

Contact Us

Scottish Canals

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Caledonian Canal

Seaport Marina, Muirtown Wharf
Inverness IV3 5LE
T: 01463 725500 F: 01463 710942

Clachnaharry Sea Lock

Inverness IV3 8RE
T: 01463 725512 or 07920 237331

Corpach Sea Lock

Corpach, PH33 7JH
T: 01397 772249 or 07917 348025

Scottish Canals

Canal House, Applecross Street
Glasgow G4 9SP
T: 0141 332 6936 F: 0141 331 1688

Crinan Canal

Pier Square, Ardrishaig
Argyll PA30 8DZ
T: 01546 603210 F: 01546 603941

Email: enquiries@scottishcanals.co.uk



Find out more at
scottishcanals.co.uk

Skipper's Guide Caledonian Canal



Find out more at
scottishcanals.co.uk

WELCOME TO THE CANAL

Scottish Canals hope that you enjoy cruising the Caledonian Canal and trust that the information contained in this Skipper's Guide will prove helpful. If you have any queries or suggestions for improving our service please do not hesitate to contact the canal office, or visit www.scottishcanals.co.uk

GENERAL INFORMATION

MAXIMUM DIMENSIONS

45.72 m (150ft) long; 10.67m (35ft) beam; 4.1m (13.5ft) draft. Vessels with draft over 3.8m (12.5ft) are advised to contact the Canal Office before arrival. Maximum mast height in the canal is 35m (115ft) above the waterline, but clearance under the Kessock Bridge on the Inverness Firth is lower at 27.4m (89.8ft). The Caledonian Canal is approximately 96.5km in length (60 statute miles or 50 nautical miles) of which 35.4km (22 miles) is man made, the remainder being formed by natural fresh water lochs. There are 29 locks and 10 swing bridges along the waterway, all of which are operated for you by Scottish Canals' staff.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The canal operates on a seasonal basis as follows:

Winter: Monday to Friday 0900 – 1600

Spring & Autumn: 7 days 0830 – 1730

Summer: 7 days 0800 – 1800

Locks and bridges may be closed during lunch break.

Lock and Bridge operations take some time to complete, so please arrive at each location in time for the operation to be

completed before closing time.

Call the canal office on 01463 725500 or visit www.scottishcanals.co.uk for details of winter closures for maintenance work.

MAIN ROAD BRIDGES

The main road bridges at Muirtown, Tomnahurich, Fort Augustus and Banavie are used daily by people driving to and from work. Scottish Canals assists traffic flow by allowing road vehicles priority at peak times.

RAIL BRIDGES

To assist the flow of rail traffic, the bridges at Clachnaharry and Banavie are periodically closed to canal traffic. See local lock keepers for timings.

TIDAL OPERATION

Special note should be taken of the tidal restrictions at sea locks. Within normal operating hours, Corpach Sea Lock is available $\geq 1\text{m}$, and Clachnaharry Sea Lock is available $\geq 1.4\text{m}$. This restriction is caused by the need for sufficient depth to float the sea lock gates. At low water and spring tides the sea locks are **CLOSED 2 HOURS** (or a little longer) either side of low tide.

Contact the Sea Lock Keeper on VHF CH 74 for advice.

PASSAGE TIMES

The absolute minimum time required to make passage is 2½ days, but why rush? Enjoy the delights of the Caledonian Canal.

CORPACH BASIN

Corpach Basin is at times used by large freight vessels which require room to manoeuvre, therefore it is rarely available for berthing leisure craft. Please follow the lock keeper's advice and berth where directed.

NAVIGATION

Information is contained in the following publications; Pilots: The Admiralty North Coast of Scotland Pilot (NP52) and the Admiralty West Coast of Scotland Pilot (NP66), both of which can be obtained from Admiralty chart agents.

Also in Yachtsman's Pilots published by Imray, Laurie, Norie & Wilson, and by Clyde Cruising Club.

Charts: Eastern Approaches: – Moray Firth 115, Inverness Firth 1078, Caledonian Canal 1791. Western Approaches – Loch Linnhe (North) 2380, Fort William and Corpach 2372.

PILOTAGE

Pilotage is not normally required, however, in the case of very large craft this service may be arranged. Please contact the canal office for advice and allow a minimum of 48 hours for pilotage arrangements to be made.

NARROWBOATS

Skippers of narrowboats are requested to contact the canal office for specific safety advice in advance of arrival.

CUSTOMS CLEARANCE

A postal service can be arranged if you inform the Sea Lock Keeper on entry.

IMMIGRATION CLEARANCE

A telephone / email service can be arranged if you inform the sea lock keeper on entry. All crew making first UK landfall must inform UK immigration.

SLIPWAYS

Scottish Canals slipway for small, non-motorised craft only:

Seaport Marina 01463 725500

Other slipways:

Caley Marina 01463 236328

Great Glen Water Park 01809 501381

Corpach Boat Builders 01397 772861

Dores / Inchnacardoch Bay - check slipways for access details.

Please check slipways for suitability before use.

JETTIES & TRANSIT MOORINGS

There are transit jetties adjacent to most locks and bridges. Please check with lock keeper as to the best place to berth, particularly if you plan a long stay. During the summer season, it is helpful if skippers of large vessels (LOA $\geq 15\text{m}$) call the canal office prior to arrival, to allow planning of overnight berthing on passage.

FUEL

Diesel fuel is available at Seaport Marina, Caley Marina, and Corpach.

Garages provide petrol in small quantities - enquire as to opening hours.

Camping Gaz is available at many garages and local stores – please ask lock keepers for advice.

CANOEISTS

More than 4000 canoeists and kayakers paddle the canal each year. Please keep their launch pontoons clear.

SAFETY FIRST and the CANAL ENVIRONMENT

BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

All users of the canal must hold insurance for a minimum of £1 million third party liability.

All those berthing within the canal system for periods in excess of 30 days must obtain a Boat Safety Certificate or equivalent. Owners using the canal for less than 30 days will be subject to spot checks to ensure their craft meet the standards of safety required under the scheme. Checks will cover the gas system, electrical system, and will be visual or in the case of the gas test carried out by use of a leak detector.

SPEED LIMITS

The maximum speed permitted on the canal sections is 5 knots, but please plan your passage with leisure in mind since excess speed not only damages canal banks, but is hazardous to other users. Please slow down as you approach locks and bridges, and also whilst passing moored craft. Vessels found to be speeding may be held back by canal staff.

VHF COMMUNICATION

Sea locks and most locks and bridges are equipped with VHF and operate on Channel 74. Please keep your VHF Radio switched on!

RADAR

Masters are requested to ensure radar scanners are switched off whilst craft are within or approaching locks.

WIFI

Wifi hotspots are available at various locations along the canal (see chart overleaf). Vouchers are available to purchase online at www.highlandwifi.com

LARGE VESSELS WARNING

Large commercial vessels operate on the Caledonian Canal. These craft normally have right of way and it may be necessary to stop smaller craft for short periods.

For your safety please adhere to Scottish Canals' staff instructions at all times.

SWIMMING

Please do not swim in the waterway, you could become entangled in weeds or rubbish, be hit by a passing craft or be drawn into a sluice when locks are in use. The results could be fatal.

DRINKING WATER

Available at Seaport Marina, Dochgarroch, Fort Augustus, Laggan, Banavie and Corpach. Please bring your own hose pipe for connection to the taps.

TOILETS AND SHOWERS

Available at locations throughout the canal (see map). Keys are issued by sea lock keepers on arrival and collected on exiting the canal. There is a fee for keys not returned on exit.

PUMP OUT FACILITIES

Available at Banavie, Fort Augustus and Muirtown locks. If you require a pump-out please ask lock staff for advice on operation and service cost. Please note that black water must not be discharged into the canal.

LITTER

Please respect the sensitive environment along the canal by using the bins provided at locks or retain litter until you can recycle it. All locations have compulsory recycling facilities.

LAUNDRY FACILITIES

Available at Seaport Marina and Fort Augustus, Gairlochy and Banavie – please see local notices for advice on costs and operation. Be sure to bring your own washing powder or liquid detergent!

PORT WASTE MANAGEMENT

Scottish Canals has produced Port Waste Management Plans which are agreed with the Marine Coastguard Agency (MCA) and must be complied with at all times. Please note that no discharge of oil or bilge water is permitted either in the canal or its adjacent waters and any

contravention of this ruling will result in notification to the MCA and may render you liable to prosecution by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA).

Emergency discharge facilities can be arranged using specialist contractors at additional cost - please contact the canal office for advice.

There are disposal facilities for small amounts of waste oil at Seaport Marina and Corpach.

CALEDONIAN CANAL INFORMATION

Length of natural lochs	38 miles (61.16Km)
Length of canal cuttings	22 miles (35.4 Km)
Total length of canal	60 miles (96.56 Km)
Summit level at Loch Oich:	106 feet (32.31m)
Number of Locks	29
Number of Bridges	10

SOME PRIMARY SAFETY POINTS

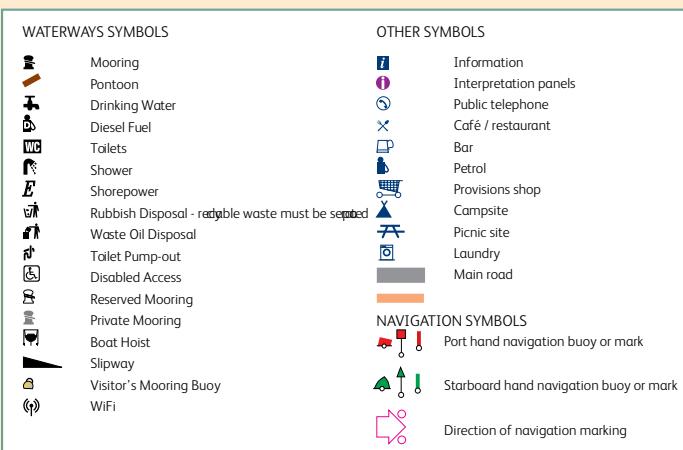
DO

1. Do have an adequate number of competent crew aboard. Single-handed passage is possible but may be subject to delays depending on staff availability to assist.
2. Do take time to plan ahead, lay out warps, fenders, and clear decks before you set off.
3. Do check fuel and oil levels before starting the engine and also that all controls are working properly.
4. Do make sure that children and non-swimmers wear life jackets.
5. Do relax and take your time.

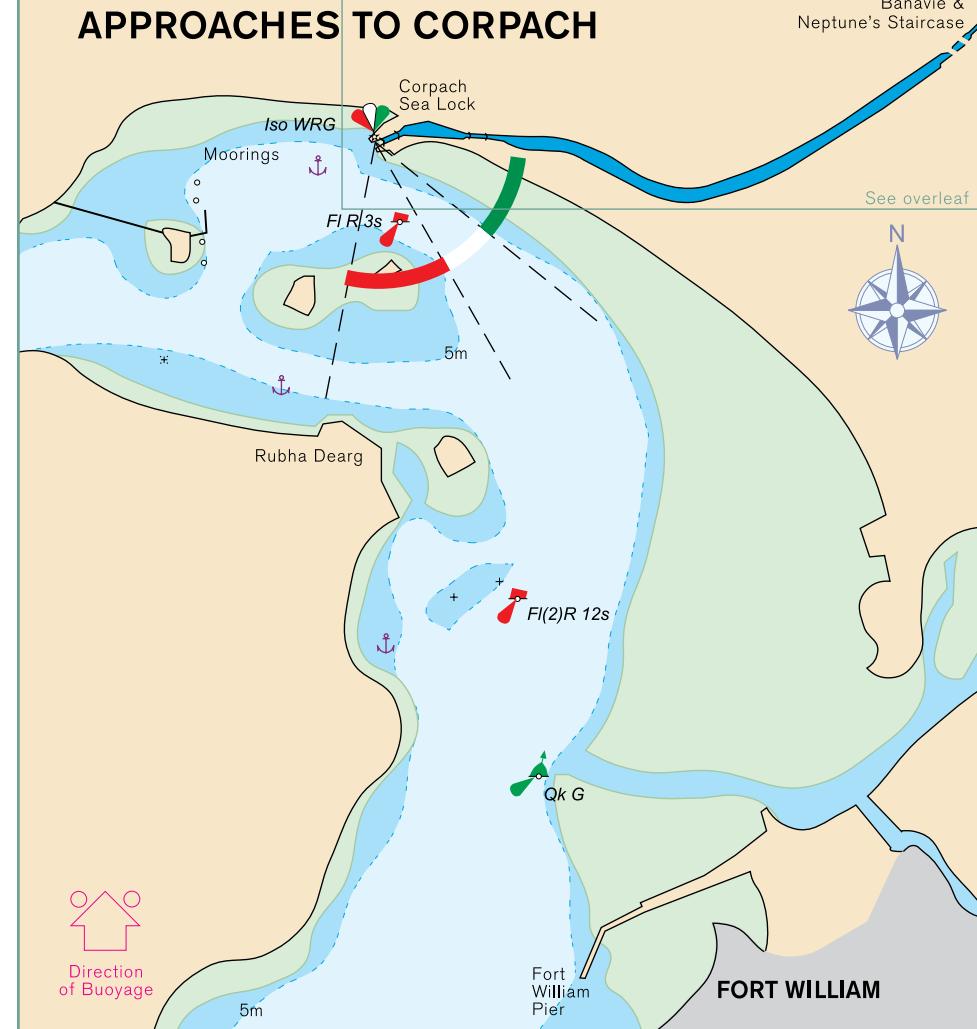
DON'T

6. Do not speed in the waterway, this damages banks and affects other waterway users.
7. Do not cruise after darkness.
8. Do not cruise near weirs, or attempt to shoot them in canoes.
9. Do not allow pets to wander – keep them on leads and do not allow them to foul the canal banks.

Emergency Out of Hours Contact:
0800 072 9900



APPROACHES TO CORPACH



APPROACHES TO CORPACH

- Admiralty Chart 2380 & 2372. Imray Chart C65.
- HW Corpach is at Oban ±0000 (sp); -0020 (np). Tidal range 3.5m (sp); 1.3m (np).
- There is a holding pontoon outside the sealock.
- Yachts generally cannot lie in the sea lock basin, and should continue through the next set of locks or to Banavie.
- Marine diesel fuel is available at Corpach Basin.

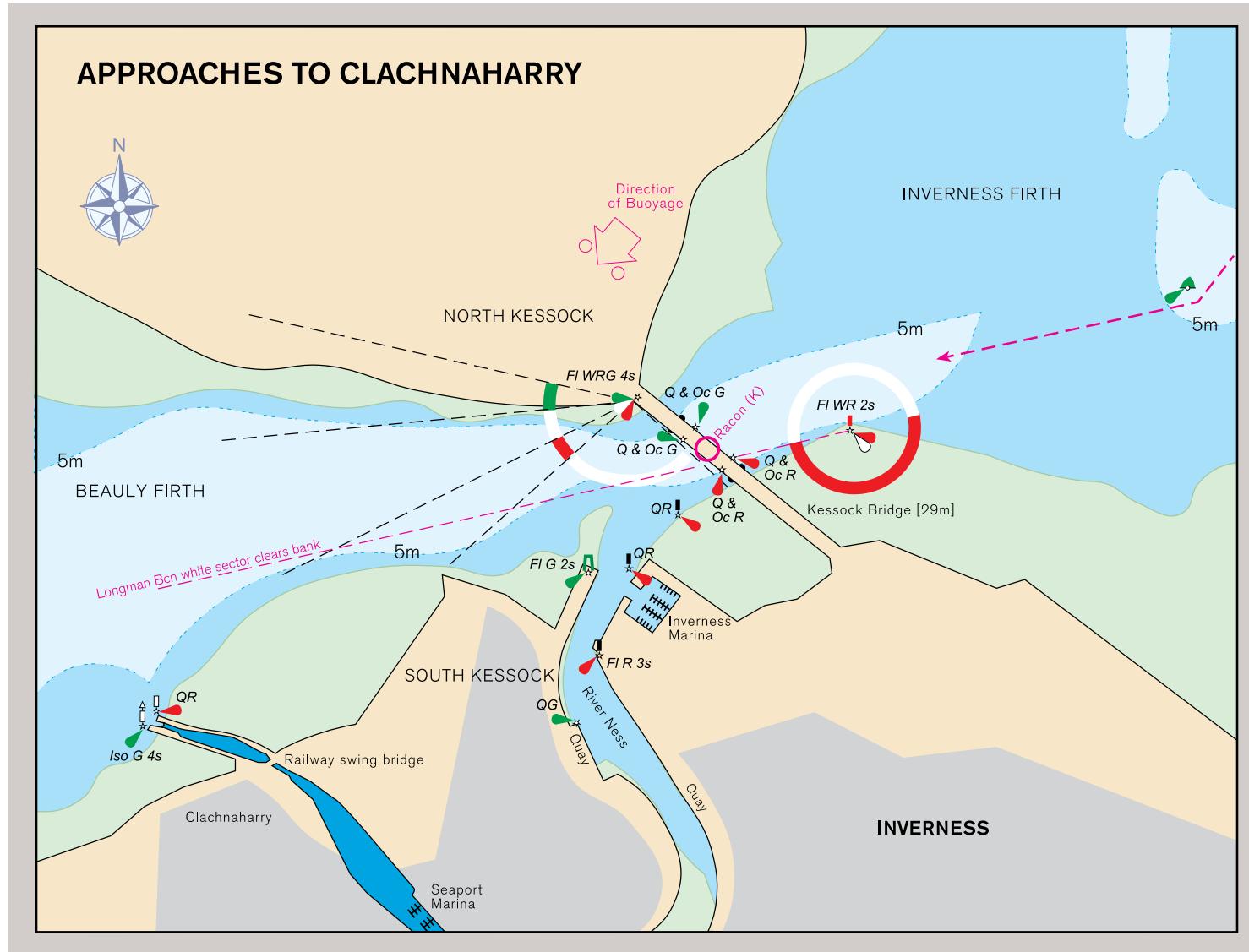
SEA LOCK HOURS

- The Canal Sea Locks operate with approx. 1.4m of tide (Spring HW± 4 hours), and within operating hours.
- VHF Ch 74 (16), call: "Corpach Sea Lock" or "Clachnaharry Sea Lock".
- Inverness Marina VHF Ch 12 / Inverness Harbour VHF Ch 12/16 (office hours)

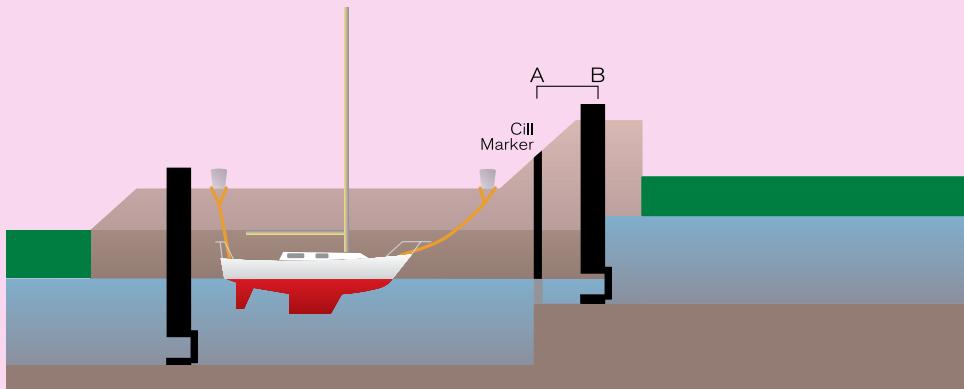
APPROACHES TO CLACHNAHARRY

- Admiralty Chart 1078. Imray Charts C22 & C23.
- HW Inverness is at Aberdeen -0050 (sp); -0150 (np). Tidal range 4.1m (sp); 1.9m (np)

- The final 3 miles of the approach from the NE to Kessock Bridge is shoal in places. A careful course should be maintained.
- The tide runs strongly through Kessock Narrows and Kessock Roads. Approach the sea lock with care in these conditions.
- Anchoring off the sea lock may be difficult due to strong tidal current. It may be preferable to wait in Inverness Marina.
- To avoid sandbank NE of canal entrance, (night) keep in white sector of Longman Point Beacon, or (day) keep beacon well open north of S bridge pier.
- For passage between Inverness Marina and Clachnaharry Sea Lock (and vice versa) see map below.



USING THE LOCKS



GENERAL

- Although the Caledonian Canal locks are large there is no need to be nervous about using them, as they are mechanised and operated by experienced canal staff who know the local conditions.
- Follow the Lock Keeper's instructions, and do not hesitate to ask him or her for help.
- Be prepared to share the lock chamber with other craft - this reduces the work load and saves water.
- When approaching each lock, berth at the nearest transit jetty and put a crew member ashore to take your lines in the lock.

- Ropes should be tended from on board, not from the shore, and should be led to a cleat or winch to aid control. However, at main lock flights ropes of small craft should be tended from shore, by an adult, to permit vessels to be "walked" from lock to lock on the flight. This avoids the need to start & stop engines and throw lines ashore at each lock.
- To avoid a build up of fumes in the lock chamber please switch off engines once your ropes are secured ashore.

BASIC EQUIPMENT YOU WILL NEED

1. Three or four good quality ropes of sufficient length (15 metres) to reach the bottom of the lock chamber
2. Adequate fenders to protect your topsides – 3 or 4 per side should suffice.
3. In addition, a good tip is to lace a canvas sheet between the hull and fenders to avoid scuff marks.
4. If you have a fender plank, use it.
5. Life jackets should be available for, and preferably worn by all crew. Children and non-swimmers should wear them at all times.
6. Ensure that there is sufficient fuel on board, and that engine controls are working correctly. Refuelling is not permitted in lock chambers.

LOCKING TIPS

Those on board will need to control the craft during the locking process. This is not difficult if a few rules are observed:

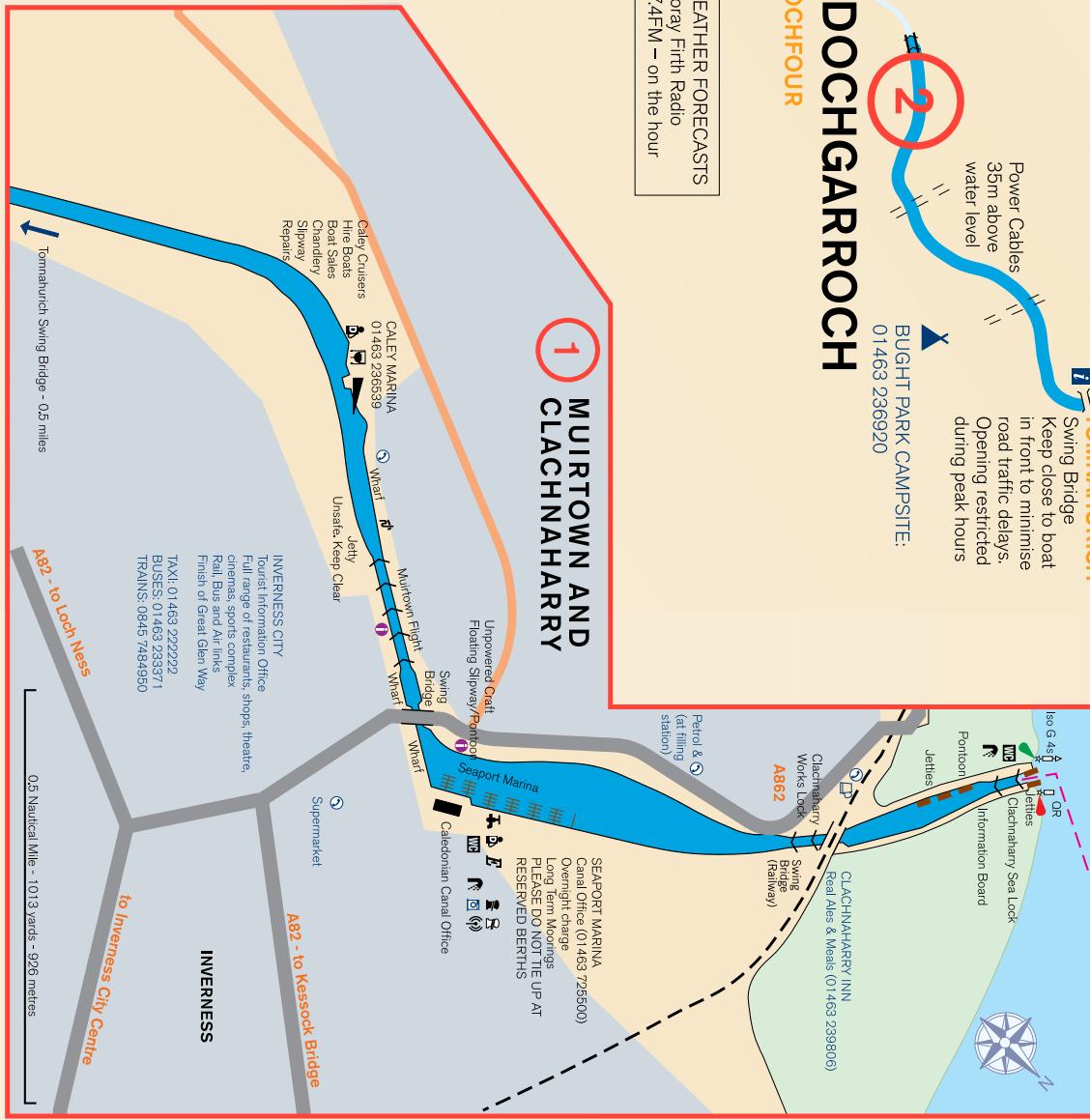
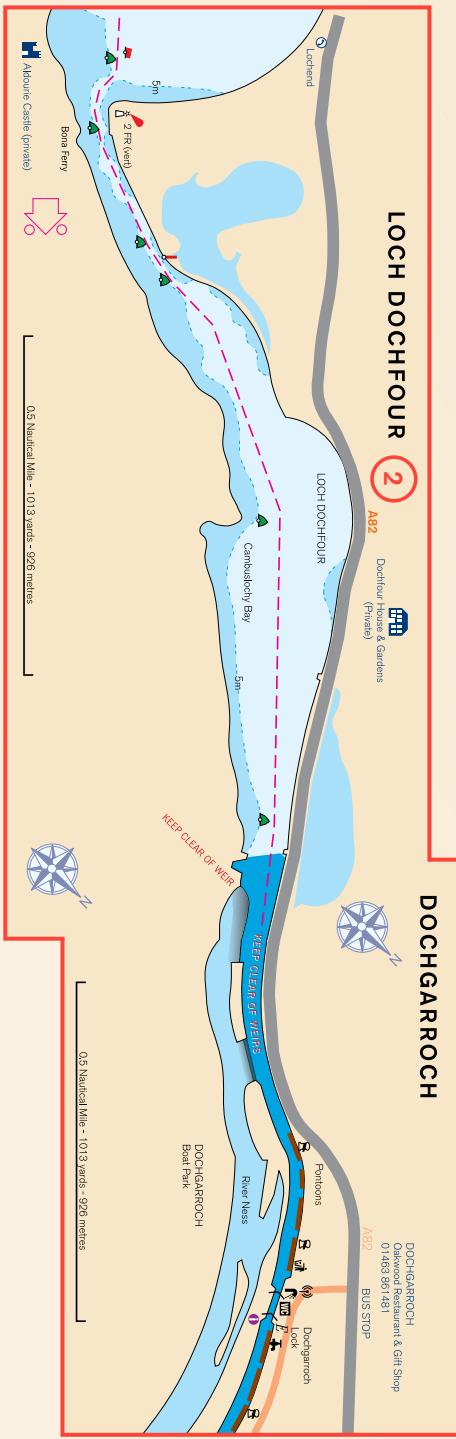
1. Approach the lock slowly and steadily, if the lock is not ready berth at a transit jetty while the gates are opened. Please do not 'hover' outside the lock. Call the Lock Keeper on VHF Ch74 and follow their instructions.

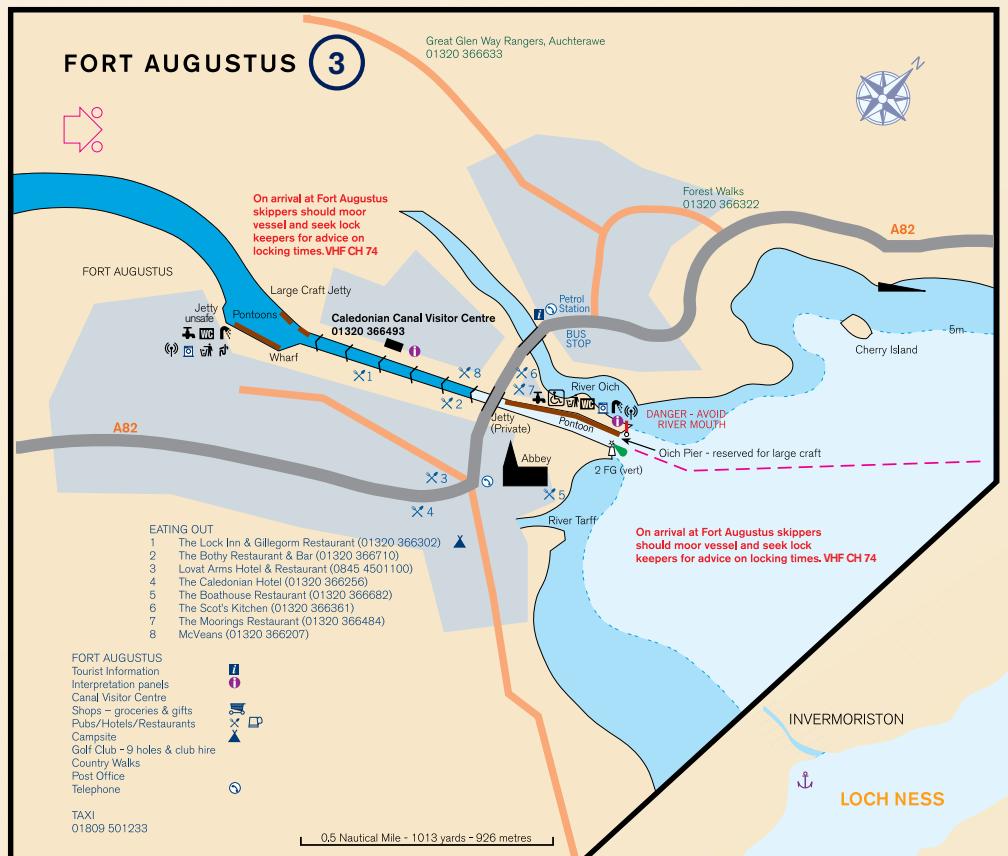
2. On single locks have a crew member positioned at bow and stern to manage ropes. On lock flights crew from small vessels should manage ropes on shore as directed by Lock Keepers.
3. Ensure ropes are clear from obstruction and can run cleanly through fairleads or stemhead roller.

CILL MARKERS

To avoid possible contact with the lock cill please ensure that your vessel keeps clear of the Cill Marker on the lock wall, and remains clear of lock gangways (area A–B on diagram).

If you are in any doubt please ask a Lock Keeper for advice.





DRUMLNADROCHIT HARBOUR
(Privately owned)
Marked Approach Channel
Max depth 6ft
No Rubbish Disposal
Overnight charge
Water

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DRUMLNADROCHIT 1.5M from harbour
Taxi: 01456 450617 or 01456 450550
Visitor Information Centre 0845 22 55 121
Fiddler's Restaurant, Bar & Coffee Shop - 01456 450678
Drummondchit Hotel - Restaurant & Café - 01456 450218
Monster Exhibition - 01456 450573
Bike Hire - 01456 450223
Pony Trekking - 01456 450220

LOCH NESS

DRUMLNADROCHIT HARBOUR (Privately owned)
Marked Approach Channel
Max depth 6ft
No Rubbish Disposal
Overnight charge
Water

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Temple Pier (Private - Keep Clear)

Urquhart Castle

Pier (Private)

Inverfarigaig Forest Walks
Forest Enterprise 01320 366322

Shop & Tearoom (1.5 miles from Foyers pier)

Foyers Bay Country House

Restaurant (reservation essential) 01456 486624

Craigdarroch House Hotel

Restaurant & Bar (please book) 01456 486400

