



## ORKNEY ISLAND HOLIDAYS LTD

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## Shetland Rover Holiday

**A multi-interest Holiday in Shetland,  
Britain's most northerly islands, with Orkney Island Holidays Ltd.**

**\*Check the Dates & Prices tab on our website or See our Holiday Schedule for  
current dates and prices.\***

**Leaders Paul and Louise Hollinrake.**



**Enjoying the peace and tranquility of a typical Shetland seascape on a calm day.**

## An introduction to your Holiday in Shetland.

Welcome to your Shetland brochure. Louise has been a fan of Shetland from the age of ten, and Paul has been visiting and leading tours there since the mid 1980s. We both think it is the best Holiday destination in the World, but we are a bit biased! In July 2001 we ran our first Shetland Rover Holidays and since then we have returned each year with a group of guests. After each visit we fine tune and improve our itinerary, taking in new sites and opportunities which develop, so that we can share the very best of this fantastic place with you.

Shetland is quite big and spread-out, and we use three different bases for exploration, so that we can take in all the best Shetland specialities without driving too far every day. It also makes more sense to have a longer Holiday when travelling to the far North.



### **Large gannet colonies inhabit the rock stacks off Hermaness in the far north of Shetland.**

We have chosen July for the Holiday because in our opinion it is the best time for the birds and flowers, the weather has usually warmed up and the daylight hours last long into the evening, known as the “Simmer Dim”. All of Shetland’s special birds are in residence, and the flowers are quite amazing in variety and abundance. Shetland’s history and archaeology show the same influences as those of Orkney with subtle yet significant differences. Comparing the two adds to the appreciation of both.

### Shetland habitats and wildlife.

The main features of the Shetland landscape are the cliffs and moors interspersed with lots of water – long arms of the sea called ‘voes’ and many freshwater lochs. The cliffs are home to thousands and thousands of seabirds, including puffins galore. Everyone leaves Shetland with close-up photos of them! Every lochan has its red-throated diver, and the moors are home to golden plover, snipe, curlew, whimbrel and of course ‘bonxies’ or great skuas, plus their more acrobatic cousins, the arctic skuas, or “scootie aalins” as they are known locally. The cliffs and moors have varied wild flowers, and in July they are very abundant.



**“I’m back dear, is anybody home?”**



**“Puffin poser!”**

## Shetland Geology.

The geology of Shetland is very diverse. “When God had finished making the world he had some bits left over. He threw them into the sea and the result was Shetland!” We will see soapstone (steatite) quarries used in past centuries by the Vikings for cooking pots and ornament, and talc waiting to be shipped for current use. The story of volcanic violence is written in cliff faces and skerries, and evidence of last winter’s storms is especially dramatic at the “Grind o’da Navir”. The large mica component of many rocks means that beaches are full of beautiful sparkly pebbles, or shining sands.



## Shetland Archaeology and History.

The best-known archaeological site in Shetland is Jarlshof near Sumburgh, a complex site with remains from the Neolithic to the Norse period. Nearby is a current archaeological dig at Scatness. It began when an airport runway was being built. A major Iron Age settlement is being discovered, expanding the boundaries of academic thought. It is open to the public and has several replicas of living areas, frequently inhabited by guides in period clothes using authentic tools, which is great fun. Other Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age sites can be found throughout the islands. Shetland was part of the Pictish Kingdom until the Norse arrived, and both periods have left their effect on the landscape. Shetlanders are proud of their Norse ancestry and links with Norway are kept very much alive. In World War Two Shetland was the base for a Norwegian resistance operation known as the Shetland Bus, first at Lunna and then in Scalloway. Louise spent many childhood Holidays in Scalloway and is still friends with the family who maintained the Shetland Bus boats, and we hope to meet and chat with Billy, one of the sons.



**The Iron Age Broch on Mousa is the best example in the World and hosts 1000s of breeding stormie petrels.**

## Our Shetland Rover Programme.

The approach and mix will be the same as our Orkney Holidays: friendly groups of like-minded individuals, interesting days, peaceful nights, long evenings, both of us on hand. We are using good quality Hotel accommodation, all with ensuite facilities and each chosen because it has some character within its local setting and is located within easy reach of the sites we plan to visit in that part of Shetland. We have a superb itinerary and accommodation worked out, so that we can share this fantastic place with you.

## The proposed Itinerary.

**Day 1:** Travel to Shetland. Meet in the Sumburgh Hotel for a short walk before dinner. *Night Sumburgh Hotel*

**Day 2:** Sumburgh Head RSPB Bird Cliffs; Scatness dig; Catpund Soapstone Quarry and wild flowers. We will attempt to visit the island of Mousa on one of our nights at Sumburgh depending on weather, to see the World famous Broch and its breeding stormie petrels, aka alamootie, or oily squirts! *Night Sumburgh Hotel*

**Day 3:** An options day. Either a day out on the Isle of Noss National Nature Reserve, seeing spectacular sea cliffs stuffed with sea birds. Or a mystery tour of special sites in West Mainland. *Night Sumburgh Hotel*



**Sometimes folk get so relaxed on our Holidays that they go a little crazy!! Not compulsory!!**

**Day 4:** Exploring many interesting sites for archaeology and wildlife in South Shetland, such as Jarlshoff; Dunrossness Croft House Museum; St. Ninian's Isle; Spiggie Loch & Peerie Voe; Shetland Museum. *Night Sumburgh Hotel*

**Day 5:** Shetland Bus day visiting Scalloway and Lunna. Scord viewpoint. Scalloway Shetland Bus Memorial. Scalloway museum. Tingwall Loch and Ting site. Lunna Kirk and Shetland Bus Base. Explore Lunna peninsular for otters and birds. Travel across Yell to Unst the most northerly isle in UK. *Night Baltasound Hotel*

**Day 6:** Exploring Unst. Options include a short or longer walk around Hermaness National Nature Reserve & Visitor Centre, Unst Boat Haven & Unst Heritage Centre, Skaw and Saxa Vord, digs such as Underhoull or Hamar, Sandwick, Norrova café & knitwear & Muness Castle. *Night Baltasound Hotel*



**Shetland yoles.**

**Day 7:** A day trip to explore the Isle of Fetlar, home of specialist breeding birds such as red-necked phalaropes, whimbrel, red-throated divers and a great place to find otters. We also discover the island's history & way of life, its archaeology, seals and abundant wild flowers. *Night Baltasound Hotel*

**Day 8:** Keen of Hamar "Moonscape Flora" National Nature Reserve on Unst. Visit Southladie Voe & West Sandwick for wildlife on Yell. Sullom Voe Oil terminal. *Night Busta House Hotel*

**Day 9:** A day exploring North Mavine. Options include Eshanness, Grind o'da Navir good walk, Collafirth Hill, North Roe Giants Stones, Sand Voe beach scenic, Ronas Voe drive along looking for divers & otters, Hillswick Booth, Urafirth, Tangwick Haa, Mavis Grind. *Night Busta House Hotel*

**Day 10:** Departure. Drive South after breakfast to Sumburgh via Lerwick for ferries and flights as necessary.

NB Busta House is about an hour from the airport. Please check with us before booking your homeward flight, if it leaves before midday, to make sure we can get you there on time.

The above itinerary is flexible and may be altered to make best use of local conditions and events each day. It also gives folk the chance to opt for more or less exercise on some days, as we can split into two smaller groups.

### **The Birds and Wild Flowers of Shetland**

In July the breeding season is at its peak, with thousands of birds on the cliffs, wheeling over the sea and inhabiting the moors. We would expect to get really good views of puffins, tysties, and all the usual cliff nesters. Both bonxies and arctic skuas are easy to see, and they often come to see us! Shetland has an amazing number of red-throated divers breeding on small lochs. A special Shetland experience is to go by boat at night to the island of Mousa to see and hear the tiny storm petrels returning from the sea to swap over with their mates in nests in the broch walls.



**A storm petrel returning home to its nest in the Mousa Broch wall at night.**

The wild flowers excel in variety and proliferation in Shetland, a result of the geology and the non-intensive crofting practices. The serpentine rock in Unst has produced a specific environment which supports unique tiny alpine plants well worth the search. Among them we would hope to find frog orchids, moonwort, Norwegian sandwort and Edmonston's chickweed, an endemic plant found nowhere else in the World.



**The exquisite flower head of the insectivorous butterwort found in Shetland's wet places.**

We will take time to see and identify Shetland birds and flowers in a relaxed way. As usual our aim will be to see and watch birds and flowers well, and not just amass a great "list". Of course we cannot guarantee any wildlife sightings, but we know many of the optimum places to see Shetland's wildlife and will always do our best for you. The welfare and well-being of Shetland wildlife is paramount, and we always endeavour to cause little or no disturbance.



**Edmonston's chickweed found nowhere else in the World, nestling amongst the serpentine debris on Unst.**

**Some of the birds we hope to see in Shetland.**

Most of Shetland's characteristic breeding birds are both numerous and relatively easy to identify and see at close range. This makes Shetland a wonderful place to come and watch birds, whether you are a complete novice or a seasoned observer. Some of the most regularly seen birds include puffin, razorbill, tystie, guillemot, kittiwake, gannet, red-throated diver, arctic skua, great skua, red-necked phalarope, storm petrel, arctic tern, kittiwake, whooper swan, whimbrel, curlew, golden plover, lapwing, snipe, redshank, ringed plover, wheatear, twite, meadow and rock pipits, greylag geese, shag, cormorant & eider duck and many more.



**An adult gannet gliding below our cliff vantage point at Hermaness.**

We visit the island of Fetlar to search for one of Shetland's star birds, the elusive red-necked phalarope. This is the only place in Britain where you have a good chance of seeing breeding phalaropes. We often get stunning views of these confiding birds as they perform their typical pirouette feeding routine at our feet.



**"Back off all those with long lenses, I'm only here!" A red-necked phalarope on Funzie Loch, Fetlar.**

## Other wildlife in Shetland

Shetland obviously lends itself to marine wildlife watching, and we have been very lucky so far. Both grey and common seals are seen swimming and lying on rocks. Otters are more easily seen than in other islands, and they have been sighted on all our Holidays so far, sometimes more than one in a day! Usually we see them while they are feeding in the shallows, amongst the kelp fronds, sometimes in the distance and sometimes quite close.



**A family pod of Killer whales known as Orcas feeding close inshore.**

Dolphins are glimpsed from ferries or from the land, and in 2006 the group was particularly lucky in seeing a pod of killer whales several times in one day. We actually saw three adult females rooting out an otter from the kelp beds in Noss Sound, a sight never recorded by science before, and luckily for the otter, he escaped!

We regularly see Arctic or blue mountain hares on the moors and hills.

Just come with us, keep your eyes peeled, fingers crossed and we will see some great wildlife.

## Some of the Wild Flowers we hope to see in Shetland.

July in Shetland sees the majority of its wild flowers at their best. We will see a large range of native flora such as field gentian, both northern & early marsh orchids, heath spotted orchid, frog orchid, moonwort, fairy flax, kidney vetch, tufted vetch, meadow-vetchling, birds foot trefoil, sea rocket, oyster plant, thrift, marsh lousewort, butterwort, sundew, red campion, sea campion, mountain thyme, golden rod, roseroot, and many others.



**Early marsh orchid and a profusion of ragged robin in flower at Catpund soapstone quarry, a wonderful wildflower habitat.**

We help you identify many species of plant during your Holiday in Shetland, depending on your level of interest. We concentrate on enjoying the spectacle and spending time identifying the flowers with you, visiting some lovely scenic sites to do this.



**A murky Shetland day enriched by swathes of yellow and orange Mimulus flowers in sheltered stream valleys, and snow like bog cotton seed heads known to Shetlanders as “Lucky Minnies oo”.**

Shetland’s road verges are full of colour in summer and delight us as we drive around. We visit several special sites especially for their botanical interest, including a most unusual moonscape landscape, with its specialist group of plants adapted to thriving on serpentine rock. Here at the Keen of Hamar just above sea level, we find plants normally found in the arctic or at high altitude.



**The diminutive moonwort, a type of fern, is only about 2-3 cms tall, whereas the arctic oysterplant carpets areas of shingle above the tide mark in only a couple of Shetland sites. Come and see.**

### **Some general information about our Shetland Rover**

#### **The Weather.**



**St Ninian’s Isle Tombolo and 12<sup>th</sup> Century Chapel and enjoying Peerie Voe.**

The weather is variable, but generally we have lots of sun, some wind and some rain during the Holiday, sometimes all in the same day. The wind usually keeps it cool and has the advantage of removing any midges which might venture out if it’s flat calm – which can happen but is rare. Make sure you bring waterproof jackets and trousers, wool hat, sunhat and sun cream, and be prepared for anything!



A lovely painting of our Hotel at Busta House by our guest Steve Jones and seals relaxing on Noss.

### Our Hotels.

Our three Hotels are all different and are appropriate for their location. It saves us having to drive very long distances every day. Sumburgh Hotel is handy for the airport and the sites in the south. The staff are all very helpful and there are excellent rooms. There are good local walks for pre-breakfast or after-dinner strolls.

The family-run Baltasound Hotel in Unst is very comfortable and homely, and is the most northerly Hotel in Britain, with beautiful chalets in the grounds.

Busta House, (pronounced Boostaa) with loads of character befitting a laird's house from the eighteenth century, even has its own resident friendly ghost! We experience a little touch of luxury here and superb food, combined with the quirkiness of an ancient and magnificent house.

The rooms are all ensuite at each Hotel, either within the main Hotel or in chalets in the garden. Tea and coffee making facilities are provided in the rooms so you can make your flask for the day out.

### Our Food.

The meals at all our Hotels are really good. Breakfasts are hearty and set us up well for the day, and the evening meals are eaten in a relaxed informal friendly atmosphere, where we can enjoy the company of our fellow explorers. Dinner is chosen from a menu, whilst breakfast at all three hotels consists of a choice of cereals, toast, fruit, yoghurt, etc, your choice of cooked food and tea or coffee. Packed lunches are usually a sandwich, a piece of fruit, packet of crisps and a biscuit etc. Supplement them with snacks from the excellent village stores throughout the islands if you wish. Your Hotel bar bill can be settled by credit card at the end of your stay.



Our group enjoying some archaeology.

### The Daily Routine.

Breakfast is usually from 8 a.m. Pre-breakfast strolls are left up to your personal choice: the Hotels are well placed for short walks along the beach. We depart in the minibuses with our packed lunches and flasks around 9.30 am.

Time of return to the Hotel will vary between 5 pm and 6 p.m. with dinner usually around 7 pm. You can choose to join either the leisurely group or the walking group on some days, when we will divide into two groups for part or all of the day. The walking group will aim to cover more distance and walk a little quicker, whereas the leisurely group will travel a shorter distance at a slower pace.

### Transport within Shetland.

We expect to have two vehicles depending on numbers, with both Paul and Louise driving. As usual we try to give you enough room not to feel cramped, and to have a good view out of the windows.



**Dore Holm, known as the drinking horse off North Mavine.**

### Other information.

#### You can travel to Shetland either by Air or by Sea.

**For Flights** we suggest you contact Ridgway Travel in Kirkwall, our usual recommendation, Tel: 01856 873359 or e-mail [ridgway@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:ridgway@globalnet.co.uk).

Sumburgh airport is less than five minutes taxi ride from our first Hotel. Our last Hotel at Busta is about one hour's drive from Sumburgh Airport. So ask for a return flight with a check in no earlier than 10.30am. Check with us if you are unsure. We will transfer you to the airport on the final day as long as your flight is after 10.30am.

You could consider staying on for one or more **extra nights in Shetland** in either Busta, Lerwick or Sumburgh. Please contact us for advice. There is plenty of choice of accommodation available but important to book in advance.

**For Ferries** contact Northlink, Tel: 0845 6000 449, [www.northlinkferries.co.uk](http://www.northlinkferries.co.uk), e-mail [info@northlinkferries.co.uk](mailto:info@northlinkferries.co.uk). They have ferries from Aberdeen direct or via Orkney, to Lerwick, Shetland's capital. There is a regular bus service or taxis down to the Sumburgh Hotel at the southern tip of Shetland, about 20 miles away.

Ferry travellers arrive in Lerwick after breakfast, so you can spend the day exploring the capital before travelling down to Sumburgh in the late afternoon. The ferry departs late afternoon for Orkney and Aberdeen on the final day, so you have time for further exploration then too.



**Admiring Muckle Flugga, the most northerly part of the British Isles.**



**Fresh five clawed otter tracks.**

#### **What IS included in the Cost of your Shetland Holiday.**

Full board ensuite accommodation for nine nights in three good quality Hotels.

Daily transport by minibus and short walking excursions as per the suggested itinerary.

Guiding with Paul or Louise for eight days to most of the main habitats and regions of Shetland that are good for wildlife and other interests.

Entry to all sites of interest that we visit as part of your tour with us in Shetland.

Ferry tickets to other islands in the tour itinerary and special evening excursion to Mousa to see stormie petrels.



The boat museum in Britain's most northerly isle of Unst is stuffed full of anything to do with Shetland boats.

**\*Check the Dates & Prices tab on our website or See our Holiday Schedule for current dates and prices.\***

### **What is NOT included in the Cost.**

Travel to and from Shetland.

Travel and medical insurance: It is your responsibility to make sure you are adequately insured. We can advise.

All drinks from the bar, telephone calls, laundry and things of a personal nature.

Extra packed lunch snacks and drinks if required.



**The peace & tranquillity of Peerie Voe and the complexity of the archaeology at Jarlshof.**

### **Once you have booked.**

We will send confirmation of your booking on receipt of your completed booking form and deposit payment.

Then when your balance is paid 10 weeks before departure, we will send you suggestions of what clothing and other things you might bring with you, plus suggestions about a few identification books that may be useful to you.

### **Is this the Holiday for you?**

Are you looking for :

- a multi interest Holiday in a unique part of Britain ?
- a well-organised and flexible Holiday where everything is planned well for you?
- a relaxed pace with a friendly and fun atmosphere ?
- an emphasis on having a good time and learning about lots of aspects of these fascinating islands ?

AND

- to be guided by two experienced people who just love Shetland and know it really well ?
- to explore with a small group of new friends?
- to get the most out of your Holiday in Shetland?

**Then this Holiday is for you!**

We very much hope you will come with us. We think this is the best Shetland Holiday on the market!!



**Learning about Viking tools at the Scatness excavations.**

**What to do now.**

If you have any questions about this Holiday please get in touch with us by phone, letter or email, and we will do our best to help.

We hope that you decide to come with us to Shetland. We think it is a terrific Holiday destination at a time of year when the wildlife especially is at its very best.

If you would like to come to Shetland, please complete the enclosed booking form and post it to us as soon as you can, together with your deposit payment made payable to Orkney Island Holidays Ltd.

Our normal Orkney Island Holidays booking conditions apply. If you need a copy of these we will be happy to send them to you.

We look forward to hearing from you soon. **Best wishes, Paul & Louise Hollinrake.**



**There is so much to see in Shetland from Viking ship's prows, to Shetland ponies, and trying to get a good photo of a marsh orchid. Come with us and find out for yourself.**

Photos in this brochure are by some of our guests. Many thanks to Steve Jones, Bob and Jenny Burwood, Steve Martin, Andy Knight and Jackie Fisher for their excellent shots. The rest are by Paul & Louise.