

Up for ten

EXMOUTH PILOT GIG ROWING
CLUB NEWSLETTER ISSUE 14
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Photo Credit: Tanya N

Club together!

As we move in to September and the regatta season draws to a close you'd be forgiven for thinking we're approaching a quieter time for the club but there's plenty to look forward to. That said, this is a good time to remind you that from October 1st we'll be moving to our winter timetable (No evening club rowing, sessions on **Saturday and Sunday at 9am**).

We're still seeing a constant string of interest for our intro sessions and these are generally getting full up a week or two in advance. Intro sessions are very important. This is how we bring in new members to help the club progress so please do continue to sign up for these sessions, we can't run them without a certain level of experience in the boat.

Following on from the introductory theme we're pleased to say that we're now at a point when we can safely operate junior sessions and so have planned a dedicated **Junior Intro** session for Friday 28th September. Again, like the normal intro sessions, we'll need experienced rowers in the boat too so when the call goes out, please help if you can.

We have the end of season social coming up on the 14th October. This is always a great evening but it's also an opportunity for us to raise funds so please do bring along partner and friends. More details later in the newsletter.

You've probably heard that we're planning a small event on the 9th June 2018. We're just finalising certain permissions from Exeter port authority but all being well the first Exmouth Gig Club regatta will be happening next season, weather permitting of course! This is a big deal and requires a lot of planning and commitment from the committee and members. Most of you will have attended a regatta at some point and so will be familiar with many of the aspects that need to come together to make it happen. Keep a close eye out for updates!

Mixed in with that there are things like the 3 rivers race in Caradon and the World Championships in the Scillies to plan and prep for, don't forget to organise accommodation early!

There is a theme that runs through much of what I have said here, that of members help and involvement. We all have busy lives, families, work and a raft of things that need to be attended to. Our committee of seven cannot do it all alone. Many of you already help out and we really appreciate that input, the club would not function without it. From coxing and towing to organising fundraising or simply turning up and supporting an event like the skittles evening. Please continue to help us where you can. Asking members to put names down allows us to plan and maybe even decide on whether an event is viable, please bear that in mind. If you need to pull out of an event, please give as much notice as possible, late drop-outs have a massive impact.

If you think you could best help by joining the committee the constitution does offer this opportunity at the end of September, see item 5.6.3 of the constitution for details.

And finally..... a personal announcement of my own. Baby Champion number 2 arrived safe and well in early August, which is why you've not seen me much lately! Victoria and baby Jessica are both doing well and will no doubt meet you all on the beach soon.

Cheers,

Max - Club Chairman

**CONGRATULATIONS MAX, VICTORIA
& EMILY ON YOUR NEW ARRIVAL.
BABY JESSICA IS BEAUTIFUL.**



www.exmouthgigclub.com



2017: THE YEAR OF EXMOUTH GIG CLUB

By George Ford



In late 2016 we got the news the club had been waiting for: we had won funds for a brand new pilot gig. While we were all ecstatic the hard work in gaining that funding had paid off, we needed to make sure we would make good on the promise we made to our supporters: we would use the new boat to give even more people the opportunity to enjoy this great sport and to perform to the highest possible level in competition.

Winter training

Once our New Year hangovers had subsided, training for the racing season began in earnest. We had for the first time selected six crews to attend the World Pilot Gig Championships on the Isles of Scilly, facilitated by our expanded fleet of racing boats (two!). Everyone involved threw themselves into their preparation like never before, with crews training hard in and out of the boat often before sunrise. Natural leaders emerged and pushed their crewmates to work hard for each other, while screenshots of improving times on the rowing machine were met with congratulation and encouragement, whether 2000 metres took six minutes or twenty. We were starting to feel like a proper racing club!



However, a few doses of realism came when pitted against other crews for the first time. Three Rivers at Caradon was tough for all who attended, and it reminded us that there was no substitute for making it hurt and pulling hard for the rower sitting next to you. We also learned from Dartmouth regatta that improved fitness on the rowing machine doesn't automatically translate to sustained power in the boat. There was still work to do.

British Summer Time brought with it evening rowing, although most race training continued in the early hours. Rowers who weren't part of Scilly crews ably deputized when crew members were absent and started their own preparation for the rest of the racing season.



Scilly

Time to see where we stood on gig rowing's global stage.

The Veteran's led the way on Friday evening, with both Exmouth crews finishing with boats in their wake. Ladies were 43rd, men 41st. An encouraging start.

The start line of the main races was the largest ever, a mile long and often three boats deep. In both the ladies' and the men's long races the conditions were challenging, but our crews coped well and consolidated their positions in the heat races that followed on Saturday and Sunday. The A crews in Shelly Maid attained the club's best positions to date with 99th and 83rd for the men and ladies respectively. Despite many strong rowers vacating Rodney Bey for Shelly this year, Exmouth's B crews also put in performances to be proud of. The men sustained only a minimal drop in the rankings for Rodders, and the Ladies B actually bettered the A crew of 2016. This was done with several rowers taking part in their first ever World Championships, a remarkable achievement.

Naturally the only way to end such a tiring but successful weekend is an ale or two with crewmates. I think most would agree that Exmouth Gig Club leading the shanty singing (interspersed with Elvis) in The Atlantic on St Mary's was one of the highlights of the weekend and demonstrated what a friendly and fun group of people we've brought together.

The regatta season

Then the post-Scilly lull. So much was put into World Championships preparation that many had earned a break from rowing, but this allowed new stars to break through. In the background we had been steadily accruing new members who were now itching to get in the boat. Nearly every regatta that followed had at least one gig rowing debutante in an Exmouth crew. The first intra-club race day proved especially fruitful in bringing on fresh faces. Following this event some club members, who had previously declared an aversion to competition, immediately signed up to represent us at races along the south coast. Everyone catches the bug eventually.



So the new generation were breaking through, but what of our more seasoned rowers? Further success came quickly for our ladies once they got back in the boat. Regular rowing practice and consistent names being available led to steady improvement and it showed on the results boards. An early highlight was a 5th placed finish at Salcombe regatta for the Ladies A, letting the gig rowing community know that Exmouth Gig Club were well and truly here. While B crews are often facilitated by relatively new members on their first forays into gig racing, their enthusiasm combined with the experience of rowers from our World Championship crews gave us equally pleasing results.



The men's season was far slower to get going. Commitments away from rowing and less consistency from regatta to regatta combined with the difficulty in sourcing a cox made establishing the same kind of training routine as the ladies' crews difficult.

Having said that, many members who only started rowing this year were already looking like a place in the A crew wasn't far away. Towards the end of the season the men finally found traction and left the best 'til last. Following a solid performance at Paignton, Lyme Regis regatta saw Exmouth finish in the main pack, with a final standing of 9th out of 15.

Of course our main strength is a strong contingent of veterans, with men and ladies giving consistent performances and some nail-biting finishes throughout the season. We hope they build on their potential and return some even better placings next year.



Exmouth Gig Club are well liked in the gig rowing community, one reason being that we have been propping up results boards consistently for our first few years – everyone likes an underdog! At the end of this season though, nearly every member of the club knows what it's like to row with a rival boat alongside,



battling all the way to the finish line and we'd all agree there's no feeling like it. We will come last again, but it's no longer the norm and that shows considerable progress.

Winter is coming. We probably won't be rowing as much in the months ahead but we'd love people to be thinking about pushing themselves to stay fit and be ready and raring to go before we organise our next racing crews in the New Year. Well done on a brilliant 2017, we can be very proud of all we've achieved. Here's to next year... and the next level!

OTHER NEWS

HELLO & GOODBYE

We welcome Angela, Tim, Victor, Andy, Anna and Victoria to the club and look forward to getting to know you all better in the coming months.

It is with sadness that we say goodbye and good luck to Jules, she and her husband are off to start a very exciting chapter in their lives in India and we wish them all the best. Jules quickly became an integral part of the club and we will look forward to hearing about her new escapades when she returns.

EXMOUTH KITE FESTIVAL AND RNLI OPEN DAY

This summer the Club was lucky enough to get selected as one of three community clubs to be represented at the Exmouth Kite Festival. The event is run by the Rotary Club who donate all proceeds to good causes and this year they decided invite the Exmouth Amateur Boxing Club, The Jurassic Coast Trust and Our Good Selves to gain votes in the form of Facebook likes and emailed forms.

When voting started in May we did such a great job of nagging family and friends to vote for us, we took the lead from day one. In fact right up to the Friday evening before the event we were still in pole position. Unfortunately on the first day of kite flying they also included a coin vote (similar to Tesco) and by the end of the day The Jurassic Coast Trust had gained the lead and won the day.

We'd like to thank those members who helped at the event especially Keith who was thrown into a live interview without any warning.

On the Sunday 13th August we attended the RNLI Open Day again to raise the profile of the club and also build on our relationship with the RNLI, which can only be a good thing. I'd like to thank Pete for donating his lovely turned candle holders and carved fish trivets. We spoke to many people about Gig rowing and raised £66 in the process, half of which will be donated to the RNLI

I would like to emphasis how important it is that club members support us at these events to raise the profile of the club and attract new members. As well as raising money on the day a good profile will help us when we approach companies for sponsorship in the future.

Gary Cook - Vice Chair

GREAT RIVER RACE



Myself and matt got an opportunity to row with London Cornish Pilot Gig Club, at the Great River Race on the 9 Sept. What an event!!! About 300 boats of varying sizes were in attendance from dragon boats, gigs, kayaks to hawaiian outriggers.

Each class of boat has a handicap depending on size, weight and number of rowers. Dragon boats getting one of the biggest handicaps, and pilot gigs getting a 50 min handicap. There was roughly 20-30 other pilot gigs there.

It was a crazy start with boats bumping into us and oars clashing. We didn't do a race start, just a rolling start. Our stroke rower, Jeremy, who is a very experienced, had already competed in this event 5 times previously, this was the first year he has done it in a Cornish gig. He kept the stroke long and sustainable. We rowed between 50/60%. I was 5, my least favourite position and matt was 3. The other 3 rowers had very little experience rowing a gig and one, had never rowed before and only just joined LCPGC. It was awesome to row under all the London bridges, singing Oggy Oggy Oggy as we went under them.

The rules state you must take a passenger, which was great as we all got a chance to swap out and have a rest. Our crew and cox, Alex, were amazing. We all worked really well together, and after the first 30 minutes of rowing we got into a good rhythm.

21 miles later we made it to the finish. Beating a few other gigs, including Fury their wooden gig. They loaned out 'ansom to Bermuda.

After a few congratulatory pats on the back we rowed to a nearby pub, and celebrated with a few naked ladies (the name of the beer they had, not actual real naked ladies).

It was a fantastic day, and we were made to feel very welcome.

Tanya & Matt

NEW AUSTRALIAN CLUB 'MEMBER'

Last month our friends, Jeff & Lesley (from Perth, Australia) and godparents of our eldest son, came to stay with us for a few days. I was hoping that he would get the chance to watch a Pilot Gig regatta and sit in Shelly Maid at Sidmouth but, unfortunately, the weather had other ideas.

Jeff has been an elite sportsman who I had the pleasure of working with in the early 1970's. He was Newcastle (Aus.) diving champion, swam in the NSW Swimming championships in 1961 and was Newcastle Boys High School swimming champion between 1962-66.

He played rugby league for South Newcastle Rugby League Club who were undefeated for 5 consecutive years and represented Newcastle and New South Wales rugby league teams. He also played rugby union, won 2 premierships with Merewether Carlton Rugby Club and represented Newcastle and New South Wales who won the Australian under 18 championship in 1966. While working in the UK he played for Rosslyn Park Rugby Club in 1975. His sporting achievements span cricket, tennis and surfing. He is a true Australian sports all-rounder.

So, we thought that, while having a meal at the Exe Cafe one evening, it would be lovely to 'present' Jeff with one of our training tops (see photo) which Matt kindly organised for us.



As an 'Honorary' Exmouth Pilot Gig club member, he now wears our shirt with pride (see photo) whenever he exercises.

I'm now trying to persuade him that Pilot Gig Rowing would be a great new sport in Perth, Australia and another sporting achievement for his 'CV' I will let you know when we can all visit him for a row!

Keith Cornish

NEW FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

There is a new Fund Raising Committee starting so please make sure that you put any ideas for fundraising events onto the message board so that they can be discussed. **Kathy, Karen, Sarah and Sophie** are heading up the group but they will be asking for help so if you are available and interested let them know to put you on the list..keep the ideas coming through.

FINALLY A BIG THANKS TO THOSE WHO ORGANISED THE 'FUN' RACE DAY.



MEET THE COMMITTEE

Chairman – Max	Treasurer – Greg
Vice Chair – Gary	Membership Secretary – Sophie
Secretary – Tanya	Other members – George
Health & Safety – Alison	

LAST WORD

A big thank-you to our sponsors/supporters for helping us to make this club a reality!

• Green Valley Cyder • Websites and more • Sport England
• Norman Family Trust • One Family Foundation