



13<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Hello everyone,

Here is your latest Captains' Update which I write at the end of my year as Captain; a good time to both reflect and look forward to the coming year. For those of you who might not be aware I have indicated I am happy to do another year as Captain, but I believe I am right in saying that if any of you have a burning desire to take on the role it is not too late to stand at our AGM which will be held next week on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October at 7.45pm.

There are some important changes to the structure of our Saturday sessions that I would like to propose to the membership. These are summarised in the covering e-mail to this update and the reasoning is set out in more detail below. I'm suggesting these to try and achieve a structure that meets the needs of all members (whatever they wish to get out of their rowing) which will provide the opportunity for all to improve on their rowing skills if that is what they wish. Please read what I have to say carefully and by all means e-mail me your comments, or better still come to the AGM on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October and contribute your thoughts along with your fellow members.

### Recent Events:

**September** – September kicked off with the Ely Marathon on 3<sup>rd</sup> September, which will be remembered for three memorable things. First – the headwind which was particularly aggressive on the final 5K straight. Second – an impressive win for Pete Donovan and Sophie Lovegrove in their first competition as a Mx.MasC.2x. Third – the rescue of a fisherman from drowning by our masters coxless quad of Mike Arnott, Andrew Blit, Keith Paxman and Stephen Nichols. This story made several editions of the local press and is well on its way to becoming folklore, having been retold in song already at the Annual Dinner!

A team of 9 SRC rowers attended the World Masters Championships at the iconic Lake Bled in Slovenia between 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> September. This was a memorable experience for all and to take part in an event that involved nearly 5000 rowers from all over the world was tremendous. Highest ranking went to Rosemary Hogsbjerg and Sarah Stirling who achieved a third place in their heat of W.MasE.2x, but I can honestly say a great time was had by all. Next year the event is in Sarasota, Florida where I suspect Jeremy Milbank will be SRC's sole representative, but plans are already being laid for SRC representation in 2019 when the event will be held in Budapest.

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September saw the final regatta of the season with Cambridge Autumn. There were wins for Lee Adams, Tim Hysom, Stephen Nichols, Paul Adams and Helen Sharp in the MasC.4+ category plus junior pots for Amelia Maskell/Martha Bullen W.J16.2x, Harry Moule in J13.1x plus another coxing pot for Amelia Moule assisting a very grateful Peterborough four.

The month and indeed year was rounded off with our annual dinner at The Bull, Long Melford on 30<sup>th</sup> September – an enjoyable evening with good food, some singing and dancing, although your Captain has been requested by his first mate to stick to the singing in future.

**October** – there were three wins for Sudbury crews at Bedford Small Boats Head on 8<sup>th</sup> October. Martha Bullen and Amelia Maskell were again triumphant, Jen Titterington took another head victory in the W1.1x category whilst God's team of Robin King and Simon White won in MasE/G.2x. Other Sudbury crews came away feeling some good progress had been made, although there remains some consternation in certain quarters over precisely how masters handicaps work!

### Forthcoming Events:

The following is a list of forthcoming events before Christmas where either I know the Club has members who intend to compete or that I am looking for the Club to attend. As ever if anyone wants to bring any other events to my attention for consideration they should feel free to do so.



**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2017** - British Rowing Senior Championships. Sophie Brown will be attending.

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2017** – Norfolk Long Distance Sculls. Anyone interested in entering this needs to let me know immediately.

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2017** - Huntingdon Head. Helen Sharp has kindly agreed to tow a trailer for the MasC.4+. Anyone else interested in attending should let me know.

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2017** – Cambridge Winter Head – an event for 8s, 4s, octuples and quads. Our Juniors are planning a mixed octuple.

Here are some key dates for early 2018:

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2018 – Women's Head of the River Race

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018 – Head of the River Race

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018 – School's Head of the River Race

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2018 – Vet's Head of the River Race

### Washing Boats:

It is the practice at many other clubs for boats always to be washed down after outings before they are put away. The Committee has agreed we at Sudbury should make this our practice as well. We would also ask members to make sure they wash the inside of the boat, avoiding the shoes as much as possible. There are orange buckets and sponges in the boathouse to make this easier. If everyone did this every session then the boats would not suffer so much from a build up of algae on the inside and there would be less work to do on maintenance days. It is not necessary to do this between outings if a boat is going out twice in the same session. However we want to make this normal practice. The Juniors have already started with this practice on Sundays.

### Saturday sessions and coaching:

I want to propose some changes to the regular Saturday Club sessions for adult rowers. This is in response to the following concerns that have been voiced by members to myself and the rest of the committee:

1. The Club should offer an opportunity on Saturdays to those members who simply want the opportunity to row for pleasure without necessarily training hard for competition as part of a crew. A separate session where such members had priority and training crews were specifically asked not to row could provide that opportunity and a more relaxed social environment, which might encourage some former members who were put off by the 'racing' element to rejoin the Club;
2. There should be some time on a Saturday when those members who are training regularly in crews or as individuals with a view to competing have priority on the river.
3. The Club should be looking to encourage as many members as possible to improve their rowing skills by making coaching and instruction more widely available, both through those volunteers/members who hold recognised coaching qualifications and through those members who have the appropriate experience and skills to pass on to newer, more inexperienced members.

I would like to restructure Saturday sessions to meet these concerns and encourage a more inclusive Club. Here are my thoughts in more detail.

#### First Session – approximate timings 7.30am to 9.15am

This would be a session for crews and individuals training for competition. Coaches willing and able to take on specific crews for training would be encouraged to be available for this session to coach from the



Club's launches. There will be some members of the Club who are not really interested in racing, but who may struggle to attend other than during the first session. For those members I can see that a directive there be no scratch crews in this session would cause difficulties, so I'm not proposing such a rule. Perhaps naively I am hoping that members will gravitate towards those sessions that are appropriate to the level of effort they wish to put into their rowing.

### **Second Session – approximate timings 10.15am to 12 noon**

This session would be a session for the whole Club. I would like to encourage as many members as possible to be available for this session. Whilst some crews might also use this water session, members should expect the Captain and Vice Captain(s) to select crews using Squadlist that may well mix up rowers of different abilities. This would be done partly to assist less experienced rowers in building their rowing skills. It would be my expectation as Captain that those members who are training in crews do not regularly only commit to rowing first session and thereby exclude themselves from participating with the rest of the Club.

Equally important I would like to ensure that some level of coaching or instruction is available for this session. In addition to the Club's recognised coaches we have a number of individuals with plenty of rowing experience who have the ability to give instruction to members to help them develop as rowers. I would like to be able to 'man' this session with a pool of members who can assist in this way, quite possibly working together with some of our more established coaches.

### **Third Session – approximate timings 1.00pm to 3.00pm**

I would like to establish an afternoon session devoted solely to those members who simply want to row for pleasure. I don't like the terms recreational rowers or social rowers, but this is what I am trying to get at. I will need some likeminded volunteer members to organise these sessions, which might not necessarily happen every week. Crews could be worked out on the day from those who turn up. If we have a co-ordinator for this, then members could contact the co-ordinator in advance so they have some idea of who will be turning up. It would also be important that there is sufficient level of competence amongst those participating to ensure everyone enjoys the session in safety. With this in mind members involved in crews would also be encouraged to come along and join in if they were free to do so. Also any coaches interested in assisting from a launch would be most welcome, although as the idea of the session is that it is purely for fun I recognise this is less likely to be of interest to coaches.

Nicola Swift has volunteered to help establish a third session if members are in favour of it. She has also suggested that if former members were invited back for such a session paying the usual one off day rate charge that might provide the avenue that would encourage them back into the Club full time. There might also be an appetite for tea and cakes after the session!

I have discussed these ideas with both the Management and the Coaches Committee. I received full support from those Committees for this initiative. I recognise that what I have in mind won't necessarily fit easily with the lifestyle, weekend commitments and general rowing ambitions of each and every member of the Club. I am also not certain that the timings will necessarily work. I can understand that hanging around between second and third sessions may well not be an attractive proposition. It may be better to make the third session a regular slot between 12 noon and 2.00pm? I do however think that if these changes could be brought in successfully, we could achieve a more inclusive Club that caters better for the varying needs of ALL its members and is a welcoming and friendly Club.

I encourage all members to respond to me individually by e-mail with their thoughts on what I have outlined above. I am also keen to hear from any members who think they would be able to contribute to the coaching/instruct I would like to make a regular feature of the second session on Saturdays. I already have some names in mind to approach, but volunteers would be most welcome. I will also ask for feedback from members at our AGM on 19<sup>th</sup> October next Thursday. If the general message I receive is in favour of the new structure to Saturdays then I would hope to introduce it in November.



### Club Talks

During the autumn/winter of last year some of our coaches kindly gave some training talks on different aspects of the rowing stroke. Terry Gosling covered the start of the stroke. Tony Moule covered the importance of core and posture. Mike Arnott covered the drive. We are hoping to repeat these talks over the next few months between first and second sessions on Saturdays and possibly add in a further talk or two on topics that would help members – such as boat set up for example.

### Training

- Mondays** Low rate (UT2) erg sessions organised by Lee Adams. The 6pm slot is quite heavily booked, but if there is interest further sessions at 5pm and/or 7pm could be organised as we go into winter training. Lee advises the aim is a long session of at least 30 minutes at rate 18 working at 75% heart rate. You should be able to carry on a conversation during the workout and stay steady to the end, not accelerating the effort towards the end otherwise you'll defeat the object of the exercise.
- Tuesdays** Circuit training at Thomas Gainsborough School Gt Cornard between 18.30 and 20.00 hours. Adults: £3.00, Juniors: £1.50 per session. Attendance levels have picked up since the beginning of the autumn but it would be good to see more of you. The circuits, core work and stretches at the end of the session really complement the other types of training available through water sessions, ergs and running or cycling summer, quite apart from which attending circuits gives a fitness that cannot be gained simply through sessions on the water. Non-members are also welcome provided they pay! Thanks once again to Tony Moule and family for their dedication in running these sessions.
- Wednesday** Run with the Captain. Most Wednesday evenings I do a run of around 5k around the streets of Sudbury at 6.30pm whilst Junior training takes place. I'm happy to run at whatever is the comfortable pace of whoever turns up. Again running complements other forms of training for rowing really well.
- Thursday** Technical erg sessions with Tony Hogsbjerg. We plan to run up to 3 sessions 18.00-18.45, 18.45-19.30 and 19.30-20.15 if there is demand for the 8 places per session available. Booking for this coming week should be made directly to me via e-mail, but as soon as I get the chance to check out the Sign Up Genius online facility for booking I hope to get that in place so that members can book each week online filling up the spaces on a first come, first served basis.

Happy Rowing!

Sean

Captain - Sudbury Rowing Club

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