

# Shelburne Longboat Society

"Pulling Together"

## Rowing Commands

The two Shelburne longboats have been invited to participate in the 250th Anniversary of the Founding of the Royal Navy Dockyard in Halifax from 17-20 July 2009. These are the rowing commands that will be used at the event - they are also authentic to the period of the longboats. So, as soon as the weather warms up and the longboats are launched for the season, watch for the two rowing crews out on Shelburne Harbour practicing their rowing commands!

### General Commands

*Preparatory command* is "**Stand by to...**"

*Modifiers:*

**Easy:** very slowly

**Handsomely:** Do it slowly

**Cheerly:** mid-speed

**Smartly:** Do it with vigor

**Man the Boat!** The boat crew is called to and boards the boat. If one of the crew is appointed to handle mooring lines, that man stands by the mooring lines.

**Attention!** or **Eyes in the Boat!** Stop skylarking and pay attention to the captain.

**Thus!** or **Very Well Thus!** or **Steady!** Keep doing the current activity just the way it is being done.

**Belay That Command!** Cancel the last order. This can also be used more specifically, such as *Belay Casting Off!*

**Knock Off There!** Stop a task. Not urgent.

**That's Well!** Stop a task. Not urgent.

**Avast!** Urgent stop.

**Bear a Hand!** or **Light** (a task)! Help out.

**Ready!** A response from a crew that is ready to carry out a task. Most often used by a gun crew after preparing the gun for action.

**Disperse!** The crew is dismissed from duty.

*A note on **Larboard** and **Starboard**:* These phrases refer to the particular side of the boat, not of a person. The starboard side is the right side of the boat when in the boat and facing the bow. The larboard side is the left side of the boat when in the boat and facing the bow. The term **port** was also used in the 18th century to avoid the confusion of the similar sounds of larboard and starboard and became the authorized word.

### Rowing Commands

As may be given for the Pulling of a Jolly Boat, Pinnace, Longboat or Launch.

#### Stand By Your Oars

The blades of all oars lying in the boat should be laid forward, and the loom or gripping ends aft, on the thwarts on their respective sides of the boat where they will be shipped. On this command, the boat's crew readies the oars to

be lifted clear of the thwarts and placed in their locks, thole pins or rowing ports. It is customary to have the oars lain with forward oars inboard of the aftermost oars.

### Toss Oars

Usually preceded by the warning "Prepare To Toss Oars". Oars are grasped and swiftly brought to the vertical, blades trimmed fore and aft. The handle of each oar is to be between the feet of the oarsman on the floorboards, the outboard hand holding the loom at chin level, and the inboard hand holding at thigh level. This position may be assumed directly from taking up the oars where they lie on the thwarts, or firstly giving the command "Ship Your Oars"



### Let Fall

The oars are lowered together into their locks, thole pins or ports, and a correct grip for pulling taken. The oar blades must be kept clear of the water surface, and the blades rotated so that they are vertical and ready to pull.

### Prepare to Give Way

Each oarsman leans forward and extends his or her arms, holding the oar clear of the water and ready to row.

### Give Way Together

Leaning back, and using the body more than the arms, the oarsmen dip their blades and begin to pull in an easy rhythm, lifting the blade clear of the water when recovering, and following the speed and rhythm set by the **Stroke Oar**, the oarsman closest to the coxswain.

### Oars

Once finished with the current stroke, the oars are brought to the horizontal and held motionless clear of the water, ready to begin pulling again or follow another order.

### Hold Water

This order can be given for port or starboard oars only, or for all oars. On the command, the oars are lowered into the water and held there to check the boat's forward progress.

### Back Together

On this command, the oarsmen take their cue from the **Stroke Oar** and row the boat astern, by beginning a push at the chest and pushing the dipped oar away, then recovering. "Back Port" or "Back Starboard" may be given as needed.

### Rest On Your Oars

Oars are brought inboard across the boat until they rest on boat gunwales, and the boat's crew can rest leaning on the oars.

### Out Oars

The recovery order from the 'Rest On Your Oars' order. The oars are extended out, clear of the water, ready for pulling.

### Way Enough

The order indicating that pulling has ceased for the time being. Oars are to be held clear of the water, as per the order **Oars**, and a next order awaited. The sequence of laying the oars back in the boat on the conclusion of pulling is usually to be:

Way Enough

Prepare To Toss Oars/Toss Oars

Boat Your Oars

### Boat Your Oars

From the Toss Oars position, starting from the bow oar position and working aft, the oars are lowered and laid fore and aft on the thwarts, blades facing forward.

### Ship Your Oars

An order which may be given if there is no wish or ability to Toss Oars before pulling, or before ordering Toss Oars. On this order, the oars, which have been positioned along the gunwales, are lifted and placed in their oarlocks, thole

pins or rowing ports. The bowman places his or her oar in last after assisting other rowers.

**Easy All**

On this order all rowers pull less vigorously, so that the speed of the boat is reduced. If the boat is being turned, the orders 'Easy Port' or 'Easy Starboard' may be given. To return to full effort, the order given is 'Give Way Together'.

