

# Vikings, music and speeches for the hundreds who came home

■ Major ceremony held to mark Hamefarin

■ Isles have seen many changes, says Cluness

By ROSALIND GRIFFITHS

Shetland's golden anniversary Hamefarin was launched in style at Clickimin on Monday afternoon with speeches, music, Vikings and a presentation.

The ceremony marked the official start of a two-week adventure for nearly 600 Hamefarers, who had made journeys of up to 12,000 miles to discover their roots, catch up with relatives and explore the isles.

Many spoke of their feelings of being at home, their sense of welcome and their wish to see and do as much as they could.

Addressing the gathering, convener Sandy Cluness said that at the time of the first Hamefarin in 1960, Shetland had been a very different place. The population had been only 18,000 and falling, the fishing industry had been in decline and people were leaving to seek a new life elsewhere.

Now, however, largely thanks to the oil industry, the isles had infrastructure and services to be proud of. He was proud, too, Mr Cluness said, of the young Shetlanders, some of whom, in the 50-piece traditional band Laldy, had been playing as the reception got under way and who would go on to thrill the audience with their music.

He was flanked by two large quilts, the suggestion of a "mad moment" by Ann Hill who created them from blocks made by Hamefarers – visible symbols of what Shetland means to them.

Dedicating the quilts to the event, Mrs Hill, who grew up in Lerwick's Russell Crescent but who now lives in the Borders, said the project had brought back memories – "I'll always be a Shetlander" – and had started many new friendships.

Originally Mrs Hill had expected around 16 blocks, she said, but ended up with 48. "I've loved every minute," she added.



Massed ranks of Hamefarers at the opening ceremony on Monday.

Photo: Dave Donaldson

Mr Cluness was then presented with a gift from the Shetland Society of New Zealand – a miniature greenstone adze (arched-bladed cutting tool). It was "made from our old rock" said society vice-president Ross Mainland.

Mr Mainland said later that his father Tom, born in Gonfirth and who later lived in Dunrossness, had emigrated in 1928 under a scheme organised by the New Zealand government, the sheep producers and the shipping companies to give orphans (as Tom was) the chance of a new start in agriculture.

The 15-year-old had travelled alone and never returned to the isles. This was Mr Mainland's third visit,

he said, and it was "like coming home".

A brief cheer on stage by the Jarl's Squad was followed by dialect songs from girl band Laeverick, who performed a Hamefarin song, followed by *Rowin Foula Doon* by Vagaland and *Evergreen* by Rhoda Bulter.

It proved highly emotional for Robin Hunter-Smith from South Africa (who with his wife Nicky and daughter Sharon form the total South African contingent) who admitted to "getting his handkerchief out".

Mr Hunter-Smith is the grandson of Shetlanders who emigrated before the Boer War and set up a building contractors business. He himself,

with his brother, does stone quarrying (and has family connections with Shetland firm Hunter & Morrison) said being in Shetland for his fifth visit felt "like being at home".

Laeverick were followed by all 21 pupils from Nesting School, also singing dialect songs and who, like Laeverick, had been taught by Maria Barclay Millar.

Head teacher Anne Peters was "very proud" the pupils had been invited. She said: "They didn't realise what a big occasion it was – they realise now."

Their renderings included *What Shetland Means to Me* by Eddie Barclay, and were followed by pieces from the newly-formed Laldy, with more Hamefarin themes

and compositions from great Shetland fiddlers such as Tom Anderson and Willie Hunter.

Hamefarin organiser and MC Douglas Irvine said the Forty Fiddlers would be proud of Laldy, whose members had been invited to play by Margaret Scollay.

The band impressed Hamefarer Jim Coutts, originally from Scalloway, now of New Zealand and in Shetland with around 13 of his family.

Mr Coutts said: "Those kids were just brilliant – how so many of them can play without a conductor – it was quite emotional." Summing up the whole ceremony he added: "It was wonderful."

● Editorial comment, p.9

## More fish charges

Seven more people appeared in private at Lerwick Sheriff Court this week in connection with a massive investigation into illegal landings at pelagic fish factory Shetland Catch.

*Antares* skipper Laurence Irvine, 64, of Whalsay, appeared with *Research* skippers Gary Williamson, 50, and William Williamson, 63, before Sheriff Graeme Napier on Wednesday.

Also in the dock were co-owner of the Whalsay boat *Adenia*, George Henry, 58, of Bixter, *Antarctic* skipper John Stewart, 55, and crewman Colin Leask, 37, of Whalsay.

The skipper of the Fraserburgh boat *Kings Cross*, Alexander Mason, 64, of Fraserburgh also appeared.

All seven appeared on charges of fraud and none of the men made any pleas or declarations. They were committed for further examination before being released on bail.

Their appearance brings to 17 the number of men facing charges in connection with fraudulent landings at the massive processing plant.

In January the company's managing director, Simon Leiper, of South Whiteness, appeared alongside his predecessor Derek Leask of Weisdale. Both were charged with fraud and defeating the ends of justice.

*Charisma* skipper David Hutchison, *Zephyr* skippers John Irvine and Allister Irvine, and skipper of the Fraserburgh-registered *Enterprise*, Victor Buschini, were charged with fraud. Mr Buschini was also charged with attempted fraud.

Within two weeks another four men had appeared – Whalsay fishermen Bobby Polson, Thomas Eunson and Allen Anderson, who all work on board the trawler *Serene*, were also charged with being involved in the alleged landings. *Enterprise* co-skipper Hamish Slater also appeared.

The extent of the investigation was sparked following a police raid at the premises in 2005. The charges mean seven of the eight boats in the Shetland pelagic fleet have become embroiled in the investigation – with the *Altaire* the only boat not coming under scrutiny.

## Response to criticism

The tourist organisation Visit-Shetland has hit back after criticism over the opening hours at its Market Cross base was made at last week's SIC development committee meeting.

At the meeting, councillor Jonathan Wills said the centre was not open at many times when people needed it, although he had no issue with local staff or management. He said the service did not even have an answering machine in operation on Saturdays and Sundays.

Dr Wills called for the alternative SIC/Shetland Amenity Trust-run organisation Promote Shetland to consider taking over control of the centre.

This week VisitShetland manager Steve Mathieson took issue with the remarks. He said the centre had been open seven days a week since the beginning of April and that would continue until September, the opening hours being 9am to 5pm from Monday to Saturday and 10am to 4pm on Sunday.

## Dead man finally named

Police have finally named the man found dead at a house in Lerwick on Monday 31st May.

He was Joseph Mitchell, 24, from Nordavatn, Lerwick. A report on the matter has been submitted to the procurator fiscal.



SIC convener Sandy Cluness accepts a miniature adze from Shetland Society of Wellington vice-president Ross Mainland.

Photo: Dave Donaldson



Joanne Wishart (left) from Shetland Archives receives letters from the Rev Lisa Eunson from the USA, who now lives in Aberdeen.

Photo: Dave Donaldson



Back (from left): Wayne Johnson, Ray Jenkins, Jim Johnson. Front: Jennifer Rudland and Shetland resident Alex Johnson. Wayne's great-grandfather left Shetland 101 years ago from Fetlar and went to Wellington, New Zealand.

Photo: Dave Donaldson



The only South Africans at the Hamefarin (from left) Sharon, Nicky and Robin Hunter-Smith with their second cousin Karene Williamson from Weisdale.

Photo: Dave Donaldson

## HAMEFARIN 2010 SPECIAL OFFERS



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# HAMEFARIN 2010

## Hamefarer Davie returns home from Oz

By JOHN ROBERTSON

There is one among the merry throng of hamefarers this week who is already a very well-kent face in his homeland: Davie Thomason is a veteran of all four hamefarins since attending as a schoolboy at the first event in 1960 with his dad Magnie.

This time, along with six-year-old son Magnie-Che, he is the proud bearer of a message of solidarity and congratulation from over 100,000 union members in Australia, represented by a colourful flurry of union banners which now have pride of place on show in the Shetland Museum and Archives.

Of course, the irrepressible Davie is not just an occasional visitor, having spent several years living back in Lerwick with his native Australian partner Tanya Koolmatie – and memorably getting involved in several demonstrations and protests – before the family headed back to Oz in 2006. He now lives in Belmont, near Melbourne, in the state of Victoria.

Sporting his *Crocodile Dundee*-style hat and bearing small gifts from afar for his friends, he was delighted to be back once again as one of the hundreds of hamefarers.

"I'm very proud of what Shetland has done to welcome us home," he said, "and I'm proud of how the town looks."

Fifty years ago it was a very different Shetland that the exiles, mainly from New Zealand, discovered with many islanders enduring a tough time amid economic stagnation, poverty and unemployment. But Davie said he would never forget the happiness that surrounded that homecoming and he remembers all the hamefarers speaking away in broad Shetland dialect.

He was back again at the 1985 event with his eldest son Davie and for the third event in 2000 with Tanya. This time he has a programme of events and presentations lined up for his trip, including the obligatory visit to the ancestral home at Copister in Yell



Davie Thomason with his son Magnus-Che.

Photo: Dave Donaldson

and a presentation to the Anderson High School of a large Australian Aboriginal flag and a DVD and book on the story of Australia.

Davie has been a staunch union man since signing up in Aberdeen, aged 15, encouraged by his dad Magnie and another Yell man, union official Basil Jamieson. Fighting for civil rights and workers' rights is still a major part of his life and the union flags he has brought over with him he evidently holds in great reverence.

On display in one of the museum's exhibition spaces near

the foyer, they convey the good wishes of unions in Australia to the organisers and participants of the 50th anniversary hamefarin. Davie also has letters and posters from union leaders congratulating Shetlanders and union members in particular.

He said: "It was an idea that came to me a couple of months ago, when I was ready to come home."

Several of the flags have Shetland connections including that of the Maritime Union of Australia which has provided two flags and a pledge from Melbourne-based

activist Paul Wilcocks to help any Shetland mariner wishing to work in the booming western Australian offshore oil sector. Mr Wilcocks' sister Wanda happens to be married in Wellington to a Shetland man, Laurie Gifford.

The Eureka Flag, brought over from the Geelong Trades Hall, is dominated by a Southern Cross. It is widely used by trade unionists as a symbol of protest, originating from the 1854 battle at the Eureka Stockade in Ballarat in Victoria which was the result of a gold miners' revolt. Davie said it was the

first revolt against British rule and saw the deaths of 22 protesters at the hands of the army.

Two flags are from tower cranes which stand over big construction sites in Australia, including one from Davie's union – the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union – and the John Cummins Memorial Fund.

Davie himself wears a T-shirt emblazoned with Cummins' picture. A legendary union organiser in Victoria, some Australians consider the twice-jailed activist to be their greatest union leader ever.

He died four years ago.

The big red flag he has brought has been flown from reputedly the world's oldest trade union hall in Melbourne. There is also one from Tanya's union, the National Tertiary Education Union, signed by the aboriginal organiser Adam Frogley and several Scottish members.

All the banners have been gifted to Shetland and Davie intends handing them and the accompanying letters over to local union stalwart and historian Brian Smith. He hopes they might find homes with the local unions.

## Stitches in time as knitwear goes back 200 years

The exhibition of Shetland's quintessential product, knitwear, delighted Hamefarers at Shetland Museum and Archives on Wednesday, with examples of the craft dating back nearly 200 years.

Some 19th century jumpers and hats from Fair Isle show the characteristic horizontal pattern for which the isle, and Shetland in general, is famous. Bright colours thanks to dyes of madder and lichen are used in these garments, whereas Shetland Mainland knitters favoured natural colours.

Mainland knitters also knitted plain undergarments at this time and were involved in the Truck System – a barter system in which knitted goods were exchanged with the merchants for essentials such as tea and paraffin and which kept the knitters permanently in debt. These undergarments were in demand from the middle classes in the big UK cities.

The upper classes, however, favoured fine lace knitting. This came into vogue through the endorsement of Queen Victoria,

who had been sent a pair of stockings by a Shetland knitter and asked for more.

The one-ply (or sometimes two-ply) wool was whitened over smoking sulphur and the best knitters excused from heavy work because they had to keep their hands soft.

Later, in the 1920s, the Prince of Wales popularised V-neck Fair Isle jumpers and patterns began to be written down. The 1930s saw experiments with various necklines and fabrics – a slip-over in rayon is on display – and during the Second

World War a Norwegian influence comes to the fore with vertical patterns.

The Voe firm of T M Adie was prominent at this time and sold its tweed fabric all over the world.

By 1960s knitting machines were in many households, with the men making the body of the garment and the women "finishing" by adding collars and cuffs.

Hamefarer and knitter Colleen Hannan from Napier, New Zealand, is the great-great-granddaughter of knitter Williamina Sinclair from North Dale, Unst, whose

name features in the Unst Heritage Centre as "knitter of worsted".

Mrs Hannan said Williamina, her husband and five children emigrated to Napier at the time of the clearances. They were locked into the barter system and an emigration agent from Napier suggested the move. The family sailed in the 1850s, with another baby, Michael Clarence, being born on the ship (which bore the name Clarence).

Mrs Hannan said: "It was the women who pushed for a better life."

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# Argos

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Please note Argos will be closed Saturday 26th June.

For further information or directions please call 01595 693070



# HAMEFARIN 2010

## Quilters pull together for Norse display

By ROSALIND GRIFFITHS

Twenty women – 14 Hamefarers and six locals – joined hamefarer and quilter Ann Hill at Islesburgh on Wednesday in a class to work on quilted cushions.

The women were all stitching the same design of the three Nornes, the three fates of Norse mythology which gave advice to the god Odin about the past, present and future.

Each participant of the class was presented with a certificate and a Shetland Jewellery charm by jeweller Kenneth Rae, whose father created the design.

Mr Rae said: "I'm delighted to see so many people here and to see them all enjoying themselves."

Mrs Hill, who had a quilt with five Norse charms worked into it on display on the wall, thanked Mr Rae for permission to use the designs, which she said, were ideal for quilting.

Also on display were quilts which had been entered into a competition with three main winners.

Nicky Hunter-Smith from South Africa won *The Shetland Times* award with quilt titled *Memories*. Helen Burgess from Shetland lifted the Shetland Jewellery award with a quilt of postcard-type Shetland scenes and Sheila Peterson, also

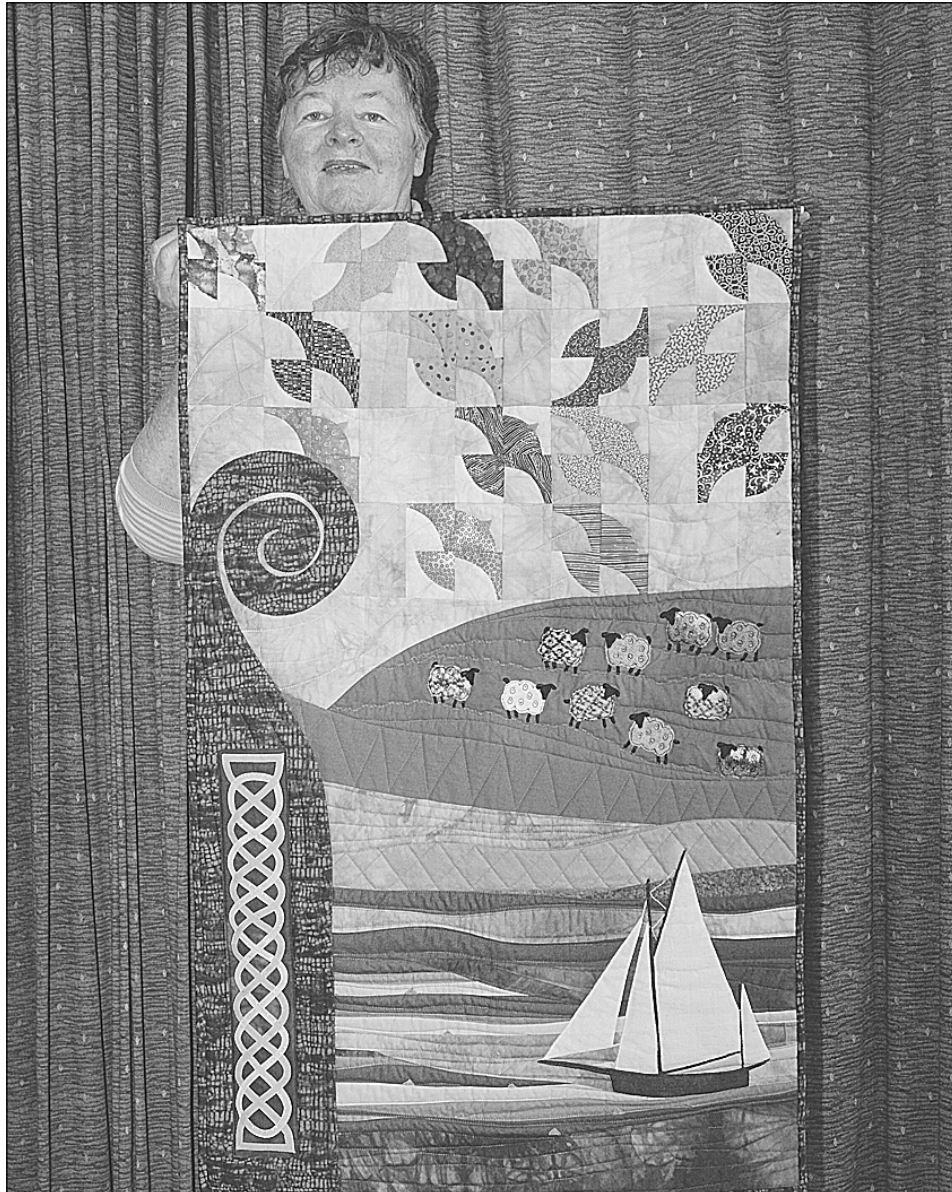
from Shetland, won the Popular Patchwork magazine award for her evocative depiction of a Shetland kitchen, complete with Rayburn.

The best young quilter was Emily Butroid, aged seven, from England, who created a puffin.

Mrs Hunter-Smith, who made her quilt of a Weisdale landscape in one week, used Fair Isle knitting from relative Pearl Hunter for the sheep and fabric found in a box belonging to her husband's Shetland grandfather Jeremiah Smith to make the sails of a ship. "I was under pressure to finish it, I was still sewing when I got here," she said.

Mrs Hill spoke of the camaraderie of the class. "Quilting is fun. This day has been great fun, everyone getting together and speaking, the class has mixed really well."

That was borne out by the fact that quilter Glennice Flynn from Massachusetts, whose grandfather was William Ratter from Lochend, is now sponsoring a coffee afternoon for her new friends at Busta House. And Caralyn Way from New Zealand, who is staying with her relative Dennis Williamson from Sullom, came to the class in spite of a broken leg. "It's my first real quilting class but I'm thoroughly enjoying it," she said.



Quilt winner Nicky Hunter-Smith from South Africa.

Photo: Maurice Mullay

## Lava launch

Shetland-born jeweller Jacqui Grant and her husband, Duncan, of Lava Jewellery Design, are launching their Shetlandic collection, inspired by the dialect poetry of Rhoda Bulter, for the hamefarin.

Nine pieces, including three pendants, four sets of earrings, a set of cufflinks and a brooch, designed and produced by the couple, are on display in the foyer of Islesburgh Community Centre and for sale from Shetland Museum and direct from the company.

Jacqui will also be exhibiting and selling the collection at Flavour of Shetland this weekend.

She said: "This will be the first collection that we have launched at home in 20 years, which is very exciting. I was inspired by Rhoda's Shetland poetry readings on the radio as I grew up and wanted to incorporate the words in a collection of jewellery."

"The pieces carry thought-provoking words from Rhoda's poem *Shetlandic*. Everyone knows how passionate she was about Shetland and my hope is that these descriptive items will help preserve that passion."

"The Bulter family has been very helpful and supportive in developing the collection and a royalty from sales of the jewellery will go to promoting Rhoda's work and keeping the dialect alive."

More of the couple's work will be available at Flavour of Shetland, including the Eshaness Collection and some one-off pieces.

## Plenty on offer as bus tours take to the roads

Two coach trips on Thursday will give Hamefarers the opportunity to visit either Tingwall, Whiteness and Weisdale or Trondra and Burra in the forenoon, before the two groups meet up for lunch and further sightseeing in Scalloway.

Throughout the day visitors will learn something of the history of the area, meet individuals involved in a range of activities and visit various places of interest.

Both coaches will leave Lerwick at 9am. The first will have local men Neil Anderson and Donnie Morrison onboard to act as guides and describe the history of the area through which they pass. Their first stop is Gott Farm to see Shetland ponies, then it is on to Sandwater via Laxfirth. As they drive through

the areas visitors will learn about the clearances and hear the story of John Clunies-Ross who earned himself the sobriquet King of the Cocos Islands.

At the Whiteness and Weisdale Hall there will be tea and home bakes as well as an exhibition by the Tingwall Agricultural Museum Steering Group and the Tingwall, Whiteness and Weisdale History Group, and others, including Rosalyn Thomson with jewellery, Susan Arthur with spinning and Margaret Peterson with knitting.

The next stop is the Tingwall Kirk and graveyard after which the coach heads for Scalloway. En route, at the Tingwall Loch, visitors will learn about the ancient parliament that met there.

In the meantime, passengers on the second coach will have the opportunity to visit the working croft of Tommy and Mary Isbister at Burland, Trondra. Onboard will be Adalene Fullerton and Laurina Herculson of the Burra History Group.

The next stop is the Burra Public Hall where arrangement will be similar to that in Whiteness with teas, home bakes and stalls including Burra Bears, Boanie Isles Products with fudges and vegetarian foods, the Thomas Fraser story and an animated film from toy-makers Davy Inkster and Susan Timmins of Speiliks.

Anyone wishing to stretch their legs may take the short walk to the Meal Kirk where there will be a

wedding exhibition and window displays.

After a drive to the East Isle of Burra, the visitors will head south to the Burra History Centre at Duncanslate where they will be able to find out more about family trees and emigration from the area.

The groups will meet for lunch in Scalloway after which there will be an opportunity to explore the village. Local historians will be on hand to describe the history of Scalloway Castle and tell the story of the wartime Shetland Bus.

Along the shore, visitors will see the many sites associated with the Shetland Bus such as Norway House, the Prince Olav slipway and the Shetland Bus Memorial.

Musicians Fradnr Gamla will be playing in Scalloway Public Hall where representatives of various groups including the Over-50s Club, Scalloway Fire Festival, Paparwark Furniture and Scalloway Junior High School will be present. Scalloway Museum and the Scalloway Castle will also be open and it is hoped there will be an opportunity to visit a working fishing boat on the day.

At the end of the afternoon the coaches will return to Lerwick, leaving from Scalloway Public Hall at 4.45pm.

Even after the buses have gone the halls will remain busy. On Thursday Burra Public Hall will be open from 11.30am until 2pm. At the Whiteness and Weisdale Hall

the display of photos and other information on the lifestyle and culture of the area will remain on view on Thursday till 5pm and be open again from Friday 25th till Sunday 27th at 2pm till 5pm.

On the Sunday teas will be served. Also on Sunday 27th, the Shetland Bus Friendship Society will serve teas at the Scalloway Public Hall. Burra History Centre will be open on Sunday afternoons from 2pm till 5pm and at other times by arrangement; ring (01595) 859623 or (01595) 859276.

At the time of going to press there are still places available on the buses. Tickets can be booked at the Shetland Box Office on (01595) 745555.

Catherine Emslie

## Incredible stories in Laughton's worthy book

By ROSALIND GRIFFITHS

Author J. Laughton Johnston gave an informative summary of his book *A Kist of Emigrants* at its launch at Clickimin on Monday evening.

It had been a confusing book to write, said Mr Johnston, who had been commissioned to produce it by the Hamefarin committee two years ago. He had appealed for information about emigration from Shetland in the peak time of the 19th century until 1960, and was rewarded with first a trickle, then a flood, of information coming in from all over the world.

He spoke of the "wonderful" stories of the emigrants from a small population, with 120 stories involving 1,000 people. Original photos, some formal, others of scenes at home and work, and copies of handwritten letters used throughout the book had been given "generously" by relatives, he said, and these "brought the book to life". Many of these have now been gifted to Shetland Museum and Archives.

Emigrants, Mr Johnston said, often had "nothing to fear" as conditions elsewhere could not be worse than they were in Shetland.

To get their own home and a decent education for their children in a new country was seen as an achievement – and women played as important part in this as men.

Some made their mark – one became a friend of the First Nations people in Vancouver Island and taught them Fair Isle knitting.

Fewer women than men emigrated and (according to several Hamefarers) there were shipboard romances on the long, hard voyages to the new life.

Some, like Robert and Mamie Eunson from Dunrossness, were already married when they emigrated to USA in 1855. But tragedy struck when the couple both died of diphtheria in 1868, leaving their oldest son, 12-year-old Robert junior, responsible for five younger siblings. Unable to make a living himself, Robert took the children from door to door in Wisconsin to find homes for them – they all survived the experience and somehow managed to keep in touch. Robert junior's son Dale became a journalist and wrote about the events, which were later made into a 1956 film *All Mine to Give*.

Present at the book launch was the Rev Lisa Eunson from USA,

great-granddaughter of the original emigrants, who now works in Aberdeen. Her family had kept letters from Shetland which have now been given to Shetland Archives.

Ms Eunson said: "I feel like I've got some very brave genes. When things get tough in my life I know I've got it in me to survive."

There were other incredible stories too – and many Shetlanders did very well. Tom Work apparently owned half of Monterey, California; Magnus Flaws in Chicago ran a newspaper in the 1880s and 90s; John Mouat built half of Denver; while John Irvine in Dunedin earned a living as a portrait painter.

All the names, including a special section on mariners who formed a large proportion of the emigrants, are in the book's invaluable spreadsheet and index (in which he was helped by Nicola Halcrow from the council's development department).

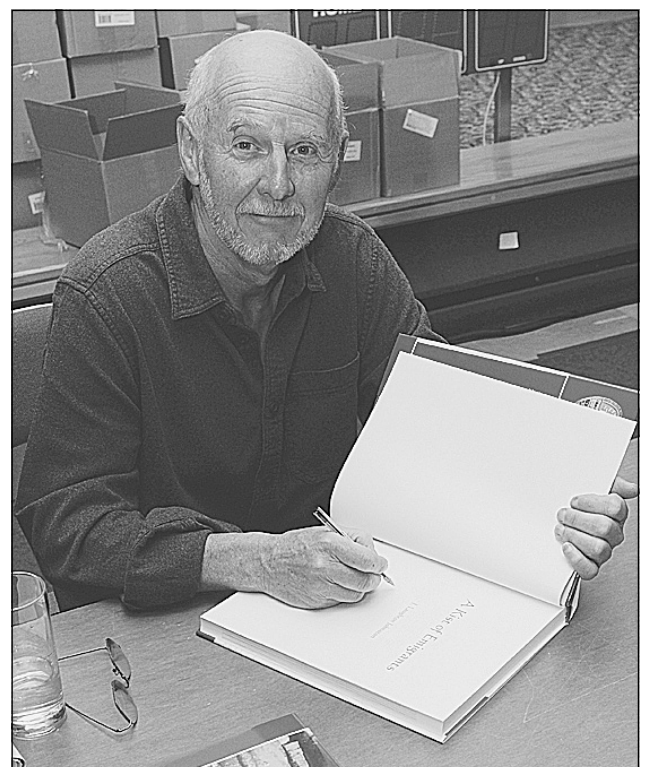
Mr Johnston said he had "jumped into" the huge undertaking of the book without knowing if he would sink or swim. But he said of the result: "I owe it all to the contributors."

But what did the emigrants leave behind? Shetland Museum and Archives curator of collections Ian Tait described the subsistence way of life of 19th century Shetland for the 30,000 plus population. This revolved round their smallholding, with the township (toon) for cultivation and the common grazing (scattald).

Many families had a cow and this would be their most important possession. They would also have sheep and poultry and work at fishing, with textile work in the winter.

However, the lowest classes had no livestock and Shetland endured famine every couple of decades. The imperative for emigration, Dr Tait said, was "opportunism and destitution".

Archivist Angus Johnson explained that emigration was well-established prior to the 19th century, however, with Shetlanders recorded in Rotterdam in the 1620s. It was not confined to poorer people – many of the middle classes could not find suitable work and were unwilling to work for low wages. Emigration, Mr Johnson concluded, was a "haunting" and "complex" issue.



Laughton Johnston signs copies of his book *A Kist of Emigrants*.

Photo: Dave Donaldson

# HAMEFARIN 2010



Shetland Fiddlers Society on stage at Clickimin.

Photo: Dave Donaldson

## Fiddlers pay fitting tribute to Anderson

By LOUISE THOMASON  
As part of the Hamefarin celebrations, a Tammy Anderson Tribute Concert was held in the Clickimin on Wednesday evening. Featuring some of Shetland's best known fiddlers and those who knew or were influenced by the man, the line-up included Catriona MacDonald, Shetland's Heritage Fiddlers and Aly Bain and Phil Cunningham.

Hosts for the evening were Mary Blance and Charlie Simpson, who did a fantastic job of introducing the acts, but more than this – and with the help of some lovely recordings of Tammy talking – helped to paint a picture of the man and bring him to life for the evening.

First to play were the Shetland Fiddlers Society. Originally formed in 1960 by Tammy for the first Hamefarin, the group is still going strong, although with different members, who played a selection of traditional tunes.

While the concert was mainly made up of those taught by Tammy, it included music that had inspired him, and the Norwegian Hardanger fiddle music from the Telemark region is one example.

Annbjörg Lien studied Hardanger fiddle from Hauk Buen, of the renowned musical Buen family in Norway with whom Tammy was great friends.

Annbjörg was joined on stage by Per Anders Buen Garnås, nephew of Hauk and Knut. They played several Hardanger tunes, which to my unaccustomed ear had unusual timing.

Their set also included a trio of tunes written by Knut, one of which was inspired by a trip to Shetland, and *I Vesterveg*, which features a poem written by Rhoda Bulter which Annbjörg recited.

Next up was the Heritage Fiddlers, a group known when they

were youngsters as Tammy's Peerie Angels.

Their lightsome set included some of his best known tunes, including *Da Slockit Light* and *Peter's Peerie Boat*, as well as some tunes written for Tammy and the Young Heritage by Bob McQuillen.

While respected for this playing and reciting, Tammy's legacy lives on thanks to his teaching and Shetland music may not be what it is were it not for his insistence on teaching fiddle in schools.

One of his best-known pupils and one of the original Peerie Angels was Catriona MacDonald, who played a truly fantastic set.

Joined by another Peerie Angel, Margaret Scollay, Catriona explained she had been bequeathed a Hardanger fiddle by Tammy, with the condition she visit Knut Buen to learn that style of music. While by her own admission this was not as successful as it might have been, the impish tune, *Tuddal Troll*, that she wrote as a gift to Knut well made up for it.

She was also joined by Annbjörg Lien, who she met while in Norway with the Young Heritage Fiddlers. The two have become best friends, and played a beautiful, mesmerising slow air, *Shingly Beach*, written by Tammy after a walk on Stenness in Eshaness.

The final act of the night was the duo of Aly Bain and Phil Cunningham. Aly is Shetland's best-known fiddler and one of Tammy's most successful pupils, and while his music was the main feature of the night, the anecdotes and snapshots of Tammy's life that he shared made the concert all the more special.

It was a brilliant night of music and remembrance which Shetlanders current and returning should be proud of.



Allan Leask, a founding member of Shetland Fiddlers Society.  
Photo: Dave Donaldson



Shetland's most famous fiddler Aly Bain was back.  
Photo: Dave Donaldson

## Canadian author visits Nicolson family roots

By ROSALIND GRIFFITHS  
Hamefarer and author Jim Stimson is visiting Shetland from Canada for the first time and has made a pilgrimage to the site of the former homes of his forebears, the Nicolsons.

His great grandparents Christina and William Nicolson and family lived in Aithsness, later moving to

Upper Setter, Clousta, then to Twatt. Four of their sons, including Jim's grandfather Malcolm, emigrated to Canada, along with their cousin Andrew Tait.

Malcolm arrived in Manitoba in 1905 and worked on a dairy farm where he met his future wife Jean. In 1919 their daughter Jean, Jim's mother, was born. Jim himself was

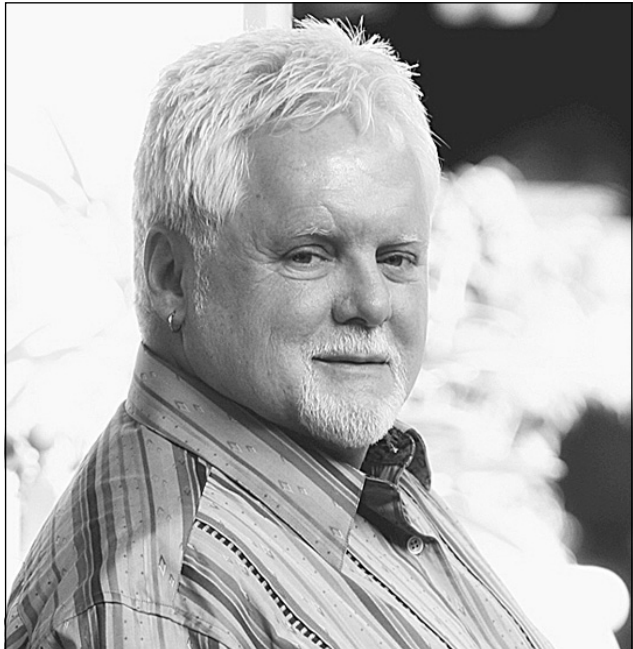
born in June 1946, and now lives in Vancouver, working in the area of addiction. [His recently published book about addiction, *An Act of Surrender*, in which he recommends the 12-step approach, is available at the Shetland Times Bookshop.]

Jim's great uncle Jimmy, one of the brothers who emigrated, had had a difficult birth in the 1880s. Dr Bowie, who lived across the voe, was sent for and rowed over to assist with the delivery. The baby was named James Cameron Bowie after the doctor – the names James Cameron have also been given to Jim.

During the excitement of the birth, nine-year-old Mary jumped up and down and hit her head on a beam. Dr Bowie went to her aid – and married her years later. She became Mary Bowie of Parkhall.

Jim has now fulfilled his wish of visiting the remains of the family homes (one of which will soon be cleared to build a new house) and of seeing the family graves.

He said: "If I hadn't come back at this time I could never have captured what it looked like. It was extremely emotional. There was a sense of completion to come back; it is the only place we can reach back to the history of our ancestors."



Canadian author Jim Stimson.

## Book will be a wake-up call

*An Act of Surrender* by James C. Stimson with Nancy E. Lee. Published by Trafford Publishing. ISBN 978-1-4251-8988-4.

Although it might seem that a book about addiction and recovery is for the specialist reader, *An Act of Surrender* is actually fascinating and worthwhile reading for everyone.

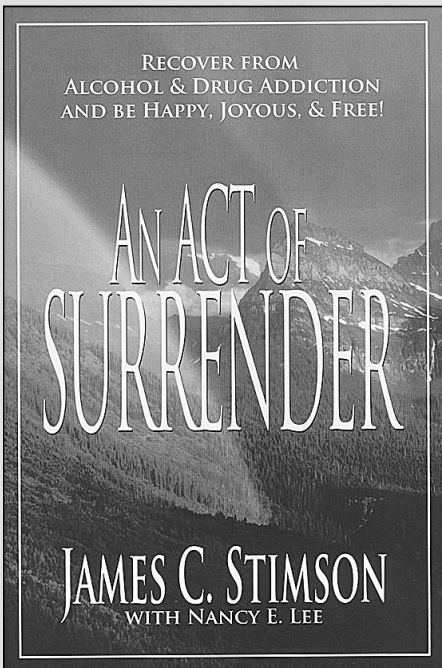
The book is the result of the knowledge gleaned by Jim Stimson through his years of addiction to drink (with a few drugs thrown in) and his many more years of recovery, and is both moving and educational.

Addiction, he argues, is an illness like any other – one which wreaks havoc not only in the lives of the addict but of those around them. The illness is genetic – Stimson tells of growing up with an alcoholic father and the sadness of having, despite his best efforts, an addicted son – and although there is no "cure", it can be treated.

The book will be a wake-up call to those who do not realise their drinking (or using) is causing problems to anyone except themselves. And it will offer valuable insights to those living with an addict (of alcohol or drugs) as to how they should handle the problem.

Because, says Stimson, anything that causes a problem (to others) is a problem. People around an addict may not realise that is what they are dealing with as there are different patterns of addiction. The drinker or user may go on benders but otherwise abstain. Or they may control their drinking or using so as never to be seen under the influence in public. However, the "loved ones" around them are affected.

These loved ones, Stimson says, often blame themselves, but that is not realistic. Addicts, he maintains, are selfish and self-centred. They are also emotionally immature people who like to regard themselves as "rebels", and delude themselves that they could stop drinking or using at any time. And of course they could, if they wanted to, but they are not convinced they are addicts anyway.



Stimson says: "Addiction is like an elevator that keeps going up and down. It stops at different floors from time to time when something happens and the addicts can get off."

Stimson got off at the age of 25 and is now 37 years into recovery, which involves complete abstinence.

A trained social worker who has spent the last 35 years working in the addictions field, including in the workplace, Stimson was formerly director of the employee and family assistance programme of Canada's then largest forest products company.

For more information on Stimson's work visit [www.actofsurrender.com](http://www.actofsurrender.com)

Rosalind Griffiths



## HAMEFARIN 2010



# One visitor will definitely not remember

Eleven-week-old Jamieson Hilton from California is the Hamefarin's youngest visitor.

He will not remember it, but he was presented with a Burra bear on Tuesday by the Hamefarin committee, to the delight of parents Scott and Chika (who is originally from Japan), aunt Amanda Hilton (Scott's sister) and grandmother Jamie Hilton (Scott's mother).

Jamie brought her son Scott to Shetland when he was 10 – he remembers the brochs and the fish and chips – and the family feel that baby Jamieson already has a strong connection to Shetland through his Japanese middle name Takeru, meaning persistent or strong (like the Anderson High School motto, Do weel and persevere).

Chika, who comes from Hiroshima and moved to the USA three years ago, said: "I love the landscape, it's so different from where I come from in Japan although Japan is an island too. But it's cold, I didn't expect to wear sweaters." She was delighted with the Burra bear gift, she said: "I almost bought one."

And the warm welcome Scott and Jamie experienced first time round has not changed. Jamie, who lives in Colorado, said: "There's such a warm feeling of home, as I have my cup of coffee in the morning I can almost feel my roots. Everyone we met has been so sweet."

Jamie's grandparents were William Goudie, born in 1879 and Edith Jamieson, born in 1890. Although from Shetland, both the Goudie and the Jamieson families lived in Glasgow at the time (William Goudie had been taken in by relatives when his father was lost at sea).

As a young man William Goudie learned about the rubber trade and this

took him to America. The Jamieson family also went there and the families re-connected in Rhode Island in 1900. William and Edith later married and their daughter, Betty Jean Goudie, married David Clarke, Jamie's late father, who started research on the family tree.

During their visit the Hiltons have been catching up with relatives, including the Inksters from Sandwick, related in the Goudie side, and other family members from as far away as New Zealand.

Scott said: "It's been fun meeting our cousins. And it's so beautiful here, the rocky bluffs are so lovely."

His sister Amanda, on her first visit, said: "I wasn't sure what to expect but I've been loving it. It's so beautiful and so green. In Colorado it's high desert. And we've had such a warm reception everywhere."

There was such a feeling of home, she said, that "Mum's looking at the For Sale signs."

Although she was enjoying the light nights she admitted to feeling slightly cold: "I've been buying woollen garments and mittens."

That was not the case for Scott, however. He did not feel the cold, he said, as their home near San Francisco is often "fogged in and not too hot".

The Jamieson family came from the now uninhabited isle of South Hava and the visitors were taken there by Bobby Hunter, which Jamie described as an "amazing, wonderful trip".

Relative Rosemary Inkster from Sandwick, who was also on the trip, said: "It was moving to see Jamie and Bobby with their pieces of paper and the research they'd done into a common ancestor, and to hear Bobby say there should be no romantic image. [Life there] was a hard struggle."



The youngest Hamefarin Jamieson Hilton with (from left) grandmother Jamie, father Scott, mother Chika and aunt Amanda.

Photo: Dave Donaldson

## Galley floats out on Clickimin Loch



A crowd gathered on Monday evening to watch as the Hamefarin Galley *Siglaheim* was launched onto Clickimin Loch. A delighted, and perhaps relieved, Ray Simpson at the head of the galley on her return to the jetty after a brave crew of men rowed her around the loch on her maiden voyage. Photos: Kenneth Shearer



## School pupils learn about Kiwi wildlife

Hamefarin Ruth Mainland from New Zealand assumed her usual role as a primary school teacher on Wednesday when she told a Shetland class about some of the wildlife down under.

Mrs Mainland, who teaches five-year-olds in Postgate Primary School, Portlouis, near Wellington, introduced class four pupils at Bell's Brae Primary School in Lerwick to the tuatara, an endangered reptile, and the fantail bird.

The tuatara – the name is Maori for spiny back – is thought to be a direct descendent of the dinosaur. The nocturnal greenish creature can live up to 100 years but is only found on offshore islands. Its eggs take between 13 to 15 months to hatch and it takes 10 years to come to maturity.

Around 20 pupils listened intently as Mrs Mainland read them a story about a tuatara and showed them a felt toy replica which emitted an authentic sound. The pupils then joined in a song about the creature, managing very well after hearing a recording only once.

Mrs Mainland also prepared cardboard cut outs of the tiny indigenous fantail bird, together with tails (bigger than the bodies) and wings, for the pupils to colour, fold and stick on.

Mrs Mainland said she wanted to "contribute a little bit of New Zealand to Hamefarin, people have done so much for us."

Head teacher Jennifer Wadley said she was delighted with Mrs Mainland's visit. "It fits in perfectly as the pupils have been learning about living things," she said.

The visit was the second to the school by a Hamefarin – Davie Thomason from Australia had been earlier in the week.





# HAMEFARIN2010

## Captain Jack presents book to marine centre

A Hamefaring sea captain with Shetland connections presented the NAFC Marine Centre library with the second edition of his new book last week.

Jack Isbester from Colchester comes from a seafaring family and his grandfather and great-grandfather were both sailing ship masters from Whiteness.

His book *Bulk Carrier Practice*, published by the Nautical Institute, provides interesting and practical advice to readers.

Capt Isbester said: "I was delighted to find the first edition of my book already in the well-equipped library at the NAFC and pleased to bring the collection up-to-date with this edition launched just one month ago.

"My aim for the book was to produce something that made for a valuable read that could be dipped in and out of, and not just left on a captain's bookshelf.

The more widely it is referred to, the happier I will be."

Accepting the book was NAFC Marine Centre librarian Ruth Priest.

She said: "I like Nautical Institute books, which are written by people with real maritime experience as these references are excellent and valuable ways to share knowledge with students."

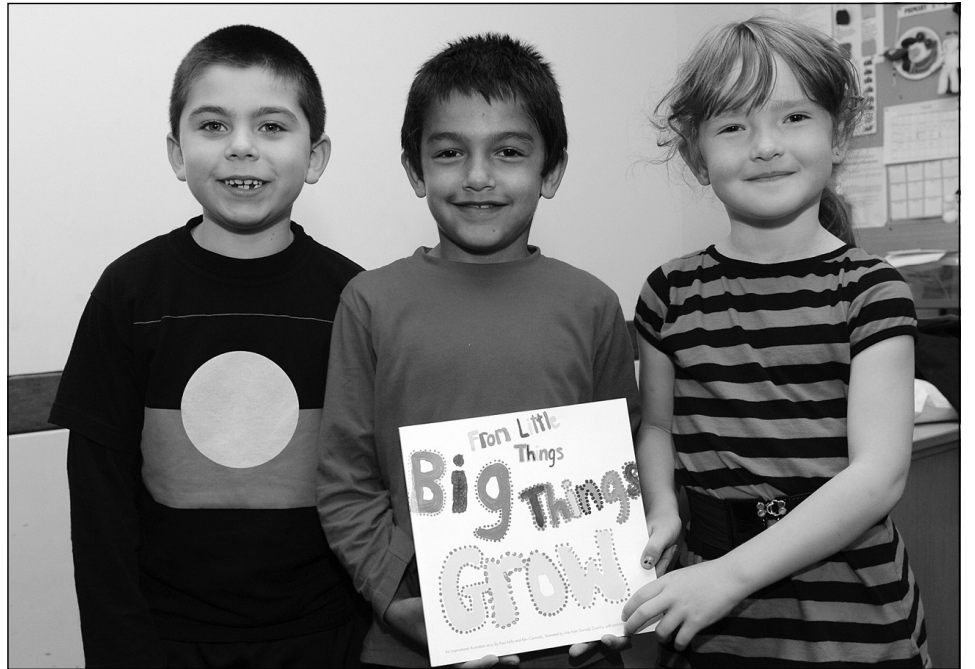
This is Capt Isbester's sixth time in Shetland. One of his previous visits had been as chief mate on the schooner *Sir Winston Churchill* in 1968/69 and, 30 years later, he was surprised that a distant relative still remembered hearing about his visit on the training ship.

He is looking forward to participating in many of the organised Hamefarin events and intends to return to Shetland later this year to research his next book, which will be a biography of his grandfather.



Ruth Priest accepts the book from Captain Jack Isbester.

Photo courtesy of NAFC Marine Centre



Magnie-Che Thomason (left) leaves a gift from his school in Australia with his cousins at Bell's Brae Primary School, Brandon Talukder and Shavanah Halvorsen-Reeve.

Photo: Dave Donaldson

## Bell's Brae links with Aussie

A link is to be set up between Bell's Brae Primary School and a primary school in the Australian state of Victoria.

The idea came from Hamefarer Davie Thomason, originally from Lerwick but now living near Geelong, 16 miles south of Melbourne.

The link will be between Bell's Brae, which Davie's elder son Davey attended in 1977 and Oberon Primary School, Belmont, where his younger son, seven-year-old Magnus-Che, has been a pupil for two years.

On Monday, during Bell's Brae assembly, Davie handed over a letter from Oberon headteacher Andrew Augerinos, offering to establish contacts between the schools.

The letter contains the quotation from Oliver Wendell Holmes: "Where we love is home, home that our feet may leave but not our hearts", and a book about the Aboriginal struggle in Australia *From Little Things Big Things Grow*, which Davie said was about persistence and reminded him of the Shetland motto "Do weel and persevere."

Magnus-Che, known as Magnie, is one of a small number of Aboriginal pupils at the 80-pupil school (and one of the Koorie, the collective term for Aboriginals in the Geelong area).

His mother Tanya is native Australian. When Magnie, who was born in Shetland, joined the school the Aboriginal flag was raised in his honour beside the Australian flag.

Davie was inspired to forge the connection, which will be carried on by internet, by the Global Classroom. "You never know what can happen from this when kids start contacting each other," he said.

And Mr Augerinos' letter said: "We cannot live only for ourselves."

Davie said there are many similarities between Lerwick and Geelong – both are seaports and in its heyday Geelong, "a small friendly town", exported wool. His father and uncles visited the port as seafarers and Davie feels he is "walking in their footsteps" when on the seafront.

## Courting letters inspire Kay's Love Story

By ROSALIND GRIFFITHS

Letters can be ephemeral objects, easy lost or destroyed, misplaced during housemoves or considered irrelevant as the years go on.

It is therefore remarkable that the letters that inspired Hamefarer Kay Wheatcroft to produce the book of her great grandparents' courtship have survived in excellent condition. Not only that, but Kay has the letters from both partners, neatly stacked in date order and wrapped in acid-free tissue paper in yearly bundles from 1858 to 1861.

The letters telling the story of Robert Jamieson (1827-1899) and Barbara (nee Laing, 1838-1923) will at some stage be gifted to Shetland Museum.

After the couple's deaths the letters, still in their tiny individual envelopes, bearing "penny red" stamps and addressed simply Robert Jamieson, Schoolmaster, Whiteness, or Miss Laing, Schoolhouse, Gulberwick, were sent to their son, one of their eight children, who lived in Dublin.

They eventually went to his son, Kay's father, in Leeds. However, before this the chest in which the letters were kept was put into storage

along with other family furniture. There was a fire at the warehouse, but miraculously the letters were not affected.

Kay's parents never managed to read all the letters but around 20 years ago Kay, now retired from a career spanning work in broadcasting, PR and stage management and based in York, decided to do so.

She said: "Each evening after work I would come home and sit in my great-grandfather's wooden chair and read a few letters. They were difficult to read fluently because of the cursive script so I had to read them slowly. Then I typed them out. In the days before word processors it took an age."

Kay later cut out "great gushing chunks" (strange to think the couple only actually met three or four times before their wedding) and "small gossip not intended for a wider public". Also ditched was a discussion on the life of social reformer Thomas Carlyle – Robert and Barbara were clearly rather intellectual.

Kay said: "I wanted to get the overall narrative of the courtship and their everyday lives."



Author Kay Wheatcroft and photographer Mark Sinclair at the book signing of *Shetland Love Story* at the Shetland Times Bookshop on Saturday.

Photo: Dave Donaldson

She approached various publishers about a book but was told the document she eventually prepared was "too sentimental for today's taste".

However, after seeing a book of

Shetland photographs taken by Mark Sinclair she had a "lightbulb moment". Her book, she decided, would have the letters' text in two columns on the left hand side, replicating the size of the original

letters, with black and white Shetland landscape photos on the right. Kay contacted Mark Sinclair and the pair collaborated for the next two and a half years without meeting.

Kay knew what she wanted: "The photos had to be very pared down and honest in the same way that I had edited the letters, [I wanted] the essence of everyday life."

The photos do reflect the text, however – one of a roofless house complements the letter describing how a schoolhouse roof has to be repaired, and another, with a description of Barbara's childhood, is accompanied by a photo of daisies.

Kay said she had found many of the letters very touching, especially the 19-year-old Barbara's worries about moving to Sandness (where Robert later taught) after being in Gulberwick all her life, and of the problem of how to get a ring the right size when she and Robert hardly met.

Kay said: "When I typed the letters I imagined my own life compared to them. I've got a warm bedroom and bathroom, I can cook a joint of meat in the oven, but the heart and head is the same."

Also in Kay's possession is the handstitched waistcoat of heavy floral cotton Robert wore to his wedding. It was presented to the museum this week.

## A rare glimpse into what was intended to remain private

***Shetland: A Love Story* by Kay Wheatcroft. Published by The Shetland Times Ltd at £20.**

This book features a collection of love letters written during the mid 19th century. In it you won't find any mention of phones, emails, cars, or the shorthand messages found in texting which seem to fill many of our lives these days.

Our instantaneous society seems to have completely lost the beautiful art of letter writing. I thought that the idea sounded good when I saw the pre-publication advertising, and I have thoroughly enjoyed the read.

Kay Wheatcroft, the editor, is the great-granddaughter of Robert Jamieson and Barbara Laing, and has

brought to life this long-distance courtship of the late 1850s. By long-distance, I mean from Sandness to Gulberwick.

Think back to a time when 16 months could pass before the couple were able to see each other again.

Think of the formality of the time – "My dear Jamieson . . ." – a form of address which is so unknown to today's familiarity.

The descriptions of everyday activities and events fill this book with accounts of social history of the period.

Their simple but hard lives were regulated by the landscape, the weather and the seasons.

A photographer arriving at Sandness was viewed at

first by the locals as a visitation of the black arts, although opinions soon began to change.

"After a day or two this feeling became considerably weakened, if not entirely eradicated and there was a rage, a demand, a mania for likeness taking which was truly inspiring. Married wives came dressed in their bridal attire, young lasses decked in their finest and best, married men in their Sunday's coat and with their Sunday's face and young lads with hair shining, sailor's tie and best and bravest jackets."

Life was definitely a different experience from what we have today.

Mark Sinclair's photographs take the book to another level. The evocative black and white photos are deliberately used to show Shetland as it would have appeared

to Robert and Barbara, with locations ranging from Hermaness to Dunrossness.

Beautiful seascapes with swirling tides sweeping over rocks, sheep's oo caught on barbed wire, lonely roads, and a stark Scalloway castle all feature thoughtfully within these pages.

The book has been beautifully put together from the pictures of the envelopes inside the front cover, with their penny stamps, to the postscript giving the history of the letters.

The love and humour shine through these letters – a rare glimpse into what was intended to be a private correspondence. The letters can be read in full, or dipped into at will – whatever is your pleasure.

Sylvia Taylor



# Sentimental journey back rekindles fond memories

By ROSALIND GRIFFITHS

Hamefarer Bill Gardner, a Scotsman now living in Canada, is both an immigrant and an emigrant. Last week he made a sentimental journey to the isles he has not seen for 46 years.

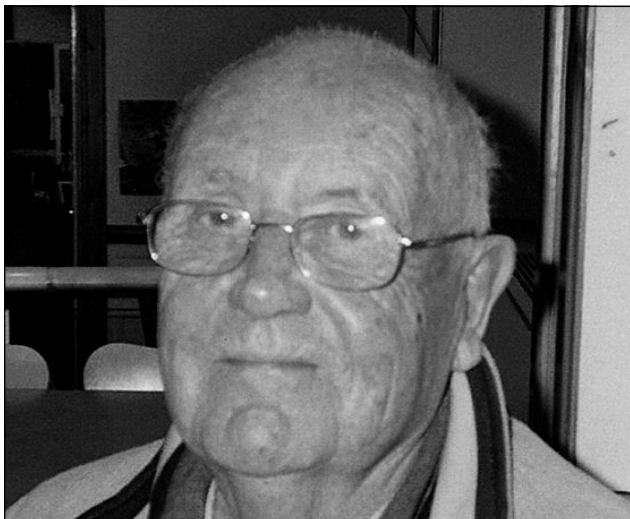
Bill has strong Shetland links – his father William was born in Fetlar in 1902 – and he heard last week that the first Gardner may have come to the isle in the 17th century.

Bill was brought up in Dalmeny, near Edinburgh, and has been coming to the isles since 1948. In those days he stayed with his grandmother Andrina Gardner and cousin the late Alastair (father of music promoter Davie Gardner) at Clickimin Road, Lerwick, and took the *Earl of Zetland* to stay with his father's cousins at Funzie in Fetlar.

In 1959 as a young teacher he returned to the isles with his wife Moira and baby daughter to be the teacher and missionary in Papa Stour, while Moira, who died two years ago, became the district nurse. There were 16 families there at the time, with eight or nine pupils in the school.

Last week Bill returned to Papa Stour and was delighted to meet his last pupil Gordon Jamieson (son of former mail boat operator John Jamieson) and hear news of other former pupils. He was impressed by the developments that have taken place in the isle but saddened by the population decline.

He said: "It was quite emotional going across by ferry from Burra-firth, in my day it was the mail boat



Bill Gardner

from Sandness and the airstrip happened after I left.

"It threw me, seeing cars on the ferry. When I was there I had a motorised bike, the only other motorised thing was a tractor owned by Alec Jamieson.

"The living conditions have changed so much for the better now but the people aren't there – it makes me sad."

Conditions were very primitive when he was there, he recalled, with no electricity or running water: "We had to walk to the well 100 yards from the school house. It would dry up in the summer and we would have a yoke with two pails on to get water from the loch."

Soon after arriving in Papa Stour

the family suffered a setback – Bill developed a brain tumour, suffering headaches so bad that he could not stand up. The mail boat made a special run to take him to the Mainland and the Gilbert Bain Hospital pronounced him so ill he went straight to Aberdeen.

Moira, who had accompanied him to Lerwick and by this time was pregnant again, was left pushing a pram around Lerwick, unsure as to where to go. The 22-year-old told a taxi driver she was thinking of checking in the Queens Hotel, but he insisted on taking her to his friends, the Cheyne family.

She lodged there for the next three months until Bill had finished radio therapy in Aberdeen. The

family would take no payment – proof, said Bill, of the "absolute hospitality" of Shetlanders.

The Gardners left Papa Stour in 1961 for Bill to take a teaching job in Scotland. His last contact with Shetland, until last week, was when he brought a party of schoolchildren to Shetland in 1964. They went to Papa Stour and saw a Tammy Anderson rehearsal. "Everything was an adventure to them."

In 1967 Bill, Moira and their growing family, eventually to number eight children, emigrated to Canada where they thought there would be more opportunities for their offspring.

Bill, who could speak French, opted for the French-speaking province of Quebec, where he became the director of the only English-speaking school in the district. The children became bi-lingual and the family now boasts 23 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, all in Canada.

Bill had always been interested in exploring his family tree and had wondered where the name Gardner came from. He heard last week from a fellow Hamefarer that John Gardner, allegedly a survivor of a shipwreck (having possibly been press-ganged) might have been the first of the family to reach Fetlar in 1683. Bill said: "It was a complete and utter revelation to me."

This story confirms his opinion of Shetlanders, whether emigrants or not. "They are so adaptable, the original DIY people."



Ethel Hofman receives the award from Christopher Moore.

## Business school award

Former Lerwick woman Ethel G Hofman received the Alumni Achievement Award for 2009 from her alma mater, Glasgow Caledonian University on 18th June from vice dean of Glasgow Caledonian Business School Christopher Moore.

Ethel, who received her award for a lifetime of work in the food and drink industry, is the daughter of the late Jean and Harry Greenwald of Lerwick. She returned to Shetland as a Hamefarer this week and gave a talk to fellow visitors on her book *Mackerel at Midnight*, which describes growing up in the only Jewish family in Shetland.

Ethel's father Harry came to Shetland with his father in the 1920s, as an immigrant from Russia after World War I.

The family later moved to Glasgow, where Harry met and married Ethel's mother Jean and where Ethel was born. But Harry never forgot the welcome he had had in Shetland and moved back with his family, setting up a shop and business that took clothes and jewellery to Shetland's outlying areas. This was remembered by one of the audience at Ethel's Hamefarin talk as a "lifeline".

Ethel's brother Roy refurbished the Commercial Street shop in the 1970s and sold it in the 1990s.

Ethel has lived in Philadelphia, USA, since 1960, and has worked as a consultant to many food companies and on a training programme for waiters and waitresses.

She is also a syndicated food columnist, contributing to many American newspapers, and also writes features – her next will be one about Shetland's Sunday teas.

# Viking board game proves hard for visitors to master

A group of intrepid Hamefarers put their skills to the test on Monday morning when they ventured forth for a game of Hnefatafl, popular with the Vikings.

The game, mentioned in the Icelandic sagas as "tafl", is thought to have been based on a naval battle. It was known in the fourth and fifth centuries, and introduced more recently to Shetland by Fetlar resident Peter Kelly.

Mr Kelly teaches the game to children in Fetlar and has also organised tournaments in the isle, including a junior tournament last year.

This week he took on the Hamefarers, equipping them with boards with coloured squares and black and white pieces made of plaster – originally they would have

been beach pebbles. He said: "It's simpler than chess but not as simple as it looks."

Studying the squared board was Hamefarer Rosemary Mallace from Manchester, who said: "It's not as simple as draughts; you have to think ahead."

Mr Kelly said: "As long as you've got your king you've got a chance."

The aim is to get the king to the corners of the board, but he cannot be moved diagonally.

Mrs Mallace, who was brought up in Shetland, said: "At least I'm getting beaten by a grandmaster" (which Mr Kelly is).

Mr Kelly's wife Janet explained that the couple's interest in the game started when they were given a set. She said: "The game was

displaced by chess brought back by crusaders in the Middle Ages. Hnefatafl was considered more ordinary."

However, it was all new to Australian sisters Heather Le Ray and Rae Doak, who had made several previous visits to Shetland but never come across the game.

Their connection to Shetland is through their great-grandparents, master mariner Peter Mouatt, born in 1849 in North Roe, and his wife Lillias Jamieson. They married in 1885 when he was 35 and she was 17, and emigrated the following year with their 10-month-old baby Jessie, the sisters' grandmother.

The sisters donated Lillias' black wedding dress to Shetland Museum on a previous visit.



Australian sisters Rae Doak (left) and Heather Le Ray play hnefatafl at Isleburgh.

Photo: Dave Donaldson

# North Roe trip reveals ruins of family crofts

Hamefarer Peter Rutter recently had a trip round Uyea and North Roe, discovering the ruined homes of forebears he did not know he had until recently.

Peter, who was born in Chester and who now lives in Linlithgow with his wife Enid, had already holidayed in Shetland without realising he had a link to the isles.

It was only in 1997, after his nephew mentioned a Shetland connection, that the couple went to the Family History Society and discovered Peter is descended from the Ratter family.

Peter's great-grandfather Charles Ratter, born in Uyea in 1820, went to Liverpool in the 1840s and

married Liverpoolian Ann, living in Toxteth with their large family.

Charles, who was first a servant in one of the poshest streets in the city (Rodney Street, populated by private medical practitioners) and later a grocer, and his brother John, a seafarer, are mentioned in the 1861 census. Charles died in 1864 when Peter's grandfather was only four years old.

Somehow, Peter thinks, the name Ratter became Rutter, as everything was handwritten at that time. The family never returned to Shetland and Peter said his late parents never spoke about the isles.

Peter and Enid are now enjoying their eighth visit to Shetland, and he is grateful to landowner Maurice Laurensen for showing him the old family sites, in what was a fishing community.

Peter said: "I can't understand how they lived there – we have so many mod cons – it must have been a very hard life." Poverty would have driven people to leave Shetland, he surmised. "If they couldn't get a place on a sixteen they would have to leave for lack of work."

One interesting anecdote of the time concerns the church. Charles' father Henry, baptised in Uyea in 1782, became interested in the new religion of Methodism that

was sweeping the isles in the early years of the 19th century.

He received permission from the Church of Scotland to go to meetings, but was not allowed to pledge himself to Methodism by giving his name and address.

Henry and his relative Christian, who would have had to travel to meetings by boat, did pledge themselves and were subsequently hauled up before the Kirk Session. Their punishment is not recorded, but one of the earliest Methodist chapels in Shetland is in North Roe.

# Recalling the advent of 'liberal' Methodism in the isles

During the Hamefarin fortnight the Methodist Church in Lerwick's Hillhead has been hosting an exhibition celebrating 200 years of Methodism, a religion founded by John and Charles Wesley and which took root in Shetland in the early 1800s.

The pioneer of Shetland Methodism was John Nicolson, born in Queenssetter, Aithsting in 1790, who served in the Napoleonic wars and converted to Methodism in London.

Poor health saw him return to Shetland in 1819, and he set about preaching in the West Side, gathering around 70 people into five unofficial meetings. At first these would have been in the open air but later chapels sprung up.

Mr Nicolson appealed to the Methodist conference for help to cope with the numbers interested in the religion, and two energetic young Englishmen, John Raby and Samuel Dunn, came to the isles.

President of the conference, Adam Clarke, visited the isles twice – Lerwick's Methodist Church bears his name.

Chapels began to be built – in Lerwick's Mounthooly Street in 1824, Sandwick in 1825 and in pockets around the isles, especially in the West Side and North Isles – Sandness in 1824, Walls and Westerskeld in 1826, North Roe in 1828 and Haroldswick, where the chapel has recently been rebuilt, in 1829.

Methodism, which happened at a time of social change after the Napoleonic wars, was given an uncertain welcome by the Church of Scotland. According to current Lerwick Methodist minister the Rev Jeremy Dare it offered a more liberal approach to religion with its tuneful singing and appealed to the "grass roots" of the population.

Mr Dare said: "People were in awe of the laird and the minister and this was

something novel. People connected with it, a religion of the heart."

There were once 19 chapels, he said, often built between communities so as to be within walking distance. Now there are fewer, but they are still used.

North Roe, for example, has recently had a new ramp and disabled toilet installed and Mr Dare said the possibility of using the chapel during the week for older folk and young people was being investigated.





# Scalloway school pupils protest over closure plan

Kirsty Uttley, Jessica Johnson and David Nugent of SJHS launch campaign against council

See page 8

## Hamefarin climax as galley burns at Clickimin



**THOUSANDS** gathered to watch the galley *Siglaheim* set alight in Clickimin Loch to mark the end of the 2010 Hamefarin on Saturday night. Story and more photographs, p.17-19. **Photo:** Kenneth Shearer

## New chief takes stock

The SIC's new top official will adopt a collegiate approach to getting the authority out of the mess it is in when he takes over on an interim basis in early August.

Alistair Buchan, 46, was in Shetland on Tuesday after councillors in Orkney, where he is currently chief executive, approved his secondment for more than two years.

Speaking at the end of the second day of the Accounts Commission hearing into the appointment and departure of his predecessor David Clark and the turmoil the council has faced in the last year, Mr Buchan told *The Shetland Times* he wanted to work with senior officials, councillors and the community generally to build a consensus on the way forward.

"The worst possible thing for me to do would be to come into Shetland with a load of preconceived ideas about what I am going to do, because that may just be counter-productive with people," he said.

"I think people who know me in Orkney would say that I'm a team player, I lead from within a team. I think it is vitally important that you are not seen to be the person who comes in with all the ideas. I want to engage with the councillors in Shetland, the management and all the staff, and bring people together so that it is a shared way forward. That's what I'm desperately keen to achieve.

**Full coverage of Accounts Commission hearing, pages 2-6**

"I'm really looking forward now to sitting down with the councillors, with the management team, with the staff, with other key players up here and working through together what we are going to do. It's not that I don't have ideas, I've got lots of ideas, but they need to be shared ideas."

At the top of Mr Buchan's intray when he starts work on 9th August is likely to be the findings of the Accounts Commission, which will report back shortly after the public sessions at the Town Hall on Monday and Tuesday during which the key players in the events

(Continued on page two)

## Harsh financial reality bites as council faces £17m shortfall

■ 'Culture change' urgently required to tackle daunting situation ■ Jobs and services at risk as cut in government support looms

By NEIL RIDDELL

The SIC needs a radical "culture change" in the way it operates to tackle a "daunting" budget shortfall of up to £17 million next year which is likely to see jobs cut and a declining level of services in some areas as the national financial crisis begins to bite, councillors were told this week.

Members are under no illusion about the size of the challenge they face after a stark report by depute chief executive Hazel Sutherland left them feeling like they had just had "a bucket of cold water" poured over their heads, in the words of one councillor.

Ms Sutherland outlined the "worrying" picture to members at Wednesday's Full Council, prompting some to express fear that if the potentially savage cuts to the organisation, which employs around 4,000 people, are not managed carefully it could

spark a population exodus over the next decade.

Her report recognised the tough action required could result in job cuts at a time when alternative employment avenues are unlikely to be available for many. It could also create disruption to services, cause dissatisfaction and disagreement within the community about what should be cut and foment staff and union unrest.

Coupled with an expected reduction of between £3-4 million in its block grant from the Scottish government, upward spending pressures on areas like community care and savings from yet-to-be-implemented reforms to the ports and harbours operation already having been banked, some extremely tough decisions lie ahead for the isles' beleaguered councillors.

Such is the extent of the "brutal" challenge they face that the outspoken Jonathan Wills said he had agreed to lay aside his differences

of opinion with convener Sandy Cluness, as members come to recognise the importance of presenting a united front for the sake of the community. The pair shook hands at Lystina House on Wednesday.

Councillors are facing up to the unappetising prospect of a two-year period before the next election where the sorts of protests seen over the introduction of charging for music tuition, axing knitting lessons and proposals to shut schools will become increasingly commonplace.

They have agreed to create an executive team to work with councillors between now and the end of the year on identifying savings and areas where income can be increased from fees and charges, commencing the exercise six months earlier than normal.

A "spend to save" budget to help department heads target early retirement and voluntary redundancies is to be brought in. Ms Sutherland assumes a provisional wage increase of

one per cent next year, but she does moot the possibility of a freeze on staff pay which would save £900,000 from the wage bill.

Both ports and harbours and the schools service, which has already embarked on a longer term drive to shed £6 million from its budget, are to be exempt from the exercise. A high-level review of how care services are delivered is also to be carried out, meaning that at this stage that area won't have to make "too much of a contribution" to the overall savings target.

Members were told that only £75 million of the annual £131 million budget consists of statutory spending, with the remaining £56 million going on services it chooses to provide over and above its legal responsibilities. In light of that Gussie Angus said it was pretty clear that SIC representatives "pleading poverty" at Holyrood was "going to ring a bit hollow".

(Continued on page six)

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## HAMEFARIN 2010



# Up-Helly-A' gets a summer makeover as Hamefarers taste the Viking flavour



The galley alight after the torches were thrown in from the special jetty erected at the loch's edge.

Photo: John Coutts

By ROSALIND GRIFFITHS

Two aspects of Shetland culture, music and a Viking procession, made a spectacular end to two weeks of Hamefarin on Saturday night.

The evening at Clickimin started with Final Fling performances from the pick of local bands – and 400 flaming torches with accompanying fireworks ensured the proceedings ended with a bang.

First up on stage was Sheila Henderson, who delighted the massed ranks of Hamefarers and locals with her powerful singing. Renowned fiddler Bryan Gear followed, with a selection of jigs and reels from Cape Breton to Ireland. Accompanist Violet Tulloch complemented his playing superbly.

Bryan, a former student of the late Willie Hunter, paid tribute to another legend of Shetland fiddle playing, Tammy Anderson, with a faultless rendition of Anderson's slow air *Daybreak*, a wistful tune that has yet to be published.

Then came a surprise item – a performance by a hastily-assembled Kiwi choir, apparently a Hamefarin tradition but one which New Zealand women in the audience had known nothing about until the last few days. Had they been practising? Not really, they said, as cameras were passed into the hands of strangers to make sure the performance was captured.

The large group were in good voice for Roger Whittaker's *The Last Farewell*, although standing in front of the audience rather than on the stage made them difficult to see.

Hom Bru were next, with an engaging blend of tuneful playing and banter. As an introduction to the song *Rowin Foula Doon* it was explained

that band member Davie Henry, wearing his Jarl's Squad outfit, is from Foula – and was on stage in his "national costume", ready for the festivities later on.

But it was their impassioned playing that really impressed the audience, with tunes from Stevie Spence and their singing of *Da Merry Boys o' Greenland* and a trowie song. The subtle lighting of ever-changing rainbow hues added to the effect – at one point they seemed to be singing in a green mist. The audience loved it and cameras flashed continually.

"Fantastic," said an Australian woman, who must have been the only person from that country in the concert not to have known about Hamefarin. She and her husband had just arrived on holiday and it was "serendipitous" that an evening of her favourite music was taking place. They had seen the next act, headliners Fiddlers' Bid, in Melbourne, she said, and loved them. And the band were every bit as good as she remembered.

After some Norwegian tunes, clarsach player Catriona McKay played a composition about Shetland's sail training boat *Swan*, her notes like the sound of lapping water complemented by soft fiddles.

The band chatted to the audience and performed a lively set through blue, gold and purple light. Dancers appeared at the front, leaving the chairs where they had been tightly wedged against tables to move in time to the music. The fiddling was fast and furious and had the crowd clapping and cheering and yelling "more" as it came to an end.

The finale, *Skeklers*, with three straw figures moving among the

(Continued on page 18)

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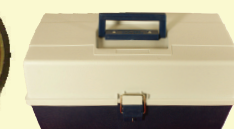


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Hundreds of people lined up to watch the torchlit parade.

Photo: Kenneth Shearer





# HAMEFARIN2010

## Visitors enthralled by musical prowess as

(Continued from page 17)  
dancers, delighted the audience as they prepared to move outside into the grey twilight to see more guizers, this time of the Viking variety.

Hamefarer Ruth Mainland said of Fiddlers' Bid: "They were out of this world." And Katrina Inkster from Sandwick said: "They were amazing, as always", adding that fiddler Chris Stout had been her brother Richard's best man at his recent wedding in Norway – and the band had played at the celebrations.

Their relative, Hamefarer Jamie Hilton, was enraptured by the band: "If they come to Denver they can stay at mine."

Her grandson and one of Hamefarin's youngest visitors, 12-week old Jamieson Hilton, was among the throng leaving the concert. He had slept throughout, being rocked in his pram in time to the music. Now, well-wrapped up, he was taken onto the football pitch.

A good-natured crowd pressed along the fence as the isles' Jarl's Squads assembled in flanks around Clickimin Loch, with locals making way to let the Hamefarers have the front spots: "We can see this anytime." Eventually torches were

lit and parading started to the traditional tunes around the loch. The galley *Siglaheim* was rowed from the south end to a landing stage with Tom Ward, 11, winner of the galley-naming competition, throwing the first torch.

*Siglaheim* was well alight before the last torch went into the water, a beacon against the now black hillside and the orange flames reflecting in the dark water. "It's primal," said Jamie.

The burning of the galley on the water was a tradition started with the first Hamefarin in 1960, and some of the locals remembered being overawed by the event when they saw it in their youth. Now the Hamefarers marvelled at the whole experience. "So well organised" [by Shetland Islands Council's development department], they said, with emphasis on the feeling of being "at home".

This comes from being in the land of their forebears and the family ties that have been maintained across continents. Thus the baby Hamefarer, who is half Japanese, is part of the Hilton family in America, who are related to the Inksters in Shetland (and New Zealand) just one example of the united nations of Hamefarin.

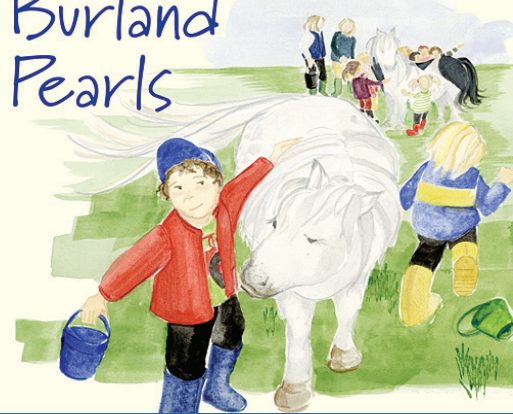


Light-up time next to the campsite.

Photo: Kenneth Shearer

*"Da Burland croft in Trondra," said Bobby, "wir gaein dere in a mini bus. I canna wait."*

Bobby an da  
Burland  
Pearls



By Valerie Watt  
Illustrated by Mary Fraser

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A separate band of guizers frame Clickimin Broch with a torchlit procession.

Photo: Kenneth Shearer



The fireworks are set off into the night as the galley burns on the loch.

Photo: Kenneth Shearer



## HAMEFARIN2010



# Final Fling leaves them begging for more



Dancing the night away at the Hamefarin Dance were Agnes and Tommy Leighton from Scatness.  
Photo: Kenneth Shearer



The packed dance floor at the Hamefarin Grand Dance.  
Photo: Kenneth Shearer



Davie Henry in his "national costume".

Photo: Kenneth Shearer



Maurice and Kevin Henderson of Fiddlers' Bid in action at the Final Fling.

Photo: Kenneth Shearer

## Clark's talent for comedy and tragedy

Two performances at opposite ends of the theatrical spectrum showcased playwright Jacqueline Clark's wide-ranging talent and delighted audiences last week.

Dialect play *Will Shu* was unrelieved tragedy. By contrast *Shetland in 60 Minutes* was comedy based on the game show format, a hilarious romp through Shetland general knowledge.

*Will Shu* is set in Firth in 2000, exactly 100 years after the Delting Disaster in which 22 local men were lost, and the bleak sense of loss is recaptured in a modern tragedy.

A complex play in which past and present intertwine, it has the sea as the common feature of the events and the setting, on the beach at Firth, is significant. Old ruined croft houses line the shore on the southern side of the voe – facing them are the modern schemes built for the incoming oil workers in the 1970s. And between them, underground and out of sight, runs the oil pipeline, the reason why many people now live in the area which was wiped out by the 1900 fishing disaster.

The play starts by recalling the modern tragedy – young Jess (Debbie Wynn) was asked to look after her little sister Freya while playing on the beach. But Freya is lost and Jess cannot leave the water that took her sister. She narrates the terrifying flashback and grief is interwoven with that of the earlier loss of 22 men.

The appearance of period-clad



Gansie (James Watt) and Filsket (Helen Whitham) are blindfolded as they try to guess Florence Grains' identity.  
Photo: Keith Morrison

Maggie (Carla Murdoch) nursing a blanket bundle, mourning the baby she never had a century ago is deeply moving.

Past and present merge and the sense of loss is never healed, although a touch of reality is injected at the end when Jess's mother Brenda (Jane McKay) shouts at her daughter, telling her of the struggle she had when her husband, Jess's father, left the family home.

A simple stage set of an upturned boat and the same (and only) three figures on stage during the short play, coupled with the absence of props, helped reinforce the pain of

the piece. Moody music and atmospheric lighting complemented the convincing acting.

The intensity lightened with *Shetland in 60 Minutes*. The Monumental Invaders took on the Wizzards in a quiz – the incompetent panellists (including a Viking, a glamorous girl called Filsket and a knitting expert, Gansie) which first had the format of *Call My Bluff*. The meaning of *begrutten*, the incompetent panellists hazarded, could be a beetroot from Foula, a disease of sheep's feet or the feeling after a night drinking Blue Wicked. And so on. The host, sharp-suited

Sidney Sixty Degrees (Keith Williamson) had them gutting fish, finding the odd one out in a picture round and introduced surprise guests of Davy Cooper and Florence Grains.

After unwittingly shaking hands with the latter, Gansie declared: "I'll never wash my hands again."

The audience loved it and the two performances complemented each other perfectly. *Will Shu* won the McLellan Playwriting Award in 2007 for new Scots or Scots dialect plays, and Clark's success should encourage her future writing.

Rosalind Griffiths

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