



# Lea Rowing Club

Annual Report and Accounts

2015

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## President's report

It's once again a great pleasure to introduce the Lea Rowing Club's Annual Report and Accounts.

This, it's no exaggeration to say, has been a momentous year for the Club. Since my report last year, we have achieved the great prize for which the club has been working for over the past five years: the grant to the Club by Hackney Council of a new 99-year lease to the boathouse site. Although this finally came through in August 2015, shortly after the period of this report, I make no apologies for mentioning it here. It's hard to overstate the importance to the Club of this grant. It secures the future of the Club for generations to come and has unlocked the funds that have been made available to us for our planned redevelopment. At the time of writing there is now a hole in the ground where the old junior shed used to be, all piled and ready

for the next stage in the construction of a new two-story extension to the current boathouse.

Over the years a number of members have put in a lot of work to reach this goal. But the whole Club has played a part in demonstrating to Hackney Council and the funders that we are a credible partner, worthy of their investment in us and capable of providing the opportunities for sport and recreation to the local community that we have promised.

Apart from the work on the new lease and the redevelopment, looking at all the activities that the Club now undertakes, it is as if the Club is advancing on all fronts – taking on a new lease of life, so to speak (apologies for the pun). From the schools' programme and junior rowing, through the various squads of adult rowers, to regattas and

masters and recreational rowing, there are strong signs that across the board we are growing, improving and getting better results. I'm confident that we are now building a strong platform from which we can continue to improve on this success in future, helped by the extended and refurbished facilities that the redevelopment will provide, which we hope will become available Spring 2016.

Finally, I would like here to thank all those Club members who have volunteered their help to make the past year such a successful one and look forward to another great year in 2015–16.

**David Carruthers**



## Captain's report



On the water we continue to make amazing progress in all areas. It is very pleasing to read of successes in the racing squads and great to be looking for Lea Rowing Club crews at the top of the list of post race results as opposed to the other end. And it says a lot about us as a club that we can do this whilst operating out of our current facilities.

Our successes, however, are just the top of very large pyramid built on an extremely broad base. Every squad, whether it's a racing one or not, has a part to play in the success of the Club.

Many of you may only come down to the Club in the evenings or on weekend mornings, however the Club is getting busier outside these core hours and this is where much of the future growth of the club will be possible.

The recreational group also continues to grow and is out on the river during the week and later at the weekends. This group also includes our oldest active member, Frank, who admits to being over eighty but it also includes many younger members. This group allows people who do not want to race to row and

have access to the sport and they bring a huge amount of experience and skills into the club.

All these squads and groups go to make up our club. We should be very proud that as a result of our efforts everyone in Hackney has a chance to try rowing. Not only that but everyone in Hackney will have that chance for the next 99 years.

As Hackney and London change we have another challenge to face. As a result of increasing pressure for cheap housing there are a lot more barges moored on the Lea. This can be very frustrating. My view is that the river is a recreational resource for all of Hackney, including us rowers. It is also a river that should be open to navigation. Mooring on this river needs to be organised and controlled so that the space can be shared fairly. I have made this point to the Canal and Rivers Trust and discussions are ongoing. But this is a problem that is not going to be solved overnight. When you are on the river, do please be aware that you are representing the rowing club.

**Richard Ellis**



## Membership analysis

Overall, membership at the Club continues to grow healthily with the number of members across the Club up over the previous year by 7% at 321 compared to 300 the year before. There were no significant decreases in membership numbers in any segments but the recreational section continues to outperform other squads with excellent growth in membership up 48% at 37 over last year's 25. The number of coxes at the club has more than doubled this year which is testament to the increase in numbers of members who are now taking part in competitive rowing at events at Elite, Senior, Intermediate, Novice, Masters and Junior level – a figure which is now higher than it ever has been before.

	2015	2014
Coach	9	12
Cox	7	3
Family	4	6
Full	91	87
Honourary/life	6	7
Racking	0	1
Recreational	37	25
Sculling	24	25
Student	40	39
Unemployed	3	1
Veteran	6	7
Juniors	56	53
Others	10	6
Bond	24	24
Summer student	4	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>300</b>

## LEA ROWING CLUB LIMITED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

For the year ended 30 June 2015

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2015 £	Total 2014 £
<b>Incoming resources from generated funds</b>				
Grants	--	41,000	41,100	1,200
Investment income	77	--	77	66
	77	41,000	41,177	1,266
<b>Incoming resources from charitable activities</b>	263,964	33,993	297,957	205,424
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	264,041	75,093	339,134	206,690
<b>Resources expended</b>				
Expenditure from Charitable activities	72,366	32,146	104,512	63,199
Governance costs	126,923	--	126,923	129,850
<b>Total resources expended</b>	199,289	32,146	231,435	193,049
<b>Net income for the year/ Net movement in funds</b>	64,752	42,947	107,699	13,641
Fund balances at 1 July 2014	142,033	--	142,033	128,391
Fund balances at 30 June 2015	206,785	42,947	249,732	142,032

## LEA ROWING CLUB LIMITED BALANCE SHEET

For the year ended 30 June 2015

	2015 £	2014 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Tangible assets	196,796	176,475
Investments	1	--
	196,797	176,475
<b>Current assets</b>		
Stocks	1,885	1,540
Debtors	41,096	16,125
Cash at bank and in hand	177,716	131,845
	220,697	149,510
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	(37,767)	(53,958)
<b>Net current assets</b>	182,930	95,552
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	379,727	272,027
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	(129,995)	(129,995)
<b>Net assets</b>	249,732	142,032
<b>Income funds</b>		
Restricted funds	42,947	--
Unrestricted funds		
Members' Capital	129,625	129,625
Unrestricted income funds	77,160	12,407
	206,785	142,032
	249,732	142,032

A full set of accounts is filed at Companies House [Company No. 07368256]

# Regattas

The Lea has, once again, hosted two British Rowing affiliated open regattas during the year, the April Spring Regatta providing an excellent start to the side-by-side racing season and the Autumn Regatta in September, a "last hurrah" for many before the start of the long dark winter training season.

The typically benign Lea conditions, 600 meter course, feast of cake and the usual sunshine drew a host of competitors from a large number of visiting clubs from around the country – juniors, seniors and masters alike – and we even had primary races in stable boats in the autumn for those new to racing.

As always regattas were only made possible by the hard work and good nature of the many volunteers, none less than the magnificent Sean O'Shea, who has now stepped down from the Regatta Committee and to whom much of the success and smooth running of these and past events must be attributed.

The new team will strive to build upon the success of these events and, as in the past, will be aiming to run competitive, popular and financially sustainable events in the coming year.

The 2016 regattas take place on 24 April and 4 September.

**Jennie Brotherston**



# Club redevelopment

This year, the Club has real progress toward its redevelopment goals. Most importantly, all of the conditions for the securing of the 99-year lease were fulfilled; so that the Club and the Borough were ready to execute the formal documentation as the year closed on 30 June. In addition, all the funds for the next stage of the development had been secured, made up of more than £200,000 from within the club and more than £700,000 from outside funders, including Sport England, British Rowing, The London Marathon Trust and the Mayor of London's Sports Facilities Fund.

With the pieces of the jigsaw now in position, construction will start during autumn 2015, and the next stage is due to be complete during the 2015–16 season. This will include the replacement of the old ILEA junior shed with a two storey structure. The new building will match the main boathouse and so will increase the indoor training facilities substantially as well as allowing much improved changing rooms, especially for the ladies.

In addition, the expanded facility will enable us to accommodate other sports which will include cycling, tennis and rugby.

The remaining phases of the project will require several years to complete, since no phase can be started until the funds are fully

committed. The Club continues to contribute significantly from general revenues, and additional resources have come from special efforts. The more we can generate from special fundraising, the less disruption there will be in the Club's ongoing operations. We are not only getting



the funds together for the immediate project, we are establishing a fundraising culture. Potential funders will increasingly take us seriously as they see we are ourselves committed to the success of the Club. We are confident Lea members will continue to play their role.

**Mark Cushway and  
Fred Shearer**



## Squad report men

This season has seen the men's squad advance across a broad front – in both areas of participation and also in fitness and technique. The efforts of the coaching team of Richard Ellis, Gill Parker, Richard Peckham and Sally Lawrence have continued to pay off with athletes winning at Novice to Elite level and at Masters events.

The Head of the River Race, one of our main areas of focus, produced significantly improved results over previous years with all three crews entered making phenomenal position gains showing the strength in depth of the squad.

Following these excellent results, the senior squad set off to its annual training camp in Seneffe, Belgium presided over by Nigel Weare, Director of Rowing. One of the key outcomes was that the summer strategy was that we would go for a coxed four for the Britannia Cup as the first boat and a Thames Cup eight for the second boat for Henley Royal Regatta in July. As the racing season progressed, a second eight came into being to try and qualify for the Thames Cup as well. In June the Novice and Development groups attended a training camp in Norwich to prepare them for the racing season.

In the Regatta Season, the coxed four excelled itself by winning Senior fours at Metropolitan Regatta and

Elite fours at Reading Regatta, being seeded and then went on to reach the semi finals at Henley. The Thames Cup eight won their first round at Henley and lost in the second round. The second eight took part in the Henley qualifying round and just missed out on a place in the regatta but are determined to do better next year.

The men's squad continues to grow in strength and depth with new members joining during the summer who have rowed previously at University or at other clubs. Also men from the summer Learn2Row course have joined the novice squad. We look forward to an exciting new season.

**Gill Parker**



## Squad report women

This year saw a sprinkling of successes for the ladies of the Lea. Overcoming a number of technical challenges, the club eight pulled out a showstopper at the season finale with a win at Henley Women's Regatta, in what is rapidly becoming the Club's signature event.

None of this could have been achieved without the commitment of the squad members and the volunteer coaches, particularly Alex, Gill, Jo, Dave, Christian and the others who have helped out (and have been inexcusably missed off the list). A special mention should also go to our Vice Captain Lucy Clarke and our Club Captain Richard Ellis, who have both put a considerable amount of their own time and resources into making the squad successful. We are hugely grateful.

The squad continues to build its strength and reputation in bringing novices through to win at the lower intermediate level. Many of last summer's Learn2Row graduates gained their first points, in what by all accounts, were convincing wins over opposition who had similar or more rowing experience. At all levels, the women's squad has competed across boat classes, with many bravely undertaking their first pairs outings (swimming session in the Lea), where other rowers of their level wouldn't have dared.

The club eight also dominated their category at the big regattas, never being seriously challenged by other crews. Other clubs who could have posed a threat preferred to build fours, resulting in one of the largest ever entries for club fours at Henley. We can only presume they took one look at the orange and decided the eights were a lost cause, especially with their shiny new Filippi. The win at Henley was an emotional event for many of those involved, not least because most had suffered the premature ejection from the competition in the previous year, but also because the winter season had seen very mixed results; with the second eight (which contained many of the club eight) at WEHoRR significantly under-performing.

The success of the eight has been a fantastic advert for the Lea, as a result there has been a considerable influx of experienced rowers who will all be eligible to fill our eight in 2015–16, we already look to be in a strong position for Henley next year.

The senior (post-club) level squad remains small, but effective and the decision to amalgamate the senior squad with the men's squad for training appears to have been a good one; although the enormous challenges of competing at senior level remain. In recent years the GB rowing infrastructure has sucked athletes away from their home clubs and into specialised units;



leading to a thinning out of senior crews across clubs.

It has also resulted in the standard of competition being more lumpy than gravy made by the men's senior squad. Some competitions are a whitewash, seeing no other boats enter, whilst others see the squad competing against well-funded full-time athletes with Olympic aspirations; against whom the members of the Lea have neither the time, nor the resources to compete. That said the senior group held its own in this season, with the four taking the championship title at Wallingford, finishing second at the Metropolitan Regatta (twice!), finishing twenty-fourth at WEHoRR (down from twenty-third in 2014) and placing as third fastest coxless four at Fours Head of the River behind a boat of Olympians and Thames Rowing Club. This can be added to a number of other wins in heads (not least of which was Ali Irving's domination of novice sculling events) and culminating in a clean sweep at the World Masters' Championships in Belgium, taking the A, B and C pairs events and the A and B fours.

Development of the senior squad remains a challenge for the club. To win consistently at senior level the happily expanded group needs an investment of high quality coaching time; for what may seem increasingly marginal gains. To build a strong senior squad will require some prioritisation of resources by the club both in terms of coaching and equipment. As it stands, the future of the senior squad remains uncertain.

Off the water, the women's squad have been at the centre of the life of the Lea, organising and turning out in strength to Club events, baking ridiculous numbers of cakes and singing along to the Frozen soundtrack far too often.

Fingers crossed for an even more successful 2015–16 season and to a more sophisticated choice of sing-a-long musical.

**Rachel Lund**

## Squad report recreational

Levels of both membership and activity have built up over six years and membership of the Recreational Squad regularly rowing now stands at 45, with eight members of other squads also regularly rowing in the group. The age range of rowers encompasses those in their early twenties right through to those in their eighties and the squad rows three times a week. Successful initiatives in the year have included Learn2Row courses for 36 people who want to row non-competitively. The British Rowing Fun Racing initiative has seen members racing at Broxbourne and Milton Keynes. Eight of our rowers took part in the annual Recreational Tour, rowing 90km on the Ouse, and in another outing 14 squad members rowed 15 miles down the River Lea from Broxbourne Rowing Club, passing through ten locks on the way!

Sadly we had to say goodbye to one of our regulars, Kate who has moved to work in New York, and who reports that she is now rowing on the Hudson.

Off the water, the group always enjoys coffee and lunch at the café after rowing. We held our annual winter social in the Club in December, where members brought their own dishes to eat with mulled wine. There was music and dancing and newer entrants were welcomed into the group.

All in all, it has been a great year for the Recreational Squad and we are looking forward to more growth and activities in the year to come.

**Sandra Motture**



## Squad report juniors



With the support of the Membership, Youth Education in Sport and the London Borough of Hackney we have embarked on an ambitious five year programme to help make the Lea one of the top players in British Junior Rowing. We have shamelessly copied best practice across the board from other Clubs with Junior sections and successful Schools' Programmes.

We now have a singular focus on Long Term Athlete Development. The success of our Juniors is totally dependent on the breadth and quality of young athletes we can attract to the bottom of our development pyramid. Young athletes who have an institutional background and understanding of both training hard and success will make our best rowers. This year,

we ran Learn to Row courses better structured than they have ever been before and we can happily report that the conversion rate to squad membership currently runs at over 60% of participants. At the other, older end of the Junior Development spectrum, instead of hitting the glass ceiling, J17 and J18 Juniors are being encouraged to row with the senior squads and fight to get into the top sweep boats, which, of course, prepares them all in the transition to university rowing. And help makes the seamless transition from Junior to Senior Athlete.

Other community involvement has included being the training base for various London borough's London Youth Games regatta teams and holiday programs. We also have

been working closely for the first time with three additional boroughs – Camden, Islington and Haringey.

Highlights of the Year must include the two Gold Medals for the J16 Quad at the Junior Inter Regional Regatta and British Junior Champs. Another first for the Club was four boys and four girls getting within a whisker of their first GB vest at U16 Trials. And of course, numerous other wins at heads and regattas.

Thanks to all the many volunteers at the Club who make all this Section possible and not least of all to all the parents who kick sleepy children out of bed on cold, dark mornings and get them down to the Club.

**Dick Millard**



## Squad report masters

**Men** Despite their notoriously punishing training regime, both on but mainly off the water, the Vet Men have on several occasions over the past year been denied certain victory by a combination of illness, injury and pressing social commitments. They nevertheless scored wins at a number of events, including Sudbury, where Pete Chapman vindicated his bold decision to return to racing, after many years of intensive preparation.

We approach the new season with great ambition and great confidence, on the strength of two newly-formed and immensely powerful fours, selected by our expert panel (Roy Vigus) after rigorous trials involving the internationally endorsed Bar Test.

Life at the Lea is not the same now that our treasured George Saunders, Hon. FRCS, has moved to a care home. We miss his wonderful companionship, brute force and uniquely beguiling yet bewildering tales. We intend to bring him to the Club for a row as often as we can.

Like all healthy organisms, the Vet Men needs to be constantly refreshed, and we warmly welcome seasoned athletes prepared to commit to our exacting programme, or at least willing to put a regular tenner in the whip.

**Julian Haxby**

**Women** The small and determined squad maintained a Lea RC presence in the classification during the year competing in the Veterans 8's Head, the Veterans Fours Head, the Scullers Head and Henley Masters Regatta. They are grateful for the enthusiasm and commitment of Coach Nick, whose input made a considerable improvement to their fortunes.

It's great to note the increasing participation and increasingly successful participation of the Club in Masters events, especially the Elite Women – half of the Club's entries in the Scullers Head were in Masters, with Ali bringing home the Women Masters A Novice Pennant in that event and beating the Women's Novice winner in the process.

The highlight of the year for the Masters Women must be the incredible achievements of Bridget, Rachel, Amanda and Lucy at the World Masters Championships in Hazelwinkel. Over the summer, they were to be seen almost daily on the River shortly after dawn practicing finishes as well as starts and this certainly paid off against the cream of International Masters. Going off the start at 48 strokes per minute and tight photofinish finals led to five wins in five events entered – a fantastic result!

We hope that in the coming season the Womens Masters group will expand with further increased fluidity between the newly reorganised squads.

**Mary Finlay and  
Bridget Snait**

# Schools' programme

"It's a wonderful resource and teaches the students so much... not just about rowing but also how to take responsibility and to work as a team"

**Haringey Sixth Form Centre**

"The students loved it. The attention and encouragement that the students get is excellent"

**Highgate School**

"The level of professionalism is excellent and the facilities are fantastic"

**Petchey Academy**

Our Schools' Programme, launched last September, has gone from strength to strength with both increased participation and increased funding for new training boats and school sessions.

The future looks bright and, looking at the year ahead, 274 school sessions have already been booked for compared with 166 last year.

In this our first year, 140 young people from a diverse range of ethnicities have rowed in the Programme from the boroughs of Barnet, Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Waltham Forest. Additionally, the sessions that we have run for young athletes with Special Educational Needs have been a huge success.

This year, subject to funding, we hope to launch a recreational session for children. Alongside the Club's Learn to Row courses this will be an entry point into the Club for young people who have attended the schools' programme and would like to continue their rowing experience and also for juniors arriving at the club looking for a new sport to try.

**Sara Cinamon**



Design: Kevin Brown. Many thanks to all contributors including Nick Mather who provided the majority of pictures here. Additional pictures [front cover: p.4 lower; p.10 main and Henley quayside; p.14 lower; p.15 all; p.16 top four] from the larger Lea RC family.



**Lea Rowing Club**

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