
CESRA Workshop 2004: Getting to Sabhal Mor Ostaig

Table of Contents

Introductory notes	1
Getting onto Skye	1
By car	1
By train or bus	2
By air	2
Contact	3

Introductory notes

Sabhal Mor Ostaig (SMO) has its own travel pages, at <http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/smo/siubhal/english.html> and <http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/smo/cg/Travel.htm>. The second of these includes a map showing the location of Sabhal Mor Ostaig near the (small) village of Armadale, at the very south of the island. Telephone numbers for local taxis are also given, the Sleat taxi being the most local.

For people coming by air, let us highlight here that the easiest way to get to SMO is probably to arrange your air travel all the way to Inverness and take advantage of the free bus we can offer all the way to SMO. We are grateful to Highland Council for supporting the Workshop in this way.

All costs are in UK pounds (£). The UK has not joined the Euro and £1 = 1.50 Euro at time of writing.

These notes are also available in RTF [travel.trf] or PDF [travel.pdf] formats.

Getting onto Skye

There are two main ways onto the Isle of Skye. There is a toll bridge from Kyle of Lochalsh on the mainland across to Kyleakin, or there is a ferry from Mallaig on the mainland to Armadale. Armadale is just 3 km from SMO, while a journey of 30 km still has to be made from Kyleakin. Both routes involve scenically beautiful journeys from any major centre of population or airport, and both have their pros and cons from a practical point of view. Travellers by car may appreciate the convenience of the bridge, while those travelling entirely by public transport might prefer the slightly shorter journey associated with the Mallaig - Armadale ferry.

Seekers after a romantic Highland experience may enjoy the passenger-only ferry from Kylerhea. This boat touches land on Skye near Kyleakin and the journey on to Armadale proceeds from there.

By car

The bridge at Kyle of Lochalsh (£5.70 toll for cars), and the Mallaig - Armadale ferry (£28 for the car plus £2.40 per person) are both available to you. The journey to either of these from further south involves first getting to Fort William (e.g. by the A82 from Glasgow - about three hours).

To get to Kyle of Lochalsh, continue north through Fort William on the A82, turning left onto the A87 after about 50 km. Kyle of Lochalsh is at the very end of this road, about 130 km in total from Fort William. Once across the bridge, follow the A87 towards Broadford, turning left on the A851 after a few km. SMO is 30 km further on, 3 km before the village of Armadale.

To get to Mallaig, take the A830 (left turn) about 2 km north of Fort William. Mallaig is at the very end of this road, 70 km on. In June the ferry operates seven times per day (not Sundays!). Booking is advisable for those taking a car, telephone (44) (0) 1687 462403, or online at <http://www.calmac.co.uk/reservations.html>. Once off the ferry in Armadale, SMO is about 3 km north, on the A851 towards Broadford.

Very detailed instructions for any car journey in the UK are available from the UK Automobile Association, at http://www.theaa.com/travelwatch/planner_main.jsp. This system does not know there is an 'Armadale' on Skye, however. Use SMO's postcode, IV44 8RQ, as your destination.

By train or bus

There are bus and train services to Mallaig, described here from Glasgow. You will get a sense of the scale of the journey from the car travel notes above. Timetable and fare information and online booking are available from Scotrail's website at <http://www.scotrail.co.uk>. Glasgow has two train stations, Glasgow Central and Glasgow Queen Street; trains to Fort William and on to Mallaig leave from Queen Street. Some train journeys from the south will take you to Glasgow Central, in which case you will have to make your way to Queen Street, just a five to ten minute walk from Central. There is also a free shuttle bus between the stations. From London Kings Cross, however, you can make a scheduled journey all the way to Mallaig, passing through Edinburgh and Glasgow Queen Street and avoiding any need to get through the streets of Glasgow.

If you have been staying in some other part of Glasgow the Underground train may be a convenient way to get to Queen Street. Buchanan Street underground station is immediately adjacent to Queen Street. Routes and timetables for train and underground journeys within Greater Glasgow are available from <http://www.spt.co.uk>. Note in particular the network summary map at http://www.spt.co.uk/Travel/SPT_network_2003.pdf.

It is possible to buy a ticket at Queen Street Station which combines the train to Mallaig and the Mallaig to Armadale ferry crossing. At time of writing the return train journey costs about £40, and the return ferry journey adds £4.80. The summer timetable is not available yet, but it appears at the moment that you will have to take the 0840 train from Queen Street - any later train will arrive after the last ferry departure at 1700. Contact us if you are arriving by this route: we may be able to pick people up, or at least coordinate shared taxi bookings for the last 3 km to SMO. This is probably the easiest train journey to SMO, although it is also possible to travel to Kyle of Lochalsh by train and conclude the journey by bus.

Bus services are operated from Buchanan Street bus station in Glasgow by Citylink (<http://www.citylink.co.uk>). The bus journey to Mallaig appears not to be much cheaper than the train but it is possible to buy a return ticket to 'Skye' for £20, provided you buy it at least five days before you wish to travel. This bus gets to Skye via Kyle of Lochalsh and the bridge - route and timetable at http://www.citylink.co.uk/route_glas2skye.htm. It heads for Uig in the north of Skye, from where one can take ferries to some of the outer islands. You should leave it just over the bridge, in Kyleakin, and connect to the bus to Armadale. The Armadale bus is operated by Rapson's who are also the bus company to use if you want to travel from Inverness. Their timetables are online at <http://www.rapsons.co.uk/frameset.html> [<http://www.rapsons.co.uk/inverness.html>] (you want 'Area 6 - Skye and Lochalsh'). Alternatively, a taxi from Kyleakin to Sabhal Mor Ostaig will cost about £23.

By air

The Isle of Skye has no airport so some of the foregoing information may be needed to complete your journey. The nearest airport on the mainland is Inverness Airport, 16 km east of the town of Inverness. There are flights to Inverness from several of the UK's international airports, e.g. London Gatwick (three flights per day, British Airways), Glasgow (one flight per day, British Airways), London Luton (one or two flights per day, EasyJet). With generous support from Highland Council we are able to offer participants free bus transport between Inverness Airport and SMO, leaving 1500 on 6 June and returning 11 June. If you find yourself passing through Inverness you may need information on getting to and from the airport, available at <http://www.hial.co.uk/inverness-airport.htm> [<http://www.hial.co.uk/inverness-airport.html>].

Glasgow has an international airport, next nearest to Skye after Inverness. The journey via Glasgow Airport would have to be completed by bus (from Buchanan Street bus station) or train (from Queen Street station) as

described above, necessitating a journey into the centre of Glasgow in either case. There is a good, frequent bus service which takes about 20 minutes to reach the city centre, terminating at Buchanan Street bus station. Timetable and fare information for this bus are at http://www.citylink.co.uk/route_glas2airp.htm. A taxi to the city centre will take about 15 minutes and cost about £15.

If there is demand we will try to organise some dedicated transport from Glasgow Airport, but there may have to be a charge for this.

Contact

The best way to contact the LOC is at the email address cesra2004@astro.gla.ac.uk - several of us check the mail at this address. Members of the LOC include: Laura Bone, Lyndsay Fletcher, Ross Galloway, Joe Khan, Eduard Kontar, Alec MacKinnon (all Glasgow), Paul Wood (St Andrews).