

Introduction

Contacts:

Youghal Harbour Master tel no +353 (0)86 7800878 (mob)

Ardmore Bay is a convenient anchorage in settled conditions for an overnight stop or to await suitable tides for onward passage (though the tidal streams along this bit of coast seldom exceed 1knt even at Springs). It is totally unsuitable when there is wind of any significance from the East.

There is a very small drying harbour which is of little use to a coastal cruiser but is a good place to land and secure a dinghy. The Cliff House Hotel is a very obvious hotel on the South shore of the bay just SE of the pier which has laid two moorings for the use of its patrons. They require that an indemnity form be signed and returned to them in advance of use. This is a quiet little erstwhile fishing village with a beautiful beach backed by a small caravan site but otherwise not much in the way of major facilities.

Youghal, (pronounced "Yaul") on the other hand, is a much busier seaside town on the West bank of the sheltered Blackwater Estuary. It has a development of drying quays and a small drying harbour basin; on the Eastern side of the estuary a spit has formed which thrusts out halfway across the estuary and which can give good shelter from a southerly swell which is not the case on the west side.

There are various anchorages off the town which will be mentioned in our berthing section below but a primary consideration there is the tidal stream through the anchorages which can reach nearly 3kts at the Spring Equinoxes. The estuary forms the NE boundary of a 5km long, high quality beach and the whole town has been designated as an Irish Heritage Port as it boasts many buildings of historical significance.

Up the estuary beyond the town on the West bank and the spit on the East the population thins out markedly and the scene becomes quietly agricultural until the road bridge at the northern end where there is still enough water to anchor afloat at LWS. The bridge has an air draft of 6.4 m and if you can get under that there is another ten miles of pleasant, navigable river as far as Villierstown Quay if you keep to the outside of the bends. All in all this is an interesting inlet with opportunities to tie up or anchor in the middle of the town or away from it in the quiet estuary.

Approach

Tidal Streams

The streams in Youghal Bay are peculiar. At LW Cobh they flow SSW but slowly alter direction through west and north until by around HW Cobh it flows NNE; never more than half a knot. It then rotates through SSE and South back to SSW but can reach 1.5kts.

In the entrance to the estuary it is more straightforward flooding from about five hours before HW Cobh to an hour and a half after HW Cobh reaching up to 2.5kts. The ebb is stronger making as much as 3kts and forming a back eddy to the immediate South of the spit on the east side.

The approach, if you allow for the sandbanks in the offing, is fairly simple...

At HW an approach over the West bar is feasible but you'd need to be certain of your bearings before attempting that; the wiser approach, especially if you have a fin keel is to make for the initial fix we have given above and if approaching from Capel Island (with its Martello tower) off Knockadoon Head leave the Blackball Ledge WCM to port. From the IF make for the white lighthouse with its red band and keep on that course until you are a couple of cables off before turning North into the estuary. The shallower water is on the east side of the estuary.

Berthing

There are several places you can drop your anchor off the town itself;

..... the favourite of these is abeam the Town Hall in about 5m, but you will find others there and be open to swell if the wind is in the South. At HW if you have a shallow draft you could even go inside the small Market Dock which dries.

The HM here sounds enthusiastic and helpful so give him a ring if you are intending to visit and he'll find somewhere to put you.

If there is no commercial traffic expected the people at Youghal Shipping may be happy for you to tie up at the commercial quay (where you might expect to stay afloat). In view of Captain Guy's comment in the "Have your Say" section below it may not be a good idea to tie up at the commercial quay on a rising tide. Other than that on the town side Aquatrek Sea Skills have a couple of visitor's buoys which you can pay to moor to. Recently the Council has installed a 25 metre pontoon at Nealon's Quay (that's the first quay you come to coming in from the sea). This is used for set down and pick-up by the pleasure boats during the day (9 'til 5) but it is available for visiting yachts to tie up overnight. I have included a new image of the pontoon in the images gallery courtesy of the Youghal tourist people. We are told that the depth there is about 2metres at LWS.

You need to arrange this in advance with the harbour office on the number above. An overnight stop will cost 10 Euros irrespective of yacht size. The HM reckons to get half a dozen there rafted (but don't forget the current - each boat independently tethered to the shore please) There's water on the pontoon but no power as yet. They also have eight visitor's buoys off the quay (which will have been serviced over the winter of 21/22) and you can land your tenders inside the new pontoon.

If there is a sea running into the estuary from the south you may well find the anchorages off the town uncomfortable and add to that an ebb tide running at 2kts and you would find them very uncomfortable. The alternative is to slip over to the other side into the lee of the spit where there are a few spots with a decent amount of water for anchoring...

The anchorage marked on AC 2071 is well out into the tideway and still a bit exposed but if you tiptoe further in there's a small pool (about a hundred yards across) with 8m just to the west of the wreck which has proved popular in the past.

Finally if you edge your cautious way up to the head of the estuary there's a lovely big pool on the Waterford side which is well sheltered, if a long way away from any shops etc; obviously you would avoid the submarine cable. There is a bus runs past here in to Youghal just after quarter to ten and back again at twenty past three but you would be wise to check this locally at the time of your stay. You may also have to pay dues to the Crown to anchor there.

Be aware that wherever you anchor you will be in some sort of tideway and off the town it would be a very wise idea to lay a tripping line with your anchor.

Other Contacts:

Youghal Shipping tel no +353 (0) 24 92577

Aquatrek Sea Skills tel no +353 (0) 868050726 or 868593482 (mob)

Cliff House Hotel Ardmore tel no +353 (0) 24 87800 (form needed for using their moorings)

Facilities

Youghal has a variety of shops of the country town type and there is a filling station for fuel in cans but it may be quite a walk.

What To Do

As with most towns of this size in the South of Ireland you will find an ample supply of nice restaurants and pubs with plenty of Irish music and craic. The sandy beach to the Southwest of the town is a magnet for the day tripper and weekender with the usual amusements on hand.

History