



HELFDORD RIVER GIG CLUB SAFETY POLICY

Prior to Launching

- Be aware of the state of tide as well as the current and forecasted weather
- Life jackets must be worn by all under 16 year olds at all times when in the boat
- Familiarise yourself with the contents of the flare box in the gig
- Ensure that your time of departure and expected return are known to others on shore
- Lifejackets are available in the shed at Ferryboat beach for all who wish to use one. Their use is mandatory for all U16
- The coxswain is generally in charge of the boat, the exception would be in the case of a novice or trainee cox. In this case there should be at least two experienced rowers/coxswains in the crew
- Ensure that there is at least one means of communication being carries on board. Ideally this should be a VHF radio, if one is not available then a mobile phone could be used
- There should be at least two crew members either trained, or competent in the use of flares

Launching

- In heavy seas and strong winds a crew must only go out with an experienced club coxswain and a full crew
- When launching the gig in easterly winds you MUST leave from the east end of the beach
- Before taking the gig on and off the beach, make sure the gig is tied to the trailer and that the rests are up
- Ensure that the passage to the water is clear of people and boats and have one person walking in front of the stern of the boat as it crosses the road and passes the kiosk, to ensure the way continues to be clear
- Ensure the brake is functioning correctly and that the person operating it is competent

- Check that the bung is in and that the stretchers, thole pins and oars are prepared before leaving the beach. Ensure all rowers are aware of where they are rowing and encourage them to set their stretchers at this time
- The coxswain should be the first person to enter the boat and assuming that there is sufficient water at the stern, must have the rudder in place before the boat is pushed off from the beach
- Get into the boat in order; coxswain first the stroke, 5, etc, etc. All rowers to be ready to enter the boat upon instruction from the Cox
- Coxswain or Stroke to use the aluminium pole to prevent the gig going broadside. If required rowers could assist utilising the handles of their oars
- **Do not delay leaving the beach.** When instructed by the Cox back the gig up into the channel and wait for further instruction to make final adjustments to stretchers, cushions etc..

On the water

- If the wind is strong the gigs **MUST** be rowed into the wind for the first leg of the journey.
- In addition, pay due attention to tides. E.g. If there is a strong flood tide and Westerly wind, conditions could be very choppy in the Narrows.
- Use the geography of the Estuary to find suitable rowing conditions.
- Be aware of the possibility of grounding on falling tides in Port Navas, Polwetheral, Frenchmans and Gear Creeks.
- In general it is safe to row mid channel almost as far as Bishop's Quay at most states of tide.
- Stay 20 feet away from the shore and always stay outside August Rock and particularly the Voose marker at all states of the tide and pay particular attention to the rocks off Helford point when picking up rowers from the ferry quay.

In the event of.....

- If the boat capsizes or is swamped **ALWAYS** stay with the boat, put on the life jackets if available and consider the use of a flare
- In the event of a medical emergency make an evaluation of the seriousness of the casualty's condition. If it is life threatening call the Coastguard using Ch16 on the VHF (or phone on 999 or 01326 317575), explain the situation and await further instructions. In all other situations return to the Ferryboat Beach as soon as possible

- Consider the use of flares. They only function for a limited time so are best used when you can hear or see help coming for you. Helicopters will use the drift of a smoke flare to gauge the wind conditions. Once spotted, dispose of the flare
- If you are not confident in their use please contact the Committee and guidance can be arranged.

Returning to the beach

- When returning to the beach the bow rower and no.2 should ship their oars early and be prepared to: jump out, pull the gig up on to the yellow roller and hold the gig steady as soon as it hits the beach. No.5 and Stroke should keep the boat steady if necessary. During this period the rest of the crew should remain seated to prevent falling and causing possible injury. Then all the crew should ship their oars and disembark as quickly as possible.

IF IN DOUBT DON'T GO

TOWING THE GIG

- Before commencing towing: **make sure the gig is tied onto the trailer.** The ball hitch must be engaged properly, with the safety wire attached to the vehicle; this engages the brake in the event of the trailer becoming detached from the car
- The rear legs need to be raised and clamped tightly
- The light plug needs to be connected and the indicators and brake lights checked to ensure they are working
- The jockey wheel needs to be fully wound up inside its sleeve and then clamped at its highest position
- When moving the gig by hand the jockey wheel stem must be kept within its sleeve to avoid bending the stem
- The road conditions need to be considered. On any steep hill, particularly Helford Passage Hill, first gear needs to be engaged well before the start of the hill. Four Wheel Drive should also be engaged if possible when it is wet. The gig is 32 foot long and although it follows the car very well, corners should be taken as wide as possible and particular notice taken of what the back end of the trailer is doing!
- When climbing steep hills and especially when leaving Helford Passage always use first gear and if it's wet engage low ratio if you have it

- When parking the trailer always engage the brake, drop the rear legs leaving 3 inches (10cms) between the ground and the bottom of the leg. Wind the jockey wheel down, detaching the trailer from the vehicle (thus raising the front of the trailer and pushing down on the rear legs) then attach the strop and padlock through the wheel and trailer. Finally disengage the brake and remove the light plug and emergency brake wire
- The gig is insured under the club policy whilst being towed by a member who has been granted permission to tow by the committee. **Damage done by the gig or trailer to a third party whilst attached to a vehicle must be covered under the driver's personal insurance policy. Damage done by the gig or trailer whilst being manhandled, is covered by the gig club's insurance policy.**