

ROWING TERMS

with thanks to Appledore Rowing Club.

Bow: The pointy bit at the front of the boat. Also the rower in the number 1 seat Bow Side:
The "Bow Side" is our term for the Port Side of the gig

Bung: As in "has anyone put the bung in?" when you first feel cold water swilling around your ankles



Catch: When the blade of your oar catches the water at the start of the stroke

Clash Oars: What happens when oars collide in a race and best avoided

Cox: The boss: he or she who will be obeyed at all times

Crab: You "Catch a Crab" when the blade digs too deep into the water, this can push you off your seat or break a pin.

"I remember back in 1991 when the newly built Gig *Corsair* had just arrived in the village and everyone was very keen to have a go. Having just had two babies I was keen to get fit again and thought it was the perfect sport as it was right on my doorstep. Living in Rose Hill and being just yards away from the Harbour it couldn't have been more convenient.

At the time, Mark Provis the local butcher, was the cox and he had a wry smile on his face when I turned up in my old fleece and thick tracksuit bottoms.

After a brief introduction about where to sit and how to hold my oar he steered the boat out through the breakwaters with one last warning about 'catching a crab.' I really didn't have a clue what he was talking about and genuinely believed that he meant the crabs that the fishermen brought in on their boats. Did they float on the surface and grab the oar as we rowed past? Did they crawl up the oar? Did they bite? Would I be able to take one proudly home after my first row for our supper?

As my mind wandered I was suddenly thrown violently off my seat by my oar and could only wrestle helplessly as it dragged me backwards into the boat and off my seat.

Mark roared with laughter and grabbed my oar and raised it high above his head. "Well done done Caroline you've just caught a crab!" he shouted and although my dreams of munching on a freshly caught crab were shattered I knew that what had bitten me was the love of rowing. I still row and love the sport and try to hide my smile when a new member catches their first crab!

Catching a crab in the gig is horrible and your natural instinct is to wrestle against the strength of the sea but you will never win! "

Caroline Cleave



Engine Room: The power positions in the gig at 3 & 4

Feathering: Turning the oars on the return stroke to reduce wind drag and helps you to stop catching a crab when in choppy water

Fender: The plastic cushion like thing that is hung off the bow to protect the gig from damage.

Full Oar: Pulling your weight in the gig and getting a bend in the blade

Gunwale: The strong top rail of the gig which is pronounced "Gunnel".

Knees: The L shaped timbers which secure the thwarts to the gig.

Leathers: These protect your oar and prevent chaffing in the pins. Where you row on the leathers alters your power through the water

Mark: The buoys which mark a regatta course where you are most likely to hear a call of "give water" swiftly followed by nautical equivalent of a car crash.

Numbers: "I am not a number" well you are in a gig. From 1 to 6 depending on where you sit

Pilot Seat: The seat at the very front of the gig also called the "seagull seat"

Pins: "Thole Pins" hold the oars on the gunwale. You pull against a hardwood pin and a softwood pin keeps the oar in place on the return stroke. Do not mix them up!!!!

Rudder: Steers the gig

Stern: The opposite of the pointy bit

Stretchers: What your feet push against

Stroke: The rower in 6 who sets the pace for the rest of the gig. The "Stroke Side" is our term for the Starboard side of the gig.

Thwart: The bit of the gig you sit on

Vaseline: Used to reduce friction on the leathers and butts

Yoke: Attached to the rudder, gives the Cox the leverage needed to turn the rudder by pulling on the "Yoke Lines"

