

Introduction

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Port St Mary is a pretty little harbour on the West side of the Bay ny Carrickey at the Southern end of The Isle of Man. It owes existence (as do most of the harbours you and I visit) to fishing and years ago had a vibrant fishing fleet and fish processing plant.

That's all gone now and we yachtsmen have inherited the harbour. It consists of an outer harbour and a drying inner harbour contained by piers, the ends of both of which are lit at night with the end of the inner pier being marked by an 8 meter red and white striped tower. The edges of the bay and the headlands are laced with rocky outcrops up to 2 cables off shore and there is a large outcrop right in the middle of the bay called The Carrick which dries to 2 meters and is marked by a lit, black & red striped perch.

Gansey Point just to the North of the harbour has an off lying rock which carries a green SH perch with an unlit, triangular top; there is a further unlit SH perch inside the harbour marking the middle of an outcrop of rocks which runs parallel and close to the inside of the outer pier (Alfred Pier). There are other rocks inside the outer harbour (Pot Rock & the Little Carrick) which cover at HW so must be born in mind if tying up on the outer pier.

There is a small number of fishing boats based here but the main traffic is leisure boats with trips for divers and anglers or just plain sightseers pottering in and out all day. The village itself is quite small, the main shops being located overlooking Chapel Bay. If you are in need of a walk there's a path along the cliffs to the SW leading to a spot overlooking the Calf Sound which is worth a stroll especially if you are contemplating passage around or through there!

The harbour and anchorages are open to winds from the E and SE; if you don't believe me have a look at the photos; strong seas from the SE will break over Alfred Pier and they set up a nasty send else where in this corner of the bay.

There is an IOM harbour information website which lists all the IOM harbours and a whole raft of downloadable docs (most of which do not apply to cruising skippers) at:-

[Isle of Man Government - Harbours Information](#)

[Isle of Man Government - Port St Mary](#)

Approach

The tidal streams close in around the IOM do not follow those depicted in the UKHO tidal Atlas; there are often counter currents. For close-in information you can access the IOM's own tidal streams info at

[tidal_streams.pdf \(gov.im\)](#)

[tidal_streams_2.pdf \(gov.im\)](#)

We suggest that if you are spending any time in the Irish sea with regular visits to the IOM you visit those two internet pages, print and add them to your Pilot Book.

The Initial Fix is set up using the ends of the piers as lead-in marks on 295°T;

The red and white tower on the inner harbour wall is very conspicuous.

A run in on 295°T will lead clear of The Carrick Rock which is well marked and will be awash from half tide as well. Coming from the East if you are tacking in against a NW and are completely happy with your navigation there is no reason why you shouldn't leave The Carrick to port on the port tack and then run down on the harbour on the starboard tack still keeping the rock to port; otherwise a straight run at the harbour from the vicinity of Dreswick

Point is clear of danger.

If you have chosen well and weather Dreswick point on the turn of the tide (HW Liverpool) you can miss the overfalls and, provided you can see the rocks skirting that point, you can pass a cable off Dreswick point in deep water. It's basically a judgement call, if conditions are right go inside the overfalls, in bad conditions it's the long way round, two and a half miles off the point.

Approaching from the West whether you have come through Calf Sound or around the lot you just make your way up the coast, stay a good cable and a bit off the shore as you approach Alfred Pier and then turn in for the harbour as soon as the Inner pier red & white Lighthouse opens around the outer pierhead.

Berthing

On offer are drying, alongside berths in the inner harbour,

..... floating, alongside berths against Alfred Pier (in both cases you should expect to have to raft), a visitors buoy (of which there are four, bright yellow to the NW of Alfred pierhead) or anchoring somewhere in the bay. They are very accommodating here and you should find somewhere to your liking.

If you do choose to tie up on Alfred Pier be very careful of the marked reef alongside it; there really is not much room and you can't afford to take a wide sweep round to come alongside starboard side to. They've basically dredged a trench parallel to the pier and erected a SH perch to indicate the width available. NB the perch does NOT mark the end of the rocks. There is a photo in the gallery in which you can see that perch to give you some idea of the available space inside it, although the more observant of you will notice the furred genny on the left of that photo; someone managed it! (Ed note - my mistake he's moored port side to)

An alongside berth (2021) will cost a 10m boat £16.32 a night.

NB the sound advice here is that if the forecast suggests that the wind might pick up from ESE, get out of there and make for Port Erin or Peel through Calf Sound which is dealt with, along with Port Erin, in another article; but basically, as long as you pick the time right, even though it might be rough along the coast the Sound itself is quite sheltered and you are shot through on very rapid but flat water!

Facilities

There's water on the piers and if you have a long enough shore cable there's shore power to some alongside berths but this is charged on a card from the HM. Showers and toilets are available ashore both in the Harbour Office and the Isle of Man Yacht Club (their website is below). Most people here do their shopping in Douglas or Castletown so there's not much available although, surprisingly, there is a chandler up in the village. You can catch a bus here to Douglas or trot out to the railway station and use the narrow gauge railway which might be fun.

One point to note is that there is no fuel here; the nearest is at the petrol station at Port Erin.

The shops are a "fair walk" up from the harbour and the Harbour Keeper says that if you need to do substantial shopping it's worth berthing in Castletown instead where the shops are very much more handy by the swing bridge.

Isle of Man Yacht Club <http://www.iomyc.com/>

Bus time tables <https://www.gov.im/categories/travel-traffic-and-motoring/bus-and-rail>

What To Do

Not much; there's the hotel on the Quay and a restaurant round the corner and a few pubs up in the village. Your best bet would be to hop a bus into Castletown; they are fairly regular and there's a late bus back. As has been said there's the narrow gauge steam railway for an afternoon trip and there are about four runs a day in each direction on a first come, first served basis. There's a link to train times on the bus timetable website in the section above this.

History