

Northern Lights

INSIDE

Cover Story:

Muckle Flugga
Lighthouse

PLUS

Burra Bears

History of
Stromness

Hidden Gems
of Caithness



Discover more at www.northlinkferries.co.uk

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Welcome

I write this introduction whilst most of Scotland is in the grip of mid-January snowstorms, Motorists and commercial vehicle drivers have had to spend the night in their vehicles as blizzard conditions closed in around them. Likewise my operational teams on shore and off shore have already been challenged this year with early January service disruption. We use a range of weather indicators and sea condition predictors to analyse likely weather conditions over our operating area and I know the team are very conscious of the impact which cancellation, weather re-routing and service delay can have on travel plans. As ever of course, 'caution' is the byword in terms of operational decision making.

We are prepared for the introduction of RET in the first half of 2018. Our Database and Booking system team of Lesley and Shona, based in Stromness are ready and waiting for a final 'go-live' date and once advised, we are confident that we will have the RET rates input and ready for booking within a matter of days for RET priced travel. In the meantime it is business as usual with our timetables for 2018 published with cabins and car deck available for booking since October last year.

On this front we are also pleased that the development of our NorthLink booking app, which essentially replicates our booking system, will be live for all users from Spring 2018. It's out there already, but we've been busy giving the system some fairly rigorous testing, supported by a number of regular customers. My thanks to you all for your support in developing this exciting new feature which is a real enhancement to our mobile connectivity.

As we press on into 2018 and the Year of Young People a range of NorthLink initiatives will take shape. My colleagues from Orkney, James Linklater and Kris Bevan, are managing this programme of events which will go a long way in supporting #yoyp2018. Included in these initiatives will be two bursaries to support #yoyp2018 travel, enabling real experiential opportunities for both an Orkney and Shetland recipient. Please keep an eye on our social media feeds for more detail.

In and around Aberdeen the progress on the AWPR continues and indeed road junctions and previously used routes may have been altered to accommodate on-going works. These works are compounded by the A96 contra-flow for the new AECC development at Bucksburn. Please check travel updates and take care where new or temporary junctions have been installed. So once again, particularly if you are not a regular traveller, leave yourself enough time to arrive safely at your embarkation Port for check-in and have a safe onward journey at your destination.

As ever, enjoy your time on board. My colleagues are on hand to assist you at every stage of your journey, both ship and shore.



Stuart Garrett
Managing Director
Serco NorthLink Ferries

Contact Stuart

I would welcome your feedback at any time. If you have any questions, then please contact me at speaktostuart@northlinkferries.co.uk

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#MagnusOnTour

We're delighted to announce that Robert and Kim Foden are our most recent #MagnusOnTour winners!

The couple, from Kirkwall in Orkney, took their photo just north of the Arctic Circle at latitude 69° north, 52° west in front of magnificent icebergs in Disko Bay, Greenland.

Taken in June, the shot is now perfectly seasonal for this edition of the magazine!

Robert and Kim are now in receipt of two return tickets to Aberdeen, Caithness or Shetland for use on any of our passenger vessels.



Our winners Kim & Robert Foden

Your chance to win a trip for two



For your chance to win, simply post a picture of yourself in an eye-catching location with a NorthLink Ferries product featuring the iconic Magnus logo on any of our social media channels. Use the hashtag **#MagnusOnTour** to be in with a chance to win. Alternatively send your photo of Magnus on Tour to webmaster@northlinkferries.co.uk

See the winning picture in Issue 8 of Northern Lights.

Terms and conditions:

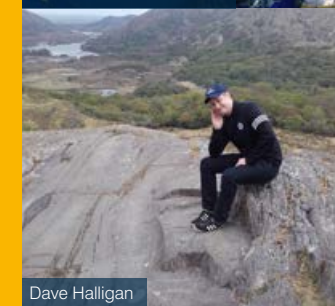
Package includes return travel on any route for two including car and standard cabin, valid for 12 months from the date of the draw. Cabins are available on overnight sailings only. The prize is subject to availability, non-transferable or refundable and no cash alternative will be offered. Upgrades available on request.



David and Jack McShane



Maggie B



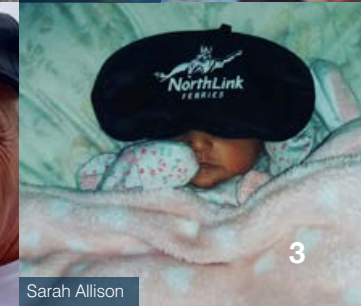
Dave Halligan



Maggie and Mia



Ian Bell



Sarah Allison

Essential reading for your Island Adventure

We've hand-picked five books which offer an insight into the unique culture and history of Orkney.

The Orkney Book of Birds

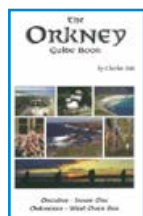
by Tim Dean and Tracy Hall



The Orkney islands are a birdwatcher's paradise. This book lists nearly 200 birds which you may spot during your time on the islands, as well as invaluable advice on how to find them. It's available in a coffee table version as well as a handy pocket guide.

The Orkney Guide Book

by Charles Tait



An essential purchase, this book covers each site, parish and island that Orkney has to offer. Packed with Charles Tait's photos, the guidebook is well-illustrated and contains Ordnance Survey maps, old photographs and prints to add to its exhaustive research.

Greenvoe

by George Mackay Brown



The famous Scottish poet George Mackay Brown lived in Stromness and penned *Greenvoe*, his first novel, in 1972. It tells the story of a close-knit island community disrupted by modern industry. The novel captures life on a small island perfectly.

The Boy with the Bronze Axe

by Kathleen Fidler



Suitable for children and adults alike, the tale offers a historical insight into daily life at the Neolithic village of Skara Brae. The arrival of a stranger with a metal axe throws the Stone Age society into confusion whilst a deadly storm threatens their very way of life.

Orkney Folk Tales

by Tom Muir



In days past, Neolithic burial cairns such as Maeshowe were thought to be houses for trows and were feared by islanders. Perhaps it is folklore that preserved many of Orkney's great archaeological sites? The brilliant storyteller Tom Muir collects the folk tales of Orkney in this entertaining book which has been beautifully illustrated by Sheila Faichney.

We've compiled a list of five books which we think make great holiday reading during your visit to the isles.

The Shetland Bus

by David J. Howarth and Kjell Colding



During World War II, brave Shetlanders and Norwegians crewed a fishing vessel between Shetland and Norway to evacuate and supply those trapped in the occupied country. Dubbed the 'Shetland Bus', this book is written by David Howarth who was second in command of the Shetland base. It offers a unique insight into the operation, along with amazing photos from the time.

Shetland Folk Tales

by Lawrence Tulloch



Island communities have been shaped for centuries by the tales they tell by the fireside. You'll enjoy hearing tales about selkies, invading giants and Vikings, collected here by Shetland storyteller Lawrence Tulloch.

Knit Real Shetland

by Sarah Laurenson



One of Shetland's most famous exports is beautifully-patterned knitwear. This great book covers the history of Shetland knitting, crofting and wool and contains no less than 15 knitting projects for you to try out.

The Shetland Guide Book

by Charles Tait



Charles Tait's brilliant guide to Shetland is an essential read for a Shetland visitor. Featuring every site, every area and every island, the guide is informative and entertaining. It's also full of photographs and contains Ordnance Survey maps to ensure you make the most of your trip to Shetland.

Otters in Shetland: The Tale of the 'Draatsi'

by Richard Shucksmith and Brydon Thomason



Brydon Thomason has dedicated his life to Shetland's wildlife and has spent much time in the wilderness observing the behaviour of wild otters. His stunning photographs accompany fascinating information about the ecology and history of otters living in Shetland.

The books listed here are available on board selected NorthLink Ferries vessels, at Stromness Books and Prints, The Orcadian Bookshop and other good bookshops.

These titles are available on board selected NorthLink Ferries services, at the Shetland Times Bookshop, and the Shetland Museum and Archives, as well as other good bookshops.



Recipe

Reestit Mutton is a variation of the Scandinavian skerpikjøt, an air dried mutton, or vivda, Norse for 'leg meat'. It is a traditional Shetland way of preserving mutton with salt for consumption during the winter months.

The mutton is first salted in brine and was then traditionally hung in the rafters (reest) of houses, where the peat smoke will add flavour and help preserve the meat. It could very likely be called Shetland's national dish.

Ingredients:

- Reestit mutton - 2 lb
- Cold water - (to cover)
- Onion - 1 (finely diced)
- Potatoes - 300 grams (peeled and finely diced)
- Turnip - 225 grams (peeled and finely diced)
- Carrots - 200 grams (peeled and finely diced)
- Water - 2 pints (or lamb stock)

1. Place the reestit mutton in a large pot and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil and continue to boil for almost two hours, or until tender. Remove the meat from the pan.
2. Reserve a ladleful of the cooking water. Skim off the fat and add more water (or lamb stock) to your own taste.
3. Add the chopped potatoes, carrots, turnip and onion and boil until tender, about 20 minutes.
4. Mash the vegetables into smaller pieces, if desired, and add the reestit mutton, finely chopped for the last few minutes of cooking.
5. Serve with buttered bread.

Storage advice for unused reestit mutton: Store in a dry environment. Do not refrigerate. Alternatively, cut to your requirements and freeze.

For more information, visit www.elizabethskitchendiary.co.uk



Recipe

Renowned for its food and drink offering, Orkney produces some of the finest beef, lamb, cheese, ice cream, shellfish, beer and whisky.

The expansive rolling fields and crystal clear waters are home to high-quality ingredients that locals have used for centuries. Such produce is used to create dishes loved across the world, as well as lesser known delights unique to the island.

One of the latter is Orkney Bere Bannocks. Created using beremeal, a type of flour milled at the Barony Mills, Birsay, from an ancient form of barley that grows in Orkney. The flat bread is baked on a hot griddle and often served as a starter instead of a bread roll.

Here's an islander's guide to making Orkney Bere Bannocks.

Ingredients:

- Milk or water
- Two cups of Birsay beremeal (can be purchased from most Orkney food shops)
- One cup of plain flour
- 1 tsp of baking soda
- 1 tsp of cream of tartar
- Salt (if desired)



Thoroughly mix all of the dry ingredients before adding the milk or water to form a stiff but soft and wet dough.



Roll out onto a floured board or surface and knead before forming bannocks – flat circles around one inch thick.



Cook on a hot, ungreased griddle for around five minutes until both sides are browned and the middle is cooked through.

Bere Bannocks are best served warm with butter. We'd also recommend serving them with farmhouse cheese or cheddar with chutney, but we hope that you enjoy experimenting with different combinations of delicious fillings.

For more information, visit www.birsay.org.uk/baronymill.htm

Meet our Hotel Supervisor



Meet our Hotel Supervisor Claire Sweetin on MV Hjaltland

Hailing from the town of Stranraer in south-western Scotland, Claire Sweetin works aboard NorthLink Ferries' MV Hjaltland vessel, which travels between Aberdeen and the Northern Isles.

With over a decade of experience aboard our ships, Claire's role involves welcoming guests onboard and ensuring that their journey to and from the Northern Isles gets off to the best possible start.

Tell us about yourself

My family is passionate about horses and when I was a child I dreamed of being a showjumper. When I left school I decided to work at sea, following in my dad's footsteps.

My first role with NorthLink Ferries was as a Summer Steward, and I have many great memories from my time on my first ship, MV Hamnavoe which sails between Scrabster in the Scottish Highlands and Stromness in Orkney. I was lucky enough to be offered a permanent position with NorthLink and ten years later, I still love looking after our customers each and every day.

What do your day-to-day responsibilities include?

On most sailings you will find me in the Magnus Lounge or in the onboard shop or bar helping our customers make the most of their journey. From time to time I will also welcome community groups onto our vessels. Just recently, we welcomed aboard children from Anderson High School in Shetland – they absolutely loved their time on MV Hjaltland.

What is it about your job that you enjoy the most?

I really enjoy the problem-solving and preparation involved in my role, such as ensuring that the customer-facing areas of the vessel are ready for afternoon service. A highlight of the role is when 'Oscar Charlie', Shetland's search and rescue helicopter, visits the ship during its training exercises. I'm always in awe of the skill and commitment of the rescue team, and I feel especially proud of the role that NorthLink has to play in ensuring passenger safety and wellbeing.

When you're not working, what do you like to do in your spare time?

I love socialising with friends and family. I'm particularly close to my godson and I tend to spend a lot of my leave being active with him, with swimming and camping favourite pastimes of ours.

Dots and Boxes

Players take turns in drawing lines between dots on a grid of boxes.

Each player takes turns to join two adjacent dots with a horizontal or vertical line.

When a player completes the fourth side of a box they should initial that box and take another turn to draw another line. When all boxes have been completed the winner is the player who has initialled the most boxes.



Super Sudoku

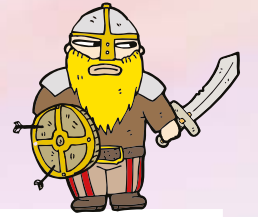
Relax in one of our many comfortable areas on board with this brain teasing Sudoku puzzle.

Good luck!

4	6	1		8				5
3	2	7					8	
				6				
			4			2	5	8
	7						6	
8	3	4			5			
	8					3	2	9
6				9		8	1	7

Vikling Word Search

Can you find ten Orkney and Shetland words in our Northern Lights word search?

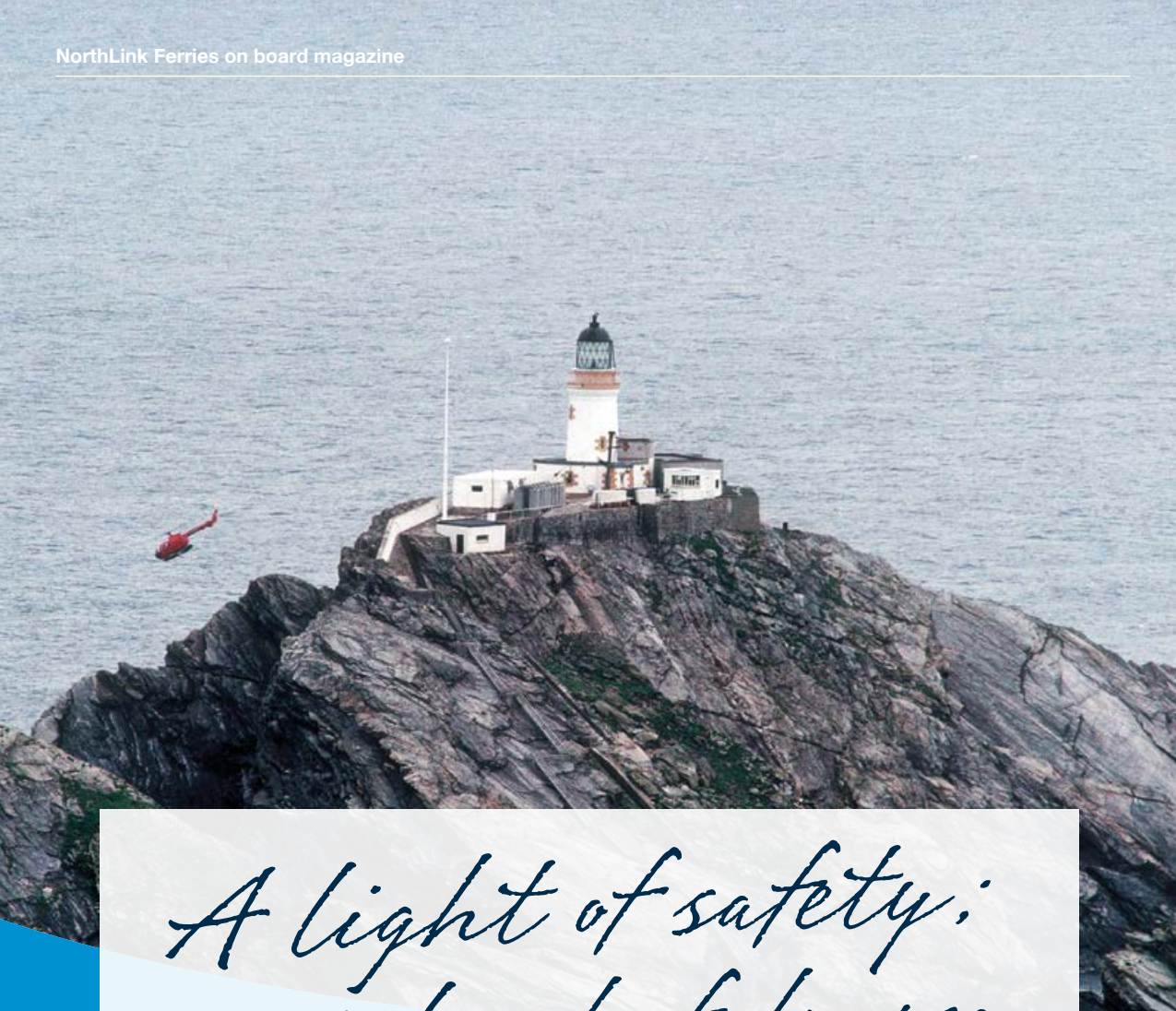


See how many of the below you can spot:

CLICKIMIN JARLSHOF MAESHOWE MOUSA SCALLOWAY
SKAILL SKARA BRAE ST MAGNUS SUMBURGH YESNABY

C	Y	U	F	H	D	C	T	S	S	N	L
L	R	E	X	O	M	L	U	S	K	Y	H
I	Z	Z	S	O	H	N	M	S	A	K	G
C	X	Y	U	N	G	S	C	Y	I	N	R
K	H	S	B	A	A	A	L	G	L	X	U
I	A	J	M	I	L	B	A	R	L	B	B
M	Y	T	G	L	I	M	Y	J	A	H	M
I	S	X	O	Z	J	A	L	M	Y	J	U
N	J	W	E	A	R	B	A	R	A	K	S
L	A	M	A	E	S	H	O	W	E	K	R
Y	A	I	N	Z	F	O	Q	J	C	Z	I
V	F	J	D	S	B	P	R	T	C	L	N





A light of safety; an island of drama

Britain's most northerly lighthouse, Muckle Flugga, was built in reaction to a clash of empires. The Crimean War began in 1853, and it was during this conflict that the British Government asked the commissioners of the Northern Lighthouse Board to erect a light on Shetland's island of Unst.

Muckle Flugga rock is the most northerly location in Britain and was perfectly positioned for such a build. Closer to Norway than to London, the new lighthouse would protect each of Her Majesty's ships as they headed into battle.

The first version of the lighthouse was a temporary structure built in just 26 days on the rocky outcrop just north of Unst and was in place by 1854.



A shining light during conflict

Muckle Flugga Lighthouse was not just relied upon by Britain's Navy vessels during the Crimean War.

This shining northern beacon was equally important during the Second World War.

In the lead-up to the conflict, the island's lighthouse keepers were tasked not just with the maintenance of the light but also of managing some vital military equipment.

As WWII began, an existing radio beacon on Muckle Flugga was recommissioned to support the nation's war efforts, and the lighthouse keepers were assigned a new role - managing and passing service messages between headquarters and the rocky outcrop they were working from. Carrying out two jobs while based off the dramatic waters of the North Sea was definitely a challenge for the keepers during the conflict.

Life on the edge

Even when Muckle Flugga's lighthouse keepers didn't have a war to contend with, life on the edge of Britain was incredibly tough.

Three lighthouse keepers lived on the rock at any one time, spending one month at work followed by one month ashore. Heavy seas, winter gales and the harsh North Sea all took their toll.

In such an unforgiving climate, the arrival of helicopters was a welcomed relief. Introduced to assist in delivering much-needed sustenance, their deliveries every second week included the landing of basic supplies such as fresh water and food.

In 1995 the lighthouse was automated, but continues to this day to protect vessels and their crews from Unst's rocky shoreline.

A treasured island

Today, Unst is probably most well-known for its connections to Robert Louis Stevenson, the author behind popular children's adventure novel Treasure Island.

Robert's father Thomas, and his uncle David Stevenson, were the designers behind Muckle Flugga lighthouse. As a member of the engineering family responsible for many of Scotland's iconic lighthouses during the 1900s, Robert was in the unique position of being able to join his father on expeditions to some of the British Isles' remote and mesmerising locations.

Robert visited the island with his father around ten years prior to the publication of his renowned novel, and the map of the island featured within his book shares striking similarities with the island of Unst.

An island of drama

Nature presents itself in dramatic form on Unst, and Hermaness National Nature Reserve in particular is a must-visit for those looking to escape the stresses of city life.

Described as a 'feast for the senses', the reserve is a bustling hub and features bird life of all types. Stroll through the moorland to reach the seabird cliffs of the reserve which, depending on the time of year, contains up to 25,000 pairs of breeding puffins and is also home to the third largest colony of great Skuas in the world.

First-time visitors to the Keen of Hamar National Nature Reserve are often taken aback by the moonscape that appears on their approach. Initial impressions suggest a barren landscape; however this stony, rocky outpost is in fact home to some of the rarest plants in Britain.

Its star attraction is a delicate, daisy-esque plant called Edmonstons Chickweed. This rarity isn't found anywhere else in the world but thrives on the island and grows well in what is considered the poorest and oldest soil in Britain.

It is also thought that Unst was one of first places where Vikings landed in Shetland. There are a great many soapstone quarries on Unst. Soapstone is a soft stone that Vikings favoured because it is easy to shape into bowls. Viking longhouse ruins can be found throughout the island.

The bay of Haroldswick in Unst is named after King Harald Fairhair who arrived here in 875AD to tell the wild Shetland Vikings to stop raiding Norway!

20 Years of Island Bears

Shetland knitwear has always been a popular export, but over the past two decades the UK's most northerly outpost has witnessed the growth of a new island icon.

Hardy, hand-made and highly collectable, the Burra Bear has been a hit around the globe since its introduction in 1997.



Available in an extensive range of colours and pattern combinations, these cuddly bears have rubbed shoulders with stars, and shots of them with actors including Bill Nighy and Dougie Henshall highlight the degree to which they have become a symbol of the isles. In fact, media reports suggest that the bears have found their way into the homes of celebrities including Miranda Richardson, Jim Broadbent and even the bedroom of Prince George.

The birth of an island icon

The Burra Bear that is known and loved today wouldn't have come into being without the creativity of one Shetland resident.

Wendy Inkster was looking for inspiration for a first wedding anniversary gift for her sister when her mind drifted to a TV programme she had seen that included a feature on making cushion covers from Arran jumpers. Her sister had recently shrunk a Fair Isle jumper by accident and so she decided to make the couple a bear from the sweater's Shetland wool as a gift.

Shetland's Fair Isle is renowned for its intricate Shetland patterns and today enjoys a cult following which is frequently featured in high fashion, music and on TV. After friends of Wendy's sister spotted her endearing little bear in its fashionable attire, they soon started flying off the shelf. Wendy was inundated with orders and now makes over 1,000 bears a year.

Fair Isle and lace

Today's Burra Bears can also be commissioned, and would-be owners have even sent Wendy their own fabric for her to use to create a truly bespoke bear.

Wendy explains: "There have been a few unusual requests over the years; some folk have even asked us to make noisy bears with things inside them, there's a nautical bear that we made for the Sumburgh Lighthouse Visitor's Centre and there's a bear with Shetland dialect words knitted into the fabric."

While most are created from new or recycled Fair Isle fabric, they can also be created out of lace or cloth, and the team has even received wedding dress material from one groom keen to provide his bride with a truly unique first anniversary present.

Wendy's favourite though is in fact not made from Fair Isle wool but another familiar local craft: "I'm particularly proud of the Shetland lace bear. To be able to make bears from a hand-knitted lace shawl is really special because of the time that's gone into creating such lovely material."

What's in a name?

Mattie O'Sunnybank, Gifford O'Gardie and Aurora O'Huxter.

Those with a cherished Burra Bear of their own will be all too familiar with its name, which is printed on the accompanying tag that comes with a bear purchase. However many might not be aware that each bear name is in fact completely unique.

Wendy explains how each gets its name: "We have a book with Christian names and a book with place names and we just tie the two together. In the old Shetland tradition, if you were a known character from a certain area you would be known as Bertie o' Burra or something like that. The Shetland place names book is well used in my house!"

"Now, when folk are having bears made from their own garments they often choose the name themselves to make it more personal. It's a nice touch."

International appeal

As a souvenir popular with international visitors, Burra Bears are well-travelled and many now live in exotic locations around the world. Wendy added: "We have bears in many countries and many of the folk that have bought bears keep in touch and let us know where they have gone to live! We have quite a few bears over in New Zealand – I suppose that's maybe with all the Shetland connections over there."

"Some bears have gone to Tokyo, some have gone to South Africa, and one went over to Columbia with one of the tall ships a few years ago when they were here. They are well travelled!"

Burra Bears can be shipped worldwide, so many people get in touch with Wendy via email or social media channels to order them after they've left Shetland. Burra Bears can also be bought on NorthLink Ferries' vessels and in locations across the islands.

For more information visit www.burrabears.co.uk



A History of Stromness

Stromness is a remarkable and beautiful town. Its motto *Per Mare* means 'By the Sea' and Stromness has a salt-encrusted history full of pirates, whalers and explorers. NorthLink Ferries is very proud that its ferry *Hamnavoe* arrives in Stromness; the town offers a wonderful first impression for visitors to Orkney.

In 2017, the town marked 200 years as a Burgh of Barony with a 'Per Mare' year of celebrations. However, the history of Stromness goes back all the way to Viking times.



1595



1620s



1600-1800



1702-1800



1730s-1750s



1770-1870

Early times

The Vikings named the area *Hamnavoe*, which meant 'haven bay'. Though it was a popular base for fishermen, Stromness didn't become a settlement until after the 16th century, when explorers and merchants started sailing around the north of Scotland to access the Atlantic. As opportunities for trade grew, so did the populace – with records showing that the first tavern was built on the eastern shore in 1595.

Chalmersquoy

The land on the western shore under Brinkie's Brae is now the heart of Stromness. However in the 1620s it was rough and thought to only be good for grazing sheep. This changed when a blacksmith named Chalmers built a pier and workshop on the land. Many businesses sprang up here, offering repairs and provisions to ships that needed shelter and the correct wind to set sail.

Dangers in the English Channel

The 1600s and 1800s featured periods of war where the English Channel proved dangerous. Many ships passing to and from the Atlantic chose a northerly route and called at Stromness for shelter, provisions and ship repairs. As an indirect result of all this trade, there were at one point over 80 drinking parlours in the town.

The Hudson's Bay Company

Canadian firm The Hudson's Bay Company started recruiting men from the Northern Isles in 1702. The ships would arrive in Canada at their fur-trading posts around Hudson's Bay. Each summer, the natives would bring in cured beaver pelts to exchange for blankets, knives and other European goods. By the late 18th century, three-quarters of the men employed by the Hudson's Bay Company came from Orkney.

Stromness versus Kirkwall

Despite being so far north, a battle for economic supremacy raged for years between Stromness and the Royal Burgh of Kirkwall. Believing that the upstart merchants of Stromness were stealing their exclusive rights to foreign trade, Kirkwall imposed a tax on them. It took twenty years of legal battles to free the burgeoning town from taxation in 1756.

Arctic Whaling

From 1770 until 1870, Arctic whaling ships from the east coast of Britain took on crew in Stromness. This was a fearsome challenge and as time went by, there were fewer whales to catch and the whalers had to go further to catch them. A makeshift hospital was set up in Alfred Street in Stromness in the 1830s to treat scurvy and frostbite in whalers who had been ice-locked over the winter.



1817

A Burgh of Barony

During the Napoleonic wars, merchants applied to the Crown for the status of Burgh of Barony so they could control trade, law and order and establish public amenities. Burgh of Barony was granted on 18th February 1817 and a government act in the 1850s empowered the Stromness Town Council to levy a rate. This money enabled the Councillors to improve the town by laying down flagstones and installing street lighting.



1850s

The ferry service

The ferry to Orkney ran, weather permitting, from Huna in Caithness to Brims in Longhope, Hoy. Mail was transported across several islands by small boats, delaying the arrival of mail by days. A new vessel, Royal Mail, was a timber ship built in Stromness at Stanger's boatyard. The Royal Mail ran from 1856, and was succeeded by a number of vessels until 1892, when the first of the four St Ola ferries to date to serve the island was put into action.



1860s

Becoming a Market Town

In the 19th century, farming methods had improved and had brought real prosperity to Orkney. Stromness became a market town for the surrounding parishes and islands. Cattle were transported south from the town by regular steam shipping. As time passed buildings were demolished so that wheeled transport could travel from one end of the town to the other.



1867

Stromness Lifeboat and the Life Saving Brigade

The first RNLI lifeboat in Orkney began to serve the waters around Stromness in 1867, and a year later it was joined by Orkney's first Life Saving Brigade. The first lifeboat shed and slip can still be seen at Ness, but another shed replaced it in the harbour where it was easier to launch the lifeboat in rough weather conditions.



1888

The Herring Boom

Bringing an estimated 5,000 extra people to Stromness over the summer, the 'Herring Boom' occurred in 1888 when large shoals of herring were discovered west of Orkney. Boats from Banff and Buckie crammed the harbour during summer, fishing all night and arriving back with their catch in the morning. Temporary wooden piers were erected at the Point of Ness to meet demand, but by 1914 it was all over.



1914-1918

The First World War

During the First World War, Scapa Flow became the northern base for the Royal Navy's Grand Fleet, with Stromness their naval headquarters. The wrecks of the interned German Fleet, scuttled and left at the bottom of Scapa Flow by their captains to avoid capture by the British, are now a divers' haven. There are no less than seven separate ships to explore.



1920-1947

A dry town

Stromness went without alcohol for 27 years. Societies such as the Good Templars and Oddfellows offered a great social life, but abstinence was required to join. In 1920, the temperance movement – a group which looked to impose restrictions on the consumption of alcohol - voted the town dry and it remained that way until 1947.



1939-1945

The Second World War

To protect the naval anchorage in Scapa Flow from air attack, servicemen and women were stationed around the town and the Stromness Hotel became the army headquarters for Orkney and Shetland. There were camps all around the town, with picture shows, famous visitors and drinking parlours bringing conviviality to the town.



1945-Present

Since the Second World War

The famous Stromness Shopping Week - a carnival set up to combat post-war depression and to encourage trade in the town - still survives today and was founded by the Chamber of Commerce in 1949. Steady growth and investment in the post-war period saw new houses built at Cairston and Grieveship, and in 1959, the Orkney Fisherman's Society was set up as a co-operative group, processing crab meat and shellfish to send to Europe and Japan.



The Pier Arts Centre, founded in 1979 in the former premises of the Hudson's Bay Company recruiting agent, holds a permanent collection of internationally-known British artists, and a programme of exhibitions and events. In 2004, Stromness Marina was opened to provide facilities for visiting yachts. Ten years later, a pier was constructed beside Copland's former dockyard for the renewables industry. Stromness is now a hub for the renewable



energy industry and is ready for the future.

With grateful thanks to Bryce Wilson for his help in writing this article. To read more about Stromness' past, read his fascinating book 'Stromness: A History', available at Stromness Books and Prints, The Orcadian Bookshop and other good bookshops.





Step into history at the Gordon Highlanders' Museum

The Gordon Highlanders Museum in the west end of Aberdeen tells the proud story of the Regiment once described by Sir Winston Churchill as the finest in the world.

Having fought in some of the toughest battles since the late 1700s until their amalgamation in 1994, the Gordon Highlanders are known for bravery and resilience. 'Bydand' is the Regiment's motto, derived from the Doric dialect of North-East Scotland, which means 'to stand fast and endure'.

Bagpiping into battle

The Regiment began as the 92nd (Gordon Highlanders) Regiment of Foot, with men from the Gordon Estate in the Moray region of Scotland. During the Regiment's early days the men wore heavy kilts and played the bagpipes as they marched into battle to keep themselves motivated. If the piper fell, another soldier would pick up the pipes and continue to play.

In 1881, The Gordon Highlanders were officially formed when the 92nd Highlanders and the 75th Stirlingshire Regiment merged.

The World Wars

Nine Battalions of The Gordon Highlanders fought in 56 actions in Belgium, Italy and France in the First World War. Of the 50,000 Gordons who served, there were over 29,000 casualties and 9,000 fatalities.

The Gordon Highlanders' first offensives of the Second World War in France (1940) and the Far East (1942) were crushing defeats. After surrendering at the battle for Singapore, more Gordon Highlanders died in Japanese captivity than during the fighting itself. They also took part in the North African campaign and the D-Day landings in Normandy.

After 200 years, the Gordon Highlanders joined with the Queen's Own Highlanders in 1994 to form The Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons), then merged with Scotland's five other infantry regiments in 2006 to form The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

Charting 200 years of history

The Gordon Highlanders Museum on Aberdeen's Viewfield Road opened in April 1997, with artefacts donated by veterans and their families.

The pride of the regiment can be witnessed in the museum's Maersk Mc-Kinney Silver Room, where the cutlery of the Officers and Sergeants' Messes is kept. This silver would be used wherever the regiment was stationed worldwide.

Another highlight includes 11 of the 19 Victoria Crosses earned by the Regiment; the highest decoration in the British armed forces for gallantry in the face of the enemy.

You can find out more about The Gordon Highlanders Museum, including opening times and admission prices, by visiting www.gordonhighlanders.com.

Hidden Gems of Caithness

The world's shortest street

1 Ebenezer Place, Wick, KW1 5ED

Ebenezer Place is the world's shortest street and is just 2.06 m long. It was declared a street in 1887 after hotel owner Alexander Sinclair was told to name the street that the short end of his hotel stood on. He named it Ebenezer in celebration of his kind acts towards others and it entered the Guinness Book of Records in 2006.

A gold mine for Groatie Buckie hunters!

Duncansby Head, Wick KW1 4YS

The Ness of Duncansby beach features the strongest tidal currents in the Pentland Firth and is one of the best beaches in Caithness for finding shells. It's a treasure trove for Groatie Buckies or Cowrie Shells (pictured) which are thought to be lucky! Look for the road sign marked 'Lighthouse, Cliffs, Stacks, Coastal Walk' and turn left down this road to get there, or reach it on foot from John O'Groats.

A castle on the edge of the world

Keiss Castle, Wick KW1 4XF

Abandoned in 1755 by Sir William Sinclair of Dunbeath, Keiss Castle stands precariously on a cliff edge. Built by George, 5th Earl of Caithness around 1600, this imposing coastal fort is a half mile walk north along the coast. Visitors are strictly advised not to enter the castle as there have been collapses in recent times.

5,000 years of history

Signposted from the A99 near Ulbster

The Cairn of Get is a 5,000-year-old burial chamber and excavations in 1866 revealed skeleton fragments. Stone was robbed from the Cairn in 1800 to build a dam and it now stands exposed. It can be accessed opposite the Whaligoe Steps (a staircase leading to a makeshift fishing station which once hosted dozens of local boats) but the earlier excavation relics have been lost to time.

Life as a fisherman

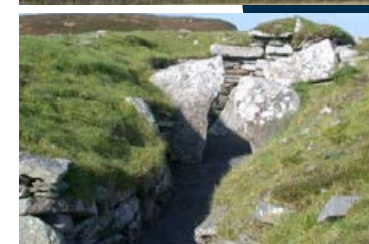
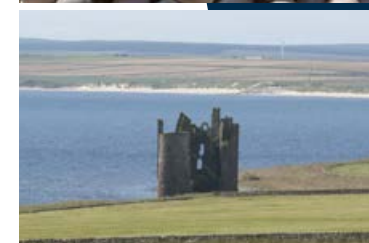
20 Bank Row, Wick KW1 5EY

Crammed with fascinating artefacts from Wick's past, the Wick Heritage Museum is a treasure trove of folk history. In 1862 there were 1,122 fishing boats based in Wick, and the museum gives an account of the town's historic herring fishing industry. Its treasured attraction is the fishing boat Isabella Fortuna, built in 1890.

The Laidhay Longhouse

Dunbeath, KW6 6EH

The Laidhay Croft Museum is a two hundred year-old Caithness longhouse, complete with items from a bygone age. Once a dwelling and byre, the site is now home to a picture-postcard museum and a superb cafe – the Cullen Skink and homebakes are reason alone to stop.





Scotland's Year of Young People 2018

We are proud to promote and engage in the year-long programme of events and activities which will mark the Year of Young People 2018. These events encourage children, teens and young adults from across Scotland to place their contributions and achievements centre stage.

Supporting young people in our community

Here at NorthLink Ferries we're supporting young people by encouraging creativity, providing opportunities for expression and helping young people realise their potential. Our work covers a range of activities - from sponsoring community organisations to providing bespoke children's entertainment on board our services to and from the Northern Isles.

Recent highlights of our rolling sponsorship programme include the donation of a series of junior bowling sets to Kirkwall Bowling Club to encourage more young people to take part in junior coaching sessions, available for those aged between 8 and 15 years. We also continue our support of Shetland Amateur Football Association and Orkney Youth Development Group teams by providing home and away football strips for all age group teams.

We take our role as a community partner seriously and work with charities and local schools to support disadvantaged children and young people.

In addition, we want to continue upskilling our young local people and help them take their first steps into employment and independence.



As part of our investment in young people, we work in partnership with local schools, colleges and universities across the Northern Isles and mainland Scotland to provide learning opportunities to those interested in working onshore or aboard.

Over the last five years, 14 of our trainee officers have completed their cadetships with us, with a further 13 making use of our sponsorship opportunities.

In 2017 we introduced a new apprenticeship programme in partnership with the North Atlantic Fisheries College's (NAFC) Marine Centre in Shetland. Our team of trainee deck and engine apprentices benefit from hands-on experiences on board our ships, developing their skills and abilities while also opening up new career opportunities. Furthermore, we are currently working with colleges in both Orkney and Shetland to deliver Modern Apprenticeships to our shore based customer service trainees.

We hope that the experiences that we provide will see them excel in the industry and go on to be the industry leaders of the future.

Showcasing the islands and our service to young people during 2018

Younger NorthLink passengers can take advantage of a host of benefits during their journey. The Viking's Den is the perfect place to take little ones to during your journey and is fitted out with toys, games and a TV that shows children's cartoons. On our Aberdeen – Kirkwall – Lerwick routes, our ferries show an early-evening children's screening in our on board cinema.

For young people, we also offer our Game Zone, complete with Xbox games consoles and costing just £1 for 15 minutes of play.

Children are also catered for when it comes to accommodation and meals, taking the stress out of travelling with kids. You can reserve a cot at the time

of booking a cabin for no additional cost. Baby-changing facilities and children's meals are available on all our services, with traditional child-friendly fayre on offer in our fun-sized ferry-shaped boxes.

If all this wasn't tempting enough, we offer 'Kids Go Free' on direct Aberdeen to Lerwick routes. More information can be found on our website.

With a roster of exciting cultural and historic events taking place in Shetland and Orkney in 2018, there's never been a better time to visit the Northern Isles with us to celebrate the creative and cultural achievements of young Scots.

One of the YOYP 2018 highlights next year is sure to be the BIG Takeover over the weekend of 14-16 September in Shetland. The programme includes musical and dramatic performances, as well as sports events, writing exhibitions and craft-making, all created by the islands' gifted young people at several facilities and organisations across the islands.

The Orkney International Science Festival returns between 6-12 September in 2018. Speakers will include Nobel laureates with key topics comprising hydrogen use for transport, drowned forests and ancient landscapes, and the physics of mountain rescue. There will also be exhibitions on wartime aerial photography; there will be something for all interests at the event.



Other attractions throughout the year include the Shetland Folk Festival and Orkney Folk Festivals, Shetland's annual film festival Screenplay, and Orkney's Nature Festival.

There's plenty to see and do in the Northern Isles during the Year of Young People – why not come and experience it for yourself?

For more information go to:
www.eventscotland.org/news/2017/11/looks-youth-full
www.thebigtakeover2018.com



*A million miles
from what you imagine...*

...Orkney and Shetland are closer than you think.

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