

# Chairman's Newsletter

## October 2011



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

### *Safety Focus – Lifting*

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Boats are heavy and awkward to lift. We risk personal injury, possibly serious, if we do not follow a few simple rules about lifting. Here they are:

- Make sure someone is responsible for giving the instructions and everyone involved in lifting the boat knows who that is. It will normally be: the coxswain of a coxed boat or the bowman of a coxless boat. A supervising adult must be present when young juniors are involved.
- The person giving the instructions (or the supervising adult) must make sure that there are enough people lifting. It is frequently the case that a crew on its own is not enough! I have never known anyone to refuse a call for help – you must ask!!
- The person giving the instructions must be clear and heard – shout if needed (e.g. Hands on! Lift on three! To shoulders on three! etc.).
- With bigger boats, best practise is to have the lifters towards the ends (e.g. for an eight, four people towards one end and the other four towards the other end). This will avoid the problem of back strain (or dropping the boat) because the people in the middle are not pulling their weight and the load falls on the person at the end.
- Always stand with a straight back (never stoop or twist).
- Best practise is to carry boats at heads or shoulders so that the weight is carried vertically through your spine.
- Never have all crew members on one side of a boat except when lowering/lifting the boat to/from the water.
- Always bend from the knees and never the waist (i.e. use your leg muscles to lift and not your back muscles).

### *Recent Fundraising Efforts*

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Fundraising is much more important for the club than it used to be (see the article in this newsletter about our development plan) and the club has been very busy recently on the fundraising front. We took a chance and ran the car boot sale at Sutton Fields in September, at a time when many members were competing at Chester. Thankfully, Paul Coady managed to find enough volunteers to bring it off and nearly £700 was raised for the development fund despite inclement weather. This opens up the opportunity to be invited back to run this again. Many thanks to Paul and Liz for spearheading this and well done to all the volunteers who turned up on the day. We held our small boats head at the beginning of October. The weather was fabulous (peaking at 28 Celsius!) and perhaps was one reason why there was a constant stream of people in the catering area throughout most of the day. We had more entries than normal and this also contributed to fundraising efforts. It was a huge success; early figures indicate we raised over £1500, of which £850 came from the catering. I would like to thank all the volunteers who contributed to making this a success, with special thanks to Jean and the catering team.

## *Welfare*

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Nick Pettet, our Clubmark and Training officer, is arranging a Safeguarding and Protecting Children Workshop especially for Runcorn Rowing Club members. It is essential that all officials and coaches in our club have this qualification, which is renewable every three years. That said, I recommend this course to everyone in the club. Please contact Nick for details.

In recent years, British Rowing has updated practically all of its welfare policy and guidance documentation and much has changed. I have therefore formed a small working group to review our welfare policy and rules and how they are implemented in our club. I fully expect that changes will be needed. The working group members are Vivienne Lightfoot, Brenda Haymer, Vivien Shaw and myself. We aim to report our findings and recommendations to the committee in February 2012.

## *Progress with our development plan*

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### *What is Runcorn Rowing Club's 5-year development plan?*

The essence of the plan is to buy the land (known as Bridge Cottage) that sits between the Jim Newcomb boat shed on the west side of our Cholmondeley Road site and the clubhouse and old boat sheds on the east side, and with that extra space to make a modest development of the site that will enable the club to grow its membership by approximately 50% over 5 years. The growth in membership is essential in order to secure funding from British Rowing. We will be buying new boats, new equipment (particularly ergos) and we will be moving Cleaver Café and the meeting area out of the clubhouse to give us more training room. We will also be improving security and sanitation. The total cost of this over 5 years is estimated to be approximately £288,000.

### *Why is the development plan so important to the future of Runcorn Rowing Club?*

The club has grown substantially in recent years. This growth reflects a national growth in interest in sport and rowing in particular. We have reached a point where further significant growth has become impossible without redevelopment of the Cholmondeley road site. To do this, we need to buy Bridge Cottage. This will give us the space in order to completely redevelop the site. This will be a major project and it is not feasible in the current financial climate. However, we do expect to proceed with this at some time in the future. Once that is done we will be able to grow to a size that is sustainable (perhaps over 200 members) and meets the needs of the local community. In the mean time, we have a time-limited opportunity to buy Bridge Cottage, but we cannot justify that to British Rowing without some form of additional development. Hence, the development plan is a critical stepping-stone towards achieving our ultimate goal: the secure future of the club.

### *What is the current status of Runcorn Rowing Club's development plan?*

I and other officers of Runcorn Rowing Club have been working hard on the club's five year development plan since the beginning of 2011. After much consultation and reformulation, the development plan was recently finalised and has been approved by the club's committee. It will now go forward to British Rowing's facilities committee and we hope, as a result, to obtain a grant of £38,000 towards the cost of the plan. We also hope, in parallel, to obtain a grant of £10,000 from Canoe England.

### *What next?*

The opportunity to buy Bridge Cottage will lapse after December 2011 and we are still not sure that British Rowing will be able to authorise a grant in time for us to buy the land. In any case, we need to bridge the huge gap between the funding British Rowing and others can offer and the very significant cost of the development plan. We will be undertaking fundraising projects over the next

five years and seeking to grow revenue to cover most of the costs. However, we need money up front to buy the land. Therefore, over the next month, Simon Leach and Jim Newcomb will spearhead a letter campaign to raise loans and donations from members who have not yet contributed. Please contact them if you think you may be able to help. In addition, I have asked our Captain, Kevin, to proceed with contingency plans that will ensure that we will be able to buy the land before the end of the year. I wish to offer my sincere thanks to all of you who have contributed so far.

### *Junior Coaches Conference*

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Val Edwards, Linda Butterworth, Dave Street and I attended British Rowing's Junior Coaches conference over two days at the end of September. There were lectures on psychology, physiology, technology, welfare, the risks of taking supplements (it's not allowed by the way), technique ("how to do jump squats, facing the wrong way, holding a stick and without compressing your breathing tackle!"), the GB junior and U23 programme, high performance coaching, and club experiences with junior coaching. The highlight for me was Val's inspirational and insightful, invited lecture on the junior coaching at our club; it was a very proud moment.



### *Interview with George Perrin*

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#### *What is your vision for the men's squad?*

In order to have a sustainable future, we need a thriving senior squad in the age range 20 to 40, an age range where many clubs find it difficult to recruit. The vision, endorsed by the club, is to win fastest crew pennants at events such as the North of England Head (NEH) and to be well up the table at the Head Of the River Race (HORR). Specifically we aim to be the fastest crew at NEH by 2015! Effectively this means we aim to take over from Agecroft as being the "best" in the North West.

#### *What is your role?*

I have spent a considerable part of my energy convincing people that this vision is SMART! (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely), and so I have organised, rowed and coached and persuaded. Now I see myself primarily as coach. Stuart Beards will, henceforth, be organising the senior squad and we need someone to step forward to organise the masters.

#### *What successes have you had?*

The first year (2009/10) was phenomenal. In that year we were as good as most first eights in the North West and came 9th at the NEH and 99th at the HORR. The icing on the cake was that we qualified for Henley Royal Regatta (HRR) which is as good as it gets for many club rowers. Last year we came 5th at the NEH and maintained our position at the HORR, but we did not get to HRR. We must not forget the Masters rowers. They have been strong for many years and they continue to get gold's and silvers at the National Championships!!

*What numbers of athletes do we have and what is their make up?*

It was a mixed bag in the first year and one of the things I am most pleased with is that the 8 that competed at HRR had men drawn from all sectors – the age range was 17 to 57! That year we stood on the shoulders of giants!! Now, for the first time, we pretty much have the chance to have a “pure” senior squad of 20 to 40 year olds. There are about a dozen of these guys backed up by another dozen or so master rowers. Again it is pleasing to see the mix – juniors who have come through the ranks, ex LUBC rowers and those who are joining because of our growing reputation.

*What are your objectives for 2011/12?*

Hmm, good one. If we all pull together 50th at the HRR is not out of sight at all. What an achievement that would be! Then there is HRR – fours and eight are the choice, together with the National championships – certainly a final and perhaps we can dream a medal!

*What do you expect from your athletes?*

I hope that they support the vision and are inclusive in their approach. Yes we all have ambitions but by being inclusive, encouraging each other and all working for the same goal, we can achieve so much and get so much more out of the next 8 months or so than we can by any other means.

*What are the difficulties and what help do you need?*

Good question. It's a little like the NHS I guess – demand will always exceed the resources available. We need help in all areas but particularly support for what we are doing and understanding when more important things (family & work) take precedence. Thank you to those who have been supportive and helped. There are many.

### ***Interview with Brian Bailey***

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*What is your vision for the women's sweep squad?*

I would like to see us regularly boating senior and masters women 8s which compete effectively in the region and nationally. The Open and Masters National Championships and Henley Masters are possibilities, hopefully winning medals, but it is difficult to have long-term goals until a stable, core membership has been established.

*What is your role?*

I am the prime mover and coach.

*What successes have you had?*

We began in 2009/10 and had little success in our first year. Since then we have had a novice 4+ win and Sue Sljivic has won medals at the British and England indoor championships.

*What are the difficulties and what help do you need?*

Our main difficulties are work and family commitments which affect attendance at training sessions, and competition for resources, particularly the training facilities in the clubhouse. We can always use extra help, particularly with launch driving, coxswains and administration.

*What numbers of athletes do we have and what is their make up?*

We have 11 masters and 1 senior and that enables us, potentially, to boat a masters 4+, a masters novice 4+ and a masters 8. We really need to find more senior women and I am hopeful that we'll find them from the Yearning To Row project (more about that in a future newsletter).

*What do you expect from your athletes?*

In a nutshell: commitment and focus!!

*What are your objectives for 2011/12?*

I have many ambitions for the squad this year: to engender objective recording of training data; to perform well in local heads; to have immaculate sweep technique consistently through the squad; to regularly boat pairs, fours and eights; to work on ergo times and core stability; to achieve high places in the Concept2 challenge and the indoor championships (we are already off to a good start) and to put two fours and an eight into the National Masters Championships next year and to win medals.

### **Winter Timetables**

We will shortly be moving to winter timetables. The timetables below are provisional. Please consult coaches for details. Note the time windows for boating and returning – please keep to them to avoid interference with other squads.

<b>Squad</b>	<b>Boating</b>	<b>Returning</b>
<b>Saturday</b>		
Seniors/Masters/LUBC 1st 8s	7:30-8:00	9:15-9:45
Juniors/adults (1st session)	8:00-8:30	9:45-10:15
Juniors/adults (2nd session)	10:30-11:00	12:15-12:45
LUBC	From 13:00	Until dusk.
<b>Sunday</b>		
Seniors/Masters/LUBC 1 <sup>st</sup> 8s	7:30-8:00	9:15-9:45
Juniors (1 <sup>st</sup> session)	8:00-8:30	9:45-10:15
Adults (1 <sup>st</sup> session)	8:30-9:00	10:15-10:45
Juniors/adults (2 <sup>nd</sup> session)	10:30-11:00	12:15-12:45
LUBC	From 13:00	Until dusk.
<b>Wednesday</b>		
LUBC	From 13:00	Until dusk.

### **Water sessions (RRC & LUBC)**

<b>Squad</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Coach</b>
<b>Monday</b>				
All*	18:30-20:00	Circuits	Helsby High	Val Edwards
<b>Tuesday</b>				
Juniors	17:00-20:00	Ergos etc	Clubhouse	Val Edwards
<b>Wednesday</b>				
Adults (various squads)**	17:00-21:00	Ergos etc	Clubhouse	Brian Bailey/Jane Parkinson
<b>Thursday</b>				
Juniors	17:00-20:00	Ergos etc	Clubhouse	Val Edwards
Adults***	19:00-20:00	Gym work	The Heath	Jane Parkinson/Darren Scott

\*From 31<sup>st</sup> October, \*\*Details not yet finalised, \*\*\*From 29<sup>th</sup> September.

### **Land sessions (RRC only)**

I had hoped to have room for a short article about rules for composite crews and progress with developing our policy and rules for crew selection – next time. Many thanks for the feedback I have received. Please keep it coming!

Chris Wheatley, Chairman, Runcorn Rowing Club ([chair@runcornrowing.com](mailto:chair@runcornrowing.com)).