

Glasgow Coastal Rowing Club

AGM 16 February 2017-02-27

*Convenor's Report to the First AGM of Glasgow Coastal Rowing Club
Ewan Kennedy*

When you join a rowing club like this one you are also joining what is almost certainly the fastest growing sporting movement in Scotland at the present time. Scottish Coastal Rowing has grown from zero at the start of 2010 to the point where you are never far away from a rowing skiff.

Last year a survey showed that the clubs in Scotland had a total of about 2500 members, but what was interesting was the same number again went out as guests. It's also interesting that we have more than 50% female rowers. Our numbers actually dwarf the figures for Scottish Rowing, the official body for the sport, which caters almost exclusively for sliding seat rowing.

As you all know there have now been two World Championships, in Ullapool 2013 and Strangford Lough last year. It seems there will be further ones at three yearly intervals. World wide there are now several fleets and the current position is:

In the UK 144 skiffs,, with the newest ones in Lochinver, Portsmouth, Strangford and Cromarty, just about the four corners of the British Isles.

In the States there are 15, including Sephira, which is also rigged as a huge guitar and plays tunes on the water.

In Australia there are 10, mainly in Tasmania where Women on Water (acronym WOW!) led the way as an antidote to the all-male image of the surf boats.

There are 3 in Canada and 7 in the Netherlands.

Finally there are 8 in New Zealand.

Scottish skiffs have ventured quite far afield. Coigach and Ullapool rowed down the Thames a couple of years ago and Boatie Blest from Port Seton rowed in Venice in 2004. Ullapool and maybe a few others are going to the regatta at the end of May in Woudrichem, now fully booked.

The Woudrichem people came to Ullapool with their boat, also some huge leather sofas and a barbeque and various other delights.

What I personally find wonderful is how totally inclusive this all is. Everyone can learn to row in fixed seat rowing, but also being involved in maintenance and construction is very important. It's down to the community spirit and the fact that the skiffs are there to be used.

There was a lovely gig from Falmouth at the 2013 Worlds in Ullapool, beautifully built and rowed by great friendly people, but along the side it had the logo of one of the big utility companies, npower or Eon I think. They cost about £40,000 to build and require skills beyond most communities, but the cost of this must be that they are just a bit remote and precious.

There's a lovely tradition growing up in coastal rowing, not an ancient tradition, because after all we're rowing in plywood boats glued with epoxy resin and not a roved copper nail in sight. It's more a pride in community endeavour, doing things ourselves and owning our sport in a way that's specially satisfying.

It means that wherever you are if there's a skiff nearby you should turn up to say hello and perhaps get out for a row.

Turning to our own club, great thanks are due to Ben Wilde and crew at Galgael for providing us all with the basic means to row, also to Ian and Gordon for the gigantic efforts in handling all the admin from the constitution through the insurance and now the constant red eye and other sessions, now joined by Sally with others coming along.

Membership

Since the club was established at the end of March last year membership has grown steadily to 60. We continue to attract interest from people across all adult age groups and our members come from a wide range of backgrounds and experience.

Membership	No		
Adult 3 years	11		
Adult 1 Year	36		
Adult concession (1 Year)	12		
Adult concession (3 year)	1		
Total	60		
<i>Female</i>	39		
<i>Male</i>	21		

No. of rowing sessions: c 200 (c 730 individual rows)

We managed to keep up a regular programme of rowing sessions throughout the winter and sustain the momentum. We are hopeful that the majority of existing members will renew.

We do need to increase the number of active coxes and encourage members to become active in the club.

In order to get ourselves established, and of course to promote a Club ethos, we have run 'mixed ability' sessions. Indeed, a large proportion of our members are new to rowing, so our coxes have become rowing coaches too. Looking forward, it will be necessary to organise certain sessions according to ability and preferences, while of course continuing others in which Veteran, Improver and Novice row together for mutual benefit and enjoyment.

Skiffs

Lady Danger refurb under way. Probably ready by end Feb. Gobhancroit to be refurbished during March. Aiming for two skiffs active by April

Riverside Regatta

Rain-soaked but very successful event. Part of Clydebuilt Festival. Laid foundation for future collaboration in the Festival.

Merchandise

Net profit from sale of hats and T shirts was £400. Intend to extend the range this spring.

Publicity

Our web presence on Facebook, Eventbrite, Instagram and Twitter has been very effective in sustaining interest in the club. In particular our photo log on Facebook present a vibrant image of the club.

Mailchimp is an effective mailing list organiser while Wordpress provides a simple and colourful website.

More traditionally our pontoon banner has attracted new members as have posters in various shops around the Glasgow. The sight of the skiff itself ploughing up and down the river has also brought in new members. And of course word of mouth has played a significant part.

Clyde Maritime Trust

We have established a good relationship with CMT.

- CMT continue to waive fees for use of pontoon.
- CMT delighted with the level of activity the club has generated on the river.

- CMT happy for us to use the cafe as a quasi clubhouse and allow club members 10% discount in the Tall Ship Cafe
- In the longer term CMT intend to create a boathouse at the pontoon. In the short term (by Spring 2017) it was hoped to site a Portakabin or similar near the entrance to the linkspan. This would be invaluable for storing club equipment, changing etc. As water, electricity and sewage services are already on-site, the opportunity to further develop this facility is evident.