

Inaugural Shetland Boat Week planned for August

A new and exciting event is planned for Shetland this summer. The first Shetland Boat Week will take place between 8th and 14th August. The week-long family friendly event is inspired by Shetland's rich maritime heritage, while also being inclusive of more contemporary methods and materials.

A wide range of activities are planned during the week, which will include demonstrations of traditional skills, talks, boat trips and tours of vessels and venues not normally open to the public. The keynote speaker for the inaugural event will be Dr Kevin Fewster, Director of the National Maritime Museum.

Dr Fewster will deliver a lecture on Thursday 11th August, and an informal Q&A session on Friday 12th.

Shetland Boat Week has benefitted from generous sponsorship funding from local marine engineering company, Ocean Kinetics. Shetland Amenity



Trust is also funding, and leading co-ordination of the event, along with Shetland Museum and Archives.

Emma Miller, event co-ordinator said "Many generations of Shetlanders have made their living on or around the sea and the links with maritime and related marine industries are as important today as they always have been.

Shetland Boat Week is an excellent opportunity to get more people involved with boats and the sea and pass on knowledge and experience. This is going

to be a great event for local folk and visitors. Everyone I've spoken to about it so far is really enthusiastic and it's clear to see that it's going to be a very sociable affair!"

Community groups and maritime related groups or businesses are encouraged to take part in Shetland Boat Week by providing tours of their premises, delivering talks, slideshows or other events to share knowledge and experiences. Support has already been forthcoming from Lerwick Port Authority, Unst Heritage Centre and Boat Haven, and Serco NorthLink Ferries. Anyone who would like to submit an event for free promotion in the programme should contact Emma Miller, on 01595 694688 or email emma@shetlandamenity.org.

Full details of events and how to book tickets are available at www.shetlandboatweek.com. A printed programme will be available in May.



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

Baltic Blockade

– Research Project



Laughton's Grandfather, Jimmie Johnston (1863) just after WW1

Among the many events of interest to Shetlanders in WWI, is the blockade of the Baltic, following Germany's declaration of War with Russia on 1st August 1914.

Many British merchant ships were trapped at ports like St Petersburg and Riga and many of course had Shetland crew. Very recently, Ian Fraser and Laughton Johnston found that their respective grandfathers had both been aboard the

Meggie at Riga on that fateful date.

Eventually, both men made their way home via Norway. They were the lucky ones as many were also caught by the German Navy when making their way across the Baltic to neutral Sweden and were interned for the duration of the war.

Laughton and Ian are very keen to try and identify as many of those Shetland men as they can so that they can tell this

story. This is a plea therefore to anyone whose grandfathers or grandmothers were similarly trapped and who may or may not have escaped, or to anyone who may have some information on the events in the Baltic in August and September 1914.

Anyone who is able to help should contact Laughton on 01595 870266 or at laughton.johnston@gmail.com. Ian can be contacted on 01595 693870 or at soothend@yahoo.org.

C.R. 10. No. of Identity Certificate	<i>H. 81711</i>
M.N.S. Region	Regional No.
Surname	<i>Fraser</i>
Christian Name	<i>John</i>
Rating	<i>AB</i> B.N.R. No.
No. and Grade of B/T Certificate	
Date and Place of Birth	<i>28-10-1873 Shetland</i>
Nationality	<i>Brit</i> Father <i>Brit</i>
Height	Colour Hair Eyes
Tattoo Marks	
Dis. A No.	<i>554469</i> N.H. Insurance No.
Name and Address of Next of Kin	

32553 W.L. 16440-43. 30m. 8/19. Av.P. (1412).

Ian's Grandfather, John Francis Fraser (1873), shown with his identity certificate.

Focus on Henry and Pearson in 2016

SHARING SHETLAND SURNAMENAMES

Shetland Family History Society has an ongoing project called Sharing Shetland Surnames.

This involves a small team of volunteers who research a chosen Shetland family name, with photographs and a rich heritage of personal journeys undertaken in days gone by. This project highlights the surnames which can go back to the sixteenth century in Shetland.

In 2014, volunteers researched the families of Gifford, Anderson, Inkster and Bolt.

Mouat, Arcus and Abernethy were researched in 2015, with Henry and Pearson the names which have been selected for 2016. A public event focussing on the name Henry, which has been present in Shetland for 400 years, will be held in Waas in May.

The Pearson event has already attracted a great deal

of interest, with a full bus load of Pearsons travelling from Canada and America to take part. This will take place in the Vidlin Hall on 28th July. Full details will be announced on the website and in local press nearer the time.

The Sharing Shetland Surnames project benefits Shetland Family History Society members and visitors who get in touch through the website; www.shetlandfhs.org.uk or call along the office at 6 Hillhead, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0EJ.

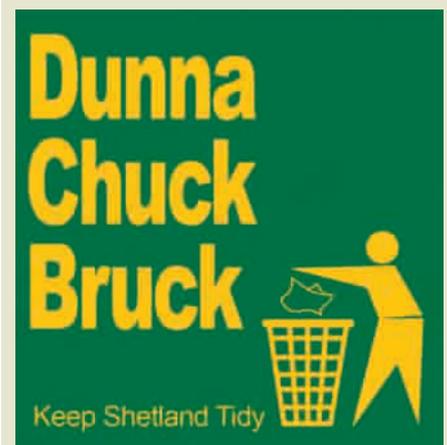
The Society has a database of Shetland families as well as an archive section to help with any queries. Volunteers are available to help with enquiries from Monday to Saturday and are also involved in checking and updating some of the information held on file. The Society carries out free research for its members.

Da Voar Redd Up 2016

Da Voar Redd Up is the UK's most successful community litter pick, with over 20% of Shetland's population volunteering their time annually. This makes an invaluable contribution to Shetland's natural environment and wildlife, clearing Shetland's beaches, coastlines and roadsides of litter and the debris washed up by winter storms.

The 29th annual Voar Redd Up will take place on 23rd and 24th April 2016. Many groups and individuals will take to roadside verges, beaches and countryside areas to take part, and Shetland Amenity Trust would like to remind drivers to take extra care during this weekend when passing clean up teams on roadsides.

If you would like to take part and haven't registered yet, or you registered last year and have not received your 2016 registration forms in the post, then please get in touch with the Shetland Amenity Trust on 01595 694688 or visit the website – www.shetlandamenity.org/da-voar-redd-up



Swinburgh or Soundburgh!

Place names are endlessly fascinating. Sometimes it seems obvious what this or that one means. For a long time scholars thought that the name Sumburgh must derive from Old Norse *sunn*, meaning south. It seemed to be named after the southmost broch in the islands: the promontory fort, long destroyed, on Sumburgh Head. The place called Sunnbøur, the southmost part of the Faroe islands, seemed to be a good parallel.

I remember an earnest discussion about the subject after a lecture by Barbara Crawford, in Lerwick in April 1975. She had been speaking about Sir David Sinclair of Sumburgh, a Shetland potentate who died around 1506. David was usually called 'of Swinburgh'. Barbara suggested that the name might mean 'broch of pigs' (from Old Norse *svín*), rather than 'the broch of a person called Sveinn'.

But there's another complication. In the first half of the 17th century the name is often spelled 'Soundburgh'. I suppose that might derive from *sunn*, south: it can't possibly be from *svín* or Sveinn. I recall the late Tom Henderson remarking that Soundburgh couldn't derive from Old Norse *sund*, since, as he put it, there is no soond adjacent to Sumburgh Head.

I was inclined to accept what Tom said. But a few days ago I noticed a most interesting note in the Royal Commission's Inventory of 1946. In the entry for the fort on Sumburgh Head they remark: 'to this day the fishermen speak of the stretch of sea between Fitful and Sumburgh Heads as "the Soond."'

Sumburgh wasn't a possession of the earls of Orkney in saga-time, as some have alleged; but from the late middle ages onwards it was owned by potentates. There was an imposing farmstead there in 14th century, destroyed during excavations in the 1950s. In 1498 the children of the earl of Orkney and Caithness gave Sumburgh to their illegitimate brother Sir David Sinclair, the governor of Shetland.

And at the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the next, Earls Robert and Patrick Stewart and William Bruce of Symbister occupied it from time to time.

Maybe, as time passed, and as life became less rough-and-ready in Shetland, the inhabitants of Sumburgh preferred a more genteel name for their home. (Barbara Crawford has made that interesting suggestion to me.) In other words, there may have been two names for the place: an original Swinburgh, from *svín* or Sveinn, and later Soundburgh, from *sund* or *sunn* ...

Brian Smith
Archivist



Sumburgh Head. Photograph by Gordon Johnston

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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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 MONDAY 23RD MAY 2016.