As a narrator Pip is breezily confident about his exact location at any given time. Walking across the marshes from the forge the river is on his right, but too far in this direction and he will miss the battery. Hearing a noise, the party pursuing Magwitch slant east, and an hour’s walk brings them to the hulk.

But looking back on our own excursions into Dickens Land, there is often a gap between where Pip says he is and where the reader ends up while trying to find him. The historic hulks he describes are more likely to have been near Chatham. A group composed of soldiers, a blacksmith, a child and an overweight church clerk are unlikely to have the same walking speed, so which of them is setting the pace?

This is not a reliable treasure map where X marks the spot. The area we are designating ‘the marshes’ represents our best guess based on what Pip tells us in the early chapters of the novel. All mistakes are his own.