

ESAME DI STATO DI ISTRUZIONE SECONDARIA SUPERIORE

Indirizzo: IT04 – TURISMO

ARTICOLAZIONE CONDUZIONE DEL MEZZO

Tema di: LINGUA INGLESE

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Shuna: the overlooked jewel off the west of Scotland

“I’ll meet you at 5pm on the Arduaine Point jetty,” the island’s owner, Eddie Gully, had said in the handwritten letter he’d sent me a few weeks earlier. A study of a map revealed our mainland rendezvous to be a mere 100 miles north-west of Glasgow. Perversely, that’s probably the reason Shuna has stayed under the radar for so long: most tourists in search of Hebridean enchantment head further north to well-known islands of Mull and Skye. Those who do stay south make for Islay or Jura, and fail to spot the tiny cluster that is the Slate Islands, one of which is Shuna (not to be confused with the island of the same name in Loch Linnhe to the north).

It took just 10 minutes in Eddie’s trim vessel for the Boat House, one of five Isle of Shuna cottages, to heave into view. Tucked behind a rudimentary harbour and dwarfed by the mass of Shuna’s wooded hills, our accommodation was a dainty blue lozenge, its seaward end – almost entirely of glass – a flash of light in the sunshine. My two companions and I bundled gleefully up its stairs to a bright, modern living area with a swish kitchen and a balcony for breakfasting in the company of swallows. A few minutes’ training from Rob and Kathryn James – the island’s affable managers and its only permanent population – in operating the little ex-military assault boats, and Shuna and its salty environs were all ours.

Over the week we became aware of the distinct cadences of Shuna, whose only timetable is the rising and setting of the sun. It has no televisions or radios to disturb the peace. Its otters, buzzards, porpoises, seals and deer are there again tomorrow if you miss them today. The only event we could set our watches by was Rob dropping off a printed weather forecast each morning so we could gauge whether it was safe to take the boats out. It was usually fine, so we circumnavigated the island, also acquainting ourselves with the modest hills and defiant hamlets of Luing, Shuna’s more substantial neighbour to the west.

Exploring on foot we found that, although only three miles long by one-and-a-half wide, Shuna does not give up its treasures easily. We moseyed happily for hours through scrub birch and oak copses, but somehow overlooked the little cove that harbours the island’s shipwreck (an elderly wooden ferry hauled up to moulder away). Later in the week, intent on seeking out some ancient graves, we marched up sylvan hill and down marshy dale but had to content ourselves with some iron age burial mounds and a brace of ruined mills from Shuna’s more populous past. We weren’t too upset, for the walk had included red deer sightings, a mammoth rockpooling session and the gorgeous sight of Shuna Castle burnished by an early summer sun.

Ah yes, Shuna Castle. Built in 1911 by adventurer and philanthropist George Alexander MacLean Buckley, with no expense spared, the crenellated pile was abandoned in the 1980s and, like the

35 ferry and mills, is now crumbling away. That's not to say that Shuna lives in the past: the Boat House is lit by LEDs and most of the electricity for the island's five holiday properties comes from solar panels and a small wind turbine.

"We've got plans to go 100% green," said Eddie, who was born and brought up on the island.

40 Eddie's joy at Shuna's many charms was infectious, and not the least of them is its isolation. It gave the feel of an adventure to our midweek trip to replenish provision. We sailed north past a sprinkling of isles encrusted with tooth-like rocks and speckled with impossibly remote houses. Beyond Ardmaddy Castle, on the mainland, we cruised, our little outboard motor throbbing away, until we landed, an hour after we had set out, at Balvicar on Seil.

And so the days passed in a timeless haze. When we weren't exploring, we were pootling about on sit-on kayaks, being taken out on a venerable racing catamaran, or learning archery from Rob and Kathryn, with the castle as a picturesque backdrop.

45 Here, a kindly gust took one of my arrows right into the heart of the target. "Bull's-eye!" I exclaimed triumphantly, though I might just as well have been referring to our choice of holiday.

Adapted from *The Guardian*, 7 March 2015

Comprehension and analysis

Answer the following questions by using complete sentences and your own words.

1. What is Shuna and where is it?
2. Explain the meaning of the expression "*Shuna has stayed under the radar for so long*" (line 4) by referring to the text.
3. Where did the writer of the article stay?
4. How many people live in Shuna?
5. What are the main events marking the rhythm of the day in Shuna?
6. What ruins did the writer of the article see?
7. How can time be spent in Shuna?
8. Who are Rob and Kathryn?
9. Explain the expression "*Bull's eye!*" (line 45) in the context of the passage.
10. What makes Shuna attractive?

Production

Choose **one** of the following questions.

Number your answer clearly to show which question you have attempted.

Either

1. Use the information in the article to write the text for a website advertising Shuna for holidays.

Or

2. Imagine you are the owner of a holiday cottage in Shuna. You would like to rent it out to holidaymakers. Use the information in the article to write an appealing advertisement.

Durata massima della prova: 6 ore.

E' consentito soltanto l'uso di dizionari bilingue e monolingue.