

Annual Report on Rowing

GRC – March 2016 AGM.

It is my pleasure to report on another very successful year for rowing at Guildford.

The junior section deserves first mention. Hammersmith, Chiswick and the Ball Cup at Dorney Lake all recorded fine wins and we were 3rd. in the Victor Ludorum at Dorney which is a highly prestigious and well attended event.

Maidenhead also recorded wins, but what set stories and newspaper articles going was the hat trick of Victor Ludorum wins at Kingston, Molesey and Staines. Over successive weekends they romped it. They have also come through the heads race season with similar determination and enthusiasm, despite the fact that river conditions have led to a number of cancellations. Teddington was a great success, and their dedication to land training has put them 4th from 32 clubs represented at the Southern Indoor Rowing Championships. Many medals were brought back from that event and the golds included Flo's win as a coach. Following this at the National Junior Indoor Rowing Championships last Friday, Charlotte Chapman won the Individual Gold, beating 250 opponents, Lawrence, Adam, Peter and James won the team Gold, winning a 60 team competition with a relay 2k time of 6.29 would you believe....Katherine Stenning, who was there with the Guildford High School team took individual Silver and Charlotte Adcock took a well - deserved 4th place.

The club is heavily over - subscribed in this squad with a long and well managed waiting list. We are all proud of their achievements – and we're also very thankful for the wealth of support given to the group by parents, coaches, and their captain, Ian.

Adaptive rowing at Guildford continues to thrive. Rachel Morris has won silver in France, gold in the UK and is getting ready for Rio. What a surprise, she was also first back to club in the Big Row from Weybridge. Chris has led the squad through a fine year and we thank him for the development of the adaptive rowing and also Claire who continues to give us advice and support. Rob, for his vision and leadership in coaching and all at Stepping Stones along with the coaching team, who enrich our lives here. Pioneering a regatta at Heron Lake was exciting for us all – and we should remember that clubs such as Bedford and Marlow are helping the development too in this section of the sport. Gold medals at the Indoor Rowing Championships were also won in this year's event by this squad. Tye is the individual National Champion and the Relay Team of Chris, Hilary, Guy and Tye took the Team Gold.

It's been hugely rewarding to see the newspaper articles appear and the photos of our club members on British Rowing's website.

Women's rowing has been strong too. Crews are also competing and winning in this squad. Peter has coached the quad squad through some impressive successes. I continue to marvel at the dedicated rowers who follow the training plan with such precision – and it works.... Take Jackie and Annika for instance, they are highly competitive as a double. I remember them winning at Weybridge – not just as their event – but becoming the fastest

women's double over the day. Put them in singles at Wallingford over 5 kilometres and there is only 1 second difference between them. Crews are training for this season's racing at all levels in this squad and we wish them well. Lauren has led women's rowing through two years now and we all thank her for her work in managing the squad. They are looking forward to their three day training camp at Henley over Easter and the regatta season following on from this.

The men have had their successes too. Marlow Spring was a good day with successes in sweep and in sculling there. The Nationals at Nottingham gave Mark's crew another bronze – and it's worth remembering that the first three boats crossed the line with just over a second difference. Mark, Richard, Jeff and Rob – coxed by Charlotte flying Guildford's colours high at National level.

We have had success rowing as a masters eight at Gloucester and Ross – and on that weekend alone, Rob and Jeff came back with 5 wins...in the eight – the four – and in their double scull. In fact, that weekend was memorable for the club as all who went won in their events. Scott, Sam, Ben, Richard Cooper and Mark Rawlinson are also successful scullers.

Mark's captaincy over the years has been admirable. Alongside his organisation of men's rowing, he has coached and trained the junior section and helped the development programme for the club with tireless enthusiasm and consistent selfless effort.

Crews in the men's squad are also preparing for the regatta season, with the added bonus now of a spirited weights training programme and of course Mike's reliable coaching.

Overall then, the rowing continues to impress. Guildford is a respected club, our boats are noticed at events, competition is strong here and there is mutual support across the squads.

We continue to grow the equipment with boats and blades to perform at the highest standard we can. It isn't always easy to keep all squads' wishes for equipment balanced and within budget. However, when the three new single sculls are delivered from Swift next week and two more pairs of Concept sculls arrive, I think we will all, on reflection, feel that we have equipment enabling us to continue the success stories.

The committee this year, I feel, deserves praise for the way in which it has kept the pace up. Bill deserves our thanks too, he has put in a phenomenal amount of work to manage senior event entries and the regatta account, thank you Bill. Personally, I feel proud to have been a part of the organisation. This club has a big heart. The Big Row alone must have involved close to 100 people in some role. We raised a lot of money and had a lot of fun doing it. We've had parties, spring fling, pantomime and the regatta at Christmas, sculling ladder, beginner courses, fireworks, crew supper... and we're now a media phenomenon. Ian Pigram even gets recognised in supermarkets now he's been in the Surrey Advertiser so much.

I am standing down from the committee this year having enjoyed my five years as boatswain and captain. It is a privilege to serve on the committee and I urge those of you

considering it to give it a go – if not now, then in the future. It only remains for me to thank the members of this year's committee group for their support, along with all of the coaches and other helpers - but in particular the squad captains. Ian, Chris, Lauren and Mark all seem to take things in their stride. I feel that they all have put the club first and have seen compromise as a skill to develop rather than a weakness to overcome. I set one of my goals to further integrate and recognise the achievements of all four squads and their support has been invaluable to me in trying to achieve this. Thank you Ian, Chris, Lauren and Mark.

And - Happy Rowing to You All.