

Up for ten

EXMOUTH GIG ROWING CLUB
NEWSLETTER ISSUE 13 - 2017



Photo Credit: Vicky Ingram

Hi and welcome to the latest edition of our Clubs newsletter.

Although, at times the weather might not always back this up, summer is well upon us and as such we're in the midst of the regatta season.

Unfortunately, some regatta's can fall foul to the weather, like Sidmouth. Luckily, as a club, we were able to turn that disappointment into a 'fun' mini event of our own. I hope you all enjoyed it. I know I was pleased to see so many members on the beach enjoying the rowing and atmosphere, congratulations to the **crab catchers** who triumphed!

By the time you read this we will have competed in back to back, Saturday and Sunday regattas at Teignmouth and Bridport. Another busy but fun weekend and we'll be putting reports out in due course. Could I please remind members though that regatta times/race orders are subject to change, so if possible please plan to be there by the coxswains meeting and let one of the organisers' know (Ideally via the thread) if you're unable to make it or not able to row last minute so that we can plan accordingly.

Alongside all that, the business of running the club continues and I'd like to thank members who were able to come and help with the "tart-up" of Rodney Bey.

We're exploring ways to get more juniors to start rowing, planning events ranging from the RNLI open day to the carnival to the end of season "Doo". We're also exploring fundraising ideas, as you may be aware we're looking to get the next new gig around 2020. As well as events/functions/grants etc one of the idea's we're considering includes asking members for a small contribution towards the costs at regatta or possibly something at normal sessions. More on this to come.

With all these events and regattas going on you may wonder why we do not run a regatta of our own? In simple terms, organising such an event is a huge task. There are further complications on the Exe because of the tides, congestion, sand banks, space and access to the water. Permission needs to be sought through East Devon District Council, Exmouth Town Council and Exeter City council (who are responsible for the use of the estuary).

However, whilst these are obstacles they are (hopefully) not barriers and they can be overcome. The committee have been doing a lot of work exploring ways to do just that and, at present, we are hopeful that we will be able to run an event in June 2018. Having our own regatta will be a big deal and it will require a lot of help and input from all members, not just the committee. There is much to organise from safety boats and umpires to race starters, stall holders, beach crew, oh and crews and coxswains! It will be a challenge but will give us a great platform to raise the profile of the club and to raise funds, we should all be very excited!

Thanks, Max.

UPCOMING SOCIALS

Skittles Night

28th July 8pm at the Police Social Club
£5 entry - Cash prize

Quiz Night

18th Aug

End of Season Bash

Save the Date

6/7th October



www.exmouthgigclub.com

HEY! WE'RE ROWING IN BERMUDA

By Gary & Sophie Cook



When planning our holiday, Sophie and I had seen photos from the Cornish Pilot Gig Club that was set up in Bermuda and were fascinated by the whole idea of it.

'I wonder... if it would be possible to row in Bermuda?'

Well thanks to the wonders of this age of communication and a few clicks on Facebook. We made contact with the club. The response was so friendly, yes of course we could have a row. We then kept in touch over the following months exchanging messages.

When the time came, we arrived in Bermuda, early afternoon, excited to have a relaxing week in the sun. Our taxi driver dropped us off at our AirBnB and I contacted The Bermuda Gig Club who were based in the town of St Georges and they told us we could row in either a race team or a social crew. We chose Social - didn't want to exert ourselves on holiday - at 9am the next morning.

We were in the next town and decided to get a bus to St Georges that evening to check out where the club was, exactly - and explore this traditional old town which we found was twinned with Lyme Regis. The club house was a simple shed, with 3 GRP Gigs kept outside next to a good slip. We did notice



a poster on the wall saying 'Visitor Pilot Gig Guided Historical Rowing Tours - 1 hour long - chose to simply ride or row, up to 4 people a time. (I think that's two in the pilot seat and passengers on seats 1 and 2). \$50 each! Now that's what I call fundraising.

The next morning we were up early and waiting at the bus stop, two buses didn't show, we got on to Facebook again and the club said they would send a car, if the next bus failed to arrive (so kind). As it happens the bus did turn up and got us there just in time to help launch.



Two boats were going out as they do most mornings, one was the ladies racing team and the other, ours were the gentle folk.

Out on the water the rowing was simple and easy. It was the water that struck us, so clear and blue. As we rowed across the bay and out to sea, the cox gave us few stories about the history of Bermuda. Their boats are named after famous Pilots from the past, one Jemmy Durrell was actually a slave and in 1795, he helped steer HMS Resolution through the reefs around Bermuda afterwards he was granted a freeman, he ended up the as a King's Pilot responsible piloting Royal Naval ships visiting Bermuda.

We rowed around St Georges bay, out and round the headland then rowed into St Davids Bay, we passed private yachts with helicopter pads and drifted in the beautiful turquoise sea. Our time was almost up.

We helped stow the boats and then we were invited to join them for a breakfast bagel and coffee at the local cafe. They have 150 members and the club is split over three locations across the island. There is a large insurance company in Hamilton that bought two gigs for their employers and another two for the club. In a few weeks time they will own nine gigs in total, all GRP as they survive better in the heat.

They are a lovely bunch and have welcomed many rowers from the UK, they hold their own regatta in October, with visiting barbarian teams competing against their own crews, so if anyone fancies a visit get onto their Facebook page.

REGATTA NEWS

WEYMOUTH



Our first ladies crew competed in the day's B race. After a solid start the crew solidified a good position into the mark with several boats trailing. The first leg was only 750m, shorter than most regattas, so the gigs were still tightly grouped at this stage. This, combined with inaudible radio calls from the umpires made the first turn nothing short of carnage! Several boats in the leading pack impeded each other as the crew of Shelly Maid looked to make up ground. As we began to turn, due to a woeful error of judgment on the part of the rival cox, we were hit hard on the starboard rear gunwale by the bow of trailing Tempest. This pushed our stern in towards the mark and caused us to veer away, allowing trailing boats to find the inside line. This gross injustice steeled the crew's resolve and despite further clashes of oars we were able to retake one of the opportunists early on the final leg, finishing strong against the wind with a boat in our wake. An unjust final result, but our ladies performed brilliantly under pressure.

The Exmouth crew competing in the Men's C race contained débutantes and recent returners to Exmouth Gig Club who hadn't practiced as a crew, but you wouldn't know it. The boys got away well and kept a good rhythm through the

first leg despite a moderate swell. They turned well but were immediately halted by mother nature as they began the final leg. Despite the wind blowing against them all the way in, they dug deep and finished ahead of 3 of the 11-strong field..

It was a great day, and hopefully everyone enjoyed it.

A big **thank you** to Jake for entertaining Ellie and Joseph on the day too.



NEWQUAY COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

The last events of the pilot gig regatta season are the County* Championships (*not just for one county) that take place over two weekends in September (Ladies: 2nd-3rd, Men 16th-17th). This is the only opportunity other than Scilly to pit yourselves against crews from all around the country and we want to know who from Exmouth Gig Club is up for it.

It should be stated that this event is quite different in organisation and atmosphere to Scilly. If you just want a nice weekend away, this isn't the event for you - it's all about the rowing. For this reason the main benefit of entering is a chance for rowers to do more focussed long term preparation than has been possible between each local regatta. We would ideally like at least one crew of men and one of women who would be willing and able to train regularly together if we are to attend. Be advised that we are only able to select crews of six and there may only be one race (depending on performance) so cannot guarantee everyone a row as we could for Scilly.

We are really keen for people who are willing, to step up to the next level in terms of training commitment and attainment in gig rowing and we hope to see massive improvements for those who take part – including rowers who support the training.



NEWQUAY FAQs:

Who's bringing the boat? No one. A few clubs are asked to volunteer a boat to be used all weekend. Boats selected are roughly the same age and are randomly allocated to crews. Neither Shelly Maid nor Rodney Bey are likely to be requested so we just need to take oars, pins, seats and tallow.

How many races will I get? It depends how well you do. You will have at least one 'heat' race where the top two qualify, plus a set number of fastest losers from all the heats. Most crews are eliminated here, but you'll still need to book accommodation to stay over for day two just in case. If you're knocked out and you don't have to get up to row on Sunday morning there's a good bar at Newquay rowing club!

If there aren't enough rowers for full crews will we enter anyway? No. We will only enter crews of the strongest available rowers in groups of 6.

How much training will there be? Regularity of in-the-boat training will be entirely dependent on the will and availability of your crew and coxes (plus any willing replacements). One of the main benefits of organising this event now is to give people

the opportunity to train hard as a unit for a sustained period of time so we hope those selected will make the most of it. While no substitute for being in the boat, off the water training is great as well so we hope to hear of rowers getting together to work on general fitness if you are able. Just make sure you're able get good power through your oar all the way to the finish line come race day and your cox will be happy. How you get there is up to you.

I can't do Newquay but I still want to compete at regattas - can I?

Yep. Any member can still put their name down for local regattas and we will accommodate as many rowers as possible as we do now and put together the strongest crews that are available.

I can't do Newquay but I still want to row lots, can I?

Of course. There will still be all the regular club sessions and training crews are always asking for replacements so just make sure the relevant people know you're keen. Remember you can also organise your own session with a crew of your choice as long as you check with a committee coxswain at least 48hrs in advance.



The morning of Salcombe gig regatta was thoroughly miserable. Showers interspersed with torrential rain during the drive south did not bode well for the day ahead. Rowers from Exmouth Gig Club trudged through puddles down to the water's edge wondering where summer had gone and changes of clothes were wet through before most of the rowers had even seen their bright orange gig, Shelly Maid. Soon though, the sun cleared, clothes dried, and the still relatively new club on the block had a day to remember.

First out, after the ubiquitous coxswain's meeting ("start in a straight line", "avoid collisions on the turns", "radio channel 72") were the men's crew rowing the B race. With their regular number 3 rower stuck in traffic, an able replacement was promoted from the C crew and they were soon jostling for position on the line. With space limited in the narrow harbour, oars clashed off the start but Exmouth soon found clear water. The row out was against the tide, with crews close the shore gaining an early advantage but the field bunched up again as boats slowed to make their first turn. Exmouth cox Vicky Ingram slowed her crew to avoid collisions, ably navigating around three crowded buoys before heading for home. The final leg was with the swell allowing the crew to go up a gear before crossing the line in a creditable 10th place.

Next was the ladies' B race. The Exmouth crew sacrificed slack tide for space on the start line and they used it to full effect. On the first stroke, Shelly Maid leaped ahead of adjacent boats and after barely a minute of racing were clear enough to cut across the bows of much of the field into more favourable water. The crew kept a consistent rhythm and solid power all the way out to the first mark where they were part of the leading pack. Shelly Maid was given right of way on the turns so was able to chart a smooth course around the buoys, maintaining boat speed before accelerating into the last straight. By now the crew were hurting but they didn't let up and held off several attempts to overtake by local boat 'Bolt'. The Exmouth boat was the 6th to cross the line in a field of 14 – a fantastic result.

Final races for the club were the ladies' and men's C races. Ladies C had a good start. They kept up with the pack despite that 3 of their rowers had already raced the previous race before. The girls were neck and neck for the second to last place with Dart Gig club's boat, Smudger. They did brilliantly and kept up with them the whole way round the course, but Smudger just beat them by a few inches.

An excellent effort from Exmouth rowers in the men's C race including for one rower their first regatta on that side of the boat. After a great start the boys kept up with the pack and, against challenging tidal and wind conditions, dug deep to gain the water over another boat on the first buoy turn.

Unfortunately another boat cut in on the inside and crept ahead but the crew kept on their bow all the way in and managed to hold off another boat that was gaining in the long final leg.

Experienced rowers and newbies alike - and their cox - were rightly very pleased with a solid performance and delighted to see the Exmouth boat names creeping their way further up the leader boards at every regatta. They placed 6th out of 7th.

MEET A CLUB MEMBER

Dr. George Ford

Who is the most famous person you have met?

I had a football training session with Kevin Keegan when I was about 10. A bit awkward given he was battling my team (Man United) for the Premier League title as manager of Newcastle. I didn't hold it against him.

I also met astronaut Chris Hadfield soon after his stint as Commander of the International Space Station – check out his zero gravity music video for David Bowie's Space Oddity if you haven't already.

What first attracted you to gig rowing?

When I was a teenager we got into a routine of going to the Isles of Scilly every August just before school started back up. One year we watched a Friday night gig race and I vividly remember a blond guy rowing in skins with a very red face giving it hell in the boat closest to us. Their bow crashed through oncoming waves throwing spray into the air as they raced alongside around 8 other crews straining equally hard. It was awesome, looked like it hurt a lot but I immediately wanted to be part of it. Soon after, a club started in Appledore where my family are from and I used to spend most of my summer. Since I was familiar with the water in and around the Torridge estuary I was called on to cox as well as row pretty much from the off. The rest is history.

What is your favourite film?

It changes from week to week, but probably the Dark Knight. I do like a bit of Christopher Nolan and Heath Ledger is brilliantly psychopathic. It's what inspired my style of coxing...

What is your favourite TV programme?

Everyone says Game of Thrones, and other epic US cable series' so I won't bother with those, although they do become an obsession when they're on.

Historically, my favourite show has been South Park. I got into it after it first aired in the UK when I was about 12, secretly watching it on an old black and white TV after my parents went to bed. Its first series was mostly swearing, violence and toilet humour (perfect!) but much like my own tastes it has matured, often satirising key issues of the day and holding up a mirror to society. Most importantly, though, it still has the fart jokes.

American comedian Louis C. K has a show called Louie which is a slightly surreal fictional account of his own life as a single dad in New York. It's really interesting and hilarious if your sense of humour is as warped as mine.



If you were a superhero, what would you be called and what would your super power be?

I'm going to borrow one from Karl Pilkington: B*****t Man. I would sense when someone is talking rubbish and zoom to their location to call them out in front of everyone with my soon-to-be famous catchphrase: 'B*****t!' I think it's the superhero the world needs right now.

Do you have any other hobbies apart from gig rowing?

Recently got my first road bike so I cycle a lot, although usually just between Exeter and Exmouth! I played football as goalkeeper in various leagues around the country up to a couple of years ago but you lot are keeping me busy year-round at the moment so I haven't got a team here.

I enjoy photography. My enthusiasm comes in peaks and troughs but hoping to get some good shots when I go to California this summer. I've got a couple of good albums from Iceland and the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone if anyone is interested!

All of the above sounds far too proactive to be a realistic overview so I should say I am also a sucker for an evening in with a game controller or a TV remote, fuelled by a pizza or three.

If a movie was made about your life, who would play you?

As a kid I looked a bit like that little s**t from Love Actually. Can't stand him in that film but there's no denying the resemblance. For the adult years it should be my celebrity doppelgänger (apparently!), Maaatt Daaaamon. I've also been told I look like Wayne Rooney, Will Carling, and Marshall from 'Alias' but they're not as flattering.

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!

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