

SPCC NOTES ON VISITING
LONDON'S WATERWAYS
REVISED EDITION - 2011

Please note that during the 2012 Queen's Jubilee and for the Olympics and Para Olympic Games various additional waterway security closures may be put in place. Anyone planning to traverse the waterways during these periods is advised to check on "waterscape.com" or contact the PLA and British Waterways



**BRIEFING NOTES FOR NAVIGATING
THE THAMES TIDEWAY**

1. Transits between Limehouse / Brentford / Teddington
2. Visiting Bell Lane Creek
3. Visiting Bow and Deptford Creeks
4. Narrowboats to Docklands
5. Visiting Waterworks, Bow Back and Channelsea Rivers
6. Visiting Barking Creek
7. Visiting Dartford and Crayford Navigations
8. Transit to and from the Medway
9. Millennium Cruise via the Thames Barrier
10. General Safety Notes and Navigation Rules
11. Thames Route Map

**These notes were prepared for St Pancras Cruising Club by Roger Squires
Telephone 020 7232 0987 (evenings) who may be contacted for additional advice or guidance.**

**THE INFORMATION GIVEN IN THESE NOTES IS OFFERED IN GOOD FAITH.
THE ST. PANCRAS CRUISING CLUB AND ITS OFFICERS CANNOT ACCEPT ANY LIABILITY FOR THE
INTERPRETATION OF IT OR FOR THE SAFETY OF CRAFT ON RIVERS, CANALS OR THE TIDAL THAMES**

THAMES PHONE NUMBERS, VHF CHANNELS & CALLSIGNS

*Since the last rewrite of this guide in 2002 some contact details in this guide havchanged,
the following information was correct in September 2010.*

London VTS (Vessel Traffic Service) <i>formerly "Woolwich Radio"</i>	☎ 020 8855 0315 <i>Thames Barrier Navigation Centre</i>	VHF ch 14 "London VTS" <i>Crayfordness to Teddington (& for private talks: ch 22)</i>
London Coastguard	☎ 020 8312 7380	VHF ch 14 "London Coastguard" (or ch 16 if distress)
Gallions Point Marina	☎ 020 7476 7054	VHF ch M(37) or ch 80 "Gallions Point Marina"
King George V Entrance Lock <i>for Royal Docks</i>	☎ 020 7511 5086	VHF ch 72 "K G 5 Control"
West India Entrance Lock <i>for West India Docks, Millwall Docks, Blackwall Basin & Poplar Dock Marina</i>	☎ 020 7517 5550	VHF ch 13 "West India"
South Dock Marina	☎ 020 7252 2244	VHF ch M(37) "South Dock Marina"
Limehouse Lock & Marina	☎ 020 7308 9930	VHF ch 80 "Limehouse Marina"
Three Mills Lock	☎ 020 7517 5570 <i>also for Bow Locks & City Mill Lock bookings</i>	VHF ch 74 "Three Mills Lock"
St Katherine Haven	☎ 020 7264 5312 ☎ 020 7481 8350	VHF ch 74 "St Katherines"
Tower Bridge		VHF ch 14 "Tower Bridge"
Marine Police	☎ 020 7275 4421 ☎ 020 7275 4422 <i>HQ Wapping (24 hrs)</i>	VHF ch 14 (and often ch 15) "Marine Police" + boat number or name "Marine Police Wapping"
Teddington Locks	☎ 020 8940 8723	No Channel
Richmond Lock & Weir	☎ 020 8940 0634	No Channel
Thames Locks, Brentford	☎ 020 8568 2779	No Channel
Inter-ship <i>(suitable for communication between small leisure craft)</i>		VHF ch 06, 08, 72 or 77
Commercial Vessels		often use VHF ch 10 or VHF ch 15 "up one"
Medway VTS		VHF ch 74 "Medway VTS"
London VTS <i>Gravesend</i>	☎ 020 8855 0315 <i>Port Control Centre Gravesend</i>	VHF ch 69 "London VTS" <i>Seaward limit to Sea Reach No 4 Buoy</i> VHF ch 68 "London VTS" <i>Sea Reach No 4 Buoy to Crayfordness</i>



**SPCC NOTES ON VISITING THE
RIVER THAMES**
— SHEET ONE —

THAMES TRANSITS to BRENTFORD or TEDDINGTON

The recommended Thames transit is UPSTREAM from LIMEHOUSE to BRENTFORD or TEDDINGTON. In that way passage upstream has the double advantage of a medium speed tide flow and extra time. High Water at Brentford / Richmond / Teddington is One Hour later than HW London Bridge. The transit to Brentford with the tide takes about 2½ hours. Richmond Half Tide Barrier is reached in 3 hours and Teddington Lock cleared in 4 hours.

Timing of Upstream Transits depends on your ultimate destination but is constrained by the operating hours of Thames Lock Brentford and Richmond Half Tide Barrier. Both operate from 2 hours before HW to 2 hours after high water. However, the second two hours requires pushing against an outflowing tide. The optimum departure window for a transit to Brentford involves a departure from Limehouse between 3½ hours and no later than 1½ hours before HW London Bridge. Craft going to Teddington have a window from Limehouse between 4 hours and no later than 2 hours before HW London Bridge. Passage outside these windows either means waiting for Thames Lock or the Half Tide Barrier at Richmond to open or pushing against an ebbing tide, which will double the time over that section of the journey.

Transits between BRENTFORD and TEDDINGTON are constrained by the same tide window. The best time to leave is as soon as Brentford Thames Lock opens, i.e. 2 hours before HW Brentford. Any departure after 1 hour before HW Brentford will catch the start of the ebb tide. Any departure after HW Brentford +1 hour stands the risk of arriving at the Richmond Half Tide Barrier about the time of its closure. Craft then are required to divert via Richmond Lock and pay a fee.

Downstream transits from TEDDINGTON to BRENTFORD are best within the window of 1 hour before HW Teddington and HW Brentford. In that way you catch the last of the flow and avoid the ebb in full spate. The transit takes between 1 and 1½ hours. Any departure after HW Teddington +¼ hour stands the risk of arriving at Thames Lock after the lock has closed. Brentford Creek becomes a sea of mud at low tide.

A downstream transit from BRENTFORD to LIMEHOUSE is not recommended for inexperienced skippers. The reasons for this are twofold. The Thames tide ebb is far faster than the flow and with the one hour tide differential, the transit through the narrow section between Blackfriars and Tower Bridge will be reached at maximum tide run. Secondly, the tide run is at its fastest just outside Limehouse Lock cut, which makes the entrance rather difficult. This, coupled with the sharp 'blind' bend below the lock cut, makes crossing the Fairway a difficult task especially with faster ferry and trip boats moving quickly with the current. For those who wish to make such a transit it is recommended they leave Brentford no later than one hour before HW Brentford and push the tail end of the flow. Boats wishing to make the Transit from Teddington to Limehouse are advised to leave Teddington 2 hours before high water, and certainly not after 1 hour before HW Teddington. A later departure than this could mean an arrival at Limehouse with insufficient water over the cill for a safe entry into the Lock. Call on VHF Channel 80 (Limehouse Marina) as you pass Wapping Police Pier so that the lock keeper can prepare the lock for you.

Before venturing on to the Thames please read the SAFETY NOTES and also study the SOUND SIGNALS. A list of last minute reminders below, are offered as a quick check list for skippers planning a transit upstream. *continued overleaf*

Thames Lock, Brentford

Lock will be manned either side of high water during the following core hour periods. Pre-booked passage outside of core hours will be available within the period 0500 - 2200 hours subject to tide conditions.

0800 - 1800 Summer 28th March - 31st October
0800 - 1630 Winter 1st November - 31st March

Note: Passage outside normal hours:

Boaters requiring passage outside of stated core hours will need to pre-book giving British Waterways notice no later than noon of the previous day, or earlier if possible.

Limehouse Lock

Lock will be manned during normal core hours as follows.

0800 - 1800 Summer 0800 - 1600 Winter
Pre-booked passage outside of core hours will be available within the period 0500 - 2200 hours subject to tide conditions.

Telephone numbers:

Brentford Locks 020 8568 2779
Limehouse Lock 020 7308 9930

If for any reason the answer phone facility is not available please leave message on London Waterway Office number 020 7985 7200.

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SAFETY CHECKS —Check for sufficient fuel—Check fan belt—Block off front-well drainer holes if these are LESS than 5 inches (130mm) above water level—Have lifebuoy handy with line attached—Install anchor—Children especially are advised to wear life jackets. Animals should be kept under control inside your craft.

BEFORE DEPARTURE, CHECK WITH THE LOCK KEEPER FOR DETAILS OF ANY HAZARD WARNINGS AND NAVIGATION CONTROLS IN OPERATION

Last Minute Reminders

- * When locking at Limehouse loop your ropes around the wire cables inset into the lock sides. The water runs out fast !
- * The upstream tide run is directly outside Limehouse lock entrance. Be ready for it to catch your bow. Hoot once on exit.
- * The rule of the river is—KEEP TO THE RIGHT. Narrowboats must stay on the right third of the river through to Wandsworth Bridge. Always take the right hand marked navigational arch of all bridges.
- * Watch out for the barges and buoys upstream of Limehouse Lock exit. Set your course early.
- * Watch out for a white flashing light on the centre arch of the central London bridges. If it flashes, beware of large craft or barge tows in the central fairway. You must keep out of their way.
- * Take extra care on the section between Tower Bridge and Blackfriars Bridges. The river is narrow here; the tide run is strong and there are a number of buoys. Watch out for trip boats leaving from the various piers especially the Fast Ferry pier just upstream of Blackfriars Bridge.
- * Trip boats pulling off from Westminster Pier and coming into moor require extra vigilance in the Westminster area.
- * Rowers and sailing boats abound above Putney Bridge. Be ready to move out to the centre of the river to let them through beside the right bank where they have the right of way. Before moving out, check behind for fast moving craft.
- * Go to the left (south) of all islands between Hammersmith and Kew Bridges.
- * Kew Bridge is on the skew. You need to swing to the right (north) to line up and see through the main arch. Take extra care here as the arch is narrow and the trip boats need to use the centre of the span.
- * Keep to the left (south) of the tree covered islands beyond Kew Bridge.
- * For those going to Brentford – look out for the diagonal creek on the right (north) just before the riverside flats. The Thames lock keeper will be on watch if you are within opening hours. Go into the lock he indicates (Left Hand).
- * For those craft going on to Teddington, pass to the left of Isleworth Ait then take the right hand, **open navigation span** of the Richmond half tide barrier; then the central arches of the Richmond bridges, passing to the left of all islands en route.
- * A neon arrow at Teddington indicates which lock you should use. Be ready to moor up alongside the mooring piles whilst you wait.
- * Please remember that in all the EA Thames locks, you are required to rope up and cut engines.

TAKE CARE — DO NOT RUSH — ENJOY YOUR TRIP

What to do in an emergency

ENGINE FAILURE and/or PROPELLER JAMMED :

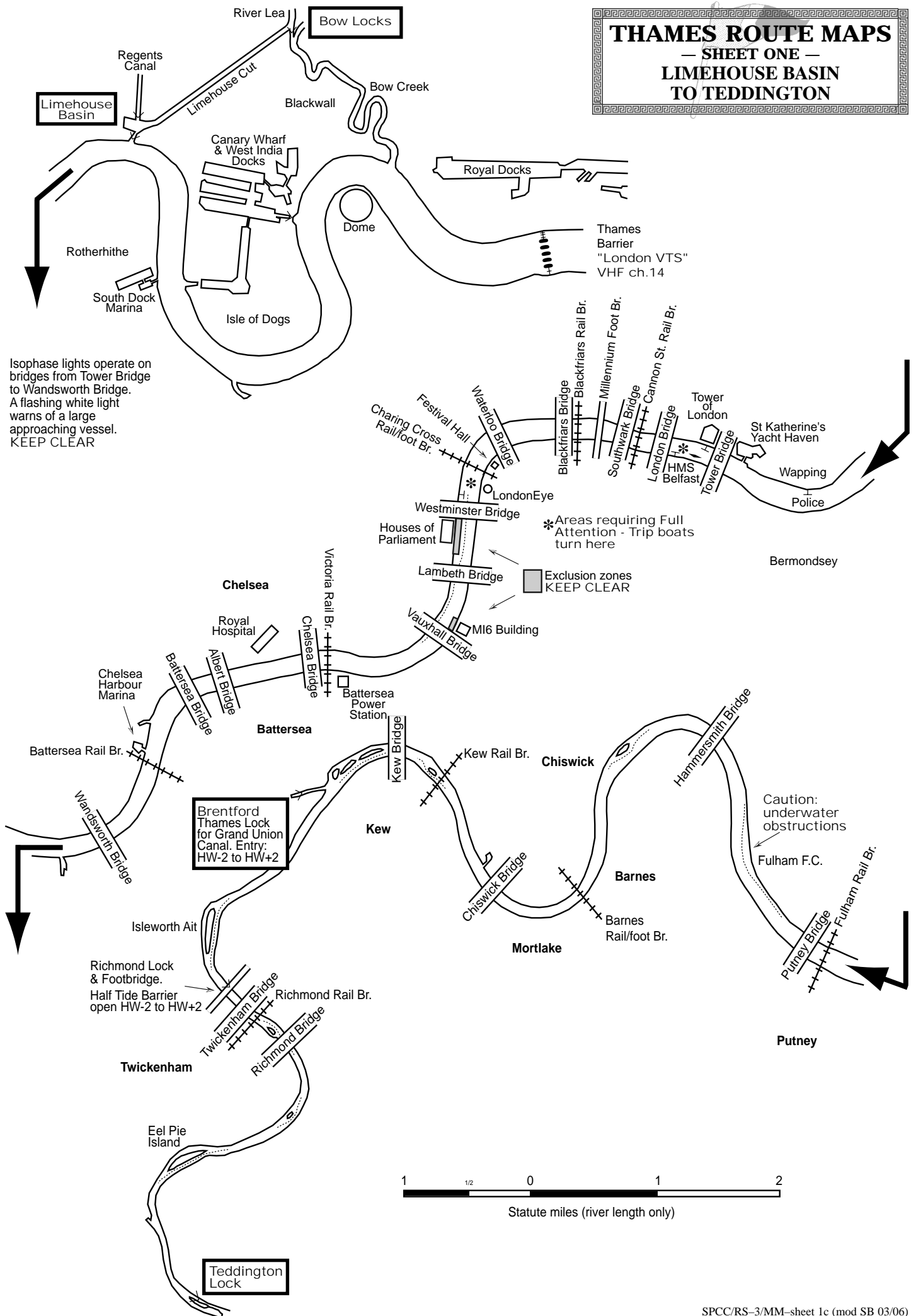
Remember that if your boat is helpless in a fast-running stream it will be carried quickly along out of control. The set of the tide may well carry it to the pier of a bridge or towards moored craft or other obstacles with considerable force. For this reason you **MUST ANCHOR AT ONCE**. Make sure that the inboard end of your anchor or warp is fastened to its cleat or post at all times while on the Tideway. Do not waste time looking for the cause of failure—you can do that as soon as you have anchored and at your comparative leisure!

MAN OVERBOARD : As soon as anyone falls overboard, swing the stern AWAY from them. Throw the life-buoy towards their position in the water and then manoeuvre the boat alongside the casualty, taking care to face the tide and keep to leeward of them, otherwise you will probably run them down!

Always insist that life-jackets be worn by your crew. Set an example by wearing one yourself.

THAMES ROUTE MAPS

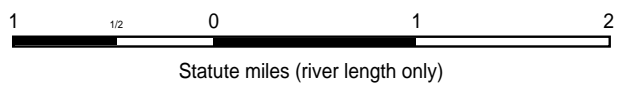
— SHEET ONE —
LIMEHOUSE BASIN
TO TEDDINGTON



Isophase lights operate on bridges from Tower Bridge to Wandsworth Bridge. A flashing white light warns of a large approaching vessel. KEEP CLEAR

*Areas requiring Full Attention - Trip boats turn here

Exclusion zones KEEP CLEAR





SPCC NOTES ON VISITING THE RIVER THAMES

HORN SIGNALS

The term Short Blast means a blast of about 1 second duration

The term Long Blast means a blast of about 4–5 seconds duration

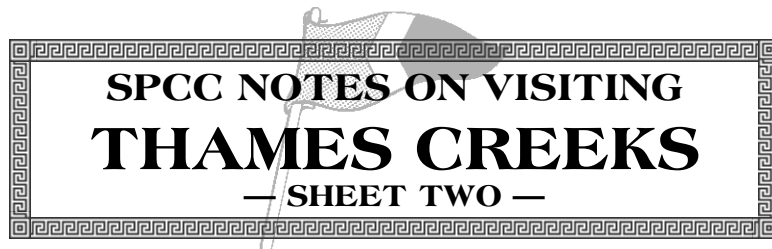


SIGNAL	MEANING
1 short blast	I am altering my course to starboard (RIGHT)
2 short blasts	I am altering my course to port (LEFT)
3 short blasts	My engines are going astern
5 or more short blasts	You are not taking sufficient action to avoid me; or I do not understand your intentions or actions
4 short blasts followed by 1 short blast	I am turning round with my head (BOW) swinging to starboard (RIGHT)
4 short blasts followed by 2 short blasts	I am turning round with my head (BOW) swinging to port (LEFT)
1 prolonged blast	I am about to get underway, i.e. depart from moorings, jetty or dock entrance
2 long blasts followed by 1 short blast	I am about to overtake on your starboard (RIGHT) side
<i>The reply by the vessel being overtaken indicating readiness to be overtaken is 1 long blast, 1 short blast, 1 long blast and 1 short blast</i>	
2 long blasts followed by 2 short blasts	I am about to overtake on your port (LEFT) side
<i>The reply by the vessel being overtaken indicating readiness to be overtaken is 1 long blast, 1 short blast, 1 long blast and 1 short blast</i>	

SAFETY

Anyone navigating a vessel without due care and attention, or in such a manner as to cause damage to other vessels or property or cause injury to persons is guilty of an offence under the Port of London rules and conditions

These signals are made by power driven vessels to indicate their own intended actions to other vessels. However with the ever increasing use of VHF R/T by all classes of vessels, especially by commercial craft, there is less likelihood of sound signals being used. The PLA does not encourage this practice. While small craft should therefore be extra careful and aware of this malpractice, it is strongly urged that smaller craft use sound signals.



**SPCC NOTES ON VISITING
THAMES CREEKS
— SHEET TWO —**

***** NOTE *****
As at January 2011,
the barrier had
become demounted
and is causing an
obstruction.
The Creek should
not be entered until
the obstruction is
cleared

BELL LANE CREEK and RIVER WANDLE

The creek is best tackled on a rising tide. The journey from Limehouse takes around one hour. High water at **Bell Lane Creek** is 30 minutes after High Water London Bridge. The creek is accessible for around 2 hours either side of high water. The optimum time to leave Limehouse is 2½ hours before High Water at London Bridge. This ensure adequate time to visit the creek and continue upstream to Brentford. Remember to keep to the right hand third of the river on your passage upstream to Wandsworth Bridge.

The **Creek**, which is at the mouth of the **River Wandle**, was once used by lighters and sailing barges to service **Wandsworth Town Wharf**. This was particularly so after the adjacent MacMurray's canal lock was closed in 1923, Subsequently the Creek was used by pleasure craft. The entrance is in the southern bank of the river, one quarter of a mile upstream of **Wandsworth Bridge** and is located just beyond the western boundary of the West London Waste Transfer Site and Wharfs which are easily recognised by the lighters with the waste containers and the large mobile gantry cranes!

Some ten years ago an impounding weir was constructed at the Creek Mouth. This acts as a 'half tide' sluice. The gate, situated between the **Red** and **Green Marker Posts**, which define the navigable channel ten metres wide, can be raised automatically when the tide falls to weir level to impound the remaining water in the Creek The Gate remains in the lowered position during high water to facilitate the transit of craft. The aim is to use this window to enter and leave the Creek.

Navigators may wish to note that the Crest of the Weir is at 1.90 metres above OD, but the sill level with the Gate Lowered is at 0.00 AOD, giving a minimum depth of water over the lowered gate sill of 1.90 metres in relation to the crest of the weir. The actual depth of water above the sill at any time is indicated on the gauge board attached to the river wall.

By leaving Limehouse 2½ hours before HW LB, by the time you reach the Creek, there should be adequate depth over the gate to make the transit into the Creek. However, it is always wise to proceed slowly over the gate itself!

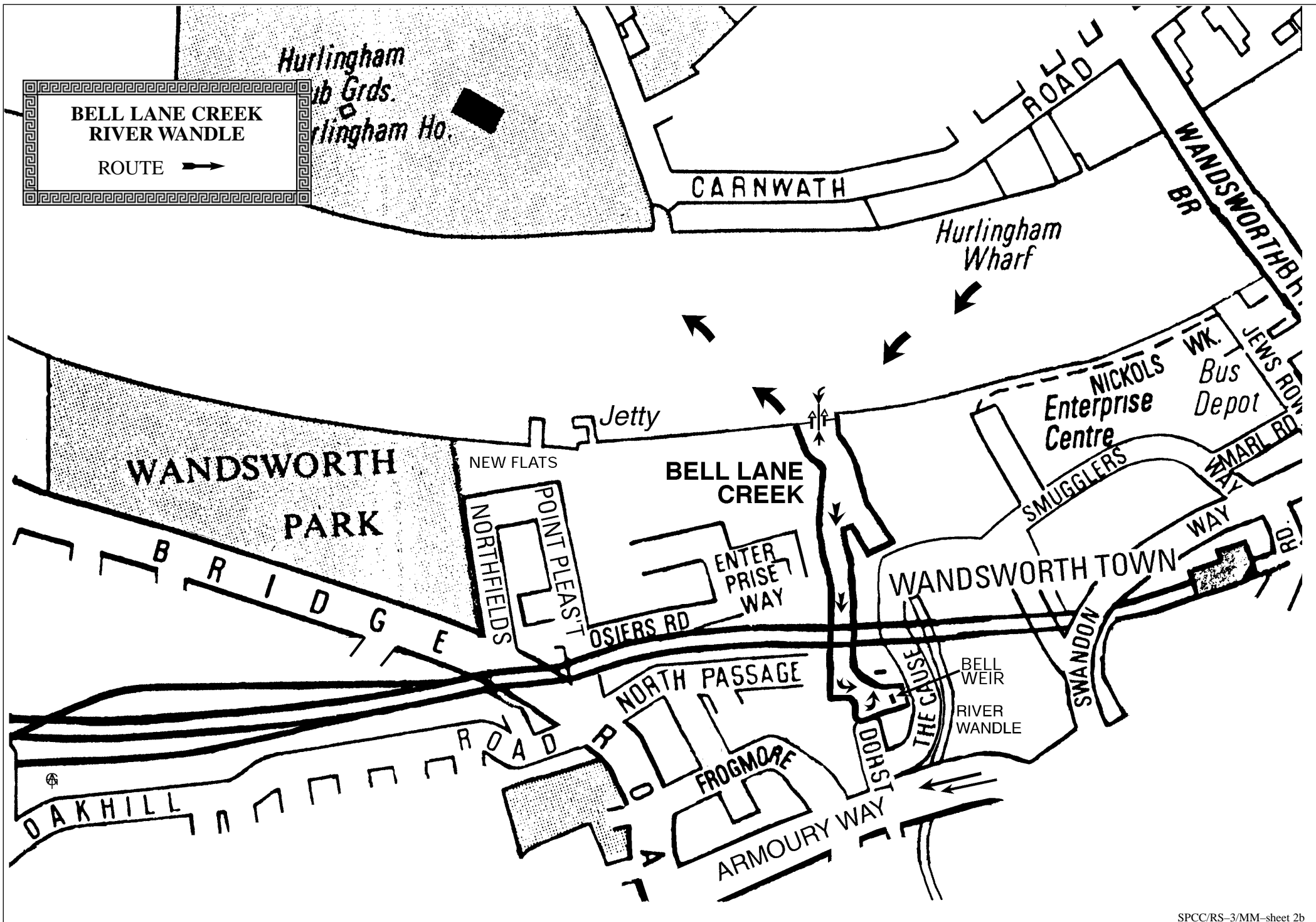
The Creek is less than ¼ mile in length and follows the **Right Hand Fork** just upstream of the entrance. Proceed slowly under the railway bridge and turn to the left to reach the creek end at **Bell Weir**. Depending on the length of craft, turning in the creek is possible, but sometimes it is necessary to reverse back to the bend to facilitate the turn.

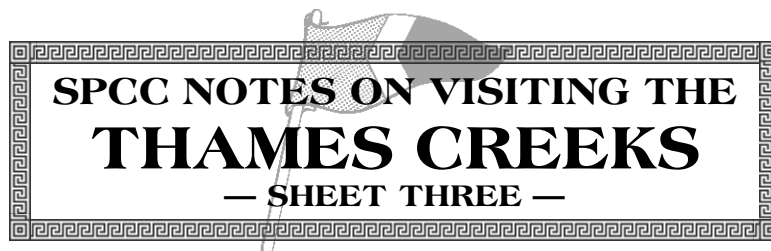
Proceed up the Creek, take your photos, and then return the way you came in, again taking care to slowly cross the gate area. The visit should take about 25 minutes overall.

The onward journey to Brentford takes 1¼ hours and it is recommended that craft proceed upstream to **Brentford Thames Lock** which is open 2 hours either side of HW Brentford (one hour later than HW London Bridge).

Please note, you will be arriving at Brentford around High Water. This will mean that **headroom will be severely restricted under Brentford High Street Bridge**. Take the centre of the arch and proceed with caution. The **Gauging Lock** ahead is **User Operated** with a BW Watermate key.

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**SPCC NOTES ON VISITING THE
THAMES CREEKS**
— SHEET THREE —

BOW CREEK and DEPTFORD CREEK

BOW CREEK —A trip down Bow Creek to the Lighthouse at Creek Mouth provides a unique excursion and with the right timing is perfectly safe for narrowboats. **It is essential to book Bow Locks 24 hours in advance** as normally the locks are unmanned. (Telephone: 020 7517 5570). Aim to leave Bow Locks 1½ hours before High Water London Bridge (HWLB). Keep to the centre of the channel and take great care on the various blind bends. There was a waste transfer site just downstream of Bow Locks. Watch out for tugs moving lighters or for transfer taking place. Turn inside the Creek Mouth by the lighthouse. The outward trip against the tide takes 35 minutes and 25 minutes for the return trip on the tide. Bow Locks should be open on your return which will be just before high water. However, it is essential to ensure you have pre-booked the lock keeper for the return journey.



DEPTFORD CREEK —A visit to Deptford Creek is best organised from Bow. Leave 2½ hours before HWLB. Take care to keep to the centre of Bow Creek. The tidal river journey from Bow Locks via Bow Creek, the Thames and Deptford Creek will take up to 1¾ hours, plus an extra 40 minutes for the Deptford Creek. Whilst cruising down Bow Creek and into the Thames boats will have to PUNCH THE TIDE. On turning upstream boats on the cruise will gain the benefit of the 4 knot incoming tide. At normal main line canal cruising revs with the tide run most boats will move at a speed of 6 mph. Deptford Creek entrance is sometimes difficult to see, so check your map. Proceed up the CENTRE OF THE CREEK and TURN WHERE MARKED ON THE MAP. Retrace your route to return to the Creek Mouth and then continue upstream. Boats should reach Limehouse Lock before the Top of the Tide. Call on VHF 80 just before you arrive at the lock so that the keeper can get it ready. Skippers should be ready to follow the Lockmaster's directions at Limehouse. Be ready to stand off and await locking through. Please have a note of your BW Licence Number handy as all craft licences may be checked at this point. The number is the one at the bottom of your licence disc.

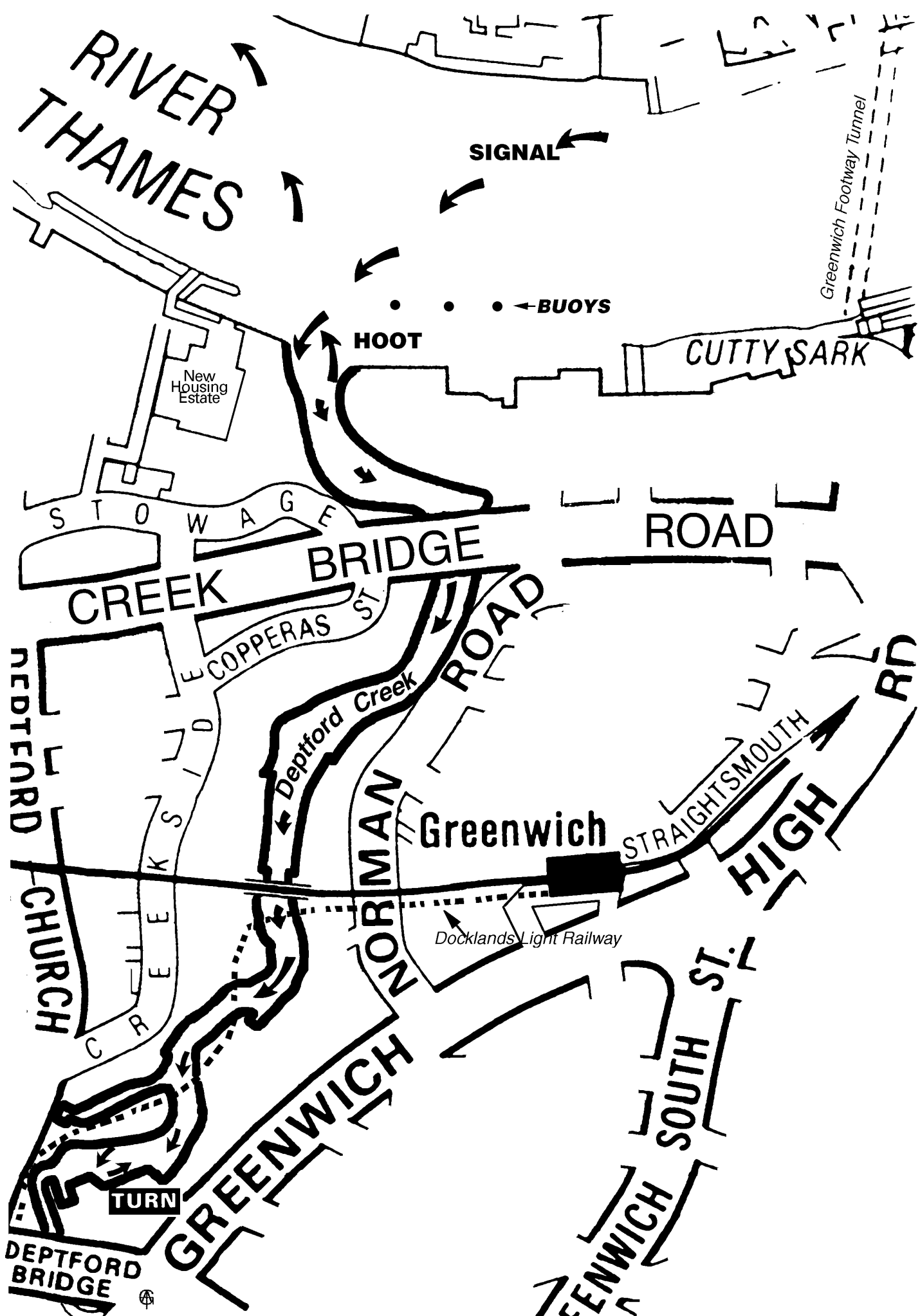
DURING YOUR TRIP ON THE TIDAL THAMES PLEASE TAKE EXTRA CARE

Remember:

1. KEEP TO THE RIGHT; DO NOT STRAY OUT TO THE CENTRE OF RIVER. FOLLOW THE NORTHERN BANK AND PASS INSIDE BARGE MOORINGS.
2. BEWARE OF DRIFT WOOD AND COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC IN BOW CREEK AND ON THE THAMES.
3. DO NOT SAIL TOO CLOSE TO THE THAMES BUOYS AND PIERS AS THE TIDE RUN WILL CATCH YOU and distort your course. Take care before turning across the tide-way to the mouth of Bow Creek. WATCH OUT FOR CRAFT COMING FAST UPSTREAM ON THE TIDE. GIVE ONE LONG BLAST ON YOUR HORN ON EXIT.
4. WATCH OUT FOR THE WASH of trips boats and commercial craft, especially between Greenwich and Limehouse Lock. Turn your bow into the waves and then return to your normal course after you have ridden the waves.
5. WATCH OUT FOR THE BARGE TOWS. All being well they should have gone up river before we leave Bow Creek.
6. ROWERS are sometimes in evidence around Greenwich. HOOT WITH ONE BLAST if you are in doubt that they have not realised you are there.
7. CHECK BOTH UP AND DOWNSTREAM FOR OTHER TRAFFIC BEFORE TURNING TO CROSS THE FAIRWAY TO DEPTFORD CREEK ENTRANCE. Do not turn too early; in that way you avoid the large buoys downstream of the Creek Mouth.
8. Keep to the centre of the channel up Deptford Creek. Take the centre lifting span of the lattice girder lifting railway bridge. Turn at the entrance end of the Upper Basin as the far end tends to collect rubbish and shopping trolleys underwater. 70ft boats may find it easier to turn in the mouth of the short arm just before the Creek Head.
9. Headroom at NARROW STREET BRIDGE IS RESTRICTED. Check your height before trying to pass under it. If in doubt wait on the outer pontoon (East Side) until the tide ebbs or the bridge swings.
10. EMERGENCY moorings are marked on the map supplied. Those at Greenland Pier are available ONLY if craft are in difficulty. Otherwise tie alongside moored barges if you cannot proceed and signal for assistance.

REMINERS —Book the locks at Bow 24 hours in advance—Check for sufficient fuel—Check fan belt—Have life buoy handy with line attached—Install anchor—Children especially are advised to wear life jackets. Animals should be kept under control inside your craft. All boats over 45ft are required by the PLA regulations to carry a VHF Marine Radio.

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RIVER THAMES

SIGNAL

BUOYS

HOOT

CUTTY SARK

New Housing Estate

Greenwich Footway Tunnel

STOWAGE ROAD

DEPTFORD CREEK BRIDGE

COPPERAS ST

Deptford Creek

ROAD

DEPTFORD CHURCH

GREENWICH ROAD

Greenwich

STRAIGHTSMOUTH

HIGH RD

Docklands Light Railway

NORMAN

GREENWICH SOUTH ST.

TURN

DEPTFORD BRIDGE

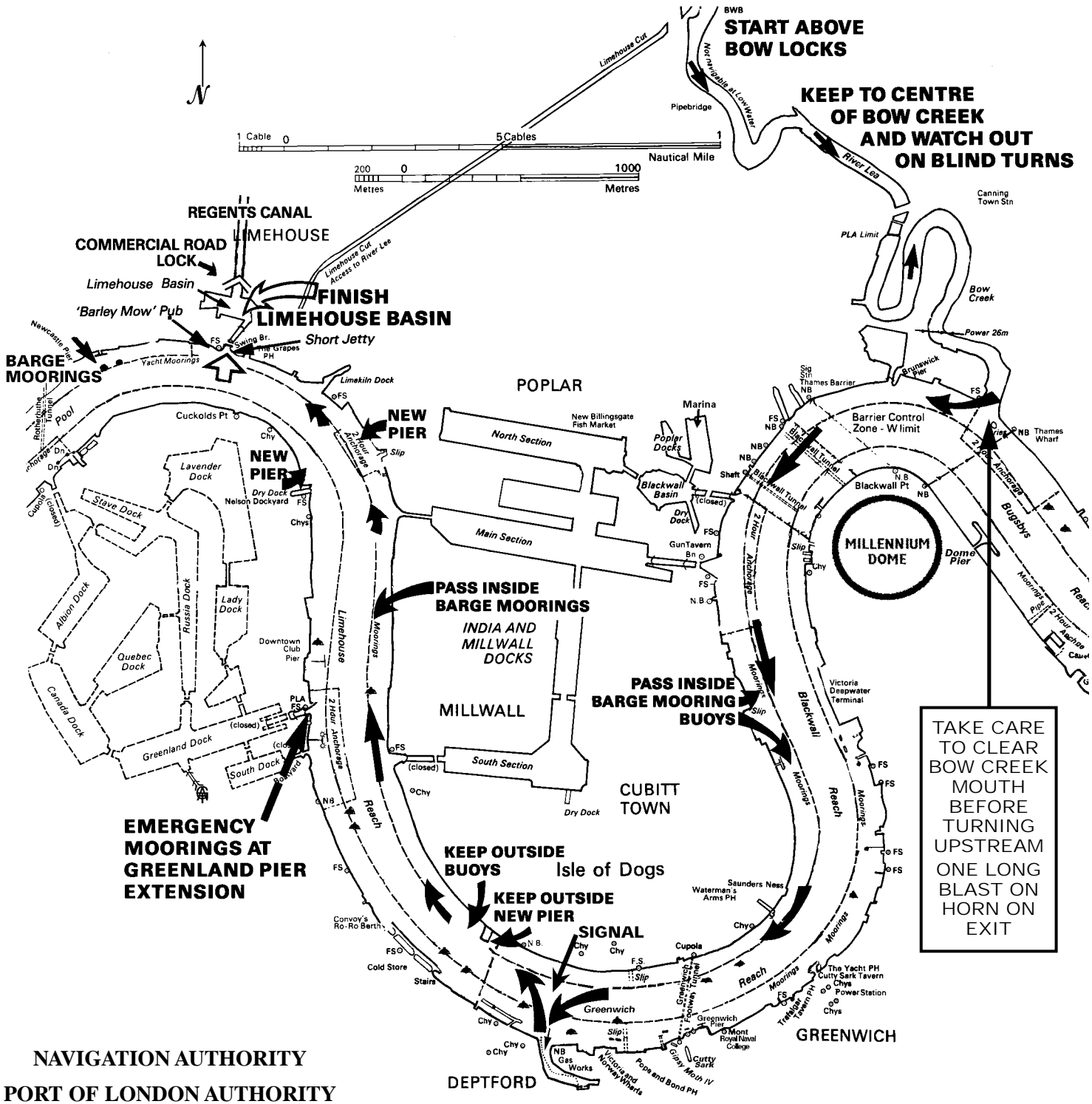
GREENWICH

GREENWICH SOUTH ST.

**CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF
THE ISLE OF DOGS
and visiting DEPTFORD CREEK**

ROUTE →

KEEP CLOSE TO NORTH BANK (RIGHT)
OF RIVER THAMES DURING TRANSIT



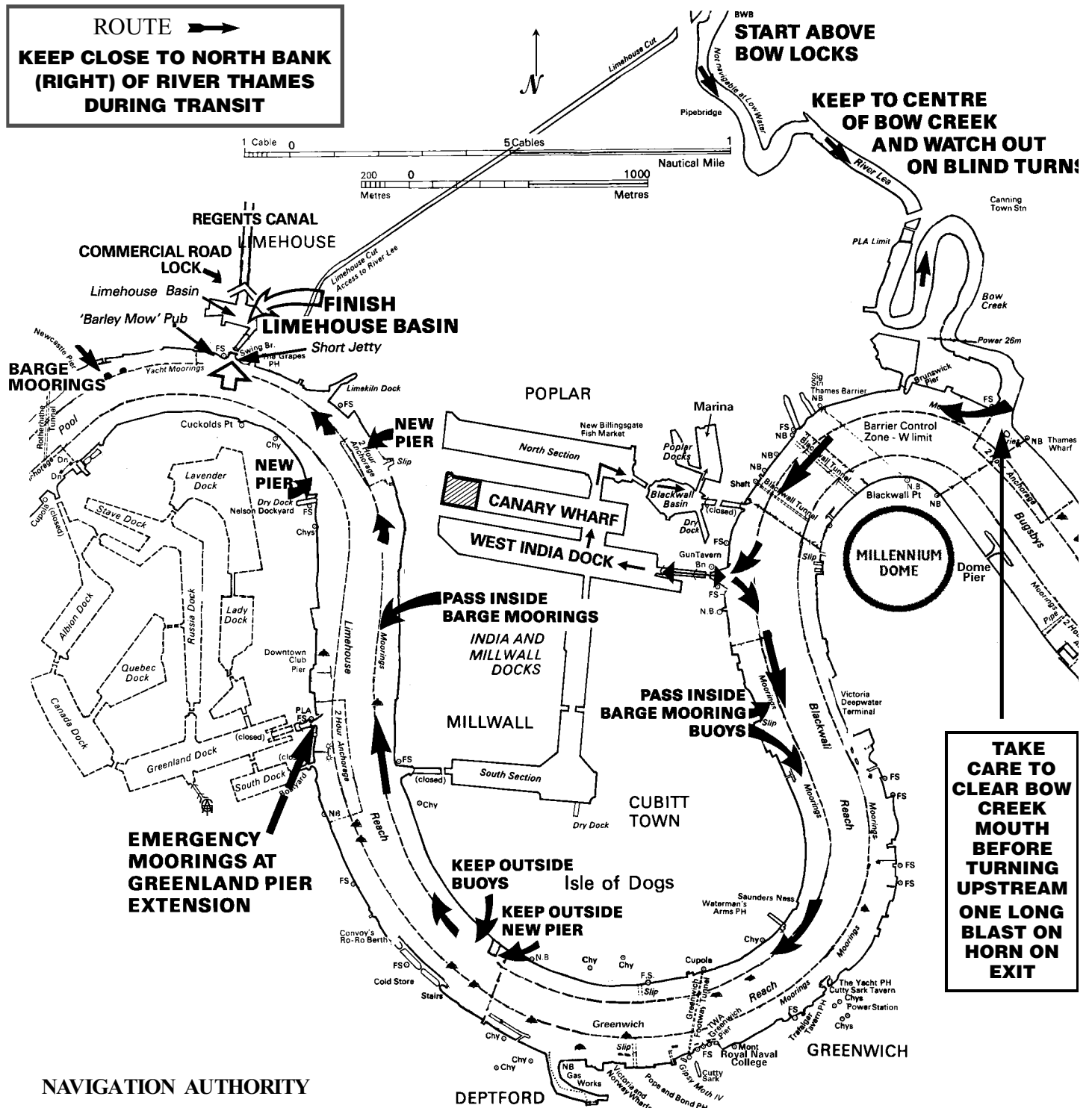
NAVIGATION AUTHORITY
PORT OF LONDON AUTHORITY

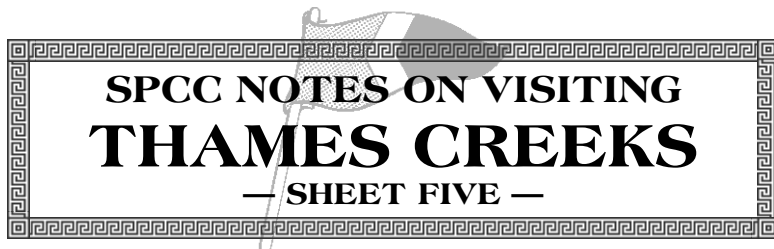
TAKE CARE TO CLEAR
BOW CREEK
MOUTH
BEFORE
TURNING
UPSTREAM
ONE LONG
BLAST ON
HORN ON
EXIT

THAMES ROUTE MAPS
— SHEET FOUR —
DOCKLANDS

NARROWBOATS TO DOCKLANDS

Boaters wishing to visit BW Docklands Marina are advised berthing allocations must be agreed prior to arrival. West India Dock Entrance Lock must also be booked 24 hours in advance. Enquiries and bookings, telephone **020 7517 5550**. The recommended route is via BOW LOCKS. (Book 24 hour in advance on **020 7517 5570**). Boats should leave Bow Locks 1 hour before HW London Bridge. This will offer an arrival at West India Dock 15 minutes before HW. (The Lock Entrance is marked by the tall Blue Lift Bridge.) For the return transit, it is recommended Limehouse Lock is used. Arrange to leave West India Dock 1¼ hours before HW London Bridge. This will give an ETA at Limehouse 20 minutes before High Water. Ask the West India Lock Keeper to phone Limehouse to warn them of your arrival, or call on VHF 80 when you pass Canary Wharf Pier Head. (Out-of-hours bookings for Limehouse need to be made 24 hours in advance on telephone **020 7308 9930**). There is a need to check the headroom at Narrow Street Bridge before proceeding into the lock.





**SPCC NOTES ON VISITING
THAMES CREEKS**
— SHEET FIVE —

CHANNELSEA RIVER * WATERWORKS RIVER and BOW BACK RIVER

*** CHANNELSEA RIVER and ABBEY MILLS ISLAND**

Boats wishing to cruise Channelsea River and around Abbey Mills Island should arrange to leave Bow Locks at High Water –30 minutes. The transit around the island into the Mill Pool and back to Bow Locks takes about 40 minutes. BOW LOCKS must be PRE-BOOKED (phone 020 7517 5570) for both the outward and return transits

Waterworks River is accessed via Three Mills Lock or City Mill Lock. **Pre-booking of Bow Locks is essential (Phone: 020 7517 5570)**. Bow Locks are operational from about 3½ hours before HW LB to 2 hours after. **Current y access is restricted due to the Olympic Games security requirements**

Leave BOW LOCKS 3 hours before High Water. On locking out take care to avoid the silt bar just below the lock exit, ie, turn sharp left to go upstream. Boats need to go slowly upstream in the centre of the channel, feeling their way, as the tide will not be in full flow.

Wait below Three Mills Lock for the green signal. Enter the lock and loop ropes around the sliders. Take the centre of Prescott Channel and do not take the turn North into the Three Mills Wall River too sharply. Just by the last factory site on the LEFT (West) Bank, move over to the left side of the channel. The Right arch of Stratford High Street bridge tends to be shallow. After that bridge move to the centre of the channel and take the centre of the centre span of the Northern Outfall Bridge. Continue forward up the left of the Waterworks River channel under the various bridges.

SLOW DOWN when you pass under Marshgate Lane Bridge. You will need to aim to turn just below the wide junction area. Watch out for some STEPS/RUNGS inset in the left wall and TURN INTO THEM. Reverse back up the Eastern side and pick up a central course for the return journey.

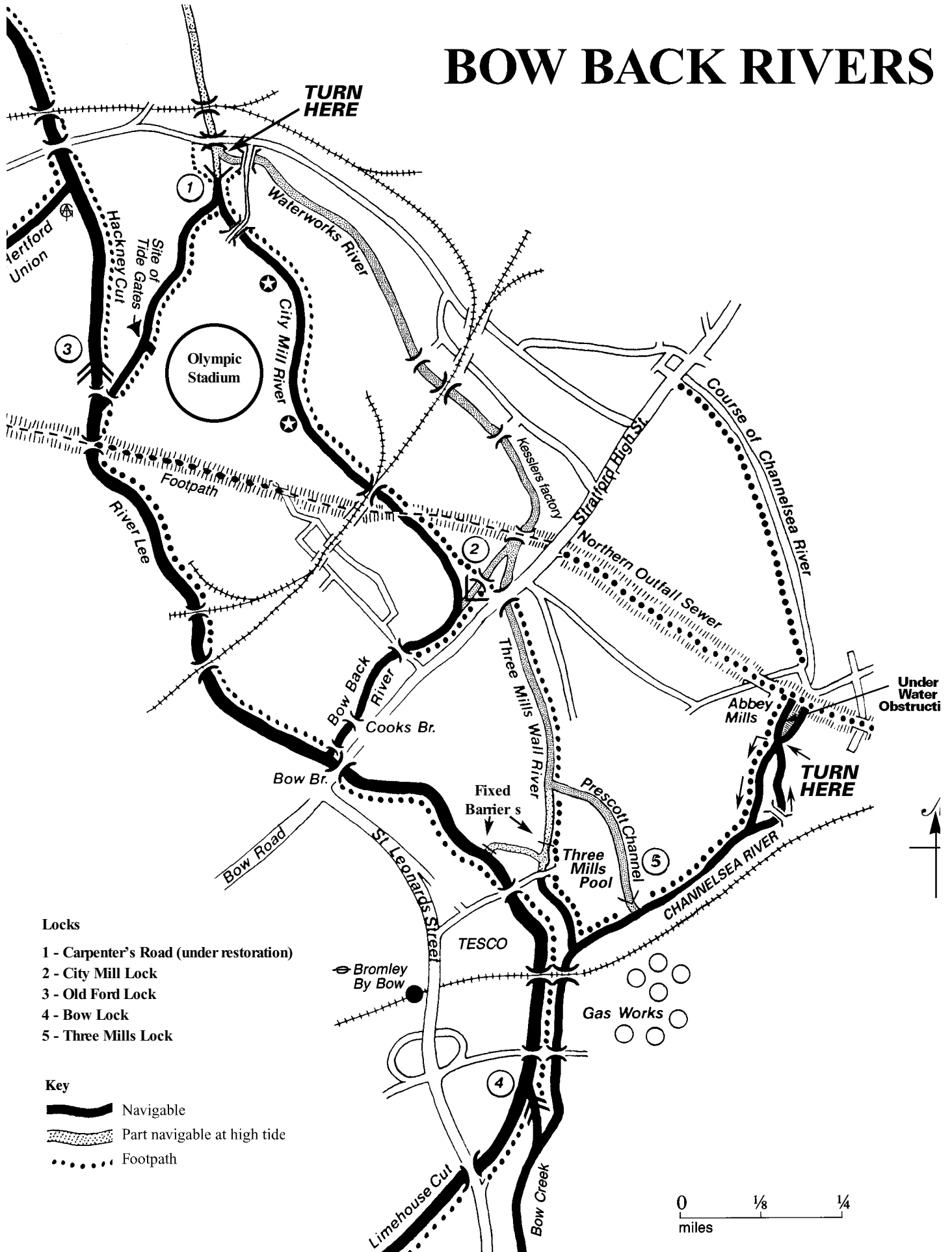
BOW LOCK CLOSES 2 hours after High Water. Take care of the shoal below the Locks when making your turn into them. THE KEEPER SHOULD BE WAITING FOR YOU, so long as he has been PRE-BOOKED. However deep water does not last much longer so you need to speed through the locks back to the Lee Navigation. For PRE-BOOKING at Bow Locks phone: 020 7517 5570 at least 24 hours in advance.

Alternatively it is possible to complete a “mini ring” by returning directly to the Lee navigation by using the recently reopened **City Mill Lock** and passing along the Bow Back River. It is essential that this lock transit is pre-booked as the lock currently is not available for user operation. Phone: 020 7517 5570 to pre-book your passage.

Entry to the lock is between the Northern Outfall Aqueduct and Stratford High Street Bridge. The lock itself is just beyond Blaker Road Bridge. It has a double set of lower gates; the outer gates are for flood control purposes. Ensure both sets of gates are open before entering from Waterworks River. Once through the lock proceed westwards to link with the main Lee Navigation just upstream of Bow Flyover.

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BOW BACK RIVERS

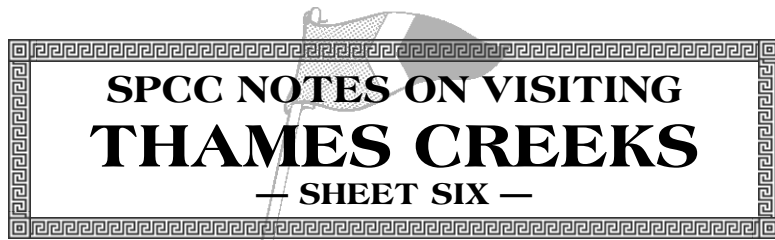


Locks

- 1 - Carpenter's Road (under restoration)
- 2 - City Mill Lock
- 3 - Old Ford Lock
- 4 - Bow Lock
- 5 - Three Mills Lock

Key

-  Navigable
-  Part navigable at high tide
-  Footpath



**SPCC NOTES ON VISITING
THAMES CREEKS**
— SHEET SIX —

An exploration of **BARKING CREEK**

Barking Creek is still an active commercial navigation with small coasters trading from the wharfs in the lower reaches. Sadly traffic no longer uses the formerly navigable River Roding Navigation to Ilford Bridge, but with the advent of the new Barking Barrage it is again accessible by smaller craft and canoes. Headroom restrictions at the bridges stop its access by higher air draft craft. **Prior booking of BOW LOCKS and BARKING BARRIER is essential.**

THE TIME TABLING OF THE TRIP IS CRITICAL. THE KEY ELEMENTS ARE SET OUT BELOW

<p>Exit Bow Locks HW, – 3.5 hours Bow Creek Mouth HW, – 3 hours Barking Creek Mouth HW(LB), – 1.75 hours Tour of Creek 0.9 hours maximum</p>	}	<p>Leave Barking Creek Mouth HW(LB), – 0.8 hours Arrive Bow Creek Mouth HW, + 0.5 hours NB: If you arrive later than HW(LB), + 0.75 divert to Limehouse) Arrive Bow Locks HW, + 1 hour (A diversion to Limehouse takes +2hrs)</p>
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THE CRUISE DETAILS

The trip involves pushing against the tide for much of the outward journey and some of the return trip. The timings depend on the engine size and the hull profile. The following times relate to a reasonable hull shape powered by a 1500cc engine.

Two factors control the trip; the **TIDES** and **WEATHER**. A tide at the neap end is preferable to a Spring. The trip must be made in daylight with good visibility and a wind no greater than **FORCE 3**, preferably less.

The cruise starts at **Bow Locks** which must be prebooked. Although the locks nominally open 4 hours before high water, experience suggests there is not usually enough water for a safe exit until around 3.5 hours before High Water. The lock keeper will tell us when the levels are right. Leave Bow as soon as the lock keeper allows and **follow the centre line of the creek to the mouth**. This will take about 30 minutes. **Check for other craft** on the Thames, then give a **long blast** on your horn and cross the **fairway** to follow the **southern shore** downstream. Call Woolwich Barrier Control (VHF 14) to gain clearance for transit. Pass between the green arrows at the **Thames Barrier Spans**. Check your passage past the **Woolwich Ferry as they move very quickly from shore to shore**. Continue downstream to the **Barking Creek Mouth**. Do not cross the fairway too soon as the tide run is on the Northern side here and it will push you upstream; i.e. turn below the Creek Mouth. Keep inside the **Yellow Barrel Buoy** which marks the end of a shoal and pass under the Flood Barrier at the Creek Mouth.

The journey time from **Bow Creek Mouth** to **Barking Creek Mouth** is approximately 1 hour 20 minutes. Aim to arrive at the Creek Mouth around 1.75 hours before High Tide at **Bow**, but this is only 1.25 hours before High Water at Barking.

Take extra care as you pass through the **Barking Flood Barrier** and proceed up the Creek following a centre line. Take extra care at the new **Tidal Barrage** site adjacent to **Regent Oil Co. Wharf**. Check that the lights are showing green which indicates the **Barrage is open** and proceed up to the **Mill Pool** where you turn. Watch out in the Creek for floating ropes, etc. The journey up the Creek to the barrage takes 20 minutes. The Mill Pool takes another 5 minutes.

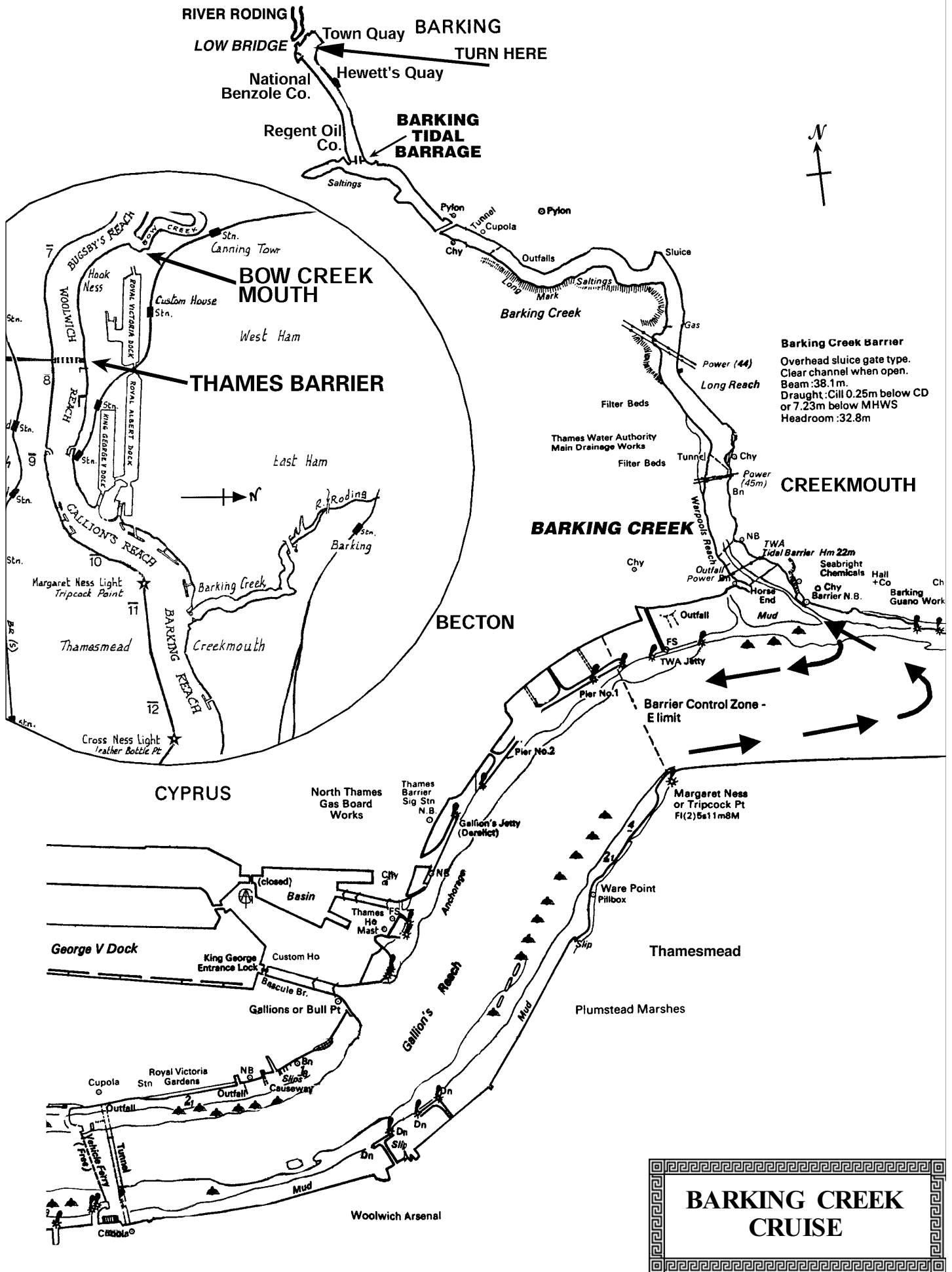
Take your photos but do not dawdle. Aim to spend 50 minutes maximum within Barking Creek before heading back upstream. The aim is to pass between the Green Arrows of the Thames Barrier before the tide turns. Here again clearance must be obtained for transit. (Call VHF 14).

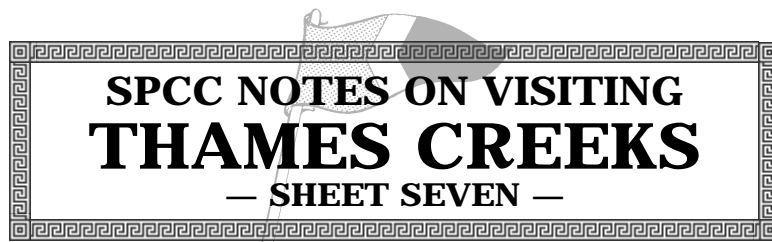
The aim is to reach **Bow Creek Mouth** by High Water Bow plus 20 minutes to ensure a safe transit back to Bow Locks which close 2 hours after High Water. You need to remember that by one hour after high water the tide run down the Creek gets much faster, and your progress against it much slower. In consequence if you enter **Bow Creek Mouth** later than **one hour after high water** you will have difficulty in reaching the locks before they close through lack of draught. In this situation it is better to continue up the Thames to Limehouse where the lock remains operational for 3.5 hours after HWLB. That journey, pushing against an out flowing tide will take at least 2 hours

On arrival at the **Locks at Bow** the keeper should be waiting. You will then have completed your transit to **Barking Creek**. If you divert to Limehouse, please remember to phone Bow Locks to cancel your return booking. By prior arrangement, it is possible to stay over in Barking Creek above the barrier. In such circumstances the return trip can normally be made on the following day's tide. It is best to leave as soon as the incoming tide makes a level and the barrier gates can open.

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS: Bow Locks 020 7517 5570, Barking Tidal Barrier 01474 562250, Weather Forecast 0891 226 456 Woolwich Barrier Control 020 8855 0315, Barking Barrier Bookings 020 8227 3202, Barking Wharf Moorings 020 8591 7324

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**SPCC NOTES ON VISITING
THAMES CREEKS**
— SHEET SEVEN —

DARTFORD AND CRAYFORD NAVIGATIONS

The key to a successful visit to the **Dartford and Crayford Navigations** is the use of the tide. The Creek experiences high and low water approximately 45 minutes before **London Bridge**. (The Thames Barrier tide is 20 minutes prior to London Bridge). For simplicity this summary works on tide times at London Bridge. However, please remember the further down stream you are, the earlier the tide changes. One must always remember that progress against the tide run takes **TWICE** as long as passage with the tide. Also allow extra time for a boat with an engine under 35hp or with a less than smooth hull line. Because of this, the timings given in this sheet can only be a guide.

The Dartford and Crayford Navigations effectively dry out at low tide. The Lock Gates at Dartford have been removed. The lock is now the head of navigation on that Arm It is still possible to visit, and turn in, the Terminus Basin on the Cray Arm, which lies just beyond the railway arch. This basin offers the only safe off-river mooring, if you miss the tide window or need to stay overnight, as it has a flat gravel bed.

Dartford Creek Mouth lies 13 miles downstream of Limehouse Lock. With the out flowing ebb tide the journey takes around 2.5 hours, but even longer once the tide turns. The aim is to arrive at the Creek Mouth so that one can enter it 2 hours 15 minutes after low water London Bridge. It is only after this time, on the inflowing tide, that there is sufficient depth of water to make an easy entrance to the Creek mouth. This has to be entered from downstream because of a substantial silt bar that projects from the upstream end of the creek entrance.

The safest way to visit the Navigations from the canal system is via Limehouse Lock and then to make full use of the ebb and flood tides. Boats should aim to exit Limehouse Lock 2 hours 15 minutes before **Low Water London Bridge**. This allows a passage downstream using the tail end of the ebb tide. Keep to the right hand third of the main river. To avoid a long wait for sufficient water in the Creek Mouth it is possible to continue downstream pushing against the tide to reach the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge. But remember you need to allow 20 minutes for the return to the Creek from the Bridge on the flood to arrive at the optimum entry time.

If you decide to forgo the visit to the bridge, either turn downstream of the mouth and ‘bottom’ your craft on the mud in the entrance to the Creek; or better still, hold off against the barge buoys that are sited just downstream of the Creek Mouth at the south side of the main channel and wait for the flood to run in to provide sufficient water for entry into the Creek.

By **Low Water London Bridge** plus 2 hours 15 minutes the water levels should be just sufficient to proceed slowly into the Creek and on through the Flood Barrage. Proceed slowly up the centre of the channel, monitoring water depth as you go. The Creek’s main arm is 2.25 miles in length, and this journey will take around 45 minutes. Turn in the wider area just below the lock, where an outlet on the west quayside scours out the mud. You can reverse from here into the lock chamber and take your photos—but do not wait too long. Allow 15 minutes to get back to the junction and a further half hour to explore the Crayford Arm. To do so, continue along the right hand arm and under the railway bridge, through to the Terminal Basin which is still navigable. By then the water depth

continued overleaf

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will be good and should allow a speedy return to the Creek Mouth. High Water at Creek Mouth comes 45 minutes before HW London Bridge. Your aim must be to reach the main river well before that time so as to use the flow of the incoming tide to push you upstream. The round trip up the Creeks and back usually takes approximately 1 hour 35 minutes. You should aim to leave Creek Mouth for the return journey upstream by about High Water London Bridge minus 2 hours. This will provide you with a run on the incoming tide almost to the Thames Barrier.

Be ready to step up your revs when the tide turns for the final leg to Limehouse Lock. As a rough guide you need to double your down stream times for that part of your return route after the tide has turned. Your ETA should be around HW LB plus two hours, provided you have reached the Thames Barrier when the tide turns. This arrival is likely to be outside of Core Hours, thus **the Limehouse Return Lockage will need to be pre-booked, at least 24 hours in advance. Phone 020 7308 9930. Lockmaster on VHF Channel 80.**

All transits through the Thames Barrier also need to be confirmed on the day of transit with London VTS (VHF Marine channel 14) or by phone – 020 8855 0315. The first reporting call should be made when you are at Blackwall Point on the outward journey and again before the Woolwich Ferry on your return leg.

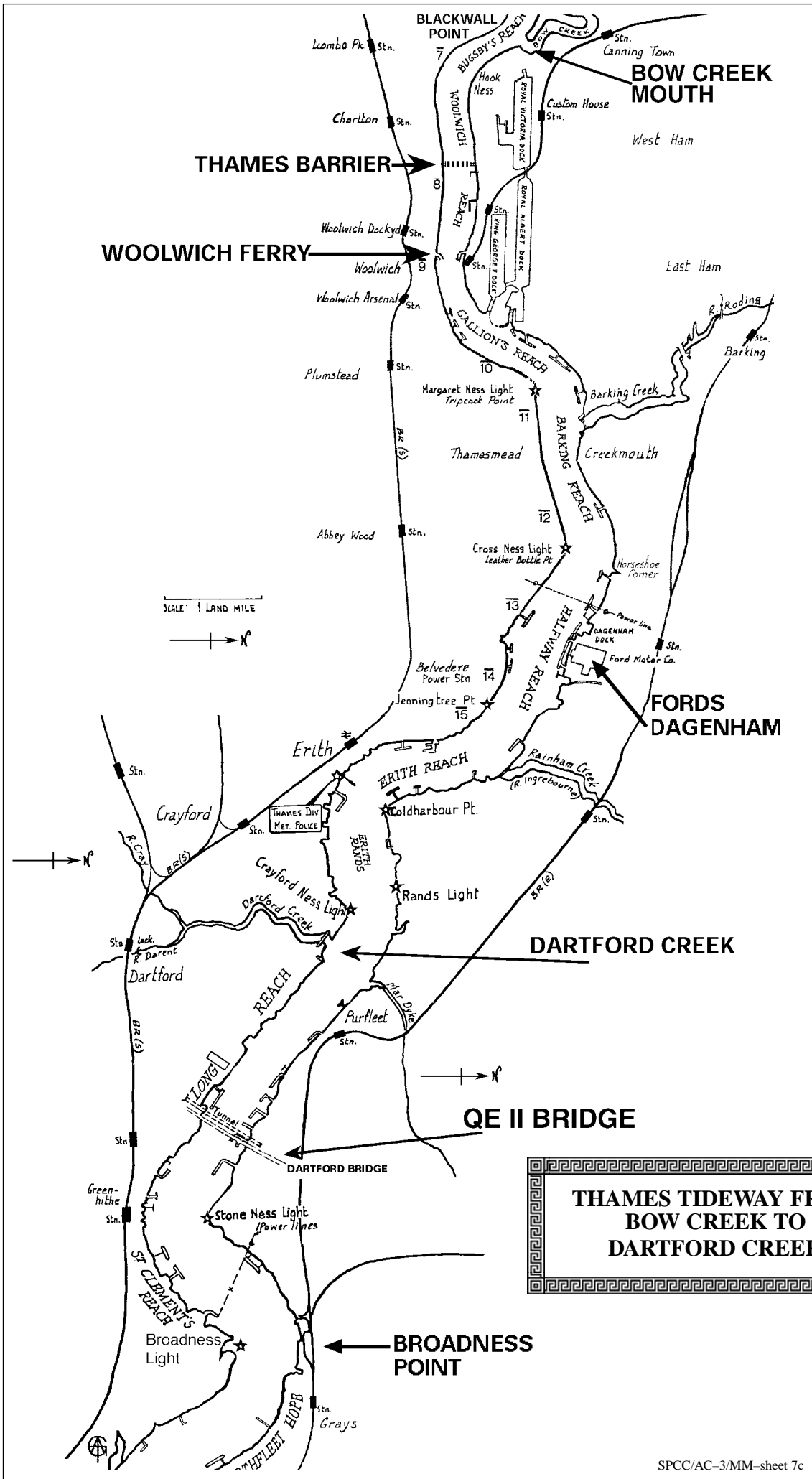
All boats making the trip should ensure they have enough fuel. A full tank is preferable since sedimenting of filters caused by wave movement is then less likely to occur. Pushing against the tide doubles fuel consumption. Oil and water levels also should be topped up before you leave Limehouse. Your anchor must also be at the ready with 50 metres of line and at least 2 metres of chain at the anchor end.

If the weather is forecast on the day is for winds above Force 3, or for poor visibility, you should postpone the trip to the next day. The timings then will be around one hour later. It is also wise to verify, in advance, with the Environment Agency that no Dartford Barrier test closure are planned to coincide with your intended date of transit.

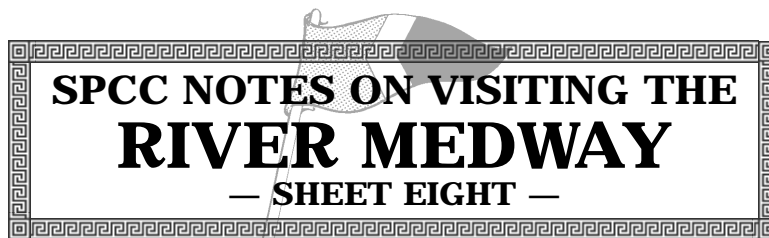
For ease of reference an indicative timetable would be:

Low Water LB 11.15	HW LB 17.03
Out Limehouse Lock	09.00
Thames Barrier	10.05
Barking Creek	10.30
Crossness	10.50
Crayfordness	12.00
Moor or QEII Bridge and return	
Enter Creek	13.30
Dartford Lock (Turn)	14.15
Cray Junction	14.25
Crayford Basin (Turn)	14.40
Cray Junction	14.55
Out Creek Mouth	15.10
Barking Barrier	16.30
Thames Barrier	17.10
Limehouse Lock	19.10

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**THAMES TIDEWAY FROM
BOW CREEK TO
DARTFORD CREEK**



**SPCC NOTES ON VISITING THE
RIVER MEDWAY**
— SHEET EIGHT —

THE TRANSIT TO THE MEDWAY

THIS IS A CRUISE THAT REQUIRES PRE-PLANNING AND IS NOT FOR THE FAINT HEARTED

Once you leave BOW LOCKS there are few places to land, and only barge buoys on which you can lay over. The last of these barge buoys are in the GRAVESEND REACH. Once you clear Lower Hope Reach you are very much 'on your own' until you are back in the Medway Channel. Good weather forecasts are essential for this section.

Navigation skills become critical when you reach the start of the THAMES buoyed channel at LOWER HOPE buoy, opposite MUCKING No.3 buoy. From here aim for the red WEST BLYTH buoy, which you can pass inside; that gets you around the end of Blyth Sands. From here look due East and steer for MID BLYTH, Yellow with Black Cap, North Cardinal buoy which is opposite Hole Haven Creek on the north bank. Take this buoy again on the inside, i.e. just outside of the main shipping channel. From here the next buoy lies ahead some three miles, east south east, and guards the edge of Yantlet Flats, (Binoculars are a must). Pass on the outside of this buoy and look ahead for the red can buoy of WEST NORE SAND which follows. Pass on the north side.

Your route on the next section is quite critical as you need to avoid Nore Sand and follow the inner Swatchway channel past the length of Nore Sand. Thus, when leaving WEST NORE SAND buoy, identify and head for the green conical MID SWATCH buoy and pass to the south of it. This buoy is on the southern edge of Nore Sand. Look ahead and to the south east to identify the red can buoy of NORE SWATCH. Head for it and pass round to the north of this buoy and then, in a sweep, alter course to the south to pass over the Sheerness Middle Sand, which marks the end of Grain Spit, to head for MEDWAY BUOY No.11. Just before you reach it turn south south west, to pass between it and GRAIN EDGE buoy, which you will pass on the outside. From here head west south west to GRAIN HARD buoy; this is opposite Garrison Point. From here turn south south west to head for NORTH KENT buoy in Sheerness Harbour.

You are now in the River Medway Channel. This tends to be busy with craft, but you will be passing through at low water when there is usually less big shipping on the move. Proceed parallel to the southern shore of the Isle of Grain. Turn at STOKE BUOY No.13 down Keyhole Reach past Bee Ness Jetty and Oakham Ness Jetty to BUOY No.15. Here head for BUOY No.17 and then turn due west, along Long Reach, turning south south west again at BUOY No.23, opposite Folly Point with its Napoleonic Fort, to proceed down Pinup reach to BUOY No.25 and thence to BUOY No.27 in GILLINGHAM REACH.

For Skippers who need a break, the floating jetty of GILLINGHAM MARINA is over on the south side of the river. A call on VHF Channel 80 will reach Marina staff – Phone: 01634 280022.

From here the trip up the Medway to the tide lock at Allington is quite straight forward. Remember that quite large craft use the river up to Rochester Bridge and that the final section of this reach before Strood Pier and the bridge, has two blind bends.

From Rochester Bridge the river becomes more rural apart from the M2 bridge. Also remember that there are no more stopping places between here and ALLINGTON LOCK. Take care under the low Aylesford Bridge and your transit to the non-tidal section of the Medway is nearly at its end. From Allington the nine locks and 19 miles of the non-tidal section of the Medway will make your epic voyage well worth while. You may, however, need a long swing Medway windlass to get some of the heavy lock gear to budge, but that is a minor point.

For the return journey, it may be easier to overnight at Gillingham Marina, or better still, rafted to Queenborough Yacht Club's lighter in the Swale. Both provide a shorter hop to Grain Edge.

SAFETY NOTE: THAMES ESTUARY – WEATHER WARNING

It is essential to verify that the WIND is not greater than Force 3, but preferably Force 1 or 2, before proceeding past SHORNMEAD LIGHT (TILBURY) on the way out, or past GRAIN HARD / GARRISON POINT on the return. You should turn back at these points if increases in WIND are forecast, as the journey through the ESTUARY takes 3 hours in an unprotected area with no shelter easily accessible

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**SPCC NOTES ON VISITING THE
RIVER MEDWAY
— SHEET EIGHT —**

RIVER MEDWAY

TRANSIT TO THE MEDWAY

This trip can only be undertaken when the weather forecast is Fine with Good Visibility and maximum Wind Force 3 in the Estuary. Transit starts from BOW LOCKS which need to be booked 24 hours in advance. (Phone 020 7517 5570) Avoid strong SPRING tides. The best CHART for the transit around GRAIN SPIT and the tidal Medway is *Stanfords Chart No.8 The NORTH KENT COAST*. Chart, compass and binoculars are essential for the lead boat. The remainder of the Thames route is on *Imray Yachting Chart C2 River Thames (Teddington to Southend)*.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Check Weather Forecast before departure with Met Office (Phone 0891 226 455) and Medway Radio at Sheerness, Channel 74 (Phone 01795 663025). Speak to Port Control London to check the condition of and traffic on the lower tideway, Channel 13 (Phone 01474 560311). **If forecast is not good — DO NOT GO.** (i.e. Wind in excess of Force 3).

DEPARTURE ROUTINE

Notify Thames Barrier/London VTS, Channel 14 (Phone 020 8855 0315) of your planned Barrier Transit when you clear Blackwall Point; and seek permission to transit when you have the barrier in sight

TRANSIT MONITORING

The timing of the transit is the key to success and you must keep a log of Way Points to verify your speed. In the Estuary and going up the Medway, mark off the buoys on your chart/checklist as you pass them. This way you will know exactly where you are. Remember to keep to the right hand third of the river and out of the Fairway channels used by larger craft.

TRANSIT TIMINGS

Timings of the transit are as follows:

Leave BOW LOCKS	HW LB -1 hour
THAMES BARRIER	AT HW LB
FORD MOTOR WORKS DAGENHAM	HW LB +1 hour
BROADNESS POINT/GRAYS	HW LB +2 hours
MUCKING No.3 BUOY/LOWER HOPE	HW LB +3 hours to +3.25 hours
EAST BLYTH BUOY	HW LB +4 hours to +4.25 hours
NORE SWATCH BUOY	HW LB +4.75 hours to +5.5 hours
GRAIN EDGE BUOY or Medway Channel No.11	HW LB +5 hours to +5.75 hours

MEDWAY TRANSIT

Follow buoyed channel up Medway, keeping to RIGHT of Channel.

GRAIN EDGE BUOY to ROCHESTER	12 miles or approx. 2 hours
ROCHESTER to ALLINGTON TIDE LOCK (Allington Lock High Water is Sheerness +50 minutes)	13 miles or approx. 2.25 hours

POINTS TO REMEMBER

Timings of the Tideway can vary depending on tide flows. It is essential to be within the above Way Point timings for a safe passage. Non-tidal section of Medway—At ALLINGTON LOCK, which is open from THREE HOURS before to TWO HOURS after high water, buy your MEDWAY LICENCE for the non-tidal River. Chart *The Upper Reaches of the River Medway*. (Imray, Laurie Norie and Wilson). ALWAYS ENSURE THAT YOU GIVE LOCK KEEPERS ADVANCE WARNING OF YOUR E.T.A.

MEDWAY TIMINGS

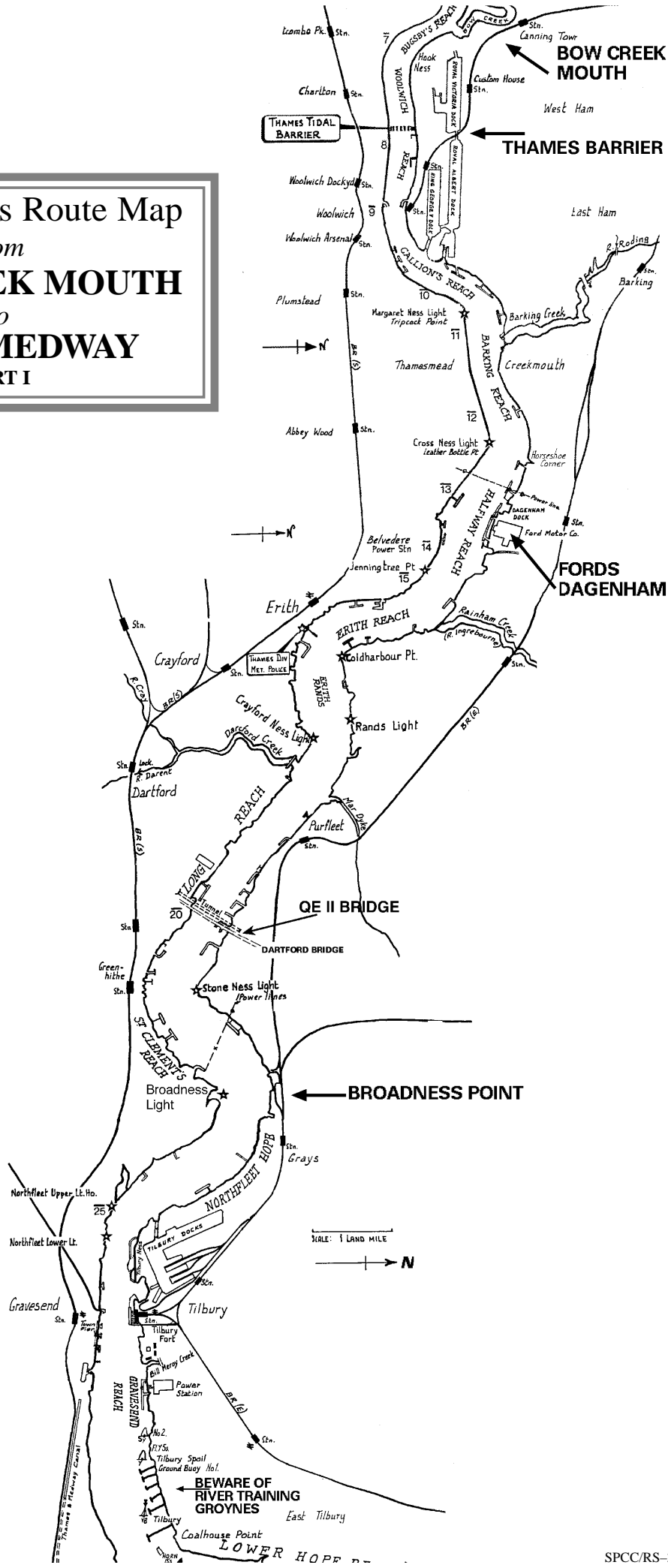
ALLINGTON to MAIDSTONE	0.5 hours
MAIDSTONE to YALDING (8 miles 3 locks)	2.5 hours
YALDING to TONBRIDGE (8 miles 6 locks)	3.75 hours

Craft with air draught of less than 5.5 feet can proceed for about half a mile, turning just beyond the Tonbridge to London Railway Bridge where the river widens to return to the moorings at Tonbridge Town Wharf just below the main town road bridge.

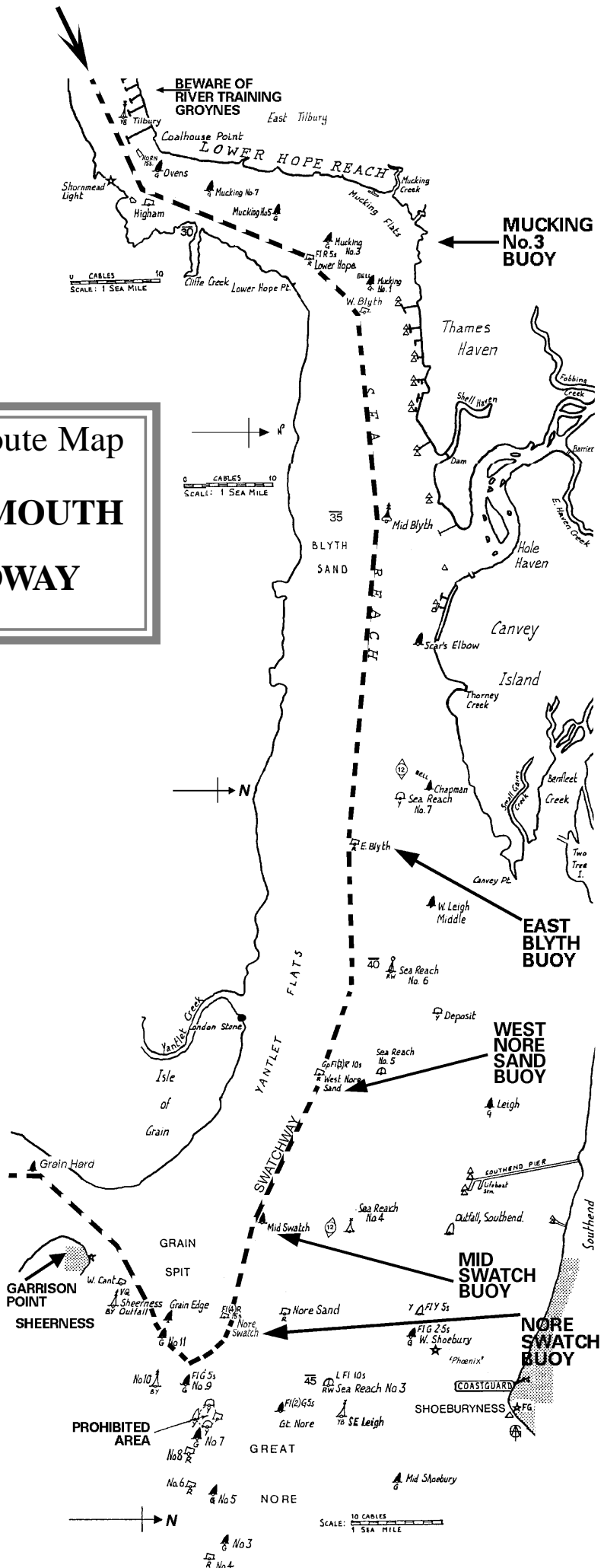
FOR THE RETURN JOURNEY USE THE SAME TIDEWAY TIMINGS IN REVERSE ORDER.

Boats can break their Medway transit at Gillingham Marina, VHF 37/80 (Phone: 01634 280022). Allow 1¼ hours to Grain Edge or overnight rafted to the Queenborough Harbour Lighter. Contact Queenborough Yacht Club, 7 High Street, Queenborough, Sheppey, Kent ME11 5AA. Email secretary@queenboroughyc.co.uk for details. Allow ½ hour to Grain Edge.

River Thames Route Map
from
BOW CREEK MOUTH
to
RIVER MEDWAY
PART I



River Thames Route Map
 from
BOW CREEK MOUTH
 to
RIVER MEDWAY
 PART II





**SPCC NOTES ON VISITING THE
RIVER THAMES**
— SHEET NINE —

MILLENNIUM CRUISE TO GREENWICH, THE DOME AND WOOLWICH VIA THE THAMES BARRIER

This cruise along the tideway passes Greenwich, the Millennium Dome and Exhibition site and traverses the Thames Barrier at Woolwich. It crosses the meridian, so is the best of both worlds!

The cruise takes about 2½ hours for the round trip. Much depends on whether low water comes early or late! Low water is normally 23 minutes earlier at Woolwich than low water at London Bridge. All times stated below are based on low water London Bridge (LWLB)

Aim to leave Limehouse 1¼ hours before Low Water London Bridge. (On a Spring tide you may need to leave a little earlier to ensure sufficient water over the cill)

The tidal river journey from Limehouse to Woolwich with the tide will take up to 1¼ hours. The aim is to go downstream on the ebb (falling) tide and arrive at WOOLWICH at SLACK (low) water. Boats turn at Woolwich and gradually gain the benefit of the incoming tide for the return transit to Limehouse Lock. At normal main line canal cruising revs with the tide run most boats will move at a speed of 5 mph.

Boat should leave Limehouse Lock 1¾ hours before LWLB and should therefore reach Woolwich at Low Water Woolwich. When boats reach Blackwall Point they are required to report their downstream transit to London VTS on VHF channel 14 (Phone: 020 8855 0315). Again when they have the Barrier in sight they need to call to seek permission to transit (The same call has to be made on the return journey upstream). **ALL BOATS MUST TAKE THE MARKED (Green Arrow) CHANNEL THROUGH THE BARRIER.** Do not turn to the northern shore until **well** past the Barrier but, **ABOVE WOOLWICH FERRY.** Boats will gradually gain the push of the incoming tide on the return journey to Limehouse. The journey is about 6 miles each way and takes 1¼ hours each way; ETA at Limehouse is 2½ hours after departure. At Limehouse be ready to enter the Lock Cut and watch for the Lock traffic lights to show GREEN. Skippers should be ready to follow the Lockmaster's directions. On a Spring tide it may be necessary to tie off on the outer pontoon landing to wait for sufficient water over the cill. Please have your BW Annual Licence Number handy as all craft licenses will be checked at this point. The number is the one at the bottom of your licence disc. Lockmaster can be contacted on VHF Channel 80.

DURING YOUR TRIP ON THE TIDAL THAMES PLEASE TAKE EXTRA CARE

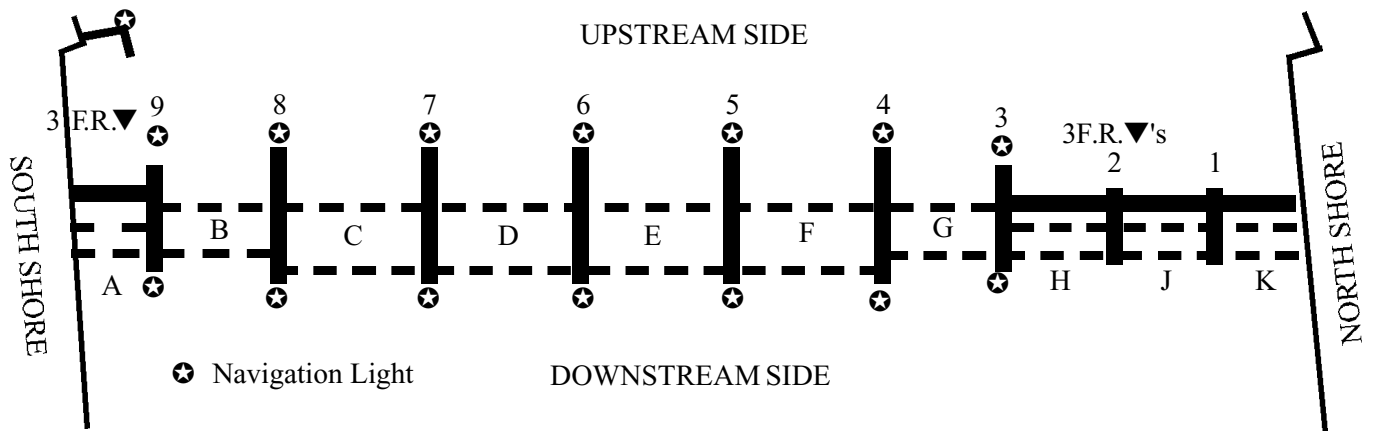
Remember:

1. KEEP TO THE RIGHT; DO NOT STRAY OUT TO THE CENTRE OF RIVER. WATCH OUT FOR BARGE MOORINGS AND BUOYS.
2. BEWARE OF DRIFTWOOD AND COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC ON THE THAMES.
3. DO NOT SAIL TOO CLOSE TO THE BUOYS AND PIERS. Take care before turning across the fairway at Woolwich. WATCH FOR CRAFT COMING UPSTREAM ON THE TIDE.
4. WATCH OUT FOR THE WASH of ferry boats and commercial craft, especially between the Dome and Limehouse Lock. Turn your bow into the waves and then return to your normal course after you have ridden the waves.
5. ROWERS are sometimes in evidence around Greenwich and in the Woolwich Reach. HOOT WITH ONE BLAST if you are in doubt that they have not realised you are there.
6. CHECK WATER LEVEL AT LIMEHOUSE LOCK ON YOUR RETURN. IF IN DOUBT WAIT ON THE PONTOON MOORINGS IN THE ENTRANCE CHANNEL (East Side) UNTIL THE WATER RISES.
7. EMERGENCY moorings are marked on the map supplied. Those at Millwall Pier and Greenland Pier are available ONLY if craft are in difficulty. Otherwise tie alongside moored barges if you cannot proceed and signal for assistance.

REMINDEES —Check for sufficient fuel—Check fan belt—Have lifebuoy handy with line attached—Install anchor
Children especially are advised to wear life jackets. Animals should be kept under control inside your craft. All boats over 45ft are required by PLA Regulations to carry a VHF Marine Radio.

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NAVIGATION THROUGH THE THAMES BARRIER



Spans A, H, J and K are permanently closed to Navigation.

River Thames – Woolwich Barrier Control Zone: Margaretness to Blackwall Point.

Notice Boards with lights at Thamesmead, Barking Power Station, Blackwall Stairs (north shore) and Blackwall Point (south shore).

- Amber lights means** – **Proceed with extreme caution**
- Red light means** – **Navigation within Zone prohibited**
- Red St Andrew's Crosses (lit) from Piers mean** – **Barrier or span closed**
- Green Arrows (lit) from Piers mean** – **Span open**

Loud hailers are fitted at certain points to pass instructions. They may also transmit Morse Signal "K". On hearing Morse Signal (indicating Barrier Closure) contact London VTS if fitted with VHF R/T. If not fitted, stop your vessel, listen to voice instructions.

It is extremely dangerous to go through a Span marked Closed (for navigation), the gates may be in a semi-raised position.

IF ALL GATES CLOSED : No vessel to navigate within 200 metres of Barrier due to turbulence.

Depth over sills: Gate C, D, E, F = 5.8m CD.
 Gate B, D = 1.25m CD.

Call London VTS (Barrier Control) on channel 14 at Margaretness and/or Blackwall Point for permission to pass through the Barrier. If no VHF Radio then phone 020 8855 0315 and pass through between Green Arrows. Use engine at all times.



SPCC NOTES ON VISITING THE RIVER THAMES

HORN SIGNALS

*The term Short Blast means a blast of about 1 second duration
The term Long Blast means a blast of about 4–5 seconds duration*



SIGNAL	MEANING
1 short blast	I am altering my course to starboard (RIGHT)
2 short blasts	I am altering my course to port (LEFT)
3 short blasts	My engines are going astern
5 or more short blasts	You are not taking sufficient action to avoid me; or I do not understand your intentions or actions
4 short blasts followed by 1 short blast	I am turning round with my head (BOW) swinging to starboard (RIGHT)
4 short blasts followed by 2 short blasts	I am turning round with my head (BOW) swinging to port (LEFT)
1 prolonged blast	I am about to get underway, i.e. depart from moorings, jetty or dock entrance
2 long blasts followed by 1 short blast	I am about to overtake on your starboard (RIGHT) side
<i>The reply by the vessel being overtaken indicating readiness to be overtaken is 1 long blast, 1 short blast, 1 long blast and 1 short blast</i>	
2 long blasts followed by 2 short blasts	I am about to overtake on your port (LEFT) side
<i>The reply by the vessel being overtaken indicating readiness to be overtaken is 1 long blast, 1 short blast, 1 long blast and 1 short blast</i>	

SAFETY

Anyone navigating a vessel without due care and attention, or in such a manner as to cause damage to other vessels or property or cause injury to persons is guilty of an offence under the Port of London rules and conditions

These signals are made by power driven vessels to indicate their own intended actions to other vessels. However with the ever increasing use of VHF R/T by all classes of vessels, especially by commercial craft, there is less likelihood of sound signals being used. The PLA does not encourage this practice. While small craft should therefore be extra careful and aware of this malpractice, it is strongly urged that smaller craft use sound signals.

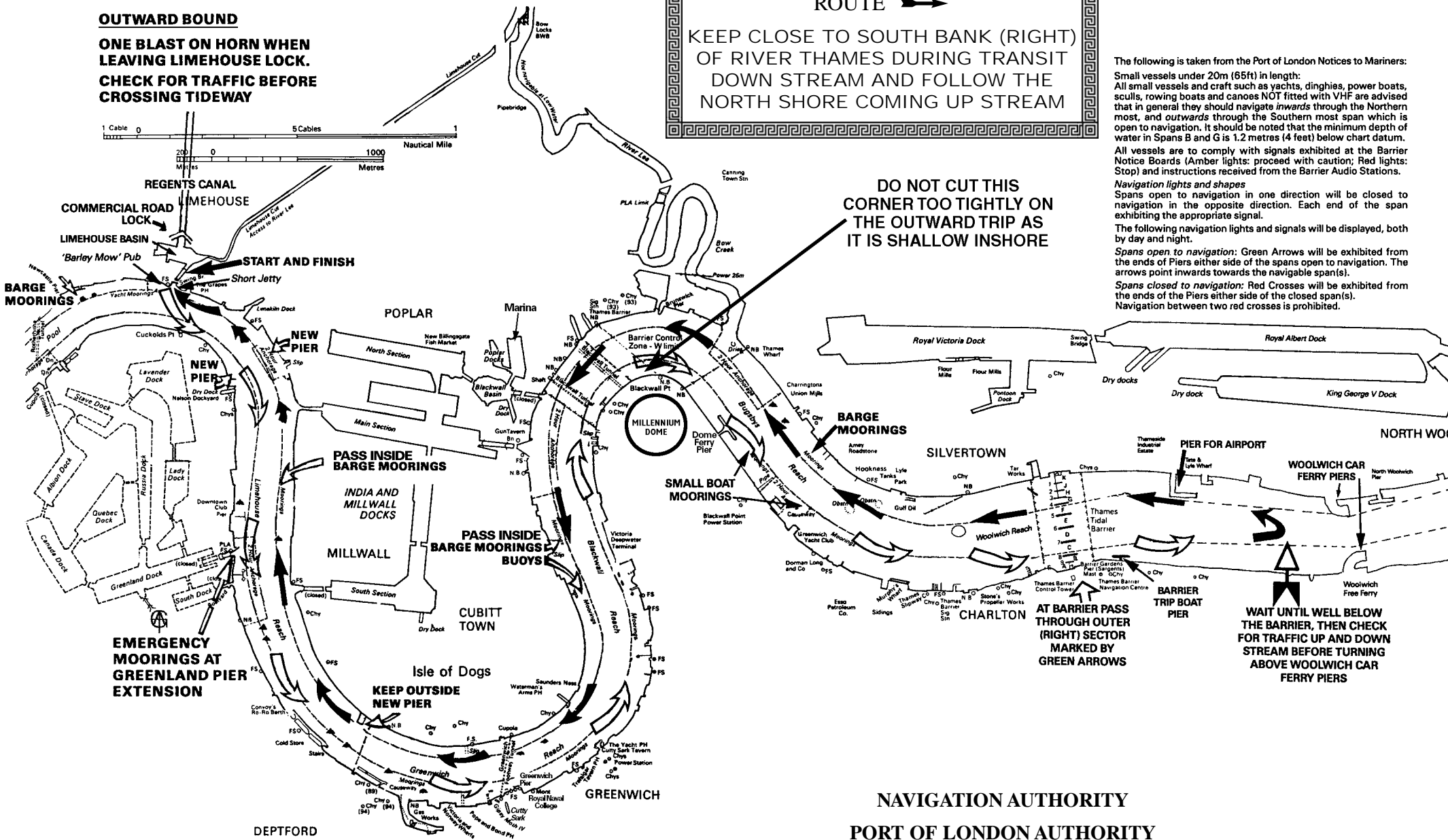
MILLENNIUM RIVER CRUISE

ROUTE

KEEP CLOSE TO SOUTH BANK (RIGHT) OF RIVER THAMES DURING TRANSIT DOWN STREAM AND FOLLOW THE NORTH SHORE COMING UP STREAM

OUTWARD BOUND

ONE BLAST ON HORN WHEN LEAVING LIMEHOUSE LOCK. CHECK FOR TRAFFIC BEFORE CROSSING TIDEWAY



DO NOT CUT THIS CORNER TOO TIGHTLY ON THE OUTWARD TRIP AS IT IS SHALLOW INSHORE

The following is taken from the Port of London Notices to Mariners:
 Small vessels under 20m (65ft) in length:
 All small vessels and craft such as yachts, dinghies, power boats, sculls, rowing boats and canoes NOT fitted with VHF are advised that in general they should navigate *inwards* through the Northern most, and *outwards* through the Southern most span which is open to navigation. It should be noted that the minimum depth of water in Spans B and G is 1.2 metres (4 feet) below chart datum.

All vessels are to comply with signals exhibited at the Barrier Notice Boards (Amber lights: proceed with caution; Red lights: Stop) and instructions received from the Barrier Audio Stations.

Navigation lights and shapes
 Spans open to navigation in one direction will be closed to navigation in the opposite direction. Each end of the span exhibiting the appropriate signal.

The following navigation lights and signals will be displayed, both by day and night.

Spans open to navigation: Green Arrows will be exhibited from the ends of Piers either side of the spans open to navigation. The arrows point inwards towards the navigable span(s).

Spans closed to navigation: Red Crosses will be exhibited from the ends of the Piers either side of the closed span(s). Navigation between two red crosses is prohibited.

AT BARRIER PASS THROUGH OUTER (RIGHT) SECTOR MARKED BY GREEN ARROWS

WAIT UNTIL WELL BELOW THE BARRIER, THEN CHECK FOR TRAFFIC UP AND DOWN STREAM BEFORE TURNING ABOVE WOOLWICH CAR FERRY PIERS

**NAVIGATION AUTHORITY
 PORT OF LONDON AUTHORITY**



SAFETY ON THE THAMES RULES AND REGULATIONS

The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea apply to all vessels on the River Thames. They are supplemented by River Byelaws, copies of which are available from the Port of London Authority. The main regulations affecting small craft are given below:

Navigation Rules

- 1 In the fairway, small craft shall not hamper the passage of vessels which can navigate only inside such fairway.
Note: 'Fairway' means the 600 foot wide channel from Erith to London Bridge, and the central navigation channel above London Bridge.
- 2 Small craft and vessels shall not enter into or cross the fairway so as to obstruct another vessel proceeding along the fairway.
- 3 High speed craft (vessels capable of speeds in excess of 15 knots) shall keep out of the way of all vessels and craft.
- 4 Vessels in doubt that sufficient action is being taken to avoid collision may indicate this doubt by sounding five or more short blasts.
- 5 All craft shall keep well clear of vessels and attendant tugs which are about to berth or moor.
- 6 A competent person must be in charge of a vessel at all times. No person under 16 years of age is to be in charge of a power boat capable of exceeding 8 knots or over 10hp.
- 7 A vessel approaching a bend or bridge when going against the tide should give way to vessels approaching with the tide. (Above Putney Bridge at low water rowing eights must use centre arches since water is otherwise too shallow.)
- 8 All vessels shall keep as near as is safe and practicable to the starboard (right) side of the river.
- 9 A speed limit of 8 knots is enforced above Wandsworth Bridge, in all Thameside Creeks, off Southend, and off Shellhaven and Coryton. Elsewhere there is no specific speed limit but it is an offence to cause excessive wash.
- 10 All craft of 45ft, or over, are required to carry VHF Marine Radios and maintain a listening watch.

Other rules and advice

- 1 The name of each vessel must be clearly displayed.
- 2 Each vessel shall be covered by third party insurance to cover the cost of accident, harbour clearance, towage, etc.
- 3 River users shall not be under the influence of drink or drugs.
- 4 The skipper of any vessel over 12 metres in length suffering damage must inform the PLA Harbour Master, and must not proceed above Lower Hope Point, or move the vessel if above Lower Hope Point, without the Harbour Master's permission.
- 5 It is an offence to throw rubbish of any kind overboard. A number of barges conspicuously marked 'driftwood' are moored along the Thames, and owners are requested to use these for all non-perishable rubbish. Other rubbish should be taken ashore for disposal.
- 6 Driftwood is a particular hazard. Large baulks of timber floating almost submerged, and plastic milk crates, ropes and sacks floating just below the surface can cause serious damage to hull or engine.
- 7 Mooring to lighters. Do not be tempted to moor to moored lighters, however briefly. Heavy wash from large passing vessels will cause severe pounding.

Bridges A triangle of **3 red discs** by day (**3 red lights** by night) hanging apex downwards from the arch of a bridge indicates that the arch is closed to navigation.

A bale of straw or white light hanging from the arch of a bridge indicates that the arch has restricted headroom. A high intensity isophase (flashing) light, displayed by day or night, indicates that one or more large vessels, or tugs engaged in towing, is about to navigate through the arch displaying the light. Small vessels must keep well clear.

continued overleaf

SOURCES OF HELP AND INFORMATION

The river authorities – Above Teddington Lock the authority is the Environment Agency. A licence is required and visitors may obtain such licences from the lock keeper at Teddington Lock (Tel: 020 8940 8723). The lock is manned 24 hours a day throughout the year and no prior arrangement is necessary.

The river authorities – Below Teddington Lock . The tidal river authority is the Port of London Authority (PLA). PLA launches patrol the river 7 days a week

Chief Harbour Master	London River House Royal Pier Road, Gravesend, Kent DA12 0EL Tel: 01474 562200	Tide Tables, Byelaws and other published information
PR Section	020 7481 8484	General Enquiries
Public Piers	020 7930 2641	Mooring and landing
Harbour Master Upper (above Dagenham)	020 7265 2604	Navigation and safety
Harbour Master Lower (below Dagenham)	01474 562200	Navigation and safety
Duty Officer (Woolwich)	020 8312 7670	Navigation and safety
Port Controller (Gravesend)	01474 560311	Navigation and safety
Richmond Lock	020 8940 0634	Navigation and safety
Patrol Launches	VHF 12, 14, 16, 6 Call sign 'Thames Patrol'	Emergency or urgent assistance

Canals – The authority for the inland waterways leading off the Thames is British Waterways. A licence is required, which should be obtained in advance. Access is only possible at certain states of the tide.

British Waterways	1 Sheldon Square	Licences and general information
London Region	London W2 6TT Tel: 020 7985 7200	
Bow Tidal Lock	020 7517 5570	Only available at 24 hours notice
Limehouse Lock	020 7308 9930	Opening times subject to tides
Brentford Creek Tidal Lock	020 8568 2779	Opening times subject to tides
Brentford Gauging Lock		User operated with Watermate Key

Police – The Metropolitan Police, Marine Support Unit, patrol the river in fast launches. They will assist small craft in difficulties.

Wapping	020 7488 5291	Blackfriars Bridge to Dartford Creek
Emergency	999	Ask for Thames Police
Police patrols	VHF 14	Call sign 'Marine Police'

London Coastguard keeps 24 hr safety watch over the Thames from Gravesend to Teddington. The control centre is at Woolwich phone: 020 8855 0315 and ask for London Coastguard

Communications – Information or assistance may be obtained from the following sources by calling on their working channel.

Sea Reach No.4 to Crayfordness	Call sign 'Port Control London'	VHF 13
Above Crayfordness	Call sign 'London VTS'	VHF 14
River Medway and approaches	Call sign 'Medway VTS'	VHF 74
Limehouse Lockmaster		VHF 80

Thames Lock, Brentford

Lock will be manned either side of high water during the following core-hour periods:

0800-1800 <i>Summer</i>	1st April—31st October
0800-1600 <i>Winter</i>	1st November—31st March

Note: Summer will include early Easter and late autumn half term holidays.

Passage outside of normal opening times is available on a pre-booked basis (*see note alongside*) during the period 0500-2200 hours.

Gauging Locks, Brentford

Locks will be available for user operation during the following hours:

0730-1830 <i>Summer</i>	0730-1700 <i>Winter</i>
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Note: A BW Watermate Key is required for user control panels.

Limehouse Lock

Lock will be manned during normal core hours as follows:

0800-1800 <i>Summer</i>	0800-1630 <i>Winter</i>
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Pre-booked passage outside of core hours will be available within the period 0500-2200 hours (*see alongside*).

Bow Locks, Lee Navigation

Lock will not normally be manned. Passage via pre-booking is available, subject to tide during the following hours:

0500-2200 *Summer and Winter*

Note: Passage outside normal hours— Thames, Limehouse and Bow Locks

Boaters requiring passage outside of stated core hours will need to pre-book giving British Waterways as much notice as is reasonably possible, but as a minimum no later than noon of the previous day. No charge is made for this service. Outside of normal hours please use answerphone facility on the appropriate number, stating clearly:

- Name and phone number (for confirmation)
- Date and time required
- Details of passage (ie, out onto Thames or in off Thames)

Telephone number s	Thames (Gauging)	020 8568 2779
	Limehouse Lock	020 7308 9930
	Bow Locks	020 7517 5570

If for any reason the answerphone facility is not available please leave message on London Waterway Office number 020 7985 7200.

In an emergency please contact our Emergency Answering Service by dialling 'Freephone Canals' and asking for the London Duty Officer to be paged.

Note: If telephoning from a mobile phone please dial: 01384 240 948.

Limehouse Lockmaster: VHF Channel 80

Hanwell Flight of Locks

Locks 90 and 97 will be secured via BW Watermate Key outside of normal working hours (0800-1700 *Summer* and 0800-1600 *Winter*). Boaters requiring passage outside of these hours are requested to carefully re-lock paddle devices after use.

Passage through the flight is not permitted during hours of darkness, nor beyond 2130 during Summer months.



SPCC NOTES ON VISITING THE RIVER THAMES

HORN SIGNALS

The term Short Blast means a blast of about 1 second duration

The term Long Blast means a blast of about 4–5 seconds duration



SIGNAL	MEANING
1 short blast	I am altering my course to starboard (RIGHT)
2 short blasts	I am altering my course to port (LEFT)
3 short blasts	My engines are going astern
5 or more short blasts	You are not taking sufficient action to avoid me; or I do not understand your intentions or actions
4 short blasts followed by 1 short blast	I am turning round with my head (BOW) swinging to starboard (RIGHT)
4 short blasts followed by 2 short blasts	I am turning round with my head (BOW) swinging to port (LEFT)
1 prolonged blast	I am about to get underway, i.e. depart from moorings, jetty or dock entrance
2 long blasts followed by 1 short blast	I am about to overtake on your starboard (RIGHT) side
<i>The reply by the vessel being overtaken indicating readiness to be overtaken is 1 long blast, 1 short blast, 1 long blast and 1 short blast</i>	
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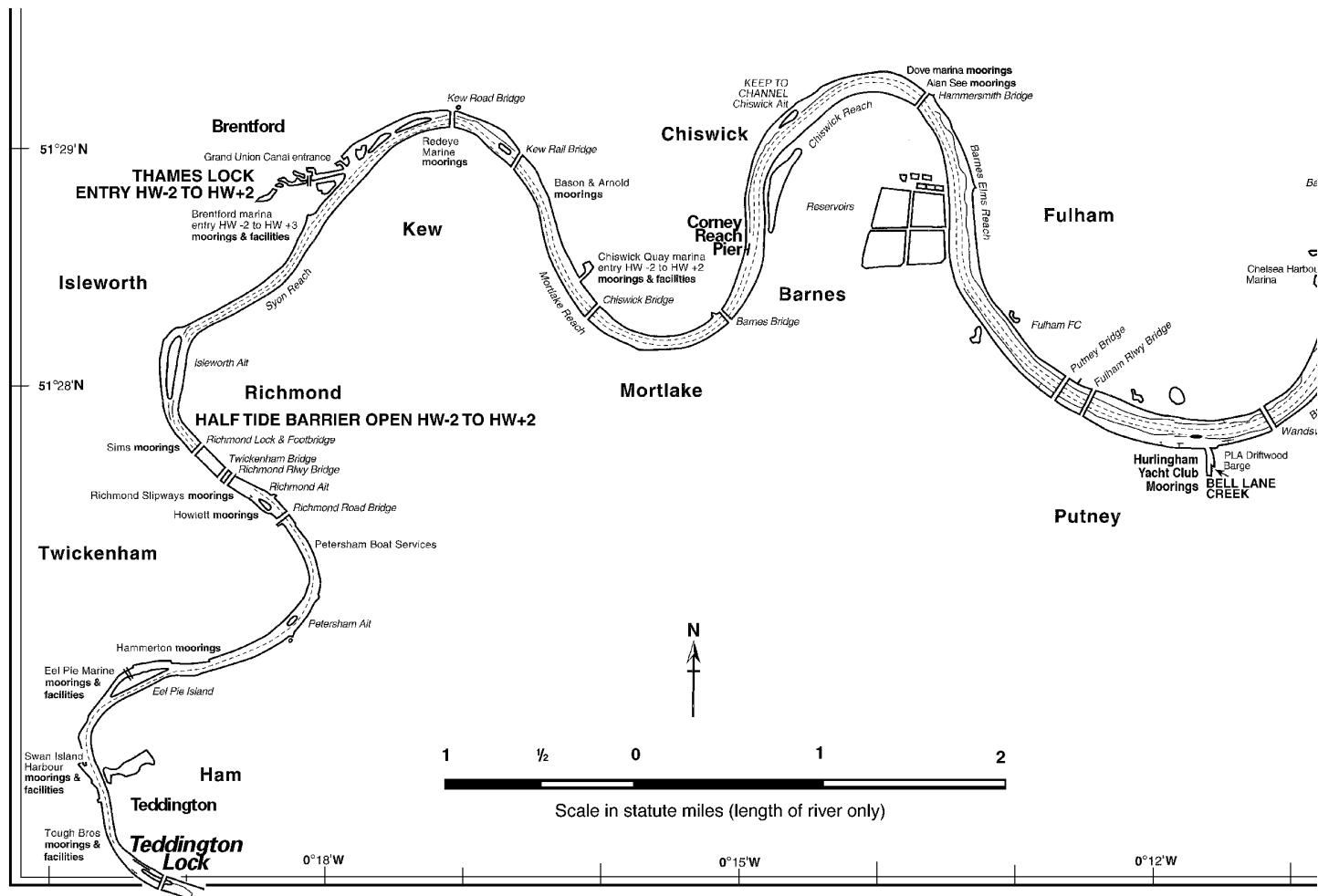
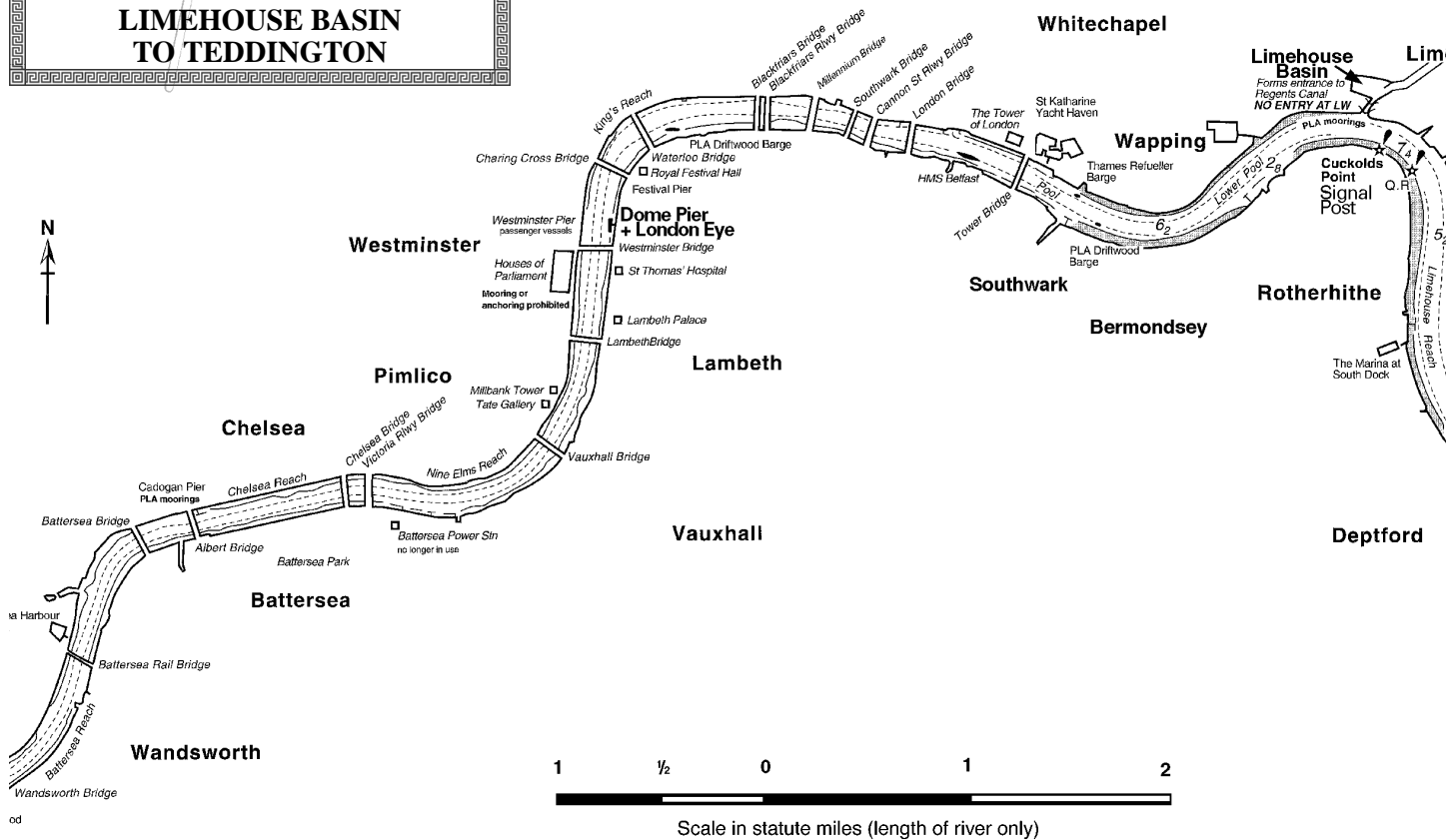
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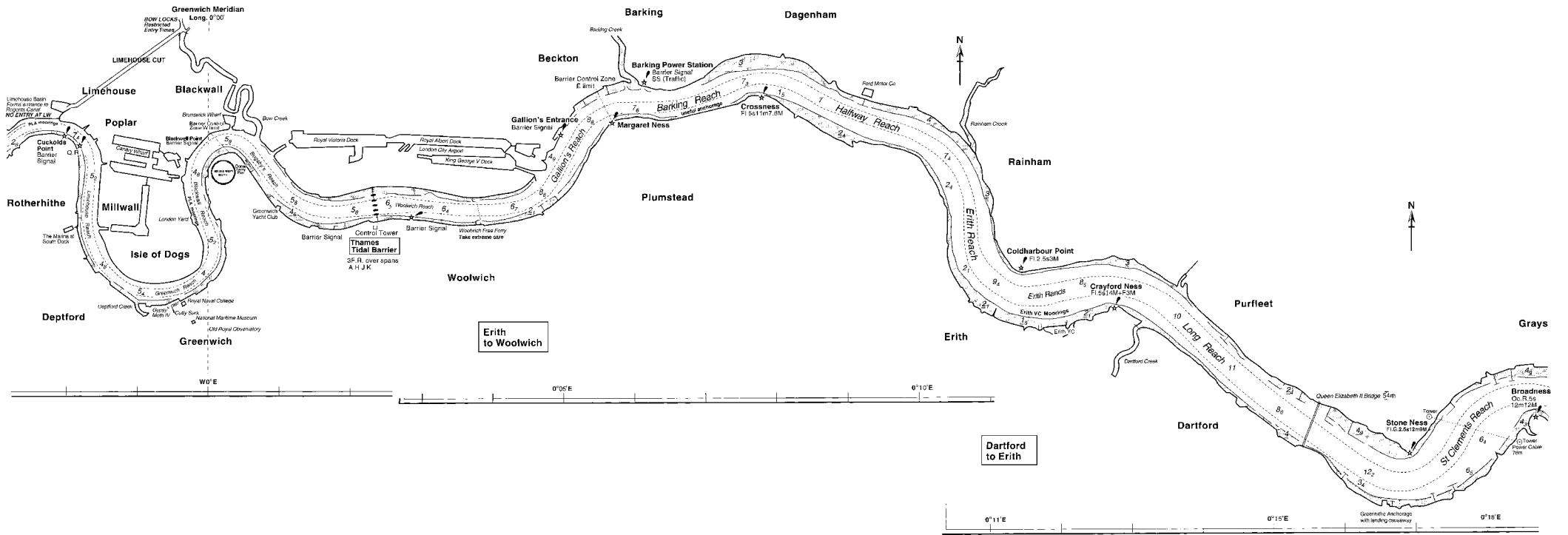
THAMES ROUTE MAPS

— SHEET ELEVEN —

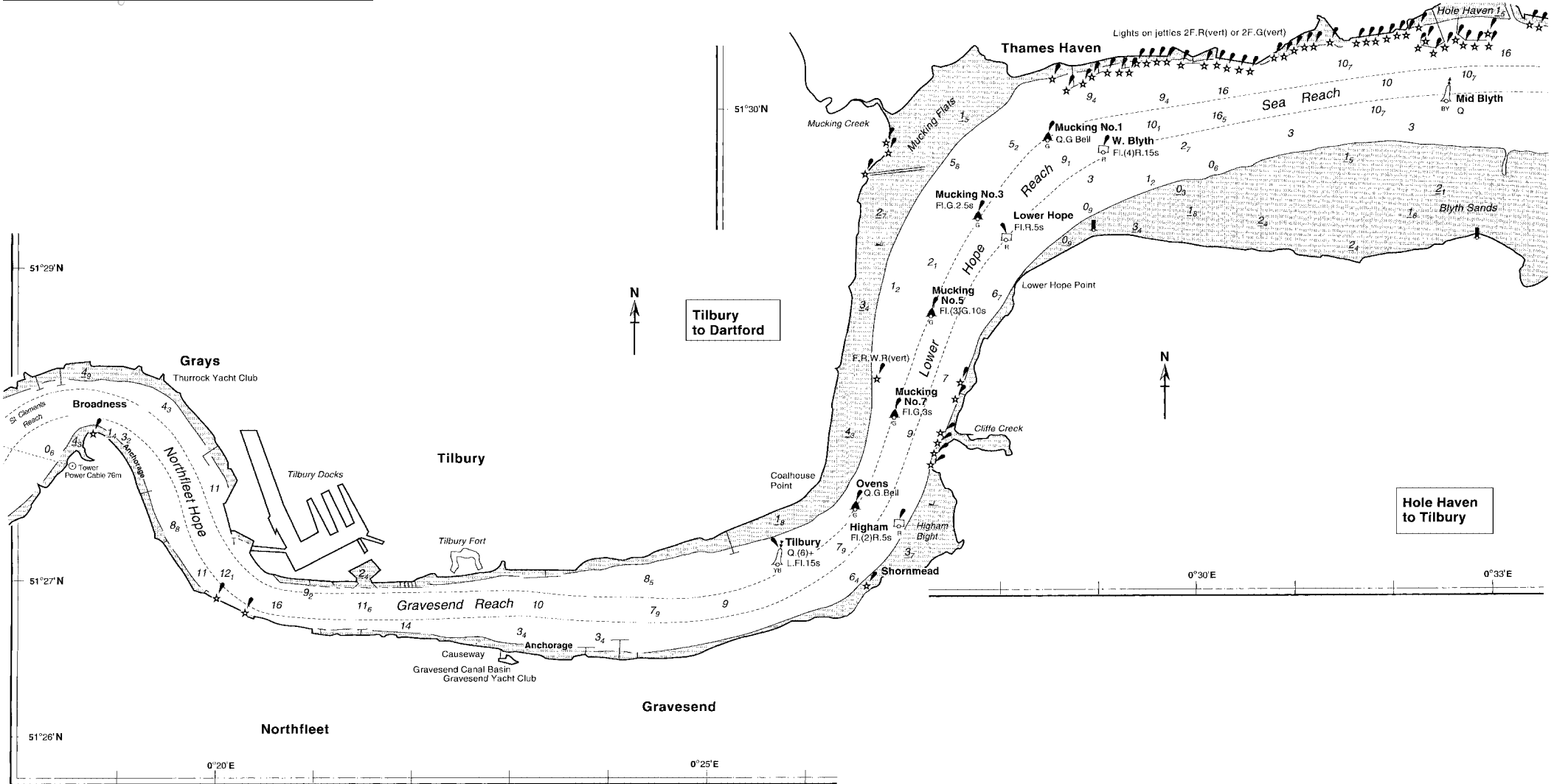
LIMEHOUSE BASIN TO TEDDINGTON



THAMES ROUTE MAPS
 — SHEET ELEVEN —
DARTFORD
TO LIMEHOUSE



THAMES ROUTE MAPS
 — SHEET ELEVEN —
CANVEY ISLAND
TO DARTFORD



THAMES ROUTE MAPS
 — SHEET ELEVEN —
 RIVER MEDWAY
 TO CANVEY ISLAND

