

## Introduction

### Contacts

Harbour Office tel 01983 760321 VHF #68

Yarmouth lies in a strategic position on the edge of the Western approaches to the Solent, and is a very useful port of call not only for passage making sailors but also for those simply cruising the sheltered Solent waters. It must be remembered however that this is a very busy ferry port.

The compact town is virtually set up for sailors, and the harbour offers all weather and all tide access. During 2011 and 2012 the Harbour has virtually transformed itself into a "Marina", which some may think a shame. The harbour office itself offers full facilities.

Ashore most backup facilities for the boat are available, with two boatyards offering full services, a very useful chandlers and sail repairs. The town boasts many pubs and restaurants, (including a Michelin star restaurant) and in season these will be packed with sailing types. Quite often Yarmouth is the first port of call for novices on competent crew courses running out of Cowes, but also a favourite with seasoned old-timers. During the Old Gaffer's festival the place is heaving, and you are unlikely to find a casual berth.

The harbour staff have a very good reputation for helpfulness, and will always be found out and about in their launches directing visitors, furthermore the mooring charges are not as excruciatingly expensive as many other Solent destinations. If you are getting the impression that I like this harbour you would be correct, I can't fault it.

Strong northerlies or north easterlies can make the main harbour a bit uncomfortable.

## Approach

For the visiting yachtsman or motorboater the approach to Yarmouth....

...is straightforward but there is a strong tidal cross set at times on the flood and the ebb, and this needs to be taken into account in your approach to avoid being swept past and having to struggle back against the considerable tide.

It is a sound idea to contact the harbour a few miles out on #68 to advise them of your approach - they are well organised and a call will ensure a good welcome.

For a good clue as to the strength and direction of the cross set, keep a close eye on the Lymington/Yarmouth ferries as they approach. You will see that in the stronger tidal conditions they approach in a crab wise fashion, and there lies your clue. Full pilotage directions now follow:

At this stage it would be good to click on this link (it opens in another window and gives a slide show of all the relevant details)

[YHC arrival guide 2022 \(yarmouth-harbour.co.uk\)](http://yarmouth-harbour.co.uk/YHC_arrival_guide_2022)

If approaching from the West attention needs to be paid to the green conical Black Rock buoy, (Fl.G.5s), which marks a rocky patch, and needs to be left well to starboard. In summer the mooring buoys laid outside the harbour should also be left to starboard, and your run in made from the vicinity of the pier head. Do not be tempted to cut through these moorings and make direct for the end of the breakwater, as you could well come a cropper on the extensive shoal radiating out from the breakwater in a northerly direction. If you are uncertain leave the Poole Belle buoy (Fl.Y.5s) to starboard before turning in towards the pier.

From the East all is straightforward, simply keep outside the yacht club moorings, and aim for a point North of the pier head.

Observation of the ferry movements will pay off. As one departs another will very soon come in and tie up. This is your opportunity.... give the incoming ferry a couple of minutes to settle down, and then make your entry safe in the knowledge there will be no further ferry movements for around 30 minutes.

As you close the harbour you will see the church tower, the castle, and the ferry berth. At night the red can East Fairway buoy (Fl.R.2s), the pier head lights (2F.R) vertical, and the brightly lit ferry berth will aid identification.

The run in day or night should be made from a position just the West of the pier head, on a course of about 190°. The aim is to run roughly parallel to the pier but at a distance off, to avoid shoal patches. There are leading marks on the town's Quay consisting of diamond top marks mounted on black-and-white posts, the rear one being 9 m high and the forward one being 5 m high. They are both lit (F.G), and line-up on 187° T. The Dolphin off the end of the harbour breakwater is obviously left to starboard and is lit (Q.G.3M), the ferry piers are lit, but quite obvious because of the floodlighting.

You will probably be met in the entrance by the harbour staff afloat in their dories, who will direct you to a berth (VHF channel 68).

It is most inadvisable to try and sail into this harbour because of the constant ferry and small boat traffic.

The harbour occasionally gets filled to capacity and in these circumstances a red flag is flown from the head of the pier, and illuminated boards will inform you " Harbour Full". In these circumstances do not approach. Mooring buoys are laid outside the harbour during the summer months to cope with the overflow. The harbour sometimes fills up completely during summer weekends and bank holidays, and an early arrival can help secure a berth at these times.

The harbour runs an excellent website, an unusually takes advance (pre-paid) bookings for berths. They work on VHF channel 68, or telephone 01983 760321. If planning to arrive in a large vessel (say 15 m or more) make sure you phone them in advance to arrange your berth. I have personally used this harbour many times with a 20 m MFV, and have always found the staff more than helpful. A link is provided to their website below:

<http://www.yarmouth-harbour.co.uk/>

The harbour is dredged to 2m below CD and is accessible at all states of the tide, and the Harbour Authority are particularly focused on visitors, with 250 visitors berths and 250 resident berths.

## Berthing

Anchoring is not allowed anywhere in the harbour or the approach.

There are other rules and regulations, probably the most important being the speed limits of 6 Knts in the approach and 4 Knts in the harbour, check the Yarmouth Harbour website (above) for the full list.

Over the past few years more and more pontoon berthing has replaced berthing fore and aft to piling. The final phase of this development is expected to be finished by the end of Spring 2013 and most of the pontooning will have reached and become connected with the shore, (instead of being isolated, which required the water taxi or a dinghy mission to reach the shore). The long pontoon parallel to the harbour wall is still "disconnected" They also lay trots of moorings outside the harbour for the summer. Suffice to say that outside of Bank Holidays, getting moored up is not a problem. Further information (including visitors' mooring prices) is now provided: The berthing options available now include walk ashore pontoons with electricity and water, two isolated pontoons, a couple of mooring piles, or alongside the Town Quay which can be a bit lumpy and frenetic. All of these options may well involve some rafting out in busy conditions.

An interesting point is that the pontoons are colour coded and their pilings match that coding as does their alpha-numeric coding (ie berth G22 is somewhere in the Green pilings!!)

The harbour staff will meet you on the way in and direct you to a berth, and will assist with berthing on the piles. The main thing to keep in mind while berthing in Yarmouth is the effect of the tide which can run in and out through the moorings with enough speed to cause berthing antics of the embarrassing kind.

Overnight berthing charges £42.50 for the serviced pontoons with walk ashore access (For a 10 m boat). They have a sliding scale of charges depending on boat length, type of mooring and day of the week so for a complete run down of the berthing prices click on this link:-

<https://www.yarmouth-harbour.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Harbour-Dues-and-Charges-2024-v5-issued-23Jun24-Visito>

There is a one off charge of £4.00 for electrical hook up but the showers and heads are included in the mooring fees. There is a scale of charges for the water taxi but you may be able to get a cheaper pass for the boat per day.

Normal size craft arriving at night after the harbour staff have finished normally make for the first pontoon on the starboard hand after entering. Advice may be obtainable from the water taxi in these circumstances, (they deal with ferrying yacht crews back and forth and operate quite late). The Water Taxi is on VHF channel 15.

### **Harold Hayles Boatyard**

No longer offer visitors moorings since the pandemic. They do have permanent moorings when available.

Link to their website below:

<http://www.haroldhayles.co.uk/>

## **Facilities**

Water is available on the walk ashore pontoons, as is electricity. Otherwise you will have to go alongside the harbour office on the South Quay to fill up, and at this spot you can also get petrol, diesel and gas bottle exchange. Gas is also available from Harold Hayles. For those on the Town Quay, water is available alongside.

Sewage pump out can be achieved on the South Quay, and there are bookable scrubbing piles situated in the north of the harbour. The provision of a new environmentally friendly wash down facility near the Harbour Office may make the scrubbing piles redundant.

The harbour office houses facilities that could put many marinas to shame, including showers, toilets, launderette, Internet access and weather forecasts, together with a comfortable lounge area housing coffee and drinks machines. WiFi is available throughout the harbour.

The slipway in the corner of the main harbour near the lifeboat can be used by trailer sailer's at all states of the tide, and is under the control of the harbour authorities. Unfortunately there is no free parking anywhere in Yarmouth now.

Facilities available for the boat include the two boatyards, Harold Hayles (Volvo agent) in the main harbour and another in the River Yar, both offering haul outs and repair facilities. There are two outboard mechanics offering repairs and spares, and an excellent Chandlers in the town.

There are two yacht clubs, the larger of which The Royal Solent Yacht Club overlooks the Solent from beside Yarmouth Castle. Visiting yachtsman from other recognised yacht clubs are welcomed and may use the bar and

restaurant. Telephone 01983 760256, link to their website below:

<http://www.royalsolent.org/>

Yarmouth Sailing Club perhaps doesn't have such salubrious premises, being just across the road from the harbour office fronting onto the River Yar. They do however promise to make ALL yachtsman welcome. Telephone 01983 760270, and link to their site below:

<http://www.yarmouthsailingclub.org.uk>

Provisioning can be accomplished here, but this is not the place for a serious stock up on a large scale. There are two cash machines one at the Lloyds bank, and the other at the post office, a minimart selling everything from frozen meat to beer, and an interesting delicatessen. Large-scale stocking up will need a trip to nearby Freshwater, where there are two supermarkets including Sommerfield's (who offer delivery of large orders), greengrocers and butchers. Freshwater is walkable along the path beside the River Yar, which are used to be a railway line. Otherwise bus it there.

Transport links consist of the already mentioned Lymington/Yarmouth ferries, and Southern Vectis buses call at the small bus station right outside the harbour office. From here you can connect inland to Newport, or go the other direction to Freshwater and Alum Bay.

## What To Do

You would not believe what a choice there is available in such a small town, virtually all the pubs serve food, with the Bugle and the King's Head both being popular with yachties, both providing good value meals. The George Hotel offers accommodation and a Michelin Star restaurant.

What Yarmouth seems to lack is fast food of any kind, no pukka fish and chip shop or Chinese takeaway are available, but with good value meals available in the pubs it's not such a problem. Yarmouth also seems happily devoid of designer and lifestyle outlets that seemed to clutter so many popular yachting hotspots.

It is believed the lack of a fish and chippers has been rectified - try the Blue Crab

For those up for a bit of a hike, 15 minutes away is the Royal Victoria Country Park which has Britain's biggest model railway exhibition, a planetarium, and an aquarium. This is open from Easter till October. History buffs will want to explore Yarmouth Castle (1547), and take in the view from the battlements. We offer the following links for further investigation:

Pubs

<http://www.beerintheevening.com/pubs/results.shtml/el/Yarmouth%3BIsle%20of%20Wight/>

## History

Yarmouth has been a settlement for over a thousand years, and is one of the very earliest on the Isle of Wight. The first record of a settlement here was in King Ethelred the Unready's record of the Danegeld tax of 991. It was originally called Eremue, meaning "muddy estuary". The Normans laid out the streets of Yarmouth on the grid system, a plan which can still be seen in the layout today. It grew rapidly, being given its first Charter as a town in 1135. The town became a parliamentary borough in the Middle Ages, and the Yarmouth constituency was

represented by two members of Parliament until 1832.

Until the building of the Castle regular raids on the Island by the French continued and in 1544 the town of Yarmouth was reputed to have been burned down. Legend has it that the church bells were carried off to Cherbourg or Boulogne.

Yarmouth Castle, was built in 1547. It survives, and is now in the care of English Heritage. It is effectively a gun platform built by Henry VIII to strengthen the Solent and protect the Isle of Wight, historically an important strategic foothold for any attempted invasion of England.

Yarmouth Harbour. In St. James's Church there is a monument to the seventeenth-century admiral Sir Robert Holmes who based his operations at Yarmouth. He obtained it in a raid on a French ship, when he seized an unfinished statue of Louis XIV of France and forced the sculptor to finish it with his own head rather than the king's.

Yarmouth Pier was built in 1876 and is the longest timber pier in England which is still open to the public.

Several Sites of Special Scientific Interest lie close to Yarmouth, including Yar Estuary SSSI & Bouldnor And Hamstead Cliffs SSSI.

#### Commerce

As a port and market town Yarmouth has long had local commercial significance. It still has some boatyards and chandlery, and although relatively small in size it still supports a number of shops, hotels, pubs and restaurants, supported partly by passing trade from the ferry terminal and by visiting yacht-owners in the harbour.

#### Transport

The Wightlink car ferry sails from Yarmouth to Lymington in Hampshire.

Southern Vectis operate bus services from Yarmouth bus station, the main one being circular route 7 serving Totland, Alum Bay, Freshwater, Brighstone, Newport and either Shalfleet or Calbourne and back to Yarmouth. The route runs in both directions.

In the Spring and Summer, Southern Vectis also operate an open top bus route called "The Needles Tour" which runs through Freshwater Bay to Alum Bay and onto the The Needles down a bus only road along the cliff edge; returning to Yarmouth via Totland and Fort Victoria. For the more athletic, Yarmouth is on the Isle of Wight Coastal Path.

One aspect not covered here is the fact that the sea used to go inland a good way and that ships could lay in Thorley, but that gradually silted up... the link below has some good historical maps on display:

<http://freespace.virgin.net/iw.history/yarmouth/history.htm>

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