



## New Rowers Information Sheet

A warm welcome to coastal rowing, possibly the most fun you can have on the water while getting fit!

Eskmuthe Rowing Club is a Musselburgh-based club set up in 2013 to build, row and race St Ayles skiffs. We are a community-focused club and open to all. Eskmuthe RC is a member of the [Scottish Coastal Rowing Association](#).

We are set up as a SCIO (a bit like a charitable trust) and the club's business is run by a committee of 8 members, including the Club Captain, who is in charge of rowing matters, including safety and training. This sheet gives some basic guidance and useful information on rowing with the club. The most important bit is the safety information so we can ensure that your row is safe as well as fun. The rest of it will hopefully provides some useful info that will make your first shot at costal rowing as enjoyable as possible.

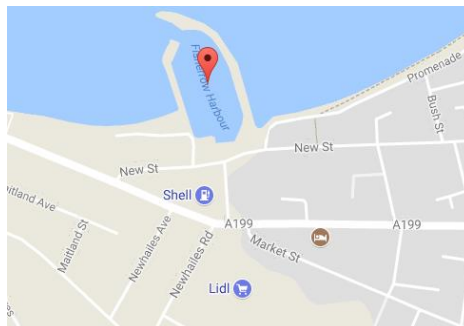


### How to find us

We are based at Fisherrow harbour in Musselburgh. The boat is kept on the boat parking area at the east side of the harbour. We usually launch the boat from the slipway in the harbour.

Lothian buses numbers 26, 30, 40, 44, 106, 113 and 124 go along North High Street (A199) close to the harbour. Get off near the Ship Inn/Shell Garage/Lidl and walk north past the housing to the Harbour/Promenade. There is plenty of parking in the Harbour area if you are driving.

Facilities around the harbour area are mentioned at the end of this leaflet.



### The Boats

We have two St Ayles Skiffs both of which were built by the community and the club. Honesty was our first skiff and our second skiff is called Steedie Falconer, named after a former Fisherrow fishwife (who died while we were building the boat). They are great wee boats and very easy to handle and very stable. For a bit of history of the St Ayles Skiff and Scottish Coastal Rowing In General check out [www.scottishcoastalrowing.org](http://www.scottishcoastalrowing.org). During the summer, we will normally have both boats on the water, but in the winter, the boats take turns to be taken into a workshop for essential repairs and maintenance.

The Skiff is a 5 person craft with 4 rowers and a Cox who steers and is in charge of the boat.



Not one of our boats but a good overhead shot!

## Rowing Basics

As with all rowing boats, the rowers sit backwards and face the Cox who sits at the back of the boat and looks forward. The Cox is essentially the captain of the boat and as well as steering, they tell the rowers what to do to help turn or stop and how hard to row (and to help them row in time!).

Rowing is quite straightforward to get the hang of, but takes time to get really good at. The idea is to put your oar in the water and use the resistance of the blade in the water to push the boat forward. Simply put, pull the oar through the water and push it back through the air.

The key to making the skiff move well is timing. All the rowers should be in time with their blades entering the water and leaving the water at the same time. The stroke rower (the one immediately facing the cox) sets the pace and the timing and the other three should follow their lead. Getting the timing right takes practice, so don't worry about getting it right first time.

The experienced people in the crew will give you instruction on the specifics of rowing. If in doubt, ask and if you get it wrong don't worry, even the most experienced get it wrong (more often than they care to admit!).

At some point you will 'catch a crab'. This is when your oar is pushed through the water by the motion of the boat and the oar knocks you backwards. It happens to everyone at some point, and to recover, push down on the oar handle and the oar will come out of the water and will stop pushing you backwards. The rest of the crew will then help you up – and regale you with stories of when it happened to them and how much worse their experience was.

## What to Wear

Being in an open rowing boat leaves you exposed to the Scottish weather. You might get splashed by the oars or from spray if it's a bit choppy, but this adds to the experience!

In summer it can (very occasionally) get warm when you are rowing. You are very exposed to the sun as it bounces off the sea as well as coming from above. Loose clothing or specific sportswear works best and lots of sun cream!

In the winter (and sometimes in summer) you will need warm clothing. A thermal layer is good and an outer water and wind proof layer is a good idea on the worst days. Lots of layers are better than a few thick ones, so you can remove them as we go. There is space to store extra clothing in the boat.

Your hands will get the brunt of the action for a while at least until you get more used to it, so bring along a pair of sports gloves if you have any. Your feet, and possibly the bottom of your trousers, will get wet when launching the boat, so you need footwear that you don't mind getting wet. Wellies are OK, but can fill with water if you have to launch in surf. Old trainers and woollen socks are a good place to start. Club members use combinations of neoprene socks, wet suit shoes and wellies. Just ask for advice.

We have dark blue club T-shirts, hoodies and caps, and might soon offer waterproofs. There is an online shop to allow members to buy club merchandise direct. For now, if you want a T-shirt, hoodie or cap, email [eskmute@gmail.com](mailto:eskmute@gmail.com)



## Personal Items.

Although the Skiff is very stable even in rougher weather, you can get a little wet and you might slip or stumble on the beach while launching/landing, so we advise not taking phones, cameras or other items that might get damaged if submerged. You can buy waterproof cases for phones from sailing and outdoor shops if you don't want to leave your phone behind. Some of the regular rowers may have space in their own waterproof bag so please ask if you need keys kept safe.

## Safety

Rowing is a great way to have fun and keep fit and is very safe but as with all sports, there are some risks. The cox is responsible for the safety of the boat, so please do as they ask and pay attention to their commands.

Moderate physical exertion is required but this can be tailored to the crew at the time. Let the cox know if you are struggling to keep up, or if you need a break. On most rows, we will take breaks to enjoy the view – or to look for seals, or to change positions in the boat. Please let the cox know of any medical condition that may affect you while rowing.

Life jackets must be worn at all times when in the boat on the water. A member of the club will show you how to put these on and operate them. They should be adjusted to fit.

Launching and landing the boat is the trickiest parts of a row, especially if there is surf. Please pay particular attention to the cox's instruction during this phase. If you can't hear, shout up!

## When are the rowing sessions?

We normally row every Saturday and Sunday – and on some weekday evenings in the summer.

Rowing from Fisherrow is entirely dependent on the tides. We can row for approximately two hours either side of high tide, so if high tide is at midday, there will be rowing sessions between roughly 10am and 2pm.

There is also an occasional weekend when we can't row because of the tides – in winter, for example, when the high tides fall in the early morning and early evening when there is no light to row.

However, there are also times in the summer when we can row in the morning and the evening – if the high tides are roughly 7-8am and 7-8pm in June/July, for example.

### **How long are the sessions? Where do you row?**

The sessions vary in length, but are typically around 60-90 minutes. The intensity and length of the session will be tailored to the experience of the crew.

We often row towards Portobello, and sometimes land on the beach and have a coffee. On other occasions, we row across towards Prestonpans, and occasionally, in very high tides, we go a little way up the River Esk. In rougher seas, we are more likely to row out into the Forth rather than east or west, as the boat is designed to go into the waves and it is dangerous to have waves hitting the boat side on. The cox is responsible for the direction of the row based on the conditions and experience of the crew. There are many variables – wind, currents, tide, waves, etc – and the cox might sometimes need to change plans mid-row and change the direction of the boat. It is important to follow the cox's instructions carefully.

### **How do I book a row?**

3 free taster sessions are available to help you decide that coastal rowing is right for you. These sessions should be arranged with one of the club officials or via [Eskmuthe@gmail.com](mailto:Eskmuthe@gmail.com).

Rowing sessions are normally posted on a website called Big Tent ([www.bigtent.com](http://www.bigtent.com)) at least a week in advance. When you join the club, you will be asked to register as a user of Big Tent and then be given access to the Eskmuthe Rowing Club page. Rowing sessions are found in the Events section. Also keep an eye out for important club information in the Discussions tab.

Big Tent takes a bit of time to get used to but once you have got the knack, it's pretty straightforward. If you are struggling, contact one of the club officials at the bottom of this page or ask one of the regular rowers for tips.

### **Does the club take part in competitions and row in other places?**

Yes. Eskmuthe has taken part in many competitions (regattas) both locally (Port Seton, Portobello, Newhaven, South Queensferry, North Berwick, etc) and further afield (Glasgow, Newcastle, Northumberland, Aberdeenshire, etc). These regattas can involve anything from a series of sprint races lasting just a couple of minutes to longer races, right through to long-distance events like The Great Tyne Row, which lasted more than three hours

The club has also taken part in several 'rows in company' (social rows), where a number of boats row together and are not in competition. We have done this in Dunbar, Amble, at the Forth Bridges opening ceremony and up-river from Berwick-upon-Tweed to Paxton House.

Eskmuthe's own regatta in 2016 was the 'Rowing of the Marches,' a social row involving 13 boats from as far north as St Andrews and as far south as Amble. We marked the historic boundaries of the town, with the event followed by beach games, a barbecue and music.

All rowing events tend to have a strong social component with barbecues, picnics and good camaraderie between different rowing clubs. It is a very social and friendly sport. While Eskmuthe competes in regattas, we are much more focused on the whole experience of social rowing as a fun activity for people of all ages. We hold regular social events to raise money and to allow club members to get to know each other better.

New rowers should try to attend a regatta as soon as possible. Each one is different, but they are always good fun.

### **How much is it to join?**

Annual fees are £30 (£20 unwaged) plus £3 (£2 unwaged) per row. Fees go towards insurance, berthing fees, fuel and mainly towards equipment to repair and maintain the boats, the oars and the trailers – wood, paint, varnish, tools.

### **Contact**

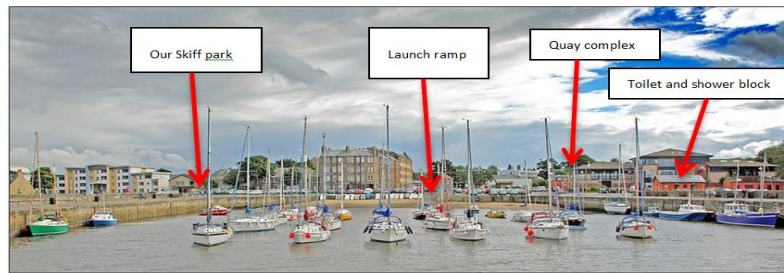
If you want to get in touch with us you can email [eskmuthe@gmail.com](mailto:eskmuthe@gmail.com) or find us on Facebook (Eskmuthe Rowing Club) or Twitter @eskmuthe. If you can't find the information you want, or you have an urgent message for a club member, text or call:

David Lee (Membership Secretary) 07802 206695

Gaynor Allen (Chair), 07980 964628

Georgina Brown (Club Captain), 07791 962924

## Facilities around the harbour



**Shower/Toilet block** – the small orange building nearest the harbour contain ladies and gents toilet facilities plus an outdoor shower (just in case).

**Quay complex** – nearest restaurant and coffee lounge.

**Lidl** – behind the tenement flats, on the main road.

**Petrol station** – There is a Shell petrol station also on the main road opposite Lidl.