

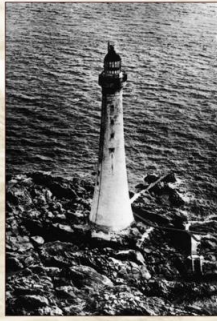
Although Donald MacKinnon, Brock, was described as 'lobster fisherman' in 1861, commercial lobster fishing only developed on Tiree after the railway came to Oban in 1880, as lobsters have to be shipped alive. They were sent by train to Billingsgate market in London wrapped in seaweed.

In the 1880s there were over thirty schooners and smacks owned by Tiree men. These vessels traded over a wide expanse and their cargoes were many and varied. They shipped coal from the Clyde, perhaps to Lerwick or the Isle of Man, cattle and sheep from all the Hebridean islands to mainland ports, and horses and ponies from Tiree to the north of Ireland. HECTOR MACPHAIL.

The most famous of these was the *Mary Stewart*, whose remains lie in Scarinish harbour. Her last voyage was in 1939.



William MacKinnon, Brock, making a lobster creel by hand in the 1900s



Skerryvore lighthouse



The Claymore at Cott Bay pier in 1954



The crew of the Baron Polworth in 1916. Six of the men came from Tiree. The company owning this ship had a reputation for meanness and the line was known as 'Hungry Hogarths'

The Merchant Navy was the biggest employer of Tiree men for the last 150 years. About 1930 there were over twenty Tiree men sailing as captains with Robertson's of Glasgow. There were at least ten Tiree men captain with the Baron line, Hugh Hogarth's company. These were known throughout the oceans of the world as "Hungry Hogarths" – he ran his ships on a shoestring. And Donaldson's line of Glasgow was so full of Tiree men they were known as the "Tiree Navy". HECTOR MACPHAIL.

Perhaps the most famous Tiree skipper was Donald MacKinnon, from Heanish. He captained the clipper *Taepping* from China in 1866 in the annual race to bring the first tea of the season to London. He beat the second boat by just half an hour after a voyage of 99 days.

"Never turn your back on the sea" was a lesson drummed into young islanders. The dangers of the open sea claimed many Tiree sailors' lives. The worst tragedy, known as *Fuadach Bhaill' a' Phuille*, was in July 1856. A fine day enticed seven boats from West Hynish to the Skerryvore fishing banks. A sudden storm scattered the fleet and nine men drowned. Two boats were driven to Islay and one to Coll, where it came ashore with the skipper dead at the helm. Two Tiree women, Isabella Black and Mary Campbell, were blamed for the disaster. *Neither of them had any great love for their husbands and they wanted to get rid of them...And the people were casting it up against these two women that it was them that caused the wind, because a witch is able to do just about anything.* DONALD SINCLAIR, WEST HYNISH.

Skerryvore lighthouse was built by Alan Stevenson in 1842 after thirty ships were wrecked on its reefs in the previous 50 years. The buildings in Hynish, which were used by the workforce and lighthouse men, can still be seen. We recommend you visit the Skerryvore museum in Hynish.

The lack of a good natural harbour was, and still is, Tiree's biggest handicap. Scarinish harbour was built before 1786. The first steamer to visit Tiree regularly from the Clyde was the *Dunara Castle* in 1875 but, with no pier, boats had to lay off Scarinish while a small skiff brought passengers and cargo to land.

*Very often it turns on the number of young men present and willing to take a hand, and with two men to each oar they assist the agent of MacBrayne to get the boat out of the narrow straits of Scarinish harbour to the steamer.* LADY VICTORIA CAMPBELL, SISTER OF THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

After years of political pressure Gott Bay pier was built in 1914. Cars had to be put in slings and winched onto the pier. The end-loading 'ro-ro' terminal was built in 1992.

This panel has been sponsored by MacLennan Motors, Scarinish, Tiree