

## PREFACE

*Shetland's Northern Links: Language and History* is one in a series of publications by the Scottish Society for Northern Studies. The conference which gave rise to the publication was held in Lerwick, Shetland, in July 1993, and it marked two special occasions: the quarter-centenary of the Society's existence and the centenary of the arrival of the Faroese philologist Jakob Jakobsen in Shetland at the start of his three-year period of place-name and dialect field work in the islands. As President of the Society at the time, I was particularly pleased to be able to organise a conference in my native Shetland, in conjunction with the locally-based Jakob Jakobsen Centenary Committee whose members planned to mark the event by reprinting Jakobsen's *The Place-Names of Shetland*, with a new introduction by Dr Gillian Fellows-Jensen of the University of Copenhagen, written against the background of her own work on Scandinavian place-names in England, and by inviting Professor Michael Barnes of the Scandinavian Studies Department, University of London, to give a public lecture.

Professor Barnes is interested in Scandinavian languages in general and, in particular, those of the Norse colonies of the west. He has written extensively on Faroese and on the varieties of Scandinavian spoken in the Northern Isles and elsewhere in the British Isles. The public lecture by Professor Barnes, on the topic of Jakobsen and the Norn language of Shetland, is now published as the opening chapter of this volume and the ensuing four chapters, plus the final chapter by the editor, also relate specifically to aspects of language use in Shetland; hence the title *Shetland's Northern Links: Language and History*. The remaining eleven chapters range over a variety of disciplines and periods in time but all contribute in some way to a greater understanding of Shetland's history.

Immediately prior to the launch of the reprint of Jakobsen's volume and the public lecture in the Garrison Theatre, Lerwick, conference delegates were privileged to be invited to a reception by the Shetland Islands Council and its Convener at the time, Edward Thomason, and I should like to thank the members of the council for their generosity. I owe thanks to many other people in Shetland who contributed to and attended the conference and have since shown interest in publication of the present volume but, above all, I owe a great deal to Brian Smith, my associate editor, who has been a constant source of encouragement and information. Robert Wishart, Managing Director of The Shetland Times Ltd and Shetland Litho has also been enormously helpful. He introduced me to Richard Stafford who produced the attractive cover design based on a photograph, by the Lerwick photographer John Coutts, of St Mary's Kirk at Sand.

Finally, I should express thanks to all the contributors to this volume whose enthusiasm for and knowledge of Shetland has made it possible to produce a

second Society monograph on the topic. The first, *Scandinavian Shetland: An Ongoing Tradition?*, which appeared in 1978 and was edited by John R. Baldwin, is now out of print but it is pleasing to note that some of the contributors to the original volume are making a reappearance in *Shetland's Northern Links: Language and History*.

Doreen J. Waugh



At the Jakob Jakobsen Centenary celebrations are — from left — Jakobsen Committee member, John Graham; President of the Scottish Society for Northern Studies, Doreen Waugh; Jakobsen Committee member, Brian Smith; Gillian Fellows-Jensen, Copenhagen, who wrote the new introduction for the reprint of Jakobsen's *The Place-Names of Shetland*; Michael Barnes, London, who gave the Jakobsen Centenary Lecture at the Garrison Theatre, Lerwick; Jakobsen Committee member, Laurence Graham.

*Photo: Malcolm Younger. July 1993.*