

# TEES ROWING CLUB SAFETY CODE

## 1. POLICY

The Club follows the British Rowing RowSafe<sup>1</sup> and procedures on Child Protection<sup>2</sup>. This supplementary local Safety Code is to be followed by all rowers and coaches. They also have a Duty of Care to themselves, other club members, other river users and the general public. This Code applies to all members and visitors to Tees RC, irrespective of status, and includes users of private equipment.

## 2. EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

The nearest phone is in River Tees Watersports Centre (RTWC) Bay 6. In emergencies during working hours, the commercial premises on North Shore and Dugdale Street may allow use of their telephones. Be prepared to give directions by road – the address of the RTWC is: The Slipway, North Shore, Stockton-On-Tees TS18 2NL

<b>Emergencies – 999</b> <b>Dial 9-999 from within RTWC</b>	These numbers are on display in the boathouse
<b>Stockton Civic Enforcement – 01642 528439</b>	
<b>Tees Barrage - 01642 633273</b>	
<b>River Tees Watersports Centre – 01642 628940</b>	

## 3. EMERGENCIES ON THE WATER

If there is serious injury, medical emergency or major boat damage, the crew should land safely as soon as possible. If the boat has become waterlogged, the crew must stay with the boat and can try to swim with it to the bank. The attached Map of the River shows where telephones and buildings to summon help from are located. Call on other Club members and the emergency services if necessary. These are Reportable Incidents and should be logged accordingly.

Personal safety takes precedence over club equipment.

## 4. EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

- Throw lines and life belts located by the boathouse doors.
- Rescue launches available with safety kit
- First aid kit and thermal blankets in launch safety kit
- First aid kit and supply of spare clothes in safety cupboard in the far bay of the boathouse
- Buoyancy aids in boathouse. These must be worn by all coxswains and people in launches, and are available for juniors, novices and non-swimmers.

## 5. SAFETY NOTICE BOARD

This shows this Code, a map of the River, posters on Resuscitation and Hypothermia and other information.

## 6. INSURANCE

The boathouse and contents are insured against accidental damage, and the Club has cover for 3rd party claims. Club members are covered for personal accident, member to member accidents and 3rd party claims of up to £1m by the Club insurance. They are also covered if they are Registered Members of British Rowing.

## 7. USE OF THE RIVER

The River Master may close the river, sections of it or impose restrictions on its use. These times must be observed and they will be circulated by email.

Rowers, Dragon Boats and Canoes have the use of the Barrage Reach (Regatta Course) on: -

Mon 06:00 - 08:00

Tue 06:00 - 08:00

Wed 12:00 - 22:00

Thu 06:00 - 12:00

Fri 12:00 - 15:00

Sat 10:00 - 12:00

Sun 10:00 - 12:00 Juniors, Learn-to-Row and Para rowers

Tees Rowing Club members must not take boats downstream of the steps by RTWC outside of these times. The Jet Skiers' limit of operations includes the steps area so if they are on the water our members must turn upstream of the steps. We have an informal agreement with the Water and Jet skiers that our members can use the Barrage Reach on weekday mornings between 06:00 and noon provided that no powered craft are active in which case our members should immediately leave the area.

During official lighting up time club boats may only be out provided that they meet the requirements of the Night Time Rowing Procedure which is included in Appendix A.

All boats must keep right on the river, and use the centre span of each bridge, except where marked on the map. It is important to keep out of the centre of the river, especially at corners and bridges. There should be no racing through the A66 bridge unless officially advised that appropriate safety cover is in place. In all circumstances, crews should be alert to the presence of other boats.

Crews must ease before the booms above the Barrage. The lock channel cannot be used unless part of an officially managed event. Crews should avoid the inlets to the lock channel and canoe slalom. At times of high flow or strong winds crews should turn well upstream of the Barrage i.e. The University Buildings.

Unaccompanied inexperienced rowers in small boats should avoid the stretch between The Princess of Wales Bridge and Victoria Bridge, because the vertical banks prevent easy escape from the water in the event of capsizing, and there are frequently large waves.

Unaccompanied outings beyond Basselton Woods upstream are not recommended because, in the event of an incident, it will be difficult to return safely (hypothermia), and there is unlikely to be anyone on the bank to raise the alarm.

## **8. HAZARDS ON THE RIVER**

Obstacles such as the Barrage, moored boats, buoys and bridges are shown on the River Map. However, the situation is subject to change.

Crews must be alert and avoid getting swept into potentially dangerous conditions by taking early action. If stopping or turning the boat, do so downstream of, or a generous distance upstream of any obstacles.

- Motor Boats & Teesside Princess - Ensure you are in a safe place on the river. Light wash: gently turn the bows into the wash and row through. Heavy wash: easy oars, blades on the surface and turn broadside on to avoid shipping water.
- Malicious louts throwing stones or firing air rifles - be wary! Keep well away from unknown persons on the bank or bridges. If in doubt, turn and go away.
- Shallow water generally within 2m of the bank.
- Driftwood
- Strong wind or stream (see below).
- Choppy water, from opposing wind and stream.
- Fog
- Ice
- Cold, wet, or windy weather - hypothermia risk. Coxes wear warm clothing and waterproofs.
- Fishing Lines
- Swans
- Other Boats - give audible warning, e.g. "AHEAD 4"
- Golf balls from the Golf Course at Ingleby (upstream of the pipebridge)

Coxes and steersmen should keep a good lookout and anticipate the possibility of boats approaching on the wrong side of the river at speed. Also be aware of small craft (e.g. canoes) cutting the corners. When manoeuvring past Castlegate Quay give way to sailing craft and only row at light pressure in their vicinity.

Crews are responsible for assessing conditions and their own ability in order to decide whether adverse weather or river conditions, and their forecasted or possible development, should result in an outing being cancelled. The Captain, Vice-Captains and other senior club members may decide that conditions are unsafe for a crew, in which case they must not boat. If the stream looks fast, call the Barrage Control Room on 01642 633273, which will give guidance on river flows and navigation. If the flow is greater than 100 cubic metres per second (cumecs), then only experienced crews may boat. No crews may boat if the flow is greater than 150 cumecs.

Coaches, coxes and crews should continually assess conditions and amend their plans accordingly. If in doubt, don't go out.

## **9. ACCIDENT REPORTING**

Incidents involving actual or potential injury, both on and off the water, **MUST** be reported to the Safety Advisor. Incidents are reported to British Rowing by the Safety Adviser as necessary. Any individual may, if they prefer, report any incident directly to British Rowing via their website: <https://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/>

## **10. EQUIPMENT DAMAGE**

Any damage **MUST** be reported to the Equipment Manager or other Committee members. The crew must put a notice on the boat if it is not river worthy. Damaged equipment must not be used.

If equipment fails, it is often possible to row back using part of the crew. Try to retrieve any broken off parts of boats and oars.

The crew, with the permission of the Equipment Manager, may undertake minor repairs; any proposed expenditure by the Club must be approved by the Committee as appropriate.

## **11. OUTINGS**

Crews and scullers may only use boats and oars that have been allocated to them by the Captain of Tees RC. The level of supervision required will also be specified. The allocation will be based on their experience, competence, and consideration of other users.

Either the stroke or a recognised experienced cox shall be in command of the crew. If the crew is accompanied by a coach then the coach has an underlying responsibility for the safety of the crew. Inexperienced coxes may only go out with experienced crews or with the launch in continuous attendance. All rowers and juniors, who haven't declared an adequate swimming ability and all coxes must wear buoyancy aids.

Each crew or sculler must write up their times of boating and expected return and planned direction in the logbook in the boathouse and enter a tick when they return. They should check who else is out on the water and expect to encounter them. They should also be aware that late return might trigger the search procedure.

To go out the water, crews should be wearing the right clothing – firstly a few layers of stretchy close-fitting garments. If it's cold then they will need more layers including a light windproof/waterproof top and a woolly hat. If it's hot, a few layers, a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen. Crews are encouraged to take mobile phones on the water in case of emergency.

No-one must go onto the water if they are under the influence of alcohol. During outings, launch drivers, rowers and scullers must not wear headphones.

Juniors and beginners must be properly instructed and supervised by their coach at all times. The extent of this supervision will depend on the coach's opinion of the competence of the rower(s) and sculler(s). For Junior rowers and scullers and beginner scullers, however, if the boat will be out of sight of the coach then the coach must ensure that it is accompanied by at least one other boat. The two boats must either stay within sight of each other at all times or the boat with the senior sculler(s) or rower(s) must follow the junior boat back to the boathouse within a short period of time.

## **12. MISSING CREWS & RESCUE PROCEDURE**

If a crew or sculler has not returned by one hour after their written up return time, check that the boat is still out and ask if they have been seen. Check if their cars or bikes are still around, and call their home numbers. If not accounted for, assume that they are in difficulty. Whenever rescue is required:

- Call the Tees Barrage, who will send a rescue boat if possible.
- Call a Tees RC Officer and one from any other club involved.
- At least one responsible person should remain at the boathouse to act as a point of contact, using mobile phone if available.
- If available, take a Club launch with rescue kit, throw line, first aid kit and at least one other person.

### **If no rescue boat can be sent:**

- If known to be between the barrage and the A66, take lifebuoy, rope and rescue kit in car and systematically search the river (Barrage Reach, Princess of Wales Bridge, Slipway, Millennium Footbridge, Riverside, Victoria Bridge, Old Boathouse).

- If further upstream, ask the barrage to instigate a Police Search, and give guidance if possible on where to look from the logbook details: outing direction, duration, crew and boat type.
- Keep the Barrage updated with the progress of any search, and especially if the crew are found.

### **13. OTHER CLUB PROCEDURES**

- All members sign declaration of good health and swimming ability. It is important that affected individuals take their conditions into account when planning their outings. They should, in confidence, inform their fellow crew members accordingly.
- Regular swimming tests and capsize drill
- Regular checks of boats
- Regular checks of buoyancy aids, launch, trailer, first aid kits and other equipment
- Guidance for coaching Juniors
- Risk Assessment
- Regatta and Heads Information
- Adaptive Risk Assessment
- Night-time Rowing Risk Assessment

### **14. WATERSPORTS CENTRE SAFETY**

- Smoking in the Watersports Centre is prohibited.
- Care should be taken when moving around in the boathouse and lifting and carrying equipment to avoid getting hit by riggers, boats etc.
- All lifting should be done using correct methods - back straight, bend legs. Take special care when using steps for high racks.
- There may be broken glass outside - avoid bare feet and sweep up.

### **15. WATER-BORNE DISEASES**

To minimise the risk of infection, river users should:

- Cover all wounds with waterproof dressings
- Wash any new cuts, broken blisters with clean water
- Avoid contact with river water, mud etc., especially swallowing and in the mouth, nose and eyes
- Wash hands before handling food and drink
- Wash damp kit immediately

Weil's disease (*Leptospira*) is rare but serious. The first stages are flu-like symptoms in 2 to 20 days: if these appear, mention to your doctor that you have been in contact with river water.

### **16. USE OF EQUIPMENT**

A booking scheme is in operation: crews may only take out a boat that has been booked by them for that time and must return it before the next booked time. Anyone wishing to race in a Club boat must first obtain permission from the Club Captain.

Crews must take care when handling boats, oars and seats. Boats should be lifted, not slid, off the racks, and placed correctly on trestles and racks so the weight is taken by ribs and not by the skin or riggers. Oars should be placed face upwards to minimise damage. All equipment should be checked before use.

Boats must be washed down before being housed. When the conditions are sufficiently cold to create a risk of ice forming additional care must be taken to avoid any water spillage by simply wiping boats down with a damp cloth. Do not use a hose pipe or a bucket of water in freezing conditions. Do not drain water from launches on the ground - either leave it until there is no risk of it freezing or bail it out into a bucket and dispose of it directly into the river. Oars should be stored in the correct rack. All seats should be left in the boat and secured with bungee clips where fitted.

Drivers of launches must either have been trained (Club course or RYA) or be accompanied by someone who is so trained. The maximum allowable speed, unless accompanying a crew or performing a safety duty, is 5 miles per hour (walking pace). Drivers should be aware of and considerate to all other river users. In particular, they should move through the passage in Stockton centre at low speed to avoid creating excessive wash due to the hard embankments. Launches must be booked prior to use. When the launch is being used for safety purposes, due consideration should be given to the number of crew. In most circumstances a crew of two would be most appropriate. Launches may travel above the river speed limit (5 mph) provided they are "directly engaged in safety duty, training, coaching or umpiring of

vessels powered by oar”<sup>4</sup>. It is judged that “directly” means within 10 lengths. If the training launch meets other river users, a lower speed may then be required to avoid swamping them.

Other river users who are especially vulnerable to wash are kayakers who also need to be given plenty of room when being overtaken.

## **17. BOATING**

Before boating, the boat should be placed on trestles and checked for loose nuts, seat movement, functioning safety straps on the shoes, presence of a bow ball and that the boat buoyancy is functioning. Buoyancy may consist of sealed underseat compartments, bow and stern sections or additional inflated buoyancy bags. Generally, the bow and stern sections of singles, doubles and pairs and sealed underseat compartments in fours and eights are adequate to prevent sinking in the event of being swamped. In boats with an open construction additional buoyancy bags are needed. However, these are not fitted to all boats and crews using such boats need to factor this into their outing plan, i.e. if the weather is rough or forecast to deteriorate, then the boat shouldn't be used (see sections 3 and 8)<sup>1</sup>. For outings or races on tidal and wide rivers, only fours and eights with either sealed underseat compartments or additional buoyancy bags should be used.

The boat should be placed on the water with bows upstream. Boating can take place from either the pontoon or the steps. When moving a boat from the boathouse forecourt to the river, care must be taken when manoeuvring because a public footpath is being crossed. When using the steps, take care so that the fin does not touch the steps. If motorboat wash approaches the steps, the boat must be held firmly clear by at least 2 people. Sequence for boating is: bank side blades in, hold riggers, river side in, blades in and rest on water, cox in, bank side one foot in together and push off. The crew should push off and row clear of the steps or pontoon before putting feet in if another crew is waiting. Do not fasten the shoes too tightly as this may prevent release in the event of capsize.

## **18. LANDING**

Approach the steps or pontoon, where possible, against the prevailing conditions; this is usually upstream unless there is a strong tailwind. Stop and take feet out before attempting to land. Row in at fixed seat. When close to the steps, bank side pass oar handles forward to river side, step out of boat and hold riggers whilst the rest of the crew disembark. When closing in on the pontoon the bank side should hold the boat off the pontoon and then step out of the boat.

## **19. WATERSPORTS CENTRE SECURITY**

The Watersports Centre must always be kept locked when unattended. Launches, trestles and other equipment must be put inside, and the doors shut and locked. Report any break-in discovered to a committee member and the manager. Take steps to secure the building as soon as possible.

The lights and taps must be turned off before leaving.

Avoid leaving items visible in cars parked outside the Centre.

## **20. TOWING**

Drivers who tow trailers must be authorised by the Club. When drivers are authorised they are supplied with the British Rowing Guide to Towing and a TRC Towing Guidance Note. The information that these documents contain includes details on car and trailer weights and projections.

## **21. ROWING IN OTHER CLUBS OR LOCATIONS**

When rowing at other clubs, members should make themselves aware of the local rules and conditions applicable to the locality.

There are supplementary rules that must be obeyed by crews rowing on the Tideway. These rules are set out in the booklet “Rowing on the Tideway” published by the Port of London Authority and the Thames Regional Rowing Council.

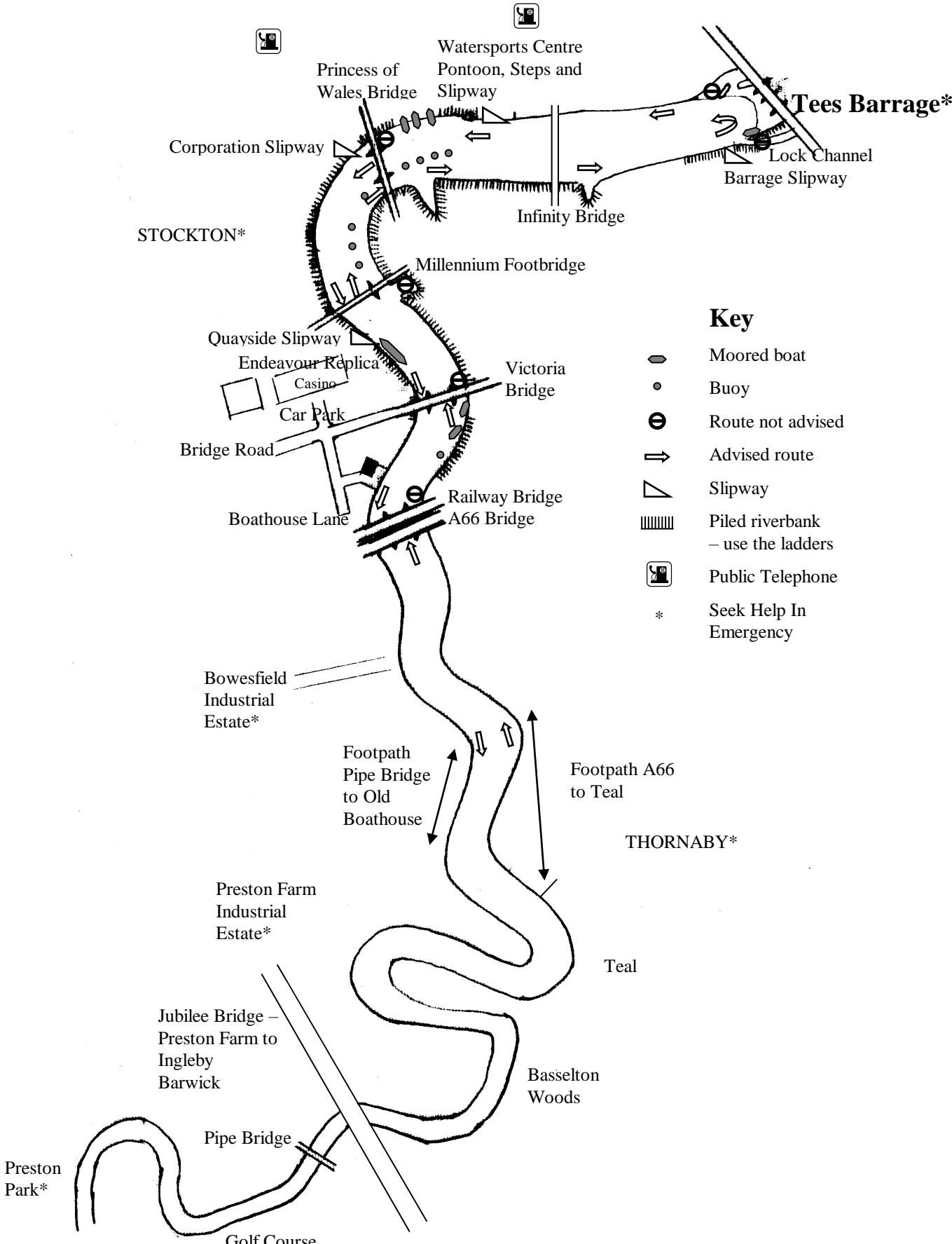
## 22. HOSTING OTHER CLUBS/ATHLETES

If another club or athlete is planning on rowing from RTWC, an individual should be appointed (or self appointed) to make the visitors aware of the local hazards and procedures, including this document, and to make sure they have access to RTWC in case of an emergency.

Alan Puddick  
Safety Advisor  
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Mobile: 07739 095285  
Email: alan@puddick.org

## REFERENCES

1. British Rowing RowSafe <http://www.britishrowing.org/about-us/policies-guidance/rowsafe/>
2. British Rowing Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy  
<https://www.britishrowing.org/about-us/safeguarding/>
3. TRC Club Rules <https://www.teesrowingclub.co.uk/index.php/docs>
4. Canal & River Trust - River Tees Guidance Notes  
<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/refresh/media/thumbnail/31933-river-tees-guidance-notes.pdf>



# MAP OF RIVER TEES

Not to scale

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Procedure for a night time outing**

1. Night time is defined as that period between Lighting Up and Lighting Down times (see local press or the internet but it is that period between 30 mins after sunset and 30 mins before sunrise)
2. Coxes and crews must be competent and familiar with this stretch of river. Inexperienced to do static drills near the pontoon and heavily supervised with a launch
3. Safety Launch cover is preferred but if not available a minimum of two boats are required for the outing and must remain together
4. Assess the weather conditions and check that flow rate is in accordance with the Water Safety Code. Do not row if there is ice on river
5. The night time course is limited to between the RTWC and the A66 bridge. If the access timetable permits, the Barrage straight can also be used but stop and spin well above the Barrage (i.e. before the Regatta Start as a minimum)
6. Pre-outing brief with all crew and launch members to agree actions in the event of an emergency
7. Remember to sign out including the planned return time
8. All boats, including launches, must be lit according to the River Regulations (white lights showing forward and aft so that the craft is visible from 360°). It is the responsibility of the crews to provide their own lights
9. Only row at light pressure on the insides of the bends, i.e. Victoria Bridge when going upstream and Princess of Wales Bridge when going downstream
10. Launch crew, steersmen and coxes to keep a good lookout for debris in the river
11. Crew and cox should be appropriately dressed for the weather conditions
12. Rowers to wear light coloured clothing as the top layer of their rowing kit. Cox (stroke if coxless) and bow to wear luminous waistcoat
13. Ensure the boats have sufficient buoyancy (if no inherent buoyancy there should be a bag under each seat)
14. If the boat sinks or capsizes, remain with the boat until rescued. If no launch, swim the boat to the side of river and leave the water
15. If you feel unwell at any stage, tell your adjacent rowers, the cox and the launch driver
16. Crew to emergency stop if someone is ejected from the boat