

BOATHOUSE CHATTER



Welcome to the next issue of Boathouse Chatter.

A big thank you to all who have contributed to this issue.

In this issue we hear from friends in isolation at home and abroad and from a pair who ended up swapping isolation on the Atlantic for isolation in Wapping & Leeds!

Please send your news to anita@newlandmail.com by Sunday 31st May 2020. Next issue Sunday 7th June 2020

Let's work together to get enough content to issue the newsletter every other Sunday

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

DIARY DATES

- SUNDAY 31ST MAY AT 8PM – POPLAR ZOOM QUIZ.
- JUNE 20TH 2020 -VIRTUAL REGATTA SERIES C
- 26TH SEPTEMBER 2020 BOATHOUSE 50TH BIRTHDAY
- AGM - TBC

➤ Trustee Update



At last we can see a glimmer of light at the end of the lockdown tunnel. In the last couple of weeks we have seen a relaxation of some of the lockdown measure which has meant that the Trustees have been able to start the long, slow process of managing our 'return to rowing'.

The plan was published recently via the forum. Please take time to read it thoroughly and follow the guidelines set so that we can maintain as safe an environment as possible.

It feels like a small tentative step, but it is in the right direction and we hope that we can all return to the water very soon.

We can't have a cuppa together yet – but we can get together remotely. Join us for the Poplar Zoom quiz next Sunday at 8pm. It would be great to see everyone and catch up. I will be sending out joining instructions during the week.

Stay Safe

Dan

danbartlett1@btinternet.com

➤ Get Involved

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

➤ Virtual Regatta

Series B 23rd May - by Paddy Boyle

Poplar had 8 competitors in the first virtual regatta in April, but the numbers jumped to 17 for today's event. Today saw 31 clubs field 510 competitors, so the competition was much tougher than last time. However, from the 18 events we competed in we managed to take 6 firsts, 2 seconds and a third. Placed in half of them so not bad at all. For 11 of the 13 events where the same competitor(s) were involved in both April and May our times improved. Everybody did better in at least one of their events. Running was possible this time and our famous 5 runners stepped out to make the most of the competition they had, with all placed in their categories. There are too many statistics to mention but particularly well done to Gill on her singles win (again), to Mo for the most improved erg at 2.7% better and to JP for dropping more than 2% as well.

Needless to say, it has been a strange season, with either weather or Covid-19 taking almost all of the heads and regattas. These virtual regattas are a bit of fun, well once the pain dies down a bit and you are pretty sure you are not going to die. They give us something to train for. I know many don't have access to an erg but the final 500 m virtual regatta is set for next month, (20th June 2020). Well done everyone who gave it a go. Contact Paddy on Patrick.boyle@phonak.com

No.	Competitor or Crew	Category	Position/Total	Time May 23	Time April 25	% Difference	Winning Time
1	Alex	MB x 1	7/8	3.31.5	3.31.8	0.1	2.59.7
2	Bob	MG x 1	3/11	3.25.9	3.28.5	1.2	3.19.6
3	Gill	WMB x 1	1/10	3.28.8	3.32.7	1.9	3.28.8
4	Jennifer	WMB x 1	9/10	4.05.9	4.05.9	0	3.28.8
5	JP	MC x 1	4/20	3.19.2	3.23.4	2.1	3.10.5
6	Mo	WMA x 1	2/4	3.42.8	3.48.9	2.7	3.40.7
7	Paddy	MF x 1	4/22	3.29.8	3.32.4	1.2	3.28.4
8	Rowan	MH x 1	6/14	3.45.9	3.45.0	-0.4	3.22.7
9	Dimitry	MB x 1	4/8	3.18.8			2.59.7
10	Ed (Benson)	MB x 1	6/8	3.28.0			2.59.7
11	Simon (Perriton)	ME x 1	14/21	3.43.1			3.15.8
12	Alex & Dimitry	MB x 2	1/1	3.25.2			3.25.2
13	Bob & JP	ME x 2	2/6	3.22.6	3.26.0	1.7	3.16.6
14	Rowan & Paddy	MG x 2	1/3	3.37.9	3.38.7	0.4	3.37.9
15	Mo & Gill	WMA x 2	1/1	3.35.8	3.40.8	2.3	3.35.8
16	Jennifer & Simon	MxC x 2	10/11	3.54.5			3.23.1
17	Jennifer, Gill, Mo & Alex	MxA x 4	1/1	3.42.3	3.44.8	1.10	3.42.3
18	Rowan, Bob, JP & Paddy	MF x 4	1/4	3.30.2	3.32.3	1.00	3.30.2
19	Alex	Run	2/2	3.56.0			3.19.0
20	Chris (Scott)	Run	1/1	4.17.3			4.17.3
21	Mo	Run	3/3	4.15.0			3.58.0
22	Toby	Run	2/3	4.40.0			4.08.4
23	Sara	Run	2/2	5.34.0			5.32.0



➤ Ladies Crew Update

Sisters are doing it for themselves - by Lizzy Nunn

Poplar's ladies squad and friends have been keeping fit during the lockdown by attending bi-weekly circuit classes via Zoom. Each week different members take it turns to devise a 60-minute work-out. Our thanks go to Szaby, Mo and Pam for compiling some great plans that allow you to improvise by using 2 litre water bottles and tin cans as weights. Meanwhile, Lizzy Nunn and Pamela Garratt have been keeping up the tradition of turning up at the Club early mornings during the lockdown. In place of rowing, they've been following the Thames path on foot (socially distanced of course). Where there's a will, there's a way. If you would like to get fit with the ladies then please get in touch at Szigyi.szogyi@gmail.com

➤ Men's Squad Update

Thames Challenge -by Chris Scott

After all the bad weather in February and early March, we were finally able to look forward to the Men's Head and use that as a spring board into the summer regatta season. Then the lockdown kicked in and, with not just all racing but also squad training being cancelled, it has been very disheartening to say the least.

I think as a squad we adjusted to our own personal routines pretty well, we had quite a few activities shared via our WhatsApp group which helped keep the motivation up in the early days. But, as time went on, and more and more got cancelled, things did seem to get a little bit quieter (I have to put my hand up and admit I had a bit of time off).

However, Federico came to the rescue last weekend with the Thames Challenge (created by Kathryn Giblin at Globe) to cover the distance of the Thames and back (692km) in 'crews' of 4 over a 3 week period, allowing for various activities to count by adjusting distance ratios. The winner would be whoever finished first. This has so far been a huge success, with members of both the men's and women's squads involved, we have collectively covered almost 700km since starting on Monday with the boat in front having reached 225km so far. The crew in second is hot on their heels though so should be quite a close race.

We will update on the final scores on the subsequent newsletter, but needless to say we are very eager to get back on the water and I personally wouldn't mind a couple of beers at the bar either!

PBDRC Thames Challenge (updated 23/05/2020 at 12.30pm)										
Team Name	Bike (km/3)	Run (km)	Walk (km/2)	Erg (Km)	Circuit	Other	Total Km	% Completed	Ranking	
Boat 1	41.3	23.0	0.0	134.3	5.0	16.9	220.4	31.9	2.0	
Boat 2	22.5	42.9	0.0	90.6	67.2	2.6	225.7	32.6	1.0	
Boat 3	6.1	37.2	2.6	63.5	2.5	4.3	116.2	16.8	3.0	
Boat 4	32.7	31.3	0.0	13.8	26.5	6.9	111.1	16.1	4.0	

➤ Circuits

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

➤ Domestic news

Friendship – by Sara Brewer

Let me be clear, I blame the Poplar and Blackwall District Rowing Club for many things; for robbing me of my weekend lie-ins, for causing my otherwise pristine wardrobe to be rammed with rowing paraphernalia and yes, for rowing the Atlantic. It was in the Ladies' Changing Room that I first overheard a conversation about the book written by Ben Fogel and James Cracknell following their Atlantic crossing and I knew I had to read it. Then, only a few pages into the book, I knew also that I had to attempt the crossing, but I couldn't do it alone.



Ann Prestidge and I were an unlikely pair, not the fact that we were not a good fit with each other – as it turned out we were an excellent fit - but more because we were not the typical ocean-rowing types; the young, strong guys with ambitions to break records, or the ex-military crews with their precise training regimes, but the timing of our entry coincided with an upsurge in women taking on this challenge so we did not feel so alone. Nevertheless, we were aware that we did not inspire confidence, two skinny women – one of whom was getting

on a bit – with no experience of oceans, navigation or fixing things which were likely to break (and did) 2000 miles from land with no support other than a satellite phone to call a friend for advice. But here lies the strength of what we did have: friendship and a shared ambition to achieve something together. Whether from those who believed in us or those who were concerned for us, we always felt a groundswell of support and in our loneliest and most vulnerable moments this gave us courage. I hope this is beginning to resonate with what makes our Club strong and what we each gain from our sense of belonging.

During the row friendship was put to the test, severely put to the test. Sleep deprivation and being constantly drenched with waves, rain and even hailstones, or drenched in perspiration from a blisteringly hot cabin where rest was denied all took their toll, together with a sense of helplessness when we were unable to steer the boat where we wanted to go rather than where the wind and the waves were forcing us to go, and all enacted on a very small stage with no way out other than to keep on rowing. We did not always handle the test well, but those same challenges strengthened our friendship such that any flare ups were forgotten an instant later – they were no more than venting. I recall the first time I swam under the boat to remove any barnacles that might have become attached. I was very nervous and my out of control imagination

had me drifting off into the big blue ocean, beyond rescue, despite the fact that I was wearing a harness and tethered to the boat. Before going in I had to hold Ann's hand, it was to remember the touch of another human being before my imagined abandonment to the ocean. Funny to think of now, but at the time it was so real and curiously resonates with today's social isolation where many are denied the touch of loved ones, whether family or friends. So friendship matters, deeply.

Don't get me wrong, it wasn't all bad; there were times of such sublime beauty it felt as though we had strayed into the province of the gods, it was almost too much for the mortal eye. And there were moments of joy when wildlife came right up alongside us, dolphins, a whale, sea turtles, birds and even a shark. And there was side-splitting hilarity at nothing at all.

We would not have seen or done any of this had it not been for our rowing Club where I overheard the conversation in the Ladies' Changing Room; where we enjoyed the support of our friends, most notably Rita and Anita who I have to single out for their unwavering support; where we learned the joy of being out on the water and where Ann and I first met. So never under-estimate yourself, never under-estimate each other and never under-estimate friendship – it is what makes us strong.

Splendid Isolation in Scotland – by Ron Dovey



We have been in splendid isolation in Scotland for the lockdown period. This is 'proper' isolation. We couldn't be in a better place. The downside is we're coming back to London at the weekend for a while!

These are some of the views that I have had to put up with during the lockdown!



Retired in Essex – by Richie Brown

As two retired people and me having to consider myself a 'vulnerable person' because of my heart surgery a few years ago, (not something I like to admit about myself by the way), but after what happened with Kenny we just have to go with it.

So we have been doing basically what we've been told, shopping as little as possible maybe once a week, staying in more than usual, and walking for exercise as much as possible.

We have a garden so that's getting more attention than before. The grass gets cut whether it needs it or not, (still don't think we'll get garden of the year though)!

I have a treadmill in the garage that I use but prefer to go walking but it's a handy backup.

We live out in Essex and have woods and countryside around us so manage to avoid people mostly, and when we do meet people on our pathway, common courtesy comes into play with lots of 'after you' or nods and waves to each other. Long may it continue after this awful time has passed. We British could do with a loss of some of our reserve!

So nothing much to excite you with your newsletter I'm afraid.

Hopefully we'll soon be back on the river. I know that you are all working towards that end, and one day this will seem like a bad dream.

Keep well

➤ International news

Lockdown in Luxembourg — by Philipp Simon



Bare of any directions as to style, form and format I have been invited to come up with a couple of lines on my coping with COVID19, lockdown and all that goes along with it in Luxembourg, so here I go. From a lawyer's perspective, it actually does not hit me too bad, because as you all know, my practice is adapted to a high degree of mobility and flexibility, so being stationary makes it a "walk in the park", but for the walk – so just sitting in the park 😊

Given that rowing basically is a non-sport in Luxembourg, where I spend my time when I am not hanging out in London, I had to find something else to do with my spare time and that time is devoted to the (voluntary) fire service.

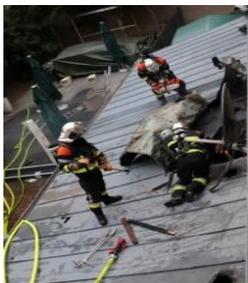
However, given that people in dire situations rely heavily upon this service only two things are really voluntary: Joining & leaving. The time in between requires commitment to the service and both principle aspects of it: training and active duty. Whilst training happens according to the diary (at least outside COVID19), active service happens when the beeper beeps. How unpredictably this can happen, some of PBDRC's members have themselves experienced, when they once "lost" their host, all of a sudden. Rest assured, they were safe – I left them right next to a pub – with my credit card!

Fortunately, so far, I got through this crisis all healthy, but unsurprisingly quite a few of my colleagues on this particular front line caught the virus and hence the load on those fit to serve went up considerably. Accordingly, I have recently seen quite a

bit of action.

Fire fighting is quite diverse and over the past 25 years or so I have climbed the ranks from entry level to a senior command post, without ever giving up on the core job.

Rather than boring you with elaborate essays I will share a couple of pictures and brief explanations.



Above, I am the guy with the black helmet; COS codes for "Commandant des Opérations de Secours" i.e. "Commanding officer" with various section leaders at a complicated fire in the middle of a difficult to access urban development, requiring 7 fire engines, 3 ladders, several ambulances (crew cover), a mobile command post and various other appliances. Nobody hurt.



A sunny afternoon saw a head on car collision with 4 vehicles involved. Two people seriously injured, one of them cut out with "jaws of life". Two engines on site with me (red waistcoat in the centre) being in command of one of the engines and having overall command of the situation that also saw several ambulances deployed.





In the middle of the night at around 3 a.m. I was commanding the engine in the background and we were part of the overall effort to put out this fire. What you see in the second picture are the remains of a couple of big wheelie bins at the heart of this incident. The underlying issue was that this was on the -2 floor of an underground car park, below a residential block of flats. Not exactly straight forward as you need to get down there against the rising heat and smoke in the vicinity, to put an end to it. Done. Nobody hurt.

The picture at the start of the article shows me ready to go. Still the best part of “the job”: Putting the fire out. Total weight of kit is in excess of 20KG (making a fine single look like small change), most of which is the breathing apparatus (you can just about see the air tank on my back (scuba divers will note that it is mounted “upside down”)), regulator, mask, helmet, balaclava, two sets of gloves, torch, protective coat & trousers, heavy duty boots, socks, lucky underwear and dead man’s marker. Regular medical checks: mandatory. Stay healthy & see you soon, Philipp



Lockdown in Amsterdam — Valerie Lenoel

I cannot complain about the lockdown in Amsterdam. The Dutch are very relaxed, all the small shops and supermarkets are open and social distancing is required but people are queuing with calm and serene attitude, nobody seems angry or frustrated. We can go out as long as we want, no time restriction like France. The parks are open and packed with eager gym fanatics as all the gym/sports facilities are closed. I have been teleworking since 20 March and even if it was difficult at the start, I am now used to it! Thanks to social media, I see my family regularly, I have breakfast catch up with my colleagues, I exercise with my ex-rowing club buddies on Wednesday evening, have virtual aperitif with friends in the UK and Luxembourg every Sunday evening, and I have Dutch lessons two evenings a week. So all in all, I keep busy, see and meet with a few friends and family, and exercise a bit. As I said, I cannot complain 😊

➤ Injuries League



Other sports can be very dangerous or are we accident prone.... Share your fun stories of the injuries you sustain trying to keep fit in lockdown. Who will be top of the league?

With no new entries ... Steve Sale remains top of the league!