

Hay's Dock - Lerwick (Shetland Islands)



Panorama of Hay's Dock with the Heritage Centre under construction in the background (right), the restoration of the old sail house on the quay (centre right) and Cintec stabilisation work (end of the quay left of sail house)

Lerwick is the capital of the Shetland Islands and in the early 1830's became a thriving centre for the herring industry. The foundation for this commercial success lay with the construction of Hay's Dock and a complex of warehouses and curing yards together with all the facilities for building and rigging sailing vessels. The fortunes of the herring industry fluctuated considerably during the 19th century and as vessels became larger and steam power became the norm, a new larger facility was required and subsequently built by the Lerwick Harbour Trust in 1906. The original dock continued to play an important commercial role adapting primarily to the timber trade.

Today Hay's Dock stands as a monument to the town's industrial heritage and with the assistance of the Shetland Amenity Trust, Historic Scotland and a contribution of lottery funding, the dock area is being rejuvenated with the construction of the New Shetland Museum and Archives building as well as the refurbishment of the old docks itself.

When originally constructed, technology for building underwater was limited. Consequently the foundations of the furthest and hence deepest part of the quay consist of large stone blocks resting upon a layer of relatively unstable sand and gravel. Inevitably, over the last two centuries, the structure has suffered from significant subsidence.



Cintec anchor being carried to the end of the quay ready for installation.

