

## Introduction

Between Fishguard and Pwllheli the coastline of Cardigan Bay forms.....

..... a lee shore for the westerly winds that are prevalent in the UK. Harbours in this stretch, especially where protected by a bar and highly tidal, are dangerous to approach in strong onshore conditions. Aberystwyth Harbour falls into this category, and is dangerous to enter in an onshore blow, and even on calmer days a heavy ground swell can make tidal timing extremely important.

Nevertheless Aberystwyth is a very useful stopping point along this coast, as vessels can remain afloat at all states of the tide in the fairly recently built Marina. Furthermore it is the principal town of the area, and a popular holiday resort to boot, with good transport connections.

Provisioning, entertainment, and crew changes can be accomplished here easily. If planning to visit it would be wise to contact the Marina and book your berth, as the Marina is small and has plenty of residents.

## Approach

The yachtsman or motorboater making his first approach to Aberystwyth Harbour,

..... would be best sticking to within two hours either side of high water, and not to make any approach at all in strong onshore conditions. The Harbour can be found and identified by Pendinas, a conspicuous hill 120m high, with Wellington monument at crest.

In the approach to Aberystwyth from the North attention should be paid to the Sarn Cynfelyn and Cynfelyn shallow patches. These have minimum depth of 1.5 m over them, and are marked clear of their western extremity by a westerly Cardinal buoy The Patches (Q(9)15s). In any kind of unsettled weather these should be given a good offing.

The unmarked Main Channel offers a deepwater passage through these shallows if approaching Aberystwyth from the North in calmer conditions with a suitable rise of tide. These patches are clearly shown on the approach chart.

The bar in the close approach to the harbour entrance only has 0.5 m at CD, and even with a rise of tide care should be exercised if there is a swell running. Drifting north of the approach line (as defined by the leading lights (2 F.R) or the white day marks on Ystwyth Bridge lining up on 133°T) could tangle you up with The Trap (appropriately named). This dries at 1.8 m over CD.

Again if approaching from the North it is necessary to know the extent of the rocky ledges extending from Castle Point (see photo gallery). There is another leading line for use in daylight which will clear the dangers off Castle Point. This consists of lining up the head of the North breakwater with the Wellington monument on the Hill or the bearing of 140°T. This line will not clear The Trap, following the other leading line mentioned above in the closer approach clears The Trap.

For a night time approach from the North, the sectored light (Q.WR.4M) on the North pier helps show the way. The red sector covers Castle Rocks.

Approach from the South or the West is relatively straightforward, but in all cases for the final approach be aware of the position of the bar, pay attention to the cross tides, and don't get too close to the South Pier as it is fringed by boulders and drying rocks. The North Pier is constructed of timber, while the South Pier is stone.

The lead-in marks on the old Admiralty chart (but not on the new one in our gallery) take you a bit close to the shallows on the port side and you are better off making your approach from our new waypoint (above). You should then identify the [WCM \(slim YBY pole with usual topmarks\) and line it up with the yellow painted lampost on the](#)

[shore](#) (click on link to see photos). Once close abeam the wooden North pier, turn quite hard to port, and the marina will open before you.

Once through the narrow entrance almost immediately a hard turn needs to be made to port towards the Marina, leaving the westerly Cardinal beacon (skinny pole with topmarks) to starboard.

The marina website (URL below) carries good photos of the approach and also extensive navigational information.

## Berthing

The only visitors berths at Aberystwyth are within the dredged Marina,.....

..... where the boat will remain afloat.

The Marina is supposed to be dredged to 2.3 m, and there are some interesting photos in the gallery showing dredging operations at a particularly low tide. It is obvious that the silt in this harbour comes down the River and settles in the Marina. Visiting berths here will cost you £3.20 per metre per night (2022) but shorepower is also charged at £3.00 per night. There is a new amenities block with showers and toilets

As mentioned before it would be worth booking your berth before arriving, the Marina can be phoned on 01970 611422, and we provide a link to their useful website below:

[Aberystwyth Marina | The Marine Group](#)

They are changing the layout of the marina in the early summer so if you have been here before be prepared for a surprise. The plan here is what we have now.

There is a marina layout diagram available [HERE](#)

Before entry they can be contacted on VHF channel 80, callsign Abermarina, for berthing instructions. There is a 5 kn speed limit in the harbour.

The Marina is staffed from 10 AM to 4 PM in the winter and 9 AM to 5 PM in the summer.

The Official Aberystwyth Harbourmaster (as opposed to the Marina) works on channel VHF channel 14, with initial contact on channel 16. He can be phoned on 01970 611433.

## Facilities

Water is available on all pontoons, and electricity on most of them. Toilets and showers ashore are accessed by security codes, and the Marina is covered by CCTV. There is a launderette nearby in the town.

The Marina operates the fuel berth selling diesel (during Marina office hours only), and Calor and Camping Gaz are obtainable locally. Petrol is available by Jerry can very close by.

Boat liftings can be handled up to 10 tonnes, with storage ashore.

For various Marine specialists check the directory.

Town facilities are reasonably comprehensive and close at hand. A good selection of supermarkets, shops, banks and cashpoints will be found within an easy walk.

Aberystwyth is well connected transport wise, with the town centre railway station being the terminus. Trains run at roughly two-hour intervals to Shrewsbury and Birmingham via mid Wales. A scenic steam railway also runs from the station covering a 12 mile route to Devil's Bridge, a local tourist attraction.

The Traws Cambria bus service connects directly with Bangor, Cardigan, Carmarthen and Cardiff. There is also a daily National Express coach service to London and Birmingham.

## What To Do

For a change from the usual format we are letting a local website have the final say about the eating, drinking and entertainment scene in Aberystwyth.

Bear in mind there is a large student/holidaymaker population here, so younger crew members may be able to find some playmates.... For the rest of us old fogeys the information provided by these links may help us steer clear of unsuitable establishments...

Pubs/Clubs

[Pubs in aberystwyth # beerintheevening.com](#)

Restaurants

[Restaurants & Places to Eat in Aberystwyth 2022 - Tripadvisor](#)

## History

The town is situated near the confluence of the rivers Ystwyth and Rheidol, about midway down the length of Cardigan Bay. Although the name may seem to suggest otherwise, only the River Rheidol actually passes through the town - the River Ystwyth only just skirts the town, following the reconstruction of the harbour.

Aberystwyth has a pier and a fine seafront which stretches from Constitution Hill at the north end of the Promenade to the mouth of the harbour at the south, taking in two separate beach stretches divided by the castle. Today it is essentially made up of four different areas: Aberystwyth town, Llanbadarn Fawr, Waunfawr and Penparcau, with Penparcau being the most populous.

Aberystwyth is an extremely isolated town, considering the population density of the United Kingdom. The nearest substantial settlements are located at least 1 hour 45 minutes drive away: Swansea, to the south, is 70 miles (110 km) away; Shrewsbury, in Shropshire, England, to the east, is 75 miles (120 km) away; and Wrexham, to the north-east, is approximately 80 miles (130 km) away. The Welsh capital, Cardiff, is over 100 miles (160 km) away. London is 210 miles (340 km) away from Aberystwyth.

Brief information

Aberystwyth is a major tourist centre and a cultural link between North Wales and South Wales. Constitution Hill is scaled by the Aberystwyth Electric Cliff Railway giving access to fine views and other attractions at the top, while

much of the finest scenery in Mid Wales lies within easy reach of the town. This includes the wilderness of the Cambrian Mountains, whose valleys contain forests and meadows which have changed little in centuries. A convenient way of reaching the interior is by the preserved narrow gauge Vale of Rheidol Railway.

Although the town is relatively modern, it contains a number of historic buildings, including the remains of the castle and the Old College of Aberystwyth University nearby. The Old College was originally intended to be a hotel, but due to a lack of funds the shell of the building was sold to the university. The new university campus overlooks Aberystwyth from Penglais Hill to the east of the town centre. The terminus for the standard gauge railway is also very impressive being built in 1924 in typical style of the period.

The architecture is a mix of Gothic, Classical Revival and Victorian, and the town is sometimes referred to as "the Oxbridge of Wales".

The town is generally regarded as the capital of Mid Wales, and several institutions have regional or national offices there. Perhaps the most important of the public bodies located in Aberystwyth is the National Library of Wales. The library also incorporates the National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales, one of six British regional film archives. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, which maintains and curates the National Monuments Record of Wales (NMRW), provides the public with information about the built heritage of Wales. Aberystwyth is also the home to the national offices of UCAC and Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, and the site of the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research. The Welsh Books Council and the offices of the standard historical dictionary of Welsh, Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru, are also located in Aberystwyth.

## Middle Ages

The recorded history of Aberystwyth, may be said to date from the building of a fortress in 1109 by Gilbert Fitz Richard (grandfather of Richard de Clare, known as Strongbow, the Cambro-Norman lord notable for his leading role in the Norman invasion of Ireland). Gilbert Fitz Richard was granted lands and the Lordship of Cardigan by Henry I, including Cardigan Castle. The fortress built in Aberystwyth was located about a mile and a half south of today's town, on a hill over the south bank of the Ystwyth River. Edward I replaced Strongbow's castle in 1277, after its destruction by the Welsh. His castle was however built in a different location, at the current Castle Hill, the high point of the town. Between the years 1404 and 1408 Aberystwyth Castle was in the hands of Owain Glyndwr, but finally surrendered to Prince Harry (the future King Henry V of England). Shortly after this the town was incorporated under the title of Ville de Lampadarn (the ancient name of the place being Llanbadarn Gaerog, or the fortified Llanbadarn, to distinguish it from Llanbadarn Fawr, the village one mile (1.6 km) inland). It is thus styled in a Royal charter granted by Henry VIII, but by Elizabeth I's time the town was invariably termed Aberystwyth in all documents.[citation needed] In 1649 the Parliamentarian troops razed the castle, so that its remains are now inconsiderable, though portions of three towers still exist. Excavations in the 1970s within the castle, in what is believed to be a stables area, revealed a complete male skeleton, deliberately buried. Rarely surviving in Wales' acidic soil, this skeleton was probably preserved by the addition of lime from the collapsed building. Affectionately known as "Charlie", he probably dates from the English Civil War period, probably dying during the Parliamentarian siege and is now housed in the Ceredigion Museum in the town.

## Victorian era

The Cambrian Railway line from Machynlleth reached Aberystwyth in the 1860s closely followed by rail links to Carmarthen which resulted in the construction of the town's impressive station. The railway's arrival gave rise to something of a Victorian tourist boom and the town was once even billed as the "Biarritz of Wales". During this time a number of hotels and fine townhouses were built including the Queens Hotel. One of the largest of these hotels "The Castle Hotel" was never completed as a hotel but following bankruptcy was sold cheaply to the Welsh National University Committee, a group of people dedicated to the creation of a Welsh University. The University College of Wales (later to become Aberystwyth University) was founded in 1872 in this building.

## Modern History

The Vale of Rheidol Railway narrow gauge line from Devil's Bridge was constructed between 1901 and 1902, intended to ship mineral traffic, primarily lead, from Devil's Bridge down to Aberystwyth for trans-shipment. By the time it was finished the lead mines were in a deep downturn and it therefore came to rely largely on the tourist industry. The railway opened for passengers in December 1902. It is still open for the summer season today.

On the night of Friday 14 January 1938 a storm with estimated wind speeds of up to 90 mph (140 km/h) struck the town. Most of the promenade was destroyed, along with 200 feet (61 m) of the pier. Most properties on the seafront were damaged, most severely on Victoria Terrace.

#### Tourist facilities and attractions

The town attracts many tourists and some of its main attractions are:

- \* The Aberystwyth Cliff Railway a funicular railway
- \* A camera obscura on Constitution Hill (known as Consti to locals)
- \* Castle ruins (see history section)
- \* The Vale of Rheidol steam railway (The aforementioned narrow gauge Vale of Rheidol Railway)
- \* Aberystwyth Arts Centre, which houses theatres, a cinema, exhibition galleries, practice rooms and studios, shops, cafes and bars
- \* Ceredigion Museum
- \* The Parc Penglais nature reserve

#### Leisure and sports facilities:

- \* A marina
- \* A golf course
- \* The commodore cinema
- \* The Ystwyth Trail cycle path

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