

HRSA Monthly Report

May 2018

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Fatalities

There have recently been two fatalities. The first occurred in the Netherlands when a 72 year old single sculler capsized in the Aarkanaal in Alphen aan den Rijn. He was rescued from the water by a fellow rower but efforts to resuscitate were not successful and the sculler tragically died.

The second occurred more recently at Newquay Rowing Club where a mature male rower suffered chest pain some time after a race. There was an immediate 999 call and he was treated with oxygen, Glyceryl trinitrate (GTN), aspirin, CPR and defibrillation by a first responder and the RNLI lifeboat crew while waiting for an ambulance. A defibrillator was used and he returned to sinus rhythm. He was transferred to an ambulance but suffered a further cardiac arrest in transit to hospital and was pronounced dead after arrival at A&E. It is understood that the Chairman will write a letter of condolence.

Incident Reports

Incident reports were reviewed (other than those of simple capsizes). Comments were made on a few and some were forwarded to others for information. Incident Reports that describe medical treatment beyond first aid and those that describe medical issues are routinely shared with the Honorary Medical Adviser and, where appropriate, his advice is conveyed to the people involved.

There continue to be reports of incidents involving narrow boats and other similar boats on canals and rivers. It is the time of year when many users of these craft start to use their boats. Rowers are invited to take extra care.

In one such incident the coach involved notified the owner of the rights to the waterway, their reply included this:-

"I will be writing a letter to this boater requesting an explanation and depending upon the response I will either be terminating the boat licence immediately or warning them that any future incidents will result in immediate termination of licence."

There is video of this incident at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1E1tG4c6yGZjSUflr11vyxzE-2R70XpnF/view>

There was a serious incident at the Oxford May Bumps. This resulted in significant and expensive boat damage but, fortunately, no serious injuries. The actions of some of the crews were questionable. It is understood that there will be an internal investigation lead by the University authorities. However, it should be remembered that British Rowing have jurisdiction over the safety related behaviour of its member clubs.

There have recently been several incidents of boats being attacked by swans. Swans can be territorial and can aggressively defend nests in springtime. Rowers are invited to keep well clear of swans particularly when they are nesting or rearing cygnets.

There has been another report of a rower suffering an epileptic episode afloat. This resulted in his airway being blocked and him showing signs of cyanosis. He was lucky that the nearest umpire was an anaesthetist and was able to provide expert support. This is a considerable concern and has been discussed with the Honorary Medical Adviser.

In another report, that related to a capsizing following a collision with the bank, the reporter chose to express herself in verse, as follows:-

Tired but filled with elation,
While attempting normal navigation
Took the corner too wide,
Scraped blades on the side,
And unbalanced the boat's gravitation.

The problem was more with our weight;
As Stroke leaned in to her gate,
Her blades flew in the air,
Bow just couldn't compare –
As we realised slightly too late.

Learn from this, I implore you:
If you're going to race a scratch crew
Get someone who can steer
To bring up the rear
And keep hold of both your blades too!

RowSafe

The 2018 update was issued in early April, it can be found at <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Row-Safe-April-2018.pdf> .

Backstays

There continues to be discussion about the update advising on the need for backstays on the forward port and starboard rigger on all boats other than single sculls. In one case it was with a representative of a boat manufacturer and in another it was a Rowing Club Secretary.

The principle that fitting backstays will tend to reduce the consequences of a head on collision was accepted but there was some concern about what umpires and others at control commissions would do and whether boats without backstays would be allowed to race. It was explained that this was a matter for umpires. It is hoped that this will be discussed at the next Sport Committee Meeting.

Power 8 Sprints

The Event Risk Assessment was developed and sent to the Event Rowing Safety Adviser (ERSA). A meeting was held with the ERSA on 16th May to discuss the risk assessment and safety arrangements. A list of items from the risk assessment to include in safety documents was also provided. Further advice has been provided on swans.

British Rowing Masters Championship

Comments have been provided on the Risk Assessment and Safety Plan. There are Barriers and Controls in the risk assessment that are not included in the Safety Plan. It is important to understand that if those Barriers and Controls are needed to ensure that then level of risk is low then they should be incorporated into one or other of the safety documents for the event. Feedback has been provided to the event organisers.

Work with the Cornish Pilot Gig Association (CPGA)

Incident Reports from Gig clubs have been forwarded to the Safety Adviser and to the Secretary.

At Lyme Regis Gig Club, feedback has been provided by the club on the proposed Level I Coxing Course material and more new photos have been supplied. This feedback has been incorporated into the training material and final drafts have been produced.

This training material is aimed to ensure that Gig coxes can lead outings safely but it will be discussed with the leadership of Education and Training.

Work with British Canoeing

Advice has been provided on what to do in the aftermath of a fatality and there has been some discussion about incidents involving both rowers and canoeists.

Defective Throw Lines

There has been a discussion with an Inspector from the of the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) following the discovery by Warrington Rowing Club of faults in a new throw line, during a capsize drill. The MAIB has issued a Safety Bulletin; this can be found at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b10fe40e5274a18fe26653a/SB2_2018.pdf and a copy is included with this report.

Safety Audit at a School Rowing Club

Bryanston School has requested a safety audit of their rowing club. The scope has been agreed as relevant legal requirements (see Safety in Club Premises at <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/club-support/safety-in-club-premises/>) and the advice in RowSafe. The onsite phase of the audit will be conducted on 5th June.

Canal and River Trust Boaters Guide

Content has been provided for the section of the Boaters Guide that deals with unpowered craft.

Other Advice

The following questions were received:

Q We are a family Boating club (rowing boats, kayaks, canoes etc.) on the Thames and are looking to set a policy for who should wear life jackets especially with regards to children. Would you be able to provide guidance as to what is best practice please? There is a swim test were children “pass” when they can swim across the river in their clothes.

A There is guidance on Lifejackets in section 7.3 of RowSafe (see <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Row-Safe-April-2018-Chp-7.pdf>). This refers to the RNLI guideline, the RYA guidance in fitting a lifejacket and to a Safety Alert on Lifejackets, you may find all of these useful. I mentioned a type of lifejacket that may be suitable for rowers in a recent monthly report, please find this attached.

Q Two open water capsize drills were conducted in a river by a university RC. On both occasions the river was very busy with junior crews and canoeists. No other river users were informed of the capsize drills in advance and they were conducted at the point where we turn our crews to come into the landing stages which was very busy on both occasions.

A I agree that conducting capsize drills at this time of year in a congested part of the river is not appropriate. I have been in talks with the University and advised them of the issues of open water capsize drills. They tell me that they have conducted some drills in their lake and that these were successful. The lake is a more controlled environment than the river. If you wish I will discuss your concerns with my contacts at the University. Please let me know what you think.

Q Are there any plans to summarise some of the important messages in RowSafe in Check List format to raise awareness?

A We have already done this. There is a checklist on the RowSafe page at <https://www.britishrowing.org/about-us/policies-guidance/rowsafe/> and RowSafe is summarised, in checklist form, in the annual Safety Audit.

Q Replacement cord for heel restraints. Some years ago it was posted somewhere what strength this had to be (and the correct name for the marine cord). I can't find it, even though we purchased some. Could you remind me please?

A It was 3 mm diameter dyneema cord (see https://www.dsm.com/products/dyneema/en_GB/home.html)