

Kirkwall to Sanday, Stronsay and Eday

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

When sailing from Kirkwall to Sanday, Stronsay and Eday the best time of tide to leave Kirkwall is 1 to 2 hours before low water in Kirkwall going out thorough Vasa round the Galt buoy and if early on in the tide hold a course for the Ness of Ork to get advantage of the eddy. From the ness, hold across for the Eday Gruna buoy off the south end of Eday. If you are a bit later on the tide near slack water can go direct from the Galt buoy to the Eday Gruna. In both cases when the Eday buoy is reached the tide will be running E or NE past the buoy and thorough the Keld and Spurness Sound. This tide starts to run E or NE one hour before low water in Kirkwall and only runs in this direction for 3 to 4 hours before turning round and running W for 8 to 9 hours similar to Weatherness and Fersness. After passing through Spurness Sound there is very little tide to contend with. The N going tide runs strong by the end of the Loth pier in Sanday.

If the wind is strong from the W and you want a more sheltered route leave Kirkwall about 1 hour before high water go down the String past Helliar Holm round Hacknes and up the East side of Shapinsay making use of the back eddy. Cross the Stronsay Firth at slack water towards the south skerry where you will meet the tide against you. Leaving Stronsay 4 hours after high water in Kirkwall you can go the same route but keeping well out side the Baas of Linton to avoid the back eddy going N along the east side of Shapinsay If you get your times right there should be ebb in the String by the time you get there.

When going from Sanday, Stronsay or Eday to Kirkwall if you leave about High water in Kirkwall or maybe 1 hour before you will carry the tide with you as far as the Galt buoy. From there to Kirkwall you would have the tide against you but as previously said but if you hold well inshore along the bays in the west side of Shapinsay you can dodge quite a bit of tide. During times of strong S or SE wind and sea it is not recommended to cross east of the Green Holms or the Stronsay Firth on the flood as you can encounter some very nasty conditions.

When sailing from Sanday, Stronsay or Eday to Westray obviously this is better done on the ebb tide, which will carry you through Calf Sound. This is the recommended route and very picturesque. Lashy sound is best avoided with spring tides running in excess of 9 knots and a very bad roost on the ebb (which runs N) if there is any wind or swell from a N or NW direction.

There is also a bit of a roost in these conditions between the Red and Grey Heads but this can be mostly avoided by crossing over just at the start of the roost to go between the Red head and the roost. It is a bit shallow near low water to go to close to the Red Head before the roost but once abeam of the roost there is plenty water. As you can see by your chart there is rock directly North of Red Head with deep water all around it. If there is a roost the sea will be braking on this. Once again there is little tide to contend with between the Red Head and Pierowall.

Sailing notes downloaded from the Orkney Marinas website. www.orkneymarinas.co.uk

The tide in Calf Sound turns approximately the same time as Kirkwall with Lashey sound most of an hour later.

When sailing from Westray to any of the easterly islands the most advantages time to enter Calf Sound may be one hour after low water in Kirkwall. The tide will help you through Calf Sound and Spurness sound or if you are aquant, the keld. Apart from low water, boats with less then 8 ft of draft can go through here keeping much nearer the Sanday side maybe 25/30% from Spurness. There can be a slight roost SE from Calf Sound on the flood with strong S or SE wind.

Journey time between Westray and Sanday or Stronsay at 8 knots is about 2 hours 20 minutes and Eday 2 hours.