

Introduction

Contacts

Harbour Master 01665 710306 VHF #14 (office hours only)

Marina 01665 712168 VHF #80

Amble, sometimes known by its other name Warkworth Harbour....

.....is a small town that developed on the northern edges of the Northumberland coalfield. It's main purpose was exporting locally mined coal, a trade that declined after the war and dried up completely in the 60s. It's an attractive place for the sailor with Coquet Island just offshore, good coastal scenery and the historic Warkworth close by. The Pan Bush shallows in the approach mean the visiting yachtsman or motorboater needs to take care.

It is nowadays host to a small fishing fleet and a sizeable number of pleasure craft based at the Marina or on drying moorings.

For the small boat navigator the harbour is easy to identify from seawards because of the above-mentioned island, but this can cause it's own navigational hazards as can the shallow patch Pan Bush lurking more or less in the harbour approach. In strong onshore conditions or heavy swell seas break over Pan Bush and in the approaches to the harbour. In these conditions small craft need to keep well clear.

The reported damage to the Broomhill Quay which occurred in 2008 is now almost repaired and by May 2013 will be back in use again

Approach

Trinity House, a good few years back, removed all the coastal buoyage from the Northumberland coast,....

.....which have made the approaches to Amble (especially from the South) somewhat more tricky. Any kind of approach from the South involves dealing with Coquet Island.

The petrified mariner (who generally lives to be an old petrified mariner) will set his course well to seawards of Coquet Island, before making his turn inwards to the harbour. He will also allow plenty of clearance to the rocky ledges and shallow patches projecting from the north of the island.

Full pilotage directions now follow:

For the more adventurous there is a passage between the island and the shore, with minimum depths of around 2 m. The trouble is locating it... there are rocky ledges and shallows either side of the passage. For those intent on trying it, a series of carefully chosen waypoints wacked in the GPS would help. The best general advice is only to tackle it from half tide onwards, in daylight with good visibility. It is definitely not recommended to try the passage in the dark.

Next there is the shallow Pan Bush area to deal with. If you can see the sea breaking in the Pan Bush area the entrance to the harbour is likely to be unsafe. A further rise of the tide might solve this matter, but even if you don't see breaking seas on the bank it could still be dangerous in the entrance.

There is less than 0.5 m charted in the harbour entrance, and visitors should wait for a good rise of tide before attempting entry. **The shallow area shifts around sometimes closer to the North pier sometimes closer to the South pier. In the early summer of 2023 the deeper water is to be found south of the centreline between the entrance piers and then staying over towards the half tide barrier from there.. Amble Marina (VHF Ch. 80) will report on the current depth on their cill which is a good indication of what's available on the bar.**

Around four hours either side of high water for a vessel drawing 1.5 m should be okay in most circumstances unless there is heavy swell, in which case more caution will be required.

If approaching having passed between Coquet Island and the shore it is simply a matter of locating the Can buoy marking the end of the sewer outfall, and lining this up with the end of the North pier. Don't stray southwards of this transit as the Pan rocks are awaiting you. It is safe to stray to the north of the transit (once past the buoy), until the harbour entrance opens right up before turning inwards.

If approaching from the North everything is straightforward. With the harbour entrance bearing just west of south the two lighthouses on the piers will line up forming a transit, which will keep you clear of Pan Bush.

If your approach was from the South and you went outside Coquet Island and its outlying reefs and shallows to the north of it you have two choices... you can either continue in a north-westerly direction closing the coast until the harbour entrance bears just west of South. The directions above can then be followed.

Bearing in mind that Pan Bush is not marked in any way this may be the safest option.

Otherwise you can turn into the North Channel having rounded Coquet Island at a safe distance and use the white sector of the Island's lighthouse (switched on during the day) to move into Coquet Road. From here when the sewer outfall buoy bears due West it can be approached safely, and thence into the harbour as has already been described.

Entry is achieved by passing between the piers, the southern light tower is red-and-white and the Northern one a latticework structure. The deepwater normally favours the southern side close to the quays which are followed inwards but as mentioned elsewhere this can change so a check with the HM on channel 14 is advisable. **In the early summer of 2023 the deeper water is on the south side of the entrance** Keep over to the left hand side of the channel inbound until the entrance to the Marina opens up as described in the next section.

Berthing

The first length of quay you come across (Broomhill Quay) on your port side.....

...is used by fishing boats, this is followed by the inlet to a small drying dock for local cobbles. Next on your port side is Radcliff Quay followed by the entrance to Amble Marina.

The harbour no longer offers berthing at Broomhill Quay so your only place to moor as a visiting boat is the Marina.

Amble Marina

During the Covid restrictions this marina was "bookings only" and they have realised how much easier life is with that arrangement - so forward planning and advanced booking is required by them.

There is a chartlet of the Marina in the Navigation Images top right and can also be accessed [MARINA BERTHING PLAN](#)

The Marina is entered between a red can buoy (leave to port) and the breakwater. Here you will be able to lie afloat, and the water is kept in the Marina by a cill... the depth over the cill is shown on the tide gauge at the entrance. Vessels drawing 1.5 m can normally cross the cill 3 1/2 hours either side of high water springs, and maybe four hours either side of high water neaps.

The Marina works on VHF channel 80, telephone 01665 712168, and we've provided a link to their website below:

<http://www.amble.co.uk/>

Prices here work out at £3.40 per metre per day. There is an extra charge for shore power (£4.00 for a single night or £7.00 for several nights)

If you haven't received mooring instructions, get tied up at the reception pontoon (The second hammerhead in from the entrance) and collect the visitors pack which gives berthing directions.

Another possible mooring option within this harbour include Radcliffe Quay already mentioned (liable to touch bottom at low water, bottom may be hard, mast ropes may be needed) or the Coquet Yacht Club has drying moorings just a little further into the harbour which you may be able to make use of. A link to their website is provided below:

<http://www.coquetyachtclub.org.uk/>

The Harbour Master (as opposed to the Marina) operates on VHF channels 16 and 14, telephone 01665 710306 and works office hours only.

Facilities

All the usual Marina facilities are available here, with water and electricity on the pontoons, toilets, showers and laundry ashore. A sailors swapping library is available at the laundry.

There is good security with locked gates and CCTV in the Marina and car park, all the facilities are accessed by security cards. Gas bottles (Calor, Propane and Camping Gaz) and diesel are available.

The Marina office is open from 9 AM to 5 PM.

Full boatyard services are available at Amble from the Amble Boat Co. A new travel lift has been installed recently with 50 tonnes capacity, and can handle boats up to 22 m. This makes it the largest in the Northeast region.

All kinds of boatyard facilities are available including chandlery.

Trailer Sailors will find a public slipway next to the marina. It's available at half the tidal range, and costs £7.25 per day, payable at the Harbourmaster's Office (01665 710306).

Facilities in the village of Amble are unremarkable, but a selection of shops, pubs, supermarkets, cafes and banks will be found. A market is held at the harbour on Sundays. No railway station, but buses run to Alnwick, Morpeth, Ashington and Newcastle.

What To Do

Most visitors to the harbour make the trip to Warkworth, to visit the castle and the very pretty village. Warkworth has its fair share of pubs, cafes and shops and tea rooms.

Otherwise it's down to a little exploration of Amble village and you will find chip shops, an Indian restaurant plus a good selection of other eating places and pubs. The link below may help:

Pubs and Restaurants:

[Amble pubs and bars: pubs in Amble, Northumberland # beerintheevening.com](#)

Eating out

[Restaurants & Places to Eat in Amble 2021 - Tripadvisor](#)

History

Amble (known as Amble-by-the-sea until 1985) is a small town and seaport on the North Sea coast, in Northumberland, England. It lies at the mouth of the River Coquet, and the nearby Coquet Island is clearly visible from its beaches and harbour.

Many of the town's buildings and streets are named after the River Coquet and Coquet Island, including Coquet High School, which lies on the outskirts of town.

The town

Amble grew in the nineteenth century as collieries were opened, and its then newly built railway links to the Northumberland coalfields, made it an ideal centre for the transportation and export of coal. Other industries, such as ship building and repair on an area known as the Braid, now a greenfield site with a modern marina, and sea fishing, expanded with the growth of the town, although traditional Northumbrian fishing vessels such as cobbles have sheltered in the natural harbour for centuries previously. A part of the harbour wall suffered a partial collapse in the late summer of 2008 due to massive flooding which, in turn, left many areas of Northumberland in disarray. The nearby village of Warkworth, a mile up the river Coquet (pronounced coe ket) seen major flooding, as did other communities up the Coquet valley.

Today, the collieries in Northumberland are all closed (the last, Ellington, closed in 2005), and the railway no longer serves Amble. However, the fishing industry survives, albeit with a somewhat reduced numbers of vessels, as does a small marine industry, mainly concentrated around the construction and repair of yachts and other pleasure craft. A small industrial estate is located to the southwest of the town, whose clients include food processing plants, vehicle repairs and telecommunications companies.

Tourism forms an important sector of the town's economy - part of the harbour has been redeveloped into a marina, and caravan park, guest houses and B&Bs exist to serve visitors to the Northumberland coast.

Saint Cuthbert lived on Coquet Island just offshore from the town, which retains its strong Christian identity. Amble's four churches are often quite busy. Nearby Warkworth is noted for its castle.

The Friendliest Port

Amble holds the title 'Friendliest Port'. This derives from the 1930s when the RMS Mauretania was heading on her last voyage to the breaker's yard at Rosyth and the Amble town council (Amble Urban District Council) sent a telegram to the ship saying "still the finest ship on the seas". The Mauretania replied with greetings "to the last and friendliest port in England".

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