

Introduction

Great Yarmouth is built on spit of land between the sea to the East and the narrow River Yare to the West.

The port was based on the herring fishing industry but nowadays is very busy with commercial activity concerned with servicing and supplying offshore gas rigs and wind farm services.

Important. The Haven Bridge is still out of action (early summer 2022) information can be found by contacting Port Marine Information on 01493 335511

A new outer harbour offers berths for commercial and ferry berths. It is unlikely however to affect traffic in the narrow River Yare, which will probably continue to be busy with supply ships. **Small craft are prohibited from entering the new outer harbour.**

The port itself holds little charm for the passing small boat Mariner, and there are little or no facilities. Indeed reading the website of the port authorities could lead one to believe that they are more interested in hurrying small craft through their bridges and thus into the Broads (and out of their way).

Therefore most boaters will only be using Great Yarmouth as a gateway to the Broads, which is a shame seeing as the town is of a good size and set up for tourists.

Facilities at present consist of a small amount of quay space set aside for small boats deep into the River near the bridge.

Approach

This is another one of those places where you really will need up to date charts to tackle the entrance.

Not only are changes going on regarding the new outer harbour, but the nearby sandbanks offshore are constantly on the move.

The Admiralty chart warns that in a 2004 survey drying heights of 0.3m are being recorded where previous charts showed depths of 12 m.

Approaches from the South will involve using the well marked Holm Channel, or perhaps if coming from Lowestoft using Corton Road and Gorleston Roads. Let the chart be your guide. Pilotage details:

Approaches from the East are probably best made by leaving the wind farm on Scroby Sands well to the north of you and approaching via the Holm Channel. This involves locating and identifying the southerly Cardinal buoy S.Corton (Q(6)+LFl.15s), and heading in a generally north-west direction leaving the green conical Holm buoy (Fl.G.2.5s) to starboard and the northerly Cardinal buoy Holm Sand (Q) to port. A course can then be shaped up direct for the entrance.

The windfarm is easily recognisable and centered on 52°39'N and 1°47'E. It consists of 30 turbines 61 m high in each. The blades are 80 m in diameter with the clearance height of 18 m. The bottom section of each turbine is painted bright yellow.

In all cases when calculating courses approaching Great Yarmouth, due allowance will have to be made for the powerful tides which sweep up and down the coast.

Any approach from the North is a bit trickier and will involve having to locate and identify the buoyage marking Caister Roads, which runs inside the Scroby Sands and it's windfarm.

Probably the safest entrance would be between the red can Hembsy buoy, (Fl.R.2.5s) and the northerly Cardinal buoy N.Scroby (VQ). With any kind of onshore winds the sea breaks heavily on the Scroby Banks and it would be most unwise to plan to sail over it even though there is sufficient depth in many places.

The track down Caister Roads is well marked by red and green buoyage and heading south will bring you into Yarmouth Road and the entrance to the port of Great Yarmouth.

For small craft it is unwise to plan or attempt entry in any kind of onshore wind greater than the top end of a force 4. Even in lighter onshore winds when the tide is running out of the River Yare it can reach speeds of up to 6 kn, and this can lead to conflagrations that are best avoided.

Any kind of entry attempt should therefore only be made on slack or flooding tides, and not in stiff onshore weather. To further complicate planning, cross tides near the entrance can reach over 3 kn at Springs.

Bearing in mind busy commercial nature of this harbour, the narrowness and strong tidal flows encountered within it is necessary to contact and monitor port control on VHF channel 12, callsign " Yarmouth Radio" for entry instructions. A link to the small craft section of the harbour authority's website is provided below:

[Peel Ports Great Yarmouth Visiting Small Craft](#)

International port traffic signals are displayed from the seaward end of the South pier and need to be identified and obeyed. Three vertical red lights mean do not proceed in. In emergency situations the three vertical red lights flash. Three green lights vertically orientated mean " vessels may proceed". If you see green, white and green displayed it means you can proceed only with specific orders from port control.

When leaving the port similar lights are displayed facing inwards.

A quick glance at the photo gallery will show you how narrow it is within the harbour, and give you some kind of idea of the kind of size vessels you're likely to encounter. The small boat Mariner needs to be acutely aware of what the tide is doing underneath him in this channel, and to make sure he maintains steerage way at all times.

Berthing

It is a real shame that there are no more mooring facilities for the visiting yachtsman or motorboater below the bridge and near the town.

What is available at present is a 50 m stretch of quayside just past the town hall on your starboard side and just before you get to Haven Bridge, which will need opening before you can pass under it. These berths lie about 2 miles upstream from the entrance.

A good look at the photos will show you that the quay consists of pilings and concrete, thus not being topside friendly. Fenderboards would be very useful.

The rise and fall of the tide is not that massive, little more than 1 m at neaps, and 2 m at Springs. The rate of flow however is considerable (4 Knts +) so any kind of lying alongside will need good spring ropes, and due care in the approach. If the tide is running hard under you beware of being swept into the lifting bridge.

The harbour office is nearby at South Quay, telephone 01493 335503.

Not much in the way of facilities here but water may be obtainable by Jerry can, and you are likely to be charged for staying.

If this is just a temporary stop waiting for the bridges, you will need to contact the port in advance to book your passage.

If planning to pass through into the Broads (which we do not cover in this article), it would be wise to study the following website for information:

<http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/boating>

There are all kinds of rules and regulations to be complied with, and a visiting boat of 10 m will have to pay £54.50 for a licence that lasts for seven days.

It is worth noting that Burgh Castle Marina is not too far into the Broads and can offer berths for boats up to 1.5 m draft or more.

Facilities

No real facilities for the boat other than the quay space, and water tap. No boatyards, no Chandlers, no yacht clubs, or anything else for that matter. It shouldn't be too difficult however to find Marine engineers, probably more used to dealing with heavy diesels. Check the directory.

Past Haven Bridge there was Bure Marine but that is now closed and the facility taken over by Fendercare Marine who service the offshore wind turbines and is of no use to the visiting yachtsman

Great Yarmouth can offer good town facilities however. Transport connections are covered by a railway link to Norwich, from where London bound trains can be caught. National Express coaches run direct from great Yarmouth to London also.

The town has find a free slipway with access at all of the tidal range next to the lifeboat station in Gorleston. This is on the Western side of the River Yare and is very close to the harbour entrance. Reversing down this ramp even with a smallish boat is said to be tricky, and trailer sailors need to be very aware of the strength of the tide and the commercial nature of the harbour.

What To Do

Being a bit of a holiday town Great Yarmouth has plenty to offer in the way of entertainment, eating and drinking.

There are a couple of museums, one of which is devoted to Nelson, together with pleasure beaches, funfairs and piers. 10 pin bowling and swimming pools can also be found.

Absolutely all kinds of restaurants are represented, together with a good selection of pubs... as usual it is not our place to delve too deeply, so we present a couple of links below for your perusal:

Pubs:

<http://www.beerintheevening.com/pubs/results.shtml/el/Great%20Yarmouth%3BNorfolk/>

Eating Out:

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

History

Great Yarmouth, often known to locals as Yarmouth, is a coastal town in Norfolk, England. It is at the mouth of the River Yare, 20 miles east of Norwich.

It has been a seaside resort since 1760, and is the gateway from the Norfolk Broads to the sea. For hundreds of years it has been a fishing port dependent on the herring fishery, and today it services offshore natural gas rigs. The town has a popular beach and two promenades.

Geography and demography

The town itself is on a thin spit sandwiched between the North Sea and River Yare. It is home to the historic rows and the main tourist sector on the seafront. The area is linked to Gorleston, Cobholm and Southtown by Haven Bridge and to the A47, A149 and A12 by the Breydon Bridge.

History

Yarmouth (Gernemwa, Yernemuth) lies near the site of the Roman fort camp of Gariannonum at the mouth of the River Yare. Its situation having attracted fishermen from the Cinque Ports, a permanent settlement was made, and the town numbered 70 burgesses before the Norman Conquest. Henry I placed it under the rule of a reeve.

The charter of King John (1208), which gave his burgesses of Yarmouth general liberties according to the customs of Oxford, a gild merchant and weekly hustings, was amplified by several later charters asserting the rights of the borough against Little Yarmouth and Gorleston. In 1552 Elizabeth granted a charter of admiralty jurisdiction, confirmed and extended by James I. In 1668 Charles II incorporated Little Yarmouth in the borough by a charter which with one brief exception remained in force until 1703, when Anne replaced the two bailiffs by a mayor.

A grammar school was founded in 1551, when the great hall of the old hospital, founded in the reign of Edward I by Thomas Fastolfe, was appropriated to its use. It was closed from 1757 to 1860, was re-established by the charity trustees, and settled in new buildings in 1872.

From 1808 to 1814 the Admiralty in London could communicate with its ships in the port of Great Yarmouth by a shutter telegraph chain.

The town was the site of a bridge disaster and drowning tragedy on 2 May 1845 when a suspension bridge crowded with children collapsed under the weight killing 79. They had gathered to watch a clown in a barrel being pulled by geese down the river. As he passed under the bridge the weight shifted, causing the chains on the south side to snap, tipping over the bridge deck.

During World War I Great Yarmouth suffered the first aerial bombardment in the UK, by Zeppelin L3 on 19 January 1915. It was also bombarded by the German Navy on 24 April 1916.

The town suffered Luftwaffe bombing during World War II but much is left of the old town, including the original 2000m protective mediaeval wall, of which two-thirds has survived. Of the 18 towers, 11 are left. On the South Quay, there is a 17th century Merchant's House, as well as Tudor, Georgian and Victorian buildings. Behind South Quay, there is a maze of alleys and lanes known as "The Rows". Originally there were 145. Despite war damage, several have remained.

The northern section of the two-mile A47 Great Yarmouth Western Bypass opened in March 1986, and the southern section in May 1985. It is now the A12.

More recently flooding has been a problem, the town flooding four times in 2006. In September 2006 the town suffered its worst flooding in years. Torrential rain caused drains to block as well as an Anglian Water pumping station to break down and this resulted in flash flooding around the town in which 90 properties were flooded up to 5ft.

The town was badly affected by the North Sea flood of 1953. On 9 November 2007 the town braced itself for more flooding as a result of a tidal surge and high tides but disaster was avoided and only a small area was under

water.[5]

Sights

The Tollhouse, with dungeons, dates from the late 13th century and is said to be the oldest civic building in Britain. It backs on to the central library.

The Market place is one of the largest in England, and has been operating since the 13th century. It is also home to the town's shopping sector and the famous Yarmouth chip stalls. The smaller area south of the market is used as a performance area for community events and for access to the town's shopping centre, Market Gates. In November 2008, a new section of Market Gates opened, including high street retailers such as Debenhams, New Look and Starbucks.

Great Yarmouth railway station, which serves the town, is the terminus of the Wherry Lines from Norwich. Before the Beeching Axe the town had a number of railway stations and a direct link to London down the east coast. The only remaining signs of these stations is the coach park where Beach Station once was and the A12 relief road which follows the route of the railway down into the embankment from Breydon Bridge.

Britannia Pier

Yarmouth has two piers, Britannia Pier and Wellington Pier. The latter of the two was demolished in 2005 and is currently being rebuilt as a family entertainment centre. Britannia Pier is home to the Britannia Theatre which during the summer months features well known acts including; Jim Davidson, Basil Brush, Cannon and Ball, Chubby Brown, Chuckle Brothers and The Searchers. The theatre is one of a few end of the pier theatres left in England.

The Grade II listed Winter Gardens building sits next to the Wellington Pier. The cast iron framed glass structure was shipped by barge from Torquay in 1903. It is said this was done without the loss of a single pane of glass. Over the years, it has been used as ballroom, roller skating rink and beer garden. In the 1990s it was converted into a nightclub by comedian Jim Davidson. Today, The Winter Gardens are used as a family leisure venue, although its future is under threat owing to the cost of repairing the aging framework. During the winter of 2005 there were worries that building might collapse, and during high winds it was often closed.

Great Yarmouth's seafront, known as "The Golden Mile" attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year to its sandy beaches, Pleasure Beach, indoor attractions and amusement arcades. Great Yarmouth's Marine Parade has 12 Amusement Arcades located within 2 square miles, including: Atlantis, The Flamingo, Circus Circus, The Golden Nugget, The Mint, Leisureland, The Majestic, The Silver Slipper, The Showboat, Magic City, Quicksilver and The Gold Rush, opened in 2007.

The South Denes area is home to the Grade I listed Norfolk Naval Pillar, known locally as Nelson's Monument or Nelson's Column. This tribute to Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson was completed in 1819, 24 years before the completion of Nelson's Column in London. The monument, designed by William Wilkins, shows Britannia standing atop a globe holding an olive branch in her right hand and a trident in her left. There is a popular assumption in the town that the statue of Britannia was supposed to face out to sea but now faces inland due to a mistake during construction, although it is thought she is meant to face Nelson's birthplace at Burnham Thorpe. The monument was originally planned to mark Nelson's victory at the Battle of the Nile, but fund-raising was not completed until after his death and it was instead dedicated to England's greatest Naval hero. It is currently surrounded by an industrial estate but plans are in place for the improvement of the area. The Norfolk Nelson Museum on South Quay houses the Ben Burgess collection of Nelson Memorabilia and is the only dedicated Nelson museum in Britain other than one in Monmouth. Its several galleries look at Nelson's life and personality as well as what life was like for the men who sailed under him.

Charles Dickens used Yarmouth as a key location in his novel David Copperfield. The author stayed at the Royal Hotel on the Marine parade while writing David Copperfield. Anna Sewell (1820-1878), the author of Black Beauty, was born in a 17th century house in Church Plain. The house is currently being used as a restaurant after being renovated in 2007.

The Time and Tide museum on Blackfriars Road which is managed by Norfolk Museums Service was nominated in the UK Museums Awards in 2005. It was built as part of the regeneration of the south of the town in 2003. Its location in an old herring smokery harks back to the town's status as a major fishing port. Sections of the historic town wall are located outside the museum.

The Maritime Heritage East partnership, based at the award winning Time and Tide Museum aims to raise the profile of maritime heritage and museum collections.

Wildlife

The Yarmouth area is home to a number of rare and unusual species. The area between the piers is home to one of the largest roosts of Mediterranean Gulls in the UK. Breydon Water, just behind the town, is a major wader and waterfowl site, with winter roosts of over 100,000 birds. This, and the surrounding Halvergate Marshes are specially protected, and the majority of the area is now owned by conservation organisations, (principally the RSPB).

The North Denes area of the beach is an SSSI due to its dune plants, and is home to numbers of Skylarks and Meadow Pipits. It also hosts one of the largest Little Tern colonies in the UK each summer, as well as a small colony of Greyling butterflies. Other butterflies found here include Small Copper and Common Blue.

The near-by cemetery is renowned as a temporary roost for spring and autumn migrants, and sometimes sees spectacular 'falls'. Redstart and Pied Flycatcher are often seen here during migration. It has also been the site for the first records of a number of rare insects, blown in from the continent.

Grey Seal and Common Seal are frequently seen off-shore, as are sea-birds such as Gannet, Little Auk, Common Scoter, Razorbill and Guillemot.

Sports and leisure

Yarmouth has an important horse-racing track which features a chute allowing races of one mile on the straight. The local football (soccer) teams are Great Yarmouth Town and Gorleston, both of whom play in the Ridgeon's League.

Speedway racing was staged in Great Yarmouth before and after the Second World War. The meetings were staged at the greyhound stadium in Caister Road. The post war team were known as the Yarmouth Bloaters. Banger and Stock car racing is also staged at this stadium.

The main Leisure Centre is the Marina Centre. Built in 1981 the centre has a large swimming pool, Conference facilities and live entertainment including their famous Summer Pantomimes and Summer Variety Shows produced by local entertainers Hanton & Dean. The centre is run by the Great Yarmouth Sport and leisure Trust. The Trust was set up in April 2006 to run the building as a charitable non profit making organisation.

At the beginning of the 2008 summer season a worlds first Segway Grand Prix was opened at the Pleasure Beach gardens.

Pop Beach

In 2003 and 2004 T4 hosted their music festival at Great Yarmouth. It saw acts like Emma Bunton, McFly and Blue hit the stage. The event brought over 20,000 people but in 2005 the show changed it's name to T4 On The Beach and has been in Weston-super-Mare since then. There is currently a campaign to get the show back to Great Yarmouth.

Transport

Great Yarmouth is connected to Norwich by the Wherry Lines from Great Yarmouth railway station. It is the only remaining station of the three once in the town.

Current Station

* Great Yarmouth

Bus

First Eastern Counties operate the main bus routes with their hub at the Market Gates Bus Station. The Excel coach service operates a direct link to Peterborough, Norwich and Lowestoft. Other local bus services link the suburban

areas of Martham, Hemsby, Gorleston, Bradwell and Belton. In recent years the bus service in the area has been severely cut back after its privatisation.

Road

The A12 terminates in the town as do the A143 and the A47 roads. The relief road was built along the path of the old railway to carry the A12 onwards to Lowestoft and London. Congestion is a major problem in the town and roundabouts, junctions and bridges can become gridlocked at rush hour. Construction work on the Outer Harbour began in June 2007, the harbour which is being built in the South Denes area plans to bring trade to the area and possibly provide a new ferry link with the Netherlands, it is due to be completed by 2009.

Lifeboat station

There has been a lifeboat in Great Yarmouth since at least 1802. The early boats were privately operated until 1857 when the RNLI took over. The lifeboat station is located on Riverside Road (from where are operated the Trent class lifeboat Samarbeta and the B class (inshore) lifeboat Seahorse IV.

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