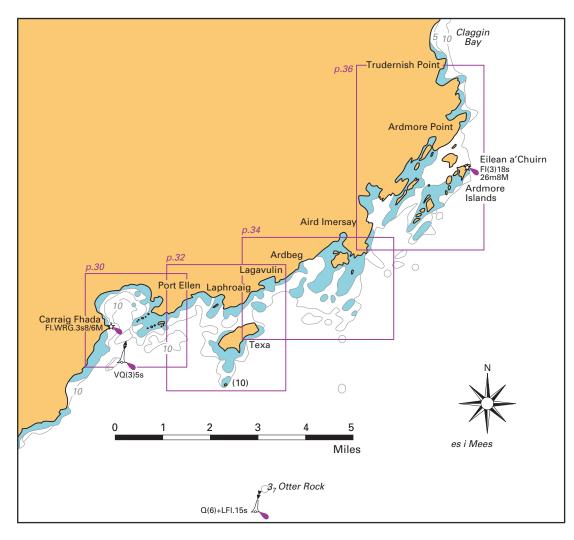


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2. Southeast Islay and Sound of Islay



SOUTHEAST ISLAY

Admiralty Chart 2168 Admiralty Leisure Folio 5611.5 Imray Chart C64 Ordnance Survey Cruising Scotland pp.65, 68-69

Southeast coast of Islay

The southeast of Islay is rich in history - and distilleries. Dunyvaig Castle at the entrance to Lagavulin Bay was the headquarters of the Lords of the Isles after the Norsemen were defeated at the Battle of Largs in 1263, and the finest carved medieval stone cross in Scotland is at Kildalton Chapel, near Port Mor and Glas Uig, north of Ardmore.

The inner passages between Ardmore and Port Ellen have been used by local fishermen and traders for centuries, but have only been brought to the notice of yachtsmen comparatively recently by Michael Gilkes.

The Ardmore Isles and the passage inshore of them are designated as a Special Area of Conservation (see p.11)

There is no published chart of the area at a larger scale than 2168 (1:75,000), but Ordnance Survey Explorer map (scale 1:25,000) No.352 Islay South provides useful detail of this part of the coast. However, much of this section of the Islay coast has been recently surveyed by Antares Charts and the use of these will enable more of the coast to be explored than can be described in these Directions, not to mention the possibility of taking one or two short cuts.

Tides

There are strong tidal streams nearby, in particular at the Oa and the Rhinns of Islay, at the Mull of Kintyre, and in the Sound of Islay.

At Otter Rock the streams run east and west. The west-going stream begins about +0530 Oban (HW Dover) and the eastgoing stream begins about -0110 Oban (+0610 Dover).

Off Texa Island, tidal streams split, one stream running towards Ardmore, the other towards Rubha nan Leacan at the southeast point of the Oa beginning at about +0530 Oban (HW Dover), and running from those points towards Texa beginning about -0030 Oban (-0600 Dover).

Dangers and marks

Dangers and marks related to an extended coastal passage are described in sequence from The Oa to Ardmore. Those related to individual anchorages and inshore passages are described separately.

The Oa, the south point of Islay, which rises to 200 metres, has a tall stone monument at Mull of Oa, its southwest point.

Otter Rock, with a least depth of 3.7 metres, 3 miles south of Texa, is marked by a south cardinal light buoy.

Texa Island is 2 miles east of Port Ellen. Tarr Sgeir, a detached rock 10 metres high, lies 6 cables south of Texa and there are other rocks between Tarr Sgeir and Texa.

Iomallach, 2.5 metres high, 1¾ miles ENE of the northeast end of Texa and a mile south of Aird Imersay lies at the extremity of an area of rocks south and southwest of Aird Imersay. A detached shoal patch of rock lies southwest of Iomallach and Ruadh Mor, 4 cables southwest of Iomallach has a depth of only 2.1 metres.



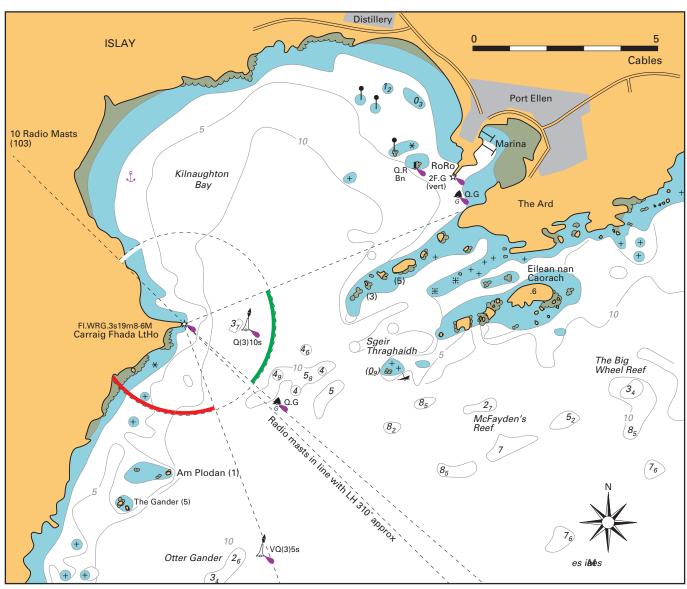
The visitors' pontoons at Port Ellen (p.31)

Ardmore Point is the most easterly point of Islay. Eilean a'Chuirn, nearly a mile south of Ardmore and 5 miles northeast of Texa, is the most easterly of the Ardmore Islands. Eilean a'Chuirn light beacon is an inconspicuous tower.

The Ardmore Islands run northeast from Ceann nan Sgeirean, 1 mile northeast of Aird Imersay, for 1½ miles, and drying rocks lie up to 3 cables southeast of Ceann nan Sgeirean.

> Port Ellen from seaward (pp.30-31)





PORT ELLEN

Admiralty Chart 2476, 2168 Admiralty Leisure Folio 5611.27B Imray Chart C64 Ordnance Survey Cruising Scotland

Port Ellen

This is the main ferry terminal and harbour on Islay. Recently installed berthing facilities have made it a popular alternative to Gigha as an arrival and departure point for Northern Ireland or the Mull of Kintyre.

Tides

Constant -0530 Oban (+0130 Dover) at springs, and -0050 Oban (+0610 Dover) at neaps.

Height in metres

MHWS MHWN MLWN MLWS MTI. 0.9 0.8 0.6 0.5 0.3

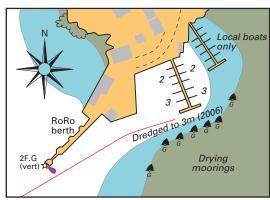
Directions

The Otter Rock (LD 3.7) S cardinal buoy lies 4½ miles southeast of the entrance to Port Ellen and is a good landfall mark if coming from the Mull of Kintyre.

Approaching from the east pass south of Tarr Sgeir (10), 6 cables south of Texa and head towards Carraig Fhada lighthouse. When this is in line with the prominent radio masts on the hill above, bearing 310°, it will lead to a G conical buoy which should be left to starboard.

From the southwest, identify the E cardinal buoy marking the Otter Gander and steer to leave this close to port before following the transit given above leading to the outer G buoy.

From this buoy steer north until on a line between the lighthouse and the pierhead (the inner E cardinal buoy marks a shoal with 3.7m



PORT ELLEN MARINA



Port Ellen approach from the southeast

over it and yachts can pass either side of it). Turn to starboard to steer approximately 60° and approach the pierhead on that bearing.

Hold close to the southeast side of the pier before entering the dredged channel to the marina, which is marked by small green starboard buoys. Shallow areas lie very close to the south of the buoys, and to the east of the three red buoys which mark the anchors for the ground chains to the east of the pontoons.

Liahts

Otter Rock S cardinal buoy Q (6) + L Fl.15s Otter Gander E Cardinal buoy VQ(3)10s Carraig Fhada LtHo Fl.WRG 3s 19m 8-6M Outer buoy G conical buoy QG Inner buoy E Cardinal buoy Q(3)10s Beacon 1 cable west of pier Q.R. Buoy south of pierhead G conical buoy Q.G.

Anchorage and berthing

A small, self-service, marina with 24 pontoon berths has been positioned in an area dredged to 3.0m lying just beyond the knuckle of the pier. The depth is less than 2m at the finger pontoons on the inner side. The northern range of pontoons is reserved for local boats and is

much shallower. Visiting yachts up to 13m can be accommodated at the outer pontoons. Dues are collected by volunteer supervisors.

Kilnaughton Bay on the west, north of Carraig Fhada, affords shelter in westerlies and some protection from southerly swell.

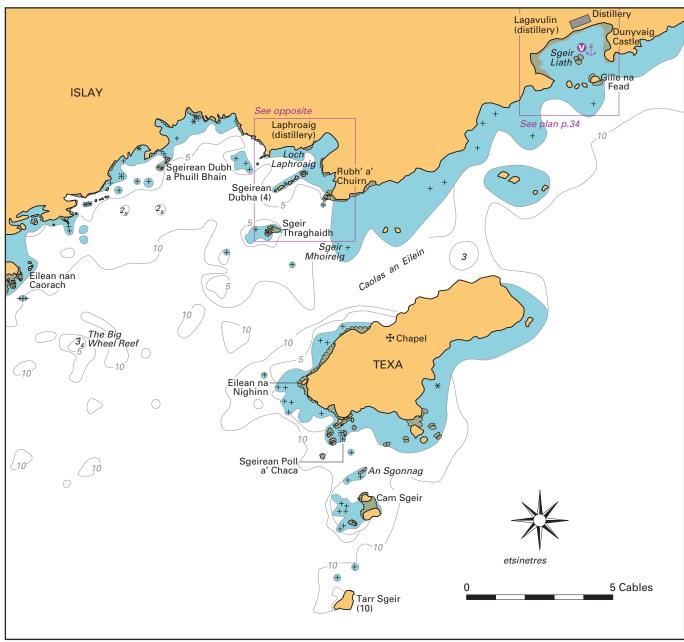
Older, uncorrected, charts may show an anchor symbol southwest of the pier but on no account should yachts anchor in this position, or anywhere in the approach to the pier, as this could restrict ferry movements. The visitors' moorings off the distillery have now been removed.

Supplies

Marina berths serviced with water and electricity. Toilets, showers and washing machine are a short walk from the marina (ask for directions). Diesel available by hose from mobile bowser at the quay, (phone Clear Water Marine ©01496 300301). Shops, Post Office, tel, hotels and restaurant, Calor Gas. Car hire and distillery visits.

Port Ellen from the south; the finger pontoons have been removed for dredging and the photograph was taken before the northern pontoon was added





CAOLAS AN EILEIN

Admiralty Chart 2476, 2168 Admiralty Leisure Folio 5611.27B. 5 Imray Chart Ordnance Survey **Cruising Scotland** pp.68-69

Port Ellen to Loch an t-Sailean

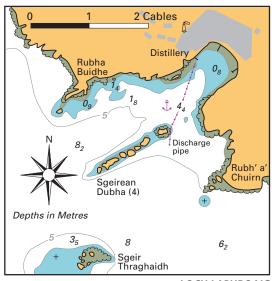
If heading east it is usual to leave Port Ellen by re-tracing the course described for entry and steering to pass south of Tarr Sgeir and thence northwards to the Sounds of Islay or Jura. However, if planning to visit any of the distilleries on this stretch of coast, some distance will be saved by passing through Caolas an Eilein, between Texa and Islay.

Chart 2476, which shows Port Ellen and the west end of Texa to a scale of 1:15,000, is useful for the first part of this passage, especially if aiming to visit Laphroaig.

Directions

Leave Port Ellen on the track described for entry (p.30) until a cable southeast of the outer G conical buoy. Then steer due east towards Texa for a mile until past The Big Wheel Reef (LD 3·4), leaving Sgeir Thraghaidh (drying 0·9) and Macfayden's Reef (LD 2.7) to port. From here a course of 070° will lead to Caolas an Eilein between Texa and Islay. Take care not to be carried off this course by the tide as some of the above rocks, and several near Texa, are within a cable of it.

Caolas an Eilein is 4 cables wide but rocks above and below water lie on the Islay side so keep about a cable off the Texa shore. Note also that a submerged rock with less than 2m lies 1½ cables due west of Texa and about 1½ cables south of the above course. At the east end of Caolas an Eilein continue ENE until Lagavulin bears due north, then head northeast towards Loch an t-Sailean or pick up the entrance bearing of 333° if heading for Lagavulin. There is a temporary anchorage off the stone jetty on Texa.



LOCH LAPHROAIG

Loch Laphroaig

Loch Laphroaig is less sheltered than Lagavulin Bay, which is just over a mile further north, but the entrance is deeper and less constricted. The white painted distillery buildings are conspicuous in the approach from the southwest. Entry from the east should not be attempted without Chart 2476 and only then with great care because of several unmarked sunken rocks.

Directions

On the passage between Port Ellen and Caolas an Eilein the distillery will be clearly seen about 1½ miles to the northeast. Follow the course described opposite but when the middle point of Eilean nan Caorach bears due north alter course to port on to 055°, heading for the right building on which hand the name 'LAPHROAIG' is painted.

After about half a mile, identify the small group of above-water rocks, Sgeir Thraghaidh (not to be confused with the drying rock of the same name off Port Ellen and recently passed to port) and note that submerged rocks extend up to 1½ cables southwest of it.

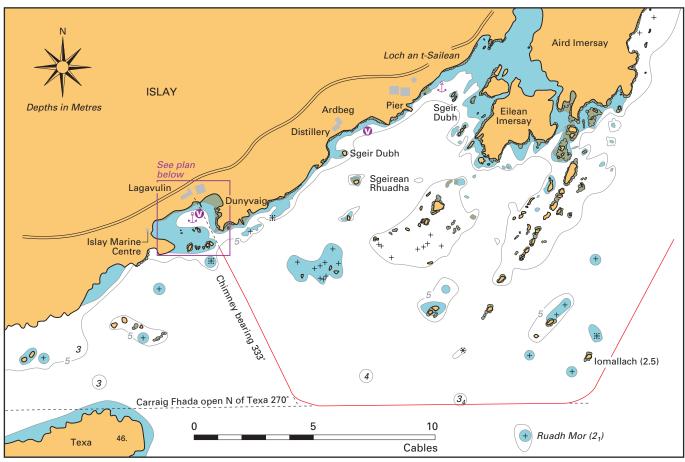
Continue on 055° and enter Loch Laphroaig leaving the string of islets, Sgeirean Dubha (4), about 30m to starboard. Anchor in 4.5m when the innermost islet (6) bears due south, noting and avoiding the discharge pipe shown on the plan. There is much kelp in the loch but clear patches exist near, and to the east of, the anchor symbol.



Loch Laphroaig and the distillery from the southwest. Sgeir Thraghaidh to the lower

Lagavulin Bay from the southeast. The red chimney of the distillery can be seen in front of of the large building on the left





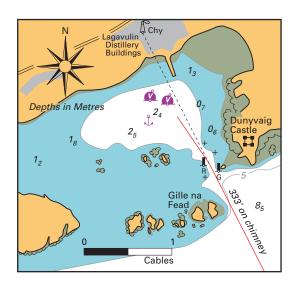
LAGAVULIN & ARDBEG

Admiralty Chart Admiralty Leisure Folio 5611.5 Imray Chart **Ordnance Survey Cruising Scotland** pp.68-69

Lagavulin Bay

From the southeast two distilleries will be seen, Lagavulin, and Ardbeg which is ¼ mile further northeast, both of which have their names conspicuously painted on the wall.

Lagavulin Bay is small and shallow and the entrance, marked by substantial port and starboard beacons, is shallower still, having only 2.1 m in it plus a number of boulders with even less and much kelp. However, with care, yachts of moderate draught should have no difficulty in feeling their way slowly in.



LAGAVULIN BAY

Tides

As Port Ellen:

Constant -0530 Oban (+0130 Dover) at springs, and -0050 Oban (+0610 Dover) at neaps.

Height in metres

MHWS MHWN MLWS MTL MLWN 0.9 0.6 0.5 0.3 0.8

Directions

From the east or northeast, identify Texa Island and Iomallach (2.5 m high). Pass a cable south of Iomallach to avoid an unmarked rock (2m) southwest of it. From a point close to Iomallach, steer with the north point of Texa Island in line with Carraig Fhada lighthouse at Port Ellen. This course takes you over a rock with a depth of 3.4 metres. Identify the distillery and when the conspicuous red chimney bears 333°, alter course to starboard and steer that course towards the entrance.

From the southwest pass south of Tarr Sgeir (10) and keep at least two cables off the east end of Texa. Steer northeast until picking up the bearing of 333° on the red chimney before approaching the entrance on that bearing.

From the southeast avoid Ruadh Mor (LD 2.1), $3\frac{1}{2}$ cables southwest of Iomallach, by keeping towards Texa before picking up and following the 333° bearing above.

Approaching the entrance identify the prominent red and green beacons and leave the above water rock due south of them about 20m

to port. Aim to cross a line between the two beacons at its midpoint, at an angle of less than 45°. Then pass 10-12 metres from the red inner (west) beacon to avoid boulders on the starboard side. When this beacon is abeam alter slightly to port to steer with the distillery pier 10° on the starboard bow. Do not stray to starboard of this line as the northeast part of the bay is very shoal.

Anchorage

Anchor in 3m, mud, in the middle of the pool just south of the visitors' moorings. Subject to swell. Two visitors' moorings are provided by Islay Marine Centre (pay at chandlery). Shoal patches have been reported in the approach to the visitors moorings.

Facilities

The distillery is open to visitors on weekdays. Showers and toilets at Islay Marine Centre, on the southwest side of the bay, which also provides chandlery, slipping, storage, grp and engine repairs, diesel and water (cans). Land at dinghy pontoon.

Loch an t-Sailean (Ardbeg)

The route into Loch an t-Sailean passes yet a further distillery, Ardbeg, where three visitors' moorings are located off the buildings (see photo p.14). Better shelter can be found near the head of the loch.

Directions

Approach as for Lagavulin and then, noting the unmarked, underwater, rocks off Dunyvaig Castle, follow a course northeastwards between 1½ and 2 cables from the shore which clears all dangers. Leave the islet, Sgeir Dubh, lying a cable off Ardbeg Distillery to port and Sgeirean Rhuadha, a small group of three above-water rocks to starboard. Thereafter the way is clear



past the Ardbeg distillery to the islet, another Sgeir Dubh, at the head of the loch.

Using the Antares chart it is possible, in calm conditions, to take a short cut through the skerries to the south of Eilean Imersay but no visual pilotage directions for this passage can be given.

Anchorage

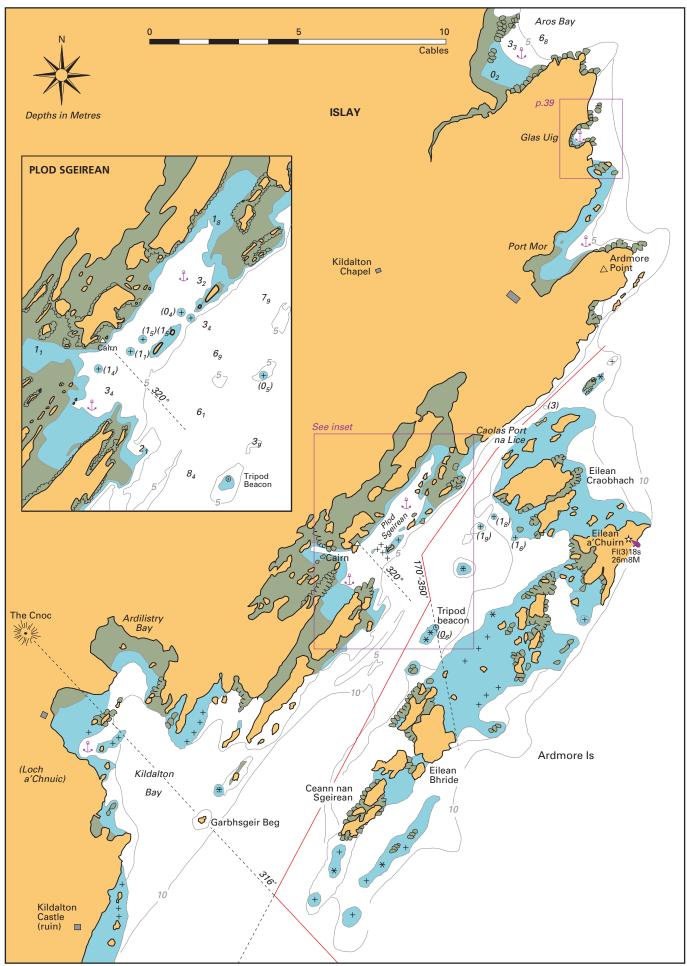
Anchor northwest of Sgeir Dubh in 3m. The bottom is sand with some rock and weed but good holding can be found and it is well sheltered by the numerous skerries which break up any swell. It is possible to lie alongside alongside the stone pier (see photo p.10) beyond the distillery but the stonework is rough.

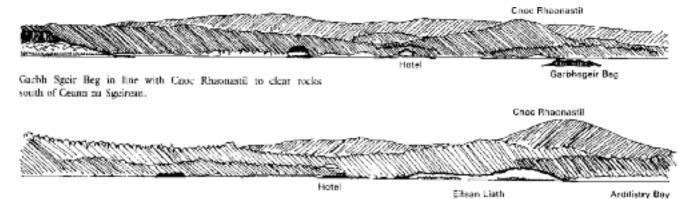
Facilities

The Ardbeg distillery has a visitor centre with a restaurant and provides three visitors' moorings. Looking northwest into Lagavulin Bay from a position slightly east of the leading line

Loch an t-Sailean at Ardbeg; Sgeir na Maodail lies at the lower right with Sgeiran Ruadha above. Sgeir Dubh and the shallow spit are immediately below the distillery







Approach to Loch a'Chnuich

Ardmore Islands

These offlying islands lie about a mile south of Ardmore Point, the eastern extremity of Islay, and give protection to several good anchorages. The passage inshore of them requires care as some of the features are not easy to distinguish and it should only be attempted for the first time in clear, quiet weather. It is also easier to make it from the north to the south.

Tides

As Port Ellen:

Constant -0530 Oban (+0130 Dover) at springs, and -0050 Oban (+0610 Dover) at neaps.

Height in metres

MHWS MHWN MLWN MTI. MIWS 0.9 0.8 0.6 0.5 0.3

Directions

From the northeast keep ½ cable from the southeast side of Ardmore Point to pass inside the line of rocks north of Eilean Craobhach and three cables south of Ardmore Point. Keep in the middle of the canal-like channel, passing over or near to the 3m patch, then hold to the northwest side of the pool as it opens out as there are several rocks with less than 2m over them southwest of Eilean Craobhach.

When the tripod beacon north of Eilean Bhride is in line with the east point of Eilean Bhride bearing about 170°, steer towards the beacon on that line to avoid a rock awash in the centre of the pool. When about a cable from the beacon alter course to pass west of Ceann nan Sgeirean. To avoid drying rocks south of Ceann nan Sgeirean do not alter course southward until Garbhsgeir Beg is in transit with The Cnoc and do not pass north of Garbhsgeir Beg.

From the south or southwest pass east of Iomallach, and head NNE to pass northwest of the Ardmore Islands. From the southeast bring the detached islet Garbhsgeir Beg in line with the conical hill Cnoc Rhaonastil (The Cnoc) bearing 316° to pass close southwest of drying rocks south of Ceann nan Sgeirean.

When Ceann nan Sgeirean is aft of the beam steer to pass northwest of the tripod beacon. There is no clear mark to avoid the rock awash

in the middle of the bay north of the beacon, but its west side should be cleared by keeping the tripod beacon astern in line with the east point of Eilean Bhride, bearing about 170°.

Steer on this line to within a cable of the skerries at Plod Sgeirean and then turn NNE to head for the narrow channel leading out of the pool to the north.

Anchorages

Kildalton Bay (Loch a'Chnuic) Pass either side of Garbhsgeir Beg, but if on its north side not more than a cable away from it to avoid a rock awash WSW of Garbhsgeir Mor, and head towards Ardilistry Bay.

Two detached rocks lie off the southwest shore and then a rocky islet off the promontory which separates Ardilistry Bay from Kildalton Bay (Loch a'Chnuic); when this islet is almost abeam turn to port to pass southeast of it to avoid a reef extending almost ¾ cable northeast from the second detached rock (see photo p.38) Anchor near the southwest shore, west of the above rock, in hard sand. The anchorage is subject to swell and if the wind goes to the south or east it is prudent to clear out as considerable swell gets up.

Plod Sgeirean This area is very remote and inaccessible and teeming with wildlife; the anchorage is within a sheltered pool ringed by skerries and islets. Enter between the islet which forms the south point of the bay and the first skerry to the northeast, keeping rather nearer to the northeast skerry as a drying reef extends off the southwest point. A white painted cairn has been built on the islet opposite the entrance which, when bearing 320°, indicates the line of approach.

To anchor at the north end keep heading towards the white cairn and turn to starboard when closer to the islet ahead than to the skerry northeast of the entrance, as submerged rocks lie west and northwest of the skerry.

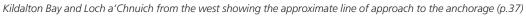
If anchoring at the south end turn to port when the channel opens out and anchor as far south as depth allows.

Both anchorages have been found to be comfortable in southeast winds of F5.

Admiralty Chart 2168 Admiralty Leisure Folio 5611.5 Imray Chart C64 **Ordnance Survey** Cruising Scotland



Caolas Port na Lice, the narrow channel leading to Plod Sgeirean and the inshore passage west of the Ardmore Islands (p.37)





Anchorages north of Ardmore Point

Three open bays provide occasional anchorage north of Ardmore Point. These bays are all difficult to identify from seaward, but Ardmore Point has a triangulation point (a short tapering concrete pillar) near its summit and Port Mor has a large white house at its head.

Tides

As Port Ellen:

Constant -0530 Oban (+0130 Dover) at springs, and -0050 Oban (+0610 Dover) at neaps.

Height in metres

MHWS MHWN MTL MLWN MLWS 0.9 0.8 0.6

Anchorages

Port Mor is immediately northwest of Ardmore Point. The head of the bay shoals a long way. Hold to the southeast side as there is a line of rocks on the northwest side of the bay. The bottom is clean sand.

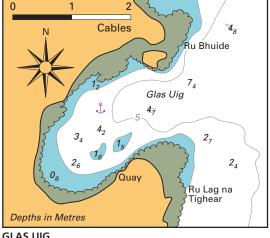


Glas Uig is very difficult to distinguish and scarcely shows on chart 2168; it is about 3 cables north of Port Mor. Anchor on the north side of the bay to avoid the submerged reef off the quay on the south side.

Aros Bay is a clean open sandy bay ¼ mile north of Ardmore Point; a pleasant place to spend a fine, windless day. Anchor in 3m in the centre of the bay.

Port Mor with the stone jetty on the right and the track leading to the road to Kildalton Chapel

Glas Uig showing the submerged reef off the old quay on the port side

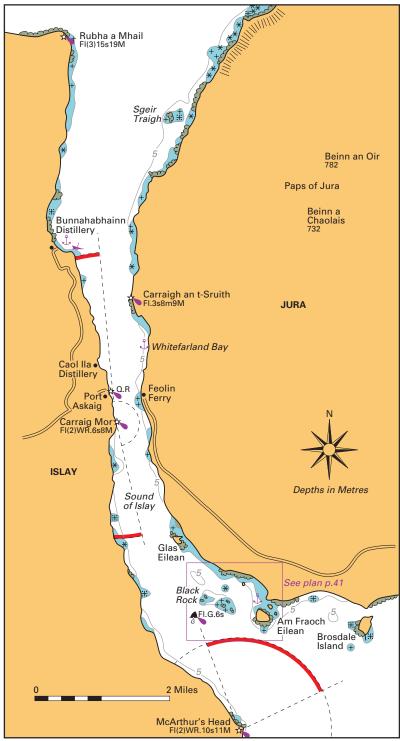


GLAS UIG



Aros Bay with the Paps of Jura beyond





SOUND OF ISLAY

Admiralty Chart 2481, 2168 Admiralty Leisure Folio 5611.5, Imray Chart Ordnance Survey Cruising Scotland pp.66, 76

Sound of Islay

The Sound of Islay separates Islay and Jura, and is eleven miles long. The navigation is straightforward, the Islay side being generally cleaner. The tide must be favourable as it runs at up to five knots in the narrows.

Tidal streams in the Sound of Islay run at up to 5 knots

The north-going stream begins about +0440 Oban (-0050 Dover), and the south-going stream begins about -0140 Oban (+0515 Dover).

Overfalls form at the north end of the sound on the flood with a northerly wind, and at the south end of the sound on the ebb, where it meets the ebb from the Sound of Jura.

At Port Askaig

Constant -0030 Oban (+0500 Dover) at springs, and -0110 Oban (+0420 Dover) at neaps.

Height in metres

At Port Askaig

MHWS	MHWN	MTL	MLWN	MLWS
2.1	1.5	1.2	1.0	0.4
At Rubha	a'Mhail			
3.7	2.8	2.1	1.5	0.6
Note the	difference in	range in o	only 6 miles.	

Directions

At the south entrance to the sound note the unmarked rock 3 cables southwest of Brosdale Island and give it a wide berth. Am Fraoch Eilean, 1½ miles west of Brosdale Island, has rocks drying 1½ cables south of it and a further mile northwest lie the Black Rocks, the principal danger in the sound. They are marked by a G con. buoy which from either direction is likely to appear nearer to the Islay shore than might be expected.

Pass south and west of this buoy and thereafter giving both shores a berth of a cable will clear all dangers until 3 miles north of Carraig an t-Sruith where Sgeir Traigh, a mass of grassy islets and rocks extends up to half a mile from the Jura shore. A clearing line of a conspicuous tower and the chimney on Caol Isla Distillery, north of Port Askaig, with Rubha Barr nan Gobag (cliffs 20-25m high on Jura) bearing 193° astern may be used.

If proceeding north to Loch Tarbert, Jura, continue to give the shore between Sgeir Traigh and the entrance to the loch a good berth as it is foul with off-lying rocks.

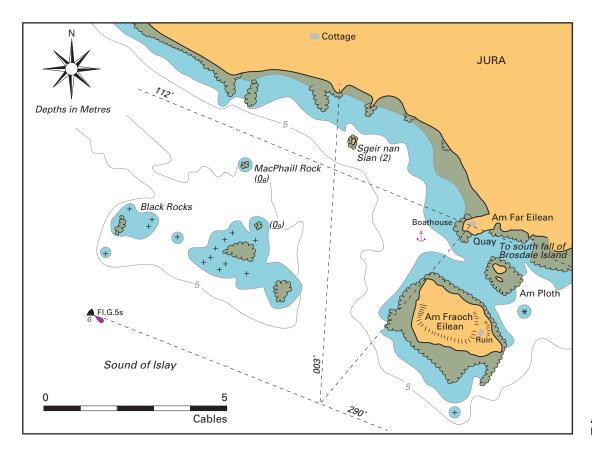
Anchorages

Port Askaig This village is on Islay, halfway up the sound, and is the port for Kintyre and Jura ferries. A temporary berth alongside a well fendered concrete quay may be available if a ferry is not expected though eddies close inshore make the approach difficult. Check immediately on berthing that a car ferry is not due to arrive before you intend to leave.

Alternatively anchor off the quay in 4 metres, clear of the approach to the quay, but the tide runs strongly here. Facilities: Shop, PO, hotel, petrol, Calor Gas. Water hose on pier. Whitefarland Bay A clean open bay on Jura opposite Caol Isla distillery, out of the main tidal stream. Anchor in 3m north of anchorpainted boulder. Holding poor in weed.

Bunnahabhainn (Bunnahaven) Bay This bay, 2½ miles north of Port Askaig is a convenient place to wait for a south-going tide. Anchor out of the main tide in 4m, ½ cable north of the pier.

McArthur's Head lighthouse Fl(2)WR.10s39m14/11M Black Rocks G con. buoy Q.G Carraig Mor light beacon Fl(2)WR.6s7m8/6M Carraig an t-Sruith light beacon Fl.3s8m9M Rubha a'Mhail lighthouse Fl(3)WR.15s45m24/21M



AM FRAOCH ISLAND PASSAGE

Am Fraoch Island

This is a suitable place to wait for a favourable tide for a passage north through the sound. The passage north of MacPhaill Rock may also be used as an alternative to passing south of the Black Rocks to avoid a foul tide. Note the large areas of foul water around Am Fraoch Eilean and an unmarked rock 2 cables south of it.

Directions

From the southeast identify McArthur's Head lighthouse and the Black Rocks buoy. Approach the buoy on a course not less than 290° until McArthur's Head is abeam. When the boathouse behind Am Fraoch Eilean is seen, alter course to 003° and make for the rocky outcrop between

Sgeir nan Sian and the cottage above the shore in line with McArthur's Head astern.

To continue passage north to avoid MacPhaill Rock and Sgeir nan Sian, keep the conspicuous boathouse at Am Far Eilean astern open of the south fall of Brosdale Island about 112°.

To make this passage from northwest to southeast, identify Am Far Eilean and Brosdale Island while passing Glas Eilean and reverse the directions given above.

Anchorage

Anchor off Am Far Eilean in 4m. Bottom sand and weed.

Port Askaig, Sound of Islay

