

Anniversary Celebrations at Shetland Museum and Archives

2016 marks two significant anniversaries for Museum and Archives services in Shetland.

Fifty years ago, on 28th June 1966, the Shetland Museum was officially opened at the Hillhead in Lerwick, where the artefacts held by the county were on display for the first time. The building was opened by R. H. W. Bruce and the event was well attended.

Forty years ago, on 6th May 1976, the Shetland Archives service was first established. Originally based at 92 St Olaf Street, the records were moved to Harbour Street and then to the huts at King Harald Street in 1981.

Both services came together in the brand new Shetland Museum and Archives building at

Hay's Dock in 2007, bringing the collections together under one roof.

A series of events are planned in the coming weeks to mark these anniversaries.

A display of artefacts will be on show in the foyer from Monday 27th June – 50 items, including one donated item for ever year the Museum has been open. A second display of unusual documents and quirky archive facts illustrating the history of the Shetland Archives will be unveiled the same day in the Archives display case.

Curator, Ian Tait, and Archivist, Brian Smith, will take an anecdotal look back over 90 years of Museum and Archives services in a joint lecture event on Tuesday 28th June. This will

be held in the Auditorium at Shetland Museum and Archives and tickets are on sale now from www.thelittleboxoffice.com/smaa, priced £3.50.

On Saturday 2nd July, members of the public will be encouraged to take a 'Hock idda attic' and unearth family heirlooms or unidentified treasures which can be brought to the Museum and Archives for an appraisal day. The Archivist and Curators will be on hand between 11.00am and 2.00pm in the Boat Hall to examine papers, artefacts, textiles or archaeology pieces and offer information and advice. (Please note values cannot be given.)

Other events will be listed at www.shetlandmuseumandarchives.org.uk as they are confirmed.



Shetland Archives, King Harald Street



Shetland Museum and Library at Hillhead

Local Events Listings

For information on local events please visit www.shetland.org to view listings. To add your own event to this site please call 01595 989898 or complete the online form at www.visit.shetland.org/submit-an-event

Visit
www.shetlandamenity.org/unkans
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New Display at Scalloway Museum

Since it re-opened in 2012 the Scalloway Museum has had a “room” in the middle which has been used for celebrating some of Scalloway’s notable residents and for miscellaneous exhibits ranging from the Oceanic to aquaculture. It has never been the focus of a large themed exhibit and there has been a feeling among the volunteers that it wasn’t being used as well as it might be. Last winter we decided it was time to do something about it and a project to transform the area into a more permanent display was launched.

The first question of course was what would be the subject. It was pointed out that the museum was very masculine orientated. The Shetland Bus and Scalloway’s fishermen and industrialists were well represented, but where were the women? A quick scan through the displays

and all we could come up with was a panel about witch burnings. Not the most positive of messages!

We decided to go down the road of women’s work which in turn led us to domestic life and inevitably to textiles. A hunt through our collection produced a number of artefacts including some beautiful Victorian/Edwardian clothes and once the word got out volunteers began to appear with more related items from their own lofts and cupboards to add to the display. This allowed us to plan the exhibit and tell the story of women in Scalloway for the last 200 years or so. Willis Duncan wrote the bulk of the text for seven interpretive panels and we were ably assisted by Dr Carol Christiansen who proof read text for us and ran a very useful workshop on how to properly display textiles.

The panels deal with a range of subjects from women’s place in the social structure of Scalloway to the development of Shetland knitwear as a high fashion item and from the production of knitwear just for family and neighbours to its industrialisation and the growth of the merchant class. The display gives an insight into the importance of women in a society where many of the men were absent at the fishing or merchant marine. The artefacts on display reflect the various roles women undertook and provide examples of domestic implements and clothing over the period.

The exhibit required a lot of hard work for a team of skilled volunteers and the result has added a whole new dimension to the Scalloway Museum displays.

Scalloway Museum is open 11.00am-4.00pm Monday to Saturday, and 2.00pm -4.00pm on Sunday.

Davy Cooper



Charles Forret – 'A superb calligrapher'

Former pupils at the Anderson Educational Institute who are my age, and older, have the fondest memories of Charles Forret. A native of Fife who had fought in Burma during the war, he arrived at the A.E.I. in 1952, and was an inspiring teacher of art in the school for fifteen years.

A bold artist – in the RAFA Club in Charlotte Street there's a fine mural painting by him of a Sunderland flying boat on the slip at Sella Ness – he had many interests. He was a keen model-maker. But until recently I knew nothing about another remarkable skill of his: he was a superb calligrapher.

After World War Two Zetland County Council set up a War Services Commemoration Committee. Its aim was to remember the contribution made by Shetlanders to the war effort. One of its lasting achievements was to commission a manuscript roll of honour of Shetlanders who had lost their lives in the conflict.

They approached Charlie Forret to do the work. I have no idea how the information was collected, but, once

assembled, Charlie laboured with it for months. The completed volume is a sparkling and moving piece of work. He signed it off on the last page: 'Charles Forret scripsit: 1962'.

Soon afterwards, the Commemoration Committee disbanded, and presented its property to the Gilbert Bain Hospital. Charlie Forret's beautiful roll of honour has been there, and latterly at Montfield, for the past half-century. National Health Shetland has now deposited it in the Shetland Archives for safe-keeping.

Brian Smith, Archivist

Do you have any examples of Charlie Forret's art work? If so Brian Smith at the Archives would be very interested to hear from you. His email address is brian@shetland-archives.org.uk



Hughson. Alexander ♦ Master ♦ Merchant
Navy ♦ M.V. Lady Glanelly ♦ —
† 2nd December 1940 † Aged 58 years
Kirkabister. North Nesting ♦ —

Hughson. Hugh E ♦ Boatswain ♦ April
Merchant Navy ♦ S.S. Cape Corso ♦
† 2nd May 1942 † Aged 23 years ♦ —
Mossbank ♦

Hughson. Laurence B ♦ 62119 ♦ Royal Air
Force † 2nd March 1940 † Aged 22
years ♦ Lerwick ♦



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Hilda Heyman – Spy or not?

Rumours of spies filled Shetland as World War One took hold. An Ordnance Survey party were continually reported, and the socially well-connected sea angler Edgar Frederick Newton protested about his own treatment. Among it all was a Swedish artist, Hilda Heyman, born in 1872 to a well off business family in Gothenburg. The *Bruun Rasmussen* auction house describes her work as *intimate studies of people absorbed in their own worlds*. She spent much of her life outside Sweden, studying in Paris just before her Shetland visit in 1914.

She recounted her experience here in the Swedish women's magazine *Idun* in April 1915. The *Shetland News* published a translation by William Ratter, 3 July 1915. She'd made over fifty sketches in the islands. The Museum holds a painting by her of Betty Mouat, Shetland's heroine of maritime endurance. War broke out, her friends in Sweden began to worry as communication lagged. They sent a telegram – *SEND INFORMATION*. It couldn't have helped.

A foreign woman was going round the islands, making sketches, asking questions even. From Sweden too, where some politicians favoured Germany. Hilda found herself visited daily by the police, although dealings seem to have been cordial. *She and the bobbies always separated as the best of friends*. She carried on, although the article says Lerwick formed into two parties, those who thought she was a spy, and those who didn't.

Finally the order came to go. The *Shetland News* said it was made by a high official. The *Idun* didn't have to operate under the same rules.

Ett teleWgram af föllande lydelse från ingen med eller mindre än amiral Jellicoe: -- Send away the Swedish woman!

A telegram with the following wording from no less than admiral Jellicoe. Whether it was Lord Jellicoe, or someone operating under his authority isn't clear. It's difficult to believe that the excitable Col. H.C. Evans, the Shetland military commander, wasn't involved somewhere, although there's no mention of him. So she was sent away, protesting to the consul, abandoning plans for an exhibition, and stating that her interests were the sea and the wide plain and the country folk.

Was Hilda Heyman a spy? It seems unlikely, more a victim of circumstance and some naivety. She certainly didn't fit with the German regime she encountered later in World War Two Paris. Her paintings were seized in a raid, although she got them back later. She'd devoted much of her career to depicting Jewish people in Eastern Europe, and Palestine.

She died in 1955 and is buried in a Jewish cemetery in Stockholm.

Angus Johnson
Archives Assistant



A painting of Betty Mouat by Hilda Heyman held in the Shetland Museum and Archives collection

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.

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

heritage
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DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR NEXT ISSUE IS MONDAY 25TH JULY 2016.