

Guidebook to Forvik



‘Centre of the known Universe’
Stuart Hill

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Visitors to Forvik are often not aware of what the island offers. Hopefully this small booklet will inform and entertain while you plan your visit. Whether you're looking for history, sport, music or culture; Forvik will surprise you.

Suggestions for improvements are always welcome.



Forvik Opera House, Multiplex Cinema and Music Venue

We're looking for you!

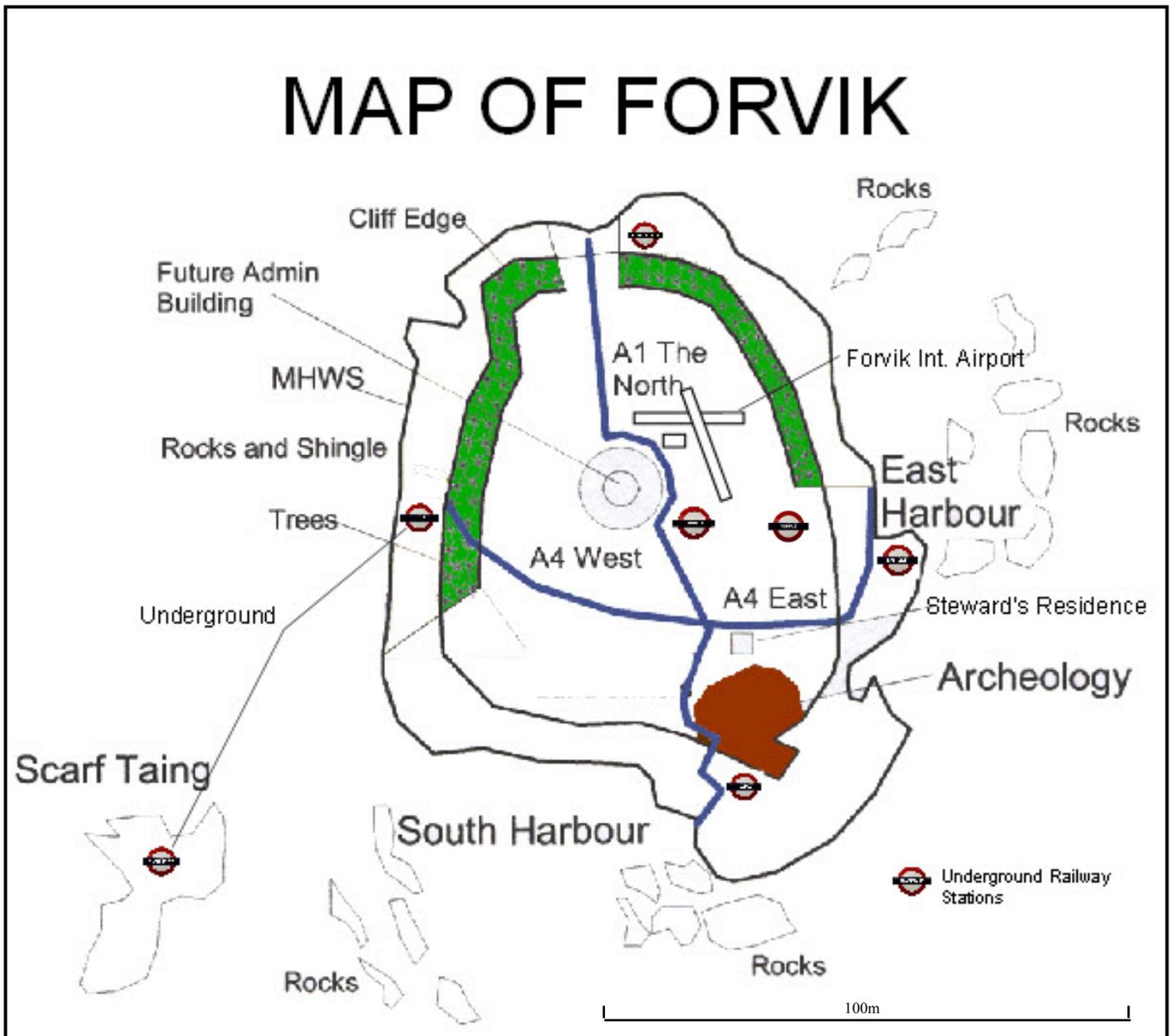
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Forvik - What it stands for.

Forvik is a tiny island in Shetland. It lies at Lat. 60°19'7.47"N, Lon. 1°39'49.29"W. It is close to the island of Papa Stour (Large Island Of The Saints) in the dangerous Papa Sound. Thirty feet high, it is constantly battered by waves from the Atlantic during the winter. Although it is rare for waves to wash over it, for it to be covered in salt spray is not unusual.

Uninhabited for centuries, it nevertheless has important historical ties with the rest of Shetland. In 2008 the island (then known as Forewick Holm) was given by the previous owner to Stuart Hill as a goodwill gift to help him in his campaign to prove the existence of Shetland's right to more autonomy. Papa Stour was the seat of Duke Hakon in the thirteenth century and it is likely that Forvik held an important place at that time.

As a faithful representation of the main features and facilities of Forvik, the map below and most of this guide book can be relied upon to the same extent as the authority of the UK in Shetland.



History

Prior to 2008, Forvik was little used except for grazing of sheep from the neighbouring island of Papa Stour. However, there is archaeological evidence of some kind of building on the south side of the island. The remains show what is left of a circular structure. Erosion on the West side has formed Archaeology Geo and the site has been eroded from all sides except the North. What is left indicates a circular structure with ramparts and ditches. The age is not known, but is thought to be pre-Viking. Papa Stour has neolithic remains going back 3000 years, so it is likely that those on Forvik could be of similar age, especially taking into account the amount of erosion having taken place. For Shetland's political history, see [Forvik - The Book](#).

Forvik was declared a Crown Dependency on 21st June 2008, in line with the real status of Shetland as indicated by the documented history. By March 2011, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II not having responded to Stuart Hill's offer to act as Steward, full independence was declared in line with the Montivideo Convention. The Sovereign State of Forvik is proud to take its place on the international stage. Membership of the Sovereign Nation confers many advantages unavailable to citizens of the United Kingdom, including exemption from UK statutes. The Sovereign Nation has its own legal system.

Sports Facilities

Forvik is unmatched for its sporting facilities.

Indoor and outdoor: The Soccer, Swimming and Senior Citizens Inline Skating teams have their headquarters at the Leisure Centre. The Chess Club meets in the Library most Tuesday evenings. Infants Tiddlywinks sessions are held on the Tabletop Rock at the East cliff edge, where they can also watch the 1-5 yrs rock climbing classes. The world famous cliffs on Scarf Taing are the venue for free climbing events and competitions attract entrants from all over the world.



The Forvik marathon is held in September and attracted over 50,000 runners last year - ranging from professional athletes to competitors in fancy dress.

Forvik fields a football team for the Inter Island games and hosts its home games at the Leisure Centre pitch. Stadium facilities are planned for 2013.

Indoor cricket is played at the Leisure Centre, as is bowls. The radio-controlled car racing club meets every Friday, sharing its facilities with the model aircraft and railway clubs.

Aerial Sports: Pre-school aerobatics is available at the airport and paragliding can be anywhere around the island according to wind direction. Since the advent of high speed paragliding rigs, this is now a year-round sport. The very popular [no-aircraft flying classes](#) are eagerly anticipated when wind conditions are suitable - usually during the winter. They are enjoyed by all ages.

Water sports: Forvik's unrivalled position makes it ideal for water sports of all kinds. The Sovereign Forvik Yacht Club is situated at East Harbour and water sports are co-ordinated from there. Snorkelling, diving and underwater hang gliding are all well catered for, with support boats operating from East harbour. The Forvik Atlantic rowing team is often to be found practising in Papa Sound.

Under water: Lying in 14-36m of water off the harbour is the wreck of the S.S. Highcliffe. Wrecked in fog in 1940 whilst on a voyage from Narvik in Norway to Methil and Immingham, she was carrying iron ore and had chosen the route along Shetland's west coast as there was less risk of encountering U-boats. The ship broke in two shortly after the crew was able to scramble ashore on the island. Divers can see the boiler, the engine and a large gun near the stern. Care must be taken by divers due to the strong currents.



S.S. Highcliffe

Forvik is famous for its shellfish. lobsters, crabs and scallops abound and the fishing is legendary.



Forvik lobster

The Round Forvik Powerboat Race takes place every year in February. Loss of life is quite rare, although the risk is said to be well worth it for the excitement.



Round Forvik Powerboat Race



L'Hydroptere

There is eager anticipation centred around Forvik's hosting of the next America's Cup series. The racing in Papa Sound is bound to be exciting and Forvik's view of the action will be unsurpassed.

Forvik is a center for innovative high speed, long distance sailing design. Part of the reason for this is the challenging conditions in Papa Sound. If a yacht can stand up to those conditions, it can go anywhere.

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Culture

Beside the Leisure Center is Forvik's world famous Opera House and Cinema venue. Amongst many unforgettable artistes, Pavarotti's performance of [Nessun Dorma](#) and Dame Nellie Melba's [La Traviata](#) are particularly memorable.

Gone With the Wind and Moby Dick are particular favourites at the multi-screen cinema complex.

In the same building are housed studio facilities for music and television production. Forvik has an enviable reputation for the quality of its music and television programmes. Forvik's library can be found in the leisure centre. Apart from a wide selection of fiction and non-fiction, the reference section contains fine collections of books on udal law, sovereignty and constitutional law, which are all taught from primary level upwards in school.

Forvik Up Helly Aa (fire festival) is held on the last Tuesday in March. The jarl squad gathers at the East Harbour for breakfast in the morning, before making a procession up to the Steward's Residence with the Bill, which is erected in its appointed place. The squad then tours the various tourist, entertainment and care centres during the day, stopping again at the Steward's Residence for a ceremonial lunch. Lighting up is at 19:30 and the torchlit procession, with up to 400 participants, circles the island. The climax is the burning of the galley at the west beach, when all the torches are thrown into it and the galley is cast adrift to meet its fate in the Atlantic. Those visitors who arrived in the galley are well advised to make alternative arrangements to get back to the mainland.



Lighting up



The Burning

Travel

Travel to Forvik is simple. By air, visitors arrive at Forvik International Airport. Private aircraft are also catered for.

It is regrettable that the nearest railway station is Bergen, making rail travel not the most convenient. By sea from the Shetland Mainland, the popular wo-wo (walk on - walk off) ferry service should be booked in advance, particularly during the summer season and in February for the Round Forvik Powerboat Race. Extra ferries will be available for the America's Cup races.



Forvik International Airport

Getting around: On Forvik itself, the A4 road connects East Harbour with the West side and the A1 runs between South Harbour and the North, passing Forvik International Airport and the administration Centre. It is not normal for visitors to bring their own cars, but there is a good local car hire service.

Nature lovers will enjoy the walking and for wheelchair users there is access to all parts. Guided tours can be arranged at the Post Office. Bicycle and mo-ped hire are available and may be booked at the Yacht Club.

The underground railway network makes travel quick and easy throughout the island. The Northern Line runs from Forvik North, through Forvik Central and Temple to South Harbour and the Central Line connects Scarf Taing, Beach, Forvik Central and East Harbour. Trains run about every five minutes. A shuttle bus service connects Forvik Central with the airport.



Views from seaward can be obtained from one of the local boat trips and this is a good way to view the world renowned sea caves of nearby Papa Stour. For those more adventurous, a trip with the Forvik kayak club will fit the bill.

Wildlife

From seals that pup at West Beach, otters along the South coast and all kinds of seabirds, the wildlife on Forvik is up close and personal. When solans (gannets) dive into the water, in most

places you would only see the splash and hear nothing, but on Forvik they are so close it sounds like somebody throwing rocks off the cliff.

Scooty Allens (Arctic Skuas) ambush the Tirricks (Arctic Terns), while Bonxies (Great Skuas) mug the Solans when they get a fish. It happens all around.

Under the water the fish and shellfish are abundant.



Baby seal



Otter



Bonxie



Scooty Allen



King Penguins

Where to Stay

The Forvik International Hotel is convenient for the airport and is open to meet visitors coming by plane. For those more budget conscious, there are camping sites throughout the island.

What to do

You can join in one of the many sporting activities, or while away some time in the airport duty-free shop. (Open to meet incoming planes). The Yacht Club has a fine selection of local crafts and groceries. There is also a well stocked chandlery for all your yachting needs. The Post Office and Customs facilities are at the Steward's Residence, near the junction of the A1 and A4. The popular night-spot 'Calamity's' can be found in a specially constructed underground venue at the International Hotel. The underground location ensures that no matter how loud the music, the wild-life and eco-tourists are not disturbed. Walking and bird-watching are amongst the finest you could find anywhere in the world.

Government

The Ting, or parliament is the seat of government. All members of Forvik, whether resident or not, are expected to vote on the various issues concerning them. Voting is done electronically and each member has a riding vote on some issues, and a deciding vote on others. At the time of writing, the currency and monetary system are under review while various alternatives are evaluated in the search for a fair system. Meanwhile the pound sterling is in daily use. Members of Forvik are engaged in an on-going process designing systems of governance and law to suit the way in which they wish to live.

Economy Forvik's economy is centred on the provision of various offshore services. Companies, ship and vehicle owners can all take advantage of Forvik's favourable tax regime. There is no income tax, VAT, or corporation tax on Forvik. Oil exploration in Forvik waters remains a possibility. Forvik produces its own renewable energy using wind, solar and free energy sources.

Industry

Forvik is a centre of excellence in the field of free energy research and production. What will come out of those endeavours in the next few years will make the current methods look positively antiquated. Oil exploration in Forvik waters remains a possibility. Forvik produces its own renewable energy using wind, solar and free energy sources.

There is a small gold mining operation on the North side of the island. Great care is taken to minimise the visual impact of infrastructure, mining and industrial activity and Forvik prides itself in the degree to which this has been achieved. Even the International airport is hardly visible to the untrained eye.

Aerospace

[The Ministry for Aerospace](#) runs a programme of rocket launches at a secret site code-named 'Muspell' (The Southern Land of Fire) deep in the Australian outback. The project (Star Peace) consists of a series of sounding rockets of increasing size and power as the first steps towards a permanent Forvegian Moon base scheduled for completion in the 3rd quarter of 2563. Research into anti-gravity vehicles is also carried out at Muspell. It is intended that these activities will be for the benefit of mankind. Forvik's Aerospace activities are entirely peaceful.

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Weather

Although Forvik lies in what would be considered a sub-arctic latitude in most parts of the world (it is at the same latitude as St. Petersburg and Anchorage), due to the Gulf stream it has a very temperate climate. Neither very hot, nor very cold, it tends to be cool and wet for much of the year, but Forvik can surprise with wonderful sunny weather. What it does not lack is wind. When the wind is against the very strong tide, conditions can get pretty rough in Papa Sound.



East Harbour



South Harbour

The United Kingdom's Claim on Shetland

Although it is widely believed that Shetland is part of Scotland and hence part of the United Kingdom and even The European Union, those claims are about as near to the truth as most of this Guide (although it's not entirely fiction). This is the true bit. Nobody can show a date or a document showing how and when it happened. It boils down to 'well, it's been like this for so long, there's nothing you can do about it now'. The reason they can say that is because the question has never been tested in the courts. Forvik is like Shetland in microcosm, showing what Shetland could do if it asserted already existing rights that have been hidden and obscured. Most Shetlanders have a problem realising that their position in Shetland is above that of Queen Elizabeth II.

In 2008 Englishman Stuart Hill decide he would test the authority of the UK government. Not recognising the Scottish courts in Shetland meant that he would have to provoke one of the authorities to take him to court, so he could challenge the court's (and the UK's) jurisdiction. Having been given a small island by a well-wisher, he proceeded to act as if Acts, Statutes and Directives of the Scottish, United Kingdom and European Union had no effect there. He built a house without UK planning permission – Shetland Islands Council demanded council tax, but then backed off. He stopped paying personal income tax and VAT on his business. HMRC threatened to take him to court, but again backed off when they realised they would have to provide proof that Shetland is part of Scotland.

Getting no reaction by those methods, it was time to issue a more serious challenge to the law. He put a decrepit Land Rover on the road in Shetland with numberplate FORVIK 1, Forvik 'tax' disc, Forvik driving licence and no MOT certificate. The police seized the vehicle and destroyed it without either compensation, or bringing any charges. Curious.

After further research, by 2011 he was ready for another go. The Forvik Consular vehicle was put on the road.

Signs in the front windscreen proclaimed LOOK – NO UK TAX DISC and LOOK – NO UK DRIVING LICENCE. The police eventually stopped him and seized the vehicle. When it became apparent that he could be in the same position as with the Land Rover, he put a second Consular Vehicle on the road, but this time locked himself in when stopped. This finally forced the police to arrest him and gave him the chance to test the jurisdiction of the court. At the time of writing (March 2012), the Sheriff has made a decision that Shetland is part of Scotland and Stuart has been found guilty of a number of traffic offences, for which he has been sentenced to 100 hours unpaid 'community service'. Pending an appeal, which is in progress, he is refusing to carry out the community service. The case is ongoing. You can keep up to date with progress by signing up for the newsletter at www.forvik.com



Consular Vehicle No.1



Consular Vehicle No.2

Shetland has always been a cash cow for Scotland and the United Kingdom. It has been a fascinating story of dark deeds. The trail of intrigue and deception at the highest levels of Crown and government started over 500 years ago and continues to this day. With so much at stake, the UK government will do everything in its power to avoid having to prove its position in court. **Watch this space!**