

The Passage from Milford Haven Estuary to Fishguard

This passage will be from Dale, through Jack Sound and Ramsey Sound, rounding St Davids Head and Strumble Head to Fishguard Harbour.

If you are considering this passage the following advice should be noted:

The whole trip should take about 7 to 8 hours and should be done in daylight.

You must have detailed charts of the entire passage.

The vessel should have a reliable engine as it will be necessary to maintain a speed of about 5 knots to complete the passage on one tide safely.

As we are using the strong tidal streams to head North across St Brides Bay and through Ramsey Sound do not attempt this passage if the wind is from the Northwest, North or Northeast of a force greater than force 2. Very bad over-falls can be experienced off St Davids Head in NE winds of force 4 and over.

2. If the wind is forecasted as S or SW or W then that's fine - however beware of sudden wind shifts within the sounds as

the islands can 'shadow' the wind. The answer is to keep the engine running.

Depart Dale at LW Milford Haven. No point in going earlier as you won't get through Jack Sound. The tide in the river will be slack. Watch out for large ships using the Western channel and fishermen's pot buoys. After rounding St Anns Head, buck the tide and head up to Jack Sound aiming to enter it left of centre - well away from 'The Bench' (on the Right) and well off the 'Blackstones' rocks on your left. The tidal stream is against you but falling away to slack. You will only be making about 2 or 3 knots over the ground. The top of the 'Cable' rock - situated about one third of the way out from the mainland - will probably be showing. Go to the left of it (West of it) maintaining a safe distance from the 'Crabstones' rocks on your left as you exit the sound. You are just after LW so beware of the underwater reef which is close to the 'Crabstones'.

3. Now in St Brides Bay the stream is slack but will soon turn in your favour as you head up to Ramsey. Aim to enter Ramsey Sound right of centre but beware of 'Shoe Rock' on your right, just south of the sound. Once in the sound steer to the right, towards the Lifeboat Station. This will keep you well away from 'The Bitches' and 'Horse Rock', which is situated in the centre of the sound. Steer into the bay a little and follow the mainland round to the north. Keep to the right-hand side of the sound. Pass the headland (Point St. John) and the reef

of rocks (Carreg Gafeiliog) with a reasonable offing. Be prepared to meet over-falls as you approach St Davids Head. As previously mentioned, these can be very violent if the wind is a fresh North-easterly.

After rounding St Davids Head stay outside a line from St.Davids Head to Strumble Head - on the seaward side.

You now have the tidal stream with you and should be rounding Strumble 2 hours or so later. Over-falls will be encountered after rounding the headland - stay well out giving Penanglas point good clearance.

4. Watch out for pot buoys especially when rounding the Fishguard breakwater.

The tidal height should be good if you intend to go into the drying Lower Fishguard Harbour - It's now about 1 or 2 hours after local HW. If you can't take the ground, anchor off or pick up a visitor's buoy with adequate depth at LW.

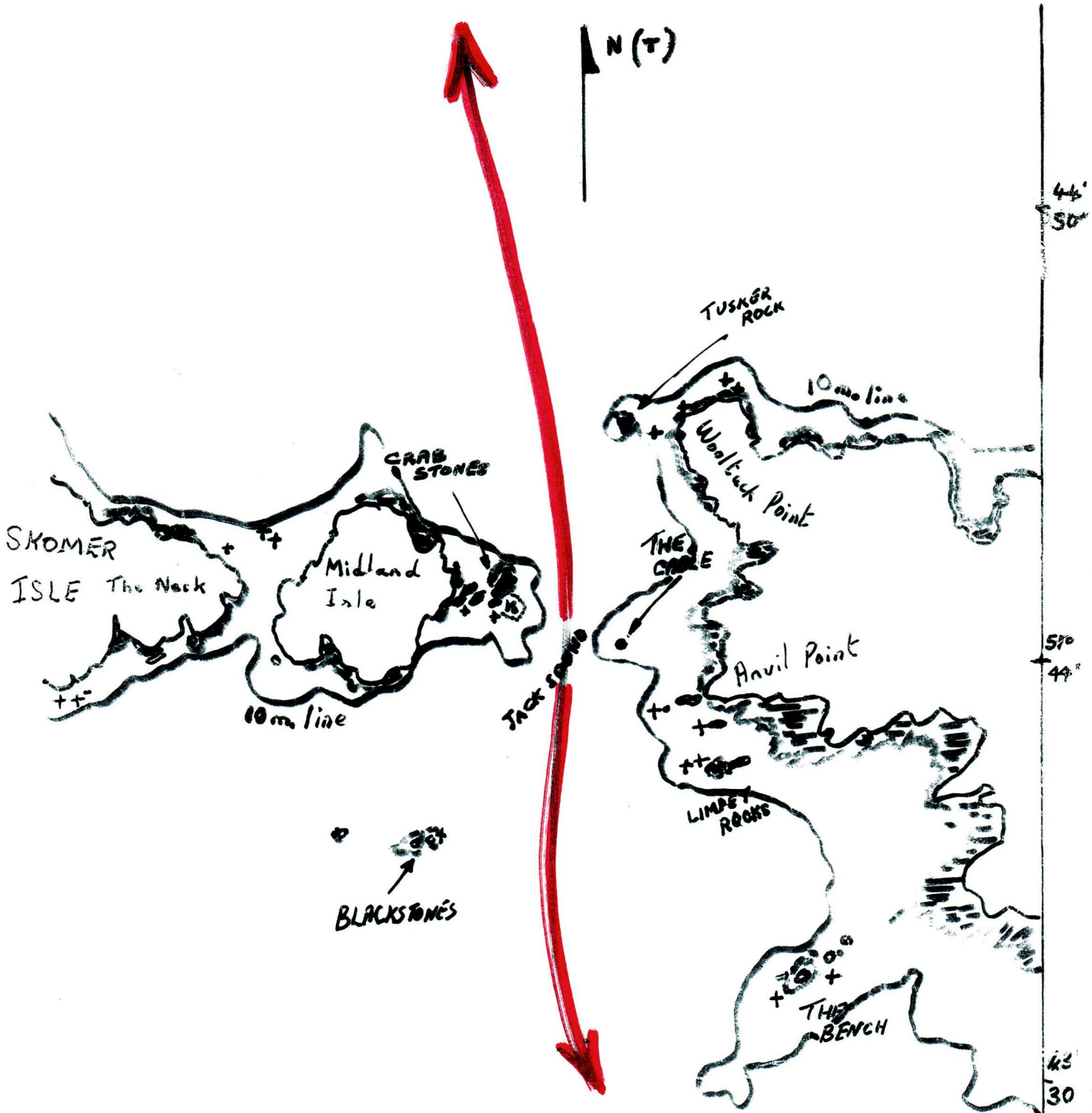
Remember - these sounds are treacherous - you must learn where these rocks are situated from your charts before attempting this passage.

Bryon Alabaster

(Former RYA instructor)

Note

The Cable Rock may be submerged. If so stay on CRABSTONES Side of channel.



JACK SOUND.

Sp. 6 to 7 Knots.

5° 16'

Carrey Trai



N(T)



Gwahan

St. Davids Head

54'

10m. line

Carrey-gateiling

Point St. John

53'

Lifeboat Station

RAMSEY SOUND

THE HORSE

52'

RAMSEY ISLAND

THE BITCHES

Farmhouse buildings

Pen Dal-aderyn

Shoe Rock

51°

51'

Pont yr Eilun

Ynys Eilun

Sprate 6 Knots

