

Safety lecture prepared for start of the 2021/22 season. As lectures cannot be held just now, this is being placed on the Riverman web site so that people can read it, be made aware of what is expected of them and take some responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others.

Safety



Advice for rowers, scullers coaches using the river Clyde between the Tidal Weir Glasgow Green and the top of the Belvidere straight which is the recognised limit for safe rowing and sculling. On this stretch of river, there are 15 rowing and sculling clubs, a Cruising Club at Rutherglen, some canoeists and on the banking, fishermen. There are also visiting rowing clubs and it is up to you to ensure they know the local rules and regulations.

In emergency dial 999. Quote nearest GIS (lifebelt sign) number.

Summon professional assistance immediately or have someone else summon it. It always pays to have back up on the way. Many accidents occur because persons try to assist in a manner that puts them in danger, know how to assist without placing yourself in danger. Know your limitations.

Safety must be emphasised, when dealing with a potentially risky sport. There is a happy medium between enforcing rules, getting people to understand the rules, and therefor, become self-disciplining.

Before an outing, check tide times and plan your outing to suit. If there is any current on the river, or a very high tide, it is better to have the outing completed before the tide turns. Tide times are available on the GHS and

parsonageriverman.com web sites. Clubs have copies of the tide tables to refer to. Check river conditions, stream, wind, fog, ice. If there has been heavy rain there may be driftwood or other flotsam coming down, or lying against the pier of a bridge to break away and drift down while you are on the water. Stream may increase during your outing. Ice can damage. Fog can be patchy. Check of any other events on the river that your outing would clash with. If a sculler boats solo, is there someone who knows when they are going out, what distance they plan, when they expect to return. This is always a worry. Instances have occurred from solo situations which involved emergency services. What should a coach carry? A mobile phone with necessary phone numbers, a "space" blanket, an extra rope. During training outings should rowers and scullers carry shoes with them, in case they have to "run home"

If foggy, don't go out. You cannot see other craft, bridges, the opposite bank or floating debris. Capsize in fog and no one may see you?

If icy don't go out. Damage to craft, ice preventing access to banking in event of capsize and colder than normal with risk of hypothermia,

Dress for the conditions. Wear clothing appropriate for the conditions, rain, temperature, wind chill etc. Hypothermia can set in. Think, if your health or your life is at risk; it is not worth it for the sake of an outing that may not be very good anyway due to the conditions
A quote from the recreation sport web site.

"Club Captains and Coaches need to take effective action to stop inexperienced crews going out in marginal conditions. No one gets much out of a training session in poor conditions".

From the Swimming Teachers Magazine. "When will those associated with all outdoor sports realise that hypothermia is a real risk? 40 taken from the water at a Triathlon suffering from hypothermia".

Rope throwing. People think that it is easy to throw a rope, but at an emergency services conference, an open challenge on rope throwing was held, and

"The only people who could do it correctly and accurately were Royal Marine Commando's".

How many cycling up our banking's know how to throw a rope, and practice? Many persons have been brought out of the river by the use of a throw rope; excellent work. Some people have never used a throw rope in an emergency, and unless they practice, will not use it until the emergency occurs.

Carry a throw rope and practice with it regularly.

Glasgow Humane Society organise rope throwing courses for Councils, Police, Fishing Bailiffs, Sport Clubs, Individuals, Firms and others. Ask them to hold one for you.



It cannot be emphasised enough, all persons running, walking, cycling, coaching on a towpath should carry a throw rope and know how to use it. If you are a regular towpath user, you will be on that path and observe someone in the water requiring assistance. It may be a rower or sculler, it may be a fisherman, someone who has just fallen in, a child. If you have a throw rope with you, you could save a life, without having to endanger your own. Members of rowing clubs have rescued persons from the water, some have risked their lives doing so. If we have our throw rope with us, we can protect ourselves. Practice regularly, it can be good fun. Try never to enter the water.

Lifebelts save lives. Help others. If you are on the river bank and notice a lifebelt missing from a stance. Get a lifebelt from the Humane Society fencing and put it on the empty stance. How would you like to have noticed an empty stance, then read in the paper next day that someone had drowned at that locus who might have been rescued if there had been a lifebelt handy?



Are lifejackets or buoyancy aids checked?



Many safety items are only checked at regattas, and sometimes only at multi lane regattas. At regattas there are safety boats around all the time, crews and scullers in lanes, so collisions should not and seldom do occur. Most collisions occur during training on your home water, sometimes when there are only two craft on the river, when there is no one about to shout a warning. Only the good boats are used at a regatta, the older ones are left at home to be used by the beginners. Check these boats, which are seldom rowed or sculled by seniors. It is up to the coaches and office bearers, the seniors of the Club, to ensure these craft are OK for safe use.

Read and learn



“Glasgow City Council recognises the adoption of Rowing Club rules and Guidelines and accordingly all those who wish to row on this area of water are obliged to comply with these Rules”.

*They are also endorsed and supported by the “Water Safety Group”
“Rowing and Sculling, are by their nature, outdoor activities, taking place on the waterways of the natural environment, and as such, are subject to the impact of the prevailing water and weather conditions”.*

“It goes without saying that safety is of paramount importance to participation in rowing, and safe behaviour should be embraced as part of the sport, not as a constraint”.

“Safe enjoyment is the aim, not foolhardiness”.

Safety on the river is the responsibility of all individuals, from novice members to chief coach, to committee members and safety advisers.

Boating on the Clyde takes place under the watchful eye of the Officer of the Glasgow Humane Society. Should you have any further queries regarding safety, the websites www.glasgowhumanesociety.com or www.parsonageriverman.com are useful, or speak with the Society Officer in person at the GHS Boatshed Glasgow Green.

River Clyde Rowing Rules.

The rules as stated below, are reproduced from the document "River Rules and Guidelines for safe use of the River Clyde by Rowing Clubs" produced by the Glasgow Humane Society; Glasgow City Council and members of the Rowing Clubs.

In the event of an accident, whether or not the Rules and Guidelines were adhered to would be investigated.

Rules of the Clyde

Rowing is recommended, in the interest of safety, to take place only between the Tidal Weir at Glasgow Green and the top of the straight which runs past Westhorn Park (known as the Belvidere Straight).

1. River users should recognise their responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others. Due regard should be taken of the Safety Rules and Guidelines.
2. Boating is not allowed without the presence and authorisation of a committee member (or in the case of the schools, a rowing master), except for those members granted dispensation by the committee.
3. Boats should keep to the left at all times (i.e., when rowing upstream stay on the north bank and downstream on the south bank). See Guideline No. 8
4. Boats must only be launched and landed from a recognised landing stage. Visitors must seek permission from the relevant club before launching.
5. All boats shall be responsible for their own steering. If there is danger of a collision, boats should stop.
6. Boats must be water worthy and comply with safety regulations.
7. All coxes must wear a lifejacket or buoyancy aid, suited to the boat when on the water. This must be the outermost garment worn.
8. All crews and scullers must be able to swim in accordance with the SARA guidelines. See Guidelines No. 12
9. All coaches should carry a rescue bag or throw rope
10. Boats shall not go afloat in adverse water or weather conditions.
11. No boat shall be on the water in bad visibility or the hours between dusk and dawn.
12. There will be no standing or changing of seats in boats except at club landing stages.
13. Coxes must be able to see beyond the bow of their boat.
14. Boats should not stop, turn or overtake on a bend under a bridge, or immediately upstream of a bridge.
15. Beginners should not boat unsupervised.
16. All rowers and coxes should make themselves aware of obstacles on the river, the position of which should be marked on a map on display in the Clubhouse.
17. Fences and gates at club compounds should be kept secure at all times. River users should inform the appropriate authorities (the Glasgow Humane Society or the Police) if they observe anyone in a dangerous position.
18. Clubs should ensure that the Police and other appropriate authorities have names and telephone numbers of members who can be called out in the event of an emergency.
19. All appropriate authorities and river users should be informed where possible of any regatta or other event planned for the river.
20. Agreed safety practices must be employed at all regatta and other events taking place on the river.
21. All visitors to the river and clubs must abide by these rules.
22. It is accepted that in some emergency situations, it may be impossible to comply with these rules.

Guidelines

- 1 Know where the safety notice board is located and read it.
- 2 Know the location of the First Aid Equipment. The names of persons qualified in First Aid should be posted on club noticeboards.
3. In an emergency telephone 999, these calls do not need money or cards.
While it would be hoped that a mobile telephone would be available at the clubhouse, and that coaches/trainers would carry a mobile phone, emergency calls could be made from the following places; Parks and Recreation at Greendyke Street (During working hours) Tidal Weir (south side) 24hrs. Glasgow Humane Society House at St Andrews Suspension Bridge (Not always available). In the event of an emergency upstream of Glasgow Green, there are no places in the immediate vicinity where a telephone is available. In these cases where assistance is required, one would have to head for the nearest bridge and flag down a vehicle preferably a bus or a taxi with a radio, or to the nearest house.
4. Lifebelts and ropes should be on each clubhouse door and must not be removed except for emergency use. Throw ropes should also be available and should be carried by trainers/coaches or other persons going up the towpath.
5. Boats should be launched with their bows facing in accordance with the circulation pattern and should return to the steps also in that direction (i.e. make a loop).
6. It is advisable that once boated, you head upstream of your clubhouse so that in the event of capsizing you are drifting towards your boathouse and not away from it, towards the weir. This is especially relevant when there is stream flowing or when the weir gates are open, especially if your boathouse is on the last 500m straight.
7. While rowers keep to the left, not every river user may abide by this rule and the safe practice is to keep a good look out and if in doubt stop.
8. Boats going upstream should use the north arch of all bridges and keep to the north bank. Boats coming downstream should use the south arch of bridges, with the exception of Rutherglen Bridge where the centre arch has to be used coming downstream. Boats, which are practice racing downstream, may, with extreme care, use the centre arches of bridges. Crews going upstream whether doing a training piece or not, must not tend towards the centre of the river.
When proceeding upstream boats should only overtake when the course is completely clear, whether coxed or coxless
9. There are lifejackets that can be worn in aqua-jogs. There are also bumbag lifejackets that can be worn by rowers and scullers even when racing. For individuals who are in the habit of sculling distances on their own, it would be a good idea to purchase one.
10. In the event of capsize do not leave your boat. Hang onto the boat, shout for help, and try to propel yourself and boat towards the bank. Be ready to catch a throwing line.
11. Ensure that you boat is safe for going out in. If in doubt ask a senior member or the attendant committee member. If you discover equipment not to be in a safe condition, please report the damage and do not use the

equipment until it has been repaired. If damaged a note should be left on the boat to warn other club members as to the boat condition.

Examples: - all boats must have a bow ball for your own protection and if you see a boat on the river without one you should report this to a committee member. All canvasses must be watertight, as should bungees. Heel restraints must be attached.

12 All rowers and scullers must be able to swim in accordance with the SARA safety guidelines and be prepared to demonstrate this in a swimming pool on the request of the safety adviser. It is recommended that persons joining a club, which is a School or University with a swimming pool and resident swimming coach, should be confirmed to the above standard by the coach.

13. A rescue craft, which could be a tub pair or aqua-jog, should, when practicable, be in readiness at the clubhouse.

14. The main purpose of the cox is safety. The cox should learn and use simple commands for boat control both on and off the water. They should use them correctly, clearly and instinctively and understand the basic commands and signals of other river users. Inexperienced coxes should firstly go out with experienced crews.

Inexperienced coxes never go out with inexperienced/beginner crews. To ensure safe passage and steering of the boat the cox must be able to see what is in front of their boat.

15. The coach should ask if everyone in their charge is aware of the appropriate safety procedures.

Caution must be taken when the weir gates are open as when the tide turns the current can increase 3-fold making conditions that seemed fair when commencing your outing, treacherous. Tide Tables should be posted on the notice board and a committee member consulted if in doubt. The best rule is that when there is strong current on the water try to plan an outing to finish before high tide time (before the tide turns).

16. In the interests of personal safety and prevention of damage to boats, assistance should be sought and given when boats are leaving or returning to the steps.

17. All river users should make themselves aware of possible diseases that can be contracted in the waters that the club uses.

Note The City Council would encourage river users to report anyone seen committing crimes or engaging in antisocial behaviour on the river banks to the police.

As said if anyone has any questions on the Rules and Guidelines, they should take their questions to a Club Office bearer or the Glasgow Humane Society.

Also check the safety advice on of Scottish, British and World Rowing.

You should have knowledge of areas where emergency services vehicles can obtain close access to the required area. You cannot expect the emergency services to know every route into a waterway, so you have to be prepared to give directions. If you can quote the nearest GIS (Lifebelt position) number, the emergency services will automatically know your position.

Memorise the correct names of all Bridges.

These can be found at

<https://www.parsonageriverman.com/images/Resources/bridge-namesv2.pdf>

Memorise the names of adjacent streets, and any streets/paths that run down to the waterway and local landmarks. Know the Bridge names from Tidal Weir upstream. St Andrews Suspension Bridge (McNeill Street/blue suspension bridge); Kings Bridge (Kings Drive/Ballater Street); Polmadie or Kay footbridge (Glasgow Green football pitches/Richmond Park); Rutherglen Bridge (Main Street/Shawfield Drive); Smart Bridge; Dalmarnock Railway Bridge, Dalmarnock Bridge (Dalmarnock Road); Cunningar Bridge.



Memorise Local names.

“Westhorn” on the “Belvidere” straight; “Motor boat Club Rutherglen”; “Strathclyde School”; “Sewage Works”, “Monument” or “Nelsons Column” Glasgow Green; “The Island” at the “Village”; the “Adelphi Centre”
Use GIS (Lifebelt) position numbers.

These can be viewed at <https://www.parsonageriverman.com/resources>
Click on Water Safety Features Interactive Map.

There is no regular boating downstream of the Tidal Weir at Glasgow Green. Rowers and scullers are extremely lucky that they have almost exclusive use of the stretch of water upstream of the weir. No boating takes place above the straight at Belvidere/Westhorn (because of shallows and submerged objects). Several rowing boats have been holed and sunk on the piles of the old Bogey Bridge or ripped open by submerged objects.



Round the corner at Belvidere is one of the reasons why we do not boat here. The piles in the photograph, are usually just underwater. They have claimed a few boats whose occupants did not follow the Rules and Guidelines.

Access by road.

The Tidal weir to Rutherglen Bridge on the North bank has good access. Tidal weir to Rutherglen Bridge, south bank has varied access; Adelphi Street; Waterside Street; Glasgow R.C; Richmond Park. Study a street map.

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Upstream of Rutherglen Bridge on the north bank access is from Rutherglen, Smart or Dalmarnock Bridges or from Carstairs or Shore Streets.
 Rutherglen Bridge to Smart Bridge on the south bank has easy access points. Smart Bridge to Dalmarnock Railway Bridge on the south bank has really only the Rutherglen Cruising Club which has no set opening hours. Emergency access would have to be from the north bank or by boat. There is access south bank from Dalmarnock Road to Dalmarnock Railway Bridge.
 Access from Dalmarnock Road Bridge upstream to Belvidere/Westhorn bank, is down the paths which run at right angles to the river from London Rd. or up the towpath from Dalmarnock Road Bridge. There are boom gates. There is access upstream of Dalmarnock Bridge on the south bank into Cunningar Park. Be aware, you may have to be able to direct the emergency services to your locus. This is not just in the event of an accident on the river involving your Clubs, since, as you are on the river or river banking, you are liable to witness an occurrence, and would wish to help. Always remember in the event of an accident try firstly to summon assistance, to ensure back up is on the way.
 Coaches could do worse than cycle up the various paths from the river towpath and find the nearest main road for future reference.



Boom gates give emergency access. Also prevent fly tipping and vehicles being driven into the river.

Since some people deem the Clyde too narrow to be suitable for coaching launches to accompany craft, rescue is usually by throw rope or if required, emergency services. Rope throwing can be dependent on access from the banking. Since there is no south bank towpath between the Smart Bridge and Dalmarnock Bridge it is advisable to keep beginners downstream of the Smart Bridge, and of course, well away from the weir.
 Everyone should complain try to have the dense foliage on the river banking limited in accordance with the water safety advice manual.
<https://parsonageriverman.com/images/Resources/architecture.pdf>

Knowledge of the island and outflow just downstream of Belvidere/Westhorn and of the fact that at high tide they can be covered



Outflow showing concrete wall.



Wall covered at high tide

Immediately opposite the island, on the north bank is an outflow which has a concrete wall on either side of it. It can be covered at high tide and prove an

underwater obstacle, when only a few inches below the surface. Learn of any other permanent or temporary hazards. Whenever possible these are featured on the Parsonage Riverman or Glasgow Humane Society sites.



Wooden piles on the south bank between Rutherglen and Smart Bridges are a permanent hazard.



Over 50 cars were removed from the river. But here could be new ones.

Don't boat in floodwater.

There are so many risks involved in boating in floodwater or fast stream. Being swept against bridge piers, against the weir, into overhanging trees, moored craft and pontoons. Not being able to reach the banking in the event of a capsize, floating debris. It is really not worth trying to fit in an outing when there is fast stream on the river. There are ergos to train on.

If in doubt don't go out.

Don't turn if visibility is obscured or above bridges.

If you are going to turn near a bridge, why bother going up through the bridge and risk being swept or blown onto a pier. Just turn downstream of the bridge. If you must go up through the bridge, make sure you go far enough upstream to allow safe turning. Many boats on our river have broken in two after they went broadside of a bridge pier, turning too close to the bridge. You must allow for any stream. Why not just turn downstream of the bridge? Bridges and moored objects take their toll in other parts of the country. We are very fortunate that we have few mooring on the Clyde

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Safe and responsible.

If possible, rowers and scullers should try not go downstream of their clubhouses towards the weir. The risk assessment is quite simple. If you capsized downstream of your clubhouse, could you swim holding on to your

boat, (as we never leave our boat), to the bank, before you hit the weir. If the answer is no, then you are too far downstream, or shouldn't be out. If you fall in upstream of your clubhouse, you will be drifting towards it not away from it. Safety, as we keep reiterating, is everyone's job. We have a duty of care on our friends, fellow students and other human beings.

A senior 8 goes out and unnecessarily goes down to the weir before turning, so a beginner sculler thinks, I shall do the same. Everyone seems to think, if they can do that, so can I, it is my right. It is not your right to place yourself in a semi dangerous position where someone else, a student, a child, could lose their life, by copying your actions, or to place yourself in a real dangerous position where someone could lose their life trying to save you.

Anyone can capsize. Its easy. It happens.

Check your equipment before going afloat, especially your shoe releases.



If at all possible, stay with your boat until help arrives.

If there is even a little stream on the river, it is advisable to keep a bend, especially a right-angled bend as we have, between you and the weir as you will drift onto the outside of the bend into the steps. A double turned too close to the Kings Bridge, hit the north pier, capsized, drifted downstream hanging onto their boat. A few minutes later they were at the east boathouse steps. Senior crews and scullers train on the lower sections of the river where all the beginners should be. Why not do your pieces further upstream. Some put their boat into the water at the east boathouse, turn and go downriver before turning again and heading upstream. Try always to stay upstream of your clubhouse. There is no point of going downriver if you cannot manage back up again.

Keep beginners upstream of your club steps.

Accidents have happened. We must try to ensure there are no more.

Details of accidents around the world can be found here;

<http://www.leoblockley.org.uk/>

Collisions can be avoided.

We have had many collisions due to persons not looking where they were going. Several persons have been injured as a result of these collisions and many boats damaged, many written off. We must keep a lookout. The cox of an eight often cannot see ahead when heading in a straight line. A small person often cannot see around 8 hulking brutes, only at bends can they see; therefor it is up to the bow pair to treat the 8 like a coxless pair and keep a lookout.



Scullers and rowers have been trapped below their boats when they capsized and could not get their feet out of the shoes, struggling to keep their mouth above water. Every person must check their heel restraints before going afloat, and if uncertain, they must ask a person with more experience to check them. A quote from Recreation Sport Rowing, "heel release cords were there to "Stop you dying upside down in the dark".

Ensure your boat has a properly fitted bow ball. Rowers and scullers have been severely injured after being hit in the back or the side by another boat, whose bow ball just split or fell off and the bow went straight into the rowers back. In Germany a rower was hospitalised after a bow punctured his back, and in another accident the bow of a boat went right through a man's thigh. Back injuries after collisions are manifold. Officials are always suspicious of bow balls with tape on them.



German sculler severely injured.

"Arguably the most famous incident in the Canadian sculler Silken Laumann's life was during her training leading up to the 1992 Summer Olympics. One of the odds-on favourites to capture a gold medal, her shell was involved in a collision with the boat of German coxless pair 1992. (in her words, "The injury looked so bad I actually wondered whether I was going to lose my leg, because I could see the bone."

Do not stand up in your boat.

A young rower stood up in the boat, over-balanced, hit his head on the gate as he went down and drowned. At a course down south, scullers were asked to stand in their boats. One girl stood up, fell in, swallowed water and was in hospital missing her final exams and had to repeat a year. Another. a big man, whose dad had just bought him the finest, most expensive boat available, stood up, overbalance and went right through the middle of his new boat breaking it in two. If you look at the risks of this practice, you will see that having been made aware of such possibilities, there is no way you could write

a risk assessment to allow this. Anyway, all the clubs have signed up to the Rules and Regulations, so this should not happen.

Do not throw coxes into the water at the end of a race.

This may seem funny, and seem safe when it is at the University Boat Race and the area where the throwing in occurs, has been carefully swept at low tide. The problem occurs at other regattas where there is not that safety factor. Dozens of coxes have ended up with (mostly) their feet badly cut on broken glass, wire, rusty metal and cuts from other items that lie along the edges of our waterways. Complaints have been made regarding the Boat Race behaviour.

Ensure such accidents do not happen a second time. Learn from the past.

The Tidal Weir.



Knowledge of how the Tidal Weir operates is useful. Knowing when it is most dangerous. Gates lifted, half lifted, gates half or partly out of the water. Know how to use the tide tables and arrange outings to suit. If there is a very high tide which may result in a strong current when the tide runs out, so, as said already, it would be safer to arrange any outing to finish before the tide turned.

Tide Tables are available at <https://www.parsonageriverman.com/resources>
Over the years several boats have come to grief at the Tidal weir.



The correct name for this structure is Tidal Weir and Pipe Bridge. It has three with gates turning flat to allow craft to pass underneath. During most high tides there is a window to allow craft to pass downstream or upstream. It regulates the level of the river water upstream to the tidal limit, Boggleshole Ford Cambuslang. The weir a vitally important asset, is manned 24/7 and has three separate methods of operating the gates. During floods a boat and persons could disappear in the current rushing under the gate. We must therefore all ensure that we do not go out in floodwater, or go too close to the gates when there is any run on the river. Remember that the current can

change very quickly. If one were to row close to the weir just as the tide was changing, you could be rowing down in slack water with almost no stream, yet by the time they turn round you could find yourselves rowing against a strong outgoing current. Always check the time and height of tide when planning an outing, try to work with the rising tide and be off the water before the tide turns. Simply, try to stay away from the weir. It can be dangerous.



This is the sign that people from the east boathouse should turn at.



Play your part. Be good to others. Prevent accidents.

If you see anyone misbehaving on the river or on the river bank, report it to someone, A cox not wearing a lifejacket or buoyancy aid (and remember, you must ensure all your lifejackets are in working order). You may see children making a raft, and hundreds have drowned off rafts over the years. If you see a gap in a fence, report it, a football floating, lift it out. A toy, remove it or report it, as it could attract a child

Close gates.

The gates at the clubhouse should be kept closed and if not in use, locked. You have a responsibility for whoever comes through that gate. In the 1950's as a young boy, George Parsonage watched his father sitting crying one night. Ben had to retrieve the body of a baby, still strapped into its pram, from the river bed. The mother had wheeled the pram through the open gate at the east boathouse during a regatta to see what was going on. Two things happened. She thought that she had put the brake on the pram; she also parked it a right angle to the river. She let the pram go, but the brake had not gone on. the pram ran down the slope, bounced down the stairs, and out into the river, sinking immediately. Once a drunk man or a group of drunk men are through your gate, it is very difficult to get rid of them. All members should try to exclude strangers from the Club compound area. This aids security and could free the Club from responsibilities incurred when persons are inside their premises.

Lifelbelts and throw ropes should be at each Clubhouse door. Lifebelts and throw ropes should be on your gates. Glasgow Humane Society provided every club with a long yellow bagged throw rope and lifebelts) do not remove belt or rope except for emergency use. Throw ropes should also be available and should be carried by coaches/trainers or any other person going up the bank. All visitors to the River and Club must be made aware of the rules and guidelines for the river. Clubs have a responsibility to whoever they allow to boat from their steps. Safety is the responsibility of all River users and common sense should be applied at all times. Try not to leave oars, bits of boats etc. outside the club even if they are old and done.

A section of a boat was left outside a clubhouse. It was thrown into the river and floated downstream, at night, straight through the weir and at dawn was seen lying against a pontoon in the Harbour. It was assumed there had been an accident. Emergency services were out scouring the river and river banks. Every club was contacted and club officials had to attend and verify that no craft was missing from the clubhouse. It took hours before a student recognised the boat as one of the ones they had discarded and just left outside. A drunk man and woman were rescued from the river one day after launching two discarded sculling boats. If there had been an accident, who would have been held responsible?

Tell someone when you are going out and when you are expected to return. One day a sculler left his clubhouse steps at the west boathouse. After some hours when he had not returned, a club official asked for a search to be made upriver to see what had happened. A search revealed nothing. Calls to his home were unanswered. Police were informed and a further search commenced. It emerged a number of hours later, that the sculler had sculled up to the east boathouse, lifted his scull out, put it on top of his car and driven home to repair it in his garage from where he could not hear the house phone. Please tell someone where you are.

Safety is mostly common sense. Just to stop for a minute and think. Think if what you are about to do is dangerous, think if you are taking any risks. You may save your own life, and you may prevent someone else loosing theirs. You train for an emergency, in order to preserve your own life, as few could stand by and watch someone drown.

Keep thinking. If in doubt don't go out.

The above has been written to help you think safety. Everyone wishes people to use the river safely, and have respect for other river users.