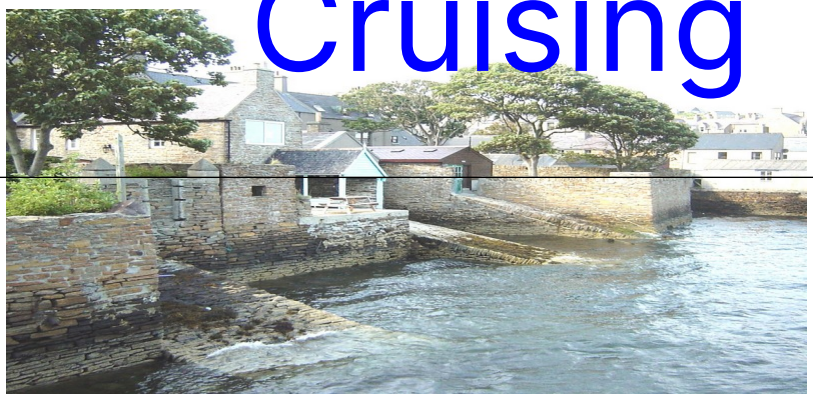
Cruising



THE ISLANDS OF ORKNEY

This brief guide has been produced to help the cruising visitor create an enjoyable visit to our islands, it is by no means exhaustive and only mentions the main and generally obvious anchorages that can be found on charts. Some of the welcoming pubs, hotels and other attractions close to the harbour or mooring are suggested for your entertainment, however much more awaits to be explored afloat and many delights can be discovered ashore.

You should consult available local visitor guides and information available online and other sources to see what each individual island area has to offer.

Orkney waters, if treated with respect, should offer no worries for the well prepared and experienced sailor and will present no greater problem than cruising elsewhere in the UK. Tides, although strong in some parts, are predictable and can be used to great advantage; passage making is a delight with the current in your favour but can present a challenge when against.

The old cruising guides for Orkney waters preached doom for the seafarer who entered where “dragons and sea serpents lie”. This hails from the days of little or no engine power aboard the average sailing vessel and the frequent lack of wind amongst tidal islands; admittedly a worrying combination when you’ve nothing but a scrap of canvas for power and a small anchor for brakes!

Consult the charts, tidal guides and sailing directions and don’t be afraid to ask!

Enjoy exploring these island gems and I hope you will discover the recipe that seduced our ancestors into colonising and establishing Orkney as “a gateway to the rest of the world”.

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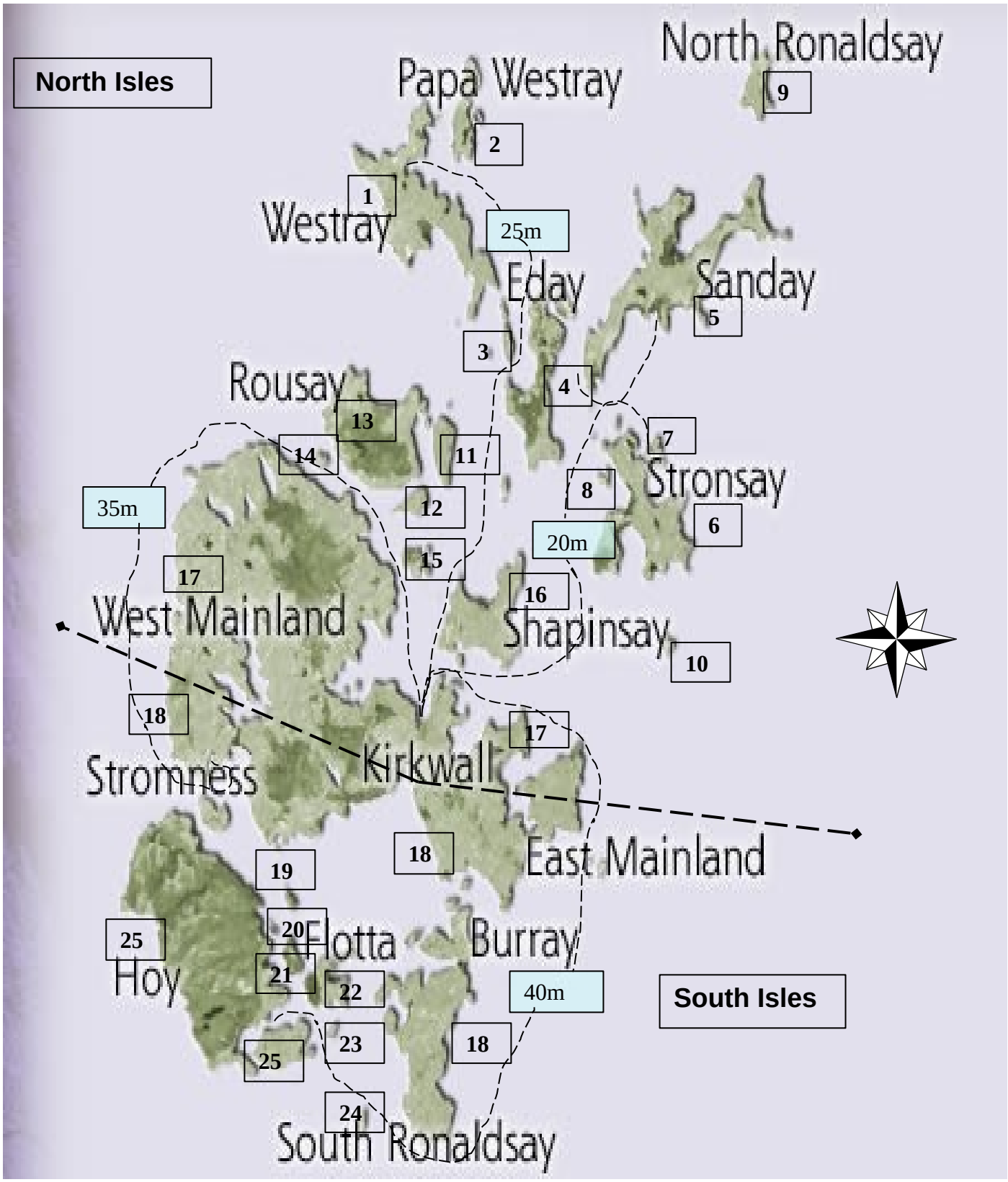
There are two distinct cruising areas in Orkney:

The North Isles (and North/West Mainland).

The South Isles (and South/East Mainland).



The NORTH ISLES
(and North Mainland)

1.

Westray has much to offer the visitor, whether for a week or a day. Many sandy beaches and rocky shores together with hill and cliff walks make Westray an ideal holiday destination for those looking for something just that little bit different. Marina, Caravan and Camping, Self-catering, B&B and hotel accommodation available.
You will find excellent hardware/grocery **shops** that stock most things you could ever need. A **bakery** offers morning bread within a five minute walk of the marina. The **post office**, **swimming pool**, **hotel/restaurant**, **café, fish and chip shop, heritage centre, craft manufacture,** are all situated in Pierowall village one mile from the harbour. A**rt gallery/studio** is within a couple of miles and you will find a number **of historic/RSPB sites** in near proximity. There is a wealth of attractions and warmth in Westray that makes this one of the most popular destinations in Orkney.
The car ferry from Kirkwall operates daily and Loganair operate passenger flights to/from Orkney Mainland, making the island very accessable and a good option for crew changes.
Westray is a good stepping stone for onward sailing to Fair Isle, Shetland, Faroe Islands.

Anchorages: Numerous bays and inlets exist around Westray where yachts can explore;

- **1.1 Bay of Brough:** is safe in most conditions but exposed to the north, good anchorage to shelter if wind in the south or west. Sandy bottom good holding in the middle of the bay.
- **1.2 Bay of Cleat**: Temporary anchorage. No longer salmon cages in the bay, however avoid cages to the northas you enter.
- **1.3 Bay of Swartmill**: Temporary anchorage, good sandy beach.
- **1.4 Pierowall Bay:** Excellent anchorage in the middle, shallows towards the west side under village and to the N of the harbour. Sandy bottom, good holding. A swell can develop with strong Southeast winds. Two well maintained Visitor Moorings are available to the northwest of the harbour entrance.
- **1.5 Westray Marina/Harbour/Gill Pier:** The busy harbour is used by lobster, fish farm boats and a small passenger ferry (to Papa Westray). The Marina can accommodate deep drafted yachts, however is small so be ready and willing to raft up during busy periods (or use the visitor moorings). Showers, water, electricity all available. Diesel available in cans.
- **1.6 Bay of Skaill:** beautiful sandy bay with seals and other wildlife. Good anchorage if you keep out of the north/south tide running between Holm of Aikerness/Westray. Good holding.
- **1.7 Bay of Tuqouy:** Long Shallow bay tide ebbs a long way out; good anchorage in sand. Lots of birds.
- **1.8 Bay of Tafts (Tills):** Good anchorage, sandy holding. Some local fishing boat moorings. Strong tides on entry to this area, however once around the north of

Wart holm the tide is not too great an issue, avoid Swine Skerry as you enter the bay. Good sandy holding.

1.9 Rapness Bay/Ferry pier.: In past and north of the Ferry terminal pier. Good shelter, but restricted swinging space. Anchor clear of ferry turning area. Some local moorings. Good holding, but use tripping line on anchor. It is possible with care to tie alongside the inner part on the north side of the ferry pier where small creel boats often use.

1.10 Bay of Helzie bay of Sous: Good temporary anchorages, good holding in sandy bottom. Ensure to avoid electric cable in Bay of Sous (signposted on shore).

2.

Papa Westray boasts the shortest schedule air service in the world (from/to Westray) according to the Guinness book of records. Good **RSPB** and **historic sites**, small **shop** and **guesthouse**. Papay (as it is known locally) has good walks fine beaches and quietly welcomes visitors. **The Holm of Papay** on the East side is well worth a visit, large Arctic Tern breeding site Neolithic burial chamber etc.

Anchorages: Good anchorages on both sides of the island:

2.1 Bay of South Wick on the east side; holding is good for anchoring in the bay, (the approach is shallow, however taken slowly the sandy bottom should offer no problem.) avoid local moorings near the jetty. A good slipway/jetty (Nouster) is available for tenders but dries out at low tide. Visit both Papay and the Holm from this anchorage, Visitor mooring available NE of slipway. (approx 2mtrs at low water).

2.2 Bay of Mocklett on the south side (Bothigan sands to the north of the ferry pier) has good holding but exposed from the south/southeast.

2.3 Pier: Temporary alongside berth, The piled, open pier is not suitable to moor up to in unsettled weather and is used by a regular ferry from Westray.

3.

Faray Is uninhabited but offers a unique opportunity to witness how islanders fared before the world 'grew up'. Derelict cottages still stand defiantly against the elements. Sheep are farmed by a tenant from Eday. Now owned by Orkney Islands Council, with controversial plans to develop a wind farm!

Anchorages:

3.1 Fersness Bay (north). Anchor in sandy bottom with good holding on south east of Faray out of the tide in the sandy bite near the small stone jetty. Good sandy bottom for a temporary mooring. There is a Visitor mooring 0.7 mile south of the jetty on the south side of Fersness Bay.

4.

Eday has some fine anchorages; the North West side (Fersness) has sandy bays where you can anchor and go ashore. A visitor mooring is available to the east of Fersness point. An interesting and peaceable anchorage exists in Calf Sound at the North end where two visitor moorings are available. The pier on the South East corner of the island is used by the ferry and has limited alongside berthing for yachts. A visitor mooring is available to the north of the pier. Attractions ashore include an award winning heritage walk across the island, craftwork and a small shop.

Anchorages:

4.1 Fersness Bay: Good anchorage on east and south of the bay. Often used to await a suitable tide in the Westray Firth when heading south. Good holding, fine beaches. Avoid mussel farm on E side Visitor mooring available 0.5 mile east of Fersness point (see 3.1 above).

4.2 Ferry Pier, Bay of Backaland: Avoid fish cages to Northwest of the pier. Use fender boards if mooring alongside. Visitor mooring available to the west of the pier. Use tripping line if anchoring as there will be a lot of seaweed and discarded mooring hazards.

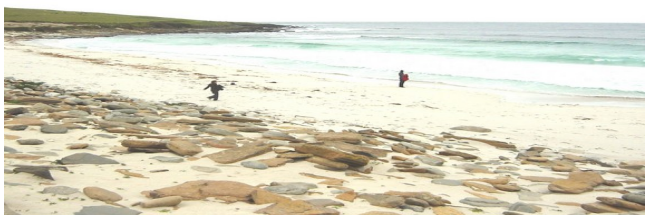
4.3 Calf Sound: Cosy and scenic anchorage on the north east between Calf Sound and Eday. Anchor out of the strong tide running through the sound, in the Bay of Carrick. Preferably use one of the two Visitor moorings for peace of mind.

4.4 **Bay of London:** Occasional anchorage but good holding. Shallows quite far out. London Airport between here and Fersness Bay.

4.5 **Mill Bay:** Occasional anchorage, good holding.

5.

Sanday offers good sheltered anchorages in several bays, however some are shallow. The island, as its name indicates has numerous sandy beaches, is low lying with a wide range of wildlife. Its main industry is farming with some lobster/crab fishing. Interesting find of a Viking plaque at Scar in the North of the island, also an 18th century shipwreck. The pier at Kettletoft can accommodate yachts, but care is needed as depth is very limited and a southerly wind can create a swell, making berthing difficult. Two Visitor mooring are available in the middle of Kettletoft bay. Local facilities include **Hotel/restaurant(s), pizza/café two shops, post office, heritage centre, crafts, caravan and camping facilities.**



Anchorages:

5.1 Kettletoft Bay: Generally shallow, however selecting a suitable depth area with good sandy holding there will be no problem**.** Exposed with swell from SE and south. Visitor mooring available approx. 200 mtrs from pier.

5.2 Kettletoft Pier: is shallow but OK at outer end with care. Some local creel boats use the pier so be prepared to share.

5.3 Loth Bay: On South West of the island, two cables North of Spur Ness. Good shelter inside breakwater (not an anchorage). Busy ferry terminal, good but limited alongside deep water berthing. Share with small fishing boats, use fender boards. Local facilities five mile distant.

5.4 Otterswick: Large bay on the north side of Sanday with numerous good anchorages. Sheltered in most conditions other than North/northeast. Sone kelp, but generally good holding where sandy shoreline can be seen. Many recent whale sightings.

5.5 Stywick: On the south side to the east of Elsness is a quiet, scenic anchorage. Good holding on sandy bottom.

5.6 Backaskaill Bay: West of Kettletoft is a large sandy bay with good holding.

5.7 North Bay: Ensure you get the tide in your favour through Lashy Sound (between Calf of Eday and Sanday) good anchorage, avoid rocks at Bow of Hermaness.

5.8 Bay of Brough: Good secluded anchorage, tidal access and rocks as above.

5.9 Bay of Stove: Long shallow sandy bay, anchor just inside entrance, little known cairn on east shore.

6.

Stronsay is a good bird watching island, with many sites for observing breeding colonies and recording rare migrants. Whitehall, a fine sheltered harbour (refer to guides for buoyed channel entrance) alongside berthing possible, avoiding local work boats. Visitor moorings available. Stronsay has long been a favourite destination for yachts. Once a prosperous and busy herring station the island now relies mostly on farming with some creel fishing. The village has **shop, Hotel/bar/restaurant, café/hostel** and showers can be arranged with the Fish Mart café/hostel. Air and ferry services run daily.

6.1 Whitehall Harbour: On the north side; Do not stray from buoyed entry channel. Anchor where depth available to north and east of main pier and clear of ferry access. Anchorage also good in Jacks Hole on the west side of the bay, keeping well clear of dredged channel. One Visitor mooring NE of ferry pier and two on the west of the West pier/jetty.

6.2 Whitehall Pier: Good depth at outer ends of both east and west sides of the main pier to moor alongside (in past the ferry ramp) It shallows rapidly towards the shore on the inner parts of the pier. Use long mooring lines (as the tide range can be up to 2.5 meters) and fender well. West pier is used by creel fishing boats, limited depth and generally not suitable for leisure craft.

6.3 St. Catherine's Bay: Large beach on the west side of Stronsay. Anchor on South and east side of bay. Also good Southeast of Linga Holm. Good sheltered sandy holding. Access via Linga Sound or from the southwest, (avoid shallow rocks "The Swarf"). Lots of seals.

6.4 Bay of Holland: Wide bay with good holding in sand at 6-8m. Good shelter and holsing good. Avoid the large Fish farm in the middle.

6.5 Mill Bay: Roomy bay; avoid shoals on North and South sides of outer entrance. Use anchor-tripping line where bottom may be foul, however good holding. Northwest side of bay probably best.

7.

Papa Stronsay: an active monastery, permission is required to land.

7.1 Anchor on the South side, mid-way between Stronsay and 'Papay', one cable to the East of the Stronsay ferry terminal (Whitehall pier). Visitor mooring (as above) available here.

8.

Linga Holm: small and uninhabited, is owned by the Scottish Wildlife Trust. It is an important Grey Seal breeding area with a variety of bird life.

8.1 Anchor to North side in North Taing, beware of hidden shallows/ rocks at SE side of bay.

8.2 Anchor on SE side (St. Catherine's Bay), to E of South Taing. Use tripping line.

9.

North Ronaldsay: Is more remote geographically from the other islands and can be difficult to visit due to unpredictable swell combined with strong tides. However, given settled conditions will be one of the most rewarding. Primitive seaweed-eating sheep are reared on the beach outside a high stone-wall that surrounds the whole island. Many species of migrant bird are recorded at the Bird Observatory where there is a **bar/cafe, accommodation** and there is a community **shop**. The Lighthouse is the tallest land based lighthouse in the UK where there is an **interpretation centre**, **café** and **gift shop.**

Anchorages:

9.1 Linklet Bay: Occasional anchorage south of Dennis Head, off jetty. Poor holding, use a tripping line. Beware of the Reefdyke south of the bay and east of Brides Ness.

9.2 South Bay: good temporary anchorage to east of pier, good holding, liable to uncomfortable swell. Only good in settled conditions. Visitor mooring available SE of pier.

9.3 Pier: Sufficient depth alongside to lie in settled conditions, swell can make berthing difficult. Ferry visits twice a week.

10.

Auskerry: Privately owned and lived in by one family. Seals, birdlife etc.

10.1 No recommended anchorage without local knowledge. Small landing jetty on SE.

11.

Egilsay: A large part of the island is owned by the RSPB and a wide variety of birds and other wildlife abound. The tall semi-ruined church of St Magnus dating from the 12th C is conspicuous from all directions.

Anchorages:

11.1 Anchor off the pier in **Rousay Sound** 100mtrs to the Southwest, beware of rocks to the west and north. Do not obstruct the ferry aproach.

11.2 **Pier:** Very shallow on West side, rocks on W – SW side of the pier. However you can lie alongside for short visits with care on a rising tide on the SE side.

12.

Wyre: Like Egilsay this small island has interesting bird life and important ancient monuments; The remains of 'Cubbie Roo's Castle' is possibly the earliest stone castle in Scotland.

Anchorages:

12.1 Reasonable anchorage to North East of the pier, however be aware of the strong tides running through Wyre Sound. Avoid obstructing the ferry approach.

12.2 North of The Tang on the extreme west of Wyre can be ok in settled conditions, minding the strong tides running past (see 13.2).

13.

Rousay: here you will find the greatest concentration of prehistoric sites anywhere in Scotland, many are near the pier and therefore accessible to the day visitor. The island is hilly and wildlife abounds. You will find a **Restaurant, Public House,** general supplies **shop**, **craft shop** and other attractions. Toilet and shower facilities at the pier. Use of Visitor moorings or alongside berthing is advised due to the strong tides in this area.

Anchorages:

13.1 **Bay of Ham:** On the East side offers good shelter, however there is a small fish farm present and care should be taken if approaching in the dark; use tripping line.

13.2 **Wyre Sound:** It is possible to anchor to the north of "The Taing", West of Wyre in settled conditions. Given the **strong tidal stream that runs through the Sound** it is recommended that this is temporary only and the visitor moorings are used (one on the west of the Rousay pier and two on the east).

13.3 **Pier:** The south and west berths on the old pier can be used in settled conditions, however the pier is old and care should be taken. The ferry slipway and pier is on the east side of the old pier, you can berth alongside the east side of this if space available, local boats are welcoming and you may be able to raft up.

14.

Eynhallow: Small island with ancient monastic history and lots of bird life, tides run strong on the south and north sides. The **North** sound between Eynhallow and Rousay is dangerous to navigate without local knowledge. The recognised channel on the **South** side is a "Tidal Gate"; Study the "Cruising Guide" for information to make a comfortable passage through Eynhallow Sound.

Anchorages:

14.1 East side bay; Temporary anchorage only, Good holding 100m offshore in min 4m, beware of the hidden rocks/shallows two/three cables on E side (south of the anchorage).

15.

Gairsay: Small, distinctively high island with direct links to Orkneys Norse history, inhabited by one farming family.

Anchorages:

15.1 **Millburn Bay:** On SE corner; Approach from the south or east, taking care at Holm of Boray where the tide is strong. Very attractive, snug and sheltered bay, good holding in sandy mud.

15.2 **Russness Bay:** Peaceful temporary anchorage on east side, to the the south of Sweyn Holm. Stone/shingle; holding not good.

15.3 **Langskaill Bay:** On S side, below large house. Temporary anchorage only. Tide runs strong so take care. Seek permission to land ashore, private jetty.

16.

Shapinsay: Green and fertile agricultural island. Offers some good bird watching ashore at Milldam and around the east side cliffs, a number of seal colonies also accessible. Balfour Castle is a prominent backdrop to the attractive Balfour village when entering Elwick Bay. Locally known as the "Commuter Island" (to Kirkwall) it sports a **Restaurant/bar, Shop**, **Heritage Centre, crafts** and other attractions.

Anchorages:

16.1 **Elwick Bay:** Anchor anywhere, however recommend middle of the bay or towards the north side. Two Visitor moorings half a cable NE of ferry terminal. Good shelter from most all directions, a swell may develop from south west gales or at high tide from southeast. Good mud/sandy holding. Do not cross shallow reef between Helliar Holm and Shapinsay.

16.2 **Pier:** Alongside berthing on south and north of main pier, use fender board, you may need to raft up in busy times.

North side of ferry terminal may also be used subject to draught. (however wrecked boat using this berth 2025/26). Beware of jetty between ferry terminal and pier that is hidden at high tide.

16.3 **Veantrow Bay**: A number of good temporary anchorages around the bay. Exposed to the N, best holding on the E side in 5-8 mtrs.

16.4 **Bay of Sandgarth:** Good temporary anchorage out of the tidal stream in sand.

16.5 **Liviness Geo:** Tiny, secluded fun anchorage for temporary use in settled conditions. Access via east side of Helliar Holm, on Shapinsay shoreline.

17.

Mainland (north and west) is the largest island in the archipelago where most of Orkneys population reside, the capital "City and Royal Burgh" of **Kirkwall** accounts for almost a third of the population of the Islands. There are a large number of visitor attractions, ranging from ancient burial chambers and Neolithic standing stones, to the mighty Viking cathedral of St. Magnus. Trout fishing in the abundant fresh water lochs, orienteering, sailing, sea angling, wreck diving, golf, bird watching and many other outdoor pursuits are catered for. A wealth of jewellery and craft manufacture can be found scattered throughout the Mainland. Some of Scotland's finest food and drink outlets are to be found in Orkney and many can be accessed from moorings and alongside berths on both the North and South of the island. You will find brochures and information on the large amount of attractions on line and from visitor information centres in Kirkwall and Stromness. Orkney is the UKs most popular cruise liner destination, so you may encounter these anchored near or berthed alongside in both Stromness and Kirkwall.

Anchorages:

17.1 **Bay of Skaill:** on the west coast of Mainland, temporary anchorage in settled conditions to visit Skara Brae Neolithic site. Good sandy holding, open to Westerlies, liable to uncomfortable Atlantic swell.

17.2 **Sands of Evie:** Temporary anchorage, holding in sand OK, ebbs quite far out. Used mainly to await suitable tide to go west through Eynhallow Sound and to visit the Broch of Gurness.

17.3 **Aikerness:** East of Aikerness headland, good holding, there may be old local moorings and ground tackle, use tripping line. Beware shoal in centre and SE of bay.

17.4 **Wood Wick:** Good anchorage and holding in outer area.

17.5 **Tingwall Jetty**: Ferry Terminal to Rousay. Busy working harbour for creel boats, may be room for visitors alongside, but not guaranteed. Good depth and good shelter, use fender board.

17.6 **Bay of Isbister:** Good anchorage and clean good holding on north and northwest side of bay in sand.

17.7 **Bay of Firth:** Shallow with obstructions west of the Bay of Isbister, towards Finstown; only suitable for shallow drafted vessels with local knowledge.

17.8 **Bay of Kirkwall and Kirkwall Harbour:** You will find many good **bars, hotels**, **restaurants supermarkets and bespoke shops** in and around Kirkwall. Approach harbour on sectored light, avoiding unlit Iceland Skerry on the east side of the bay. There is a large busy pier on the west side of Kirkwall Bay used by the ferry to Shetland and Aberdeen and also used frequently by cruise liners and

should be avoided. Anchorage available on West side of the bay in the region of Hatston small boat slipway (Orkney Sailing Club hold regular dinghy training/racing from this slipway so keep a sharp lookout and avoid marker buoyage). You can also anchor on the East side (Bay of Weyland). There may also be two or three Visitor moorings in Bay of Weyland that can be used when the marina is full or to await berthing instruction. Look out for the many lobster keep boxes moored on both sides of the bay. Use a trip line as there is much disused moorings and discarded fishing gear.

17.9 **Kirkwall Marina** on East side of main pier. (check out Orkney Marinas web page for information) Approach with caution as the access can be difficult to identify and departing boats may not be able to see approaching craft. This is also a busy harbour with fish farming boats and ferries serving the north isles. Good alongside berthing on the arrival pontoon which can accommodate up to 60ft vessel. Be prepared for the marina to be busy during summer months, it can be a good idea to have fenders deployed on both sides of your boat before entering beyond the breakwater in order to be able to pick up the most suitable berth on arrival. Visitors should moor on the west or north arrival berth and await marina attendant to contact. Showers and toilets, electricity, water wi-fi, diesel available.

17.10 **Inner harbour** on West side of main pier is accessible but used mainly by fishing boats, work boats and the Lifeboat. Tidal drying out area available here, for maintenance. Contact Kirkwall Harbour for advice should you need to use this area.

17.11 **Bay of Carness:** Good holding, avoid busy fish farm cages.

17.10 Bay of Meil: Good anchorage in centre, avoid fish farm cages.

17.11 Inganess Bay: Large bay, good depth, sandy bottom with good holding in most parts of the bay. Popular swimming and tourist beach.

17.12 Deer Sound: OK to anchor wherever depth suits. Good shelter and good holding in most areas. Suggested anchorages off jetty on NW side, below Hall of Tankerness. On the west side of Ness. On east or west sides of Mirkaday point. Avoid shallow water and Oyster skerries to southeast of Mirkaday Point. (note location of a recent wreck south of Mirkaday Point).

17.13 Copinsay: uninhabited Island, nature reserve. Avoid Corn holm and other islets to west of main island. Temporary anchorage on the north side of holms and to the west of landing jetty on main island. The jetty is in poor condition so take care.

18.

Mainland (south and east), including linked South Isles.

The Islands of **South Ronaldsay, Burray** and **Glimps Holm** are connected to Mainland by causeway, built as part of wartime defences, creating one of the deepest natural harbours in Northern Europe (Scapa Flow). Anchorages in these islands are therefore included within this ‘Mainland’ section of the guide. The tides are weak within Scapa Flow presenting some fine, gentle cruising and a number of excellent bays to moor up.

Many historic sites are within walking distance of piers and anchorages. You will find good food and bars in St. Margaret's Hope, Longhope, Burray, and Stromness.

18.1 Newark Bay: Shallows and hazards, not a good anchorage and only recommended for shallow drafted boats: Good community owned concrete slipway facilities for trailer-sailors and small motorboats during any state of the tide to support fishing around Copinsay.

18.2 Kirk Sound: Good temporary anchorage, good holding; fishfarm development no longer in this area so use tripping line as there may be leftover hazards. (Italian Chapel visitor attraction ashore). Swell enters on east to south east winds.

18.3 East Weddel Sound: Best shelter in this area, in South West corner of Holm Sound; Enter with care, anchor up near causeway to the East of blockship. 2-4 m sand, good holding (no longer fishfarm, but some local moorings in the area, best to use tripping line).

18.4 Holm Sound: East side of Burray, temporary anchorage. Good holding in 5-7 meters, avoid if wind NE-SE.

18.5 Wind Wick: Temp. anchorage in light winds, not good holding; used to await favourable tides in the Pentland Firth and rounding Old Head.

18.6 **Bur Wick:** On the SW tip of South Ronaldsay; used by one or two creel boats. Previously used by short-sea passenger ferry from John O' Groats; very strong tides around Old Head and Lother Rock; take great care calculating suitable tides. Temp. anchorage off beach.

18.7 Widewall Bay: Good anchorage, shallow in the bay. Sandy bottom. Sheltered from most directions. Used often to await suitable tide across Pentland Firth.

18.8 St. Margaret's Hope Bay: On South side of Water Sound. Avoid drying rocks off Needle Point and unmarked shallows to port when entering the bay. Good anchorage in middle of bay, although it shallows rapidly towards the village. Busy ferry terminal on west side of the bay (from Gills Bay on Mainland Scotland), so leave plenty room for the ferry to maneuver.

18.9 St. Margaret's Hope Pier: Busy with ferry the and fishing boats. Very limited leisure berthing. Shore facilities in the village include **hotel/bar, shop, café, gallery, post office**.

18.10 Burray: East end of Water Sound, anchor to South East of jetty. Visitor mooring available. Alongside berthing possible when available. Busy boat repair yard at head of pier. **Hotel** ashore with **food and bar** facilities.

18.11 Hunda Sound: Excellent shelter in most conditions, anchor in middle in sand over clay.

18.12 Echnaloch Bay: Good temp. anchorage, avoid cables. Use tripping line.

18.13 St. Mary's Bay: Village on North side of bay, anchor to South of pier, holding good. Visitor Mooring. Possible to lie alongside jetty during settled weather. Avoid mooring near causeway as bottom is foul. Basic toilets ashore, **café/crafts, post office/shop.**

18.14 Scapa Bay: Avoid Scapa Skerry and shallows to West of approach; anchor to NW of pier, leaving plenty of room for harbour traffic; this is a busy commercial pier, mainly for tugs and small tankers tankers in Scapa Flow. **Orkney Harbour Control** is situated at head of the bay and can be contacted on channel 16, working channel 11.

18.15 **Waulkmill Bay:** Dries out 3c from head, interesting wildlife, temp. anchorage only.

18.16 **Swanbister Bay:** Good temp. anchorage in sand and mud, avoid Smoogro Skerry on NE side.

18.17 Houton Bay: Sheltered bay with good holding but restricted space, anchor in middle or towards west side of the bay. Use S-E entrance, leading lights. Busy ferry terminal serving Hoy and Flotta. Alongside berthing not recommended for small boats.

18.18 Bay of Ireland: Anchor to E of Bu Point; good holding in sand. Beware of large mussel farm.

18.19 Stromness Harbour: Very picturesque village, busy ferry port from Thurso, (Scrabster harbour) on the Scottish Mainland. Use buoyed channel entrance; Busy fishing/workboat harbour. Alongside berthing possible at the direction of harbourmaster. Good **marina** berthing at Orkney Marina facilities in north end of bay beyond ferry terminal. **Showers, toilets** etc. **shops, bars, restaurants** and other facilities. Lifeboat station.

19.

Graemsay: Populated fertile island with some of the best views in Orkney. Ferry pier difficult for alongside mooring, landing facility only, avoid long stay.

Anchorages:

19.1 Sandside Bay: shallow sandy bay on North side; can be used in settled weather, beware of strong tides and avoid Skerry of Cletts, The Lash, and the Barr Rocks.

20.

Cava: Uninhabited with a few old traditional Orkney houses still standing. Deep water all round.

Anchorages:

20.1 Point of Ward: To east side of point as temporary anchorage in shingle, avoid sandspit on point. Use tripping line.

21.

Fara: Uninhabited island, some old croft houses still stand in good condition.

Anchorages:

21.1 Peat Bay: Occasional anchorage, use tripping line.

21.2 Jetty: SW of pier in 3-5 mtrs. Temp. mooring only, ground foul, use tripping line. Possibly obstructed by fishfarm.

22.

Flotta: Oil terminal; tanker traffic and related vessels move in this area so be ready to keep clear. However not so busy since down-turn of oil industry. **Shop** and community **café** available on shore.

Anchorages:

22.1 Pan Hope: Interesting fair weather anchorage, holding good on south side of bay, avoid underwater pipeline. Wildlife good in this area including seals.

22.2 Kirk bay: Temp. anchorage. Strong tides in this area, holding can be difficult.

22.3 Gibralter pier: alongside berthing available at ferry terminal or Sutherland pier. It is ok to anchor between the piers. Holding fair to good, Use a tripping line.

23.

Switha: Sheep inhabited island: Respect the strong tides around this area.

Anchorages:

23.1 The pool: Temporary anchorage on South West side, use tripping line.

24.

Swona: Feral cattle are the only inhabitants; this is a difficult island to approach due to surrounding tides. Deep water all round with a couple of exceptions. Local knowledge and owners permission required.

Anchorages:

24.1 The Haven: a small cove on the east side with alongside berthing for small craft is the best landing point in settled conditions.

25.

Hoy: As its name implies is the highest island in Orkney, and has long been a favoured destination for the visitor. The west side boasts some of the highest cliffs in the UK and is the backdrop to "The Old Man of Hoy". In contrast to the stunning heather and hill scenery on the West side of the island, South Walls to the East is flat and fertile. You will find **pub, café, hotel restaurant**, **grocery shop**, **lifeboat museum**, **wartime 'Scapa Flow' museum,**

nature reserves, theatre etc. There are several picturesque anchorages and alongside berthing around the island.

Anchorages:

25.1 Bay of Quoys: At the Northwest end of Hoy; good temp. anchorage in sand. It is possible to use the jetty at Mo Ness when the ferry does not require to berth. Do not approach from North between Hoy and Graemsay, as there are unmarked underwater obstructions.

25.2 Lyrawa Bay: Deep bay with good holding, can be exposed, shoal towards head of bay. There may be a fishfarm to avoid.

25.3 Pegal Bay: In Rysa Sound, good holding in attractive surroundings. Avoid salmon Cages.

25.4 Mill bay and Ore bay: Not recommended for anchoring without a tripping line as the bottom is foul with left over naval debris and large fish farm. However, there is a Visitors mooring in each bay that is comfortable in most conditions.

25.5 Lyness Pier: Busy ferry terminal. Alongside berthing is possible however be prepared to share with dive boats. Deep water, beware of old bolts and other obstructions, use fender board. Access to the excellent **naval museum**.

25.6 Longhope: Anchor on South side of bay East of and before you go as far as the pier. Two Visitor moorings available. Use tripping line as seabed debris can obstruct. West of pier is also good anchorage in 5-8m. (beware of strong tide between South and North Ness). Alongside pier is possible avoiding ferry berth. Best shelter (limited space) inside new breakwater on Northwest of main pier; leave room for lifeboat to manoeuvre. Note; tide can run strong past entrance.

25.7 Kirk Hope: Good anchorage 6-7mtrs in sand. Beware of strong tide on Cantick Head.

25.8 Aith Hope: Good anchorage however can be exposed in South to southeast winds. Several local lobster boats may moored here. Access to lifeboat museum on west shore.

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**This publication is for information only and should not be used for navigation.*
Advice is given in good faith, however should only be used in conjunction with relevant charts, tidal publications and common sense.

Useful Information:

- Orkney Marinas - Visitor ticket covers all three marinas, all piers/harbours (excepting St Margaret's Hope) and all visitor mooring buoys in Orkney.

http://www.orkneymarinas.co.uk/

- Red painted mooring "Visitor" Buoys are placed in a number of locations around the islands: Off Gill Pier Westray. East side of Papa Westray. Fersness, Calf Sound, Eday pier north, East of Kettletoft Sanday. North east and west of Whitehall pier

Stronsay. South east of North Ronaldsay pier. West and East of Rousay pier. East of Balfour pier Shapinsay. South of St Marys pier Holm. East of Burray pier, East of Longhope pier. North and South of Lyness pier.
http://www.orkneymarinas.co.uk/plan-your-trip/piers-and-moorings

- These moorings are fitted with pennants to pick up, however can often be missing; Hint: use a weighted/sinking heaving line to first drop over the buoy and then attach a mooring rope to the steel ring on top. Designed for vessels up to 18 tons.

- **Dover** tide tables are the preferred tables for passage making in Orkney. These tie in with Orkney Harbours and Admiralty printed guidance and tide charts.

- Tides can run at up to 8 knots in the tidal gates during Springs. However, in general around the islands the tides are much less. Maximum range 2.5 meters.

Treat with great respect and plan well before making passage, tides can be used to your advantage and will dictate where and when you go. If in doubt, "ask a local".

Main Tidal gates:
Eynhallow (Between Mainland and Rousay)
Hoy Sound (West entrance to Stromness)
Lother (south of South Ronaldsay)

- Consult the tidal atlas, however in general:
  Ebb tide runs North and West
  Flood tide runs South and East

Within the confines of Scapa Flow there is little tidal influence.

Eddies can form on the "tidal lee" of islands where often counter tides will be encountered.

- Orkney Marinas operate "Ask a Local" service. Please take advantage.
  http://www.orkneymarinas.co.uk/ask-a-local

If you would like further help or advice on passage making or tidal concerns please see the above link or do not hesitate to contact Mike Cooper: Representing Orkney Marinas, the Cruising Association, the Ocean Cruising Club. RNLI Water Safety Officer. RYA Instructor.

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