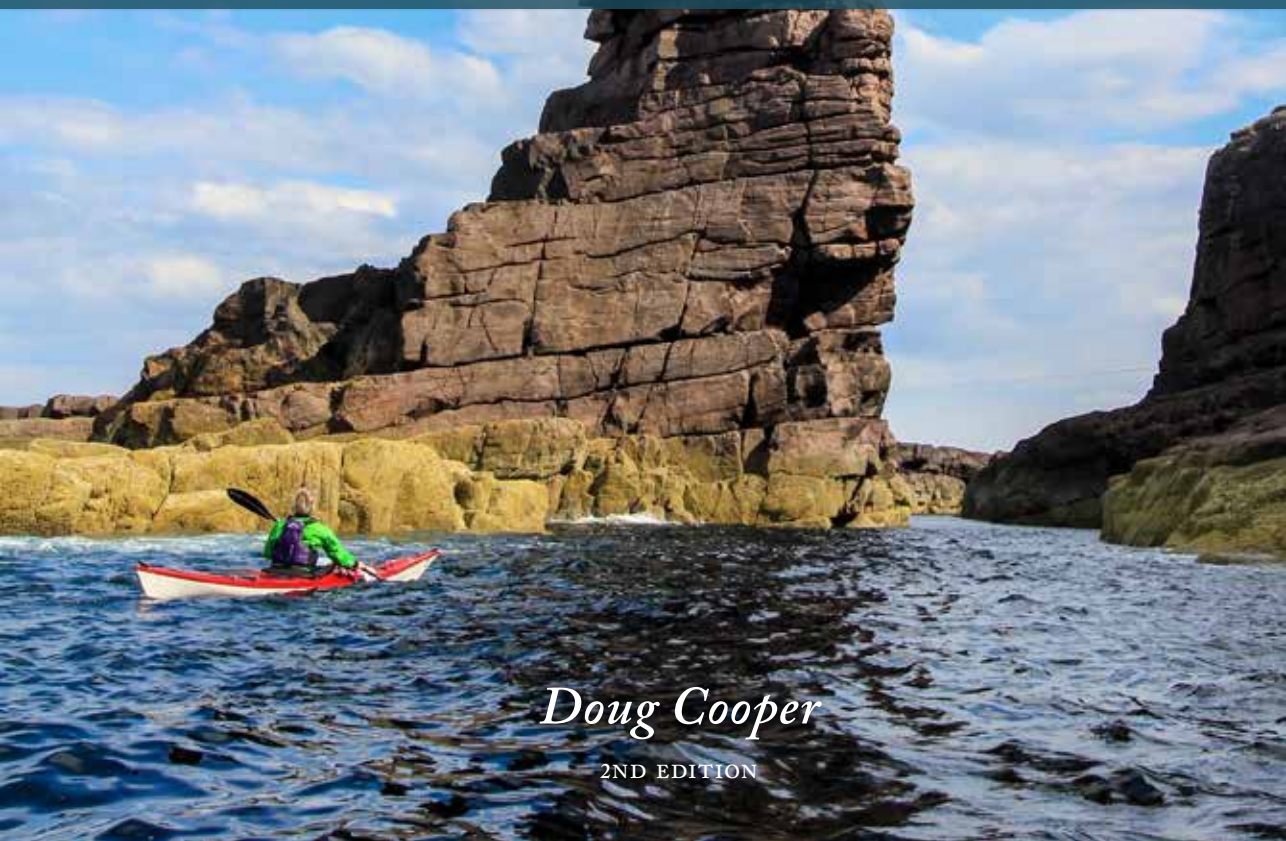




Scottish Sea Kayaking

SIXTY-TWO GREAT SEA KAYAK VOYAGES



Doug Cooper

2ND EDITION

Scottish Sea Kayaking



Scottish Sea Kayaking

SIXTY-TWO GREAT SEA KAYAK VOYAGES

Doug Cooper

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Howard Jeffs

Foreword

When Doug asked me to write the foreword for the second edition of his guidebook, I was amazed to discover that it was fifteen years old! Where has that time gone? Plenty of water under the keel, and that is what this book is all about.

Since the first edition was published, the whole of the UK now benefits from similar guidebooks; essential sources of information and part of the package of material we all need for a successful sea kayaking trip. You will not find where to park your car in an Admiralty Pilot, where that great looking cave or arch in the photograph is to paddle through, or what is a good time of year, and where best, to see the puffins.

I have been sea kayaking for over forty-six years, nearly forty of which have been in Scotland and have been fortunate enough to have paddled in some of the most stunning locations on the globe with some great people! However, I can't help but believe that the coastline of Great Britain is the most diverse and beautiful in the whole of the world, with Scotland being one of the jewels in its crown. If inspiration is what you still need, towering cliffs and big swells, fearsome tide races, then you have got it! If you want quiet spaces, tranquil lochs, history, culture, wildlife, you will find no better source!

Guidebooks can be a double-edged sword. They tell us of great places to go and all the specific information to go with them. But Doug has been careful here, providing enough information to inspire and plan a safe trip, yet ensuring there are plenty of hidden gems on route for you to discover yourselves.

Enjoy this book, enjoy the planning and execution of your trips, but most of all enjoy the company of friends, on an isolated beach around a driftwood fire, looking west and watching the sun go down with a wee dram of Scotland's finest in your hand! Is that not what it is all about?

Howard Jeffs



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📷 Loch Scavaig and the Cuillins from Elgol

Introduction to the 2nd Edition

When *Scottish Sea Kayaking – Fifty Great Sea Kayak Voyages* was first released in 2005, it was the only dedicated sea kayaking guide book available in the UK. On the back of its instant success many have since followed, with guides now available for pretty much the whole of the British Isles' amazing coastline. The ethos of all these guide books is a blend of high-quality photographs to inspire, maps with tidal information to inform planning, key summary, trip details and then written chapters for added detail and insight. In this they have supported and inspired many sea kayakers to get out and explore places they perhaps had not considered before.

This 2nd Edition of *Scottish Sea Kayaking* is aimed at continuing the ethos of the previous guide but to do it better and with additional trips. The inspirational photographs are still a core part, but instead of these being taken using slide film as was the case in the original edition these have all been taken on a digital SLR camera. The print quality of the book has again moved on to fully show off the stunning photographs and maps. New to this edition is updated tidal and access information, updated and improved maps, some additional trips in the SW and N of mainland Scotland, Shetland is now included with five selected trips, Orkney is also included with five selected trips; a total of 62 trips as opposed to the original 50. There are also variations and additional nearby trip suggestions for all trips, providing numerous additional paddling options, full lat / long coordinates for your sat nav / chart / gps planning as well as grid references, updated local information and the www.scottishseakayaking.co.uk website to support the guide with additional photographs, information and resources.

We hope the 2nd Edition will continue to inspire and inform all those who use it and in addition, get more people out sea kayaking with increased knowledge from a safety and environmental point of view. To send us updates or comments regarding access or tidal information please do so via info@scottishseakayaking.co.uk and we will share relevant updates via the website.

About the Author

Doug Cooper

Doug has a lifetime of experience as a paddlesport coach in sea kayaking and white water, working for many years at Glenmore Lodge, Scotland's National Outdoor Training Centre. Through this he has enjoyed many years of taking people to remote and spectacular coastlines and rivers, then helping them to improve their paddling skills and understanding. The majority of his workdays on the sea have been in Scotland, which provides a great office and an even better playground on days off. When not out on the water, he has also enjoyed many years working as a Mountain and Ski Instructor, or at play in search of new crags or fresh powder tracks.

As much as Doug loves introducing people to new environments and challenging their skills, it is his days off, personal adventures and expeditions that he lives for. He has sea kayaked extensively worldwide, including Greenland, Alaska, Iceland, Norway, Ireland, Corsica, Croatia, Sardinia and Greece, and has always got a new destination and adventure planned.

Doug is also author of *Skye and North West Highlands Sea Kayaking*, *North and East Coasts of Scotland Sea Kayaking*, *Sea Kayak Handling* and *Rough Water Handling*; all published by Pesda Press. With his wife Lara he has also created a website, Scottish Sea Kayaking www.scottishseakayaking.co.uk to provide 'inspiration & information' to all sea kayakers and compliment the guide books.

So, if it involves discovering remote parts of the world, having an adventure or helping friends and clients; Doug will have a smile on his face and most definitely be having fun.



📷 Doug Cooper

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all those who have contributed photographs, shared local knowledge, accompanied me on paddling trips or just been part of my sea kayaking journey over the years. It is time spent over many years with friends and clients out on the sea exploring the fantastic diversity that the Scottish coastline has to offer that has evolved my love for, and knowledge of, this very special area.

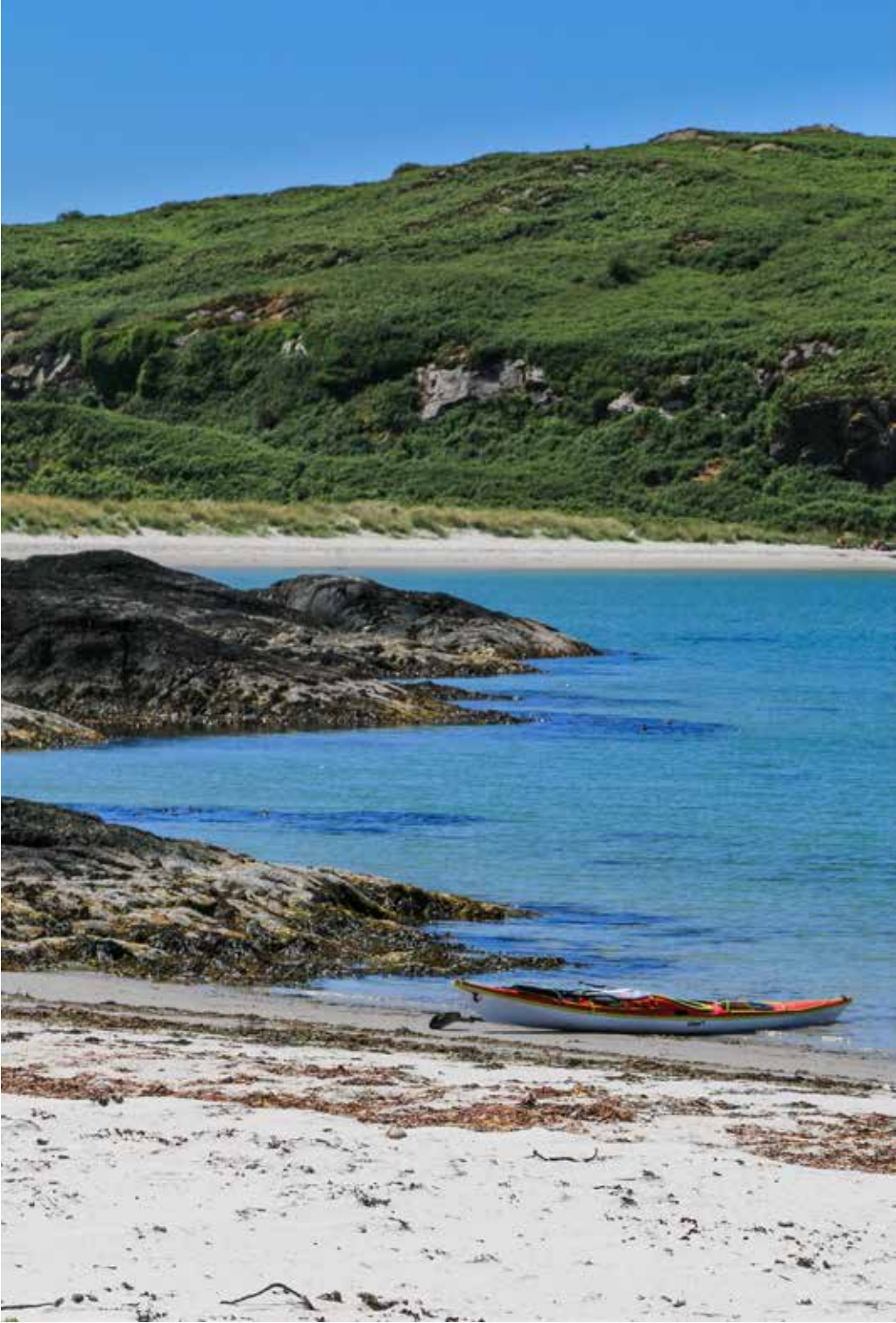
Particular thanks need to go to my wife, Lara, who never falters in her support, is always there on the journeys and is also prepared to be in front of, or behind, the camera lens. I am also very grateful to Angus and Wendy of Sea Kayak Shetland, who have kindly supported me in sharing their exceptional local knowledge by writing and providing the photographs for the Shetland section of the guide.

Thanks need to go to Pete Astles at Peak UK, who has supported me for many years in ensuring I have the best equipment to wear while enjoying my sea kayaking and other paddling. I would also like to thank P&H Sea Kayaks who have made sure I have the world's best sea kayaks to take me on my journeys, around the Scottish coastlines and beyond.

Finally, thanks are due to Franco Ferrero and his team at Pesda Press. Yet again, great support and a great book!

Photographs

A special thanks to those who helped with any of the photographs, whether that was in front of or behind the lens. Without these the book would not be what it is. All photographs are by Doug and Lara Cooper unless otherwise acknowledged in the captions.



📷 Gigha, Bagh na Doirlinne

Introduction

Scotland's South West offers accessible paddling, yet makes no compromise in quality, variety and beauty. The coastline is a mass of intricate islands, each with their own unique character, scenery and wildlife.

These islands alone, offer a lifetime of day and multi-day trips. Islay is famed for its whiskies, Gigha its beaches, Ailsa Craig, Treshnish and Staffa for their birds and unique geology; and of course, there are the myriad islands of the Garvellachs and Lismore areas. The South West really is an island odyssey. This island landscape provides some dramatic rock architecture as well, the immense basalt columns and caves of Staffa being a must for all. However, cliffs, caves and arches are found on many other trips as well.

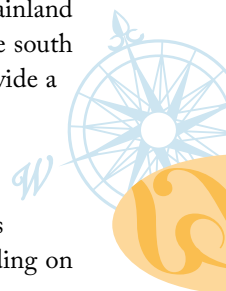
The area is not just about islands however, it can also claim some of Scotland's most committing and dramatic headlands. Ardnamurchan Point in the far north of the area provides mainland Britain's most westerly point, and an iconic lighthouse with views to die for. Then to the south of the area, the mighty inaccessible headlands of the Mull of Kintyre and Galloway provide a worthy challenge for any sea kayaker.

With this maze of headlands and islands it comes as no surprise that the area also provides some of Scotland's most challenging tidal waters, as the sea is squeezed through and around this intricate coastline. Along with fast currents, there are also numerous tidal races, overfalls, eddy lines and whirlpools for the kayaker to avoid or enjoy, depending on their abilities.

With cliffs, remote islands and a constant conveyer belt of tidal waters the area is a haven for both marine and bird wildlife. Whales and dolphins can often be seen, and on many of the remote islands and cliffs the thousands of nesting birds will be constant companions.

Tides and weather

Due to the many islands this area has to offer, shelter can often be found from the swell and winds. The western coastlines of the outer islands and headlands of this area are exposed to the full force of the Atlantic and this needs to be planned for, however for the most part much of the area can offer comparative shelter. The tidal waters are generally the main consideration throughout this area, around many headlands and between islands these can reach speeds in excess of 8 knots, and maximum spring rates of 5–6 knots are often the norm. With all of these, there will be strong eddy lines, races and overfalls; all providing standing waves and whirlpools to be carefully planned for by any sea kayaker venturing into them.





📷 Mull of Galloway



Isle of Gigha



No. 4 | Grade B | 30km | OS Sheet 62

Tidal Port Oban

Start  Gigha Ferry Terminal NR 692 465 / 55.6570, -5.6706

Finish  Gigha Ferry Terminal NR 692 465 / 55.6570, -5.6706

HW / LW HW / LW at Gigha varies between 2 hours before Oban on springs and 5 hours before Oban on neaps. There is little difference in height between high and low water at Gigha.

Tidal Times In the Sound of Gigha: The N going tidal stream starts at about 4 hours and 30 minutes after HW Oban. The S going tidal stream starts at about 1 hour and 55 minutes before HW Oban.

Max Rate Sp In the Sound of Gigha 2–3 knots.

Coastguard Belfast, tel. 02891 463933, VHF weather every 3 hours from 0810 UT

Isle of Gigha

Introduction

The Isle of Gigha is surrounded by Kintyre, Islay and Jura; wherever you look on this paddle the scenery is fabulous. It offers stunning beaches and remote coastlines, along with possibly the perfect paddlers pub. Add to that the wildlife that makes this island its home, and you are in for a special day out.



Islay and Jura from Bògh na Dòirinne

Description

Leaving the easy launch site at the ferry terminal, the beaches and coastline of the Isle of Gigha are clear to see across the sound. The crossing is long enough to make it feel like you are going somewhere special, but not so long as to be overly arduous. Arriving on the sheltered eastern side of the island at Port an Sgiathain will provide a sandy beach to land on if necessary. There is a wealth of small skerries and wildlife that is typical of the entire island. As you head to, and around, the southern tip the skerries and beaches continue, with expansive views down the Kintyre peninsula and on to Ireland.

The west coast provides a remoter feel, with a more rugged and unforgiving coastline. The views across to Islay and Jura will unfold, with the impressive mountains of the Paps of Jura standing out. It is worth considering stopping to land before continuing beyond Caolas Craro, as easy landing spots become more limited from here.

At Port an Dùin there is an old mill, an indication of the island's rich history. Heading up to the beautiful beaches found at Bògh na Dòirinne the remote coastline continues and there will be only wildlife for company. Paddling round Eilean Garbh the rock architecture is striking with dark black, rounded boulders covered in bright orange lichens. Allow time to enjoy the beaches and views of Bògh na Dòirinne, you will find it a hard place to leave.

The northern tip of the island should lead to more sheltered waters, and of course the beaches will continue. Although not as rugged, this section of coastline still offers plenty of interest. Ardminish Bay is where the main village is situated and the ferry lands. Just beyond the ferry you





Bagh na Doirlinne

will find some lovely little beaches to land on, and next to one you will find arguably the most convenient paddlers pub there is. Take time to stretch the legs, visit the pub, or stroll up into the little village for an ice cream. The only decision left will be whether to stay and enjoy all the island offers then get the ferry back, or to paddle the final crossing of the day back to the start.

Tides and weather

The island is exposed to winds from the south, and care should be taken if thinking of crossing to the island in these conditions. The Sound of Gigha, although not particularly tidal, can provide a rough sea state with wind over tide. Making use of visual transits will ensure the crossing is made efficiently when paddling across to the island. The southern and western coastlines of the island can be exposed to any sea states or swell coming from the south-west.

Additional information

If you wish to avoid the crossing, it is possible to take the kayaks across using the ferry. At the ferry terminal there is a public convenience as well as a perfectly situated café for the end of the trip. The island has a shop, pub and public conveniences in the area of Ardminish Bay.

Variations

Cara Island, just south of Gigha, is a beautiful addition to this trip and is definitely worth considering if time allows. Doing the trip over two days would be an ideal way to accommodate this, thus making for a perfect weekend.



Eigg & Muck





12

Eigg & Muck

No. 12 | Grade C | 42 / 72km | OS Sheets 39 & 40

Tidal Port Ullapool

Start  Eigg Pier NM 485 838 / 56.8772, -6.1294 or Rhue NM 627 852 / 56.8972, -5.8983

Finish  Eigg Pier NM 485 838 / 56.8772, -6.1294 or Rhue NM 627 852 / 56.8972, -5.8983

HW / LW HW / LW at Eigg is around 40 minutes before Ullapool.

Tidal Times In Loch nan Ceall: The ingoing tidal stream starts at about 5 hours and 45 minutes after HW Ullapool. The outgoing tidal stream starts at about 50 minutes before HW Ullapool.

Between Eigg and the mainland: The N going tidal stream starts at about 6 hours after HW Ullapool. The S going tidal stream starts at about 10 minutes before HW Ullapool.

Around Eigg and Muck: The N going tidal stream starts at about 6 hours after HW Ullapool. The S going tidal stream starts at about HW Ullapool.

Max Rate Sp Off the east coast of Eigg 4 knots. Off the east and west coasts of Muck 4 knots. In the Sound of Eigg 3 knots. Between Eigg and the mainland 1 knot. In the North and South channels of Loch nan Ceall 1–2 knots.

Coastguard Stornoway, tel. 01851 702013, VHF weather every 3 hours from 0710 UT



© An Sgurr, Eigg

12

Eigg & Muck

Introduction

Eigg and Muck are the southernmost of the Small Isles. Both are home to vibrant, small communities that offer a warm welcome, and the seas that surround them are home to whales and other marine life. You can either paddle out to Eigg or use the regular ferry service. Making it a multi day trip provides ample time to make the most of these magical islands.

Description

For the paddle out to Eigg, starting at Rhue in Loch nan Ceall is ideal. Leaving here there is a mass of skerries to negotiate; these skerries are a wildlife oasis with golden sands all around. From the skerries there is a 12km open crossing that takes you across to Eigg. With the imposing Sgùrr of Eigg leading you on and the views of Ardnamurchan Point, Skye, Rum and Muck, there is plenty to keep you occupied. There are regular sightings of whales in this area, so keep an eye and ear out for these fantastic creatures of the ocean. Head for the sandy beach at Poll nam Partan below the old, ruined fort, south of Kildonan, as your first landing spot on Eigg. If you are stretching your legs after the crossing you may wish to visit the old Celtic cross-slab and ruined church at Kildonan. It is said that St Donan set up a monastery here with 52 of his monks, who in 617 AD were all murdered by the local Pictish queen who, apparently, had a disliking of missionaries.

If the crossing out to Eigg does not suit due to conditions, time constraints or personal preference, it is easy to take the regular ferry service from Mallaig out to Eigg. You can just walk on with your kayak and then launch at Eigg Pier, where the ferry lands just south of Poll nam Partan.

Island buy-out

In 1997 the island was bought by the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust, a partnership between the residents of the island, the Highland Council and the Scottish Wildlife Trust. The residents bought the island for £1.75 million, aided by a £1 million gift from an anonymous donor. It led the way in the land reform movement throughout Scotland. In effect, the islanders could own and run their own island. Since this time the island's population has grown by 24%, and even more notable is the fact the island has the first completely wind, water and sun-powered electricity grid in the world.

The trip heads up the remote east coast to the northern tip of Eigg. If you have time you may wish to stop and explore Eilean Thuilm for fossils that have been found in the rocks of this area. Continuing around the next headland, you will start to get a feel for the more rugged west coast of





📷 Singing Sands and Rum

12

Eigg & Muck

Eigg, as you reach the fantastic beach of Camas Sgiotaig. This is also known as the ‘singing sands’ because the dry grains of quartz drone underfoot, or sing, when the wind blows across them. The area of grass behind the beach makes for a fantastic campsite, with a wonderful view north-westward to Rum. It is worth spending the night here to watch the sun set behind the mountains of Rum, and then watch the early morning light bathe these shapely mountains the next day.

Surf can often come into this beach, so there is every chance of an early morning shower when leaving to continue the journey. As you cross the Bay of Laig you will reach the most exposed, yet spectacular, part of the trip. This bit of coastline down to the south of Eigg is fully exposed to the westerly seas, has no landings, and is lined by steep cliffs along the entire route. If conditions allow there will be a chance to explore the odd cave, and go in amongst the cliffs to enjoy the varied birdlife that uses this part of Eigg as their summer home. On reaching the southern coastline, take a little time to explore it before heading across to Muck.

Massacre Cave

West of Galmisdale you might want to find the cave of Uamh Fhraing, where there is a rocky landing. It is here, in 1577, that 195 Eigg islanders hid from the MacLeods of Skye. The MacLeods were on the island to retaliate as some of them had been sent back to Skye castrated, after being caught raping some MacDonald girls on Eigg. The MacLeods found the cave and, in trying to smoke them out, suffocated the 195 islanders. For this reason, the cave is known as ‘Massacre Cave’.



Crossing to Muck the sandy beach at Gallanach is the place to head for, an idyllic place to relax and enjoy. There is camping here if required. From here head out around the west coast of Muck to savour the wildness of this island, while heading for the next easy landing place at Port Mòr. Muck in Gaelic translates into the *Isle of Pigs*, which could have come from the fact that porpoises were known as sea pigs and are often seen in these waters. Port Mòr is the main centre for Muck and is where the small school is situated, along with a café for the weary paddler. Once fuelled up at the café, make the crossing back to Eigg. Aim for Galmisdale where you will find somewhere to camp, if required, or be in situ ready for the ferry. Whether paddling back to Loch nan Ceall or taking the ferry back to Mallaig, this trip will leave you filled with memories of a great journey. It is with tired bodies, yet fulfilled souls, that you will reach the mainland.

Tides and weather

Due to the long crossings and / or exposed coastlines with few landings, good weather is required to complete this trip. If the weather changes, shelter is never too far away amongst the islands. The west coast of Eigg and the mainland crossing are the most weather dependent sections.

There are relatively strong tidal streams running around much of the islands and these will need to be taken into consideration when planning the trip. Timings will be fairly critical to ensure these are paddled with, as opposed to against. When crossing the tide on the route to and from Muck, careful use of transits will be required to ensure an efficient crossing.

There is a small amount of tide in the North and South Channels of Loch nan Ceall, but this is easy to paddle against if necessary. On the main crossing to Eigg the tidal streams are almost insignificant.



📷 Eilean Chathastail and Point of Ardnamurchan

12

Eigg & Muck

Additional information

There is a full range of amenities in both Arisaig and Mallaig. For details about the ferries to and from Eigg and Muck from Mallaig go to www.calmac.co.uk; consider using a kayak trolley to make life easy! There are limited amenities on the islands, however there is a shop at the Eigg Pier with toilets, showers, café and craft shop, as well as a café and craft shop in Port Mòr on Muck.

There are additional launch sites to Rhue if parking is tight at the road head, these are as follows: Rhue (NM 629 854 / 56.8991, -5.8952), small bay with private landing pontoon (NM 638 853 / 56.8987, -5.8804), bay at NM 648 846 / 56.8922, -5.8633 (high water only), Gortnachullish (NM 642 877 / 56.9204, -5.8761) or in Arisaig, just south of the village where the stream enters the loch (NM 661 861 / 56.9070, -5.8434).

Variations

If weather or time dictates, it is possible to get the ferry back to Mallaig from Muck, thus avoiding the need to cross back to Eigg. You may also want to consider spending more time out exploring the Small Isles, visiting Rum and maybe Canna. For further information on this see Trip 13.



Noup Head




43

Noup Head

No. 43 | Grade C | 24km | OS Sheet 5

Tidal Port Aberdeen

Start  Grobust HY 427 493 / 59.3262, -3.0086

Finish  Bay of Tafts HY 498 416 / 59.2579, -2.8821

HW / LW HW / LW at Westray is around 1 hour and 50 minutes before Wick.

Tidal Times North coast of Westray: The SW going tidal stream starts at about 20 minutes before HW Aberdeen. The NE going tidal stream starts at about 3 hours and 55 minutes after HW Aberdeen.

Between Inga Ness and Noup Head: An eddy forms on the NW going tidal stream, this combined with the SE going tidal stream produces a nearly continuous SE tidal stream along this section of coast.

West coast of Westray: The SE going tidal stream starts at about 3 hours and 55 minutes after HW Aberdeen. The NW going tidal stream starts at about 20 minutes before HW Aberdeen.

Max Rate Sp Off Noup Head and Inga Ness 2 knots.

Coastguard Shetland, tel. 01595 692976, VHF weather every 3 hours from 0710 UT



Westray's west coast

43

Noup Head

Introduction

Westray is the most north-westerly of the Orkneys and to paddle around its most north-westerly headland provides an 'on the edge of the world' experience. The cliffs will not disappoint, and Noup Head is one of the largest breeding sites for sea birds in the UK. Add to this some spectacular beaches, along with a welcoming community and a great trip is guaranteed.

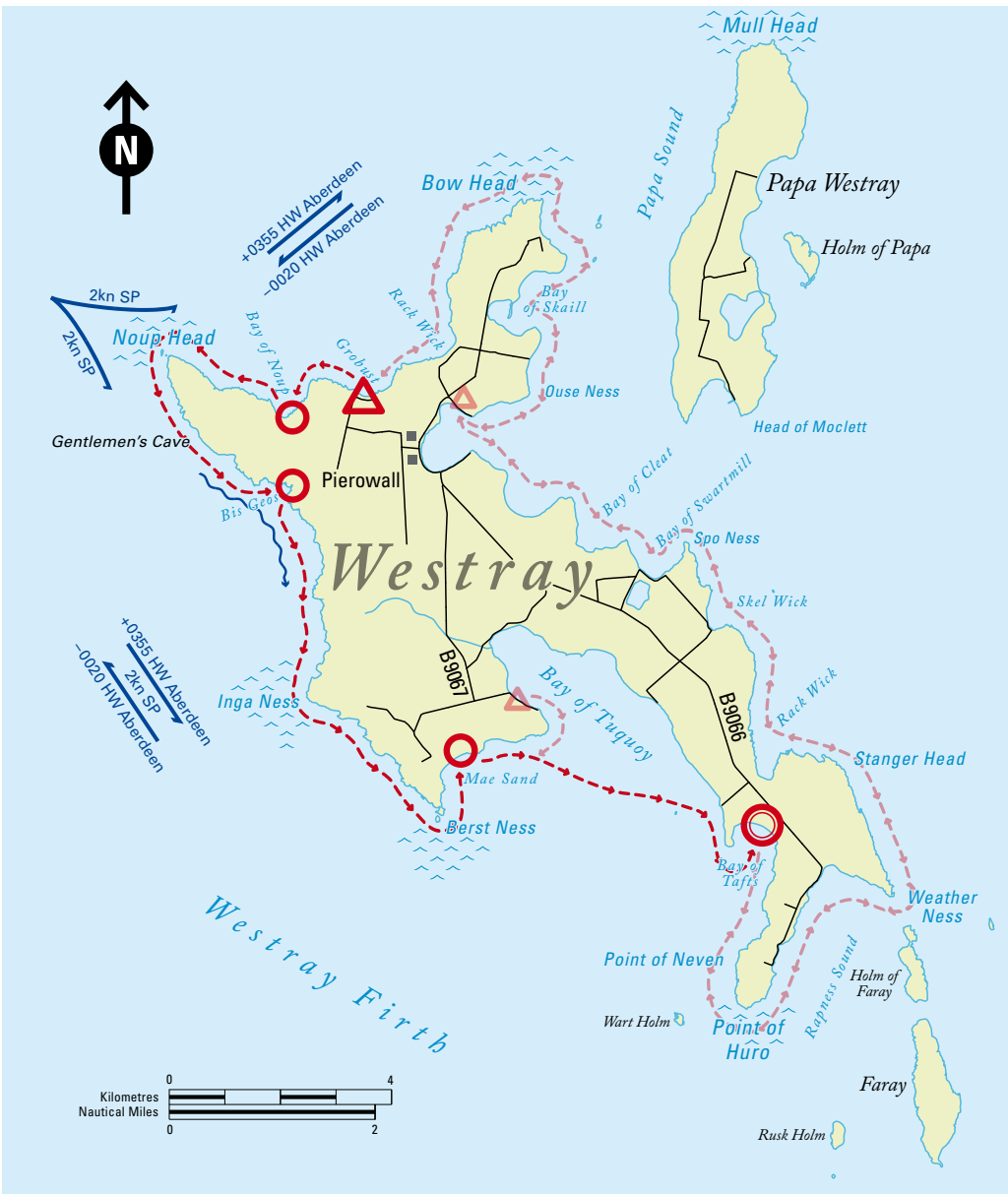
Description

When you arrive on Westray you cannot miss the sign advising you that it is customary for everyone to wave to each other when passing in a car. This friendly welcome sets the scene for what will undoubtedly be a memorable visit.

The beach at Grobust on the northern coast provides a remote and idyllic start to this trip. It is accessed at the end of a rough track, signposted to the archaeological site at the Links of Noltland. This is a location exposed to the swell and weather, so if it looks awkward to launch due to surf, take this as a sign to leave this trip for a calmer day. Leaving the beach, there will be great views across to Bow Head, Westray's most northern point, but this trip takes us in the opposite direction towards Noup Head. The Bay of Noup provides another beautiful beach, and if you have any last-minute things to sort it is worth stopping as the cliffs of Noup Head are next.

The lighthouse of Noup Head was built in 1898, the first lighthouse on the west coast of Orkney. As you paddle around the headland you are dwarfed by the towering cliffs above and the vastness of the open ocean. If you are looking for an 'out there' place to paddle, this is it. The

immense, overhanging wall of rock that sits below the lighthouse is impressive, however it will be the birdlife here that will take your breath away. This RSPB reserve is the second largest breeding site in the UK and the sounds and smells are overpowering. Ornate, natural rock ledges make up the cliffs and provide ideal nest sites for the sea birds, the rock walls streaked with white along their entire length. With thousands of birds all around, and circling above, you will be lucky to escape unscathed from their guano; perhaps you will need to rename the headland 'Poop Head'!





📷 Grobust beach and Bow Head

43

Noup Head

Continuing along the coastline the grandeur keeps on coming; a deep geo cuts into the cliffs at Lawrence's Piece, and impressive sea arches and caves can be explored. Gentlemen's Cave is also passed, this is accessed by a narrow rock platform cutting through the cliffs at half height. Two Lairds are reputed to have used the cave as a hideout after the Jacobite rebellion. A landing may be possible at Bis Geos if you need a break, before the cliffs continue down to Inga Ness.

On passing Inga Ness the cliffs slowly abate, and as you paddle around Berst Ness the beautifully unspoilt Mae Sand is revealed. At this stage you will have earned a good long rest and time to enjoy the tranquil waters and untouched sands of this beach.

Leaving the beach, the journey finishes by crossing the Bay of Tuquoy and following the low-lying coastline to the Bay of Tafts. The views stretch across the Westray Firth back to the mainland of Orkney, as well as the islands of Rousay, Egilsay and Shapinsay. The finish provides another beach, and thankfully not too far from where the vehicles can be parked at the cemetery.

A bloody battle

On the side of Fitty Hill, the map identifies the Bloody Tuaks, which marks the site of a battle between Westraymen and raiders from the Isle of Lewis. The battle was intense and in the end some accounts suggest only one raider from Lewis was left standing, who eventually surrendered when his hamstrings were cut! An outcrop named 'The Highlandman's Hamar' is where he was said to have made his stand.



Tides and weather

Being on the north-western edge of the Orkneys this trip is as exposed as it can be to swell and weather from the Atlantic. If there is any notable surf when launching at the start, it will be unpleasantly rough along the western coastline; aim for a day with no wind or swell for this trip. The E going tidal stream splits around Noup Head, with a NE stream continuing to Bow Head and a SE stream down to Inga Ness. Rougher water can be found at Noup Head, Inga Ness and Berst Ness, but the tidal rate is not much more than 2 knots. There is a fairly continuous SE tidal stream from Noup Head to Inga Ness, due to the eddy formed on the NW tidal stream combining with the SE tidal stream. This trip is described to make use of this, but the eddy is relatively weak should you wish to paddle the trip in the opposite direction.

Additional information

It is well worth visiting the Noup Head lighthouse to view the trip from above, and if time allows there is an excellent waymarked coastal walk around the headland. The impressive remains of Noltland Castle are also well worth a visit, and situated near the start of the trip. Just across from the finish at Castle o'Burrian (HY 504 429 / 59.2697, -2.8719) there is Orkney's largest puffin colony, which is only a short walk from the road. There are daily ferries to Westray from Kirkwall, mainland Orkney. The main village on Westray, Pierowall, offers a range of local amenities.



📷 Noup Head and its nesting birds

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Noup Head

Variations

The obvious variation is to extend the trip and circumnavigate Westray, potentially including Papa Westray. If this is done, be mindful of the fast tidal streams and associated rough water at Bow Head, Mull Head and the Point of Huro, along with Papa and Weatherness Sounds. To make the trip a bit longer, including Bull Head, starting / finishing at a slipway on the east end of the beach at Pierowall (HY 443 492 / 59.3255, -2.9805) is recommended (this takes in the dramatic archway at Scaun). To shorten the trip an alternative start / finish is at the Ness of Tuquoy (HY 459 437 / 59.2763, -2.9510).

Appendix A – HM Coastguard & Emergency Services

In UK waters, HM Coastguard coordinates rescues and emergency services. They also broadcast weather forecasts and inform water users about potential hazards in their area. They monitor VHF channel 16 and you should use this channel to make initial contact; you will then be directed to a working channel. Note the times here are for UT. During the UK summer months remember to add 1 hour.

All of the trips in this guide fall within the area covered by the following HM Coastguard stations:

HMCG	Area	Telephone	Weather announced on CH16 (VHF):
Belfast	Mull of Galloway to Ardfern, including the islands (North to and including Jura and Colonsay)	02891 463933	0210, 0510, 0810, 1110, 1410, 1710, 2010, 2310
Stornoway	Mull to Cape Wrath, including Western Isles and St Kilda	01851 702013	0110, 0410, 0710, 1010, 1310, 1610, 1910, 2210
Shetland	Orkney, Fair Isles and Shetland, and mainland from Cape Wrath to Brora, including Pentland Firth	01595 692976	0110, 0410, 0710, 1010, 1310, 1610, 1910, 2210
Aberdeen	Brora to English Border	01224 592334	0130, 0430, 0730, 1030, 1330, 1630, 1930, 2230

Appendix B – Weather Information

The weather is the most discussed topic within the communities that make up the UK coastline, and this is especially true of Scotland, which is affected by a wide range of weather conditions. The Met Office (www.metoffice.gov.uk) was founded in 1854 to provide information about the weather to marine communities. It was not until 1922 that forecasts were first broadcast by BBC radio, a tradition that still remains today.

The Met Office website provides a variety of detailed predictions and resources for the weather to support sea kayakers in their planning. In addition to this, it is always worth looking at additional forms of weather or swell forecast, here are some to consider.

RADIO

BBC RADIO 4 (92.5 – 94.6 FM AND 198 LW)

0048 – Shipping and inshore waters forecast, coastal station reports

0520 – Shipping and inshore waters forecast, coastal station reports

1754 – Shipping forecast



BBC RADIO SCOTLAND (92 – 95 FM AND 810 MW)

1904 (Mon–Fri) – Outdoor conditions, including inshore waters forecast

0704 (Sat and Sun) – Outdoor conditions, including inshore waters forecast

2204 / 2004 (Sat/Sun) – Outdoor conditions, including inshore waters forecast

INTERNET

Met Office – www.metoffice.gov.uk

BBC Weather – www.bbc.co.uk/weather

XC Weather – www.xcweather.co.uk

Windfinder (includes swell forecast) – www.windfinder.com

Magic Seaweed (surf forecasts) – www.magicseaweed.com

Appendix C – Mean Tidal Ranges

Tidal Port	Mean Spring Range (metres)	Mean Neap Range (metres)
Dover	6.0	3.2
Liverpool	8.3	4.3
Greenock	3.1	1.8
Oban	3.3	1.1
Ullapool	4.5	1.8
Lerwick	1.6	0.8
Aberdeen	3.7	1.8
Leith	4.8	2.4

Appendix E – Trip Planning Route Card – User’s Guide

The trip planning route card is designed to be used in conjunction with the information supplied in each route chapter in the book. In addition to this you will also require a set of relevant tide timetables. If the blank route card is photocopied, all the information for your route to be paddled can be worked out on it. This way it will help you plan your paddle as effectively as possible, and then allow you to have all the information you need on a handy piece of paper. This can be displayed in your map case on your kayak for easy reference. To help you use the card please refer to the following example and guidelines:

Trip Name & Number <i>Rubha Hunish, Number 19</i>	
Page Number <i>107</i>	VHF Weather <i>0710, 1010, 1310, 1610</i>
Date <i>10th August 2019</i>	Weather Forecast
Coastguard Contact <i>Stornoway, 01851 702013</i>	<i>Fair, visibility good, wind W F2-3</i>

- Fill in the name, number and page of your chosen trip for easy future reference.
- When choosing the date of the trip, check in the chapter’s ‘Tide & Weather’ section as to whether it will need specific tides that will dictate the date.
- Obtain a weather forecast using information supplied in Appendix B.
- Coastguard contacts can be found in the introductory info for each trip and in Appendix A.

TIDAL INFORMATION

Tidal Port <i>Ullapool</i>		Mean Sp Range <i>4.5m</i>		Local Port <i>Duntulm</i>			
		Mean Np Range <i>1.8m</i>					
Tidal Port Tide Times (UT)	Height in Metres	Tidal Range in Metres	HW/LW	+1 Hr for BST?	Local Port HW/LW Time Difference	Local Port HW/LW	Sp or Np Tides
<i>0305</i>	<i>4.1</i>	<i>2.1</i>	<i>HW</i>	<i>0405</i>	<i>-0030</i>	<i>0335</i>	<i>Np</i>
<i>0908</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>2.2</i>	<i>LW</i>	<i>1008</i>	<i>-0030</i>	<i>0938</i>	<i>Np</i>
<i>1537</i>	<i>4.2</i>	<i>2.2</i>	<i>HW</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>-0030</i>	<i>1607</i>	<i>Np</i>
<i>2145</i>	<i>2.0</i>		<i>LW</i>	<i>2245</i>	<i>-0030</i>	<i>2215</i>	<i>Np</i>

- Identify Tidal Port from the chapter introductory information.
- Identify Mean Spring and Neap Ranges from tide timetable or see Appendix C. These will help identify Spring or Neap Tides and Estimated Maximum Speed.
- Local Port is also found in the chapter introductory information.
- Obtain the Tidal Port Times and Height in Metres from your tide timetables. Usually four times and heights, but occasionally three.
- To work out the Tidal Range in Metres subtract the LW heights from the HW heights.



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