

Code of Conduct



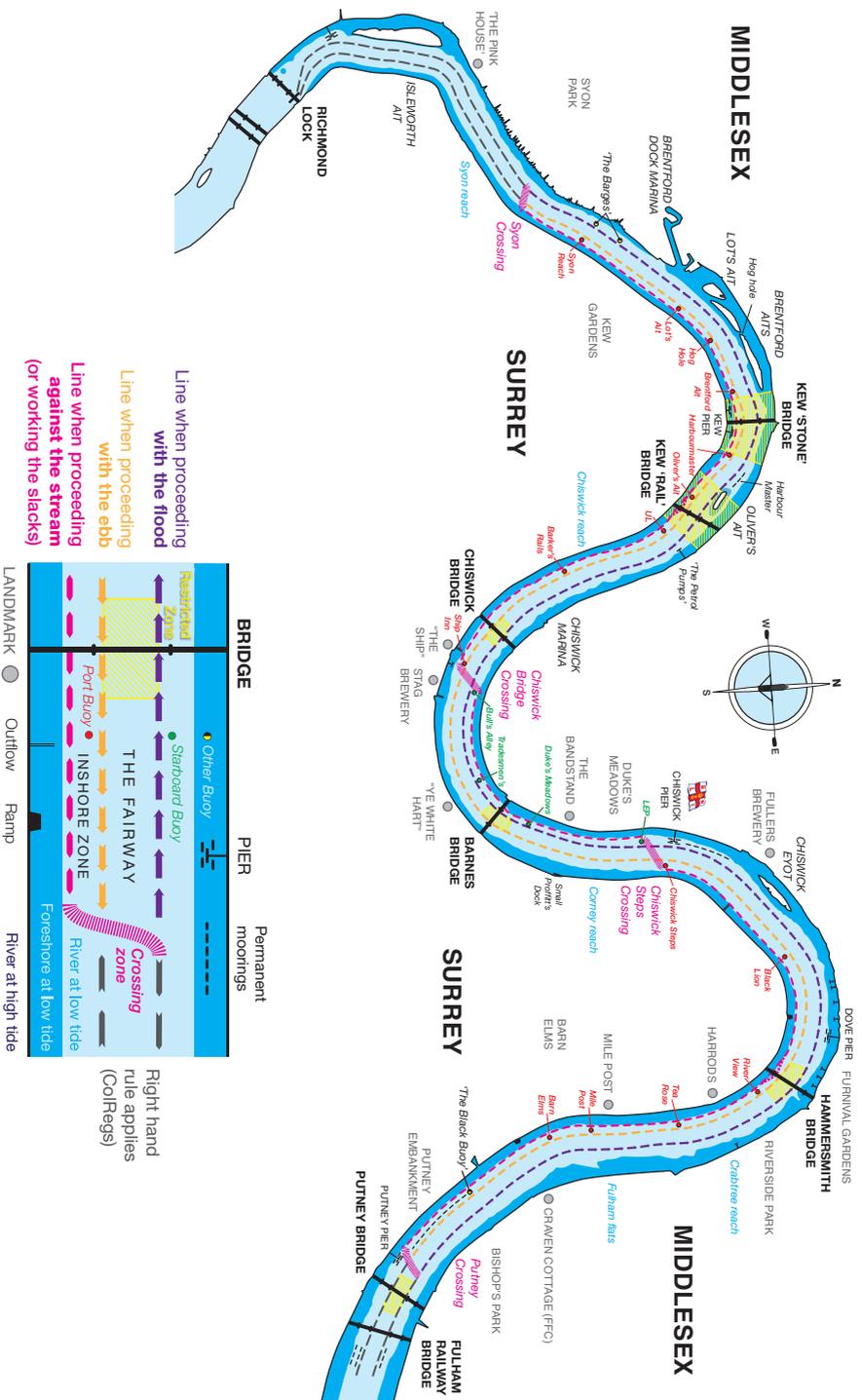
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For further information about Cygnet Rowing Club including the constitution, rules, racing, training, safety and social events please check the website at www.cygnet-rc.org.uk and the club notice boards.

Purpose

We, the Management Committee of Cygnet Rowing Club, are very pleased to welcome you as a member of Cygnet - whether you are a complete newcomer to rowing, someone with experience elsewhere in the rowing fraternity, or one of our existing members extending your years or even decades with the club. Our goal is to provide you with the up-to-date equipment, crew mates, coaching and a framework of advice that will enable you to get the most out of our sport. This Code of Conduct sets out what we expect of you by way of common sense, adult behaviour towards other members, the equipment we provide, and other users of the rivers and lakes we row on, especially our normal home waters, the tidal Thames between Richmond and Putney or beyond (as outlined in the "Rowing on the Tideway: A Code of Practice for Rowing on the Tidal Thames above Putney 2006" laid down by the PLA, see the map and guidelines on the notice board).

The code has been compiled in accordance with the Water Safety Code 2003 of the Amateur Rowing Association ("the ARA Code") and the example of similar codes at other rowing clubs. If you follow its provisions and those in related, more detailed documents displayed in the boathouse, you will get the most out of rowing while minimising the risks inherent in a strenuous water sport by:

- giving priority to the safety of yourself, your crew and other river users
- looking after equipment properly, so that it is available for use and it lasts
- ensuring that membership of this club is a pleasant & rewarding experience

Status and Effect

We have prepared this Code in friendly accessible language, and do not want to take the pleasure away from rowing by setting restrictive rules. However, boats, oars and training equipment are expensive, and injuries to other people or damage to their equipment could be not only costly but also dangerous to life and limb. Our money is far better spent on additional or improved facilities and equipment than on repairs, increased insurance premiums, or lawyers' fees, court costs and compensation. Therefore a breach of any of the requirements set out in or under The Code could become a formal disciplinary matter.

The Code applies to anyone using the Club's equipment, and to any Club member boating from the Civil Service Boathouse, the Cygnet Bungalow, Emanuel Boathouse, or Dacre (including responsibility for their guests). All clubs have a similar code - they can reasonably expect you to follow its letter and spirit wherever you may be training or competing.

General

Safety is an issue involving everybody in the club irrespective of their activities. Safety consciousness will help to prevent accidents, injuries and damage. Any disregard for the safety of others is inexcusable and a breach of the legal "duty of care" each of us owes to all others affected by our actions or omissions. Any act that endangers others, including interfering with safety equipment, may be an infringement of the law. There are therefore clear moral, legal, and financial obligations, which make due regard to safety essential.

Under the ARA Code, the club has appointed a Water Safety Adviser and adheres to certain practices to mitigate the inherent risks. The Water Safety Adviser's tasks are to understand the ARA Code, to advise the Management Committee on ways of improving our conformity with it, and to promote awareness and safe practices.

He or she is neither the club policeman nor the person on whom responsibility for safety is dumped so that other members can ignore it. It is your responsibility to understand the risks and to apply the necessary best practices so that we can all row, cox, coach or steer without accidents or disruption. If we do not take effective action ourselves, we might find that more restrictive requirements are imposed on us.

The ARA Code is displayed prominently on the notice board in the boathouse. You must follow its recommendations. The following points are worthy of particular emphasis:

Risk Assessment

The ARA Code requires us to undertake collective and individual risk assessments before each activity. Fast stream, high winds, fog, very high or very low water levels, excessive flotsam, or excessive traffic are common conditions on the Tideway. The club, or the Port of London Authority (the "PLA" or "Harbourmaster") may prohibit certain activities and those prohibitions **must** be observed.

In addition, do not persist with an outing if one or a combination of the considerations is likely to cause an unacceptable risk. Caution is not only to be preferred, but is **essential** under such circumstances. On any particular occasion, the Captain, a committee member, or other senior, experienced member may take a view on whether or not the activity should take place, and, if so, on what terms (for example, boating only with an experienced coxswain).

Personal Assessment: Each individual must consider positively whether he or she is fit, healthy, experienced, or well-clothed enough for the intended activity, taking into account the level of experience of crew mates. The criteria for that assessment will be set out by the Management Committee and displayed prominently in the changing room. **If in doubt, do not go out on the water.**

Navigation on the Thames Tideway

For extensive instructions and guidelines, refer to the legal "Rowing on the Tideway: A Code of Practice for Rowing on the Tidal Thames above Putney 2006" laid down by the PLA in cooperation with the TRRC and to the map and guidelines on the notice board.

You must follow the correct course on whatever river, lake or rowing trench you find yourself. You will not be allowed to steer, cox, or scull in a club boat until you are familiar with the Tideway rules, and have completed the club's Steering and Navigation test before being signed off on the official steerspersons list.

An inexperienced coxswain, as well as inexperienced steersmen or scullers, should be accompanied by a launch or one crew member must take responsibility for guidance.

Other River Users

Have respect for other river users who have an equal right to be there and to enjoy the amenities. Such users include anglers, other rowing craft, sailing boats, pleasure cruisers and small motor boats which are often driven by the inexperienced. Visitors to the Tideway may not know where there is water deep enough for them to navigate.

Remember that the larger boats have a restricted channel of deep water, and may have restricted headroom at certain bridges. **Do not** force them into shallower water or under the low parts of arches by thoughtless steering.

Bad language or behaviour towards other river users is also not acceptable and will not be tolerated by the club.

Coxswains (coxes) & Steersmen

A coxswain or steersman is regarded in any claim, litigation, inquest or criminal prosecution as the “master” of the boat. Therefore, a boat should be steered by a competent person who is familiar with The Tideway Code issued by the PLA. An exception may be when a launch is used for coaching as the coxswain or steersman can also be under instruction. However, if the launch has to retire owing to a malfunction that person will have to bring the boat back alone. A minimum level of competence should therefore be achieved before going out as the master of a crew boat. Age and maturity will play a part and judgement should be exercised accordingly when selecting a cox or steersman.

Both coxswains and steersmen should be signed off on the steerspersons list before going out on the water unaccompanied.

In any urgent need, the master of the boat’s instructions immediately override those of any crew member, coach or, if necessary, race official.

Coxes must always wear lifejackets when on the water, without exception. These are kept in the men’s changing room within the boathouse. Coxes should know how to don, adjust and operate the lifejacket. Young coxes may not know or forget. They should demonstrate their knowledge occasionally and ensure the inflation toggle is accessible - groping feverishly when it is needed is too late.

Capsize Drill & Swimming

There is a risk of capsizing even for the most experienced oarsmen, and knowledge of the remedial steps is essential.

In the event of the boat capsizing or sinking, individuals should first free themselves and then ensure the safety of crewmates. A "buddy system" should be adopted, whereby each pair in the boat (e.g. bow and 2) ensures that one another is safe. Stern pair and Cox should be responsible for one another. The crew should then "number off" as when adjusting, starting with bow and including the Cox, to ensure everyone is safe. Where possible, individuals should remain with the boat, both to make use of its buoyancy and to aid location.

The crew should normally hold on to the boat and await a rescue boat, or try to swim the boat to part of the shore where a landing is safe and practicable.

The club regularly holds capsized drills at a local swimming pool whereby these procedures can be practised in a safe environment. **Members must be able to swim** and will be asked to demonstrate this as part of the capsized drill.

Boat Log

A whiteboard is positioned within the boatshop on which the details of each boat must be entered when that boat goes afloat on the water, whether launch, crew-boat or single scull. The driver of the launch, the Cox’n/Steersperson of a crew boat, or the sculler as appropriate, shall ensure that this is done.

After the outing the return of the craft has to be indicated by the person who made the entry. This is an important precaution, which must be observed. At this time, use the comments box for damages done to the boat, or if the life jacket is not in good order or has been inflated.

Emergency Stop

All crews should regularly practise the emergency stop so that it is applied effectively when it is needed. If all members of an VIII do the same thing, the boat can be stopped within its own length from racing speed; if they do not, embarrassing chaos will ensue.

Pollution

Risks of contact with river water include Weil’s disease, the effects of green algae and on occasion, sewage. Anybody falling into the river or having prolonged contact with the water should wash or shower thoroughly, immediately afterwards. Take medical advice if you experience any unusual or flu-like symptoms.

Rowing in the Dark

Under general circumstances, rowing after sunset (or before sunrise) shall not take place. Potentially, rowing in the dark is hazardous and the Amateur Rowing Association believes that it should not be encouraged. However, under specific circumstances, and with the Captain’s consent rowing in the dark is allowed, as long as the crew strictly adheres to the Cygnet "Rowing in the Dark" guidelines, to reduce the risks to an acceptable level. These guidelines are displayed in the changing rooms.

The allocation of club boats to the various activities, crews, squads etc. is the responsibility of the Captain, or the senior Club officer present. Do not use equipment without the express authority of the Captain or his nominee. For specific details, see the Cygnet "Use of Club Equipment" document.

In general coaches will be aware of which boats are available for use by their respective squad or crews. Where boats have to be shared, coaches will arrange mutually convenient schedules. Any conflict will be resolved by the Captain.

Some private equipment is available for club use. Again, such equipment may only be used with the express agreement of the owner, which the Captain will obtain.

Please treat all equipment with respect (e.g. boats, trailers, blades, launch, tools etc.)

Always check a boat before leaving the boathouse and again before leaving the landing stage. Ensure that there is no damage to the hull, that the bow-ball and heel restraints are in place, that stretchers are properly and symmetrically secured in their slots, that nuts are tight and there is no damage to fittings such as rudder controls. Having bits of the boat drop off midstream can be a nuisance as well as hazardous.

Worn or damaged equipment will only deteriorate further if not repaired. This applies particularly to equipment that is still serviceable to some extent (e.g. inadequately secured stretchers, slack or frayed rudder lines etc). By reporting such damage equipment can be repaired and returned to service quickly with benefits for all.

In general do not attempt to repair something yourself unless you are sure you are competent to do so, and you have the necessary tools and materials. Damage so repaired must still be reported. Makeshift repairs should be avoided. In particular major repairs, such as serious structural defects (e.g. broken shoulder) or hull penetrations (with the possible exception of pinholes), should be left for repair by experts.

Generally speaking, repair costs are borne by the Club. However, if damage to or loss of any equipment was caused primarily by ignorance or stupidity, the Club may request (part of) the cost to be subsidised by the person(s) responsible.

At the end of the outing, undo the hatches where fitted to enable the boat to dry out.

IF YOU TAKE SOMETHING OUT MAKE IT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT IT IS PUT AWAY AGAIN.

It happens repeatedly that those who are at the boathouse at the end of a session and are closing up are left with the task of clearing up. This includes putting away odd trestles and the hose but also the launch, forgotten blades, seats etc. which have been overlooked by crew members.

WITHOUT EXCEPTION, ALL ON THE RIVER, ACCIDENTS, NEAR MISSES AND INCIDENTS OF DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT MUST BE REPORTED IN THE INCIDENT REPORT BOOK BY THE NOTICE BOARD.

For incidents on the water the cox'n/steersperson of the crew involved must ensure entry of the details in the incident report book. Other incidents must be reported by those involved. All entries should be made on the day of the incident.

Reporting is particularly important since at intervals the committee must consider the incidents that have occurred and introduce any remedial measures that are necessary. Failure to keep proper records will prevent the committee from acting appropriately. In some circumstances this might be construed as negligence and might give rise to serious consequences for the club. The maintenance of such records is also a requirement of the ARA.

In addition the TRRC requires clubs to report incidents, near misses and bad navigation or behaviour on the Tideway. This can be reported on-line via the TRRC safety page or go to <http://onlinerep.vorboss.net>

Coaches carry responsibilities for those in their care and coaching should not be undertaken without awareness of the extent and nature of these responsibilities. The club encourages those with sufficient experience to pass on their knowledge to other members of the club but this must be done appropriately. Begin by speaking to the Captain who will advise you. The ARA runs courses in coaching and, again, you are encouraged to undertake such courses.

Those driving the coaching launch must have prior authorisation from the Captain. The launch may be used for rowing related purposes only. A maximum of two people can be in the launch and all **must** wear a lifejacket without exception. The launch must be adequately equipped on the river in accordance with the ARA Water Safety Code and recommendations. Equipment carried must include:

- Anchor and line
- First Aid kit (including thermal blankets)
- Sound signalling device
- Throwing rope
- Paddle
- Lifebuoy or similar device

Lifejackets are available in the men's changing room in the boathouse. Drive responsibly, keeping a good lookout.

Do not fill tanks or transfer fuel within the confines of the boathouse, including the surface immediately in front of the boathouse doors. The fire risk is far too great.

6 Subscriptions

Members are not permitted to use any club equipment until they have paid their annual subscription or have agreed terms with the treasurer to do so. In addition, it is a club requirement that anyone using club equipment, whether a racing or non-racing member, is also a member of the ARA because of the insurance cover that ARA membership carries with it.

The transport of boats and equipment by trailer or on car roof racks is potentially hazardous. Some rowing clubs have suffered serious accidents, which have involved uninsured loss of equipment, injury and even fatalities in trailer accidents. The following applies as a minimum to trailing of boat club equipment.

- Only approved drivers with appropriate experience and with the prior consent of the Captain may transport club boats.
- A copy of the ARA document "Trailer Towing" is attached to the notice board and all drivers must be familiar with its contents.
- The towing vehicle must have suitable third party insurance, which the driver must ensure is in place. Currently the CSBE has a vehicle (the ute) specifically for this use and all members with the appropriate licence are insured to drive it.
- The club expects crews whose equipment is being transported to ensure such equipment is stowed and secured on the trailer in a manner acceptable to the towing driver.
- The towing driver is legally responsible for the safety of the equipment towed and must check that everything is securely fastened in accordance with good practice and conforms to all legal requirements. This will include that all lights are in working order, the loads are correctly distributed to produce the correct DOWNWARD pressure on the towing vehicle, and that projections beyond the trailer are adequately marked, especially at night.

8 Race Entries

All race entries will be handled by the Captain or his nominee. You will require valid ARA membership in order to race and you cannot be entered without it. It is the responsibility of members to keep their ARA membership up-to-date.