

Gometra

Secret
shelters



Waiting for the tide at Am Bru, seen from Ulva.



To reach Gometra from the mainland with a vehicle involves crossing onto Mull from Oban to Craignure or crossing the Corran Narrows and again from Lochaline to Fishnish, then across Mull, then on the private ferry across the Sound of Ulva, then across Ulva to Am Bru. At the start of the first lockdown the BBC interviewed the sole resident about isolation.

SR Crockett's *The Raiders* listed one of the crimes of pirate Yawkins as trepanning a lass on the island, the location of which was suitably vague.

Ballygowan Bay might appear the most accessible launch point for Gometra but parking is difficult and access to the water is not easy so Ulva Ferry is probably the most realistic venue, approaching along the north coast of Ulva and through Am Bru.

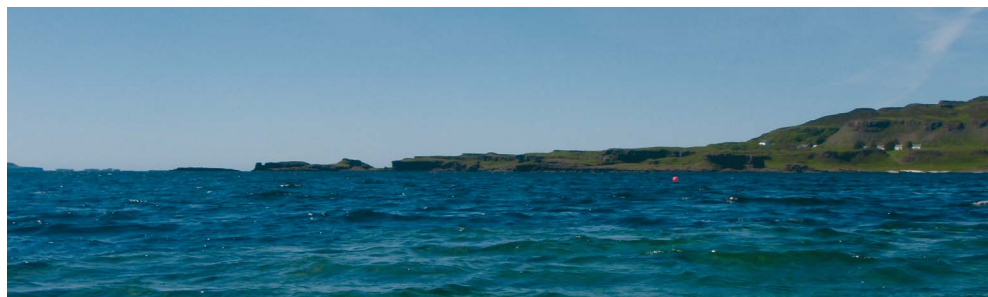
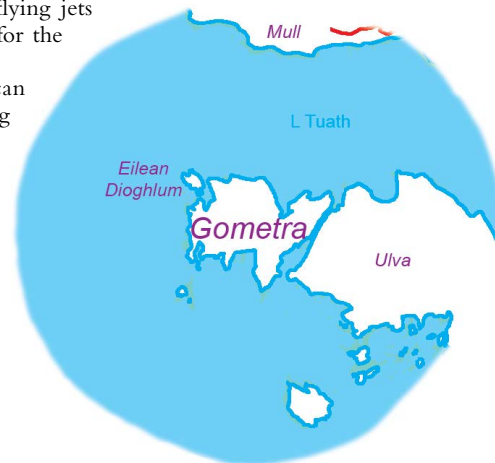
Gometra is a single farm of 5km², 2.5 x 1.6km. It is terraced, flat cone, trap country rising to 155m, porous Tertiary basalt with no peat but luxuriant bracken. Like Ulva, it was subject to vicious clearance in 1846-51 by FW Clark. It now supports Highland cattle and 350 sheep. In the 1930s it was owned by Hugh Rutledge,

the leader of the unsuccessful 1933 British Mount Everest expedition.

Am Bru is a narrow cleft between Ulva and Gometra, shallow enough to stay dry even at the top of neap tides. At its northern end it was guarded by Dùn Bàn. Access to Gometra is over a small bridge, little more than a sheet of metal spanning a gap between two stone walls, protected from the south by another pair of walls which were the bridge until damaged by a storm in 1977. Beyond them is a ford, sufficient on most occasions although the track suggests that there is little vehicle traffic. In 2019 the American owner and its eight residents blocked the bridge with a small boat as a protest about the climate, the owner having already replaced his quad bike with a bicycle.

Small flatfish, crabs and shrimps crawl about in the mud and stones in the pass. Low flying jets aside, it is a peaceful place to wait for the tide to make.

Gometra Harbour anchorage can experience big seas with strong



Mâisgeir just visible off Rubha Maol na Mine..

Access and passage are not necessarily permitted and safe under all conditions.