

Introduction

Contacts

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Of the harbours around the Firth of Forth, this and the one at Limekilns are hard to beat for the yachtsman who likes somewhere sheltered and reasonably priced to clew up. (It's possibly my favourite harbour in the Forth) We deal with [Limekilns](#) in another article. The harbour was originally built for the export of coal but in Victorian times it became a day trip destination for paddle steamers from Leith. These steamers tied up on the hammerhead at the end of the present pier or on the pier (now derelict) on the opposite side of the entrance. It is still a holiday destination but the tourists now come by road or rail.

There are two beaches East and West of the harbour but they are far enough away for the beach visitors not to impinge on the harbour area. The harbour, although picturesque, does not have any visitor amenities so does not attract them in hordes as do some other harbours. For the cruising sailor it is a quiet, tidal harbour used mainly for weekenders from other harbours on the Firth or the occasional coastal explorer (like you if you are reading this!) Add to this the fact that it is only three or four hours sailing (if that) from other harbours in the Firth of Forth and you can see why it would make an ideal place to stop for a while and use as a base for exploring other harbours in the Firth

It consists of a single harbour wall protecting the outflow of the burn which separated Wester Aberdour and Easter Aberdour, the two villages existing now as a single entity. The area between the wall and the shore is home to thirty five bilge keeled cruising yachts lying to fore and aft moorings; the wall itself is kept clear for visiting boats or boats loading for a cruise. You can get a little bit of swell when the wind is in the SE quadrant but, with the shelter from Hawkraig Ness and Inchcolm it has to be from quite a narrow SE sector to cause any grief. The pier is constructed from rough fieldstone with a little tumble home which should be born in mind when tying up.

Approach

You can make an approach any time three hours either side of HW....

.... and there are no in or out flowing currents to limit your approach, though the tidal streams in the Firth are beginning to bottleneck towards the narrows at the Bridges and will influence your time of arrival.

From the East you will pick up the two white obelisks on Hawkraig Ness and a large white building to the right of them from quite far away. You can shape a course about a cable south of that until you start to see the derelict pier jutting out and can turn towards it. Aim to pass between the pier and the local yachts lying to moorings, heading for the pierhead.

From the West you will undoubtedly be running down on the ebb under bridges and need to pass along the North side of the main channel just outside (i.e. North of) the No 5 and No 3 SHM. From alongside the No 3 SHM you can then head straight for the end of the derelict pier and the hotel behind it. Local sailors will often pass to the North of both Craigdimas Rocks and the Little Craigs and, indeed, if outbound to the West this route is perfectly viable but on a falling tide and not knowing the local waters we would advise taking the outside route. There are markers on the two shoal areas and it would be an idea to take advice from a local skipper before taking the inshore route outbound to the West

Inchcolm

Approach to Inchcolm should be made from the large Tug Waiting Buoy between the No8 and No 10 PHM; lay a course to the North of Swallow Craig and round up in the anchorage to the NE of Inchcolm. It is possible to anchor closer in just to the North of the tower on the Abbey ruins and we were able to pass through the gap between

Swallow Craig and Inchcolm keeping a careful eye on the echo sounder (3 foot draft, 2 hours before HW) but would not advise it without local advice. Be aware that there is a sight seeing boat which comes through to that little cove on a regular basis and ties up to the landing on the Eastern side of the cove

Berthing

Basically there are no fishing boats based at Aberdour.....

.... so you can tie up anywhere along the North side of the pier or as directed by the Harbour Master. If you intend to hook up to shore power try to get to the third ladder after the bend in the pier (it's closest to the shore power). Be aware of the tumble home of the ladder and use big fenders. Ian MacFarlane will find you if you haven't already contacted him (it's all very informal but it's a good idea to let him know that you intend visiting). At some places against the pier there can be an outward slope to the bottom which could cause a little bit of an outward lean but not so much as to make it positively uncomfortable. If you are fin keeled there is no problem about leaning against the wall and there are ample rings/bollards for doing so. **There is a basic charge for visiting boats and in 2021 this is now(2022) £13.00 which includes shore power.**

Facilities

As you would expect with a small village, there are no big shops and the only shop you could call a supermarket isn't and it's a good mile away in Easter Aberdour. The buses run every half hour to Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline both of which have supermarkets. There is a new Morrisons at the West end of Kirkcaldy esplanade. There are also a Tesco's and Asda in Dalgety Bay 10 minutes to the West by bus.

In the harbour you have access to water, shore power and toilets. The toilets are in the boat club and there is now a shower at the shore end of the pier. For shore power you will need a domestic 13amp plug (we carry a short length of cable with a 13amp plug on one end and a female shore power plug on the other because there are several harbours on this coast where you need it); you may also need a shore cable a bit longer than the standard if you cannot get a berth close to the one on the pier..

What To Do

There is a pleasant round trip for the walker round Hawkraig Ness to the East beach or you leave that path at the harbour end and walk up a fairly steep hill path which will take you to Easter Aberdour. If you have taken the road from Wester Aberdour, over the railway bridge and on to the mini-market you can return via this route.

Other restaurants

[Restaurants & Places to Eat in Aberdour 2021 - Tripadvisor](#)

Aberdour has a substantial castle ruin which can be explored in an afternoon.

The train only takes half an hour from here to the centre of Edinburgh so you can easily use this as a base for a sight seeing trip to the "Athens of the North" and the last train back is about 2300 (but check on the day!!)

And of course a Golf Course!!

History