

2022

HARVARD ALUMNI TRAVELS

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SCOTLAND

Orkney & Shetland Islands Hiking Adventure

June 26, 2022 - July 6, 2022





The Cairns excavations, Orkney Islands (left) and Ring of Brodgar, Orkney Islands (right).

Schedule by Day

B=Breakfast, L=Packed lunch, D=Dinner

SUNDAY, JUNE 26

Depart U.S.

Depart the U.S. on independent flights to Scotland.

MONDAY, JUNE 27

Arrive Aberdeen / Kirkwall, Orkney (1)

Arrive in Aberdeen today for a 12:45 pm transfer to Aberdeen Airport where the group will board a flight to Kirkwall, Orkney.

Arrive in Kirkwall around 4 pm and transfer to your hotel.

Overnight: *Lynnfield Hotel* (D)

TUESDAY, JUNE 28

Neolithic Orkney (2)

Today, visit several important Neolithic sites including: The Ring of Brodgar, Ness of Brodgar, Stones of Stenness, and Maeshowe, Britain's largest chambered cairn. These sites make up the "Heart of Neolithic Orkney," a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Followed by a visit of the excavation of a large Atlantic Roundhouse, or broch, and associated structures.

Hiking distance: 4 miles. Height climbed: negligible

Overnight: *Lynnfield Hotel* (B, L, D)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29

Isle of Hoy (3)

This morning, take the ferry to

Hoy.

Your walk today will bring you to the world famous sea stack known as The Old Man of Hoy, which has attracted generations of climbers, not to mention nesting seabirds.

Hiking distance: 5 miles. Height climbed: 720 ft.

Overnight: *Lynnfield Hotel* (B, L, D)

THURSDAY, JUNE 30

Skara Brae / Kirkwall (3)

Begin the day at Skara Brae, possibly Orkney's most exciting archaeological site, which was buried by a sandstorm in about 2450BC and revealed by another storm in 1850.

Later, walk south along the Old Red Sandstone coastal cliff scenery, which features geos, natural arches, caves, and sea stacks.

Visit the town of Kirkwall this afternoon to view its Cathedral and palaces.

Dinner tonight will be in the hotel before you board an overnight ferry to Shetland at about 11:00pm.

Hiking distance: 3 miles. Height climbed: 300 ft.

Overnight: *Ferry, 2-berth outer cabin* (B, L, D)

FRIDAY, JULY 1

South Mainland, Shetland / Isle Of Mousa (5)

Disembark the ferry in Lerwick this morning and head south to

visit Jarlshof. The site, which was occupied for more than 4,000 years, boasts a remarkable sequence of stone structures: late Neolithic houses, a Bronze Age and an Iron Age village, a Norse longhouse, a medieval farmstead, and a 16th-century laird's house.

This afternoon, take a boat to the uninhabited island of Mousa. The wildlife here includes harbour and grey seals. The island is also famous for its Iron Age broch, which, at 44 feet, is the world's tallest and best preserved Pictish broch.

Back on the mainland, travel north to your hotel.

Hiking distance: 4 miles. Height climbed: negligible

Overnight: *Busta House Hotel* (B, L, D)

SATURDAY, JULY 2

Fethaland / Viking Quarry (6)

Begin today in Fethaland, the northernmost part of Shetland's mainland. Walk to a ruined Haaf (meaning "open sea") fishing station. From the 15th century until the beginning of the 20th century extremely brave fishermen ventured out 50 miles into the Atlantic Ocean in open boats to catch ling and cod.

Another place of interest that you will encounter during your walk is a Viking soapstone quarry.

Hiking distance: 6 miles. Height climbed: 450 ft.

Overnight: *Busta House Hotel* (B, L, D)



SUNDAY, JULY 3

Eshaness (7)

Today visit the Eshaness peninsula, which tells a fascinating story of a long extinct volcano. The spectacular cliffs you see today are the best section through the flank of a volcano in the British Isles and it is a geological 'must'. The sea has carved out a dramatic array of stacks, geos, and blowholes.

Another highlight is an active storm beach.

Hiking distance: 4.5 miles. Height climbed: 200 ft.

Overnight: *Busta House Hotel* (B, L, D)

MONDAY, JULY 4

Isle of Unst (8)

Today, we travel via Yell to Unst, using two ferries. Unst is one of the North Isles of the Shetland Islands. It consists of a block of oceanic crust thrust that is very much out of place. These enormous masses of thrust rock (called ophiolites) give a rare glimpse into the Earth's deep interior.

Along the way, encounter some very interesting botany, a Viking long ship and replica longhouse, and the northernmost cliffs of the British Isles, which are home to large seabird colonies.

Hiking distance: 3-6 miles. Height climbed: 330-660 ft.

Overnight: *Busta House Hotel* (B, L, D)

TUESDAY, JULY 5

Ronas Hill / Lerwick (9)

Today, visit Ronas Hill, Shetland's highest hill (1475 feet) topped by a prehistoric chambered burial cairn. The granite summit has a subarctic climate, with patterns created by freezing and thawing in the stony soils and some rare Arctic/Alpine plants.

Your walk to the top of Ronas Hill starts at 700 feet and offers you the chance to examine its granites and the freeze-thaw features. On a bright day, the views from the top are spectacular.

After the walk you will drive to Lerwick. There you will have free time to explore the town, its shops, and the excellent Shetland Museum & Archives before boarding the overnight ferry to Aberdeen.

Hiking distance: 5 miles. Height climbed: 800 ft.

Overnight: *Ferry, 2-berth outer cabin* (B, L, D)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 6

Aberdeen

Arrive in Aberdeen this morning and depart for home. Flights should depart Aberdeen no earlier than 11:00am.

(B)



Puffins at Hermaness, Isle of Unst, Shetland Islands.