

MERSEY PILOTAGE FOR YACHTS TO BRUNSWICK LOCK (LIVERPOOL MARINA)

Whilst The River Mersey with its Strong tides and plentiful Commercial traffic may sound daunting for the visiting yacht, following a few simple guidelines and some common sense mean that the Mersey is a wonderful place to sail and Liverpool an enjoyable port to visit. Whilst the rules of the road must be followed, with a few simple pointers and some common sense you should enjoy the trip! Obviously these “tips” are to be used in conjunction with Almanac’s, Charts and Pilotage documents that are all readily available.

This document is for vessels exiting the River at Liverpool Marina (Brunswick Lock Entrance) which is one mile to the South of the infamous Liver Buildings and Albert Dock.

ENTRANCE TO THE RIVER - Inbound

Depending upon your direction there are three safe entrance points to the Mersey:

BAR LIGHT SHIP– The beginning of the buoyed channel. This is the easiest to navigate although there is significant commercial traffic using the channel – No problem as long as you communicate with **Mersey VTS** on VHF CH 12, stick to the rules of the road and maintain excellent surveillance. Those arriving from the West need to be vigilant of the Traffic Separation Zone. It is advised to reach the BAR light some 3 – 4 hours before high water on a yacht so that the incoming tide can flush you up the channel, Obey all of the marks as there is a steep wall just outside the greens and acres of sandbanks outside of the reds! If you are forced the wrong side of a buoy to avoid commercial traffic – as a rule of thumb if you stick close to the marker you should be ok. After Brazil Buoy locals stick to the Wirral (West) side and cross the river at convenient opportunity or as requested by Mersey VTS. N.B. At Night watch out for the moorings at New Brighton/Wallasey after Brazil Buoy as they are un lit – Stay closer to the middle of the River.

Q2 – A Convenient place to enter for those heading from the North and Isle Of Man – Leave the buoy to Port on entering the channel and inform Mersey VTS

Rock Channel – This ancient route “Cuts the Corner” for those heading from the Dee and North Wales. HE 1 to Starboard, Newcome Knoll To Starboard and then the Offshore Waypoint. Again the timing of this is best a few hours before HW. This can be the simplest of routes as long as the timing and positioning is correct.

Compiled by Andy Farrell – FRPO – Please use published Navigational Info

MERSEY MUSTS!

1. Tide – USE THE TIDE!. The River can run at up to 5 Knots and Yachts can regularly hit SOG of double figures. Good when its with you – Not so good when its against!
2. Lock Times – Brunswick Lock as a rule of Thumb operates +/- 2 hrs either side of high water. The depth over the Sill is 2.2 metres to enable the gates to open. “Liverpool Marina” is the call sign and the lock keeper operates CH 37 (M1). Please be aware that the buildings shelter the lock from VHF until around the Liver Buildings. Best to Call up a minimum 10 mins before you want to enter. The tide runs strongly across the entrance so you need to use power and de-accelerate in the jaw of the lock before the gates – There is a fair bit of room to slow up! There is also ample depth **IF** the lock gates can open – 2 Hrs either side of HW There is deep water up to the walls on both sides – There is deepwater between the Cardinal of Pluckington Bank and the lock so long as you are 2.5 hrs either side of HW .
3. MERSEY VTS – The Port of Liverpool is one of the busiest Ports in the UK. The Mersey VTS communicates on Channel 12. When entering the Channel from please contact them on 12 – Their Call sign is Mersey VTS. They may not answer back quickly – Be patient and listen to how busy they are. It is vital that you monitor channel 12 all the way – You will hear them relay your position to the big ships! Also don’t forget to tell them when you are exiting the River – Either into Marina or Outbound and leaving the channel.
4. Marina – Once in the Marina it is very sheltered and has hundreds of berths in two adjacent docks.
5. ENJOY IT – It’s a fantastic experience to sail into the City of Liverpool. Especially at Night. Its is one of the few UK cities to be built facing the water – Relax and take it in!

Useful Links

<http://www.visitmyharbour.com/harbours/wales-nw-england/liverpool-marina/>

http://www.lyc.org.uk/?page_id=41

http://www.lyc.org.uk/news/N_TO_M_13_09_consult.pdf

<http://www.liverpoolmarina.com/>

Contacts

Liverpool Marina – 0151 707 6777

Bluepoint Marine Services – 0151 734 3080

Andy Farrell – 07815 739 668

Tim Hare – 07773 346248