



Northern England & IOM

FIFTY GREAT SEA KAYAK VOYAGES



Jim Krawiecki



SCOTLAND

WALES

NORTHERN ENGLAND

Northumberland

Tyne Tees

Cumbria

Yorkshire

Lancashire

ISLE OF MAN

Newcastle upon Tyne

Carlisle

Kendal

Heysam

Douglas

Kingston upon Hull

Manchester

Liverpool

Belfast

Dublin

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Maps by Bute Cartographic.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of my father. He brought up my brothers and me, giving us the inspiration, skills and freedom that led me to my appreciation and love for the outdoors. He taught us to respect the elements, seize the moment, and take pride in achievements, whilst not taking ourselves too seriously.

Sadly, Jurand passed away before this book could be completed.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks to those who contributed anecdotes and photographs that are credited throughout the book. During the time it took to compile information, take photographs, and write text for this guide I have had the benefit of help from others. The paddlers that accompanied me on the scenic sunshine tours, as well those as who stuck with me when it got 'grim up north', are too many to mention. However, they know who they are and my thanks and my respect goes to them all.

When it came down to the nitty-gritty of local information, the support and inspiration from local paddlers was invaluable. Keirron Tastagh and his wonderful family always make me welcome during my trips to the Isle of Man. Kate Duffus (Cumbria), Terry Hailwood (Yorkshire), Pat Murray (Tyne-Tees) and Ollie Jay (Northumberland) all took the time to help, advise and criticise at various stages of this project.

One non-paddler is pilot Bill Tiplady, whose flying helped to gain unique viewpoints along the eastern shores of northern England for research and photographs.

Most importantly, this book would not have been possible without the unending support of Kirstine Pearson, Sean Jesson and Peter Roscoe. I would like to acknowledge their efforts and extend my heartfelt thanks to them.

Finally, thanks are due to Franco Ferrero and his production team at Pesda Press. Franco's dedication to this project and his patience (when things didn't go according to plan) has been extraordinary.

Photographs

All photographs by Jim Krawiecki except where otherwise acknowledged in the captions.



Ed Douglas

Foreword

Life as a journalist with a passion for the outdoors can be both opportunity and trial. In the first instance I get offered fun jobs, like my first sea kayaking experience when Jim Krawiecki took me out for a short paddle along the Menai Straits. I felt like a new window on the world had been opened. Everything I love about being in nature, about making a journey, however small, and seeing things afresh were instantly obvious to me as I was expertly shepherded along.

I also immediately recognised that sea kayaking is just about the best way to watch wildlife without sitting still for weeks on end. I remember being grateful to Jim and his publisher Franco, who was also helping keep me upright, for their patience and the same indefinable ease they showed in their chosen environment that I've seen so often among mountain climbers. I felt immediately that I wanted to do more sea kayaking and within a few weeks was off to the Isle of Skye, where within five minutes of getting in the water I was paddling behind an otter.

The trial in outdoor journalism comes in how the media often choose to portray adventure sports as being something for adrenaline fiends who barely notice the world they live in. I'd be lying if I said I didn't enjoy the odd rush of the good stuff, even in my dotage, but it seems to me grotesquely unfair to assume that this is all that the outdoors has to offer. Five minutes with this book reveals the richness of the experience available paddling in our own backyard. And that's your own, individual, salt-flecked experience, not one absorbed with millions of others sitting on their sofas watching *Coast*.

If paddling off Lancashire isn't quite on the same scale as Odysseus sailing through the isles of Greece, it's astonishing how different the familiar can look from the radical new angle of a kayak. Having received an invitation from Jim to cross the Pennines by kayak, I foolishly went to the Himalaya instead, but looking at the journey described in this book I should have tagged along when I had the chance. Paddling up the River Lune into Lancaster with him was some compensation. It was bitterly cold, and we made the amusing discovery, after hauling our boats up a steep hill, that the Lancaster canal had been drained for maintenance and so had to float back down the river instead.

Apart from all the useful, practical information, I love the pictures chosen for the book: boats left high and dry; bizarre, abandoned structures; remote rock arches, those arches of experience that we seem inexplicably drawn to pass through. It's always a treat to see the North of England re-imagined, but I doubt many books will allow you to do so as comprehensively as this one.

Ed Douglas



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Access & Environment

ENGLAND

Access to the outdoors in England is becoming increasingly encouraged and revisions to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act of 2000 has brought access to many additional areas of coastal land. While engaged in sea kayaking it is rare to encounter access problems. Most of the routes described in this book start and finish at beaches or harbours where public access to the foreshore is already established. Areas of coast between the high and low water mark are often described as 'foreshore', and most of this is owned by the Crown Estate. Neither the Crown Estate nor any other owners normally restrict access to the foreshore.

One exception to this is where it is important to protect areas from human disturbance at nature reserves like those at Spurn Head, South Walney and Lindisfarne. Another exception is where there are MoD firing ranges like those at Whitburn and Eskmeals. Details of these ranges along with contact details are given in the relevant chapters of this guide.

Access on the sea is only restricted in rare and extreme cases and information is given by HM Coastguard during regular maritime safety information broadcasts.

At busy ports like Liverpool and Tyne it is important to seek permission from the relevant authority, either by VHF radio or by mobile phone, before entering or crossing busy harbor entrances.

ISLE OF MAN

The Isle of Man is not part of the United Kingdom; it is a self-governing British crown dependency. However access to its foreshore, harbours and coastal land is much as it is in England.

RESPECT THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS

Acting with courtesy, consideration and awareness is very important. If you are exercising access rights make sure that you respect the privacy, safety and livelihoods of those living and working in the outdoors, and the needs of others enjoying the outdoors.

CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Sea kayakers can access remote and special places that others cannot. Many of these places have sensitive plant, animal and bird life. Be aware of, and respect landing restrictions around nature reserves. Look after the places you visit and enjoy and leave the land as you find it. Natural England (www.naturalengland.org.uk) has created www.natureonthemap.org.uk, a source of detailed maps that outline protected sites and habitats. The Marine Conservation Society (www.mcsuk.org) offers advice on how to act appropriately around marine wildlife.

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN ACTIONS

Remember that the outdoors cannot be made risk free and that you should act with care at all times for your own safety and that of others.

WILD CAMPING

This guide provides information on many ‘paddler friendly’ commercial campsites. However, wild camping provides a special experience and forms an integral part of sea touring. There is no right to camp on the English or Manx coasts, and areas that lend themselves to wild camping for sea kayakers are few and far between. If you do decide to add a wild camp to your journey plan, be sure to choose a remote location away from dwellings, roads and paths. Always arrive late in the day and do not pitch your tent until dusk. You should take your tent down early the following morning. “Leave nothing but footprints and take nothing but photographs.”

Important Notice

As with many outdoor activities that take place in remote and potentially hostile environments, technical ability, experience and good planning are essential. The sea is one of the most committing and unforgiving environments. With this considered, it should be treated with the constant respect that it deserves. This guide is designed to provide information that will inspire the sea kayaker to venture into this amazing environment; however it cannot provide the essential ingredients of ability, experience and good planning. Before venturing out on any of the trips described in this book, ensure that your knowledge and ability are appropriate to the seriousness of the trip. The book is purely a guide to provide information about sea kayaking trips. For the additional essential knowledge of safety at sea, personal paddling skills, environmental considerations and tidal planning, the author recommends gaining the appropriate training and advice from experienced and qualified individuals.

WARNING

Sea kayaking is inherently a potentially dangerous sport. Users of this guide should take the appropriate precautions before undertaking any of the trips. The information supplied in this book has been thoroughly researched; however the author can take no responsibility if tidal times differ or if the information supplied is not sufficient for the conditions on the day. Conditions can change quickly and dramatically on the sea and there is no substitute for good judgment and personal risk assessment during the planning stages of a sea trip, or out on the water. This guide cannot replace or diminish the need for these essential skills. The decision on whether to go out sea kayaking or not, and any consequences arising from that decision, remain yours and yours alone.

How to Use the Guide

To use the guide you will need an up-to-date tide table for the relevant area, the appropriate Ordnance Survey maps and the knowledge to use them.

Each of the fifty trip chapters is set out into seven sections:

Tidal & Route Information - This is designed as a quick reference for all the 'must know' information on which to plan the trip.

Introduction - This is designed to give the reader a brief overview of what to expect from the trip and to whet the appetite.

Description - This provides further detail and information on the trip including the coastline, launching/landing points, the wildlife and environment, historical information and places of interest to visit.


Tide & Weather - Offering further tidal information and how best to plan the trip which takes the tides, weather and local knowledge into consideration.


Map of Route - This provides a visual outline of the route's start/finish points, landing places, points of interest and tidal information.


Additional Information - This section provides further information (including Admiralty Charts and other useful maps) that will complement the trip, or be of interest if in the local area.

Using the Tidal & Route Information

Each route begins with an overview of pertinent details beginning with the following information: grade of difficulty, trip name, route symbols, and trip number.

 **Grade A** | Relatively easy landings with escape routes easily available. Offering relative shelter from extreme conditions and ocean swell. Some tidal movement may be found, but easy to predict with no major tidal races or overfalls.

 **Grade B** | Some awkward landings and sections of coastline with no escape routes should be expected. Tidal movement, tidal races, overfalls, crossings, ocean swell and surf may be found on these trips. They will also be exposed to the weather and associated conditions.

 **Grade C** | These trips will have difficult landings and will have no escape routes for long sections of the trip. Fast tidal movement, tidal races, overfalls, extended crossings, ocean swell and surf will be found on all these trips. They will be very exposed to the weather and sea state, therefore require detailed planning and paddlers to be competent in rough water conditions. With this considered, the journey may require good conditions for the trip to be viable.

CIRCUMNAVIGATION

COASTAL PADDLING

SHELTERED

OPEN SEA CROSSING

NO LANDING ZONES

STRONG TIDAL EFFECTS

PORTAGE NECESSARY

VEHICLE SHUTTLE

FERRY SHUTTLE

ROUTE SYMBOLS



Distance	Total distance for the trip.
OS Sheet	Number of Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 Landranger map required.
Tidal Port	The port for which tide timetables will be required to work out the tidal streams.
Start	△ map symbol, name and six-figure grid reference of starting point.
Finish	○ map symbol, name and six-figure grid reference of finishing point.
HW/LW	The high and/or low water time difference between local ports nearest to the trip and the tidal port.
Tidal Times	Location or area of tidal stream movement, the direction to which the tidal stream flows and the time it starts flowing in relation to the tidal port high water.
Max Rate Sp	The areas in which the tidal streams are fastest and the maximum speed in knots attained on the average spring tide.
Coastguard	Name of the relevant Coastguard Station.

MAP SYMBOLS



start & alternative start



finish & alternative finish



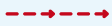
waypoint



possible escape



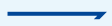
portage



described route



alternative route



tidal stream direction

-0520 HW

time relative to Tidal Port HW

7kn Sp

Max Rate at Springs



High point



major counter-current



areas of counter-currents / eddies



areas of rough water / overfalls



lighthouse & light



lifeboat

lifeboat station



ferry, passenger & car



campsite



bird reserve



town / buildings



Prohibited Zone

prohibited area



car park

About the Author



© Jim Krawiecki | Kate Duffus

Jim Krawiecki

Jim started paddling in any old kayak he could muster during the school holidays. He has since paddled (and swum) many of the exciting white water rivers of England, Scotland and Wales, as well as many of those in the French Alps.

A passion for sea kayaking combined with an interest in writing and photography, brought about the first comprehensive Guidebook to the Welsh coast, for sea kayakers. *Welsh Sea Kayaking* was co-written by Andy Biggs and published in September 2006 by Pesda Press. Since then, Jim has travelled overseas to paddle along French coastlines, Greek islands and the shores of east Greenland.

Jim lives in Manchester, is a prominent member of North West Sea Kayakers, and regularly organises meets and sea trips. So a sea kayakers' guide to northern England and the Isle of Man was the obvious choice for an encore. This project has taken Jim to far-flung and remote coastal stretches as well as northern England's industrial and urban tideways.



The Lancashire Coast

Introduction

The Lancashire coast begins at its border with Cumbria and Morecambe Bay in the north and finishes at the entrance to the Mersey in the south. With the famous ports of Heysham, Lancaster, Fleetwood and Liverpool, there is no denying Lancashire of its maritime heritage. The coastline holds little in the way of obvious paddling adventures. Local paddlers are however passionate about their patch, which has given rise to some innovative ideas for trips.

This section has four trips that are unique, each with its own distinct adventurous flavour. Crossing Morecambe Bay is certainly no mean feat. This is an area where the sea holds more than a few tricks and conditions change rapidly from one minute to the next. Despite the strong tides, the Wyre Estuary is a trip for all with enough to keep seasoned paddlers entertained. With the help of a big spring tide, a trip up the Lune Estuary could float you over the tidal weir above Lancaster. From there it is possible to return to the start by canal, completing an intriguing circular route. The most unusual of all, by far, is the tour of Blackpool's famous illuminations by kayak.

Tides and weather

The land along the Lancashire coast is exposed to prevailing south-westerly winds. Much of the coastal land is low lying, giving little shelter other than in the upper reaches of Lune and Wyre estuaries.

Beaches are mostly gently shelving and there are huge areas of sand and mud exposed at low water. When the tide comes in, these areas are flooded at a phenomenal rate. This results in powerful tidal streams, especially where these advancing waters are squeezed into narrow channels and river estuaries.

Further information

For more information about kayaking in this region, see the following titles:

West Coast of England and Wales Pilot NP37, UK Hydrographic Office 2005, 978-070771880.

Sand Pilot of Morecambe Bay, Atlantic Transport Publishers 1998, 978-0906899946.





Looking north from Fleetwood across Morecambe Bay




Morecambe Bay



No. 21 | Grade C | 20km | OS Sheet 102

Tidal Port Liverpool

Start  Roa Island ferry slipway (SD 232 647)

Finish  Fleetwood Esplanade Beach (SD 339 485)

HW/LW HW at Piel is around 10 minutes after HW Liverpool; HW at Fleetwood is around 5 minutes before HW Liverpool.

Tidal Times The N-going stream in the Piel Channel starts at around 6 hours after HW Liverpool; the S-going stream starts around 1 hour after HW Liverpool.

In the open waters of Morecambe Bay, the ENE-going (in-going) stream starts around 6 hours before HW Liverpool and the WSW-going (out-going) stream starts at around HW Liverpool.

Max rate Sp 3 knots

Coastguard Liverpool, tel. 0151 931 3341, VHF weather every 3 hours from 0130



Morecambe Bay can humble even large vessels.

Introduction

The tides of Morecambe Bay have a well-deserved reputation. It is said that the broad sands of Ulverston, Grange and Silverdale can be inundated at a rate that cannot be outrun by a galloping horse. Some say that these claims are exaggerations, but people are frequently caught out. The tragedy in February 2004 in which the lives of at least 21 Chinese cockle-pickers were lost is well known. The 20km crossing is a serious undertaking that requires excellent navigation and paddling skills. This trip should only be undertaken in clear settled weather, ideally on a neap tide.

Description

Walney Island stands at the northern entrance to Morecambe Bay. The best place to launch is from nearby Roa Island, which is tucked inside the Piel Channel between the south end of Walney and Barrow-in-Furness. The causeway leading to Roa can be found by driving through the village of Rampside off the A5087 coastal route between Ulverston and Barrow-in-Furness.

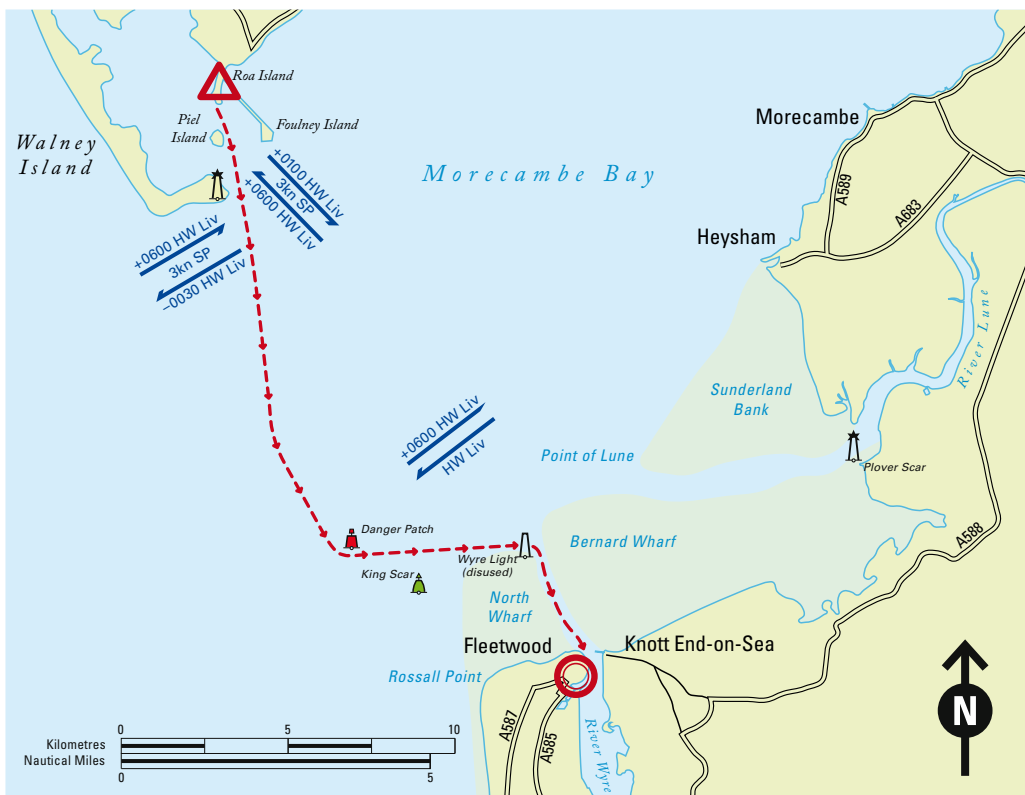
The causeway leads to Piel Street, at the end of which are the Barrow lifeboat station and the sloping jetty for the Piel ferry. The jetty and the surrounding shore are ideal for launching at mid- to low-tide. Once on the water, follow the S-going ebb stream out of Piel Channel, past Piel Island and the SE Point of Walney and out into Morecambe Bay. You should be able to make out the Blackpool Tower from here, which lies 28km south-southeast and makes a good bearing for the next 6km of the crossing.

After this first part of the crossing, you should head southeast for the buildings of Fleetwood as the flood stream begins. This should bring you to an area known as 'Danger Patch', which is marked by a large red buoy (SD 283 516). King Scar lies just over 1.5km east-southeast, and is marked by an even larger green buoy (SD 296 509). Keep a look out for other vessels when approaching this area; all of the shipping traffic for Heysham, Lancaster and Fleetwood moves through here.

The skeletal structure of Wyre Light (now disused) stands nearly 3km to the east on the northern limit of the sandbank called North Wharf, marking the entrance to the Fleetwood channel. It is important to make good headway going south into the Fleetwood channel in order to avoid being pushed towards the River Lune by the strong NE-going flow. Once you are in the Fleetwood channel, it is just a case of following the buoys to the eastern end of the Fleetwood sea front. The Esplanade Beach is marked by a square lighthouse made of sandstone blocks known as Fleetwood's Lower Light. There is a slipway that leads from the sands to roadside parking along the Esplanade.

Tides and weather

Between Wyre Light and Fleetwood, the in-going stream follows the channel south-southwest when the sand banks are still dry. When the sands surrounding the channel become covered, the





Ferry dodging

flow runs east across the channel. Overfalls form where strong currents rush over, around and between sand banks, which can be almost anywhere during the trip. All parts of the route are exposed to swell from the north, west and south and to winds from any direction.

Additional information

The Ferry Café is around 300m south from the Lower Light along the esplanade, located beside the ferry slipway and tram terminus at Fleetwood.

Variations

Making this crossing in reverse can be slightly easier. The best place to launch is from the beach to the south of Rossall Point to the west of Fleetwood. There is a car park and access to the beach via a path that leads over the sea wall (SD 311 455) at the junction of West Way and Fairway. In clear conditions, it will be possible to make out the lighthouse on the south of Walney Island with the buildings of Barrow-in-Furness beyond. You should allow the last of the SW-going ebb to carry you out to sea during the first half of the crossing. The NE-going flood stream will gather strength as you approach Walney Island. You should aim to pass close to Walney's SE Point to avoid missing the entrance to Piel Channel.