

Mearns scenery 'one of most beautiful' locations for art tale

A Scottish islander's incredible tale of survival at sea has proved a huge hit after landing on the sands of the Mearns coast.

Drift – an art show based on the experiences of Shetland crofter Betty Mouat – unfolded at St Cyrus national nature reserve on Thursday.

Show director Symon Macintyre said the location was the ideal home for the story to be told, describing it as “one of the most beautiful beaches” he had been to.

Miss Mouat was 61 years old when she boarded the Columbine as its only passenger departing Grutness for Lerwick in January 1886.

She had been planning to sell her knitting in the Shetland capital, but during the trip a storm washed the captain and crew overboard and she was presumed lost at sea.

However the vessel grounded at Lepsoy, Norway, nine days later and the tough Shetlander was found alive and well gripping for dear life to a rope in the hold.

She returned home to Scotland a national celebrity and lived to the age of 93 on Shetland.

Her story inspired Mr Macintyre to craft the walk-in art project, which ran until Sunday.

Audience members wander through the work of four artists while songs and other sounds are relayed to them through headphones.

Mr Macintyre said almost 100 people had viewed the show.

He said: “It has been quite busy. Even in 1886, people were very interested in Betty, there is something about her and the fact that she survived that time at sea.

“She was an ordinary person that an extraordinary thing happened to.

“That captures people’s imagination, I think.

“Almost 130 years later it is still a story that has an interest.

“I suppose we’d all like to find the courage and endurance to do that if we were trapped down in that hold with two biscuits and a quart of milk.

“Beaches are places that are meditative and contemplative. This show is a meditation on that condition.”



Kirsty Cameron and Rhona Guild in action. Picture: Kris Miller.

Sisters are cycling for themselves

BIKING: Club nears first anniversary

ROB MCLAREN

A pair of cycling enthusiasts in Angus are approaching the first anniversary of a bike club they started just for women.

Kirsty Cameron from Forfar and Rhona Guild from Kirriemuir organised a ladies' race as part of the Angus Cycling Festival in September last year.

Surprised at the enthusiastic response to the event, the friends thought there was enough interest to set up a female only group.

The Ladies Leisurely Cyclists have now completed 15 routes covering more than 400 miles.

Kirsty said: “The group has encour-



We are open to people of all abilities.

KIRSTY CAMERON

aged more ladies to enjoy cycling locally in Angus who want to enjoy group rides on local roads with the mandatory cuppa stop en route.

“We are open to people of all abilities and ages, with a promise that no rider would get left behind.”

Each route is meticulously planned in advance, with the course driven the day before to make sure there are no obstructions.

Kirsty said that as well as organising the routes, it was as important to give participants encouragement on the day.

“We have four or five experienced cyclists who we dot in groups to look after a few of the riders,” she said.

“Many of the ladies are very worried on the day and may only have cycled a few miles before.

“We help reassure them and support them with positive words, stories of our cycling fails and handy tips.

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New golf coaching course open to women

When Mary Queen of Scots reputedly stepped on to the fabled Old Course at St Andrews in 1567 there was outcry.

She is reckoned to be one of the first women to have a real connection with golf, having played a version of the game in 1563.

Spotted on the course just two days after the murder of her husband Lord Darnley, however, she was criticised for indulging in a pastime unfitting of someone of her position.

Now Elaine Hendry, golf services officer at Leisure and Culture Dundee, is bringing things right up to date by offering a new generation of women easy access to the game.

She is leading a golf coaching programme specifically designed for women at Caird Park Golf Club and hopes to attract greater numbers to the sport by reminding the public of women's long association with the game.

By 1893 there were more than 50

ladies' golf clubs in Britain and locally at Barnhill there was a ladies course established in 1895 on advice from golfer Tom Morris.

The six-week golf coaching programme at the Caird Park practice area starts tomorrow and takes place between 6 and 7pm for beginners and from 7 to 8pm for improvers.

For more information, call the Caird Park starters box on 01382 438871 or book in person.

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