

Follow the Vikings Project Launched



Follow The Vikings is a 4-year EU Creative Europe project celebrating Viking heritage throughout Europe, with a particular emphasis on creativity and culture, including the creation of an international touring event. Key aims of the project include international networking opportunities, skills development, reaching new audiences, promoting borderless tourism and promoting Europe as a global tourism destination. The Lead Partner in the project is Shetland Amenity Trust, which secured the €3.92 million of European funding required to deliver the project objectives.

The project was successfully launched in Lerwick on Friday 10th July. Twenty-eight delegates from the 14 partners participated in the first Steering Committee and contributed enthusiastically to the planning for the various project work packages.

Jimmy Moncrieff, Chair of the Steering Committee and Destination Viking Association, said, "This is an auspicious start for the project. All the project partners were represented at the meeting and participated in the lively discussions regarding the work ahead. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Shetland Islands

Council and VisitScotland for hosting a civic reception for the delegates whilst they were here in Shetland."

The Steering Committee meeting was held in the same week that the Project Manager was also appointed. Helen Smith will take up the position on 17th August and, with her extensive project management experience, will be responsible for co-ordinating the various strands of the project.

This project is a Destination Viking Association initiative. The work carried out will raise the visibility of the Council of Europe's Viking Cultural Route, which is managed by the Association.

The Destination Viking Association is an association of 41 organisations from 15 countries set up under Swedish law in 2007 to promote Viking heritage and borderless tourism.



Delegates attend the first Steering Committee Meeting of the project at Shetland Museum and Archives in July.



A new 'birdwatching' cabinet has been installed at Shetland Museum and Archives to highlight the wealth of ornithological opportunities at Sumburgh Head. Logan Johnson, who joined staff for a week on work experience from Mid Yell School assisted in arranging the display, which includes a number of items generously loaned by Dennis Coutts. The cabinet is located in the upper gallery next to the lighthouse.

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

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John's Table Lament



John's restored table



The original table in the RAF operations room at Sullom Voe

Way back in the early 90's workmen were gutting out the remains of the old knitting factory at Brae. One of the items which was thrown into the skip outside was a large oak table. This caught my eye!

The table was solid oak and had 3 drawers with brass handles. The centre of the table top however was a veneered ply which had been attacked by woodworm. Oak generally is too hard for woodworm so the rest of the table was fine.

I noticed that the brass handles were stamped G.R. with a crown in the centre. Underneath the tablet here is also the makers name stamped WAKE & DEAN LTD. and dated 1939. A neighbour, Alec Johnson of Voe suggested it had come from Sullom Voe after the war.

I noticed the legs were detachable so I raided the garage of a Brae friend, Herbie Clements, for tools. The legs came off easily enough, and these, plus the drawers, were loaded

into my Fiat Panda. However, this particular vehicle is not designed for heavy removals, so the tabletop was a different matter. A five foot by three foot tabletop will, I found, slide into a Fiat Panda, but it leaves the driver with the problem of access. I had to lift the tabletop so I could get underneath it into the seat and then I needed something extremely solid to hold it up.

My head seemed to fit the bill.

So off I set from Brae to Voe at a steady pace with my head gently sinking into my shoulders.

The miles rolled uncomfortably by, oak tabletops are heavy!

I arrived at Norderhoull, compressed but intact. My eyebrows were now level with the top of the steering wheel. I slid out and stretched.

Over the next few days I removed the centre section of the tabletop which was tongued and grooved into the edge panels. I then cut and fitted a new section.

The table was cleaned off and varnished and has given sterling service over the years. My kids and others have climbed all over it, covered it with crayons, food paint and various other substances, some of dubious origin. It has withstood it all.

Which brings us to the present.

I have recently started a new venture offering holiday accommodation. This involved refurbishment, turning one wing of the house into a self-contained flat.

One of my first bookings was a Phil and Val Sinclair from Yorkshire. Phil was contacting relatives and researching family history. His father was Peter Charles Sinclair of Haggriester, Sullom.

I suggested to Phil that he check out the museum archives for possible information regarding the old croft at Haggriester. I showed him the photo archives.

As I was looking through some of the photos I came across one taken in the RAF operations room at Sullom Voe.

And there was my table !!

I checked details of the tables, one against the other and I'm certain that they are one and the same.

I'm delighted to have salvaged a small part of Shetland history.

John Laurenson, Toft

Take a Virtual Tour of Fethaland at Shetland Museum and Archives

A new interactive visitor experience has been installed at Shetland Museum and Archives, which allows the user to take a stroll through the fascinating and historic location of Fethaland fishing station.

Developed in partnership with St Andrew's University and the SCAPE Trust, the Fethaland fishing station journey is part of a project called 'Virtual Histories.'

The initiative looks at eroding archaeological sites in Scotland and promotes understanding of these for the public benefit.

The interactive model has been created with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland.



Several years ago, a team from SCAPE and Queen's University, Belfast were part funded by Shetland Amenity Trust to survey Fethaland fishing station in Northmavine. Electronic mapping of the landscape and buildings was carried out, and this data, together with input from Shetland Museum and Archives, has been used to create a 'virtual world' of Fethaland.

The user can take a virtual tour around the site which includes reconstructions of buildings, boats and an option to examine documents and artefacts from the area.

The interactive unit itself is situated in the Boat Hall next to the display of fishing artefacts and is an excellent way to put these pieces into context for visitors.

P&O Flag Flies Again at Böd



Dr Ian Tait and Captain George Sutherland prepare to hoist the P&O colours.

The P&O flag is again flying at the Böd of Gremista, following an appeal from Shetland Amenity Trust Vice Chairman, Captain George Sutherland, to reinstate it.

P&O Heritage kindly donated two original flags to Shetland Museum and Archives. Replacement flags for daily use were commissioned to ensure the colours are displayed at the historic Böd building; the birthplace of Arthur Anderson.

Shetland born Anderson founded the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company in 1840, which went on to become P&O; one of the best known shipping companies in the world.

P&O Heritage is an organisation which exists to preserve and celebrate the maritime history and collections of P&O. Their website, www.poheritage.com, enables public access to the collections which highlight the contribution that P&O has made to the world over the last 175 years.

Researching Henry

Aren't Archives BRILL! It had taken me many years, since 1987, to discover that my great great great grandfather, Henry Anderson, was born in Delting, had 2 children at Woolwich (what?), fought at Waterloo (no way!), returned to Udhouse and, inexplicably, died in Dundee. Why Dundee? That was the question I hoped to answer, a visit to Dundee proved fruitless, so up to Shetland for Haemfarin 2010 seemed the next obvious choice.

My query at the Archives revealed papers between Henry and the court, oh eck, and then a slowly emerging picture of a family who were simply trying to earn a living against the odds.

According to a pay list for June 1816 Henry's 'Date of Inlistment' was 5th March 1804. Ann Hamilton Anderson, 1812, and Henry Scott Anderson, 1814, were born to Henry Anderson, gunner, and Elizabeth, his wife, at Woolwich and baptised at the Scots Church. In 1879 Henry jnr sold the Waterloo Medal of Gunner Henry Anderson, who served in Cpt Charles Sandhams Company, and soon afterwards died in the Poorhouse in Peterhead. On Henry's death certificate his father's occupation was recorded as 'soldier' whilst it was recorded as 'tailor in Dundee' on the wedding certificate of their 3rd child, Jean Nicolson Anderson –my great great grandmother.

Sometime between 1st February 1819, and his death, in 1849, Henry returned to Shetland, a soldier, then left again, a tailor.

By 1832 Henry and Elizabeth had 6 children and an apprentice, Robert Bruce, and life became challenging.



The coins and notes in the Shetland Archives – Henry Anderson's fine.

On the 15th May a letter was prepared by the Clerk of Court requesting that Henry Anderson, Tailor in Udhouse be summoned to the Court House in Lerwick on the 31st May to answer the charge of delaying payment of rent arrears.

The debt was being called in by the Trustees of the late Mrs Balfour Spence, it dated from Candlemas 1830 and, along with interest of 10/-, amounted to £5 sterling.

Alex Cogle, Sheriff Officer served the summons on 17th May.

There is a beautifully penned letter, by Henry snr., in the Archives, headed 'Udhouse 29 May 1832'. In it Henry declared that he could not pay, that he was too ill to travel to Lerwick and suggested to Mr Alex Nicoll, that he be allowed to repay his debt in instalments. Henry also wrote that by agreeing to his request 'they will have a better chance of getting their money than by exposing my distressed circumstances to the public'. After asking that the letter be laid before the sheriff it was signed 'I am Sir your obedient servant Henry Anderson'. On the 31st May another note confirmed that Henry was to pay 25/- quarterly, but implied he had flitted from the house! There is also a packet containing the actual Georgian money that Elizabeth Scott took to Lerwick. There are 2 instalments in 1832. On the 20th August £1 and on the 24th November £1-5-0 both by cash from Mrs Anderson. I have found no evidence, yet, that the rest was paid.

When I opened the packet in the Archives my excitement was matched by that of Brian Smith. When we saw the old money I could not take a photograph for shaking. My great great great grandparents had handled that money, Granny Anderson had taken it to the Court at Lerwick, the letter was hand written by Grampa Anderson, old rogue or not!

Sadly, there was more! The apprentice was implicated in another court action in January 1833 when a year old unpaid bill amounting to £3-3-3p 'for cloth, Groceries and other Merchant Goods Sold' was presented to the court. The goods came from a John Russell, Unst. I don't know the outcome of that but I hope Grampa Anderson did not let Robert Bruce take the blame, maybe Robert's ancestors know?

I don't think Granny and Grampa Anderson fared much better when they left Shetland. They were living in some sort of subterranean passageway houses in Dundee, St Mary's Close off the Nethergate. Grampa was a tailor and Granny died there of asthma 3 weeks after a huge fire, on 3rd January 1841, which consumed a Church complex at street level. My over fertile imagination suggests that the passageways filled with smoke.

Both of my Shetland ancestors are buried in Dundee, but the burial records confirmed their roots. I have never found it enough to simply trace my family tree by generations, the social history fascinates me. The wealth of information, in Archives around the world, have enabled me to create characters of my ancestors. Great stuff!

Elspeth O'Dell

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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