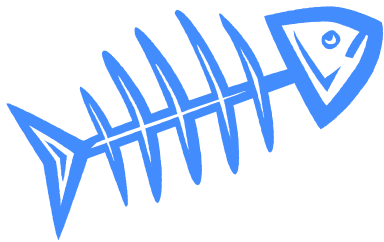
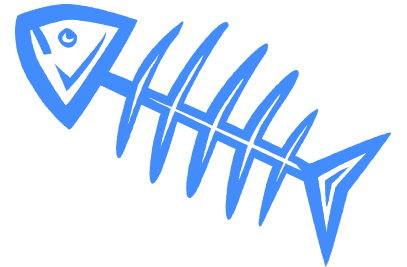


Fishing in Shetland



Through the
years



Primary 5-7

Early people

Few relics have survived from the early periods of Shetland's history.



It is likely that the earliest settlers in Shetland hunted wild animals, fish and birds.



Remnants which may have given us information about diet and hunting methods decayed long ago before we could assess them.

We think settlers in Shetland went fishing, but also grew crops and kept animals in periods of warmer weather.

A warmer climate greeted Shetland around 2500BC.



This broken quern was discovered in Sumburgh—it dates from the bronze age, which means people in Shetland at that time did grow and grind crops.

These bone 'disgorgers' are for removing fish hooks and gorges from the mouths of fish. They were found in Shetland and used between 3000BC and 1100AD.





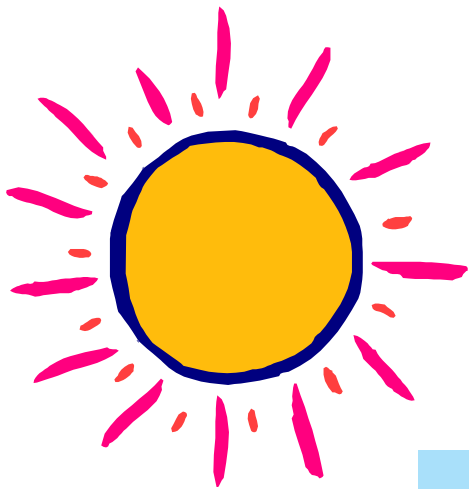
THE PICTS



The Picts lived in mainland Scotland from around the 6th to the 9th Century, possibly earlier. Indications of a burial at Sumburgh suggest that Picts had probably settled in Shetland by 300AD.



The Picts built the Mousa Broch



We think Picts went fishing, but also grew crops and kept animals in periods of warmer weather.



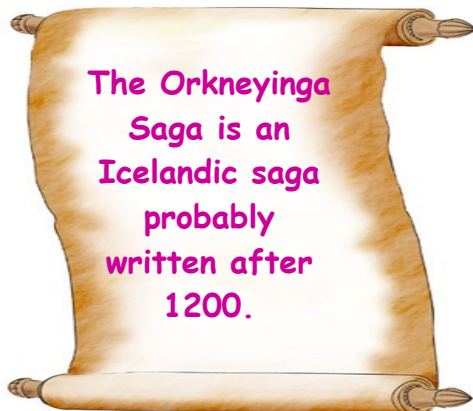
They cultivated the land, before the Vikings made their way to Shetland from Norway.



Vikings!



Viking boats that travelled to Shetland were strong, sea-worthy but lightweight.



The Orkneyinga Saga is an Icelandic saga probably written after 1200.

The design of the Viking boats developed into the 'Shetland boat' style in later years.



"...and Uni took three Hjatlanders, and they took a six oared boat... in Sumburgh Voe a poor old bondi drove out as each was ready..."

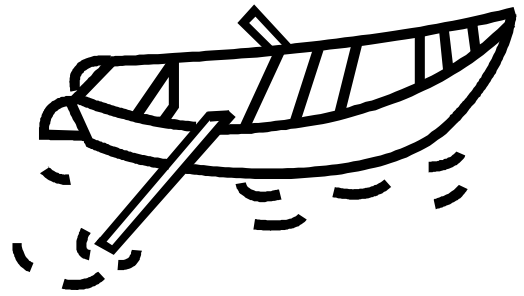
The Orkneyinga Saga mentions fishing in Shetland briefly—off Fair Isle, and off Sumburgh.

...kæm þeir vörð tok vörð at þýja sött eringerð.
...þýan 7 þengur þ' áttu mikinn 7 laugu þ' þria daga öm
...llinnk öös 7 lagdi nær at þá milli bröta skynn. þa kú. j.
...hlut uyan áreingr 7 lita sid: þ' suediu bærð suaktegar
...hútt herta haurkæð é ek þæ næðan vinn: þ' suarr at
...þrudi. þ' þ' wöndu þá fýð lín 7 bentu wot at næpa linn
...kú oði. þ' þ' þ' halloutr löpða hún é wíod deðter mún
...sagr mún þæð en rekjuðasæ weni raugnuðhe m: þ' þ' ik
...lú hlunt at næpa linnu. 7 é þ' bentu at linnu: kú þ'



Species of bone found from this era include cod, saithe and ling.

Types of boats over the centuries!



Colour in the boat!

At first, boats arrived from Norway—
Shetland didn't have enough wood to
build their own.

These boats arrived
in parts, and the
Shetlander put all
the parts together.

When more roads were built, people
started using them regularly, and
used their boats less often.



Small whilly

The smallest of the open
boats—it can be used
close to the shore for
fishing or visiting the shop!

Used for winter haddock
fishing. It had to be
strong and sea worthy!



Haddock boat



Fourareen

Fourareen—
boat with
four oars!

Fourareens can be lots of
different shapes and
sizes—they are often
painted colourfully!

Sixareens are the largest of
the open boats and has a crew
of 6 or 7. They were used for
haaf fishing far out at sea.



Sixareen

There are ponies
in the boat!

Trade and Merchants

In the Middle Ages the Hanseatic League had a trading port in Bergen.

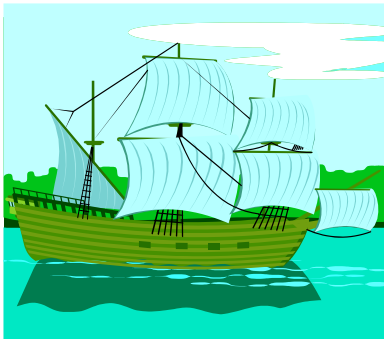
Hanseatic League: merchant traders who controlled trade across Northern Europe from the 13th to 17th centuries.



They were powerful and controlled Norwegian trade with Shetland.

The Hanseatic League had rules on trading. From about 1450, merchants from North Germany decided to ignore these rules.

They travelled over to Shetland from Germany, and traded directly with Shetlanders over the summer months.



They arrived in May and set up trading booths all over the isles. They stayed until September.

The story of the German merchant families is found in Whalsay's 'Bremen' or 'Hanseatic' Böd in Symbister.



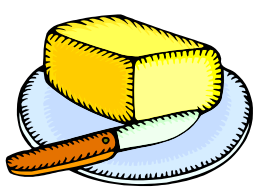
Barter (verb)
- to trade or
exchange
goods

Bartering

Shetlanders got most things from local sources, but swapped things like cloth, butter and fish for items they couldn't get, make or grow in Shetland.



Shetlanders bartered with the German merchants.



They swapped fish, butter, meat and knitwear for salt, fish hooks, tar, beer, tobacco, linen, pottery, flour or rye meal.



German merchants sailed to Shetland for nearly 250 years—they were a vital part of the local economy.



- German merchants residing in Shetland in 1685
- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Delmar Lanhanow | Ellart Martens |
| Derick Cuning | Castin Hackman |
| Claus Derick | Frarick Dicken |
| Barthol Hinch | Herman Badiwish |
| Adolphus Westerman | |

Trade continued even after the passing of Shetland into Scottish hands.

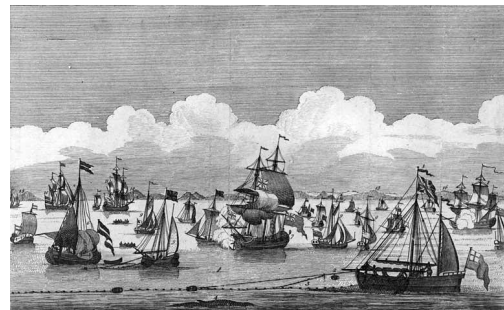
Dutch fishing fleets



The abundance of fish stocks also attracted the Dutch fishermen.

Merchants and fishermen travelled from the Netherlands to Shetland from the end of the 16th century.

Hundreds of boats gathered in Bressay Sound harbour, and started fishing on the 24th June each year.



The Dutch fishermen slept on their ships, and salted their herring onboard.



This map was drawn in 1741 and shows Dutch busses positioned around the islands.

They traded tobacco, gin and cash for the goods Shetlanders gave them.

Quite often, Shetlanders could understand Dutch and German because of their trade with their summer visitors.

Economic Depression

There was severe cold between 1690 and 1700—storms hit Shetland around 1696, destroying crops and disrupting trade and fishing.

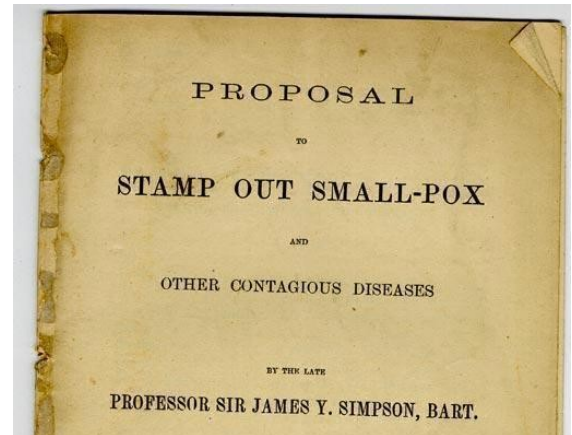


Did you know?

'Johnnie Notions' of Eshaness came up with a vaccine for smallpox! He cured 3000 people and lost none!

As well as the famine from the poor harvests, smallpox spread around Shetland—there were epidemics in 1700 and 1760.

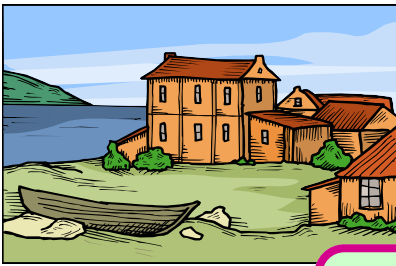
Merchants avoided the isles at this time. They were no longer appealing to traders—their wealth was dwindling and their health was a hazard.



In 1703, when France was at war with Holland, around 400 Dutch busses were burned in Bressay Sound, with huge impact on Shetland.

Wars between the Netherlands and Great Britain in the 17th and 18th centuries made the crossing through the English Channel dangerous.

Shetland became quite poor when the merchants stopped trading in Shetland.



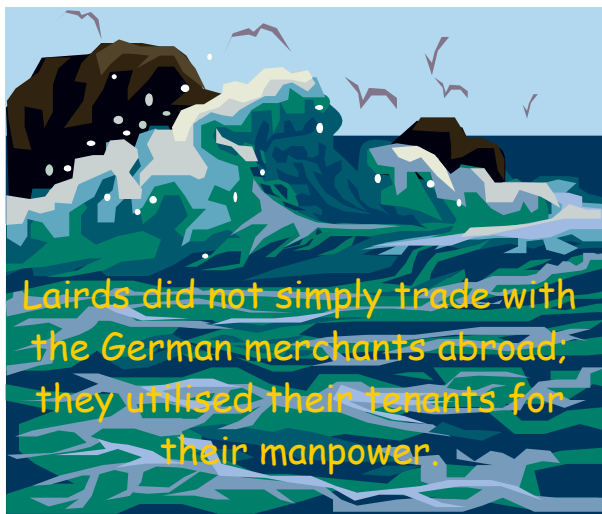
Lairds and the haaf



In the 17th century, lairds in Shetland began to take control of land previously shared equally between crofters.

Crofters and fishermen were 'tenants' to the laird and liable to pay rent.

The lairds started sending ships over to Germany to trade.

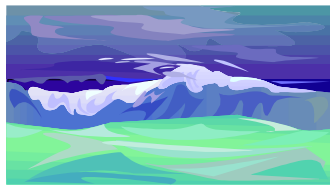


Crofters then had to go out and fish—the laird took a lot of the fish they caught. Tenants were almost always forced to fish for the laird or risk being evicted.

The lairds got much larger boats and sent their tenants further out to sea—the well-known 'haaf' fishing began.

Lairds sent so many men out to fish for them that soon there were too few fish left inshore!

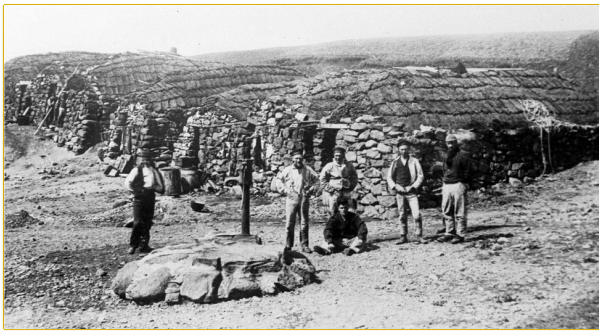




Out at da Haaf



Haaf fishing:
May to August.



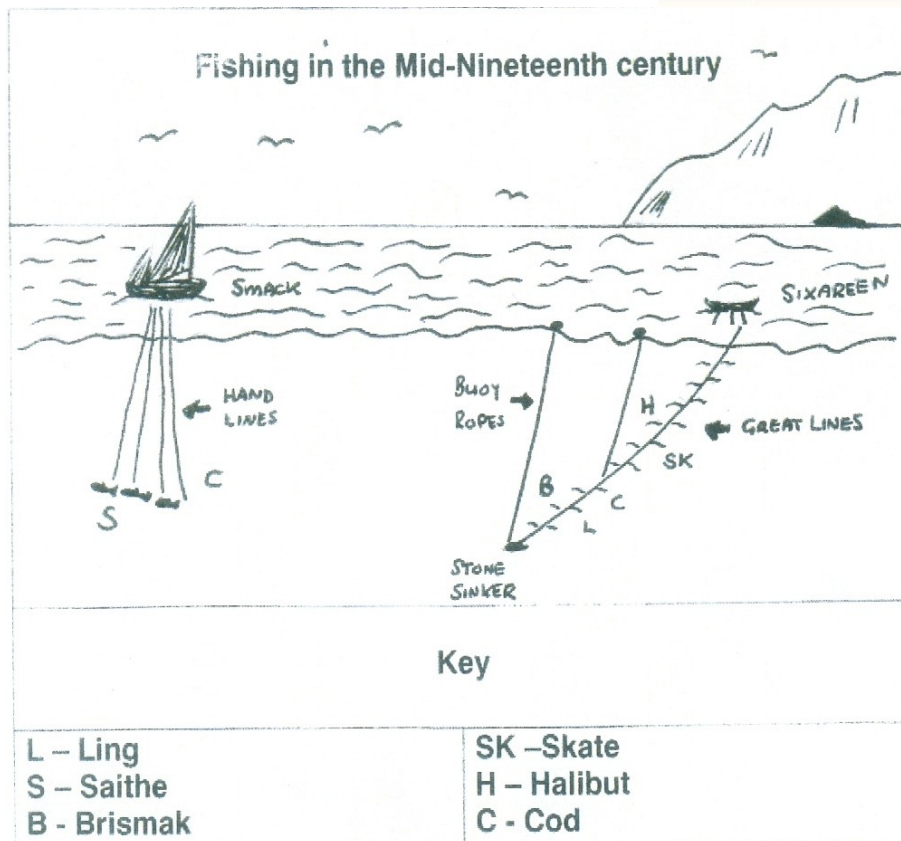
Before they set off they would stay in small huts.

Six or seven men would row out in six-oared boats called 'sixareens' for a voyage of several days.

Fishing far from land in an open boat is very dangerous.

Some died of lack of food or warmth. Others perished in wild storms.

These men wouldn't have nets. They used long-lines to catch fish.

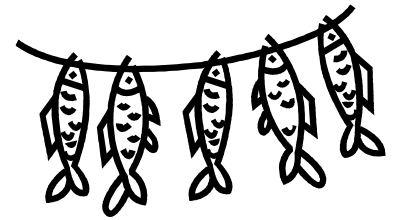


Long-lines could have 7 miles of line stretched out on the sea-bed—hauling these in when they were full of fish must have been incredibly hard!

Cooking, eating and sleeping were difficult when haaf fishing. Sleeping in the boat was unlikely, and men were out for 2 or 3 days and nights at a time.



The end of 'Da Haaf'



The 1886 Crofters Act changed crofters lives for the better!

Tenants could now fish without giving any of their catch away.



On the 16th July 1832, a great storm off Shetland claimed 107 lives and 17 boats—the haaf was a huge risk, but many had little choice until the second half of the century.

42	Thomas Gunn	Left a widow and 5 children under 14	Much in debt
43	Andrew Pole	Left a widow	Six children grown up
44	John Thomason	Unmarried	Left no one who was dependant on him
45	John Robertson	Unmarried	Left a helpless-sister who was dependant on him
46	David Jeromson	Left a widow and 2 children under 14	A sister received temporary aid
47	John Charlison	Left a widow and 1 child under 14	One child grown up
48	Magnus Christie	Left a widow and 5 children under 14	Not destitute, see No. 53
49	William Charleson	Left a widow and 3 children under 14	Two children grown up
50	William Blance	Left a widow and 3 children under 14	A poor family
51	Robert Thomason	Left a widow but no children	The father of the deceased aged poor
52	John Robertson	Left a widow and 2 children under 14	Rather poor
53	Basil Christie	Unmarried, left aged parents who depended	on him, brother of No. 48
54	Adam Clunis	Left a widow; no children under 14	In tolerable circumstances
55	William Rendal	Left a widow and 4 children under 14, 2	grown up. An aged father
56	Jerom Manson	Left a widow; no children under 14	Two children grown up
57	Robert Couatts	Left a widow and 4 children under 14, very	poor. A blind sister, aged 89
58	Daniel Robertson	Left a widow and 2 children under 14	Four children grown up
59	Hosea Robertson	Left a widow and 3 children under 14	In great poverty
60	Andrew Johnson	Left a widow, but no children under 14	Three children grown up
61	Gilbert Robertson	Left a widow and 4 children under 14	Very poor
62	George Williamson	Unmarried; left a mother and a brother under	14 who depended on him
63	Adam Shewardson	Left a widow and 3 children under 14	Five children grown up
64	Gilbert Hunter	Left a widow and 3 children under 14	A destitute family

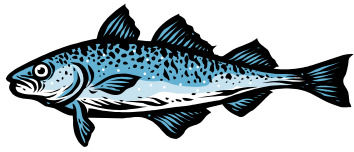
Pages and pages of this report detailed the deceased and how many were dependent on them. A saddening case—hundreds were left in severe poverty.

In 1881, 58 men were lost off Gloup, North Yell when another freak summer storm left 34 widows and 85 orphans.

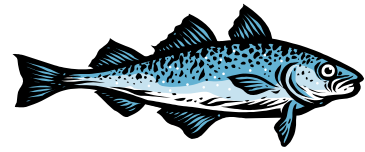


These open boats were not robust enough for deep-sea fishing, and people were beginning to count their losses.

The Gloup Memorial, remembering the fishing disaster of 1881



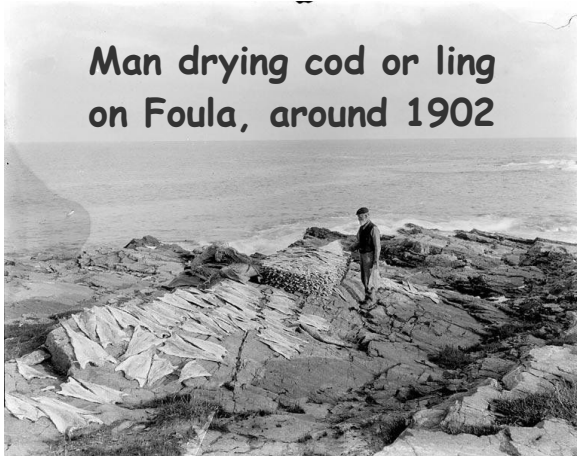
Cod fishing



In the 19th century there was a cod fishing boom in Shetland.



This boat, built in 1885, was used for cod fishing in the early 1900's.



Man drying cod or ling on Foula, around 1902

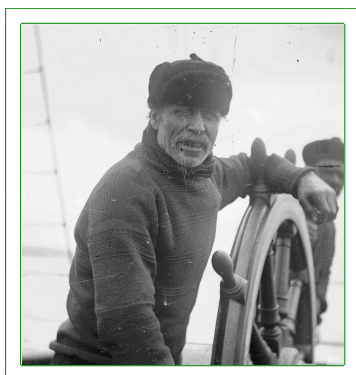
Cod had previously been overlooked—long-lines sitting on the seabed couldn't catch cod as they swim half way between the surface and the seabed.

Many cod schools had not been discovered before 1800 as they didn't swim in the fishing areas commonly used by locals.

The number of cod may have increased since the Dutch fishing fleets left in the 18th century, giving the species time to populate again.



Strong fully-decked boats, new fishing methods and navigation equipment all played a part in developing Shetland fishing.



Sixareens were still going out to the haaf at this time.



Herring fishing

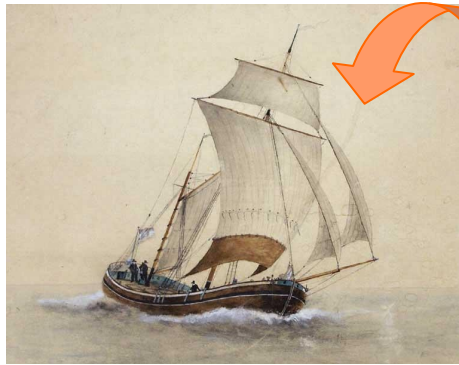


Shetland herring fleet around 1890

Shetlanders had never fully taken advantage of the herring around the Shetland seas. In the 19th century there was a huge herring boom.



The herring boom was important for Shetland's economy!



The Dutch were the first to heavily fish for herring in Shetland waters. The locals didn't start until the late 19th century.



Women played an important part gutting fish at the herring stations.



Women gutting fish as men take their catch ashore.

In 1874 only 1100 barrels of herring were cured ashore in Shetland and the fleet was up to 50 boats. In 1881 the total cured had risen to 59,586 barrels and the fleet to 276 boats.

By 1884 the number of barrels cured was 300,117 from 932 boats.



20th Century



By the First World War, few people still went out fishing in sixareens—the herring booms had paved the way to motor engines.



Motor haddock boat, Burra 1911



The 'seine net' was developed.

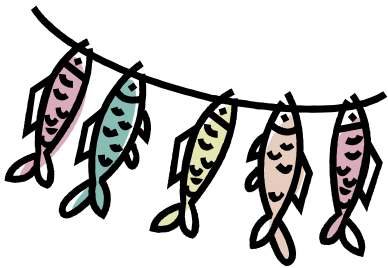
The seine net is a bag-shaped net. It is operated by ropes and has a higher catch rate than line-fishing.



A government scheme in 1945 gave financial help to those working in the fishing industry in Scotland.



The Shetland fishing industry today includes 'demersal', 'pelagic', and 'shellfish' and there are some local fish farming companies too!



Fishing today!



Today, the best of Shetland seafood is marketed worldwide.



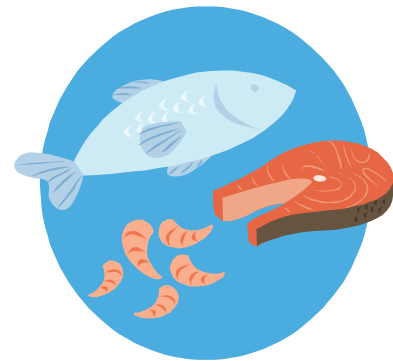
Shetland mussels waiting to be cooked!

We even have our own Food Festival!

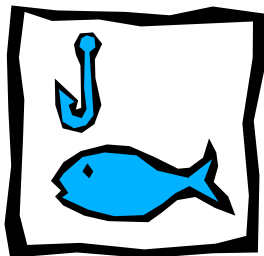


Shetland lamb, salmon and mussels are fiercely sought after by Michelin star restaurants.

There are a number of local salmon farms around the isles, as well as farms owned by large national companies.



Processing factories employ people to clean, gut and package fish caught in Shetland.



Fisheries made up nearly 10% of the employed population of Shetland in 2010.



Photo: Shetland Catch

The total value of all kinds of fish landed in Shetland in 2010 was £80,494,356!

Today's Special

Smoked Haddock Pasties with Leeks and Clotted Cream

Serves 6

Ingredients

2lb chilled puff pastry
12oz smoked haddock
6oz cleaned chopped leeks
10oz peeled cooked tatties
4 tbsp clotted cream
black pepper and salt
1 egg

Method

- Preheat oven to 200°C or Gas 6
- Roll out pastry to create 7.5 inch circles
- Cut haddock to 1 inch chunks, slice the leeks and cut tatties into 0.5 inch cubes
- Mix haddock, leeks, tatties, clotted cream and seasoning
- Divide mixture between the pastry circles, then bring pastry edges together and crimp.
- Transfer to a lightly greased and floured baking tray, brush with egg and cook for 35 minutes

Serve hot, warm or cold

Recipe from Seafood Shetland (www.fishuk.net/seafoodshetland)

Recipe donated by Eunice Henderson