

= Islay =

Islay ( / ʔaʔljʔ / EYE @-@ Iʔ ; Scottish Gaelic : Ìle , pronounced [ ʔiʔIʔ ] ) is the southernmost island of the Inner Hebrides of Scotland . Known as " The Queen of the Hebrides " , it lies in Argyll just south west of Jura and around 40 kilometres ( 25 mi ) north of the Irish coast . The island 's capital is Bowmore where the distinctive round Kilarrow Parish Church and a distillery are located . Port Ellen is the main port .

Islay is the fifth @-@ largest Scottish island and the seventh @-@ largest island surrounding Great Britain , with a total area of almost 620 square kilometres ( 239 sq mi ) . There is ample evidence of the prehistoric settlement of Islay and the first written reference may have come in the 1st century AD . The island had become part of the Gaelic Kingdom of Dál Riata during the Early Middle Ages before being absorbed into the Norse Kingdom of the Isles . The later medieval period marked a " cultural high point " with the transfer of the Hebrides to the Kingdom of Scotland and the emergence of the Clan Donald Lordship of the Isles , originally centred at Finlaggan . During the 17th century the Clan Donald star waned , but improvements to agriculture and transport led to a rising population , which peaked in the mid @-@ 19th century . This was followed by substantial forced displacements and declining resident numbers .

Today , it has over 3 @,@ 000 inhabitants and the main commercial activities are agriculture , malt whisky distillation and tourism . The island has a long history of religious observance and Scottish Gaelic is spoken by about a quarter of the population . Its landscapes have been celebrated through various art forms and there is a growing interest in renewable energy . Islay is home to many bird species such as the wintering populations of Greenland white @-@ fronted and barnacle goose , and is a popular destination throughout the year for birdwatchers . The climate is mild and ameliorated by the Gulf Stream .

= = Geography = =

Islay is 40 kilometres ( 25 mi ) long from north to south and 24 kilometres ( 15 mi ) broad . The east coast is rugged and mountainous , rising steeply from the Sound of Islay , the highest peak being Beinn Bheigier , which is a Marilyn at 1 @,@ 612 feet ( 491 m ) . The western peninsulas are separated from the main bulk of the island by the waters of Loch Indaal to the south and Loch Gruinart to the north . The fertile and windswept southwestern arm is called The Rinns , and Ardnave Point is a conspicuous promontory on the northwest coast . The south coast is sheltered from the prevailing winds and , as a result , relatively wooded . The fractal coast has numerous bays and sea lochs , including Loch an t @-@ Sailein , Aros Bay and Claggain Bay . In the far southwest is a rocky and now largely uninhabited peninsula called The Oa , the closest point in the Hebrides to Ireland .

The island 's population is mainly centred around the villages of Bowmore and Port Ellen . Other smaller villages include Bridgend , Ballygrant , Port Charlotte , Portnahaven and Port Askaig . The rest of the island is sparsely populated and mainly agricultural . There are several small freshwater lochs in the interior including Loch Finlaggan , Loch Ballygrant , Loch Lossit and Loch Gorm , and numerous burns throughout the island , many of which bear the name " river " despite their small size . The most significant of these are the River Laggan which discharges into the sea at the north end of Laggan Bay , and the River Sorn which , draining Loch Finlaggan , enters the head of Loch Indaal at Bridgend .

There are numerous small uninhabited islands around the coasts , the largest of which are Eilean Mhic Coinnich and Orsay off the Rinns , Nave Island on the northwest coast , Am Fraoch Eilean in the Sound of Islay , and Texa off the south coast .

= = = Geology and geomorphology = = =

The underlying geology of Islay is intricate for such a small area . The deformed Palaeoproterozoic igneous rock of the Rhinns complex is dominated by a coarse @-@ grained gneiss cut by large

intrusions of deformed gabbro . Once thought to be part of the Lewisian complex , it lies beneath the Colonsay Group of metasedimentary rocks that forms the bedrock at the northern end of the Rinns . It is a quartz @-@ rich metamorphic marine sandstone that may be unique to Scotland and which is nearly 5 @,@ 000 metres thick . South of Rubh ' a ' Mhail there are outcrops of quartzite , and a strip of mica schist and limestone cuts across the centre of the island from The Oa to Port Askaig . Further south is a band of metamorphic quartzite and granites , a continuation of the beds that underlie Jura . The geomorphology of these last two zones is dominated by a fold known as the Islay Anticline . To the south is a " shattered coastline " formed from mica schist and hornblende . The older Bowmore Group sandstones in the west centre of the island are rich in feldspar and may be of Dalradian origin .

Loch Indaal was formed along a branch of the Great Glen Fault called the Loch Gruinart Fault ; its main line passes just to the north of Colonsay . This separates the limestone , igneous intrusions and Bowmore sandstones from the Colonsay Group rocks of the Rhinns . The result is occasional minor earth tremors .

There is a tillite bed near Port Askaig that provides evidence of an ice age in the Pre @-@ Cambrian . In comparatively recent times the island was ice @-@ covered during the Pleistocene glaciations save for Beinn Tart a ' Mhill on the Rinns , which was a nunatak on the edge of the ice sheet . The complex changes of sea level due to melting ice caps and isostasy since then have left a series of raised beaches around the coast . Throughout much of late prehistory the low @-@ lying land between the Rinns and the rest of the island was flooded , creating two islands .

#### = = = Climate = = =

The influence of the Gulf Stream keeps the climate mild compared to mainland Scotland . Snow is rarely seen at sea level and frosts are light and short @-@ lived . However , wind speeds average 19 to 28 kilometres per hour ( 10 to 15 kn ) annually and winter gales sweep in off the Atlantic , gusting up to 185 kilometres per hour ( 115 mph ) . This can make travelling and living on the island during the winter difficult , while ferry and air links to the mainland can suffer delays . The driest months are April to July and the warmest are May to September , which as a result are the busiest times for tourism . Sunshine hours are typically highest around the coasts , especially to the west .

#### = = Etymology = =

Islay was probably recorded by Ptolemy as Epidion , the use of the " p " suggesting a Brittonic or Pictish tribal name . In the seventh century Adomnán referred to the island as Ilea and the name occurs in early Irish records as Ile and as Íl in Old Norse . The root is not Gaelic and of unknown origin . In seventeenth century maps the spelling appears as " Yla " or " Ila " , a form still used in the name of the whisky Caol Ila . In poetic language Islay is known as Banrìgh Innse Gall , or Banrìgh nan Eilean usually translated as " Queen of the Hebrides " and Eilean uaine Ìle ? the " green isle of Islay " A native of Islay is called an Ìleach , pronounced [ ?i?l?x ] .

The obliteration of pre @-@ Norse names is almost total and place names on the island are a mixture of Norse and later Gaelic and English influences . Port Askaig is from the Norse ask @-@ vík , meaning " ash tree bay " and the common suffix -bus is from the Norse bólstaðr , meaning " farm " . Gaelic names , or their anglicised versions such as Ardnave Point , from Àird an Naoimh , " height of the saint " are very common . Several of the villages were developed in the 18th and 19th centuries and English is a stronger influence in their names as a result . Port Charlotte for example , was named after Lady Charlotte Campbell , daughter of the island 's then owner , Daniel Campbell of Shawfield .

#### = = Prehistory = =

The earliest settlers on Islay were nomadic hunter @-@ gatherers who may have first arrived

during the Mesolithic period after the retreat of the Pleistocene ice caps . A flint arrowhead , which was found in a field near Bridgend in 1993 and dates from 10 @, @ 800 BC , is amongst the earliest evidence of a human presence found so far in Scotland . Stone implements of the Ahrensburgian culture found at Rubha Port an t @-@ Seilich near Port Askaig by foraging pigs in 2015 probably came from a summer camp used by hunters travelling round the coast in boats . Mesolithic finds have been dated to 7000 BC using radiocarbon dating of shells and debris from kitchen middens . By the Neolithic , settlements had become more permanent , allowing for the construction of several communal monuments .

The most spectacular prehistoric structure on the island is Dun Nosebridge . This 375 square metres ( 4 @, @ 040 sq ft ) Iron Age fort occupies a prominent crag and has commanding views of the surrounding landscape . The name 's origin is probably a mixture of Gaelic and Old Norse : Dun in the former language means " fort " and knaus @-@ borg in the latter means " fort on the crag " . There is no evidence that Islay was ever subject to Roman military control although small numbers of finds such as a coin and a brooch from the third century AD suggest links of some kind with the intermittent Roman presence on the mainland . The ruins of a broch at Dùn Bhoraraic south east of Ballygrant and the remains of numerous Atlantic roundhouses indicate the influences of northern Scotland , where these forms of building originate . There are also various crannogs on Islay , including sites in Loch Ardnave , Loch Ballygrant and Loch Allallaidh in the south east where a stone causeway leading out to two adjacent islands is visible beneath the surface of the water .

There is some controversy about the nature of the relationship between the indigenous peoples of Ireland and south west Scotland during the late Iron Age . The widely accepted theory is that the latter became populated by immigrants from the former , replacing an earlier culture , although it has also been suggested that the Gaels in this part of Scotland were indigenous to the area .

= = History = =

= = = Dalriada = = =

By the 6th century AD Islay , along with much of mainland Argyll , lay within the Gaelic kingdom of Dál Riata with strong links to Ireland and , according to the Senchus fer n @-@ Alban ( " The History of the Men of Scotland " ) , was ruled by the kin group Cenél nÓengusa . In 627 the son of a king of the Irish Uí Chóelbad , a branch of the Dál nAraidi kingdom of Ulster , was killed on Islay at the unidentified location of Ard @-@ Corann by a warrior in an army led by King Connad Cerr of the Corcu Réti , a kindred based in Cowal on the mainland of Scotland . The Senchus also lists what is believed to be the oldest reference to a naval battle in the British Isles ? a brief record of an engagement between rival Dál Riata groups in 719 .

There is evidence of another kindred on Islay , the Cenél Conchride , descended from a brother of the legendary Dál Riata king Fergus Mór but its existence seems to have been brief and the four hundred and thirty households of the island are later said to have been divided between three great @-@ grandsons of the eponymous founder of Cenél nÓengus : Lugaid , Connal and Galán .

= = = Norse influence and the Kingdom of the Isles = = =

The arrival of Scandinavian settlers on the western seaboard of Scotland in the ninth century had a long @-@ lasting effect . For the next four centuries and more all the islands of the west fell under the control of various rulers of the Kingdom of the Isles most of whom were of Norse origin . As is the case in the Northern Isles , the derivation of place names suggests a complete break from the past . Jennings and Kruse conclude that although there were settlements prior to the Norse arrival " there is no evidence from the onomasticon that the inhabitants of these settlements ever existed " . Gaelic continued to exist as a spoken language in the southern Hebrides throughout the Norse period , but the place name evidence suggests it had a lowly status , possibly indicating an enslaved population .

Godred Crovan was one of the Norse @-@ Gael rulers of this Hebridean sea kingdom who had a connection with Islay . His origins are obscure . The Chronicles of Mann call him the son of Harald the Black of Ysland , ( his place or origin variously interpreted as Islay , Ireland or Iceland ) and state he " so tamed the Scots that no one who built a ship or boat dared use more than three iron bolts " . Godred also became King of Dublin at an unknown date although in 1094 he was driven out of the city by Muircheartach Ua Briain , later known as High King of Ireland , according to the Annals of the Four Masters . He died " of pestilence " on Islay the following year . A local tradition suggests that a standing stone at Carragh Bhan near Kintra marks Godred Crovan 's grave . A genuine 11th century Norse grave @-@ slab was found at Dóid Mhàiri in 1838 , although it was not associated with a burial . The slab is decorated with foliage in the style of Ringerike Viking art and an Irish @-@ style cross , the former being unique in Scandinavian Scotland .

In the 12th century a granddaughter of Godred Crovan 's married the ambitious Somerled , a Norse @-@ Gael Argyll nobleman . Godred Olafsson , a grandson of Crovan , was an increasingly unpopular King of the Isles at the time and Somerled was spurred into action . The two fought the Battle of Epiphany in the seas off Islay in January 1156 . The result was a bloody stalemate , and the island kingdom was temporarily divided , with Somerled taking control of the southern Hebrides . Two years later Somerled completely ousted Godred and re @-@ united the kingdom , but the divide was re @-@ established after the former 's death in 1164 . His Clann Somhairle descendants continued to describe themselves as " King of the Sudreys " until the 13th century but following the 1266 Treaty of Perth the Hebrides were yielded to the Kingdom of Scotland .

= = = Scottish rule = = =

= = = Lords of the Isles = = =

Somerled 's descendants became the rulers of various powerful clans , including the MacDougalls , Clan Donald and the Macruaris . Alexander MacDougall 's support of the opponents of King Robert the Bruce led to the forfeiture of his lands and they were distributed between Aonghas Óg MacDonald of Islay and the chief of the Macruaris , Ruaidhri mac Ailein , who also held much of Lorne , parts of Lochaber , Garmoran and the North Isles . These estates were eventually inherited by Amie Macruairi of Garmoran . She had married her MacDonald cousin John of Islay in the 1330s , and he now controlled significant stretches of the western seaboard of Scotland from Morvern to Loch Hourn and the whole of the Hebrides save for Skye . From 1336 onwards John began to style himself Dominus Insularum ? " Lord of the Isles " , a title that implied a connection to the earlier Kings of the Isles and by extension a degree of independence from the Scottish crown and this honorific was claimed by his heirs for several generations .

Initially , the MacDonald Lords ' power base was on the shores of Loch Finlaggan in northeastern Islay . Successive chiefs of Clan Donald were proclaimed Lord of the Isles there and their advisory " Council of the Isles " met on Eilean na Comhairle . However , as their control of the west grew in strength the twin castles of Aros and Ardtornish in the Sound of Mull had become the " heart of the Lordship " by the early 15th century .

The Islay Charter , a record of lands granted to an Islay resident , Brian Vicar MacKay , by Domhnall of Islay , Lord of the Isles in 1408 , is one of the earliest records of Gaelic in public use , and is a significant historical document . In 1462 , John of Islay , Earl of Ross struck an alliance with Edward IV of England under the terms of the Treaty of Ardtornish @-@ Westminster . The onset of the Wars of the Roses prevented Edward from fulfilling his obligations as an ally , and in 1493 MacDonald was compelled to forfeit his estates and titles to James IV . After the forfeiture , James ordered Finlaggan demolished , its buildings razed , and the coronation stone destroyed to discourage any attempts at restoration of the Lordship . When Martin Martin visited Islay in the late 17th century he recorded a description of the coronations Finlaggan had once seen .

= = = 16th and 17th centuries = = =

Initially dispossessed in the wake of royal opposition to the Lordship , Clan MacDonald of Dunneveag's holdings in Islay were restored in 1545 . In 1549 , Dean Monro observed that the island was fertile , fruitful , and full of natural pastures , with good hunting and plentiful salmon and seals . He also referred to Dunneveag Castle in the south east , controlled by Clan Donald and Loch Gorm Castle on Eilean Mòr in Loch Gorm to the west , " now usurped by M<sup>r</sup> Gillayne of Doward " . This implied dispute with the Macleans continued and they were expelled from Loch Gorm by force in 1578 and defeated at the Battle of Traigh Ghruinneart in 1598 . However , a clash with the Irish branch of the family led by Sorley Boy MacDonnell and their unpopularity in Edinburgh ( where their use of Gaelic was regarded as barbaric ) weakened the MacDonald grip on their southern Hebridean possessions . In 1608 the Scottish crown mounted an expedition to subdue them and then in 1614 handed Islay over to Sir John Campbell of Cawdor in return for an undertaking to pacify the island . This the Campbells eventually achieved although a setback occurred during the Civil War when a Covenanter army under Sir David Leslie arrived on the island in 1647 . They besieged a royalist garrison at Dunneveag and laid waste to the island . It was not until 1677 that the Campbells felt sufficiently at ease there to construct Islay House at Bridgend ( which is now used as a hotel ) as their principal ( and unfortified ) island residence . The structure was built for Sir Hugh Campbell of Cawdor and is now a Category A listed building .

== British era ==

At the beginning of the 18th century much of the population of Argyll was to be found dispersed in small clachans of farming families and only two villages of any size ? Killarow near Bridgend and Lagavulin ? existed on Islay at the time . ( Killarow had a church and tolbooth and houses for merchants and craft workers but was razed in the 1760s to " improve " the grounds of Islay House . ) The agricultural economy was dependent on arable farming including staples such as barley and oats supplemented with stock @-@ rearing . The carrying capacity of the island was recorded at over 6 @, @ 600 cows and 2 @, @ 200 horses in a 1722 rental listing .

In 1726 Islay was purchased by Daniel Campbell of Shawfield . It remained in his family 's ownership until 1853 when it was sold to James Morrison of Berkshire , ancestor of the third Baron Margadale , who still owns a substantial portion of the island . A defining aspect of 19th century Argyll was the gradual improvement of transport infrastructure . Roads were built , the Crinan canal shortened the sea distance to Glasgow and the numerous traditional ferry crossings were augmented by new quays . Rubble piers were built at several locations on Islay and a new harbour was constructed at Port Askaig .

Initially , a sense of optimism in the fishing and cattle trades prevailed and the population expanded , partly as a result of the 18th century kelp boom and the introduction of the potato as a staple . The population of the island had been estimated at 5 @, @ 344 in 1755 and grew to over 15 @, @ 000 by 1841 . However , the sundering of the relationship between the landowners and the island 's residents proved consequential . When the estate owners realised they could make more money from sheep farming than from the indigenous small farmers , wholesale Clearances became commonplace . Four hundred people emigrated from Islay in 1863 alone , some for purely economic reasons , but many others having been forced off the land their predecessors had farmed for centuries . In 1891 the census recorded only 7 @, @ 375 citizens , with many evictees making new homes in Canada , the United States and elsewhere . The population continued to decline for much of the 20th century and today is about 3 @, @ 500 .

During World War I two troop ships foundered off Islay within a few months of each other in 1918 . The American vessel SS Tuscania was torpedoed by UB @-@ 77 on 5 February with the loss of over 160 lives and now lies in deep water 6 @. @ 4 kilometres ( 4 mi ) west of the Mull of Oa . On 6 October HMS Otranto was involved in a collision with HMS Kashmir in heavy seas while conveying troops from New York . Otranto lost steering and drifted towards the west coast of the Rinn . Answering her SOS the destroyer HMS Mounsey attempted to come alongside and managed to rescue over 350 men . Nonetheless , the Otranto was wrecked on the shore near Machir Bay with a

total loss of 431 lives . A monument was erected on the coast of The Oa by the American Red Cross to commemorate the sinking of these two ships . A military cemetery was created at Kilchoman where the dead from both nations in the latter disaster were buried ( the American bodies later removed ) .

During World War II , the RAF built an airfield at Glenegedale which later became the civil airport for Islay . There was also an RAF Coastal Command flying boat base at Bowmore from 13 March 1941 using Loch Indaal . In 1944 an RCAF 422 Squadron Sunderland flying boat 's crew were rescued after their aircraft landed off Bowmore but broke from her moorings in a gale and sank . There was an RAF Chain Home radar station at Saligo Bay and RAF Chain Home Low station at Kilchiaran .

= = Economy = =

The mainstays of the modern Islay economy are agriculture and fishing , distilling and tourism .

= = = Agriculture and fishing = = =

Much of Islay remains owned by a few non @-@ resident estate owners and sheep farming and the few dairy cattle herds are run by tenant farmers . Islay has some fine wild brown trout and salmon fishing and in September 2003 the European Fishing Competition was held on five of the island 's numerous lochs ; this was " the biggest fishing event ever to be held in Scotland " . Sea angling is also popular , especially off the west coast and over the many shipwrecks around the coast . There are about 20 commercial boats with crab , lobster and scallop fishing undertaken from Port Askaig , Port Ellen and Portnahaven .

= = = Distilling = = =

Islay is one of five whisky distilling localities and regions in Scotland whose identity is protected by law . There are eight active distilleries and the industry is the island 's second largest employer after agriculture . Those on the south of the island produce malts with a very strong peaty flavour , considered to be the most intensely flavoured of all whiskies . From east to west they are Ardbeg , Lagavulin , and Laphroaig . On the north of the island Bowmore , Bruichladdich , Caol Ila and Bunnahabhain are produced , which are substantially lighter in taste . Kilchoman is a microdistillery opened in 2005 toward the west coast of the Rinnns .

The oldest record of a legal distillery on the island refers to Bowmore in 1779 and at one time there were up to 23 distilleries in operation . For example , Port Charlotte distillery operated from 1829 to 1929 and Port Ellen is also closed although it remains in business as a malting . In March 2007 Bruichladdich announced that they would reopen Port Charlotte distillery using equipment from the Inverleven distillery .

= = = Tourism = = =

Some 45 @, @ 000 summer visitors arrive each year by ferry and a further 11 @, @ 000 by air . The main attractions are the scenery , history , bird watching and the world @-@ famous whiskies . The distilleries operate various shops , tours , and visitor centres , and the Finlaggan Trust has a visitor centre which is open daily during the summer .

= = = Renewable energy = = =

The location of Islay , exposed to the full force of the North Atlantic , has led to it being the site of a pioneering , and Scotland 's first , wave power station near Portnahaven . The Islay LIMPET ( Land Installed Marine Powered Energy Transformer ) wave power generator was designed and built by Wavegen and researchers from the Queen 's University of Belfast , and was financially backed by the European Union . Known as Limpet 500 , due to cabling constraints its capacity is limited to

providing up to 150 kW of electricity into the island 's grid . In 2000 it became the world 's first commercial wave power station . In March 2011 the largest tidal array in the world was approved by the Scottish Government with 10 planned turbines predicted to generate enough power for over 5 @, @ 000 homes . The project will be located in the Sound of Islay which offers both strong currents and shelter from storms .

= = = Transport = = =

Many of the roads on the island are single @-@ track with passing places . The two main roads are the A846 from Ardbeg to Port Askaig via Port Ellen and Bowmore , and the A847 which runs down the east coast of the Rhinns . The island has its own bus service provided by Islay Coaches and Glenegedale Airport offers flights to and from Glasgow International Airport and on a less regular basis to Oban and Colonsay .

Caledonian MacBrayne operate regular ferry services to Port Ellen and Port Askaig from Kennacraig , taking about two hours . Ferries to Port Askaig also run on to Scalasaig on Colonsay and , on summer Wednesdays , to Oban . The purpose @-@ built vessel , MV Finlaggan entered service in 2011 . ASP Ship Management Ltd operate a small car ferry on behalf of Argyll & Bute Council from Port Askaig to Feolin on Jura . Kintyre Express will begin operating passenger only services between Port Ellen and Ballycastle in Northern Ireland from Fridays to Mondays through June , July and August .

There are various lighthouses on and around Islay as an aid to navigation . These include the Rinns of Islay light built on Orsay in 1825 by Robert Stevenson , Ruvaal at the north western tip of Islay constructed in 1859 , Carraig Fhada at Port Ellen , which has an unusual design , and Dubh Artach , an isolated rock tower some 35 kilometres ( 22 mi ) to the north west of Ruvaal .

= = = Other activities = = =

Since 1973 the Ileach has been delivering news to the people of Islay every fortnight and was named community newspaper of the year in 2007 . The Islay Ales Brewery brews various real ales at its premises near Bridgend . In the early 21st century a campus of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig was set up on Islay , Ionad Chaluim Chille Ìle , which teaches Gaelic language , culture and heritage . The Port Mòr community centre at Port Charlotte , which is equipped with a micro @-@ wind turbine and a ground @-@ source heating system , is the creation of local development trust Iomairt Chille Chomain .

= = Gaelic language = =

Islay has historically been a very strong Gaelic @-@ speaking area . In both the 1901 and 1921 censuses , all parishes in Islay were reported to be over 75 percent Gaelic @-@ speaking . By 1971 , the Rhinns had dropped to 50 @-@ 74 percent Gaelic speakers and the rest of Islay to 25 @-@ 49 percent Gaelic speaker overall . By 1991 about a third of the island 's population were Gaelic speakers . In the 2001 census this had dropped to 24 percent , which , while a low figure overall , nonetheless made it the most strongly Gaelic @-@ speaking island in Argyll and Bute after Tiree , with the highest percentage recorded in Portnahaven ( 32 percent ) and the lowest in Gortontaoid ( 17 percent ) , with the far north and south of the island being the weakest areas in general .

The Islay dialect is distinctive . It patterns strongly with other Argyll dialects , especially those of Jura , Colonsay and Kintyre . Amongst its distinctive phonological features are the shift from long / a? / to / ?? / , a high degree of retention of long / e? / , the shift of dark / l ? ? / to / t ? / , the lack of intrusive / t ? / in sr groups ( for example / s ? ?o?n / " nose " rather than / s ? t ? ?o?n / ) and the retention of the unlenited past @-@ tense particle d ' ( for example , d 'èirich " rose " instead of dh 'èirich ) . It sits within a group of lexical isoglosses ( i.e. words distinctive to a certain area ) with strong similarities to southern Gaelic and northern Irish dialects . Examples are dhuit " to you " ( instead of the more common dhut ) , the formula gun robh math agad " thank you " ( instead of the

more common mòran taing or tapadh leat but compare Irish go raibh maith agat ) , mand " able to " ( instead of the more common urrainn ) or deifir " hurry " ( instead of the more common cabhag , Irish deifir ) .

### = = Religion = =

Associated with various Islay churches are cupstones of uncertain age ; these can be seen at Kilchoman Church , where the carved cross there is erected on one , and at Kilchiaran Church on the Rhinns . In historic times some may have been associated with pre @-@ Christian wishing ceremonies or pagan beliefs in the " wee folk " .

The early pioneers of Christianity in Dál Riata were Columba of Iona and Moluag of Lismore . The legacy of this period includes the 8th century Kildalton Cross , Islay 's " most famous treasure " , carved out of local epidiorite . A carved cross of similar age , but much more heavily weathered can be found at Kilnave , which may have served as a site of lay worship . Although the first Norse settlers were pagan , Islay has a substantial number of sites of drystone or clay @-@ mortared chapels with small burial grounds from the later Norse era . In the 12th century the island became part of the Diocese of Sodor and the Isles , which was re @-@ established by King Olaf Godredsson . The diocese fell within the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Nidaros and there were four principal churches on Islay in the Norwegian prestegjeld model : Kilnaughton , Kildalton , Kilarrow and Kilmany . In 1472 Islay became part of the Archdiocese of St Andrews .

Archibald Campbell , 5th Earl of Argyll was a strong supporter of the Reformation , but there is little evidence that his beliefs were greeted with much enthusiasm by the islanders initially . At first there were only two reformed churches but in 1642 three parishes were created , based at Kilchoman , Kilarrow and a new church at Dunyvaig . By the end of the century there were seven churches including one on Nave Island . Kilarrow Parish Church is round , as local folklore has it , to leave no corner for the devil to hide in . This " architectural gem " was constructed in 1767 by Daniel Campbell , the laird of Islay . The kirk on the Rhinns of Islay is St Kieran 's , located just outside the village of Port Charlotte and Port Ellen is served by St John 's . There are a variety of other Church of Scotland churches and various other congregations on the island . Baptists meet in Port Ellen and in Bowmore , the Scottish Episcopal Church of St. Columba is located in Bridgend and the Islay Roman Catholic congregation also uses St. Columba 's for its services .

### = = Media and the arts = =

Islay was featured in some of the scenes of the 1954 film The Maggie , and the 1942 documentary " Coastal Command " was partly filmed in Bowmore .

In 1967 ? 68 , folk @-@ rock singer Donovan included " The Isle of Islay " in his album , A Gift from a Flower to a Garden , a song praising the pastoral beauties of the island . " Westering Home " is a 20th @-@ century Scottish song about Islay written by Hugh S. Robertson , derived from an earlier Gaelic song .

In the 1990s the BBC adaptation of Para Handy was partly filmed in Port Charlotte and Bruichladdich and featured a race between the Vital Spark ( Para Handy 's puffer ) and a rival along the length of Loch Indaal . In 2007 , parts of the BBC Springwatch programme were recorded on Islay with Simon King being based on Islay . The British Channel 4 archaeological television programme Time Team excavated at Finlaggan , the episode being first broadcast in 1995 .

In 2000 , Japanese author Murakami Haruki visited the island to sample seven malt whiskies on the island and later wrote a travel book called If our language were whiskey .

### = = Wildlife = =

Islay is home to many species of wildlife and is especially known for its birds . Winter @-@ visiting barnacle goose numbers have reached 35 @,@ 000 in recent years with as many as 10 @,@ 000 arriving in a single day . There are also up to 12 @,@ 000 Greenland white @-@ fronted geese ,



and smaller numbers of brent , pinkfooted and Canada geese are often found amongst these flocks . Other waterfowl include whooper and mute swans , eider duck , Slavonian grebe , goldeneye , long @-@ tailed duck and wigeon . The elusive corncrake and sanderling , ringed plover and curlew sandpiper are amongst the summer visitors . Resident birds include red @-@ billed chough , hen harrier , golden eagle , peregrine falcon , barn owl , raven , oystercatcher and guillemot . The re @-@ introduced white @-@ tailed sea eagle is now seen regularly around the coasts . In all , about 105 species breed on the island each year and between 100 and 120 different species can be seen at any one time .

A population of several thousand red deer inhabit the moors and hills . Fallow deer can be found in the southeast , and roe deer are common on low @-@ lying ground . Otters are common around the coasts along Nave Island , and common and grey seals breed on Nave Island . Offshore , a variety of cetaceans are regularly recorded including minke whales , pilot whales , killer whales and bottle @-@ nosed dolphins . The only snake on Islay is the adder and the common lizard is widespread although not commonly seen . The island supports a significant population of the marsh fritillary along with numerous other moths and butterflies . The mild climate supports a diversity of flora , typical of the Inner Hebrides .

= = Notable natives = =

John Francis Campbell , authority on Celtic folklore and joint inventor of the Campbell ? Stokes recorder . The son of Daniel Campbell of Shawfield , his father 's bankruptcy prevented him inheriting the Islay estate . There is a monument commemorating him at Bridgend .

Glenn Campbell , Scottish political reporter for the BBC , was brought up on Islay and attended Islay High School .

Alistair Carmichael , the Liberal Democrat Deputy Chief Whip , was born on Islay to hill @-@ farming parents . He has represented Orkney and Shetland at Westminster since 2001 .

The Islay @-@ born Reverend Donald Caskie ( 1902 ? 1983 ) became known as the " Tartan Pimpernel " for his exploits in France during World War II .

John Crawford was born on Islay in 1783 and during a long career as a colonial administrator he became governor of Singapore . He also wrote a number of books including Journal of an Embassy from the Governor General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China ( 1828 ) .

David MacIntyre from Portnahaven , recipient of the Victoria Cross .

General Alexander McDougall , a figure in the American Revolution and the first president of the Bank of New York , was born in Kildalton in 1731 .

George Robertson , formerly secretary @-@ general of NATO and British Defence Secretary . In 1999 he was made Lord Robertson of Port Ellen .

Sir William Stewart ( born 1935 ) steered a course from Bowmore junior school to become the UK government ? s Chief Scientific Adviser in the late 1980s and early 1990s .