

Shetland Society of Wellington (Inc)

President's Annual Report – September 2017

Welcome to this 95th year of the Shetland Society of Wellington.

What a proud tradition! My mother, grandmother and grandfather all came here what seems like such a long time ago – in 1927 and 1930 – and the Society was already in place then. This Society has been an important part of the lives of so many Shetlanders in Wellington, and we now have a well-deserved reputation around NZ, and around the world.

It's a privilege to be part of the leadership of such a strong, good-hearted group.

Now we are only four years until our centenary – we have good numbers of members, we have an active social life, we have superb resources, we have a strong and capable leadership team – so we have the chance to really celebrate our centenary in style – not just looking back, but also looking forward.

This is the time to make decisions about how best we can celebrate our centenary. We haven't made any definite decisions yet, but this is the year we do need to put things in place – the time from now till 2022 will speed past. Can you help us think of great ideas?

Ideas so far include:

- an annual competition focussed on Shetland-themed crafts and/or music
- building two traditional Shetland boats
- updating of Chips off the Auld Rock - possible using video and oral history - focus on the experience of the NZ descendants of Shetland immigrants
- a group DNA test - of people in NZ with Shetland descendants
- more regular displays and celebration of Shetland-themed crafts
- better ways to provide support for Shetland-linked people doing family history

And of course we would like to make all our regular events, a supa-doopa version – the picnic, the Viking Ball, the Foy, the Christmas Party, the annual dinner – and what else?

It's been a good year.

The Foy starts our year in July. In 2016 the theme was puffins and we had a great attendance. It's been good to see the way that this event has steadily changed, in response to member interest, from a pure focus on children, to being an event that people of all ages enjoy. The Anniversary lunch/AGM in September was well attended, as was the children's Christmas party and members' afternoon tea in December.

Sadly, our annual picnic was cancelled because of bad weather. With more variable weather more likely, we probably need to have a "rain day" for the picnic, and a way of contacting people if we do have to change dates.

The murder mystery event was a huge success – and warm thanks to the committee members who worked on it, and those who were brave enough to be suspects.

We successfully made the transition to a new group running the Viking Ball – with good numbers, and (apart from some heating complaints), a smoothly run event – thanks to the new Ball group under the leadership of Sarah Best.

The library continues to grow and to be used – warm thanks to Jane Haskell for her unstinting energy, and seeking out of new items. This year we will explore whether members are interested in adding more music to the offerings.

We are about to change the Newsletter Editor – after 14 hard working years Mary Wood is standing back. Mary – your work is hugely appreciated – and the Wellington Shetland Society newsletter is justly famous! A warm welcome to John and Gay Hay – our first joint editors – who have accepted our invitation to take on this task. John and Gay – we look forward to the particular flavour you will bring to our newsletter – we already know your writing and publishing skills.

The Society Committee is made up of hard-working, loyal and talented people – thanks to you all for your work – it's the lifeblood of our society.

As we begin another year, we welcome the energy and ideas of every member. The Society will grow and be strong only if we can be of some small service to every member – helping older people keep in touch with Shetland and Shetlanders, helping families have fun and take on new challenges, keeping the beauty and energy of Shetland visible here in New Zealand. Thanks to you all for what you do to make that vision real.

Peter Glensor