

EDGES & EXTREMES

SHETLAND: PEOPLE, PLACE, INDUSTRY



Box of Haddock

A collaborative arts project

by visual artist Sally Booth and poet Evlynn Sharp

Edges and Extremes

This year-long project is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England and Creative Scotland. The artists are also grateful for support from Tate, Scottish Parliament, Loganair, BBC Radio Shetland, Juliet Gomperts Trust, Shetland Arts, Artlink Central, Pen to Paper (Brighton), K and K Stationers (London).



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The moral rights of the artists have been asserted.

With thanks to Margaret Scollay who has given permission to use her musical compositions and interpretations on the CD recording.

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and Evlynn Sharp [evlynn.sharp@zen.co.uk]

Foreword by Mary Blance

I've always been attracted by projects which lead to collaboration between artists. There's something unpredictable and exciting about what might happen when folk from different paths set off on a journey together.

Poet Evlynn Sharp and artist Sally Booth made their first stop in the village of Scalloway, Shetland. It can be challenging to arrive in a new place, needing to find out what makes it tick. However, Evlynn and Sally were warmly welcomed wherever they went, finding inspiration among the folk they met.

It's a welcome aspect of the project to see the emphasis placed on working lives. Knitting, fishing and fish processing have been vital to survival here for centuries and the writing and the pictures bring the skills, ancient and modern, to life on the page. You can almost sense the speed-sketching demanded from Sally.

I'm glad the project extends to the sound of Shetland – to the lilt of the voice and the music that are so much part of our local culture. The CD rounds off a very special artistic journey to 60 degrees North.

Mary Blance

Shetland ForWirds – promoting and celebrating the Shetland dialect

April 2013



In Flight, Glasgow-Sumburgh

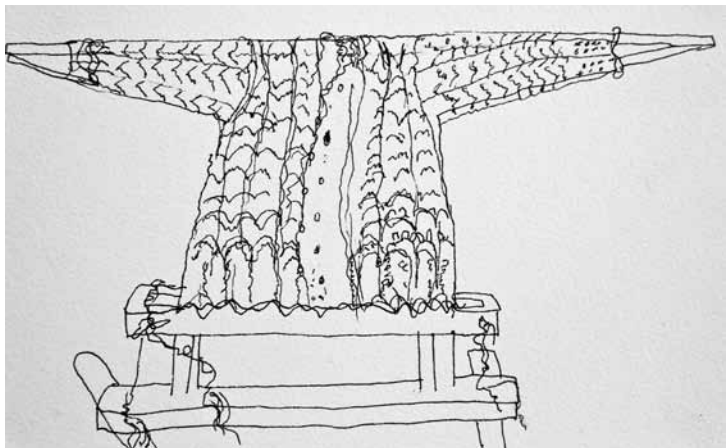
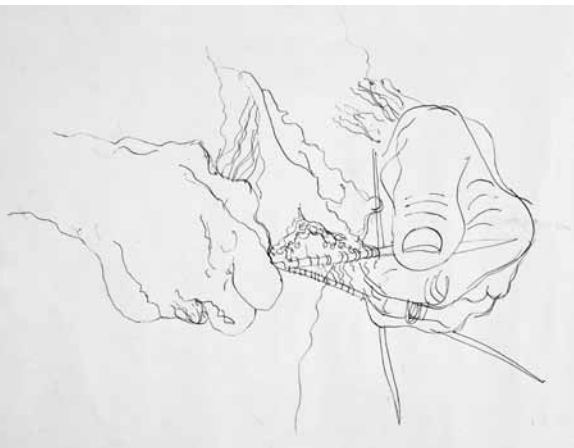
An exit nudges behind us,
Arrows in dual directions,
A glass without a shade –

People who know the turn
And strangers fastened in
Are preparing for ascent;

Countless winds change,
Quickly shed, in Shetland,
Like the axis every year

Of this Magnetic North;
Thoughts curve into space,
Pilot steers with co-pilot

Who place us on a map
Of broadening surf, dust,
Back towards the land.





Scallop Workers 1 (extract)

(For Kevin, Andrea, Frank, Ludmilla)

Two men's knives into shells,
Click clack...each outer case –
Click clack...flung into floor-sack,
And each scallop skimmed over
For the trim two women complete...

Back to click, clack...a rhythm
Of preparation, skim
And trim, ready speed,
Each worker an intensity
Of knowledge in the skill.

All hands race, flurry,
Across shell, scallop, air,
Where an artist is present today
Wanting to reveal the work,
Her synchronised pace –
Proven on sketch-paper – shows
Everyone industrial, not apart...



Cast Off A Loop (extract)

(For Annie Henry, Emma Isbister, Alice Johnson)

One year, the whole of Scalloway had snow,
Nae flittings until the beautiful summer came;
Annie's father cut her a belt to makk from;

Emma is casting off a loop, starting again
From the beginning; Alice holds patterns
In the mind: *there's naebody knits like this,
Yon's a dying art; it's terrible sad;*

Spread it back, set the light,
Set so triangles come in the middle,
A scallop, the new shell,
A wave, the old shell:
And yon's a rose leaf.

Knitting belts worn, wires at an angle –
Women must hae a free hand for other work:
In the stoor of the past, they'd have
Kishies full of peat on their backs...
Still they're makkin, makkin...
If there are mair loops
Than should be a wave,
If the knitting's noe right –
It's only an eyesore,
Take it back, spret it back...

Annie never changes her tongue,
Even for a lass afore she was a seed,
Her hands are skating the wires this morning,
And now she is spretting it back...







Davie at Hunters Fish (extract)

(For Davie Robertson & the Hunters: Gibby, Andrew, James)

A couple of beautiful cod, you said,
A name scrawled underneath
Of *Guardian Angell* that trawls
The fresh catch in. Earlier
This morning, you're filleting
Haddock – each fish done in
Less than a minute, you're fast,
And give the name of one fish:
Stanebiter, catfish, wolf-fish –
One and the same depending
On where is home; you have

A stainless steel table for haddock,
A sharp knife, you're steady, no fable,
And we watch, the rhythm of you...



Weather Far More

(For Lillian, Sheila)

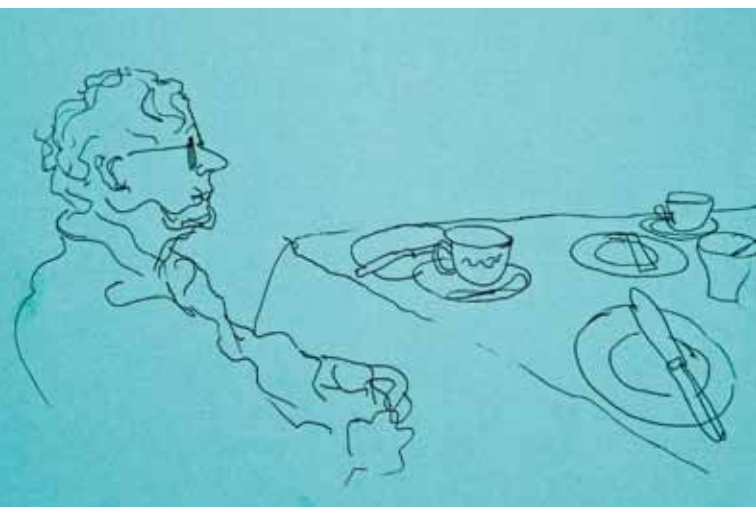
Imprints of weather
You could see
Before you can speak

You would hear the weather
When the men were lying away
And be worried for them

Weather was raising up
Husbands were shipwrecked
Something must give way

To the worry
The listening
The necessary watch





Patterns of a Life (extract)
(In memory of Harry Williamson)

The day is a pattern,
A pattern for everything,
For myself,
This is a different way of life;
A deep-sea fisherman,
Starting off as a cook
Like all the young boys,
And so it went...



Edges and Extremes: Shetland

Edges and Extremes is a collaborative arts project by English visual artist Sally Booth and Scottish poet Evlynn Sharp. The venture spans remotest edges of land from Shetland to Cornwall with artworks and poetry inspired by people, place and industry.

This book celebrates the first part of the project in Shetland. Local people shared their experiences and aspects of their daily lives with the artists. The selection of Sally's artworks here and extracts of Evlynn's poems reflect the local people, sights and sounds.

On the CD, Shetland fiddler/composer Margaret Scollay and BBC Radio Shetland's Jane Moncrieff add their skills of connection along with the voices of Holly Smith and Logan Nicolson.

Dedicated to Andrew Montgomery Nicolson (1965-2009)



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