

= Shetland =

Shetland ( / ʃetˈlɪnd / ; Scottish Gaelic : Sealtainn [ ʃal ʔ t ʔ ʃʌ ] ; Norn : Hialtland ) , also called the Shetland Islands , is a subarctic archipelago of Scotland that lies northeast of the island of Great Britain and forms part of the United Kingdom .

The islands lie some 80 km ( 50 mi ) to the northeast of Orkney and 280 km ( 170 mi ) southeast of the Faroe Islands and form part of the division between the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the North Sea to the east . The total area is 1 @, @ 466 km<sup>2</sup> ( 566 sq mi ) and the population totalled 23 @, @ 210 in 2012 . Comprising the Shetland constituency of the Scottish Parliament , Shetland is also one of the 32 council areas of Scotland ; the islands ' administrative centre and only burgh is Lerwick , which is also the capital of Shetland since taking over from Scalloway in 1708 .

The largest island , known simply as " Mainland " , has an area of 967 km<sup>2</sup> ( 373 sq mi ) , making it the third @-@ largest Scottish island and the fifth @-@ largest of the British Isles . There are an additional 15 inhabited islands . The archipelago has an oceanic climate , a complex geology , a rugged coastline and many low , rolling hills .

Humans have lived there since the Mesolithic period , and the earliest written references to the islands date back to Roman times . The early historic period was dominated by Scandinavian influences , especially Norway , and the islands did not become part of Scotland until the 15th century . When Scotland became part of the Kingdom of Great Britain in 1707 , trade with northern Europe decreased . Fishing has continued to be an important aspect of the economy up to the present day . The discovery of North Sea oil in the 1970s significantly boosted Shetland incomes , employment and public sector revenues .

The local way of life reflects the joint Norse and Scottish heritage including the Up Helly Aa fire festival , and a strong musical tradition , especially the traditional fiddle style . The islands have produced a variety of writers of prose and poetry , often in Shetland Scots . There are numerous areas set aside to protect the local fauna and flora , including a number of important seabird nesting sites . The Shetland pony and Shetland Sheepdog are two well known Shetland animal breeds . Other distinguished local breeds include the Shetland sheep , cow , goose , and duck . The Shetland pig , or grice , has been extinct since approximately 1930 .

The islands ' motto , which appears on the Council 's coat of arms , is Með lögum skal land byggja . This Icelandic phrase is taken from the Danish 1241 Basic Law , Codex Holmiensis , and is also mentioned in Njáls saga , and means " By law shall land be built " .

= = Etymology = =

The name of Shetland is derived from the Old Norse words , hjalt ( hilt ) , and land ( land ) .

In AD 43 and 77 the Roman authors Pomponius Mela and Pliny the Elder referred to the seven islands they call Haemodae and Acmodae respectively , both of which are assumed to be Shetland . Another possible early written reference to the islands is Tacitus ' report in AD 98 , after describing the discovery and conquest of Orkney , that the Roman fleet had seen " Thule , too " . In early Irish literature , Shetland is referred to as Inse Catt ? " the Isles of Cats " , which may have been the pre @-@ Norse inhabitants ' name for the islands . The Cat tribe also occupied parts of the northern Scottish mainland and their name can be found in Caithness , and in the Gaelic name for Sutherland ( Cataibh , meaning " among the Cats " ) .

The oldest version of the modern name Shetland is Hetlandensis , the Latinised adjectival form of the Old Norse name recorded in a letter from Harald count of Shetland in 1190 , becoming Hetland in 1431 after various intermediate transformations . It is possible that the Pictish " cat " sound forms part of this Norse name . It then became Hjaltland in the 16th century .

As Norn was gradually replaced by Scots , Hjaltland became ?etland . The initial letter is the Middle Scots letter , " yogh " , the pronunciation of which is almost identical to the original Norn sound , " / hj / " . When the use of the letter yogh was discontinued , it was often replaced by the similar @-@ looking letter z , hence Zetland , the misspelt form used to describe the pre @-@ 1975 county council . This is also the source of the ZE postcode used for the Shetlands .

Most of the individual islands have Norse names , although the derivations of some are obscure and may represent pre @-@ Norse , possibly Pictish or even pre @-@ Celtic names or elements .

= = Geography and geology = =

Shetland is around 170 kilometres ( 110 mi ) north of mainland Scotland , covers an area of 1 @,@ 468 square kilometres ( 567 sq mi ) and has a coastline 2 @,@ 702 kilometres ( 1 @,@ 679 mi ) long .

Lerwick , the capital and largest settlement , has a population of 6 @,@ 958 and about half of the archipelago 's total population of 23 @,@ 167 people live within 16 kilometres ( 10 mi ) of the town .

Scalloway on the west coast , which was the capital until 1708 , has a population of less than 1 @,@ 000 .

Only 16 of about 100 islands are inhabited . The main island of the group is known as Mainland , and of the next largest , Yell , Unst , and Fetlar lie to the north and Bressay and Whalsay lie to the east . East and West Burra , Muckle Roe , Papa Stour , Trondra and Vaila are smaller islands to the west of Mainland . The other inhabited islands are Foula 28 kilometres ( 17 mi ) west of Walls , Fair Isle 38 kilometres ( 24 mi ) south @-@ west of Sumburgh Head , and the Out Skerries to the east .

The uninhabited islands include Mousa , known for the Broch of Mousa , the finest preserved example in Scotland of these Iron Age round towers , St Ninian 's Isle connected to Mainland by the largest active tombolo in the UK , and Out Stack , the northernmost point of the British Isles . Shetland 's location means that it provides a number of such records : Munness is the most northerly castle in the United Kingdom and Skaw the most northerly settlement . The geology of Shetland is complex , with numerous faults and fold axes . These islands are the northern outpost of the Caledonian orogeny , and there are outcrops of Lewisian , Dalradian and Moine metamorphic rocks with histories similar to their equivalents on the Scottish mainland . There are also Old Red Sandstone deposits and granite intrusions . The most distinctive features are the ultrabasic ophiolite , peridotite and gabbro on Unst and Fetlar , which are remnants of the Iapetus Ocean floor . Much of Shetland 's economy depends on the oil @-@ bearing sediments in the surrounding seas . Geological evidence shows that in around 6100 BC a tsunami caused by the Storegga Slides hit Shetland , as well as the rest of the east coast of Scotland , and may have created a wave of up to 25 metres ( 82 ft ) high in the voes where modern populations are highest .

The highest point of Shetland is Ronas Hill , which reaches only 450 metres ( 1 @,@ 480 ft ) . The Pleistocene glaciations entirely covered the islands . During this period , the Stanes of Stofast , a 2000 @-@ tonne glacial erratic , came to rest on a prominent hilltop in Lunnasting .

Shetland is a National Scenic Area which , unusually , is made up of a number of discrete locations : Fair Isle , Foula , South West Mainland ( including the Scalloway Islands ) , Muckle Roe , Esha Ness , Fethaland and Herma Ness .

= = Climate = =

Shetland has an oceanic , temperate maritime climate bordering on the subpolar variety , with long but cool winters and short mild summers . The climate all year round is moderate due to the influence of the surrounding seas , with average peak temperatures of 7 ° C ( 45 ° F ) in March and 18 ° C ( 64 ° F ) in July and August . Temperatures over 25 ° C ( 77 ° F ) are very rare . The highest temperature on record was 28 @.@ 4 ° C ( 83 @.@ 1 ° F ) in July 1991 and the coldest ? 8 @.@ 9 ° C ( 16 @.@ 0 ° F ) in the Januaries of 1952 and 1959 . The frost @-@ free period may be as little as three months . In contrast , inland areas of nearby Scandinavia on similar latitudes experience significantly larger temperature differences between summer and winter , with the average highs of regular July days comparable to Lerwick 's all @-@ time record heat that is around 23 ° C ( 73 ° F ) , further demonstrating the moderating effect of the Atlantic Ocean . In contrast , winters are considerably milder than those expected in nearby continental areas , even comparable to winter temperatures of many parts of England and Wales much further south .

The general character of the climate is windy and cloudy with at least 2 mm ( 0 @.@ 08 in ) of rain

falling on more than 250 days a year . Average yearly precipitation is 1 003 mm ( 39 in ) , with November and December the wettest months . Snowfall is usually confined to the period November to February , and snow seldom lies on the ground for more than a day . Less rain falls from April to August although no month receives less than 50 mm ( 2 in ) . Fog is common during summer due to the cooling effect of the sea on mild southerly airflows .

Due to the islands ' latitude , on clear winter nights the " northern lights " can sometimes be seen in the sky , while in summer there is almost perpetual daylight , a state of affairs known locally as the " simmer dim " . Annual bright sunshine averages 1110 hours , rendering overcast days common .

## == Prehistory ==

Due to the practice , dating to at least the early Neolithic , of building in stone on virtually treeless islands , Shetland is extremely rich in physical remains of the prehistoric eras and there are over 5 000 archaeological sites all told . A midden site at West Voe on the south coast of Mainland , dated to 4320 ? 4030 BC , has provided the first evidence of Mesolithic human activity on Shetland . The same site provides dates for early Neolithic activity and finds at Scord of Brouster in Walls have been dated to 3400 BC . " Shetland knives " are stone tools that date from this period made from felsite from Northmavine .

Pottery shards found at the important site of Jarlshof also indicate that there was Neolithic activity there although the main settlement dates from the Bronze Age . This includes a smithy , a cluster of wheelhouses and a later broch . The site has provided evidence of habitation during various phases right up until Viking times . Heel - shaped cairns , are a style of chambered cairn unique to Shetland , with a particularly large example on Vementry .

Numerous brochs were erected during the Iron Age . In addition to Mousa there are significant ruins at Clickimin , Culswick , Old Scatness and West Burrafirth , although their origin and purpose is a matter of some controversy . The later Iron Age inhabitants of the Northern Isles were probably Pictish , although the historical record is sparse . Hunter ( 2000 ) states in relation to King Bridei I of the Picts in the sixth century AD : " As for Shetland , Orkney , Skye and the Western Isles , their inhabitants , most of whom appear to have been Pictish in culture and speech at this time , are likely to have regarded Bridei as a fairly distant presence . " In 2011 , the collective site , " The Crucible of Iron Age Shetland " , including Broch of Mousa , Old Scatness and Jarlshof , joined the UKs " Tentative List " of World Heritage Sites .

## == History ==

### == Scandinavian colonisation ==

The expanding population of Scandinavia led to a shortage of available resources and arable land there and led to a period of Viking expansion , the Norse gradually shifting their attention from plundering to invasion . Shetland was colonised during the late 8th and 9th centuries , the fate of the existing indigenous population being uncertain . Modern Shetlanders have almost identical proportions of Scandinavian matrilineal and patrilineal genetic ancestry , suggesting that the islands were settled by both men and women in equal measure .

Vikings then made the islands the headquarters of pirate expeditions carried out against Norway and the coasts of mainland Scotland . In response , Norwegian king Harald Hårfagre ( " Harald Fair Hair " ) annexed the Northern Isles ( comprising Orkney and Shetland ) in 875 . Rognvald Eysteinnsson received Orkney and Shetland from Harald as an earldom as reparation for the death of his son in battle in Scotland , and then passed the earldom on to his brother Sigurd the Mighty .

The islands were Christianised in the late 10th century . King Olav Tryggvasson summoned the jarl Sigurd the Stout during a visit to Orkney and said , " I order you and all your subjects to be baptised . If you refuse , I 'll have you killed on the spot and I swear I will ravage every island with fire and steel . " Unsurprisingly , Sigurd agreed and the islands became Christian at a stroke . Unusually ,

from c . 1100 onwards the Norse jarls owed allegiance both to Norway and to the Scottish crown through their holdings as Earls of Caithness .

In 1194 , when Harald Maddadsson was Earl of Orkney and Shetland , a rebellion broke out against King Sverre Sigurdsson of Norway . The Øyskjeggs ( " Island Beardies " ) sailed for Norway but were beaten in the Battle of Florvåg near Bergen . After his victory King Sverre placed Shetland under direct Norwegian rule , a state of affairs that continued for nearly two centuries .

= = = Increased Scottish interest = = =

From the mid @-@ 13th century onwards Scottish monarchs increasingly sought to take control of the islands surrounding the mainland . The process was begun in earnest by Alexander II and was continued by his successor Alexander III . This strategy eventually led to an invasion by Haakon Haakonsson , King of Norway . His fleet assembled in Bressay Sound before sailing for Scotland . After the stalemate of the Battle of Largs , Haakon retreated to Orkney , where he died in December 1263 , entertained on his death bed by recitations of the sagas . His death halted any further Norwegian expansion in Scotland and following this ill @-@ fated expedition , the Hebrides and Mann were yielded to the Kingdom of Scotland as a result of the 1266 Treaty of Perth , although the Scots recognised continuing Norwegian sovereignty over Orkney and Shetland .

= = = Pawned to Scotland = = =

In the 14th century , Orkney and Shetland remained a Norwegian province , but Scottish influence was growing . Jon Haraldsson , who was murdered in Thurso in 1231 , was the last of an unbroken line of Norse jarls , and thereafter the earls were Scots noblemen of the houses of Angus and St. Clair . On the death of Haakon VI in 1380 , Norway formed a political union with Denmark after which the interest of the royal house in the islands declined . In 1469 , Shetland was pledged by Christian I , in his capacity as King of Norway , as security against the payment of the dowry of his daughter Margaret , betrothed to James III of Scotland . As the money was never paid , the connection with the crown of Scotland has become perpetual . In 1470 , William Sinclair , 1st Earl of Caithness ceded his title to James III and the following year the Northern Isles were directly annexed to the Crown of Scotland , a process confirmed by Parliament in 1472 . Nonetheless , Shetland 's connection with Norway has proven to be enduring .

From the early 15th century on the Shetlanders sold their goods through the Hanseatic League of German merchantmen . The Hansa would buy shiploads of salted fish , wool and butter and import salt , cloth , beer and other goods . The late 16th century and early 17th century was dominated by the influence of the despotic Robert Stewart , Earl of Orkney , who was granted the islands by his half @-@ sister Mary Queen of Scots , and his son Patrick . The latter commenced the building of Scalloway Castle , but after his imprisonment in 1609 the Crown annexed Orkney and Shetland again until 1643 when Charles I granted them to William Douglas , 7th Earl of Morton . These rights were held on and off by the Mortons until 1766 , when they were sold by James Douglas , 14th Earl of Morton to Laurence Dundas .

= = = Early British rule = = =

The trade with the North German towns lasted until the 1707 Act of Union when high salt duties prohibited the German merchants from trading with Shetland . Shetland then went into an economic depression as the Scottish and local traders were not as skilled in trading with salted fish . However , some local merchant @-@ lairds took up where the German merchants had left off , and fitted out their own ships to export fish from Shetland to the Continent . For the independent farmers of Shetland this had negative consequences , as they now had to fish for these merchant @-@ lairds .

Smallpox afflicted the islands in the 17th and 18th centuries , but as vaccines became common after 1760 the population increased to a maximum of 31 @,@ 670 in 1861 . However , British rule came at price for many ordinary people as well as traders . The Shetlanders ' nautical skills were

sought by the Royal Navy . Some 3 @, @ 000 served during the Napoleonic wars from 1800 to 1815 and press gangs were rife . During this period 120 men were taken from Fetlar alone and only 20 of them returned home . By the late 19th century 90 % of all Shetland was owned by just 32 people , and between 1861 and 1881 more than 8 @, @ 000 Shetlanders emigrated . With the passing of the Crofters ' Act in 1886 the Liberal prime minister William Gladstone emancipated crofters from the rule of the landlords . The Act enabled those who had effectively been landowners ' serfs to become owner @-@ occupiers of their own small farms . By this time fishermen from Holland , who had traditionally gathered each year off the coast of Shetland to fish for herring , triggered an industry in the islands that boomed from around 1880 until the 1920s when stocks of the fish began to dwindle . The production peaked in 1905 at more than a million barrels , of which seven hundred and eight thousand were exported .

= = = 20th century = = =

During World War I many Shetlanders served in the Gordon Highlanders , a further 3 @, @ 000 served in the Merchant Navy and more than 1500 in a special local naval reserve . The 10th Cruiser Squadron was stationed at Swarbacks Minn and during a single year from March 1917 more than 4 @, @ 500 ships sailed from Lerwick as part of an escorted convoy system . In total , Shetland lost more than 500 men , a higher proportion than any other part of Britain , and there were further waves of emigration in the 1920s and 1930s .

During World War II a Norwegian naval unit nicknamed the " Shetland Bus " was established by the Special Operations Executive in the autumn of 1940 with a base first at Lunna and later in Scalloway to conduct operations around the coast of Norway . About 30 fishing vessels used by Norwegian refugees were gathered and the Shetland Bus conducted covert operations , carrying intelligence agents , refugees , instructors for the resistance , and military supplies . It made over 200 trips across the sea with Leif Larsen , the most highly decorated allied naval officer of the war , making 52 of them . Several RAF bases were also established at Sullom Voe and several lighthouses suffered enemy air attacks .

Oil reserves discovered in the later 20th century in the seas both east and west of Shetland have provided a much needed alternative source of income for the islands . The East Shetland Basin is one of Europe 's largest oil fields and as a result of the oil revenue and the cultural links with Norway , a small independence movement developed briefly to recast the constitutional position of Shetland . It saw as its model the Isle of Man , as well as Shetland 's closest neighbour , the Faroe Islands , an autonomous dependency of Denmark .

= = Economy = =

Today , the main revenue producers in Shetland are agriculture , aquaculture , fishing , renewable energy , the petroleum industry ( crude oil and natural gas production ) , the creative industries and tourism .

Fishing remains central to the islands ' economy today , with the total catch being 75 @, @ 767 tonnes ( 74 @, @ 570 long tons ; 83 @, @ 519 short tons ) in 2009 , valued at over £ 73 @. @ 2 million . Mackerel makes up more than half of the catch in Shetland by weight and value , and there are significant landings of haddock , cod , herring , whiting , monkfish and shellfish . Farming is mostly concerned with the raising of Shetland sheep , known for their unusually fine wool . Crops raised include oats and barley ; however , the cold , windswept islands make for a harsh environment for most plants . Crofting , the farming of small plots of land on a legally restricted tenancy basis , is still practised and is viewed as a key Shetland tradition as well as an important source of income .

Oil and gas were first landed in 1978 at Sullom Voe , which has subsequently become one of the largest terminals in Europe . Taxes from the oil have increased public sector spending on social welfare , art , sport , environmental measures and financial development . Three quarters of the islands ' workforce is employed in the service sector , and the Shetland Islands Council alone

accounted for 27 % of output in 2003 . Shetland 's access to oil revenues has funded the Shetland Charitable Trust , which in turn funds a wide variety of local programmes . The balance of the fund in 2011 was £ 217 million , i.e. , about £ 9 000 per head .

In January 2007 , the Shetland Islands Council signed a partnership agreement with Scottish and Southern Energy for the Viking Wind Farm , a 200 turbine wind farm and subsea cable . This renewable energy project would produce about 600 megawatts and contribute about £ 20 million to the Shetland economy per year . The plan is meeting significant opposition within the islands , primarily resulting from the anticipated visual impact of the development . The PURE project on Unst is a research centre which uses a combination of wind power and fuel cells to create a wind hydrogen system . The project is run by the Unst Partnership , the local community 's development trust .

Knitwear is important both to the economy and culture of Shetland , and the Fair Isle design is well known . However , the industry faces challenges due to plagiarism of the word " Shetland " by manufacturers operating elsewhere , and a certification trademark , " The Shetland Lady " , has been registered .

Shetland is served by a weekly local newspaper , The Shetland Times and the online Shetland News [http : / / www.shetnews.co.uk /](http://www.shetnews.co.uk/) with radio service being provided by BBC Radio Shetland and the commercial radio station SIBC .

Shetland is a popular destination for cruise ships , and in 2010 the Lonely Planet guide named Shetland as the sixth best region in the world for tourists seeking unspoilt destinations . The islands were described as " beautiful and rewarding " and the Shetlanders as " a fiercely independent and self reliant bunch " . Overall visitor expenditure was worth £ 16 4 million in 2006 , in which year just under 26 000 cruise liner passengers arrived at Lerwick Harbour . In 2009 , the most popular visitor attractions were the Shetland Museum , the RSPB reserve at Sumburgh Head , Bonhoga Gallery at Weisdale Mill and Jarlshof .

== = Quarries == =

Brindister : 60 ° N 1 ° W ? / 60 ° ; -1.215874  
Scord : 60 ° N 1 ° W ? / 60 ° ; -1.261629 [ 1 ]  
Sullom : 60 ° N 1 ° W ? / 60 ° ; -1.382306  
Vatster : 60 ° N 1 ° W ? / 60 ° ; -1.220861

== = Transport == =

Transport between islands is primarily by ferry , and Shetland Islands Council operates various inter island services . Shetland is also served by a domestic connection from Lerwick to Aberdeen on mainland Scotland . This service , which takes about 12 hours , is operated by NorthLink Ferries . Some services also call at Kirkwall , Orkney , which increases the journey time between Aberdeen and Lerwick by 2 hours . There are plans of road tunnels to some of the islands , esecially Bressay and Whalsay , however it is hard to convince the mainland government to finance them .

Sumburgh Airport , the main airport on Shetland , is located close to Sumburgh Head , 40 km ( 25 mi ) south of Lerwick . Loganair operates flights for FlyBe to other parts of Scotland up to ten times a day , the destinations being Kirkwall , Aberdeen , Inverness , Glasgow and Edinburgh . Lerwick / Tingwall Airport is located 11 km ( 6 8 mi ) west of Lerwick . Operated by Directflight Ltd. in partnership with Shetland Islands Council , it is devoted to inter island flights from the Shetland Mainland to most of the inhabited islands .

Scatsta Airport near Sullom Voe allows frequent charter flights from Aberdeen to transport oilfield workers and this small terminal has the fifth largest number of international passengers in Scotland .

Public bus services are operated on Mainland , Whalsay , Burra , Unst and Yell .

The archipelago is exposed to wind and tide , and there are numerous sites of wrecked ships . Lighthouses are sited as an aid to navigation at various locations .

## == Public services ==

The Shetland Islands Council is the Local Government authority for all the islands , based in Lerwick Town Hall .

Shetland is sub @-@ divided into 18 community council areas and into 12 civil parishes that are used for statistical purposes .

## == Education ==

In Shetland there are two High Schools ? Anderson and Brae ? five Junior High Schools , and 24 primary schools .

Shetland is also home to the North Atlantic Fisheries College , the Centre for Nordic Studies and Shetland College , which are all associated with the University of the Highlands and Islands .

## == Sport ==

The islands are represented by the Shetland football team who regularly compete in the Island Games . The islands ' senior football league is the G & S Flooring Premier League .

## == Churches and religion ==

The Reformation reached the archipelago in 1560 . This was an apparently peaceful transition and there is little evidence of religious intolerance in Shetland 's recorded history .

A variety of religious denominations are represented in the islands .

The Methodist Church has a relatively high membership in Shetland , which is a District of the Methodist Church ( with the rest of Scotland comprising a separate District ) .

The Church of Scotland has a Presbytery of Shetland that includes St. Columba 's Church in Lerwick .

The Catholic population is served by the church of St. Margaret and the Sacred Heart in Lerwick . The Parish is part of the Diocese of Aberdeen .

The Scottish Episcopal Church ( part of the Anglican Communion ) has regular worship at St Magnus ' Church , Lerwick , St Colman 's Church , Burravoe , and the Chapel of Christ the Encompasser , Fetlar , the last of which is maintained by the Society of Our Lady of the Isles , the most northerly and remote Anglican religious order of nuns .

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter @-@ day Saints has a congregation in Lerwick . The former print works and offices of the local newspaper , The Shetland Times , has been converted into a chapel .

## == Politics ==

Shetland is represented in the House of Commons as part of the Orkney and Shetland constituency , which elects one Member of Parliament , the current incumbent being Alistair Carmichael . This seat has been held by the Liberal Democrats or their predecessors the Liberal Party since 1950 , longer than any other they represent in the UK .

In the Scottish Parliament the Shetland constituency elects one Member of the Scottish Parliament ( MSP ) by the first past the post system . The current MSP is Tavish Scott of the Scottish Liberal Democrats . Shetland is within the Highlands and Islands electoral region .

The political composition of the Council is 22 Independents . Thus it is one of only three Councils in Scotland with a majority of elected members not representing a political party .

Roy Grønneberg , who founded the local chapter of the Scottish National Party in 1966 , designed the flag of Shetland in cooperation with Bill Adams to mark the 500th anniversary of the transfer of the islands from Norway to Scotland . The colours are identical to those of the flag of Scotland , but

are shaped in the Nordic cross . After several unsuccessful attempts , including a plebiscite in 1985 , the Lord Lyon King of Arms approved it as the official flag of Shetland in 2005 .

= = Local culture and the arts = =

After the islands were transferred to Scotland , thousands of Scots families emigrated to Shetland in the 16th and 17th centuries but studies of the genetic makeup of the islands ' population indicate that Shetlanders are just under half Scandinavian in origin . A sizeable component of Scandinavian patrilineal ancestry has been reported in Orkney ( 55 % ) and Shetland ( 68 % ) . This combination is reflected in many aspects of local life . For example , almost every place name in use can be traced back to the Vikings . The Norn language was a form of Old Norse , which continued to be spoken until the 18th century when it was replaced by an insular dialect of Scots known as Shetlandic , which is in turn being replaced by Scottish English . Although Norn was spoken for hundreds of years it is now extinct and few written sources remain . Shetlandic is used both in local radio and dialect writing , and kept alive by the Shetland Folk Society .

The Lerwick Up Helly Aa is one of a variety of fire festivals held in Shetland annually in the middle of winter , it is always started on the last Tuesday of January . The festival is just over 100 years old in its present , highly organised form . Originally , a festival held to break up the long nights of winter and mark the end of Yule , the festival has become one celebrating the isles ' heritage and includes a procession of men dressed as Vikings and the burning of a replica longship .

The cuisine of Shetland is based on locally produced lamb , beef and seafood , much of it organic . Inevitably , the real ale @-@ producing Valhalla Brewery is the most northerly in Britain . The Shetland Black is a variety of blue potato with a dark skin and indigo coloured flesh markings .

Shetland competes in the biennial International Island Games , which it hosted in 2005 .

= = = Music = = =

Shetland 's culture and landscapes have inspired a variety of musicians , writers and film @-@ makers . The Forty Fiddlers was formed in the 1950s to promote the traditional fiddle style , which is a vibrant part of local culture today . Notable exponents of Shetland folk music include Aly Bain , Fiddlers ' Bid , and the late Tom Anderson and Peerie Willie Johnson . Thomas Fraser was a country musician who never released a commercial recording during his life , but whose work has become popular more than 20 years after his untimely death in 1978 .

= = = Writers = = =

Walter Scott 's 1822 novel The Pirate is set in " a remote part of Shetland " , and was inspired by his 1814 visit to the islands . The name Jarlshof meaning " Earl 's Mansion " is a coinage of his . Robert Cowie , a doctor born in Lerwick published the 1874 work Shetland : Descriptive and Historical ; Being a Graduation Thesis on the Inhabitants of the Shetland Islands ; and a Topographical Description of the Country .

Hugh MacDiarmid , the Scots poet and writer lived in Whalsay from the mid @-@ 1930s through 1942 , and wrote many poems there , including a number that directly address or reflect the Shetland environment such as " On A Raised Beach " , which was inspired by a visit to West Linga . The 1975 novel North Star by Hammond Innes is largely set in Shetland and Raman Mundair 's 2007 book of poetry A Choreographer 's Cartography offers a British Asian perspective on the landscape . The Shetland Quartet by Ann Cleeves , who previously lived in Fair Isle , is a series of crime novels set around the islands . In 2013 her novel Red Bones became the basis of BBC crime drama television series Shetland .

Vagaland , who grew up in Walls , was arguably Shetland 's finest poet of the 20th century . Haldane Burgess was a Shetland historian , poet , novelist , violinist , linguist and socialist and Rhoda Bulter ( 1929 ? 94 ) is one of the best @-@ known Shetland poets of recent times . Other 20th and 21st century poets and novelists include Christine De Luca , Robert Alan Jamieson who



grew up in Sandness , the late Lollie Graham of Veensgarth , Stella Sutherland of Bressay , the late William J Tait from Yell and Laureen Johnson .

There are two monthly magazines in production : Shetland Life and i 'i ' Shetland . The quarterly The New Shetlander , founded in 1947 , is said to be Scotland 's longest @-@ running literary magazine . For much of the later 20th century it was the major vehicle for the work of local writers ? and others , including early work by George Mackay Brown .

#### = = = Films = = =

Michael Powell made The Edge of the World in 1937 , a dramatisation based on the true story of the evacuation of the last 36 inhabitants of the remote island of St Kilda on 29 August 1930 . St Kilda lies in the Atlantic Ocean , 64 kilometres ( 40 mi ) west of the Outer Hebrides but Powell was unable to get permission to film there . Undaunted , he made the film over four months during the summer of 1936 on Foula and the film transposes these events to Shetland . Forty years later , the documentary Return to the Edge of the World was filmed , capturing a reunion of cast and crew of the film as they revisited the island in 1978 .

A number of other films have been made on or about Shetland including A Crofter 's Life in Shetland ( 1932 ) A Shetland Lyric ( 1934 ) , Devil 's Gate ( 2003 ) and It 's Nice Up North ( 2006 ) , a comedy documentary by Graham Fellows . An annual film festival takes place in the newly built Mareel , a cinema , music and education venue .

#### = = Wildlife = =

Shetland has three national nature reserves , at the seabird colonies of Hermaness and Noss , and at Keen of Hamar to preserve the serpentine flora . There are a further 81 SSSIs , which cover 66 % or more of the land surfaces of Fair Isle , Papa Stour , Fetlar , Noss and Foula . Mainland has 45 separate sites .

#### = = = Flora = = =

The landscape in Shetland is marked by the grazing of sheep and the harsh conditions have limited the total number of plant species to about 400 . Native trees such as rowan and crab apple are only found in a few isolated places such as cliffs and loch islands . The flora is dominated by Arctic @-@ alpine plants , wild flowers , moss and lichen . Spring squill , buck 's @-@ horn plantain , Scots lovage , roseroot and sea campion are abundant , especially in sheltered places . Shetland mouse @-@ ear ( *Cerastium nigrescens* ) is an endemic flowering plant found only in Shetland . It was first recorded in 1837 by botanist Thomas Edmondston . Although reported from two other sites in the nineteenth century , it currently grows only on two serpentine hills on the island of Unst . The nationally scarce oysterplant is found on several islands and the British Red Listed bryophyte *Thamnobryum alopecurum* has also been recorded .

#### = = = Fauna = = =

Shetland has numerous seabird colonies . Birds found on the islands include Atlantic puffin , storm @-@ petrel , red @-@ throated diver , northern gannet and great skua ( locally called the " bonxie " ) . Numerous rarities have also been recorded including black @-@ browed albatross and snow goose , and a single pair of snowy owls bred on Fetlar from 1967 to 1975 . The Shetland wren , Fair Isle wren and Shetland starling are subspecies endemic to Shetland . There are also populations of various moorland birds such as curlew , snipe and golden plover .

The geographical isolation and recent glacial history of Shetland have resulted in a depleted mammalian fauna and the brown rat and house mouse are two of only three species of rodent present on the islands . The Shetland field mouse is the third and the archipelago 's fourth endemic subspecies , of which there are three varieties on Yell , Foula and Fair Isle . They are variants of

Apodemus sylvaticus and archaeological evidence suggests that this species was present during the Middle Iron Age ( around 200 BC to AD 400 ) . It is possible that Apodemus was introduced from Orkney where a population has existed since at the least the Bronze Age .

=== Domesticated animals ===

There is a variety of indigenous breeds , of which the diminutive Shetland pony is probably the best known , as well as being an important part of the Shetland farming tradition . The first written record of the pony was in 1603 in the Court Books of Shetland and , for its size , it is the strongest of all the horse breeds . Others are the Shetland Sheepdog or " Sheltie " , the endangered Shetland cattle and Shetland Goose and the Shetland sheep which is believed to have originated prior to 1000 AD . The Grice was a breed of semi @-@ domesticated pig that had a habit of attacking lambs , and that became extinct in 1930 .

=== Lists ===

List of counties of the United Kingdom  
List of islands

=== About Shetland ===

Mavis Grind  
Udal law

=== Other ===

Hjeltefjorden  
Battle of Florvåg  
Rögnvald Kali Kolsson  
Timeline of prehistoric Scotland  
Prehistoric Scotland  
Constitutional status of Orkney , Shetland and the Western Isles