

Steering Proficiency Award

Introduction

The implementation of the Steering 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 in line with the Sculling Proficiency Award and the Coxing 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.

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

Every steersperson must have a thorough understanding of the levels of competence and proficiency required by members of their crew. This applies to doubles, quads, pairs, and fours.

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

It is expected that all members are also familiar with the Safety section and MRC Induction Pack on the website. The understanding and application of the directions laid out in the Circulation Pattern, Steering Guide and Safety Light system are considered fundamental, lifelong and critical elements of the Club Safety Plan and apply to every member of the club.

BRONZE

The Bronze level may be carried out in any boat (double, quad, pair, four) and entitles the steersperson to go afloat **in that boat type** above the lock, under 'Green light' conditions in daylight.

SILVER

The Silver level may be carried out in a four or quad. Completion of the Silver level entitles the steersperson 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.

GOLD

The Gold level may be carried out in a four or quad. The Gold Award generates experience and exposes the steersperson to longer distance work and higher mileage, and therefore to changeable river conditions. Completion of the Gold level entitles the steersperson to the same privileges as the Silver level holder, but in addition they may also go out under 'Amber light' conditions.

N.B. A Gold level steersperson 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 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 steerspersons.

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

Completion of the Adult Learn to Scull programme does not confer automatic Bronze status and all athletes must undergo a Bronze level test, once their coach deems them to be sufficiently competent.

Squad coaches or squad reps will be responsible for ensuring award levels are signed off for their athletes. 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 large number of the club's athletes 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 athlete's squad representative.

Bronze Award

The Bronze level may be carried out in in any boat (double, quad, pair, four). Completion of Bronze level entitles the steersperson to go afloat unaccompanied in that boat type, above the lock, under 'Green light' conditions and in daylight only.

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 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);

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 (see Appendix 1);
- Location of the main stern reference points on the Marlow to Temple stretch;
- 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 an understanding of the safety features of the boat, including buoyancy compartments (and the importance of keeping an intact seal), heel restraints, foot-strap pull and bow-ball. Appreciate importance of wearing high-vis outer layer appropriate to light conditions.

Bronze Award

- 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 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 steersperson must be able to speak clearly and loudly, so the whole crew can hear, and be correct and consistent with their commands. At the end of the session, the steersperson should then organise positioning trestles, cleaning the boat, and sanitising the blades before returning them safely to their designated racks.
- 6 Demonstrate how to organise the crew to get in the boat and push off the landing stage safely, using the standard commands. At the end of the session, the steersperson should be the first member of the crew to disembark, holding the boat firmly so that the rest of the crew can disembark safely.
- 7 Demonstrate a clear understanding of the commands needed to start and stop any piece of work 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.
- 8 Demonstrate ability to steer a total distance of 3600m, i.e. one full loop of the Marlow Reach, observing the circulation pattern in full, and demonstrating timely safety calls: eg “Ahead Quad!”
- 9 Explain in detail the safety procedures to avoid capsizing and what to do in the event of a capsize or crew emergency.



Assessor's Checklist and Certificate

Bronze Steering Award

	ELEMENT	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
1	Circulation Pattern and Turning (Marlow Reach)		
2	Position on River, Steering Reference Points and Hazards		
3	Boat Safety Features		
4	Boat Equipment		
5	Racking and Boat Handling		
6	Embark and Disembark		
7	3600m paddling with start and stop commands		
8	Emergency Stop		
9	Backing down		
10	Understand Capsize Drill procedure		

NAME OF CANDIDATE	SIGNATURE
NAME OF ASSESSOR	SIGNATURE
DATE	

Silver Award

The Silver level may be carried out in a four or quad. Completion of the Silver level entitles the steersperson 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.

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 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 coxless 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 confident commands to embark and disembark the crew unaided.

Silver Award

- 4 Demonstrate ability to back the boat down in a straight line and then stop the boat.
- 5 Paddle firm and execute an emergency stop on a shout from the assessor.
- 6 Execute an emergency stop with turn to bow side.
- 7 Execute an emergency stop with turn to stroke side.
- 8 Demonstrate ability to command crew to turn boat 360 degrees clockwise and anticlockwise.
- 9 After cleaning and re-racking the boat, ensure that all equipment is put away and secure the boathouse.



Assessor's Checklist and Certificate

Silver Steering Award

	ELEMENT	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
1	Night Sculling and Rowing Safety		
2	Circulation Pattern		
3	Embark and disembark crew unaided		
4	Backing down and stopping		
5	Emergency Stop from firm pressure (straight)		
6	Emergency Stop with turn to bow side		
7	Emergency Stop with turn to stroke side		
8	360 degree turn clockwise and anti-clockwise		
9	Boathouse protocol		

NAME OF CANDIDATE	SIGNATURE
NAME OF ASSESSOR	SIGNATURE
DATE	

Gold Award

The Gold level may be carried out in a four or quad. The Gold Award generates experience and exposes the steersperson to longer distance work and higher mileage, and therefore to changeable river conditions. Completion of the Gold level entitles the steersperson to the same privileges as the Silver level holder, but in addition they may also go out under 'Amber light' conditions and 'Red/Amber' controlled sessions.

N.B. A Gold level steersperson may only go below the Marlow lock once they have demonstrated knowledge of lock use and the Cookham Reach circulation pattern and safety hazards. This can be done in an additional assessment.

Required elements

The tasks can be signed off in any order, but should be completed over a period of 3 months.

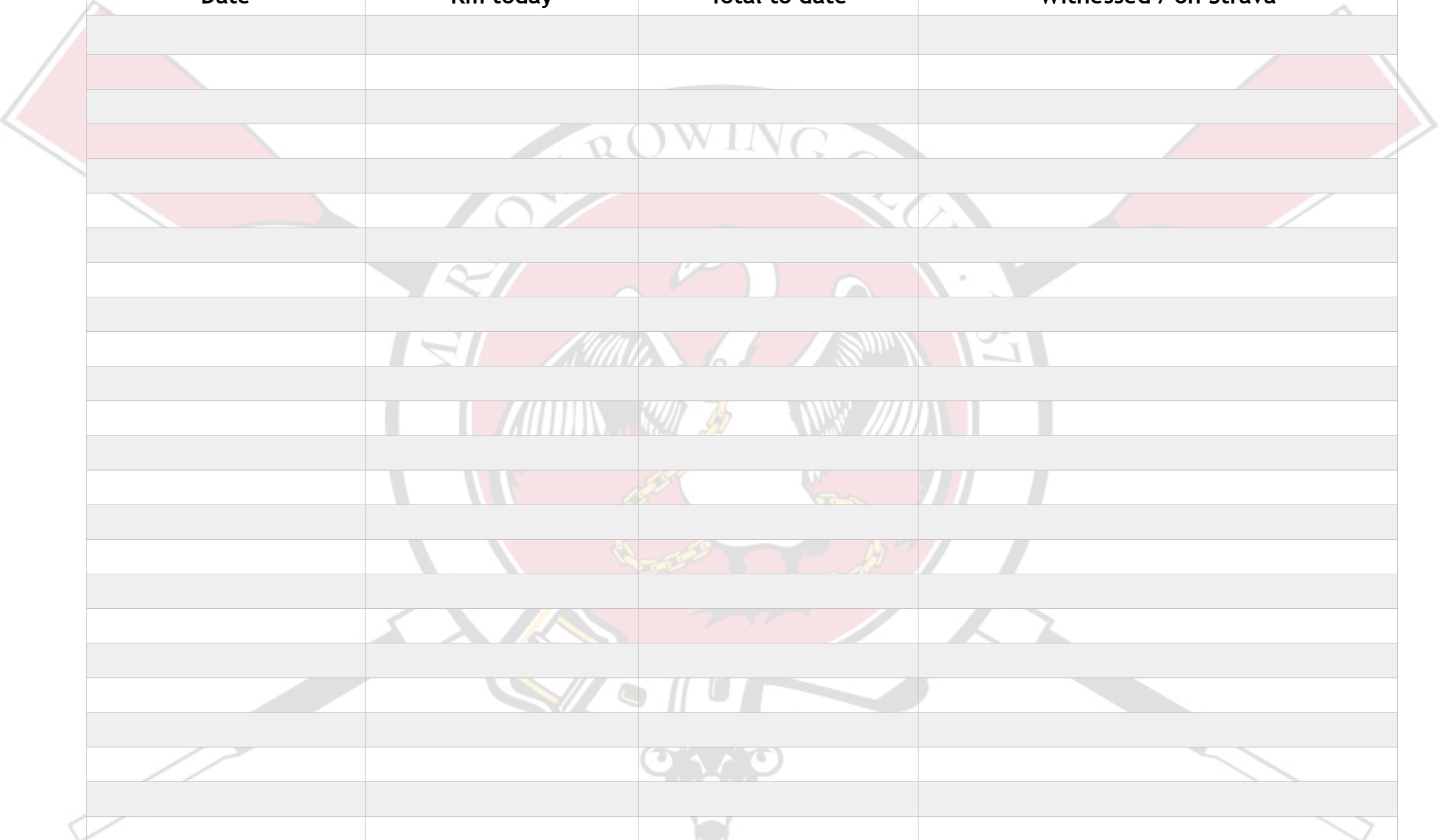
- 1 Over a period of 3 months, the steersperson must steer a total distance of 150km in a safe and competent manner, observing all the safety and technical skills learnt in the previous two levels, plus side-by-side practice and overtaking. One loop above Marlow lock counts as 3.6km. Kilometres attained in reaching Bronze and Silver levels do not count towards the Gold level award.
- 2 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.
- 3 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 an outing in Amber light conditions under supervision of a Gold steersperson in the crew.

Gold Award plus Lock

- 4 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.
- 5 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.
- 6 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.

Gold Award Mileage Log

Date	Km today	Total to date	Witnessed / on Strava





Assessor's Checklist and Certificate

Gold Steering Award

	ELEMENT	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
1	150km Experience, including Side-by-Side and Overtaking		
2	Ferry Glide Understanding and Demonstration		
3	River Conditions Risk Assessment and Amber light outing		
	GOLD PLUS LOCK		
4	Lock Risk Assessment		
5	Lock Navigation		
6	Circulation Pattern and Turning (Cookham Reach)		

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.)

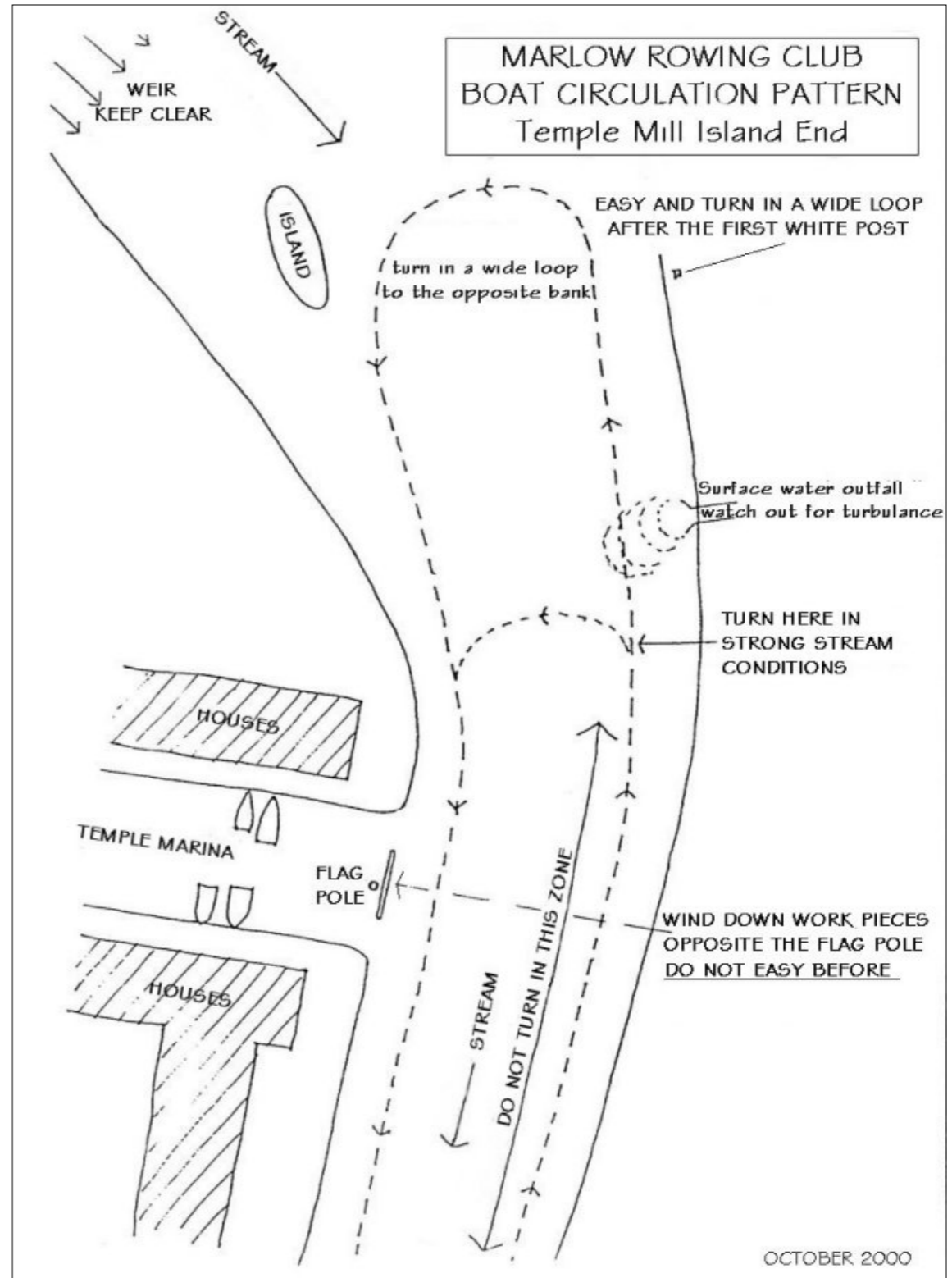
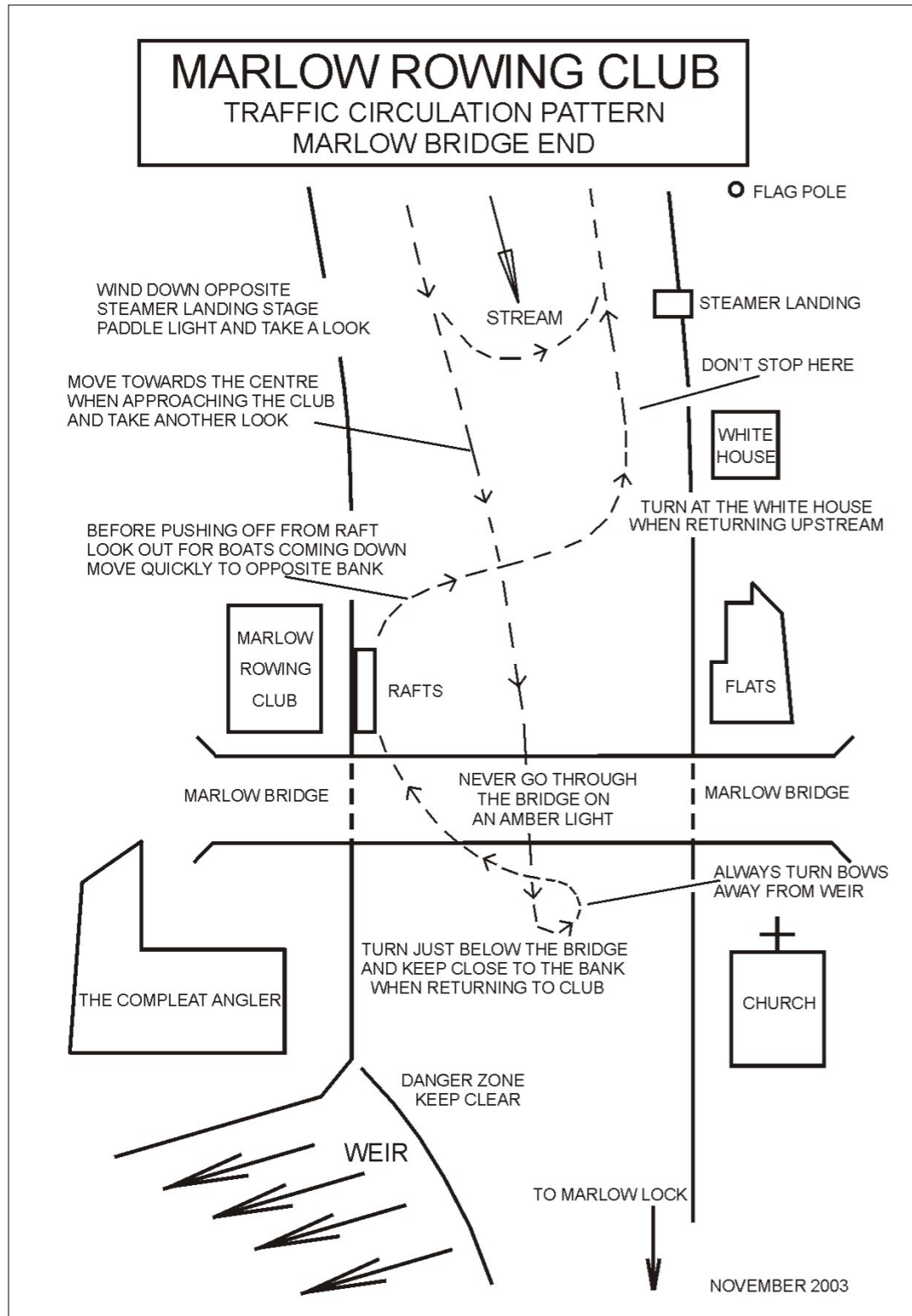
Summary of Safety Lights

	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

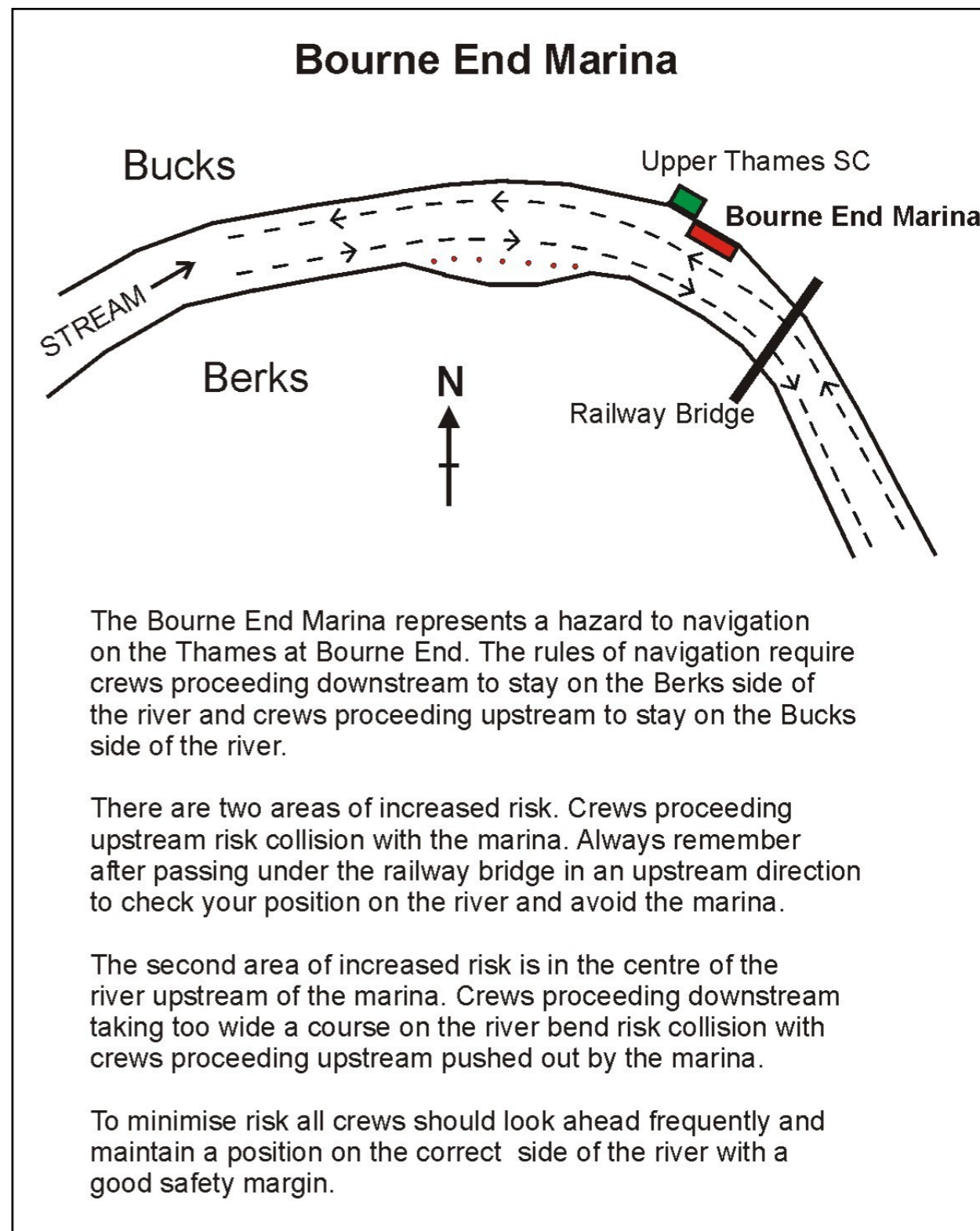
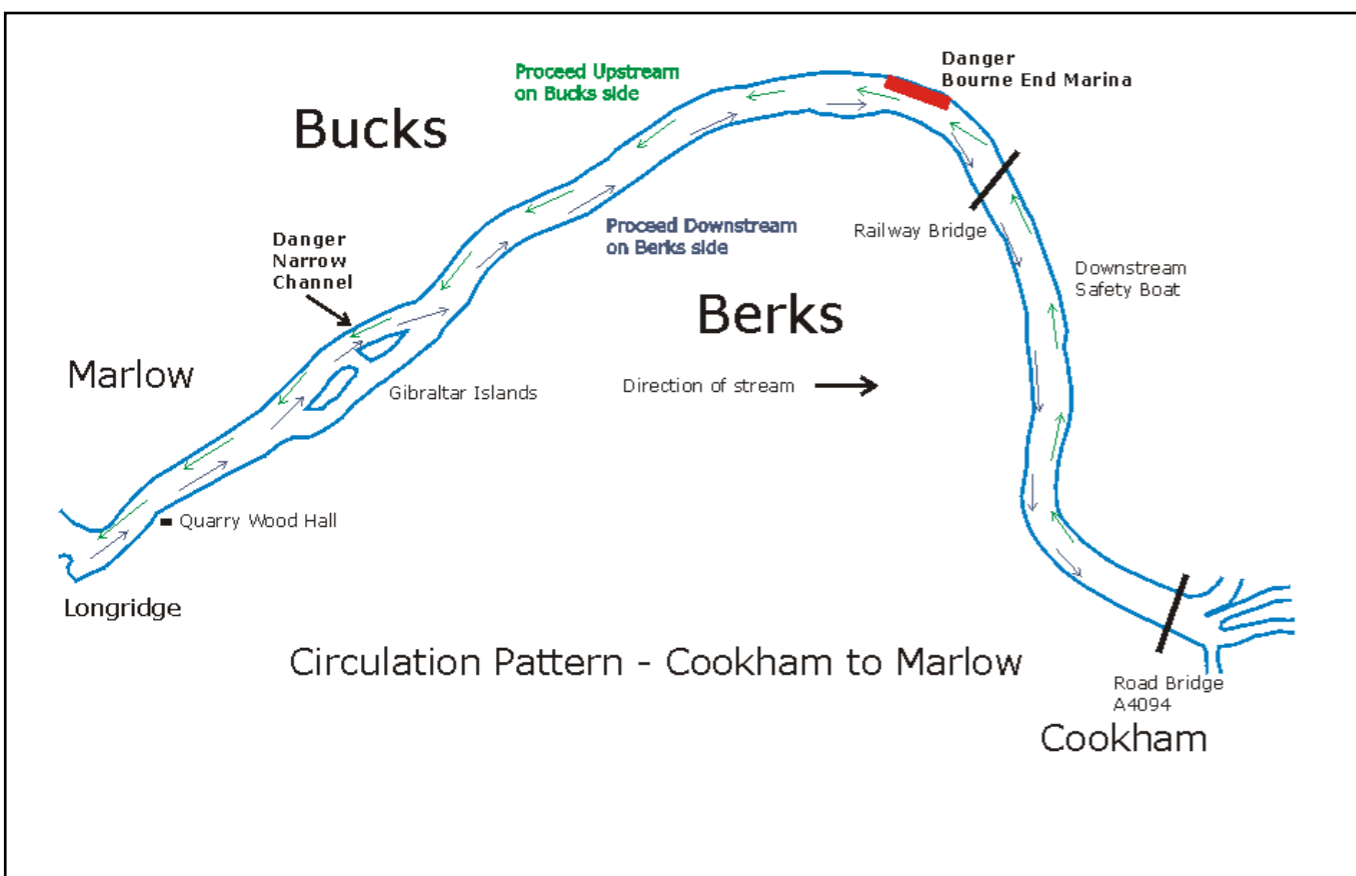
Summary of Circulation Patterns - Above Marlow Lock



Compliance ensures safe rowing for all.

Appendix 4

Summary of Circulation Patterns - Below Marlow Lock



Appendix 5

List of Steering Proficiency Award assessors

Safety Officer
Richard McMahon
David Plaskitt
Lisa Knill
Mike Landers
Graeme Hyman
Matt Evans
Other BR L2 Coaches as directed by the Captain



Useful websites

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

British Rowing:

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

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

British Rowing Technique- britishrowing.org/knowledge/rower-development/british-rowing-technique

Training Advice - britishrowing.org/knowledge/online-learning/training-advice

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

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

