

## Introduction

Dunstaffnage Marina 01631 566555, VHF M

At first glance it would appear that this marina is a bit off the beaten track.....from Crinan to Fort William but, in fact, to stop off here if making for the Canal would only add a couple of miles on to one's passage. Your only problem is one of timing; Corpach Sea Lock closes at 1800, going against the ebb through the Corran Point narrows is not an option and I would hesitate before going through the northern end of the Lynne of Lorne in the dark; but that's part of the fun of cruising these waters!

The marina is an isolated, self contained unit in a bay two and a half miles north of Oban; the entrance is uncomplicated and, although they generally have visitors berths, at the height of the summer season it would be wise to ring ahead and book. Having mentioned its isolated position it would be unfair not to mention the fact that they have an impressive array of on-sight yachting related services encompassing all areas of yacht servicing/maintenance for all types of hull construction. For complete coverage of what is available visit their website and download their year book at:

[www.dunstaffnagemarina.co.uk/](http://www.dunstaffnagemarina.co.uk/)

We have been getting a disturbing number of adverse reports about this marina; there appears to be a general "shrug of the shoulders" attitude to failures in service and a lack of maintenance of equipment

For general notes on cruising in these waters we have compiled an article which you can find on this site at:

<http://www.visitmyharbour.com/cruising-west-coast-scotland/>

## Approach

Dunstaffnage Bay & Marina. There is a new wave break pontoon and buoyage here

..... which can be seen in our Navigation Images up on the right hand menu. This has necessitated a change in the buoyage and the approach to the marina pontoons. It is doubtful if the UKHO charts will show this change until later in 2017 or possibly even 2018. Use the one supplied in our Images or the one on the Marina website (where we got ours!!)

The approach to the marina is through a channel between Eilean Mòr (Big island) and Rubha Garbh. Coming from the South there are no problems, just stay at least a cable off shore and turn in when the entrance begins to open. From the North be very aware of the reef extending out from the north arm of Ardmucknish bay and use the back bearing supplied on the Admiralty chart (mind you, a good chart plotter helps a bit!) Once you are through the gap turn to Starboard and leave the two new PHM buoys to port and turn in to the marina between the PHM and the new SHM. They ask that you don't cut through the trots. You can enter round the NE side of Eilean Mòr and Eilean Beag but when you look at the depths, overfalls and swirls it really is not too good an idea.

Loch Etive

We have not been into Loch Etive and cannot give advice on that passage. The CCC Pilot devotes two pages to the Loch and I wouldn't consider entering without a copy of that in the cockpit; suffice it to say that you can only really consider passing under the Connel Bridge at HW or LW slack and even then expect to have to correct for the heavy swirls and eddies. Easytide provides tidal information for Dunstaffnage, Connel and Bonawe and we are told that the Bonawe times are the best to use for passage under the bridge. There is a local website giving a pile of info about the falls and you can find it via this link

<https://www.falloflora.info/>

Once in, the Loch extends fifteen miles inland into the heartland of Argyllshire providing stunning scenery and many coves for anchoring. Be aware that there are power cables with a minimum clearance of 12m over the Loch at the

narrows at Bonawe. The trout fishing is said to be good here with the added advantage that you don't need a fishing permit as it is a sea loch. It's the sort of place that, if you have a boat moored in the area, it would provide a lovely place to explore over a long weekend. It has a fearsome reputation for squally, fluky winds

## Berthing

Apart from the marina in Dunstaffnage Bay it is possible.....

..... to anchor in the East of bay clear of the moorings but you will be very close to the traffic entering and leaving the marina. Other than that there is room to anchor in Camas Bruaich Ruaidhe but the next bay along from there is full of permanent moorings. Ardmucknish Bay can provide a good anchorage except in onshore conditions, as does Nathais Bay.

The marina asks that they be contacted in advance if you intend stopping there for a visit so that they can allocate a pontoon for you. It is also imperative that they be contacted if arrival will be "out of hours" (Reception closes at 1930 in the summer) because you will need to make arrangements to obtain a key fob for access to the amenities building (probably at the Wide Mouthed Frog). We have included a berthing plan in our gallery

Charges here (2022) are £3.00 per metre, per night.

## Facilities

Whilst it provides all the services that you would expect of a marina (and more) there is little else here. There are no services inland from the marina although there is a village boasting a village shop twenty minutes walk away, for anything else you will have to travel to Oban for that (last bus back is at half ten)

The marina has a chandlery which supplies most things including both Calor and Camping Gaz (907s). Water and shore power is available on all berths (power is £3.50 extra per night), they have a diesel refuelling berth but no petrol (the nearest petrol station is a good 3/4 of a mile away, which, with cans, is a good long hike). There is the usual amenities block providing showers, toilets and a laundrette.

## What To Do

There is a restaurant franchise at the marina called the "Wide Mouthed Frog" (don't ask) which has a bar, bistro and hotel bedrooms. The village does not appear to have an hostelry. For anything else you would either have to bus or taxi to Oban. The bus is fairly regular, takes about fifteen minutes and the last one back is just after half ten.

Basically you get the same here as you would at Oban Marina on Kerrera Island except that the ferry there is free and the mooring fee at Oban is marginally cheaper. But you get what you pay for - Dunstaffnage is just that little bit more "swept up" than Oban marina in most areas.

## History

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