

## Introduction

### Contacts

Harbour Office 01542 831700, VHF12

To put things into perspective; this harbour administers [Burghead](#), [Hopeman](#), [Findochty](#), [Portknockie and Cullen](#) as well as itself. Harbour dues can be paid here or at the Harbour Office in Burghead or on line at the link below.

The present harbour at Buckie replaced the original (now the site of Buckpool Harbour Park) in 1880. The original at Buckpool, built not long before that, was found to be very prone to silting so the local Laird developed the harbour we see today. There had been a fishing village at Buckpool for centuries where the local boats landed their catch over the beach and hauled the boats up in stormy weather. One has to remember that this was a notoriously dangerous area for fishermen before this harbour was built; the harbours along this coast and as far North as Wick were small, tidal affairs; the boats plied their trade throughout the winter before the days of weather forecasting, lifeboats and power, so somewhere as safe as Buckie was a boon.

**These days, if you sail this coast, even in the summer months, you will have this harbour in the back of your mind as somewhere to run for if things start to go wrong.** The well-built Buckie harbour became very successful and at one stage was the premier fishing port in the North East of Scotland. To this day it competes with Fraserburgh, though the larger ocean going trawlers tend to favour Fraserburgh. At the height of the herring industry Buckie was served by the railway but that connection was severed by Beaching in 1960 and nowadays fish landed at Buckie are transported world wide by refrigerated road transport. Now Buckie is competing aggressively for a share on the off shore wind farm industry.

Buckie harbour has a long North wall enclosing four basins; the harbour walls are high to accommodate the commercial boats and the visiting yachtie will need long warps here (although the writer was once rafted on the pilot boat in the SW corner of No 3 basin which made life a lot easier!!)

There is no doubt about the commercial emphasis of Buckie harbour and there is no way that it could be described as "picturesque"; there are no shops along the harbour road unless you count the wet fish shop, and it is dead in the evenings although there are a few pubs at the West end of the harbour. At the eastern end of the harbour there is a shipyard where fishing vessels are repaired (and used to be built) and beyond that are the remains of a basin used for fitting out ships built in the, now derelict, buildings on the shore. There is no doubt that the harbour could accommodate many more vessels than it does at the moment and its development over the next decade will be critical to its survival.

The town above the harbour can be reached by an inclined path from behind the "Fat Mair Fish" shop or, from further along, up a long flight of steps. Both of these approaches bring one out on to the main street (where one can catch the coast bus) which is well served by an eclectic mix of shops.

All in all not a particularly attractive cruising destination but if forced by weather or a need to wait for the tide for Findochty this is a very useful, well sheltered port and, if you cruise this coast on a regular basis, well worth a short visit.

## Approach

The approach to the harbour is not difficult to navigate....

..... but in unsettled on-shore conditions the entrance will be tricky; the outer walls were not built as high as they are on a whim and the seas around here can still break over them in the winter storms. The harbour entrance is guarded by a phalanx of offshore drying rocks (the Mucks) and most passage instructions assume that the navigator will stay to seawards of these before making an approach from the North West. If you are making an approach on a fine summer's evening from the east there is absolutely no reason why you shouldn't duck inside between the East and Middle Mucks but you should be very sure of your position if doing that.

The photographs in our gallery show the location of the lights to be seen but it should be noted that they were taken

at the end of a passage across Spey Bay and the yacht was coming down a line between the green and white sectors of the light ie well to the south of the ideal central approach from the recommended way point. It should also be noted that the prominent white tower on the end of the north wall is not, in fact, on the end but about fifty yards back from it; the actual end of the north wall is marked by a lattice pylon with a two FR (vert) lights.

There are two possible leading lines to avoid the West Muck; you should stay West of a line joining the red and white sector light tower and the white tower on the North breakwater or West of a line joining the two FG (vert) lights on the starboard side of the entrance and the two FR (vert) lights on the end of the North breakwater (but stay out of the green sector of the sector light above the harbour) By day you will be faced with a seemingly unbroken line of seaward construction from the old entrance to Buckpool harbour on the West side to the shipyard at the East end; the harbour entrance itself has white painted walls on both sides of it and from some aspects they can join together as one very small white splodge in the greyness.

The perch atop the West Muck is very prominent but remember that it marks the North-East end of that large lump and use the shore leading marks to avoid its lurking underwater spread. Once in the shelter of the North wall it is all very calm and you will have time and space to sit quietly in whatever basin you've been directed to and ready your warps and fenders.

## Berthing

You will be in contact with the harbour on VHF and they will direct you.....

..... to the basin they require you in. It's worth noting that a few of the berths have 240V shore power so it's worth asking if one of those is available.

Because of the height of the walls you are unlikely to be able to connect with the www or cell-phone networks in this harbour. The harbour dues are attractive at £20.00 for a night's stop or, of course, you can get a Morayshire Rover card which is accepted here. It is possible to pay for one's berth on the internet [HERE](#)

The Rover ticket is valid in Moray Council and Aberdeenshire council harbours - with the exception of Lossiemouth, Whitehills, Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Aberdeen itself. So basically useless in just about every harbour you would normally use North of Stonehaven

If you are sailing shorthanded let the HM know and someone will pop down from the office to give you a hand to get your warps ashore (a light heaving line would be of advantage); they're not keen on sailors climbing ladders with mooring warps in hand!! (neither am I for that matter, but sometimes needs must!)

## Facilities

There is water available and a limited number of berths with shore power. You will find a toilet in the HM's office or more substantial showers further along the dock to which the HM can give you access.

There is a petrol station at the West end of the dock road but it is exorbitantly expensive and if you have the energy you'd be better scouting out the one up in the town and working out whether it's worth the effort to save money.

Diesel can be obtained by arrangement with the HM but needs to be of sufficient quantity to justify tanker delivery.

There is a fast food portacabin on the dock road to the west and he also keeps a stock of Calor Gas bottles. He can also arrange for Camping Gaz but that would be an overnight job and there's no telling what time of day it would be delivered.

## What To Do

Apart from some fairly basic bars at the west end of Dock Road there is nothing at harbour level. Further up the town there are Indian & Chinese take-aways and several good Hotel/restaurants. In clement weather there is a nice wander around the old town and Buckpool harbour with boards at various points outlining the history of the area.

For further choices see

<http://www.beerintheevening.com/pubs/results.shtml?l=Buckie>

Restaurants

[Restaurants & Places to Eat in Buckie - Tripadvisor](#)

## History