Newsletter

Autumn 2026

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Remember!
This is the time of year when we are sharing the river with lots of other users - particularly



fishermen (in boats and along the banks). This makes it all the more essential to wear hi viz clothing

Chairman's Message

Upton Rowing Club has had another good year, despite being off the water last winter for several months due to the prolonged periods of flooding – probably as bad as it's ever been. We then had a remarkably hot summer and extensive dry period but thankfully we were fortunate to retain our full use of the river – unlike several local clubs.

Our thanks to the myriad of volunteers who have contributed to the success of the club over the past year. Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Club and we want to encourage even more members to consider how they can help the club to operate successfully and safely in the future.

Thank you, Peter



After over 30 years of service to the club, Peter Barker has resigned as Club President and from being involved in the management of the club. Peter has helped manage the club since its formation, including steering its affiliation to ARA – now British Rowing, securing funds for the boathouse, and championing recreational rowing and touring at club and national level. He has been Captain, Chairman, Junior Coach, and Treasurer, as well as organising National Recreational Rowing Tours.

Peter's dedication was recognised nationally in 2017 when he won the British Rowing National Volunteer of the Year Award.

Welcome Steve, our new President



For those who may not know me.
I am a founder member of Upton rowing club, who was an active member from the early 1990/s until 2017 when I decided to take a break.

I've kept a watchful eye on the club's progress in recent years - the racing crews and coaches with all the wins they have achieved, and close races fought, have really put URC on the map. The recreation rowing side of the club have also been very busy, visiting clubs, rivers and lakes in the UK and abroad- also inviting other clubs to row on our lovely water at Upton, probably the best water for rowing on in the country!

With the busy lives people live, and the busy world we live in, the river here at Upton is a place to find peace and tranquility. May you all continue to enjoy whatever type of rowing you decide to do.

I am prepared to help in any capacity that would benefit members and the smooth running of our club.



At the A.G.M. last month members got the opportunity to thank Peter for his years of service to the club and to wish him a very happy 80th birthday.

Members of the Committee surprised Peter by presenting him with a large birthday cake, complete with candles at the end of the meeting.



The Boatmaster Team

A big thankyou to Andrew Scott for leading the Boatmaster Team for the past few seasons. Andrew had to stand down from the Boatmaster Co-ordinator role over the summer and we are grateful to Liz Elston for taking on the role.

Boats under repair.

From time to time, you will see boats under repair in the boathouse. **Don't** put them outside, especially if it is raining. Water makes it difficult to repair boats and weakens the result. **Never** use boats which are under repair unless you have been given permission by the Captain or the Boatmaster team

Checking Boats for damage.

After an outing, check over the hull to see if there is any damage and report it.

The Club Committee 2026-27

President – Steve Cox
Chairman - Maurice Stanley.
Captain - Debs Thompson
Treasurer - Mandie Bird
Secretary - Pamela Guilding
Membership Secretary – Kate Brunsden
Recreational Rowing Captain – Jane Smith
Boatmaster Co-ordinator – Liz Elston
Ordinary Member and Safety Officer – Jo England
Ordinary Member – Will Garton-Jones
Ordinary Member – Chris Horne
Junior Co-ordinator - vacancy

Membership fees for 2026-27

Here are the membership rates confirmed at the A.G.M. in September 2026. **The payment deadline for the discounted full membership fee is 2 November.**
If you wish to pay by 10 monthly instalments, please set up your first monthly payment of £34.50 to start in October or November.

Category	Agreed 2026/27 rate
Adult full	£345
Adult full (discount for early payment)	£320
Student (paid in one instalment after the AGM)	£172
Junior (paid in one instalment after the AGM)	£172
Cox/Coach/Volunteer	£30
Affiliate	£70
Social	£40
Racking (internal)	£93 per seat
Racking (external)	£70 per seat

Please find below links to the new 2026/27 forms.
We have made some changes to the main application form this year to enable you to skip sections if no change but there are also new questions related to your privacy requirements.

Our Bank details:

Upton Rowing Club
Sort code: 404505
Account no: 21072552
Reference: Name + Subs/Racking

Membership Form
Medical & Disability Form
Racking Form

easyfundraising

A great way to raise funds for the Club!

Easyfundraising is an online platform you can use to raise funds for the Club simply by shopping online. If you select Upton Rowing Club as your nominated group and you make purchases through participating retailers (over 8,000 of them!), a percentage of what you spend is donated to the Club at no extra cost to you. It's a straightforward way to support the Club while doing your usual shopping, and every contribution adds up to make a real difference.

You can raise funds through the App or website and, if you add the easyfundraising browser extension you get a handy pop-up whenever a retailer is offering a donation – you just need to click to activate it.

More information can be found on the website: https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/how-it-works/

You can create an account using this link: https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/create-an-account/

Once a quarter, all donations over a threshold of £15 which have been paid out by the retailers are sent across to the Club's bank account.

Simple – sign up before you start your Christmas shopping!

Beginners Regatta 2026

What a fantastic day we had for our Beginners Regatta last month. Special thanks to Pippa for a brilliant job organising this event, which brought crews from clubs Evesham, Ross on Wye, Phyllis Court and Stratford upon Avon to compete against our own crew.
Thanks too to everyone who helped make the event such a success - whether you baked a cake or put a shift in to help with preparation before or on the day.It was a real team effort and we made a rough profit of £500 for the club (still awaiting final costs at time of print).





….and by Clive Allport - the view from a coach/cox's seat

Oh, those poor Learn to Row candidates; they naively volunteer for six weeks of mental torture. Sit up, keep your knees down, square your blades, keep your hands down - just a few of the dozen or so instructions the new crew is bombarded with. After a few weeks of this torture the number of instructions diminishes as the crews gradually get the hang of it (although I am led to believe several of my crew have been known to be heard muttering in the early hours "turn on early, turn on early"….. mentally scarred for life!)

As the crews' technique improves and their confidence grows, they look forward to the Beginners Regatta. Training moves over to fine boats, so light yet oh so wobbly. At this point I am grateful to be wearing a life jacket. Then a couple of weeks before the regatta, it's back to the recreational boats. "Gosh these **** boats are heavy", "I wish they'd sunk in Venice", I heard someone say.
We stay the course, we persevere and the crew starts to increase the stroke rate, here there seems to be some proportionality with the number of crabs caught. I am wondering whether I can manage to get a second life jacket over the top of the one I'm wearing.

It's regatta day, confidence is high as the boats are rowed across to the town steps. This confidence is soon dampened when we see the first crews race, "oh gosh they look good".
At this point I feel I should try and control this see-saw in confidence – or, alternatively, should I pop across the road for a swift half?
Now it's our turn, we are on the water, a clumsy turn at the start and we are off. In no time we are at 34spm with eight blades all at different angles and only half of them in the water. I call to lower the rating, it has little effect, the other crew is far ahead, eventually we hear the second bell. Ooops; I blame the cox!
We slowly improve over the next few races, then it's our last race.
A good start and back up to 34spm, I call to slow down, the crew respond down to 29spm. I call for "More leg power". Seventy metres to go and we are pulling ahead, the first bell is for us.
Hooray, elation; it was all worth it!!

Opposite:
Clive and his crew prepare for their final race.



The West Midlands Recreational Rowing League

(For new members, the Recreational Rowing League is aimed at anyone who doesn't row competitively, and particularly but not exclusively ex-L2R's are encouraged to join in).

There's one League event a month from March to September, each one held at a different club and
the aim is to bring like-minded club rowers together for some fun rowing activities. This year the Upton squad has taken part at every event, which was brilliant.
After the final event, held at Stourport last month, Upton finished in a very respectable fourth place overall.
Well done and thank you to Pamela, Kate, Martin, John, Laura, Jane B, Penny and Pippa for putting in the time to practice and take part, and to Bev, Sandra and Pamela for helping out with the coxing too.
We'll be canvassing for more rowers to join us next year!

Sweep Rowing

Well done to Pamela for setting up and organising a sweep rowing WhatsApp group a few weeks ago, it's been a great success, we've had the eight out three times already.
The intended outing on Monday 14th September had an unplanned twist when the crew had to tow Linda and the launch from near the wires back to the marina after an engine failure!

Never a dull moment!



Recreational Rowing
by Jane Smith

We had a slow start to the recreational rowing calendar last autumn which was very welcome with me being new to the role, and having very big shoes to try and fill after Peter stepped down at the last AGM. The rest of the team, which was Bev, Sandra, Pamela and Martin stayed on board which was a huge relief, and we quickly got stuck in to planning events.
Our first was the Christmas Row, which turned into the Christmas non-row…..again! A huge thanks to Linda Scott for stepping in and organising some festive games for us instead, and thanks to everyone who came along, it was a great morning, helped along by the mulled wine flowing even before the games got underway…..

Due to flooding and the lack of rowing through the winter, our first event of 2026 didn't happen until May. We had a club row down to Tewkesbury, with lunch at the Black Bear, which was a great way to start the season.

Sandra stepped down from the team around this time, we'd like to thank her for all her support. Sandra was instrumental in organising an exchange row with Lea last year, and had already set the ball rolling for a repeat run this year, but Martin stepped up and took over the planning for this. We welcomed nine rowers from Lea in August, and had a glorious day to row down to Tewkesbury again, it was a huge success, thanks Martin for your organisation.

Below – Upton RC and Lea RC members



On Sunday 27th September, we were joined by 12 members of North Staffs R.C.
We had an eight out and four quads, and a very enjoyable row was had by all participants, followed by a great lunch at the Boathouse.
We hope to organise a return visit to the North Staffs water at Rudyard Lake next April.

Below – Upton R.C. and North Staffs R.C. members



Social Events

Our first quiz of the season will be on Friday 30th October and as that is only one day off the 31st, we have themed the Quiz around Halloween. Members are welcome to bring along their friends and families.

The Quiz will be held at the Malvern Hills Hotel from 8.00p.m. In a change to the usual format, the quiz will be running without a long half time break for food and instead, members and their guests are invited to arrive early (6.00pm - 6.30pm ish) and to buy a meal from the hotel menu.

There will be a charge of £3 per person (maximum of 5 in a team) and all profits will go to club funds. Teams can be made up on the night if you do not have a ready-made team.



Hold the date!

The Annual Christmas Row will take place on Sunday 6th December this year



It has been a number of years since the river conditions have allowed us to hold a Christmas Row, so the members of the organising committee have their fingers firmly crossed. Information about the format of the row and how you can sign up, will be circulated nearer the time.

Upton Miniheads 2026

For those of you who are new to the club or indeed new to rowing, this is what the minihead is:

Once a month on a Sunday we get together as a club to race the 5km back from the shed to Upton. Although the crews are varied, we have an adjustment factor to compare times based on age, gender & boat type.
The miniheads are open to all members regardless of experience and if you don't have a crew, you can put an entry in anyway & we will endeavour to include you in one.

We meet at 9:45 for a 10am start.

The dates are:
Sunday 11th October (see results below)
Sunday 29th November
Sunday 20th December
Sunday 24th January
Sunday 21st February
Sunday 28th March (Easter Sunday, we may want to change this)

Thank you to Maurice, Kate, Pam, Deirdre & Clive for doing the timing for our first minihead. Well done to everyone who took part.

Crew	Boat	Boat Type	Time	Basic Ranking	Adjusted Time	Adjusted Rankin
Debs	Heffa	W C 1x	00:22:21	3	00:16:22	1
Rodney	Dreamboat	M D 1x	00:21:39	1	00:17:08	2
Jo H, Karen, Linda S, Liz E	Michael Roberts	W G 4x	00:22:21	4	00:17:39	3
Mel	Hello Dragon	W B 1x	00:24:14	5	00:18:01	4
Linda C	Own Boat	W F 1x	00:26:07	10	00:18:06	5
Will	Own Boat	M G 1x	00:25:24	8	00:18:58	6
Adam C	Slipalong	M E 1x	00:24:25	6	00:19:01	7
Den, Chris, Keith Stuart	King Alfred	M F 4x	00:21:41	2	00:19:14	8
Andrew C	Own Boat	M F 1x	00:25:42	9	00:19:36	9
Ben	Piglet	M B 1x	00:24:51	7	00:20:19	10

SARA provides safety cover for our miniheads, but they can only take place if we have sufficient support from club members to take their turn as race timers. If you are available to time on any of the dates above please complete this form ASAP.

External Head Races

This is just a selection of the external head races scheduled to take place over the next few months

- Stourport Small Boats Head 8th November (3,600m)
- Kingston Small Boats Head 7th November (5,200)
- Avon Autumn Big Boats Head 14th November (long course 3,250m short course 1,500m)
- Veteran Fours Head 22nd November time tbc (6,400m Mortlake to Putney)
- Newark Head 5th December (5km Long course, 3,900m Short course both downstream)
- Monmouth Winter Head 6th December (2,250m) (5,600m short course 3,70m)

Please complete this form if you'd like to enter any of these events