



Information for New Members

H&DSC

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RYA Affiliated

Established 1927

The Commodore and committee of the Harwich and Dovercourt Sailing Club welcome you to the club and hope your experience both afloat and ashore is stress free. It is the mission of the club to see as many members afloat as possible within the constraints of available moorings and space in the yard.

What concerns new members most is the process of getting your boat afloat and recovering it at the end of the season. The club has an enviable record of hundreds of boat lifts done in a safe, efficient way which is a testament to the skill and care exercised by the crane drivers, tractor drivers and banksman* over the years. New members may have only had experienced yard professionals handling their boat, so may be unsure how we handle it within the club.

These notes will help you navigate the process of getting yourself and your boat ready for launching or recovery. It might seem a daunting task at first due to the fact that *many things have to be done at the same time and several people need to be involved*. You should read these notes in conjunction with the flow chart which sets out the process in a more visual form.

Please be mindful that the officers of the club are all volunteers who give up their time to help other members, asking only that **you have played your part in getting ready** and perhaps receive a few words of thanks for a job safely done. The ethos within the club is one of self-help. Please respect the fact that all our club facilities are maintained by members for the benefit of all.

Access to the quay is limited by the state of the tide, so your first port of call should be the **tide tables** when looking for a day to lift in or out. The weather needs to co-operate, so follow the forecast leading up to your lift.

For a bilge- keel, $\frac{3}{4}$ tide might be sufficient water to get alongside. A fin keeled boat will probably need more, but in either case it is better to plan for doing lifts **on a rising tide**. Mid-day tides offer the longest period of access and thus are popular. Weekends tend to be busier, so if you are able to choose a weekday there is a better chance of finding a slot. To avoid congestion and rushing the job the **Yard Master and the Crane Driver will work together** to organise the order of lifts depending on the depth of water needed and the size of the boat.

You must **book the day you hope to do the lift in the diary**, this is kept on clipboard in the workshop. There may be several boats hoping to go in on the same day, so the Yard Master will advise if this is possible or if another day needs to be chosen. If you are unable to personally log your boat onto the diary, a phone call to the Yard Masters dedicated phone will do the trick, but please note that only his mobile number should be used and within the hours of 09:00 – 17:00 except in an emergency. A personal approach is always better if you can manage it. You should have been given a sheet with the contact details of all the people you need to consult.

Book a crane and tractor driver. These can often be one and the same, but on busy days the crane driver is too occupied to do both.

Get some help to assist with lift. At least one other person is needed to handle ropes, move dinghies and their trailers and generally help. If that person is an experienced member who understands the role of a Banksman, that is all to the good. It is often the case that there is plenty of help on busy days, but you cannot rely on this, so organise your own.

When you think you have sorted out the booking process, the work of getting yourself and your boat ready needs some thought. Don't leave this until the day of the lift.

Your trailer needs to be **sitting on its wheels and 'ready to roll'**, all **clutter needs to be cleared** from your land berth so the tractor driver can hitch up easily and get your boat out safely. To this end the **tyres need to be pumped up** and ratchet straps may be advisable to stabilise the boat. Does the trailer need a drawbar or can it be close-coupled to the tractor? Do you have suitable bars to work the steering mechanism?



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The boat needs to have a **bow and stern lines** hanging over the gunnel so that helpers can reach them. **Put fenders out** on the side which will be next to the quay. In most cases this will be on the **port** side for both lines and fenders. If you need **spreaders** to stop the boat being pinched, the backstay[s] will have to be slackened away but this is best left until the boat is in position on the quay. Make sure they are free and you have any tools needed to hand.

If you are unsure if spreaders are needed, the Yard Master or a crane driver can advise. They will also advise on the location of the lifting strops and their length as not all boats need the same length strop fore and aft to ensure a level lift.

It is a wise owner who **tests the engine** whilst still ashore and makes a check on all through-hull openings. Make sure any **fuel tank vents and taps are open**, all **seacocks closed** except for the cooling water intake if you have an inboard engine.

The weather has an influence on boat handling on the quay. The crane driver will decide on the day if wind conditions are too bad and may postpone the launch or recovery. If there is much of a **NE wind**, conditions can be uncomfortable alongside the quay which will make a recovery more difficult. The best wind direction is S to SW.

The scope of these notes does not cover the actual lift, with all the watch points required for a safe operation. However, please note that the boat owner is responsible **for clearing up afterwards**. This is difficult as you need to be in two places at the same time! You will probably be putting the boat onto the mooring, but the strops need to be hosed down and put away, and your trailer returned to your slot. Please don't leave this to others if you can avoid it, though in practice everything seems to get done somehow.

* The job of the Banksman is to be eyes and ears of the crane driver on the ground during the lift. [The owner of the boat is often too pre-occupied with other things.] The banksman will communicate to the crane driver by hand signals to ensure the lift proceeds in a safe manner and that the boat clears the trailer and is properly restrained during the swing over the water. A close eye needs to be kept on the mast head and the extremities of the hull to ensure they do not hit the jib or hook.