

Havera: The story of an island

It is 90 years ago, in 1923, that (South) Havera was finally abandoned by the descendants of those families settled there in the 1770s. They were put there originally to fish at the Burra Haaf and at its peak in 1850 the island supported some 50 people comprising five families. In many ways Havera and its community was unique. The soils are good and they were exceptional fishermen, making such a good living that when they left they purchased a state of the art steam drifter. It is said that each family had two boats, a summer haaf boat for cod and ling, and a winter haddock boat. By a stroke of fortune one of the summer boats, the *Ann*, built in 1871, has survived. She has been beautifully restored at Shetland Museum and Archives and is one of Shetland's oldest boats. There were also one or two larger boats on the island for fetching peats from the Clift Hills and for taking the cow to the bull or a roup at Maywick. There are no burns on Havera and one of the island's most intriguing features is its windmill, built and briefly used in the 1860s.

Stories of Havera include the inevitable wreck, the most notable being the total loss of the Norwegian barque *Lovise* in 1903. In gratitude for their rescue and the hospitality they received, the captain gave his gold ring to one of the island women. Other stories include that of the drowning of the laird; the drifting boat with dying seamen; the women sailing to Scalloway to sell their knitwear and lace and to get supplies, most often tea and sugar; and the school, the post and the tethering of children to prevent them falling over the banks by the township.

The story of Havera has now been recorded in a book by Laughton Johnston – who wrote the text, and Christine De Luca – who has written a number of poems. The book is illustrated with photographs by Mark Sinclair and

photographs from the old days on the island.

Havera: the story of an island is to be published by Shetland Heritage Publications and will be launched along with the unveiling of the restored *Ann* at Shetland Museum and Archives in April. A display of artefacts from Havera including the captain's gold ring will remain on show through the

month, along with a screening of Mark Sinclair's photographs accompanied by original scores by Pauleen Wiseman in the upper foyer. A DVD to accompany the book is to be released in the autumn, with photographs, music, poems, and recordings of the last inhabitants of the island, captured by Radio Shetland in the 1970s and 1980s.

Laughton Johnston



Havera residents c.1916.



Havera township c.1900.

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
to sign up for your electronic copy

Inspirational Litter Picker

Cecilia James has become a familiar sight to road users since she began her roadside litter pick along the A970 last September. She's covered over 100 miles of ground clearing all the roadsides, roadside ditches and adjoining parks along an 18 mile stretch of road. Along the way Cecilia has filled 256 rubbish bags and collected some rather unusual finds, including a child's potty, swimming goggles, 83 L plates and an inflatable doll!

Shetland Amenity Trust supported Cecilia throughout her litter pick by providing bags and protective clothing. Where challenges were met, the Trust put Cecilia in touch with local businesses that kindly provided practical solutions. Since completing her redd up Cecilia has been working with the Trust to sort through over 1.5 tonnes of roadside bruck and separate out the recyclables. Thanks to Cecilia's efforts 939 glass bottles, 4895 cans and 5728 plastic bottles will go for recycling. What started as a one person project has engaged many islanders and local businesses, turning this into a community-wide environmental project. Cecilia



Cecilia collected thousands of discarded drinks containers.

believes that the help and support she has received has made this a uniquely Shetland experience, reflecting the local community's willingness to get involved and lend a hand. You can find out more about Cecilia's environmental endeavours, as well as other environmental initiatives, at www.facebook.com/Dunnachuckbruck.

Following her mammoth litter pick, Cecilia has recently been named Civic Champion runner up in the Civic Trust My Place Awards

If Cecilia has inspired you why not get involved in the annual Voar Redd

Up which takes place on 27th and 28th April? Register or find more details at www.shetlandamenity.org/da-voar-redd-up



Cecilia reaches the halfway mark.



Restored picnic chair now on show at Quendale Mill.

Restored Child's Picnic Chair

This little chair was stored in the attic of the Quendale Haa – the one-time residence of the Lairds of the Quendale Estate, who were instrumental in ordering the construction of the Quendale Mill. For some years, due to the dilapidated condition of the Haa, it was considered too dangerous to try and rescue it, so it was not until a severe gale in 2011 which caused the entire roof to cave in along with all 3 floors of the building that further consideration was given to the chair and its condition.

Geordie Black, member of the South Mainland Community History Group and Custodian at the Mill spoke to the current owner of Quendale Farm, Mr Martin Burgess, who agreed that Geordie should make an attempt to recover the chair from amongst the debris. It had already been noted that the little chair had survived to a great degree and was

now lying at ground level amongst the many broken pieces of the once great house.

Having considered how best to rescue the chair, Geordie decided to construct a long wand with a hook on the end to attempt recovery. He then used this device to carefully and successfully lift the little chair to safety.

Following some considerable time spent on restoration, this little chair now has its own deserved place in history. It is thought that the chair is a folding Picnic Chair of the late Victorian period – Geordie says he "likks ta tink dat it stood in a peerie lasses bedroom wi' a favourite doll or teddy bear happily sitting on it".

Why not come and see it for yourself? It's now on display at the Quendale Mill – the Mill opens for the season on the 15th of April and is open every day until the 13th of October. Website: www.quendalemill.co.uk

Discover the Geopark Shetland app for Android on Google Play

The Geopark Shetland app for Android is now available on Google Play (<https://play.google.com/store>). The application 'Geopark Shetland' introduces you to the Geopark through Google maps populated with information about sites of geological and heritage interest throughout Shetland. It uses GPS triggering to alert you to key localities, helping you to get out and discover the natural and cultural heritage of Shetland for yourself.

You can search the app for information in different ways. The main map displays 40 of Shetland's geosites, and supplies directions to help you locate each one. You will discover the story behind each site and can also access 'further information' that places the site in its wider geological context. Some sites make use of augmented reality, using the phone camera system, which allows you to identify key points in the landscape around you. In addition to the main map function you can search for sites by geological theme, such as rock type, geological period or cultural interest. You can also explore geological trails around Sumburgh, North Roe and Eshaness. The app is due to be launched on Iphone in late spring and the content will also be made available online.

The project is a pilot that forms part of a wider transnational project funded by Leader, with partners from several Geoparks and aspiring Geoparks. The purpose of the cooperation project (known as the HINT project) is to explore the possibilities for Heritage Interpretation using New Technologies.

You can find out more at www.hintproject.eu.

Geology project officer Robina Barton said 'this project has been an interesting process and a steep learning curve! We have worked with developers Zolk^c and Allen Fraser of Shetland Geotours to develop an app that gives people an insight into Shetland's 3 billion year geological journey. We experienced some technological challenges in the early part of the process that resulted in some delays but volunteers tested a prototype last autumn and we have adapted the app in line with the feedback we received. We were particularly happy to launch the app during Climate Week (4th-10th March) as it is a perfect tool to help people get out and explore their natural environment on foot. We'd be very interested to hear what people think'.

Geopark Shetland has now been a member of the European and Global Geoparks Networks for nearly four years. During this time much work has been done to raise the profile of Shetland's world class Earth Heritage and help visitors and residents alike to discover Shetland's 3 billion year geological story. There are displays at Shetland Museum and Archives, Unst Heritage Centre and the Old Haa in Yell, geowalls at Mavis Grind, Haroldswick and Funzie, displays and panels at Braewick and Stennes and self-guide trail packs exploring the floor of an ancient ocean in the North Isles and the remains of an extinct volcano in Eshaness.

New developments for this summer include welcome signs at Shetland's entry points, Sumburgh Airport and



Application Welcome Screen.

Northlink Ferry terminal, a Geoparks corner in the Shetland Museum and Archives where people can find out more about other members of the EGN, and area based information sheets to help all those working in Shetland's tourist industry to better inform visitors about what is on their doorstep. This year the Geopark is preparing to be revalidated for membership of the EGN – a stringent process to assess the quality of Geopark activities and ensure that aspirations are being met. EGN officials visiting the islands later this summer should be impressed with what has been achieved to date.

Shetland has some outstanding geological features, such as the Grind o da Navir.

Image by Christine Irvine



Fothergill manuscript

When Charles Fothergill set out for Shetland in July, 1806, his ambition was to make a name for himself as the pre-eminent British naturalist of his generation, the first to provide a natural history of Britain that was based on direct knowledge of the entire nation, including its northernmost islands. He didn't succeed, and even his later, less ambitious plan to publish a travel narrative about Orkney and Shetland fell through, although the book had been far enough along to be advertised in literary magazines. The only traces of his journey that remain are drafts and notes now in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library in Toronto and the journal that he kept of his Shetland travels, held in the Shetland Archives.

Never published or fully transcribed, Fothergill's Shetland journal is in poor shape, despite having obviously been valued by Fothergill himself: the notebook is bound with a brass clasp and there is a formal title inscribed on the cover (*Voyage to Orcades and Shetland*, vol. 3). It appears to have been dropped into water at some point, as some of the early entries have been partially effaced by water damage. It contains nothing like a finished, organized narrative; along with daily journal



The Fothergill manuscript.

entries, it features glossaries of 'provincialisms', scraps of Icelandic poetry, and a list of Shetland birds. Fothergill evidently returned to it as his working notebook as he began to prepare his work for the press: some of the entries are lightly crossed out, and the volume includes the very rough beginnings of an uncomplimentary essay on the inhabitants of Orkney and Shetland.

As sketchy, damaged, and fragmentary as it is, the notebook nonetheless manages to suggest Fothergill's curiosity and enthusiasm as a traveller. He was only twenty-four when he visited Shetland and even though (as he notes himself in his

journal) he had a tendency towards melancholia, his interests ranged well beyond natural history to incorporate landscape, language, literature, and social practice. His enthusiasm apparently impressed his Shetland hosts as well. Thomas Mouat of Garth hoped that Fothergill's account of the island would provide a counterweight to Patrick Neill's deeply unflattering 1806 *Tour through Some of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland*. In an 1808 letter to his nephew Robert Hunter of Lunna, Mouat commented that (unlike Neill), Fothergill was a 'Gentleman' and 'a man of some genius' and that, as a result, Mouat was 'wearying to see' Fothergill's book (Shetland Archives, D25/1/7).

Had the book appeared, Mouat would probably not have been pleased with everything in it. If not as critical of the lairds as Neill had been – he is willing to allow that some landowners were well-meaning – Fothergill still makes clear his dislike of Shetland's economic system. He is also capable of some rather unkind commentary on some of his hosts. He describes Robert Neven of Windhouse, with whom he stayed while waiting for the weather to permit him to reach Unst, as 'a living representative of Don Quixote' and as being so completely uncongenial 'in every respect that novelty was no sooner over than ennui not to say disgust ensued' (73). Nor did the landscape of Yell please him: 'well might Buchanan exclaim ag' the interior of Yell', Fothergill notes grumpily after taking 'one of the worst rides in Zet^d' over 'mountains covered with barrenness & bogs of unknown depth' (71).

Yet such complaints are far outweighed by Fothergill's vivid interest in the unfamiliar and by his ability to provide quick verbal sketches of anything that caught his attention. He was more or less equally intrigued by Shetland ponies, whose 'little noses appearing from a thick wig of hair gave them the heads of lions' (72) and by Shetland cooking. He pays careful attention to dishes that were new to him, such as 'muggies', which he describes as 'the stomach of a fish [...] made in the form of a sausage – being stuffed with the liver of fish generally seasoned and tied at one end' (32). He was no less excited about seeing for himself aspects of Shetland that were familiar to him from other travellers' accounts and, in the process, highlights the beginnings of Shetland tourism. He tries out the Cradle of Noss and records his 'extatic emotions' on having made an 'aerial voyage' (109), and provides a detailed description of Mousa Broch, which he had been 'extremely anxious' to visit and which did not disappoint. 'I can assert with some confidence', he writes, that the 'castle' is 'the most perfect specimen by far in Europe of this species of human habitation' (127).

What survives of Fothergill's journal suggests that his book, had it been completed, would have provided a valuable and engaging perspective on Shetland in the opening decade of the nineteenth century. Yet even as they stand, Fothergill's fragmentary, scattershot observations deserve attention, offering, as they do, a lively glimpse of Shetland landscape and culture, one that is perhaps all the more lively for having never gone through the process of being polished and tidied for the press.

Pam Perkins

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.

You can now have each new issue of *Unkans* delivered straight to your inbox.

Sign up for the mailing list at www.shetlandamenity.org/unkans

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 17 MAY 2013.