



FIRTH OF CLYDE

STRETCHING FROM THE GREAT CITY OF GLASGOW, the firth of Clyde offers excellent facilities and an unrivalled maritime heritage. Away from the mighty River Clyde itself there are long sea lochs stretching all the way into the Highlands and a delightful collection of islands to explore, each with its own distinctive character. Little wonder this superb areas has been capturing the imagination of recreational sailors for generations.



Kyles of Bute © VisitScotland

From idyllic Isles and charming seaside resorts to the vibrant cultural hub of Glasgow, the Firth of Clyde has everything you could wish for as a sailing destination. It's a wonderfully sheltered cruising area with ten large marinas which can accommodate several thousand boats, and there's a host of marine services close at hand.

The main Clyde marinas for resident and charter vessels are Troon, Ardrossan, Largs, Kip, Rhu, Holy Loch and James Watt Dock, while Fairlie Quay is particularly popular for winter storage and has developed as a centre for maintenance. All are easily accessible by public transport and the increase in low-cost air travel has encouraged many yacht owners who live elsewhere to keep their vessels in Scottish marinas. More recent marina developments are now well established at Portavadie in Loch Fyne and Port Bannatyne on the Isle of Bute.

DESTINATIONS

The Clyde is more than just a convenient playground; it is also the perfect starting point for cruises to more distant places. Visiting boats arriving from the south or Ireland may choose to visit the new marina at Stranraer, where shore-side facilities have been upgraded as part of the EU-funded Sail West project, before venturing further north into the firth itself.

The first fully serviced marina on the Firth of Clyde can be found at Troon. From there, a popular route is north-west through the beautiful Kyles of Bute to the Crinan Canal and then to the Argyll coast and islands, Skye and the Outer Hebrides. Heading south-west past Arran and round the Mull of Kintyre, perhaps calling at Sanda or Campbeltown, is a passage best undertaken in good weather. It leads to the southern Isles of Gigha, Islay and Jura or alternatively across the North Channel to Rathlin Island, Ballycastle and Glenarm.

There's also a range of options for those who do not want to leave the firth. This rich cruising ground has moderate tidal streams and ranges, well-marked hazards and, apart from a few popular spots, relatively few other boats. The 'harbour full' sign has yet to reach Scottish waters!

One of the most popular destination harbours is Tarbert, where the fishing fleet has to some extent given way to visiting and resident yachts of all types and sizes. There, pontoon berthing, a chandlery and good shore facilities, bars and restaurants are acknowledged attractions. It is a picturesque village where the illuminated remains of Tarbert Castle overlook the village at night.

Flotilla visits are welcome to Tarbert, and it is a favourite with sailing clubs for musters and rallies. It also hosts the Clyde Cruising Club's Scottish Series each spring. This attracts upwards of a hundred competitive yachts from far and wide for a long weekend of racing in the waters of Loch Fyne where, although it has few hazards and gentle tides, the variable wind patterns offer the racing sailor great challenges.

A short distance across Loch Fyne from Tarbert is the marina at Portavadie which has almost 250 berths and a full range of facilities including a new infinity pool and spa for 2016.

Other destinations with pontoon berthing are Campbeltown, Ardrishaig and Rothesay, plus a new facility at Girvan on the Ayrshire coast. These are ideally placed for the cruising yachtsman. Campbeltown is close to the Mull of Kintyre, and a good port of call arriving from the south, while Ardrishaig is the eastern terminus of the Crinan Canal. Girvan lies midway between the harbours of Stranraer and Ayr, and Rothesay, capital of the beautiful Isle of Bute, is a traditional favourite.

At Lamlash on Arran or in the Kyles of Bute more traditional landing methods – anchoring and going ashore by dinghy – can be found. In many spots, hotels and communities have laid moorings for visitors, while smaller pontoon facilities have been installed to assist with landing a dinghy at some locations. These are sometimes free for patrons or a nominal charge may be made.

Arran is often called 'Scotland in Miniature' as it has almost all the elements of the whole of Scotland including mountains, castles, beaches, golf courses, a brewery and a distillery. You can call at Brodick, Lamlash or Lochranza and in each place you will find visitor moorings, with the additions of a landing slip at Lamlash and a fine new pontoon at Lochranza.

The Kyles of Bute is one of the prettiest open-water passages in Britain. Its fjord-like channels, or kyles, wind between heather-clad hills, past sleepy holiday villages and through groups of islands. What's more, every half-mile or so there is an anchorage to stop for lunch or for the night! Ashore, the village pubs and restaurants are renowned for their good food and pleasant ambience. Here you will meet fellow sailors enjoying themselves and locals with a tale to tell of past seafaring exploits.

If you're thinking of getting off the beaten track, the Clyde's long lochs will take you deep into Scotland's mountains. The scenery is magnificent, the sailing straightforward and, although there are around 5,000 boats on the Clyde, you will easily find a spot of solitude.

Loch Long is exactly what it says on the chart, but paradoxically Loch Fyne is much longer, at around 40 miles. Loch Long strikes deep into the highest mountains in southern Argyll, known locally as the Arrochar Alps, and this offers a good opportunity to 'bag a Munro'. Loch Goil is a branch off Loch Long to the west and has two attractive destinations: Carrick Castle, near the mouth of the loch, and Lochgoilhead, at its head.



Lamlash Bay, Isle of Arran © Ayrshire & Arran Tourism

Loch Fyne starts south of Tarbert, winds its way north past Ardrishaig and then continues to places such as Otter Ferry, Loch Gair, Crarae, Furnace, Strachur and Inveraray. At the very head of the loch is the well-known Oyster Bar, which provides visitor moorings for those intrepid sailors who make it all the way. The last sea loch before entering the River Clyde is the Gare Loch. This was one of the first areas to embrace leisure boating in Scotland and is home to one of the oldest yacht clubs in Britain, the Royal Northern and Clyde Yacht Club at Rhu. The marina at Rhu is also an ideal stopover to explore Scotland's first national park and its breathtaking scenery.

THE UPPER FIRTH AND GLASGOW

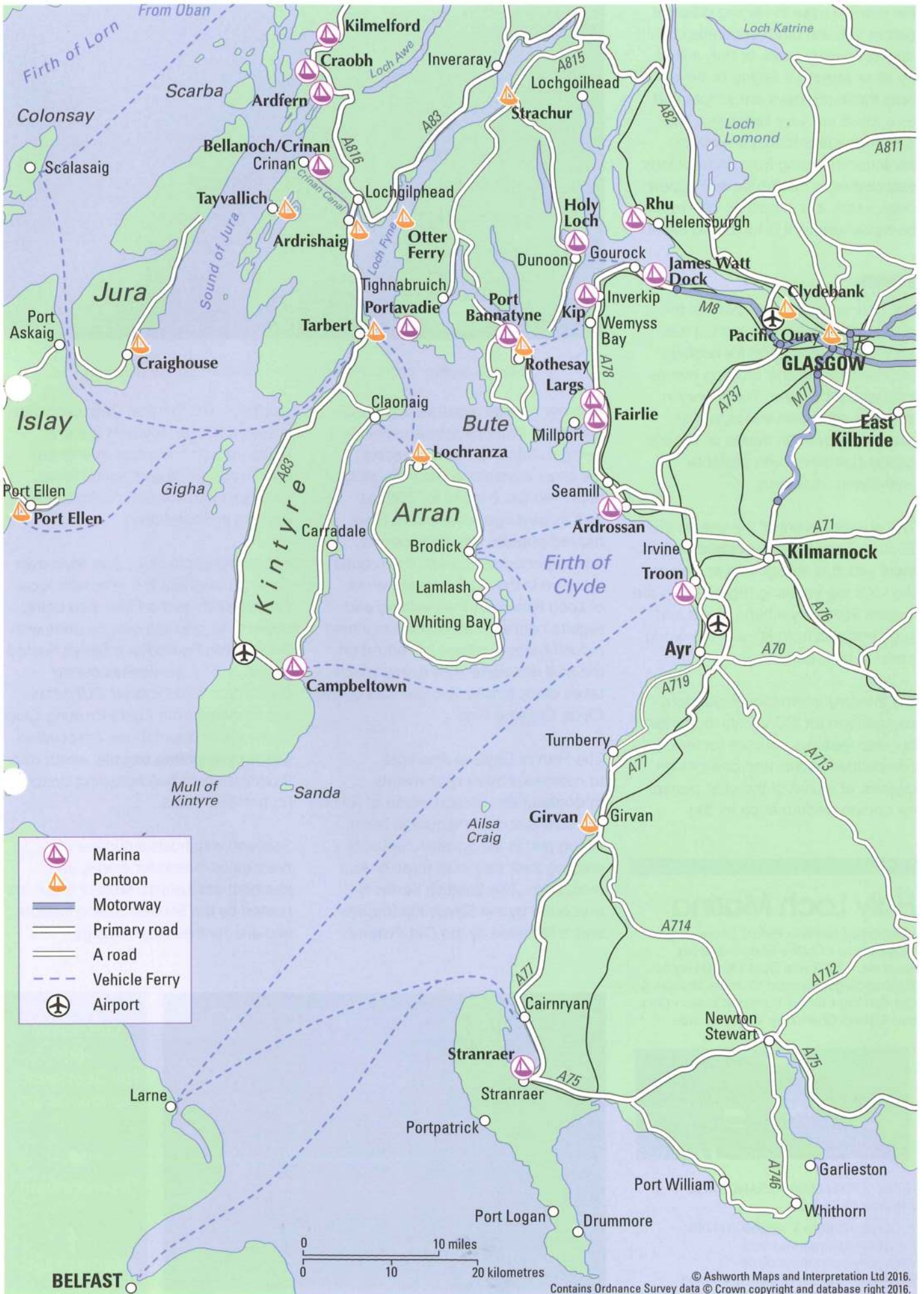
The Clyde, after years of decline, has come to life again and there are potential stopping places on the way up the river at Bowling and Clydebank before reaching Glasgow Harbour. Here there are pontoons on either side of the river at the BBC building which are free to use but should be booked in advance.

The pontoons are upstream of the opening Millennium Bridge; the pontoon on the north bank outside the

Crowne Plaza Hotel can be booked by calling the SECC and the pontoon on the south bank at Plantation Quay can be booked by calling Glasgow City Council. For boats with an air draught of less than five metres wishing to go one mile further upstream to the city centre (maximum clearance under the Bell's Bridge, Clyde Arc and Tradeston footbridge at high tide) there are two more pontoons controlled by Glasgow City Council at the Broomielaw and under George V Bridge.

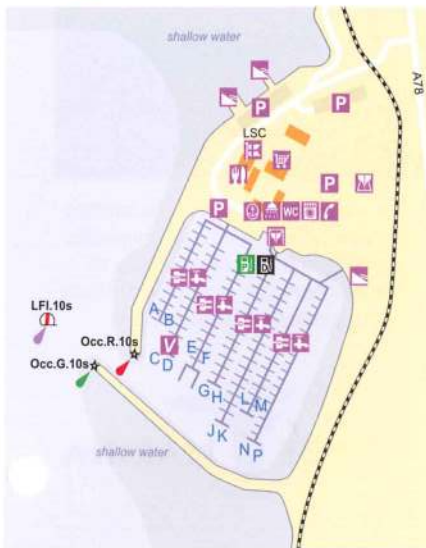
All take visiting craft and all have security suitable for their city centre locations. To request opening of the Bell's and Millennium bridges please call 0141 946 5186 at least eight hours in advance or when booking a berth.

You can get lots of information on all aspects of sailing in the Firth of Clyde from the Clydeport Leisure Marine Guide, freely available or to download from www.clydeport.co.uk. In particular, it deals with the passage up the river to Glasgow. This is a fascinating city to visit, packed with history, culture and entertainment events. Now you can see a great city and live in comfort on your own boat. One of the benefits of being a tourist by boat in the Clyde area is



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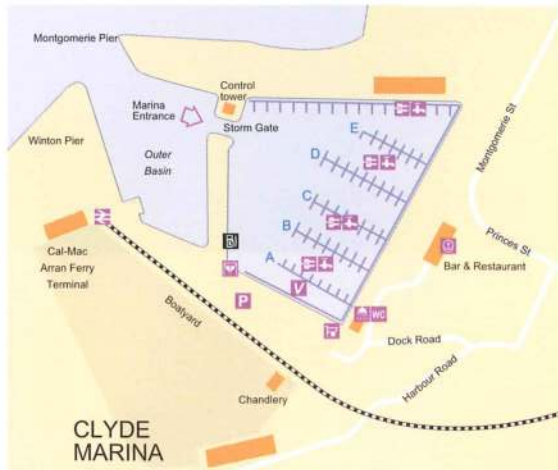
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Clyde Marina Ltd



Situated on the Ayrshire coast, Clyde Marina is the ideal base for the islands and sea lochs of the Clyde, one of Europe's most beautiful cruising grounds. The shores and anchorages of Arran, the stunning scenery of the Kyles of Bute, Loch Fyne, the Cumbraes and Bute. We are perfectly positioned. Clyde Marina offers full service facilities and the Clyde's deepest water marina berthing.

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Troon Yacht Haven



Situated on the Southern Clyde Estuary, Troon Yacht Haven provides an ideal port for entering the Clyde or for passage making to Ireland and the South. Full facility marina and boatyard with superb communications by road, air, car & sea. The helpful and experienced staff are on hand 24 hours to maximise the enjoyment of boating, and pride themselves on their high standard of customer services.



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Tarbert Harbour



Tarbert Harbour is a picturesque harbour and naturally protected sanctuary situated on the west shore of Loch Fyne, offering competitive berthing rates. The facilities provide all the requirements for the modern day sailor including excellent pontoons with free wifi and electricity, 180 finger berths, and 600 metres of parallel pontoon. There is a chandlery, Laundry, diesel, gas and access to a 24hour toilet and shower facility. Tarbert is unique in that it provides a large shore side recreation area with a community marquee, the perfect choice for gatherings and musters. This area is also perfect for families with an outdoor gym, children's little gym, picnic benches and barbeque stations.

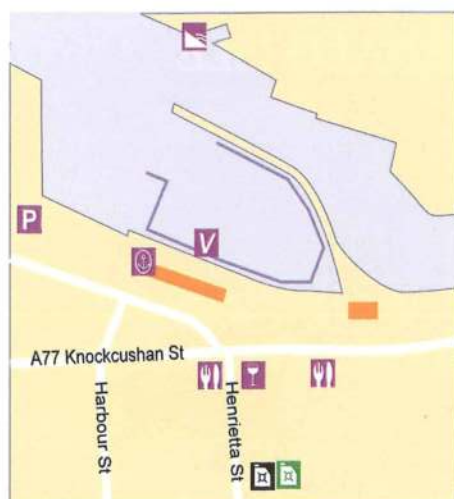


The Harbour is situated in the Heart of Tarbert's captivating Heritage Village famous for its festivals, friendly locals and fresh produce. Each year the locals produce a full enticing festival calendar for you to join in and enjoy. As well as leisure boats, Tarbert Harbour remains a commercial port with a very active fishing industry and you can sample fresh produce from local merchants or enjoy in the choice of restaurants, hotels, cafes and bars. The delightful village also offers bank, post office, chemist, stores, and many galleries and shops to browse.

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Girvan Marina



Benefiting from investments of over £1 million since 2013, Girvan harbour's modern 36 pontoons - varying in size from 7 to 12m fingers - enjoy secure access, CCTV, water and power supplies, attracting more than 500 leisure yachts a year.

This season, a wealth of new facilities and a Harbour Master's office were opened, making Girvan and South Carrick an increasingly important - and attractive - sailing destination.



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