

# LERWICK, SHETLAND

Lerwick is the capital of the Shetland Islands, a group of islands some 100 miles off the Northern coast of mainland Scotland. Lerwick has a population of around 7,500, although VisitScotland estimates that around half of Shetland's 22,000 residents live within 10 miles of the town. There have been settlers in the area for over 3,000 years and Lerwick was established primarily as a herring port in the 17th Century. Lerwick is now a busy fishing port, with related fish processing industries and is an important base for North Sea oil and gas.

The site for Shetland Museum and Archives was chosen following several feasibility studies and options appraisals and includes Hays's Dock, an historic dock listed Category B. BDP designed the new building: an iconic design that reflects local history and tradition. It was intended to act as a showcase for the existing collections as well as becoming the focal point for Shetland's natural and cultural heritage interpretation. In the first month of opening it welcomed 37,000 visitors and has continued to attract over 85,000 visitors per year.

The previous museum and archives services operated out of two separate buildings within Lerwick. These facilities were inadequate to meet both the developing needs of the collections and services.

The new museum, alongside its permanent collection, hosts temporary art exhibitions in 'Da Gadderie' and visiting items from the national collections, including the National Museums of Scotland. Hay's Dock provides a base for historic boats to dock, whilst a 1905 wooden boat-building shed adjoins the museum where boats are on display to the public. The museum operates a high quality restaurant and shop stocking local products.

## BECOMING AWESOMESTOW

11–26 April

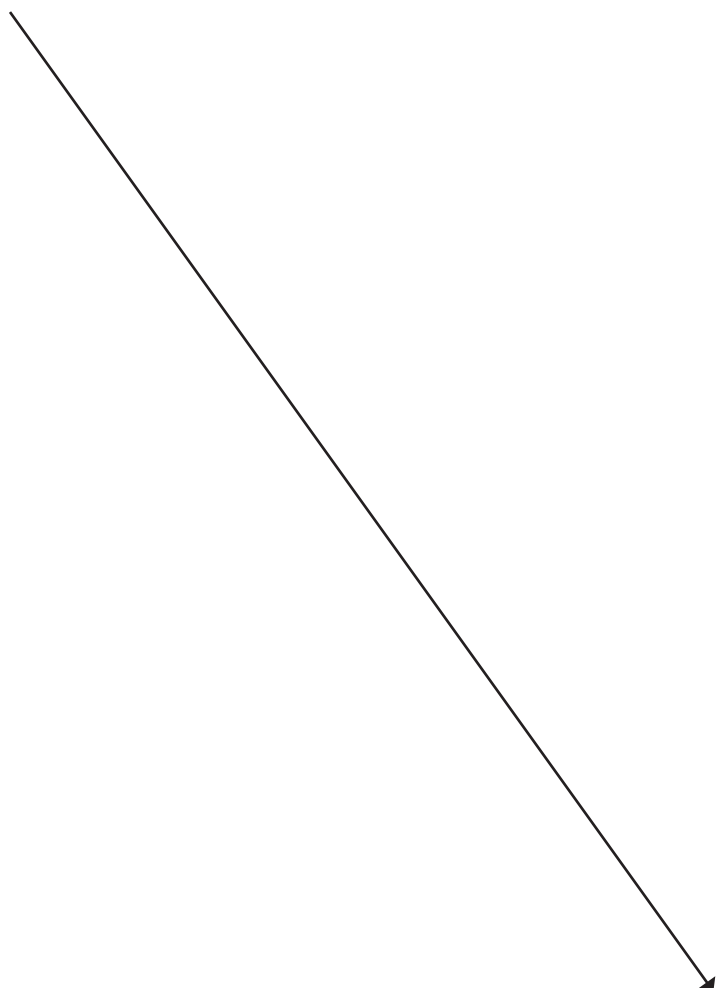
A research project by Julie Ramage and Dr Lorna Hards

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11–26 April 2015  
Ground Floor Corridor, Reid Building, The Glasgow School of Art,  
164 Renfrew Street, Glasgow, G36RT  
Open: Mon–Sun 10am–4.30pm

**Nesta** THE GLASGOW  
SCHOOL OF ART

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**CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS**

- Museum building in poor condition and too small
- Conditions for archive storage are unsuitable
- Hay's Dock area fallen into disuse, dereliction and decay
- Relatively low levels of visitors and lacking strong visitor offer
- Economy reliant on key industries
- Fragile community at risk of falling population, loss of talent and heritage

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERVENTION**

- Provide a new museum building, which is fit for purpose
- Move the archives to suitable storage
- Begin transformation of Hay's Dock from industrial usage to a Cultural Quarter
- Establish the museum and archives as the hub for heritage visitors in Shetland
- Provide a base for traditional skills and heritage education

**IMPACT**

- The collections are protected and preserved
- Hay's Dock is vastly improved
- Visitors have a base, although the knock on effect on local businesses is not yet manifest
- Shetland Amenity Trust are able to use the success of the museum to leverage additional grant funding (e.g. for Mareel)
- Cultural quarter has not taken off but business park units are sold to range of mainly professional services businesses
- Traditional skills protected

**THEORY OF CHANGE**

- Iconic museum building will be a catalyst to a cultural quarter at Hay's Dock attracting other investment in creative and cultural activity
- It will attract visitors who will spend money in the local community
- Local community will become engaged in activities and build pride in their heritage
- The new museum will act as a hub for a network of museums across Shetland
- Contributing to a better place to live, work, learn and visit

**OUTCOMES**

- There is a high quality visitor destination
- Collections are housed in good quality building, with specialist archival facilities
- Local people get to see national touring exhibition and exhibits
- Creative people have a base in Lerwick for meeting and events
- Greater confidence in Shetland as a destination and cultural centre
- Shared knowledge of local skills and crafts

**INPUTS**

- Shetland Amenity Trust
- HLF grant funding
- Shetland Islands Council
- Highlands & Islands Enterprise

**OUTPUTS**

- Visitors from other parts of Shetland
- Visitors to Shetland
- Renovation of the Hay's Dock
- Busy archive service with many inquiries from Shetland and beyond
- Employment at the Museum, shop and restaurant
- Interns trained in local skills
- Meeting place for creative people, businesses and community groups
- Almost every school child in Shetland visits the museum

**ACTIVITIES**

- Design and construction of new building
- Designing and displaying collections
- Visiting exhibits and shows
- Education programme
- Shop stocking locally produced goods
- Programme of traditional skills including boat-building
- High quality restaurant
- Archive service
- Branding and coordination of the wider Shetland museums' offer
- Conference facilities and support

