

## Introduction

### Contacts

Fowey Harbour Office tel 01726 832471 or 832472, VHF#12,  
Fowey Harbour Taxi tel 07774 906730 or VHF #06 [www.foweywatertaxi.co.uk](http://www.foweywatertaxi.co.uk)  
Tom,s Yard Polruan tel 01726 870232 [www.ctomsandson.co.uk](http://www.ctomsandson.co.uk)

Fowey is a very active port, combining heavy commercial traffic and yachting. The estuary and river are extremely attractive, and the harbour authorities manage to juggle the needs of commercial shipping and visiting yachts very well. Entry is easy, there are plenty of moorings available, and for shallow draft craft it is possible to navigate deep upriver. The town has a long seafaring history, and most yachting needs will be met here, including hauling, repairs, chandlery, and all day-to-day basic needs.

Shelter is good, and entry is possible in all weather, although in strong onshore winds with an ebbing tide, it can get a bit rough. In South or south westerly gales a scend runs in the harbour, making the berths in the lower harbour area uncomfortable, and in these conditions shelter is available further up the river, away from the town.

The town itself provides all facilities including provisions, pubs, restaurants and banks. For loading up with stores and water, two shortstay pontoons are provided with good access to the town.

There is no marina here, all moorings are either of the swinging variety or isolated pontoons, although the visitors pontoon at Mixtow allows walk ashore access.

An increasing number of cruise liners are making Fowey a port of call together with large heavy ships engaged in the china clay trade.

The harbour is visited by over 7000 yachts annually, and in summer it can get crowded and you will probably have to raft up, but the whole place makes a really nice change from staying in a bland Marina.

The Fowey Harbour website can be found at [www.foweyharbour.co.uk](http://www.foweyharbour.co.uk)

## Approach

Fowey is easy to spot from seawards thanks to the day mark

..... on Gribbin Head 1.25 miles south-west of the entrance. It consists of a red-and-white tower 25.6 m high constructed on a base 71 m above sea level. Approaching from the East the danger is Udder Rock (Dries 0.6m). This is 3 miles east of the entrance and is marked by a lit southerly cardinal bell buoy. The Cannis Rock (which dries at 4.3 m) lies approximately 4 cables south east of Gribbin Head, (ie to the South West of the entrance). Mariners need to pass seawards of the southerly cardinal bell buoy marking this danger. At night the white sector of Fowey Lighthouse (L Fl WR 5s) keeps you clear of dangers.

Much useful information is available here, particularly concerning shipping movements.

<http://www.foweyharbour.co.uk/leisure-information>

### Pilotage details:

From the West you can alter course towards the entrance once past Cannis Rock, but there are rocky ledges off the west shore so keep a good offing until close to the entrance. At night after using the white sector of the Fowey Lighthouse to guide you safely towards the entrance, the inner Lighthouse on Whitehouse Point, located near the town on the western shore provides a sectored light (ISO RWG 3s), the white sector of which will lead you in. Probably the safest way to approach this Harbour, is on a Northerly heading, from a position well offshore, clear of all the costal dangers.

As you enter the river by day you will see on the western side St Catherine's Point (Fl R 2.5s) and on the eastern side Punch Cross Rocks, which are marked by a beacon. Next on the eastern side comes Lamp Rock, marked by a beacon (Fl G 5s).

By now you will be past the narrowest point which is only about one cable wide, and the harbour will start to open up.

It must be remembered that the main deep water channels are in constant use by large heavy deep draught ships that cannot change their course. Yachtsmen are advised to keep well clear of the main channels wherever possible and keep a sharp lookout, especially astern. Unladen ships approaching the harbour have impaired visibility at close quarters, you may see them, but can they see you? Deep draught ships (Depths of up to 9m !!!) leaving the harbour cannot stop quickly, and when the engines are reversed they become unmanageable, as there is no prop wash. All in all, although the harbour is easy to enter, great care is necessary because of the narrow entrance and frequent ship movements.

Information on entering the port can be obtained from "Fowey Harbour Radio" or "Fowey Harbour Patrol" on VHF Channel 12. Advice on ship movements is available from Fowey harbour radio, or "Fowey Pilots" on VHF Channel 9.

<http://www.foweyharbour.co.uk/> Harbour Office 01726 832471 or 832472

## Berthing

The harbour and river are under the control of the Fowey harbourmaster and

..... his assistants will be active all round the harbour in their launches, which are all named after characters from the " Magic Roundabout".

It is more than likely that you will be met and directed to an appropriate berth if you arrive during working hours. All yachts or motorboats over 12.5 m long should seek advice from the harbour authorities before picking up any mooring, and no vessels are allowed to anchor unless given permission and directed by the authorities.

The charges for anchoring are the same as for mooring, and vessels at anchor may be required to move to allow swinging room for ships.

Visiting boats are well catered for and there are a number of facilities located close to the town. There are five sets of floating pontoons available for visitors, two are at the entrance to the Pont Pill, three off Prime Cellars Boat Ho (Underhills), one opposite No4 Pier (Grid Irons), and another pontoon is in Mixtow Creek, opposite the commercial jetties.

The pontoon marked on the chart opposite Albert Quay has been moved northwards and is now off the boat house above the No2 & No3 buoys (off Prime Cellars Boat ho, opp the lifeboat) The visitors berths on the Mixtow Creek 165 m pontoon are on the South side, and these are dredged to 2m LAT. This particular pontoon allows walk ashore access. The other pontoon's mentioned do not.

In the summer of 2016 they trialled overnight stops on the pontoon at Berril's Yard but it is uncertain how busy it will be there (Water Taxi, boats tenders etc?)

That trial was successful and they have continued to use the Berril's Yard pontoon for overnight stop. There is shore power on that pontoon now at £2.60 a night and the charge for using the pontoon is £2.80 per metre.

Further details including visitors prices: There are numerous visitors mooring buoys available, and these are all clearly marked " FHC Visitors", and coloured blue. The prices have been simplified and basically you pay £2.10 per metre per night everywhere (buoy or pontoon) apart from on the Mixtow pontoon where it is £2.70 per metre per night. All the moorings and pontoons are on the Polruan side with the exception of the Berril's Yard pontoon where an overnight stop is £2.80 per metre

There are three short-stay landing pontoons for boats over 4.5 m, one is situated at Albert Quay, one at Berrill's Yard on the Fowey Shore, and the other at Polruan Quay. **New for 2022 ONEhour is the maximum stay at these locations**, and they can be used for watering up, gathering stores, etc. There are penalties for overstaying, and hogging these quays is considered antisocial, bearing in mind how many other users may be waiting to get on there. Once again extreme care needs to be exercised whilst moving around in the harbour, due to large ship movements.

Once safely tied up to a mooring buoy or pontoon, access to the town is via dinghy, and a place to leave these whilst ashore is out of the way on the inside of the shortstay landing pontoons.

The RNSA has one mooring available for visiting members only.

There is plenty of water for yachts, as the river is dredged right up to the commercial berths at Mixtow. For intrepid explorers in shallow draught vessels the river is navigable right up to Lostwithiel, given the right state of the tide. Local knowledge is advisable, however, because the upper reaches of the river are tidal and dry to a meandering stream.

A copy of the 2022 Fowey Harbour Guide can be downloaded [HERE](#)

## Facilities

Nearly all facilities are available in the harbour or the town. Freshwater is available from the shortstay pontoons on the Fowey side, and the Mixtow pontoon which now has, additionally, showers and toilets ashore.

Diesel and petrol can be obtained from the Toms and Sons boat yard on the east side of the estuary by Polruan and they now have an amenities block with showers, toilets and a laundrette and have added a chandlery. For more information call them on 01726 870232.

There is now a serve-yourself diesel facility established by the harbour north of Bodinnick Ferry on the west bank. Not too expensive and easy to use with a debit card. Thank you Tidal Tim for that information.

There is a new chandlery and engineering facility at Mixtow where the visitors pontoon is at the South end of the pontoons there.

Shore power is available at the Berrills Yard pontoon and now at the Mixtow pontoon

Diving services are available in Fowey, try contacting Sal Diving, 01726 844460 or Mobile 07770 598346. If you wish to dive permits must be obtained from the authorities before any underwater activities can commence. All health and safety diving regulations must be complied with.

WiFi Internet access is available on most of the visitors berths in the lower harbour, just detect and connect to the Fowey Harbour wireless network, select an option from the pricing plan, pay by card and start browsing.....mobile phone connections are not too reliable here, due to surrounding high ground.

The Harbour Commissioners maintain a regular patrol of the harbour throughout the year, in the summer months from eight o'clock till dark. They will offer advice and assistance to all visitors about the facilities, and try and ensure that their stay in port is as enjoyable as possible.

Repairs and hauling out and Marine engineering can be arranged in this harbour for quite large vessels, check the business directory.

A water taxi is available throughout the day in the harbour and can pickup and drop-off as far as Wisemans Creek. For more information contact the taxi on VHF channel 06, by phone on 07774 906730 or visit their website at:

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

The Royal Fowey Yacht Club was founded in 1905, and members of other clubs can use its facilities including good showers and a bar. During the season the club serves breakfast from 8 AM till 10:30 AM, also lunches teas and dinners.

The Fowey Gallants Sailing Club, just upstream from Albert Quay, was founded in 1950. The club also extends welcome to visiting yachts crews, and facilities include showers and toilets, and the bar that serves food at the weekends.

Trailer sailors can use Penmarlam Quay, with access at the whole of the tidal range on the concrete ramp. Charges apply, but the facilities include parking and toilets with camping for caravans and tents adjacent to the boat park entrance. Boat storage is available winter and summer.

The town is basically one main shopping street which is very narrow and will provide whatever you are likely to need, except perhaps on Sundays. Butchers, fishmongers, bakery, and delicatessen all share the street with the banks (complete with cash machines), Post Office and the mini mart selling food and drink. There is a bookshop

selling second-hand nautical books, and newsagents. Chandlers are to be found by Albert Quay, and the sailmaker is a short walk a way, North St. There appears to be no launderette however.

The number 25 bus (telephone 0871 200 2233) goes hourly from outside Safe Harbour pub to the mainline railway station at Par, a 20 minute trip. The same bus continues to St Austell (another 25 minutes), to make a better connection with most mainline trains. Telephone 0845 748 4950. Taxis can be contacted on 01726 832676, 01726 814095, 01726 832372.

Fowey Community Hospital, off Green Lane, can cope with minor injuries. Telephone 01726 832241.

<http://www.foweyharbour.co.uk> This site gives more harbour info

## What To Do

There is a wide range of eating and drinking places in Fowey, maybe starting with breakfast at the Royal Fowey Yacht Club. There is a wide choice of restaurants including Italian and Chinese, and several local hotels that are open to non residents for meals. The following pubs have a good selection of bar meals.. Safe Harbour, Ship Inn, Galleon, Globe Posting House, Luggier Inn, King Of Prussia.

On the Polruan side it is a bit quieter, visitors cars are banned in season, all basic provisions can be obtained and there are a couple of pubs and a cash machine.

For those interested in history the Fowey Museum and Aquarium, both in the middle of town, are worth a visit.

For the energetic there are some interesting walks around the area. There is a guided town walk organised by the tourist information centre every Tuesday in the summer, but the longer Hall Walk, takes in a large part of the harbour.

The Fowey festival of Arts and Literature takes place mid-May, and Fowey Classics takes place the first week in August, (this is a gathering of traditional boats). Fowey regatta and carnival takes place in the third week in August, and the harbour is likely to be very busy at these times.

Below are some links that may give you some leads for things to do and see.

<http://www.fowey.co.uk/local-directory/eating-out>

Listings of eating places

## History

Fowey started to develop as a port in the 12th century, after the older harbour at Lostwithiel six miles further inland started to silt up. In 1346 Fowey supplied 47 ships and around 800 men for the siege of Calais, a huge number. The sailing men from Fowey, seemed to develop a taste for this kind of adventure, and long after hostilities officially finished they continued to wage their own wars against the French. There were daring raids and skirmishes across the Channel, with much plunder taken..... they earned the nickname of "Fowey Gallants", although they were little more than Pirates.

The French retaliated in 1457 raiding and burning the town, but if anything this just encouraged the activities of the gallants. one man, John Wilcox seized 15 French ships in the same number of days, and the town rapidly became a source of great embarrassment to King Edward IV, who had made peace with France. He dispatched a messenger to Fowey asking them to stop their pillaging and looting, but the unfortunate messenger ended up having his ears and nose cut off, an act of defiance by the Fowey men that did not go unnoticed or unpunished. Ringleaders were hanged, goods were seized, ships redistributed to other ports and a huge protective chain was slung across the harbour mouth. The wild men of Fowey were thus tamed, and went back to their former occupations of fishing, shipbuilding, trading, and smuggling.

In the 18th century the port became very important in the china clay trade, and is presently the 15th largest exporting port in the United Kingdom, shipping 1,000,000 tonnes of china clay each year. This trade is in decline now and will soon be dropping to 800,000 tonnes and around 350 ships a year, a big reduction from 1989 when the trade peaked at 848 vessels and 1.89 million tonnes!

Tourism and yachting are becoming more and more important for Fowey.

General info and history

<http://www.britainexpress.com/counties/cornwall/az/fowey.htm>

Legends?

<http://www.britannia.com/travel/magical/magic11.html>

General info and history

<http://www.visit-fowey.com/about-Fowey.html>