

Living with Water Children's Tour

Tidal Barrier to Scott Square

The Tidal barrier

The tidal barrier is an iconic part of Hull's skyline. It is the second most important barrier in the UK in terms of properties protected, and tall enough for ships to pass underneath. This is because the River Hull used to be a working river and ships and boats would need to come past the barrier to drop their cargo.

It takes 30 minutes to move the gate up, and 30 minutes to go down and can be lowered by hand if the motors fail.

Construction on Hull tidal barrier began in January 1977 and was opened on 15th April 1980, at the time it cost £4.3 million. That's the equivalent to over £60 million today (the same price as Isak who plays for Newcastle, Rodri who plays for Manchester City or Hojland who plays for Manchester United). The project began after the 'great flood' in 1953 and then another tidal surge in Hull in 1969, there was also lots of lower-level floods due to spring tides or tidal surges.

There is 200 cubic meters of concrete in each of the towers (around 53.3 African elephants) with 1550 cubic meters of concrete underwater (413.3 elephants) . Each of the tower foundations has 950 cubic meters of concrete. The weight of the gate itself is 212 tonnes (56.5 elephants).

The barrier protects around 17, 000 properties or 118,000 properties as part of the wider Hull Frontages scheme. The barrier protects the whole of the city it runs through, and then Kingswood in the north of the city.

The barrier operates 20 -25 times per year on average, this is becoming more frequent as the climate changes. The barrier is not just used to keep the River Humber out, it can also be dropped to let water from the River Hull build up behind it, when the gate is raised the water is pushed out.

During the City of Culture in 2017, Members of the public could speak into a microphone located at the far end of Humber St and see their words scroll up one of the barrier's towers. Even though the organisers tried to block out rude or offensive words, a six year old boy was delighted to find that he could repeatedly shout 'Poo!' into the microphone and see the word scrolling on the barrier in all its glory!

Follow the waterside path on this side of the river with the Deep on your left and Stage @ The Dock on your right

The Deep is built at Sammy's Point, named after Martin Samuelson, who built a shipyard in that location in 1857. This is why it is designed to be the shape of a ship prow to represent Hull's maritime history. It is the world's only submarium -an aquarium that is partially under water.

The aquarium opened in 2002 and gives us a chance to see thousands of creatures including sharks, turtles and penguins. Over eight million people have visited since it's opening. It has been the setting for many events including weddings, the FA Cup third round draw in 2014 and part of the Made in Hull exhibition that launched Hull's City of Culture status in 2017.

On your right is Stage @The Dock, this is based in the bed of the disused Central Dry Dock, or South End Dry Dock, built in 1843 to support the shipping industry in Hull. The Stage is an important venue for events like Humber Sesh in August and Freedom Festival in September, though it does host lots of other events too.

If you look at the water, you should be able to see where the River Humber tide meets the River Hull. Can you see the line in the water where they merge? This will be in a different place at different times of the day, depending on whether the tide is going in or out.

Keep following the pathway around to Nelson Street, near the flood gate

Nelson Street

The ramp at Nelson Street is also known as 'Oss wash' as this is where people used to lead their horses down to the water to wash them. These days you can sometimes see a common seal on the ramp instead.

The frontages (the concrete walls) were constructed in response to the increased flood risk the city is facing, it is second only to London in terms of flood risk. The frontages span for 7km (4.3 miles) and we can see they are made up of different elements from concrete walls, brick slips, glazing and flood gates.

Whilst the tidal barrier stops water from heading up the river Hull and overtopping its banks, water was still breaching (coming through) at low spots along the estuary, like in 2013 when a tidal surge caused flooding at Victoria Dock and further inland at Hessle. The glass panels mean that we can still enjoy nice views of the Humber.

Some of the trees planted in this area are in tree pits to help manage that surface water. Tree pits take water from roofs, roads or paths, send it through a planter that is sunk in the ground, then out through the drainage at the bottom.

Walk down to the picture of the ray on the floor by Oss Wash Cafe

The marina is a very popular venue in Hull, with a range of bars, restaurants, gallery spaces and shops. Initially this area was full of fruit and veg traders. At the height of the markets, over 20,000 lettuces were sold here every week.

There is a rumour that the cisterns in the public toilets contained goldfish. The cisterns were designed to never be completely empty, this means the fish could remain there even when the toilets were being flushed.