

Captains AGM Report – 2021

Well, this year of Captaincy hasn't quite been the year I expected when I said I would take it on again. I came in thinking that we would have COVID to deal with for a short period, but then I could lead us into battle on the river, bringing home victories and growing our reputation as a club not to be underestimated. One thing I can say is I have led the club through a battle, not quite the same battle I was expecting, but a battle none the less. I would like to think that for all the battle isn't yet over, we are getting through it and the club will still be here at the end, the members will still be here, and we can battle on the river in years to come. The lockdowns have brought frustration and anger to many, but it has also brought a true sense of appreciation and realisation of what we have as individuals, as a club and as a community.

Even through these times of COVID we have had some good times and great results such as:

- York Smalls Boats Head – We took a trailer of boats down to York University and boated from there to compete as the York City steps were out of action for travelling clubs with the number of boats we planned to take down. This was a fight against a rather strong stream but the Tees crews fought to achieve some great results (even if there was some rather sketchy steering from me and a capsized) and was great to see the camaraderie of Tees RC at a race day
- Durham Small Boats Head saw 3 wins from Tees in the Band 1 2x (Tom Hillier and Harry Clark), J16 2x (Ben Summers and Lewis Henson) and Band 1 1x (Steven Roe). As usual, Elvet Bridge caused havoc for a number of crews, but none were from Tees who all got through safely, even if it did involve some handbrake turns to get through different arches because of other clubs hitting the bridge. Members of other clubs complimented the steering, the technique and the supportive nature of the club which gave me great satisfaction as Captain
- Junior Inter Regionals saw a strong Tees contingent this year and we were hoping for some big performances. Boy did we get some! Again, the technical ability on the water and the personal support off the water was commented on by a number of coaches and members of other clubs who said that "their coaches should be proud of their technique" (I can confirm we were and still are). If a crew wins the time trials, they go onto compete at a national level representing the northern region against other regions of the UK. Some of you may have noticed two of our juniors walking around in maroon jumpers with Team North written on their arms. Ben Summers and Lewis Henson managed to fight off some strong opposition to qualify to represent the Northern Region. However, due to COVID the Junior Inter Regional Regatta was cancelled this year meaning they didn't have the opportunity to show their ability against other regional qualifiers
- Tyne Single Scullers Head – we were one of a limited number of clubs asked to go up to Tyne and compete in the British Rowing Test Event. As the name suggests there were only single sculls out on the river in limited numbers. There was one almighty tide on the day of racing which made getting to the start line from Division 1 and 2 an absolute dream, but the racing back was not as fun. Ask anyone that competed!
- British Indoor Rowing Championships – this took place online in peoples living rooms as opposed to a velodrome surrounded by others. Despite this lack of support and pushing from others around them there were still some great results from our members who brought home a number of medals and posted a number of PBs.
- British Rowing Awards – Callum Holdsworth and Mazi Amini were awarded the award of British Rowing Junior Club of the Year. They fought off some incredibly tough competition from the likes of the Eton School Top 8! A massive congratulations to the boys for their win

in this and a big thank you to all members that have supported them throughout their journey

COVID has given us, as a committee and me as Captain, time to reflect and overhaul things that have been pushed aside due to the busy nature of Tees RC. Therefore, from my side, for all it has been a tough year, the club is now set up with updated policies and procedures, a five-year development plan, an overhaul of the accounts, a comprehensive asset register and an overall aim of progression. This year has definitely had its tough times and I just want to personally thank those of you that have supported me and the rest of the Committee through this time. I will hold my hands up and say there have been days I have cried and said I can't do this anymore and then I will see an email, or a tweet of thanks, or hear a comment made that will make me think that we have done alright really!

The biggest thing I have realised this year is quite how lucky we are to have the membership we do. The support and sense of community among many of the members has been great to see from doing erg challenges as a squad, zoom meetings to check in with one another, the meeting up for walks and coffee to the email correspondence between people. Let's look forward to the next year and hope that the 2021/22 season is more normal than the seasons we have just gone through but lets also ensure that everything we do is safe! COVID is here now but will not be here for long (hopefully), Tees RC is here now but will be here for a long time to come!

I know there has been a lot of COVID mentioned in the statement made above but really, what else is in conversations these days!! Anyway, now to the thankyou's!

- The Committee - from myself, a big thank you to all of those that have been on the committee this year helping to make some tough decisions and having the trust in me to put out statements without having to consult you all. A special thank you to those members leaving the Committee for all of the work you have done - your input has been very greatly appreciated
- Angela Warburton and Louise Summers – as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively, have played a blinder this year, helping to revise our vast number of documents and accounting systems
- Thanks also to Karami Ure for her support to Angela and research over the last year. This thanks not only covers this year but also covers the years you have served on the Tees RC committee. Your inputs have been invaluable and kept us on the straight and narrow
- Kate O'Sullivan and the rest of the junior coaching team along with the junior parents, who have managed to keep the junior programme ticking over through online sessions when we have been in lockdown and COVID safe coaching when we have been allowed to get them out on the water. The junior programme continues to go from strength to strength so we must be doing something right. Onwards and upwards for the juniors
- Recreational squad leaders (Karami Ure, Len Small, Josie Watson) and coaches (Alan Ure, Len Small, Karami Ure and Ernie Bland) who have done their best to keep the recreational squad going and as organised as ever. I have seen a number of communications between you all as well as newsletters keeping everyone up to speed with what is going on and adding a bit of fun to the world at this time
- Lucy Radley, Chris Kenyon, Dick Marlow, John Lund, Len Small and Ernie Bland who have continued to maintain our fleet to the high standard that we have all come to know and appreciate. I know during this year it hasn't been easy but thank you for all you have done
- Greg Beswick who has kept the para-athletes training where possible and ensuring that we keep them safe but training. He also co-ordinated the letting out of the club ergs during lockdown which was very much appreciated by all and the sale of our outgoing equipment

- John Winton who has supported Kate O'Sullivan with the coaching of Teesside University both prior to COVID and throughout the lockdown when they were able to get out on the water. He has also supported John Hutchinson getting out on the water on a weekly basis. The help provided over the years is much appreciated by a number of members
- Ralph Pickles and Alan Pearce who have kept us up to date with updates on behalf of TRUT and the RTWC in relation to COVID and also with any work being done to ensure there is a clubhouse to come back too
- Finally, all Club Members. From me, just a massive thank you for keeping to the large number of rules we have had to enforce over the year, for keeping positive and keeping a sense of community through these very tough times

Overall, it has been a strange old year of being Captain with a distinct lack of normality. But as a club, we are coming out the other side in a position that is better than a large number of other clubs around the country. For this we have to be incredibly grateful.

Onwards and upwards from here for Tees Rowing Club.