



Glasgow Rowing Club – who finished top Scottish crew in 36<sup>th</sup> position in the Tideway Eights Head of the River in March 2009

## **Introduction**

Well – thanks to an encouraging number of submissions – welcome to the second issue of the Scottish Rowing Newsletter. Much has happened since the first issue and a worthwhile number of submissions from a wide variety of sources should provide interesting reading. Many thanks to our contributors whose epistles are contained here.

Contents of this issue are as follows:-

1. Editorial
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## Editorial

It's been a busy time for us all both on and off the water since early February as will be noted from the various reports included in Issue No 2 of the Newsletter. A number of significant highlights are referred to including outstanding performances by Scottish crews at both the womens and mens Tideway Heads. Also worthy of note after a well deserved sabbatical is the welcome return to the water of Katherine Grainger who earlier this month dominated the womens sculls event for the 8<sup>th</sup> time at the GB Trials in Hazewinkel.

At a recent meeting of Scottish Rowing Umpires, a plea for new recruits to the umpires' ranks was made. It would be most welcome to hear from anyone who is interested in becoming a trainee umpire, including those who are rowing supporters, such as coaches, parents and 'retired' competitors. If you would like to find out more, contact Sandy Walker or Peter Morrison (your club secretary will have their contact details).

## Boat Transporting

Advice from the North East Rowing News Group:

Recently a car was stopped leaving York City RC after the Head with a double on its roof rack. The overhang of the boat was within the allowed limits both front and rear but the boat was not adequately visible from the sides. The police felt that a pedestrian could have walked into the boat while crossing the road behind, or in front of, the car. The driver was fined £60 on the spot and given 3 points on his licence.

Until we get better advice, it is advised that anyone car topping a boat or with dark coloured boats overhanging the back of a trailer should ensure that there is plenty of red and white tape along the overhanging part of the boat and that there is a red and white triangle (as on trailer boards)

on the front and back of the boat. If there is a significant overhang at the front you should carry a co-driver to allow you to pull out of blind junctions. It is also good practice to carry a copy of the [ARA Trailer Driver's Handbook](#) to show to any policeman who stops you, having made sure before you set off that your load complies with the rules.

**Universities Winter League:** The position in the winter league after all events shows Dundee emerging as winners for the very first time. They have not only won for the first time but also with a record score, with Edinburgh also beating the previous record. Dundee will be presented with the Thornton Trophy at the Universities AGM held over the Universities Championship weekend

1. Dundee University	1068	5. Heriot-Watt University	333
2. Edinburgh University	800	6. Strathclyde University	301
3. Glasgow University	677	7. Robert Gordon University	114
4. Aberdeen University	420		

## Executive Report

### Scottish Rowing Half Yearly Meeting

At the Half-Yearly Meeting on Sunday 23rd March, final approval for converting the Scottish Amateur Rowing Association from an unincorporated association to a registered company limited by guarantee, operating under the new name of Scottish Rowing. This move gives important legal protection to all involved in our sport by limiting, in particular, financial liability. This means a couple of changes. First of all, instead of having a Constitution we now have a [Memorandum and Articles of Association](#) (known as M & A's) and an [Operating Practices document](#). The M & A's deal with how Scottish Rowing is run as a company. The Operating Practices deal with how rowing in Scotland is run. Most of the provisions of the old Constitution

have been incorporated into these documents and some things which many of us thought were in the Constitution but actually weren't have been brought in too. The second change is that the 'Executive' is now the 'Board'.

## Governance – from Tom Hewitt

### Child Protection

Along with Board membership to deal with Governance goes the role of Child Protection Officer. So, I'm it. If you have any issues relating to child protection matters please don't hesitate to contact me on

[tom.hewitt@physics.org](mailto:tom.hewitt@physics.org) or 01698 458480  
or 07973 498066

Three items of news.

1. The business of my taking over requesting SCRO Disclosure checks for Scottish Rowing is now complete. Also, **Alan Lawrie** of ASRA has been set up as a signatory. Perhaps the north-east's rowers will find dealing with Alan less of a geographical challenge than it is with me.
2. When child protection legislation began to affect us all significantly Peter Morrison took on the role of SARA Child Protection Officer. In order to give clubs breathing space in which to get themselves sorted out, Peter offered to process Disclosure Checks for junior coaches on behalf of the clubs. That was a wee while ago. I will, obviously, continue to do this for clubs who need me to do it – in particular for our University clubs which do not have the same continuity of management as the others – but it would be much better all round if our clubs got themselves registered with CRBS in order to request their Disclosure Checks directly. This would leave

me free to deal with coaches performing a direct Scottish Rowing role and the University clubs.

So, how is this done? I would suggest first off a visit to the CRBS web site [www.crbs.org.uk](http://www.crbs.org.uk). If you click on the 'Registration' tab you will find loads of info on what you need to do. The first step is to download the Enrolment Form, print it, complete it and send it off to CRBS they will then send you a registration pack with lots more info. **Tom Hewitt** you are online you may care to download templates for producing 3 key policies

- Child Protection,
- Disclosure Handling, etc,
- Recruitment of ex-offenders.

You can get to work on tailoring these to your own club's situation and needs while you wait for the CRBS material to arrive – just don't mess with bits that are (obviously) legal requirements!

Being voluntary bodies, registering with CRBS is FREE and Disclosure Checks are FREE too when requested via CRBS.

I have always found CRBS staff very knowledgeable and very helpful. If you have any queries just phone CRBS on **01786 849777**

Please, if you have any concerns at all about the welfare of under-18s in your club, speak to your Child Protection Officer. If you are sufficiently concerned to think action needs to be taken, put the matter in writing, signed and dated – and keep a copy. Child protection is an obligation for each and every one of us. Issues cannot be ignored in the hope that someone else will deal with it. We've all seen in the media recently the tragedies that can result when people do that.

If you have any questions on these or other child protection matters please contact me.

PS I could do with a few more returns from the Child Protection Questionnaire sent out to clubs in January. So far I have a grand total of 18, rather less than I expected.

## Equity

Part of the role of the Board member (Governance) is Equity in Scottish Rowing. If you have any issues relating to equity matters please don't hesitate to contact me on

[tom.hewitt@physics.org](mailto:tom.hewitt@physics.org) or 01698 458480  
or 07973 498066

Equity in sport is about making things fair. To quote our Equity Policy, "... equality of opportunity of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them. It involves changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure that it becomes equally accessible to all members of society."

Our President, Mike Morrice says, " Scottish Rowing is committed to ensuring that equity is incorporated across all aspects of its operations. In doing so we must accept that this is about fairness in sport and giving equal access to everyone in society and also giving them the right to enjoy their sport in an environment free from threat of intimidation, harassment and abuse. It is also important for everyone in Scottish Rowing to be responsible for opposing discriminatory behaviour and promoting equality of opportunity. If all the clubs, athletes and volunteers commit to this policy then it can only strengthen Scottish Rowing and help grow the sport."

Before we can move forward, we need to know where we are. After all, the way we are facing might not necessarily be the best direction to move off in initially. So your Board has begun the process of looking for information both from individuals (entirely optional) and from clubs (not at all optional). The fuller the response we have the better

informed we will be, so we are hoping for the best response possible. Equity Audit forms have already gone out to key individuals in Scottish Rowing's management and to our Umpires and returns have begun to come in. The next group we have to audit are our clubs' coaches, and finally it will be the turn of the team members for HIR.

Some folks may feel a bit uncomfortable with answering some of these questions. Don't worry. In each section of the audit there is a tick-box for those who do not wish to respond. Indeed for those who feel uncomfortable about the whole thing there is a tick-box right at the start for those who don't want to answer any of the questions. Even if you feel that way we still would like a response saying so – all returns add to the validity of the audit.

## Club News

### Stirling Rowing Club – Ergo Marathon, Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2009 – from Jean Ann McKinnell

In an uncharacteristic moment of weakness, to demonstrate their fitness and skills, 10 teams from Stirling Rowing Club and Stirling University Rowing Club agreed to completed 420 kilometres, the equivalent of 10 Marathons on the dreaded Ergo. Each team had 4 or 5 members with ages ranging from 13 to 60+.

It was **not** a race. The teams were of mixed abilities and age groups and it was expected to take about 4hours. Club captain, Jean Ann McKinnell, explained the rules, *have fun, be safe and go steady*. The machines were set to record the kilometres completed, the scorers were on hand to record each individuals contribution, the music was pumping out great tunes, the food and drink were on hand to keep the fuel levels up and the athletes were primed and ready.

The pace at the start was steady as each team eased into a gruelling and punishing rhythm. The work effort was exceptional with each team

choosing a strategy to suit the individuals in their team. Some chose to do their full contribution in one session completing 10+kms in one go, others chose to split their sessions doing half followed by a break for a drink and a stretch of the legs.

Regardless of the strategy the teams were evenly matched and progress was rapid with the 4 hour plan looking highly pessimistic. As the teams approached the final 8 km it was clear that 4 teams were ahead and rowing at a similar level of effort. There was a noticeable lifting of pace and huddled discussions to re-access strategy. With a 3 hour target achievable everyone dug deep and the steady rhythm built to a crescendo of whirring fans, sliding seats, heavy breathing and cheering. No longer was it an exercise in endurance and style it was a flat out race with the power horses (they know who they are) pulling out the final 5 km to rival the Oxford team. The 'winning' team completed the 'not race' in 2hrs and 52 minutes with the remaining teams following in rapid succession.

All in all 45 athletes had a brilliant day, raised £1000+ for club funds and demonstrated to themselves, friends and family that Stirling Rowing is going from strength to strength.

Picture below/alongside shows the action in Stirling Rowing Club that day with a number of well known faces involved including SARA Past President Mary Massaro



## Regattas

### **Inverness race the Head of the River Lagan in Belfast**

On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February, Inverness Rowing Club travelled to Northern Ireland to compete in the Head of the Lagan race organised by Belfast Rowing Club. In the first division, the men's veteran coxless quad of John Sharkey (stroke), Moritz Bauer, Jonny Harvey and Dave Rothwell (bow) steered a good line on the twisty Lagan river. Their time of 13:27 over the 2,700m course was the fastest time for a senior quad.

The men were joined by Hazel Smith, Caroline Keith and Katie Van Exan in a mixed veteran eight in the second division and remained unbeaten, recording the fastest time for a mixed eight of 19:13 over the longer 4,200m course. As a result of these strong performances, Inverness Rowing Club were awarded the Visitors' Pennant by the race organisers.

## Strathclyde University Small Boats Head

The Strathclyde University Small Boats Head was also held on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February on the 4000m course on the River Clyde in calm bright conditions with a light stream running.

Fastest time of the day was recorded in Division 2 by Clydesdale ARC (Gourlay) in Open Junior 18 double sculls with a winning time of 14 minutes 30 seconds, whilst in Division 1 the Clydesdale ARC crew (Philips) in Mens Veteran A coxless pairs was fastest crew in that division with a winning time of 14 minutes 34 seconds.

Clydesdale ARC also had a clean sweep in single sculls with Jack Leask recording a time of 15 minutes 23 seconds to win the Open Junior 18 event in Division 1 whilst Sam Fowler won the Womens Open event in 16 minutes 52 seconds. Andrew McConnell (pictured below) won the Mens Open event in Division 2 in a time of 15 minutes 29 seconds. Strathclyde Park RC womens double sculls crews had highly competitive finishes with the Young R2 crew and the Colley Junior 18 sculls crew dead heating in 15 minutes 56 seconds in Division 1 win their respective events and the McNee Junior 16 crew recording a winning time of 16 minutes 47 seconds also in Division 1



## Macrae & Dick Eights and Small Boats Head & Scottish Rowing Long Distance Time Trial

A good entry of over 60 crews was received for the Macrae & Dick Eights and Small Boats Heads which took place in variable weather conditions on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February on the superb rowing waters of the Caledonian Canal in Inverness. Much excellent racing was witnessed over the 4.5 kilometre course in an exciting day of competition which included crews from all over Scotland and an enthusiastic contingent of three veteran eights crews from two separate Belfast clubs.

The Mens Open Eights was won by a Glasgow RC/Castle Semple RC crew in an excellent time of 15 minutes 11.0 seconds, just 6 seconds ahead of a crew from Aberdeen BC whilst the fastest time in Womens Open Eights was recorded by Strathclyde Park RC in 18 minutes 03.6 seconds. Dundee University BC won both the Mens R2 and Mens Novice Eights whilst Aberdeen University BC won both the Mens and Womens R1 Eights. Aberdeen BC won the Womens R2 Eights whilst Belfast RC won a closely contested Mens Veteran Eights event ahead of crews from Belfast BC and Inverness RC. Fastest Womens Veteran Eight was the crew from Inverness RC.

Earlier in the day the Scottish Rowing Long Distance Time Trial took place over the longer 5 kilometre course on the Caledonian Canal. Fastest man down the course was single sculler Andrew McConnell from Clydesdale ARC in a time of 19 minutes 29.8 seconds whilst his clubmate Kelly Limond recorded the fastest womens time of 21 minutes 9.2 seconds in the lightweight single sculls category. In the womens junior events, Strathclyde Park RC (Arnold) was the fastest double sculls crew in 21 minutes 59.8 seconds whilst Nithsdale RC (Findlay) emerged as the fastest single sculler with a time of 22 minutes 55.5 seconds

## Aberdeen Universities Boat Races

The Aberdeen Universities Boat Races were held on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February on the River Dee in bright, breezy conditions with a moderate stream running.

For only the second time in the events 13 year history, Robert Gordons University celebrated a fine win by one length over Aberdeen University in 8 minutes 3 seconds, just two seconds outside the record time set two years ago. Aberdeen University won both the Alumni race in a new record time of 8 minutes 13 seconds and the shorter second crews race in 2 minutes 20 seconds.



Robert Gordons University leading Aberdeen University as crews approach the finishing line

## Clydesdale Eights & Fours Head

Also on the 27<sup>th</sup> February on the River Clyde at Glasgow Green, in Division 1 of the Clydesdale Eights and Fours Head, the composite Glasgow RC/ Castle Semples RC/George Watsons College RC crew convincingly won the mens open eights event in 12 minute 26 seconds whilst Edinburgh University BC won both the mens novice eights in 13 minutes 49 seconds and the womens novice coxed fours in 18 minutes 59 seconds. The mens R2 coxed fours was won by Clydesdale ARC in 14 minutes 24 seconds.

In Division 2, Glasgow University BC were victors in mens R2 eights in 13 minutes 46 seconds whilst the composite Clyde RC/Glasgow University BC/Glasgow RC/Edinburgh University BC crew won womens open eights in 14 minutes 11 seconds. Clydesdale ARC were the fastest mens open coxed fours crew in 14 minutes 27 seconds, whilst Edinburgh University BC won the mens novice coxed fours in 15 minutes 24 seconds. Edinburgh University BC also won the womens novice eights in 16 minutes 48 seconds whilst Nithsdale ARC won the womens R2 coxed fours in 17 minutes 15 seconds.

## Women's Eights Head of the River Race

On Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March, seven crews from Scotland took part in the Women's Eights Head of the River Race on the Tideway in London. Raced on the River Thames from Mortlake to Putney in warm conditions with a slight wind which stiffened during the race, this was the largest field for the women's head ever with 291 crews racing over the 4 ¼ mile course.

The fastest Scottish crew which was the composite Clyde RC/Edinburgh University BC/Glasgow RC/Glasgow University BC crew, who covered the course in 19 minutes 28.24 seconds and finished in an outstanding

6th place from a start position of 200. The highest placed single club crew was Clydesdale ARC who finished in 33rd place and 5th of the Senior 3 crews. Almost holding their start position of 65, Edinburgh University BC (A) finished 68th, and won the Senior 4 pennant.

## **Women's Eights Head of the River Race – from Imogen Walsh: Clyde ARC**

For many small boat rowers, the winter season can be rather long and lonely, and so throwing a crew together for Tideway is a good way to break up the long cold outings on swirly water. Variations of the crew that finally went to the Women's Eights Head of the River raced with success at the GUBC Western Head and Clydesdale Head. The eventual line-up of Fran Jacob (GRC), Amanda Larcombe (Clyde and GUBC member), Lorna Logan, Caitie Gorton-Phillips, Gillian Toal, and Imogen Walsh (all Clyde), Kerra Templeton (cox, GUBC), and Jen Reid and Polly Swann (EUBC and regular customers of the Clyde tuck shop!) went off to London with hopes and expectations ranging from top-10 to top-30.

Starting 200<sup>th</sup> meant a lengthy wait at the start line, although we were fortunate to have fairly good weather. The race, we felt, started reasonably well, but didn't quite come together as we had hoped. I remember thinking on the approach to Hammersmith that I had never felt this exhausted just half way through a head race! After the race, a general feeling of "could have done better, but nevermind" prevailed, despite George's (Warnock, who had coached the eight) comments of "well I don't care what you all say, I think you looked bl\*\*dy good!"!! So we all made our own ways off after the race, to visit friends or to make our way back to Glasgow. Sat in the airport, with Amanda and Fran we got the result, to our disbelief, that we had come 6<sup>th</sup> overall! Needless to say, we were pretty pleased with the result, which, I am told, is the highest placing an all Scottish crew has ever come, and for

all but Jen Reid, the highest position any of the crew had come. I do wonder though if those people around us in the airport were wondering why we were so excited about coming 6<sup>th</sup>?!

## **Aberdeen Senior Eights and Junior Fours Head**

This rescheduled head was held on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March on the upstream course on the River Dee in bright sunny conditions into a strong gusty headwind. Fastest time of the day was recorded in Division 1 by Aberdeen BC (Crosland) in Mens Open 8s, whilst in Division 2 Dundee University BC Mens R2 8 was the fastest crew. Aberdeen Schools RA (Steel) won the Womens R2 8s. In the novice eights events, Dundee University BC won the men's event and Aberdeen BC the women' event. As a result of these wins in Aberdeen, it was confirmed that Dundee University Boat Club were classified as winners of the Winter Universities League for the very first time.

## **BUSY WEEKEND ON THE WATER**

The Tideway Eights Head of the River Race took place on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March on the River Thames from Mortlake to Putney in fine, sunny conditions. An international crew representing Tideway Scullers wrested the first place away from last years winners Leander Club by a margin of 4 seconds whilst the top finishing Scottish crew from Glasgow RC completed the 4 ¼ mile course in fine style to finish in 36<sup>th</sup> place in an excellent time of 18 minutes 34.87 seconds. Edinburgh University BC recorded a time of 19 minutes 8.66 seconds to finish in 101<sup>st</sup> place followed by Glasgow University BC in 192<sup>nd</sup> place in a time of 19 minutes 38.98 seconds. Other Scottish crews to break the 20 minute mark were Aberdeen University BC in 19 minutes 45.85 seconds, Clydesdale ARC in 19 minutes 46.51 seconds, Strathclyde University BC in 19 minutes 46 98 seconds and Dundee University BC in 19 minutes 59.37 seconds.



Edinburgh University power on through Hammersmith Bridge



Scottish supporters on Hammersmith Bridge

Other Scots involved included two members of the Leander Club whose crews finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> place recording times of 17 minutes 45.35 seconds and 18 minutes 13.75 seconds respectively.

The following day saw another record entry of crews for the Vesta Veterans Head which took place in sunny conditions over the same stretch of water. A composite mixed veteran D/E crew containing lady members from the Inverness, Strathclyde Park and Sons of Thames clubs raced with the men of the Mladost Boat Club from Croatia producing an excellent result to win this event category in a time of 20 minutes 52.45 seconds and in doing so finished in 29<sup>th</sup> place overall in the entry of 182 crews. A mixed veteran D/E and a mens veteran D crew from Aberdeen Boat Club also took part in this event finishing in 23 minutes 20.24 seconds and 23 minutes 42.30 seconds respectively.

Nearer to home, the Scottish Schools Head took place on Saturday on the Dullater stretch of the Forth and Clyde Canal where crews from Aberdeen Schools, Castle Semple, George Heriots, George Watsons, Clydesdale and St Andrew clubs challenged for the various race categories in coxed fours and coxed quads. Aberdeen Schools Rowing Association (comprising pupils from Meldrum Academy, Harlaw Academy, Aberdeen Grammar School and Robert Gordon's College) were winners of the Peter Grieve Memorial Team Trophy as a result of their wins in four event categories. Clydesdale ARC (comprising pupils from St Thomas Aquinas, St. Aloysius College, Lourdes Secondary School, Rosshall Academy and Merrylee Primary School) won the Open Junior under 18 coxed fours, whilst George Watsons College RC won Open Junior under 15 coxed fours and George Heriots School RC won the Womens Junior under 15 coxed fours,

## The Barony Cup

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual staging of the Barony Cup races between current and past student members of Strathclyde University Boat Club took place on the River Clyde on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April.

Four separate eights races were held over a 500 metre course finishing close to the Strathclyde University boathouse. In the first race, the mens university second crew overcame the graduate crew by just over one length in the tricky cross-wind conditions. That proved to be the only win for the students as in the mens first crew race, an extremely competent graduate crew, which included a number of international oarsmen, narrowly won a most exciting race by the closest margin of 3 feet.

Both the womens and mixed races resulted in wins for the graduate crews which tipped the overall balance of wins in favour of the graduate crews to allow George Parsonage to present the Barony Cup to the winning captain Jonny Graham (pictured below).



## Aberdeen Schools Rowing Association in Gent – from Alan Lawrie: ASRA

For a number of years, a selection of Aberdeen Schools Rowing Association (ASRA) members have been attending the Gent Spring International Regatta. However, two years ago, it was decided to make this event part of the club's regular calendar, Easter school holidays permitting, combining it with a week long training camp beforehand.

2009's ASRA Easter training camp in Gent proved, as in previous years, to be of great value in the development of the crews. We were also blessed with much finer weather than experienced last year, which meant more rowing and less chatting time. A mixed blessing for our rowers.

Reflecting the continued growth of the club, primarily as a result of the ongoing dry start / wet start programme, ASRA took their largest ever representation to Gent. The compliment of 32 competitors aged J13 through J17 built on the club's success at the event in 2007, when ASRA won 2 silvers and 2 bronzes, by this time winning 2 golds, 3 silvers and 2 bronzes, with a host of other impressive performances. What was particularly pleasing to the coaches however was, as usual, the spirit exhibited by the children, not only in the effort they put into their own performances, but also in the support they gave each other and the concern for each other's welfare. This was also reflected in other attendees' comments on our children's enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment of the whole experience.

As usual, the week started off with intensive training, comprising two or three training sessions per day. With eight coaches in attendance we were able to give a level of focus to each crew not possible at home on the Dee in Aberdeen. The benefit of this was evident in the rapid

progress made by all the rowers. The intensity of the rowing soon became evident, however, in the number of blisters appearing, but undaunted, and with the aid of copious amounts of tape, everyone kept coming back for more. After three days, however, fatigue was setting in, so sessions were cut shorter and on the Friday the club took the afternoon off, walking into Gent city centre to have a look around and relax.

The regatta on the Saturday got off to the best possible start with ASRA winning gold in the first event of the day, the JM16 4-, crewed by Atholl Wallace, Daniel McSherry, Niall Rundle and Blair Sorbie.



Blair Sorbie, Niall Rundle, Daniel McSherry, Atholl Wallace

Not to be outdone, the crew of Jamie Steel, Iona Riley, Catriona Bain and Rosie Morton soon followed up with victory in the JW18 4- category.



Rosie Morton, Catriona Bain, Iona Riley, Jamie Steel

A tremendous performance by Lewis McCue saw him come third out of 29 in the JM14 1x, just 1 second off gold position. Lewis was then in an even more agonisingly close finish in the JM14 4x+ event, when the ASRA boat crewed by Lewis McCue, Cameron Gordon, Yinglun Huang and Elliot Bruce with cox Christie Duff came second, missing gold by just 4/100<sup>th</sup> of a second.



back: Lewis McCue, Yinglun Haunng  
 front: Cameron Gordon, Elliot Bruce  
 cox: Christie Duff

Sunday saw another early start and a tremendous first race of the day when the MJ16 4- boat, this time crewed by Atholl Wallace, Daniel McSherry, Niall Rundle and Robert Hamlet, were nip and tuck all the way down the course, eventually coming in second. In a similar vein, the JW18 4- crew of Jamie Steel, Iona Riley, Catriona Bain and Rosie Morton finished a gallant second in their race. ASRA's final placing of the weekend was in the JM14 2x when Lewis McCue and Cameron Gordon came a tremendous 3<sup>rd</sup> out of a field of 24.

The standard of the competition was, as usual, very high and has proved useful to both the children and the coaches in determining what we have been doing right and identifying where improvements need to be made. It is now up to us to make the necessary changes and reinforce the good points so that next year when we return we'll be even more competitive and turn those marginal silvers into gold. Before that though, we have what will hopefully be a successful domestic season to look forward to, one that will see progress for all our rowers.



The ASRA Squad – Gent 2009

## Features

### Glasgow Rowing "Howff" – from Jim McRitchie

Each Tuesday, from noon till whenever, a small but eclectic conclave of Rowing people meets at the Ingram Bar in Queen Street, Glasgow [just off George Square]. Matters temporal and spiritual - and even some Rowing - are discussed over a lunch of one's own choosing; be it eaten or hydraulic. All are welcome. Recently there was a charming little ceremony, when Bob ["sunshine from Leith"] Neill OAP came to make a presentation to John Eadie, to mark John's years of service to the Scottish Schools' Head before the event moved from the Clyde to the Forth/Clyde Canal. Mr. Eadie's well-established reputation for post-prandial somnolence was not in evidence on this occasion, and he was awake when Mr. Neill presented him with a handsome engraved Quaich - but he really did come to life when a bottle of Highland Park malt whisky followed. Mr. Eadie has not been seen since. And here's a picture of the handsome Quaich presented to John that day.



### Throw Bags – from George Parsonage

I was talking with a rower the other day and he asked when the idea of coaches etc carrying throw bags came into being. I explained that it was on the grounds of self preservation, it was to give one the chance of rescuing someone who was in trouble without risking your own life. I have heard of/recovered the bodies of too many persons drowned while trying to save someone else, and often the person who they were trying to save was rescued and “rescuer” drowned. If someone is regularly travelling up and down the bank of a waterway, whether they are a coach, using the route to cycle to work or just out for an enjoyable ride, on the law of averages, they will come across someone in trouble on or in the water. They would probably be the first person to jump in to assist, and perhaps drown: if they had a throw rope with them, they could rescue the person in the water (as already said) without endangering their own life—it makes sense.

This is why we (the Glasgow Humane Society) have encouraged as many as possible of the establishments along waterways (especially 24hr ones) to have a lifebelt and throw ropes in their premises, so that if they observe someone in the water, or if a member of the public runs into their establishment shouting that there is someone in the water nearby, then a rescue can be carried out without endangering the rescuer too much and without reliance on waterside rescue equipment which is forever being vandalised (The City Council support this idea and hopefully it will be included in planning consents). That is why we encourage anyone who regularly cycles along a waterway pathway to carry a throw rope and we have had much success with this.

Throw ropes have more uses than the obvious. They can be tied to a railing or tree and allow the user to climb safely down a banking to retrieve something, to assist someone, to even just collect a child's ball that has been accidentally kicked over the fencing. A rope allows this action to be carried out in relative safety.

The Rule/Guideline that requests those coaches and others cycling along paths beside water carry a throw rope is a very sensible one. It is not just that a throw rope can assist with the rescue of persons from the boat they are accompanying in the event of capsize; it could be another boat that is in trouble, or someone fishing who has fallen into the water, or a child or anyone.

Although the carrying of throw ropes is recommended by the international body of rowing, by the ARA, the SARA and the Rules and Guidelines for safe use of the River Clyde by rowers, some persons (both local club personnel and visiting club personnel) choose not to comply with this.

These persons should value their own life more; they should value the life of those younger than them, those with less experience than them who look to that person to set an example, and they should value the life of those whom they are supervising.

The ultimate decision on whether to carry a throw rope or not could lie in having just a little thought of what would happen if there was a serious accident. If you were not carrying a throw rope and it was ascertained that a throw rope could have helped prevent said accident, then both you, personally, and your Club may have to face the serious consequences of not heeding advice given to you and made widely known to all waterway users (it may even have a bearing on your insurance)

Perhaps all rowing boats carry a throw rope in their craft as do most canoeists?

The main thing is to be in a position to help others while placing yourself in the least possible danger.

Take a moment to check the availability of the throw bag before you mount your bike

And the record of an entirely different successful rescue undertaken by George (pictured below/alongside)



### **Veteran handicaps – a new approach – from Iain Wilson**

*Background* There is continuing debate about handicaps applied for masters' racing, particularly for main season regattas. The present handicap system was formulated to encourage wider participation of masters athletes at domestic regattas where mostly there are insufficient entries to justify individual races in each age category. In Scotland, the present handicap formulae were created some twenty years' ago and they were intended to be applied across no more than three age groups (for example, B to D). Regatta organisers often face a dilemma when co-ordinating entries. Do they exclude entrants because they are more than three age categories apart from the other athletes? Notwithstanding the well-intentioned efforts of organisers to try to keep everyone happy, there have been many instances in recent years of side-by-side racing across a lot more than three age groups. Such races, whether handicaps are applied at the start or on the finish, degenerate into time trials; they detract from the wide appeal of real side-by-side racing.

*Proposal 1* Handicaps for side-by-side races should be restricted to no more than three age groups. Handicaps for head races (time trials) may be across more than three age groups.

*A need for change?* Since the present handicap formulae were created, there has been a marked change in performance levels of masters athletes. Put simply, the best older athletes are going faster now than they were in the past; and the performance gap between age groups is closing. Put another way: the annual rate of physiological decline in athletic performance has slowed. The reasons for this are varied and many. Not least, increasing wealth has contributed to more leisure time generally; and increasing opportunities to retire early have resulted in some masters' age athletes returning to training regimes that would put many younger club and regional athletes to shame.

*Proposal 2* The existing handicap formulae are out-dated and require updating to reflect evolving comparative performances of masters athletes.

*What basis for handicapping?* Junior and senior squad selectors use one critical basis for their selections: gold medal standard. In other words, they compare their boats against the fastest in the world. These results are absolute, fair and reasonable. They are clear. Masters rowing should not be different and we can employ the performance differentials of the world's best performers as a basis for analysing age group handicap formulae. Opinion exists that we should adopt average times of masters' racing events, thus removing the best (and worst) performances. Why compromise? Why not aspire to the best? The best is what all athletes should measure against. The best masters rowers in the world aspire to win at the annual FISA World Masters Regatta.

*Proposal 3* A fair handicap system would use as its comparison basis the results of the world's best athletes at the annual FISA World Masters Regatta.

*Available data* Benchmarks may be absolute (world records times) or evolving (a rolling average of world championship winning times). On the basis that the physiological performances of masters' age athletes is changing – and assuming it will continue to change – the latter method is arguably more reasonable.

The following table shows the actual results at each of the last four years' FISA World Masters' Regatta for Men's 4+ and Women's 2x.

#### **M 4+ Ave winning time**

##### **Ave m/sec boat speed**

##### **% of A time Variance from A (secs)**

A (27-34)	3:23.94	4.90	100.00%	00.00
B (35-42)	3:23.35	4.92	100.29%	-00.59
C (43-49)	3:25.29	4.87	99.34%	01.35
D (50-54)	3:33.17	4.69	95.67%	09.22
E (55-59)	3:37.08	4.61	93.95%	13.14
F (60-64)	3:36.44	4.62	94.22%	12.50
G (65-69)	3:44.53	4.45	90.84%	20.57
H (70+)	3:54.26	4.27	87.06%	30.32

#### **W 2x Ave winning time**

##### **Ave m/sec boat speed**

##### **% of A time Variance from A (secs)**

A (27-34)	3:51.02	4.33	100.00%	00.00
B (35-42)	3:56.58	4.23	97.65%	05.56
C (43-49)	3:57.17	4.22	97.41%	06.15
D (50-54)	4:11.56	3.98	91.84%	20.54
E (55-59)	4:04.64	4.09	94.43%	13.62
F (60-64)	4:24.01	3.79	87.51%	32.99
G (65-69)	4:39.85	3.57	82.55%	48.83
H (70+)	4:37.97	3.60	83.11%	46.95

Evidently, there are some anomalies, but they are expected. However, the reasons for the anomalies are uncertain: they might include weather or racing conditions, or they might be owing to older athletes simply being faster because they are training harder.

*Evident and clear need for change to reflect current physiological performances of masters' athletes*

Notwithstanding anomalous data, there is an overall trend and it is clear that actual winning world-class performance differentials are substantially less than the prevailing UK veteran handicaps. For example, in 2002 a 2- contest between (among others) Gordon Day and Ian Stanners (then Vet G) and Iain Wilson and Derek Boyle (then Vet B) saw Daisie and Stanners receive a head-start of 38 seconds. Evidence argues that, today, such a handicap ought to be around 20-21 seconds.

*Further data research needed* If the rowing community agrees that a basis for change exists – and consensus supports the principle of measuring against a rolling average of world-class performances – further research is necessary: data for all age groups and boat classes will need to be collected and analysed.

*A desire to race side-by-side*

Main season racing, for most rowers, is about side-by-side.

Notwithstanding earlier comments about restricting to a maximum of three age groups the spread of handicapping, there are at least two other measures that might help create wider appeal and fairer racing.

*Proposal 4* On or before the start, masters crews (if competing in mixed age group events) should be given the opportunity to waive handicap.

*Proposal 5* On or before the start, the starting umpire should ask masters crews (if competing in mixed age group events) if they would like their handicap entitlement applied.

*Proposal 6* In the event that a regatta organiser feels unable to restrict races to a maximum of three age groups, the Rules of Racing should permit crews to enter with a caveat that, if racing is across more than three age groups, the organisers will contact the crews concerned (at or around the time of the draw) and give them the option to move into an appropriate open (non-veteran) event, or to scratch with no financial penalty.

*Head races* There is an evident age-linked decline in physiological performance. However, the various physiological components (of overall 'fitness') do not necessarily change at the same rate. On a purely physical basis, masters athletes tend to hold onto their endurance longer than they hold onto their strength; their fast twitch muscles seem to degrade quicker than their slow-twitch counterparts. While setting FISA World Masters Regatta as the basis for handicapping side-by-side racing, there is an argument for employing a different basis for handicapping of long distance time trials. Perhaps, the Vesta Veterans Head and Head of the Charles might make suitable benchmarks.

## Training Handicaps – from Tom Hewitt

Boat Class	2000m Nat Champs Records	1000m Standard Times	Training Handicaps for 1000m Pieces (in seconds)						
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G
M 8+	05:37.8	02:48.9	0	2	6	12	19	26	33
M 4x	05:58.5	02:59.3	10	12	16	24	30	37	45
M 4-	06:03.9	03:01.9	13	15	19	27	33	40	48
M 4+	06:15.9	03:08.0	19	21	26	33	40	48	56
M 2x	06:26.9	03:13.4	25	27	32	39	46	54	62
M 2-	06:43.5	03:21.7	33	35	40	48	55	63	72
M 1x	06:51.5	03:25.7	37	39	44	52	59	68	77
W 8+	06:20.1	03:10.0	21	23	28	35	42	50	58
W 4x	06:43.2	03:21.6	33	35	40	48	55	63	72
W 4-	06:48.0	03:24.0	35	37	42	50	57	66	75
W 2x	07:03.8	03:31.9	43	45	50	59	66	75	84
W 4+	07:04.1	03:32.0	43	45	50	59	66	75	84
W 2-	07:25.8	03:42.9	54	56	62	71	78	87	97
W 1x	07:35.6	03:47.8	59	61	67	76	84	94	104
Mix 8+			11	13	17	24	31	38	46
Mix 4x			22	24	28	36	43	50	59
Mix 4-			24	26	31	39	45	53	62
Mix 4+			31	33	38	46	53	62	70
Mix 2x			34	36	41	49	56	65	73
Mix 2-			54	56	62	71	78	87	97

The handicaps above may be useful when boats of different types, sexes and ages attempt to train together.

The handicaps are derived from data obtained from Nat Champs record times and the standard veteran handicapping tables.

The Nat Champs records have been used to produce 'standard' times as used in veteran handicapping. The differences between these 'standard' times' produce an additional component of handicap according to the boat involved. The result is a set of handicaps (in seconds) where a M Vet A 8 is the 'scratch' (fastest) boat.

Thus, for example, a **W Vet C 2x** has a handicap of **50 seconds** and a **M Vet F 1x** has a handicap of **68 seconds**. The male sculler should therefore be given an advantage in 1000 m training pieces of **68 - 50 = 18 seconds**.

Crews younger than Vet A should be treated as Vet A.

Handicaps can be pro-rated for distances other than 1000m.

The nature of records is such that they are set in ideal conditions. If conditions are less than perfect, handicaps should be increased.

Regatta Organisers might care to use the Standard Times above as a starting point for calculating veteran handicaps at their events.

## Postscript

Well, that's it for Issue No 2 of the Scottish Rowing Newsletter. I do hope that you have found it interesting and obtained something useful within the contents.

If you have been a contributor this time, very many thanks for your submission. If your club has been unable to submit a contribution this time, please encourage your secretary or Club Scribe to consider submitting an epistle for the next issue.

Depending on reactions and comments arising from this Issue No 2, I'll be happy to go along with any sensible requests for information on any specific rowing topic.

Just email me at [roy.sinclair8@btinternet.com](mailto:roy.sinclair8@btinternet.com) and I'll do what I can to oblige.

Deadline for submissions for the Issue No 3 is Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2009

## Forthcoming regattas and events

<b>April 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Strathclyde Park Regatta &amp; Scottish Universities Championships</b>
<b>May 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Aberdeen Regatta</b>
<b>May 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Clydesdale Regatta &amp; EUBC/GUBC Boat Races</b>
<b>May 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>EUBC Regatta – Strathclyde Park</b>
<b>May 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Castle Semple Regatta</b>
<b>June 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Scottish Championships &amp; Scottish Schools Championships</b>
<b>June 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Henley Women's Regatta</b>
<b>June 27<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Nithsdale Regatta</b>
<b>July 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Henley Royal Regatta</b>
<b>July 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>National Championships – Nottingham</b>
<b>July 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Home Countries International - Nottingham</b>

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