

POOLE GIG ROWING CLUB STARTER PACK

Hello & welcome to Poole Gig Rowing Club new rower's starter pack. If you are thinking about coming to try out rowing, we hope this pack answers some of your questions.

Members come from all walks of life, all ages, and you don't have to be able to row beforehand. Some members row for the social aspect or to make the most of seeing our coastline and harbour from a different angle. Other members like the competitive aspect of Gig Rowing & attend regatta's nationally to race against other clubs.

Some history about gig rowing

A traditional Cornish pilot gig is a 6 man rowing boat, 32 feet in length and a 4 ft. 9in beam. They are Clinker built with Elm on Oak. Their specification is based on the "Trefry", a gig built in 1838 and still in regular use by Newquay rowing club. Their original use was to take pilots out to incoming ships in the Atlantic Approaches. The fastest gig would have the best chance of securing the pilotage fees.

Originally a commercial venture, now the sport of gig racing has become established in the West Country and is spreading to the rest of the world where clubs compete against each other in wooden gigs on marked courses between about 2km & in some cases up to more than 15km.

Gig rowing in Poole

Poole Gig Rowing Club, PGRC, was founded in 2010 with our first plastic gig, Arry Paye coming in 2012. We are now over 100 members, and have 5 boats we regularly row in Poole Harbour & beyond.

Wooden Gigs are the only boats that can (in most cases) be entered into competitive races. They can't be left in the water so must be launched & recovered after each session. Fibreglass Gigs (known as plastics) can be left in the water indefinitely (with some regular maintenance) so are perfect for the majority of our rowing sessions.

PGRC is lucky enough to now own & row in 5 boats. All acquired through extensive fundraising from members, sponsors & grants.

Our 3 plastic gigs are Arry Paye, Robbie Paye & our newest gig, Smuggler, arrived in 2023. All their names honour infamous local to Poole & the surrounding area. These are stored on pontoons at the Port of Poole Marina.

Our wooden gigs are Isabelle, she arrived in 2016, and in 2023 we took delivery of Osprey, named after the successful reintroduction of Ospreys to Poole Harbour. Isabelle is stored at the Fishermens Drying Ground by the RNLI Lifeboat Museum on Poole Quay. Osprey is in secure storage by the Channel Ferry Port.



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PGRC is lucky enough to be able to row all year round in Poole Harbour & is not limited to daylight hours.

We have access all areas (dependant on tides) & we have regular rows that allow our members to explore the Harbour & row around all its 5 islands. Sometimes we will venture further, rows to Swanage & Wareham have been organised & enjoyed by lots of members.

After sunset we are restricted to rowing within the Quays up to the RNLI college, these night rows are magical in their own way, especially at Christmas when the Quay is lit up.

Just in the last year, Poole members have attended competitive regattas in the Isles of Scilly & all across the South West and had their best year ever in results from Junior to Masters age. We have also been to events like the Great River Race in London & the Tamer Challenge at Cotehele Quay, so alongside local rowing there are lots of opportunities to travel across the country with gig rowing.

Getting Started

Beginner sessions are the way to try your hand at rowing a pilot gig with other first time & novice rowers alongside experienced rowers for support & to follow what they're doing. These first sessions recognise you're a beginner and will have straightforward instruction to get you started.

Each gig boat crew consists of 6 rowers & a qualified Coxswain. The Coxswain is in complete charge of the gig & all the crew & will give you clear instructions to follow. It is imperative you follow these instructions & respect the coxswains requests.

What will happen on your first row

On arriving at the free parking we use whilst we row, you'll meet another member & they will walk you down to the PGRC locker. You will pick up a lifejacket which you'll need to wear whilst we prepare & launch the boat & at all times that the coxswain asks you to.

The boat will be booked out for an hour & the Coxswain will take you through the basics of the boat, the equipment & the rowing stroke on land, then you will get into the boat, set up your position with seat, stretcher & oar. Within the hour you'll be rowing for about 30-45 minutes. There will be plenty of breaks to ask questions, have a drink & enjoy the surroundings, afterwards you may discover a few muscles you didn't know you had!

When you arrive back at the pontoon, the coxswain will tie up the boat & the crew will put the boat to bed, but it will remain in the water. In the first few sessions, unless it's raining, it's unlikely you'll get wet. It's only when using our wooden gigs that this might happen but what's different them will be covered when that happens.



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The cox & crew will make you feel welcome, be very encouraging & answer any questions with might have, we were all beginners once & rowed for the first time so know exactly how you'll be feeling.

How much does it cost?

New rowers are asked to pay £3.50 per row to help towards the maintenance of the gigs, it's cushions & oars, plus all the other wear & tear items.

You can row three times at £3.50 per session before deciding if you'd like to join the club at a continued cost of £3.50 per row. If you decide not to join after 3 rows, all rows from here on in will be at a cost of £6.50 per row for subsequent sessions.

An invoice is sent at the start of every month for your rows throughout the previous month so there's no need to bring any cash or cards with you on rows.

After your first 3 rows, you will be invited to join as a Member, for info, the membership rates are as follows.

	Yearly
ADULT	£80.00
JUNIOR (Under 18)	£40.00

What do I wear?

Rowing is not very kind to expensive clothing or shiny new trainers so please don't buy any new kit.

Wear layers of clothing, rather than one bulky top that will inhibit your movement. You will get quite warm and may like to take a layer or two off. Loose tracksuit bottoms or sports leggings/shorts are good & T-shirts and sweatshirts, waterproof or fleece jacket and hat in the winter. Trainers that have sturdy soles are good - but not work boots or heels, as they can damage the boats. If you have cycling or sailing gloves which are not too bulky, you may find them comfortable to row in and save you getting blisters.

A carrier bag or dry bag to put layers you've taken off in under the seat is a good idea as things can get a bit wet on the floor of the gig.

Where can I park?

Our free parking is at Frank Greenslades Ltd (Fishmongers) on New Quay Road in Poole, BH15 4AF. The parking is in the gravel area to the right of the shop, as you look at the frontage.

See the photo or the what3words location of the entrance is [///choice.hills.leaps](https://www.what3words.com/choice.hills.leaps)



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You must display the PGRC parking sign in your car windscreen which will be sent to you so you can print it off.

Is it safe?

The cox will carry a VHF radio in the gig should any difficulties arise. The cox will also always wear a life jacket as they will not have oars to hold onto in an emergency.

Please remember what these boats were originally designed to do – row out to ships in rough seas to navigate them back to a safe harbour. Stories of gig boats being in distress because of sea conditions are rare, so please be reassured that an emergency is unlikely. You may get splashed by water or by rain but it's not a wet sport.

The gig and equipment are insured, but all members are expected to be alert and look out for dangers at all times for themselves and others in the crew. Anything noted should be brought to the attention of the cox.

The Gig & Oars

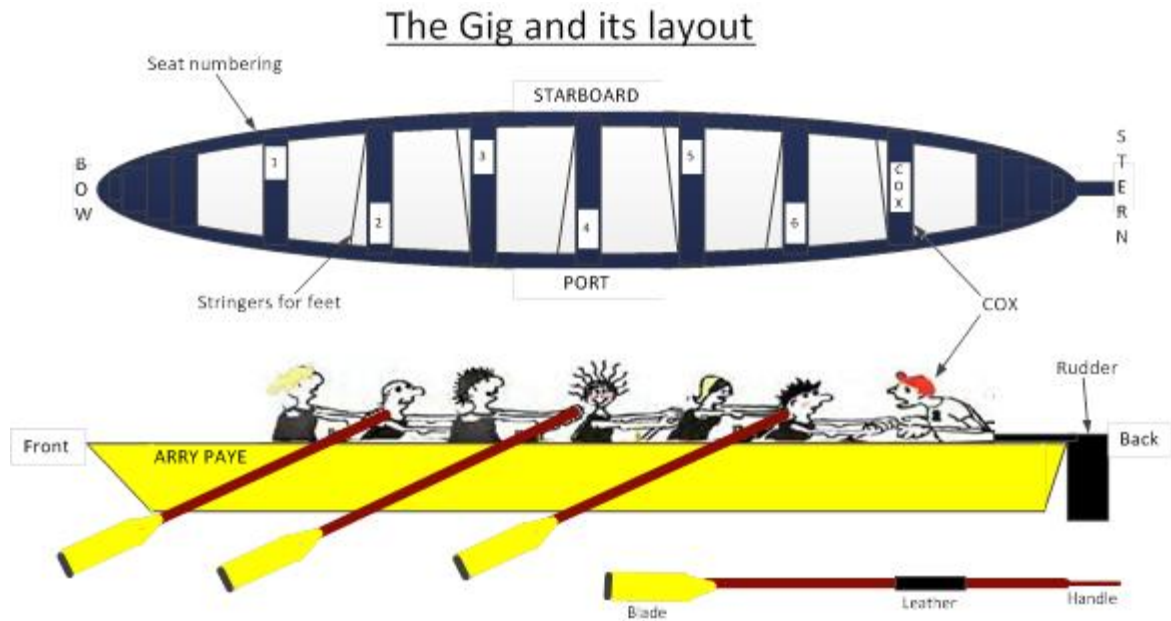
Each gig typically costs £16,000 for a fibreglass gig and £28,000 for a wooden gig. Each of the 6 oars costs £400 each.

The boats & oars are very precious to the club, and we work hard to take care of them. One of the first thing you will be doing during the first session is to look at the boats and learn the rules of handling the equipment safely and carefully, without damage to either you or the equipment.

Please do not stand on the seats. Please do not smoke in the gig. Please no music / earphones in the gig.



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How do I sign up to get started?

If this is of interest to you & you'd like to have a go, the Membership Secretary will help you get you on your way.

The Membership Secretary will organise your first row with you and help you book your next 2 rows using our Facebook Booking Page.

1. To row with PGRC you will need to complete our disclaimer. This covers you & us for insurance purposes.

[Complete the Disclaimer Form here](#)

2. Please like our PGRC Bookings & Info Facebook Page so you can see the rows as they are scheduled & put your name down. Your request to join the page will be approved once we have received your disclaimer.

[Join the PGRC Facebook Bookings Page](#)

3. When we have received your disclaimer, our Membership Secretary will be in touch to arrange your first row

