

Captain's Report – The 2022-2023 Season

What a year it has been. It began with the sad passing of our Queen, for many of us the only monarch we have known. On the eve of her funeral, we held a vigil on the hard to show our respect.

Our Club Strategy in 2020 set a goal of growing numbers and we are certainly doing that as planned. Over the year, the club membership has fallen slightly, we currently sit at around 600 members of which just over 500 are in rowing categories. However, we targeted growth particularly in the junior and senior squads and have achieved this with the juniors at 123 members, set to rise to 140-150 from September, and the Seniors at around 50 with post Henley recruitment already looking positive.

One way which we continue to develop our membership is via our successful Adult and Junior Learn to Row programs. We taught 121 juniors to row last year and anticipate another 100 this. For the adults, 21 have already completed Wave 1, another 39 are signed up. From completed courses, there are 21 members in the pathway Improvers Squad and a further 24 members in the pathway Development Squad which targets moving to the Senior group.

Another factor has been our excellent performance coaching team, Jamie Axon and Lachlan Chapman (Chappy) joined Peter Chambers in September and all have been successful in recruiting quality athletes.

We had our biggest entry to Henley Royal Regatta this year with 12 club crews, a composite with Leander and Helen Glover wearing Cardinal in the Leander/Imperial College London W4-. 6 of our club crews and the composites went on to race and held their opponents to some close racing with 2 of the club crews being only just knocked out by the eventual winners. Helen was in the winning Town Challenge Cup crew.

The Junior Squad has had a fantastic year of achievements with wins across all year groups from J13 to J18 which include the Schools Head, Junior Sculling Regatta, Met and Henley Women's Regatta. We also entered a record 16 crews to the National Schools Regatta and came away at the top of the junior rowing league table. In January last year's J16 boys 4x were nominated Regional Crew of the Year by British Rowing.

The Senior Squads have also ratchetted up some good wins at the Pairs Head, Wallingford LDS, UTAH, Henley 4s and 8s and the Women's Development 4+

secured a win at Met. Ruth Naylor and Victoria Parsons picked up the Anna Roots Trophy for the fastest women's pair at the Pairs Head and the Senior Men improved their positioning in the Head of The River Race.

Another large sector of the club is the Masters, divided into the Young Vets, Masters Men and Masters Women. For those who don't know, the Young Vets is mainly made up of long term experienced rowers who have rowed competitively either at Marlow or other clubs. They have a higher entry criteria, a more intense training program and are capable of competing at championship level with the likelihood of placing well. This they have done, aside from the juniors they have bought in the highest number of squad wins which include a win at the Pairs Head for Tom McGibbon and Paul O'Boyle, an E4x win at Vets Head, 4 wins at British Masters and 1 at Henley Masters. The Women's and Men's Masters squads both secured medals at Marlow Town Regatta.

We had a record of eight 8+s at Womens Head of the River Race this year and saw credible racing with improved positioning from previous years across all squads.

Then we come to our amazing, and ever growing, Para Squad. Led by Bruce Lynn and with support from an increasing number of club members either as launch cover or support rowers. Back in September, Mari Durward-Akhurst represented Wales at the Home International Regatta and Georgia Walker, who is currently away at university, represented England. Not satisfied with that Mari smashed the 5k World Record for a PR1 rower on Concept2, this was actually the club's 6th para World Record. We also topped the leader board at the Junior Indoor Rowing Championships in March with Matilda, Kiki and Helen Cooper winning two golds and a bronze closely followed by Kiki and Matilda taking Gold and Silver at the Junior International Regatta. Ben and Sebastian joined City of Oxford RC in a row by at Henley Royal Regatta to mark 25 years of para rowing there. Away from the water, Helen has been off to the Houses of Parliament to present on the barriers facing hearing impaired students and deaf awareness.

We have a number of scullers who are not part of the main training squads which we can not forget. A few have made their mark through the year with Neil Galbraith completing the Head of the Charles, Christy Job travelling the length and breadth of the country knocking up some impressive results at long

distance events and, most notably, Jac Easton has had a fantastic season culminating in wins at British Masters and Henley Masters.

We continue to produce athletes who are invited to GB Trials and this year have seen Annabelle Ruinet selected to compete at the European U23 Championships winning a bronze, Helen Glover being selected, Mari attending para trails, and a number of our juniors working their way through the U19 trials, training and selection process. Annabelle also competed at International Wedau Regatta in Duisberg coming 1st in the A final and winning a bronze on Sunday. Her journey on the U23 pathway continues.

Sadly, due to the flooding we were unable to hold Marlow Spring Regatta. Not only the loss of a good day and one of the first opportunities to race but a big part of our annual fundraising effort. Luckily, Marlow Town Regatta went ahead, despite threats of thunder storms, and was a great success. David Jackson passed the baton to Graeme Gordon as Regatta Organisation Committee Chairman and a new committee was formed. Under the guidance of David and Peter Hunt, the new team have learnt the ropes and are well placed for years to come. Graeme and myself also joined the MTRF Committee which has proved very useful.

Away from the river, Graeme Gordon continued to demonstrate his madness by taking on a World Record attempt for One Million Metres on an ergo. He absolutely smashed this although a new record had only been set the week before. In the process, he raised £8600 plus gift aid towards Marlow Rowability the project to rebuild the sculling shed area. We had a great night at the Club Supper with an attendance of 150 members, Christmas Carols hosted by the Seniors and Julie Lyons providing a Christmas for those on their own.

Mike Parsons was crowned Regional Volunteer of the Year by British Rowing, much deserved recognition for all the time and effort he puts into running this club and coaching the younger juniors.

John Kirtland has headed up a team to work on a Statement of Social Impact for the club which we will hear more about in the new season. He has also been driving our corporate booking opportunities and creating the entries to our new look LinkedIn page which is attracting attention. Thank you John.

Hot off the press, we have just heard that we have hit the target on our first Crowdfunder and received a matching payment from Sport England: Active

Together fund. Thanks to Mike Parsons for his commitment to making this work, it was not easy.

Thanks to Max Hearnden and Eve Turley from the Seniors who have created a new design for the club blazer badge. It is based on a traditional design that can be machine stitched. The important factor is that this will speed up the process for blazer orders and reduce the cost of the badge.

To close, I'd like to say thank you for supporting me in my year as Captain. I have enjoyed it and would have found it a lot harder without the help and kindness of so many members who turned out to mend things, move things, mop up floods, drive trucks and all manner of other things. Personally, I think we've had a year we should be very proud of and know that there is more to come.

Jenny Maiden

Captain