



The maritime town of Harwich stands at the tip of a peninsula in North East Essex commanding the entrance to a magnificent harbour, where the Orwell flows down from Ipswich to meet the waters of the Stour that flows from Constable Country. It is the largest natural harbour between the Thames and Humber and is available at any tide or weather conditions and that is why it has played a vital part in our national history.

While Dovercourt (Druvrecourt) is recorded in the Domesday Book (1086) Harwich is not mentioned before 1196 when it was called Herdwic, Herewyche or Herewic. The Town was laid down on a typical medieval plan by The Earl of Norfolk who was also Lord of the Manor. He also built a wooden castle on the headland to enforce the collection of harbour dues from ships passing by on their way to Ipswich. The medieval grid systems has hardly changed over the years with its narrow streets running from North to South and even smaller offset lanes (designed to prevent the easterly winter winds blowing directly through the town) running from east to west. You can still wander along these same streets to take a journey back in time.

There are fine views over the busy harbour, especially from The Ha'penny Pier, with vessels of all shapes and sizes constantly moving, from small dinghies, sailing craft, including the graceful sailing barges of yesteryear, freight vessels from the smallest coasters to the largest container ships in the world, Passenger Ferries and not forgetting the large splendid Cruise Ships that pass within 200/300 metres from the Harbours edge.

Many significant events have taken place at Harwich. King Alfred sent his navy into the harbour in 885 defeating a Viking Fleet on their way to raid Ipswich in the Battle of Bloody Point.

Edward III left the harbour in 1338 with over 200 ships, including 9 from Harwich to destroy the French Fleet off Sluys. Harwich men played an important part in the defeat of The Spanish Armada and the Earl of Cumberland came ashore at Harwich, rode on horseback to Tilbury and conveyed the news to Elizabeth I that the threat of invasion had passed. In 1918, after World War I, over 100 U Boats sailed into the harbour to surrender. These are only a few events that go into the annals of Harwich history.

The Essex coast has a good climate with low rainfall and Harwich makes an excellent place to visit. With its narrow medieval streets and many interesting visitor attractions you can be sure to have a great day out or short break away. For picnics, sunbathing and swimming head to the award winning Blue Flag beaches at Dovercourt.

1. Low Lighthouse

The old wooden low lighthouse was built by the beach and is portrayed in one of Constable's paintings. The current lighthouse was built in 1818 to replace the earlier wooden structures dating from the late 17th century. It is now the town's Maritime Museum showing the history of the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy in pictures and models.

Tel: 01255 552488

2. Treadwheel Crane

The earliest known reference to a crane of this type was by the Romans in 25 B.C. It was used at the Naval Yard from 1667 to 1927 and moved to its present site in about 1932. The crane was worked by men walking in the interior of the two wheels. It is the only one in existence in the UK

3. Lifeboat Museum

It is housed in the first Harwich Lifeboat Station, built in 1876, and known as the 'Number One Station'. The museum tells the story of the Lifeboat Service in Harwich since 1821.

4. The Mural

Wall painting commissioned by the Harwich Society and carried out by the Harwich School showing glimpses of the town's history.

5. The Electric Palace Cinema

The Electric Palace is one of the oldest purpose-built cinemas to survive complete with its silent screen, original projection room and ornamental frontage still intact. To access details of current films being shown please visit the website.

Tel: 01255 553333

www.electricpalace.com

6. The Naval Wharf

Previously this was the site of the naval shipyard and before that the site of the 12th century castle. Ships were built here in the 16th century and a list of the Men of War constructed in the Old Naval Yard 1660-1827 is shown on a board near the entrance to the wharf.

7. Ha'penny Pier Visitor Centre

It was built in 1854 as the ticket office and waiting room for the first continental ferries. It was so called because of the 1/2d toll charged. Originally the pier was twice as long as the present one but half burnt down in 1927. It houses now the Ha'penny Pier Visitor Centre which is open daily from May until end of August. It also houses an exhibition on Harwich, Christopher Jones and the Mayflower. Every Saturday at 2pm you can join the guided tours of Harwich organised by the Harwich Society.

8. Trinity House

Founded by Henry VIII in 1514, Trinity House is responsible for lights and buoys. There has been a Trinity House Depot in Harwich since 1812 and it is now the Operational Headquarters for England and Wales.

9. Christopher Jones House

Christopher Jones was Master of the Mayflower. On the 5th August 1620 the Mayflower and the Speedwell weighed anchor to begin the journey to the New World. The connection with Christopher Jones and the Mayflower still continues in the town. There is an exhibition in the Ha'penny Pier and the branch railway line between Harwich and Manningtree has been named the Mayflower Line.

10. Old Custom House

Two early Georgian houses converted into a custom house around 1798. It remained the centre of customs operation until 1935.



11. The Guildhall

Set in the heart of the historic old seaport, Harwich's Guildhall is a Grade I listed building dating from the 17th century. The wealth of history and heritage that it contains, along with its remarkable architecture, make it a fascinating place to visit. Interesting documents showing the connection of Harwich with Pepys, the Pilgrim Fathers and the settlement of Virginia can also be viewed.

Tel: 01255 507211

www.harwichtowncouncil.co.uk

12. St Nicholas Church

A church has stood on this site since 1177. The crusaders rested here following the Banner of the Cross across Europe to the Holy Land. Kings, Queens and Princes have worshipped here on their way to and from the Continent. Samuel Pepys (twice MP for Harwich), Willoughby, Drake, Howard, Nelson and Daniel Defoe almost certainly attended this church whilst staying in Harwich. Christopher Jones was married in the old church. After falling into disrepair it was rebuilt in 1821 in the perpendicular gothic style. It is a spacious building with many of the memorials from the old church within.

13. Foresters

This timber framed and plastered house, built circa 1450, is thought to be the oldest house in Harwich and was 'Foresters Arms' public house from 1800 to 1940, when it fell victim to an incendiary bomb during WW2. After standing being restored it is now being used as a resource centre for the Harwich Society.

14. The High Lighthouse

It was built in 1818 to replace a light over the Town Gate. This and the Low Lighthouse were used in transit to aid navigation into the harbour. It was withdrawn from service in 1862 and houses now the Wireless and Television Museum.

15. Harwich Redoubt Fort

An extremely impressive 180ft diameter circular moated fort built in 1808 to defend the port of Harwich against a Napoleonic invasion. Ten guns sit on the battlements and 18 casements below would house 300 troops in siege conditions. Fortunately it was never called upon to demonstrate its powers. Part of the fort is now used as a military museum and houses a fine display of large guns, military uniforms, local artefacts and displays. Battle re-enactments and other events are held during the summer months.

For more information on the historic attractions in Harwich please call Tel: 01255 503429 or visit www.harwich-society.co.uk

Getting to Harwich

Arriving by Road

If you are travelling from London or the south, take the A12 from junction 28 of the M25. Leave the A12 at junction 29 and take the A120 signposted Clacton and Harwich.

Arriving by Train

Harwich is served by a frequent National Express East Anglia rail service directly from London Liverpool Street. For more information please call 0845 600 7245 or visit www.nationalexpress-eastanglia.com

Travel information can also be obtained by calling 0871 200 2233 or visiting www.traveline.org.uk

Essex



Accommodation

1 The Pier at Harwich

★★★ Hotel
Harwich CO12 3HH
Tel: 01255 241212
www.milsomhotels.com

Tourist information

Harwich Connexions Tourist Information Centre

Telephone 01255 506139
harwichic@btconnect.com
www.harwichconnexions.co.uk

Guided tours:

You can book guided tours of Old Harwich by calling 01255 506047

Places to eat:

There are many pubs offering a variety of fayre but we have highlighted just a few.

1 The Pier at Harwich

Formal dining at the Harbourside restaurant. The Ha'penny restaurant serves brasserie style food - the fish & chips are famous!
Tel: 01255 241212
www.milsomhotels.com

2 Sign of the Bear

Tel: 01255 242628

3 Thai up at the Quay

Tel: 01255 554531
www.thaiupatthequay.com

4 Samuel Pepys

Tel: 01255 503857
www.samuelpepysotel.co.uk

2

Maritime memories



Maritime memories

Harwich maritime trail

0 Kilometres 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5

0 Miles 0.1 0.2 0.3



Attractions along this route

- 1 Low Lighthouse
- 2 Treadwheel Crane
- 3 Lifeboat Museum
- 4 The Mural
- 5 The Electric Palace Cinema
- 6 The Naval Wharf
- 7 Ha'Penny Pier Visitor Centre
- 8 Trinity House
- 9 Christopher Jones House
- 10 Old Custom House
- 11 The Guildhall
- 12 St Nicholas Church
- 13 Foresters
- 14 The High Lighthouse
- 15 Harwich Redoubt Fort

Accommodation

for details see overleaf

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This map is intended as a guide only. Please refer to relevant OS Explorer maps for specific details.

Key

- Place of worship
- Telephone in rural area
- Public House
- National Rail
- Accommodation
- Restaurants

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