

Introduction

Contacts

Harbour Master 07715 559848 till July 2025. See comments

St Andrews Sailing Club 01334 479059, 07884071831 www.standrewssailing.org

This small, tidal harbour is a bit off the beaten track for the passage making sailor but, for the coast hopping sailor who can take the ground, it is a must-visit spot. St Andrews houses the third oldest University in the UK, only superseded by Oxford and Cambridge and is world renowned for the quality of its education. Many will perhaps be more aware of the town as the home of golf and will want to visit The Royal and Ancient Clubhouse and maybe even play a round here. The town, during term time, is one complete university campus though, since the mid 1960's, the main campus is out to the west of the town overlooking the golf courses; as a result you will find the cafes and bars flooded with students in the evening. During the summer, in the long vac, the town becomes a golfing town and then it becomes busy with foreign visitors many of who (for some strange reason) wear plaid trousers!!

The harbour itself is small and tucked down on the shore at the bottom of the cliffs that surround the old Castle and the ruins of St Andrews Cathedral. There is an outer harbour (all berths taken by the inshore fishing boats) which is enclosed by the long main pier aligned ESE/WSW and a shorter pier to its south. Then there is an inner harbour which is accessed through a swing bridge and lock gates. The lock gates are not there to maintain a floating harbour inside but are closed once a month on HW springs to trap the water behind them which is then released at LW to scour the outer harbour and harbour entrance. The swing bridge can be opened by the HM or, in his absence, by the staff at the cafe; beside the bridge.

There are no large scale charts of the harbour but, if you visit our images gallery and the Google link (top right) you can see the basic layout.

The harbour website is at <http://www.standrewsharbourtrust.org/index.html> and they also have a FB page which has hundred of pictures on it.

Approach

No matter from what direction you approach St Andrews the first thing you see will be the ruins of the old cathedral....

... and St Reg's (aka St Rules or St Regulus) tower; there are further spires to the West of the harbour entrance, not be confused with those ruins.

From the East you are blessed with the white buildings behind the harbour as an aiming spot from far out but from the North you need to aim about half a mile to the East of the square St Reg's tower in order to stand clear of the inshore reefs. These reefs are extensive and lie parallel to the north pier wall from abeam the R&A Golf Club to about a cable to the SE of the harbour entrance, stretching out to a couple of cables off-shore in places; indeed, the main pier wall has been constructed on top of one of these reefs as can be seen in the photograph in our gallery of the entrance to the harbour. Take a good look at that photograph and note that the deepest channel is close to the wall, but not too close, or you will catch on the reef on which the wall is built.

There is a sector light which shines 24/7 and is bright enough to be seen in daylight; it is in the window halfway up the cliff from the harbour and shown in a photo in our gallery. You should be especially aware of a rock (known locally as the Bishop's Neb) about half a cable off the end of the pier and which is awash at half tide. It sounds daunting; narrow tidal entrance, surrounded by rocks but, in fact, if you plan your entrance after about half tide and come in on the sector light bearing of roughly 280°M you'll not have any trouble - just don't try to cut the corners!!

Once abeam the end of the pier inbound hold about 2.5 metres clear of the pier wall and aim for the left hand edge of the slip opposite, at the root of the pier wall.

Berthing

The aforementioned slip is where you tie up.

In the Inner Harbour there have been massive improvements. They have installed pontoons and fingers along the West wall and have fingers for sixteen boats to dry out on the mud. They intend to put a further pontoon in behind the cafe and that will have access to power and water. We have added a photo from the harbour FB page. There are no longer any buoys in the inner harbour so the local yacht club can no longer help with a mooring buoy there.

So our previous comments re staying for a couple of nights and exploring remain valid but you will find the accommodations for your yacht have improved a lot. We would recommend a text to the HM's mobile to advise him if this is your intent.

They were charging £20 per boat, per night irrespective of length in 2021 but, if you pay for two nights you can have a third night free.

Facilities

This is where you really need to contact both the HM and the local sailing club before arrival and, from experience; a text to the HM will probably elicit a reply.

The "amenities" available here have been improved to the extent that you can now arrange with the HM to have access to the local yacht club for showers and toilets. It will cost £4.00 per day paid to the HM or his representative at the cafe and they will supply you with an information sheet with directions and an access code for the Yacht Club. Apparently there has been an improvement to the public heads under the arches - but not massive!!

There is now power and water available on the pontoons

Petrol, diesel, Gas and Gaz is available at Morrisons and the garden centre near it. Alternatively there is a petrol station at the far end of South Street just outside the South Gate, but it does not stock Gas/Gaz.

For supplies there is a Tesco Metro on the south side of Market Street about halfway down. Further away there is a large Morrisons store.

What To Do

You will be spoilt for choice for places to eat and drink - everything is available from fish and chip shops and other fast food outlets to gourmet eating at places like Rufflets or the Grange outside town. A comprehensive guide to drinking here can be found at:

<http://www.beerinevening.com/pubs/results.shtml?l=St+Andrews>

You can also find a list of restaurants here:

[Restaurants & Places to Eat in St Andrews Tripadvisor](#)

For other things to do there is the Recreation Centre at the end of the East Beach, The ruins of the Cathedral which does guided tours, a cinema (yes it's still there after all these years) , a wander around the old University buildings (unfortunately St Mary's College appears to be closed during the long vac) - you can even have a coffee in the cafe; where, supposedly, Kate met Prince William!!

Naturally, if you have your clubs with you will want to have a go on the Old Course and for this and other information use the link below (but before you open that link, be warned, the green fees for the Old Course at the height of the summer are in three figures.)

<http://www.standrews.com/Play/Green-Fees>

History