

Sunde to lecture again

On 8 September Professor Jørn Sunde of the University of Bergen will be back in Shetland. He gave the Tom Henderson memorial lecture to a packed audience in the Museum and Archives in 2008. On this occasion he will speak about the abolition of 'foreign laws' in Shetland and Orkney in 1611.

At the end of Earl Patrick Stewart's career in the north, the Scottish Privy Council

decided that he had used the old Norse lawbook of Shetland inappropriately. So they issued an edict abolishing laws other than Scottish ones in the islands.

Jørn will speak about foreign laws and Scots law on the 400th anniversary of the Privy Council's edict.

Tickets are free but booking is essential. Visit Reception or phone 01595 741562.

Busiest season yet

We have enjoyed our busiest summer ever, with record numbers of visitors coming through the door. In July a total of 15,531 people visited the building and we had a record-breaking day on the Saturday of the Tall Ships week when we welcomed no fewer than 1,592 visitors. Customer services manager Barnaby Ashton said: "I'd like to thank all our staff for their hard work and enthusiasm during the busiest time since opening in 2007."



Professor Jørn Sunde

Opening Hours (Autumn)

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:

Tuesday-Saturday, 6.30-9pm (last orders)
To book: 01595 741569

What's on Guide

September

daily, to 25th: Exhibition:
'30 Years of Smirk', Stephen
Gordon, Foyer Corridor.

daily, to 9th Oct: Exhibition:
'North Atlantic Drift',
tapestries, drawings and
mixed media work by Ingrid
Arthur, Robyn Marwick, Clare
Coyle, Da Gadderie.

1st: Lecture: 'Shetland
Family History', by Brian
Smith and Dr Ian Tait,
7.30pm, free.

2nd: Film: 'Man of Aran',
2.30pm, tickets available
from Shetland Box Office,
£5/£3.50.

3rd: Films: 'Homemade in
Shetland', 11am-4pm, free.

4th: Films: 'Homemade in
Shetland', 1-4pm, free.

8th: Lecture: '400th
Anniversary of Abolition of
Norse Laws in Shetland', by
Prof. Jørn Sunde, University
of Bergen, 7.30pm, free,
booking recommended.

12th: Bookings taken: Mootie
Moose Sept.-Nov. Sessions,
open from 10am, ages 2½-5,
£7.50 for three Sept.-Nov.
sessions.

22nd-23rd: Victorian
Washday: Mootie Moose
workshop, 10.30-11.30am &
2-3pm (each day), ages 2½-5,
£7.50 for three Sept.-Nov.
sessions, booking essential.
30th: Lecture (Centre for
Nordic Studies series):

'Roots of Shetland Dialect',
Dr Robert McColl Millar,
University of Aberdeen,
7.30pm, free.

October

daily, to 9th Oct: Exhibition:
'North Atlantic Drift',
tapestries, drawings and
mixed media work by Ingrid
Arthur, Robyn Marwick, Clare
Coyle, Da Gadderie.

daily, to 24th Oct: Exhibition:
'Eric Gray Centre', Foyer
Corridor.

1st: Event: 'An afternoon of
readings, poetry and music
with author Heike Heering',
2pm, free.

10th: Workshop: Hairst wall
hanging, 10-12.30am, P3-7,
£5, booking essential.

10th-15th: Wool Week tours:
Textile Treasures, 2pm, free.

10th-15th: Wool Week
demonstrations: Traditional
Textiles, 2pm, free.

10th-16th: Wool Week sheep
scavenger hunt, free.

11th: Wool Week
presentation: 'Shetland
Textiles Then and Now',
6.30pm, free.

12th: Workshop: Friendship
bracelets: 10am-4pm, P5-7,
£10, booking essential.

13th: Wool Week workshop:
Pom pom mice: 10.30am-
12pm, P1-7, £3.50, booking
essential.

14th: Lecture (Centre for
Nordic Studies series): 'A
Saga of Sea Eagles', by John
Love, 7.30pm, free.

15th: Wool Week family
workshop: 'Peerie Ooie
Sheep', 11am-3pm, free.

15th-20th Nov: Exhibition:
'Drawings', by Ron Sandford,
Da Gadderie, free.

16th: Family workshop: Party
bunting, 12-3pm, drop-in,
free.

20th-21st: Creepy
Castles: Mootie Moose
workshops, 10.30-11.30am
& 2-3pm, ages 2½-5, £7.50
for three Sept-Nov sessions,
booking essential.

21st: Lecture: 'German
Merchants and their trade
in Shetland in the 17th
Century', by Dr. Kathrin
Zickermann, Institute of
Historical Research, 7.30pm,
free.

28th: Lecture (Centre for
Nordic Studies series):
'First links in Scandinavia,
Environment and People in
the Northern Isles', Caroline
Wickham-Jones, University
of Aberdeen, 7.30pm, free.

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

Farewell to hard working students



Cairi Jennings, Helen Whitham and Robert Anderson.

It's time to wave goodbye to our summer students! This year Helen Whitham returned for her third year, Cairi Jennings for her second year and Robert Anderson joined us for the first time.

Helen worked in collections, registering art work and textiles and making mounts for Fair Isle swatches. Cairi was deployed in Lifelong Learning, where she helped with summer workshops. Robert reorganised the storage and scanning of original negatives that make up the vast photo archive, as well as scraping and painting boats in preparation for the Tall Ships Race.

In addition, they donned boiler suits and went to the Crofthouse Museum at Boddam to paint gates, doors, and rails, clear paths and the mill waterway, and tar the boat shed roof! Their reward was a dip in the sea during the dinner hour.

Celebrate all things woolly

Shetland Wool Week 2011 celebrates the wool of Britain's most northerly native sheep, Shetland's textile industries and rural farming. It's part of the Campaign for Wool, initiated by HRH Prince of Wales, to promote and champion wool globally. In Shetland, Promote Shetland and woolbrokers Jamieson &



A peerie flock o' moorits
Smith are co-ordinating a range of events throughout the islands.

Shetland Museum and Archives staff will demonstrate spinning,

Fair Isle and fine lace knitting. There are drop-in weekend sessions on making peerie ooie sheep and bunting. Artists Ana Horne and Jo Jack will lead children's workshops on weaving. Jamieson and Smith are providing Shetland wool for our events. See What's On guide for details.

Bowled over by unexpected find

A large, unfinished kleber (steatite) bowl was recently donated to the museum. These are usually found around the Isles in site excavations but this incredible example was found when the donor, Audrey Smith, decided to extend her kitchen at Glenside, Hoswick. Glenside was formerly known as Da Slap and is believed to be one of the oldest houses in Sandwick. Little did she know that just a few feet under the foundations was a household item left by one of its earlier occupants!

Kleber vessels come in several shapes and sizes; the round ones are believed to be earlier. Examples of

this type have been found in Bronze Age and Iron Age houses but are more prevalent in the Viking and early Norse periods. Rectangular bowls seem to have become more popular in the later Norse period.

Our new bowl may have been hewn from the nearby steatite quarry at Catpund in Cunningsburgh. These were chiselled out of the bedrock then probably traded in this unfinished state for its new owner to finish at home. Why the residents of Da Slap never finished their one shall remain a mystery, but its chisel marks offer us a good insight to its construction.



Jenny Murray with kleber bowl

Family jumper recreated

We're always grateful when treasured family objects are donated to the collections and we're more than happy to show these items to family members again. At last year's Hamefarin, descendents of Gilbert Robertson (1910-1998) requested to see a jumper he donated to the museum in 1977. His mother, Andrina Bruce Harrison Johnston

Robertson, of Gossabrough, Yell knit the V-neck natural-coloured jumper for him before her untimely death in 1935. Ruby Smith, granddaughter of Andrina, returned early this year to study and photograph the jumper, before re-creating it. She showed us her finished work, photographed next to the original.



Ruby with 1935 jumper, left, and 2011 jumper, right.



Gong for Barbara

Dr. Barbara Crawford of St. Andrews University was awarded an OBE in this year's Queen's Honours List for services to History and Archaeology. Dr. Crawford excavated the Biggins site on Papa Stour in the late 1970s and 1980s and spearheaded the project to reconstruct the Norse stofa building on the site. She has authored many publications about Norse and medieval history of the Northern Isles. Following retirement in 2001, she has continued researching medieval political relations with Norway and the early history of the church in Orkney and Shetland. She is currently President of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

Memorial Lecture to honour Tommy Watt

This year's lecture is in memory of Tommy Watt, the Museum's Curator from 1990 to 2010. To recognize the importance of Tommy's commitment to expanding the Museum art collection and his support for local artists, the lecture will be given by art historian Professor Duncan Macmillan.

Duncan taught for many years at the University of Edinburgh as Professor of Art

History, ran the University art gallery and has written widely on art. He is a Fellow of both the Royal Society of Edinburgh and Royal Society of Arts, and also an Honorary Royal Scottish Academician. He writes art reviews for the Scotsman newspaper and his book *Scottish Art 1460-1990* was *Scottish Book of the Year, 1990*. It was reissued as *Scottish Art 1460-2000* in 2000.

As well as having a great knowledge of Scottish art Tommy was himself an artist and to accompany the lecture an exhibition of his paintings will be displayed outside the auditorium.

The Tommy Watt Memorial Lecture on Art in the Northern Landscape is on 3rd November, at 7.30pm in the Auditorium. Tickets will be available on 3 October.

Shetland and Byzantium

Sometimes small objects can tell big stories. In the Museum's store there are two coins which do just that. The first is a worn bronze coin of the Emperor Justinian I, minted at Byzantium in 545 AD. In 1954, Mr Clausen told how he acquired the coin from an old man who found it at the Sands of Breckon, in North Yell.

The coin is one of just six Justinian coins found in Scotland. Others have been found at Kirkintilloch, Shotts, Cramond, Stonehouse and recently at Loch Sween. There are enough to suggest we are dealing with a phenomenon here, and not just stray finds. They are likely to be numismatic evidence for some kind of commercial activity in Scotland in the century after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. Economic historian Professor Blanchard believes that newly-minted Byzantine coins continued to arrive in northern Britain during much of the 6th and 7th centuries, and that their distribution reveals an underlying pattern of trade, a pattern which Shetland seems to have been part of. Perhaps there was a beach trading site at the Sands of Breckon. This trade

network ultimately led back to the Mediterranean, where Justinian, with his conquests of Spain and North Africa, tried to hard to restore the glories of the Roman Empire.

A few years before the coin was minted a terrible plague occurred, ravaging the late Roman world. It swept through the Mediterranean and along trade routes, even reaching Ireland in 545. The dreadful thought occurs that this network, which brought the coin to Shetland, may also have brought plague.

The second coin is 500 years younger. It was also minted in Byzantium, during the reign of Emperor Michael IV (1034-1041). Again it was found in Yell, but unfortunately from an unknown site. However, there is also no reason to doubt its veracity. Certainly Byzantine coins would have been circulating in Norway at this time. Whereas the Justinian coin probably arrived in Shetland along the trade routes from the south, this coin perhaps came directly from the east, because there were direct links between the Kingdom of Norway and Byzantine Empire. The leader of Emperor Michael

IV's Varangian guard had been the warlike Harald *harðráði*, who became king of Norway, immensely wealthy, on his return from Byzantium in about 1047. Harald was the most energetic man of his age, described as the 'Thunderbolt of the North' by Adam of Bremen. He had links

retinue exchanged a coin in Shetland for some service.

Two coins, 500 years apart, both connect Shetland to the great Imperial city of Byzantium, yet they embody a change in the geopolitical situation of Shetland during that half millennium. The first suggests Shetland was connected to the Late



Coins of Emperors Justinian I, left, and Michael IV, right

with the Northern Isles. According to his saga, he had been saved from the Battle of Stiklestad in 1030 by Rognvald Brusason, later Jarl Rognvald. These two warriors travelled together to Russia. Then on Harald's ill-fated expedition to England in 1066, he stayed in Shetland a short while before sailing to Orkney. Perhaps, a member of Harald's

Antique World of the Mediterranean via Britain. The second shows that after Shetland had become part of the Norse world, the patterns of trade had changed, and Shetland was now linked to the Great City via the Viking trade route down the mighty Russian Rivers.

Dr Andrew Jennings
Centre for Nordic Studies

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, 14 OCTOBER, 2011.