

# Jewellery Industry in Orkney

The beginnings of the small jewellery industry in Orkney started just over 45 years ago and has grown considerably in the last 20 years. The rich heritage which can be found all around is a great source of inspiration for many designers. Places such as Skara Brae and Maeshowe provide great stories about our past, for example runes. Runes, an early form of writing, are used in jewellery which not only look contemporary, but have a hidden message in the piece.

When **Ola Gorie** graduated from Gray's School of Art in the 1960s. She returned home to setup her business and was the first jewellery company to be based in Orkney. Her designs range from being traditional to contemporary – sometimes being quite intricate. Ola Gorie Jewellery is based in Kirkwall with the shop being on Broad street opposite the Cathedral.

**Ortak**, the second jewellery business to be set up, was established in the 1970s by Malcom Gray, and is now one of the largest jewellery manufacturers in the UK with around 12 outlets throughout the country. Ortak's style covers both traditional and contemporary designs. Their factory and shop is based in Hatston Industrial Estate, with another shop in Albert Street, in Kirkwall.

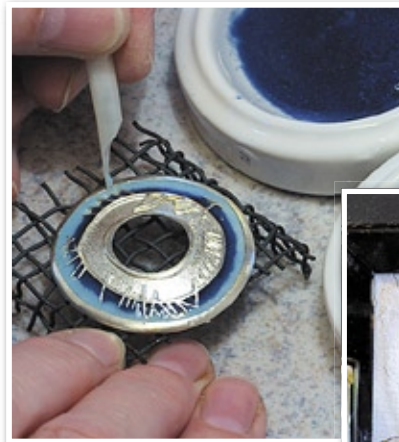
**Sheila Fleet** was the 3rd Jeweller to start her own business in 1993. She graduated from Edinburgh College of Art in 1967 and worked in London for 9 years. In the late 1970s she returned home to Orkney and designed for one of the jewellery companies before setting up on her own. Inspiration for her jewellery comes from the natural surroundings in Orkney such as the sea, sky, landscape and rich historic past. Her designs are unique and use coloured enamels to bring the jewellery to life. Sheila is based just past the Airport in Tankerness at her country workshop and retail studio, where tours are welcome.

**Aurora Orkney Jewellery** was setup in 1996 by Steven Cooper. The work is very contemporary, all designs are created by various designers who are all highly credited. A retail outlet has recently opened in Thurso, on the north coast of Scotland.

There are smaller producers which are also equally important to the local industry such as **Orkneyinga silversmiths**, **Peter Rowland**, **Westray Jewellery** (Geordie Thomson), **Stewart Moar**, **Lindsay Craigie**.

This thriving industry, which boasts unique design styles and attention to detail, all being manufactured in Orkney, is steadily growing. People sometimes ask how there are so many jewellery businesses in Orkney? One reason is the natural environment that is an infinite source for inspiration for designers. Approximately 1/5th of all pieces made in Scotland that require hallmarking at the Edinburgh Assay office come from Orkney.

Visit these businesses and individuals to see how varied each style and way of working is. To find more information contact VisitOrkney for more information, [www.visitorkney.com](http://www.visitorkney.com).



*Sheila Fleet*  
DESIGNER RING COLLECTION

Matching ladies & gents rings  
Visit the workshop where you can have your rings made to measure.

Tel. 861203

Watch your rings being finished whilst you wait