

Chairman's Newsletter

August 2011



To RRC, RCC and LUBC members, and parents of RRC Junior members,

Safety Focus – Launch Driving

RRC has several rules for launch driving and two I wish to highlight are:

- There must be a minimum of two people in a launch at all times, and
- One of the two must be authorised to drive.

You will only be authorised to drive if you have supplied your RYA Level 2 launch driving certificate to RRC's Safety Advisor (safety@runcornrowing.com) and your name appears on the list of authorised drivers posted on RRC's notice board. These rules are long-standing and were endorsed at the August committee meeting. We have these rules to minimise the risk of accidents with the launches and to ensure compliance with the terms of our insurance and RowSafe. Funding is available for those who would like to do the RYA Level 2 launch driving course in order to support RRC – please contact me for details. Crews or squads who require launch cover (be it for safety or coaching) must be willing to provide someone to drive and to accompany the driver (e.g. a spouse or partner), depending on your coaches requirements; you should not expect your coach to make these arrangements for you. Please also see below regarding support for Junior training sessions.

Support required for Junior Training Sessions (parents please note)

Our junior squad is ever growing and it has become necessary to ask for help during training sessions. Help from the parents of juniors is especially sought and welcomed. There are many ways you can help. For example: launch driving, accompanying a coach in a launch, provision of safety cover from the bank, or keeping an eye on the buildings and equipment while a session is in progress. Please get in touch with Val Edwards or myself with any offers of help.

Volunteers Required for RRC's Small Boats Head

Planning has already started for RRC's Small Boats Head which is on Saturday, 1st October. This will be a very popular event and we'll need all the help we can get. Help with the catering is particularly sought, both in preparing food and in serving on the day. Please, please get in touch with Paul Coady, our volunteer coordinator, or myself if you would like to offer your support.

Coaches required by LUBC

Part of our development plan is to strengthen the link with LUBC. Two of the main benefits we get from this are use of LUBC boats and increased, regular and long-term revenue. In return, LUBC would like to see an improvement in the support we provide to their rowers. They particularly would like help with running the taster sessions for new students, most of whom will not have rowed before (these sessions will probably be the afternoons of 28th September and 2nd October), their capsizing drills and developing the rowing skills of complete beginners, for which they are willing to pay £20 an hour. Even if you can only help occasionally, please would you get in touch with me as soon as you can for further information.

Security Reminder

Please remember that you must lock all boat house doors and lock away all equipment including launches before you go on the water; do not assume that someone else will do it. A basic rule is: if you've unlocked a door then you must relock it; if you've taken a launch out of the boathouse then you must return it. The only exception is if you have confirmed personally with someone that they have taken on your responsibility.

Announcement of new RRC Crest

A new crest based on Halton Borough Council's coat of arms was approved at the August committee meeting (see the top of page 1). Thanks to Stuart Beards for the idea and doing the groundwork. The crest will be used on our letter head, in promotional literature, and on our medals and kit. *Valudus ut perago* means "Strong to the finish".

Chairman's Interview with Rosa Atkinson

Rosa Atkinson has been the most successful junior rower RRC has ever had. She will shortly be leaving us to pursue her studies at university and so I thought it would be a good idea to have a chat with her to get an insight into why she took up rowing and why she has been so successful...

What got you started in rowing? I started rowing through Project Oarsome in Year 7 at Helsby High School. It began in January 2005 when I joined the lunch time ergo club led by Val Edwards. I thought that rowing might be for me because I had not really found any other sport that strongly appealed to me. In the first session, we had to row 2 minutes and go as far as we could. I got the best score out of all the girls and beat most of the boys. That got me hooked and after that I attended every ergo session, did the capsize drill, completed the Project Oarsome water sessions and finally joined RRC.



What is it that particularly appeals to you about rowing? I love rowing because it is accessible to almost anyone wishing to participate at any level. Although I am very fortunate in being successful at a very high level, I respect those who row for fitness, enjoyment and for its social side. I love the thrill of victory at major international competitions but I also love training at the club on my own and with others, from the J12's to the veteran women.

What kind of rowing do you prefer? I love rowing in all types of boats, both sculling and sweep. I mainly enjoy racing in quick eights and quads but I love training in my single too. I enjoy the progression you see day by day and week by week when spending a lot of time training with a particular crew. I can scull, row confidently on either side, and steer, and this flexibility proved essential in my selection for the World Junior Rowing Championships in 2010. Ergos are definitely not enjoyable but they serve a purpose and there is a feel good factor when you finish a piece and get a good score.

How do you switch off from rowing? Although the amount of time I spend training, travelling and racing limits the amount of time I have for a social life, I make time to escape from the pressures of high level sport. I particularly enjoy going out with friends to the cinema, for meals and to parties. I try to get a balance between spending time with school and rowing friends so that my life is not totally one sided.

What was the most rewarding moment for you? That was when we won gold in the JW8+ at the 2010 World Rowing Junior Championships in Račice, Czech Republic. All of our training came together and we rowed perfectly for that 06:24.97 minutes of racing. It was the culmination of 5½ years of training with the one goal of becoming a junior world champion always in my mind. I enjoyed every second of the race, and being the first GBR Junior Women to win gold made it very special.

Have you had to make any sacrifices? Whilst trialling or when training for an event you do have to sacrifice your social life to an extent, but I believe that it's worth it when you get the result you've been aiming for all season.

What was your most difficult race? The hardest race I have ever taken part in was the WJ 1x final at the GB Junior Small Boats Trails at Dorney Lake in 2010. I had progressed to the A final after a poor performance in the time trial, achieving 9th position, and then I had a much better but very tough race in the first round, winning over Alice Denyer (Marlow RC) and Lucy Burgess (RRC). I decided that my best chance of victory in the final would be to lead from the beginning. I managed to do this but paid for it later when Alice came back to just $\frac{1}{3}$ of a length down (1 second) by the finish. This was my best result in all the singles trials I have done.

What do you think is the most important reason for your success? Commitment! This covers a wide range of things from the time I devote to the sport to the financial help my family have given me. The support of RRC, especially my coach Val Edwards, has been essential. The commitment is not just in the final stages of tight races where you have to push your body to new levels of exertion, but it extends to the physical effort and mental focus put into each and every stroke during training sessions. Without my personal commitment and the commitment of my family, friends and coaches I most certainly would not have been as successful. For this I cannot thank everyone enough.

What are your ambitions? Results depending, I aim to study nutrition at either Kings College London or Reading University starting. I will continue rowing, possibly as a lightweight, and will trial again for the GB team. I hope to be selected to represent my country at U23 and senior levels, with the ultimate goal of an Olympic Gold. Beyond that, I would love to continue my involvement with rowing through coaching and sports nutrition.

Good luck Rosa. RRC will be following every step of your journey.

Chris Wheatley, Chairman, Runcorn Rowing Club (chair@runcornrowing.com).