

Captain's report - AGM 2023

Introduction

Following my first year as club captain, I have a number of key reflections on the past 12 months. Firstly, it's important to note that whilst I was excited for the role of Club Captain, I was not fully prepared for the challenges and trials that I would face. I feel like we've made good progress this year and this is a reflection of the impressive efforts of all of our committed volunteers, many of which I will go on-to thank directly within this report.

What I am most proud of this year is the engagement of our members - I don't have data to support it, but I am convinced over the last year we have become larger, more diverse and a stronger group. I believe this engagement is key to our future development as a club and I hope that we continue to move forward with a strong club culture and enjoyable atmosphere that helps us attract new members and makes LRC a positive place to be.

I am extremely grateful for the support I have personally received. I would like to thank first and foremost the committee, some of which will be stepping down, for their efforts in helping support the club over the last 12 months. For those stepping down, please accept my gratitude for your efforts. For the new members that will be elected at this year's AGM, I would like to warmly welcome you into the committee - I look forward to working with each of you over the next 12 months.

Results

This year the club has posted an impressive 90 wins, which is an increase of 25 from the previous season. This is a return to the number of wins that we enjoyed pre-covid and something that I am hoping we can build on as the club continues to grow.

There have been some notable results and performances this year which need to be mentioned:

- Lauren Henry won a World Championship Gold Medal in the Quadruple scull for Great Britain. Lauren has been rowing in/around Leicester for a long time, having been coached by Howard on her way to the GB Senior Squad. I know that the whole club is rightfully proud of this achievement. I want to wish Lauren the best of luck in her future rowing career, we're all excited to see what you continue to achieve.
- Dave Smith and Gualter Graca winning the Masters B/C Coxless Quad at the Vesta Masters Head of the River Race. This is a race that showcased the quality of two strong athletes competing at a really high level. This form was continued later in the season at the European Masters Championships in Munich, with both Dave and Gualter performing well and winning in Leicester colours.

Women's squad

Sophie Connolly has taken on the women's squad lead role this year, and has overseen an impressive period of growth under her leadership and guidance. The squad now is as vibrant as I can remember seeing it in recent years, and has developed a feeling of togetherness

which I am confident will act as a strong foundation for the squad growth and results moving forwards.

Sophie will take a step back from this role in the coming season so I would like to thank her for what she has done this year.

Moving forwards Hazel Ward will be taking over as the Women's Captain and has keen ambition to continue the good work that has been done over the last 12 months. I wish her all of the luck moving forwards, but I am sure she won't need it.

Men's squad

Peter Mather has looked after the men's squad now for a period of 2 years, and has done an impressive job of supporting the squad in their development. The standout achievement within that time is the squad's attendance at the Head of the River Race in 2023. This is a huge achievement, the first time in 5 years that Leicester has posted a crew at this event.

Peter is stepping down this year, so I would like to extend my thanks for his commitment to the squad over the last two years.

Moving forwards Ross O'Brian will be taking over as the Women's Captain and has keen ambition to continue the good work over the last 12 months. Ross is a keen rower and importantly a great motivational presence within the team. I know there is big ambition within the squad this year and I look forward to supporting Ross over the next 12 months.

Junior squad

Liz and Ang have continued to work together to run the junior squad this year. The squad continues to grow, and provide a fun and encouraging atmosphere for all athletes. The work with Castle Mead is a real success within the junior area which I look forward to seeing move from strength to strength.

Several coaches are involved in supporting both Castle Mead and the junior squad at LRC, in recognition of that I would also like to highlight the positive impact of Sally Horrocks, Sophie Connolly, Howard Marsh and Tim Walton.

Riyaa Sandhu will be standing down as the Junior Representative on the committee this year. Thank you to Riyaa for her work supporting the junior squad this year and for reporting their activities and achievements to the committee each month.

Recreational squad

The recreational squad continues to be one of the most popular at the club, which is influenced heavily by the dedication of Anne. It's really positive to see so many people enjoying the sport, and more from this squad getting out and racing.

Anne and Kim represented the club at this year's Euro Masters Regatta and more recently the squad has raced at Ancholme coming away with a medal.

The squad continued this year to go on tours this year and create an inclusive environment in which people can develop and enjoy the sport.

Leicester Rowing Club is volunteer led and the rec squad are key contributors in many aspects of the club, and form a large part of the committee. I would like to say thank you to the squad for their continued support and contribution to Leicester Rowing Club.

Performance squad

The performance squad continues to provide a platform for top athletes to reach their potential. This year a number of positive achievements have been reached, with notable and encouraging seasons for Teddy Sherman, Sophie Connolly and Molly Varley.

Howard continues to set a really good example for all squad leads and coaches within the club. As the performance squad grows with new talent, I look forward to seeing the great work continue. I am confident that it will lead to a great season and really positive achievements for all squad members.

Equipment

Equipment purchases and maintenance this year has been wide ranging, with notable purchases listed below:

- 5 new Concept 2 erg's
- 2 x 2nd hand single sculls
- 1 x 2nd hand Hudson double/pair
- Multiple refurbishment projects

The investment in new equipment this year will have hopefully been enjoyed by many athletes at the club, and we will hopefully be able to continue to invest in equipment where appropriate moving forwards.

I also must mention the contribution of John Sephton, amongst many others, in working hard to fix the disabled access lift. This is a great service to the club and has given us the financial stability this year to continue to invest in new equipment for our members.

Thank you's

I wrote earlier that Leicester Rowing Club is a volunteer-led club, and we have an exceptionally hard working and dedicated membership base, for which I am really grateful. The commitment of all members to creating a positive club is inspiring, and whilst there are too many contributors to mention them all by name, I would like to express my gratitude to all contributions that our members have made, no matter how small.

Special thanks goes to:

- Tim Walton, John Sephton and Joe Holohan. These three have worked together on a number of facility and maintenance projects this year to great success. The most notable is the disabled access lift, where due to the commitment of these individuals, we have been able to save significant club funds.
- The squad leads for their work to ensure that all people in the club are supported and empowered to make the most out of their experience at Leicester Rowing club.
- Joe and Angela Holohan for kindly allowing the club to borrow their vehicle for towing on a number of occasions this year. This has allowed us to facilitate racing at a much more economical cost level.

- Sally Horrocks for working closely with the committee to ensure that we're operating sensibly and safely in all activities.
- Brian Robbins for helping to generate funds for the club by volunteering to support the football car parks at the club.
- Howard Marsh for providing a great coaching example to follow, and providing many members at the club training plans, guidance and support.
- Liz Pulford for her tireless work as Club President. Liz has been instrumental over the years in shaping the club into a place we can all enjoy. Further to that, Liz has been a great support for me as Club Captain for which I would like to thank her wholeheartedly.

Alex Wellings
Club Captain
25/10/2023