

Introduction



St Ringan's Church in the 1930s (courtesy of Shetland Museum)

Former St Ringan's United Free Church on Lerwick's Hillhead is now home to the Shetland Library. The questions many people ask include: 'What was this building before it was a library?' or 'How did it become a library?' and 'What happened to the former congregation?' along with 'What does United Free mean anyway?' The purpose of this booklet is

to answer at least some of these questions by drawing mostly upon sources readily accessible within the library itself. It is hoped that this booklet may not only inform visitors as to the provenance of St Ringan's, but also encourage visitors and locals alike, to concern themselves with and be better informed about Shetland's local history and the various means by which material relating to it can be conveniently accessed. The library holds an extensive collection of local publications and a comprehensive archive of Shetland Times', other newspapers and periodicals. The Shetland Museum also provides extensive visual insight into local history through its photographic archive, accessible via the Internet. This hugely important resource was also used in preparing this booklet. If reading this booklet reliably informs the reader or indeed, encourages increased uptake of either the library or the Museum's resources, its purpose will be more than served.



The Lerwick Library in 2006