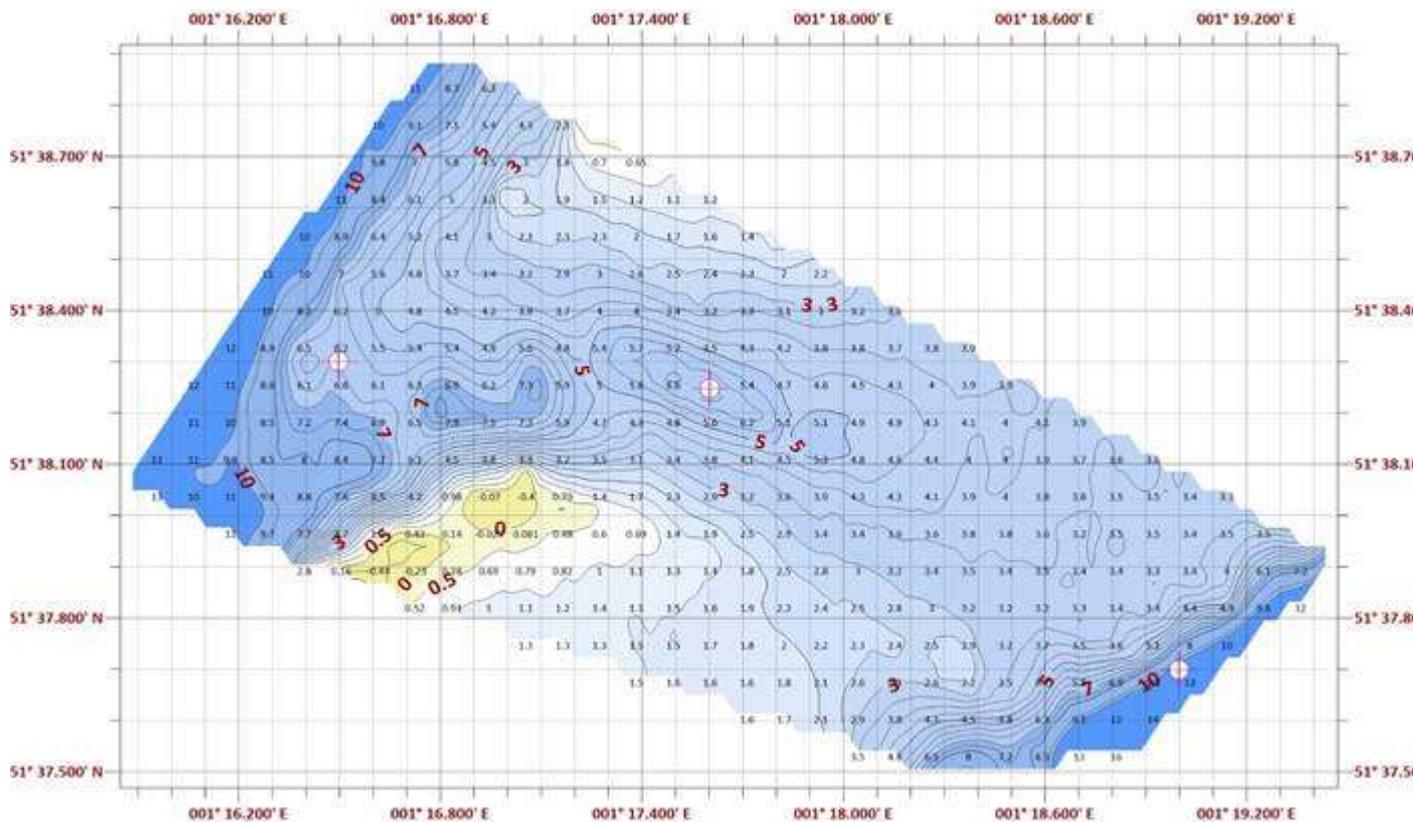


Consolidated Update 2021

SW Sunk Swatchway

On Thursday, 27th May, I went down to the SW Sunk for the survey. I was very fortunate to have Larry Botheras with me (Ex-Gladys of the YBW forum) and I am very grateful to him to help me. He steers, responds to commands(!) and generally keeps the boat going while I pour over instruments and look at the water, generally tut-tutting.

The SW Sunk is still firmly established. There are some changes, nothing dramatic except the SW knoll has migrated slightly to the North. Fortunately the Middle Sunk Knoll the other side appears to have migrated north slightly in harmony. The 2020 waypoints could still be used but I will comment on that in a moment. We started the first run of the survey, following the track between the three waypoints, and depth was fine. The profile of the swatch retained deeper water at the western side as before and the eastern side still had over 3 metres of water at chart datum. So the swatch is workable.



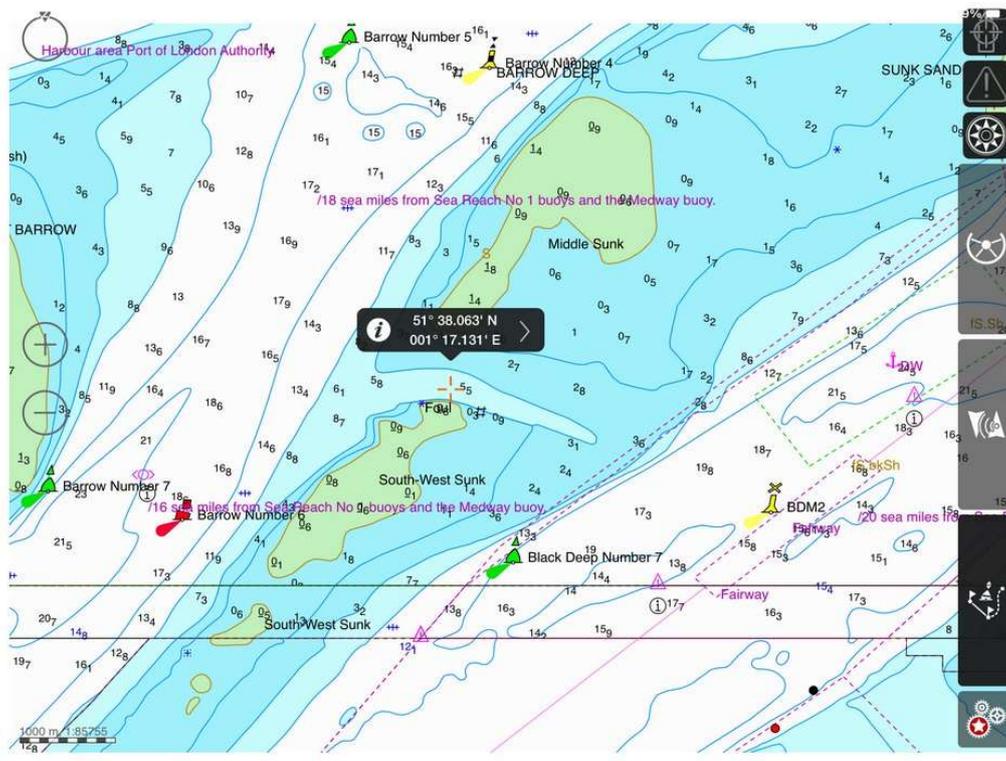
I am recommending revising the western and centre waypoints so as to retain the same distance away from the SW Knoll. The SW Knoll is very steep, indeed you will see at one point it looks pretty vertical. I suspect that edge changes very locally as Larry and I experienced seeing and going through a rather impressive tide rip (or is it 'overfalls') at the edge of the knoll. We had the advantage of no wind at all at the time so we could see the action of the tide. We were there at the second half of the spring tides so we can explore over the banks and that is the time that the tide rip occurs. We found probably as much as 1.8kts of tide moving from the east to the west through the swatch and where the swatch tide tries to exit into the Barrow Deep, the weight of the Barrow Deep flood forces the swatch flood round the edge of the face of the knoll and produces the rip. Please don't worry about this for 2 reasons. First, if you use the waypoints you will stay clear of the tide

rip. You can see from the chartlet that there is ample room further to the north if you wish. Second, if you use the tables in the book and seek the best passage times, you would not arrive at the swatch at the time of the tide rip. The rip is a function of the flood tide and once the flood eased the rip completely disappeared.

To get the new download go to: <http://www.crossingthethamesestuary.com/page29.html> (the first item). That gives full details of the revised waypoints and tracks. The 'Download' button provides a pdf file; if you click on the image you should get a jpg.

NOW: An important point. Please do not rely on any electronic chart at present to follow the deep water in the swatchway. On Friday 18th June, two yachts grounded on the SW Sunk knoll and it was necessary for the Walton and Clacton lifeboats to attend. Fortunately everything was resolved but there was some damage to steering and everybody had a nasty time.

I assume the two yachts did not follow my recommended waypoints but if they used any electronic chart and 'followed' the centre of the deep water that put them aground. A kind reader has sent a screenshot which marks (X) where the yachts were grounded:



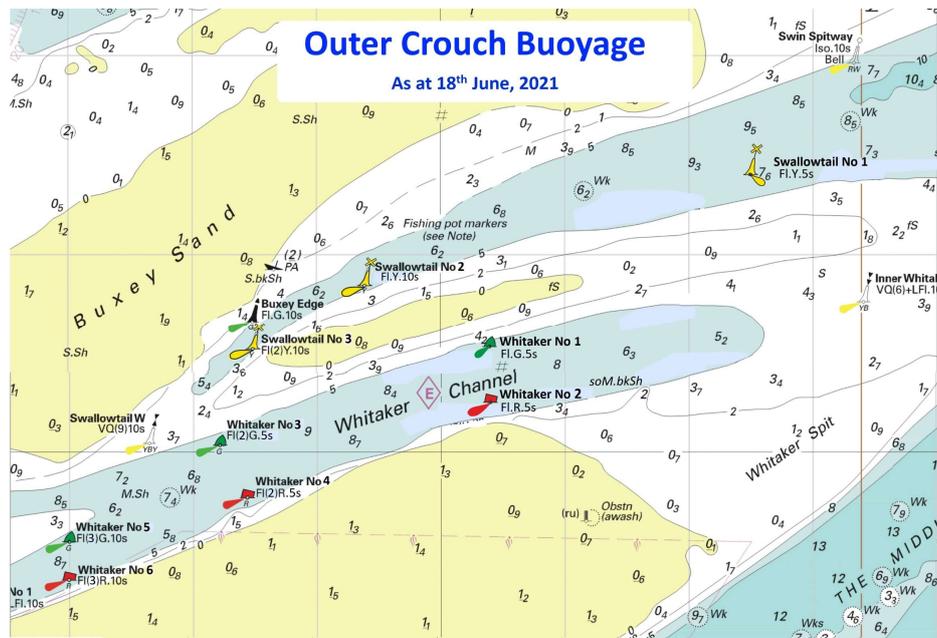
This is from iSailor and if you used Navionics, C-Map or Imray you would see the same. Essentially they are using the Admiralty data which is dated from 2019 after my submission of data that year. I have sent in the 2021 data to the UKHO and they are actioning the data. Unfortunately the next edition of the relevant UKHO chart is due on 8th July and is too late to include the changes. Since the electronic chart makers follow the UKHO data you should expect this area to be out of date for most of this year. If there is new information I will, of course, circulate it to readers.

In summary, please don't rely on electronic charts at present as regards the SW Sunk swatchway. I would stress though that the swatch is feasible, viable and, in appropriate conditions entirely safe provided the recommended waypoints are used. Of course depths can change but I would be

surprised if they changed significantly during this season. The recommended waypoints are on the download.

If you have any concerns and want to discuss the swatch, email me at rgaspar@tinyworld.co.uk. An alternative is the Little Sunk crossing which is a very stable plateau of sand and over recent years has little has changed.

Outer Crouch buoyage changes



The Changes

Crouch Harbour Authority have announced that with effect from 15th June, 2021, the Swallowtail and Whitaker channels are subject to some changes in the buoyage. The overall plan for marking the two channels is as before, but three buoys have been permanently removed causing some position, name and light characteristic changes.

Swallowtail Channel

The former No 2 has been removed, No 1 has been moved to the west and Nos 3 and 4 have been re-numbered Nos 2 and 3. Light characteristics for the 'new' No 2 have been changed.

Whitaker Channel

The former Nos 3 and 4 have been permanently removed and Nos 1 and 2 have been moved to the west just short of where the pair Nos 3 and 4 used to be located. Nos No 5 and 6 remain in the same position but are re-named Nos 3 and 4 and have changes in their light characteristics. Similarly Nos 7 and 8 are now re-named Nos 5 and 6 with light characteristics changes.

I have added a new download at: <http://www.crossingthethamesestuary.com/page29.html> (second item) which comprises of an image and full details of the changes. I have temporarily 'shopped' part of Imray Chart Y17 to illustrate the changes and remove the out of data

I have asked the London Array if we could be forewarned before those turbines bordering the Gat and dogleg were selected but they have told me that as local conditions will dictate the choices for the locations at short notice. So we are told that daily warnings will be broadcast on VHF Ch 16. We should also call up any London Array vessel irrespective of the absence of any Ch16 broadcast prior to entering the Wind Farm.

If you have any problems over the Downloads or have any questions, please drop me a return email.

Have a good season, I hope you and your families are all well and you enjoy the book. I appreciate the tables can be daunting. I am happy to help.

Roger

www.crossingthethamesestuary.com