

Shetland Place Names Project



Shetland Place Name Elements

Natural features - Coastal			
Old Norse element	Meaning	Shetland forms	Place Names
eið	isthmus, neck of land	aith	Aith
fjörðr	firth, bay	firth	Burrafirth, Collafirth, Firth, Effirth
gjá	ravine	gjo, geo	Many named geos
hólmr	holm, islet	holm, hom, hulm	Muckle Holm, Hulmalees
hópr, hóp	small landlocked bay or lagoon	houbie, houb, toab	Houbie, Houb
klettr	rock, crag	klett, clett	Clett, Cletts
nes	ness, headland	ness	Scatness, Sandness, Eshanness, Whiteness, Muness
stakkr	stack, pile	stakk, stakki, stakken	Stack, Stackaberg
sund	sound	sound, sund	Baltasound, Uyeasound, Sound
tangi, tunga	tongue of land	taing, tingon, teng, tunga	Taing, Tungi, Tingon
trumba	pipe, trumpet	trumba, tromba	Trumba
vágr	creek, bay	voe, wa, was	Voe, Hamnavoe, Burravoe, Walls, Scalloway
vík	inlet, small bay	wick, wik	Norwick, Otterswick, Westsandwick, Hillswick, Reawick, Lerwick, Sandwick
øy	isle	-a, -ay, -ey	Foula, Burra, Trondra, Whalsay, Bressay

Natural features - Land

Old Norse element	Meaning	Shetland forms	Place Names
bakki	steep bank, steep coast	backa, back	Backa, Dunabacka, Neepaback
berg	rock, rocky soil	berg, berri, bergset (craig seats)	Berg, Lodberries, Skelberry
brekka	slope	breck, brake, brekk, bregg	Breckon, Breck, Brake
dalr	dale, valley	dale	Dale, Djubidale, Ordaal
fell,fjall	mountain, hill	feall, field	Feal, Blofel, Hamrafield
gnípa, gnúpr	high steep mountain with overhanging top	nip, nup, nib	Neep, Noup, Neepaback
grind	gate	grind	Mavis Grind, Voesgrind
hagi	pasture	hoga, hag	Da Hoga, Hogali, Hagdale
hamarr	steep rock, rocky wall	hamar, hammer	Hamar
haugr	mound, cairn	heog	Heogland, Heoganness, Heogan
hóll	hill, height	houll, well, wall	Houll, Houlland, Skibhoull, Houlenquida, Kjurkhul, Swarthoull
kambr	comb, crested ridge of hills	kamb, komba, kame, kom	Kame of Isbister, Camb
krá, kró	nook, corner	crö, croe, croo, cru, crow	Da Crö, Cruting
land	land	land	Burland, Longlands, Ireland
líð, hlíð	hillside, slope	lee, lea, lie	Leans, Soberlie, Fuglali
varða	cairn on hilltop	ward, vord, vird	Wart, Saxavord, Virdafield, Virdibreck
vatn	water, lake	vatna, vatn	Sandwater, Vatster, Vanlop, Vatnagarth, Watlee

Houses, crofts and buildings

Old Norse element	Meaning	Shetland forms	Place Names
bær, býr	farm	by, bi, buin, boll, bo(e)	Exnaboe, Norby, Beosetter
borg	fort	brough, burg(h), burgi	Cunningsburgh, Burravoe, Brough, Gossabrough, Sumburgh
bólstaðr	domicile, farm	bister, busta	Symbister, Fladdabister
garðr	fence, enclosure, farm	garth, gord, gert, gart	Garth, Gord, Midgarth
gata	road, path	gait, gett, gott, goat	Gott
gerði	fenced patch of ground	gerdi, gerdin	Gardie, Gerragarth
hús	house	hoose, hus, house	North House, Garderhouse, Uphouse
kví	enclosure for cattle	quoy, quey	Quoys, Houllsquoy, Sneusquoy, Ocraquoy
setr, sætr	homestead, summer pasture for cattle	setter, ster, huxter	Setter, Swinister, Mangaster, Bixter
staðr, staðir	domicile, farm	sta, ster	Ulsta, Tresta, Wethersta, Clousta, Girlsta, Gremista
stofa	sittingroom, house	stove, stow, stu, stiva	Stove
topt, tupt	house site	toft, taft, tup, top	Toft, Taft
tún	fenced plot, farmyard	toon, tun	Newton, Rattleton, Shurton, Bigton
völlr	field, low lying piece of ground	field, well, wall, villans	Millfield, Velzie, Seafield, Villans

Colours			
Old Norse element	Meaning	Shetland forms	Place Names
grœn(a)	green	grun	Grunens, Gruney, Grunay
Hvíta	white	quida, kwida, hwida	Quidaroonies, Houlenquida
Rauð	red	ro(e), rud	Muckle Roe, Rudda
Svart	black	swart, swarta	Swarthoull, Swarta Skerry
Birds and animals			
Old Norse element	Meaning	Shetland forms	Place Names
fugl	bird	fogl, fugl	Fugla Stack
gríss	pig	gris, grice	Griskerry
ross, hross	horse	ross	Rossaness, Rossahoull
hundr	dog	hund, hundi	Hundi Geo
hvalr	whale	whal	Whalsay, Whalfirth
selr	seal	sel, sell	Sellafirth, Sel Geo
svín	pig	svin, swine	Sweinna Stack

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Shetland Amenity Trust, Garthspool, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0NY

tel: 01595 694688

email: placenames@shetlandamenity.org

www.shetlandamenity.org/shetland-place-names-project