



Visiting the Past TOURS

Midsummer on Prehistoric Orkney and Shetland

19th June – 28th June 2016

£1,649 per person

£50 Early Booking discount (£1,599) when booking by 12th February 2016

Deposit of £100 required

Single person occupancy is offered, subject to availability (early booking advised) Hotel £140 Ferry £84

Guided by Gillian Hovell BA(Hons), archaeologist & author of 'Visiting the Past'

Itinerary

Sunday 19th June: Arrival and Overnight Cruise

Arriving at Aberdeen ferry terminal, we board the Northlink ferry for the light midsummer evening and our overnight cabins. Evening dinner on board and a brief but lively scene-setting talk by Gillian.

Monday 20th June: Shetland – Through the Millennia

We wake up in Lerwick on the Shetland islands, a land of cliffs, puffins and ponies. We drive down from Lerwick to **Jarlshof** (1), a breathtaking site which will set the scene for the timeline we shall be exploring, for it encompasses a myriad of ages, from the distant Neolithic to the Viking age and beyond. If time permits, we shall drive up to spot puffins on nearby Sumburgh Head. After a light lunch at the Sumburgh Hotel we move on to nearby **Old Scatness** (2), where a site archaeologist will give us an exclusive tour of the Iron Age archaeology and the reconstructions will give us a feel for the prehistoric world we have entered. Driving up to Lerwick, we pause to look across to **Mousa Broch** (3), the largest surviving Iron Age broch in the world. After boarding our ferry to Orkney in the late afternoon, we set sail and enjoy dinner on board and a briefing to whet our appetites for tomorrow. We arrive at 11pm at Kirkwall on Mainland Orkney and drive to book into Stromness Hotel overlooking the picturesque harbour.



Tuesday 21st June: Orkney Mainland - Neolithic Ritual

A special day enjoying stones, mounds and a ritual landscape. We drive the short distance to visit the impressive **Stones of Stenness** (4) and the partially rebuilt **Barnhouse Neolithic Settlement** (5). We follow this with a marvellous guided tour of the awe-inspiring Neolithic burial mound of **Maes Howe** (6) with its corbelled roof and later Viking graffiti. A short drive back past the Stones of Stenness and the Ness of Brodgar takes us to the **Ring of Brodgar** (7) where we relax for our packed lunches before we are joined by an Orkney Ranger who will guide us around the Ring. Although the ongoing excavations at the nearby recently unearthed **Ness of Brodgar 'temple'** (8) will not have begun yet this year and it will still be turfed over, our Ranger guiding us today and our own guide, Gillian, have been deeply involved in the work and we shall have a fascinating

experience as we look across this stunning landscape. Dinner & evening briefing will be at our hotel.

Optional Tour: Midsummer Sunset at the Ring of Brodgar c.10.30pm sunset (£15 per person)

Wednesday 22nd June: Papa Westray & Westray - At Home in the Neolithic

We take an early boat from Kirkwall to the island of Westray, famous for its puffins. Here we view the famous Neolithic Venus of Orkney figurine at the Westray Heritage Museum (9) and, weather permitting, experience the wild remoteness of the (now re-buried) **Links of Noltland** Neolithic site (10) where the figurines were found. Packed lunch today and plenty of time to relax and enjoy the surroundings. A ferry takes us across to the island of Papa Westray and we walk to **Knap o'Howar's** astonishing Neolithic homes (11), the oldest surviving upstanding houses in Northern Europe. An afternoon stroll down the shore, past the ruined medieval St. Tredwell's Chapel (12), built on Iron Age site, takes us down to the ferry for our return to Kirkwall and our drive back to Stromness Hotel for dinner.



To book call / contact

Gillian Hovell BA(Hons) Tel: 01423 203516 Mob: 07860 637301 email. gillian@visitingthepast.co.uk

Thursday 23rd June: Skara Brae & Stromness

A short drive takes us to the World Heritage Site of Neolithic **Skara Brae** (13). Europe's most complete Neolithic village is unforgettable and we shall spend the whole morning here. We drive past the Ness of Brodgar where an internationally important temple site (currently re-buried for its own protection) has been discovered in recent years. We return to the hotel for a relaxed afternoon in Stromness where you can visit the arts centre, museum, WWII battery or take a pleasant hill walk or simply relax before our evening briefing and dinner at the hotel.



Friday 24th June: the island of Rousay – Back to the Stone Age

A 20 minute ferry-ride from Tingwall gives us a glorious sea journey to the island of Rousay. On arrival, we take a circular tour of the island to visit brochs, crannogs and chambered cairns galore which introduce us to the prehistoric ways of life and death. **Taversoe Tuick** (14), **Blackhammer Cairn** (15) take us back to the Neolithic and, after lunch with sea views at The Taversoe, we walk down to **Midhowe Broch** (16) and **Midhowe Cairn** (17). After walking back up to the coach, we drive past **Wasbister Loch** (18), site of Iron Age lake dwellings crannogs and past **Saviskail Beach** (19), a common spot for seals. If time allows, we briefly visit the Trumland Visitor Centre (20) before returning by ferry for dinner and evening talk by Gillian at our hotel.



Saturday 25th June: Cuween, Rennibister and Kirkwall

We visit two picturesque sites this morning. **Cuween Hill Cairn** (21) overlooks the north coast. This Neolithic burial mound is atmospheric and, weather permitting, provides stunning early evening views. which has some great views of the bay, and the subterranean **Earthhouse of Rennibister** (22). We spend a free afternoon in **Kirkwall** (23) where you have a chance to visit the Bishop's Palace and Earl's Palace (both included), the imposing St. Magnus Cathedral, or the museum or feel free simply to explore the town and its wonderful array of independent shops. Our return journey is a scenic drive back to the hotel along **Scapa Flow** (24) where Lord Kitchener was torpedoed and where the WWI German battle fleet was scuttled. If time permits, we shall visit the ruins of the 12th century coastal Ophir Church.



Sunday 26th June: Broch of Gurness & Brough of Birsay – Prehistory to the Picts

We begin our day with a drive up to the north coast, opposite the island of Rousay, to visit the stunning Iron Age **Broch of Gurness** (25). A short scenic coastal drive takes us to the Barony Hotel for an early lunch. In the early afternoon, we walk across the causeway to the **Brough of Birsay** (26) at low tide and journey on through the centuries with Pictish and Norse settlements. There may be a chance to see puffins too. After walking back across the causeway before the tide returns we drive past the picturesque ruins of the nearby Earl's Palace in Birsay.



We return to our hotel for dinner and our usual short briefing for the following day.

Monday 27th June: Mainland Orkney – Through the Ages

We say farewell to the Stromness Hotel and drive across the Orkney mainland to South Ronaldsay. To reach it we cross the **Churchill Barriers** (27) and pause at the **Italian Chapel** (28) and nearby Orkney Wine Gift shop. After driving on to a light lunch at the Orkney Fossil and Heritage Centre where we can also browse their exhibits. The afternoon is spent at the famous Tomb of the Eagles. The scene is set at the Visitor Centre with a talk and we encounter the Bronze Age at the **Burnt Mound** site (29). Further along on the clifftops is the atmospheric Neolithic burial chamber of the **Tomb of the Eagles** (30) itself which we enter through the low passage, using the trolley provided. A gentle stroll back along the clifftops gives us time to say farewell to these islands' glorious scenery, birdlife and flora. We drive to Kirkwall for our farewell dinner and to board the overnight ferry back to Aberdeen.



Tuesday 28th June: Homeward Bound

We arrive at Aberdeen ferry port in the early morning ready for our onward journeys home.

Itinerary subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control
Please note most sites are on rough ground and stout footwear will be required



***Not just a Guided Tour –
A Visit into the Past***



Visiting the Past Ltd. Registered Office: 212 Woodfield Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG1 4JF Tel. 01423 203516 Company No. 08325220

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Map



Shetland's Jarlshof – Old Scatness
Rousay's Taversoe Tuick. Blackhammer Cairn, Midhowe Cairn, Midhowe Broch
Stones of Stenness – Barnhouse Village – Maes Howe – Ring of Brodgar
Westray's Links of Noltland, Noltland Castle & Heritage Museum – Knap of Howar
Skara Brae – Cuween Hill Cairn – Rennibister Earthhouse
Broch of Gurness – Brough of Birsay
Italian Chapel – Churchill Barriers – Skapa Flow – Orphir Church
Orkney Fossil & Heritage Centre - Tomb of the Eagles
Stromness - Kirkwall

Optional Tour: Midsummer Sunset at Ring of Brodgar

Your Hotel

Stromness Hotel ★★ ★

Established in 1901, the historic 42 roomed hotel lies in the heart of the fishing port of Stromness, overlooking the picturesque harbour and Scapa Flow. Closeby is the modern Piers Arts Centre and a short walk through the winding streets lined by shops bring you to the Stromness Museum and the mountains of the Island of Hoy can be seen.

The hotel hosts award-winning Orkney Ales and over 100 malt whiskies (including special bottlings from local Highland Park Distillery and Scapa distillery).

Residents can stroll in the large Victorian Garden to the rear of the hotel.

Bedrooms are en suite with telephones, colour television and tea/coffee making facilities.

There is a lift to all floors.



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Price includes

- Luxury coach travel while on Shetland, Orkney, Rousay and Westray
- 2 nights with cabin, dinner and breakfast on ferry (Aberdeen to Shetland and return from Orkney to Aberdeen)
- 1 evening meal on Shetland-Orkney ferry
- 7 nights at the 3 star Stromness Hotel with dinner and Scottish breakfast
- 1 evening meal in Kirkwall
- 8 light lunches while on tour
- All admissions to sites
- Use of 'Quietvox' sound system throughout the tour
- Tour guiding and evening briefings by archaeologist Gillian Hovell
- Full time tour manager



QUIETVOX 

Optional tour to Midsummer Sunset at the Ring of Brodgar (£15 per person)

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TOURS

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