

The tidal stretch from King's Lynn to Denver can be tricky to navigate for several reasons: the mass of water being funnelled in from the Wash means that the tide can run very quickly, resulting in rapid changes in the water level; also, there are a number of sand banks which can result in the boat touching bottom, especially on small tides. The return journey from Denver to King's Lynn is much easier, as the lock keeper will lock you through when the level is right to suit your draft and headroom, generally when his tide gauge shows a reading of between 103.4 and 103.6.

The time to leave King's Lynn for Denver depends upon the height of the tide. Leaving too early can mean going aground, whereas leaving too late could result in insufficient headroom under the bridges. The wind also has an effect. A north wind, for example, can bring in the tide 15 minutes or so early. (The chart at the end of this booklet gives an idea of the effect of the tide on the bridge clearance at Downham Market).

To calculate the best time to leave King's Lynn, in a boat with a 3ft draught and travelling at 6 knots, allow 1 1/2 hours for the journey from South Quay to Denver Lock, aiming to arrive there:

a) 15 minutes after flood at Denver on tides over 22 ft, 6.7 m

b) 1 hour after flood at Denver on tides of 20 to 22 ft. 6.1 - 6.7 m

(*'flood'* means that the tide has turned and water has started to flow upstream)

Flood at Denver is 1 hour before High Tide at King's Lynn, so:  
in case a) leave King's Lynn 2 1/4 hours before High Tide,  
in case b) leave King's Lynn 1 1/2 hours before High Tide.

On tides of less than 20ft there is danger of grounding and so, if possible, it is better to undertake the journey when there is more water.

The above information is just a guide and it is important to get advice from the Denver lock keeper who has local knowledge and up-to-date information. He can be contacted in advance by telephone on Downham Market (0366) 382340 or 382013, or on VHF Channel 6. When the telephone has to be unattended, locking times will be recorded on the answerphone during the boating season between 1st April and 30th September.

DENVER R2100 CH. 73

DAVID MASTERS. 0366. 382013

*This guide has been compiled by a local boat user and is based on personal observations. The maps are intended to let you know what stage of your journey you have reached and to give you advance warning of what you might find around the next bend!*

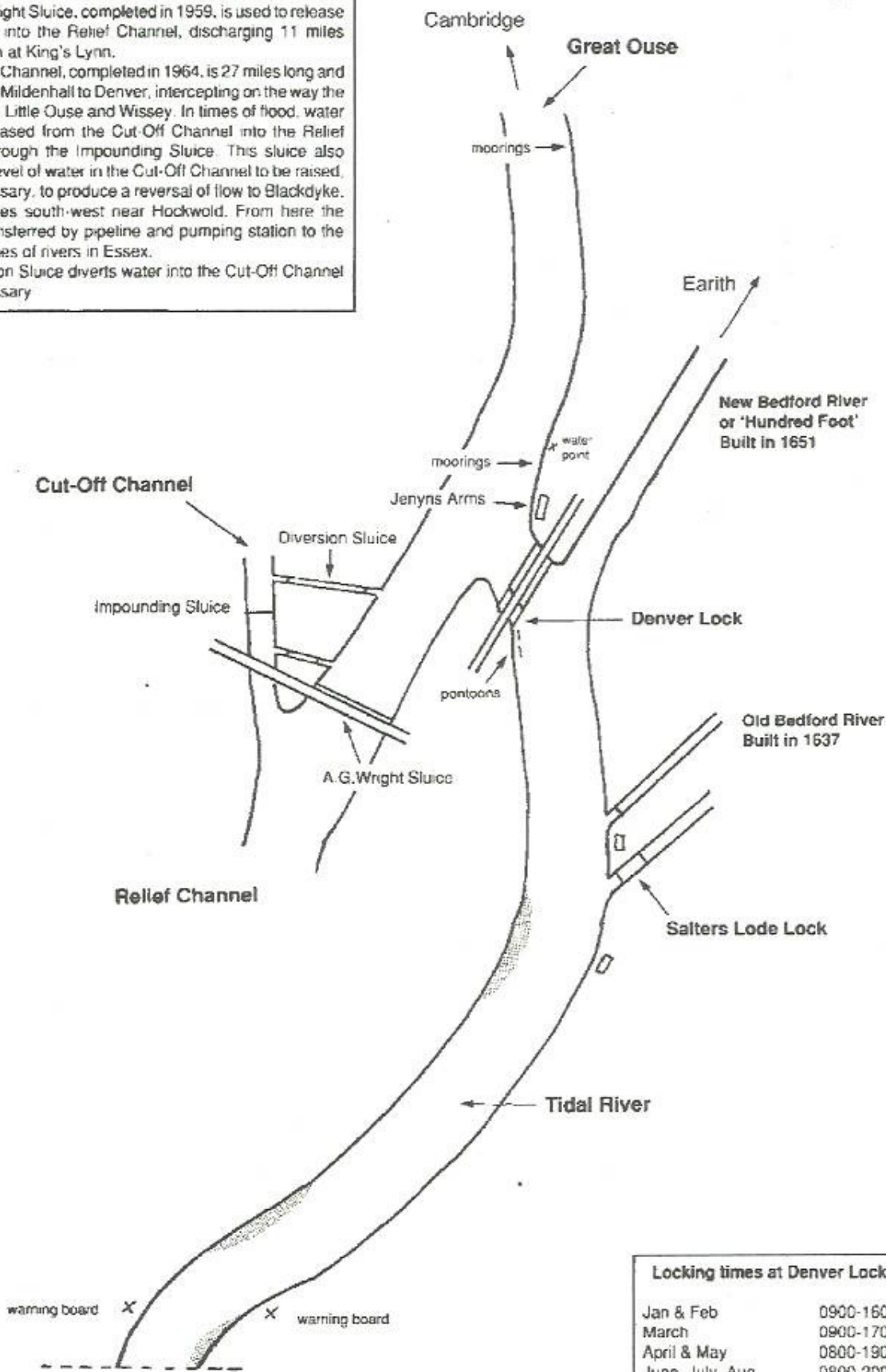
**The Denver Complex**

Denver Sluice controls the flow of water from the Great Ouse and its tributaries into the tidal channel to the sea. A sluice was first built here in 1651.

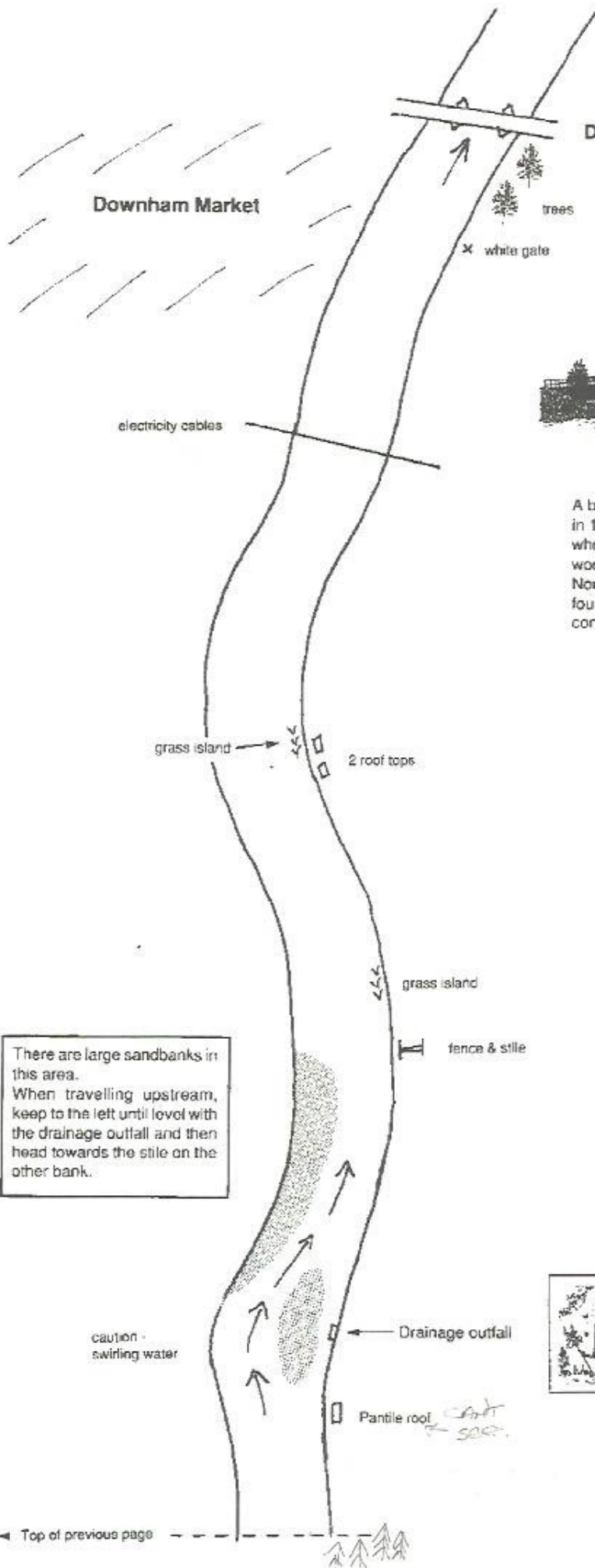
The A.G.Wright Sluice, completed in 1959, is used to release flood water into the Relief Channel, discharging 11 miles further north at King's Lynn.

The Cut-Off Channel, completed in 1964, is 27 miles long and travels from Mildenhall to Denver, intercepting on the way the Rivers Lark, Little Ouse and Wissey. In times of flood, water can be released from the Cut-Off Channel into the Relief Channel through the Impounding Sluice. This sluice also allows the level of water in the Cut-Off Channel to be raised, when necessary, to produce a reversal of flow to Blackdyke, some 15 miles south-west near Hockwold. From here the water is transferred by pipeline and pumping station to the upper reaches of rivers in Essex.

The Diversion Sluice diverts water into the Cut-Off Channel when necessary.



Locking times at Denver Lock	
Jan & Feb	0900-1600
March	0900-1700
April & May	0800-1900
June, July, Aug	0800-2000
September	0800-1900
October	0900-1700
Nov & Dec	0900-1600



A bridge has existed here for centuries. It was recorded that in 1454 the Lord of the Manor leased it to the Bridge Reeves who maintained it and charged users a toll. In 1877 the existing wooden bridge was replaced by a wrought iron structure. Norfolk County Council took over the bridge in 1929 and later found it necessary to impose a weight restriction. The present concrete structure was built in 1964. (Centre span 89 ft).

There are large sandbanks in this area. When travelling upstream, keep to the left until level with the drainage outfall and then head towards the stile on the other bank.

caution swirling water



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Stow Bridge



A bridge has been recorded on the site.  
A timber structure was erected in the 18th century.  
The present bridge, of bowstring girder spans, was built in 1896.

Cottage roof  
with 3 dormers



House in trees



Outfall

Cottage roof  
Dormers show 1896

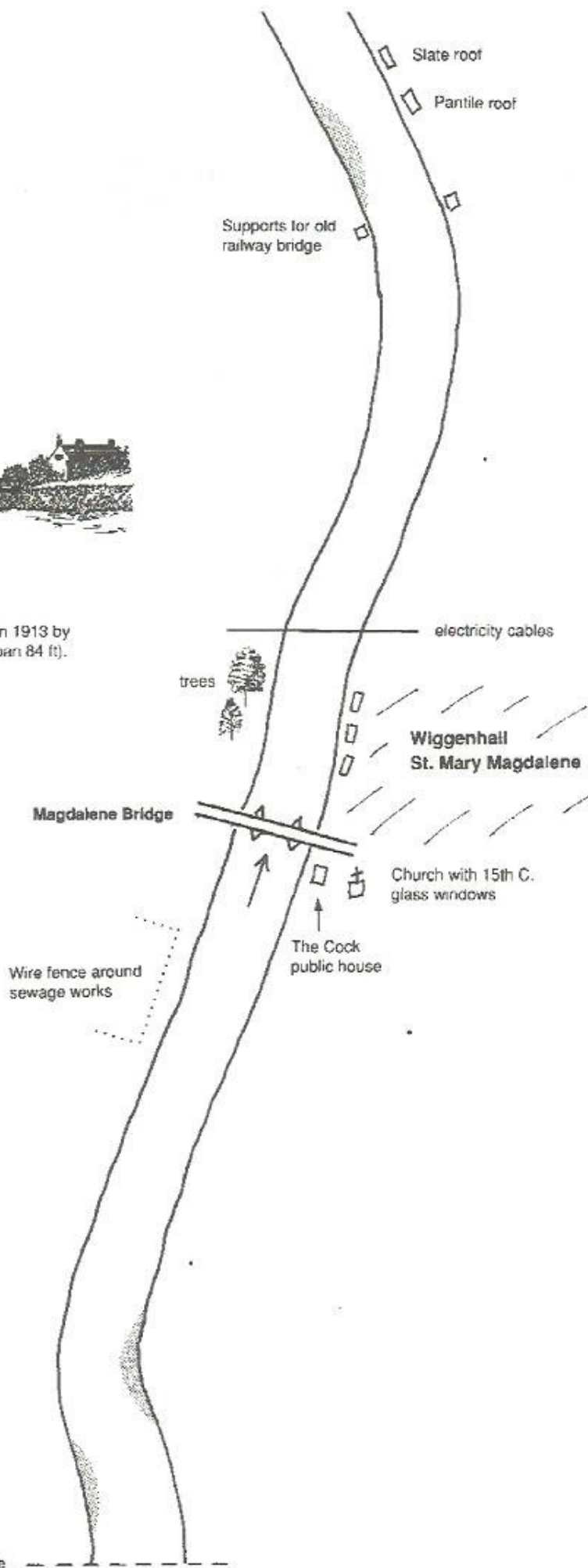


Tall aerial by  
outbuildings





The old timber Magdalene Bridge was replaced in 1913 by the existing steel lattice girder bridge. (Centre span 84 ft). It is due to be reconstructed in the near future.





Norfolk County Council took over a w  
St.Germans Charity in 1928 and rest  
of less than 3 tons. The present reinf  
was built in 1938. (Centre span 90 ft)

St. Germans Church  
> 15th Century  
benches



Pub



St. Germans Bridge

Wiggenhall  
St. Germans

Fishing boat often  
moored here

The Middle Level Main Drain is a 10-mile  
straight cut completed in 1848.  
The pumping station built in 1934 has since  
been greatly increased in capacity and is now  
the biggest in England

Pylon ✖

Pipeline bridge



Relief Channel

Pipeline bridge

Tail Sluice

Pylon

Factory

Pylon

Jetty

EAU BRINK CUT

Eau Brink Cut was opened in 1821 to remove a 6-mile loop in the river and so improve the flow of water to the sea.

The A47 Road Bridge was built in 1975 as part of the King's Lynn southern by pass. (Centre span 200 ft).



A47 road bridge

Free Bridge



King's Lynn Free Bridge was originally a timber toll bridge built in 1821. It was replaced in 1873 by a wrought iron lattice girder structure. The bridge was rebuilt in 1924 in reinforced concrete and, in 1970, the superstructure was replaced by steel girders supporting a concrete deck slab. (Centre span 120 ft).

Great Ouse Boating Association, King's Lynn Conservancy and Denver Boating Club buoys

DCC  
DCC  
KLCB  
GO 3  
GO 2  
GO 1

Boats moored towards the centre of the river

river

Coal Quay

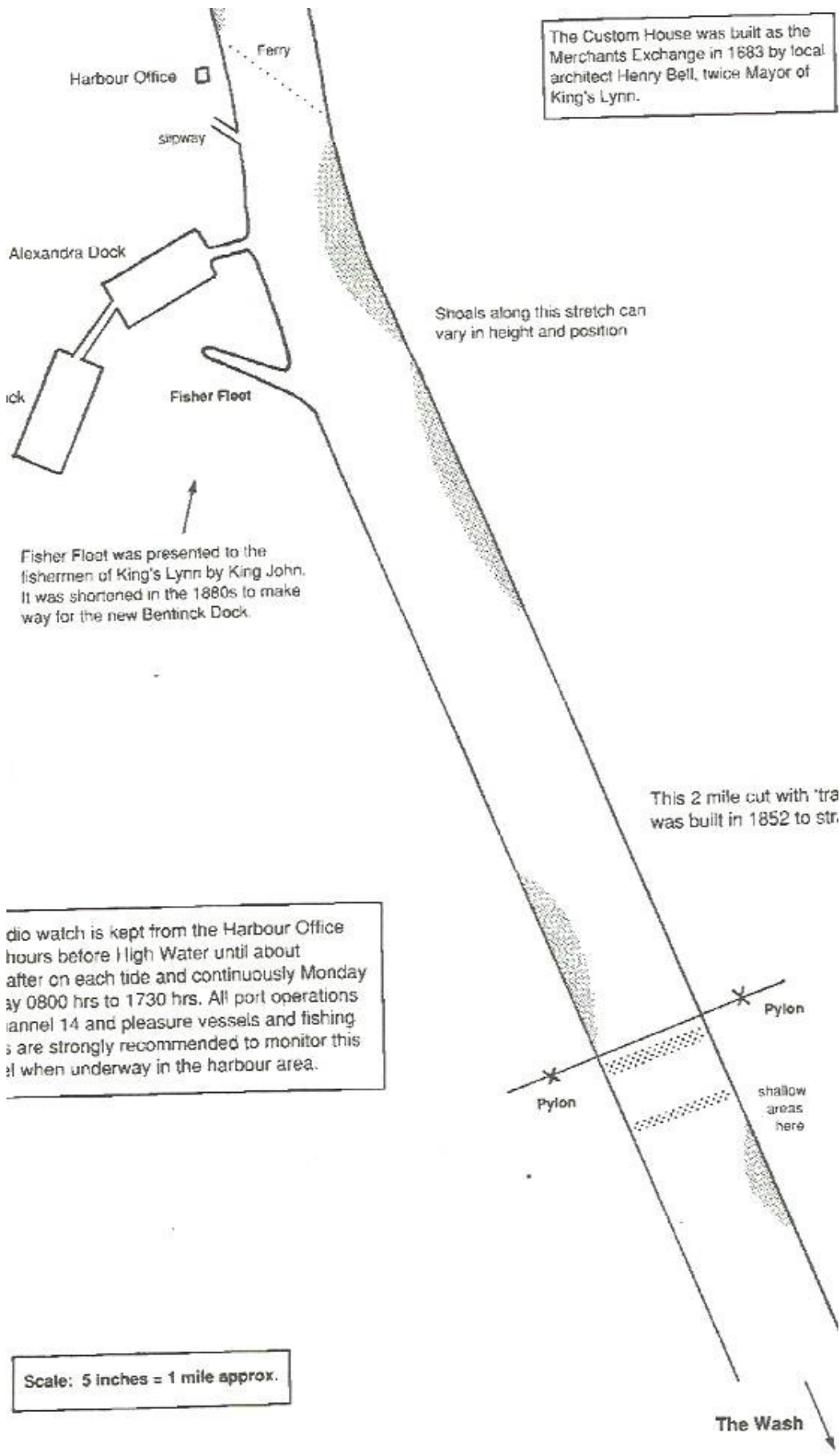
Mill

Wheel

grain silos

West Lynn

The Custom House was built as the Merchants Exchange in 1683 by local architect Henry Bell, twice Mayor of King's Lynn.



Shoals along this stretch can vary in height and position

Fisher Fleet was presented to the fishermen of King's Lynn by King John. It was shortened in the 1880s to make way for the new Bentinck Dock.

This 2 mile cut with pylon was built in 1852 to straighten the waterway.

Radio watch is kept from the Harbour Office hours before High Water until about 1 hour after on each tide and continuously Monday to Friday 0800 hrs to 1730 hrs. All port operations in channel 14 and pleasure vessels and fishing boats are strongly recommended to monitor this channel when underway in the harbour area.

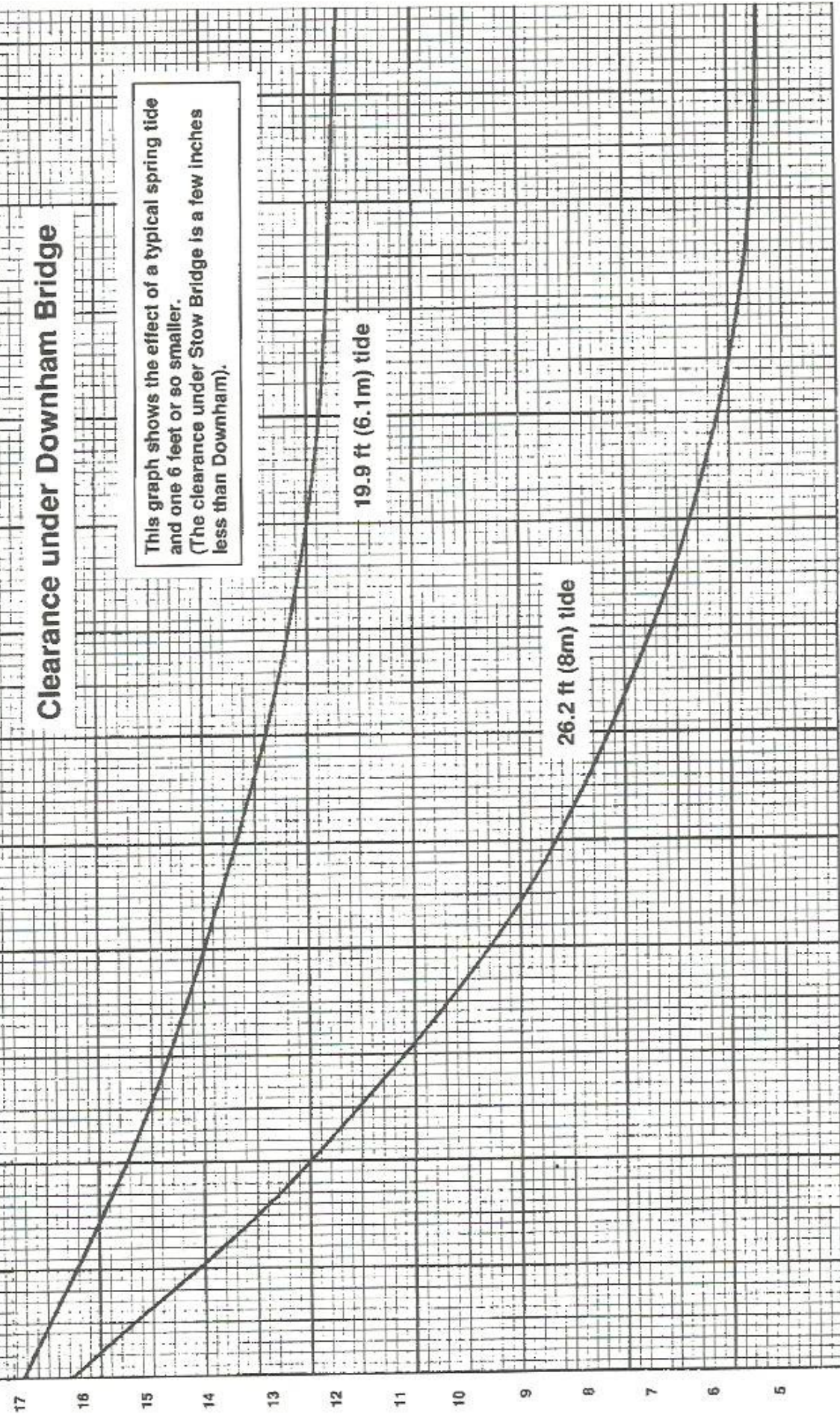
Scale: 5 inches = 1 mile approx.

The Wash



# Clearance under Downham Bridge

This graph shows the effect of a typical spring tide and one 6 feet or so smaller.  
(The clearance under Stow Bridge is a few inches less than Downham).



Clearances under the river bridges *measured from above the dock sill at King's Lynn* are as follows:-

Free Bridge	33.0 ft
A47 Road Bridge	37.0 ft
Gas Pipeline Bridges	34.0 ft
St. Germans Bridge	31.8 ft
Magdalene Bridge	31.8 ft
Stow Bridge	31.8 ft
Downham Bridge	32.0 ft

This sill is also the datum used for the King's Lynn tide tables.