

Preserving our sung heritage in harmony

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

THE Big Orkney Song Project was launched on Saturday in Stromness Town Hall with its first Song Share event.

It is a lottery-funded project which aims to regenerate Orkney's song heritage.

Aimee Leonard acts as Workshop leader/Song Developer, Sarah Jane Gibbon as History/Archive Researcher and Emily Turton as the Administrator/Vocal Coach.

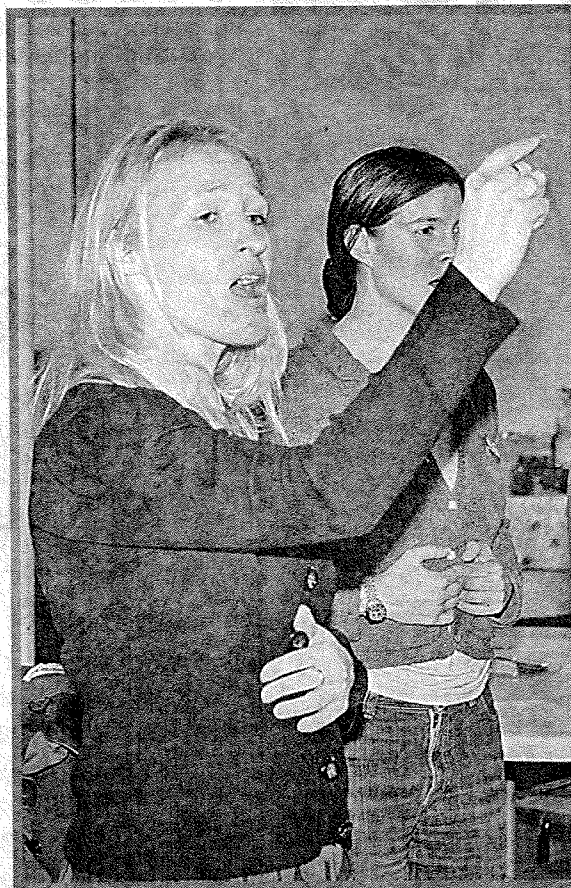
Emily said: "The project will preserve songs from our oral history and hopes to reinvigorate Orkney's song tradition.

"This two-year project will see 28 Song Share events held throughout Orkney mainland and all of the islands along with specific sessions also planned for our care homes and day centres.

"We are collecting, cataloguing and archiving songs that have been traditionally sung in Orkney, locally written and contemporary songs and children's rhymes thereby building up a complete picture of Orkney's dynamic song heritage.

"A programme of workshops will follow the song share events in order to reintroduce the collected songs into the community. A copy of the complete collection will be held in the Orkney Library and Archive and will be freely available to everybody.

"Please come and see us at an event or if you would like more information or would like to share any song material or if you would like to get involved as a volunteer in the archive or at events please contact us."



WORKSHOP: Aimee Leonard leads the singing at the launch event of the Big Orkney Song Project in Stromness town Hall on Saturday.

PICTURES ORKNEY PHOTOGRAPHIC

Further information can be found on the Orkney communities website - www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/ORKNEYSINGERS/; or you can call Sarah Jane Gibbon on 01856 872056, Aimee Leonard on 01856 851898 or

Emily Turton 07974 178612; or by e-mail: orkneysingers@hotmail.com.

The next Song Share event will be held at the Comarty Hall in St Margaret's Hope on Saturday, December 6 between 2pm and 4.30pm.



AT THE SONG SHARE: Learning The Orkney Boatman Song.

REVIEW

WE HAVE been hearing quite a lot just recently about 'The Big Orkney Song Project'. We've heard of the generous Lottery funding gained, the appointments of the three young women who will lead the project during the next two years, the plans and the sequence of events so far organised.

On Saturday afternoon the first Songshare event took place at Stromness Town Hall. There were some fifty people of all ages present and the overall impression was that they had a great time.

Tea and biscuits, convivial surroundings, time to chat and share, a concert in a café-bar style, traditional music, Orkney Song and the opportunity to join in a workshop to learn one of the songs from the concert.

Sarah Jane explained the aims of the project and progress so far. Just how all this was packed into an afternoon remains a mystery especially

as the mood of the day was relaxed and very good fun.

Performing in the concert of Orkney songs were local singer-songwriters Frank Keenan and Brian Cromarty, The Song Shop Trio (Aimee Leonard, Emily Turton and Sarah Jane Gibbon) and The Song Shop Choir.

Everyone is welcome at all Songshare events and already some people are planning to go to future events at St Margaret's, Hope, Orphir, Kirkwall, Firth, St Andrews, Flotta, Dounby and Shapinsay.

Each event will have new material presented and more opportunities to share Orkney Song. On Saturday, 27 people stayed on to learn The Orkney Boatman Song.

A lively vocal warm-up provided by Aimee was rapidly followed by the group singing the song in a two-part harmony supported by Aimee and Emily. Wow! The long winter months could just be an ideal opportunity for the regeneration of Orkney's Song heritage.

JL