

NEWSLETTER

Progress with our Water Sessions

Last weekend was the first where club boats were available and the committee needed to review how things went. Overall, it wasn't too bad but there are some things that didn't work as well as I had hoped. Therefore, I have decided to try a slightly different approach this weekend, as discussed with the committee.

There will be a supervised junior session on Sunday between 7am and 11am. After 11am, time slots will be available to book as usual. All day Saturday will be available for private and club singles bookings.

I hope that this arrangement will provide a better way of managing supervised sessions which avoids them running over into the following time slots. I also want to see if it's possible to have more people on the water at a time while maintaining social distancing at bottlenecks, e.g. the landing stage and

boat houses. If this different approach works then it may be a template for supervised/coached sessions for other sections of the club in future.

A few other things I learned over the weekend:

- Don't forget to bring your own sponge/cleaning cloth for cleaning boats. We'll provide soap, water and buckets.
- Please give yourself plenty of time to get off the water and wash the boat before the end of your session. This is especially important if someone is taking over a club boat from you immediately after your session ends.
- The normal safety rules of the river still apply. If any part of the landing stage is covered in water then please do not go afloat. Also please stick to the central part of the landing stage between the red lines as the ends of the stage are less stable after February's



flooding.

- If you can't make your booked time for some reason (eg. river's up) please update the spreadsheet with N or No in the Time In or Time Out boxes.

That's all for now. Please bear with us as a committee while we try to find the best way of getting back to rowing. Our aim is to make sure we can all use the river safely while maintaining social distancing and good hygiene.

Please keep letting myself, the VCs or any of the committee know how the system is working in practice.

Stay safe

Laura - Club Captain
captain@llandaffrc.com



Dear Reader,

How time flies when you think you are enjoying yourself!

We started the LRC Newsletter (rowers reader's digest) several weeks after lockdown had started and this is now our sixth fortnightly edition with lots more interesting reading matter from club members.

After this edition we are moving from a fortnightly to every 3 weeks, so that the next edition will be on 1st August and we will review the situation again in early September.

In this Newsletter we have a variety of topics :- 'Working for the Diplomatic Service in West Berlin during the Cold War', 'Building a faster boat' by Ian Hall who is an engineer. In his article he mentions a sliding rigger scull in Munich. I was with Ian at that event and took the opportunity of trying one and can tell you that it was an interesting experience and that it was a very fast boat.

Please continue to read our ongoing series telling you the background of the people who have had club boats named after them. Each is written by a club member who was a close friend of the person and is part of our club history. Our friends from the Pentanque Club have written an article to give us a clearer understanding of who they are and the game they play. SianElin Griffiths reminisces about the LRC involvement in the 1994 "rowers right of passage event" the Boston Marathon. To conclude, do take time to read the contribution from Gergely Hanczár, our Hungarian club member, who explains and explores rowing in his city of Budapest and that of LRC and Wales.

2021 is our club's 75th Anniversary and we shall be telling you more about this in the next edition.

JUNIOR PARENTS, When conditions permit, the club will be running a series of Saturday morning seminars to explain rowing terminology and something about what is going on when your children boat out and thus enable you to have a clear understanding of their/ our sport. I hope you join us.

SKD-H

Come and Play

PENTANQUE

at Llandaff



By Heather
and Paul Milton

Some of you may have thought to yourselves 'what on earth are those people doing on the gravelled area next to the private boat sheds?' Well, we are playing the ancient game of 'Petanque', also known as 'Boules'. The Boules game has a very long history, dating back through the Middle Ages to ancient Rome, and before. In its current form, it originated in France.

Petanque (pieds tanqués) or 'feet planted', sees players stand with their two feet together inside a circle attempting to get more of their boules closer to a cochonet (jack) than their opponents. Played mainly in either singles or doubles teams, each player has 3 boules, which they take turns to throw with the opposing player(s). The game typically consists of several 'ends', where one or more points can be scored, and the first side to score 13 points wins the game. A simple game, Petanque can be played on an equal basis by anybody, both young and old.

In April 2018 the City of Llandaff Petanque Club was established alongside the beautiful River Taff at the Llandaff Rowing Club. From a few founding members, news of the club quickly spread and the membership has continued to grow with many of our

members now coming from the Llandaff area. The unique selling point of the game is that it is a sport that can be played together by both men and women, thus couples tend to join the club and learn to play together both competitively and also just for fun. The terrain or playing area at Llandaff was both designed and funded privately by the founding members. It consists of 10 pistes measuring 3 meters x 15 meters, set out on a fine gravel base, enabling as many as 10 matches to take place simultaneously. Not just a sports club, we at the City of Llandaff Petanque Club also enjoy social membership of Llandaff Rowing Club and we have a calendar of events which has included travelling to play abroad, wine tasting evenings, quizzes, treasure hunts and of course enjoying a warming drink on the balcony of the clubhouse overlooking the river Taff. If you want to play too, or just try out the game, come over to us when we are there, contact 07817 204376 or alternatively visit our website at www.llandaffpetanque.org.uk. New members are always welcome and you will find us a very friendly and sociable bunch.

SianElin Griffiths, a social member, is sadly no longer a competitive rower, but she remain active at the club, where you can catch her coaching children from Ysgol Plasmawr as part of the school's activity scheme. She originally taught at Whitchurch High before moving to Ysgol Plasmawr. One star pupil that SianElin taught to row was Zak Lee Green, who was quickly selected for the Welsh Squad, before joining the World Class Start Programme and into the GB squad.

MEMORIES OF THE 1994 BOSTON MARATHON

SianElin Griffiths

Back Row: Robin Ireland, Paul Dungey, Leon Stevens, Kate Breckenridge, Sue Hoddell, Cath Adams, Charis Koutzoukis, Caroline Barnett, Jaqui Crook

Front Row: Edward Gambarini (Cox), SianElin Griffith, Jane Manion, Jo Taylor (Cox)

Not in picture: Matt Griffiths

Times:

Ladies 8+ : 3 hrs 54 mins

Mens 4+ : 3 hrs 39 mins



On Sunday 18th September 1994, 14 members of Llandaff Rowing Club set out to conquer the 31 mile Boston Rowing Marathon. This is the first time that a Ladies 'eight' has represented the club and a long time since a Mens 'four' has competed. We would like to hope that this will be the start of many further representations as it is a challenge certainly worth experiencing.

In true Llandaff tradition, the Ladies borrowed a boat – the 'Ceridwen' from Monmouth, and started training quite late, unlike the Men who were seen on numerous occasions ploughing up and down the Taff with metronomic frequency! However did Edward manage to keep still for all that time?!

There was certainly no need to watch one's diet – "It's OK if I have those 10 bars of chocolate – I'm rowing a marathon next weekend!" Funny, but the same applied after the event – "Two pieces of cake won't make any difference, not to mention the 10 pints of Stella – I've rowed a marathon!" So we really shouldn't mention the fact that we all stuffed ourselves silly on the eve of the race in a little pizza place in Lincoln – they were certainly 'Llandaffed'!

So a glorious crisp and sunny Sunday morning dawned to the chorus of "I don't believe I'm doing this!" and "It's the T-shirts we've come for really!" Well, SianElin was heard saying that she refused to wear anything with 'It's long and hard' on it!!!

Photographs taken, Robin's Teflon Spray

administered (can anyone remember what this was for?), Camel backs (!!!) donned and refreshments and supplies stored, we tentatively boated to the cheers of onlookers – did they know something we didn't?!!

So, onward and forward (or backwards!) we paddled. "The race plan girls" said Jo our Cox "is to warm up for the first 30 miles and race the last mile", who was she trying to kid? Our only company was the occasional cow and sheep, not to mention the numerous strange beings called fishermen who dotted the riverbanks at regular intervals. No, it is not true that they throw maggots at passing crews!!! The scenery was delightful – or so we were told – our only view was water, water, water. Jane was heard to comment at numerous intervals "I'm not doing this again, there's no talent to ogle at!" So much for 'eyes in the boat'!

I think that it was with 8 miles to go that we realised that we could crack 4 hours – an immense lift to our sagging spirits since we'd anticipated taking around 5 hours! Those last couple of miles were a cross between pure torture and sheer relief that it would be over very soon. Crossing the finishing line to the sound of an empty gas canister being 'gonged' with a hammer is an emotion I'll certainly never forget, nor the onset of extremely sore limbs (not to mention bum!) and excruciatingly sore hands once we'd stopped. Was it worth it?

Try it next year for yourselves, but a handy tip – take your own flask of tea, food and portable shower – the facilities at Boston were not what you call palacial!

Both crews won their Senior 3 divisions, the Ladies 8+ even beat a Senior 1 crew! Alas, there were no pots to drink victoriously from, but we did all have a far better prize – a triangular pennant to mark the occasion!! Not forgetting the T-shirts of course!!

It has to be said that the real heroes of the day were our two Coxes – Jo Taylor and Edward – well, would you like to sit in a coxwain's seat for nigh on four hours?!!

A tremendous thanks has to be given to our support crew – Phil Barton and Martin Lunn – for the safe transportation of crews and boats. Their help and encouragement prior to and on the day was invaluable. We shouldn't really mention the fact that they zoomed up and down the river Witham at breakneck speeds only to miss us and the boys at the lock and the finish! "We didn't think you'd go as fast as you did!" was the quote – ye of little faith!!!

So, if considering the marathon next year, we as the 1994 'Bostonites' suggest forward planning (?), a training timetable (!?) and hours on the Taff (!!!!!). But more importantly, as anyone witness to the Saturday night of the following weekend's Pub & Club regatta knows, you must be of strong constitution and be able to 'slam' the Boston 31 miles in Tequilas!!!

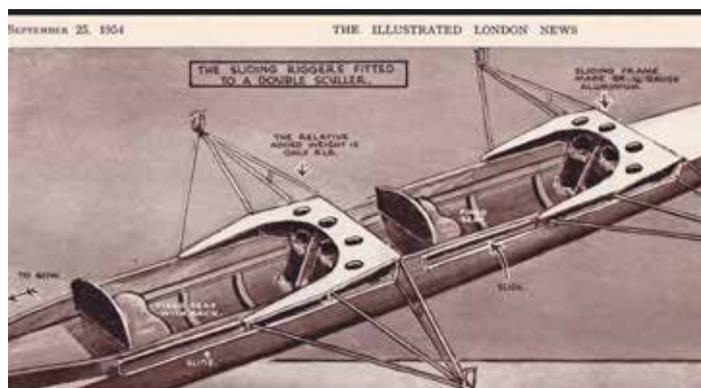
Building a Faster Boat

Written by Ian Hall

The difference in speed between the equivalent boats from any two boatbuilders is rarely significant. There is a much larger potential difference because of the crew or the conditions. The reasons for this are that the market is not large enough to attract big investment and that FISA* have always sought to keep racing even and costs down.

An example of the former is the fitting of shoes in the boat. The West German national crew screwed their trainers in their boat in 1960 to try to get maximum length on their slides. And we have all done the same since then. In what other sport do they stick their feet in grotty old club shoes, and expect those with small feet to perform well in a size 13? However, nobody thinks the market is big enough to develop a shoe and stretcher system to solve the problem. During the 1980's I used cross country skiing shoes hooked into the boat, but cross country ski shoes became big business, and developed further making them unsuitable for quick release from my stretcher fitting.

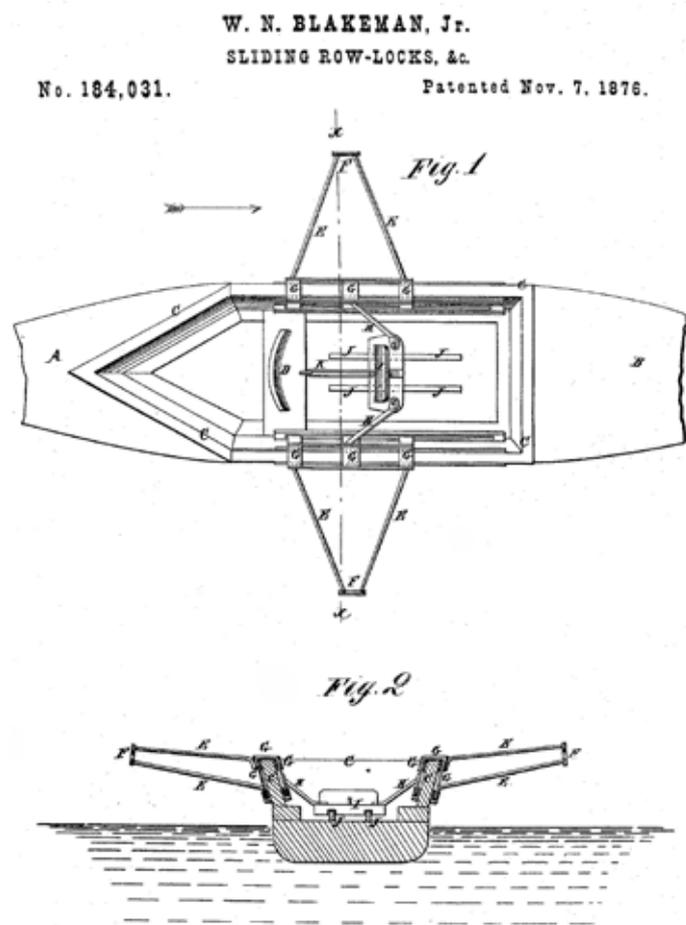
FISA's Rule 40 on Innovations is now the official

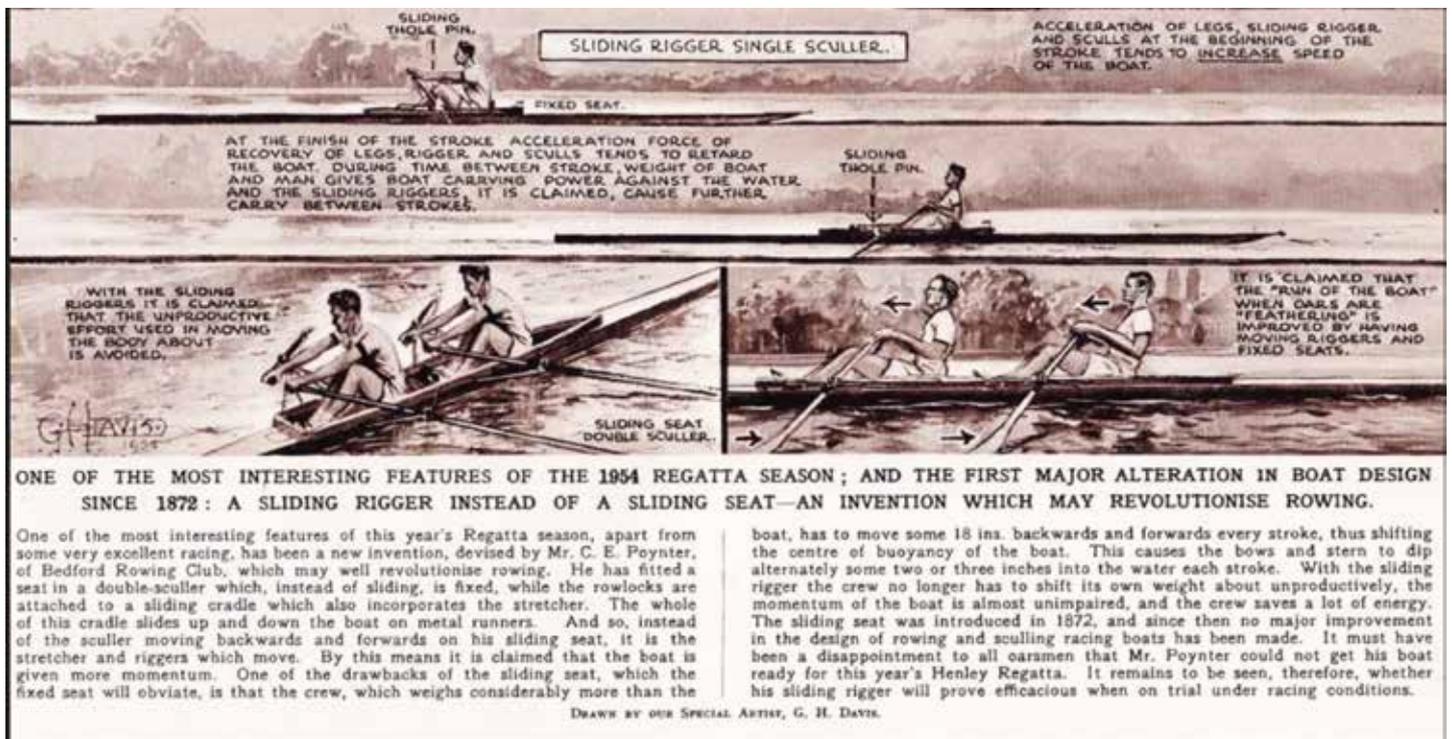


mechanism to maintain stability. It says that FISA should be advised in advance of any significant developments before they are used in competition, so that they can be assessed for fairness and cost. FISA also prohibit the use of patented designs which might restrict open competition – probably also a factor in the shoe issue, as the cross-country ski shoe makers will usually design and patent a shoe and binding combination to help make it profitable.

However, before these regulations were developed there were a number of interesting experiments into boat design including some involving hydrofoils and moving riggers. In the '60's the NPL** at Teddington managed to do some work on hull design which resulted in the building of a single scull of about 20ft length with a cut-off stern. Nick Cooper of Yare Rowing Club, who was a friend of Arnold Cooke my coach at that time, undertook water testing of this boat and found he could get it planing, going very fast for about a minute but not sustaining it for the length of a regatta course. About this time I also remember reading an article in an old copy of the Rowing Magazine, probably from the mid '50's, about someone from Marlow or Maidenhead who had fitted a conventional wooden single scull with hydrofoils and had managed to get the hull out of the water. However I do not recollect any speed data.

So when I got to Bedford in 1968 and learnt of the concept of the moving rigger boat, the possibility of putting a short hull with moving riggers was very interesting. Moving riggers were first patented by W N Blakeman Jr in 1876, only a few years after the introduction of the sliding seat. At Bedford I learnt about Baker and Poynter of Bedford Rowing Club who had entered the double sculls at Henley in 1954 intending to compete in a moving rigger boat. The photos in this article are





some drawings from the Illustrated London News of the period show their design together with an explanation of the benefits. Unfortunately the rigger broke couple of days before the regatta and they withdrew. Their moving rigger double was still sitting up in the roof trusses of Star Rowing Club at that time.

As you can see in the drawings, the seats have backs to ensure you don't come off your seat which is necessary with moving riggers. Baker and Poynter learnt this the hard way, I was told. On their first test row, without the backs, they soon found that they were coming off their seats. So they returned to the boathouse and collected some leather straps to loop behind their backs to prevent the problem. Unfortunately they found these straps tended to slide down as they rowed so they returned to the boathouse again. They found some safety pins and used them to fix the straps to the waistband of their rowing shorts. All fine until they paddled firm, when they came off their seats and the newly fixed straps pulled their shorts down.

Fast forward 10 years or so and I bought a second hand Reredos sculling boat from Martyn Kelly here at LLandaff. This boat was one of the first to use a Kevlar and resin matting for the hull, stiffened along its length with carbon fibre. The riggers were bolted to an aluminium casting in the conventional position at the front of the slide. It was a beautifully stiff and solid boat. It led you to recognise the weakness of conventional wooden boats at the time, which was that as boats got older they developed vertical flex in their riggers as the shoulders got weaker. This, in turn, led you to realise that the rigid work mechanism needed in a boat is the link between the feet and the pins, while the rest is just

to keep you out of the water.

I needed a couple of spares for the boat and called in to Reredos at Redditch to pick them up around 1981 and discovered that he was working on a hydrofoil boat with moving riggers. An acquaintance of mine (and rather better sculler) was testing it for him. He reported that the main problem was the gearing. The gearing required to get it out of the water was very different from that required to keep it there, and they were still trying to solve that problem. I believe the River and Rowing Museum at Henley has exhibited this Reredos aluminium hydrofoil boat.

Then Peter-Michael Kolbe won the World Championships in a moving rigger scull in 1981 and 1983, and FISA voted to ban their use to prevent the expense associated with everyone having to change their equipment to stay competitive. At that stage, however, the boats being used were all full-length hulls from standard moulds, so the shortening of the hull to take advantage of the reduced pitching had not been tried. However moving wing riggers on shorter hulls have since been developed for leisure and open water rowing. When we went to the World Masters in Munich in 1997 a German builder had such a boat which many scullers enjoyed rowing, and the Virus light skiff from France is similar and just under 5m long. I've always liked the Virus wing design as they use tubular rails with grooved wheels rather than vice-versa so dirt washing into the boat then falls off the rails rather than collects in them.

**Federation Internationale de Societes d'Aviron – the World Rowing Federation*

***National Physical Laboratory, who had a tank suitable to assist hull design*

Naming a Boat... *what's in the name?*

Most Rowing Clubs have boats with individual names on them and Llandaff is no exception.

Invariably they are the names of people who have done amazing things for the club, their tribute have been gratifying and we have honoured them by naming a boat after them. They are part of the club's history and deserve to be remembered.

We retell their story so that you get an opportunity to understand the value of these individuals, the names on the bow of the boat that you row in. These obituary have been written by a current or ex member, who had a close friendship with these persons, in the last edition we wrote about Sian Jones, Chris Barrow, Dai Morgan and Peggy Morgan. In this edition friendly thoughts go to Bill Morris, Colin Prentice, Martyn Kelly and George Greaves.

Bill Morris : Men Quad, remembered by Roy Nicholls

The boat is named after William Emrys Morris (1923 -2002), who was a member of both Llandaff Rowing Club and Worcester Rowing Club.

The majority of Bill's rowing career was at Worcester where he competed in the clubs senior four and eight. He became Captain of the club in 1953 and 1954 and also served on their regatta committee.

On returning to Cardiff, Bill became Captain of Llandaff Rowing Club in 1967 and then served as the Regatta Secretary from 1968 - 70. After his years of service at the club, Bill was made a Vice President of Llandaff Rowing Club, he was also elected to the Llandaff Society of Watermen in 1963.

Bill lived in Plasturton Avenue, Cardiff and later moved to Chapel-en-le Frith, Derbyshire where he spent the remaining of his life.



Colin Prentice : Men Coxed Four, remembered by Steven Denley-Hill

Colin (1930-2001) was a Trustee and Vice-President of Llandaff Rowing Club and was its President for 10 years. For 35 years, he devoted vast amounts of his spare time to the coaching, administration and general well-being of not only LRC but also Cardiff University and WARA. Both within LRC and UCC, numerous male and female crews were coached to success at senior level by Colin, but it is his patience, perseverance and subsequent successes with untold numbers of novices year after year, in all weathers, that is equally well remembered. This cornerstone of rowing coaching takes big-heartedness of an extraordinary nature and Welsh Rowing owed Colin a massive debt of gratitude. The generosity he showed in his coaching was reflected in equal measure in his assistance with the running and development of Llandaff Rowing Club. It was as a direct result of Colin's skills that LRC was successful in the first round of Lottery grants in Wales in 1995, achieving grant aid that totally transformed the club. But Colin was not a front-of-house man; he was at his happiest helping with the manual work essential to maintaining a club. Many an oarsman and woman comes off the water with damaged equipment, taking it for granted that it will be serviceable again when next they need it - but not giving a thought to who will fix it. At Llandaff, for many years it was Colin Prentice. Dedicated to seeing that others enjoyed the sport, always delighted at other people's success, a voice of reason in difficult debate, unfailingly good-humoured and welcoming to strangers - LRC had this rare breed of man - the measure of him evident in the full-to-bursting church at his funeral and subsequent wake at his beloved LRC.

Colin introduced his daughter Sarah to the sport in 1976 and with his generosity and desire to give back to a sport he loved that was instilled in Sarah and subsequently Jack and Abi.

Martyn Kelly : Light-weight pair/double, remembered by Nick Bradley

Martyn Kelly – (1947 -2017) - Corinthian Extraordinary

If Corinthian, in the sporting sense, refers to a person ‘who pursues amateur sport as a means of fair and honest competition, for camaraderie and fun, taking part for the good and enjoyment of all involved’ then Martyn Kelly was a true Corinthian!

But there again, this seems an old-fashioned term to describe such a man who, whilst keen to keep traditions, embraced innovations and new ideas, change yes, but not for ‘change’s sake’. He was, for example, very aware of rowing’s narrow social base, and wished to see it become more inclusive.

A Corinthian? Yes, I think so, but in a modern, progressive sense. To Martyn, what mattered most was ‘taking part’, win or lose. Not that he did not want to win, he did, and did, often. But his motto was more ‘If you don’t try, you don’t get’. Give the best your circumstances and conditions allow, and do so fairly, in a congenial and friendly manner.

Corinthian also in the sense of his contribution to the sport. Here was a man who put more into the sport than he took out - and he took a great deal out! His contribution, stretching over half a century, was enormous. From his student days in Oxford when he founded the successful Regent’s Park College Boat Club, rowing their first ever event in 1970; Chairman of Monmouth Rowing Club; Trustee, Coach and Captain at Llandaff; Chairman of the Llandaff Society of Watermen; managing the Welsh team; and most importantly of all, his many years as Chairman of WARA (Welsh Amateur Rowing Association now Welsh Rowing). It would be no exaggeration to say that he made WARA a structured and active governing body.

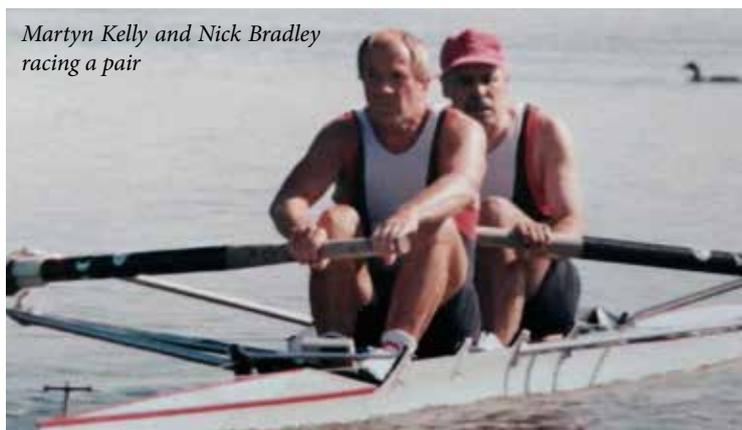
All done whilst pursuing an outstanding career at the Bar – courts not pub (well, not always). His analytical skills were incredible. Martyn had the ability to summarize the most complex issues in a clear and precise way; to identify the core of what mattered in a way all could understand. Such was his reputation as a lawyer that the Crown Court uniquely gave an amazing Valedictory on his passing. This was a truly outstanding tribute to him, which I had the honour of attending – quite magnificent and very moving. Martyn’s family farmed at Cefn Mably, between Cardiff and Newport. Farm work gave him strong hands, which no doubt helped his rowing! He started rowing at Llandaff before winning a place from Bassaleg Grammar School to Oxford.

His philosophy of ‘having a go’ earned him a seat in the ISIS boat. He went on to row at HRR, for Wales, and here at Llandaff, with the likes of Charlie Wiggins (LRC’s only Olympic medal winner). He enjoyed cycling and, before his knees packed in, running, both of which complimented his rowing. His last major success was winning Veteran 2X at the National Championships with Steven Denley-Hill.

Above all, Martyn enjoyed family life with Sue and his three sons, Alex, Tris and Henry, all excellent rowers, and active triathletes.

Martyn was taken from us too soon, in a most cruel way.

He, I know, felt indebted to rowing and rowing is indebted to him. He loved the sport and, in particular, he loved the club. May his legacy live on.



Martyn Kelly and Nick Bradley racing a pair



George Greaves : Men double, remembered by Ian Hall

George Greaves (1942 - 2008) was brought up in Edinburgh where he learnt rowing at his school, George Watsons. Subsequently he rowed with Lady Margaret BC at Cambridge and Durham University, where he was in an eight which came 16th in the Tideway Head in 1966. He came to Cardiff to teach mathematics at the University in 1970. He first rowed in Llandaff’s Elite IV and for Wales in 1971 and became Captain of Llandaff in 1972.

Between 1972 and 1976 George rowed for Llandaff at Elite level in eights, fours and coxless pairs, and also competed in both single and double sculls. He represented Wales between 1972 and 1975 in fours, coxless pairs and double sculls. He became Secretary to Welsh Rowing in 1973, a post which he held for more than ten years.

In 1978 he started competing in Veteran (now Masters) events, and it was in a Llandaff/ Monmouth four which came a close second in their Vet.C race in the World Masters Championships at Nottingham in 1979.

Unfortunately he then suffered a serious leg fracture when skiing, and was away from the river for a year before returning to row in Veteran competition. He started to cycle with his son at local cycling club, and found it much better therapy for his damaged leg. Thereafter he cycled and concentrated on his academic research, and was only occasionally seen on the river.*

George died of a brain tumour in 2008, aged 66.

**Keen number theorists will be aware that his definitive text “Sieves in Number Theory” is still available in paperback at £110.*

Budapest Rowing Club and Llandaff Rowing Club

The difference between two clubs

which I'm a member of... **Gergely Hanczár**



I love this newsletter idea from the very first issue, and I intended to contribute; however, it is not that easy to do that with my limited English proficiency. I am an experienced academic paper writer, but that does not require to entertain the reader, that is very different. This article, like any other academic paper, will include a lot of useless facts and does not aim to amuse readers.

One might think that rowing is the same all over the world, and there might not be many differences between clubs across Europe. There is. There are. I am still a member of the Budapest Rowing Club and am rowing on the Danube whenever visiting my family. It is always interesting to see the differences.

Last year, when the World Masters Regatta was held in Hungary, a lovely bunch of Llandaff crew were visiting my Hungarian club, and I was so happy and proud that I could show the clubhouse and the river. We had a fantastic outing with an old beautiful and surprisingly quick clinker boat that still takes part in regattas. We row up to the picturesque beach (Római part) in Budapest, where restaurants and boathouses are alternating on the riverside.

Taff - Danube

The discharge of the Danube is 6500 cubic meter/second, 200-300 times the Taff. The Danube is half a mile wide and has a rapid current between 5-10mph depending on its level. The level might go up and down half a meters daily. The size of the river and the moving level makes the course every day a bit different, and you can row without turning 1000 miles up, and 700 miles down. You can never get bored.

International marine traffic, hundred-meter long container and cruise ships are passing by. You must be extremely careful

crossing the river as they are not likely to perceive a small boat like a coxed eight. Long-distance hydrofoils are travelling between Budapest and Vienna with the speed of 40mph, and disrespectful powerboat drivers and water skiers are likely to pass by your single scull with full pressure within one length. The anchored barges also need special attention as you cannot ignore the relative speed of these boats' to the water. The river sometimes, depending on the wind strength and direction, have meter high waves that make rowing very different. Last year we had maybe just a bit more than foot-high waves with the Llandaff crew, and one of us became sea-sick.

The biggest challenge is the Russian push boats without barges. They use extra cheap gasoline; therefore, they do not care what the optimal speed would be. Always try to maintain at least 300 yards distance to stay safe of the high waves. Last year on the 100 miles regatta one of these boats was too close to me, just 100 yards, unfortunately, I could not escape, and a wave rinsed through my single in the height of my shoulders. According to my experiences: soggy sandwiches are more comfortable to swallow, have the same amount of calories, but the taste is quite different.

Rowing in the middle of Budapest is highly not recommended, as it could be a bit dangerous when the river is higher than usual. Dozens of quick sightseeing boats make the water extremely jerky. Also needs some extra precautionary measures: life jackets and additional inflatables are required in order to keep the boat and the crew on the surface if capsized on the currents. Early mornings, before 6 am, it is incredibly beautiful to kayak or row across the sleeping city. In comparison, the Taff is so peaceful and safe.



Regattas

As far as I see each of every bigger club in the UK is proud to organise their regatta. This habit is unknown in Hungary, most of the clubs have never ever hosted such a lovely event. The Rowing Association or different committees hold most of the regattas; however, there are some special club events, like the Külker Kupa this weekend, that belongs to one of the clubs.

There are many boathouses without any club life. They are like a car park house in the city. You can park your boat, and you can enjoy the water, but like you are not greeting others very warmly in a park house, similarly, you do not have an intensive social life in these houses.

Price

However, the average wages in Hungary are less than half of the salaries in the UK; the membership fees are a bit more expensive in Hungary than in the UK, don't know the reason.

Water tours

Rowers are allowed to pitch a tent and stay overnight without any limitation on any riverside outside of cities. That is the law. It is quite easy to do all-day or longer tours if the water level is lower, and during the summer it is nearly always lower. Roughly 30-40% of the thousand miles of riversides are sandy beaches or covered by small pebbles.

Age restrictions

Any age restriction would seriously defect the rowing culture as families would not be able to do weekend boat tours if small kids were not be allowed in the boat. Basically, there are not many restrictions.

There are international regattas where age limits apply, but you can take part in locally organised regattas regardless of your age. Last year my youngest son, who is four years old now, and I entered a 30-mile long regatta. And he was not the youngest. It is because they say, you need to grow up in a boat to be a waterman, and kids are spending their whole summer in small boats; they develop a deeper understanding of the river, and the balance they have is impressive. I shared on the Llandaff Rowing Club's Facebook page the balancing tricks of my 9-year-old last year.

Tools

There are sets of wrenches available at the club; it does not arise either to have a private one.

Lights

The winter is frosty, there is no rowing at all during that season, and the days are long enough during the summer; therefore rowing in the dark is uncommon; however, it is legally allowed. Steady white lights must be visible from all directions; red light is used by powerboats only, and on its front left side only. Blinking red means a buoy, therefore using red blinking light on a rowing boat might mislead ships, and they might hit the bank, so inadequate lights are severely punished. Also, it would be best if you understood horn signals to stay safe.

Most important musts and mustn'ts

Always have a massive sponge block in the boat, it is a lifesaver, and also police might check it on the river.

Wear a long-sleeved white shirt and long trousers in the middle of the day and be extremely careful with high temperature, regattas are not cancelled if the temperature goes above 40 degrees. Wet your white hat in every quarter of an hour.

Never step over blades, boats and any other equipment, because it is widely considered to be dangerous, and you are likely to be sent home by the captain for that day.

Never put objects on the ground in a boathouse apart from trestles.

Each of every boathouse has a logbook that you must fill in before and after you use a boat.

There are no strict rules for the rowing course; you must always be careful.

Small homes

Spending a whole summer at the club is not extreme. There are dozens of small rooms in a clubhouse where enthusiastic rowers can sleep overnight. These small 10ft x 10ft rooms and people sleeping in the clubhouse has a unique atmosphere during the summer. I also have a room there that I love, kind of second home for me.

I love doing a lovely afternoon marathon up to the fantastic sandy beach (Dunabogdány), arriving back right after sunset, and having a beer on the landing stage, and swimming in the warm Danube.

Just one more

A polite "How are you" in a club is not just a form of greeting. Answering a standard "Fine thanks" is considered to be rather unpolite; it means that you would like to block the conversation. It would be best if you shared something positive or negative instead of something neutral.

Rosemary Martin joined the Diplomatic Service in 1982. Here she describes some of her early experiences, first in London and then in West Berlin, separated from East Berlin and surrounded by communist East Germany. You might think after reading it "I didn't know that about her," although outside the Official Secrets Act, which she had to sign. Rose is a member of the Masters squad, rowing in a mixed quad on Saturday mornings with Valerie Price, Gareth Beech and Terry John, which can require all her diplomatic skills on occasions.

Working for the Diplomatic Service in West Berlin during the Cold War



Having completed a bilingual secretarial course, I applied for a job as a secretary in the Diplomatic Service, in the hope of using my foreign language knowledge. Friends from my course were already working in the European Parliament in Strasbourg and the EC in Brussels. Having been interviewed, skills tested and positively vetted, I started work in the Press Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in December 1982. The department had a group of press officers, each responsible for different parts of the world, and the head of it acted as press secretary to the Foreign Secretary. I was a general dog's body, very excited when journalists from the TV, such as John Simpson and Michael Brunson, popped in to pick up a press release or an interview transcript. It was a busy place - major events that occurred whilst I was there was the outbreak of martial law in Poland, and the Falklands War. I remember the shock and upset in the department when the very popular Lord Carrington resigned as Foreign Secretary over the failure of the FCO to foresee this war. My claim to fame was cutting off Bernard Ingram, Margaret Thatcher's press officer, when trying to put his call through to my boss - and not just the once!

When applying for postings abroad, I expressed interest in a French or German speaking country as I had studied both languages post A'level. The FCO in those days was renowned for sending people somewhere totally different so



I was delighted to be sent to West Berlin - a posting known as "the gravy train" as it was a very comfortable set up - on St David's Day in 1983.

As this was before the wall came down, West Berlin was divided into the British, French and American zones and East Berlin was the Russian zone. My job was secretary to the political adviser in the British Military Government. The Polad's job was to keep London and the British Embassy in Bonn abreast of what was happening in Berlin. I remember well the twice-weekly rush to get correspondence typed up in time to meet the headline for the diplomatic bag. My boss was expected to do a lot of entertaining, so part of my job involved organizing his social diary. Rudolf Hess was still alive in Spandau Prison and the four countries took it in turns to guard him. For the military, the posting was more ceremonial than proper soldiering so a bit uneventful at times.

One event that I will always remember is the 40th anniversary of VE Day. To hear the Last Post played amid thousands of immaculately kept graves in the Commonwealth War Graves cemetery was incredibly moving and it was a privilege to be there. As a civilian I was allowed to cross Checkpoint Charlie on foot - the military had to travel by car or bus - and it was rather an unnerving experience going through "no man's land", especially thinking of all those who tried to escape when the wall went up. I did this on quite a few occasions, as I had friends in the British Embassy there, but it never got any easier. The contrast between West and East was huge - West Berlin vibrant, lively, colourful, East Berlin gloomy, foreboding and oppressive.

I spent a very happy two and a half years in the city but have yet to go back and see it as a united city. West Berlin introduced me to the delights of a walk and then "Kaffee und Kuchen" (coffee and cakes), a habit I will never be able to break! Contrary to what some friends say, I was not a spy and, although my surname starts with an M, I can assure you it is not Moneypenny!

Feel free to write an article of your choice. Send articles with photos to Steve at: skdenleyhill@gmail.com

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