

Introduction

Contacts

Harbour Control 01502 572286 #14

Marina 01502 580300

The main thing of concern to a passing yachtsman or motorboater is that Lowestoft Harbour...

... can be entered at all states the tide and in onshore weather, unlike Southwold, Orford Haven and Woodbridge Haven. It thus provides him with a bolthole if heading north from Harwich area.

Although the port and the dockside scenery is more industrial than rural, good facilities will be found within. There is now only one marina virtually just inside the entrance where comings and goings are unrestricted by bridge liftings. Deeper within the harbour, past the opening Road Bridge will be found another three opportunities for mooring alongside.

Access is then available to the non-tidal Oulton Broad via an operation involving two bridges and a lock. That complex is now controlled by the Broads Authority.

The substantial town can offer all kinds of facilities including an Asda superstore, so serious provisioning will be no problem. It also has good transport connections, and most kinds of boat repair work can also be tackled locally with all kinds of specialists on hand.

All in all Lowestoft could be a very useful port of call if on passage.

Approach

Any kind of approaches to Lowestoft or Great Yarmouth will need up to date charts.....

.... as the various offshore sandbanks are constantly on the move. There are deepwater buoyed channels between the banks, and it is best to stick to these in your approaches to Lowestoft - there are numerous charted wrecks in the vicinity of Lowestoft which give weight to this advice!

If coming from the North, say the Great Yarmouth area, you would probably use the Corton Road channel and the Lowestoft North Road channel. This takes you inside the well marked Holm Sands shallows which are to be avoided. You will see the town, the lighthouse mounted slightly inland, and the wind generator. Keep a reasonable offing to avoid the pair of lit Cardinal buoys marking an obstruction. These lie off Lowestoft Ness, the most easterly point of the UK.

Pilotage details:

Entry at night is possible using the narrow white sector of the light on Kirkley front, to the south of the harbour.(Oc.WRG.10s17m8/6M). For those of you who remember the sector light on Claremount Pier, that has been discontinued, but you can see from the chart that the Kirkley front light's white sector is coincident with the remains of that pier.

In case you are working on old charts, the Kirkley Sector light was realigned in 2020 and its sectors subdivided into Occulting and Flashing Sectors thus it goes from Oc G to FI G to FI W, Oc W, FI W FI R , Oc R

This pattern is shown on the recent UKHO chart (which is shown top right on this page)

Closer in the harbour pier ends are marked by two pagoda type lighthouses, the northern one showing Oc.G5s.8M and the southern pier lighthouse showing Oc.R.5s.6M.

If coming from the South or East the safest option is to use the well marked Stanford Channel. The southerly Cardinal buoy S.Holm (VQ(6)+LFI.10s) and the red Newcome Sand buoy (QR) mark the entrance to this channel. Following it in a generally NNW direction will put you opposite the entrance to Lowestoft Port.

If coming from the South, in the right conditions and with due care the Pakefield Road and Lowestoft South Road channels can be used. This track is unlit and care will be needed to avoid the Barnard shoal off Kessingland.

Whichever way you arrive be aware of the tide sets strongly across the narrow entrance to Lowestoft port. Standing off the entrance the tide starts it's northwards flow at around HW Dover, and it southerly flow around LW Dover.

The entrance to the harbour is narrow, while also being on a bit of a blind bend. It is therefore essential to follow the traffic signals as ships can virtually take up the whole entrance.

The information below is directly from ABP's Website, and is presented here unaltered so there can be no confusion about their rules and regulations.

Quote:

Information for the Guidance of Small Craft and Yachts using Lowestoft Harbour and the Seaward Approaches to Mutford Lock.

1 ALL vessels must enter, leave and navigate in the harbour in accordance with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea.

1a Small craft and yachts should give particular attention to "Narrow Channels" Rule No 9b "a vessel of less than 20 metres in length or a sailing vessel shall not impede the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway".

2 Approaching, departing and transit craft must make every reasonable effort to establish and maintain contact with the Lowestoft Harbour Control on VHF Channel 14.

2a ANY vessel without radio contact must give particular attention to the harbour control lights and navigate with extreme caution in the vicinity of structures, which may mask their presence.

3 ALL vessels must observe the international port traffic signals located on the South Pier and in the Yacht Basin.

* Three vertical red lights - vessels should not proceed.

* Green, white, green vertical lights - a vessel may proceed only when it has received specific orders to do so.

3a For small craft and yachts without VHF communication the green, white, green signal may be considered in favour of proceeding with extreme caution and navigational courtesy, those vessels in the Yacht Basin must contact the Port Control before departure.

3b Mariners should note that port control (located at the harbour bridge) and departing vessels within the Outer Harbour basin have extremely limited vision to the north of the entrance piers and should conduct their navigation accordingly.

4 The Lowestoft Harbour Bridge (between the Outer and Inner Harbours) will only be opened on demand for commercial shipping.

4a Commercial shipping is discouraged from passage: 0815-0900 hours, 1230-1300 hours and 1700-1730 hours.

4b Small craft and yachts may use a bridge opening for commercial shipping provided that prior arrangement has been made with Lowestoft Harbour Control - VHF Channel 14, telephones 572286 or personal visit.

4c In addition to 4b and subject to prior notification of at least 20 minutes, small craft and yachts maybe given a bridge opening at the following times:

Mon-Fri:0300, 0500, 0700, 0945, 1115, 1430, 1600, 1900, 2100, 2400.

Sat, Sun, Bank Hol: 0300, 0500, 0700, 0945, 1115, 1430, 1600, 1800, 1900, 2100, 2400.

End of Quote.

Perhaps the only thing to add is the phone number for the harbour office 01502 572286, so you can still get in touch if you don't have VHF.

Be prepared for a bit of turbulence in the approach, but once through the narrow entrance the harbour opens out and various basins will be seen. Where you go now depends on where you intend to berth.

Berthing

There are various options for berthing in Lowestoft, Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club Marina....

while in Lake Lothing there is another ABP Marina (The Lowestoft Haven Marina), Lowestoft Cruising Club, and finally Lowestoft Marina (small). There is nowhere to anchor in Lowestoft. Full details including prices follow:

ABP Lowestoft Haven Marina, Hamilton Dock is now devoted to the off-shore commercial business and is no longer taking visiting boats

Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club Marina .

This long-established club runs the Marina in the Yacht Basin, which lies a little deeper into the harbour on your port hand side approaching the bridge. Visitors are more than welcome to use this Marina and your mooring fees include temporary membership of the yacht club, based in the imposing buildings adjacent to the pontoons.

Contact the Royal Norfolk Harbourmaster on VHF channel 80 or telephone 01502 566726 and obtain berthing instructions before entering their Dock. If arriving outside the normal hours you should make sure you obtain the necessary codes for the marina gates and the shower block. A link to their website is provided below:

<http://www.rnsyc.net/wordpress/>

Facilities here include water and electricity (included in the mooring fee for visitors) on the pontoons, with diesel alongside available. Ashore you will find toilets, showers and a launderette with WiFi also available throughout the Marina. Holding tanks can be pumped here.

Prices here (2022) come out at £3.20 per metre per night with a big discount for a week's stop.

Visitors will find a good welcome at the club, and can use the sun lounge overlooking the Marina where bar meals are available. The club also offers a la carte dining in it's restaurant. They also have some plush accommodation ashore if you've crew has had a hard time and needs a night away from you!

The club is virtually next to the award-winning beach, whilst the town facilities are close by also, just across the bridge. The Asda superstore is on the same side as the yacht club and a relatively easy hike away.

The same advantages also apply to the yacht club Marina in as much as you can come and go 24 hours. It is however essential to note permission must be obtained from Lowestoft port control (VHF channel 14) before leaving the dock, and traffic lights are installed in this basin... three reds meaning no exit.

All other mooring options involve negotiating the lifting bridge in front of the conspicuous grain silo. Although the bridge opens on request for ships, it does **not** do so for yachts. The details of the opening times and the methods of arranging a transit have already been given.

It only remains to say that while waiting for your transit there is a waiting pontoon just within the Trawl Dock, on your starboard side more or less opposite yacht club Marina.

Lake Lothing

Once past the bridge you'll be in Lake Lothing, which is mainly an industrial area with docks and shipyards. There is plenty of water in the dredged channel but note that if you are awaiting a bridge opening on your way out of Lowestoft there may be several other boats waiting; there is nowhere to tie up so be aware of the shallows off the ASDA Superstore while you swan about with the other waiting boats. If going up stream stick to the middle as the channel is unbuoyed and just over a mile into it on your port side you will come to the second Marina run by ABP. (Lowestoft haven)

Lowestoft Haven Marina (School Road)

The contact details are the same as for Hamilton Dock, call them on VHF channel 80 or M, or telephone 01502 580300, 7:30 AM to 7:30 PM. Their website can be found at:

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

The usual Marina facilities are available here including water and electricity on the pontoons, with toilets and showers and launderette ashore. WiFi is available, and mooring fees (2022) work out at £2.69 per metre per night which covers everything

Diesel is available from the fuel berth and both Calor and Camping gas/gaz can be obtained. Boat lifting and repair facilities are available at this site with a 70 tonne travel lift, and various specialists including engineers, riggers and electronics on hand. Check the directory.

This site is not as convenient for the town and provisions as the two marinas before the bridge. The nearest source of provisions is an open all hours ASDA about 30 minutes walk away.

Lowestoft Cruising Club

The mooring pontoon belonging to this club is on the North side of Lake Lothing, more or less opposite the ABP Marina. Visitors may be able to make use of the clubs pontoon, and the best plan would be to contact the duty moorings officer on 07934 981991

A link to their website is provided below where you will find e-mail contact details and full mooring instructions:

www.lowestoftcruisingclub.co.uk

Water and electricity are available on the pontoons, with showers and toilets ashore. Town facilities are about 10 minutes away by foot. Mooring prices (2022) are £2.40 per metre per night (charged to the nearest half metre), with a charge of £1 per day for services They operate an honesty scheme and ask that you fill in their departure form and leave it with your mooring fees in the box at the bottom of the gangway. Liaise with the club for a visitor's pack where you will find a key card for entry to the club and moorings.

Finally last but not least, Lowestoft Marina...

This little Marina was the first in Lake Lothing, and it's to be found on the port hand side just before you get to the Carlton Swing Bridge (leading to the Broads).

They only have a few berths available, but all kinds of specialists are on hand for repairs etc. The pontoon berths have water and electricity, and toilets and showers (£1) are ashore. If they have room they would be able to give you a berth for a night or so and charge very little for it (about 40p a foot- or £12 a night for a 30ft boat) shore power would be charged for as metered. It is essential that you contact them a couple of days in advance if you are looking for a berth for a couple of nights.

Contact them on 01502 588111, and we provide a link to their website below:

<http://www.lowestoftmarina.net/>

They are close to Oulton Broad, where shops and banks proliferate.

Into Oulton Broad

Anyone planning to enter the Broads will have to organise a temporary licence, which is compulsory. These can be obtained from Mutford Lock or from the Broads Authority in Norwich.... link below:

<http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/boating/owning-a-boat/tolls>

There are all kinds of safety checks and standards that have to be complied with, so a good study of the website will be required before you make your mind up to bother going in.

Operation and administration of the Mutford Lock, Mutford Road Bridge and Carlton Railway Bridge has been transferred to the Broads Authority and the limit of the ABP Lowestoft is now below the Railway Bridge as opposed to above the Lock as it was. To arrange transit through the complex now call on VHF#73, telephone 01502 531778 or 01502 574946. It will cost you £13 for each lock transit t you will have to purchase their 7 day operating licence to do this.

It is beyond the scope of this article to cover cruising the Broads.

This section was updated in March 2022

Facilities

Facilities at the individual marinas have already been covered, and this short section deals with Lowestoft town facilities.

The two marinas before you go under the bridge are perhaps the closest to the town, and Lowestoft Haven Marina in Lake Lothing is perhaps the furthest. Having said that though it is still walkable.

The shopping centre area is on the North side close to the lifting bridge. Absolutely all kinds of shops will be found plus banks with cash machines. An Asda superstore is on the southern side of Lake Lothing not too far from the yacht club Marina, and is open daily up till 10 PM (except Sundays when it opens 10 AM to 4 PM).

Transport connections are okay, Lowestoft lies on the main A12 road. The railway station again is close to the lifting bridge, and offers frequent connections to Norwich and from thence to the Midlands and North. It also connects with Harwich and from there to London Liverpool Street. National Express coach services go direct from Lowestoft to London Victoria.

Trailer Sailers are well served by the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Marina. Their concrete ramp has access at three quarters of the tidal range and costs £7.50 a day. It is necessary to make arrangements with them first though, and their contact details have already been given. The same rules apply to trailer boats regarding getting permission to exit from the dock.

What To Do

If berthing at the yacht club Marina, their clubhouse and its bars and restaurants are open to you . Likewise the ABP Marina in Lake Lothing has its own Go-Fish restaurant/bar specialising in fish and seafood.

Otherwise it's a hike over the bridge (or into the town from Hamilton Docks) to sample what Lowestoft has to offer, which does include a cinema and a theatre. The Maritime Museum is open during the summer months, and is

located near to the Lowestoft lighthouse, north of the town.

For those with families the Pleasurewood Hills Family Themepark might keep the little monsters occupied for a day and this also is to the north of the town centre.

The hungry and thirsty crew will find no shortage of opportunities in this town.... a couple of links are provided below for you to investigate. One of the pubs has a very high rating.

Pubs:

<http://www.beerintheevening.com/pubs/results.shtml/el/Lowestoft%3BSuffolk/>

Eating Out:

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

For those who wish to use Lowestoft as a base to start exploring the Norfolk Broads, could be worth having a look here:

www.norfolk-broads-review.co.uk/

History

Lowestoft is a coastal town in Suffolk, East Anglia, England, lying between the eastern edge of The Broads National Park at Oulton Broad and the North Sea.

Lowestoft Ness, located adjacent to Gas Works Road and an abandoned industrial site, is the most easterly point of the United Kingdom and of the British Isles.

Geography

The town is divided in two by the man-made Lake Lothing, with both north and south sides of the lake containing residential and business sectors. The main shopping areas lie just north of the divide, while the popular sandy beach is to the south. Just to the north of the beach is a large working harbour.

The town has two piers, situated on the south beach. The southerly pier is called the Claremont Pier. The pier itself has been closed for many years, and the structure is now in a state of decay and is not open to the public. A large arcade is at the front. Just over half a mile (1 km) to the north of that is the South Pier (so called because it is placed on the south side of the harbour). These piers are home to shops and arcades, and are somewhat popular tourist attractions.

The seaward boundary of the harbour is a strip of land known as the Old Extension, which is used as a development yard for North Sea oil companies.

Lowestoft railway station is centrally placed within the town, as well as also being within walking distance of the beach, providing services to Norwich along the Wherry Line and Ipswich on the East Suffolk Line. Some services also continue on through to London Liverpool Street along the main line from Ipswich. All services are operated by National Express East Anglia.

History

The name is said to come from toft (a Viking word for "homestead") and Loth or Lowe (a Viking male name). The town's name has been spelled variously: Lothnwistoft, Lestoffe, Laistoe, Loystoft, Laystoft. In the Domesday Book,

Lowestoft is described as a small agricultural village of 20 families, or about 100 people. Rent for the land was paid to the landowner Hugh de Montfort in herrings.

In the Middle Ages, Lowestoft developed into a fishing port. Great Yarmouth saw Lowestoft as a rival and tried to push it out of the herring trade. Yarmouth later backed out of fishing trade, but the rivalry between the towns didn't completely go away. In the English Civil War (1642-1651) Yarmouth took the side of Parliament and Lowestoft took the Royalist side, possibly so that they wouldn't need to co-operate. However, this was not taken very seriously, as Lowestoft's defences consisted of a rope across the High Street and a single, unmanned, unloaded cannon.

In 1662 two old women, Rose Cullender and Amy Denny, living in Lowestoft were accused of witchcraft by their neighbours. They were tried at the Assize held in Bury St. Edmunds by one of England's most eminent judges Sir Matthew Hale. The jury found them guilty on thirteen charges of using malevolent witchcraft and the judge sentenced them to death. They were hanged at Bury St. Edmunds on 17 March 1662.

In the 1665, the first battle of the Second Dutch War was the Battle of Lowestoft 40 miles off the coast of the town.

During the 1790s, Lowestoft's fishing community established their own "beach village", living in upturned boats.

In the 19th century, the arrival of Sir Samuel Morton Peto brought about a huge change in Lowestoft's fortunes. Peto started by building a rail link between Lowestoft and Norwich, and links with other towns soon followed. He developed the harbour and provided mooring for 1,000 boats. This gave a boost to trade with the continent. He also established Lowestoft as a flourishing seaside holiday resort. There is a road named after him in Lowestoft called Peto Way.

In World War I Lowestoft was bombarded by the German Navy on 24 April 1916.

During the Second World War the town was used as a navigation point by German bombers. As a result it was the most heavily bombed town per head of population in the UK. Old mines and bombs are still dredged up and have been hazardous to shipping.

Lowestoft has been subject to periodic flooding, the most memorable was in January, 1953 when a North Sea swell driven by low pressure and a high tide swept away many of the older sea defences and deluged most of the southern town.

Until the mid 1960s fishing was Lowestoft's main industry. Fleets comprised drifters and trawlers, with the drifters primarily targeting herring while the trawlers caught cod, plaice, skate and haddock, etc. By the mid 1960s the catches were greatly diminishing, particularly the herring. Consequently the drifter fleet disappeared and many of the trawlers were adapted to work as service ships for the newly created North Sea oil rigs. A large fisheries research centre which is a part of Defra is still located in south Lowestoft, this is due to be moved together with new offices for Waveney District Council in an area presently occupied by eight businesses.

The Eastern Coach Works was another big employer and in the 1960s it was a regular occurrence to see a bare bus chassis being driven through the town to the coach works by a goggled driver. Installing the bus's superstructure, body work and seats was the job of Eastern Coach Works. Both double decker and single decker buses were built there and sent all over the country.

Brooke Marine and Richards shipbuilding companies who together employed over a thousand men also went out of business at about the same time. In order to carry on the skills and traditions of the threatened shipbuilding trade, the International Boatbuilding Training College was formed in 1975 and has been largely successful at producing graduates who carry on the legacy of Lowestoft shipwrights.

From the late 1960s to the late 1990s, the oil and gas industry provided significant employment in the Lowestoft area. For many years the Shell Southern Operations base on the north shore of Lake Lothing was one of the town's largest employers. A decision to close the Shell base was finally made in 2003.

Lowestoft Air Festival

For two days each year, Lowestoft South Beach plays host to the Seafront Air Festival. Since its first opening in 1996, the event has gained much popularity and media attention. Despite being a free event, the festival earns a lot

of money for the town, from companies which advertise and sponsor the event. The main attraction tends to be the Red Arrows, but there are many different performing aircraft in the event.

Its 10th anniversary was its most successful year, attracting around 420,000.

One of the most infamous events in the show's history is the Harrier crash in 2002. An RAF board of inquiry later established that the pilot, Flight Lieutenant Cann had accidentally operated the controls for throttle and nozzle direction lever at the same time causing it to drop sharply. Cann ejected as the aircraft dropped, via the ejector seat to rise safely above the crashed plane. He then descended safely by parachute until he struck the sinking plane and fractured his ankle. People in the sea were swiftly evacuated, and the Lowestoft Lifeboat 3 was quickly on hand to take the pilot from the sea to the harbour where he was winched to the SAR Helicopter from RAF Wattisham and flown to a local hospital. The recovery of the aircraft was watched by hundreds as it was winched out of the North Sea several days later.

Future performances were thought to be under threat with the cessation of the main sponsorship by the Birds Eye frozen food company, but the show is administratively underwritten by the local district council until 2010, and new main sponsors are currently being sought by the management committee. In 2006 only £62,000 was raised in donations from the estimated 420,000 spectators, but in 2007 donations of £59,000 from the reduced crowd of 270,000 (due to poor weather on the first day) is considered a positive step towards the future of the show, as is the new link forged with the Honda Powerboat Grand Prix which was held on the two days following the air show.

The 2008 Lowestoft Seafront Air Festival has been, yet figures regarding monies raised, or visitor numbers are yet to be published.

Wind turbine

A large wind turbine, built in December 2004, is located by the sea on the edge of town.

The turbine is named 'Gulliver'; this name was picked from a list of suggestions given by readers of a local newspaper, the Lowestoft Journal. The construction of the wind turbine began on Tuesday 7 December 2004 with a 108 metre high crane lifting the 71 tonne Tower Lower Section. The 65 tonne Tower Middle Section, 46 tonne Tower Top Section, 83 tonne nacelle and 54 tonne, 92 m diameter Rotor Blade Assembly were erected on Friday 10 December 2004. The new turbine began generating electricity in January 2005 and has a generating capacity of up to 2.75 MW, although the original proposal was for an even bigger 3.2 MW turbine.

The hub height is 80 m (262 ft). The blade tip height is 126 m (413 ft). The nacelle assembly weighs 83 tonnes and is 11.2 m (37 ft) long, 3.3 m (11 ft) wide, 3.8 m (12.5 ft) high, making it the biggest wind turbine on mainland UK as of April 2005.

Each of the 3 blades weighs 10 tonnes and is 44.8 m (147 ft) long. The overall diameter of the rotor assembly is 92 m (301 ft). The blade tips slice through the air at about 150 miles per hour. The turbulence this generates accounts for the pulsating "whooshing" noise audible when you stand underneath. This sound, combined with the height, weight and dimensions, prompted the owners to conduct tests for "subsonic" sounds and vibrations after several people reported feeling "nauseous" and suffering from "Ground level vertigo" when standing nearby.

On 8 June 2007 one of the blades was struck by lightning during a storm causing what appeared to be a small explosion at the end of the struck rotor blade. Damage was not as bad as first thought and the turbine was running again later in the day. A few days later it broke down and it took over three months to repair.

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