

To celebrate 30 years of publishing and 30 books, Ann Cleeves – bestselling crime writer of *Vera* and *Shetland* fame – has written a murder mystery based around a traditional Shetland Sunday Tea.

Shetland is the setting of the popular crime series featuring detective Jimmy Perez. This traditional murder mystery has the accessibility of a familiar format – we’ve all played Cluedo or watched *Poirot* – but this gives readers the chance to expand this experience. There are opportunities for income generation through books and tickets sales, for developing partnerships with community organizations and between libraries and bookshops, and for reader development training for frontline staff. But above all, it’s great fun.

WHAT WE PROVIDE

- A script for 4 actors. This is a specially written script by Ann Cleeves, the setting is a Shetland Sunday Tea and reference is made to the Shetland detective Jimmy Perez
- PDFs of professionally designed posters, tickets and the competition form ensuring the promotional material looks attractive
- A running order and guide for planning the event
- A template press release to send out to local media
- Recipes for a traditional Shetland tea accompanied by each chef’s story

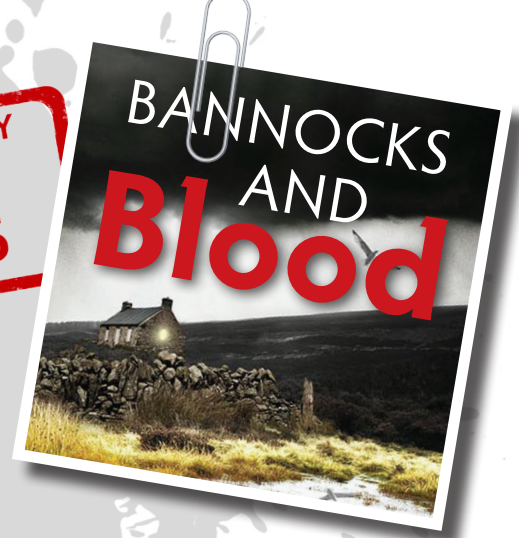
WHAT YOU NEED

- 4 actors – 2 men and 2 women. They don’t need to learn lines but should be confident about reading a short monologue in front of an audience. These could be staff members, but if you approach your local amateur dramatic society or FE college performance students, you could be introducing new people into your shop or library
- Someone to host and chair the event
- Books by Ann Cleeves for sale. Libraries can do this through Pan Macmillan, through their usual library supplier or by inviting a local bookseller to sell on their behalf
- Scrap paper and pencils so people can take notes – some do take this event very seriously!
- Encourage attendees to bring along some homebaking in the spirit of a Shetland Sunday Tea. The packs also include recipes should any of the organizers want to create some authentic fayre



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RUNNING ORDER

1 WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

2 INTRODUCTION (No need to follow this word-for-word – just to give you an idea. But this is a tricky puzzle and a mention of Christie might just point your audience in the right direction).

'This evening we're not in but in Shetland, at Sunday Tea. This is a community meeting that brings people together once across Shetland a week to catch up on local news, hear music, sell homemade items. This Sunday began like any other as the Shetland Tea committee met early to set up today's tea, until the body of committee member, Minnie Laurenson is found. In the tradition of the Golden Age detective novel only the people at the Sunday tea committee could have committed the murder – they were the only ones present in the hall and nobody else had access. Detective Jimmy Perez has been called but he is delayed on the mainland due to storms. One of the suspects standing before you is a killer and in the absence of the detective your task is to deduce which of them stabbed Minnie Laurenson. If you enjoy Agatha Christie and understand classic crime fiction, you can use your little grey cells to solve the mystery.'

3 WITNESS STATEMENTS

Introduce the witnesses in turn and they step forward to read their statements:

- Mavis Grind, lives in Ravenswick and runs the post office and community shop
- Kathryn Rogerson, lives in Lerwick with her parents. She is an island councillor's daughter, and the new teacher at the local Ravenswick school
- Stuart Henderson, wealthy owner of holiday chalets
- Andy Hay, plays the fiddle and works as a barman at the Mareel cultural centre

4 INTERVAL

During this time you can offer Sunday Tea-themed refreshments and sell books. If your actors are sufficiently confident, they can stay in role and mingle with the audience answering their questions.

5 DECISION TIME

Call your audience back to their seats, hand out the competition form, and ask them to decide who killed Minnie Laurenson and why. (The why is obviously important – they have a one in four chance of being right . . .) Make sure everyone writes their name on the form. Collect them in. While your volunteers are choosing the reader who has come closest to the solution, ask readers for their favourite crime titles, or suggest crime fiction to travel to, or present recent books in stock.

6 CONFESSION

Ask the murderer to make themselves known. It's very corny, but get all your suspects to start rising from their seats, before sitting down again, leaving Kathryn standing. She reads the confession.

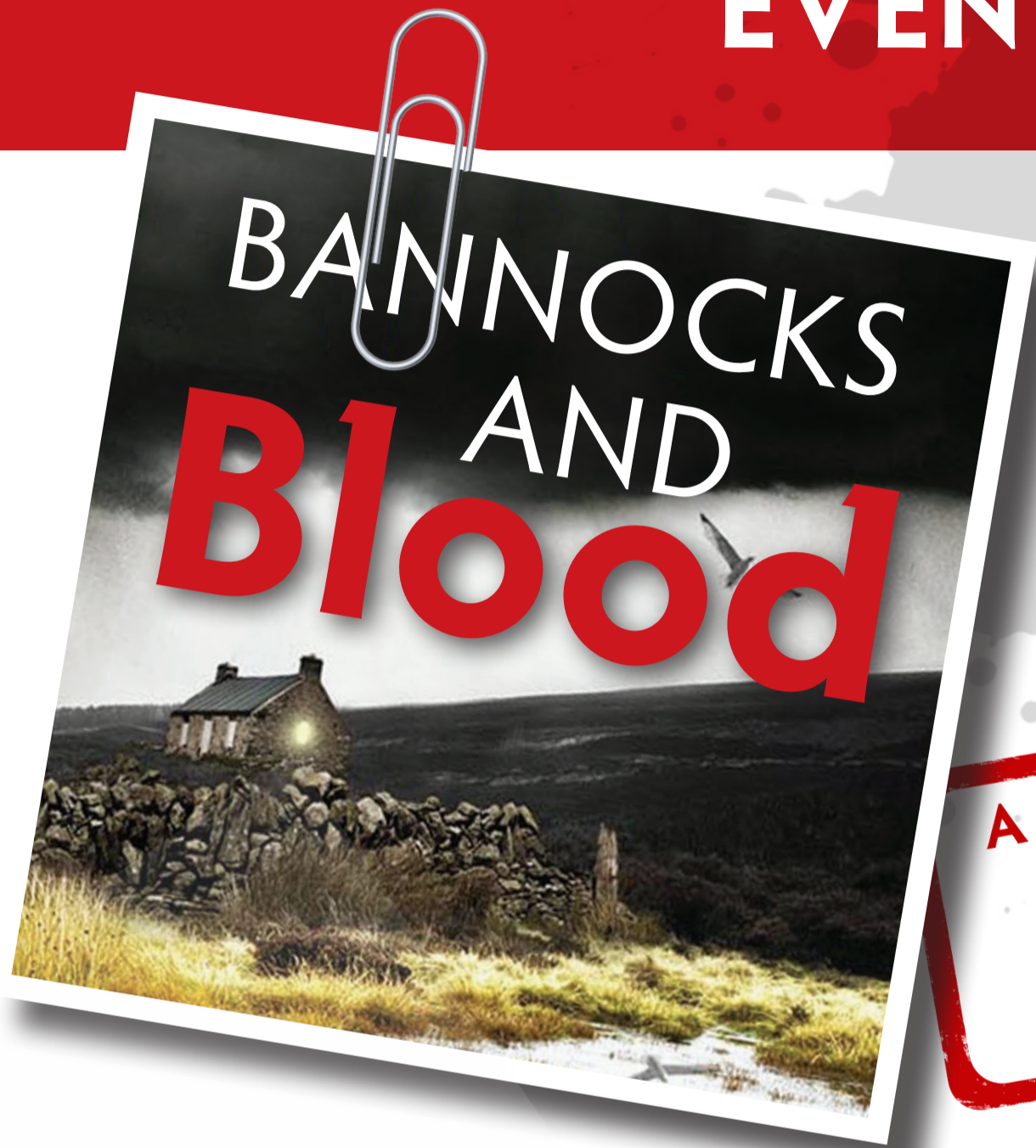
7 THE WINNER IS ANNOUNCED AND A PRIZE IS GIVEN – this could be a copy of the latest Ann Cleeves Shetland book.



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A SHETLAND MURDER MYSTERY EVENT



Celebrating 30 years x 30 books

When:

Where:

Ticket information:

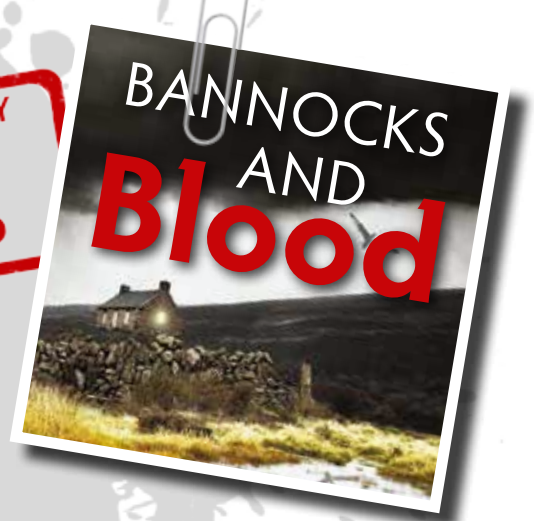
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A MURDER MYSTERY
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MAVIS GRIND



The Sunday Tea isn't an old Shetland tradition. I don't remember it when I was a peerie lassie, for example. Then Sunday was for the kirk and maybe for a family walk in the afternoon if the weather was nice. There was no work done on a Sunday, no men out in the fields, no washing on the line. My mother cooked a fine lunch of course, and cleared it up afterwards, but somehow that didn't count as work. Things are very different now.

The Sunday Teas bring folk together and that can only be a good thing. Each community chooses a day to hold its Tea and in the spring and summer there can be several in the islands in the same week. Our Ravenswick Teas have been so successful that we run them right into the autumn. In the spring we hold a plant sale – Jane Hay brings along some of the plants from her polycrub – and in October we have a bit of music.

There's always some argument about where the money we raise should go. We have a committee to organize the Teas and make that decision. There's me, Kathryn Rogerson, who's the new teacher at the school, Stuart Henderson who runs those fancy chalets on the coast for holiday makers, Jane Hay's son Andy, and Minnie Laurenson. At least, there was Minnie Laurenson. But now, of course, she's dead – and that's why you're all here today.

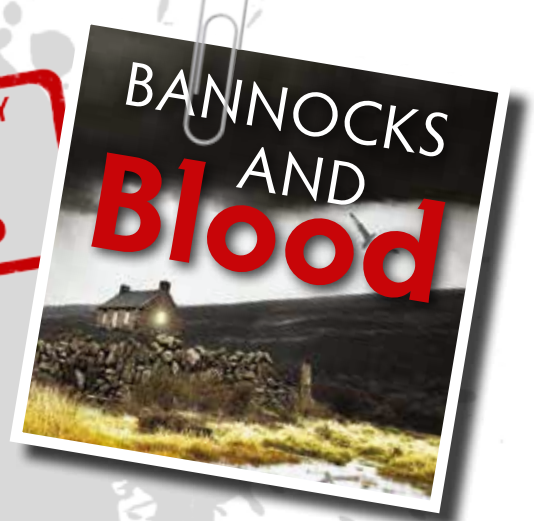
It all started just like every other Shetland Tea Sunday. The committee got to the hall in the morning to set up. We'd had a meeting the week before in Minnie's house at Tain, and that had been a kind of niggling, fractious affair, with everyone bickering about where the profit from this month's Tea should go. In the past we've all got on splendidly, but Stuart had the bright idea to invite a couple of younger people onto the committee, and since Kathryn and Andy got involved, nothing has been straightforward. Kathryn is one of those women who seem shy and biddable, but who get what they want by being persistently obstructive in the politest sort of way. It's impossible to argue with her without appearing rude!

I've always thought Andy an arrogant young man. Charming enough on the surface but underneath you feel that he's sneering. He's one

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MAVIS GRIND

of those young men that hang around Mareel; they're all arty talk, tattoos and piercings. He plays the fiddle like a dream though and we definitely have visitors to the October Teas who come just to hear his music. He dropped out of uni and he works at Mareel now, serving behind the bar. So really, he has nothing at all to be arrogant about. I run the post office and the community shop in Ravenswick and I'm serving the public just like him.

When we arrived at the hall this morning we still hadn't come to a decision about a suitable place for the money to go. Stuart didn't really care. He's got far more money than he needs and as long as he has a holiday in the sun every year and enough cash to keep his wife in fancy designer clothes, he's happy enough. I'm not sure why he joined the committee at all. Andy was all for a donation to the Youth Theatre in Mareel. I wasn't having that! That arts centre has already taken too much of the council's money and if kids want to prance about on a stage, let them pay for it themselves. Kathryn thought we should support the Ravenswick Playgroup. I've never had bairns myself and I don't see why the young mums can't look after their own offspring. Besides, it was about time Miss Kathryn Rogerson learned that she can't always get her own way. So I backed Minnie Laurenson's idea of a donation to the Textile Museum.

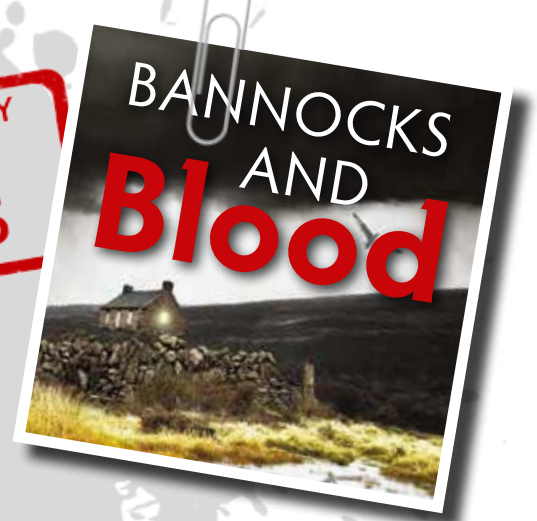
The thing you need to know about Minnie is that she was a great knitter and spinner and that when Professor Grieve cuts her up at the post mortem he'll probably find yarn in her body instead of veins. It was what she lived for. I learned to knit when I was a girl of course and I can still make bonnets and mittens and scarves if I'm pressed. But Minnie was famous for her skill and her knowledge of the old patterns. And as our Teas coincide with Shetland Wool Week it seemed appropriate to give our cash to the institution that keeps the traditions alive. So when we all met in the hall this morning I chatted to Stuart and got him on side too and that was our decision made. Three of the committee backed Minnie's plan and we had our majority.

Do I think one of the youngsters killed Minnie in a fit of pique? Because we out-voted them? Of course not. But somebody killed her with her own scissors while we were laying out the cakes and the bannocks. And it must have been one of the committee, because we were the only people with access to the hall when she died. She'd brought her knitting because she had an all-over jersey to complete for an American client and she'd decided not to go home for lunch. Her scissors were in her knitting bag, long-bladed and very sharp. We'd all seen her use them when we stopped for coffee earlier in the day. Minnie could knit anywhere in any spare moment. I was in the kitchen, filling up the urns for tea and when I went back into the hall she was dead. The scissors were sticking out of her back and there was blood on her knitting. She'd been using natural colours, grey and mourrit and white; the splashes of red looked like an unusual design, part of the pattern. Of course I screamed. It was a horrible sight.

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ANDY HAY



I'm not sure how I allowed myself to get bullied into joining the Sunday Teas committee. It was my mother's fault. She said now I was back from uni I should commit myself to the community. She said I'd made the decision that I wanted to stay in Shetland so I should prove that I was serious. I joined the committee just to get her off my back. And because Kathryn Rogerson said she'd be there too. I've always had a soft spot for Kathryn. She's older than me of course, but I've admired her since we were in the Youth Theatre together. Her father's a councillor with his fingers in many pies and she's very much a daddy's girl. I'm not sure he approves of me so our friendship is unlikely to develop into anything more serious.

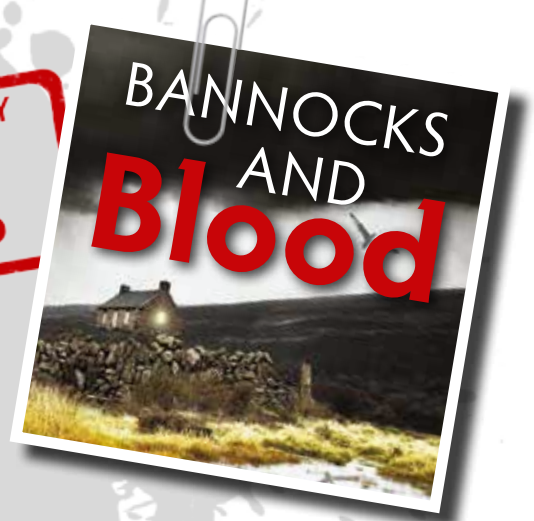
I'm usually at the Teas anyway playing my fiddle; it's a fun way to get my name out and I sell CDs after the gig. I had a soft spot for Minnie Laurenson too. She was our neighbour. We live in Gilsetter, the croft near the shore in Ravenswick; my dad's a farmer and my mother has a horticultural business. Tain, where Minnie lived, used to be a croft too, but Dad bought up her land when it was too much for her to manage and after that, she was just left with the house. We used to visit a lot when we were younger. She had a fat, idle cat called Sammy and she made us the biscuits that we call peat. She's famous for writing spiky letters to the *Shetland Times*.

The committee meeting last week was the first time I'd had much contact with her since I dropped out of university and she seemed a bit crabby and irritable. Sammy had died over the summer, according to Mum, so perhaps that had something to do with it. Maybe she was just feeling lonely and a peerie bit old. I'd always had the impression that she and Mavis were best pals, but there seemed to be some tension between them in the run up to the Teas. They were both in Minnie's kitchen when the meeting ended and I heard Mavis Grind say: 'You're not going to get away with this Minnie Laurenson. I'll see you in your grave before I do.' We'd been arguing throughout the meeting about the funds from the Teas, so maybe it was about that. I don't think so though. I've always considered Mavis Grind a malicious gossip – she spread rumours at one time that I had a drug problem – and that sounded downright nasty. Of course I didn't take the threat against Minnie seriously at the time but now it seems more sinister.

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ANDY HAY

This morning I was the last to arrive. I was on a late shift at Mareel last night and then there was a bit of a party at a friend's house, so I was in no state to be here at the crack of dawn. The deal is that folk bring their baking to the hall between eleven and twelve. In other places the arrangements are more flexible but Mavis rules Ravenswick with a hand of iron. She's always been queen bee and we all do as she says. Word has it that there was once a man in her life but I'm not sure if that's true. Who on earth would put up with her?

I got to the hall at about midday just as the last tins of cakes and bannocks had been delivered. I made myself a cup of coffee in the kitchen and took it outside to drink. It was warm enough, out of the breeze. I needed a cigarette if I'm honest. My mother thought I gave up smoking years ago, so don't tell her.

I stopped to chat to Minnie on my way through the hall with my coffee. She'd brought her lunch from home – you'd have thought there'd be enough food in the place but it wouldn't be her style to nick any of the homebakes brought for the Teas. She taught me in Sunday School when I was a boy and is the most honest person you can imagine. She'd just put a chair up to one of the trestle tables and she'd pulled a sandwich from her bag. There was a knitting belt round her waist with one needle stuck into it and she was clacking away with the others, even when she was speaking to me. It looked like a complicated pattern but she didn't even seem to be looking at it.

'Are you well, Andy?' she said. 'Are you sure it was the right thing to do, coming back to the islands?'

I said I thought it was. I enjoyed being back with my family and friends.

There was a pause before she spoke. Then she said: 'Just you take care, boy. Sometimes it's the people closest to you who stab you in the back.' And wasn't that weird? It sounds almost prophetic, as if she knew something terrible was about to happen.

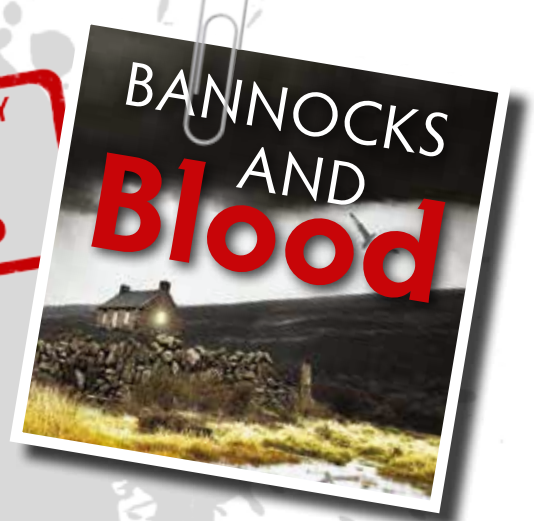
I went out with my coffee then. I'm not sure how long I was on the grass outside the hall. A quarter of an hour maybe. The sun was out and there was a great view over the headland. Then I heard a terrible scream and I ran inside. Mavis Grind was there looking down at Minnie's body and the scissor blade was sticking out of her back.

I didn't see anyone go into the hall while I was sitting outside. I might have dozed for a while but I was right by the door and would have woken up if anyone went passed. There is a back door to the hall but that was locked and only the committee members have the keys. I have no idea why anyone would want to kill a harmless old lady like Minnie Laurenson. She was a part of my childhood and I feel that my life has changed, that in some strange way I've had to grow up very quickly.

30 BOOKS
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STUART HENDERSON



Angie made me join the Teas committee. She's my wife and I've generally found that it's a good plan to go along with what she says. There was a bit of bad feeling in the community when we built our holiday complex in the parks not very far from the kirk. Minnie called it blasphemous: 'All those folk drinking and carrying on so close to a house of God!' There were other objections too, but the council came to our point of view in the end. We made them see that Ravenswick Haven wasn't just a business proposition, but a way of bringing work to this part of Shetland. The locals don't realize how much we've invested in the scheme – we built it on a piece of boggy wasteland and we had to drain a pool. It was worth the effort though. The chalets have been booked out since they went up and they're especially busy at this time of year, when everyone's here for Wool Week. Anyway, Angie decided it might smooth things over with our neighbours if I volunteered for the committee, so that's what I did.

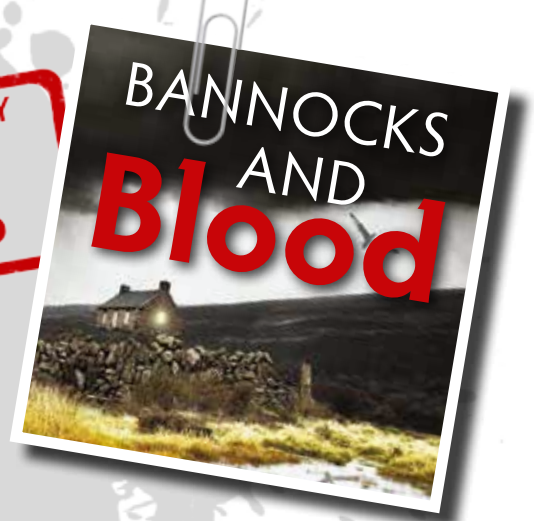
I think I might know why Minnie and Mavis fell out. Mavis had a gentleman friend, a man from the south. They met when he first came to the islands years ago. He was married then and as far as I know he's still married today. He's too mean to stay in our complex; our neighbour runs a B&B and he stays with her. He claims that he comes to Shetland each year to study the birds; I'd say it's a very different bird that he's interested in. He's elderly now, but there's definitely a spring in his step when he walks over to the post office every evening just as Mavis is closing for the day. Perhaps Minnie saw them together. Mavis Grind has always been discreet about her gentleman friend but it's hard to keep secrets in Shetland. Maybe Minnie threatened to tell the chap's wife what was going on. I'm happy for people to take their pleasure where they can, but Minnie could be a hard woman and she'd see it as her duty to put an end to the affair.

I got to the hall at ten and Mavis and Minnie were already there then. Young Kathryn Rogerson arrived soon after. She's recently taken up a post as teacher in Ravenswick School and everyone thinks very highly of her. I decided we needed some younger people involved in the Teas committee. Kathryn lives with her

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STUART HENDERSON

parents in Lerwick but she's very much become a part of the community, and I was delighted when she agreed to join us. Minnie was a school governor and had appointed Kathryn, so it seemed odd that she hadn't been enthusiastic about having her on the committee. She was perfectly prepared to include Andy Hay with his weird clothes and druggie friends though. Elderly people can have these strange prejudices. Perhaps she liked Andy because she'd known him since he was a small boy and she considered Kathryn an outsider.

As soon as Kathryn arrived, Minnie took herself off to the kitchen to wash the cups and saucers, leaving Kathryn and Mavis Grind to greet the folk coming in with their homebakes. I'd started pulling the trestles out of the big cupboard under the stage. We put four together to act as a counter. And then I pinned up the bunting and set out the small tables where folk sit for their Teas. Mavis makes table decorations and is very particular, but we have the preparation down to a fine art by now. Andy Hay turned up just as all the hard work was finished. That's very much his style!

I decided to go home for my lunch. One of the chalet residents had a complaint about a faulty light switch. Angie said my son had sorted it out but I wanted to check. Small details like that can ruin a company's reputation. It only takes one bad review on trip advisor to keep the visitors away. I went out through the back door of the hall and through the kitchen, because that was closest to where my car was parked. Minnie was still there. She'd washed and dried all the crockery – though I'm sure it had been put away clean the last time it was used – and she was sitting on her own in a corner of the room. I asked if anything was wrong. She didn't seem like her usual self. She looked up, kind of surprised, as if she hadn't realized I was there until I'd spoken.

'Sometimes it's very hard to do the right thing,' she said. 'I'm struggling with my conscience, Stuart.'

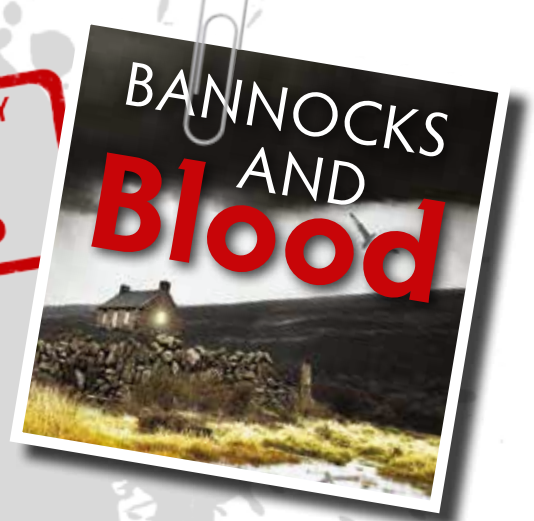
I didn't know what to say to that. I've never been a religious man. For me Sundays are a day to relax with my family and have a few beers. And now they're a day to get together at the Teas. I mumbled something about how I was sure she'd make the right decision and I left the building. I don't know where Mavis Grind was then. Perhaps she was in the small room that we use as a cloakroom. The weather can be unpredictable at this time of the year and we always put up a coat rail for waterproofs. Minnie said she'd have her lunch and went into the main hall with her knitting bag. Andy wandered into the kitchen to make himself a coffee. I think Kathryn had already left by then. She said she'd go to the school to prepare some work for the next day.

By the time I got back everything here was in chaos. Mavis had just called Jimmy Perez but he hadn't arrived yet. And Minnie Laurenson was dead. She was the last of her generation in Ravenswick and I'll miss her.

30 BOOKS
& 30 YEARS

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BY Ann
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KATHRYN ROGERSON



I knew from a small child that I wanted to be a teacher in Shetland. My dad was working in Aberdeen when I was born, but the family moved back when I was only a baby and all my memories are from here. My father's a lawyer and an island councillor, and we've always been close. He had great ambitions for me and after I did so well at uni I think he hoped I'd go for some high-powered job in the south. But this is all I've ever wanted: to teach small bairns in a little school in Shetland. Of course I'd love children of my own too, but so far the right man hasn't come along. My father says I'm just too picky and maybe he's right, but he's picky too and he hasn't liked any of the men I've taken home.

When Stuart Henderson asked me to be a member of the Ravenswick Teas committee of course I agreed. I know some local people were disappointed that I didn't move into the community when I got the job in the school, but I like to keep some distance between work and my personal life. This is a way of showing that I'm committed to the place and the children in my care without getting too entangled with the village and its politics. If I'd realized just how set in their ways the older members of the committee are and how much they'd resent new ideas, perhaps I'd have had second thoughts about joining up. But as Mavis Grind told you, I'm a stubborn woman and I won't be bullied. Now I'm here I'm determined to make the Ravenswick Teas an event for everyone, especially for the children and their families. In the past it's been a rather cliquy affair. But I certainly wouldn't kill an old woman because she disliked my ideas for involving new people, or because I didn't like the way she wanted to spend any funds raised.

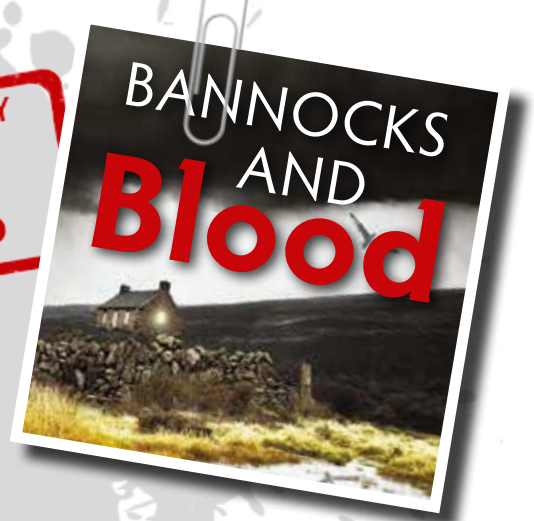
In fact, we'd become closer in recent weeks, and that was all down to Minnie's passion for knitting and for keeping the old patterns alive. I'd invited her into the school to teach the children – the boys and the girls – to knit and she'd already been in for one session. She had great stories to tell about the wool and where the natural dyes came from.

I was pleased that Andy agreed to join the committee too. He's younger than me of course, but I knew him when we were children.

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BY Ann
Cleeves



KATHRYN ROGERSON

We were both members of the Youth Theatre in Mareel and it's great that he's working there again. Of course I've never considered him in any sort of romantic light. He's a sweet boy but not very mature for his age. I think he had some problems with addiction when he was away in the south but he seems fine now and I'm hoping he'll agree to work with me on some community projects for teenagers if we can get the funding. I haven't floated that one past the committee yet! Mavis Grind was horrified when I suggested giving the Teas money to the playgroup, so what she'd make of a bunch of rowdy youths meeting in her precious hall I can't say . . . Even Minnie Laurenson would probably have been more open-minded.

I think I might suggest getting someone to look over the accounts – Mavis and Minnie have been joint signatories for the cheques since the Teas started, and it's probably time that the books were audited. My father might agree to do it for them.

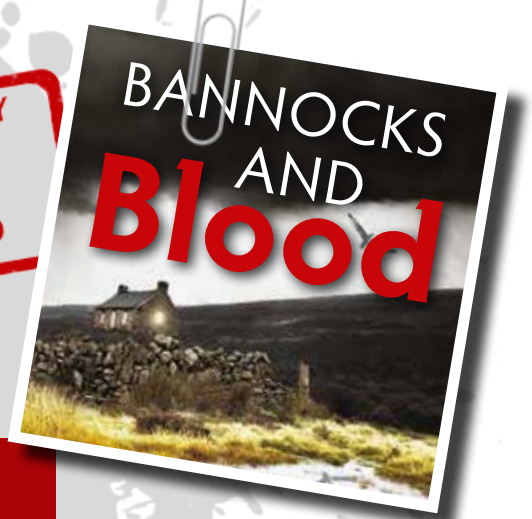
I arrived at the hall at about the same time as Stuart. I've known him since I was a girl. He and Angie have been friends of my parents for years and he's like an unofficial uncle. People started arriving with their baking soon after and I sorted it, putting the fresh cream cakes into the fridge and the bannocks, scones and biscuits onto plates and trays covered with cling film to keep them fresh. Mavis Grind was with me, but she seemed to spend more time gossiping with her neighbours than helping out. Minnie stayed in the kitchen for most of the morning. She said the crockery would be dusty after being left in the cupboards for a couple of months. Whenever I went in she seemed happy enough. A bit quiet perhaps, but she'd never been one for idle chat.

We had everything pretty well sorted by lunchtime and I decided to go to the school to eat the salad I'd brought with me. I told the others that I had work to prepare for the next day, but really I just wanted a bit of time to myself. I decided to walk down to the school. It was really a lovely day for the time of year and I needed the fresh air. I went out through the front door. Andy Hay was drowsing in the sun outside the hall – I don't think he saw me. I didn't stay long in school and it was just after one o'clock when I got back. I can't remember if Andy was still outside or not. I was quite preoccupied about a personal problem that's been troubling me for a while. I let myself in to the hall through the back door into the kitchen, using my key. That was when I heard Mavis scream. It hardly sounded human at all. I rushed through to the main hall and there was Minnie, lying dead, her knitting still on her lap. With the bunting and the balloons, it just looked very grotesque.

30 BOOKS
& 30 YEARS

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CONFESSION

KATHRYN ROGERSON



I stabbed Minnie Laurenson in the community hall today. She was threatening my father and everything he stands for, and I couldn't let her get away with that. I couldn't let it happen. Dad's a good man and he does what he thinks is best for the islands. He didn't support Stuart's application to build a holiday complex just because Stuart offered him a great deal of money if it passed smoothly through the planning committee. Dad knew it would bring in visitors to Ravenswick and increase prosperity for all its residents. There'd be more people using Mavis Grind's post office and Jane Hay's farm shop, so everyone would benefit. What did one little deception matter if the result was all that?

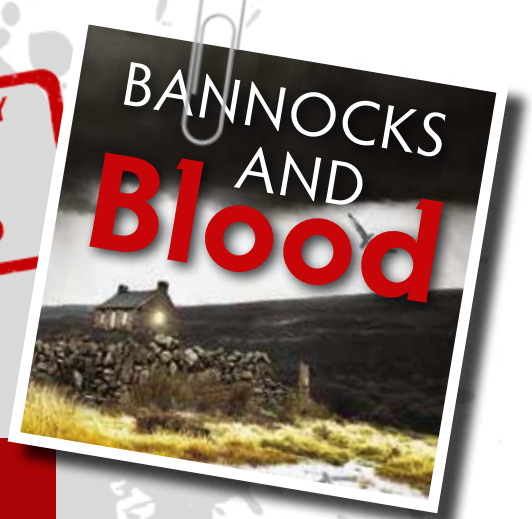
As Stuart said, it's hard to keep secrets in Shetland. Of course I knew that Mavis was carrying on with a married man from the south. Her lover is an enthusiastic amateur birdwatcher and he's been coming to the islands for years. He found a pair of breeding red-necked phalarope on the small pool that Stuart drained to build his holiday homes and he was horrified to discover the chalets on the site when he returned the following autumn. He told Mavis about the birds and she mentioned the fact to Minnie Laurenson. Minnie became suspicious – she'd never liked my father.

She first brought up the subject when she came to school to teach knitting to the bairns. 'It would be better if your father made a clean breast himself. Then I won't need to act. I'll give him a week.' Then I heard her talking to Stuart this morning. She told him she was planning to write a letter to the *Shetland Times* asking why the Henderson planning application had gone through so speedily, when there had been a rare species breeding on the site.

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CONFESSION

KATHRYN ROGERSON

Any investigation would have traced the payment from Stuart's account to my father's. Dad would have been disgraced and I couldn't stand the thought of that. The shame of it. Everyone in the islands whispering about our family. Of course Mavis tried to persuade Minnie to keep the matter to herself; she didn't want her affair with a married man to be aired in public either.

I didn't leave the hall at lunchtime. I hid in the big cupboard under the stage where the trestle tables are stored. The main hall was empty at the time. Minnie Laurenson had her back to me; she's elderly now and a little hard of hearing. I took the scissors from her bag and stabbed her. She still had her knitting in her hands when she died. I think it was the way she would have wanted to go.



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SHETLAND TEA RECIPES

Nicola's Gluten Free Dairy Free Crunchy-top Lemon Cake (Based on a Mary Berry recipe)

This recipe can be made in a 23cm round cake tin (a spring-form one is best), or in a roasting tin for very easy portioning at Sunday Teas. Your roasting tin should be approximately 30cm x 23cm, but a little larger or smaller either way doesn't matter. It's not the prettiest cake in the world, but it's certainly one of the tastiest! It can also be made with 'normal' flour – just leave out the Xanthan gum.

NOTE: Gluten-free baking relies on incorporating lots of air, and keeping it in there. It's very important that all your ingredients are room temperature. I always try to remember to take the margarine out the night before, and my eggs are never in the fridge. Warm the milk in a small pan or in the microwave just before using. TOP TIP: If you do forget to take the margarine out, warm for a few seconds in the microwave – but don't melt it! If you forget to take your eggs from the fridge, they can be also be gently warmed by placing in a bowl with some hot tap water and leaving for a few minutes. But whatever you do, don't use cold ingredients.

CAKE INGREDIENTS:

175g very soft margarine (I use Vitalite, it's dairy free)
225g golden caster sugar (white caster sugar is ok, I just like golden)
225g self-raising gluten-free flour (I used Doves Farm)
1½ tsp gluten-free baking powder (I use Dr Oetker)
¼ tsp Xanthan gum – not essential, but does help the cake hold together (I use Doves Farm)
3 large room temperature eggs
8 tbsp warm milk (use coconut or rice milk to make your cake completely dairy free)
Finely grated rind from 2 unwaxed (preferably organic) lemons

CRUNCHY TOPPING:

Juice of 2 lemons
Enough sugar (caster or granulated, but please use white sugar) to make a delicious lemony sludge. You'll need 115–175g . . . depends on how juicy your lemons are.

HOW TO MAKE:

The tins: Lightly grease your round tin, then base-line with parchment paper (Not greaseproof paper, it'll stick!), or grease and fully line your roasting tin (i.e. do the sides too – makes it easier to remove from the tin).

The oven: Pre-heat your oven to 180°C, or 160°C if using a fan oven.

Mixing: I use an electric stand-mixer with a balloon whisk as it's easy and gets lots of air into the mix, but just use what you have.

The method: Sift together your flour, baking powder and Xanthan gum (if using), and set aside.

In the mixer bowl, add your eggs and sugar. Set the mixer going, and whisk on high speed until very pale and doubled in size (4–5 minutes) Once light and fluffy, add in the flour mix, lemon zest, your very-soft margarine, and about 6 tbsp of the milk. Mix on low speed, just enough to incorporate, for about 30 seconds. Do not over mix . . . you'll end up with a tough cake!

Remove bowl from mixer, and scrape and mix in any stuck bits of flour from the sides and bottom with a silicon or rubber spatula. The consistency should be like softly whipped cream. If it's a bit stiff looking, add the rest of the milk and mix this in by hand. If you are unsure if the consistency is right, add the milk anyway!

Pour into your prepared tin, and level the top.

Pop the cake into the oven, clear up your mess, squeeze your lemons into a measuring jug, and measure out your sugar, but DON'T mix together at this point . . . then have a cup of coffee!

After 40 minutes, test the cake by gently pressing on the top. It should spring back and not wobble. If there is any wobble, give it another 5 minutes. Exact baking time will depend on what shape of tin you used, your oven, the mixture, etc . . . just keep testing.

Once ready, set the cake on a cooling rack. DON'T remove from the tin.

SHETLAND TEA RECIPES

Now mix together your lemon juice and sugar. It should look like an unappetizing gritty sludge. That's perfect! If you have a skewer, poke some holes in your cake. Don't worry if you don't have one, I'm not convinced it actually helps.

Spoon on your lemon topping. Take your time with this. Let it soak in. Make sure you get into every corner and curve. The sugary topping will run and build up at the edges, especially if your cake has risen more in the middle. But that's not a problem. The deliciously crunchy outside bits are the best bits!

For easy transportation to your chosen venue, leave in the tin until ready to slice and serve. Cut the round cakes into 12 very generous wedges. Or, you can get 16–18 more moderate portions from the roasting tin cake. Enjoy with a strong cup of coffee, and a blob of crème fraiche for the ultimate treat! ENJOY!



ABOUT THE CHEF

Name: Nicola Sinclair

Where I live: Bigton

My favourite book and why: *Narrative of the Most Extraordinary and Distressing Shipwreck of the Whale-Ship Essex* by Owen Chase

Shetland has a long history of seamanship. Fisherman, merchant navy, whalers. This is the true account of a fight for survival, written by the first mate of the ill-fated Nantucket whaler, *Essex*. It was the book that inspired *Moby Dick*, and one which I read long before the release of the recent blockbuster movie *In the Heart of the Sea*. Yes, it concerns whaling. And that is something that may put folk off. But, whether you decide to root for the whale, or whether you decide to overlook the bloodshed and concentrate on the human story, on the hardship, and the bravery and strength of the men involved . . . just read it! Amazing, amazing book!

SHETLAND TEA RECIPES

Outi's Date Cake

This is a traditional Finnish cake that has for several years now been served at Sunday teas and the recipe has been shared in different parts of Shetland.

CAKE INGREDIENTS:

250g stoned dates
100ml water
250g soft butter
180g sugar
3 eggs
250g plain white flour
1 tsp baking powder

HOW TO MAKE:

Boil together the stoned dates and water into a puree, mixing well, and let cool.

Beat the soft butter and sugar together in a bowl.

Add the date puree into butter and sugar, mixing well. Then add the 3 eggs into the mix.

Mix the baking powder into the flour and add both to the mix.

Pour into a loaf tin or a ring-shaped savarin tin that has been either lined with baking paper or buttered and floured and bake at 175°C (or 160°C fan oven) for 1 hour.

If you are using gluten-free flour (which works well with this recipe), increase the amount of water to 150ml.



ABOUT THE CHEF

Name: Outi Kater

Where I live: Aith

My favourite book and why: My favourite book is *Wegener's Jigsaw* by Clare Dudman. It is a novel about Alfred Wegener, a real-life scientist who, in the first half of the twentieth century, was the first to come up with the theory of continental drift, only to be discredited by his contemporaries. It is a story of one man's love for science and unshakeable belief in an idea. Northern landscapes and ice play prominent roles in this story. I always find it fascinating how we human beings can have so vastly different interests and can get passionate about very different things. That is how the ever-advancing civilization is carried forward, and Alfred Wegener definitely gave his all for his cause.

SHETLAND TEA RECIPES

Karen's Rhubarb Cake

Rhubarb grows like mad in Shetland, so it's good to find recipes to use the stuff up! This cake works really well with the gluten-free flour, but you can just use ordinary flour if you like.

INGREDIENTS

150g soft margarine
150g caster sugar
215g gluten-free self-raising flour
½ tsp baking powder
3 eggs
Pinch salt
1 lemon – zest and juice
Approximately 575g rhubarb
50–75g brown sugar (use 50g sugar if your rhubarb is young and sweet, 75g if older and more bitter)
1 tsp ground cinnamon

HOW TO MAKE

Beat the margarine, caster sugar, flour, baking powder, salt and eggs together briefly

Then stir in the lemon juice and zest and a handful or two of rhubarb cut into small dice

Spread in tin lined with non stick paper – my tin is approximately 25cm x 25cm

Mix brown sugar and cinnamon – sprinkle half over the top of the cake mix

Cut the rest of the rhubarb into short (approximately 2cm) lengths and arrange in rows all over the cake surface

Sprinkle on the rest of the sugar/cinnamon mix

Bake at 190°C for approximately 45 minutes – till wooden skewer in middle comes out clean

Toffee Flapjacks

It can be intimidating to have to bring something to a Shetland Hall Tea if you're not a baker. Don't face the ignominy of trying to disguise shop-bought as home-made! Make these instead as they are very easy but most delicious. What makes these flapjacks toffee-ish is the dark brown sugar and, most importantly – use *jumbo*-rolled oats (from health food shops) instead of normal porridge oats.

INGREDIENTS

115g dark brown sugar
115g butter
1 slightly rounded tbsp golden syrup
175g jumbo-rolled oats

HOW TO MAKE

Heat butter, sugar and syrup gently until melted.

Stir in rolled oats.

Press into a Swiss Roll tin lined with non-stick baking paper (you can try just greasing the tin, but lining makes things so much easier).

Cook at approximately 190°C for about 10–15 minutes till it's all bubbling and going crispy round the edges.

Cool in tin then cut into bars (though if you didn't line the tin it would be wise to try getting them out before they're totally cold).

SHETLAND TEA RECIPES

Shetland Bannocks

There is no standard recipe for bannocks, so here's a couple of very different versions to play with. There is a kind of alchemy to them – some folk can bake them effortlessly; some of us might follow the same recipe but just don't have the 'knack'. In theory they are very simple and you can knock a few up anytime. Best eaten fresh (even better warm) with butter and you can add fillings as desired. Get them right and you will find you are more popular than the maker of the fanciest cakes!



BANNOCKS 1 – GRIDDLE-COOKED TRADITIONAL

INGREDIENTS

250g self-raising flour
1 rounded tsp baking powder
Large pinch salt
1 carton buttermilk (284ml)

HOW TO MAKE

Lightly grease a griddle or big heavy frying pan and put it on the cooker top to heat.

Sieve the dry ingredients into a bowl.

Add just enough buttermilk to make a soft dough.

Transfer to a floured board, divide into 2 balls and roll or flatten them fairly thin.

Cut each in half then into 3, so you have 6 triangular bannocks from each round.

Lay them on the hot griddle for approximately 2 minutes, turn when lightly brown and cook on the other side.

Cool them on a tea towel while you cook the other 6.

SHETLAND TEA RECIPES

BANNOCKS 2 – PETER SINCLAIR'S OVEN-COOKED* BANNOCKS

This one is used for classes by Shetland Islands Council's Adult Learning department and they highly recommend it.

INGREDIENTS

600g self-raising flour

50g margarine

25g caster sugar

1 carton buttermilk (284ml)

1 egg

Natural yoghurt – approximately 250–300g

HOW TO MAKE

Preheat oven to 160°C (fan oven) and flour a baking tray.

Combine flour and butter into a bowl and rub together with your fingertips until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs.

Add the sugar, buttermilk, egg and enough natural yoghurt to make a sticky dough.

Turn the dough out onto a floured board and knead, adding enough flour just until the dough is no longer sticky, but it is still light.

Using floured hands gently press the dough down to a thickness of 2.5cm.

Cut with a biscuit cutter and place slightly spread apart on the floured baking tray.

Bake for 12 minutes until well risen and golden on the top.

Transfer to a wire baking rack to cool.

*These can be cooked on the stove top if you prefer, simply press your dough out slightly thinner, cut and cook on both sides over a moderate heat until browned and well-risen.



ABOUT THE CHEF

Name: Karen Fraser

Where I live: Lerwick

My favourite book and why: Impossible to have one favourite book! I will go for *Full Tilt: Ireland to India with a Bicycle* by the great travel writer Dervla Murphy, because she is so intrepid. It is the tale of her cycle journey from Ireland to India in the 1960s.

SHETLAND TEA RECIPES

Catherine's Malteaser and Mars Bar Slice

This is a traditional Finnish cake that has for several years now been served at Sunday teas and the recipe has been shared in different parts of Shetland.



INGREDIENTS:

200g of Malteasers plus extra to decorate (grab a 280g pack)
4 Mars Bars (4 x 53g bars)
125ml condensed milk
1 pack of Chocolate Digestive Biscuits (250g)
2 blocks of Cadbury Milk Chocolate (2 x 200g blocks)
100g unsalted butter
1 tsp vegetable oil

HOW TO MAKE:

Line the base and sides of a slice tin with baking paper.

Finely crush the Chocolate Digestive Biscuits. You can use a food processor or the end of a rolling pin if you are like me!

Roughly crush 200g of the Malteasers.

Dice the Mars Bars into small pieces.

In a small saucepan over a low heat, melt the butter and condensed milk, stirring until combined.

Add the roughly crushed Malteasers and Mars Bars to the crushed biscuits and stir through. Then add the melted butter and condensed milk and stir until combined – it will be very sticky!

Pour the mixture into the slice tin and flatten with the back of a metal spoon.



SHETLAND TEA RECIPES

Pop it in the fridge for approximately an hour until it has completely cooled.

Melt both of the blocks of chocolate and add 1 tsp of vegetable oil to the melted mixture, making sure you stir it in.

Pour the melted chocolate over the cooled slice and then decorate with remaining Maltesers.

Put the slice back into the fridge and cut into pieces before it has completely set.



ABOUT THE CHEF

Name: Catherine Jeromson, Senior Library Assistant

Where I live: Voe

My favourite book and why: One of my favourite books is *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak. It is such a powerful read – never before had I read something which evoked so much emotion. My husband was astonished that a mere book could make me cry! Unfortunately, like many of my other favourite reads, it has been made into a movie, and I often feel that spoils the magic and my enjoyment of the book.

SHETLAND TEA RECIPES

Louise's Chocolate-Chip Banana Cake

INGREDIENTS:

200g un-sifted plain flour
175g sugar
115g margarine
1 tbsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
1 tsp vanilla essence
2 eggs
3 or more ripe bananas, mashed – the riper the better
1 (or 2) packets chocolate chips, both the same or mix and match

HOW TO MAKE:

Pre heat oven to 180°C (fan oven 160°C)

Mix the flour, baking powder, salt and chocolate chips together (stops the chocolate sinking to the bottom).

Beat the sugar, margarine and eggs together until light and fluffy then mix in the vanilla essence and the mashed bananas.

Stir in the flour mixture until no flour is visible – do not overmix.

Makes one 900g loaf or 2 x 450g loaves (cake tin liners very handy). Can also be thrown into mini loaf tins or muffin cases.

Pour into the loaf tin and sprinkle liberally with brown sugar.

Bake the 900g loaf for 50–60 minutes – it usually cracks across the top. Reduce baking time if using smaller tins.

Cool on a rack and remove from the tin after 10 minutes.



ABOUT THE CHEF

Name: Louise Arcus

Where I live: Lerwick

My favourite book and why: It's hard to choose just one book but I think I'll have to go with *It* by Stephen King as it is the book I have re-read more than any other. I've always been a fan of horror books and films, and Stephen King can do horror better than anyone. If you weren't afraid of clowns before reading it, you will be after!

SHETLAND TEA RECIPES

Julie's Paet Hill Rumbly Road

This is a traditional Finnish cake that has for several years now been served at Sunday teas and the recipe has been shared in different parts of Shetland.

INGREDIENTS:

125g soft butter
300g dark chocolate broken into pieces
3 tbsp syrup
200g rich tea biscuits
100g peerie mootie marshmallows
2 tsp icing sugar (for dusting)

HOW TO MAKE:

Melt the butter, chocolate and syrup in a heavy-based saucepan. Melt together on a low heat. Reserve 150g of this melted mixture and put to one side.

Put the biscuits into a freezer bag and then bash them with a rolling pin. It is good to have both crumbs and pieces of biscuits.

Fold the biscuit pieces and crumbs into the melted chocolate mixture in the saucepan, and then add the marshmallows.

Tip into a tray (24cm x 24cm) and flatten as best you can. Pour the reserved 150g of melted chocolate mixture over the marshmallow mixture.

Refrigerate for about 2 hours or overnight.

Cut into peerie pieces (you don't want them too big as they are quite rich) and dust with icing sugar.

ABOUT THE CHEF

Name: Julie Thomson

Where I live: Unst

My favourite book and why: I absolutely love *Pride and Prejudice*. What an amazing world to fall into. I read that famous first line and I was hooked – 'It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife!' I adore every character and the ways in which they interact with each other. My favourite part is when Mr Collins proposes to Lizzy and she turns him down. The conversation she must then have with her parents is so funny and witty. I won't even get started on how much I fell in love with Mr Darcy!