

RWYC Rowing Notes 2019

by Mike Laing

The rowing year began favourably with some fine conditions on our home waters of the Menai Straits enlivened on one occasion by a seal sighting; always a bit of a thrill.



There was however a distinct lack of such fine weather at the end of March when the rowers made their regular pilgrimage to Glanllyn on the shores of Llyn Tegid. The weather was

particularly bitter and the surrounding hills were draped in a frosty covering of snow; it was a case of wrap up to the max and make the most of it. There was also plenty of rain and the walk to the local pub involved sloshing through standing water and huge puddles; Bala always entertains in one way or another!



Our first event of the season was the Montford (*The North Pole*) Challenge in Shrewsbury at the end of March; a race over two time trial legs with times combined to determine overall class winners. The day provided blue skies and an overall time of 3 hours 5 minutes for the ladies.



A week later an intrepid crew rowed out to Abermenai Point, barbecued and camped the night before heading back the next morning. An added bonus was that we arrived at Abermenai just as a group of yachties was finishing a barbecue so we inherited their established fire and were able to cook without the faff!!

May brought the Madog Dash between Porthmadoc and Pwllheli in pristine sunny conditions. All agreed this was a gruelling event and the time of 4 hours exact for our mixed crew stands testimony to this - an hour more than London's Great River Race takes!



A week later on May 19th it was our own turn to host and the RWYC League Race passed off under grey yet dry skies. 13 boats attended which made for a great sight as they streamed past the club during the mixed race, the event where the most boats are in the water at any time.



The end of May saw the rowing highlight of the year - 'La Semaine du Golfe Du Morbihan' in Brittany. A week-long festival celebrating Brittany's culture, music, boating and marine traditions.

The concluding highlight of the festival is a 'Big Parade of Sail' in which all the boats are displayed

en route from Port Navalo to Vannes. Leading up to this, four days are spent rowing the excellent and varied waters of the Golfe Du Morbihan imbibing in oysters, local food, wine, more oysters, Breton hospitality and even more oysters!!! The final day's start was a very rude 4am but made for idyllic and atmospheric river rowing towards the Big Parade which was very impressive,

the longboats seemed very small in comparison to some of the large sailing ships that went passed. To say the waters were busy during the parade is somewhat of an understatement.



The parade travels on the incoming tide which was in places very strong our longboat very

nearly wrapping itself around a sturdy and immovable navigation pillar, only some last minute screaming at the cox and an impulse 90 degree swerve saved the day....by a whisker!! The weather was kind throughout and made the effort of getting ourselves (18 rowers) and the three longboats all the way out there wholly worthwhile....roll on 2021.

Back home and on June 22nd we hosted our annual and popular Castle to Castle Race which attracted 16 entrants. The day was blessed with sunny weather which isn't always the case - there's nothing worse than making all the preparations and having to reschedule. Beaumaris Mens Supavets headed the field with a very creditable 1 hour and 46 minutes. Porthmadoc Ladies Vets were at the other end in 2 hours 5 minutes making for a very close field.

Porthmadoc and Beaumaris league races followed in quick succession in July and the Puffin Island Race in August. For the Great River Race in September a single and relatively inexperienced crew made the journey but were rewarded with a creditable 3 hours and 2 minutes.

So as ever a busy and varied year for the rowers.

Thanks from us all to Liam for his efforts as bosun and making the time despite having a young family. To Keith for his ingenuity and hard work on making our trailers safe and looking the part. To Clive for stepping in at short notice as Rowing Secretary and all club members who assisted and gave their time to support our home events at Porth yr Aur.