**[00:00 Jane Matthews]**

I’m Jane Matthews from Shetland Arts and I’ve been working with Living Lerwick to create LOCUS, a contemporary public art trail for the centre of Lerwick. With grant funding from Shetland Islands Council via the Scottish Government’s Town Centre Fund, four sculptures and two murals have been commissioned by Living Lerwick to act as place-makers, animate and enhance the area, and offer a new way to engage with contemporary art and the environment.

Lots of wonderful people, businesses and organisations have collaborated to make this trail a reality and I’d like to acknowledge and thank them here, now. From colleagues at Shetland Arts to the team at Living Lerwick, the commissioned artists and designers, the local businesses who have fabricated and installed the work and all the young people involved through school workshops.

More information on the trail and the artists can be found on our website shetlandarts.org/locus or livinglerwick.co.uk/locus

The free map and guide is available from the tourist office and Mareel, and is also downloadable as a pdf from the Shetland Arts and Living Lerwick websites.

The artworks on the trail consider Lerwick and Shetland in the context of three themes: Where we are, Where we’re going, Where we’ve come from. This audioguide will give you a bit of historical context and an introduction to each of the works by each of the artists involved. They will describe their work and what it means.

Stage 1 of the project consists of four pieces of sculpture. Stage two – the painted murals – will be added to the trail over the summer so, at this stage, are not included in this audioguide. They’ll be added soon.

As an introduction to LOCUS, Edna Irvine of Living Lerwick explains here a little about the history of the town:

**[01:50 Edna Irvine]**

Lerwick was built originally as a settlement to trade with the Dutch fishing fleet in the 17th Century, becoming the capital of Shetland in 1708. The associations with trading and with the sea have continued on to the present day, with fishing still a mainstay of the local economy and vessels of all kinds seen in the busy port area, including oil supply ships, yachts and cruise liners.

The main thoroughfare of Commercial Street is the vibrant hub of the town, a place full of character with independent shops lining its length, while the numerous lanes that branch off the street and wend their way to the Hillhead are brimming with architectural interest.

**[Jane]**

The LOCUS trail doesn’t have a designated start or finishing point but rather a suggested route. For the purposes of this audioguide, we’re going to start with Kenny Hunter’s sculpture As Above so Below, which is located on a widening in the pavement outside Cee & Jays shop at 5 Commercial Rd

Kenny Hunter is a Scottish sculptor who makes monumental civic sculpture as well as gallery-based work. His public artworks feature in cities and landscapes across the UK and internationally.

**[02:59 Kenny Hunter]**

*As Above so Below*is bronze and concrete and represents the practice of gas extraction from below the seabed to the west of Shetland. The sculpture is composed as a cross-section of undersea landscape and its geology: the top section represents the gas pipeline, the mid-section the seabed and the plinth suggests the gas-pocket within the earth's crust. These three elements combine to depict the coexistence of industry and nature. Whilst the sculpture doesn't try to make a statement about this situation it does acknowledge the important role this industry has played in the development of Shetland’s economy and society.

The bronze section was cast at Powderhall Foundry in Edinburgh and the concrete section was cast by Garriocks here in Shetland.

**[Jane]**

From Kenny’s work we suggest walking up Harbour Street, that leads you up the hill with an entrance Fort Charlotte on your left. Then take the first left along Market Street, past the Garrison Theatre and the Town Hall. Civic Soup’s artwork The Never-Ending Gansey is just along Hillhead, past the Town Hall on the left, facing the small car park.

Civic Soup is an Edinburgh-based architecture and design collective focusing on inclusive design, engaging with diverse communities to take interest in, and ownership of, the built environment.

**[04:37 Ruth Hamilton from Civic Soup]**

*The Never-Ending Gansey* spools from a long line of Shetlandic textile tradition. Emerging from a mill of young Shetland minds, here, yarn is re-spun in an image of diverse contemporary life across the Isles. A spectrum of colourways and looping forms tell of maintained connections to landscape whilst revealing new ties beyond the shoreline.

The result of layer upon layer of reinterpretation by knitters and young people, the artwork began in February 2020 through a series of workshops across five Shetland schools led by Civic Soup. Just as needles and yarn are used to interpret a knitting pattern, pencils and stencils of geometric shapes were the tools used by participants to interpret the Fair Isle pattern of a ‘never-ending jumper’. The language of these shapes later formed the basis of individual motifs that spoke of hobbies, games, landmarks, friendships, pets and more. Just as colour is intrinsic to the reading of Fair Isle knitwear, here too individually mixed colours were used to denote themes and links devised by young people through illustrated storytelling.

Jamiesons Mill in Sandness, where production processes have remained largely unchanged for over a century, further inspired in its endlessly spun lines of fast-moving wool collecting around successive tiers of cones. These colourful threads now weave across the vantage point of Hillhead; tracing reinterpreted motifs and recalling the production, knitting and wearing of wool yarn across the Isles.

The culture of Makkin has evolved significantly over time, at once representing consummate craftswomanship, gendered oppression, work for idle hands, an 'intergenerational gift' and a commodity. *The Never-Ending Gansey* draws upon this heritage to knit together stories and relationships of place and home, as told by the next generation of Shetlanders.

**[Jane]**

From The Never-Ending Gansey, head down through the car park and one of the small lanes that lead down onto Commercial Street, or Da Street as it’s known. If you’d rather a route with no steps it’s best to go back past the Town Hall then down Charlotte Street on your right.

On The Street, outside the Parliamentary Office and opposite Specsavers, you’ll find David Lemm’s sculpture Stakamillabakka.

David Lemm is a Scottish artist based in Edinburgh. Through research-led practice, he works with various media to create context-specific outcomes in response to particular places and found objects.

**[07:09 David Lemm]**

*Stakamillabakka* is a collection of forms based on ‘sea fastenings’ used in local industry to secure loads to boats. These artefacts, reminiscent of letterpress blocks, have been translated into linear motifs and are presented here as a possible visual language inspired by Shetland dialect, semaphore and runic forms.

Equally, details of the surrounding landscape are mirrored in the voids and lines of the structure, which create windows through which to consider Da Street anew. The steel framework echoes ladders in Lerwick harbour; devices connecting land to sea and the idea of transition between the two. Standing as a beacon, aerial or marker point, the cross design also references a compass and Shetland as a historic crossroads of cultural exchange.

**[Jane]**

From Stakamillabakka, head down along The Street. You’ll know you’re going the right way along the street if you can glimpse the sea off to your left down any of the side roads. After a short walk, you’ll see the first half of Gavin Renshaw’s mural, PUSH/PULL, facing you on the wall of Bayes, the camera and optic shop. His work spans the street, with the other half on the side of Number 88, opposite.

Gavin Renshaw is a visual artist, combining elements of classical painting and graphic design, with a graffiti aesthetic.

**[09:20 Gavin Renshaw]**

The work explores the intrinsic relationship and historical connection that Shetland has between land and sea in regard to not only livelihood and travel but in the spiritual and primal sense of ancient and future culture.

The standing stone looks out to sea, a beacon, an ancestor... a way marker perhaps. The Yoal looks for the stone, a reference to land. They are floating amongst two worlds, a way of navigating between them both, anchored to one, released to the other.

The walls lie across from each other, the proximity of which allows a mimicry to occur and shapes are echoed between the two in a dialogue of colour.

**[Jane]**

From PUSH/PULL Continue beyond the Market Cross and the tourist office until you get to the area outside the Royal Bank of Scotland, just before the Shetland Times Bookshop, where you’ll find Joseph Ingleby’s sculpture, Storm Cargo.

Joseph Ingleby is a Glasgow-based sculptor specialising in site-specific public art. His works range from large, outdoor pieces to smaller sculpture for domestic, gallery or corporate spaces.

**[10:34 Joe Ingleby]**

Storm Cargoconsists of two halves, inspired by the shape of a guillemot’s egg. The outer surfaces of the work depict tides, waves, coast and landscape, along with traditional sixareen Shetland boat construction. The egg is sliced open to reveal a cargo of elements that make up Shetland: a Scatness wheelhouse and a hearth stone from Jarlshof, Edmonston's Chickweed from Unst and Fort Charlotte, compass navigation and marine engineering, all as deep cut symbol reliefs. The two oldest ones are cut deepest, the next two less so, and the most recent with the lightest 'footprint’. The inner plates also angle and wedge, creating a dynamic surface reflecting the stone construction and landscape at Scatness and Jarlshof.

**[Jane]**

From Storm Cargo, you may wish to continue along The Street to the historic Lodberries and Bains Beach or head back into town via the waterfront Esplanade to see the sixth work on the trail. On your way, you’ll find another artwork, Da Lightsome Buoy by Jo Chapman, commissioned in 2016 by a local partnership of LHD, Lerwick Port Authority, Shetland Catch and Shetland Fish Producers' Organisation. It celebrates Shetland's pelagic fishing industry and its importance to Shetland's culture and economy.

The final LOCUS artwork is Cobolt Collective’s mural, Only Da Sea, on the wall outside the Peerie Shop and Café on the Esplanade in the centre of town, between the seafront and the street.

Cobolt is a mural collective of three designers – Erin Bradley-Scott, Chelsea Frew and Kat Louden, based in Glasgow. They seek to transform a wall or space into one that exudes positivity, encouragement and or celebration for the people it is designed to be used by.

**[12.16 Cobolt Collective]**

We have used a combination of text, image and textural line work to capture the spirit of the local area within our mural. We began the design process by speaking to as many islanders as possible in order to gain a better understanding of what life on the island is like and how this could link to the theme of “Where we were, where we are, and where we’re going". It is these conversations that have influenced our design for the mural.

A consistent visual that recurred in our conversations was the sea and its deep-rooted ties to Shetlandic culture. The island has changed dramatically over the years, yet the sea has remained a constant. At the same time, the sea has been, and continues to be, an integral part of the island’s identity and growth.

The sea is a place of work and pleasure for Shetlanders, and has been for centuries. It has welcomed new people and said goodbye to others. It is home to a wealth of living things from otters to orcas, and is almost like a living creature of its own. The rhythm of the waves is like the heartbeat of the island, steady and constant, and this has been, and still is, a comforting presence for people during difficult times.

Continuing with the theme of rhythm, another important element we wanted to depict in the artwork was Shetland dialect, music and poetry. It was apparent from our discussions that it is intrinsic to the local culture and heritage, and so we were really keen to include this in the design.

We chose a line from Discontinuity, by Shetland born poet Christine De Luca - “Only da sea can greet an sing at da sam time". Shetland has strong traditions in appreciating poetry, and we felt this line captures the idea of the sea being a living thing, capable of its own emotions, singing to its own melody and rhythm. We have extended and warped some of the letters to try and mimic how the poem sounds when it is spoken out loud by Christine, again tying in with the theme of rhythm and sound.

We have aimed to capture the independent spirit of the community, celebrate Shetland’s rich heritage and traditions, while looking towards a bright future. As with all of our murals we hope this new addition injects some colour and positivity onto the Main Street.

**[Jane]**

The LOCUS trail map and guide has been designed by Chloe Keppie. Originally from Gulberwick, Chloe is a graphic designer completing her final year of Communication Design at the Glasgow School of Art.

**[15.12 Chloe Keppie]**

When designing the trail map I considered the use of maps not only as guidance, but also as a souvenir. By using imagery, drawn from key aspects of each of the works, the map is designed to encourage viewers to actively visit each site to witness the pieces, as opposed to displaying the full artworks on paper. Using the icons in this manner, alongside bold colours borrowed from the murals, allowed me to play with these illustrations in the layout of the work, creating a map which is fun and engaging for the reader. My intention is that the map is helpful not only for the sculpture trail, but also gives the reader ideas for other interesting areas to visit along the trail.

**[Jane]**

Read more about the work of each of the artists on the trail on our websites.

And don’t forget to tag us in your photos on the trail @shetlandarts or @livinglerwick