

## **Crofting Connections: Coulregrein crop rotation 1941-1951**

**Target group: Upper Primary and Secondary students**

### **Aim**

Using the crop rotation records of Coulregrein House, Stornoway, the purpose of this project pack is to introduce students to using primary source material, seeing crofting and agriculture in historical context and relate this to their own experiences. It will enable them to study and draw conclusions from this material and to compare it with modern crofting methods and techniques learned elsewhere in the curriculum.

### **Ways in which this resource can be used**

Using the digitised images of the crop rotation records, analyse the rotation systems undertaken to consider how, if at all, this makes best use of the soil given the available crops.

#### **Curriculum for Excellence links**

*Outcomes addressed specifically:*

#### Social Studies: People, Past Events and Societies

SOC 2-01a I can use primary and secondary sources selectively to research events in the past

SOC 2-04a I can compare and contrast a society in the past with my own and contribute to a discussion of the similarities and differences

#### Social Studies: People, Place and Environment

SOC 2-08a I can discuss the environmental impact of human activity and suggest ways in which we can live in a more environmentally-responsible way

SOC 4-09a Having evaluation the role of agriculture in the production of food and raw material, I can draw reasoned conclusions about the environmental impacts and sustainability

SOC 2-13a I can explain how the physical environment influences the ways in which people use land by comparing my local area with a contrasting area

SOC 3-13a By comparing settlement and economic activity in two contrasting landscapes, I can reach conclusions about how landscapes influence human activity. I can explain my findings clearly to others.



Skills Development; these skills are used and developed in the project

- observing, describing and recording
- comparing and contrasting to draw valid conclusions
- analyzing and interpreting historical data
- developing the capacity for critical thinking
- developing an awareness of sequence and chronology

### **The source - Tasglann 2010/4/2 Coulregrein House Garden crop rotation book.**

Prior to the advent of the welfare state, responsibility for the poor lay with local parishes under the various Poor Law Acts. In 1930, this responsibility transferred to County Councils. Parishes could come together to create poorhouses where the most destitute and helpless individuals and families would find themselves. This may be due to them having lost their home or being unable or unwilling to find work in order to support themselves. They may be aged and unable to look after themselves or the death of a husband could leave a mother with children in need of help. The poorhouse was the place of last resort for the most desperate.

There were two poorhouses in the Western Isles: Stornoway Combination Poorhouse (later known as Coulregrein House) in Stornoway and the Long Island Combination Poorhouse (later Lochmaddy Hospital) at Lochmaddy in North Uist. Both were built on the outskirts of the towns between 1894 and 1896.

Stornoway Poorhouse was a two storey building that could accommodate 66 inmates when it was first built. In 1911, it was licensed to provide accommodation for patients suffering from more mild forms of mental illness who otherwise would have been transferred to hospitals or asylums on the mainland.

In 1930, the Poor Law system was abolished. The poorhouse however continued as a residential home for people who continued to need help be this due to poverty, physical or mental illness. The house was managed by the Coulregrein House Sub-Committee of Management who reported to Ross & Cromarty County Council.

It is unclear from historical sources, but it would appear that during the 1939-1945 War, if not earlier, Coulregrein House began to grow its own vegetables on a reasonably large scale, taking over the former lawns around the building.

The house continued until into the 1970s, predominantly caring for the elderly. It has since been demolished. The site is now occupied by Dun Eidean care home on Westview Terrace, Stornoway.

### **Other historical resources relating to crofting and agriculture**

School log books often comment on the crofting activities being undertaken and the effect this has on school attendance. Log books for appropriate areas are held in the libraries at Castlebay, Lionacleit, Tarbert and Stornoway. They may not be removed from library premises. The log books for St Kilda and Mingulay are available online at <http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/archives/collections.asp>

Comainn Eachdraidh. Virtually all historical societies in the Western Isles have undertaken research into local crofting practice as well as the history of individual crofts. Contact details for individual historical societies can be found at <http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/archives/comainneachdraidh.asp>

### **Other historical resources relating to Coulregrein House**

Coulregrein House Management Minutes 1893-1970 (3 volumes)