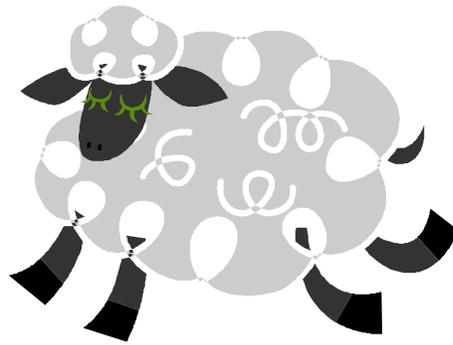
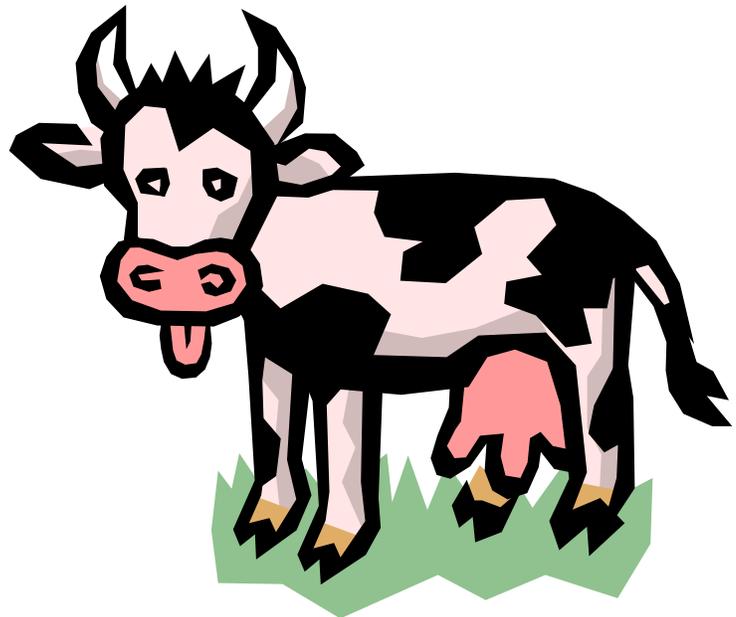
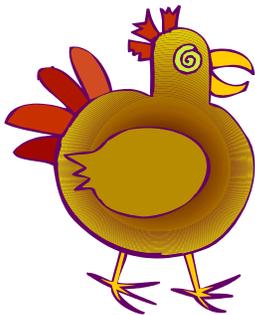




Crofts and farmland in Shetland



Primary 3-4



People of the past

The first people in Shetland lived on small farms.

The Picts lived in Shetland over a thousand years ago.

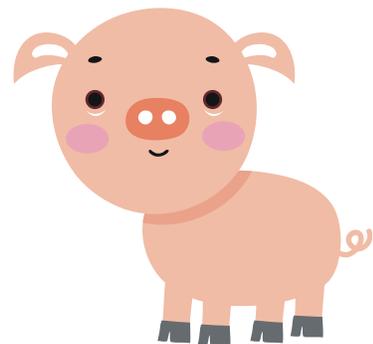


They had to grow a lot of crops because there were a lot of people to feed!

They hunted wild animals, fish and birds!



When the Vikings came, they brought cattle, sheep, ponies and pigs with them!



Crops and animals

Families grew crops to eat.
They fed crops to their
animals too.



In Shetland,
crofters grew
barley and oats



tatties,

kale,

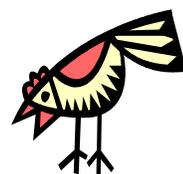
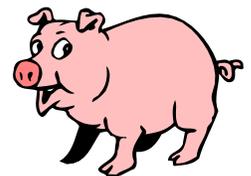


and neaps!

Animals were important too. They provided milk,
meat, wool, horn and leather—they were also strong
and could help on the croft!

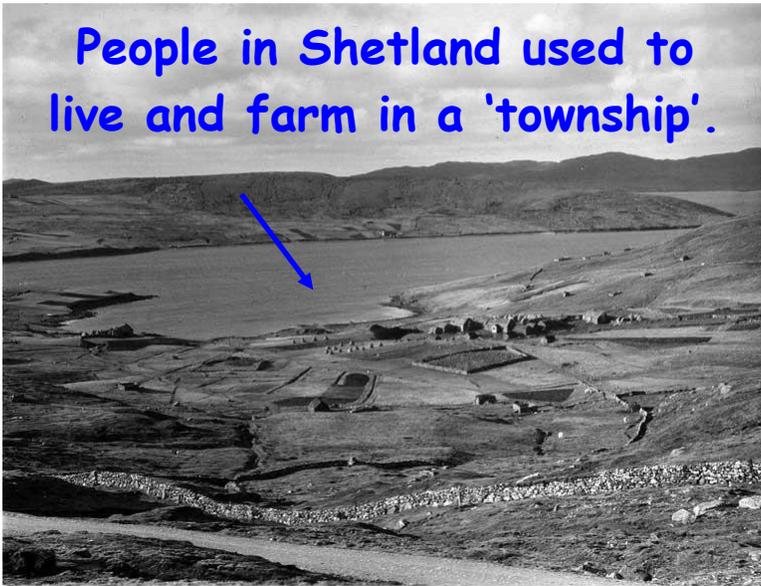


Crofters in Shetland kept
cows, sheep, horses, hens,
pigs and geese!



Sharing Land

People in Shetland used to live and farm in a 'township'.

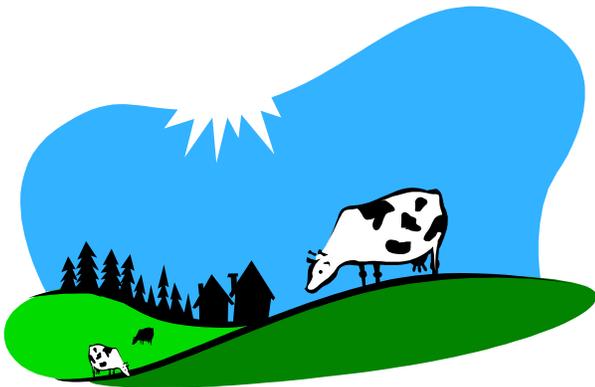


This is where they would have their fields for growing crops.

Everyone shared the land, so each family had enough space to grow crops.



They worked together to make sure all the crops were gathered up when they were ready.



The animals stayed outside of the township, on the land that wasn't used for crops.

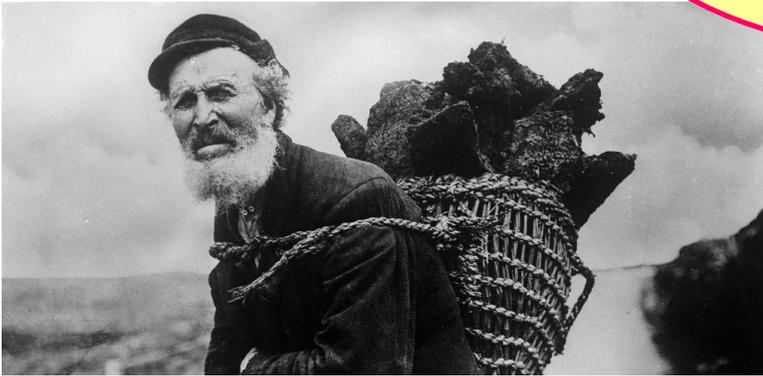
In winter, everyone would bring their animals into the township for shelter.

The Lairds

In the 17th century, the 'Lairds' in Shetland began to control the land. Sometimes they bought the land from crofters, and sometimes they just took it.



Laird: a Scottish word for landowner



The crofters living on the land could be 'evicted' from their small homes by the laird at any time!

To keep their house, crofters had to give the laird the crops they grew and the fish they caught.



A crofters life was very hard. All the family had to work hard and there was very little food to eat.

The crofthouse



A crofters home is called a crofthouse.

Crofthouses used to have only two rooms.

The 'but' room was the main room—it was used by the family for eating in.

The but room was dark and smoky—there were no windows!

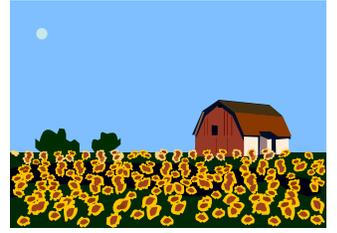


The 'ben' room was the bedroom. The whole family would sleep in this room.

Some beds had doors to keep the heat in—they were called 'box-beds'.



Children would usually share the same box-bed, and older children sometimes slept in the loft.



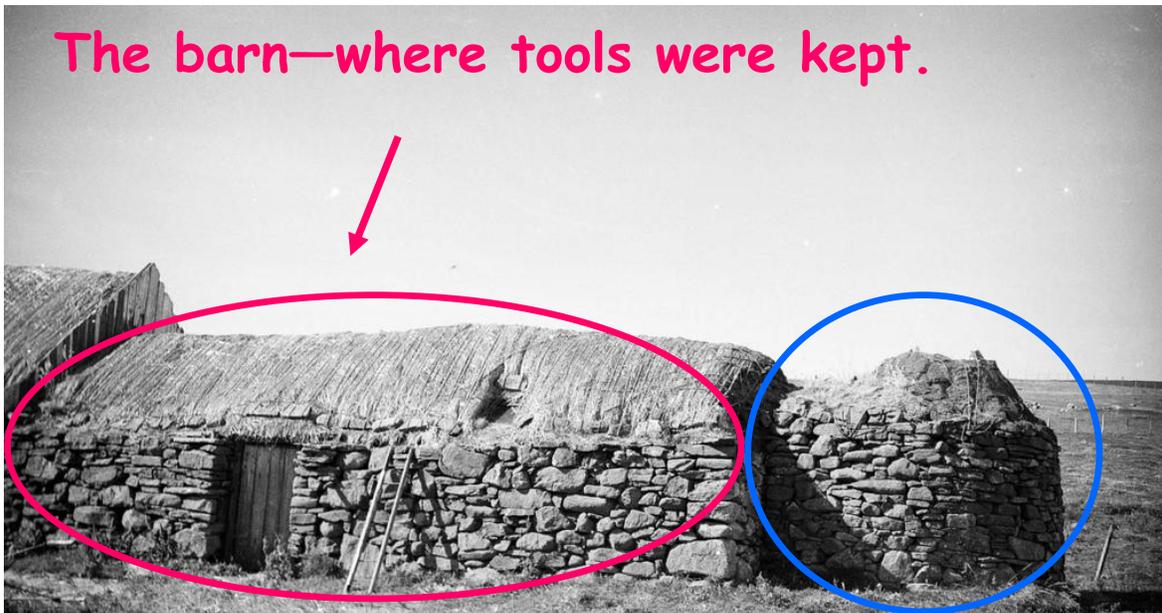
Outbuildings

Crofts had other buildings too—
these were called 'outbuildings'.

The byre—where
the cattle were
kept at night.



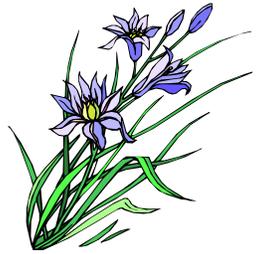
The barn—where tools were kept.



The mill—where the grain was ground
to make into bread.



Nature's gifts

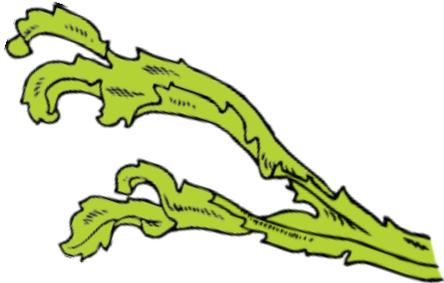


Crofters could use the plants, peat and seaweed for their croft.

Grass was mown for hay.



Ling was made into rope.



Seaweed could be put onto soil to help plants grow.

Peats



Peat is found all over Shetland. It is dug up from the ground, and used on the fireplace.

Many crofters were fishermen too. They went out to sea and worked on the land when they came back.



Following the seasons



The seasons were important for crofters.

Some work could only be done in summer, whilst other work could only be done in winter.



The weather was also very important. If the weather was good, lots of crops grew.



If the weather was bad, less crops grew. This meant less food, and less straw for the roof!



A man
'thatching'
his roof
with straw!

Crofting today

Crofts still exist today, but they don't have as many crops or animals as they once had.



Crofters can keep their land and don't have to give any fish or crops to the lairds.

Many crofters have other jobs too, so they don't have much time to look after lots of animals.



Many crofters today only keep sheep, as they are quite easy to look after.

There are lots of shops for buying bread and milk, so crofters don't have to keep a cow or grow crops if they don't want to.

