



Troon Coastal Rowing Club

Induction Guide

Welcome

As one of our newest members, a very warm welcome to Troon Coastal Rowing Club, we are delighted to have you with us. And congratulations on becoming part of the coastal rowing community, where you can keep fit while spending time on the water, enjoying our wonderful coastline with good company.

The following Induction Guide gives you information about the club, boats, rowing techniques and important safety issues.

With any physical activity, especially on water, safety is paramount and if you are new to rowing there may also be some unfamiliar terms. Please read through the following contents which are a useful reference guide, as you become familiar with coastal rowing through spending time on the water. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask, all our club members will be happy to give you any further details.





- Coastal Rowing background
- Troon Coastal Rowing Club
- Rowing session times
- Clothing
- Weather

Section 1 -

Troon Yacht Haven Boat Yard
Lifejackets

Section 2 -

St Ayles skiff terminology
Preparing the Boat
Launching
Pontoon

Section 3 -

Crew positions
Role of the cox
Embarking
Cox commands

Section 4 -

Yacht Haven & Harbour

Section 5 -

Rowing Technique
Disembarking
Skiff Recovery
Your club





Coastal Rowing background

The boats we use in coastal rowing are St Ayles Skiffs, made for a cox and 4 rowers, they have fixed seats, single oars and are built for rowing at sea. The skiffs are 22 feet long, 5 feet wide, they weigh over 150kg and are constructed from a clinker plywood kit.

The boat design was originally commissioned by the Scottish Fisheries Museum in 2009 as a vessel for use in the Scottish Coastal Rowing Project. Inspired by the community involvement and tradition of Fife miners rowing regattas, the project looked to develop a boat that could engage communities in the same way.

Over 250 boats have now been built worldwide, initially by communities around the Scottish coast but increasingly by groups elsewhere, including England, Northern Ireland, the Netherlands, the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa, France and New Zealand.



Coastal rowing is one of the fastest growing international water sports and the 2019 Skiffieworlds world championship held in Stranraer saw competition involving 700 crews from 57 clubs.

The skiffie rowing community has a true spirit of friendship and support across the clubs and throughout the world.

Coastal rowing is also much more than enjoying getting out on the water, the skiffs are all entirely built by hand which requires a great deal of knowledge, skill and team work. Additionally once the skiffs have been finished, annual maintenance needs to be carried out as well as fine tuning and innovations around oars, rudders and foot plates.



Troon Coastal Rowing Club

TCRC began in the winter of 2010 when a St Ayles Skiff kit was donated to Marr College by Sir Boyd Tunnock who had recognised the remarkable growth of coastal rowing. Building subsequently began in conjunction with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and in due course a working group was formed which led to the creation of Troon Coastal Rowing Club.

Troon's first skiff named "Marr Voyager" was launched on 2nd October 2011 at Troon Yacht Haven, the clubs home. The following year, club members built and launched a second skiff "Ailsa Lass".

The aim of Troon Coastal Rowing Club is to promote and encourage coastal rowing in the local community with regular rowing sessions, club days, social events and taking part in regattas across the country.





Rowing sessions

TCRC rowing sessions run all the year round beginning with the traditional New Years Day row.

Times:

Wednesday - 10.00am & 6.00pm (BST only)

Saturday - 10.00am

Sunday - 2.00 pm

Training sessions (members only):

Tuesday & Thursday - 6pm (both BST only)

Each session is organised through the club's WhatsApp group, dependent on weather conditions and crew availability. Sessions last as long as there are enough people wishing to row. Additional sessions can also be arranged out with these times through the club's booking system which is hosted on our website.

Parking

When attending any rowing session at Troon Yacht Haven members **must** park in the main car park to the front of Scott's Restaurant, especially on week days. If the car park is full please park outside in Harbour Road.

Clothing

Layered clothing is recommended, it can be sunny, it can be cold, it can rain, you are exercising outside and can become warm so please consider the weather. A waterproof jacket, fleece, hat and rowing/cycling gloves are suggested.

The skiffs are launched from the slipway at the rear of Scott's Restaurant and crews enter the boats from the adjacent pontoon so your feet will stay dry.

It is **mandatory** that lifejackets are worn whenever members are on the pontoon and at all times on the water. The club will provide a lifejacket if you do not have one.

Weather conditions

If in doubt, we don't go out.

Weather conditions are one of the most crucial aspects of coastal rowing. The conditions can be completely different at the pontoon compared to the harbour and open sea. On occasions we can comfortably row in the harbour but would not be able to venture into open water. In such conditions significant consideration will be taken over the capabilities of the crew.



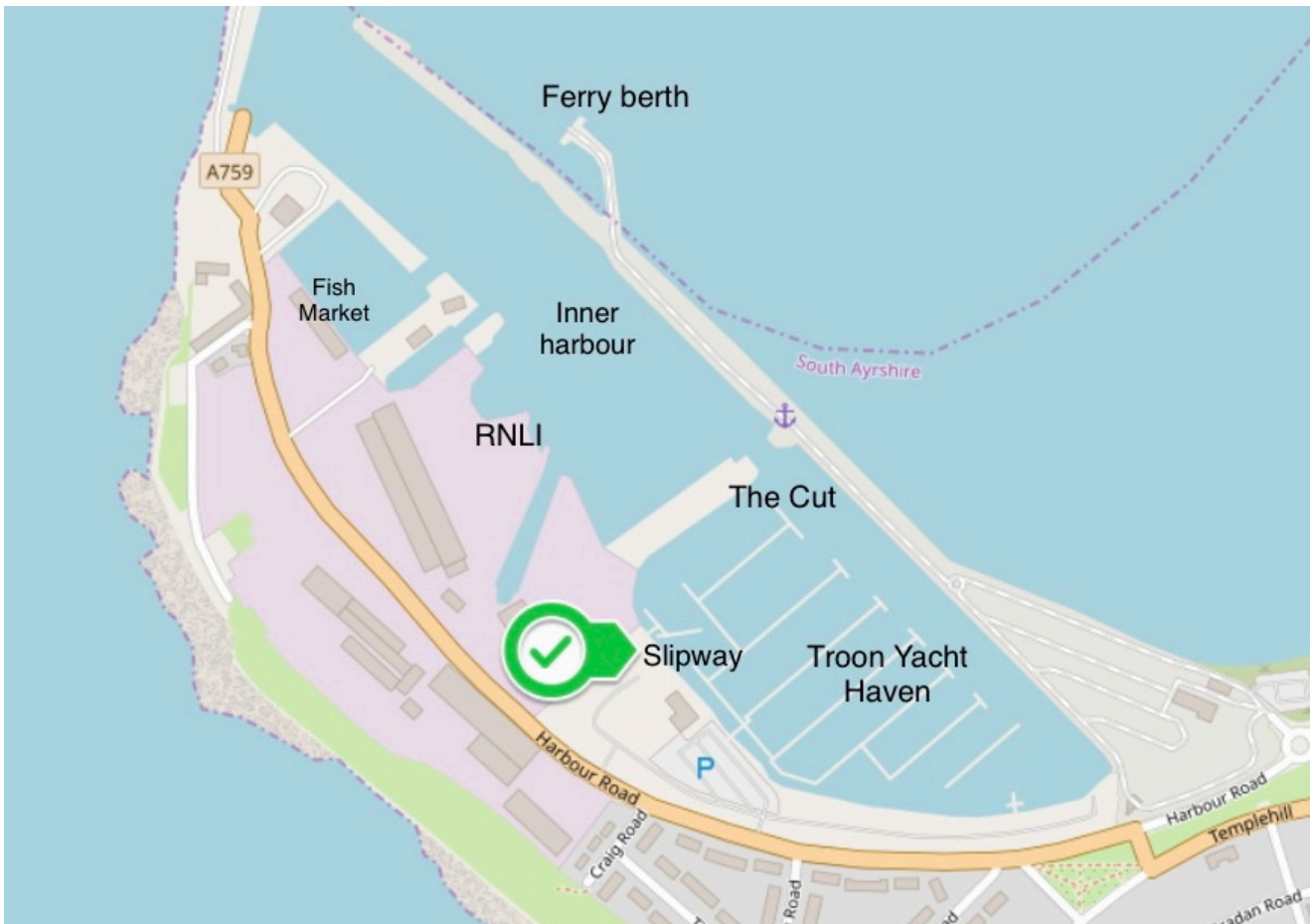
Section 1

Troon Yacht Haven boat yard

Troon Yacht Haven is a busy working environment with vessels being moved, maintenance work being carried out and large machinery operating around the yard. You must be aware of your circumstances and surroundings at all times. Additionally TCRC are guests of the yacht haven and must respect and show courtesy to staff and other patrons at all times.

TCRC store the club skiffs on hard standing at the top of the slipway. The slipway is operated by Troon Yacht Haven for commercial business and launching customers boats.

The slipway is also overlooked by the Salt Lodge accommodation and members should be mindful of the guests.





Lifejackets

It is **mandatory** that lifejackets are worn whenever members are on the pontoon and at all times whilst on the water. The club will provide lifejackets if you do not have one. It is imperative that all members know how to properly wear and how/when to deploy their lifejacket if required. If you have a personal lifejacket you must make yourself familiar with when it was last checked and if the gas cylinder is up to date.

Section 3

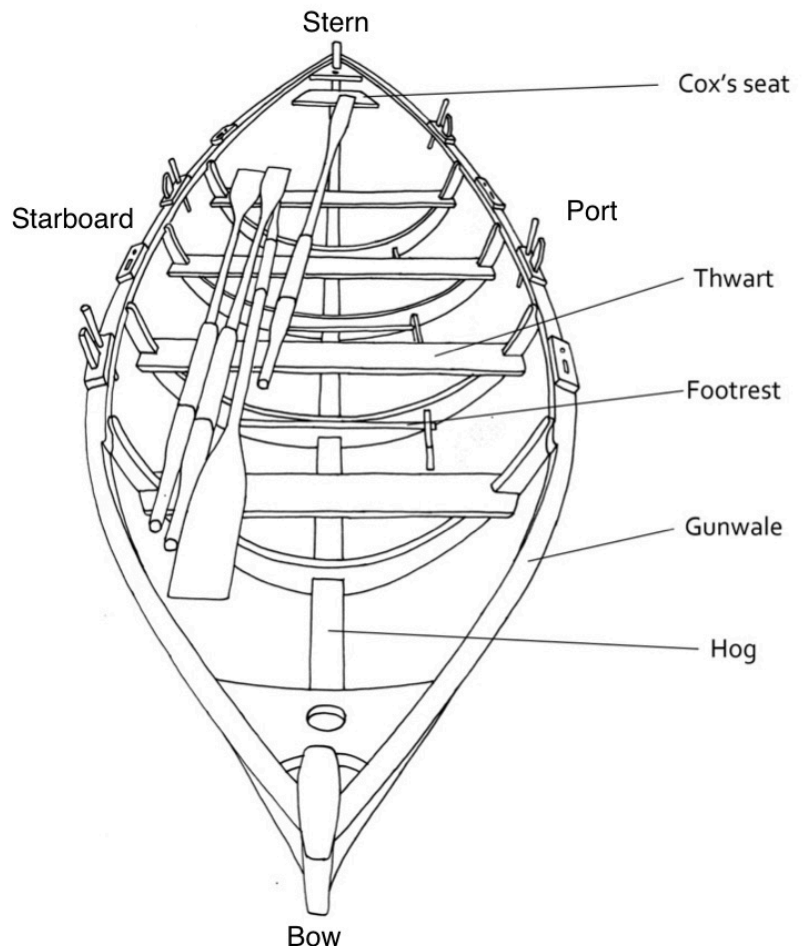
Skiff terminology

Bow:
Front of skiff

Stern:
Rear of skiff

All rowers face the Cox and therefore row with their back to the direction of travel.

Port refers to the left side of the boat and Starboard to the right side of the boat, regardless of which direction the crew are facing.





Preparing the Boat & Launching

At the start of each rowing session members prepare the skiffs -



Unclip, fold down and remove the cover

Check to ensure that all necessary equipment is in place and intact including:

Oars

Footplates

Row locks

Grab bag

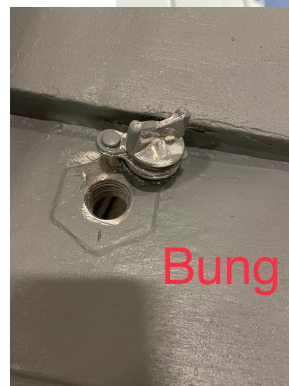
Position rudder on the stern using holding bolt

Unclip the skiff from the trolley at the bow

Ensure skiff is stable on the launch trolley



Screw bung in place





Skiff Launching

A minimum of 5 adults will move the skiff and trolley to the slipway

The crew are the only brakes on the trolley, and must maintain careful control as it goes up or down the slipway

The slipway is steep and can be muddy/ icy/ slimy. Everyone on the slip should be careful of their footing

2 members (one per side) should hold on at the bow - either holding the boat itself or the handles of the launch trolley

One member should hold the boat at each of the trolley posts, or hold the trolley posts themselves

The fifth member should hold onto the trolley rope, taking some strain

Any members assisting with the launch and recovery must do so to the best of their ability

If you lose your grip or cannot handle the strain you must alert the rest of the crew immediately

All crew should have a firm grip on the boat/trolley or rope and be prepared to take additional strain if anyone slips or loses their grip

No-one should be in front of the trolley as it goes down the slipway





On reaching the waters edge, a wedge must be used on the trailer wheels to prevent accidental movement

Two crew members will then board the skiff



They will then carefully position their oars in front of the trolley posts before being lowered into the water on the trolley

The crew will then manoeuvre the skiff across to the pontoon where it will be secured by ropes at the stern and bow

The trolley will be pulled from the water and returned to the hard standing

Pontoon

Members should only make their way to the pontoon when they have been allocated a skiff

There is limited space and no one should make their way there unless they are part of a crew or have a specific task



Crew positions

The cox will allocate crew positions depending on the capabilities of each crew member and their stature to ensure balance

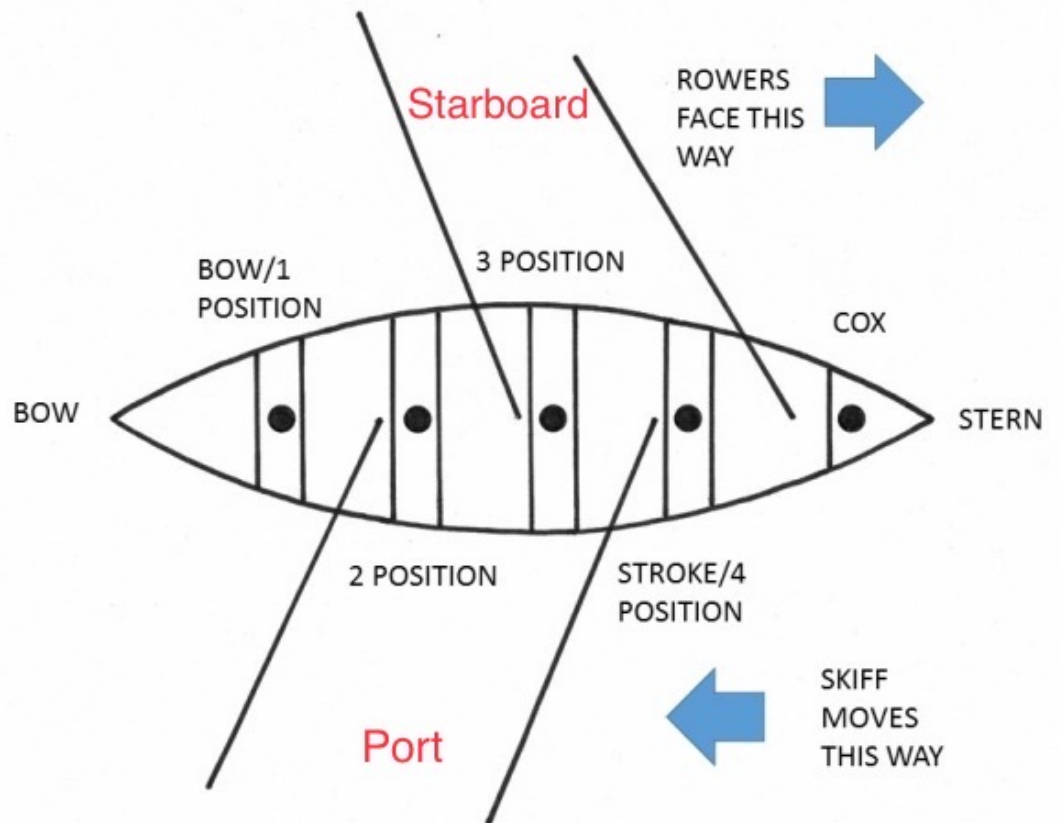
Cox

Position 4 -
Stroke

Position 3

Position 2

Position 1 -
Bow



The crew consists of a cox and four rowers, each having one oar. Two rowers are on the port side.

Two rowers are on the starboard side.

The cox steers the boat using a rudder and is seated at the stern.



Embarking

Although tied up at the pontoon, the skiff is on water it will move and crews should only board in a safe manner.

One at a time, as requested by the cox each crew member will take their seats in the skiff in the prescribed method.

Take the hand of a crew member on the pontoon for stability and using one foot, step on to the middle of your allocated seat, before stepping down onto the skiff floor and taking your seat.



Only one person should be standing in the skiff at any time.

Once in position alter your foot plate and foot straps to your preference and prepare your pin, row lock & oar.

Ensure that you have the correct oar for your rowing position.

The oars are long, heavy and extra care should be taken when repositioning.



The role of the Cox

The cox is ultimately responsible for the safety of the crew and skiff. They steer the skiff and give directions to the crew.

The cox will select the crew positions for the most efficient row depending on the capabilities of each crew member and their stature to ensure balance.

They will supervise the safe boarding & disembarking of the crew.

The cox has responsibility for radio communications.

They will take decisions about the length, direction and duration of the session.

Cox Commands

“Ready to row” – rowers get ready to start rowing

“Row” – start rowing

“Hold water” – put blades in the water and hold them there

“Back water” – row backwards

“Port side only” – only rowers with oars on the port side should row

“Starboard side only” – only rowers with oars on the starboard side should row

“Hard on starboard side” – rowers with oars on the starboard should row hard

“Hard on port side” – rowers with oars on the port should row hard

“All together” – all rowers to come back in, e.g. following a command for one side only

“Easy all” - all rowing stops



Section 4 -

Yacht Haven & Harbour

The waterway around Troon Yacht Haven and the Inner Harbour can be busy with sailing yachts and large commercial vessels.

The entrance/exit from the yacht haven to the inner harbour, known as the "Cut" has room for only one vessel at a time. Most other craft using this waterway are engine driven and larger than a skiff, significant awareness is required to safely pass through. As such members should be aware of any visible increase in traffic in and around the yacht haven.

The RNLI Troon Lifeboat also operates within the harbour and crews must be mindful of any increased activity at the lifeboat berth which may indicate an emergency launch.

Fishing boats also operate from the harbour supplying the fish market.

Large tugs laden with timber deliver to the inner harbour and skiffs may be restricted access during this operation.



Troon Harbour Master will be contacted by radio prior to setting off, making them aware that we will be in the harbour and in order that they can inform us of any hazards.

All vessels **must** pass through and enter/exit the harbour on the starboard side.

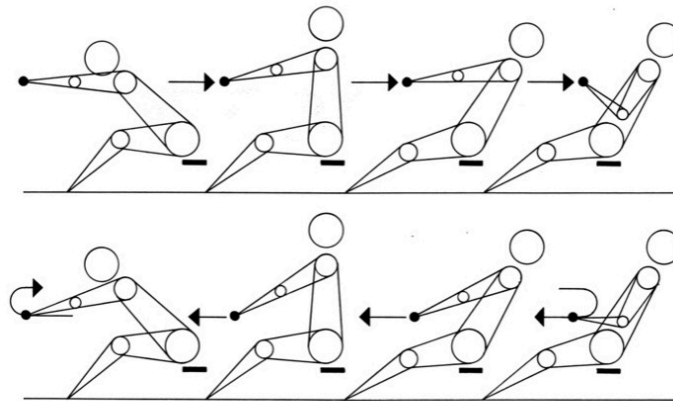
Vessels must not exit/enter the harbour if the harbour warning light is illuminated.

Most of the above is the main responsibility of the cox, however all crew members should have a knowledge of potential hazards and should immediately inform the cox of any identified safety issues.



Section 5 -

Rowing Technique



The Catch

The body is hinged forward at the hips, back is straight, head is lifted looking towards the Cox, arms are straight and outstretched, legs are bent, shoulders are relaxed. The blade is dropped smoothly and swiftly into the water until it is just submerged by allowing the hands to lift, the feet / toes are placed firmly against the foot rest in preparation for applying pressure.

The Drive

Pressure is applied through the feet and legs and transferred to the blade in the water, the legs straighten as the body (with back still straight) pivots towards the bow of the boat strongly utilising the back to add pressure to the blade. After the body passes through vertical, the arms bend bringing the oar handle in towards the chest. Breathe out during the drive.

The Finish

With the body still just past vertical, the hands are pressed down to lift the blade out of the water cleanly and quickly. The hands move away from the body until the arms straighten out towards the stern.

The Recovery

Leading with straight arms, the upper body returns through vertical pivoting at the hips and leans towards the stern. The back is straight throughout and the



shoulders and hands are relaxed. The legs bend slightly and the feet engage with the foot rest ready for the next catch. Breathe in during the recovery.

The [Scottish Coastal Rowing Association](#) has produced a series of excellent short videos which explain the technique involved in rowing a fixed seat St Ayles Skiff.

Please find the videos at the below embedded links:

- [Personal Setup](#)
- [The Catch](#)
- [The Drive](#)
- [The Recovery](#)
- [Handy Pointers](#)

Catching a Crab

This is when the blade of your oar catches in the water, which can push you backwards and out of your seat.

When this starts, push down and away on the oar handle to bring the blade out of the water.

You will catch a crab. Everyone catches a crab.

Disembarking

On returning to the pontoon the skiff will be securely tied to the stern and bow.

Two crew members will be selected to manoeuvre the skiff from the pontoon to the trolley.

The remaining crew will carefully lift and stow each oar in the skiff, removing their row locks and pins.

One at a time, as requested by the cox each crew member will disembark in the prescribed method.

Only one person should stand upright in the skiff at any time.

Take the hand of a crew member on the pontoon for stability and using one foot, step on to the middle of your allocated seat, before stepping up on to the pontoon.



Skiff Recovery

A minimum of 3 members will carefully position the trolley at the waters edge before partially submerging it

Two crew members will manoeuvre the skiff from the pontoon across to the trolley, reattach the bow clip and store their oars, row locks and pins onboard



The crew must be seated before the trolley is then pulled back to the bottom of the slipway, just beyond the waters edge

The skiff crew should then disembark from the skiff

2 members (one per side) should pull from the handles of the launch trolley

One crew member should push the boat at each of the trolley posts, or push the trolley posts themselves

The fifth crew member should use the trolley rope to pull



All crew should have a firm grip on the boat/trolley or rope and be prepared to take additional strain if anyone slips or loses their grip

No-one should be behind the trolley as it is pulled up the slipway



Once the skiff has been returned to the hard standing all equipment should be checked and stored again, ready for the next session including:

Oars

Footplates

Row locks

Pins

Grab bag

Unscrew the bung

Remove the rudder holding bolt and place rudder in the skiff

Replace the cover on top of the skiff and securely clip back in place

Your club

Troon Coastal Rowing Club is your club.

Treat everyone with the respect, you would expect.

Take care to avoid damage and unnecessary wear and tear to the skiffs and equipment.

Show consideration and avoid causing offence through language or actions which may bring you, the club and the sport of coastal rowing into disrepute.

Always adopt a 'safety first' attitude and follow instructions, particularly when on the water, launching and recovering the skiff.

Make sure you understand the guidelines and safety procedures. If you're unsure about anything, or want more help or training with something, then ask.

And most of all, enjoy coastal rowing and being part of the skiffie community.