

Introduction

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Dovey YC 01654 767607

Aberdovey has been a port for many centuries, exporting slate and oak bark and importing coal, limestone and trade goods. There was a thriving boat building industry in the nineteenth century and the landing stage originally was built for the import of agricultural stock from Ireland, this being one end of the Aberdovey and Waterford Steam Ship Company. Our archive photo in the gallery may have one of those steamships alongside on the landing stage; that photo is interesting in that those slow cumbersome sailing barges have been navigated up to there despite the currents and having no mechanical propulsion (how many yachts do hear asking for help these days because their engines have broken down?)

These days the town is given over to the holiday trade; many of the domestic buildings have been converted to holiday accommodation and the town trebles its population in the summer (house prices here are above the local averages as well)

The port itself lies 2 miles up the River Dovey on the North shore and is approached through a buoyed channel. It is said to have its own "micro climate" but we are not sure whether that means it has more rain than the rest of Wales or less - we hope, less!! Anyway, once you have been here, it is likely that you will return.

It, like Porthmadog, is blessed with a narrow gauge railway which was originally used to transport slate for export from Aberdovey. It has been lovingly preserved by volunteers and now is a popular visitor attraction.

One point, this is not a place to run for shelter in a strong west wind - there is no shelter and, in a strong swell the depths over the bar can be reduced to zero.

Approach

From the South there are no dangers along the coast apart from the Cynfelyn Patches....

..... and there is a passage inside these. From the North you must go outside the Sarn-y-Bwch reef as there are some nasty rocks inshore of that reef (This is advice from a local sailor).

Before starting this approach you should contact the HM on #12 to confirm the passage inbound and for any updates to the buoyage. This channel is of the "ever varying" category to the extent that the latest Admiralty chart (in our gallery) shows the latest buoyage (correct) superimposed on the old soundings (incorrect). The advice here is to start your approach from the Outer Buoy (our waypoint); do NOT cut the corner and head straight for the bar buoys, and call the HM for advice. They also advise that the Bar is only passable 3 hours either side of HW

We have supplied a diagram of the buoyage and channel in our Navigation Images as given to us in the summer of 2022. If you plot the positions of the buoys as given in the table on that image you will see that the only buoy on the Admiralty Chart which is correct is the Outer R/W buoy - all the others have been moved and will move again!!

As that panel is a bit difficult to read here are the buoy positions

Outer buoy 52 32.000 N 004 05.550 W

Bar Buoy No 1 52 32.125 N 004 04.750 W

Bar Buoy No2 52 32.171 N 004 04.764 W

No 3 South Spit 52 32.195 N 004 04.491 W

No 5 52 32.198 N 004 04.053 W

No 7 52 32.256 N 004 03.408 W

YSM 4 Knots 52 32.469 N 004 02.861 W

Once you are over the bar at the entrance to the channel then there is plenty of water but you should not enter too early in the flood on a spring tide in a fin keeler. The final yellow buoy in the approach should be left to starboard on

the way in.

The ebb runs very strongly in the channel, especially at springs, so you need to time your run in with enough water over the bar but enough time left in the flood to make it to wherever you want to clew up. You should call the HM on Channel 12 before entering the channel

Berthing

There are some visitor's deep moorings but they are exposed....

..... to westerlies and quite a way from the slip; unless you can dry out the only other place for a fin keeler is against the outside of the landing stage and, in a westerly this can be very exposed.

The HM has fender boards if you haven't got your own and you will need them. Anchoring is not permitted in the channel because of submarine cables though there are vast expanses of sand in the estuary where a bilge keeler could dry out at anchor.

There is also an extremely strong current through the moorings and we have been told by one skipper who put in here that he wouldn't have wanted to row a dinghy ashore (he had an outboard for his) and he also said that the landing slip was a) crowded and b) open to the general public with, he feared, a risk of pilfering. If you can take the ground you may be able to get moored alongside the wall but we have been told that those slots could well be occupied by local boats.

The harbour dues for visiting boats were £10 in 2017 irrespective of size of boat.

Facilities

There is no shore power and water is by can from a tap at the Harbour Office. Showers and toilets are available in the yacht club and the HM can supply an entry fob for use when that is closed.

The Harbour has red diesel but the nearest petrol is up the coast at Tywyn (you would have to get a lift) and the Londis that used to be in Aberdovey has recently closed which leaves the Post Office (located where the "old" garage used to be) as the only place close by for newspapers and groceries.

The well stocked Dovey chandlery is located behind the Dovey Inn just along the beach to the east of the landing stage. Calor Gas and Camping Gaz refills are available at Dovey Yard Repairs (which is the old boatyard)

What To Do

This being a holiday destination there are plenty of pubs, restaurants and hotels.

History

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