

Readers' cruising destinations, near and far

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## Tempted by Tobermory

Charmian Entwistle mulls over the allure of Tobermory, a cruising highlight off the west coast of the Scottish mainland

**W**hen cruising on the north-west coast of Scotland, one of the attractions is getting away from it all and enjoying the freedom of cruising among the Inner and Outer Hebrides.

After a few days or weeks of the remoteness which can still be enjoyed among these islands, most people have to start heading home, needing something repaired or simply wanting to stock up on provisions, and they head towards the facilities offered in Tobermory Harbour. Tobermory's location on Mull, at the northern end of the Sound of Mull, is superb for stopping off whether you are on passage from north, south, east or west of the Hebrides.

Tobermory, which was built as a

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Charmian Entwistle and her husband Mark run the Isle of Skye Yachts charter company. Charmian is also a director of Sail Scotland.

fishing port in the late 18th century, is now the main town on Mull and is also an excellent spot if you want to see more of the Isle of Mull by car, bus or bicycle. It is also a good harbour of refuge should the weather be unkind to you on your Hebridean cruise.

Tobermory is an easy harbour to access through the north channel, although you shouldn't pass too close to Calve Island – and keep a good look-out for other boats entering or leaving, usually fiddling with their sails as they go! You should also be aware of the small CalMac ferry which runs regularly to and from Kilchoan. Small boats can also enter from the south through the Doirlinn Narrows which dry out at low water, so the passage needs careful planning. Full navigation instructions can be found in the Clyde Cruising Club pilot book *Kintyre to Ardnamurchan*.

Tobermory is very popular and features in most of the extensive range of books written about the west coast of Scotland, but the harbour has undergone serious refurbishment and improvement over the last 10 years so make sure you have an up-to-date pilot

book and chart. Once you round Calve Island you will be greeted by a large number of boats whatever time of the season (April to October) you are visiting, although as you get closer to the pontoon and moorings you will usually find a space. July and August are very busy, particularly during West Highland week, which runs from 1-7 August this year. Unless you are actively involved in

this popular event, you might be as well to avoid trying to get there during that period.

Tobermory Harbour offers around 50 pontoon berths and 26 visitors' moorings. There is also space to anchor on the south side of the bay. All the information you will require can be found on the THA website ([www.tobermoryharbour.co.uk](http://www.tobermoryharbour.co.uk)) and during the season, the harbour master or assistant will probably come out in their workboat and direct you to whichever option you require. There is also comprehensive information on the website about the facilities and services available to yachtspeople.



Taigh Solais, the white harbour building, has toilets, showers and a museum



Tobermory Harbour has around 50 pontoon berths and 26 visitors' moorings

### Tobermory highlights

The harbour building, Taigh Solais, includes toilets, showers and a museum, and is well worth a visit. Also, no visit to Tobermory is complete without a walk ashore: the pontoons and moorings are conveniently situated to access the Co-op, Tobermory Distillery and a selection of gift shops. If you're ashore for an evening meal there is a good selection of restaurants: on our visit last year we chose the Galleon Grill, enjoying the fresh crab and scallops on the menu. The Mishnish is always a popular haunt for sailors.

If you tire of Tobermory or can't find a berth or mooring because everybody else got there first, there are other nearby options to choose from. Across the water



Stewart Dauber

The area around Mull is home to the UK's largest eagle population

there are moorings at Kilchoan, or there's the whole of Loch Sunart in which to play. The most popular anchorage there is Loch Drumbuie (na Droma Buidhe), but Loch Sunart is 17 miles long so there are other anchorages to choose from, as well as pontoon facilities now available at Salen.

Heading round Ardnamurchan Point opens up a fabulous vista of islands to choose from. If you are heading the other way down the Sound of Mull, there are pontoons and shoreside facilities in Loch Aline.

Mull is always a lovely island to visit: the list of facilities available at Tobermory is too long to detail here. Do keep in mind that there is an abundance of wildlife in this remote spot and the surrounding area, including the UK's largest eagle population.

The houses on the shore, painted in their distinctive colours (long before the *Balamory* programme!), lend Tobermory a cheerful image quite unlike anywhere else. You may visit en route to somewhere else, but its unique charm will draw you back again and again.



The colourful houses on the Tobermory shore are cheerful and distinctive

## Free anchorage! Farne Islands



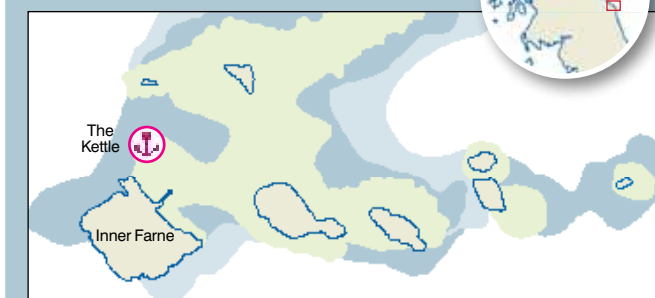
David Steel

Well worth visiting in good weather: the Farne Islands

**T**he Farne Islands, or Farnes, are a group of 15 to 20 islands (depending on the tide) off the Northumberland coast. This nature reserve, owned and operated by the National Trust, has large seabird and grey seal colonies.

Landing on Inner Farne, Staple Island and the Longstone is only permitted for licensed visitor boats from Seahouses. None of the islands can be landed upon by private craft. One anchorage, The Kettle, can be found to the

north-east of Inner Farne Island. Be prepared for some tricky pilotage. In good conditions it is a better north-south route than keeping outside the whole group: but the stream runs at 3 knots at Springs, and with strong wind against tide there is rough water. Inner Farne is the most accessible island of the Farnes. This mini cruising ground is well worth visiting in good weather.



Do you have a favourite free anchorage? Send it in! Email [pbo@timeinc.com](mailto:pbo@timeinc.com)

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