

Extract from “Sailing Directions for the West Coast of England”  
Published in 1891, this section covers **Wigton Bay**.

*N.B. Most of the original spelling ‘mistakes’ have been left, as have some initial capitals.*

**WIGTON BAY** is contained between Great Ross and Burrow head, separated by a distance of 12 miles. The bay is 13 miles deep to the narrows at Knockdown ferry, or 8 miles to the Wigton and Baldoon sands, dry at low water, which fill up the inner portion of it : and below which no banks or dangers exist, except within a short distance of the shore on either side.

**General Directions.**---In Wigton bay the bottom is clean and the depths are regular, decreasing gradually from 16 and 14 fathoms over sand, from the line between the heads, to 3 or 2 fathoms near Wigton sands. The various anchorages around the bay afford good shelter in off-shore winds, but a heavy sea sets into it with southerly winds, which are very prevalent, and often give but little warning. A sailing vessel caught suddenly under such circumstances within the bay, should endeavour by every means to hang off until tide-time, and then enter Garliestown or the river Cree, as may appear most desirable.

By keeping southward of the line passing through Borgue church and Barlocco island, a vessel will be in not less than 3 fathoms, and nearly one mile southward of Wigton sands.

**Tidal streams.**—In the offing, the stream is slack for about an hour, near high and low water by the shore and at Liverpool ; running eastward whilst the tide is rising, and westward whilst it is falling at Liverpool.

The flood stream begins to set into Wigton bay round Burrow head 2 hours before it is low-water by the shore, and about 2 hours before low water at entrance to Liverpool, taking a direction across the bay towards Muncraig bay or the Borgue land ; but eastward of the centre of the bay, the direction is more south-easterly, towards Great Ross point.

Within the line of the heads the ebb stream sets to the westward across the bay 2 hours before it is high-water by the shore. The greatest velocity is 4 knots on springs and 2 knots on neaps.

The flood stream sets into the river Cree after one hour of flood by the shore ; abreast Creetown it continues 5 hours, and the ebb stream 7 hours, the average rate being 5 knots on springs and 3 knots during neaps.

The above times are materially influenced by the wind, and above Creetown the strength is also affected by the river freshes.

It is high water, full and change, on the Wigton sands at 11h. 30m. local, 11h. 44m. Greenwich time.

**EASTERN SHORE**—Bridgehouse bay.—The coast from Great Ross point trends irregularly north-westward for 2½ miles to Bareness point ; between is Bridgehouse bay, about 2 cables wide, half a mile deep, and dry at low water ; it is fringed by shelving rocks, which, off the west point extend rather more than a cable ; on the east side is a jetty, where, in fine weather, coasters discharge coal and lime. From Bareness a bold rocky coast, steep-to, especially at Muncraig heughs, extends northward to Kirkandrews bay.

**Kirkandrews** bay, 4 miles north-westward of Great. Ross point, is fronted by ledges to the distance of a quarter of a mile, and is unfit for anchorage, except in off-shore winds.

**Islands of Fleet**—Barlocco island, the southernmost of a group of four, designated the islands of Fleet, lies on the north side of Kirkandrews bay ; it is connected to the rugged coast by rocks, which uncover at low-water. The isle is 25 feet in height, one-quarter mile in extent, and the same distance from the coast, but the passage between is available for boats only at high water.

**Knockbrex** bay lies between Barlocco and Ardwall (Knockbrex) islands ; at low water the margin is sandy, but the high-water line is rock. Fair anchorage may be found in this bay with the wind off the land in  $2\frac{1}{2}$  fathoms, sand. Ardwall island is nearly one-third of a mile in length, by one-quarter of a mile in breadth, with an elevation of 100 feet, and is connected to the main at low-water by a sand ridge ; there is a house near its south-west end. On the north side some rocks, named Parton Craigs, show at low water.

**Murray isles** lie half a mile north-westward of Ardwall island ; the north and larger island is one-quarter of a mile in length by 200 yards in width, and is connected with the sands of Fleet bay at low water.

The bay between Ardwall island and the Murray isles affords good anchorage for coasters, in 2 fathoms, during off-shore winds.

**FLEET BAY** is contained between the north point of Ardwall isle and Ringdow point, an opening  $1\frac{3}{4}$  miles across, dry at low water. Within Airds bay, on the eastern side, Fleet bay becomes contracted to half a mile in width, and can be forded, while a large stone on the north margin of the stream is visible. Eastward of Rough point, situated one mile within Airds bay, is the beginning of an embankment, which, at the distance of half a mile within, with a similar work on the north side, contracts the stream to a width of 40 feet. Half a mile farther in, and at the same distance below Gatehouse bridge, is the shipping place.

**Ringdow point**, the north-west point of entrance to the bay, is fronted by Carvellan rocks at the distance of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cables, the heads of which are above high-water. At  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles within is Cardonness point and obelisk, and Skyre Burn bay, thence the bay is contracted as before stated.

The whole of Fleet bay, with the exception of the narrow and muddy channel of the issuing stream, is dry at low-water within the line of the entrance points. The mark for the deepest water is the north point of Airds bay bearing about N.E. by E. Vessels drawing 12 feet can reach the shipping place at high-water springs, but none should attempt to enter before two-thirds flood.

**Tides**—It is high-water, full and change, at 11h. 15m. local time.

**Fleetwater and Gatehouse**—Fleetwater has its source in two streams, the larger one on the east side of a hill named the Cairns Muir of Fleet, which in a direct line is about 10 miles northward from Gatehouse. The town of Gatehouse, which is a borough, is situated upon the eastern side of the water, which is crossed by a stone bridge ; vessels of about 60 tons get up the embanked channel.

The trade is small, being confined to a few cargoes of coal and lime. The population in 1871 was 1,503. The nearest railway station is about 5 miles off.

**Coast**—From Ringdow, the rocky coast trends north-westward for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles to Carsluith burn ; the land is high, generally well wooded, and backed by a range of lofty hills, the highest of which is Cairnharrow, 1,487 feet in height. Near Ravenshill cliff is the conspicuous mansion of Kirkdale, and westward of it is the ruin of Carsluith castle, almost hidden by trees. The best channel into the Cree river is along this shore, which is free from danger beyond the distance of a cable.

From Carsluith burn the shore is low, with a stony margin and a high background, to the granite quarries, where is a projection formed from the refuse of the works. Abreast is a pool with 9 or 10 feet at low-water. The low-water channel, which runs close in to the shore, is about 100 yards wide, and is bounded westward by the Wigton sands.