

# Stour Sailing Club

## Coastal Rowing Project June 2016 – May 2017

Since 2008 some Club members have been rowing their own Claydon Skiffs both for fun and in races around the region. During that time Coastal Rowing has become more and more popular and now there are lots of new local coastal rowing clubs, and increasing numbers of sailing clubs that also have rowing sections.



### LOTTERY FUNDED

At the beginning 2016 year the Club agreed to set up a coastal rowing project to increase the opportunities to get involved in rowing for fun and competition. It has taken a while to get there but with the help of a £10,000 grant from Sport England Lottery Fund, the Club now has a brand new Harker's Yard Gig launched on 1<sup>st</sup> October

The Coastal Rowing project funded by the Sport England Grant runs from the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017. The aim of the project is to increase the opportunities for people to get involved in rowing – holding Club Rowing sessions that any member can sign up for, and opportunities for non members to have a go without having to join the Club first. Our participation targets are to get at least fifty people out rowing during the year, and to race as a Club with men's, women's and mixed teams in the Harker's Yard winter series between October 2016 and February 2017.

The Club will report back to Sport England in May 2017 on how well we have done against those targets.

This Log aims to show the fun and activity behind the numbers.

#### ***Sunday May 22 – Push the Boat out Day***

Slightly ahead of the 'Official' start of the Project, in May the 'Rowers' took part in the Club's very successful RYA Push the Boat out day. The Claydon Skiffs Witchoar and Lt. Washington spent the whole time out on the water apart from embarking and disembarking crews. Witchoar even had a fresh coat of paint for the occasion.

Nineteen new rowers came out to 'have a go', most of them liked it, some enjoyed it enough to join the Club and keep rowing, and some went on to race for the Club later in the year.



#### ***June 4 & 5 - Rowing Festival***

Only two weeks later it was time for the two day Manningtree Rowing Festival with lots of visiting coastal rowing clubs and boats from as far afield as Gravesend and North Norfolk. The first day focussed on our local boats the Claydon Skiffs, and some of our 'push the boat out' rowers gamely returned for another go and raced in the Skiffs along with visiting Claydon Skiffs and crews on a slightly gloomy day.

The weather for the second day of the event was warm and sunny and twenty visiting boats of all types, and crews from all over the East Coast joined us for a race to Wrabness, and back to tell the tale. The second day also included a micro series race as part of our starts and finishes and it was great to see so many people both rowing and sailing enjoying the weather and the water.



**Sunday June 26**

Following the Rowing Festival we had a period of wet and windy weather, with much bailing out of boats but no rowing possible.

On 26 June Club Rowing started in earnest and Lt Washington went out twice with some established crew members and some returning 'Push the Boat Out-ers'.



**Saturday 2 July**

First day of the Tour de France and two boats out on the water for the Tour de Stour, a mixture of "old" and "new" rowers, and with a very novice Cox for Witchoar. The sun thought about shining, but was largely put off by the wind and the clouds - but the rain held off. We rowed over to the Pink House where there was almost a mutiny by the Witchoar crew who realised that all of the sweets were on board Lt. Washington. Disaster was averted by a sneaky sidle up to Washington to acquire sweets (we be pirates us). Then a choppy row across to Mistlely Quay and home, hugging the shoreline along the Walls. The stiff breeze made for a tricky run up to the Club Quay - but we made it safely back to the Club for tea and biscuits.



**Sunday 17 July**

A lovely day for a row - a bit cloudy and quite windy - but getting hotter as the morning went on. On the way we saw the largest number of sailing boats and canoes out on the water so far this year – and were even joined by a cargo ship coming in to Mistlely Quay. It was a long hard row down to the Beacon, and an even harder row for most of the way back until the wind dropped a little and a good six miles there and back.

**Saturday 23 July – Round Canvey Island Race**

The Round Canvey Race is one of the highlights of the summer 'away' programme, a 17 miles row which takes close to three hours in a Claydon Skiff.

The event this year took place on 23 July. Lt. Washington took the trip to Benfleet Yacht Club for the race and the crew included two of our new Rowers who had started rowing only at the Push the Boat out event two months before. We promised them that it would be fun, and it was (at least once we had finished!)



**Sunday 31 July**

A lovely day for a row as we took a trip down to the Beacon and back - with the river almost to ourselves.



**Wednesday 3 August**

Our first weekday Club Row, and the first of many opportunities for those lucky people who have time during the week.



**Saturday 6 August**

Another beautiful day to visit the Pink House

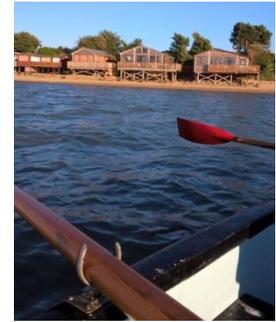


**Tuesday 9 August**

A lovely afternoon row, leaving the Quay for trip down to the Beacon and a choppy, windy row back via the Quay.

**Friday 12 August**

An evening row down to Wrabness and back - a bit blustery and choppy on the way down, and a wine gum stop after number 4 before a row back. Then back to quality test the beer at the Club - still excellent and even better after an eight mile row!



**Saturday 13 August**

Our second evening row in as many days. Lovely conditions, flat calm, no wind and a beautiful sunset.

**Tuesday 23 August**

Windy conditions had meant that no rowing was possible over the weekend of 20-21 August.

Tuesday 23 was hot and sunny for an afternoon row. A tough old pull out to the pink house - against a stiff sea breeze and strong tide. Then back past the Quay and the Walls where we were forced to send the Cox over the side to go and get ice lollies for the rowers. What nicer way could there be to spend a weekday August afternoon - luxury!



**Friday 26 August**

Friday evening found us out on another row across to the Pink House and back via the Quay. A hot evening made much more pleasant by a decent sea breeze which even tempted a few sailors out before it died away. Just for a change it was a pleasant row over and a bit of a slog back.

**Sunday 28 August**

Another nice morning row - leaving at the top of the tide at 9am (we didn't fancy an 8am start on a Bank Holiday Sunday).

We sailed down the river on a good sea breeze, but it was rather harder work coming back against the breeze and the tide! Then Coffee and a natter in the Club before getting on with the rest of the day.





**Monday 29 August**

Last row for some before the Great River Race and a decent row down to Wrabness and back.



**Tuesday 30 August**

The lucky mid-week rowers get to go out again

**Saturday 3 September**

Each year since 2008 at least one boat and crew from Manningtree has taken part in the Great River Race. This year was the first time we had entered as a SSC crew and we took Lt. Washington with a mixed veteran crew for the 22 mile race from Docklands to Ham along with 330 other traditional fixed seat rowing boats.



*Manningtree Witchoars Crossing the line at Ham*



The Stour Sailing Club crew – the 'Manningtree Witchoars' completed the course in choppy, windy conditions in 3hrs and 41 seconds, coming home as the second mixed veteran crew overall.

After the River Race we took a bit of a break for holidays and the Club's World Micro-Championships and then we were back on the water.

**Friday 23 September**

Late afternoon row in almost perfect conditions to celebrate the day after the autumn equinox - making the most of the opportunity. We took a trip up to the bridges and back and then along to Mistleay Quay - then across to the Pink House and back home - really good going for two new rowers. Still no sight of the Seal - but plenty of swans!





***Tuesday 27 September***

Early morning row reversing the triangle - over to the Pink House then a tough row against the wind across to the far side of Mistley Boatyard - pausing only to say hi to Clive as we passed Mistley Tea Rooms and then back for a coffee in the Club.

Lovely morning rounded off by a trip to pick up our lovely new Club Gig.

***Saturday 1 October  
Launch of William Rose***



Launch Day – first time in the water and first row





**First William Rose Club Row – Tuesday 4 October**

A choppy, windy day but we had had to cancel our planned row on the Sunday as it was too windy and we were determined to go out. So we had a challenging first 'proper' row after the launch. Our first excursion took us up to the Cattawade Bridges – passing by the Rose Builders building to say hello and show her off. Then back down to the Quay and back – trying to get the hang of Gig rowing.

**Saturday 8 October**

Out for another go – with a different crew and with Will trying out a very different technique for rowing the Gig.



*Sharon and Sarah – Bow and no 2 on Lake Maggiore*

**Saturday 8 October – Further Afield**

Two SSC Rowers Sarah and Sharon took part in the Fixed Seat European Rowing Cup at Lake Maggiore in Italy, rowing with Rowhedge Coastal Rowing Club in 'Gozzi' boats.

They did well, making it through the heats to the women's final where they came in sixth. They had such a good time that we might well see if we can get an invitation for Stour Sailing Club in 2017



**Thursday 13 October**

William Rose went for a Boy's trip out, on another wet and blustery day. Despite the conditions and lack of practice they made it to the Pink House for a coffee break where they ordered bacon rolls to be provided back at the Club. The weather cheered up a bit mid-trip and they enjoyed it enough to want to do it again the next week!

**Saturday 15 October**

Our last chance to have a go in the Gig before the first races in the Harker's Yard Winter Series on Sunday - and it meant that all of the crew had rowed in the Gig at least once although not for long! Sharon had her race watch on and we tried various techniques and stroke speeds to see what effect they had. Sharon and Caroline practiced coxing skills along the way. The overall verdict was that we all needed a lot more practice!



**Sunday 16 October**

The first of the winter series of Harker's Yard Gig races and we were off to Brightlingsea along with twelve other Harker's Yard Gigs. Our objective was to have fun, and if possible, not to come last. We succeeded on both counts.

*Post Race picture of the Crew*



*Yes the fenders were supposed to be out!*

Across the three races (men's, women's and mixed) we came home 11<sup>th</sup> out of 13 Gigs on the day. The women's crew did really well, coming 7<sup>th</sup> out of 13 Gigs in a close competition. Video of the women's crew crossing the finish line <https://www.facebook.com/marcel.mcclarnon/videos/10210054397663911/> A good first time out with plenty of room to improve over the series.



**Wednesday 19 October**

Another Boy's trip out on a very windy day. They had a bit of a blow down along the north shore almost to the Beacon and then a hard, bouncy row home. They did well and earned their coffee and doughnuts in the Club afterwards,

**Thursday 20 October**

Another mixed day weather wise but the rain did not put off our rowers and we took William Rose out twice with two different crews.



Our first row took us over to the Pink House where we stopped for jelly babies and a bit of chat. Then we rowed back to the Club Quay to disembark crew and to pick up more rowers.

We picked up Ted and Jean from the Quay in the rain for their first row in the Gig. Ted is a member of the Company of Watermen and Lightermen - he said that they make a cup of tea when it rains, but came for a row anyway. In the end the sun eventually came out as we took a trip under both bridges, passing by the Rose Builders Building first. The tide was so high that it almost looked as if there was no room under the bridges – and we disturbed a Heron into flight as we came into the lagoon on the Suffolk side of the estuary.





Great excitement on our return as we had picked up the frame and cover for William Rose earlier in the day and could cover her up safely until the next row when we next have some water in day light on Thursday morning.

**Thursday 27 October**

A lovely morning mid week row in William Rose, taking a tour round the Jewson's wharf works - admiring the pontoon brought in for the works - well hidden out of sight from the beach - and then off to the Pink House, back via the Quay and back home where we were met by Jane's children Martha and Alexander who were keen to help get the boat back in the compound (in between looking for Jelly fish that is). Beautiful calm weather, with just a hint of the sun breaking through - what could be better?



**Saturday 29 October**

Getting some practice in for the second leg of the Harker's Yard Winter Series. Another fantastic day, more like Spring than autumn - flat calm, sunny and warm - what nicer start to the day could there be. Helena and Ruby came along for the trip.

**Sunday 30 October**

Second Race in the Harker's Yard Winter Series and a trip to Rowhedge along with thirteen other Harker's Yard Gigs. Sadly William Rose picked up some damage at launch which meant that we could not row her in the races. However the William Rose crews raced in Tyrant, gallantly lent to us by Rowhedge CRC for the occasion.



*Women's crew in action*

Across the three races (women's, men's and mixed) the crews did really well with the women coming home 8<sup>th</sup> out of 14, the men 12<sup>th</sup> and the mixed crew a brilliant 5<sup>th</sup>. The results placed us 11<sup>th</sup> out of 14 in the league so far, but only two points away from 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Tuesday 1 November**

The Club Row went out in Witchoar to test the theory "train hard, race easy". A definite change in the weather with the beginning of November and a more autumnal feel. We took a turn to inspect the continuing work on the Wharf and cast envious glances at the sadly only temporary pontoon before heading off to the Pink House for jelly babies. We even practiced some sprints for the next race.



**Thursday 3 November**

Another trip for the 'Boys', this time out for a lunchtime row in Witchoar. Apparently a good time was had by all, but they forgot to take a photo so we have no proof!



Toughing it out in Witchoar

**Sunday 6 November**

The weather forecast had predicted gales. In the event the winds were strong, but not gale force and it was cold and wet, the first of our real 'winter' rows. However, we had ten people up for rowing and although we thought about just going for coffee instead we thought that having got down to the Quay we might as well go out.

Both Witchoar and Pyefleet (borrowed from Pioneer for a little while) were out today. Over to the Pink House and back with Tim as impromptu safety boat, then back to the Club to unfreeze.



**Sunday 13 November**

The day before had been miserable, pouring with rain and windy and we had had to cancel our planned Club Row. However the forecast for Sunday was better and so it proved as we set off for Mersea Island for the third leg of the Harker's Yard Winter Race Series. The day was also Remembrance Sunday, with the two minute silence observed on the water. The event was hosted by Mersea Island Coastal Rowing Club at the Dabchicks Sailing Club. We had a good day for our third ever race event in a Harker's Yard Gig. We were joined by Keith and Maria both in their first races for the Club, and Keith racing without having rowed in a Gig before. This time we competed in Pyefleet, trying to win the record for the crew rowing in a different Gig for each race! Fourteen Gigs took part and the Stour Sailing Club Teams came home 9th in the men's and mixed and 8th in the women's. Overall that kept us at tenth in the league for the time being – and still hoping to move up over the series.



Velocity observing the two minute silence



Post Race Team Photo

**Tuesday 15 November**

The lucky mid-week rowers were out again. This time in Witchoar as the lift out of the Cruisers was in full swing and the compound was full of cranes, boat tractors and cruisers. It will not be possible to launch the Gig from the West Hard again until after the lift in in the Spring – time will tell how well we manage from the East Compound.

A beautiful morning for the middle of November, and we practiced swapping sides and places followed by a sprint back from Portishead to the finish line – always a courageous exercise in a half ton Claydon Skiff but we need to do it more often if we are to have a chance of moving up the league.

Then back to the Club House for coffee after a quick break to help move some of the smaller cruisers to their winter home in the East Compound.



**Saturday 26 November**

A beautiful morning for rowing, flat calm and bright. It would have been even better if Witchoar had not been full of water, including the fore and aft compartments (clearly not water tight compartments). There followed lots of frantic bailing before we finally set off for a row. Nick joined us this morning and did brilliantly well on his first time out. Then back to the Club for coffee and cake, no better way to start the weekend.

**Sunday 27 November**



*Getting Ready for the Mass Start for the Women's Race*

A cold and early start as we took William Rose to Stone Sailing Club at St Lawrence to take part in the fourth race meeting of the Harker's Yard Winter Race Series. Fourteen of the current seventeen Harker's Yard Gigs took part. Launching from the beach, and with a mass start rather than the more usual time trial format made for some exciting starts and racing, especially round the marks.

The races were a bit longer than usual over a triangular course of 2 miles or so in choppy and cold conditions. At the end of the day the results had William Rose at 11th in the women's, 8th in the Mixed and a fantastic 5th in the men's – moving us from tenth to ninth in the overall league so far - way to go crews!



*Post Race Picture of some of the crew!*



### ***Tuesday 29 November***

A mid-week Club Row on a bright, cold, but sunny morning.

The water was mirror like, with some ice left over from the night's frost. We went for a long meander on the estuary today going past Mistlely Quay and the boat yard where we saw our first Seal in a long time, then over to Stutton where we saw another Seal (or perhaps the same one again) and then home. On the way we surprised flocks of birds into aeronautic clouds. A real privilege to be on the water this morning.

### ***Saturday 3 December***

A lovely Saturday lunchtime row with two different crews - not bad for a cold December day. We Rowers almost had the water to ourselves once again - apart from the Fishing Boat crew testing their engine at Mistlely Boatyard - and a distant glimpse of a sail down towards Wrabness.



### ***Sunday 11 December***

An 8.30 start for a Sunday morning. A cold but bright and beautiful morning as we took a trip under the bridges and down past the Quay and back.

### ***Tuesday 13 December***

Another glorious mid-week morning row with a pause at the Pink House to be entertained by huge murmerations of sea birds wheeling and buzzing across the surface of the estuary and the mudflats. We practiced handbreak turns and sprints along the way.

*Wednesday 14 December* – the 'boys' took the boat out on a misty day – but again no photo (must try harder!)



### ***Wednesday 14 December***

The 'boys' took Witchoar out for a lunchtime row in the mist.

### ***Saturday 17 December***

A huge lunchtime tide and we played 'how foggy does it have to be before you can't row?' An outing first for the men's crew and then a second trip with a mixed crew on board.



### ***Sunday 18 December***

Off to Brightlingsea with William Rose for the fifth race day in the Harker's Yard Winter Series and the last before Christmas.

The day saw some very close racing with a mass start and a short run down to the first mark. There was little time for the field to spread out resulting in all fourteen Gigs trying to negotiate the mark at more or less the same time.

The women's crew engaged in an epic tussle with Defiance – just pipping them to the post on the finish line.



*Women's team crossing the line*



*Men's team in action*

The final results put us 7<sup>th</sup> in the women's race, 8<sup>th</sup> in the mixed and 9<sup>th</sup> in the men's – keeping us at 9<sup>th</sup> in the league overall so far with four race days to come in the new year.

### ***Tuesday 27 December***

Another beautiful cold, bright and sunny December morning as we took a "blow the cobwebs" row down to the docks and the pink house and back with one crew before swapping over for a visit to the bridges on a second outing, followed by bacon butties in the Sailing Club Parlour.



### ***Friday 30 December***

In a change from Coastal Rowing six rowers from the Club paid a visit to Sudbury Rowing Club where we tried out a very different sort of rowing in a fine eight. Again a lovely morning but cold, breaking the ice on the water and feeling ourselves lucky that we did not end up in the river which at times seemed a possibility. Being in a sixty foot long narrow and tippy boat, close to the water, with carbon fibre oars and gates and feathering was to say the least a learning experience. Thanks to Keith's expert tuition we eventually managed to row with all eight oars, and for very short moments of time almost had all of the oars in the water together at the right time (but not quite!). We may be back (but when the weather is warmer!).



### ***Monday 2 January***

The first row of 2017 and another bright, frosty day as we set out for a lunchtime row. Two crews out today, with a row over to the Pink House with the first crew including a sprint on the way back and then back to the Quay pick up the second crew for a trip under the bridges and then row to Mistle Quay with a sprint back.

### ***Musings on Tide and Mud***

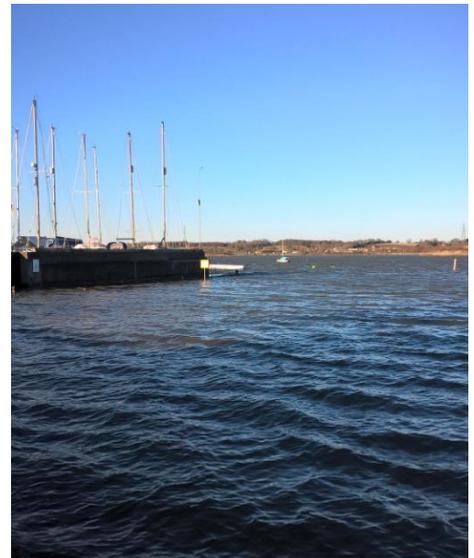
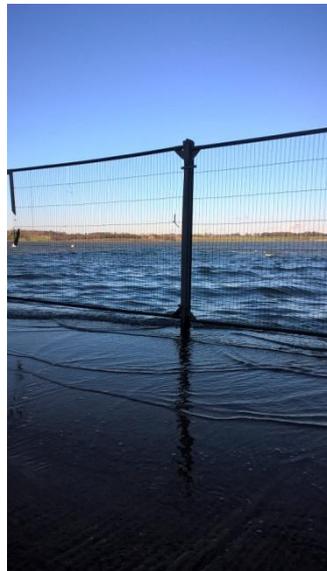
The tidal nature of Manningtree combined with the short days mean that opportunities for Rowing in January and February are very restricted. Mud is great for birds but useless for rowing. For two of the four January weekends in 2017 there were no day time tides, and although the tides were better on the remaining two weekends – these coincided with Harker's Yard Series races elsewhere! Weekday tides were slightly better, but not much – and February was not much better either.

### ***And Weather***

Manningtree and Mistle were the subject of a severe weather warning for flooding on Thursday 12 January. With a high tide, north sea surge and onshore winds anticipated all of the flood gates were shut and locked and we had to cancel our planned club row!

In the event the surge came ahead of the high tide and the winds subsided meaning that the impact was less than expected, although it would not have taken much more to cause significant problems.

Photographs taken at high water at lunch time the following day show how close it was.



### ***Sunday 15 January***

The Crews set off for Burnham on Crouch with William Rose for the sixth race in the Harker's Yard Winter Series. This time the weather lived up to its name, cold, rainy and occasionally sleeting. But at least the threatened snow did not materialise.

Once again the races were for Women's, Men's and Mixed crews, this time over a longer course and with a mass start. The Club had its best result in the series so far, 8th in the Women's, 9th in the Men's and 6th in the Mixed. Overall we remained 9th out of 15 Gigs in the series overall, with three more races to come.

With so much rain there were not many photographs taken on the day!



*Women's Crew in Action*



*Mixed Crew*

### **Saturday 21 January**

Once again there were no rowing tides at Manningtree this weekend. William Rose took a trip to Brightlingsea to celebrate an SSC Club members 80<sup>th</sup> birthday with informal racing and a pirate party. Two William Rose crew members rowed in the only all women's crew on the day in Molliette. Molliette was coxed by the birthday boy Sid and led for much of the race after which he penned an ode in their honour.

*The river Colne stood slack and still, the sun shone wanly as it will,  
Four of the fittest and the fair by blade and oar conveyed me there.  
They fought for glory on that day, precise and good their strong oar play,  
Gave mighty shock to break back men who leaped at thole pinned oars again  
To best us if and when they could.*

William Rose took a chicken for a row on her Bow (we could not find a parrot!) with some of BCRC on board and Russell and Shirley took a trip in Molliette.



### **Sunday 22 January**

William Rose stayed at Brightlingsea overnight ready for a bright and early row on Sunday on a beautiful, cold, icy but sunny morning in flat calm conditions with sea ice on the water. The rare chance to row William Rose in non-race conditions gave us the chance to try out some freshly leathered, borrowed oars from Lt Washington.

We shared the water with Brightlingsea Gigs Molliette, Viollette and Velocity, later joined by Tyrant and Aquiline from Rowhedge CRC.

**Thursday 26 January**

Back on the Stour and back in Witchoar on a bitterly cold morning – not helped by having to bail half a boat full of icy water out before we started.

Undaunted (mostly) we took a row along to the Dock and across to the Pink House and back before calling in for tea and biscuits in the club.



**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January**

Another race day and the seventh race in the Harker’s Yard Winter Series hosted by WivGigs at the Wivenhoe Sailing Club and our turn to help with the timekeeping for the event as well as competing.

We decided to try out our borrowed oars (1990’s Sutton needle oars from Lt Washington) in race conditions for the first time. It was difficult to know whether they made the Gig faster, but they felt better to row with than the flat ‘training oars’ that we had used until now.

The racing was once again phased time trials with two Gigs starting at a time and with William Rose drawn against Tyrant, one of the leading Gigs in this year’s series. Racing along the river means views for spectators and it was great to have some support there from family and friends.

Another set of good results for us in very close racing, eleventh in the men’s and seventh in the women’s and mixed races, keeping us in a very respectable ninth place in the league overall, eighth in the women’s competition and seventh in the mixed, with two races to go.



Women’s crew



Men’s crew before the race



And the mixed crew to complete the set.

**Tuesday 31 January**

Back on home water for a lunch time row in Witchoar, pausing only to bail out half a boat full of water yet again.

It was a cold and breezy day but we made it down to the Quay to pass by two Ships at the port, then across to the Pink House before coming back to the Club for tea and biscuits.

