



# MEMBERS HANDBOOK

**For new and existing members**

Revision 3 – October 2016

## Committee Members

Abingdon Rowing Club has an enthusiastic and active committee which runs the club for the benefit and enjoyment of its members. Details of key members of the committee are listed below.

Andrew Troup	Chairman and Welfare Officer
Nikki Reeves	Club Captain
Corinna Demmar	Women's Vice Captain
Tom Hardy	Club Kit Secretary
Adam Hagar	Men's Vice Captain
Phillip Nelson	Beginners Coordinator
Ross Fergus	Secretary
John Roberts	Treasurer
Kate Walker	Welfare Officer
Matt Robinson	Membership & Racking, Website
Helen Gray	Entries
Tony Hughes	Ordinary Member, Head Co-ordinator
Stefan Paetow	Social Secretary
John Fass	Water Safety Officer

All of the above can be contacted by email via the contacts page on the ARC website, or in person at the club. There is a poster on the noticeboard at the club with "mugshots" so you know what everyone looks like, so if you see them around the club, come and say hello!

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

## **Introduction**

This handbook is aimed at all Club members, new and present, and is intended to give an overview of the club, the stretch of river we row on, and other information you may find useful throughout your membership with Abingdon Rowing Club.

If you feel there is anything else that could be added, please let us know by contacting one of the committee members shown on the previous page, and we will do our best to include it in the next revision

## **Abingdon Rowing Club**

Abingdon Rowing Club was established in 1958 to exploit one of the best stretches of water on the River Thames. The distance from end-to-end is 3,800m which remains relatively free of major river traffic, even during the summer months. The club continues to build on its success, investing in our facilities, equipment and coaching support to provide a training unique training environment for everyone from recreational rowers to athletes with ambition.

The Club has several different squads, catering for members of all age groups and abilities. Squads train between 1 and 6 days per week depending upon their aims, aspirations and commitments.

Each year the Club competes at regattas all over the country, and has had medal successes at Henley Masters, National Veteran Championships and Vet Fours Head.

We also hold our own Head of the River race each year, in April. This event is very well attended by many clubs from all over the UK – Some from as far away as Scotland! Unlike other clubs, we don't compete in our own Head Race, as we are far too busy running it - More on the Abingdon Head later!

# Squads

## Beginners

The club runs beginner courses in Spring and Summer to provide people with a taster in rowing and the basic skills required to take part in the sport recreationally or competitively. After completing a course, new members may be invited to join the novice/intermediate squads and progress to racing, or, once assessed as self-sufficient, are able to row recreationally if they wish. For details of upcoming beginner courses, check out our website [www.abingdonrc.org.uk](http://www.abingdonrc.org.uk), or send an email to [Abingdon.learnrow@gmail.com](mailto:Abingdon.learnrow@gmail.com)

## Novice/Intermediate (Men and Women)

The Novice/Intermediate Squads are for those who have progressed from the Beginners squad, and are developing their rowing technique and fitness, or those with previous rowing experience who are coming back into the sport. We have very active men's and women's Novice/Intermediate squads who all train regularly (Around 2-5 days per week, depending on commitment), and aim to compete at local level regattas such as Shrewsbury, Ironbridge, Henley T&V and Oxford City Regatta.



This group gives the first taste of competition and the feeling of being part of a squad. It is a mixed ability group with some members remaining at this level for competition each year as it meets their competition desires and fits with their ability to train. Those who wish to train further are able to join the respective Men or Women's senior squad at the beginning of winter season in September each year.



## **Senior (Men and Women)**



The Senior squad is for those who have some experience rowing or sculling, and who are willing and able to commit to a full training program six days a week, which is made up of four evenings sessions during the week (Water based in the Summer, and Land based in Winter), as well as Saturday and Sunday morning water outings (8am – 12pm) each weekend. Regular assessments are held throughout the season, and all members of this squad are expected to commit fully to the club's senior training plan. This helps to ensure our Senior squad is as competitive as possible.



The senior squad regularly competes at Henley Women's Regatta, Henley Masters Regatta, and the annual Head of the River Races on London's tideway, and has had good results in these, as well as local Regattas and Head Races. The Senior Squad takes in experienced new members all the way through the year, and those progressing from the Club's novice/Intermediate squads in September each year.

*If you are interested in joining one of the Novice/Intermediate or Senior Squads, please speak to the relevant Men's or Women's Vice Captain (Contact Details on page 2)*



## Masters

Abingdon Rowing Club has a large Masters (formerly known as Veterans) group of rowers. Dedicated to enjoying themselves, the group welcomes rowers with all levels of experience and ability and offers rowing to suit all levels, from recreational / occasional to full competitive racing at international levels. In the last few years, we've had wins at National Masters and Henley Masters regattas (crews have included some members who only learnt to row in the last 5 years) and have had representatives at the World Masters regatta. We also compete regularly at UK regattas in the summer and head races in the winter.

It is just as important to us to support individuals and crews who prefer to stay on our beautiful stretch of water with regular or occasional sessions, not racing but enjoying the activity, the companionship, the (occasional) tranquility and the (lively) wildlife. It



keeps us fit, keeps us healthy and keeps the mind working.

So, whatever your ability level and whatever your ambition from rowing, you'll be assured of a very warm and enthusiastic welcome at Abingdon Rowing Club. The Masters row on Saturday and Sunday mornings through the year

and add evening rowing in the summer months.

*If you are interested in joining the Masters group, please speak to Adam Hagar, Men's Vice-Captain.*

## Recreational

ARC has a group of recreational rowers who boat as and when they are able to do so during the week, and also at weekends occasionally. This group are mainly made up of experienced rowers/scullers who's busy lives only allow them the occasional outing as and when they can fit it in. This group is not coached, and do not follow a regular training plan, so if you are already a competent rower/sculler and able to boat without coaching/launch supervision, and a gentle paddle up and down the river is more your style, then this is the group for you!

## Juniors

The juniors at ARC are a great bunch. We receive coaching from a fantastic team and are continually progressing to compete. As the squad is developing, we have more and more members from ages 12 to 18 and from many different schools in Oxfordshire.

Recently, thanks to joint funding from the club and a community grant, we have been able to purchase a new coxed quad, named by the squad as "Frank". This new boat has allowed us to recruit a group of J13 women, who are currently learning to row and then join the rest of the squad. Meanwhile, the rest of the group continues to train and race.



ARC Juniors racing their new coxed quad at TVTH January 2012

Our current WJ15 quad has won several events in the past year, and we have also had extremely promising results at Gloucester head with 4 victories in 7 crews that competed. With the juniors, everybody is encouraged to compete but you have a better chance of being a more competitive crew if you train harder.

We train 4 times a week; Wednesday and Friday evenings at 17:30, as well as Saturday and Sunday afternoons from 2-4pm. During the summer most of our outings are water based (weather permitting!) but during the winter months, we do land training on the week days to build fitness for the summer.

It's not all about training - we also have regular socials organized by one of the juniors and an annual Christmas social. We all get on well with each other and make sure that even though we are training hard, we are also having fun

*If you are interested in joining the Abingdon Junior Squad, then please speak to the Junior Coordinator, Kevin Mentzel, or contact him via the website.*

## Our Facilities and Equipment

The Abingdon Rowing Club boathouse consists of male and female changing rooms, a gym, club room, and three boat bays. We have a range of sculling and sweep oar boats to suit all sizes and abilities.

The boathouse and fleet of boats is maintained by club members, with the help of a part time boatman for one or two hours a week. This means everyone needs to help look after equipment, facilities and the general running of the club. There is always something that needs doing, be it mowing the lawn, washing up cups, fixing or cleaning boats or mending club equipment.

The running of the club is funded entirely by club membership, racking fees, club head income and grants. Our mission is not to make money, but to improve facilities for our members, and any income received is ploughed straight back into the club to improve equipment and facilities.

Rowing boats are extremely delicate and expensive - It is important they are handled with the proper care they need. Please take care to clean boats after you have used them, and to carry and store them correctly. All of the boats have been carefully rigged and, other than footplates, shouldn't be changed unless under direction from the club captain or coach. Plastic 'C' clips have been placed on all riggers to allow for heights to be adjusted easily. If you notice any problems with any of the boats, please send an email to [arcboatrepairs@gmail.com](mailto:arcboatrepairs@gmail.com), with a full description of the issue, so that repairs can be arranged.

The club has a number of indoor rowing machines (known as ergs), in our new gym. If you are using the ergs, please wipe them clean with the spray and wipes provided, and replace the bubble wrap screen protectors after each use. There is also some special oil available to lubricate the chains occasionally.

The club gym also has a selection of free weights available for use by members. Please think about your own and other people's safety when using this equipment, and ensure that all weights are returned to their racks after use.

The club has two club launches; Speckled Hen and the yellow Fun Boat. These boats are power boats which are normally used by coaches to accompany crews when on the water. The boats are booked using the booking sheet (see links page), and can only be used by people who have been trained and assessed as competent to do so. If you



would like to be trained to use these boats, have a chat to one of the squad vice captains, who will be happy to help arrange this for you.

## **Booking Boats**

All of the club boats are listed on a public spreadsheet. This spreadsheet is used to book boats, and also contains information on water safety and river conditions. Reserving boats via the booking sheet ensures that club equipment is utilized as efficiently as possible. There are a couple of rules to remember when using the sheet –

- Please do not book boats more than 7 days in advance, unless booking for a specific event
- if you have booked a boat and you are more than 20 minutes late then your booking becomes null and the boat is then available for others to use
- If you no longer need your boat booking, please cancel it as soon as you know it will no longer be needed, to enable others to use the boat instead
- The spreadsheet clearly shows the suggested average crew weight and the suggested ability level or squad that should use that boat. Please take care to read this before booking boats to make sure you reserve a boat that is best suited to you and your crew.

The link to the boat booking spreadsheet can be found on the links page at the back of this handbook.

## **Abingdon Club Head Race**

One of the biggest events of the year at Abingdon Rowing Club is the annual club head race. Crews from all over the country come to compete at Abingdon. It is one of the biggest sources of income to the club and so it is important that all club members help to make the event run as smoothly as possible. As part of membership to the club, all members are expected to make themselves available for the weekend of the Head which is held in the middle of April. It really is a case of more hands making light work! Please take this event seriously, it is very important the ARC membership all pull together to help ensure the continued success of this essential event to the club.

## Navigation and Safety

The Thames at Abingdon is enjoyed by many people. As well as Abingdon Rowing Club, local canoe clubs, sailing clubs and leisure boats also take advantage of this stretch of River. To help make the river a safe place to be, all river users should be aware of the following navigational rules:

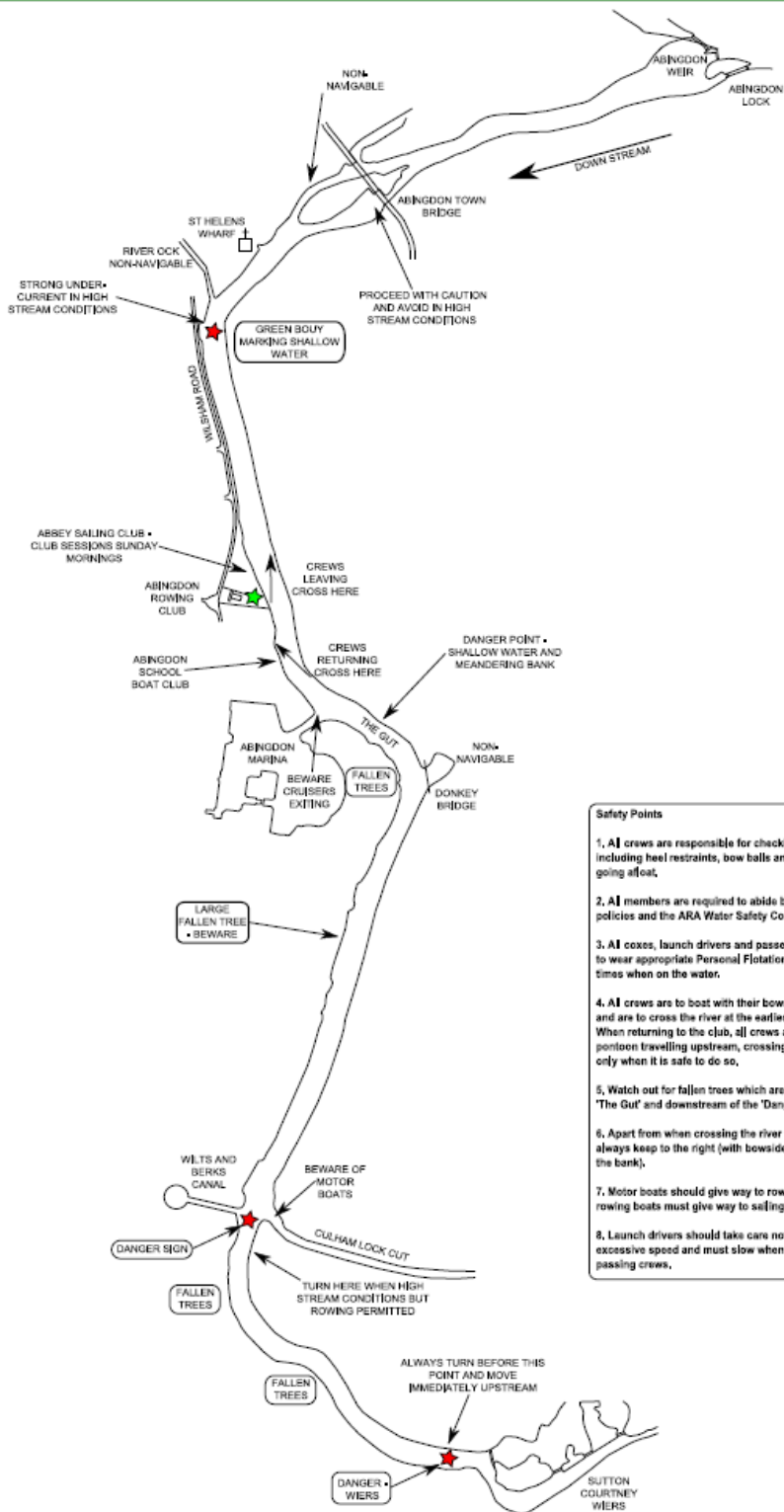
- Always boat and land with the bows of the boat pointing upstream
- Boats landing have priority over boats going out on the Landing Stage
- Always keep to the right of the river (So the bank should always be on your left (Unless you are the cox, in which case it should always be on your right))
- Crews being overtaken should maintain course and speed. The overtaking crew is responsible for ensuring it is safe to do so before proceeding.
- Rowing boats must give way to sailing boats
- Powered craft (Including launches and pleasure boats) must give way to rowing boats
- Always ensure the river is clear both ways before spinning, and never spin on a bend
- In high stream, spin by the petrol pumps at the town end of the river, and just past the danger sign at the weir end of the river

A map of the river, showing hazards and turning points, can be found on the next page.

Rowing is an extremely safe sport, but as with all river activities, please remember the following guidelines:

- Always bring a spare change of kit and a towel with you to the club if you are planning a water outing – Although rare, capsizes do happen!
- If there are adverse weather conditions, or high stream, please consider the ability of yourself and/or your crew to deal with the conditions, refer to the competency sheets on the boat booking google site, and heed the advice of the Club Safety Officer on all matters to do with Water Safety.
- All members must be able to swim at least 100 meters in light clothing, and complete a capsize course as soon as possible after joining the club. All members wishing to use club boats must attend a capsize drill every two years as a minimum requirement. Capsize drills for Junior members are organized by the Junior Coordinator.

# ABINGDON ROWING CLUB - RIVER THAMES MAP



## Safety Points

- 1. All crews are responsible for checking their boats** including heel restraints, bow balls and hatches before going afloat.
- 2. All members are required to abide by the club's safety policies and the ARA Water Safety Code.**
- 3. All coxes, launch drivers and passengers are required to wear appropriate Personal Flotation Devices at all times when on the water.**
- 4. All crews are to boat with their bows facing upstream and are to cross the river at the earliest opportunity. When returning to the club, all crews are to approach the pontoon travelling upstream, crossing to the club side only when it is safe to do so.**
- 5. Watch out for fallen trees which are common through 'The Gut' and downstream of the 'Danger Sign'.**
- 6. Apart from when crossing the river to or from the club, always keep to the right (with bows/ blades closest to the bank).**
- 7. Motor boats should give way to rowing boats but rowing boats must give way to sailing boats.**
- 8. Launch drivers should take care not to drive at excessive speed and must slow when approaching passing crews.**

## Club Kit

Abingdon Rowing Club has a wide range of club kit, for both racing and training, which is supplied by Godfrey Rowing. Bulk club kit orders are generally put in a round three times a year, so that we can make the most of large order discounts and pass these savings on to our members. Club kit can still be ordered outside these windows, but you will pay the single item price. If you are new to the club and need any racing kit before you have had a chance to order any, then our members are always willing to help out by lending kit (Providing you return it washed of course! 😊), so please do ask if you need something.

## Social

We are a very friendly club, with a busy social calendar, which includes our annual Christmas Party, regular organized “Row to Oxford” outings (Via the Isis pub!), Fun Race Days,



Barbecues and Halloween/Fire works parties. Keep an eye out for emails from the club membership secretary for details of any upcoming social events.



## The Rowing Year – Notable Dates and Events

Winter training runs from September through to April, during which time we compete regularly in Head Races. In May we switch to Regatta racing for the summer months, and the real excitement begins! The following calendar shows the typical events in the club Calendar throughout the year (Subject to change)

January	<a href="#">Thames Valley Trial Head</a>
February	<a href="#">Avon County Head</a> <a href="#">Bedford Eights and Fours Head</a>
March	<a href="#">Women's Eights Head of the River</a> <a href="#">The Eights Head of the River</a> <a href="#">Vesta Veterans Head of the River</a> <a href="#">Gloucester Head</a>
April	<a href="#">Abingdon Rowing Club Head</a> <a href="#">Oxford City Bumps Race</a>
May	<a href="#">Shrewsbury Regatta</a> <a href="#">Ball Cup (Juniors)</a> <a href="#">Nottingham City Regatta</a> <a href="#">British Rowing Masters Championships</a>
June	<a href="#">Metropolitan Regatta</a> <a href="#">Reading Amateur Regatta</a> <a href="#">Henley Women's Regatta</a> <a href="#">Ironbridge Regatta</a>
July	<a href="#">Henley Royal Regatta</a> <a href="#">Henley Masters Regatta</a> <a href="#">British Rowing Championships</a> <a href="#">Bewdley Regatta</a> <a href="#">Henley Town and Visitors Regatta</a>
August	<a href="#">Maidenhead Regatta</a> <a href="#">Oxford City Regatta</a>
September	<a href="#">Isis Sculls</a> <a href="#">Wallingford Long Distance Sculls</a>
October	<a href="#">Pairs Head</a> <a href="#">Bedford Autumn Fours &amp; Small Boats Head</a> <a href="#">Marlow Long Distance Sculls</a>
November	<a href="#">Fours Head</a> <a href="#">Vet Fours Head</a> <a href="#">Evesham Head</a>
December	<a href="#">Wallingford Fours and Eights Head</a> <a href="#">Vesta Scullers Head</a>

## Glossary of rowing terms

Rowing	In a boat with one oar each
Sculling	In a boat with two oars (blades) each
Eight, Four, Pair	Eight people rowing, Four people rowing, Two people rowing in a boat
Quad, Double, Single	Four people sculling, Two people sculling, One person sculling in a boat
Cox	The person who steers the boat and is in overall charge of the crew
Coxless	No cox - The bow person rowing/sculling are doing the steering as well as rowing/sculling
Stroke Side	When you are sitting on your seat in the boat, the oar which is sticking out on the right hand side of the boat (Also known as Port side)
Bow Side	The oar sticking out the left hand side of the boat when you are sat in it (Also known as Starboard)
Oars/Blades/Sculls	Different names for Oars
Bow/Bowman	The person who sits at the front of the boat, but because you are going backwards, Bow is the person who is following everyone else
Stroke	(The person not the action) The person who sits at the back of the boat, but because you are going backwards Stroke is the person who everyone else follows
Bow (1), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, Stroke (8)	The positions in an Eight, each person has a number depending on which seat they are in
Square blade	When the spoon of the oar is vertical to the water, this is the position that you want to be in when taking the oar through the water
Feathered blade	When the spoon of the oar is horizontal to the water, you don't want to be in this position when taking the oar through the water!
Slide	The movement of the seat (which is on wheels)
Quarter Slide, Half Slide and Full Slide	The extent to which you move the seat up the slide

Safety Position	When sitting in the boat, legs flat and arms straight out, oar feathered and resting gently on the water
Back stops	As the safety position except that the oar is near (but not touching) your rib cage. This is the finish position of the stroke that you take.
Front Stops	The legs are compressed at a full slide and your blade is squared in the water ready to take the stroke
Catch	The point at which you put the oar in the water
Drive	The bit between the Catch and the Finish where you push the legs down to move the boat
Finish	The point at which you take the blade out the water
Hands, Body, Slide	The order in which you move for the recovery of the stroke between the Finish and the Catch. Hands and arms out straight, the rock the body over the hips and then glide up the slide
Stroke (the action, not the person)	The whole action from the beginning (the Catch) to the end (the Finish) and back again (the Catch)
Backing down	The opposite action to normal rowing, the boat will then go in the direction that you are looking. You put the oar into the water where you normally Finish and take it out where you would normally take the catch.
“Easy/Easy Oar”	Finish the stroke that you are on and go to Hands away (the first part of the recovery) and stop rowing
“Drop/Lower”	After you have stopped rowing your oar will be off the water, this command tells the crew to rest the oars back on the water
“Hold it up”	All rowers/scullers place their blades on the water and gently raise the hands using the surface tension to hold up the run of the boat on the water
“Hold it up Bowside/Hold it up Stroke side”	Only the rowers on that side of the boat to raise their hands or if sculling, raise the relevant oar
“HOLD IT UP NOW!” (with slight panic!)	Do the above quickly! The boat needs to stop!

“Look Ahead”	A shout to a crew (especially a coxless crew) who may not know that you are there. This call gives the crew advance warning of your presence and allows them to take appropriate action. It is your responsibility to call if you see a crew coming towards you - remember they are going backwards
“Ahead Sculler, Head Pair, Head Double”, etc	Variations on the above if you can identify the type of boat coming towards you.
“Hands On”	The call from the cox or steersman for you to go to your boat in expectation of carrying it on and off the water
Half Turn	This is a command used on land. Normally the boat is carried so that the riggers are flat, however to fit the boat through smaller spaces (i.e. doorways) it is sometimes necessary to raise one side of the boat and lower the other side, this is “Half Turn”
To Shoulders	When carrying the boat, lift the boat to the average shoulder level of the crew members
To Heads	When carrying the boat, lift the boat to above the head with your arms straight.
Spinning	Turning the boat around on the river
Rigger	The metal bit of the boat which sticks out to hold the oar
Gate	The plastic bit which you place your oar into and close by tightening the gate prior to rowing/sculling
Footplate	the board that the shoes in the boat are attached to, which can be moved to cater for different sized rowers/scullers
Ergo	(proper name, Indoor Rowing Machine) The evil pieces of machinery housed in the third boat bay!
No talking in the boat	Exactly that!
Regattas	Side by side racing over the summer months
Heads	Time trial racing over the winter months
Status	The level at which you can compete in Regattas and Heads (Currently Novice, IM3, IM2, IM1, Senior, Elite. There are also Veteran and Junior Categories as well)
Points	An overall win at a regatta (So winning the Final of your event) means you get awarded a point. The number of points you and your crew have dictate which status you can race in. Each status has a maximum number of points
Pots	An overall win in your event at a Regatta or a Head gets you a pot (Normally a tankard) – And that’s what it’s all about!



## Useful links

Listed below are some useful links to rowing related websites

- [Abingdon Rowing Club](#)
- [Abingdon Rowing Club Boat Booking sheet](#)
- [Abingdon Rowing Club Facebook Page](#)
- [Abingdon Rowing Club Kit Ordering Page](#)
  
- [Biddulph Regatta Calendar](#)
- [British Rowing](#)
- [Environment Agency River Conditions](#)
- [Concept 2](#)
- [Oarsport](#)
- [Rowing Service Noticeboard](#)
- [Sculling Boat Sales](#)