

Isles of Scilly: Land of Legends [B2]

Le Isole Sorlinghe sono 145. Si trovano davanti alla costa della Cornovaglia, e secoli fa erano frequentate dai pirati. Oggigiorno, questo ducato del principe del Galles è un luogo estremamente turistico.



The Isles of Scilly are a 145-island archipelago 45 kilometres **off** the tip of Cornwall, the **south-westernmost** part of Great Britain. The islands are **steeped** in myth. It is said that England's King Arthur was **buried** here in a land called Lyonesse in the 6th century. King Arthur is thought to be a mythical figure, but he remains a fundamental part of England's historical identity. Lyonesse was, supposedly, a **flooded** country west of Cornwall.

A DROWNED WORLD

Part of this myth may actually be true. The isles have been called "the last, lonely **hilltops** of a **long-drowned** world." About 15,000 years ago, the lands **off** Cornwall were above sea level. The sea has **risen** four metres in the last three thousand years, which is why today walls on the islands disappear into the sea. Scientists think the sea **flooded** the central plain around 400-500 **AD**. A Roman document talks about a "singular island", while

medieval writers talk about 140 churches submerged between Cornwall and the Scilly Isles, with fishermen catching pieces of doors and windows in their [nets](#).

FEW RESIDENTS

Just five of the islands are inhabited. The population is about 2,300, reaching four thousand in the summer. The population was just two thousand a little over two hundred years ago. In the past, the isles were famous for their dangerous rocks and [towering cliffs](#). Many sailors died in their [wrecked](#) ships just kilometres from the safety of England's [mainland](#). The land itself was also unsafe — in medieval times, [Barbary pirates](#) often [raided](#) the islands to capture people for the [slave trade](#).

PRINCE OF WALES

The Scilly Isles are part of the [Duchy](#) of Cornwall, a centuries-old [fiefdom](#) now under the [stewardship](#) of the Prince of Wales, a title inherited by Prince William when his father Charles became king. Most residents rent their homes from the Prince of Wales, and the [Duchy](#) provides much of his [income](#) (£22.2 million in 2020). When Charles visited the islands with Diana and their sons in the 1980s, the paparazzi hired boats to follow the royal family. The locals [delighted](#) in sending the paparazzi to the wrong islands.

UN-BRITISH SUNSHINE

One uninhabited island of just one acre gives its name to the entire archipelago. The five inhabited islands are called St. Mary's, Tresco, St. Martin's, Bryher and St. Agnes. Tresco's main [landmark](#) is the Abbey Garden, a seventeen-acre oasis containing 20,000 plants from eighty countries. Nearby, the Valhalla Museum has a collection of [figureheads](#) from hundreds of [shipwrecks](#) around the islands. Although tourism is now the islands' main industry, for decades narcissus flowers [drove](#) the economy. Flowers bloom early on the islands and farmers in the 19th century sent their flowers to

England early [to beat](#) the [mainland](#) market. Globalisation eventually ended this advantage, but the spectacular beaches and the weather — very [unBritish](#) with 7.6 hours of sunshine a day in July — soon made the island a very popular resort for Brits looking for sun, sand and watersports. The wildlife and gardens are exotic, and the atmosphere is calm and one of times past. The skies are incredibly clear at night, allowing [deep-sky viewing](#), and [birdwatchers](#) arrive in their thousands in October to see rare and migratory birds visiting the islands.

HOUSING PROBLEMS

Tranquillity is the [pervading](#) atmosphere, but the islands are not without problems. Housing demand [outstrips supply](#) (erta”), and local [incomes](#) are low compared with [mainland](#) England. The [local council](#) recently declared a housing crisis. On the other hand, there is one problem the island does not suffer from. The islands are called “the land that crime forgot” because of the low crime rate. In the memoirs of one policeman stationed on the islands for ten years, *The Life of a Scilly Sergeant*, author Colin Taylor shocked his readers with tales of burglars who left fried eggs as their calling card, and a [short-sighted](#) horse who terrified neighbours by [crashing](#) into parked cars. Neighbours shocked Taylor himself by leaving their front doors [unlocked](#)! www.visitislesofscilly.com

Glossary

- **south-westernmost** = più a sud-ovest
- **mainland** = terra ferma
- **income** = reddito
- **delighted** = dilettersi
- **landmark** = simbolo, monumento
- **deep-sky viewing** = astronomia amatoriale
- **unlocked** = aperte, non chiuse a chiave
- **off the tip of Cornwall** = di fronte alla punta della penisola della Cornovaglia
- **pervading** = dominante
- **nets** = reti
- **towering cliffs** = scogliere altissime
- **slave trade** = tratta schiavista
- **drove** = spingere
- **unBritish** = non britannico
- **supply** = offerta
- **buried** = seppellire
- **off** = di fronte alla costa
- **figureheads** = polene
- **long-drowned** = sommerso da molto tempo
- **shipwrecks** = relitti
- **to beat** = vincere, battere
- **birdwatchers** = osservazione degli uccelli
- **crashing** = schiantarsi
- **fiefdom** = feudo
- **hilltops** = colline
- **raided** = assalire, saccheggiare
- **stewardship** = amministrazione
- **short-sighted** = miope
- **flooded** = allagato
- **risen** = alzarsi
- **wrecked** = naufragare
- **steeped** = avvolte

- **Barbary pirates** = pirati barbareschi (ottomani)
- **Duchy** = ducato
- **outstrips** = superare
- **local council** = amministrazione locale
- **AD** = AD: AnnoDomini (d.C.)