

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn is a company registered in Scotland - No: 273903 and a charity registered in Scotland - No: SC036903

www.visitnorthlewis.com

Check out the website!

LOCAL BUSINESS & ACCOMMODATION LISTINGS

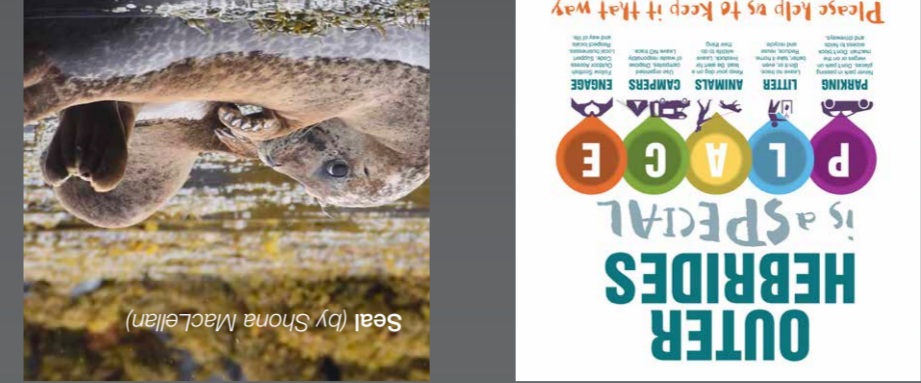
DISCOVER WALKING & CYCLING ROUTES

LISTEN TO LOCAL AUDIO TRACKS

Download the App!

Visit North Lewis
URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

Tadhail air Ceann a Tuath Leòdhais



You can also visit Visit Outer Hebrides responsible tourism page: www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk/planning-your-trip/responsible-tourism

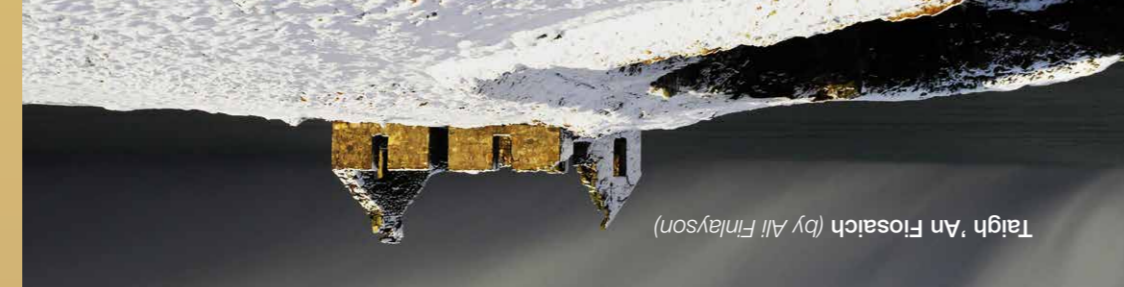
Please be aware that this is an area where ticks are prevalent. To find out what to do in the event of a tick bite go to: www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/injuries/skin-injuries/tick-bites

During your walks, please be mindful of where you step, as many areas are home to ground-nesting birds and their eggs are very well camouflaged. Adult birds may change behaviour and become distressed if you go too close, so please be aware of birds and their behaviours.



ENJOYING THE OUTDOORS RESPONSIBLY

Visit the Scottish Outdoor Access Code site for more information: www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot



Mòine	Mònya	Mòine
Croit	Croytich	Croit
Abhainn	Avean	Abhainn
Uamh	Oo-av	Uamh
Creagan	Kray-kan	Creagan
Sruth	Strew	Sruth
Muir/Cuan	Moor/coo-an	Muir/Cuan
Gnàth-side	Gna-shee-juh	Gnàth-side
Tràigh	Tra-ee	Tràigh
Cladach	Cla-doch*	Cladach
Mòinteach	Mon-joch*	Mòinteach
Fraoch	Fruch*	Fraoch
Machair	Machur*	Machair
Boglach	Bog-loch*	Boglach
na beinne	ben-yeh	na beinne
Mullach	Mooluch* nuh	Mullach
Beinn/Cnoc	Ben/cnock	Beinn/Cnoc
Hill		Hill
The summit of		The summit of
		the hill
		Bog
		Low coastal grasslands
		Heather
		Moor
		Shore
		Beach
		Climate
		Sea
		Stream
		Cliffs
		Cave
		River
		Croit
		Peat

GAELIC TRANSLATIONS

CRUTH-TÌRE / CREW CHEER-UH / LANDSCAPE TERMS

Tioram	Tìeh	Tioram
Sgòthach	Mi-chàilear	Sgòthach
Grianach	Garbh	Grianach
Fuar	Fuar	Fuar
Frasach	Frasach	Frasach
Fliuch	Fliuch	Fliuch
Breagha	Breagha	Breagha
Blàth	Blàth	Blàth
Àlainn	Àlainn	Àlainn
Tha i	ha ee ...	Tha i
Beautiful	Beautiful	Beautiful
Warm	Warm	Warm
Lovely	Lovely	Lovely
Wet	Wet	Wet
Showery	Showery	Showery
Cold	Cold	Cold
Wild	Wild	Wild
Sunny	Sunny	Sunny
Unpleasant	Unpleasant	Unpleasant
Cloudy	Cloudy	Cloudy
Hot	Hot	Hot
Dry	Dry	Dry

RÀITHEAN / SEASONS

Spring: An t-Earrach / Un tyaruch*

Summer: An Samhradh / Un sa-oo-rudh**

Autumn: An Foghar / Um fuver

Winter: An Geamhradh / Un gyaa-oo-rudh*

SIDE | WEATHER

Beautiful: àlainn

Warm: blàth

Lovely: breagha

Wet: fliuch*

Showery: fras-och*

Cold: fuar

Wild: garav

Sunny: gree-un-och*

Unpleasant: mee-*chalur

Cloudy: sgh-och*

Hot: tcheh

Dry: tchir-rum



DURATION: 7-9 HOURS

DIFFICULTY: CHALLENGING

DISTANCE: 19 KM / 12 MILES

INTRODUCTION

The Heritage Trail is situated on the north east of the Isle of Lewis. This moorland area between Ness and Tolsta is known for its stunning coastline, abundant marine life and rich cultural heritage. You can walk from either Tolsta or Ness and visit interesting historical landmarks along the way.



Bring a map, compass and mobile phone, although signal can occasionally be poor.

MAP: OS EXPLORER 460 OR LANDRANGER 8



URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

HERITAGE TRAIL
Slighe Dualchais

The Galson Estate is a community-owned estate of 56,000 acres of beautiful coast, rich agricultural land and rugged moorland in the north west of the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland.

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (Galson Estate Trust) was established on the 12th of January 2007 to manage the Galson Estate for, and on behalf of, the community from Upper Barvas to Port of Ness, comprising 22 heritage-rich villages, and several scenic walking and cycling routes.

This leaflet was produced by Galson Estate Trust and designed by Donald Smith Graphic Design.

Thank you to all who contributed information for this leaflet, including Comunn Eachdraidh Nis, Chris Barrowman, Iain Gordon Macdonald and Mary C Campbell.

Thank you also to those who provided photographs; their names are credited on the photos.

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[@GalsonEstateTrust](https://www.facebook.com/GalsonEstateTrust) [@urrasog](https://www.instagram.com/urrasog) [@UrrasOG](https://twitter.com/UrrasOG)

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A company registered in Scotland No: 273903

URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

HERITAGE TRAIL
Slighe Dualchais

Tolsta — Ness | Ness — Tolsta



HERITAGE TRAIL

Tolsta – Ness | Ness – Tolsta

----- ROUTE DESCRIPTION -----

If you are walking from North Tolsta, park your vehicle at Garry Beach car park. Follow the gravel road for 300m until you reach the famous Garry Bridge (Drochaid Ghearadha). The gravel road will end once you go across another concrete bridge. Turn right onto a small trail, staying alongside the stream until the route gradually turns left, up a rise to follow the coast to the north. From here, you will pass several small burns before reaching the small rock stack at Dùn Othail.

After going past Dùn Othail, follow the trail slightly inland where you will explore spectacular views over the moors and lochs. Continue following the trail back to the coast where the track will follow along the cliff tops until you reach the ruins of Cùilator. From there it is a direct descent where you will need to carefully cross the burn at a confluence (remember to use the way markers for guidance) then a steep ascent to the Lower Diobadal shielings.

Follow the way markers from the shielings and coast around Cellar Head (Sròn an t-Seileir) where there is an interesting landslip feature. From there you will then have two burn crossings before reaching Filiscleitir.

The trail leads to the clifftop ruins of a church and house. Continue until you reach a burn, then a quad track which guides you towards the Cuishader shielings. To finish, follow the 'peat road' for 3km to Skigersta.

If you are walking from Skigersta, park at the small parking area at the end of High Street, Skigersta. Cross the cattle grid and follow the track for 3km until you reach the Cuidhsiadar shielings. Keeping the coast on your left, go past the shielings, over the small bridge and continue along the small track until you see the remains of Filiscleitir on the headland.

Go past Filiscleitir, following the posts along the top of the valley, until you find a suitable place to cross the river. Following the markers, head back to the coast and follow the trail around Cellar Head where you will come across a large landslip. Carry on along the coast until you see the Diobadal shielings and the river below. Cross the river at the guide markers and in a short while you will see the long stretch of sand at Tolsta Beach (An Tràigh Mhòr) in the distance.

Carry on following the markers and you will soon reach the small rock stack at Dùn Othail. The views across to Tolsta Beach and the mainland are quite spectacular from here! Carry on crossing a few burns until you reach the main track which leads to the Garry Bridge and then onto Garry Beach, Tolsta, your finish point.



Cuidhsiadar Shielings (by Philly Hare)

Flora and Fauna

The ground you are standing on is peatland, an internationally rare wetland habitat mostly made up of Sphagnum mosses, sedges and shrubs which are the most common components in peat. As well as the peatland, along the coast there is also a range of beautiful flowers and plants. In the winter you will be able to see heathers, mosses and lichens; and in the warmer months you will see an abundance of orchids, brooms, daisies, clovers, and sea pinks.

Flowers: Seapinks, wild primroses, bell heather, cross leaved heath, common milkwort, bog cotton, lady smock/cuckoo flower, crowberries, fern, heath bed straw, tormentil, common lousewort, golden rod, creeping thyme.

The vast peatlands and stunning coastline on this trail support populations of important wildlife, in the air, on the ground and in the sea. Below is a list of some of the breeding, migratory and over-wintering birds, as well as an extensive list of marine mammals and other wildlife seen along this scenic route.

Birds: White-tailed sea eagle, golden eagle, hen harrier, raven, snipe and jack snipe, golden plover, stonechat, skylark, red grouse, passing whimbrel (usually May), fulmar, gull, shag, cormorant, gannet, oyster catcher, guillemot, black guillemot and razorbill.

Cetaceans: Orca whales, Minke whale, Risso's dolphin, White-sided Atlantic dolphin and Bottlenose dolphin.

Then we have our grey seal and possible sightings of common seal.

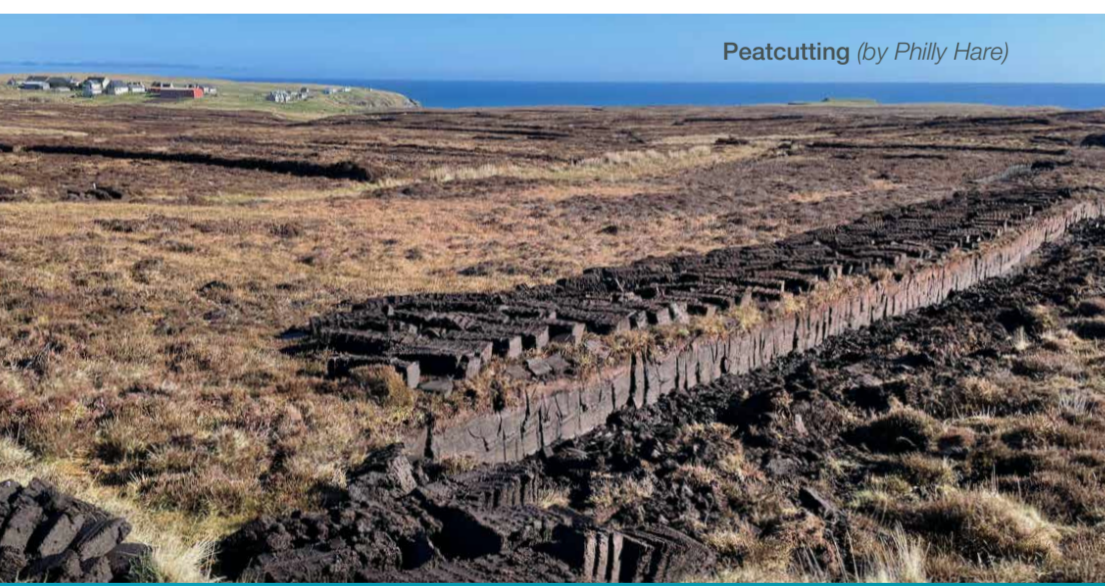
Other wildlife: Hare, rabbit, stag and roe deer.



Bottlenose dolphin (by Shona MacLellan)



Bird's-foot Trefoil (by Sandy Morrison)



Peatcutting (by Philly Hare)

Peatcutting

Peats are a valuable, natural source of fuel for islanders, and have been for centuries. Cutting peats is an arduous job, usually involving the whole family. Many households have their own peat bank that is used each year. There are a number of stages to peat-cutting, starting with lining the top of the bank and removing the top layer of ground/turf. The soft peat is then cut into slices, using the peat iron, known as a 'tairsgear' in Gaelic, and laid out to dry. After a few weeks they are lifted into small 4-peat stacks, or 'rùdhanan', in order to dry completely. They are then gathered into piles – 'dùintean' – ready to be taken home, usually with a tractor and trailer.

SITES OF INTEREST

1 Cuidhsiadar Shielings

The buildings you can see are 'àirighean' [ah-thee-in], or 'shielings', and the villages where they are located are 'Cuidhsiadar', 'Àirigh a' Bhealaich' and 'Filiscleitir'. For generations shielings were used in the summer months, when crofters, along with their families, would leave their homes in May to graze their cattle on the moor and make butter and cheese for the coming winter. They would remain on the moor for three or four months. The men would go out first to check the condition of the shielings in order to fix any structural damage caused by the harsh winter, before the women and children came out.

2 Taigh 'An Fiosaich and Eaglais 'An Fiosaich

The ruins you will see are a house, Taigh 'An Fiosaich, and a church, Eaglais 'An Fiosaich. Both are attributed to John Nicholson and were built in the early 20th century. John was a Baptist minister who was originally from Ness and had emigrated to America. When he returned to Ness with his American wife, Nora Barney Cushing, they set up Edgemoor Hall in Adabrock where they had their home and a church. The couple later built another house and church at Filiscleitir.

He built the church at Filiscleitir to hold services for the locals who were at the shielings. Hymns would have rung out over this landscape, which was unusual at that time, as only Gaelic psalms were sung in the nearby community. He used to baptise people in a moorland loch called 'Loch Haragro'.



Taigh 'An Fiosaich (by Kev Edwards)



Diobadal (by Colin Morrison)

3 Diobadal

Diobadal had up to eight 'àirighean' (shielings). People often travelled here with cattle in the summer months, as they depended on the moor to graze the cattle whilst the croft land was being cultivated to provide crops to sustain them through the winter. The women used to get up early and go to the shore at Diobadal to gather seaweed which the cattle were very fond of, especially at milking time. It was a long way to Diobadal which was as close to Tolsta as it was to Ness!

4 Dùn Othail

Dùn Othail, a rock stack near North Tolsta, was first described as a natural fort in 1696, then in 1852 as the site of the ruins of a house said to have been erected and inhabited by an outlaw, and then in 1861 as a possible early chapel. The site is linked to the Clan Morrison, and is within the ancient boundaries of Ness, the clan's traditional home.

There are remains of a small drystone building of early Medieval date on the stack, which is split from the mainland by a perpendicular ravine. The rock, rising 60m above sea level, is only accessible from the SE.



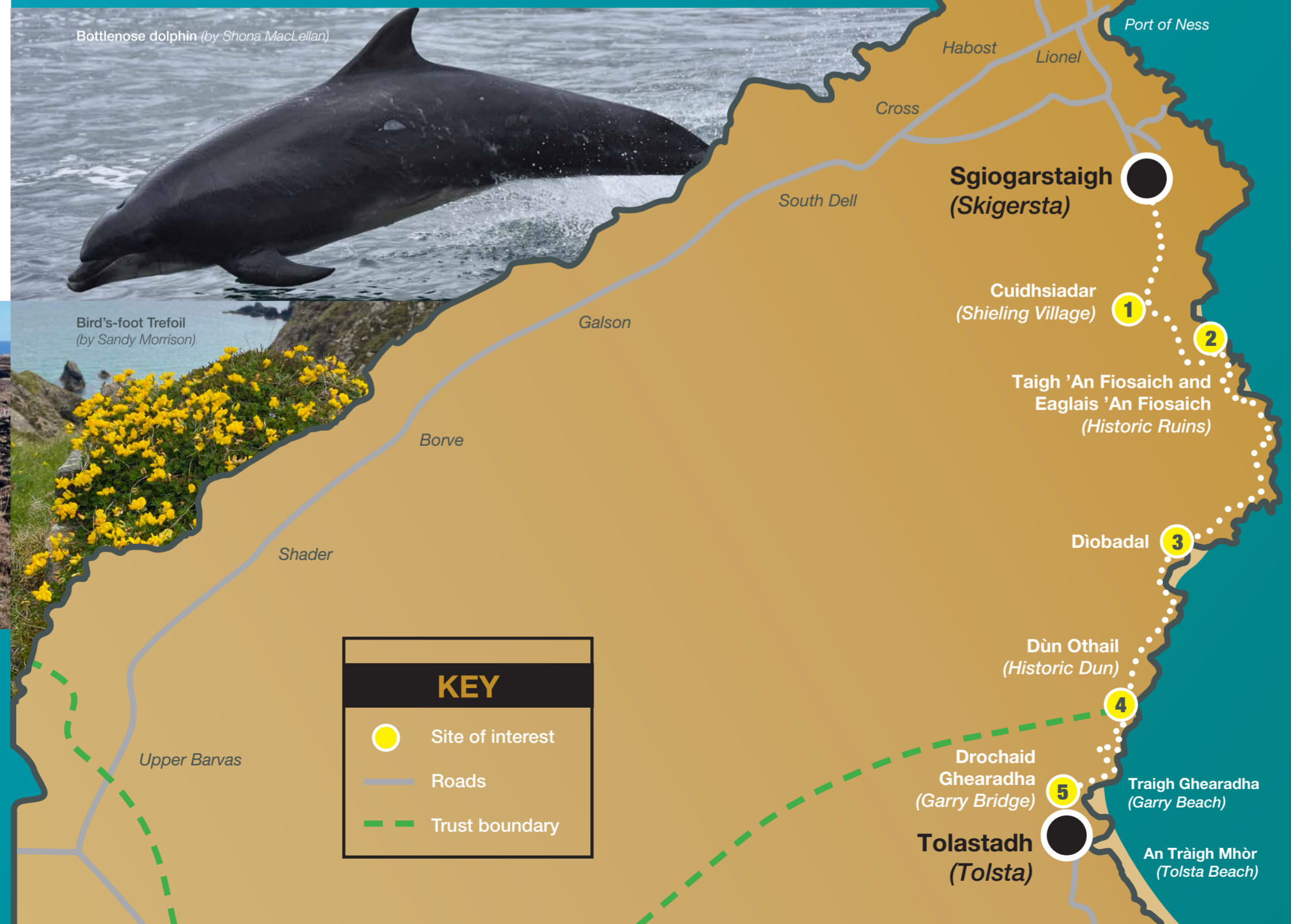
Dùn Othail (by Sandy Morrison)

5 Garry Bridge (Drochaid Ghearadha)

This bridge can be found near the end of the road on the northeast side of Lewis beyond the village of Tolsta. The bridge was built as part of an ambitious plan by Lord Leverhulme in the early 20th Century to build a road from Tolsta to Ness, but the plan never came to fruition.



Garry Bridge (by Mairi Graham)



KEY	
	Site of interest
	Roads
	Trust boundary

We hope that you enjoy all that the trail has to offer. If you would like more information about the featured heritage highlight points along the way, please feel free to scan the QR codes, found on marker posts as you make your way along this beautiful walk. Please visit our website/app for further information:
www.visitnorthlewis.com / Visit North Lewis

To find out more about these historical sites, please visit:
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 Sgoil Chrois, North Dell, Isle of Lewis HS2 0SN
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www.nesshistorical.co.uk

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