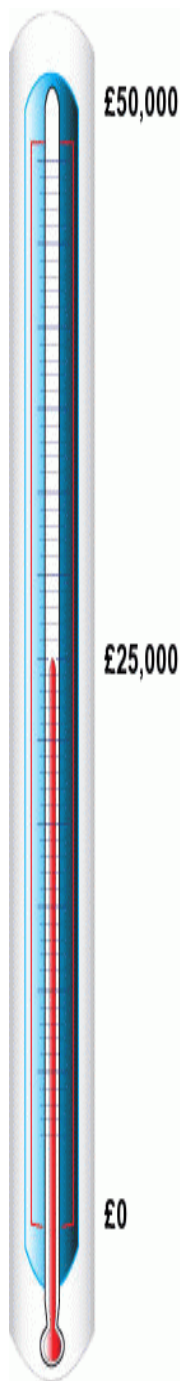


HOW ARE WE DOING?



“SCREAM IF YOU WANT TO GO FASTER!”



Lis (middle, nearside) and crewmates give their all at the women's championships in Newquay.

When Lis Dyer came to live in Dorset, the last thing she wanted to be was a gig widow.

Four years later, Lis is the first to admit that she is now probably verging on the obsessive when it comes to gig rowing. “I row as often as humanly possible...I talk rowing, I think rowing, and where I started out just rowing I now also go spinning and circuit training and running in order to improve my rowing!”

The Dyers came to live in Lyme Regis so husband Paul could study at the Boat Building Academy. Along with other students at the school, he helped Gail McGarva build ‘Rebel’, Lyme Regis’ first gig.

“I had absolutely no intention of rowing, and Paul wasn’t going to row because I didn’t want to be a gig widow!”

The mind shift happened when Lis went

to the Beale Park Boat Show. She was offered a row in a gig on display there, ‘Young Bristol’, that had been built by an ex B.B.A student.

“...and I wasn’t bad at it. I’d never been in one before, although I’d always loved them having watched the races in the Isles of Scilly on holiday as a child. I’d never done anything sporty, but after I got the oars in the water, I was kindly told, ‘You’re a natural’! Rebel was launched 3 weeks later so I decided to join LRGCC”.

Since then, Lis’ involvement with the club has gone beyond the occasional row. In addition to rowing for the Ladies A-Crew she has also taken on the role of PR Officer, and Secretary for the club, and is now considering training as a cox.

“What I love about gig rowing is that there is something in it for everyone - you can pootle along in the C crew, or train like mad for the A’s; row at 82, or 16”.

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www.bridportgigrowingclub.org.uk

“The A crew is for the really focussed people. Most clubs have A, B and C crews, mens and womens. If you are a nutter like me and want to row 3 times a week and train 3 times a week and do everything possible to be fit, then you want to be in the A crew. If you like rowing and want to be competitive and want to do a couple of sessions a week, but have a life as well, then maybe the B crew is for you. The C’s are your less experienced rowers who are working their way up and have yet to decide how serious or not they want to be”.

“And then there are the veterans crews too - the over 40’s. I’m actually the second youngest on the A Crew and I’m 37. You can be a Vet and still be on the racing teams...there was a crew who rowed in the Scillies that had a combined age of 400, their oldest rower was 82!”

So gig rowing is very much a sport for every generation, and it is clearly not dominated by any one age group, gender or ‘type’.

“... and there’s also social rowing for those don’t want to compete. What’s extremely interesting though is that almost everybody who joined for social rowing ends up wanting to compete at some level...there is nothing like the thrill of a race”.

“I equate my first moment on a start line with the birth of my children! It was that special (laughs), so sad!!”

“Gig rowing is a lot like childbirth in other ways too. A lot of shouting and swearing and physical effort, and the noises that come out when you’re really going for that last burst of energy are just the same. And the men are just as bad... they even make those noises on the rowing machines!”

The club acquired 4 machines from the CPGA who award them to clubs on loan.

“Over the winter months we lost the evening rowing when the clocks went back, so it’s great that we can all still meet up on a Thursday for training”.

“We are extremely lucky to have Chris Horsefield, an ex-marine PT instructor, who is working out a programme for us and scaring us remarkably with the amount of pain that it causes”.

There isn’t any particular blue print for the archetypal gig rower. Whatever the physique, it seems there’s a place for everyone.

“Obviously, technique is a lot of it, and so is power. Smaller rowers go at the stroke position and set the pace whilst bigger rowers go towards the back where they have the delightful task of ‘tossing the oars’ so they have to be pretty strong. It means that as the gig goes round a buoy the No.1 rower chucks the oar to the other side and joins in the stroke to help pull it round harder...you need to be pretty confident to use that technique”.

As far as LRGC is concerned, 2009 was their first proper season for competing.

“We’ve done OK considering we started the season always being last, but by the end we were creeping up the pack. We are going to the World Championships in Scilly for the first time this May, which is super-exciting for us. After hectic fund-raising, we have just managed to acquire a second-hand trailer, which means we can take both boats with us, so pretty much everyone who wants to row will have the opportunity”.

“Another great thing about LRGC is that we have a lot of social members, as opposed to social rowers, who don’t row and instead are happy to do tea-urn duties, serve bacon butties and bake cakes ...which are absolutely vital, along with bananas and cider, the complete gig rowers diet!”.

As well as fundraising, and organising events, the members at LRGC also need to be kept well informed about what’s going on.

“And that’s my job as PR Officer really, making sure everyone knows what’s happening. I do the local press, and communicate to the members whatever they need to know. As Secretary I also do the admin, entering us into regattas, keeping the harbour master informed, making sure indemnity insurance is in place ...but I’d always prefer to be rowing”.

As well as all this, Lis still finds time to juggle her family and work commitments. She has 3 young children, and also works part-time as a childminder and as an assistant at the Blue Lias gallery in Lyme.

“During the rowing season, the children are quite happy playing down on the beach. What’s very nice is that many of us have children so there’s a pack of ‘Gig-Kids’ and as long as there’s one parent on land to watch them we can all get out and row”.

Even on cold wintry days Lis and crewmates can be seen rowing out of Lyme harbour during daylight hours, and although the club haven’t yet got any Trophy’s in the cabinet (“We don’t even have a cabinet!”) they have plenty of memorable moments to be proud of,

“My proudest moment so far would have to be that first race at Swanage which was fantastic, and also Black Venn hitting the water for the first time; not coming last at Newquay, and not dying in the incredibly rough seas at Ilfracombe! Yeah, that was fairly dangerous”.

Despite Lis’ relentless enthusiasm, when all is said and done, and the moment comes to find a sudden surge of energy, the Lyme Regis Ladies take inspiration from their Cox,

“Scream if you want to go faster!” he shouts, and the waters break.



NEW YEAR! NEW MEMBERS! NEW BOAT!...

Whether you are one of our brand new members, or whether you are an existing Founder Member, the message for 2010 is the same...

This is the year we all get to know each other, both on and off the water!

2009 was a year for laying foundations, getting our house in order and securing financial support. With all those things in hand, its now time for the wider membership to get on board and pull an oar or two.

Committee meetings this last 12 months have been interesting, productive, lighthearted and definitely lively events. A few familiar faces turned up every time, a few came and went, others popped in when they could, but importantly, decisions were made and things moved steadily forwards.

Only one item kept coming up again and again....How can we persuade members to get more involved? So, we thought we'd ask you...

Obviously, having a boat would help, and that's on the way. But what we really need right now is for members to organise the occasional social or fundraising event.

We are appealing for anyone who would be willing to get involved in putting together a quiz, a treasure-hunt, a pubwalk/crawl, a car boot sale, a cake stall, a darts night, go busking,...anything, in the name of BGRC. Committee are here to help and publicise the details, and when you're done someone else can step up...Come the time of the launch, we'll all know who our crewmates are, and hopefully one of them will be you!

Finally, a gentle reminder to everyone that 2010 subscriptions are now due. If you have any questions about your membership then please contact Jim Binning at members@bridportgigrowingclub.org.uk.

Our fees are in line with other gig clubs, and we offer substantial concessions to Founder members, social members, students, the over 60's, unemployed or low-waged. We trust that you will continue to support BGRC through your contribution and discover that once we have our boat on the water you will consider it money well spent.

PROTO-TYPE GIG HIGHLIGHTS DESIGN FAULT



Members take an icy dip at the West Bay Wallow.

When brave members volunteered to test BGRC's first gig on Boxing Day, it soon became apparent that a few crucial details had been over looked.

Firstly, cardboard probably wasn't the best material to choose. Whilst being economical, it didn't really protect rowers from the icy chill of the water in West Bay harbour, which was recorded at 5°C.

Secondly, a huge hole in the bottom didn't help, although it did come in handy as an emergency exit.

Finally, had the boat worked, the rowers would have been a bit stuffed without a set of oars....

So, with some valuable lessons learned, we look forward to the launch of our next gig in April, which will be made of plastic...and a wooden one to follow shortly after (and yes, we do have a set of oars!).

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR...Mike Carter.

In this, our first newsletter following the Club's inaugural AGM in November, I find myself drafting a note to our members and interested recipients in my new capacity as your Club Chairman.

The past nine months have been engaging for me, working with a spirited group of people who have collectively put Bridport Gig Rowing Club firmly on the map. I anticipate that our success with initial funding will see our first training gig in the water in the spring; against a funding target of £50,000 to buy and equip both training and racing gigs, we have already secured enough money to buy the training boat and with a Lottery Grant of £10,000 from Sport England, we are on our way to building funds for the commissioning of our first CPGA racing gig in September.

Further funding opportunities are in our sights which, at the time of writing, should deliver 80% of our initial target. Whilst acknowledging the continuing need for funds to get us on the water, the club also needs to consider boat storage ashore. Since the Harbourmaster has agreed to make space available for the training gig in the boat park, we have embarked on discussions with West Dorset District Council to secure a site in West Bay for us to build our own boat shed. The site is currently the subject of a Flood Risk Assessment with the Environment Agency before we can make any progress with planning and construction. To help raise funds for this amenity, the club plans to hold a Dinner and Pledge auction later in the year. Our Social Secretary will announce the details of this when they have been finalised.

On that note, we sincerely hope to engage the wider membership more in social events this year. In order for this to happen, we really need your help in organising and supporting such activities. In this way the clubs ownership becomes that of its members and not its committee, and no one would want that!

The Club's membership to the Cornish Pilot Gig Association is on the agenda for their AGM in January and we will be represented at the meeting to deal with any queries and hopefully be accepted as a bona fide CPGA member.

However, voting rights and our ability to engage with the Association and CPGA fixtures in 2010 will be restricted until we have our certified racing gig in the water - so, the sooner the better!

The success of these endeavours will bring a fast growing community sport to Bridport and West Bay and serve to utilise the tremendous asset and amenity of our coastline as well as offer opportunities for us to engage with neighbouring clubs and communities, both competitively and socially.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to Palmers Brewery who have agreed to be our key sponsor. Also, to those Club members who have generously pledged financial contributions, to the Town and District Councils for their support, and to our sporting neighbours for their encouragement.

I look forward to seeing you at club events in the new year and on the water in the spring!



An example of a Plastic-Fibre Gig - Tresco, Isles of Scilly

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

BGRC sincerely wish to thank everyone who has supported the club over the last 12 months.

Firstly, thank you to our Membership, which has grown three fold. We are grateful for your good will and for sharing the vision that it will all be worth the wait...we're *really* nearly there!

To local businesses, organisations and benefactors, who have come forward with generous cash donations, pledges and continued support. Thank You!

We are also hugely grateful to all who offered up prizes for our Raffles this year... in no particular order; Mango Hair, The Bull Hotel, The George Hotel, 'Taste' Bridport, Colfox Estates, Electric Palace, 'Ruby J' fishing trips, Samways fisheries, West Bay Angling Centre, Park Dean Holidays, Bridport Leisure Centre, JB's Kiosk, Denhay Foods Ltd, and River Cottage.

Much support has come in the form of practical help and expertise. More thanks ...

To Nikki and Richard and staff at The Bull Hotel, Roy and Jacqui and staff at The George in West Bay, Morrisons Supermarket, Adrian Collis, and WaterRower® for their help in organising various meetings and events.

To Gary Fooks and Heddon Johnson for their inspiring contributions at the AGM.

To James Radcliffe, harbormaster, for valuable advice and encouragement.

To Lyme Regis Gig Club for rowing over to visit and for sharing their experience and enthusiasm.

To Bridport Round Table for organising the 'West Bay Wallow' (the water was lovely!?).

To local media for publicising and supporting our events; Bridport News, View from Bridport, Western Gazette, Bridport Radio and Wessex FM.

To Palmers Brewery for offering to become our key corporate sponsor, and to West Dorset District Council and Bridport Town Council for helping us make it all happen.

From The Committee.

WHO'S WHO? BGRC COMMITTEE MEMBERS

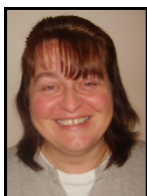


Mike Carter - CHAIR

A retired professional with a love of exercise and activity on and off the water. I have returned to my love of sailing in the past two years and as a team player, look forward to the challenge and learning of a new skill in rowing and to pulling my weight!

Robin Carter - DEPUTY CHAIR

Retired GP with a life long love of the sea. Likes community things too. I Can't think of anything better than 6 sweaty people working together on the sea, to prove Bridport is the tops!



Elizabeth Day - SECRETARY

Having lived in Dorset all my life, and enjoyed swimming for many years, it's time to participate in another water activity with lots of fun included.

Dan Rowe - ROWING CAPTAIN

I'm a local lad who loves living by the sea.

Always keen to try new things and looking forward to trying out this fun new sport to the area.



Jim Binning - MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

I use the Internet to teach children who cannot attend school and was looking for a fun way to keep fit. The BGRC came along and I look forward to getting out on the water later this year.

Sally Vaughan - INFORMATION LEAD

New to Bridport and delighted to be involved in such a positive and exciting community venture. Itching to get out on the water. As the 'Eyes and Ears' of the club it's my job to make sure everyone knows what's happening where and when...Any questions? - Call me!



John Ward - TREASURER

18 years in Cornwall introduced me to the pleasures, and at times, sheer hard graft of Gig racing. I cannot think of a better sport to get a community. Together we raise the funds, race the boat, train the youngsters and drink some beer - brilliant.

Peter Wilson - SOCIAL SECRETARY

Lived in Bridport for 25 years. I rowed at college and am glad of the opportunity to row again. As Soc Sec for BGRC, my role is to coordinate events for members. Send in your ideas or let us know if you are interested in helping to run them...and be sure to come along!



Ed Wootton - WEBMASTER

BGRC for me combines an inherent love of the sea and a desire to do something healthy. Plus, it's a great excuse to meet new people socially and do something for our community.

IN MEMORY OF
MICHAEL
RUSHFORTH
1938-2009



Founder Member and gig enthusiast Michael Rushforth died very suddenly in September.

Michael was very influential during the early days of BGRC and he helped us towards making some of our important decisions.

Here, his widow Angela explains how he got involved in the world of Gig rowing.

“ Michael was born in 1938, and educated at Friends' school, Wigton. His lifelong love of the sea was nurtured during the two years he spent at the naval training school, HMS Conway. It was here that he first became involved in the rowing and coxing of gigs...

...After a career at sea and later in agriculture, he retired to St Mawes, Cornwall, where he rekindled his interest in gigs, this time from the shore.

Ten years later, on moving to Lyme Regis, he helped establish their Gig Club and spent many happy hours coxing and passing on his knowledge and pass for the sea”.

A year or so later Michael attended our initial BGRC meetings and immediately offered his full support.

Since then he continued to be on hand as a great source of information and advice.

It was on his advice that we decided to opt for a plastic-fibre rather than a second hand wooden boat as our first gig, a decision which other seafarers applauded.

His enthusiasm and knowledge has been very useful over the past year and those of us who got to know him during that brief period greatly regret that he is no longer around to help us through the next exciting stages.

Were he still here we have no doubt that he would be among the first to cheer us on and our progress would have given him great satisfaction

May we extend our heartfelt sympathies to his family and friends.



CONTACT DETAILS

Website : www.bridportgigrowingclub.org.uk

Membership - Jim Binning

members@bridportgigrowingclub.org.uk

Information - Sally Vaughan. Tel: 07796684519

info@bridportgigrowingclub.org.uk

Secretary - Liz Day. Tel: 01308 862539

secretary@bridportgigrowingclub.org.uk

By Post

BGRC
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Beaminster,
Dorset DT8 3SN

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

◆ **Social Committee Meeting.**
January 21st @ 7pm.
The West Bay Hotel, West Bay.

◆ **Members Dinner**
Early Spring.
To be held at an exciting location in
Bridport/West Bay... T.B.C.
Watch this space!

MORE EVENTS COMING SOON...
**Let us know if you have any ideas or wish
to offer some help in organising an event.**

SEE WEBSITE CALENDAR FOR UPDATES

BGRC is supported by :

