



Liverpool Victoria Rowing Club

January 2021 Newsletter

I had hoped that this latest newsletter would be a little more optimistic about the coming rowing season but unfortunately, as I write we are still locked down.

As you all know, we are still in the depths of the Covid19 pandemic, although vaccinations are being rolled out and the first shoots of spring should bring a reduction in the number of infections.

We've asked members for their experiences of lockdown and I am very pleased to say that everyone who has responded has been positive about what they have been able to do in the last months.

Looking to the future, Lesley Kuguloglu is hoping for great things from our juniors, pencilling in the dates for National Schools Regattas later in the year. Of course, we have two athletes in the GB Junior programme, with excellent scores from Flynn Jones and Emily Bernhem. They are itching to get on the water and convert their winter ergo results into on-water times. They and all the juniors have shown fantastic commitment to maintaining their training over the winter.

On the equipment side, you will see that a hard core of individuals, including Heather Parry, Debra Winson and Paul Fegan have worked through a large part of the boat fleet, whilst Mike Vick has been tireless in ensuring that the building will be fit to use when we get back to full activity. During the pause between the first and second lockdown, the club was lucky enough to get a Rowing Foundation grant towards upgrading 'Olympic Gold' from an eight to an octuple to be used by the younger juniors. Heather, Debbie and Paul also used the opportunity to refurbish a number of the singles and doubles. Heather and Brigid also used contacts to get a complete respray on the women's eight 'Rosemary', which now looks like a new boat.

Hope Ball and her women's group had hoped to enter the Women's Eights Head in March, using the refurbished 'Rosemary'. Although it now seems unlikely that they will be able to compete until later in the year, they have been training and even undertook a sponsored row to raise money for Claire House Hospice.



Royal Fleet Auxiliaries Fort Austin and Fort Rosalie

We've all got used to avoiding the two Royal Fleet Auxiliaries that have been moored on the West Float, whilst they were refurbished at great expense. They have kept Cammell Laird employees busy for a few years now but will be moving away to be scrapped. Heather Parry and Will Elliott take up the story:

The two ships belonging to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, have been moored in our dock for about 3 years now and are a familiar part of our landscape. RFA ships carry supplies of food, ammunition and explosives to the Royal Navy ships. Fort Rosalie was originally named Fort Grange but was renamed in 2000, to avoid confusion with RFA Fort George. Both were launched in the mid 1970s, Fort Austin was sent to the Falklands to support the action there and was awarded battle honours. As both ships have flight decks, they could deliver supplies by helicopter and have taken part in humanitarian and disaster relief missions. As a part of our landscape on the dock, we have become used to using both ships as markers for training, both are just under 200 mtrs long and so crews used this to help them judge improvements in times or coverage of stroke length. During night rows their brightly lit decks and solid presence were very comforting for coxes and launch drivers. Fort Austin in particular always drew admiring looks from any visitors at night, looking from the lounge windows. Sadly both have now been decommissioned and are no longer under the auspices of the MOD and so their lights have gone out and they sit in darkness, awaiting transfer to a breakers yard, possibly in Turkey. Between lock-downs we received an invitation for 6 people to go aboard her, just before she was decommissioned. We only had 4 days notice, so a hurriedly gathered group of junior and adult members, had a last look around.

Heather Parry

I was very pleased to be asked to visit Fort Rosalie. We were fortunate that it was a bright, sunny day and this served only to enhance the experience. Having seen Fort Rosalie beforehand I was excited to be going aboard. I felt privileged to be asked to represent the club and it was good to be able to share the experience with my Dad.

Fort Rosalie is a Support Ship that replenished the warships for the Royal Navy with food, ammunition and stores. She has also played a significant part in providing support to humanitarian missions and disaster relief taking vital supplies to people in need.

Although you can obviously appreciate the size of the ship from afar, up close the ship is very imposing. She was built from 1973-1979, weighs 23,834 tonnes

and is 183 metres long and 24 metres wide, with a top speed of 22+ knots. It is quite a feat of engineering to get that to float!

Fort Rosalie had the capacity to store 3500 tonnes of stores including refrigerated items. To replenish ships at sea, three, ten tonne and three, five tonne cranes were used. She also had a flight deck, an emergency landing platform, a hangar and the facility for up to four (but usually one) Fleet Air Arm Westland Sea King helicopters ...and even a nightclub!

I am very grateful to have been given this opportunity. I would like to extend my thanks again to all involved in organising the trip. It was an experience that I will remember for a long time to come.

Will Elliott

Ps. Joseph Summers also visited the Fort Rosalie and has written a much longer article, which we have loaded onto the club website separately, as it is a 20 MB document. It is full of interesting photos and detailed commentary from Joseph and his dad!

Richard Lewis

Coaching Update

Firstly, I wish to thank all our athletes for their perseverance and hard work keeping up with their training plans during this most difficult and challenging of times. I understand training alone must be a particularly daunting experience with the added difficulties of trying to stay motivated and as weeks pass, keeping up the momentum.

I have received requests for ergo plans, circuits and S & C workouts and I believe members are training regularly and morale, under the circumstances is good. The junior squad are regular in forwarding ergo scores to me and there are some impressive results coming through causing many changes to the junior leader board! There's also been lots of new equipment purchased to assist with training both at LVRC and at home, which is always good to hear.

The junior captains Flynn and Freya are keeping in touch with the squad via zoom on Saturday mornings by putting together their own circuits which is a fantastic way to keep fit together, stay motivated and have fun.

We have seen a number of virtual entries into EIRC and BRICs during lockdown and as expected our amazing juniors again achieved medal status. This is entirely due to their own hard work and dedication to the sport by completing their training schedules and keeping up that fighting spirit right through to the finish. A Big Well Done to all!

Our GB athletes Flynn and Emily are still going strong and working hard towards water trials, ergo scores are improving brilliantly but unfortunately due to lockdown the February water assessments have been cancelled and rescheduled to a date yet to be confirmed at the end of March. The next 5k r26 ergo assessments are due to be submitted not later than 7th March and training is currently underway with this in mind. The training intensities these athletes achieve are massive and the sessions both on and off the ergo are fiercely competitive. A Big Well Done to you both for all you have achieved so far.

Lesley Kuguloglu

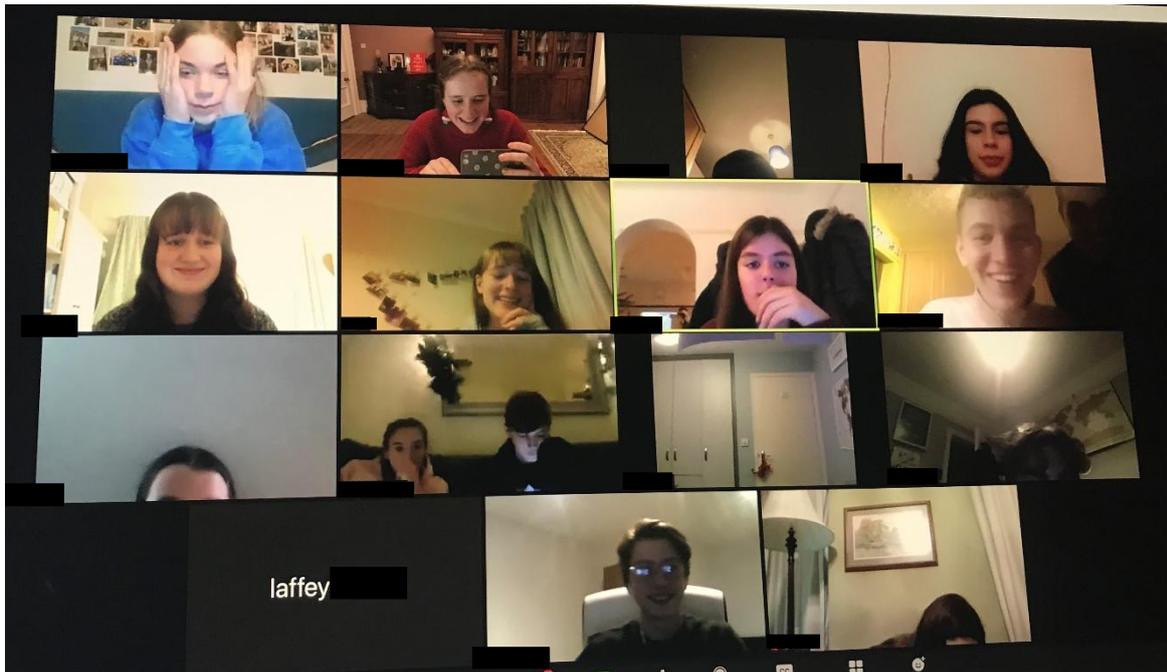
Sore legs even in lockdown!

Since the announcement of the January lockdown LVRC Juniors have teamed together as always. Missing our usual training schedule, we decided it was time to put together some weekly work outs via zoom.

Despite cats and dogs regularly photobombing, the sessions have been very successful. This is a true testament to the spirit and resilience of the juniors! It is lovely to catch up with the team and keep fit from the safety and comfort of our own homes.

We are now on our 4th week of Saturday work outs and our next goal is to add a weekday workout to our routine. Junior Club Captains, Freya and Flynn, have been busy writing the training plans and we are looking to other members of our team who want to get involved in designing some workouts!

Alongside training we have managed to squeeze in some quizzes! Here is a photo of our Christmas Quiz.



Juniors at the online Christmas Quiz

Despite missing rowing on the open water, the juniors are all well. In these difficult times we have taken comfort in leaning on each other and supporting one another. We are all really looking forward to when we can get back out on the water – but for now our zoom workouts will have to suffice!

Happy New Year and stay safe from the Juniors!

Freya Semple

Warrington RC Saturday Zoom Tabata

From April 2020, Warrington Rowing club hosted weekly Tabata sessions, open to all rowing clubs. At 9am on Saturday mornings, members from LVRC joined Warrington and several other clubs (over 50 participants) for an hour workout and yoga cool down. Each week was followed with a cup of tea and catch up via zoom. This was the perfect opportunity to turn a negative situation into a positive one, as we met rowers from across the country, whilst stuck in our

living room. Huge thanks to Jen Hinds (who hosted the sessions) and the rest of WRC for continuing to run this throughout 2020 and 2021.

If you missed out on these during the first national lockdown and would like to join us as we continue throughout 2021, please contact Sam Fairbanks/Hope Ball via Team App or LVRC Facebook page.



Warrington RC online training

Charity octuple row

On Sunday 6th December, a crew from our women's squad returned to the club (post-first lockdown closure) with a long-distance charity scull. This was to raise funds for Claire House Children's Hospice, in memory of Holly Dawson, who sadly died last year. To honour her on what would have been her 19th Birthday, our ladies sculled together in the octuple for 19km. Together with several other Claire House Staff, friends & family (all covering 19 units of distance/time etc) over £4,000 was raised for Claire House. Well done ladies and all involved!



Pictured: Cath Thursby (Cox), Kate Wilson (Stroke), Grace Skirrow, Hope Ball, Beth Hiorns, Jenny Davies, Ruth Dudley, Kat Whitelaw, Kate Skinner (Bow)

Baby Seal

During the first national lockdown of 2021, our safety officer Heather Parry spotted an unfamiliar face outside of the club...a seal pup! The pup wriggled across the slipway of the dock and back into the water after being spotted. Luckily, after posting footage on 'Wirral Wildlife' Facebook page, we were contacted by a marine mammal medic from British Divers Marine Life Rescue, who visited the club to try find the pup and attempt a relocation.

Unfortunately, there was no sign, but we have been made aware of the procedure that should be taken for future sightings.

If anyone spots the seal pup (or any other marine mammal) at the club, please contact British Divers Marine Life Rescue by calling their rescue hotline (01825 765546). Posters will be displayed around the club, with further procedure



details and contact information.



Quiz

During 2020 and due to the pandemic, it seemed like our social calendar must come to a halt. Thanks to our committee members, we managed to learn and adapt to bring our club socials online! Our captaincy team (Sam Fairbanks & Hope Ball) hosted several quizzes throughout lockdown, keeping our spirits high and feeding the competitive sides we all know and love as rowers!



Ladies 8 Return to Rowing

Hope Ball





Women's eight on the water

Boathouse and boat refurbishment

Lockdown 1 was looking grim until Heather invited me to the rowing club for a spot of DIY.

Little did I know on April 1st that we would leave no stone unturned in our quest to bring the rowing club back to its former glory! We began by rubbing down and painting the bars in front of the shutters. We then white washed the front walls which made an incredible difference.

Once we had finished painting most of the oars, we moved upstairs where armed with dusters, mops, hoover and painting equipment, we tackled

everything from dusty furry radiator pipes to the mouldy ceiling in the men's showers. In the process we found lots of jobs for Mike who spent many hours working at the club.

After weeks of painting the bar, gym and changing rooms we turned our attention to the outside. We found a tin of turquoise metal paint which transformed the rusty bollards into mermaid tails!

The railings were painted, the grass was cut and two tyre planters filled with flowers appeared either side of the newly wood stained bench. A picnic bench bought by Heather and an old parasol I found at home completed the look. We had our tea breaks in the sunshine sometimes with Lesley, Brigitte and Mike. One morning we arrived to the sight of a fender which had broken loose. It resembled a big, black whale and spent several days floating around the docks until it was towed away.

My worse memory was my first litter pick when I managed to find a dead rat! It went straight back into the docks.

Debra Winson



Bow section of Rosemary at the paint sprayer



Stern section of Rosemary at the paint sprayer

Charlie and Gill's return to rowing

Although the Women's Masters crew couldn't resume rowing until September we were able to go down to the club and sit outside on the bench admiring the handiwork of Brigid etc with their plants in troughs and tyres. The wildlife was plentiful as there was no disturbance.

I spent several evenings on land duty accompanied by my Labrador Charlie who took it all very seriously. Whilst the pair of us sat on his dog bed (me with my binoculars) he would survey the water watching the single scullers negotiate the dock and then welcoming them back onto dry land.





In these dark Winter days when the sky and the sea are '50 Shades of Grey' (the colour not the book) its so nice to reflect on those sunny Spring / Summer days .

The Masters crew were so excited to be reunited and to get back out onto the water in late September. After 8 months we were also going to get into a boat! A big day for all of us. Heather was the Cox so we knew we were in safe hands.

We managed several laps of the dock over the ensuing weeks and although a tad 'rusty' our fitness held up. Lesley was pleased with our technique so that was praise indeed.

The other highlight of 2020 was that 2 members of our crew were to become Grandmothers. My gorgeous grandson William (future rower) was born in October and Alexia's beautiful granddaughter Halle on Christmas Day! When

we next race can we have extra points for being Grannies 😁?

Stay safe everyone. See you all on the 'other side'. Never again will I take the benefits of rowing (physical & mental) for granted again.

Gill Childs

Further thoughts on lockdown

As the final online class for this week ends on another crisp January afternoon, and the winter sun begins to make silhouettes out of the farther trees I can see from my window, my eyes idle on the sky spaces between the foliage a moment, 'It's still light enough for a row', I think. What is it about rowing of all things, that I have come to crave when I cannot take part? Why does it resonate with me so much? We humans will seek the familiar, whether consciously or unconsciously. In this moment of reflection I realise the familiar for me...

There are some things about rowing that resonates with aspects of my time in the military, the better aspects. There is that knowing that as I layer up at home for an ice-cold row, fuel up and head out, the rest of the crew are doing the same. I know that when we all arrive there will be banter as Heather counts heads and organises us. There is a moment in the hubbub that we lose our names and become numbers and Heather becomes the cox – moving from

individuals to a crew. Simultaneously we are liberated from the every-day, we become 'other'. We leave behind our culture of overthinking, embracing instead the necessary headspace needed to interpret rowing's more sensory nuances. Next come the orders, after post oar manoeuvres, we muster before the beast, organised and ready to take the strain.

Old war wounds creak into action but we press on regardless as we synthesise our efforts towards raising the beast from its boathouse slumber. We shuffle and tilt, heave and lift, working the beast into the light of day. We have placed our trust for guidance into the cox, duty bound to bark orders. Crew comms remain at a minimum with our burden on our shoulders, waiting for next orders. In an almost showy display of crew strength, the mighty beast is raised up high before deftly sweeping it down into the water.

As we assemble and prep, we buddy up. While No.5 loosens No.3's stretcher, No.3 put No.5's oar in, No.2 grabs No.1's drink while No.1 wrestles to open their gate. The cox checks comms and crew focus is steadied. Having abandoned our names and now our shoes, as one, we push off waking the beast from its slumber at last.

The first few strokes begin a conversation unspoken with each other, a sort of crew force. We sense a need to adjust and account for each other in pursuit of our mission objective.

Seasoned by the unpredictable British weather and driven by an insatiable pursuit of the perfect 'slide n glide' we, the crew wrangle with Neptune's torments on his more turbulent days, a maniacal grin on our faces as we drive on, stopping only at the command of our cox. On the days when Neptune's moods are fair, we strive to do the water justice to the glass like serenity stretched out before us like a mirage.

We don't pick rowing, rowing picks us. There are unseen qualities required to earn a seat in the boat. To hear that unspoken conversation in the crew, to feel beyond the physical and just enough kamikaze to laugh in the face of nature's worst.

Rowing jargon remains amongst rowers, and there is little room for polite requests and soft voices. Camaraderie is earned and rewards are given officially in the form of shiny things. Occasionally we get a jolly in the form of a race or to become Vikings, but no two missions are ever the same. We maintain our own constant for the sake of comrades, gaining strength and rock

steady guidance from our cox to fight through the obstacles before us in every mission.

There are non-rowing civilians outside of the gates that, when we tell them, 'I'm a rower' likely envisage perhaps hazy afternoons in a wooden tub on a river. Long, lazy graceful strokes are taken as picnickers with parasols look on from an impossibly manicured grassy verge. They may even entertain an image of the Oxford Cambridge boat race in their mind's eye, splashing and dashing, high on the ancient tradition of the other half. Until they are in the thick of it though, they will never truly understand.

It seems I have found the familiar in what is unfamiliar to most people I know. This familiar may be entirely subjective but as the clear winter sky dims between the trees foliage, I conclude that I am happy that rowing chose me.

Angie McCormick

Messages from the Club Assistant Treasurer

Our final group of articles from the Assistant Treasurer, Hazel Russell, update members on the club's financial position, which has been radically affected by the Covid19 pandemic.

Happily, the club has managed to continue operation, albeit fleetingly, as various Government and British Rowing controls have allowed varying levels of operation both on and off-water.

The articles above show how members have responded, particularly to maintain the boathouse and equipment and to keep members active and enthused.

However, the financial situation remains critical and I would urge members to continue to support the club, by paying their subscriptions and maintaining their membership. I'm sure that we will come through this terrible time with a stronger club and perform well on the water, when we finally get back to competition. Please remember that the only source of income that the club has is its members and costs continue to be incurred in keeping the boats insured and the building in good order.

Impact of Covid 19 on LVRC Membership

Unfortunately many members stopped paying their subs when the Club closed in March 2020, an unprecedented situation which made chasing people for owed subs as per the rules inappropriate given the circumstances. An email was sent to the full membership asking those that normally paid monthly to pay up front for the year if they could, which resulted in 6 members who previously paid monthly paying the full annual membership, which we were very grateful for. (One member paid in full for next year's membership as well, and though she admitted that was by mistake, she is happy that we keep it!)

When the Club re-opened in July 2020 many members resumed their monthly payments and the hard work of the Junior Co-ordinators paid off with 12 new monthly paying Juniors joining the club. The Club closed again just before Christmas 2020 and we await news to see when and how we can reopen in 2021

Hazel Russell

'50' Club

The 50 Club is a fundraising scheme primarily to purchase new equipment or pay for the repair of existing equipment.

It only costs £2.50 per month, and you will be allocated your own number between 1 and 100. A monthly draw is made giving you the chance to win £45.00. At present we have less than 100 members so the odds are pretty good. Once we have expanded membership of the 50 Club we will be able to offer larger quarterly prizes of £60 and £120.

If you are a lapsed member please re-join quickly to keep your old number! Membership enquiries at present to poppyrichardlewis@gmail.com please (we are having difficulties with our lvrc.co.uk emails at present so could you please contact the Club Chairman, Richard Lewis on his home email until we can get the problem resolved?- he will pass on the details to the Assistant Treasurer).

You can pay by standing order, £2.50 per month or £30 for the year. The LVRC 50 Club is open to Members or indeed anyone who wants to have a go, we

never turn anyone away. Please do however put your name and 50 Club in the reference when you instruct your bank, or we won't know who you are.

Month drawn	Name	50 Club Number
February 2020	Liz Naylor	58
March 2020	Elsbeth Bromiley	56
April 2020	Liz Naylor	58
May 2020	Sue Earley	75
June 2020	Stuart Potter	33
July 2020	Mike Vick	52
August 2020	Andrea Hutson	58
September 2020	Richard Beckley	26
October 2020	Sue Lewis	71
November 2020	Richard Lewis	50
December 2020	Anne Stewart	92
January 2021	Heather Parry	22

As visiting the bank is hard given the current circumstances, if any of our winners would like their winnings paid directly into their bank, please email the Club Chairman, Richard Lewis (poppyrichardlewis@gmail.com) who will arrange for this to be done.

Hazel Russell

Olympic Gold Octuple refurbishment

In February 2020 an appeal was sent out to all current members, friends and parents (and special thanks to Peter Duff et al for galvanising many of the 'Golden Oldies'). We asked the membership to pledge a sum of money to match-fund a Rowing Foundation application to reconfigure Olympic Gold into an octuple mainly for the use of the Junior squad. We needed £1,000 in donations in order to fully leverage funding from the Rowing Foundation.

In response we received pledges to the value of £2,290 with many offering to gift aid their donations. We received many lovely responses as well including:

“I will give £250 towards the conversion of Olympic Gold the boat that was named for Wallasey School by Steve Redgrave on a visit to the club after winning his first Olympic gold medal”

In April we received confirmation of the grant from the Rowing Foundation and contacted all the pledgers asking them to make good on their promises. Although this email was sent out at the height of the pandemic and lockdown, we have to date received £2,330 with only a few of the pledges remaining unfulfilled.

We have been hesitant to chase pledgers and push for more donors, given that many will be suffering financial uncertainty due to the current circumstances, but we have a list, and a plan to make this come good during 2021. Once we are again fully open for good we will hold an re-launch event and a celebration to which we will invite all donors, pledgers, members and friends old and new. We are sure this will galvanise some missing pledgers as well as generate some new donations.

Hazel Russell



Finally, a photo from our 'furthest-flung member' in Auckland, New Zealand. Maureen Kenny has sent us this picture of an eight and launch on Auckland Harbour, as the sun rises over the Pacific. Go beyond the headland and the next stop is South America!



Keep safe and I look forward to seeing everyone back on the water in the months to come

Richard Lewis Club Chairman