

## Going West from Westray

*We hope you find these notes helpful and of interest to you while planning your sailing trip to Orkney. Please note they are not intended to be used for navigation*

If leaving Westray to go west about to Stromness or Cape Wrath or approaching from the same direction unless you have a draft of more than 12 feet and it is low water springs you can go through Papa Sound. This can save a lot of time and rough water going round Mull head which once again has tides of up to 8 knots on springs, the tide changes in Papa Sound about the same time as Kirkwall and the Mull head about 1 hour later. There are strong eddies on both sides of Mull Head, Papa Westray especially on the east side during the flood creating a dangerous "boer" where the flood and the back eddy meet. This is an area to be given a wide berth during spring tides and any adverse

If inward bound through Papa Sound keep in the middle until you are just in past Aikerness Holm then hold up for about a cable of Ouseness, doing the reverse when outward bound.

Passage time to Stromness is 4 1/2 hours at 8 knots. If you leave Pierowall with the first ebb in Papa Sound by the time you get to Hoy Sound the flood will help you into Stromness. There is not much tide between Marwick Head and the Black Crag. The harbour master at Pierowall is very helpful with advise on Papa Sound. The tide turns in Hoy Sound about 40 minutes before Kirkwall.

If you leave Stromness for Westray maybe 2 hours before low water you will pick up the flood tide about Marwick Head and carry it all the way to Pierowall.

Going west about from Kirkwall to Stromness will take about 3 1/2 hours at 8 knots. Leaving Stromness for Kirkwall is about the same as stated for Stromness to Westray. During any westerly weather there is quite a roost out of Hoy Sound on the ebb. Apart from when rounding the Kirk rocks it is possible to stay inshore of this tide run. When rounding Bragga Skerry on the north side there is plenty of room between the roost and the shore until you get to the Kirk rocks. Inward bound against the ebb there is a strong tide against you from the Kirk Rocks until you get into the harbour entrance. This tide is strongest when abeam of the Ness Beacon where it can reach 7 knots or maybe more. En route from Stromness to Kirkwall, Eynhallow Sound is best approached on the flood. The deepest water is between Rousay and Eynhallow but the most straight forward channel is between Eynhallow and the Orkney Mainland, Just keep to the middle. Between Gairsay and the Holm of Rendall is a shallow patch. Unless your boat has more than 6ft of draft and it is low water springs this should not create a problem. To keep clear of this patch keep over towards the Holm of Rendall and the Beacon on the skerry. When past the beacon steer for the Linga Buoy.

The tide in Eynhallow Sound turns about the same time as Kirkwall. When going in the opposite direction going out through Eynhallow on the ebb time your departure from Kirkwall so that you arrive at Hoy Sound at the first flood for the quickest journey.

The last half of the ebb tide in Eynhallow Sound is one of the stronger. Personally with a boat doing 9 knots I have been unable to cut this tide at the top of the springs several times.

Once again with west or northerly weather there is bad tide run on the ebb here known as the "Burger Roost". If there is not too much swell you can keep out of the worst of the roost by keeping to the mainland side of the channel.

If the weather is such that you do not want to go west about between Stromness and Kirkwall you have the option of going east about. 5 1/2 hours at 8 knots.

If you depart Kirkwall on the flood to reach the South end of South Ronaldsay at slack water you will pick up the ebb as you go either through Hoxa Sound or up past Cantick Head and Lyness to Stromness. For the most water when going through the pass of Copinsay keep about 30/40% of the Black Holm side of the channel. As you approach the old head the tide will be running west. If you are a bit early this tide will still be running west up to Brough Ness. If the weather is good you can go outside of Lothar Skerry but some tide lumps can be avoided by going inside of the Lothar. Keep mid channel between the Lothar and Broughness and well over towards a rock that has the remains of a wooden pole on it when passing out the north end of the channel. The Lothar lies shallow for about 30 % across the north channel.

Once the flood tide is well established in Hoy Sound maybe one hour after low water in Kirkwall you should leave Stromness for Kirkwall this tide will take you down to Broughness. NOTE this tide is over 9 knots off the SW corner of the Lothar Skerry. Inshore from Broughness and round the Old head the tide will likely be against you being quite strong on the old head "the liddle eddy". In good conditions this can be avoided by holding well out between South Ronaldsay and the Pentland Skerries before turning NE for Copinsay. Once again if the timing is right you should pick up the ebb tide at the pass of Copinsay to help you right up the String to Kirkwall. Once clear of the old head there is not a lot of tide till you reach Copinsay