

## Introduction

Contacts: Coleraine Harbour VHF #12 Tel 028 70342012 (Capt Pat McKeegan)

Coleraine Marina VHF #M Tel 028 70344768

Seatons Marina Tel 07718 883099

Coleraine Harbour is four miles up the River Bann from the entrance at Barmouth. It is a busy market town established on the lowest crossing of the River Bann and there has been a settlement of sorts there since prehistoric times.

Once inside the River Bann passage upstream is deep, sheltered and very well marked. Coleraine is probably the most prosperous town in Northern Ireland, the population of just over 20,000 occupying the most expensive property in the Province (more so even than Belfast). The University of Ulster (not to be confused with the much older Queens University in Belfast) was established here in the 1960s with all the advantages that brings to the services in the town.

The rivers on this coast are famous for their salmon fishing and information on this can be found at:

<http://www.fishpal.com/Ireland/Bann/>

A word to the wise; don't even think of flicking a fly or spoon off the marina pontoon - you must have a licence and anyway, if the fish are as big as the locals claim, you could end up in the middle of the river, along with the pontoon! When the salmon are running they can be seen jumping the weir in the middle of town. For the sailor who likes exploring there is a Mesolithic fort on the East bank of the river in the Mount Sandel forest between the bridge and the weir. There is also a good bus service to the towns of Port Stewart and Portrush which are the playgrounds for the population of County Derry and Antrim.

The river Bann is navigable all the way to Lough Neagh but you'd have to lower the mast if you have one; if you have an exploring kind of nature, and time to spare, a trip up to Lough Neagh could prove interesting. For advice on this you could contact the Antrim Boat Club whose website can be found at

<http://antrimboatclub.co.uk/wordpress/>

On the other hand, if you have an outboard for your dinghy the river lends itself to idle "Ratty" type messing about.

## Approach

In the River Bann Ingoing is 0225 after HW Dover and Outgoing 0415 before HW Dover.

The ebb can reach speeds of 3kts at the entrance and can be felt out to two miles from the shore. The River Bann is the outfall for Lough Neagh so the stronger currents can be expected after heavy rainfall inland

The approach is quite simple for boats equipped with GPS as one merely gets to the Initial Fix, turns onto 165 and looks for the lead in marks and the East pierhead which has a 4.5 metre white concrete tower on it. As has been mentioned earlier, if one can see white water between you and the pierhead it is time to think of going elsewhere, especially if the waves can be seen breaking over the West pier.

For those without a GPS, if you are coming from the West, there is a headland with an ancient monument at the Eastern end of the sands which stretch all the way from Magilligan Point; once round this, the entrance is about half

a mile further up the beach; if coming from the East and having given Port Stewart Point a goodly offering, head straight towards the village of Castlerock on the other side of the bay and it will be easy enough to identify the training walls at the entrance.

Once inside the training walls the channel is well marked with buoys and perches following the international standards (Region A) for port and starboard markings. The entrance and channel are well lit so there should be no problems in making an entry after dark.

## Berthing

It is possible to anchor anywhere in the river as long as one is outside the main channel.....

....but it would be wise to anchor fore and aft with the bows upstream and wear lights/shapes as appropriate. There is an anchorage and moorings just upstream of the Old CG Station but watch out for the depth. There are three marinas about four miles up the river and closer to the town.

### **Seatons Marina :**

<http://seatonsmarina.co.uk/>

Family run marina with one designated visitors berth and they are charging £15 per night for that. They have power and water on their pontoons with toilets, showers and coffee facilities ashore.

Their office is only manned on Saturday mornings but if you intend using this facility you should ring ahead to the mobile number listed above.

### **Cranagh Marina**

A few years ago this facility stopped operating and was put up for sale. The new owners concentrated on the shore side restaurant (which looks very inviting) but a couple of years ago started redeveloping the Marina side. They now have over 250 metres of pontoons They have shore power and water on all the berths; toilets and showers ashore plus an activities centre. The result is that they now have a well served marina. It's about two miles from the town and does not have fuel. They will be charging (2019) £25.00 per night irrespective of size (that's a reduction and includes shore power)

They are very pushed for space and need notice of any intended visit as they do not have spaces reserved for visitors.

They can be contacted on 07710015067 and their website is at

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

**Coleraine Marina. Telephone (HM Portrush) 028 7082 2307** The main visitors' berths are at Coleraine Marina just under a mile further up river: this is the Coleraine Yacht Club's home Marina and is run by the Coast and Glens Borough Council. The day to day running is done by the HM out at Port Rush so you have to contact them for permission to tie up and get all the codes for the pontoons and amenities block

There is water and power on all berths and a shower/toilet block ashore. Both diesel and petrol is available at the marina. They are charging (2021) £2.50 per metre per boat.

### **Town Centre Marina**

It is understood that that Coleraine Harbour Commissioners have installed two new pontoons for yachts; one each side of the river at the town bridge. Since we last wrote they have appointed a new HM here and she can be contacted on 028 70342012 (07921 361459 mobile) during office hours. They use VHF#12 when necessary. You MUST contact them before you plan a visit here because they do not always have space available and you need to

make arrangements for a bridge swing

The railway bridge before these pontoons has an air draft of 4.9m (about 7m at LW) so if your air draft is greater than this you will need the rail bridge lifted; in order to co-ordinate your movement with that of rail traffic (which has priority) you will have to give the HM as much warning as possible of your arrival and stick to the arranged ETA. . Bridge swings for commercial traffic are fairly normal events so they do not make a big thing out of it.

<http://coleraineharbour.com/leisure/>

## Facilities

### Coleraine Marina:

The visiting mariner can put his feet up here; water and electricity is available at all berths and there is a modern shower block. Unusually both petrol and diesel are available on site but the chandlery that did exist is no longer in business; the nearest one is now at the other end of town (see below for plans to add a chandlery at the Town Centre Marina, Bottled gas (Calor and Camping) has to be found in the town . This is where most visitors to Coleraine clew up rather than go through the pantomime of passing under the railway bridge

### Cranagh Marina

This marina is once again a going concern with a high class bistro on site.

### Seaton's Marina

The facilities here are well covered by their website and have updated facilities to provide toilets and showers.

### Town Centre Marina

This is a new addition to the berthing availability at Coleraine. They have two berthing pontoons, one either side of the river just below the town bridge, with water and shore power. There are new toilets and showers on the East side of the river and a chandlery expected some time as well. They were charging in bands but have scrapped that and now (2021) will be charging a flat £30 per boat irrespective of length.

The berths are secure and fobs for the gates are obtained from the harbour office.

Here they also have a Roodberg 40tonne slipway trailer and a crane for lifts up to 18tonne

The town itself is well endowed with super markets and shops so this is a good place to stock up on supplies.

If revictualling is high on the priorities for a visit here the new pontoons at the town bridge will be far more convenient for shops and launderettes.

There are rail and road connections to airports and ferries to the UK which makes it an ideal spot to meet crews or leave the boat for the winter.

## What To Do

Coleraine is a busy town during the day but tends to shut down at night . There are pubs (which get a bit wild on a weekend night in the town centre) and the normal collection of Take-Aways but the consensus of opinion is that the night life is in Port Stewart and Portrush.

## History