

# Inland Waterways News

## Estuary guidelines

*John Dimond*

The tidal waters of the three sister rivers flow through the varied and beautiful countryside, giving 70 miles of waterway to explore. The trip from the Barrow sea-lock at St Mullins, as from Inistiogue on the Nore or from Carrick on Suir, must be made within one hour of the top of the tide as the water levels drop rapidly.

### St Mullins to New Ross

Travelling downriver, stay in the middle and wide on the bends until you come to Ferrymountgarrett Bridge (6.5 miles), when you should stay to your left to pass under the arch with the high superstructure. Check that you have headroom: there is less than 6' at high water springs.

One mile below the bridge a green buoy marks a submerged wreck out from the left bank; keep to your right. One and a half miles below the bridge is the confluence of the Barrow and the Nore: the Nore joins from the right as the Barrow swings left. At the unused railway bridge (which once joined the Waterford/New Ross line to the Wexford/Dublin line) you can pass under any of the wide spans. On a falling tide, approach the Boat Club pontoons facing the tide: it is the only facility available, as the inviting quay walls on the town side soon become 12' high and dry out as the tide drops.

### New Ross to Inistiogue

This 9.5-mile trip is one of the most beautiful on the Irish waterways. Start from New Ross about three hours before the top of the tide. Up through the railway bridge, about two miles from the town, the Nore runs to the left. It is straightforward for another six miles until you come to the Red House on your left just below the islands. This is the end of the navigation except for one hour either side of high water. Keep right of the islands and you pass up to the quay and slipway of the village. You can come alongside but be prepared to go aground. Should you wish to stay afloat you can anchor in the deep hole just opposite, but be sure of a sound grip as the flow can be strong: a line to the bank can help.



New Ross Boat Club welcomes visitors

### Downstream of New Ross

You now enter the commercial waters of the estuary. Information about shipping, tide tables and conditions is available from the harbour office.

The shipping channel from New Ross to the Barrow Bridge (11 miles) is marked with red buoys to your right and green to your left travelling downriver. Stay with the buoyed channel, which swings over and back across the river, avoiding extensive mud banks that appear on low tide. Yellow crosses to the banks warn of groynes that may be covered by the tide.

You are now in the wider river, which may become choppy as the tidal waters are exposed to the wind. The Barrow Bridge crosses just as the Suir joins the Barrow at Cheekpoint. The navigation arch is marked.

A further three miles down the estuary, Ballyhack on the east shore and Passage East on the west are joined by a car ferry; Duncannon is another mile and a half. All three places dry out, so it may be best to ask permission to moor outside a fishing vessel. Less than ten miles will bring you to the mouth of the estuary to Hook Head and Dunmore East. This journey depends on conditions, craft and experience as there is a strong tidal race. Beyond Duncannon is open to the Atlantic and exposed in windy conditions.

### **Cheekpoint to Waterford**

Cheekpoint quay is all silted up, so you can't have a pint or a meal at the local restaurant while waiting for the tide to change before going up to Waterford (5.5 miles). The channel is buoyed and straightforward, passing Bellview Port (now the commercial hub of the south east), up to Little Island, which you can pass on either side. The main shipping channel is to the right and, as you enter the city, the two marinas are on your left.

### **Waterford to Carrick on Suir**

Ships travel up to Morris Oil in Fiddown (15 miles) so the channel is buoyed that far. Pass under the lifting span of Waterford City bridge and through the open span of the old railway bridge and on to Granagh Castle (5 miles). Above Granagh, the straight known as the long reach can get choppy if wind is against tide. At Fiddown, pass under the centre span but watch your headroom.

The last three miles are not buoyed. Staying in the middle of the river you will pass Tabrochney Castle on your right and on to Roches Quay on your left. Above this the channel is on the left of a chain of islands. As Carrick castle appears, the river in front of it is full of rocks and the entrance to the town is by a narrow cut on the left, which has a stone-faced quay. As you exit the cut stay left for a short distance to stay clear of rocks, before travelling up the centre of the river to berth at the Carrick Boat Club pontoons. Remember to enter Carrick on Suir within one hour of the top of the tide.