

The Voyage of the Diana

Cast:

Captain John Gravill

1st Mate: George Clark

2nd Mate: Tom Hornaby

Inspectioneer / 3rd Mate: William Clarke

Engineer: Emanuel Webste

Carpenter: Andrew Donald

Edward Charles Smith, Surgeon

Cook: Joe Mitchell

Fireman 1: Fred Lockham

Fireman 2: Philip Pickhard

The Shetland crew: Harpooners:

Laurie Stewart

Mitchell Abernethy

Purvis Smith

Basil Smith

Magnie Nicholson

Magnie Grey

Magnie Grey

Peter Acrow

Peter Robison

Robert Robison

Alexander Robertson

John Thomson

Gideon Fraser

Hercules Anderson

John Robertson

Arthur Yell

Laurence Smith

James Williamson

Peter Shewan

Half-deck boys:

William Shewan,

John Hutchison

Robbie Hughson,

John Irvine,

Christopher Tait

Tom Himsworth

John Hughson

Reporters 1, 2, 3, 4:

Musicians

This was an 8-week drama unit, working on one scene per week. I began with work on the central mime, then slotted that into the dialogue.

My original class was a group which found focus difficult, so apart from the mimes, the movement was very stylised, with the seamen forming the ship's sides, and the officers in the middle.

For the Festival, it's being performed by two classes, with the younger pupils doing scenes 1-4, with support from the older ones, and the older ones doing scenes 5-7, with support from the younger ones.

Scenes:

1. The seal voyage
2. Catching the whales
3. Stuck in the Ice
4. Wintering on the ice
5. The death of the Captain, and the first cases of scurvy
6. Theft and starvation
7. Escape from the ice, and return home

The Voyage of the Diana

Opening:

SFX: fiddle tune. *Curtains open on cast on stage, making ship.*

? Back projection 1: painting of ship

LX clear, open, at sea

Part 1: the voyage to catch seals.

Captain Gravill: Captain Gravill, Master of the sail and steam whiling ship *Diana*, of Hull.

ALL: 19th February 1866

1st Mate: This voyage was to Jan Mayen Island, for seals.

2nd Mate: Look lively, there! All hands aloft.

Mime: climbing the rigging. Song: Heave away haul away

1st Mate: You two, to the wheel. You, lookout. You, boy-watch. You, firewatch.

Engineer: Firemen, to the coals.

ALL: Lerwick at last.

Mime: Signing on the Shetland crew.

2nd Mate: Name and occupation.

Shetland crew: (boatmen, harpooners, half-deck boys) announce their names and occupations. When all are aboard,

LX at sea – cold, blue feel.

Charles E Smith: Jan Mayen Island is in the Arctic seas, almost a thousand miles north of Shetland.

Shet 1: In the afternoon we spotted a large pack of male seals.

Shet 2: This showed the females and young were not far off.

Shet 3: The wind increased to a gale.

Shet 4: The ice was breaking up around us.

Shet 5: It'll break up the ship!

Carpenter: Fend it off with poles.

Mime. Crew take poles and push off ice.

Captain: Captain's log, 1st April. Clear of ice at last. Calm weather. Few seals to be found.

Shet 6: 19th April. We're now returning to Shetland.

Shet 7: It's too late in the season for young seals.

ALL: 27th April.

1st Mate: Lookout aloft.

Mime: lookout climbs up rigging.

LX as opening, at sea but less cold.

Lookout: Balta! Balta Isle!

Captain: We arrived in Lerwick on 28th April.

Shet 8: We were a clean ship – we hadn't caught anything.

Captain: We re-provisioned and coaled, ready to set out for the whaling.

Part 2: The whaling.

1st Mate: We were headed for Pond's Bay, on the east coast of Alaska.

2nd Mate: On the way, we encountered more ice than usual.

Captain Gravill: Run the engine ahead and astern to free us.

Mime: ship inches back and forwards.

Captain Gravill: Fend those floes off with ice poles.

Shet 9: Aye, aye, sir.

Mime: mates 3 & 4 organise crew on each side fending off with poles.

All: 18th June 1866.

LX at sea, cold, blue feel.

Captain Gravill: The North Waters at last. Three cheers, men!

All: Hurray! Hurray! Hurray!

Cook *mime tray*: An extra tot of grog all round!

Dr Smith: Is it usual to have so much ice here, sir?

Captain Gravill: No, Mr Smith. But this is the best ground for whales.

1st Mate: Make ready for catching fish.

2nd Mate: Swing the boats outboard.

Engineer: Fix the harpoon guns in position.

Carpenter: You boys, start assembling the barrels.

Fireman 1: As you finish them, hand them down to be stowed in the hold.

Fireman 2: You, boy, man the crow's nest.

Mime; making ready for whaling. The lookout stares then points.

Lookout: There she blows, sir!

1st Mate: Launch the boats!

Mime: catching and flensing a whale.

Captain Gravill: 30th June. We caught two right whales. *He stamps his log, twice.*

Engineer: Twenty tuns of oil, and one and a half ton of whalebone.

Carpenter: Now our luck's turned.

Dr Smith: But it had not.

Shet 10: Pond's Bay was full of ice.

Shet 11: None of the other ships had caught anything.

Captain Gravill: The season is over. There is no point in remaining.

Dr Smith: All the ships left together. We were behind the *Intrepid*.

Captain Gravill: Her captain has promised to wait until we are out of the ice too. If we get stuck, she will help us.

Shet 12: More ice ahead, sir.

Captain Gravill: Engine ahead and astern.

Shet 1: The *Intrepid* hasn't stopped.

Shet 2: She's leaving us behind!

Shet 3: We're stuck in the ice!

Part 3: Left behind

Dr Smith: I cannot tell you how angry we all felt about the *Intrepid's* betrayal.

All: 2nd September 1866.

LX **cold, shifting lighting**

1st Mate: The ice flow sheltering us began to break up.

2nd Mate: The gale was blowing large ice lumps towards us.

Dr Smith: Each time that we hoped to get the ship free, the ice closed in on us again.

Cook: Sir, I'm short o coal for cooking.

Captain Gravill: Use some of the barrel staves, Mr Cook.

Cook moves back, shaking his head.

LX **lights brighter on ship area**

Dr Smith: On 21st September, the Captain called us together on deck.

Captain Gravill: Men, our position is serious. We are short of food and of coal.

Shet 4: We'll nivver see Shetland again.

Shet 5: Whit can we do, sir?

Captain Gravill: First of all I want every one of you to bring any food you have left in your sea-chests. Cook, bring me all your stores.

Cook: Aye, aye, sir.

Mime: fetching provisions. Captain locks cupboard.

Captain Gravill: From now on, all food will be rationed. You will each receive three pounds of biscuits each week, and three-quarters of a pound of salt meat each day.

Shet 6: We'll nivver survive on dat!

Shet 7: We'll hae to.

Shet 8: Foo lang, though?

Shet 9: Foo lang will we be grippit in dis ice?

Shet 10: If we're no got coal fir da engine, hoo can we get lowse?

All crew look at the Captain.

Captain Gravill: Gentlemen, we have a hard time ahead of us. We cannot force our way free. We will remain in the ice here and trust to the Atlantic Drift to take us to the south.

Shet 11: We're gaun tae drift oot a da ice?

Shet 12: Foo lang will it tak?

Captain Gravill: Until April.

Engineer: April!

All: Seven months!

Cook: Sir, there's not enough food to last that long.

Fireman 1: We can shoot seabirds.

Fireman 2: We might catch a seal or two.

Shet 1: We'll mak it if we aa work tagidder.

Part 4: Wintering on the ice.

LX dim ship slightly – add dim yellowish light

Dr Smith: With the last of the sun disappearing and short days coming, we snuggled down the ship for the long wait ahead. The upper masts and spars were taken down and all wood, including the seal clubs, was gathered for fuel.

Cook: I was only allowed to light a fire once a day, to melt ice for water.

Shet 2: It's dat cauld.

Shet 3: I was lying in me bunk, and me breath was freezing intae icicles on the bolts aboon me.

Shet 4: Luckily da ship's planks held.

Shet 5: Da pumps wir frozen solid.

Shet 6: We had to mak ready tae abandon ship twar-tree times.

Carpenter: But each time, her strong sides resisted the pressure of the ice.

Shet 7: Mony of wis wir suffering fae frostbite.

Shet 8: If du touched metal, it took da skin fae dee fingers.

Cook: Fire's alight.

Mime: crew gather together around it, stretching out their hands to the stove.

LX brightening to cold blue light

Dr Smith: Sunday 2nd December.

Carpenter: Sir, the ship's stern has been damaged.

Fireman 1: There's water coming in.

Captain Gravill: We need a secure camp on the ice, just in case.

Dr Smith: We built a camp on the iceberg using spare sails and spars as tents.

LX add back projection – ship on ice

Mime: unloading the ship and building camp.

Shet 9: Some o wis had to keep working da pumps, aa da time.

Shet 10: We were dat weak we could barely manage tae keep da water level doon.

Shet 11: We pat lumps of bruck ower da ship's side ida hoop da current wid sook dem intae da hol.

Shet 12: When da ice aroond wis started tae brak up we had to shift aa wir tents an provisions back on board again.

Mime: breaking up camp and loading ship again.

Dr Smith: Our thermometer could only measure as low as -20 degrees, but it was much colder than that.

Shet 1: I'm dat tired.

Shet 2: I just waant to gie up.

Shet 3: Du his tae keep gaun, or du'll dee.

Shet 4: I don't care ony mair.

Shet 5: We need to keep gaun for each anidder.

Change of cast.

Part 5: the death of the Captain; New Year; the first cases of scurvy

Dr Smith: The crew were weakened by the cold and the lack of food. I was also worried about our captain. He suffered from asthma, and was developing dropsy. The officers took it in turns to sit with him.

LX change from back projection to cold blue feel

LX brighter on ship area

All: Christmas Day.

Cook: I've made a plum duff!

All: Hurray!

Dr Smith: Captain Gravill died the following day.

Shet 6: He was the first of wis tae dee.

Shet 7: We'll nivver see hame again.

1st Mate: George Clarke, first mate. I'm in charge now.

Dr Smith: We laid our Captain's body on the fore-deck, covered with the ship's flag, and said prayers over him.

Move away from body.

Shet 8: Whit's dat smell?

Shet 9: Phoo! Dat's aafil!

Ist Mate: Joe, what are you burning?

Cook: Crang, sir, bits of dead whale I fished up from the tanks. It's a bit rotten, sir, that's why it smells.

Dr Smith: We have only two weeks' worth of coal left.

Shet 10: Hoo are we going to survive here wioot a fire?

Shet 11: I'm missing me cups o tay.

Ist Mate: Keep doing your best, Mr Cook.

Mime: men disperse; mates to bunks at aft, Shetlanders to bunks forrard; some to pumps, one on watch. Reactions; sound effects.

LX lights dim to 'night'

Dr Smith: That night, a bitter north-easter gale blew.

Engineer: This ice creaked and groaned around us, like a living thing.

Shet 12: We lay awake waitin fir da call, "Abandon ship."

Shet 1: But *Diana* wis a braaly tough ship.

Carpenter: Her planks cracked, but the joists held.

Shet 2: We still hed tae keep pumping aa da time.

Dr Smith: An anxious, anxious night.

Watchman sounds 8 bells.

Shet 3: Midnight.

Shet 4: Happy New Year.

Shet 5: New Year's blissings tae you, sir.

All (to each other): Happy New Year!

LX cold blue daylight

ALL: 5th January 1867

Shetlanders: Merry Christmas tae dee, boy.

Dr Smith: The Shetlanders celebrated Auld Christmas.

Shetlanders freeze in eating and drinking poses.

Laurence Smith *doubles over and groans*: Send fir da doctor. I'm deeing.

Dr Smith: What is it, man?

Laurence: It's me belly. I saved me rations all week to celebrate.

Dr Smith: No wonder you're ill, man.

Fireman 1 and Magnie Grey: Doctor?

Dr Smith: What is it, men?

Magnie Gray: Magnie Gray, sir. My gums ir dat sore.

Fireman 1: Mine are bleeding.

Magnie: My hale mooth hurts.

Fireman 1: Me teeth are loose.

Dr Smith: I'll give you a mouthwash for it.

He comes forward to Ist and 2nd Mates.

Dr Smith: Mr Clarke, we have scurvy on board.

1st Mate: How many?

Dr Smith: Two, at the moment.

2nd Mate: Did you tell them that was what it was?

Dr Smith: No, sir.

1st Mate: Don't. Say it's – it's –

Dr Smith: I'll say it's the effects of smoking tea in their pipes sir.

2nd Mate: Poor fellows, they miss their tobacco, but it's all gone.

Dr Smith: I miss my pipe myself, sir.

Dr Smith: Lime juice would have helped, but the cask was frozen solid.

We set it by the fire to thaw.

Shet 6: A bird!

Shoots – three times. Scrambles overboard to bring birds back.

Shet 7: Three kittiwakes, sir.

Cook: That's tonight's tea taken care of.

3rd Mate (Andrew Donald): Sir I have spots on my legs.

Shet 8: I have too, sir.

Shet 9: So have I.

Dr Smith: I've got them too. It's the cold.

Shet 10: It's cold enough to put spots on a zebra.

They disperse, shivering.

Dr Smith: Only I knew that the spots were another sign of scurvy.

Part 6: Theft and starvation

ALL: January 18th.

Dr Smith: We have now been three months in the ice.

John Thomson: Doctor, this tooth's wobbling.

Dr Smith: Let me see. It'll have to come out.

Mimes tying string round, yanking.

John Thomson: Owww!

Alec Robertson *backing off hastily*: Mine's oer weel sir, ee noo.

2nd Mate: Sir! Sir! Someone's been stealing the biscuits.

Shet 11: Stealing!

Shet 12: Wha could be dat mean?

Shet 1: Wir aa starving dagidder.

1st Mate: Men, we are already on short rations.

2nd Mate: We will all have to eat less now.

Shet 2: Fred Lockham, I saa dee wi an extra biscuit dastreen.

Shet 3: Bonsall Miller, du hed een an aa.

Angry reactions from the rest of the crew.

Fireman 1: Philip Pickard started it.

Fireman 2: It wasn't me. It was Robbie Hewson.

1st Mate: You four are all on fewer biscuits than the rest of us, until you've made up what you took.

ALL Friday, 1st Februry.

Shet 4: I canna believe hoo cauld it is. I spilt some waater apo da floor an it froze tae ice in a second.

Shet 5: Hit's no fair. Da men aft hae a fire.

Shet 6: Sir, we need a fire an aa.

Shet 7: We're starvin here.

Shet 8: Poor Magnie's worse.

Ist Mate: There's an old ash-bucket you could light a fire in, every evening.

2nd Mate: Be sparing with the wood.

Mime – setting up stove.

LX **orange glow round bucket**

Jamie Williamson: Ah, tis mony a day since I saa sic a sight as dat, sir.

Dr Smith: This morning, the cook opened our last cask of flour.

ALL: We're starving.

Cook: Biscuits.

He doles out the biscuit rations. Men mime putting them away.

Shet 9: I divide mine into seeven, an pat dem in packets, een for each day.

Shet 10: I divide mine right into meals, or I'd ate da hale day's ration at brakwist.

Shet 11: I canna do dat. I nivver hae ony left be Friday.

Shet 12: I canna make mine lest till Tuesday, I'm dat black fanted.

ALL: Sunday.

Sit down in 'eating' rows.

1st Mate: Half-pound flour dumpling. Half pound salt boiled beef.

ALL Monday:

2nd Mate: Ladleful of weak pea soup, thickened with biscuit crumbs. Half pound salt pork.

ALL: Tuesday.

Engineer: Ladleful of "burgoo". Half pound salt beef.

ALL: Wednesday.

Carpenter: Ladleful of barley broth. Half-pound salt pork.

ALL: Thursday.

Cook: No extras. Half pound salt beef.

ALL: Friday.

2nd Mate: Ladleful pea soup. Half pound salt pork.

ALL: Saturday. Ladleful of burgoo. No meat.

Shet 1: The cook gies wis meat fat to spread apo wir biscuits.

Shet 2: We're blyde o it.

Mime: all tramping round the deck.

1st Mate: Keep moving on deck, there. Exercise will keep you warm.

Purvis Smith: I canna, sir.

He falls to the deck.

Dr Smith: He's exhausted, sir. I can barely feel his pulse.

1st Mate: Take him below.

Dr Smith: Sir, we have eight very bad cases of scurvy. The men need better food.

1st Mate: Cook, is there any bouilli broth?

Cook: One cask of it, sir.

1st Mate: Give them that instead of salt pork.

Dr Smith: Five of the men were Shetlanders: Alec Robertson, Mitchell Abernethy, Magnie Grey, Peter Acrow and Gideon Frazer. Poor Purvis Smith was also very weak.

2nd Mate: Sir, Purvis Smith is dead.

Dr Smith: We laid him beside the Captain. Lord, have mercy on us.

Part 7: Escape from the ice and return home.

ALL: Friday, 15th February.

Dr Smith: A year since we set sail from Hull.

Engineer: Will we ever see home again?

Lookout: Sir, the wind's coming from the North West!

Carpenter: It'll blow us out of this ice.

ALL: 21st February.

Line sides of the ships, watching anxiously.

**LX intense blue-white light on icebergs, otherwise dark –
gradually lightening to dawn, then warmer light during dialogue**

Shet 1: We aa bade up aa night as da ship came atween a lang line o icebergs.

Shet 2: We lippeded ony minute tae be torn sundry.

Shet 3: When the sun cam up we saa we'd gone safely atween dem.

1st Mate: Lookout, can you see water?

Lookout: There's more pools around us, sir. Yes, sir, I think I see the edge of the ice, way in the distance.

Shet 4: Der's a mallie, sir, look!

Shet 5: Dey nivver fly inland. We must be nearly at da waater.

ALL Hurray!

LX warm light by now.

Shet 6: Da wind drave wis steadily tae da soothard.

Shet 7: Da ship was still cased in ice.

Shet 8: Twa o wis were deeing: Hercules Anderson and Mitchell Abernethy.

Shet 9: Someen stole Mitchell's last tree biscuits.

Dr Smith: Mitchell Abernethy died the next day. Only seven of us are free of the scurvy.

Lookout: A fish! A fish!

1st Mate: Then the ice is beginning to melt.

2nd Mate: It's beginning to feel warmer.

ALL: 11th March.

1st Mate: Let's haul up some sails, lads.

2nd Mate: Fire a couple of shots to starboard.

Engineer: Let's see if we can free her.

Carpenter: She's sailing.

ALL: *cheers Mime roll of ship on swell.*

Lookout: I'm sure I can see open water, just at the horizon.

Shet 10: Ten miles away!

1st Mate: Look lively, all hands. Ship the rudder!

2nd Mate: Let's get the mainsail up.

Mime: all hands, although weak and exhausted, work together to get the sails up.

Shet 11: We were still sailing atween icebergs.

Shet 12: Dir was a rim o ticker ice just afore da open sea.

Shet 1: We had to fight wir way trow it.

Shet 2: *Diana's* timbers shuddered and cracked as da ice pressed against dem.

Shet 3: But we made it at last, trow da ice and into open water.

Shet 4: We were headin hame.

LX ?Sunlight on water effect.

1st Mate: Our ship's crew was in a dreadful state.

Dr Smith: The scurvy worsened when the climate changed from frost to damp.

Alec Robertson and Arthur Yell dead.

2nd Mate: It was a swift passage, with strong winds behind us.

Carpenter: The ship was still leaking badly.

Dr Smith: Bonsall Miller and Basil Smith dead.

Engineer: We had to keep pumping all the time.

Dr Smith: Philip Pickard dead.

Lookout: Only three of the ship's company were able to go aloft.

ALL: 1st April. 6 in the evening.

Lookout: Land! Land ahoy!

ALL: Land!

LX green on cyc or back projection photo

1st Mate: We sailed up the land.

Dr Smith: Robert Robison dead in the night.

2nd Mate: We came into Ronas Voe the next morning.

Dr Smith: 1pm. Frederic Lockham dead.

Engineer: The people of the houses there came out to help us.

Dr Smith: 1.30pm. Gideon Frazer dead.

1st Mate: They manned the pumps and brought food.

2nd Mate: Some men were too weak to go ashore.

Dr Smith: 4th April. Hercules Anderson and John Thomson dead.

6th April. Alexander Robertson dead.

Engineer: We stayed in Ronas Voe for a week, then sailed round to Lerwick.

LX projection?

1st Mate: Reporters described the ship:

Reporter 1: - a ghastly ship, battered and ice-crushed, sails and cordage blown away, boats and spars cut up for fuel.

Reporter 2: - miserable, scurvy-stricken men looked over her bulwarks.

Reporter 3: Most pitiable of all were the ship's boys, with their strange, aged look.

Dr Smith: The dead men were buried in Lerwick. I remained on board *Diana*, with the Captain's body. Thousands of people thronged the jetties in Hull to see the *Diana* come home.

Reporter 4: Dr Smith's brother gave the people of Lerwick a drinking fountain in memory of the men of *Diana*. You can see it on Victoria Pier. Other mementoes are in the Shetland Museum.

ALL: That was the true story of *Diana* of Hull.

SFX **snatch of fiddle tune**

LX **fade to blackout.**

LX **Lights for cast bow.**

LX **Blackout.**

Curtains close.