

## Submitted by a Watchkeeper at NCI Gosport

### Correct use of the small boat channel.

### Also Crossing from Ballast Pile to Camber/Gunwharf Quay.

I often watch the traffic in the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour and there are regular issues with those transiting the area. These issues are to do with both being unaware /caught out of the tidal flow and not following the correct route.

Traffic exiting the harbour during the flood are often caught out by the strong east going tide flooding in from the inner swashway. This can be running at 3kn and will push the unwary towards the Round Tower as they meet the incoming flood, even those that have travelled south using the back eddy between BC4 and BC2 will be pushed east. It is not uncommon for yachts to be 1/3 of the way across the main channel before they realise and correct their course. With so much to consider it is not always easy to anticipate the cross tide.

Vessels being pushed across the channel in turn tends to force incoming traffic into the middle of the main channel, unable to stay in the small boat channel and pass outgoing traffic Port to Port.

Since the dredging of the main channel for the QE class carriers, No 4 bar buoy has been positioned to the west of No 2 Bar buoy. Traffic exiting the harbour using the small boat channel should leave No 4 bar buoy to port. If a small boat that is heading out is intending to following the main channel it is very tempting to head straight for No 2 Bar buoy, or even Spit Refuge as soon as they have passed BC outer. This also causes inbound traffic to move into the main channel. Enter and leave the small boat channel to the South of No 4 Bar Buoy.

On busy days with lots of recreational traffic as well as commercial traffic in the main channel, better discipline by those using the small boat channel would make entering and leaving Portsmouth Harbour less stressful for everyone. It would also assist KHM who is responsible for the safety of all users and is controlling all commercial craft.

Entering and leaving the small boat channel to and from the east only at the South and North ends.

All vessels fitted with engines should proceed under power, and adjust their speed to avoid overtaking or unnecessarily slowing other vessels. No Loitering and no speeding.

Leaving No 4 Bar Buoy to port both leaving and entering.

Be aware of the tidal push to the east from the inner Swashway during the flood tide.

Finally crossing the harbour to and from Gunwharf and Camber should be undertaken **with the permission of KHM** to pass north of Ballast pile. This gives a route clear of any commercial traffic manoeuvring in and out of the Camber ferry port.

I would also recommend all pleasure craft have printed almanac and read the entry instructions for each port. I have been surprised by how many recreational boaters do not understand differences at each port and think they know local requirements. Some times only good fortune saving them from a major incident.

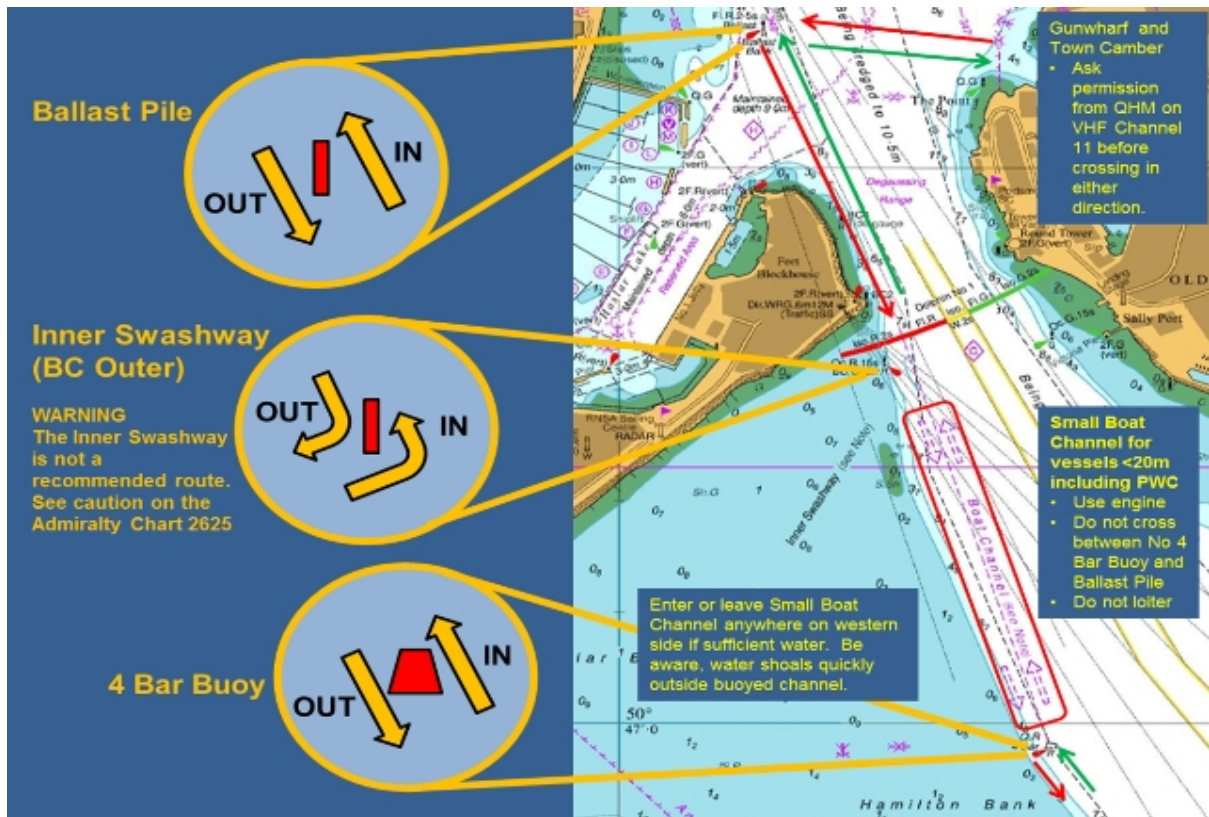
## **KHM:- Extracts from LNTM**

### **PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR ENTRANCE - APPROACH CHANNEL, SMALL BOAT CHANNEL**

To assist the safe passage of small craft to and from Portsmouth Harbour a Small Boat Channel for vessels less than 20 metres in length including Personal Watercraft (PWC) (hereafter referred to as small boats) has been created on the western side of the harbour entrance. The 50-metre-wide Small Boat Channel is shown on Admiralty charts. Its northern and southern extremities are at Ballast Pile (50 47.62N 001 06.83W) and No 4 Bar Buoy (50 46.97N 001 06.48W) respectively. Small boat skippers are reminded that they can be difficult to see and the harbour entrance is a blind bend to larger vessels and traffic leaving the camber.

The following rules apply:

- a. Small boats must enter and leave the harbour through the Small Boat Channel.
- b. All craft fitted with engines, when navigating in the approach channel to Portsmouth Harbour, are to proceed under power between No 4 Bar Buoy and the Ballast Pile.
- c. Vessels greater than 20 metres in length may only use the Small Boat Channel with the express permission of KHM on VHF Channel 11. Permission will only be granted if traffic levels are sufficiently low to allow safe passage for all vessels using the Small Boat Channel.
- d. The Small Boat Channel may only be entered or exited by vessels approaching from the east at its northern or southern ends.
- e. A traffic pattern is established around Ballast Pile; small boats entering the harbour are to pass close to the east of Ballast Pile and those exiting close to the west.
- f. Small boats crossing the harbour entrance may only do so to the north of Ballast Pile and may not cross the main channel until south of 4 Bar Buoy.
- g. Small boats, save those listed at paragraph 5, are not to loiter in the Small Boat Channel.
- h. Small boats should remain on the Starboard side of the Small Boat Channel and should adjust their speed to remain within the Small Boat Channel rather than overtake other craft and be forced into the main channel.
- i. All vessels using the Small Boat Channel are to leave 4 Bar Buoy to port, whether heading inbound or outbound.
- j. In vicinity of BC Outer (red beacon), all vessels are to pass to the east of the beacon except those joining or leaving the Small Boat Channel at the Inner Swashway who are to leave it to port. This area can become extremely busy, particularly during the summer months, and mariners joining here should converge with caution and avoid forcing others out into the middle of the harbour entrance. Similarly, all mariners should be alert to strong cross currents in this area which can sweep vessels into the main channel.



4. Vessels approaching or departing the Small Boat Channel to the south, particularly at low water, should follow the line of the port lateral buoys in order to avoid grounding on the south-east corner of Hamilton Bank, turning to follow the line of the channel in the vicinity of 4 Bar Buoy.

5. The following vessels under 20 metres in length are authorised to use the main channel and loiter in the Small Boat Channel when their duties require; pilot boats, police launches, KHM Harbour Patrol launches, Border Force craft, Royal Naval vessels, lifeboats, senior officers' boats flying official flags or discs and tugs engaged in towing operations or escorting a vessel.

6. Small boats may continue to use the Small Boat Channel when the main channel is closed for the passage of a large vessel other than a Queen Elizabeth Class (QEC) Aircraft Carrier. The Small Boat Channel will be shut to all traffic during QEC transits.

7. Personal Watercraft. PWC of all descriptions are prohibited from entering or operating in the Town Camber, (defined by the purple pecked "no anchoring or fishing" line shown on Admiralty Chart 2629 joining the entrance to Gunwharf Quays and The Point) save with the permission in writing of KHM who will consult with Portsmouth International Port who are the Statutory Harbour Authority for this area.

8. Gunwharf Quays/Town Camber - Traffic Management. The following traffic management plan for craft under 20 metres in length (bound to/from Town Camber/Gunwharf Quays) is in force:

a. Arrival. In the interest of safety all Small Boats bound for Gunwharf Quays/Town Camber are to enter harbour through the Small Boat Channel. Vessels are only to cross the main channel when they are to the north of Ballast Pile, and permission has been obtained from KHM on VHF Channel 11. Vessels fitted with engines are to use them from entering the Small Boat Channel until arrival at

Gunwharf Quays/Town Camber.

b. Departure. Small boats departing from Gunwharf Quays and the Town Camber are to obtain permission from KHM on VHF Channel 11 before crossing the main channel. All vessels are then to cross the main channel direct to Ballast Pile and leave harbour through the Small Boat Channel. Vessels fitted with engines are to use them until exiting the Small Boat Channel. If any of these vessels are not fitted with VHF radio, fixed or portable, then they are to be escorted by a marshalling craft or accompany another vessel so fitted.