

## **Cross-cultural links and bonds of friendship**

*Gillian Fellows-Jensen*

IT WAS with great pride and pleasure that I received the invitation to hold the Hermann Pálsson Memorial Lecture in 2016. Most of those present there will probably first and foremost have thought of Hermann in connection with his role as one of the founding fathers of the Scottish Society for Northern Studies and its President from 1970 to 1971. Further afield he is also known for the role he played as the founder and primus motor of the series of International Saga Conferences, the first of which was held in Edinburgh in 1971. To my good friend and colleague at the Arnamagnæan Institute in Copenhagen, Peter Springborg, Hermann was affectionately known as Hermann the Chairman because he had been Chairman of The International Saga Society that was founded at the Fourth Saga Congress in Munich in 1979 to promote international cooperation in saga research.

My main purpose, however, is to talk about cross-cultural links and I start with Hermann as a role-model for these. His university training had qualified him exceptionally well for this task. After completing his degree in Icelandic Studies at the University of Iceland in 1947, Hermann went on to take a degree in Irish Studies at the National University of Ireland, graduating in 1950, and then he learned Welsh.

Hermann's older compatriot Jón Helgason, who was my supervisor in Copenhagen, has acknowledged that it was first during his own studies there that he had realised that the heroes in the Eddic poems belonged in a Common Germanic past rather than in the cold northern country where their exploits had been extolled so eloquently by Icelandic poets. Although

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1 I am indebted to Willie Waugh for supplying me with information about Doreen's early life in Shetland and to Brian Smith for help with information on many occasions and for taking the happy photograph of Doreen and me in Scalloway.

Jón continued to love and respect the Icelandic language and its culture, he acknowledged freely that the cultural currents in this case had flown from south-east to north-west and not in the reverse direction.

It was our own cross-cultural university careers that eventually brought Doreen Waugh and me together in a friendship that lasted from our first meeting in Edinburgh in February 1981 at the conference arranged to celebrate the Bicentenary of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland.<sup>2</sup> Significantly enough, Hermann Pálsson was one of the editors of the papers from this interdisciplinary conference.

Prior to this meeting in Edinburgh, the careers of Doreen and I had been in some respects very different, in others very similar. Both of us were only children. I was born three years before the beginning of the Second World War and lived in an old terraced house in the great, black city of Manchester. Astonishingly enough, there was still a functioning farm behind our small back-garden throughout my childhood. I attended the local municipal school in Northenden, where there were over 40 children in each class, largely because all male teachers under the age of 51 had been called up for active military service. I lived in a monolingual English atmosphere, speaking a South Manchester regional form of English, and had only a vague knowledge of some Lancashire dialect words that I did not myself employ. My only contact with any other language than English was at the cinema, where Frenchmen and Germans were differentiated from the English by speaking English with unusual accents, just as did the Americans, the Irish and the Scots.

Doreen was born one year before the end of the War and she grew up in Sand on the island of Mainland in Shetland and attended Sand primary school, where her mother was a teacher and eventually became head-teacher. The classes must inevitably have been much smaller in Sand than in Manchester. Doreen grew up speaking Shetland dialect and absorbing all aspects of the local culture and folklore. She retained her delight in speaking dialect to the very end and was prominent in the production of the *peerie* handbook of Shetland words that appeared for the first time in 2014 and has brought so much joy and pleasure to both Shetlanders and incomers like me.<sup>3</sup>

My own very first contacts with anything cross-cultural can be dated to 1943. My father had gone to war with the Royal Engineers and travelled via North Africa, Sicily, Italy and ultimately to Greece. As soon as communications to England became possible, my father began to send me picture postcards from abroad with the titles of the pictures and the names of any localities crossed out in ink by the army censors, as well as small souvenirs in the form

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2 Fenton and Pálsson 1984, ix-x.

3 Waugh 2010a, 30; *Mirds o Wirds* 2014.

of Italian and Greek alphabet books and primers. I had always been a keen reader but it came as a shock to me that a cat was not always a cat but could be a *gatto* or a γάτα or even a γάτος. This puzzled and fascinated me but it required something of an effort for me to acknowledge that what the Greek child would recognise as a σκαντζόχοιρος was what I would call a hedgehog. I still don't really understand the etymology of this Greek word.

I know little about Doreen's early schooldays, except that she was an avid reader and that because of her mother's post at the school, she had access to all the books in the school library and read most of them. We both regularly went to Sunday schools. I attended first the Anglican Sunday school and later the Methodist one. Doreen's childhood was considerably more ecumenical and cross-cultural than mine. She went to Sunday schools organised by several different denominations and sects. Her account of her Sunday activities reminded me more than anything else of Salman Rushdie's account in a television interview of being encouraged to attend Sunday schools of different religions and various English-language mission schools in Mumbai to improve his English.

When I left the municipal school in 1947, I attended Manchester High School for Girls until 1955. I was well trained in English, Latin, French, Greek, Mathematics and diverse other subjects but finally decided to study English in London. After Sand, Doreen attended the Anderson Educational Institute in Lerwick as a boarder and had thus a much earlier experience of living away from home than I did. She certainly profited from studying in Lerwick, graduating in English, French, Latin, Geography, History and Mathematics, not to mention Shetland language and literature, which she studied under the guidance of the late John J. Graham. It was, however, originally History that she first opted to study in Edinburgh.

Once in London I discovered rather quickly that what interested me particularly was not so much English literature, but rather the development of the English language from the earliest recorded documents and texts written in Old and Middle English to the great classical literary texts of English, and I chose to study Old Icelandic as my special subject. I know that Doreen preserved and strengthened her love for Shetland language and literature in Edinburgh, and that in her third year she switched from studying History to English Language because she had realised that her interest really lay in the history of the language. She has said that the parts of the course she found most fascinating were Middle English dialectology taught by Angus McIntosh and Scots language and literature taught by A. J. (Jack) Aitken, but I know that she was very fond of the Barchester novels of Anthony Trollope, which I found too southern for my taste.

Immediately after my first degree I spent a year in Copenhagen 1958-59, learning Danish and beginning work on a text-critical edition of an Icelandic text, *Hemings þáttur Áslákssonar*. I then returned to UCL to complete the edition and was awarded a Ph.D. for this in 1962. In the meantime, however, I had been offered a temporary part-time post in Copenhagen working on Nordic personal names in English sources. This was simply intended to keep the wolf from the door but it was probably the single most significant event in my academic life. When asked in later years why I had chosen to study Nordic names, my immediate answer was always to say, "I'm in it for the money". There was more to it than that, however. When I applied for a research post in Copenhagen, a kind of post-doc fellowship, in 1962, I was bold enough to say that I wanted to work both on a second Icelandic text, *Göngu-Hrólfs saga*, and on a study of Nordic personal names in English sources. There was a genuine cross-cultural conflict in my mind that continued to rage until I was appointed to a regular post at the Institute of Name Research in 1967 so that Icelandic had to take a back seat. To my recent great delight, my work on the saga has not been all in vain. Philip Lavender has now taken the saga under his wing so that at least the various versions will be published on-line. It was, however, ultimately not Icelandic sagas but Nordic personal names and place-names that brought me into contact with Doreen in 1987.

After her first degree in 1967 and her diploma in Education in 1968, Doreen worked for a year with the British Council as a teacher of English as a foreign language in Borås in Sweden. This gave her a basic knowledge of Swedish and the ability to read the other Nordic languages. She spent several years teaching English. It was her husband Willie Waugh who bought her as a Christmas present in 1976 the first edition of Bill Nicolaisen's *Scottish Place-Names*.<sup>4</sup> She found this book enthralling. There have been at least three editions and several reprints of this innovative book and there are many of us here today who will think of Bill with gratitude and affection both for this book and for all the work he has done teaching students in Scotland and abroad about many aspects of Scottish place-names.

Doreen was soon tempted to sign up with Ian Fraser from the Scottish Place-Name Survey to learn more about place-names. The regular meetings of first the Council for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland, and subsequently the less exclusive Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland, as well as the Scottish Society for Northern Studies and the Scottish Place-Name Society have all proved of immense value for those of us like Doreen and me who have enjoyed the advantage of meeting scholars from other parts of our geographical area who have been willing to listen to our suggestions and

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4 Nicolaisen 1976.

helped us to solve many of our problems and often turned our noses in the right direction in our pursuit of knowledge.

Doreen had been awarded a Faculty of Art scholarship at Edinburgh University in 1980 to prepare a PhD dissertation under the guidance of Ian Fraser. Doreen bravely selected six parishes of the former county of Caithness as her focus rather than her native Shetland because she hoped that this would develop her knowledge of Gaelic. Well before she had begun working on Caithness, I had completed my study of Nordic personal names in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire in 1968.<sup>5</sup> I was pleased with the large number of names that I had been able to collect from sources earlier than 1250 but dissatisfied with my unsuccessful attempts to date more closely the formation of most of the personal names occurring in the place-names. This encouraged me to look more carefully at Nordic influence on the settlement names in first Yorkshire<sup>6</sup> and then the East Midlands.<sup>7</sup> I am now inclined to think that I tended to exaggerate the role played by personal names in the Yorkshire place-names and underestimate the role they played in the East Midlands. There will naturally often be a certain amount of uncertainty about the correct interpretation of names.

One group of place-names that caused me cross-cultural problems was that containing elements of Celtic origin. Originally following one of my English mentors Hugh Smith<sup>8</sup>, I considered that several of the relevant personal names in Yorkshire were borne by Irishmen.<sup>9</sup> Invaluable help with the Celtic names came when Éamonn de hÓir from Dublin kindly helped me with the personal names in Yorkshire place-names. I had in fact already made valiant, but somewhat unavailing, efforts between 1969 and 1971 to learn Modern and Old Irish under the guidance of James (Seamus) Stewart and acquired a good collection of dictionaries and grammars that made it possible for me at least to appreciate the work that was then being done by Irish philologists, especially as I continued to receive much generous help both from James Stewart in Copenhagen and by letter and mail from Magne Oftedahl, Donnchadh Ó Corráin and Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig. I have even had the temerity twice to put my assembled conclusions about Nordic names in Ireland in print.<sup>10</sup> It is certain that a number of Irishmen did make their way to England in the Viking period and that some of them settled there. This is shown by the fact that a number of pre-Conquest Domesday tenants bear

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5 Fellows Jensen 1968.

6 Fellows Jensen 1972.

7 Fellows Jensen 1978.

8 Smith 1927, 34-58.

9 Fellows Jensen 1968, XXVIII; Fellows Jensen 1972, 12.

10 Fellows-Jensen 2001, 107-113 and Fellows-Jensen 2015, 268-83.

Irish names, most of these in Yorkshire. A few names that I earlier thought to be of Nordic origin have now been shown to be Celtic formations. It seems that the personal name-forms *Macus* and *Machus* and place-names containing both these forms and short forms like *Mákr* and *Máki* that I noted in Fellows Jensen 1968 pp. 192-193 under the assumption that they were Danish forms of *Magnús* can be more satisfactorily explained as Celtic formations, probably new nominal coinages in medieval England and Cornwall arising from a misunderstanding of Irish or Gaelic onomastic practice with patronymics, as suggested by David E. Thornton<sup>11</sup> and supported by Oliver Padel.<sup>12</sup>

Gradually, I also began to realise that the Celtic influence on the personal names of northern England and south-eastern Scotland might alternatively have been Scots Gaelic. I suggested that this was also the case with a number of place-names containing the Gaelic word *àirigh* for a kind of shieling.<sup>13</sup> The first time I spoke about this element was at a conference in Edinburgh in 1976, where Mary Higham also discussed it from a historical-geographical point of view, employing the spelling *erg* for the word.<sup>14</sup> Basil Megaw was also at this conference and Mary, Basil and I talked informally about the element not only in Edinburgh but also the following year when we met at a conference in Douglas, Isle of Man. Here, Mary repeated the lecture from Edinburgh and Basil Megaw spoke about the survival of Manx Gaelic in the Viking period. I did not offer a paper here but was too fascinated by Eleanor Megaw's talk on the *early*-sites in Man and the Isles<sup>15</sup> to hold my peace in the course of discussion. Very generously Eleanor Megaw sent me a copy of the material that she had collected on these place-names. My original lecture from 1976 was subsequently split into two parts for publication.<sup>16</sup> I argued that it would be wise to refrain from citing the Gaelic loanword under the form *erg*, as Mary and others had done, for this form is only found in a sixteenth-century Danish translation of a version of the Icelandic *Orkneyinga* saga whose text has been lost. The Common Gaelic form *àirge* is of disputed etymology but probably originally denoted 'a milking-place for cows' and later developed a specialised sense 'summer milking-place in the mountains', a sense which does not seem to occur in Ireland but is found in Gaelic. The significance of the word in the English sources would seem to be that it denoted a temporary shelter at no great distance from the home-farm that offered the possibility of later development into a prosperous arable settlement, as was the case at

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11 Thornton 1997, 67-94.

12 Padel 1997, 95-98.

13 Fellows Jensen 1972, 74.

14 Higham 1977-78, 7-17.

15 Megaw 1978, 327-45.

16 Fellows Jensen 1977-1978, 18-25 and Fellows Jensen 1980, 67-74.

Goosnargh and Grimsargh in Lancashire. I know that my informal discussions in Douglas 1976-77 ultimately led to my being asked to include the Isle of Man in my titles for lectures on Scandinavian settlement in North-West England for conferences in Douglas and Edinburgh in 1981.

I must now go on to say a few words about my earliest friends from Scotland. I first met Bill Nicolaisen at the International Conference of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS) in Amsterdam in 1963, while my first certain meeting with Bill's Gaelic-speaking assistant, Ian Fraser was at the ICOS conference in London in 1966. All the pictures I have of Ian seem to show him in cold and wet situations, for example (Figure 1) shoving off a group of Scottish Society for Northern Studies members on a leaky boat on Loch Maree in 1988, where Doreen and I in white woolly hats ended up in the bottom of the boat taking turns to bail out with a small plastic jug at the Ullapool conference. Ian was for many years the kind and efficient secretary of the Council for Name Studies and could always be relied upon to offer help and advice when necessary. I think of both Bill and Ian in connection with Doreen and Caithness place-names, although I do not believe that Doreen was at the



Figure 1. Ian Fraser shoving off a leaky boat on Loch Maree (photo by Betsy Uldall 1988).

Caithness conference in Thurso in 1979. Two years before, at a Council meeting in London, Ian Fraser had spoken very humorously about the problems facing the folklorist and others when gathering information about the pronunciation of Scottish place-names.<sup>17</sup> I have frequently thought that Doreen's splendid understanding of the problems involved in this were probably the result of Ian's teaching. At the Caithness conference in 1979, Bill Nicolaisen took me to visit some of his informants and I realised then that no information was forthcoming before a wee dram had been served, however early it was in the morning. I was in the chair for Bill's instructive lecture about Caithness as a divided province in which the later advance of Gaelic names towards the east and north created an area of toponymic overlap on the older Scandinavian names with little evidence of pre-Norse names surviving.<sup>18</sup> This lecture ran well overtime and concluded with some slightly acrimonious discussion as to whether one of the symbols on one of the slides was actually a Norse place-name or a dead fly.

From Thurso in 1979 I spring to the same town in 1989, when Doreen was a splendid guide on some of the Viking Society excursions, although on one occasion she was obliged to spend the whole of an excursion sitting on the floor of the bus as a recalcitrant member of the conference refused to relinquish the seat beside the driver with the microphone that he had grabbed for himself. It is typical of Doreen that she sat on the floor uncomplainingly throughout the excursion. Of much greater relevance for my talk today is the fact that by then Doreen had successfully defended her PhD thesis in Edinburgh in 1985 and given relevant papers at conferences that were subsequently published, one in Aberdeen in 1984<sup>19</sup>, another at the Viking conference in 1989<sup>20</sup>, and had written a chapter on the place-names to *The New Caithness Book*.<sup>21</sup> I should like to mention just a few points she has made about Caithness. For an outsider like me it was useful to be told that Gaelic was at no time spoken throughout Caithness and that the Gaelic forms occurring in the extreme east of the county are almost certainly accidentals. I was particularly fascinated by her discussion in 1985 of the variations in the pronunciation of the name pronounced as [dun're] by the BBC, and hence the only form then known to me, but as ['dunra] by most of the older local inhabitants and [dun'ra] by local youngsters and ['daunre] by outsiders. In a paper published almost a quarter of a century later Doreen spoke about the significance for her of the reception given to her lecture in Aberdeen in 1984 by Margaret Gelling,

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17 Fraser 1977, 37-43.

18 Nicolaisen 1982, 75-85.

19 Waugh 1985a, 15-28.

20 Waugh 1993, 120-28.

21 Waugh 1989, 141-55.



the much lamented grand old lady of English place-names.<sup>22</sup> Margaret leapt to her feet under questions at the end of Doreen's lecture and with palpable excitement homed in on the way Doreen stressed the contribution made by local informants to the understanding of place-names. Doreen never forgot this occasion and nor did I. I mention it now to show the value for place-name scholars of getting together regularly at inter-regional and international seminars and conferences to discuss their work across geographical and linguistic boundaries.

In a volume published in honour of Bill Nicolaisen in 1985, Doreen published a useful article about Scandinavian settlement names in Caithness.<sup>23</sup> She pointed here to the similarity between the topography of Caithness and that of Orkney and noted that it is the presence of a few pre-Norse Gaelic elements in Caithness and the later, perhaps twelfth- or thirteenth-century, advance of some Gaelic elements from the west that make the settlement pattern in Reay parish particularly interesting. There is, however, good onomastic and archaeological evidence for Norse settlement there. The name Dounreay proved again to be of particular interest, as it probably shows the prefixing of the Gaelic word *dùn* meaning 'a hill or fort' to Norse *rá* meaning 'a corner or nook'. Doreen also suggested that there was a meaningful distinction in Caithness between the words the Norse used for a shieling. The word *ærgi* that the Norse borrowed from Gaelic is mainly found in the south of the county, suggesting contact with the incoming Gaelic-speakers, while the *sætr*-type names tend to be scattered along the north coast, where the Norse probably established their original habitations. Doreen also pointed out that it is usually possible to distinguish in Caithness place-names containing *ærgi* by the word order in the compounds, with Shurrery being a Norse formation and Aryleive a younger Gaelic one.

I should also like to point out here that Doreen studied some of the names in neighbouring Strathnaver, where she was convinced that several of the names were likely to be of Norse origin, particularly along the north coast and in the river valleys.<sup>24</sup> She has pointed both to topographical names containing generics such as *dalr* 'valley' and names pointing to habitations such as *Kirkiboll* and *Skail* and suggests that Norse settlement must have occurred in Strathnaver in or shortly after the period when colonisation was taking place in Caithness.

Before I leave Caithness altogether it is important for me to mention that one of Doreen's much later papers brought the exciting news that she planned

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22 Waugh 2008, 410-15.

23 Waugh 1985b, 64-79.

24 Waugh 2000, 13-23.

to produce a dictionary of Caithness place-names that would involve both the names treated in her thesis and those in the four parishes that she had not covered there.<sup>25</sup> She presented some sample entries which augured well for the project and explained how the layout would differ from that in the thesis. Doreen talked about this project with me on several occasions but I am not aware of how far she had come before she died. I hope very much that it will be possible for this volume to be completed and published.

From Northern Scotland I turn now to Shetland, where Doreen's knowledge of the place-names, the dialect and history of the area have been of great help for my work on Nordic names, partly because she and Willie welcomed me frequently to their houses in Sand, Edinburgh and Howgate, and drove me round to take photographs but also because she wrote so many useful papers on relevant topics. The first paper from 1996 dealt with her childhood home and was in a volume she edited herself to commemorate the centenary of the arrival of the great Faroese philologist Jakob Jakobsen in Shetland to spend three years there studying place-names and the dialect.<sup>26</sup> The occasion was marked by this photograph (Figure 2) showing Doreen and me with the book, surrounded by John Graham, Brian Smith, Michael Barnes and



**Figure 2.** The publication of the centenary volume in 1996 (photo Malcolm Younger 1993 printed in Waugh 1996, p.ii).

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25 Waugh 2009, 31-48.

26 Waugh 1996, 242-54.

Laurence Graham. Jakobsen's doctoral thesis was published in Danish in 1897 and dealt with the Norse language in Shetland.<sup>27</sup> His place-name dictionary was also originally published in Danish as *Shetlandsøernes Stednavne* in 1901.<sup>28</sup> It was translated into English by Jakobsen's widowed sister Anna Hørsbøl, with whom he lived until his death in 1918, and Anna's English translation was published in 1936.<sup>29</sup> It was eventually reprinted in Kirkwall in 1993 with a new introduction which I had the honour to write.<sup>30</sup> One of Doreen's papers published in 1994 gives a good summary of Jakobsen's general views on place-names in Shetland.<sup>31</sup> Here she demonstrates that he considered the class of name containing places named according to the shape and form of the land to be of greatest significance. Many of these names incorporate coastal elements and reflect settlement on the flatter and more fertile coastal land. Jakobsen then went on to discuss names containing the Norse word *borg*, often referring to the numerous brochs which dot the landscape and must often have been a focus for Norse settlement. Then follow the names which refer to various other types of habitations.

It is auspicious for me to be able to begin my discussion of Doreen's work on Shetland with her own account in the celebratory volume of the place-names of her childhood:

The picture which emerges from a detailed study of all the place-names of an area such as Sand, Innersand and Garderhouse is of a community which uses its Scots speech in the creation of its nomenclature. Shetland dialect does, of course, have many Norse words in its vocabulary ... but these have not been 'translated' into Scots; they are simply used as Norn words in the Shetland dialect, which is a dialect of Scots.<sup>32</sup> (Figure 3)

This is, of course, the case with the name *Sand* and Doreen emphasises that she never paused to think whether she knew the meaning of the place-name *Sand*. No more than I paused to think of the meaning of *Manchester* of the city, where I grew up. This word just meant 'home' to me and did not conjure up pictures of the Roman past. The originally Norn name *Sand*, recorded in a charter from 1355 in the oblique case as *Sande*, probably denoted the edges of Sand Voe and still needs no explanation today because the word *sand* is common to all the Germanic languages, while the generic *ting* meaning

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27 Jakobsen 1897.

28 Jakobsen 1901.

29 Jakobsen 1936.

30 Jakobsen 1993.

31 Waugh 1994, 9-29.

32 Waugh 1996, 245.

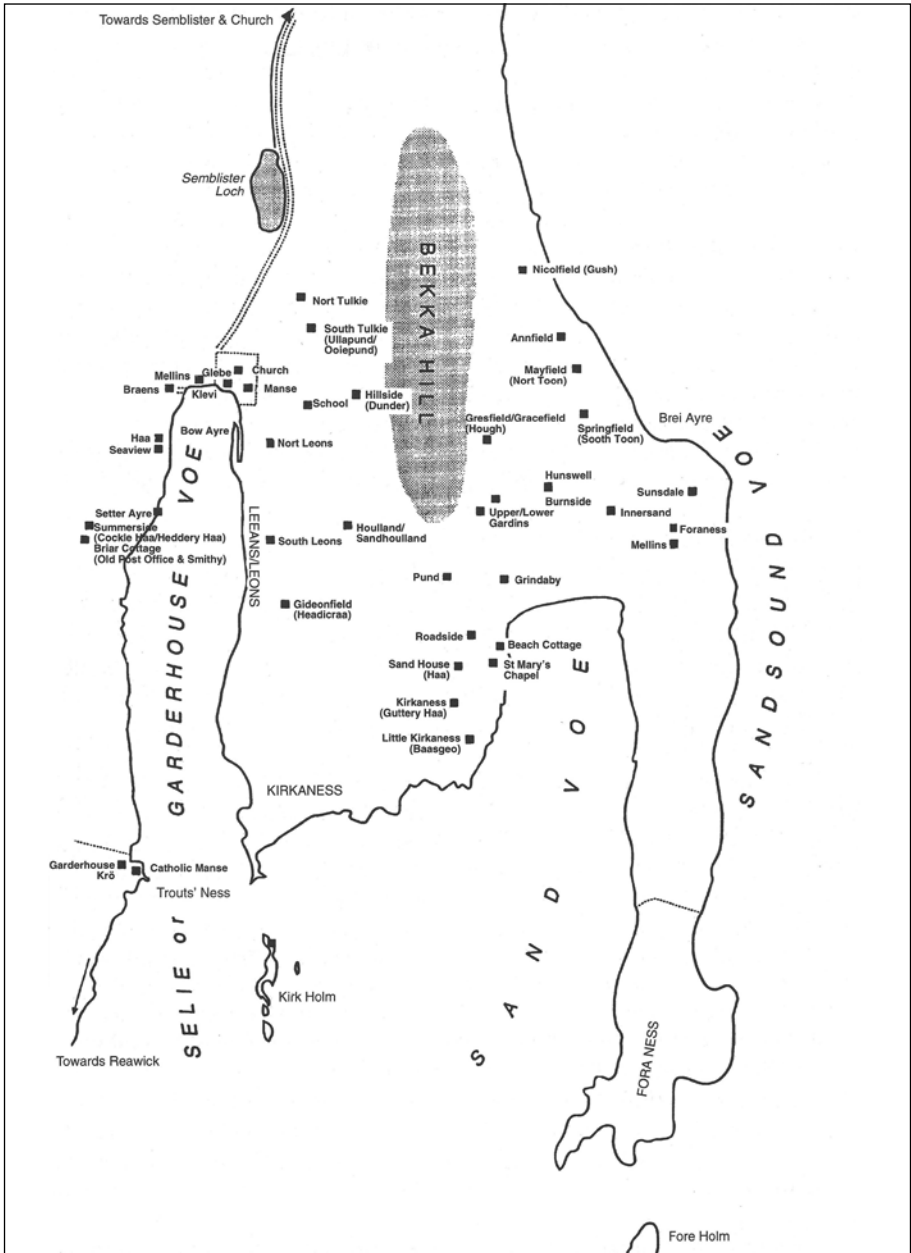


Figure 3. Sand, Innersand and Garderhouse (map printed in Waugh 1996, p. 243).

'administrative district' of the present-day parish name Sandsting confirms that there was Norse social organisation in the area. Doreen suggests that the Norse may have sighted remains of a building on the small island now known as Kirk Holm as they passed Foraness and therefore called the next promontory Kirkaness, although this name is perhaps more likely to refer to the remains of St Mary's Chapel in Sand. These names all seem likely to date from the Norse period. Another possible old name close to Sand is Grindaby (Grindabye 1789). Although early forms of this name are lacking, it seems to be a compound of Norn *grind* 'gate' and *bý* 'settlement'. It stands not far from the gates of Da Haa o Sand. Doreen, however, seems to think that Grindaby can be a late formation, because the element *grind* has survived in the Shetland dialect and is still in regular use.<sup>33</sup> Conversely, she considers that the name Garderhouse (Garthishous 1524) in Sandsting must be an old compound of Norse *garðr* 'yard, enclosure' and *hús* 'house' because the element *garðr* would no longer have been understood in Shetland in the 16th century. In this late period, when many names make their first written appearance, it can be impossible to distinguish between names of Shetland-Norn origin and Norse loanwords that had become embedded in Scots English.<sup>34</sup>

Moving out from Sandsting we come to the wider area to which Sand belonged, namely The Westside, which Doreen describes as being roughly the land 'which juts out like a clenched fist to the west of an imaginary line running from Aith to Bixter'.<sup>35</sup> (Figure 4) She takes her starting point here with the name Twatt. Jakobsen states that a Latin charter from Nidaros dated 1 September 1321 refers to places called *Thveitathing* and *Raudarthing* and suggests that *Thveitathing* refers to The Westside, while *Raudarthing* seems to denote the northern part of Northmavine now known as North Roe because the rocks here are of red granite.<sup>36</sup> Doreen is inclined to accept the identification of *Thveitathing* with The Westside because Ronald Cant, whose knowledge of Shetland organization was immense, also favoured the idea and even suggested that *Twatt* itself might have been the centre of the parish of *Thveitathing*.<sup>37</sup> She also points to two other instances of spellings that point to the Norse form of the word, namely *Twayt* (1543) in the parish of Aith and *Langaskoill in Tuait*.<sup>38</sup> To explain why Norse *þveit* should end up as Norn *Twatt*, as in Brunatwatt in Walls, is not exactly straightforward but the scattered spellings with the diphthongs *ai* and *ei* show that Jakobsen's identification

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33 Waugh 2006, 250.

34 Waugh 2007, 167-69.

35 Waugh 2005a, 230-43.

36 Jakobsen 1936, 126.

37 Cant 1975, 18.

38 Ballantyne and Smith 1999, 95.

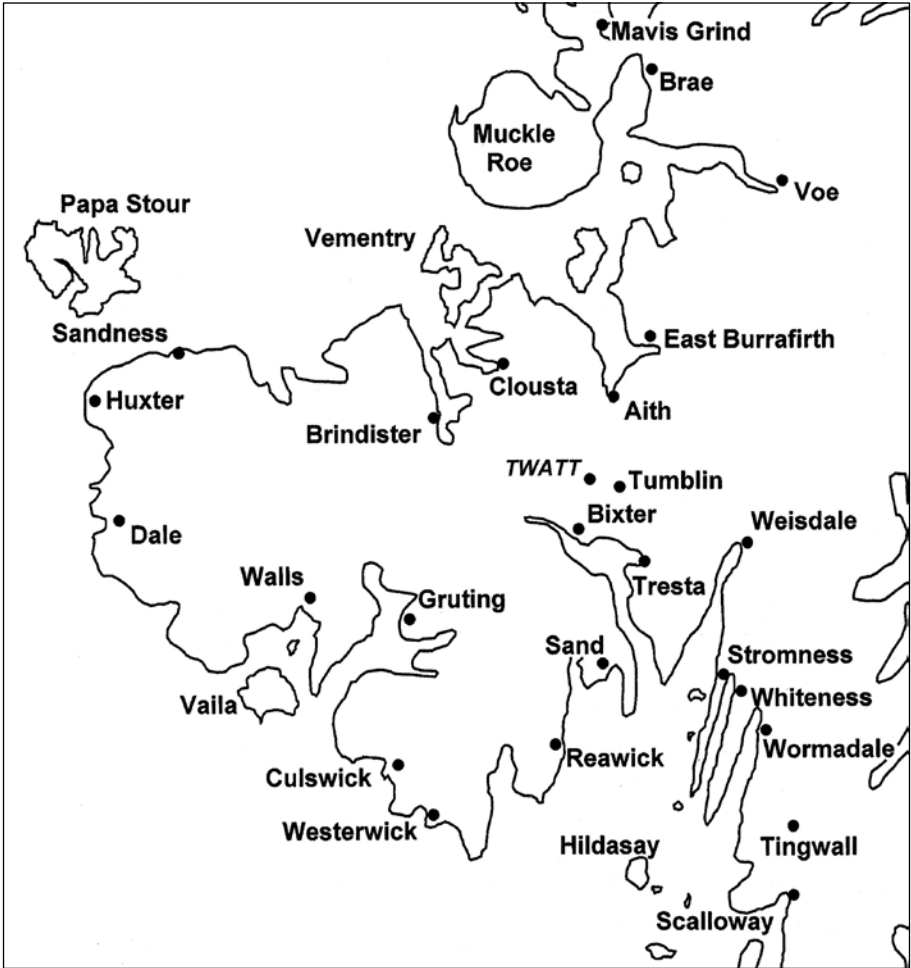


Figure 4. The West Side / Da Wastside (map printed in Waugh 2005a, p.231).

is correct and I have to acknowledge that southern English scribes in the medieval period also found great difficulty in representing *þveit* in unstressed positions and its survival into the modern period in England must reflect the fact that the Nordic word *þveit* survived in the more northerly English dialects as a word referring to a piece of land reclaimed for cultivation so that place-names containing this element continued to be formed for centuries, for example Ickenthaite and Loanthwaite in northern Lancashire.<sup>39</sup>

39 Fellows-Jensen 2014, 91-92.

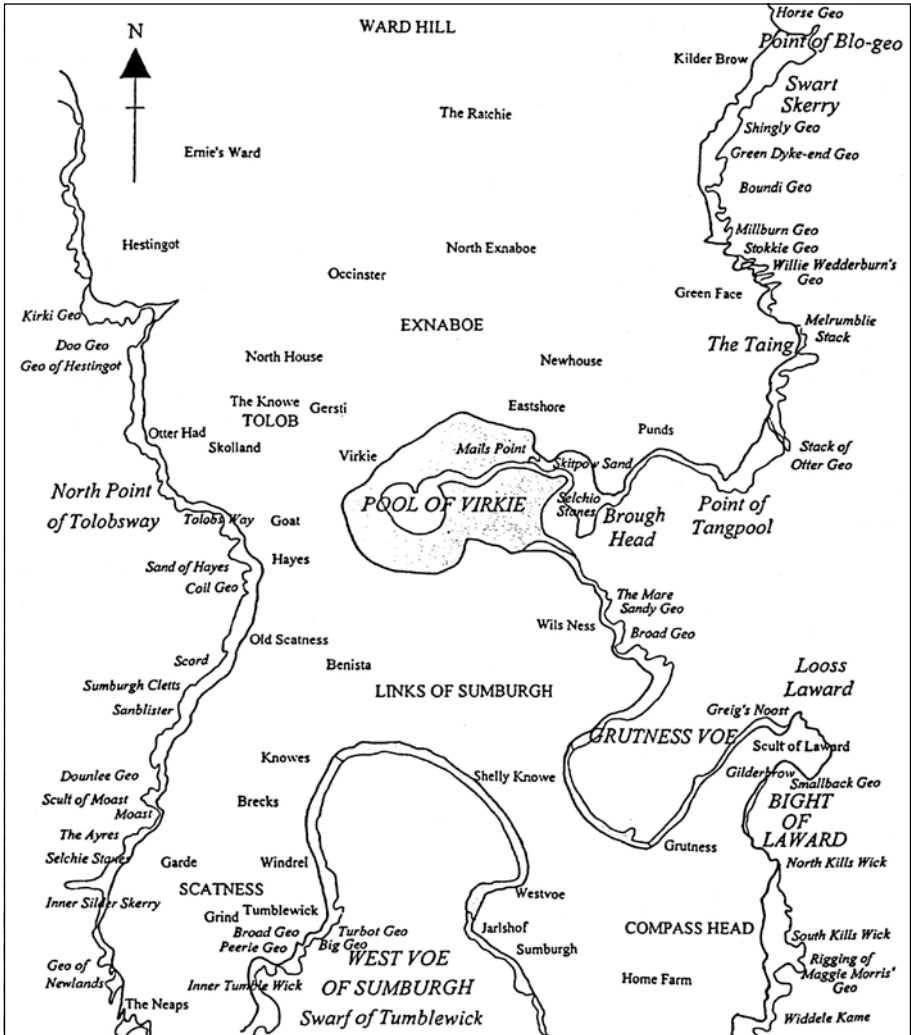


Figure 5. Scatness (map printed in Waugh 2001a, p.84).

Another Shetland region whose names Doreen has studied closely is Scatness.<sup>40</sup> (Figure 5) This settlement has been the focus of interest for both an archaeological excavation and historical investigations. Scatness makes its first regular appearance in the records in the early 16th century and would seem then to have been the name of a township of considerable local importance.

40 Waugh 2001a, 69-90 and Waugh 2001b, 47-57.

There has been much discussion about the specific element of the name. John Stewart considered this to be Norse *skata* f. because it resembles the flat-bodied fish known as skate or possibly *skattr* m., referring to a 'land-tax'.<sup>41</sup> Doreen noted that this could possibly refer to the fact that tax might have been levied on the arable portion of the ness inside the dyke which walled off the grazing land further to the south but also suggests that Norse *skati* m. would suit if it could be assumed to refer to something long, thin and protruding. There are place-names containing *skate* m. in Norway referring to long, thin features, e.g. Skatestraumen, the name of a narrow sound with strong currents, and *Skattøra*, referring to a pointed headland.<sup>42</sup> An incidental point of great interest in this context is Doreen's comment designed for an audience not accustomed to hearing about Shetland names is that topographically descriptive place-names of Norn origin are much more likely to be understood by speakers of modern Shetland Scots than are the names for habitations containing elements such as *staðir*, *bólstaðr* and *setr* that all point to the establishment of settlements but whose meaning they do not immediately understand.

Doreen also turned her attention to the cultural landscape in the Scatness area and argued that the Shetland names Pool of Virkie (from *virki* 'fortification') and Tolob (*toll-hóp* 'toll bay) both point to the landlocked bay they describe just north of Scatness and reveal that this area was of economic importance because it offered a good harbourage for ships on the east side of the ness, while West Voe to the south was very exposed to the frequent south-westerly gales.<sup>43</sup> She suggested that the various names may indicate an agglomeration of farmsteads in the Viking period on the rich soil of South Mainland.

Doreen returned later to Scatness and other names in *-nes* n.<sup>44</sup> Since *nes*-names are very common in Shetland, it was possible for her to classify the types of specifics employed in the names. An important point she makes is that the names often came to be used of much more extensive areas than that occupied by the original promontory, as for example not only in Skatness but also in Dunrossness, which probably began as denoting the southern point of the headland and the southernmost parish but is now used of 'Da Nes', the long southern leg of Mainland. She argues that we must reckon with the likelihood that the significance of a place-name can change for the individual observer with the passage of time.

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41 Stewart 1987, 219.

42 Sandnes and Stemshaug 1976, 279.

43 Waugh 2003, 29-41.

44 Waugh 2005b, 250-56.



Doreen also gave thought to a less common element *eið* n. meaning ‘isthmus’ and perhaps ‘portage’.<sup>45</sup> She described how her opinions had changed from looking upon names in *-eið* as an appellative used by the namers simply to describe an isthmus to thinking that perhaps it could also denote a farm or township located on the isthmus. She had thus become more willing to accept Barbara Crawford’s argument in her book on *Scandinavian Scotland* that ‘Wherever the Old Norse element *eið* can be traced in a place-name it is certain that the isthmus would have been used as a portage’.<sup>46</sup> When Doreen sent me a copy of the paper she had written in 2006, my thoughts flew immediately to the absence of any instances of *eið* in place-names in England, where similar locations would have names containing OE *dræg*, pointing to portage or to dragging overland in general. I do not think there are any certain examples of *eið*-names in Denmark. There is, of course, a description of Denmark in *Knýtlinga saga* chapter 32 which states that:

There is a fjord in Jutland, very large and famous, called Limafjorden, stretching from north to south, and separated by a narrow isthmus on the north side from the open sea to the west. It is called Harald’s Isthmus (*eið*) because King Harald Sigurdarson had his ships hauled across when he was fleeing the attacks of King Svein Ulfsson, as is told in *King Harald’s Saga*.<sup>47</sup>

There is, however, no other evidence to support the use of this word *eið* in Danish sources. The word in general use for a portage in Denmark is ODan *dragh*.<sup>48</sup>

Jakob Jakobsen noted in his *Etymological Dictionary* that the word *\*ed* survived in some place-names and was partly remembered in Southern Shetland.<sup>49</sup> His spelling *\*ed* is rather strange and must reflect Danish monophthongisation. Doreen seemed to think it likely that the practice of portage ceased at an early date in Shetland. She also thought it surprising that there was less evidence for *eið*-names in Orkney, where the flatness of the land would seem ideal for the transfer of boats themselves or goods from the boats from one shore to another by portage, whereas the rugged terrain of Shetland might be thought to have acted as an immediate deterrent to such a project. I find particularly interesting the two neighbouring localities in North Mainland, Mavis Grind (*\*mæf-eiðs grind* ‘gate of the narrow isthmus’)

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45 Waugh 2006a, 239-49 and Waugh 2010b, 545-54.

46 Crawford 1987, 24.

47 Pálsson and Edwards, 1986, 59-60.

48 Jørgensen 1994, 61-62.

49 Jakobsen 1928, Part 1, 139-40.

and Brae (\**breið*-eið 'broad isthmus'), which mark outlets to the Atlantic Ocean on the route south out from Sullom Voe. Doreen also noted, however, that in Shetland in particular there are many necks of land which could have been described as an *eið* but were not so named. She therefore suggested that there might have been a cognitive purpose behind the naming of certain plots of land as *eiðs*. Her tentative conclusion seemed to be that when the word was used of stretches of land that would seem to have been used as portage routes between two end-points, the isthmus in question probably formed part of the Norse economic landscape.

The last of Doreen's papers concentrating on a single element that I shall have time to touch on is her discussion of the names in *bie* in Shetland.<sup>50</sup> Here she explained that the germ of an idea for this particular study was sown when I was external examiner of her doctoral thesis in 1985 and commented on the two Caithness place-names Canisbay and Duncansby, whose recorded forms reflect that the generic must have been West Scandinavian *bær* m. denoting a farm but which nevertheless reminded me of the place-names I had studied in Yorkshire in which personal names of Celtic origin are combined with the Old Danish cognate element *bý*. In this case, however, the personal names were of Irish origin: *Dubgilla* in Duggleby, *Fíacc* in Fixby and *Máelmuire* in Melmerby.<sup>51</sup> I cannot remember what I said at the examination or find any notes of my comments. Perhaps both thoughts and notes were washed away in the immediately following wet and windy conference in Uist, attended by both Doreen and me. The important fact about the two Caithness names is that both Canisbay and Duncansby had considerable local significance in the early period of Norwegian colonial influence.

The 26 Shetland names in *-bi* treated by Doreen in 2006 are a different matter. Eleven of them refer to the location of the name relative to other parts of the settlement and are very likely to be young. Names whose specifics may go back to the period when the name was first in use include at least three instances of names containing the word *kyrkja* 'church', two in Unst, one in Weisdale. Grindaby in Sand containing a word meaning 'gate' could be old but not necessarily so. The same probably applies to Quoyabie containing *kví* f. 'fold for animals' in Delting. Tiptoby on Fetlar containing *toft* f. 'site for a building' can be compared with the name Tosaby, earlier *Totmanby*, on the Isle of Man which means 'the settlement of the toft-holders'.<sup>52</sup> These names referring to rural activities and some others of less certain interpretation may seem to point to settlements established at a later date. For discussions about

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50 Waugh 2006b, 298-321.

51 Fellows Jensen 1972, 12, 190-191.

52 Broderick 2002, 182-83.

these names I am deeply indebted not only to Doreen but also to our friends and colleagues Tom Schmidt and Arne Thorsteinsson, who have written persuasively about related place-names and settlements in Norway and the Faroes. Tom Schmidt has certainly shown that the element *bø* could be used in Western Norway to denote 'enclosed land, meadow or field'.<sup>53</sup> Arne Thorsteinsson, for his part, has berated me for talking about settlements being situated on the outfields of older settlements because the Faroese element *bær* m. should normally be translated as meaning 'cultivated land'.<sup>54</sup> He gave me some good cross-cultural instruction designed for ignorant city-dwellers to the effect that the building of habitations on cultivated land in the early period would have been unlikely. Showing a map of the *bygd* of Sandur, on Sandøym in the Faroes, (Figure 6) he explained that the *bygd* was the district responsible for agricultural matters. This carries me back to the Viking conference in Tórshavn in 2001, where Doreen and I were both carried bodily on and off the small ferry between Sandøym and Skuvøym. I confess that I most vividly remember the method of transport when I should have been digesting the significance of the well-documented historical *bygd* of Sandur. I now realise why the West Scandinavian element *bær* is of such frequent occurrence in the Faroes. There are hundreds of such place-names there in which the reference is simply to cultivated land and not to a habitation. The element can also, however, be employed of a district such as Sandur. The sites of three primary farms in this *bygd* are shown here and called *Úti á Bø*, *Norðri á Bø* and *Á sondum*. They lie so to speak at the corners of the settled district and not right in the middle of the arable land. Subsequently in the medieval period farms could be established as the result of the splitting up of the Viking-Age farm. These would be referred to by the delightful term *bylingar*, in the same way as ducks have ducklings and geese have goslings. It seems that many of the names in *-bi* in Shetland are borne by bylings.

Finally, as a brief appendix to this discussion of the names in *-bi(e)* I should like to end not with a bang but merely a whimper with my own view that there are no certain occurrences of the generic *þorp* in Shetland. Jakob Jakobsen tentatively suggested that *þorp* might be contained in the names Everthorp, Mandrup and Wolthrop.<sup>55</sup> With help from Brian Smith and Iris Sandison I have been able to show that the house called Everthorp in Walls (HU 199505) was named after one of the whaling ships that had been given its name by a Hull shipowner who had lived in the hamlet of Everthorpe in Yorkshire in the 19th century, and it seems likely that the house in Shetland

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53 Schmidt 1997, 143-59

54 Thorsteinsson 1996, 183-96.

55 Jakobsen 1901, 110.

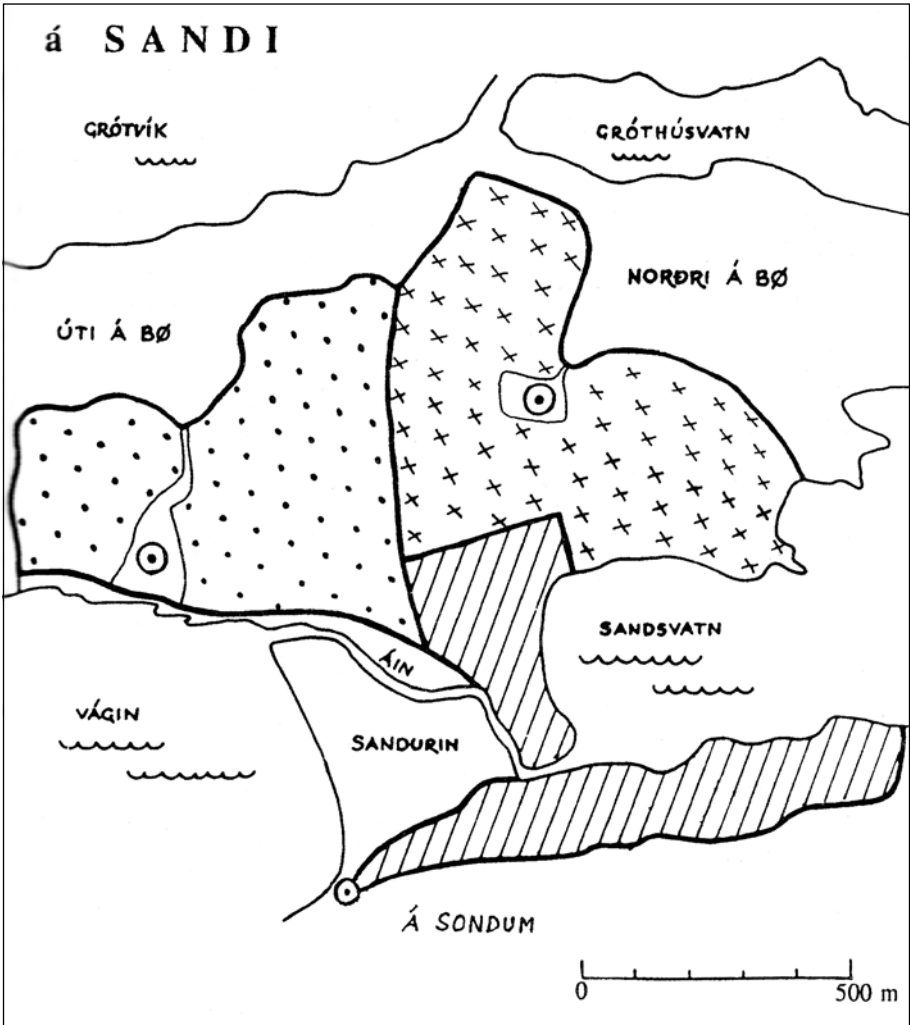


Figure 6. Map of the settlement area Á Sandi with three primary farms on Sandø, Faroe Islands, drawn by Arne Thorsteinsson in Thorsteinsson 1996, p. 191.

had been built by one of the many Shetlanders who had served on this ship.<sup>56</sup> The name Mandrup which survives on the Pathfinder map in the forms Seat of Mandrup and Green of Mandrup (HU 3624) was probably originally a Danish surname or Christian name. The form taken by the name is certainly

<sup>56</sup> Fellows-Jensen 2007, 57-63.

Danish and not Norn. The third name Wolthrop mentioned by Jakobsen and claimed to be in Sandwick is said by Brian Smith to be correctly located in Dunrossness and called Wiltrow. This also seems unlikely to be a name of Norn origin. My conclusion is that my own contribution to the place-names of Shetland has only been a rather negative one. (Figure 7)



Figure 7. Gillian Fellows-Jensen and Doreen Waugh at Scalloway 2006. Photo by Brian Smith

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