



Audit Year: 2010

GTBS Award: SILVER

Business Name: Valentia Harbour Tours

Business Type: Boat Tour

Location: South Kerry, EIRE

Website: www.valentiaharbourtours.com

Valentia Harbour Tours is operated from the small town of Cahersiveen on the picturesque South Kerry coast in the Kerry Geopark. The unique aluminium amphibious vehicle, the *Beag Inis*, features both a hull and retractable wheels, and provides guided sightseeing tours of the nearby Valentia Bay and islands. Rock formations, seals, gannets, black guillemots and gulls are just some of the highlights. The enthusiastic owners and staff use their extensive local knowledge to give visitors much more than a standard tour. Recent efforts have resulted in the business securing a SILVER Green Tourism Award.

Environmental benefits

There are several benefits of operating an amphibious vehicle from a green perspective. As the vessel is parked on dry land every night no barnacles or seaweed can survive therefore simple maintenance and light washing is all that is required to keep the keel ship shape. Less drag results in less demand on the engine. Corrosion by saltwater is also minimised and there is no requirement for harmful anti-fouling paints that are typically used by boat operators.

The engine and exhaust design is similar to that of a vehicle engine meaning that any unburned hydrocarbons or pollutants are not released to the sea. Similarly the enlarged exhaust system acts as a silencer reducing noise pollution and wildlife disturbance.

Social & community benefits

The Beag Inis can carry up to 48 passengers in total, and on occasion places are given free of charge for community use. School groups have been on nature visits in and around Beginish Island and charity swimmers have been transported to the start line for triathlons. Removable seating and an accessible toilet can accommodate wheelchair users, allowing all sorts of groups to experience at close hand the beauty of the area.

In busy summer months the vessel offers pick ups and drop offs from dry land. Visitors from the nearby Holiday Park, town or Valentia Island can experience the area without getting their feet wet or requiring a pier for landings.

Cost Savings

The amphibious nature of the vessel results in significantly reduced maintenance costs that it is estimated to save several thousand Euros each year. Anti-fouling paints can be extremely expensive and need to be regularly reapplied. Associated maintenance costs are minimised as heavy lifting equipment and mooring fees are not required.

Web Links

Kerry Natural Heritage: www.kerrygeopark.ie, www.iwt.ie, www.birdwatchireland.ie
Amphibious Boats: www.arklowmarine.ie, www.amphibiousribs.com
Green Boating: www.thegreenblue.org.uk, www.broadsgreenboatshow.co.uk