

## Celebrating Bobby Tulloch



*(editor's note: As a first for Unkans, we are highlighting the work of community heritage on our cover. We applaud the Yell community for reminding us of a life dedicated to Shetland's natural and cultural heritage)*

The late Bobby Tulloch was a gifted, self-taught naturalist who pioneered wildlife tourism in Shetland, and eventually organised tours as far apart as Spitzbergen and the Falkland Islands. This year marks the 80th anniversary of his birth and the 21st anniversary of Island Holidays, the tour company he founded with his partner, Libby Weir Breen.

Libby has arranged a cruise of the Scottish Islands this year as a tribute to Bobby, and the Russian exploration vessel, *Professor Multanovskiy*, will be calling at Burravoe on 19th June. The forty passengers will be accompanied by Hugh Miles, who filmed *The Track of the Wild Otter* for the BBC. Also

onboard will be John Busby who illustrated Hugh's book, as well as two books which Bobby produced.

Passengers will spend a day on Yell, visiting the Bobby Tulloch memorial at the Old Haa and two exhibitions which are being arranged in his memory, before touring the island and attending a reception in the Burravoe Hall. In the evening the ship will depart for Mousa.

The three films in which Bobby took part may be screened in local halls during the week, and a tribute concert featuring Bobby's songs and music will take place on Saturday 13th June in the Burravoe Hall.

The website [www.bobbytulloch.com](http://www.bobbytulloch.com) contains over 700 images selected from the 14,000 slides which Bobby's surviving family donated to the Old Haa. Details of the commemorative cruise can be found at [www.islandholidays.co.uk](http://www.islandholidays.co.uk).

### What's On Guide

#### May

**14th: Fishy Fun!**: make a collage fish to take home, 3pm-4pm, free, booking essential. Ages 3-4 (must be accompanied by adult)

**Until 25th: Exhibition: 'Oil Works: North Sea Diaries'**, by Sue Jane Taylor, Da Gadderie.

**Until 25th: Film: 'Under the North Sea'**, 26 mins., daily, free.

**21st: Illustrated talk: 'Oil Works: North Sea Diaries'**, with Sue Jane Taylor, 7.30pm, free - drop in.

**30th - 28th June: Exhibition: 'Last Works in Walls'**, by June Hainualt. Da Gadderie.

#### June

**daily: Film: 'Sheep Dipping in the Shetland Islands'**, 9 mins, b&w, silent. 1936.

**Tours: 'Highlights of Shetland Museum and Archives'**, throughout the day, contact Reception for times: 01595 741562.

**1st - 26th: Display: Zetland Golf Club trophies.** Cafe Restaurant foyer.

**Until 28th: Exhibition: 'Last Works in Walls'**, by June Hainualt. Da Gadderie.

**4th: Going Potty!: make a clay pot using ancient techniques.** 10:30-11:00am, free, booking essential, ages 3-4 (must be accompanied by adult)

**10th: Workshop: Researching historic landscapes in the Archives**, by RCAHMS, using materials from Shetland Archives, 9am-4pm, to book, phone 0131 662 1456.

**17th - 31st July: Display: 'St Magnus Sails'**, 14 banners by Orkney artists. Auditorium.

**20th & 21st: Viking Galley workshop:** make a galley sculpture from willow, 2-4pm, (Note: spread over 2 afternoons), free, booking essential, P5-7.

**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.**

### Opening Hours

Museum:

**Monday-Saturday 10am-5.30pm, Sunday 12pm-5pm**

Archives:

**Monday-Friday 10am-4.30pm, Saturday 10am-1pm, Sunday closed**

Hay's Dock Café Restaurant:

**Until May 29th:**

Daytime **Monday-Saturday 11am-4pm, Sunday 12-4pm**

Evenings **Thursday-Saturday 7-11pm**, last orders 9pm

**Beginning May 30th:**

Daytime **Monday-Saturday 10:30am-5pm, Sunday 12-5pm**

Evening **Tuesday-Saturday 7-11pm**, last orders 9pm

to book, phone 01595 741569

Croft House Museum:

**Daily 10am-1pm & 2pm-5pm**

Böd of Gremista:

**Wednesday-Sunday 10am-1pm & 2pm-5pm**

## A gift sent home twice



For Shetlanders settling elsewhere a century ago, it was as much of an emigration to settle in mainland Britain as if they'd gone abroad. Chances are they seldom visited home again, and communication only came by mail.

Robert Christie was born in 1851 in Delting. He was a postman, taking deliveries from Voe to Collafirth and Voxter. In 1908 his daughter Lilius Christie married Thomas Vaughan, a miner in south Wales, where the couple made their home. Soon after, Lilius had a snuffbox made as a present to her father, which she posted home. Latterly, Robert became blind and moved to stay with his other daughter, Margaret Christie in Glasgow, where he died in 1935.

The pewter box has come home once more, the donation of Robert's great-grandson, Andrew Young, Ayr. It is engraved with the owner's name, and inside are the maker's details; 'THOMAS EVANS, TREHERBERT'.

If you have artefacts that belonged to expatriate Shetlanders we would like to hear from you!

**Dr Ian Tait**  
Curator of Collections

## Viking Conference

A conference hosted by Shetland Amenity Trust (SAT) exploring Shetland's place in the Viking world will run from 16-19 July 2009 at Shetland Museum and Archives. Findings from the Viking Unst Project will be presented and specialists will discuss Shetland in the wider Viking context. Saturday will be spent in Unst, visiting longhouse excavations, the Skidbladner ship, and a Viking market.

To book, or for further information, contact SAT at 01595 694688, [info@shetlandamenity.org](mailto:info@shetlandamenity.org), or [www.vikingshetland.com](http://www.vikingshetland.com)

## You gave us a clue!

The unknown photo in *Unkans 12* has been identified. It shows Joseph Leask's whitefish station at Hirpa, Whiteness, around 1890. In addition to his warehouse and shop, you can see fishcuring apparatus and the haddock boat *Lark* 2974 LK, belonging to Burra. This station operated in the 1880s-90s. Thanks go to Ian McAlpine, South Whiteness, for letting us know.

## New study on old films

Shetland Amenity Trust has received a Heritage Lottery Fund Awards for All grant of £8,600 to part-fund a feasibility study into establishing a Moving Image Archive in Shetland.

The first stage of the study is to research the quantity and nature of old cine and video film in Shetland, with a view to collecting and preserving it.

If there is enough film to establish an archive, donated film will be preserved in a climate-controlled environment, while a

high-quality digital master will be available for public access. The donor of the material will also receive a copy.

The project will make films available for research and education, and will be a rich resource for marketing, advertising and art.

Project co-ordinators Joanne Jamieson and Karen Emslie would like to hear from anyone who may know of old cine or video films. Please contact: [filmproject@shetlandamenity.org](mailto:filmproject@shetlandamenity.org), 01595 694688.



Shetland Museum Photographic Archive

# Archivists visit Shetland

On 28-29 March archivists from all over Scotland held their annual mini-conference in the Shetland Museum and Archives. Chris Kitching, author of two standard works on Archives buildings, gave a keynote lecture about planning and building new facilities, and referred warmly to the development at Hay's Dock. On Saturday evening, conference members ate dinner at the Grand Hotel, and were entertained by humorous reminiscences about the archives world in Scotland during the past thirty years, by Shetland archivist Brian Smith. On Sunday, the archivists visited Scalloway Castle and Old Scatness to see some of Shetland's historical and prehistoric monuments.



Archivists listen to Dr Peter Anderson, former deputy keeper of records at the National Archives of Scotland, an expert on Scalloway Castle.

## Old Scatness summer 2009



Haven't been to Old Scatness in awhile? It's a great day out for families, and a fantastic site to take your visitors to this summer. Guided tours, Living History demonstrations, and visiting local and international craftspeople will be on hand. Open from May to September, Sunday to Thursday, 10am – 5pm (closed Friday and Saturday). Admission: adults £4.00, children £3.00 for single tickets that last all season. Groups, family, and discount tickets also available. Contact Old Scatness Visitor Centre 01590 461869 for more details.

### COMMUNITY HERITAGE NEWS

*Is your heritage group working on a special project? Why not tell us about it. Contact Carol Christiansen on 741560, [carol@shetland-museum.org.uk](mailto:carol@shetland-museum.org.uk)*

#### Cabin will open

The Cabin museum will open again this season, despite the sad loss of its founder, Andy Robertson, in December. Andy's family plan to open Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons from 1-5pm throughout the summer.

#### Sheltie show in Unst

Many of the community museums and heritage centres have new displays for 2009 (see accompanying article on the Bobby Tulloch exhibition in Yell). The Unst Heritage Centre have developed a new exhibition entitled, 'Shelties at Home'. Funding was granted by Museums Galleries Scotland, which helped pay for a life-sized resin pony for bairns to ride. UHC is open daily, 11am-5pm through September.

#### Scotland's Rural Past course

The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments Scotland are offering a one-day course at Shetland Museum and Archives on researching the past landscape through documentary evidence. The course will be held on 10 June from 9am-4pm. To book, contact the RCAHMS on 0131 662 1456 or visit [srp@rcahms.gov.uk](http://srp@rcahms.gov.uk).

# Shetland's mining history

As stories from Shetland's mining history are re-awakened, elements which may be found in a modern virtual-reality program begin to emerge. In these stories there is rivalry, deceit, power, poor management and blind investments tinted with lust for money and broken dreams. For centuries, strong-willed men have tried to profit from Shetland's valuable minerals, only to leave holes of failure behind them.

Shetland's mining heritage begins with a felsite quarry on the northwestern slope of Ronas Hill. Early Shetlanders quarried this fine-grained volcanic rock and painstakingly formed and polished it to make essential tools such as the unique Shetland knife. Just south of Cunningsburgh at the

Catpund Burn is another ancient quarry. Here, people carved out bowls, plates and other implements from the surrounding soapstone.

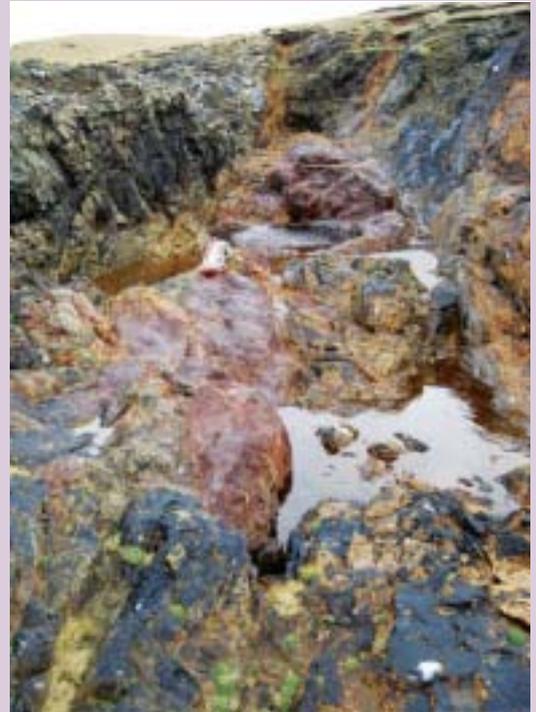
Shetland's first commercial mining came in 1789. A southlander with little mining experience, Alexander Crighton, searched for copper and iron and entered into mining leases with local landowners. Apparently, friction occurred between Crighton and estate owner John Bruce of Sumburgh. Revoking Crighton's lease, Bruce signed a new one with Londoner, Robert Redman and The Shetland Mining Co.

Redman's first mining attempt ended with liquidation. With reconstruction, new shareholders and fresh capital, machinery was bought, shafts were driven and some

copper ore was shipped southwards. But, battling water filled shafts, using unskilled workers, having incompetent management and with irrational mine owners relying on misleading information, the company again went into liquidation around 1806. Afterwards, little interest in Shetland copper was shown until John Walker's arrival.

During the 1870's, Walker's Sand Lodge Mining Co. Ltd brought new energy. New shafts were sunk, tunnels dug, piers were built, investments in machinery and buildings were made, and tons of crushed and washed ore, mostly iron, was shipped to England.

Although a few Cornish miners were imported to Shetland, Walker employed many Shetlanders. Working three-shift workdays, paying for their own tools and explosives, which allegedly left some of them indebted to the company, the miners had accidents, strikes and protests. Evidence points to shareholders owing the company vital capital funds, which initialized mud throwing and scapegoat hunts amongst those involved. In early 1882,



**Quendale mine.**

liquidation became a fact for The Sand Lodge Mining Co. Ltd.

In 1919, renewed interest in the Sandlodge mines and Fair Isle copper, the latter having been known since the early 19th century, was shown by The Shetland Exploration Syndicate, London. New reports were commissioned leading to new investments. A Belgian mining engineer, Dr. J.B. Garbe, reportedly boasted of 369 000 tons of "impressive" copper ore, 4000 miners immediately needed, best mine ever seen,

"sizable" returns and profits...! The Sandlodge copper mines were permanently capped with cement in the summer of 1931.

Other Shetland mines, whose stories are waiting to be reawakened are: The Garthsness Mine (copper/iron), The Fair Isle Mine (copper), The Levenwick Mine (iron), the Cunningsburgh Trial (iron/copper), The Fetlar and Unst quarries (chromite) and others that may have stories left untold.

**Tim Senften**



**Detail from Quendale mine share certificate D8/417/3**

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.

Email: [info@shetlandmuseumandarchives.org.uk](mailto:info@shetlandmuseumandarchives.org.uk) Telephone: 01595 695057 Fax: 01595 696729

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

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE IS 12 JUNE 2009**