



## Islands on the Edge – UK, Eire & Hebrides

From the south of England to the Hebrides – this is a journey of cultural and natural history delights. For the avid birder there are many opportunities to see large numbers of gannets, fulmars, kittiwakes, cormorants, guillemots and puffins. Almost daily are new archaeological experiences from Bant's Carn to blackhouses. The rugged coast was a challenge for man and nature alike to eke out an existence and shows the adaptability of both man and nature. This expedition cruise takes place in spring – a time of abundance, hope and growth.



### DARTMOUTH TO OBAN

12-night itinerary May 4–16, 2010

**Tue, May 4** (England) Embark in picturesque **Dartmouth**.

**Wed, May 5** (Isles of Scilly) These surprisingly sub tropical islands are located southwest of England's mainland and here you will find the amazing **Abbey Gardens** of Tresco, Iron Age **Halangy Village**, charming island of St. Mary's and Bant's Carn, a Bronze Age village site.

**Thur, May 6** (Ireland) **Skellig Rocks**, a UNESCO site, is a remote formation of pinnacles of rock, home to an abandoned Cliffside beehive monastery and fantastic Gannet colony. From there the ship heads to **Dingle Peninsula** for a tour ashore that provides spectacular views and relics that speak of the Potato Famine, Celtic and early Christian times.

**Fri, May 7** (Ireland) The ship cruises along the **Cliffs of Mohar** in the early morning en route to the Aran Islands. Land at Killronan on **Inishmore**. Dramatic limestone pavements, charming stone walled fields and a Bronze Age fort, **Dun Aengus**, dramatically perched atop a 90 metre cliff are found on this island.

**Sat, May 8** (Ireland) In County Donegal first set off to **Glencolmille** to see examples of rural Irish homes throughout the ages and then back to explore **Killibegs** independently – perhaps the carpet factory or a music session in the local pub.

**Sun, May 9** (Northern Ireland) The **Giant's Causeway** is an interesting formation of basalt rock formed by volcanic activity. The afternoon is spent exploring **Rathlin Island**, known for fantastic bird cliffs and sites of archaeological interest.

**Mon, May 10** (Scotland, Inner Hebrides) Enjoy the morning light in the gardens of **Achamore House** on the island of Gigha. Time on the Isle of Islay is divided between a visit to the **Ardbeg Distillery** – a whisky noted for its "peaty" flavour and a visit to **Kildalton Cross** and Chapel. The cross is a wonderful eighth-century Celtic ringed cross.

**Tue, May 11** (Inner Hebrides) One of the wildest and most mountainous islands of the Inner Hebrides, **Isle of Jura** is home to deer, mountain hare

and eagles. Explore Loch Tarbert featuring intriguing raised beaches and caves. On the **Isle of Colonsay** plan to land in Kiloran Bay to enjoy the miles of sandy beach and a walk to **Colonsay House** whose original owner Malcolm MacNeil made his fortune building the Canadian Pacific Railway. Leaving the island, cruise along the sharp escarpment watching for kittiwakes, cormorants and guillemots.

**Wed, May 12** (Inner Hebrides) With high hopes for a calm day, the visit to **Fingal's Cave on Staffa** could be on foot or by Zodiac. Nearby Iona is home to a grand abbey and burial ground for 62 Scottish Kings. It was the starting place for the spread of early Christianity through northern Europe.

**Thur, May 13** (Inner Hebrides) **Tiree** remains an excellent example of the traditional lifestyle of "crofting" and was once known as the breadbasket of the Inner Hebrides due to its abundant corn crops. "Pudding" or "Spotty" houses as well as white houses (tigh geal) and traditional blackhouses (tigh dubh) can be seen on this island.

**Fri, May 14** (St Kilda) Once described as "the edge of the world" the remote island of St. Kilda has UNESCO World Heritage status for both natural and cultural significance. Inhabited since the Bronze Age, the resourceful St. Kildans lived by harvesting the seabirds in this harsh environment. Blackhouses and other remnants still remain. The St. Kildan archipelago is home of the world's largest northern gannet population (65,000 breeding pairs) as well as St. Kilda wrens, Arctic skuas and Fulmars. Enjoy the afternoon cruise around the sea stacks to see this wildlife spectacle.

**Sat, May 15** (Outer Hebrides) Learn the story and see the real setting of the highly entertaining film "Whisky Galore" at **Eriksay**. Inhabited until 1912, **Mingulay** is now home to an abandoned settlement and impressive sea stacks and cliffs with a multitude of birds.

**Sun, May 16** (Scotland) Having navigated the Sound of Mull through the night, disembark in the charming highland town of **Oban**.

*Please note that this is our planned itinerary – actual execution is subject to weather and scheduling limitations. PSE reserves the right to adjust the itinerary as needed without recourse.*



## Highlands & Islands of Scotland

Continue the exploration of the Hebrides and then cruise around the northern shores of Scotland to Orkney, Shetland and Fair Isle. So many of these places are difficult, if not impossible, to access by land. Spring in the Scottish islands and coastal regions is a fantastic time for birds. As well the archaeological sites of St. Kilda, Dun Carloway broch, Ring of Brodgar and Jarlshoff, to mention a few, tell the story of a complex and tenacious history. These remote areas are a delight to wander through as the lifestyle here seems to have managed to retain some of the slower pace of yesteryear.



### OBAN TO DUNDEE

12-night itinerary May 16–28, 2010

**Sun, May 16** (Scotland) Embark in the charming highland town of **Oban**

**Mon, May 17** (Inner Hebrides) Located on the Isle of Mull, **Duart Castle** stands proudly on a cliff top historically guarding the Isle of Mull for the clan MacLean. At the exit from the Sound visit the charming waterside town of **Tobermory** and its whisky distillery.

**Tue, May 18** (Inner Hebrides) The lure of **Fingal's Cave** on **Staffa** has brought travelers from around the world. Weather permitting, Zodiac cruise or walk into the cave to perhaps experience what inspired Mendelssohn. **Iona** is recognized as the birthplace of Christianity and still today has an overwhelming sense of peace and tranquility.

**Wed, May 19** (Inner Hebrides) On the south coast of **Isle of Skye** visit Loch Scaivaig to search for a seal colony and to see dramatic views of the **Cuillins**, long felt to be the spiritual heart of Skye. The afternoon's visit to **Rum** is light-hearted with a visit to the quirky **Kinloch Castle**.

**Thu, May 20** (Outer Hebrides) The harsh lifestyle of the crofters who live on **St. Kilda** is apparent throughout the village. The last of the St. Kildans were evacuated in 1930, but still today the birds remain – including Puffin, Fulmar, Kittiwake, Guillemot and Razorbill. In the sea stacks of **Boreray** and the other islands of this archipelago are 65,000 nesting pairs of northern gannet. This double **UNESCO** world heritage site is one of the most remarkable on the planet.

**Fri, May 21** (Inner Hebrides) Reaching the northern coast of the Isle of Skye, come to **Dunvegan Castle**, seat of the clan MacLeod. Off the northwest of the Isle of Skye lies the small island in Loch Dunvegan, **Isay**, abandoned during the Highlands Clearance to make way for sheep grazing. Eider and Shelduck may be seen in these waters.

**Sat, May 22** (Isles of Lewis) Landing at **Stornoway**, the focus today is on archaeology. Visit the standing stones of **Calanish**, the **Dun Carloway broch** and the traditional blackhouses of **Gerrannan**.

**Sun, May 23** (Scottish Highland Coast) Across the water from Poolewe

is **Interewe Gardens** with surprising flora at this northern latitude due to the Gulf Stream. Further north along the coast lies the island of **Handa**, managed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust with over 200,000 birds returning each year. The high cliffs of the sandstone Stack an Seabhaig (hawk's stack) is the most densely populated area.

**Mon, May 24** (Orkney Islands) The Orkney islands are home to many bird species, fine local craftsmanship and exquisite archaeological and historic treasures – plan to visit **Ring of Brodgar**, standing stones of **Stennes**, **Skara Brae**, and more recent 13<sup>th</sup> Century, **Magnus Cathedral** in the town of Kirkwall.

**Tue, May 25** (Shetland Islands) **Foula** (population 30) is one of Britain's most remote inhabited islands and leaves a lasting impression on everyone who visits. The crofting townships on the narrow coastal strip are dwarfed by the island's five dramatic peaks. Just off the west coast of the mainland island is the small island of **Papa Stour** with the most impressive **sea caves** of Britain along with rock arches, stacks and skerries. It is also an internationally important colony of Arctic tern, is often visited by seals and has several archaeological sites. As with all these coastal areas, there is a possibility of whales and porpoises in the surrounding waters.

**Wed, May 26** (Shetland Islands) The day starts with an early morning visit to **Mousa Broch**. Landing on the mainland of the Shetland Islands, visit the archaeological sites of **Jarlshoff** and **Old Scatness**. There is time after this to amble the cobbled streets of **Lerwick**.

**Thu, May 27** (Fair Isle) Occupied since the Bronze Age, today about 60 crofters work the land of this most isolated inhabited island. It is also home to a permanent bird observatory. **Fair Isle** is famous for its knitted jumpers (sweaters).

**Friday, May 28** (Scottish mainland) Disembark in the "City of Discovery" (Scott's exploration ship), **Dundee**.

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