

The 30th British Rowing Tour

Bablock Hythe to Mapledurham

29th August – 1st September 2024

Briefing for coxes (and everyone else since everyone is expected to take a turn at coxing)

- The route
- Navigation rules
- Going through locks
- Launching and landing
- Rowing and coxing on tours

Morning timetable

- Thursday 29th August
 - 14.30 – as many people as possible to Bablock Hythe to unload the trailers and rig the boats
- Friday 30th August
 - 08.00 – on the bus! Likely to be a long day as there are a 7 small locks
- Saturday 31st August
 - 08.30 departure. An easier day – but no loos so use bushes!
- Sunday 1st September
 - 08.45 departure. Bring spanners to derig boats at the end

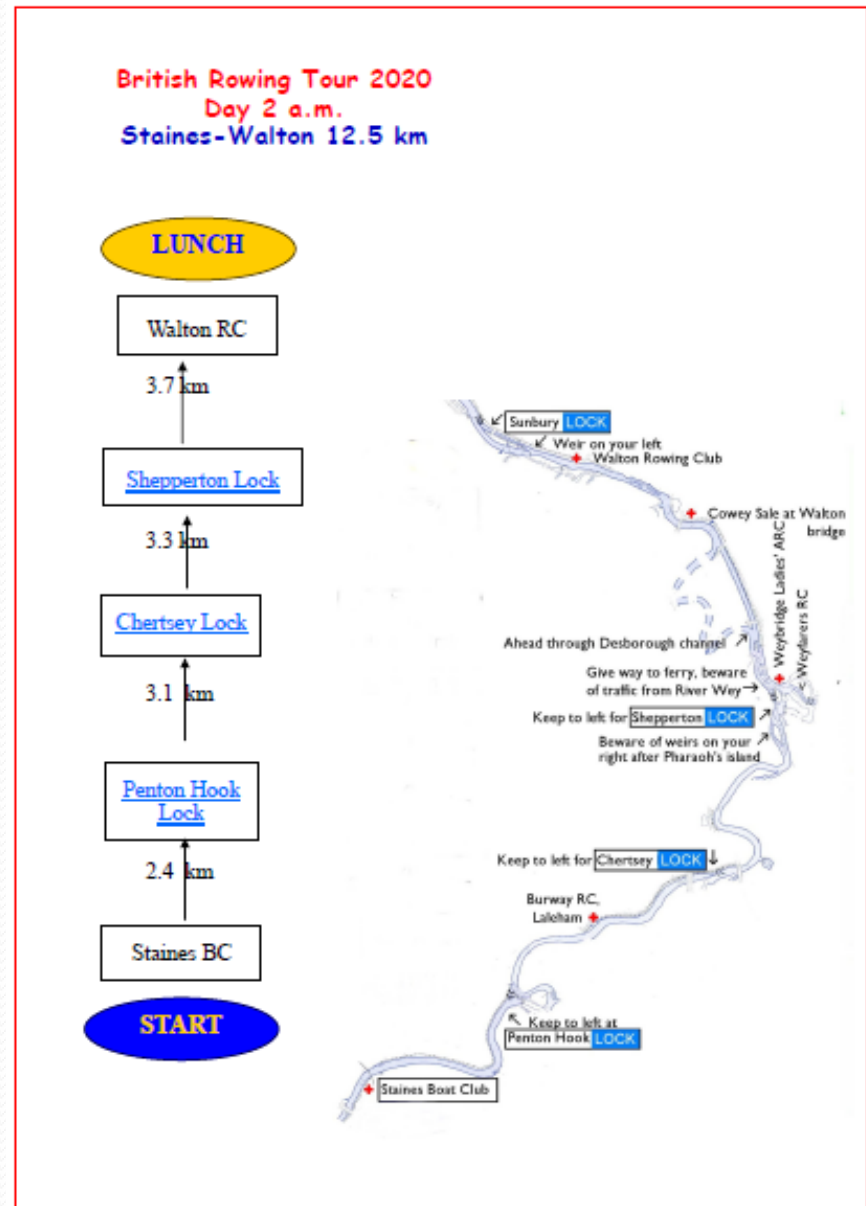
The captains' morning briefing

- Have you got a route map?
 - Where do we start?
 - Which direction?
 - What are the hazards?
 - Weather forecast
 - What do we do if we have a problem?
 - Where can we stop (for loos, refreshments etc.)?



The route

- How long will it take?
- Where will you have rest stops?
- Will you change coxes?
If so, where?
- How many locks are there?
- Are there interesting places along the way?



Our boat and crew



Do they speak English? Is it the same English? Agree coxing commands
Have we checked the boat?

- Rudder fixed properly?
- Riggers, footplates, seats, buoyancy compartments
- Oars the right way round?

Your essential equipment – Paddle and boat hook



What's it for?

- Manoeuvring into and out of locks
- Pulling into the bank
- Getting out of tight spaces
- Remember you can paddle backwards as well as forwards!

Mooring spike, bailer, ropes



And a means of communication – mobile phone
in a waterproof container



The Route

And navigation rules

Day 1 a.m. Bablock Hythe to Godstow

12.2 km. 4 locks



Launching may be difficult – high banks but there is a slipway.

You will need water shoes!

The locks are small – probably only take 4 boats. You will need to raft up.

Landing at St Edwards School



Go through Godstow lock, turn sharp left and row upstream to the boat club.

Beware of shallows on starboard (bowside) going upstream / port (strokeside) going down after lunch

Day 1 p.m. Godstow to Radley

12.9 km. 3 locks



Folly Bridge, Central Oxford

“Official” route is through the main bridge (yellow arrows) but awkward turn into the channel. It is possible to go through the smaller bridge (orange arrows) but it is narrow so you will need to swing the oars in.

Narrow bridges....



Day 1 p.m. Godstow to Radley Landing at Radley College



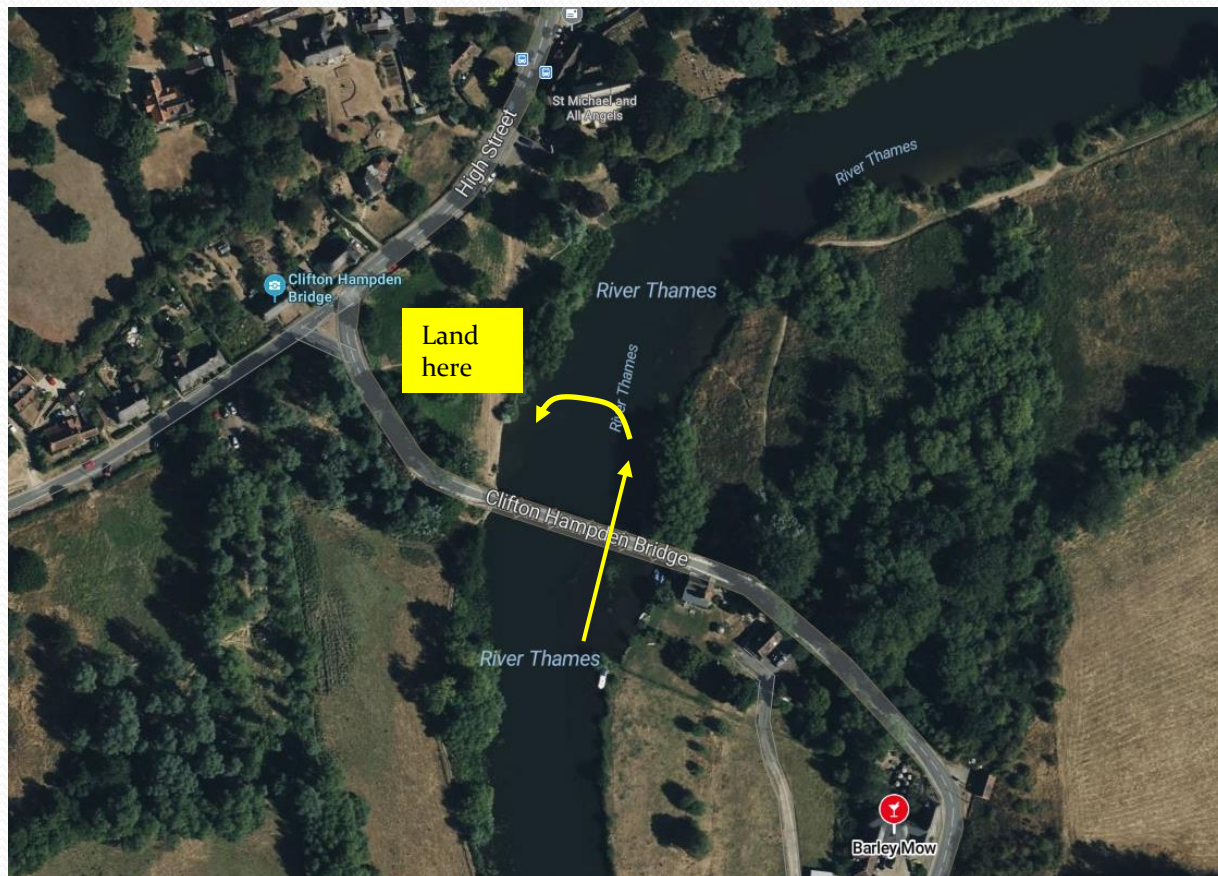
Row past the boathouse, turn and come in upstream on the low part of the landing stage (off the left-hand side of the picture). Take boats out and place on foam rolls.

Day 2 a.m. Radley to Clifton Hampden

14 km. 3 locks

Go through the bridge, turn and land on the bank. You will need water shoes.

Sadly, the Barley Mow pub declined to sell us 80 lunches so we will have a picnic.



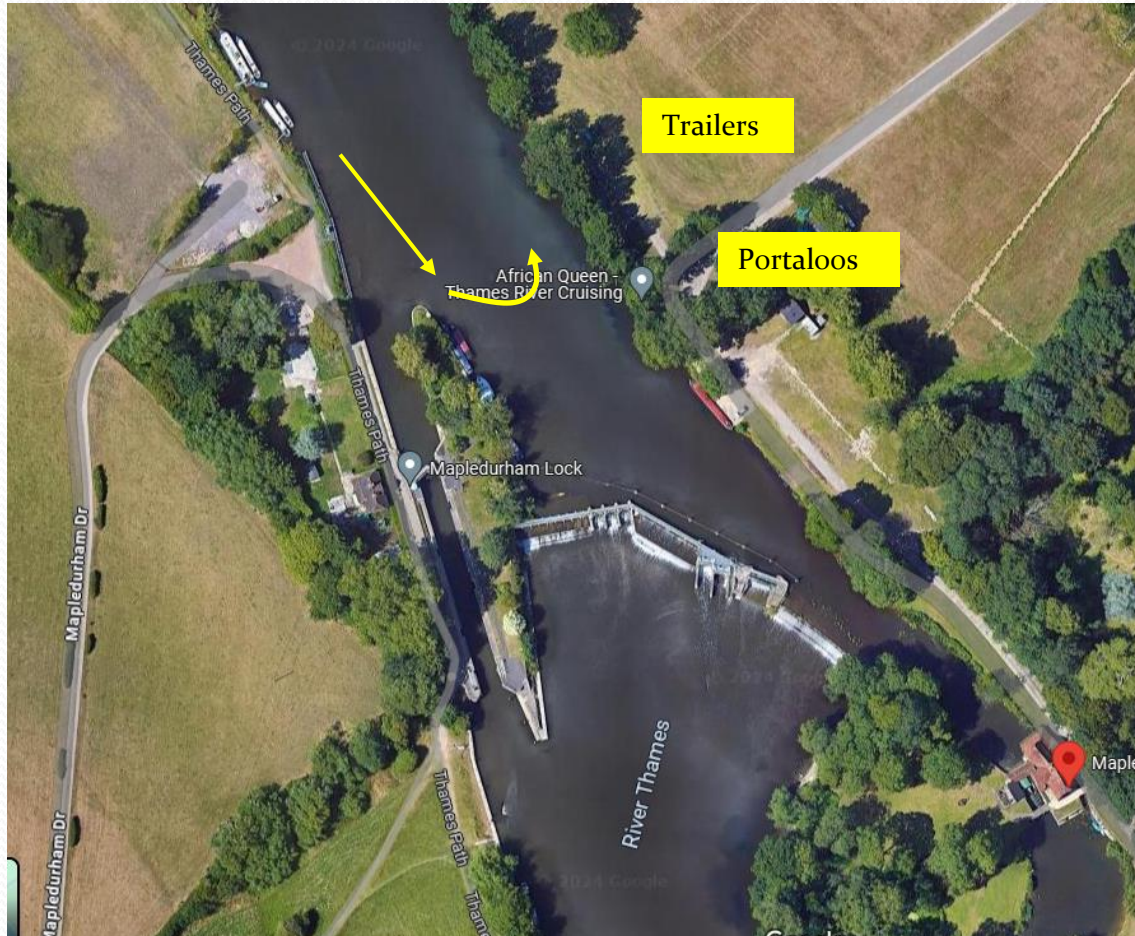
Day 2 p.m. Clifton Hampden to OUBC 13 km. 2 locks

Store boats on grass
behind boathouse



Day 3 OUBC to Mapledurham

18.9 km. 3 locks



Do not go through the lock – turn before the African Queen and find somewhere to land. Depending on water level, bank may be high and steep, so help each other! You will need water shoes. Derig boats and load trailers before lunch.

Navigation Rules

- Most canals and rivers have a “right hand rule”
- Keep to the right (as seen from the cox’s seat)
- Pass oncoming traffic port to port (strokeside to strokeside)
- Overtake towards the middle of the river
- Boats going downstream have right of way
- If there are navigation buoys, remember Red on the Right going downstream
- Watch for navigation signs round islands and junctions, e.g. **CHANNEL** **LOCK** or **DANGER**

Going through locks

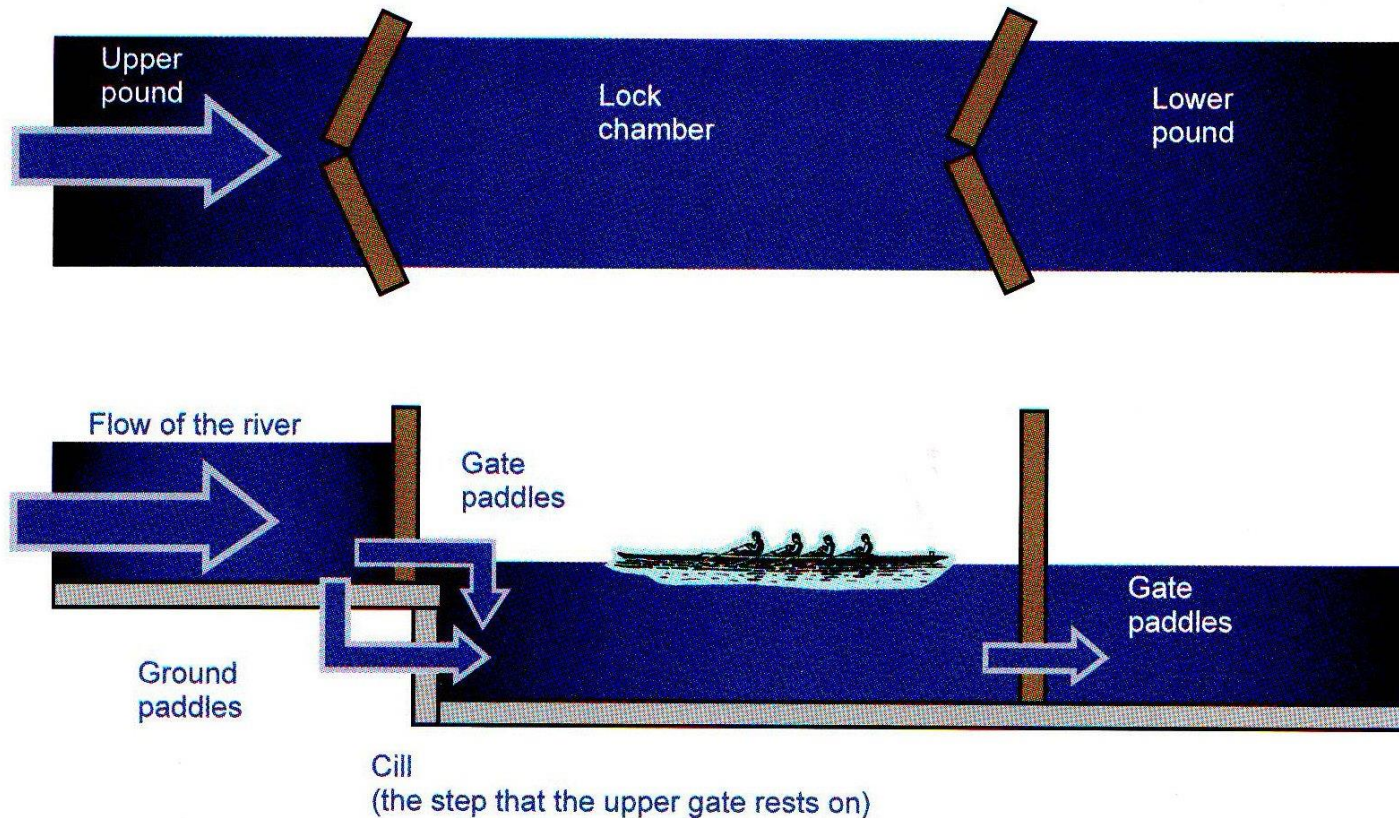
Keep calm and carry on!



Watch for the signs



Locks – how do they work?



At both ends of the lock are gates with sluices or paddles built into them. The upstream paddles fill the lock chamber and the downstream ones empty it.

The pressure of the water holds the gates shut and it is virtually impossible to open them unless the water is the same level either side.

Locking procedure – going in

- If the lock is in use, tuck into the layby and wait – traffic may come out
- Watch out for weirs at the side of the lock
- Follow the lock keepers instructions – he/she may take motor boats in first
- Approach the entrance slowly, with one or two people rowing. If the lock is narrow, use a paddle.
- Remember you can also straighten the boat by paddling backwards!



Locking procedure – inside the lock

- Keep the boat straight and stable using oars and/or paddle/hook
- Keep riggers, bowball and blades clear of obstructions or steps on the sides of the lock
- If crowded, raft up with adjacent boats
- If ropes are used, ensure they run freely around bollards and are long enough for fall of lock
- Going upstream (not on this tour), watch out for turbulence from the water coming in
- Going downstream, avoid getting caught on the cill at upstream end



Locking procedure – coming out

- If there are motor boats, watch out for propellers as they start their engines
- If the lock is narrow, use canoe paddle
- Get bow to paddle on as soon as their oars are clear of the gates
- Watch out for weir stream outside the lock which might push you into the bank



Some demos....

Weyfarers crew going through a lock:

Waiting in the layby for the lock to open

Entering the lock

Waiting in the lock

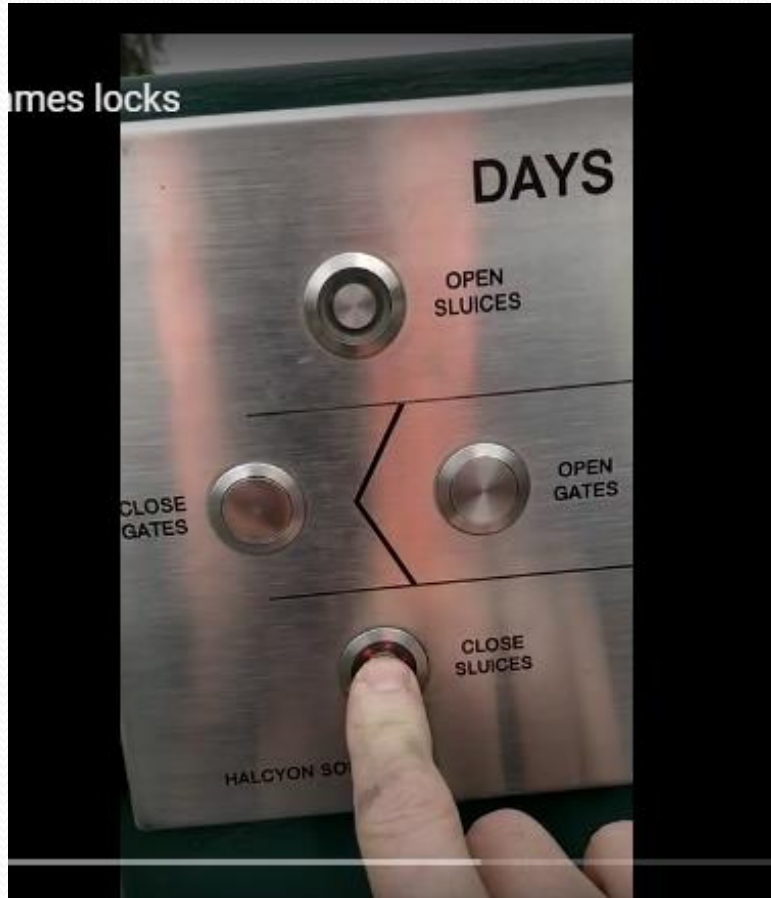
Lock filling

Exiting the lock

Getting in and out of the boat

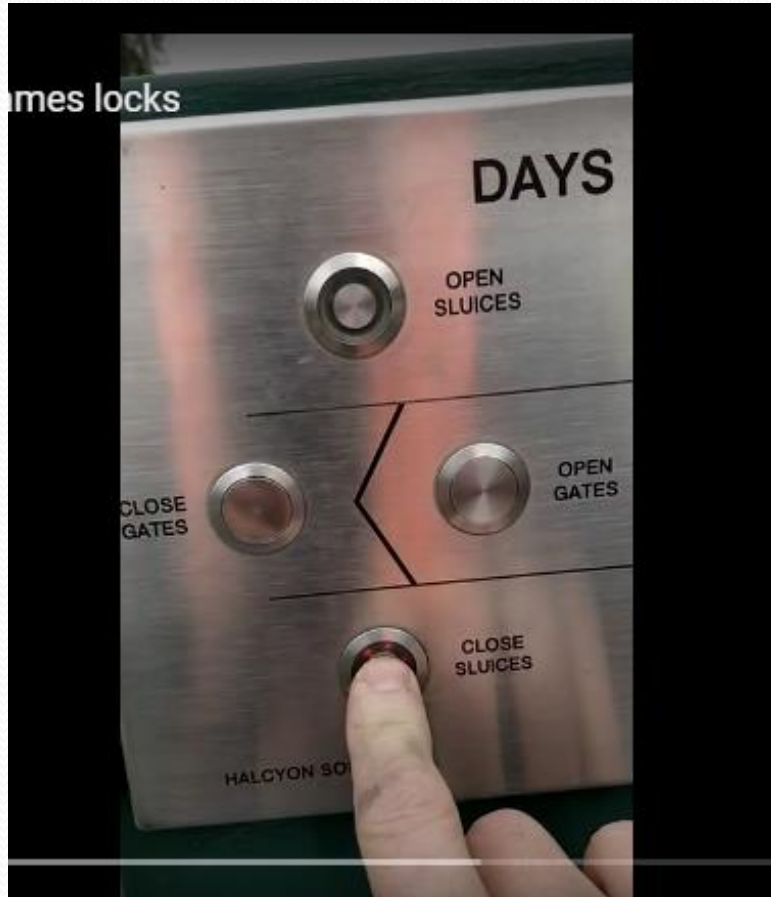
Operating the locks

- If there is no lock-keeper, you may have to operate the lock yourself. However, we will try to ensure there are volunteers on the bank to operate the locks
- All the locks on the Thames are electrically operated – unless there is a power-cut!
- There is a control panel either end of the lock
- READ THE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE PANEL - CONTROLS MAY VARY!
- Normally you only press the sluice buttons once until the green light comes on, but on some locks you may have to hold the “Open Sluices” button for 10 seconds and press it again after 2 minutes.



If the lock is open:

1. Go in and close the gates and sluices at the upstream end.
2. Open the sluices at the downstream end – see instructions on the panel
3. When the water level is the same both sides, open the gates.
4. When all the boats are out, close the sluices and gates at the downstream end unless there are boats waiting to come in



If the lock is closed and the water has drained out:

1. Ensure that the downstream sluices and gates are closed.
2. Open the sluices at the upstream end – read the instructions on the panel.
3. When the water level is the same both sides, open the gates.
4. Continue as per the previous slide.

Landing and launching

You can't depend on rafts on tours

Landing on high banks...

- Most landing stages along rivers are designed for motor boats and are too high for rowing boats



- You may be able to get in and out if someone on the bank holds the riggers to keep the boat stable e.g. an agile cox
- Crew should keep outside blade flat on water and lean body weight on it until someone on bank can hold a rigger steady

Slipways...



Launch stern first so the rudder is in the water to avoid damaging it

You may get wet feet...



Remember the water shoes

Rowing on Tour

Of course you all know how to row.....

Different from a normal outing?

- You may be rowing 20 – 30 km
- You have to reach your destination, so you can't shorten the outing
- Frequent rest/water/snack stops (every 20 minutes or so)
- Change cox at intervals (may need to change places in the boat)
- If someone is injured or ill, you may have to continue with part of the crew while they rest

Rowing in difficult conditions

- Strong wind
 - Look for sheltered side of waterway
- Rough water
 - Shorten stroke
 - If necessary, have one or two people sit the boat while the others row
- Strong current
 - Straight river – current usually strong in the middle
 - Bendy river – current is usually stronger on the outside of bends
- Heavy traffic
 - Keep a good lookout
 - Stay near the bank if large ships are in the middle
- Wash from motor boats
 - Normal wash – cross at about 30 degrees
 - High wash – position boat parallel to wash with crew sitting in safe position

To summarise....

Top tips for coxes on tours

- Know where you're going
- Know who's going with you
- Look after your boat - check it before going afloat
- Look after your crew – rest stops etc.
- Look after yourself – clothing, PFD, phone
- Look ahead and anticipate ... remember that most accidents on the water are caused by people not keeping a good look-out

