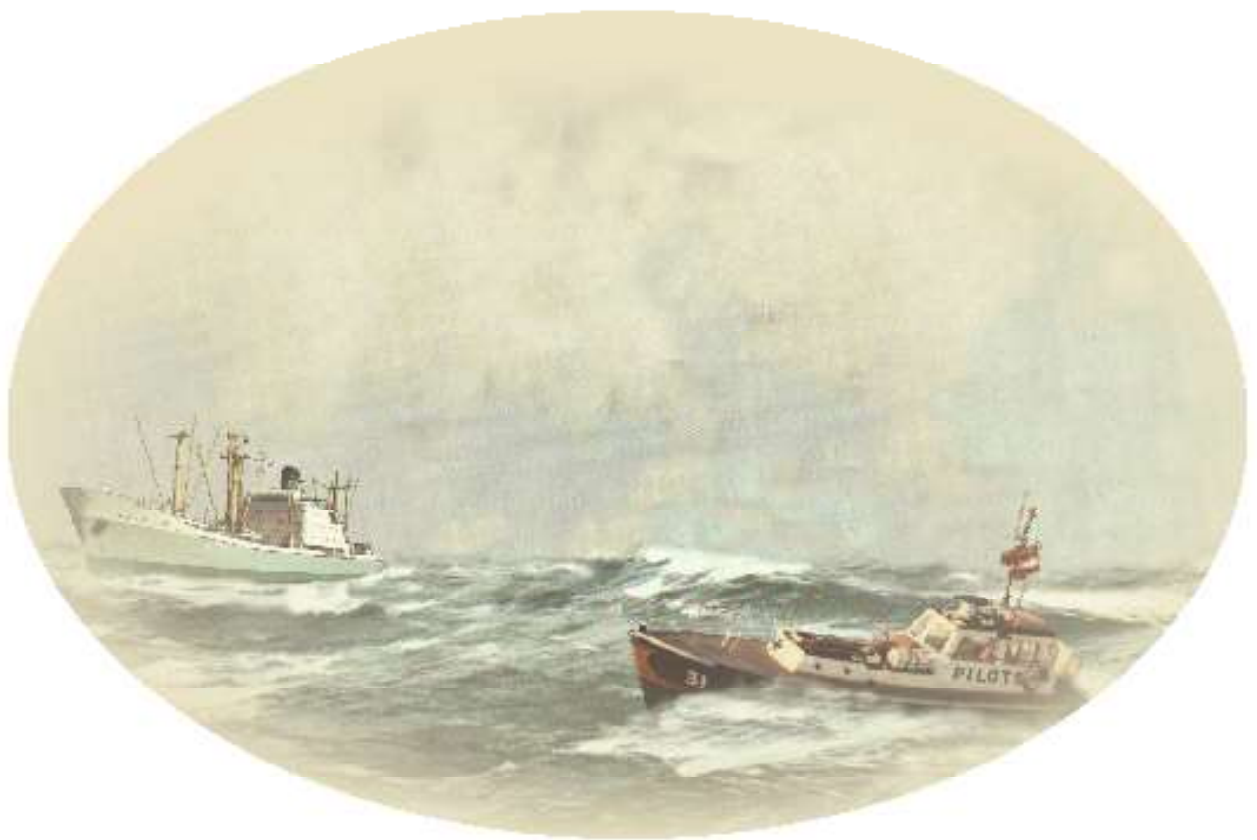


THE RIBBLE
PILOT



CAUTION

It is hoped that you find the information contained in these Sailing Directions helpful.

Whilst every care has been taken to ensure that the information contained in the Directions is accurate the Author formally disclaims any and all liability for any accident, loss or damage howsoever caused whether by reason of any error, inaccuracy, omission or ambiguity in relation to the information in the Sailing Directions or otherwise.

The Author will at all times be grateful to receive information which may improve the work.

WARNING

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PORT of PRESTON

Preston's history goes back to the very earliest times when the town arose from the ruins of the ancient *Coccium* or Ribchester and received its name of Priest – town, corrupted over the years into Preston. It received its first charter in 1179 from King Henry II. Situated on the main north – south road where it crossed the Ribble, The town's strategic importance gained prominence especially during the Civil Wars.

By the first half of the 19th century Preston was a growing "cotton town"(with over 70 mills in 1860) and also an increasingly important port on the Ribble. It had, during two decades, become an equally important rail centre with lines diverging from it to Lancaster and Scotland; to Crewe and Fleetwood, Manchester, Liverpool and Blackburn. The railway scene was, in fact, much as it is today and was already giving the riverside wharves at Preston a new importance as outlets for Lancashire coal and textiles and as centres for importing raw materials for the country's growing industries.

In 1853 the Preston Town Council, who owned riverside quays and warehouses, purchased shares in the Ribble Navigation Company but no active participation was made until 1883. The linking of the quays, in 1845, with the main railway system had further added impetus to growth and improvement of trade.

In 1883 with the need for improvements and for the construction of a wet dock, the Ribble Navigation Undertaking was purchased by Preston Corporation (for the sum of £73,000), who, therefore, became owners of one of the very few municipal ports in the country with the Ribble Committee of the Corporation as the controlling body. By then, however, it had become increasingly obvious that if trade were ever to flourish on the Ribble, Preston would have to have a wet dock. Plans were drawn up and application was made to Parliament for the purpose. The move was strongly opposed by some of the town's ratepayers, and the bitter controversy was only solved by a Government enquiry. This gave approval to the dock's construction and subsequent improvements to the channel along the river estuary from the dock to the sea.

When it was opened by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh in 1892, the new dock, the Albert Edward Dock, was the largest single dock in both this country and in Europe. It had a water area of 40 acres being 3,200 feet long by 600 feet wide. The tidal basin had an area of 4.75 acres and was 850 feet long by 300 feet wide.

An outer pair of lock gates led from the tidal River into the Entrance Basin and three pairs of gates in the Lock Entrance between the Basin and the Dock formed locks of 325 and 225 feet long or allowed a single lock of 550 feet in length to be made. All were 66 feet in width and had a depth of 29'-6" at high water mean spring tides.

After the closure of the Port in 1981, the whole Dock area was re-developed to include retail-shopping, business, industrial and residential areas in a landscaped setting with a Marina established at the West End of the Dock. Today the Dock and Basin areas remain the same but there is now only one-lock 225 feet long by 66 feet wide.

To protect the re-developed estate against tidal flooding, defences were constructed around the area and the number four gates were modified to enable them to be set seaward of the entrance gates and act as Storm Gates, completing the defence when closed.

A road and rail crossing was provided towards the western end of the complex next to the Lock using a Swing Bridge which is operated in conjunction with the locking facility.

SAILING DIRECTIONS
FOR ENTERING AND LEAVING THE “RIBBLE ESTUARY”
REFER TO ADMIRALTY CHART 1981
DATUMS WGS84

Waypoint Alpha “GUT “ buoy	53° 41’ 75N	03° 08’ 90W
Waypoint Bravo “Entrance”	53° 42’ 90N	03° 05’ 00W

ASPECT

The buildings of Southport are visible from seaward, the area generally low lying.
Lytham St Annes building’s also are visible from seaward, the area generally low lying.
To the north is Blackpool Tower (158m) pos 53° 48’ 96N 03° 03’ 28W conspicuous, as is the “Big One” a roller coaster (76m) pos 53° 47’ 48N 03° 03’ 38W 1 1/2M to the south of Blackpool Tower.

Contact the lock’s at Preston on Ch 16/14 or by phone 01772 726871 at tide time for the latest information. Waypoints are correct at JUNE 2010

LIFE SAVING

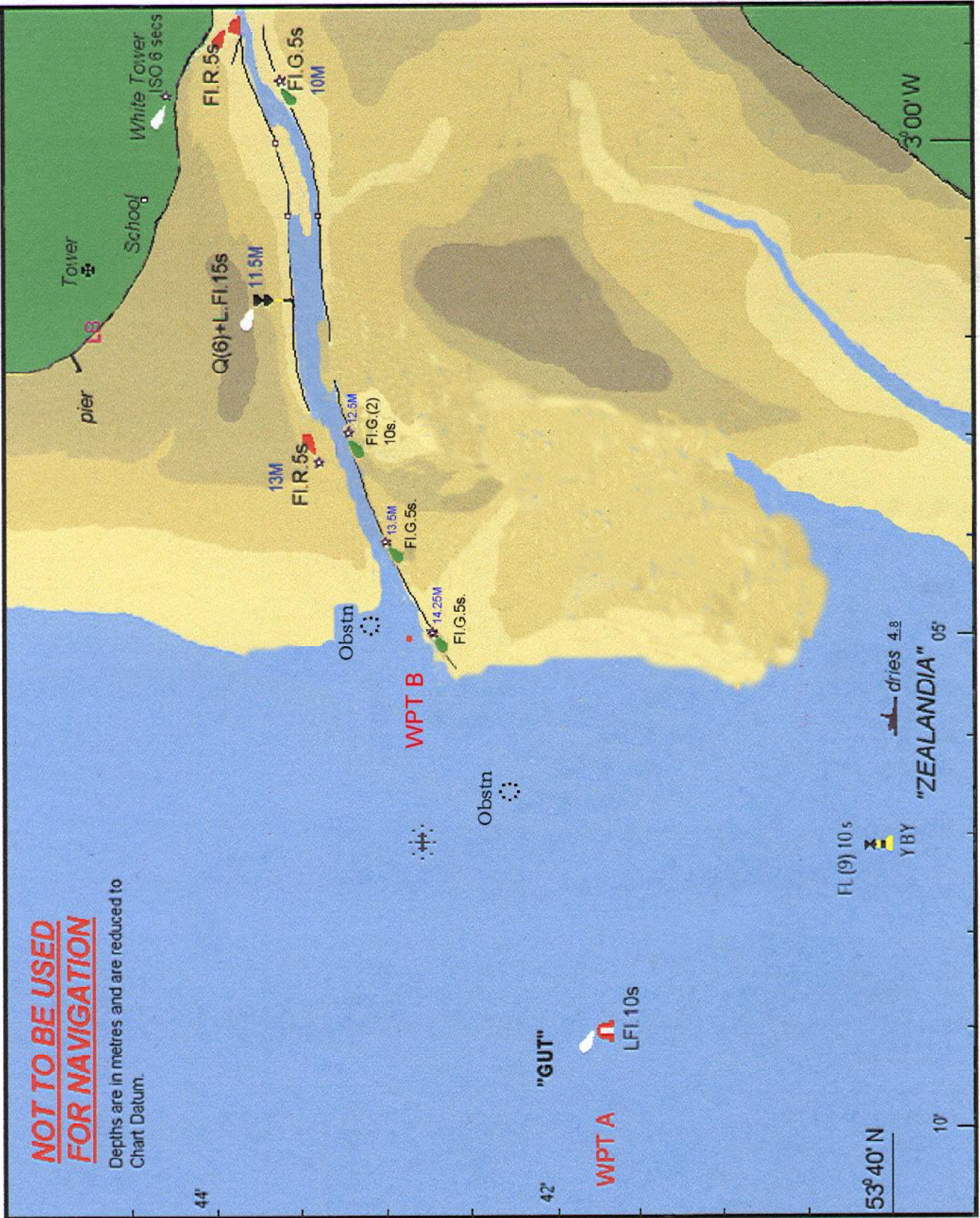
An All Weather Life Boat is maintained ashore on a carriage at St Annes, an I.L.B. at Lytham, an Atlantic 21 and I.L.B. at Blackpool, and a R.I.B. at Southport.

THE APPROACH

The main approach is from “GUT” buoy to WPT E, Keep to the track and times. **CAUTION** if you approach early i.e., low water be aware of three off lying danger’s. The wreck “ZEALANDIA” pos 53° 39’ 94N 03° 05’ 58W dries 4.8m. Marked by a west cardinal buoy, YBY FL (9) 10s, pos 53° 40’ N 03° 06’ 42W aprox 5 cables to the west of the wreck.
Obstn 23 pos 53° 42’ 46N 03° 06’ 03W. Obstn pos 53° 43’ 12N 03° 04’ 73W.
All are marked on the A/C 1981. All positions to WGS 84 Datum’s.

INFORMATION IS CORRECT TO JUNE 2010

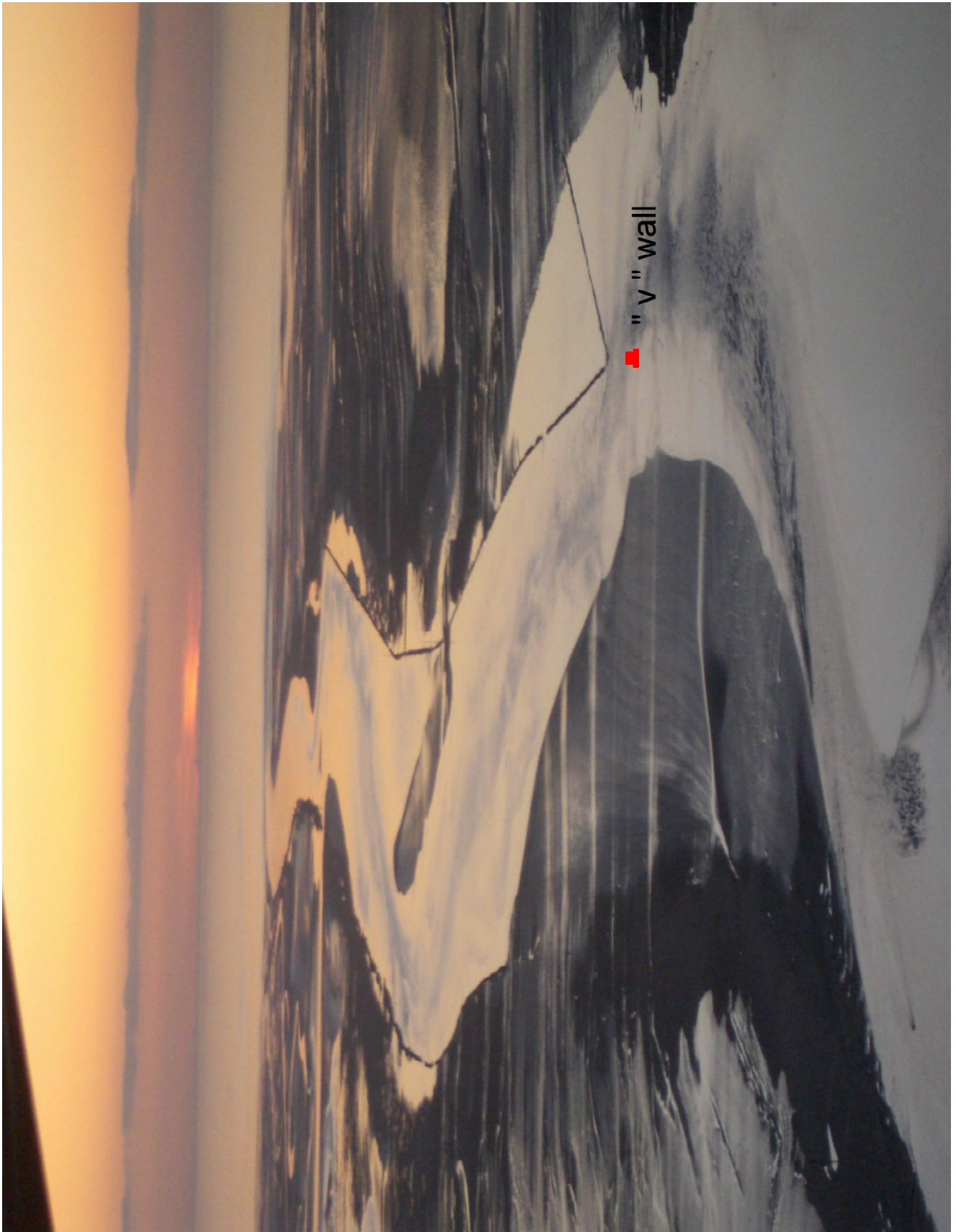
PLAN OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE RIVER RIBBLE



The Entrance to the RIVER RIBBLE
From “GUT” buoy steer 064 T 2.5nm to WPT E ,
Looking EAST 6 hours ebb spring tide



The way out from Lytham to sea.
Looking WEST at 6 hours ebb spring tide



NOTES

PERCHES



14^{1/4} South perch



14^{1/4} photo taken from the back



13^{1/2} South perch



12^{1/2} South perch

APPROACH to WAYPOINT B.

Leave GUT Buoy (see photo) at 2hrs B.H.W. Liverpool, small craft with a draft of 1.5 metres or less may commence some $\frac{1}{2}$ hrs earlier.



Steer a course to make good a track of 064 T to WPT **B**avo 2.5 nm. On this track depth will be no less than 5 metres. Be aware that the tide tends to set to the south east on the flood tide.

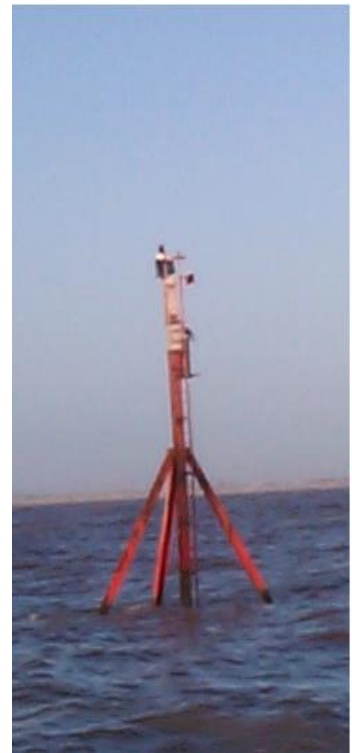
Keep off the first three starboard perchs $14^{1/4}$, $13^{1/2}$, and the $12^{1/2}$ by aprox 100/150ft, then make for the $11^{1/2}$ south cardinal perch to bring you into the middle of the channel then proceed uptowards Lytham.

On the way into Lytham you will pass the **13M perch** the $11^{1/2}$ M perch which is a South cardinal, then between the 11^{th} M perches North and South, the $10^{5/8}$ M **perch** North, the 10^{th} M South, then the $9^{7/8}$ **red can buoy** ("V" wall). You are now

approaching Lytham with its conspicuous windmill.



The $11^{1/2}$ M perch, as can be seen from the photo, has some numbers. The $11^{1/2}$ denotes that this is $11^{1/2}$ statute miles not nautical miles from Preston dock. The numbers below are the tide gauge numbers set to chart datum, (4.⁹m below ordnance datum newlyn).



13M (North Blinker)



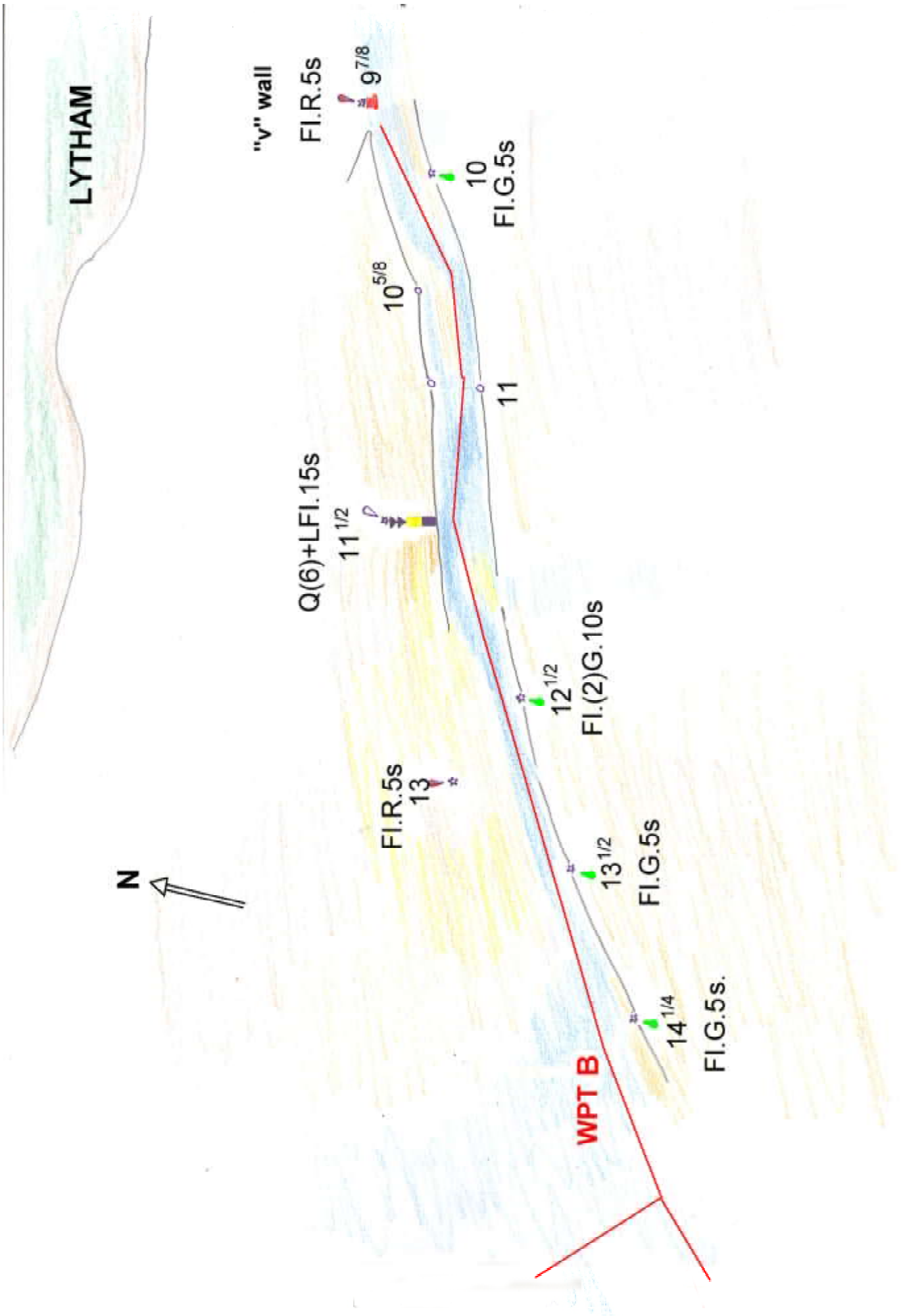
Having passed the $9^{7/8}$ buoy keep to the north side of the channel until you have the $9^{3/8}$ M perch abeam when you can shape up for the $8^{1/2}$ M perch, passing various moorings, (as a guide if the weather is clear, you can aim for the communication mast on WINTER HILL, after just passing the $9^{3/8}$ M perch, track about 110° T). If going up the Lytham creek just keep on the north side. Here you need to keep the spire of St John's church and the Windmill just open (see photo) be aware of the tide set across the entrance on the flood. The creek is marked with perches square top mark's on port hand and triangular top mark's on starboard hand leading the way to Lytham dock, and various other moorings.

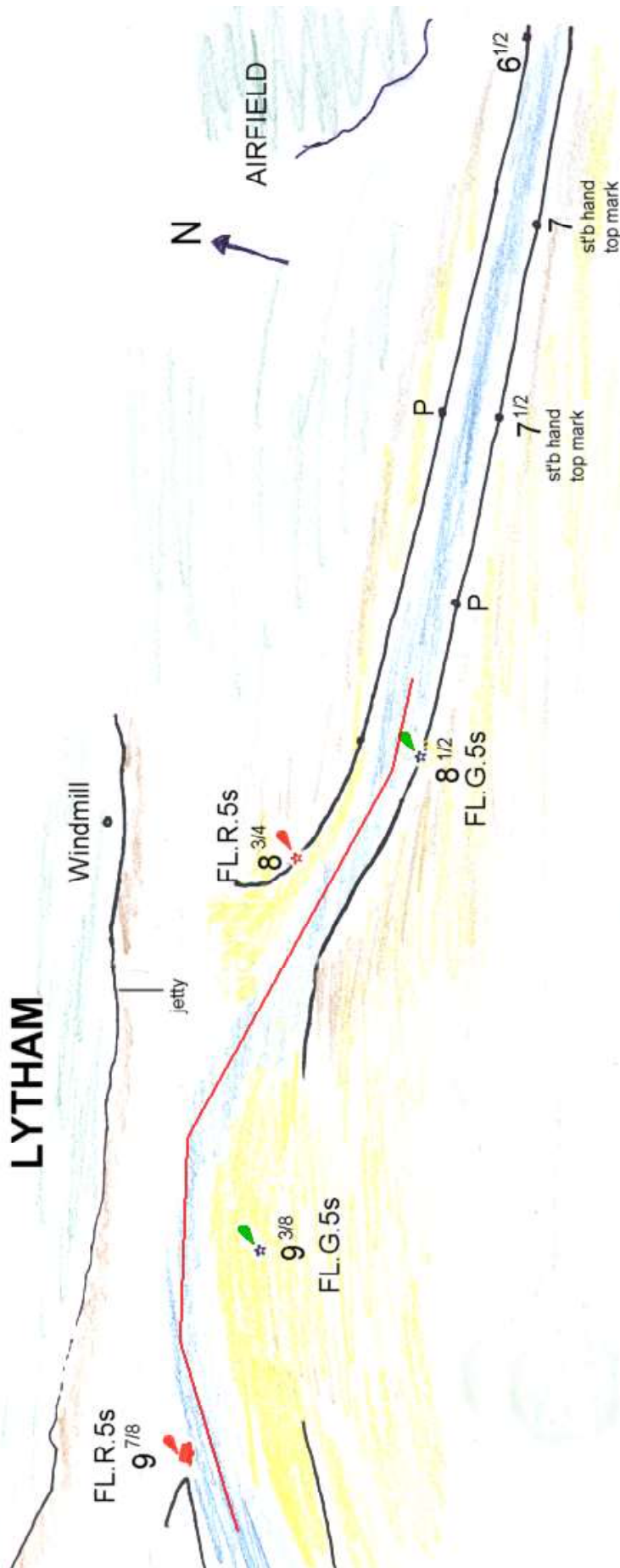
If proceeding up River to Freckleton creek, the River Douglas or Preston, once east of the $8^{1/2}$ M perch, which should be passed fairly close to, keep in the middle of the channel up to the "Naze" the 5^{th} mile perch on the south side is the marker for the junction of the River Douglas, which you leave to Port if you are going up the River Douglas to Hesketh Bank or Tarleton.

If proceeding to Freckleton, pass the 5^{th} mile south perch close to starboard then head for the $4^{1/2}$ mile perch on the north side. As you approach, Freckleton creek will open up. Pass to the west of the $4^{1/2}$ mile perch to enter the creek.



The view approaching Lytham with the $9^{7/8}$ ("V" wall buoy) in the foreground







The bend at Lytham at low water, looking EAST



Lytham creek at low water looking NORTH EAST



The confluence of the River Ribble and River Douglas at low water, looking NORTH EAST.



The River Douglas at low water looking NORTH with Freckleton creek at the top and the River Ribble running EAST—WEST.



If heading up to Preston, pass close to the 5th mile south, then head back to the middle of the channel and proceed in the middle up as far as the disused jetty at the 1^{1/4} M. Keep slightly south of the middle until past the last set of pylons, then shape over to the north side, (see plan next page) then shape towards the entrance of the dock. **See Note re: traffic lights at the Bullnose entrance.** This route is suitable on neap or small tides. On spring tides with plenty of water just keep in the middle of the River. The rise of the tide at Preston on average commences 2hrs B.H.W. Preston, The earliest time to arrive off the entrance would, on neap tides be 1/2hr B.H.W. to H.W. Preston. On spring tides 1hr B.H.W. to H.W. Preston depending on the draft of the vessel.

On spring tides there is a tidal Bore that travels up the river all the way to the dock entrance. It is not advisable to come up the river early (*Bore moves at approx 4knots*).

When approaching the dock entrance be aware that the tide will be setting strongly to the south on the early flood, slackening off towards high water. There is a mud bank on the north side of the entrance 7.6 m above chart datum, so keep to the south side of the entrance as you come through into the outer basin. Then pass through the debris boom and into the lock. Watch for the signals on the traffic lights at each lock gate!!!

On spring tides there can be an early level of water through into the main dock. This is advised by a flashing amber light on the traffic light at each end of the locks.

A STRONG FLOW THROUGH THE LOCKS MAY BE EXPERIENCED. THIS WILL EASE IN STRENGTH TOWARDS HIGH WATER.

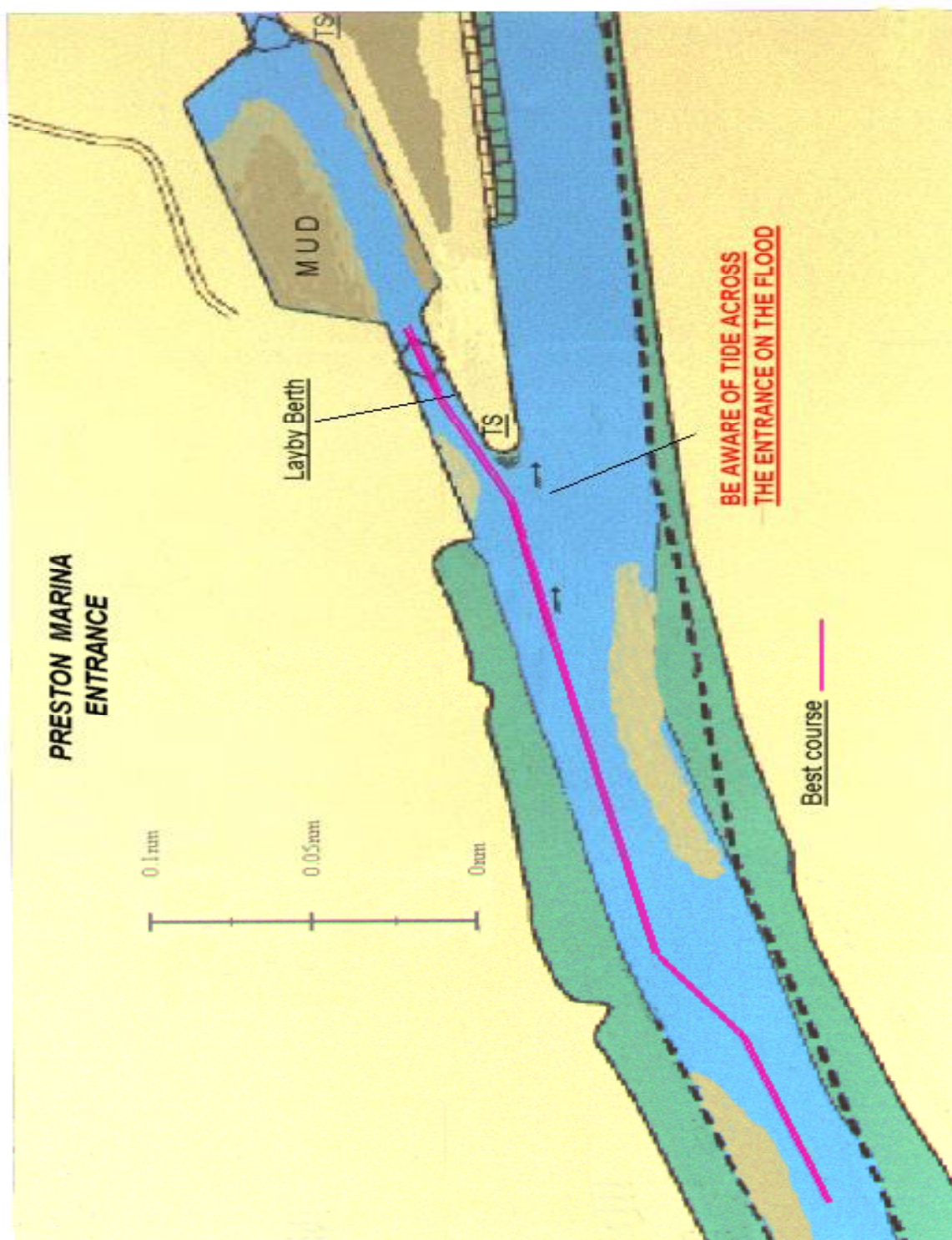
When approaching the dock entrance please call "RIVERSWAY CONTROL" on CH16, working on CH14 to ascertain current movements of vessels, locking and swing bridge. You contact the marina on CH80 / 37 regarding berthing, fuel etc.

TRAFFIC LIGHT SIGNALS

Red = Do not enter
Green = safe to enter
But be aware of other
Craft moving.

Flashing Amber =Tidal flow taking
place through lock system.







Freckleton creek at low water looking NORTH, boat yard at the top.



Entrance to Freckleton creek at low water looking SOUTH.



Douglas boat yard looking NORTH at low water, with the Naze the 5th mile and Freckleton creek at the top.



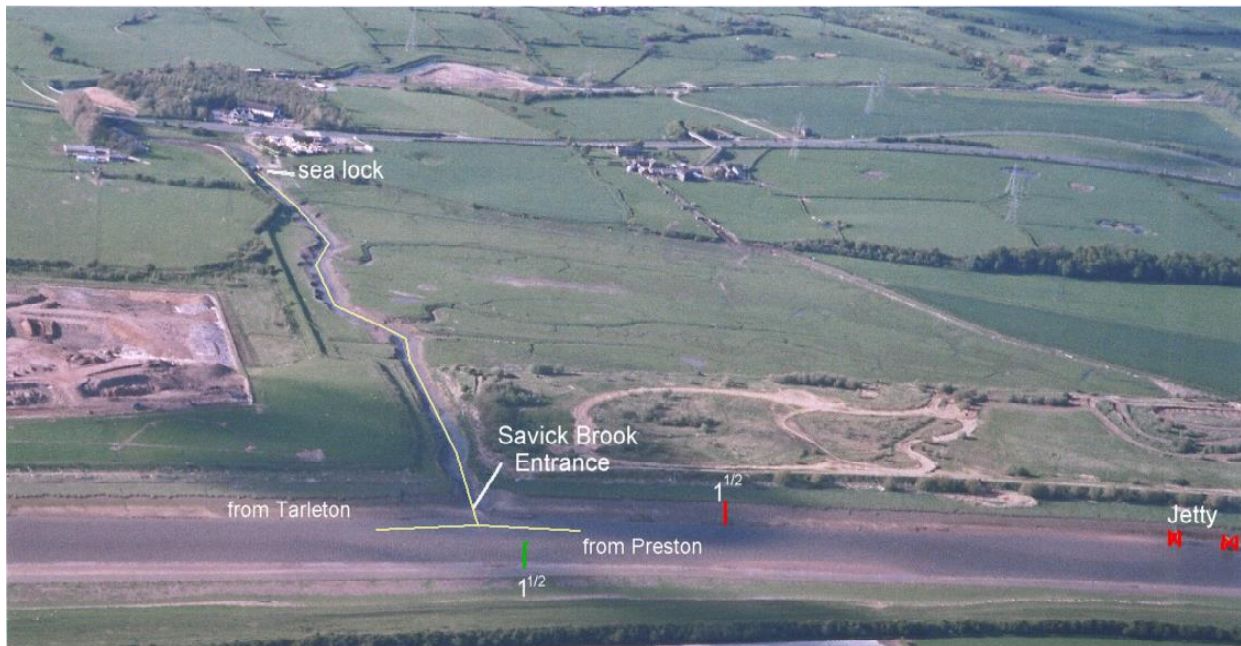
Douglas boat yard looking SOUTH, with Tarleton lock and the canal at the top, and the River Douglas going off to the left.

In 2002 a new length of inland waterway linking the River Ribble to the Lancaster Canal was opened. This is the Millenium Ribble Link.

Steel narrow boats (barges) and canal cruisers now use the length of River Ribble between Preston Dock and the Five mile marker (The Asland Lamp) together with the River Douglas as far as Tarleton Lock.

This enables these craft to move between the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and the Lancaster Canal. The Ribble Link section is accessed from Savick Brook.

Care should be exercised by all vessels navigating this area as the freeboard of some of the canal craft is very small.



Savick Brook at low water looking NORTH with the sea lock at the top
Do not cut the corner when entering Savick Brook



Tarleton Lock looking South

GOING WEST

The time to leave the dock at Preston will depend on whether you are going to sea or are just going for a sail in the river. If going to sea, at an average speed over the ground of 5 knots it will take about 2 hrs to arrive at the $11\frac{1}{2}$ M perch where you can see how much water there is on the tide gauge on the perch.

When the $11\frac{1}{2}$ M perch is reached, you can shape over to the $12\frac{1}{2}$ M perch keeping about 100/150 ft off the perches, then keeping that distance off, follow the line to the $13\frac{1}{2}$ M perch and the $14\frac{1}{4}$ M perch which is the last perch/marker on the south side, (WPT Echo). Then down to "Gut Buoy" If you are going to North Wales or the West. If going to the North or Northwest, i.e. Isle of Man, Fleetwood or Barrow, proceed another $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, then turn. The soundings will start to drop off when you have past the last perch.



Dock entrance at low water



The outer tidal basin looking west from N° 2 gates to the entrance with the sluice gates open at low water, showing the channel to follow. At this time it is 5.5 metre above C.D.

LIST OF TRAINING WALL MARKERS FROM SEA
THE NUMBERS ON THE PERCHES INDICATE STATUTE MILES FROM THE DOCK.

SOUTH SIDE

Perch 14^{1/4} FL.G. ev 5s
 Perch 13^{1/2} FL.G. ev 5s

 Perch 12^{1/2} FL.(2)G. ev 10s

 Perch 11 unlit

 Perch 10 FL.G. ev 5s.

 Perch 9^{3/8} FL.G. ev 5s.

 Perch 8^{1/2} FL.G. ev 5s.
 Perch 8 unlit.
 Perch 7^{1/2} unlit. St'b hand top mark
 Perch 7 unlit St' b hand top mark

 Perch 6 FL.G. ev 5s

RIVER DOUGLAS

Perch 5 FL.(2) G.ev 10s.
 Perch 4^{1/2} unlit

 Perch 4 (notice board) unlit ,
 St'b hand top mark

 Perch 3 FL.G. ev 5s

 Perch 2 unlit.St'b hand top mark

 Perch 1^{1/2} FL.G.ev 5s..
 Perch 1^{1/4} unlit.
 Perch 1 FL.G. ev 5s

NORTH SIDE

Perch 13 FL.R. ev 5s (north blinker)

 Perch 11^{1/2} Q(6)+LFI. Ev 15s white
 South cardinal.
 Perch 11 unlit. Port hand top mark.
 Perch 10^{5/8} unlit

 Buoy 9^{7/8} FL.R. ev 5s ("V" wall)

 Perch 8^{3/4} FL.R. ev 5s.
 Perch unlit

 Perch unlit

 Perch 6^{1/2} unlit.
 Perch unlit AIRFIELD Mo (W.Q.) G.8s.

Perch 5 unlit

FRECKLETON CREEK

Perch 4^{1/2} unlit
 perch unlit.

Discharge outfall pipe.

Perch unlit.
 Perch unlit.
 Perch unlit.

SAVICK BROOK

Perch unlit.
 JETTY (disused) unlit.
 Perch unlit, Port hand top mark

PYLONS

PYLONS

DOCK ENTRANCE

.SOUTH SIDE

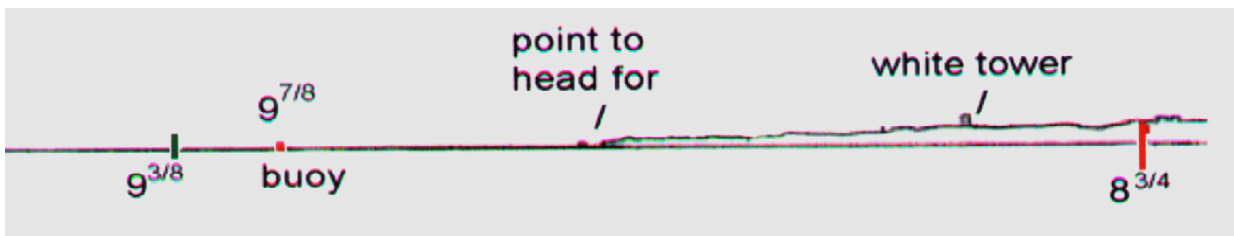
NORTH SIDE

LIST OF TRAINING WALL MARKERS FROM THE DOCK
THE NUMBERS ON THE PERCHES INDICATE STATUTE MILES FROM THE DOCK.

NEGOTIATING THE BEND AT LYTHAM



When approaching the bend at Lytham from the direction of Preston /The Naze keep close to the $8\frac{1}{2}$ mile perch south (see photo) then head for the foreshore at Fairhaven lake / Granny's Bay (see sketch) until you have the $9\frac{3}{8}$ mile perch abeam, you should now have the $9\frac{7}{8}$ buoy on your port bow. When the $9\frac{3}{8}$ perch is abeam shape up to leave the $9\frac{7}{8}$ buoy close to starboard. Then head up for the 11^{th} mile perch south to take you down the middle of the channel.



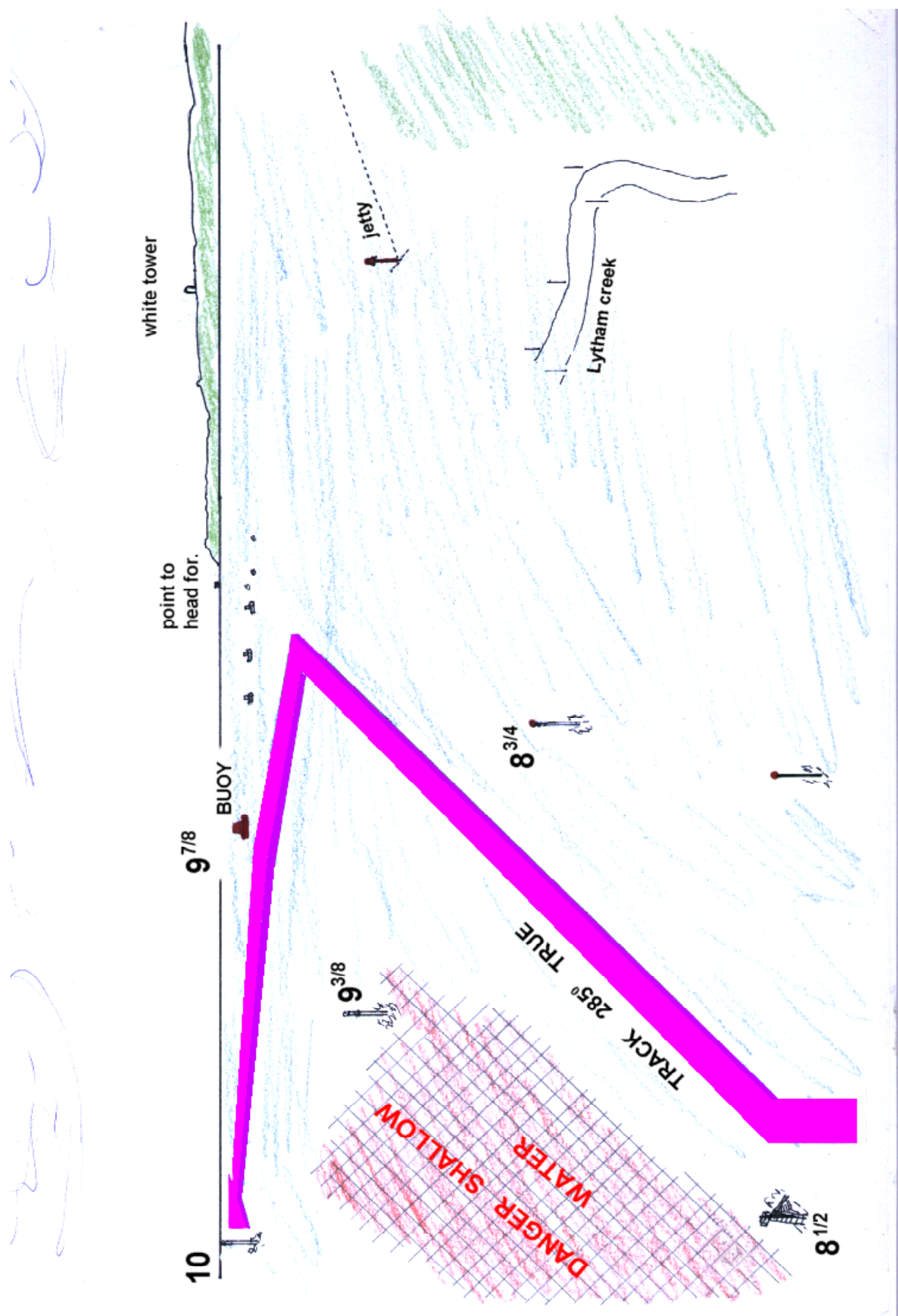
If stopping at Lytham you can anchor off the jetty at Lytham. The area is sand and mud, and you will dry out. The end of the old jetty is still marked with perch and top mark red can, it dries 6.9 m above chart datum, the end of the jetty has silted up as you may be able to see from the photo's, if going ashore you will need "wellies".

Anchoring in the area of the fishing boats is not recommended as the area is littered with disused old moorings. You could try a cable to the East of the last moored fishing boat; the bottom is sand towards the middle of the channel and some boulders on the edge of the low water line.

There is an old wreck of a fishing vessel half way up the beach on the north side opposite the $9\frac{3}{8}$ mile perch.



The bend at Lytham looking to the North West at low water on a spring tide.





West Cardinal buoy marking
The “**ZEALANDIA**” wreck



The “**ZEALANDIA**” wreck at low water on a spring tide.
Wrecked on the 2nd April 1917, cargo of sheep were taken off and then taken to Liverpool.
Built by J. Elder & Co Glasgow in 1875. Iron steamer – 2,739 grt – 2 decks, 5 bulkheads.
Approx. dimensions 377' x 37' x 18^{1/2}' engine by builder, 429 hp 3 cylinder – 2 boilers – one screw. Owned by Fisk Trading Co, USA.



The “**HENRIETTA**” wooden barque 680grt 150.9 x 33.3 x 20.0 ft lying just over the wall on the south side of the river between the 4^{1/2} and the 4th mile perch. 10. 1894: Stranded on Southport beach. It is thought she was salvaged by William Allsup & sons taken to their shipyard at Strand road and after survey, condemned. No doubt all useful equipment and fittings were removed. It is strongly believed she was then towed to the position between the 4^{1/2} and the

4th mile perch and deliberately sunk behind the training wall as a reinforcement to plug a breach.



Underside Blackpool Rd Bridge

11

Storm Gates WILL CLOSE
to Prevent Flooding

10

Underside of Swing Bridge

M.H.W.S.

9

Savick Seacock Gates
Close at 8.0m

8

M.H.W.N.

7

Savick Seacock cill
&
Tarleton lock cill

Top of wall North side from 1/4M to 2M

Top of wall South side from Dock to 2M

Top of wall 5M

6

soundings in Basin Channel

High spots of wall South side
East of 11M to "The Hole"

5

Ordinance Datum Newlyn

4

Top of wall South side from "The Hole" to 13M

3

Storm Gate cill

Top of wall North side from 11^{1/2} to "V" wall

2

1

Dock Stone Tide Gauge Datum
in Roman numerals from Gate's 1,2 & 3 cill

0

Chart Datum

**TABLE SHOWING WIDTHS AND HEIGHTS OF
TRAINING WALLS**

Miles from Dock	Channel width Metres	Ht of wall North side	Ht of wall South side
1/2	105m (345ft)	7.0m	7.0m
1	91m (300ft)	7.9m	7.6m
2	94m (310ft)	6.7m	7.0m
3	91m (300ft)	6.8m	6.7m
4	103m (340ft)	6.4m	6.6m
5	131m (430ft)	5.1m	5.7m
6	152m (500ft)	4.3m	5.9m
7	185m (610ft)	4.3m	5.4m
8	219m (720ft)	4.1m	5.1m
9	No Wall	No wall. LYTHAM	4.0m
10	292m (960ft)	3.1m	3.9m
11	347m (1140ft)	3.1m	3.9m / 5.4m
12	393m (1290ft)	3.1m	4.4m
13	435m (1430ft)	3.1m	3.6m
14 ^{1/4} To the end of wall		No wall	2.9m

NOTE :- Widths of channel are between centres of walls.
Heights of walls are above LAT.



Looking toward Preston from just east of the 11^{1/2} mile perch,
Which is just of picture.

The author John Eccles is a local man from Lytham who has spent a great deal of time on the waters of the Ribble Estuary.

He served on the former Trinity House pilot cutters operating from Lytham and Preston skippering the cutters for 25 years, and for some time on the cutters at Barrow, Heysham and Fleetwood and was a crew member of the Lytham Lifeboat.

Currently working for Preston City Council he is a Lock – keeper at Preston Dock and skipper of the “Prestonian”, the vessel used to maintain navigation marks in the River and Estuary.



THV “VALIANT”