



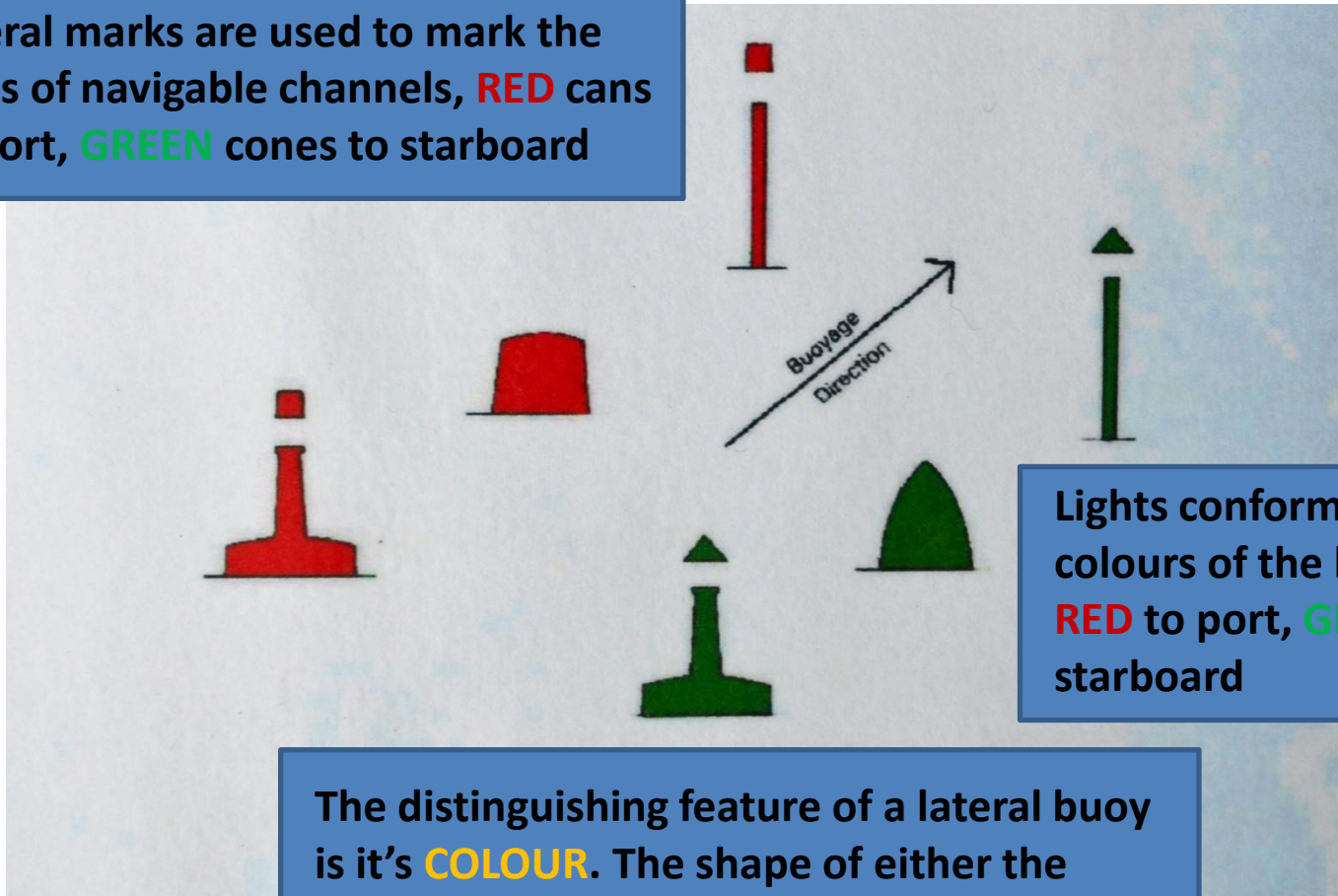
# **BASIC BUOYAGE**

**IALA MARITIME BUOYAGE SYSTEM**

**- what they mean and what to do -**

# Lateral Marks

Lateral marks are used to mark the sides of navigable channels, **RED** cans to port, **GREEN** cones to starboard

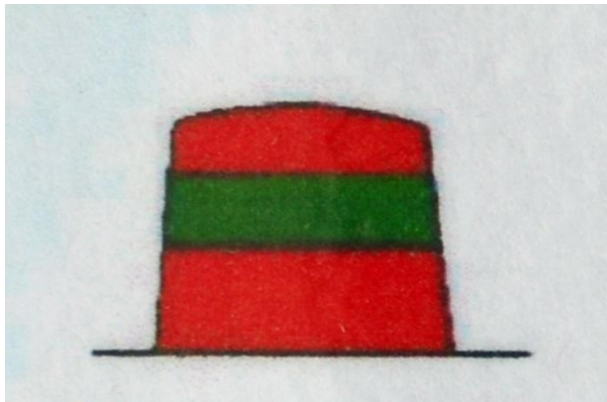


Lights conform to the colours of the buoys, **RED** to port, **GREEN** to starboard

The distinguishing feature of a lateral buoy is its **COLOUR**. The shape of either the buoy or its top-mark is also distinctive

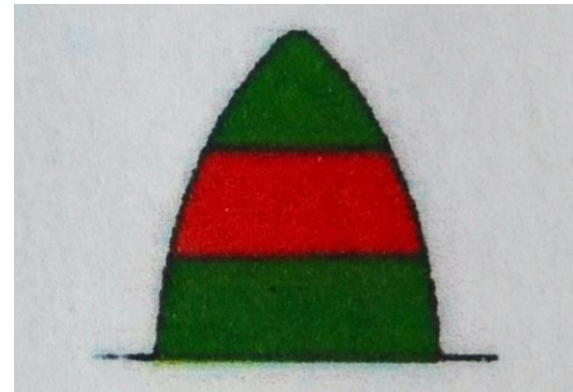
# Modified Lateral Marks

Preferred channel to RIGHT



Light, composite group flashing **red**  
(eg Fl (2+1) R)

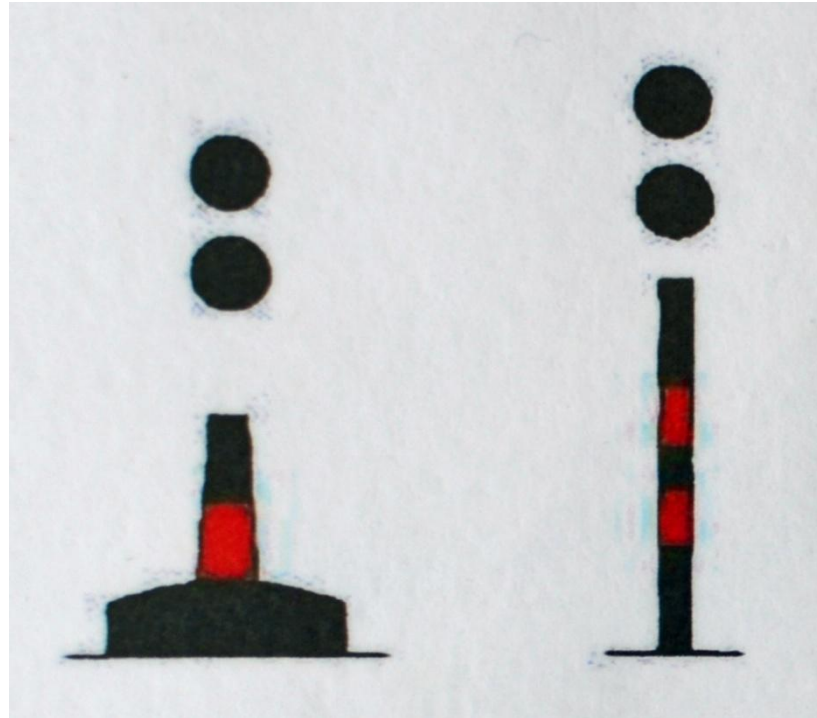
Preferred channel to LEFT



Light, composite group flashing **green**  
(eg Fl (2+1) G)

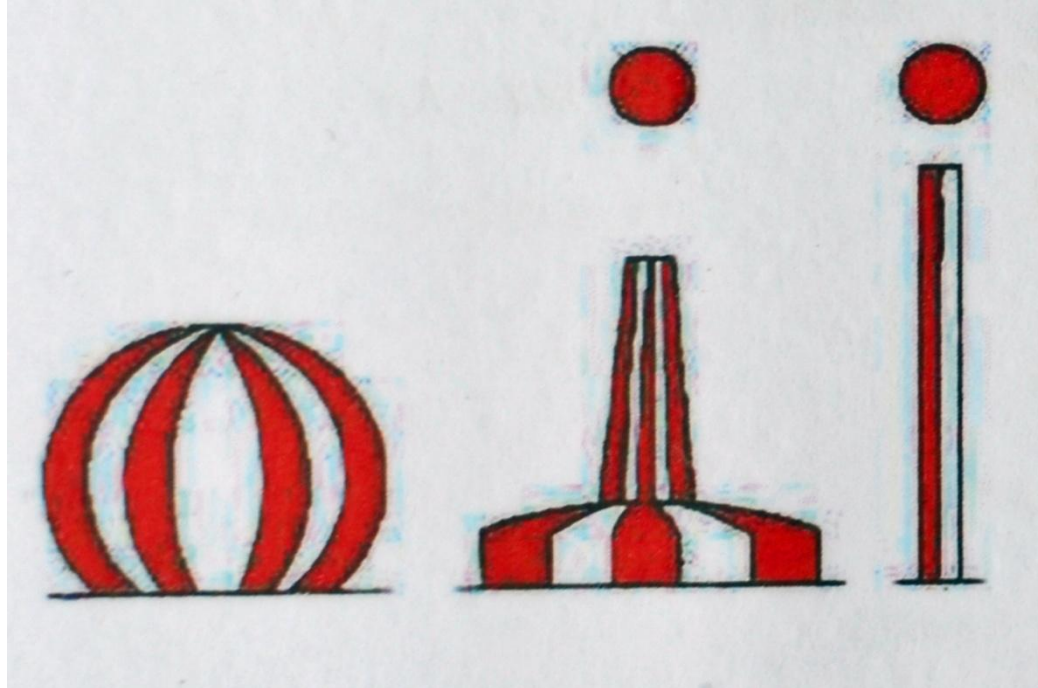
The purpose of modified lateral marks is to mark the point where a channel divides, when proceeding in the conventional direction of the buoyage and indicate the preferred channel

# Isolated Danger Marks



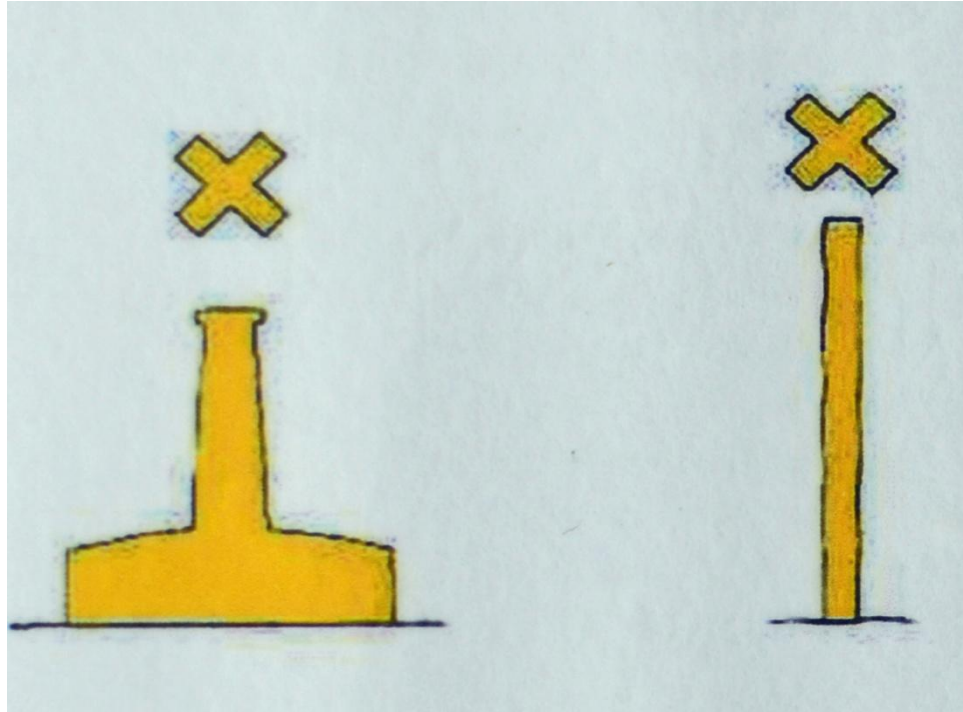
- Used to mark an isolated danger, with navigable water all around
- Distinguishing feature is the double-sphere top-mark (a feature of the **CARDINAL** family – it might be considered as a central cardinal mark)
- Light characteristic is group flashing 2

# Safe Water Marks



- Used as landfall buoys or as central channel markers
- There is deep water all around them
- The single top-mark is a feature it shares with marks from the **LATERAL** family
- Light characteristic is **white**, isophase or occulting or one long flash every 10s or Morse 'A'

# Special Marks

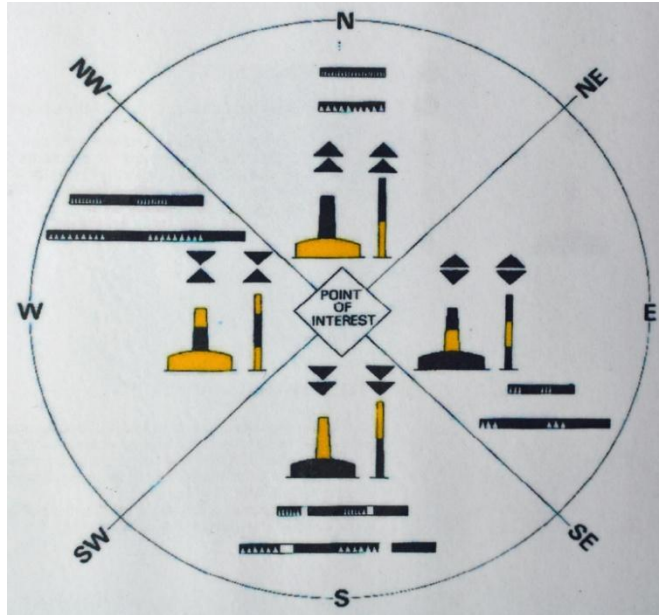


- Used to indicate special areas or features such as military exercise areas, recreation areas and spoil grounds
- They may be any shape, are always **yellow** and may carry a yellow **X** top-mark
- If they carry a light it will be **yellow** and will not conflict with normal navigational marks

# Cardinal Markers

Named according to the side of the HAZARD they mark

The WEST side of a shoal will be marked with a WEST CARDINAL BUOY



The EAST side of a shoal will be marked with an EAST CARDINAL BUOY

- The distinguishing feature of any cardinal mark is its double-cone top-mark
- **North** points up, **South** points down, **West** points together, **East** points apart
- Lights conform to a clock code, ie, 3 o'clock = **EAST**, 6 o'clock = **SOUTH**, 9'clock = **WEST** & continuous flashing = **NORTH** (as 12 flashes would be uncountable)
- South is actually six flashes plus a long flash to make it easier to distinguish from east and west

# Example of Buoyed Channel

## SKIPPER'S TOP TIP

I keep a copy of this laminated near the helm so that any crew member, whatever their experience, can work out which side to pass marks and buoys



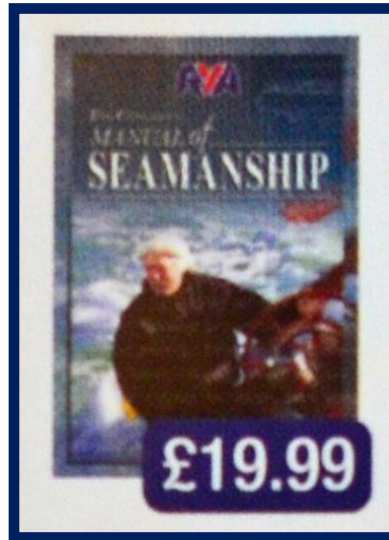


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## Further Reading



We highly recommend Tom Cunliffe's  
**RYA Seamanship Handbook (G36)**

You can buy a copy of this book by visiting our on-line shop

[www.penguinsailing.com](http://www.penguinsailing.com)

