

The Vikings didn't think long before naming Sanday; Old Norse 'sandr' = sand, 'ey' = island. Most of the east-facing coastline consists of sandy beaches, and as the tide goes out, vast expanses of shallow bays glisten in the summer sun.



At the Spouts

Sanday's heritage is strongly influenced by the Norsemen; dialect words, house, field, bird names, the location of the bigger farm steadings - many are little changed from the days a thousand years ago when

raiders became settlers. These farmers weren't the first to live here, though people have lived here for at least five thousand years.

Enjoy your time on the island, these walks have been devised to help you acquire just a little of the atmosphere that makes the place so special.

At Elsness, walk back 5,000 years to a time before the pyramids of Egypt. Here, at Quoyness cairn, Sanday's first islanders buried their dead.



Coo Shell

Consider the strategic importance of the north-east corner of the island when you walk at Scuthvie. For two hundred years there has been a lighthouse, in the second World War a radar station, and for



Fulmars

countless thousands of years it has been the first landfall for tired migrant birds blown off-course across the North Sea.

At Tresness you're at the centre of a constantly changing landscape. The wind-blown sand shifts each year, and from one storm tide to the next, though the marram grass helps to give an underlying stability.

Piles of seaweed around the Whitemill area, along with evidence of kelp-pits and drying platforms along the coastline, help you realise how important these industries were as recently as twenty years ago.

No-one lives here now, but that intriguing row of cottages once held a community of seventy.

Imagine the laird's house at Scar in the late 19th century, how many crofters were working for the benefit of 'the big hoose'? A huge debt of gratitude is owed to William Gladstone, whose government established the Crofters' Commission of 1888. After this, many tenant-crofters became owner-occupiers, working at last for themselves.

Before you set out for the walk from Lady village, look at the War memorial. Count the number of 'Sanday boys' who died in the first World War. This loss of manpower accelerated the absorption of smallholdings by neighbouring crofts which became farms.

The walk to Broughtown starts from the school, you walk past the old West Manse, which was home to the Rev. Matthew Armour, champion of the crofters' cause when the conflicts with landlords was reflected in a schism between the 'established' and 'free' churches. When you reach the beach, you might be tempted to look into the shallow rock pools left by the tide.

In Backaskaill Bay's Cross kirkyard you'll find the grave of Walter Traill Dennison, Sanday's famous antiquarian. Close by, too, is the graveyard of eleven colossal Sperm whales, stranded on the beach in 1994.

You'll probably be on your own down at the beach of Dounhelzie. Try to go at low tide when you'll be able to try your hand at beachcombing among the strandline, and exploring the caves and arch. The erosion of sandstones of this area has created a marvellous variety of colours, shapes and textures in the cliffs and on the shore.



Benchiecott

*\*I like my porridge fine and dandy  
For I'm a gruellie belkie from Sanday*

