

Welcome to Orkney's Eastern Approaches

You will find quiet contrasts and unexpected riches in the gentle landscape of Orkney's eastern approaches. Heading east from Kirkwall you will find three parishes that make up the East Mainland: St Andrews (consisting of Tankerness and Toab districts); Deerness (almost an island); and Holm, pronounced ham, said to be the "garden of Orkney" due to its fertile farm land and its south facing aspect. These parishes are joined to other islands

by the Churchill Barriers (or causeways) allowing you to drive across the sea and island-hop.

With two of the three direct ferry routes from Caithness on the Scottish Mainland, and Orkney's main airport, the communities of the East Mainland can hardly be described as remote with regular bus services from/to Kirkwall.

For anyone interested in archaeology, history, geology, wildlife and crafts the area is exceptionally rich. The main

industry is farming, mostly grass-fed suckler cow herds and sheep in an area where there has been continuous settlement since the Neolithic times 5000 years ago.

For birdwatchers the eastern approaches can bring surprises, with migrant birds being blown off course from northern Europe by storms. Like them, you can rest, explore, and recharge your batteries on Orkney's welcoming, fascinating eastern approaches.



Mid-winter sunrise behind Copinsay.

HOLM, LAMB HOLM AND GLIMPS HOLM



Holm Village.

15 ST NICHOLAS CHURCH AND CEMETERY

The church is owned by a community group and is no longer in use. The churchyard continues to be used for parish burials.

16 WAR MEMORIAL

Built in honour of the local men who gave their lives in both world wars.

17 GRAEMESHALL LOCH

This small loch is home to a large collection of wildfowl, easily seen from the comfort of your own car by the roadside.

18 MANOR HOUSE OF GRAEMESHALL

This was once the home of the lairds of the parish. The former home of the Graeme lairds was the House of Greenwall.

19 TOTEM POLE

Carved by the members of the Squamish First Nation Indians and the Holm folk as a community project. Erected in August 2007.

20 BAY OF AYRE

The Bay of Ayre is an ideal area for sea-angling with cod, ling, skate and mackerel to be found, especially near the Churchill Barriers.

21 SCAPA FLOW

Scapa Flow was the naval base for the British fleet during both world wars. Now the main activity in the Flow is connected with North Sea oil, and you are almost sure to see one or two large tankers at anchor waiting their turn to load crude oil from the Flotta oil terminal, which you can see over at the other side of the water, dominated by the flare stack, so typical of modern oil installations.

Scapa Flow is arguably one of the best diving locations in Europe with the remnants of the scuttled German fleet to explore as well as the sunken battleships. The clean pollution-free water allows for clear vision underwater enabling divers a good view of the wrecks.

22 CHURCHILL BARRIERS

These barriers were constructed on the orders of Winston Churchill during the Second World War after the disastrous sinking of the British battleship Royal Oak in Scapa Flow in October 1939. This was carried out by the German submarine U47 under the command of Captain Prien in a daring raid, during which he managed to manoeuvre his vessel between the blockships which constituted the defence of Scapa Flow at the time. You can still see the remains of some of these blockships on the east side of the second and third barrier.

23 THE ITALIAN CHAPEL

The main workforce used in the construction of the barriers was Italian prisoners of war, who were quartered on the island of Lamb Holm just over the first of the barriers. These prisoners left behind an abiding memorial to their time spent here in the beautiful chapel which they built using mainly scrap materials. Apart from the facade it is plain and austere on the outside but ornate on the inside.



The Italian Chapel.

ST ANDREWS AND DEERNESS



Dingieshowe.

1 KIRKWALL AIRPORT

Kirkwall Airport, also known as Grimsetter Aerodrome, was created during World War II to aid the defence of Scapa Flow. The Navy's Barracuda torpedo bombers took off from here to sweep the Norwegian coast in 1944/45. Nearby, at Wideford Farm, Captain Fresson landed on 30th May 1934 to establish the first internal airmail service in Britain.

2 TWIN AYRES AT WEETHICK

On the west side of Tankerness lie the twin lochs of Weethick, both enclosed by a double ayre or shingle bar, the only example of its kind in Orkney and used as a safe harbour as far back as Viking times.

3 RERWICK HEAD

The remains of World War II coastal defence installations, guarding the channel between Tankerness and Shapinsay, can be seen around this headland.

4 LOCH OF TANKERNESS

The Loch of Tankerness is privately owned and fishing is prohibited, although visitors are welcome for birdwatching as long as they respect the country code. A walkway passes near to the Loch, from the Yenstaya area to the Mill Sands area.

5 MILL SANDS

This sandy bay is a good place for collecting cockles and "spoots" (razor fish) at very low spring tides. An excellent spot for birdwatching.

6 ST ANDREWS WAR MEMORIAL

The current St Andrews Cemetery contains the site of the Tankerness War Memorial.

7 COVENANTERS MEMORIAL

This monument marks the site where two hundred Covenanters perished when their ship, the Crown, was shipwrecked in 1679. The Covenanters were captured after the Battle of Bothwell Bridge and were being transported to the American Colonies.

8 MULL HEAD NATURE RESERVE

An area of over 200 acres of coastal grassland, heath and sea cliff providing opportunities for walking, bird watching and nature study. Circular walks of between 4 and 8 kilometres are signposted from the Gloop car park. Interpretation Information Centre with toilets at car park. Visitors are not restricted to any part of the reserve but are asked to respect the need to avoid disturbing the wildlife.

9 BROUGH OF DEERNESS

The Brough is a very large stack which stands proud from the coastline and lies north from the Gloop. It is accessible only by a narrow, dangerous cliff track. The site of an early Christian Monastery of the Celtic Church where hermit monks lived simple lives.

10 THE GLOOP

A dramatic collapsed sea-cave/blow-hole separated from the sea by a land bridge of 50m wide. The Gloop is about 80m long and 25m deep and 26m wide. The Gloop is easily accessible by a 200 yard path from the car park, but visitors should be warned that the Gloop is unfenced and dangerous.

11 ST NINIAN'S CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD

The church now belongs to a community group and is no longer used for regular services. The churchyard continues to be used for parish burials and includes the Deerness War Memorial.

12 COPINSAY AND THE HOLMS

Copinsay is a wedge shaped island with an unmanned lighthouse perched on a 300 foot vertical cliff facing the North Sea. Together with the Horse of Copinsay, and three holms, (Corn Holm, Black Holm and Ward Holm) the whole group is now the James Fisher Memorial Reserve, owned by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

13 GEO SLIPWAY/INTERPRETATION CENTRE

The Slipway at the Geo has facilities available for the use of members and visitors alike. Visitors are asked to provide donations. Benches, picnic tables, and parking.

14 DINGIESHOWE

Another Howe is to be found on the narrow isthmus joining Deerness to the Toab area of St Andrews. There are sandy beaches at either side of the isthmus, a car park and toilets.



The Gloop.

SOUTH RONALDSAY AND BURRAY



View over Burray.

24 NORTHFIELD BROCH

This broch is a conspicuous mound and the interior is impressive. Please call at the farm before visiting.

25 ORKNEY FOSSIL & HERITAGE CENTRE

A museum dedicated to the geology of Orkney. Here you will find a fascinating display of fossils – some of which are over 350 million years old.

26 HUNDA

The small uninhabited island of Hunda is on the west side of Burray, joined by its own barrier which was built during the war to form part of the boom-defences against small surface craft. Call along at Littlequoy Farm.

27 BURRAY VILLAGE

The hub of Burray with a licenced grocery and garage, hotel, bar restaurant, public telephone and toilets. With plenty of convenient facilities for mariners, Burray is a popular anchorage.

28 THE CAIRNS BROCH

An Iron Age Broch.

29 WAR MEMORIAL

Built in honour of the local men who gave their lives in both world wars.

30 ST MARGARET'S HOPE

This picturesque village lies in a sheltered bay, perhaps named after a chapel dedicated to Margaret Queen of Scotland circa 1093 or the ill-fated Margaret of Norway who died in 1290. It is the third largest community in Orkney, and has first class restaurants, craft shops, cafes, shops, hotels, public telephone, toilets and tourist information point. As well as a play park, bowling green and a nine hole golf course.

31 THE SMIDDY MUSEUM

The Smiddy Museum in Cromarty Square, St Margaret's Hope has many artefacts from the time when every village had its own blacksmith.

32 HOWE OF HOXA

Though this broch is a prehistoric fortress, it is also reputed to be where Earl Thorfinn, The Skullsplitter, was buried in 976 AD.

33 SANDS O'WRIGHT

Lovely sandy beach which is the scene of the Annual Boy's Ploughing Match every August, established circa 1816. There is an interesting coastal path through an area of high quality wetlands.

34 HOXA HEAD

Military enthusiasts will enjoy Hoxa Head. Follow the marked walkway and explore coastal batteries from two World Wars. Area also noted for wild flowers. Superb views of Scapa Flow. Ideal for rock fishing.

35 HERSTON VILLAGE

A peaceful village originally built for the herring fishing circa 1830. Public telephone. A good place to see wading birds.

36 HARRABROUGH

An impressive rock formation with a natural arch and magnificent cliffs.

37 OLAD BRAE

A marvellous viewpoint from which to see panoramic views of the Pentland Firth, mainland Scotland and many islands of Orkney.

38 HESTA HEAD

In 1918 HMS Narborough and HMS Opal, returning to Scapa Flow at night, ran at full speed into the cliffs during a blizzard. There was one survivor out of 180. An information plaque can be found in Windwick car park.

39 TOMISON'S ACADEMY

The Hudson Bay Company, Canada employed many Orcadians, one being local man William Tomison, born 1731, who founded Tomison's Academy and later became the governor of the company.

40 BURWICK

Arrival and departure point for the shortest sea crossing from John O'Groats. The crossing takes 45 minutes. There is a large seal colony off the cliffs and it is also an excellent place to see puffins.

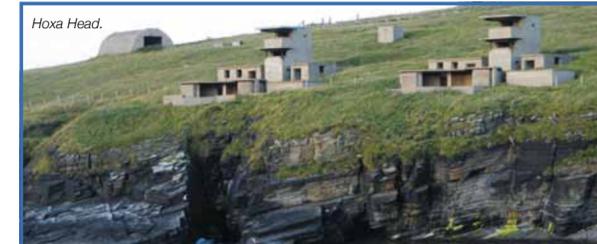
41 OLD ST MARY'S CHURCH

The site of one of the earliest chapels in Scotland. Inside the church is a curious stone – the Ladykirk stone, said to be a Pictish inauguration stone with the outline of two feet.

42 TOMB OF THE EAGLES

This impressive stilled chambered tomb dates from approximately 3000BC. The name comes from the many talons and claws of sea-eagles found among the burials. It is now a well established family-run visitor attraction with a small museum.

43 TOMB OF THE OTTERS



Hoxa Head.

EAST MAINLAND

ORKNEY ISLANDS

EAST MAINLAND

