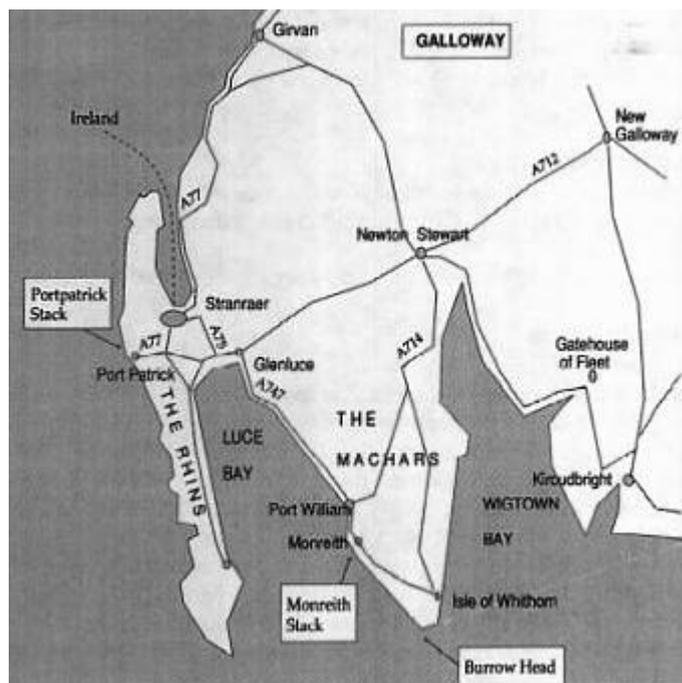




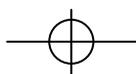
SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND

There are many more stacks off the Scottish coasts than in any other part of the British Isles. The stack population increases dramatically as soon as we cross the border into Scotland. The south west islands lie east of the outer Hebrides, south of Skye and west of the Scottish mainland. There are lots of them and several possess stacks. The Galloway peninsula also features some stacks. Many appear not to have been climbed. Jura being an exception but then the island has a long climbing heritage.

Galloway



This is that section of the Scottish coast that runs from just above Carlisle out to Stranraer and then north to Ayr and Glasgow. It is a relatively minor area that is still being explored. Three stacks are known about so far.





Stack Rock

Burrow Head

MR: Sheet 83 449341

There is a 100 feet high sea stack below the campsite here and to the west of the main cliff. Take the A747 from Monreith or the A746 from Wigtown becoming the A750 at Whitham to Isle of Whitham on the coast east of Burrow Head. A minor road runs south east to Cutcloy 2 miles away. Tracks now lead to the campsite in half a mile.

Detailed access: Make your way from the campsite to the stack -somehow.

The Fin 100 feet HVS 4c

Climb the direct line up orange coloured rock to the left-hand end of the flat, narrow arete right of the summit. Then, I imagine, continue up the arete.

First ascent: C MacAdam, A Fraser, 24 September 1980.

Monreith Stack

MR: Sheet 83 370393

This stack doesn't have its own name so I have taken a liberty and given it one. It is, in fact, a pinnacle providing very good bouldering. The rock has the strange name of greywacke. The stack is south of the A747 - but is not a jumbo. Drive east from Stranraer along the A75 for about 13 miles to Glenluce. Take the A747 going south east to the tip of The Machars peninsula. Twenty three miles later you reach Port William. About four miles later you pass Monreith and come to a campsite. Go to a carpark by the beach via a turning by the St. Medan golf course. Walk east across Back Bay to reach the stack in less than a half mile.

Detailed access: Low tide access is needed I think.

First ascent: Unknown.

Portpatrick Stack

50 feet Severe

MR: Sheet 82 993544 (approx.)

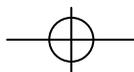
Another christening. There is a small sea stack just over half a mile north of Portpatrick harbour. Take the A77 south and then west from Stranraer to Portpatrick. Walk north west up the coast to the stack which you reach before the radio aerials.

Detailed access: No information.

Climb the obvious landward-facing groove system.

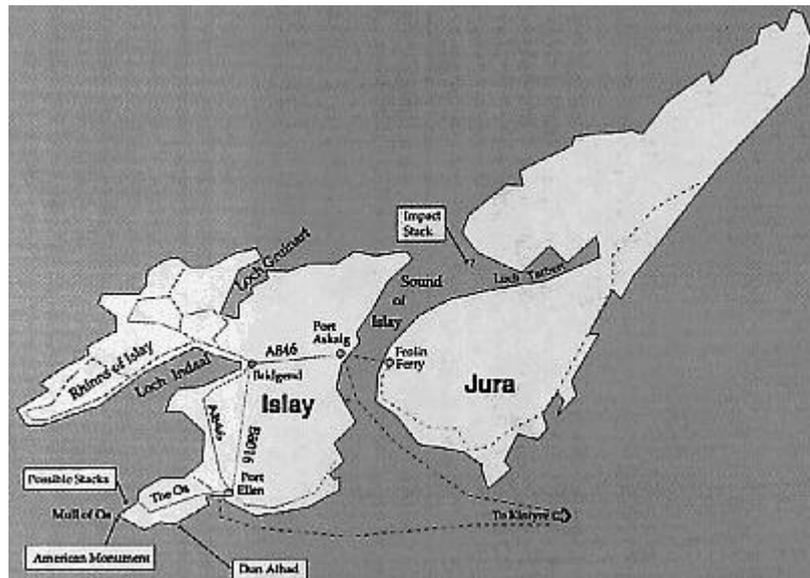
First ascent: Unknown.

Next we look at the islands east of the outer Hebrides and south of Skye. Apart from Rhum they are considered a backwater from the climbing point of view. However there are a fair number of stacks on these islands. If you happen to be a sailing



climber then knocking them off can be quite enjoyable. Starting from the south the first one encountered is Islay.

Islay



Pronounced 'ila' this island lies in the Firth of Lorn south of Mull. For the most part it is low lying and is principally noted, in some quarters, for there being eight whisky distilleries. Such a number in a small area not being found elsewhere. You can sail to Islay by Caledonian MacBrayne ferry from Kintyre to either Port Ellen or Port Askalg and the crossing takes about two hours.

The coastline from the Mull of Oa to Port Ellen is steep and eroded into caves and stacks. Only sketchy information is available. The stacks are not impressive enough to attract climbers in their own right and nor are the cliffs big enough to attract climbers in their own right and so bring attention to the stacks. You can be assured of peace and quiet.

Dun Athad

120 feet Easy

MR: Sheet 60 324412 (approx.)

This stack has an iron age hill fort on the top. A grassy isthmus links it to the mainland. The seaward ridge is little more than a scramble but enjoyable enough.

Stack Rock

Detailed access: Go to Port Ellen. Take the minor road south west for the Mull of Oa. At Risabus, 4 miles from Port Ellen, take a track going to the south east. At the t-junction threequarters of a mile further on take the right-hand track for just over a mile to Inerval. Strike across moor land south east to reach the coast in half a mile. Search out the stack. No further information.

First ascent: Unknown.

American Monument Stacks

80 feet

MR: Sheet 60 270415

This monument is a tall, pointed, stone tower. To the north of it there are schist stacks reaching a maximum height of 80 feet. Start from Port Ellen and take the minor road to Cragabus and Risabus. From the end of the road it is a two and a half mile walk to the American Monument.

Detailed access: No further information.

First ascent: Unknown.

Jura

A stack was found in West Loch Tarbert and climbed by a sailing stack climber called I. Davidson.

Impact Stack

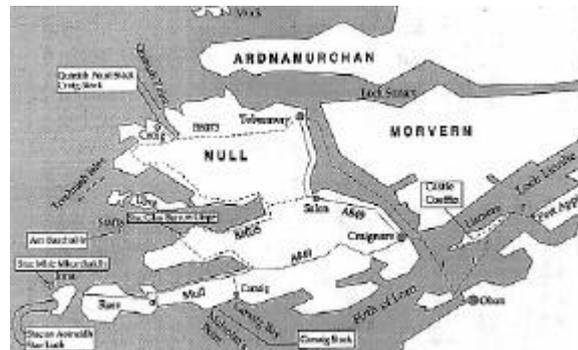
80 feet Severe

The line is "excitingly loose" according to the first ascensionists and it is mentioned by them "more as a warning to other owners of rose tinted binoculars. " The exact line is not known, nor is the exact location!

Detailed access: By sailing boat.

First ascent: I. Davidson, P. Heneghan, P. Stewart, May 1988.

Lismore, Mull And Staffa



This area is dominated by the island of Mull. It has a scattering of much smaller islands around it, some of which are famous - Iona, Staffa - and others which are relatively minor - Muck - or almost unknown like Lismore. There are about ten stacks here and climbing sailors will be at a distinct advantage.

Lismore

This long narrow island is set in the mouth of Loch Linnhe where it becomes the Firth of Lorn to the east of Mull. It can be reached by ferry from Oban or from Port Appin. The B8045 runs the length of the island. There is a stack but the information is not complete.

Castle Coeffin

MR: Sheet 49 853437

There is ivy-covered masonry, a ruin of some sort, set on top of a rocky limestone stack. A quarter mile south west of Clachan on the B8045 take a track heading west. It curves and eventually goes north to Castle Coeffin in about a mile.

Detailed access: No information.

First Ascent: Very long ago by the castle builders.

Mull

This is the second largest inner Hebridean island after Skye and, like Skye, has a very indented coastline. It has a web site as well. The stacks are in the south and the north so you need transport to cross the island. A Caledonian MacBrayne vehicle ferry runs from Oban to Craignure and the crossing time is 45 minutes. The long peninsula in the south is called the Ross of Mull and on its south side is Malcolm's Point and Carsaig Bay.

Stack Rock

Carsaig Stack

MR: Sheet 48497185 (approx.)

At Malcolm's Point there occur natural rock arches called Carsaig Arches. This stack, a tall pinnacle, is pierced by one such arch. It is 6 km south west from Carsaig Bay. A minor road runs south from Pennyghael on the A849 to Carsaig Bay.

Detailed access: Walk along the coastal path south west from Carsaig Bay until you find the stacks.

'Landward Side' 50 feet V.Diff

Climb the landward side encountering loose rock at the top.

First ascent: Unknown.

Stac Glas Bun Un Uisge

MR: Sheet 48 415305

On the coast of Ardmeanach. From the B8035 at Balnahard (MR: sheet 48 452343) go south and take a track to Balmeanach half a mile away. Now walk south west along the coast with steep slopes to traverse and no path for 3 miles to the stack.

Detailed access: No information.

First ascent: No information.

Moving across to the north west of the island we find an area called Quinish with Quinish Point at its northern tip.

Quinish Point

MR: Sheet 47 408571

A small coastal stack is apparently to be found here. Go to Dearvaig on the B8073. Take a track north west to Cuin I mile away. Follow tracks northward to Mingary in two and a half miles. Follow a stream north west to the coast reached in I mile and then walk northwards to the point in just over a quarter of a mile. What a trek!

Detailed access: No information.

First ascent: Unknown.

The next area to the east is called Mornish and Croig is a small settlement on the east side of this looking across the sea loch back to the Quinish coast.

Croig

MR: Sheet: 47 402539

A stack is reported here, a small one, near Croig. The map reference is for Croig itself which is reached along a minor road north from the B8073. The views are supposed to be lovely.

Detailed access: No information.

First ascent: Unknown.

Iona

This island has great religious significance because of the landing by St. Columba in 563 AD and the subsequent monastery and abbey. A Caledonian MacBrayne ferry crosses from Fionnphort on Mull to Iona. It sails every day and the crossing takes 5 minutes.

Stac an Aoineidh

MR: Sheet 48 251225

This is shown on maps of the south west of Iona but no other information is available. There is a central islet with features to the north and south.

Detailed access: No information.

First ascent: Unknown.

Stac Liath

MR: Sheet 48 264239

A stack in the north of Camas Cuil an t-Saimh. A minor road crosses the island to this bay.

Detailed access: No help here apart from noting a need for a boat to get to Iona.

First ascent: Unknown.

Stac Mhic Mhurchaidh

MR: Sheet 48 241262

An islet/stack about 2 miles west of Iona.

Detailed access: By boat obviously. No further information.

First ascent: Unknown.

Staffa

This island, famous for the basalt columns of Fingal's Cave, is owned by the National Trust for Scotland and located close to the west side of Mull. It may also boast a stack. The feature is called Am Buachaille (as in The Herdsman!) and stands by Clamshell Cave. Take the boat from Mull to Staffa and land at Clamshell Cave.



Am Buachaille

MR: Sheet 47 326352

Since the island is owned by the National Trust and the presumed stack close to the landing place it is probably a very good idea to check with the National Trust over climbing access.

Detailed access: No information.

Stack Rock

First ascent: No details.

Treshnish Isles

A 5 mile long string of uninhabited islets and skerries strung out in an arc from Treshnish Point on Mull. You need to charter a boat to reach these islands. The central island is called Lunga. Off its west coast below Cruachan there may be a stack.

(There is certainly a stack in the Treshnish Isles, witness this quote from the Independent on Sunday, 12 Jan '97, Travel Special; "At Treshnish, seals bellyached on the rocks and vomiting fulmars and fussy puffins rootled around in the cliffs. Just offshore stood a mighty stack of basalt seething with guillemots and razorbills all effing and blinding at each other.")

Dun Cruit

95 feet

MR: Sheet 48 278420 (Cruachan map reference.)

It is separated from Lunga by a 2 yard channel.

Detailed access: No further information.

First ascent: Unknown.

Muck

This small island is about 15 miles north of Mull as the crow flies.

The Spichean

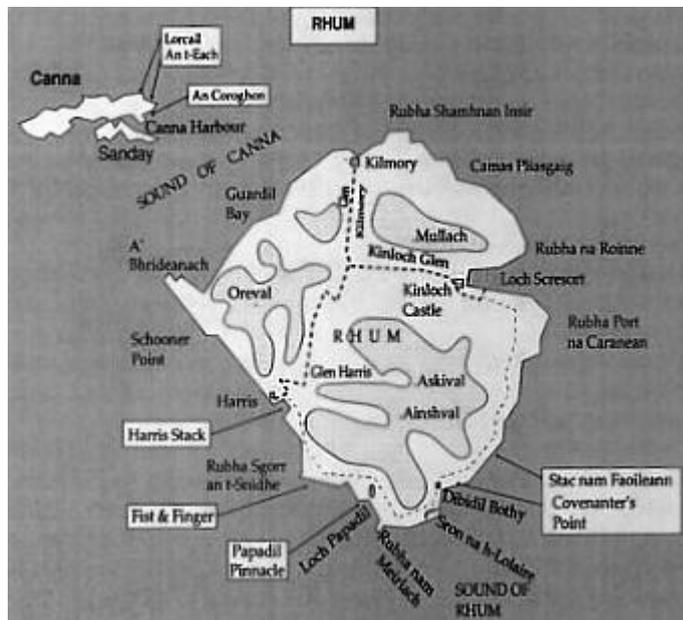
MR: Sheet 39 405790 (approx.)

This is a prominent rock pinnacle on the west side of a sheltered bay called Camas Mor. It may be a stack. Ferries from Rhum and Mallaig via Eigg call at Port Moran on the south side of Muck. Walk a mile west over rough ground to the bay called Camas Mor. The west side of it is 1 mile long and the pinnacle is somewhere along it.

Detailed access: Unknown.

First ascent: Unknown.

Rhum



Rhum is one of the inner Hebrides and is located just to the south of Skye. It is served by a Caledonian MacBrayne ferry service from Mallaig. The island is owned by the Nature Conservancy Council who class it as a National Nature Reserve and restrict access to people who apply successfully to the Chief Warden, Rum NNR, The White House, Isle of Rum, near Mallaig, Scotland. The telephone number is 01687 2026. Note that camping is restricted and the bothies cannot be booked in advance. Rhum is a very distinctive island, a little like a Scottish, and mountainous, Lundy. The best stack on the island is not a stack; it's Orval Pinnacle, a 100 feet high dramatic slender finger on the side of Orval mountain north of Harris. This provides an E3 5b route of the loose kind. The ferry lands at Kinloch and a track runs generally south from there to the Dìbidil bothy and beyond. This track is used to reach the stacks. We'll describe the stacks as you encounter them on this track.

Mountain Rescue: Contact the Chief Warden as best you can.

Stac nam Faileann

MR: Sheet 39 407932

This lies about one mile east of the bothy at Dìbidil. There are, in fact two stacks here with the second being a little to the south.

Detailed access: No details.

Stac nam Faolleann North 40 feet Diff



Stack Rock

Climb the landward side.

First ascent: Ian Clough & party, May 1967.

Stac nam Faoileann South Diff

This has a more pleasing shape than its neighbour.

Detailed access: Descend the sea cliffs for 100 feet then the information stops.

First ascent: Unknown.

Covenanter's Point Stack

MR: Sheet 39 404929

About threequarters of a mile east of Dibidil bothy there is a point with a stack. Hamish Brown in his guide to Rhum places a stack at Stoatir Point "c20 mins from Dibidil on the path to Kinloch." I assume it is the same one. Detailed access: Abseil from a block at the top of the cliffs to sea level. Go towards the stack and cross through a tunnel to the north side of the cliffs from where you can reach the stack at low tide. Diff.

Climb a ramp to the seaward side and then gain the summit.

First ascent: Wright & Eadie, 28th March 1980.

Papadil Pinnacle 30 feet Easy

MR: Sheet 39 364918

The name sounds like something from Tolkien's The Hobbit. This stack is to be found west of where the stream draining Loch Papadil runs into the sea. It's setting is particularly fine.

Detailed access: Continue along the track from Kinloch past Dibidil bothy until you reach Papadil. Now start exploring.

Climb the north east face heading to a deep crack in the seaward edge.

First ascent: Unknown.

Fist & Finger

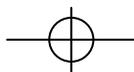
MR: Sheet 39 344942.

Named for its shape this stack is 550 yards south east of Sgor an tSnidhe which is two miles south of Harris. It is a twin stack with the main part connected to the shore by a gravelly neck uncovered at low tide. The landward side of the stack is steep whilst the side facing the sea overhangs. At the far north of this little peninsula is the Finger stack.

Detailed access: Go to Harris from Kinloch and then walk east towards Dibidil and so come to the stack.

Pinkey Crack V.Diff

Go to the south part of the main or Fist stack and climb up to a pedestal. Ascend a weakness leftwards until you can move right to the final wall and overhang. A curving crack (crux) is followed on the left.



First ascent: H. Brown & N. Hunter, 1st June 1970.

Note. The Finger may be unclimbed. (It was unclimbed in 1988.)

Sgor an t-Snidhe Stack

MR: Sheet 39 346931 (approx.)

This small stack is found off Sgor an t-Snidhe, the main point on the coast between Harris & Dibidil.

Detailed access: As for the Fist & Finger stack and encounter this stack en route. At low tide get over onto the stack and contour round the Papadil side to gain the seaward face.

The Sea Roofs V.Diff

Scramble up the north end and then climb two steep slabs, known as the sea roofs', to reach the summit.

First ascent: H. Brown, 1st June 1970.

Harris Bay Stack

MR: Sheet 39 338956 (approx.)

Another small and minor stack.

Detailed access: Reach Harris from Kinloch and find the stack in the bay.

No further information.

First ascent: Unknown.

A Possible Stack: Hamish Brown's Rhum guide shows an illustration of a flat-topped pinnacle with a sea cave through its base near the mouth of the Glen Shellesder burn which is near Guardil Bay. This is right across the island from Kinloch.

Canna

Canna lies about 5 miles to the west of Rhum and can be reached via a Caledonian MacBrayne ferry from Mallaig. The island is owned by the National Trust for Scotland and plenty of good camping sites can be found. There is a stack just over a quarter of a mile north from the harbour entrance and two more in the north east of the island.

An Coroghon

MR: Sheet 39 280055

This is a conglomerate stack almost linked to the mainland by a grassy bank and with a ruined tower on its summit.

Detailed access: Walk north from the harbour across Rubha Car-unnis then around the coast to An Coroghon. The stack should be obvious.

Stack Rock

First ascent: By the tower builders. I don't know who the first recreational ascensionist was.

An t-Each

MR: Sheet 39 277066

Conglomerate again. Just over threequarters of a mile across Compass Hill from An Coroghon. The hill has a plateau top which falls away to the sea via cliffs and steep slopes.

Detailed access: By boat again.

First ascent: Unknown again.

Lorcail

MR: Sheet 39269068

Another conglomerate stack. It is 1 1/4 miles north west from Canna Harbour across rough ground.

Detailed access: By boat or swimming I suspect.

First ascent: Unknown.

SKYE



This island has made its reputation because of its mountains. Stacks are a minor feature and, it can be argued, the most stack-like feature, The Old Man of Storr, is inland and not a sea stack at all. Nevertheless Skye does possess over a dozen stacks in the north and south west parts of the island.

In northern Skye there are three fingery peninsulas reaching out into the sea between Skye and the outer Hebrides. These are known by their old Norse names of Trotternish, Vaternish and, the most westerly, Durinish. To the south of Durinish is an area called Minginish. The stacks are located around the coast of Trotternish, to the south of Durinish and the west coast of Minginish.

Skye is reached by taking the new road bridge (toll) from just north of Kyle of Lochalsh to Kyleakin. Once across the A850 heads into the centre of the island via Broadford.

Mountain Rescue: There is a mountain rescue post at Glen Brittle. Contact this or Gerry Akroyd at Stac Lee, Glen Brittle.

We will go round the island in an anti-clockwise direction northwards from Portree on the east coast. The A855 circumnavigates the Trotternish peninsula, becoming the A856 at Uig. It provides the main access route to the Trotternish stacks.

Kilt Rock Area

MR: Sheet 23 507666

There are five possible stacks here. The rock is dolerite and the cliffs have steep shaly slopes below them.

Detailed access: Drive up the A855 from Portree north towards Staffin. Just by Loch Mealt on the left there is a turning on the right for a viewpoint and waterfall. There is a car park here and you now walk along the cliff top northwards for a quarter of a mile to Kilt Rock. The stacks as described in the Skye guides and the various New Climbs Supplements seem to be land-bound pinnacles. So I'll describe their location but not cover any climbs on them.

They lie a little further up the coast. Refer to the diagram above. In general descent is by abseil and any abseil stakes in place should be backed up. However there is a descent gully which is best located thus: from the car park walk north up the A855 to the public phonebox. Now locate a wall on the right and leave the road after it and walk north east towards the coast. You reach a wire fence preventing you falling down a gully that has cut back from the cliff edge. Go down this gully without too much difficulty. The Elishader Wall area is now to your south

Stack Rock

Elishader Pinnacle

This lies at the southern end of the Elishader Wall area and is an obvious feature visible from the descent gully. It seems to be a land-bound pinnacle.

Chimney Stack

Another land-bound pinnacle. It is composed of dolerite. (No doubt it was formed as a stack and the sea level dropped.) The local guides and SMC Journal term this a stack so, for the sake of thoroughness, details are included. The climbs here are big time E-grade jobs. Detailed access: Either abseil to the base of the stack from the adjacent cliff top or walk along the base of the cliffs to the stack and climb 50 feet of, possibly, HVS rock to reach it.

Bob Bob Stack Mod

This may be a proper stack albeit an inconsequential one. It is 200 yards north of Tempest Buttress and you climb(?) it from the col between it and the main cliff. The descent is by the second stack(?) which was unclimbed in 1986.

First ascent: B. Wightman, Bill Birkett, 26 May 1985.

Broken Needles

This is a suggestive name but there is no further information.

Stacan Gobhlach

MR: Sheet 23 452744

This twin stack with its lovely name (sic) is by a small but pronounced promontory with cliffs about a hundred feet high. Go up the A855 from Staffin and, just over two miles north of Flodigarry, take a track north to a viewpoint for a beautiful stretch of coast. You should be able to see the stack to the north. Walk half a mile up the coast to reach it.

Detailed access: Descend the cliffs, probably by abseil, and go out along the promontory. Swim across at low tide.

50 feet Diff

Climb the south ridge of each pinnacle.

First ascent: Guy Muhlemann, Simon Richardson, 8 June 1991.

Stac Bhuidhe

MR: Sheet 23 468746

This stack lies in a small bay just to the north of Stacan Gobhlach. Walk to the cliffs above that stack and continue along the coast for almost a 1/4 mile until you see the stack offshore.

Detailed access: Hmmm.

80 feet H. Severe

Climb the north ridge.

First ascent: Ed Grindley,? Williams, ano, 1990.

These first details were gleaned by Guy Muhlemann and Simon Richardson the second ascent. They presumed they were on the first but found an arm of a female shop dummy on the top of the stack together with a note. Don't ask

Stac Lachlainn

MR: Sheet 23 442755

This stack sports an HVS route. Go up the A855 from Staffin and just after it bridges the Kilmaluag river take a left turn onto a minor road and so reach Port Gobhlaig in threequarters of a mile. Turn left at the t-junction on the sea front and go as far as you can before parking the car. Walk northwards around the coastline for threequarters of a mile to reach the stack.

Detailed access: It stands on a foreshore that is uncovered at low tide.

Double Dragon 75 feet HVS 5a

This climbs the south west side of the stack. Start by locating a biggish ledge below a wall between two grooves at the bottom of this face. Climb the wall and carry on upwards until it is necessary to go leftwards to reach a loose groove. Ascend this for 15 feet and then go across on good holds to the belay. No information on the descent

First ascent: R. Bates, P. Agnew, Summer 1981.

Rubha Huinish

MR: Sheet 23 407770

This, the most northerly point in Skye, possesses three stacks in superb scenery with an interesting two mile walk to reach them. Go to Duntulm on the A855 and then east to where there is a public telephone about a half mile past Duntulm. Take a minor road going north east to Shulista and park your vehicle as near to its end as you can. Now walk north west for one and a half miles across gently falling and then rising ground to the top of Meall Tuath whose steep northern slopes overlook the peninsula of Rubha Huinish. On your west is a valley which provides a way to bypass these slopes so descend into it and walk north onto the peninsula. Go along the peninsula over a small hill to its tip where you will find the three stacks.

Detailed access: Abseil down the cliff north of a prominent corner to a small platform. Then swim for about 30 yards to the stacks

Stack 1 Severe

First ascent: Unknown.

Bodha Huinish

The central stack of the trio provides a sustained climb.

Eilean Groove 115 feet EI 5b

Stack Rock

There is an obvious corner facing north. Climb this meeting loose rock.

First ascent: Simon Richardson, Guy Muhlemann, 31 May 1992.

It appears that "highly skilled antics with grappling irons" were needed to reach this and the southernmost stack summits on the first 'impure' ascents according to the SMT "Islands of Scotland" guide.

Stack 3 E1

First ascent: Unknown.

Fladda-Chuam Isles

MR: Sheet 23 360800

These are an arc-shaped group of stacks and islands some 5 kilometres off Rubha Huinish. The rock is basalt and the stacks may be 100 to 130 feet high.

Detailed access: By chartered boat I guess and with an admiralty chart. I have no further information.

First ascent: Unknown.

Uamh Oir

c80 feet

MR: Sheet 23 370719

Tom Prentice refers to the Uig Organ Pipes in his book, 'The Climbing Guide To Scotland.' There doesn't appear to be a formal description of their location so what follows is, hopefully informed, guesswork.

Drive north from Uig on the A855 for just over five miles to Kilvaxter where a minor road goes off left. Ignore this but take the next minor road on the left in less than a quarter of a mile. Follow this for about a quarter of a mile and turn right onto a road running north west to the sea. Park 3/4 of a mile later at its end and walk north a short distance to the coast. Now walk west along this for about half a mile past a natural arch and continue for another 100 yards to, hopefully, the stack.

Detailed access: There is an easy descent 100 yards east of the stack. Hopefully, always hopefully with this description, landward access is feasible.

The Mitre 90 feet Severe

Climb up cracks in the east face staying on the left side of this face.

First ascent: Jerry Moffat, Chris Dale, 2 April 1984.

Mitre Groove 100 feet E2 5b

Gain a prominent square corner on the north corner of the stack from the right. Go up the corner to its top and then move right to a ledge and climb the crack above to the "rickety summit."

First ascent: Simon Richardson, Guy Muhlemann, 1 June 1992.

Stack of Skudiburgh

MR: Sheet 23 373647

This is just north of Ru Idrigill point immediately to the west of Uig. Go up the A855 for about one mile after the hairpin bend on the way north out of Uig. Here a track goes off left to Skudiburgh. Park the car at its end (half mile) if you can and walk south west to the obvious conical hill of Dun Skudiburgh on the coast just over half a mile away. The stack should be located near here.

Detailed access: Hopefully it is attainable from the land.

First ascent: Unknown.

Ru Idrigill Stack

MR: Sheet 23 376635 (estimated)

A solitary non-tidal stack is reported (thanks to Duncan Irving) to exist at Ru Idragill point on Trotternish. From Uig take minor roads leading south west towards the Ru Idragill headland. Where the road ends descend to sea level and go round the coast to the south west stack hunting.

Detailed access: You just read it!

Route 1 20m Hard Severe 4b

Climb a crack system which is to be found on the right-hand side of the mainland-facing face. Simultaneous abseil descent.

First ascent: Unknown.

Central Scoop Route 20m HVS 5a *

There is a central scoop and crack system in the mainland-facing face. Climb up this to finish up a boulder-choked overhung crack. Good rock overall until the last 3 or 4m with the technical difficulty sustained at 4b apart, obviously, from the harder section. Descent by simultaneous abseil.

First ascent: Duncan Irving party 24th May 1996.

Duncan Irving reckons there may be an E3 5c-ish line on the seaward face of the stack.

Ascrib Islands

MR: Sheet 23 400640

These are a group of islands and stacks in the entrance to Loch Schizort between Trotternish and Durinish. They are made of basalt and the islands are uninhabited.

Detailed access: By boat but no further information is available.

First ascent: Unknown.

Stack Rock

Durinish

There are several stacks here, however the most famous are the three Macleod's Maidens. This is a walker's coast with long approaches being the order of the day, and, if you are unlucky, long returns being the order of the night. In mitigation the coast is a glorious one with dramatic cliffs and natural arches as well as stacks.

Glen Lorgasdal

MR: Sheet 23 222380

Two stacks are to be found here, one wedge-shaped with a knife-edge summit ridge. There is also a natural arch to add to the interest. Walk north up the coast from Macleod's Maidens to reach them. Alternatively, drive to Hamaraamore on the B884 and take five miles of very minor road south to Ramasaig. Walk south along a footpath from here to the Lorgill River and the coast some three miles distant. Follow the coast southwards to Glen Lorgasdal three and a half miles away. The Lorgasdal river flows into the sea between the stacks so it should be a pretty spot for a picnic. Detailed access: The stacks appear reachable at low tide.

First ascent: Unknown.

Macleod's Maidens

MR: Sheet 23 243363

At the south west tip of Durinish lies Idrigill Point with a group of three stacks in the sea to its west. These are Macleod's Maidens and they are named after a mother and two daughters of Clan Macleod who drowned when their boat was wrecked nearby. Head south east from Dunvegan on the A863 then take the B884. Next take a minor road to Orbost. Follow a track, possibly signposted for Idrigill Point, and then its continuation footpath for about five miles to the point. The footpath passes above several other stacks which are, apparently, of no climbing interest. (Alternatively sail a boat across Loch Bracadale to the same place.)

Detailed access: Abseil down the 240 feet high cliffs on the south side of the headland. You can reach The Old Lady at low tide. The outer two stacks are reached by a 55 yard swim.

The Old Lady 190 feet Severe (E1 now suggested.)

The largest of the three, therefore the mother and, therefore again, not a maiden. (Maidens are maternally challenged.) The grading has been called inappropriate at Severe with E1 being more suitable considering the state of the rock.

1. 50 feet. Climb up to a ledge to the left and then trend rightwards to a grassy patch and belay.
2. 70 feet. Ascend leftwards up a gangway to reach a groove and so to a terrace at the base of a wall.
3. 70 feet. Go up the wall passing a flake to reach a ledge. Traverse to a crack on the left and climb this and carry on to a shoulder.

4. 35 feet. Climb along the ridge and ascend a wall with loose rock to the top.
Descend by abseil.

First ascent: Ian Clough, J McLean, 26 April 1959.

Middle Maiden c60 feet V.Diff

A dumpy pinnacle.

First ascent: Unknown.

Outer Maiden 100 feet E2 5b

An impressive thin blade of basalt when viewed from most angles.

Follow a line of cracks on the south face to enter the prominent final clean cut corner.

Climb this steeply to a very loose finish pulling out right at the top.

First ascent: Guy Muhlemann, Ed Grindley, Simon Richardson, 30 May 1992.

Minginish

In Minginish just to the north of the Cuillins and the Glen Brittle forest there lies the remote and unspoiled Talisker Bay, home to the small village of Talisker and its old distillery. (The Sligachan Hotel stocks Talisker malt whisky and it's worth sampling.) To the south east coastal cliffs rise to 900 feet. It is an austere scene. The south side of Talisker Bay culminates in Talisker Point where there are two stacks which can both be reached at low tide.

I assume that the larger one is called The Fiddler and the smaller has no name.

The Fiddler

MR: Sheet 23 313200

This is a quite big affair being about 150 feet high with vertical south and east faces and a line of overhangs below the grassy upper reaches of the north and west faces. The rock is conglomerate and mudstone.

Leave the A863 at Drynoch and follow the B8009 past Merkadale to where you can turn onto a minor road just before Carbost. Five miles further on you reach Talisker. Go through the village to the end of the road in the southern part of Talisker Bay.

Detailed access: The stacks can be reached at low tide.

The CorkScrew 210 feet V.Diff

Start by going up a shallow gully and an arched rib to reach a ledge on the south west corner of the stack.

1. 60 feet. Traverse left for 50 feet underneath overhangs and then pull up on grass and loose rock to gain a crest and a belay.



Stack Rock

2. 150 feet. Traverse left across the grassy north face and then climb directly up steep rock to the summit.

First ascent: R. O'Donovan, 1971 (estimated).

Noodle 200 feet Severe

1. Climb the south arete to a ledge and belay.
2. Go over the overhangs to large ledges and a belay.
3. Follow the arete to the summit over precarious blocks.

First ascent: B. Taplin, D. Sharp, 3 June 1971.

West Ridge 150 feet VS

Get up easily to a large platform and look for an obvious rib on the west edge of the stack. Climb the rib easily until below an undercut slab on the right. Go up the slab to a ledge and then climb a corner to a terrace and peg belays. The summit can be reached by climbing loose blocks.

Descent by abseil. The peg belay ledge just below the summit is a good place for abseil anchors.

First ascent: Unknown.

The (Bow?)

The Fiddler's twin. This stack is around 75 feet high and loose and overhung in places.

Detailed access: As for The Fiddler.

First ascent: Presumed unclimbed.

Stac a'Mheadais

MR: Sheet Sheet 32 330254

This stack is found just over four miles south of Talisker and seems to be a little way offshore below 400 foot high cliffs. A boat is a safe bet and can be launched from Eynort at the head of Loch Eynort a little distance further south. Drive north from Sligachan on the A893 down Glen Drynoch. At Drynoch take the B8009 eastwards for two miles and turn onto a minor road after Merkadale.

Turn left at a t-junction in just over a mile and left again at a fork a half mile further. Now drive down and to Glen Eynort and launch the boat. Alternatively follow the coast line to the north on foot for just over four miles to reach the stack.

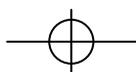
Detailed access: No further information.

First ascent: Unknown.

StacanTuill

MR: Sheet 32 355215

South of Loch Eynort there is a hilly area before Loch Brittle, the coast of which features 450 foot high precipitous slopes. The stack lies off this coast and may be accessible at low tide.



Drive along the B8009 to Carbost from Drynoch on the A855 and then take a minor road four miles to Eynort. Enter Glen Brittle Forest on your left just before the road bridge over the Eynort river at the entrance to Eynort village. It may be possible to drive further if you have either a company car or other off-road vehicle and there are no locked gates on the track. Otherwise prepare yourself for a trudge through the forest.

Take the track which runs south east through the forest parallel to the shore of Loch Eynort. Choose the right fork at any junction so that you stay in the same line until, about two and a half miles from the start, the track goes uphill. Take a footpath to stay parallel to the shore and emerge from the forest at the very small settlement of Kraiknish some three miles after entering the forest.

Walk in a south east direction across rough ground keeping the main slope of An Cruachan on your left for one and a half miles until the line takes you up a slope to the coast with the stack visible below.

Detailed access: Descend the slopes somehow and gain the base of the stack. This probably requires low tide.

First ascent: Unknown.

Stac Suisnish

MR: Sheet 32 585163

Rubha Suisnish separates Loch Slapin to its north from Loch Eishort. The stack is on the west side of this headland. Take the A850 out of Kyleakin for Broadford and turn left onto the A881 at the far side of Broad ford. Pass Loch Cill Chriosd after four miles or so and go about a mile further to where a track goes off to the left.

Park the wheels and follow the track. Ignore a turnoff to the left by some buildings which you reach quickly. The track forks in a little while and you take the left (south west) option and tramp to the east shore of Loch Slapin where you and the track turn south and head for Suishnish two and a half miles to the south.

Detailed access: Just before Suishnish where the track goes to the east of a small summit near a building walk west for half a mile to the coast. Find the stack at the end of a small promontory near where a stream meets the sea at a waterfall.

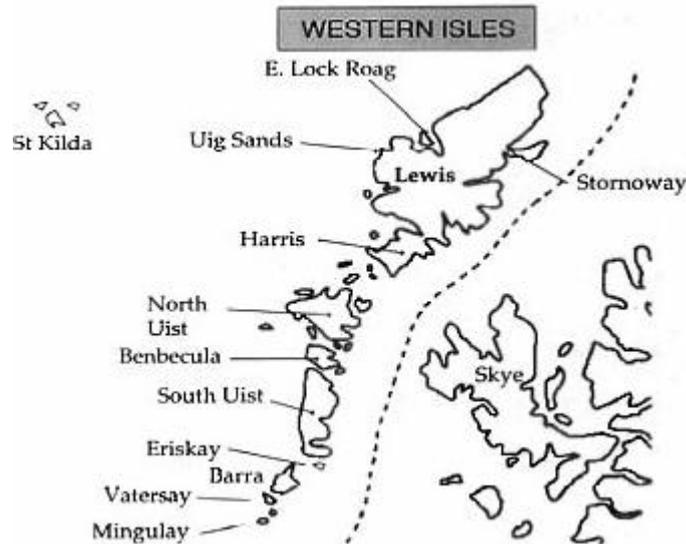
First ascent: Unknown.

Camus Islivig Bay

At Ard Phenis Head, two miles north of Brenish village you find Camus Islivig Bay and there are supposed to be several sea stacks in the bay. (There is a Camus Islivig on Lewis near Mangersta, MR: Sheet 13 982281, and the Skye reference may be mistaken). At Waterstein Head (MR: Sheet 23 143468) There is an offshore feature labelled An Stac here which sounds suggestive.

Outer Hebrides

Stack Rock



This area includes all the islands from Lewis in the north to Mingulay in the south. The Western Isles are a collection of rugged islands which take the brunt of Atlantic gales and polar storms. Their surface has been gouged away by ice sheets. Crofting residents have seen the grand schemes of absentee landlords, ever the curse of the Scottish country dweller, blown away by wind, remoteness, the unforgiving climate and the inhospitableness of the market. Up here the weather is harsh, the landscape is austere and the living is never easy. Life can seem bleak, black and white. You hang on to what you have with little thought for the fripperies of life.

The only substance that providence has been over generous with is water. It is everywhere and surrounds the islands and fills every little hollow so that parts of Harris and Uist are more loch than land.

Nevertheless the landscape can have an awesome beauty. The sea, the sky, the lochs, the mountains and the coast are sublime. You come upon the islands by water, by ferry from Ullapool to Stornoway on Lewis, or from Uig on Skye to Tarbet on Harris, or perhaps from Oban to South Uist. The stacks are concentrated around the north and west coast of Lewis with some possibilities down in the south on Mingulay and Berneray.

Lewis

Eilean Leodhais has the capital of the Western Isles, Stornoway, which is the main ferry terminal for the group. Caledonian MacBrayne ferries sail to Lewis. Eg; to Tarbet from Uig on Skye and to Stornoway from Ullapool on the Scottish mainland. Lewis is

the largest of the islands and is a severely glaciated plateau in the north and middle with mountains to the south in the part called North Harris. The western coast, especially around Great Bernera, is very beautiful.

Mountain Rescue: Find a telephone and dial 999.

The first stack is found on the north east coast a little south and east of Stornoway and we will start there and continue round the island in an anti-clockwise direction.

Stac Shuardail

MR: Sheet 8 461307

The A866 heads east from Stornoway. A little way from Stornoway a minor road goes generally south east to Holm. Walk south west from here and find the stack along the coast a mile or so, possibly two or more, from Holm.

Detailed access: Unknown. You might need a boat.

First ascent: Unknown also.

Grey Castle

MR: Sheet 8 533485

This stack is located on the coast north of New Tolsta. It has a 150 foot high face on the landward side and a 250 foot high one on the seaward side. There are two long corners on the northern side. Go up the B895 from Stornoway to North Tolsta and then New Tolsta to reach it. Go to the north end of the sands at Tolsta and then continue north up the coast until you see the stack.

Detailed access: A neck of land sticks out from the mainland towards it and you can abseil down this to reach the base of the stack. There is a climb on the south side of the stack.

Looksee Crack Mild VS 150 feet

Start by the large detached flake on the south side. Climb up behind it to a recess and overhang. Layback up to a heathery ledge and then continue via a wall on the right, a terrace and choose your corner leading to the summit.

First ascent: I. Mackenzie, A. McDonald, 14 Aug 1971.

There may be more stacks on the west coast. The SMT 'Islands of Scotland' guide says that there are "a few sea stacks" at the northern tip of Lewis.

Stac na Caoraich Lachduinne

MR: Sheet 13 174424

On the north shore at the entrance to Loch Carloway. Take the A858 from Stomoway to Breasclete on the shore of East Loch Roag. Continue to Carloway. Here take a minor road west to Borrowston. Go to the end of the road (11½ miles from Carloway) and follow a footpath to its end. Now walk about a mile along the coast to the stack.

Stack Rock

Detailed access: It may be possible to swim to it once you have descended to the shore. On the other hand it may not.

First ascent: Unknown.

Stac a'Bhanain

MR: Sheet 13 361204

This stack is on the east shore of East Loch Roag just north of Breasclete on the A858. Walk north west from Breasclete to the coast and, hopefully, find the stack at the head of a twin-headed peninsula.

Which head? I don't know.

Detailed access: Unknown.

First ascent: Unknown.

Stac an Tuill

MR: Sheet 13 121424

On the south side of the small island of Bearasay north west of Great Bernera. This will definitely need a boat. You could probably sail approximately due west from Loch Carloway.

Detailed access: No details.

First ascent: No details.

Stacan Nedacliv

MR: Sheet 13 057384.

On the coast to the east of Gallan Head which is north of Uig Sands. Take the A858 from Stornoway but, before reaching Breasclete go south west on the B8011 and follow it to its end about nineteen miles further on. Now take the minor road going north north west to Aird Uig. Stacan Nedacliv is at the tip of a promontory forming the eastern side of the bay of Camas na h-Aird here and is about ³/₄ of a mile away.

Detailed access: Unknown.

First ascent: Unknown.

Staca na Berie

MR: Sheet 13 029359

On the west coast south of Gallan Head but north of the lovely Uig Sands. Go to the end of the B8011, turn right onto the minor road and then take the second turning on the left in ¹/₂ a mile along another minor road for about one mile to the point where a track goes off to the north and the road starts a big turn to the south and Crowlista. Walk north west from here over rough ground for just over a mile to reach Fiavig Bagh (Fiavid Bay?) Go round the northern edge of this and find the stack where the bay meets the open sea.

Detailed access: No details available.

First ascent: No details.

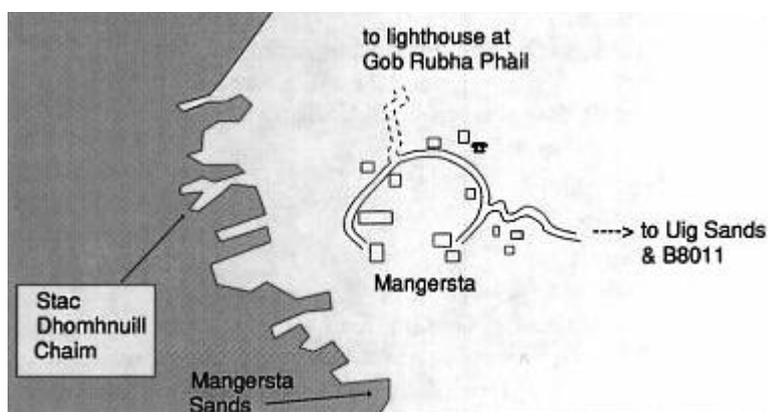
Stac Dhomhnuill Chaim

MR: Sheet 13 002315

On the coast west of Mangersta. Go to the end of the B8011 and drive along minor roads for about 5½ miles to Mangersta. The stack is on the coast to the west about ½ a mile away. However the coastline has many small headlands and inlets. It looks from the Landranger sheet 13 as if this stack is at the southern end of a twin-pronged promontory and is reachable at low tide.

Detailed access: No details.

First ascent: Unknown.



Stac Leathann

MR: Sheet 13 982281

This stack lies on the coast south of Mangersta. Take the minor roads to Mangersta but, at the fork on the south side of Loch Scastavat, take the left (south) turn and drive just over three miles to Islivig.

Park at the northern end of the village and walk due west skirting the bay of Camas Islivig to the headland. On the north western part of this the stack should be encountered. It is about a mile from Islivig.

Detailed access: There don't appear to be cliffs and the stack appears to stand on a platform uncovered at low tide.

First ascent: Unknown.

Stacageo

MR: Sheet 13 995225

On the west coast south of Mealista. So drive to Islivig as for the previous stack and continue through the village, through Brenish to the end of the road where it becomes a track. Off-road vehicles can continue south on the track while others will have to walk.



Stack Rock

Follow the track to Mealista and on to its end about two miles from the road. Walk south and count the inlets. Stackageo is by the third inlet encountered to the south and is about a mile from the end of the track. Not surprisingly it is by a geo.

Detailed access: Nothing is shown offshore on the map so I guess it is accessible from the land.

First ascent: Unknown.

North Uist

Haskeir

MR: Sheet 18 615820

There are two islands called Haskeir Island and Haskeir Eagach which lie 7½ miles north west off the north west tip of North Uist. They are attended, apparently, by sea stacks. It seems that Haskeir Eagach is actually made up of 5 islets/stacks with deep water channels between them.

Detailed access: Obviously a boat is needed but it will be an exploratory voyage as there is no further information. Griminish in North Uist seems an appropriate port to use.

First ascent: Unknown.



Eriskay

This small island is further south in the chain and lies south of South Uist. It has a tail of small islands called The Stacks. The main island is called Stack Island.

Eilean Leathan

MR: Sheet 31 786075

Detailed access: By boat.

First ascents: Unknown.

The Stack

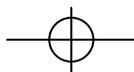
MR: Sheet 31 786070

Detailed access: By boat.

First ascent: Unknown.

Vatersay

MR: Sheet 31 630960



This island is yet further south. A 2 mile long chain of islets and stacks runs eastwards to Muldoanich from Vatersay's eastern coast. Again this may be worth exploring if you are in the area.

Mingulay

There are 800 feet high cliffs at the southern tip of this island with stacks mentioned in some references. The island is quite small being 1 mile by 2 miles in extent. There are no inhabitants although there were 140 of them at the beginning of the century. It is now the domain of guillemots, kittiwakes and puffins particularly on the south west cliffs. You will need a fairly substantial boat to visit Mingulay.

Mountain Rescue: Take a radio set and call up the RAF!

Geirum Beg

MR: Sheet 31 551813

Detailed access: Unknown.

First ascent: Unknown.

Geirum Mor

MR: Sheet 31 548813

This is a bigger islet south east from Geirum Beg.

Detailed access: Unknown.

First ascent: Unknown.

Lianamul

MR: Sheet 31 549837

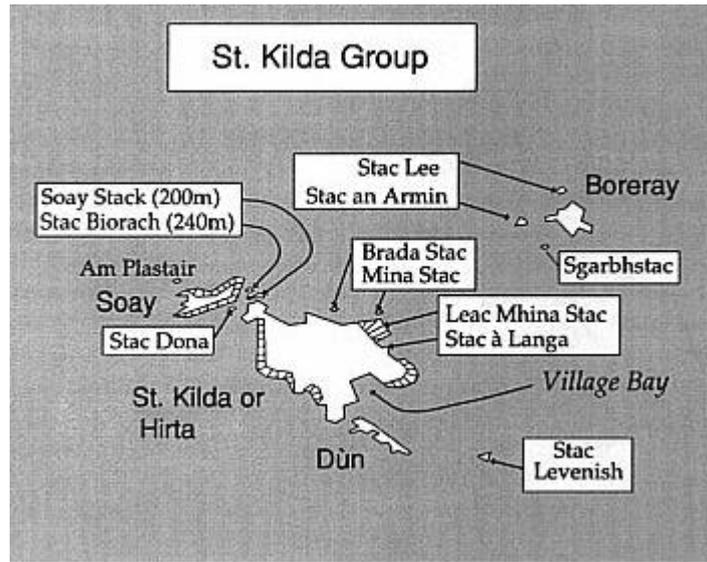
A very steep sided stack or islet on the west side of Mingulay that is home to large numbers of birds and whitened by guano. (Take your rubber gloves.) Apparently there was once a rope bridge connecting it to Mingulay and happy bird harvesters used it.

Detailed access: A boat.

First ascent: Unknown.

There may be stacks off the coast of Bernaray to the south and Pabbay to the north of Mingulay. It's worth exploring if you have a boat.

ST KILDA



The most remote island group in the British Isles being thirty miles or so west of Lewis. St. Kilda possesses cliffs that rise sheer out of the sea for almost 1,400 feet. The group also possesses the highest stack in the British Isles in the shape of Stac an Armin. St Kilda used to be inhabited but was evacuated in 1930 after a winter of dire hardship and is now home only to birds, sheep and the army who man a missile tracking station.

There are four islands in the group; St. Kilda itself known as Hirta, Dun, Boreray and Soay. The St. Kilda group is not open to the public. Permission is needed from the National Trust of Scotland who organise trips for summer visitors. The St. Kilda group constitute a wild bird sanctuary of the first water. The statistics are impressive. A million seabirds call the islands home and fill the air with their constant screams. They include:

- 50,000 gannet pairs - the world's largest colony
- 63,000 pairs of fulmars on Hirta
- 300,000 pairs of puffins - half the entire UK stock
- 15,000 guillemot pairs
- 2,600 pairs of razorbills and
- 7,800 kittiwakes

There are 40,000 pairs of gannets on Stac Lee alone. In the nesting season the stacks can become ankle deep in guano. Winter storms wash a lot of it away. It is, perhaps, best to climb before the nesting season and to consider climbing in sticky rubber wellington boots.

The islands were inhabited for 4,000 years and the inhabitants lived off birds and sheep and cattle. Birds provided food - flesh and eggs, shoes - gannet necks, and oil for lamps. The St. Kildans grew very skilled at cliff climbing in their need to 'harvest' birds and it became part of their culture that a man had to demonstrate prowess at this before being able to take a wife.

St. Kilda is included on the World Heritage List alongside such attractions as the Grand Canyon. (Yes, well, politicians) Supposedly they were formed 60,000,000 years ago, give or take a year, and form the rim of an extinct volcano. To reach the islands you will need a boat, a sturdy, Atlantic storm-beating boat, a party of experienced people and co-operation from the National Trust of Scotland.

Mountain Rescue: contact the army or the Nature Conservancy Council warden.

Hirta

The largest island being 1,575 acres in extent. It possesses the highest sea cliff in the British Isles in Conachair at 1,569 feet. You land in Village Bay if the weather - fog, wind, waves - permits. As long as the island of Dun shelters the bay you should be ok. However you will need calm seas to reach the stacks. It is quite possible to be marooned on Hirta for weeks at a time due to the weather. So take emergency provisions.

Stac a' Langa

MR: Sheet 18 107002

Detailed access: Sail and explore.

First ascent: Unknown.

Leac Mhina Stack

MR: Sheet 18 (unknown)

Detailed access: Sail and look around.

First ascent: Unknown.

Mina Stack

MR: Sheet 18 104008

Detailed access: Sail and explore.

First ascent: Unknown.

Stack Rock

Bradastac

MR: Sheet 18 097007

Detailed access: Sail and investigate.

First ascent: Unknown.

Stac Levenish

MR: Sheet 18 134966

This six acre pyramid-shaped stack is 1 1/2 miles south of Hirta, stands 185 feet high and guards Village Bay. John Ridgeway recounts how he nearly sailed into this stack in his book 'Floodtide'.

Detailed access: Unknown.

First ascent: Unknown.

Boreray



*Stacs Lee (left) and Armin (right). Boreray is behind them on the right.
(This Picture is referenced from the <http://www.utter.chaos.org.uk/> web site.)*

This island is 189 acres in size. There are two marvellous and prominent stacks off the coast here. Both require boats to get to and both are very big indeed and absolutely covered with nesting birds in the breeding season. The Colin Baxter book has some tremendous photographs of the Boreray stacks. The weather is going to be of vital importance so visit timing would be crucial to obtain a fair weather window. If you ever get the chance to climb here the experience would be something to be treasured.

Stac Lee

MR: Sheet 17 143048

This is 544' high - see picture to right. The name means 'Blue Stack.' It is a huge stack which should have a cornucopia of potential lines on it. Unfortunately they will probably remain potential rather than become actual.

Detailed access: Sail and explore.

First ascent: R. Balharry and party, 1969.

Stac an Armin

MR: Sheet 17 152064

Even higher at 627 feet. This is the highest stack in the British Isles.

Although higher than the Old Man of Hoy it is much more massive and should have many potential lines on it. Its name means 'Warrior Stack.' I have no information about the actual line taken on this humungous lump of rock.

Detailed access: Sail and explore.

First ascent: R. Balharry and party, 1969.



Other possibilities on Boreray include:

Stack Rock

Am Biran

MR: Sheet 17 154045
(aprox)
No further information.

Sgarbhstac

MR: Sheet 17 154045
(aprox)
No further information.

Soay

Soay is home to the breed of sheep of the same name and is 244 acres in size. There are three stacks which lie in the channel between it and St. Kilda.

Stac Biorach

240 feet
MR: Sheet 17 072~3
The 'Pointed Stack' is shaped like a kind of power station cooling tower.
Detailed access: Unknown.
First ascent: C. Barrington, 1883 (Mentioned in the Alpine Journal, vol 27, page 195.)

Soay Stac

200 feet
MR: Sheet 17 073013
There is a tunnel right through this stack and it is comparatively birdless.
Detailed access: Unknown.
First ascent: Unknown.

Stac Dona

MR: Sheet 17 069011
The name means the 'Bad Stack' as no birds nested on it. It is split right through by a crack.
Detailed access: Unknown.
First ascent: Unknown.



Section ID

