

# THINGS TO DO AT HOME

WITH **MODER DY!**



Protecting, Preserving and Celebrating Shetland's Unique Maritime Heritage

[www.moderdy.org](http://www.moderdy.org)



Moder Dy

Moder Dy is a not-for-profit maritime heritage organisation based in Shetland. We are working to promote and record Shetland’s small boat heritage before it is lost to time and the sea.

We hope you will find some interesting activities in this little pack to keep the whole family busy!

This activity pack has been designed alongside our online Caain da Noosts project, for more information or to participate go to <https://www.moderdy.org/caain-da-noosts>

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## BOATS

The first people to live on Shetland arrived by boat around 6000 years ago. We don't know what these boats looked like. The Vikings settled here around 1200 years ago, and thanks to well preserved archaeological remains of various ships and boats we know a lot about how they were made. This sketch, found in the Viking settlement at Jarlshof, probably shows a Viking long ship.



The smaller Viking four and six-oared types of boats gradually changed in design over several centuries. Most boats used in Shetland from Viking times until the early nineteenth century (1800s) were imported from Norway. Shetlanders, from the late eighteenth century (1700s), adapted these Norwegian boats to better suit their use in Shetland. By the middle of the nineteenth century the small wooden boats used in Shetland became slightly different to those used in Scandinavia and the mainland UK, creating a unique design.

Shetland has over 100 islands, so to travel from island to island a boat was vital. Until quite recently boats were used for everything from fishing to moving animals and travelling from place to place. Most of Shetland was connected by rough tracks until roads and bridges began to be built in the middle of the nineteenth century so the sea was the quickest and easiest way to get around.

## Design your own boat

What you need:

Paper

Pencil

Coloured pencils/pens

If you could design your own boat what would it be like? What would it be made from? What would you use it for? Let your imagination run wild!

Boats always have a name, what is yours called?

When you have finished your design, please send us a picture, we'd love to see it! Email us on [contact@moderdy.org](mailto:contact@moderdy.org) or find Moder Dy on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



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## Float your boat!

What you need:

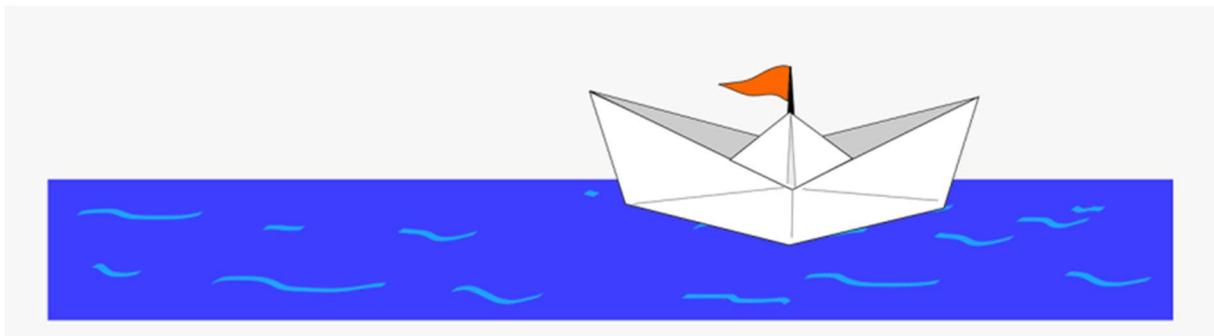
Paper

Bowl/sink/bath of water

Coins/small pebbles etc.

Fold your paper to create a boat - there are lots of instructions and videos online, you can even experiment with different types of boat! Here is one to get you started.

<https://usefulbuzz.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/How-to-make-a-paper-boat.png>



### Experiment:

Does your boat float?

How much can your boat carry before it sinks?

Try putting the coins/pebbles etc in different places in your boat, does that make a difference?

What happens if it is windy? Blow on your boat!

What about waves? Use your hand to make waves in the water.

## PLACES

Shetland has changed a lot over the last 100 years. When was your house built? Can you find old photos of your area on the Shetland Museum photo archive?

Shetland Museum Photo Archive

<https://www.shetlandmuseumandarchives.org.uk/collections/museum/photos>

You may need an adult to help you use these websites to look at old maps - what was your area like in the past?

Pastmap - <https://pastmap.org.uk>

National Library of Scotland - <https://maps.nls.uk/geo/find/#zoom=5&lat=56.00000&lon=-4.00000&layers=102&b=1&z=1&point=0,0>



## What's in a name?

Local dialects are made up of words from all sorts of different places and can tell us a lot about the history of an area. Shetland dialect is made up of mostly old Norse and Scots words.

To find out more about Shetland dialect explore the online dictionary here

<https://www.shetlanddialect.org.uk/john-j-grahams-wordlist.php>

or ask your family. Can you find some words you didn't know? What do they mean?

Shetland place names mostly come from Old Norse, some of them describe the area or its use in the past. For instance, Sandwick means Sandy Bay - there are quite a few places called Sandwick around Shetland! Some place names are linked to boats, Skippidock means ship harbour.



If you want to find out more about Shetland place names here are some useful links:

<https://www.shetlandamenity.org/about-place-names>

<https://www.shetland-heritage.co.uk/shetland-place-names>

<https://www.shetland.org/60n/blogs/posts/place-names-to-past>

<https://www.northlinkferries.co.uk/shetland-blog/shetland-place-names/>

## MEMORIES

Boats were an important part of life for almost everyone in Shetland until quite recently.

Do you have grandparents, great grandparents or another older relative or neighbour who might remember? Can you contact them to ask? This could be by phone, video chat, email, letter or maybe they live with you already?

**Here are some ideas of questions to ask:**

Did your family use a boat?

What was the boat called?

Where was it kept?

What was it used for?

Did you go out in the boat? Did you enjoy it?



©Shetland Museum and Archives

We are collecting these memories as it is really important to record this way of life before we all forget what Shetland was like before everyone used cars! If you can type up or video what you find out we'd love you to send it to us at [contact@moderdy.org](mailto:contact@moderdy.org)

Don't forget to check with your parents/carer and the person you talked to that they're happy for you to send it first.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeologists investigate what life was like in the past by looking at what people have left behind. They can do this in many ways, including excavating in the ground or by looking at the remains of things like buildings that are still here.



© M. Chivers, Moder Dy

At Moder Dy most of the archaeology we record is still standing, like this boat noost at the Bridge of Walls which dates to around 1870. Boat noosts were used as a place to store boats safely, especially during the winter. You can find the story of this noost, and the family who used it, in our archaeological report here <https://www.moderdy.org/consultancy>

## Rubbish!

A lot of what archaeologists find was people's rubbish, or things that they had lost, but it can tell us important information about their lives.

**Do:** Ask an adult to help you find safe and clean recycling to look at. What can you tell about your family from looking at it? What do they like to eat and drink? There will be lots of things you eat and drink that aren't in the recycling - this is the same in archaeology - many things don't survive in the ground.

**Think:** If you were to look in your waste bin, would the newest rubbish be on the top or at the bottom? That's right, the oldest archaeology is usually deepest and the newest things are on the top! What would survive and what would rot away?



Excavations at Troni Shun, Shetland ©E. Renwick, Moder Dy

Check out the Young Archaeologists Club website for lots more archaeology activities!  
<https://www.yac-uk.org/things-to-do>

We hope you enjoyed the activities, come and find us at [www.moderdy.org](http://www.moderdy.org)  
or on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, we'd love to hear from you!



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