



Cork Boat Club Newsletter January 2017

Hi Everyone

We thought it would be useful to reach out to the wide group of that are and hopefully feel part of Cork Boat Club at this time of the year to reaffirm our connection with you and to provide a little update on Club activities and developments.

Memories of your time in the Club and stories you might have

As people that have passed through the Club and I trust, enjoyed the experience. Each of you probably have your own memories of that time, the other rowers you met that may in fact still be close friends of yours (which is the way of rowing and the shared experience). The hard sessions that might have taken you well outside your comfort zone. Trips around the country to face opposition from other Clubs, again more friends made (enemies on the water of course). Remembering the butterflies as you gathered before racing, isn't it often surprising how we remember the close verdicts be they wins or losses (they still sting) and the comfortable wins have faded into the mists of time. Did you use timber oars or synthetic? Were your boats made of wood or fibreglass/carbon? Was the cox a shouter or a whisperer? Did the Coach inspire you?

We would love to hear your recollections now that you have the benefit of perspective and have returned to civilian life so to speak.

You will be surprised to hear that the shared struggle continues as it has done for over 100 years at Undercliffe (do you remember the address?). You will have an immediate connection with the boys, girls, men and women that are going through the very same experience that you went through. Once an Oarsperson always...

Some of you will reflect on the small changes, we no longer have the "long pole" or the "long rocks". The "Green jacks" is no more. Macon blades are gone the way of the Dodo. The pencil buoy that used to lie on its side at low tide near Blackrock pier is gone. Cork Regatta and the "Leander" no longer grace the Marina. The block pair that some of you might have learned to row in is no more. Even our competition strip has changed over the years.

Despite these small changes the core that is Cork Boat Club and its history and traditions remain. You have all contributed to and are part of that tradition and we honour you for that. Our tradition is evident in the pictures dating back to the start of the last century on the café walls and also in spoken history (we are in the process of finishing a documented history of the Club championed by Ger Healy RIP and continued by the "History Club" that meets every Sunday in the café).



For many of you reading this please don't take offence if I am describing a time that predates your involvement in the Club however the spirit of sportsmanship, tenacity and focus goes all the way back to the beginning. This spirit that we try to pass on each season helps to develop your life skills long after you leave the sport. Be the best person for the boat not the best person in the boat. Each era had its giants and it is on those shoulders we stand today as is the way of Cork Boat club. Who were your "giants"?

The Club, in full flight, has always been progressive with high ambition for its crews. Were you part of any ground breaking things? First crew to win at Trinity Regatta? First crew to race in the UK? First crew to race in mainland Europe? First crew to win abroad? Member of the first Women's crew? First crew to race in Henley Regatta? First crew to race in Women's Henley regatta? First winner of Cork Sculling Ladder? Did you win your section of the Cork Sculling Ladder? What about the Leander? First win of Women's Senior eights Champs?

Every bit as important are your own or your crew's firsts. First time in an eight? A capsized survived? Your first crab? Falling off your seat during a race? The first time you "got it" and the boat sang away from the finish straight and level, the sound and feel of the boat as it cut through the water, your last puddle or puddles disappearing into the distance.

Let us know what firsts you have been involved in I'm sure there are many stories. Please don't forget that while not unique we are among a small band of Clubs that cherish and value the manner of how we compete as much if not more than the results of that competition so cast your net wide when you think about "firsts".

Cast a thought at this time on the many giants of the Club that over the years have passed on and yet still reside in our hearts, that still walk the halls and corridors of the Club and are in every boat that we send out to do battle on behalf of the Club pulling hard every stroke with the boys, girls, men and women, that respect and regard for those that have gone before is our secret weapon.

To mention a recent giant passing, Paul McCarthy left us this year, many of you will have known Paul as a fierce trainer and competitor that epitomised the spirit of Cork Boat Club. Paul never won the Leander (he will smile when he reads this) but he did win almost everything else the sport has on offer but that Leander did bug him. Do you have any unfinished business in your rowing career?



Update on this season

So to try to give an update of the Club at present and its plans for the future let us start by saying this season has started well. There are over 150 Athletes in training this season. Our efforts are to imbue in them the spirit of the Club that was handed down to us and to help each and every one of these Athletes to achieve their potential whatever that might be.

We have two very healthy groups of beginner Oarspeople boys and girls. 22 boys and 14 girls. There are two teams of coaches, one with each and doing great work.

There is a very healthy group of Junior girls (22) training under their team of Coaches and we also have high performing pair of U23 Ladies and a very potent Senior Ladies group. A success of this season is the restarting of Novice Ladies and 15 girls joined by 5 Ladies from last year's Novice group making multiple eights at novice and Club levels also with a Coaching Team supporting.

There is a large (20) group of J15/16 boys and a solid group of J18 boys each with their own Coaching Team.

There is a Men's Novice/Club 8 squad and a Men's Senior/Inter eight squad with their Coach support group.

A group of Ladies (6) are also competing in the Masters category and fresh from their emphatic win at Skibereen Head are seeking out even more competition under the guidance of their Coach Richard Moloney. We have ambitions to develop the Masters group further.

All groups have been in hard training specific to their "rowing age" and are deep into their winter work cycle. We have had countless trips to Cobh/Monkstown and other areas in the lower reaches of the harbour with high mileage being clocked up.

A group of young boys (from our Christians intake) have been to an indoor rowing blitz in Trinity College and a large number of the Junior boys and girls attended the Regional Indoor Rowing Champs at University of Limerick. Some pretty serious erg scores being registered and many PB's.

We have represented the Club at Skibereen Head of the River with a hatful of wins and took part in Muckross Head with 50 crews, bringing two fully laden trailers and 22 boats – returning with more victories.

So for matters not related directly to racing, the Committee have recently purchased a new Coaching/Safety launch which is already in service. This boat came from Dorset and apart from the purchase, the delivery logistics would make your eyes water but all completed without fuss. What a Club.



The Club café is going from strength to strength and is now the hub of the Club on Saturday and Sunday. We would like to formally invite you all to join us any weekend between 10am and 12.30pm, we would love to catch up and hear your experiences and you might be able to find a picture of yourself on the wall. If not you may be able to give us a story or picture to make our records more complete. There is a Team of Ladies that drive this great facility feeding and watering the tired and hungry groups as they come ashore from their latest outing and listen intently to their tales of derring do, with much patience.

Safety and hygiene are of prime importance to us to continue to advance the care of our Oarspeople. We have made great strides in these areas in recent times. We have an active group led by Frank O Leary, Eamonn O Brien, Richard Moloney and Eimear Quaid installing hand sanitisers in all areas, cleaning materials for equipment in the Gym, a defibrillator and first aid boxes maintained and stocked and we have ambitions to continue these efforts by identifying safety grab bag equipment for safety launches and radio communication to launches when afloat and many other things when funds allow.

We have a fleet of 18 ergometers that are in full use and we have 5 sets of “sliders” that effectively put 5 rowing machines afloat giving a frighteningly realistic “feel” of a crew in a rowing boat. Higher technical demands needed so a great coaching aid. We have ambitions to purchase more of these devices so that more of our Oarspeople can benefit.

The Committee have purchased a touring boat for beginner athletes and for Masters who might enjoy a stable paddle along the river. She is in use every weekend and is called the “Ger Healy” and we have ambitions to purchase more of these boats.

The Club has just placed an order for a new Filippi F42 eight which it will receive in January and intends to name her the “Paul McCarthy”.

We have a very active Team looking after boat maintenance you might know some of them, John Duggan, Eddie Rice, Eric Coogan and Finbarr Heas. If it has anything to do with widgets, wingnuts or fibreglass they are the buckos to speak to.

We have now 6 Vice Captains

- Brian Crean (Senior Men)
- Pat Peilow (Senior Women)
- Terence McGrath (Junior Women)
- Ray Connolly (Junior Boys)
- Eamonn O Brien (Masters)
- John Duggan (Equipment)

All competitive entries are handled through “tracker” by recent former Captain Karen McCarthy in whose footsteps we follow.



We have a Team of 40 volunteer Coaches, the men and women on whom the Club depends so much. These Coaches are giving to their charges a love of the sport as has been handed down through the decades by the Coaches that have gone before. Their dedication is clear to see in the care, attention and passion they have for their groups.

The Season Ahead

We expect to compete next at Cork Head of the River along the Marina stretch in front of your Club on the 11th of February. This event has special significance to us as the “Denis MacSweeney” trophy is at stake, named after another “giant” of your Club unfortunately passed on. We have in recent times brought “Denis” home several times but currently we are not the holders. Our burning ambition this season is to bring “Denis” home.

We have an interest in the Erne Head which would be a first for your Club on the 4th of March?

Galway Head will be the 18th of March.

Skibereen Regatta will be held at the National Rowing Centre on the 8th of April and Trinity Regatta which we have reacquainted ourselves with is the 15th of April in Islandbridge Dublin.

After that the regatta season comes hot and heavy and we will be representing you at many domestic events along with we hope Ghent Regatta in Belgium, London Metropolitan Regatta at Dorney Lake.

Cork Regatta now held at the National Rowing Centre in Inniscarra will take place over two days starting 24th June. It is around this time that we will have sight of the potential crews, boys, girls, men and women that will represent us at the National Championships at the same venue starting the 14th of July and running through that weekend.

Committee Matters

The entire “Machine” that is Cork Boat Club is underpinned each year by energetic, ambitious and progressive Committee’s. This year is no different, led by President Gerry Buckley and Chairman John Mackey the group is already fully engaged in the support of the rowing effort driving membership and fundraising. Supporting the enhancement, repair and replacement of our equipment along with developing the fabric of the Club. Huge strides have been made over the last number of years in all of these areas as will be evident to you should you decide to call down and have a look around. The Coastguard cottage has been structurally redone, a new roof on the main Club House, two new external



Boat Houses, Reconstruction and extension of both east and west slips, new windows in the “Hall” and 2 new Hudson boats, 6 new Wintech boats to add to our fleet of over 50 boats.

In short we are fully engaged with the challenge of continuing and developing the traditions of Cork Boat Club. The shared struggle is important for any Club, it galvanises and unites us as we move forward.

How can we help?

We believe that all of you share this struggle with us in spirit and again we would ask that you visit us at Undercliffe and see for yourself the progress and the challenges. If any of you are motivated to support this struggle in other ways there are many options should you be so inclined.

- There are various Membership types that suits all levels of engagement. All accessible from the Club’s website. If there are any suggestions you might have for us to improve these offerings please let us know.
- We have a “Boat Fund” that is based on a standing order into a Club account with the idea that a small regular contribution builds over time and significantly helps the Club meet its needs and the needs of its Oarspeople. Let us know if you wish to follow up.
- We have a very recent “go fund me” program to raise funds for the new Filippi F42 eight which will be named the “Paul McCarthy”. This boat represents the latest in racing hull technology and with a crew design weight of between 70-85 kg will be a huge addition to our racing fleet for the near future. If you are interested in supporting this effort please let us know and we will send on details.
- We have an annual Calendar which is the result of effort from many. It has month by month photo’s that show the current Athletes in action along with key regatta dates. These are available for 10 Euro in the Cafe. Let us know if you are interested.
- Pat Keane championed the Christmas Draw with amazing prizes ranging from overnight Hotel stays, Munster Match tickets with corporate lounge access as well as numerous designer jewellery prizes.
- We will be running an annual Golf Classic in Douglas Golf Club next year. This is championed by John Mackey and we are always looking to promote this as a most vital part of our annual fundraising effort. Please let us know if you wish to support.
- If you have skills that you are prepared to share with us there are countless areas where your Club would benefit from help. Would you assist Coaching and mentoring? Would you join our Masters group and do a little paddling with us? Do you have skills in fabric maintenance? Our Club as you may know is among the biggest in the Country and requires upkeep.
- If you have connections to industry (particularly local industry but not exclusively) you might be able to assist with introductions such that we can reach out to the next generation of adult



Oarspeople or Masters who will in their turn carry on the work that has been ongoing for generations.

- If you have connections in political life you could be of assistance in raising our case for Government funding. This type of funding is competitive in its own way but being very much aware of our contribution to the fabric of our locality and making this offering for generations to one and all, we feel our case is strong but needs to be made. Can you help?

As we hope you can see there are many facets to the continued development of your Club, you can assist in a variety of ways, should you wish. Over and above any financial assistance your support can come in many forms and crucially, support in spirit for your Club is of great value to all of us charged with the current day to day challenge.

Compliments of the season

Your servant

JMc