

Goring Gap Boat Club

Chairman's Report

AGM Report 2011

Overview

It's been a year of contrasts for GGBC: continued concern about the club's future home; a superb regatta – an event we should all be rightly proud of; a club that has grown and continues to thrive.

Once again the club has introduced lots of new people to the joys of rowing – our Learn2Row courses are as popular as ever and of course regatta training helped many newcomers to take their first strokes. It's a testament to the commitment of the membership that all of these activities went without a hitch.

Boathouse

As many of you will be aware the club has a somewhat uncertain future at the Oratory school site (currently we have to leave in the New Year). You should all have received a summary of the sites that have been explored over the past 18 months. A great deal of work has been undertaken and we have some exciting possibilities in the pipeline. I firmly believe a permanent and secure home is real possibility in the near future

Any development will require significant effort from our members, not just in the planning and construction stages of the building, but also in fund raising and ensuring the future development of the club.

2012 Objectives

- Review the possible sites and concentrate our efforts on those which best fit our requirements.
 - Prepare a detailed specification for a boathouse development.
 - Identify sources of funding and set up a fund raising sub-committee
 - Agree an achievable development plan (including the boathouse development) for the next 5 years.
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Safety

No major incidents to report, just a few unplanned capsizes! All temporary and new members are required to complete an induction before they row – this has worked extremely well. The session manager rota that has been operating for a couple of years now has certainly helped to maintain safety standards.

There are still areas that need improvement but overall we have an excellent safety record – let's keep it that way. Safety is everyone's responsibility, if you notice something you are obliged to report it; if you have any concerns please let us know.

Fuel storage has been flagged as a possible safety hazard and immediate steps have recently been taken to remove this fire hazard.

2012 Objectives

- Complete the annual British Rowing safety audit and act on any deficiencies.
 - Continue to encourage and educate all members in making safety a top priority.
 - Carry out regular audits of equipment, life jackets, and first aid kits.
 - Encourage members to participate in capsized and swim tests.
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Membership

Membership has risen from 104 in 2010 to 117 in 2011 - a healthy growth of ~12% which achieves last year's objective.

The club remains welcoming and fully inclusive; we have continued to attract new members throughout the year. Unfortunately we also lose 40-50% of our membership year on year.

On behalf of the club I'd like to thank Tim Greaves who is retiring from the committee after 5 years as membership secretary.

2012 Objectives

- Maintain our current membership level in 2012.
 - Target specific groups to widen the membership demographic.
 - Provide activities in order to retain a larger number of members.
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New Equipment

The club has made limited additions to its fleet this year: -

Quad Riggers - £250 - Bob Bushnell, the Janousak 4+ has had a shoulder repaired, a complete refurbishment, and (thanks to Karl) a superb respray. Second-hand quad riggers were purchased to provide the scullers with a fine crew boat.

Tub Pair – Jolly Roger has returned to the club after spending the last two years at Roger's house undergoing a complete renovation. She is one of the club's original boats and it's great to see her back in the water and being used on a regular basis.

Current Craft

Coaching launch has continued to give excellent service.

Sculling - The singles, doubles, quad and octuple have all proven very popular. So much so that we regularly run out of sculling blades. We are constantly on the lookout for second-hand blades (new sets are £500!) and I'm sure the deficiency will be overcome in the near future

Tubs double / pairs - Snuffy, Sniffy and Jolly Roger, have proven as popular as ever. They provide a superb platform to work on good technique and hence are ideal for beginners.

Our three wooden eights, Tim, David Coombs and Sweet Sixteen are still going strong and have proved to be the mainstay of the weekend rowing sessions. They do however require considerable upkeep and the sooner they are housed undercover the better.

The fine fours – One for All and All for One are starting to become popular. Not easy boats to row (easy to carry though!) they have provided a useful challenge for our more experienced rowers.

The fleet of Eton restricted fours continue to give good service and are the mainstay of the regatta racing. If anyone spots an Eton 4+ for sale we'd be keen to purchase it as some of our current boats are starting to show their age!

The Punts residing at the Swan have had a rather disappointing number of outings this year.

Boats in need of some TLC – the Donaratico coxless four (an Oratory boat) is looking rather sad. She is in need of a complete revarnish - other boats have taken priority. Wooden boats need protecting from the weather.

2012 Objectives

Boats – we are currently on the look out for:

- A medium weight coxless four / quad
 - Gradually upgrade and rationalise our fleet.
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Boat Maintenance

Boat refurbishment – as in previous years a small band of dedicated members have ensured that all our boats are in excellent condition. Annual preventive maintenance has really paid off. We really need to protect the wooden boats (it takes 10-15 hours man hours just to revarnish an eight!) – may be covers could be used while we work towards a purpose built boathouse.

I'd like to thank Karl for all his work on Bob Bushnell and the restricted fours.

2012 Objectives

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

- Ongoing repair and upkeep of our fleet of boats.
 - Covers for the wooden boats
 - Renovation of the rowing dingy for use at the Swan site.
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Club Sessions

The Sunday and Thursday sessions are still the mainstay of the club. The session manager rota that has work exceptionally well, ensuring sessions are well organised and safe. In addition the normal club session we have:

- **Early Sunday sessions** – every Sunday morning 8-10am. These sessions have given our keenest members the opportunity to row hard for two full hours.

- **Small boats Tuesdays** – for the fourth year we've run the SBTs throughout August. It's been very popular and allowed many of our scullers to grow in confidence and competence.
- **Pilates** – our weekly sessions have continued throughout the whole year.

2012 Objectives

- Include more coaching at the squad rowing sessions.
 - Training additional session managers.
 - Encourage more members to participate on a regular basis.
 - Get some dedicated coxes or train club members up to be coxes.
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Coaching and training

GGBC continues to support and encourage our members to seek recognised qualifications and training.

- Stuart Cowen is now an expert on core strength and stability – he attended a British Rowing training day.

2012 Objectives

- Training for at least one additional level 2 coach.
 - Increase the coaching content of club sessions, squad rowing, erging etc
 - Encourage members to attend first aid courses and take part in the swim and capsize drills.
 - Increase the number of qualified launch drivers.
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Competitions

This year has seen a number of crews competing at local events and international head races.

- May 11 – Round the Island head
- July 11 - Goring & Streatley regatta – challenge races
- October 11 - Coupe de Dames et Monsieur's– Angers, France – where, according to the official results, the GGBC men's crew came in equal first!

2012 Objectives

- In the coming season we'd like to visit Paris or Angers in October – both great events.
 - We are also hoping to arrange a series of friendly competitions against local clubs.
 - BR regatta and heads are held locally and we could enter these at novice/vet level.
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Goring and Streatley Regatta

The 2011 regatta was a great success and made a record profit.

The 'Wind in the Willows' theme was an excellent concept and helped focus the advertising and PR activities. The result was an increased gate and lots of favourable publicity. Our special guest, Zac Purchase was very impressed with the day's activities and we hope to have him back presenting the prizes in years to come.

The regatta is a huge undertaking and wouldn't happen without the dedication of a great number of willing volunteers. Regatta Chairman, Brian Barnes must be congratulated on bringing everything together on the day; Hedley West did a fantastic job on the logistics, and Andy Mackenzie organised the racing without a hitch. Once again Stuart Cowen did an excellent job as safety adviser – everyone survived the day! Behind the scenes but working extremely hard was Treasurer Lorraine Slade (and her Mum & Dad) keeping tabs on all the cash and working tirelessly on selling advertising and designing the programme. In the bar Sally Albin successfully served the masses with beer; and Julia Turnock organised the superb 'wind in the Willows' theme and club tent. Ros Crowder excelled on the PR front – I doubt there was a car within miles of Goring that didn't have a G&S leaflet applied! We also owe Bexy Butcher a big thank you for her superb themed artwork. On the river Ian Smith did a splendid job with the course laying and tugboat driving. Special mention should also go to all the non boat club members who did another excellent job this year – Nick Bubb (gazebo) and Mike Cheeseman (site manager) to name but a few.

There are too many people to thank you all individually, but you know who you are, so on behalf of the club I thank you, we couldn't have done it without your help.

The regatta training also went particularly smoothly thanks to all the willing volunteers who coxed and coached.

2012 Objectives

Overall the regatta was an excellent event but as ever there is room for improvement.

- encourage more people to attend – PR, publicity
- tighter control on budgets
- more coxes/coaches required for regatta training – Learn2Cox courses?
- have a theme for the 2012 regatta – any thought?

If you have any ideas or are keen to help out then please contact us.

Social Rowing Events

The social activities have been excellent again this year:

- Dec 10 - Santa Row
- May 11 - 'Round the Island Head
- June 11 - Summer Ceildh
- Oct 11 – Angers, France
- Nov 11 - Annual Dinner

A great mix of events. We even have tea, coffee and mugs at the boathouse – always welcome after a row.

By all accounts the GGBC dinner at Pierrepoints, and the Summer Ceildh were both excellent events.

2012 Objectives

- Continue with a varied array of social activities.
 - Focus on more impromptu social activities – e.g. visits to the pub after rowing!
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Courses

The GGBC courses have gone from strength to strength over the years. They are a valuable source of new members and a great way to develop our existing membership in helping and encouraging others into the sport.

We ran two Learn2Row courses in the spring of 2011. Both were very successful and have introduced some excellent new rowers to the club. The level of support from club members has been fantastic once again.

Row2Win followed on from its successful introduction in 2009. Crews took to the water every Saturday for 10 weeks. A slight change this year was the switch to the octuple – it proved very successful with some record 2km times posted.

GoRow day – we held our first GoRow course in June – an intensive afternoon of erging, rowing and competing under the watchful eyes of our coaches. The day was a great success with many of the participants becoming club members.

Learn2Cox – Stuart ran a short course for prospective regatta coxes. It must have gone well judging by the success of the regatta training.

2012 Objectives

- **Learn2Row** – we hope to run three courses: two in the spring and one in the autumn.
 - **Learn2Scull** – hopefully we can fit in at least one course in 2012.
 - **Learn2Cox** – with more crews we definitely need some experienced coxes. We hope to put together a comprehensive coxing course following British Rowing guidelines.
 - **GoRow days** – we hope to run a series of half-day courses providing an introduction to the sport. They will be focused on specific groups: 18-35's, 55+, parents of rowers, etc. We're confident we can get crews from complete beginners to head to head rowing with in the day.
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Other rowing events

2012 Objectives

- Touring – two camping tours are planned for 2012.
 - Corporate events - if you know a group who'd like to do some team building we'd be happy to help out.
 - Sponsored Row – we need to raise lots of money!
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Public Relations

As many of you will no doubt have noticed GGBC has a presence in almost every local village magazine, newspaper and even the national rowing press. Ros Crowder has done a fantastic job writing copy once a month and delivering it on time to every publication in the district.

2012 Objectives

- Continue to publicise the club on a regular basis.
 - Produce posters and a club leaflet for distribution.
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Finances

The club has a healthy bank balance and growing capital assets. It continues to offer excellent value for money with the £50 full membership being possibly the lowest of any inland rowing club in the country.

Membership fees, rowing courses and the regatta provide the major sources of income.

Treasurer, Lorraine Slade, should be congratulated on her expertise in keeping everything in order.

Given the current financial position the committee recommends no increase in membership fees this coming year.

2012 Objectives

- Budget planning for all club activities.
 - Boathouse financial planning.
 - Apply for additional funding to help support our new activities.
 - Fund raising
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Website – www.goringgapbc.org.uk

The website continues to be the first introduction to the club for many of our new members and has proven to be an excellent way to keep everyone informed of club activities. The number of hits has risen by 15% in the last year to over 17,760. 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!

2011 Objectives

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

The club has a detailed development plan that gives it direction and objectives for the coming years. This will be of particular importance should we decide to build a boathouse and apply for funding.

From the 2010 **chairman's report** the objective results are:

Boathouse

- Define and review the club's requirement for a boathouse – **partially complete**
- Identify possible boathouse sites between Reading and Wallingford and explore these with the EA and local planning offices – **complete** (and ongoing)
- Identify sources of funding and set up a fund raising sub-committee – **partially complete – fund raising sub-committee should be formed.**
- Agree on an achievable development plan for the next 5 years – **discussed but not formalised**

Safety

- Complete the annual British Rowing safety audit and act on any deficiencies - **complete**
- Continue to encourage and educate all members in making safety a top priority - **ongoing**
- Carry out regular audits of equipment, life jackets, and first aid kits – **complete (and ongoing)**

Membership

- Increase the membership by 10% in 2011 – **up by 12.5%**
- Target specific groups to widen the membership demographic – **no specific targeting expect demographic is unchanged.**
- Provide activities in order to retain a larger number of members year on year – **fewer activities than previous years**

Equipment

Boats – we are currently on the look out for:

- A medium weight coxless 4x/- - **no progress due to current circumstances**
- Gradually upgrade and rationalise our fleet - **no progress**
- Ongoing repair and upkeep of our fleet of boats – **complete** (and ongoing)
- Renovation of the rowing dingy currently at the Swan site – **not achieved**

Club Sessions

- Introduce dedicated coaching and coxes to the squad rowing sessions – **not achieved**
- Expand our offering of activities – **8am Sunday sessions**
- Training additional session managers - **achieved**
- Encourage more members to participate on a regular basis – **more rowers at sessions**

Coaching and training

- Training for at least one additional level 2 coach – **not achieved**
- Increase the coaching content of club sessions, squad rowing, erging etc – **ongoing**
- Encourage members to attend first aid courses and take part in the swim and capsize drills – **not achieved**
- Increase the number of qualified launch drivers – **not achieved**

Competitions

- In the coming season we'd like to visit Paris or Angers in October – both great events – **Angers visited in October**
- We are also hoping to arrange a series of friendly competitions and events against Maidenhead and Reading rowing clubs – **didn't happen**
- BR regatta and heads are held locally and we could enter these at novice/vet level. - **didn't happen**

Regatta

- encourage more people to attend – PR, publicity – **Increase in attendance**

- more coxes/coaches required for regatta training – Learn2Cox courses? - **achieved**
- have a theme for the 2011 regatta – **Wind in the Willows**

Social

- Continue with a varied array of social activities - **achieved**
- Focus on more impromptu social activities – e.g. visits to the pub after rowing! - **ongoing**

Courses

- **Learn2Row** – we intend to run spring and autumn courses - **achieved**
- **Learn2Scull** – hopefully we can fit in at least one course in 2011 - **didn't happen**
- **Learn2Cox** – with more crews we definitely need some experienced coxes. We hope to put together a comprehensive coxing course following British Rowing guidelines in spring 2011 - **achieved**
- **GoRow days** – a series of one-day courses providing an introduction to the sport. They will be focused on specific groups: 18-35's, 55+, parents of rowers, etc. We're confident we can get crews from complete beginners to head to head rowing with in the day – our coaches are very competitive! - **achieved**

Other Rowing Events

- Touring – two camping tours are planned for 2011 – **planned but didn't happen**
- Corporate events - if you know a group who'd like to do some team building we'd be happy to help out – **none this year**
- Sponsored Row – we need to raise lots of money! - **didn't happen**

Finances

- Budget planning for all club activities - **partial**
- Ring fence a significant part of the bank balance into a higher interest 'boathouse fund' account - **didn't happen**
- Apply for additional funding to help support our new activities - **didn't happen**
- Fund raising - **didn't happen**

Website

- If anyone would like to contribute to the website content, copy or images, then please let us know. The history page could do with an update.... **didn't happen**

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the committee and membership for their support and help throughout the past year.

I hope 2012 will prove to be as exciting and rewarding for us all.

Richard Bowsher
Chairman
Nov 2011