

## Crofters and Fisherfolk

### *What's for tea in the croft tonight?*



#### Lesson Planning

#### Aims:

During these sessions, pupils will:

- Learn about the relationship between the crofters and fisherfolk in Moray
- Learn about the Fishwives Walk from Buckie to Keith
- Learn about different food groups
- Learn to prepare different foods to make a balanced diet

#### ***What's for tea in the croft tonight?***

*In the croft house, food was cooked in large pot or on a griddle over a peat fire.*

#### ***Food groups: can you identify different foods from the croft?***

*Pupils work in groups to label food products in season – the displays used were of foods available in the winter – fresh vegetables included roots and brassicas*

<p><b><i>Cereals from the croft</i></b>  <u><i>cereals on the stalk:</i></u>  <i>bere</i>  <i>modern barley</i>  <i>black oats</i>  <i>modern oats</i>  <i>Emmer wheat</i>  <i>modern wheat</i>  <u><i>cereals ready for milling:</i></u>  <i>oat groats</i>  <i>wheat grains</i>  <i>shilled bere</i>  <u><i>meals and flour:</i></u>  <i>beremeal</i>  <i>oatmeal</i>  <i>wholemeal wheat flour</i></p>	<p><b><i>Tatties and vegetables</i></b>  <u><i>heritage potatoes:</i></u>  <i>British Queen</i>  <i>Highland Burgundy Red</i>  <i>Salad Blue</i>  <u><i>root vegetables:</i></u>  <i>carrots</i>  <i>parsnips</i>  <i>swedes</i>  <i>onions</i>  <i>leeks</i>  <u><i>brassicas:</i></u>  <i>cabbage</i>  <i>red kale</i>  <i>black Russian kale</i>  <u><i>herbs:</i></u>  <i>parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme</i>  <u><i>pulses:</i></u>  <i>dried marrowfat peas</i>  <i>peasemeal</i></p>	<p><b><i>Milk, eggs and fish</i></b>  <u><i>Dairy products:</i></u>  <i>milk</i>  <i>cream</i>  <i>butter</i>  <i>buttermilk</i>  <i>crowdie</i>  <i>rennet</i>  <i>whey</i>  <u><i>eggs:</i></u>  <i>eggs from Scots Dumpy hens</i>  <i>eggs from modern hybrid hens</i>  <u><i>fish:</i></u>  <i>fresh herring</i>  <i>kipper</i>  <u><i>salts:</i></u>  <i>Isle of Skye sea salt</i>  <i>pink Himalayan rock salt</i>  <i>herb salt</i></p>
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#### ***What's for tea in the croft tonight?***

*vegetable broth*  
*beremeal bannocks*  
*tattie scones*  
*butter*  
*crowdie*  
*fresh herring*  
*kippers*

Pupils work in groups to talk about how they would prepare the items above – crofters would not call this a menu, they would just ask: “*What's for tea?*”

*Using the worksheets provided below, pupils discuss what utensils and ingredients they would use to make each of these foods.*

*Each group has a scribe, everyone joins in the discussions, with adults on hand to help.*

## ***The Silver Darlings***

### ***North Sea herring - Clupea harengus***



***Class activity:*** Observational drawing: ***Making a shoal of herring.***

- Each pupil has a picture of the North Sea herring, with its name in English and Latin.
- In the space below the picture of the herring, write something you know about the herring, so the class can build a story of the herring and the fishing industry on the coast of Moray during the herring boom.
- Use the picture of the herring to copy or trace the herring onto greaseproof paper, folded in half.
- Observe the colour and pattern on the herring and decorate your fish on both sides.
- Cut out the fish. Save the trimmings.
- Staple together the two sides of the herring, leaving a gap into which you insert the crumpled pieces of greaseproof paper.
- Seal the herring.
- You now have a glinting, slippery fish to add to the shoal created by the whole class.



- How large a shoal can you create as a class?
- Have you created a good story about the herring using everyone's contribution?



## ***What's for tea in the croft tonight?***

*In the croft house, food was cooked in large pot or on a griddle over a peat fire. Crofters ate very simple, nourishing food which they produced themselves or exchanged with their neighbours, including the fisherfolk from the coastal town.*

### **Preparing and tasting the food which Crofters and Fisherfolk ate**

#### **Cereals**



Activities: Milling wheat, oats and bere to make **meal and flour**; making **bannocks**.  
– see notes on milling grains, below, and separate lesson plan for making bannocks.

#### **Vegetables**

Activity: Making a hearty **vegetable broth**.



Method:

- Soak dried peas and pearl barley;
- chop root vegetables; cook very gently in a little oil or butter;
- add vegetable stock cube, the soaked dried peas and pearl barley;
- simmer gently for 30 minutes;
- add chopped kale or cabbage; cook for a further 10 minutes.

You can replace the dried peas with a little peasemeal to thicken the broth.

Pearl barley and peas or peasemeal form a complete protein, which is an important part of a hard-working person's diet.

#### **Potatoes**

Activity: Making **tattie scones** from traditional varieties of potatoes

Crofters grew traditional varieties of potatoes, including the 19<sup>th</sup> century varieties British Queen, Highland Burgundy Red and Salad Blue.

**British Queen** potatoes make the best mashed potatoes!

**Highland Burgundy Red** potatoes have red skins and pink flesh.

**Salad Blue** potatoes have dark blue skins and lighter blue flesh.



#### **Tattie scones**

Method: Mix cooked mashed potatoes with a little milk and some flour to form a stiff dough. Roll out, shape into rounds the size of a small plate, and cook on a griddle till brown on both sides. Cut the rounds into 'farls' or triangles.

## Milk and eggs – protein products from livestock on the croft

Activities: Making **crowdie**, shaping **butter** and grading **eggs**.

### Milk

**Crowdie** is the simple soft cheese, made in the croft, with skimmed milk after the cream was taken off to make butter. Traditionally, milk was left in a warm place to go sour, a process which would cause the curds to separate from the whey. Nowadays we can only buy pasteurised milk, so we cannot risk souring milk in a traditional way.

#### Making crowdie:

*Make sure all utensils are really clean, by sterilising with boiling water - **ask an adult to do this.***



- Heat the milk in a bowl, in a hot water bath, to 31° C; add a 'starter' of yoghurt or a cheese 'culture'.
- Add a few drops of rennet, an enzyme which makes the milk set, diluting it with cold water and stirring for one minute, with a perforated spoon, in order not to damage the structure of the milk. 'Top stir' the milk for one minute, to keep any cream from rising.
- Cover the bowl of milk with a clean cloth; leave for a few hours in a warm place to set.
- Line a bowl with a sterilised piece of muslin, tip in the set curds and hang to drain over a bowl till the texture is soft and creamy, but not too wet. Remove from the cloth and keep in the fridge.

*The whey can be used for baking. It was considered a very thirst-quenching drink for hard-working people. It was also fed to pigs. Whey is used in the manufacture of detergents.*



**Butter** is made from the cream which naturally rises to the top of milk. These days, most milk is skimmed to remove the cream or *homogenised* to mix in the cream. Butter is made by agitating the cream to separate the fat globules from the liquid. This can be done on a small scale by shaking the cream in a jar till it separates. It can also be made in a hand-operated butter churn. When the fat globules are like small grains of couscous, they are strained through clean muslin (called 'butter muslin').

Shaping butter: The butter grains can be shaped with 'scotch hands'. Butter gets very warm and greasy if it is handled or worked too much. Scotch hands are wooden paddles with which butter can be moulded, cut and shaped. Rinse the bitter grains with cold water to keep it cool and firm.

*The buttermilk is used to make scones and bannocks. It is very thirst-quenching and nourishing.*

### Eggs



Crofters' hens laid small eggs during the spring and summer months, a total of around 100-120 per year. **Scots Dumpy hens**, also known as *Bakies*, *Crawlers* and *Creepies*, have been bred in Scotland for over a century. Similar breeds can be traced back to AD900. It is said that the Picts used to carry them into their battle camps where they used to warn of approaching strangers. They have a very heavy body and waddle as they walk because they have very short legs.



Grading eggs: Modern commercial hens are usually hybrids, which lay up to 320 eggs per year. Eggs come in various colours, but in Scotland most eggs are pink or brown. Egg producers usually grade and label their eggs. Most eggs we buy are either medium or large in boxes of six.

Small eggs weigh less than 53g; medium 53-63g; large 63-73g; X large over 73g  
Eggs can be sold in mixed sizes, including small or extra large, with a minimum weight of 300g per box of six.



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### vegetable broth

bannocks

tattie scones

butter

crowdie

fresh herring

kippers

What do I need to make **vegetable broth**?

Ingredients

Utensils



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tonight?*

*In the croft house, food was cooked in  
large pot or on a griddle over a peat  
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vegetable broth

**bannocks**

**tattie scones**

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*Want do I need to make **bannocks**?*

Ingredients

Utensils

*What do I need to make **tattie scones**?*

Ingredients

Utensils



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vegetable broth  
bannocks  
tattie scones  
butter  
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fresh herring  
kippers

*What do I need to make **butter**?*

Ingredients

Utensils

*What is left after you make butter?*

*What do I need to make **crowdie**?*

Ingredients

Utensils

*What is left after you make crowdie?*



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vegetable broth

bannocks

tattie scones

butter

crowdie

fresh herring

kippers

*How will I cook the fresh herring?*

Ingredients

Utensils

*What is a kipper?*

## Notes on Grain Milling

### The Hand Mill

For care and assembly of mill, see leaflet included in package.

***Take care not to lose the small plastic washer which is inserted in the shaft in front of the handle.***

### Using the mill

- Assemble the mill and clamp firmly to a sturdy table
- Fill the hopper just over half way and do not grind when it is empty as this will wear out the mechanism
- *The mill must be turned clockwise, otherwise the grooves wear out.*
- *Take care not to turn the handle very fast, ideally 2 seconds per turn, otherwise the mill will heat up too much for the flour and the mill will wear out*
- If the mill is clogged, a quick turn anti-clockwise can release the grains. Otherwise, empty the hopper and take mill apart to clean.

### To clean the mill:

- Take the mill apart as far as possible
- Use a stiff clean paint brush to remove all traces of flour or meal from the grooves in both parts of the grinding mechanism
- The mill can be washed in very hot water, taking care not to scratch the surfaces
- Make sure the mill is completely dry before storing - use a dry cloth or paper towels and then leave in a warm dry place before storage.

### The Cereals

- The grains sent with the mill should be stored in tightly fitting containers to keep them fresh.
- Whole grains store better than flour or meal – the freshness is sealed in the whole grain.
- Once you have ground the grains into meal or flour, use as soon as possible to ensure freshness.

The mill comes with 1 kg. organic whole-wheat grains and 1 kg organic oat groats ready for milling.

### Wheat grains

The flour can be sieved after milling for a finer, but still very nutritious product.

The bran can be saved to sprinkle on the top of bread before baking, or sprinkled on breakfast cereals for extra fibre in the diet.

The handle on the grinder can be adjusted to produce finer or coarser flours.

### Oat groats

The oat groats sent with the mills are very soft and sometimes stick to the grooves of the mill. Take care to clean the mill thoroughly after use – see above

For a harder meal, you can dry the groats out very slowly in a slow (defrost) oven or warming cupboard. Take care not to overheat the outer husk, as this will make it hard to mill the groats.

The mill can be adjusted to produce finer or coarser meal – the soft groats produce a texture which is floury or flaky.