

# Westray

## ... Queen o' the isles

*Westray is sprinkled with wonderfully atmospheric locations for you to explore. Spectacular sea cliffs, sandy beaches, rocky shores and undulating hills offer spirit-swelling locations for photographers, artists and lovers of empty places.*

A voyage out along the old Viking sea route to Westray is an essential element in any Orkney adventure.

Here the unique flavour of Orkney's island fringe can be experienced to the full. The exquisite workmanship and artistic talent of the ancient peoples we have encountered on other islands is illustrated by the Westray Stone, a rock carving found in a tomb at Pierowall, the island's largest settlement, in 1981. The spiral and lozenge design is the finest of its kind in Scotland and is permanently on display in the Westray Heritage Centre. Of the earliest Christian settlers the best evidence is again found in the lonely rock-stack or island hermitages such as at the Castle o' Burrian (also a marvellous place to see Puffins) and on the Holm of Aikerness.

The Orkneyinga Sagas, the tales of the Viking occupation of Orkney paint a vivid picture of Westray during the early 12th century and Westray families operating from power bases at Rapness, Pierowall and Tuqouy played important roles in the political life of the isles.

## Plant & animal life

The western cliffs and hills behind support a rich variety of northern maritime vegetation. The spray-sweep has created unusual clifftop salt marshes and behind this the maritime heath. Vikings are thought to have brought angelica to the island and it can still be found growing around Pierowall Bay. Seals, of course, are plentiful around Westray but whales, dolphins and porpoises are occasionally seen. Other attractions are the otter families and tell-tale tracks through rough vegetation will indicate the presence of the indigenous Westray vole.

## Birdlife

Noup Head cliffs are first port of call for birdwatchers. Huge numbers of nesting seabirds can be seen between April and July. It is also possible to see Peregrine Falcons on the island's cliffs and Ravens successfully breed each year, raising their young in nests often built from barbed wire. The rare corncrake with their characteristic call has been heard on summer evenings. Among the smaller birds the Wheatear can be seen skipping along the drystone dykes. Puffins are a great attraction at the Castle of Burrian and at Noup Head. Gannet numbers have increased dramatically in recent years at Noup.

## Industry

Westray is one of the most productive farming areas in Orkney with beef cattle a main contributor to the island's economy. Sea-faring is also deep rooted, a trait inherited from the Norse ancestors and the island has developed a modern fishing industry which includes white fish trawling and creel fishing for crab and lobster. Velvet crabs provide a significant contribution to the local economy and are exported to Europe. The modern factory at Gill pier exports processed crabs throughout Britain and Europe, and visitors are welcome to look around the facility. W. F. M. Brown is a family-run bakery at Gill Pier, which supplies daily bread and other baked products to local and mainland Orkney shops and also exports their shortbread, biscuits and cakes to shops further afield.

Westray's tourist industry plays a vital part in the local economy, providing facilities for camping and caravans, two hostels, two hotels, several B&Bs and self-catering cottages.

The Craft and Heritage Trail tempts visitors to explore the island and see the varied shops, galleries, jewellery makers, knitters and straw-backed chair making, returning to Pierowall village to the newly enlarged Heritage Centre next to the Pierowall Hotel.

## Points of interest

- 1 St. Mary's Medieval Parish Church, Pierowall:** This ruined church is one of two Middle Ages kirks in Westray; most of the structure dates from the 17th century but the south wall is a remnant of the original 13th century structure.
- 2 Noltland Castle:** This fortress was erected in the second half of the 16th century by Gilbert Balfour who held high office under Mary Queen of Scots.
- 3 Links of Noltland Prehistoric Settlement & Wild Flowers:** During the late 1970s an extensive area of settlement was excavated on the Links. Houses and middens, now covered over, were contemporary with Skara Brae (3000BC). Sand dune and dune pasture supports Eyebright, Felwort, Cowslip and Sandwort - this site has been re-opened for further examination.
- 4 Knowe of Queena Howe:** Deriving its name from the old Norse kvi 'enclosure' and haugr 'mound' this conspicuous mound probably contains a broch tower which is surrounded by extensive settlement. Stonework can be seen in the eroded shoreline. Nearby excavation has exposed a settlement pre-dating Skara Brae. (see 3 above).
- 5 Lochs – Breeding Wildlife and Waders:** Westray's three largest lochs, Burness, Saintear and Swartmill are rich in breeding wildfowl and waders and are also popular with anglers for trout fishing. Mute swans breed in all three lochs and Whooper swans overwinter here.
- 6 Noup Head Lighthouse:** This lighthouse was constructed in 1898 to warn ships off the North Shoal. First lighthouse to use a system of mercury flotation in the revolving carriage. Automated in 1964.
- 7 Noup Head R.S.P.B. Reserve:** Cliffs extend here to five miles and the northernmost section is the reserve which in terms of number of breeding seabirds is second only to St Kilda. A 1978 survey revealed over 40,000 Guillemots, 1,200 Razorbills, 1,000 Fulmars and almost 25,000 pairs of Kittiwakes. Gannets now breed here.
- 8 The Gentlemen's Cave:** Place of refuge for Orkney lairds who supported the 1745 uprising, said to be linked by an underground passage to Noltland Castle. Access is now too dangerous to visit.
- 9 Northwest Coast and North Hill:** West-facing cliffs are very exposed; Thrift, Sea Plantain, and Buck's horn Plantain are abundant and immediately inland from the cliffs nest Skuas and Arctic Terns.



**10 Heritage Centre:** A permanent exhibition of Westray's history, flora and fauna can be seen here next to the Pierowall Hotel. In addition to the permanent exhibition, each year sees a new exhibition on a specific local topic. Local crafts can be purchased; limited opening hours. Now has an extensive database of churchyards and houses and a growing genealogy section.

**11 Fitty and Skea Hills:** Very rich maritime sedge-heath. Several of the plants found here are such as typically occur at high altitudes in mountain environments. The *Primula Scotica* can also be found.

**12 Bay of Kirbest:** On this storm beach Sea Mayweed, Sea Campion and Scottish Lovage can be found.

**13 Knowe o' Burristae Broch:** This large mound contains a broch tower partly destroyed by the sea. Part of the curved wall is still standing and the entrance to a mural cell or passage can be seen.

**14 Tuquoy – Cross Kirk Medieval Parish Church and Norse Settlement including Heritage Walk:** Cross Kirk is one of the best constructed churches in Orkney and a large Norse settlement lies to the west where massive walls are being exposed in the shoreline.

**15 Bay of Tuquoy:** A localised area of saltmarsh occurs at the head of this large sandy bay.

**16 Castle o' Burrian & Stanger Head:** Precipitous rock stack was an early Christian hermitage; possibly the best place in the isles to watch the comings of the cliffs, the Puffins. No attempt should be made to climb the stack. Great care should be taken on these clifftops. Stanger Head is a favourite haunt of the entire range of Orkney's seabirds.

**17 Holm of Faray & Rusk Holm:** Important breeding site for Grey Seals. Each autumn large numbers concentrate here to mate, the pups being born in October. Rusk Holm is inhabited by native sheep, descendants of the original sheep brought from Norway by the Vikings 1000 years ago. Visits are possible by arrangement locally.

**18 Holm of Aikerness:** A good site to see Common Seals which pup in June, and home to 150 North Ronaldsay Sheep.

**19 West Westray Walk:** from Kirbest to Noup Head, this walk displays nature at its best. Estimated time to complete = 3 1/2 hours.

**20 Quoygrew:** archaeological site, seasonally excavated in recent years, now consolidated and open to the public. Considered to be one of the finest examples of Viking archaeology in Orkney.

**21 Pontoons:** floating facilities and showers are situated at Gill Pier for use by visiting yachts etc.

**22 Knowe o' Skea:** archaeological site, seasonally excavated in recent years.

**23 Tourist Information Point:** Leaflets and guidance on all aspects of Westray's visitor services. Café serving light lunches, breakfasts and early evening meals. Local crafts for sale.

## 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.

#### HOTEL

**Cleaton House Hotel (★★★★SH)** (small hotel) - Tony Thorpe, t: 01857 677508. e: cleaton@orkney.com. www.cleatonhouse.co.uk.

**Pierowall Hotel** (Awaiting Grading) - Alan and Alison Drever, t: 01857 677472/677208. e: enquiries@pierowallhotel.co.uk. www.pierowallhotel.co.uk.

#### BED & BREAKFAST

**No. 1 Broughton (★★★★B&B)** - newly renovated Orkney house offering 2 double and 1 twin rooms, all en-suite, on the shore of Pierowall Bay. Packed lunches. Use of garden, lounge and sauna. Prices from £20.00. Sheila Et Jerry Wood. t: 01857 677726. e: no1broughton@hotmail.com. www.no1broughton.co.uk.

#### SELF-CATERING

**Bis Geos self-catering (★★★-★★★★SC)** - Three cottages, sleeping 2-8. t/f: 01857 677420. www.bisgeos.co.uk.

**Skaill Cottage (★★★SC)** - self-catering, sleeps 6. t: Linda Hagan, 01857 677226. e: lindahagan@onetel.co.

**Sand o' Gill (★★★SC)** - self-catering, sleeps 6. t: 01857 677374.

**Daisy Cottage (★★★SC)** - self catering, sleeps 4/5. Netta Harcus, e: cubbigoe@freeserve.co.uk. t: 01857 677398.

**Daybreck (★★★SC)** - self-catering cottage, in the village on the shoreline, sleeps 6. t: Suzie Rendall, 01856 876579. e: raymond.rendall@btopenworld.com.

**Seaquoys (★★★★SC)** - self-catering. Karen Oddie, Cranfield, Canningal Road, St Ola, t: 01857 871169. e: kjoddie@hotmail.com.

**Orcadee (★★★SC)** - Pierowall, self-catering bungalow. Uninterrupted views of the bay. Sleeps 4/6. Marlene and Geoff Bagley, t: 01952 727814.

#### HOSTEL & CAMPING

**The Barn (★★★★H)** - Chalmersquoy. Isabell Harcus, t: 01857 677214. e: info@thebarnwestray.co.uk www.thebarnwestray.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.

### Transport/Car Hire

**M. Et J. Harcus**, Ferry bus service (see bus timetable on page 46. t: 07789 034289, 01857 677758.

**D. Groat**, car hire. t: 01857 677374.

**Bird and Wildlife** watching with experienced guide **Taxi:** Kathy and Graham Maben, t: 01857 677777 and mob: 07766073088.

### Shops/Post Offices

**W. F. M. Brown**, family run bakery at Gill Pier. t: 01857 677349.

Peter Miller, Skelwick, **Sub Post Office**, general merchant, souvenirs, grocery, knitwear, petrol, crafts. t: 01857 677351.

**J. C. Tulloch**, Pierowall, **general merchant and post office**, groceries, drapery, butchery, hardware; newspapers and books, fruit and vegetables, souvenirs, gifts, etc. Wheelchair access. Open 9am-9pm Mon. to Sat. and 2-4.30pm on Sundays from May until September. t: 01857 677373. e: jctulloch@tiscali.co.uk.

**W. I. Rendall**, Pierowall, **general merchant**, grocery, butchery, fruit and veg., newspapers, hardware, souvenirs, gifts, petrol, diesel Et bio-diesel, Calor and camping gas. Wheelchair access. Open Mon-Sat; Sundays 2.00-4.30pm May-Sept.

**Hume Sweet Hume**, Pierowall, designer soft furnishings, knitwear, gifts and off licence sales. t: 01857 677259 e: info@humesweethume.com www.humesweethume.com.

### Recreation

**Golf course** information from Stewart Rendall, t: 01857 677303.

#### Cycle Hire:

- May Bain, Twinness, Rapness. t: 01857 677319.
- Dorothy Groat, Sand o' Gill. t: 01857 677374.
- Westraak. t: 01857 677777.

**Pierowall Charters**. Boat tours and fishing trips. www.pierowallcharters.co.uk Contact: Malcolm Brown. t: 01857 677493.

**Sea Life Westray Boat Tours**. Visit the uninhabited island of Faray, or cruise around the Bay. www.sealifewestray.co.uk. Contact: John Harcus t: 01857 677214.

**Boat Trips**, Tom Rendall, Harbour-master, Gill Pier, trips to and from Papa Westray daily and as required. t: 01857 677216.

**Swimming Pool**, opening times and information from Allison Pottinger, t: 01857 677430 or mobile 07793112372 or check the local noticeboard.

**Community Centre**, sports field, football, netball, badminton, snooker, pool, darts, weight training; contact Ann Kent, t: 01857 677436.

**Petanque**, Tony Thorpe, Cleaton House. t: 01857 677508.

**Children's Play Park** oposite school in Pierowall Village.

**Sailing Club**, June 1 to August 31, Tues. and Thurs. evenings, Sam Harcus, t: 01857 677860.

**Marina** - dedicated visitor berthing, shower facilities at Gill Pier. Bread available from the bakery at Gill Pier and other supplies from the shops in Pierowall village. Laundry facilities at The Barn hostel. A leisurely stroll to Pierowall village. Tom Rendall, harbour master, t: 01857 677216.

**Traditional cooking** Et writing courses at the West Manse. Contact Sandy on t: 01857 677482, www.millwestray.com and the VisitOrkney notice board at the Kirkwall TIC.

### Camping & Caravaning Facilities

**The Barn**, Chalmersquoy. Isabell Harcus. t: 01857 677214. www.thebarnwestray.com, info@thebarnwestray.co.uk

**Sand o'Gill**. Dorothy Groat. 01857 677374.

### Other Services

www.westraypapawestray.com.

**Westray Tourist Information Centre** at Haff Yok Cafe. t: 01857 677777. e: info@westraak.co.uk.

**Doctor**. t: 01857 677209.

**Nurse**. t: 01857 677706.

**Church of Scotland**, Iain MacDonald, t: 01857 677357.

**United Free Church of Scotland**. Daniel Harcus, Session Clerk, t: 01857 677375.

**Baptist Church**, Stephen Hagan, Secretary, t: 01857 677226.

**Gospel Hall**. Mr A. Bews, t: 01857 677376.

**Haff Yok Cafe**, Pierowall, tea/coffee and home baking, breakfasts, light lunches, early evening meals and refreshments. t: 01857 677777.

**Healthy Living Centre**. t: 01857 677568.

### Industry/Crafts

Westray Heritage Centre, Pierowall. VisitScotland 4-star visitor attraction. VisitScotland disabled access rating 2. Local craft and publications. Children's activities, genealogy, local history. t: 01857 677414. e: enquiries@westrayheritage.co.uk

**R. Leslie**, Woodturner, 9 Lastigar. t: 01857 677297. e: raymondleslie@hotmail.co.uk

**Westray Studios** Online gallery - oil, acrylics and watercolours. www.westraystudios.co.uk. t: 01857 677786.

**Orkney Faerie Museum** Et Gallery. Also children's storytelling, pixie play house, gift shop and artist at work. t: 01857 677320. e: neil@geddesward.co.uk.

**Hume Sweet Hume**. Designer soft furnishings. t: 01857 677259. e: info@humesweethume.com www.humesweethume.com.

**The Wheeling Steen** Gallery - New purpose-built art and craft gallery and tearoom. Unique feature is original deck cabin from 19th century sailing ship. Open Monday-Saturday 10-5pm. t: 01857 677292. www.wheeling-steen.co.uk.

**Knitting** - Westray Knitters, Marlene Bews, Gorn. t: 01857 677366.

**Fish Processing** - Westray Processors, The Manager, Gill Pier. t: 01857 677273.

**Westray and Papa Westray Craft Assoc.** Contact Peter Brown, The Gallery, Pierowall. t: 01857 677770.

**Westray Straw.** Contact Edith Costie. t: 01857 677411.

**West-Ray Jewellery.** Mid-Ouseness, Westray. t: 01857 677400. e: geordie@westrayjewellery.com www.westrayjewellery.com.

**Westray Cards,** Lightcost, Hand-made cards, bookmarks and gifts, original artwork, prints and a bespoke framing service. t: 01857 677287. e: jfcable@btinternet.com.

**W. F. M. Brown.** Family run bakery at Gill Pier. t: 01857 677349.

**Aak Work.** Printed Souvenirs etc. Contact Linda Drever. t: 07711 577682.

**Westray Pottery.** A wide range of utility stoneware pottery with natural high quality glazes. Contact Martyn Terrell. t: 01857 677776. Email: martinandsasha@firenet.uk.net.

**Art Studio** at No 1 Broughton. Jerry Wood. Working studio with oil paintings and prints to view and buy. t: 01857 677726. www.no1broughton.co.uk.

**The Gallery,** Pierowall - Artists Studio and Gallery. Ongoing exhibitions of contemporary art work. Peter Brown t: 01857 677770.

**Westray Digital Art,** Links House. Digital photography and artwork. Open and limited edition prints available online at www.westraydigitalart.co.uk e: enquiries@westraydigitalart.co.uk.

**Edenweave,** hand woven contemporary textiles. Workshop open 10-4pm Tuesday-Saturday from May to September. Winter hours by arrangement. Sit and Knit Group meets 2-4pm on 1st and 3rd Wednesday of month. t: 01857 677785, e: edenweave@tiscali.co.uk.

For all tourist information see the Westray and Papa Westray Tourist Association website: www.westraypapawestray.com.



noup head lighthouse - charles tait



MONDAYS			
Dep Kirkwall	Arr	Dep	Arr Kirkwall
0930	0942	0949	1010
1620	1641	1648	1700
TUESDAYS			
Dep Kirkwall	Arr	Dep	Arr Kirkwall
0805	0830	0837	0849
1650	1711	1718	1730
WEDNESDAYS			
Dep Kirkwall	Arr	Dep	Arr Kirkwall
0905	0917	0924	0945
1545	1606	1613	1625

## Transport links

### Westray/Papa Westray

Effective from 3 May until 28 September 2009



t: (01856) 872044

The services to Westray and Papa Westray are carried out by the vessels **m.v. Earl Thorfinn** (190 passengers and 25 cars), **m.v. Earl Sigurd** (190 passengers and 25 cars) and **m.v. Varagen** (144 passengers and 32 cars). Canteen facilities are available on all vessels at modest prices. Bookings should be made at the Kirkwall Office: t: 01856 872044, f: 01856 872921, e: info@orkneyferries.co.uk

See page 46 for occasional extra Sunday inter-island connections

		Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Kirkwall	dep	0920A		0700B	0720B	0720B	0720B	0720B
Westray	arr	1045		0825	0845	0845	0845	0845
Westray	dep		0830A	0840B	0900B	0900B	0900B	0900B
Kirkwall	arr		0955	1005	1025	1025	1025	1025
Kirkwall	dep		0940	1300	1110	1300	1045	
Westray	arr		1105	1425	1235	1425	1210	
Westray	dep	1800A	1115	1435	1245	1435	1220*	
P. Westray	arr						1300	
P. Westray	dep						1320**	
Kirkwall	arr	1925	1240	1600	1410	1600	1510	
Kirkwall	dep	1935A	1620		1620	1620	1700	1620A
Westray	arr	2100	1745		1745	1745	1825	1745
Westray	dep		1755		1755	1755	1835	1755A
Kirkwall	arr		1920		1920	1920	2000	1920

A - Vehicles must be booked before 1430 hrs on Saturday.

B - Vehicles must be booked before 1600 hrs the day before sailing.

All other vehicle bookings must be made at least one hour before the departure from Kirkwall.

**NOTES:**

- 1) Vehicle check in times: **20 minutes** before departure. Passenger check in times: **10 minutes** before departure.
- 2) **No Show Charges** - All cancellations must be made not less than 24 hours before the intended date of travel or full charges may apply.
- 3) In order to accommodate certain local events these timetables will be subject to change. (See page 47).
- 4) For conditions of carriage of passengers and cargo see notices exhibited in the Company's vessels, offices and premises.

\*Not available for vehicle bookings Westray to Kirkwall. \*\*This sailing may be delayed due to cargo operations.

For full fares please enquire at Orkney Ferries Offices

Please see Page 21 for additional Papa Westray Cargo Sailings in conjunction with North Ronaldsay on Tuesdays.

### Sunday sailings direct to Papa Westray on the following dates only:

7 June (via Eday/Sanday), 19 July (via Stronsay), 16 August (via Eday/Sanday).

Further information on the connecting ferry/bus service in Westray can be found on page 47.

WESTRAY - PAPA WESTRAY - The World's Shortest Scheduled Air Service. The scheduled two minute flight between Westray and Papa Westray has held the record as the World's Shortest Scheduled Air Service for almost thirty years. This year join the flight at either island and you may qualify for a unique Certificate commemorating your World Record Flight!

THURSDAYS				SUNDAY			
Dep Kirkwall	Arr	Dep	Arr Kirkwall	Dep Kirkwall	Arr	Dep	Arr Kirkwall
0805	0817	0824	0845	1500	1512	1519	1540
1450	1511	1518	1530				
FRIDAYS				SATURDAYS			
Dep Kirkwall	Arr	Dep	Arr Kirkwall	Dep Kirkwall	Arr	Dep	Arr Kirkwall
0905	0917	0924	0945	0900	0912	0919	0940
1550	1611	1618	1630				

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

**LOGANAIR 01856 872494/873457**