



BRITISHROWING

HRSA Monthly Report

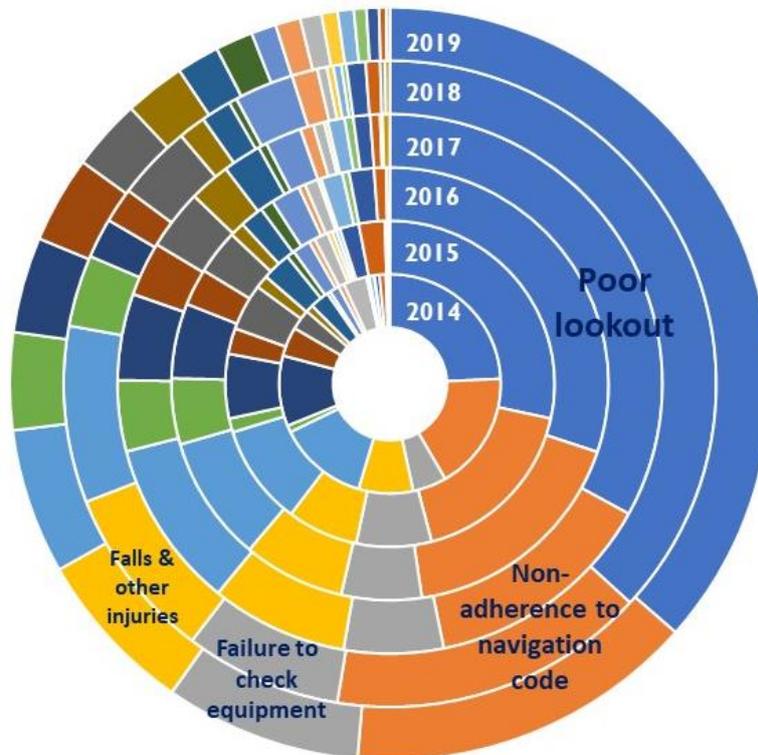
January 2020

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TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT

Analysis of Incident Reports

The analysis of Incident Reports has been completed and an analysis is included with this report. This will be published on the [RowSafe](#) page of the website. This is an overall summary of the causes of incidents in recent years.



A Certificate of Commendation signed by the Chairman and me has been sent to each of the Top 5 reporting clubs. A further thirteen clubs each reported twenty or more incidents.

Club	Number of Incidents Reported
Lea RC	74
Avon County RC	51
Putney Town RC	47
Marlow RC	74
Christchurch RC	41
Gravesend RC	33
Leicester RC	33
Taunton RC	32
Cambridge 99 RC	24
Norwich Rowing Club	24
Bewl Bridge RC	23
Durham ARC	22
Latymer Upper School BC	22
Tideway Scullers School	22
City of Bristol Rowing Club	21
Liverpool Victoria RC	20
Tyne Amateur RC	20
Weybridge Rowing Club	20

Please remember that incidents are learning opportunities and that people who report incidents should be commended as they are making meaningful contributions to rowing safety. I would like to thank all clubs that report incidents.

Another death on the Rhine

One member of Basel Rowing Club died and three were injured following a frontal collision between a four and a Rhine barge. The incident occurred at 7:15 pm on the 13th January and the rower who died was a woman aged 52. The Club President confirmed that the four women were all experienced rowers and that the accident was a “great shock” to the club.

The Chairman is sending notes of condolence to the Club and to the Swiss National Rowing Federation.

This is not the first accident of this kind on the Rhine. Last March, a freighter collided with a 2x. The two rowers were pulled under the vessel but managed to escape unharmed. The freighter did not even realize it had run over the men and continued on its way.

We should also remember the incident at Arnhem on the lower Rhine where three rowers died. This occurred in March 2017 and was reported extensively in my October 2017 Monthly Report (copies are available on request).

Rhine Barges are big. They vary in size and are typically 80 metres long, 11 metres wide, 3.5 metres draught and have a displacement of 2300 tonnes. For comparison the largest narrow boats are about 22 metres long, 2 metres wide, 0.6 metres draught and have a displacement of about 20 tonnes. However, as you will see below, you do not need a Rhine barge in order to have an incident with the potential for a serious injury or fatality.

Incident Reports in January

Near miss with a weir

A 4x rowing downstream tried to turn to row upstream but was too close to a weir. The strong stream pushed it sideways towards the weir and the crew was saved by being pushed sideways into a moored barge.



The crew called for help and after 20 minutes a runner on the opposite towpath heard them and ran to the rowing club. It is believed that a dog walker on the towpath called 999 and told the crew the fire brigade were on its way.

A coaching launch arrived and helped to hold the quad in a relatively stable position. Another launch arrived to help, closely followed by the Fire Service Rescue boat. (In the

interim, fire engines arrived on the towpath side, but were unable to help.). All 5 crew members were able to safely get onto the fire rescue boat and were taken to safety. This is an example of an incident with SIF potential, see below.

Almost fell through Kitchen Ceiling

A club member tripped over a box that had been left on a walkway in an unlit loft and almost fell through the ceiling into the kitchen. She was able to save herself by grabbing a beam to stop falling onto kitchen floor. She attended A&E and was treated for a cut and bruised ribs. This is another example of an incident with SIF potential, see below.

Altercation between Rowers and Anglers

There was an unpleasant exchange between anglers and rowers when a 4x snagged two fishing lines and one of the anglers reportedly became abusive insisting that the rowers should have kept to the centre of the river and avoided their lines. The Canal and River Trust boating guide (available [here](#)) contains the following:-

*Keep to the centre of the channel when passing anglers – unless they ask otherwise.
Reduce your wash, but keep a steady pace.*

Foot trapped due to failure of keel thumb screw

A 4x capsized and one member of the crew had difficulty pulling her feet from the shoes because the base of the foot stretcher was not correctly bolted to the boat. This prevented the heel restraints holding the heels in place. All clubs are advised to encourage their crews to check the fixings of the stretchers to the boat, particularly those near the keel.

Incidents with SIF potential

In industry we sometimes talk about incidents with SIF potential (SIF = Serious Injuries and Fatalities); these are sometimes termed accidents with the potential for life threatening or life changing injuries. The incidents on the Rhine clearly qualify.

We have recently had a few incidents with SIF potential in British Rowing; just the potential but little actual harm. Incidents with SIF potential are characteristically different from "normal" incidents. Simple capsizes and slips, trips and falls on the level are unlikely to result in serious injuries but the same cannot be said when somebody falls through a ceiling or is nearly swept over a weir (see above). We were lucky this time but I worry that we will not always be lucky.

It is not generally appreciated that 10% of falls from 10 feet are fatal. If you have any doubt of the potential significance of the effects of falls from a relatively low height then please read [this](#).

A Safety Alert on Weirs was issued in December and is available [here](#). This shows the danger that weirs pose. This danger is not always appreciated.

Heart Attack

In one incident a club member experienced symptoms of myocardial infarction. This was recognised by others at the club and an Ambulance was summoned immediately via a 999 call. The club member was transferred to the Regional Cardiac Centre for further assessment and treatment. It subsequently transpired that the club member had a stent inserted into an occluded heart blood vessel and is feeling much better. Later the club member was discharged from hospital and is progressing well.

A heart attack (what doctors call a myocardial infarction or MI) is defined as damage to part of the heart muscle caused by inadequate blood flow to that area. This can occur if one of the arteries that supplies blood to the heart muscle, becomes suddenly blocked. While a heart attack is a plumbing problem, a cardiac arrest is an electrical problem.

A heart attack may not be related to exercise or exertion and the onset can be whilst sitting quietly. A heart attack is treatable and usually manageable if recognised and referred to hospital in time. A cardiac arrest is when the heart stops and this requires cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR see [Lifesaver](#)).

In this case a life was saved because the symptoms were recognised and the correct action could be taken immediately. The following information is taken from the British Heart Foundation website.

Symptoms of a heart attack

Heart attack symptoms vary from one person to another. The most common signs of a heart attack are:

- **pain or discomfort in your chest** that suddenly occurs and doesn't go away
- **pain that may spread to your left or right arm, or to your neck, jaw, back or stomach.** For some people the pain or tightness is severe, while other people just feel uncomfortable
- **feeling sick, sweaty, light-headed or short of breath.**

It's possible to have a heart attack without experiencing the above symptoms or 'classic' chest pain. This is more common in the elderly, women, or those with [diabetes](#) as the condition can cause nerve damage which can affect how you feel pain.

What should I do if I think I'm having a heart attack?

The first thing to do if you think you're having a heart attack is to phone 999 immediately for an ambulance.

Don't worry if you're not completely sure whether your symptoms are a heart attack, it's really important that you seek medical attention regardless.

If you're having a heart attack or you think you're having a heart attack:

- *sit down and remain calm*
- *take a 300mg aspirin if you have one within reach*
- *wait for the paramedics.*

Women have heart attacks too

We know that women tend to wait longer before calling 999 after first experiencing heart attack symptoms. This may be because women are less likely to recognise the symptoms as a condition that requires urgent treatment. A [recent study](#) funded by the BHF emphasises the need for both sexes to recognise and act on the warning signs.

In the UK an average of 3 women die of [coronary heart disease](#) every hour, many of them due to a heart attack. Delaying calling 999 can dramatically reduce your chance of survival. Read more about [women and heart attacks](#).

There more information on the British Heart Foundation website [here](#) and information on the difference between heart attack and cardiac arrest on the same website [here](#).

Emergency Stop Video

Some collisions have been avoided and the harm caused by others has been significantly reduced by one or more crews performing an Emergency Stop.

In RowSafe it says:-

Coxes and steers (including scullers) are expected to:

- *Know how to stop the boat quickly and safely in an emergency and practice this skill with their crews.*

and

Coaches are expected to:

- *Coach crews to stop the boat quickly and safely in an emergency.*

A video has been produced explaining how to perform an Emergency Stop, this is available [here](#). Rowers should be encouraged to study this technique and practise it at least once during each outing.



The Requirement for Backstays

There were enquiries about backstays and the requirement to fit them, the following advice was provided:-

Perhaps the easiest way to summarise the background is to refer to the Safety Alert on Backstays; this can be found [here](#).

The 2020 Rules of Racing were recently approved by the Board and contain the following statement on backstays in italics.

The forward port and starboard rigger on all boats, other than single sculls, should be protected by a backstay.

This is in italics because it is not a racing requirement yet but it may be at some point in the future.

The safety reason for fitting backstays is simply to cushion the impact of the rigger with members of another crew in the event of a collision. This is also the reason why they are only specified for the bowmost rigger on each side of the boat. Some backstays will absorb energy by deforming and some will simply tend to push the other rower away rather than to draw them towards the boat.

Backstays are not needed for safety reasons on boats with reverse wing riggers, that is those wing riggers that are attached to the boat between the rower and the bow.

Just for completeness, they are not required for safety reasons on Ixs. We believe that the rotational moment of inertia of a Ix and crew will be so small that in the event of someone or something striking the outer end of the rigger then the Ix will rotate about its vertical axis.

Just because backstays are not required for safety reasons, this does not mean that you should not fit them. They tend to make the boat go faster, as explained in the Safety Alert, so you may wish to fit them anyway.

Spotters

There have been several incidents recently where “spotters” on the bank have been supporting crews but have not taken sufficient action to help their crew to avoid collisions with other crews.

Spotters should be asked to take care to keep a good lookout both in front of and behind the crews they are supporting and warn the crews of the presence of other boats, obstructions and any other hazards. They should also warn any crews that are at risk of a collision with their crew.

In addition, they should also be asked to check the position of their crew across the waterway and warn the crew if it strays towards the centre of the waterway or beyond.

Coxes and steers should understand that they cannot rely on their spotters. The crew is responsible for its own lookout and taking action in good time to avoid collisions.

What to do after a collision

There was recently a collision between a 1x and a 4+. One of the sculls in the 1x was broken and it soon became inevitable that the 1x would capsize. The 4+, and its spotter, left the scene of the collision and the sculler then capsized and had to swim ashore unaided. This is not the behaviour we should expect of rowers.

In other incidents, rowers have taken great care to check the condition of all the people involved in the collision and provided assistance to them where needed. The following comments were made in 2019 Incident Reports:-

"I was proceeding downstream, but had moved too much towards the middle of the river. My single scull came in contact with the double scull from another club who were coming upstream. As a result of the collision my strokeside scull was broken. The crew from the other club helped me to get back to my club's landing stage."

(It should be noted that in the event of a sculling blade being broken in a 1x then, in the absence of aid from another boat, capsize is inevitable.)

"We were doing a high rate burst against the stream and wind and were on the correct side when the crew coming the other direction were on our side and not looking. We hit their strokeside rigger and completely broke it, the rigger then wrapped around the bow and pierced our bowside through the hull about 6 inches from the bow. Our bowman's rigger hit the splashguard of their boat which shattered and bent our backstay and hit their bowman in the back. They then capsized and we pushed them across to the far bank."

"After the collision, bow of the other crew apologised several times. I asked if anyone was hurt and they reported that they were fine. We rowed back together to make sure both boats would get back safely." (These were crews from different clubs.)

The following is taken from incidents reported in January.

"A sculler in a head race was catching and overtaking a sculler from a different club on the final bend. Both scullers were attempting to hold the inside line. As both scullers came together, one sculler decided to yield and lifted one of her blades to avoid a clash of blades. As she did do, the other blade caught the choppy water and capsized. The capsized sculler remained with her boat in the water, and other sculler stopped and stayed with her until the rescue launch arrived."

"My arm was injured in a collision, but I would like to note that to their credit, the other crew did turn and come back to see if they could help."

Please remember that we are all members of the greater community of rowers. We should all take great care to look after each other.

Support for the CPGA

Information was provided to the CPGA Safety Adviser on an incident in Bristol involving a Gig.

Steering around bends

There have been several collisions recently where crews have strayed towards the “wrong” side of a waterway when rowing at speed around bends. The radial component of surface flow around bends may also contribute to this problem. This is explained in a Safety Alert [here](#). Crews and coaches should be invited to take particular care on bends.

Swim Test

There was an enquiry about the recommendations or pre requisites on swimming ability of rowers on the tideway. The query was in relation to a club’s rowing courses application form. The following information was provided.

There is guidance in section 3.6 of [RowSafe](#) where it says:-

Ideally, everyone taking part in rowing should be able to:

- *Swim at least 50 metres in light clothing (rowing kit).*
- *Tread water for at least two minutes.*
- *Swim under water for at least five metres.*

However, these times and distances could be extended so that they are appropriate to the venue where rowing takes place.

In practice, on the Tideway, the distance they should be able to swim on the surface should be at least 100 metres.

Please remember that RowSafe also says:-

It should be recognised that the ability to swim in a pool does not guarantee the ability to swim in cold, exposed waters.

RowSafe Updates

The 2020 version of RowSafe will be issued in April and information about the suggested updates has been included on previous reports. If you have any suggestions for updates then please write to safety@britishrowing.org

Coaching Seminar

A Coaching Seminar will take place on Sunday 22nd March at Hampton School. This is open to all coaches, whether qualified or unqualified, new or experienced, sliding seat or fixed seat.

The day will be split into 4 time slots and each coach can select the 4 topics that they would like to attend. Each topic will be run more than once in the day so that group sizes can be kept small enough to encourage discussion and participation. The safety topics on offer are:-

Safety Leadership Skills

Safety is just one of those aspects of life at a club that depend on the behaviour. This session will help you to improve safety at your club by improving your leadership skills. You will then be able to take the lead and encourage those behaviours that you want and discourage those that you do not want. The principles covered apply to all aspects of club life not just safety.

Safety Management

This topic covers how to decide whether it is safe to proceed with an event or activity or whether additional measures are required or whether it should be replaced with an alternative activity. It provides a framework to ensure that the relevant factors are considered and the correct decisions are made.

The other topics on offer are:-

- Building the Foundations (Developing new rowers)
- Developing Skills After Learn to Row
- Exploring ways of safely generating more power in the rowing stroke
- Indoor Rowing for Fun
- Integrating new rowers into your club
- Learning the stroke
- Training for Masters

For further information and a copy of the Seminar prospectus please write to Andrea at s.a.worley@btinternet.com.