

THE

ISSUE THIRTY SEVEN • WINTER 2021

HEBRIDEAN TIMES



HEBRIDEAN ISLAND CRUISES

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Cover Image: Winter on Loch Oich, Great Glen

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Welcome to the Winter 2021 edition of The Hebridean Times

After such a long layover, it was with a sense of excitement and anticipation that *Hebridean Princess* set sail from Greenock in July for the journey south to Cardiff to embark her first guests of the season. Our summer in the south was mainly blessed with blue skies and warm sunshine and it was with real pleasure and delight that our crew welcomed guests back on board.

Our newly appointed Captain, Kirk Blacker, reflects on his first season as Master in the View from the Bridge and looks forward to greeting new and familiar faces next year.

We were also delighted to welcome the newest addition to our fleet, *Lord of the Highlands*, when she arrived in Greenock from Spain in late September. She will spend the winter season alongside *Hebridean Princess* is James Watt Dock, ahead of her maiden voyage in early April. You can discover her enticing selection of brand-new itineraries on pages 6-9 of this issue and get to know Hotel Manager, Andy Allan on pages 10 and 11.

If you would like to join Hebridean Host David Indge and guest speaker John Ducker to experience the Flavours of the Low Countries on board *Royal Crown*, see page 13 for more details.

To keep up to date with all the latest news and special offers from Hebridean Island Cruises, please sign up to the e-mailing list on our website: www.hebridean.co.uk or follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

We send our warmest wishes for the Festive Season and hope you have a healthy and prosperous New Year. We very much look forward to welcoming you on board *Hebridean Princess*, *Lord of the Highlands* or *Royal Crown* in 2022.

Louise

Louise Pratt
Editor



Flavours of the Low Countries



Lord of the Highlands

6-9

View from the Bridge - Captain Kirk Blacker



Captain Heaton (L), Captain Blacker (R)

As I write this the ship is currently anchored in Bloody Bay, an anchorage favoured by previous, current and now new captains! Bloody Bay offers fantastic shelter when strong winds are forecast from the south or the west and, in my short tenure as captain, it is an anchorage that I have used on several occasions.

Whilst I enjoyed the overdue return to cruising on the south coast and the sunshine that came with it, it feels good to be back home and cruising in familiar waters.

Previous captains who I have sailed under, including Captains Stevenson, Bailey, Kirkwood and of course Heaton, were all fantastic in sharing their knowledge of the Western Isles and, being back here, means that I finally get to use these gems and put their recommendations to good use.

The weather has been kind to me so far, although due to a week of strong winds in October we embarked on what I believe to be the very first 'surprise' Footloose walking cruise. The itinerary was re-written completely, with the guests being fantastic in their understanding of the situation. Tobermory was our first port of call at the start of the cruise and, as many of you know, we like to keep Tobermory up our sleeve should the forecast turn during the cruise. I had to use my trump card early, however, the cruise was a success for all.

I am often asked how I am enjoying my new position and truthfully, I love it!

I have a fantastic crew who go above and beyond in all departments and they make my job a pleasure. All of our

crew work tirelessly to ensure that every cruise is of a high standard and memorable for all involved. I love seeing the joy that spreads across guests' faces as they walk up the gangway during embarkation, to be met by their favourite member of the ship's company, or the reception that the crew receive on the final gala night, after a week's hard work to ensure the cruise is a success.

Every department deserves the credit and thanks they receive at the end of the cruise, however most are too modest to accept it.

With a high percentage of returning guests, it has been lovely to see familiar faces and be reminded that a few of the guests have known me from when I first joined the ship in 2012, as a fresh faced third officer.

With the resumption of cruising again, it has been nice to catch up with many guests after almost two years.

As the season comes to a close, there is no let up as we have the annual refit period fast approaching. Refit is a busy time for all as we concentrate on planned maintenance and upcoming surveys, trying to fight the weather in the Clyde estuary to ensure that all of our tasks are completed.

Starting the new season is something that I am very much looking forward to, and to seeing familiar and new faces on the gangway as we head back out to sea.

"I am often asked how I am enjoying my new position and truthfully, I love it!"



News in Brief

HEBRIDEAN CELEBRATES WAVE AWARD WIN



The Wave Awards celebrate the very best of the UK's cruise industry. The Oscars of cruising, they recognise and reward excellence and innovation in a business that is continuously evolving to deliver an exceptional experience, both on board and ashore. Launched in 2015 and now in their fifth year, these awards are firmly established as the premier accolades in the industry.

Guests gathered at 8 Northumberland Avenue, London, on Friday 15 October, as winners were announced across a range of categories – including both judged and passenger favourites, as voted for by the public.

Hebridean Island Cruises was delighted to be chosen as a finalist in two categories, and thrilled to be announced as the winner of Best Specialist Cruise Line.

VOTE FOR HEBRIDEAN AND YOU COULD BE A WINNER TOO!

We are delighted to announce that Hebridean Island Cruises has been shortlisted in the Boutique/Adventure Cruise Line of the Year in the 2021 Food and Travel Reader Awards.

The annual Food and Travel Magazine awards recognise the very best in the world's food and travel and voting for the 10th edition of the awards is now open – this is your chance to decide who takes home the coveted trophies.

We would love to secure your votes and you have until midnight on 7 January to register at foodandtravel.com/awards. Then, simply choose one entry per category and click 'place your votes'.

All valid voters will be automatically entered into a competition to win two free tickets to the black-tie gala dinner in London on 17 January 2022, where the winners will be announced.



Engagement Congratulations

Our warmest congratulations go to Carl Stutts and Cynthia Dyer of Houston, USA, who got engaged on the Isle of Iona on 27th September 2021.

On the final evening of the cruise, the ship was anchored off both Duart and Torosay Castles and Captain Heaton proposed a toast to the happy couple during his speech at the Farewell Champagne Reception.



LORD of the HIGHLANDS

THE LATEST ADDITION TO THE HEBRIDEAN FLEET



We are delighted to launch the *Lord of the Highlands 2022 Cruise Directory*, offering a brand-new selection of delightful and enticing itineraries through the Caledonian Canal, the Great Glen and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

Carrying just 40 guests, in a relaxed house-party atmosphere, *Lord of the Highlands* will take Hebridean's unique style to the intricate inland waterways of the Caledonian Canal to ensure the peace and tranquillity for which we all crave. Combined with visits on Scotland's western seaboard and the wonderfully diverse Inner Hebridean islands of Mull, Iona, Eigg and Skye, our itineraries present guests with a veritable cornucopia of delights.

Hebridean Island Cruises are for those who love the idea of exploration, hate the concept of cruising on large ships and long for that elusive, special holiday where the customer really does come first.

For many people, the elegant style of a cruise on a small luxury ship has a wonderful appeal. *Lord of the Highlands* is the ideal escape and promises the warmest of welcomes. Our all-inclusive tariff will provide you with peace of mind and our knowledgeable on board guides will accompany every itinerary to bring each one to life.

To receive your copy of the *Lord of the Highlands 2022 Cruise Directory*, please call 01756 704704 or email reservations@hebridean.co.uk

A TASTE OF THE HIGHLANDS - Oban to Oban

5 nights including 1 Gala Dinner
8th April to 13th April 2022

Embark in Oban to join *Lord of the Highlands'* maiden voyage as she sets sail through scenic lochs and the intricate inland waterways which make up the Caledonian Canal.

Travel Plan - 5 nights

Day 1

Oban - Embarkation.

Day 2

Cruise Loch Linnhe to Corpach.
Scenic West Highland Railway to Glenfinnan.

Transit Neptune's Staircase to Banavie.

Day 3

Cruise the Caledonian Canal, Lochs Lochy and Oich.

Corpach - Overnight berth.

Day 4

Craignure, Mull - Visit to Iona.

Tobermory, Mull - Overnight berth.

Day 5

Tobermory, Mull - Free time to explore at leisure.

Oban - Walking tour and McCaig's Folly.

Day 6

Oban - Disembarkation.



Iona



Corpach

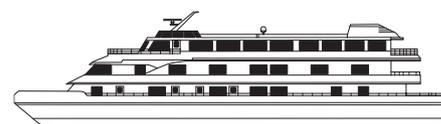


PRICES PER PERSON

Twin Cabins	Deluxe Cabin	£2,390
	Balcony Cabin	£2,825
Double Cabin	Suite (King size)	£3,250
Single Cabins	Deluxe Cabin	£3,820

Prices include:

5 nights on board *Lord of the Highlands*. Full board including house wines, Taittinger Champagne by the glass, spirits, beers, soft drinks, tea and coffee. All shore excursions. On board Guide. Gratuities. Complimentary Wi-Fi on board. *Travel insurance not included.*



SCOTTISH TEMPTATIONS - Oban to Inverness

5 nights including 1 Gala Dinner
**13th April to 18th April 2022 and
 18th Oct to 23rd Oct 2022**

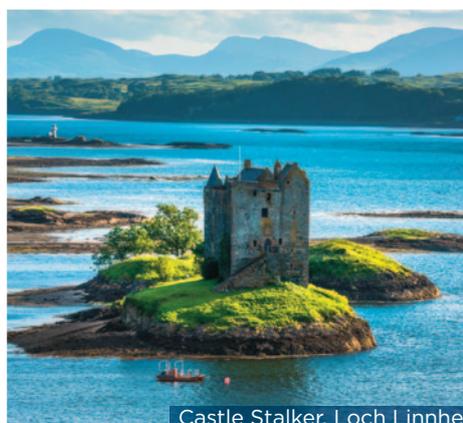
Explore Scotland as few people have, on this enchanting Scottish Highland cruise. Purpose-built for these waters, *Lord of the Highlands* will transport you in comfort and style from Oban, along scenic sea lochs and the narrow Caledonian Canal, which cuts through the heart of Scotland, to Inverness, on a panoramic voyage of gentle pace.

Travel Plan - 5 nights

- Day 1**
Oban - Embarkation.
- Day 2**
Oban - Walking tour and McCaig's Folly. Craignure, Mull - Duart Castle.
- Day 3**
Tobermory, Mull - Walks ashore
Sail the Sound of Mull and Loch Linnhe to Corpach.
Transit Neptune's Staircase to Banavie.
- Day 4**
Scheduled West Highland Railway passage to Glenfinnan.
Caledonian Canal to Fort Augustus
- Day 5**
Free time in Fort Augustus.
Caledonian Canal and Loch Ness.
- Day 6**
Inverness - Disembarkation.



Oban



Castle Stalker, Loch Linnhe



PRICES PER PERSON

Twin Cabins	Deluxe Cabin	£2,390
	Balcony Cabin	£2,825
Double Cabin	Suite (King size)	£3,250
Single Cabins	Deluxe Cabin	£3,820

Prices include:
 5 nights on board *Lord of the Highlands*.
 Full board including house wines, Taittinger Champagne by the glass, spirits, beers, soft drinks, tea and coffee. All shore excursions. On board Guide. Gratuities. Complimentary Wi-Fi on board. *Travel insurance not included.*

HIGHLAND WATERWAYS DISCOVERY - Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh

7 nights including 2 Gala Dinners
Departure dates:

- 18th April 2022** **11th July 2022**
- 2nd May 2022** **25th July 2022**
- 16th May 2022** **8th Aug 2022**
- 30th May 2022** **22nd Aug 2022**
- 13th June 2022** **5th Sept 2022**
- 27th June 2022** **19th Sep 2022**

Travel Plan - 7 nights

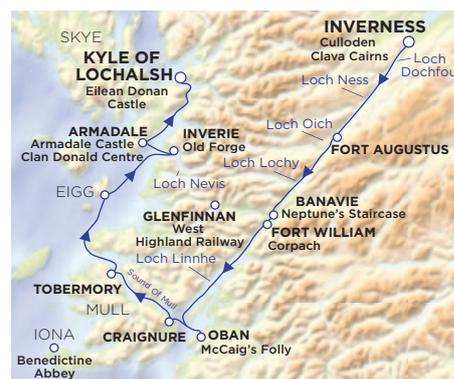
- Day 1**
Inverness - Embarkation.
- Day 2**
Visit to Culloden and Clava Cairns.
Caledonian Canal to Fort Augustus.
- Day 3**
Transit Neptune's Staircase to Corpach.
Scenic West Highland Railway passage to Glenfinnan.
- Day 4**
Sail Loch Linnhe to Oban.
Oban - Walking tour and McCaig's Folly.
- Day 5**
Craignure, Mull - Visit to Iona.
Tobermory, Mull - Free time.
- Day 6**
Tobermory - Distillery tour.
Eigg - Walks ashore.
Inverie, Loch Nevis - Overnight berth.
- Day 7**
Armadale, Skye - Armadale Castle and Clan Donald Centre.
Kyle of Lochalsh - Eilean Donan Castle.
- Day 8**
Kyle of Lochalsh - Disembarkation and transfer to Inverness.



Urquhart Castle, Loch Ness



Caledonian Canal and Loch Ness



PRICES PER PERSON

Twin Cabins	Deluxe Cabin	£3,850
	Balcony Cabin	£4,550
Double Cabin	Suite (King size)	£5,250
Single Cabins	Deluxe Cabin	£6,160

Prices include:
 7 nights on board *Lord of the Highlands*.
 Full board including house wines, Taittinger Champagne by the glass, spirits, beers, soft drinks, tea and coffee. All shore excursions. On board Guide. Gratuities. Complimentary Wi-Fi on board. *Travel insurance not included.*



LORD of the HIGHLANDS

CALEDONIAN CANAL EXPLORER - Kyle of Lochalsh to Inverness

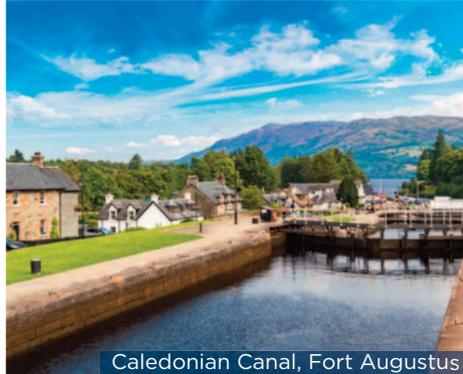
7 nights including 2 Gala Dinners

Departure dates:

25th April 2022 18th July 2022
 9th May 2022 1st Aug 2022
 23rd May 2022 15th Aug 2022
 6th June 2022 29th Aug 2022
 20th June 2022 12th Sept 2022
 4th July 2022 26th Sept 2022

Travel Plan - 7 nights

- Day 1**
Kyle of Lochalsh - Embarkation.
- Day 2**
Kyle of Lochalsh - Eilean Donan Castle, Armadale, Skye - Armadale Castle and Clan Donald Centre.
Inverie, Loch Nevis - Overnight berth.
- Day 3**
Eigg - Walks ashore.
Tobermory, Mull - Free time.
- Day 4**
Oban - Walking tour and McCaig's Folly.
Oban - Oban Distillery.
Craignure, Mull - Overnight berth.
- Day 5**
Craignure, Mull - Visit to Iona.
Sail the Sound of Mull and Loch Linnhe to Corpach.
- Day 6**
West Highland Railway to Glenfinnan.
Transit Neptune's Staircase, Lochs Lochy and Oich to Culloch.
- Day 7**
Fort Augustus - Free time.
Visit to Culloden and Clava Cairns.
- Day 8**
Inverness - Disembarkation.



Caledonian Canal, Fort Augustus



Glenfinnan Monument



PRICES PER PERSON

Twin Cabins	Deluxe Cabin	£3,850
	Balcony Cabin	£4,550
Double Cabin	Suite (King size)	£5,250
Single Cabins	Deluxe Cabin	£6,160

Prices include:
 7 nights on board *Lord of the Highlands*.
 Full board including house wines, Taittinger Champagne by the glass, spirits, beers, soft drinks, tea and coffee. All shore excursions. On board Guide. Gratuities. Complimentary Wi-Fi on board. *Travel insurance not included.*

HIGHLAND GEMS - Inverness to Oban

5 nights including 1 Gala Dinner
3rd October to 8th October 2022

Nothing to clutter the view, just hauntingly beautiful Scottish Highland scenery brought effortlessly to your panoramic window. This, together with excellent cuisine and delightful accommodation, provides for a truly unique travel experience.

Travel Plan - 5 nights

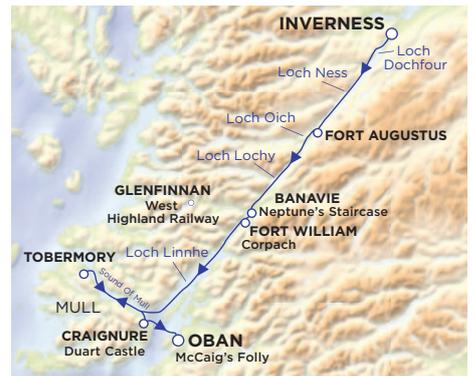
- Day 1**
Inverness - Embarkation.
- Day 2**
Caledonian Canal and Loch Ness.
Fort Augustus - Walks ashore.
- Day 3**
Caledonian Canal to Banavie.
Scheduled West Highland Train passage to Glenfinnan.
- Day 4**
Transit Neptune's Staircase to Corpach.
Sail Loch Linnhe and the Sound of Mull.
Tobermory, Mull - Walks ashore
- Day 5**
Craignure, Mull - Duart Castle.
Oban - Walking tour including McCaig's Folly.
- Day 6**
Oban - Disembarkation.



Duart Castle



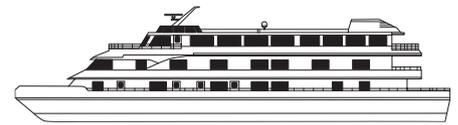
Glenfinnan Viaduct



PRICES PER PERSON

Twin Cabins	Deluxe Cabin	£2,390
	Balcony Cabin	£2,825
Double Cabin	Suite (King size)	£3,250
Single Cabins	Deluxe Cabin	£3,820

Prices include:
 5 nights on board *Lord of the Highlands*.
 Full board including house wines, Taittinger Champagne by the glass, spirits, beers, soft drinks, tea and coffee. All shore excursions. On board Guide. Gratuities. Complimentary Wi-Fi on board. *Travel insurance not included.*



SCENIC SCOTLAND - Oban to Fort Augustus

5 nights including 1 Gala Dinner
8th October to 13th October 2022

Take an enchanting cruise to the bustling Isle of Mull and tranquil Isle of Iona, before discovering the awesome feat of engineering, the Caledonian Canal.

Travel Plan - 5 nights

Day 1

Oban - Embarkation.

Day 2

Craignure, Mull - Visit to Iona.
Tobermory, Mull - Overnight berth.

Day 3

Tobermory, Mull - Free time to explore at leisure.

Oban - Walking tour and McCaig's Folly.

Day 4

Cruise Loch Linnhe to Corpach and transit Neptune's Staircase to Banavie.
Scenic West Highland Railway to Glenfinnan.

Day 5

Cruise the Caledonian Canal, Lochs Lochy and Oich.

Fort Augustus - Walks ashore.

Day 6

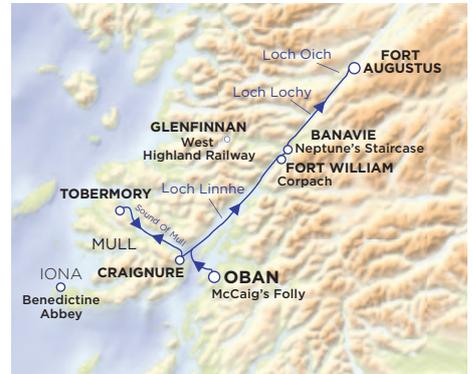
Fort Augustus - Disembarkation.



McCaig's Folly, Oban



Loch Oich



PRICES PER PERSON

Twin Cabins	Deluxe Cabin	£2,390
	Balcony Cabin	£2,825
Double Cabin	Suite (King size)	£3,250
Single Cabins	Deluxe Cabin	£3,820

Prices include:

5 nights on board *Lord of the Highlands*.
Full board including house wines, Taittinger Champagne by the glass, spirits, beers, soft drinks, tea and coffee. All shore excursions. On board Guide. Gratuities. Complimentary Wi-Fi on board. *Travel insurance not included.*

CALEDONIAN TAPESTRY - Fort Augustus to Oban

5 nights including 1 Gala Dinner
13th October to 18th October 2022

Lord of the Highlands will transport you in comfort and style along scenic sea lochs and the intricate Caledonian Canal, which cuts through the Great Glen, to Oban, on a panoramic voyage at a gentle pace. With short stretches of man-made canal linking the scenic Scottish lochs, this is a stunning location for a cruise holiday.

Travel Plan - 5 nights

Day 1

Fort Augustus - Embarkation.

Day 2

Fort Augustus - Walks ashore.
Cruise Lochs Lochy and Oich. Transit the Caledonian Canal to Banavie.

Day 3

Scenic West Highland Railway to Glenfinnan.
Transit Neptune's Staircase and cruise Loch Linnhe to Oban.

Day 4

Oban - Walking tour and McCaig's Folly.
Tobermory, Mull - Free time.

Day 5

Craignure, Mull - Visit to Iona.
Cruise the Firth of Lorne to Oban.

Day 6

Oban - Disembarkation.



Tobermory



Neptune's Staircase



PRICES PER PERSON

Twin Cabins	Deluxe Cabin	£2,390
	Balcony Cabin	£2,825
Double Cabin	Suite (King size)	£3,250
Single Cabins	Deluxe Cabin	£3,820

Prices include:

5 nights on board *Lord of the Highlands*.
Full board including house wines, Taittinger Champagne by the glass, spirits, beers, soft drinks, tea and coffee. All shore excursions. On board Guide. Gratuities. Complimentary Wi-Fi on board. *Travel insurance not included.*

Meet the Team - Andy Allan, Hotel Manager, *Lord of the Highlands*



Growing up on the Black Isle, the idea of a career at sea was never one that entered my mind. As with most boys of a young age, the dream was to become a footballer... before reality took hold and I attended university in Edinburgh to study accountancy.

While attending university, I started working part-time as a bartender in the Grassmarket of

Edinburgh. Unbeknownst to me at the time, this was when I fell in love with the hospitality sector and thrived knowing that no two days are ever the same!

As I continued my degree, I also progressed my career in the pub, as my thirst (no pun intended!) for knowledge

"I am extremely excited to be back doing what I love in a part of the world which I still find the most beautiful!"

and learning in the hospitality sector increased, before being offered the position of General Manager of a busy city centre gastro pub in Edinburgh.

The next 4 years passed in the blink of an eye, but not without first catching the travel bug and looking to expand my horizons further afield than Edinburgh.

With my family living on the Black Isle and on the banks of Loch Ness, the idea of joining a cruise ship started to form. In 2015 I successfully applied for the position of Assistant Hotel Manager on board *Lord of the Glens* which my gran had seen cruising along Loch Ness, looking for Nessie once a week for the previous 15 years!

I immediately fell in love with ship life and felt at home. Cruising the Caledonian Canal and the Inner Hebrides gave me a new appreciation for the beauty that is on our doorstep and I felt (and still feel) extremely privileged to be able to experience and enjoy this beautiful area of Scotland as part of my job!

It was on board *Lord of the Glens* that I met my Kiwi partner and we took the opportunity to explore parts of the world still unknown (at least to us) and so jetted off to The Americas, New Zealand and most of Europe before deciding to settle back in Edinburgh, leaving *Lord of the Glens* after a wonderful 3 years working on board.

Back on terra firma now and the question of what's next? Having the option to travel proved to be a major factor and I accepted a position working in Event Management. Here I planned, organised and managed large-scale events for companies such as Microsoft all over the world.



Lord of the Highlands

I met some amazing people during my time and managed to see yet more of the world unknown to me, however, I could feel the call of the sea beckoning me home and in July 2021 I joined Hebridean Island Cruises as Hotel Manager of *Lord of the Highlands* - the newest addition to the Hebridean fleet ready for sailing in April 2022!

As there was some time available before sailing next year, I jumped aboard *Hebridean Princess* for three months to be introduced to the Hebridean family, which is made up of the most wonderful crew and guests who come back time and time again!

I enjoy doing almost anything water based (lucky given my career choice!) and being taken for long walks by my young German Shepherd around the Black Isle and Loch Ness.

I am extremely excited to be back doing what I love in a part of the world which I still find the most beautiful! Welcoming *Lord of the Highlands* into Hebridean Island Cruises has been a huge privilege for me and I look forward to welcoming you on board with all the magic and wonder you have come to know and love from the Hebridean family!



Andy on board *Hebridean Princess*

Hebridean welcomes first Lady Captain



A HEBRIDEAN FIRST

Chief Officer Caroline Palmer took command of *Hebridean Princess* for the recent Firth of Clyde Explorer cruise which set sail from Greenock on 9th November. Not only is this a first for *Hebridean Princess*, Caz is the first female captain to take command of any Hebridean Island Cruises vessel.

Caz joined *Hebridean Princess* in 2014 and achieved her captain's license, or Masters Certificate of Competency Unlimited, in September 2016.

Under the tutelage of Captain Richard Heaton, who has temporarily stepped into the role of Second Officer, Caz will gain confidence and vital experience during her time at the helm, to help further her career.

"I consider myself very lucky to have this opportunity and to sail under the expert guidance of Captain Heaton. It did not feel real until he made the announcement to guests and the microphone was handed to me to make the welcome speech! I am not really thinking about being Hebridean's first female captain, it is just the next step in my career.

We have a lovely group of guests on board this week, some new and many old faces all of whom have been very supportive and lots of fun so far."



Secrets of the Scenic South West

The wild south-west of England is a land of gorse-clad cliffs, booming surf, white sand and epic, widescreen skies. Bordered on three sides by sea, the combined coastlines of Devon and Cornwall stretch for more than 530 miles, encompassing every example of coastal scenery along the way: plunging cliffs, huge sandy bays, secluded coves, craggy headlands and postcard-pretty fishing villages aplenty.

Whether it's the silhouette of a crumbling castle on a lonely hilltop, or the spectre of moody mine-stacks spiking the horizon, the region's history plays out wherever you look. From its long legacy of fishing and seafaring to its illustrious mining heritage, Devon and Cornwall are crammed with fascinating reminders of the past.

Enjoying the warmth of the Gulf Stream, the magical gardens in Cornwall are home to a wealth of exciting, rare and beautiful plants and trees. From wild woodland to neatly manicured lawns, from the small and unusual to large and famous.

Thirty years ago, Heligan's historic gardens were unknown and unseen; lost to the brambles of time since the outbreak of WW1. It was only the chance discovery of a door in the ruins that led to the restoration of this once great estate. Today, The Lost Gardens have been put back where they belong: in pride of place among the finest gardens in England.

Tresco's key attraction – and one of Scilly's must-see gems – is the subtropical estate of Tresco Abbey Gardens, laid out in 1834 on the site of a 12th-century Benedictine priory by the horticultural visionary Augustus Smith. The 7-hectare gardens are now home to more than 20,000 exotic species, from towering palms to desert cacti and crimson flame trees.

The area's intriguing maritime history and heritage spanning over 150 years can be uncovered at the Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth. Join expert resident tour guides on a revealing voyage from past glories to the present day. The tour will take you into the heart of the College, from the elegant Chapel, through to areas including the Quarterdeck, Parade Ground, Senior Gun Room and Britannia Heritage Museum.



Pendennis Castle was built in the middle of the 16th century by Henry VIII to form the Cornish end of a chain of coastal castles built by Henry VIII to defend the country from invasion by France and Spain. Pendennis began as a simple round tower and gate enclosed by a curtain wall, over the following 400 years it was frequently adapted to provide new coastal defences, up to and including WWII.

With puffins outnumbering humans 15 to 1, the English island of Lundy is the jewel of the Bristol Channel. Just three miles long and half a mile wide, this tiny sliver of England, lying just north of Devon in the Bristol Channel, has endured a long and volatile history that belies its modern-day incarnation as a protected nature reserve, bird-watchers' paradise, and, for the 26 people who live here, idyllic island home.

This is a fascinating voyage exploring the outstandingly beautiful delights of Devon and Cornwall, and the enchanting Isles of Scilly and Lundy which pepper the Celtic Sea like a cluster of precious ocean jewels. Join us for a magical, unforgettable experience.

SECRETS OF THE SCENIC SOUTH WEST

Portland to Cardiff

9th to 16th August 2022

7 nights including 2 Gala Dinners

Prices start from £5,740 per person

based on 2 people sharing an inside twin/double cabin



HEBRIDEAN RIVER CRUISES

Flavours of the Low Countries

Often quoted as having the best cuisine in Europe, Belgium's food specialities extend far beyond just waffles, beer and chocolate. For such a small country, it has rich local resources such as fish and mussels, meat and game with butter, cheese, cream, beer and wine being used liberally in local cuisine.

Dutch cuisine is unique and distinctive, embracing traditional culinary customs and ingredients. It is safe to say that the Dutch are big fans of cheese – they produce nearly 674,000 tons of cheese each year and export it to 130 countries across the globe. Every region in the Netherlands produces its own distinctive cheese. Cheeses such as Gouda, Edam, and Alkmaar are named after the areas from which they originate.

Join Guest Speaker John Ducker and taste the best of Dutch and Belgian food and drink as you cruise through a vast network of canals and rivers, stopping in key cities to soak up local culture and sample the produce for which this area is renowned. Combined with a visit to the spectacular Keukenhof Gardens, this voyage is a true feast for the senses.

A wealthy Antwerp entrepreneur built the Palais op de Meir in 1745. Today the palace is home to one of only two chocolatiers mentioned in the Michelin Guide, Dominique Persone of the Chocolate Line. We enjoy a tasting of his quality, artisan chocolate in an authentic empire setting,

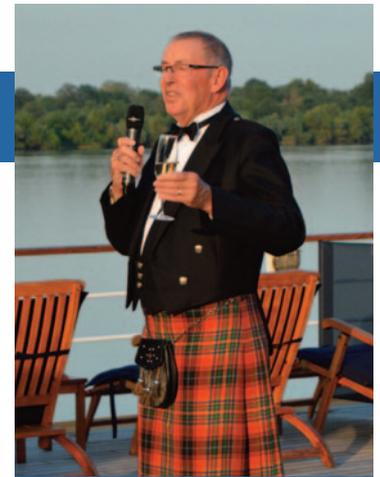
whilst visiting the 'chocolate kitchen' where we can watch the chocolatiers at work.

Belgium is the fatherland of quality beer brewing, creating a huge variety of different styles. With such a rich history, it is a must for any true beer lover and, in Brussels, we sample the delights of regional craft ales.

Just outside Maastricht, various vineyards grace the slopes of the Limburg hills. The vineyards of Maastricht are some of the oldest in The Netherlands, initially planted back in Roman times. Hoeve Nekum has been home to the Bollen family since 1934 and the first vines were planted on their farmlands in 1988. We enjoy a tasting of the prize-winning wines produced from the lime-rich soil which gives a fresh and fruity style with a distinct mineral taste.

Gouda cheese is famous throughout the world and is now one of The Netherlands' biggest exports, despite its humble origins from this picturesque city in the province of Zuid-Holland. Today, 60% of Dutch cheese is produced in the region surrounding the city of Gouda, also known as Cheese Valley. The Cheese and Craft Museum, located in the Gouda Weigh House, reveals local history, tells how the cheese is made and how the products have been weighed and traded for centuries.

No visit to The Netherlands in spring would be complete without a visit to Keukenhof Gardens to experience the gorgeous views of blooming Dutch tulips and other flowers for which The Netherlands is famous. The world famous gardens at Keukenhof encompass over 70 acres of gardens and parkland with over seven million bulbs in bloom.



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FLAVOURS OF THE LOW COUNTRIES

Antwerp to Amsterdam

12th to 19th April 2022

7 nights including 2 Gala Dinners

Prices start from £3,850 per person

based on 2 people sharing a twin deluxe cabin



Cheese Museum, Gouda

Hidden Isles and Highland Gems



Helen Fensom is a cruise consultant working for one of our preferred travel agency partners, Mundy Cruising. Having recently sailed aboard *Hebridean Princess*, she recalls her adventure with fondness.

“ Like so many others, I had suffered the disappointment of twice having my cruise cancelled because of the pandemic, so I was more than excited as I finally prepared to make my way to Oban for seven nights on board *Hebridean Princess*.

I began my trip with a day exploring Glasgow, then took the local Scotrail train the next day up to Oban. As we travelled out of Glasgow the beauty of the Highlands became quickly apparent, and I spent the train journey just relaxing and taking it all in.

Oban is a pretty little fishing town on the west coast, and I would highly recommend including some time here either pre- or post-cruise. Weather permitting (it is Scotland after all!) you can enjoy long coastal walks and plenty of options for al fresco dining while you watch the world go by.

After a night's stay in Oban it was time to board *Hebridean Princess*. Carrying only 50 guests, she is so much smaller than any other ships I have sailed on, so I was not really sure what to expect. It was immediately obvious that I was going to be waited on for my every

need, with nothing being too much trouble. Absolutely everything you could want is included in the price, including all meals, an open bar, guides and guest speakers, shore visits, transfers and gratuities. Even a cup of tea while ashore in a local restaurant or hotel if you wish!

I settled into my cabin, Duart Castle, which had three portholes, two of which could be opened for a bit of fresh air. Other accommodation options include some with picture windows, and even four with small balconies, all depending on your personal preference. I must also mention how well Hebridean cater for solo travellers, with lovely smaller cabins which feature a large single bed and have no extra supplements to pay.

The ship sailed completely full that evening from Oban, and the first night was all about getting to know each other and settling in to our home for the next week. The captain and our on board guide welcomed us in the Tیره Lounge, with Champagne and canapés before our first evening meal.

The Columba Restaurant accommodates all guests in one sitting, with the majority of tables set for two guests. If you travel with friends then larger tables can be set, and there is always a table for up to 8 guests for those who want to dine with others, a great option for solo travellers. You can also dine with a member of the ship's crew every night. Each evening you are presented with a menu with choices including vegetarian options, and if you have any further dietary requirements these are easily accommodated.

The first morning was perfect, as I had time aboard while sailing to Ballachulish for a visit to the Glencoe visitors' centre, learning about the region and the geography of the area before a scenic drive to visit waterfalls and lochs. Then our first of two gala evenings gave us a chance to get dressed up and relax with new friends. How nice it was for the cocktail dress to finally make an appearance after being locked away for almost two years!

The following morning we took a trip to Arduaine Gardens and enjoyed the opportunity to stretch our legs and have



Duart Castle Cabin



Columba Restaurant

Helen Fensom – Cruise Consultant, Mundy Cruising

a nice long walk. Other guests found it more appealing to stay and relax on board, which is of course quite acceptable too! A jump back on board using the ship's small tender and a lunchtime sail took us to the beautiful island of Colonsay. As I had my walking boots to hand I took advantage of some drier weather and went off to explore independently. Others went off in a group tour on the bikes provided by Hebridean, some did a walking group tour; the choice is yours.

After anchoring overnight in a sheltered bay we had breakfast and then set sail cruising the Sound of Mull and on to the Isle of Canna. Here there were more options for walking, cycling and exploring, with a welcome break at the only café on the island for a piece of cake and cup of tea, the tab all picked up by Hebridean Island Cruises.

Our next morning sail was spent up on the Skye Deck looking out for dolphins that had been spotted earlier, as we sailed under the Skye Bridge towards Loch Ewe. The gardens here were beautiful, a little limited in colour as it was September but large enough for a couple of hours to explore. Back on board for afternoon tea in the Tiree lounge with a glass of Champagne, and then back to the dolphin spotting! I got lucky with a small pod playing to the aft as we sailed.

After dinner we spent a relaxing evening in the lounge talking over our day and hearing plans for the next day from our on board guide. This short evening brief was great, letting you plan what you want to do the next day and hear where you are going. Sometimes bad weather means the crew have to make minor amendments to the planned itinerary, so it's always worth listening to what's coming up.

On our last day we visited the beautiful island of Iona. We approached on a local boat so we could all visit together, and we enjoyed a relaxed visit to the Benedictine Abbey followed by a tea and coffee picnic at the beach. The sun even made a welcome appearance, which made the visit even more special. Who would have thought it - a Scottish beach in September, in the sunshine!

The final evening was the second gala night with all dressed in their finery, and we all sat for dinner together to witness the Captain address the haggis and recite Robert Burns' famous poem. We enjoyed a spectacular gala meal starting with a taste of haggis, neeps and tatties, followed by lobster. Then a farewell drink with new friends before we disembarked back in Oban the following morning.

Hebridean offer a true small ship experience with very personal and attentive friendly service. Travelling in Covid times, this certainly appeals, and the domestic travel makes things very easy indeed. After two years of planning, this very special cruise was certainly worth the wait. ”



Address to a haggis

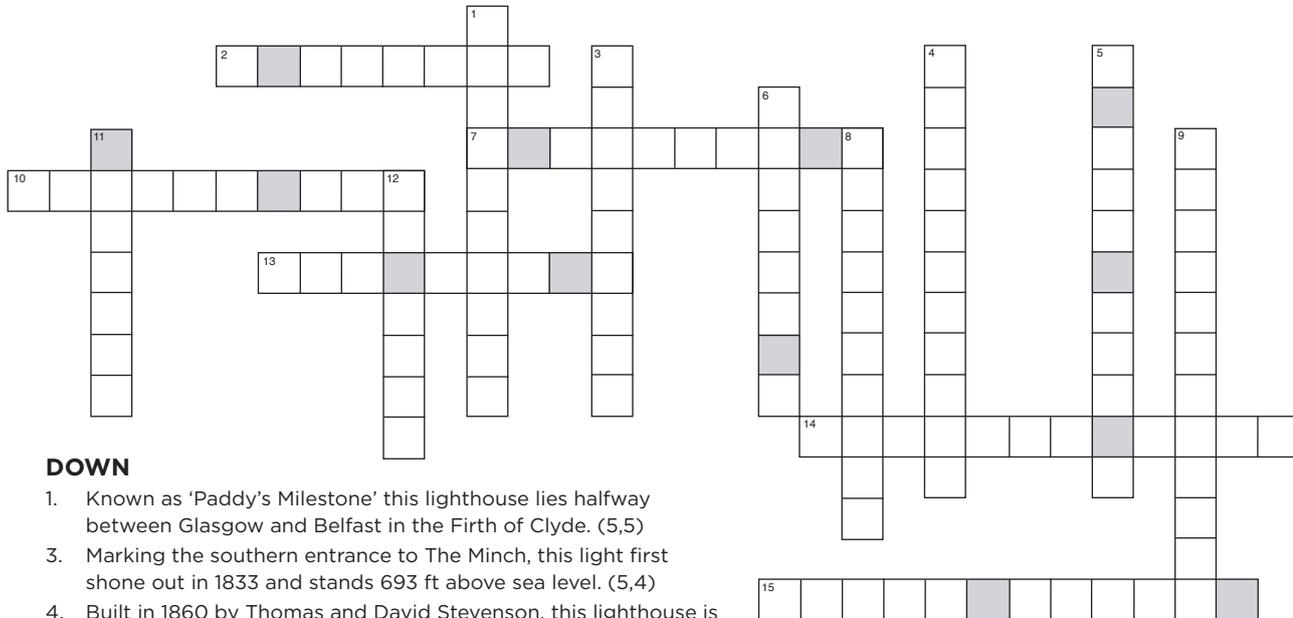


Iona

SCOTTISH LIGHTHOUSE CROSSWORD



The crossword below contains the names of 15 Scottish Lighthouses. When you have solved all the clues, the highlighted letters will spell out the name of a further lighthouse which was built by Thomas Smith in 1788. (4,2,7)



DOWN

- Known as 'Paddy's Milestone' this lighthouse lies halfway between Glasgow and Belfast in the Firth of Clyde. (5,5)
- Marking the southern entrance to The Minch, this light first shone out in 1833 and stands 693 ft above sea level. (5,4)
- Built in 1860 by Thomas and David Stevenson, this lighthouse is situated on the west side of the Narrows of Loch Linnhe. (6,5)
- Unusually constructed in brick, this was the last Scottish lighthouse to be automated in 1998. (4,2,5)
- Locally known as 'Wee Donald', this lighthouse faces the east coast of the Isle of Arran at the south entrance of Lamlash Bay and was built in 1877. (4,4)
- Established in 1789 by Thomas Smith and located on the east coast of the island of Scalpay in the Outer Hebrides, this was one of the first four lighthouses to be built in Scotland. (6,4)
- Originally called North Unst, this lighthouse is located on a rocky stack in Shetland and was renamed in 1964. (6,6)
- Situated on Eilean Musdile in the Firth of Lorne at the entrance to Loch Linnhe, this light was built in 1833 by Robert Stevenson and automated in 1965. (7)
- Nickname of the lighthouse which stands on the southern tip of the privately owned Isle of Sanda. (3,4)

ACROSS

- This disused lighthouse sits on the tiny island of Eilean Bàn in the shadow of the Skye Bridge. (8)
- Lying on a remote reef 12 miles SW of Tiree, this lighthouse is the tallest in Scotland at 156 ft. (10)
- One of the most famous lighthouses in Scotland which can be found on the most westerly tip of Skye near Glendale. (5,5)
- Built in 1828, this lighthouse is located at the most north-westerly point on the British mainland. (4,5)
- This island lighthouse was the scene of a mysterious disappearance of three of its keepers in 1900. (7,5)
- This lighthouse marks the most westerly point on mainland Britain. (12)

To enter, email the **name of the lighthouse** spelt out in the **13 highlighted squares**, together with your name and address to louise.pratt@hebridean.co.uk by **Monday 31st January 2022**. **One lucky winner will be randomly chosen from all the correct entries and will receive a luxury House of Bruar hamper.**

COMPETITION QUESTION in ISSUE 36

Our thanks to all who entered the competition question in the last issue and congratulations to everyone who submitted the correct answer:

What is the name of the river ship which Will plays on board for Hebridean guests? Answer: **Royal Crown**

The lucky winner was **Millie Deverell** of Henley-on-Thames who has received a CD copy of Will Marshall's album 'Destination - Home.'

Please note email addresses may be used for marketing purposes.

If you would prefer not to receive email communications from Hebridean Island Cruises, please state this in your entry.



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