



# STOUR SAILING CLUB

## Safely Does It - Project Log December 2017 – November 2018



**LOTTERY FUNDED**

# Stour Sailing Club

## Safely Does it Project December 2017 –November 2018

In November 2017 the Club was delighted to be awarded a £10k grant from the Sport England Small Grants Fund for a project to increase active participation on the water at the Club through purchasing a second safety boat. The project ran from 5 December 2017 to 30 November 2018.

### Project Description:

*"We established Club Coastal Rowing in June 2016 including a Club Gig funded through the Small Grants Fund. The project has increased participation in rowing and interest in rowing continues to grow. To help sustain and further increase participation in Coastal Rowing whilst still supporting activities such as dinghy and cruiser sailing and racing we need to purchase a second safety boat. Our 'Safely Does It' project will ensure the safety of individuals (particularly novices) on the estuary (which includes a commercial Port) where different activities, or separate novice and experienced crew sessions may be occurring several miles apart."*

**Our New Safety Boat** – an XS Ribs Five Metre Orange Rib with a 60HP Mariner Engine plus a new Snipe Trailer was ordered in January 2018 and was formally launched at our 'Push the Boat Out' Event on Bank Holiday Monday 28 May in time for the summer sailing and rowing season.

### Our 'Safely Does It' Targets

#### ***Events and activities***

- Participating in the RYA Push the Boat Out week in May 2018 to encourage local people to have a go at watersports;
- Organising two 'have a go' sessions involving at least one of the water sports on offer at the Club;
- Actively promoting our sail training initiative to encourage both young people and adults to take advantage of sail training opportunities supported through funding from the Club;
- Publicising the availability of a Club Dinghy to allow young people to practice sailing without the need to have their own boat;
- Actively encouraging members to take RYA Power Boat courses and to gain experience of safety boats to provide cover at the Club;
- Encouraging increased participation in our Sailing Regatta in July 2018, particularly by dinghy sailors and those under 16;
- Organising two Club Rows a week when tide and light allow;
- Participating in the Harker's Yard Gig Winter Race Series with women's, men's and mixed crews;
- Organising a Rowing event in June 2018 with participants from both Stour Sailing Club and local Coastal Rowing Clubs;
- Promoting the range of activities available at the Club

#### ***Participation targets – were based on the number of people Rowing at the Club***

Participation targets were on a baseline of 44 individuals taking part in rowing in the previous 12 months. The target for the new project (to end Nov 2018) was 70 individuals rowing between 5 December 2017 and 30 November 2018.

### How did we do?

*Target: Participating in the RYA Push the Boat Out week in May 2018 to encourage local people to have a go at water sports.*

*Target Met:* The Club held a very successful Push the Boat Out event on the bank holiday Monday May 28<sup>th</sup> as part of the national RYA initiative to give people the chance to have a go at sailing for free. In the Club's case this included coastal rowing, kyaking, trips on powered craft, as well as dinghy and cruiser sailing.

The dinghy sailing included the opportunity for children to have a go at sailing Optimist Dinghies under the guidance of a qualified instructor (we hired the Optimists from the RYA for the event).

When the Club last ran the event in 2016 the weather was less than ideal and thirty five members of the public came along. This year in 2018 the weather was amazing (although the sailors could have done with more wind) and the final total was one hundred and fifteen people having a go at some activity on the water followed by a barbeque.

*Target: Organising two 'have a go' sessions involving at least one of the water sports on offer at the Club.*

*Target met:* as well as the Push the Boat Out event the Club also held a 'try rowing for free' event on Saturday 16 June. We were completely overwhelmed by demand and all available slots were booked up almost as soon as we opened for the day. We had to have a re-think to get as many people out on the water as we could. We had all of our boats: the Club boat William Rose, and Claydon Skiffs Witchoar and Lt. Washington lent by their owners, out taking people rowing for almost three hours, and well as both our safety boats. We took new rowers out in pairs with two experienced rowers and in all thirty people came for a row for the first time.

*Target: Actively promoting our sail training initiative to encourage both young people and adults to take advantage of sail training opportunities supported through funding from the Club;*

*Target met:* A new Training Secretary was elected at the Club AGM in March 2018 and has been working to further develop arrangements for training including sail training for children and adults. The procedure for applying for funding has been simplified and the information on training on the Club website has been updated to make it more accessible. Whilst this has yet to feed through into a significant increase in numbers of people seeking sail training, work will continue over the coming year.

*Target: Publicising the availability of a Club Dinghy to allow young people to practice sailing without the need to have their own boat;*

*Target met:* The information on the website with regard to the loan system for the Club Topper has been updated and although numbers are small the Topper has been in regular action on the water over the summer.

*Target: Actively encouraging members to take RYA Power Boat courses and to gain experience of safety boats to provide cover at the Club;*

*Target partly met:* the availability of trained safety boat crew continues to be a limiting factor and we are working to increase the number of trained crew. Four people signed up for Power Boat 2 training during the project but due to other commitments only two have been able to take the course this season.

*Target: Encouraging increased participation in our Sailing Regatta in July 2018, particularly by dinghy sailors and those under 16.*

*Target Met:* although numbers were still relatively small there were a larger number of dinghies involved in this year's regatta and there were a small number of dinghies with under-16 helms and a few dinghies that had younger children as part of their crews. This year was notable for the inclusion of a larger number of 'classic' dinghies including 'Old Gaffers' in the regatta. In general more dinghy sailors were in evidence on the estuary this summer, mainly sailing classic dinghies.

*Target: Organising two Club Rows a week when tide and light allow.*

*Target Met:* We organise two Club rows a week all year round, one during the week and one at the weekend. The weekday sessions have proved particularly popular as there are many rowers who are either retired, or who work part time or flexibly. Due to the extreme tidal conditions we cannot row on the same days or times of the day each week which makes scheduling very complicated – however we manage somehow.

During the Project we:

- Organised 95 Club rows (14 were cancelled due to extreme weather)
  - Including 12 race training sessions
- Took part in 11 races (including the Great River Race)
- Participated in the European Fixed Seat Rowing Championships on Lake Comabbio in Italy

*Target: Participating in the Harker's Yard Gig Winter Race Series with women's, men's and mixed crews*

*Target met:* the project has spanned the end of the 2017/18 Winter Series and the beginning of the 2018/19 series. Since her purchase in October 2016 the Club Gig William Rose has competed in every race in each winter series. Stour Sailing Club finished the 2017/18 winter series in 8<sup>th</sup> place in the women's, 11<sup>th</sup> in the men's and 7<sup>th</sup> in the mixed – giving us 9<sup>th</sup> place overall out of 16 Gigs (ahead of the 10<sup>th</sup> Gig by 18 points). At the end of the project and three races in to the 2018/19 Winter Series William Rose is currently 4<sup>th</sup> in the women's, 8<sup>th</sup> in the men's and 9<sup>th</sup> in the mixed.

In addition crews from the Club took part in a number of other rowing events during the summer of 2018, including taking both the Club Gig William Rose, and a borrowed Claydon Skiff Lt. Washington to the Great River Race in September. Our Super Veteran (all over 60) men's crew did particularly well – winning the Claydon Skiff category and the Super Veteran category and coming second in the Veteran category (for crews over 40).

In October the Club went international for the first time, taking a veteran women's crew to take part in the European Fixed Seat Rowing Championships on Lake Commabbio in Italy.

*Target: Organising a Rowing event in June 2018 with participants from both Stour Sailing Club and local Coastal Rowing Clubs*

*Target met:* On Sunday 16 June we held a Manningtree Rowing Festival with five visiting Clubs and boats (including a Cornish Pilot Gig) as well as three crews from the Club competing in the Club Gig and two Claydon Skiffs lent by their owners. The race was a seven and a half mile race to Wrabness and back – taking between 1 hour and 15 minutes and 1 hour and 40 minutes depending on the type of boat and crew. Organising events during the summer is difficult as there are few weekends with suitable tides, and all regattas and rowing events in tidal areas have the same limitations. Despite efforts at regional coordination there are inevitably clashing events which limits the number of participants at each. However, the event was a success, and a few years ago the number of participants would have been considered large!

*Target: Promoting the range of activities available at the Club*

### **Participation targets – were based on the number of people Rowing at the Club**

- Participation targets were on a baseline of 44 individuals taking part in rowing in the previous 12 months.
- The target for the new project (to end Nov 2018) was 70 individuals rowing between 5 December 2017 and 30 November 2018.

*Target Met:* a total of 84 individuals rowed between 5 December 2017 and 30 November 2018 – exceeding our target by 20%. 19 of the 84 were rowers who had rowed with the Club at some point in the previous 12 months; however the remaining 65 were people who had not rowed with the Club before.



## ***Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017***

A mid-week row in Lt. Washington for those of us lucky enough to be retired or working flexibly.

Six of us on board for the trip which took in a visit to our lovely new (to us at least!) pontoon which was sitting temporarily on Lt Washington's mooring before being moved later in the week.

We took the opportunity to practice rowing with our eyes shut, rowing one handed and sprinting hard with a slow stroke.

On a trip to the Pink House we saw huge waves of small birds, mainly dunelin, flying in formation. The next day the twitchers would be out in force to see even more along the Walls - but we were there first!

The tides the following week were unhelpful, and although we planned a row on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December at Brightlingsea we were scuppered by heavy snow, so our next row was was the next race, the fifth in the Harker's Yard Winter Series.

## **Sunday 17 December**

The weather was freezing cold and overcast as we left Manningtree, and we arrived at Brightlingsea to find sea fog firmly in place and showing no signs of shifting. It looked as if the planned mass start racing would be replaced by timetrials in the creek (not our favourite model!). However, at the last moment the organisers decided that conditions were improving enough to give it a go. It was still freezing cold and the visibility for the women's race was pretty poor. However the William Rose Crews had a good day, coming home 11<sup>th</sup> in the women's (being crashed in to at a mark did not help but we felt that we had had a good row), 7<sup>th</sup> the the mixed and amazing 6<sup>th</sup> in the men;s (up from 14<sup>th</sup> in race one).



## ***Tuesday 19 December***

Back to the Stour and a mid week row in Lt. Washington with first time rower Sophie on board.



## ***Saturday 23 December***



Another day and our second new rower of the week as Sue came out for a row, swapping indoor rowing for the great outdoors after a break of a few years.



Then we fitted Lt. Washington with a Christmas Tree and Fairy Lights and put her back on her mooring to spread some Christmas cheer. William Rose was doing her own star turn in model form on the Brightlingsea CSC Christmas tree (it is on our wish list for next Christmas!)



We rounded off the rowing year on New Year's Eve with our 'Blow the Cobwebs' row. The day started blustery and raining and both Lt. Washington and Witchoar were full of water from the week before and needed a goodly amount of bailing. We got most of the water out of Lt Washington before we broke the pump (again!) but it was still slooshing around. We also had sadly to take down the Christmas Tree and lights. However two crews (five men in Witchoar and six women in Lt Washington) set off for a blustery row across to the Pink House and back via Mistley Quay. Then we rounded off the morning with Bacon Butties in the Club – lovely!



A great way to end the year's rowing and start the next.

## ***Thursday 4 January 2018***

Our first outing of 2018 was in Lt Washington with the 'girls' crew trying out some exciting new prototype technology aimed at the Great River Race in September 2018. We give you a Claydon Skiff with gates and cleavers!

We chose an interesting day for our trial. For the majority of our outing we had calm water and light winds and were able to begin to get to grips with the gates and the much lighter cleavers and very different technique as Maria instructed us in the mysteries of feathering. However as we turned for home at the Quay and began to row back along the walls, the promised 'gusts' of wind turned into a persistent, fully scale easterly squall and we found ourselves rowing into a wall of wind.

At one point it looked as if we might have to beach the skiff but we made it back home. Putting Washington back on her mooring in such extreme conditions however required heroic efforts.



Our first race of 2018 was due to be the sixth round of the Harker's Yard winter series hosted by Marconi Sailing Club on 7 January – unfortunately forecast storm force northerly winds meant that the organisers had to cancel the event for safety reasons on the 5 January. In the event the forecasts were well made and cancellation was a good call.

The tides the following week meant that there was no water during daylight hours, and as we have yet to find a way of rowing on the mud – no rowing!



## ***Sunday 14 January***

What a difference a week makes. We took William Rose to Brightlingsea for a row. There we found three Gigs from Brightlingsea Coastal Rowing Club and Brightlingsea University Community Sailing Club out on the water as they are every Sunday morning.

We are wildly jealous of this access to the water at all states of the tide, but unless we build a tidal barrage on the Stour estuary we are stuck with what we have!

We had a fantastic row – popping over to have a look at Pyefleet and Mersea Island and then back for a jaunt up the creek and back.

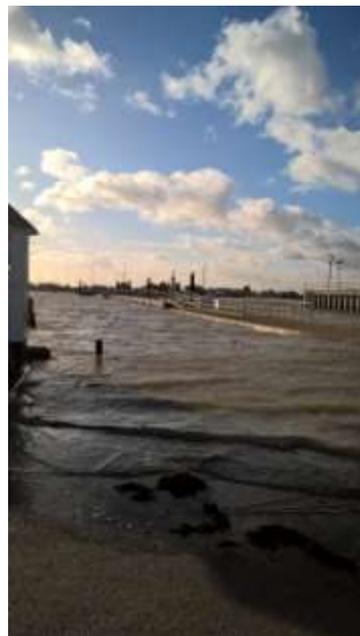
## ***Tuesday 16 January***

What a difference two days makes! We thought that we would repeat our trip with the Gig to Brightlingsea so that Mike could have a go in the Gig ahead of the next race on 21 January and that new rower Jenny could have her first row in the Gig.

We were greeted by wind and waves and unrowable conditions even if we had been able to launch safely – so we retired for coffee!

Much discussion and negotiation this week around the specification and ordering of our new second safety boat to enable us to safely increase participation at the Club.

We settled on a 5m orange Rib with 60HP Mariner engine and a trailer – ordered on 20 January so looking forward to its arrival in around 3 months time!



## ***Sunday 21 January***

Race seven in the Harker's Yard Winter Series, this time at Burnham on Crouch. The weather forecast had not been great, but the conditions on the day were truly horrible! Freezing cold, raining, sleeting and snowing during the racing, and all of the rowers deserved a prize simply for agreeing to get in the Gigs rather than staying in the nice warm club house! This event truly pushed the boundaries of "we do this for fun" into "explain to me again why do we do this?"

However, we rowed all of the races with William Rose coming home in ninth place in the women's, twelfth in the men's and sixth in the mixed – putting us in 9<sup>th</sup> place overall with two events still to go.



## ***Tuesday 23 January***

Back at Manningtree with Lt. Washington and with new rower Jenny on board. We headed for the Pink House but ominous clouds threatened and we changed our minds and headed for Mistley boatyard before coming home via the Quay.





### ***Sunday 28 January***

No water at Manningtree so we took the Gig to Brightlingsea with crews to get in some practice ahead of the next race on 4<sup>th</sup> February. Once again there was rather more wind than was wanted and we thought that we might have to abandon – but the William Rose crews stayed out after the local Clubs had headed homewards, and the women's, men's and mixed crews all had a chance to practice.



### ***Wednesday 31 January***

Back at Manningtree with Lt Washington. The crew got caught in an unexpected twenty minute squall with high winds and rough waters. Lt. Washington took refuge by calling in at Mistley Boatyard and waiting on the water for the squall to pass. They got soaking wet but had a decent row back. Strangely there is no picture of the wet crew!

### ***Sunday 4 February***

We took William Rose to Maldon for the penultimate event in the Harker's Yard Winter Series. Maldon is one of the few places with even more mud than Manningtree and tides that are just as extreme. With five minutes to go before the start of the first race there was not enough water to launch the Gigs that had not been craned in. Eventually race control relented and put the start off by ten minutes, but it was still a mad rush to launch, row away and start the race.

Another cold day, but at least it did not snow or rain during the racing. The two by two time trial format is not our favourite, and the wind and tide made for some tough conditions. However, at the end of the day the William Rose women's crew came home in 10<sup>th</sup> place, the men in 9<sup>th</sup> and the mixed in 6<sup>th</sup>, keeping us in 9<sup>th</sup> place overall with one event to go.



*Waiting for the tide to come in*



**Tuesday 6 February**

Out in Lt. Washington once again trying out the gates and cleavers. Since our first outing the nuts had been welded to the bolts which worked much better. Still some glitches to be worked out but getting there.

Almost two crews out today – and just to make a change – it snowed again! Roll on spring



We were due to row on Sunday 11 February but strong winds stopped play.

**Wednesday 14 February**

So our next row was a bright but cold and windy Valentine's Day/Ash Wednesday row. Once again we had two crews out taking it in turns in Lt. Washington but back with the rowlocks and macons.

First row featured first time rower Tim and a surprising absence of rain or snow – although rather more wind for the second row than was wanted!



During the first row the swans were enjoying the winter sunshine on the mudbank by the Quay.

## ***Sunday 18 February***

The last event of the Harker's Yard Winter Series, this time at West Mersea and with some actual sunshine, although still a fair amount of wind and chop. The racing was tough and close with mass starts for all races and there was no time to take photographs.

The William Rose Crews on the day finished 7<sup>th</sup> in the women's , 9<sup>th</sup> in the men's and 6<sup>th</sup> in the mixed.



At the end of our second Winter Series William Rose and Crews finished 8<sup>th</sup> in the women's, 11<sup>th</sup> in the men's and 7<sup>th</sup> in the mixed – giving us 9<sup>th</sup> place overall out of 16 Gigs (ahead of the 10<sup>th</sup> Gig by 18 points).

## ***The Beast from the East***

We do not cancel many rows due to the weather but the next couple of weeks proved a challenge as the 'Beast from the East' brought freezing weather and snow, with the estuary covered with Sea Ice. Storm Emma followed. Wind Chill factors bringing the 'real' temperature down to -10 degrees meant that even when there was a rowing tide there was no rowing!

## ***Wednesday 7 March***

At last the weather was good enough for Lt. Washington to go out with two different crews. Unfortunately neither of them remembered to take a picture!

## ***Wednesday 15 March***

A morning row in Lt Washington with Shirley bravely coming along as passenger as she had been unable to row for a while after hurting her thumb.

It was cold and breezier than we expected, but good to be back on the water in a brief respite between snow, ice and gales!



## ***The Beast returns***

Our next two rows were planned for Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March. The Beast from the East (part two) brought snow, ice and cold on the Sunday and a howling north north easterly on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> made it impossible to launch safely.



### ***Saturday 24 March***

Back on the water again at last for an afternoon row. We did not have the promised warmth, but it was considerably less chilly than of late, and gentle winds made for flat calm rowing conditions. Ideal for taking out two first time rowers today.

We had two rowing crews but only one Cox due to illness so we could not quite get two boats out – so we went out twice (with a little adventure in the mud at the Pink House on the second outing!) – then back to watch the Boat Race.



### ***Thursday 29 March***

A lovely sunny mid-week row in Washington with passenger!



### ***Saturday 31 March***

Out in Washington today with new rower Sam and trying out the gates and cleavers again. Feathering went much better after we realised that two of the rowers had the gates the wrong way round!

### ***Wednesday 4 April***

A mid week row with Washington heading off into the distance and a picture of our youngest recruit so far who didn't quite understand why she could not go rowing.



**Saturday 7 April**

Two crews out today in Washington and Witchoar – including Julia who was working on a cruiser ahead of lift in and 'volunteered' to come for a row as we were one short due to illness!



**Thursday 12 April**

Mid week rowing is increasingly popular and we had two crews out today in Washington and Witchoar.



*choar*

**Sunday 15 April – Tony Adams Race**

Racing from Brightlingsea to the Hythe and then back with a brief stop over at Rowhedge – in total around 15 miles. We were joined by Sophie, a guest rower from Sudbury Rowing Club who had never rowed a Gig or a fixed seat boat before. It was a brilliant effort and a great day.



**Wednesday 18 April**

A mini heatwave for a change and a mid-week row in Lt Washington.





**Saturday 21 April**

Our first chance to get William Rose back on home water following the cruiser lift in. 11 rowers today so a women's crew in William Rose with two passengers, and a mixed crew in Washington also with a passenger and with two new rowers aboard.



**Sunday 29 April**

We had enough crew for three boats but the forecast for northerly winds and heavy rain meant that we thought better of taking the Gig out, as we did not want to put new rowers off or damage the Gig! So we went out on Sunday morning in Lt Washington and Witchoar and although the conditions were not brilliant we got away with it and had a good row (even the one new rower who came out seemed to enjoy it!). Then on to the Club for sausage and mash and the fitting out lunch – honours to the rowers for being on the water on a miserable day - unlike the sailors – the first race of the spring series did not happen!



**Thursday 3 May**

We had been due to row the day before but cancelled due to torrential rain and strong winds. It had been that sort of year! The forecast for Thursday looked better so we rearranged and went out in lovely sunshine for Russell's training session for his coaching course – trying out one handed rowing, rowing backwards and rowing with our eyes shut. We were joined by Sonia back from a year in China.

**Sunday 6 May**



The first May Bank Holiday weekend saw temperatures reach record highs and we basked in sunshine on our Sunday afternoon row. We had two crews out with both Lt Washington and William Rose on the water as we struck out for the Pink House then home again via Mistletoe Quay. Will had swapped oars for sails for the day and entertained the crews. A sail race was on the programme – but in the end there was no racing although Will was also joined on the water by a Laser.



Two of our rowers were away – guesting with another Club at the world Gig racing championships in the Scilly Isles.

Just a few more boats there than here!



### ***Wednesday 9 May***

A lovely evening for a row, this time with three new rowers aboard. As is often the case we had too many rowers for one boat and not quite enough for two so we took advantage of the warm evening and went out with two passengers on Lt. Washington. A bit of a squash but everyone got to have a row.



### ***Sunday 13 May***

The weather forecast for the day had been dreadful but the threatened heavy rain and strong winds passed over during the night and our row was a bit choppy and overcast but conditions were good for rowing. Both William Rose and Lt. Washington were out today and with no new rowers in either boat for a change we dropped in on the Pink House for a while and then had a decent row down to the Beacon and back to the Club – around 5 miles in all. Sharon passed on her experience of the world pilot gig championships to the Gig crew and Keith and Maria coached the Skiff crew on gates, cleavers and feathering.



### ***Wednesday 16 May***

We were due to row at lunch time following the cake and coffee morning in the Club. Unfortunately the wind had other ideas with a blustery northerly making it impossible to launch and retrieve the boats, even if we could have rowed.

### ***Sunday 20 May***

We took William Rose to Brightlingsea to take part in the Brightlingsea Gig Festival which coincided with the Beating of the Bounds and Blessing of the Waters. The race was a tough five miles or so down to Arlesford Creek (which took around 30 minutes) and back (which took over an hour against the wind and the tide). It was lovely to see all of the traditional boats and the dignitaries decked out in flags and traditional robes respectively!



Posing before the race



Working Hard During the Race!



### ***Wednesday 23 May***

An evening row on a warm but choppy evening with a stiff northerly breeze and choppy conditions.

Two crews out with two new rowers and one rower on their second row in Lt. Washington and a more experienced crew in William Rose. The new rowers ventured down towards the Quay before thinking better of it and heading up to the bridges where they soon got the hang of the oars. William Rose went across to the Pink House where they eventually found calm waters before we all headed for home and a ginger beer in the Club.



**Monday 28 May – Pushing the Boat Out**

On Bank Holiday Monday the Club took part in the national RYA 'Push the Boat Out' initiative to give people the chance to have a go at sailing for free. In the Club's case this included coastal rowing, kyaking, trips on powered craft, as well as dinghy and cruiser sailing. The weather was beautiful (although the sailors could have done with a little more wind). When the Club last ran the event in 2016 thirty five members of the public came along. This year in 2018 the final total was one hundred and fifteen people having a go at some activity on the water. No wonder we were all exhausted at the end of it!

We also took the opportunity to formally launch the Club's new second safety boat, purchased with the help of a £10,000 from the Sport England Lottery Fund through our 'Safely Does It' project. The launch was celebrated with the traditional local beer as befits a working boat.



### ***Wednesday 13 June***

A mid week row with a twist. As we were heading out for our row we noticed a tender against a cruiser where no tender should be. We rowed out to investigate and found that a delapidated day boat had broken free of its mooring and had wrapped itself round the cruiser's mooring. We managed to free the day boat and tow it under oar power to the shore, where it was collected by its owner the next day. By a stroke of luck the cruiser was not damaged.



### ***Thursday 14 June***

Time to bring Witchoar and Lt Washington up on the Hard for a wash and brush up ahead of the Rowing festival weekend.

Saturday 16 June would feature a 'try rowing for free' session and Sunday 17 would be our traditional 7 mile race from Manningtree to Wrabness and back for visiting boats and crews.



### ***Saturday 16 June***

The first day of our rowing festival and our 'try rowing for free session. We had no idea if anyone would turn up at all, or how many people would turn up. In the end almost before the session was due to start all of our available slots were allocated and we had to have a re-think to get as many people out as we could. We had all of our boats: the Club boat William Rose, and Claydon Skiffs Witchoar and Lt. Washington lent by their owners, out taking people rowing for almost three hours, and well as both our safety boats. We took new rowers out in pairs with two experienced rowers and in all thirty people came for a row for the first time. A brilliant if tiring day!



*Just a few of our 'Have a Go-ers'*

## ***Sunday 17 June***

Our Wrabness race for visiting Clubs and crews with all three of our local boats taking part alongside boats from other Clubs around the East Coast including a Cornish Pilot Gig, a Spirit Class Gig and a number of other Harker's Yard Gigs.

The weather was once again fantastic and the occasion was enjoyed by all.



*Our local crews in the Wrabness Race*



*And some of our visiting boats and crews*

## ***Friday 22 June***

A busy evening yesterday on the water with the Micros out racing, two cruisers out and a topper as well as the Club Rowers out in two boats with three crews in total. Another beautiful evening - finished off by post race/row discussions in the Bar.





### ***Sunday 24 June***

It was once again a beautiful Sunday morning on the river with sunshine and light winds - just right for rowing at 9am (even the Mirror dinghy was rowing at one point) - but there were a few sails today enjoying a bit of a drift round.

We had Washington and Witchoar out with two women's crews - the men had obviously decided to save their strength for the England game in the afternoon - good choice - it made all the difference to the game!

There was even added excitement as we came across another rower out in a single coastal scull - the first time that has happened.



### ***Tuesday 26 June***

More glorious weather and six women out for a row in Lt Washington - playing swapsies with the passenger and rowers.





## **Sunday 1 July**

A sunny afternoon for a row and sail racing. However the strong easterly wind was better for the sailors than for getting Lt Washington on and off the mooring using a tender and woman power alone. We mainly confined our explorations to the bridges to keep us out of the worst of the wind and were grateful for the help of an outboard to get Washington back on to the mooring. Our first 'bumpy' row for newish rower Anna, but it didn't seem to put her off.

## **Tuesday 3 July**

The weather continued to be 'scorchio' for an afternoon outing. Another windy day with a strong easterly making for challenging conditions – however a good time was had by all.



## **Wednesday 11 July**

A 9.45am row this morning and a noticeable change in the weather, much cooler and with a brisk northerly breeze. Lt. Washington went out twice with a total of nine crew members, for a couple of trips that took in Mistley Quay and trips up to the bridges and back. We also practiced 'girl power' for towing the boat in and back using a small tender and sculling on to the mooring today – just about managed it!



## ***Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 July***

The weekend featured the Manningtree Town Regatta. The event is organised by the Stour Sailing Club and includes two days of sail races, along with a public fireworks display on the Saturday evening and the famous Manningtree Mud-Sports including children's games on the beach, tug of war (in the mud) and race across the river and back (in the mud). The race across the river and back is especially famous as a few years ago in 2015 we hosted a special race for Griff Rhys-Jones which featured in 'Griff's Great Britain' at the beginning of 2016 and was repeated this year. Our event this year also featured a visit by Border Force and Harwich RNLi boats as well as an open day at the local Fire Station.

No rowing this weekend as the rowing crews were helping out with all things sailing!





### ***Tuesday 17 July***

A nice gentle club row in Lt. Washington to recover from the excitement of the regatta.

### ***Thursday 26 July***

The Rowing Secretary went away for a few days and so there are no photos of the next two rows – but they did happen despite the lack of photographic evidence!

### ***Friday 27 July***

First race training session in William Rose for the women's crew for the European Fixed Seat Rowing Championships in Italy in October.

### ***Sunday 29 July***

One of the rare rows cancelled this year due to torrential rain and high winds



### ***Friday 3 August***

Race training for the women's crew again with Maria sitting in for Sally.

### ***Wednesday 1 August***

Both William Rose and Lt. Washington out today but photo of only one boat – William Rose!





### ***Thursday 9 August***

Two boats out this morning for a 9.30 row. A mixed crew of mainly beginners and one rower out for the first time in Lt. Washington.

We missed the rain whilst rowing but got soaked putting Washington back on the mooring and laying up William Rose, and the rain continued in torrents for the rest of the day.

### ***Friday 10 August***

Another training session for the women's Italy crew – lots of sprints – searching for water in the kit bags!

Training at 10am and once again we just missed the rain.



### ***Sunday 12 August***

The Club Boat William Rose was out today along with both borrowed Claydon Skiffs: Lt Washington and Witchoar.

Once again were just one rower short of three full crews and Witchoar went out with two completely new rowers and one who had rowed once before and did really well in slightly choppy and gusty conditions.



The women's crew in William Rose stretching it out down to the Beacon.





### ***Wednesday 15 August***

An afternoon row on a breezy day. Some of the men's Great River Race crew with guest rowers out for a practice in Lt Washington and mostly newer rowers in William Rose. Lt. Washington followed William Rose off to the Pink House and then headed off down to the Beacon and back – finishing with a sprint from Portishead House home.



### ***Friday 17 August***

An afternoon training row for the Great River Race crews. The men's crew in Lt. Washington featuring three guest fine boat rowers from Sudbury Rowing Club getting to grips with coastal rowing and seats that don't move did the seven miles or so down to Wrabness and back. The women's crew in William Rose did the same distance but took in a trip to see the Sailing Barge Edme, moored up in the channel off Stutton point.



### ***Sunday 19 August***

A blustery day that turned into a lovely night for a row. The Men's GRR crew took Lt Washington down to Wrabness and back for a training row while William Rose went out twice with a total of ten rowers on board.

There was even a touch of magic as we we saw at least one and possibly two seals enjoying the water at the head of the estuary.



*Looking for the seal!*



### ***Monday 20 August***

A lovely evening row but one of the last for this year as even rowing at 6.30pm the light was going by the time we called it a night.

Both William Rose and Lt. Washington (coxless rowing at times!) were out this evening.



### ***Friday 24 August***

The women's crew for Italy were out in William Rose again for a training row. It was a blustery day with a stiff WNW gusty wind which made for a fast blow down the river and a hard slog back practicing one kilometre sprints. Total photo failure today – need to re-train the Cox!

### ***Sunday 26 August***

A lunch time Sunday row in Lt Washington.



### ***Monday 27 August***

A lovely Bank Holiday row in the early afternoon with both Lt. Washington and William Rose out in breezy conditions which also tempted out the sailors.

You can just see Washington in the distance!

### ***Friday 31 August***

A lunchtime row that started with a boat rescue by safety boat. We were about to go out rowing when a cruiser was spied dragging her mooring gear and heading at a rate of knots with the wind and the tide towards other moored boats. Luckily the loose mooring gear caught on an empty mooring and halted the cruiser's progress before a very expensive collision took place. The crew took a safety boat out and towed the errant cruiser to a visitor's mooring to await her owner. Then we went out for our Club row but in the excitement no-one remembered to take a photograph!

### ***Sunday 02 September***



What do you do when you have more than one crew and not quite two? Today we took the 'spare' crew out on a Safety Boat to follow Lt. Washington and to get some experience of steering the RIB. Then we swapped crew members over mid-row and gave some more people a chance on the Safety Boat. Lt. Washington is stable enough for even the less agile crew members to manage the transfers.

### ***Tuesday 4 September***

Our last row before the Great River Race and a chance for the women's crew to practice swapping seats whilst a second crew took Lt. Washington out for more of a social row. Rowing at 5.30 and getting back before dusk but inevitably one of our last evening rows of the year before the evenings draw in too much.



## ***Saturday 8 September – The Great River Race***

The Great River Race is an annual 21.6 mile race along the Thames from Docklands to Ham for traditional fixed seat rowing boats, with around 330 boats entering each year. At least one Claydon skiff from the Stour Sailing Club has entered the race each year since 2008 and we have come second many times in the Claydon Skiff class but have never won it.

This year we took William Rose, the Club Harker's Yard Gig with a veteran (over 40's) women's crew and Lt. Washington, our borrowed Claydon Skiff with a men's super veterans (over 60's) crew. The men's crew were on a mission to wrestle the super veteran's trophy from the Club that had won it every year since 2005 and had put together a crew with members from Stour Sailing Club and Sudbury Rowing Club and some who are members of both clubs.

Well – what can we say? We had a brilliant day with the women coming home in three hours, eight minutes and eleven seconds, seventh in the women's veterans and beating 164 crews including 140 men's and mixed crews. The men's Team in Lt. Washington finished in two hours, fifty one minutes and fifty five seconds, bringing home both the Claydon Skiff Trophy and the Super veterans trophy and finishing second of all of the veteran (over 40) crews in the race – way to go Guys!



### ***Wednesday 12 September***

Back to reality after our adventures in London in the Great River Race – Lt. Washington went back in the water and out for a Club Row.



### ***Wednesday 13 September***

Some of the rowers who didn't get to take part in the Great River Race this year wanted to have a longer row so on Thursday evening one crew rowed down to Harwich (about eight miles) and on Friday a second crew rowed back. The first crew had the better of the deal – lovely conditions with the wind and the tide behind us and a one and a half hour row there for dinner. The Friday crew had winds, chop and the wind on their nose on the way back and the tide against them for some of the way – nearly three hours of hard rowing later they finally arrived wearily home!



### **Sunday 16 September**

It was a blustery day and it looked as if we might have to cancel our 4pm Club Row, however the met office forecast said that it would moderate so we kept our fingers crossed. We arrived at the water to find that the tide had not come in. We checked the tide table in case we had made a mistake – but it was just the SW wind and atmospheric conditions holding back the tide. Eventually there was enough water to row – the winds were a little gusty but all in all a lovely early evening row with two boats out.



### ***Friday 21 September***

We were set for a training session for the women's crew but were thwarted by strong winds that meant it was impossible to launch and row safely. Instead we had an interesting session talking through rowing technique with a sliding seat coach thinking through the differences in technique and identifying things to try next time we were on the water.

### ***Sunday 23 September***

It doesn't happen often but strong winds and torrential rain meant that we had to cancel the planned club row.

### ***Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September***

A real change of weather with light winds and sunshine for a touch of summer again. William Rose was out for more serious race training with the winter series coming up, and as Lt. Washington was off the water for painting we borrowed Witchoar, bailed her out and went for a more social row.



### ***Friday 28 September***

A bright and breezy Friday lunchtime training session for the women's crew – practicing 2k sprints for the European Fixed Seat Rowing Championships in Italy in October.

***Saturday 29 September***

Both William Rose and Lt Washington out for a row this morning. Lt Washington had been spruced up and repainted as a treat for doing so well in the Great River Race!



***Sunday 7 October***

Two Crews out this morning in William Rose and Edgar having a go at Coxing in Lt Washington.



***Friday 5 October***

A foggy last Friday practice for the women's crew ahead of the European Fixed Seat Rowing Championships in Italy. The strava track was interesting as the Cox had no points of reference – we were safe enough as there were no moored boats to avoid or traffic to contend with – but it was not a straight course!





***Wednesday 9 October***

Two crews out for a another luxurious mid-week row in William Rose this morning.



***European Fixed Seat Rowing Championships – Lake Comabbio Italy 13 October***

The women’s crew went off to Italy to take part in the European Fixed Seat Rowing Championships. We found very different boats (fixed seats but sliding seat technique) and facilities that we can only dream of including a rowing tank. The crews were mainly British crews with a couple of young Italian crews in each race who won everything. But we had fun and learned something new along the way.

With the women away the men failed to get a row out back at home – must try harder guys!



### ***Sunday 21 October***

Yet another autumn morning bonus row in lovely sunshine and almost flat calm conditions. Three crews out this morning with a social row in Lt. Washington and two training sessions for the men's and women's crew in William Rose.



### ***Wednesday 24 October***

Two crews out again today for our lucky mid-week rowers. Conditions were bright and breezy making for just a bit of challenge for our trips up the bridges, over to the Pink House and back via the Quay.



### ***Friday 26 October***

A mid-day training row for the women's crew ahead of the first Harker's Yard Event in this year's winter series. Camera person AWOL today unfortunately!

## ***Sunday 28 October***

The first event of nine in the Harker's Yard Winter Series at Marconi Sailing Club. After the extended summer, winter finally arrived this weekend. The forecast in advance had been windy enough for cancellation to be contemplated. The event went ahead but with caution due to the squally north easterly winds from which Marconi offers little shelter.

The conditions for all of the three races were challenging with starts against the wind and the tide meaning that boats were struggling to even hold water for the start. However the conditions for the mixed race, the last of the day were truly horrible as a squall blew up before the start which led to boats being blown broadsides on and backwards and a number of clashes and 'racing incidents'.

At the end of the day we finished with a brilliant 2<sup>nd</sup> in the womens race, 9<sup>th</sup> in the men's and 8<sup>th</sup> in the mixed - finishing in in 6<sup>th</sup> place overall.



*Men's crew just before the start*



*Women's crew and mascots relaxing – their work done for the day!*

## ***Tuesday 30 October***

Our planned mid-week row was cancelled due to wet, cold and blustery NW winds.

## ***Saturday 3 November***

The race crews decided to test their metal by going out for a training row at 6.30am (some of the crew did not realise that there were two 6.30's in a day!) A men's crew went out first for an hour followed at the slightly more reasonable time of 7.30 by a mixed crew. There are photographs of the second outing but not the first (the men's crews seldom remember to take a photo – must try harder!) The outing was followed by bacon butties in the Clubhouse Parlour – lovely!



### ***Sunday 4 November***

A slightly less early start of 8.30am for our Sunday Club Row with both Lt. Washington and William Rose out for a row.



### ***Tuesday 6 November***

Two crews out again in much better conditions than had been forecast.



### ***Friday 9 November***

A training row with a difference today. For the past year the Club has been working to realise our 'Pontoon Project' to increase our extremely limited waterfront capacity and improve access. As we did not have enough money for new pontoons we purchased three second hand pontoons, one of which was destined to become a floating dock for our Club Harker's Yard Gig purchased in 2016 with the help of our first ever public funding, a £10k grant from the Sport England Lottery Fund. All of the pontoons needed a huge amount of work, and the Gig Pontoon has needed the most design and rebuilding input. All of the design and work has been undertaken by Club members on a voluntary basis, so it has not been a quick process! However today we combined a training row in William Rose with the Gig's first ever and very careful ascent onto the Gig Pontoon, and descent back on to the water. There is still a lot of work to do, but the trial was a success.



### ***Sunday 11 November***

The second leg of the 2018-19 Harker's Yard Winter Series took place on Remembrance Sunday, and on the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armistice. Rowers were able to attend a Remembrance Service on the Village Green before boats were launched on the tide.

After the rather too exciting conditions of the previous leg the weather was almost summer like, although there was a strong wind the rain of the morning had passed over and conditions were good. Due to the narrowness of the river at Rowhedge the event was on a time trial basis with boats setting off at 1minute intervals – brilliant for spectators on both sides of the river (Rowhedge and Wivenhoe). Time trials are not our favourite but the Teams did well. At the end of the event the women's crew came home 6<sup>th</sup>, the men's 10<sup>th</sup> and the mixed 7<sup>th</sup>, putting us 7<sup>th</sup> overall on the day and 6<sup>th</sup> in the league overall after two events.



## ***Tuesday 13 November***

Most of the Cruisers had been craned out of the water and placed in the compound for winter storage. Sailors tend to be fair weather folk!

The rowers row all year round, but once the compound is full of cruisers we are unable to get William Rose on to the water except on a spring tide. So today our mid week row went out in Claydon Skiffs Lt. Washington and Witchoar. The Skiffs are nowhere near as glamorous as the Club Harker's Yard Gig, but they are made of GRP, weigh in at 480 kilos each and sit reasonably happily on a mud mooring all year round. The only problems being that they fill up with water when it rains and have to be bailed out, and they attract the attentions of the local bird life! Two crews out for a social row, a lovely row out to the Pink house and a slog back against the wind and the tide.



## ***Sunday 18 November***

The tides were unhelpful at Manningtree this weekend and as no one fancied rowing in the dark we took William Rose to Brightlingsea where the water can be accessed at any state of the tide. We are very envious of the luxury of water access at anytime, but Manningtree would not be the same place without the mud!

Race training today with men's, women's and mixed crews taking turns to get in some race training before the next Harker's Yard Series event on 25 November.



## ***Thursday 22 November***

Two crews out in Lt Washington for on a cold and murky November morning. Photograph of the second row of the morning.



## ***Sunday 25 November***

Time for the third Harker's Yard Winter Series race hosted by Mersea Island Coastal Rowing Club.

The conditions were once again challenging, cold and breezy for day of mass starts and rowing round an Island and back. Results for William Rose were mixed with the women coming home 6<sup>th</sup> in the women's and 9<sup>th</sup> in the men's but only 15<sup>th</sup> in the mixed after a poor start. Three races in to the season that left William Rose 4<sup>th</sup> in the women's, 8<sup>th</sup> in the men's and 9<sup>th</sup> in the mixed.



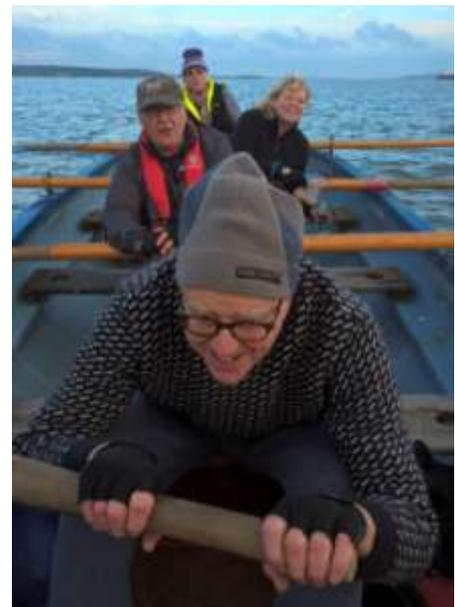
## ***Tuesday 27 November***

An early afternoon row on a day that was forecast to be windy and cold and which turned out to be cold but with flat calm water. We had two crews out today in Lt. Washington and Witchoar – including a new rower out for the first time in Witchoar. The rain threatened but held off until we were safely back and the boats were back on their moorings.

A good way to end our project – with a new rower on board, a few more new rowers still waiting for their first row and our participation targets for the project exceeded – thanks to everyone that helped to make it happen.



*Waiting for the Coxswain!*



*Duck Stroke!*