



50 fascinating facts about Mull

1. Mull may mean *island of peninsulas*.
2. Only 20 miles of Mull's 140 miles of road are double track.
3. Ben More at 3169 ft (966m) is the only Munro on the Argyll islands and is the highest peak of tertiary basalts in Britain.
4. Mull has the only passenger railway in the Hebrides. The Isle of Mull railway is 10 1/4 inch gauge and runs less than two miles from Craignure to Torosay Castle.
5. The film *Entrapment* was partly filmed at Duart Castle with a scene that featured Catherine Zeta Jones emerging from the waters the Castle guards.
6. The Island of Erraid is the one David Balfour was shipwrecked on in the book *Kidnapped* written by Robert Louis Stevenson.
7. Torosay Castle was built in 1858, to a design by David Bryce. Acclaimed for his work in Scots Baronial style, his arguably most well known design Fettes College is ironically in French Chateau style!
8. Mull Hosts the only Rally operated on public roads in the U.K.
9. The Hebridean Princess, chartered in 2006 by HM Queen Elizabeth, was built as the ferry for Mull in 1973 and was called the Columba.
10. The island of Staffa is part of a Basaltic seam that runs up the West coast of Scotland. The Giants Causeway in Northern Ireland is part of the same seam.
11. The rock group *Genesis* once owned Pennyghael estate.
12. Tobermory means *well of St Mary*.
13. Tobermory was the setting for the BBC childrens' program *Balamory*. What's the story...?
14. McCulloch's Tree, a natural wonder of Europe, is the cast of an ancient coniferous tree trunk caught in a volcanic lava flow. Care is needed in venturing to view this shoreline marvel since the tide can cut you off from your route back.
15. Place names from Mull have been proliferated throughout the former British Empire, making it the most commemorated of any part of Britain.
16. During WWII, Tobermory Bay was the most vital and successful training centre in the British Isles for anti-submarine warfare.
17. The grandfather of the missionary and explorer David Livingstone was a crofter on Ulva.
18. Red granite from Tormore was shipped to America in large quantities and also supplied stone for Glasgow University.
19. There is a roadside monument on the Ross of Mull to Mary MacDonald who wrote *Child in a Manager* (in Gaelic) also rendered as *Morning has Broken*.
20. Mull was part of the sea kingdom of the Norse and many place names reflect the joint Gaelic/Norse history – Pennygael is one example.
21. St Columba founded a Christian settlement on Iona and so Mull became part of the pilgrims route to this hallowed place.
22. Mull microbrewery has named its beer after landmarks and events associated with the area. These include McCaig's Folly, Galleon Gold and Tobermory Terror.
23. Iona Abbey was gifted to the Church of Scotland, by the 8th Duke of Argyll, for use by all Christian denominations.
24. The Queen regularly stopped at Market Bay for picnics from the royal yacht Britannia.
25. The line of the Moine Thrust runs between Mull and Iona with the result that Iona has substantially older rock foundations of Lewisian Gneiss, which are around 1500 million years old.
26. Mull has greater biodiversity of any other place in Britain relative to its size, with more than 200 species of birds and more than 4000 species of plants in its 353 square miles.
27. Mull is reckoned to be the most likely place to see Golden Eagle in Scotland.
28. Family names associated with Mull are Maclean, MacQuarrie, Mackinnon and MacDonald.

29. Tobermory Bay is thought to be the resting place of the San Juan de Sicilia, a Spanish ship sunk around 1588. The ship allegedly laden with Spanish gold, has resisted many unsuccessful salvage operations. The current Duke of Argyll initiated yet another search and the search vessel can be seen in the harbour. [March 2007]
30. Tobermory is home to the island's only distillery.
31. Duart Castle takes its name from the promontory it occupies Duart, which means *dark point or headland*.
32. Duart Castle was restored as the seat of the Clan MacLean after being bought by Sir Fitzroy Donald Maclean, 10th Baronet of Duart, in 1911.
33. Inchkenneth is home to a fine mansion house once owned by the Mitford family. Unity Mitford died on the island in 1948.
34. It is said that Iona was the burial place of around 48 kings. The burial ground is thought to have been in the vicinity of St Oran's chapel.
35. Artist John Lowry Morrison, Jolomo, is well known for his colourful paintings of scenes from Mull and Iona.
36. Sir Joseph Banks is famous for his round-the-world voyage with Captain Cook (1768-71). However, the next year, this wealthy young man, with his reputation already made as an explorer, was en route to Iceland when his party called into Mull. There he learned about a marvellous island close by. He sailed out to it – and 'discovered' (and later publicised) Staffa. He named its most famous rock formation Fingal's Cave.
37. *The Eye of the Needle*, which starred Donald Sutherland, contained outdoor scenes filmed at Treshnish in northwest Mull.
38. Mull's "National Anthem" is *An t-Eilean Muileach* (The Isle of Mull), a Gaelic composition written and composed by Dugald MacPhail (1818-87).
39. Mull Theatre is currently constructing a production centre within the grounds of Aros park to replace its Guinness Book of Records Little theatre. Founded in 1966 the theatre has managed to produce a remarkable number of productions to critical acclaim and with its new centre provides a model for other remote theatre enterprises.
40. Minke whales, porpoises and dolphins are among the sea life that can be seen on boat tours from Mull. Whilst seals are readily visible basking on the islands shores.
41. Lachlan Macquarie, born on the island of Ulva, became Governor of New South Wales from 1809 to 1822. He is buried at the Macquarie mausoleum.
42. *The Terror of Tobermory* was Vice Admiral Sir Gilbert Stephenson KBE, CB, CMC, who earned his nickname as Commodore of HMS Western Isles. Sir Gilbert was responsible for the training of new Royal Navy recruits in Tobermory harbour on the isle of Mull, Stephenson moulded hundreds of inexperienced recruits into trained and disciplined sailors. He is fondly remembered in a biography penned by Richard Baker the newsreader, who trained under him.
43. Iona, Ulva and Mull all benefited from the building of a so called *Parliamentary Church* under the direction of Thomas Telford the great Scots civil engineer.
44. Mull Highland Games take place in July each year in Tobermory.
45. Mull provides the first ascent in The Scottish Islands Peak Race, when teams sail into Salen and two runners scale Ben More.
46. The Mishnish in Tobermory will hosted a World' Mince n Tatties competition in 2008.
47. Mull Music Festival takes place in April annually and showcases traditional music.
48. It is possible to travel on to Coll and Tiree from a ferry which stops at Tobermory.
49. Fingal's Cave became a pilgrimage for the Romantics: William Wordsworth, John Keats, Sir Walter Scott, JMW Turner, Felix Mendelssohn (and even Queen Victoria sailed out to see the rocks.
50. The German composer Mendelssohn was inspired to write his overture *Hebrides* after his visit in 1829. His visit is now recalled in an annual music festival Mendelssohn on Mull.