



BOATHOUSE CHATTER

Welcome to Boathouse Chatter.

Thanks for all the people who have contributed to the Newsletter. You have made it a very full and varied issue. It would be great if we could keep the contributions coming in for future issues. Please let us know your news and what you're doing to get by – stay in touch!

Please send your news to anita@newlandmail.com by Sunday 21st February 2021. Next issue Sunday 28th February 2021

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

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

DIARY DATES

- **16TH MARCH 2021 – DOGETTS COAT & BADGE (POSTPONED 2020 RACE)**
- **VIRTUAL REGATTA 28-31 JANUARY 2021**
- **VIRTUAL REGATTA 18TH -21ST FEBRUARY 2021**
- **AGM - TBC**

➤ Welcome

Happy New Year! Certainly not the start to the 2021 that we would have hoped for, but fingers crossed, the current lock down will soon be history, and we can get back on the river.

The vaccine offers hope to make this a reality. So far, we have heard that Ron Watkins (aged 89) and Frank Barrett (aged 90) have both had their vaccinations which is great news.

Enjoy the Newsletter – It's great to hear how people are staying fit, active and (relatively) sane!

The Trustees continue to meet regularly. If you have any queries or concerns, please contact Dan directly at danbartlett1@btinternet.com.

➤ Notice Board....

➤ *The Bar*

The bar is currently closed.

➤ *Circuits*

Monday & Wednesday from 5.30pm – contact Bev on samjunior135@gmail.com

➤ *Virtual Regatta*

28th -31st January and 18th -21st February 2021 – contact Paddy on patrick.boyle@phonak.com
or WhatsApp (0771) 171 6075. Free to enter.

➤ *Keeping active & Home Schooling*

Keeping active has probably never been more important than it is now. There seem to be lots of resources available – which is great. I came across a new one the other day designed to help parents of primary school age children with home schooling. This one tries to incorporate learning and sport. Have a look at <https://youtu.be/igin5iDqArc>

➤ *Competition Time!*

The Thames looks particularly lovely at the moment. We will all be seeing it during lockdown at different times. Some of us will be working on the river -whilst others will be walking and running by trying to maintain fitness. So we thought it would be good to get as many different images of it as possible. Please send me your pictures of the ‘Thames during lockdown’ and we’ll share the best ones in the next Newsletter. Send via email to anita@newlandmail.com

➤ *What’s good about the ‘Lockdown’*

We are all frustrated with the Lockdown(s) and it is difficult to find many positive things that have come out of the time we have spent confined to home and separated from family and friends. However, I am sure there are a few good things that we could share over the next few issues of the Newsletter.

I’ll kick off proceedings During the ‘Lockdowns’ I have been lucky enough to be able to walk and run along the Thames close to Limehouse and Canary Wharf. The other week whilst walking, I saw a cormorant wrestling with a fish, that was not keen to become the bird’s dinner!

The fish fought to maintain a horizontal position in the cormorant’s mouth with the bird trying fiercely to move it to a vertical position and swallow it whole. The fish and bird were locked in battle and created quite a racket for ages.

Unfortunately, I had to continue with the walk after 10- 15 minutes of watching the battle unfold, so am not sure how it ended. However, I’d like to think that the fish got away. It seems fair after it fought so bravely and with such vigor!

In addition, I have seen cygnets, born on the local canal, grow into grey and then white swans and learn to fly. It’s amazing what you see when you don’t travel by tube!

It would be great to hear what you’ve been forced to do differently..... but have actually quite enjoyed or at least have learnt something new in the process. Send your ‘Lockdown Goodies’ via email to anita@newlandmail.com

➤ Tea & cake — By Markus Gesmann



During times of lockdown we need things that can provide pleasure and comfort. Pastry does the trick for me. Here is a very simple recipe with puff pastry that is popular in Armenia. Essential baking with essential ingredients. Nothing fancy, but have it with a cup of tea or coffee and you will be in heaven for a brief moment.

Ingredients:

Roll of readymade puff pastry from the supermarket
6 tbsp flour
6 tbsp sugar
30g butter
1 egg, separated into yolk and egg white
Dash of milk added to the yolk and mixed together

Gata is basically filled puff pastry.

Start with preparing the filling. In a bowl mix together flour and sugar, then add the butter and mix with your hands until you get to the consistency of sand, but when you press it together it stays in shape. You can add more flavour, e.g. by adding a dash of vanilla extract and Cognac. Set the bowl aside.

Roll out the puff pastry, cut it in half along the long side and brush it with egg white (you probably don't need all of the egg white). Next, spread the sandy filling prepared earlier onto the pastry and press a little into it.

To form the pieces of Gata we roll each half of the pastry towards the middle and fold it one more time to form a long roll. Use a fork to press in a decorative pattern and cut out pieces (c. 1 inch wide) and place them onto a baking tray (with baking paper). Finally give all pieces a good washing with the beaten milky egg yolk.



Place the tray into a preheated oven at 200 degrees for 20 – 25 minutes, see also the instruction on the readymade puff pastry. Switch off the oven, open the oven door a little and let the Gata cool down inside the oven.

So, all that's left to do is put the kettle on and make a brew. Gata goes really well with a cuppa. Take care and ENJOY!

➤ Battersea Park – Boathouse fund raiser event – picture provided by Helen Coughlan



In Issue 6 of Boathouse Chatter we learnt about the events employed to raise funds for the new boat house. One of the events took place over a weekend in Battersea Park and provided people with the opportunity, (for a small fee), to have their picture taken whilst sitting in the Silver Aston Martin used in the James Bond films. One of the lucky people to be able to do this was Helen Coughlan. The picture on the left was taken at the event in the late 1960s /early 1970s.

Helen is on the top row in the middle. Mike Kelly (Prof), is in the driver's seat. Thanks for the photo Helen. It looks like it was a great event.

➤ Life on 'The Island' in the 1970s — by Richie Brown



26th September 1970 to 26th September 2020. 50 years of the New Boathouse. A new beginning and life as it was then.

So, what was the life like on the Isle of Dogs in 1970 when the new clubhouse opened? Here's some memories of mine.

The major employer on the Island, the West India and Millwall docks, were still in operation giving work to many of the club members in various roles. This continued until about 1975 when the docks closed.

On the riverside there was very little housing of any kind. Nearly all the apartment blocks that line the river now replaced the industry that was there basically supporting the docks industry such as wharves, warehouses, haulage companies, ships engineering companies and various firms that supplied the shipping lines like ships chandlers and rope makers etc.

Either side of the club slipway were wharves with barges lining the river wall being loaded or unloaded. This could be quite disconcerting at high tide when leaving the slipway in a boat as it was awkward to see if anything was coming as you pulled out.

The river traffic was mainly commercial craft rather than pleasure boats that we have today, although they were operating as well, in a minor role, and there was certainly no commuter river service.

Most housing was London County Council (LCC) property consisting of buildings that had survived the war, some intact, but generally with some damage that was repaired. There were streets of pre-fabricated houses (prefabs) that replaced the great number of dwellings that had been destroyed in the war as a result of their proximity to the docks which was the target of the bombers - unfortunately, some with boss-eyed bomb aimers. I don't recall many, if any, privately owned houses, owner occupier housing only took off in the Canary Wharf era.

For entertainment, basically there was none apart from pubs of which there were plenty - I think about 20 or so compared to probably half a dozen today not counting the Canary Wharf pubs and bars. The pubs vied for customers by having singers and musicians to entertain but this was of no use to anybody under the age of 18 which was when you were allowed to frequent them due to the Licensing laws.

For cinemas we had to travel to Poplar and beyond and apart from the Sunday night dances at Christ Church hall no dancing or music venues on the Island that come to mind.

The culinary choice for restaurants consisted of several working men's cafes and a few fish and chip shops. For more exotic tastes, a trip to Limehouse was called for to enjoy the many Chinese restaurants that had sprung up from the arrival of the Chinese community some decades before. Jamie Oliver and co never bothered us in those days.



The central part of the Isle of Dogs enclosed the docks surrounded by very high fences into which you could only gain entrance through gates guarded by dock Police Officers, so apart from a foot bridge between Glengall Grove and Tiller Road across the Millwall docks there was only one road around the Island for access to other areas. The photograph on the left, shows the Footbridge across the Docks - early 60s.

Public transport consisted of just a bus service connecting the Island to Poplar, Limehouse and the rest of the World. No DLR or tube service that Canary Wharf enjoys today. We also had to endure the fact that the two bridges that gave access from the river to the docks would occasionally stop your journey when craft were entering or leaving. This was known by Islanders as 'catching a bridger'. I'm not sure whether this term is used today by the newer island population on being delayed by the blue bridge, but this could be quite unfortunate for those of us that had to leave the Island for school. When you explained to your teacher your lateness was caused by 'catching a bridger' you got two slaps, one for being late and one for misuse of the Queens English. Yes, corporal punishment was still alive and well in schools in the '60s.

Life in general around 1970 had seen the Beatles disband after a decade or so of amazing success, Elvis Presley was having a renaissance in Las Vegas, Rod Stewart enjoyed hit records that began his 50 year career (so far) and Frank Sinatra was probably on another comeback tour, which included an appearance a few years later at the London Arena, an events venue that opened in the Millwall dock after the docks closure. I suppose at this stage I should suggest some of you google these names.

Television was limited to three channels, BBC1, BBC2 and ITV and mainly monochrome, although colour television was in its infancy. A decade or so before, the BBC had free reign and limited viewing to a few hours in the afternoon followed by a break in transmission about 6pm for an hour or so to allow parents to send their younger children to bed. At the end of the TV broadcast, usually after the news read by newsreaders (male only) some attired in dinner jackets, about 11pm the National Anthem would be played and TV closed down. We think we live in a nanny state today!

The previous year had seen arguably mankind's greatest achievement when Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin set foot on the moon. Put into context, this was about 20 years after jet flight was first invented. Those of us that remember this still feel lucky to have been alive to witness it.

The Vietnam war was ongoing, but thanks to 'Good old Mr Wilson', as John Lennon referred to the Prime Minister of the time, we were kept out of it. However we were just beginning to experience the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland which in later years affected the Island when Canary Wharf was bombed.

Generally speaking the Island population was mainly white working class blue collar people, a major change to today's multi-cultural residents and multi-national white collar office workers that populate Canary Wharf.

Finally the club members from 1970 still around are:

John Skelton 65+years member
Ron Watkins 70+years member
Ken Orwell 65+years member
Richie Brown 60+years member
Ken Dwan 60+years member
John Dwan 55+years member
Bobby Prentice and Milky 55+years members
John Roberts 55+years member
Frank Walker 55+years member.

Plus members in those days still around and some who re-joined the club or are still associated with the club include:

Alan Butler
Micky Lane
Keith Read
Maurice Coughlan
Bob Milligan
John Hall
Philip Skelton
Paul Wilson
Fred Bradshaw
Terry Hunter and
Wally Murray, (recently turned 100 years of age).

Those recently lost who were long term members and very active in 1970 include:

Martin Spencer 60+years member
Bernard Spencer 65+years member
Sam Spencer 65+years member
Alan Lane 60+ years member.

I think Roger and Chris Spencer, Steve Sale, Les Broom and others were too young to be sampling the Guinness in the newly opened bar around this time but am prepared to be corrected.

Apologies to any I've missed but it's time for my pills.



Regards
Coxswain Richie

Picture to the left.... I am the boy at the front with the loudhailer. Left to right around me as you look at the picture are Teddy Murray, Vic Brown (unknown chap with bald head) Brian Murray (front) John Bidmead (behind).

➤ *Bringing the Boats to Life....*

We have a club that is rich in history and memories. The boat names are an integral part of this history. Over the next few issues of Boathouse Chatter, we will be 'Bringing the boats to life' and explaining a bit about the people who have given their names to the boats.

➤ *Jo Brown – ladies 8+ - by Richard Brown (Jo's brother)*



In March 2009, The Joanna Brown Trust presented Poplar Blackwall & District Rowing Club with a new lightweight 8 rowing boat. The boat was the first project completed by The Joanna Brown Trust.

By request of the female members of Poplar Blackwall & District Rowing Club at the time, the boat was christened 'Jo Brown'. Jo had been a member of Poplar since 2004 and always wanted to race in a lighter boat with a small foot plate, suitable for female rowers. Jo loved being a member of the Poplar and made many friends there.

Sadly, Jo died on 25th August 2008, in an accident whilst trekking around Lake Baikal, near Irkutsk. It was part of a trip she had been on with her friend Helen, which included going to the Beijing Olympics. A highlight of the trip had been watching Zac Purchase and former Poplar member, Mark Hunter, in the GB Men's lightweight double winning their gold medal.

In memory of Jo, her family founded The Joanna Brown Trust, a sports charity that aims to support people to experience sport and excel in it. To date the charity has supported 8 projects around the world, including India, Tanzania, Lesotho, Uganda and Guatemala.

The charity has also awarded grants to 98 young British athletes. These athletes include Kare Adenegan, Alice Tai, Evie Richards and Amber Anning. All of whom will hopefully be competing at the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. Another athlete that the charity has been proud to support, is Maddy Badcott. Maddy went on to be a member of the winning Oxford crew in the inaugural women's boat race in 2016.

100% of the money received by The Joanna Brown Trust goes directly to its causes. No money is spent on admin fees or salaries. For more information about The Joanna Brown Trust, please visit www.TheJoannaBrownTrust.org.



➤ *Tommy Scott – Coxless 4 - by Anita Newland. Information & pictures provided by Helen Coughlan*



The 'Tommy Scott' is a crew boat. It is currently rigged as a quad and was previously a coxless four. It is named after Tommy Scott - Helen Coughlan's dad, who was Captain of the Club in 1956. Tommy was a member of the Club for many years, initially coming to the club with his father, who was also a rower.

Tommy worked as a Thames Lighterman operating 'lighters', (a type of flat bottomed barge usually powered by a tug) – using & developing his knowledge of the tides and water currents on the Thames, to move the vessels.

As a lighterman, he was involved in the building of London Bridge in the late 1960s and the Thames Barrier during the early 1970s.



Tommy is stroking the coxed four in the picture on the left hand side. The picture was taken at the Club. In the picture to the right, Tommy is the smartly dressed chap in the club blazer on the far right. The picture is taken outside the Prince of Wales pub where the club used to meet and store their cups and trophies.



➤ PBDRC Badge – Rowan Watson



Ever thought where the club badge comes from? Heraldry is one of my interests! I have often thought that the badge is very official looking with the wig and scales of justice. After discussion with Richie, it seems that the club badge was designed by a former club member, Brian Gould. Brian took the coat of arms from the old Poplar Borough Council in the 1950's and integrated it into the club's badge with the crossed oars.

So with a bit of research, as I had a bit of time on my hands during lockdown!, I managed to find the following information which provides some great context....

The Poplar Council had no registered Coat of Arms, but adopted a Common Seal based on the badge designed for the Poplar Board of Works in 1855, and comprising the seals of the parishes of Poplar, Bromley, and Bow, which formed the Metropolitan Borough of Poplar.

The gateway represents that of the West India Import Dock, and the sailing ship (believed to be the Hibbert) refers to the parish of All Saints and to Poplar's associations with shipbuilding and the sea.



The figure in the monk's habit was the seal of the parish of Bromley St. Leonard. It commemorates the Benedictine Priory dedicated to St. Leonard which is believed to have been founded in the 10th or 11th century and which stood on the banks of the River Lea until the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

The bows and bridge on the Bow shield refer to the bow-shaped bridge over the Lea which, according to tradition, was built by Queen Matilda, wife of Henry I, near the site of a ford which formerly connected London with the old Roman road to Colchester.

The picture to the left shows the arms in the town (Image from Instagram eekmouse 923)

Digging a bit deeper behind the Hibbert, provides a deeper association to the water, the Docks and Isle of Dogs. The *George Hibbert* was a baroque boat built in London in 1804. It was used for importing sugar, rum, cotton, coffee and tropical wood from the West Indies and later was used to transport convicts to Australia! George Hibbert was associated with philanthropists Sir William Hillary and Thomas Wilson, to help found the *National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck* (4th March 1824). This organisation is better known today, as the *Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)*.

So, it seems that Brian Gould's choice of design was exceptionally appropriate.

➤ Teenage reflections of the COVID pandemic — by Eloise McDermott

So, lockdown no.3 and I'm here to give an insight from a teenagers perspective. I'll start from the beginning. A couple weeks before, my Nan had a heart attack and at the time it was my biggest worry. About three days later the GCSEs I had been preparing for tirelessly so I could get into my dream sixth form were cancelled and there was no way of knowing how the grades would be worked out. Two days after that it was the final day of school and it was incredibly tearful. I was rushed to say last minute goodbyes to teachers I haven't seen or heard from since. If that doesn't sound sad enough already, brace yourselves...

As my friends and I were shopping for snacks in Aldi I got a message saying that my nan who was in hospital had gotten COVID. Next thing I know I'm on the floor crying while clutching a bag of off brand doritos and getting a dirty look from a Mum doing her weekly shop on a Friday afternoon. Skip to Sunday and the country is plunged into a national lockdown.

Lockdown no.1 was probably the hardest situation I've had to face in my life so far, for many it meant time at home to spend with family accompanied by daily walks in the sunshine. Unfortunately it wasn't quite like that for me, I attended my very first funeral. Barely a week into lockdown my Nanaji (grandad) died from the virus, he was only 69 and only two weeks before I'd been twirling in my prom dress for him while we made plans for him to be the photographer for my friends and I on the big day. At the time I had never considered that my prom would be cancelled let alone that he wouldn't be there for it.

I spent the weeks after his death practically living at my Nan's. My aunt had also contracted COVID and had been in hospital. I was there to support them and if it wasn't just for their health, it was for their grief. It didn't hit me immediately that I'd lost someone. It was the first time somebody close to me had died and it wasn't something anyone could be prepared for, but it came as a huge shock, especially considering that I had been busy being concerned with my nan, aunt and my grades. It felt

incredibly selfish to be concerned about my grades, but it gave me something to fill my mind with other than the loss I was feeling. Whilst staying there I learnt to cook a few dishes and some very basic sewing skills, whilst also becoming very close with my Nan. I'd say I did a pretty decent job at distracting her but obviously she was in bits. For context she'd been married since she was 16 and never gone a day without my Nanaji. I learnt that my sarcastic humour comes from my Nan as well as my use of bad language (shocker a 17 year old with a potty-mouth!).

In August came results day and despite our failure of a government, I came out with a set of results that meant I got a place at the sixth form I really wanted to get into. My best friends also got in and that day was the best day I can remember. September meant the start of sixth form and new opportunities. It was awesome, coming from what is essentially a nunnery, this sixth form made me excited for school and honestly still does.

Lockdown 3 and my patience has worn thin. The days blur and online school is almost as much of a joke as Boris. I wake up at noon everyday, log in and don't leave my desk till the early hours of the morning. I had just made new friends who I adore and all of a sudden it feels as if they've been confiscated from me. I feel as if my teenage years are quickly slipping out of my grasp uncontrollably.

If you were reading this to see if maybe the 'youngsters' were having a decent time, I'm sorry to inform you that we really aren't. But I know there is a light at the end of this perpetual tunnel. Just as I'm writing this, my grandad(the alive one) has gotten the vaccine, so I am hopeful. I look forward to the concerts I have booked that are postponed, but I can't wait to be drinking from a plastic cup of water that has been passed from person to person while sweating in front of a stage and singing my heart out, (can you believe we used to share water with strangers!?). I don't see a point in trying to make lockdown seem like it's 'not that bad' because we all know it sucks. I prefer to focus on the future and the better days ahead. They are coming, maybe slowly, but they are. Soon enough we'll all be able to go out and hug all of our loved ones and these lockdowns will have taught us to make the most of every day we have freedom.

One of the things that I am most looking forward to is getting back out onto the water. During the brief period where rowing was allowed, I was sat stroke for a weekend and damn, it really is as good as everyone says. I thought people were being dramatic when they spoke about the feeling you get when you're at the front of the boat, but no, they were being deadly serious. I am excited to be back in the boathouse and back on the Thames. I never thought I'd miss the cold, murky water of the Thames, but honestly, I'd give anything if it meant I could row again, even if it meant losing the feeling in my toes!

➤ British Rowing Indoor Championships (BRIC) – by Rowan Watson

Worn out by club's virtual Thames Challenge in July last year, the club's virtual race from Lands End to John o'Groats looked a bit daunting – the virtual regatta organised by British Rowing Indoor Championships came at the right moment as an alternative. For £10, you could enter, in my case, the 2k race for the 70-74 'heavy-weight' bracket (doesn't seem the right expression), to be run on Saturday 5 December last. The bonus was a scientifically-designed six week training programme before the regatta, recommending two sessions a week and anything else you could manage – in my case some 30 minute ergos and sessions cycling round the interior ring of Regent's Park, which as all north London cyclists know is a training ground for serious cyclists (4.5k a circuit where you get used to being overtaken by bikes doing way, way over the 30mph limit). The training programme ranged from 4k of 250m light followed by 500m firm, to 3 x 3k at 18 spm firm with breaks of 90 seconds between each. It worked wonders. For 5 December, the challenge was to master the software to link into the BRIC marshalling system; the help from the race organisers the day before was superb and immediate, so on the day I was able to enter the lobby at 12.40 on the dot as required; the monitor on my Concept2, linked to my computer, then gave all instructions. Waiting to get under starter's orders was just like hanging around before a race on the water, with the same range of emotions, including much tense shouting by umpires at crews in other races to get into position. When the start came, 'Attention!' followed by 'Row', it was off like the clappers, with your position displayed on the monitor screen in front of you, which seemed more immediate than a race on the water.

Well, what times for 2k can you expect from 70-74 year olds? There were seven competitors, from the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic. The winning time was 7:08 and the slowest 8:10. Expecting to bring up the rear gracefully, the staggering effectiveness of the training programme gave me a miraculous time of 7:54.7, no.5 out of 7 competitors – nothing to boast about, but I had never expected to break what I remember Tom Shute calling the 'eight minute barrier' again. The winning time for the 75-79 bracket was 7:19, and for 80+, a competitor managed 8:33. I give these figures to show club members what they should aim for as they reach their 70s. The BRIC website gave an overall report on the regatta: 2700 entries from 42 countries. The best £10's-worth I have had in ages. Now I can relax with the very varied daily work-outs (short, medium and long) offered by the Concept2 website, in the e-mail that arrives every morning at 6.00 am, monotony on the ergo now a thing of the past.

➤ Poplar Challenge #3 – Lands’ End to John O’Groats -race report – by Jack Colquitt



The November lockdown brought with it the third instalment in the Poplar Challenge series. Once again, entrants were split into teams of four and tasked with logging their daily exercise meters across a range of sports – rowing, running, biking, power walking and circuit training – in order to cover the challenge distance as quickly as possible. For this round the bar was raised from the 692km of the Thames (and back) to the famous Lands’ End to John O’ Groats distance of 1407km!

The competition was fierce, with all the teams making strong contributions from the off. Boats 5 and 7 in particular were logging big efforts, but the last-minute entry of Boat 8 caused quite a stir as Dan and Max attempted the challenge as just a pair. Within a week they had taken a strong lead, and their beastly 3-session days continued to propel them

further up the country. Boat 5 rose to the challenge however and remained hot on their heels. Kudos go to Dmitry who greeted the chat each morning with his sunrise efforts. Other highlights included the movie / TV recommendations to watch whilst pulling long-distance ergs – A Few Good Men, for those wondering.

Despite the strong efforts of the other teams, Boat 8 could not be stopped and on day 17 they arrived in John O’ Groats – tired but victorious, having averaged over 80km per day! A big congratulation goes to Dan and Max for this herculean effort. Dmitry, Mo, Min and Paddy of Boat 5 took silver, giving a massive final push to finish just 1 day later. Having left the others behind, it was a little wait before Jen, Rita, John and Max M of Boat 7 grabbed the final podium position on day 29. They were followed shortly thereafter by Boats 6, 4, and then Boats 2, 3 and finally Boat 1 who were helped across the line by the strong club spirit to ensure everyone could get home by Christmas.

Congratulations to everyone who took part in keeping their training going through lockdown, and of course a massive congratulations again to Dan and Max on showing us all how to push hard.

| Place | Boat | Day |
|-------|------|-----|
| 1 | 8 | 17 |
| 2 | 5 | 18 |
| 3 | 7 | 29 |
| 4 | 6 | 32 |
| 5 | 4 | 33 |
| 6 | 2 | 36 |
| 7 | 3 | 37 |
| 8 | 1 | 41 |