

Introduction

Contacts Fleetwood dock (for the lock) VHF#12 tel 01253 872351
Fleetwood Marina 01253 879062

Fleetwood lies just within the entrance to Morecambe Bay, a large area of drying mud and sand banks, punctuated by deeper channels.

The tides run hard and fast in this area, and the dangers of the banks were proved recently when, tragically, many Chinese migrant workers were cut off and drowned whilst harvesting cockles.

The approach to Fleetwood via the Lune Deep is shared with that of Heysham (a commercial port), and [Glasson Dock](#), covered separately.

Fleetwood has an interesting history in as much as it was built and named by a rich man who had big plans for the area. Sadly, history had other plans for him... the venture bankrupted him.

The docks were heavily used by the fishing industry, which created much employment in the town.... after the cod wars this completely dwindled away. By the early 80s only a few inshore fishing boats used the docks.

The Marina at Fleetwood is owned by ABP, and has been developed to make use of the redundant docks. Housing, stores and leisure facilities have sprung up around the Fleetwood Harbour Village, and there are other plans afoot for further rejuvenation of the whole area. Their original marina in the outer dock has been extended and now the Fish Dock is fully "marinised" Plans for both the inner and outer Marina can be found on their website given below.

Stenna Line Ferries which used to run from Fleetwood to Ireland, and shared the approach channel stopped operating in 2010

From a skipper's point of view the approach is straightforward and easy via Lune Deep, but needs to be timed so as to arrive at Fleetwood two hours either side of high water.

Approach

Any passage up the Lune Deep starts with locating and identifying the Lune Deep southerly Cardinal buoy (Q(6)+LFI.15s). It's coordinates are given in the data. It is also a RACON/AIS buoy so it shouldn't be too hard to locate lying 3 miles to the south-east of the conspicuous Barrow Wind Farm with its 30 gigantic turbines.

The Lune Deep is well marked by substantial lit buoyage, trending in a generally north easterly direction. Small craft need to keep within this channel and not stray because it is very steep sided, rising from depths of over 40 m to less than 1m in short order. Various charted drying dangers extend close along the Lune Deep's southern edges... Pilotage details, including entry to the marina and other drying berth possibilities:

Tides can run at over 3.5 Kn, and strong onshore winds meeting an ebbing tide can create steep and unpleasant seas in the deep.

For an approach to Fleetwood is necessary to locate the Fairway buoy, which is a northerly Cardinal (Q.FI). Check data for coordinates. They ask that you call the docks on VHF#12 before entering the channel.

[FC98 - Fleetwood Approaches \(fleetwoodhavenmarina.co.uk\)](#) shows the latest hydrographic survey of the port and its approaches (March 2022) Even a glance at that will show you that there is not a lot of water in that channel at Low tide and that, unless they have moved them, the No4 PHM and the No 3 SHM look a bit to port of the ideal course in. (Ed note:We're trying to get clarification on that)

Entrance to the River Wyre should be made on a rising tide, with the aim of arriving at Fleetwood Marina no earlier than 90 minutes before high water.

The course of the River is marked by lateral buoyage as far as the old Ro Ro berths for the ferry. The red can buoys are evenly numbered, and the conical green buoys have odd numbers. They are lit and passage is straightforward.

For a night approach there are further leading lights to help, the lower light (Iso.G.2s) is on a 14m tower located on the shoreline. The rear light (Iso.G.4s) is on a brick tower, 28m tall set further back. These lineup on 156° T.

Once level with the old Ro Ro berth and the final red can buoy No.22 (Q.R), a fairly central course up River is maintained until you can clearly see the lock entrance to Wyre Dock. At this stage swing a bit to starboard and follow the buoyed dock channel. Keep well clear of the end of The East Bund

In the approaches call Fleetwood Dock on VHF channel 16, working channel 12. The lock works a couple of hours either side of high water, and may well be open for free flow.

The signal consisting of a black ball displayed at the entrance means access is clear for inbound vessels, whilst two black balls displayed vertically mean access is for outbound vessels.

Once through the gates you will be virtually in the Marina. This access is shared with fishing vessels using the fish dock, who's wash can cause some disturbance when berthed within the Marina.

It is possible if, not using the Marina, to push on up the River Wyre. This trip needs to be tackled about an hour before high water. In the area of Wardleys Creek and Skipool Creek will be found private drying moorings belonging to Wardleys Marine Yacht Club, and The Blackpool and Fleetwood YC. The way is then blocked by Shard Bridge.

Links to their websites are provided below:

Wardleys Marine YC:

[http:// www.wardleys.org. /](http://www.wardleys.org/)

Blackpool and Fleetwood YC:

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

Berthing

Once into the docks, you will see the Marina pontoons on either side of you.

If you haven't already received instructions, there is normally plenty of room to get tied up. You can phone the Marina in advance on 01253 879062, and a link to their website is provided:

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

The cost here (2022) works out at £2.65 per metre per night boat with electricity included. The weekly rate is £13.99 per metre.

Facilities

Water and electricity (included in the mooring fee) are available on the pontoons, with showers toilets and laundry ashore.

Provisions should be no problem with a Kwik Save in the Harbour Village, and the Co-op and Asda nearby. Overlooking the Marina wall are lots of well known retail outlets including an M & S.

Public transport to Fleetwood is not that convenient for crew changes. There is no railway station, but there is a tram running to Blackpool where mainline services can be found.

Trailer Sailability will find a convenient launch site at Knott End, on the opposite side of the River to the docks (01253 879062). This ramp has access at three quarters of the tidal range with charges payable to the ferry operators. Jetskis are not allowed.

What To Do

If you are moored in the Marina you will be able to find something to eat in the Freeport shopping village, with it's Food Court and a McDonald's.

On the other hand you are right on top of the town, where a much larger number of choices await you.....

Try the links below for further information

Pubs

<http://www.beerinevening.com/pubs/results.shtml/el/Fleetwood%3BLancashire/>

Restaurants

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

History

Fleetwood is a town within the Wyre district of Lancashire, England, lying at the northwest corner of the Fylde. It had a population of 26,840 people at the 2001 Census. It forms part of the Greater Blackpool conurbation. The town was the first planned community of the Victorian era. For most of the twentieth century, Fleetwood was a prominent deep-sea fishing port, but, since the 1970s, the fishing industry has declined precipitously and the town has undergone economic difficulties. Fleetwood is also a seaside resort, serving as a quiet contrast to nearby Blackpool.

There is evidence that the eastern side of the River Wyre was occupied during the Danish invasions of the 9th and 10th centuries, and by the time of the Domesday Book in 1086, the land on which Fleetwood now stands was part of the Hundred of Amounderness.

A Manor House at present-day Rossall, in the southwest of the town, was in the possession of the Allen family by the time of Henry VIII. The Allens were prominent Roman Catholics, and Henry VIII repossessed the land. Cardinal William Allen was born at the Manor House in 1532. It was ultimately sold to Thomas Fleetwood, Comptroller of the Royal Mint, whose son Edmund, expanded the house into Rossall Hall. The land remained in the Fleetwood family for 300 years.

By the 1830s, the house and estate was in the ownership of Edmund's descendant Peter Hesketh, High Sheriff of Lancashire and MP for Preston, who later changed his name to (Sir) Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood. A man of somewhat liberal views for his time, Hesketh believed that the sheltered harbour and views over Morecambe Bay gave the area the makings of a busy sea port and popular resort for the less-affluent. With no rail link between London and Scotland, He envisaged Fleetwood as the transfer point between the rail and the steamers to Scotland, and set about encouraging a railway link from Preston. In 1836, after considering the names Wyreton and New Liverpool he named the new town Fleetwood, and hired the prominent architect Decimus Burton, whose work in St Leonard's-on-Sea he had admired, to lay out what would be the first planned town of the Victorian era.

Burton's plan was to use largest of the sand-dunes on the north-facing shore as the focus of a half-wheel street layout. This was landscaped, and became known as The Mount. It served as the hub of Burton's half-wheel design, the main residential streets acted as the spokes, and the main commerce area of Dock Street was the rim of the wheel. The oldest surviving building in the town, once the Custom House, later the Town Hall, and latterly Fleetwood Museum, dates from 1838 and housing from as early as 1839 still exists in the town. The crown jewel was the North Euston Hotel, built in 1841, a fine semi-circular building overlooking the bay and the river estuary. The hotel was built to serve overnight guests making the rail journey from Euston, and was close to the point of departure for the steamers to Scotland. This journey was made by Queen Victoria in 1847, but by the mid-1850s the completion of the western railway link between London and Scotland over Shap Fell rendered Fleetwood's role as a transport terminus obsolete.

By 1844, Hesketh had run into serious financial difficulties. He had engaged Frederick Kemp as his agent and the two had big financial arguments. Kemp borrowed against the estate revenues to finance the expansion of the town, and Hesketh became short of cash. He was obliged to sell much of his estate. He leased Rossall Hall itself to the Church of England, which intended to set up a boarding school as a North of England equivalent of Marlborough School.

By 1847, Hesketh was virtually bankrupt and retired to Brighton. Meanwhile, Kemp's influence expanded. He set up the Fleetwood Estates Company to manage the land, and the North Lancashire Steam Navigation Company in 1843 to manage the expanding steamer trade. However, by the late 1850s, the combination of the new western railway route and the rise of neighbouring Blackpool as a prominent seaside resort signalled a decline in the town's fortunes.

From the 1860s Fleetwood expanded its port activities. Steamers began pleasure and commercial services to the Isle of Man, Ardrossan, and Belfast. Half a mile of stone quays were built along the river front, and the railway line was extended to the steamer pier opposite Queen's Terrace, where an imposing new passenger station was built in 1883. The port was still mainly a cargo terminal at this time, but the fishing industry began to grow as vessels expanded their catchment area from the Irish Sea fishing grounds first fished in the 1840s, to the haddock grounds of the North Atlantic Ocean. At this time, all the fishing vessels out of Fleetwood were sail-powered fishing smacks, few being over 40 tons deadweight. The Fleetwood Docks Act of 1864 enabled the construction of a dock and embankment for both fishing and general cargo. Work on what was to become Wyre Dock began in 1869 but was suspended for financial reasons. A second Act in 1871 gave construction authority to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company, under chief engineers Sir John Hawkshaw and Harrison Hayter. Construction itself, by John Aird & Sons, was completed in 1877. Heavy industry came to the area in the late 1880s with the construction of a salt-processing works on the South-Eastern edge of the town by the Fleetwood Salt Co. Ltd, using salt mined in Preesall, across the river.

By the early 1890s, the construction and expansion of rival cargo ports in the North-West and the building of the Manchester Ship Canal heralded the decline of Fleetwood's prominence as a cargo port. However, at the same time this was more than offset by a period of rapid expansion of the fishing industry, signalled by the launch in 1891 of the first steam-powered trawler, the Lark. All the other major fishing ports in Britain, Hull, Grimsby and Aberdeen, were on the east coast, so there was a competitive advantage for a west-coast port with good rail links. By the turn of the century, Fleetwood's position as one of the three major fishing ports in England was cemented. James Marr brought a fleet of steam trawlers to Fleetwood and actively started to change the port by selectively fishing for hake, which until then had been treated as a much less desirable catch. Many of the houses in the old area of town around The Mount and Lord Street were built in the 1890s. In keeping with the thriving economy, these terraced houses were large for their era. An electric tramway link to Blackpool was constructed in the 1890s and remains operational to this day. The trams were routed along East Street and West Street (now Lord Street and North Albert Street) rather than Dock Street, and commercial trade followed, making those streets the commercial centre of the town. Fleetwood is the only town in Britain with trams running the full length of its main street, sharing road-space

with cars. The docks were expanded in 1908 with the construction of the Fish Dock, accessible through Wyre Dock and still used today for the inshore fleet. Plans for a pier were first made in the 1890s but building did not start until 1909 and it was opened in 1910. It was the last new seaside pier to be built in the United Kingdom.

By the 1960s, however, Fleetwood began to decline economically. The last ferry to the Isle of Man sailed in 1961. The sailings have been revived periodically since. The main railway station was closed in 1966 as a result of the Beeching cuts, and the passenger terminus was moved to Wyre Dock station. This in turn was closed in 1970, as the branch line from Poulton was taken out of service. Additional light industry developed along the former railway bed. The rise of package holidays abroad led to fewer visitors generally to British resort towns. As Blackpool expanded its attractions, fewer day visitors came to Fleetwood, and as transportation became more efficient, more overnight visitors became day visitors. The Hillhouse plant was heavily cut back, and was finally closed in 1999. Most serious, however, was the collapse of the fishing industry, which was largely destroyed in the late 1960s and early 1970s by the Cod Wars, a dispute over fishing rights between Iceland and the UK. As Fleetwood's trawlers mainly fished the North Atlantic Ocean in search of cod, the loss of the fishing grounds hit the town hard. The last deep sea trawler left the town in 1982 and now only inshore fishing boats fish out of the port, although trawlers registered in other places can still be seen taking advantage of the fish market. Fish is still a big industry in the town, though the jobs are mainly in processing rather than fishing. A pair of bronze figures on the Promenade by the pier depicts the idea of families welcoming back the fishermen from sea.

In 1973, the area around the old railway station was developed into a container port facility, with P & O operating a container service to Larne in Northern Ireland. In 1975, this became a Roll-on/roll-off service. This development led indirectly to some renewal of the then largely derelict Dock Street area, and improved road access to the town to support the container traffic. Twice-daily container service continued until 2004 when Stena Line bought the route and increased the service to three times a day.

Since the 1970s there have been several attempts to enhance Fleetwood's economic profile. In 1995, the now-deserted Wyre Dock was developed into a marina. The derelict dock landing area was developed into Fleetwood Freepoint, a retail centre, and housing has been built at the north end of the marina. Most recently, in July 2007, a new "Masterplan" for revitalizing the waterfront and town centre was submitted to the Wyre Borough Council.

The plan has three main areas for development:

- * Transport - Improvements to the A585 link road. Restoration of the railway link including a new railway station in Fleetwood. Improved links to the riverside coastal paths and Fleetwood Marsh Nature Reserve.
- * Seafront scene transformation - New waterfront environment with housing, beach sports, family area and bigger entertainment attractions. The original plan placed housing on land opposite the Mount Hotel on land currently used as a nine hole pitch and putt course, but, after opposition from residents, this part of the plan was dropped. The waterfront would have a discovery and entertainment centre focused around a re-fashioned Marine Hall, with better health and fitness facilities nearby.
- * Attractive new look for centre - The Masterplan includes plans for more open spaces and more national name shops on Lord Street, with Albert Square and Station Road earmarked as public squares. A new landmark square and heart of the town is proposed on both Lord Street and London Street with cafes, bars and restaurants.

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