

Newsletter

July / August 2025



Since the last newsletter, the Club has enjoyed a busy few months with social events both on and off the water and preparations by the competitive crews for the regatta season. We have also welcomed a number of new members, both experienced rowers returning to the sport and an enthusiastic group of new 'graduates' from our latest Learn to Row course. With regular crew combinations disrupted as members take holidays, this is an ideal time for everyone to get more involved in the 'club rowing' sessions, rowing with, and getting to know, the newest members of the club.

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Boat naming

On a bright and sunny Saturday morning in March, we held a long-awaited boat naming ceremony outside the boathouse. This event was very well supported by current and past members with the conversation and laughter flowing, accompanied by a few glasses of the traditional 'bubbly' and some delicious snacks prepared by members of the club (thanks to Jo E., Sandra and Linda S. for the catering)



Planning for the 2025 Beginners' Regatta

The Beginners' Regatta will be held on Sunday September 7th this year. Every year Upton invites a small number of local clubs to bring crews to take part in this popular event. Only scullers who started learning to row since September 2024 are eligible to take part and for many of the crews it is their first chance to experience competitive racing.



To ensure that we run the event successfully, we will be asking members to volunteer to take on a variety of different roles over the regatta weekend to help with preparing the location, running the regatta itself and tidying away all the equipment afterwards.



Winning crew, 2024

Quiz night

The boat naming was followed in the evening by a quiz night held at Manor Park Club in Malvern.

No home-made refreshments this time, instead the quizzers tucked into portions of pizza delivered on schedule for the break half way through the evening. There was a wider choice of refreshments during the quiz with participants choosing their own particular tippie from the bar to help provide inspiration for the answers to the quiz rounds – or at least that was the reason given by the quizzers!



The quizzers will restart in late Autumn.

Mixed Eight take on the Tideway

Late March saw a mixed eight formed from a combination of our Mas F men and Mas G women, coxed by Debbie Thomson, competing in the Vesta Vets Head on the Tideway.

Although the commitment to enter the event had been agreed between the crews almost six months previously, it proved remarkably difficult to fit in training sessions with the entire intended crew. Nevertheless, and much to the delight of the participants, the crew managed to be placed a creditable fifth out of eleven entries in their event.



serious carb-loading the evening before the racing!

How you can encourage and support our newest members.

Upton R.C. is deservedly recognised for its friendly atmosphere and its inclusive approach to encouraging new members. This was proven in bucketfuls by the club-wide response to the support we received for the L2R Taster Sessions.

Now that the new scullers have successfully completed their initial training and are gaining experience using the fine boats, we want to manage the next stages in their integration to the benefits of full club membership.

It would be really great if we could see more members of established competition crews staying behind at weekends for a “double outing” ie following their usual 8.00am training session with a quick rehydration stop and then buddying up with some of the developers to form composite crews for the 10.30 outing slot.

Don't consider yourself a coach? Not a problem!

Merely the opportunity to row further, faster and with fewer stops helps develop their technique as well as their stamina. Experienced members can also provide positive role models for our latest rowers in lots of subtle ways, all of which help them become more independent. It doesn't have to be a weekly commitment, any contributions welcomed.

This year's graduates are a lovely bunch, come and meet them!

In memoriam

Long standing members will remember our very capable boatmaster, Bob Hinds who passed away last year at the age of 83.

Bob was boatmaster at Kings School Worcester for a number of years after which he was boatmaster here at Upton. Earlier this year, Kings named a new 4x+ after Bob.



Learn to Row / Developers update

First of all, many thanks to all the members who supported the 'Learn to Row Taster Day' at the end of April. The friendliness and camaraderie shown by all the helpers certainly wove its magic and in early May we started four Learn to Row crews with coaches Linda S, Clive, Jo E and Peter (supported by Will) in weekly sessions which ran on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.



Even on the six-week course, the L2R crews experienced wide variations in the weather conditions!

At the end of the course, the L2R 'graduates' were invited to continue training by joining the coached sessions already offered to the Developers and Intermediates squads.

This has already given them the opportunity to experience different boats / crew combinations and to begin mixing more widely with each other and other members of the club. See the panel on the left for information about how our established club members can support the coaches manage the next stages in the development of these new scullers. Any offers of support for coxing, launch driving, becoming a 'sit-in' for an absent crew member all very much appreciated. Please let the Captain know what you can offer to do. The coaches have already told the new scullers about the opportunity to take part in the Beginners' Regatta and we will begin offering regatta training sessions once the crews have been confirmed.

Dates for your diary

August 23rd / August 24th

Lots of Upton in action at local regattas over the Bank Holiday weekend – why not come along to give your support? (Saturday Aug 23rd at Gloucester, Sunday Aug 24th at Ross on Wye)

August 30th 2025

The big event of the season has got to be the Club's Pearl Anniversary on August 30th. We didn't manage to have a good party for the Silver Anniversary in 2020 thanks to the Covid pandemic, so we have an extra five years to celebrate now. Planning for the event is well underway, so look out for more details by email shortly.

September 7th 2025

Our annual Beginners' Regatta is an established feature of the rowing year which involves a huge commitment from the entire membership. See Page 2 for more information and look out for messages from the Regatta Co-ordinator, Pippie Riddle.

September 22nd 2025

Club A.G.M. Hill Centre, WR8 0EN

Please come along to the A.G.M. to show your support for the current committee and to help elect the new club officials.

Yes, there are some essential formalities which have to be included in the meeting, but it is also an excellent opportunity to get updates about future plans for the club, discuss proposals with the other attendees, and to air your own views.

October 22nd 2025

Annual Club Dinner and Awards Evening
Hunters' Inn, B4211,
Longdon, Tewkesbury
GL20 6AR

The Club is 30 this summer!

(Tales from the early days of the river bank)

How the club got its colours:

Steve Cox, one of the founders of Upton Rowing Club had been a student at The Hill School in Upton and he was keen to adopt his old school colours into the official club kit. Opposite is a photo of an original school tie (not sure if it is the one worn by Steve!) When the school closed in 1991, the gym building was re-purposed to become the Hill Community Centre (where we hold circuit training over the winter months).



Above: Photo taken after what we believe was the first win for URC. Left to right: Colin Biggs, Graham Ewing, Kirsty Barkley (cox), Bruce Elston, Peter Barker.

Below:

1996 Head of the River Crew:

From Bow: G Ewing, B Elston, H Barkley, C Legge, D Lambert, P. Barker, M Harborne, S. Cox (cox H Boswell)





Harriet and Mel, winners of W Mas C/D 2x at Monmouth



Hugh, winner of Op J 18 1x at Monmouth Sprint



Ian, winner of Op Mas F/G/H 1x at Llandaff

Regatta Reports

We have had an eventful regatta season so far, with a total 37 crews attending 16 regattas. Over the season so far, crews have achieved six heat wins and three event wins.

Winning Crews:



Monmouth Regatta (24th May 2025)
W Mas C/D 2x Mel and Harriet

Monmouth Sprint Regatta (25th May 2025)
O J18 1x Hugh

Llandaff Sprint Regatta (13th July 2025)
Op Mas C/E 1x Ian

Regattas attended by Upton R.C. crews

Evesham Regatta

Op Mas D/E 1x, Op Mas F/H 4x

Evesham Sprint

Op Mas H 2x, Op Mas H2x (two crews)

Junior Sculling Regatta

Op J18 2x

Nottingham Masters & Club Regatta

Mx Mas F 2x, Op Mas G 1x

Worcester Spring Regatta

Op Mas D/E F4x, W J15 2x

Monmouth Regatta

Op Mas E/F 2x, Op Mas G/H 1x, W Mas C/D, 2x,
Mx Mas F/G 2x

Monmouth Sprint Regatta

Op Mas F/H 2x, Op J18 1x, W4x+, W Mas E/G 4x,
W Mas E/G 4x (two crews), W Mas D/F 2x, W 1x

Hereford Regatta

Op Mas F/G 4x

British Rowing Masters Regatta

Mx Mas F 2x, W Mas G 4x

Bridgnorth Regatta

W 1x, W Low CRI 4x+

Henley Masters Regatta

Op Mas G 1x

Llandaff Regatta

W Mas B 1x, W Mas D/E 2x

Llandaff Sprint Regatta

Op Mas F/G/H 1x, W Mas B 1x, Op Mas D/E 2x
Mx Beginners 4x+, Op Mas H 2x, W Mas D/E 2x,
Op Mas C/E 1x

British Rowing Club Championships

W J15 2x

Bewdley Regatta

Op Mas F 4x

Bewdley Sprint Regatta

Op Mas F 2x



Pam, Annie S, Emma B & Bev
– coxed by Debs



Jo E.



Will G.J.



Matt C, Adam S, Annie & Bev, coxed by Debs



Mark & Ian (photo taken on a training session on the Severn)

Regatta Reports cont.

Special mentions must go to the debutant crews listed below who have made great impacts on the local regatta scene this season.

Monmouth Sprint

Pam, Annie S, Emma B & Bev – coxed by Debs – had their first taste of sprint racing in W4x+. They had a good row but were eventually beaten by a more experienced crew from Evesham.

Jo E having been training in a 1x for only 4 weeks prior to Monmouth, rowed very well against strong opposition from City of Oxford and looked like a seasoned sculler!

Bridgnorth Regatta

Matt C made his debut as a race cox with the W Low CRI 4x+ of Pam, Annie S, Emma B & Bev.

Llandaff Sprint

Will debuted in the 1x, winning his first heat with an 8 second handicap against him and only losing out by 1 length in the final due to a bit of gardening on his way down the course.

Ian debuted in the 1x, chalking up his first regatta win in his first race! He had a 6 second handicap in his favour and he managed to hold onto his lead over an experienced sculler (also 15 years his junior) from Cardiff City to win by a canvas.

Ian & Mark L in Op Mas D/E 2x had an 8 second handicap against them and did a bit of gardening on their way down the course, but they recovered to row very well.

Matt C & Adam S had their debut in Mx Beginners' 4x+ alongside Annie S & Bev (coxed by Debs), they also had a taste of winning in their first race beating a crew from Worcester by ¼ of a length!

A special thanks from all the racing crews to Jo England and Will Garton Jones who have taken trailers to these events in order to transport quads for other crews to use for their races.

From The Boatmaster Team

Washing boats.

On occasions the boats can become covered by a very sticky, dirty layer during an outing. Try to wash off stains when fresh as they can become permanent, making sure that you clean the boats thoroughly, including the seat runners. Remember to turn the boats over to get the entire hulls washed - using cloths rather than sponges can be more effective in removing the dirt.

Please make the washing process an opportunity to inspect the boat for damage and report any areas of concern.

Reporting boat damage

Please report boat damage or faulty equipment as soon as possible after it has occurred, (use the white board by the signing out book and/or fill in a report form using this [link](https://shorturl.at/vm5jF) <https://shorturl.at/vm5jF>). Mentioning damage to the boatmaster team verbally is not enough – we sometimes get bombarded with requests or reports while we are putting our own boat away and we can forget!

General (boat)housekeeping

When you find one of the bins in the boathouse is full, don't try to stuff anything else into it! Please take the full bin bag to the refuse area (at the end of the berth holders carpark, near the barrier). There is a roll of spare bin bags in the desk

Upton on tour (report by John Ashley)

Tuesday 10th June saw four Upton recreational rowers (Sandra, Pamela, Martin and John) making their way to London ahead of a one-day tour of the River Lea with members of Lea Rowing Club. After an evening enjoying the culinary delights of Stoke Newington, we met the LRC rowers the following morning at their large, well-equipped boat house by the River Lea.

The convoy consisted of two coxed quad touring boats and three cyclists who made their way along the tow path to operate the lock at Old Ford. We headed south along the Lea, an initial rural feel quickly giving way to the urban environment of East London. With sharp bends and boats moored alongside both banks, the river was narrow and tricky to navigate and we were grateful to have experienced coxes from LRC.

Once below the lock, we found ourselves on rarely-used sections of the river where large amounts of water weed had accumulated.

Much to the amusement of walkers on the tow path, both boats became stuck in the weed on several occasions – it is surprising how quickly it becomes impossible to row with weed wrapped around the blades!



After taking a detour along the City Mill River to view the former Olympic Park in Stratford, we finally made our way along the Limehouse Cut to reach Limehouse Basin where we tied up the boats. Lunch was enjoyed overlooking the Thames at the nearby Grapes pub.

After some seat switching and swapping with cyclists, the convoy made its way back north to the rowing club. To defeat the water weed, a new tactic was tried with some success – rowing as fast as possible towards, then lifting the blades and gliding over it! Thanks to our enthusiastic and well organised hosts, the outing was a great success and a chance to experience rowing in a totally different

We are looking forward to welcoming members of Lea R.C. and returning their hospitality, when they visit Upton in a few weeks time. On Thursday 21st August, we plan to repeat our most popular recreational row for our guests. This will involve rowing from the marina to Tewkesbury, mooring the boats at AB7 and then taking the short walk to the newly refurbished 'Black Bear' in Tewkesbury for lunch. Suitable refreshed, and with the opportunity to switch seats / crews for the return row, the rowers/scullers will make a leisurely return to the marina, quite possibly for further refreshments!

If you would like join us for the trip, please complete the form [here](https://shorturl.at/xviOc) (<https://shorturl.at/xviOc>)

Safety advice for ALL members -

Pre-outing safety checks

before every outing, crews should inspect their boats to ensure that they are safe to use

- check the heel restraints (re-secure if necessary)
- check that the riggers and footplates are secure (tighten nuts if necessary)
- check hatch covers are secure (if a cover cannot be made secure, the boat should not be used)
- check the bow ball is secure (if not secure, the boat should not be used)
- check the hull for damage which penetrates the outer skin (if so, must not be used)

If a boat fails your safety check, return it to its rack, hang a "Do Not Row" notice prominently on it, and report the problem(s) to the boatmaster team.

Safety bum bags

Please remember to bring a safety 'bum bag' and a phone with you when you go out for every row. This guidance applies even when conditions are good. Ideally place your phone in a waterproof pouch, though some phones are now waterproof.

Every bum contains

- 'space blankets' for every member of the crew (hypothermia can set in after a capsizing, even if the air temperature is relatively benign)
- a length of rope to secure your boat to something on the river bank should your crew need to "abandon ship"
- a whistle should your crew experience difficulty and need to attract attention / help

Recreational Rowing on the Severn

Pixham Ferry Row, June 4th (report by Pam Guilding)

A rain shower wasn't the best omen for our proposed row up the Severn to Pixham Ferry but fortunately by the time we were on the water, the weather had improved and our waterproofs could be stowed.

After leaving the marina we had a very leisurely, sociable row in the 2 recreational boats. 'Peter Barker' was set up for sweep and contained the man himself, and 'Upton Flyer' flew with the sculling crew. I have never been as far as the Shed before, so I was fascinated to see this corrugated cathedral! Leaving the Shed behind we ventured further upstream between steep banks which had a dense covering of horse chestnut trees in bloom.



On finally arriving at Pixham, Jane heroically struggled across the muddy river bank, narrowly avoiding slipping in the mud and was able to pull the boats to suitable mooring locations. After that, the rest of us managed to reach the shore and secure the boats and without further incident.



Belatedly, we realised that we would have had room onboard to stow a picnic, but instead Jane ferried the grateful crews to the nearby Old Bush Café at Callow End – thank you, Jane!

After having some welcome refreshments and a short stroll to 'stretch our legs' we then returned to the boats to make our way back to Upton (suitably fortified by Sandra's excellent Lemon drizzle cake.)

Rowing when the water level is low

Unfortunately, as water users we are beginning to see an annual pattern on the Severn – too much water in the Winter months, making our rowing hazardous and areas of shallow water in the Summer which are creating their own problems for us.

Lately the Boatmaster Team has had to deal with some avoidable damage to our boats from deep scratches on the bottom of hulls to lost or damaged fins. This damage has been caused by crews taking boats into very shallow water, for example when approaching the landing stage in the marina.

The water is particularly shallow at the corner of the landing stage so when boats approach the area “bow first” it increases the risk that their fins will catch on the bottom of the marina.

Here are the recommended ways to approach the landing stage to reduce the risk of fin and/or rudder damage

- reversing the boat onto the landing area, using an approach angle which keeps the stern clear of the shallow water at the beginning of the manoeuvre the bringing the boat parallel once the fin is clear of the shallowest water
- approaching the landing stage “bow first” but at an angle which keeps the stern in the (relatively) deeper water rather than trying to parallel-park.

With this method, crew in the bow of the boat may have to alight first and pull the boat carefully, still at an angle to the landing stage, until the fin clears the area of shallow water and the boat can be brought fully alongside the landing stage.

Worcester to Upton Row – 5th July 2025 (report by Jude Sanderson)

Saturday, 5th July saw six boats row from Worcester RC to Upton RC – a distance of some 18km. Three clubs were involved. Three crews from Upton took part rowing in our two stable coxed boats, one rigged for sculling and one for sweep and a brave double (with Ian and Mark).



Worcester RC contributed an eight with four New Zealanders from North Shore RC in Auckland. One of them Fiona Trevelyan used to row at Upton and Worcester in the 1990's and was here on a nostalgic trip after visiting Henley RR. Sandra was also in the eight kindly making up a full complement. Apart from WRC and URC, two Celtic Longboats from Clevedon Coastal RC also joined the flotilla. Conditions on the day were good—cloudy, but not too hot. We set off from Worcester at around 12.15pm and were immediately into the adventure, navigating two bridges and the lock at Diglis.



Once through the lock, the river was quiet and peaceful, allowing us to settle into a comfortable rhythm while keeping in sight of the other Upton quad. Frequent snack stops gave the crew a chance to rehydrate and recharge. Our relaxed pace became apparent when Ian and Mark in the double breezed past us—despite setting off a good 20 minutes behind us! By the time we reached the familiar stretch after the shed, tiredness was starting to kick in—just in time for the choppy, windier waters after White House corner. A ‘meaty’ row was called for to bring us home, and legs were on! Landmarks were ticked off: the haunted shed, the green barge, the wires... and there was a definite sense of relief as the bridge came into view and we finally turned into the marina.

Many of the Upton crews, along with a few from Worcester, rounded off the day with some well-earned tapas and drinks at the Boathouse, reflecting on a successful event and wondering how on earth we'd manage the stairs the next day!

A great day and a great event—thank you to everyone involved in organising it.



We can only produce the Club newsletter with the help of contributions from you, our members. Please, please save suitable photos from future rowing (and rowing related) events and when you have enjoyed an event, share the news about it by writing a short article for a future newsletter.
P.S. I also need proof-readers! [Editor]

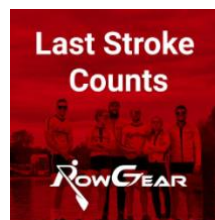


The new Club website will be launched in the near future!
The basics are all in place, we just need another couple of weeks to upload key information and to sort out the settings so that members will have personal login IDs for the 'Members Only' area.
We will have the same URL, but improved functionality and a dedicated Members' App

Looking for more Rowing-related reading, listening and training? Here are a couple of our favourites:

Last Stroke Counts – Tom Clark, Piotr Golawski

“Join us as we dive into the captivating world of rowing and business where we discuss and showcase links between the two. We chat with athletes, coaches and former rowers who share their personal experiences, expert advice, and hard-earned wisdom.



Available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and others

RowingWOD Resources – Cam Nichol

Founded by Cam Nichol, an Olympic rower and medical doctor turned coach and competitive fitness athlete. RowingWOD combines training from the worlds of competitive rowing and Crossfit and it claims that the resources “will unlock your speed using your body’s natural biomechanics”



<https://www.rowingwod.co/resources/>

Join us for our “Posh Birthday Party” this Summer

