

Deliverable WP 2:

JOINT REPORT ON THE FIELDWORK AND ANALYSIS CONDUCTED DURING THE STUDY VISIT IN SHETLAND (UNITED KINGDOM).

1. Practical information regarding the study visit

Dates of the study visit: January 29th – February 1st, 2024

Participants:

Ivan Murin (CZ), Lenka Jakoubková Budilová (CZ), Marek Jakoubek (CZ), Andrew Jennings (UK), Andrew Lind (UK), Aušra Mlinkauskienė (LT), Kęstutis Zaleckis (LT), Ingrida Povilaitienė (LT), and Marius Ivaškevičius (LT).

Plan of the visit:

The third and final study visit of the HerInDep project took place between 29 January and 1 February in Shetland. Andrew Jennings (PI) and Andrew Lind (CoI) welcomed colleagues from Charles University (Czechia) and Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania) to UHI Shetland (Lerwick) for a programme of project meetings and first-hand cultural experiences.

Once the project team had completed their journey to Shetland by boat, plane and car, proceedings began with a meeting between the project team and local stakeholders. The stakeholders included our project partners, Shetland Heritage Association and Shetland Amenity Trust, as well as other third-party groups, such as Dr Marc Chivers, Director of Moder Dy, a local non-profit coastal and maritime heritage company. The meeting began with short (10min) presentations from each of the HerInDep teams (UK, CZ & LT) to provide useful context for the other participants. This was followed by a roundtable discussion between the team and the attendees on their experiences and views of/on heritage and depopulation in Shetland. The project team were able to capture and record these exchanges and answer questions from the stakeholders regarding HerInDep's objectives and upcoming plans. Discussion continued at dinner, which followed the formal session.

The second day (30 January) began with a walking-tour of Lerwick, which featured several activities associated with UpHellyAa, including the revealing of the galley, the parading Jarl's Squad and the posting of the UpHellyAa 'Bill'. Jennings and Lind were on-hand to explain these activities and provide some background information regarding the history and culture of Shetland. Following lunch at the UHI Shetland campus, the team assembled for a project review meeting. This proved to be very productive; the team made plans for future activities (including the upcoming publications and organization of the Prague conference in 2025) and reviewed the progress of each of the national teams. This meeting was attended virtually by Nataly Trushina (CZ) and Conan Doyle (CZ). After all project business had been addressed, Jennings and Lind gave a lecture to the rest of the team on the history, development and importance of UpHellyAa in Shetland. This provided useful contextual information for that evening's events.

After grabbing some dinner, the project team took to the streets of Lerwick once more. They were able to secure an ideal vantage point to witness the UpHellyAa fire procession and celebrations. To ensure that the project team received the authentic UpHellyAa experience, following the procession they made their way to the Sound Hall in Lerwick upon the invitation of one of the hall's hostesses, Robina Barton (Secretary of the Shetland Heritage Association). Intrinsicly connected to the festival, the dozens of halls throughout Lerwick act as venues where Shetlanders come together to celebrate. At these halls celebrants eat and drink local produce, dance to traditional and modern music, and witness the 'acts' of the various 'squads' who perform a circuit of the all the halls, performing at each. The halls open from around 8pm and stay open until around 7am the following morning.

Given the late night, the team reassembled the following day (1 February) at 3pm for a final team meeting and reflections session. During the reflection session they noted how inclusive, organic and community-led the festival was, commenting that it was a prime example of 'living heritage'! The project team's thoughts and comments were recorded by Jennings and Lind.

With the conclusion of the study visits, the teams' attentions have turned to the publication of the special issue of the *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, due later this year.

STUDY VISIT PROGRAMME

1st Day - Monday, January 29th

Arrival in Shetland, check-in to accommodation.

15:30 – PICK-UP FROM AIRPORT TRANSFER TO HOTEL

17:30 – 18:00 PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION AND WELCOME SESSION

UHI Shetland. Lerwick.

18:00 – 19:30 UHI SHETLAND MEETING WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS –

Presentation of Partners Case-Study Research so far - Meet Shetland Heritage stake-holders – our Associate Partner Shetland Heritage Association, Shetland Amenity Trust, Simon Clarke UHI Shetland, Moder Dy.

20:00 - 22:00 SOCIAL DINNER

Partners and Stakeholders. Shetland Hotel. Conclusion of Day 1.

2nd Day - Tuesday, January 30th

UP HELLY AA INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE EXPERIENCE

10.00-12.00 LERWICK ON FOOT

Revealing of Galley and 'Bill' at the Market Cross. Walk around Lerwick to take in the sights of the build-up to Up Helly Aa.

12:00-13.00 Lunch

UHI Shetland, Lerwick.

13:00-16.00 PARTICIPANT'S PROJECT MANAGEMENT MEETING FOLLOWED BY LECTURE ON THE CULTURAL MEANING OF UPHELLYAA

UHI Shetland, Lerwick. Project management session between 3 partners to discuss progress so far. This will include discussion on the completion and evaluation of the study visits, publication intentions, conferences, upcoming local workshops and preliminary project reports for 2023. Elodie Cazenave will attend online. After the meeting Andrew J and Andrew L will give a lecture to explain the history, cultural importance and impact of the Up Helly Aa.

17:00 DINNER

Shetland Hotel, Lerwick.

19:00 – 20:00 THE FIRE PROCESSION

We will take to the streets to observe the fire procession. Please dress warmly and be prepared for wet weather. There will also be lots of smoke from the fires, you may wish to wear old clothes.

21:00 – 07:00 EVENT AT THE SOUND SCHOOL HALL, RUN BY OUR SHA PARTNER

Experience Shetland culture, food, drink and entertainment. Conclusion of the Day 2.

3rd Day - Wednesday, January 31st

15:00-17:00 PARTICIPANTS' MEETING

UHI Shetland, Lerwick. Team reflections and feedback on Up Helly Aa.

18:00 DINNER

Shetland Hotel, Lerwick. Conclusion of Day 3.

Thursday, February 1st

Departure Flights from Sumburgh Airport: Ferry from Lerwick.

Photographs from the Shetland Study Visit (all credited to Jennings and Lind):



Figure 1 HerInDep team members (left to right) Kęstutis Zaleckis (KUT), Aušra Mlinkauskienė (KUT), Ingrida Povilaitienė (KUT), Marek Jakoubek (CU), Marius Ivaškevičius (KUT) and Ivan Murin (CU) pose in front of the 2024 Lerwick UpHellyAa longship. Photo Credit: Dr A Jennings.



Figure 2 The 2024 Lerwick UpHellyAa Torch Procession, led by the Jarl's Squad. Photo Credit: Dr A Lind.

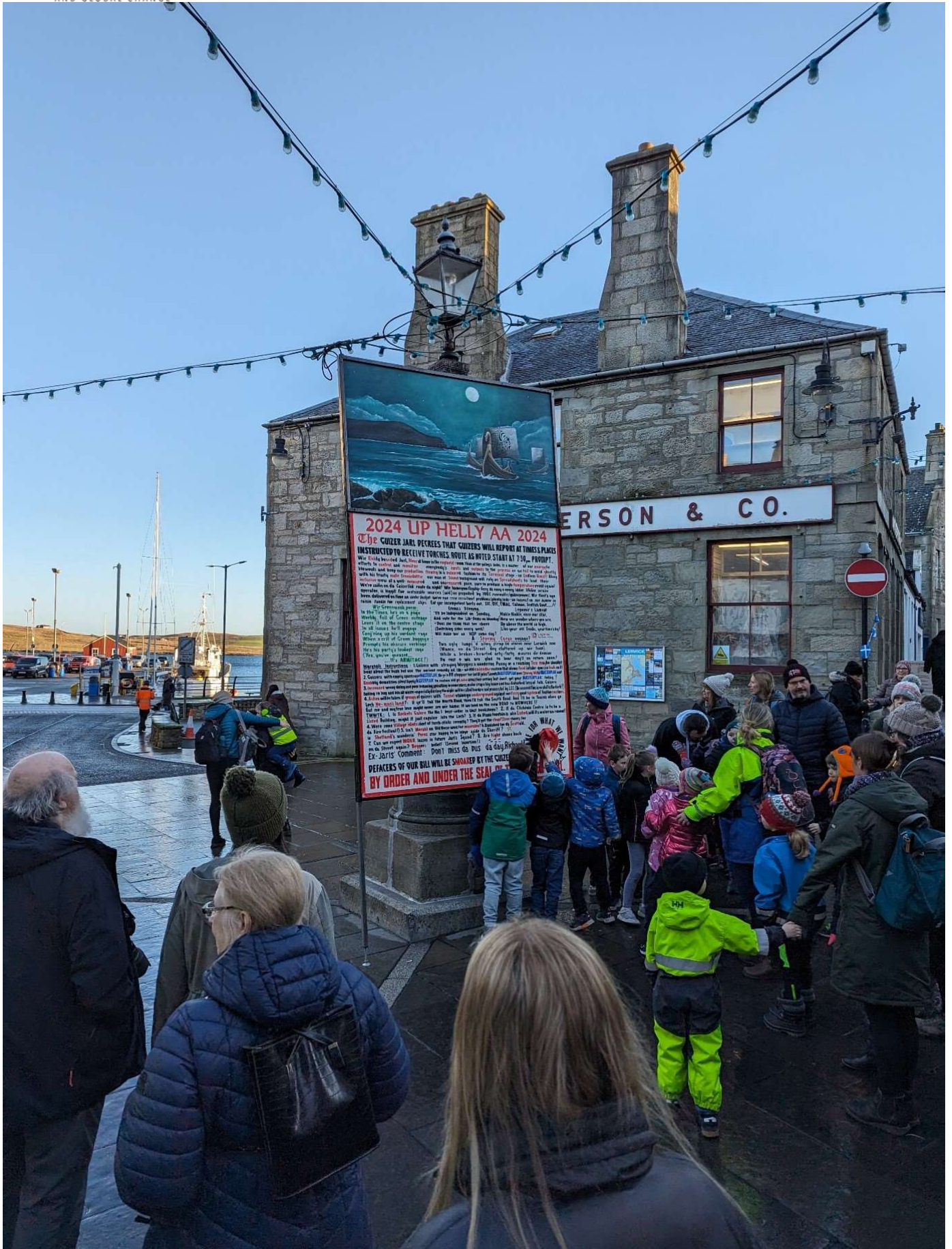


Figure 3 The 2024 Lerwick UpHellyAa 'Bill' Photo Credit: Dr A Lind.



Figure 4 The culmination of UpHellyAa - the burning of the longship! Photo Credit: Dr A Lind

General information on the participation to the Shetland Study Visit

Information UHI Shetland -

29 January -1 February 2024

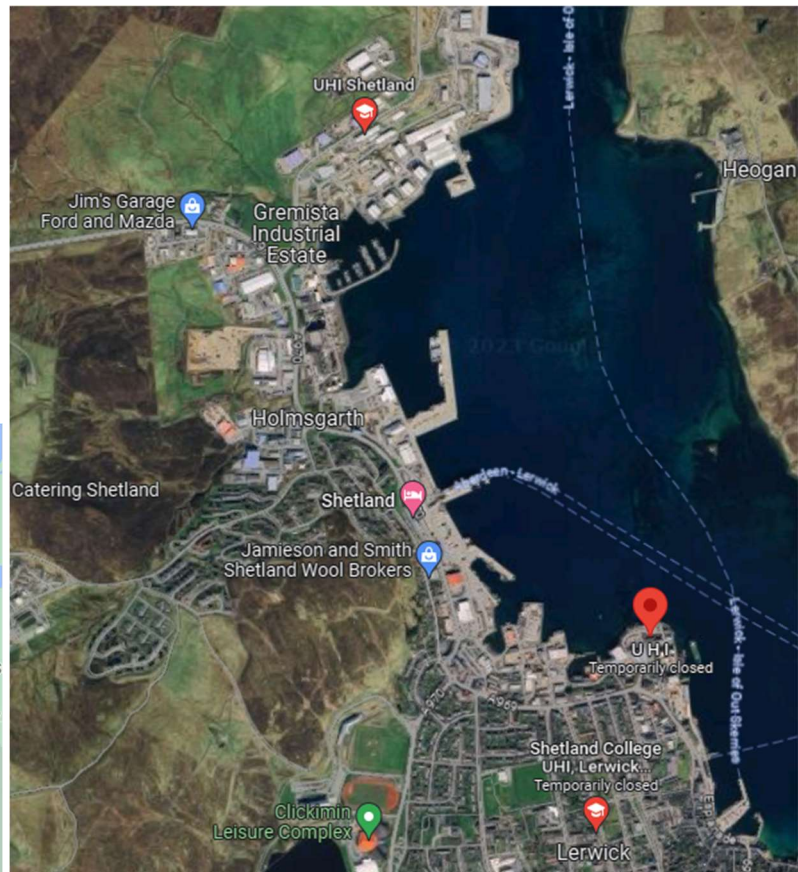
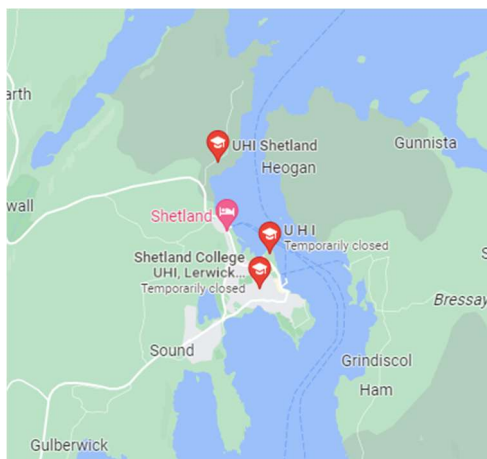
UHI Shetland

Address:

UHI Shetland, Gremista Rd, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0PX

Where we are:

Shetland College is a further and higher education college in Lerwick, Shetland, Scotland. It is part of the University of the Highlands and Islands. The main campus is located at Gremista, on the outskirts of Lerwick.



1. Overview of the cultural heritage in Shetland

Economic Background

Shetland is an island archipelago of 100 islands, which is part of Scotland and the United Kingdom. The economy is strong, worth c. £1 billion annually, and the standard of living is comparatively high, although there is a high level of fuel poverty (defined as having to spend 10% or more of fuel). There is low unemployment, standing at 1.9% in October 2023, which is lower than Scotland as a whole. Services and amenities continue to be of high quality, supported by the fact that Shetland Council has £380 million in its reserves (as of October 2023). As in the past, the surrounding seas provide a vital component of the Shetland economy. The economic output from the seafood industries, fishing, aquaculture, and fish processing were valued at £440 million in 2017 (when the last detailed analysis of Shetland's economy was carried out). The tourism industry is small in comparison, having been valued at £23.2 million in 2017 (Shetland.org, 2023). Nonetheless, the islands receive more than 75,000 visits per year from leisure and business visitors and in addition there is increasing cruise ship business. In the 2023 season, 129 cruise ships visited with 124,000 passengers in total, which is estimated to have generated £33.5 million in visitor spending (Shetland.org, 2023).

Demographic Background

Despite having a strong economy, initial results from Scotland's 2022 census suggests a 1.2% decline in Shetland's population – to 22,900 – from 2011. Scotland as whole saw an increase of 2.7%. Indeed, in stark contrast to Shetland, the neighbouring Orkney Islands recorded a population increase of 3%. In Shetland's case, this decline has primarily been attributed to migration (NRS, 2023). This, combined with Shetland's aging population and the declining influence of North Sea oil, has caused concern that the archipelago is undergoing a significant socio-economic transition linked to depopulation.

Value Placed on Cultural Heritage in Shetland

Shetland organisations with a role in preserving and interpreting cultural heritage include Shetland Council, UHI Shetland, the Shetland Charitable Trust, the Shetland Amenity Trust, with its many subsidiary groups (see below), Shetland Arts, and the members of Shetland Heritage Association, and other individuals and groups, such as Professor Viveka Velupillai (Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen) and Marc Shiver's Moder Dy.

The discovery of oil and gas brought wealth and change to the islands. However, cultural heritage was protected and Adam Grydehoj points out that, 'far from destroying Shetland's traditional culture, the sudden economic boom brought about by the oil era has preserved it better than any gradual transition into wealth could have' (2008:179). The Shetland Charitable Trust, created to manage some of the Shetland's oil funds, was expressly 'set up in the wake of the discovery of oil and the existential angst created in Shetland by the perceived potential damage to Shetland's way of life and the threat of the arrival of large numbers of immigrant oil workers' (Jennings 2015:168). As of September 2023, the Charitable Trust holds approximately £396 million in reserves. These funds are used to support a range of activities and trusts, such as the Amenity Trust and the Shetland Recreational Trust. It has been funding the Shetland Amenity Trust since its establishment in 1983. In 2022/23 this funding amounted to £1,441,676. The Amenity Trust in 2015 employed over 100 people, and although the number of employees has decreased due to budget cuts, it is still a sizable employer, with employees involved in cultural heritage management, natural heritage, peatland restoration, archaeology, archives, museum

curating and visitor services.

The Charitable Trust also funds the Swan Trust, which maintains and operates Shetland's tall ship, and provides small grants to a range of heritage organisations such as the Brough Lodge Trust, which promotes Shetland knitting, and the Shetland Folk Society. Recently the Bough Lodge Trust, which was set-up to restore Brough Lodge on Fetlar, relinquished the building, Europe's most northerly neo-Gothic building, to the European Heritage Project, who will be overseeing its restoration, adding to their collection of European castles, monasteries and palaces. The impact of this new phenomenon of external (i.e. non-local) heritage safeguarding is yet to be seen.

Statements about the importance of cultural heritage from various Shetland organisations:

"Culture...largely defines the identity of a place and its people and it promotes personal growth and community cohesion. A vibrant and distinctive culture is also a hugely important economic asset."
Shetland Arts On the Cusp...Shetland's Cultural Strategy 2009-2013

'Shetland's heritage is at the heart of our islands and key to a prosperous and sustainable future for those who live and visit here.' Priority in the 5 years from 2019-2024 *'Innovate for heritage Increase resilience to economic, social and environmental impacts on Shetland's heritage.'* Shetland Amenity Trust Vision

'Shetland's natural environment and rich culture and history are key elements of what makes Shetland a special place.' Shetland's Partnership Plan 2018-2028 p.9

'We will support the delivery of the Tall Ships 2023 bid and support the development of small-scale events and festivals to celebrate, increase participation and build pride in Shetland's heritage.' Shetland Islands Council Corporate Plan 2021-26 p.19

Cultural Heritage Tourism

Over the last 20 years, cultural heritage tourism's importance in Shetland has steadily increased. As the traditional industries (oil and fisheries) have declined, the tourism and heritage sector has looked to fill the vacuum. The importance of cultural heritage to the tourism industry is clearly manifested on the website 'Shetland Islands of Opportunity', which has a series of videos exploring Shetland's cultural heritage.



In the Shetland Islands Visitor Survey of 2019, for leisure visitors the key reasons for visiting Shetland cited were the scenery and landscape (69%) and the history and culture (49%), significant numbers cited an interest in archaeology (17%) and attending an event or festival (10%). Leisure visitors were also asked to name the attractions they had visited during their trip and these included a range of cultural heritage sites, including Shetland Museum and Archives (65%), which tells the story of Shetland, the world class archaeological site of Jarlshof (54%), Scalloway Museum (38%) which focuses on the World War II heritage of the Shetland Bus, Unst Heritage Centre and Unst Boat Haven (27%) with their collection of traditional Shetland boats, and Viking Unst (21%) which explains Shetland's Viking heritage. Leisure visitors participated in a number of cultural activities while in the islands, including visiting archaeological sites (53%), knitting and textiles (25%) and listening to traditional music (22%).

Cultural/heritage tourism is a researched area worldwide, although not so much has been published about cold island destinations. However, Leask and Rihova did research the role of heritage tourism in Shetland, which they pointed out had, 'exceptional natural and archaeological wonders and a very distinctive culture, which comes from its location at the crossroads between Scotland and Norway.' (2010:123). As well as noting the degree of autonomy that Shetland exercises over economic development, they concluded that, 'heritage and culture are fundamental not only for Shetland's economic development but also with respect to the identity and culture of the islanders.' (2010:125-126).

Shetland's Tangible and Intangible Cultural Capital

As noted by Leask and Rihova, Shetland has a wide range of intangible and tangible cultural heritage assets, which are recognised for their quality. In the *Pride in Place: The RSA Heritage Index 2020*, Shetland was 3rd overall in Scotland, behind, Dundee City which was 2nd and Orkney which was 1st. Shetland was 2nd overall for the Heritage Index 2020 Activities.

Here is a list of Shetland's major cultural heritage assets:

Music – fiddle music in particular

Fair Isle Knitting

Lace Making – another wool based tradition

Shetland Wool – Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) from EU

Archaeology – seeking UNESCO world heritage status for Iron Age Shetland

Crofting

Fishing

Publications

Language – Shetland ForWirds

Traditional Stories

UNESCO Geopark

UpHellyAa Festivals

Role of Cultural Heritage in Community Creation and Maintenance

Communities are symbolic bounded entities, much like islands. Cultural heritage plays its role in providing an important element of that symbolism. The anthropologist Anthony Cohen, who researched Whalsay, suggested that 'when the inhabitants of a Shetland island talk of "their community", they refer to an entity, a reality, invested with all the sentiment attached to kinship, friendship, neighbouring, rivalry, familiarity, jealousy, as they inform the social process of everyday life' (2008:13). He could have added shared history, local stories and cultural monuments. For example, he did note that, 'the resonances of crofting [the traditional form of agriculture] maintain a sharp sense of cultural continuity among the Whalsay Islanders of Shetland, in spite of the massive changes which have transformed island life – including crofting – since the Second World War.' (Cohen, 1979). He also pointed to the importance of the Whalsay spree [an example of intangible cultural heritage] to the Whalsay community, this is a peripatetic party whose 'symbolic form ... has been transformed but whose continuity masks or limits the trauma of change' (Cohen, 1985).

As Shetland enters a new period of change, this project will focus on the role cultural heritage will play and, indeed, is already playing. Primarily, we are interested in uncovering if and how heritage factors into the discourse surrounding depopulation, how the community values its cultural heritage in the face of depopulation and whether cultural heritage can be utilised to offset or even reverse demographic change. Due to its unique circumstances as a comparatively wealthy 'cold' island with a rich array of cultural heritage, Shetland offers the HerInDep project a rare case study which will undoubtedly help us understand how at-risk communities make sense of, plan and react to the threat of depopulation and its ramifications for their unique cultural heritage.

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2. Reflections from project partners (CZ & LT)

Czech Team Reflections

The third and final HerInDep case study site visit took place on January 29th – February 1st, 2024 in Lerwick, Shetland Islands, UK. The visit brought together members from each of the three participating institutions: Charles University, Kaunas University of Technology and the University of the Highlands and Islands.

The first day of visit we met with other project participants and the Shetland team partners, like the representatives of the Shetland Heritage Association and the Shetland Amenity Trust. A short report of the three sites (Czech, Lithuanian and Shetland) were presented and then the common topics regarding demographic change and cultural heritage were discussed with the Shetland heritage association's members.

On the second day we started with a guided tour through Lerwick, which was already full of Up-Helly-Aa activities (jarl's squad parade through the town, the galley on display, the UpHelly-Aa "bill" at the main square, etc.). In the afternoon there was a project meeting to discuss the plans for the future, like publications and the conference in Prague in 2025. Dr. Lind and Dr. Jennings also provided a lecture on the context of the Shetland heritage and culture, which was very welcome and helpful in understanding the whole event.

In the evening there was the main program of our stay, connected to "cultural heritage", the Up-Helly-Aa festival. We participated in the huge fire procession that ended up by setting the galley on fire. Involvement of thousands of people and the organization of the whole event was breath-taking. Thanks to Robina Barton, our hostess, who invited us and took care of us, we had an opportunity to participate in the festival evening in the Sound Hall Lerwick. In the Sound Hall we could engage in what anthropologists call "participant observation" and watched the whole night how individual squads would come and perform their shows to entertain the audience. This had clear signs of the "carnival" with the humour license, reversal of roles, or the performing of some topical issues, like the local politics, climate change or the sea world preservation.

The last day of the Shetland study visit was dedicated to some feedback on the previous day and night and reflections on the Shetland cultural heritage. We could say that this experience was very interesting mainly due to the large scale of participation of various parts of the local community. We also discussed the gender issue (involvement of women in Up-Helly-Aa squads) and the changing relationship to the inclusion of foreigners and newcomers into the festival.

Discussion themes and questions:

- What is the role of cultural heritage in facing global challenges, like the demographic change?
- How to include newcomers into the cultural heritage preservation and maintenance?
- How does depopulation in some areas threaten the preservation of cultural heritage?

Main contributions of the study visit in Shetland Islands (UK):

From the viewpoint of the Charles University team members, who participated in the Shetland site visit (Ivan Murin, Lenka Jakoubkova Budilova), the main important results of the visit are:

- The guided tour through Lerwick and especially the participation in the Up-Helly-Aa event was a fantastic opportunity to see a “living heritage”. The level of participation and involvement of the local community in the event is really huge.
- The main interesting point of comparison is a similarity of issues (threat by depopulation, struggles to maintain local cultural heritage) in very different context (geographical, political, and cultural).
- We appreciated a lot the possibility to meet the local heritage stakeholders, like the representatives of the Shetland Heritage Association, and to follow their projects and activities.
- There could be a fruitful field for networking of the heritage associations from the Czech Republic with the Shetland heritage stakeholders. The remoteness of the areas and the need to attract both tourist and (most importantly) new inhabitants is something that connects them.
- The UHI (University of the Highlands and Islands) teaching model (with partly online teaching) attracts the Czech stakeholders (regional development agencies in Broumov), as a possible solution for a remote locality to retain its young population.
- It was great to meet all project partners in person and to meet some of the Shetland colleagues, too. The place and time for the discussion of the future plans and activities was precious.

Thanks to Shetland team for a perfect organization of the site visit and an unforgettable experience of their Up-Helly-Aa festival!

Lenka Jakoubková Budilová, Ivan Murin

Lithuanian Team Reflections

Context and practical relevance of the visit:

Visit to the Shetland Islands is a third study visit in the frame of this project. The Shetland Archipelago is located in the Atlantic Ocean, between the Norwegian and North Seas, in the northern part of the British Isles, north of Scotland and the Orkney Islands, it is a part of the Shetland area of Great Britain. The region is important for its unique natural and cultural environment, traditional crafts and living culture. The Scottish island hosts an annual fire festival, which was visited by the project partners during the study visit. We met with local community representatives and other stakeholders interested in cultural preservation and heritage protection to talk about traditional events and how concrete practices can help to better understand community values and priorities. This provided an insight into the identity and importance of the region in the context of a changing social environment.

The relevance to the project:

The case report is directly related to the objective of the project, which is to investigate emptied cultural heritage sites - case studies and research between partners. The research part of the report starts with a description of the visit plan with detailed descriptions of the stages of the research visit. A detailed overview of cultural heritage in Shetland is provided, taking into account the economic, demographic and tourism context and the implications for cultural heritage development and conservation opportunities. The report also presents Shetland's tangible and intangible cultural capital as a qualitative cultural foundation for the island and gives prominence to the key reflections and research carried out within the project, answering the fundamental question: what is the role of cultural heritage in developing and sustaining communities? In our view, the study visit and case report is relevant to the aims and objectives of the project work packages and its further insights will be needed for the next phases of the project implementation, for the comparative analysis of cross-cultural case studies and for the implementation of the studies. The study visit revealed the most important ideas for the preservation and promotion of traditions and living cultural heritage, which can be useful to develop a deeper understanding of the preservation of intangible heritage in Lithuania and the involvement of local communities in the preservation of their heritage.

Assoc. prof., dr. Aušra Mlinkauskienė Prof., dr. Kęstutis Zaleckis Lecturer, dr. Ingrida Povilaitienė Lecturer, dr. Marius Ivaškevičius

3. Reflections from local partners (SHA & SAT)

Shetland Heritage Association was glad of the opportunity to participate in the HerInDep partner meeting in January. It was very enlightening to see the different ways the partners from Lithuania and the Czech Republic approached the issue of depopulation and how it relates to heritage. It was interesting to note the shared feeling that heritage is not just about the past, but has something to teach us in the way of sustainable living for the future, so there is a real value in preserving old skills and knowledge. Obviously, heritage can also provide a draw, playing a role in the decisions of former residents to return to an area, and also encouraging visitors, some of whom inevitably choose to stay. The project delegates seemed to enjoy attending the annual Up Helly Aa festival and get a real sense of the strong connection between heritage and identity that exists in Shetland by immersing themselves in what is first and foremost a community celebration.

Robina Barton, Secretary of SHA