

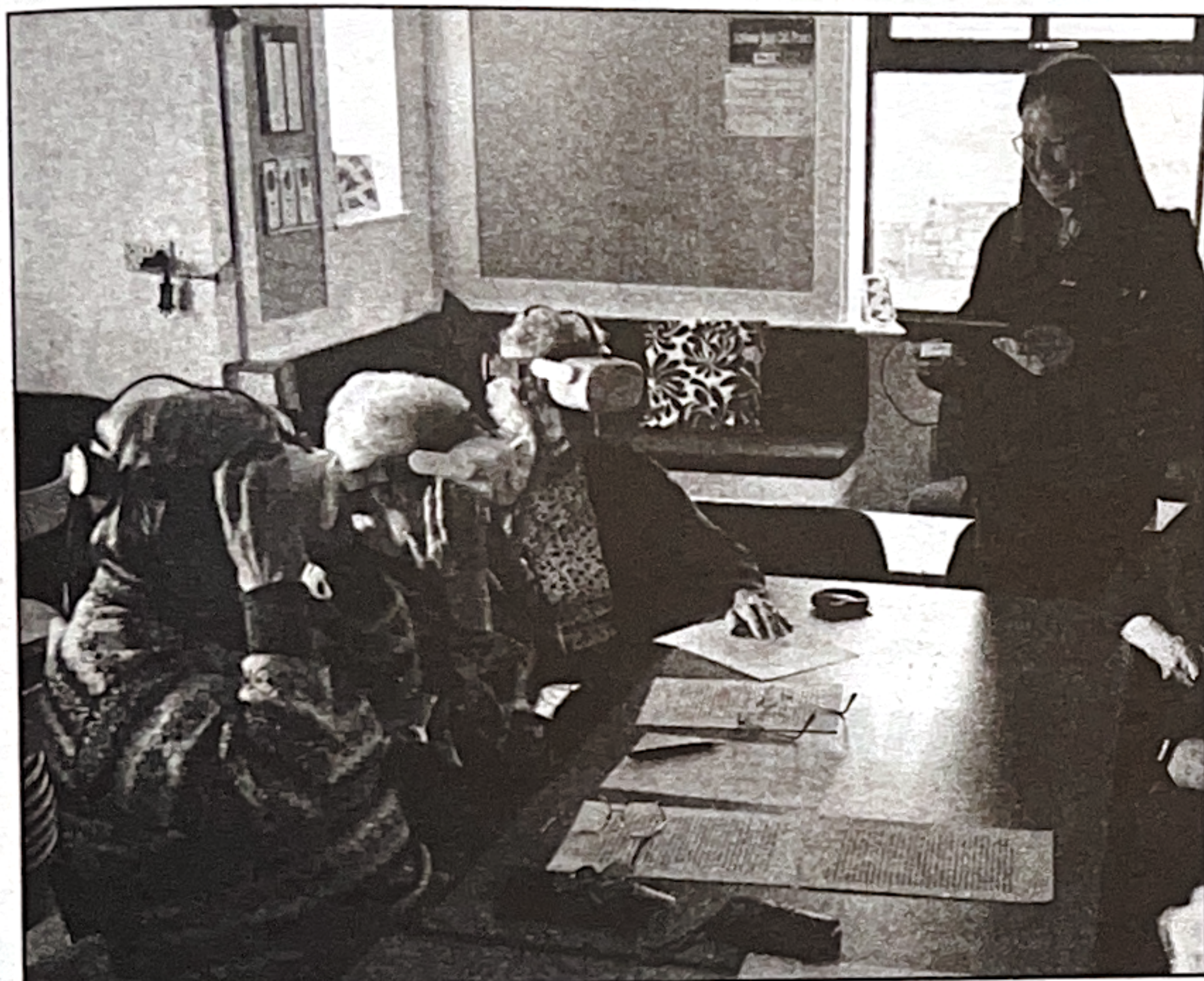


# Scord Views

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Immersed in the wonders of our local underwater shore life, three members of the Over 60s group don virtual reality headsets guided by Eleanor Hutcheon of UHI. The project was funded by the Shetland Regional Inshore Fisheries Group. Photo: Mark Burgess



Just some of the volunteers who tackled the waterfront in Scalloway for the Voar Redd Up last weekend. From left, Zander Johnson, Fiona Johnson, Jacqueline Irvine and David Irvine. Photo: Mark Burgess

## Harbour activity

It was a fair to middling week at the Scalloway fishmarket in the period up to last Friday.

A total of 2,160 boxes from the West Mainland port were sold at auction.

The week began with good landings from the *Avrella* and *Venture* for a total of 682 boxes sold.

There was another solid day on Tuesday with landings of 761 boxes sold from the *Ocean Reaper*, *Our Lass*, *Venture* and *Victory Rose*.

The *Avrella* sold 222 boxes on Wednesday, with a single box landed by the small boat *Pilot Us*. There were no landings for Thursday's auction. The week ended with landings from the *Arcturus*, *Defiant*, *Leslie A*, *Ocean Reaper* and *Radiant Star* for a total of 494 boxes in total.

## Voar Redd Up

Trustees and volunteers of all ages from the Scalloway Youth and Community Centre tackled the Waterfront and Midshore areas of the village last weekend as part of Da Voar Redd Up.

The group of adults and children gathered 22 bags of marine detritus from the rock armour and beaches.

Asides from the large quantity of synthetic twine, as used in fishing and aquaculture, the most common items recovered this year in the area were mussel pegs, used in mussel farming.

As a positive observation there were very few plastic bottles found and a relatively small quantity of general plastic litter.

Despite the volunteer efforts the heavily weeded onshore areas still hold a quantity of twine and rope, especially on the beaches, difficult or impossible to extricate from the weeds in which they lie. Something for another day.

At East Voe, regular beach cleaning volunteer Barbara Anderson encouraged volunteers to come and help out as she tackled this regular hotspot for flotsam and jetsam.

Barbara can often be seen clearing this beach area and others around the village, as an individual effort that benefits everyone and is an example to all.

## Virtual memories

The Over 60s drop-in group at the Scalloway Youth and Community Centre were taken on a voyage of discovery and reminiscence this week. Eleanor Hutcheon and Hilary Burgess

were guest visitors who came equipped with a state-of-the-art box of electronic tricks and a box of maritime artefacts from days of yore.

With these accessories, the 30 folk attending had the virtual reality experience of travelling on a traditional boat through Lerwick Harbour, and being inside a seabed creel with caught crabs for company, among other virtual experiences and reminiscing about the local fishing industry.

The innovative project has been shared with schools and community groups throughout the isles.

The headsets are the latest virtual technology, allowing users to look all around at an immersive video being played while wearing them.

Footage is shot with special 360-degree cameras for the purpose.

An example of this experience that was particularly well received by the Scalloway participants was a video shot in shallow water near the UHI's NAFC Marine Centre, showing crabs, anemones, sea urchins and other creatures and seaweed in their own environment.

One of the participants was Zandria Gilfillan who said: "I couldn't believe that there were so many colours just out here in the water. It's lovely. You could see all around you. It's amazing."

Another described the experience as "mesmerising".

Eleanor Hutcheon is the UHI's Stem outreach coordinator: "We are doing a marine and fisheries-themed activity involving some artefacts from the museum, some photos from a selection of contacts that Hilary has, and a virtual reality experience with 360 degree videos with lots of different sights around Shetland," she said.

"We've got some with sea anemones and sea urchins, crabs inside of a creel, some fishermen catching buckies around Yell, fisheries scientists doing lobster sampling and a selection other ones that people can view."

Hilary Burgess is the chairwoman of the Shetland Regional Inshore Fisheries Group, which funded the project.

While Eleanor introduced the Over 60s to the world of virtual reality, Hilary produced maritime-themed artefacts from the Shetland Museum and folders of photographs.

The Over 60s group could handle the maritime artefacts and learn about their history, but also, importantly, share their own knowledge of the industry, their experiences and those of their families and ancestors with Hilary and Eleanor.

The basis for this blended project of digital technology and historical

technology revolves around Stem teaching in schools.

Eleanor said they have been around the schools doing activities relating to science, technology, engineering and maths.

"Part of that has been a big seafood project using virtual reality to create an immersive exciting experience to create interest in different careers in the local industries," she said.

"This is a bit of a spin-off project with the Shetland Regional Inshore Fisheries Group, from where we got the funding for the headsets and the camera.

"Some of the other projects they have funded have been research projects through UHI Shetland, and we thought we would see if they would fund an outreach project as well."

The outreach has covered all ages of folk in the community and Eleanor said the response had been "really good".

"I think a few folk have been nervous to begin with, but I think everyone has tried it at least once if not twice, if not five times to see all the different videos."

She said the senior members of the community "have all the previous experience of the fishing industry to speak about, and that we can learn about. I've been able to fill the gaps in my knowledge of the fisheries heritage in Shetland."