

Notes for visiting craft

Approach - The approach should be made only in daylight and in settled conditions. The entrance can be dangerous in anything more than a moderate onshore wind without local knowledge. Due to the strength of the tidal streams in the entrance, entry should be made within half an hour either side of local high water, so as to gain slack water. (The flood tide can attain speeds of up to 5 knots making entry impossible) The entrance is located beneath Haven Cliff at the eastern extremity of Seaton Bay. There are no offshore dangers in the approach. At low water the old pier head rocks uncover approximately 20 metres to the west of the entrance and the River Ledge rocks uncover 30 metres to the east.

The shingle bar in the entrance is changeable depending on recent tide state, river flow and weather conditions

Entrance Channel - The entrance channel usually runs from the pier head in a south westerly direction, but is changeable as noted, with shingle drying each side extending approximately 75m. (LAT) seaward. The approximate line of approach is when the 'pillbox', situated beneath the cliff, is in transit with the pier head, providing a north easterly heading. On making the approach due allowance should be made for the east going coastal tidal stream. Once inside the entrance there is a sharp turn to the west following the line of the harbour wall. A mooring basin with pontoons is situated just below the fixed bridge to port. Fishing vessels berth to starboard against the quay, all berths in the harbour dry out.

There is a five knot speed limit in the harbour, including the approaches and estuary. Vessels navigating against the tidal stream have greater manoeuvrability and should give way to those navigating with the stream, especially in the entrance. Due to limited vision on the approach to the entrance from within or seaward, vessels should navigate with caution and avoid overtaking in the approaches and entrance to the harbour.

Tidal Streams - Local High Water is 4 hours 55 minutes before HW Dover. The tidal streams off the entrance and the adjacent coastline are rectilinear and generally weak, attaining 1.5 knots during springs and one knot during neaps. The east going stream starts approximately four hours after HW Dover, until two hours before, at which time it eases and turns to the west until four hours after HW Dover.

Conversely the tidal streams in the entrance run strongly, requiring great caution. These are usually stronger during the ebb, attaining circa six knots during springs, and increase considerably more after heavy rain.

The ebb flow from the harbour entrance sets up overfalls on the bar and immediately seaward of it; this occurs from approximately one hour after HW until LW.

Anchorage - In settled conditions it is possible to anchor due south of the AYC club house (white building with grey slate roof & white mast) in approximately 5m of water, with a sand bottom and reasonably good holding. A more sheltered anchorage can be found off the village of Beer, although remains open to the South

and East. Due to poor holding and limited room, there is no anchorage within the harbour.

Depths - MHWS depths within the entrance channel are 3.3m decreasing to 2.5m within the harbour and 2.8m to 1.6m MHWN respectively. The shingle bar and entrance dry to 0.5m, shallowing within the harbour, drying to 1.5m, although there is approximately 0.5m impounded in the mooring basin.

Lights - A green beacon with a cone top mark and light is situated at the seaward end of the pier. The beacon displays a flashing green light every four seconds, at a height of eight metres with a range of two miles - (Fl.G.4s.8m.2M) - 50°42.13'N 003°03.29'W

Accommodation and Facilities - The Axe Yacht Club provides approximately 120 pontoon berths, with a limit of 9.0m LOA and 1m draught, capable of drying out. Visitor's berths are available upon application to the AYC Bosun. The mooring basin is fairly well sheltered, there being little swell entering the harbour.

The Axe Yacht Club lies within the harbour compound and serves both yachts and dinghies. It is open at weekends, and most weekdays in the season, providing showers and usual facilities. Slipping (hoist) and drying-out can be arranged on the Club's slipway

Store, Fuel, Repairs - Water can be obtained from the Yacht Club. Fuel & stores can be obtained from the local super market in Seaton (half a mile distant). Local chandlery is available in Beer. Two local hostelries exist in the village of Axmouth and a mixture of facilities in Seaton. Repairs can be carried out by the local boat builder, H.J.Mears; situated just above the bridge (clearance of 1.5m HWS). The estuary can be navigated some two miles inland by shallow draught vessels at HW.

These notes were adapted from the AYC Activities afloat safety guidance. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure their accuracy neither AYC nor EDDC can be held liable where circumstances have changed from those described. Every craft has its own capabilities and limitations and it is the duty of the skipper to take these into account whilst navigating his vessel.