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The following directions are intended for guidance only and any passage should not be undertaken without consulting the local pilot books and charts and preparation of a pilotage plan.

However you get here, it is important to have accurate pilotage and tidal information and up to date charts when cruising the west coast. There are excellent pilot books for the area available from the Clyde Cruising Club, www.clyde.org and the Martin Lawrence series from Imray www.imray.com. These can be ordered from our chandlery as can Admiralty and Imray charts. Tides are strong in the Sound of Jura and the Sound of Luing with tidal races at the Corryvreckan, the Dorus Mor, the Cuan Sound and the Grey Dogs. However, with a little forward planning and care, these should not present an obstacle and good timing can greatly aid passage making. The area is a delight to sail with sheltered water and beautiful scenery and the navigation required makes for an even more interesting and enjoyable passage.

From the south – distance from Mull of Kintyre lighthouse approx. 55NM

After rounding the Mull of Kintyre if coming from the Clyde, or after crossing the North Channel if coming from Ireland, head north into the Sound of Jura. Pass Gigha to starboard with Islay to port and continue north with the long coastline of Jura to port. North of Gigha leave the MacCormaig Isles and the entrance to Loch Caolisport and Loch Sween to starboard. The most southerly of the chain of islands extending south from the Craignish peninsula, Ruadh Sgeir, 56 04'30N 005 39'70W, is identified by a light beacon FL6s. Leave this and the chain of islands up to Garbh Reisa to port, passing east of the Dorus Mor with the entrance to Loch Crinan to starboard and enter Loch Craignish.

Tides: Apart from the race at the Mull of Kintyre, the tides gradually increase in strength the further north you progress up the Sound of Jura. Rates at the north end of the Sound can be up to 4kn. In the main part of the sound the north going stream begins approx. +0545 Oban (+0115 Dover) and the south going at -0015 Oban (+0545 Dover) Near Ruadh Sgeir, north going stream begins approx. +0425 Oban (-0105 Dover), south going -0155 Oban (-0500 Dover). These times are an approximate guide only and times will vary between springs and neaps.

From the North – distance from Oban approx. 25NM

Departing Oban bay there is the choice of leaving by the north entrance and then turning south with Kerrera to port or heading down Kerrera Sound with the island to starboard and the mainland to port. Whichever is chosen, the channels are well marked. It is worth noting however that in the Sound of Kerrera the direction of buoyage runs north from the entrance to the sound and continues north out the north entrance of the bay.

Heading south, if going outside Kerrera, you can pass either side of Bach island off the SW tip of Kerrera. Keep clear of a drying rock, Dubh Sgeir, and a rock awash at chart datum, Bogha Nuadh, south of the island. A south cardinal Q(6)+LFl marks the rock awash. Continuing south you can choose to go west of Insh island or pass through the Sound of Insh with the island to starboard and Seil to port. Take care to keep clear of the reef to the north of Insh. Leave Easdale to port and set a course for Fladda lighthouse Fl(2) WRG. 9s Pass to the east of the Bono rock marked by a red can buoy Fl(4)R and a west cardinal Q9 15s and enter the Sound of Luing between Fladda and yet another Dubh Sgeir, (meaning black rock, of which there are many!) this one marked with a light Fl WRG 6s. Head south down the Sound of Luing. To starboard you will pass the islands of Rubha Fiola, Fiola

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Meadhonach, Lunga and Scarba while to port is the larger island of Luing. Keeping the green buoy Fl (2)G at the southern tip of Luing to port keeps clear of any hazards. Continue south with the famous Gulf of Corryvreckan well to starboard. Reisa an t-Struth, with a light FL(2)12s at its southern end, makes a good mark to aim for if it can be identified. Keep clear of Dearn Sgeir and MacIsaac rock to the west of Reisa Mhic Phaidean. Approaching Reisa an t-Struath look to the south east and try and identify the distinctive white building of the Crinan Hotel. If the weather is clear enough, this makes a good mark to clear all dangers and pass through the Dorus Mor by keeping the building just open on the north tip of Garbh Reisa, the island to the south of the Craignish peninsula. Once through the Dorus Mor turn NE into Loch Craignish.

Tides: The tides in the Firth of Lorne are slight. Even in the Sound of Kerrera they should not reach more than 2kn at springs. In the Sound of Luing rates can reach 4/5kn in places. The north going stream begins approx. + 0430 Oban (-0100 Dover) and the south going -0145 Oban (+0515 Dover). At the Dorus Mor the tide increases greatly, reaching 8kn at springs. The flood tide runs southeast to northwest through the gap, the ebb northwest to southeast. The flood begins + 0330 Oban, the ebb -0215 Oban. There are many eddies close to the shore and, on the flood allow for the strong current setting towards the Corryvreckan. These times are an approximate guide only and times will vary between springs and neaps.

From the Crinan Canal – distance approx. 6.5NM

Leaving the canal set a course towards the Dorus Mor. Exiting Loch Crinan, leave Eilean nan Coinean to starboard. You then have a choice of two approaches. The most straightforward is to pass south of the chain of islets lying off the southern tip of Eilean Macaskin and then turn NE into Loch Craignish. Leave Eilean Macaskin and Eilean Righ to starboard and Eilean Dubh and Eilean Mhic Chrion to port. As you approach the north of Eilean Mhic Chrion and the entrance to the Yacht Centre, you pass to the west of a small rock, Sgeir Dubh lying approximately 1.5 cables to the east of the island. A reef extends approximately 1.5 cables NE of the rock. Pass between the rock and the island and the Yacht Centre entrance will open up to port. The alternative passage is to leave the islands of Eilean Macaskin and Eilean Righ to port sailing between the islands and the mainland. Keep closer to the mainland side to stay clear of the rocks to the SE of Eilean Macaskin and again for the reef to the NE of the north tip of Eilean Righ, while taking care to keep clear of the fish cages and associated marks. Once clear we recommend you pass south of Sgeir Dubh but, if passing north, give a wide berth to avoid the reef.

Tides: Inside Loch Crinan and Loch Craignish, tides should not present a problem.

Marina approaches

The entrance to the marina is clearly marked with a red buoy FLR 3s off the tip of the island and a green light FIG 3s on the southern tip of the floating breakwater pontoon. Flashing amber beacons on the breakwater pontoon will assist identification at night. There are two mooring trots to starboard outside the pontoon with further moorings inside. Pass between the pontoon and the red buoy. Ahead you will see the diesel berth with the workshop pontoons and slipway beyond. The main visitor berths are to starboard, along the long outside leg of the main pontoon system running NE-SE (see plan).

During working hours you can call the marina on CH80 for assistance.