
RYA Guide to the River Dart



Rising up out of Dartmoor and tumbling through South Devon, the River Dart meets the sea at Dartmouth. Steeped in nautical history and good pubs too, Dartmouth is often as far as many visiting boats get to.

But, it's up river the Dart comes into its own. By boat, and with a rising tide, the Dart is navigable as far as Totnes, which dates back over a thousand years and is a cool place to shop and eat. The route up the Dart has stunning scenery, great visitor moorings, good pubs, historical sites, yummy ice creams, crabbing and tranquil surroundings, and with 2.3m to 3.5m HW Totnes and lots more height along the way, it's achievable by most boats.

So let's push on 'up-river' to see what's in store.

Getting started

Heading North past Noss Marina, then NW the river becomes tree lined with the deeper water favouring the starboard side of the channel.



Noss Marina (Chart point 1)

Just opposite Sir Walter Raleigh's boathouse lies the Anchor Stone, a rock with a large red topmark atop so leave it well to port. Half a mile on and you reach Dittisham to port, and Greenway Quay to starboard.



The Anchor Stone (Chart point 2)

Dittisham



Dittisham dates back to the Saxon invasion of Devon 660 A.D. Visitors are now usually looking for a good lunch, drink or some fun crabbing on the long dinghy pontoon.

Visitors' buoys are plentiful and rafting expected.

A water taxi operates if you do not want to use a dinghy. There are two pubs, the Ferry Boat Inn on the quay and the Red Lion up the hill near the village shop.

Dittisham and the Ferry Boat Inn (Chart point 3)

Greenway

A steep lane climbs from Greenway Quay past ferry cottage up to Greenway House, once the private holiday home of Dame Agatha Christie, now National Trust and open to visitors. A water taxi operates to Greenway Quay, Dittisham and offers boat transfers.



Greenway Quay and ferry cottage (Chart point 4)

From Dittisham, deep water favours the starboard side and passes close to the moored boats keeping you off Flat Owers shoal. The channel turns N then NW to pass Galmpton with its many boatyards and the holding area for landing craft before the D- Day landings in WW2.



Once past the second boathouse, deep water favours the opposite bank and wanders towards Blackness Rock and Blackness Pt.

Second boathouse after Galmpton (Chart point 5)

When the slipway and yellow cable marks at Blackness marine are abeam, head to the North bank to run past Pighole Point.



Blackness Rock (Chart point 6)

Follow the mooring trots that lead around to Stoke Gabriel creek.



Pighole Pt (right) and the moorings leading to Stoke Gabriel (left) (Chart point 7)

Stoke Gabriel

Stoke Gabriel offers pubs, the quayside ‘River Shack’ cafe/bistro, ice cream and great crabbing. Outside the creek, there are a few visitors mooring buoys. Red and green posts indicate that the channel meanders to the port bank then over to starboard of the dinghy pontoon. The creek leads to a dam; on which it’s possible to tie-up, but most people moor outside and dinghy in.



Entrance to Stoke Gabriel Creek (Chart point 8)

Carrying on up the Dart deep water shifts onto the West bank near White Rock. No.2 red can marks the turn North for Totnes or West into Bow Creek.



No.2 red can and entrance to Bow Creek (Chart point 9)

Bow Creek & Tuckenhay

The top of Bow Creek offers the Malsters Arms at Tuckenhay. The Malsters, once owned by Keith Floyd, is included in The Times best 50 places to eat alfresco, (April 2010). Depending on draft, the pontoon and wall alongside the pub is accessible 2 hours either side of HW. Overnight mooring is allowed by booking in advance. The channel is marked by posts which wind in intricate S shapes for $\frac{3}{4}$ m to the pub.



The Malsters Arms - Quay and pontoon (Chart point 10)

Out of Bow Creek and back on the Dart, from No.2 red can and No.3 green, the channel narrows, becomes wooded and beautiful.

Sharpham Estate



Sharpham house and boathouse comes into view as you close Ham Pt. The house, designed in 1770 by Sir Robert Taylor, and the 500 acre estate is a vineyard and cheese producer offering wines, cheese, tours and tastings.

Sharpham house, boat house and Green post marking Ham Pt (Chart point 11)

The vineyards run down towards the river bank around Sharpham Pt. and a landing stage in Fleet Mill Reach offers the chance of a visit.



Sharpham landing stage (Chart point 12)

Totnes

Sharpham to Totnes is straightforward with occasional buoys on route and deeper water favouring the outside of bends. The river straightens and Baltic Wharf Boatyard comes into view along with the distant spire of St Mary’s church in Totnes.

Mooring is available at Baltic Wharf or opposite, alongside the wall at Steamer Quay.



Baltic Wharf (Chart point 13)



Steamer Quay (Chart point 14)

Totnes is a bustling medieval market town with great shops, pubs, restaurants and even a castle. From here you can even follow the Dart North by catching a steam train from Totnes to Buckfastleigh.



Totnes Bridge (Chart point 15)



Cafe culture

Fact file

Web

The Malsters Arms	www.tuckenhay.com
Greenway House	www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-greenway
Sharpham	www.sharpham.com
Dart Harbour	www.dartharbour.org.uk

VHF

Dart Harbour	Call Dart Nav	Ch.11
Fuel barge (Dartmouth)		Ch.6
Greenway Ferry		Ch.10
Marinas		Ch.80

Tides

Dartmouth				
Range	Spring	4.7m	MHWS 4.9	MLWS 0.6
	Neap	3.5m	MHWN 3.8	MLWN 2.0
Totnes				
	Spring	-	MHWS 3.5	
	Neap	-	MHWN 2.3	

Rough guide - there should be a good 1m of tidal rise above what's on the chart at Totnes (LW + 3hrs).

Slipways

Dartmouth Higher Ferry
 Totnes – Steamer Quay
 Darthaven
 Noss
 Blackness Marine
 Stoke Gabriel
 Dittisham

Charts

Imray 2300.9
 BA 5602 folio
 BA 2253

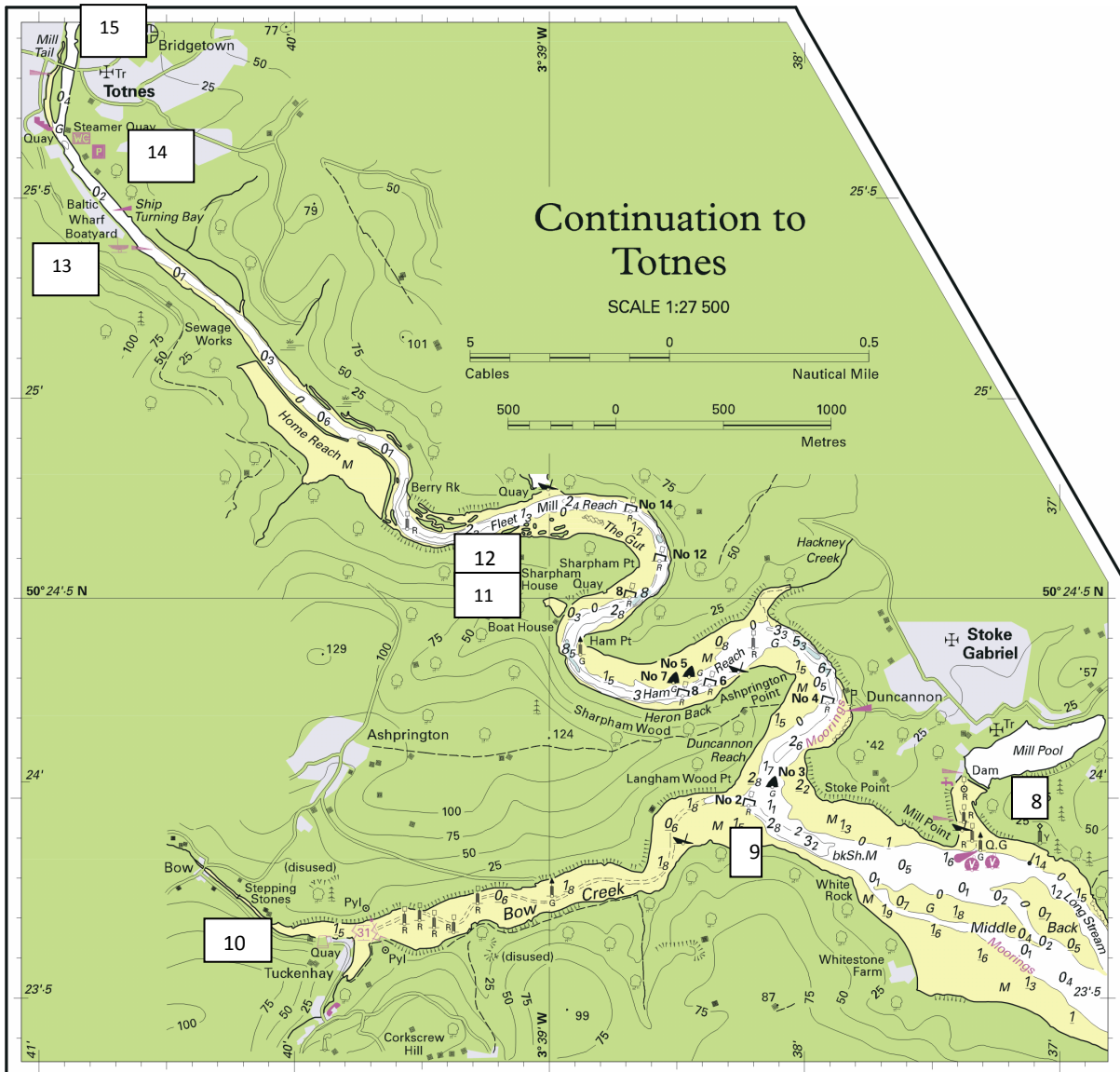
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Many thanks to South Devon College for their kindness lending a boat for the making of this article.

www.southdevon.ac.uk/about-us/facilities/noss-marina

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