

Goring Gap Boat Club

Captain of Rowing

AGM Report 2007

Overview

2007 has been eventful to say the least. The club has continued to develop and prosper with some significant achievements through the year, but of course this has been somewhat overshadowed by the cancellation of the regatta in July. Overall it's been a very positive period with lots of new club members and a continuing enthusiasm for our sport.

Membership is slightly down (107 compared with 120 in 2006) but the number of active rowers has remained consistently high throughout the year with 15-25 rowers per club session.

The club remains welcoming to all ages and abilities and continues to fulfil an important niche role in Thames valley rowing scene.

Safety

I'm very pleased to report that the club has made significant steps in its safety awareness and practices. We still have room for improvement, none of us should be complacent, but there is now a routine procedure of checking equipment, reviewing the river conditions and keeping our actives safe and fun.

Please ensure you read through the GGBC safety policy and report any areas of concern. If you have any concerns please bring them to the attention of the club safety adviser.

2008 –

Risk assessments and audits to identify areas of concern and procedures introduced to minimise them. Introduction of swim and capsized drills for the new Learn2Scull course – something which may be extended to encompass more of our membership over time.

Boathouse

We continue to have an excellent relationship with the Oratory school. Please ensure that the Oratory facilities are treated with respect - without their co-operation we wouldn't have a boat club.

2008 -

Plans towards a permanent home for the club are ongoing and will feature as a key objective in the club's development plan. There is an ongoing review of possible sites within the local area. Any permanent site would incur additional expenses on top of any building and site costs. Just how much would the membership prepared to see their membership fees rise for such a facility - £100, £200?

Should we focus our efforts on a boathouse or spend to improve our current facilities at Pangbourne and the Swan?

Membership

Lots of new members but we've also lost quite a few. A reduction overall of ~15% - which matches closely the increase in the membership fees in 2006 (£40 to £50).

Learn2Row has been very successful in attracting new members - 24 participants plus a good number who have been too late to get on the courses!

Equipment

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

Harris Eight - £400. This old wooden boat was purchased to provide the guys with a heavier boat....unfortunately in use she has proven to be a little disappointing. The stiffness has gone and hence the boat is difficult to balance. However we continue to use her as a second eightand she did play a major part in the corporate event – which netted the club £1k!

Sims Pair /Double – Martin Kay - £375 from Marlow Rowing Club. This is a superb carbon shell, fine and fast – it should provide an ideal platform for the up coming Learn2Scull course and provide our members with a challenging craft. It came with both sets of riggers so we have some flexibility. After a refurbish and clean she looks really good....and we've found a corner in the dry boathouse to store her!

Eton Gig Double / Pair – £650 from Stratford on Avon RC. This is a wide, very stable rowing boat with sliding seats and a rear seat for two people - a modern day Thames skiff. This is an ideal boat for families or teaching anyone a little nervous to row. It could also be used for touring – may be a camping weekend on the river? We need to buy a cover and hoops to prevent the need to bail her every outing!

4 x Wintech Single Sculls - £5.6k – thanks to a very generous **£5k** grant from **Awards for All** the club has been able to purchase 4 brand new single sculls. These will cover a range of crew weights – 70kg, 2 at 80kg and 90kg.....so at least one should fit most members. The boats are of fibreglass / Kevlar construction with metal wing riggers. The grant was awarded to help us with a specific project – a learn2Scull course which we expect to run in the spring.

Red Scull – GOG013 – this boat has been kindly loaned to the club. It is an excellent boat for the heavier rowers (~95kg) and has help expand our sculling facilities.

Ergometers – the club now has 2 concept II model C ergometers on permanent loan from the Swan at Streatley. We'd like to thank the Swan for their continued much valued support of the boat club

Boat Maintenance has featured highly in the past year's activities.

Boat refurbishment – Hedley (and helpers) has done a fantastic job refurbishing all six restricted boats, the Eton eight, and Graham, the coxed four. We have also refurbished a couple of Oratory wooden boats – a beautiful Eton coxed quad and a superb Donaratica coxless four....both of which could have easily fallen into disrepair and been scraped! Both of these boats are now available to GGBC members.

Restricted fours – two of these were professionally repaired – new shoulders earlier this year.

Unfortunately a four lent to Wallingford in September was damaged and is still awaiting repair – at WRCs expense.

Blades – no new blades this year, but they are now painted in the club colours.

Current Craft

Coaching launch has continued to give good service - no breakdowns or problems so far! It has been invaluable for the Learn2Row courses and we hope to use it more extensively in the future.

We should give a special mention to the **Eton Eight** – David Coombs – which we purchased in 2006 for just £250. This boat has made a big impact on the club's sessions and has transformed our rowing from the restricted fours to a fine fast boat. She has been carefully looked after and gets used almost every weekend. £100 bought new wheels and axles for the seats and in the coming year we may need to purchase some new shoes.....

The six restricted fours continue to serve the club well. However they are starting to show their age and although they should be fine for a good few years at some point we'll need to replace them.

I'd like to thank the Oratory school BC for their continued assistance and goodwill. The girls have made extensive use of the Oratory octuple during the year and we continue to borrow their boats and equipment on a regular basis. The relationship between the clubs remains excellent.

2008 –

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

- Ongoing repair, and up keep of our fleet of boats
- Gig pair – This very useful boat is in a rather sad state at the moment – the good news is that one of our members has volunteered to get her back on the water over the winter.
- An Oratory light weight coxed quad needs attention (it was suggested she be burnt!) if anyone fancies a project. She looks sound but needs some TLC.

Racking – we will build some racking and a cover along side the Oratory boathouse to accommodate our ever growing fleet.

Boats – no immediate plans to purchase any further boats. May be a plastic eight?

Other – possible purchases - life jackets, blades, coxbox, boat cover....

Competitions

This year has seen a number of crews competing at local and international head races. We race to compete and enjoy the event - but our members did manage some victories and silverware during the year!

- March 2007 – Reading University eights head – Cancelled!
- March 2007 - Coupe de Supporters – Anger, France – Cancelled!
- July 2007 - Goring & Streatley regatta – challenge races – Cancelled!
- September 2007 – Reading RC corporate regatta exhibition race. GGBC Men's eight against RRC novices over 750m. We won by 1.5 lengths (in David Coombs)!
- Wallingford Town (Pub) Regatta – crews made up extensively from the May Learn2Row course managed to get into every final in the highest category winning mixed fours final. The girl's crew then went on to beat the WRC novice's crew! A very close but well deserved victory.

- Les Fondateurs, Paris – this year we had a record number of crews in the Paris trip – 2 men's eights and a women's octuple. The girls came away with a very creditable third place.....and England beat France in the rugby! We had a fantastic weekend thanks to the warm hospitality of our hosts at Basse Seine.

2008 -

In the coming season we hope to visit Angers, France in March. A great weekend only spoilt by a 15km race!

Already people are putting their names down for Paris in October 2008.....it was that good!

We could enter a few local ARA regattas and heads. These require training and fitness, and the added logistics of transporting boats etc. Our crews have proved they can win at novice level and I'm sure with a little commitment we could have some competitive crews. However the club's focus will continue on making rowing available to all and for people to enjoy the river. Competition is just one small aspect of the sport at GGBC and anyone who really wants to compete at a high level would be advised to join the local elite clubs.

We also hope to encourage our newest members from the Learn2Row courses to compete at the 2008 Goring and Streatley Regatta.

Goring and Streatley Regatta

As we are all aware 2007 was a very disappointing regatta with it's cancellation on the Friday before the big day. A huge amount of time and effort had gone into this event but it wasn't to be, 4" of rain put an end to the event.

However, there were still some positive points:

We trained 60 crews to row in the preceding 5 weeks of regatta training (not without their share of poor weather conditions!). The training was much better organised this year with a session manager keeping everything under control – a measure that all, including the crews, were impressed by. We intend to use the same model next year.

We didn't engrave the date on the tankards.....so no need to order any for next year!

The events of this summer have helped us reassess the regatta and how we run it. The hope is that the task of running next years regatta will be more evenly spread amongst the membership.

2008 -

I believe we should aim to make a bigger monetary return from the wet-side activities, and from the regatta as a whole. I hope the new regatta structure will go some way to achieving these goals.

We hope to run another coxing course pre-regatta training to establish a common teaching approach and ensure all coxes are fully aware of their responsibilities.

Social Rowing Events

We held a 'round the Island' head in the spring – a great fun event.

2008 –

Round the island head spring and autumn.

Trips to France – Angers in March, Paris in October

Touring expedition in punts, gigs etc on the Thames over a weekend?

May be a trip to the seaside for some coastal rowing?

Learn2Row

We ran two Learn2Row courses in 2007, one in May and another in October / November. Both were very successful and have resulted in some excellent new rowers at the club and a new source of active volunteers. We have also added over **£2k** to club funds. Club members have been keen to volunteer to help with the courses....so much so that I've had to turn people away! An excellent effort from everyone – well done.

In recognition of our achievements the ARA has awarded GGBC '**ARA Recreational and Adult Learn to Row Club**' status.

We also ran a Coxing teach-in prior to the regatta which was very well attended.

2008 –

We will continue to develop the L2R course, improving our standards and hopefully delivering the best L2R in the country. We hope to run a further two L2R courses next year....there's already a long list of people hoping to join the course. 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.

Learn2Scull

Thanks to a grant from Awards for All the club will soon be able to run a Learn2Scull course. The course is still in the planning stage but will probably be limited to 8 participants and include a pool swim test and capsized drill.

Learn2Cox

We hope to run a short theory and practical course in the coming year – coxing is great fun....but not if you do it all the time!

Other rowing events

Corporate Rowing day

In September GGBC and Oratory school played host to 30+ Norwegians from the BG group. In 3 hours we took them from absolute beginners to racing side by side in eights and octuples! Everyone really enjoyed themselves and we added **£1k** to club funds. Many thanks to all involved for making the day a great success. Hopefully it's something we can repeat from time to time in the future.

2008 –

Corporate events - if you know a group who'd like to do some team building we'd be happy to help out....at a price!

Sponsored Row

In October two crews in eights set out from Oxford and 7.5hrs later they arrived at Pangbourne! A fantastic effort which raised nearly **£4k** for **WaterAid**. We had perfect conditions, very little boat traffic and a great run through all ten locks, but even so this was a huge achievement – particularly as many of the rowers only started the sport in May!

Website – www.goringgapbc.org.uk

The website continues to be the first introduction to the club for many of our new members – it's proven to be a good tool for promoting the club (~20 hits per day) and keeping the membership informed. We try to keep it up to date and topical – so please visit on a regular basis to find out all the latest rowing gossip!

If anyone would like to contribute to the website content, copy or images, then please let us know. The history page for instance could do with an update.

2008 –

No major updates planned.

Club Kit

The website kit page seems to have been working overtime - judging by the number of members wearing their kingfisher emblazoned lycra with pride.

2008 –

We might add club socks and caps to our extensive range of designer leisure wear.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the membership and committee for their support and help throughout the past year. I hope 2008 will prove to be as exciting and rewarding for us all.

Richard Bowsher

Captain of Rowing

Nov 2007