

NEWSLETTER



Annual Regatta Cancelled

The Executive Committee at Llandaff Rowing Club regrets to announce that due to the continuing uncertainty of the coronavirus, we have decided to cancel this year's Regatta scheduled for 11th and 12th July 2020.

The health, safety, and welfare of all who take part or contribute to the regatta are of paramount importance and we judge that the risks to these are not acceptable.

We recognise that this decision will come as a major disappointment to our competitors, members, supporters, volunteers and all who look forward to our summer event.

We too, are deeply upset but look forward to welcoming you back again in July 2021 to celebrate our 75th Anniversary with us.

On behalf of Llandaff Rowing Club, Stay Safe.



A real mixed bunch of things for you all to read in this fourth edition with signs of change in the offing in the next edition in two weeks time, we will, hopefully be able to bring you details of a limited and controlled resumption of our sport.

Already a number of club members past and present have written articles for our Newsletter and more are promised for future editions. There is however an ongoing need for new and interesting material. What we have already published shows that many of our members do not live in a parochial backwater, but have international interests, great ideas and interesting sidelines, ranging from an International regatta course in Wuhan, to raising money for charity, to fixing a new tap, and much more.

I am proud to introduce Gareth Beech on board to help with the future of our newsletters. If you have a story to tell or something to say, let us hear about it. Please email Gareth at gareth.beech67@btinternet.com or myself at skdenleyhill@gmail.com

PRIDE IN LLANDAFF JUNIOR SQUAD...

You may be Junior oars Men and Women now but one day you won't be. I, together with some other Senior and Masters' men and women were once Junior rowers and do well to remember it. It helps sometimes at our age to look at photographs of your early rowing career.

The current Junior squad led by coaches Ola Schlottmann and Sarah Thomas have maintained a remarkable level of training throughout the lockdown.

Credit is due to the coaches but mostly to all you Juniors for doggedly sticking with it. The club is proud of you.

If you have any favourite photos of

your back-garden training, we would love to print them in future editions of the lockdown newsletter.

It would also be great to have a short note from you telling us what you think of the home training and are you looking forward to getting back on the water?

Are there any aspects of the lockdown that you think you could adapt to normal training when it resumes? A couple of sentences would suffice.

Your views are important, as you are our club's future.

Email your thoughts to either Sarah, Ola, Gareth or myself.

Steve Denley-Hill

A Letter from our Membership Secretary

This notification was put into the first news letter, due to continued lock down of the club, this proposal will continue. You will be updated on membership fees as soon as we know more about when you will have access to the club.

Dear Members

This is a notification to inform all members that GMC have been discussing what to do re the membership fees in a time where you are unable to use the club. So this is the proposal that we have decided upon: For 2019-20 all membership payments are to stay as they are, so if you have paid your membership up front or if you are paying via standing order, this will not change. Instead what the club is proposing is that memberships for 2020-21 will be discounted by however many weeks the club is in lock down. For those who will be moving away, due to going to University for example, you can make an application on this basis for the fees to be refunded for the amount of time the club is closed (this does not include students who will be joining as Non Term Time Student membership). Also if you find yourself in personal financial difficulty due to not being able to work, please feel free to make a case for a refund. These will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Please note this would not be done until the club is open again. This proposal has been decided because we don't know how long the lockdown will last and the club will be closed. We are not in a financial position to refund members at present, as we still have to pay our bills and we have no commercial income to support the club. Thank you for your patience and we hope you are all staying fit and safe.

Kindest regards

Christine Hughes

Membership Secretary

River Taff rowers tough out 6,000-mile trek to China

ROWERS on the Taff went the extra mile by toughing out an ergo, running and cycling marathon all the way to China, reports Nick Hartland.

The 9,038km (5,616 miles) Cardiff to Wuhan challenge saw Llandaff Rc senior and masters rowers raise more than £2,300 for two charities by keeping fit in May during lockdown.

And not only did they achieve the distance, they passed it in style, recording 9,800km (6,089 miles) in total. Club captain Laura Starrs said: "Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the current lockdown we are unable to train at the club.

"So a group from the masters' and seniors' squads set up a challenge using their time exercising at home to raise money for two charities 'Noah's Ark' – the children's hospital for Wales – and 'Refuge' – a support group that helps women and children fleeing domestic violence.

"The challenge was to make up the distance from Cardiff to Wuhan, in China, where it is believed the pandemic

first occurred.

"The distance is 9,038km, and the group decided to do this distance through rowing on the ergo, running and cycling.

"The challenge started at the beginning of May, and in just a month we did it.

"Not only did we achieve the row, run and cycle to Wuhan but with our final distance we passed and headed for the East of China! Amazing!! and we're now ready for the regatta season.

"And it's not too late to donate and help raise more for the two charities, by going to the 'Just Giving' website and search for 'Llandaff Rowing Club'."

To date £1,457 has been donated and Gift Aided to Noah's Ark and £887 to Refuge, making a total of £2,344.

For Noah's Ark go to www.justgiving.com/fundraising/llandaff-rowing-club2 and for Refuge see www.justgiving.com/fundraising/llandaff-rowing-club1

• *This article was written by Nick Hartland and it currently appears on the home page News on the Welsh Rowing website*

Tapped up

Here's how it started, a remark passed by the newsletter editor, reminding that he didn't have a working email address for me.

That's no problem I said, I'll ping a note over in the next day or two and you just reply to confirm it's arrived. In due course off went the note and later a reply with the query, *"..might I persuade you to create a short article for the next or future Newsletter. The subject is up to you."*

I had well and truly been tapped up. Never mind the fear, what a lockdown opportunity. And with a generous copy deadline more than two weeks away there would be plenty of time to think up a few words. How difficult could it be? The only thing was that my experience in rowing extended not much further than the occasional shift on the oars as a 7 year old in a plastic moulded Tabur 3, fishing in the sea at places like Tighnabruich and Tayvallich on Scotland's holiday west coast. Even then, there was a tiny seagull outboard to get us home, just in case.



Tabur 3
- a brick of a boat

Beyond that my rowing life had grown at LRC no further than dropping off and picking up my two daughters for training or competitions, and a couple of afternoons each year on the regatta burger tent. But that wasn't going to stop me. I had a look at the first couple of newsletters, something good to stay informed as well as pass the time while that wasn't possible actually at the club, either in training or chatting around the car park.



A bit of insight too, into what people are doing to stay sharp and be ready for when boats and blades get wet again, preparing for the next competitive events, whenever they come.

Some of that I can see at home with the junior sessions taking over the garden (the weather as it has been and when the wifi stretches far enough.) It's an extraordinary thing that a zoom call can involve so much movement and effort, not to mention the commitment and organisation to get them going at all. The experience I have of zoom is static by comparison.

David Mackie : Junior parent

To the article. Always write about what you know I remembered as being some good advice, and look for inspiration in the everyday things. A few days passed but there still wasn't really a subject. Then a few more, still no subject.

Then the taps note came. The taps at the club were being changed to make them Covid compliant. The pictures showed how the capstan style communal taps had been flipped to levers, meaning you could put them on and off with your elbows or feet or anything but hands, to limit the spread of infection. *Inspirational!*

Since lockdown in our house had already sent DIY activity off the scale, why not do the taps at home and write about that? A week long process of waterworks renovation and replacement got underway, here are photos after the work was completed.

- Chrome indoor mains, installed by previous owner in the garage, with a sink. It needed cleaning up and a new washer.



Dripping no longer, more of a torrent.

- Brass outdoor jammed closed. Freed up and then made a bit shinier using a rag soaked in vinegar. Ready to accept bucket, hose or a watering can.



And the last, a tour de force.

- Brand new retro fit outdoor which included drilling an alarmingly large hole through a breeze block wall and some minor plumbing to a mains inlet. Astonishingly it is leak free, and it works.



Lockdown has meant a few things in our house, a bit more time together, learning not to expect everything to happen straight away. There will, of course, be a queue at the shops and the broadband can actually get full up. The other one? You might get asked to write something for the Rowing Club newsletter and if you rely on the guidance "The subject is up to you." It's actually quite a lot of fun. That's not something I'd really expected and now it also means there's a working tap pretty much wherever you look round here, so I guess we really have been well and truly tapped up.

David Simmonds - Master Rower and Welsh Umpire

The Book Wot I Wrote

So, how's the lockdown project going? Built that extension?

Fluent in Spanish? Finished writing that book?

I'm afraid I can't offer any kind of assistance if you're still working on the first two, but I have a couple of suggestions on the book writing.

About three years ago, languishing in retirement after a working lifetime as a journalist, diligently pursuing the facts, I thought I'd have a crack at writing some fiction. I was lucky enough to sell a couple of short stories and win a competition, and my ambitions grew – I'd write a book!

Where to start? Well, they say write what you know about, and in truth I'd wanted for quite a while to write something about my first job, nearly fifty years ago, as a trainee reporter on a group of weekly newspapers in the South Wales valleys. It was at times nerve-wracking, being plunged into a society and culture I knew little about (my mum's from Abercynon, but she left at 14 and I was born and raised in North London), trying to come to grips with a new job for which I'd had no training, but I met some great people, had quite a bit of fun and learned a lot.

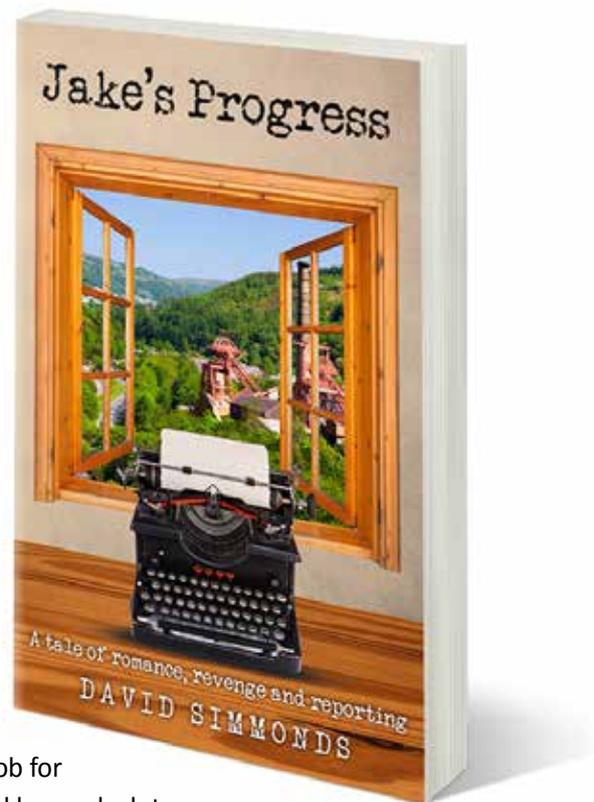
So I had something on which I could base my fictitious hero, Jake – but I needed a plot. It took some work, but I came up with one in the end. It has action: in his first few weeks on the Edwardstown Enquirer, Jake gets involved with two would-be freedom fighters (we're in the late 1960s, my favourite decade) who are determined to rid Wales of the English yoke. They take him on a night-time bombing exercise which goes disastrously wrong. There's some romance: while Jake finds himself falling for the charms of a very attractive colleague, he also attempts to reignite the fires of a faltering love affair with his long-term girlfriend, Amanda, but that isn't helped when she is found half-naked on the landing of his boarding house by a very fierce landlady. There's intrigue: Amanda falls for a lad who rescues her when a rugby game Jake is reporting on turns into a mass brawl – but the lad is one of the freedom fighters. There's a baddy, a sinister Minister with murder in mind. There's quite a few laughs, and the whole thing ends in a car chase and an explosion. You get the idea, then; this is never going to be a GCSE set text in English Literature, it's intended as pure entertainment.

Next, the major stumbling block, actually getting down to writing it. And this is where I got lucky; I came across National Novel Writing Month. This is a web-based organisation which, every year, challenges anyone who cares to try to write a 60,000 word novel in the month of November. The emphasis is on just bashing out the words; no revision, no editing, just keep writing, enter your word count every day on the website and it will tell you if you're on target to finish on 30th November.

It worked for me. After 30 days of getting up at 6 a.m. and hammering away for two or three hours before going down to breakfast, I ended up with the first draft of 'Jake's Progress', about a thousand words over the target.

That's when the editing started. Over the next few months I must have deleted around 5,000 words but still ended up with 72,000 of them, words which I'd grown sick of going over and over again. So publishing 'Jake's Progress' seemed the next step. In the end I went for self-publishing. It would have been great to have been snapped up by an agent or a publishing house, but the chances of that happening are, while not impossible, infinitesimally small, and you have to be both very talented and extremely persistent to get a deal – J K Rowling was rejected 12 times after she'd written the Harry Potter series when she submitted her novel 'The Cuckoo's Calling' under a pen name, with one publisher suggesting she might take a writing course. Self-publishing is not the same as vanity publishing; there are any number of companies who'll publish your book if you pay them enough, although they tend not to market themselves quite like that. And if you just want to get it out there, rather than leaving it lying on your computer gathering cyber dust, you can publish (and sell) your book on Amazon for a very small outlay – I think mine cost me around £50, and most of that was on commissioning a couple of 'extras' for the cover. And I sold enough copies to recoup that, even though royalties are scandalously low. It's still on sale, if you're interested, on Amazon in either paperback or Kindle editions.

Will Jake have any further adventures? Well, in my case, it all went pretty much downhill after the Rymney Valley Express (to the South Wales Echo then BBC Wales) but I might be able to dredge up something to keep him busy. Not in this lockdown, though.



Spending half the year travelling around the world, Nigel Tranter, a Fitness member found he could not commit to the training to learn to row or even contemplate about competing in regattas. Watching from the bank at various regattas supporting and cheering, he had an urge to be part of the rowing community, so took the courage to do the Umpire's exam, and is now a qualified Welsh Umpire.

So you think your industry is boring...

I ran into Steve Denley Hill the other day and he asked, "Would you write something for the newsletter?", I responded that it's a rowing newsletter and although I'm a member of the club I'm just a fitness member.

"Well write anything of your choice, how about your industry", he responded.

"MY INDUSTRY...!!! - are you crazy?..", I retorted. I work in the credit card industry, performing payment card assessments. In what universe is that going to be interesting to the rowing community? I pondered.

Well after some thought, here we are. The article that no one is really interested in and no one wants to read. The first article about credit card security (ever), in a rowing club newsletter. Thinking about the lockdown, I decided to try and explain what actually happens when you shop online (or if you're brave enough to go out shopping) and how (for the most part) your information is kept secure.

Let's say for some inexplicit reason you urgently need to buy toilet paper, (what were you doing in early March, slacker) you use the credit card in an actual shop as they don't take cash and after getting over your guilt of actually buying more toilet paper, you present your card.

What happens next? Well that depends on the type of card you present. Credit and debit cards are treated differently, as one hits your bank account and the other your credit card account. It also depends on how you perform the transaction. If you use a PIN (in a chip and PIN transaction) then that is validated by the terminal and is very secure. In fact, PIN based or EMV style transactions have reduced card present fraud by 89%. At this point you are either wondering "what does EMV mean" or you have decided to stop reading and do something more interesting like cataloguing your shoes.

I hope you're still with me here...if so, here goes..

EMV simply means Eurocard, MasterCard and Visa who were the companies that came up with the chip and PIN protocol.

After the PIN is validated the transaction is sent to the merchant acquirer (who are called that because they "acquire" the transaction). By the way, this transaction is sent clear text, that is not encrypted unless the payment terminal is using P2PE, which is Point 2 Point Encryption. Yes that's right when inventing EMV, the payments industry forgot to secure the overall transaction and had to invent a whole new protocol to fix that.

Next the Acquirer sends the transaction to VISA (or Mastercard if you use that type of card) who then send it to the Issuing Bank. Guess what? The Issuing Bank is your bank, the one that issued your card, that's why they are called the "Issuing Bank". Riveting



stuff this isn't it?

This whole process, by the way costs the merchant money (usually 1-3% of the transaction total) and is given the lovely name of the "Value Chain".

The Issuing Bank then either looks into your account (debit) or your credit card debt balance to determine if the transaction can go ahead. VISA also runs all their checks on the transaction while it passes through their network and reports back to the merchant and Acquirer, real time.

Once the transaction is authorised, the Issuing Bank send an authorisation code back to the Merchant via VISA and the Acquirer. Then the transaction is complete and you can walk out of the store with your toilet rolls.

If the transaction fails and there are lots of reasons for this, the merchant receives a code telling them what caused the failure, so they think you have no money in your bank account.

If you're still with me... online transactions are similar, only the validation process is not EMV or PIN, but the use of the three digit code on the back of the card, which is the CVV2 (well that's what VISA calls it, it has different names for each card type but lets just call it CVV2 for now).

This is validated using 3DS or 3 Domains Secure, which is an overly complex process that the industry revises every 3-5 years to independently validate the CVV2. I'm not going to describe this in detail because I'm limited in the size of this article and I don't want to push your will to live any further. Suffice to say, it's a set of security checks which reduces risk that the transaction is fraudulent.

After that is done, just like a shop transaction the merchant receives an authorisation code and your product is shipped. One small wrinkle with online transactions is that the merchant does not get their money until they ship the product, so unlike shop transactions, it's a 2-step process, the transaction is authorised, product is shipped and then the transaction is settled and the merchant gets paid.

So there you have it, a summary of what happens when you buy toilet paper with a credit or debit card.

All the above takes just 2-3 seconds to process from the time the machine accepts your card to the time the card comes out (except the online authorisation/ settlement stuff as described above). I have left out many more steps, because most of them are very technical and even more boring for you to read.

Finally, a serious point to remember, EMV are card present transactions, because you are there in the shop, so the merchant does not need your CVV2 – so you don't have to give it to them. Also if the merchant want to record your card number separately or requires other ID such as driving license, walk away.

With 'online' if you see multiple places to enter your card number and/or CVV2, don't shop there - it might not be safe. So Stay safe, Spend safe and keep shopping - after all VISA needs the money...(not)!

Llandaff Golden Year

1995 was Llandaff's 50th Anniversary, an unprecedented year for wins, in the Junior, Women and Mens squad. A coxed four and coxless pair in the Henley qualifiers, and brothers James and Huw Lewis, Martin Llun and Zoe Petersen representing Wales at the Home Internationals in Ireland.

1995 was also the year when the World Masters Regatta was held at Bled in Slovenia, one of the most beautiful regatta sites in the world, to which Llandaff RC sent a team of four, who succeeded in bringing home six Gold medals.

Probably the most important of these was the E quad sculls. Two of that crew are sadly no longer with us, the most recent being Alan Soulsby who passed away in January this year.

Alan was the bow steer of the quad and wrote an article about the regatta back then, and in particular the race itself. In memory of Alan Soulsby here is that article Alan wrote 25 years ago.

The FISA Masters Regatta

The 22nd World Veteran Rowing Championships or to give it its proper name the 22nd FISA Masters Regatta - 'masters' sounds better than veterans, especially as internationally veterans start at the ripe age of 27 where you have to wait until you are 32 in Britain. Not that I noticed, but was informed by a member of the Llandaff contingent that some of the younger female 'masters' looked quite delightful in their lycra one-piece rowing outfits - still I have better be careful as one does not want to be accused of being sexiest, for all I know maybe the younger male 'masters' looked equally delightful!

The regatta was held on Lake Bled, Slovenia at an altitude of 501 metres. Bled has been part of the Holy Roman Empire, has come under French Napoleonic rule, has been owned by a Belgian Industrialist, a merchant from Vienna and since 1937 has been state property. Lake Bled has an idyllic setting especially when compared to last years venue at Groningen, Holland, that was about as attractive as rowing on a paddy field or maybe a polder (unless you were a medal winner when it might have looked different). The weather during the regatta was varied, generally warm and sunny, but also with rain and hail - the size of which I have never seen before, more like ice cubes from heaven. In fact the lumps of ice injured people, ruined boats, (some of the wooden boats looked as if someone had machine gunned them) dented cars (my own included) and stopped the regatta for 2 hours.

The regatta is a two day event, actually there is a third day for mixed rowing on the Sunday that the 'Brits' and most other competitors don't bother with as they use that day to return home. The FISA masters officials don't appear to take the mixed rowing seriously either as the official programme only covers Friday and Saturday. The FISA Masters regatta started in 1974 and has been held in 12 different European countries and twice in north America, in Canada in 1985 and Miami 1991. It has come to Britain twice, Nottingham in 1979 and Glasgow in 1998. Next year the regatta will be held in Lake Velence, in Hungary and in 1997 Australia. So you can row as masters and see the world.

A few statistics for anyone interested: at Lake Bled there were 3500 competitors from 29 countries, sitting on 5244 seats, in 1686 boats - all according to FISA.

Germany (as you might expect) had the largest number of boats and seats) a total of 2379 respectively, with Great Britain next with 169 boats and 548 seats. Italy was the 3rd largest. As for people who travelled the furthest to compete, this went to the Australians with 16 boats and 67 seats, with the Americans in 55 boats and 172 seats. It was not all about large contingent as one lone E single sculler travelled all the way from Lima Peru to come 2nd in his race (had he been in any other heat he probably would have won).

Either of statistics, the race I had trained for and thought about for a very long time was the quad sculls, in FISA terminology E 4x - we had all spent hours on ergos, on the river in single sculling boats, and churned up and down the Taff in the quad and had narrowly missed winning at Henley Veteran Regatta (we blamed Steve's shoulder for losing).



BLED, SLOVENIA 1995 FISA 'MASTERS'
David Currie, Steven Denley-Hill, Alan Soulsby and Jeffery Lever (after winning E Quads)
The Squad won Gold medals in 6 events

Now we were in Bled racing the Internationals for a medal, only first place would do, as unlike the Olympics or World Championships, the FISA Masters only give medals for first.

It was raining, as we got into lane 4 at the last heat, the start time was 16.24. We out our stern into the hands of the lad, lying on stake boat, the starter did the roll call and announced there was 2 minutes to go, what seem to be an age the starter said it would be a 'quick' start. Attention - the German crew next to us did not wait for the word 'Go', they went. The rest of us, three other German crews and a Scottish crew waited for the command 'Go', the recall bell sounded, we all stopped, backed it down to the stake boats ready for the restart. Rudderkultb AM Wannsee were given a false start, we sat there sitting trying to keep the rubber grips dry ready for the next 'quick' start. This time no body jumped the gun, but the Germans in lane two, immediately started pulling away and by half distance had clear water over us, we were just ahead of the other crews.

Our race plan was to have a good start and to get into our stride, not to be panicked but to scull the race the way we had planned in practise. After 500 metres, we started pulling them back stroke by stroke, inch by inch. Part of our plan was to have an extra effort at 250m from the finish if we needed it! - we needed it, we were gaining on them but was still behind. With about 10m stroked to the finish we needed an extra special effort if we were going to do it, one shout of 'Go' or 'now or something and the whole crew responded, we had not all trained for a year to be narrowly beaten, with our final effort the German crew wilted, veered out of lane towards us and we won. The official result was to Llandaff/RAF by 0.92 of a second. Elation, we had achieved what we had set out to do.

Ten years ago, on 1st April 2010, British Rowing made changes for the UK to match the rest of the world. 'Veteran' rowers became known as 'Masters', and the age was lowered so that rowers from 27 years to over 80 can now compete in Masters events. Currently known today as The World Rowing Masters Regatta, it now ran over 5 days and last year had a record number of over 5,000 competitors from 722 rowing clubs. Llandaff RC still currently attends The World Rowing Masters Regatta and we have a few training for the next.

WHAT HAPPENED? ...

... Ten useful excuses for losing a race

"They had a better boat."

A valid excuse which must be used with extreme caution as it carries a real risk of provoking a lecture on care of equipment. NEVER use this excuse to an older member of the club since they will tell you at great length that in their day, you didn't get out of a clinker boat until you reached elite status.

"We weren't level/the cox's hand was up/they jumped the start."

This is a useful excuse since the start is generally out of sight of the spectators, however, it is probably not the best excuse to choose if you lose by more than one length.

"They drew the best side of the river."

To be really effective this excuse needs embellishing with detail about the stream, weeds, bends, wind speed and obstructions. Ensure that these details are impossible to check and never use this excuse to another cox (unless they also drew your side and lost).

"They were bigger than us."

Make noises about the need for more drugs/sex testing in sport. If the opposition is a lot bigger than you, be very careful that they don't overhear you making these noises.

"A swan attacked us/We were hit by lightning etc."

The 'fickle finger of fate' group of excuses are particularly useful if you lose by more than three lengths. To pull them off successfully you need a fertile imagination, a straight face and preferably a gullible audience. These excuses should be used sparingly (otherwise people will think you are jinxed) and should always be within the realms of possibility. Don't use 'We were abducted by aliens' as an excuse, even if it is true.

"We lost to the eventual winners."

Useful if it was a close race since it allows you to save face even if you get knocked out in the first round. Optional extras include 'We took them on the start', 'We were pulling back on them' and 'I'm sure they must be over-pointed'. Senior rowers often use the 'They rowed at Henley' variation of this excuse.

"One of our crew came off their seat."

This excuse can be used no matter what distance you lose by. Use additional detail such as 'we still held them most of the way' to give the impression that you struggled heroically against all odds. Be careful not to see it too often, however, or you may give the impression that there is a serious flaw in your rowing technique.

"Our cox steered an awful course."

An effective excuse which should be used with extreme caution (even if it is true). Most coxes are notoriously sensitive to criticism of their steering. Only use this if you are very sure your cox won't find out or if you only intend to row coxless boats in future.

"One of our crew was ill."

This excuse is ideal for the budding actor in your crew, useful props include asthma puffers, elastic bandages, Deep Heat and tablets of any kind. Avoid illnesses that resemble a hangover as this could quickly lose you the sympathy of your audience.

"They were faster than us."

The direct and honest approach, disarmingly simple but surprisingly little used.

