

# Mortlake Anglian + Alpha BC

## A guide for new members



July 2007

# Welcome to Mortlake Anglian + Alpha BC

## We hope that you will enjoy rowing with us

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This guide incorporates general club information, safety advice and details about Tideway navigation. More concise information is available on the club website – [www.maabc.com](http://www.maabc.com).

### **Opening hours and keys**

During the week the boathouse is usually open from 8am till late evening and at weekends from 7am till late afternoon.

The main door has a combination keypad for entry. Outside normal hours, an additional high security lock is used and the premises are alarmed. Key issue is strictly controlled by the committee and if you require access outside normal hours, please see the captain or a committee member.

### **Parking and bikes**

Parking is not permitted in Ibis Lane (a private road) or Quintin Boat Club. Please ensure you park in our own car park or leave your vehicle in Hartington Road. Bikes can be locked to the side of the balcony but please avoid the area of the stairs.

### **Club house facilities**

The 'Lawson Room' is the club's main function room and opens onto the balcony overlooking the river. Club members can hire this room for private functions. The bar is here and is fully licensed and catering facilities are available.

Male and female changing rooms are at the rear of the first floor. The club does not employ cleaning staff so all members are asked to help to keep the premises clean and tidy. A limited number of lockers are available for a small fee. Do not leave valuables unattended anywhere in the club.

### **Boat bays and gym**

The boat bays and a fully equipped gym are on the ground floor. You are free to use the gym facilities at any time.

### **Boats**

MAABC has an extensive boat fleet which is constantly being upgraded and refurbished. Indoor racking for sculling boats is available to full members only – a racking fee will be charged.

No one is allowed to take charge of a club boat in the boathouse, on the foreshore or on the river, until the captain (or club-appointed coach) is satisfied that they are competent.

If your boat sustains any damage during an outing please record the details of the incident in the ARA incident book and damage in the club damage book (both found in the hallway). The club is insured for damage to club boats and for injury to a club member whilst in a club boat.

Please take care with all club equipment. Club boats should be washed down before being returned to the rack. Hatch covers should be removed for ventilation and drainage, and gates must be fastened.



### **Coaching and squads**

Coaching is available to all members from beginners through to international standard. We have a mix of paid professional coaches and willing volunteers, many of whom hold ARA coaching qualifications.

The club is organised into several groups according to age, experience, ambition and gender. These 'squads' have organised outings, usually at specific times. If you are unsure which group to join seek advice from the captain.

These squads are usually senior men, novice men, senior women, intermediate women, beginners, veteran women, veteran men and single scullers.

### **Racing**

MAABC competes in racing at all levels throughout the year, taking part in long distance 'head' races in the winter and short course 'regatta' races in the summer. Racing is planned and organised according to the different squads.

The club organises and runs two open regattas each year, both held outside the boathouse – Borne@Chiswick Bridge Regatta in May and Barnes & Mortlake Regatta in June.

The Club Regatta, held each September, is for club members only. Racing is in mixed ability scratch eights over a 1000m course, finishing in front of the boathouse.



### **Amateur Rowing Association (ARA)**

The ARA is rowing's governing body in England. It is affiliated to FISA, the international rowing governing body.

Most racing is conducted under ARA rules and enforced by ARA qualified umpires. An ARA official will make a safety check of each boat entering a regatta or head race before allowing it into the event.

To participate in regattas held under ARA rules you must be registered with the ARA. As well as the racing licence, full ARA membership provides insurance cover for both civil liability and personal accident. See [www.ara-rowing.org/](http://www.ara-rowing.org/)

### **Kit (clothing)**

Official MAABC kit, suitable for training and racing, comes in club colours – red, black and white. ARA regulations specify that uniform kit in club colours must be worn while racing in ARA affiliated events. Some items of kit are stocked at the club and can be purchased direct – please ask for details.

The official club kit is made by Godfrey Sports Ltd and can be purchased via their website [www.godfrey.co.uk](http://www.godfrey.co.uk). Kit can also be ordered as part of a club bulk order, where the unit cost is more favourable. The dates of these bulk orders, made several times a year, can be found on our website. Alternatively, you can order kit independently but this may be more expensive.



### **Committee and captain**

The club is run by its committee and officers. All, other than the presidents and vice-presidents, are elected to serve on an annual basis. The captain, supported by two vice-captains, has overall control of all rowing matters. The committee meets on the first Wednesday of each month. Should you have an issue that the captain, vice-captains or other club members cannot resolve, it can be raised at the next committee meeting.

### **General Meetings**

The Annual General Meeting takes place on the last Saturday in October. Nominations to serve on the committee are registered on the Secretary's notice board (Lawson Room) in the preceding weeks. All members are entitled to vote. Special General Meetings may be convened from time to time to deal with specific business. A copy of the 'Club Rules and Constitution' is available in the committee room or from the club secretary.



### **Mailing list**

The best way to stay informed about club news and notices is to subscribe to the club's global mailing list. You can do this from our website.

### **Fixtures and social calendar**

A fixtures card with club social events, the regatta calendar and a full list of committee contacts is published annually on our website. Social events are also advertised on the boathouse notice boards.

### **How to find us**

A map is shown on the back page of this guide and details of bus routes to the club are available from our website.

### **Contact details**

A full list of club officers and committee members is published on the website and on the fixtures card.

### **Useful websites for further information**

Mortlake Anglian + Alpha BC [www.maabc.com](http://www.maabc.com)  
Amateur Rowing Association [www.ara-rowing.org](http://www.ara-rowing.org)  
The Rowing Service [www.total.rowing.org.uk/](http://www.total.rowing.org.uk/)  
Port of London Authority [www.portoflondon.co.uk](http://www.portoflondon.co.uk)  
Thames Regional Council <http://safety.thames-rrc.org/>

# Key points about rowing safely

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Statistically, rowing is a safe sport, but all club members should be aware of the risks presented by rowing in general and, in particular, rowing on the tidal stretch of the Thames.

Safety is a prime consideration for the club and it is essential that all members view the safety and navigation pages on the club website for more comprehensive information than is set out below.

## General health matters

### Water-borne diseases

There are risks to health associated with water-based activities which arise from the micro biological or chemical quality of the water, such as Weil's Disease and Tetanus. Wash your hands and face after an outing, particularly if you have open wounds such as raw blisters.

### Drinking water

Ensure you are properly hydrated during your outing. Fill your water bottle with drinking water from the sink in the kitchen or the taps in the boathouse (middle boat bay).

### Clothing

You should be appropriately dressed for the planned activity and conditions. Prior to an outing consider the potential hazard posed by unsuitable clothing, for example, capsize. This consideration not only applies to cold weather conditions, but to hot weather where protection from the sun is important.

Wellies or stout footwear should be worn to boat in as sharp objects can be washed up on the foreshore.

### Night rowing

Only experienced oarsmen and women are permitted to row in the dark. When doing so you must display white lights through 360°. The lights must be attached to the boat and must not flash.

### ARA water safety code

As an ARA affiliated club we are required to follow the ARA water safety code. This is not exhaustive, and should not preclude common sense. A copy of the code can be found on the water safety board in the club house, or see the ARA website [www.ara-rowing.org/](http://www.ara-rowing.org/)

## Cold water safety and hypothermia

### Immersion in water

Capsize is when a crew or sculler turn their boat over leaving the crew immersed in the water. Swamping is when the boat fills with water and the crew are immersed in water with the boat upright yet partially or fully below the waterline.

Once immersed in cold water you are in danger from hypothermia and your ability to think rationally and rescue yourself will be diminished in a few short minutes. It is recommended that you read Jane Blockley's cold water safety guidelines on hypothermia and water immersion, see [www.leoblockley.org.uk/](http://www.leoblockley.org.uk/)

Getting your torso out of the water is the priority. You should try to get back into your boat as soon as possible. Think quickly about what the best method might be – towing your boat to the bank, standing up and climbing in, climbing back in mid-river or climbing on top of your upturned boat and paddling it like a surfboard. Remember you should swim with the stream, rather than trying to go straight to the bank at 90° which involves more effort.

### Risk assessment and incidents

Every cox, coach, bowsteer or single sculler should perform a risk assessment before an outing. It does not need to take a long time or be formal and should include a boat check; consideration of crew competence plus an assessment of water, weather and tidal conditions.

### Accidents and incidents

Quickly assess the incident. Can it be resolved quickly? Is anyone in danger? Are you thinking clearly? In an emergency call 999 and ask for the coastguard – the RNLI provide a dedicated search and rescue service on the Tideway. Once all involved are safe, ensure you have details such as boat ID numbers, club and crew names – you will need these for the report.

The ARA and the PLA require us to report all accidents and serious incidents. There is an 'incident log book' on the club's safety noticeboard for this purpose. The club website explains how to do a risk assessment and how to report an incident.



### **New single scullers**

New or novice single scullers – someone who has had less than 20 outings in a single – are not allowed to have unsupervised outings. They should be accompanied by a coach in a launch or by an experienced sculler, sculling alongside.

### **Coxes, bowsteers and single scullers**

These people are responsible for the safety of their crew. As 'Master of the vessel' you are in charge, and responsible should anything happen. This is over and above any coach supervising an outing. You are responsible for performing the risk assessment and reporting any incidents which might occur.

Coxes must wear a life jacket (and ensure they know how it works). Most club boats are fitted with a full 'coxbox' sound system, so coxes can communicate clearly with their crew.

# Boating and navigation

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This section includes information on tides, boating from the club and the navigation rules of the 'Tideway' between Richmond and Putney.

## **Tides**

The River Thames at Mortlake is tidal and changes in height by around 6 metres between the low and high tide. Each tide state has its dangers. Low tide has generally more benign conditions because there is less water and it is more sheltered, however the river does get very shallow around the edges, and the risk of grounding is great. High tides can have very rough, almost sea-like, conditions.

As with any river, the wind affects conditions. On a tidal river when the wind and tide are working together conditions are generally better than when they oppose. If the tide changes so that you have wind against tide, calm water can often become choppy very quickly. The river also bends significantly, so around one corner you can have flat calm and around the next choppy difficult conditions.

## **Tide tables**

These are available from the club website (tidal predictions) and are also displayed around the club house and boat bays. The cox, coach and crew must check to see what the boating tide state is and if the tide may change while you are out on the water. This is so that you can be aware of the change in circulation pattern.

It might seem obvious but if high tide time is 2pm then the tide will be rising until 2pm and then falling after 2pm. The rising tide moves quicker, it takes approximately 4.5 hours to rise and 8 hours to fall – so we spend more time rowing on a falling tide.

The difference in tide times between Putney and Richmond are approximately:

Earlier at Putney – 17 mins (high) and 44 min (low).

Later at Richmond – 15 min (high) and 53 min (low).

### **The turning tide**

There are important differences to river conditions for rising and falling tides. You should be aware of tide change times and if the tide may change while you are out on the water. Accidents often happen when crews are not aware of the change.

The tide changes earlier further downstream. A rowing boat moves faster than the changing tide. It is common for crews to boat at Putney checking their tide conditions and start up river knowing that the 'tide is rising', but when they arrive in Chiswick the tide has not yet changed and they meet crews who have judged the 'tide to be falling'. Be aware, stop, look and listen to other crews' advice. If in doubt, stop the boat and see if you are drifting up or down stream.

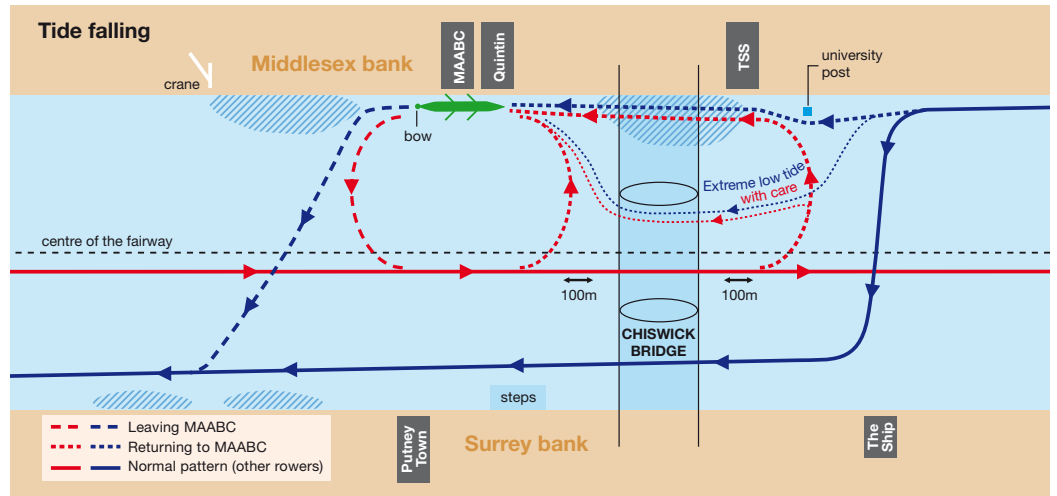
### **Boating**

Always boat and return with your bows pointing into the stream. The circulation diagrams on the next page show you what to do for a falling or a rising tide.

Work out what the river is doing before you boat – consult the tide table, look at the river, or ask someone on the foreshore. Boating the wrong way is tricky and can be dangerous for other crews boating or landing.

At low tide the beach is very shallow. Be aware of wash from launches or cruisers, this can ruin your landing/pushing off and at worst damage your boat by bouncing it on the shore.





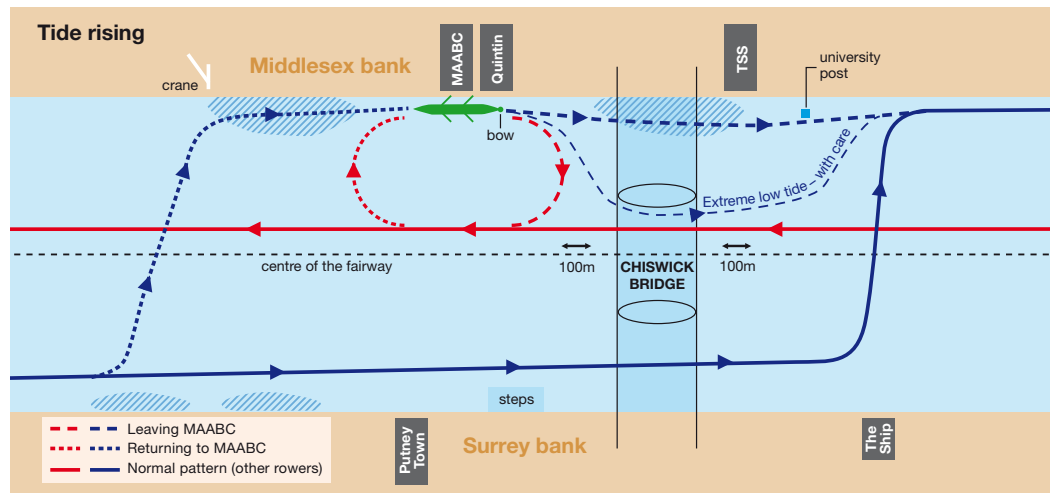
## Tide falling

### Boating from MAABC – bows point upstream

Bows point away from Chiswick Bridge. To go upstream cross the river immediately and proceed up the Surrey bank. To go downstream, spin into the middle of the river and head through the middle arch of Chiswick Bridge, staying on the starboard side (bowside) of mid-river.

### Returning to MAABC – bows point upstream

If returning from upstream you may spin in front of the club but not near the bridge, or immediately after the bridge, before the crossover point. If returning from downstream come through the Middlesex arch beside Tideway Scullers School and proceed past Quintin BC (bowside oars alongside the bank).



## Tide rising

### Boating from MAABC – bows point downstream

Bows point towards Chiswick Bridge. To go upstream spin immediately and stick to the starboard side (bowside) of mid-river. To go downstream go through the Middlesex arch of the bridge without crossing. When the tide is very low there may not be enough water under the arch by TSS, so proceed with extreme care through the middle arch.

### Returning to MAABC – bows point downstream

If coming from downstream go past the boathouse before spinning onto the Middlesex bank. If coming from upstream cross the river at the white crane (200m upstream of the club), do not cross earlier than this, and give way to oncoming traffic.

### Working the slacks – ‘special rowing lane’

In addition to standard ‘right hand rule’ where all river craft stick to the starboard (bowside) side of the river, there are exceptions for rowing craft called ‘working the slacks’.

This means that rowers can be on the ‘wrong’ side of the river in order to go around the easy side of a long bend.

### Where working the slacks applies

The ‘working the slacks’ rule applies **only** between the Syon crossing (look for the numbers 13 and 15 painted on the Surrey bank) and Putney Pier. Above Syon and below Putney Pier normal ‘right hand’ rule applies.

‘Working the slacks’ also applies **only** when you are moving **against** the tide. When moving with the tide you join the rest of the river traffic following the ‘right hand rule’.

You should never be in the middle of the river. Think of the centre of the river as the white line in the middle of a two lane road, with traffic going in two directions on either side. You must be on the starboard side (bowside) of this middle line.

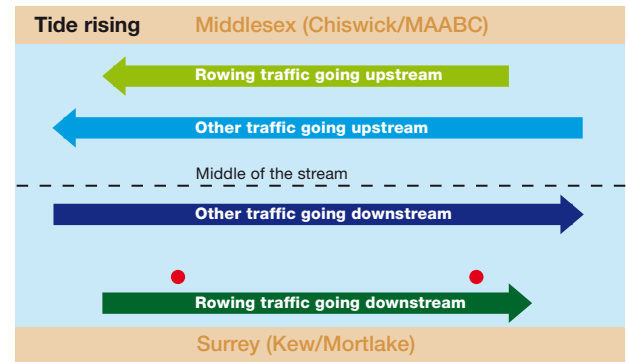
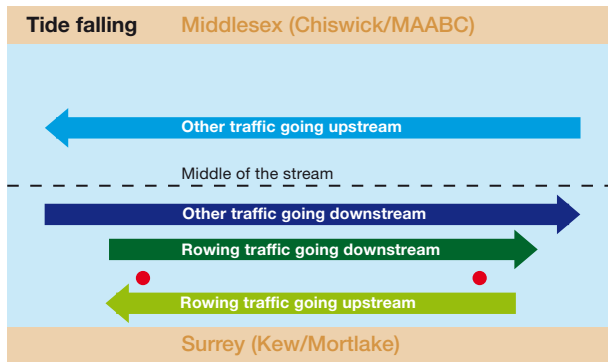
The ‘special rowing lane’ does not alter its position, but the direction of traffic in the lane reverses according to what the tide is doing. Several red buoys separate this rowing lane from the main traffic and the diagrams below show where you should be in relation to the red buoys depending on the tide.

Notice how the rowing traffic sticks closer to the edge of the river and how the crews going against the tide are segregated from other river traffic.

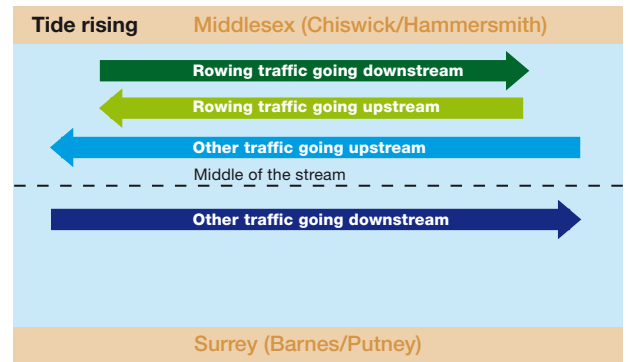
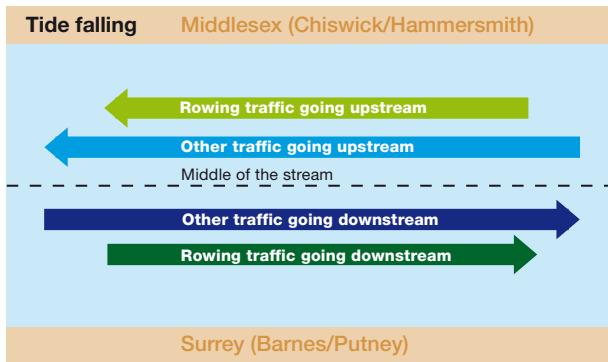
**Tide falling** – rowers going upstream (against the tide) use the special rowing lane. Rowers going downstream follow the right hand boundary of the channel keeping away from the middle (leaving deepest water free for large craft).

**Tide rising** – rowers going downstream (against the tide) use the special rowing lane. Rowers going upstream follow the right hand boundary of the channel keeping away from the middle (leaving deepest water free for large craft).

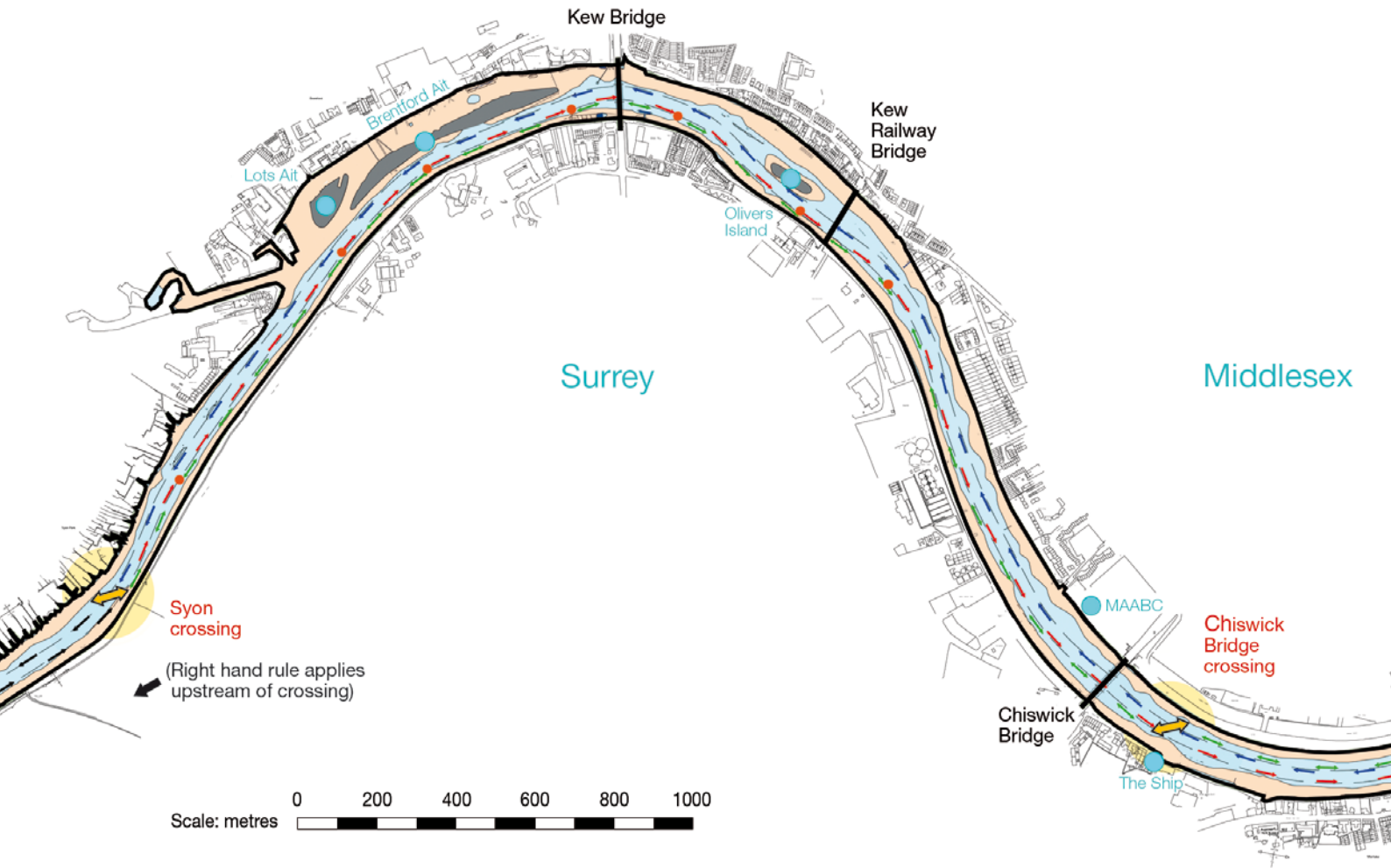
**Remember that starboard side is bowside – that is the crew’s left-hand side and the cox’s right-hand side.**



Traffic flow showing the special rowing lane on the **Surrey** bank.



Traffic flow showing the special rowing lane on the **Middlesex** bank.



### Rowing on the Tideway

This map shows the crossing points and the path of the 'special rowing lane'.

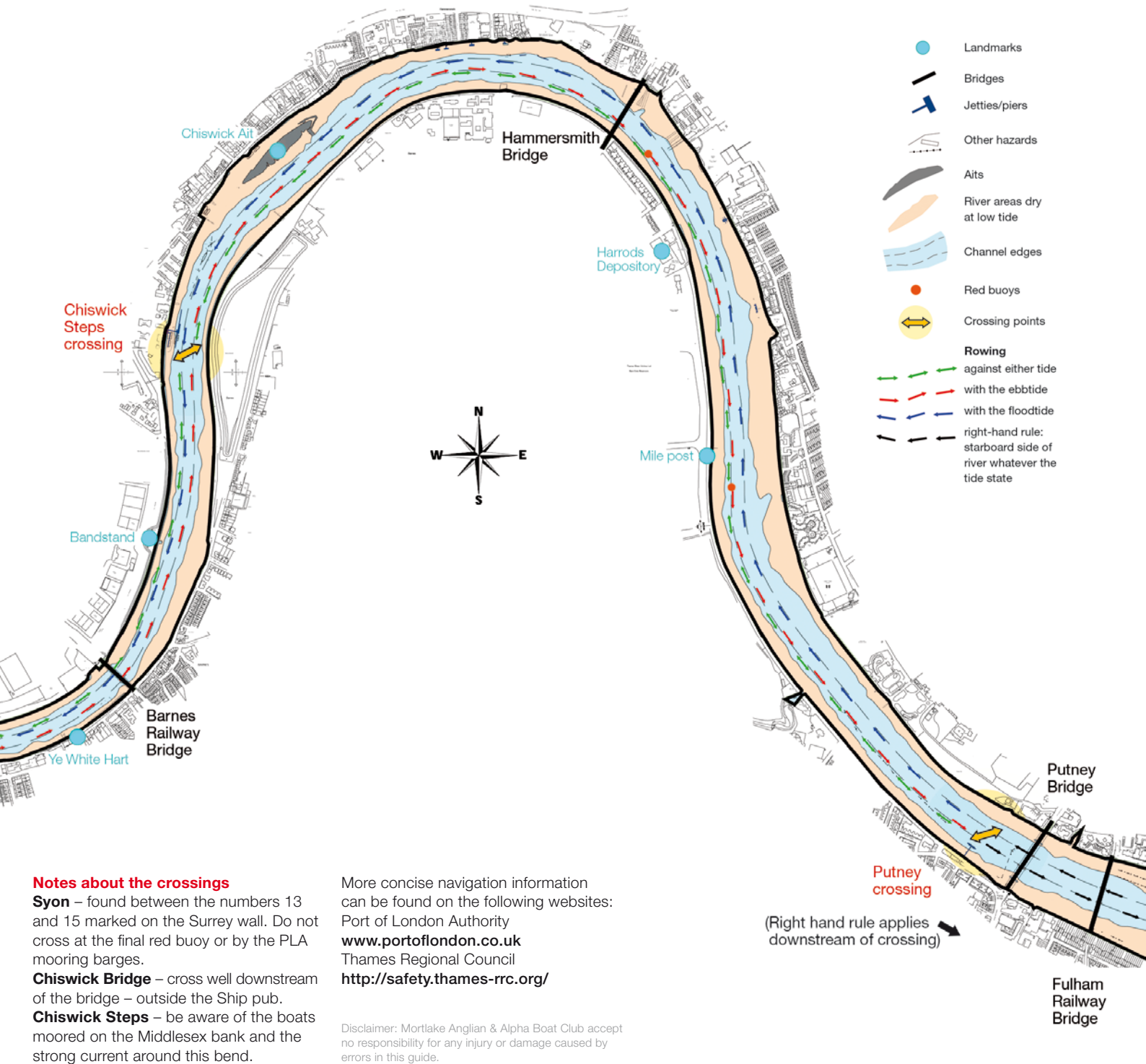
When moving **against** the tide notice how the lane hugs the inside of the wide bends (green arrows).

The river between Syon and Putney can be split into 3 sections with 4 crossing points, including each end above Syon and below Putney Pier.

**1** From the Syon crossing down to just below Chiswick Bridge, the 'special rowing lane' is on the Surrey (south) bank of the river.

**2** From the Chiswick Bridge crossing (100m downstream at the Ship pub) down to Chiswick Steps (well below the bandstand) the 'special rowing lane' is on the Middlesex (north) bank.

**3** From Chiswick Steps down to Putney Pier (100m above Putney Bridge) the 'special rowing lane' is on the Surrey bank again.



**Notes about the crossings**

**Syon** – found between the numbers 13 and 15 marked on the Surrey wall. Do not cross at the final red buoy or by the PLA mooring barges.

**Chiswick Bridge** – cross well downstream of the bridge – outside the Ship pub.

**Chiswick Steps** – be aware of the boats moored on the Middlesex bank and the strong current around this bend.

More concise navigation information can be found on the following websites:

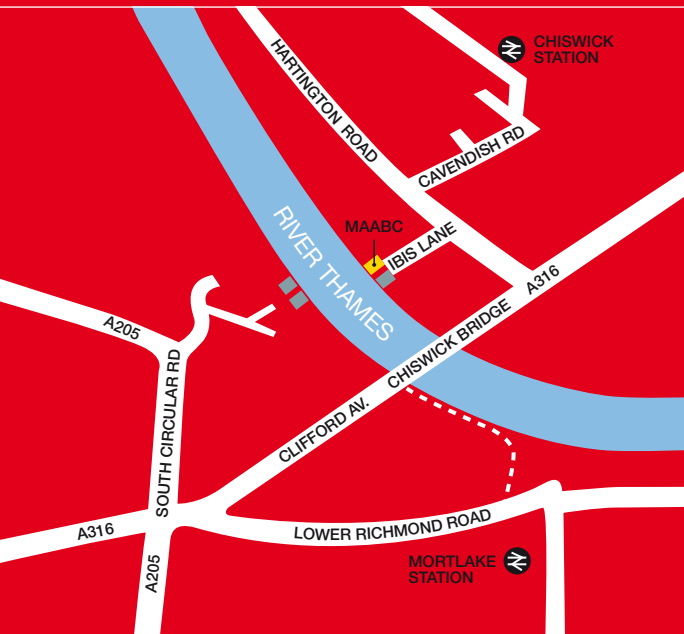
Port of London Authority  
[www.portoflondon.co.uk](http://www.portoflondon.co.uk)

Thames Regional Council  
<http://safety.thames-rrc.org/>

Disclaimer: Mortlake Anglian & Alpha Boat Club accept no responsibility for any injury or damage caused by errors in this guide.

(Right hand rule applies downstream of crossing)

[www.maabc.com](http://www.maabc.com)



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