

## Introduction

### Contacts

Peterhead Harbour Control VHF #14, 01779 483630,  
Peterhead Marina 01779 477868, mobile 07803264617

**The marina is not staffed 24/7. If you intend to arrive outside the published hours contact them by landline in advance to make arrangements for access to the amenities block and the marina gate. There is a green box at the bottom of the pontoon access bridge containing a safe and they will give you the safe code and leave you a key there.**

**Both Aberdeen and Fraserburgh favour Commercial traffic (in fact Aberdeen refuses entry to Leisure traffic) so Peterhead has become the crossroads for just about every skipper on the East coast and has gained a reputation as value for money and welcome.**

It is an extremely busy harbour serving the off shore oil rigs and windfarms, a deep sea fishing fleet, assorted inshore and lobster fishermen, various training organisations for commercial helmsmen and finally the leisure industry. The Marina, situated in the Western corner of the bay was opened in 1994 and has been enlarged on since then.

The entrance to Peterhead Bay faces SE and is passable in all but the most ferocious weather and once inside it provides good shelter from all quadrants though in strong winds it is advisable to double up ones moorings on the pontoons. Peterhead has been a port for over 400 years but the encirclement of the bay itself was done in the late 19th Century when the harbour was designated as a "Harbour of Refuge" (the only Scottish one on the East Coast). This encirclement was built by prisoners from the, now, infamous prison which was built to house them and which still glowers down on the harbour from the SW shoreline.

The requirement for "Harbours of Refuge" faded as sail gave way to steam but has left Peterhead with a huge area of enclosed water which it has capitalised on to provide services to a vast range of maritime activities. The fishing fleet is served by four basins in the NE corner of the Bay, the off shore oil rigs services operate from the SASCO berths in the South corner and the South breakwater and the occasional Cruise ship berths against the North Breakwater.

The more observant of you will notice that, over recent years the breakwater (the Albert Quay) at the entrance to the Fish Docks has been extended and a new pier (the Smith Embankment) added to the North side of that entrance to accommodate ships with up to 10m draft and up to 200m in length (big!!); most yachting pilot book chartlets do not reflect this. Should the wind farm planned for the seas off Newburgh eventually come into being (despite objections from Donald Trump Esq. & his Golf Course) this harbour will be well placed to service it.

The hinterland is mainly flattish (compared to the Highlands) and does not lend itself much to tourism of the kind that Scotland is famous for; the coast to the South of Aberdeen provides much for the cliff walker, bird watching fraternity and to the West of Fraserbrough, likewise. It can be a bleak place in inclement weather conditions and the Marina is a good long walk from the town (especially when returning with loaded shopping bags!); but it provides what the cruising sailor wants most in inclement weather, shelter which can be easily accessed.

## Approach

From the South the Power Station at Boddam will be the first prominent object....

.... to catch the eye and just to the right of that the lighthouse on Buchan Ness. As you get closer the Skerry will separate from the headland and you have the choice of going outside that or through between it and the Meikle Mackie (the whereabouts of the "Muckle Mackie" is undocumented and a source of curiosity for the author; if there is a "wee" Mackie surely there should be a "big" one?).

As the route outside the Skerry will add only about 0.05 of a nautical mile to your leg, one would suggest that the saving in time doesn't warrant flirting with the inside route. When you pass Buchan Ness it's a good time to call the harbour on VHF 14 for inbound clearance. For all but the biggest yachts you don't need to go further north to pick

up the inbound track of 314°T but can make straight for the harbour entrance once you have rounded the Skerry (watch out for kreen markers on the shoals). As you approach the harbour entrance keep a good lookout and an ear on the radio because trawlers departing the fish docks will have to cross you to pass "red to red" and the support ships coming from the SASCO terminal (on the SW side) will come out straight down the middle.

From the North the tall spire on the church (marked on the chart) will be the first identifiable object you will be able to make out against the background of grey granite buildings; that is of course once you have rounded Rattray Head. There is a tall, unattached light tower at Rattray Head, don't, whatever you do, try to pass between it and the mainland; there is never enough water. In rough conditions you should give this headland two or three miles offing to be sure of avoiding the overfalls. When the wind is against the tide here, and off Scotstown Head, it is very, very bumpy; even in quite settled weather you will experience an increase in the swell and you are looking at a good 2 to 3 knots of tide at springs, if not more. On the other hand if you are running with the tide and have the wind behind you this part of the passage should not cause you any problems, even at only half a mile off the light.

Once inside the breakwater turn onto roughly West and you'll be able to see the yacht masts on the port bow in the corner. At this stage identify the green SH Marker buoy and aim for that. When you get closer you'll be able to see the Marina entrance (at night it has port and starboard lights on it and that SHM is also lit). The right hand (going in) marina breakwater has a white plinth on it.

You will note as you progress towards the marina entrance that there's a large sign on the end of the Princess Royal Jetty adjacent to the marina saying "Visitors Yacht Fuel"; if you want to bunker before you tie up in the Marina you need to give the Marina Manager a ring about 15 minutes before you get there as he has to walk from the office to the end of the pier to service you.

## Berthing

The Marina Website is at [http://www.peterheadport.co.uk/peterhead\\_bay\\_marina.htm](http://www.peterheadport.co.uk/peterhead_bay_marina.htm)  
The berths directly opposite the marina entrance (141 to 173) are reserved for visiting boats,

and you can choose to berth straight ahead or bear left and moor, bows north on the other side. The only caution here is that it is shallower on the East side of the entrance so if deep keeled and less than half tide err a bit to starboard as you enter and give that breakwater a bit of room &ndash; this is especially necessary if leaving on the bottom of the tide; yachts have been known to ground there, cutting the corner. If you have a 12m+ boat length you will probably be directed to proceed beside the Eastern breakwater to tie up alongside the next hammerhead along. The charges here (2022) £15 per night for up to 6m and a £1 per meter after that. That includes electricity and showers and has to be the best value for money on this coast (and perhaps anywhere!). You can also get 7 nights for the price of 5 without paying in advance which was a distinct advantage in the autumn of 2012 for smaller boats as you could get stuck here for days on end with winds of F5 and above.

## Facilities

As has been said there is electricity and water available on all pontoon berths and included in the harbour dues. The showers and toilets are also free and kept in immaculate condition. There is a small stock of both Calor and Camping Gas kept by the Marina Manager. You should note that the Marina Manager works "split shifts" in the summer, starting at about 0800 through to lunch time and then turning to again at 1600 until about 2100. If you arrive outside these hours and need the key to go ashore you should telephone the Port Control who can give you the code to the key safe at the bottom of the pontoon bridge.

Diesel is available at the end of Princess Royal Jetty though they some times have had trouble with the hose and

you may have to get it in cans from the Marina manager. Petrol will have to be obtained at the Esso Garage up on the shore.

There is also a laundrette operated by tokens obtained from the Manager (£2 wash and £2 dry in the summer of 2018)

There is now an ALDI by the first roundabout on the walk into town which is a whole lot closer than the Morrisons we used to use!

## What To Do

This is where Peterhead fails the visitor; the nearest watering holes and restaurants are in the town which, by the time you have negotiated the serpentine hike from your berth to the Marina gate and then walked along the foreshore, is going to take you a good half hour (so if you buy Fish and chips with a view to eating them back on board, they will be cold when you get back there!).

A business/amenities development at the roundabout to the west of the town on the Aberdeen road now provides a bar/restaurant, a Macdonalds, a garage with a Greggs and Spar attached along with a huge B&Q. The advantage here is that you can cut diagonally up the small cliff opposite the marina path, skirt clockwise around the housing complex to get to that complex - its about three quarters of a mile. Click on the image to the left to enlarge image and follow the dotted line from top right to bottom left

Seafood dominates the menus here from Fish & Chips take-aways to the Brassiere in the Palace Hotel; you pays your money and takes your choice. There is a good Chinese takeaway across the links, halfway to Morrisons but you'll need to run back if you want to eat it hot on the boat!!

Other Food [Restaurants & Places to Eat in Peterhead - Tripadvisor](#)

The bars tend to very basic, at best they have a fruit machine for entertainment and are dedicated to drinking, making very little allowance for "ambience."

It's the sort of place where you would be better off making friends with other visiting boats and entertaining on board where you can at least control the volume and genre of any music!!

There is naturally a golf course and bowling green.

## History