OIL, CULTURE AND ECONOMY:
THE REINVENTION OF THE SHETLAND WAY OF LIFE

THOMAS SIMCHAK

Mansfield College

Thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Letters
School of Geography, University of Oxford
2008

49,727 Words

ABSTRACT

Claims to historically-based identities and cultures have long been prevalent in Shetland, an island group bordering the North Sea and North Atlantic approximately 300 kilometres north of Aberdeen. In the early 1970s, however, oil and gas discoveries in the North Sea made Shetland an ideal location for oil infrastructure and ultimately the site of a major oil terminal and extensive oil-support and servicing activities. The prospect of such major developments, however, stirred fears regarding the disruption of a local culture and identity heavily based on historical elements. Discussed in this thesis are the elements and influences that led to the creation – sometimes intentionally – of Shetland's sense of identity and culture and how the construction of the Sullom Voe Terminal and other oil support infrastructure impacted such perceptions. Not only did the actual externalities of development alter the 'Shetland way of life', but also in response, significantly, to fears about what the industrial growth in their midst would bring, Shetlanders' understandings of their own cultures and identities were changed. Petroleum-related immigration and income both significantly altered the practicalities of Shetland life but did not wholly replace the cultural influences which had existed previously. Instead they fuelled the creation of new hybrid identities that largely embrace these modern influences while remaining grounded in the historical crofting and fishing ways of life, claims to Norse heritage, and a sense of island remoteness that have long characterised Shetlanders' outlooks on the world and perceptions of self.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I – INTRODUCTION **1**

II – THE LITERATURE: IDENTITY, CULTURE & WAY OF LIFE **21**
Defining Key Terms 22
Identity 23
Culture 29
Way of Life 34
Invented Traditions 36
Nationalism 42
Shetland Identities, Cultures & Traditions 47
Conclusion 51

III – METHODOLOGY **54**

IV – DISRUPTION & HISTORY: MODERNITY **62**
Social & Cultural Disruption 65
The Zetland County Council Act 69
Demographic & Structural Impact 73
Affluence & Identity 82
Historical Identities in Modern Shetland 86
Conclusion 90

V – INVENTION OF CULTURE **92**
Crofter-Fisherman Identities 99
Up-Helly-Aa 102
Further Victorian Constructs 116
The Hamefarins 120
Faroe & Modern Norse Identities 121
Culture & Identity in the Local Media 123
Dialect: Wir Aald Wirds 126
Remoteness & Difference 127
Identity from Without 132
Oil, Culture & Economy 136
Conclusion 138

VI – CONCLUSION **141**

Appendix: List of Interviewees 147
Acknowledgements 148
Bibliography 149

FIGURES

1 – Shetland Location Map	3
2 – Map of Shetland	4
3 – Walterson Comic – ‘Hits no da saam here’	16
4 – Pride of Place Logo	28
5 – Walterson Comic – ‘He’s never been da sam’	64
6 – Employment Graph: 1971 to 1977 by sector	77
7 – Unst Ferry	79
8 – Mid Yell Sixareen	89
9 – Modern Fishing Trawler	89
10 – Vandalised Up-Helly-Aa Exhibition Tourist Sign	97
11 – Magnus Barelegs, Delting Up-Helly-Aa Jarl, 2006	105
12 – 2006 Delting Up-Helly-Aa ‘Bill’	106
13 – Guizers Dressed as Suffragettes	114
14 – 2006 Delting Up-Helly-Aa Chicken Guizer	115
15 – 1923 Chicken Guizer	115
16 – Valhalla Breweries	119
17 – Kishie-Carrying Woman, Knitting, in Lerwick Lane	145
18 – The Galley in Flames at the 2006 Delting Up-Helly-Aa	148

I ~ INTRODUCTION

Announcements of North Sea oil and gas discoveries in the early 1970s and subsequent plans for major petroleum infrastructure development in Shetland rapidly stimulated fears that the 'Shetland way of life' could be irreparably damaged by the disruption that development would cause. Yet it also created a greater sense that there was a local way of life that was particularly unique and worth protecting. The question of what exactly it was that was being preserved, however, poses interesting questions about the meaning and significance of Shetland's 'way of life' and what exactly Shetlanders were setting out to protect. The construction of the Sullom Voe Terminal was massively disruptive, but I suggest that *perceived* threats, whether realistic or not, were the initial driving force behind concerted efforts to preserve and protect the culture and identity of the islands. Fuelled by the additional time and money that oil-related affluence was able to provide, and furthered by increased contact with the influx of outsiders that so worried many Shetlanders, the islands actually experienced something of a cultural renaissance and developed a more confident Shetland identity within its new modern context, yet one still based on the history and rural character that was so important to Shetlanders and which itself had been created in response to various specific forces in the past. Though this revival may have resulted in a more vibrant cultural environment and stronger sense of Shetland identity, it certainly has not prevented changes in Shetland's culture and identity. Oil,[1] in a sense, accelerated the integration of modernity into Shetland

[1] As in House (1986), while I usually refer in this paper to activities in Shetland as 'oil' development, it is worth noting that natural gas is extracted in the North Sea and brought ashore at the Sullom Voe Terminal in addition to oil. 'Oil development' can likewise be interpreted broadly, as along with the terminal and pipelines dealing directly with oil, oil-related activity included much more: houses and work camps for those employed building and operating the terminal, airport and road improvements, facilities for support and construction ships, concrete fabrication companies, and a great deal else.

society; the 'Shetland way of life', so often mentioned in local discourse, has changed greatly from that of the pre-oil era and the more distant historical precedents on which Shetlanders' identities are so heavily based, despite continued (and revived) claims to these historical elements.

While 'tradition' was being reinforced by renewed claims to it, it was also being changed by these acts of claiming. Identity in Shetland remains a dynamic construct, despite its continued historical claims to Norse heritage and to idealised ideas of fishing and crofting activities which were once critical to local livelihoods but are now predominantly symbolic in nature.[2] While there does exist some conflict between the tradition-based Shetland identity and that of today's oil-influenced way of life, in practice, the hybrid identity that results (at least for most Shetlanders) combines modernity and tradition; the result is a 'tradition' that is itself new. But it is not any less authentically Shetland.

Inevitably, any work on Shetland or any introduction to the islands for outsiders is forced to pause for a moment to explain where exactly Shetland is, as so often on maps of Great Britain, it is kept neatly in a box somewhere near Aberdeen – perhaps something of an artificial embrace of these distant islands. Few realise how far they actually are from mainland Britain; many seem to imagine them somewhere near the Hebrides, if they realise that Shetland is not a Hebridean island at all. Common knowledge often seems to stop at Shetland ponies. When not neatly boxed near the UK mainland cartographically, Shetland may be found 300 kilometres north of Aberdeen – and almost equidistant with Bergen, Norway and Tórshavn, Faroe. The sense of geographical connections to Norway and Faroe both reflect and fuel the

[2] While fishing is still an important part of Shetland's economy, it is now much more modern and mechanised than the small self-contained boats crewed by kinship groups that characterised traditional fishing activities.

continuing Norse cultural claim while contributing to the sense of disconnectedness from Scotland. However, the firmly-held myth of having greater geographical connection with Scandinavia is somewhat dampened by the presence of the whole of Caithness in Scotland, which inconveniently lies rather closer to Shetland than Aberdeen, and thus Faroe and Norway as well. But the claims to geographical affinity with Scandinavia remain unabated and logistical barriers to transportation of both people and cargo reinforce a sense of distance from the rest of Scotland and the UK.



Figure 1: Shetland Location

Occupied by humans since Neolithic times, Shetland was populated by Picts[3] until the arrival of Vikings circa 800 AD, though some trade contacts with

[3] The Picts were the people living in northern Scotland and the surrounding islands before the arrival of the Vikings (ca. 8th century onwards), and who thwarted the northwards advance of Roman Britain (Schei and Moberg, 1988). Little is known of their society, though some details are mentioned in semi-contemporary biographies of Celtic saints who converted them to Christianity. The details of their demise in Shetland are not fully understood, though they had vanished not long after the arrival of the Vikings; the Norse settlers may have killed them off or may have simply out-competed them for scarce resources after taking over prime

Scandinavia may have existed previously. Shetland remained under various Scandinavian crowns until 1469. The King of Denmark, who also ruled Norway and

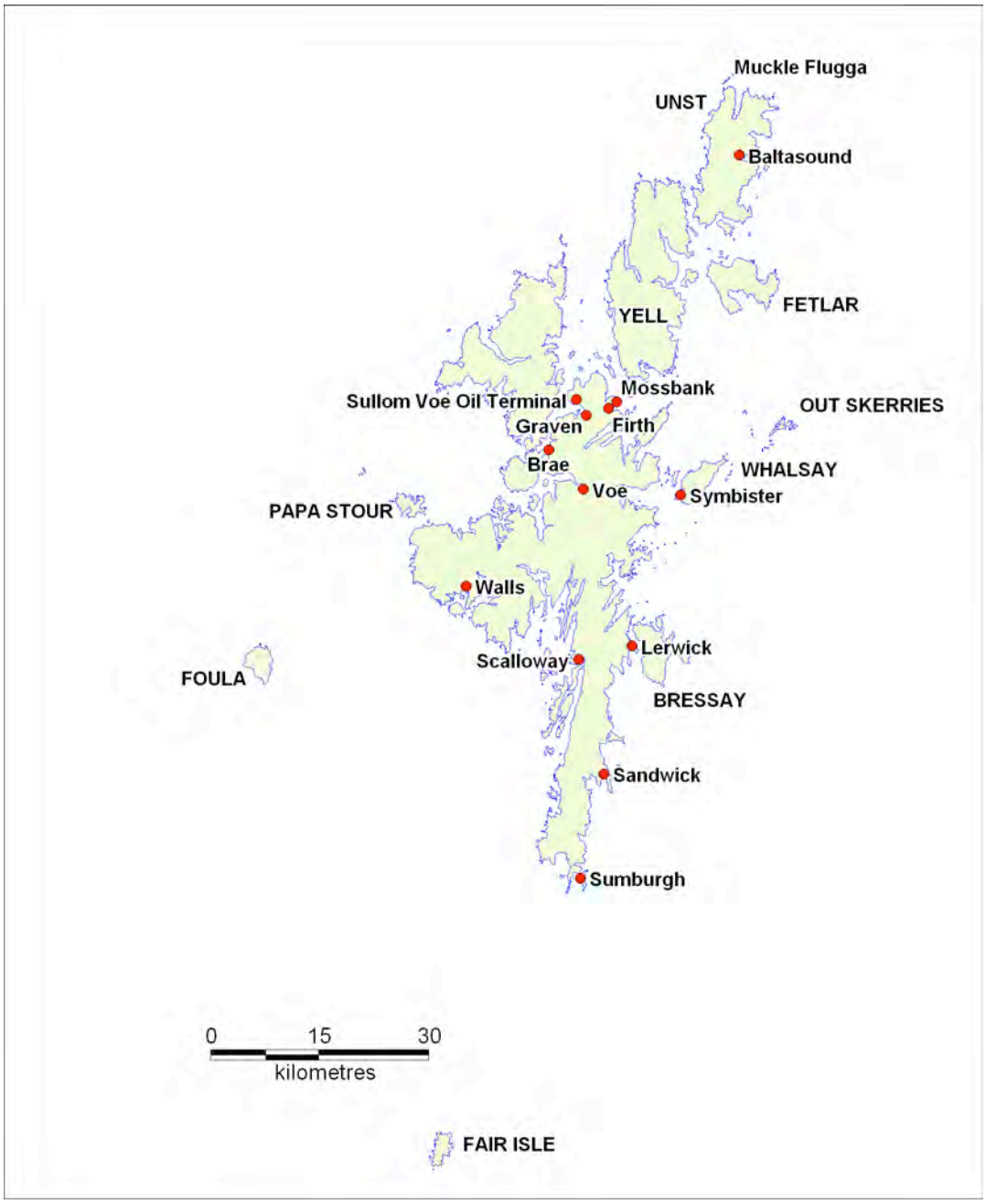


Figure 2: Shetland

farmland (Irvine, 1987). Norse settlers did occupy many formerly-Pictish settlements, modifying and converting Pictish structures to other uses, thus obscuring much of the archaeological record. Even less is known about pre-Pictish Shetlanders, including those who built the numerous Brochs (tower forts) around the islands, though Neolithic settlement existed at least as early as 3200 BC (Shetland Museum Service, 2007).

Sweden at the time, effectively pawned Shetland (and Orkney, the previous year) to James III of Scotland in lieu of a promised dowry for his daughter, who was married to the young Scottish king for political gain (Denmark being unable to pay the promised dowry due to various military adventures in Germany).[4] While this initially only changed where taxes went (tax structures even remained unchanged in the early days of Scottish rule), over the subsequent few centuries, Orkney and Shetland were gradually integrated into the Scottish legal system and feudal government – Orkney more rapidly than Shetland – replacing Norse legal and civic structures. At the same time, immigration from Scotland further diluted Norse culture and language (Barnes, 1998). Assimilation in Shetland was particularly notable during the rule of the Stewart earls from 1568 to 1615, bringing the isles into the structure of Scottish government (Graham, 1983) and ultimately ending Norse law in 1611 (Withrington, 1983) (though some land tenure rights, notably ownership of the foreshore,[5] are still claimed). From the late sixteenth century, Shetland became subject to a series of particularly harsh Scottish lairds who earned the enmity of the local populace. Some were even recalled by Edinburgh on occasion (Graham, 1983). Into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many Shetland crofters were subject to severe 'truck'

[4] There continues to be some academic dispute in certain circles as to whether or not Britain has any sovereign right to Shetland. Others suggest that it should hold a Manx-style independence as a crown dependency, but not under Parliament (Shetland and Orkney Udal Law Association, 2004) or a Faroese-type arrangement where domestic matters are solely administered locally. A few still agitate for a return to Denmark or Norway (Hill, 2007), but this is not a mainstream point of view. Notably, the Isle of Man, Faroe, and Norway are not subject to EU fisheries regulation – an appealing state of affairs for many.

[5] In Great Britain, the foreshore (*viz.* the space between low and high water marks) is owned by the Crown Estate – so anyone wishing to, for example, build on the foreshore (such as for a pier) or collect gravel (or buried treasure!) must seek authorisation from, and often pay, the Crown Estate. But ownership of the foreshore has been sporadically recognised in Orkney and Shetland – not consistently, however. For example, Occidental Petroleum was forced, after a lawsuit, to reclaim money it had paid to the Crown Estate and pass it instead to coastal landowners in Orkney after laying a pipeline. Likewise, curiously, while swans are Crown property elsewhere in Britain, they are not when in Orkney or Shetland (Crawford, 2001). Though no legal precedent has supported it, it was suggested at one point that Shetland could rightly claim ownership under Udal law of much of the North Sea oil (Williamson, 1975).

regimes where they were paid in credit to be spent only at the laird's store and could not sell their produce to anyone but their laird – likewise for any fishing activities they undertook. Lairds often sought to subdivide crofts into as many units as possible so as to have as large a number of fishing tenants as possible, yet this put increasing pressure on many to provide for their families. The men would spend much of their time fishing in dangerous seas while the women would do the majority of the croft work while knitting to provide additional income. When husbands or fathers were lost at sea – not an uncommon occurrence – families would come under even greater hardship as widows without the extra income coming from fisheries were unlikely to be able to afford rent for a croft on land-based produce alone (Abrams, 2005). Graham (1983) does, however, note that not all of the lairds were as harsh as legend would suggest. But the system of land tenure that bound so many Shetlanders before the Crofting Act was grossly skewed to the advantage of the lairds. As discussed later, the Crofting Act of 1886 granted many protections for tenant farmers in Shetland and throughout Scotland, and the herring boom which began in the later portion of the nineteenth century improved the welfare of many Shetlanders. Large numbers of soldiers stationed in the islands during the two world wars brought relative prosperity to the islands as well, despite some privations and much disruption, given Shetland's strategic maritime position. But throughout Shetland's history, periods of steep economic decline have encouraged emigration and undermined efforts to create stable indigenous economic activity. So while Shetland was in a state of relative economic wellbeing when the first oil discoveries were made in the North Sea, such development was greeted with cautious welcome, but also recognition that development had to be carefully managed to help build a sustainable economy in the post-oil era.

Modern Shetland culture reflects many of its historical antecedents. Crofting and fishing still carry a great deal of 'cultural weight' (Abrams, 2005, p. 224) and much is made of the claims to Viking history and ancestry in the islands so as to draw a distinct cultural line between Shetland and the Scottish mainland while also borrowing a great deal of the dramatic flare that surrounds modern popular Viking imagery. The coming of the oil industry in the 1970s, however, rapidly accelerated cultural change in the islands as modernity arrived with what seemed to Shetlanders to be great rapidity. But the cultural effects of oil were certainly mixed and no doubt a great deal more complex than expected.

A crofter is, historically, a small-scale tenant farmer, or 'a small tenant of land with or without a lease, who finds in the cultivation and produce of his holding a material portion of his occupation, earnings and sustenance, and who pays rent directly to the proprietor' (H.M. Commissioners of Inquiry, 1884). Today the term is generally used to describe any small holding farmer in the Highlands and Islands or Northern Isles[6] of Scotland, often, though not always, with some grazing animals in addition – frequently kept on common land in Shetland. More crofters own their own

[6] For the purposes of this paper, I intend 'Highlands and Islands' to refer to the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland and 'Northern Isles' to refer to Orkney and Shetland. I hope to avoid confusion, as in some situations, Orkney and Shetland are grouped by others within a 'Highlands and Islands' designation – but not always, thus occasionally proving the source of confusion when consulting writings about Scotland in general – whether authors mean to include Shetland in references to the Highlands and Islands. Sometimes they do and sometimes they do not, often with little warning as to which is the case (for examples: Hunter, 1991; McCrone et al., 1999; Grenier, 2005). One might, as a particularly blatant example, refer to the prevalence of Gaelic heritage and Presbyterian religiosity in the Highlands and Islands, but these would not apply to Shetland or Orkney. In practice, the Western Isles (Skye, Uist, Lewis, Harris, Barra, etc.) tend to be much more closely linked with the highlands of mainland Scotland than Orkney and Shetland tend to be (in terms of administration, culture, language, economy, etc.). Such a distinction would anyhow probably make me popular with those who seek to note the dissimilarity between what might be considered the Gaelic regions of Scotland and the ostensibly Norse. And while there are some airplane flights to Inverness from Shetland, Shetland's connections to Scotland are primarily through the non-Highland cities of Aberdeen (for most flights and both the cargo and passenger ferries), Edinburgh, and Glasgow.

land now than was historically the case, though in Shetland the majority are still tenants (Crofters Commission, 2006). There are few full-time crofters in Shetland; for most it provides supplementary income to other employment or is merely a hobby (A. Cohen, 1987; T. Smith, 2004). Traditional crofting land has strong legal protections; to change its use for so much as a conservatory off the back of a house requires a lengthy application procedure to the Crofters Commission in Inverness[7] and the opportunity for public comment on the change of land use.

Crofter-fishermen aside, the continuing presence of Viking cultural references demonstrates how heavily Shetland identity rests on historical bases of identity, even though Shetland was transferred by the King of Denmark from Norway to Scotland in 1479 and subsequently heavily colonised by lowland Scots incomers whose language rapidly became dominant. But given the harsh treatment under early Scottish rule, it is no surprise that the Norse era seems appealing. The heavy hand of Scottish lairds certainly contributed to the romanticisation of that era and the character of those who ruled Shetland before Scotland consolidated its control over the islands, creating a sense of 'just Norsemen' versus the 'unjust Scots' (Schei and Moberg, 1988). But such perspectives are not only based on a long historical view; much of the Viking element of Shetland culture and identity is of a largely modern provenance. In addition to Viking imagery in art, architecture, tourism, street names, and elsewhere, the Up-Helly-Aa festival is perhaps the most visibly 'Viking' element of Shetland culture. This event, in which bands of costumed Shetlanders, including some in elaborate Viking regalia, march through the streets with torches before burning a replica Viking boat, is a very strong reminder of the centrality of Shetland's Norse

[7] The Crofters Commission also acts as a statutory resource and advocacy body looking after crofters' interests and the wellbeing of crofting in general in the Highlands and Islands and Northern Isles of Scotland (Crofters Commission, 2007).

heritage. But despite some half-hearted claims to ancient Norse antecedents, it is generally acknowledged that the event has its roots in the early 19th century and the Viking element – regalia and the longship (incongruously called 'the galley') – was created around the turn of the 19th century in a conscious effort to infuse a sense of Norse-ness into the Shetland identity.

Shetland's remoteness – or perceived remoteness – is an important part of local understandings of a great many positionalities, including cultural, identity-related, and political. It has formed a major part of the pro-autonomy movement in Shetland, supporting claims that 'one-size-fits-all' solutions for governance in Scotland or for the Highlands and Islands cannot be trusted to be properly applicable to Shetland's situations and needs. According to Irvine (Irvine, 2007a), 'Although part of Scotland, our remoteness means that we have developed heightened traits of independent philosophy. Our outlook is similar to that of a small country…' Undoubtedly Shetland's situation can be considered remote; the distance between Shetland and mainland Britain reduces the ease of travel and shipping such as to reduce the ease of casual personal communication and transport of goods. Even today, winter gales and summer fog can halt Shetland's transport links with the outside world. But Shetland certainly is not isolated; given its strategic position between the North Atlantic and North Sea, it has long been a nexus for travellers from northern Europe going west by sea, and oil made it more so.

The sentiment that 'Shetland is different' (for example, A. Cohen, 1985) and that 'it's not the same here'[8] draws upon all the particular cultural uniquenesses of the islands (or at least the perceived differences), plus the realities of the effects of remoteness on life logistics (time and cost to move people and goods to and from the

[8] 'Hits no da sam here' being a phonetic spelling of 'It's not the same here' in local accent by comic artist Francis S. Walterson; see figure three.

mainland, primarily), and even the terrain and weather (Peterson, 1972). Whether or not Shetland really is 'different', peoples' sense that it is distinct in so many ways means they are less inclined to accept what are seen as one-size-fits-all solutions offered by Inverness, Edinburgh, London, or Brussels (Thomason, 1997; Erikson and Anderson, 2006, for example) – or even Lerwick, for some (Graham and Graham, 1963). Despite all the oil money and incomers, Shetland still stakes a claim to being uniquely Shetland[9] and has not, in the minds of Shetlanders, been absorbed into a more standardised cultural fabric of Scotland or Britain.

A central premise of this thesis is that construction of the Sullom Voe Terminal caused a distinct shift in Shetlanders' perspectives of their own culture and identity (and thence to the idea of 'way of life') and the symbolic significance of the islands' Norse heritage and traditional activities. The changes brought about by oil-related economic activity both revived and altered these symbolisms, demonstrating linkages between the economic and the cultural. While Shetlanders' identities were by no means static before then – indeed the arrival of television in 1964 could be seen as having caused fairly significant cultural shift ('A. J. C.', 1966; Goodlad, 2006) – the prospect of oil-related development, followed by the reality of terminal and support-facility construction provoked a significant shift in local perspectives. If, as many argue, there is a strong relation between economy and culture (and thence to identity), then one might expect that a radical shift in economic activity will be associated with radical shifts in culture and identity. So I seek to identify the

[9] Though some writers use 'Shetlandic' as the adjective form, this is quite rare in local parlance, so I stick with the more common use of just 'Shetland' for adjective use in situations such as this.

situations where such dynamics occurred in Shetland since the announcements of oil development in the early 1970s.

This conception of the relationship between economic activity and cultural change is similar to Busenberg's (1999) 'focusing events' and could also share characteristics of Kuhn's (1964) 'paradigm shifts'. An event (e.g. proposals for a massive oil terminal nearby) serves as the catalyst for a sudden and definable break from the previous course of cultural perspective and development (rather than the change in scientific understanding discussed by Kuhn). Likewise, Busenberg's concept of focusing events is used by him in the context of environmental disaster changing understandings and design of oversight systems for environmental protection. But both ideas address the idea of specific events altering the continuity of thought and understanding (culture and identity-related or otherwise) amongst a given group of people. While oil development in Shetland was, I suggest, the catalyst for efforts and cultural preservation, due to concerns about cultural demise that would result, many aspects of the historically grounded identity and culture that were extant at the start of the 1970s were already in a state of slow decline due to a more general ingress of cultural influences from mainland Britain, most notably television, but also communication links more generally. But it was the announcement of the Sullom Voe Terminal construction and associated oil and gas activities that spurred action.

The most evident transformations brought about by concerns regarding oil disruption is the money made available to the Council and, via the Zetland County Council Act of 1974[10] (ZCC Act), the Shetland Charitable Trust. These funds have

[10] Prior to 1975, the SIC was known as the Zetland County Council. 'Zetland' derives from the original spelling, ʒetland, which used the now defunct letter 'Ezh' which was erroneously replaced with the similar-looking 'Z' – another archaic spelling, Hjaltland, may better mirror the Norse pronunciation. In 1975, the Zetland County Council and Lerwick Town Council were amalgamated into the 'most purpose' Shetland Islands Council (SIC).

allowed for the support of infrastructure (much of which has kept rural communities viable) for a wide variety of pursuits – cultural and otherwise – that the Charitable Trust has made possible. This linkage allowed the transformations experienced by Shetland to be managed locally to a greater extent than would have otherwise been the case and thus mitigated against what could have been a much more damaging experience for the islanders. On an individual level, oil-related activities brought many Shetlanders levels of affluence far beyond anything previously experienced, allowing them income and leisure time to direct towards activities beyond simple sustenance. It also brought Shetlanders into increased contact with people from beyond the isles, thus contributing to a sense of understanding of Shetland's place, and often difference, in the world. Worries about how incomers would act seemed to help establish a somewhat romanticised view of the lives of Shetlanders (crime-free, friendly to all their neighbours, etc. – Thomason, 1997), or at least encouraged discussion of this perceived difference – just as worries about damage to the 'rural character' of the islands seems to have created new interest in such a character.

A great many parallels can be drawn with the cultural change and disruption caused by the herring boom Shetland experienced from ca. 1880 to 1913, when, just as during the Sullom Voe Terminal planning and construction phase, Shetland experienced a sudden and dramatic increase in material wealth and immigration while more and more people were drawn away from traditional ways of life to work at herring gutting stations or on new steam-powered fishing boats (nearly all a result of investment from outside the islands – just as with oil). New steam technology, coupled with increased demand, created a period of massive growth in local fishing, driven largely by capital from elsewhere in Britain. Lerwick also got its first permanent commercial fish market. While local fishermen generally did not enjoy as

much success as incomers (the steam drifters were nearly all owned by financiers from the mainland), the boom period, which though not limited to Shetland, was certainly particularly notable in the islands, and brought development on a scale not seen in any previous era. Lerwick became a major national fishing port and such other Shetland ports as Baltasound, Scalloway, and Symbister experienced exponential growth (Irvine, 1985). Increased immigration, improved communication, and greater frequency of ship travel permitted a greater interest and knowledge about local heritage, mirroring such interest elsewhere in Britain. The construction of historically-based Norse identities at the time was not unique to Shetland, but was adopted particularly strongly there. Individual affluence allowed people the time to devote themselves to local culture and municipal wealth supported such endeavours as a town hall in Lerwick brimming with Norse (and Masonic) imagery and a new section of the town with predominantly Norse street names. Just as in the oil era, cultural disruption and money were key to the development of new understandings of culture and identity amongst Shetlanders.

While situated within the literature on culture and identity, this thesis will draw upon several areas of literature on Shetland, bringing them together, along with my own document- and interview-based research, into an analysis of how oil has been such an important force in shaping Shetland culture and identity today. This will be within a discussion of the forces shaping the extant culture which oil development altered. The importance of heritage in Shetland identity has been well established (Sutherland, 1974; B. Cohen, 1983; A. Cohen, 1987; Ramsay, 2000), though I seek to add to this through an analysis of reactions to oil development. Sociological and historical studies of oil both in Shetland and Scotland in general are likewise not rare,

though are mostly somewhat dated (Carter, 1982; Byron, 1986; Irvine, 1987). Such studies have been very useful in providing the background on which to set this work. There have been some works which have addressed in tangential manners the effects of oil development on identity and culture in Shetland (Irvine, 1985; Wills, 1991; Abrams, 2005), but this thesis will address these issues in much greater specificity and draw more heavily on academic literature related to the ideas of identity, culture, way of life, nationalism, and the invention of tradition, as well as works on petroleum development. As such, it will provide an addition to the Shetland literature in particular, but will also be an addition to the study of elements of invented traditions and cultural impacts of industrial activities more broadly, and to the general field and literature of cultural geography while drawing upon cultural anthropology and sociology.

This thesis contributes to the literature on invented traditions by presenting a scenario in which local identities are quite evidently constructed, but by a number of different sources and for various reasons. The context (*viz.* major industrial development) is one which is experienced by many cultures around the world and will thus hopefully be of use in cultural policy considering courses of action and causal linkages between communities with strong claims to historically-based identities (though these claims themselves may already be constructed) faced with the rapidly-modernising, or otherwise disruptive, influences of such development projects.

Much of the literature on the relationships between oil and those affected by local development of oil infrastructure focuses on the negative externalities of such projects – from local pollution to national political corruption – but the example of Shetland does not fit very well into this literature given the quite different state of

local affairs and the subsequent oil effects. Of course Shetland's situation is rather different than most (most importantly, it is not a sovereign country and is not in control of its own monetary policy; external economic control from London, Edinburgh, and Brussels is far more significant than economic policy of the Shetland Islands Council). The story of Shetland must, for the most part, be an exception within the literature on socio-political and economic effects of oil-related development, but one certainly worth study and comparative consideration.[11] For example, while resource-export-dependent economic activity would normally have few 'spillover effects' for (Larsen, 2006) the wider economic fabric of a region, or would be 'enclaved' from it (Hirschman, 1958; Humphreys et al., 2007), in Shetland oil development (which from a practical standpoint consisted predominantly of the construction and operation of the Sullom Voe Terminal and related infrastructure) provided a major boost for several sectors of the local economy.[12] It is conceivable, however, that Shetland experienced some elements of the 'Dutch disease;' the local 'manufacturing sector' contracted (in this case actually farming and fishing), though the reasons behind this are complex (European Union fisheries regulations and declining fish stocks no doubt played a greater part in reduced fish landings): labour shortages were the primary cause rather than the more complex economic forces,

[11] Larsen (2006) studies the reasons that Norway did not generally experience the effects of the 'resource curse' and 'Dutch disease' when developing its own oil industry in tandem with maintaining an operable fishing industry and other domestic economic activity. Larsen notes that it is one of the few oil producers to have done so. Instead of the economic stagnation that has characterised most resource-dependent economies (and petroleum-based ones in particular), Norway experienced 'countercurse' increased growth in GDP subsequent to North Sea oil discovery and development. Larsen notes that Norway was able to effectively develop positive 'spillover effects' to contribute to a wider range of economic growth than might have been expected from the extractive nature of oil development. Given the similarities in economic activity, comparative study between Shetland and Norway would be worthwhile, but again, the fact that Shetland does not have an independent economy and monetary policy would hamper much potential comparative research.

[12] However, it also resulted in a decline in others; employment trends shown in figure six in chapter four indicate some of the changes experienced by local industry.

such as exchange rate or investment issues, that would create 'Dutch disease' situations in nation-wide scenarios. Watts (2004) also suggests that dependence on extractive resource wealth results in increased centralisation and visibility of the state. While the importance of the Shetland Islands Council (SIC) and the Shetland Charitable Trust[13] has no doubt been enhanced by the money they disburse, they are prohibited from accumulating much power simply by their local and subordinate position of authority. The literature on various elements of the 'resource curse', that is, simply, how over-dependence on a single extractive resource for export is damaging to the economy and polity of a political entity, is particularly vast (Yergin, 1993; Coronil, 1997; Karl, 1997; Watts, 2004). But when approaching these

This image cannot be made available in ORA at this time

Figure 3: Comic by Walterson (1973)

[13] The various trusts, including the Charitable Trust, are discussed in chapter four.

works during the course of this research, I cannot help but feel that the story of Shetland contradicts many of the assumptions regarding what happens to regions hosting major oil development; Shetland, and my study of it, provides a rather different story and perspective. In this case (and as might be found to varying extents in other developed-nation petroleum economies), the implications of oil impacts have been rather more nuanced. I could not say whether or not oil was a 'bad' or a 'good' thing (defining 'bad' and 'good' would probably be impossible anyhow), merely that change had occurred.

On the surface, it is certainly difficult to compare Shetland with regions like southern Sudan or Nigeria's Niger delta region, but perhaps this is the scale at which such comparisons ought to be made. Again this is problematic given that the UK is not a major petroleum exporter due to its large domestic demand (though oil *is* shipped abroad from Shetland's Sullom Voe Terminal). It is easier, from an economic and political standpoint at least, to draw comparisons with formerly-marginal resource-extraction regions of other developed countries; oil and gas extractive regions in Alaska, Newfoundland, and the Northwest Territories (of Canada) come to mind.[14] These are regions where oil and gas are locally quite important but due to the comparatively small impact of such resource extraction on their nations' macro-economic policy, many of the negative externalities of the resource curse simply do not materialise. An economically significant fisheries sector has also prevented Shetland from becoming entirely dependent on a single resource (Irvine, 2007a). The Faroe Islands, long an object of socio-political envy from Shetland,[15] may turn to Shetland for guidance if North Atlantic fields prove to extend into Faroese waters in

[14] Though the premise of this thesis is, of course, that Shetland's strong sense of identity and attachment to an historically-grounded sense of culture make it uniquely notable.
[15] As discussed later, Faroe's surviving Scandinavian culture and language, as well as its political autonomy from Denmark, have long been envied by Shetlanders.

commercially viable quantities. But in terms of contribution to the literature on the socio-economics of oil development, Shetland provides an example of a comparatively extremely stable oil region within a larger national context. The relative stability of the British political and economic system is largely the source of such stability within Shetland, of course, but as in Karl (1997), it is to a great extent the dynamics of Shetland-based decision-making, supported by a strong sense of localised identity, that creates a social environment in which the impacts of oil have been largely well managed. Karl may touch on a resolution in her contention:

> '[F]rameworks for decision-making, that is, the incentive structures embedded in the institutions of a particular political economy, hold the key to understanding different development trajectories... In developing countries, it is the interaction between this framework for decision-making and the leading export sector, *not* the properties of a commodity per se, that determines whether a particular product is a blessing or a curse.' (p. xvi, emphasis in original)

I would suggest that she need not have qualified this statement as being limited to developing countries – the framework for decision-making is the key to the fate of oil regions and Shetland's framework in this regard is quite different than one might presume to find in the more common oil-equals-turmoil literature. Larsen (2006), based on his work on Norway's oil governance, would likely agree with me on the broader applicability of Karl's statement.

Shetland has, of course, seen the rise of nationalist sentiment in recent decades (though probably more in step with other UK nationalist movements gaining traction in the 1960s than direct oil-fuelled movements). Just as in Scotland and around the world (southern Sudan and Nigeria's delta region easily come to mind), the idea that oil revenues could make independence for a marginal area economically possible provides inspiration for autonomy and independence movements (Shankleman, 2006). What would happen in an independent Scotland with a heavily oil revenue-

based economy and an anti-Edinburgh Shetland agitating for its own independence or annexation by England (or, conceivably, Denmark or Norway as a rather remote possibility favoured by a few) might be a different matter, though one we can only leave to conjecture (*The Economist*, 1992; Tallack, 2007, for example).

I begin with a discussion of the literature surrounding the idea of invented traditions, as well as key terms of this study, namely *identity, culture,* and *way of life*, as well as *nationalism*, which certainly plays a major part in formations of identity and, to some extent, its reflection in local culture. I also discuss idea of 'invented traditions' developed by Hobsbawm (1983) and others, which is central to the issues discussed in this thesis. From there I discuss the relationships between economic activity and cultural change, in particular how Shetland's situation reflects (or does not) existing literature on connections between culture and oil development, before summarising social science studies of Shetland, particularly those of cultural and historical natures. After this literature review chapter, I discuss my research methodology. Chapter four analyses the disruption experienced by Shetland during the oil era and the implications for perceptions of local culture and identity, as well as setting out some of the socio-economic context that characterised Shetland life when announcements of oil discoveries arrived. Chapter five deals with the invention of Shetland culture, noting sources of Shetland's strong Norse identity and discussing at length the Up-Helly-Aa celebrations. I also address sources of anti-Scottish feeling that further contribute to the sense of difference that is so strong in Shetland identities, connecting to the question of whether Shetlanders feel that the islands belong in Scottish or Scandinavian cultural contexts. The importance of traditional industries and local dialect in Shetland identity are both also of great importance and

is discussed at length. The thesis then concludes with observations and remarks to draw all these issues together into a consideration of the modern, yet still historically-based, nature of Shetland's culture and identity in the wake of oil development.

II ~ The Literature: Identity, Culture & Way of Life

The relationships between the key terms that I discuss, namely 'identity', 'culture' and 'way of life' form the theoretical basis for my investigations into social, economic, and political interactions in Shetland. In this chapter I discuss some of the theoretical premises influencing these oil-era relationships and the changes to Shetland culture and identity which ensued. It is necessary to set out specific working definitions for the critical terms which shall be used throughout the thesis, and unravel the theoretical and contingent relationships between the often multivalent categories of 'culture', 'identity' and 'way of life', as they are terms used with various definitions by various people in various situations and disciplines – thus I must establish my own definitions based on several central works on these ideas. The oil industry brought economic change to Shetland and was a catalyst for cultural change. Much of this cultural change, I suggest, took the form of 'invented traditions' – that is, a re-conception of previously extant 'ways of life' to shape a new cultural identity for Shetlanders. These new cultural identities may not necessarily be 'historically authentic', but contain reinterpretations of historical elements and remain 'authentically Shetland' and important for peoples' sense of the islands, nonetheless. Thus modern identities are formed within historical cultural frameworks. Of course, if a sense of identity and culture is based on an artificially generated sense of heritage and history, then any possible disruptions to the way of life generated by such senses (for instance, *oil*) are unlikely to materially alter that artificial construct (*viz.* if a local sense of identity is based on a remote crofter-fisherman idyll that no longer

substantively exists, then the 'oilymen' and 'fok fae Sooth'[16] are unlikely to be able to damage that imagined idyll). The reality is more complex, of course, as the world of modernity accelerated by oil's coming has certainly altered perceptions, but the Sullom Voe Terminal cannot itself destroy Shetland's sense of heritage.

Additionally, in order to consider the ways in which Shetland reacts against its inclusion in national categories such as 'British' and 'Scottish', and seeks to define its own sense of a separate 'Shetland' national identity, it shall be necessary to discuss 'nationalism', and some of the theoretical conceptions which underpin it, within a context of invented traditions, modernity and the effects of economic activity on regional culture – and of course how the case of Shetland presents some differences to premises supported by the literature.

Some of these issues, at least in a tangential way, have been addressed in various ways in the work of several social scientists who approach various aspects of Shetland history and sociology. In the final section of this chapter, I shall discuss the narratives that describe the changes which occurred during this period, as found in literature about Shetland and its encounter with the oil industry (and in comparison to pre-oil era studies).

DEFINING KEY TERMS

Any discussion of 'identity', 'culture', and 'way of life', my own included, demands a clarification of critical terminology. The terms, as used in academic discourse, can be accused of overlap; that is, being utilised for same or similar functions without any real clarification of the boundaries which separate an 'identity' from a 'culture' or a

[16] *Folk from south* (*viz.* those not natives of Shetland) – curiously I have heard this phrase used to describe all those from outwith the islands – in a particular instance a group including a significant portion of Faroese, Icelanders, and Greenlanders.

'culture' from a 'way of life'. As is common to much academic terminology, these are terms used widely in common parlance, yet often without precise understanding of their definitive boundaries and with variation between authors. How is one to arrive at a working definition? Within the literature in which we see discussion of 'culture', 'identity' and 'way of life' utilised as critical terminology, some common trends can be evinced and from these I build my own working definitions.

Furthermore, even if Shetland tradition is an invented construct, it would be a mistake to analyse it exclusively as such. One must consider it within a broader analysis of identity and culture's interaction and development within the economic influences which are the focus of this thesis.

Identity

As a preliminary enquiry, we might look for a definition of 'identity' which reflects common usage. In Burke et al. (2003) we find a fairly specific definition for identity: it consists of perceived personal traits held to be common amongst members of a given group, somewhat simply described as, 'what it means to be who one is' and as a 'group with self-interested motivation… an organized, coherent force with its own goals and oppositions'. In developing a working definition, Burke et al.'s analysis is helpful; it describes what identity is, and how it may be used. However, it lacks any real clarification of how identity is constructed. On this topic we might refer to Hall, who, in one definition of 'identity', suggests that it may be 'constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation' (Hall, 1996, p. 2). This description does seem to recognise, at least in passing, the inter-connected web of influences which might at

any time be operative in the construction of an identity or of plural identities. Hall here suggests that identity is a conscious construction – an edifice constructed after a careful consideration of possible identity-forming stimuli, and which reflects the best possible combination of present and available factors. To my mind, this an overly cognitive assessment of identity, and one which fails to account for more subconscious constructions based upon environmental factors which, though present, may not necessarily be informed choices. Learned identities may be inherited, rather than cognisant choices. Though identities may also be established in intentional opposition to received identities in order to set oneself apart.

In recognition of this complexity, Abrams (2005) chooses to emphasise the function, as opposed to the genesis of identity construction. She addresses how 'expressions of identity and difference' are used to create a 'sense of worth' amongst a people. The benefits of an analysis of identity may be located in the focus upon the application of a term which we have already recognised is widely used and understood (and therefore multivalent), rather than in the attempt to define the broad and indefinable. By attempting to understand the many and variant ways in which identity operates and functions, as opposed to the ways in which we might define its operations in a scheme that is all encompassing, we allow 'identity' to operate in different ways in different contexts. Just as identities themselves can take many forms, so can the means and circumstances by which identities are constructed. For example, while Hobsbawm (1983b) and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Anderson (1991) focus on the intentional invention of communties to serve specific nation or community-building intentions, the creation of localised senses of identity can be peripheral to economic activities. But again this may be intentional or unintentional; the development of a common brand identity for marketing of Shetland fish or

knitwear may rely on the conscientious development of a constructed Shetland identity, or responses to expected disruptions from oil may result in a preservationist retrenchment of cultural assets leading to a strengthening of local identities.

In the context of this thesis, I will be primarily focusing upon regional identities – that is, the commonalities of interest and culture perceived amongst a group of people 'native' to a particular location, and their active use in a system of governance. Having a common identity is key to politicising a region to act as a cohesive regional entity (Raagmaa, 2002; Paasi, 2003). Identity, in the way that I have utilised the term, ought not be perceived as a static element, but as a process. That is, as one that changes with changing relations to one's (or a group's) environment (Groote et al., 2000). Identities are not fixed, but exist as multiplicities. Hall (1996) identifies the fragmented nature of identities, which are constantly subject to change as they are affected by 'intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions'. (p. 4) More generally, Groote et al. (and Hall as well) identify globalisation in general as a force furthering the dynamic characteristics of identity; people reacting to unfamiliar and uncertain global influences respond by orienting themselves more strongly towards familiar local forces, resulting in the localisation of their outlooks and identities as they become more aware of their group's position in the wider world (a phenomenon readily apparent in concerns about incoming oil-related workers). This need not preclude attitudes from becoming more 'cosmopolitan' at the same time. As ease of travel and improved communication make it increasingly easier to share common identities and cultures, people actually seem more determined to retain unique senses of self; *viz.* a crofter may holiday in Spain, but doing so establishes a more aware personal identity: 'I am not Spanish' and more 'I am a Shetland crofter' – as a Shetlander seeks to establish a sense of

place in the wider world he or she is now more aware of (as in Swyngedouw, 1989; Watts, 1991). Miller and Slater (2000) identify such phenomena in Trinidad where the internet has provided many of the same globalising influences on understandings of personal identity that commerce and travel has for a previously-more-remote Shetland.

Mitchell (2000) raises the prospect of increasingly globalised identities, in response to increasingly global-scale economies, governance regimes, and social movements. Though not explicitly described, Mitchell suggests a scalability of one's identity – one can choose to establish one's identity on any number of different spatial levels. By this rationale, one may choose to see oneself primarily as a citizen of Britain or one may first see oneself as a European, a sentiment echoed by Paasi (2002; 2003) in the context of delineating EU regions. In the context of Shetland, we would take this concept and scale it further downwards; one could see oneself as British, Scottish, or Shetlander – Coleman (1958) identifies such schemes in Nigerian identities.[17] Anthony Cohen (1978) recognises the varying identities of residents of Whalsay, one of Shetland's more remote populated islands – he locates identities from families and fishing boat crews to villages to areas of the island to the island of Whalsay itself to Shetland as a whole. Each of these identities carries with it varying senses of obligation and entitlement in relation to others residing in that identity. While Mitchell arranges his argument in such a way as to advocate a replacement of the culture of one scale with that of another, there is certainly no reason why one cannot actively and concurrently occupy several identities across a wide variety of

[17] Coleman, in his studies of Nigerian nationalism during their push for independence, identifies several types of nationalism at work – African, Nigerian, Regional, Group, and Cultural. This sort of idea, hierarchical identities with varying salience, is also addressed by Huntington (1993) and others.

scales. Hybrid identities could even be claimed within a single scale ('Oh, we're mostly British but we've got a good slice of Norwegian culture as well').

Place-based identification such as that which is apparent in Shetland *against* Scotland is addressed by Rose (1995), who comments on the ability of place-based identities to be based on contrast with another place – e.g. that which Shetlanders *are not* – again returning to the 'othering' basis of identities. Distance, of course, is significant in a Shetland context simply because there is so much of it:

> 'There is a strange comfort in being a hundred miles away, a hundred miles nearer the ice-pack, a hundred miles of clean, blue ocean.' (Peterson, 1967, p. 13)

And the physical characteristics of the islands are often cited as well: 'bare hills, grey ocean, fierce winds, and the wide arching of the skies of the north' (Peterson, 1972). Thus, if place is such an important force in the development of identity (Rose, 1995), and the place of a Shetlander is altered by the forces of development and its myriad externalities (both positive and negative[18]), identities will also be altered as that person defines him or herself in relation to that place.

The role that establishing local identities can play in marketing an area for tourism or branded export products is well established (Simpson, 1983; Groote et al., 2000; Steven, 2006; Baldursson, 2007). Hamilton (2007) describes the importance of Shetland's branded identity to attracting tourism and markets for premium Shetland produce. Shetland's 'Pride of Place' branding scheme, launched in 2004, was meant to establish a recognisable and consistent scheme for the branding of Shetland goods and tourism, drawing in a number of themes that were thought to represent the islands, including 'soul', 'origin', and 'fineness' (Corporate Edge, 2004). Even a refurbishment of Shetland's primary airport at Sumburgh is being undertaken with

[18] Of course, what is negative or positive for one person or group of people might not be for another.

'celebrating Shetland's cultural identity' in mind (Shetland Islands Council, 2007c). Interviewees and commentators in the letters columns of the *Shetland Times* have frequently expressed some disfavour of this production of identity, however – ranging from doubt as to its likely efficacy or reflection of the reality of Shetland life (or 'Shetland experience' as it would likely be presented) to outright scorn. Though much of this was encouraged by the £123,200 cost of the branding effort – and the impression that it merely produced a little-used logo (Hamilton, 2007). Thus there is evidently doubt as to whether such commercially-constructed identities could be seriously owned by 'real life' Shetlanders and Hamilton warned that Shetlanders must 'prevent [local identity] from being altered as it becomes more and more widely known'.



Figure 4: Shetland's 'Pride of Place' branding logo

Identity is a concept whose empirical measurement is essentially impossible, but whose understanding is important for the consideration of social disruption of 'close-knit' communities who perceive themselves to be somehow different (and as a group cohesively so) than the incoming cultural influences arriving with industrial development. It is imagined – enacted as a process rather than being an object.

Culture

Culture seems to be even more vague in application than 'identity'. The totemic Raymond Williams, ubiquitously cited when discussing the meaning of 'culture', describes it as 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (Williams, 1976, p. 76), but goes on to document the term's history, including French 18th and 19th century use as largely synonymous with 'civilisation' and identifies early uses of the plural 'cultures' to acknowledge the concept's different incarnations in different people. He also traces development of the term in intellectual and artistic use, arguing that new understandings of culture rose contemporaneously with the 'new kinds of personal and social relationship[s]' (1958, p. xviii) brought about by the industrial revolution as part of his conclusion that 'the history of the idea of culture is a record of our reactions, in thought and feeling, to the changed conditions of our common life' (Williams, 1958, p. 295). I will note in particular the connection Williams makes between conceptions of culture and changing 'conditions of common life', not necessarily understanding such phenomena to be limited to the macro-scale events of the Industrial Revolution. Mitchell (2000) casts a wide net in his definitions of culture, including 'a 'total way of life' of a people, encompassing language, dress, food habits, music, housing styles, religion,

family structures and, most importantly, *values*' (p. 13, emphasis in original). Additionally he describes it as:

> Both a nebulous 'structure of feeling' that defines life or people and a set of productions that reflect upon, speak to, or attempt to mold that 'structure of feeling' through various strategies of representation. (p. 13)

While Mitchell's 'structure of feeling' might work better under the heading of 'identity', his 'set of productions' gets to the root of 'culture' – that is, as I understand it, the manifested traits of a commonly held identity, generally with some sort of physical embodiment. Hofstede (1991) identifies culture as being learned from one's social group, be it 'national, regional, gender, age, social class', or even from one's place of employment. Peter Jackson (1989) takes 'culture' to mean the 'codes with which meaning is constructed, conveyed, and understood', going on to say that 'cultures are *maps of meaning* through which the world is made intelligible' (p. 2, emphasis in original) and includes shapes of social relations, as well as how 'those shapes are experienced, understood, and interpreted' (p. 2). 'Way of life' is a generalised term that encompasses the day to day realities of cultural experience in a community (Jackson, 1981c; 1982). Monaghan and Just (2000) suggest a far more essential possible definition of culture, using it to label 'our capacity to conceptualize the world and to communicate those conceptions symbolically' (p. 34); they set this to be what separates human beings from the remainder of life on Earth. But this may not be especially useful in considering the differences between cultures or how individuals perceive their own. It focuses on an action-based definition, it seems. They also offer 'shared patterns of learned behaviour' (p. 35) as an alternative – one rather more friendly to the sort of social interactions and perceptions I discuss here.

Culture as a term, though ubiquitous, does not enjoy universal affection. Geertz was not very enamoured with it as he found it used in the early 1970s:

> The term ‘culture’ has by now acquired a certain aura of ill-repute in social anthropological circles because of the multiplicity of its referents and studied vagueness with which it has been invoked. (Geertz, 1973)

He did, however, push to revive the study of culture and make it more interdisciplinary. Geertz’s contemporary, Raymond Williams, offers a similar critique without being quite so critical, but laments its complexity as a term, ‘because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought’ (Williams, 1976, p. 76-77). Williams though does limit the scope of the term rather more than others do, focusing much more on what might be thought of as somewhat more mundane elements of culture, *viz.* artistic endeavours, literary works, and the like, while occasionally noting that there could be more. ‘Yet a culture is not only a body of intellectual and imaginative work; it is also and essentially a whole way of life’ (Williams, 1958, p. 325) (preparing a segue to the next term I discuss). More recently, Bennett (2005) seems to agree with Geertz and Williams’ sentiments in his definition by going into a long list of the sorts of ‘culture’ that one might include under that title whilst referencing several writers (Clifford, 1988; Kuper, 1999) who were themselves not content with the word or concept, even if they cannot avoid it themselves. Bennett’s effort was, notably, an update on Williams’ classic *Keywords* (1976). Mitchell (1995) takes a rather different tack in the critical critique of ‘culture;’ he disowns any concept of culture as a tangible entity, instead arguing for its use only as an ‘idea (or ideology)’ – but an important idea nonetheless. Clifford acknowledges that culture is an idea that he ‘cannot yet do without’ (Clifford, 1988, p. 10, as cited in Bennett, 2005), and all of those cited above continued to use the term despite their misgivings. It was often these misgivings that inspired their extensive work on the term and idea (Geertz and Williams in particular).

Of culture and identity, identity is probably the more ethereal of the pair as on its own it lacks any substantive physical embodiment. But given the connection between the two, when one discusses culture, identity must automatically be an element in that discussion. Likewise, there will nearly always be a cultural embodiment or projection of a given identity. Culture seems to remain more within the empirical realms, despite Mitchell's arguments in favour of it holding only 'idea' status.

The economic conditions of a given area can have a major influence on the social dynamics and determination of culture within that region. Historically, traditional industries were extremely influential in Shetland cultural networks (Byron, 1981; A. Cohen, 1987). Oil-related economic activity in Shetland altered these networks but also created new ones, whilst at the same time changing the economic fortunes of a great many individual Shetlanders (Wills, 1991). But if economic conditions do have a major influence on culture, then how can we conceive of this relation?

One crude way of understanding the relation is in terms of the 'base/superstructure' model employed in Marxist theory.[19] Shetland culture has long been defined by the economic base of traditional industries (fishing, crofting, knitwear) (Graham, 1983), but with the major changes in economic base brought about by oil development, the 'superstructure' of Shetland culture and identity did not so easily shift. We cannot say that with the 'new economy' of oil, there was a new cultural identity created, because the stimuli for cultural regeneration was found in the past, rather than in something new. Traditional industries such as crofting and fishing, rather than subsiding as cultural influences in the presence of the new global

[19] For example Wolff (1981)

market created by the arrival of oil in Shetland, may have become more significant. The oil industry as base economic structure therefore does influence Shetlanders' cultural engagement with the base economy of the past (which influenced ideologies and identities – if not the practicalities of daily life) much more than oil does now. So while oil has affected day-to-day lives massively, its ideological and cultural impact is largely to be found in the ways people relate to the past and to the traditional economic bases of fishing, crofting, and knitwear.

Miller (1994) is hesitant to use traditional Marxist ideas of class in his ethnographic work in Trinidad because the socio-economic scenarios present on the island do not match the factory/peasantry and capital/labour models prevalent in traditional Marxism. There is relative economic mobility in Trinidad, allowing one to move up and down within socio-economic standing. Thus the sort of institutionalised class barriers and differences fail to materialise in the manner envisaged by traditional Marxism. He does not refute the Marxist argument for the existence of inequalities or forms of exploitation; he merely suggests that class distinctions are not necessarily the basis for such inequalities and exploitation. Miller also describes communities where any class identities are largely superseded by place-based identities. Perhaps similarities should be noted in the case of Shetland.

Gabriel Tarde recognises the role that modern economies play in promoting invention, particularly innovation resulting from peoples' imitation (Barry and Thrift, 2007). According to Tarde, 'the individual often innovates unconsciously, and, as a matter of fact, the most imitative man is an innovator on some side or other but without paying the slightest attention in the world to the degree of difficulty or merit of the innovation in question' (Tarde, 1903, p. xiv). This may apply to any cultural facet of society just as it would the economic. So by imitating some aspect of an

outside culture, a group or individual may actually innovate a slightly different manifestation of a given set of cultural elements.

Culture's vagueness as a term in common usage makes it necessary for me to set out my own definition, if only to constrain interpretations of what exactly I mean when I use it in this thesis. I would define it as a collection of the day-to-day realities of meaning in an individual's life, including the symbolisms that those realities hold for that individual and how they are communicated to those who share similar senses of culture. I borrow parts of several different writers' definitions, perhaps sometimes slightly out of context (*e.g.* I am not taking on board Williams' Marxist cultural materialist perspective, even if I have been so bold to take his words on the topic of culture in order to establish my own – not very Marxist at all – definition for my use of the term). The important goal is to have a working definition so that I am understood over the course of the thesis and, ideally, any grand pronouncements regarding culture that I may make are not given too broad or narrow a reading. By making generalising statements about 'Shetland culture', I do, of course, mean the collection of cultures at various scales for people across Shetland, as meanings will vary from person to person, family to family, village to village, and region to region.

Way of Life

The idea of a 'way of life' (or plural *ways*) is something of a manifestation of culture into everyday practise and the day-to-day realities of a peoples' lives, and as such shares close ties with 'culture' while being interpreted for an individual within the context of their identities. Anthony Cohen (1980) uses 'culture' synonymously with 'way of life'[20] and others draw strong connections between the two (Williams, 1981;

[20] As discussed later, Cohen was not content with the use of the term 'way of life.'

Monaghan and Just, 2000), while recognising that individual cultures produce individual ways of life.[21] It is difficult to speak of generalised identity, culture and way of life, as each person's individual experiences will vary, thus comprising separate identities and understandings of a given culture (A. Cohen, 1987; Hall, 1996). Likewise, descriptions of a way of life would 'fail to grasp the meanings' that individuals assign to their own ways of life (A. Cohen, 1987). If we are to accept Mitchell's (1995) argument that culture ought only be thought of as an idea, rather than an ontological entity, then we must also accept that 'way of life' is merely an idea or ideology. This seems to create a somewhat comfortable compromise with Cohen's concerns – for perhaps then we can see 'way of life' as a perceived essence of common day-to-day life when there is not really as much common in a group's lives, on a practical basis, as they may feel.

Cohen's various works on Whalsay, along with several by Byron on the island of Burra (1981; 1986) provide good examples of the application of studies focused on ways of life in Shetland and changing meanings for the people of these two islands. Wills (1991) interestingly notes how much more complex and nuanced the realities of a Shetland way of life are on an Unst croft, dependent on neighbours and unable to avoid interactions with them, compared to his life in Edinburgh previously where his day-to-day life was predictable and he could partake in social interaction only as it suited him.

One must also consider the question of difference in this case; while no region at any scale will be identical to any other, many of the characteristics thought so particularly Shetland in nature are not particularly unique. The focus on remoteness, connection to the sea, importance of traditional industries, and local language are

[21] This connects back nicely to Williams' discussion of the use of 'cultures' as a plural term.

certainly found elsewhere. Crofting, fishing, remoteness, and local language are all important in the ways of life in Scotland's Western Isles (Ennew, 1980, for example), despite implication of uniqueness in statements regarding the 'Shetland way of life'. Yet a sense of uniqueness remains strong in the Shetland identity regardless (Nicolson, 1990; Irvine, 2007a).

In his discussion of Canada's Prince Edward Island, Edward MacDonald (2007) notes debates over whether an 'island way of life' is possible when faced with the 'cultural onslaught of mass media and rapid transit' – *viz.* globalisation as is so often discussed in geographical discourse – or even just a particularly strong nation-level influence.

In terms of discussing the changes to peoples' culture and way of life in Shetland, way of life acts as the medium by which such changes are conveyed. The realities of having a major oil terminal built in one's rural community force changes on one's way of life, thus altering one's culture and identity. Likewise one's culture and identity influence the ways in which one conducts one's activities and how the significance of those activities is understood, thus creating something of a demonstration of one's culture and identity in an empirically identifiable manner.

INVENTED TRADITIONS

While tradition plays a strong part in many, if not most, national identities, such a sense of tradition is rarely developed in a completely organic manner (Hobsbawm, 1983a). The interests of certain individuals or discrete groups within (or outwith) a group may encourage actions by or on behalf of that person or group to establish a sense of common identity based on a set of traditions which may themselves not actually be entirely within the realms of historical fact or evolution. Alternatively,

existing traditions may be altered to fit within a desired alternative identity. The development of a common sense of nationhood is frequently based on constructed ideals of historical meaning for a given group.

The claiming of identities based on tradition and historical precedent largely ignores, or at least attempts to circumvent, the fluid nature of identities (as discussed earlier) by establishing unchanging roots in the past, that is a sort of point of reference meant to anchor the identities of the present within that given historical context. Doing so essentially denies (or endeavours to prevent) cultural evolution, to a great extent. Hobsbawm describes this phenomenon:

> [I]nsofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of 'invented' traditions is that the continuity with it is largely factitious. It is the contrast between the constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant, that makes the 'invention of tradition' so interesting for historians of the past two centuries. (1983a, p. 2)

Raymond Williams (1977) argues that most versions of 'tradition' are 'radically selective', asserting that particular meanings and practices are emphasised by hegemonic forces while others are neglected or excluded. While this may seem to have highly negative connotations, it must be noted that this can be done for purely defensive means as well. In response to a threat (real or imagined) developing from that 'other', it may be necessary to create a common sense of identity to defend against a more powerful outside force. The means of doing so are, of course, various.

According to Hobsbawm's (1983a) classic account, the phenomenon of 'invented traditions' whereby certain sets of practices are developed, is often undertaken in an 'attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past' (p. 1). He takes a rather functionalist approach by suggesting that most national traditions, used to create a sense of common national identity, are deliberate 'exercises in social

engineering' (p. 13) and suggests 'three overlapping types' of invented traditions in the period following the industrial revolution:

> a) those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real, or artificial communities,
> b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and
> c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation or beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour. (p. 9)

Following from this, we can identify a useful connection with McCrone et al. (1999), in their discussions of 'heritage' (which we may take to be the historical antecedents for culture and thereby identity – and thus perhaps some sense of past ways of life) and the claim that heritage is a 'thoroughly modern concept… [which] belongs to the later quarter of the twentieth century' (p. 1). McCrone et al. continue:

> [Heritage] has come to refer to a panoply of material and symbolic inheritances, some hardly older than the possessor. We have constructed heritage because we have a cultural need to do so in our modern age. Heritage is a condition of the late twentieth century…
> [McCrone et al.] explain the extraordinary phenomenon through which the past is opened not only to reconstruction but also to invention. We will discover that heritage has only a tenuous connection to actual events, to history. It has a much stronger one with the past, that is to say our interpretation formed in the context of the present. If there has been a boom in interest in history and archaeology, it has been because of what we want to use them for in the context of our own lives, and their potential for mapping out the future. (p. 1)

Mitchell (1995) likewise identifies the constructed nature of culture and its active maintenance by social actors, denying its 'superorganicism' and identifying the 'relations of power' that will always be present in any formation of culture. Broadly, such constructions fit within elements of the 'imaginative geographies' described by Said (1994), Gregory (2000a), and others as well – at least in part.

The focus on both tradition and modernity within this thesis, spoken often in a single breath as I connect the two within Shetland's way of life at the turn of the 21st century, might run afoul of several thinkers on the topic of modernity, including Habermas (1981) who saw modernity as a separation from 'the models supplied by

another epoch'. Perhaps my own use of 'modernity' is a bit more banal than might be had in a grand debate of modernism and postmodernism, thus allowing a space for interpretations of tradition to hold a place. Gregory's (2000b) 'forms of spatiality that [seek] to impose metropolitan "rational" spaces over indigenous, supposedly "non-rational" spaces', *viz.* the normalising influence of the 'metropolitan' cultural and economic centre, might be called upon in this instance. Additionally, Said's (1994) inclusion, within the collective of 'Orientalism', of the idea that traditional societies are perceived to be stagnant and thus not joining the 'civilised' 'west' (*viz.* metropolitan) also connects to the sort of perceptions of tradition in the face of modernising external influence. Said (1994) and Gregory (1994), amongst others, develop the related theories of 'identity-formation of the viewing subject' (Gregory, 2000a, p. 372) as well, whereby one's perception of self is developed via the perception of others, within the authors' similar conceptions of imaginative geographies and positionalities of viewing subjects (also Gregory, 2004). Such phenomena can be observed both in Shetlanders' perception of outsiders, Scottish/British and Scandinavian, as well as Scottish/British perceptions of Shetland and Shetlanders (which themselves harken back to Said's Orientalism, yet within the United Kingdom itself[22]).

Much work on tradition and heritage has used Scotland (and northern England) as a point of departure. J. D. Richards (2000; 2005) identifies the

[22] Perhaps of curiosity is a letter which appeared in *The Shetland Times* asserting that the crofters of Scotland ought to be considered an indigenous people (Ratter, 2008), claiming similarities to Norway's Sami as well as indigenous peoples who have suffered 'oppressive treatment' globally. While from a practical standpoint such an assertion is doubtful and is more likely to be viewed as an attempt to claim EU protections and aid, the comparisons that could be drawn between Scotland's crofters (particularly during the Highland Clearances) and various world indigenous groups under colonial regimes (even internal colonialism) can serve to represent the application of Said's theories, and those of many others who address issues of othering and the 'West's' relation to colonialism and the developing world, such as Gregory (1994), to rural Scotland. See also Squires (1996) regarding internal colonialism.

constructed position of historical identities in his home city of York, where, much like Shetland, the presence of Vikings in popular consciousness seems to far outweigh their actual impact on contemporary local society (though this constructed consciousness then does actually affect contemporary local society). Meanwhile, Macdonald (1997 , p. 73-74) suggests that imaginings of pre-Highland Clearance crofting life in the Highlands and Islands regions of Scotland has been heavily romanticised. She also addresses the 'kitsch' nature of much of Highland culture today (p. xvii-xviii) – as witnessed by anyone approaching Edinburgh's Royal Mile or other tourist-oriented area in Scotland and faults some early efforts to artificially glamourise Highland culture and identity (such as Stuart et al., 1842). Similarly, Trevor-Roper (1983) traces the popularity of kilts to knitwear manufacturers who stood to profit from their popularity[23] and McCrone suggests that 'tartanry has come to stand for tourist knick-knackery, visits to [football matches against England at] Wembley, and the Edinburgh Tatoo' (1992, p. 181). Kidd (1993) debates various aspects of Scotland's attempts to establish its own unique non-English identity, while Jedrej and Nuttall (1996) humourously remark that 'arguably never was Scotland, and the Highlands in particular, so rich with traditions' (p. 87). Scotland's extensive invention of tradition has, of course, served both tourism and the Scottish nationalists well, creating an idealised historic idyll to draw tourists (often Americans of Scottish descent seeking out some imagined magical land that their starving or evicted ancestors fled) as well as a cohesive sense of history and common culture to appeal to all Scots together – from a Dumfries estate agent to a Western Isles crofter. The cohesive Scottish 'brand' thus serves to create economic activity and a sense of

[23] Though this is contested; McCrone describes Trevor-Roper's piece as 'knock-about' (McCrone, 1992, p. 181) and notes that Dunbar (1981), a 'major historian of tartan', dismisses such ideas.

nationhood that holds similar symbolism across the country, even if the kilts and bagpipes had very little to do with the historical experience of those in the lowlands and not necessarily as much to do with highlanders as might now be imagined (and even less to do with Shetlanders).

In his study of Shetland political dynamics, Church (1989; 1990) discusses 'confabulations' of history and identity – or a sort of subconscious filling-in of history with information appropriate to contemporary perceptions, achieved through 'the domination and appropriation of the past by political technologies and apparatuses' (1989, p. 21), most often by individuals or groups with particular agendas in advantageous positions of influence or power. Church also references what he describes as 'a ritual of strategic forgetting' (1990, p. 34) in the creation of Shetland-culture-based pageantry of *Hamefarins*, a sort of world-wide reunion of those of Shetland ancestry in which an idealised construction of Shetland culture and way of life is presented for those of Shetland ancestry – both for the glorification of the 'Shetland way of life' (such as it is interpreted) and to encourage tourism by the 'hamefarers', which is discussed at greater length in chapter five. Perhaps appropriately, Anderson (1991) describes the altered rendering of the past in contemporary situations as a 'remembering/forgetting', for example, 'A vast pedagogical industry works ceaselessly to oblige young Americans to remember/forget the hostilities of 1861-65 as a great 'civil' war between 'brothers' rather than between… two sovereign nation-states' (p. 201). While this terminology may be awkward in terms of grammar and smooth reading, the point made by its use is interesting and helpful in considering how a person or group, on their own or influenced by outside or internal forces, may selectively remember aspects of the past whilst also selectively filling in gaps.

NATIONALISM

As noted above, nationalism is an important product of the development of group identity and may be used as a justifying goal for the manipulation of identities for group mobilisation. The literature on nationalism may also play a useful part in a study of identities, particularly in the context of invented traditions based within Shetland culture and identity, and the manner in which local perceptions of commonality amongst Shetlanders is actively a part of discourse and action on behalf of the islands. This can be interpreted as rather nationalist in nature – and certainly 'regionalist' – even if the goal of the vast majority of Shetlanders is not actual independence.[24] Several writers eschew rigid definitions of 'nation' and 'nationalism' entirely, allowing various scales of common groupings of people to act under the title of 'nationalism' (Coleman, 1958; Geertz, 1994, for example). Connor (1994, p. 36) argues nationalism is based on 'a psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it, in the subconscious conviction of its members, from all other people in a most vital way'. In the context of Shetland nationalism, it is important to note the need, identified by Hobsbawm (1983a), for constructed historical grounding in many nationalist movements; that is, groups must seek to identify themselves and their beliefs across time in order to legitimise their claim to unique cultural identities, as well as, often, a 'myth of common descent' (Weber, 1948). J. D. Richards (2005) illustrates this in his descriptions of the extensive use of constructed Viking heritage to develop nationalist sentiments in newly independent Scandinavian states in the 19th century, where such historical interpretations were used to create national identities

[24] Though increased autonomy is a very common desire, nationalism tends toward cultural manifestations rather than political efforts, though sporadic independence parties and movements have existed.

for regions which were otherwise characterised by localised allegiances. J. C. Richards (2001)[25] likewise describes the adoption of Viking history and national imagery to offset low national morale caused by the loss of Finland to the Russian Empire in the early 1800s. Bronwen Cohen (1983) identifies similar interest in Norse heritage in Britain in the later part of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries and Shetland's particularly strong adoption of this interest.

This sort of nationalist sentiment-building activity (a further illustration of 'invention of tradition' and constructed identities) was widespread in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Hobsbawm, 1983b), as social transformation around the globe required the creation of new traditions to match the new social contexts that came with industrialisation and political change. An increasingly politically aware and active middle class (at least in Europe) sought to establish itself in the politics and social discourse while these new social systems sought some sort of historical grounding upon which to base their new social orders, *viz*. Hobsbawm's invention of tradition. This often took the form of what he describes as a 'civic religion' which needed to be constructed to fit these changed social orders. He traces the need for highly visible and participatory public events to the maintenance of such social and national (rather than religious) loyalties. This would seem to contrast somewhat with Brown's (1998) greater emphasis on the calendar customs as a social feature put on the defensive by religion (or even by modernity itself as experienced at the turn of the 20th century) – but the two forces can collaboratively alter events. A prime example is

[25] I am no doubt not the only one who was, for a time, confused by the fact that there are two writers named Julian Richards who written on Viking and Norse historical topics. I am also no doubt not the first whose bibliographic software had difficulties prying the two identities apart. Julian D. is a professor of archaeology at York University while Julian C. is an archaeologist and television presenter.

Shetland's Up-Helly-Aa celebrations[26] – a calendar custom that was heavily altered by those keen to establish a common Norse-based Shetland identity. This mirrors common trends in Victorian Britain towards establishment of heroic antecedents for a then supposedly equally heroic British society (Webster, 1993; Bryden, 2005). As described by MacDougall (1982):

> Myths of origin enable people to locate themselves in time and space. They offer an explanation of the unknown and hallowed traditions by linking them to heroic events and personages of the distant past. In addition, they form the ground for belief systems or ideologies which, providing a moral validation for attitudes and activities, bind men together into a society. (p. 1)

Similarly, Anthony Smith (1999) discusses the importance of a myth of national ethnic descent in the broader context of forming unified identities to develop senses nationalism.

The recognition of a commonality amongst a given group of people inherently delineates an area (however vague) beyond which must be defined an 'other'. The oppositional force of a common 'other' often strengthens communities' perceptions of identity (Said, 1994; Jones, 1995; Rose, 1995; Gregory, 2000a). It could even define communities themselves, as A. Cohen (1985) suggests that 'community' rests on the relational sense of similarity with one set of people and difference to all others. Eagleton (2000) suggests that the more pressure placed on groups by forces outside their 'culture', the more strongly their own identity will form. Alternatively, without a distinction between 'us' and an 'other', Paasi (2003) asserts that there can be no collective action to confront such an outside force. History, of course, is rife with examples of groups of people using this 'othering' to destructive ends – to mobilise identities for the express purpose of opposing and attacking that 'other' or 'provide

[26] Up-Helly-Aa, the annual 'Viking' fire festival in which thousands march through Lerwick (and elsewhere in smaller versions celebrated in outlying villages) bearing torches, some dressed as Vikings, before burning a replica Viking longship, is discussed at length in chapter five. But it is worth noting, at this point, the mostly Victorian origins of the event as it is practiced today.

politicians with instruments for the manipulation of the citizenry' (Paasi, 2003, p. 478; see also Anderson, 1991) – several examples are quite notorious, though this phenomenon can be observed at numerous levels. In a more passive sense, Jackson (1981a) suggests that exposure to cultural differences may give rise to reinforced adherence to the cultural base of one's own identity. Meanwhile, Chamberlain (2000) argues that common identities may strengthen due to a collectively experienced wrong. She develops a thesis proposing that in the face of pressures from industry and collective suffering, a community[27] can be driven to politicise as a group when otherwise they had been independent actors. Similar themes are implicit in Wills' Shetland histories (1991; Wills and Warner, 1993) and Church's (1989; 1990) studies of the role of cultural inventions in the construction of a Shetland political identity.

Shankleman (2006) and Yergin (1993) identify the propensity of resource wealth to encourage nationalist movements. Scotland certainly is a fine example of such a situation, given the success of the Scottish Nationalist Party in the 1970s leading to the 1979 devolution referendum (which Shetlanders notably rejected). Shetland's contemporary nationalist association, The Shetland Movement, predated oil discovery, just as the SNP did. However the prospect of oil revenue, much as in the case of the SNP, seemed to offer the prospect of the sort of revenue that would be needed to actually support an independent (or much more autonomous) Shetland ('Northmoother', 1972b; Grønneberg, 1976) or Scotland (McCrone, 1974; Miller et

[27] 'Community' is yet another term used in a variety of ways with a variety of subtle and presumed meanings. Beamish (2002) defines it as a loosely defined formation of institutions or human associations specific to a location, larger than a family, yet less structured and less goal-specific than a complex organisation with association being defined by a 'common belonging' rather than by 'pecuniary, instrumental, or utilitarian rationality' (p. 110). I would dispute the inclusion of 'specific to a location', but this is a moot point; Shetland, being an island, conveniently fits into conventional conceptions of 'space'.

al., 1980; Nairn, 2003). Meanwhile, Watts (2004) notes increased dependency on, and visibility of, the state in such scenarios.

Media and sport (often sport in the media) can play an important part in establishing a unique local sense of identity. Bairner (1996) and King (2006) identify the importance of sport in nationalist movements. King also identifies the significance of displays of flags as support for a nation's athletes, as well as the role that local media plays in developing 'a web of social relations interlocked with others' even when supporters may not ever personally meet; this connects strongly with Anderson's (1991) discussion of media and nationalism, in which he discusses the role of newspapers in making events part of a common cultural experience shared by all within that 'assemblage of common readers', (p. 62) if only vicariously through the text of an article. Sport, perhaps, does not play exactly the same role in Shetland as it might in more 'typical' geographical circumstances. King (2000) recognises the role of sport in fostering a sense of place and special relationship to the world, yet in Shetland, there is likely little additional effect sporting activities can have regarding *place*. The islands' remote location is such a central part of peoples' everyday existence and where the islands are in relation to the world is so significant. Sport certainly does provide a means for athletes, particularly school-age children, to travel to mainland Scotland (and occasionally even further) where otherwise they might not, gaining something akin to King's recognition of the cultural significance of Manchester United supporters' travels to away matches in Europe.[28] Much of the public contact with Shetland sport comes via local media (*viz. The Shetland Times*,

[28] Although, whereas the knowledge accrued from such trips by King's Manchester United supporters would orient mainly towards in-depth understanding of local bar and club customs and behaviour towards local women, Shetland youth have the benefit of meeting youths from across Scotland and experiencing some of the somewhat more savoury aspects of Scotland – including cities on a far greater scale than anything in Shetland.

mostly), but the role that media plays in formulation of local identity is much broader in scope. Anderson (1991) recognises the importance of a common print media to the formulation of common identities. Within Shetland, *The New Shetlander* has provided a media venue for an expansive array of cultural commentary and presentation, as my heavy citation of its articles and editorials throughout this thesis attests.

SHETLAND: IDENTITIES, CULTURES & TRADITIONS

Efforts to understand Shetland's sense of unique identity and culture developed within various social contexts have often appeared in local media and locally published books. The intense interest in various aspects of the historical grounding for a modern Shetland way of life – or at least idealised conceptions of that way of life – has produced a variety of works on a range of historical periods, as well as more vertically integrated historical studies. While many of these works can be seen more as the product of a particularly well developed public interest in community history and local museums, such as would certainly not be overly unique to Shetland, several have touched on more specific theoretical considerations for the state of Shetland culture and identity and its implications for contemporary understandings of those concepts and the resultant ways of life in the islands.

Nearly all writers on contemporary and historical Shetland identify the importance of crofting and fishing in the mindset modern Shetlanders (Abrams, 2005; Button, 1978; H. Smith, 1978; Sutherland, 1974; Wills, 1991, amongst countless others). Anthony Cohen (1978; 1987), describes the centrality of crofting within the minds of the Whalsay community, despite its economically marginal nature:

> It is clear, then, that crofting occupies a prominent place in the Whalsay ideology. It has more salience as an idea than as an economic activity. Its continued salience must be treated as paradoxical in the context of contemporary economic life. (p. 100)

Meanwhile, the commentator 'B.F.W.' (1963) remarks in a pre-oil discussion of the island's economic future, 'Where is Shetland going if it is not going fishing?'

Some mention of remoteness is also almost obligatory, with comments comparing Shetland's distance from the Scottish mainland and comparative closeness to Norway acting as an indicator of its geographical disconnect from Scotland and the rest of the UK; some note the importance of this distance in forming a sense of separateness and independent character (Irvine, 1961b; Peterson, 1967).

Ways of life are certainly changing in Shetland, with A. Cohen identifying the 'erosion' of distinctive ways of life by 'the irresistible force of modernity' (1987, p. 14) and Wills devoting much of his best-known book, *A Place in the Sun: Shetland Oil – Myths and Realities* (1991) to the ways oil development has altered the islands' society. The 'Shetland way of life' is a ubiquitous, yet vague and quite unempirical labelling of Shetlanders' common societal being, manifested within and across perceived identities and cultural expressions. Anthony Cohen himself is not a great fan of the moniker 'Shetland way of life' which he considers an 'inaccurate' and 'inept' collectivisation of a multitude of cultural processes operating in the islands (A. Cohen, 1980, p. 164), though others are far less reticent (for example, Nicolson, 1975; Varwell, 1981; Hamilton, 2007). Even Cohen allows himself its use for purposes of generality, but warns against 'painting' such groups with a 'broad brush of stereotype' (Cohen, 1978, pp. 449-450). Meanwhile Jackson (1981b) argues that existence of a 'Shetland way of life' presupposes the existence of a Shetland community. I certainly consider a 'Shetland community' to exist, even though that single community is composed of numerous individual communities within Shetland, each with distinct elements which compose their own ways of life, and even if it is highly connected to a wider Scottish and British society. Indeed, it is quite revealing

that many of the issues I discuss can be scaled up and down with relative ease – we could see a given island's relation to the Shetland whole in similar ways to how we see Shetland in relation to Scotland – and then again we could see it in Scotland's relation to the United Kingdom as a whole.

Those referencing Shetland culture or identity inevitably must directly or indirectly refer to its strong historical basis, whether noble crofter-fishermen or noble Viking warriors. Again, Wills and Abrams, along with Brown (1998), provide among the more comprehensive studies on articulations of Shetland's historically-grounded cultural identity, but they were certainly not the first to do so, being preceded by numerous histories and commentaries in the pages of the quarterly *New Shetlander* magazine (McGill, 1976; B. Smith, 1970; Sutherland, 1974; H. Smith, 1978) and by anthropological studies situated in the islands (Church, 1989; A. Cohen, 1987; B. Cohen, 1983; Varwell, 1981). Withrington's collection of historical essays (1983) and Bronwen Cohen's thesis both include studies of the invention of historical identities in the later portion of the Victorian era. The role of crofting and fishing, along with the Viking connection, are the most commonly referenced groundings for Shetlanders' identities, and Graham (1983) traces the historical roots of Shetlanders' tendency to cast a disparaging eye on Scotland and Scottish connections, despite Shetland's political, fiscal, and social dependency on the mainland. Knight and G. Smith (2005), providing a somewhat rosy assessment in a Shetland Islands Council report titled *Shetland Cultural Strategy*, describe it as follows:

> Shetland is blessed with a rich and diverse culture which has grown and evolved out of the geographical remoteness, and the industries and communities of fishing and agriculture. Shetlanders have embraced and responded to many new influences which when integrated with existing traditions results in a strong and dynamic culture. This cultural legacy is one which may other areas of Scotland envy.

Abrams (2005), Goodlad (1983), and Graham (1983), amongst others, describe the events of the late-Victorian herring boom in terms which one cannot help but compare with writings about Shetland's oil experience (for example, Button, 1978; Wills, 1991); indeed similarities between the oil and herring booms are identified very early on in Shetland's oil age by writers in *The New Shetlander* ('Northmoother', 1972a; Graham and Graham, 1973).[29] A. Cohen (1987) records a corresponding lament for the loss of the 'old ways' during these periods of social and cultural change in Whalsay, one of the smaller populated islands of Shetland. Shetland archivist Brian Smith, in a study of a Victorian Shetland 'crofter-intellectual' Laurence Williamson, notes Williamson's laments regarding what Williamson saw as the readily-apparent demise of Shetland's culture during the decades around the turn of the century – including harmful influences of the gutting stations(Smith, 2006a). Graham (1983) likewise quotes Williamson from 1892:

> This is a transition time such as never was before. The old Northern civilisation is now in full strife with the new and Southern one, and traditions, customs, which have come down from hoary antiquity, are now dying for ever. The young don't care for their fathers' ways. I mean what was estimable in them. The folklore and family traditions and picturesque stories yield fast to the "People's Journal", "Glasgow Mail", "Ally Sloper's Half Holiday" and such like.

Abrams (2005) suggests that that herring gutting is excluded from perceptions of Shetland's way of life and 'not regarded as intrinsically 'Shetland'' (pp. 115-116) – in

[29] 'Soothmoother' is a local dialect term, occasionally used in a derogatory manner, for incomers to Shetland – that is, those who have come in through the south mouth of Lerwick Harbour from mainland UK. Thus 'Nort Moother' or 'Northmoother' would be a pseudonym claiming to the opposite of an incomer. In November of 2007, a member of the Up-Helly-Aa committee was forced to resign after posting comments including the term on a social networking website, sparking a debate in the local media regarding the appropriateness of the term.

part because it lacked any historical precedent – it was quite different from any activity undertaken.[30]

The New Shetlander, cited heavily throughout this thesis, provides a constant supply of commentary and opinion regarding the prevailing social issues of the day in Shetland and is quite central to any study of the issues worrying Shetlanders in any period since the Second World War – as well as a fine selection of historical pieces. But it must be taken to be skewed towards the intellectual and culturally-active side of the Shetland population that has the interest and time to read it and write for it. It features editorial comment on the issues of the day (both within Shetland and Shetlanders' perspectives of the country and world), articles written by members of the Shetland public (admittedly not a cross-section of the populace), and as creative writing and poetry – generally on Shetland-related topics and frequently in dialect.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have laid out working definitions for several terms which might otherwise be variously interpreted, as well as setting out some of the context in which I will use them in this thesis. I have connected the terms 'identity' and 'culture' to the concepts of 'way of life' and nationalism and also introduced discussion of the invention of tradition – based on Hobsbawm's exegesis of the term and others' related studies of this and similar issues. Definitions of these terms will always contain some degree of vagueness, however. It is thus not terribly useful to categorise any element of a society's existence into just 'identity', 'culture', or 'way of life'. Is a

[30] This perspective on herring girls may not be entirely accurate given that the lives of these women are now coming into something of a vogue in Shetland historical studies; their lives featured strongly at a 2007 conference in Lerwick entitled 'A Woman's Island? Shetland women, past, present and future', organised by Abrams herself. They have also featured in writings on Shetland (Telford, 1998).

fondness for a Norse past culture or is it identity? Some could even argue that it is integral to Shetland's way of life. Likewise, a fisherman – even only a hobbyist – could include fishing in all three. But this vagueness only serves to highlight the interconnectedness of the three terms. Any definitions I claim are primarily for the purposes of descriptive clarity. And while I certainly try not to use them interchangeably, I realise that in some situations I come perilously close and perhaps over-use 'culture and identity' as a double-barrelled label in many instances in this thesis.

While it is important to view the development of Shetland culture and identity in light of theories of invented traditions, it is not possible or proper to reduce it entirely to the realm of artificial inventions. Self-conscious efforts to construct and reinforce Shetland identity through the invention of traditions may play a critical part in the constructions of identity and culture, but it should not be assumed that either is entirely invented. The relationship between economy and culture is likewise complex, and perhaps even more so in the application of the literature to Shetland's scenario. On one hand, the 'invention of tradition' may be a response to economic transformations. On the other hand, economic transformations affect the everyday experience and working life which is vital to cultural reproduction. As cognisant efforts to mould Shetland culture were undertaken, peoples' reactions to these creations cannot be understood as artificial. Likewise, invented traditions have had to face organic interactions with a multitude of societal forces over time (not just economic), as well as at their creation (if any particular moment of creation can even be claimed). Thus understandings of invented traditions are viewed through various social lenses and in the contexts of varying identities, as well as the pre-existing identities and cultures which such creations were laid upon.

I have also drawn upon literature of imaginative geographies, such as the works of Said and Gregory, to identify some of the forces of 'othering' and the formation of personal identity based on perceptions of others which contribute to the sort of sense of difference so present in Shetland identities. These are, again, important in the development of the basis for much of Shetland identity, as discussed in the Shetland literature.

Much of the literature on Shetland dates from the era of terminal construction when all manner of social scientists scrambled to analyse the 'impacts' of oil development in rural Scotland and the Grampian region.[31] Shetland was particularly trendy in this period given the somewhat romanticised notions of a David and Goliath struggle between the SIC and multinational oil companies (a look at the bibliography for this thesis will reveal a great many works from the 1970s and 1980s). Few of these took a nuanced look at such ideas as culture and identity, though Anthony Cohen's *Whalsay* (1987) and his related works are noteworthy, as are Byron's assorted works on the island of Burra (1981, 1986). So while I am certainly not the first to have found socio-anthropological issues in Shetland noteworthy, a gap in the literature is to be found in Shetland's post-Sullom Voe construction era, and there I situate this work.

This literature together forms a cohesive basis on which to base my further research from documentary sources and interviews.

[31] In and around Aberdeen.

III ~ METHODOLOGY

It is especially interesting to approach Shetland from the perspective of cultural geography and social anthropology at the present time because the vast majority of social science and popular history literature on Shetland is now twenty to thirty years old, having been written during the height of disruption caused by construction at Sullom Voe and related infrastructure. Thus there is ample opportunity to step back and study Shetland from a perspective at the 'beginning of the end' of its oil era – as operations at Sullom Voe begin to slow down and revenue from oil gradually drops. But rather than what Monaghan and Just (2000) describe as 'salvage ethnography', the study of traditional societies meeting their doom with the onset of development and modernity, the study of Shetland provides an opportunity to study a society that remains active and alive, even through periods of major change.

Shetland provides a very neatly bounded region for study, as the sea creates very specific borders. Baldacchino (2006) claims that islands' distinctiveness makes them particularly good venues for particularised study and deserving of 'respect as subjects/objects of academic focus and inquiry' (p.9) and, perhaps, 'more thorough control of intervening variables' (p. 6). That is not to say that lands beyond play no part in my study – they certainly do, and the identities of 'ex-pat' Shetlanders living in mainland Scotland and further afield[32] are often just as strong (or perhaps sometimes stronger) than those at home. And of course the encroachment of extra-Shetland influences is of major importance in this study. But in delineating a space of study, 'Shetland' is certainly not a politically-generated artefact the way that 'Oxfordshire' or 'Wales' might be – the space now called Shetland is a natural

[32] 'There are Shetland societies everywhere from Edinburgh to New Zealand. With Shetlanders covering the globe the sun never sets on the "Shetland Empire"' (MacFarlane, 2007).

construction of geology with boundaries that are not only administrative and symbolic, but also quite evidently material.

I attempt to position the events and attitudes of Shetlanders from the period immediately before oil development began (circa the end of the 1960s) to the present within the literature above to address how oil development altered the course of Shetland's culture and identity. This changing of course creates a situation where the historically-based nature of the islands' culture and identity might have been eliminated or lost credibility as an identity, but instead has allowed Shetland to lay an increased, though perhaps more manufactured, claim to such an identity. To do so, I must create some understanding of the elements of the 'Shetland way of life' and the *cultures* and *identities* that compose it, either in a unitary sense or as a collective of interacting and related, yet individual *cultures* and *identities* spread across the islands in space and time, all responding to various degrees of oil-related disruption and associated (as well as unassociated) modernisation. For while there are perspectives and traditions common to Shetland as a whole, individual areas, the outlying islands in particular, do claim uniquenesses of their own.

There is, as Hobsbawn recognises, 'no way of making realistic quantitative comparisons' regarding changes in peoples' perceptions of traditions (Hobsbawm, 1983b) – or for that matter, identities or cultures. Similarly, A. Cohen (1980) and Blaikie (2001) cite the difficulties inherent in 'accounting' for culture, cultural value, and cultural change, given that meanings given to events and actions are based in thought rather than in the events or actions themselves. Thus any study such as this will inevitably be predominantly qualitative in nature, relying on expressions and sentiment, rather than hard numbers representing Shetlanders' ideas. The *Shetland in Statistics* series, published annually by the SIC, however, has provided valuable

numerical data where such support is appropriate, particularly related to population dynamics and the makeup of the Shetland economy.

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured, open format focusing on the sorts of issues appropriate to the experience and expertise of the interviewees. Interviewees were selected from a number of sources based on their ability to comment on the issues addressed in this research. Those involved in cultural organisations, including dialect associations, could comment on the issues of culture and identity which they themselves were actively involved in shaping or preserving. Local historians, likewise, could discuss any number of issues related to Shetland's cultural development, though were generally more oriented towards a history rather more distant than the 1970s. Those engaged in media-related activities, either professionally or on a commentary basis (as much of the material produced in local media, *The New Shetlander* in particular, is on a casual basis by interested Shetlanders) provided a wide variety of perspectives based on their position as 'watchers' of events and affairs in Shetland. Local government figures provided further perspective on events and affairs both in present day Shetland and during the oil era (as some have been involved in the SIC for that long). Further interviews, particularly involving those personally involved in the construction at Sullom Voe were identified largely via snowball sampling, but also through several chance meetings. Further interviewees were identified from material they had written in the local media. Of particular interest were those who had been involved in cultural activities since the 1960s, so could (perhaps) judge change to some extent. Historical perspective has, as one would expect, been very important to this research. Williams (1981) suggests that 'any adequate sociology of culture must… be an historical sociology', given the peculiarities of any one place that might contradict any

'universal or general explanatory scheme of the necessary relations between "culture" and "society"' (p. 33).

Interviews were largely conducted on an individual basis, though two sessions were in a focus group format, allowing discussions between the participants to draw out ideas and reminiscences. Consideration had to be paid, of course, to the subjectivities and positionalities of those being interviewed. One difficulty of interviews in 2004-2007, rather than circa 1972-1983, is that peoples' perspectives are coloured by their intervening experience. Ideally, I might have had four interviews with each person: circa 1968, 1973, 1983, and the present day, for a pre-oil example, a 'what you think the future will bring' example, a discussion of what impacts had actually occurred, and then today's perspective of what oil had brought and how it had altered culture and identity (a circa-2025 post-oil perspective could be interesting for comparison as well if I were to be allowed the impossible). Shetlanders have enjoyed the benefits of Shetland's development and have seen that, for instance, the Charitable Trust has been largely successful and that Shetland is not covered in oil terminals and refineries. Additionally, discussion of some points of view proved difficult given the decades' distance; while I attempted to interview several figures regarding the Shetland Movement, a loose association supporting autonomy and independence, most active in the 1970s and early '80s, it was difficult to draw out much real discussion of any substance on this issue. Those who had been known to be actively involved in the group during its heyday who are still alive view the political situation of the islands rather differently today and thus did not seem, for the most part, overly keen to express views that had been tempered with time. Thus discussion of Shetland independence efforts in the terminal construction period lacks the sort of

coverage that it might deserve. Nonetheless, memories are not just (inaccurate) accounts of the past, they also play a part in the present.

Primary source documents and contemporary commentary about oil-related events were critically important to this research, as the large number of *New Shetlander* articles in my bibliography attests. These sources provide a view of peoples' perspectives as the events were unfolding – rather than with the hindsight that interviewees in 2004-2007 have. They have not been coloured by peoples' experiences with the aftermath of the terminal construction (and related activities). Material drawn from publications (mostly local, but some from national and international sources) was further supported by primary source material from the Shetland Archives to paint a picture of perceptions of Shetland before, during, and after the construction of the Sullom Voe Terminal. One should certainly not consider these sources to be definitive or even necessarily true, however. They represent the points of view of those writing them, but as such are critical to building up a sense of contemporary sentiment about what was happening to Shetland, its identity, and its culture. In many instances they are meant as opinion pieces or turn out that way unintentionally; they are not meant to be journalistically 'objective'. Many are *New Shetlander* editorials or commentary pieces and I have cited several letters from *The Shetland Times*. The more vociferous in the community will be over-represented as well; those calmly sitting in their homes not much minding what was going on with oil development are not represented as well as those who were at their typewriters dashing out frenzied letters to the local press. And of course editors had their own influence as to the commentary being expressed. The opinions of the pseudonymous commentators of *The New Shetlander*'s 'Da Wadder Eye' piece every issue ('Northmoother', 1972a; 'Eyjar-Skeggi', 1975; 'Pundie', 1975) certainly had an

extremely disproportionate soap box on which to lament whatever issues troubled them, be they local or global – from SIC spending to nuclear disarmament. Also, considering the complaints many Shetlanders made about not having all the information they desired about the terminal construction, such contemporary sources cannot be thought of as all-knowing. But as noted by Glaser and Strauss (1967), 'Every book, every magazine article, represents at least one person who is equivalent to the anthropologist's informant or the sociologist's interviewee' (p. 163) and their perspectives have been invaluable to this research.

In the end, when it came to historical issues, interviews proved most valuable for confirming observations made in the literature, as well as providing a vast array of tales of what most saw as fairly wild times in the early days of the terminal construction. As most of those available for interview were under the age of thirty in the early days of the construction, many memories focused on somewhat more worldly pursuits, rather than being actively concerned about culture and identity. The excitement of men from the terminal construction crews trying to gain entrance to village halls for dances was certainly of more interest, for example; though of course this sort of everyday life is an important element of culture and is central to formation of identities. But there was less contemporary introspection than seems to have been the case amongst those lamenting the trajectory of Shetland society in the pages of *The New Shetlander* and *Shetland Times*.

In an ideal world, having some sort of 'control' location would have allowed for better understanding of the effects of Shetland's oil development. It could be revealed which cultural changes were the result of oil and which would have happened anyway with the normal advance of modernisation and communications with Britain that every island in Scotland experienced since the early 1970s. One

could perhaps look towards one of the Western Isles, maybe to Orkney, possibly as far as Faroe, but none of these share the same sorts of cultural precedents which so characterise Shetland and fuel the 'Shetland is different' attitude.

The question of using the terms 'Viking' and 'Norse' is perhaps a minor semantic issue, though is of some debate in historical Scandinavian studies (J. D. Richards, 2005). For the somewhat distant perspective my own research has on actual historical activities of those of Scandinavian descent in the medieval period, I shall be content to broadly use 'Viking' as the term to describe the medieval seafaring raiders of Norse descent and the broader cultural context of those individuals as 'Norse', roughly in accordance with Richards, but given the quite flexible manner in which the two terms have been used in more modern popular interpretations and constructions of Shetland history and culture, and given that the two terms are used essentially synonymously in the discourse surrounding Up-Helly-Aa, strict differentiation between the two is not terribly important (or always even possible) for my own research. The lens through which Norse descent is portrayed is vastly more significant than true historical activities – which do not often seem to be of much account.

Approaching this topic as an American, and thus perhaps free from some of the assumptions Shetlanders might make were I Scottish, English, or European, or even a Shetlander myself (Ramsay, 2000, discusses some of the trouble associated with being a Shetlander studying Shetlanders), has actually been advantageous in my view. As a complete outsider, it seemed that Shetlanders were more willing to complain about the Scottish and English and did not feel they needed to keep up appearances of solidarity. Moore (1980) jokes, however, that the presence of

American anthropologists is the surest sign of underdevelopment in a region, so I suppose it is a good thing that I am an American geographer (technically) instead.

Several interviewees were particularly keen to figure out exactly where I could be placed in terms of nationality and family background (the origin of my Polish surname elicited interest from several people, despite the lack of Polish ties in my own perception of personal identity) – just as I was investigating their identity they were taking the opportunity to investigate mine. Whether or not I had any Shetland genealogical connections was also of interest to interviewees, though this may have been a local version of the quizzical 'Why Shetland?!' I encounter both in and out of the islands when explaining what exactly it is I 'do'. A grandmother's ties to the isles of Skye and Barra in the Western Isles seemed to elicit approval and the inevitable comments about the differences between the Western Isles and Shetland.

This thesis presents a document-based approach, supported by interviews of key informants, to construct a picture of Shetland identity and culture and how perceptions of it have changed, particularly as a result of the construction and operation of the Sullom Voe Terminal and associated activities related to offshore oil development. This approach presents the best opportunity to cultivate an understanding of cultural change in the islands given the combination of material written during this period of change and current perceptions of those who lived through it and experienced the social dynamics of the day – as well as, of course, the legacies of oil revenue and demographic change in the islands.

IV ~ DISRUPTION & HISTORY: MODERNITY

Shetland's strongly historically-based identity and culture combined with the disruption and legacy of oil development to create a particularly unique manifestation of modernity in the islands. This chapter discusses the sorts of disruptions faced by Shetlanders and their responses to it both on an individual and local level and on a Shetland-wide and political level. Of particular note is the demographic change experienced in many areas of Shetland as people moved in to work on the terminal and other oil activities, as well as migration within Shetland and an increase in Shetlanders commuting around the isles for employment created or altered by oil activities. Particularly central to oil's legacy was the Zetland County Council Act which created the legal structure for the creation of the various charitable trusts which continue to benefit Shetlanders via the investment and distribution of oil money in loans and grants. Structurally, after providing an overview of the effects of disruption, the chapter moves to a more specific discussion of social and cultural disruption, particularly the fears expressed in the 1970s and early 1980s regarding such impacts. I then move to a discussion of the ZCC Act and the means by which the council used it to establish regimes for the economic benefit of Shetland well into the future so as to mitigate, somewhat, any damage that might be caused to the islands and its economy and culture. Following this, I discuss the changes in demographics and the strain put on the infrastructure of the islands before addressing the ways in which the increased affluence brought by oil money and increased employment has altered Shetland and the understandings of identity and culture amongst its inhabitants. Prior to concluding the chapter, the place of Shetland's historical identities within its modern context is discussed, addressing how ideas of Vikings and crofter-fishermen still hold cultural salience in post-oil boom Shetland.

Since the dawn of Shetland's oil era, efforts have been made to strengthen Shetland's culture and identity. This has been supported to a large extent by the amenity funds made possible by oil-related revenue and was in great part attributable to the fears that preceded oil development – loss of rural character, local dialect, traditional industries, community spirit, etc. and increased crime and other social problems. While the 'rural character' of much of Shetland has been significantly altered, other aspects of local cultural identity have seen a great revival. Fears of cultural erosion leading up to the oil era inspired increased efforts to preserve Shetland culture and fuelled a resurgence in music, crafts, and other cultural pursuits. Assisted by newly available funds related to oil development, increased leisure time stemming from this relative affluence, and increased contact with people from beyond the islands, Shetland now enjoys a stronger sense of cultural identity than was generally present in the years prior to North Sea oil discoveries. *New Shetlander* co-editor Laureen Johnson (2006a) described these concerns common during the recessions that preceded oil:

> Depopulation was a big issue in the fifties and early sixties so although folk might have been concerned about what was happening to the culture, I think there was more basic things on their minds like emigrating and work.

Certainly greater opportunities now exist for traditional culture to be passed down to younger generations who might otherwise not have had such opportunities in times of economic distress. It has also helped reverse and reduce some of the emigration that plagued Shetland for so long, allowing for somewhat stabilised community social structures.

However, it is not quite the same culture as before – as local historian Jonathan Wills describes, 'socially it has been torn apart and unevenly stitched back together again' (Wills, 1991, p. 13). The draw of higher-paid oil-related jobs (of all

sorts, not just those of an industrial nature) pulled people away from activities considered more 'traditional' (Nicolson, 1990) – fishing,[33] farming, knitwear, and to some extent, tourism – further reducing the day-to-day connections of most Shetlanders to these activities so connected to idealised Shetland ways of life. Institutionalised support of some cultural elements, for example fiddle music, may have reduced the regional diversity that existed across Shetland (Johnson, 2007).



Figure 5: Comic by Walterson (1972)

However, it has allowed many Shetlanders advantages beyond those experienced by their Scottish counterparts. The council is also put in a generally solid financial footing (despite constant despair regarding overspending and questionable investments fuelling forecasts of doom from commentators in the *Shetland Times* and elsewhere), allowing the financing of a wide array of infrastructure projects (many

[33] Though McDowall and Begg (1980) note that EU fishing regulations, and the declining fish stocks that inspired them, did more to disrupt Shetland's fishing activities than the oil industry.

via the Shetland Charitable Trust), most notably the ferry system, but also rural buses, roads, sewerage, schools, leisure centres, care homes, and other infrastructure made costly by the dispersed nature of the population across several islands.[34] Oil money gave the council the financial ability to provide mains electricity to some of the islands that had previously been without it – Papa Stour, Skerries, and Foula.

While direct impacts such as pollution and income may seem the most obvious, indirect impacts, such as rapid immigration to oil regions can be far more disruptive. In Shetland the indirect impacts, most notably rapid population growth from immigration and labour shortages experienced by local industry and businesses, were more widespread than direct effects of terminal construction and operation. McDowall and Begg (1980), along with several of my interviewees, described increased wages caused by labour demand in non-oil employment. McDowall and Begg's study suggested that wages increased by an average of 2.83 times between 1975 and 1980 in five jobs they chose as an indicative sample. Interviewees described, for example, a lack of bakers and hotel staff in Lerwick. Another apocryphal story tells of teenagers making more money over one summer working in the oil camp canteens than their fisherman fathers made in a year.

Social & Cultural Disruption

The perceived threat to the 'Shetland way of life' became a major rallying point for restrictions on development of petroleum-related[35] infrastructure in Shetland after the

[34] 21,940 people, according to the 2001 census, spread across 1,468km^2 (567 miles^2) and fifteen inhabited islands (Shetland Islands Council, 2005), for an average density of 14.9 people per square kilometre – though excluding Lerwick, 6,830 people in 2001, the density would be more like ten people per square kilometre – with plenty of uninhabited grazing land and peat bog between settlements.

[35] I tend to use 'petroleum-related' infrastructure because the related activity around the construction of the terminal itself was a large part of the overall picture – concrete production, warehousing of pipes, road improvements, work camp canteens, building homes

discovery of oil in the North Sea in 1969, and then closer to Shetland in 1971.[36] *The Shetland Times* noted with interest the presence of oil-related ships in Lerwick harbour; though notable boats often received mention, the February 19th, 1971 issue featured a front page photo of three oil exploration vessels tied up in Lerwick and note was made of such visits throughout the year, particularly the arrival of the Staflo drilling rig in May. Coverage that year continued with notes about 'strong rumours' of discoveries in the North Sea near Shetland. A great many Shetlanders feared that the disruption of traditional patterns of life brought on by the incursion of the petroleum industry would irreparably alter what they perceived to be critical elements of Shetland identity – the rural character of the islands, their connection to fish and agriculture-based livelihoods, relative insularity, and low crime, as well as disrupting more practical day-to-day activities like traffic and overstressing infrastructure. Two residents of the Delting parish, then teenagers living in Graven, a hamlet practically across the road from what is now Sullom Voe and its associated airport, Scatsta, described it as follows:

> 'The place we stayed in up at the hotel, there might have been how many houses there… six or seven households up in the hamlet type thing [Graven], so it was quite a close-knit, quiet community. And I think the idea, the original idea was that there was going to be a refinery coming as well as an oil terminal. And the plan was to buy up all the land around where the site is now – to buy everything up in that area. So this compulsory purchase would cut in and everybody would have to be relocated somewhere else, wherever that was going to be. So that was a–'
>
> 'Big panic'.
>
> 'Yeah. It was a thought for everybody having to up sticks and I suppose some of the older people there had lived there all their lives'.

---

for helicopter pilots, and much more, all played major parts in the flurry of activity in Shetland from the early 1970s to mid 1980s. And of course much of it goes on today, particularly with airport usage and support for offshore facilities. There are no oil wells actually on any of the Shetland islands.

[36] Though the Shell/Esso consortium that discovered the Brent field did not announce it until August of 1972 after additional appraisal wells had been drilled. Exploration in earnest had begun in 1970 with the first lease sales off Shetland.

> ‘Quite scary for the older ones’.
>
> ‘Yeah, so it was a big thing, just this idea that everybody would have to up sticks and end up living somewhere different because of the oil. I suppose there might have been a bit of resentment in the early days – why would we all have to move home from a place we like to stay in to another. So there was a lot of trepidation I would say; ken,[37] it’s “what is going to happen here?” like, “It’s going to be huge”. And it was a job to get your head around how it was going to be, I suppose’.

Comparisons were made with the Highland Clearances of the 18th and 19th centuries;[38] suggesting that the rush for oil would put corporate profits and government balance of payments before Shetland’s quality of life. Soon after the real expectation of oil development arose, a piece in *The New Shetlander* drew this comparison in its appeal for the wellbeing of Shetland:

> People should come before profit. Too often in the past they have been sacrificed to these high-sounding, but often hollow phrases: Economic Growth, Rationalisation of Resources, Industrial Progress and so on. The evictions of the last century still leave that harsh lesson written in ruined crofts and homes over Shetland hills and valleys today. People are still infinitely more important than profits from Sheep - or Oil. (New Shetlander, 1972)

Meddling in Shetland’s affairs by outsiders and the loss of local control over local issues, so keenly fought for in the 1960s and long a concern connected to various issues in Shetland, also came to the fore in discussions of oil; Nicholson (1975) describes some peoples’ worries:

> Comparison with the Middle East and the USA was inevitable – Shetland would become the Abu Dhabi of a Scotland soon to be the Texas of Europe, yet these islands would have lost their independence to the red pen of an accountant in Frankfurt or Houston. (p. 81)

[37] ‘Ken’ is dialect for, in this instance, something like, ‘you know.’

[38] Which, given the economic focus on fishing in the isles, was not nearly so pronounced as it was in mainland Scotland and the Western Isles (Smith, 1984). Richards (1982), however, tells a completely contradictory story – but Smith’s subject focus was entirely on Shetland (and he is heavily cited by others) while Richards was writing a history of clearances in Scotland as a whole.

And in a *New Shetlander* commentary predicting the aftermath of Shetland's oil experience, 'Nort Moother' (1980) gave passionate voice to the fears resonating amongst Shetlanders:

> In the final accounting, at the bottom of the debit column will be found a small entry. It will read, "By part share in the death of a culture." It will be an insignificant item from the British point of view but it will prove to be a terrible price for Shetland, the passing of a way of life - of the identity and dignity of a proud people, swamped under a tide of culturally deprived urbanites, a large majority of whom can only be described as arrogant, ill-mannered and ignorant. These same people will express surprise at our lack of appreciation of the favour they are doing us, "dragging us," poor backward souls, "into the twentieth century."
>
> They are, if we are to believe them, the vehicle of progress and as our crime, drug abuse, glue sniffing, knife carrying, mugging, neighbour ignoring statistics approach the urban norm we can be described as progressing. They have little other to offer us. Shetlanders, regrettably, have come to the point of accepting all this. It seems inevitable, why fight it any longer. In fact it is almost indecent to put such things in print although they are widely believed and discussed... We have slipped far along the degenerate road, culturally speaking.

While oil related fears ultimately did fuel a sort of Shetland 'cultural renaissance' and a rush to preserve the 'Shetland way of life', it may be that the whole idea of a 'way of life' was actually popularised amongst the general Shetland populace for the first time during this period; for many, the whole idea was created in the 1970s. According to one crofter, quoted by Renwanz (1981), 'We never heard of this Shetland way of life before these oily men and soothmoothers started coming up here. Now, that's all we hear about' (p. 250). And in a rather more positive tone, modern Shetland booster Jim Nicholson effused:

> There is a new interest in every aspect of life in Shetland – a new awareness of the environment, and an admiration for the history of the islands and their traditions. People now realize that a study of the islands' culture enhances their sense of belonging to 'The Old Rock'. There is no room for complacency, since oil related developments could destroy much of the essential charm of these islands. On the other hand, oil could produce the jolt necessary to make us realize the importance of our heritage and how much there is that is worth saving. (Nicolson, 1990, p. 194)

Renwanz (1981) goes on to suggest that 'oil had done more than make Shetlanders realise the "importance of their heritage." Under the threat of oil, they endeavoured to invent a unique culture for themselves' (p. 250). The SIC has identified support for cultural pursuits as a practical means for supporting struggling communities (Knight and Smith, 2005) – of which there are many as people migrate toward larger populations centres within Shetland or leave the islands altogether in search of greater opportunities.

THE ZETLAND COUNTY COUNCIL ACT

In response to Shetlanders' fears, a massive political effort was organized that drastically altered the path of development. Local interests, combined with sympathetic Westminster MPs, successfully advocated for a number of unique arrangements that gave the Shetland Islands Council an unusual amount of influence and control over the development and operation of the Sullom Voe terminal. This was achieved primarily via the Zetland County Council Act of 1974 (ZCC Act), which devolved several powers that local councils normally do not possess.

Of note was the ability to limit the dispersion of oil infrastructure (focusing most of it at the Sullom Voe site) and housing for both temporary and permanent workers (focused in nearby villages, but somewhat dispersed with the intention of reducing the impact on these communities, while insofar as possible keeping workers away from Lerwick, the one town in Shetland). The SIC identified the impacts that could result from the presence of multiple terminal facilities and support bases scattered about the islands and acted to preclude it. This prevented the feared oil sprawl of plots of industry scattered throughout the islands spreading the impact far afield, with companies building duplicate facilities. Instead the one terminal was

built, used by all those piping oil to Shetland but operated by British Petroleum. Likewise only one oil service base was built – in Lerwick harbour.

The act also set the framework for the creation of a monitoring and consultation body to perform independent monitoring of environmental quality around the terminal and to review spill contingency plans. After the initial organisation, the Sullom Voe Environmental Advisory Group (SVEAG) floundered – the fact that most positions of importance in the organisation were held by BP employees did not inspire trust (Dunnet, 1995); it was superseded by the Shetland Oil Terminal Environmental Advisory Group (SOTEAG), which is differently organised but undertakes essentially the same responsibilities. Its mission is to provide 'a focal point for discussion between the industry, the local community in which development is taking place, and the various conservation interests' (SVEAG, 1976) as well as monitoring environmental quality around the terminal and Shetland more generally and to review contingency plans for oil spills and other potential accidents.[39] Its board is made up of both SIC councillors and oil company figures.

The ZCC Act also allowed the SIC to act as a harbour authority, regulating activities for every harbour area in Shetland (aside from the Lerwick and Broonies Taing[40] harbours which were already operated by harbour trusts at the time), most notably, of course, the Port of Sullom Voe. This allows the SIC to dictate regulations for tanker activity in Sullom Voe and has been used effectively to enforce environmental regulations (such as prohibiting tankers from releasing oily ballast water into the surrounding sea and banning from the port any that do). It made the council responsible for harbour tugs, which has been something of a mixed blessing

[39] Oil spill response oversight is co-managed with the Sullom Voe Oil Spill Advisory Committee, a somewhat vague body directed, like SOTEAG, by both SIC and industry figures.
[40] The harbour at Sandwick.

as the council can decide what sort of quality of tugs to purchase – but then it must purchase them (or be faulted for not having done so as was the case in the *Esso Bernicia* spill in 1978/79 when the engine room of a tug caught fire, contributing to a collision between the tanker and one of the terminal moorings[41]).

For Shetland, the most significant element of the Act, however, is the ability to set aside revenues from oil for the creation of grant bodies that fund a wide assortment of projects. These range from support for care homes, to funding for indoor swimming pools and recreation centres in many tiny villages, to support for local musicians and cultural venues. Interestingly, this ability to create these trusts, discussed later in greater detail, stems from a single bullet point in the legislation; from a textual perspective, nearly the whole act is concerned with the particulars of harbour jurisdiction – even the subsection about the creation of trusts pertains primarily to the use of surplus funds from harbour activities to support and manage harbours – only the last item sets out the legal basis for Shetland's various trusts to benefit the Shetland populace, 'for any other purpose which in the opinion of the Council is solely in the interests of the county or its inhabitants' (p. 35).

The ZCC Act can also be seen in the context of battles against amalgamation of government administration in the 1960s. Various plans had been proposed to centralise local government across the Highlands and Islands, including that of Shetland, to Inverness (ostensibly for reasons of efficiency). This was heavily opposed within Shetland (and elsewhere) and a lengthy political battle ensued, which Shetland ultimately won, retaining its local council government and greatly boosting

[41] This spill, which began late on December 31st, 1978 – only a month after the terminal became operational – seemed to confirm many of the fears about the oil industry, as foul weather defeated spill-response efforts and contributed to significant damage to both marine ecology in Sullom Voe (the body of water – not the terminal) and Yell Sound and to sheep that fed on the foreshore and thus were oiled.

local political confidence (Murray and Murray, 2007). This confidence in the islands' ability to manage its own affairs effectively and to look after its own interests, still strong when the battle over the ZCC Act arose, served Shetland well and was enhanced by the more general optimism stemming from the comparative economic wellbeing of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Today the ZCC Act is seen as quite a triumph of political manoeuvring; via a private member's bill,[42] it allowed Shetland to get something of an even hand in the struggle with multinational oil companies over development plans and with a Westminster government keen to bring oil production (and its revenue) online as fast as possible. It was described at the time as the 'hornswoggleing' of the oil industry.[43] At the time, however, perceptions were not always so rosy. Some saw it as the SIC becoming the 'new lairds' of Shetland (Wills, 1991 p. 22). Compulsory purchase powers were especially contentious as crofters in the immediate area of proposed petroleum and support infrastructure developments feared it would deprive them of their crofts, just as their ancestors faced eviction by Scottish lairds. The council had to make concerted efforts to allay the fears of those in areas where compulsory purchase might be exercised, promising extensive local consultation with those likely to be effected and pledging to conserve good agricultural land whenever possible. While they by no means appeased everyone or allayed all fears to this effect at the time (coming in for heavy criticism over perceived lack of transparency), the council did

[42] A 'private member's bill' is one introduced in the House of Commons (or Lords) by a backbench MP or lord, thus not enjoying nearly as much debate time, nor as much likelihood of passage (UK Parliament, 2007).

[43] Wills (1991) tells the story of an apparently captivated United States consul who used this curious term to describe how the then-chief executive of the SIC, Ian Clark, was able to negotiate what seemed to be an astoundingly good arrangement for the council in relation to the industry consortium looking to develop what would become the Sullom Voe Terminal.

ultimately hold on to this power, though several councillors subsequently lost their seats in the next election.

It took a great deal of concerted effort and planning to steer the legislation delicately through Parliament. General cross-party support to see the act pass into law was partially attributable to willingness to assist what had historically been seen as an economically downtrodden area, but the primary forces behind Parliament's willingness to acquiesce to Shetland's desires were far greater than even Great Britain. Continuing instability in the Middle East, particularly wars between Israel and Arab countries, along with uncertainties in Iran, had raised major concerns about the reliability of Middle-eastern oil. The 1973 OPEC oil embargo rapidly increased the attractiveness of North Sea oil fields which, though extraction would be difficult from a technical standpoint, would be politically easy to manage and with few of the worries that have continued to plague net-importing countries' relationships with oil from less politically stable parts of the world. Placating the SIC and the Shetland populace was a far easier task than Iran's Mossadegh or OPEC.[44] The SIC's planners and negotiators used this strong bargaining position to good effect and are seem to be universally applauded for their efforts by Shetlanders and other commentators.

DEMOGRAPHIC & STRUCTURAL IMPACT

There have been a great many externalities regardless. The construction of the Sullom Voe terminal and other associated oil infrastructure (both in Shetland itself and out to

[44] Of some historical note, there was actually worry that the Scottish Nationalist Party could make North Sea development politically difficult. Recently released documents reveal efforts to play down the economic benefits of oil to Scotland for fear that it would encourage the SNP (given that oil could make an independent Scotland economically viable) (McCrone, 1974). There was also a very botched assassination attempt on the Queen by the pro-Scottish-independence (and somewhat IRA-esque) Tartan Army when she came to officially open the terminal. The SNP has never fared particularly well in Shetland politics.

sea, supported by Shetland logistics bases) caused a significant demographic shift in the population of the islands. With the influx of workers, numbering over 7000 at the peak of construction in 1980, the population not only increased but became younger on average and more economically active. The parish of Delting, which includes the terminal and all three of the villages where most of the terminal workers lived had a population of 580 in 1971 (down from 958 in 1931), but 2,110 in 1981 (Shetland Islands Council, 2006) – an increase of 363.78%. In 1971, six people lived in the Delting hamlet of Firth, but by 1980, with housing projects for the oil-related workforce, the population rose to an estimated 600 (Irvine, 1985), not including a work camp housing another 1137 construction workers. But population increased throughout the islands, including in many areas not directly in touch with oil-related activities, indicating a strong reversal of depopulation trends. Between the 1971 and 1981 censuses, all but one of the twenty-three areas defined in the SIC's *Shetland in Statistics* increased in population (Shetland Islands Council, 2006).[45] Tallack (2007) argues that the large number of incomers that followed oil development and then stayed in Shetland mean that the prospect of Shetland independence is less likely, given their ties to mainland Britain, making Shetland look 'more like the UK than ever' in terms of culture and demographics.

For a time, during the most active construction years, it also became a great deal more male. According to census data, whereas women had once outnumbered men in Shetland by as much as 40% (in 1871), the proportion of men showed a strong jump by the 1981 census, with records indicating near even ratios of women to men during a period when a great many short term workers would not have been recorded. As there had been negligible immigration previously, the potential for cultural

[45] The only one that did not was Skerries, a group of remote small islands ten miles east of the Mainland.

disruption was great. The change in gender balance is notable considering the traditional demographic dominance of Shetland's women caused by high mortality rates in fishing, men's greater propensity to emigrate, and men working in marine professions with long journey durations (Abrams, 2005). Abrams has also argued that the reduced importance of women in Shetland's modern economy, given the decline of crofting and the rise of male-dominated petroleum-related heavy industry, has tended to reduce women's social importance in their communities. On the other hand, many women were able to get jobs outside the home for the first time.

While Shetlanders were certainly aware of the goings-on of mainland Britain and the world, partially furthered by the coming of television in 1964 (Thompson, 1991), the massive influx of outsiders coming to work on Sullom Voe construction, support roles, and other oil activity related operations brought Shetlanders into greater day-to-day contact with the cultural forces of Scotland and mainland Britain, a prime example of globalisation accelerated by oil's incoming modernity.

Fear of crime resulting from the 'Soothmoothers' working on the terminal seemed to be realised in the late 1970s as the *Shetland Times* would occasionally run out of space to print details of the week's criminal activities, yet would paint crimes committed by outsiders in a much more unfavourable light than those involving native Shetlanders (Renwanz, 1981). Both Renwanz and a *Shetland Times* reporter she interviewed largely ascribed this to a thirst for such stories amongst the Shetland public, suggesting that they were often the first stories people read. People wanted to hear about criminal acts committed by the oil workers as it seemed to justify notions of Shetlanders as law-abiding victims of chaos brought in from the south as a result of oil. 'A. J. C.', a *New Shetlander* commentator, claimed, probably without a great deal of veracity, that in 1966 that motoring offences were the only crimes in Shetland.

Renwanz refutes the image of a peaceful crime-free past, noting various homicides, assaults, and robberies well before oil (and her thesis focuses on what might have otherwise been a part of the 'rural idyll'). It seems merely that Shetlanders were more ready and willing to hear about the evil deeds of outsiders and to blame Shetland's social ills on them; the *Shetland Times* and BBC Radio Shetland were perfectly willing to cater to the interests of their readership and listeners, furthering this geographical imagination. While several interviewees recounted stories of parents' fears for younger Shetland women being preyed upon by amorous oil workers, such fears were not seen to have been realised on a major scale; pubs may have filled up and village dances may have become invite-only to limit them to locals, but the dangers to Shetland's young women did not, in the opinion of any interviewees who discussed it, turn out to be nearly so grave.

Despite this 'othering', incomers have often been some of the keenest proponents of Shetland's culture (Johnson, 2006a). An oft-quoted line about Shetland is 'you either love it or you hate it' (for example, Erikson and Anderson, 2006); those who come to Shetland for whatever employment-related reason and then decide to stay are likely to be those who are most positive about various aspects of local culture. With so many outsiders coming through the islands in these periods, there would exist ample opportunities for the islands to acquire keen incomers ready to support local cultural pursuits, even if these were only a small percentage of the thousands who came during Sullom Voe's construction (those who did not like it did not stay, after all).

There were certainly some significant growing pains that had to be faced by Shetland's infrastructure when taking on the massive influx of oil-related activities. Roads, ports, and airports had to be upgraded to handle the increased movement of

people and equipment around the islands, often connecting areas of the islands that formerly had been particularly remote. But it took time to upgrade roads and airports; terminal construction did not wait for the old country roads to be improved to handle HGV lorries, and for a time the quality of many Shetland roads worsened under the increased traffic. The council had to borrow heavily early on to meet the new demands on infrastructure and, despite earlier promises to the contrary, to raise taxation on Shetlanders in order to fund it. As there was little unemployment prior to oil development, and as oil jobs paid better than agriculture or fishing (Byron, 1986; Murray and Murray, 2007), traditional industries increasingly had difficulties finding adequate labour and younger workers did not learn the skills necessary for such work (Irvine, 2007b). Data collected by McDowall and Begg (1980) identify several sectors of the Shetland economy which experienced drops in employment during the oil era – when most sectors were rapidly growing.

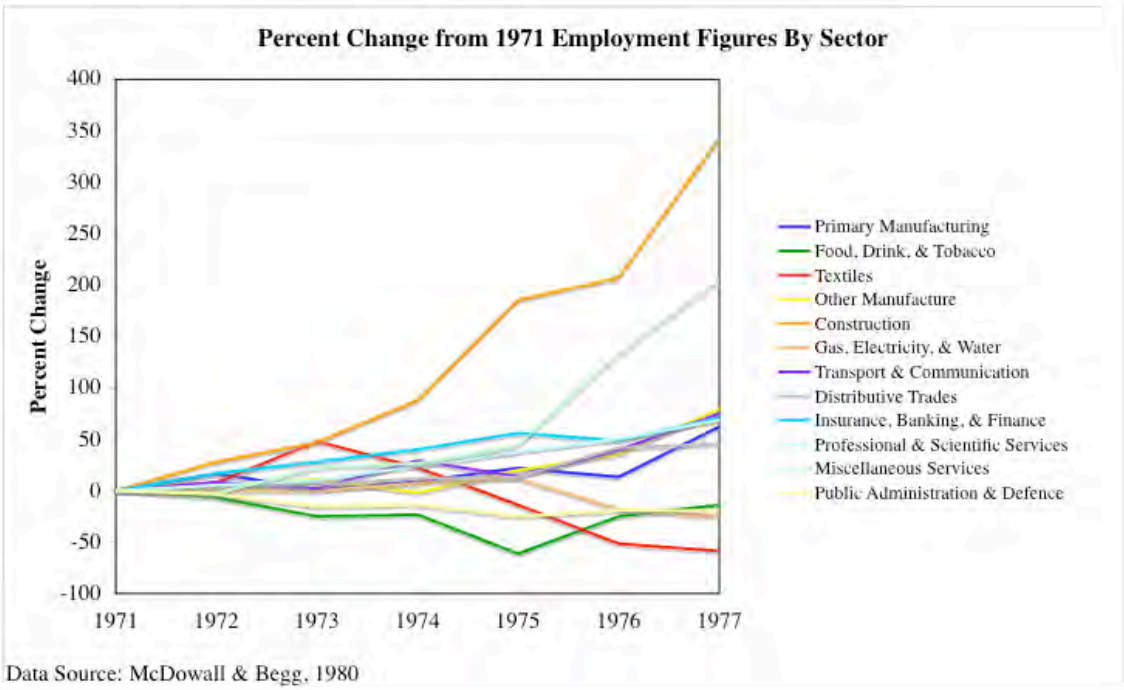


Figure 6

Figure six depicts the strong growth of construction in particular from 1971 to 1977, but also primary manufacturing, transport & communication, finance, and 'miscellaneous services' sectors. The textile industry is shown to have faced the largest drop in employment during this period, along with the public sector (public administration and 'gas, electricity, & water') and agriculture (there being no 'drink and alcohol' commercially produced in Shetland at the time, other than milk, to occupy the 'food, drink, and alcohol' category).

This is likely to plague Shetland in the future as oil production gradually decreases in the North Sea[46] and equipment becomes increasingly mechanized.[47] Fishing is often billed as the future for the Shetland economy (Irvine, 2007a), but declining fish stocks and European Union fishing regulations do present a rather daunting barrier to this sort of economic vision. Tourism, likewise, is often touted as a revenue replacement, but the question of how much tourism Shetland can actually draw remains a cloud over such plans. In 2007, the serious possibility of a massive wind turbine development, spanning much of the north Mainland and aptly named 'Viking Energy', presented the possibility of an alternative revenue source for the post-oil era; Shetland would provide alternative energy to mainland Scotland via an interconnector cable. But the scale of the development and its visual impact has raised not insubstantial opposition to the project and the letters pages of the *Shetland Times* have filled with debate on the issue, much as in the early 1970s with oil. Shetlanders

[46] Production at Sullom Voe peaked in 1984 with 58,328,785 tonnes throughput (from the Brent and Ninian pipeline systems). In 2005, 16,488,980 tonnes passed through the terminal (though the Brent and Ninian systems as well as the new North Atlantic Schiehallion and Clair systems which came online in 2001 and 2005 respectively). In 2004 Sullom Voe was still the 8th busiest port in the UK by tonnage, with 4.2% of UK traffic (Shetland Islands Council, 2006).

[47] In 1991 the permanent terminal workforce (including SIC ports & harbours staff, Shetland towage, British Petroleum, and subcontractors) peaked at 1,110, but in 2006 it was down to 712. However 86% of the 2006 workforce was described as 'local' while only 62% of the 1991 workforce was (Shetland Islands Council, 2006).

have rather more power to firmly say ‘no’ however, in this instance, as the project is more (though not completely) home grown and there is less outside pressure for it than was the case with oil infrastructure.

Perhaps the most notable impact of oil is that the islands are now far less remote – many more ferries and airplanes travel to the islands than would have been the case without the growth in population and economic activity. Shetland enjoys two modern airports, including the massively-oversized Sumburgh Airport (a legacy of one of the few over-estimates of the scale of oil activity) and several smaller airstrip facilities on smaller outlying islands. ‘Roll-on-roll-off’ (‘ro-ro’) ferries allow easy car travel between all of the populated islands, most on a daily basis.

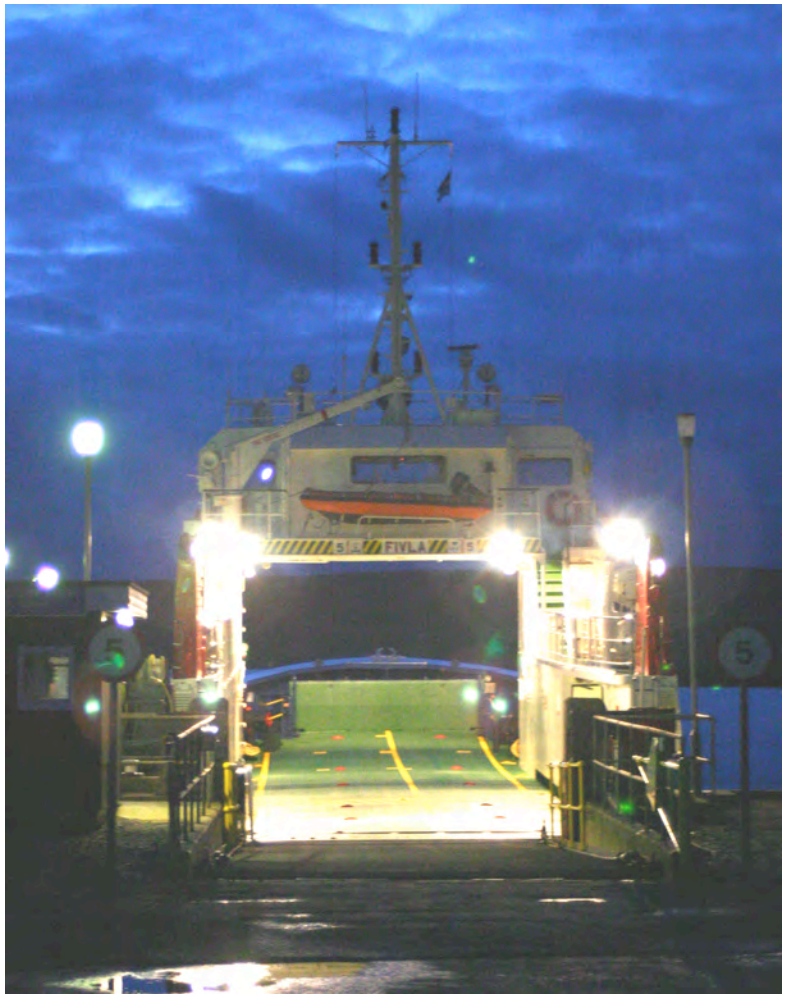


Figure 7: Boarding the roll-on-roll-off ferry to the island of Unst

Increased affluence amongst individuals has allowed travel to mainland Britain and beyond, as well as allowing increased television ownership, which A. Cohen (1987) suggests has been, along with the ferry, the greatest threat to unique identity and culture of Whalsay, given that it reduces the frequency of inter-household traditional 'sprees' or house-to-house social visits and substitutes a broader British (or even American) cultural repertoire in place of the stories and social activities that characterised pre-television Whalsay society. SIC councillor Morgan Goodlad (2006) echoed such comments about TV for Shetland as a whole, though Thompson (1991) suggests that TV and oil revenue together allowed for the modernisation of Shetlanders' understanding of the world, thereby allowing cultural survival (rather than his 1961 foretelling of doom).

Many of these impacts seem to mirror those identified by studies of the impacts of fixed links on island communities (see Baldacchino, 2007, for example) – increased flows of people and goods (both in and out) decrease the bounds of remoteness which seem to establish island ways of life. Though Shetland was not connected to the mainland by a physical bridge, the scale of activity at Sullom Voe created a situation where the flow of people and communication between the islands and the rest of Britain did, in a sense, breach the 'moat against cultural and economic imperialism' (MacDonald, 2007, p. 34) that islandness could provide.

At the same time, the council's financial ability to support the inter-island transportation network has no doubt allowed some of the smaller island communities to remain viable – without the ferries and council-owned airplane services, several of the more remote communities would have much more difficulty surviving. Members of those communities would have had to move to less remote areas, probably reducing the overall 'remoteness' of the Shetland population as a whole. Support for

small remote schools has no doubt also contributed to community survival. In 2005 there were nine schools with fewer than ten students[48] and three (on the islands of Papa Stour, Skerries, and Foula[49]) with fewer than four (Shetland Islands Council, 2006). Thus increased revenue for the SIC has in some ways allowed for continued remoteness for those Shetlanders who choose to remain in remote communities – a policy that the SIC has, in general, strongly supported in efforts to keep such communities viable (for example, Shetland Islands Council, 2007b), though discussion of school closures is near-constant. This debate over whether or not to close some of the remote schools can be seen as a proxy for debate over the maintenance of remote communities within Shetland and thus, perhaps, the very importance of remoteness within the broader Shetland identity. While no doubt most would support keeping all the schools open if more funding were available, the question of whether or not to prioritise the maintenance of schools such as Skerries Secondary amongst all the demands on the SIC's budget is indicative of the stresses of claims to remoteness.

If Shetland is the periphery of the periphery (ie, Scotland is the periphery for England and Westminster, but Shetland is the periphery of Scotland), then remote Shetland islands like Papa Stour and Skerries, with small – and dwindling – populations can be seen as a periphery three times over.[50] Many areas of Shetland risk

[48] Not including nursery education.
[49] Though as of the writing of this paper, the Papa Stour primary school had been closed and mothballed after the family with the two children left the island. Skerries Secondary school had two pupils in 2005 according to *Shetland in Statistics 2006*, but subsequently dropped to one. Skerries' primary department is rather larger, with four students in 2005.
[50] Critiques of the relations between Scotland and Britain as a whole largely mirror those observed between Shetland and Scotland (see, for example, *The Economist*, 2006a). In many cases, it would almost be possible to substitute Shetland for Scotland and Scotland for Britain (including Edinburgh for Westminster – and even Lerwick and the SIC for Edinburgh and the Scottish Parliament). Scotland itself is fighting to maintain (or establish) its own unique identity from that of England (for example, MacDonald, 1997; *The Economist*, 2006b), just as Shetland fights to maintain (or establish) its own (for example, Wills, 1991; Abrams, 2005).

depopulation to an extent that public and social amenities could not be supported, thus encouraging further emigration and diluting any population base that could support local culture (as even within Shetland itself there are distinct identities in different areas, each fighting against cultural dominance of 'Da Toon', Lerwick).

In many ways, social change and modernisation may have increased the salience of other traditionally-based identities. As suggested by Anthony Cohen in his discussion of the Shetland island of Whalsay:

> As the outside world impinges ever more insistently, so people become increasingly conscious of their cultural identity, increasingly aware of their cultural boundaries. In these circumstances all forms of behaviour can assume significance as symbolic expressions of identity and cultural distinctiveness. (Cohen, 1985, p. 309)

This is precisely the sort of cultural focus that has been demonstrated throughout Shetland during and after the oil era – not just on Whalsay.

AFFLUENCE & IDENTITY

The primary tangible benefit from oil as experienced by Shetlanders not employed by the industry is almost certainly the array of trusts which support various aspects of Shetland life and society – from pensioners' homes to children's sporting activities to loans for fishing boat purchases. The Shetland Charitable Trust, which actually owns the land that the Sullom Voe Terminal is built on, and thus receives rent payments, acts as an umbrella fund for several other trusts with more specific purposes: the Shetland Development Trust (which supports local business and industry, particularly Shetland's fisheries sector), the Shetland Amenity Trust (which supports a wide range of social and cultural activities from educational events to archaeological research), the Shetland Arts Trust (which supports more active cultural expressions, primarily in the performing arts and Shetland dialect), and the Shetland Recreational Trust (primarily concerned with the many well appointed leisure complexes and with

supporting sporting activities). The Charitable Trust was founded in 1976 to receive the so-called disturbance receipts from oil industry taxation with the mission to improve the quality of life of Shetlanders by supporting the financial needs of organisations working on education, environment, leisure, and 'social need' in Shetland (Shetland Islands Council, 2007a). In addition to disbursing grants to the more targeted trusts mentioned above, the Charitable Trust provides grants for some projects directly – for example care homes, the citizens' advice bureau, and alcohol treatment programmes. Although the Charitable Trust is a separate organisation from the council, its board of directors is composed of the twenty-two SIC councillors, plus the head teacher of Anderson High School and the Lord Lieutenant of Shetland, allowing a coordination of activities between the council and the trust, but also subjecting it to criticism. Some have complained that the overwhelming dominance of SIC councillors on the board makes it prone to simply finance any 'pet projects' which the SIC cannot fund itself due to budgetary constraints or European Union state subsidy regulations, rather than those which demonstrate real need of support from the trust (Robertson, 2007b). This led to calls, gaining force from November 2007 for changes in the board of directors structure – supported by concerns that such close ties between the council and the trust could attract the disapproving eye of EU regulators. Also in November 2007, EU regulators ordered that more than one million pounds of grant aid paid by the SIC (not the Charitable Trust) over a thirteen year period to local fisheries projects (fishermen and a fishmeal factory) be returned to the council for contravention of EU state subsidy regulations (Robertson, 2007a). This has cast into some doubt the future of council programmes to support local industry with funds drawn from oil revenue via the Shetland Development Trust.[51] Wills

[51] In March 2008, solicitors contracted by the SIC recommended that the Shetland

(2008b) discusses the importance of aid to local businesses from oil-based funds: 'What this assistance does is reduce Shetland's built-in disadvantages of remoteness, high transport costs, a small local market and a lack of investment capital. It allows us to compete fairly for business'. In theory this does not affect the Charitable Trust, but such concerns have raised questions about the close connection between the council and the trust.

The celebration of local sport contributes to a Shetland identity and has been supported to a great extent by the Shetland Recreational Trust. Shetland seems to take great joy in victories against those from the rest of Britain (and occasionally Faroe, Norway, or further afield). The 2005 Natwest Island Games, which Shetland hosted, included teams from island communities around the world and surprised even many Shetlanders with the local pride it generated (Goodlad, 2006). Local sportsmen and women competed in kit emblazoned with the Shetland flag[52] as spectators throughout the islands watched whilst waving Shetland flags – a phenomenon familiar to those in England during the World Cup, which King (2006) identifies as central to developing nationalist sentiment. This all receives extensive coverage in *The Shetland Times*; pictures of local athletes in Shetland jerseys and jackets holding recently won medals abound in its pages.

Development Trust be wound up and its efforts moved into a more typical development committee within the SIC after EU decisions declared that the Development Trust's efforts fell afoul of state-aid regulations (BBC Radio Shetland, 2008).

[52] Designed in 1969 by Roy Grönneberg and Bill Adams, the Shetland flag consists of a Scandinavian-style offset cross (as appears in the flags of every Scandinavian country) in the blue and white of the Scottish saltire. It was officially recognised by the Lord Lyon King of Arms, who regulates heraldry in Scotland, in 2005 in time for the Island Games. It is normally flown above Lerwick Town Hall, as well as being displayed extensively by Shetlanders as a flag, on car window stickers, on SIC vehicles, and numerous other locations for the demonstration of a bit of Shetland pride. It has also become tradition for visiting boats to fly it as a 'courtesy flag' rather than the saltire or Union Flag when in Shetland harbours. In 2007, June 21st was designated 'Shetland Flag Day'.

One of the great luxuries of the oil era has been that well educated youth and those who had previously left the islands have had the opportunities to return and find meaningful employment, whether it be in oil-related activities or with the vastly enlarged SIC and the associated trusts managing their extensive funds. These trusts have also allowed some to pursue careers that might otherwise have not been economically viable within Shetland – music in particular – thus keeping them on the islands as an active part of the cultural scene.

Hance Smith (1977a) described the state of Shetland's economy in the early 1960s and prospects for employment as so bleak that education was 'for export'. Those pursuing education beyond a basic level would inevitably leave the islands to find work elsewhere; he draws upon earlier statements by the Anderson Institute's rector and John and Laurence Graham (1962), in reference to the laudable educational efforts of Lerwick's Anderson Educational Institute (now Anderson High School):

> We must… admit that it has been largely an education designed for export, and that Shetland schools have specialised in producing the "lad of pairts" who too often has found the native heath too restricted for his ambitions and has gone oot da Sooth Mooth[53] to distinguish himself elsewhere. (Smith, 1977a, p. 4)

Graham and Graham described education as 'the magic passport of escape' from the drudgery of croft work and the dangers of fishing, subjecting the islands to a '"brain-drain" [that] has been crippling Shetland for most of this century' (1964, p. 5). In the early sixties, a *New Shetlander* editorial asked 'Is pessimism the curse of Shetland?' (Graham and Graham, 1963). Oil provided a means for people to stay on and be financially successful within the islands and for some who had left to return (Nicolson, 1990).

[53] As noted earlier, the 'Sooth Mooth' being the south mouth of Lerwick Harbour, the direction boats go when leaving Shetland for Scotland or come when arriving from there. Also as in 'Sooth Moothers' – those from outside of Shetland who traditionally would have come in through the south mouth of Lerwick Harbour.

Irvine (2007b) recounts changed attitudes of Shetlanders towards themselves that oil-related affluence provided (albeit in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek way): 'We had progressed, we had better houses, better cars, better possessions, knew more people, went on holiday, could speak about bigger things – we knew that we were modern!' (p. 17). But on a more basic level, oil money allowed Shetland to escape from what Wills (1991, p. 32) describes as the 'soup kitchen' of Scottish budget handouts.

HISTORICAL IDENTITIES IN MODERN SHETLAND

The maintenance of an identity based on the idealised crofting, knitting, and fishing family of the past does seem somewhat problematic in a society where daily lives are not significantly different, in a practical sense, from what might be found in other areas of modern rural Britain. It may in fact be more disconnected from that rural ideal as a result of the luxuries financed (directly or indirectly) by oil wealth. Instead of life in a quaint stone crofters' cottage, a Shetlander today is far more likely to live in a modern home fabricated in Norway, drive to Lerwick's Co-op Superstore for food (perhaps including a ride on the heavily subsidised SIC ferries), then take children to swimming or gymnastics at one of the opulent leisure centres scattered throughout the islands.[54] Shetland may be remote, but it is certainly not antiquated. Crofting seems to be a particularly important issue within conceptions of Shetland identity, both in terms of a historical precedent upon which ideals of a Shetland way of life are based, and as a way of life that has become less economically important in recent years. As Laureen Johnson (2006a), co-editor of *The New Shetlander*, has

[54] These leisure centres are partially financed by the Shetland Amenity Trust with income from investments made with oil money. Shetland has the greatest number of recreation centres in relation to population of any council in Britain.

suggested, it is difficult to separate conceptions of the so called Shetland way of life from its increasingly remote historical ideals:

> What most people, I think, refer to as the Shetland way of life is the crofting way of life. There was a way of life in the country which I think is the general one taken to be the Shetland way of life. This ignores, of course, perfectly good other ways of life that were going on in the *toon*, but really I think crofting is some way in it.

But perhaps crofting does not matter nearly as much in Shetlanders' minds and their ideas of a 'Shetland way of life' as it once did. As archivist Brian Smith (2006b) observed:

> The old idea of the Shetland way of life – the crofter and the blissfully good relationships between neighbours, etc., etc. – I hear much less about that now probably because that sort of agrarian setup has now really departed forever.

People do still believe in 'that sort of thing' and various forms of crofting continue to play a large part in Shetlanders' understanding of their own 'way of life'. One interviewee described the practise of walking a small bit of burning peat around one's house at Christmas time to make the house smell of peat fire, even if they do not actually have a peat-fired stove or fireplace. Anthony Cohen (1987) describes crofting's economically marginal nature, yet it remained central in the minds of the Whalsay community.

> To most Whalsay crofters, the croft is incidental, not only to their annual income but also to their allocation of time and labour. It commands substantial resources in neither capital nor labour; nor does it contribute more than marginally to the household income. Nevertheless, many Whalsay people identify themselves closely with an idealised crofting 'way of life', and enthuse about crofting even though the demands of fishing prevent them from devoting much time or effort to it... It is clear, then, that crofting occupies a prominent place in the Whalsay ideology. It has more salience as an idea than as an economic activity. Its continued salience must be treated as paradoxical in the context of contemporary economic life. (p. 100)

Fishing also features strongly in traditionally-imagined ways of life. This can be given a bit more credence than crofting, considering the significant part that the fishing industry continues to play in the Shetland economy, but instead of the brave men in open sail or row boats, towing hand-baited long lines and battling the

elements in dire risk of their lives, modern fishing is a very high-tech affair. While once the bonds between a fishing crew and their joint ownership of a traditional *sixareen* boat was nearly as strong as the bond between kin, the demands of capital-intensive modern fishing (which began with the first steam-powered boats that arrived in Shetland during the Herring Boom) has reduced the social connection of such crews and turned fishing into a much more modern industrial style activity (Byron, 1986; A. Cohen, 1987). Yet some areas of Shetland, for example the islands of Burra, Skerries, and Whalsay, remain heavily dependent on fishing income and both Scalloway and Lerwick harbours are strongly connected to the fish-related activities. As of 2003, fishing was still valued at £243.1 millon, making up 53.3% of Shetland's economic activity (Shetland Islands Council, 2006), but it is highly modernised. As Cohen (1987, p. 14) laments, 'They see their distinctive ways of life being steadily eroded by the irresistible force of modernity' – though the fishermen of Whalsay and other areas, with their state of the art equipment, no doubt enjoy the income they are able to earn. Yet this does not represent the end, for, as he describes in his assessment of modernity and 'way of life' on the Shetland island of Whalsay (1985):

> They all admit change, and much of the change originates outside of the community. Indeed, the change may be so substantial as to reconfigure the traditional activity. Yet, the activity does not thereby become any less 'Whalsa'.[55] Rather, in its transformed state, it becomes a new and modernised item in the repertoire of symbolic devices through which the boundaries of the community are given meaning and, thereby, preserved, and through which people signal their determination that imposed or expedient structural change will not make them 'less like themselves'. (p. 309)

[55] A transliteration of the local pronunciation of 'Whalsay'.



Figure 8: A traditional 'sixareen' (courtesy Shetland Museum Photographic Archive)



Figure 9: A modern trawler in Lerwick Harbour

Instead of making a living from subsistence farming supplemented by fishing in open boats, Shetlanders today are far more likely to work for the council, in more modern genres of shipping, tourism, or countless other quite contemporary commercial pursuits, as might be found in any rural region. Agriculture only

accounted for 2.9% of the output of the Shetland economy in 2003 while the council alone represented 27.9% (Shetland Islands Council, 2005). And given Shetland's distance from the mainland, there are a great many more public and private services in the islands than might otherwise be expected given a population of only 22,000 – downtown Lerwick is home to a surprisingly large number of banks, for example. Fishing is still a major part of the economy, representing 53.3% of the island's economic output in 2003.

CONCLUSION

The Shetland community experienced a great deal of social upheaval as a result of the construction of the Sullom Voe Terminal, but has adapted to the aftermath with the assistance of the economic wellbeing that oil has brought, generally without falling into the sorts of 'resource curse' traps that have plagued so many oil-extractive regions. The upheaval itself accelerated the onset of modernity in the islands as massive numbers of incomers came to previously remote communities, communication and interaction with the world beyond the islands increased, and Shetlanders gained the affluence which allowed them to travel and participate in wider global social trends. But within this modernity lies a strong reclamation of a sense of Shetland's past, described in depth in the coming chapter. The oil men did not turn Shetland into an industrial urbanised wasteland as some of the strongest sceptics might have feared. But nor has oil left Shetland just as it found it. Shetland has been altered by oil, but thanks to some well considered planning, particularly in the form of the ZCC Act, the islands have managed to maintain a sense of uniqueness and independence while also claiming some of the modernity that oil activity and the resulting income (for the council, the trusts, *and* individuals) had to offer. The council

can be credited with making sure that oil activity did not cause the same degree of detrimental effects that so many other oil regions of the world have faced.[56] It is not my position to judge the positives or negatives of such affluence; opinions within Shetland will certainly differ, but the level of infrastructure, amenities, and assistance to Shetlanders themselves certainly exceeds most other areas of rural Scotland. The assistance rendered to 'tradition' and 'heritage' cannot be overlooked either. A brand new museum and archives has recently opened on the Lerwick waterfront, largely a product of the Charitable Trust, though also a commitment by the council to Shetland's 'rich and distinctive many-faceted heritage, which is the foundation for the Islands' way of life today' (Shetland Islands Council, 2000, p. 49). Music and other cultural pursuits are supported. Archaeology and interpretative history projects financed by the Amenity Trust instil a sense of historical pride in Shetland and its connection to the past. All these elements, based directly or indirectly on oil-sourced funding provide institutional support for the sort of cultural elements that so many people feared would be lost in the onslaught of dirty oil workers with criminal intent racing lorries across superhighways through the Shetland countryside.

[56] As documented extensively in the literature. For just a small sampling, see Alaska Oil Spill Commission (1990), Beamish (2002), Coates (1993), Ejobowah (2000), Freudenburg (1984), Shankleman (2006), Watts (2004), Yergin (1993) and countless others.

V ~ INVENTION OF CULTURE

Many elements of contemporary Shetland culture can be ascribed to intentionally and artificially generated sources rather than to organic popular generation and cultural evolution. The influences of oil, both direct and indirect, fuelled these intentional cultural changes in diverse ways, but within existing historical frameworks of local culture. Although some may doubt the 'authenticity' of the claimed historical groundings of Shetland's present day culture and tradition,[57] they remain distinctively Shetland. As noted in previous chapters, the prospect of oil development stirred concerns amongst Shetlanders that their distinctive identities and cultures were at risk of serious disruption; efforts to save it, however, represented interpretations of culture from specific segments of Shetland society. Anticipation of an altered oil-based future, in part, has led to a reconstruction of the past as a defence (Barry, 2007) against the prospective damages and threats of industrial modernity that does not apparently fit within that historically-based idealisation of Shetland (an imagined geography). Yet as we shall see, the resulting hybrid cultural identity is not impossible or necessarily contradictory.

In this chapter I discuss the dynamics of Shetland's culture and its identities based heavily on the ill-defined 'Shetland way of life', which have been significantly influenced by the economic fortunes and activities of the islands. I aim to highlight the ways in which much of Shetland culture and identity has been intentionally constructed by particular elements of Shetland society while also identifying other causes of cultural change that lead to the historically-based, yet modern, cultural

[57] For example, Church (1990): 'Nowhere is the link between identity and modernity, or perhaps, post-modernity, more clearly seen than in the strategic employment of these confabulatory practices in the production of a simulacrum effect, whereby an exact and authentic copy is being produced of a traditional Shetland culture, the original of which is tacitly recognized, in the antagonism and tactics of daily resistance, to have, in fact, never existed' (p. 40).

identity present in the islands today. My main line of argument is that while the historical fact on which Shetland identity is based may not fully support the reality of today, the hybrid nature of constructed Shetland identities (that is, highly modern yet claiming an essentially historical grounding) effectively rationalises the discontinuity of claims to histories to create what is evidently a unique Shetland identity within an otherwise not terribly unique modern way of life. The relatively straightforward bases for claims to culture within Shetland (*viz.* Norse heritage, traditionally-based industries, remoteness, etc.) are formed by differing forces of invention, each creating a different cultural space which is individually incomplete in its understanding of Shetland's cultural identities and perceived 'way of life'. But together, several of these compose key elements in a far more nuanced, hybrid, and varied cultural environment for Shetland. An understanding of such forces is, of course, important in any consideration of effects which oil may have had on those cultures and identities. So while not every section of this chapter is implicitly connected with oil itself, they frame the cultural environment which oil entered and within which oil has interacted to create the hybrid cultures and identities of Shetland today. I begin with a discussion of some of the major aspects of Shetland identity and culture, with some discussion as to how each represents an invented cultural element or tradition, throughout Shetland history, as well as the sometimes contested and multiple versions of these societal elements within local perception and discourse. This is followed by discussion of some of the forces affecting the dynamics of culture and identity within the islands and comparisons with historical economic and cultural disruptions. While my primary focus continues to be the change and invention of culture that has occurred during the oil era, I draw comparisons to a similar period of cultural change and invention: the herring boom of circa 1880 to 1913.

Shetland identity as we know it today, and as it was mobilised in the 1970s in the face of the perceived threats to that identity from oil, is, to some extent, an idealisation of the rural idyll constructed by local intelligentsia (including non-native incomers). This idealised picture was based on the lives of people who were essentially peasants well into the Victorian era. The idyllic life of the noble crofter-fisherman, as portrayed in imaginings of Shetland's historically-based identity, was, unfortunately, largely a fiction – it was a harsh life that encouraged many Shetlanders to emigrate while killing many who stayed. This seems broadly recognised in some sense by Shetlanders, yet lets the idealised group-memory dominate common perceptions (Church, 1989).

> Here is the core of the old Shetland – poverty but warmth of communion, of family togetherness, their links with the sea providing an added dimension to their cramped lives. Facts and statistics tell us an added dimension to their cramped lives. Facts and statistics tell us little of the texture of daily life at any period of time. We know there was poverty and misery and it would be wrong to sentimentalise a way of life which contained these. But we must recognise the virtues which grew from adversity: the strong sense of kinship and community which took naturally under its wing the weak and the old, the orphan and the pauper; the feeling of continuity produced by folk memory, reinforced by the fact that often three generations lived together under one roof: the awareness of the world of love and legend which invested the daily round with significance. These qualities sustained and integrated life in these days and lay at the heart of the community. (Graham, 1983, p. 230)

The highly un-idyllic reality of the crofting life does, however, factor into the preference for Norse heritage over Scottish heritage. It was Scottish lairds who treated the Shetland peasantry so harshly; they had mostly been free landholders under Norse Udal law (Graham, 1983). It also inspires a sense of pride in being able to survive under such harsh economic and environmental conditions – hearty Shetlanders surviving the cold ocean and harsh lairds. These together form a sense of affection for the 'rural island character' cited by many (for example, H. Smith, 1984; Blance, 2006; Goodlad, 2006; B. Smith, 2006b) as central to the 'Shetland way of life'.

> Shetland is blessed with a rich and diverse culture which has grown and evolved out of the geographical remoteness, and the industries and communities of fishing and agriculture. (Knight and Smith, 2005, p. 2)

Identifying with this crofter-fisherman idyll is also quite in keeping with a continued affection for the rural character of Shetland.

The Norse connection is certainly one of the most overt elements of constructed Shetland identities. Exactly how connected modern Shetland is to its Viking heritage is debatable, depending on who one speaks to – Shetland is outwardly far more Scottish than it is Norwegian (or Faroese or Danish or Icelandic…[58]), but one can actually offend certain Shetlanders by discounting the islands' Norse heritage. Shetland's closest real connection to its Viking past is probably in the large number of place-names of Norse descent. However, in perhaps the prime cultural events of the Shetland year, the winter Up-Helly-Aa festivals feature squads dressed as Vikings (as well as other curiously themed groups) pulling a replica Viking galley through town before burning it, is theoretically a Viking fire festival. The SIC may also claim, some argue, to continuing a tradition of democracy dating back to Viking colonisation circa 800 AD (Grønneberg, 1976).

Shetland's sense of geographical connection to Norway, reflected in the ubiquitous statements regarding it being 'as close to Bergen as it is to Aberdeen', (Marshall, 1978; Irvine, 1982) similarly lies in a somewhat adaptive confabulation of geography.[59] Popular lore has it that the 'local McDonalds' (that is, the one closest to

---

[58] Murray (2007) describes the multitude of influences – 'voices from the past' (she suggests Dutch as well and one could add Spanish and maybe Russian from the centuries of international trade through Shetland) – as a 'cultural schizophrenia', but that 'each piece of the jigsaw is equally important and crucial to our identity' and which contribute to Shetlanders' distinctiveness.

[59] 'Mapmakers have never really known what to do with the Shetland Islands. Remotely placed as they are, away up in the northern North Sea, the map men have found it most awkward to squeeze them onto their maps in the proper position. The result has been that very often the islands appear on a postage stamp somewhere on the east side of Scotland, quite frequently they don't appear on the maps at all, and only very occasionally are they

Shetland) is to be found in Bergen - a claim to continuing affinity, of a sort, with Norway (and on to Scandinavia as a whole), and a perceived disconnect with the Scottish mainland. It is often stated that Bergen has the closest train station as well (even Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2007, for example), though this is not actually correct, as the stations for Thurso and Wick in Caithness,[60] on the mainland, are both closer. VisitShetland material even suggests that 'its nearest neighbour is Norway'. And while Aberdeen, Bergen, and Tórshavn are all roughly the same distance from Shetland (Aberdeen is still the closest of the three), Wick, on the Scottish mainland, is only roughly 190 kilometres from Sumburgh Head (at the southern tip of Shetland). Bergen is roughly 330 km from Skerries, off the east coast of the Shetland Mainland and Tórshavn roughly 330 km from Northmavine in northwest Shetland. Regardless of the accuracy of such measurements, the willingness to claim a geographical closeness to Scandinavia is indicative of a keenness to establish a social or cultural connection with these cultures. By declaring that 'Shetland is a land of contradictions. It's part of Scotland, yet it's much closer to Norway, and the local dialect is still peppered with Norse' (VisitShetland, 2007, p. 4) (taking a somewhat loose definition of 'close') and that 'Shetland lies almost exactly at the centre of a triangle with Bergen, Norway, approximately 320 km (200 miles) to the east, Faroe slightly closer to the north-west and Aberdeen, Scotland at a similar distance away to the south' (VisitShetland, 2007, p. 20), the local tourism agency seeks to situate Shetland geographically within a cultural framework that places

---

shown in their correct position, which is approximately 180 miles north of Aberdeen, the same distance west of Bergen, in Norway, and rather more than that of their sister group of islands, the Faroes' (Irvine, 1982, p. 11). Notably, here, Faroe is being claimed as the 'sister group of islands' rather than the rather more obvious, but less Scandinavian, choice of Orkney.

[60] Caithness once shared much of the same Viking heritage as Shetland and Orkney, though being on the mainland, it was politically and culturally absorbed into mainland Scotland much earlier, and more completely, than the Northern Isles.

Shetland's identity amongst the Scandinavian nations – certainly not just with Scotland or the UK – fitting well within the 'cultural tourism' promoted by VisitShetland (Steven, 2006). While the tourist office perhaps may exaggerate actual geography and identity for the benefit of dramatic copy in their publicity material, the Norse element of Shetland culture remains important – but the sense of remoteness from Scotland even more so, influencing and inspiring resistance to amalgamation of local government and services with authorities in mainland Scotland and fuelling a sense of independence and need for self-sufficiency. Even the branding of the local branch of VisitScotland as 'VisitShetland' is an intentional differentiation from the 'tartan and shortbread of VisitScotland' (Steven, 2006) – even though VisitShetland is a part of the VisitScotland network, it is the only part of that network to maintain a comprehensively different branding to the national organisation.



Figure 10: Though individuals have been taking it upon themselves to erase the Scottish thistle on tourism signs, proposals were put forward in 2007 to replace it with a more Shetland-oriented logo

The sentiment has often been expressed favouring the supposedly distant and benign hand of London versus that of Edinburgh, which, though still remote, is more threatening (Grønneberg, 1976; *The Economist*, 1992; Erikson and Anderson, 2006). Greenwood (2007) suggests that in order to establish its own legitimacy, Edinburgh pulls power in both from above (*viz.* Westminster) and below (*viz.* local government bodies), centralising power in the Scottish Parliament and Executive. While this may make the Scottish national government more significant, it risks damaging local power structures that may be more responsive to local interests and concerns – always a worry in Shetland (Thomason, 1997; Irvine, 2007a).

Historically, Shetland has been plagued by boom and bust economic cycles. Booms were often times of great social upheaval and increased interactions with the wider world – with economic interaction came social interaction and thus social change. Of note, however, is the cultural revival evident during and after such social disruptions. The herring boom of the 1880s, which brought a period of unusual economic vibrancy, but also significant immigration and cultural disturbance, fuelled the rise in recognition of Norse heritage, including a short-lived revival of support for autonomy or Scandinavian re-annexation of Shetland and Orkney (Cohen, 1983). Likewise, the Second World War can be seen as a boom period for the islands. Despite some privations, development of local war infrastructure, national war spending (a boon, for example, to the woollen industry supplying clothing and raw wool for the war effort), and the large RAF, Royal Navy, and Norwegian exile presence in the islands, was an economic boon to the islands (Skodvin, 1983) that also strained infrastructure and social bonds in much the same way that oil would several decades later. It also took a great many men abroad, giving them a more cosmopolitan and globalised perception of themselves and the world. The later part of

the 1940s saw the rise of several notable cultural institutions including *The New Shetlander* magazine and the Shetland Folk Society. *The New Shetlander* was an important force behind building support for Shetland Dialect, which was in rapid decline at the time. Such examples of cultural renewal in the face of social disruption mirror that observed in Shetland's oil era.

While Shetland was fortunate enough to be experiencing relatively prosperous times in the years immediately preceding oil, many Shetlanders still remembered the depressions of the 1930s and post-War period – eras when unemployment and emigration were rife and the actual experience on the crofts and in the fishing boats was not nearly so romantic as it was made out to be in the 1970s. By the seventies, such lifestyles were already rapidly disappearing, if not largely gone. The average Shetlander, though perhaps not truly desperate for oil to come to the islands, was probably fairly keen to see the jobs and money that it had to offer, even if they were somewhat wary about how it was to all be managed and whether or not the county council would be able to manage the funds in a way that would meet Shetlanders' approval (Johnson, 2006a; Murray and Murray, 2007).[61]

CROFTER-FISHERMAN IDENTITIES

Conceptions of the Shetland crofter-fisherman feature strongly in most understandings of the Shetland 'way of life'. The idea of the noble Shetlander living off land and sea is rather romanticised; in reality, the life of fishermen was hard and dangerous and much of the crofting was done by women who were often widowed by storms at sea (bringing to mind Anderson's (1991) 'remembering/forgetting' discussed in chapter two). The harsh and constrictive land tenure system endured by

[61] Doubting the abilities of the SIC to make rational decisions or manage money seems, at times, to be an integral part of the Shetland way of life.

most crofters also contributed to a generally poor standard of living amongst Shetlanders who were forced to live decidedly unromantic lives as peasants to the Scottish Lairds. The mistreatment of Shetlanders at the hands of the lairds, however, remains something of a source of bitterness even today, leading Graham (1983, p. 220) to describe 'hunting the laird' as a 'favourite Shetland bloodsport'.

For all the importance that the crofting economy plays in the Shetland cultural imagination, it did not actually last very long historically. Having started, according to Graham (1983) and MacDonald (1997), in the first two decades of the 18th century with the adaptation of previous forms of land tenure to a more capitalism-based regime,[62] it was largely ended by the success of the herring fisheries[63] which allowed Shetlanders to join larger more modern fishing craft and earn enough to escape what had essentially been debt bondage. Improved connections with Britain and beyond allowed many to travel further to earn more than they had been able to do by fishing in open boats around Shetland and selling all their catch to their Laird at artificially low prices. The 1886 Crofting Act, which resulted from the Crofters' Commission (H.M. Commissioners of Inquiry, 1884), in which extensive interviews and hearings were conducted in Shetland, gave security of tenure and rights to compensation to

[62] According to MacDonald (1997), in reference to the Highlands and Islands region of Scotland, 'far from being an ancient 'way of life', then, crofting was a mainly nineteenth-century introduction whose format was principally dictated by what those in charge of the reforms saw as the most economically viable solution.' (p. 77) Smith (1984) identifies the truck system beginning as late as the 1810s. But this is largely besides the point – even if the systems of administration differed over the centuries, many Shetlanders have, for centuries, worked the land in various versions of vassalage under harsh conditions – whether in a crofting arrangement or a runrig system or any other scheme. The symbolism remains consistent even if the conditions of tenancy have varied.

[63] Though Wills (1991) takes a different perspective, suggesting that the period between the Crofting Act's 1886 emancipation and the outbreak of World War I represented the '"golden age" of crofting (p. 31). Graham seems to be accounting for when crofting was the most economically important whilst Wills selects the period with improved quality of life for those working the land in Shetland.

tenant farmers across Scotland[64] while gradually reducing rents, thus providing more disposable income to many crofting families (Hunter, 1991), though Hunter suggests that increased dependence on a cash economy made many crofters of Scotland less self-sufficient. By that time, the herring industry and related activities were already providing alternative sources of income to many Shetland families – particularly for women who worked as gutters but might not have ever had the opportunity to earn their own money outside the home before. The 1880s saw a dramatic increase in Shetland's middle class as shops and other services sought to cater for the rapidly expanding local economy that resulted from the herring industry – just as would be the case nearly a century later when Shetlanders scrambled to provide services demanded by the oil industry and to compete with outside companies and individuals who came to Shetland to do the same (Smith, 1977a; Smith, 1977b; Irvine, 1985); again women found employment in the work camps' canteens and as chambermaids, providing many with their first opportunity for employment outside the home. Forced to compete with outsiders far more than they had been used to, Bronwen Cohen (1983) suggests that Shetlanders in the 19th century found it easy to paint Scottish incomers as alien outsiders threatening their way of life (and business). As noted previously, such sentiments would again arise in the 1970s and comparisons with both eras can here be easily drawn with the Scottish takeover in the 16th century and the start of dominance of Scottish Lairds, at least in a somewhat over-dramatised sense that the Scots were taking over.

[64] This all followed a rebellion in the Western Isles where crofters held rent strikes and sometimes fought battles with police acting on behalf of heavy-handed landlords (Hunter, 1991).

UP-HELLY-AA

The Up-Helly-Aa festival, held on the last Tuesday of January, represents perhaps the premiere embodiment of Shetland's Norse heritage and probably the most-recognised Shetland cultural event. As practiced today, the event begins early in the day with the 'Jarl's Squad', over two dozen men dressed as Vikings, calling upon various venues in Lerwick (or more locally in outlying areas for the Up-Helly-Aas held in other parts of Shetland in the weeks before and after) such as schools, pensioners' care homes, and hospitals. Notably in Lerwick, the squad visits the Lerwick Town Hall, now the meeting place for the SIC and primary administrative centre for Shetland, where they share a toast with the SIC convenor – perhaps the greatest official sanction the event could have. After sunset, the Jarl's squad, along with many dozens of other squads, each dressed in variously themed costumery, gathers to begin a torchlight procession, winding through the streets of Lerwick (or one of the other villages), accompanied by brass bands, singing from a repertoire traditional songs evoking Norse imagery. The words of the Up-Helly-Aa Song are perhaps the most notable (particularly the first, sixth, and seventh verses and the chorus), drawing direct connections between today's Shetlanders and idealised Viking virtues:

> From grand old Viking centuries Up-Helly-A' has come,
> Then light the torch and form the march,
> and sound the rolling drum:
> And wake the mighty memories of heroes that are dumb;
> The waves are rolling on.
>
> *chorus* –
> Grand old Vikings ruled upon the ocean vast,
> Their brave battle-songs still thunder on the blast;
> Their wild war-cry comes a-ringing from the past;
> We answer it "A-oi"!
> Roll their glory down the ages,
> Sons of warriors and sages,
> When the fight for Freedom rages,
> Be bold and strong as they!
>
> Of yore, our firey fathers sped upon the Viking Path;

Of yore, their dreaded dragons braved the ocean in its wrath;
And we, their sons, are reaping now their glory's aftermath;
The waves are rolling on.

In distant lands, their raven-flag flew like a blazing star;
And foreign foemen, trembling, heard their battle-cry afar;
And they thundered o'er the quaking earth, those mighty men of war;
The waves are rolling on.

On distant seas, their dragon-prows went gleaming outward bound,
The storm-clouds were their banners, and their music ocean's sound;
And we, their sons, go sailing still the wide earth round and round;
The waves are rolling on.

No more Thor's lurid Hammer flames against the northern sky;
No more from Odin's shining halls the dark valkyrior fly;
Before the Light the heathen Night went slowly rolling by;
The waves are rolling on.

We are the sons of mighty sires, whose souls were staunch and strong;
We sweep upon our serried foes, the hosts of Hate and Wrong;
The glory of a grander Age has fired our battle-song;
The waves are rolling on.

Our galley is the People's Right, the dragon of the free;
The Right that rising in its might, brings tyrants to their knee;
The flag that flies above us is the Love of Liberty;
The waves are rolling on.

- - The Up-Helly-Aa Song, words by J. J. Haldane Burgess, 1897

Such lines as ‘we, their sons, are reaping now their glory’s aftermath’ and ‘We sweep upon our serried foes, the hosts of Hate and Wrong’ present an obviously glorified sense of Shetland greatness within its Viking history and identity while ‘the flag that flies above us is the Love of Liberty’ establishes a claim to the sort of spirit of independence noted earlier. Interestingly, the line ‘we, their sons, go sailing still the wide earth round and round’ draws a connection between the activities of Vikings and the maritime history of more recent times, creating an identifiable bond that any fisherman or merchant seaman might find alluring.

Nearly a thousand ‘guizers’, torches in hand and dressed in a myriad of strange and curious costumes, march along a set route through town, with the Jarl’s squad in front, pulling a replica Viking galley that the Jarl’s squad has spent the past

year building. When the procession arrives at its designated terminus, the mass of torch bearers then proceed to cast their torches onto the galley in a ritually organised manner, burning the ship to the ground. In some of the rural Up-Helly-Aa celebrations, such as the one in Delting, the flaming ship is even pushed out to sea. The squads then disperse throughout the town, calling at each of more than a dozen halls where they are treated to beverages and food of various sorts and perform short skits for the assembled masses, generally related to the theme of their dress and often parodying current affairs, before moving on to the next hall.

Of particular note is the Jarl and his squad and their adoption of Viking personas. Each Jarl, who is in charge of the event, adopts the persona of a Viking ruler of his choosing and the tale of that character is retold in the event programme, thus perpetuating a public understanding of basic Viking history. The characters chosen do not even always have much to do with Shetland directly; for example the Jarl for the 2006 Delting[65] Up-Helly-Aa chose an eleventh century Norwegian King, Magnus Barelegs, known for conquests in Man and around the Irish Sea. But the retelling of the appropriate portions of Norse sagas at each Up-Helly-Aa connects the Shetland public to the history of the Vikings far more than any other group from Shetland's history. Short biographies of the adopted personas in the *Shetland Times* and the event programmes provide brief history lessons in Viking exploits for nearly all Shetlanders. Norse legend is kept in the public consciousness in a way that

[65] Delting is a district towards the north-west of the Shetland mainland; the Up-Helly-Aa for the district is held in the town of Brae, though the Jarl's squad travels around the district by coach making the obligatory visits to schools and assisted living homes. Delting is, notably, home to the Sullom Voe Terminal and a significant portion of those who work there. It also housed the majority of those working on the terminal during the construction phase; portions of the derelict dormitory camp buildings remained in the Delting countryside until 2007.

Scottish history does not even approach, despite the rather more direct extant effects of Scottish rule since the 16th century.[66]



Figure 11: Jarl Magnus Bareleggs of the 2006 Delting Up-Helly-Aa

For the duration of the day, 'the bill' is posted at the Market Cross in the centre of Lerwick (or at other well-trafficked central locations in the rural festivals). The bill is a large board with a decorated heading, features a selection of thinly veiled mockery and local inside jokes related to local people and events which have raised

[66] Or the Picts, or previous Shetland residents – there is quite a lot more evident archaeological presence of Iron Age forts and Pictish settlements than Viking settlements. There are 141 known or suspected Iron Age brochs (forts), but only 52 known Viking houses (Shetland Islands Council, 2005). But comparatively little is known about the Picts and their culture (other than that they came to Shetland from northern Scotland) and thus one cannot depict them in the same grand romantic way that the Vikings are portrayed. Also remains of timber Viking houses are less likely to survive than the stone Pictish fortifications. Support from the Amenity Trust for projects to excavate Viking settlements have recently sought to expand archaeological knowledge about Viking activities in Shetland (Shetland Amenity Trust, 2006).

local peoples' ire in the previous year, written by the guizer jarl's squad and often unintelligible to outsiders. Its consistent formatting year after year always includes threats to defacers and the traditional Up-Helly-Aa slogan, 'We Axe for What We Want'. Its commentary and parody connects the event strongly with the affairs of the present – both personal and public in nature, yet maintains the historic element of Up-Helly-Aa, that is, an attack on those disfavoured in Shetland public life. While far more subtle than daubing shop windows with hot tar, it still allows for the sort of lampoonery of local people and events which was a notable feature of the tar-barrel era of Up-Helly-Aa. The bill at the 1982 Delting parish Up-Helly-Aa in the village of Brae included the threat, 'Defacers of the Bill will be subjected to the full effluent treatment and dispersed in Yell Sound', referencing ongoing debates about the efficacy of ballast water treatment systems at Sullom Voe Terminal.



Figure 12: The Bill at the 2006 Delting Up-Helly-Aa

Young Shetlanders are brought into the event from an early age as part of assorted junior events at schools across the islands, bringing the Viking pageantry into the educational system.[67] In some areas, there is even a junior Jarl's squad that burns its own galley a few hours before the main event; these children's events receive extensive coverage in the *Shetland Times* and various Up-Helly-Aa-related programmes and pamphlets as well. Thus connection with the event is part of Shetlanders' lives from a young age; they are exposed to this Norse claimed identity and the historical Viking caricatures, building connections both with Shetland's Norse past and with the community-wide bonds that Up-Helly-Aa fosters and represents to communities across the islands. Young relatives of the Guizer Jarl also often take part in their father's or uncle's guizer squad, creating familial patterns of participation that can reach across several generations with grandfathers, fathers, and sons all taking their turn as guizer jarls and being members of the jarl squads of brothers, uncles, and cousins. One guizer interviewed by Ramsay (2000) identified this almost inherited tradition: 'In da squads, I mean an aafil lot o squads ken maybe your grandfaider is been in da squad in dan your faider in dan your bairns in ken it'll aa follow in'[68] (p. 24). With squads including friends from within the communities, the multi-generational connections between families can increase inter-familial connections of the sort whose perceived demise was being lamented by various people, as discussed in the previous chapter.

In popular lore, Up-Helly-Aa dates to Viking times; however, it is generally acknowledged to have begun in the early 19th century (though suggestions of more

[67] This is not only incorporated during the Up-Helly-Aa season; Viking history and culture appears in the curriculum often, for example learning Viking games alongside history lessons (*Shetland Times*, 2008).

[68] As transcribed by Ramsay in the original dialect. I translate it as 'In the squads, I mean, an awful lot of squads, you know, maybe your grandfather has been in the squad and then your father and then your children in [it], you know, it'll all follow on.'

distant historical antecedents still abound); disgruntled unemployed veterans of the Napoleonic wars,[69] who, as Brian Smith (Smith, 1993) describes it, had developed 'rowdy habits and a taste for firearms', (see also BBC Wales, 2006) along with festively-inclined youths, would pull a tar barrel[70] around the narrow lanes of Lerwick, vandalising the homes of wealthy residents who had raised the revellers' enmity over the past year. Thus the Norse element, along with the participation and support of nearly the entirety of Shetland society was quite intentionally overlaid upon what was once a fairly rowdy affair more akin to a scheduled riot. Newall (1978) quotes an account of a pre-Viking-style Up-Helly-Aa from an 1870 edition of the *John o' Groat Journal*:

> The Christmas holidays ended here on Saturday the 29th, or the 18th January Old Style, making twenty-four days in all, 'Yule' day included. The last holiday here is called 'up-haly-a'' and there formerly used to be rants held in the country districts on the evening of this day... Such things are seldom heard of now, and many of the days formerly observed by the natives are scarcely known even by name. Some of the Lerwick youths have resolved that if such days are to be no longer known as festivals, they shall be known for noise and mischief-making. It seemed as if some of them were vexed or ashamed that Christmas and New Year (Old Style) should have passed off so quietly in town, and, therefore, resolved to make up for it on the night of the 28th or morning of the 29th ultimo. After parading the streets and lanes for several hours, making as much noise as possible with a drum and a few other instruments, attracting a crowd of idlers, they commenced their favourite sport of dragging the burning tar barrel through the street, and daubing the doors and windows of the houses and shops who did not countenance their proceedings.

The rising economic affluence of Lerwick, however, did not seem, to the town's growing middle class, to be particularly compatible with riotous mobs in the

[69] According to Halcrow (1967), more than 3000 Shetlanders were press-ganged into the Navy during the Napoleonic Wars, out of a population of roughly 25,000, and when, legally, not more than 100 were supposed to be press-ganged from any one county. She suggests that Shetlanders might bear much of the credit for saving Britain from Napoleon.

[70] The tar barrels were generally composed of several wooden barrels (at times more than a dozen), split in half and fastened to a sort of sledge. The half barrels were filled with tar, generally stolen from the town's gas works, or other flammable material, and pulled by chains by several men while others stirred the flaming tar while running behind or beside, helping to steer the whole affair in the narrower sections of Lerwick's Commercial Street. Youths might adapt their own smaller tar barrelling sledges from washing buckets or any other material that might come to hand.

streets. Disapproval of these activities was additionally influenced by Victorian temperance movements. Brown (1998) discusses the tendency of some to attribute such behaviour to a general Victorian-era tendency to replace the 'real past' with 'synthetic history' in order to better 'control the plebeians of the machine age' (p. ix); he himself takes a more nuanced view, however. Victorian efforts to halt the destructive festivities met with mixed success, but by the 1880s, several Shetland intellectuals[71] had infused a revived event with the Norse symbolism so prevalent today. Perhaps chief amongst these, the blind Lerwick poet and author J. J. Haldane Burgess was a major proponent of Shetland's Norse heritage and its incorporation into local cultural consciousness. As well as encouraging Shetlanders to adopt Norse names, he wrote the Up-Helly-Aa Song in 1887 (as above), instigated the first appearance of the Viking galley in 1889, and is attributed with leading the renaming of the 'Worthy Chief Guizer'[72] to 'Guizer Jarl' and the permanent adoption of Viking garb by the Jarl's guizer squad. But it may not have been just ideas of Norse identity that Burgess sought to inculcate; Brown (1998) attributes some of his more radical stances, reflected in some of the later lines of the Up-Helly-Aa Song (*viz.* 'Our Galley is the People's Right…' that 'brings tyrants to their knee') to Burgess' Marxist political sentiments, although B. Cohen (1983) is more of the opinion that despite Burgess's leanings, Up-Helly-Aa and the general 'othering' of Scotland via assertions of a common Norse identity shared by Shetlanders of all classes was used by the rapidly expanding middle class as a 'socially-harmonising' activity to which working

[71] In her discussion of the role of Shetland intellectuals in Victorian cultural constructions, B. Cohen (1983) describes and defines 'intellectuals' (particularly in the Shetland context) as 'those who, through these historical developments, were provided with the time, skills and organisation to concern themselves with the extension of knowledge within and about their community, and with access to the increasingly available means of disseminating their ideas' (p. 35).

[72] This moniker was a humourous allusion to the title of the leading position of the Order of Rechabites (Up-Helly-Aa Committee, 1978), a temperance organisation very active in Shetland at the time.

class dissent could be 'harnessed' (p. 249). According to B. Cohen (1983), Up-Helly-Aa was used by Shetland intellectuals to 'project to a wider audience, and indeed to posterity, the product of their romantic exploration of Shetland's Norse past, conveying to generations of Shetlanders an inescapable sense of their Norse identity' (p. 478). The event certainly has been successful in projecting such a sense of Norse-ness to more than a century of Shetlanders. Already in 1889 *The Shetland News* stated, in its coverage of the festivity, that 'This festival, as most Shetlanders know, was an institution among Scandinavian people of religiously strict observance' (Shetland News, 1889). The event was thus also placed within the realm of religious propriety.

While the Lerwick Up-Helly-Aa, by far the largest, dates to the 1880s, many of the rural celebrations are quite modern, arising in the oil boom days of the 1970s (or at least being revived). While they take their form from the Lerwick festival, the reasons for their founding may be much more rooted in the disruption from oil. Up-Helly-Aa is a truly iconic representation of Shetland culture and the founding and re-founding of such celebrations can be seen as rural communities claiming their part of Shetland, as in many of these areas the social disruption caused by oil was much greater – particularly concerning the number of new residents coming from the south in the parishes of the north Mainland and the island of Yell. In some sense, these Shetland communities are reinventing the invention. They are taking the invented tradition of Up-Helly-Aa and distributing it throughout Shetland so that a multitude of communities can claim their own part of the tradition rather than leaving it focused in Lerwick (some Shetlanders consider 'Da Toon' to be somewhat un-Shetland anyhow). They then add their own traditions over time – marching routes, composition of the Jarl's Squad, places the squads are expected to visit, and so on.

They can also personalise it with their own local flavour – the politics, scandal, and gossip of their own area can be reflected in the bill, costumes, and skits of their own festivals, cultivating localised senses of pride and identity within an instantly recognisable Shetland framework. The creation of these newer festivals also allows for local evolution away from the highly formalised Lerwick model – for instance women are not allowed in Lerwick's guizer squads, but are allowed in all eight of the country festivals.[73] Additionally, it creates a sort of Up-Helly-Aa season from late-January until the end of March with a festival somewhere in Shetland almost every week during that period, encouraging many to travel around the islands to experience several (and perhaps take in a bit of the local flavour of each). It would be disingenuous to claim that Up-Helly-Aa lacks any elements of organic evolution and, in the manner suggested by Tarde (1903), this imitation of the Lerwick event has demonstrably resulted in innovations seen in the particular characters of the rural Up-Helly-Aa festivals.

The issue of women's involvement in Up-Helly-Aa, at least in Lerwick, has been quite contentious for some time, as women are prohibited from the guizer squads in the Lerwick festival – a position that has been defended quite strongly by the Lerwick Up-Helly-Aa committee. Even Lerwick's junior jarl squad is entirely male. In every interview in which I discussed Up-Helly-Aa with women in Shetland, as well as several casual conversations, the issue of women's involvement in the Lerwick Up-Helly-Aa was raised – sometimes in defence of the status-quo – but the issue is always a contentious one. One woman interviewee expressed some indignation at others' sentiment that women were 'excluded' from the Lerwick

[73] When discussing Up-Helly-Aa with Shetlanders, and trying to lead the discussion towards the rural festivals, the debate over women in the squads was almost invariably among the first issues noted.

festival, pointing out the important role women play in running the several halls which the squads travel to after the torchlight procession. The halls are operated almost exclusively by women; she suggested that to imagine that Up-Helly-Aa was all about the Jarl's Squad, torches, and the burning of the galley was to focus on the 'touristy' side of the event and neglect what she saw as the more important element of the night – the skits, socialising, eating, drinking, and dancing that occurred later in the halls. But other interviewees saw women's near-confinement to the halls to be seriously limiting their participation in the event, particularly given that the procession is certainly the most visible and vivid element of the festival and that women's exclusion from the squads relegates them to an essentially domestic role in the halls. Beyond the night of Up-Helly-Aa as well, the socialising that is expected of many squads, the Jarl's Squad and Up-Helly-Aa Committee (composed of the current jarl and jarls-to-be) in particular, is maintained as a men-only social sphere from which wives and girlfriends are notably excluded, in most circumstances. As noted by several sources, interviewees and authors alike, although the guizing outfits are supposed to be kept secret to everyone prior to the festival, it is well-known, if not much acknowledged, that the men of the squads often rely on the craft skills of wives, girlfriends, and mothers to produce the often elaborate outfits, though perhaps this is in decline with the increase of store-bought costumery.

Regardless of one's position on the question of women's participation, the question itself remains highly controversial throughout Shetland; when raised during a question and answer session during a 2007 conference on women in Shetland, the issue seemed on the brink of causing an outbreak of serious argument (even in an auditorium which was nearly all women) before others quickly moved the discussion on to another topic. But while those involved in the country festivals and others

looking out from Lerwick might point out that those festivals are not so arcane as to exclude women (indeed Delting's festival draws participation from Lerwick women), participation in the squads remains predominantly male and there has never been a female Jarl,[74] perhaps lending additional support to the suggestion (Abrams, 2005; also Brown, 1998) that Up-Helly-Aa (and of course Lerwick in particular) is heavily based in a sense of warrior machismo. This could be seen to exclude women even when such exclusion is not institutionally imbedded (as it is in Lerwick). Squad activity both during and outwith the festival also tends to focus on alcohol-driven camaraderie, which may dissuade some women from participation and reduce acceptance of women in any given squad by members, even if it is not institutionally forbidden. Research by Jenny Murray of the Shetland Museum, regarding attitudes towards Up-Helly-Aa amongst students at Shetland's main secondary school, Anderson High School in Lerwick, suggests that there does not exist much demand for participation amongst teenage Shetland girls.[75] Despite being perceived as so quintessentially Shetland by so many, there remain a great many women who feel excluded from the event, though this sentiment is not universal and change is not comprehensively desired.

[74] Though this is rather variable when it comes to the Jarls' squads of the rural festivals. As noted by one interviewee, while the Jarl's squad at the 2006 Delting Up-Helly-Aa included just one young girl as a 'Viking princess', the Jarl that year, according to the interviewee, was 'a bit of a traditionalist'. The 2005 Jarl's squad, however, included ten women: three as 'Viking princesses' and seven dressed in the same suits as the men – including fake beards.
[75] The Anderson High School in Lerwick draws students from many rural areas of Shetland in addition to local Lerwick students.



Figure 13: Though women have never been allowed to participate in Lerwick's Up-Helly-Aa guizer squads, transvestism has been widely practiced since the event's early days, including this 1909 reference to current events. (courtesy Shetland Museum Photographic Archive)

Up-Helly-Aa itself exists, perhaps, as more of a celebration of Shetland than actual historical heritage, reducing the need for true historical links beyond the Victorian era. According to Brown (1998), 'the Viking ship and Norse warriors are icons of island identity, conveying power and machismo, and marking a robust and passionate patriotism for community' (p. xii). And even though the Jarl's squad is dressed in a (theoretically) historical manner,[76] the other guizer squads draw in modernity to the event; their costumes often reflect the popular culture of the day, with squads dressed as television characters, local and national notables, and a wide variety of thoroughly modern strangeness; the Jarl's squad is only one allowed to dress as Vikings. Lerwick's 2007 Jarl squad even incorporated a fire hose motif on their shields, as many members of the squad were firemen in the town. Unsurprisingly, oil-related themes were frequently present in the costumes, skits, and

[76] One interviewee referred to them as 'velvet Vikings', given the rather variable historical accuracy of the jarl squads' costumes.

bill of the 1970s (and in the Delting festival, wearing one's British Petroleum coveralls and safety helmet seems to remain a low-effort option for guizers).



Figure 14: A chicken guizer in 2006



Figure 15: A chicken guizer in 1923 (courtesy Shetland Museum Photographic Archive)

Politics, scandal, and antics of notorious local characters are often the subject of ritualised commentary at Up-Helly-Aa; the event is certainly not just about Vikings, but is an interpretation of Shetland as a whole - both past and present.

> The origins of Up-Helly-A' may be obscure. Academics and intellectuals may dispute those origins. It may be an ancient pagan calendar festival. It may be a Norse fire festival. It may be a nineteenth century invention. But that is the past. Up-Helly-A' 2000 is a modern day celebration of community. A celebration of identity. It is an expression of freedom and pride in the community. It is alive, contemporary and thriving.
> Let us hope that in 100 years time it is still being celebrated in Lerwick, and that it remains as modern, as vibrant and as joyful then as it is now.
> (Morrison, 2000, p. ii)

Despite Up-Helly-Aa's claims to historic roots, it remains a very modern event even within the bounds of tradition; 'a community ritual of the late twentieth century may appear to be a pastiche of a custom from the fifteenth or sixteenth century, but in fact it is something deeply modern' (Brown, 1998, p. ix). Up-Helly-Aa is not merely an event that just 'happens' one Tuesday in January; it is an ongoing cultural entity whose influence and essence is a continual presence in Shetland culture. 'To describe Up-Helly-Aa as a calendar custom lends it an inappropriate air, because it is not merely an event but a permanent community institution in some very modern ways' (Brown, 1998, p. 17). It could be readily suggested that the specifics of Viking ancestry in Shetland are not what is most important; perhaps the fact that Shetlanders seek to stake a claim to such unique identities (separate from the Anglo-Saxon or Celtic history claimed by most of mainland Britain) is at the centre of an understanding of what Shetland means to Shetlanders and helps to explain fears and desires regarding oil and its cultural impacts.

FURTHER VICTORIAN CONSTRUCTS

As discussed earlier, the story of economic change coming coupled with cultural change is mirrored in the herring boom and the revival (or perhaps the birth) of

interest in Shetland's cultural distinctiveness - particularly its Norse heritage. The transformation of Up-Helly-Aa from what was essentially a scheduled riot with strong similarities to events in mainland Britain (Brown, 1998), such as the Lewes Bonfire Night in Sussex, to the unique 'Viking' festival witnessed today represents a particularly striking example, as noted previously, but there certainly exist other elements of Shetland culture and identity that were largely constructed by intellectuals in the economic boom period that Shetland enjoyed, to varying extents, from circa 1875 to the outbreak of the First World War. The number of people who might be labelled 'intellectuals' in Shetland also increased with the islands' economic success as wealth allowed successful merchants and capitalists the time and money to pursue these interests.

Increased communication with the outside world, primarily resulting from the vastly improved mail service that came with economic success allowed Shetland intellectuals to communicate with Scandinavian experts from Iceland, Faroe, and mainland Scandinavia, as well as enthusiasts keen to identify Norse elements in British society and culture. These contacts stoked much local interest regarding Norse history and Shetland's role in it (B. Cohen, 1983). Cohen also addresses the manner in which ideas of racial purity, common in Victorian Britain, and desires to lay claim to the perceived superiority of Norse heritage, encouraged some to more strongly stake claims to that heritage.

The Vikings were not alone in being revived as constructed-epic-historical antecedents for the culture of Victorian Britain; semi-historical enthusiasm for other epic figures, such as King Arthur and Boudica, was brought into mainstream British consciousness as an 'ill-assorted pageant of folk heroes and heroines which passes in the popular mind for the history of Britain' (Webster, 1993, p. 13), providing firm

shoulders on which to rest the cultural roots of the British Empire. Translation and publication of extant medieval documents into English during the nineteenth century fuelled increased interest in the historical bases of Britain – an interest that was not limited to the actual factual content of such documents, as Victorian literary works filled in gaps or revised history in more romantic terms (labelled 'literary regeneration' by Bryden, 2005) for an increasingly educated (and thus reading) British populace. Such literary revisionism created a 'constructed picture' (Bryden, 2005, p.28) of British history which provided the 'cultural fiction' (Anderson, 1991) needed to rationalise the empire and support the 'racial myth' (Bryden, 2005, p. 34) that 'the Englishman… was peculiarly manly, honourable, apt for leadership and that his social institutions, of ancient Saxon pedigree, were superior to those of any other people' (MacDougall, 1982, p. 89). Similar attitudes were of course used in the construction of Viking heritage in Victorian Britain (B. Cohen, 1983). This all compares quite well with Church's 'confabulations of community' (1989; 1990) throughout Shetland's history, but continuing to the present day; such activities can be readily recognised in the works of Shetland writers during the Victorian era in their adoption of a heroic Viking history for the islands.

Shetland intellectuals were also responding to the normalising influence of Britain trying to create common bond via common identity throughout the Empire; while focused on the importance of establishing a distinct Shetland identity, they borrowed some of these imperial tendencies.[77] In a *Shetland News* editorial, Lerwick intellectual J. B. Lawrence (who also played a part in the Viking-ification of Up-Helly-Aa) lamented, 'Our claim to be a distinctive people, it is plain, is rapidly vanishing, under new education processes and other powerful influences, and if

[77] For more extensive coverage of similar imperialist-imitating tendencies, see McDonald's (1989) study of nationalism-building activities in Brittany.

[Shetland cultural boosters] do not soon make haste, we shall soon go over altogether' (Laurence, 1888), mirroring several of those quoted in the previous chapter regarding the oil era. The interest Shetland intellectuals had in cultivating the islands' sense of Norse identity coincided with the herring boom-induced expansion of Lerwick, and the opportunity to infuse the town's physical fabric with Norse connections was not missed. Stained-glass windows depicting Norse historical figures were included in the Victorian-gothic-style Lerwick Town Hall, which was completed in the late 1880s. New streets on the expanding western side of town nearly all feature names of Norse kings and saints. One Norse booster even brought a copy of the *Orkneyinga Saga* (one of the few sagas to explicitly mention actual Viking era events in Shetland) to an 1884 planning meeting regarding naming of new Lerwick streets. While congratulating Shetland on having 'one of the few' 'sales-resistant' identities left in Britain, Lenman (1987), however, doubts this Norse historicism, condescendingly describing the 'glorification of a largely mythical Viking past about as relevant to the historical experience of the community as the ancient Celtic twilight so beloved by the average middle-class English-speaking Catholic nationalist in Dublin' (p. 501).



Figure 16: Valhalla Brewery in Unst utilises an entirely overt Viking branding (courtesy Valhalla Brewery)

THE HAMEFARINS

While Up-Helly-Aa certainly includes elements of spontaneous 'change from below', and claims at least tenuous historical connections, the Hamefarins are presentations of purely invented reflections of tradition. These events, held in 1960 and 1985 (and upcoming in 2010) act as a sort of grand family reunion for ex-pat Shetlanders and the decedents of émigrés. At the original 1960 Hamefarin, conceived by a New Zealander of Shetland birth, a series of cultural and craft events were assembled to present something of a pageant of Shetland-ness. The idea behind the event, as Church (1989; 1990) suggests, was to stage a demonstration of how far Shetland had come since the periods of mass-emigration in the later part of the nineteenth and earlier part of the twentieth century.[78] The events themselves have featured a highly diverse selection of Shetland-related activities, sight-seeing ventures, and displays of Shetland culture. They have included knitting demonstrations, visits to notable archaeological sites, and in 1985 an obligatory staged Viking battle with the burning of a replica ship (for what presentation of Shetland could be without Vikings?[79]), along with more mundane tea parties and shopping visits. Both events featured parades of Shetland culture, or at least what culture could be towed through Lerwick. Church (1990) notes the significant local audience these events attracted as well – Shetlanders themselves who were not actually participating in the events went in

[78] Unlike much of the rest of Scotland, Shetland did not experience significant emigration in the 18th century, though this was due primarily to lack of transportation and communication (Thomson, 1983). And while the 1886 Crofters Act, 1872 Education Act, and prosperity brought by the herring boom brought about improvements to the quality of living in Shetland, it also provided the finances, transport, and communication needed for increased numbers of people to leave for Australia, New Zealand, and North America (Graham, 1983).

[79] Even a 2007 presentation of Shetland food and drink in the Scottish Parliament building in Edinburgh included members of the Lerwick Jarl Squad in full regalia. A delegation of Jarl Squad members (including the local MSP) was also sent to the 2007 Cannes Film Festival as part of an effort to publicise Shetland as a filming location.

large numbers to witness demonstrations of the 'Shetland way of life' and sometimes to critique the accuracy of these reproductions (Church, 1989; 1990).

The event is notable in that it created a set of traditions, partially formed from outside 'Shetland societies' (particularly from New Zealand) which had no historical precedent. Ceremony was invented for a previously non-existent event that tied in with ideas of 'authentic Shetland'. Church recounts criticism of the staged Viking battle in 1985, due to its somewhat disorganised and alcohol-influenced nature, but suggests that this did not matter as there was no 'right way' to enact this 'tradition' given that it had no historical base from which to claim a 'right way'. The creation of tradition as a means to bring people in to Shetland (and spend their money there), as seen in the Hamefarins is essentially the same as is seen in tourism activities; the people coming to Shetland from around the world for the Hamefarins would have essentially been tourists. The Hamefarins represent a much larger-scale version of the cultivating of cultural resources as a tourist draw.

Faroe & Modern Norse Identities

On a great many issues, Shetlanders look longingly towards the Faroe Islands – enviously observing the comparative economic success of local fishing (courtesy, to a certain extent, of non-membership of the EU), active sense of culture, and survival of Faroe's distinct language – and credit Faroe's arms-length political relationship with Denmark (Zetland County Council, 1962; 'A. J. C.', 1967; Leirfall, 1979; Dyble, 2006). Faroe is seen (whether rightly or wrongly) as having successfully incorporated modernity and its traditional culture – such that some Shetlanders imagined them to have achieved the economic balance and stability so desired by Shetland, particularly

pre-oil, while also holding on to traditional fishing, language, and self-sufficiency ('Freedom', 1947; Graham and Graham, 1960; 'J. B.', 1963).

After lamenting some peoples' contemporary view of Shetland culture as 'scattered hentilags of our long history of oppression, superstition and blundering ignorance', a 1960 *New Shetlander* editorial wistfully described Faroe as a place still in touch with its Scandinavian traditions:

> How different is the Faroese attitude to their past. There a love and respect and development of their traditions have gone hand in hand with economic progress. As their Home Rules manifesto said: "The national movement does not wish to put conditions back to a former state; it only desires to reap from the values of the past and preserve as much as possible for posterity." Faroe's fine museum and the way she has fostered her once decaying language prove that she has not forgotten these early ideals. (Graham and Graham, 1960, p. 7)

There are certainly a great many similarities between the two island archipelagos – both are traditionally fishing-dependent economies dealing with the changes brought on by modernisation and they occupy a similar geographic position. They share the same Norse heritage (though Shetland's has been diluted by more than five hundred years of relations with Scotland whereas Faroe has remained socially, culturally, and politically connected to Scandinavia) and in the mid to late nineteenth century, were often crewing fishing and whaling boats together. Collaboration, though sporadic, has existed for quite some time; for example, Victorian-era fishing techniques practiced by the Faroese were largely borrowed from Shetland (New Shetlander, 1947), in the post-war period Shetland loaned road surveyors to Faroe ('A. J. C.', 1966), and the SIC and Faroese government periodically send official delegations to visit each other. So frequent comparison is made between Shetland and Faroe, particularly by Shetlanders themselves who often seem keen to size up affairs in Shetland in comparison with those of their North-westerly island neighbours. While the common saying is 'Shetland is different' (Steven, 2006), Faroe (and Orkney as well) is

certainly considered rather less of an 'other' than mainland Britain. An official visit by Shetland County Council officials to Faroe in 1962 is credited with initiating the modern Shetland autonomy movement as it was concluded that Faroe's prosperity was largely due to their relatively expansive control over local affairs (Zetland County Council, 1962).

Faroe represents a modern island community that has retained the Norse history and identity that faded from Shetland under the centuries of Scottish rule. While Shetland may have built up the pageantry of Up-Helly-Aa and a fondness for things Viking, Faroe has embraced modernity (albeit with Danish subsidies rather than oil boom wealth) within its Norse context. Several writers have suggested that the 'live culture' of the Faroese contributes to their prosperity (West, 1961; Zetland County Council, 1962; Leirfall, 1979) and called upon Shetlanders to take up similar cultural stands to ensure Shetland's prosperity.

Faroe may come to call upon Shetland again in the near future, should prospects for North Atlantic offshore oil and gas development prove to reach into Faroese waters in economically viable deposits.

Culture & Identity in the Local Media

The various media outlets in Shetland have long played a significant part in the cultivation of Shetland identities and contribute greatly to the continued connections between Shetlanders. Historically they have long been venues for the presentation of discussion on cultural issues and lively debates on such topics. The local media has acted both as a means for the distribution of views on culture and identity and as a participant in those debates while contributing a great deal to the social cohesiveness of the islands.

Shetland also enjoys quite an extensive cultural paper trail, resulting from the extensive discourse on culture, identity, and community in the islands – and the availability of several local media outlets keen to include such discourse. Where would the study of 'The Shetland Way of Life' be without back issues of *The New Shetlander*? With public awareness of debates surrounding culture and identity so high, the opportunity to imbue the debate, and thus actual perceptions of Shetland's culture and identity are significantly greater, or, at the very least, more apparent. Shetland retains such an extensive archive of its cultural repertoire largely thanks to its local media.

The presence of publications like the weekly *Shetland Times* mean individuals have a direct connection to the activities of other Shetlanders – far more than would be the case if the islands relied solely on the Highlands & Islands' *Press and Journal* from Inverness, which would foster perceptions of Shetland as merely another part of Scotland's assorted distant rural areas. 'It wouldn't be Friday without it' is a common saying, and by late morning every Friday, the majority of those on the streets of Lerwick are likely to have a copy under their arm. It has also won several media awards. Additionally, magazines like the quarterly *New Shetlander* and the monthly *Shetland Life*, as well as local programming on BBC Radio Shetland and Shetland Islands Broadcasting Company (SIBC), focus much more specifically on 'the Shetland way of life' and present a venue for the discussion of cultural issues from a variety of local perspectives; one interviewee described the creation of BBC Radio Shetland as 'a catalyst' for the local cultural scene. Even the dedicated local news reflects, and thus encourages, cultural values with major stories on, for example, any new fishing boat that is brought to the isles (Johnson, 2006b; Gardner, 2007) and an entire 'fishing and marine news' section in every *Shetland Times* issue, demonstrating

the importance of maritime activities to the Shetland public and supporting those involved in the industry. This section even includes a summary of the week's tanker activity at the Sullom Voe Terminal. BBC Radio Shetland's 'Good Evening Shetland' programme features reports on livestock sales and fisheries prices. Coverage of local sport is extensive, spreading news of any team's conquests against Scottish foes. The paper is merely reporting local news, but in giving Shetlanders such a perspective – focused specifically on the islands, it can increase awareness of Shetland. By putting discussion of life in Shetland so explicitly in the hands of the vast majority of Shetlanders and by celebrating the activities of Shetlanders, identities can be developed on the basis of relating with what is presented in such media outlets. Local media also can, to some extent, displace external media, thus offsetting some of the normalising pressure of outside cultural influence coming from British and American television, radio, and films.

Such media venues as *The New Shetlander*, often the subject of dire Cold War accusations of communist sympathies and petit-bourgeois tendencies of 'Lerwick intelligentsia',[80] have been central in building up the image of the fisherman-crofter of noble Viking descent[81] with wistful columns on history and photographs from 'the old days'. However, it is in the pages of *The New Shetlander* where such cultural imaginings are also, on occasion, most publicly faulted (Smith, 1970; Wills, 1970).

[80] These make rather amusing reading today. The SIC has also been the target of such accusations (Callahan, 1998). See also Cohen (1980, p. 166).

[81] And all too often it is a fisher*man* – forgetting the fact that it was often the women of a community whose knitting and farming supported families when husbands were killed at sea or were away on whaling expeditions or were unemployed when fish markets collapsed. Ready availability of female labour was also critical to the on-shore activities of the herring industry (Abrams, 2005), as well as modern fish processing.

DIALECT: WIR AALD WIRDS[82]

Shetland Dialect, a mix of Scots, English, and Norn, has become an increasingly important part of Shetland's cultural identity. The loss of Norn, the Old Norse variant spoken in Shetland prior to Scottish rule (and still spoken in modified form by some in outlying areas as late as the early 19th century), is perceived by many to be a major cultural tragedy: Faroese and Gaelic are seen to be critical parts of their speakers' cultural legacy (Graham and Graham, 1960; Goodlad, 2006).[83] The Gaelic language is often identified as being central to the development of a Gaelic cultural identity within the Highlands and Islands (MacDonald, 1997; 1987). While perhaps not as desirable as Norn might have been for the propagation of distinctive Shetland identities, Shetland Dialect, or to 'spak da aald wye' (Graham, in Jakobsen, 1993), is seen as an integral part of Shetland's identity and cultural scene (Thomason, 1997) and described as the '*midder*[84] tongue' (Morrison, 2008). This has certainly not always been the case; schoolchildren were strictly expected to speak 'proper' English well into the 1970s, as the dialect was considered 'backward' and a sign of being uneducated (Graham and Graham, 1960; Graham, 2004; Tait, 2007).

> It's no aften ye fin a body at's uncan
> Draan tae da wye at we spaek,
> Whin da sköls and da kirk
> Look doon on wir midder-tongue
> An want wis tae spaek mair perskeet.
>
> *It's not often you find somebody who's unusual*
> *Drawn to the way that we speak,*
> *When the schools and the church*
> *Look down on our mother-tongue*
> *And want us to speak more properly*
> - - From a poem about Faroese philologist Jakob Jakobsen by John Graham in the preface to the 1993 reprint of Jakobsen's The Place Names of Shetland (1936) - my translation.

[82] 'Our Old Words'.
[83] See also McDonald (1989) for discussion of the importance of local linguistic difference to the Breton nationalist movement in France.
[84] 'mother'.

More recently, various efforts have been undertaken to encourage use of dialect, with mixed success. Programmes to include dialect in schools, and to encourage students to write in dialect, are rapidly multiplying. Dialect classes are even available for adults. Venues for dialect writing and poetry are increasingly numerous – *The New Shetlander* continues support for dialect writings in its pages and countless books of dialect poetry can be found on the shelves of the Shetland Times Bookshop in Lerwick. Like Up-Helly-Aa, the provenance of the dialect is somewhat romanticised, for while much is made of it being of Old Norse roots, the vast majority of it is lowland Scots or simply English spoken and spelled with a broad accent. But again, like Up-Helly-Aa, the actual descendancy of the dialect is not so important; it remains something unique for Shetland which still calls to mind a pre-Scottish past and establishes a difference from mainstream British culture. Gaelic was probably never natively spoken in Shetland, though the Picts may have had some contact with Irish monks residing as hermits on a few outlying islands before both were wiped out by Vikings in the 8th and 9th century AD. Shetland dialect remains central in establishing difference from mainland Scotland, and while it is a natural creation itself, conscious efforts have been necessary to preserve its use, to a large extent.

REMOTENESS & DIFFERENCE

While the islands' remoteness plays a large part in the perception of Shetland as a unique place separate from the remainder of British society, the islands' extensive contact with the 'outside world' has been a major influence on Shetlanders' life, culture, and identity. As a major maritime crossroads in the North Sea and North Atlantic, much of the world has sailed through Shetland in the past two thousand years or so of known Shetland history (thus engaging Shetland in many important

events in European history, particularly its wars). The presence of the oil terminal at Sullom Voe is just one example of Shetland's strategic position. Shetland was an important waypoint for Viking travellers destined for Faroe, Iceland, Greenland, and beyond. In the medieval period, Shetland enjoyed close trading ties with Northern Europe and Scandinavia, as Hanseatic merchants sought the islands' natural resources for German markets. Later it was integral to North Atlantic whaling and fishing, even playing a major part in worldwide whaling as English and Scottish ships called at Lerwick to raise crews while en-route to the Arctic (or even Antarctic). Such connections tied the wellbeing of the islands to global events; war in Germany or Russia could cause severe economic distress in Shetland as trade was blocked and prices crashed. The islands were particularly strategic in attempts to contain the German navy in both world wars. Even today, Lerwick's harbour fills with an assortment of pleasure craft every summer – from cruise ships carrying several thousand passengers to nineteenth century sailing ships. Throughout the year, ships from around the world shelter in Shetland harbours during storms, resupply, and make repairs, much as they have done for centuries.

> Then, as now, the islands stood at a crossroads of the sea; then, as now, they were a landfall of tremendous importance to the seafarers from many ports who have frequented, and still frequent, these northern waters. (Irvine, 1982, p. 11).

Shetland's sense of difference and distance is heavily stimulated by the not-actually-Scandinavian but not-fully-Scottish attitude that is so prevalent in the islands. Cultural antecedents aside, it's indisputable that the islands are Scottish politically and mostly Scottish socially. But as discussed throughout this thesis, Shetland does not let go of its Scandinavian past. An historical base for Shetlanders' vague dislike of Scotland and wariness of the governing hand of Edinburgh, is described in a poem by the locally-renowned poet 'Vagaland', depicting peaceful

Norsemen unjustly oppressed by the Scots (and echoing some elements of the Up-Helly-Aa song).

> Our fathers crossed the Norway Deep
> And rowed o'er many long sea-miles.
> They doffed their swords to sow and reap
> When they had won these Northern Isles
> [...]
> But robbers from the mainland came
> Who crushed a people proud and free
> And brought to them the bitter shame
> Of alien, feudal slavery.
> - - T.A. Anderson, 'Vagaland'

Similarly, one Yell writer complained of the un-Norse Jubilee celebrations for Queen Victoria in 1897, demonstrating the readily-apparent dominance of British culture:

> I object to the jubilee and kingly craze as unpatriotic, seeing the destruction they have worked on Shetland and its institutions and its opposition to the Norse Spirit. (Laurence Williamson, 1897, as cited in Smith, 2006a)

And as described by Irvine (2007a):

> For centuries Shetland has considered itself as a crossroads in the North Atlantic. Our culture bears the influences of a variety of European countries – Scots, English, Norwegian, Danish, German and Dutch. Although part of Scotland, our remoteness means that we have developed heightened traits of independent philosophy.

And in VisitShetland's (2005) marketing material staking out the sense of difference:

> There is, of course, a lot of Scandiavian influence in Shetland although Shetlanders themselves tend to think of themselves as Shetlanders, neither Scots or Norwegian. They are Shetlanders very much and very proud of their islands.

Regardless, from a cultural standpoint, the islands are certainly more Scottish than they are Norwegian; perhaps to the dismay of some of my interviewees (local Norse cultural advocates and those supporting independence from Scotland or the UK certainly make themselves known) and others in Shetland, one is unlikely to see a Scandinavian football jersey on the streets of Lerwick while those of Glasgow

Celtic[85] and other Scottish teams are ubiquitous amongst the youth. But the claim to a Norse history, coupled with the standoffish-nature of Shetland's relationship to Scotland, creates yet another example of the unique hybrid nature of Shetland's identity.

> We need to be proud of the fact that it's a little bit different. The Shetland flag- if you want to see what's different with Shetland, well look at the Shetland flag. It's the crossroads of Scandinavian past and Scotland. You won't hear people here saying they support the Faroese football team, but there's a very large percentage of the population here have got a strong allegiance to Norway and to our neighbours, Faroe Islands. But at the same time everyone is well aware that we drive on the different side of the road and genuinely it is a part of Scotland. But nonetheless these are differences that you don't get anywhere else in Scotland… You know, the street names, everything shows that Nordic past. (Steven, 2006)

It is, of course, Shetland itself that individuals will tend to most rapidly turn to, rather than just Scotland or just Scandinavia:

> [W]hat we Shetlanders lack in Scottish dourness has been lent to fickleness of purpose, a facility to see ourselves as Scots today, Scandinavians tomorrow, and if anyone should have the temerity to imply that we are either, a mighty air of injured superiority. We are Shetlanders and decline to be associated either with Norwegian feudalism or Scottish decadence. (Peterson, 1967)

Stella Sutherland, noted Shetland poet and occasional cultural commentator, felt strongly about Shetland's uniqueness:

> You may say that this happens generally, and not only in Shetland. But we are not the general, we are the particular; it is we who are here, it is we who remain, to prove that this particular climate, circumstance and chance have been lived with, and outwitted by resources peculiarly Shetlandic. (Sutherland, 1974, p. 26)

This sense of difference remains one of the central elements of Shetland's identity – across the wide spectrum of ways of life Shetlanders might lead, the sense of Shetland being something apart (either subtly or widely) from the rest of Britain is a common thread in the sense of Shetlanders' place in the wider world and in the propagation of elements of identity and culture like Up-Helly-Aa and the dialect –

[85] Though generally without the secretarian implications that wearing such a jersey might have on the streets of Glasgow.

and particularly in responses to attempts by those outside Shetland (*viz.* Inverness, Edinburgh, London, Brussels) to dictate policies within the islands. Is Shetland culturally different from elsewhere?

Shetland's status as the 'most northerly' of various things British appears often in discussion of the islands and plays into the local sense of remoteness. A hairdressers in Lerwick proudly announces that it is the most northerly hairdressers in Britain. In Unst, the most northerly populated island in Britain, the selection of 'most northerly…' features strongly – the most northerly post office, hotel, school, and so on. The 'Official Unst Website' uses the tagline 'An island above all others' (Unst Marketing, 2008). The claim to being the most northerly of a great many things even appears in seemingly unrelated situations; for example a 2007 *Shetland Times* discussion of the Scottish smoking ban in indoor public places is careful to note that 'Baltasound Hotel in Unst was the most northerly bar to have to comply with the new legislation' (*Shetland Times*, 2007).

As noted earlier, the day-to-day life of most Shetlanders is not terribly different from any resident of rural Britain – and certainly quite similar to anyone living in the islands of Scotland. But the sense of cultural difference and remoteness is certainly felt strongly by Shetlanders, and this is certainly the most important element of their identity. The sense of remoteness is not only physical; there is more to it than simply greater shipping costs for goods shipped from mainland UK. Cohen (1980) notes the importance of a 'conceptual remoteness' to Shetland and Irvine (1961a) revels in the islands' remoteness: 'Separated by 180 miles of turbulent sea and air from Aberdeen, and by many more from Fleet Street, we are gloriously remote'. Oil, in the minds of Shetlanders, stood to destroy this difference by bringing the rest of the world to Shetland (Cohen, 1980).

IDENTITY FROM WITHOUT

Although Shetlanders' perceptions of themselves and efforts by people within Shetland to form and develop cultural entities and identity-defining forces may be the primary elements constructing modern culture and identity, the way Shetland is perceived by outsiders and how it is presented to outsiders has its own role to play. This greatly increased in the 1970s with the rush to study the various impacts of oil development and also during the herring boom due to rapidly improving communications and means of travel, fuelled by herring activities and resulting affluence.

An idealised image of Shetland has also been held by an assortment of well-to-do English and Scottish southerners who, as noted by Wills (1991), had been enjoying the holiday value of the islands long before the advent of North Sea oil – since their Victorian forefathers discovered Shetland's trout fishing and the charming 'Shetland way of life' which was already being romanticised by outsiders. Indeed, the crofter fisherman idyll was initially constructed by outside travellers, often connected with missionary work and the church (see, for example, Muir, 1885), who celebrated Shetland as 'a place largely left behind by the modern world, an uncomplicated, rural society where one might find throwbacks to a world that had been lost on the industrialising continent of Europe' (Abrams, 2005, p. 6), just as Scotland as a whole was something of an 'unprogressive and backwards' 'rustic playground' (Grenier, 2005, p. 2) for well-to-do Englishmen, mirroring the sorts of colonialist attitudes expressed about more distant parts of the empire (Gregory, 1994; Said, 1994).[86]

[86] Grenier notes that conflict in Europe encouraged many such gentlemen travellers to go to Scotland rather than anywhere more dangerous – not entirely unlike oil interests being encouraged to come to the North Sea due to conflict in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, other Shetlanders were quietly ignored as being unrepresentative, as they may have spoken several languages and had quite international outlooks given connections with international shipping, trade, and smuggling. Shetland's maritime commercial activities likely meant many would have been better travelled than the southern gentlemen who looked down upon them. So while a Shetland identity was being ascribed from without, the reality of the Shetland way of life at the time was quite different from romantic cultural imaginings.

The drive to generate income from tourism has led to something of a commoditisation of Shetland culture, which Church (1990) describes as an 'import and export of "cultural authenticity"' (p. 40) whereby various cultural elements of Shetland are developed in the interests of the tourism draw they could represent. Though it is consistently claimed that Up-Helly-Aa is not tourist-oriented (BBC Wales, 2006), it is certainly the largest draw for cultural-tourism. But events such as the annual Shetland Folk Festival and Johnsmas Foy also represent major tourism draws for the islands and are much encouraged and marketed by the tourism office (with the added benefit of not occurring during the rather harsh Shetland winter, as Up-Helly-Aa is), as is the new museum. The Shetland Folk Festival is an annual event which includes folk bands, singers, and dancers from both within Shetland and around the world, performing at venues across the islands. Held every year since 1981, the event is organised by an all-volunteer committee. Notably, perhaps, British Petroleum and the Sullom Voe Terminal regularly sponsor a few of the events of the festival. The Johnsmas Foy is an annual summer celebration of Shetland's maritime heritage. Each year a different theme is selected, for example 'a celebration of sail' in 2006 and 'Shetland's fishing heritage' in 2007. Along with maritime-related events and activities, other cultural events are scheduled around Shetland to coincide with

the foy. Johnsmas, near the summer solstice, was traditionally the time when the Dutch herring fleets would arrive in Shetland to start the herring season (Shetland Islands Council Economic Development Unit, 2007). Although Up-Helly-Aa and the Johnsmas Foy are developed by locals with a primarily local audience in mind, the Norse and maritime elements (respectively) that each represents are heavily marketed elements of local identity, providing an extremely important part of the 'marketing mix' identified by Groote et al. (2000). Crofting also features heavily in historic sites maintained as museum pieces, such as the Crofthouse Museum and Quendale Mill.[87] Regarding an Italian television programme being made about Shetland, a VisitShetland marketing executive was quoted in the *Shetland Times* as saying, 'The programme will be a wonderful advert for our culture, our heritage and our way of life - all of which highlights perfectly the "authentic" visitor experience people can expect when they come here' (Riddell, 2006). Although Church (Church, 1989) thinks it curious that planning documents include tourism as a 'traditional industry' (see, for example, Shetland Islands Council, 2006) – as noted earlier, the presence of an active tourism industry is by no means a recent phenomenon. Tourism was probably more disrupted by oil than fishing and crofting were; oil development-related companies block-booked most of the meagre hotel and B&B rooms in Shetland, leading hoteliers to put little or no effort into tourism marketing and preventing any tourists from developing much interest in the isles. The construction

[87] The Crofthouse Museum exists as a sort of living history museum popular with school groups and tourists looking for something of the traditional ways of life marketed as so representative of Shetland. The Quendale Mill likewise presents a museum piece of Shetland's agricultural past, along with craft exhibits. Both are not unlike similar venues designed to connect with the life and economies of the past and maintain an emotional connection to, and awareness of, a region's historical antecedents, as might be found almost anywhere in the world (Skye's Museum of Island Life, the West Midlands' Black Country Museum, and Virginia's Colonial Williamsburg are three examples within the author's experience, but such sites are ubiquitous). Both are assisted financially by the Shetland Amenity Trust (and thus by oil revenue) – the Crofthouse Museum is run by it.

also harmed Shetland's image as a tourism destination (Norman, 1975), with many imagining it to have become an industrial wasteland full of oil refineries – an image that to some extent still exists today (Steven, 2006).

Academics attempting to examine Shetland's anthropological-self have no doubt played a role in forming perceptions of local culture and identity, though assessment of these impacts, even qualitatively, would be a difficult task. Anthropologists of various sorts, and even the rare Geographer (Smith, 1977a), have passed judgement on the islands from time to time – particularly during periods when Shetland seems to have been popular in academic study, most notably the late Victorian era (as discussed previously) and during the planning and construction of the Sullom Voe Terminal (*viz.* roughly 1973 to 1985). A great many studies of Shetland have been by Shetlanders themselves (for example Brian Smith and Jonathan Wills, two of the more prolific present-day local intellectual cultural commentators), but plenty of outsiders have approached the myriad of topics that one could address within the social sciences in Shetland. On top of this, the Shetland Islands Council often makes extensive use of outside consultants, often to the chagrin of Shetlanders (for example, Smith, 1977a, and a wide selection of letters to the *Shetland Times* criticising SIC spending) who take a somewhat dimmer view of these hired investigators than they do of academics who may seem to have developed an interest in Shetland on their own accord. Indeed the interest expressed by non-commercial academics may be interpreted by some as something of a badge of honour for Shetland culture and civil society (Blance, 2006; Goodlad, 2006). Such studies often make their way in various forms to the pages of local publications, *The New Shetlander*, in particular, which may inculcate certain understandings of Shetland to a wider audience. How wide is debatable; with a circulation of roughly

1400 (including a not insignificant overseas readership), *The New Shetlander* is by no means universally absorbed by the Shetland population.[88] The significance of academic study to the 'Shetlander on the street' may not be terribly great, even if it informs discourse amongst intellectuals to a great degree.

Oil, Culture & Economy

In Shetland, economic vibrancy has allowed for increased cultural activity and encouraged formation of identity, though facing adversity may also spur development of distinct local identities. While I identify the close connection between economic and cultural vibrancy (*viz.* an environment where cultural pursuits – music, literature, dialect, etc. – are active and widely within the public consciousness, and still hold, or are seen to hold, traits unique to Shetland) it is also important to bear in mind that rapid economic change or advancement is likely to lead to changes in culture and identity as people are exposed to new influences from outside the islands; given the enclosed nature of Shetland itself, any economic development will almost inevitably entail increased contact with the 'outside world', be it goods, people, or communication coming in or going out. The resulting external connections will invariably decrease the sense of remoteness cited by many as being a major part of Shetland identity (Byron, 1981; Goodlad, 2006, for example) and will bring Shetlanders into greater contact with cultural forces from outside the islands, be it changing fishing practices, Scottish football, or American television.[89] At some point, a heated Shetland economy is also likely to encourage immigration as the inelastic

[88] The monthly *Shetland Life* also includes some cultural study and commentary (for example, Simchak, 2007).
[89] Several people, authors and academics alike, have recognised the reduction in social interaction between families caused by the coming of television in 1964 and its expansion with increased affluence in the 1970s (Cohen, 1987; Goodlad, 2006; Smith, 2006b).

supply of local workers is exceeded, especially when unemployment is already quite low[90] (as was the case in Shetland immediately before the oil boom), or outsiders identify Shetland as a good place to find employment. Both of these occurred on a grand scale during construction of the Sullom Voe Terminal (as well as during the herring boom). The threats Shetlanders worried about, including pollution, immigration, and shortages of labour for traditional industries are quite typical of what would be encountered in any 'boomtown', (see, for example, Davenport and Davenport, 1979; Freudenburg, 1984; Strohmeyer, 1993; Yergin, 1993) particularly one of Shetland's rural character.

Interestingly, many aspects of Shetland's history which form the basis for today's historically-based cultural understandings are former economic activities. Crofting, for example, has gone from a purely economic resource to a largely cultural one. Few people cut peat or grow crops because they have to anymore, or even because it's profitable – those few who do generally do so to provide for the cultural demands of other Shetlanders who burn peat for tradition's sake rather than any lack of gas or electric heat. Traditional-style fishing and pony breeding, both seen as 'things Shetlanders do' (Goodlad, 2006) are increasingly cultural rather than economic pursuits for the islanders as they become activities for leisure rather than profit (and as the actual economically-active fisheries require less labour than they once did). What was once truly a 'way of life' becomes a hobby for most.

To a certain extent, many of my assertions assume that Shetland's unique sense of identity and unique local culture are 'good things'. This is not absolute; as

[90] For further discussion of employment dynamics in Scottish oil boom situations, and the relations with - and effects on – local traditional industries, see Shapiro (1980) and Ennew (1980). While Shetland's unemployment did not actually decrease in real terms, during the terminal construction period it did decrease significantly relative to UK and Scottish figures (McDowall and Begg, 1980).

several of those I have interviewed recognised, it can amount to what one described as 'clannish' and exclusionary – discriminating against even those Shetlanders who do not conform to accepted norms. Certainly importing modern fishing practices has kept Shetland's fisheries-related industries relatively competitive. But confidence in one's community and a common cause are extremely helpful for the maintenance of an economically viable local economy, at least from the point of view of several Shetland commentators (Zetland County Council, 1962; Coull, 1996). For Shetland in particular, emigration problems highlight the need for Shetlanders to identify their own culture as something unique and special. Should high rates of emigration return, the viability of such a relatively small community – assuming a desire to hold on to modern public and commercial services – could come into question. Sandy Cluness, a councillor and now convenor of the Shetland Islands Council (SIC), described the maintenance of a common interest as 'vital to the survival of any small group of islands' as he worried what the fate of Shetland would be in the face of proposed oil-related development (Cluness, 1972, p. 32).

CONCLUSION

Shetland culture's claim to historical bonds might not be the product of unbroken ties to a bygone Viking era and ideals of noble crofter-fishermen might not entirely represent the daily reality of 19th century subsistence farmers and fishermen in open sail and rowboats on the swells of the cold ocean, but in claiming these cultural factors for Shetland's sense of identity, the islands' inhabitants stake a position of difference to the otherwise overwhelming cultural influence of Scotland and Britain as a whole (or even America) and the general trends of Western globalised society. As oil arrived in Shetland, along with all the other cultural influences that came with

increased immigration by outsiders and the financial ability for Shetlanders to bring outside culture in themselves, (colour televisions, holidays in the mainland UK and abroad, a general desire for modern lifestyles over community-based village lives, etc.) it became more necessary to stake that claim to difference. Changes to Shetland's culture have not been entirely organic; it today reflects concerted efforts by those specifically interested in influencing that culture in response to cultural forces from outside the islands threatening their ideas of Shetlandness.

Fears that oil development would irrevocably damage Shetland's culture were actually a spark to revive it, even creating new cultural spaces whilst reinforcing perceptions of unique identity. Responses to oil development facilitated cultural reawakening, though efforts of people within that context were necessary for this to actually happen. Worries about disruption spurred on those efforts and the increased prosperity brought on by development allowed people the time to devote to cultural pursuits and gave the council, largely via the 1974 Zetland County Council Act, the money and power to support such ventures. Shetland identity today is heavily influenced by efforts in the 1970s to shore-up local culture against fears of the impending annihilation of the 'Shetland Way of Life'.

The extent to which fears of cultural disruption from oil were instigated by a small intellectual subset of Shetland society is difficult to determine thirty years later and the sorts of fears were no doubt variable. Was it a matter of crime and knowing one's neighbours or Norse character and island spirit? Were such fears an organic manifestation amongst the majority populace or were they roused by those writing in the pages of *The New Shetlander* and *The Shetland Times*? Looking back, writers and interview respondents' views are coloured by the debates of the day and subsequent days. The potential threats brought by oil also brought Shetland the ability to support

the cultural and social elements needed to continue as *Shetland*, rather than as just another outlying Scottish island. This cultural maintenance was guided by particular interests, but was not counter to prevailing attitudes of distinctive Shetlandness and un-Scottishness.

VI ~ CONCLUSION

The possibility of wealth from oil development tends to be irresistible for those who stand to benefit financially from its development. As Kapucinski (1985) described it, 'Oil creates the illusion of a completely changed life, life without work, life for free'. The long history of oil boom towns, however, attests to the disruption and upheaval that can result from petroleum development activities, particularly when such activities are poorly planned and managed without sensitivity to the communities which are to deal with the immediate externalities of development – both direct and indirect. In Shetland, the likely disruptions of oil were identified very early on; organised and concerted actions were taken in an effective manner to maximise the islands' ability to mitigate negative impacts while arranging a legal and political environment to expand the potential benefit for Shetlanders themselves. The ZCC Act was certainly the most important result of such efforts, making possible much of Shetland's present-day prosperity.

Within the literature on Shetland, this thesis develops an understanding of local culture and identity within the numerous discussions related to the 'Shetland way of life' but based on ideas of invention of tradition. While the importance of heritage to Shetland's identities and cultures has long been established, I draw more of a focus on oil as a major catalyst for change within those contexts, which has lacked extensive consideration in historical and cultural-anthropological studies of the islands.

This thesis presents an excellent case study of the invention of historically-based cultural traditions and the identities that result from peoples' interactions with these forces, altering those cultures and identities. My own focus is on oil's effects, and I have demonstrated that it was the primary catalyst for change in the later part of

the twentieth century, but as is evident in this thesis, particularly in chapter five, there have been many forces at work in developing Shetland's perceptions of its own culture. But oil has itself interacted with these.

Much of academia's research on oil has focused on the comprehensively negative effects of oil development on the societies local to major petroleum developments. My own study is rather more nuanced while also presenting a scenario in which a marginal community's interactions with 'big oil', while by no means perfect, can be seen as a positive example for community engagement with multinational oil companies. Shetland has not fallen into the 'resource curse' that has plagued many oil regions around the world (Coronil, 1997; Watts, 2004; Larsen, 2006). Shrewd bargaining, macro-level political sympathy, and a fair bit of good luck combined to create a situation where the large-scale industrial disruption of the islands did not annihilate local culture or homogenise local identity with that of mainland UK. I have addressed how changes occurred, but also addressed how Shetland maintains a unique sense of self despite its oil boom. And as discussed, perhaps that sense of self is stronger than would have been the case if the social and economic trajectory of the 1960s had continued as it was. So my study contributes to the literature an example which may hold lessons for any remote region seeking to mitigate against the negative effects of large-scale industrial development activities.

The possibility of cultural demise increased awareness that there might be something of Shetland's culture and identity worth saving, and came at a time when the islands were acquiring the financial ability to support cultural pursuits. The interest and means to preserve this historically-based culture and identity could not and cannot help but be combined with the modern world, creating a culture, identity, and way of life which though different from what it once was, remains unique.

Shetland identity is heavily based on historical references, coupled with the islands' perceived remoteness and ongoing connections with the sea. Much of this historical basis is more legend and fond imaginings than actual fact. But as is readily evident amongst Shetlanders and as has been noted by several studying the islands (Hunter, 1999, for example), the actual peculiars of what has happened to the Vikings is of little consequence. Much like the romanticised historical basis of the crofter-fisherman, it is almost more the *idea* of Norsemen farming Shetland's soil and setting out on the high seas that is so critical to the idea of Shetland, rather than the actual factual basis for Up-Helly-Aa, Shetland Dialect, or any given place name. And through the identities developed based on these elements, Shetland establishes itself as being that much more separate from those south across the tumultuous sea who, intentionally or not, seem to seek to pull Shetland closer and closer.

The question of what is 'authentically Shetland' and what is meant by the oft-mentioned 'Shetland way of life' remain debated topics even today, but the local culture, why and how to protect it, and who exactly is 'a Shetlander' are important questions for those on the islands. I have not attempted to specifically define the 'Shetland way of life'. Trying to do so would not be terribly helpful anyway; there are (and always have been) too many *ways* of life for anyone to try to label one of them as 'authentically Shetland'. Yet it is perceived by Shetlanders to be something worth protecting as a cohesive whole – a claim to difference that has withstood the Sullom Voe Terminal.

Shetlanders' identities and strong sense of the importance of culture in their lives were fundamental cornerstones on which to base the actions taken to protect their way of life as far as was possible during the islands' oil era. At the same time, they have made the most of the oil industry's presence, enjoying benefits to the

quality of life, largely thanks to a well planned tax regime and development plan engineered by the SIC.

In a strict sense, new and old identities do not appear to be directly compatible – but if one allows each to be melded with aspects of the other, we are presented with the Shetland identity readily apparent today. Shetlanders maintain their unique identity while incorporating the extensive modernity which oil development has allowed (to a much greater degree than the islands would enjoy without it). Shetlanders see themselves as the inheritors of a strongly-historical social environment, yet from a practical perspective, their everyday lives are heavily modern – from an extensive modern ferry system to highly equipped leisure centres to a welfare system which Wills (1991) suggests should be the envy of socialists across Britain; he declared, 'We've built Britain's best welfare state despite Thatcherism' (Wills, 2008a) in a radio interview while running for a seat on the SIC. While identities may be strongly grounded in history (sometimes to a point which may seem somewhat unrealistic), the Shetland way of life is both 'traditional' and 'modern', a hybridity which is magnified by the presence of the oil industry.

As Shetland becomes increasingly used to the oil terminal tucked away in one of its corners, and as the prospect of a Shetland after oil become ever more present in peoples' minds, the practical connection to traditional notions of Shetland are really quite distant. Crofting, where it still occurs, is generally just a hobby or at best a source of some small cash to supplement more 'modern' jobs. The big fishing boats in Shetland harbours and the activities of their crews bear little resemblance to a traditional sixareen. If we were to try to imagine a 'typical' Shetlander (likely impossible) he or she would probably work for the council (yet still complain about the councillors), drive to a Lerwick supermarket for food, and send the children to

activities at the local leisure centre – quite a different life to crofting, fishing, and knitting out in the remote countryside, battling the elements and the harsh hand of the Scottish laird.



Figure 17: A commonly used photo of a woman carrying a 'Kishie' of peat while knitting in the lanes of Lerwick circa 1885 (courtesy Shetland Museum Photographic Archive)

Affluence from oil has made Shetland a particularly modern place. It's impossible to say just what Shetland would be like without oil's money and the legacy of the boom-days of Sullom Voe construction, but it would be hard to argue that it has not made the sort of amenities that Shetlanders have grown used to much more common than they would otherwise be. But this affluence has also made possible the survival of many of the outlying communities which would almost certainly have faced depopulation as people gravitated towards Lerwick (as many have anyway) or left the islands altogether for points south, as so many Shetlanders have done over the centuries, seeking a better life across the globe. The remoteness and difference from mainland Scotland that seems to be quite central to Shetland

identities may have been reduced, but has not entirely been extinguished as the culture of islands has been revived and established as something significant and worth attention. It has not remained unchanged, but then, as I have established, identities, cultures, and ways of life are not static. Faced with changing contexts and forces they adapt and respond to evolve into new identities, cultures and ways of life. The construction of the Sullom Voe Terminal was certainly a particularly large force for change in the islands, but Shetland approaches the gradual end of its oil era with uniqueness in all three of these interlocked concepts. Returning to F. S. Walterson's 1973 *New Shetlander* cartoon (figure three), featuring the statement 'Bit somehoo hits no da sam here' - it is still not the same there. Neither is it the same as it was in 1973, of course, but Shetland still is something apart from the rest of Scotland, Britain, and the world.

In a 1974 *New Shetlander* editorial (Graham and Graham, 1974), concerns were expressed that Shetlanders were being seen to be 'dragged screaming into the Twentieth Century'. However, after years of recessions, the fight over plans for oil development (and the ZCC Act success), followed by the affluence that oil brought, allowed Shetland to march into the twenty-first century rather more confident in its own unique Shetland identity.

APPENDIX: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Carol Anderson – BBC Radio Shetland
Neil Anderson
Mary Blance – BBC Radio Shetland, formerly *The New Shetlander*
Sandy Cluness – Shetland Islands Council
James Erikson
Alastair Hamilton – SIC Infrastructure Services
Stuart Hill – Shetland and Orkney Udal Law Group
Morgan Goodlad – Shetland Islands Council
Adam Grydehoj – University of Aberdeen
Angus Johnson – Shetland Archives
Elma Johnson – Island Trails
Laureen Johnson – *The New Shetlander*
Jenny Murray – Crofthouse Museum & Shetland Museum
Les Murray
Marabelle Jack
Anita Orheim – Shetland Museum
Tavish Scott – Scottish Parliament
Charlie Simpson
Douglass Sinclair – Island Trails
Brian Smith – Shetland Archives
Theo Smith – Sullom Voe Terminal
Andy Steven – VisitShetland
Hazel Sutherland – Shetland Charitable Trust
Angela Watt – University of the Highlands and Islands
Tommy Watt – Shetland Museum
Jonathan Wills – author, formerly *The Shetland Times*, subsequently SIC councillor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Andrew Barry, Tony Lemon, and Morag Torrance at Oxford, and in particular Laura Tomes at McMaster University, all deserve thanks for their thoughts and assistance on my ever-evolving research. Thanks are also due to Mary Blance and Jenny Murray for their assistance in setting up focus group interviews and to all the folk from the University of the Highlands and Islands' Nordic Studies Centre in Shetland, particularly Angela Watt for thoughts over coffee and in cars. I am sure her thesis will outdo mine! And of course Brian Smith, the Jarl of Shetland-oriented research of all types, at the helm of the Shetland Archives, who seems to appear in the acknowledgement sections of nearly everyone writing about Shetland in the past two decades, deserves much thanks. Much of the help and information that came to me from other scholars of Shetland no doubt at some point passed through Brian. Someday Shetland historians will be writing about *him*.

This research was funded in part by an Oberlin College Alumni Fellowship; Mansfield College, Oxford; and the Oxford University Environmental Change Institute.



Figure 18: The galley goes up in flames at the 2006 Delting Up-Helly-Aa!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abrams, Lynn. 2005. *Myth and Materiality in a Woman's World: Shetland 1800-2000*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

'A. J. C.'. 1966. Da Wadder Eye. *The New Shetlander* no. 79: 22-24.

'A. J. C.'. 1967. Da Wadder Eye. *The New Shetlander* no. 82: 20-22.

Alaska Oil Spill Commission. 1990. Spill: the Wreck of the Exxon Valdez. State of Alaska.

Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Bairner, Alan. 1996. Sport in the Construction of Swedish National Identity. *Political Studies Association Annual Conference* 1817-1827.

Baldacchino, Godfrey. 2006. Islands, Island Studies, Island Studies Journal. *Island Studies Journal* 1, no. 1: 3-18.

Baldacchino, Godfrey (ed). 2007. *Bridging Islands: The Impact of Fixed Links*. Charlottetown, PE, Canada: Acorn Press.

Baldursson, Ragnar. 2007. Icelandic Reflections on Sustainable Identity. Conference proceedings. *Energy from the Edge*

Barnes, Michael P. 1998. *The Norn Language of Orkney and Shetland*. Lerwick: Shetland Times Ltd.

Barry, Andrew. 2007. Personal Communication, 13 March.

Barry, Andrew, and Nigel Thrift. 2007. Gabriel Tarde: Imitation, Invention and Economy. *Economy and Society* 36:4, 509-525.

BBC Radio Shetland. 2008. Good Evening Shetland. 14 March.

BBC Wales. 2006. Up Helly Aa.

Beamish, Thomas D. 2002. *Silent Spill: The Organization of an Industrial Crisis*. Urban and industrial environments. London: MIT Press.

Bennett, Tony. 2005. Culture. In *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, eds. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris, 63-69. Oxford: Blackwell.

'B.F.W.'. 1963. Focus On. Fishing in Shetland. *The New Shetlander* no. 67: 16-17.

Blaikie, Andrew. 2001. Photographs in the cultural Account: Contested Narratives and Collective Memory in the Scottish Islands. *The Sociological Review* 49, no. 3: 345-367.

Blance, Mary. 2006. Personal Interview, 3 April.

Brown, Callum G. 1998. *Up-Helly-Aa: Custom, Culture and Community in Shetland*. Manchester: Mandolin.

Bryden, Inga. 2005. *Reinventing King Arthur: the Arthurian Legends in Victorian Culture*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Burke, Peter J., Timothy J. Owens, Richard T. Serpe, and Peggy A. Thoits. 2003. *Advances in Identity Theory and Research*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Busenberg, George J. 1999. The Evolution of Vigilance: Disasters, Sentinels and Policy Change. *Environmental Politics* 8, no. 4: 90-109.

Button, John. 1978. *The Shetland way of Oil: Reactions of a Small Community to Big Business*. Sandwick, Shetland: Thuleprint Ltd.

Byron, Reginald. 1981. *Burra Fishermen: Social and Economic Change in a Shetland Community*. North Sea Oil Panel occasional paper. London: Social Science Research Council.

Byron, Reginald. 1986. *Sea Change: A Shetland Society, 1970-1979*. St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada: ISER, Memorial University of Newfoundland.
Callahan, Robey. 1998. Ethnic Politics and Tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research* 25, no. 4: 818-836.
Carter, Ian R. 1982. *Social Monitoring of Oil Developments in Scotland: an Evaluation*. North Sea Oil Panel occasional paper. London: Social Science Research Council.
Chamberlain, Kathleen. 2000. *Under Sacred Ground: A History of Navajo Oil, 1922-1982*. Albuquerque N.M.: University of New Mexico Press.
Church, Jonathan T. 1989. *Political Discourse of Shetland: Confabulations and Communities*. Temple University, PhD Thesis.
Church, Jonathan T. 1990. Confabulations of Community: The Hamefarins and Political Discourse on Sheltand. *Anthropological Quarterly* 63, no. 1: 31-42.
Clifford, James. 1988. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. London: Harvard University Press.
Cluness, Sandy. 1972. North Sea Oil. *The New Shetlander* no. 99: 6-8, 32.
Coates, Peter A. 1993. *The Trans-Alaska Pipeline Controversy: Technology, Conservation, and the Frontier*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press.
Cohen, Anthony P. 1985. *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. Key ideas. Chichester: Ellis Horwood.
Cohen, Anthony P. 1978. 'The Same - But Different': The Allocation of Identity in Whalsay, Shetland. *Sociological Review* 23:6, 449-469.
Cohen, Anthony P. 1980. Oil and the Cultural Account: Reflections on a Shetland Community. In *The Social Impact of Oil in Scotland*, eds. Ron Parsler, and Dan Shapiro, 164-176. Westmead, Farnborough, Hants, England: Gower Publishing Co., Ltd.
Cohen, Anthony P. 1985. Symbolism and Social Change: Matters of Life and Death in Whalsay, Shetland. *Man* 20, no. 2: 307-324.
Cohen, Anthony P. 1987. *Whalsay: Symbol, Segment and Boundary in a Shetland Island Community*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Cohen, Bronwen J. 1983. *Norse Imagery in Shetland: An Historical Study of Intellectuals and Their Use of the Past in the Construction of Shetland's Identity, With Particular Reference to the Period 1800-1914*. University of Manchester, PhD thesis.
Coleman, James S. 1958. *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
Connor, Walker. 1994. A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a. In *Nationalism*, eds. John Hutchinson, and Anthony D. Smith, 36-46. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Coronil, Fernando. 1997. *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela*. London: University of Chicago Press.
Corporate Edge. 2004. *Shetland Brand Guide*. London: Corporate Edge.
Coull, James R. 1996. Shetland: The Land, Sea and Human Environments. In *Shetland's Northern Links: Language and History*, ed. Doreen J. Waugh, 66-77. Edinburgh: Scottish Society for Northern Studies.
Crawford, Alan. 2001. Islanders Threaten to Split from UK Over Norse Land Law. *The Sunday Herald*, November 18. 2.
Crofters Commission. 2006. *Annual Report 2005/2006*. Inverness: Crofters Commission.

Crofters Commission. 2007. 'Crofters Commission.' http://www.crofterscommission.org.uk/. Accessed 29 September 2007.
Davenport, Judith A., and Joseph Davenport, III. 1979. *Boom Towns and Human Services*. Laramie, WY: University of Wyoming.
Dunbar, John Telfer. 1981. *The Costume of Scotland*. London: Batsford.
Dunnet, G.M. 1995. The History of Environmental Monitoring. In *Monitoring at an Oil Terminal: The Shetland Experience*, eds. G.M. Dunnet, and A.D. McIntyre, 11-20. Edinburgh: The Royal Society of Edinburgh.
Dyble, Scotty. 2006. Fight for Your Rights. *The Shetland Times*, 17 March. 10.
Eagleton, Terry. 2000. *The Idea of Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell.
The Economist. 1992. Oil Be Off Now. 322, no. 7745: 54.
The Economist. 2006a. A Lament for Scotland. May 20. 11.
The Economist. 2006b. Home Truths About Home Rule. May 20. 25-27.
Ejobowah, John Boye. 2000. Who Owns the Oil? The Politics of Ethnicity in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. *Africa Today* 47, no. 1: 29-48.
Ennew, Judith. 1980. Gaelic as the Language of Industrial Relations. In *The Social Impact of Oil in Scotland*, eds. Ron Parsler, and Dan Shapiro, 52-69. Westmead, Farnborough, Hants, England: Gower Publishing Company, Ltd.
Erikson, James, and Neil Anderson. 2006. Personal Interview, 6 April.
'Eyjar-Skeggi'. 1975. Da Wadder Eye. *The New Shetlander* no. 112: 18-19.
Foreign & Commonwealth Office. 2007. 'Country Profiles: Norway.' http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountryProfile&aid=1019744925788. Accessed 24 May 2007.
'Freedom'. 1947. Shetland's Future. *The New Shetlander* no. 1: 7, 9.
Freudenburg, William R. 1984. Boomtown's Youth: The Differential Impacts of Rapid Community Growth on Adolescents and Adults. *American Sociological Review* 49, no. 5: 697-705.
Gardner, Davie. 2007. New Whitefish Boat is a *Star*. *The Shetland Times*, 23 November. 9.
Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.
Geertz, Clifford. 1994. Primordial and Civic Ties. In *Nationalism*, eds. John Hutchinson, and Anthony D. Smith, 29-34. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Glaser, Barney G, and Anselm L Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine.
Goodlad, Alistair. 1983. Five Centuries of Shetland Fisheries. In *Shetland and the Outside World 1469-1969*, ed. Donald J. Withrington, 107-118. Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen.
Goodlad, Morgan. 2006. Personal Interview, 21 March.
Graham, John, and Laurence Graham. 1960. Editorial. *The New Shetlander* no. 55: 7.
Graham, John, and Laurence Graham. 1962. Whither Education? *The New Shetlander* no. 62: 3-4.
Graham, John, and Laurence Graham. 1963. Is Pessimism the Curse of Shetland? *The New Shetlander* no. 64: 3.
Graham, John, and Laurence Graham. 1964. *Schooling and Education*. *The New Shetlander* no. 68: 5.
Graham, John, and Laurence Graham. 1973. The Oil Debate. *The New Shetlander* (103), no. 103: 5-6.

Graham, John, and Laurence Graham. 1974. Complacency. *The New Shetlander* no. 109: 5-6.
Graham, John J. 1983. Social Changes during the Quinquennium. In *Shetland and the Outside World 1469-1969*, ed. Donald J. Withrington, 216-233. Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen.
Graham, John J. 2004. *The Shetland Dictionary*. Lerwick: Shetland Times Ltd.
Greenwood, Robert. 2007. Governance for Regional Development Around the North Atlantic Rim: Opportunities From the Inside Out and the Outside In. Conference proceedings. *Energy from the Edge*.
Gregory, Derek. 1994. *Geographical Imaginations*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Gregory, Derek. 2000a. Imaginative Geographies. In *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, eds. R. J. Johnston, Derek Gregory, Geraldine Pratt, and Michael Watts, 372-373. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd.
Gregory, Derek. 2000b. Modernity. In *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, eds. R. J. Johnston, Derek Gregory, Geraldine Pratt, and Michael Watts, 512-516. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
Gregory, Derek. 2004. *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd.
Grenier, Katherine Haldane. 2005. *Tourism and Identity in Scotland, 1770-1914: Creating Caledonia*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
Groote, Peter, Paulus P.P. Huigen, and Tialda Haartsen. 2000. Claiming Rural Identities. In *Claiming Rural Identities: Dynamics, Contexts, Policies*, eds. Tialda Haartsen, Peter Groote, and Paulus P.P. Huigen, 1-7. Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum.
Grønneberg, Roy. 1976. *Island Governments*. Sandwick, Shetland: Thuleprint, Ltd.
H.M. Commissioners of Inquiry. 1884. *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry Into the Condition of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*. Edinburgh: Neill & Company.
Habermas, Jürgen. 1981. Modernity Versus Postmodernity. *New German Critique* no. 22: 3-14.
Halcrow, Grace M. T. 1967. How Long is "Forever"? *The New Shetlander* no. 82: 10-11.
Hall, Stuart. 1996. Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'? In *Questions of Cultural Identity*, eds. Stuart Hall, and Paul du Gay, 1-17. London: Sage.
Hamilton, Alastair. 2007. Introduction by Chair. Conference proceedings. *Energy from the Edge*
Hill, Stuart. 2007. Opinion Divided on the Big Question Over Shetland's Historical Origins. *The Shetland Times*, 30 November. 22.
Hirschman, Albert O. 1958. *The Strategy of Economic Development*. Yale studies in economics. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Hobsbawm, Eric. 1983a. Introduction: Inventing Traditions. In *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm, and Terence Ranger, 1-14. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Hobsbawm, Eric. 1983b. Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe 1870-1914. In *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm, 263-307. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Hobsbawm, Eric, and T. O Ranger, eds. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Past and present publications. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hofstede, Geert. 1991. *Culture and Organizations: Software of the Mind, Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*. London: Profile Books.
House, John Douglas, ed. *Fish vs. Oil*. St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada: ISER, Memorial University of Newfoundland.
Humphreys, Macartan, Jeffrey Sachs, and Joseph E Stiglitz. 2007. Introduction: What is the Problem With Natural Resource Wealth? In *Escaping the Resource Curse*, eds. Macartan Humphreys, Jeffrey D. Sachs, and Joseph E. Stiglitz, 1-19. New York: Columbia University Press.
Hunter, James. 1991. *The Claim of Crofting: The Scottish Highlands and Islands, 1930-1990*. Edinburgh: Mainstream.
Hunter, James. 1999. *Last of the Free: A Millennial History of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*. Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing.
Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3: 22-49.
Irvine, Douglas. 2007a. Shetland - At the Crossroads of European Policy? *CPMR Islands Commission: The Islands and European Maritime Policy*
Irvine, Douglas. 2007b. The Road to a Prosperous Future. *The New Shetlander* no. 239: 16-19.
Irvine, James W. 1961a. Da Wadder Eye. *The New Shetlander* no. 57: 5-6.
Irvine, James W. 1961b. Da Wadder Eye. *The New Shetlander* no. 59: 13-14.
Irvine, James W. 1982. *Up-Helly-Aa: A Century of Festival*. Lerwick: Shetland Publishing Co.
Irvine, James W. 1985. *Lerwick: The Birth and Growth of an Island Town*. Lerwick: Lerwick Community Council.
Irvine, James W. 1987. *The Dunrossness Story*. Lerwick: A. Irvine Printing.
Jackson, Anthony. 1981a. Identity. In *Way of Life and Identity*, ed. Anthony Jackson, 24-36. London: Social Science Research Council.
Jackson, Anthony. 1981b. Reflections on Way of Life. In *Way of Life and Identity*, ed. Anthony Jackson, 6-23. London: Social Science Research Council.
Jackson, Anthony, ed. 1981c. *Way of Life and Identity*. North Sea Oil Panel occasional paper. London: Social Science Research Council.
Jackson, Anthony. 1982. *Way of Life: Dominant Ideologies and Local Communities*. North Sea Oil Panel occasional paper. London: Social Science Research Council.
Jackson, Peter. 1989. *Maps of Meaning: An Introduction to Cultural Geography*. London: Unwin Hyman.
Jakobsen, Jakob. 1936. *The Place-Names of Shetland*. London: Nutt.
Jakobsen, Jakob. 1993. *The Place-Names of Shetland*. Kirkwall, Orkney: Orcadian.
'J. B.' 1963. Da Wadder Eye. *The New Shetlander* no. 65: 8-10.
Jedrej, Charles, and Mark Nuttall. 1996. *White Settlers: The Impact of Rural Repopulation in Scotland*. Luxembourg: Harwood Academic Publishers.
Johnson, Angus. 2007. Tom Anderson and the Journey of the Fiddle in Shetland. *The New Shetlander* no. 241: 5-11.
Johnson, Laureen. 2006a. Personal Interview, 5 April.
Johnson, Peter. 2006b. *Copious* room on board isles' new pride and joy. *The Shetland Times*, 5 May. 9.
Jones, Owain. 1995. Lay Discourses of the Rural: Developments and Implications for Rural Studies. *Journal of Rural Studies* 11, no. 1: 35-49.
Kapucinski, Ryszard. 1985. *Shah of Shahs*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Karl, Terry Lynn. 1997. *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States*. Studies in international political economy. London: University of California Press.
Kidd, Colin. 1993. *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity 1689-c. 1830*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
King, Anthony. 2000. Football fandom and post-national identity in the New Europe. *British Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 3: 419-441.
King, Anthony. 2006. Nationalism and Sport. In *The Sage Handbook of Nations and Nationalism*, eds. Gerard Delanty and Krishan Kumar, 249-259. London: Sage.
Knight, Eddie, and George Smith. 2005. Shetland Cultural Strategy. *Shetland Islands Council*
Kuhn, Thomas S. 1964. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Kuper, Adam. 1999. *Culture: The Anthropologists' Account*. London: Harvard University Press.
Larsen, Erling Røed. 2006. Escaping the Resource Curse and the Dutch Disease? When and Why Norway Caught Up With and Forged Ahead of Its Neighbors. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 65, no. 3: 605-640.
Laurence, J.B. 1888. Burns and the Shetlander: Editorial. *The Shetland News*, February 11.
Leirfall, Jon. 1979. *West Over Sea: Reminders of Norse Ascendency from Shetland to Dublin*. Translated by Kenneth Young. Sandwick, Shetland: The Thule Press.
Lenman, Bruce P. 1987. Review of *Shetland Life and Trade 1550-1914* by Hance D. Smith. *The English Historical Review* 102, no. 403: 501.
MacDonald, Edward. 2007. Bridge Over Troubled Waters. In *Bridging Islands: The Impact of Fixed Links*, ed. Godfrey Baldacchino, 29-46. Charlottetown, PE, Canada: Acorn Press.
Macdonald, Sharon. 1987. *Social and Linguistic Identity in the Scottish Gàidhealtachd, a Study of Staffin, Isle of Skye*. University of Oxford. DPhil thesis.
Macdonald, Sharon. 1997. *Reimagining Culture: Histories, Identities and the Gaelic Renaissance*. Oxford: Berg.
MacDougall, Hugh A. 1982. *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons and Anglo-Saxons*. Montreal: Harvest House.
MacFarlane, Emily. 2007. To the City. *Shetland Life* no. 321: 6.
Marshall, Elizabeth. 1978. *Shetland's Oil Era*. Lerwick: Shetland Islands Council.
McCrone, David. 1992. *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Stateless Nation*. International library of sociology. London: Routledge.
McCrone, David, Angela Morris, and Richard Kiely. 1999. *Scotland - the Brand: The Making of Scottish Heritage*. Edinburgh: Polygon.
McCrone, R. G. L. 1974. *The Economics of Nationalism Revisited*. Edinburgh: Scottish Economic Planning Department.
McDonald, Maryon. 1989. *'We Are Not French!': Language, Culture and Identity in Brittany*. London: Routledge.
McDowall, Stuart, and Hugh M. Begg. 1980. *Industrial Performance and Prospects in Areas Affected by Oil Development*. ESU research paper. [S.l.]: Scottish Economic Planning Dept.
McGill, John. 1976. Shetland and the S.D.N.M.G. *The New Shetlander* no. 118: 24-25.

Miller, Daniel. 1994. *Modernity, an Ethnographic Approach: Dualism and Mass Consumption in Trinidad*. Oxford: Berg.
Miller, Daniel, and Don Slater. 2000. *The Internet: An Ethnographic Approach*. Oxford: Berg.
Miller, William Lockley, Jack Brand, and Maggie Jordan. 1980. *Oil and the Scottish Voter, 1974-79*. North Sea Oil Panel occasional paper. London: Social Science Research Council.
Mitchell, Don. 1995. There's No Such Thing as Culture: Towards a Reconceptualization of the Idea of Culture in Geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20, no. 1: 102-116.
Mitchell, Don. 2000. *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Monaghan, John, and Peter Just. 2000. *Social & Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Moore, Robert. 1980. Northern Notes Towards a Sociology of Oil. In *The Social Impact of Oil in Scotland*, eds. Ron Parsler and Dan Shapiro, 21-37. Westmead, Farnborough, Hants, England: Gower Publishing Co., Ltd.
Morrison, Donnie. 2008. Brukkit Paap at da Sweerie. *The Shetland Times*, 1 February. 10.
Morrison, Keith. 2000. *Up-Helly-A': The Fire Festival at the Turn of the Century*. Lerwick: Shetland Times.
Muir, Thomas S. 1885. *Ecclesiological Notes on Some of the Islands of Scotland*. Edinb:.
Murray, Jenny. 2007. Cultural Schizophrenia. *Shetland Life* no. 321: 11.
Murray, Jenny, and Les Murray. 2007. Personal Interview, 7 May.
Nairn, Tom. 2003. *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism*. Altona, Vic: Common Ground Pub.
New Shetlander, The. 1947. The Shetland Scene. no. 1: 8.
New Shetlander, The. 1972. Oil Prospects. no. 99: 5.
Newall, Venetia. 1978. Up-Helly-Aa: A Shetland Winter Festival. *ARV: Journal of Scandinavian Folklore* 34, 37-97.
Nicolson, James R. 1975. *Shetland and Oil*. London: Luscombe.
Nicolson, James R. 1990. *Traditional Life in Shetland*. London: Robert Hale Ltd.
Norman, Cecilia. 1975. Letter: Tourist Grumbles. *The Shetland Times*, 6 June. 4.
'Nort Moother'. 1980. Da Wadder Eye. *The New Shetlander* no. 133: 22-23.
'Northmoother'. 1972a. Da Wadder Eye. *The New Shetlander* no. 100: 34-35.
'Northmoother'. 1972b. Da Wadder Eye. *The New Shetlander* no. 101: 24-25.
Paasi, Anssi. 2002. Bounded Spaces in the Mobile World: Deconstructing 'Regional Identity'. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 93, no. 2: 137-148.
Paasi, Anssi. 2003. Region and Place: Regional Identity in Question. *Progress in Human Geography* 27, no. 4: 475-485.
Peterson, Jack. 1972. The Shetlander's Heritage. *The New Shetlander* no. 102: 10-11.
Peterson, John. 1967. On Greeting Scottish Nationalism. *The New Shetlander* no. 83: 12-13.
'Pundie'. 1977. Da Wadder Eye. *The New Shetlander* no. 122: 20-21.
Raagmaa, Garri. 2002. Regional Identity in Regional Development and Planning. *European Planning Studies* 10, no. 1: 55-76.
Ramsay, Alison K. 2000. *The Symbolic Construction of Shetland Identities*. University of Aberdeen, BA thesis.

Ratter, Drew. 2008. Are Crofters Indigenous to Highlands and Islands? *The Shetland Times*, 29 Feburary. VIII.
Renwanz, Marsha Elizabeth. 1981. *From Crofters to Shetlanders, The Social History of a Shetland Island Community's Self Image: 1872-1978*. Stanford University, PhD thesis.
Richards, Eric. 1982. *A History of the Highland Clearances*. London: Croom Helm.
Richards, Julian C. 2001. *Blood of the Vikings*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
Richards, Julian D. 2000. *Viking age England*. Stroud: Tempus.
Richards, Julian D. 2005. *The Vikings: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Riddell, Neil. 2006. World Cup hangover for Italian film crew. *The Shetland Times*, 14 July. 33.
Robertson, John. 2007a. EU Aid Shocker to Cost £1m. *The Shetland Times*, 23 November. 4-5.
Robertson, John. 2007b. Rebels Call for SIC to be Removed From Trust. *The Shetland Times*, 16 November. 1-2.
Robertson, T.A. 1975. *The Collected Poems of Vagaland*. Lerwick: Shetland Times, Ltd.
Rose, Gillian. 1995. Place and Identity: A Sense of Place. In *A Place in the World?*, eds. Doreen Massey, and Pat Jess, 87-132. Milton Keynes & Oxford: The Open University & Oxford University Press.
Said, Edward W. 1994. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
Schei, Liv Kjørsvik, and Gunnie Moberg. 1988. *The Shetland Story*. London: Batsford.
Shankleman, Jill. 2006. *Oil, Profits, and Peace: Does Business Have a Role in Peacemaking*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.
Shapiro, Dan. 1980. The Industrial Relations of Oil. In *The Social Impact of Oil in Scotland*, eds. Ron Parsler, and Dan Shapiro, 1-20. Westmead, Farnborough, Hants, England: Gower Publishing Co., Ltd.
Shetland Amenity Trust. 2006. 'Viking Unst Project - Introduction.' http://www.shetland-heritage.co.uk/amenitytrust/archaeology/unst/unst.html. Accessed 17 January 2008.
Shetland and Orkney Udal Law Association. 2004. *The SOUL Report: Analysis of the Findings of the Association to Autumn 2004*. Cunningsburgh, Shetland: Shetland and Orkney Udal Law Association.
Shetland Islands Council Economic Development Unit. 2007. 'The Johnsmas Foy: Shetland's Summer Festival.' http://www.johnsmasfoy.com/. Accessed 13 June, 2007.
Shetland Islands Council. 2000. *The Shetland Structure Plan 2001-2016*. Lerwick: Infrastructure Services, Shetland Islands Council.
Shetland Islands Council. 2005. *Shetland in Statistics 2005*. Lerwick: Shetland Islands Council Economic Development Unit.
Shetland Islands Council. 2006. *Shetland in Statistics 2006*. Lerwick: Shetland Islands Council Economic Development Unit.
Shetland Islands Council. 2007a. 'Charitable Trust.' http://www.shetland.gov.uk/socialwork-health/CharitableTrust.asp. Accessed 6 June 2007.
Shetland Islands Council. 2007b. Fetlar's Future: Information Bulletin.
Shetland Islands Council. 2007c. Sumburgh Airport Image Improvement Project, SIC Executive Committee Report. September 4.

Shetland Museum Service. 2007. 'Neolithic.' http://www.shetland-museum.org.uk/collections/archaeology/neolithic.htm. Accessed 19 September 2007.
Shetland News. 1889. Up Helly A'. February 2. 8.
Shetland Times. 2007. From Striking a Chord With Music Lovers to Workers Hitting the Streets. 29 December. 26-27.
Shetland Times. 2008. Pupils Play the Viking Game. 1 February. 11.
Simchak, Thomas. 2007. Shetland's Oil, Culture and Identity. *Shetland Life* no. 321: 30-31.
Simpson, John M. 1983. The Discovery of Shetland from 'The Pirate' to the Tourist Board. In *Shetland & the Outside World 1469-1969*, ed. Donald J. Withrington, 136-149. Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen.
Skodvin, Magne. 1983. Shetland and Norway in the Second World War. In *Shetland and the Outside World 1469-1969*, ed. Donald J. Withrington, 181-197. Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen.
Smith, Anthony D. 1999. *Myths and Memories of the Nation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Smith, Brian. 1970. Storm over the Gentry. *The New Shetlander* no. 94: 30-31.
Smith, Brian. 1993. *Up-Helly-Aa Programme, 1993*. Lerwick: Up-Helly-Aa Committee.
Smith, Brian. 2006a. Laurence Williamson of Mid Yell. *The New Shetlander* no. 237: 12-19.
Smith, Brian. 2006b. Personal Interview, 17 March.
Smith, Hance. 1977a. *The Making of Modern Shetland*. Lerwick: The Shetland Times, Ltd.
Smith, Hance. 1977b. The Old Rock and the Promised Land. *The New Shetlander* 9-13.
Smith, Hance. 1978. The Making of Modern Shetland: Epilogue. *The New Shetlander* no. 123: 10-12.
Smith, Hance. 1984. *Shetland Life and Trade, 1550-1914*. Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd.
Smith, Theo. 2004. Personal Interview, 3 August.
Squires, Joy. 1996. Re-visiting "Internal Colonialism" - The Case of Shetland. *Political Studies Association Annual Conference* 1264-1270.
Steven, Andy. 2006. Personal Interview, 27 March.
Strohmeyer, John. 1993. *Extreme Conditions: Big Oil and the Transformation of Alaska*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
Stuart, John Sobieski Stolberg, Richard Urquhart, and William Tait. 1842. *Vestiarium Scoticum: From the Manuscript Formerly in the Library of the Scots College at Douay*. Edinburgh: William Tait, 107, Prince's Street.
Sutherland, Stella. 1974. The Shetland Way of Life as I See it. *The New Shetlander* no. 107: 26-27.
SVEAG. 1976. *Oil Terminal at Sullom Voe Environmental Impact Assessment*. Sandwick, Shetland: Thuleprint, Ltd.
Swyngedouw, Erik. 1989. The Heart of the Place: The Resurrection of Locality in an Age of Hyperspace. *Geografiska Annaler B* 71, no. 1: 31-42.
Tait, John Magnus. 2007. Shetland Identity and (the) (Sh(a)etlan(d(ic))) (D/dialect). *Shetland Life* no. 321: 10-11.
Tallack, Malachy. 2007. Independence Thinking. *The New Statesman*, April 2.

Tarde, Gabriel. 1903. *The Laws of Imitation*. Translated by Elsie Clews Parsons. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
Telford, Susan. 1998. *'In a World a Wir Ane': A Shetland Herring Girl's Story*. Lerwick: Shetland Times.
Thomason, Edward. 1997. *Island Challenge*. Lerwick: Shetland Times.
Thompson, William. 1961. Shetland - An Asessment. *The New Shetlander* no. 59: 7-9.
Thompson, Willie. 1991. Shetland - A Retrospect. *The New Shetlander* no. 177: 18-20.
Thomson, William P. L. 1983. Population and Depopulation. In *Shetland & the Outside World 1469-1969*, ed. Donald J Withrington, 150-180. Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen.
Trevor-Roper, Hugh. 1983. The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland. In *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 15-41. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
UK Parliament. 2007. 'Uk Parliament - Private Members' Bills.' http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/laws/private_members.cfm. Accessed 28 September 2007.
Unst Marketing. 2008. 'Unst.' http://www.unst.org/. Accessed 3 February 2008.
Up-Helly-Aa Committee. 1978. *Up-Helly-Aa Programme, 1978*. Lerwick:.
Varwell, Adrian. 1981. *Way of Life: In Search of Meaning*. North Sea Oil Panel occasional paper. London: Social Science Research Council.
VisitShetland. 2005. Brae: VisitShetland Podcast. November 22.
VisitShetland. 2007. *Shetland: Where Experiences Surround You*. Lerwick: VisitShetland.
Walterson, Francis S. 1972. Somehoo He's Never Been da Sam Since He Selled Oot to Yon Oil Company. *The New Shetlander* no. 102: 22.
Walterson, Francis S. 1973. Bit Somehoo Hits No Da Sam Here. *The New Shetlander* no. 106: 14.
Watts, Michael. 1991. Mapping Meaning, Denoting Difference, Imagining Identity: Dialectical Images and Postmodern Geographies. *Geografiska Annaler B* 73, no. 1: 7-16.
Watts, Michael. 2004. Resource Curse? Governmentality, Oil and Power in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Geopolitics* 9, no. 1: 50-80.
Weber, Max. 1948. The Nation. In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, eds. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright-Mills, 171-179. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
Webster, Graham. 1993. *Boudica: The British Revolt Against Rome AD 60*. The Roman conquest of Britain. London: Batsford.
West, J. F. 1961. Nationalism and Faroese Prosperity. *The New Shetlander* no. 56: 11-13.
Williams, Raymond. 1958. *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*. London: Chatto & Windus.
Williams, Raymond. 1976. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. London: Fontana Croom Helm.
Williams, Raymond. 1977. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Williams, Raymond. 1981. *Culture*. Glasgow: Fontana.
Williamson, A. 1975. Letter: Udal Oil, Etc. *The Shetland Times*, 30 May. 11.
Wills, Jonathan. 1970. "Quilk is a Desert Place". *The New Shetlander* no. 93: 24-26.

Wills, Jonathan. 1991. *A Place in the Sun: Shetland and Oil - Myths and Realities*. Edinburgh: Mainstream.
Wills, Jonathan. 2006. Personal Interview, 27 March.
Wills, Jonathan. 2008a. BBC Radio Shetland, Good Evening Shetland: Interview. 29 February.
Wills, Jonathan. 2008b. Lerwick South By-Election. *The Shetland Times*, 15 February. 14.
Wills, Jonathan, and Karen Warner. 1993. *Innocent Passage: The Wreck of the Tanker Braer*. Edinburgh: Mainstream.
Withrington, Donald J, ed. *Shetland and the Outside World 1469-1969*. Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen.
Wolff, Janet. 1981. *The Social Production of Art*. London: Macmillan.
Yergin, Daniel. 1993. *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power*. London: Pocket Books.
Zetland County Council. 1962. *Report on the Visit to Faroe, 1962*. Lerwick: Shetland Times Ltd.