

# The Island of HOY

**1 The Old Man of Hoy:**  
Famous 450ft (137m) sea stack, first climbed in 1966 with a televised assault the following year, the Old Man of Hoy is perhaps Orkney's most famous landmark. The footpath from Rackwick to the stack is steep in places and requires a three-hour round trip.

**2 St John's Head:**  
At 1,128ft (343m) this is the most vertical sea cliff in Britain. The first direct ascent was made in 1970 by Edward Ward Drummond and Oliver Hill who spent six nights on the face sleeping in hammocks.

**3 Broch of Braebister:** This promontory provided protection for an Iron Age fort built some 2000 years ago. Remains are still visible in the form of a 6 to 9ft (1.8 to 2.8m) high mound.

**4 Hoy Kirk:** Now a community venue, the Hoy Kirk houses the Hoy Heritage archive - photographs, films and exhibitions. Open all year. [www.hoyheritage.co.uk](http://www.hoyheritage.co.uk)  
The pulpit has wooden panels believed to have been from the Spanish Armada. Above the pulpit is a cross made using wood from HMS Vanguard. The RSPB have a display room at the kirk.

**5 Berriedale Wood:**  
The most northerly native woodland in Britain; pollen analysis suggests that woodland of this type was more widespread in Orkney until 5000BC.

**6 Ward Hill:** At 1570ft (479m) this is Orkney's highest hill and with the neighbouring Cuilags has a sub-arctic, glaciated environment attracting geologists, botanists and hillwalkers.

**7 The Dwarfie Stane:**  
Britain's only rock-cut tomb, thought to have been hollowed out some 5000 years ago in the Neolithic. Local legend report it as the home of a giant with later folklore recording it as the dwelling of a dwarf.

**8 Hoy High & Hoy Low Lighthouses, Graemsay:**  
In the late 1840s two lighthouses were designed by Alan Stevenson and built to act as leading lights to the western approaches of Hoy Sound to clear the submerged Bow Rock of Hoy and Kirk Rocks of Warbeth.

**27 Rackwick Museums:**  
Folk museums about life in Rackwick run by the Rendall family. Craa Nest is up the hill on the way to the Old Man of Hoy. Glen House and the Old School House are situated where the track begins. Open all year.

**9 Betty Corrigan's Grave:**  
A young girl from Lyness abandoned, pregnant, by a visiting sailor in the 18th century, took her own life and was buried away from hallowed ground on the parish boundary. Surely one of Britain's loneliest graves.

**11 Scapa Flow Visitor Centre & Museum:** Located a few minutes' walk from the Lyness ferry terminal the museum is centred around the former fuel oil pumping station at Lyness Naval Base (HMS Proserpine). The exhibition illustrates the importance of Scapa Flow as a base for the British fleet throughout history, concentrating on its role during two world wars. The museum is open March-October and admission is free. The Pumphouse Café is open from Easter to October. Tel: 01856 791300

**26 Rackwick:** This crofting township is considered one of the most beautiful places in Orkney. Bounded by towering cliffs and steep heathery hills, Rackwick rests beside a fine sand and boulder strewn beach.

**10 Scad Head Viewpoint:**  
A wonderful panorama of Scapa Flow and Orkney Mainland.

**12 Lyness Naval Cemetery:** Here rest the heroes from some of the most famous incidents in modern naval history - the Battle of Jutland (1916), HMS Hampshire sunk by a mine off Birsay (1916), the explosion of HMS Vanguard off Flotta (1917) and the torpedoing of HMS Royal Oak in Scapa Flow (1939).

**25 Melsetter House & Chapel:** The current house was built, incorporating an earlier property, in the late 1890s by the famous Arts & Crafts architect WR Lethaby. Visits arranged by appointment only subject to owner's convenience - Thursdays. Tel: 01856 791352.

**13 Arctic Convoys Memorial, Lyness:**  
To commemorate all who served in the Arctic Convoys to Murmansk and Archangel in Russia.

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**24 New Longhope Lifeboat Station:** Alongside the pier you will find the the Helen Comrie, a Tamar class lifeboat. A shop run by the Longhope Lifeboat Guild is open on Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays 12 - 2pm. Tel: 01856 701498 [www.longhopelifeboat.org.uk](http://www.longhopelifeboat.org.uk)

**14 Wee Fea Viewpoint:**  
The large concrete building on Wee Fea is the WWII communications and signal station. From there, all the main fleet anchorages and the main entrance into Scapa Flow were visible. Viewpoint gives panorama of the South Isles.

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**23 Longhope Lifeboat Station Museum:** Situated at Brims in South Walls, Longhope Lifeboat Station was opened in 1874 and the crew have since saved over 500 lives. The boatshed is now a museum housing one of the early lifeboats, the Thomas McCunn (1933-1962). Tel: 01856 701431 to view.

**15 Gable End Theatre:** The Gable End is a 75-seat community theatre, cinema and music venue. Most music events have a licensed bar. The Gable End Film Society holds fortnightly screenings. Events are advertised locally and at [www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/IOHDT](http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/IOHDT).

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**20 Cantick Head Lighthouse:** First lit in 1858 it was built by David Stevenson to mark the southern entrance to Scapa Flow.

**16 Martello Towers and Longhope Battery:** These two towers, constructed between 1813 and 1815 were built as protection for the Baltic convoys. Renovated in 1866 they were used during World War I. Hackness is maintained by Historic Scotland. Open April - October 9.30 - 5.30 daily.

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**21 Green Hill of Hesti Geo:** This large green mound, not far from the Candle of Snelsetter, contains an unusually large broch. There are two ghoups nearby.

**17 Moodie Burial Place:** The Moodie family owned most of Walls parish from the late 16th century until 1820.

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**22 Hill of White Hamars:** A Scottish Wildlife Trust reserve which offers spectacular coastal walks, overlooking the Pentland Firth. The reserve is one of the few places where you will find the rare Scottish Primrose (Primula scotica).

**18 Longhope Lifeboat Memorial:** At Osmondwall the Kirkhope burial ground is dominated by the lone bronze figure of a lifeboatman, erected in honour of the eight-man crew of the T.G.B. which was lost with all hands on March 17, 1969, en route to a rescue.

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design: Iain Ashman Design Orkney