

# Skipper's Guide

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## Crinan Canal

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# Scottish Canals



Find out more at  
[scottishcanals.co.uk](http://scottishcanals.co.uk)

# WELCOME TO THE CRINAN CANAL

The Crinan Canal team would like to welcome you to the canal. We hope you enjoy your stay with us.

The canal was constructed during 1793-1801 with further improvements made in 1816 and again between 1930 and 1932 when new larger sea locks were constructed. One of the most picturesque waterways and a real treasure, the canal is known to sailors the world over for its friendly lock keepers and spectacular surrounding countryside.

There is just so much to see and do, so why not step ashore and enjoy the tranquillity of this remote unspoilt area. The idyllic still water marina facility at Bellanoch is the ideal base from which to cruise the west coast and also to enjoy the many top quality sailing events which take place through the yachting season.

Scottish Canals is committed to customer care and should you require any help or advice during your stay with us please do not hesitate to contact the Canal Office of any member of staff. We also welcome comments on our service, or suggestions for improvements to make passage or lockings more enjoyable.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

This part of Scotland has been inhabited for at least 5,000 years, since the first hunter-gatherers followed the retreating ice northwards, and settled in this fertile area. Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, pre-Christian, Medieval, and later eras are represented by monuments and buildings, and the Canal itself is a listed Monument.

### **Kilmartin House Museum**

Kilmartin, 6 miles north of Cairnbaan on the A816.

The concentration and diversity of ancient monuments in Kilmartin Glen distinguish the area as Scotland's richest prehistoric landscape. This independent museum displays local artefacts and interactive exhibits. Audio-visual experience, bookshop, unique wildfood café. Open every day.

01546 510278. [www.kilmartin.org](http://www.kilmartin.org)

## **Dunadd - Ancient Capital of Dalriada**

Hill Fort, 2 miles north of Cairnbaan on the A816.

The curious carvings near the summit are popularly associated with the inauguration of Scotland's first kings. The Scotti migrated here from Ireland around 500AD, establishing the ancient kingdom of Dalriada, this stronghold, and the Scottish royal succession.

## **Moine Mhor Nature Reserve**

The Great Moss, north of the Crinan Canal, between Dunardry & Crinan.

One of the last expanses of raised mire in Scotland, this estuarine environment supports a rich and varied ecosystem, including some rare plants and animals.

## **Achnabreck Cup & Ring Marked Rocks**

1 mile east of the canal at Cairnbaan, sign-posted off the A816.

These outcrops of bedrock together represent the largest expanse of prehistoric rock-art in Scotland. Hollow cup-marks are often surrounded by rings, and some have a gutter extending from the centre. There are other motifs, including spirals, petals and stars.

## **Cairnbaan - Marked Rocks, Dun Chuain & Carn Ban**

0.75 mile north of the canal, sign-posted at Cairnbaan Hotel.

Further examples of prehistoric rock carvings here include a double cup surrounded by a single ring, and irregular grooving. The remains of a small fortified structure or dun can be seen 250 yards to the east.

## **Cairn, on the south bank of the canal at Lock 5**

This Bronze Age burial monument exhibits a cup mark and an unusual abstract design on its capstone. A decorated slab from this site is preserved in the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh.

## **Ardrishaig Water Waster**

Eastern canal bank at Ardrishaig, between Lock 4 and Oakfield Bridge.

Completed in 1895, this unique system maintains a safe water level in the canal. Excess water fills a bucket on one end of a rocker mechanism, the weight of which unseats a plug attached to the other end, discharging water into the sea.

## **Forest Walks and Cycle Trails**

The forest and woodland walks at Crinan, Dunardry, Cairnbaan and Achnabreck are indicated on the canal map. There are also cycle trails in the forest south of the canal, and Barnluasgan Interpretation Centre (1 mile S of Bellanoch on the Tayvallich road) offers information on the forest, and the history and wildlife of Knapdale. Forest Enterprise publish useful leaflets on all these walks and trails, which are usually available from the Crinan Canal offices.

## **Cycle Hire**

Crinan Cycles, Lochgilphead T 01546 603511 [www.crinancycles.co.uk](http://www.crinancycles.co.uk)

# BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

## BASIC EQUIPMENT YOU WILL NEED

You will require good ropes for the bow and stern, of sufficient length (12m) to reach the bottom of the lock chamber. Please ensure these are not damaged or frayed as they may be under considerable strain while locking up, particularly on the bow.

Ensure you have adequate fenders to protect your topsides. A good tip is to lace a canvas sheet between the hull and the fender to avoid scuff marks.

Life jackets for all crew are advised.

Water points are located at Ardrishaig Basin, Oakfield, Cairnbaan, Dunardry, and Crinan. You will require a hose pipe for connecting to these.

## INSURANCE

All users of the canal must hold insurance for £1m third party liability.

## FUEL

Diesel may be purchased from Crinan Boatyard Ltd and petrol or diesel in small volumes from garages in Lochgilphead,.

## PUMP OUT

Unfortunately pump out facilities are not available.

## OPERATING HOURS

The Crinan Canal operates on a seasonal basis. We are open 7 days per week in peak season, Monday to Saturday during Spring and Autumn, and Monday to Friday during Winter. Please check the website or contact the canal office for details of exact operating dates and times.

The minimum time you should allow for passage is about 5-6 hours, but why rush? Relax and enjoy the superb scenery and hospitality. It is fairly common to require an overnight stop to complete a transit.

## CANAL LICENCES

All craft must hold a valid and current licence. Various terms are available, from passage through to annual. Short-term licences include all lockings, passages and berthing, provided these are made within normal operating hours. Long term berth holders will also require a mooring permit.

The licence fee is calculated on a charge per metre basis depending on the length of term purchased. A price list is available at the canal office or [www.scottishcanals.co.uk](http://www.scottishcanals.co.uk)

In order to keep our charges as low as possible by reducing administration costs, we would ask that all licence fees are paid on entry to the canal.

# LEGISLATION

## **PORT WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Scottish Canals has produced Port Waste Management Plans which are now agreed with the Marine Coastguard Agency (MCA) and must be complied with at all times. It is an offence to discharge oil or bilge water into the canal or its adjacent waters, and any contravention of this ruling will result in notification to the MCA and SEPA.

Emergency discharge facilities can be arranged through specialist contractors at additional cost.

## **OIL DISPOSAL**

Oil disposal can be arranged by contacting the Canal Office.

## **INTERNATIONAL CATERING WASTE**

Customers from outside EU waters transiting or staying in the Crinan Canal, who wish to dispose of meat or animal by-products which were purchased outwith the EU, must bag the waste and inform the Crinan Canal Office.

## **BOAT SAFETY**

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



# WHILE YOU ARE IN THE CANAL

## **RADAR**

Please ensure radar scanners are switched off while craft are within or approaching locks.

## **LAST LOCKING TIMES**

Please remember to allow 30 minutes before closedown to complete lockings, in particular at sea locks.

## **LITTER**

Refuse should be disposed of in the skips located at Ardrishaig, Cairnbaan, Bellanoch Bay and Crinan. Please help us to keep the Crinan Canal tidy by disposing of rubbish in a thoughtful manner. Please only use the dry recycle bins for waste as described on the lid and avoid putting domestic waste into these bins. Remember, plastic bags thrown overboard could block your water intake, or foul the prop of your craft.

## **PETS**

While pets are welcome, it would be much appreciated if owners could take care to prevent animal fouling on the banks. Animal waste bins are located along the canal for disposal. Particular care should be taken at main lock flights and mown areas as these have heavy foot traffic.

## **SWIMMING**

The canal may look inviting, but please do not swim in it. This is very dangerous as there may be an underwater obstruction or sudden current, and the banks are very steep.

## **SHORE POWER**

Limited shore power is available at key points along the canal, mainly for use by long term customers. Please make contact with the lock staff regarding availability and charges for power. Payment should be made to the appropriate Sea Lock Office. Power may be available at pontoons in Ardrishaig Basin, above Lock 4, Oakfield, Cairnbaan or Crinan.

## **SHOWERS**

Toilets and showers are available free of charge to licence holders, at various locations (see map). Further information can be obtained from the sea lock staff.

Please help us to maintain a pleasant environment by making use of shore facilities and not using sea toilets whilst your vessel is in the canal.

## **LARGE CRAFT**

Certain sections of the canal are narrow, in particular towards Crinan, and for this reason we may require to traffic manage vessels with a wide beam. Therefore, owners should expect a slight delay while Scottish Canals staff ensure the reach is either clear of other vessels or a large craft transits the section. Your patience to ensure a trouble free passage is much appreciated.

## **RAFTING**

Rafting of boats is normal on the Crinan Canal, in particular during events or busy periods.

Please assist us by following staff instructions to ensure that we can make best use of the space available.

## **LONGER TERM BERTHING**

Reserved Berths are located in Bellanoch Bay, and at Crinan and Ardrishaig in the disused Sea Locks. The pontoons and moorings in Bellanoch Bay are all reserved and should only be used by the berth holder. Should you wish to take advantage of these facilities please contact the Canal Office for advice, or visit [www.scottishcanals.co.uk](http://www.scottishcanals.co.uk).





## NAVIGATION

### MAXIMUM CHANNEL DIMENSIONS

Length	26.82m (88ft)	Width	6.09m (20ft)
Air Draft	28.95m (95ft)	*Depth	2.7m (8ft 10in)

\*Please add 10cms (4in) to your normal draft as craft sit lower in the fresh water of the canal than they do in salt water.

Due to possible water level changes, customers with a draft of over 2.2m are advised to contact the Canal Office or Sea Locks at least 24 hours in advance to confirm passage will be possible.

### NAVIGATION INFORMATION

Admiralty charts: Loch Fyne 2381; Lochs and Harbours in the Sound of Jura and Approaches 2476; Loch Crinan to the Forth of Lorne 2326.

Imray charts: Firth of Clyde C63; Upper Clyde & Loch Fyne 2900; Belfast Lough to Crinan C64; Crinan to Mallaig and Barra C65.

Pilots: Admiralty West Coast of Scotland Pilot; Clyde Cruising Club Sailing Directions - Firth of Clyde; Kintyre to Ardnamurchan; Imray Pilot: Clyde to Colonsay.

### LOCKS AND BRIDGES

There are 15 locks and 7 bridges on the Crinan Canal. The Sea Locks & Lock 14 are mechanised and operated for you by Scottish Canals staff.



All bridges must be also operated by Scottish Canals staff.

Inland locks are manually operated which involves pushing lock gates and winding sluices. Crews are welcome to step ashore and assist manning these locks.

Indeed many customers report back that working the locks is an enjoyable part of the Crinan passage.

Additional staff will normally be available during the summer season to assist those on passage.

Customers are advised to contact the Canal Office for the up to date situation prior to arrival .

It is anticipated that those enjoying an assisted passage may be required to wait and join up with others in the lock to ensure efficient use of manpower and water resources.

Please note that to maintain access for emergency vehicles we are unable to rotate Ardrishaig Sea Lock Bridge and Lock 4 Bridge at the same time and must also comply with slight restrictions during school term time, both of which may cause unavoidable short delays. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

## **SPEED LIMITS**

Please observe the 4 knot speed limit on the canal to avoid bank erosion through excessive wash, and please slow down when passing moored craft. The final approach to Crinan between Crinan Bridge and Lock 14 is narrow, with moored craft lying above Lock 14. Please exercise caution while transiting this section of the canal.

## **USE OF LOCKS AFTER CLOSEDOWN**

Do not use the canal locks after closedown. This is when water levels are adjusted for the following day and any unauthorised locking may cause flooding or water loss.

## **CILL MARKERS**

To avoid possible contact with the lock cill please ensure your vessel does not pass the cill marker on the lock wall and remains clear of lock gangways (area AB on diagram) during lock operations. If you are in any doubt please ask lock staff for advice.

## **VHF**

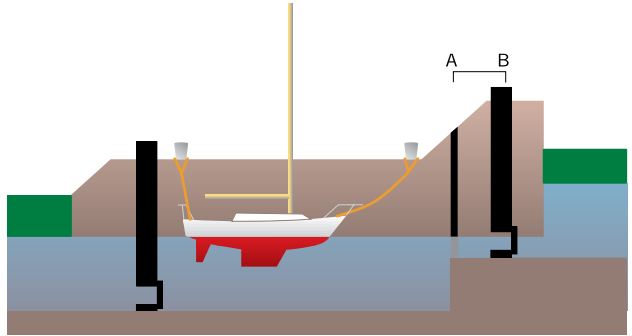
The sea locks work on Channel 74. Please note when staff members are performing locking or maintenance duty they will be unable to respond to calls. If you do not get an immediate response either try later or approach the lock if open to the sea; it is likely that the Lock Keeper has spotted you.

**Emergency Out of Hours Contact: 0800 072 9900**

## LOCKING UPWARDS

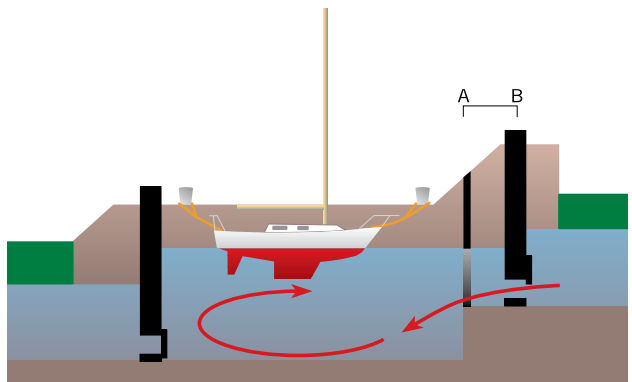
1. Make sure that the top gates and sluices are closed.
2. If the lock is full, empty it by raising the bottom sluices, first checking to see if a boat is approaching the lock in a downward direction, and if so please wait until it has locked through.

3. Open the bottom gates by leaning on the swing bar. The gate will only open once the water levels have equalised so apply steady pressure until you feel the gate move. Once the gates are open the craft may enter the lock, and if on its own in the lock, should stay as far back as possible to minimise the effect of turbulence.



4. Secure the craft by both bow and stern lines to the bollards provided. Always use a bowline to secure your lines, do not use a running line back to the boat which could jam causing injury or damage. It is not advisable for the shore crew to hold the warp, since loads can be considerable.
5. Close the bottom gates and sluices.
6. Only when you are satisfied that all craft are secure should you commence to flood the lock by raising the top sluices. Only open the sluices about 2" (5cm) at a time to keep turbulence in the lock to a minimum, starting with the sluice on the same side as a single moored craft, or the smallest craft. Continue to raise the sluices a little at a time as the water rises, but if the turbulence is too great lower the sluice a little. When the lock is full ensure the sluices are fully open, to make it easier to open the top gates.

7. Open the lock gates and exit.
8. Please leave a crew member to close the gates and sluices. This important part of the operation ensures that the lock chambers are ready for the next customer, though you may leave gates open for craft which are approaching in the opposite direction if they are near at hand.

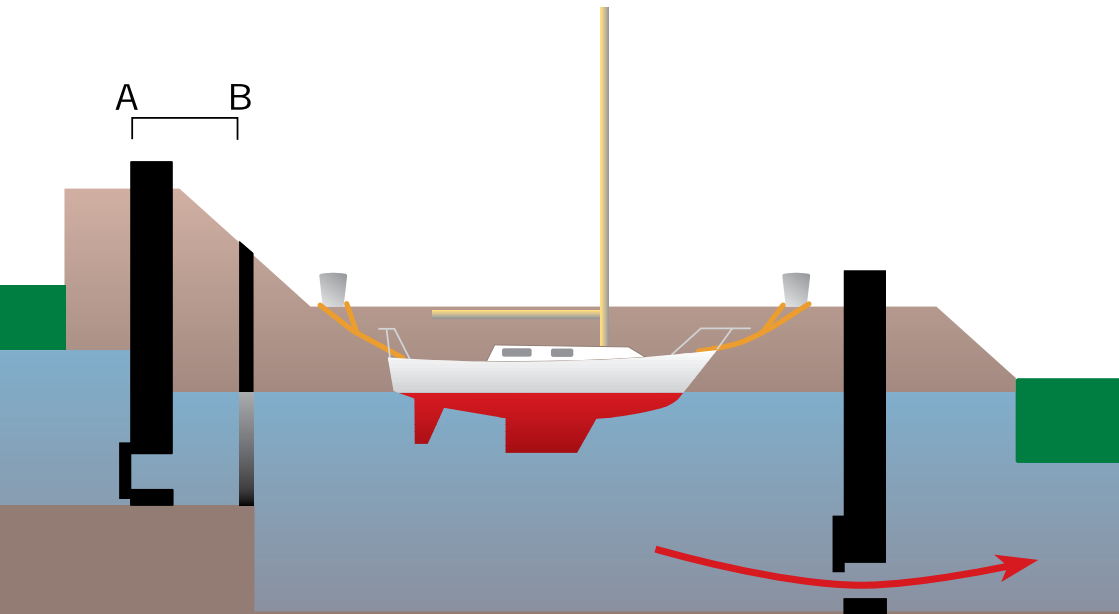


## LOCKING DOWNWARDS

1. Ensure that the bottom gates and sluices are closed. If the lock is empty, fill it by opening the top sluices. (If there is craft approaching which will use the lock in an upward direction, allow it to do so).
2. When the lock chamber is full, open the gates by leaning on the swing bar. The gate will only move once the water pressure has equalised so, leaving the sluices open, apply a steady pressure until you feel the gate move.
3. The craft may now enter the lock.
4. Secure the craft by both bow and stern warps using the bollards provided. Always use a bowline to secure your lines, do not use a running line back to the boat which could jam and cause injury or damage.
5. Close the top gates and lower the sluices.
6. Open the bottom sluices only after you are sure the boats are secure and crews ready. The sluices should be raised slowly to maximum, keeping an eye on the boats in the lock. If you are experiencing any difficulties, close the sluices.
7. Open the bottom gates and exit the lock.
8. Please remember to close all gates and sluices after the craft leave the lock.

### SKIPPERS: NOTE WHEN LOCKING DOWN

The downward locking is much less turbulent than the upward, however, it is vital to have crew positioned bow and stern to pay off the warps as the craft descends. Failure to do so could result in the boat being hung up by its warps. If this does occur you must tell the shore crew to quickly shut the sluices, and seek the assistance of a lock keeper.





N

Rubha Garbh-ard

Loch Crinan

Rubha na Mòine

Black Rock

Ardnoe Point

Eilean da Mhèinn

Crinan Harbour

CRINAN

Viewpoint

castle towerie

Crinan Boatyard Ltd  
01546 830232

Crinan Basin

Crinan Ferry

BELLANOCH MARINA

No Visitor Moorings

BELLANOCH BRIDGE

Bird Hide

Islanddadd Bridge

Mòine Mh...  
Nature R...

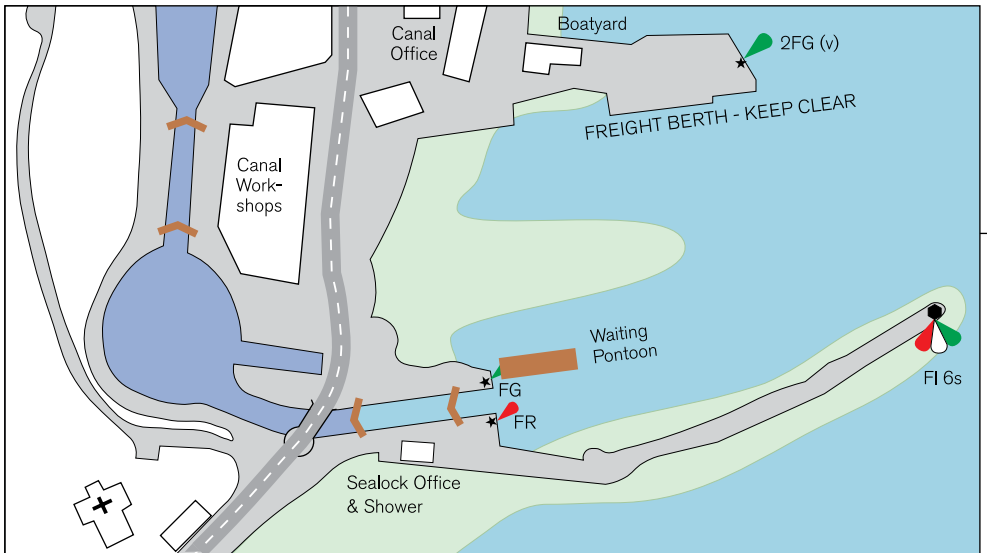
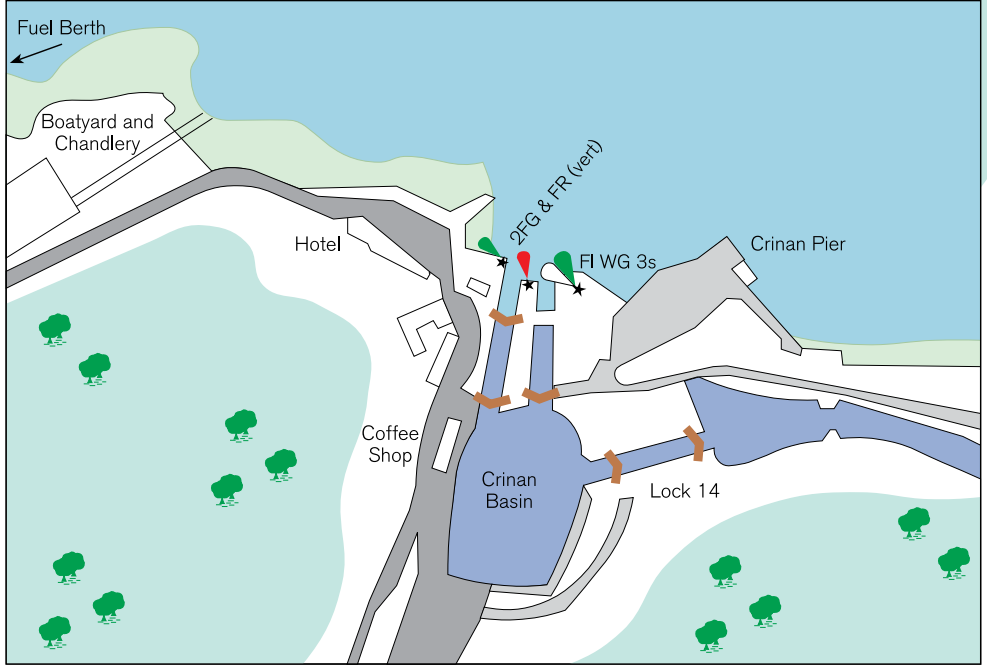
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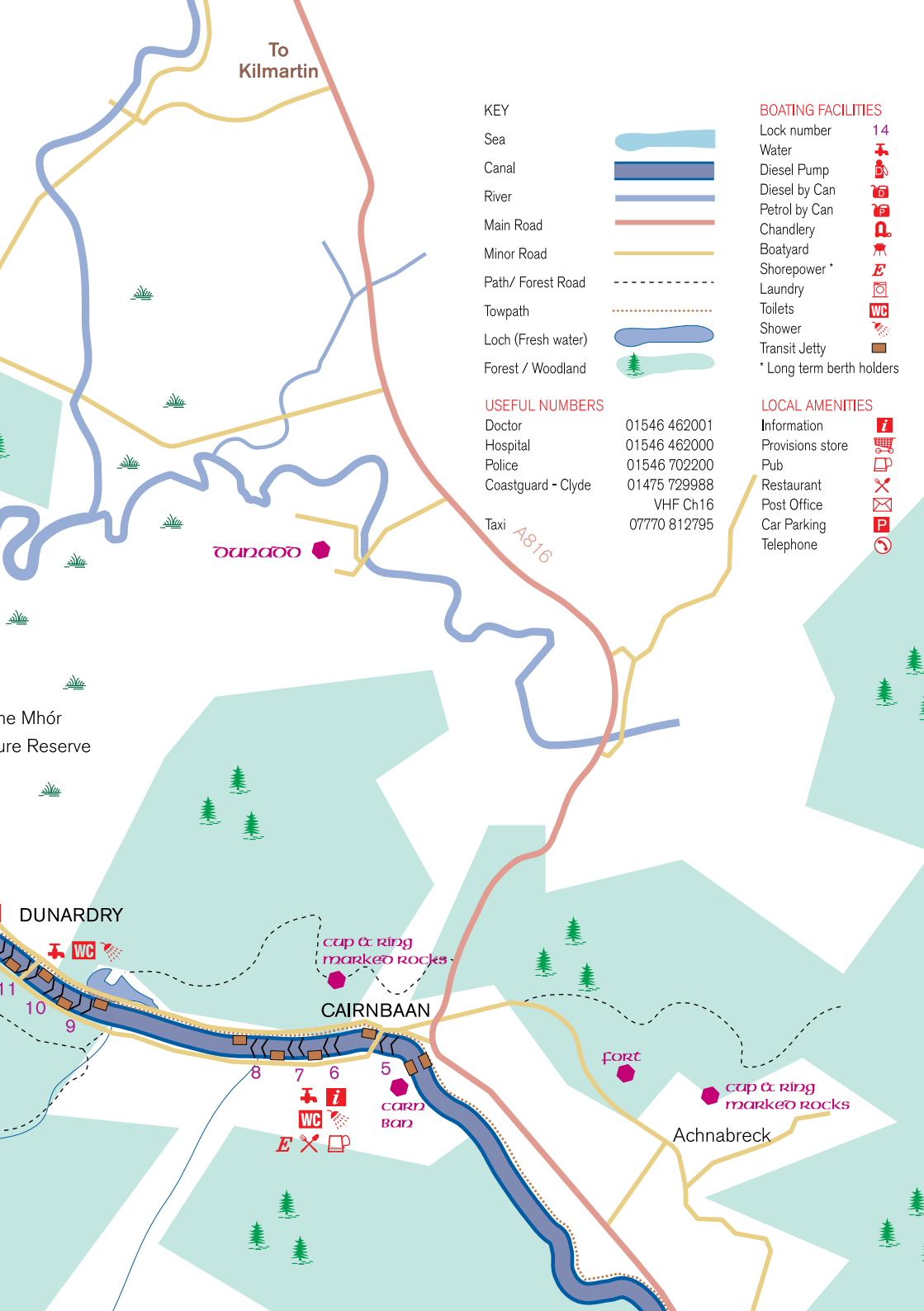
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Fuel Berth





To Kilmartin













KEY

- Sea 
- Canal 
- River 
- Main Road 
- Minor Road 
- Path/ Forest Road 
- Towpath 
- Loch (Fresh water) 
- Forest / Woodland 






USEFUL NUMBERS

- Doctor 01546 462001
- Hospital 01546 462000
- Police 01546 702200
- Coastguard - Clyde 01475 729988
- VHF Ch16
- Taxi 07770 812795

BOATING FACILITIES

- Lock number 14 
- Water 
- Diesel Pump 
- Diesel by Can 
- Petrol by Can 
- Chandlery 
- Boatyard 
- Shorepower \* 
- Laundry 
- Toilets 
- Shower 
- Transit Jetty 
- \* Long term berth holders

LOCAL AMENITIES

- Information 
- Provisions store 
- Pub 
- Restaurant 
- Post Office 
- Car Parking 
- Telephone 

DUNARDRY

A816

the Mhór  
ure Reserve

DUNARDRY

CAIRNBAAN








Achnabreck

cap & ring  
marked rocks

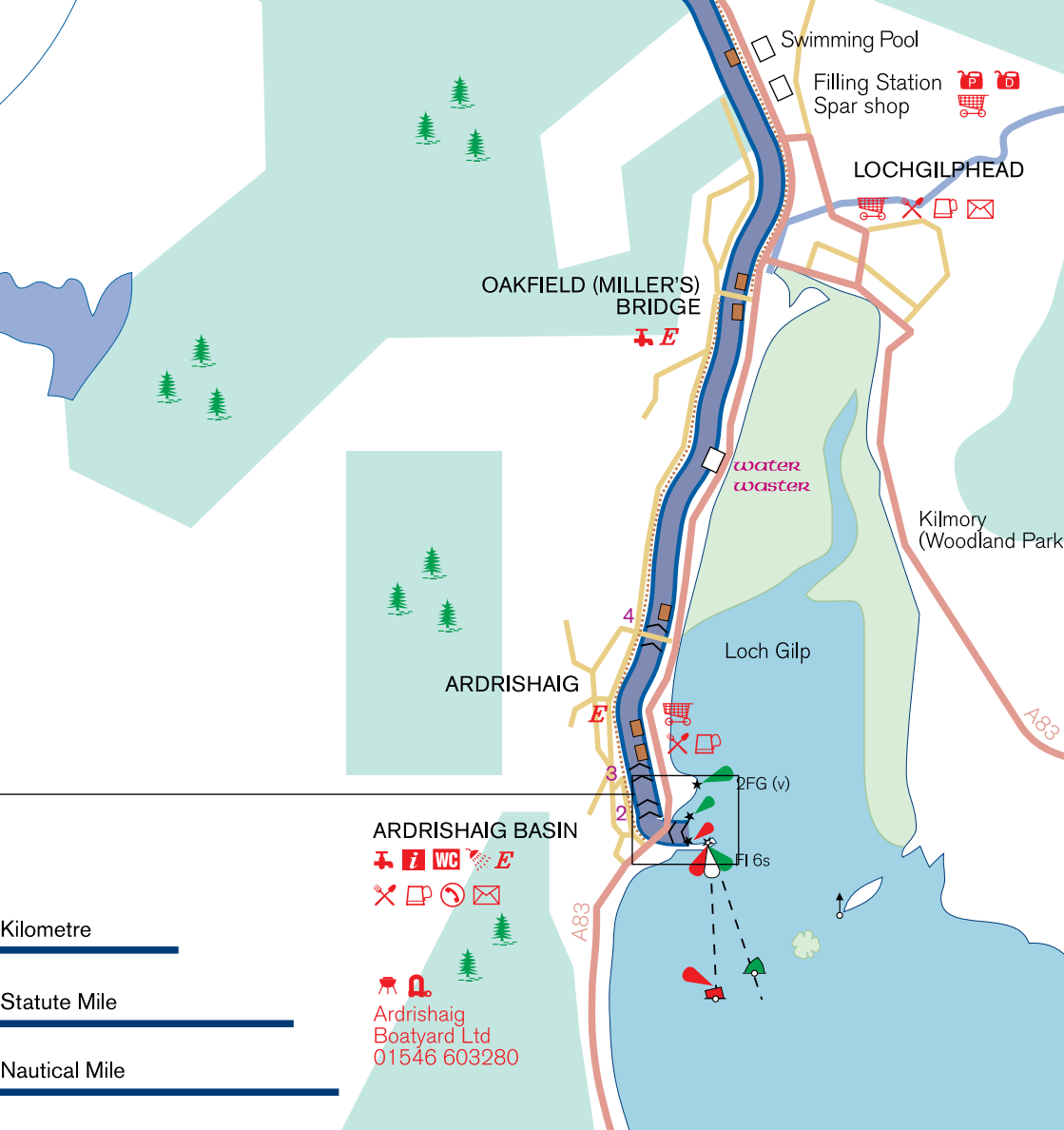
fort

cap & ring  
marked rocks

carri  
Bar

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# Contact Us

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# Scottish Canals

## **Crinan Canal**

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

## **Crinan Sea Lock**

T: 01546 830285

## **Ardrishaig Sea Lock**

T: 01546 602458 or 07917 374678

## **Scottish Canals**

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

## **Caledonian Canal**

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

E: [enquiries@scottishcanals.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@scottishcanals.co.uk)

10/2014



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