

## Shetland Young Writer 2021: Lighthouse Theme

### Title: The Old Lighthouse Tells His Story

#### The Old Lighthouse Tells His Story.

When I look back, I realise I was always in danger. I just never stopped to think about it. I had kept going all my life, never stopping for one minute to think about the possibility of not shining bright. My job was simple, but very important - I had to warn all the ships and vessels who dared to cross the stormy seas to Shetland. The sailors would sail in all seas, daring life, but little did they know of the dangerous waters that lay all around us. My job as the lighthouse was to keep them safe without smashing ashore or breaking bows or, worst of all, losing lives. It was not an easy job, I can tell you, one I would never change.

It all started when I was young, I was created by a visionary man called Robert Stevenson who took great pride in building lighthouses like me across Shetland. I was built to last, strong and proud, out of stone by local men who knew how to work, craft and shape materials with their bare hands with only a few simple tools. They made me well, built me out of the heaviest stone to stand solid. They painted me white with a red band and a red door and there was no doubt I would have been a standout had there been a crowd!

The reality is I was quite lonely, out there on the edge of the cliff, all on my own. Without a close friend or any chance of romance... so I was dedicated to my job. I had nothing to distract my attention, I was focussed, and tried my best to shine as bright as I could. I worked hard and played fair. I never took a break, I was regular as clockwork, I was a reliable lighthouse!

I was rewarded with a keeper. He kept me amused, with his stories, we got along. We were both calm and we both knew when a storm was brewing. The birds would fly off, that was warning enough. The cups would begin to rattle on our dresser and the wind would pick up and start to whistle around the windows, bringing with it the warning of a harsh night ahead. We would brace ourselves, and we were always prepared. When we sensed danger ahead, we sounded our horn and sent out the signals to beware of the danger! **STAY AWAY!! DON'T COME THIS WAY!!!** There were many long dark nights, but we gathered all our strength to stay strong, shining until the calmer morning. The promise of the calm after the storm kept our spirits up and our hopes alive, and we saved many lives, ours as well.

You can imagine how grateful I am when I look back on my life. Even though I am old, worn, weathered and tired I still stand strong of all that I have achieved in my life. Things have moved on so much in my lifetime, I have seen many changes and I realise that there is no longer the same need for me - everything is automated now, and I do not have to host a keeper, keep time, or sound my horn. But although I have been replaced by 'progress' I have lived a full and happy life, and in my retirement I am happy. Now I gaze boats, I search for Tammie Norrie's burrowing all around the banks. I can relax in the gentle Shetland sun and watch the orcas chasing seals ahead. I can let the wind blow away the cobwebs, I can stay up all night and watch the Mirrie dancers partying in the sky above me, until another gentle dawn breaks on the horizon. I stand quietly by as the seasons pass.

This old age is not so bad! With all my wisdom and experience, I have started to recognise that I am still of excellent value - actually, I have become quite the internet sensation! I am a wonderful place for people to take a 'made it to the old lighthouse' selfie, and I find myself in big command. I meet new visitors from all over the world! Even though I am old and tired, I think we should never forget there is always a reason to shine!