

# SHETLAND SOCIETY OF WELLINGTON ( INC )

## PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2018

Wow! The President's Report on the 96<sup>th</sup> year of the Wellington Shetland Society!

That's a great achievement for a tiny community of less than 25,000 people in the North Sea – to still have a group of people in Wellington NZ – the other side of the world – interested in Shetland, linked by family and personal interest with aspects of Shetland, and willing to be linked to a society focussing on Shetland. And to keep doing that for 96 years! This AGM we will be looking in more depth at what lies ahead as we prepare for our Centenary in 2022. But first – a recounting of what has been happening in the Society since last July.

In July, our Foy focussed on lighthouses. This family oriented day was again led in large part by Ruth Mainland. Making lighthouses, thinking about the importance of lighthouses for an island community like Shetland – part of the goal of the Society to help spread knowledge and awareness of Shetland. And of course a great afternoon tea provided by our Committee members.

In September we had our AGM and annual luncheon – with delicious catering from the Pines. - Mary and Duncan McDonald shared their experience of being part of the Edinburgh Festival, and we had a really good discussion about renewing our financial support for the Crofthouse Museum in Shetland – still on the agenda as we look at our Centenary.

In December, our Christmas Party was a bit tricky – as the entertainer Tricky had to pull out at very short notice due to injury. Ruth and Ross came to the rescue, along with others on the committee, and everyone enjoyed a good afternoon.

February was our first year to try having a rain day for our picnic – it worked! When we finally got to hold it, the picnic gathered an enthusiastic group of members. Those of us a bit older are delighted to see that venerable events like stepping the chain and tug of war still provide serious fun and serious competition among young and old. Why don't you come next year!

In March Feriel and Robin Falconer, for the second time, hosted a very successful garden party for our Society and our friends from Manawatu. Even though we were outnumbered by the Manawatu folk, it was a very good afternoon, and we think it's valuable to have an annual get together with our northern neighbours.

In May, we held the first Shetland-Viking Dance evening in the Ngaio Town Hall. 70 people joined for a great evening of Scottish and ballroom dancing, and a wonderful supper coordinated by Jane Dowson. This dance evening looks like being continued and we do hope that a good number of members will see it as a cost-effective evening of good fellowship and good fun. One strong feature of the evening was the way that so many committee members were able to help out – with everyone doing a little bit the jobs get done.

Right through the year our library was there, and our website is always up to date – Jane Haskell is the main worker for both of these, and we are grateful to her.

Change is with us as a Society. A couple of features of this. The decision has been made not to continue the Viking Ball next year. This brings to an end 46 years of fantastic work, and we're sorry we can't continue. But there just aren't enough people to do the work, and there are fewer Society

members attending. So – we move on, with the Dance Evening being a more realistic way of keeping our Shetland dancing tradition alive. Secondly, Ruth has signalled she won't be the lead organiser of events in the coming year, so we all need to step up and help with the grunt work. I'm confident that will happen – having nearly a dozen capable people on our committee means there are plenty of hands.

There are other changes coming up within our committee. Lois Henderson is standing down. Lois – we have really valued your contribution – your taking of the our meeting minutes, your storing of so many of our Society treasures, your work to support the Viking Ball. Thank you for what you have done. Ruth has given notice that this is her last year as our Secretary. We'll have a chance next year to say thank you, but during this year we need to think about who can take on this task. A warm thank you to all the other committee members who are willing to serve another year – who else in our membership is open to taking on this role? And our warmest thanks to our new Newsletter editors Gay and John – you've made a great start, and we are grateful.

#### Centenary Planning:

Since last AGM your committee has been working hard to start work for our Centenary year of 2022. We have a number of projects we believe will help us celebrate, and this AGM is our first chance to report them to you.

We do think that some kind of contribution to the Crofthouse Museum in Shetland will be appropriate. We are still talking with the Museum authorities in Lerwick, and Gay and John Hay are bringing back the results of conversations they've had recently in Shetland. The details aren't yet fully formed, but we'll keep you in touch with developments. We see this as a great way to continue a practical link with Shetland itself, and continue a NZ-Shetland connection begun years ago.

We are talking with people running a Shetland DNA project about linking in New Zealanders to their next Shetland DNA project. Already they have confirmed that people with three or four "Shetlandic grandparents" will be welcome to join, but we hope that people with 2 will also be able to join – once again, we will keep you in touch, including whether or not there is a way that people with a more distant Shetland DNA heritage can be part of the Viking 2 DNA programme.

We want to sponsor a permanent history display here in Wellington – focussing on the Shetland community in Island Bay, and have begun talks with the City Council about that. We hope to sponsor a Shetland-themed textile competition, and have begun exploring a Shetland exhibition at the Museum of City and Sea. There is a possible Shetland concert, a dance evening, a family history day – maybe all wrapped together in one weekend during 2022.

And we have linked up with the University of Otago to have some stories told about the way modern New Zealanders maintain and develop their links with Shetland – Sam Keen hopes to link this work with his Master's degree thesis on migration, and Sam is here today to say hello and talk about what might happen.

We're pretty excited about the possibilities, and we are always open to your ideas – let us know if there is some way you think our Society can celebrate 100 years.

Peter Glensor  
President

September 2018