

# HISTORY, HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY

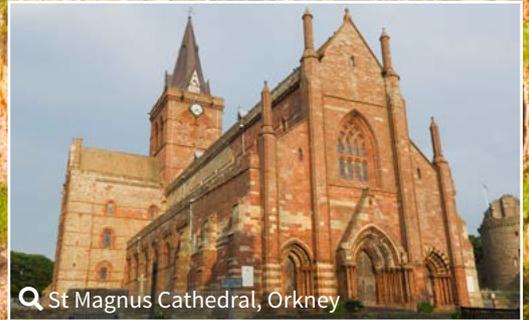
## Orkney and Shetland



Q The Old Man of Hoy, Orkney



Q Treasures from St Ninian's Isle, Shetland



Q St Magnus Cathedral, Orkney



Q Shetland fiddling traditions

From the remains of our earliest settlements going back thousands of years, through the turbulent times of the Middle Ages and on to the Scottish Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, every area of Scotland has its own tale to share with visitors.

The Orkney islands have a magical quality and are rich in history. Here, you can travel back in time 6,000 years and explore Neolithic Orkney. There are mysterious stone circles to explore such as the Standing Stones of Stenness, and the

Ring of Brodgar which experts estimate may have taken more than 80,000 man-hours to construct. Not to be missed is the fascinating Skara Brae - a cluster of eight houses making up Northern Europe's best-preserved Neolithic village.

You'll also find evidence of more recent history to enjoy, such as Barony Mill, a 19th century mill which produced grain for Orkney residents, and the Italian Chapel, a beautiful place of worship built by Italian prisoners of war during WWII.

The Shetland Islands have a distinctive charm and rich history, and are littered with intriguing ancient sites. Jarlshof Prehistoric and Norse Settlement is one of the most important and inspirational archaeological sites in Scotland, while 2,000 year old Mousa Broch is recognised as one of Europe's archaeological marvels.

The story of the internationally famous Shetland knitting, with its intricate patterns, rich colours and distinctive yarn spun from the wool of the hardy breed of sheep reared on the islands, can be uncovered at the Shetland Textile Museum.

The history of Shetland's heritage and culture from its earliest geological origins to the present day is told at the Shetland Museum and Archives in Lerwick.

### EVENTS

#### JANUARY

Up Helly Aa  
[www.uphellyaa.org](http://www.uphellyaa.org)

#### MAY

Orkney Folk Festival  
[www.orkneyfolkfestival.com](http://www.orkneyfolkfestival.com)

#### SEPTEMBER OCTOBER

Shetland Wool Week  
[www.shetlandwoolweek.com](http://www.shetlandwoolweek.com)

#### OCTOBER

Shetland Accordion & Fiddle Festival  
[www.shetlandaccordionandfiddle.com](http://www.shetlandaccordionandfiddle.com)

## DAY 1 - ORKNEY



**1**  
**Skara Brae** – is the best preserved group of prehistoric houses in Western Europe. The Neolithic settlement, lying near the dramatic white beach of the Bay of Skail, was uncovered by a storm in 1850 and presents a remarkable picture of life around 5,000 years ago.  
**T: 0131 668 8831**  
**E: trade@hes.scot**  
**www.orkney.com**



**2**  
**St Magnus Way** – The St Magnus Way is a long distance pilgrimage route through Mainland Orkney, inspired by the life and death of Magnus, Orkney's patron saint. From Evie to Kirkwall, the 55 miles trail features five separate stages, taking in spectacular cliffs, rolling farmland, bustling villages and the serene coastline of Scapa Flow.  
**www.stmagnusway.com**



**3**  
**St Magnus Cathedral** – Britain's most northerly cathedral, known as the 'Light in the North', was founded in 1137 by the Viking, Earl Rognvald, in honour of his uncle St Magnus. With its distinctive red sandstone hues, it's one of Orkney's most significant landmarks.  
**T: 01856 874894**  
**E: cathedral@orkney.gov.uk**  
**www.stmagnus.org**



**4**  
**Italian Chapel** – one of Scotland's most unusual churches, built on the Orkney island of Lamb Holm by 550 Italian prisoners of war who constructed the Churchill Barriers during WW2. Built from two Nissan huts and such everyday objects as tins and car exhausts, the chapel is a unique and special place to experience.



**5**  
**Maeshowe Chambered Cairn** – part of the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site, this fine chambered tomb is more than 5000 years old. It contains a stone built passage and burial chamber with cells in the walls. Look out of the graffiti runes on the walls of the main chamber carved by Viking crusaders!  
**T: 0131 668 8831**  
**E: trade@hes.scot**  
**www.historicenvironment.scot**



**6**  
**Bishop's & Earl's Palaces** – discover the town's oldest surviving domestic building – part of the medieval cathedral complex at its heart. These palaces are regarded as two of the finest examples of architecture in Scotland and highlight Orkney's close Norse and ecclesiastical links.  
**T: 0131 668 8831**  
**E: trade@hes.scot**  
**www.historicenvironment.scot**



**7**  
**Broch of Gurness** – one of the most impressive surviving examples of an Iron Age settlement that is unique to northern Scotland. It provides a vivid impression of life in the Scottish Iron Age, and gives an insight into what was probably the residence of the principal family of the community.  
**T: 0131 668 8831**  
**E: trade@hes.scot**  
**www.historicenvironment.scot**



**8**  
**Barony Mill** – a working water-powered mill specialising in stone-ground bere meal. The present mill was built in 1873. Grinding takes place here over the winter, and in the summer months the mill is open to visitors with the opportunity to see the miller demonstrate the running of the machinery.

## DAY 3 - SHETLAND



**1**  
**Jarlshof Prehistoric and Norse Settlement** – one of the most important archaeological sites in Scotland, providing a fascinating insight into the way of life in Shetland from the late Bronze Age to the Middle Ages. It includes Bronze Age houses, an Iron Age broch, Viking long houses, and a 16th century laird's house.  
**T: 0131 668 8831**  
**E: trade@hes.scot**  
**www.historicenvironment.scot**



**2**  
**Shetland Museum and Archives** – found within a restored 19th century dock in Lerwick, the museum tells the story of Shetland's heritage and culture from its earliest geological origins to the present day. The collection ranges from delicate Shetland lace to Pictish art or a fascinating collection of boats.  
**T: 01595 695057**  
**E: info@shetlandmuseumandarchives.org.uk**  
**www.shetlandmuseumandarchives.org.uk**



**3**  
**Mousa Broch** – Mousa Broch is one of the finest surviving examples of a 2,000 year old Iron Age tower or broch, and one of Europe's archaeological marvels. Take the short boat trip across from Sandwick to the island of Mousa, and climb to the top of the broch for incredible views across Mousa Sound.  
**T: 0131 668 8831**  
**E: trade@hes.scot**  
**www.historicenvironment.scot**



**4**  
**Quendale Watermill** – this powerful watermill was built as a labour saving revolution for farmers and crofters in the late 1860s, replacing traditional hand querns for grinding cereals. Beautifully restored, the mill now houses a visitor centre with an exhibition of old farming methods and croft implements.  
**T: 01950 460969**  
**E: info@quendalemill.co.uk**  
**www.quendalemill.co.uk**



**5**  
**St Ninian's Isle** – cross the wonderful beach tombolo to the ancient chapel on the isle. excavated in the late 1950s then again in 2000/2001, it demonstrates the continuity of pre-Christian and Christian burial. Treasure was excavated from the site in 1958 including bowls, weapons and jewellery – replicas of the silver can be seen in the Shetland Museum.  
**www.shetland-heritage.co.uk**



**6**  
**Old Scatness** – an Iron Age broch and village in the south mainland of Shetland, is one of the biggest archaeological excavations in Europe in recent years and is believed to date from between 400 and 200BC. Step back in time as you explore replica houses based on actual structures found on the site.  
**T: 01595 693 956**  
**E: info@shetlandamenity.org**  
**www.shetlandamenity.org**



**7**  
**Viking Unst** – Unst, the most northerly island in Britain, is thought to be the first foot-fall of Vikings in the North Atlantic. Unst has the highest density of rural Viking sites anywhere in Europe. Follow the Viking trail, visit the Skidbladner (replica Gokstad ship), and the Viking Longhouse reconstruction.  
**T: 01595 693 956**  
**E: info@shetlandamenity.org**  
**www.shetlandamenity.org**



**8**  
**Scalloway Museum & Castle** – discover the story of Shetland's ancient capital Scalloway, from the earliest settlers right up to the present day. Learn about the clandestine wartime operation which became known as the 'Shetland Bus'. Don't miss the Scalloway castle built in 1600 by Patrick Stewart, Earl of Orkney.  
**T: 01595 880 734**  
**E: enquiries@scallowaymuseum.org**  
**www.scallowaymuseum.org**

Please note some attractions have seasonal opening hours. Please check opening times with the attraction.

For more ideas and contacts go to [www.visitscotlandtraveltrade.com](http://www.visitscotlandtraveltrade.com) or email [traveltrade@visitscotland.com](mailto:traveltrade@visitscotland.com)