

Coxing Proficiency Award

Introduction

The implementation of the Coxing Proficiency Award Scheme at Marlow RC is primarily to ensure that local safety rules are understood and observed and that good watermanship skills are learned and practised. It is complementary to the Sculling Proficiency Award and the Steering Award Schemes. It is expected that all members are also familiar with the Safety section and MRC Induction Pack on the website.

The scheme is designed to cover unaccompanied crews. 'Unaccompanied' means without a coach in a launch or without a coach on the bank equipped with a throw line, radio and/or mobile phone. 'Accompanied' may also include a boat being looked after by a coach in a sculling boat alongside, provided they do not become separated.

Coxes are responsible for the safety of their crew and other river users; they are also placed in charge of very valuable equipment.

All coxes must have a thorough understanding of the levels of competence and proficiency required by members of their crew. This applies to pairs, fours, quads, eights and octos.

The intention of the scheme is that progressing through the award levels demonstrates increasing competence to enable coxes to train with crews on the water unaccompanied in 'Green light' conditions (Bronze), at night (Silver) or under 'Amber light' conditions (Gold).

BEGINNER LEVEL

This is the minimum standard required of any MRC member who wishes to cox a boat. Initially this is likely to be a Mondego, fat pair, fat quad, or stern-loading four or quad. Beginners must not be in eights, octos or bow-loaders.

The cox may go afloat in 'Green light' conditions on the Marlow stretch above the lock in daylight, accompanied by a coach, but avoiding busy squad training sessions on the weekend mornings.

BRONZE

This is the minimum standard required of any MRC member who wishes to cox a boat in a British Rowing sanctioned race. The Bronze level may be carried out in any fine boat (four or eight) and entitles the cox to go afloat above the lock, under 'Green light' conditions in daylight, including weekend mornings. The cox may race at local Regattas and non-tidal Head Races.



SILVER

This is the minimum standard required of any MRC member who wishes to cox a boat on the Tideway. The Silver level may be carried out in any fine boat (four or eight). Completion of the Silver level entitles the cox to the same privileges as a Bronze level holder, but in addition, he or she may also take a crew boat out at night with appropriate lights and clothing. The cox may also race at multi-lane regattas and Tideway Heads.

GOLD

This is the standard required of any MRC member who wishes to cox a boat on the Tideway and at National and International Regattas. The Gold level may be carried out in a four or eight, but the cox must have adequate experience of both stern- and bow-loaders. The Gold Award generates experience and exposes the cox to longer distance work, higher mileage and therefore to changeable river conditions. Completion of the Gold level entitles the cox to the same privileges as the Silver level holder, but in addition he or she may also go out unaccompanied under 'Amber light' conditions and 'Red/Amber' controlled sessions. N.B. Gold level coxes may only go below the Marlow lock once they have demonstrated knowledge of lock use and the Cookham Reach circulation pattern and safety hazards.

ASSESSORS

The Committee will appoint Award Assessors. In general, these will be British Rowing Level 2 qualified coaches or higher. Additional competent persons, specifically the club's most experienced coxes, may also be appointed where the Committee deems it appropriate.

ADMINISTRATION

The awards are to be taken in the correct order and no level may be bypassed. Even though the technical aspects of the Bronze Award are very basic, the local safety rules of the river (warning lights, turning rules, circulation patterns, etc) must be understood by all members of the club. It is just as important for 'old hands' to be educated and informed as it is for newcomers to the club.

RECORD-KEEPING AND PUBLICITY

In order to minimise paperwork and to keep centralised records, it is a requirement that the Membership Secretary and Safety Officer are informed whenever a candidate achieves a new level of competence. Their membership record on the central membership database can then be updated. Squads/coaches are also advised to keep a list of certified competent coxes.

The Committee will publicise the scheme and communicate it as widely as possible to the membership to ensure understanding and compliance. The award scheme documentation will be published on the club website. Members are expected to complete their own signature sheets and Gold level logbook.

IMPLEMENTATION

Coaches are expected to take novice coxes through the beginner level competencies in the first two to three outings. Completion of a few outings does not confer automatic Bronze status and all athletes must undergo a Bronze level test, once their coach deems them to be sufficiently competent. The MRC Coxing Guide provides comprehensive information and exercises to support coaches.

Squad coaches or squad reps will be responsible for ensuring award levels are signed off for their coxes. For club members not in designated squads, the Safety Officer can put them in touch with an assessor from an approved list.

It is recognised that a number of the club's coxes are competent at all levels of the scheme. It is up to the assessor to judge if practical aspects of the level in question need to be practised further, but in ALL CASES the safety aspects need to be reviewed regularly. This can be done in a group session or post-outing debrief.

APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

The scheme is administered by the Captain, Safety Officer, and an appointed sub-committee. Appeals, complaints and comments should be addressed to the Captain through the cox's squad representative.

Beginner Level

This is the minimum standard required of any MRC member who wishes to cox a boat. Initially this is likely to be Mondego, fat pair, fat quad, or stern-loading four or quad. ***Beginners must not be in eights, octos or bow-loaders.***

The cox may go afloat in 'Green light' conditions on the Marlow stretch above the lock in daylight, accompanied and guided by a coach, but avoiding busy squad training sessions on the weekend mornings.

Required elements

- 1 Read the British Rowing Guide to Coxing and MRC Coxing Guide.
- 2 Complete the British Rowing online Steering course
- 3 Demonstrate a clear understanding of the Circulation Pattern above the lock (see Appendix 3), specifically:
 - where to turn at club and Temple ends and adaptations when river conditions change; and
 - direction of turning (eg away from the weir) and shape of turning pattern (eg wide loop).

Beginner Level

- 4 Demonstrate a clear understanding of all commands needed for the crew to take the boat off the rack and to launch it without damage. Know where to position blades correctly on the hard standing. The cox must be able to speak clearly and loudly, so the whole crew can hear, and be correct and consistent with their commands.
- 5 Demonstrate a clear understanding of the commands needed to start and stop paddling on the water. Know the 'safe position'. Know the commands to carry out an emergency stop.
- 6 Instruct the crew to turn the boat through 180 degrees at the correct turning point.
- 7 Demonstrate safe landing on pontoons.
- 8 At the end of the session, the cox should be the first member of the crew to disembark, holding the boat firmly so that the rest of the crew can disembark safely on their command. The cox should then position trestles and organise cleaning the boat and its safe return to its designated rack, using the standard commands.
- 9 Appreciate essential requirement for warm and waterproof clothing and footwear.



Coach's Checklist and Certificate

Beginner Coxing Award

	ELEMENT	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
1	Read the BR Guide to Coxing and MRC Coxing Guide		
2	Complete the BR online Steering course		
3	Circulation Pattern and Turning (Marlow Reach)		
4	Racking and Boat Handling		
5	Start and stop commands		
6	Turn the boat 180 degrees		
7	Land and disembark		
8	Boathouse protocol		
9	Wear appropriate clothing		

NAME OF CANDIDATE	SIGNATURE
NAME OF ASSESSOR	SIGNATURE
DATE	

Bronze Award

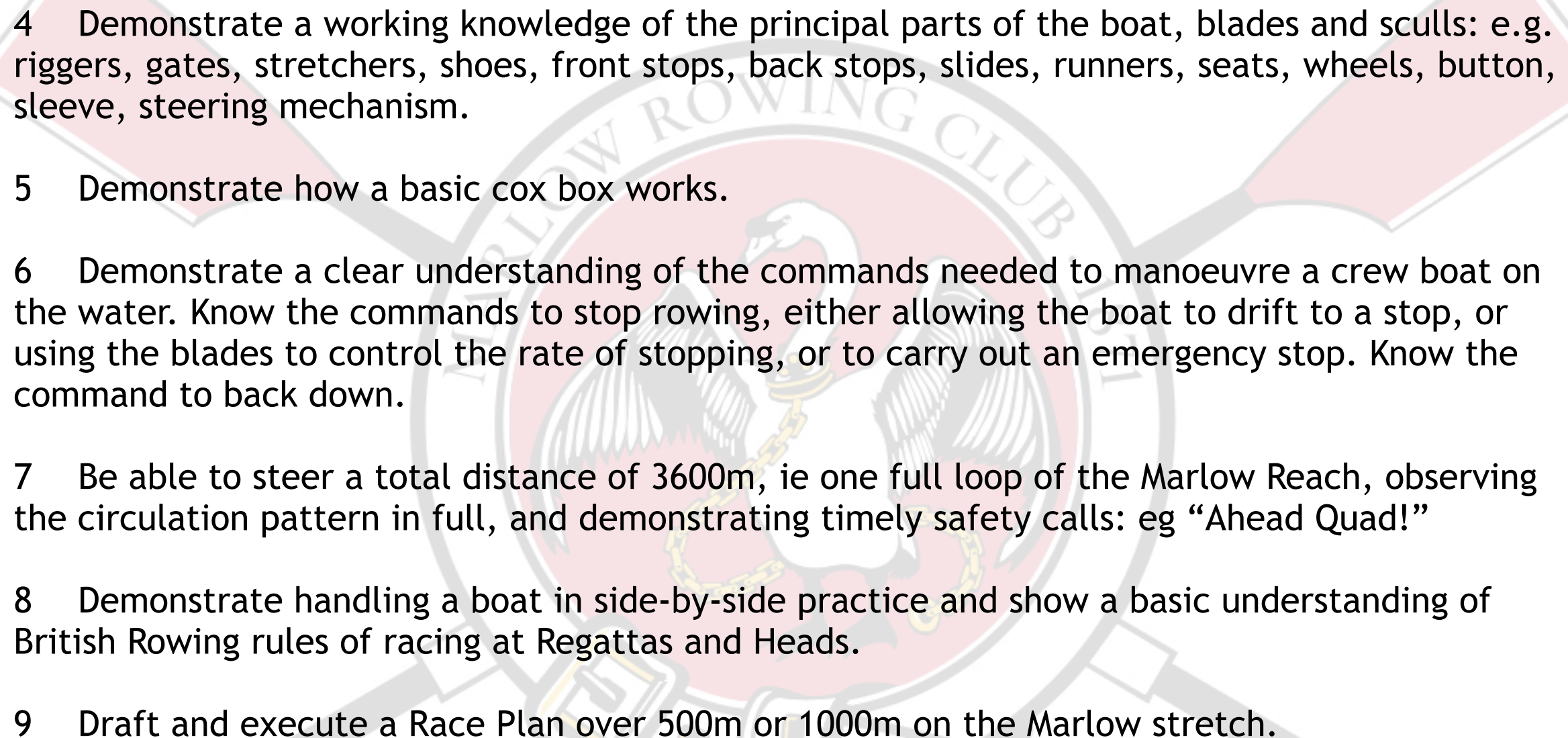
This is the minimum standard required of any MRC member who wishes to cox a boat in a British Rowing sanctioned race. The Bronze level builds on the Beginner Level skills, may be carried out in any fine boat (four or eight) and entitles the cox to go afloat above the lock, under 'Green light' conditions in daylight, including weekend mornings. The cox may race at local regattas and non-tidal Heads.

Required elements

The tasks can be signed off in any order, but must all be completed to a satisfactory standard in one session.

- 1 Demonstrate a clear understanding of the MRC Safety Light system and its implications.
- 2 Demonstrate a clear understanding of position on the river, specifically:
 - Course to be taken paddling upstream and downstream with reference to Four Lane visualisation;
 - Location of existing hazards (e.g. Sudersee) on the Marlow to Temple stretch;
 - Knowledge of 500m training sections where crews and scullers are likely to be doing pieces;
 - Safe stopping points for breaks, outing feedback and equipment adjustments
- 3 Demonstrate understanding of the safety features of the boat, including buoyancy compartments (and importance of keeping an intact seal), heel restraints, foot-strap pull and bow-ball. Appreciate importance of crew wearing high-vis outer layer appropriate to light conditions.

Bronze Award

- 
- The background features a large, faint watermark of the Marlow Rowing Club crest. The crest is circular with a red border and contains a white swan in the center, flanked by two grey oars. The text 'MARLOW ROWING CLUB' is written in a circular path around the swan. Below the swan is a small illustration of a boat's bow.
- 4 Demonstrate a working knowledge of the principal parts of the boat, blades and sculls: e.g. riggers, gates, stretchers, shoes, front stops, back stops, slides, runners, seats, wheels, button, sleeve, steering mechanism.
 - 5 Demonstrate how a basic cox box works.
 - 6 Demonstrate a clear understanding of the commands needed to manoeuvre a crew boat on the water. Know the commands to stop rowing, either allowing the boat to drift to a stop, or using the blades to control the rate of stopping, or to carry out an emergency stop. Know the command to back down.
 - 7 Be able to steer a total distance of 3600m, ie one full loop of the Marlow Reach, observing the circulation pattern in full, and demonstrating timely safety calls: eg “Ahead Quad!”
 - 8 Demonstrate handling a boat in side-by-side practice and show a basic understanding of British Rowing rules of racing at Regattas and Heads.
 - 9 Draft and execute a Race Plan over 500m or 1000m on the Marlow stretch.



Assessor's Checklist and Certificate

Bronze Coxing Award

	ELEMENT	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
1	Safety Lights		
2	Position on River, Steering Reference Points and Hazards		
3	Boat Safety Check		
4	Boat Equipment		
5	Cox Box		
6	Emergency Stop / Backing down		
7	3600m paddling observing Circulation Pattern and Turning (Marlow Reach)		
8	Side-by-side handling and British Rowing Rules of Racing		
9	500m or 1000m Race Plan		

NAME OF CANDIDATE	SIGNATURE
NAME OF ASSESSOR	SIGNATURE
DATE	

Silver Award

This is the minimum standard required of any MRC member who wishes to cox a boat on the Tideway. The Silver level may be carried out in any fine boat (four or eight). Completion of the Silver level entitles the cox to the same privileges as a Bronze level holder, but in addition, they may also take a crew boat out at night with appropriate lights and clothing. The cox may also race at multi-lane regattas and Tideway Heads.

Required Elements

The tasks can be signed off in any order, but must all be completed to a satisfactory standard in three sessions.

- 1 Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the safety requirements for sculling or rowing at night, i.e. providing and fitting white lights on bow and stern, position of lights for best visibility, use of high-visibility clothing on uppermost layer. Understand there is no racing allowed after dark in unaccompanied boats.
- 2 Understand the need for 'conservative' circulation pattern at night, e.g. stay well over to the bow-side bank and do not venture into the 'amber lane' to give a wider safety lane between passing crews.
- 3 Demonstrate the ability to attach to a stake boat and execute a racing start with confidence.

Silver Award

- 4 Execute an emergency stop with turn to bow side. Execute an emergency stop with turn to stroke side.
- 5 Approach landing stage, land and disembark unaided. After cleaning and re-racking the boat, ensure that all equipment is put away, and secure the boathouse.
- 6 With reference to MRC Coxing Guide, demonstrate understanding of Commands, Semantics, Coaching and Crew Relationship components.
- 7 Draft a Multi-Lane Regatta and Tideway Head Race Plan
- 8 Competently critique two YouTube coxing videos. Complete two desk based hazard awareness tests.



Assessor's Checklist and Certificate

Silver Coxing Award

	ELEMENT	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
1	Night Sculling and Rowing Safety		
2	Circulation Pattern at night		
3	Stake boat attachment and racing start		
4	Emergency stop to bow side or strokeside		
5	Competent landing and Boathouse protocol		
6	Knowledge of MRC Coxing Guide		
7	Multi-lane and Tideway Race Plan		
8	Coxing video and hazard awareness test		

NAME OF CANDIDATE	SIGNATURE
NAME OF ASSESSOR	SIGNATURE
DATE	

Gold Award

The Gold level may be carried out in a four or eight, but the cox must have adequate experience of both stern- and bow-loaders. The Gold Award generates experience and exposes the cox to longer distance work, higher mileage and therefore to changeable river conditions. Completion of the Gold level entitles the cox to the same privileges as the Silver level holder, but in addition he or she may also go out unaccompanied under 'Amber light' conditions and 'Red/Amber' controlled sessions.

N.B. Gold level coxes may only go below the Marlow lock once they have demonstrated knowledge of lock use and the Cookham Reach circulation pattern and safety hazards.

Required elements

The tasks can be signed off in any order, but should be completed over a period of 12 months.

- 1 Understand and demonstrate the 'ferry glide' technique. This allows the boat to cross the river in fast stream conditions whilst maintaining position in the stream relative to a fixed point on the bank.
- 2 Be conversant with the club risk assessment for fast stream and temperature levels and know where to find this information and updates to conditions online. Complete minimum 5 outings in Amber light conditions under supervision of a Gold steersperson in the crew (preferably at Stroke).

Gold Award

- 3 Be conversant with the club risk assessment for passing by the weir and through the lock, in particular the meaning of the Environment Agency 'Red' and 'Yellow' boards and how they tie in with the club's safety light system.
- 4 Navigate through Marlow lock using clear commands and demonstrating how to hold the boat steady whilst negotiating the lock gates and emptying/filling of the lock.
- 5 Demonstrate a clear understanding of the circulation pattern below the lock on the Cookham Reach (see Appendix 4), specifically:
 - where to turn at Gibraltar Islands and Cookham Road Bridge ends;
 - direction of turning and shape of turning pattern (e.g. wide loop);
 - location of existing hazards (e.g. Bourne End Marina) on the Marlow to Cookham stretch.
- 6 Over a period of 12 months, the cox must steer 10+ races, including 2+ Tideway Heads, in a safe and competent manner, observing all the safety and technical skills learnt in the previous two levels.



Assessor's Checklist and Certificate

Gold Coxing Award

	ELEMENT	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
1	Ferry Glide Understanding and Demonstration		
2	River Conditions Risk Assessment and 5 Amber Light outings		
3	Lock Risk Assessment		
4	Lock Navigation		
5	Circulation Pattern and Turning (Cookham Reach)		
6	Demonstrate race experience and competence at regattas and heads.		

NAME OF CANDIDATE	SIGNATURE
NAME OF ASSESSOR	SIGNATURE
DATE	

Steering Guidelines

1 Position on the River

Four Lane visualisation - visualise the river split into four lanes: two upstream and two downstream. The **green** lane runs between the bank and a quarter of the way across the river. Just like the inside lane on the dual carriage way, this is the lane that people should be in unless there's a very good reason. It's the lane a crew will be in if their bowside blades are 5m off the bank on their left. The second lane, effectively between a quarter of the way across the river and halfway across the river is coloured **amber**. Crews should only venture into this lane if the inside lane is blocked by either a stationary or a slower crew. On corners, particularly the upstream corners where the stream can drive crews wide, crews must avoid going into the amber lane wherever possible. Venturing into the two **red** lanes that make up the opposite part of the river (upstream when you're going downstream and vice versa) is something that coxless crews shouldn't do. So before they cross the centre line, unaccompanied coxless boats should correct their line, slow their speed and/or stop their boat.

2 Stern Reference points and Triangulation

There are 8 main reference points on the Marlow to Temple stretch. Check the MRC Steering Guide for photos. If a crew has its stern on the reference point and their bowside blades are 5m from the bank, it will be in the right position in the river. All members of a crew should know exactly where they are on the river without looking round.

3 Looking round for Hazards

The sculler or steersperson should look round every 5 strokes, alternating between bowside and strokeside. They should be looking out for potential hazards: other crews, paddle-boarders, swimmers, logs in the river. If the crew is approaching a known hazard or corner, the steersperson should look round every 3 strokes.

4 Crew Support

It is recommended that another crew member (usually 2 seat) take responsibility for calls on pieces and technical drills, so that the steersperson can focus on steering the course, starting and stopping. Communication is key and commands from the steersperson should override all others.

River Safety

1 Traffic Light System

Light status is determined by qualified coach consensus, the Captain or Safety Officer, who are key-holders to the light switch control box. Check the website home page for live updates: marlowrowingclub.org.uk

Green Light - normal river flow, unaccompanied crews must have Bronze Award, otherwise no restrictions.

Amber Light - river fast-flowing, windy or both. Unaccompanied singles must have Gold Sculling Award and unaccompanied crew steersperson must have Gold Steering Award.

Red/Amber Light - only available at weekends with full safety cover with Captain's permission following the safety protocol. Unsuitable for all but the most experienced Gold level crews. Three safety launches posted at Temple, Bisham and above Marlow Bridge/MRC. No coaching launches.

Red Light - river fast-flowing, and /or windy or foggy. No boating under any circumstances.

2 Overtaking

Boats being overtaken should move towards the bank to allow faster crews into the 'Amber lane'. No crew should ever go more than halfway across the river into the 'Red lanes' as there is a danger of meeting crews coming the other way.

3 Turning

Green or Amber Light: At Temple, wind down at the flagpole but do not stop paddling until you are past the outflow opposite the top of Temple Mill Island. Turn in a wide teardrop shape and vacate the turning area before you stop for a break (by the Temple marina).

Mid-outing turns should be completed opposite Salter's Steamer Landing pier, before passing the White House.

Green Light: Wind down before Steamer Landing. Move towards the centre of the river as you approach the club. Turn just below the bridge, turning bows away from the weir, and cross back over to the Berkshire bank to return to the club.

Amber Light: Wind down before Steamer Landing. Move towards the centre of the river as you approach the club. Easy opposite the upstream club pontoons and complete your turn with bows away from the weir, before the bridge. Never go through the bridge on Amber Light.

4 At Night

Only Silver Level steerspersons and above may go afloat. Boat should carry a white light at either end of the boat, fixed to the boat, not the crew members. Flashing or coloured lights are not permitted.

A white or fluorescent top should be worn as the uppermost layer of clothing, no matter what the conditions. If it is raining put your high-visibility top over your waterproof if the latter is dark.

5 Reporting Incidents (capsize, crash, near-miss)

All incidents, however insignificant, must be reported straightaway on the British Rowing website: incidentreporting.britishrowing.org. (The Captain and Club Safety officer are then notified automatically.)

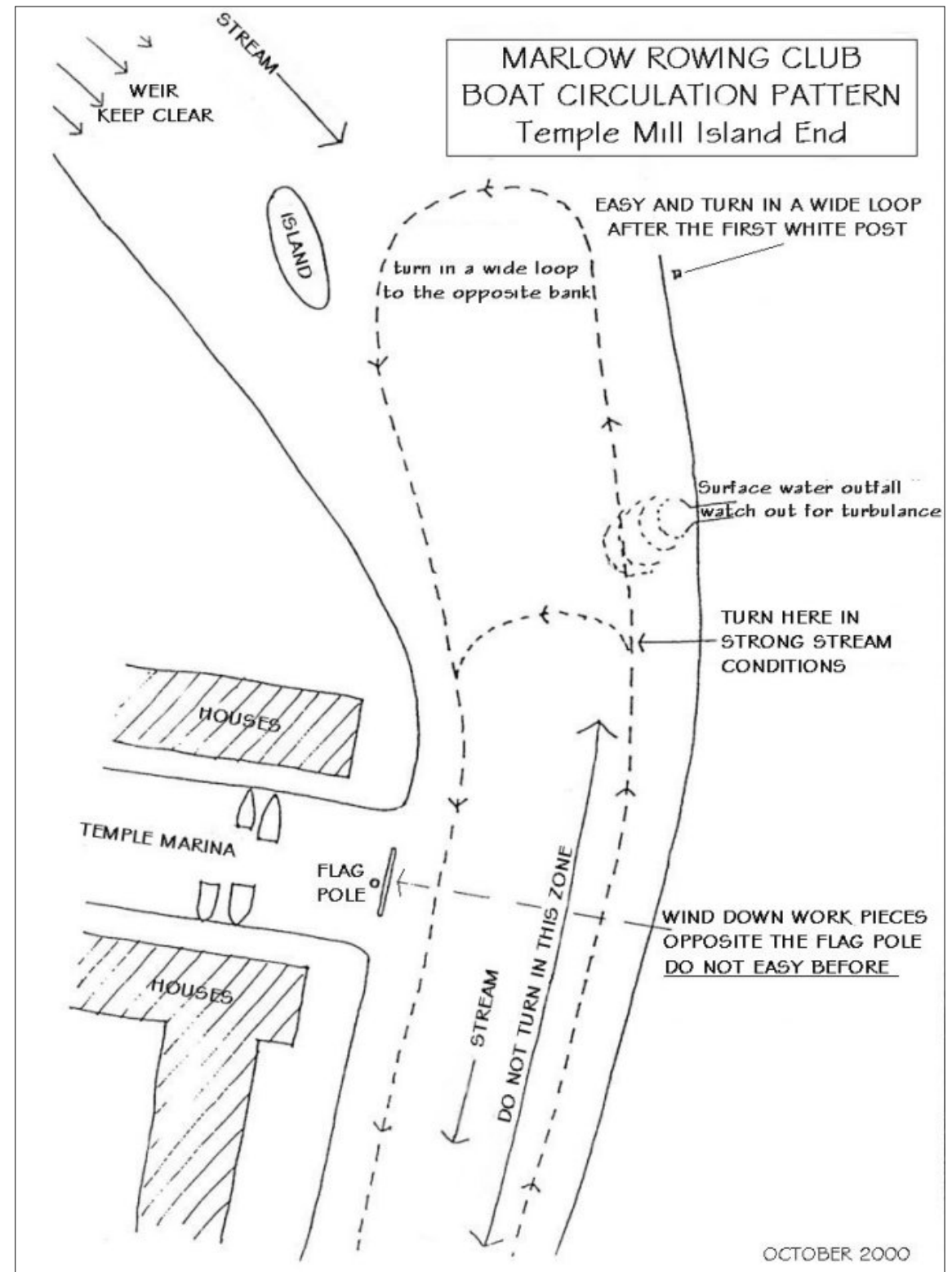
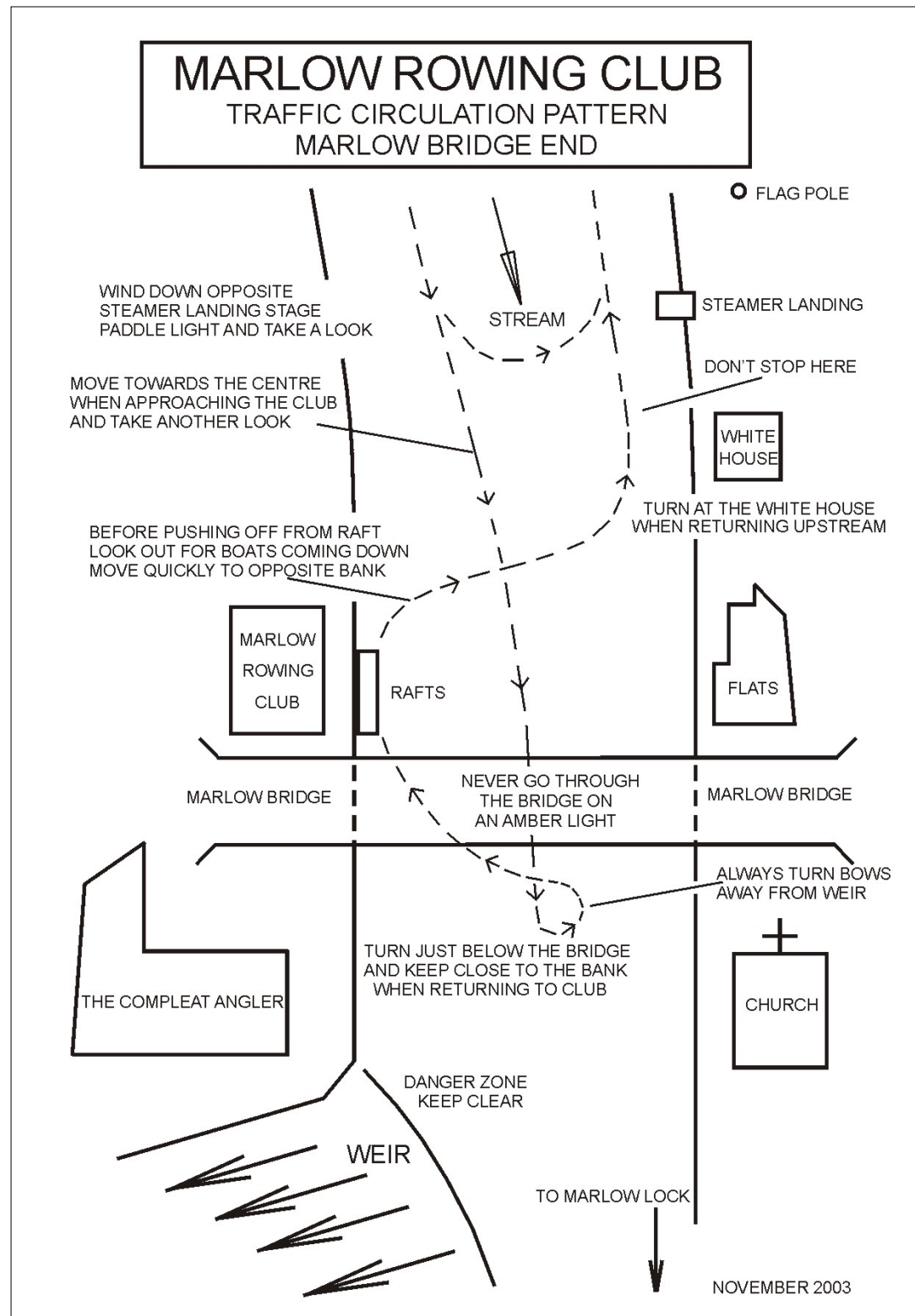
Summary of Safety Lights

	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Green	Can single / steer unsupervised in daylight	As bronze, plus can row at night	As silver, plus can pass locks
Amber Flow > 65 t/s or water < 8°	No unsupervised steering / singling	No unsupervised steering / singling	Can single or steer. Can row at night but not alone
Red+Amber	No rowing*		
Red Flow > 120 t/s or water < 3°	No rowing		
Fog	Higginson Park flagpole must be clearly visible for 5 mins		
Wind	Consider gusts and direction. Wind against flow is worse.		
Lightning	Do not boat for 30 mins. If already out, return directly.		
* rowing may be possible for experienced crew boats with extensive mitigation.			

Check the website home page for live updates: marlowrowingclub.org.uk

Appendix 3

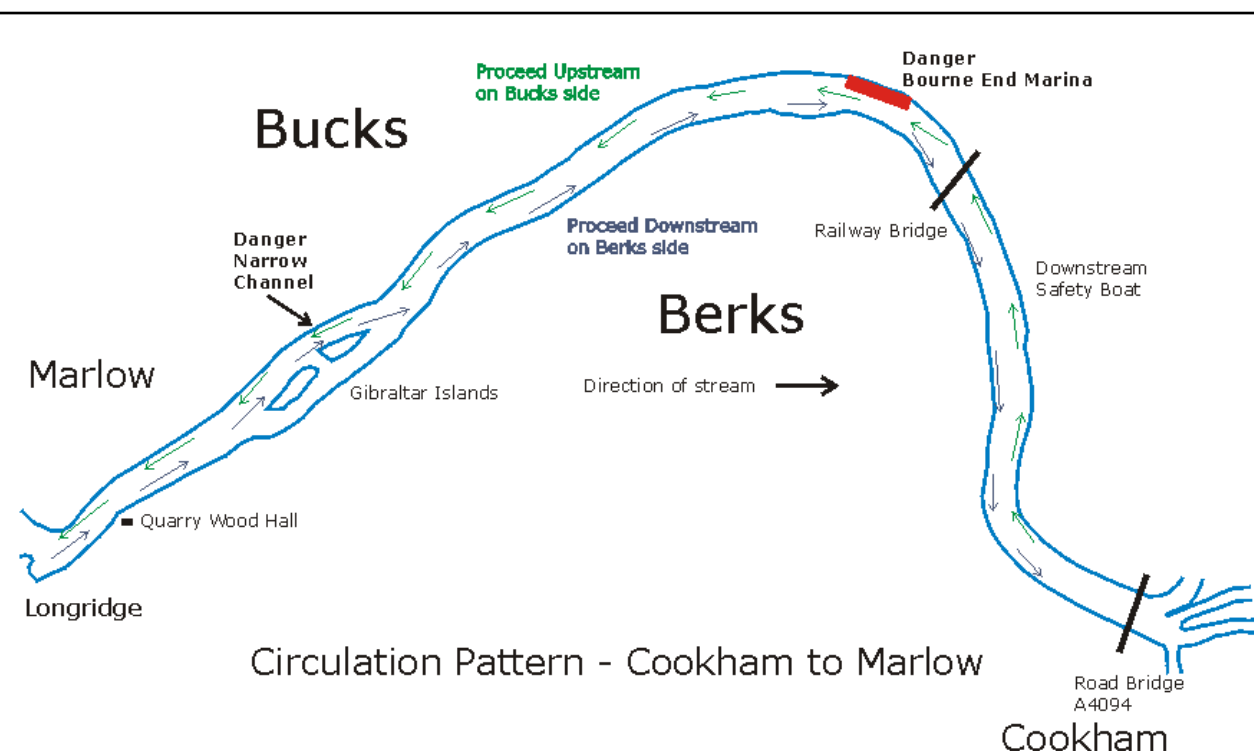
Summary of Circulation Patterns - Above Marlow Lock



Compliance ensures safe rowing for all.

Appendix 4

Summary of Circulation Patterns - Below Marlow Lock



Bourne End Marina

This diagram provides a detailed view of the Bourne End Marina area. It shows the river bend with the Bucks side to the north and the Berks side to the south. A north arrow points upwards. Key features include:

- Upper Thames SC** (Swimming Club) marked with a green rectangle on the Bucks side.
- Bourne End Marina** marked with a red rectangle on the Bucks side.
- Railway Bridge** crossing the river.
- Dashed arrows indicate upstream and downstream directions.
- A solid arrow labeled **STREAM** points towards the top left.

The Bourne End Marina represents a hazard to navigation on the Thames at Bourne End. The rules of navigation require crews proceeding downstream to stay on the Berks side of the river and crews proceeding upstream to stay on the Bucks side of the river.

There are two areas of increased risk. Crews proceeding upstream risk collision with the marina. Always remember after passing under the railway bridge in an upstream direction to check your position on the river and avoid the marina.

The second area of increased risk is in the centre of the river upstream of the marina. Crews proceeding downstream taking too wide a course on the river bend risk collision with crews proceeding upstream pushed out by the marina.

To minimise risk all crews should look ahead frequently and maintain a position on the correct side of the river with a good safety margin.

Appendix 5

List of Coxing Proficiency Award assessors

Safety Officer

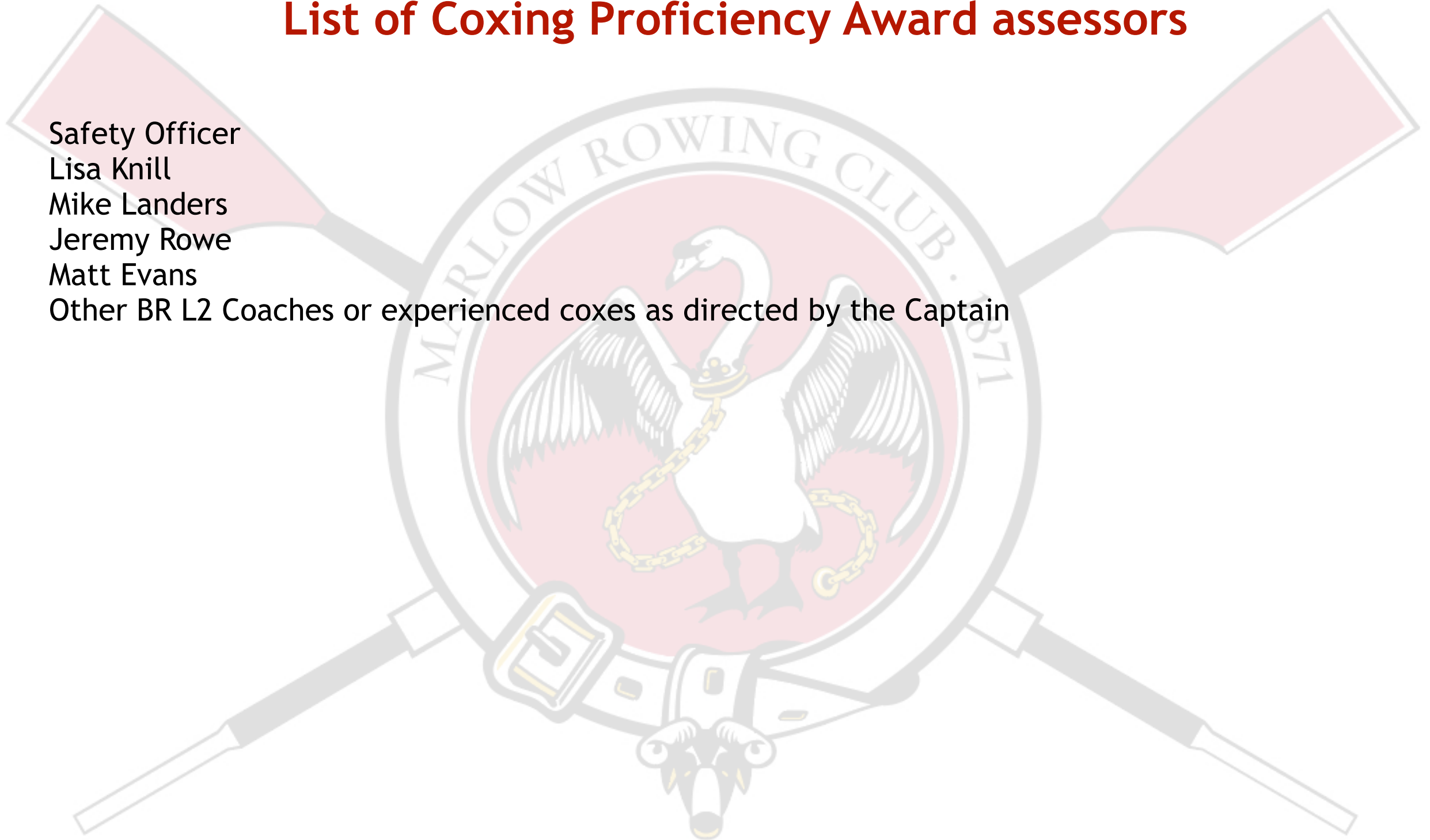
Lisa Knill

Mike Landers

Jeremy Rowe

Matt Evans

Other BR L2 Coaches or experienced coxes as directed by the Captain



Useful websites

Marlow Rowing Club: marlowrowingclub.org.uk
in particular the Safety section and MRC Induction Pack
MRC Steering Guide
MRC Coxing Guide

British Rowing:
Glossary of Terms- britishrowing.org/knowledge/online-learning/techniques-and-training/glossary

Equipment- britishrowing.org/knowledge/online-learning/equipment

Coxing/Steering Advice- britishrowing.org/knowledge/online-learning/coxing/introduction-to-coxing-steering/

Rules of Racing britishrowing.org/events/entering-competitions/rules-of-racing/

Steering the Tideway: Quick-Guide-to-Steering-on-the-Tideway.pdf

Beginner cox guide- rowingservice.com/coxingfiles/coxhbk.pdf

UK Anti-Doping: ukad.org.uk - check the *athletes/ 100%me* zone

Racing calendar: biddulph.org.uk

Useful contacts

Club Captain: captain@marlowrowingclub.org.uk

Club Water Safety Officer: safety@marlowrowingclub.org.uk

Club Chairman: chairman@marlowrowingclub.org.uk

Club Secretary: secretary@marlowrowingclub.org.uk

Welfare Officer: welfare@marlowrowingclub.org.uk

Boatman: boatman@marlowrowingclub.org.uk

