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### **Chairman's Report 2014/15**

I will continue my self imposed habit of starting my report by looking at the wider sporting arena. We have plenty to celebrate, particularly a spectacular success in the Ashes Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes dominating Formula One and a third win for the Men's Eight at the recent World Rowing Championships. The continued domination by the Women's Pair is awesome and our own Zac Lee-Green finishing fourth in Lightweight Men's Quads in the World Championships gives us plenty to look forward to next year.

I concluded last years report with:

"Llandaff Rowing Club is gearing itself up for another Golden Era. The membership continues to grow, and we are slowly but surely putting into place the structures and funding to deliver our potential – I urge you all to be part of the continuing renaissance of the club we all belong to"

I will be the first to agree that this statement has yet to be fulfilled, we are not yet in another Golden Era. I will look at how I think we can ensure that it comes to pass in the rest of my report.

The highlight for me of the year came from meeting Jenny Ashman. For those of you who didn't meet her at our regatta, Jenny donated a Silver Goblet and Salver to the club. They were passed to her by her uncle who was a member of the club before the First World War. What made Jenny inspirational for me was her total dedication to volunteering and fund raising for the West Midlands Air Ambulance, with over £1.5m raised by her alone to keep the service on the air. What could we do with a similar amount of money, and more importantly, what could we do with that dedication, drive and determination?



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As we all know, our club is essentially run by volunteer labour, supplemented by paid staff in areas such as coaching and the bar. I noted last year that we were looking to employ a bar manager and we were lucky to employ Jim Meah. Jim made some great strides during his short time with the club, but unfortunately, we were unable to retain his services. Managing the resulting situation took a lot of time and effort and dominated GMC discussion for a lot of the year, and is still work in progress. Without Christine Hughes, Ian Peters and Simon Spiller the Club would have simply ceased to function as a viable commercial concern – for this we all owe them our considerable gratitude.

As always, I will leave the report on our actual performance on the water to our Captain, however, I will comment that once again, we have had considerable support from our volunteer coaches in the absence of full time paid coaching, John McTeague, Jack Thomas, Ceri Peters, Christine Hughes, Gary Brace, Dawn Brace, Mary Yee, Rhodri Hill and Laura Hyatt have certainly given us better results than we could have obtained without their input

We need to celebrate all our volunteer labour, and I will mention a few people that have contributed to the well being of our club:

Maurice has taken on the role of the treasurer and has done a fantastic job, he has given us all the information we need to help us reach sensible and pragmatic decisions on what we can and cannot afford, the amount of hard work that he has contributed is enormous.

Sarah has once again dedicated an entirely unreasonable part of her life to the Captains role, I sometimes wonder how she can run the rest of her life given all the time she spends at the club and on club and Welsh Rowing business.

Dan and Dai Briley – anyone who has used a boat refurbished by Dan and Dai, and anyone who will use the newly insulated Gym will have great reason to be grateful for their generosity and the work that they have put in. The meticulous attention to detail is great to see – who says British craftsmanship is dead?

Laura Starrs has been responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the boat fleet – keeping what we have now in a usable state until Dan and Dai can work their miracles –



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and I am sure she would be the first to say that she has far too much to do as a result of careless boat damage.

Andy Pratt and the regatta committee's first year (of many we hope) in post led to a successful and profitable regatta – despite what the weather threw at us on the Sunday.

The entire GMC and Officers of the club have worked hard this year, and deserve recognition – it can sometimes feel a thankless task, but my gratitude to all the GMC members needs to be placed on record.

I am sure that I have missed many volunteers out of this list, the Catering crew did their usual spectacular job, and I see different people pulling the trailer for every regatta. Only you know if you have done enough to support our club this year – if you have, then a huge vote of thanks is due to you.

I challenge us all – myself especially - to match the dedication shown by these individuals. At the last AGM, we agreed that we would expect each member to spend 10 hours per year supporting the club in a voluntary role. This has not been policed or checked, but can we all look ourselves in the mirror and say we have matched or beaten this expectation?

Enough of the past, what of the future? My work commitments have meant that I have not been able to dedicate as much time as I would like to fulfil the role of your Chairman for this year, and as such I will not be standing for re-election.

After having the privilege to be your Chairman for four years, what can we look back on with pride and what is still to be done:

1. The management structure of the club is far more agile than it was, however, have we lost something of the spirit of the club by not having a “Social Committee” to organise the “fun” part of the club – Fundraising is vital; the events put on by the fundraising committee have been highly enjoyable and generated great income, but have we got a gap here – do we need someone to step up to the plate and organise social events, on a “Not for Profit” basis but to enhance the social cohesion of the club?
2. The financial state of the club is reasonably healthy, Maurice will expand further in the Treasurers report. Equally importantly we now have the right reports to ensure that the



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GMC takes financial decisions recognising the current and future forecast of income and expenditure

3. Membership has grown out of all proportions, as I have commented previously, the Legacy of the London Olympics is alive and living in Llandaff, I would however question whether we are ready if we get a similar increase in interest in Rowing following Rio?
4. Most importantly, above and beyond anything else, we must recognise that any club is nothing but a collection of like minded individuals, better put by the Cambridge Dictionary:-

“an organization of people with a common purpose or interest, who meet regularly and take part in shared activities”

We cannot rely upon being able to afford all the paid support we would ideally want, but our skill base across our membership is huge. We need to pull together as a club, value all our members and their skills and input. To misquote John F Kennedy’s inaugural speech

“ask not what your Club can do for you, ask what you can do for your Club.”

It has been my honour to be your Chairman for the last four years, giving something back to the Sport and Club that I am proud to be part of. I wish my successor all the luck in the future, and will gladly offer any support he or she requests.

Paul Bradshaw

Chairman