

Island of Rona

A hard
landscape
for broken
people



Port an Teampuill with the peaks of Trotternish on Skye beyond.



Not to be confused with North Rona, Rona or South Rona is an island extending northwards from the northern end of Raasay.

Of glaciated Lewisian gneiss, it is a rock platform, tilted to the west like Raasay.

After Culloden, Government troops landed on Rona, searching for chief Malcolm MacLeod of Raasay, who had accompanied Prince Charlie. They could not find him so they imposed a scorched earth policy on Raasay.

In his subsequent *A Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland*, Samuel Johnson noted that Rona was used as winter grazing for 160 cattle, accompanied by a solitary herdsman. In the mid 19th century the island was used to house victims of the Clearances on Raasay. The Rona Raiders were seven families who seized more fertile land at North and South Fearn and Eyre at the southern end of Raasay in 1919 but were jailed in Inverness despite public outcry, subsequently being piped home from the jail. Rona has been owned by the UK Government since 1922 and was inhabited until 1943.

It is not easily accessible. The nearest it is possible to get a vehicle is a cleft at Rubha Crion on Loch Arnish at the north end of Raasay, still 7km from Rona or more if the channel inside Eilean Tigh is dry. A steep track with a chain across it leads down to a rough slipway. A space by the side of the road looks like a passing place but is not marked as such. There is little traffic here as the road ends 300m away up the hill, where there is plenty of parking space.

Off the southern end of Rona is Garbh Eilean, rough island, separated by a drying channel leading to Port an Teampuill. An Teampuill is an attractive little graveyard, from where a footpath leads up the centre of the southern half of Rona to Dry Harbour, there being no roads on the island.

Caol Rona flows northwest from Dover +0030 and southeast from Dover -0320 to 4km/h. Clear of 111m Eilean Tigh and Rubha Dubh Chamais, it opens out into the Sound of Raasay.

Acairseid Mhòr, the big harbour, is one of the best anchorages on the west coast. In the 17th and 18th centuries it was the place of Broken Men, pirates and

robbers based in Port nan Robaireann, the port of robbers. Completely sheltered to its north, east and south, it is protected by Eilean Garbh on the southwest side of its entrance with several skerries to its northeast. The Trotternish peninsula of Skye intercepts most of the Atlantic weather and provides an interesting skyline.

Acairseid Thioram with the Dry Harbour township is more open to the northwest but was occupied by crofters evicted from Raasay during the Clearances. There is a Mission House and some crofts have been restored as holiday cottages.

Sgath a' Bhannaich and Beinn na h-Iolaire are each 110m high, standing behind Port an Fhearrainn and Ob nam Feusgan.

The Sgeirainn Buidhe Bhorlum break up the coast at Rubha na Sgàth Mòine. The yellow colour is from wrack, bootlace weed and kelp. Cormorants, herons and starfish are present.

Oban Dreallaire winds its way in to a tidal pond from the mouth of Loch a' Bhràige, where there is a NATO signal station and boaters have found themselves being scanned by binoculars. The 13m Rona lighthouse seems to appear time after time between rocks on rounding the northern end of the island, where Sgeir Shuas, Limpet Rock and

