

SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

Passing a barge

If a skipper says, "Show me (or give me) a RED", he wants to pass on your port side, conversely GREEN for starboard.

Don't try to overtake a barge without the approval of its skipper. Negotiating the wash of a big vessel can be tricky and he can't always slow down to suit you..

Landing

If you can see a barge about to emerge from a lock, or the lock is emptying and a red light shows, hang back so both you and the barge have steerage-way when you pass. If you must land a crew, tie up securely as far from the lock as you can so the barge has room to counter the effects of cross-winds, currents etc. before passing you.

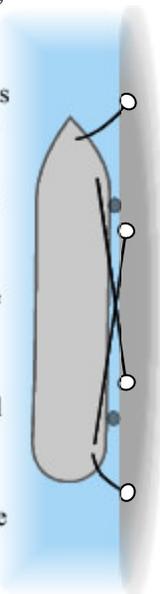
Never try to hold your boat or moor it on a handling line when a barge passes. You may be safer staying at the helm and letting your boat ride the wash.

Mooring

If not properly tied up, boats can be dragged off moorings, or heeled over, by the wash of barges. Ensure you have ropes to resist fore and aft movement (springs) and keep all lines as near level as you can and securely tied to rings or bollards, **never use pins**. A centre rope from a roof cleat to an adjacent bollard can convert even a mild lengthwise movement into a severe tipping force and can be worse than useless.

Place fenders so they will not get caught under anything when the level rises after a barge has passed.

A fully laden barge under way can even disturb boats moored off the line in basins or side arms.



STRONG STREAM INDICATION

On this waterway look for the level gauges set into the walls on the river entrances to locks, and nearby notices explaining what action to take. If only red is exposed on the gauge it is deemed unsafe for pleasure craft to proceed.

OTHER RIVER MATTERS

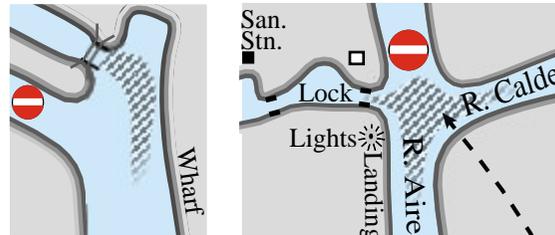
Ensure you have to hand normal river safety gear, anchor, life-buoy, life-jackets etc.

It is important to look out for signs, particularly going downstream, so you don't miss flood locks. Only in Leeds is a river weir visible from the navigable channel on this waterway.

Below are the layouts of the flood locks as seen looking downstream.

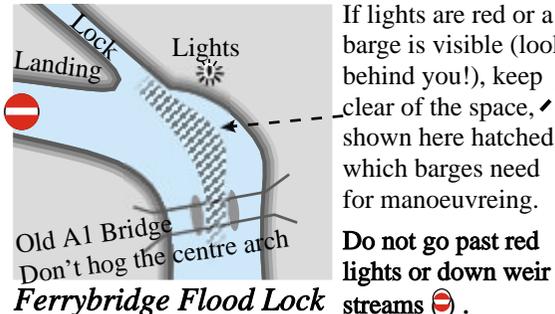
The WAVE

Not an undulation on water, rather the universal navigational signal of friendship. Use it generously, especially when passing barges!



Knostrop Flood Gates

Castleford Flood Lock



If lights are red or a barge is visible (look behind you!), keep clear of the space, shown here hatched, which barges need for manoeuvring.

Do not go past red lights or down weir streams ⚠️.



A SKIPPER'S GUIDE to the AIRE and CALDER NAVIGATION

Compiled by the National Association of Boat Owners in conjunction with British Waterways and the barge operators.

This guide gives advice to those unaccustomed to this navigation, with particular regard to its role as a COMMERCIAL WATERWAY and the extra care needed due to its RIVER REACHES



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COMMERCIAL CARRYING

This navigation is used by barges up to 200 ft long, 20 ft wide, carrying up to 600 tonnes – i.e. **BIG**.

Skippers of these vessels have a living to earn, but welcome pleasure craft on this waterway. Many boat for pleasure too. Remember they have to treat you as you would treat a fragile dinghy, so assume they can't see you or avoid you, and give them the deep water, plenty of room to swing, and priority at all locks and bridge-holes. Empty barges can be severely affected by cross-winds.

SAND - Motor barges come in at Goole **9**. Some off-load there. Most run up to near Whitwood **3** but don't rule out one going to Leeds **1**

PETROL and OIL - 200 ft Tankers come in at Goole and discharge at wharves at Castleford **5** or Fleet **2**

STEEL etc - Occasionally down the SSYN & New Junction **8** to Goole or beyond.

BE FOREWARNED

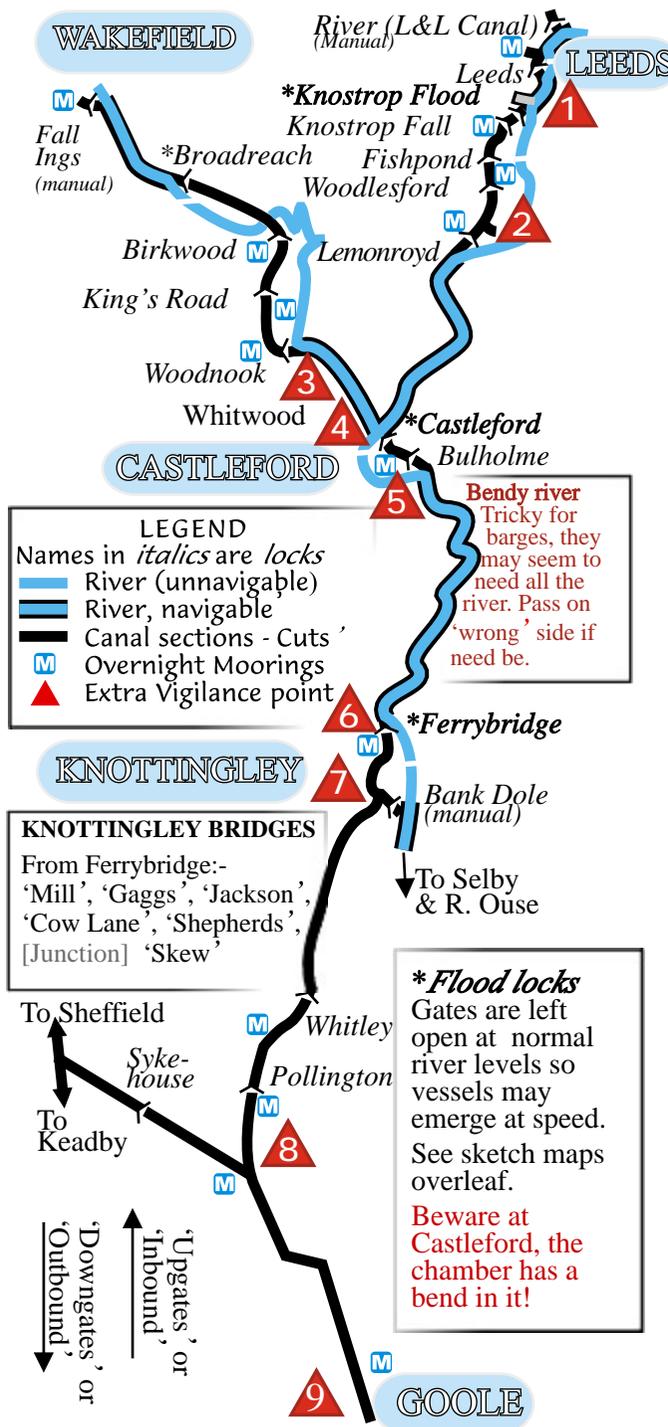
Locks and Lights

The locks at *Castleford*, *Bulholme* and *Ferrybridge* are often manned. Phone Ferrybridge (Tel - 01977 673124) for latest on barge movements. On other stretches, barges are penned through by mobile lock-keepers. If you see their vans or any lock traffic lights not on amber (for self-operation), a barge may be near.

Marine Band Radio – Channel 74

Messages from commercial vessels to each other or lock-keepers are a good clue to their location. Listen for lock names. If followed by '-mobile', the keeper may be at a lock nearby, or travelling in his van, rather than at his designated lock.

Some barges give helpful position reports when approaching hazardous locations. You can benefit from these if you know their call signs and the names of bridges etc. along the route.



Commercial Vessel Call Signs

Petroleum Tankers:

(Rix) Owl, Eagle, Falcon & Osprey
(Humber) Energy, Pride, Princess & Jubilee

Sand Barges:

(Humber) Enterprise, Renown & Trader
Freda Carless Eskdale Cordale
Battlestone Easedale Fusedale
Gladys Lillian Joyce Hawksley Risby
Selby Linda Selby Ellen

Note – barges often omit the 'Rix' or 'Humber' from their name on the radio.

Tell Others

Don't be afraid to announce your position on the radio, and share what you glean about barge movements with boats without radio.

Extra Vigilance points

Keep a special look-out for barges at these locations marked on the map:-

- 1** Stourton wharves (See Knothrop map overleaf)
- 2** Fleet Oil Depot
- 3** Whitwood Aggregate Staithe and blind bridge (Stephenson's) Barges need middle arch
- 4** Castleford Junction (See map overleaf)
- 5** Castleford Cut - Total Butler oil wharf
- 6** Ferrybridge Flood Lock (Map overleaf)
- 7** Blind bends in Knottingley
- 8** 'Went End' - junction with New Junction Canal
- 9** Goole - sand wharf and general barge mayhem!

Surges

When lock-keepers pen barges through quickly, tell-tale surges are produced. Barges also send fast moving low waves both ways when they pass through bridges. Both can make moored craft restless 10 minutes or more away, but are more difficult to detect from a moving boat. If you know the feel of your vessel these surges can give you warning that a barge is about.