

BOATHOUSE CHATTER

Welcome to Boathouse Chatter.
Thank you to all who have contributed to this issue.

It's July which means we should all have enjoyed a trip to the Henley Royal Regatta. However, like most other events this year, Henley was cancelled and so in this issue we have our own 'Henley' and share the memories of previous Henley Regattas with those who attended and raced there.

Please send your news to anita@newlandmail.com by Sunday 16th August 2020. Next issue Sunday 23rd August 2020

Let's work together to keep the chatter going...

Robbie Coleman is updating our Twitter account. Follow us on Twitter @PBDRC

DIARY DATES

- 26TH SEPTEMBER 2020
BOATHOUSE 50TH BIRTHDAY
- AGM - TBC



➤ Trustee Update

Hopefully, you will have all seen Nick Paul's email heralding the re-opening of the club. This is great news. Cheryl and the team are working really hard to ensure that the strict health and safety guidelines are adhered to and that we provide as safe an environment as possible. There are new procedures which we will all have to get used to – see below. Please become familiar with these measures so that we can help Cheryl and the team to bed them in as soon as possible.



OPEN FROM FRIDAY 24TH JULY 2020

WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU ALL...!!!

OUR NEW OPENING HOURS ARE:

FRIDAY	4PM – 10PM
SATURDAY	12PM – 10PM
SUNDAY	12PM – 8PM

Sticking to the current guidelines, we will be operating a ring up & book system. You will need to call up and book your space in order to secure your place.

- You will need call 0207 538 9869 or 07903 228 244 to secure a place (we can't guarantee entry without a booking in place)
- You will notice lots of signs around the club, we kindly ask that you all follow these rules.
- You can still order a drink at the bar; however, you will not be able to sit there. You will be required to sit at a table.
- No children will be permitted (we hope to change this soon)
- Restricted opening hours are subject to change.

It was great to be able compete in the Thames Challenge over the last couple of weeks. A massive 32 people took part - showing great team spirit -even though we are not physically together. The challenge is now to keep this going and work together to come up with new ideas of pulling together as a club whilst being socially distanced. It would be great to hear your ideas. As ever, please contact me directly with your ideas at danbartlett1@btinternet.com.

➤ Health & Safety Reminder – Nick Paul

First of all, thank you to everyone who is adhering to the guidance in terms of bookings and hygiene. I want to highlight a few key points from the guidance. Please remember to:

- ✓ Wash hands regularly and use the hand sanitiser provided.
- ✓ Wipe down all handles & door plates using the blue paper towel & disinfectant spray or use the wipes provided.
- ✓ Adhere to social distancing at all times and be mindful of the 2 meter rule. This will become increasingly important as numbers using the boat house increases.
- ✓ Please use your own face mask /face covering and gloves.
- ✓ Wash down all boats and sculls using the soap provided.
- ✓ Remember to have your phone with you at all times.
- ✓ Pull the boathouse doors together if you are the last boat out.

➤ Get Involved

Share what you are doing to keep fit and sane during the lockdown....

➤ *Circuits*

Monday, Wednesday & Friday from 5.45pm – contact Bev on samjunior135@gmail.com

➤ *Ladies Crew Training*

Tuesday and Thursday at 6.30 pm - Contact Szigyi.szogyi@gmail.com

➤ *Thames Challenge -The Results* - by Chris Scott

Well done to everyone who took part in the Thames Challenge, not only a great way to keep up fitness and a bit of competition, but also a great way for members from across the club to do a bit of 'virtual' socialising.

There were a total of 32 competitors giving us 8 teams. Boat 8 was a late entrant on the night before the challenge started with a perceived disadvantage that the average crew age was considerably above that of the other crews.

Please do not let this fool you though, Boat 8 came out with guns blazing as they showed the younger members of the club how winning is done and had the challenge wrapped up after just a week...days before any of the other crews. Huge congratulations to Rowan, Ian, Paddy and Dan!

A few teams had provided a bit of a challenge at the start but tailed off as the challenge progressed. Boat 4 gave a big push to the end and reached the finish line 2 days after the winners. Still a great effort to have completed in under a week and a half. Well done Eze, Rita, David and JP.

Third place went to Boat 6 who finished on the 13th day. All crews have now finished the challenge - although some did get help from members in other teams to get them over the line.

There were some outstanding individual performances. These are the top distances per activity:

Overall distance:	Gill - 324km
Cycling:	Jack -157km (actual 314km)
Running:	Sara - 153km (actual 122km)
Rowing:	Ed - 234km

For me, Man of the Match has to be split between Ian and Rowan from Boat 8 who covered 171km and 159km respectively in less than a week and are a massive inspiration to us newer members of the club.

Congratulations all. Depending on how advice changes in the next few weeks, we may organise another challenge in August to keep any of us not yet able to get back to the club focussed and engaged until we can.

➤ Old members – Walter Murray 100 years old



Robbie Coleman published the two pictures above on the club twitter account. I thought it was worth repeating them here for those who had missed the tweet. The pictures are to celebrate Walter Murray's 100th birthday in July 2020. Walter is a former member of the rowing club. He is the chap on the left of the left picture and 2nd from the right in the picture on the right.

➤ My Henley Royal Regatta memories – by John Roberts



It was in May 1971 when the Club Captain Johnny Skelton informed us that we were entered at Henley Royal Regatta in the July. His reasoning may have been, that as we had won our Novices the previous September in a gut buster race at The Medway Regatta, we must be a reasonable crew and deserve a chance at the big time. (Oh really).

We were drawn out against Clare College Cambridge, who by all accounts were not that good, phew, we might get through our first race was the thinking. Unknown to us then, the result was determined by which crew hit the booms the least. We hit them five times, Clare hit them only four times, they beat us by 1length. We put that one down to experience, we had raced at HRR and the next time we should not be as nervous.

1972 saw a few good young rowers join Poplar RC from Globe RC. Our 1971 4- joined up with them and we formed an 8+ for the season. Our racing boat was “The Argosy”. To give you an idea of how heavy it was, if you had split a 60foot tree down the middle, hollowed out the inside and attached iron riggers to the sides you wouldn’t be far off the truth. We never led off the start but always came through in the second half of the race once The Argosy got going. We got through our first race against Vesta RC and next day we were up against the seeded crew Kingston RC. We came off the start like a rocket and were only a length down at the 1/4mile. We expected that and kept that distance for most of the race. Then came the Poplar Charge. Up went the rate and back came Kingston. Only half a length now and still closing them down. We passed the progress board and were only a canvas behind, we are still on a charge. The Finish line appeared too early and both crews collapsed into silence. After a minute or so of deliberation from the Finishing Judges the announcement was made Kingston RC beat Poplar Blackwall RC by 2feetwe were gutted but it was the race of the day and we went to the bar that evening feeling like we were winners for the East End Rowers.

1973 we said goodbye to The Argosy and said hello to a brand-new boat “Wearwell”. We raced at HRR but drew the Garda (Irish Police) RC. They were a strong crew and although a good race were a lot more powerful than us.

1974 saw a 4- come out of the 1973 8+ but with no real success.

All the time we raced at HRR we use to stay at the Church Hall in nearby Medmenham. We were looked after by Johnny and Mavis Skelton and in all had a great time during the HRR fortnight. (stories of this to come).

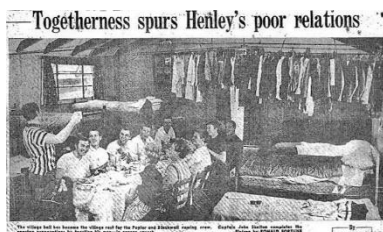
In 1974, Bob Milligan and I joined up with two young lads from The Lea, Crowland RC, as it was then. We moved onto Thames Tradesmen RC with the promise of a coach and a top-class boat. Our coach turned out to be Billy Mason, who was at the time rowing in the GB 8+ and the boat was a top of the range Karlisch.



We went on to win the Wyfolds Challenge Cup in 1975 beating Leander RC in a record time. The picture on the left shows us in the final. The crew that day were: Bow Tony Mallin, 2 John Roberts, 3 Bob Milligan, Stroke Steve Simpole

We went on to win The Grand Challenge Cup in 1976. I then joined up with Jim Clarke from TTRC and won The Silver Gobbets Trophy in 1977 and then again in 1978, then in 1979 I won The Grand again. Being a member of Poplar RC since 1962 has been a massive influence on my life. Training hard against each other but racing together as a team can only be a great lesson in life and I am pleased to have been lucky enough to be part of it.

➤ Henley Royal Regatta 1967 – by Richie brown



The picture on the left was printed in the Daily Mail on 28th June 1967, the first day of the Henley Royal Regatta.

The picture shows the Captain John Skelton standing and toasting the Club (with a cup of tea) on our first Henley adventure.

Clockwise after John is Peter Holdeman, Martin Spencer, Nobby Clarke, Richie Brown, Bobby Prentice, Micky Lane, Nigel Holman (hidden behind Ken Dwan), Alan Lane, Brian Cole, Mavis Skelton, Sandy Murray, wife of coach Ted

Murray, and seated next to John with her back to the camera Kim Murray, Ted and Sandy’s 6 year old daughter. A real club and family effort, Mavis Skelton and Sandy Murray looked after us so well with all the cooking and help without which we could not have done it. Three weeks of support that went above and beyond and for which we were incredibly grateful.

The average age of the crew was about 22 and Kenny was 18. We enjoyed many more Henley trips after this one, which included regattas where two of the squad won here and two finals for Ken.

The press always liked to highlight the ‘poor boys vs the toffs’ angle whenever Poplar went to Henley. As we were mainly a manual working men’s rowing club from the East End of London and particularly centered on the docks and river, this was something they could write about that seemed to, I suppose, draw attention to the regatta whilst bringing the class difference into play. I don’t think it bothered us too much, we just got on with the rowing and enjoyed the opportunity of

being able to race at this iconic regatta, and maybe the publicity helped eventually with the successful efforts to raise the money to build the new boathouse.

This was the first time we had used Medmenham as a base and the club kept it for a number of years after. A great find by John and Ted as it was a very economical way to stay and enjoy Henley.

We had entered an eight in the Thames Cup which got through two rounds to the quarterfinals and Ken's first attempt at the Diamond Sculls ended in the second round.

➤ Poplar 1972 – By Bob Milligan



In 1972 Poplar had a squad of young oarsmen who whilst not physically the biggest, and in the early stages, not the most technically accomplished, did have some great assets. They were dedicated to training and improving, loved racing and most importantly were so hungry for success you could almost taste it. The squad system was very different then – work pressures were not so draconian, Poplar was still very much a blue collar club. So you needed a sharp knock off from work to get to the club by 6pm or be dropped or moved down the order. We had a mix of people but few if any university grads or students. We did have plumbers, builders, debt collectors some bankers sheet metal workers and one statistician (he might have been to uni' he counted the 10 stroke bursts).

Crew classifications were different then - senior C after winning novices through to Elite. As I recall you needed 6 regatta wins to achieve that. In any event we approached Henley Royal in the Thames Cup as "elite" oarsmen after a very successful regatta season.

We had a dedicated coach in John 'Nobby' Clarke – somewhere to stay for pre HRR training at the village Hall Medmenham and a boat that deserves a special mention. The Argosies was an old boat in years and design. Wooden of course with soft canvas decks flat bottom profile long bow and stern canvas's and a huge rudder on rope. The riggers were cast iron with no adjustment available apart from an extra hole in the plate to change the pin if you wanted to row through your work. Clogs not shoes and brass fittings. It took 8 men to row it and 12 to carry it. She was a dog to get off the start due to the weight but once it was up and going the stability was tremendous and very forgiving so you could just sit and row yourself to oblivion.

And that's what we did.....our first heat versus Vesta was my first Henley start, never to be forgotten. We were all hooked on racing and this was major league – the adrenalin was pumping along the crew. After being dumped off the start (expected - therefore not worried about) we settled into our work and the rhythm took us through Vesta and we squeezed out the win along the enclosures.

Euphoria!

Back at the tents the feeling was out of this world the support we had was always good and strong with family and friends travelling to many regattas in a hired coach (light ale crates all down the middle of the seats). That day you would have thought we had won the final. First things first – Kingston on Friday. Bring them on - we would race anyone anywhere. Underdog status went with the turf in those days and Poplar still experienced some of the old social divide first broken down by the famous 1956 "Dockers 8" from Poplar. But despite the old Argosies lining up against a short back brand new Sims (the stake boats had to be adjusted to accommodate the difference in lengths of the boats) we felt we would race until we dropped, nothing to lose.

Slow start, settled on the rhythm, held them at about one length down – never clear water but we working very hard to stay in touch. At the ¾ mile, hanging on, but before the mile we were inching back. Terry the cox is going ballistic smashing the clapper boards (ask your Dad) sure enough we were working through them. Me, Johnny and Dave in the stern sensed them on our shoulder and we hit the afterburners. It was not pretty rowing nor elegant but it was Poplar personified and scaring the life out of Kingston. I have no recollection of the run in to the line. The picture is on the wall by the stairs and there's bodies everywhere but every man there is more than 110% all out so hopefully we are forgiven. Final verdict said Kingston by 2 feet. More than one neutral and learned observer came to us after the race to say we had in fact won by a whisker - but that's racing. We earned a lot of respect from neutrals that day.

It would have been a huge upset (but not for us) if we had prevailed and also the comeback of the regatta. Can't win 'em all, but the club had a proud day it would remember for a very long time and we all slept well that night.

The crew that day were:

Stroke	Dave Nankivel	3	Johnny Keane
2	Kevin O'Shaughnessy	5	Barry Green
4	Keith Read	7	Bob Milligan
6	John Roberts	Bow	John Ward

Richie mentioned an episode that occurred 1973 (Aaron cutting his backside on the window) while attending the Young Athlete's Sports festival in Berlin. My recollection is from the same event but earlier in 1969 also involving a window which I will come to later. We had a reasonable squad representing Greenwich, and, if my memory serves me (which often is not the case), amongst the team were Poplar members Colin Andrews, Richie Brown, Patsy Sheehy, Alan Lane, Peter Holderman, Terry Hunter and me. I was the youngest on the team and it was quite an eye opener for me. We were treated to a grand reception, all of us blazered up, in sweltering heat at a fancy hotel in Berlin. While we sweated it out in our blazers we watched, in envy, hotel guests splashing around in the pool. There were other reception dinners and sightseeing tours of the Berlin Wall, execution chambers and other monuments/museums in Berlin's recent history which we attended and so being kept busy while not training for the regatta to come. All the events we attended we were taken to by coach. Once on the coach we were entertained by Terry Hunter and Colin Andrews with their inexhaustible repertoire of "Rugby Songs", which were not fit for the young ears of the swimmers on the team, some only 12 years of age. Peter Blazeby, (AKA Purple Pete because everywhere he went he wore his UL Blazer) from Curlew, took it upon himself to be in charge and was constantly reminding the singers of the young age of the occupants of the bus we were on. To say that the shenanigans were boisterous would be a fair understatement. They decided the younger members of the squad would travel on the lower deck to keep them from being exposed to the tomfoolery. This made things worse and allowed the brakes to come off and on one occasion Purple Pete came to the top deck of the bus to remonstrate with us when he was promptly sent on his way with his trousers around his ankles having had them ripped from him, I think it was Patsy Sheehy who managed to separate him from his trousers

So in July 1969 Buzz Aldrin was walking on the moon. This was something special, a monumental occasion. So was our trip to Berlin and while not being chaperoned around Berlin and with time to kill we were inevitably going to find excitement in one way or another. I remember being woken up in the middle of the night to be identified by the hostel manager who was looking for the person who had not paid for the session in the adjacent bowling alley. The manager was convinced it was one of us and proceeded to move around the dorm shining a torch in everyone's face to try to identify the culprit. None of us had been into the bowling alley and all were quite compliant in letting him see our faces. That was until he got to Colin Andrews. Colin decided he wasn't going to cooperate and, screaming at the top of his voice, "IT WASN'T MEEEEEE, IT WASN'T MEEEEEE, over and over while covering his head under the blankets creating an instant reaction from those looking for their culprit. The ensuing struggle was hilarious. The manager of the bowling alley and the manager of the hostel grappling with the struggling heap of blankets trying to unravel the tangle to extract and identify him. The struggle went on for some time and the noise level increasing attracted attention from other dorms creating a gathering outside our room. Colin finally gave up the struggle and popped his head from under the blankets with a "MEH, MEM, A, MEH, MAAAA". The disappointment on the face of the bowling alley manager's face was hilarious and the increased volume of laughter at his expense made him turn purple with rage. The manager instantly recognised Colin though. He had expelled him the previous night for launching a 12lb bowling ball across three lanes. Colin was p----d and made the excuse the ball had stuck on his thumb.

Our Hostel was "L" building in the corner of which housed a quadrant shaped bank. Our dorms were for 6-8 in bunk beds. I was rooming with Richie, Terry, Patsy, Alan + a Curlew chap whose name I can't recall. I was looking out of the window of the common room and could see some activity on the other side of the building. I quickly realised the activity was happening in my dorm. As I continued to watch I noticed a pillow flying out of the window, followed shortly afterwards by a mattress with all the bed linen, all of which, landing nicely on the roof of the bank. When I got to the room I realised it was my bed that had been launched through the window. The laughter and shenanigans began subsiding the realisation of what had been done had to be undone set in. Richie, being the responsible one; not for the incident I hasten to add, decided he would retrieve the bedding from the bank. Gathering all the sheets from the room, tied them together and, with a little help from us, climbed out through the window and lowered himself, Spiderman-like onto the roof of the bank. He tramped around the roof picking up the various pieces of bedding and started handing it up to us. The rest of this story is a little blurred for me, perhaps Richie can enlarge on this bit, but the police sirens, bank alarm ringing out and shouting and roaring, plus the sight of police with guns, was enough for me, I decided best I wasn't around. I beat a hasty retreat leaving the scene to the guilty.

In spite of all this tomfoolery we were the most successful squad on the team that year, winning most of our races.

➤ Storytime – Coxswains by Richie Brown



Get a group of young boys together and you're guaranteed mischief. Here's some that our little people got up to. In the mid 1970's when the working docks were in the process of closing down, we got permission to use an area, in the West India Docks I think it was, that wasn't being used. This was quite handy for us because although most of us had worked in the docks we were never allowed to use the docks for our sport. All went well until a couple of the more adventurous kids discovered the controls to one of the swing bridges that connected one dock to another for both road and rail transport. Obviously, the temptation to see what happened when you pulled the levers was too much for them and before we knew it the bridge started to open. All rowing was stopped as we tried to get the bridge back

in place before any disaster happened or the dock police found out. This we did after a lot of pushing and pulling of levers until the bridge settled back in place. Panic over! The names of the culprits escape me but I'm pretty sure they never got to bother us again.

Another escapade they enjoyed was getting up on the roof of the club. There was an iron ladder on the wall leading up from the balcony for maintenance purposes that proved too much of a challenge for their mischievous minds. Quite often Harry Read, who was the Club Steward would get them down and give them a scolding but that never really deterred them. This came to a head when they were reported by some ladies who noticed them spying through the glass roof light over the lady's toilet. This warranted an appearance by the offenders before the committee. Whilst no defence could reasonably be offered, one of them tried the excuse that he had been looking down into the gent's toilet! I think it was probably suggested that he seek help whilst the others were suspended for a period of time. The end result was of course that the ladder had to be taken down. I couldn't end this segment without mentioning our old friend Aaron. As a coxswain our hero wasn't always first choice, and if he was your cox in a club race let's just say he wasn't always in the moment. Maybe his mind wandered much like the direction of the boat he was steering. His stroke man in one race, under pressure to push on and aware of the encouragement being given by the opposition coxes, mouthed to Aaron 'for f***sake say something'. His words became part of folklore. 'All puff together' were his words of wisdom!

Best wishes and keep well all.

Richie,

Who's been locked in by the Government and locked out by the rowing club. My only saving grace is that if I get locked up, I know a cheap Probation Officer 🙄