

Steering The Marlow Stretch - Guidance Notes

Marlow RC's clubhouse sits on a stretch that's approximately 1900m in length. The clubhouse is on the Berkshire (Berks) bank at the downstream end of the stretch. All Saints church, across from the clubhouse, is on the Buckinghamshire (Bucks) bank. A key hazard on the stretch is the weir 100m downstream from the clubhouse. The circulation pattern helps rowers to avoid it. The stretch is made up of 3 consecutive straight 500m sections with curved 200m sections at either end of the stretch. These steering notes are written in the order that a rower or sculler boating from the clubhouse and doing 1 full loop (a requirement of the Bronze assessment) would encounter them.

Before setting off – check what's moored on the far bank. Also you need to be able to see the park flagpole shown below from the pontoon. If you can't, because of fog or mist, you can't go out.



Leaving the pontoon. The job here is to get across to the Bucks bank quickly – getting to the bank well before the White House where crews will be turning to go back upstream. Set off with the stern pointing at the clubhouse highlighted in red and follow the safe line – highlighted in green.



You'll now be sitting 40m downstream of the **White House** seen below.



The next 200m / 20 strokes involve using rudder and or a squeeze on your bowside blades to take you around the gentle bend alongside the cruiser station



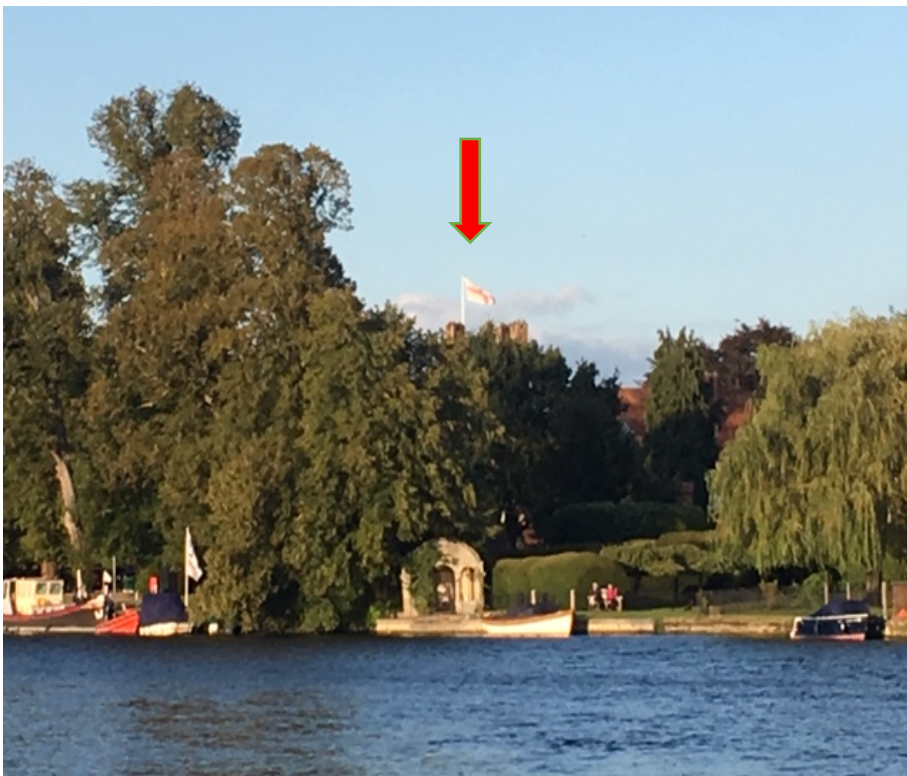
The first 500m upstream section starts alongside the flagpole in Higginson Park and runs to the door of Bisham church. As you move upstream point the stern of your boat at the mooring points (easier to see with a boat moored on them) alongside the flagpole. Keep 7-8m from your bowside bank to avoid firstly the protruding bush and then the fallen tree. This is the view approaching the church door looking back over the stern.



When you reach the church door you need to squeeze circa 3 times on strokeside and bring the stern onto the left of the large tree halfway up the balustrade. This is the view from alongside Bisham Sailing School with the stern point for the **second 500m upstream section**.



100m / 10 strokes upstream of Bisham Sailing School you need to squeeze circa 3 x on strokeside and bring the stern onto the flagpole at Bisham Abbey. Here's the view taken from the start of this **3rd 500m section** with the flagpole highlighted – it's directly above the grotto.



Below is the view as you approach the end of this top 500m section with line highlighted in green and the flagpole still highlighted in red



Approaching the top of this stretch you'll come alongside the ramp at Temple Sailing club (on the Berks bank) at which point you'll need to squeeze circa 3 x strokeside and put the stern to the left of the sailing club slipway – shown below.



You're now on the **top end 200m section** and there's a couple of things to be aware of. It's easy to get drawn into a small bay which has at its upstream end a bush that many rowers have become acquainted with. As you approach the Marina flagpole (Berks bank) check you're 8+m off your bowside bank or you're likely to join them.

When you pass this outlet – partly hidden by clumps of reeds you've reached the top of the stretch. Now you need to execute a wide turn after the first white post, opposite the top end of Temple Mill Island, taking you from 5m off the Bucks bank to 5m off the Berks bank.



Don't turn on the spot and **never pause in the turning zone**.

If you want a drink or need to take kit off get alongside the Marina flagpole before you do it.



Downstream section. Take a good look before you set off – obviously it's easier when you're stationary. The wall alongside the riverside houses at Temple is straight for 100m from the flagpole, although in summer there may be boats moored to the wall.

100m downstream from the flagpole you'll pass a set of river exit step ladders (5m off your bowside blade) which is your cue to start squeezing circa 4 x on bowside to bring the stern onto the end house as you approach Temple sailing club slipway.



Below is the downstream (over your shoulder) view - try not to get drawn too close to the slipway (circled) you want to be 8+m from it to avoid hitting the protruding trees just downstream of the slipway. If you can keep the stern on the end house and point your bows at Sudersee you can be confident of your line down the 500m stretch— highlighted below



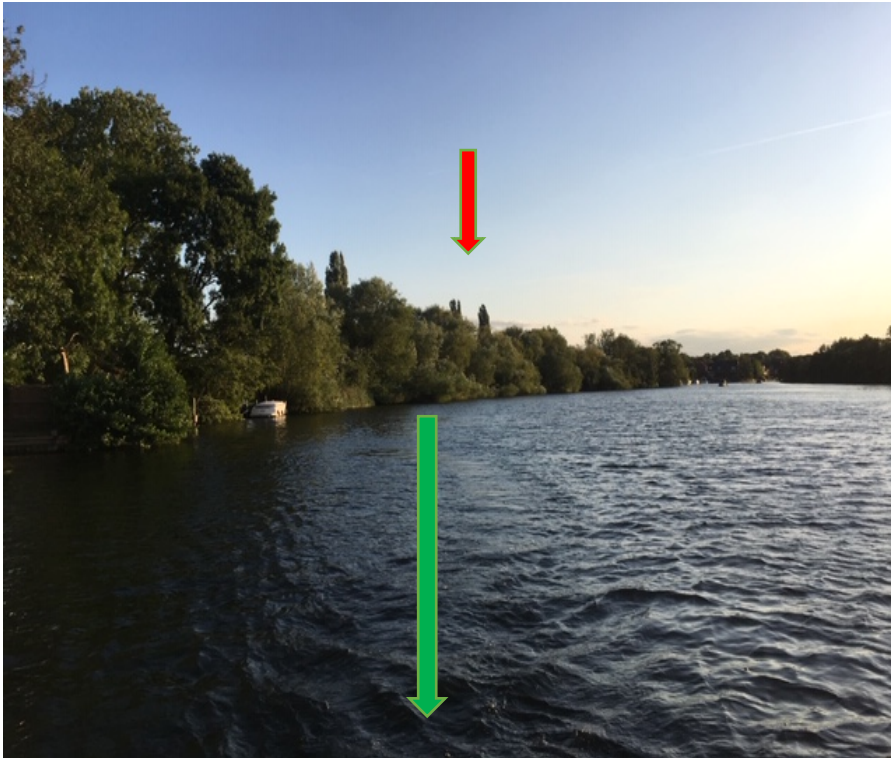
Approaching Sudersee at the end of the first 500m downstream section you'll pass the first of two almost identical boathouses. The first one is the point at which you need to squeeze circa 3 x on bowside. If you leave it until the second boathouse you're cutting it very fine – especially in high stream conditions and you need to consider **holding** it to strokeside to avoid hitting Sudersee which is usually moored on this bend.

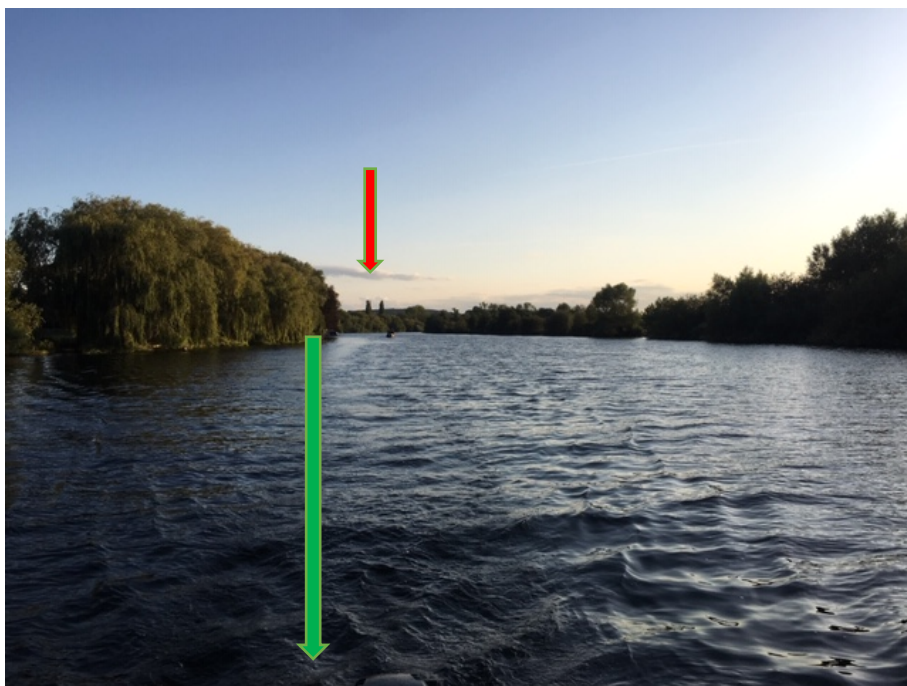


Here's Sudersee – usually moored on the Berkshire bank at the upstream end of the middle 500m section.

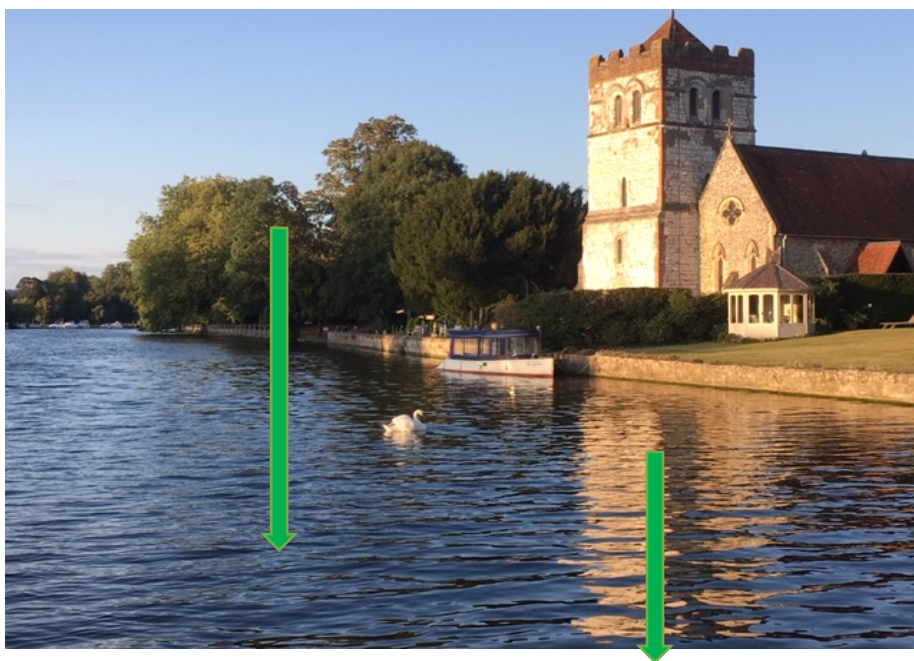


Having started your turn by the first boathouse you want to place your stern between the two Poplar trees emerging on the horizon. If you keep the stern there and keep 10m off the bank (to avoid getting close to boats at Bisham Sailing School which are sometimes double moored) you can be confident of your line all the way to 50m before Bisham Church door.





Approaching Bisham Church you need to squeeze circa 3 x on bowside and move the stern onto the Copper Beech tree. Take care to avoid The Juliette which is regularly moored by The Rectory. The good news is that the wall starting alongside the Church is straight for 500m and if you keep 8m off it you'll avoid the 3 protruding trees.

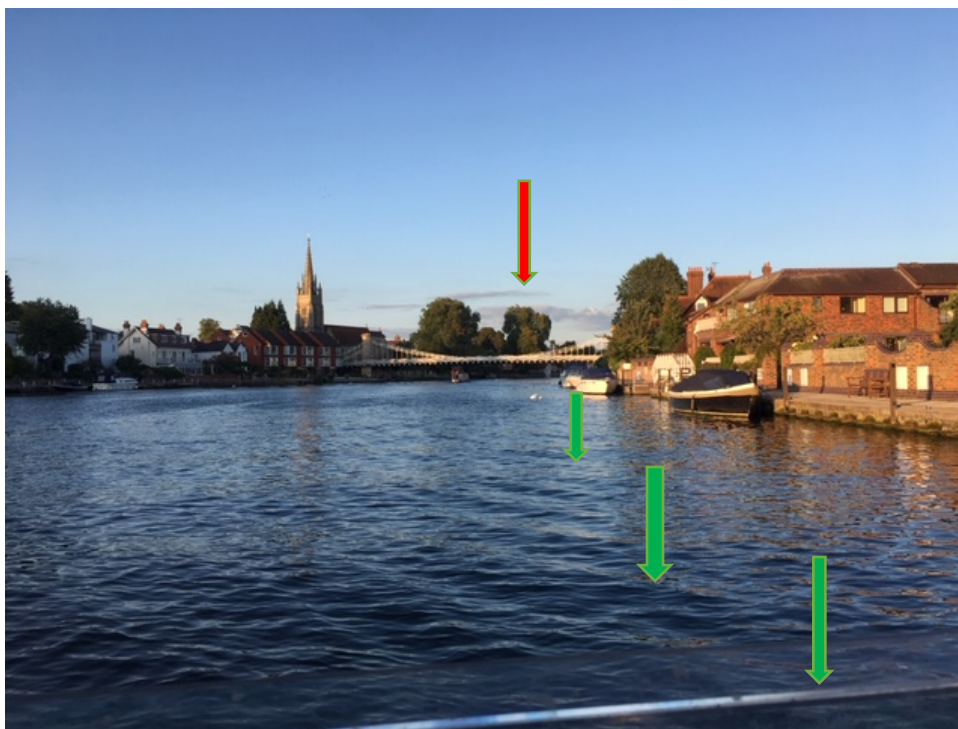




By the time you're alongside the third protruding tree (the weeping willow below) you're fast approaching the end of the third downstream piece and you need to be both preparing to wind down and getting ready for a 200m bend that will require you to squeeze gently on strokeside for circa 20 strokes.



Expect crews to be turning to go back upstream. They'll be doing this between the cruiser boat Jetty (50m upstream of the White House and often hidden by the cruisers they provide access to) and the White House, so you need to be winding race practice pieces down 10 strokes beforehand, at the park flagpole.



Having passed the White House you need to be going slowly and looking around every 2-3 strokes. Be vigilant, you're approaching the **crossing zone** where crews leaving the club will be crossing your path. Come slightly further out from the bank – an extra 5m will give you earlier visibility of crossing crews and vice versa.



Check the pontoons, for crews leaving the club and the turning zone, also circled, for crews.



As you pass the clubhouse remember to double check the light system – it may have changed while you’ve been out. If it’s on Amber you must turn above the bridge. If, as here, it’s still on green you can proceed just under the bridge, turn away from the weir, through 180’ and come back onto the pontoons being vigilant for crews also coming in to disembark. As an extra precaution its worth checking the club flag to assess the strength and direction of the wind in the turning zone.



