

Summer loving

Fall in love with the British Isles all over again by discovering our top 25 places to drop the hook



Picture yourself motoring along, enjoying a stunning cruising ground before dropping the hook in a secluded, sun-drenched bay.

That's the sensation we've tried to capture this month with a guide to 25 of our favourite anchorages. This is by no means an exhaustive list (there are far too many to mention), but hopefully an eye-opener to the wealth of great anchorages on your doorstep.

Anchoring is a terrific reminder of just why we all signed up to this boating lifestyle in the first place – it even delivers cost-cutting benefits in these trying times.

But if you don't believe us, listen to what our expert panel has to say about what 'throwing the hook' means to them.

Pick the right spot

Richard Johnston-Bryden,
MBM cruising contributor



"Anchoring provides a delightful alternative to the hustle and bustle of busy marinas or town moorings on those days when you simply want to be left alone to relax at your own pace. For a few precious hours you can feel like a castaway on your own island without having to leave modern creature comforts behind. And if you pick the right spot it is possible to enjoy magical sunsets, listening to an evening bird chorus while enjoying an apéritif."

“For a few hours you can feel like a castaway”

Find somewhere that ticks all the boxes

Stuart Carruthers, RYA cruising manager

"The perfect anchoring spot is somewhere that is easy to approach, has good holding in all weather, no strong tides and a superb pub not too far away – a Newtown Creek without the crowds, if you like. Undoubtedly, anchorages on Scotland's west coast have a clear advantage here, but usually compromises have to be made. When you do find somewhere that ticks all the boxes, then it becomes clear why anchoring is so wonderful. For those of us whose cruising ground is the south coast of England, Salcombe is an ideal spot as it's between Dartmouth and Plymouth and is generally accessible in most weather conditions."



Our top 25
All of our favourite anchorages are plotted here on this map



Rafting up while at anchor can be a lot of fun

There are 1000s of anchorages in the British Isles waiting to be explored

SOUTH

The south coast of England is the busiest cruising ground in the British Isles, and with good reason. There are countless nooks and crannies to explore, many of which provide shelter from the prevailing southwesterly winds.

1. River Fal, Cornwall



The River Fal offers lots of well-sheltered anchorages

Stuart Crump, MBM cruising contributor

Falmouth is the third largest natural harbour in the world and offers an excellent choice of places to drop the hook. If you want to anchor overnight, a good holding, plus shelter from strong winds are a must and here there are anchorages for every occasion. St Just Pool is a glorious place for lunch or you can head for the very sheltered and quiet anchorages further up the River Fal, about half a mile past the King Harry Ferry. Here wooded hills border the river and you'll also find two inexpensive floating pontoons, if you prefer to moor to something fairly solid. Alternatively, anchor in the relatively shallow areas near Maggoty Bank, or progress further upstream to find a spot for the night

with little fear of being disturbed by anything other than a swan looking for breakfast. The nearby Helford River is another beautiful place to stay but is best avoided in an easterly wind.

Pilotage AC SC5602 – The West Country, Falmouth to Teignmouth; West Country Cruising Companion by Mark Fishwick

Watch out for

Beware of strong tides and rips at the north end of Carrick Roads

Local tip Tie up at one of the visitor buoys for a drink and a meal at the historical Smugglers' Cottage, parts of which date back to the 15th century

Great for Peace and quiet
Ground Mud and sand, generally good holding
Ability level Beginner

Find a quiet cove of your own choosing

Stuart and Ann Crump, MBM cruising contributors

"Last year we moored in Lamlash Bay on the Isle of Arran just before low tide. We were spending the evening ashore so we tied up to a mooring buoy. When we returned it was after high tide and our boat, *Jomima*, was moored quite happily in a row of yachts, but at 3am Ann woke me to say that something was banging against the hull. By this time it was low tide again and the swell was making *Jomima* roll slightly. It was slack water and the mooring buoy was bumping against the hull. I tightened and adjusted the mooring ropes and was about to return to bed when I noticed that the neighbouring yacht was about to ram us with its pulpit – the buoys were obviously too close together and fitted with mooring chains that were too long. A quick look at the charts confirmed that there was a suitable anchorage in the north of the bay. We started our engines and cast off before heading for the anchorage for the remainder of the night. There is a lot to be said for the freedom of being able to find a quiet spot, of your own choosing, where you can drop anchor and stay without fear of being disturbed by other boats."



2. Cadgwith Cove, Cornwall

PHOTO: MARK FISHWICK



The pretty cove of Cadgwith is one of many inlets along this stretch of coastline

This is an idyllic little cove next to a pretty fishing village, which was the setting for the 2004 film 'Ladies in Lavender' starring Dames Judy Dench and Maggie Smith. Cadgwith is picture-postcard perfect

with white-washed, thatched cottages that overlook the sea.

This region also has a murky past – the countless inlets along the coastline proved to be handy hideaways for smugglers in

the past and the scene of many a shipwreck.

Cadgwith is divided into two beaches by a promontory called the Todden. The larger beach on the north-east side is often referred to as Cadgwith

Cove and is used by the local fishing boats. It is sheltered from most winds but easterly or south-easterly winds can produce rough seas and swells. Anchor off the nearby rock known as the Mare in 2m to 3m of water, although beware of onshore winds.

Alternatively, the anchorage at Kilcobben Cove (where a new £6m lifeboat station is planned to replace the existing one) is a good spot if you're waiting for weather to improve to round the Lizard.

Pilotage AC 154, 2345, 5603.6

Watch out for The Todden can be a risky outcrop so beware of its extension

Local tip The Devil's Frying Pan – a 200ft-deep hole in the cliffs formed many years ago when a cave collapsed – is a short walk from the village and is a sight to behold. Or if you're feeling lazy head for the Cadgwith Cove Inn, once popular with the local smugglers

Great for Stepping back in time

Ground Sand

Ability level Intermediate



4. Salcombe, Devon

Stuart Carruthers, RYA cruising manager

Salcombe provides a good variety of anchorages. Choose a spot off Small's Cove, or for something quieter and away from it all – or if the swell becomes uncomfortable – make

upstream to Halwell Point for a quieter all-weather anchorage. Southpool and Frogmore Creeks are other interesting alternatives for those who can take the ground.

Salcombe isn't a commercial shipping harbour and has something for everyone. There are lovely beaches on the East Portlemouth side above and below Mill Bay and quieter anchorages upstream towards Kingsbridge, although anchoring is prohibited just off Mill Bay because of cables.

Visit Salcombe for the stunning scenery and the delicious food, which includes pasties, clotted cream and crab sandwiches.



Pilotage Salcombe WGS 84 (Imray); AC SC5602 – The West Country; West Country Cruising by Mark Fishwick

Watch out for Salcombe Bar must be avoided in strong onshore winds, especially when the tide is ebbing

Local tip The Millbrook Inn in South Pool does the best crab sandwiches ever, but it's a bit of a hike on foot.

There are a number of pubs in Salcombe, including the Ferry Inn where you can sit outside if it's sunny.

Everywhere gets busy with holidaymakers in the height of the season, so if crowds are not your thing anchor well up past The Bag towards Halwell Point

Great for Sampling the local delicacies

Ground Holding is good off Halwell Point. Reeds

mentions that there are reports of bad holding in some areas between the racing start line and the fuel barge (See SC5602-12) but we have not found this – it is often the result of not letting out enough scope

Ability level Intermediate.

Upstream is suitable for beginners, but it can get trickier in the channel, dependent on how busy and windy it is



Popular anchorages abound or go upstream for a quieter spot

PHOTO: MARK FISHWICK



3. Dandy Hole, River Lynher, Cornwall

The River Lynher (also known as St Germans River) is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Protection Area. It is beautiful and often deserted, allowing its many species of wildlife to thrive, including the kingfisher, otter, dipper, avocet and black-tailed godwit. At 34km-long it peaks at a height of 280m on Bodmin Moor and flows into the Tamar Estuary at Plymouth, but as much of

the river dries out completely, finding a great anchorage can be like finding a needle in a haystack. With this in mind the deep anchorage at Dandy Hole is one worth remembering. Situated off the south tip of Erth Hill and approximately five miles from Plymouth, Dandy Hole is a pool with 3m to 5m of water that is well sheltered; although be warned, landing at low water can be tricky.

Pilotage AC 871
Watch out for Keep clear of the bend at the western end of the reach, as this is often used by salmon fishermen with nets
Local tip Larger boats cruising on the nearby River Tamar will need to trace the deeper water on the outside of the bends
Great for Wildlife lovers
Ground Sand/clay
Ability level Intermediate

5. Teignmouth Estuary, Devon

Motorboaters braving the bar at the entrance to the Teignmouth Estuary will be handsomely rewarded with some lovely anchorage spots that they can revel in, as Shaldon Bridge prevents most yachts from accessing

the upper reaches of the estuary. Teignmouth is an historical harbour, which has been a trading port for over three centuries, and which was a major centre for crews and ships for the Newfoundland fisheries. It's

still a busy commercial port so give way to ships at all times. Also, although the entrance to the harbour is relatively simple in reasonable conditions, the position of the bar can change within a few hours during fresh or onshore winds, particularly in winter.

Pilotage AC 3315, Imray C5
Watch out for Underwater obstructions such as oyster racks that usually lie outside the channel, these are marked by black diamond marks on red buoys. Also, the harbourmaster requests that you call ahead on

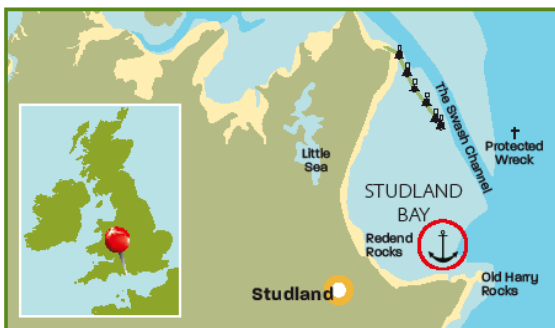
VHF Ch12 or ring the office on 07796 178 456
Local tip Coombe Cellars and the Passage House Inn are both good pubs that are accessible by boat
Great for Escaping yachties
Ground Mud/sand
Ability level Intermediate



Teignmouth is out of bounds for large yachts



6. Studland Bay, Isle of Purbeck, Dorset

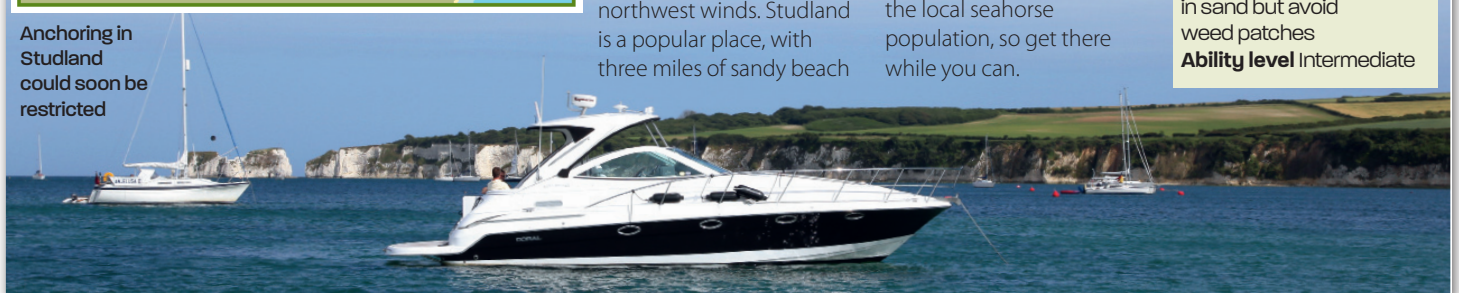


Anchoring in Studland could soon be restricted

OK, so it's not really an island but you'll soon forget that when you realise the Isle of Purbeck is home to an abundance of inviting anchorages, none more so than Studland Bay, a firm favourite among the MBM team. This is a very pleasant and sheltered anchorage in south through west to west northwest winds. Studland is a popular place, with three miles of sandy beach

and it is a haven for rare birds. But these attractive features come at a price and on a sunny day up to 300 boats can be seen mooring in the bay so it's not for those that are looking for a little privacy. Unfortunately local authorities are threatening to introduce a no-anchoring zone in the bay due to damage done to the local seahorse population, so get there while you can.

Pilotage AC 5601, 2175, 2172; Imray C4
Watch out for Unmarked Redend Rocks ESE of Redend Point and rogue swimmers
Local tip From the beach you can walk to Knoll House Hotel for a slap-up meal or for something more modest, the Bankes Arms Hotel is good
Great for Beach lovers
Ground Good holding in sand but avoid weed patches
Ability level Intermediate



7. Shipstal Point, Upper Wych Channel, Poole Harbour, Dorset Rod Carr, RYA CEO



In the upper reaches of Poole Harbour this anchorage boasts good holding and shelter in almost all wind directions. In an unspoiled part of one of the busiest harbours on the south coast, the Upper Wych Channel is off the beaten track and pretty shallow, so deep keel boats should ensure there is a sufficient rise of tide.

Nature lovers should note that landing on the sandy beach on the Point around high water gives access to a

wonderful woodland walk on the Arne peninsular where there is an RSPB reserve.

Pilotage The Shell Channel Pilot by Tom Cunliffe; and SC2611 – Poole Harbour & Approaches

Watch out for The shallow depth, which can get as low as 0.5m

Local tip There are no

shops or pubs in the village of Arne, so make your own picnic and enjoy the solitude

Great for Bird-watching

Ground Mud with some weed

Ability level Beginner



SOLENT AND ISLE OF WIGHT

Whether you want to cruise across to Cowes or head inland, the Solent and its surrounds offer unbeatable boating and enviable anchorages.

8. Newtown Creek, Isle of Wight

Remember when you were young and carefree, with no stresses in life? Anchoring at Newtown Creek will bring

all those memories flooding (hopefully not literally) back. There are no facilities so it's just a case of dropping

anchor and getting back to basics – of course this works even better if you resist the temptation to use the generator. This natural harbour, owned by the National Trust, is renowned for its bird-life, especially in winter. And although it can get busy during the summer, if you choose your timing carefully (i.e. midweek), you should be able to escape the masses. Surrounded by lush landscape, this is a tranquil place where time has stood still – get out the dinghy and head over to Hamstead Jetty for a stroll around the marshy creeks. Anchor in the main channel before the moorings or in



PHOTO: KIERAN FLATT

Don't let the yachties put you off, Newtown Creek is lovely

Clamerkin Lake as far as the two 'Anchorage Prohibited' signs that mark the oyster beds. You can

also anchor east or west of the entrance, just as long as you keep clear of the banks and channel.

Pilotage AC 5600, 2035; Imray C15, C3

Watch out for This is a yachtie haven so motorboats will probably be outnumbered

Local tip Landing at Fishhouse Point is not allowed for three months between April and June as it

is a nature reserve. Instead dock at Shalfleet Quay, Newtown Quay (both dry) or lower Hamstead on the west side of entrance

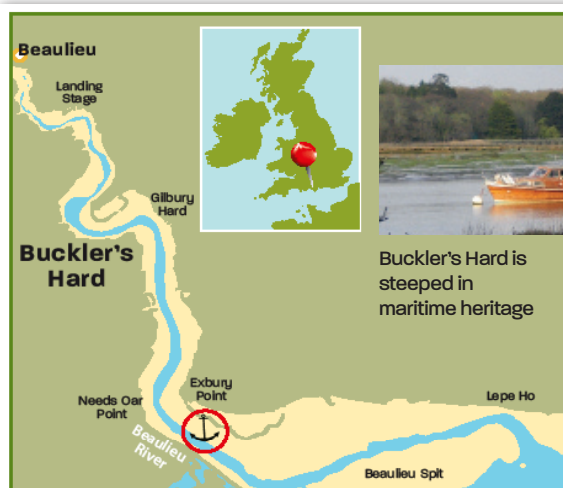
Great for

Escaping the rat race

Ground

Mud

Ability level Intermediate



9. Beaulieu River, Hampshire



Buckler's Hard is steeped in maritime heritage

This river winds itself through wooded countryside past the 18th century shipbuilding village of Buckler's Hard, before joining the West Solent at Lepe. It was at Buckler's Hard that wooden ships for

the English Fleet were built, including Nelson's favourite, the 64-gun *Agamemnon*. Anchoring is permitted in the first reach up to Needs Oar Point but stay clear of the fairway and beware the strong stream. The river is

navigable two miles above Buckler's Hard but it's best explored by dinghy.

Pilotage AC 5600, 2036, 2021; Imray C3, C15
Watch out for Anchoring is prohibited one mile either side of Buckler's Hard
Local tip A speed limit of 5 knots is applied and there's a small fee for anchoring
Great for Swotting up on Britain's shipbuilding past
Ground Mud
Ability level Beginner

EAST

Anchorage may not be in an abundance along the east coast but with the Thames Estuary, the coastal marshes of Kent, Essex and Suffolk, not to mention the picturesque Norfolk Broads, there is still plenty on offer.

10. Harty Ferry, The Swale, Kent

Along the north Kent coast lies The Swale, the preferred route of all the ships heading to and from London during medieval times as the Thames Estuary was off limits due to unmarked shoals. Harty Ferry is so named after the ferry service that ran until

1946 across The Swale from the mainland to the Isle of Sheppey. Harty Ferry is an isolated anchorage and a timeless sanctuary situated about one mile north-east of Faversham. It offers good shelter anywhere from

southeast to north. Not so good in northeast to easterly winds, but having said that you can still tuck up behind the horse shoal off Harty Ferry (north side) and keep out of the worst. One of the east coast's best-kept secrets.



Few people seem to know about this timeless spot



Pilotage AC 5606, 2482, 2571; Imray C1
Watch out for The broken down causeway at the Ferry House Inn that runs down to the low water mark
Local tip There are two good pubs nearby. The Ferry

House Inn on the Isle of Sheppey and the Shipwright's Arms at Hollowshore (a quarter of a mile up Faversham Creek). A popular pub but only good between a half-ebb and half-flood tide as it dries out

Great for Timeless sanctuary
Ground Holding is excellent and there are three visitor moorings near Faversham Creek entrance owned by the Shipwright's Arms
Ability level Beginner

11. Surlingham Broad, Norfolk

Richard Johnston-Bryden, MBM cruising contributor

Immediately upstream of the Coldham Hall pub on the River Yare, Norfolk, lies a narrow channel that leads to Surlingham Broad, where you can drop into mud to enjoy a wonderful

afternoon of relaxation. Found on the southern Broadland rivers it can become quite crowded in summer but arrive on a quiet day and you'll discover a tree-lined haven of

tranquillity packed with wildlife, including inquisitive swans and ducks that encircle anchored boats in the hope of a free meal. Those with a tender will enjoy taking a closer look at the wherry wrecks, while many can't resist a refreshing dip on a hot day.

Pilotage The Green Book, by the Norfolk & Suffolk Yachting Association. Only available chart is The Broads by GEO Projects
Watch out for Approach the

two narrow channels leading to Surlingham Broad slowly in case of on-coming boats
Local tip A new landlord is due to re-open the Coldham Hall pub

downstream of the entrance to Surlingham Broad
Great for Tranquillity and wildlife
Ground Mud
Ability level Beginner



You can find solitude or company on Surlingham Broad



PHOTO: RICHARD JOHNSTON-BRYDEN

SCOTLAND

The west coast of Scotland is jam-packed with impossibly beautiful anchorages so your options are endless. Here are some of our favourites.

12. Loch Feochan

Gordon Garman, MBM cruising contributor

Loch Feochan is located just south of Kerrera Sound, and approached through a winding and fast-flowing entrance channel. The loch is almost completely land-locked so offers excellent shelter, and some

stunning scenery. The entrance channel is well buoyed, as the marks are maintained by the boatyard, but depths in the channel at low water can drop to as little as 2m. The main anchorage is just off

Ardoran Marine, about a mile into the loch. The inner part of the loch is accessed past the small island of En an Ruisg to the east of Ardoran Marine. The channel on the north side offers deeper water, but note the rock lying to the northwest off the mainland side. The island itself is

home to nesting terns and there is a notice asking visitors to keep off. Once past the island, a tranquil

anchorage can be found where wind and depths permit, although the north is perhaps more striking.

Pilotage AC 2724, 2387, 2171; Imray C65; Yachtsmans Pilot to Isle of Mull and Adjacent Coasts (Imray); and Kintyre to Ardnamurchan (Clyde Cruising Club)

Watch out for Visitors are not welcome on the island of En an Ruisg

Local tip The Barn is a fine local pub serving good wholesome food
Great for Sublime scenery
Ground The holding is good, mainly sand and shingle
Ability level intermediate. It's suitable for beginners, but accessing the loch can be tricky



Loch Feochan is almost entirely land-locked so there are lots of well-sheltered options



13. Puilladobhain

Gordon Garman, MBM cruising contributor

Roughly translated as Otter Pool, this delightful inlet seven miles south of Oban has been a favourite with Scottish cruisers for many years. One of the real attractions, once the anchor

is down, is being able to sit and watch the sunset, preferably with a sundowner to hand.

The only swell to reach the anchorage is when the wind is blowing hard from the

north or northwest, so shelter here is pretty good. At first glance the entrance looks a little awkward, but your first visit will dispel any fears. The entrance channel is well documented, the main task when approaching is identifying the castle-shaped island of

Eilean Duin. There are a couple of rocks to be avoided but otherwise it is easily reached, but note

there is a shoal at the head of the anchorage so keep an eye on your echo sounder.



Pilotage AC 2724, 2386, 2169; Imray C65; Yachtsmans Pilot to Isle of Mull and Adjacent Coasts (Imray); and Kintyre to Ardnamurchan (Clyde Cruising Club)

Watch out for Shoal at head of anchorage

Local tip A 15-minute walk over the hill to Clachan Bridge ends with a warm welcome at the Clachan Inn

Great for Watching the sunset

Ground The anchorage at Puilladobhain has generally good holding in mud

Ability level Beginner if the bay is empty but when there are lots of boats, it becomes trickier due to limited swinging room

14. Tayvallich

Helen and John Anderson, MBM cruising contributors

Tayvallich is an idyllic, almost land-locked, natural anchorage near the head of Loch Sween in Argyll, on the west coast of Scotland. You'll find some lovely walks here, including the nearby Taynish Nature Reserve. There are also several

beautiful and secluded anchorages within two or three miles. Tayvallich Bay is entered through a narrow gap between the green beacon with a triangular top mark off the islet to starboard and the topless red beacon off



the peninsula to port. Keep clear of both points. There are many private moorings

but there is a reserved anchoring area and three visitor moorings.

Pilotage AC 2397; Sailing Directions: Kintyre to Ardnamurchan (Clyde Cruising Club); and The Yachtsman's Pilot: Clyde to Colonsay by Martin Lawrence (Imray)

Watch out for Beware the rocks (above and below water) running NE to SW near the middle of the bay

Local tip Around the shoreline is a pub, the Tayvallich Inn and a post office/shop/coffee shop

Great for Beautiful walks

Ground Mud (good holding)

Ability level Beginner

Information

www.tayvallich.com and

www.tayvallichinn.co.uk



There's reserved anchoring at Tayvallich

CHANNEL ISLANDS

The islands of Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, Herm and Sark are a boater's paradise. However, concealed rocks, strong tidal streams and poor visibility mean that they are better reserved for more experienced skippers. For true escapism visit one of the smaller islands.

15. Shell Bay and Belvoir Bay, Herm

These spots were suggested by a number of boaters, and while Shell Bay is undoubtedly more popular in terms of visitor numbers,

Belvoir Bay seems to be the preferred choice. Situated off the north-east side of Herm, these anchorages, both sheltered from the west, provide a little taste of paradise that seems more fitting for the Caribbean than the English Channel.

When the sun is shining, the sand and turquoise waters are tantalising. Both are within an easy day's cruise from Guernsey. You must anchor 20m from each beach, and gain permission from the harbourmaster if you want to overnight.



The irresistible Shell Bay

Pilotage The Channel Islands (Imray); AC 807, 808

Watch out for There are a number of rocks and boulders so plan your approach carefully

Local tip Both bays have

well-stocked cafes, serving ice creams and snacks

Great for A taste of the Caribbean

Ground Sand

Ability level Advanced



16. Portelet Bay, Jersey

The coast of Jersey boasts some of the most fabulous beaches and bays in the British Isles. Portelet Bay is one of those places that we

almost don't want to tell you about as then everyone might start coming and spoil all our fun. Situated on the south-west coast of

Jersey it provides a good anchorage in northerlies either side of Janvrin Tower, a single-cell tower that sits in the middle of the bay, often marked as Ile au Guerdain. From the beach there's a steep walk up through lush woodland which prevents the beach from becoming overcrowded. Once up there are lots of walking options – head towards St Brelade's Bay, another anchorage with shelter from the north and west.

Pilotage The Channel Islands (Imray); Imray C33B; AC 3655

Watch out for The complex system of tidal streams that affect the island

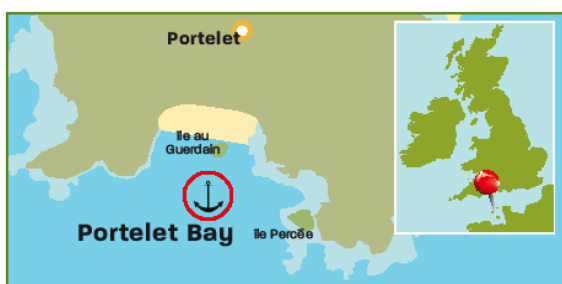
Local tip The crystal clear

water is ideal for swimming, and there is a lovely pub, the Old Portelet Inn, at the top of the walkway

Great for Secluded cove

Ground Sand

Ability level Intermediate



Anchor in Portelet, a quiet corner with a fabulous beach

ISLES OF SCILLY

One of the most beautiful yet unsung areas of the British Isles, the Isles of Scilly are made up of five inhabited islands and many smaller islets. Weather can change quickly here and anchoring should perhaps be reserved for more experienced skippers, as no anchorage in Scilly is protected from all directions. Despite this, anchoring here is an incredible experience.

17. St Helen's Pool, St Helen's

Escape it all in the relatively sheltered waters of St Helen's Pool



This anchorage on the southern side of the uninhabited island of St Helen's is idyllic, and as most boaters opt to moor in nearby St Mary's, you should find yourself alone to savour your surroundings. Anchor astride an invisible line joining the centre of Men-a-Vaur to the landing cairn on the southwest tip of St Helen's Island. St Helen's Pool is comparatively sheltered to other anchorages in the area but you may experience some swell near high water.



18. New Grimsby Harbour, Tresco

Situated between Bryher and Tresco, New Grimsby Harbour provides some of the best shelter in Scilly and you are protected in most wind conditions, except in

northwesterlies. A popular anchorage is between Hangman Island and the quay in 1.5m to 4.5m of water. This area is growing more popular each season and the

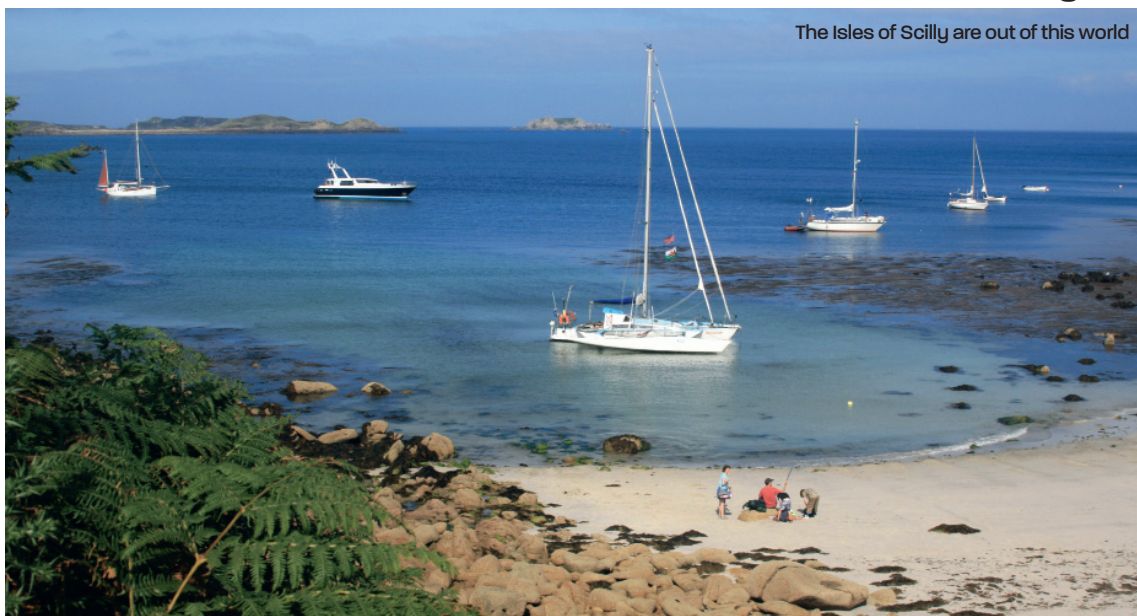
nearby visitor moorings are encroaching on the space, so if it's solitude you are after then try Old Grimsby on the other side of Tresco. There's a £5 fee to anchor.



You'll be well-protected in New Grimsby

19. Watermill Cove, St Mary's

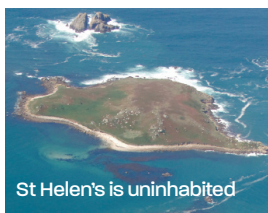
The Isles of Scilly are out of this world



This remote anchorage on the northeast side of St Mary's is well sheltered from south through west to northwest and is an excellent retreat from strong southwesterlies, when St Mary's Pool becomes unbearable and the nearby anchorage of Porth Cressa is unsafe. And that's not the only reason to visit, once here a beautiful sandy bay awaits you and, like many anchorages in the Isles of Scilly, it is devoid of crowds so you can drop the hook in 5m of water and enjoy your own private island paradise. This is undoubtedly what anchoring was made for.

WEST COAST AND WALES

This stretch of coastline is often overlooked and while many boaters from the south coast may navigate its waters to reach ports further north, woefully few stop to take a look around, which, it has to be said, is their loss.



St Helen's is uninhabited

Pilotage AC 1148, 34, 883; Imray C7

Watch out for Anchors may drag on sand, even with plenty of scope

Local tip The ruins of ancient Christian buildings are said to be on St Helen's

Great for Escaping the crowds and saying you've been there!

Ground Sand

Ability level Advanced

Pilotage AC 1148, 34, 883; Imray C7

Watch out for Weed and cables when anchoring

Local tip There's water on the harbour wall and fuel for sale in the local Duchy of Cornwall offices, but it is pricey

Great for Good protection

Ground Sand

Ability level Advanced



Explore St Mary's by boat or on foot

Pilotage AC 34, 883, 5603; Imray C7

Watch out for Changing weather conditions

Local tip A good base for exploring St Mary's on foot as a series of paths will take you round the island

Great for A reliable bolt-hole

Ground Sand

Ability level Advanced

20. Watermouth Cove, north Devon

This snug and shallow inlet, situated opposite

Waterworth Castle, is well sheltered from all but the strongest northwesterlies.

The entrance is tricky to spot, so aim for the white coastguard cottages above Rilage Point and then

head east until the entrance appears.

The anchorage is just inside Watermouth entrance and is best approached on a neap tide when you can tuck further in. At springs, the cove dries out to Burrow Nose. The



PHOTO: HAZEL LEWIS

A perfect lunch-time stop

view from the anchorage is striking, with impressive headlands overlapping eastward beyond Hangman Point. In quiet weather or southerly winds it's quite feasible to stay overnight at Watermouth, but if there's any northerly wind it's probably best to stick to a lunch-time stop.

Pilotage Bristol Channel and River Severn Cruising Guide by Peter Cumberland (Imray); AC 1165, 1179

Watch out for Heavy surge in strong NW winds

Local tip Nearby Watermouth Cove Holiday Park does decent meals in the evening

Great for Lunch-time stop

Ground Sand

Ability level Advanced

21. North Haven, Skomer Island, Pembrokeshire

This is the only anchorage on Skomer where landing is permitted and although there is a small fee, it's well worth it. Skomer is a National Nature Reserve and a Marine Nature Reserve, famous for its wealth of puffins (they are even smaller and cuter in reality) so it's a wonderful spot for any closet twitchers. Enter North Haven close to the western shore and land on the west side of the bay on the

Anchor at North Haven and you can step ashore

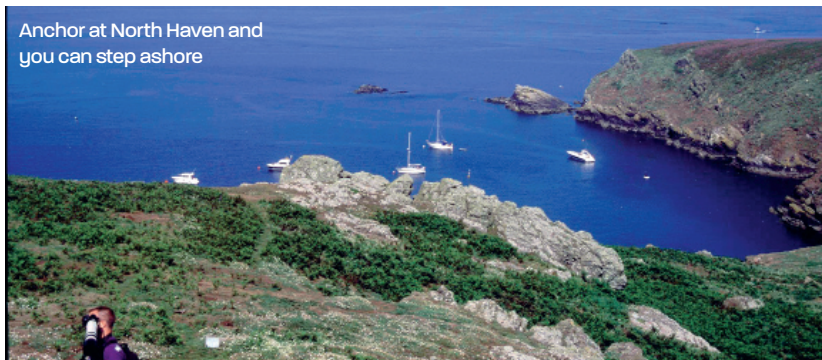


PHOTO: HAZEL LEWIS

beach or at the steps. Visitor buoys are provided and you must anchor

seaward of these.

Anchoring is not permitted shoreward of the buoys because of a rare bed of seagrass. It's also important to remember that although boaters can't land in South

Haven it does provide another anchor option. This means that whichever way the wind blows you should be able to find a peaceful, deep-water anchorage on Skomer.



Pilotage AC 5620, 1178, 1410; Imray C61, C51; Sea Guide to Pembrokeshire by Tom Bennett

Watch out for The reef on the east side on entry – keep well to the west of the bay

Local tip The Visitors Centre on Skomer has

been given a makeover so you can now stay overnight on the island

Great for Puffin spotting and beautiful wild flowers – the best months to visit are end of May, all of June and early July

Ground Sand

Ability level Intermediate

22. Cemaes Bay, Anglesey



Cemaes Bay is now owned by the National Trust



PHOTO: CROWN COPYRIGHT (2009) VISIT WALES

To the north of Anglesey, this sheltered spot provides views out across the Irish Sea but it can be vulnerable in northerly winds. Anchor in a couple of metres in the northeastern part of the

harbour where there's good holding in the sand. Cemaes Bay is a small village on the northern tip of Anglesey. Historically it was known for its boatbuilding heritage, but the village also housed

a fishing fleet and the harbour was once a thriving port. Now it is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and it is partly owned by the National Trust.

Pilotage AC 5609, 1826; Imray C61, C52
Watch out for Reef which extends from the western shore of Cemaes for half a cable.

Local tip In the town you'll find a shop, the Harbour Hotel and two pubs
Great for A history lesson
Ground Sand
Ability level Intermediate

IRELAND

It can be a bit of pot luck cruising along the Irish coastline as very little has been surveyed since 1914. Because of this you need to stay alert to depths of water in estuaries and sandy bays as there is often considerably less water than indicated on charts. However, despite this, there is a lot to discover and an awful lot of craic to be had.

23. Castle Haven

Sitting in the southwest of Ireland, this pretty estuary is a breath of fresh air and it can be entered at all states of tide. Certainly one of the best anchorages in west Cork – Ireland's jewel of a cruising ground – Castle Haven offers a protected

and excellent anchorage in most weathers, with some swell in strong southerly or southwesterly winds. Anchoring in the centre of the inlet can be tricky due to poor holding in seagrass – it's better at the sides where there's mud and



PHOTO: NORMAN KEAN

Castle Haven can be entered at all states of tide and is a great stopover when cruising Cork



sand. Also, be careful of the cable that crosses from Castletownshend village. Above the village the inlet – now much narrower and sheltered by a gravel spit called The League – continues for a mile between steep wooded shores. This stretch is pretty well full of moorings but it's almost perfectly sheltered. Castletownshend, on its steep narrow street (with what must be the smallest roundabout in Ireland) is rich in history and it was

home to several prominent and close-knit Anglo-Irish land-owning families, including that of Edith Somerville and her cousin Martin Ross, who together

wrote the famous Irish RM series of stories. This stretch of coastline is beautiful and scattered with lovely towns, just waiting to be discovered.

Pilotage Irish Cruising Club Sailing Directions for South and West Coasts; AC 2092, 2129; Imray C56
Watch out for The sea can be turbulent in strong winds by Horse Island at the entrance to the estuary
Local tip Give the ship's cook the night off and go to

Mary Ann's for dinner where you'll get to taste some of the seafood that this region is famous for. Water on the slipway, nearest diesel at Union Hall or Baltimore
Great for Exploring the West Cork coastline
Ground Mud/sand
Ability level Beginner



A great anchorage and no shortage of good pubs



24. Skerries Bay

This fairly sheltered bay can be susceptible to northerlies but its close proximity to the quaint town of Malahide, and its clear waters, make it an attractive anchorage. Many boats, including some rather intimidating trawlers, moor up at the pier but if you anchor in the bay you get the best of both worlds. Drop anchor in 3m of water and jump in the tender and head to one of the many delightful pubs.

Pilotage Irish Cruising Club Sailing Directions for North and East Coasts; AC 1468 Arlow to Skerries, 633; local charts for Malahide inlet; Imray C62

Watch out for The huge trawlers in the bay
Local tip Grab a bite at gastro pub Stoop Your Head, or pop next door to Joe Mays for some music

Great for A bit of craic
Ground Sand
Ability level Beginner

Your hidden treasures

This selection is by no means a definitive list, it's simply a taster of some of the great anchorages you can find right here in the British Isles. We hope it's opened your eyes to the incredible freedom anchoring offers, whether you want total seclusion, to indulge in a spot of bird or wildlife-watching, or to share your experience with other like-minded boaters. There are countless anchorages in the British Isles (too many to fit in here) so if you have a favourite that hasn't made the list email sally_coffey@ipcmmedia.com and tell us just what makes your chosen spot so fantastic. Go on, let us in on your secret anchorage.

25. Ringhaddy Sound, Strangford Lough, N Ireland

The name Strangford is derived from the old Norse, Strangrjöfth, meaning 'strong fjord', which is apt considering the tidal streams at its entrance. Once through this, however, you'll discover the hidden anchorage at Ringhaddy Sound. It is especially good for those that have just done an Irish Sea crossing, as its rural setting provides some nice serenity. Due to the strong tide, which can run at 8 knots at springs, it's best to enter on the flood tide and

leave near high water. Once in the lough the islands all look the same so pay close attention to your chart, although Ringhaddy Sound is easily spotted by the forest of masts. The most convenient anchorage, in 4m with a mud bottom, is in the channel west of Eaglehill Point and the safest course is to follow the line of moorings. You may be charged for anchoring, but fees are rarely collected. The Ards Peninsula offers rugged yet beautiful terrain.



Pilotage AC 2156, 2159, 5612; Imray C62
Watch out for Keep your wits about you inside the lock as it's studded with boulder reefs or 'pladdies'. Also note that Black Rock is 1.5m high, not 5m as on older charts
Local tip The picturesque

village of Killinchy has some cosy and welcoming pubs, as well as two good restaurants, Balloo House and Lisbarnett House
Great for A well-deserved rest after an Irish Sea crossing
Ground Mud
Ability level Intermediate



PHOTO: NORMAN KEAN

The perfect place to rest after a tiring Irish Sea crossing

How to anchor

Hopefully our suggestions on where to anchor have sufficiently whetted your appetite but if you're new to anchoring, or a little out of practise, turn to this month's MBM Skipper on page 82 for advice on how to drop and retrieve your anchor, information on the different types of grounds you may encounter, plus tips on how to stop your anchor from becoming fouled. And for those adventurous souls among you that plan to anchor overnight, this month's Ask the Experts on page 61 offers advice on night-time anchoring.



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