In April 2014 Ted and I visited the Outer Hebrides for the first time, travelling by air, ferry and service bus, and the first version of this article was based on that visit. In September 2017 we returned, this time leading a Great Rail Journeys tour group, travelling by coach with a local guide. That trip covered additional ground which has been added to this account. Our 2014 trip was from south to north – Barra to Lewis, and the layout uses that direction of travel, despite the 2017 visit travelling from north to south. The photo of Ted was taken on a busy day at the West Beach (Tràigh Siar), on the island of Vatersay.
Glasgow – Barra

One of the planned highlights when I put our first trip together was the flight from Glasgow to Barra. This has become a tourist attraction in its own right, as the plane lands on the beach at Barra. Flight times vary according to the tides, and today was an afternoon flight. I woke up to a miserable morning in Glasgow with very low cloud and heavy drizzle, took my time over breakfast, then made my way to the airport early – there was no point in traipsing round Glasgow in the rain - to find that the flight was delayed by nearly two hours. Guessing (correctly) that there would be no toilet on board the plane, I sat in the airport Wetherspoons, sipping two pints extremely slowly (nice stuff too – brewed by an Australian as part of their beer festival), before heading down to the less-than-luxurious Gate 1 where the Western Isles flights depart.

I had assumed the reason for the delay was the weather, but in fact it was because ‘the other plane got stuck on the beach yesterday’. I eventually pieced together the story – yesterday’s return flight couldn’t take off from Barra because of a technical fault, though most passengers were able to travel to Benbecuela and fly to Glasgow from there. Our plane had to make an additional trip to Barra in the morning with engineers and their toolkits to try to fix the plane, before starting its scheduled trips.

Barra Airport

The plane itself is a Twin Otter with, according to the blurb, special tyres so that it can land on the beach – there are only two planes which can land on the beach. It seats about 18-20 in discomfort, not a problem as it is only a one-hour flight. On a clear day it must be a tremendous journey - the pilots fly visually and point out the sights. Today I could see nothing between the Erskine Bridge and coming into land, though I could follow the GPS map in the cockpit. Above the low cloud the ride was smooth.
I had visions of landing on a wide, golden, sandy beach – in fact as one flies in over the beach, before making a half-circle to land, it becomes clear that most of the beach is under water, in theory only an inch or two. The plane landed today facing out towards the sea (so the previous sentence had better be correct) before turning and taxiing back towards the shore. The other, stranded plane is still there, pulled clear of high tide. ‘It’s not often you see two planes on the beach’ says one local passenger – this must be the Barra version of a traffic jam.

I clambered out, managed not to get my feet too wet, and took a few photos of the plane and the airport. No bus was due, because of the delay, so I sorted out a taxi – I had to remember how to use a payphone, as I had no mobile reception – and off we went to Castlebay, with two other gents who were also staying in the Castlebay Hotel. The taxi driver took the A888 road via the beaches on the west side of the island, pointing out the sights – the golf course, the water supply, the hotel closed for the season. He was asked if he got bored driving a taxi on Barra, and he admitted that a third option to get from one end of the island to the other would spice up his life no end.

All roads lead to Northbay (Bagh a Tuath). You can’t get lost on the A888. Castlebay, Barra.

My room in the hotel was comfortable, overlooking the pier and the bay, with Kisimul Castle in the middle. I went out to explore the metropolis of Castlebay, before a few pints in the hotel bar next door, and dinner in the lounge. It manages to have many of the facilities of a much larger town.... swimming pool, sports centre, hospital, council offices and so on, even a new coop supermarket, which I was told in amazed tones, is open till 10pm. I didn’t bother checking – just went to bed.

Barra and Vatersay

Ted and I were heading for the Uists the following morning, but in 2017 we had a full day to explore Barra with a coach and a guide. We spent much of the morning on the island of Vatersay to the south, linked with Barra by causeway. Vatersay is the southernmost inhabited island in the Western Isles with a population of 90. The day was a challenge for our coach driver, who was from Lewis, but had never driven a full-size coach on the roads on Barra and Vatersay. The guides knowledge of the bends and bumps was essential as we toured the sights of Vatersay.
Vatersay (and uninhabited Sandray in the distance) from Barra.

We passed the former school bus that local band the Vatersay Boys had driven to Sevilla in 2003 to watch Celtic play in the UEFA cup final\(^1\). We stopped at the wreckage of a Catalina seaplane which crashed in 1944. The wreckage remains in situ, together with a monument to those onboard – 3 out of the 9 died in the crash. Across the machair on the beach at West Beach is a monument to the 350 who perished on board the Annie Jane, a ship carrying emigrants from Liverpool to Canada in 1853, when it struck the rocks nearby. Also that day a large, dead turtle had washed up on the beach.

*Kisimul Castle*

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\(^1\) The Vatersay Boys are still going strong and play regularly in the Castlebay Bar and to sellout crowds on the mainland. See [www.thevatersayboys.com](http://www.thevatersayboys.com) and watch the videos on Youtube.
After a lunch stop in Castlebay – I managed a pint in the Castlebay Bar - we visited the airport, almost on time to watch the planes land – due to the tides the two daily flights were only 45 minutes apart. We visited the ancient chapel of Cille Bharra at Eoligarry, and the adjacent burial ground, which includes the grave of Compton Mackenzie, author of almost one hundred books, though probably best known for Whisky Galore. Finally, back in Castlebay we were ferried out in small groups to Kisimul Castle. It is owned by the chief of the Clan MacNeill (the current chief is American and visits for a few weeks each year) but it is leased to Historic Scotland for an annual rent of £1 and a bottle of whisky and open to the public. It is a well preserved small medieval castle, the location and views are tremendous, and the short boat trip is fun.

Barra marked the end of the 2017 Hebrides visit and we returned to the mainland by ferry – the five and a half hour trip to Oban is interesting (on a clear day) passing Rum, Eigg and Skye to the north and Coll and Tiree to the south, the lighthouse at Ardnamurchan Point then sailing through the Sound of Mull past Tobermory and Duart Castle.

**Barra to North Uist**

The ferry approaching Eriskay

Back in 2014 we set off through the rush hour traffic (well I saw three cars) to the bus stop, joined by the two gents from the taxi yesterday and their six friends. They normally go sailing round the West Coast of Scotland, but this time they were on Barra for a couple of days walking and were off to Eriskay for the day. So, the bus was packed, by Barra standards. This time we took the A888 via the east side of the island. The ferry leaves from a slipway at Ardmhor near the airport and heads for the island of Eriskay, which is connected by a causeway to South Uist. I recognised half the people on the ferry from the Castebay Hotel. The tide was in, and with binoculars we could see that the stranded plane was still there on the beach. It was a lovely clear and sunny day….but a cold wind outside on the ferry deck.
We reached Eriskay. People drove off in their cars, the eight gentlemen set off walking along the island road and I caught the bus. The first stretch is up a steep hill to the middle of the island, and we passed them quite soon, much to the bafflement of the bus driver, as they could have had a lift with him for nothing – they all had their bus passes with them.

Before setting off I mentioned the upcoming trip on Facebook and a friend in Spain said one of his family had died, the mate on a trawler which sank off Barra in the 1930s. He had done some online research and thought that he was buried on Eriskay. I asked the driver and the other elderly passenger who both knew the story. Though it didn’t pass directly by the graveyard, the driver stopped the bus a couple of times, so I could get out and take some photos of the village, and of the graveyard from a distance. Another passenger joined us for a while, and once he left the rest of the journey to Lochboisdale was passed with stories of his drunken escapades – there are no secrets on the islands.

I intended to spend a couple of hours in Lochboisdale, the main settlement in South Uist but I wasn’t impressed – the hotel gave all the impressions of being shut and there was noise everywhere from the construction of a new breakwater. Instead, I walked the three miles back along the road to the Borrodale Hotel at Daliburgh. This turned out to be enjoyable – the weather was good, the road was quiet, we passed sheep and cows grazing and crofters planting potatoes and cutting peat being.

The afternoon bus journey took us from Daliburgh through South Uist, across Benbecuela to North Uist, the series of islands linked by causeways. South Uist is quite mountainous, Benbecuela much more flat and North Uist a mixture of both, riddled with lochs, giving the impression of being more water than land.
Balivanich on Benbecuela is the largest settlement in the area. It was mainly built as military housing for the Army base and Hebrides Rocket Range and looks like an urban housing scheme plonked down in the middle of nowhere. However, the population means that there are facilities such as a hospital, school, shops, even a takeaway, and the base is used as the airport. The various online guides and books really struggle to make it sound interesting, so I passed through on the bus, and it looked like a wise move. Benbecuela also marks the transition from the Catholic south of the Outer Hebrides to the Protestant northern islands – the Calvinist work ethic not being quite strong enough to struggle further south with the Reformation.

Throughout the day I heard a lot of Gaelic being spoken routinely, by people of all ages. The ability of bilingual people to switch from one language to another never ceases to amaze me. At one point I overheard a long Gaelic conversation between two bus drivers (yes, there is more than one bus on the islands – this was as we passed the garage and changed drivers) with an ‘aye, no bother’ in the middle.

Lochmaddy is the main port in North Uist, the pier for the ferry from Skye, and location of the local Sheriff Court (the Court had been sitting...and some dodgy looking strangers had been seen around the village...probably the lawyers). A pleasant evening ensued in the Lochmaddy Hotel, with Deuchars IPA on draught in the bar and a delicious steak pie, listening to the local gossip and scandal – the main scandal being that the bar prices had just increased that day.

In 2017, as we travelled from Stornoway to Barra, we stopped in Balivanich for lunch at the Stepping Stones café, which raised my opinion of the place greatly. We also called in at the Kildonan Museum, a museum run by the local community celebrating the social, cultural and domestic history of South Uist – well worth a visit if you are passing.

*Getting a full-size coach on and off the ferries can be interesting, but we made it without mishap.*
North Uist to Lewis

Another full breakfast cooked to order – I could become used to this. There was drizzle first thing, but it cleared up mid-morning for a dry, though cloudy, day – weather that would remain for the rest of the trip.

The first stage of the journey on my third day on the islands is by bus to the neighbouring island of Berneray (another causeway), for the ferry to Harris. I’m the only person waiting for the bus, which is a few minutes late. The driver is an old misery who says we’ll be lucky to catch the ferry as it left early yesterday because of the tides. I reckon he enjoys saying this to all the tourists, and it gives him an excuse to race along. As we reached the causeway to Berneray – the ferry slipway is just across it - I can see cars waiting to board, and in fact it was at least 15 minutes before the ferry left.

The ferry has to take a tortuous route, which is clearly marked by buoys throughout – it would clearly be a tricky journey without modern navigational aids. The boat threads between tiny islands, many of which are only rocks exposed at high tide, and I’m told there are also sandbars.

We landed at Leverburgh in South Harris and the bus was waiting to take us (Ted, myself and two Swiss tourists) into Tarbert. We passed tremendous beaches and views of the North Harris hills, then after an hour we pulled into Tarbert, the capital of Harris. Somehow, we are locked on the bus and we can’t get the door open, and the driver has disappeared. The Swiss woman clambers over the seats into the driving seat and out that door, then opens the passenger door from the outside to release us. Tarbert is quite a bustling little place, compared with what has gone before, and on my walk around, for the first time on the islands I pass someone who doesn’t say hello. I had lunch in the bar (sorry...bistro, or was it brasserie) of the Hebrides Hotel, which is trying to be terribly upmarket and modern – I believe I saw the word boutique somewhere to describe it. In truth the food was good, the beer was fizz but OK, and it felt as though it would be a friendly place to stay.
The afternoon bus journey to Stornoway is a one-hour ride through the impressive, empty interior of Harris and Lewis. For the first time in the trip, it is a full size single deck bus, and the road was double track all the way – I don’t remember a single passing place. I noticed a series of small lochs beside the road with ‘cast with care’ signs....I eventually worked out that the lochs are used for fishing and the main power lines following the road are overhead.

![Stornoway Harbour](image)

**Stornoway**

Stornoway definitely feels like the big city – there were people around, crossings controlled by traffic lights and even two supermarkets – Tesco has made it this far. However, it looks as though it has seen better days – a few empty shops (presumably the Tesco effect) and a couple of pubs were closed and boarded up.

The County Hotel was in the middle of renovation – a good job has been done in the public areas – needless to say they hadn’t reached my single bedroom yet, which was 70s style, but comfortable enough. The hotel had Asian chefs and an Indian menu – which was popular with the locals and deservedly so.

An interesting conversation snippet in the bar - ‘even kids that can’t play properly have the new water system on their pipes’. It turned out there was a major piping competition in town next day and I was listening to two of the judges².

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² I’m sad enough to check this out, and it turns out that moisture control systems are big business in the world of bagpipes.
A saunter round town led to the Criterion Bar. It looked like it might be a good place (mainly because it was busy, judging by the number of smokers outside – unlike the picture which must have been taken at a quiet time). Inside, was very definitely a traditional Scottish bar with large whiskies being knocked back at a furious rate, chased by the occasional half-pint. Beer, curry, beer and bed – a good night.

The following morning was spent in Stornoway wandering round the harbour then across to the grounds of Lews Castle and along the shoreline for a mile or two – there are plenty of options for walking in the grounds. Since my first visit, the Museum nan Eilean has opened in the castle and those from my tour group who visited it were impressed.

I had a quiet Friday night in Stornoway – I know there were two wedding receptions on, and a ceilidh after the piping competition – but after the early evening drinkers went home the pubs were quiet. The bus timetable changed today which was causing great debate and upset to the routine of the Crit Bar regulars. I was told the pubs are suffering because the kids get tanked up at home before heading out after 11 (by which time I’m in bed, but it is a familiar story).

While some of my 2017 group were using a couple of hours free time in Stornoway to visit the museum and others were shopping I went for a beer or two. I had discovered that the local microbrewery Hebridean Brewing had opened its own bar by the harbour, the Edge O’the World, and paid a visit – the beer was good but there was not a lot of custom at that time of day. In contrast the Crit was jumping. I was the most sober person there, and the only one not drinking whisky, and I spent a pleasant hour there.

Ness

After my visit to Lews Castle grounds I caught the lunchtime bus to Ness (the northernmost area of Lewis), which was busy with people and their shopping. The driver was Bob, who played a mixture of Gaelic mouth music and rock-n-roll quietly over the sound system of the old coach, knew exactly where everyone lived and dropped them outside their door. The passengers worked a rota - the next person to get off helped the person currently leaving by handing their shopping bags down the bus steps. It was back to Gaelic speaking – I didn’t hear much in Stornoway itself.
The journey took us across the huge peat moor that occupies the middle of Lewis, past more ‘cast with care’ lochs, to Barvas on the west side of the island. From Barvas onwards it is classic crofting country, with a series of townships (where people were resettled on the coastal strip following the Clearances). The coastal fringe remains well populated and, though there is no way that a living can be made from a typical croft, a high proportion are still worked on a part-time basis.

At Port of Ness I walked to the deserted harbour and beach. The bus times didn’t allow a walk out to the lighthouse at the Butt of Lewis. The lighthouse was built in the 1860s, unusually of red brick and unpainted. I reached there with the tour group in 2017, on a clear, cold, windy day when there were clear views over to Sutherland, where peaks such as Suilven could be made out. Back in 2014, I did make time to walk back along the main road a couple of miles to the Cross Inn, the most northerly pub in Lewis, hoping it was open and that I could spend an hour there before the next Stornoway bus. On the way, I passed the biggest free kirk I’ve seen – totally plain and as solidly built as usual, with a large car park that
looks well used³. It seems that you are allowed to drive to church on a Sunday, if nothing else. The Old Barn Bar (it’s what it says on the tin) at the Cross Inn, was open, welcoming, chatty and warmed by a peat fire.

Gearrannan, Carloway and Callanish

Our 2017 coach tour of Lewis took us to Ness, then on to visit several sights I didn’t manage to reach in 2014.

Gearrannan Blackhouse Village is a group of traditional Lewis blackhouses restored by the local community trust. There is a small café and a tweed weaving demonstration and some of the houses are available as holiday lets, including to bears (left).

Near Carloway township we climbed to Dun Carloway broch, taking in the views over the West Side of Lewis (below). The broch is thought to date from the 1st century and is in excellent condition, the wall reaching over 9 metres high in some places.

³ The Cross Free Church website says it can hold 1400 people in comfort, though it has been known to hold about 2000.
Finally, we reached the Standing Stones of Callanish and had plenty of time to wander round the site. The stones date from some 5000 years ago and predate Stonehenge. There are a series of other stone circles nearby and various theories as to their religious and astrological significance.

Onward from Stornoway

My final morning in Stornoway in 2014 was spent reading the local papers and exploring more of the town and the Lews Castle grounds, followed by a couple of pints of lunch.

The papers were full of discussion in the papers about potential devolution for Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles (no matter what the outcome of the Scottish independence referendum) – both London and Edinburgh feel remote with little interest or knowledge of island life. I picked up a definite impression that the southern islands (in this context, the Uists and Barra) feel slightly under-represented and hard done by compared to Lewis and Harris. By 2017, while the islands voted only narrowly to remain (the fishing and farming industries in particular had reservations regarding Europe) there was concern about the effects of Brexit, as the islands have benefitted greatly from EU grant programmes.

In the papers and walking round there is huge evidence of a vibrant voluntary sector. I can only guess that relative isolation and communal traditions are behind it. I also tried a first attempt to pick up some Gaelic. It turns out that, unsurprisingly the word

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The Scottish Government now has a Minister for Transport and the Islands, currently Humza Yousaf, with responsibility for cross-government coordination re the islands. The Islands (Scotland) Bill which aims to meet the unique needs of the islands was published in June 2017 and is currently going through the Scottish Parliament.
slàinte, the equivalent of cheers, means health, and that ionad-slàinte means health centre and not something to do with coming in for a dram. From shop opening time signs I discovered the words for each day start with the syllable for day (ie the equivalent of Daymon, Daytues etc). They all begin di (ie diluain, dimàirt), which is the same as in Catalan (dilluns, dimarts etc). So now you know. This means that the Gaelic equivalent of the English M,T,W,T,F,S,S on calendars, timetables and so on is D,D,D,D,D,D,D, which is not very helpful.

On the way round town I bumped into Dougal from Durham – it turns out one of the weddings was his cousin’s. He’s originally from Harris but came back for the wedding for the first time in years. He agreed that Stornoway looked a bit down on its luck. He was on the afternoon ferry to Ullapool, so helped to pass the time in the on-board bar on for the three-hour journey. From there it was straight on to the coach to Inverness (fortunately with an on-board toilet), time for a couple in the Castle Hotel before pouring onto the last train to Perth.

Practicalities:

In 2014 Ted and I travelled in early April during the local school holidays, so buses were quieter than term-time. There were not many tourists around and there was the feeling of the place just waking up from hibernation and starting to gear up for the summer. I arrived by plane from Glasgow to Barra, stayed one night in Castlebay, one in Lochmaddy and two in Stornoway, and left via the Stornoway-Ullapool ferry and Citylink coach to Inverness.

In 2017 our tour set off from Fort William by train to Mallaig, ferry to Armadale through Skye by hired coach to Uig, ferry to Tarbert (Harris) and on by coach to Stornoway. We stayed two nights in Stornoway and two nights on Barra, then left by ferry from Barra to Oban and train to Glasgow. The tour was in late September and the season was just about to end – in particular, Barra was closing for the winter.

5 This of course is nonsense. Whilst Breton is also D,D,D,D,D,D and Manx is J,J,J,J,J,J, Cornish (dy’Lun etc.), Irish (Dé Luan etc.) and Welsh (dydd Llun etc.) all use two words and the second can be used for the abbreviation. Occitan and Provençal are also D,D,D,D,D,D and several Pacific island languages are A,A,A,A,A,A, though Basque, which usually can de relied on to look ‘strange’ is A,A,A,O,O,L,I. Incidentally, to avoid having two Ms, in Spain the abbreviation X is often used for miercoles (Wednesday). You can thank www.omniglot.com/language/time/days for this fascinating (?) information.
Getting to and from the islands

In addition to the routes mentioned above, there are other options for reaching the islands. There are flights to Barra, Benbecula and Stornoway. There are ferries from Lochboisale to Oban and from Uig to Lochmaddy (North Uist). It is possible to reach Lochmaddy and Stornoway (via Tarbert) overland in a day from Glasgow using the Glasgow-Fort William-Kyle of Lochalsh-Portree-Uig Citylink coach.

**Flights** should be booked well in advance – space is limited, particularly to and from Barra and Benbecula. Flights are to and from Glasgow, except Stornoway which has a wider range of destinations. Most are operated by Loganair – book at [www.loganair.co.uk](http://www.loganair.co.uk) and full details of all flights are on the Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd website [www.hial.co.uk](http://www.hial.co.uk). Don’t even think about taking on hand-baggage-sized cases… check them in, as there is nowhere to put them apart from on your knee. Flight times at Barra vary according to tides.

There is no need to book **ferries** (unless with a car, in which case it is essential) – there is plenty of room for foot passengers. The ferries are run by CalMac and full timetables are on their website [www.calmac.co.uk](http://www.calmac.co.uk)…..but check carefully and read any notes, as times change frequently. Some ferry times can vary with tidal conditions, so it is worth a check with CalMac local offices, and for any disruption on the website or the CalMac Status phone app.
In the summer there is a considerable tourist trade and limited accommodation, so it is certainly best to book in advance at any time. Don’t expect cheap prices – the remoteness and the short season adds to costs. The plus side is that most places are locally or family owned, and there’s no feeling of being swamped by chains and brands.

I had no problems with the weather but it worth being aware that ferries and flights are occasionally cancelled, mainly due to high winds. Don’t panic - the locals are used to it. If you can’t get off an island, others can’t get on, so hotel beds should be available. The M.V. Loch Seaforth entered service on the Stornoway – Ullapool route in 2015, and this seems to keep running in all but the worst weather.

Ferry services. The inter-island ferries are also operated by CalMac. As above, check the times carefully as they can change according to tidal conditions, and check the CalMac app for the current status of services in case of any issues.

Bus services are pretty reasonable and coordinated by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, the Western Isles Council. Full timetables are available (in English) on their site at www.cne-siar.gov.uk and click on bus timetables. The key route is the W10 spine.
route. They require careful reading....some journeys operate by request only and times can vary according to school holidays, ferry and plane times. There is no bus service on Sundays.

If you are travelling under your own steam, note that while bus timetables and destination displays and some maps are in English, road signs and place names on Ordnance Survey maps are in Gaelic. I've given some translations of place names below.

*The Harris bus fleet at Tarbert*

It is possible (Mon-Fri, but only in summer) to visit the Callanish Stones by bus in the morning, be back in Stornoway in time for lunch and take the bus to Ness for the afternoon. (I discovered this when the Callanish bus passed me in Stornoway on the first day of the summer timetable.....which wasn’t available online the previous day). It would be extremely difficult to take in all the Lewis destinations we visited in 2017 by bus in one day, though all are accessible by bus. An additional day is advisable. needed to see them all. Buses on Barra and Vatersay are limited and many journeys by request only – the other options are to walk or to take one of the two taxis on the island. It is possible to travel from Castlebay to Stornoway or vice versa by connecting buses and ferries in one-day, without my overnight stop in Lochmaddy.

**And a few other tips:**

In 2017 we had the assistance of Chris Ryan a local guide and he will accompany Great Rail Journeys tours to the Outer Hebrides in 2018 (details at [www.greatrail.com](http://www.greatrail.com)). He was a great help – I learned so much more from him than I did travelling by myself - he has an encyclopaedic knowledge of both the history of the islands and the current social, cultural and economic realities of life today. He is available for private tours and can be contacted via [www.tourguide-hebrides.co.uk](http://www.tourguide-hebrides.co.uk).
In 2014 I found I had to take websites with a pinch of salt (not a problem confined to the Hebrides)....they either miss out on key information or get it wrong. I never cease to be amazed at the number of pub and hotel websites that don’t mention bar opening times. Are they open at lunchtime? In the afternoon? A couple of hotel sites neglected to say that they were closed in the winter. At least two said they had real ale on draught when they didn’t (and no sign of ever having it), while the one place that did have some didn’t mention it on their site.

As far as beer is concerned many locals seem to take the West of Scotland / West Highland attitude that beer is something tasteless and cold which you drink to wash down the whisky. There are a few Highland breweries around nowadays, including Hebridean Brewing in Stornoway, and quite a few places stock some their bottled beers. Whisky has recently started to be produced on Lewis and Harris for the first time in 200 years – I haven’t had the opportunity to try them.

I had very limited mobile reception (my network is 3) except in Tarbert and Stornoway, though locals with Vodafone and Orange got a slightly better deal. However, every hotel I used had good quality free wifi.

And don’t forget to buy some black pudding in Stornoway.

For further information:

Air travel: Loganair - www.loganair.co.uk and Highglands and Islands Airports Ltd – www.hial.co.uk
Ferries – CalMac – www.calmac.co.uk
Connecting coach services on the mainland and to Skye – Citylink – [www.citylink.co.uk](http://www.citylink.co.uk)
Rail services (to Oban, Mallaig and Kyle of Lochalsh) – Scotrail – [www.scotrail.co.uk](http://www.scotrail.co.uk), also [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)
Kisimul Castle, Barra - [www.historicenvironment.scot](http://www.historicenvironment.scot) – Open Mon-Sat, April-September
Kildonan Museum – [www.kildonanmuseum.co.uk](http://www.kildonanmuseum.co.uk) - Open daily – April-October
Callanish Standing Stones – [www.historicenvironment.scot](http://www.historicenvironment.scot) - daily all year (Visitor Centre and café) – [www.callanishvisitorcentre.co.uk](http://www.callanishvisitorcentre.co.uk) - Mon-Sat summer, Tues-Sat Winter.
Dun Carloway broch – [www.historicenvironment.scot](http://www.historicenvironment.scot)
Gearrannan Blackhouse Village – [www.gearrannan.com](http://www.gearrannan.com)

### Gaelic place names (roughly from south to north)

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<th>English</th>
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<td>West Beach</td>
<td>Tràigh Siar</td>
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<td>Barra</td>
<td>Barraigh</td>
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<td>Castlebay</td>
<td>Bàgh a Chaisteil</td>
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<td>Kisimul Castle</td>
<td>Caisteal Chiosmuil</td>
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<td>North Bay</td>
<td>Bàgh a Tuath</td>
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<td>Ardmhhor (ferry)</td>
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<td>Rubha Robhanais</td>
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*Source: Ordnance Survey*