



ORKNEY ISLAND HOLIDAYS LTD

Paul & Louise Hollinrake
Furrowend, Shapinsay,
Orkney, KW17 2DY.
Tel : 01856 711373

Email : info@orkneyislandholidays.com
Web : www.orkneyislandholidays.com

Orkney and Shetland Combination Holiday

**A multi-interest Holiday in Orkney and Shetland,
Britain's most northerly islands, with Orkney Island Holidays Ltd.**

[See Holiday Schedule for Holiday dates and prices this year.](#)

9 nights.

Leaders Paul and Louise Hollinrake.



Enjoying the peace and tranquility of a typical Shetland seascape on a calm day.

[An introduction to your Holiday in Orkney and Shetland.](#)

Louise has had a life-long interest in Orkney and Shetland since her first visit at the age of ten. In 1986 she and Paul moved to live in Orkney and began leading guided holidays there. In 2001 they ran their first holiday in Shetland, and have continued to do so every year since. After each visit we fine tune and improve our itinerary, taking in new sites and opportunities which develop, so that we can share the very best of these fantastic Northern Isles with you.

We have chosen June and July for the Holiday because in our opinion it is the best time for the birds and flowers, the weather has usually warmed up and the daylight hours last long into the evening, known as the “Simmer Dim”. All of the islands’ special birds are in residence, and the flowers are quite amazing in variety and abundance. Shetland’s history and archaeology show the same influences as those of Orkney with subtle yet significant differences. Comparing the two adds to the appreciation of both.



One of the houses in Skara Brae Neolithic Village.



Skara Brae village

[Archaeology](#)

Orkney boasts World Heritage Archaeology with the ‘Neolithic Triangle’ of Maeshowe Chambered Tomb, Skara Brae Village and The Ring of Brodgar stone circle. Shetland has Jarlshof, a complex site spanning thousands of years, and the nearby Scatness dig, on-going for many years and now being consolidated for visitor access. Often there is a ‘living history’ presentation there in replica Iron Age and Pictish buildings.



Excavation at the Ring of Brodgar



Norse and Pictish trades displayed at Scatness

Flora and Fauna

The birds of Orkney benefit from the proximity of seashore, moorland and farmland, so we are likely to see lots of waders such as curlew, redshank and lapwing, with a cruising hen harrier or short-eared owl hunting on field or moor. The main features of the Shetland landscape are the cliffs and moors interspersed with lots of water – long arms of the sea called ‘voes’ and many freshwater lochs. The cliffs in both Orkney and Shetland are home to thousands and thousands of nesting seabirds, such as guillemots, razorbills and kittiwakes. In Shetland there are puffins galore. Everyone leaves with close-up photos of them! Every lochan has its red-throated diver, and the moors are home to golden plover, snipe, curlew, whimbrel and of course ‘bonxies’ or great skuas, plus their more acrobatic cousins, the arctic skuas, or “scootie aalins” as they are known locally.

The road sides, stream courses and hill slopes have varied wild flowers, and in June and July they are very abundant. In Orkney the rare *Primula scotica* can be found, while both island groups have northern marsh and heath spotted orchids plus a host of other delightful specialities.



“I’m back dear, is anybody home?”



Primula scotica



Insectivorous butterwort



Seals conserving their energy



Evidence of otter

You will see both common (harbour) seals and grey (atlantic) seals in both Orkney and Shetland. Orkney has 17% of the world’s grey seal population. Both species haul out in groups and we may hear them ‘singing’ – the strange noises are actually more like warnings to each other not to get too close! Common seals pup in June and July so we may see mothers and pups playing in the shallows.

Otters are here too, but more difficult to spot. In Shetland there are several places where we have seen them in the past, and the more eyes you have looking the greater the chance. We’ll be doing our best!

Geology.

The geology of Shetland is very diverse. “When God had finished making the world he had some bits left over. He threw them into the sea and the result was Shetland!” We will see soapstone (steatite) quarries used in past centuries by the Vikings for cooking pots and ornament, and talc waiting to be shipped for current use. The story of volcanic violence is written in cliff faces and skerries, and evidence of last winter’s storms is especially dramatic at the “Grind o’da Navir”. The large mica component of many rocks means that beaches are full of beautiful sparkly pebbles, or shining sands.



Louise enjoying a geological exhibit



The Old Man of Hoy sea stack

In Orkney the geology is not so varied, being almost entirely sedimentary, but it has some intriguing patterns showing what was going on on the seabed as each layer was laid down millions of years ago. Fossils and imprints of plant life can be seen between the layers, and tessellated pavements – natural features that look like medieval road surfaces – occur on the top of cliffs.

History.

Orkney and Shetland were part of the Pictish Kingdom until the Norse arrived, and both periods have left their effect on the landscape. Orcadians and Shetlanders are proud of their Norse ancestry and links with Norway are kept very much alive. In World War Two Shetland was the base for a Norwegian resistance operation known as the Shetland Bus, first at Lunna and then in Scalloway. Louise spent many childhood Holidays in Scalloway and is still friends with the family who maintained the Shetland Bus boats, and we hope to meet and chat with Billy, one of the sons.



Burroughston Broch, Shapinsay, Orkney



Mousa Broch, Shetland

Iron Age Brochs are evident in both Orkney and Shetland. Orkney has three good examples, Gurness, Burroughston and Midhowe, open to the public, while in Shetland Mousa is the best example in the World and hosts 1000s of breeding stormie petrels.

Norse place names abound throughout the islands, and Orkney has many interesting sites associated with the 'Orkneying Saga', a collection of tales about the Norse Earldom. In both World Wars Scapa Flow in Orkney hosted the British Fleet and was the location for many adventures.

The proposed Itinerary.

The approach and mix on the Orkney and Shetland Combination Holiday will be the same as all our Holidays: friendly groups of like-minded individuals, interesting days, peaceful nights, long evenings, both of us on hand. We are using good quality Hotel accommodation, all with ensuite facilities and each chosen because it has comfortable rooms, excellent food and is located within easy reach of the sites we plan to visit in that part of Orkney and Shetland. In Orkney the hotel is the Lynnfield in Kirkwall, www.lynnfieldhotel.com and in Shetland the Sumburgh Hotel, www.sumburghhotel.com.

We have a superb itinerary worked out, so that we can share these fantastic places with you.

Day 1: Travel to Orkney. Meet as a group before dinner at the Lynnfield Hotel. We can meet you at the airport or ferry terminal on this day and take you to the hotel.
Night Lynnfield Hotel.

Day 2: A mixed day of wildlife and archaeology in Orkney's West Mainland, visiting the World Heritage Neolithic sites of Skara brae and the Ring of Brodgar, and the sea cliffs of Marwick Head.
Night Lynnfield Hotel

Day 3: A day trip to the island of Shapinsay with its Iron Age broch and Mill Dam RSPB Bird Reserve. If the weather permits it may be possible to do a short trip in our workboat to nearby uninhabited islands with their flowers and birds.
Night Lynnfield Hotel

Day 4: More archaeology with Maeshowe Chambered Cairn and perhaps some of the smaller, less well-known Mainland Sites, plus the moors for birds, and geology at the cliffs.
Night Lynnfield Hotel



Gannet over the sea



Orchid in marshy ground

Day 5: Scapa Flow and the Churchill Barriers, via the Italian Chapel to the island of South Ronaldsay, where choices of scenic walks, birds, flowers and archaeology await you. *Dinner Lynnfield Hotel, night on Northlink ferry to Shetland*

Day 6: On the way from Lerwick to Sumburgh we will visit Catpund Viking Soapstone Quarry with its wild flowers. After lunch we will head up to look at Sumburgh Head RSPB Bird Cliffs and meet our first Shetland puffins!
Night Sumburgh Hotel

Stormie petrel visit : We will attempt to visit the island of Mousa on one of our nights at Sumburgh depending on the weather, to see the World famous Broch and its breeding stormie petrels, aka alamootie, or oily squirts!



Plantboat



Xyloboat

Day 7: Exploring many interesting sites for archaeology and wildlife in South Shetland, such as Jarlshoff; Dunrossness Croft House Museum; St. Ninian's Isle; Spiggie Loch & Peerie Voe; Scatness.

Night Sumburgh Hotel

Day 8: An options day. Either a day out on the Isle of Noss National Nature Reserve, seeing spectacular sea cliffs stuffed with sea birds. Or a mystery tour of special sites in West Mainland.

Night Sumburgh Hotel

Day 9: Today we visit the ancient Shetland capital of Scalloway with its World War 2 Shetland Bus Memorial, and its special links with the brave Norwegian resistance movement. Then on to the Tingwall Loch and Norse Parliament Ting site. In the afternoon we can explore the superb new Shetland Museum in Lerwick, and perhaps the Up Hellya Museum with records of the famous Fire Festival.

Night Sumburgh Hotel

Day 10: *Depart after breakfast.*



Shetland yoles.



Stormie petrel at Mousa.

The above itinerary is flexible and may be altered to make best use of local conditions and events each day. It also gives folk the chance to opt for more or less exercise on some days, as we can split into two smaller groups.

The Weather.

The weather is variable, but generally we have lots of sun, some wind and some rain during the Holiday, sometimes all in the same day. The wind usually keeps it cool and has the advantage of removing any midges which might venture out if it's flat calm – which can happen but is rare. Make sure you bring waterproof jackets and trousers, wool hat, sunhat and sun cream, and be prepared for anything!

The Food.

The meals at our Hotels are really good. Breakfasts are hearty and set us up well for the day, and the evening meals are eaten in a relaxed informal friendly atmosphere, where we can enjoy the company of our fellow explorers. Dinner is chosen from a menu, while breakfast consists of a choice of cereals, toast, fruit, yoghurt, etc, your choice of cooked food and tea or coffee. Packed lunches are usually a sandwich, a piece of fruit, packet of crisps and a biscuit etc. Supplement them with snacks from the excellent village stores throughout the islands if you wish. Your Hotel bar bill can be settled by credit card at the end of your stay.

You can travel to Orkney and from Shetland either by Air or by Sea.

For Flights we suggest you contact Ridgway Travel in Kirkwall, our usual recommendation, Tel: 01856 873359 or e-mail ridgway@globalnet.co.uk.

We will transfer you to the airport on the final day

You could consider staying on for one or more **extra nights in Shetland** in either Lerwick or Sumburgh.

Please contact us for advice. There is plenty of choice of accommodation available but important to book in advance.

For Ferries contact Northlink, Tel: 0845 6000 449, www.northlinkferries.co.uk, e-mail info@northlinkferries.co.uk.

They have ferries from Aberdeen or Scrabster to Kirkwall or Stromness, Orkney, and from Lerwick, Shetland's capital. There is a regular bus service or taxis down to the Sumburgh Hotel at the southern tip of Shetland, about 20 miles away.

The ferry departs late afternoon for Orkney and Aberdeen on the final day, giving you time for further exploration.

What IS included in the Cost of your Orkney and Shetland Combination Holiday.

Nine nights full board ensuite accommodation in two good quality Hotels and a cabin on board the ferry to Shetland.

Daily transport by minibus and short walking excursions as per the suggested itinerary.

Guiding with Paul or Louise for eight days to many of the best habitats and regions of Orkney and Shetland that are good for wildlife and other interests.

Entrance fees to all sites of interest that we visit as part of your tour with us in Orkney and Shetland.

Ferry tickets to other islands in the tour itinerary and special evening excursion to Mousa to see stormie petrels.

What is NOT included in the Cost.

Travel to Orkney and from Shetland.

Travel and medical insurance: It is your responsibility to make sure you are adequately insured. We can advise.

All drinks from the bar, telephone calls, laundry and things of a personal nature.

Extra packed lunch snacks and drinks if required.



The complexity of the archaeology at Jarlshof.



St. Ninian's Isle Tombolo.

Is this the Holiday for you?

Are you looking for :

- a multi interest Holiday in a unique part of Britain ?
- a well organised and flexible Holiday where everything is planned well for you?
- a relaxed pace with a friendly and fun atmosphere ?
- an emphasis on having a good time and learning about lots of aspects of these fascinating islands ?

AND

- to be guided by two experienced people who just love the Northern Isles and know them really well ?
- to explore with a small group of new friends?
- to get the most out of your Holiday in Orkney and Shetland?

Then this Holiday is for you!

What to do now.

If you have any questions about this Holiday please get in touch with us by phone, letter or email, and we will do our best to help.

We hope that you decide to come with us to Orkney and Shetland. We think it is a terrific Holiday destination at a time of year when the weather and wildlife are at their very best.

If you would like to join us on this Orkney and Shetland Combination Holiday, please complete the enclosed booking form and post it to us as soon as you can, together with your deposit payment made payable to Orkney Island Holidays Ltd.

Our normal Orkney Island Holidays booking conditions apply. If you need a copy of these we will be happy to send them to you.

Once you have booked.

We will send confirmation of your booking on receipt of your completed booking form and deposit payment. Then when your balance is paid 10 weeks before departure, we will send you suggestions of what clothing and other things you might bring with you, plus suggestions about a few identification books that may be useful to you.

We look forward to hearing from you soon. **Best wishes, Paul & Louise Hollinrake.**



One of many Shetland ponies



Northern Marsh Orchid

There is so much to see in these Northern Isles. Come with us and find out for yourself.