

Introduction

Contact

Campbeltown Marina Callum Lawson 07798 524821 VHF 13 (same as the harbour but only when manned)

Campbeltown Harbour nestles at the head of the loch of the same name, on the east side of South Kintyre.

Campbeltown Loch itself is a superb natural harbour with good protection from just about every direction, and its harbour is in use by the fishing fleet. There has been a significant increase in commercial traffic, and the Loch/Harbour is regularly used by the Royal Navy, large cargo Ro/Ro ferries, coasters, etc.

The new facility at Campbeltown is now completed. The area to the North West of the old quay was dredged out and new pontoons went in in the spring of 2015. They can be seen in our picture gallery and are shown on this years UKHO chart. The new facility has everything you would expect of a wee marina and the Amenities block is complete with showers and toilets

Check out the new photos

It's proximity to the coasts of Northern Ireland make it a natural stopping off point for Irish crews intending to sail the sheltered waters of the Firth of Clyde. Likewise if heading for the NE corner of Ireland (say Ballycastle), Campbeltown is a sensible place to set out from.

If you are contemplating the Western Islands for your summer cruise it is at least 42 miles from here to Gigha via the fair weather (inshore) route round the Mull and over 50 if you go outside Sanda Island; unless you are in a well founded boat with an experienced crew it is not a trip to be undertaken lightly - much better to use the Crinan canal to get out of the Clyde to the Islands.

If you insist on going around the Mull you might find this useful

<http://www.campbeltownsc.co.uk/rounding-the-mull-of-kintyre-or-heading-for-n-ireland/>

The town is a good size, and there are plenty of marine specialists (more geared to fishing vessels) who may be able to sort out problems.

All in all a useful stopping off point.

The Kintyre Express which ran for years between Campbeltown and Ballycastle shut down in the early "noughties" but was been reopened again in 2016 and operates a scheduled service between Campbeltown, Ballycastle and Port Ellen from Easter until September. Details can be found on their website. They are not running as we write in June 2021 but hope to re-start in July 2021 if Covid restrictions are lifted enough.

Ed Note I checked at the end of July 2022 and they were still not running

<http://www.kintyreexpress.com>

Approach

Approaches from the north or south will involve keeping a reasonable offing....

.... as the coastline inshore is littered with shallows and rocks. Keeping outside the 20 m contour clears this.

Approaching from the North, Otterard Rock (3.8m) rises up from surrounding depths of over 20 m, and is marked by an easterly Cardinal buoy (Q(3)10s).

Strangers should leave this buoy to landwards of them.

North and South going tidal streams across the entrance to Campbeltown Loch can reach speeds of 2 and 3 Knts respectively.

Entrance to the loch is made between Island Davaar and Macringan's Point, with BOTH having off lying rocks very close in (see charts). The reef under Davaar light is particularly to be avoided. Give both of these a reasonable offing, say 1 cable.

Island Davaar is connected to the mainland by a drying spit of sand and gravel called The Doirlinn (Dhorlin), and thus needs to be left on your port side as you enter. The northern extremity of this island is marked by a lighthouse (Fl(2) 10s 37m 23M), as seen in the photo gallery.

For a night entry there are leading lights both F.Y. the rear one being 28 m high, the forward one being 7 m high. These are displayed from a point to the South East of Campbeltown, and are best seen by reference to the chart. These line up on 240 degrees T.

The best daytime approach for strangers also involves coming in on a line of around 240 degrees, and be sure to identify the green conical Millbeg Bank buoy (Fl.G.2s) and the partner red can "A" buoy (Fl.R.3s).

This buoyage can be seen clearly in the photo gallery. The (drying) Doirlinn extends outwards close to the red can buoy, and the shallows of Millbeg Bank extend out to close to the green conical buoy. It is therefore necessary not to cut corners and pass between the two buoys. Once beyond Trench Point the Loch opens right out with no particular hazards for small craft.

Methe Bank (no problem for yachts) is marked by an isolated danger buoy BRB (Fl(2) 6s), and there are various dolphins around the NATO pier on the South side of the loch.

The head of the loch dries out to sand and mud, and there are various rocky and drying patches around the shores, best seen on the chart.

The yacht marina is tucked away behind the fishing harbour.

Berthing

Those determined to anchor will find several spots within the loch.

The best anchorage is east of the lower leading light, to the S of the loch, keeping a suitable distance off to avoid shallows. Avoid anchoring anywhere near the New Quay and its Ro/Ro berths. This is likely to be extended, and sees a good amount of shipping traffic.

Anchorage is possible NNE of harbour but is exposed to SE winds, holding is not good and great care must be taken not to foul local Sailing Club moorings with large yellow buoys (not for use by visitors).

You will certainly need to use an anchor light at night within this loch, as fishing boats and commercial traffic move at all times.

Make sure you don't anchor anywhere that may obstruct the lifeboat leaving its berth, which is on the North West side of the Old Quay.

The main harbour is given over to fishing and commercial activity, HM 01586 552552.

Campbeltown Marina

The yacht pontoons run parallel to, and behind the Old Quay, there is plenty of water for all pleasure craft. They have dredged the area around the new pontoons and there is plenty of water but still do not wander too far outside

them on the west side.

They have a marina website at <https://www.campbeltownmarina.co.uk/>

As has been said they have an amenities block with full facilities and they are charging (2021) £20 per boat per night for boats between 8 and 10 metres. They have a sliding charge for lengths above this.

Facilities

The pontoons have water available and electricity (included with the mooring fee unless staying for a week), together with secure entry. The vast majority of visiting yachts will use this facility.

Diesel, petrol, and Calor gas are obtainable. Callum the HM keeps a couple of Camping Gaz 907s these days. There is no diesel on the pontoon but it can be obtained from a tank adjacent to the pontoon on the Old Quay or from a supplier just across the road from the pontoon exit. The petrol station is not too far from the harbour.

Being a busy fishing harbour there are plenty of boat facilities to be found, including a chandlers, marine electronics and electrics, and even a surveyor.

There is a slipway in the south corner of the harbour, suitable for hauling fishing vessels, and smaller pleasure craft may be able to dry out against the south western wall of the harbour for minor underwater maintenance. The slipway drying out facilities now have wooden keel bearers, leaning posts, and water and electricity connections.

The recently opened 'Aqualibrium' , houses a swimming pool, gym, and a library. Showers can be had here, and a cafe is onsite.

Campbeltown Sailing Club at the NW corner of the Loch welcomes visitors..check their website below:

<http://www.campbeltownsc.co.uk>

Campbeltown has a good supply of shops together with a post office and banks. The following local link will give you a feel for the wee toon !

<http://www.campbeltown.org.uk/>

Transport is covered by 3 daily flights between Campbeltown Airport and Glasgow, plus 3 Buses a day to Glasgow. There is also a High Speed Ferry Service between here and Ballycastle for details see the link in the history section (Not yet running after Covid in July 2022)

The Marina does Bike hire.

What To Do

A wide range of hotels in the town cater for all tastes, the link below may give you some ideas:

<http://www.beerinevening.com/pubs/results.shtml/el/Campbeltown%3BArgyll/>

Dedicated restaurants include a Chinese an Indian and a bistro, the link below has them all:

History

Campbeltown is a town and former royal burgh in Argyll and Bute, Scotland, located by Campbeltown Loch on the Kintyre peninsula. Originally known as Kinlochkilkerran (Eng: The head of the loch by the kirk of St. Kieran) - this form is still used in Gaelic. It was renamed in the 17th century and became an important centre for shipbuilding and Scotch whisky, and a busy fishing port.

Whisky

Campbeltown is one of the handful of areas in Scotland categorised as a distinct whisky producing region, and is home to the Campbeltown Single Malts, at one point having 34 distilleries and proclaiming itself "the whisky capital of the world". However, a focus on quantity rather than quality, and the combination of prohibition and the Great Depression in the United States, led to most distilleries going out of business. Today only three active distilleries remain in Campbeltown, which have, or in one case is expected to have, an excellent reputation for their quality.

The well known folk song titled Campbeltown Loch, I wish you were whisky is based on the town's history in this industry.

Culture

Apart from the distilleries, Campbeltown boasts a museum and a heritage centre. The museum has a varied collection of items from Campbeltown's past, and prehistoric items excavated from sites around Kintyre, such as axeheads, jewellery and combs. The 19th century building also houses the library and has plaques or exhibits related to famous Kintyre people: for example, William McTaggart and William Mackinnon. Near the museum is the Wee Picture House, a small but distinctive Art Deco cinema dating from 1913 and believed to be the oldest surviving purpose-built cinema in Scotland. These buildings are on the waterfront, as is a 14th century Celtic cross that also served as a mercat cross. St. Kieran lived in this area before the town existed. A cave named after him can be visited at low tide, as can the cave on nearby Davaar Island where pilgrims and tourists go to see a 19th century crucifixion painting.

Campbeltown also hosts the annual Mull Of Kintyre Music Festival, which has seen acts ranging from up-and-coming local bands to well-established groups such as Deacon Blue, The Stranglers and Idlewild perform.

On Friday 16 June 2006, First Minister Jack McConnell flew to Campbeltown to officially open Campbeltown's new 'Aqualibrium' Centre. Aqualibrium replaced the old Campbeltown swimming pool, which closed 7 years ago due to safety reasons, and houses Campbeltown's library (with the old building being the museum only), swimming pool, gym, conference centre and 'Mussel Ebb' Cafe.

The Kintyre Camanachd are a local shinty team that belongs to the Camanachd Association.

Argyll FM is a local radio station based in Campbeltown on 106.5, 107.1 & 107.7

Transport

Campbeltown Airport lies near the burgh, and a scheduled service runs between here and Glasgow Airport on weekdays, but not weekends.

Due to the town's isolated location near the far end of a long peninsula, in many ways it resembles sizeable communities on the islands of the Inner Hebrides in that transport by sea is particularly important, although nonetheless it is linked to the rest of Scotland by the A83 (to Tarbet) and A82 (from Tarbet to Glasgow).

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Campbeltown was linked to Machrihanish by a canal (1794-mid 1880s) that was superseded by the Campbeltown and Machrihanish Light Railway that closed in 1932.

Language

Campbeltown is traditionally one of the few communities in the Scottish Highlands where the Scots language has predominated, rather than the previously widespread Scottish Gaelic. This was due to the plantation of lowland merchants to the burgh in the Middle Ages. Today the English language, in the form of the Scottish English dialect, is the predominant language in the town.