



# Millennium Ribble Link Skipper Guide



**Canal &  
River Trust**

Making life better by water

## WELCOME TO THE MILLENNIUM RIBBLE LINK

The prestigious £5.8m project to construct the Millennium Ribble Link opened in 2002. This is the first new navigation to be built in England since the Manchester Ship Canal in the 19th Century.

The idea for connecting Kendal to the national network dates back over 200 years and was part of the ambitious scheme to build a canal, which is now the Lancaster Canal, starting at Westhoughton in the South and continuing 75 miles north to Kendal.

The canal was to consist of three long level sections connected by two flights of locks and include two large aqueducts over the rivers Ribble and Lune. The line was surveyed in 1772 and work began circa 1792 but by 1799 the southern section was incomplete and because of insufficient funds the proposed Ribble aqueduct was shelved. By 1803 a temporary horse drawn tramway had been built to connect the southern section to the new canal north of Preston. With the arrival of the railways however the temporary tramway became permanent, and the aqueduct never built.

Canal & River Trust is responsible for the on-going operation of the Link which is owned by the Waterway Trust and Canal & River Trust.

For further information please contact Canal & River Trust on 0303 040 4040

## LOCATION

- 1.1 The Millennium Ribble Link commences at the Lancaster Canal (between Bridge 16 and 16A) and travels down Savick Brook to Lock 9. The remainder of the Savick Brook passes into the River Ribble which then leads to either Preston Docks or into the River Douglas which then connects into the Rufford Branch of the Leeds & Liverpool canal via Tarleton Lock.
- 1.2 Maps are located on pages 9 & 10. Alternatively, you can find a map online, [here](#).
- 1.3 Ribble Link customers are required to comply with Canal & River Trust terms and conditions of passage and abide by the regulations and byelaws. The remainder of the Savick Brook, the River Ribble and the River Douglas are public rights of navigation.

## OPERATION

- 2.1 Open from April to October, operation of the Link is dictated by the tide times and weather. Passage must be booked in advance.
- 2.2 The Link will be manned during operating hours. Canal & River Trust will operate the staircase flight locks 1- 3 and sea lock 9. All other locks 4-8 on the Link are to be operated by customers.
- 2.3 The Link will only operate in one direction each day. It is anticipated that the crossing between Lock 9 and Tarleton Lock will take 1.5 to 2.5 hours, subject to weather conditions and vessel capability.
- 2.4 Passage through the Link is continuous, there is no facility to remain within the Link at any time. All locks will be locked after each passage is completed for security. In an emergency, boats may be required to moor at Lock 8. Skippers should note there are no facilities at this site and road access is limited.
- 2.5 The Link will be operational on as many days as possible during each year, but weather may restrict operation. It is expected that the Link will only operate between river tide levels of 8.6 - 9.6 metres and up to Beaufort wind scale of 4/5 winds, in daylight hours and when there is high visibility. Please note that winds from certain directions may have a greater effect than others and that water levels on the Link will also dictate operation. Canal & River Trust will make a decision as to whether the Link is operational on the day of travel. **This decision will be final (see Canal & River Trust's Ribble Link terms and conditions).**

**At low tide levels there is a much-increased likelihood of you being asked to divert to Preston Docks. Please note, should you not make your Link crossing in time and be diverted to Preston Docks, this will incur a third-party overnight mooring charge. This will need to be paid direct to Preston Docks before leaving. Trust staff will call to arrange alternate passage on to the Lancaster canal.**

- 2.6 Canal & River Trust reserves the right to close the Link at any time and without reason, particularly on the grounds of Health and Safety (see Canal & River Trust's Ribble Link terms and conditions).
- 2.7 We politely remind all customers that the maximum speed limit on the Lancaster and Leeds & Liverpool canals is 4mph.
- 2.8 Please note when travelling from Tarleton, the last place to dispose of rubbish before going onto the Link is at Sparks Bridge. It is also suggested that fresh water tanks are filled up at Sparks Bridge as there are no facilities at Tarleton. On arrival at Tarleton please moor up on the visitor moorings immediately after Town End Bridge.

## **BOOKING**

- 3.1 Due to the popularity of the Link, we recommend you book early to avoid disappointment.
- 3.2 Bookings will only be granted to customers who hold a current Canal & River Trust boat licence, current Boat Safety Certificate or Certificate of Conformity and insurance which should include cover for tidal links. This will be checked on the Canal & River Trust's database and copies requested where necessary.
- 3.3 If you cannot sail on the day booked due to weather restrictions all steps will be taken to ensure you sail on the earliest available operational tide.
- 3.4 The Ribble Link is part of a tidal waterway, and the navigable channel is subject to silting up through season. In the unlikely event of excess siltation, passage may not be guaranteed.
- 3.5 You must arrive by the '**Start time**' specified in the passage schedule, this is 4-4.5 hours before the tide time for a 'DOWN' passage and 2 hours before for an 'UP' passage.
- 3.6 Please read the Skippers Guide and terms and conditions thoroughly prior to booking.

## SAFETY

- 4.1 The Savick Brook, River Ribble and River Douglas are tidal and deep in places, it is mandatory that lifejackets are worn by all person and animals on board.

It is recommended that the following equipment be carried as a minimum and used as appropriate:

- An anchor, chain and rope (minimum 30 metres)
  - Mobile phone is essential plus VHF (optional) **Your mobile phone must be fully charged, switched on and in a place where you can hear it throughout the passage as staff may need to contact you.**
  - Firefighting equipment.
  - Flare pack (recommendation)
  - In order to assist the Emergency Services an awareness of your vessel's position at all times during the passage – an accurate position will ensure that the Emergency Services can get to you with minimum delay.
  - The boat may rock from side to side during the crossing as you are sailing in moving tidal water unlike canals which are comparatively still. Please ensure that all loose items are secured, particularly anything on open decks or roofs. **If any items fall from your boat DO NOT attempt to retrieve them.**
  - If you need advice whilst navigating on the river contact Preston Riversway Control Centre on either VHF channel 16 or telephone 01772 726871. Advise the controller of your situation and they will assist accordingly.
  - **IF YOUR SITUATION IS IN ANY WAY LIFE THREATENING CALL 999 IMMEDIATELY AND ASK FOR THE COAST GUARD.**
  - As you will be sailing in tidal waters for some of your journey you must ensure that your boat is capable of travelling comfortably at a minimum of 5 knots (approx. 6 miles per hour) in still waters. You must keep your water tanks full and run the hot water system to cool your engine if it becomes overheated.
- 4.2 If you have little experience of sailing in tidal waters, we recommend that you seek guidance from an experienced skipper.
- 4.3 You agree to Canal & River Trust contacting emergency or rescue services if they feel the boat or crew is in danger and all fees to be invoiced directly to you.
- 4.4 As Skipper of your craft, you are ultimately responsible for the safety of yourself, your crew and your craft. Please ensure that you have read all the safety and operational guidance before you enter the Link.
- 4.5 You must ensure that your insurance covers you for sailing in tidal waters and rivers – contact your broker directly for further information.

- 4.6 In the event of your vessel going aground contact the Coastguard immediately by calling 999 – follow their instructions and stay with your vessel unless otherwise directed.

The HM Coastguard has responsibility for search and rescue within the passage and the Trust will supply a copy of passages & boat names to the HM Coastguard. However, due to GDPR regulations, the Trust is unable to provide contact information of any individual customer. To aid awareness and safety, vessels travelling via the Ribble Link can log a passage plan with the HM coastguard by calling Holyhead Coastguard on 01407 762051. Once safe passage is complete you must then call the Coastguard on the same number to make them aware.

This is to help aid assistance and direct appropriate resources should anyone get into difficulty during the passage.

#### SAILING FROM LEEDS & LIVERPOOL CANAL

- 5.1 Proceed out of Tarleton Lock as directed by the Lock Keeper, sail down the River Douglas for approximately 4 miles to the junction with the River Ribble.
- 5.2 As you approach the junction you will notice the 5-mile perch (Asland Lamp, see photo on map) sail to the left and behind the perch, turning right into the River Ribble. **Be aware of strong tidal flows near this perch. DO NOT sail in front or to the right of this perch as there is shallow water over marshland that hides submerged walls. Please ensure you adopt a central position towards the end of the estuary, cutting corners can result in grounding (See 4.3).**
- 5.3 Sail along the River Ribble for approximately 3.5 miles. **Ensure you keep to the right-hand side at all times and keep a sharp look out for other craft using the river. There is a sandbank on the west side of the entrance to Savick Brook – DO NOT CUT THE CORNER.**
- 5.4 A notice on your left will identify Savick Brook, proceed to the 2-mile perch and the entrance to the Link, make a call to the Link team 07483 130006. If the light at the entrance to the Link is green it is OK to proceed, making allowances for the tidal flow and sail towards Lock 9, Sea Lock (NB the light is sometimes difficult to see particularly in bright sunlight). If there is no light at all **DO NOT PROCEED** and contact 07483 130006 or 01772 726871 if it is out of hours. If you are diverted to Preston Docks, go into the dock on the south side as there is a sandbank on the north side. After going through the lock into the dock turn left and moor on the public moorings, not in the marina. **Please note a mooring fee will be applicable to Preston Docks by the customer. The Trust will not cover this charge.**
- 5.5 At Lock 9, Canal & River Trust staff will direct you through the lock to the Link. **Do not proceed through the Link until directed to do so. Skippers must follow all Canal & River Trust staff instructions during passage through the Link (see Canal & River Trust's Ribble Link terms and conditions).** After you have passed through Lock 9, await further instructions from Canal & River Trust staff. Further up the Link, Canal

& River Trust staff will assist you through the staircase flight of locks and onto the Lancaster Canal.

- 5.6 The nearest Canal & River Trust sanitary station is at Cadley (Preston). Turn right out of the basin and travel for approximately 1 mile along the Lancaster Canal. If you require further information on facilities and services, please contact our Customer Service team on 0303 040 4040.

### **SAILING FROM THE LANCASTER CANAL**

- 6.1 On arrival at the junction of the Link and Lancaster Canal, moor up in the basin and await departure instructions from Canal & River Trust staff. Do not proceed through the Link until directed to do so. Skippers must follow all Canal & River Trust staff instructions during passage through the Link (see Canal & River Trust's Ribble Link terms and conditions).
- 6.2 At the correct operational tide, Canal & River Trust staff will operate Lock 9 Sea Lock and you will be able to proceed through into the remainder of Savick Brook. Travel to the end of the Brook remembering to keep within the markers and turn right into the River Ribble for the Leeds & Liverpool Canal or left for the Preston Dock. **Please ensure you adopt a central position towards the end of the estuary, cutting corners can result in grounding (See 4.3).**
- 6.3 If you turn left and wish to proceed into the Preston Docks a separate guidance note, written by Preston Borough Council, is available. For further details contact the Riversway Control Centre on 01772 726871. Please advise Canal & River Trust staff if you are travelling to Preston Docks when commencing passage.
- 6.4 If you turn right, sail along the River Ribble for approximately 3.5 miles.  
**Ensure that you sail on the right-hand side and keep a sharp lookout for other craft using the river.**
- 6.5 When you reach 5-mile perch, sail to the right and behind the perch and then turn left into the River Douglas. **Be aware of the strong tidal flows near this perch.**  
**Do not sail in front of this perch as there is shallow water over marshland that hides submerged walls.**
- 6.6 Sail approximately 4 miles up the River Douglas to Tarleton Lock. Notify the lock keeper of your approach by telephoning Mayors Boat Yard on 01772 812250. Enter the lock as directed by the Lock Keeper (Harry 01772 816592 or Roger 07885 762347).
- 6.7 You will have entered the Rufford Branch of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. Further details on this canal are available from the North West office on 0303 040 4040 or by visiting our [website](#).

## PILOT SERVICE

Canal & River Trust does not offer a pilot service. If you require this service, please contact a private operator. There will be a charge for this service.

## THE LANCASTER CANAL

The Lancaster Canal is 41 miles long and it is worth noting that due to the unique design of this canal you should bring boarding planks to allow access.

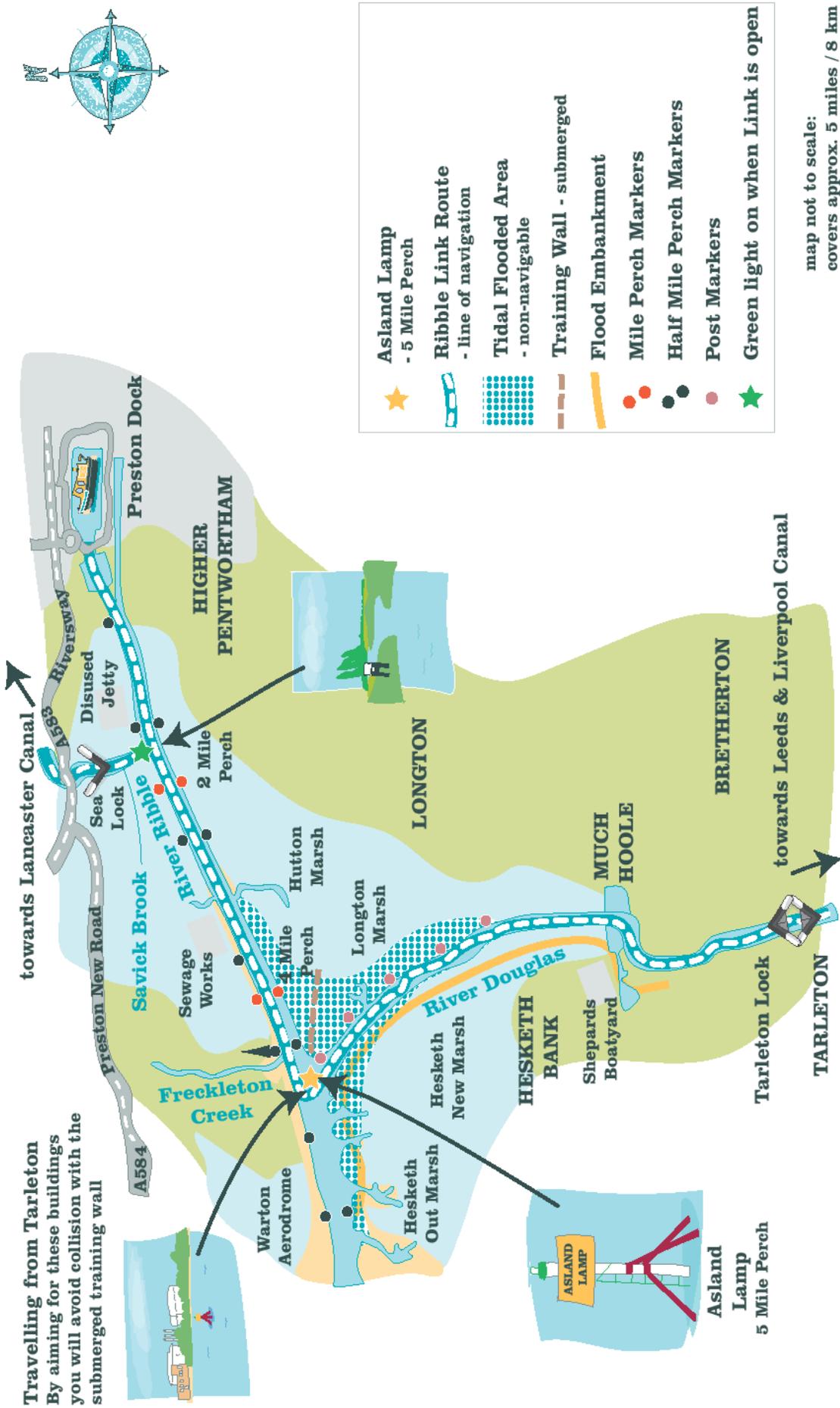
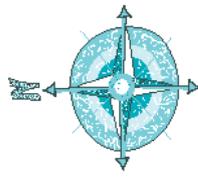
## MAXIMUM CRAFT DIMENSIONS

<u>Millennium Ribble Link</u>	Length – 62 ft /18.8m	Width – 10ft 6in /3.2m
	Height – 8ft / 2.5m	Draught – 2ft 3in / 0.7m

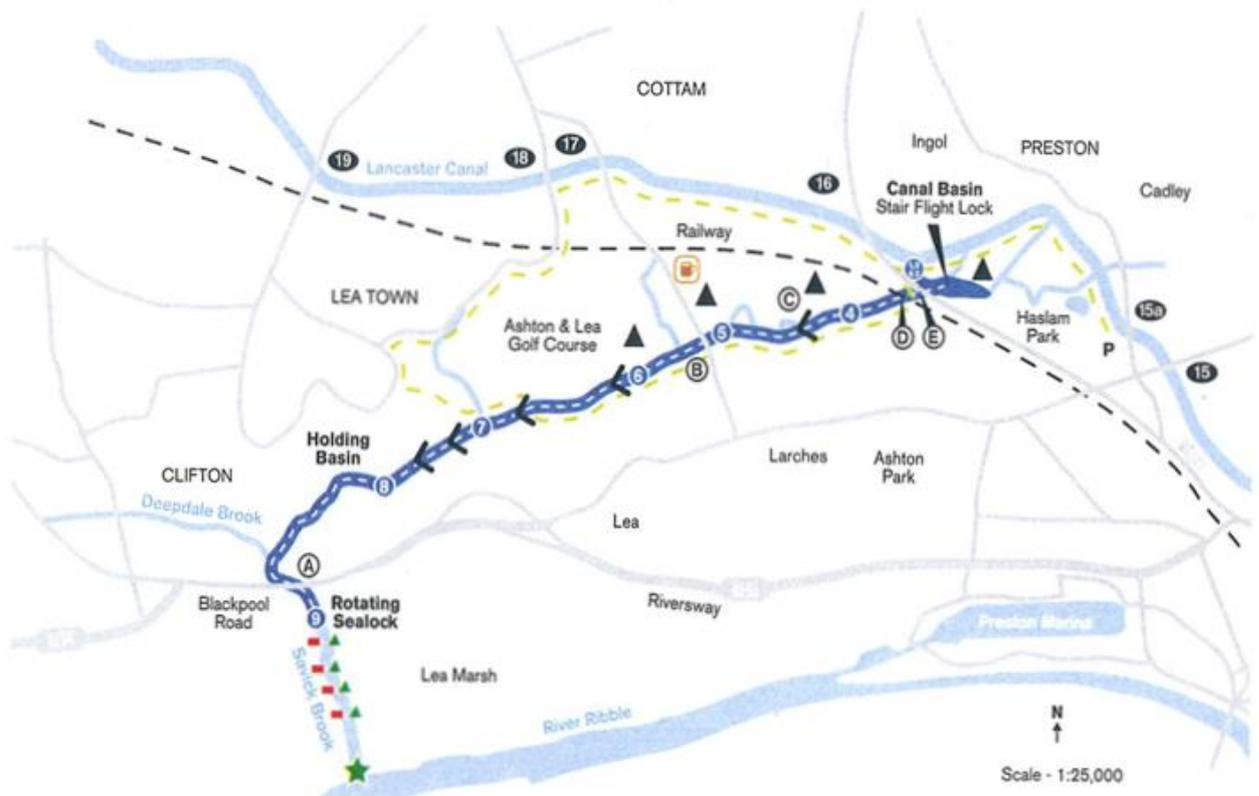
*The Ribble Link is part of a tidal waterway and the navigable channel is subject to silting up through season. In the unlikely event of excess siltation or obstruction, passage may be affected. In this instance, please visit our [Online Notice](#) page and search for the Ribble Link.*

<u>Lancaster Mainline</u>	Length – 72ft /22m	Width – 14ft / 4.3m
	Height – 8ft / 2.5m (6ft 10 in / 2m Ashton Basin)	
	Draught – 3ft /0.9m	

<u>Glasson Branch</u>	Length – 70ft / 22.3m	Width – 14ft / 4.3m
	Height – 8ft / 2.5m	



map not to scale:  
covers approx. 5 miles / 8 km



KEY	
	The Route of the Link
	Canalside Walk (c.6 miles)
<b>1</b> to <b>9</b>	Locks
<b>15</b> to <b>20</b>	Bridge Numbers
<b>(A)</b>	Savick Bridge
<b>(B)</b>	Leyland Bridge
<b>(C)</b>	Savick Way Bridge
<b>(D)</b>	Railway Bridge
<b>(E)</b>	Tom Benson Way Bridge
	Sculpture Trail
	Cotty Brook Public House
	Post Markers
	Green light on when Link is open

#### \*Please note

We recommend you arrive at departure point 4 hours before high tide when travelling from Savick to Tarlton (down the link). Travelling time will need to include passage through the Ribble Link, the Ribble Estuary and the River Douglas. Therefore it is important that you take this additional time into account.

## NAVIGATING THE MILLENNIUM RIBBLE LINK

The limited opening times of the Millennium Ribble Link are dictated by the tidal nature of the Ribble Estuary. The Link itself incorporates a staircase lock and a sea lock, both of which are manned for safety reasons, in addition to 5 individual locks.

The Millennium Ribble Link will provide an exciting challenge for all keen boaters.

For Entrance to Preston Marina please see the Preston Marina User Guidance Notes which accompany this Skippers Guide.

#### Useful contact numbers:

Preston Dock Control Centre: 01772 726711

Preston Marina Moorings: 01772 733595



# Canal & River Trust

Making life better by water

For further information on the Lancaster Canal and the Millennium Ribble Link, please contact us at:

Tel: 0303 040 4040

Website: <http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk>

Email: [enquiries.northwest@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:enquiries.northwest@canalrivertrust.org.uk)

