

1972

A little of Shetland's
history is told
in this
supplement . . .

a lot more can be learned
from the

SHETLAND BOOKS

on sale in . . .

THE SHETLAND TIMES SHOP

The Shetland Times

1872 - 1972

IN presenting this centenary supplement, the publishers hope it will give pleasure to readers at home and abroad. For the older generation it may recall events in which they took part and there are "kent faces" in many of the illustrations. For the young folk, it may demonstrate the improvements that have taken place since their parents' youthful days.

In attempting to produce a chronological diary of events in Shetland, we found it impossible to do so from our own files, which do not go back earlier than 1915 when our offices were destroyed by fire. However, microfilms have been purchased by the county library and we are obliged to Mr George Longmuir, the county librarian, for allowing a member of our staff to view these over a lengthy period. Another difficulty arose from wartime censorship and events of both wars have been culled from private diaries.

We are grateful to those who have contributed articles and photographs, especially Messrs James R. Nicolson, A. T. H. Tulloch and John Jamieson, who have described the progress of our three basic industries, Mr I. R. Clark, county clerk and manager, for his review of local government, and Mr E. J. F. Clausen, without whose help we could not have assembled what we hope is a representative collection of pictures of the past. It is impossible to mention individually all who loaned prints, nor can we identify the photographers in many instances. A large number, however, are from a collection of negatives by the late Mr Robert Williamson, kindly loaned to us by Mr Sandy Cluness, and others are the work of other well-known men such as Rattar, Abernethy and Spence. All present-day pictures are by Dennis Coutts. No attempt has been made to achieve a theme through the picture pages — they are merely leaves from an album that might yet be reproduced in full.

We are also greatly indebted to our advertisers, not only for the financial support that enables us to produce this supplement, but also for the interest that the advertisements themselves hold for us and, we trust, for readers. Some remind us that we are only joining the ranks of centenarian firms, others show the changes in trade and commerce over the period under review, and all give a heartening indication of Shetland's future prospects.



Managing Director:
D. M. Fraser
Directors:
J. Fraser
A. M. Fraser

Telephone:
Lerwick 122

William Fraser & Partners Limited

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Reg. Office:

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LERWICK,
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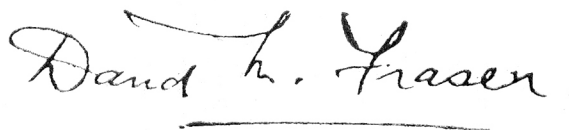
May we add our congratulations to the Shetland Times Ltd., on reaching its hundredth year of publishing the local news and views and long may it continue to do so.

For the last 25 years that we have been reading the Shetland Times, we have also been building and contracting. In addition to the hundreds of local houses built by us during that period, here also are some of our notable contracts:—

Cunningsburgh Water Scheme.
The Telephone Repeater Building.
The New Gilbert Bain Hospital.
The R.N.M.D.S.F.
Dunrossness Primary School.
The Norwegian Welfare Centre.
And The Swimming Pool.
We have also laid cables here and there.

HAPPY HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY SHETLAND TIMES.

Yours sincerely,



Managing Director.

Telephone: 166. Telegrams: Leisks, Fruiterer.

*For high class sweets
and chocolate,
flowers, fruit,
confectionery and
tobacco*

**PETER LEISK
& CO.**

Commercial St., Lerwick

MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH
TELEFLOWER SERVICE

AGENT WALLS ICE CREAM

**For
Breakfasts,
Lunches and
High Teas**

**V I C T O R I A
R E S T A U R A N T**

Market Cross, Lerwick

**Fish and Chip Shop on
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NEWSAGENT . . . All kinds of papers on sale.

STATIONER . . . Every variety.

CONFECTIONER . . . All the leading lines.

FRUITERER . . . Choicest fruit in season; also dried fruit.

TOBACCONIST . . . All kinds of cigarettes and tobacco stocked.

W A L L S I C E C R E A M



41-45 Commercial Road, Lerwick

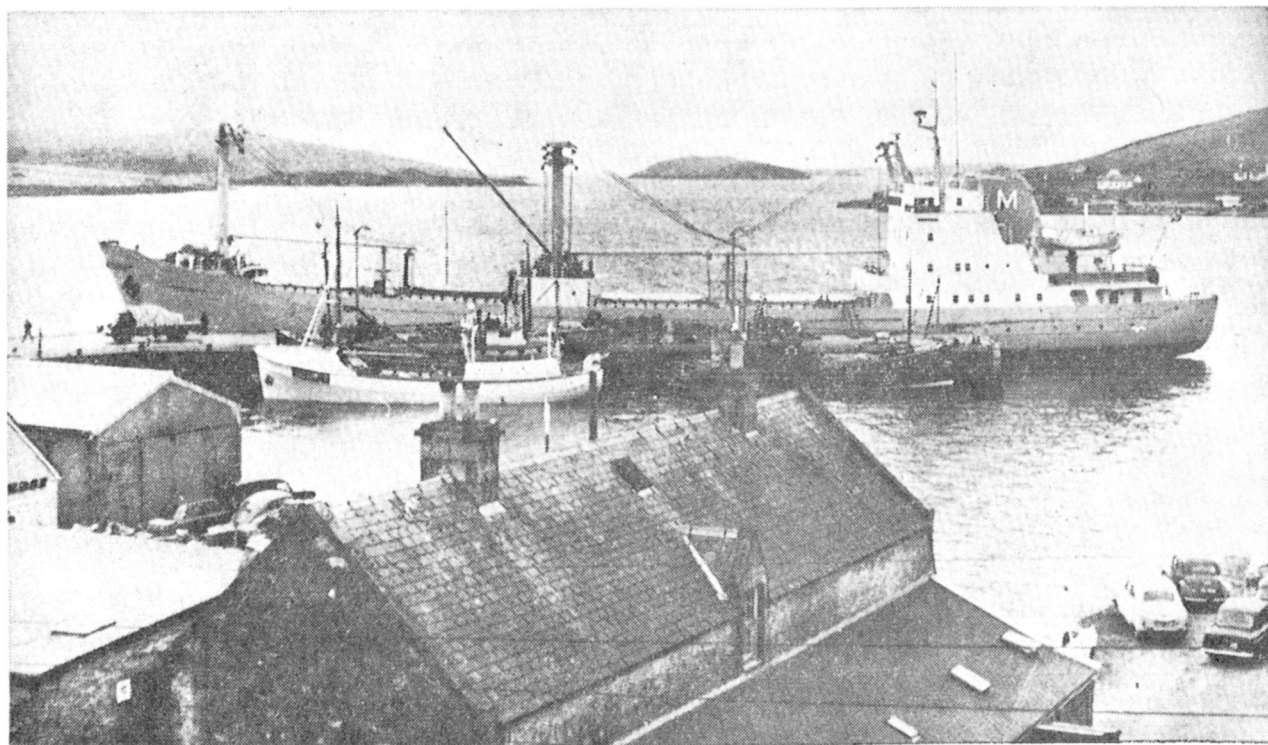
T. T. F. (Fish Processing) Ltd.

*ALL TYPES OF FISH EXPERTLY PROCESSED BY HAND
AND QUICK FROZEN. GUARANTEED BONELESS FILLET.
SPECIALITIES—SMOKED SALMON, WHITE FISH and KIPPERS*

BLACKSNESS - SCALLOWAY - AB3 OTQ

Telephone: Scalloway 636

We extend heartiest congratulations to "The Shetland Times" on a very fine record of service to the Shetland Islands and wish them every success as they enter their second century of journalism in Shetland



Icelandic refrigerated ship Hofsjokull loading frozen fish at Scalloway for direct shipment to the United States. the first of many such consignments from the port.

We congratulate "The Shetland Times" on reaching its hundredth birthday and we wish them continued success for another hundred years



We are pleased to have this opportunity of thanking the county surveyor, the contractors and, especially, all employees, who together have helped to make the company's new processing factory the most up to date and most hygienic fish processing unit in Shetland



ICEATLANTIC SEAFOODS Limited

REGISTERED OFFICE:

SCALLOWAY - SHETLAND

Telephone: Scalloway 676

Telegraphic Address:

Iceatlantic Scalloway Shetland

SALES & ACCOUNTS OFFICE:

68 CLYDE STREET

GLASGOW - C.1 - SCOTLAND

Telephone: 041-552 2117

Telex: Chamber Glasgow 77667

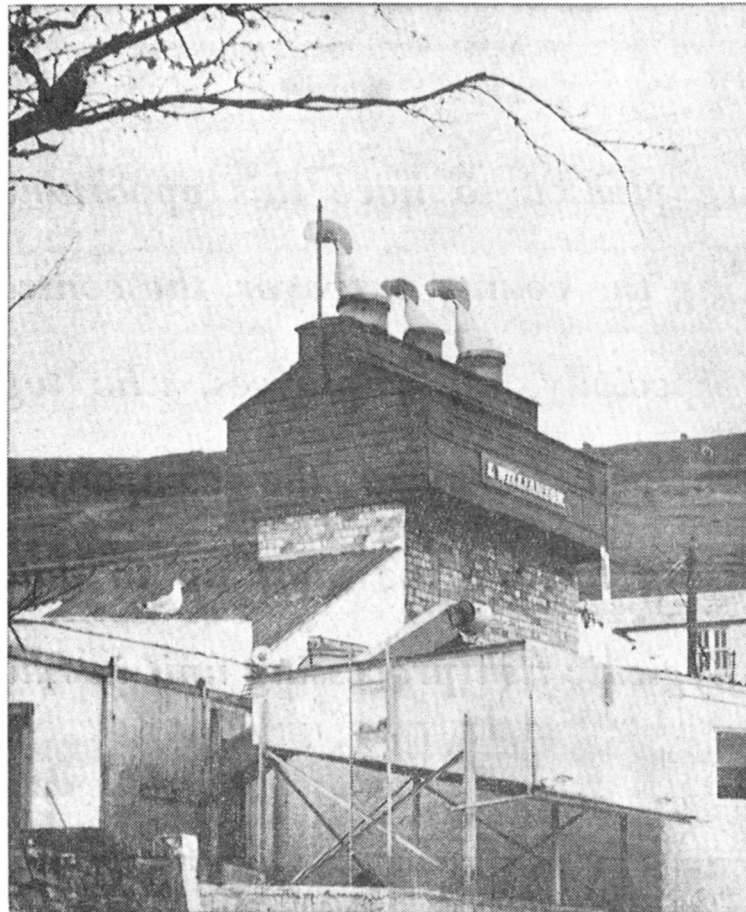
L. WILLIAMSON

Fish and Shellfish Processors, Fish Meal Manufacturers
SCALLOWAY

Telephone: Scalloway 237/8.

Telex 75203

1922



1972

The firm of L. Williamson, Scalloway, was established fifty years ago by L. A. Williamson. Over the years the firm has dealt in cured herrings and kippers, and in recent years has concentrated on frozen products, including scallops and queens. The firm now operates four factories, including a fish meal plant at Brae.

— FACTORIES —

SCALLOWAY	237/8	KIRKWALL	3010
LERWICK	1127	BRAE	278

L. H. D. LIMITED

Fishing Vessel Owners and Managers Fish Salesmen

5 Alexandra Buildings, Lerwick - Shetland - AB3 0LL

Telephone No. — LERWICK 768/9

We congratulate "The Shetland Times" on its 100th birthday and its service to the Shetland people

L.H.D. NET MENDING LIMITED

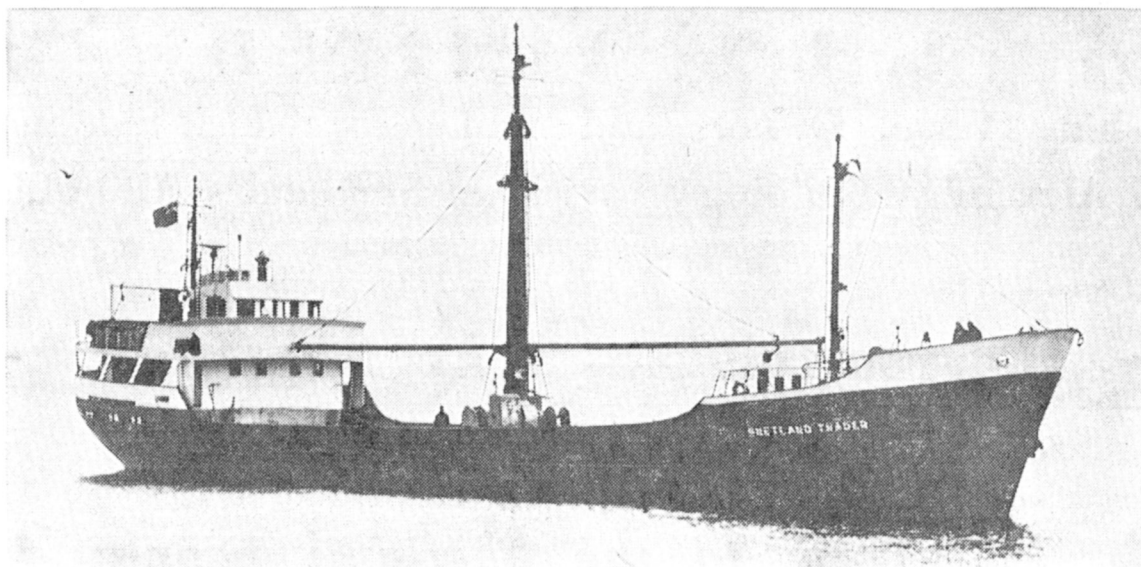
Alexandra Wharf - Lerwick - Shetland

Telephone No. — LERWICK 882

All through the years the skill and industry of the knitters of Shetland have played a vital part in the economy of these islands.



TULLOCH OF SHETLAND LTD



CONGRATULATIONS TO "THE SHETLAND TIMES" ON JOINING US AND OTHER FIRMS WHO HAVE COMPLETED A CENTURY OF BUSINESS IN SHETLAND. DURING THIS TIME OUR FIRM HAS CHANGED BUT SHIPS AND SHIPPING PROVIDES THE BASIC LINK FOR ALL OUR TRADE IN THE ISLANDS.

Hay & Company (Lerwick) Ltd.

Head Office: 106A Commercial Street, Lerwick

SHIPOWNERS — M/V "Shetland Trader," 880 tons d.w.; M/V "Lerwick Trader," 680 tons d.w. (U.K., Baltic and near Continent trades).

CHARTERED SHIPBROKERS — Customs clearance, forwarding, chartering, agency (24 hours service).

PREMISES AND QUAYS — Freefield and North Ness. Storage available under cover and in the open.

BONDED STORES SUPPLIED.

STEVEDORING

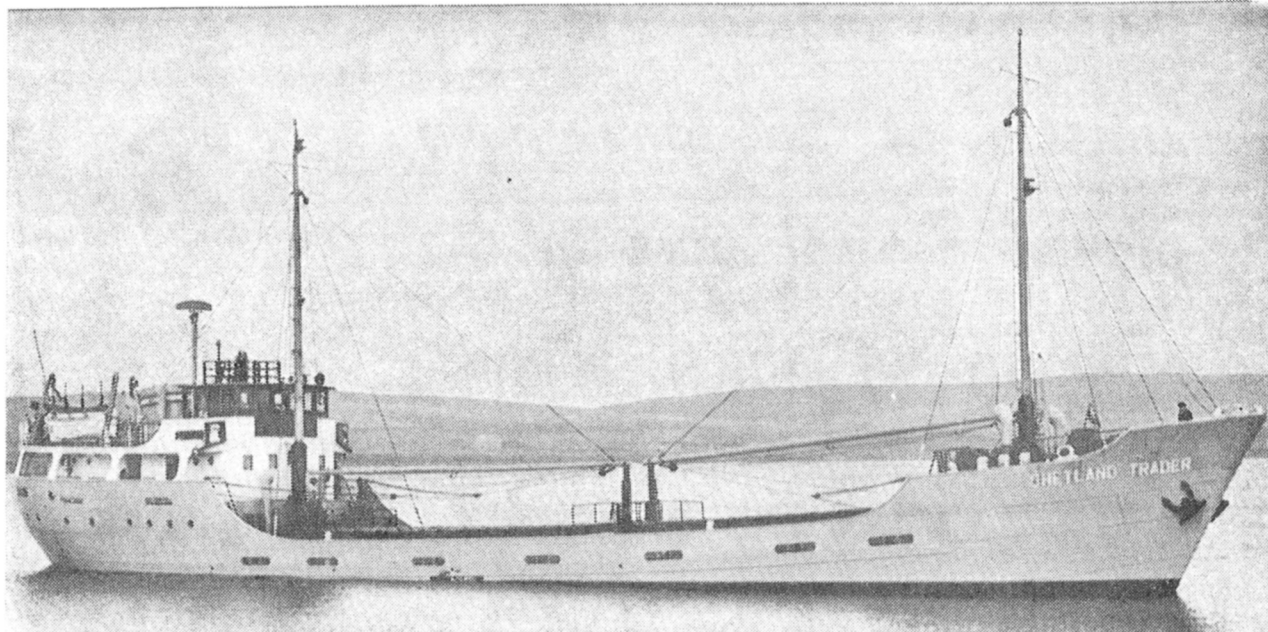
LLOYDS AGENTS SINCE 1862

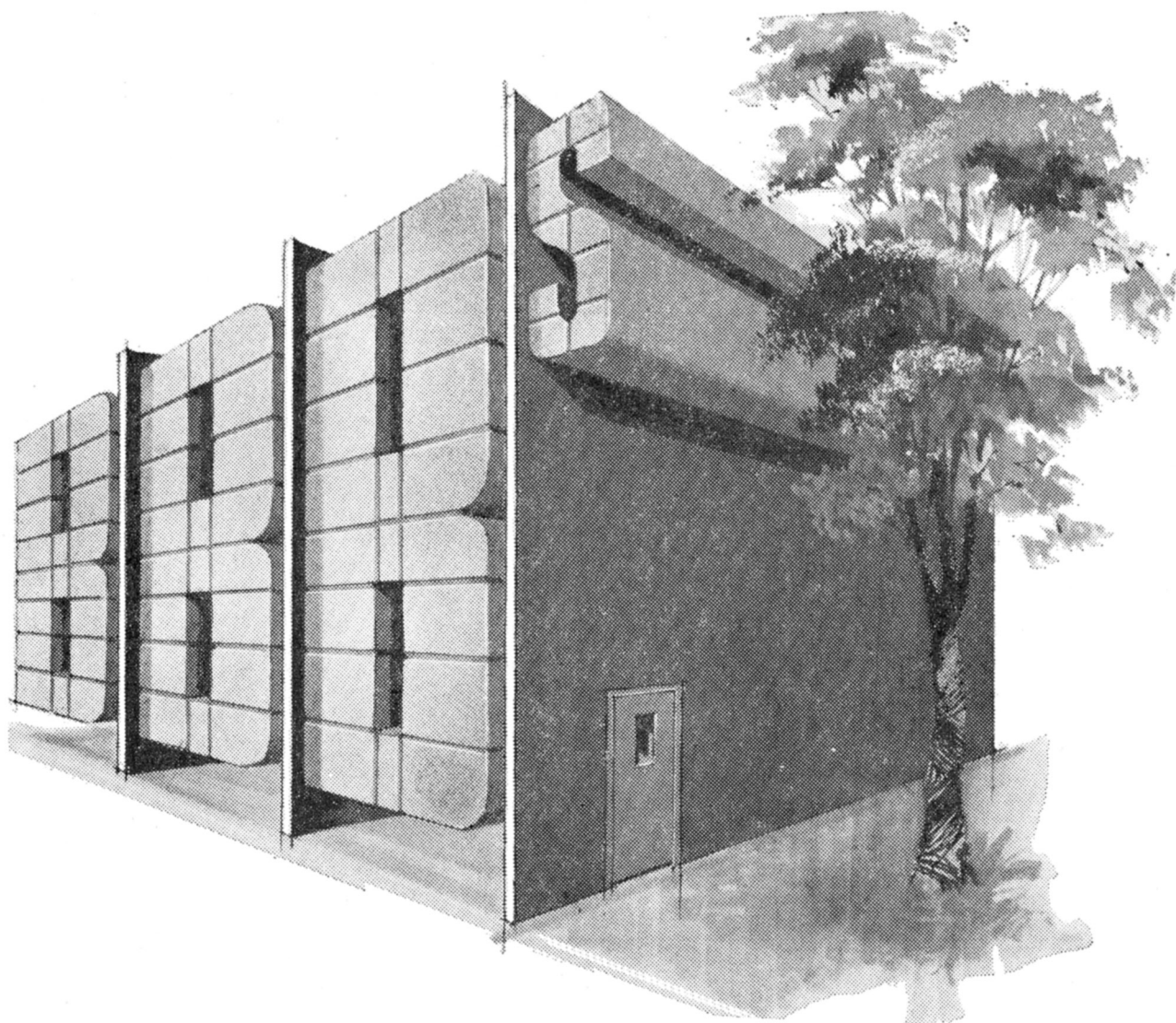
Consulate for Norway; Vice-Consulate for Finland and the Netherlands; Consular Agency for France.

TELEPHONE 1057 (four lines).

TELEX 75295.

TELEGRAMS "HAY" LERWICK."





Building for your future

BBB^s

BRADFORD & BINGLEY BUILDING SOCIETY

Head Office: Bingley, Yorkshire.

Member of the Building Societies Association.

Assets: £316,000,000 Over 500 branches and agencies

LERWICK AGENT — 141, COMMERCIAL STREET

W. S. MANSON & CO.

In July, 1735, one of our predecessors in business, Thomas Gifford of Hillswick, was not pleased with the prices he was getting for his salt fish in Hamburg, and decided to make a shipment to Portugal. He therefore chartered a schooner from Orkney, the "Restoration of Cairston," skipper J. Polson. With the salt fish he sent a small consignment of Shetland stockings. In a subsequent order from his agents in Lisbon he was told that the stockings had sold well and that they would welcome more, the total realised for the 800 pairs being £40, a considerable sum at that time. This is the first record that we have of knitwear being exported from Hillswick to the Continent. However, we are still exporting knitwear to Europe, including Portugal, but not stockings now.

HILLSWICK

Telephone — Hillswick 207

Telephone — Hillswick 207

FOR PASSENGER TRANSPORT:

Get in touch with . . .

JOHN LEASK & SON

- TAXIS.
- SELF-DRIVE CARS.
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OFFICIAL AGENTS FOR BRITISH EUROPEAN AIRWAYS,
BRITISH RAIL, AND LEADING TOUR OPERATORS.

56 COMMERCIAL STREET

Telephone: LERWICK 1212.

Telephone: LERWICK 1212.

For

***Furniture, Carpets,
Curtains and all
Household Goods***



LERWICK HOTEL



SHETLAND'S THREE STAR HOTEL

**During winter months we will be pleased
to cater for functions up to 180 people**

Telephone: LERWICK 1166

A long and happy association

For 100 years "The Shetland Times" has been read by the people of the islands, and while the paper has carried news for 100 years the North of Scotland, Orkney & Shetland Shipping Company has carried newsprint so that the paper can be printed.

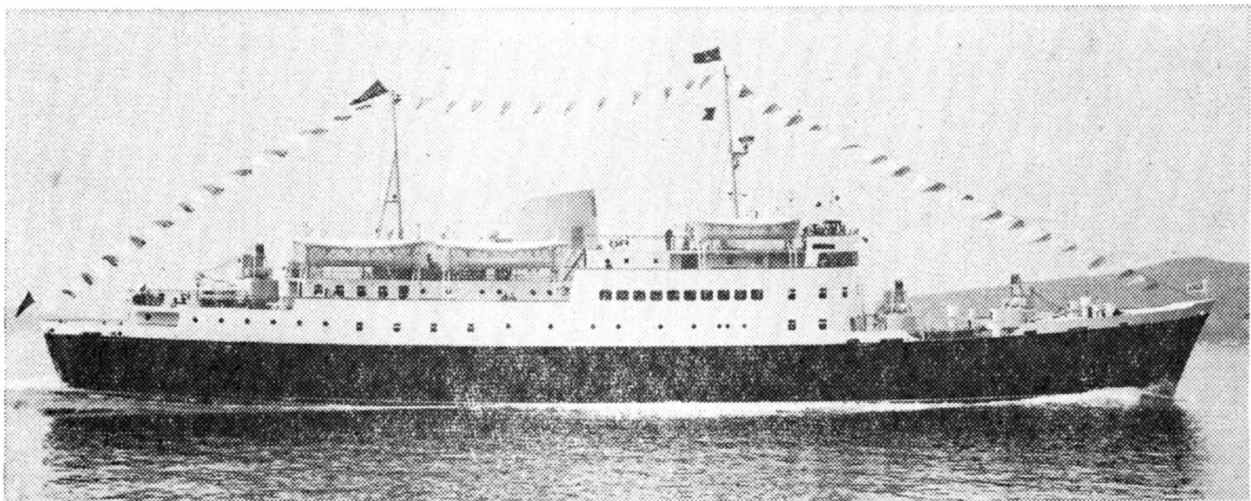
As well as newsprint the company carry passengers, holidaymakers and cargo between Lerwick and Aberdeen and they look forward to serving the islands for many more years.

We extend to "The Shetland Times" our congratulations on their 100th anniversary and wish them many more successful years of publishing.

**North of Scotland
Orkney & Shetland
Shipping Co Ltd**

Matthews' Quay
Aberdeen, AB9 8DL

Esplanade
Lerwick



**Congratulations
and Best Wishes
to Shetland Times Ltd.**



Lerwick Branch:

F. G. Murray, Manager

W. M. Murray, Asst. Manager

**"We take the worry
out of money"**

... at Bank of Scotland, with a wide range of services specially tailored for personal and business needs. It's probably the most comprehensive range of services you'll find, all designed to take the worry out of money. For example—

SCOTLOAN — helps you get the things you want, without waiting.

SCOTBUDGET — provides the easiest way to meet your bills.

SCOTCASH — dispenses money 24 hours a day.

Call in at any of our Branches and start to live.



Aberdeen & Northern Marts Limited

AT ABERDEEN

WEEKLY SALE OF STORE CATTLE, ACCREDITED AND NON-ACCREDITED DAIRY HEIFERS AND COWS, YOUNG CALVES, FARROW COWS, STORE SHEEP, YOUNG, STORE AND BREEDING PIGS, FAT PIGS AND POULTRY EVERY FRIDAY.

Commencing at 10 a.m.

WEEKLY SALE OF FAT CATTLE AND FAT SHEEP EVERY THURSDAY, commencing at 2 p.m.

TRACTORS AND FARM IMPLEMENTS EVERY ALTERNATE TUESDAY, commencing at 10.30 a.m.

SALES OF ANTIQUES AND HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE EVERY ALTERNATE TUESDAY, commencing at 6 p.m.

8,623 Shetland store lambs sold 1970 averaged £4.79.

12,456 Shetland store lambs sold 1971 averaged £6.27.

Stock to our sales will be met at the steamer and carefully lairaged until time of sale. Commissions carefully executed for those unable to attend the sales.

ABERDEEN MEAT MARKETING CO., LTD. Subsidiary of Aberdeen & Northern Marts Ltd., wholesale and exporters of quality Scotch meat. Livestock marketed on dead weight and grade basis. Price list on application.

EGG GRADING STATION. Our Society's Station is the most modern in Scotland. Enquiries welcome.

ESTATE AGENCY DEPARTMENT specialises in the sales and valuations for any purpose of agricultural and urban properties anywhere in Scotland.

Our representative, Mr William Hendry, will be in Shetland from 12th to 24th July, staying with Mrs Harper at Meadowvale, Virkie (Sumburgh 240), and will be delighted to call on you.

SALES ARRANGEMENT BOOKLET SENT ON REQUEST

Congratulations to "The Shetland Times"
on its centenary

ABERDEEN & NORTHERN MARTS LIMITED

CENTRAL MART, ABERDEEN

Telephone 41331 (6 lines)



Congratulations to
“The Shetland Times”
on their hundred years service to
Shetlanders all over the world

Not quite a century for us, but
established almost fifty years
ago, and engaged ever since
in the manufacture of high
class knitwear for markets at
home and abroad.

JOHN TULLOCH
(Shetland Products) Ltd.

MONTFIELD

-

-

LERWICK

TELEPHONE: LERWICK 50

TELEPHONE: LERWICK 50



ABERDEEN SAVINGS BANK

1946

Interest	£50
Depositors' Balances	£17,570

1951

Interest	£4,820
Depositors' Balances	£221,000

1956

Interest	£8,825
Depositors' Balances	£371,000

1961

Interest	£15,285
Depositors' Balances	£554,250

1966

Interest	£31,345
Depositors' Balances	£1,011,100

1971

Interest	£71,190
Depositors' Balances	£1,557,750

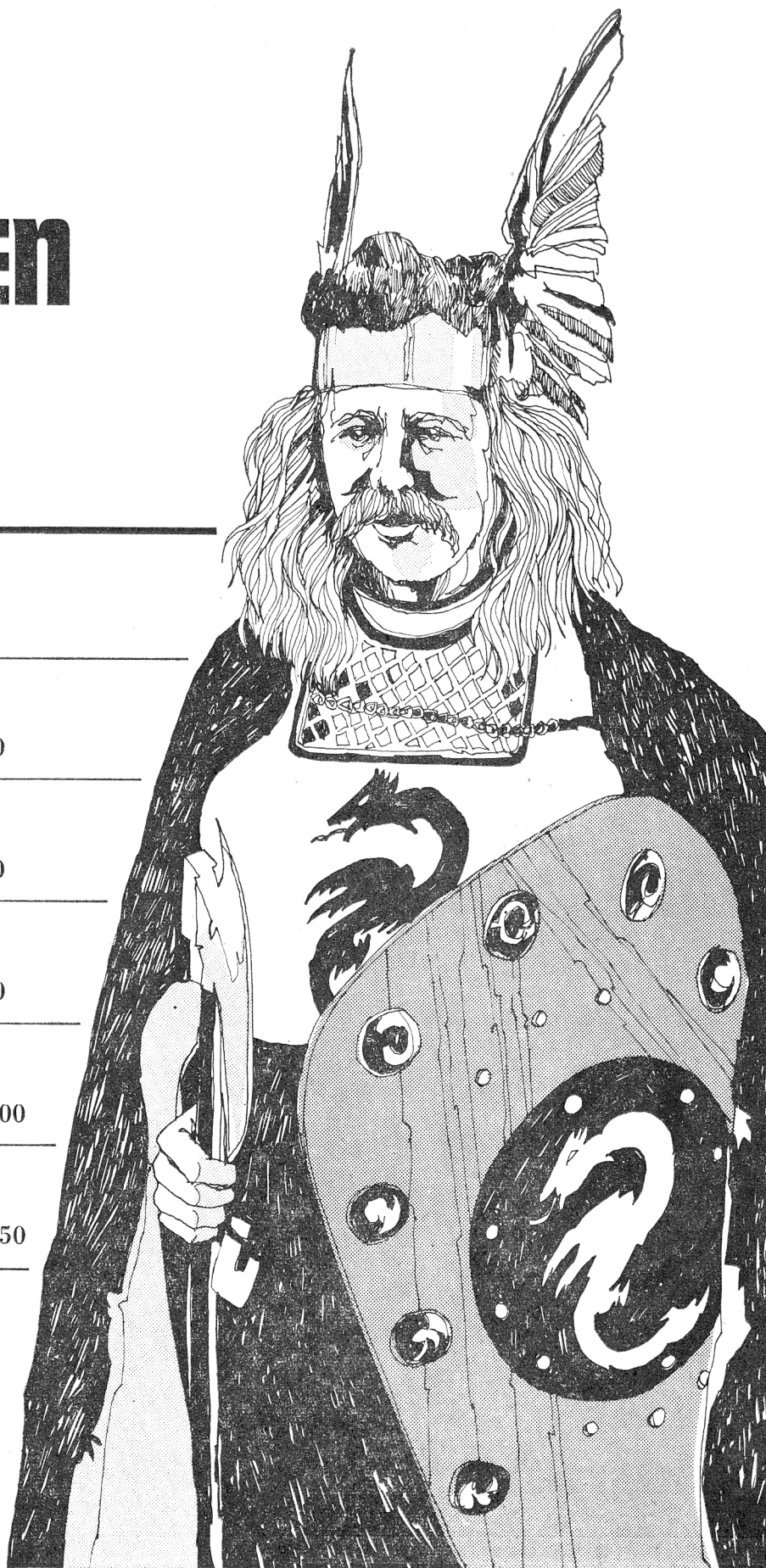
Over £500,000 in interest has been paid to Aberdeen Savings Bank depositors in Shetland since the Branch opened in Lerwick in 1946.

A contribution to "Shetland Times" past and present.

For further information visit our Staff at 66 Commercial Street, Lerwick.

Telephone 305

Manager : Mr. D.P. Rosie



ONE HUNDRED YEARS ON

The weekly Press in Shetland

When Donald Stephen came to Shetland in the spring of 1872 he was following a route that had been pioneered by journalists years earlier, but it is to him that Shetland is indebted for creating the one local newspaper that has survived the hard and often unprofitable course of weekly publications.

The first newspaper was "The Shetland Journal," which lasted for only a year and was printed in London. Its aim was to bring national and international news to the islanders, and, in particular, to act as a vehicle for the views of its founder, Arthur Anderson. Anderson attempted to extend his paper into Orkney, but "The Orkney and Shetland Journal" only lasted for a few months, and it was not until 1862 that a further effort was made by Charles D. Jamieson, who turned out a four-page paper at 68 Commercial Street, under the title of "The Shetland Advertiser." Contributors to it included Dr Gilbert Spence, and his sister Miss Catherine Spence, who were later to contribute to the columns of "The Shetland Times." The reason for the failure of the Advertiser was, according to an article in the jubilee issue of "The Shetland Times," difficulties of communication throughout the islands." The type and plant lay idle until 1870, when a further effort was made, chiefly to report news of the Franco-Prussian War. By then the islands had been linked by telegraph, and Mr Jamieson decided to publish a paper called "Telenews" — which, coincidentally is the name of Mr John Robertson's radio and television business in Commercial Street. The fate of "Telenews" was sad indeed — advertisements had been canvassed and a good deal of local support promised, but on the very date the first number was to be published the telegraph cable broke and it was impossible to get the news to fill the sheet.

The start of "The Shetland Times" is said to be due to the influence of Charles G. Duncan, the then procurator fiscal, who brought Donald Stephen north. Stephen had served his time with "The John O' Groat Journal" and set about printing a four-page paper, using two hand presses. The first issue appeared under the title of "The Zetland Times," but this changed to "The Shetland Times" soon afterwards, and the publication day became a Saturday — in its early days the paper appeared on Saturday or Monday, depending on the arrival of mail from the south with advertisements and news items. Within a year the hand presses had gone and a cylinder machine had been installed, and at the same time there was an attempt to publish a separate paper for the town. But the "Peerie Times" and "The Lerwick Times" did not succeed, and in any case Stephen's health was by then failing and in 1875 he left Shetland, and the business was taken over by Mr Christopher Sandison.

Mr Sandison found new premises in part of a new building which had been erected by Bailie Charles Robertson near the Market Cross, which is now well-known as the draper's shop of Messrs Anderson & Co. The ground floor was a booksellers and stationers' shop, with the printing office and composing room upstairs. Here the paper continued the even tenor of its way until Christopher Sandison's health broke down. In 1883 he died, and his brother Andrew, who had become a partner the previous year, carried on until 1894, when Basil Johnson and Peter Greig took over. By



The staff of "The Shetland Times" prior to the partnership of Johnson & Greig. Mr Christopher Sandison, the editor, is in the centre; Mr B. J. H. Johnson on his right; and Mr Peter Greig on his left. Others identified in the pictured are — Back row, left to right: John Gair (who subsequently became better known as a cycle agent), Mitchell Nicolson, William Jamieson ("Aaful Dan"), James Pottinger. Front left, Frankie Pottinger; front right, Halcrow Stewart.

this time the location had again changed, and it was in a printing works near the present Bank of Scotland that the first power-driven press was installed.

But Johnson & Greig had further ambitions, and a new building was erected in Mounthooly Street, where they installed equipment sufficient to increase the size of the paper from four pages to eight, and it was not long before they were able to instal the first Linotype machine and hand-setting of the paper ceased.

It is now difficult to appreciate the financial struggles of the late nineteenth century. The paper was bankrupt in 1894, and for the foreman printer, Basil Johnson, and the only reporter, Peter Greig, the first formidable task was to find £250. It appears they scraped together £150, and the balance was made up by an overdraft of £100 at the North of Scotland Bank, guaranteed by a string of local people: Peter Scott Goodlad, boot-maker; Thomas Anderson, draper; John Bannatyne Anderson, solicitor; Alexander and Charles Gilbert Duncan Sandison, merchants and fishcurers, Baltasound, Unst; and Robert Henderson, merchant, Scousburgh. It is interesting to speculate how much credit one could obtain nowadays with the support of people of this commercial calibre.

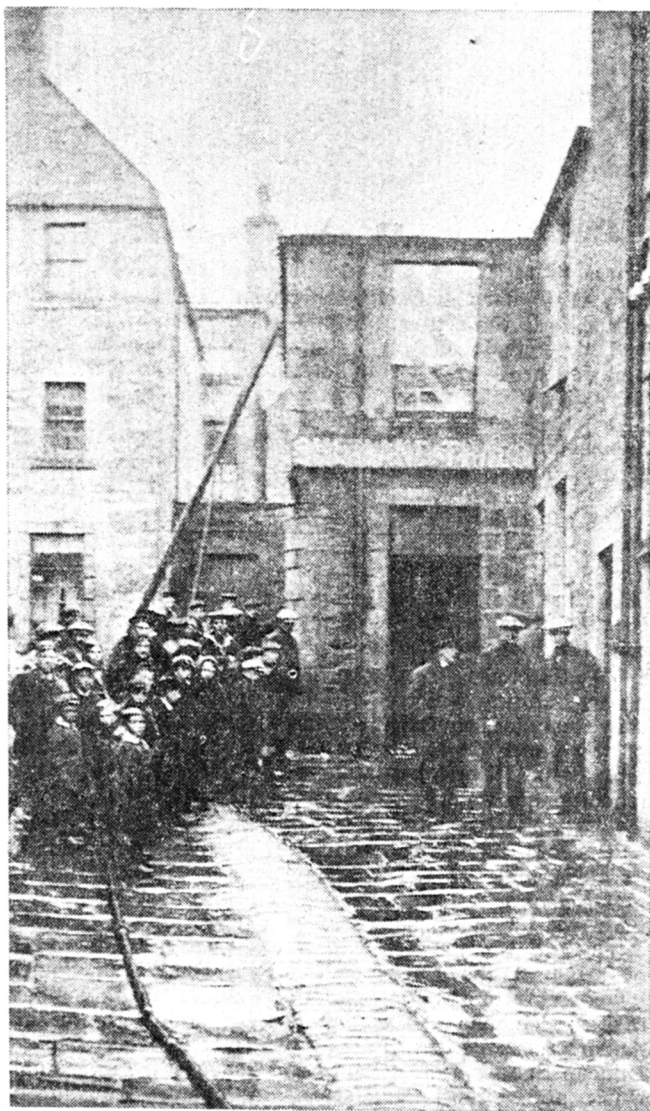
A good investment

It proved a good investment, however, and "The Shetland Times" more than doubled its circulation when it doubled its size. Much of its popularity stemmed from its advocacy of land reform, which had come about with the passing of the Crofters Act of 1886. The publishers sought legal advice on the Acts and published as much information as they could lay their hands on about crofters' rights.

With its enthusiasm for land reform and better social conditions, the paper naturally supported the Liberal Party. In fact its first incursion into politics came soon after it started, with a hard-fought election following the death of Sir Frederick Dundas. It was the custom then for political candidates to pay for a special edition of the local paper containing their lengthy party speeches, and, apart from the financial benefits, these issues introduced the paper to households who

* * *

THE MORNING AFTER



The proprietors and staff survey the ruins of their printing works which went on fire in April, 1915.

had not hitherto subscribed. From its advocacy of Liberal Party policies, and from the extent to which candidates used it to carry their message, it was widely thought that the paper was under some form of political control. In fact it has at no time been other than a purely family business, and it is quite coincidental that the present editor is himself a supporter of the Liberal Party and has stood as a Liberal candidate at a general election. The paper continues to support the present Liberal Member, Mr Jo Grimond, but has never denied space to his opponents, and is not uncritical of some of his views and those of his party.

In 1884 Thomas Manson and his brother James C. Manson were both in the "Shetland Times" office, Thomas continuing as a printer, James, also a printer, having become the first shorthand writer in Shetland. That year Thomas left and set up as a jobbing printer on his own and in 1885 the Shetland Newspaper Company Ltd. was formed with J. K. Galloway, solicitor, as secretary, to start the "Shetland News". Thomas Manson was engaged as works manager, his small business and plant being purchased; J. B. Laurence was appointed editor and Jas. C. Manson reporter. The plants of the "Orkney and Shetland Telegraph" which had just ceased publication, and of the defunct "Shetland Advertiser" were purchased, as well as Mr Manson's plant.

In 1886 the Shetland Newspaper Co. went into liquidation and the Manson brothers acquired the whole business as T. & J. Manson. James was editor from then till his death in 1907. Thereafter Thomas added the editorship to management of the works and business, his nephew Robert F. Inkster succeeding his deceased uncle as reporter.

"The Shetland News" was a worthy rival of "The Times" until declining advertisement revenue forced its closure in 1963. Both printing works catered for general jobbing printing, as they still do, but T. & J. Manson concentrated more on book publications, and many of the most sought-after Shetland books bear their imprint.

Both local newspapers produced war editions from the 4th of August, 1914. In the case of "The Shetland Times" the news came from Central News, London, each morning, and the news sheet was distributed throughout the islands in the afternoon. These sheets, of course, carried national news, whereas the regular weekly editions of the paper dealt with local affairs, and with local aspects of the war, in particular a sad chronicle of Shetlanders' deaths. Over five hundred photographs of local men killed in action appeared in the paper between 1914 and 1919. Another wartime activity was a fund to provide cigarettes for Shetland boys serving in France, and over a million and a half were sent out.

Although "The Shetland Times" has been in existence for a century it has not appeared each week throughout the century — there was a gap of eight weeks in 1915, after the premises in Mounthooly Street had been burned down, and it also missed one issue during the General Strike of 1926.

The fire in April, 1915, was disastrous. The physical difficulty of getting new plant and premises during the war was made worse by the fact that the place was under-insured. However, the old infant school in Prince Alfred Street was available, and H. Pullan & Sons, of Glasgow, printing engineers, combed the country for second-hand plant, which was all that could be obtained in wartime conditions. One of the problems that followed this phase was that the machinery had to be set on a wooden floor of the rented premises and twenty years later the results of this were still having to be faced. It was not until just before the second war that the heavy plant was put on concrete foundations, and since then every item of equipment has been replaced again, and in the past five years alone over £30,000 worth of new plant has gone in.

Editors and reporters

Basil Johnson edited the paper from 1894 until after the first war and Peter Greig was the sole reporter save for a period of ill-health when a succession of young men was sent north by John Leng, of the Dundee "Courier," to get experience in the atmosphere of a small country newspaper office. One of them, Mr R. J. Arnott, maintained a link with "The Shetland Times" until the outbreak of the second war by providing it with "A London Letter," mainly composed of Hansard extracts of interest to a crofting and fishing community. Another, Mr Jack Jellen, who only died at the end of April, aged 84, wrote an amusing article in "The Scotsman" not long ago on how he lived like a gentleman on 30/- a week!

During the first war the proprietors' sons, Bertie Johnson and Bob Greig, both saw active service, but returned to fill their fathers' shoes, Bertie as editor and manager and Bob as the sole reporter. In effect the sons were running the business, but the senior partners retained their positions, if only nominally, until the death of B. J. H. Johnson in 1928. Thereafter Peter Greig took no active part in the business. Like Bob Inkster, who kept the columns of "The Shetland News" filled for half-a-century or more, Bob Greig wrote a confident verbatim shorthand, and local meetings were reported at almost inordinate length, as was the fashion until quite recently. Bob Greig's death in 1938 was an irreparable loss to the business, as well as a great personal one to Bertie Johnson. From then until Hugh Crooks joined the firm after the second war there was a succession of reporters, of whom the best remembered are E. A. (Ted) Pritchard who was succeeded, after he was called up for war service in 1941, by Miss Helen Fisher.

The saddest change of all, however, took place not long after Bob Greig's death. Through a foolish industrial dispute which discredits the Scottish Society of Master Printers and the Scottish Typographical Association as well as the parties directly involved, the entire printing staff left, with the exception of Mr Alex. Fraser, who succeeded Mr Robert Malcolmson as foreman, and served the firm loyally for over forty years. It fell to the present editor to deal with that situation and to find replacements, and as he writes this now he is still appalled at the crudeness of industrial relations at a time that does not seem to him to be very far distant.

The only other industrial dispute engendered no acrimony between the firm and staff — for six weeks in the summer of 1959 the printing staff were absent at the behest of their union, and a "mini Times" was produced by the editorial and office staff. Incidentally, the strike editions of our paper were superior to those produced by most Scottish weeklies, and indeed some produced nothing at all.

"The Shetland Times" reached its lowest ebb during the second world war, and might well have disappeared had the war continued much longer. Bertie Johnson had died suddenly in 1942, leaving the business to his sister, Mrs H. B. Wishart.

There were several interim editors until 1946, when Mrs Wishart's son, Basil, returned from war service and was joined by Hugh T. Crooks, who had helped out at various times while serving in the R.A.O.C. in Shetland. Their efforts in the early post-war years made good the wartime losses, and commenced the period in which profits were ploughed back in the form of new plant and equipment, so that today the firm has as good a plant as any of its modest size. It has, too, as good a staff as any weekly newspaper, and indeed a much better staff than most. Once again it is a wholly local staff, including two who would probably have become redundant with the closure of "The Shetland News."

Mrs Wishart formed a private limited liability company in 1942, she and her daughter and son being the principal shareholders. Since then her daughter-in-law, her grandson, Robert Wishart, and Mr Crooks have become shareholders and directors.

The character of the paper did not change noticeably until after the second war. Then the need for a more modern approach to local news became evident, and several features of the pre-war paper were no longer in demand. "The London Letter," for instance, was not of value with daily papers reaching the islands by air. A main feature of pre-war papers that also disappeared was the shipping list. When airmail letters could reach Shetland within days of being posted on the other side of the globe, there was no interest in reporting from "Lloyds' List" the movements of vessels in which Shetlanders were sailing. Similarly, weekly magazines supplanted the weekly newspapers' serial stories, and the cookery hints and health notes and such like that were bought by the foot in stereo. The result is that the news content of the paper is very much greater than it used to be. It is also a paper that voices its own opinion more regularly than it used to do, both in editorials and in features such as "A Lerwick Log," where the editor attempts to stamp his own character on the columns.

Like other papers "The Shetland Times" was reluctant to go over to front-page news, and even more reluctant to change from a broadsheet to a tabloid size. But when the changes were made they were welcomed by most readers, and the process continues, with an alteration in column widths and with more pictorial coverage following the installation of an electronic block-making machine.



Three generations — Mr Peter Greig and his son Bob, with Mrs Bob Greig and their infant son Joe.



A third of a century

— BY —

Basil Wishart, editor of "The Shetland Times"

It has been a long-standing family joke that I would one day write my reminiscences and entitle them "Forty Years Behind the Times." In fact I can only claim to have been associated with the paper for a third of a century, and am slightly astonished to find that this is a longer assize than any other editor has tholed. Nevertheless, I feel entitled to review the years over a longer span than this. My whole life has been conditioned by the fact that the family owned the newspaper, and indeed my involvement can be said to have started on the 19th September, 1919, when Grandpa went down to the printing works, stopped the machine, and inserted a birth notice!

Wilfred Taylor once wrote in his "Scotsman's Log" that weekly newspaper editors were usually to be found at the bottom of a well. Truth, he asserted, was also to be found at the bottom of a well. Certainly very little provision has ever been made for the editorial staff of small newspapers, but, we did not live at the bottom of a well. We lived in an exposed glass cubicle in Prince Alfred Street with a Crossley gas engine thumping away on the other side of the partition, and a bogey stove mingling its anthracite fumes with those of the thick black twist that Peter Greig favoured. In my childhood "the office" was a slightly mysterious sanctuary where I was allowed to remain so long as I kept my mouth shut, and I can remember a great deal of what went on there, as far back as the middle twenties, when my grandfather was the senior partner

The work was done at two rickety tables, pushed together in the centre of the room. Katie Gray (Mrs Alex. Gray) sat at one side of the table, usually scoring names off Lloyds' List and Shipping Register, for that important item of the paper that told islesfolk where their kith and kin were. Facing her sat my uncle,



"The Shetland Times" staff in 1939. Back, left to right: David Brown, Neli Wishart, Tom Worth, Ruby Ramsay, Dick Bell, Gracie Tait. Front: Ian Ross, Ted Pritchard, Bertie Johnson (Editor), Alex. Fraser, Basil Wishart.

The smell of ink

Bertie, a slight, sandy-haired man whose extra-mural interests were badminton and playing the piano. Behind them Peter Greig would be wreathed in his own cloud of smoke, and at the window Bob Greig, with a cigarette in his left hand and a pencil in his right, would be furiously turning out copy in longhand for, although he wrote verbatim shorthand, he scorned the use of a typewriter.

The atmosphere in the office was always a relaxed one. It seemed to me that they had endless time for talk, though I now know that this was not so, and that, as Hugh Crooks and I well understand, the work is done when the pressure is on. Discussions about local municipal affairs were often dominant, but it is little snatches of seemingly irrelevant conversation that remain in my mind: for instance, when Bob once said to Bertie "I don't know what anybody wants with more than £5 a week." And indeed in the late twenties this was an understandable viewpoint.

Of the printing staff my strongest memory is of Jimmy Morrison — a big, kindly and capable man, whose presence was somehow felt more than that of the foreman, Mike Malcolmson, who, at least to my juvenile mind, was a more cynical character. His real Christian name was Robert but because of a superfluity of Roberts in the firm, he was dubbed Mike. The plant had been set down on a wooden floor because the premises had only been rented following the fire of 1915, and the noise and vibration when the old Wharfedale was printing the paper was quite appalling, and ultimately resulted in the machine becoming so out of alignment that it had to be scrapped. There is now just one relic of the past in the place — a platen press which in my childhood was everyone's pride and joy, being the only piece of equipment that wasn't second-hand. There was a continual shortage of almost every basic piece of printing equipment, and it was not uncommon to see books being printed two pages at a time on a heavy platen press which could not have turned out more than five hundred sheets an hour.

It was always thought necessary to have an office on "the street", and until my uncle acquired 77-79 Commercial Street in the mid-twenties, the office was pushed from pillar to post — at one time in what is now Mr Greenwald's shop, then in the shop now occupied by Maka Knitwear, and, though I do not personally recall this, I understand that for a period they lodged in what became Bruce Laurenson's dental surgery in Mounthooly Street. Here my great-aunt Barbara reigned. Unlike the editorial offices, I detested her domain, for no one was allowed to idle there and even in early childhood I would be given a length of string to unravel or old envelopes to sort out if I was foolish enough to intrude. She also had a somewhat incongruous sideline — presumably because she was miserably underpaid — as the local agent for Pullars' dyeworks in Perth, and it was said that she was quite capable in the days when the paper was sold on the street, of popping a cheeky newsboy into a Pullars' hamper and leaving him there!

The penurious attitude of Aunt Barbara was not untypical of the manner in which small business

survived in pre-war Lerwick. She had, for instance, a running battle with the late Mr R. D. Ganson, who insisted on receipts for small advertisements which then came out at about a shilling. She took her revenge by demanding individual receipts for all the parcels sent by Gansons' mail cars at a cost of threepence each! Similarly, the late W. A. A. Tulloch — to whom our family was distantly related — was so distressed at the thought of paying the poundage on postal orders that he called regularly to find what was in Aunt Barbara's cash box. He would poke his head in the door saying "Have you one for 2/6?" If the reply was in the negative he would go away saying "Never mind, I'll come round again tomorrow!" Incidentally, he also economised on stationery by buying a surplus quantity of Post Office telegram envelopes when the colour of these was changed. The result was that every communication from Billy Tulloch seemed to have a note of great urgency about it!

It might appear from what I have so far written that this was a life of unalloyed joy. But in fact the background was drab and sombre. After the first war the Shetland fishing industry declined. Coal for steam drifters was dear in relation to the price of herring which was no longer bought by Russia, and the small haddock boats had never been able to do more than eke out a living for their owners.

For the knitters there was the prospect of 1/6 for a spencer or maybe just that amount credited in a tupenny pass book so that the merchant might get a double profit when the woman returned to get some tea or sugar. It was a time when emigration became inevitable, and when Lerwick only lived for a few bright weeks of summer during which the town was enveloped in a pall of smoke from drifter funnels.

Lerwick's growth took place before the first war and in the inter-war years it had little to offer. The men who made the place were then a dying generation, and all too often the sons who should have inherited were missing, due to the dreadful toll of the first war. This was not the case with our business, however, for both my uncle and his partner, Bob Greig, came home unscathed. But there was always the

feeling that only the failures remained in Lerwick and to some extent that stigma in turn attached itself to me. I had been ill very frequently in my early teens, had achieved no academic success, and as another mouth had to be fed, I was pushed into the office somewhere about 1935. It is therefore purely fortuitous that I edit and manage the paper now.

I worked in all departments of the business until I left Shetland with the "Terriers" in 1939. By 1941, however, my uncle's health was poor and I "wangled" a posting back home so that I could give him some help. When he died, quite suddenly, in March, 1942, I was released from the Army for three months but on my re-call was posted south and subsequently overseas.

Over the rest of the war, so far as our business is concerned, I can only draw a decent veil. There were several editors who came and went. Towards the end of the war, however, my cousin, John B. I. Laurenson, was editor and the works was kept going by Alex. Fraser and Jimmy MacMillan, a Shetland-born linotype operator, who came back here from Orkney. But from 1946 to the present day my involvement with "The Shetland Times" and indeed with the community it caters for has been total.



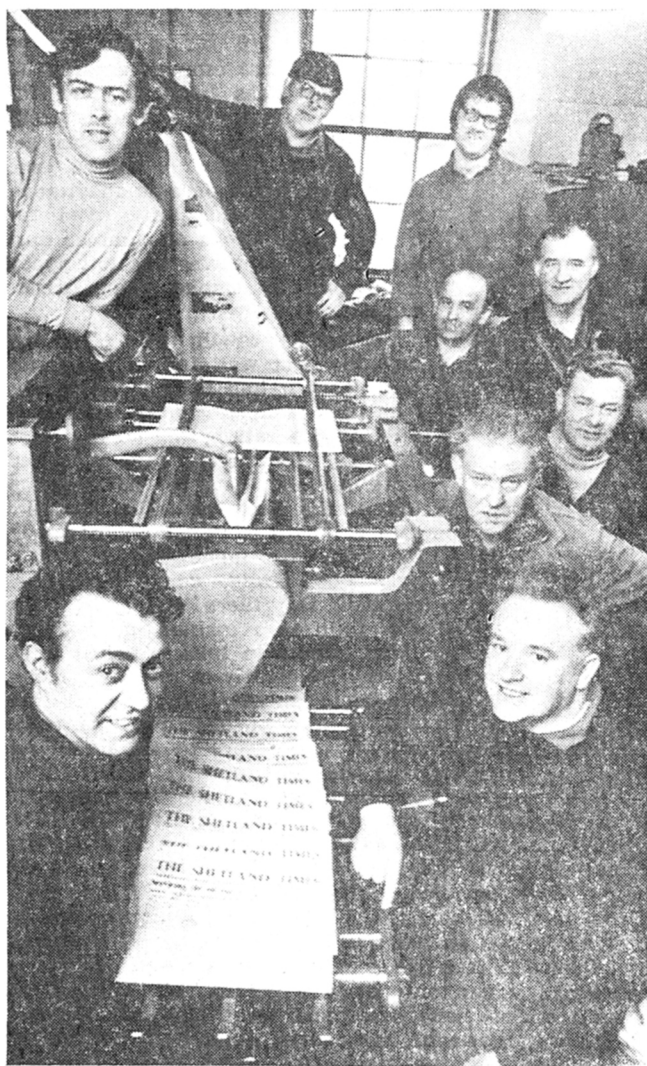
Two key figures in the inter-war years were Jimmy Morrison and Katie Gray pictured outside the printing works

An April fool

On the commercial side of the business many people were involved, some of whom I never really knew, but in the early war years my sister, Nell, was active in 77 Commercial Street, and my wife Joyce, whom I had met while she was serving in the WRNS in Shetland in 1942, was demobbed nine months before me, so that she too had some involvement before I returned. Ruby Ramsay had done a considerable stint on the book-keeping, and old friends, such as Mrs Alex. Gray, occasionally came in to help with proof-reading and similar chores.

It may seem appropriate to some that I returned to the paper on All Fool's Day in 1946. It was approaching bankruptcy, machinery was decrepit, and the very tools of the trade were inadequate, but fortune favoured me in that among the thousands who had served in Shetland during the war there was one well-trained reporter who wanted to remain here. Perhaps I should be more grateful to Laura Simpson than to Hugh Crooks for pinning him down to a situation in which he is, in all but name, editor of this paper and since last year a director of the company.

My ambitions were twofold. Firstly I had of



The present printing staff (round the clock): Hamish Cutt, Alastair Johnston, Ian Williamson, Ian Crooks, Dennie Johnston, Willie More, Allan Bruce, John Laurenson, James Manson.

necessity to make the business profitable for the family and the staff, and secondly it was an affront to my political pride that for fifteen years the constituency had been Conservative. To achieve the second aim of getting a Liberal MP elected was to prove easier than the first.

In 1946 an unknown man called Jo Grimond had come within a few hundred votes of ousting the sitting Conservative, and only another few hundred votes behind him was Prophet Smith, the only Labour candidate who has ever come near to winning the seat. Grimond had taken the post of secretary for the National Trust for Scotland — one for which I think he was not too well suited — and as the years of the post-war Labour Government rolled on I saw that some action was needed if a Liberal was to be returned. I went to Edinburgh, was coldly received by Jo Grimond, but told him bluntly that he would have to show his face in the place if he intended to stand again. It is not for me to say whether this interview was effective, but soon afterwards Grimond resigned from the post and came north to win the seat at the 1950 election. It is characteristic of Shetland that it runs against the tide of national affairs, and Grimond's success was the only consolation for the Liberal Party, whose leader, Sir Archibald Sinclair, lost his seat. It is tempting to speculate on Shetland's political future, but I shall only record what is history now, and try to relate it to the situation as it then was.

Others will describe the development of our island industries, but this may not reveal the social changes that I have seen and am thinking of now. The British are said to be a nation of shopkeepers, and if this is so one can certainly say that the Lerwegians were British to the core. An earlier generation had invested heavily in the fishing industry, but too many of them had burned their fingers in the depression years for their successors to follow their example. There were innumerable prophets of doom, and many of us took the attitude that Shetland had to look for Government investment in public works to provide a breathing space in which the indigenous industries could be re-established. Everyone hung around waiting, Micawber-like, for something to turn up, but nothing did, and while new houses were being rushed up a large proportion of the population rushed off. Lerwick became something of a transit camp, into which people flocked from the isles and the outlying parishes, only to move off again to mainland Britain or, more especially, to New Zealand, where people of Shetland descent must now outnumber the total of our own population.

Yet it was a shopkeeper who gave the lead. While our Labour-controlled council extended a begging bowl to the Scottish Office and prayed in vain for Government sponsored industry, J. G. Peterson put money into a fishing boat, which was built at Scalloway by David Howarth, who is now a very successful author, but then a not very successful boatbuilder. The "Enterprise", as she was appropriately named, was the forerunner of the fine fleet of multi-purpose vessels that now earn £2 million every year.

The knitwear industry, too, was changing swiftly. Before the war A. I. Tulloch had used his flair for salesmanship to establish a large mail order trade in knitwear and tweed, which had the effect of raising prices. And these prices were boosted further by the shortage of all kinds of clothing during the war years. After the war, however, the handflat knitting machine intruded on the scene, and the development which has followed this has now reached a point where one can only ask if automation is not the next step.

From a personal and business point of view, however, the mail order trade produced what is now described by the modern phrase "spin off". The first automatic flat-bed press in Shetland was a direct result of A. I. Tulloch's willingness to give me printing work, assuming price and quality to be comparable to what he was getting "oot da sooth mooth." Again

The smallest show

it is for someone else to tell the story of the knitwear industry, but it is for me to say something that is probably unappreciated — that for many years at least one printer's employment stemmed from "hosiery".

The crofting scene was not a pretty one. Although the Crofters Commission has done a remarkable job and land improvement is everywhere apparent, the whole system was in decay, and the very weapon that was devised to give the crofters stability — the Crofters Act of 1886 — had had the effect of preventing development. In the early post-war years an attempt was made to introduce intensive pig and poultry rearing, but this was doomed to failure as feeding stuffs had to be imported. What Shetland can grow is grass, and on the grass we can rear cattle as well as heavier breeds of sheep. This has always been my contention, and I am sorry that my disbelief in the viability of other forms of agriculture up here has led some to conclude that I am out of sympathy with the crofters and farmers.

For the crofter/fishermen of Shetland their legal emancipation followed on the growth of literacy which, coincidentally, commenced a hundred years ago, and there is little doubt that the circulation of "The Shetland Times" grew from the introduction of free primary education in 1872. Ten years before the paper was founded, Arthur Anderson, founder of the P & O Line, and Shetland's greatest benefactor, had founded what is now the Anderson High School, and in rural areas primary education had been given a start by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. But in 1873 a report prepared for the government of the time revealed the total inadequacies of property and teaching personnel.

Even with the introduction of free schooling, the old School Boards did not expend a vast sum of money — and when they were superseded by the Education Authority in 1919 their total expenditure in Shetland was only £20,779 — compared with today's budget of well over a million pounds.

Unfortunately literacy also assisted emigration — indeed Arthur Anderson's aim was to assist young men to "get on and get out," and the export of brains has continued to the present day, with a declining population reducing the opportunities for the academics to remain in the community.

In parallel with educational advancement came the social and medical services, which in present-day Shetland are superior to those of most small communities. Their development can best be traced in the biography of Dr H. P. Taylor, who came to Yell in 1890, and served the community there for over forty years. It was not until 1922 that a surgeon was appointed to the Gilbert Bain Hospital, and until the new G.B. Hospital was opened by the Queen Mother in 1961 Shetland had to rely on a "cottage hospital." Even now the sole consultant surgeon in the islands performs over a thousand operations each year, and has to be much more versatile than his mainland colleagues.

One has constantly to ask oneself what influence, if any, a tiny weekly newspaper can have in its bailiwick. I have always tried to act as a catalyst, my views not half as important as the reaction that they may, one hopes, provoke. I found right away in 1946 that there was an inbuilt hostility amongst the older generation towards the editorial column of the paper, and as I get older I begin to appreciate their point of view. Why should some young fellow come along and pontificate about all the complexities of local life that they have been wrestling with for years? This generation gap cannot be closed, and I bear no malice towards the one or two young people who

are now trying to cast me in the role of an establishment figure, although I still feel something of a rebel. Another legitimate source of complaint is that I sit on the sidelines and criticise councillors and their like who are doing all the donkey work, but I have had some salutary lessons of the unwisdom of a local editor taking part in public affairs. The first duty of a journalist is to expose, and very often the first thought of a committee member is to conceal. So that where I have tried to help with committee work I have been disturbed by a division of loyalties.

My first loyalty is, and must be, to be my own newspaper, selfish though this may sound.

"The smallest show on earth" was one of Peter Sellers' best comedies, and although it was concerned with a run-down cinema, I laughed most because I saw in it some parallel with "The Shetland Times" I inherited in 1946. It virtually amounted to two men and a boy and an old mangle! The circulation had been "pegged" at 5000 copies a week by the Medes and Persians who occupied a department of the Board of Trade responsible for rationing newsprint. The paper was then limited to four broadsheet pages, and I thought it would at least look better if I turned it round into eight small pages. This produced the almost unbelievable comment from the Board of Trade that we had "ceased to publish a small, large newspaper and were publishing a large, small newspaper." My reply was it depended which way they looked at it!



"Shetland Times" shop and office staff are pictured here: (left to right): Mrs Cathie Morrison, Miss Ruth Wishart, Mrs Margaret Sandison and Miss Renate Robertson.

Politics and profits

There seemed to be three facets of life for me at that time. Firstly there was the need to support a growing family out of an under-capitalised business, secondly there was the physical problem of producing the paper itself, and thirdly there was the social and economic problem of the whole county.

The purely commercial problem I tried to deal with by expanding the printing side — turning out a class of work which had hitherto gone to mainland firms — and I also decided that our retail shop which we had always thought of as merely a “front” for the newspaper business, could be developed. The first problem was the state of the premises at 77/79 Commercial Street. My uncle had bought the block in 1926, but the plight of the tenants of the two-storey house above the shop was quite appalling, but I persuaded the council to rehouse them, and then set about reconstructing the whole place. It soon became evident that the only way in which I could justify the expenditure was if I lived in the flat myself, and this I have happily done for the past eighteen years, although my relations complain that I left a good house “to live in a kloss”, and one local businessman did tell me that I had gone the wrong way about the business — I should have knocked the whole place down and started from scratch (and perhaps he was right).

The newspaper itself continued to dominate my life, as it still does, and from a rather shaky start in 1946 it has developed surprisingly well. In the first year after the war, Hugh Crooks and I saw the circulation go up by a thousand a week, and I am hopeful that we will have a net sales figure of 8000 in the course of this year, as against 4000 in 1939. This is more remarkable when one remembers that the population has fallen in that period from 21,000 to 17,500.

The weakest point of our paper is unquestionably its Lerwick orientation, but, try as I may, I cannot obtain any regular news coverage from what Lerwegians rather laughably call “the country.” It could be that the coming of vehicle ferries and inter-island air services will enable us to redress this in the future, though it would be an expensive operation.

My relationship with the local authorities has been a love-hate one. Not unnaturally, many have resented my comments on their activities, but usually I have found myself on the side of the angels where big issues were concerned, and the trouble and strife has arisen over matters that now seem trivial. I well remember making a great fuss about the importation of Belgian bricks, which were apparently the only house-building materials the council could lay their hands on just after the war. A highly emotive situation was generated, with bailies and councillors snubbing me in the street, and not long afterwards there was more wrath and rage — and a really excellent contribution to the Up-Helly-A’ bill — because I had the temerity to comment on the manner in which a local appointment had been made.

By far the most influential figure in municipal affairs was the late R. A. Anderson, and it therefore followed that criticism of local authority policy often appeared as though it were personal criticism of him. Happily, however, I was nearly always in agreement with him on those infrequent occasions when I found myself on some committee or another. Prophet Smith comes into this category too — there must be yards of implied criticism of him buried in my old editorials, and yet again we co-operated wholeheartedly and to some extent successfully in such plays as forming the Shetland Development Council.

A valuable asset to most country journalists is the representation of daily newspapers, but for many



First Freeman — R. A. Anderson was the principal figure in municipal affairs after the second war.



Former Convener — Prophet Smith, one-time Labour candidate, now the senior member of HDB.

years all of this had been handled by the late Bob Inkster, with the exception of the “News Chronicle,” whose needs were so few that income from this source was negligible. In 1947, however, I was appointed as BBC correspondent for Shetland, which for the first time gave Hugh Crooks and myself the opportunity to handle news as an immediacy and not as something that you had to keep up your sleeve for half a week. Subsequently, with Bob Inkster’s retiral, we found ourselves in the position of having all the representation in our hands, but I do not think that we will ever again have the satisfaction that stemmed from covering news on a competitive basis, nor is the standard of daily newspapers such as to provide us with the opportunities that were there a decade or more ago.

Over the years we have covered a wide range of stories, ranging from tragic shipwrecks and runaway Russians down to a ridiculous episode which involved the Bressay minister in eating a lot of eggs — free range, of course! There has always been room for laughter in the ignorance of national news editors, one of whom seriously suggested that I should “hire a launch” and cover a story for him in Faroe; and another who was quite cross because I wouldn’t get out of my bed when told a ship was in distress off the Butt of Lewis! On the other hand we have had to bear the opprobrium that comes in the wake of a visit to Shetland by some of the less scrupulous daily hacks. Time and again we have read stories which bore no relation to the facts, and, time and again, have had to explain to an angry and unbelieving public that we were not responsible for what had been perpetrated.

More rewarding, perhaps, has been an association with the BBC’s local programmes on VHF radio. There is no doubt that Aberdeen has pioneered this type of service, and if it expands I would hope that the staff of “The Shetland Times” will have a part to play.

Running a weekly newspaper is not an unrewarding way of life. It has the advantage of keeping one in constant touch with almost every sphere of local activity. At times one is under pressure and at other times almost idle in a journalistic sense. Yet because the business is small there is nearly always more than enough to do of a mundane nature, which a bigger fish in a bigger pond would be able to delegate. Perhaps the only sad fact that is now being borne in upon me is that an editor becomes like a minister who has been too long in the same pulpit. But unlike the minister, no one else is going to give me a “call” (unless it is to the Knab. I have long believed that one of the advantages of a newspaper chain is that editors can be moved around, yet, oddly, this is something that even Roy Thomson does not appear to have recognised.

Is there a future?

What future is there for this newspaper? To me it seems entirely related to the future of the islands as a whole. The printed word cannot be supplanted and as long as there is a community there will be the need for some form of print, if only to convey necessary information. Our geographical location favours the paper, for, no matter how many daily papers arrive, there is need for a weekly that recognises Shetland for the entity that it is. The Press barons who gobble up little newspapers elsewhere are unlikely to be interested in something so small and remote, and that in my view is a comforting thought. What this paper will look like fifty years on I wouldn't know, but I would hope that when my term is over some young man will transform it to meet the changing needs of the community, in the way I have tried to do in the years since 1946.

Indeed the future challenges me now, for many changes are imminent in Shetland. If there is development on a large scale and as speedily as some forecast, I shall have to take cognisance of these developments. For instance, an "oil town" would need an information sheet just as much as any other community. Probably the information needed would not be of much concern to the rest of our community, however, and one could envisage a special edition for that area. Again, if the north isles develop it might be possible to have a district reporter. Then there is the quite direct challenge made by Mr Ian R. Clark, the county clerk and general manager, in his article in this issue. How are we going to handle local government affairs after 1975? Already the business of local authorities is so extensive and complex that only someone like Hugh Crooks is capable of interpreting all of it for the local public. Should he, therefore, be employed solely as a local authority "lobby correspondent"? There is much to be said for this idea, but I suspect that Mr Clark is really looking for a public relations officer! And that is where the present and future catch up with each other, for Mr Clark has presented a case that has to be answered.

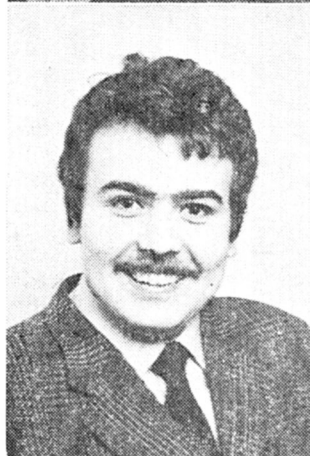


★
Left: Hugh Crooks,
News Editor.

Below, left: Gilbert
Irvine, reporter.

Below: Fred Hunter,
cashier and office
manager.

★



A staff outing to Lunna in the 30's was the occasion for this photograph. Left to right (back): Bill McGregor, Magnus Sinclair, James Morrison, Edward Sutherland, Robert (Mike) Malcolmson. In front: Alex. Fraser and Bob Greig.

From paddle steamer to BEA jet

Transport and tourism over the century

Shetland has had good internal and external communications for longer than the life of "The Shetland Times". In fact, the first issue of the paper advertises a passenger service from Lerwick to Bergen, Faroe and Iceland — something many people wish existed today. Internal sea transport was plentiful, if primitive, and a hundred and twenty years ago 117½ miles of "meal" roads had been constructed to stave off famine and, incidentally, to form the basis of our present highway pattern which now covers

These facilities meant that by 1872 Shetland had its share of discriminating tourists who did not feel they were embarking on a wild adventure as Sir Walter Scott may have done when he came in 1821 to find material for "The Pirate" — not his best novel but the first item of tourist publicity for the islands. Benjie's "Tour in Shetland" gives us a visitor's impression of the isles and a look at the visitors themselves. He came north in the old two-funnelled paddle steamer "St. Magnus" which plied on the island routes from 1867 to 1901 and arrived on a Saturday morning at "the queer, old-fashioned town of Lerwick." He noted among his travelling companions "three brisk young men who were also our fellow voyagers for a day or two in the little craft which steams among the Zetland Isles, rigged out in travelling costume "de rigueur," straw hats, tweeds, and knickerbockers, getting their poor legs thoroughly wet through their stockings with the rain." It might be said that many of our present-day tourists are even less well-equipped.

The history of communications between Shetland and the mainland is the history of the North of Scotland, Orkney and Shetland Shipping Company until May 1936 when aircraft came on the scene, and the company can also claim credit for most of the tourist developments, into the post-Second War period. But a serious study of this cannot be given in a short article and Professor Gordon Donaldson's history of the company, "Northwards by Sea" is on the bookshelves of the many who are fascinated by the subject.

The growth of air transport has also been well recorded in "Air Road to the Isles" by the late Captain E. E. Fresson who had already opened the routes as

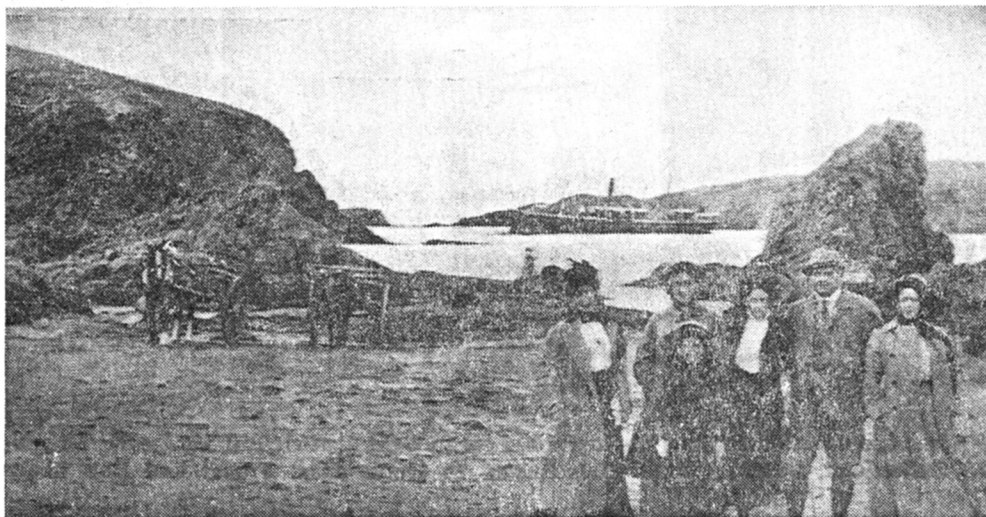
far north as Orkney when, on 6th May, 1936, he started a service to Shetland. He was just one day late however to claim to be the first arrival. Mr Eric Gandar Dower nipped into Sumburgh on 5th May and from then onwards there was fierce competition between his Aberdeen Airways and Capt. Fresson's Highland Airways.

Throughout the war the little De Havilland Rapides of the rival companies shuttled to and fro at low altitudes to avoid enemy attention and with blacked-out cabin windows so that passengers might not see the activities in such places as Scapa Flow. After the war the entrepreneurs were summarily dismissed at the behest of the first Labour government who created British European Airways. The Rapides continued for a short time and were supplemented by some noisy, Junkers aircraft acquired as part of Germany's war reparations. But it was the Dakota aircraft — the DC3 as it was more widely known, the "Pionair" as it was dubbed by the corporation — that permitted a real upsurge in air traffic.

When the Dakotas were withdrawn in 1962 they were replaced by De Havilland Dart Heralds but these were not popular with crews, nor with passengers when the frequency of landings at Sumburgh fell and they in turn gave way to the Viscounts, which today have earned a place in public affection and respect approaching that of the Dakotas. Not that the Dakota has vanished from the Shetland scene — Air Anglia uses it to fly oil rig crews to Sumburgh.

The number of passengers handled at Sumburgh Airport has more than doubled in the past six years, and this trend seems likely to continue. In 1965 there were 1062 aircraft movements with just under 20,000 passengers — in 1971 the 3895 aircraft movements catered for the needs of about 47,000 passengers.

Unlike Orkney, which enjoyed internal air transport even before the war, Shetland had to wait until the late 60's for the bare bones of a service. It was a classic example of military and civil co-operation that created an airstrip in Unst — the Royal Engineers did the spadework and the County Council completed "the Heathrow of the north!" Capt. Alan Whitfield has now earned for himself a place in Shetland's history equal to that of the well-beloved shipmasters, such as Capt. William Sinclair, who, incidentally, retires this week from command of the Earl of Zetland. And no survey of inter-island communications would be complete without mention of the Yell Sound Ferry Company — a combine of bus and ferry operators who have provided an "overland" route to the isles for many

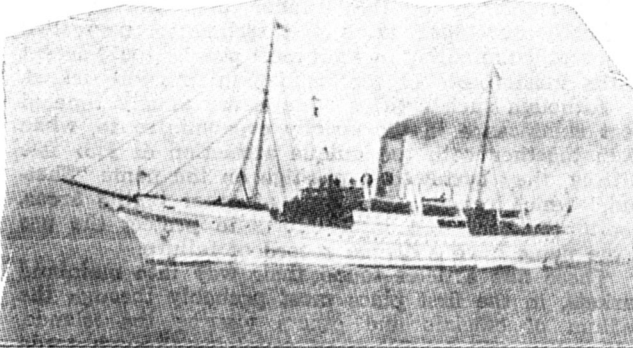


★
Pre-first war tourists—
In those days the "St. Ninian" started its series of calls on the West Side at Spiggie, where this group posed after landing.
★

FROM PADDLE STEAMER TO BEA JET

Those were the days—

A 1932 ADVERTISEMENT



FIRST-CLASS PASSENGER STEAMERS
From LEITH

To ABERDEEN AND SHETLAND - 4 Times Weekly
From ABERDEEN

To SHETLAND - 5 Times Weekly

—SUMMER CRUISES—

	From Leith	From Aberdeen
3 Days' Inclusive Cruise	£4 10 0	£4 0 0
4 Days' Inclusive Cruise	6 0 0	5 10 0
5 Days' Inclusive Cruise	7 10 0	7 0 0
12 Days' Holiday with 7 days at St. Magnus Hotel, Hillswick, Shetland	12 10 0	12 0 0

Full particulars on application to ALEXANDER STEPHEN, Agent, Lerwick.

years. Vehicle ferries will soon be operating over Yell-sound and Bluemull Sound, but it will take time for their operators to win the affection that the island travellers rightly show to the operators of the present service.

Shetland now has 503 miles of highways, and Shetland County Council's progressive policy has led to an astonishing growth of motor traffic. There are now 3,600 vehicles — a greater density of traffic per head of population than New York, as our M.P. frequently reminds the general public. Some of the islands have ceased to be so by strict definition. Muckle Roe, which had been connected to the mainland by a footbridge, saw mainland traffic when a new bridge was built after the war, and last year Trondra and Burra Isle became part of the Mainland when Mr George Younger, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, officially opened the route.

Two firms dominate the history of road transport—Ganson Bros. and J. Leask & Son. It was Gansons who, in the days of the horse-drawn wagonette, provided Shetland with a regular mail and passenger service, and this only ceased in 1947, when the Post Office introduced its own mail vans. Meanwhile, both firms had developed excursion services for the growing tourist trade, mainly a product of the North of Scotland Co.'s imaginative programme of "round trips," and with the recent decline of passenger services by sea the self-drive hire trade has increased.

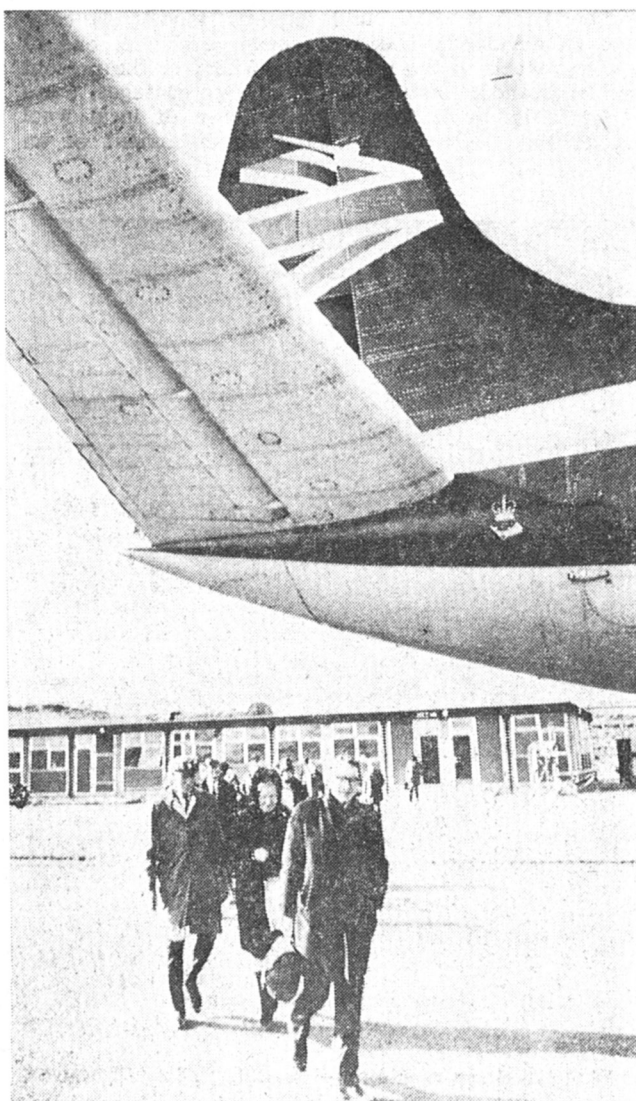
The tourist trade in Shetland has gone through many phases, from the pioneers who came north in the old paddle steamer, the I.C.S. men who would spend a long furlough at Spiggie, the "round trippers" on the St. Magnus and St. Ninian, and so to the B.E.A. passengers of the present day. The local authority has always been conscious of the value of the tourist trade, and Lerwick Town Council was the first in Scotland to subscribe the product of a halfpenny rate to the Scottish Tourist Board. Since then, through the aegis of the Highlands and Islands Development Board, a Shetland Tourist Organisation has grown in stature,

and the Board has also ploughed considerable capital into hotel development. It is interesting to note that a major expansion in tourism followed the erection at Hillswick of a prefabricated hotel from Norway, and that in recent years the H.I.D.B. has sponsored the erection of another hotel from the same source — in Unst.

In the past ten years hotel accommodation has more than doubled, and ranges from the three-star Lerwick Hotel — the first new hotel building in Lerwick since the Grand Hotel was erected in the late nineteenth century — to small, comfortable guest houses in places as remote as Fetlar.

Now the tendency is to air travel, and the North of Scotland Co. has lost much of its passenger capacity by withdrawing the St. Magnus and St. Ninian, although it still has a good grip on the market with the St. Clair, probably the best passenger vessel on British coastal routes.

An unending theme, however, has been escalating freight rates. It has been dominant in local and national politics throughout this century, and only now is there a glimmer of hope of rationalisation. While the local authority will take responsibility for internal transport, the Government is pledged to support the trunk route, and the tourist of the future will probably drive his car on to a ferry at Aberdeen, or arrive at Sumburgh Airport in the safe hands of B.E.A. All of Shetland's transport problems stem from the low volume of traffic, but growth is evident on both sea and air routes, and future prospects are bright.



Many who travel to and from Shetland nowadays, do so in BEA Viscounts.

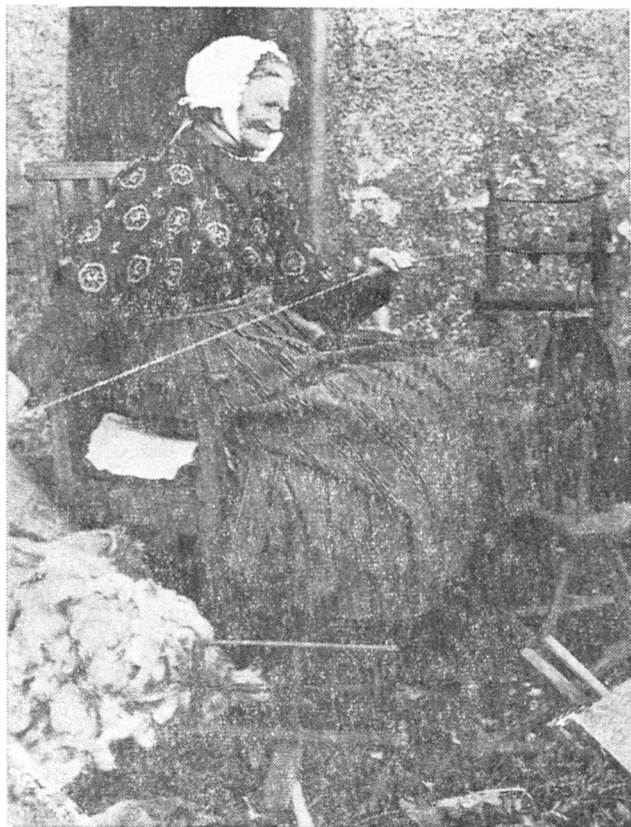
"Shetland" — the name for knitwear

By A. T. H. TULLOCH

Although none of the contemporary knitwear manufacturers can claim a life span as long as "The Shetland Times", knitting itself was a well established activity in Shetland one hundred years ago, and had been so for some considerable time, although the origins are now obscure. While the establishment of a newspaper may have taken place for logical reasons, the creation and development of a traditional local industry is more difficult to analyse, although it seems certain that the simple need for clothing would have stimulated the earliest attempts at spinning, knitting and weaving.

Whatever the original reason for these pursuits, the skills developed over the past hundred years or so are still of relevance today, and while most areas learned of necessity how to produce some kind of clothing, Shetland managed to evolve highly attractive products which have continued to exert an influence over the more commercial goods of the present day.

The harsh climate and exposed moorlands combined to develop a breed of sheep producing one of the finest wools in the world, and, whatever the present arguments about quality, blends and percentages, there can be little doubt that the excellence of local wool was a vital factor in the early establishment of an



A century ago the carding and spinning of fine Shetland wool laid the foundation of our modern industry.

important textile industry. While most parts of the country tended to concentrate on rough woven fabrics, there was an early tradition of knitting in Shetland, originally pretty well confined to stockings and other simple items, but the fineness of the wool was a continuing challenge to the spinner and knitter, who eventually developed skills and techniques unrivalled elsewhere, culminating in what most people would accept as the masterpiece of the hand-spun fine lace shawl.

Although such articles were never at any time of great significance in the strictly economic sense, when taken together with the unique attraction of Fair Isle knitting, they bestowed a prestige on the name "Shetland," which remains the envy of other textile areas, despite the fact that local efforts to protect the use of the name have a dismal record of failure.

These fine articles found their way into mainland markets, in the first place most probably through the medium of officials and others visiting the islands, and earlier still to European countries through trade with fishermen, when knitted articles were no doubt among the goods sold or bartered to Dutch boats during the years when the town of Lerwick was being established. In relation to present-day industry, perhaps the most important outcome of this early trade was to establish a quality image for Shetland wool and knitwear, which has allowed a hand-based domestic industry to survive and flourish in what amounts to direct competition with modern methods of mass production.

Although elsewhere textiles were one of the first commodities to become industrialised, hand spinning remained the only means of producing yarn until the very end of last century, when Shetland wool was first sent to a mill in Wick, but soon afterwards this business closed down and the manager established another mill nearby in Brora. The introduction of machine-spinning provided the knitters with a more plentiful and reliable source of raw materials, which greatly accelerated the development of the knitwear industry, while hand-spinning declined to vanishing point by the nineteen-thirties. A further great impetus was provided by the introduction of knitting machines in the late nineteen-twenties, so that the value of sales increased from about £30,000 in 1890 to the present total of between £1.5 and £2 million.

Many would argue that one of the least satisfactory turn of events during the middle quarter of this century has been the change from knitting of pure Shetland wool confined to the islands, to a situation where any woollen garment of suitable appearance can be described as "Shetland," and can be knitted anywhere in the world. This change, which can be attributed jointly to mainland spinning and the complexity of trade mark legislation, has probably damaged the wool grower much more than the knitter.

In the case of mainland spinning, the yarns became freely available for sale to knitters outwith the islands, and owing to the price and scarcity of real Shetland wool, spinners started to eke out by blending in coarser wools. This process continued through the stage where the really big Shetland spinners bought a nominal amount of local wool almost as a salve to the conscience, to the point where Shetland is a generic term and native wool is virtually ignored. So far as trade marking is concerned, the then Board of Trade refused to provide adequate protection against imitation, on the grounds that no person or organisation can claim exclusive rights to the use of a geographical location. It is often argued that the use of a trade mark which simply includes the name "Shetland" would be sufficiently protective, but the trade has never subscribed to this view, and the S.W.I.A. certification mark is rarely used.

Changes in wool

Furthermore, the native wool itself has become adulterated over the years through crossing with other breeds of sheep, made possible as pasturage has been improved by re-seeding and the use of chemical fertilisers. Farmers and crofters are understandably reluctant to breed pure Shetland sheep as the wool yield and carcass weight is so small, and the movement towards cross breed sheep is certain to continue. However, for many years the industry was obsessed with its relationship towards local wool, and until quite recently hopes were entertained for exclusive use of the name "Shetland," involving the use of island wool in pre-determined proportions, with specified wool blends and elaborate controls. Most of the trade now accepts, albeit with reluctance, that this hope is quite unrealistic, that arbitrary recipes for spinning blends are impracticable, and that any future promotion will depend on geographical identity. In any event, exclusive rights to the name would now be a mixed blessing, as local industry would be wholly unable to cope with demand, and large buyers would quickly turn to other commodities.

Until the last war, knitwear in Shetland, although important in the aggregate, was mainly a sideline carried on by traders in other goods, principally local shopkeepers who originally accepted knitted articles on a barter system to pay for weekly housekeeping needs. Although well suited to local circumstances at the time, this was in many ways an unfortunate development, as the industry was being conducted in an indifferent manner, particularly as regards sales and marketing, and technical expertise. Taken together with the early post-war years, this is probably a key period during which local manufacturing expanded only quite slowly, while other areas such as the Scottish borders achieved

rapid growth, and now produce far more Shetland knitwear than the islands.

Immediately after the war the trade experienced what was probably its first boom, unfortunately short lived and followed by a slump which weeded out some of the weaker organisations, and exposed the weakness of the industry's marketing, although it is doubtful if the lesson was taken to heart at the time. However, by the early to mid-nineteen-fifties, a good steady trade was established in the American market, and a number of sound manufacturing concerns were built up at this time. This period is of some interest in that it saw the establishment of the yoked garment as the principal interpretation of Fair Isle knitting, at the expense of the more attractive but also more expensive allover patterned style.

This trade continued for a number of years, during which the number of home knitting machines greatly increased and productive capacity was built up to a reasonable figure for the first time, but a steady decline was experienced by the early nineteen-sixties, under the inroads of severe competition from Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and other Eastern producers. Many people believed that the trade was about to enter lean times, but before the effects were really being felt, the situation was suddenly transformed in the summer of 1964, as orders poured in almost overnight from France, and manufacturers tried to boost production to meet this new demand. Although France remains an important market, demand has spread to most other European countries, and apart from one or two short periods, has been sustained ever since. Detailed figures are not available, but the value of sales has probably increased more in the past eight years than in the whole of the industry's previous history.

On the face of it, the Shetland industry has little right to survival in the atmosphere of modern business, being small, labour intensive, and by conventional yardsticks less efficient than competitors at home and abroad, as outside experts never tire of pointing out. To compound the mystery, the local product has always failed to penetrate the home market, and this has remained



A modern knitwear factory, managed by the writer of this article.

A specialised activity

a paradox over the years, as the obvious geographical association should be most readily accepted in this country, but the British consumer appears to prefer the cheaper mass-produced article over the counter of a multiple store. London has proved an important market, but even here sales are almost exclusively to foreign visitors. An exception to this rule are Fair Isle garments, which have always enjoyed popularity with British customers, but only sell intermittently across the Channel.

This sentiment is sometimes echoed by knitters themselves, as prophecies of doom go round on the grapevine, but the truth is that the Shetland industry is a specialised activity, producing a highly characteristic style which large manufacturers have so far been unable or unwilling to reproduce. The businesses are not really manufacturers in the true sense of the word, but could be more accurately described as depots or warehouses for the distribution and collection of work from domestic producers, with only a limited amount of true factory activity associated with the final processes prior to despatch.

The unique styling and mode of manufacture provides the answer to recent success, and proves that a hand-made expensive commodity can still be sold successfully, if of good quality and, most important, sufficiently different from run of the mill factory goods. Current fashion is of course an important factor, but it is true to say that the hand framed Shetland pullover has now established as a fashion basic, and a stable counterpoint to the more exotic flights of fancy, which are often little more than window dressing.

The importance of this individuality is well illustrated by the fact that Far Eastern producers usually provide the sternest opposition by copying the Shetland method of production in areas of cheap and plentiful labour, and this is a timely reminder that the local industry must not in any way become complacent, and ignore the usual problems of price, delivery, marketing and so forth, but the evidence does suggest that future prospects are reasonably good.

One of the industry's greatest embarrassments is

a long-standing shortage of labour, particularly in connection with domestic operations, and this has been a major factor in inhibiting expansion beyond the present level. An obvious answer might be the adoption of more power knitting, and one such venture has already been established, but a spread of this activity now seems unlikely, because manufacturers are afraid to make the considerable outlay required, without a reasonable expectation that labour will be available, and such fears have not been allayed by the proximity of North Sea oil.

The Highlands & Islands Development Board has recognised some of the problems facing the industry, and in 1970 published their report "Planning for Progress," which examined the position in depth, and made a number of recommendations, including rationalisation and mergers, the possibility of an identifying trade mark, and the establishment of some power-frame knitting. The report also contains a great deal of authoritative information, and helped to focus attention on many of the weaknesses, although some of the proposals aroused controversy in the trade.

The other main part of the report concerned a feasibility study for the establishment of a local spinning mill, and concluded that such a venture could be viable, although the initial cost would be high. Although a spinning mill has long been a pipe dream in the trade, with new realism many more people are now of the opinion that the real value of a mill passed thirty or forty years ago, when Shetland wool was already losing its exclusiveness. Manufacturers feel that they should concentrate all their energy on the development of knitting, and have shown only cautious interest in the mill proposal, especially when they realise that economic operations might mean a premium on the price of yarn.

Shetland now stands poised for intensive development in connection with oil discovery, and what effect this will have on knitwear is impossible to forecast, but as women make up the bulk of the labour the effect may be less than on other local industry, and there is even the possibility that the wives of incoming workers could form a new pool of labour and thus increase the total output.

Future demand is equally difficult to forecast, and less prosperous periods are bound to be experienced from time to time, but provided that adequate quality is maintained and that prices are kept to reasonable levels, the knitwear industry has every chance of continued success for many years to come.



★

It all begins at da crü, where the raw product of the Shetland knitwear industry is stripped from the backs of the native sheep.

★

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE PRESS

By Ian R. Clark,
County Clerk & General Manager

"When it comes to seeing themselves discussed in print most journalists, in my experience, prove not so much to have thin skins as to suffer from haemophilia", so said Anthony Howard in his first "London Diary" as editor of the New Statesman. The relevance of the quotation for this article is that it explains its tone — the benevolence stems from responsibility rather than sentimentality! This is fitting, for in one hundred years of dealing with local government matters "The Shetland Times" has displayed a high sense of responsibility. There are glorious and intriguing exceptions but a brief description cannot afford the luxury of deviating from the normal.

There have seldom been open attacks on individual councillors. Policies have been cruelly dealt with and proposals have been criticised but the "Times" has rarely openly ridiculed an individual councillor. This is not the result of high moral principle but of sound tactics, there being no one in public life who can avoid making statements which, when reported without the other detail of a particular debate, convey a different message than was intended. Why do for others what they can do for themselves?

Successive editors have been less gentle in their handling of officials. Editorial after editorial is devoted to their edification. Sometimes the wording is cruel, sometimes vicious but invariably it is most effective when it is condescendingly polite. What could be better than, 'That the Dr had faith in his report we do not doubt; but we are just convinced that it is an exaggeration'. The comment column has also been used for attack but, again, the press can all too often allow others to do their work. Factual reporting of discussions at council meetings must have proved to be as hurtful and damaging to officials as any press comment. The following can hardly be bettered as a demolition job accomplished with economy of words:

'Mr Ganson said that this was a very awkward state of affairs.

The Vice-Convener — And yet it was thought that if we got Mr X, we would have a quite unequalled man.

Mr Adie — But the Mr X we have got is not the Mr X we knew.'

Both of these examples are many decades old but the issue is still of real importance. In his autobiography Lord George Brown devotes a few pages to his views on the need to give civil servants a great deal of protection from the blaze of publicity. The position of chief officials in local government is not identical but much of what he says has relevance for them.

But both councillors and officials have received the odd word of praise and a few of these have even managed to pre-date obituaries!

The major issues in local government have always been given full and balanced treatment by the "Times". A most reassuring characteristic is that national decisions as they affect local government have been given coverage to an extent which is most unusual for a local weekly. The best illustration of this was the reorganisation of local government in Scotland. Each week I receive a copy of what must be one of the country's

largest local weeklies and its coverage of the Report can only be described as amateurish compared with that of the "Times". It is important that this trend continues for local decisions can only be properly assessed when considered in this wider context.

It is surprising how constant many of the issues are. The first heated correspondence affecting local government was over the forcible removal of certain townfolk from their homes — it mattered little that they had been removed because it was thought that they had smallpox. In the 1890's a petition was sent to the Secretary of State requesting additional boat services but they had more ambition in these days and were after a daily service. The very first County Council had vacancies due to an absence of candidates in some districts. Lastly, for the present, in the year 1901 the Town and County were in dispute over sewerage but in that case it was the Town which wished the County to justify their actions.

There have been some significant changes in the coverage of local government matters over the years. Until well into this century, local government business being much less than it is now, the newspaper went into great detail. Some of the points covered could have been of little interest to the readers but these included some points, such as listing those present which could have been embarrassing to members. An example of the boring detail which was dealt with is a leader on the provision of a house for the chief constable (at that time a Town Council matter) which after a supposition and three "says" ended with a net sum of £27.4s.4½d 'which would mean a farthing a side on owners and occupiers'. Less space is now given to expenditure of hundreds of thousands but, to some extent, this is due to more factual and less speculative reporting.

Until the recent past the "Times" gave quite definite advice to the various public bodies, backing their judgement with a reasoned case. This, coupled with the attention to detail, must have been frustrating to councillors and officials alike but it must have had a salutary effect on everyone involved in public life.

It is interesting to note that the authorities have always been able to create a little frustration among reporters and editors by going into committee to discuss matters which the Press representatives have thought to be worthy of public attention. As far back as 1901 a leader declared that "the ratepayers have a right to know what is being done" while the decision to exclude the Press was purported to have been made in the public interest. This dialectic has continued throughout the years but recent years have shown closer understanding between Press and authorities and it appears that much less is taken "in committee" than was done in the past. What now happens is that the Press representative has explained to him the possible dangers of having certain matters publicised and he is allowed to sit through most discussions and exercise his own judgment. In practice it has been found that, given these explanations which were previously denied him, he normally agrees that the desire for Press silence is in the public interest and is not to shield an incompetent party.

One change has been brought about by national decision. In the past the salaries of the officials were public knowledge and the Press took considerable interest in this matter. One of the most heated series of correspondence was on a war-time increase to chief officials. Alas, the national negotiating committee made recommendations which have meant that many column inches have had to be filled with more instructive if less interesting matters.

Which brings us to the correspondence columns. It is surprising to find the lack of comment on local

Specialist council reporter?

government matters. There have been the odd issues which have provoked comment but these have rarely been the issues with most far-reaching effects. The present policy of refusing to accept letters which do not indicate to the editor the identity of the writer has reduced the volume of correspondence but has increased its worth. It is a pity that so little comment is made in this way. An official who is involved in a matter which is the subject of a letter may disagree with the writer but he is foolish if he does not give thought to what is written. A healthy correspondence column can be both a guide and a stimulant to all engaged in local government matters.

I am surprised by the amount of accurate prophesying which has been committed to leaders and Lerwick Logs. Many of the speculations must have struck the readers as fantasy and no doubt some were written with tongue in cheek but some have been and others are being fulfilled. Whoever heard of bridges to Trondra and Burra or North Isles ferries or houses for incoming workers? The readers of "The Shetland Times" had heard of these many years ago. But the persons with the greatest faith were those who figure in the "Times" in 1872. A far-sighted group of Lerwegians then formed a Lerwick Swimming Club! Some prophecies remain unfulfilled. Of these, there are some which even their authors will be happy to have forgotten but there are others which were born of insight and have been noted in my book as worthy of continuing consideration.

The "Times" must be praised for the manner in

which it has reported on local government matters and for the responsibility of its comments in this field. Its vision has encouraged those who have the thankless task of making decisions which affect the local community and it may even be that it has given the occasional inspiration. But all of that is past and it would be rather irresponsible of me (certainly less than human!) if I were to ignore this opportunity of pontificating on the next hundred years.

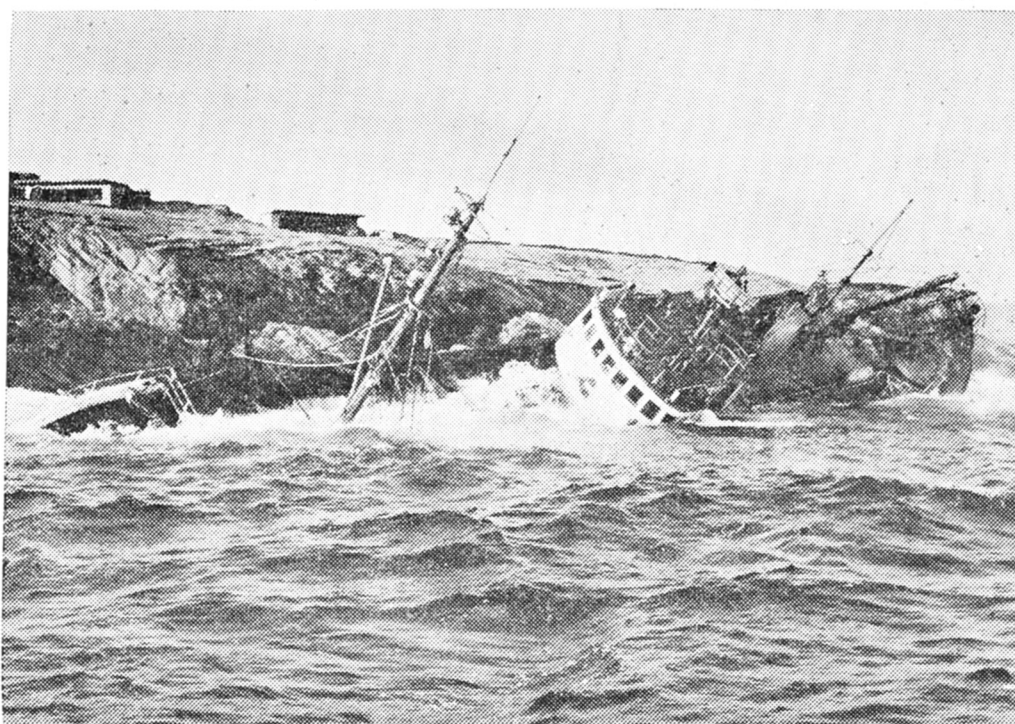
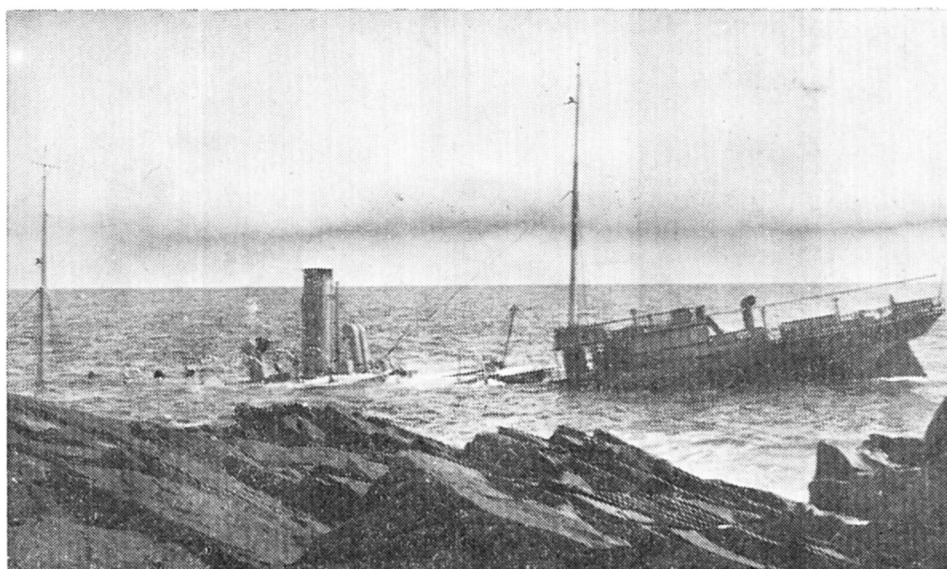
After 1975 "The Shetland Times" will be one of the few local newspapers in Great Britain which have local government in their area and on which they can comment. They can treat reorganised local government as though there had been no change or they can re-organise their approach to deal with a new body which we all hope will accomplish new and greater things for Shetland. How about providing the community with a reporter who will specialise in the affairs of all the public bodies in Shetland? In this way local readers could be provided with some of the more interesting information which lies behind the bald statements of minutes and official reports. Also, the paper's most avid readers, who are semi-resident in an Edinburgh Home, St. Andrew's House, would receive fuller information which must convince them of the worth of local government in Shetland and of the validity of each case presented to government departments by local government representatives from Shetland! Lastly, the specialist could just about pay for himself from the additional copy sent south.

To do justice to a hundred years of reporting in a few hundred words is impossible. Suffice it to say that Shetland will be fortunate if the standard over the next hundred years bears comparison with what has been achieved.



A milestone in the growth of public works in Shetland — that which commemorates the opening of the Trondra-Burra bridge scheme in September of last year by Mr George Younger, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (extreme right). On his left is the county convener, Mr Edward Thomason, Mrs Rita MacNeill, Rev. D. P. Johnstone, and Mr R. A. C. Garrick.

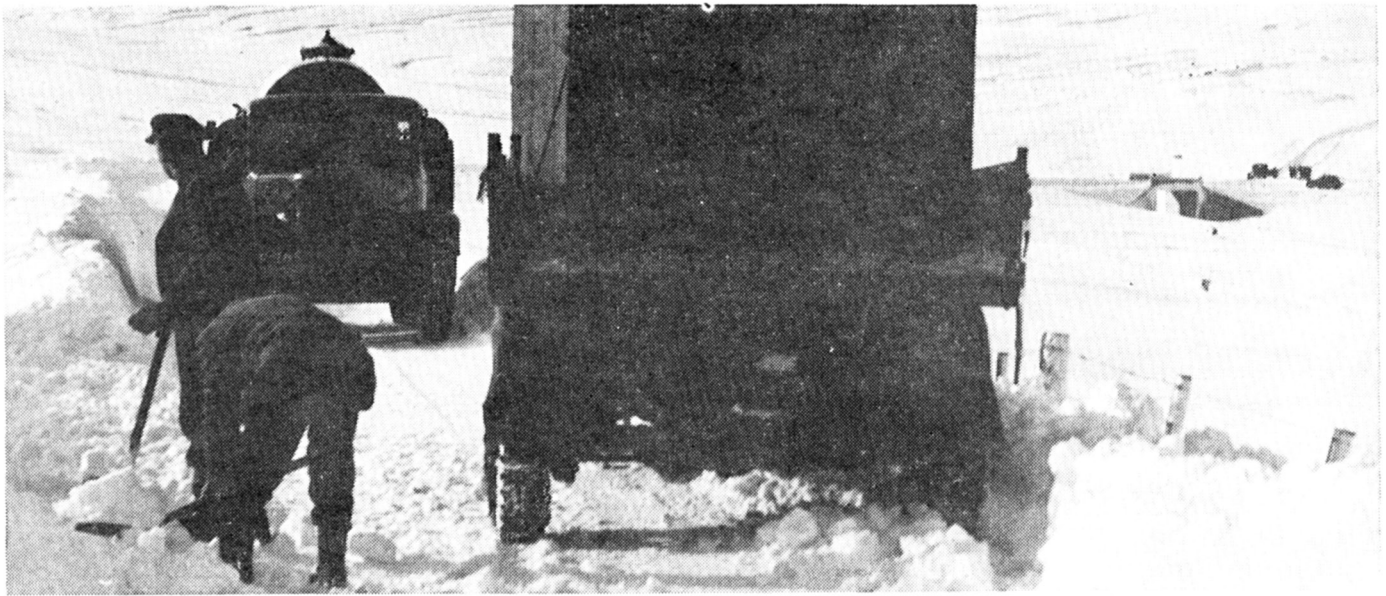
Sea stories of the past



Top — The mail steamer "St. Sunniva" became a total loss after running ashore on the rocks of Mousa during thick fog on the morning of 10th April, 1930.

Centre—The German Active Fleet off the Knab on 22nd July, 1904. Eight battle-ships are in the picture with a torpedo boat destroyer in the foreground and two cruisers near the Bressay shore.

Left—The Aberdeen trawler "Rangor" was lost at Ness of Sound in 1964 but her crew were safely brought ashore by breeches buoy.



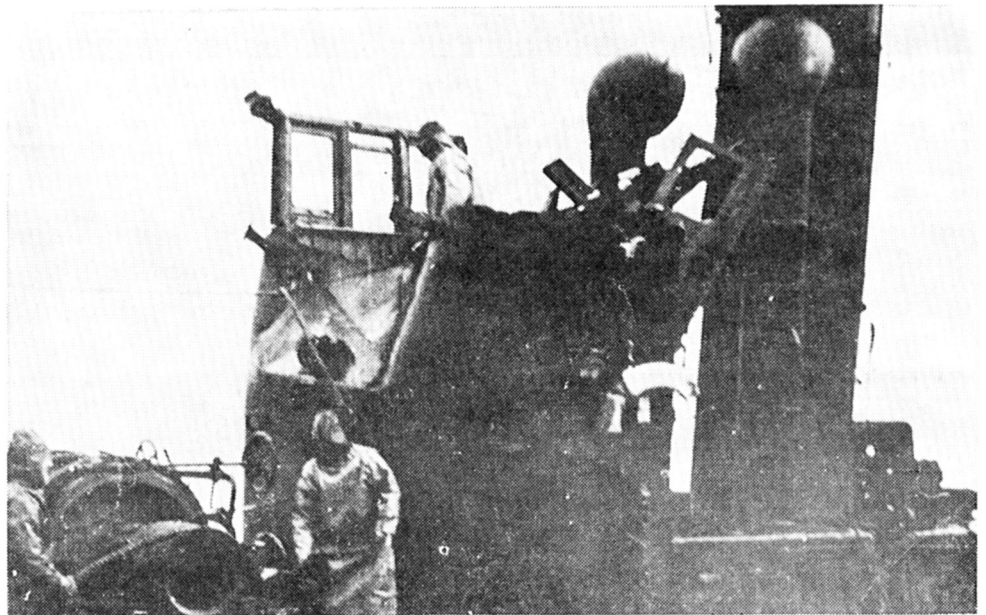
Above. — Winter on the roads in Shetland. Modern snow clearing equipment means less pick and shovel work than shown in this picture taken near the Brig o' Fitch.

◆

Right. — Winter at sea around Shetland. One freak wave stove in the wheel-house and reduced an Aberdeen trawler to a shambles above decks.

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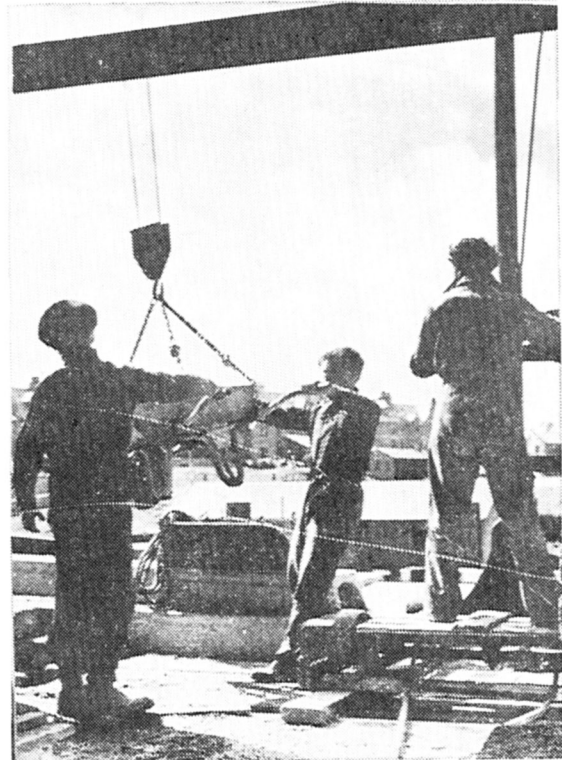
Below. — A sympathetic crowd watch the impressive funeral cortege of a seaman who died on board H.M.S. "Duncan", one of the ships of the Channel fleet when it visited Lerwick in 1905.



Post-war changes



The slums of Lerwick have almost gone.

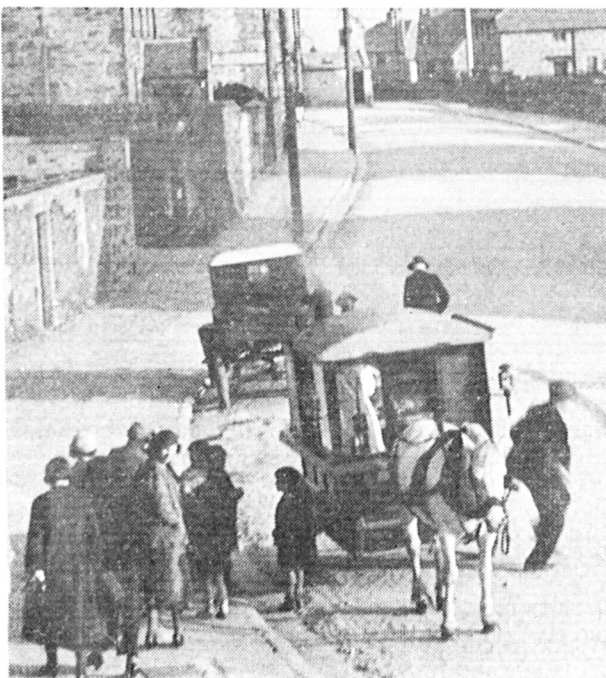


Building the H.I.B. factory in 1947.

Boldest and most imaginative of Lerwick's housing schemes — Heddell's Park.



Right: As recently as the late 1930's horse-drawn traffic was to be seen in Lerwick — such as this fish-and-chip van pictured on the Hillhead.



Below: Many well-known townsfolk accompanied the Lindberghs to their seaplane to bid them farewell after a visit to the town in 1933.

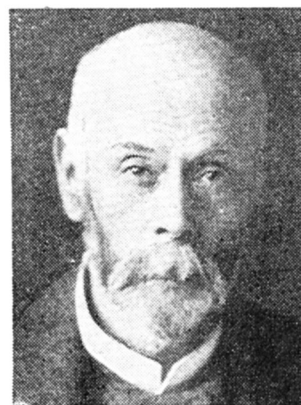
Bottom: A terrific explosion shook Lerwick in April, 1915. Seven died and many were injured when a building at the north end of the market, used for storing explosives, blew up. Brentham Place was the most badly damaged property but shop windows were shattered all along "the street".



Coland, M^{rs}. C.A. Lindbergh at Lerwick, 14. Aug. 1933.
Photo R. Williamson.

FIRST LOCAL LEAD

COUNTY CONVENERS



JOHN BRUCE
1890 - 1907



EDWARD THON
1970 -



TWO V

The "Toon"

Provost William's personal interest in this piece of public property before the mechanisation of the "toon's horse".



ERS — AND THE PRESENT

PROVOSTS OF LERWICK



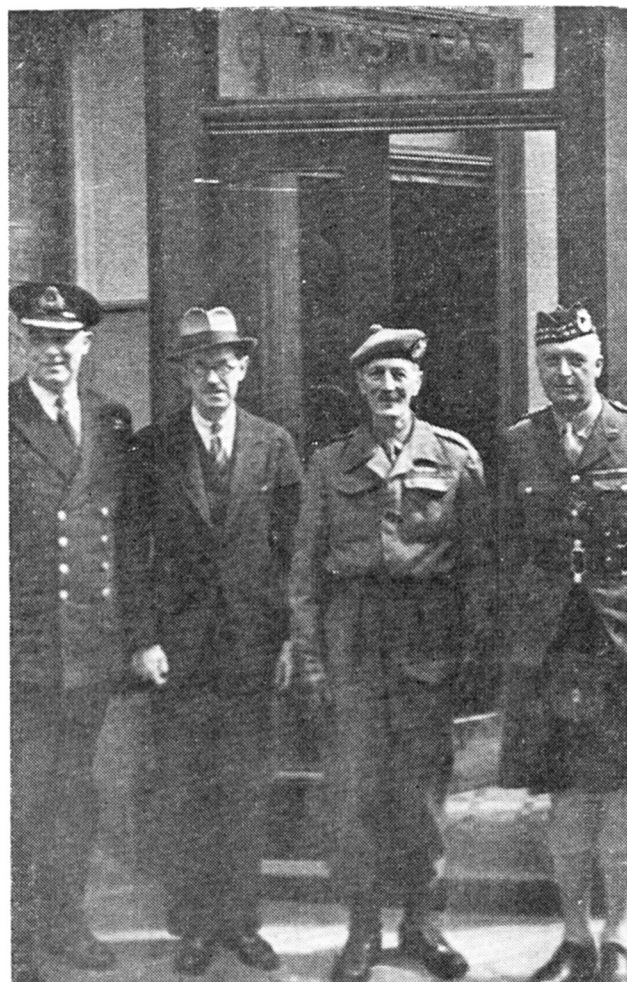
MASON



CHARLES ROBERTSON
1893 - 1895



WILLIAM A. SMITH
1971 -



Above: Four people of importance in Shetland during the war were photographed outside the Queen's Hotel: Captain Palmes, senior Naval officer, Sheriff R J. Wallace, Sir Arthur Nicolson (in battledress as C.O. of the Home Guard), and Lt. Col. Magnus Shearer, the then Provost and also military control officer for the islands.

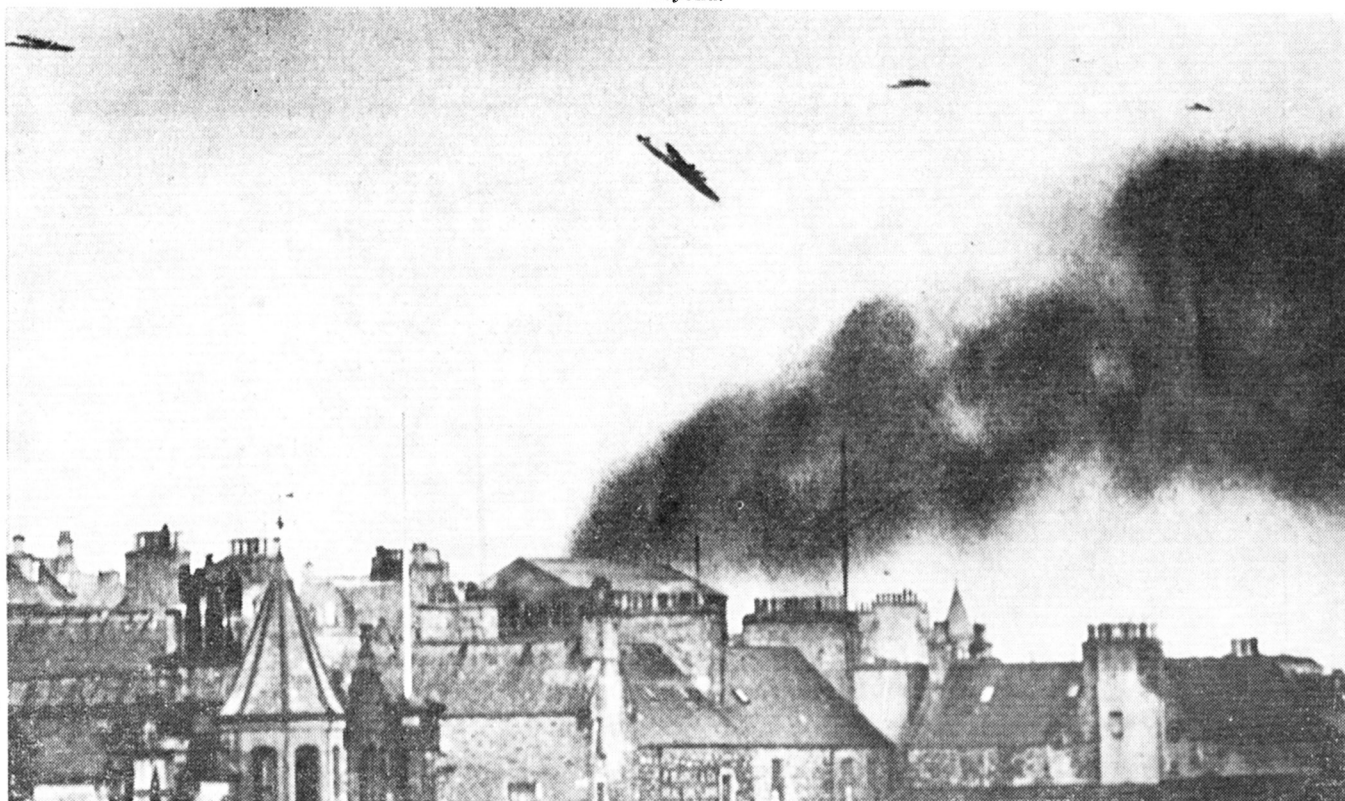
Left: The annual shows in country districts have disappeared with the exception of those at Cunningsburgh and Walls. This scene at Walls some years ago is typical of those highlights of the Shetland summer.

Below: In 1939 four German bombers flew low over Lerwick, bombing and gunning a flying boat moored in the north harbour. This picture by the late Robert Williamson shows the planes over the Fort with smoke from the burning flying boat rising beyond.



s Horse"

Sinclair took a
that valuable
property in days
al "essy kert" —





Above left—Though the fish had to be sold, there was no lack of time for a yarn at the stalls on the Esplanade.

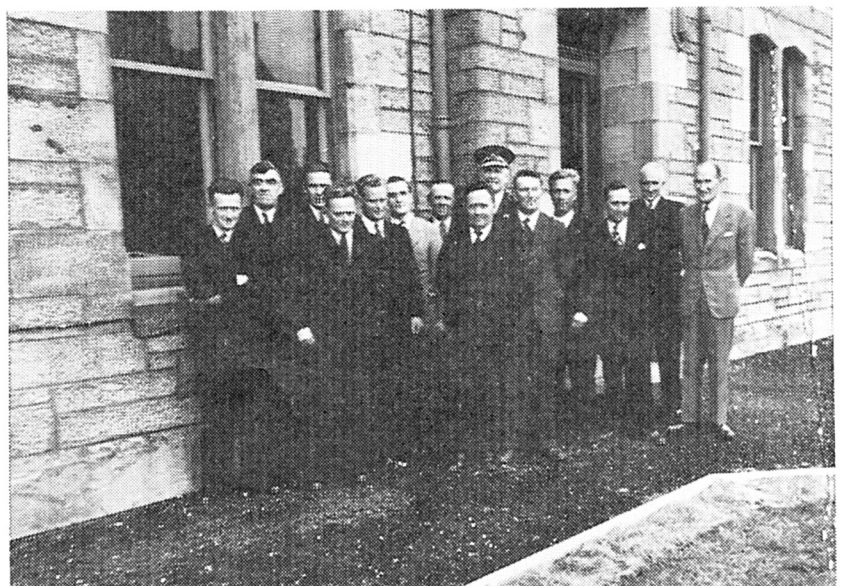


Above right — Lerwick women, bound for the peat hill, walk out the North Road. In the background are two Faroe smacks.



Left — The crew of the old Fair Isle lifeboat.

FAIR ISLE HEROES

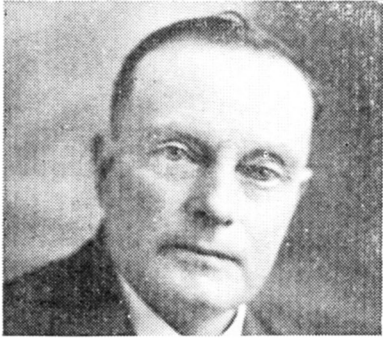


For a cliff rescue in 1956 the medal of the Carnegie Hero Fund was presented to twelve Fair Isle men: Jerome Stout, Lower Leogh; Alexander Stout, Stoneybrake; James Wilson, Schooltown; James Stout, Midway; William Stout, Houll; Alexander Stout, snr., Taft; George Stout, snr., and George Stout, jnr., Upper Stoneybrake; James Anderson, Vaasetter; Douglas Stout, Shirva; William Eunson, Leogh, and Jerome Stout, Melville House.

PIONEERS OF SHETLAND TRANSPORT



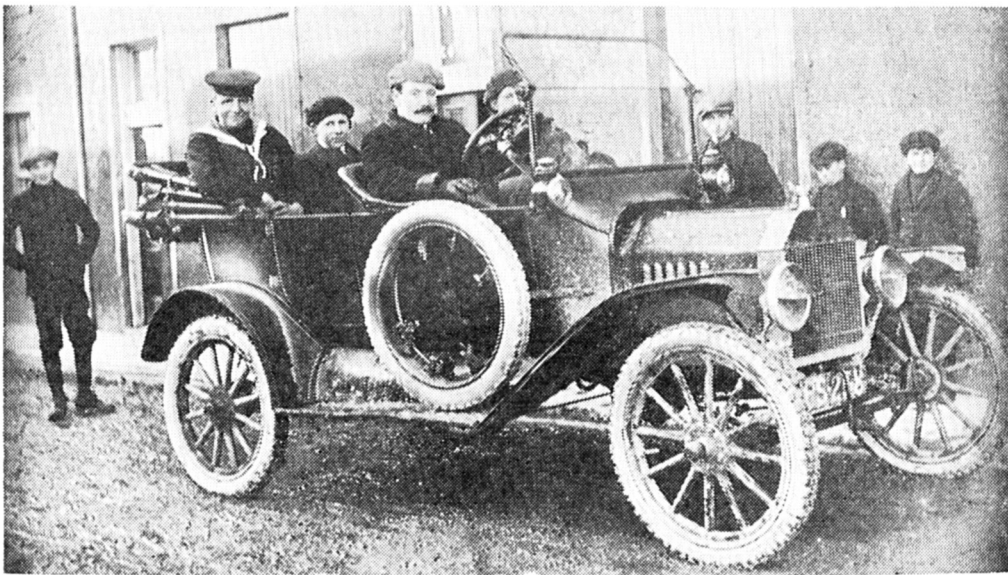
R. D. GANSON, whose firm provided Shetland's mail services until after the second war and is still well known, especially as main Ford agents.



JOHN LEASK, who built up the successful transport and travel business his sons now carry on.



A party of tourists on their way home after a day's outing to Sandwick in 1900.



The first Model T Ford to make its appearance in Scalloway.



Capt. **WILLIAM SPENCE** was for many years master of the old Earl of Zetland.



Now retiring after many years as master of the present Earl of Zetland is Capt. **WILLIAM SINCLAIR**.



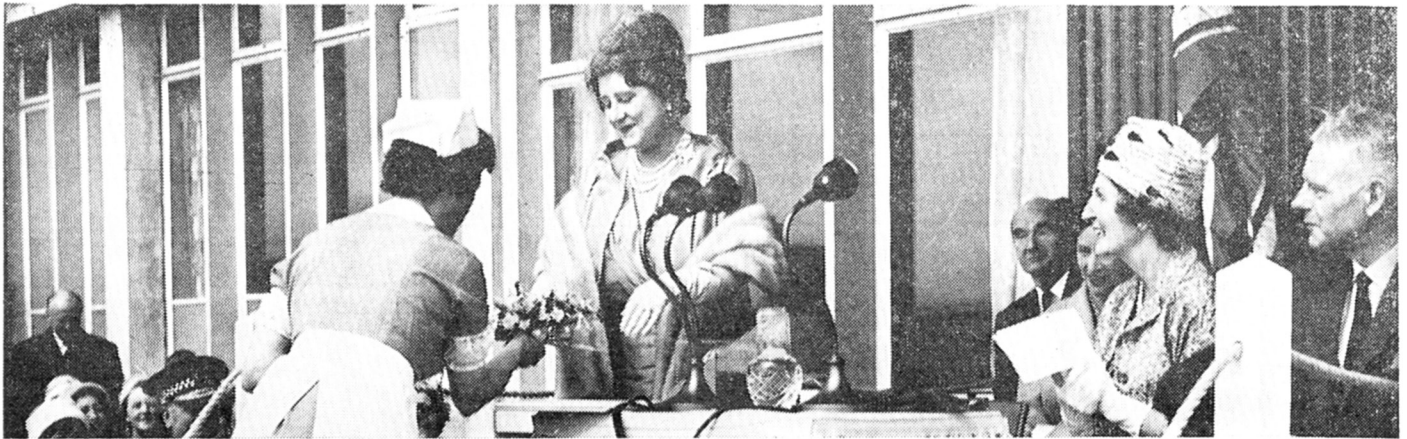
JIM BLACK managed air services at Sumburgh from their start until last year.

The first air mail arrives at Sumburgh in 1937



Pioneering the newest transport service is Loganair's resident pilot at Sumburgh, Capt. **ALAN WHITFIELD**.

FOUR ROYAL VISITS



The Queen Mother opened the new Gilbert Bain Hospital in 1961.



H.M. The Queen, accompanied by Sir Basil Neven-Spence, on her first visit in 1960.



H.R.H. Prince Philip with the late Provost G H. Burgess after the opening of the King George Fields in 1953.



Her Majesty was escorted by Provost Eric Gray on her tour of the town in 1969.

EVENTS THAT MADE HEADLINES

1874

December 7—

The Orkney and Shetland Cables. — The telegraph steamer Caroline, which has spent the greater proportion of five months in laying and repairing cables in the north has accomplished a great deal of telegraphic work in the Pentland Firth, between Orkney and Shetland, and also in the various sounds running between the islands.

1875

May 15—

Five men lost at the fishing in a boat from Eswick, Nesting. Empty boat drifted ashore at Kirkabister.

1876

October 13—

Barque Wilhelmina stranded and wrecked on Fair Isle. Mate killed trying to take line ashore, rest of the crew of eleven landed safely.

February 3—

Orkney and Shetland Telegraph transferred to the Government.

Letter to the Editor

TAR BARRELS

"Sir — When I read the letter from 'A Citizen' in your last paper, I says to myself that he is some new-come fellow, for no real Lerwick boy will believe that we are black-

guards for having a tar-barrel; and none of our old companions either will credit that we are cowardly, they know better than that. The stupid fellows who allowed themselves to be known have themselves to thank. Had they obeyed orders, held their tongues and kept their masques properly on, there would have been no danger, as the constables were afraid to touch us. If these fellows had been real Lerwick boys they would have had more sense, and we are going to pay for them if they are fined, and also to pay William Mouat for the tar, because he is a poor man, and we could not get the tar any other way. Sir, you will excuse me signing my name, but I just wanted every Lerwick boy to know that we are still, honour bright,

I am, etc.

A Lerwick Boy.

1878

October 26—

Loss of smack Telegraph with 22 men on board, including the crew of the wrecked Gondola. They leave 57 dependents.

1879

August 23—

"Wreck on Fair Isle. — On Thursday the smack Columbine arrived here from Fair Isle and Dunrossness. She brought the master and crew of a vessel that had been wrecked on Fair Isle last week. The vessel was the barque Julia of Drammen, Antonniesen, master,

coal laden from Greenock to Cronstadt."

1881

March 6—

Improved mail service to Shetland assured, three mails a week in summer and two in winter.

July 23—

Storm in Shetland, ten boats and 58 men lost.

"Storm and Great Loss of Life. — A most appalling calamity has befallen our islands this week, such as has not occurred for half a century, involving loss of upwards of fifty men and the destruction of valuable property. During Wednesday night a sudden storm arose, quite unprecedented for this season of the year. The weather had been unsettled for some time previously, and considerable sea disturbance, so that when the storm burst the sea rose with frightening rapidity, putting the frail skiffs in which the majority of our fishermen still risk their lives, in the greatest peril, and, alas, swallowing up not a few..."

November 2—

Storm signal established in Lerwick.

November 26—

"Total Wreck of a Wick Schooner. — Early on Monday morning the schooner St. Olaf of Wick, Milne, master, was driven ashore at the Slates, and has become a total wreck."

1882

January 28—

H.R.H. Prince Albert lays the foundation stone of Lerwick Town Hall during visit to Shetland.

1883

February 3—

Fatal boat accident at Olnafirth Voe, two fishermen drowned.

July 6—

Visit of Reserve Squadron to Lerwick, eight ironclads and a steam tender.

August 18—

"Shetland Cod and Ling Fishing. — The home cod fishing at which several smacks have been engaged at the West Side during the season, is being prosecuted with good success, the weekly catches ranging from 300

to 800 fish... Scarcely half of the fleet of sixerns which a few years ago engaged in this fishing have been employed this season, and the sixern will, in all probability, be entirely superseded by decked boats in a few years' time."

1884

May 10—

"Tarring Outrage — Early this morning it was discovered that the premises of Mr Andrew Smith, merchant, 77 Commercial Street, had been tarred during the night. It is thought that this was done because Mr Smith's place of business was kept open during the weekly half-holiday on Wednesday last. We think it is a pity that he should have been in a minority of one on this occasion, and thus endangered the summer half-holiday, which during the past few years has been much appreciated generally by the people engaged in business; but on the other hand, such a mode of expressing dissatisfaction cannot be tolerated in any community, and should the perpetrators of the outrage be traced, they will find that by taking the law into their own hands, they have made themselves liable to a heavy punishment."

1885

June 26—

"Shetland News" established.

1886

February 6—

Betty Mouat drifts to Norway in smack Columbine, after captain drowns. Ship drifted crewless after mate and boy rowed off in lifeboat in an attempt to rescue the captain who fell overboard.

June 12—

Lerwick harbour works opened.

1887

December 9—

Storm in which 17 lives were lost. Laurence Moar from Whalsay brings his boat into Lerwick with two of the crew dead and the third unconscious. In the worst snowstorm in 20 years five boats went missing and 17 lives were lost, mainly Whalsay men.

1888

September 22—

Whales driven ashore at Hoswick. "The capture of 340 whales at Hoswick and

CANADA.
FREE PASSAGES to any of the New Zealand Provinces, and ASSISTED PASSAGES to Canada, will be granted to ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS. Apply to JOHN MANSON, Local Agent, Lerwick 27th June 1874.

FREE
EMIGRATION TO NEW ZEALAND.
FREE PASSAGES are granted by the GOVERNMENT OF NEW ZEALAND as under:—
To Married and Single Agricultural Labourers, Navvies, Ploughmen, Shepherds, Mechanics, &c. also to
SINGLE FEMALE DOMESTIC SERVANTS, as Cooks, Housemaids, Nurses, General Servants, Dairy Maids, &c.
For Terms and Conditions, apply personally, or by Letter, to the Agent-General for New Zealand, 7 Westminster Chambers, London, S.W.; or to
RICHARD T. TAIT, Agent at Lerwick.
London, 29th Oct., 1873.

EMIGRATION TO ADELAIDE.
SOUTH AUSTRALIA.
ASSISTED PASSAGES.
The Government of South Australia grant Passages to the following persons:—
1. Artisans, Agricultural and other Labourers, Miners and Gardeners under 50 years of age.
Single Female Domestic Servants as well as

the intention of the captors to retain the whole, thus depriving the proprietor of a third of the value, which according to use and want was considered to be their lawful share, has created and is creating the greatest excitement amongst the people."

November 14—

The smack Petrel on voyage from Norway turns turtle but rights again, and continues to Lerwick.

November 19—

Schooner Snaefell wrecked at Gardie, Bressay.

1889

March 30—

Schooner Snaefell refloated in January, sails for Ramsey, Isle of Man.

June 22—

Hoswick Whale Case. — Judgment in favour of the captors.

"Sheriff Mackenzie's decision in this famous case which had been anxiously expected for some days past was issued on Tuesday afternoon. The news that his Lordship has decided in favour of the captors spread rapidly through the town and being specially telegraphed to Sandwick, was hailed with popular expressions of satisfaction . . ."

July 27—

Crofters Commission began sittings at Dunrossness.

November 7—

First issue of fair rent decisions by Crofters Commission.

—Review of 1889. " . . . The evidence adduced before the Commission went to show a good deal of the abuses which the crofters had to suffer from, but the most glaring of these referred to the past rather than present times . . . It is fixity of tenure, the knowledge that they cannot be turned out, that they are as much the owners of the soil as the landlord that should, and no doubt will, enable them to work with new energy, and better times may still be in store for them all."

1890

February 6—

First County Council election.

June 4—

Judgment given against Mr J. Bruce and in favour of captors at appeal in Hoswick whale case.

1892

January 23—

"The Scavengers' Cart. — It is something disgraceful the way in which this conveyance scatters its contents between Commercial Street and the Knab. The lighter contents are generally made up of waste paper and ashes, and as there is no cover on the cart, as there should be, the materials, particularly the paper, are seen and felt whirling and eddying in every street, lane and garden in town. Surely this is hint enough to our progressive Police Commissioners."

1893

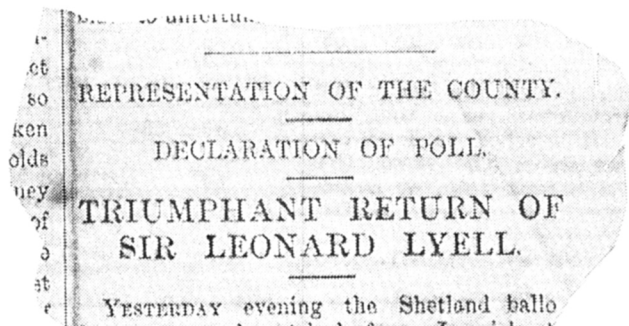
September 2—

"Sale of Fishing Boats — The Eclipse, with all her gear, nets and lines, was purchased for £75 by Mr W. S. Adie, Voe . . ."

1894

April 21—

Norwegian barque Marie, over 600 tons register, ashore at Fair Isle during dense fog. Crew launch lifeboat and come safely ashore.



1895

October 2—

Great rain flood in Shetland. Flood damage extensive in Sandness where bridges, an old mill and a boat house were washed away. Damage reported from all over Shetland including Fair Isle.

1896

February 18—

St. Ninian ashore on beach near Sandhaven in calm sea and thick fog. Floated off and steams to Aberdeen; some damage to ship. At Board of Trade enquiry Capt. Nisbet's certificate is suspended, much to public consternation.



1897

September 1—

Disaster at Fair Isle. In gale eight men lost, leaving four widows and 28 dependents. A skipper brings his boat in alone with two dead from exposure.

1898

June 25—

In rain and thick fog barque Sjökongen, 1030 tons, wrecked on Fair Isle.

July 23—

One hundred whales captured at Nesting.

September 10—

Father and two sons drowned in Weisdale Voe.

1900

February 16—

Great storm. After a week

ledge on which she stranded, and sank in deep water.

May 12—

Nine ships of the German fleet anchor in Lerwick for four days.

December 20—

Delting disaster. Four boats lost in gale, 22 men died leaving 15 widows; in all 68 dependents were left.

1901

September 10—

New St. Rognvald ashore on Fair Isle, only slight damage sustained.

1902

September 10—

Trawler Juniper of Hull, 110ft. steel vessel, lost at Whalsay with no trace of the crew.

July 5—

Andrew Smith, 77 Commercial Street, wins Sinclair's beach case against Lerwick Harbour Trustees.

August 20—

Gilbert Bain Memorial Hospital opened.

September 25—

Opening of the Central School.

1903

March 17—

Appeal against Smith in Sinclair's Beach case decided by First Division of Court of Session in favour of Smith.

March 29—

Barque Lorisa of Drammen wrecked at Havera in gale, four men lost.

1904

July 15—

Broonie's Taing pier works opened.

July 23—

32 battleships, cruisers, gunboats and torpedo boats of German Active Fleet visit Lerwick.

August 18—

86 whales captured in Basta Voe.

October 16—

St. Giles ashore at Mousa.

of gales the wind rose to hurricane force and thousands of pounds worth of damage was done in Lerwick alone. The sea breached the Esplanade and part of the road was carried away. At Sumburgh the enclosures at the lighthouse were breached and the area of boulders at Grutness was also due to the enormous seas sweeping over the land. Five ships were lost and many men drowned in the most violent storm Shetland has ever known.

April 24—

St. Rognvald wrecked in Orkney. All passengers landed safely but the livestock was drowned. The ship became a total loss when she slipped from the

1905

Record year for herring fishing.

1906

July 19—

Worst July gale since 1881, ten men lost in various incidents and considerable damage to fishing fleet.

July 30—

Telegraph communication established between Shetland and Faroe.

August 25—

Shetland-Iceland telegraph completed. The Shetland-Faroe-Iceland cable totals 515 miles.

September 7—

Herring industry hold a meeting to protest against the whale fishing in Shetland which is assumed to be cause of poor herring landings.

1907

April 13—

Regulation of Whale Fisheries in Scotland Bill introduced.

July 2—

New Fish Mart in Lerwick formally opened.

September 16—

Four drown and three rescued in a boating accident in Burra Isle.

October 12—

Motor installed on fishing vessel Pearl reported a success and may enable sail drifter owners to face competition from steam vessels. Engine installed was a Clifton 25-30 h.p.

1908

August 29—

Demonstration in Lerwick Fish Market against the ruination of the West Side herring fishing by the whale industry.

1909

March 20—

German trawler Kryno Albrecht wrecked at Whalsay.

June 26—

Joseph Randlesome, master of the John Lincoln, LT 140, appeared to answer to a charge of having exceeded the speed limit in the harbour by $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles. He pled guilty and asked the Sheriff to let him off lightly as he had been earning nothing for six months.

The Sheriff — "That is the worst of it. If I let you off lightly I must let others off also. I fine you £4 with £1 9/1

of expenses. The alternative will be seven days imprisonment. You may have a week to find the money.

Accused — "I would rather do the seven days than pay that money."

The Sheriff — "Very well, I have given you a week to pay it."

Accused — "Well, I will clear out. So long."

The Sheriff — "Oh, very well."

1910

May 9—

Lerwick's new Post Office opened.

September 3—

Lerwick is Scotland's premier herring port.

December 17—

Whalsay men salvage Norwegian barque after the crew abandon her while she was drifting with no steering gear.

1912

January 14—

Week of storms. Shipping disrupted, two trawlers wrecked and five men from a Swedish barque drowned.

May 8—

St. Magnus holds trials in the Firth of Forth.

July 26—

Earl of Zetland stranded on Lunna Holm. At a court of enquiry Captain P. Johnson was cautioned and later severed all connection with the North of Scotland Company.

1913

September 24—

North Star Picture House opened. A varied programme was presented, the pictures

shown on the screen "being quite distinct and attractive."

1914

September 5—

The trawler Glenogil rescued 600 men from the White Star liner Oceanic, wrecked on the Shaalds of Foula.

22nd October—

H.M.S. Hawke, which had been in Lerwick a month previously, was torpedoed and sunk. 450 lives lost.

November, 1914. Secretary and Registrar

G. R.

Royal Naval Reserve.
(SHETLAND SECTION).

RECRUITS WANTED.

TRAINING TO BE PERFORMED IN THE SHETLAND ISLANDS.

MEN NEED NOT NECESSARILY FOLLOW A SEAFARING LIFE: but must be PERMANENT RESIDENTS IN SHETLAND.

TERMS OF SERVICE:—Enrol for a period of five years, up to a total of 20.

AGE 15 TO 40

Gratuity, Pension, and Annual Retainers, as paid heretofore to R.N.R. men.

Periods of Training:—On enrolment, 36 days; thereafter 14 days annually.

For enrolment apply

COLONEL EVANS.
Fort Charlotte, Lerwick.

NOTICE.

THE FISHINGS AND SHOOTINGS on the PROPERTIES in the Parishes of Walls and Sandwick, belonging to Colonel B.

1915

February 10—

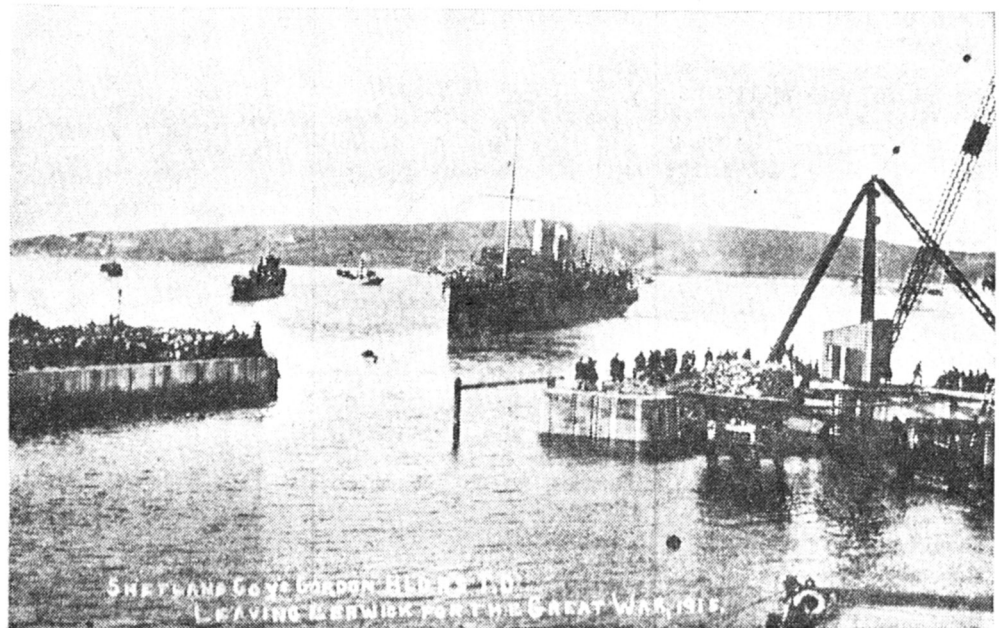
German submarine blockade began.

April—

Seven killed when fish market explodes. A shed at the north end of the market used for storing explosives caught fire and blew up.

June 25—

Sixteen steam drifters sunk by a German submarine while at their nets. In all cases the crews were saved.



December 19—

Whaler Active founders in North Sea. Capt. W. Leask and second mate James S. Jamieson drowned.

1916

June 5—

Cruiser Hampshire sunk off Orkney with Lord Kitchener on board.

November 4—

Herring fishing — "It has been one of the best — if, indeed, not the best—seasons experienced in Shetland for a long number of years."

November 16—

Word received of heavy death-roll and casualty list of Shetland soldiers in the Battle of Ancre.

1917

January 4—

Eight German mines found in entrance to Lerwick harbour. St. Magnus diverted to Scalloway until mines exploded by Navy.

February 27—

Town Hall bells rung to warn of Zeppelin — a false alarm.

June—

Large number of vessels in Lerwick, the examination port for neutral shipping in the North Sea.

1918

January 19—

Snowstorm and intense freezing in Shetland — worst for over 30 years.

April 29—

War savings week in Shetland total £173,000 invested on average £6-7-2 per head of population.

November 12—

Armistice signed and all hostilities cease at 11 a.m.

November—

First contingent of Shetland prisoners of war arrive in Lerwick.

1919

December 10—

Naval base at Lerwick closed.

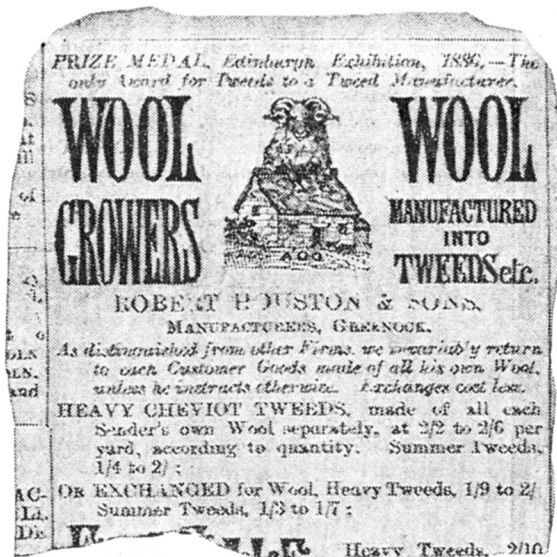
1920

March 6—

Commission appointed to enquire about whaling in Shetland report that whaling operations in Shetland should not be permitted.

December 14—

Lerwick goes "dry" in local option vote. No licence 945, no change 432.



1921

May 26—

As a result of local option vote, 28 licences ceased in Shetland.

1922

February 7—

Four old Dutch cannon found in Lerwick harbour. They are believed to be from the wreck of a Dutch warship sunk by Spaniards in 1640.

1923

June 23—

A Shetland company set up to salvage German ships in Scapa Flow.

August 9—

Opening of the Bruce Hostel in Lerwick.

September 12—

The first Shetland sheep-dog trials held in Shetland at Annsbrae golf course.

1924

January 6—

County War Memorial unveiled by Mrs T. Hardy, Gilsta, mother of three sons lost in the war.

1926

May 20—

End of East Coast combine, defeated by lack of co-operation of Lerwick curers and a Hamburg merchant. No close season for herring.

December 18—

Steamer Lyd wrecked at Skerries, crew got safely ashore.

1927

February 11—

Steamer Lyd salvaged and brought to Lerwick from

Skerries under her own steam.

1928

May 6—

New steamer launched for the North of Scotland Company. The St. Clement, built by Hall, Russell and Co., Aberdeen.

October 25—

St. Clement ashore at Mid Yell, only slight damage sustained.

1930

March 29—

Ben Doran wrecked on the Ve Skerries. Nine of crew lost after many hours lashed to the mast. Although boats were standing by, their crews could not give any assistance and were forced to watch helplessly in heavy seas. Eventually the vessel broke up and her crew lost.

April 10—

St. Sunniva wrecked on Mousa. Passengers and crew saved but vessel became a total loss.

July 7—

51-foot Barnett type lifeboat arrives for Lerwick.

1931

February 21—

Lerwick lifeboat's first call in a hurricane and blizzard to tow Faroese ketch to Lerwick and rescue crew from disabled steamer.

February 23—

"Talkie" pictures introduced to Lerwick.

June 2—

New St. Sunniva makes her maiden voyage to Lerwick.

September 5—

Four seaplanes land in Lerwick harbour.

December 15—

Panama registered vessel Venus wrecked in Norway with loss of all but two of crew, including nine Lerwegians. A rum-runner, she was hit by a shell from a coastguard cutter and after escaping was wrecked during a gale.

1932

September 11—

Lerwick streets lit by electricity under municipal scheme.

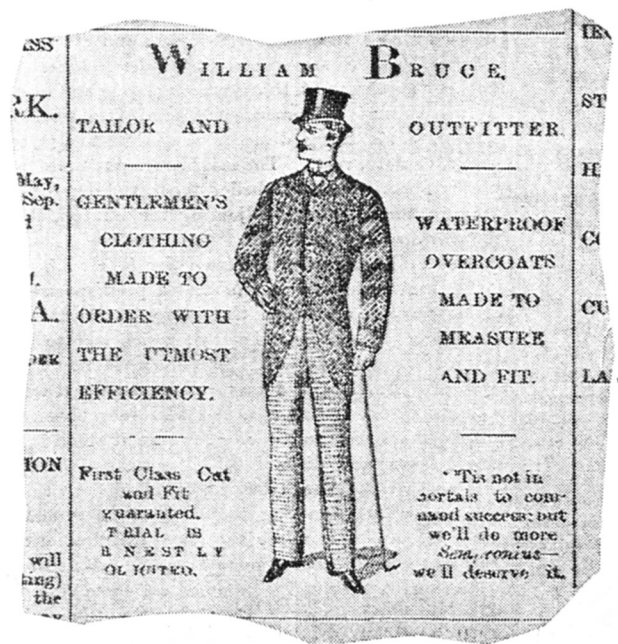
1933

January 16—

Ex-Longhope lifeboat arrives for new station at Aith.

April 19—

First aeroplane to land in broke up and her crew lost. Shetland arrives at Sum-



burgh. D.H. Moth, with four passengers.

August 24—

Aviator Charles Lindbergh and his wife arrive in Lerwick in a seaplane on northern trans-Atlantic air route survey.

1934

June 4—

Crew of foundered trawler James Evans landed at Lerwick

July 26—

First discovery of Norse house at Jarlshof.

November 29—

Wireless communication set up to Skerries. Representation to Post Office for similar arrangements for Foula and Papa Stour.

1935

July 20—

Violent rainstorm in Shetland. Roads and bridges damaged and destroyed, 4½ inches rainfall at Baltasound and in Northmavine a loch disappears into the sea after it overflows.

1936

February 14—

Scalloway public electricity lighting inaugurated.

June 4 and 5—

First Shetland air services started by Highland Airways and Aberdeen Airways.

October 14—

Hamnavoe light, untouched by the sea for 44 years, extinguished and glass broken by huge wave.

1937

January 30—

First letter air mail to Shetland by special charter and first mail steamer from Shetland for ten days due to worst gales since 1900.

April 14—

Radio communication with Foula established.

May 1—

New ship St. Clair arrives in Lerwick on maiden voyage.

September 7—

Foula film premiere in London.

November 23—

Air mail three times weekly started by Allied Airways Ltd.

1938

March 3—

Swedish steamer Godhem

wrecked on Bressay and declared a total loss.

April 8—

Trawler Angus sinks while under tow from Foula after going ashore.

May 1—

Summer daily air mail began.

May 14—

Lerwick burgh boundaries extended.

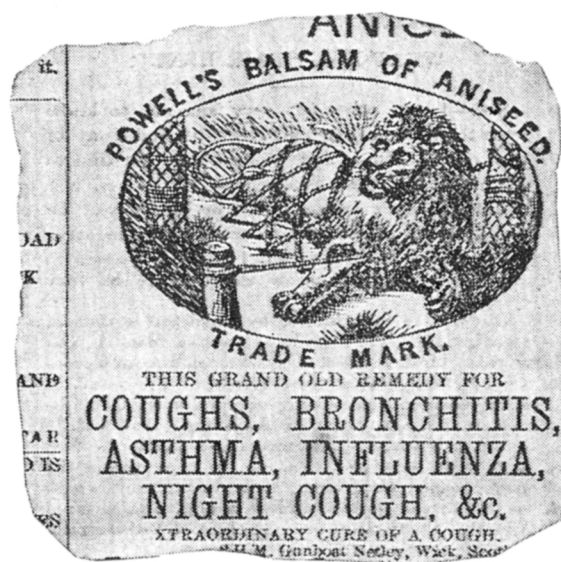
1939

August 19—

North Isles steamer Earl of Zetland, after 62½ years service, is replaced by a new motor ship of the same name.

October 13—

Shetland Company 5/7th Bn. Gordon Highlanders embarked in s.s. St. Clair.



October 14—

Battleship Royal Oak sunk by submarine in Scapa Flow, 810 men lost.

October 21—

Lerwick lifeboat rescued crew of 25 from British vessel Sea Venturer, torpedoed 15 miles off Flugga.

November 13—

First enemy bombs dropped on Shetland soil.

November 22—

First air raid warning in Lerwick when Nazi planes destroyed flying boat in the North Harbour.

1940

March 20—

Danish vessel torpedoed off Shetland, five seamen, one woman lost.

April 10—

Eight German seamen brought to Lerwick, first German prisoners to be landed there.

April 17—

Destroyer Eclipse arrives Lerwick, badly holed and four men dead. The crew of torpedoed steamer Stancliffe landed after three days in boats.

April 24—

Destroyer Pelican arrives with whole of stern blown away, about 60 killed.

May 3—

42 German prisoners from Norway landed.

May 4—

First refugees from Norway arrive.

July 15—

11 p.m. curfew imposed.

July 21—

Admiral of the Fleet, the Earl of Cork and Orrery, took command of Shetland defences.

July 29—

Admiral makes a speech on imminent invasion.

August 2—

North Company ship s.s. Highlander attacked by two enemy aircraft. Both aircraft shot down, one by Shetland gunner George Anderson, the other by Laurence Halcrow. Anderson later awarded M.B.E. for his part in the action.

October 15—

Curfew abolished.

November 15—

Highlander reported sunk. George Anderson among those lost.

1941

February 15—

Two men injured in Nazi bombing of Lerwick.

March 9—

Two Fellar brothers killed when a mine explodes.

June 2—

Nazi plane sinks boat at Uyeasound. Cullivoe postmaster wounded by machine gun attacks.

October—

"War Weapons Week" ends with death of three airmen when planes collide in fly-past.

December—

First Shetland air raid victim dies — a lighthouse keeper's wife, following strafing of Fair Isle South Lighthouse.

1942

January 18—

Bombs destroy lighthouse at Skerries. Woman dies from injuries.

January 19—

Seven die when Catalina flying boat crashes in Yell; three survive.

January 21—

Fair Isle lighthouse and shore station bombed; a woman and daughter and a soldier killed.

January 23—

Lerwick's worst experience of the war: four mines explode in Breiwick. An air raid warden killed and 50 families evacuated.

March 21—

Beaufort crashes at Dale after raid on fleet in Trondheim: three men killed, one injured.

August 6—

Fraser Park, Scalloway, opened.

October 26—

St. Magnus attacked by an enemy aircraft. She returned the fire and the plane sheared off.

1943

January 23—

Commando raid on Norway. 50 Commandos in 7 M.T.B.s — raid successful.

April 15—

Britain's largest submarine, N27, in Lerwick.

June 5—

Wings for Victory Parade. Huge turnout. Catalinas, Spitfires and Beaufighters flew past.

August 27—

Ju. 88 shot into sea by gunners on Fair Isle.

November 21—

British and Norwegian M.T.B.s catch fire while in Lerwick. High octane fuel burns until craft sunk by gunfire. Six men missing, one dead.

1944

January 14—

Woman, three children and grandfather burned to death at Gloup, North Yell.

January 28—

S.H.K.A. became a limited company.

March 5—

Ju 88 over Lerwick hit by A.A. fire, crashed near Holm of Beosetter, 3 survivors picked up by Air Sea Rescue boat.

September 4—

Reported that an aircraft had been shot down and crashed into the sea.

October 18—

Norwegian M.T.B. arrives in Lerwick with captured Dutch coaster.

1945

May 3—

Luftwaffe men surrender in a German boat to an aircraft. Later arrives in Lerwick.

May 19—

15 surrendered U-boats sail past Shetland on their way to Scapa Flow

May 26—

Prince Olav slipway at Scalloway has plaque erected.

August 25—

Herring Board scheme for Shetland inaugurated.

October 22—

Landslide at Maywick.

1946

March 8—

Order placed for building £6000 modern fishing boat at Scalloway.

June 30—

First B.B.C. broadcasts from Shetland.

July 23—

H.I.B. quick freezing factory at Lerwick and fishmeal and oil factory at Bressay commence work.

August 22—

First post-war Orkney-Shetland sports contest.

September 9—

107 entries in the first inter-club regatta in Lerwick.

1947

January 3—

Crew of five bale out of American Flying Fortress during gale with 75 m.p.h. gusts. All landed in Tingwall and Gremista areas without serious injury.

January 12—

Fair Isle mail boat Good Shepherd wrecked at North Haven.

February-March

Worst winter for half-a-century, all roads blocked by snowdrifts. Nine lifeboat calls in twelve days.

ALL BRANCHES OF FIRST-CLASS DENTISTRY
AT MODERATE CHARGES.
 PAINLESS EXTRACTIONS, 1/-.
 ARTIFICIAL TEETH AT ALL PRICES.
 From 1/6 each, and from £1 per Set.
HOURS:
 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., WEDNESDAYS, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 and by Appointment.

August—

Long dry summer reduced Sandy Loch until a water shortage was imminent. August rainfall lowest since Observatory opened.

1948

July 23—

Lifeboat called out to rescue the crew of a Lancaster bomber. An amphibious Sea Otter landed to pick up crew but could not take off again. H.M.S. Welcome arrived on the scene minutes before the lifeboat and towed the amphibian to Lerwick.

1949

January—

Cunningsburgh man blown up, a Nesting man killed in the H.I.B. factory and while on demolition work in Unst, a Haroldswick man was killed.

July 15—

First Swedish timber houses in Lerwick completed in ten weeks.

1950

March 6—

Launched from the Caledon yard in Dundee was the St. Ninian — "... nothing finer has ever been built of the short sea passage type."

December—

From Shetland Diary, 1950 — "The question of high freights to Orkney and Shetland was to be investigated, ... and as time goes by it becomes more and more evident that local politicians of all shades are turning to the freight problem as a first obstacle to be surmounted."

1951

January 15—

The worst gale ever sweeps the North of Scotland. Shetland received only the tail end of the storm but Lerwick Observatory recorded a 106 m.p.h. gust

August 22—

The last steamdrifter, Gossawater, brought in the season's record catch, 257 crans

September 12—

Sullom Voë re-opened for NATO exercises.

1953

January 31—

Gale in which two Nesting men, Harold and Harry Gear, were lost in a small boat. Lerwick lifeboat searched but no trace was found until wreckage from the boat drifted into Lerwick harbour.

May 6—

Russian ship Pamiata Ilich near Unst. Evidence of the increasing Russian fleet working north off Shetland over past eighteen months.

March 27—

Trawler River Lossie wrecked in North Harbour.

May 26—

Official opening of the new Gremista power station, built at a cost of £250,000.

September 26—

Visit of Duke of Edinburgh. First visit of member of Royal Family for 71 years.

1954

February 21—

Russian trawler CPT 4163 aground at Burrafirth, Unst. Refloated by other Russian trawlers.

June 30—

Total eclipse of sun obscured in Unst and Yell by low cloud. Partial eclipse observed in other parts of Shetland.

August 2—

Visit to Lerwick of flotilla of Norwegian M.T.B.s with depot ship Valkyrien.

September 10—

Myxomatoses confirmed in Quendale area.

1955

February 15—

Blizzard blocks roads in town and country. 15 days with snow in March makes

it the most extreme winter in recent years.

June—

240 hours sunshine — a record for Britain.

June—

RAF station under construction in Unst. Also Lerwick Harbour works well up to schedule.

1956

March 14—

For the first time a sick fisherman is landed at Lerwick from a Soviet fishing vessel.

March 27—

Russian fishing vessel sinks in Blue Mull Sound. Crew refuse local assistance but are taken off by sister ships who then try unsuccessfully to tow her off, sinking the ship in the process.

November 3—

Hamnavoe pier officially opened.

1957

June 5—

Official opening of Bell's Brae School.

1958

June 26—

Crofters in Walls hide an Estonian fleeing from Russians and seeking political asylum.

July 4—

Discovery by students from Aberdeen University of the St. Ninian's Isle treasure.

October 17—

On its first call out the new Lerwick lifeboat rescued three Russian seamen from the wrecked trawler SRT 4442. Twenty-two others drowned.

1959

Heddell's Park housing scheme completed.

April 21—

Foundation stone of the New Gilbert Bain hospital laid.

June 26—

Printers' strike. Emergency issue of eight small pages of the "Shetland Times."

1960

May 6—

First of the Hamefarers arrive in Shetland.

May 20—

Headline: "Everyone in favour of a swimming pool

in Lerwick. £40,000 scheme envisaged."

May 20 — June 3—
"Hamefarin."

June 3—

Russian seaman swims ashore on Fetlar and granted political asylum.

July 1—

Arrival of the new St. Clair on her maiden voyage to Lerwick.

August 10—

Royal visit of Queen Elizabeth and Duke of Edinburgh. Lerwick harbour works formally opened after being postponed from the previous year.

November 25—

Strict precautions against foot and mouth disease after the disease reaches Orkney.

1961

January 27—

Russian fishing vessel wrecked on Outstanes, North Yell. 13 men saved by a Russian trawler but 13 lost in gale with 100 mph gusts.

March 18—

Visit of a German naval squadron of seven ships, first visit since 1904.

April 5—

Mr Jo Grimond lays the foundation stone of the new R.N.M.D.S.F. building

April 9—

Pioneer aircraft stranded on Foula for three weeks.

August 8—

New Gilbert Bain Hospital opened by Queen Mother.

September 21—

New junior secondary school opened in Scalloway.

1962

February 2—

Twelve of the crew of Russian trawler Maiy rescued by breeches buoy in Fetlar, eleven others taken off by launch.

March 1—

Foula mailboat lost after twice being taken in tow.

April 26—

Yell Conference.

September 10—

Decision by Lord Hunter on St. Ninian's Isle treasure; it belongs to the Crown.

1963

January 11—

Shetland Marine have a stand at the Earls Court Boat Show to try to win

orders for local boat builders.

July—

Salvesen's sell their last whaler, the Southern Harvester, to the Japanese. This meant the end of an era for Shetland men employed in the whale industry.

September 27—

The "Shetland News" ceases, leaving only one newspaper in Shetland.

1964

January 17—

Aberdeen trawler "Rangor" wrecked on Ness of Sound, 13 crew rescued by breeches buoy.

April 15—

BBC TV station came into full service.

May 29—

£257,000 Anderson Institute extension opened.

August 27—

Salvesen's give £33,000 to Shetland Trust to help Shetland whalers with grants and loans for business commitments.

September 29—

Fishery limits extended to 12 miles.

1965

March 19—

The Concord, the first

new fishing boat for Yell this century, arrives in Shetland.

June 4—

National Museum robs Shetland of a major part of its heritage. St. Ninian's Isle treasure moved to Edinburgh.

July 23—

Aberdeen surgeon, Mr Alexander Lyall, and Stephen Drummond drown when boat with six people on board capsizes in Weisdale voe

December 10—

Foula's new mail boat, Westering Homewards, arrives in Lerwick.

1966

June 29—

New library / museum officially opened.

July 4—

Normal shipping services recommence after seamen's strike.

August—

Sunniest month in Shetland for 45 years.

1967

February 19—

Aith lifeboat rescues 12 trawlermen from the Juniper after she goes ashore at Papa Stour.

March 4—

Russian trawler wrecked

near the Point of Skaw in Unst. Crew rescued but vessel a total loss.

May 15—

Visit of cruise ship Leda with reunion of Norwegian war veterans who operated from Shetland in the war.

June 18—

Shetland's first purse netter, the Adalla, arrives in Shetland.

October 13—

Divers recover treasure from Dutch East Indiaman "De Liefde" at Skerries, including 4320 silver coins.

November 27—

Shetland police emergency committee set up controls against foot and mouth disease.

December 29—

First section of Yell "lit up" after electricity provided via cables from Gremista.

1968

August 5—

Official opening of the new Unst airstrip.

August 13—

Lerwick Town Council sanction the Burns Lane site for swimming pool.

September 20—

Russian tanker takes water supply to Skerries after drought in the islands.



Newsworthy now is Brognies Taing Pier, taken over this month for oil rig servicing. This, however, was the beginning — the opening ceremony in 1904.

1969

February 7—

Worst blizzard in Shetland for many years. Winds up to 120 m.p.h. Roads blocked and three boats grounded in Lerwick harbour. The lifeboat escorts two vessels into port.

February 14—

Stormiest week of winter. Longhope lifeboat disaster.

April 11—

Fair Isle mail boat Good Shepherd receives a new deckhouse.

April 11—

Kveldsro Hotel opened.

April 18—

Springfield Hotel reopens after being rebuilt.

April 21—

Fraserburgh boat Ocean Star ashore on the Holm of Cruister at the peak of the tide. Lerwick Harbour staff refloat vessel.

April 25—

Shetland's first steel hulled purse netter, the Wavecrest, launched in Renfrew.

May 15—

Local police force becomes part of the Northern Constabulary.

August 4—

Norwegian lone rower Ragner Thorseth arrives in Shetland after rowing from Maaloy to Skerries.

August 6—

Royal visit to Shetland. Queen and Duke of Edinburgh arrive in Shetland at Broonies Taing.

August 6—

Mr Peter Helm in his yacht Italdo arrives in Shetland after 45 days attempting to reach Iceland. He returned to Shetland in October and sailed for England but was never seen again.

August 15-24—

Shetland Quincentenary Historical Congress.

October 17—

Fair Isle Bird Observatory opened.

1970

April 17—

First tenant moves into the new housing scheme at Sound.

April 24—

First Loganair flight to Fetlar — 34 years after first aircraft landed on island.

May 28 —

Official opening of the new air terminal at Sumburgh.

June 30—

Lerwick Hotel, built at a

cost of over £150,000, opened by Sir James Mackay.

July 17—

Round Britain race contestants reach Lerwick.

August 3—

Dockers strike ends.

September 3—

Aberdeen purse-netter Quo Vadis turned turtle and sunk off Sumburgh Head. Crew picked up by a Faroese vessel.

September 5—

West German ship Bleksand with cargo of timber arrives in Lerwick with 38° list.

November 23—

Cypriot ship, Petros,

spends 15 days in Lerwick. While in port, two crew injured in boiler explosion. Ship goes ashore on Bressay the following day. Eventually towed to Aberdeen.

1971

February 27—

St. Ninian sails from Lerwick for the last time.

May 7—

First oil rig to operate in Shetland waters, the Staflo is towed into position north-east of Unst.

May 19—

Yell's new automatic telephone exchange comes into operation.

June 5—

Lerwick's Health Centre opened.

June 25—

North Isles ferry contract signed with Faroese builders.

August 20—

Shell-Esso £21 million bid for licence to prospect for oil in an area north-east of Shetland.

October 18—

Trondra - Burra bridges opened by Mr George Younger, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland.

November 5—

First of Norwegian timber houses arrive from Norway for County Council.

The shape of things to come?



Shetland's future is now linked with the exploration of oil resources in the North Sea. First rig in the area was the STAFLO, pictured here from a helicopter based at Sumburgh.

Shetland's fishing industry

A century of change

by James R. Nicolson

Of all the changes in Shetland during the last hundred years none is more remarkable than those in the fishing industry. This period has seen the end of the centuries old trade in dried fish, the rapid rise and short-lived boom of the herring fishery and the growth of the modern, diversified fishing industry.

THE LING AND COD FISHERIES

A hundred years ago the haaf fishing was at its peak; every able-bodied man was a fisherman while old men and young boys found employment in curing the catch. The haaf (or open sea) fishing was prosecuted from stations on remote islands and at exposed headlands as near the fishing grounds as possible, the men while ashore living in rough stone-walled lodges. A sheltered harbour was not essential since the boats could be hauled ashore at the onset of storms; the main necessity was a good stony beach where the salted ling, cod and tusk could be spread out to dry. There were haaf stations all round the coasts of Shetland, including seven in the parish of Northmavine alone.

The actual haaf season lasted from mid-May to mid-August, then for the rest of the year fishing was carried out more sporadically from the fishermen's homes as weather permitted and of course they had their crofts to tend. The principal boat used was the sixern, a larger deeper version of the yoal once universal in Shetland. A typical sixern was 21 feet of keel with an overall length of 30 feet; she was propelled by six oars (hence the name) and a dipping lug sail. There was also a large fleet of smaller, four-oared boats which fished nearer the shore.

It was an arduous life: the sixerns made two trips a week from Monday to Wednesday and from Thursday to Saturday, and while at sea cooking was extremely difficult and sleep impossible. The hooks were baited with piltock, haddock or herring as the lines were shot and laid on the sea-bed. A sixern's lines might extend

for six or seven miles — a formidable stretch to haul again by hand, which was done two or three times each trip.

It was a dangerous occupation with frequent loss of life for sudden storms often caught the fleet of undecked sixerns 40 or 50 miles from land. The worst disaster took place on 16th July, 1832, when 105 men were drowned; another occurred on 20th July, 1881, when ten boats were lost and 58 men perished. It was partly the dangers involved that brought the haaf fishing to an end, but the main reason was the rapid rise of the herring industry from the 1870s on. The sixern could not provide adequate returns for her crew and a man who earned £10 or £15 for his season was envied. It was merely the large numbers employed which made the exports so large. In the record year of 1875 when 3,468 tons of haaf-caught dried fish were exported some 600 boats were engaged with around 3000 fishermen.

Relics of the haaf days remain in the deserted drying beaches and the ruined lodges at places like Stenness and Fedeland, while of the hundreds of sixerns which fished around these islands only one has been preserved and it awaits a decision regarding its permanent home as a museum piece in Lerwick.

The Faroe Smacks

There was a second branch to the salt fish industry entirely different from the haaf fishing: it was prosecuted in large, fully-decked smacks and schooners hundreds of miles away. It began about 1807 and in the peak year of 1864 107 ships, manned by 1185 men, sailed from Shetland. The most usual fishing grounds were the Faroe banks but trips were also made to Rockall, Iceland and even the Davis Straits.

The smacks were owned by merchants such as Hay & Co., Lerwick, and Nicolson & Co., Scalloway. The crews joined them in March and they made three or four trips a year, 30 or 40 tons being considered a good catch. Cod were taken on hand-lines, packed in salt in the ships' holds and curing was completed back on the drying beaches.

The best year's catch from smacks alone was in 1870, while the best combined haaf and smack season was that of 1875 when a total of 3½ million fish were caught and 5593 tons of dried fish were exported to Spain, Portugal and Southern Ireland.



★

This picture shows the scale of the herring landings in August, 1947. It represents part of one Friday's catch, which had to be "roused" in bulk on the quay until a freshening steamer came next day to take a full cargo to Germany.

★

A dangerous occupation

This, too, was a dangerous occupation, several smacks being lost, including three in 1878, and although it lasted a few years longer than the haaf fishing it also ended with the growth in the herring fishery. A rapid decline set in as the smacks were sold in increasing numbers to Faroese owners. In 1896 24 smacks operated from Shetland, and in 1899 only seven were left. The last smack to sail was Nicolson & Co.'s "William Martin" which was sold to Faroe in 1908. The "Buttercup" survived a few years longer but not as a cod fisher: her owners, Hay & Co., fitted her out as a herring drifter, curing her catch on board.

THE HERRING BOOM

Since the 16th century, or perhaps earlier, Dutch fishermen had regarded Shetland as the centre of their great herring fishery, but all Britain's attempts to emulate them were unsuccessful. A promising attempt was made in Shetland in the 1830s but it, too, failed.

It was not until the 1870s that Shetlanders began to exploit the herring shoals successfully, following the example of fishermen from North-East Scotland. In 1876 men from Buckie visited Shetland in their Fifies and Scaffies, engaged local men as pilots and proved to them that the big boat was superior to the sixern in both long-lining and herring fishing. A year later the first of these boats to be owned by Shetlanders arrived, and by 1880 the boom was under way with scores of boats being purchased annually. By 1885 no fewer than 350 decked sail boats, with crews totalling 2000 men, were owned by Shetlanders, in addition to a still considerable fleet of sixerns and Faroe smacks.

During the next few decades the herring fishery dominated the economic life of the islands. Markets for salt herring were found in Germany and Russia, a new race of curers came north, and stations sprang up all over Shetland, the most important being Baltasound and Lerwick.

Those were remarkable years for Shetland: the rate of emigration was reduced and men even returned from the colonies to invest their savings in sailing drifters. More boats came from all over Scotland to fish at

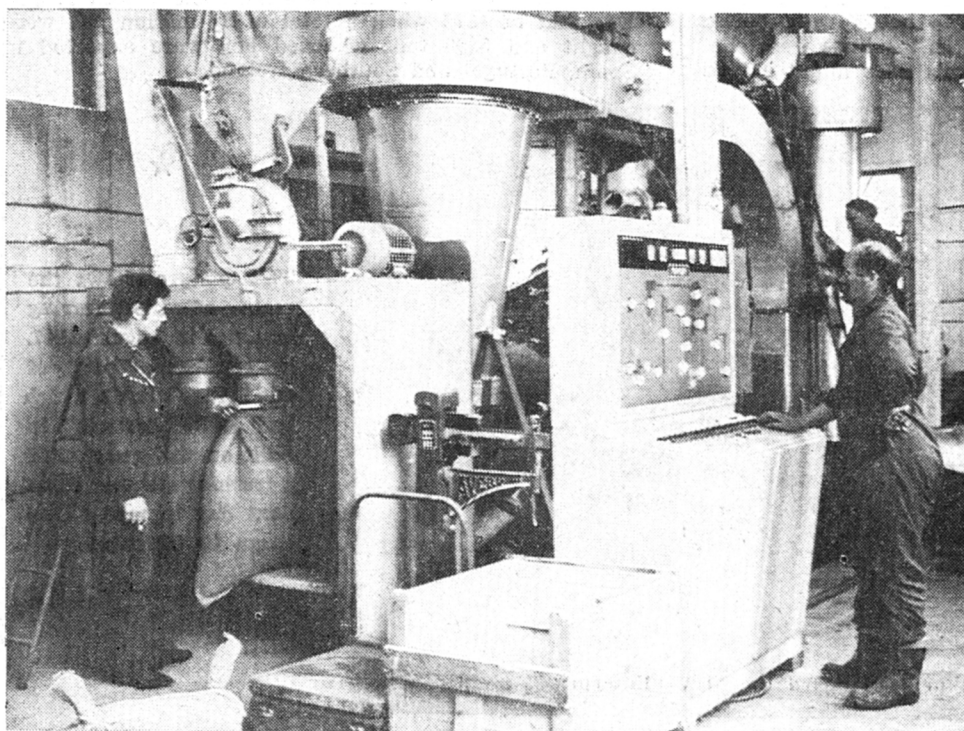
Shetland, and gutters and coopers came from as far away as the Hebrides and Ireland to find work. In 1905 2840 people found employment at 48 stations at Baltasound, 2500 worked at 36 stations at Lerwick, and hundreds more were engaged at 90 smaller stations all over Shetland. That was the record year as regards landings when 1783 vessels landed 645,834 crans worth £576,645, and 1,024,000 barrels of herring were cured.

But already a cloud was gathering on the horizon, for only a small part of this was caught by Shetland's sail boats; most of it was caught by English and Scottish steam drifters which then began to dominate the fishery. Just as the sailing drifter had outclassed the sixern so the steam drifter made the sail boat obsolete, but few Shetlanders had the capital necessary to purchase a steam drifter. The number of sail boats dropped rapidly, with them the number of fishermen, and emigration again became a serious problem. Only Lerwick benefited from the arrival of the steam drifter and actually increased in importance as the smaller ports declined. In 1914 there was still a large fleet of 643 vessels based there.

The outbreak of hostilities in 1914 meant the loss of markets and a virtual suspension of herring fishing, but with peace the industry revived and between the wars a fleet of 300-500 vessels fished from Lerwick, landing around 200,000 crans a year to retain for Lerwick the title of premier herring port in Scotland.

The local fleet continued to decline. There were still 38 sail boats left in 1928, but four years later only fourteen were left, and in 1937 the last sail boat, the "Gracie Brown," gave up the struggle. Following the introduction of the paraffin engine, however, some of the old sail boats got a reprieve and they kept alive the tradition of herring fishing in Shetland. Some were very successful: in 1934 the "Reaper" of Scalloway had the remarkable gross of £1180. Also in 1934 the "Hazelbank" of Burra was the top steam drifter for Scotland with a season's gross of £1725.

But on the whole those were difficult years for the fishermen: markets and prices were poor, and the steam drifters fared worst of all because they were so costly to run. In 1939 Shetland's herring fleet numbered about fifty, nearly all of them Zulus and Fifies with engines installed and all struggling to keep clear of debt. Then again the fishermen's difficulties were forgotten as more serious problems engulfed the world.



★

Now in production at the Brae factory of L. Williamson's is this Baader fish meal plant. Processing a ton of offal per hour, it will be a valuable adjunct to fish processing in the north end of Shetland.

★

The modern industry

The main species sought today is haddock for freezing and the white fish trade. The market in fresh fish goes back a surprisingly long way to 1876 when three tons of line-caught fish were packed in ice and sent by steamer to Aberdeen. This outlet rose rapidly in importance for in 1881 500 tons were shipped.

The ling and cod fisheries were virtually over by 1910 but line fishing was not yet extinct, for a new winter haddock fishery became established at Burra Isle, Scalloway, Lerwick, Whalsay and Skerries, using small lines baited at home by the women of the family, but it was severely hampered by the activities of Aberdeen trawlers which spoiled the grounds for lining.

However hated the trawlers, they forced the Shetlanders to examine ways of improving their efficiency too. The first engine was installed in a haddock boat in 1909 and more followed in 1910 but this did not greatly increase catching power. The white fish industry continued to decline and in 1937 the fifty boats employed landed a mere 1300 tons of fish worth only £18,000.

Then came the industrial revolution in the fishery with the adoption of the seine net. It was first used by Lerwick fishermen in 1926 to catch flats, but it did not become important until a technique evolved for catching haddock and whiting. The change-over from lining to seining took place during World War II. In 1939 when lining produced 1,637 tons of white fish, seining accounted for only 31 tons, but in 1944 when small line landings amounted to only 243 tons, seine net landings totalled 970 tons. Since then the seine net has dominated the entire fishing industry in Shetland and it was the main factor in the revival of the immediate post-war years.

Shetland's problems were far from over, the most serious problem of the 1950s being the decrease in the number of local fish merchants. In 1946 there were fourteen firms buying white fish to send to customers and parent firms in Aberdeen and Glasgow, but rising

freight charges forced one after the other out of business until, in 1958, there was only one major firm left, renting part of the H.I.B. factory at Lerwick to fillet and freeze white fish. Prices dropped through lack of competition and many people will remember the restrictions imposed to limit landings as much as possible. It says much for the fishermen of that period that they managed to keep the industry alive.

The men of Burra and Whalsay found a solution by replacing their old boats with modern dual-purpose vessels, 65-80 feet long, purchased through the W.F.A. and H.I.B. loan and grant schemes; they could fish all year round and land their catches at Aberdeen. The crews of inshore boats, too, began to consign their catches to Aberdeen by steamer, but freight and handling charges which soon reached £1 per cwt. made this a bit of a gamble.

Aberdeen became more and more important to Shetland until in 1963 40 per cent. of the islands' white fish catch was landed there and a further 27 per cent. consigned by steamer. The next logical step was for fishermen to give up their homes in Shetland and move with boats and families to Aberdeen — the crews of two boats did in fact do so. This was the most disturbing trend of all.

Fortunately local businessmen saw the tremendous potential in Shetland's fishing industry. The argument was a very simple one — all the fish could be processed locally to save freight and create jobs at a time when unemployment was another serious problem. First locally-owned factory was that of Ice-Atlantic (Frozen Seafoods) Ltd., which opened at Scalloway in 1960. It started at a very difficult time since the system of tripping was firmly established and there was an unusual scarcity of fish on the inshore grounds, so serious that several boats had to be sold in 1961.

In 1961 one would have said that there was scarcely one haddock left in the sea but in 1962 a miracle occurred with a fantastic brood of young haddock. By 1964 when the new stock was of marketable size the landings were so heavy that more firms were encouraged to build factories. In 1965 there were four large factories in operation and seventy per cent. of the white fish catch was processed locally.



Hauling drift nets on board the M/V "Enterprise" in the summer of 1947.

The 12-mile limit

It is surprising how many apparently unconnected events combined to help Shetland in the 1960s. In 1964 the 12-mile limit was introduced, just before the arrival in this area of large fleets of Norwegian purse seiners and Danish trawlers engaged in the controversial industrial fisheries. In 1965 came another boost with the setting up of the H.I.D.B. which has given valuable assistance in the building of more fish processing plants and in reviving the fishing industry in districts such as Unst where it had been allowed to decline.

Changes in the Herring Industry

In 1946 the local herring fleet numbered 46 drifters but the downward trend continued and in 1965 only twenty crews changed over from seining for the short summer season. In that year the full force of modern technology struck Shetland when a fleet of 150 purse seiners began to fish in this area, forerunners of a fleet which soon increased to 600 vessels. The contrast between the Norwegian vessels and the little wooden drifters was incredible. The latter had radio, DF and echo-sounders, but their nets were essentially the same as those used by the Dutch 500 years previously. The Norwegians used sonar to locate a herring shoal and, once found, they made sure it was caught by ringing it with a massive purse seine.

The scale of the Norwegian fishery was impressive: in 1965 they took 190,000 tons of herring from the Shetland area alone, compared with 10,000 tons by British vessels. The lesson was plain and the first two British purse seiners fished in 1966 while the first Shetland-owned purser, the "Adalla," was bought from Norway in 1967. None of these three pioneering vessels is still fishing herring but their place in the history of the industry is assured. First Shetland-owned purser to be built for that purpose was the "Wave Crest" which began fishing in 1969, soon followed by the "Serene" and "Unity" of Whalsay.

Shetland drifters continued to fish and it seemed that the local fleet would be a diversified one; but then came the season of 1970 which was disastrous for the drifters, excellent for the pursers. The result was that in 1971 only three Shetland crews switched over to herring drifting. In 1971 17 Scottish drifters and 11 purse seiners fished from Lerwick. All had a successful season but the purse seiners accounted for 87 per cent. of the 128,000 crans landed. The catch was four times that of 1965 while the value at £584,000 was only slightly less than that of the record value in 1906.

The introduction of the purse seine has been another boost to Shetland, but on a wider scale the picture is less bright since it became clear that the Norwegians and Icelanders had over-invested in this sector and their herring catch rate dropped alarmingly. To conserve North Sea stocks a close season was introduced last year and between 1st April and 15th June this year herring fishing was virtually prohibited. The success of these measures is doubtful while industrial fishing continues uncontrolled during the rest of the year.

Shellfishing . . .

Shetland was slow to exploit the many types of shellfish found in these waters. Even in 1947 the value of shellfish landed by part-time fishermen was under £3000, but in 1960 it rose to £60,000. In 1962 some

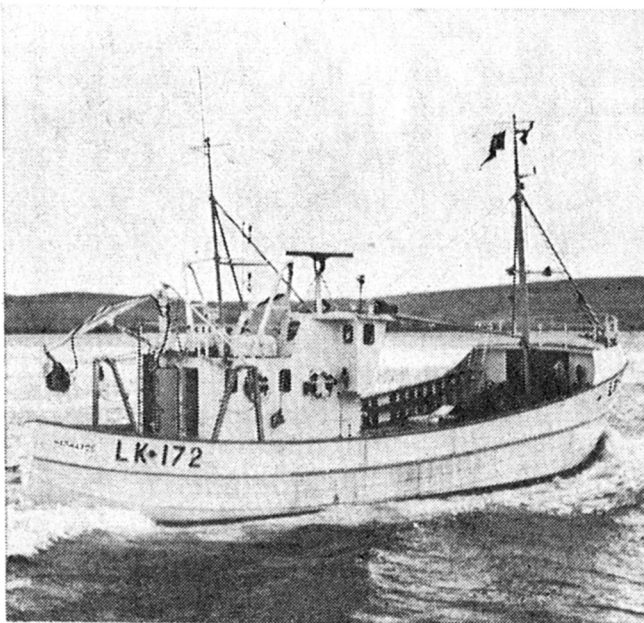
of the larger boats were forced by poor catches of white fish to try creel fishing and they raised the value of the lobster catch to £110,000 for that year. Crab fishing began in 1962 and in 1968 this species, formerly thrown back as useless, produced a catch of 8900 cwts., worth £22,000. In 1968 scallop fishing began and this is now a major section of the industry, worth £93,000 last year.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FISHING INDUSTRY

Combining all three sectors, Shetland's catch was worth £2,107,000 in 1971, compared with only £529,000 in 1961. The number of full-time fishermen was 460 in a white fish fleet of 71 vessels, of which 43 were over fifty feet long. In addition there were 170 men fishing part-time for shellfish.

Fish processing is now an important industry with a labour force of 700, increasing to over 900 at the peak of the herring fishery. There are now fourteen factories scattered all over Shetland including the islands of Yell, Skerries, Whalsay and Burra. Marketing of white fish fillets within the U.K. remained a problem until the firm of T.T.F. (Fish Processing) Ltd., of Scalloway, developed a market in the U.S.A. and arranged a service with a Danish shipping company whereby the cartons of frozen fillets are shipped direct from Scalloway. Most processors now find it convenient to use this service and in 1971 exports to the U.S.A. amounted to 4500 tons, worth £1,500,000. These statistics must prove the value of the fishing industry to Shetland.

Much anxiety was felt locally when it appeared that Britain might have to give up her twelve-mile limit as a condition of entry into the E.E.C. The present arrangement, though far from satisfactory, does offer a ten-year breathing space. The exploration for oil will certainly have a pronounced effect on Shetland, but it must be remembered that development of our basic industries was sufficient to create prosperity and they are capable of further expansion. They will have to sustain the islands again when the period of exploration is over and it would be a tragedy if they are allowed to run down through a short-sighted infatuation with oil. History shows that decline once started is not so easily halted.



One of the newest of the Shetland fleet is the 76-foot seiner/trawler "Sirius." She was built in Norway for Skipper John R. Pottinger and others.

One hundred years of agriculture

By JOHN JAMIESON, County Organiser

The trouble about a subject like this is that there is nobody alive who can remember back 100 years. Up to 60 years ago I can remember something and for the last 25 years I have had the opportunity of getting considerable knowledge of agriculture in the islands.

Luckily, however, there are agricultural records in addition to newspaper references over the years.

Nobody likes statistics and most folk treat them with considerable distrust. The following figures from the Department of Agriculture's records over the years since 1870 do contain some interest if you care to study them in the panel at the foot of this page.

The "Crops and Rotation Grass" represents the arable cropping land of the county and it is noticeable that 100 years ago there was very little rotation grass; 97% of the arable being in crop. This need not surprise us when we consider how much of the actual food of the folk in the form of meal and potatoes was actually grown on the croft. There is, however, a decline in the percentage of the arable which is actually under crop and this reflects the change in the feeding habits of the folk on the land. From their early dependence on their own crops for food, they now eat almost entirely imported food in many cases.

The following figures, which give the percentage of the arable which is used for crops, show a regular trend over the years. Crops: 1870, 97%; 1890, 93%; 1910, 88%; 1930, 83%; 1950, 71%; 1970, 91%.

You will notice that there was a decline in the total arable between 1910 and 1930 and this decline continued into 1950; but by 1970 the figure has almost recovered to the 1870 level.

This decline was probably due to the fact that land which was turned over to sheep grazing was classed after a time as "rough grazings" rather than "rotation grass".

These figures also show a definite trend from cattle to sheep; this change being initiated by the "clearances".

The sheep numbers reached their peak about 1950 and it seems now that there may be a slight recovery in the cattle numbers.

Looking back to 1872, newspaper notes state that "the potato disease", which caused a famine in Ireland in 1846 was spreading through the county; while a writer from Unst comments on the great change in mechanisation — the scythe has replaced the sickle!

Agriculture in Shetland cannot be separated from national economic forces and the part-time crofting of last century was very closely linked with fishing.

While the haaf fishing was being pursued in 1872 it was gradually replaced by the herring fishing during the end of the century and this fishing never really recovered from the war of 1914-18 which destroyed much of the former markets.

The introduction of the seine net and other forms

of fishing has made fishing a full-time occupation and its link with agriculture, although not broken entirely, is much weakened.

The huge increase in population in the late 18th and early 19th centuries led to the sub-division of crofts and the taking of new holdings (outsets) from the hill.

This in turn led to a reduction in the number of work horses (or oxen) and ploughs and the Shetland spade became the chief implement.

If a crofter improved his holding, the landlord usually increased the rent so there was no encouragement to improvement. This condition was changed by the Crofters Act of 1886 which gave the crofter security of tenure, right to compensation for improvements and the right to assign his holding to a member of his family. Many landlords then ceased to take an interest in their tenants since they no longer had any control over their property except the right to collect the rent.

During the 1914-18 war the Agricultural Executive Committee made strenuous efforts to bring back into cultivation areas of good land that had been put down to sheep grazing. Shortage of labour and of power (horse or otherwise) made it difficult for the land holders to comply with the Committee's orders, but a certain amount of land recovery took place; and the end of the war saw the break-up of several of these grazing farms into small holdings for ex-service men. Unfortunately, many of these holdings were too small to provide a livelihood for the tenants.

Prices of stock had risen steadily and the war gave the prices an extra boost until by 1922 cattle had risen to £16-£20 and sheep up to £2-£3.

That year, however, saw the deflation of the British currency and this gave a serious setback to agriculture over the country as a whole. By 1932, cross-bred lambs were selling for 5/-, farrow cows for £4 and ponies were being shot to get them off the hill grazings.

The late 20's and early 30's saw agriculture in a sorry state indeed and it was only the approach of the Second World War which started a revival in farm prices, over the country as a whole, while many writers (and even government bodies) were despairing over the state of agriculture.

The onset of war saw the formation of an Agricultural Executive Committee which again set itself to increase food production from the land.

By this time, however, tractors were available. The Department of Agriculture set up a Tractor Section in Shetland, supplied with tractors and implements which carried out considerable work all over the mainland.

This period also saw the introduction of the two-wheeled tractor — "Iron Horse" — and they performed a useful function until replaced by bigger 4-wheeled units.

By 1944 experiments had proved that it was possible to seed newly ploughed hill directly to grass and later work showed the possibility of surface seeding hill ground. The tractor had made possible work that had been almost impossible before.

JUNE RETURNS	1870	1890	1910	1930	1950	1970
CROPS	16,905	15,369	14,217	10,501	6,996	3,340
CROPS & ROTATION GRASS	17,345	16,454	16,137	12,609	9,788	16,943
ROTATION GRASS	440	1,085	1,920	2,108	2,792	13,603
CATTLE	20,861	18,876	16,170	10,672	7,208	6,966
SHEEP	80,613	98,320	153,014	160,876	247,986	229,578

The lime plant

The establishment of a lime grinding plant at Girdsta about 1944 made hill improvement feasible and from that time onwards it gained in popularity until many thousands of acres of useless hill have been turned into good grazings.

The last 25 years have seen a greater change in agriculture than any period in Shetland's history.

The average croft has had its production multiplied four or five times and in addition there has been a considerable amalgamation of crofts to form bigger units. Another noteworthy change has been the number of crofters who are trying (and often succeeding) to make a full-time, worth-while living from agriculture.

Livestock in Shetland over the period under review suffered from what is now called "do-gooders"—people who were not directly involved in stock but had theories about stock. Their general theme was that Shetland Cattle and Shetland Ponies had to be small, while the sheep should produce fine wool.

Gifford of Busta writing about 1730 states that the Shetland cattle of that period were bigger than those in Orkney or the North of Scotland.

The end of last century saw moves to form a Shetland Cattle Herd Book. One of the promoters was a titled gentleman from Perthshire. The new society set up small size and colour as their two chief characteristics

of the Shetland cow. The result was that the cows entered in the herd book were the smallest in the county. By the 1920's it was obvious that this had produced a type of beast without commercial value and the Society introduced a Friesian cross to improve the size. By the 1930's bull calves were often slaughtered at birth because they were not worth rearing. The cows were capable of producing a very good yield of milk from poor fodder and could exist on very little food. However, today there is no place in the economy for this type of animal and the demand is for an animal that will produce a great deal of milk from good and plentiful food or beef from an adequate diet.

Different breeds of cattle are being tried, a notable introduction being the Hereford, while many cattle owners have tried imported breeds from Europe like the Charollais and Simmental as soon as they are available. While Shorthorn and Aberdeen-Angus crosses form the greater part of the beef cattle some breeders are experimenting with Devons to produce cows.

Shetland sheep have been selected for fine wool and this often means that the finest wool is got from the smaller sheep on poorer pasture; leading to a selection of the small, fine woolled animals rather than the bigger more robust types. The small Shetland sheep is probably the only type that will exist on the unimproved Shetland hills but the modern trend is to improve the hills and use a bigger, more productive sheep. It is quite possible that selection for size and conformation in the Shetland breed would produce a sheep that would have real value. Attempts to improve it by crossing have seldom led to much success because of the poor hill pasture.

On the better land most of the ewes approximate to a Cheviot type although bred from Shetland sheep. There has been a trend to try the South Country Cheviot which is smaller than the more general North Country type.



The "iron horse" was the first stage in the post-war mechanisation of crofting.

Pony trade revived

There are still a few flocks of Blackface and one of the somewhat similar Swaledale.

Lambs are produced from this flock for the fat and store market by using rams of the Cheviot or Suffolk breeds while some folk also experiment with the Dorset Horn. The very poor demand and low prices for the fine Shetland wool is making many sheep owners believe that selection for wool quality is no longer of importance.

Shetland ponies suffered a great fall-off in demand so that in the late 20's early 30's they were about worthless; but after the second war they made a remarkable recovery and have been selling at good prices for several years.

Apart from the North Isles the local roups of stock which were held in May, August and October have almost disappeared now and more stock is coming to market in Lerwick.

Figures of exports of stock from Shetland show a very significant increase over the years.

Agricultural shows, which at one time made a special day in every parish, have sunk in numbers until only two are now held on the mainland and none in the isles.

So far we have seen changes in livestock on the

land over the 100 years. What of the people on the land? Here there has been a movement from the land to the towns (as in all other parts of Britain) and the number of effective agricultural holdings has fallen by about one third in the last 25 years.



Harrowing in Fetlar with three ponies

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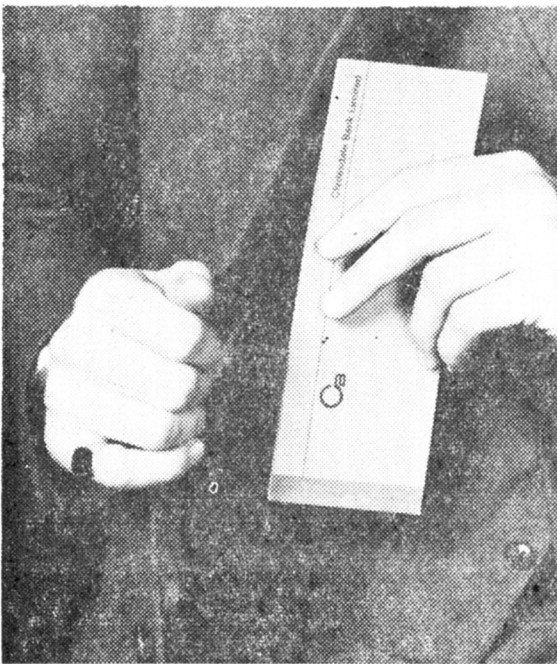
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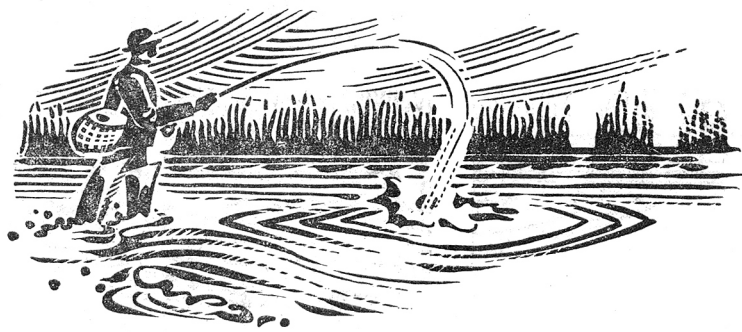
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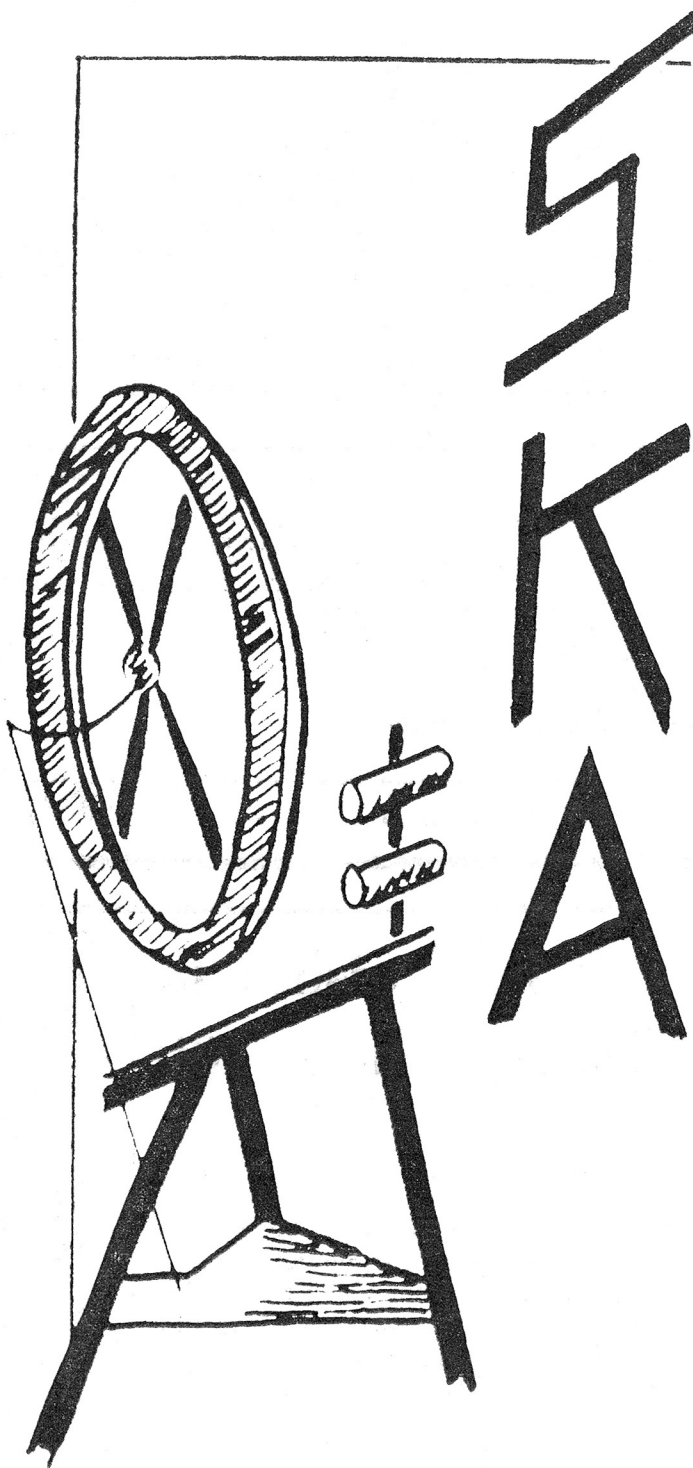
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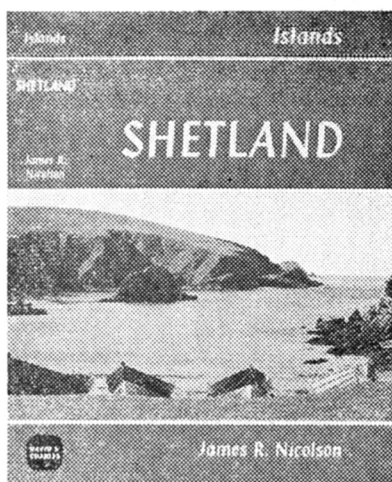
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The titles in the Islands series initially dealt predominantly with the Scottish islands, but islands ranging from The Falkland Islands (£3.50) to Singapore (5th October, £3.25) are now being included. The volumes have a stronger reference value than most published works on islands, but special care is being taken to capture the island atmosphere and to deal with those

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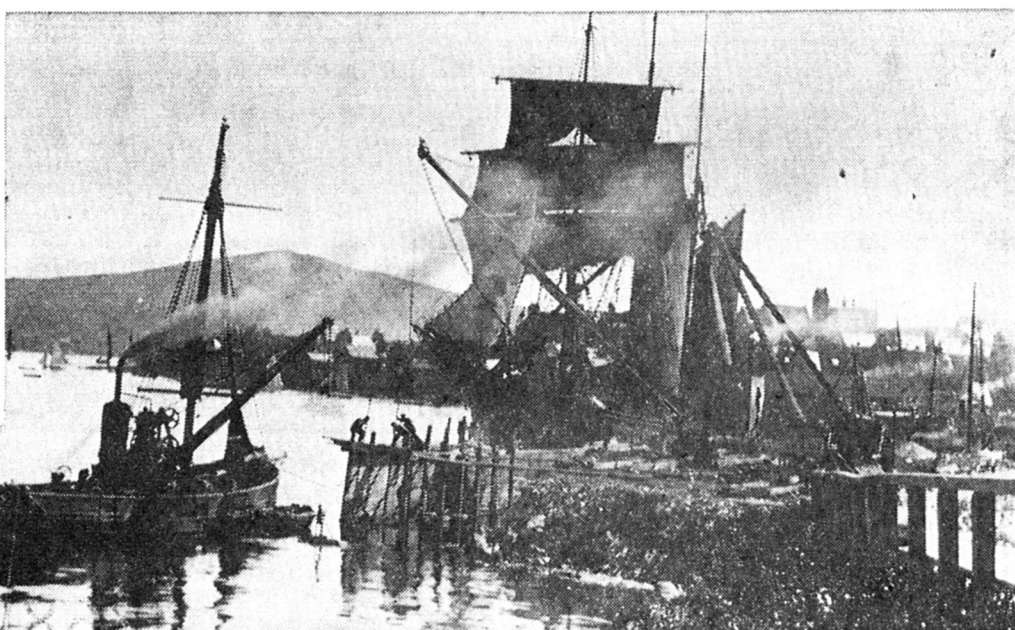
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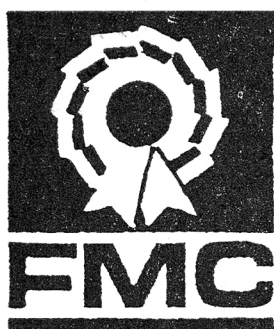
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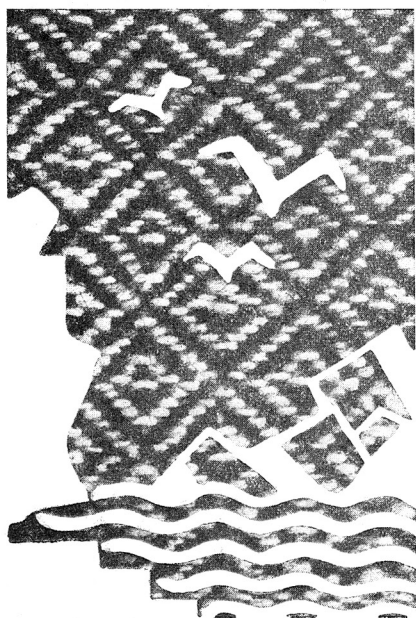
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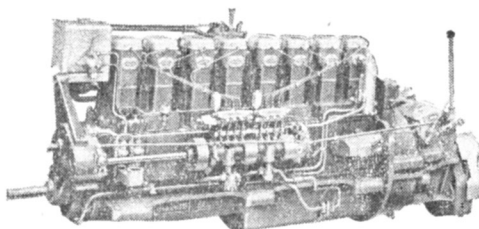
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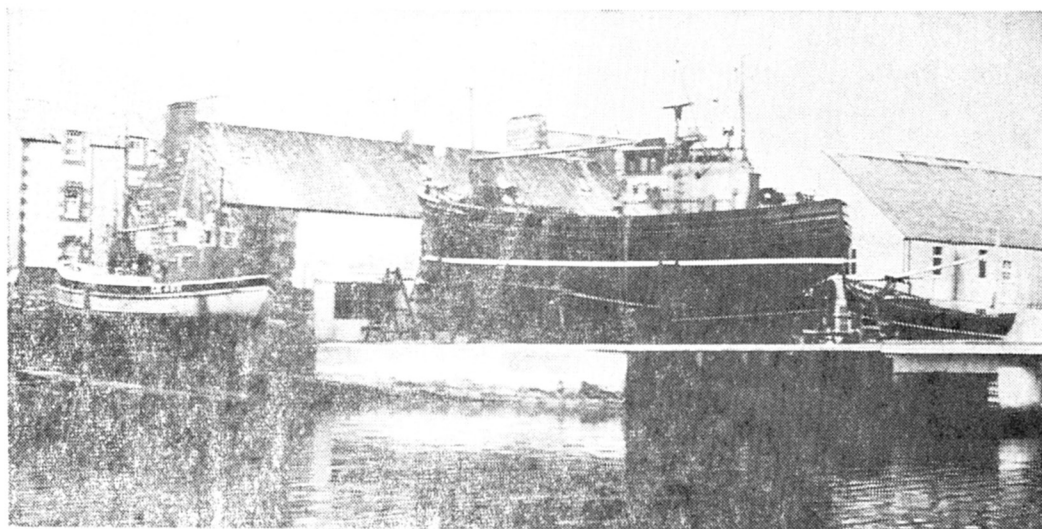
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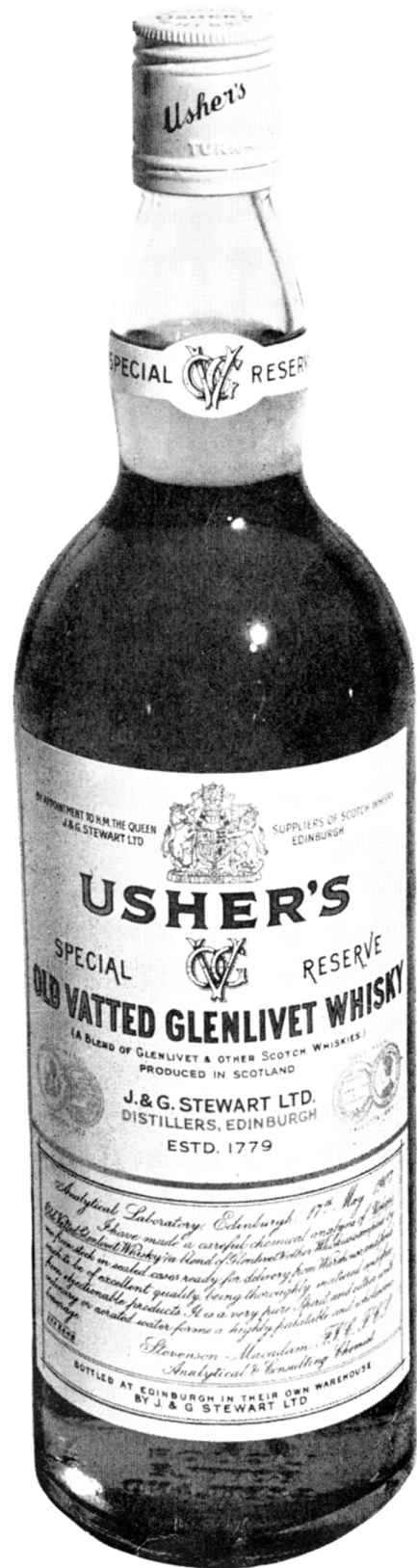
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