens the layers and

presses out the paper artefacts.

Most of the items were stored in the Museum but now will be transferred to the Archives. For more information, contact the Archives, or go online at www.calmview.eu/ShetlandArchive/CalmView.

Laurie Goodland
Museum Assistant

Digitisation project in Unst

Unst Heritage Trust is undertaking a digitisation programme for their collections at the Heritage Centre and Boat Haven. Together, there are about 3,300 artefacts between the two museums. Currently, access to the collections is open to all, but is not easy to search and does not protect artefacts from regular handling.

Following a successful grant bid from the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, work began this year to create a database record for each object, using the Collective Access database programme (<http://collectiveaccess.org>). Adlib and CALM proved too expensive for our limited budget.

Once the mammoth task has been completed over the next three years, collections information will be more accessible for staff and researchers. Caring for the collections and assessing object condition will be easier since each object will have a photographic record.

Rhoda Hughson
Chairman, Unst Heritage Trust



An artefact entry
ready for digitisation



Kudos for Curator

Jenny Murray, the Museum's Curator of Collections, recently received an M. Litt in Shetland and Orkney Studies from UHI. She attended the ceremony held at St. Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall, where she was graduated with distinction.

Faroe Collection comes to Archives

A unique collection of books has recently been transferred to the Archives from the Shetland Library. The Faroe Collection, which was formerly shelved in the Shetland Room of the old Library, was a gift from Faroe to Shetland in 1969. In that year, five centuries after Shetland became part of Scotland, there was a major historical conference in the isles, and it was during these events that the books arrived. Most of the books are in Faroese or Danish (although a few are in English) and the collection gives an excellent picture of the kind of material which was being published in Faroe in the mid-twentieth century. The books are currently being incorporated into the Archives' catalogue and will be available to users in due course.

New festive menus

Hay's Dock Café Restaurant will launch two new menus in December to help you celebrate the festivities. The lunch menu features classic Christmas dinner, vegetarian haggis or salmon, along with a range of starters and desserts. In the evening, diners can choose from a menu including pheasant, salmon, mixed game, and turkey with all the trimmings. The evening menu will be available Tuesday – Saturday evenings from the 2nd until the 23rd of December. If you'd like to see the full menus please visit <http://www.haysdock.co.uk/>. To find out more or book a table please call 01595 741569.

John Paul Jones and the Mousa men



John Paul Jones, shortly after he met the Mousa men.

On 8 October 1779 John Paul Jones, the Scottish-born American naval commander, sailed into North Holland with two prizes. 'He was dressed in the American uniform,' reported a Scottish newspaper, 'with a Scotch bonnet edged with gold; is of a middling stature, stern countenance and swarthy complexion.' On board his ship were four fishermen from Mousa.

Jones had wreaked terror on the east coast of Scotland in his 40-gun ship the *Bon Homme Richard*. When he got to Holland he wrote about what had happened as he headed north. On 6 September 'a pilot boat came on board from Shetland, by which means I received such advices as induced me to change a plan which I otherwise meant to have pursued.' What did Jones hear?

He had been sailing past Mousa, en route to

Lerwick, and he caught up with a small boat from the island. He hoisted English colours. On board the boat were John Adamson, a native of North Cunningsburgh, my own great-great-great-grandfather; James Smith, Adamson's brother-in-law; a third man called James Bain; and a fourth whose name we do not know. They assumed that the *Bon Homme Richard* wanted a pilot.

More than a hundred years later Robert Cogle, a Cunningsburgh antiquary, described what happened next. 'Jones ... made enquiries concerning the strength of the garrison at Lerwick, and if any men-of-war had been there lately. [The fishermen] now overheard some of the marines on board speaking in a foreign language (French), and becoming suspicious that something was wrong, informed him that there were two large English men-of-war lying in at Lerwick. On [Jones] enquiring the size and rig of those vessels they answered that "dey hed twa muckle masts afore, an a peerie mast behint".'

It was a lie, and, as Jones said, he changed his plans. But first he took the Mousa men and their boat on board, in case they raised the alarm. He headed south, re-joined his squadron, and on 23 September met a British convoy off Flamborough Head on the Yorkshire coast. The convoy was under escort of the *Serapis*, with 44 guns,

commanded by Captain Pearson, and the *Countess of Scarborough*, 20 guns, commanded by Captain Piercy. There ensued what Cogle rightly called 'one of the most desperate battles recorded in history'.

The Mousa men were in the hold of the *Bon Homme Richard*. As the battle raged, and water began to fill the ship, they tried to get up to the lower deck. But a sentinel with a bayonet, guarding the hatchway, barked 'Prenez garde'. (They thought he meant 'Whaur ir you gaen?') Eventually they made a rush at him, flung him into the hold and escaped.

Captain Pearson, meanwhile, was raking the *Bon Homme Richard* with fire, killing scores of Americans. But Jones lashed the ships together, and although his own sank he won the battle by sheer determination. He then sailed across the North Sea to

safety in American-favouring Holland.

The Mousa men stayed there for a few weeks, and eventually found a smuggler who would take them home. Adamson was still carrying their boat's sail. They arrived in Mousa on Christmas Eve, to the astonishment of their families, who thought they were dead.

It was a great event in Shetland. People flocked to the boat's crew to hear about their experiences. Someone asked James Bain where had had been. 'I'm been whaur I'm heard naethin bit cannicks roarin,' he replied. People called him 'Cannicks' for the rest of his life.

Brian Smith
Shetland Archivist

[Robert Cogle's account appeared in the *Shetland Times* of 19 and 26 January 1889.]



The battle between the *Bon Homme Richard* and the *Serapis* on 23 September 1779.

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 *Unkans*, 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

heritage
Shetland
culture

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR NEXT ISSUE IS NEXT ISSUE IS FRIDAY, 16 DECEMBER, 2011.