

TRAVELS NOW AND THEN

© Christopher Earls Brennen

SCOTLAND AND IRELAND 2012**IRELAND/SCOTLAND 2012**

Ireland/Scotland, May/June 2012. C.E.Brennen.

May 24 Thurs Amtrak NHV-EWR 4.11pm-6.47pm (NE Reg 137)
 Fly EWR – BFS lv 9.25pm on UA94

May 25 Fri 9am arrive BFS. Rental Car. Hertz F4432750759
 Laurel Villa, Magherafelt (028 7930 1459)

May 26 Sat Morning in Magherafelt
 3pm Wedding at Beechwood. Down Royal House (028 9262 2179)

May 27 Sun Breakfast with Christine. 11.⁴0am Titanic?
 2pm BBQ at Beechwood Fitzwilliam Hotel in Belfast

May 28 Mon PRONI (9am-4.45pm) Elizabeth Davis?
 Fitzwilliam Hotel in Belfast

May 29 Tues Fly BE125 BHD-GLA 7.15-8.00 then BE6822 GLA-SYY 10.50-11.55
 12noon Carhire-Hebrides. Drive to Leverburgh.
 Stones of Callanish, Carloway Broch?
 Carminish B&B (018 59 520400)

May 30 Wed Trip to St.Kilda. SeaHarris Order #746. Carminish B&B

tel: 01859502007

mob: 07760216555

May 31 Thurs Trip to St.Kilda. SeaHarris Order #746. B&B - Stornoway?

June 1 Fri Drive to Stornoway?
 Fly BE6952 SYY-INV 12.00-12.40 then BE332 INV-BHD 14.25-15.25
 Rental Car at BHD (Hertz F45522283C5)
 Colin's Birthday

June 2 Sat

June 3 Sun

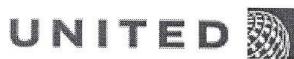
June 4 Mon Fly BFS-EWR. Lv 11.15am on UA95. Arr. EWR 1.50pm
 Either EWR-NHV 4.58pm-7.10pm or connecting PennStation-NHV 3.30-5.06pm

eTicket Itinerary and Receipt for Confirmation HJJSP

United Airlines, Inc. [unitedairlines@united.com]

Sent: Wednesday, April 11, 2012 2:46 PM

To: Brennen, Christopher E



A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

Confirmation:

HJJSP

[Check-In >](#)

Issue Date: April 11, 2012

Traveler	eTicket Number	Frequent Flyer	Seats
BRENNEN/CEMR	0162324140484	UA-DFB8XXXX	22C/25D

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Day, Date	Flight	Class	Departure City and Time	Arrival City and Time	Aircraft	Meal
Thu, 24MAY12	UA94 ¹ W	NEWARK, NJ (EWR - LIBERTY) 9:25 PM	BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND (BFS) 9:00 AM (25MAY)	757-200	Dinner	
Mon, 04JUN12	UA95 ² W	BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND (BFS) 11:15 AM	NEWARK, NJ (EWR - LIBERTY) 1:50 PM	757-200	Lunch	

¹ Flight operated by UNITED AIRLINES.² Flight operated by UNITED AIRLINES.**FARE INFORMATION**

Fare Breakdown

		Form of Payment:
Airfare:	505.00 USD	VISA
U.S. Customs User Fee:	5.50	Last Four Digits
U.S. Immigration User Fee:	7.00	2303
U.S. APHIS User Fee:	5.00	
U.S. Federal Transportation Tax:	33.40	
September 11th Security Fee:	2.50	
U.K. Air Passenger Duty:	20.70	
U.K. Passenger Service Charge:	20.70	
Fuel Surcharge:	202.00	
U.S. Passenger Facility Charge:	4.50	
Per Person Total:	806.30 USD	
eTicket Total:	806.30 USD	

The airfare you paid on this itinerary totals: 505.00 USD

The taxes, fees, and surcharges paid total: 301.30 USD

Fare Rules: Additional charges may apply for changes in addition to any fare rules listed.

NONREF/0VALUAFDPT/CHGFE

Cancel reservations before the scheduled departure time or TICKET HAS NO

Re: Reservation

Laurel Villa Townhouse [info@laurel-villa.com]

Sent: Saturday, April 14, 2012 12:18 PM**To:** Brennen, Christopher E

Hello Christopher,

Thanks for your 2 emails which I received a short time ago within 10 minutes of one another. Good to hear from you. My family moved in here from the Pound Road in late 1961, a couple of years or so after the Forbes left. I remember your mum and dad and of course Paula. My sister and I used to ride up your front avenue and out the back lane onto Station Road. Your mum used to love that.

Anyway, Christopher we definitely have accommodation on Fri. 25 May. The single rate is £60. As regards Saturday 26, we have a Poetry evening taking place here that night and we already have advance bookings for it from the guest poets (Australian and American) etc. There is still a possibly we will have 1 room available for that night, but we may not know until closer to the time.

Let me know what you think.

Eugene Kielt

From: Brennen, Christopher E [mailto:brennen@caltech.edu]**Sent:** 14 April 2012 18:30**To:** info@laurel-villa.com**Subject:** Reservation

I emailed you several days ago but the email may not have been sent.

If possible I would like to reserve a single room for the nights of May 25 and 26. Incidentally, I used to live just a short way down the Castledawson Road - in what is now an old peoples home. In my day your house beloned to a vet named Forbes. I look forward to staying with you.

Chris Brennen



THE TITANIC EXPERIENCE

[Buy Admission Tickets Here](#)

[HOME](#) > [The Titanic Experience](#) > [Visitor Information](#) >
Visitor Information

TICKETS:

Tickets for Titanic Belfast are based on a timed ticketing with slots available every 20 minutes throughout opening times. Last admission is 1 hour before closing time.

The standard admission charges are as follows:

Adult £13.50

Child (5-16) £6.75

Child (under 5) Free

Student/Unemployed £9.50

OAP (60+) (m-f) £9.75

OAP (60+) (s-s) £11.50

Family (2adults + 2 children) £34.00

School/ Education group £5

Group at Door (15+) £12.75

[**Click here to buy your tickets online for a 5% discount.**](#)

Tickets are also available via telephone on T: +44 2890 766399 or in person at the Belfast Welcome Centre, 47 Donegall Place, Belfast, BT1 5AD.

A £1 transaction fee applies to all card transaction

DATES & TIMES OF OPERATION:

April – September

Monday - Saturday: 9am-7pm

Sunday: 10am – 5pm

October – March

10am – 5pm every day

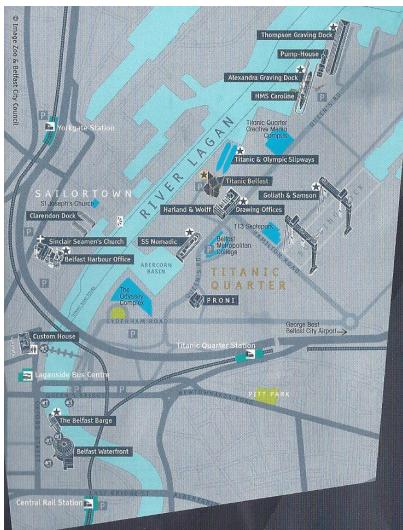
Closed: December 24, 25, 26

EXHIBITION:

Nine galleries employing a variety of interactive media including CGI, film, audio, artefacts and full-scale replicas; a high point being a Shipyard Ride though the Titanic under construction.

AVERAGE VISIT LENGTH:

2-3 hours

**Opening Times**

Summer: April-September, Monday-Saturday 9am-7pm, Sunday 10am-5pm.
Winter: October-March, 10am-5pm every day.

Prices (Online discount 5%)

Adults:	£13.50
Children (5-16):	£6.75
Family (2A+2C):	£34
Senior Citizen:	£9.75 Mon-Fri
Student/ Unemployed:	£9.50
Education:	£5
Group 15+:	£12.75

Tel: +44 (0)28 9076 6399
Email: ticketing@titanicbelfast.com

**Titanic Store**

Inspired by your trip to Titanic Belfast, you'll find lots of unique mementos of your visit in the gift store, alongside contemporary products from across Northern Ireland.

Restaurant & Cafe

Choose from a wide range of hearty menu options in our restaurant featuring the very best of local Northern Irish produce or for a lighter bite, relax in our Cafe and enjoy a range of speciality teas, luxury coffees and local delicacies inspired by RMS Titanic.

Parking and Transport

There are 500 spaces in the basement car park, plus extensive additional parking throughout Titanic Quarter. For information on bus services please go to translink.co.uk or call 028 9066 6630.

Taxi Partner

To travel by taxi call our taxi partner Value Cabs on 028 9080 9080.

Titanic Belfast: Queen's Road, Queen's Island, Belfast BT3 9DT, Northern Ireland

Tel: +44 (0)28 9076 6386

Email: welcome@titanicbelfast.com

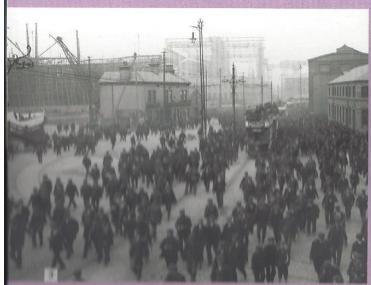
www.titanicbelfast.com



TITANIC BELFAST

THE WORLD'S LARGEST TITANIC VISITOR EXPERIENCE

WWW.TITANICBELFAST.COM



1 TITANIC 1911. Belfast men with unique new sailing gear. Titanic in background. May 1911. Photograph by National Museum Northern Ireland Collection Harland & Wolff. Ulster Folk & Transport Museum



2 TITANIC 1912. Belfast men view a completed Tug in Belfast Harbour with tug. 2nd April 1912. Photograph by National Museum Northern Ireland Collection Harland & Wolff. Ulster Folk & Transport Museum

Titanic: Built In Belfast

It's 1909. You're hanging off the back of a crowded new electric tram, rattling through Belfast...

You could be on your way to an engineering foundry, the world's biggest rope works, linen mill or tobacco factory; Belfast leads the world in each of those industries and more. But you're heading elsewhere in this bustling city, to join over 15,000 workers flocking through the gates of Harland & Wolff, the world's greatest shipbuilders.

In 1907, Harland & Wolff's charismatic chairman Lord Pirrie revealed his dream; to build the largest and most luxurious ships the world had yet seen for shipping giant White Star Line's trans-Atlantic route. From dawn to dusk, six days a week,

riveters, carpenters, welders, shipwrights - the cream of Belfast's craftsmen. Defying danger and hardship, they work with a fierce pride and passion to bring Lord Pirrie's dream to fruition.

The Ship. The Launch. The Opulence.
How can words describe the achievements of these men? Imagine then the sight they beheld as these 'new wonders of the world' took shape before them.

At 175 feet, Titanic will be higher than Nelson's Column. Her 882ft 6ins length is longer than the height of the world's tallest building. Weighing 46,326 tonnes, Titanic will be the largest man-made moveable object the world has yet seen. Following her launch into Belfast Lough on May 31st 1911, the master craftsmen have been busy outfitting

Dock. This floating palace will be the first ship with steam baths, a heated swimming pool, electric escalators and hot and cold water in every cabin. It will also have a state-of-the-art gym, squash courts and a lounge and ballrooms inspired by Versailles.

On April 2nd 1912 over 100,000 people lined Belfast Dock to cheer her off. Their pride still radiates today. "She was alright when she left Belfast!"

Titanic Fact

The cost of a first class (parlour suite) ticket was £870 or 4,350 US dollars. That's nearly 70,000 US dollars today!

- 1 Shipping heritage at Sinclair Seamen's Presbyterian church
- 2 Titanic memorial, Belfast City Hall
- 3 The workers leaving H&W shipyard

THE *fitzwilliam* HOTEL
belfast

Mr Christopher Brennen

DEPOSIT RECEIPT # 124198 07.05.12 @ 18:13			
Date Received	Payment Method / Comments		Amount
07.05.12	Paid By:	Deposit Visa	£ 172.00
	Arrival	Departure	Confirmation #
	27.05.12	29.05.12	9656160

For any changes or cancellations please contact the Reservations Office

Guest Signature

Cashier No. 120



GREAT VICTORIA STREET BELFAST NORTHERN IRELAND BT2 7BQ
TELEPHONE + 44 (0)28 9044 2080 FACSIMILE + 44 (0)28 9044 2090
enq@fitzwilliamhotelbelfast.com www.fitzwilliamhotelbelfast.com
VAT Number 919665383. Company Registration Number NI 062278



The Fitzwilliam Hotel Belfast for arrival date 27.05.12 Confirmation letter 9656160

enq@fitzwilliamhotelbelfast.com

Sent: Monday, May 07, 2012 7:12 AM

To: Brennen, Christopher E

Attachments: uk_conf_email_bfsfh_9679545.pdf (38 KB)

Dear Mr Brennen,

Thank you for booking the Fitzwilliam Hotel Belfast for arrival on Sunday 27.05.12.

We have all the details we need to take excellent care of you in true Fitzwilliam Hotel style.

You will find your confirmation letter attached to this email.

If you have stayed here before, or you have visited our sister hotel in Dublin, you know you are in very good hands.

If this is your first time to stay with us, you are in for a treat: This is a really great hotel, full of little extra touches and topped with excellent service and a wonderful bar and restaurant (where we recommend you eat at least once during your stay).

You could not have chosen a hotel with a better location: We are right in the very centre of Belfast, on the "Golden Mile", close to many places of interest, great shops and a stone's throw from the heart of Belfast's business district. We're also proud to have the glorious Grand Opera House as our next-door neighbour.

Should you require any further assistance before you arrive please do not hesitate to contact me or call our dedicated Reservations Department on +44 (0)28 9044 2080.

Kind regards,
Collette McElduff
Reservations Department
THE fitzWILLIAM HOTEL
1-3 Great Victoria Street,
Belfast,
Northern Ireland. BT2 7BQ
T: +44 (0)28 9044 2080
F: +44 (0)28 9044 2090
E: enq@fitzwilliamhotelbelfast.com
W: www.fitzwilliamhotelbelfast.com



A New Higher Standard Of Bed And Breakfast For Lisburn.

FREE Wi Fi

FREE Use PC and printer

FREE Car Parking

Disabled Bedroom

CCTV 24 HOURS

Tea/Coffee In Rooms

Come See What Lisburn Has To Offer

When would you like to stay?

Check-in Date

14 April '12

Check-out Date

15 April '12

[Check availability](#)

Powered by Booking.com

Welcome to Down Royal Bed and Breakfast LISBURN

Just five minutes drive from the Down Royal Racecourse near Lisburn, Northern Ireland, our B&B offers luxury accommodation for a one-night visit to a week-long break.

The luxury bed and breakfast has ten rooms including seven double beds, two twins and one single and have ensuite bathrooms and luxury showers. You will be spoiled for choice when it comes to local attractions: have a flurry at the world famous Down Royal Racecourse, tee off from some of the best golf courses in the United Kingdom and Ireland, go shopping in nearby Lisburn or Belfast City or enjoy some beautiful scenery and wonderful walks in the Mourne Mountains.

For directions and how to find us visit our 'Find Us' page and go here for latest price information.

We hope you enjoy your stay at our Lisburn guest house and we would love to hear your comments. Read some of our guests' comments so far and contact us to let us know of your experiences.



I have never stayed in such a friendly and happy environment before and would have no hesitation in recommending you Brenda, Surrey

[More Guest Comments >>](#)

Down Royal Bed & Breakfast Facilities

- 10 rooms - 7 double, 2 twin, 1 single
- Ensuite with luxury shower
- Free Wireless broadband & PC
- Disabled access
- Spacious parking at side and rear
- Flat panel TV in every room



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 >

© Down Royal House B&B

Tel: 028 9262 2179

Email: info@downroyalhouse.com



B&B Contact Us Find Us Attractions Prices Terms Site Map

Bed and Breakfast - Hotel Lisburn - Guest House Maze, Lisburn, County Down, Northern Ireland

Down Royal House

TripAdvisor Traveller Rating:



Wedding of Karen Mills and Ian Walker

Confirmation of your Flybe flight(s)

Flybe - Do not reply. [DO_NOT_REPLY@bookings.flybe.com]

Sent: Wednesday, April 11, 2012 3:43 PM

To: Brennen, Christopher E

 Flybe**Flight booking: Confirmation**

Your flight booking reference: E863EP

 Print

		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>				
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Full Booking Details**BOOKING REFERENCE: E863EP**

Date	Flight No	Route	Depart	Arrive	
Tue 29 May 2012 <u>Economy</u>	BE125	Belfast City to Glasgow Intl.	07:15	08:00	Operated by Flybe
Tue 29 May 2012 <u>Economy</u>	BE6822	Glasgow Intl. to Stornoway	10:50	11:55	Operated by Loganair
Fri 01 Jun 2012 <u>Economy</u>	BE6952	Stornoway to Inverness	12:00	12:40	Operated by Loganair

11 BE332 INVERNESS - Belfast City 14.25 - 15.25

Carhire Hebrides Limited Terminal Building Stornoway Airport Stornoway Isle of Lewis HS20BN VAT No.: GB 110 3309 79 Tel. No.: 01851706500 Fax. No.: Email: info@carhire-hebrides.co.uk																			
			Rental Agreement 2177 Vehicle Reg. No. SY12NMX <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Make CITROEN</td> <td>Model C1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Group A</td> <td>Charge A</td> <td>Booking Ref #571</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Spare N</td> <td>Tools N</td> <td>Radio N</td> <td>Other N</td> </tr> </table> Identification Delivery: Collection :			Make CITROEN	Model C1	Group A	Charge A	Booking Ref #571	Spare N	Tools N	Radio N	Other N					
Make CITROEN	Model C1																		
Group A	Charge A	Booking Ref #571																	
Spare N	Tools N	Radio N	Other N																
Hirer/Account Driving Lic. No. A0587158 Categories B,B1 Issued No. Hirer's Name/ Contact MR. CHRISTOPHER BRENNEN Billing/ HO Address 348 S ORANGE GROVE PASADENA CA CA CALIFORNIA CA 91105			Co Reg. No.: D.O.B. 03/12/1941 Issued By CALIFORN Test Date 01/06/1969 Expiry 03/12/2015 Occupation RETIRED HIRE A SAFE JOURNEY HIRER ACCEPTS FULL LIABILITY FOR ANY OVERHEAD DAMAGE																
Licence Address 348 S ORANGE GROVE PASADENA CA CA CALIFORNIA CA 91105		Contact Address 348 S ORANGE GROVE PASADENA CA CA CALIFORNIA CA 91105 Tel. No.: 0 Fax. No.: Mobile No.:		Damage Out : Full Recovery Details Tel.: Mem No.:															
Credit Card Details Type: VISA Card No.: Exp. Date: -- Card Name:		Memo		Return Location Site: Carhire Hebrides Stornoway Date Time Miles Charge From 29/05/2012 12:00 Charge To 01/06/2012 10:00 Due Back 01/06/2012 10:00 Actual Pickup 29/05/2012 11:52 0 Actual Return															
Additional Drivers Name : Lic. No.: Issued By: Exp. Date:		DOB: Cat:		Payments VISA #3221 29/05/2012 £133.20 Payment															
Insurance Details Do you wish the Lessor to insure the vehicle? Have you had any proposals declined, a policy cancelled or renewal refused or been required to pay an increased premium or had special conditions imposed by any motor insurer? Have you any physical or mental defect or infirmity or suffered from diabetes, fits or any heart complaint? Do you have any current convictions for any motoring offence (except parking)? If YES see panel below.		Yes Insurance Declaration I the undersigned agree to pay the insurance excess cost of £200.00 in the event of any damage or theft claim on the vehicle, or any third party claim made against our insurance policy. No Signature of Hirer : _____		No Hirers Insurance Company :- No Policy No :- Expiry Date: Signature of Hirer : _____															
Do you wish to add any motoring accident details that have occurred in the last 3 years? If YES see panel below.		No Uauthorised Drive Declaration Any vehicle hired under this agreement may only be driven by authorised drivers, who have been approved by the lessor. I understand that should I breach these terms an additional rental charge will be levied. (This extra charge will not offer any insurance cover, and the hirer & driver will remain responsible for any losses incurred by the lessor or any third party) Signature of Hirer:		Charges <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Description</td> <td>Total</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rental (3 x Days @ £32.00)</td> <td>£96.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collision Dam. Wav. (3 x Days @ £5.00)</td> <td>£15.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Charges</td> <td>£111.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>V.A.T. @ 20 %</td> <td>£22.20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>£133.20</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Max 8 charge items shown</td> </tr> </table>		Description	Total	Rental (3 x Days @ £32.00)	£96.00	Collision Dam. Wav. (3 x Days @ £5.00)	£15.00	Total Charges	£111.00	V.A.T. @ 20 %	£22.20	TOTAL	£133.20	Max 8 charge items shown	
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TOTAL	£133.20																		
Max 8 charge items shown																			
I declare that the information in this proposal is to the best of my knowledge and belief correct and complete in every detail and that no information has been withheld which might influence the acceptance of this proposal which with this declaration shall form the basis of the contract of insurance. Signature _____ Print Name: _____																			
Liability Statement I hereby acknowledge that during the currency of the hiring agreement I shall be liable as the owner of the vehicle let to me thereunder in respect of: a.) Any fixed penalty offence or contravention in respect of that vehicle under part III or section 66 of Road Traffic Act 1988 including congestion charging and b.) Any excess parking charge which may be incurred in respect of that vehicle in pursuance of an Order under section 45 and/ or 46 of the Road Regulation Traffic Act 1994 (as amended). c.) Any penalty charge incurred under the Road Traffic Act 2004. I also acknowledge that this liability shall extend to any other vehicle let to me under the same hiring agreement and to any period by which the original period of hiring may be extended. I hereby agree to hire the above vehicle on the terms & conditions set out herein & overleaf and confirm that if payment hereunder is to be made by credit or charge card my signature below shall constitute authority to debit my nominated credit or charge card company with the total due amount plus any administration charges, extensions or additional charges resulting from this rental. Signature Hirer _____ Signature Lessor _____ Date _____																			
I understand the Operators Licence requirements and agree that the vehicle is not to be used for commercial purposes for which an Operator's Licence would need to be held. I agree that if the vehicle is detained by the vehicle inspectorate for illegal use that I will be responsible for any charges incurred in restoring the vehicle, and any loss of income incurred by the rental company. Operator's Licence Yes / No Operator's Licence No: _____ Checked: _____																			

29/05/2012 11:53:14

***** THIS VEHICLE IS UNLEADED *****

v4.41

Re: Car Hire Hebrides Enquiry from Website

Car Hire Hebrides [info@carhire-hebrides.co.uk]

Sent: Thursday, April 12, 2012 4:36 AM

To: Brennen, Christopher E

Dear Christopher,

Thank you for your rental enquiry, I have a Citroen C1 available for these dates. The cost including VAT would be £115.20.

You also have the option of our Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) which is explained in our terms and conditions. The total cost including CDW and VAT would be £133.20.

If you wish to make the booking I will need a credit card number to secure the booking, however we will not take any payment from your card until the vehicle is collected. Should you wish to proceed then the safest way to give these details is to call our office on 01851 706500.

If you have not looked through our terms and conditions then I attach a link to them.

<http://www.carhire-hebrides.co.uk/terms.html>

If you have any further questions then please get in touch.

Regards,

Donald

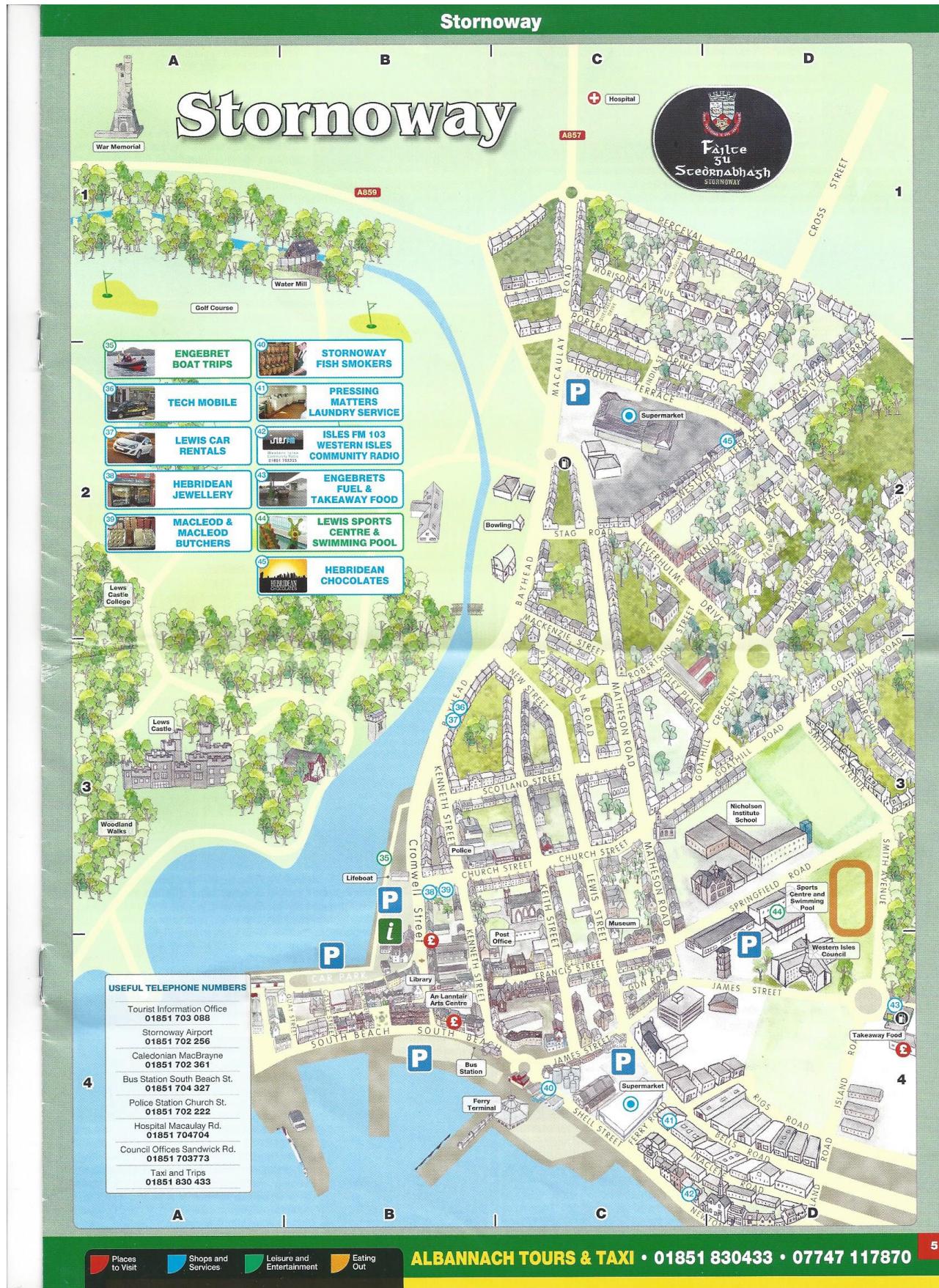
Car Hire Hebrides Ltd
Stornoway Airport
Isle of Lewis
HS2 0BN

Web: www.carhire-hebrides.co.uk
Email: info@carhire-hebrides.co.uk
Tel: 01851 706500

From: [Christopher Brennen](#)
Sent: Thursday, April 12, 2012 12:21 PM
To: info@carhire-hebrides.co.uk
Subject: Car Hire Hebrides Enquiry from Website

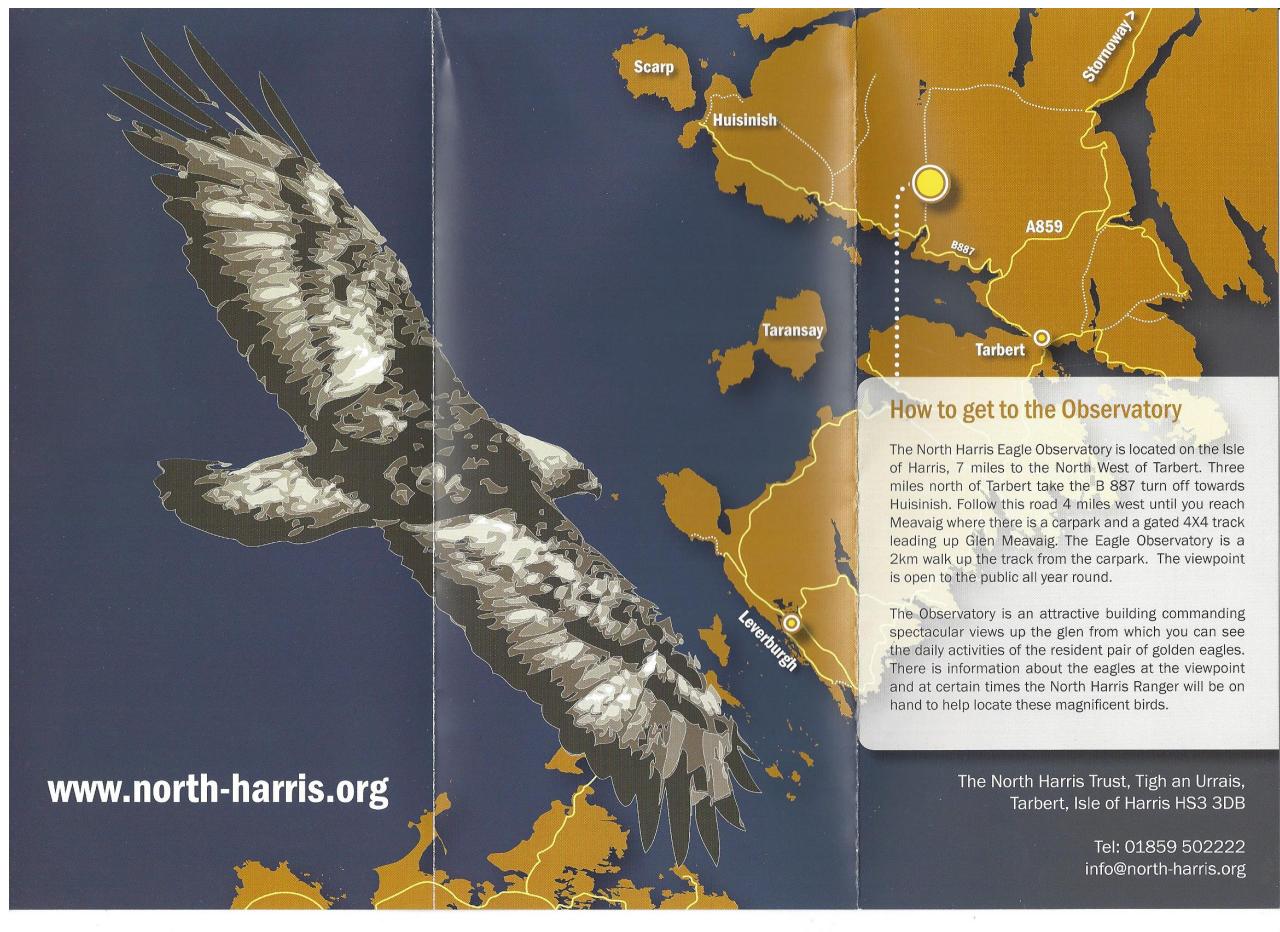
Name*: Christopher Brennen
Email*: brennen@caltech.edu
Phone*: 16266881381
Subject: Group A (eg Citroen C1)
Collection Date: 29/05/2012

Stornoway



Isle of Lewis





Stones at Callanish



Carloway Broch



South Harris coast



St. Clements Church, Rodel

W: Carminish House Booking Enquiry

Peter Prince [pv.prince100@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, April 12, 2012 3:53 AM

To: Brennen, Christopher E

From: Peter Prince [mailto:pv.prince100@gmail.com]**Sent:** 12 April 2012 11:52**To:** brennan@caltech.edu**Subject:** Carminish House Booking Enquiry

Dear Christopher

Thank you for your booking enquiry. Your provisional reservation is as follows:

Type of Room	Twin Bedded (Lapwing) for single occupancy
Number of People	1
Number of Nights	2
Date of Arrival	Tuesday 29 th May 2012
Date of Departure	Thursday 31 st May 2012
Cost	£55.00 per room for single occupancy per night inclusive of breakfast.

A deposit of £30.00 is required to confirm your reservation please. Sorry but we are unable to take credit/debit cards, for overseas visitors, deposits can be made by bank transfer by providing your bank with the following details:

Bank of Scotland, Glasgow

Swift Code :- BOFSGB2S (also known as BIC code)

Beneficiary account name : Carminish House 

IBAN number :- GB46 BOFS 8022 6010 0574 61

Please let us know should you encounter any problem with completing a bank transfer.

An email will be sent to confirm receipt of deposit.

We look forward to welcoming you to Carminish House.

Kind Regards

Pete and Val Prince

Carminish House

1A Strond

Leverburgh

Isle of Harris

HS5 3UD

Tel +44 (0)1859 520400

CARMINISH HOUSE

Bed and Breakfast

Receipt

Guest Name Christopher Brennen

Date: 29th May 2012

Invoice No:

Qty	Item	Description	Unit Price	Line Total
2	Night B&B	29th & 30th May 2012 Double Occupancy Lapwing	£55.00	£110.00

Paid with thanks

Valerie



Thank you for staying at Carminish House

1A Strond
Leverburgh
Isle of Harris
Scotland
HS5 3UD

e mail :- info@carminish.com
Tel: +44 (0)1859 520400
Mob: +44 (0)7708660670

Total £110.00

Re: Sea Harris Cruise Enquiry

Seumas [seumas@seaharris.co.uk]

Sent: Wednesday, April 11, 2012 2:42 AM

To: Brennen, Christopher E

Hi Christopher

Thank you for your provisional booking for a trip to St.Kilda for the two day window of 30/31 May for 1 adult. The price of a St.Kilda trip is £170 per adult, bookings are held on a provisional basis for up to 10 days, to confirm the reservation a deposit of £70 per adult is required, with the remainder to be paid on the day of the trip.

Please click on the link below, or copy and paste into your browser, to take you to my Realex Secure Payment Site, select the number of adults in your booking and continue with the payment.

[http://www.seaharris.co.uk/payments/index.php?
route=product/product&keyword=p&category_id=0&product_id=54](http://www.seaharris.co.uk/payments/index.php?route=product/product&keyword=p&category_id=0&product_id=54)

For accommodation please visit the 'links' page of my website, Tarbert is the 'capital' of Harris and has more bed spaces and places to eat/drink and is around 35 minutes drive from Leverburgh, which itself has quite a few accommodation providers (try Taylor Hill) and also has the very popular Anchorage Restaurant beside the pier, or Rodel Hotel 3 miles from there, so you wouldn't be stuck for somewhere to eat and would give you a bit more time in bed on the day of the trip.

As mobile reception in areas of Harris can be fickle; please advise me of any contact numbers and your accommodation provider (if and when known) so that I can advise you as far in advance as possible as to which of the two day window will provide the best weather for the trip.

Regards
Seumas Morrison
www.seaharris.co.uk

On 10/04/2012 20:38, Brennen, Christopher E wrote:

Seumas:

Thank you for your reply. I would like to make a reservation for the day trip to St.Kilda for one adult (myself) for the two-day window 30/31 May. If that is still open, can I pay the deposit by credit card? Please let me know what you need.

Can you also suggest where I might stay on the nights of May 29 and May 30? Any suggestions would be

valuable. I intend to fly to Stornoway on May 29, to rent a car and drive to Leverburgh.

Christopher Brennen



Enchanted Isle

The MV Enchanted Isle is an Interceptor 42. She was built specifically for transporting up to 12 passengers from the Isle of Harris out to St Kilda.

Her general arrangement has been designed to allow for the maximum seating in the main cabin with new "aircraft style" seating recently fitted which vastly improves passenger comfort. She has full galley and toilet facilities and a large flush aft deck with outside seating, allowing plenty of vantage points for all the passengers.

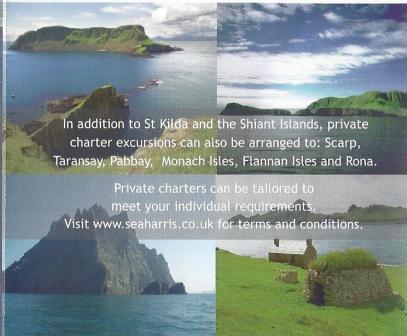


Enchanted Isle has a fast cruising speed of 18 Knots and a top speed of 29 Knots.

The vessel is coded to MCA category 2 and as such, carries a full complement of safety equipment and life-saving appliances.



See More, Sea Harris ...



CONTACT

Seumas Morrison

T 01859 502007 M 07760 216 555

E seumas@seaharris.co.uk

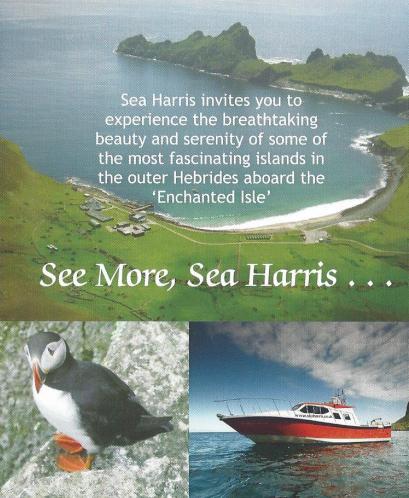
Se Harris, East Tarbert, Isle of Harris, HS3 3DB

www.seaharris.co.uk

You've come this far ...



BOAT TRIPS TO ST KILDA, SHIANTS AND OTHER ISLANDS



Sea Harris invites you to experience the breathtaking beauty and serenity of some of the most fascinating islands in the outer Hebrides aboard the 'Enchanted Isle'

See More, Sea Harris ...



Sea Harris offers scheduled day excursions to St. Kilda and the Shiant Islands as well as providing private charters to many small islands accessible from the Isle of Harris.

With the St.Kilda excursions departing from Leverburgh in South Harris at 8am and returning at 7.30pm and the Shiant excursions departing from Tarbert in North Harris at 10am and returning at 4pm, our scheduled island visits are accessible to anyone visiting Lewis and Harris during the summer months. Booking is essential.

Parts of these islands are exposed and as a consequence passengers who book an excursion are strongly advised to dress appropriately. Warm, waterproof clothing is essential as is sturdy footwear.

Children are welcome to travel with Sea Harris, provided they are accompanied by an adult.

Due to the ecological fragility of these islands, there are strictly no pets allowed.

Sea Harris Wildlife

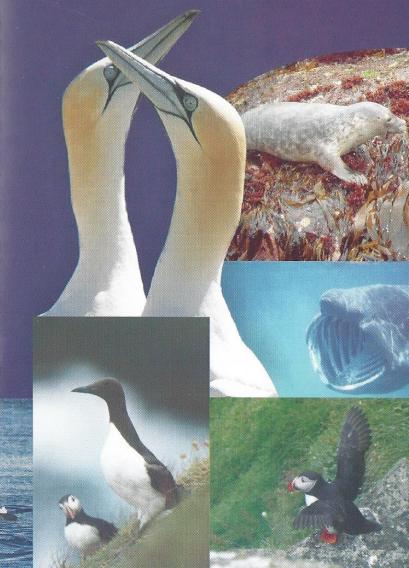
One of the most fascinating aspects of the islands of the Outer Hebrides is the way in which man and nature continue to co-habit and thrive. An excursion to these captivating and alluring islands presents the perfect opportunity to observe the way in which the beautiful creatures of the sky, the sea and land exist in their natural and undisturbed environment.

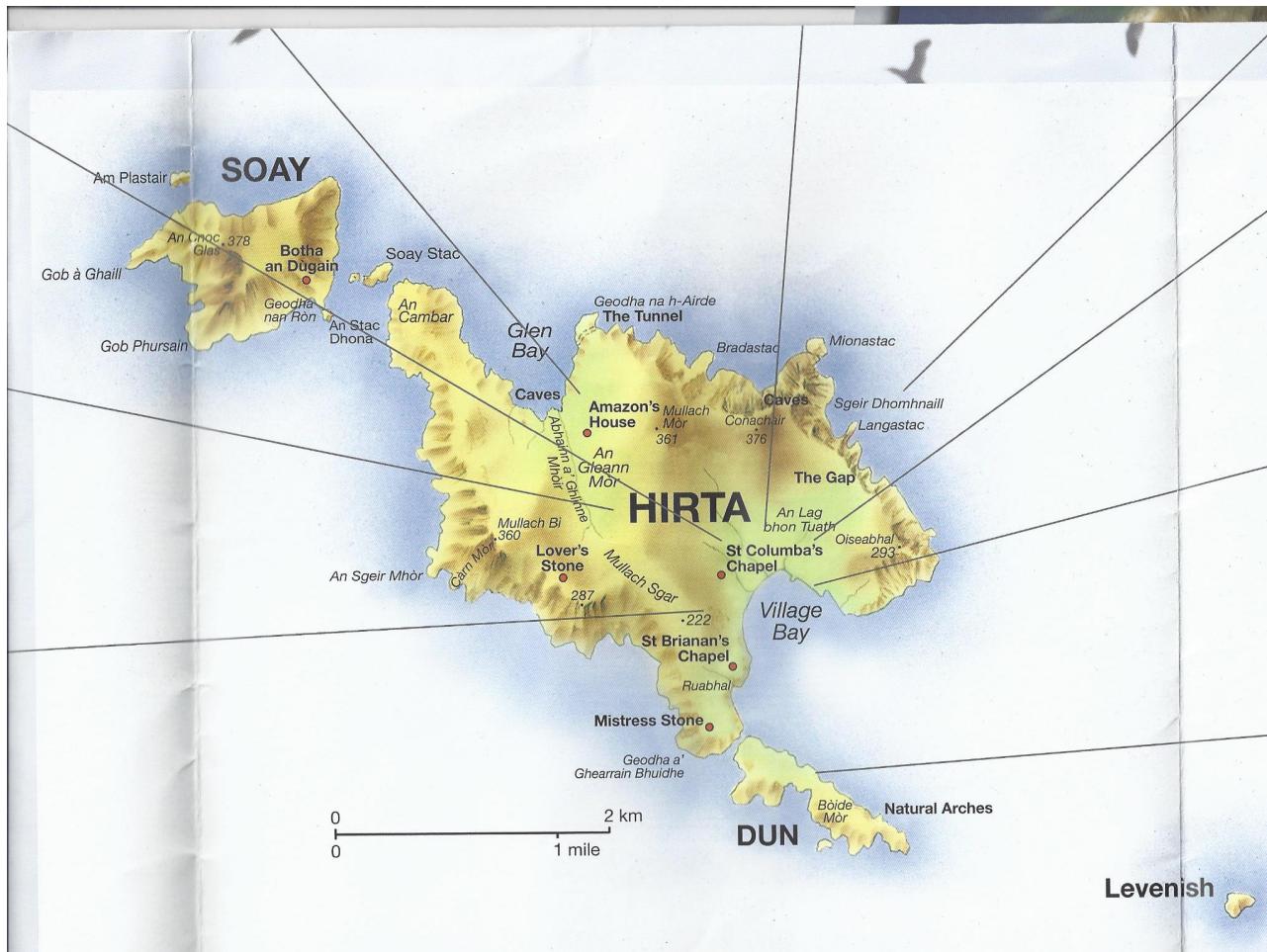
For anyone with an interest in nature, ecology and preservation, rare wildlife, and in particular, bird watching, a trip to the islands that Sea Harris specialise in is a must. The opportunity to visit and witness some of these magnificent and rare creatures and other such natural delights is one that cannot be missed, and will not easily be forgotten.

There is a huge and diverse range of wildlife living in and around these coastal waters. A day excursion is the perfect way to combine the relaxing but

exhilarating experience of a boat trip with observing some of the very best that nature has to offer.

The excursions offered by Sea Harris are a perfect means to watch all this wildlife in action. It will be all around you - all it will take is an eager eye and a second to stop, forget everything else and enjoy something that is really quite magical.





98 Obituary

The Economist October 19th 2013



Norman John Gillies

Norman John Gillies, the last voice of St Kilda, died on September 29th, aged 88

PLUMPED on his mother's lap, a woolen cap on his head, he looked as well set up as any child in Britain. It was the other elements in the photograph that cast doubt. The face of his grandmother, Annie Gillies, was tanned dark by sheer exposure to howling winds and seas and, in summer, a pitiless sun untempered by the shade of a single tree. The box she carried was perhaps full of gannets' eggs, and the lumpy sack would hold a dead seabird or two for dinner. Both women wore shawls of hand-woven wool to keep their hair in order. When not burdened with bundles, or babies, both would have been working at a spinning wheel to make yarn for the tweed that they bartered with the laird on the mainland. Within four years, however, the smiling young mother would be dead of appendicitis that was flagged up too late to one of the few boats that passed. And within five years, in 1930, everyone on the island would have decided that life on St Kilda, 110 miles out in the Atlantic off the Scottish coast, was too hard for them.

The St Kilda memories of Norman John Gillies, the baby, were as fragmentary as those of any small child. They became precious because, by his 80s, he was the only person who shared them. The only other surviving St Kildan, of the 36 hardy souls who were at last evacuated by the British

government, was an older relative in a Clydebank nursing home, who no longer spoke of the place. It was left to the energetic, cheerful Mr Gillies to call this archipelago of thousand-foot peaks, cliffs and bird-crammed stacs his "little homeland", and to call Cottage No. 10, in the semicircle of 16 tiny houses on the only street on Hirta, the main island, his home. The open turf and rocks clustered under looming Conachair had been his place of joy and play. On his rare visits back he would make for his house as eager as a barefoot boy.

There he remembered his mother cooking scones, oatcakes and puffins over an open fire. Puffins were a staple, though he did not remember exactly how they tasted. He was too young to have been taught to scale the beetling, perilous cliffs to snare them, or to catch the gannets and fulmars on which the islanders also lived. He recalled, though, the huge heap of birds that was brought back and dumped by the jetty, for everything was shared equally. The basic economy of St Kilda, hunting, gathering and sharing, had not changed since the Bronze Age. Nor had its government, which consisted of a morning meeting of the menfolk out of doors to decide what needed to be done. On a photograph from 1927 of a dozen wool-clad, tam o'shantered, roughly bearded men, Mr Gillies

would point out his grandfather and great-grandfather. They might have been snipped in the mid-19th century.

He had been lucky to survive infancy. Many babies died of infantile tetanus, caused by treating the umbilical stump with prized but infected fulmar oil. Lack of medical care, and falling numbers, were two reasons why life on St Kilda became unsustainable. Another was the disruption to work, and general gloom, introduced by the Free Church of Scotland when the island was "converted" from its pagan ways. Much of the Sabbath was spent in the bare, unheated church. Of this Mr Gillies remembered only squirming in the pew and being pulled back by his mother from the aisle. He recalled, too, learning his first hymn from the island's medical officer, Nurse Barclay, as she dressed the burns he had got from red-hot ash from the open peat fire in their house. It was Nurse Barclay, unknown to him, who persuaded the islanders to leave.

The strangeness of trees

That leaving, on *HMS Harebell* on August 29th, was not especially sad for him. He was more interested in racing round the boat and, when he landed in Morvern in Argyll to find an extraordinary crowd of people, he was more intrigued to see his first tree and ride in his first motor car. The adult St Kildans had great difficulty settling, living apart from each other, and getting used to money; his grandmother Ann, like many of the old folk, still knitted gloves and socks and bartered them for haircuts. But Norman John, like many of the young, thrived in his new setting, did quite well at school, worked for the Forestry Commission, joined the navy in the war, married a girl from Suffolk and, in middle age, settled to a contented English suburban life as the manager of a builder's merchants near Ipswich. The only obvious clue to his different life was his Western Isles accent, ever softer, and the name of his lawned and red-brick house, "St Kilda".

As he grew older, and interest in St Kilda revived, interviewers tried to rifle his memories more and more often. But those, too, were fading. Only three seemed to remain as vivid as the rare, precious photographs. The first was of his mother, wrapped in her shawl, standing on the walled bank outside their house and shouting "Tormod Iain [his Gaelic name], come home to dinner!" The second was of his mother again, her shawl over her head, waving to him from the rowing boat that took her away to hospital in the February of 1930, never to return. And the third was of the old St Kildan women, standing in the stern of the *Harebell*, "waving to the island" as to a living person, as they all left. And so St Kilda, hearth and home, disappeared into the grey Atlantic swell. ■

From "Leaving St. Kilda" in "The Far Side of the Sky":

Out in the bleak North Atlantic, more than "forty miles from sweet bugger all" (viz. the Outer Hebrides of Scotland), there rises from the waves a tiny, cliff-ringed island whose dramatic scenery can only be matched by the remarkable and tragic story of its long-isolated people. That island was called Hirta by its residents though it is labelled on the map by the anglicized name, St.Kilda. Only a mile and a half across, this tiny island is nevertheless much larger than the nearby sea-stacks, some of which

tower vertically over 1400 feet above the waves. No-one knows how and when the people got to this remote island in the first place though the archeological evidence indicates that they were there before the birth of Christ. The language they spoke right up until the end was a strange, archaic form of Scotch/Irish gaelic. The Vikings visited, of course, and left their mark as well as some DNA and the names of a few natural features. The island does appear on some ancient maps. But nothing was really documented until Donald Monro, the archdeacon of the western islands of Scotland, visited his islands in 1549 and penned a brief description of each, including a paragraph on Hirta. Monro wrote that the inhabitants were "*simple creatures*" and that their produce was "*corn and girsing, namely for scheip*". He remarked that "... the seas are stark and verie evill entering in ony of the saids Iles." But the first detailed account of the island and its people was written by a doctor by the name of Martin Martin who visited Hirta in 1695 and penned an extensive report entitled "A description of the western islands of Scotland circa 1695" (currently available in paperback from Birlinn Ltd. of Edinburgh).

Remarkably, the people of Hirta, no more than about 180 in number at any time, found a way to survive on this treeless, storm-swept speck of 1700 acres in the north Atlantic. They lived inside a protected, south-facing bay (location 57° 48' 47.83" N, 8° 34' 6.65" W) surrounded by mountains whose other sides are huge vertical cliffs dropping straight down to the waves. The bay is part of an ancient volcanic crater. Prior to about 1840, the homes they built consisted of a line of stacked-stone houses with peat/thatch roofs, ranged in a circular arc a short distance above the shoreline of the bay. In 1836-38 a kind benefactor provided the means to construct a row of small but roomier cottages along the same crescent that the islanders knew as Main Street. The empty remains of these cottages (some reconstructed for use by the National Trust) as well as a number of the cruder, earlier homes now line Main Street, a somber reminder of the tenuousness of the human experience. The place has the reverence of a graveyard (there is, in fact, a small burying ground in a stone-walled enclosure behind the row of houses) and one feels the same need to tread quietly out of respect for the community that lived and died here. Because of this the nearby military base seems like a gross and thoughtless intrusion. During its lifetime Main Street was the center of St. Kildan life; each morning the menfolk would gather there to decide on the community work to be done that day (some have described this meeting as the St. Kildan "Parliament"). There the birding expeditions to the cliffs and sea stacks would be planned; and there the final exodus was decided upon.



Village Bay on Hirta



Main Street



Main Street



Main Street Parliament

(Photo by G.W.Wilson)



Cleit on the way to the Gap



Women of Hirta

(Photo by G.W.Wilson)

The St.Kildans were a brave and hardy people with their own culture that included a strong tradition of communal sharing combined with a necessary spirit of collective but calculated risk. That risk included the danger of living off the produce from the cliffs that surrounded them, cliffs that they learned to negotiate at a very young age. When he reached manhood and had found a prospective partner among the few available, a young St. Kildan man was required to prove his courage and his potential as a provider at the so-called "Mistress Stone". This natural feature on the cliffs of the Ruaival peninsula south and west of the village consisted of a dramatic doorway in the rock at the cliff-top with a vertical 400ft drop to the ocean below. In the words of Martin Martin who was challenged to perform this traditional feat of bravado, "... upon the lintel of this door, every bachelor-wooer is by an ancient custom obliged in honour to give a specimen of his affection for the love of his mistress, and it is thus; he is to stand on his left foot, having the one half of his sole over the rock, and then he draws the right foot further out to the left, and in this posture bowing, he puts both his fists further out to the right foot; and then after he has performed this, he has acquired no small reputation, being always after it accounted worthy of the finest mistress in the world ..." No doubt this rite-of-passage steeled the young man for his duties gathering food on the cliffs of Hirta, Stac Lee and Stac-an-Armin.



Mistress Stone

(Photo by Alex Walker)

A young St.Kildan might also be dared to traverse the dramatic sea-tunnel through the headland on the north side of Hirta. To get to this remarkable natural feature he would have to hike over the 700ft saddle above the village in order to drop into Gleann More, the other main valley on the island. Passing the House of the Amazon, he would have veered to the right in order to access the relatively flat top of the Gob na h-Airde peninsula on the north side of Glen Bay. Proceeding to the cliffs at the very end of this headland he would have noticed a steep path down to his left by which to reach a narrow ledge that leads down to the tunnel entrance and to a sloping rock shelf in the tunnel itself. He might even have been challenged to proceed through the tunnel though the raging seas that dominate the far eastern end may have made the exit impossible.



Tunnel through Gob na h-Airde on Hirta



Western tunnel entrance

(Photos by Bob Jones)

For sustenance the St.Kildans survived by ingenuity and daring. Though they were able with difficulty to grow some potatoes and a few vegetables, to husband a native breed of sheep and to catch a few fish, their primary nutrition came from the huge rookeries of seabirds that populated the island cliffs and nearby sea stacks. They not only gathered the eggs of the gannets and fulmars but also caught and ate the birds themselves. To do so they manufactured ropes and rapelled hundreds of feet down the cliffs of Hirta. Even more spectacularly, they made landing upon and climbed the sea stacks. Of their ropes Martin Martin wrote "*... there are only three on the whole island, each 24 fathoms in length (about 144 ft). They are either knit together and lengthen by tying the one to the other, or used separately as occasion requires; the chief thing upon which the strength of these ropes depends, is cow hides salted, and cut out in one long piece, this they twist round the ordinary rope of hemp, which secures it from being cut by the rocks; they join sometimes at the lower end two ropes, one of which they tie about the middle of one climber, and another about the middle of another, that these may assist one another in case of a fall; but the misfortune is, that sometimes the one happens to pull down the other, and so both fall into the sea; but if they escape (as they do commonly of late) they get an incredible number of eggs and fowls.*" They climbed barefoot and, in doing so since childhood, developed ankles and feet that were adapted for their tasks.



Rappelling for birds at the Gap

(From film by Paul Robello & Bobbie Mann)



Birding haul

(Photo by G.W. Wilson)



Birding expedition on Boreray



Birding on Stac an Armin

Getting the fulmar

St. Kildans birding (1908): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SDVV4Vz2kI&feature=player_detailpage

St. Kilda with birding (1928): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-CpkFgxx2I&feature=player_detailpage

The St.Kildans used every part of the birds they caught. The birds to be eaten, whether gannets (solan geese), fulmars, puffins or other seabirds, were stored in the "cleits" that are sprinkled all over the landscape of Hirta. Cleits were small stone-walled sheds with turf roofs used for the storage of all of the St.Kildan's goods. They had a single entrance on the uphill side and were well vented through the gaps in the stone walls to keep the stores as dry and cold as possible. The feathers of the birds were used for many purposes, in later years to pay tithes to the nominal landowners, the MacLeod of MacLeod. The oil from the fulmars was prized for its restorative powers and for lamp oil. Fulmars also formed the favorite diet of the St.Kildans though a puffin was regarded as a tasty snack. Shoes, though not regularly worn by the St.Kildans, were sometimes fabricated from the necks of gannets.

It is an easy hike up the valley northeast of the village to a saddle called "The Gap" where the land drops 535ft precipitously down into the sea. This was the most convenient birding location on Hirta and was therefore the site of the ropework demonstrations featured in some of the early film included among the internet sites listed above. However this birding location was much less productive than the group of sea stacks that are visible across the ocean some four miles northeast of the Gap. It is a truly awesome experience to approach these sea stacks by boat. The largest, Boreray (the "Fortified Isle"), is a giant wedge-shaped projection, vertical on three sides and very steep (but grass covered) on the fourth; almost a mile long and half a mile wide, it rises to a ridgeline that towers 1243ft above the ocean, as high as the top of the mast on the Empire State building. Yet the St. Kildans would row their wooden longboat over from Hirta on birding expeditions and land on Boreray. During their visits to Boreray over the years they built a "bothy" or shelter for overnight stays as well as a number of cleits in which to temporarily store their harvest of birds. Even more dramatic are the several vertical columns of bare rock separated from Boreray by just a few hundred yards of often-raging ocean. Stac Lee (the "Grey Stack") is perhaps the most impressive; with a sea-level footprint of just 200yds by 100yds. It rises some 545ft to an awesome summit plastered white by gannets, their nests, their eggs and their guano. Stac-an-Armin (the "Warrior's Stack") is slightly larger, rising to a height of 627ft. As you ride the waves around these awesome rocks, it is almost impossible to visualize how the St.Kildans managed to land on these cliffs from their frail longboats. Yet they not only landed using their home-made ropes but somehow managed to climb both these spectacular monoliths. And they not only climbed them (both the men and the women), but carried barrels of eggs and birds down from the summit for transport back to Hirta. Stac Lee is the most impressive climb (Stac-an-Armin has a less precipitous side) but if you look very closely you can spot a series of narrow diagonal ledges that zigzag up the southwest face and allow ascent to the sloping roof of the stack. And if you look even more closely, near the top on the left side, you should be able to spot the entrance to the bothy.



Passing Boreray on the way to Hirta



Stac Lee and Boreray



*Stac Lee**Stac an Armin*

The St.Kildans would launch expeditions of several days to Boreray, Stac Lee and Stac-an-Armin. Normally the boat and crew would row back to Hirta and return to pick them up several days later. For such trips, the birders built small shelters called "bothies" on each of the rocks. The one on Stac Lee, a small, inclined crack high on the southwestern cliff-face, would only hold a couple of men. The one on Stac-an-Armin was a larger, free-standing structure that would hold about a dozen people crammed together for warmth. Indeed, one of the most remarkable stories of human survival occurred on Stac-and-Armin in 1727 and 1728. On Aug.15, 1727, three men and eight boys were ferried over to Stac-an-Armin for a multiple-day birding expedition. However, while they were there a smallpox epidemic broke out in the village as a result of contaminated clothing brought back from the mainland after a St.Kildan died of the disease there. The village was so decimated that the islanders were unable to man a boat to bring the birders back to Hirta. Somehow the eleven survived on the rock by drinking water from a spring, eating birds and eggs and huddling together in the bothy. Eventually, thanks to the efforts of the local land steward on the island, they were miraculously rescued on May 13, 1728, after a nine month stay on Stac-an-Armin. It says something about how the islanders were viewed by their landlords, that none of the names of the survivors were recorded.



Bothy on Stac Lee



Bothy on Stac Lee



Bothy on Stac-an-Armin

(Photo by Philip Storey)

Stac-an-Armin from a boat:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=poG89UHkjU

Climbing Stac Lee: (1) Ascent:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=Ru0XclkE-vU

Climbing Stac Lee: (2) Descent:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=wsTOjMmrkSQ

Stac-an-Armin is remembered for one other, less fortunate event. In July of 1840, the last great auk (or "garefowl") in the British Isles was caught on Stac-an-Armin by three birders. They tied it up and kept it alive for three days before beating it to death with a stick, because they believed it to be a witch. A few years years later, in 1852, the last great auk in the world was killed and the bird became extinct.

For years I had thought to visit this extraordinary place. Finally, on Jun.29, 2012, I caught a plane out of Belfast City Airport and flew by way of Glasgow to Stornoway, the principal airport in the Outer Hebrides. There I collected a little car from the Hebrides Car Rental Company, made my way through the town of Stornoway and out onto the narrow road that runs the length of the connected islands of Lewis and Harris. With most of the day to spare, I detoured to visit the Stones at Calanais, a miniture version of Stonehenge constructed over 4500 years ago, and the Dun Carloway Broch, an Iron Age stone castle with double walls and multiple floors. Whoever occupied these ancient structures they seemed utterly beyond the known compared with the very

real individuals who lived on Hirta. Continuing on through the stone and heather landscape I crossed from Lewis into Harris, drove over the narrow isthmus at Tarbert into South Harris and along the narrowing single-lane road to the tiny port of Leverburgh. There I spent the night at a lovely little bed and breakfast called Carminish House run by Pete and Val Prince; near the southern tip of Harris this has the advantage of being within easy walking distance of both the Leverburgh Pier and the pleasant restaurant called the Anchorage. Bright and early the next morning I joined the small group of about 10 booked on the day trip to St.Kilda with Sea Harris and captain Seamus Morrison. To get to St.Kilda and back in one day requires a high-speed boat like Sea Harris's *MV Enchanted Isle*, an Interceptor 42 with a cruising speed of 18 knots and a high speed of 29 knots. A very similar boat operated by a rival company, St.Kilda Cruises, was moored alongside and the two boats travelled together in a sensible and safer cruising arrangement. On that day, June.30, 2012, we were fortunate with the blue-sky weather and lucky with the relatively calm ocean; in these northern latitudes there are many days when the trip cannot be made because of the dangers involved in landing on Hirta.

Thus began a spectacular and beautiful day visit to the storied archipelago of St.Kilda. Five at a time we were ferried from the *MV Enchanted Isle* to the rough village jetty in an inflated Zodiac and then allowed to wander through the village and up the slopes of Hirta. I climbed to the Gap to enjoy the fantastic view over to Boreray and the sea stacks while gannets, fulmars and skuas swirled overhead. Too soon it was time to leave. We were transported back to the boat and, as the crew made preparations for the return to the mainland, I could not help but look back at the remains of the village. My thoughts were of sadness for both the village and the individuals who lived there. I tried to envisage how the last 36 island residents must have felt as they were ferried to the ship on that morning of Friday, Aug.29, 1930.

A number of factors contributed to the demise of the St.Kildan community. Increasingly over the last two hundred years, contact with the larger world brought both problems and opportunities. The younger and more adventurous saw greater opportunity elsewhere and chose to leave, to seek their fortune in the world beyond the island. Eventually, there were too few young, strong arms and too little vital energy to sustain the island community. Moreover, changing economic conditions on the mainland created unsupportable financial pressures on the island and led to untenable living conditions for the villagers. Their culture and tradition had been based on a barter system and a tradition of sharing obligations and resources and the increasing intrusion of the cash system used in the world beyond further eroded the island economy. The people of St.Kilda were too old and too few in number to adjust to the modern world. Perhaps these commercial realities were inevitable given the huge gulf between the island culture and that of the mainland. But another externally-generated malaise was not unavoidable. In the decade of the 1820s, religious upheavals and zealotry in Scotland led to a dominant over-bearing church that was very destructive to the island community. Rev. John MacDonald arrived in 1822 to minister to the population and preached 13 lengthy sermons during the first 11 days. All the inhabitants were required to attend. Moreover he returned on a regular basis, subjecting the islanders to more of the same. Some years later his successor, Rev. Neil Mackenzie, who arrived on Jul.3, 1830, continued the zealotry. He, at least, is recognized as improving aspects of the islanders living conditions. But the Rev. John Mackay who arrived in 1865 increased the zealotry and gloom. He initiated church practices that were critically detrimental to the island well-being, three-hour-long Sunday sermons at which attendance was obligatory as well as long services on the other days of the week. These impositions made substantial inroads into the time, energy and spirit that the islanders needed for their farming, birding and fishing. They also eliminated the carefree activities that helped strengthen the spirit of the islanders. In short, organized religious zealotry was a cancer that ate away at the St.Kildan community and, along with the changing financial conditions, led to the island's inevitable demise.

But Hirta was still the only home that most of them knew and the only community in which they would ever feel comfortable. Most of them could see that the community conditions had sunk to the point where some radical change was needed. The government was unwilling to provide adequate help so that, in the end, the islanders were persuaded by the resident nurse, Williamina Barclay, that total evacuation was their only option. Of course, this was a fallacy for the government expense that would have allowed these people to remain in their homeland would have been trivial. So the 36 islanders became victims of man's inhumanity to man, victims of an insensitive government resorting to convenience. Very few survived their relocation to the mainland and all suffered unnecessarily.

As the preparations for our departure continued I could not help but reflect on how these 36 souls must have felt as they boarded the ferry boat, the SS Hebrides, that would take them far away to Oban and Glasgow. In the years ahead a few would be allowed to make brief return visits and several were granted their wish to be buried on Hirta. There are moments of grief in all of our lives and in these moments it is hard to grasp the magnitude and direction of changes that are to come upon us. I doubt that the St.Kildans could foresee the consequences of this upheaval in their lives; I had known such moments and had also been unable to envisage the future. I could not help but revisit the feeling that day in Village Bay.

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Last updated 7/30/99.

Christopher E. Brennen