

# Howmore



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*It lies between the modern main road that runs the length of South Uist*



*and the road it replaced, the oldest road in the Hebrides, now a long distance footpath*



*through farmland by the sea.*



*Howmore is home to one of Scotland's best collections of thatched buildings*



*of which the hostel is perhaps its most attractive.*



*New buildings have not obscured the pattern of the earlier settlement.*

## Howmore Conservation Area

Conservation Area

Archaeologically Sensitive Area

Scale 1:5000

CnES MSA Licence No. 100022965

Howmore  
(Tobha Mor)

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# Christianity and Howmore



*Above the village stands Howmore Parish Church, a landmark from sea and land.*



*For centuries the community has been linked with Christianity,*



*and religious buildings span 800 years.*



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Above the village stands Howmore Parish Church, a landmark from sea and land. For centuries the community has been linked with Christianity, and religious buildings span 800 years. Beside the hostel are the Thirteenth Century remains of a church and four chapels of early Irish Celtic monastic design. The most striking is the "Large Church" of which only part of the east gable remains.

# Beach, Machair and Moorland



*To the west of the Parish Church a network of tracks runs to and behind*



*the magnificent dune-backed beach that stretches for miles along South Uist's deserted western coastline.*



*You can walk along the beach itself*



*or join the coastal track - The Hebridean Way - the long distance path, running from Barra to Stornoway in Lewis.*



*The fine beaches of white shell sand and the dunes behind*



*merge into pasture where beach sand has sweetened the underlying peat creating a fertile grassy plain.*



*This ecological system is called machair, and is one of the rarest habitats in Europe.*



*Beyond the machair the acid soil alone provides rough grazing and moorland vegetation,*



*uninhabited except for sheep and deer and the lover of wild places.*

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# Walking from Howmore



*The Howmore River reaches the sea below the church and the Hebridean Way crosses it at a bridge.*



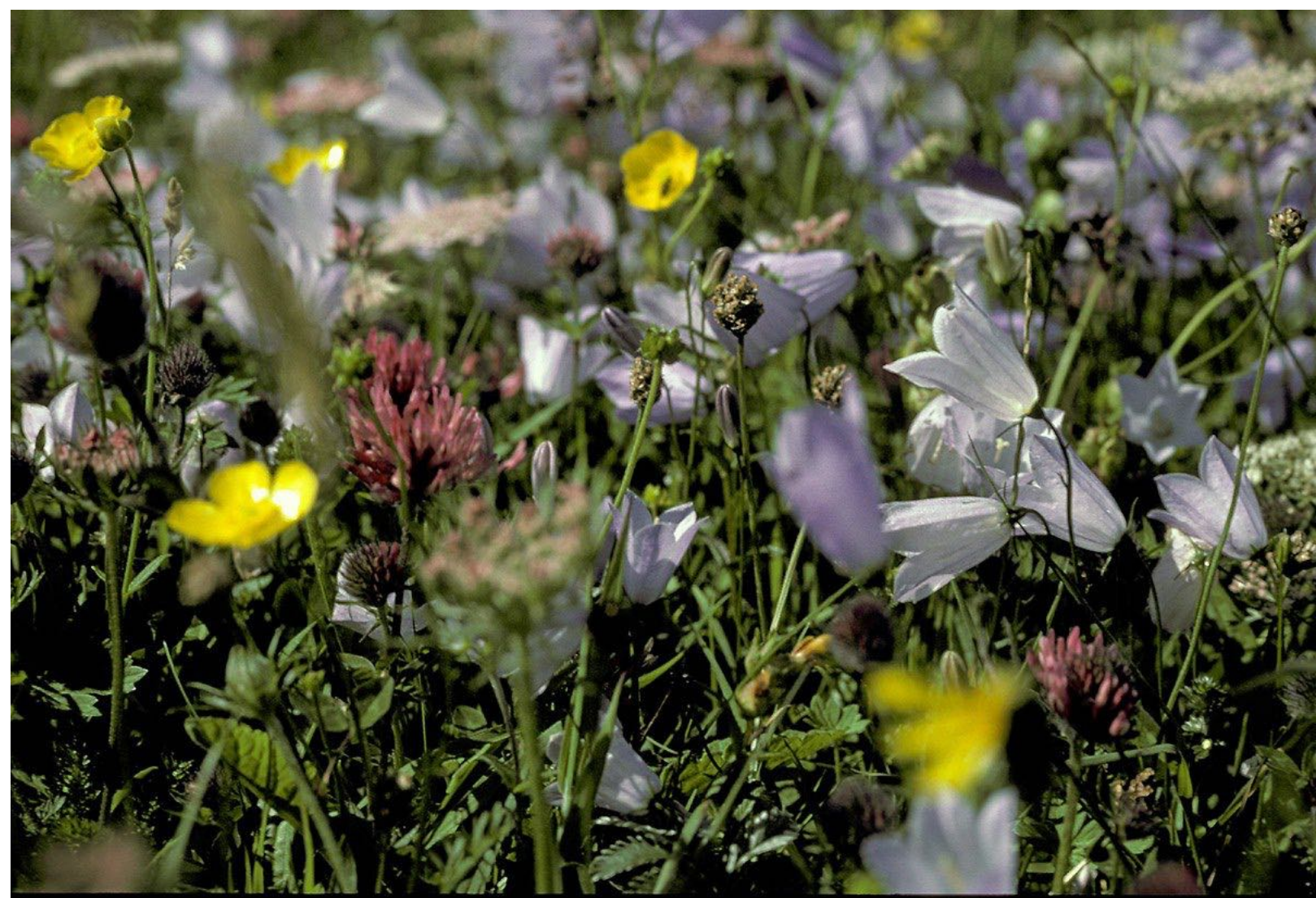
*It is a fine river for salmon and trout and the Queen has reputedly fished it.*



*From the river the visitor is spoiled for a choice*



*of fine coastal walks beside the marram grasses.*



*You can look for wildflowers in the machair with superb scented flora in season,*



*listen for the Atlantic rollers, or on rare occasions admire the stillness of the sea*



*You can either head south as far as the untamed Askernish Golf Course and return by bus,*



*or go north before turning inland to Loch Druidibeg to complete a circular walk.*

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# Loch Druidibeg



*The Loch Druidibeg Nature Reserve contains a full range of island wildlife and habitats.*



*The colourful machair grassland on the Atlantic coast gradually gives way*



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# Howmore Hostel

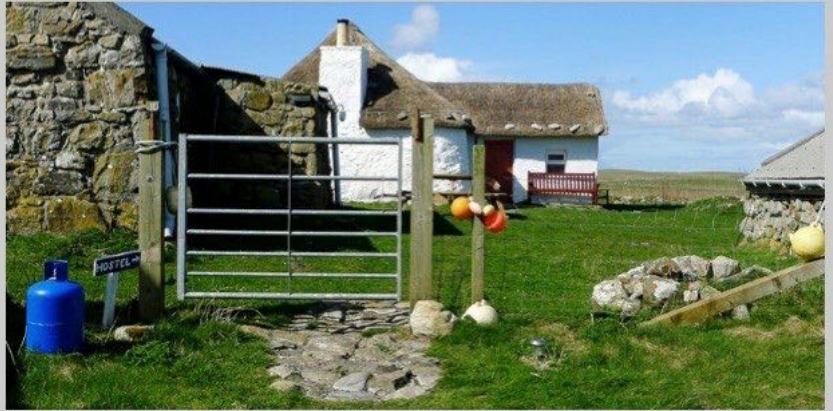


*Howmore Hostel is run by the Gatliff Hebridean Hostels Trust.*

# Three Gatliff Trust Hostels



Rhenigidale, Harris



Howmore, South Uist



Berneray, North Uist

*It is one of three Gatliff hostels in the Outer Hebrides.*



<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1023587>

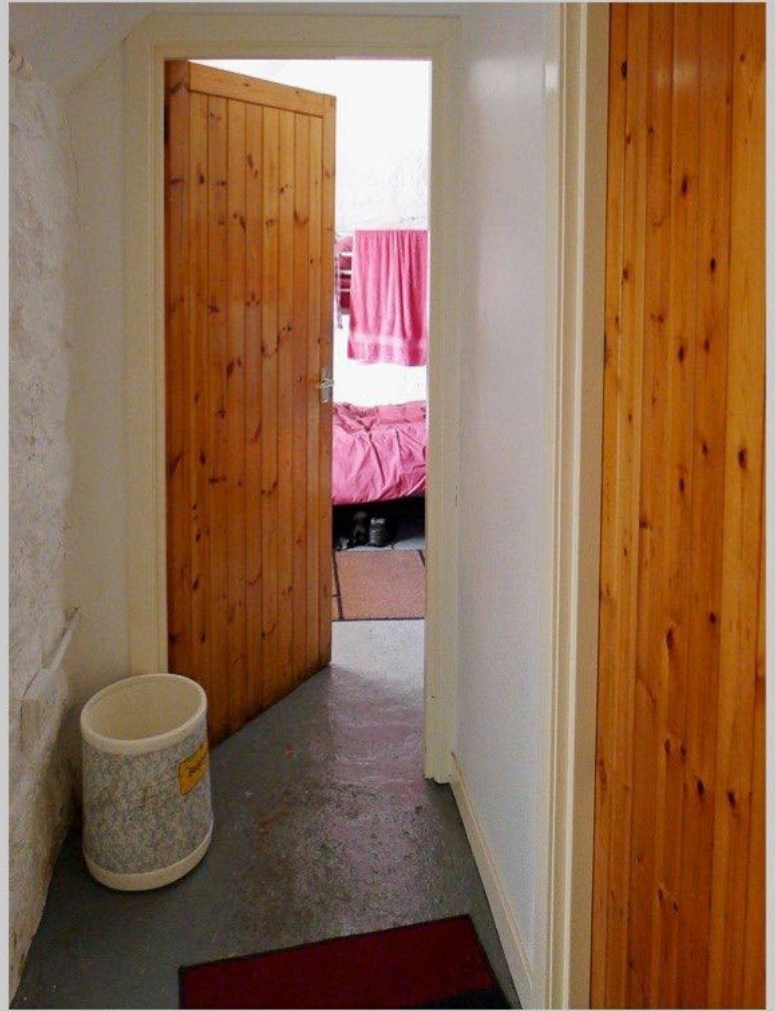
*Howmore was opened in 1966.*



*Over the years the Trust has made the hostel more appealing and increasingly more comfortable, but not overly so.*



*The hostel is open all year and has sixteen beds in three shared rooms.*



*Two dormitories have six beds each and one has four.*



*The Hostel has a Visit Scotland two star status.*



*Recent renovations to the kitchen, dormitories and roof are subjects of appreciative comment.*



*You can camp nearby*



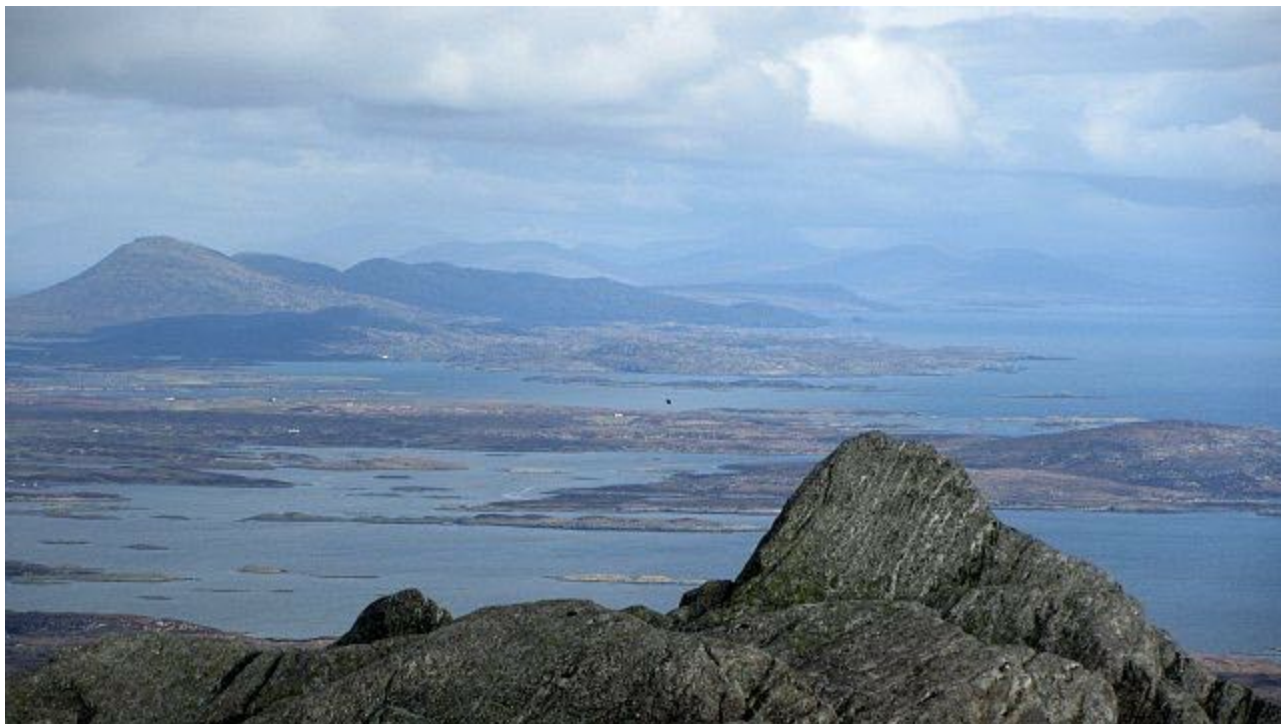
*with stunning views towards South Uist's highest hills.*

Howmore Hostel is run by the Gatliff Hebridean Hostels Trust. It is one of three Gatliff hostels in the Outer Hebrides. Howmore was opened in 1966. Over the years the Trust has made the hostel more appealing and increasingly more comfortable, but not overly so. The hostel is open all year and has sixteen beds in three shared rooms. Two dormitories have six beds each and one has four. The Hostel has a Visit Scotland two star status. Recent renovations to the kitchen, dormitories and roof are subjects of appreciative comment. You can camp nearby with stunning views towards South Uist's highest hills.

# South Uist's hills



*The mountaineer will enjoy a long or short day on these hills.*



*From Hecla, Corodale and Beinn Mhor, views over the Atlantic and across the Minch are spectacular,*



*besides providing a totally different perspective of South Uist than possible from the coastal plain.*



*With an overnight stop at Uisinis Bothy a two-day expedition crossing the island becomes a fine hill and wilderness walking challenge to savour.*



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# Cycling the Uists



*Cyclists find a welcome at Howmore. National Cycle Route 780 now rebranded as the Hebridean Way passes through the village.*



*Throughout the Uists cyclists can explore narrow roads*



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*and coastal harbours.*

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# Enjoying Howmore



*Howmore is certainly a place to visit while travelling, but primarily the hostel is a destination in itself.*



*Days there can be lazy or strenuous. Just come to soak up the atmosphere and decide each day how best to use the weather and the long Summer daylight hours.*



*Why not look for otters, listen to Gaelic music and understand the culture,*



*examine the machair and maybe come to understand its ecology.*



*Why not stalk the deer,*



*smell the peat smoke,*



*go climb a hill*



*and get a view;*



*study the sky,*



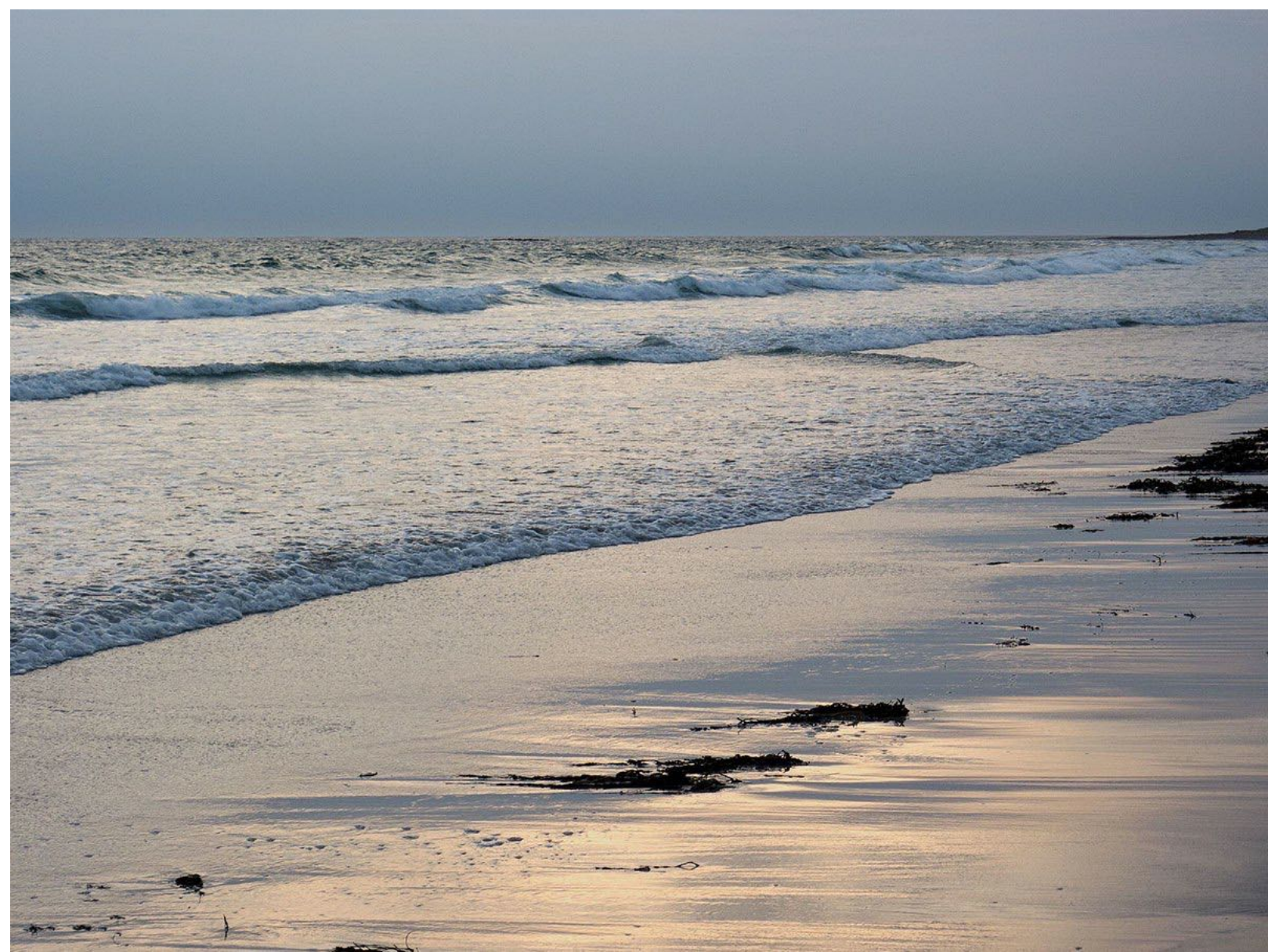
*find hidden anchorages,*



*count the lochans,*



*or seek out an elusive corncrake;*



*experience the rhythm of the tides and its impact on the seabirds along the shore.*



*Why not interpret the stones – are they as nature left them*



*or a treasure trove of prehistory?*



*Try identifying some of the 200 flowering plants growing close by;*



*become a pilgrim for a day in the ruined churches;*



*or simply relax around the hostel – the door is always open.*



*Have the coast to yourself and enjoy the freedom of this quiet land.*



*For some, time stands still in Howmore.*

Howmore is certainly a place to visit while travelling, but primarily the hostel is a destination in itself. Days there can be lazy or strenuous. Just come to soak up the atmosphere and decide each day how best to use the weather and the long Summer daylight hours. Why not look for otters, listen to Gaelic music and understand the culture, examine the machair and maybe come to understand its ecology. Why not stalk the deer, smell the peat smoke, go climb a hill and get a view; study the sky, find hidden anchorages, count the lochans, or seek out an elusive corncrake; experience the rhythm of the tides and its impact on the seabirds along the shore. Why not interpret the stones – are they as nature left them, or a treasure trove of prehistory? Try identifying some of the 200 flowering plants growing close by; become a pilgrim for a day in the ruined churches; or simply relax around the hostel – the door is always open. Have the coast to yourself and enjoy the freedom of this quiet land. For some, time stands still in Howmore.

# Acknowledgements

The majority of the photographs in this book were taken by Julian Paren, a Trustee of the Gatliff Hebridean Hostels Trust. One was taken by the Chairman of the Trust, Peter Clarke. For information on the work of the Trust please visit the website [www.gatliff.org.uk](http://www.gatliff.org.uk).

The old photograph of Howmore Hostel was taken by Mary Miers, and the photograph of Askernish Golf Course was taken from the on-line Links Magazine. I thank Marc Calhoun for his picture of wild camping.

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