

Mersey Pilotage: Liverpool Marina to Fidlers Ferry

Best map: Large scale charts of the upper Mersey are no longer maintained best to use an annotated copy of OS Explorer 275 1:25000

Info at: www.ferryboatyard.com

Distance 29 Km 16 Nautical miles Allow three hours

Suitable tides

For 1.8m draft boat 9.8 M

For 1m draft boat 8.6 M

Background

The journey to Fidler's Ferry is now only possible for keelboats on large tides although it is frequently used by ribs and other shallow draft craft as well as by the Falcons of FFSC..For the keelboat it is a journey requiring careful tidal calculation and navigation and a careful reconnoitre of the channel. This is best carried out by observing the channel at low water when the route of the deepest water can be seen. The use of the waypoints plotted by Mike Hughes from Fidlers Ferry are also a useful aid to navigation. As the channel changes frequently these waypoints **always** need checking by observation and by seeking advice from local boat owners

However it is a fascinating journey taking you into the heart of the Cheshire countryside to Fidlers where you will be surprised to find a wide range of sail and power craft from 50 foot tugs to 40 foot schooners being prepared by their owners for a worldwide adventure, or perhaps for a journey in the Irish Sea . It also takes you to glimpse a piece of maritime heritage



The boat yard and canal moorings at Fidlers. Ready to lift Black Magic onto the water!



Preparing to lock out onto the Mersey with the South bank and Cheshire countryside visible behind

This section of the River Mersey has been a recognised navigation to and from Manchester. from the 15 century . In 1720 the Mersey and Irwell Navigation Company undertook the building of weirs, by-passed by canal locks allowing navigation to Manchester up the River from Liverpool to the wharfs of Manchester . These shallow waters were navigated by the shallow drafted Mersey Flats, who carried cargo up to Manchester returning to offload their return cargo onto seagoing vessels at Liverpool, even then in times of drought or when an Easterly wind held back the tide the river became un-navigable forcing the Mersey Flats to settle on to the bottom to wait for a fair tide. If you decide to follow the river to Fidlers a few signs of this former activity are now visible including the ruined lattice perch on the Oglets shore , the lighthouse at Hale Head and at Runcorn the

navigation monument and the sea lock at Spike Island which , together with the lock at Fidlers gave vessels access to the St Helens canal system

To find your way to this countryside and historical gem you should leave marina as soon as lock opens and follow the buoyed channel to Garston

Leaving the Garston Channel take a heading just outside (West) the airport light gantry this should clear you from the wreck just south of Garston, then head south for the end of gantry through the moorings of LSC. Once past LSC building head outside gantry clearing it by 100 metres .. Passing the gantry head inshore (about 200 M offshore)sighting withies on shore stay parallel to shore until passing ruined lattice perch, once a navigation marker for craft going up the Mersey. By now the tide will be running and carrying you swiftly towards Runcorn

Now go right inshore on the Oglets shore(about 100 to 150 Metres offshore) and follow close inshore to Hale Lighthouse. Here the water shallows and you head out from the light before heading for the outflow of a stream on the shore once at the stream you can follow the coast to just off Pickering Pastures Country park and the only deep water on the route Now approach the North side of the Bridge crossing to the south side of the river and going through the south arch , once through the bridge head toward Widnes Church before crossing to mouth of Spike Island canal lock and continue close inshore to the blue bird hides and tree sculpture on the north bank, you then cross to Hempstones point and follow the south coast to a prominent electrical pylon the shore. The channel from the bridge to Hempstones point was reported to be moving south in 2012. Now continue to follow the south shore until the Sailing Club at FF becomes visible and you can follow the club's racing marks in mid river. The lock to transit from river to canal is immediately beside the Sailing club.





Fidler Ferry Waypoints

These waypoints are based on a list of waypoints prepared by Mile Hughes the FF boatyard manager for his boat Lansanta on 28.03.10, with minor modifications by Dave Hardy . The channel changes frequently and should **always** be checked by observation of the channel and seeking local advice. In 2012 the area around waypoints no. 24–29 was undergoing particular change with deep water moving to South shore . Mike Hughes can be contacted at FF Yacht Haven Tel 01925 727519, Mob 07876767484. Email : harbourmaster@ferryboatyard.com

1	53.20.865N	02.54.905W	Garston Channel
2	53.20.322N	02.53.965W	LSC
3	53.19.831N	02.52.877	Light Gantry
4	53.19.570N	02.51.236W	Leaning perch
5	53.19.487N	02.50.177W	Lattice Perch
6	53.19.800N	02.49.742W	Oglet shore
7	53.19.993N	02.49.433W	
9	53.19.762N	02.48.760W	
10	53.19.537N	02.48.192W	
11	53.19.219N	02.47.666W	Hale Head Light
12	53.19.361N	02.46.971W	
13	53.19.624N	02.46.550W	
14	53.19.929N	02.46.586W	Decoy Outlet
15	53.20.384N	02.46.340W	
16	53.20.714N	02.46.109W	Pickering Pastures
17	53.20.940N	02.45.803W	
18	53.20.998N	02.44.676W	
19	53.20.823N	02.44.3621W	
20	53.20.781N	02.44.342W	
21	53.20.747N	02.44.216W	Turn to S'Bd
22	53.20.778N	02.43.4691W	South Bridge arch
23	53.20.895N	02.43.8601W	Widnes Church
24	53.20.994N	02.43.7841W	Spike Island
25	53.21.086N	02.43.5851W	

26 53.21.209N 02.43.298W
27 53.21.386N 02.42.831W
28 53.21.611N 02.42.3821W Channel changing 2012
29 53.21.669N 02.42.193W Tree Sculpture
30 53.21.574N 02.41.753W Hempstone Pt.
31 53.21.467N 02.41.472W
32 53.21.324N 02.40.915W
33 53.21.319N 02.40.401W Under Pylon
34 53.21.387N 02.40.208W
35 Follow South bank then FFSC markers mid stream