

## The fiddle at sea: tradition and innovation among Shetland musicians in the whaling industry

*Frances Wilkins*

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Excerpted from:

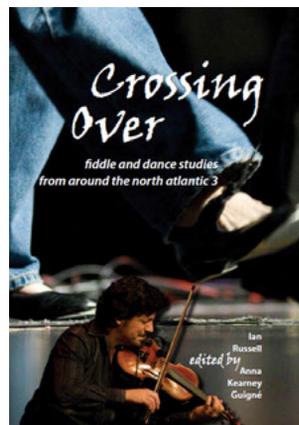
### Crossing Over

Fiddle and Dance Studies from around the North Atlantic 3

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## 2

# The fiddle at sea: tradition and innovation among Shetland musicians in the whaling industry

FRANCES WILKINS

### Introduction

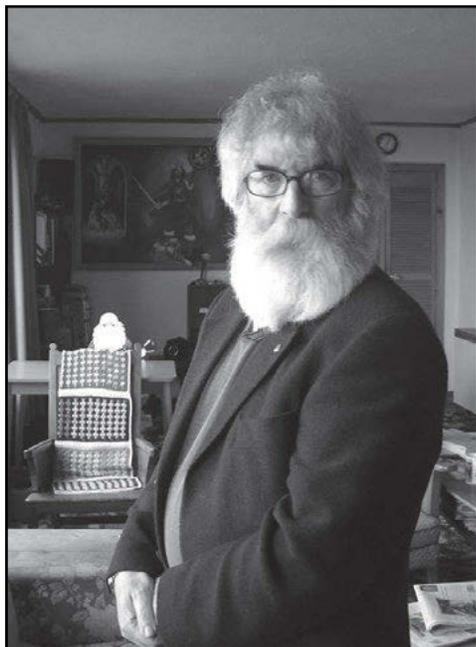
Among Shetlanders the fiddle has been the best represented instrument since it was first introduced to the islands by Hanseatic traders from Northern Europe in the early 1700s.<sup>1</sup> By 1809, it was commented by Arthur Edmonstone that in Shetland ‘among the peasantry almost one in ten can play on the violin’, and by 1920 most households on the islands were believed to own a fiddle.<sup>2</sup> Today there are believed to be approximately 340 tunes in the traditional Shetland fiddle repertoire.<sup>3</sup> Until the early twentieth century and the introduction of pianos, melodeons, and pedal organs or harmoniums, the fiddle was the dominant instrument in use among islanders. Due to its portability, it was often taken aboard sailing ships and other vessels for musical entertainment.<sup>4</sup> The necessity of music among whalers was described by David Proctor as follows:

The men who undertook expeditions to Polar regions were perhaps those who needed music most, in order to maintain their morale during the long dark hours of winter when their ships were caught in the ice or they were living in huts, separated by vast distances from their homelands. This was especially true in those periods when wireless communication and aircraft, that might bring relief, did not exist.<sup>5</sup>

The influence of the fiddle was not only confined to crew members working aboard whaling ships, but extended to the indigenous populations in Arctic Alaska, Canada, and Greenland with whom whalers came into contact. Dan Worrall noted that anthropologists and musicologists of the early twentieth century ‘remarked upon the frequent use of fiddles, concertinas, and accordions by Inuit and Aleut people, as well as upon the proportion of European and American dance music that they played’.<sup>6</sup>

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how and to what extent the instrument was used at sea by Shetlanders employed in the whaling industries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>7</sup> In addition to using various written sources, I received help from Angus Johnson at the Shetland Museum and Archives in Lerwick and interviewed two men with extensive knowledge of fiddle music and the Shetland whaling industry. These are Charlie Simpson (see Figure 1), a pianist for the

Shetland fiddlers and long standing member of the Shetland Folklore Society whose father was a whaler, and Mitchel Arthur (see Figure 2), a music enthusiast and ex-whaler who was stationed in South Georgia during the 1950s and 60s. The oral account from Mitchel Arthur was particularly useful as it enabled me to present a first-hand account of the South Georgia whaling industry and the music performed by workers in the industry, while the musical knowledge shared by Charlie Simpson gave me a better understanding of the repertoire associated with the whalers from Shetland.



**Figure 1** Charlie Simpson, Cunningsburgh, Shetland Islands, 16 May 2008.

*Photograph by Frances Wilkins*



**Figure 2** Mitchel Arthur, Firth, Shetland Islands, 15 May 2008.

*Photograph by Frances Wilkins*

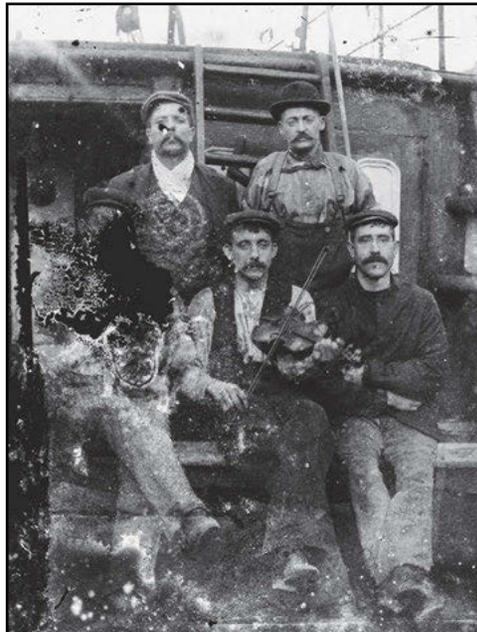
While whaling was not the only nautical occupation where fiddle players were employed (many Shetlanders joined the Merchant and Royal Navies and worked in the herring industry), the whaling industry was particularly conducive to fiddle playing due to the long periods of inactivity associated with the occupation. Rather than use the fiddle for accompanying work, as with the sea shanty, the use of the instrument in this environment appears to have been solely for entertainment purposes. Dan Worrall, in his explorations of the use of concertina at sea, uncovered the following statistics which show the recorded instances of fiddle playing at sea far outnumbering those of other instruments.

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Instrument	Instances	Ranking
Violin/fiddle	1315	Very High
Flute	676	
Guitar	625	High
Banjo	466	
Accordion	331	
Tin whistle	322	Medium
Concertina	262	
Jew's harp	151	
Mandolin	134	Low
Harmonica / Mouth Organ/	121	

**Figure 3** Frequency of occurrence of various musical instruments on board ships during the period 1860–1900, in numbers of ‘hits’ from a digital search.<sup>8</sup>

Whilst this must be treated only as a snapshot view of the period 1860–1900 relying solely on written documentation, it still gives some indication of the extent to which the fiddle was used among seafarers during the nineteenth century. Figure 4 is a photograph of crew members onboard a steamer in the early 1900s. The fiddle player positioned in the centre is Gibby Wood from Muckle Roe in the North Mainland of Shetland.<sup>9</sup>

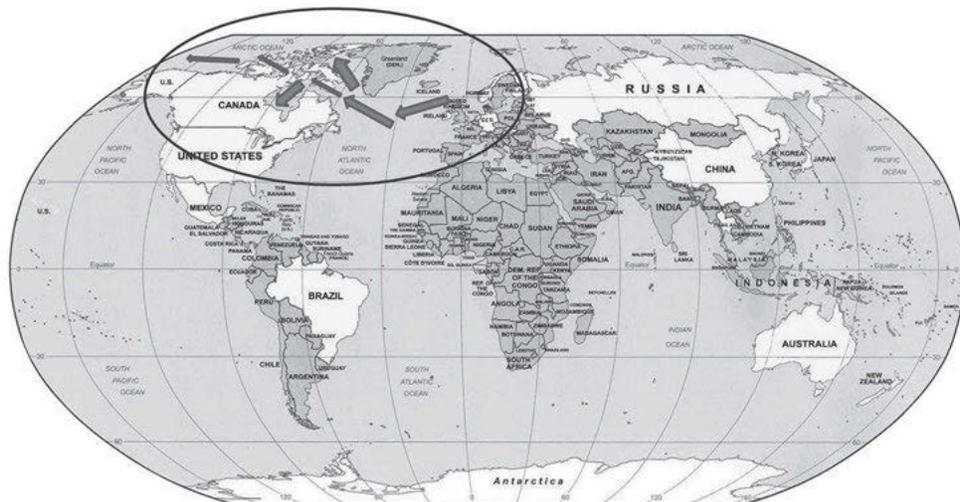


**Figure 4** Crew men on board a steamer, early 1900s. *Shetland Museum Photographic Archives*

### The Arctic Whaling Industry

The Arctic whaling industry began in the early 1700s when ships started travelling to the Davis Straits off the Greenland coast in order to hunt down the whales.<sup>10</sup> Leaving

in the spring, a whaling season tended to last between four and five months.<sup>11</sup> Greenland was the centre for the industry in the late 1700s, after which time attention was drawn to areas further west such as Hudson Bay and the Bering Straits.<sup>12</sup> Figure 5 is a map showing the routes taken by ships employed in the industry. In 1851 American whalers introduced the practice of 'wintering'. Vessels became frozen into the ice and the crew members were forced to live off the land. This required them to depend on the Inuit for food and clothing, and trading became established, which resulted in interdependence between indigenous populations and the whalers.<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 5** Map showing Arctic whaling routes<sup>14</sup>

The popularity of whaling as an occupation for Shetland men was due to two main factors. The first was that inshore fishing around the coast of Shetland was winding down in the early 1800s and the second the lack of opportunity in fishing forced men to look to the Arctic whaling industry as an alternative means of earning a living.<sup>15</sup> This was made possible because whaling ships from English and Scottish ports had started the practice of hiring extra crew members in Lerwick, the last port of call before they continued their journeys westwards to the whaling grounds.<sup>16</sup> Shetlanders and Orcadians were willing to work for less than mainlanders and were known as excellent seamen. They were welcomed onboard whaling ships as crew members, and, in addition to this, many Shetlanders played the fiddle. Whaling ships were known to complete their crew with a fiddle player so that they could 'while away the hours during times of inactivity'.<sup>17</sup> Evidence of the popularity of fiddle playing in the whaling industry can be found in whale company ledgers such as those of the Lerwick-based Hay and Company, where the purchase of fiddle strings was frequently recorded. Copies of these documents are available for viewing in the Shetland archives in Lerwick.<sup>18</sup> The variety of nationalities working in the whaling industry allowed for vibrant musical interchange between crew members, as Laurence Williamson of Yell described in his article, 'Fiddle Springs', in 1971:

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Each Greenland ship used to carry a fiddler, sometimes a Southerner, sometimes a Shetlander, to play to the men while at work to enliven them. And sometimes the fiddlers from several ships would meet and try their skill. And I think I have heard of a Shetland fiddler competing with the Dutch from a buss or ship. No wonder that tunes are so abundant. Several of them are fairy tunes, and are likely very old; many are of Norse origin and many Scotch; and many of them must have been learned from the sources indicated above. There is even a Yaki, i.e. Eskimo tune.<sup>19</sup>

### **‘Yakki’ and ‘Whaling’ Tunes**

The large cross-section of people working in the Greenland whaling industry from England, Scotland, Shetland, Norway, and Denmark, among other places, resulted in a vibrant mixture of tunes learned and played amongst the musicians employed on the whaling ships.<sup>20</sup> Some of these were then transported back to Shetland following a whaling season, often with little or no information on their origins. This process of musical exchange led to the acceptance of two new, albeit small, categories in the Shetland repertoire which were identified by Peter Cooke as ‘Yakki’ tunes (apparently learned from Inuit sources), and ‘whaling’ tunes (learned or composed by musicians aboard whaling ships).<sup>21</sup> While Cooke suggests that ‘Yakki’ tunes have been totally forgotten, two tunes were attributed to this category by the Shetland fiddle teacher and researcher, Tom Anderson. These are ‘Hjogrovoltar’ and ‘Da Greenland Man’s Tune’, the latter originating as a listening tune, possibly with Inuit words to it.<sup>22</sup> ‘Hjogrovoltar’, which takes its name from a croft on the island of Fetlar, has been described as both a ‘Yakki’ and a ‘trowy’ tune. ‘Trowy’ tunes constitute another category in the Shetland repertoire, and are linked together by the various claims that they were learnt from trows. These are small mythical troll-like creatures which were believed to live under the hills and entice fiddlers to entertain them at their parties.<sup>23</sup> According to Charlie Simpson, these ‘Yakki’ tunes were more likely to have been compositions by modest fiddlers aboard whaling ships who were too shy to admit that they had written the tune themselves, as there was no melodic instrumental tradition among the Inuit at that time.<sup>24</sup> Charlie Simpson drew parallels between the ‘Yakki’ and ‘trowy’ tune categories, suggesting that in both cases the composer had been too shy to admit writing the tune themselves, and so invented a story that it had been learnt from one of the two sources.<sup>25</sup>

Whaling tunes had no Inuit associations. Three of the best known of these are the reels, ‘The Merry Boys of Greenland’, ‘Oliver Jack’ and ‘Willafjord’, all of which are firmly established in the Shetland repertoire and known by fiddlers throughout the islands.<sup>26</sup> As its name suggests, ‘The Merry Boys of Greenland’ is one of the few tunes known for certain to have been taken back by Shetland fiddlers from the Arctic whaling. It is also believed to have had words accompanying the tune, although I have been unable to find any reference to what these were.<sup>27</sup> Another version of this tune has been found played in Denmark, as Cooke explains:

'The Merry Boys of Greenland' is another popular reel, described by many Shetlanders as a 'whaling reel' because it was said to have been brought back by the crews of whaling ships in an earlier century. Interestingly its second turning, somewhat similar in its alternating motifs to the opening of 'Da Galley Watch', may well have travelled to the Frisian islands where, on Terschelling island, a tune known as 'Rielen' was noted down by Jaap Kunst, the celebrated Dutch folklorist and father of ethnomusicology. Sunday dancing seems to have been a popular tradition in Terschelling and Kunst made some fascinating early film of Sunday dancing in which this dance is recorded – the dance appears identical to the 'backstep' version of the Shetland reel, which is the most commonly known version in Shetland today. Presumably the Dutch fishermen took more than just herrings back with them from Shetland waters – happy memories of dances on the quaysides and in the huts of the Shetland herring stations.<sup>28</sup>

The tune 'Willafjord' was introduced to Shetland by the father of Bobby Peterson, a fiddler from Tingwall, who learnt it while aboard a whaling ship in the Davis Straits in the early twentieth century.<sup>29</sup> Peterson senior, who was born in 1886, worked aboard whaling ships for a number of years and rose from the ranks of whaler (or deckhand) to ship's captain.<sup>30</sup> He always took his fiddle to sea, and returned from one trip having learned the tune.<sup>31</sup> It became so popular that it is now not only in the Shetland repertoire, but played by fiddlers throughout the British Isles and in Canada. Whereas Peterson senior performed at concerts and weddings whilst in Shetland, he played the fiddle in the mess room when at sea. Apart from the above mentioned tunes, most of the repertoire which emerged from the Arctic whaling is assumed to have been forgotten from what was an entirely oral tradition at that time.<sup>32</sup>

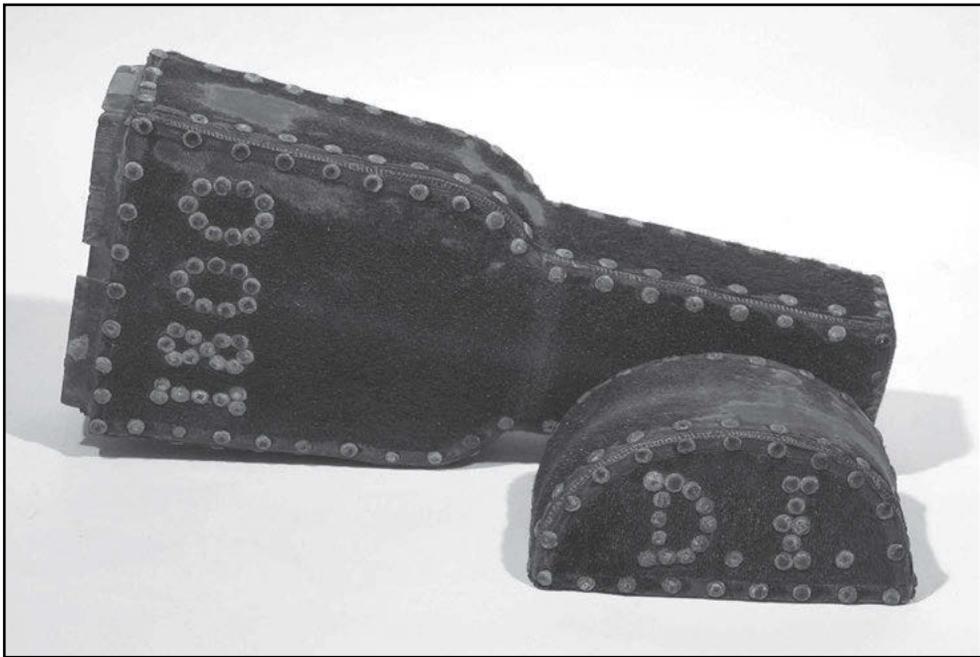
'Da Greenland Man's Tune' is another melody which was brought back from the Greenland whaling days. It was believed by Jamsie Laurenson, a fiddler from the island of Fetlar, to have originated as a listening tune with Inuit, or what he called 'Yakki' words to it.<sup>33</sup> However, Pat Shuldham Shaw, who transcribed the tune during fieldwork in the mid-twentieth century, questioned any origin among the indigenous Arctic population, writing against the transcription, 'Most unusual, I don't think it is a Greenland tune despite the name. I class it as a very old Shetland tune.'<sup>34</sup> 'Hjogravoltar' is another tune which is known both as a trowy tune and as a 'Yakki' tune, noted down by Pat Shuldham Shaw from Jamsie Laurenson of Fetlar, who learnt it from what appear to be three sources, his mother, Willie Isbister, and a whale fisher. The name, however, refers to a croft on Fetlar and has no obvious association with the Greenland whaling.<sup>35</sup>

### **Instruments and Accessories**

Conditions of isolation at the whaling demanded a degree of innovation with regards to the care and protection of the instrument and its accessories. One example can be seen in Figure 6, a photograph of a seal-skin fiddle case made by Donald Jamieson

which is on display at the Shetland Museum in Lerwick. The skin is held in position by brass studs and spells out the date, 1800, and the initials 'D. I.' on the end piece. In former times, it was common to use the letter I to represent the letter J, and this is probably why Donald Jamieson uses it here.<sup>36</sup> Regarding the fiddler himself, it is recorded:

Donald was said to have owed his exceptional talent to a group of old fiddlers from the Flamaster area of Nesting who taught him to play with great skill and proficiency. Stories were told of how he won many wagers while at the Greenland whaling, and on one occasion how a desperate attempt was made by his rivals to poison him by giving him a dram containing a quantity of aquafortis.<sup>37</sup>



**Figure 6** Seal-skin fiddle case made by Donald Jamieson. *Shetland Museum*

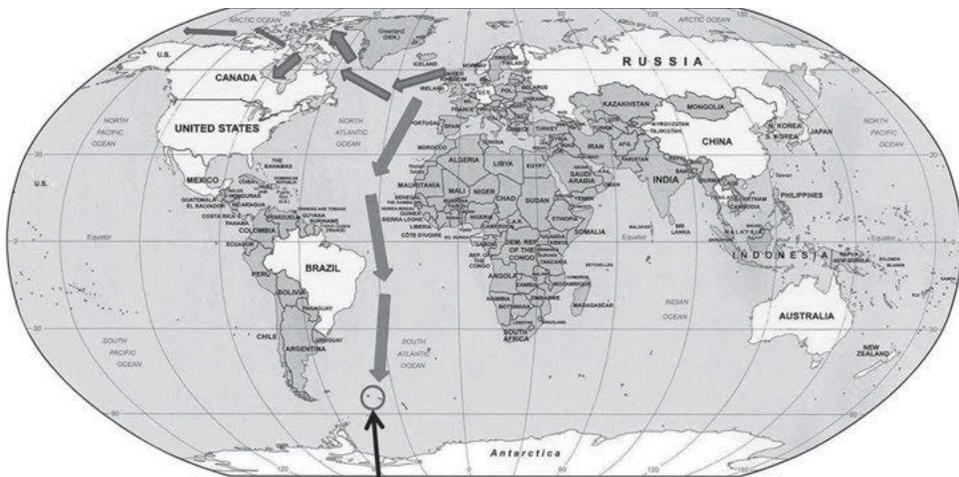
In the 1860s the practice of overwintering onboard whaling ships began to the west of the Hudson Bay. This resulted in sustained cultural contact between whalers and indigenous populations, and appears to have contributed to the introduction of bowed instruments to the region.<sup>38</sup> For example, what were known as *Tautiruut*, which were one-stringed instruments used for accompanying Inuit songs, were believed by the ethnographer E. W. Hawkes to have been 'a rude imitation of "fiddles" seen on whaling ships' even though they had strong similarities to the ancient Icelandic *Fidla* and the Shetland *gue*, which were predecessors to the fiddle.<sup>39</sup>

The Arctic whaling industry ended in the early 1900s and was replaced by an era of modern whaling which lasted from 1904 until 1963 when the industry

finally came to an end.<sup>40</sup> During this time the centre of the whaling industry moved from the Arctic to South Georgia, a remote and initially uninhabited island lying 864 miles east-southeast of the Falkland Islands.<sup>41</sup> Christian Salvesen, a Norwegian company based in Scotland, was the main employer and Shetland men looking for work registered with the company at Leith, near Edinburgh, before joining the *Southern Garden* or the *Southern Venturer*. These were large ships responsible for transporting over six hundred men from the British Isles to South Georgia for the start of the season, a journey which lasted six weeks in total.<sup>42</sup>

### **Whaling in South Georgia**

In contrast to the Arctic whaling, it was not when the men were working aboard ships that they played music, but primarily during the journeys to and from South Georgia (see the map in Figure 7).<sup>43</sup> Although there were some jobs given to the whalers onboard, much of their time was spent in recreation.<sup>44</sup> Evidence of the influence of increased communication between Shetland and other parts of the world, coupled with the effect of listening to recorded media and radio, can be seen in the playing styles and different instruments adopted by men aboard the ships. This can especially be seen with the influx of guitars and accordions, and the infiltration of country and western music, and Scottish country dance music.



**Figure 7** Map of South Georgia whaling routes

Although there was some work for the men to do onboard, such as preparing the ship for the coming season, and painting and splicing wires, much of the time was spent in recreation.<sup>45</sup> A number of the crew were able to play a musical instrument, and in an interview for BBC Radio Shetland, Mitchel Arthur commented that almost all people seemed to be able to play music, and that 'it was just splendid, we had many a good tune when we were at the tropics'.<sup>46</sup> Groups were often formed to provide entertainment, and on the *Southern Garden*, a band of four Shetland men known as 'Da Boys,' performed regularly during the 1950s and 1960s. These were Victor Inkster from Burra, who played the accordion, Scotty Christie, also from

Burra, who played guitar, his brother John Christie, who played guitar and sang, and Davy Clarke from Yell, who played the fiddle.<sup>47</sup> Although they were well known on the *Southern Garden*, the band did not perform together when the men were in Shetland.<sup>48</sup> Mitchel Arthur, who spent a few years travelling aboard the *Southern Garden*, explained their music as follows:

MA: John Christie was a marvellous country and western singer, and that was the music. We sang a lot of country and western.

FW: Was it country and western fiddle rather than Shetland fiddle?

MA: No, it was Shetland fiddle mostly. Davy Clarke could do country and western fiddle as well, but he preferred the Shetland music.

FW: Did people dance? What did the band do?

MA: Just play and then the lot o' the crew would sit around and listen. Sometimes it wis [was] just a few of you in the cabin. It was just the boys that played liked to get together and play as they always do.<sup>49</sup>

There was a huge country and western influence at this time, although the musicians still retained an interest in and appreciation for the Shetland fiddle music. Mitchel himself showed great appreciation for the music, and in another interview commented: 'It was just splendid, we had many a good tune.'<sup>50</sup> There was no amplification, and the weather for much of the journey was so good that musicians were able to play on the decks to large audiences.<sup>51</sup>

The atmosphere on the *Southern Venturer* was similarly conducive to the formation of ad hoc bands. One particular group, which played together during 1960–1961 consisted, again, of four Shetlanders. These were Albert Clark from Yell on guitar, Arthur Thomason from Fetlar on accordion, Wilson Coutts from Fetlar on guitar, and Allan Tulloch from Whalsay on fiddle.<sup>52</sup> Allan Tulloch, who experienced his first whaling season at the age of eighteen in 1953, recalled, 'I always had a fiddle with me so, along with other Shetlanders, we had many a good tune.'<sup>53</sup> It is worth noting that the instrumentation of both groups is exactly the same: two guitars, accordion, and fiddle. Conceivably this may reflect what was happening musically in Shetland at that time. The photograph in Figure 8, taken in 1960, appears to represent this band with an additional fiddle player (see overleaf)

Entertainment on the *Southern Venturer* appears to have been a more organised affair than on the *Southern Garden*, and regular ship's concerts were held during the evenings. The format for these was similar to a talent show, with voting cards handed out to a selection of the audience at the beginning who then awarded points to each act. At the end the points were counted and winners announced. In 1961, this was consistently a Shetland duo, John Dalziel on fiddle and Bobby Sinclair on accordion. Jimmy Smith, one of the men on board at the time recalled, 'They were a delight to listen to and played many an encore.'<sup>54</sup> This combination of accordion and fiddle had become very popular at this time, mostly due to the influence of Jimmy



**Figure 8** Entertainers on board the Southern Venturer, c. 1960.  
*Shetland Museum Photographic Archives*

Shand.<sup>55</sup> The players too were incorporating a number of Scottish and Irish tunes, many of which have retained popularity in Shetland to the present day. Mitchel Arthur explained this as follows:

MA: Fiddle and accordion music was always the main source of entertainment. It always was. I mean it was live, you could have requests if you wanted to play such-and-such a tune.

FW: What were the favourite tunes?

MA: Well, now. The favourite tunes, dear, dear, dear, dear, there were so many of them. I mean there was all the original tunes that everybody played. 'Merry Boys of Greenland' being one. 'Barren Rocks of Aden', 'Orange and Blue', 'Lovat Scouts', 'Willafjord', 'Jack', 'Brown Coo', 'Mrs. Macleod of Skye' is it? The Irish tunes, quite a few Irish tunes that I don't mind the names of them now. 'The De'il among the Tailors', of course Scots, 'Mason's Apron' very popular, and then for show off, the hornpipes, the 'High Level' especially, 'Banks', 'Trumpet'.<sup>56</sup>

In Mitchel's list of tunes mentioned, it is interesting that the Greenland whaling tunes – 'Merry Boys of Greenland', 'Willafjord', and 'Oliver Jack' – continued to play a prominent role in the instrumental tradition even after the shift to the South Georgia whaling grounds and influx of new musical influences.

### Music in South Georgia

When the whalers eventually reached South Georgia, they were sent to work either on whale catchers or a factory ship.<sup>57</sup> While men on factory ships had some opportunity to play music during their spare time, this was not the case on whale catchers, which were much smaller vessels. Musicians who had been placed on whale catchers usually left their instruments aboard the factory ship.<sup>58</sup> Every few years, men were expected to overwinter in South Georgia and were given the jobs of repairing the station and boats.<sup>59</sup> Music in the wintertime took place at the weekends when people had time off, and parties and entertainment took place. As Mitchel explained:

Music in the wintertime, as I said, you've got this Saturday afternoon and Sunday off, and then you woulda had – you got a tot of rum, and there wis usually a bit of illicit drink and everybody picked up their accordions and fiddles and whatever, and Jimmy Shand would get a good hammering, and Will Star. A lot of good Norwegian musicians too, but it was mostly accordion.<sup>60</sup>

The photograph in Figure 9 shows musicians from Shetland and Norway who at the time were overwintering in Leith Harbour, one of the ports in South Georgia.



**Figure 9** Musicians from Shetland and Norway overwintering in Leith Harbour, South Georgia. *Shetland Museum Photographic Archives*

## **Conclusion**

The Arctic and South Georgia whaling industry is only one small area where fiddles were used onboard ships from the Shetland Islands. Other places where this occurred are in the Royal and Merchant navies, in the Hudson's Bay Company, and to some extent in the fishing industry. Even today, fiddlers are popular additions to a ship's crew, and can be found on tall ships, in the merchant navy, and aboard cruise ships as valued entertainers. Not only has fiddle music provided entertainment for crew members onboard the ships, but the musical interchange which resulted in the meeting of fiddlers from different geographical regions contributed to the integration of new tunes into the Shetland repertoire. Although there is evidence that Shetland whalers introduced fiddles to the arctic regions, there has been little research conducted into the music which Shetlanders left behind in their wake. Whereas Craig Mishler extensively researched the Athapascan fiddle tradition and its roots in the Hudson's Bay Company, and Anne Lederman has published on the Métis fiddle tradition, the direct impact of Shetlanders in Canada and Alaska would be an area which would benefit from future research. When we consider the South Georgia whaling industry, the changes in Shetland musical society are noticeably reflected on board ships, particularly with the addition of the accordion and guitar, and the influence of different musical genres such as country and western and Scottish country dance music.

## **Appendix: Interviews**

Mitchel Arthur, interview on memories of whaling by Frances Wilkins, 15 May 2008, Firth, Delting, Shetland Islands, tape recording.

Charlie Simpson, interview on Shetland whaling and fiddle music with Frances Wilkins, 16 May 2008, Cunningsburgh, Shetland Islands, tape recording.

## **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Peter Cooke, *The Fiddle Tradition of the Shetland Isles*, ed. by John Blacking, *Cambridge Studies in Ethnomusicology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Edmonstone quoted in Peter Cooke, 'Notes and Comments: The Fiddle in Shetland Society' (London: Royal Musical Association, 1976), p. 69; also in Tom Anderson, *Talk on Shetland Music* (London: National Sound Archives, 1950), audio recording.

<sup>3</sup> Charlie Simpson, interview on Shetland whaling and fiddle music by Frances Wilkins, 16 May 2008, Cunningsburgh, Shetland Islands, tape recording (Elphinstone Institute Archives, not yet catalogued).

<sup>4</sup> 'Shetland Music from 1700 to 1920', *Shetland – Music* (2004–2006) [www.shetland-music.com/about\\_our\\_music/history\\_and\\_traditions/shetland\\_music\\_from\\_1700\\_to\\_1920](http://www.shetland-music.com/about_our_music/history_and_traditions/shetland_music_from_1700_to_1920) [accessed 25 June 2008].

<sup>5</sup> David Proctor, *Music of the Sea* (London: HMSO, 1992), p. 67.

<sup>6</sup> Dan M. Worrall, 'Concertinas at Sea: A History of a Nautical Icor', *angloconcertina.org* (2008) [http://www.angloconcertina.org/concertina\\_at\\_sea.html](http://www.angloconcertina.org/concertina_at_sea.html), p. 2 [accessed 20 June 2008].

<sup>7</sup> This paper is a continuation of previous research which I conducted in 2002–2004, which resulted in the presentation of the conference paper, 'The Fiddle Music of the Shetland Islands', at the 'Soul of the Fiddle Conference' at SOAS, University of London, in April 2004

and another paper on the same topic at the London Fiddle Conference at SOAS, University of London, in 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Worrall gathered these statistics as follows: 'by querying Google's digital books for the name of each instrument and the word 'ship', in books written in the time period in which concertinas were most common (1860–1900). These results were taken in January 2008 and can be found in Worrall, 'Concertinas at Sea', p. 39.

<sup>9</sup> This photograph is courtesy of the Shetland Museum Photographic archives.

<sup>10</sup> Dorothy Harley Eber, *When the Whalers Were up North: Inuit Memories from the Eastern Arctic* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Gordon Jackson, *The British Whaling Trade* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1978), p. 78.

<sup>12</sup> Jackson, 1978, p. 73.

<sup>13</sup> Eber, 1989, p. xii, pp. 11–12.

<sup>14</sup> This map was downloaded from the following website: [www.nlar.net/International/overviewOct03.htm](http://www.nlar.net/International/overviewOct03.htm) [accessed 12 June 2008]. The arrows were added later by the author.

<sup>15</sup> Charlie Simpson, 'Three Centuries of Fiddling', *Shetland – Music* (2004–2006) [www.shetland-music.com/about\\_our\\_music/three\\_centuries\\_of\\_fiddling/three\\_centuries\\_of\\_fiddling](http://www.shetland-music.com/about_our_music/three_centuries_of_fiddling/three_centuries_of_fiddling) [accessed 25 June 2008].

<sup>16</sup> Simpson, interview, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Alex R. Buchan, *The Peterhead Whaling Trade* (Peterhead: Buchan Field Club, 1993), pp. 54, 64; Bobby Peterson, 'Willafj rd'/'Oliver Jack', interviewed by Tom Anderson and Peter Cooke, TA 104A-10, Lerwick, Shetland Archives, 1970.

<sup>18</sup> There are many examples of whaling ledgers which refer to the purchase of fiddle strings in the Shetland Archives in Lerwick. One example, from the ship, *Venable*, refers to the purchase of '45s' worth of 'fiddle strings' in 1816, volume D.31/6/5. A ledger from another vessel, the *Alibi*, refers to the purchase of a violin in 1853, volume D.31/6/22.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Cooke, 1976, p. 71. L. G. Johnson, 'Lawrence Williamson of Mid Yell, Lerwick', 1971, p. 125, quoted in Cooke, 1976, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> Simpson, interview, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Cooke, 1986, p. 50.

<sup>22</sup> This is explained in Tom Anderson and Pam Swing, *Haand Me Doon Da Fiddle*. 2nd edn (Stirling: Department of Continuing Education, University of Stirling, 1981), p. 27.

<sup>23</sup> Simpson, 'Three Centuries of Fiddling'.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Simpson, interview, 2008.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Chris Stout interviewed in John Purser, 'Hunting Whale and Seal', *Scotland's Music*, Episode 32, 19 August 2007 (Glasgow: BBC Radio Scotland, 2007), [www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/music/scotlandsmusic/pdfs/scotlandsmusic\\_32.pdf](http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/music/scotlandsmusic/pdfs/scotlandsmusic_32.pdf) [accessed 30 January 2009].

<sup>28</sup> Cooke, 1986, p. 65.

<sup>29</sup> Cooke, 1986, p. 16.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Simpson, interview, 2008.

<sup>33</sup> This is explained by Tom Anderson in Anderson and Swing, 1981, p. 27.

<sup>34</sup> Read from Shuldham Shaw manuscripts owned by Charlie Simpson during interview, 2008.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> This explanation is given with the fiddle case, which is on display at the Shetland Museum, Lerwick, Shetland Islands (2008).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> E. Y. Arima and Magnus Inarsson, 'Whence and Where The "Eskimo Fiddle"?' *Folk*, 18 (1976), 23–40 (pp. 35–37); Worrall, 2008, p. 10.

<sup>39</sup> Arima and Inarsson, 1976, pp. 29–33.

<sup>40</sup> The events leading to the end of the Arctic whaling are described more fully in the following: Redgrave, this is the only name given to the sailor – no first name, 'Journal of a Whaling Voyage from Dundee to Davis Strait, 1894', *The Polar Record*, 10 (1960), 126–37 (p. 126); Eber, 1989, p. 104; John R Bockstoe, *Whales, Ice and Men: The History of the Whaling in the Western Arctic* (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 1986), p. 338; dates given by Jackson, 1978, p. 155.

<sup>41</sup> Wikipedia contributors, 'South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands', *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, 20 February 2009, 00:13 UTC, [en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=South\\_Georgia\\_and\\_the\\_South\\_Sandwich\\_Islands&oldid=271956100](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=South_Georgia_and_the_South_Sandwich_Islands&oldid=271956100) [accessed 26 February 2009]. All information taken from Wikipedia has been verified and I am confident of its accuracy.

<sup>42</sup> More on the Shetland whaling industry based in the Shetland Islands is discussed in Simpson, interview, 2008; discussed in Mitchel Arthur, interview on memories of whaling by Frances Wilkins, 15 May 2008, tape recording.

<sup>43</sup> This map was downloaded from the following website: [www.nlar.net/Internation/overviewOct03.htm](http://www.nlar.net/Internation/overviewOct03.htm) [accessed 12 June 2008]. The arrows were added later by the author.

<sup>44</sup> Arthur, interview, 2008.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> A half-hour interview can be heard between Mitchel Arthur and Mary Blanche, where he speaks in detail about his time at the South Georgia whaling, in Mary Blanche, 'Mitchel Arthur', in *In About Da Night* (Scotland: BBC Radio Shetland, 2003). This can be accessed in the Shetland Archives, Shetland Museum, Lerwick, BBCRS/1/9/184.

<sup>47</sup> Arthur, interview, 2008.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Blanche, 2003.

<sup>51</sup> Arthur, interview, 2008.

<sup>52</sup> Discussed in Gilbert A. Fraser, *Shetland Whalers Remember* (Shetland: Gilbert A. Fraser, 2001), p. 65.

<sup>53</sup> Quotation from Fraser, 2001, p. 90.

<sup>54</sup> From a longer piece in Fraser, 2001, p. 223.

<sup>55</sup> Arthur, interview, 2008.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Arthur, interview, 2008; Simpson, interview, 2008.

<sup>59</sup> Explained in Simpson, interview, 2008, and Arthur, interview, 2008.

<sup>60</sup> Arthur, interview, 2008.