

Gloucester Rowing Club Rules of Navigation – October 2016

1. Direction of Boating / Embarkation:
Old Club House: Always boat with the Bow to the right as you look at the canal i.e. towards Gloucester. Before pushing off, check that it is clear and safe to do so. Boats should ideally turn between the landing stage and Hempstead Bridge to prevent accidents and congestion in this busy location. If this is not possible due to other craft or fishermen being present carry on through Hempstead Bridge and turn there.

New Boat House: Always boat with the Bow to the right as you look at the canal i.e. towards Sharpness. Before pushing off, check that it is clear and safe to do so. Boats wishing to turn and head towards Gloucester should ideally proceed passed the Petrol Station before making any attempt to turn to prevent accidents and congestion in this busy location. If this is not possible due to other craft or fishermen being present carry on to the Cement Works and turn there.
2. The 'Rule of the River' is KEEP TO THE RIGHT (Starboard). Boats must keep as close as reasonably possible to the starboard bank, with their port (i.e. strokeside in standard configuration) blades to the right side of centre of the canal. Do not cut corners.
3. Where it is safe keep away from the bank to avoid tangling with angler's lines.
4. Try and avoid stopping close to anglers, especially if you intend to rest and talk for awhile. Be especially careful not to stop in the middle of a competition. If it is necessary to stop, there should be a gap every 50 pegs in which you can stop without causing too much disturbance to the anglers.
5. When training, rowers and safety boats are asked to stay clear of moored boats to avoid excessive wash and damage to boats. These boats also move so be aware of anything e.g. exhaust fumes which may suggest they are moving.
6. When bridges are open or being opened they are not to be passed through, unless the Bridge Keeper tells you it is safe to do so. (Opening signs: audible warning, barriers down, Bridge Keeper winding, bridge moving, boats waiting...)
7. Care should be taken at bridges, all rowers must wait for traffic lights to be changed by the Bridge Keeper. Notify Bridge Keeper by whatever means possible of your presence so lights maybe changed in your favour.
Remember:
 - i. Red / Flashing Red - Stop
 - ii. Green - Free to Go
 - iii. No Lights – Proceed with caution
8. Proceed with caution if the lights are off – there may be a boat coming the other way. Take heed of any advice given by the Bridge Keeper.

9. Do not stop within 100m of Bridges.
10. Do not turn within 100m of Bridges.
11. Make yourself aware of the bridges on the canal - see separate section "Know your Bridges". Bridges are to be taken single file and as close to the centre as possible to prevent damage of boat or equipment.
12. Always approach bridges with caution as they are only wide enough for one boat. The Crew in front 100m or less before bridge, goes through first.
13. If the canal water level is high i.e. 2"(51mm) before flooding the land stage, do not take the Cat launch towards Gloucester unless you get the bridge keeper to open the bridge for you as there is not enough clearance. If in doubt approach the bridge with caution assuming height problems.
14. Rowing / Sculling crews travelling towards Gloucester have the priority over crews travelling to Sharpness. The rule is not necessarily followed by other vessels, so take extreme caution when meeting these at a bridge.
15. When a tanker or other large ship is encountered pull into the side as soon as possible and wait for the ship to pass. Be aware that the ship's pilot has a very limited field of vision in front of him and has no room to manoeuvre past you. Be aware of the "draw" from large ships; use your blades to keep the boat away from the bank.
16. With smaller craft dependent on the design wash may be an issue so be prepared to stop and assume the safe position of blades locked and flat on the water.
17. Don't assume that all boat users know the rules of navigation, keep an eye out for unusual manoeuvres with little or no warning.
18. When turning wait until all other crews have passed before turning and do not turn 100m or less of a bridge or big bend.
19. Returning / Passing Club
Old Club House / New Boat House: When returning / passing the Club from Sharpness light pressure should be engaged at the Petrol Station in preparation for landing or passing the Club to Gloucester Docks.
Similarly when coming from Gloucester Docks light pressure should be engaged from Hempstead Bridge to the Petrol Station in preparation for landing or passing the Club to Sharpness.
20. Landing / Disembarkation
Old Club House: Bow to be facing Gloucester when landing
When returning to the Club, approach from Sharpness i.e. heading towards Gloucester.
As you approach the club wait for any other boats to clear the landing stage before attempting to land.

When returning to the Club, approach from Gloucester Docks i.e. heading towards Sharpness.

As you approach the club pass the club and turn at the end of Pro Tyres car park, when it is clear to do so, wait for any other boats to clear the landing stage before attempting to land.

New Boat House: Bow to be facing Sharpness when landing

When returning to the Club, approach from the Sharpness i.e. heading towards Gloucester.

As you approach the club pass the club and turn just passed the Dry Docks, when it is clear to do so, wait for any other boats to clear the landing stage before attempting to land.

When returning to the Club, approach from Gloucester Docks i.e. heading towards Sharpness.

As you approach the club wait for any other boats to clear the landing stage before attempting to land.

Old Club House / New Boat House:

If there is a strong tail wind, the direction of landing may be reversed as it is easier to control the boat if it heads into the wind. Be aware of the conditions and look to see what other crews are doing.

21. Before any outing the stroke of each crew must sign the book stating his name, the boat type and the boat name that he is using and the time. On return to the boathouse record the time that the outing finished. Any incident that occurred during the outing should also be recorded in the accident and damage book, and reported to the Captain or other Club officer.
22. Inexperienced rowers are advised to travel in groups of 3, ideally with supervision. This applies particularly to junior members where all groups must include an instructor and where appropriate a safety launch. If instructing from a bike a throw line and space blankets must be carried.
23. Rowing at night may only take place with the Captains permission and must comply with the BRITISH ROWING Row Safe Guide – boats must be fitted with lights fore and aft visible through 360’.
24. The maximum speed limit on the Gloucester Sharpness Canal is 6 mph by any motorised craft.
25. No one is to go out in foggy conditions if visibility is 50m or below. If visibility is 750m or less only competent Rowers / Scullers may use the water at the discretion of the Coaches / Club Captain. Remember conditions can change quickly so discretion is the better part of valour. (See separate advise)
26. In windy conditions do not stop on bends, move to an area where you cannot be caught up in bushes, reeds or pushed into the bank by cross winds – ideally keep the boat moving against the wind – stay vigilant. As a guide if the wind can be heard blowing through the BT fence it is too windy to row, similarly if you have white horses.

27. In Thunder and Lightning use the “30-30 Rule” when you see lightning, count the time until you hear the thunder – if it is 30 seconds (approx 10 km away) or less, seek “proper shelter”. If you can’t see the lightning, just hearing the thunder is a good back up rule. Wait a minimum of 30 minutes after the last lightning or thunder before leaving shelter.

A “proper shelter” is an enclosed substantial building with electric or telephone e.g. Bridge Keepers House, a vehicle with windows closed
Dangerous locations are open areas – rivers / lakes / fields, under trees, under umbrellas, in tents, close to tall structure, near metal or carbon objects

28. With Rain / Snow / Hail / Cold wear appropriate clothing for the conditions e.g. waterproof, hats gloves, tight fitting items so they don’t snag, many layers.

29. If you take layers off store in the hatches as they can be used when cooling down or at end of outing to keep body warmth or as dry clothing if you fall in.

30. If the canal is frozen outside the club, the ice cannot be successfully broken up by the launch and it cannot be demonstrated that equipment or people will not be damaged then do not venture out.

31. In Warm conditions make sure you take enough water so you do not get dehydrated; wear sensible clothing, a hat, waterproof sun cream – slip, slap, slop.

32. Further more detailed Guidance is available in the Boat House or on line in the BRITISH ROWING Row Safe Guide or from the Club Rowing Safety Adviser.

33. Do not wear headphones or listen to music through the boats Cox PA system – keep alert.

34. In poor light conditions the Cox / Bow / Steers Person should wear bright coloured clothing so they can be seen by those around them.