

# Papa Westray

## ... Where oceans meet

*Travellers to Papa Westray come from the five continents for an experience which lasts only a couple of minutes. They want to fly on the shortest scheduled air flight in the world between Westray and Papa Westray – a distance shorter than the main runway at Heathrow which has been completed in less than a minute and is featured in the Guinness Book of Records.*

Papa Westray, or Papay as it is known through the North Isles, is home to the oldest house in northern Europe at the Knap of Howar. Farmers, incredibly, were busy here before the pyramids were built in Egypt.

In the Dark Ages the island took on great religious significance and St Boniface kirk, one of the oldest Christian sites in the north of Scotland, was a pilgrimage site and missionary out station. Now lovingly restored it is once again attracting visitors.

Papay is famous for its birds and the North Hill is a top-rated nature reserve. Airborne visitors who land on Westray en route for Papay will experience the shortest scheduled flight in the world – don't blink or you'll miss it (under 2 minutes).

While on the island you must visit the farm of Holland and its amazing complex of agricultural buildings adjacent to Holland House which was the seat of the Traill lairds of Papay for three centuries. The farm includes a splendid mill tramp where horses provided the pulling power.

One of the farm workers' bothies has been converted into a compact museum displaying a fascinating range of artifacts from the island's history including the parish handcuffs!



st boniface kirk - charles tait

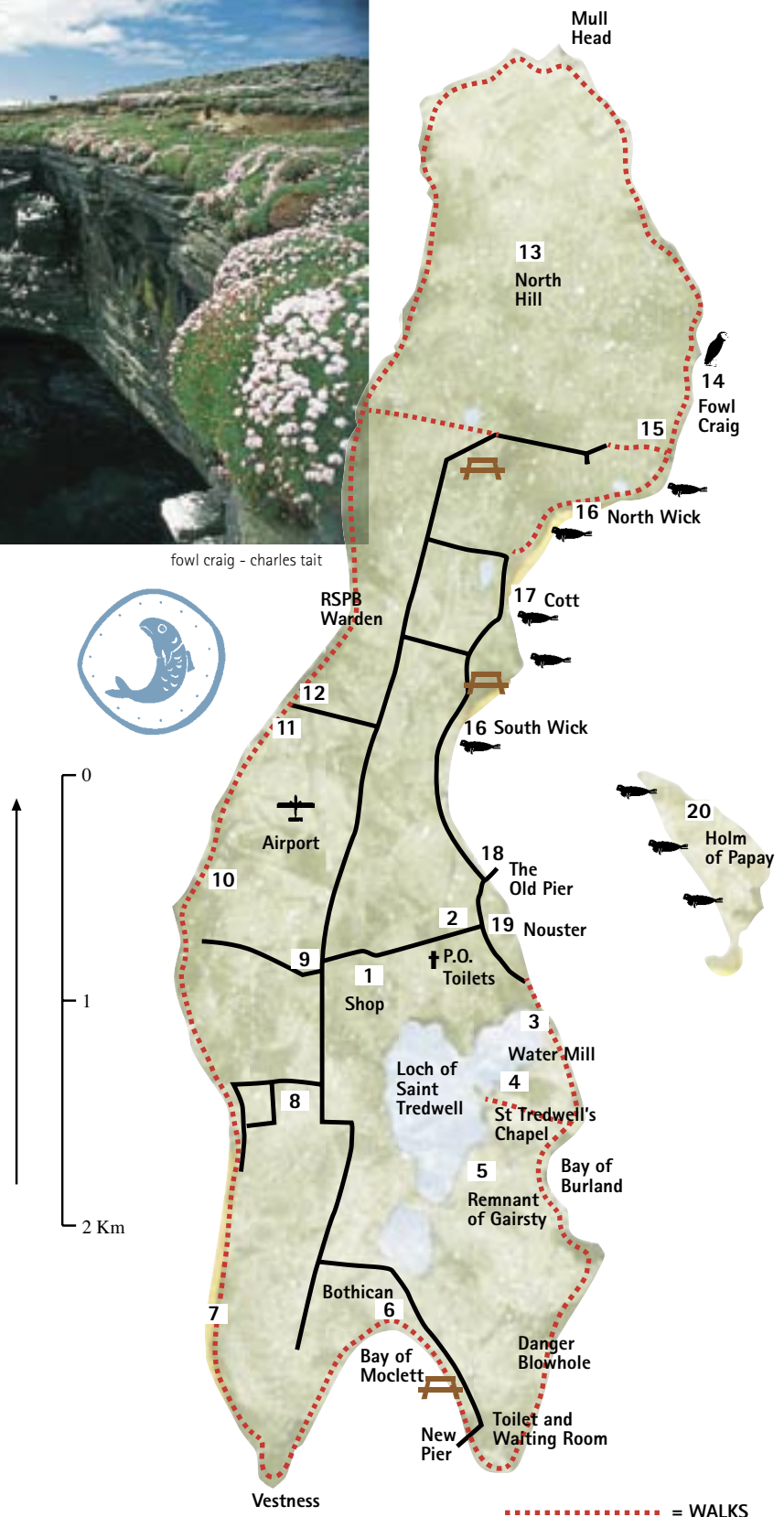
## Points of interest

- 1 Beltane:** The location of the community co-operative shop, youth hostel and guest house; the heart of the island.
- 2 Church/Surgery & School:** St Ann's Centre, Church of Scotland and Doctor's Surgery and just along the road, the community school; third building in this complex is School Place, the Free Church school in use until 1877.
- 3 The Water Mill:** On an isolated headland, this building was last used for milling oats about 100 years ago. Remains of the undershot wheel and millstones can be seen.
- 4 St Tredwell's Chapel:** On a small peninsula are traces of an Iron Age fortification and the walls of a Medieval chapel and beehive cells . . . a place of pilgrimage as late as the 18th century.
- 5 Bronze Age Landmarks:** Between the ruined farm of Cuppin and St Tredwell's Loch the remains of a gairsty or treb-dyke, a Bronze Age boundary, can be traced. A second wall in the north of the island has also been identified.
- 6 Bothican:** A fine sandy bay close to the New Pier where the ferry from Kirkwall and the link service with Westray calls. In summer the area of machair is rich in orchids and other wild flowers.
- 7 Minister's Flag:** At one time the minister from Westray had to land here and walk below the high tide line to St Boniface kirk because the Traill laird would not let him on his land. The laird and the kirk were often at loggerheads.
- 8 Burnt Mound:** Just to the east of Backaskaill lies a large, grass-covered knoll created by the accumulation of burnt stones which had been heated and immersed in tanks to cook meat.
- 9 Holland Farm:** Formerly the home of the Traill family, lairds of the island for three centuries, this is perhaps the most extensive traditional steading in Orkney. It features a doo'cot, mill tramp and corn-drying kiln. Don't miss John o' Holland's Museum.
- 10 Knap of Howar:** Earliest standing house in Northern Europe. These well preserved buildings were occupied by neolithic farmers over 5000 years ago.
- 11 St Boniface Kirk:** One of the oldest Christian sites in the North of Scotland. The old kirk, with stonework dating from the 12th century, has been restored in recent years.
- 12 Munkerhoose:** Exposed on the shore below the kirk (see 11) are the remains of a settlement dating from the Bronze Age to the Medieval Period.



fowl craig - charles tait

- 13 North Hill:** A wild and windswept nature reserve managed by the people of Papay in conjunction with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Scottish Natural Heritage. There is a summer warden on this important site.
- 14 Fowl Craig:** A spectacular cliff nesting site. Care is required. Puffins may be seen April-July, occasionally first two weeks in August. Back from the cliff edge is Papay's famous colony of *Primula Scotica*.
- 15 South of Fowl Craig:** As the land levels out to the south of Fowl Craig there is a huge area of sea-turned stones and remains of many small, walled enclosures or crues used for growing vegetables or penning geese.
- 16 North & South Wick:** Lovely bays of sparkling white sand and the best locations on the island for viewing the colony of Common and Grey seals which bask on the taings or tidal reefs.
- 17 Cott:** A number of fishing boats used to be beached here as can be seen from the keel marks on the stone and the unusually tall boat nausts or shelters in the banks.
- 18 The Old Pier:** The steamer from Kirkwall called here once a week before the New Pier was built in 1970. It is now used by local lobster boats and for access to the Holm of Papay.
- 19 Nouster:** Excellent examples of boat nousters. These can be traced all round the island shore indicating the presence of hundreds of boats in time gone by.
- 20 The Holm of Papay:** One of the most impressive chambered cairns in Orkney can be seen on this deserted isle, also a small stalled cairn. Boat hires available.





## Geography

Lying roughly on the same latitude as Stavanger in Norway the island is one of the most remote of the Orkney group. Just over four miles long by a mile wide the scenery ranges from impressive cliffs, through wide sandy bays to rolling agricultural land.

The cliffs at the northern tip, heavily eroded by the fearsome seas, are steep and densely populated by seabirds. The North Hill (next stop the Arctic Circle!) is a lonely and inspiring location – a must for anyone still with a love of empty spaces and a bit of poetry in their soul.

Off Mull Head right at the northern tip of the isle is the Bore, a fearsome tidal race where the Atlantic crashes into the North Sea – under certain tidal conditions this is a boiling cauldron with waves breaking many fathoms below the surface.

## Wildlife

With its wide variety of habitats Papay is particularly rich in seabirds with the best known being the elegant Arctic tern as well as Guillemots, Kittiwakes, Razorbills and Puffins on the cliffs. Snipe, Curlew and Lark are commonplace in the fields while on the Holm, the calf island, Storm Petrels and Black Guillemots are to be found. Papa Westray, sadly was the home of the last Great Auk in the United Kingdom, killed in 1813. A wide range of wildflowers are rooted in Papay and the local seal colony is always interested in wanderers along the east shore.

## History

Papay has traces of many early buildings, the most spectacular being the Neolithic farmstead at the Knap of Howar. Pictish brochs (fortified round towers) have been identified at several sites, notably at Munkerhouse and St Tredwell's Chapel on an artificial peninsula in the loch of the same name. At the Chapel during excavations the bones of a woman were uncovered and it has been speculated that this may be St Tredwell herself.

Munkerhouse, adjacent to St Boniface, is now regarded as a significant location. Much lies buried beneath the kirkyard and a settlement site has been exposed by erosion on the shore.

Viking sites are less easily identifiable but the Scandinavian links can be traced, as elsewhere, through the farm names. Only in 1472 did Papay along with the rest of Orkney become part of Scotland – pledged as a royal marriage dowry. There are interesting burial sites, including the impressive chambered cairn on the Holm, a lonely, atmospheric place.



knap of howar - charles tait

## Lifestyle

The pace of life of Papa Westray's farmers and fishermen is very much ordered by the changing seasons and community life centres around the arrivals and departures of ferry and plane. At the centre of the island is the only shop, run by the islands community co-operative. It is the focal point of community life. Adjoining the shop is the Beltane House, the community run guest house and hostel complex.

This building is part of a row of renovated cottages and offers magnificent views out towards Eday and Sanday.

Unquestionably 1980 was a watershed year for the island with the opening of the facilities at Beltane and the arrival of mains electricity via an underwater cable. Cars still take second place to walkers on the few miles of metalled road. There is a constant battle to keep the island's mini-economy afloat.

## Services

### Accommodation

Accommodation providers listed below are members of VisitScotland's Quality Assurance Scheme and have been graded as part of the national scheme. Please refer to the disclaimer on the inside of the back cover.

#### BED and BREAKFAST

**Beltane Guest House (★★GH)** - converted farmworkers cottages, 3 twin, one double en-suite rooms. t: Papay Community Co-op 01857 644321, e: beltanepapay@aol.co.uk.

#### SELF CATERING

**Holm View (★★★★SC)** - self-catering cottage, sleeps 4. t: 01857 644211. e: tomhughes@scotnet.co.uk. www.papawestray.co.uk.

Accommodation providers listed below are not participants of VisitScotland's Quality Assurance Scheme. Please refer to the disclaimer on the inside of the back cover before booking.

### Local Services

**The Papay Co-op Shop**, general merchants, and information exchange. t: 01857 644321. Open Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Sat, 10am-12 noon & Mon, Wed, Thur, Fri, 3-5pm, Sat, 8-9pm.

**Post Office**, Daybreak. 01857 644275.

### Transport/Tours

**'Peedie Package' Island Tour**; guided tours of Papa Westray. Historic, scenic, cultural & wildlife. Lunch & refreshments included. Papay Community Co-op. t: 01857 644321 or see page 48 for details.

**RSPB Warden** for North Hill Nature Reserve; guided walks available Tue, Thur & Sat (April-August). t: 01857 644240.

**Car Hire**, Taxi Service and Contemporary Tours, Nic, t: 01857 644245

**Airport Building**. t: 01857 644252.

**Nouster Pier**; mooring for visiting yachts. t: 01857 644282.

**Boat Service** to and from Westray; see separate timetable for schedule, hires. Tommy Rendall. t: 01857 677216.

### Local Crafts & Publications

**Daybreak Craft Shop**. Handknitting, Papay socks, felting, wood turning, pictures, postcards. Margit. t: 01857 644275.

**The Papay Co-op Shop**. Local prints and cards, Holmie wool, knitted crafts, jewellery, Papay souvenirs.

**Island Felt – Recycled by Design**. Unique creations from recycled felted wool. Bewan Gallery and Workshop. Jan, t: 01857 644245. e: jan@hippyhats.com.

**Local Papa Westray books and publications** available from the Papay Co-op shop.



## Recreation

**Community Coffee Morning.** Wed 10.30-11.30am. St Anne's Centre. Fresh coffee & homebakes.

**Saturday Pub.** Beltane House from 9pm. Bar, darts, snooker available.

**Papay fun Weekend** and other community events. Tim, t: 01857 644224.

**Community Centre** gym, table tennis, pool, badminton, computer facilities, t: 01857 644294.

**Children's Play Park,** access through school car park.

**Cyclogym,** challenging bike course for all the family, pyramid and see-saw ramps, find it behind the kirk and school.

## Other Services

[www.papawestray.co.uk](http://www.papawestray.co.uk)

**Nurse & NHS Surgery.** 01857 644227.

**Church of Scotland.** Iain MacDonald. t: 01857 677357. Services every Sunday, 2.30pm at St Anne's Kirk. Bookings to Iain or Marina, t: 01857 644242.

**Gospel Hall.** Alan Hourston. t: 01857 644253.

**Westray & Papay Westray Tourist Association.** Graham and Cathy Maben, t: 01857 677777.

## Transport links



### MONDAYS

Dep Kirkwall	Arr	Dep	Arr Kirkwall
0930	0951	0958	1010
1620	1632	1639	1700

### TUESDAYS

Dep Kirkwall	Arr	Dep	Arr Kirkwall
1005	1030	1037	1049
1225	1255	1302	1314
1650	1702	1709	1730

### WEDNESDAYS

Dep Kirkwall	Arr	Dep	Arr Kirkwall
0905	0926	0933	0945
1545	1557	1604	1625

### THURSDAYS

Dep Kirkwall	Arr	Dep	Arr Kirkwall
0805	0826	0833	0845
1340	1352	1359	1429
1450	1502	1509	1530

### FRIDAYS

Dep Kirkwall	Arr	Dep	Arr Kirkwall
0905	0926	0933	0945
1340	1352	1359	1429
1550	1602	1609	1630

### SATURDAYS

Dep Kirkwall	Arr	Dep	Arr Kirkwall
0900	0921	0928	0940
1530	1600	1607	1619

### SUNDAYS

Dep Kirkwall	Arr	Dep	Arr Kirkwall
1500	1521	1528	1540

This timetable is subject to contract. Visitors should check with the Airline for full details and reservations.

**LOGANAIR 01856 872494/873457**

Loganair offer special low cost fares on their scheduled services from Kirkwall to Papa Westray

## Transport links

### Pierowall/Papa Westray

Effective from 3 May until 27 September 2009

See page 47 for connecting Westray ferry bus

- A** = On request only (must be booked 24hrs in advance)
- B** = Will not operate between 27 June & 17 August inc.
- C** = From 29 June to 17 August inc. sailings will be replaced by: dep Pierowall 1625 arr P. Westray 1650
- D** = Additional sailings from 29 June to 13 August inc.
- E** = From 3 July to 14 August inc. sailings will be: dep Pierowall 1705 arr P. Westray 1730

MONDAY				
<b>A</b> dep	Pierowall	0700	arr	P. Westray 0725
<b>A</b> dep	P. Westray	0730	arr	Pierowall 0755
<b>B</b> dep	Pierowall	0845	arr	P. Westray 0905
<b>B</b> dep	P. Westray	0910	arr	Pierowall 0930
dep	Pierowall	0945	arr	P. Westray 1010
dep	P. Westray	1015	arr	Pierowall 1040
dep	Pierowall	1135	arr	P. Westray 1200
dep	P. Westray	1205	arr	Pierowall 1230
<b>C</b> dep	Pierowall	1545	arr	P. Westray 1610
dep	P. Westray	1655	arr	Pierowall 1720
dep	Pierowall	1815	arr	P. Westray 1840
dep	P. Westray	1845	arr	Pierowall 1910
TUESDAY				
dep	Pierowall	0700	arr	P. Westray 0725
dep	P. Westray	0730	arr	Pierowall 0755
<b>B</b> dep	Pierowall	0800	arr	P. Westray 0820
<b>B</b> dep	P. Westray	0825	arr	Pierowall 0850
dep	Pierowall	0855	arr	P. Westray 0920
dep	P. Westray	0925	arr	Pierowall 0950
dep	Pierowall	1305	arr	P. Westray 1330
dep	P. Westray	1335	arr	Pierowall 1400
dep	Pierowall	1455	arr	P. Westray 1515
dep	P. Westray	1520	arr	Pierowall 1545
<b>B</b> dep	Pierowall	1550	arr	P. Westray 1610
<b>B</b> dep	P. Westray	1615	arr	Pierowall 1640
WEDNESDAY				
dep	Pierowall	0730	arr	P. Westray 0755
dep	P. Westray	0800	arr	Pierowall 0825
dep	Pierowall	0915	arr	P. Westray 0940
dep	P. Westray	0945	arr	Pierowall 1010
dep	Pierowall	1115	arr	P. Westray 1140
dep	P. Westray	1145	arr	Pierowall 1210
dep	Pierowall	1305	arr	P. Westray 1330
dep	P. Westray	1335	arr	Pierowall 1400
<b>C</b> dep	Pierowall	1545	arr	P. Westray 1610
dep	P. Westray	1655	arr	Pierowall 1720
dep	Pierowall	1815	arr	P. Westray 1840
dep	P. Westray	1845	arr	Pierowall 1910



This passenger only service linking the islands of Westray and Papa Westray is operated by **m.v. 'Golden Mariana'** (40 passengers). This service is free only to passengers between Pierowall and Papa Westray making a direct connection with the ro-ro ferry at Rapness. All other passengers will be subject to the normal inter-island fares. All enquiries for request calls, hires etc. to be made through Tommy Rendall, Telephone 01857 677216.

THURSDAY				
dep	Pierowall	0730	arr	P. Westray 0755
dep	P. Westray	0800	arr	Pierowall 0825
dep	Pierowall	0915	arr	P. Westray 0940
dep	P. Westray	0945	arr	Pierowall 1010
dep	Pierowall	1305	arr	P. Westray 1330
dep	P. Westray	1335	arr	Pierowall 1400
<b>D</b> dep	Pierowall	1455	arr	P. Westray 1520
<b>D</b> dep	P. Westray	1525	arr	Pierowall 1550
<b>C</b> dep	Pierowall	1545	arr	P. Westray 1610
dep	P. Westray	1655	arr	Pierowall 1720
dep	Pierowall	1815	arr	P. Westray 1840
dep	P. Westray	1845	arr	Pierowall 1910
FRIDAY				
dep	Pierowall	0730	arr	P. Westray 0755
dep	P. Westray	0800	arr	Pierowall 0825
dep	Pierowall	0915	arr	P. Westray 0940
dep	P. Westray	0945	arr	Pierowall 1010
<b>E</b> dep	Pierowall	1500	arr	P. Westray 1525
dep	P. Westray	1735	arr	Pierowall 1800
dep	Pierowall	1855	arr	P. Westray 1920
dep	P. Westray	1925	arr	Pierowall 1950
SATURDAY				
dep	Pierowall	0730	arr	P. Westray 0755
dep	P. Westray	0800	arr	Pierowall 0825
dep	Pierowall	0915	arr	P. Westray 0940
dep	P. Westray	0945	arr	Pierowall 1010
dep	Pierowall	1625	arr	P. Westray 1650
dep	P. Westray	1655	arr	Pierowall 1720
dep	Pierowall	1815	arr	P. Westray 1840
dep	P. Westray	1845	arr	Pierowall 1910
SUNDAY				
dep	Pierowall	1115	arr	P. Westray 1140
dep	P. Westray	1145	arr	Pierowall 1210
dep	Pierowall	1630	arr	P. Westray 1655
dep	P. Westray	1700	arr	Pierowall 1725
<b>A</b> dep	Pierowall	2130	arr	P. Westray 2155
<b>A</b> dep	P. Westray	2200	arr	Pierowall 2225

For full fares please enquire at Orkney Ferries Offices

See page 41 for Westray (Rapness/Pierowall) connection for Papa Westray.

See page 47 for Papa Westray Package Tour and details of special air fares