



THE CENTRE FOR NORDIC STUDIES

The Orkney and Shetland Islands, along with Caithness on the Scottish mainland, are identified primarily in terms of their Nordic cultural and linguistic heritage. They are positioned at the centre of the Nordic world and therefore combine a wealth of archaeological and cultural heritage with a reasonable degree of accessibility for scholars from Nordic countries, as well as Scotland, England, Canada, Germany, and USA. A new interdisciplinary Centre for Nordic Studies with a campus in Kirkwall and a campus in Lerwick has therefore been created.

The new Centre for Nordic Studies promotes the following: preservation of organic heritage; increased community involvement in the generation and study of local heritage in all its forms; and further development of cultural and academic tourism with its concomitant impact on the community. Employment opportunities are being created in an area hitherto not available in Orkney and Shetland. Partnerships have been forged with the Universities of Iceland, Faroe Islands, Nottingham, Bergen, and Copenhagen in particular to explore the history and culture of the North Atlantic Rim.

The Centre has the following four strategic aims

- To promote and publicise research in Nordic Studies, focussing on Orkney and Shetland studies.
- To promote Orkney and Shetland culture and stimulate debate. The Centre will provide educational opportunities at secondary and tertiary level for both local and external students.
- To provide an overarching focus for locative research on Orkney and Shetland and their relationship to the North Atlantic Rim.
- To work in partnership with Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council, the HIE Network, and local bodies such as Shetland Amenity Trust to create a resource which will enhance and benefit local communities.

A taught MA/MLitt in Highlands and Islands Literature is available from September 2007 across the Highlands and Islands region and beyond.

PhD studentships in interdisciplinary Nordic Studies are available.

Summer schools in Orkney and Shetland culture are available from 7-11 July and 14-18 July 2008.

The Centre aims to be of service to academics worldwide, to undergraduate and postgraduate students, to interested members of the public, and, perhaps most pertinently in the context of the archive, to the people of the Orkney and Shetland Islands and Caithness, who will have access to, and ownership of, the practical expressions of their culture and identity.

Research demonstrates that the project will capitalise on a niche market, attracting researchers, MA students and summer school participants from Orkney and Shetland, other parts of Scotland and the UK, and a range of other countries worldwide.

CNS will fill gaps in provision for specialist research in its subject areas, international collaborations, and cultural tourism.

The work of the Centre will rediscover, preserve and interpret local culture for future generations

As projects that enrich the appreciation of Nordic culture in the North of Scotland are completed and as the summer school programme builds, the initiative will make a considerable impact in Scotland's cultural tourism sector, which has been identified by VisitScotland as one of the country's main potential growth areas.

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