

## Introduction

Maryport like many other harbours in this area was once mainly concerned

..... with the export of coal. Together with iron and steel, vast quantities were exported through Maryport. Shipbuilding also had a place here. With industrial decline business disappeared and the harbour became silted up. Regeneration is now taking place with a Marina fully established in Senhouse Dock, and a narrow dredged channel allowing access at a bit less than half the tidal range. The gates, which collapsed in October 2009, have been replaced by stronger ones so, theoretically, there should not be a repeat of that incident. See "More info" below.

The docks are close to the main town, so shopping and provisioning should be no problem.

Visiting boats of up to 70 feet can be accommodated lying against the dock walls, while smaller vessels use the pontoons. Access to the Marina is via gates that open approximately 2 hours either side of high water, and when closed maintain adequate depths within the dock. Staff are on hand 24 Hrs.

## Approach

Any kind of approach from the Scottish Coast requires that you keep outside of Solway Firth.

This area of strong tidal streams and shifting sandbanks should be left on your port side, by passing outside the Robins Rigg Wind Farm (the westerly Cardinal buoy Two Feet Bank was discontinued in 2010). Once past this wind farm a course can be shaped up towards Workington. In the region of the North Workington northerly Cardinal buoy (Q), a new course can be set for a safe distance off Maryport harbour entrance. But the offing you give Robin Rigg, the Two Feet Bank and Three Fathoms Bank and where you turn for Maryport will depend on the state of the tide, wind direction etc

Any approach from the South needs a good offing, say 1.5 miles offshore to avoid rocky outcrops.  
Full pilotage directions:

Tidal streams run strongly off the harbour. The north-east going tide reaches its maximum speed (pushing 3 kn at Springs) between three hours and one hour before HW Liverpool. The south-west going tide reaches its full speed (again up to 3 kn at Springs) at 3 to 5 hours after HW Liverpool.

This harbour can be entered in most conditions.

Maryport is not over endowed with navigational lights, so perhaps a night entry is best left to locals.

A quick glance at the photo gallery will show that at low water the drying harbours are just that... a sea of mud. There is approximately 1.8m depth between the piers at the entrance by half tide also in the river channel. All the mudbanks cover around two hours before high water. Effectively this means a boat of about 1.5 m draft will be able to squeeze in around three hours before high water springs, with perhaps more leeway at neaps.

The Marina is entered via a gate (not a lock), and water levels within are maintained at 2.4 m above the gate sill. The gate is normally open two hours either side of high water.

When entering the harbour keep Central between the piers, and only swing to starboard when the gate to the Marina is actually abeam (to avoid a mountain of mud waiting for you if you cut the corner). If you need to wait for the gate to open a it is possible to temporarily anchor in the approach (without blocking access to the rest of the harbour).

## Berthing

The Marina works on VHF channel 12, initial call up on channel 16 call sign 'Maryport Marina', staff are available 24 hours.

Alternatively telephone 01900 814431. Berth as instructed within, there's plenty of room. The overnight price here (2022) is £19.50 per 10m boat per night and electricity on a card (check that there isn't still some left on your pillar before buying a new one!)

The Marina Website is at

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

## Facilities

This full-service marina has water and electricity on the pontoons, toilets and showers ashore. A launderette is nearby.

Diesel fuel, Calor gas and camping Gaz are available, while boats of up to 25 tonnes can be lifted with on-site repair facilities. Hardstanding is available, as is chandlery.

Petrol is, as usual, is a good half hour walk.

There is a Yacht club here but, as far as we know it doesn't have a club house.

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

For other Marine services in Maryport check the directory.

Trailer Sailers have the choice of two slipways, one leads into the non-tidal Marina and the other is at the head of Senhouse Basin. This one leads into the River and its shared with the lifeboat. Access here is at about half the tidal range, there are charges.

All the town facilities are on hand, and although the town isn't overly endowed with big-name supermarkets there is a Co-op, and other provisioning needs can be handled by the local shops.

Transport wise Maryport is on the West Coast branch line which connects with Carlisle for inter city services.

## What To Do

The visitor will find plenty to do in Maryport, much regeneration effort is centred around the Marina and Docks. If interested perhaps the best thing to do is have a look at the local link below:

[Things to Do in Maryport - 2022 \(with Photos\)](#)

A good choice of eating places will be found closed by including Italian, Chinese, and no lack of humble fish and chips. Check the link below for a full list:

[Restaurants & Places to Eat in Maryport 2022](#)

As for pubs there is plenty of choice, some of them serve food:

Pubs

<http://www.beerinevening.com/pubs/Maryport>

## History

The town was first established as the Roman fort Alauna in around AD 122 as a command and supply base for the coastal defences of Hadrian's Wall at its western extremity. There are substantial remains of the Roman fort, which was the last in a series of forts stretching southwards along the coast from Hadrian's Wall, aimed at preventing the wall being avoided by a crossing of the Solway Firth. Recent geomagnetic surveys have revealed a large Roman town surrounding the fort. A recent archaeological dig discovered evidence of a second, earlier and larger fort next to, and partially under the present remains. After the Roman withdrawal from Britain the town was soon reduced in size and importance.

Georgian times

For many years the town was named Ellenfoot but the name was changed by Humphrey Senhouse as he began developing the town as a port, following the example of Whitehaven. In 1749 an Act of Parliament was passed to allow the creation of the present town. Humphrey Senhouse named the new town after his wife Mary. The Senhouse family were the major landowners in the Maryport area and they were responsible for the development of the town and excavation of its Roman past. It was during this period that the town's lighthouse was built.

Victorian times

The town quickly developed as an industrial centre throughout the 19th century with an iron foundry and coal mines opening. The port also developed as did shipyards, such as Ritson's, which were famous for launching ships broadside into the River Ellen because it was not wide enough to allow ships to be launched the usual way. The Maryport & Carlisle Railway railway to Carlisle was built in the 1840s, with George Stephenson as its engineer, and the line handled heavy coal traffic at the Maryport end. Maryport docks were exporting over 340,000 tons/yr of coal by 1857 - about triple the exports at the end of the 1830s. As a result the railway paid exceedingly good dividends - 9 to 10% - for much of its first 50 years.

Modern times

By the beginning of the 20th century the town was suffering an economic decline. All but one of the shipyards had closed and trade declined because the newly built dock was not wide enough to accommodate new ships. During the 1930s depression, adult unemployment peaked at over 50%.

The town had a brief recovery during World War II but its status as an industrial port was never recovered. The decades after the war saw further industrial decline with many of the primary sources of local employment, such as

the coal mines, closing down. The final open-cast mine closed in 2000. Today, after a series of major regeneration projects, prospects for the town are looking better.

Tourism is now the main business in Maryport. There is an aquarium, a maritime museum and a Roman museum. The latter houses numerous Roman artefacts, most notably a series of altars to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, which were excavated in the 18th century from the parade ground of the Roman fort.

In July 2008, a new tourism venue, The Wave Centre, opened its doors. The Wave Centre is a theatre and conference facility, an interactive heritage exhibition on the local history of Maryport, the Tourist Information Centre for Maryport, and a gift shop and bistro.

The town is a major name on the blues scene, holding a popular 3 day music festival every summer, which has previously attracted names such as Jools Holland, Dionne Warwick, Elkie Brooks, Buddy Guy, Van Morrison and Chuck Berry.

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