

LIFE AND NAMES OF PLACES ON RENNESØY

Many names of places on Rennesøy are so old that they date back to the time before Christ. They show, however, that the same people have lived in this part of the country throughout the ages, and have given the base for our names of places.

These names may be memorials about life and work on land and sea in old as well as recent times, they belong to our valuable cultural memorials and are worth taking care of and protecting.

A few years ago all names of places on Rennesøy were collected and recorded. The number was about 2,200 names, but lots of these are no longer used.

Until the second half of the 19th century there were many cotter's famers on the island. Today there are none of these left. They are either separated from, or included in the main farms. But the names on these farms still exist. For instance, Beite, Haugen, Hola, etc.

A common way of making names was mentioning more names after each other. North-, south-, east-, and west- in front. Thus have the farms Nordbø, Sorbø, Vestbø, Austbø, Nordhus etc. got their names. The farm Vik (Bay) got its name from bay in Vikevåg, because it extends right down to the sea and includes this bay.

There is not much forest on the island. The forests have from old times been destroyed and it was difficult to find wood for fire in the winter. Firewood had to be bought from inner Ryfylke area. The big roots in the ground proves that there were once large trees on the island, but how the forest was destroyed is unknown. There is still some leaf-tree forest, mostly silver-birches, some roan trees, willow trees and hazelnut trees. In recent years the farmers have also had pine trees planted on land which is not suitable for cultivation. Some farms have names from trees, i.e. Ask (Ash)

Since it has been hard to find firewood, they did for a long time use heather, which there was a lot of, for heating. Juniper twigs were used for "smoking" meat & fish, particularly herring.

There is not much wild berries. Some berries which are found are blueberries, blackberries, wild raspberries, stawberries and mostly cranberries. Names like Blåbaermyra (blueberry-swamp), Jordbaerlia (strawberry-place) still exist. In some places there also grow wild apple trees, but few are left.

During the spring and summer there were a lot of seabirds making nests along the seaside around the island. From olden times these were useful for food. The feathers were also used. The seagull is the most common bird. Elderly people can still remember that the seagull eggs were used in the household. There are sea-swallows, sea-pies, cormorants and, of course, the ordinary small birds like swallows, sparrows, tomtits, robins, chaffinches, thrushes, crows, magpies, etc. From these birds

we have the name Måkeskjar (Gull-rocks), Tjeldastranda (Sea-Swallow-beach), ec.