History update 2022 – 2023

The new academic year that started in September 2022 was yet another step forward. Greater Manchester Youth Rowing, based at Agecroft Rowing Club sprang into life. Else where it was a case of sustaining and growing our current sites.

The schools in Warrington, some of them now seven years into the project, soon got to grips with things and most of them where active by early October. We lost two of the schools for various reasons and they took a year out but promised to return next year. We did, though, gain two new schools in the shape of Penketh High School and St Gregory’s Catholic High School. The coaching team at WYR is now well versed in the way we do things. They continue to impress with their dedication and willingness to adapt and improvise. The coaching team at WYR was bolstered by the addition of a British Rowing Grow Coach in the shape of Quin Dunne.

Action on The West Float Dock continued at a pace with plenty of action on the water. North Liverpool Academy increased their sessions to three per week and three other schools increased their sessions to twice weekly. We were delighted to be able to introduce two new schools to the Mersey programme. South Wirral High School and Dixons Broadgreen both joined the fold during the spring term. Our student based coaching team at Mersey are performing well and are always up for a challenge, especially as they work on a commercial dock. I’m sure we will all miss the navy ship, that has now moved and was an interesting feature on the skyline.

The river Weaver saw plenty of activity with local schools continuing to participate and utilise the modern facilities at Northwich Rowing Club. The enthusiasm of the schools in Northwich is always rewarding to see and unsurprisingly they did very well at the Youth Rowing Regatta in July. Winsford High School capped their year by winning the Roger Chicken Trophy as the best performing school over the year. The number of schools increased as we lost one but gained Hartford and Rudheath. Kev Jump leads a well-established group of coaches at Northwich, and they have developed a very inclusive and caring style that works well with our youngsters.

Agecroft Rowing Club now play host to Greater Manchester Youth Rowing, and it is interesting to see the youngsters working alongside athletes that are on the GB pathway. Six schools eventually signed up with five of them coming from United Learning, a large trust with schools all over England. Our coaches at GMYR are by in large young adults and some of them are on the GB pathway. Its great to see these coaches passing on the skills that they have been learning, whilst being coached themselves by GB coaches!

The popularity and growth of Youth Rowing carries on and we have started planning for our next site to be based at Runcorn Rowing Club. Onward we march!

Rocking the Boat, the outreach conference that we help to organise with London Youth Rowing and Henley Stewards Charitable Trust took place in October and I’m delighted to say that we played a major part, organising several speakers. Scott Whitfield from LJMU was able to highlight his work and his study into our work and I’m pleased to say it was a big hit with the audience. Rocking the Boat 3 is in the planning stages.

We managed to hold our two Youth Rowing competitions this year, despite a teachers strike on our original regatta date. The indoor competition was held at Birchwood High School on 25th January. We had our biggest entry to date with 375 young rowers taking part. In July we eventually held our regatta with a slightly reduced entry due to a teachers strike on the original date. We were pleased to welcome along Siobhan Cassidy, Chair of The Boat Race Company as a guest and she was delighted to see so many youngsters taking part in a regatta for the first time. It was a radically altered format and in general it worked well. Knutsford and Winsford were the winners on the day.

Based on the results of the indoor competition we were able to select a team to take part in the National Junior Rowing Championships at The Copper Box Arena in London. All four of our areas were represented and we sent the largest team to date, comprising 40 rowers and 35 adults.

Henley Stewards Charitable Trust continue to be our principal sponsor and we are very grateful to receive this cornerstone funding. They also give us valuable assistance at the time of Henley Royal Regatta, and this enables us to invite school leaders to attend the regatta and experience what is possible for their youngsters.

The Boat Race Company have also provided funding and we even got a mention on the BBC with their live coverage of the Boat Race.

Our old girls Iffy and Elle continue to do us proud with their rowing scholarships in the USA. Iffy at Tulsa University and Elle about to start at Washington State.