

Introduction

Harbour Master 01241 872166 VHF11

Arbroath has an inner harbour and an outer drying harbour....

.... approached from the South East through a narrow dredged channel bounded by rocks. The entrance to the outer harbour faces SW and is guarded by a wave barrier. This makes for a tortuous entry. Be advised you are entering the region of the lobster pot and the sea to either side of the approach is packed with them and, at LW, their ropes are far too long.

The harbour has been developed from the original inner harbour, the outer harbour, along with the breakwater, being added in the mid nineteenth century. Initially it was involved in the general coastal trade and the export of jute & flax but, like all the other harbours on this coast, became heavily dependant on the fishing industry until the middle of the 20th century. The flax/linen industry declined as steam took over from sail because much of their cloth was used as sail cloth (they were very innovative in the treatment of linen to extend the life of their sailcloth)

Nowadays it is more dependant on the leisure industry and there is a gated marina in the inner harbour whilst a small lobster/crab fleet operates from the outer harbour.

You may have heard of the "Arbroath Smokie" – a kipper to all intents and purpose; except that it is smoked haddock as opposed to smoked herring (which is the kipper) Another contributor to the local economy is 45 Commando of the Royal Marines, and, until the 1970s there was a Royal Naval Air Station here which was also home to the FAA Artificer's school.

From the point of view of the cruising sailorman there are two main points; the harbour is unapproachable in strong SW through South to East winds and there is a tidal limit making it unusable except about three and a half hours either side of HW depending on your draft. (you would probably be able to get a shallow draft boat into the outer harbour at LW Neaps but you'd have to be very careful and it would have to be settled sea.)

Approach

The waypoint above is on the leading line into the entry channel....

.... but the first object you will see coming up or down the coast to Arbroath is the white signal tower which was used to communicate with the Bell Rock lighthouse in days of yore.

You should stay well off shore (a good couple of miles) until this signal tower is on the beam before turning in towards the harbour. This is not just because of the rocky reefs girding the approach but will keep you clear of the maze of lobster pots which impede the approach. If you can't locate the leading marks/lights (highly unlikely because they are very prominent) you should be able to locate the twin towers of St Thomas' Church and if you run in with them between the beacon on the west breakwater and the small lighthouse on the end of the pier you should eventually pick up the white leading marks just to the right of the signal tower to continue inbound.

The HM here would appreciate a call on #11 to advise him that you are coming in.

Be very careful of the tall, yellow post (Fl(4)Y) marking the end of the diffuser on the rocks to the SW of the entry channel (ie port hand side coming in) - it is close enough to the channel to be mistaken for a sort of outer end channel marker and it is nothing of the sort!!

You will of course have to be careful, it's a narrow channel ending with a blind turn to starboard into the Outer harbour and, on top of that, the deeper water is to the pier side of the channel, which means that you are unlikely to be able to spot the mastheads of outbound traffic, and certainly not small angling boats. It would be an idea to check with the HM on channel 11 to avoid any surprises and it's probably best to swallow your pride clear up for entering harbour whilst still well out and motor in..

The times for the dock gate this year 2022 can be found at the link below (may open in a separate tab on some computers)but tend to be about 3 hours either side of HW between 0700 and 2000. This means that, if you want to make an early start you may have to move out of the marina to a pier wall the evening before especially if HW is at dawn and you are headed North.

[Arbroath Marina Gate Times](#)

Berthing

You will get berthing instructions from the HM on channel 11....

.... or just tie up to the nearest available hammerhead and pop ashore to the HM's office. The original layout had two long pontoons with fingers and some rasta charts on chart plotters may still show this but, in fact, there are now three long pontoons with fingers - so there is a choice of three hammerheads for visitors.

There are berths with ladders available alongside the wall in the outer harbour but you would need to check with the HM on this as many are permanent berths for the gentlemen earning their living from the sea. These are obviously unserviced so if you need shore power the inner harbour is your only choice.

A berth in the inner harbour (2022) is £29.00 per day irrespective of length but this now includes free shore power. A berth in the outer harbour is £20.00 per night.

Facilities

There are toilets and showers (they've just installed two new shower cubicles) in the building on the South corner of the inner harbour which also houses laundrette facilities for which you need tokens from the HM Water/ shore power is on the pontoons and included in your harbour dues. Everything else, including diesel fuel is available. Calor gas refills can be found at Morrisons (where there is also petrol) and, thanks to kurrawong kid we can confirm that Base Camp in Westport (DD11 1RF) street does 907 camping Gaz refills..

There is a boatyard for repairs but the chandlery is reported to be closed.

What To Do

Eating and drinking is standard fare here, the usual fast food outlets and bars with some good hotels.

Pubs

[Arbroath pubs and bars; pubs in arbroath # beerintheevening.com](#)

[E](#) ating out

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

Having said that, remember that this is home to both the "Arbroath Smokie" and the "Aberdeen Angus" (for the uninformed that is a breed of steer renowned for its steak) and this gives rise to some very good, upmarket restaurants – you may even be able to source a wild salmon steak as the Perthshire rivers are some of the finest salmon rivers in the world.

History

First Floor Offices Unit 11A, Clarence Boatyard, Clarence Road, East Cowes, Isle of Wight. PO32 6TA

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