

# Goring Gap Boat Club

## Captain of Rowing

### AGM Report 2006

#### Overview

2006 has been a good year for the boat club. The rowing membership has grown significantly (>50%) and the club has invested in lots of new equipment. During the summer club session attendance has been consistently high (20+people) and remained high even during the usual post regatta lull. Winter Sunday sessions are still popular with ~8-10 hardy rowers each week. We continue to develop and encourage people to take up rowing. The Learn2Row course is a good example and has been a great success.

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#### Safety

Safety awareness has come a long way in the past year - The new membership booklet has full details of the GGBC safety policy and regulations. We now have a safety notice board, a full compliment of safety equipment (first aid kit, throw lines etc), detailed section on the website and the introduction of a temporary membership form. In addition the club has purchased a safety/coaching launch (with the help of a grant from Awards for All) to provide safety cover on the water. The club is affiliated to the ARA and as such we are bound to abide by the ARA Water Safety Code and to appoint a safety advisor and welfare officer.

Safety must be taken seriously. It is every member's responsibility to understand the safety regulations and to ensure that they and fellow members abide by them. One incident could finish the club!

#### 2007 –

The introduction of some simple measures to encourage a more disciplined and responsible attitude towards safety - risk assessments and audits to identify areas of concern and procedures to minimise them, and safety awareness training, etc.

Swim tests are becoming the norm at rowing clubs. Should GGBC adopt a similar requirement?

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#### Boathouse

We continue to have an excellent relationship with the Oratory school and have negotiated a further 5 year extension to our current arrangement. Please ensure that the Oratory facilities are treated with respect .....without their co-operation we wouldn't have a boat club as we know it.

Our current membership (120) has increased the demands on equipment and facilities, but not to a level where we need to limit numbers.

#### 2007 -

Plans towards a permanent home for the club are ongoing and will feature as a key objective in the club's development plan.

Good news - Oratory are planning to resurface the track.

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## Equipment

The club has purchased a number of boats and related equipment during the year: -

### **Coaching launch** ~£6.2k (£5k grant)

The launch has provided the opportunity to develop the club in new directions while maintaining its key objectives. In particular it has enabled the establishment of a Learn2Row course. It also provides much needed safety cover during club sessions and regatta training, and the opportunity to improve the level of coaching at the club.

The launch is fully equipped with safety equipment and a megaphone.

### **Eton Eight** – David Coombs - £250

The addition of the wooden eight has had a big impact on club sessions. It's in excellent condition, sits very nicely and is a joy to row. As a stepping stone from the restricted fours it is ideal and has remained one of the most popular boats since its introduction. Again L2R has benefited from the use of an eight.

Maintenance of this 20 year old craft will be ongoing (new seats etc) but given the low purchase price it has proven to be a bargain. The boat appears to be designed for light weight crews. Some of the minor problems we've encountered are due to overloading – until we buy a heavy weight boat maintenance may be higher than normal.

A cox box and rate meter have been added (~£120).

### **Aylings Pair** – Make It Happen - £380

Our latest addition is an Aylings pair (80kg) from Reading RC. It is in excellent condition and rows extremely well. It may be possible to convert the boat to a double scull at some stage.

### **Blades**

Croker Sculling blades – 4 sets of brand new sculling blades ~£1.3k.

3 sets of second-hand cleaver sweep blades (24 blades) ~£440 (£200+ each new!) The blades have proven to be very popular with our rowers....the macons may be destined for regatta duty only.

### **Ergometers**

Oratory school kindly donated 4 Concept II rowing machines to the club. These will require refurbishment and storage. These, along with 2 machines on loan from the Swan hotel, were crucial for the L2R course. Many thanks to both parties.

### **2007 -**

Maintenance of our current craft is a key objective for the coming year.

- 6 x restricted Eton fours - The regatta relies on these and they are now showing significant signs of wear. Professional refurbishment will be costly but given that second-hand replacements are unlikely and new boats expensive it may be the prudent option in the long run.
- Fine fours and eight – ongoing maintenance to keep these boats in their current condition.
- Gig pair – This very useful boat is in a rather sad state at the moment – she's in need of some TLC if anyone fancies a project.

Racking – There is an opportunity to build some racking and a cover along side the Oratory boathouse. We just need to do it....so if you fancy a scaffolding project let us know.

Blades – need painting in GGBC colours.....a nice undercover job.

Boats – no immediate plans to purchase any further boats. However there are grant opportunities that could enable the club to purchase some new equipment (expand our sculling facilities?). These will be investigated.

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## External Training Courses

The club, external bodies and individual club members have sponsored places on the following courses in an effort to improve the club's skill base:

- 4 members have RYA II powerboat certificates (launch drivers).
  - 1 member has attended the UKCC level II coaching course.
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## Competitions

This year has seen a number of crews competing at local and international head races. We race to compete and enjoy the event....so no silverware again this year!

- March 2006 - Coupe de Supporters – Anger, France. A superb effort from the men's eight finishing the 15K in 1hr 5min. A great result (we beat ~1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the entries) and enjoyed a very memorable weekend.
- October 2006 – Basse Seine, Paris. Two eight crews (men and women) travelled to France for an unforgettable weekend! The row went okay too...
- Local ARA head races at Reading and Henley – two fours put up creditable performances.

### 2007 -

Support for our trips to France has waned somewhat with the Paris crews relying heavily on members from other clubs. Hopefully our new members will help revitalise these events.

ARA events require training and fitness, and the added logistics of transporting boats etc. If crews are keen and committed then the club will encourage them. However this mustn't be to the detriment of the majority membership. If you want to row seriously then it is probably best to join a 'serious' racing club.

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## Goring and Streatley Regatta

This year's regatta was superb – a record public attendance and some great rowing. All credit to the Regatta Chairman and her helpers for all their hard work. On the day the racing went very smoothly and incident free – well done race control and all involved on the 'wet-side'.

Regatta training was hard work too....5 weeks of continuous training (60 crews) is a huge undertaking and one which through the dedication of a small band of members went without any major hitches.

### 2007 -

Regatta training definitely needs a bigger pool of volunteers. A larger organising group, fewer crews, greater safety awareness etc are areas to consider for the 2007 training.

A coxing course would help establish a common teaching approach and ensure all coxes are aware of their responsibilities.

I believe we should aim to make a bigger monetary return from the wet-side activities, and from the regatta as a whole.

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## **Social Rowing Events**

The 'round the Island' heads held in the spring and autumn went well but lacked the numbers of previous years. They are relatively easy to organise and serve as a good way to bring people together. Likewise the Dolphin centre exchange day was excellent fun.

### **2007 –**

Both events are worth considering again next year.

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## **Learn2Row**

Something new for GGBC, a structured series of sessions teaching complete beginners how to row (see the website for details). It's been a great success, with all the original 12 participants seeing it through to the bitter end .....and the club funds expanding by a healthy ~£900!

The course has been the culmination of lots of planning and hard work over the past year to enable all the components to come together - launch, eight, ergometers, safety equipment, training, coaches, literature, ARA advice, research, publicity, volunteers etc.

The result has been twelve new members who have had a great time learning to row, and 12+ club members that have worked as a cohesive team to make the course a success. Thank you all for your enthusiasm and assistance. I hope the outcome will be a commitment to work together in the future – regatta, future courses, social events etc and to help maintain and build the 'critical mass' that is so important for a successful club.

### **2007 –**

We will review the current course and adapt it where necessary. I believe the key to its success has been careful planning, manageable numbers, attention to detail and a friendly atmosphere. It is important that we maintain and improve our standards and hopefully deliver the best L2R in the country – it will do our reputation and our chances of a new boathouse a big boost.

There is a good demand for a future L2R course (we have a waiting list already) but it's important that we maintain our enthusiasm and remember that income is less important than encouraging active helpers, especially in a club run by volunteers.

Ideas for L2R courses – Learn2Scull, Learn2Cox, Learn2Row for the over 50's, club member L2R etc.... all have their merits.

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## **Website – [www.goringgapbc.org.uk](http://www.goringgapbc.org.uk)**

The club website has been updated and redesigned to give it a fresh appearance and provide a good first impression to potential new members. Hopefully it has served as a useful source of information and a way of keeping everyone updated on what's happening at the club. It appears to get a good response – the majority of the Learn2Row participants found out about the course through the internet. If anyone would like to contribute to the site – update the 'history page' etc – then please contact me.

As part of the website development a GGBC kit page was added – You can now order your Lycra in club colours with a club logo. It's a small step towards reinforcing the club identity and has proved popular with regular rowers. Maybe this can be developed further?

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I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the membership and the committee for their support and help throughout the past year. I hope 2007 will prove to be as exciting and rewarding for us all.

Richard Bowsher  
Captain of Rowing  
Nov 2006