

overlooking the bay – and yes – there is a castle on an island in the bay.

My first impression of the school was of open spaces and bright colours, with an extensive use of timber finishes. A drama studio, which has to double as a gymnasium until the next phase is built, has been provided. The studio has a floor area of 9m by 8.2 metres with a balcony on the north and west sides about 1.5m wide, which is provided with bench seating for a small audience. The floor of the studio is vinyl covered whilst the balcony is carpeted. The storage space available is unusually generous for the size of the studio.

SHETLAND



BARRA

A Tale of Two Schools:

by Mike Smythe*

A small but well equipped control room is on the north side, raised slightly above balcony level giving a good view of the studio floor.

The south wall is a folding wooden partition opening onto a dining hall, and which will become the auditorium when proscenium productions are mounted. This means that for a proscenium production, the control is behind the cyclorama but provision has been made for both the sound and lighting to be controlled from studio floor level. Whilst this might not be ideal, there was no other position for the control room if good facilities were to be provided for the studio.

A height of 5m is available over the whole studio area, whilst the roof over the dining area slopes from about 5 metres to about 3m at the windows at the south of the building.

The technical equipment installed is of a high standard. The lighting control is a Tempus 24 desk with a Permus rack feeding outlets on fixed lighting bars over the studio, an f.o.h. bar in the dining area and some dip sockets. Most circuits have two outlets in different parts of the studio to give added flexibility. The lighting equipment includes Prelude 16/30, Prelude 30 and Prelude F lanterns.

The communications equipment includes a Strand Sound ring intercom system and a show relay system to the control room and dressing room.

The sound equipment is possibly generous by normal school standards but reflects the need to provide facilities for both touring shows and local groups who cannot nip out and hire extra equipment locally. An Alice 828 mixer has been installed with 2 x 100 watt power amplifiers and two PRO 100 loudspeakers. A Revox 877 is installed as well as a record deck.

The stage equipment consists of a front curtain track and double perimeter track with a full set of wool serge drapes. Six rope sets, operated from balcony level have been installed and a set of stage rostra supplied.

There is no cinema on the island so the control room also has to act as a projection room.

Two screens are installed, one in the studio for small audiences and a second larger screen in the dining area; when this is used the audience is seated in the studio and part of the dining area. A 16mm xenon projector complete with an anamorphic adaptor is available.

The studio should prove a useful performing space for the people of Barra.

Shetland, must be known to everyone who has ever heard of North Sea oil, or the massive Sullom Voe oil terminal. Shetland is not, however, in a little box off the east coast as shown on many maps, but is about 100 miles north of the mainland. The coming of the oil has certainly made an impression on the islands, which one is aware of as soon as one sets foot in the new airport terminal building with its separate check in facilities for helicopter and fixed wing flights.

The school I was to visit, Sandwick Junior High, is in a small village on the east side of the island between the airport and the capital, Lerwick. Not quite the most northerly school in the British Isles, but there aren't many to the north of it! Shetland is also a windy

place, although the sun shone whilst I was there! I don't remember seeing a single tree.

The school has been designed with the wider community needs in mind, indeed the "Assembly Hall" and "Stage" are designated as "Social Area".

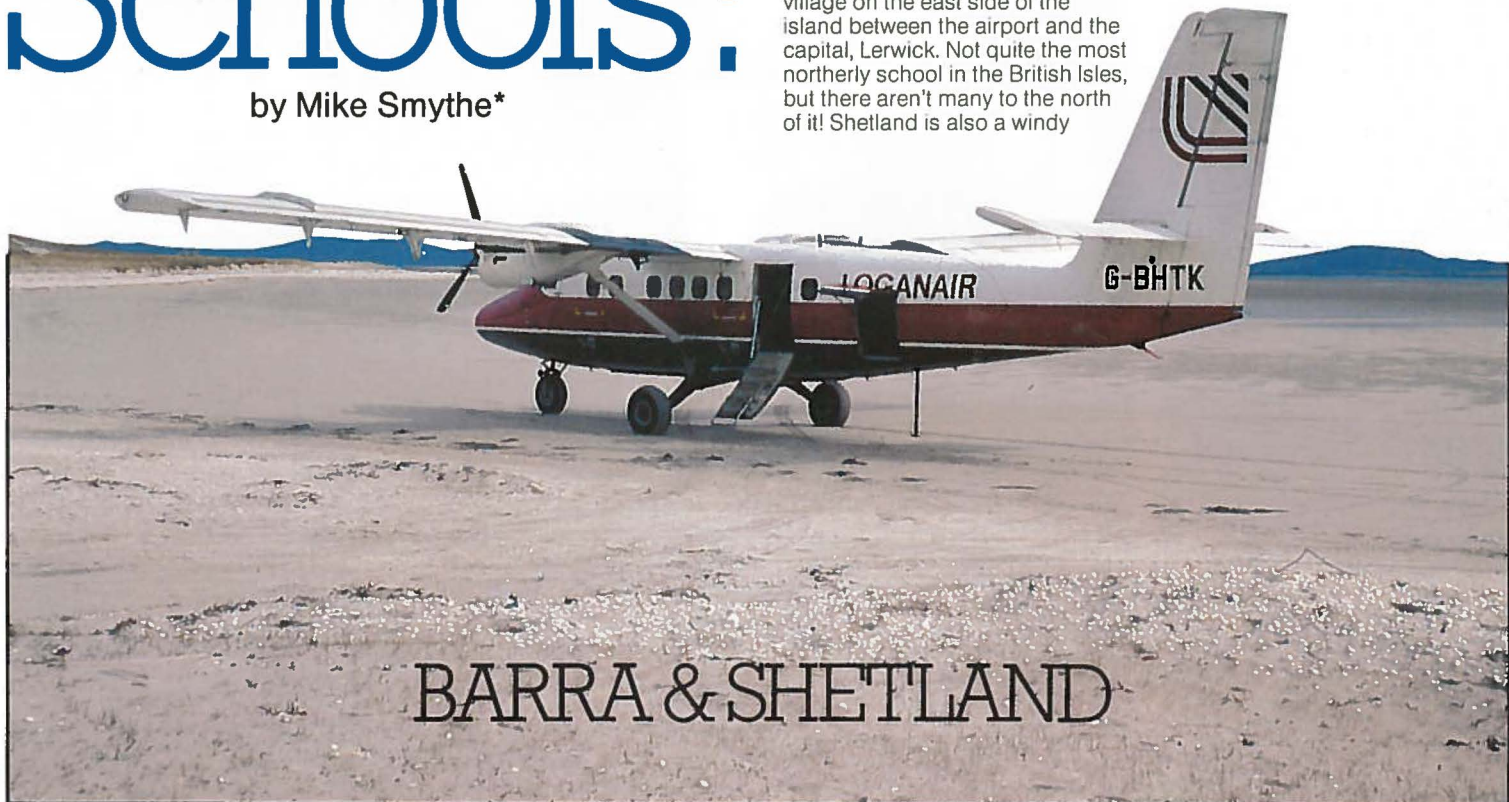
The stage is quite small, having a proscenium of 4½ metres wide and a depth of 5 metres. The stage is 700mm above the flat auditorium which is 16 metres deep. Over the auditorium is a suspended ceiling made up of hexagonal shapes which also serves to conceal the f.o.h. and general lighting.

Because the area will be used for dances etc. pinspots have been fitted into the ceiling to provide coloured lighting.

The stage lighting is controlled by an 18 way Tempus desk using 18 dimmers on a 24 way Permus rack. The remaining dimmers are used either for the pinspots or are spares. A Disco desk is used to control the coloured lighting and selected stage lighting circuits.

I find it encouraging that schools are now being built which can be used outwith school hours by the community and that the large capital investment made in these buildings will not lie unused for much of the day.

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BARRA & SHETLAND