



SAFEINHERIT- Safeguarding Our Heritage

FORUM ON LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN RELATION TO NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

**Fair Isle, SHETLAND, UK, 21st to 23rd June, 2000
Held at the Fair Isle Bird Observatory**



Fair Isle from the north east.



SAFEINHERIT- Safeguarding Our Heritage

The SafeinHerit Network was established in 1999 in response to a European Union/Norwegian Government initiative to stimulate community development and environmental protection in northern parts of Europe through the Northern Periphery Programme (NPP) funded by EU, ERDF Article 10 and the Norway Bequest. This particular network and series of projects is a partnership between four communities and organisations:

- The community of Fair Isle, Scotland, under the auspices of their Fair Isle Marine Environment and Tourism Initiative (FIMETI)
- The Nord-Trøndelag County Council (Nord-Trøndelag Fylkeskommune), Norway
- Steigen Municipality, Nordland County, Norway
- The community development organisations of Inlandslandet, Vindelälvs kommunerna and SOS-kommunerna, Sorsele, Sweden.

Each partner is responsible for taking a lead role in a series of one of more joint and individual projects, aimed at benefiting the communities and their environment and demonstrating how community development can be achieved through sustainable use of environmental and cultural resources.

One joint activity of the SafeinHerit Network is a series of three workshops on specific themes of sustainable resource management: Natural and Cultural Resources, Land Management and Green Tourism. These are designed to allow direct transfer of information between individuals, communities and countries, and to discuss process and practical measures generally applicable or adaptable to other peripheral communities in areas of high quality environmental and cultural value.

The first workshop, on the theme of Natural and Cultural Resources, was held on Fair Isle, where the community, currently of 70, has a long socio-economic history based on the sustainable use of these resources.



The end of the final leg of a long and complicated journey for some, as those attending the forum arrive on the Good Shepherd IV from mainland Shetland to Fair Isle.

PERIPHERY – OF MINOR SIGNIFICANCE....

Ian Best, on welcoming everyone to Fair Isle, spurred us on to change the dictionary definition of periphery: as a collection of enthusiastic communities we could and should inspire others.

THE PARTNERS.....

Fair Isle – Nick Riddiford.

Fair Isle folk have always used their terrestrial and marine environment as a sustainable resource - not for any altruistic reason but because this was the only resource they had. They were not in a position to over-exploit then move to resources elsewhere. They recognised that all resources had to be available for future years and future generations - a true application of the principles of sustainability. The island community continues to demonstrate this approach for the terrestrial area but has lost control of the marine. Changes in fishing law and increased mobility of commercial fishing boats, allowing them to move on to resources elsewhere once their own have been depleted, has led to over-exploitation of our marine resource by outside interests. We do not have that option. We owe it to future generations to continue using our resource wisely and sustainably, by returning the marine area to sustainable management regimes as still practiced on the land. Another characteristic of Fair Isle is the socio-economic diversity of the human population. 'Biodiversity', has recently come to importance, as variety in life for the future well being of the human race. I would take this one step further by proposing that variety is equally important at the socio-economic level. The diversification of activities and incomes on Fair Isle has been an important factor in sustaining the community during a period of immense social change. Peripheral communities generally have been very vulnerable to this change and should perhaps be addressing the issue of diversification as a way forward. It is something we are in a position to highlight and promote.

Fair Isle's involvement in the SafeinHerit project includes an administration role, overseeing the joint projects of the SafeinHerit website, overall evaluation and the two interpretative booklets on recipes and crafts. Fair Isle based activities include producing a CD Rom on the sea and sustainable resource use, a series of five booklets relating to environmental and cultural aspects of the isle, setting up activity holidays and carrying out a study into shellfish stock management.

Nord-Trøndelag Fylkeskommune – Sigurd Kristiansen.

The County of Nord Trøndelag is the largest and most varied region in the SafeinHerit network, with coastline, inland farmland, forestry and mountains, and a population of 125,000. The projects within SafeinHerit are concentrated in the mountain area in the east, bordering with Sweden, aiming to resolve the dispute between nature conservation and local use of nature, by ensuring sustainable use of areas. A National Park has been designated in the Lierne region by the national government, bringing with it strict regulations on all activities. The projects are assessing how to involve the use of natural and cultural resources within a National Park and thereby produce a new model for designation, incorporating local human populations and their way of life.

Nord Trøndelag is supervising, along with Steigen, the running of the joint project of school exchanges and environmental initiatives

Sorsele – Leopold Sjöström.

The Municipality of Sorsele is one of five within the LEADER region of Inlandslandet, in the heart of Swedish Lapland. The region is nearly 40,000km², through which the Vindel River runs, with a population of 25,000. The greatest threat to the area is the decreasing population. The instruments of different national economic transfers and subsidies have not been effective enough to compensate the comparative disadvantages for the area.

It is important to identify and develop human and environmental elements, the region's natural and cultural resources, and to recognise the importance and value of transnational networks and partnerships, enabled by information technology and exchanges.

Involvement in SafeinHerit is to initiate, establish and develop networks and partnerships in the region among small-scale rural ecological tourist companies, and to oversee joint workshops.

Steigen Municipality – Eva Bakkeslett.

Farming and fishing have been the basis of life in the area, although this is beginning to change.

The SafeinHerit project is (1) promoting local food production for the local market, aiming to decrease quantities of imports and exports, by developing systems in which inhabitants can more readily buy locally produced products and (2) encouraging small-scale sustainable production of herbs, sea urchins and milk products as examples of means of utilising natural resources.

Meg Telfer was invited to introduce Dùthchas.

Dùthchas is an old Gaelic word describing the link between people and place, the sense of place and belonging and of a shared inheritance. It has been used to name a project partnership between communities and agencies working together to develop strategies for the sustainable future of remote fragile areas. Dùthchas has gone out into the communities of North Sutherland, North Uist and Trotternish (Skye), to find out what people want, what their dreams and realistic hopes for the future are. It has been working with the information to put a number of sustainable projects in place in the areas.

The importance of all projects is working and getting together, realising that we do not work alone and providing a revitalising experience.

OUR AIMS.....

Decided upon through discussion.

- To address **shared challenges**: despite obvious differences there are many similarities between the partners.
- To consider **issues of sustainability and diversity** (including of the human element), although these have always been held in our communities: unconsciously but as a necessity of life.
- To discuss and put together thoughts on how to **overcome the lack of communication** between agencies and communities - despite the buzzwords of 'community empowerment', in reality bureaucracy is becoming greater rather than less. How to get agencies and communities together, to get agencies to take us seriously, and produce flexible policies.
- To **share experiences**: learn new ideas, value the worth of our rich natural and cultural assets, gain enthusiasm, take charge of our destiny and convince others that we are not disadvantaged. Together our voice is louder, making us more able to overcome our challenges, we will be able to go anywhere.....



Full Workshop in Session

SOME OF THE SUSTAINABLE USES OF FAIR ISLE'S NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.....

Utilised both directly, and indirectly through interpretation.

Hollie Craib, administrator of the **Fair Isle Bird Observatory**, talked about the workings of the Hostel, and catering for up to 35 visitors. Fair Isle has a unique appeal to visitors in particular those interested in birds and their migration. Despite this, visitor numbers have been falling since the beginning of the 1990s, in the main due to the high cost of travel to and from the isle.

In the **George Waterston Memorial Centre**, Anne Sinclair talked about the large amount of paper work undertaken voluntarily to secure grants and registration. However it was worth it as a means of looking after the heritage of Fair Isle, to use as a base line for the future and to draw visitors to the isle.



Eva in the museum.

The workshop of Ian Best, **Boat Builder**: yoals and smaller dinghies were constructed on the isle for over a hundred years until the 1960s, when the isle fishing industry was coming to an end. Ian spent three years in Norway learning the trade, returning to the isle to undertake boat building as part of his living. Yoals are now used on the isle and further afield for recreational pursuits, including fishing, and although Ian no longer uses the now rare natural resource of drift wood as had been done in the past, he has revitalised a trade once very much part the isle culture.

Felt is produced by Lise Sinclair and Linda Grieve. They dye local Shetland fleece in rainbow colours to achieve the patterns, incorporating less waterproof imported wool inside.

As well as visiting the **violin** workshop of Ewen Thomson, who is using a cultural resource, we were able to witness how many islanders **use the land and sea** as a livelihood: crofting with the growing of crops and vegetables and rearing of lambs and beef for home consumption and sale, and occasional trips to sea for fish and lobsters. Alongside this, all islanders have a variety of jobs in service, craft or high tech industries to put together a living.

Nick Riddiford talked about the creation of the **Fair Isle Marine Environment and Tourism Initiative**. Twelve years ago the Fair Isle community became concerned about the continued deterioration of the marine resource throughout the twentieth century, felt to stem from technological changes during the century which allowed boats from elsewhere to access and use Fair Isle's marine resources with little regard to stocks or islander's rights or needs. It was unanimously decided to do something about it.

For the first seven years, efforts comprised representations to various interested bodies, formalised in 1996 with funding from the Scottish Office Rural Challenge Scheme. The Fair Isle Marine Environment and Tourism Initiative began, led by the Fair Isle community in partnership with the Fair Isle Bird Observatory and the National Trust for Scotland. A team of islanders were contracted to demonstrate the isle's high quality environmental and cultural maritime assets, and how maintenance of these and a healthy, fully functioning marine environment continues to be required if the community is to survive and prosper in the future. This work has enabled two reports: "Managing the sea for birds - Fair Isle and adjacent waters" (Riddiford & Thompson 1997), part-sponsored by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; and "Safeguarding our Heritage - the Fair Isle marine resource: a community proposal for its sustainable management" (Riddiford 1998), to be produced. Work is continuing under the NPP.



Yoal built by Ian Best, used occasionally for low intensity fishing for home consumption.

The power of the argument is that it comes from the entire isle. In these days when the Scottish government talks of "community empowerment", Fair Isle is a prime example. Yet we have not seen any practical steps taken towards allowing us to have a say in our marine environment or management of Fair Isle marine resources measures. (for more information see Appendix II)

At the South Light is the future workshop of the **Fair Isle Silver Company**, an enterprise in the making. Clare Scott talked of the time involved in accessing funding and achieving planning permission, so much so that launching the range of jewellery has been delayed from spring until autumn.

The afternoon ended at Stackhoull stores, the well stocked shop, including post office, at the hub of the community.

The evening was spent transported to **Nord-Trøndelag, Steigen** and **Sorsele** by way of videos and slides, giving us a general impression of the areas and a glimpse at some of the uses of their Natural and Cultural Resources.

Demonstrations of some of the crafts displayed at the Observatory:

- knitwear from Fair Isle Crafts: use of Shetland wool and of the heritage of Fair Isle knitting
- Fair Isle Stained Glass: use of much of the isle's heritage and environment in the designs
- locker-hooking: use of the natural resource of the annual clip from the Shetland sheep on the isle and of the isle's cultural and natural resources in the designs
- spinning wheels: use of the heritage of spinning and incorporation of wood from the shore and wrecks when possible
- straw-backed chairs: revitalising an old craft on the isle, using wood from the isle when possible and locally grown Shetland oats.



Stewart Thomson, maker of Fair Isle Straw-Backed Chairs demonstrating his craft at the Fair Isle Bird Observatory

THE DIRECT USE OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Fair Isle Crafts: a co-operative set up twenty years ago to continue the historical production and sale of Fair Isle's unique hosiery. Presented by Linda Grieve.

We were provided with a detailed history of knitting on Fair Isle from when it was probably first brought to the isle in the 1600s, how the detailed knitting patterns came to be and how Fair Isle patterns have become known worldwide.

By the 1970s few women remained on the isle with the necessary skill and speed to knit commercially. A number of younger women were interested in trying to sustain the tradition of Fair Isle knitting as demand was still strong. A co-operative was formed to produce Fair Isle knitwear using the new hand framed knitting machines capable of producing the all-over patterning.

With an average number of 10-12 members, 20 years on from its formation Fair Isle Crafts Ltd is still going strong, with orders taken during the summer to knit during the winter. This allows great flexibility as to the quantity of work carried out by each individual, dependant upon how much time they are able to devote to knitting. Knitters and finishers are paid by the hour according to the size and type of garment knitted, with overall profits for the year being divided out amongst the shareholders. As in the past, each knitter remains free to design garments using patterns and colours as they wish.

The co-operative relies on trade from the increasing number of cruise ships and other visitors to the isle, which more than provides enough orders for the winter ahead. Advertising has provided more orders than the co-operative can deal with.

The annual sheep clip from the Shetland breed around Shetland is bought and spun commercially at the mill from which yarn is purchased. When prices paid for wool and meat are at rock bottom it is reassuring that ultimately the garments produced on Fair Isle from these sheep's fleeces are high quality products, desired and copied all over the world. The Fair Isle Crafts Co-operative is only the latest chapter in the long and complex history of Fair Isle knitting, sustaining an ancient craft for future generations to inherit. (for more information see Appendix III)

Milk Production in Steigen: the over-production of milk and how this problem can be made into a resource. Presented by Eva Bakkeslett.

Dairy farms in Steigen are important to the region and large by north Norwegian standards. The central government is currently encouraging farmers to sell milk quota: endangering farming and threatening the farmers' co-operative dairy in Steigen with closure.

Therefore recently there has been an urgent need to find new ideas for using the dairy: these include making: fresh cheeses and adding various seasonings (a tradition in Steigen); hard cheese (no tradition, but a course has been organised for the new year); and it may be possible to produce small scale good quality butter with a quality label.

Situations can look helpless, but by turning them around, a positive can come out of a negative.

Sorsele Food Production: A co-operative association for production and marketing of local food products. Presented by Inger Granström and Helen Nilsson.

The Municipality of Sorsele has a population of 3240, with more than 55% living in rural areas. Vindelfjällen, the largest nature reserve in Europe, takes up 60% of the 7490km² area. The economy is based on electronic industry, refinement of wood and foodstuffs, reindeer breeding, tourism and services.

In 1990 Sorsele entered the national 'Ecological Project', which, as part of ecological development, encourages the refinement of local foodstuffs: to decrease transport costs; produce high quality and healthy products from one of the cleanest areas of Europe; and to create work in small villages.



Inger handing around reindeer meat and lingonberry jam.

Over the last 25 years production of milk and meat in the region has become centralised into fewer farmers' hands. However they are young and innovative, setting up a new project in 1996, to: increase competence; create better cooperation between farmers and local food refinement companies; establish a quality standard; and increase local refinement and selling of food stuffs to create new jobs and a better local economy. High standards are expected of those enterprises involved in the project including no use of chemicals, recycling of waste and packages, and the use of hormones and antibiotics for medical purposes only.

The farmers started a marketing organisation, involving all companies working with foodstuffs following the quality standard. Currently there are 35 enterprises within the

Sorsele Municipality involved in the manufacture of foodstuffs of various sorts, including potatoes, pesto, reindeer meat, moose and reindeer sausages and mulled wine made from local berries. This organisation is relatively new, and is exploring various avenues for marketing. One of the problems is fulfilling large orders.

National Parks: how central government establishes national parks and other conservation measures vs a new model involving the local communities to a greater extent in the process. Presented by Ivar Guntvedt.

The community of Lierne, 1600 inhabitants over an area of 2970km², have historically utilised the environment for fishing, hunting and harvesting, providing the people with their own identity. To them the area is a sustainably used resource, giving it the value it now holds for nature conservation: not one of event and recreation as seen by central government.

In Norway National Parks are designated by central government and implemented by the County Governor.

Legislation is strict over activities undertaken, producing issues of disagreement between the County Governor and the municipality/inhabitants of Lierne. These include: a lack of information and local participation in the process, debate over use of local or central government in the management of the National Park, too much focus on nature issues rather than on user interests, lack of consideration of local knowledge of the area, and the perceived threat of the National Park on the local culture.

Nord Trøndelag County Council, through SafeinHerit, have been working on a new model for implementation of National Parks using the process with Lierne as an example to aid formulation. It is necessary to document business and user interests in the region and define areas of conflict. Thus legislation can be produced that considers the users of the environment. Local participation should be encouraged in the process and management should be delegated to a regional management board or the municipalities.

Through dissemination processes in place with SafeinHerit, NTCC hope other communities can learn from the process on going at Lierne.



Shetland Sheep and lambs on the Hill Land of Fair Isle.

CONCLUSIONS ON DISCUSSIONS.....

Group 1: Price Policy Strategies to Equate Supply with Demand

- Raising the price may not secure orders through fragile/unreliable market (visitors), requiring expense of advertising or middle-man cuts that a smaller, more exclusive market away from the isle would incur.
- Increasing production through mechanisation would be problematic, due to the fluctuating power supply and because the exclusive nature of the garments would be lost. Limited production equals quality.
- It is important that prices are what the producers feel to be viable and suitable to its functioning.
- It is important to have trademarks with exclusive, local products

Group 2: Locally Prepared Local Structural Strategies

- Forward planning is essential to produce long-term local strategies for changes in the future, which may be unwanted but necessary.
- These must be flexible and able to accept and adapt to change.
- Everyone should have the choice to be included in the decision-making process, from local level upwards.
- Long-term partnerships should be formed between locals and supporting agencies.

Group 3: Marketing Strategies for Local and Global Markets

- Co-operation between those involved to produce a mutual marketing strategy.
- Produce an image with local distinctions and identity.
- Ensure the ability to meet the demand created through careful marketing.
- Address the needs of producers – production of exclusive, high quality and luxury items can warrant a higher charge, and therefore higher standard of living for those involved.
- Raise local awareness and encourage local consumer pressure.

Group 4: How to get Local Communities Involved in the Process of Designating National Parks

Weaknesses in Current Practices of Designation

- Non-recognition in higher levels of bureaucracy that local communities in National Parks must play a vital part in the management of the area.
- A lack of community networking to build a strong voice and consensus: private landowners do one to one negotiation.
- Too many levels/layers in the bureaucratic chain.
- Traditional top-down ways of delivering regulations are hard to break.

Opportunities

- There appears to be recognition from higher levels that the conflict from community level is not good. Another National Park in the south of Norway has had unresolved conflict for 25 years.
- One solution is to tweak the borders of the National Park until the conflict disappears. This does not engage with the real problem that the concept and attitudes of National Parks need to INTEGRATE the needs of people and nature.



Examples of the handicrafts made by some of those involved in the the Vindel River Handicraft.

THE INTERPRETATION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The transition from fishing and farming communities to other means of making a living – problems and common themes. Presented by Eva Bakkeslett.

Small communities based on primary industries are often hesitant to new ideas. Times are inevitably changing and the people who take the first steps, successfully, into a more diverse way of managing land are often met with scepticism. The creativity, innovativeness and success are often not appreciated. This creates a blockage in the community that makes change very difficult.

Communities going through the same processes should exchange ideas and talk about mutual difficulties. Governments/agencies must also be aware of the problems and help find solutions.

Vindel River Handicraft: information and marketing of handicraft along the Vindel River Valley through data base management. Presented by Inger Granström and Leopold Sjöström.

For many involved in handicraft it was a hobby, until the idea was put forward bring the products together twice a year at a 'fair' to widen and increase the potential market. However this did not appeal to everyone.

'Future Vindel River' is a project encompassing fishing, tourism, sport's events and a crafts project. The latter consisting of a database of photographs of handicrafts produced in the region, including use of wood and bone, knitwear, knives, mats and basketry.

The Lierne National Park Information Centre: how the establishing of a National Park can benefit the local community through an interpretation centre encompassing natural and cultural aspects of the area. Presented by Geir Rannem.

In addition to the lack of local influence in the formation of the Lierne National Park, as outlined by Ivar earlier, the area is also subject to a Government regulation for big predatory animals—bears in this case. This is providing further conflict between the local community and central government since the area has a tradition of sheep grazing, and predatory losses amount to 15-20% of the herds each year. Therefore as well as increasing the local community's influence on the management of the area and searching for local benefits from the establishment of a National Park, future challenges include finding different forms of agricultural production for the area and developing alternative forms of sheep-holding, with lower predatory losses.

The Lierne Park Information Centre (LUS) is trying to exploit this alternative means of development. Planning has been underway since 1997: achieving consensus at the local level; persuading Central Government of the benefits of such a Centre and to provide funding; and assessing such ventures in other areas of Europe.

The local benefits of increased tourism would include: the

establishment of small local enterprises, for example handicrafts and old-time farming demonstrations; museum archives; science and research activities; and forming connections with neighbouring municipalities and enterprises.

The plans are being drawn up. Achieving all the necessary funding may prove problematic, and a final decision as to whether the project will go ahead will be made at the end of the year 2000.

Technology and Sustainability: can it help a rural community survive and flourish. Presented by Philip Welch.

My partner, Linda Grieve, and myself publish and edit on Fair Isle a monthly magazine called 'Scottish Islands Explorer'. It is dedicated to discovering all aspects of the Scottish Islands, which we aim to do by publishing material on a wide range of topics. Our first edition was published in January 2000 and to date the articles we have carried have ranged geographically from Shetland and Orkney in the north, throughout the Hebrides and west to St Kilda. We have covered history, archaeology, folklore, natural history, music, crafts and many other subjects.

Background: In July 1999 I decided I wanted to start a magazine, as yet without a subject. During the summer months I spoke to visitors to Fair Isle, many of who were eager to find out more about the islands in general. After carrying out extensive research (libraries, magazine shops, Scottish related internet sites) I decided on the topic of Scottish Islands.

How it works: It is a subscription-based magazine. So far subscribers have been attracted in a number of ways: by personal contact, i.e. residents on the isle and visitors; by running a number of advertisements in specifically selected magazines; and by the distribution of a loose insert in the National Trust for Scotland members magazine 'Heritage Scotland'. We have a number of other marketing ideas not yet carried out.

The material published comes from a number of sources. Some articles have been 'one-offs' but we are trying to establish a network of writers throughout the isles who will submit work to us on a regular basis.

The assistance of new technology: Given our remote location the functioning of a business such as ours would have been a non-starter only a few years ago, since our terrestrial mail deliveries are dependant on the weather. Computer technology, the Internet and email, have blown away most of the communication problems previously experienced by isolated rural communities such as ours. Not only are we able to communicate instantly with the mainland by email, but also with others in equally remote settings. Many of our writers submit work to us by email, so hopefully we are of assistance to other rural communities.

We recently set up a website for the magazine, which is already attracting subscribers from all over the world.
www.scottishislandsexplorer.com
inquires@scottishislandsexplorer.com
(for summary of software products used see Appendix IV)

OUR CHALLENGES.....

EDUCATION

- To educate **our children and young people** on the quality of our environment and heritage, and on how to become suitably qualified to make use of these resources sustainably. Use local people and skills within the education system to achieve this.
- To educate **decision makers** of the passion we have for our local areas and overcome perceptions held by those in government.
- To ensure the **national education system recognises the way of life** of our regions and of our involvement in society as a whole.
- To appreciate that young people should have the opportunity to move away for a time for further education, to see other areas of the world to accumulate information and other skills, and to **provide opportunities** for young people to return.

LOCAL COMMUNITY CONTROL vs. HIGHER LEVEL BUREAUCRACY

- To **change the vertical (top-down) tradition** of decision making to one which is horizontal.
- To ensure **all levels are able to participate** in decision-making, including the local.
- To **find tools for constructive dialogue** and remove feelings such as 'them' and 'us'.
- To enable those working centrally to **recognise local values**, perhaps by encouraging them to visit. By so doing we could hope to **gain their support**. The Dúthchas project has had some success with this.

GAIN CONFIDENCE

- To be **aware of our identity and origin**: to explore our territorial image, retaining the sustainable and diverse way of life.
- To **share our ideas and visions**, enabling us to be prepared for situations as a united front.

USE OF MEDIA

- To **raise public awareness** and therefore make politicians listen.
- To **overcome the media precipitated view** of an inferior or twee way of life.

Coming together as a network of communities in SafeinHerit brings with it feelings of optimism: change is achievable. This network and others within the Northern Periphery Programme provide a united front from northern peripheral areas, and it is important that this opportunity is used to the maximum, to overcome these challenges. How we tackle these will be the key to the success of SafeinHerit.



Some of Fair Isle's local produce at the buffet on the Thursday.

One next step is to co-operate with higher levels of authority: the agencies

We have new possibilities: higher-level government now sees the necessity of changing the old ways. We can see more flexibility and willingness to integrate the needs of local people and that of nature in general, perhaps a product of the emphasis placed on sustainable development strategies, including Local Agenda 21 with its focus on bottom-up communication.

HOW COMMUNITIES CAN BEST HELP THEMSELVES OVERCOME THEIR CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.

A community attempting to regain local control of local waters.

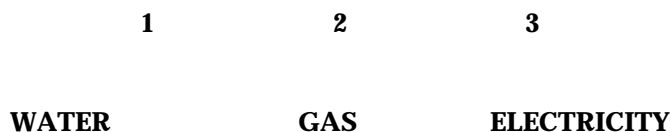
Presented by Fiona Mitchell, Chair of the Fair Isle Marine Partnership.

Once we as communities have outlined the challenges, we can formulate plans. Despite our capabilities can people in offices (the agencies) take us seriously when we are not speaking from offices and much of this sort of work has to be done after undertaking all the other necessary jobs required to make a living? It is easy to feel too small and too remote. Often it is difficult to know who to speak to on what issues: the process of getting involved in bureaucracy is long and slow.

It is important for communities to be empowered – not just in the rhetorical sense. When John Hume Robertson recently talked about the Shetland Shellfish Regulating Order he said it was ground breaking, empowering local people and fishing communities, but it has done nothing to empower the community of Fair Isle. The Fair Isle Marine Environment and Tourism Initiative and the Fair Isle Marine Partnership have been community led in their formation, however all that has been achieved to date is a pat on the back.

So how do communities achieve empowerment – obtain a degree of authority and control that enables us to achieve local objectives?

Fiona provided us with a puzzle to solve during her talk:



All three houses, 1,2 and 3, must get water, gas and electricity individually, without any lines of supply crossing over.

Solution: The puzzle is impossible under these instructions – the rules must be changed and links made between the houses for all to get supplies of the three utilities. This puzzle can be applied to our communities: it is necessary (to change the rules) to make links through partnerships and networks, such as SafeinHerit and the Northern Peripheries Programme, to progress and receive what is desired from agencies (the utilities).

DISCUSSION

- Community partnerships improve communication and exchanges of ideas, to aid empowerment: perhaps **agencies need to join together** as well to address issues of community empowerment. The Scottish Executive Report on Rural Development talks of the promotion of ‘cross-sectorial’ communication.
- A **strategy for making allies** - the communication process between agencies and communities could be helped by each informing the other as to how they function. Communities must tell the agencies what they require, agencies must keep communities up to date on issues, avenues of funding etc.
- A community’s **aims and objectives are likely to be diluted** by agencies to reach consensus. Fair Isle’s bid to regain local control of the waters around the isle is radical and in opposition to how environmental measures are usually established (top down). It is a challenge to meet Fair Isle’s aspirations without upsetting other communities and interest groups.
- The **rhetoric of empowerment** - Fair Isle fits the model of community empowerment, but how far can the community go?
- **Persuading those with power to visit** by making ourselves heard. Is the media an option?
- The **media require an easily defined story**: a product to be sold. Stories must be well managed: the community must be as one. Fair Isle is unique in what it is trying to achieve: a Sunday Paper Feature or Video community programme?

HOW AGENCIES AND PARTNERSHIPS CAN HELP THE COMMUNITIES.....

Leader Inlandslaget and SOS partnership – the interaction between local and community level: the partnership between non-profit making organisations, local companies and public actors. Presented by Leopold Sjöström.

In the mid-80s six municipalities in Northern Sweden joined together to form SOS, Strategies for Optimal Strength, a partnership looking into new ways to stimulate the area and overcome the greatest threat to the area - loss of population, supported by the government and county administration. In 15 years it has moved forward on many of the issues and enabled common ground to be found amongst the municipalities. However the communities were not always in processes. This is important to overcome and also to encourage all actors to identify a shared vision. This can be enabled by dialogers, of which Leopold is one.

In 1996 Inlandslaget was formed as a partnership of public, business and voluntary actors, running the Leader II programme in the area. The Leader programme is a European Community Initiative for rural development, focusing on bottom-up initiatives and partnership actions to stimulate capacity building, competence, co-operation and business development, adding values in the context of sustainable development. The mayors of the municipalities encompassed by Inlandslaget unanimously gave the partnership responsibility for the programme, making it a very powerful actor in the area. Community input and dialogue is very active.

Returning to Fiona's puzzle, Leopold suggested the utilities (agencies) also formed links with one another, enabling communication and therefore leading to progress.

Sorsele Village Network. Presented by Inger Granström.

Since 1994, £50,000 per year has been available from EU, national and local funding, to the 24 villages involved. How the money is spent each year is worked out by consensus at an annual meeting of the villages. It is a bottom-up solution to local needs, without involvement from governments, although it is accountable to the funding bodies.

Shetland Structure Plan. Presented by Fergus Murray, Shetland Islands Council (SIC) Planning Officer.

The responsibility of an agency is to establish a climate in which communities can prosper. Agencies are wishing to help. The SIC, with the current decline in oil and fishing, is becoming more proactive in planning and economic development, finding the direction in which Shetland should move. This is being incorporated into the Shetland Structure Plan (currently out to public consultation), outlining key issues up until 2016 for the development and use of land – to balance the need for development and infrastructure against protection for the built and the natural environment.

The Plan is based upon sustainable development, since it is essential to maintain our resources for future generations. It will be an important document, approved by the First Minister of the Scottish Parliament, demonstrating what communities

require and desire. It is hoped that once adopted the government will help provide sufficient financial resources to meet the aims, goals and policies of the Plan. (for more information see Shetland Structure Plan, available from Fergus Murray or Anne Sinclair)

The Role of Scottish Natural Heritage. Presented by John Uttley, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Area Officer for the Northern Isles.

SNH works at a distance from the government, with the Minister who oversees environmental matters providing funding, appointing the board and agreeing what should be done. The organisation carries a broad remit involving advising on nature conservation and landscape issues and raising awareness of and promoting enjoyment of the natural heritage.

With a wish to involve communities more in natural heritage issues SNH is evolving new ideas and approaches to its work. In response to the government SNH is currently working on a local communities policy, with five routes to improvement:

- better working relationships with communities;
- improved communication, by providing communities with information;
- involving communities in the designation and management of sites for conservation and landscape (being primarily scientifically driven, this requires more time and money);
- a community grant scheme, encompassing rangers, interpretation, schools projects etc.; and
- capacity building on both sides, through increased communication, forming looser working relationships, sharing of skills, provision of advice and grant aid etc. Building partnerships with communities in the ways described also ensures that both parties have a greater understanding of each other's positions when potential conflict arises.

SNH's Natural Heritage Zones project is being developed by the organisation at present. This sets out SNH's vision for the natural heritage for the next 25 years. Part of this process will be full consultation with all interested parties and communities. Successful implementation of the many steps towards this vision cannot be accomplished without the support of these important partners. The zones are based on bio-geographical rather than administrative boundaries, with consideration of the socio-economic benefits of appropriate environmental management.



The puffin—one of the attractions of Fair Isle to visitors.

CONCLUSIONS.....

Such a degree of common ground on a community level provides us with great potential and possibilities for moving forward and overcoming our challenges.

Common ground:

- Local community challenges have been identified
- A shared confidence in local possibilities
- A new perspective on “peripheral” life
- The need to empower ourselves, obtain new trust and confidence

Suggested strategies:

- Communication!
- Partnerships at and between the different levels of government
- Networking (e.g. SafeinHerit)

The next step:

- Action! Achieve and demonstrate something! (e.g.: results from SafeinHerit)
- Make other communities aware of these topics and challenges



At the Dance on the Friday evening.

FEEDBACK ON VALUES, BENEFITS AND RESULTS OF FORUM.....

This was very positive with comments such as excellent and fantastic, particularly in relation to the Fair Isle hospitality. We were provided with interesting presentations and the relaxed and friendly atmosphere was productive, providing opportunities for relevant discussions and time to chat, and to forge friendships between all individuals, both at the grass roots and from agencies. The forum:

- Installed renewed confidence and feelings of optimism and empowerment in all participants, for the SafeinHerit network and our communities: because of pride for the richness of our natural and cultural resources; finding so much common ground, despite obvious differences, to lay down a common platform (challenges, constraints and expectations) for actions and opportunities to come; and providing project understanding among the partners.
- Enabled us to renew feelings of how fortunate we are to live where we do and to explore our identity.
- Enabled important input from agencies (SIC Development and Planning Departments, SNH, RSPB). They contributed much, including ways and means of closing the perceived gap between authority and communities in development and environmental issues. We are already some way to opening up and improving routes of communication
- Exchange of ideas and information has enabled us to go away with new ideas and thoughts of benefit for the future.
- Brought partners together, so important at the start of a project such as this; SafeinHerit is now functioning as a cohesive team rather than a series of individuals
- Enabled discussion about the network in general, e.g. money flow, accounting procedures and course correction.
- Demonstrated that the initiatives being taken by SafeinHerit had applications and the means to inspire all Northern Periphery communities and thus had the potential for a large measure of 'added value' for the area as a whole.
- Provided living proof of how productive it can be when different officials, agencies and individuals come together in a real and practical situation.

We met our aims laid down on the first day, and covered a lot more besides!

This first SafeinHerit workshop can only be described as a success! We are no longer a solitary voice crying in the wilderness, but have shared aspirations that make each individual voice stronger and more powerful. The SafeinHerit network is an organic process, within which 'We build the rural road as we travel' (Old Scandinavian proverb).

It is now up to each and every partner to carry on the Workshop spirit through regular partner contact by e-mail, website, 'phone or letters. The workshop gave us a momentum that should be kept up until a group of us meet again in Swedish Lapland in late January to discuss Land Management within our regions and the Northern Periphery as a whole.

DISCUSSION ON FORUM AND CONCLUSIONS ON THE EVENT

CONTENTS OF FORUM

- There were a large number of presentations during the time available. Although this provided us all with a lot of useful information about the different partners it perhaps did not provide enough time for discussions, and we always had to move on.
- The use of Natural and Cultural Resources was examined but not addressed as specifically as was hoped, to arrive at pragmatic solutions to challenges.

VENUE

- The Bird Observatory provided an ideal location for the forum: plenty of space, good food, amenable staff and provision of extra-curricular activities.
- If such events were to happen there again, a hatch between the dining-room and the kitchen would be helpful: the kitchen staff were careful to be quiet, but noise did get through and it was prohibitive to their activities.

ARRANGEMENTS

- Although it was possible to undertake all aspects of organisation, in the occasion of another such event it might be beneficial to have, in addition, a specific Press Officer and another concerned with travel arrangements, to achieve better results.

GENERAL

- The atmosphere was very good and a lot of people became involved, providing a good basis for the future of the project on Fair Isle and with the other partners.
- Information exchanged was diverse and on all levels: within formal discussions, over lunch, around kitchen tables – about empowerment and overcoming challenges to the production of films and techniques of different crafts.

THANKS

Sincere thanks to everyone who made it such a successful event: those who travelled on numerous aircrafts to arrive on Fair Isle, and/or endured the Good Shepherd crossing (it was a bad day), those from agencies in Shetland, and so many people on the isle who contributed in some way or another. We all went our separate way as friends. In particular I would like to thank Leopold for guidance, Anne for holding it together, and Hollie and Deryk for the venue.

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Shetland Island's Council



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Nordland Fylkeskommune



SOS-kommunerna



County Governor of Nordland



Scottish Natural Heritage



Steigen Kommune



Nord-Trøndelag Fylkeskommune



Vindelälvs kommunerna

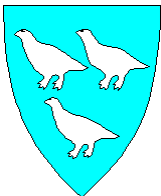


Inlandslaget



Shetland
ENTERPRISE
Shetland Enterprise

The Williamson Bequest



Lierne Kommune

Thanks are also extended to Eva Bakkeslett, Inger Granström, Sigurd Kristiansen and Dave Wheeler for allowing their photographs to be reproduced in this report.

Appendix I

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APPENDIX II

Fair Isle Marine Environment and Tourism Initiative. Presented by Nick Riddiford.

Twelve years ago, at a Fair Isle Committee Meeting, a member of the island community raised the issue of the deterioration of the marine resource and asked, "Should we be doing something about it?" The deterioration was clearly evident because islanders had witnessed a steady decline in fish stocks over many years and this had now been compounded by a series of devastating seabird failures - the visible sign of which included the distressing sight of large numbers of dead and dying newly fledged birds on the sea and beaches. This deterioration, it was felt, stemmed from technological changes during the century which allowed boats from elsewhere to access and use Fair Isle marine resources with little regard to stocks or islander rights or needs.

The discussion that ensued led to a unanimous proposal that we should indeed try to do something about it. The task of doing this fell into my lap because of my conservation and environmental background. It should be noted that the Fair Isle Committee comprises representatives of all island families. I was therefore able to proceed with knowledge that I had the backing of the entire community. This is very important to understand, as is the point that the proposal came from an islander and not from me. Therefore it was, and is, a community rather than a pure conservation issue.

For the first seven years, efforts comprised representations to various interested bodies. In 1996 the opportunity arose to formalise these efforts thanks to funding from the Scottish Office Rural Challenge Scheme, with matching funding from the National Trust for Scotland. This led to the formation of the Fair Isle Marine Environment and Tourism Initiative, led by the Fair Isle community in partnership with the Fair Isle Bird Observatory and the National Trust for Scotland. The involvement of the partners was very important because the Bird Observatory already had a track record in the study of marine biology, in particular the breeding ecology of Fair Isle's internationally important seabird colonies; and the National Trust for Scotland, as owners of the isle, had done a lot to bring the attention of our efforts to a wider public.

The sea around our isle has always played a large part in community life, and continues to do so. The shift has changed, from subsistence reliance on small-scale commercial fishing to a range of less tangible but still essential benefits such as eco-tourism, which sustain the isle's economy and social structure. The three-year Rural Challenge funding allowed a team of islanders to demonstrate the isle's high quality environmental and cultural maritime assets, and how maintenance of these and a healthy, fully functioning marine environment is still required if the community is to survive and prosper in the future.

This work allowed us to draw up two reports: "Managing the sea for birds - Fair Isle and adjacent waters" (Riddiford & Thompson 1997), part-sponsored by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; and "Safeguarding our Heritage - the Fair Isle marine resource: a community proposal for its sustainable management" (Riddiford 1998).

The first report concentrated on the need for a healthy marine ecosystem to maintain Fair Isle's internationally important seabirds. The island community sees the second as the most important because it takes a wider view and demonstrates how proper sustainable management of the marine area is not merely a conservation issue but essential to the long-term well being of our community. Its title, "Safeguarding our Heritage", emphasizes this. The studies showed that the islanders had managed their marine resources in a sustainable manner through the centuries, not for altruistic reasons but because they had to ensure that these resources were still available in subsequent years. In the twentieth century, Fair Isle became within range from boats from elsewhere. The more mobile fishing industry can exploit the resources of an area until these are no longer available, and then go elsewhere. We were/are not able to do that.

My definition of sustainability is ensuring that the resources we use and value are still available at comparable levels for future generations. Because of Fair Isle's location, more distant than any other UK inhabited island from other land (islands) and thus distant from markets, transport links, etc., the community has always taken a long-term view and recognised the need to plan for the benefit of future generations. This contrasts starkly with the short-termism of governments and some other public bodies.

"Safeguarding our Heritage" is a synthesis of Fair Isle's superb maritime assets and heritage, and their importance to the community at all levels, including the economic. More importantly it puts forward a carefully worked proposal for integrated sustainable management of Fair Isle's inshore and adjacent offshore waters - with the objective to safeguard Fair Isle's maritime, cultural and natural heritage.

The title "Safeguarding Our Heritage" has of course been adopted for the current SafeinHerit NPP project. This is because the need to safeguard our environmental and cultural assets and resources for future generations is a theme common to, and recognised by, communities throughout the Northern Periphery area. Fair Isle holds the Council of Europe Diploma. This prestigious designation is held by few and awarded to areas of high environmental quality where the human population lives in harmony with its environment. The Diploma demonstrates that our community can and does have the interests of our environment at heart, and the skills and care to look after it. Unfortunately, there is currently a marked contrast between a land area managed by the island community, and an unsustainably exploited sea area, where we have no control and no say. FIMETI's involvement in the SafeinHerit project will allow us to use this contrast to further our case for sustainable management of the marine resource - which is all the community wants. The power of our argument is that it comes from the entire isle. In these days when the Scottish government talks of "community empowerment", Fair Isle is a prime example. Yet we have not seen any practical steps taken towards allowing us to have a say in our marine environment or management of Fair Isle's marine resources.

Finally, though I may be seen as a spokesman on marine matters, everyone on the isle has been involved in some way or other, from school bairns upwards, in FIMETI and furthering our aims - it is in every sense a team effort by the whole community.

APPENDIX III

Fair Isle Crafts Co-operative. Presented by Linda Grieve.

Although the distant history of Fair Isle knitting has been obscured by the passage of time, it is probable that knitting was first brought to the isle at some time in the 1600's when the practice of knitting as a source of additional income spread throughout the northern isles. At this time and on through the next few centuries, agriculture and the raising of sheep was important to the isle's economy, but the sea provided the major sustenance to the islanders. In their fragile yoals the men worked the local fishing grounds reaping the sea's rich harvest, which was then abundant.

In some ways Fair Isle was less remote than it is now. The isle sits within the channel between Scotland and Shetland, which formed an alternative route for much of the shipping leaving the eastern ports of mainland Britain; the Dutch merchants traveling to the East Indies; and traffic from the Baltic. During the many periods of war between England and her Continental neighbours the 'Passage North About' was often a safer route out into the Atlantic than the English Channel. The seafaring skills of the Fair Isle men allowed them to benefit from this traffic. Passing ships would signal to the isle that they wished to trade, whereupon a number of yoals would be filled with goods; fresh water, vegetables, hens, geese, and eggs, which they would take out to the ships to barter for goods such as clothing, spices, spirits and other household goods: all welcome additions to supplement the mostly self-sufficient way of life. The knitting of hosiery, as it was known, fitted well into this way of life. The native sheep produced good fleeces that could be spun into fine, soft yarns used to knit items for this barter trade.

In 1774 a boat bound for North Carolina from the East of Scotland carried on board a small group of gentry, amongst whom one passenger, a Janet Schaw, kept a daily journal. She described in some detail this process of barter that took place between the ship and Fair Isle. Amongst the goods exchanged were "knit caps, mittens, stockings, and the softest cloth she had ever seen made of wool". Although Janet Schaw's account is highly detailed we do not know whether this knitting was plain or patterned. Perhaps she would have remarked on its appearance more if it had been the highly patterned work that we now know as Fair Isle knitting which she surely would have thought was most unusual.

In the early 1800's the market for hand knitted goods slumped dramatically. Hand knitters throughout Shetland were no longer able to compete price-wise with cheaper frame knitted hosiery that began to be mass-produced further south. The trade with Dutch and German fishermen was also reduced due to the war between the countries and the whole knitwear trade, which in Shetland had been valued at £17,000 in 1790, fell to around £5,000 by 1809. In 1814 Sir Walter Scott, the novelist, visited Fair Isle and wrote an account of his visit. The women were still industriously knitting worsted stockings and nightcaps but he says "they greatly regret the American war [of 1812] and mention with unctious the days when they could get from an American trader a bottle of peach brandy or rum in exchange for a pair of worsted stockings or a dozen eggs". Again Sir Walter Scott, a great observer of the unusual, makes no mention of these knitted garments being extraordinary in any way.

The population on Fair Isle at this time was growing. The Statistical Account of 1790 records a population of 220: by Sir Walter Scott's visit it had grown to 250 and by the 1850's it had reached 360. Without the additional items brought onto the isle from bartering knitted hosiery the families here would have struggled to survive. In Shetland the knitters turned their skills to the production of fine lace knitted goods that were becoming highly fashionable. Here the knitters directed their talents in a different direction. Around 1800 there was an explosion in brightly coloured, stranded knitting in the countries bordering the Baltic, which coincided with an upsurge in trade with these countries. Given Fair Isle's history of barter with passing vessels it seems likely that an item was brought onto the isle from one of these Baltic States. Being resourceful and skilful knitters, most of whom would have knitted from an early age, the women turned their attention from plain knitting and began to produce the brightly coloured, intricately patterned garments that were eventually to become famous worldwide.

Although items from Fair Isle were exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851, initially the knitting was thought to be bizarre and outlandish. The garments: jerseys, scarves, gloves and long pointed caps continued to be traded mostly with passing sailors and fishermen, although some were sold in Shetland as tourist curiosities. Traditional Fair Isle knitting is thought by many to be indigenous clothing but it was in fact solely made for sale to the outside world. The island men wore tightly knitted, single colour genseys whilst the women themselves, for warmth, wore large knitted shawls called haps, worn wrapped around their upper bodies. Production of knitwear continued through the second half of the 19th century and surviving garments from this period show a high degree of skill in spinning and dying yarn, and knitting using the intricate designs known as OXO patterns. Each household produced their own yarn. Dying was also carried out using family recipes. Rich reds were produced by mixing imported madder with a dye producing lichen known as corklet. An island plant, amphibious bistort, known as blocks, was used to achieve subtle yellows, and imported indigo was used to produce strong blues. Indigo was expensive and had to be bartered from passing boats. Sometimes it could not be afforded or it was not available, in which case brown was used from the natural coloured sheep. Because of the nature of the dyes used, subtle variations are discernable between the results achieved by each household. As each knitter also had their own style of knitting and favoured certain patterns and combinations, there is actually a high degree of individuality in the end product in what may initially appear to be a very restrictive knitting form.

The technique of stranding wool across the back of the work between patterning stitches produced a garment that was warm but lightweight. The soft Shetland yarn meshed together to form a dense waterproof layer, ideal for those working in harsh climates. The desirability of Fair Isle knitwear for this purpose was emphasised when, in January of 1902, the isle received an order from the benefactor, James Coats for "100 jerseys, long stockings, short stockings, mitts, gloves, helmets, and mufflers, up to a 100 of each. Also 50 knitted tobacco pouches". The order was to be completed by July of that year as it was to be used on the Bruce Expedition to Antarctica. The isle women must have been mightily relieved to complete such a mammoth order. This order was, however, a one-off event. By the early 20th century Fair Isle knitwear was still regarded as an outlandish curiosity. Fortunately a

number of factors arose which were to lift it from obscurity. Firstly, following the First World War there was a fundamental change in fashion away from the restrictive clothing of the Edwardian period to the softer more liberated styles of the 1920's. The wealthy upper and middle classes took to wearing sweaters that had previously been considered fit only for the working classes. Secondly, the appearance of cheap machine made knitted lace eroded the market for much of the hand made lace being produced in Shetland. Many women were dependant on the extra goods that their knitting could be traded for and faced abject poverty without the contributions their knitting brought them, little as it often was. In an attempt to produce a new market for the Shetland knitters a Lerwick draper, James A. Smith, presented the Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) with a sweater that, although knitted in Shetland, used Fair Isle patterns. Everything the Prince did was avidly noted by the 'bright, young things' of the Flapper era and his outfit of Fair Isle sweater and golfing plus fours became an instant success. Suddenly everyone wanted these sweaters that, with their bright colours and intricate designs, seemed to epitomise the innovative feel of the period. Although much of the knitting produced to cope with the boom came from Shetland it was the name 'Fair Isle' which stuck.

From the 1920's onward Fair Isle knitting evolved: patterns in general became smaller and the area of plain knitting between the patterned rows increased. A more muted palette became fashionable using the natural colours of wool - browns, greys and fawns. Yarn spun off the isle became available and by the 1960's the custom of home dyeing had faded out. The isle struggled during the early 1920's to gain a unique trademark for its goods but all that could be achieved was use of the Shetland trade mark with the rather telling words 'Fair Isle made in Fair Isle'. During the Second World War many large woolen mills closed, leading to another upsurge in interest in Fair Isle knitwear, which when purchased with clothing coupons, gave good value for money.

In the first half of the 20th century few baby girls were born on Fair Isle and by the end of the 1970's only a few women remained on the isle who, through a life long dedication to the craft, had the necessary skill and speed to knit commercially. There were a number of younger women on the isle, many of whom had come here through marriage to isle men, interested in trying to sustain the tradition of Fair Isle knitting as demand was still strong. One couple had brought a hand frame-knitting machine to the isle on which it was possible to produce the allover patterning. The idea of forming a co-operative to produce Fair Isle knitwear using these new machines was suggested. The Highlands and Islands Development Board and Shetland Islands Council both provided assistance in the form of guidance and funding and on the 7th April 1980 Fair Isle Crafts Ltd came into being.

The co-operative was formed with 12 members, men and women. It was set up on official lines as laid out by The Friendly Society that provided rules and guidelines upon which to base the company. Each member became a shareholder in the co-operative by the initial purchase of 100 shares valued at a £1 each. Along with starting up grants this provided the initial capital for the purchase of machines, yarn and other necessities. All the members attended a training course held on the isle. Some members learned to use the machines for knitting; others concentrated on the new techniques that were needed to finish the garments to the same exacting standards that had been used to check the hand knitted goods. Although it would have been possible to centre the company in one premise, many members had young families and preferred to work from home. Meetings were frequent to enable the members to coordinate their production.

Output of the co-operative increased as members became more familiar with the new machines and techniques. A wide range of garments was produced, initially concentrating on the use of the traditional red, blue, yellow and white colours and the natural range of greys, browns and fawns available from the Shetland Sheep. The yarn used on the machines was commercially spun. Enquires were made about the possibility of having fleeces from the isle spun exclusively for the use of the co-operative, but this proved to be prohibitively expensive. Instead yarn was purchased from the wool brokers in Shetland who at that time purchased most of annual sheep clip from the entire Shetland breed around the isles. These fleeces were then spun at a commercial mill in Brora in the North of Scotland.

Initial marketing successes came to the co-operative from an article in "Good Housekeeping" magazine, bringing a flood of enquires. A stand was taken at the Aviemore Trade Fair, proving too successful in that the co-operative was swamped with orders, hard pushed to fulfill. It became obvious that it was not necessary to strongly market the goods, whose high quality was obvious, with enough people interested in purchasing genuine Fair Isle knitwear, to keep the order books filled. The co-operative did however decide it would be advantageous to acquire an exclusive trademark. As in the 1920's this again proved difficult to do. Surprisingly there was opposition from knitwear companies in Shetland: perhaps they feared a drop in sales to their companies? It also proved impossible to obtain sole rights to use the name Fair Isle for the knitwear. The popularity of the style meant the name had become too generic to have sole use of the term. So knitwear can be manufactured in all other corners of the planet and still be sold under the name 'Fair Isle Knitwear'. A trademark was finally obtained and all our products now carry our symbol, resembling one of the patterns traditionally used: a distinctive star shape composed of the words 'Fair Isle Knitting'.

Twenty years on from its formation Fair Isle Crafts is still going strong. There have been changes in the membership, with retirements and new faces but membership numbers have always remained fairly constant at around 10 to 12 and the basic structure remains the same. Officially there is a Board of Directors and a Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary, who carry out the day-to-day administration, but to some extent everyone has a part to play in the workings of the company. Fair Isle knitwear is only retailed from the isle, either from one of the crofts at which all the knitwear is collectively stored or from displays or workshops held at the hall. In recent years Fair Isle has become the destination of an increasing number of cruise boats, generating many sales, as well as visitors to the Bird Observatory and other tourists. Most knitting is undertaken in the winter months, so knitting is done to orders taken the previous summer, ensuring a steady income is generated throughout the year rather than having to wait to sell all the goods in the summer months when we have most of our visitors.

All income to the co-operative is generated from the sale of knitwear. Once it has been calculated how long it has taken on average to produce a garment, each worker is paid a fixed amount per hour, according to the garment made. After the cost of yarns, other materials and administrative costs have been paid for, all profit for the year is divided amongst the members, paid out as a bonus according to how much they have worked during the year. There is no middleman taking a cut of the profit. A far cry from the Truck system longstanding in Shetland, whereby knitters had to trade in their work for basic groceries, receiving very little for all their hard work. Even today some outworkers in Shetland receive a very small hourly rate. Over the years there

have been changes in fashion. Sweater styles are now baggier and the knitters have had to gradually change the shape of garments to accommodate this. The current knitters still use the traditional bright colours and the natural range. A spinning mill reopened in recent years in Shetland adding its own range of colours to those already available and these are often incorporated in more modern colour schemes. As happened in the past, each knitter remains free to design garments using the patterns and colours they wish. This approach stops the products appearing stale, with new colour combinations and garments frequently produced. There is great flexibility as to how much work is carried out by each individual dependant upon how much time they are able to devote to knitting.

For many centuries the raising of sheep has played an important part in the economy and lifestyle of the isle. Hand in hand with this has been the knitting of garments and there are few households now on the isle in which Fair Isle knitting has never played any part in family life, be it in the past or now in the present. When prices paid for wool and meat are now at rock bottom and little value is placed by the outside world on beasts carefully nurtured, it is at least reassuring that ultimately the garments produced here on Fair Isle from these sheep's fleeces are high quality products, garments of great beauty, desired and copied all over the world. The Fair Isle Crafts Co-operative is only the latest chapter in the long and complex history of Fair Isle knitting. Hopefully this ancient craft can be sustained for future generations to inherit.

APPENDIX IV

Scottish Islands Explorer: Summary of each software product used. Presented by Philip Welch.

Microsoft FrontPage

We use this software for designing our website - easy to use, a lot of templates. It took me approx. 30 hours to familiarise myself with it. It has similar features to other Microsoft products.

Microsoft Publisher

Simple and easy to use desktop publishing software, with a lot of easy to use templates easily changed to suit your own requirements.

Eudora Pro 4.2 Email Programme

This is the best email management programme on the market today, sending, receiving and filtering email while you read and compose messages.

Site Promoter Search Engine Placement Software

We use this software to get our web site ranked high in search engines. Site Promoter guides you through picking the right keywords and descriptions in its tutorial. It then takes the information you input and prepares the submission in just the way each search engine wants it. One caveat, I recommend you manually submit your website details to the top 5 search engines. This software recently helped me get ranked number one on Excite.

WebPosition Gold Search Engine Status Software

Submitting your site to search engines is the first step, but we use this software to track our position in search engines and more importantly, the positions of our competitors. WebPosition Gold is the first software product to analyse, track, and show you how to improve your search engine rank position. It makes monitoring and improving your search engine positions quick and easy.

APPENDIX V

Publicity

8th June: Shetland Times

12th June: BBC Radio Shetland

20th June: BBC Radio Shetland

21st June: BBC Radio Orkney

21st June: BBC Radio Scotland

22nd June: BBC Radio Shetland

23rd June: Shetland Times

Further copies of this report can be downloaded from the SafeinHerit website, www.safeinherit.net