



We'll be having two retreats this fall featuring Shetland sheep and their wool.

Yes, there will be lots for us to do! And two sessions!

**Shetland** is the most complicated breed I've encountered (and that's saying a lot). First question to consider: What *is* a Shetland sheep?

I taught a one-day workshop on Shetland wools at the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival this May. About an hour into the morning, some of the participants came up to me and said, "We'd heard you were doing a four-day retreat on these fibers, and couldn't imagine how there could be enough material for that. *Now we get it.*"

Shetlands grow fantastic wool—of many different types. They also connect us to the history of humans' alliances with animals, to the modern wool marketplace, and to concerns about community, ecology, and creativity.

As I write these notes, I'm preparing to leave for a teaching trip to the U.K. that will also involve two more weeks in Shetland visiting sheep and shepherds (and acquiring some of the wool we'll need for the second retreat). On the way home, I'll participate in the North Atlantic Native Sheep and Wool Conference in Iceland. (Shetlands are one of the North Atlantic native breeds.)

While I'm gathering (and then washing) wool and digging out even more information and preparing the handouts, Jessica Cook will make sure all the details are in order. Feel free to get in touch with me, but my internet connectivity will be unreliable. Jessica will be the steadiest source of help as we get this together, and you can contact her at [Jess@Drobson.info](mailto:Jess@Drobson.info).

## Getting ready for the **Explore 4** Fall Wild Card Fiber Retreats!

with Deb Robson

November 2–7, 2014 (the bonus one)

November 9–14, 2014 (the original one)

in Friday Harbor, Washington

And now I've got a suitcase to pack and, in a couple of days, a plane to catch.

See you soon!

*Deb*

P.S. The Dreaming of Shetland project is making this additional research trip possible. Thanks to everyone who is enjoying the delights of the e-book! [www.DreamingofShetland.com](http://www.DreamingofShetland.com)

### Summary checklist

- Lodging
- Food: checks and special needs to Deb Nolan
- Ferry schedules

To bring, general

*flashlight*  
*lightweight rain gear*

To bring, textile-related

*spinning wheel or spindle*  
*spinning accessories*  
*fiber-prep tools of choice*  
*knitting needles, crochet hooks, tiny loom*  
*ziplock bags (gallon; quart or sandwich)*  
*labels, sharpies, tape, hole punch, maybe*  
*a tweezer for one of the yak options*  
*and a plastic comb for a Shetland opportunity. . . .*

Very optional (if you live close enough and want to)

*drum carder*  
*anything else that makes you happy . . .*

## *And now the nuts and bolts. . .*

### **Retreat fees**

Materials fees are being put to good use. I have U.K and U.S. fleeces of several types, and am acquiring more. A deposit of \$125 (the materials fee) will hold your space. Because I am buying fiber, deposits are transferrable but not refundable. The balance of the retreat fees (\$395) is due by October 10.

### **Lodging**

Do you have your Lakedale reservations for lodging? They are holding rooms, but will want to release any that we won't be using. I suggest calling the lodge directly (instead of using the 800 number) or working online: 360-378-2350 or [www.lakedale.com](http://www.lakedale.com). Info on our special rates is in the invitation document (if you don't have a copy, drop Jessica a note).



Be sure to say you are with the Explore 4 group for the dates you are reserving.

We want to fill the lodge rooms, which means we can take over the whole building without disturbing any other guests, but groups of us may also reserve the cabins or the larger Lake House. Several of the lodge rooms and all of the cabins can accommodate sharing. Other than service animals, dogs aren't allowed in the lodge, although they are permitted in the cabins and the Lake House.

### **Food**

The lodge provides breakfast for guests. It's simple and diverse.

We're so fortunate that Deborah Nolan will cater our lunches and dinners. She uses a lot of local ingredients and tremendous care. The cost is \$200 per person for Monday lunch through Thursday dinner, and checks need to be mailed to her directly at:

Deborah Nolan  
14 Fieldstone Road  
Friday Harbor WA 98250

Mark each check "Explore 4 Nov. 3-6," or Explore 4 Nov. 10-14" so she knows when to feed you. *Please include a note indicating that you have no allergies or special needs, or, if you do, what they are. If you do have special needs, add your e-mail so she can contact you if necessary.* While Deb can't promise to accommodate all special diets, I've seen her manage a complex set of us. Her e-mail is [debnolan@rockisland.com](mailto:debnolan@rockisland.com).

As we did last year, we'll chip in anonymously with tips for Deb N. at the end of our stay, and

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## *To coordinate shared lodging and/or travel arrangements to Lakedale*

*see the Ravelry group:*

*Explore 4 Retreats with Deb Robson: <http://bit.ly/1nUgfeV>*

### *Dates*

*November 2-7, 2014: arrive November 2, retreat November 3-6, depart November 7*

*November 9-14, 2014: arrive November 9, retreat November 10-13, depart November 14*



hand-make a container for them. I'll bring my little Weave-It looms, in case we want to use some squares as a base, although someone else could well have a much better idea.

### Arriving

Plan to arrive by Sunday night. Some of the lodge rooms have wet bars (fridge and sink; no microwave). The cabins and Lake House have kitchens (someone staying in one of those buildings could coordinate a Sunday evening potluck—through the Ravelry group). King's Market is on your right as you drive from the ferry to Lakedale, and it has just about anything you might need in the way of food or beverages. There are also a lot of restaurants on the island.

Get a good night's sleep, because I have lots of fiber for us to explore starting Monday morning! The goals for our time together are to relax, to play, and to learn.

### Special visitors

Maxine Bronstein and Debbie Hayward from Island Fibers on Lopez Island will be visiting us one afternoon, bringing more fibers for us to work with and a selection of items unique to the area.



(If you've forgotten something, they may be able to help out if you get in touch before they pack the van.)

Among other things, they produce private-label yarn from Lopez sheep. They are working with me to have some local Shetland wool for our sampling pleasure.

<http://www.islandfibers.com/>

I can't wait!

—Deb

## Things to bring—general

The mornings can be a bit drizzly, with clear skies most afternoons. The lodge's main room will be our home base, with the fireplace and a view of the lake, where it's sometimes possible to go boating for a bit in the afternoon.

There are no street lights.

Thus you may want

*a small flashlight*

*lightweight rain gear* (the lodge has umbrellas, although so far it hasn't been rainy enough that I've needed to use one)

## Things to bring—textile-related

As noted in the preliminary information:

### spinning wheel or spindle

whatever simple kit of **accessories** you like to use

something(s) with which you can make fabric, to try out the yarns you will be making:  
**knitting needles, crochet hooks, a tiny portable loom** (a Weave-It or Weavette or similar)

It's essential that your tools be quick to set up and use, so you can get right into the middle of the yarn experience.

**Fiber-prep tools** can be whatever you like and are comfortable with. I will be bringing some tools to share and try out.

*It isn't necessary to buy new things. Bring what you have and like.*

My favorite tools are regular hand-carders, two-row mini-combs, and two-row Viking or peasant combs.

When I travel, I often carry dog-grooming tools. They are not good for preparing quantities of fiber, but they are fine for testing ideas.

Those two-row combs at #1 offer a taste of combing at a fraction of the price of textile combs. I



use them in pairs. I'll have set for you to try. But if you have a dog who has these types of grooming aids, you might want to bring them! The combs are known in the dog world as 2-row long-tooth undercoat rakes; the longer the teeth, the better, and narrow is better than wide.

Item #2 is handy for opening the ends of locks. The slickers shown at #3 are useful and easy to pack but not always much less expensive than real carders.

Here are a few other items that you may find very helpful:

**ziplock bags**, gallon and either quart or sandwich (if you need to pick one size, bring the smaller, quart or sandwich, ones)

**labels** and something to write with—fine-tip **Sharpies** are great—I use a lot of string tags

**tape** and/or **hole punch** may come in handy (I'll have a hole punch for folks to share)

If you want to be in touch with each other to coordinate rides, supper plans for Sunday night, shared lodging, or anything else, see the new Ravelry group at Explore 4 Retreats with Deb Robson.

## Getting to Lakedale

If you are traveling by car rather than shuttle, it's good to arrive at the ferry well in advance of departure time (at least an hour). The current ferry schedule is here:

<http://bit.ly/eqB3RZ>

Make sure the ferry you have your eye on (west-bound from Anacortes) stops at Friday Harbor. Fares are charged only on westbound travel (you won't pay a fee for the return).



If you end up with time in Anacortes, there is a needlework shop (Ana-Cross Stitch) and at least one good place to eat, called Gere-a-Deli, both on Commercial Avenue. Anacortes map here:

<http://bit.ly/x9nJbG>

When you get off the ferry in Friday Harbor, you will be funneled onto Spring Street downtown. King's Market will be on your right as you enter town, in case you forgot something.

From Spring Street, take a RIGHT on 2nd Street, then go to Tucker Ave. (there's a stop sign) and take another RIGHT there. Tucker turns into Roche Harbor Road, which is what you want.

In a few miles you will see a sign for Egg Lake Road, which means it's time to pay attention. (If you thought you saw a camel in a field to your left shortly before that, you are correct.)

This is what the Lakedale sign looks like:



As you turn in, you'll be on a one-lane entry road. Soon you'll see a view resembling the one just below.



Drive past the cabins (all on the left) to register at the lodge. There are signs. It's not a big place.

There's a promotional interactive map that's useful at

<http://bit.ly/xmerBI>

It's available in print form once you get to Lakedale.

# *Traveling to Friday Harbor, San Juan Island*

*Thanks to Cat Bordhi for all the details!*

## **Washington State Ferries**

Current schedule for Anacortes-San Juan ferry: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/>

*A few notes about the ferries:* Fares are collected only on the way to the island. Coming back, no money is required. Fares are significantly lower off-season, and the retreat will be in the off-season window. Some ferry runs take longer than others, because they stop at more islands on the way from Anacortes to Friday Harbor. If people want to spend an afternoon on the interisland ferry, for passengers only (no vehicle) that ferry is free!

## **Island Airporter**

A Friday Harbor-based shuttle runs directly between SeaTac (Seattle-Tacoma Airport) and Friday Harbor once daily (except Sundays). If your schedule can match it, you won't need to carry your luggage on the ferry (it will be in the van). For an extra fee, owner John Nash will deliver you right to Lakedale. Current schedules and rates can be found at [www.islandairporter.com](http://www.islandairporter.com) or by calling (360) 378-7438.

## **Bellair Charters Airporter Shuttle**

This service offers 12 round-trips daily between SeaTac (Seattle-Tacoma Airport) and the Anacortes Ferry Terminal. The trip is lengthened by additional stops en route. Current schedules and rates are available at [www.airporter.com/shuttle](http://www.airporter.com/shuttle). Make sure to allow at least 45 minutes between the scheduled arrival time of the shuttle at Anacortes and the ferry's departure, in case the shuttle runs into traffic.

## **Rental Cars**

SeaTac Airport has many rental car services. If you drive to the Anacortes Ferry Terminal, it is a good idea to arrive at least 1 hour before your scheduled sailing, since ferries sometimes run out of room for vehicles. This isn't common in the off-season, but it does happen. (There is always room for walk-on passengers, but then you have to leave the car on the Anacortes side.) It takes about 2 hours to drive directly from the airport to Anacortes. Cat tells me that if you are using a GPS, you need to type in Anacortes (Ferry Terminal Road), not Friday Harbor, or the GPS will send you on an insane route via Whidbey Island and a second ferry.

## **Kenmore Air**

For those who prefer to fly (and to see beautiful sights!), Kenmore Air offers both land and sea plane services. Those traveling by land plane are shuttled between SeaTac (Seattle-Tacoma Airport) and Boeing Field. Those traveling by sea plane are shuttled from SeaTac to Lake Union and land in the Friday Harbor Marina. Current schedules as well as reservation information can be found at [www.kenmoreair.com](http://www.kenmoreair.com). Before making reservations, make sure to coordinate your arrival and departure from SeaTac with Kenmore's schedule, allowing enough time to collect your baggage.