

## Canal rules

This document sets out the policies and rules which we observe as users of the Bridgewater Canal. **Rules specifically to do with safety, such as the “rule of the road”, are not included here:** they are detailed in the club's Safety Briefing Card, available from club officials.

### ***Principles we adhere to as canal users***

- Other craft on the water have the same rights to be there as we have. We go out of our way to enable them to enjoy the canal and expect them to do the same for us.
- Almost everyone who uses the towpath or bridges is either neutral or friendly to us. We will avoid obstructing or inconveniencing them in their use of the canal and expect them to do the same for us.
- We will assist in identifying and taking action against the tiny few who behave irresponsibly or dangerously towards other users of the canal and the towpath.

### ***Sale Cruising Club moorings***

- Our boats produce little wash but a surprising amount of swell. We have a special dispensation to exceed the canal speed limit of 4MPH **except** in the two places where the Cruising Club have their boats moored: by Timperley bridge opposite the office block, and between Brooklands bridge and Sale. In these areas crews will drop to light pressure, and eights will drop to four oars, to reduce swell.
- People often sleep on these moored boats. On early morning outings do not stop for coaching alongside them, and keep use of loudspeaker systems to a minimum. This also applies to the Oldfield marina area.
- Avoid any stopping on the Brooklands-Sale stretch if possible.
- Cruisers will occasionally emerge from the turning point at Timperley bridge. They have no choice but to do so “blind” and you cannot assume that they will see you. All crews must keep a sharp lookout at that point.

### ***Other water craft when under way***

- Remember the “keep right” rule (the cox's right; bow side; starboard). Any other convention is just for rowers and does not apply to cruisers and narrow boats.
- The canal is shallower at the edges: barges and cruisers cannot get in as close as you might think.

*(Continued...)*

- When taking avoiding action in favour of an oncoming narrow boat or cruiser, make it obvious in good time that you're doing so, either by heading clearly towards the bank or by raising a hand (or both).
- Take great care not to stop in the middle of the canal within a narrow boat's large forward blind spot.
- A narrow boat may sound its horn as a helpful gesture, to make sure it has been seen. Do not interpret this as aggression.
- On the other hand if the crew of a narrow boat is abusive take its number and ask an officer of the club to report it to the Cruising Club officials; they will take the report seriously.

### ***Anglers***

- When passing anglers, keep to the middle of the canal.
- If possible, do not stop within 50m of an angler.

### ***Animals and birds***

In the past the club has attracted criticism when crews have been seen to row at speed through fleets of ducklings. Try to avoid this if possible.

### ***Passers-by on the towpath***

- When pulling in with oars on the towpath keep a sharp lookout for passers-by, either on foot or cycling, and make sure to call a warning about the blades clearly and in good time. If the towpath is wide enough, try to position the oars so that there is room to pass.
- When a coach on a bicycle pauses to talk to a crew, make sure that the towpath is not obstructed.

### ***In case of abuse or attack by vandals***

Our main response must be to stay out of trouble and to gather information for an incident report, which may be passed to the police.

- Do not engage in conversation or direct action. Say little or nothing and get away quickly.
- Remember as much detail as possible, including descriptions of the people if you can, and write a report in the club incident book. This will help to highlight any continuing problem to the police.