



## Alnmouth Community Rowing Newsletter August 2018

The long hot summer of 2018..... Is that what they will be saying in years to come? It has certainly proved to be a real "hot" time for coastal rowing at Alnmouth. At the start of the year we felt that the relatively new bunch of members were a strong basis for growth within ACR and so it has proved. A combination of some local recruitment activity and quite a lot of word of mouth has seen our membership more than double since the Spring. The really exciting thing about this rising membership is that a large proportion are actively interested in rowing on a weekly basis, some even more frequently. As I write this news we now have 44 paid up members, with a list of another 8 or so who are lined up for New Rower events. The result of the surge in interest is that the Pride of Aln is now out on the water at least four days every week. The emerging pattern is that each session will see three crews having about an hour each on the water. As a result we typically get between 8 and 12 crews on the water every week. It is also great to see that our membership is drawn from across the local area including four residents of Alnmouth village.

This level of rowing activity has spin off benefits that are also very encouraging. Many of our newer members who were completely unfamiliar with boats and rowing are now very happy to row for an hour or more and cover at least 4 or 5 miles. Indeed some feel that doing much less is "hardly worth it". This means that there is a noticeable improvement in fitness amongst rowers - noticeable because they say so! We are also seeing a number of new coxes who are starting to learn the skills needed in that role. This is particularly beneficial to ACR as it increases the flexibility of what we can manage in any outing

We have done less rowing with our neighbour clubs but have been round Coquet Island with Amble and others(see picture below), as well as a lovely trip up to Low Newton from Craster with several other skiffs. While in home waters we now routinely go up to Boulmer and have once made it up the Aln to "bag the bridges" at Lesbury on a really good Spring Tide. The trip involves getting the skiff completely through three bridges without grounding the boat. (Those with local knowledge can work out which three bridges I mean)



Coquet Island Trip



### Lakes weekend

We once again enjoyed a weekend rowing in the Lake District, our third visit over there. A total of fifteen members enjoyed the glorious weather and the magnificent scenery to row on both Windermere and Ullswater. This year we had the beginnings of a "fleet" as the rowing was accompanied by a little bit of sailing in my own boat although the wind strength and direction meant that there was little progress "in company". Maybe next year we will look further afield for the annual trip ....

### Lifeboat house (ACR home)

Many of you reading this up day will know about the lifeboat house that we lease from the Alnmouth Parish Council (APC). Because it is both a boathouse and located right on the shore, it is a fantastic base for us and we are continually thankful for the support we get from the APC. It makes a huge difference to how ACR can operate and also makes us the envy of many other coastal rowing clubs. Discussions are actively being pursued with the APC to continue our tenure and to work with them to maintain the building and ensure that it survives in good shape for years to come. It remains a very practical way in which we can engage with and contribute to the village of Alnmouth. Over the winter and spring we took the opportunity to make some significant investment in our base at the lifeboat house. Other than general housekeeping and clear up we have added in a free standing and self supporting platform to increase the useable work space, the "lean to" part of the building on the north side has been insulated in the roof and painted out and the front apron area has been cleared and a small garden border added. Internally we have added some new displays as well as a couple of items of maritime interest to supplement the display boards provided by the local history group. One member even provided several bunches of Lavender to add a fresher smell! Just before the start of the season proper we did our usual refresh of the paintwork on Pride of Aln.

### Future plans

The major decision that we have recently taken is that it is time for ACR to build another boat. After some deliberation we feel that our activities will be best supported by adding a second St Ayles skiff to the fleet. Due to the scale of the commitment, this decision was taken by all members at a specially convened EGM. Our outline plan is that we will complete the new boat in time for the start of next season so thoughts are turning to fund raising and the inevitable logistical challenges. Initial feedback from the members is that 80+% are interested in a hands on role in the build - although many claim to have few relevant skills. We shall see! It is very exciting to be able to fulfil another of the ACR objectives which is to encourage boat building and associated skills on the Northumberland coast. If any of our wider circle of supporters would like to help with the project then please do get in touch:

- For any matters relating to the build activity itself please contact me [dsfoote@hotmail.com](mailto:dsfoote@hotmail.com)
- For any funding or financial support issues please contact Mike Ewen (Treasurer) [ajewen@btinternet.com](mailto:ajewen@btinternet.com)

As we grow as a club we venture into new areas such as participating in Scottish Coastal Rowing Rowing Association events. For the benefit of the new members who may not know, there are 2 such events in August and more details can be found on the home page of the website ([alnmouthrowing.org](http://alnmouthrowing.org)) under the post from David Cant dated 11<sup>th</sup> July. Although places are filling up, if you want to go contact David. It will be competitive rowing in whatever conditions prevail on the day. In any event it is worth going as a spectator just to see so many clubs and skiffs getting together and competing.

We also have an eye on the Skiffie World Championships which will be held in Stranraer next summer (July 2019 – picture below). Having enjoyed participation in the last championships back in 2016 we have already booked some excellent accommodation in Portpatrick. We have yet to make any serious attempt at training crews but with the increased activity in the club I am sure that



there will be plenty of keen members willing to give it a go. Once we have two skiffs then the opportunity to see "who can go faster?" will inevitably start to appear in our regular outings.



In conclusion

Having growth in activity and membership is great however this does not mean that we lose sight of our past and the fact that there is a wider community of interested supporters. Thank you for your interest and please do pop down to the boathouse if you can. Most weeks we will be there on Tuesday mornings, Wednesday evenings, Thursday morning (before breakfast, yes really) and Sundays.

Dave Foote  
Chairman ACR

[www.alnmouthrowing.org](http://www.alnmouthrowing.org)

Any feedback on this newsletter, please pass on to our Secretary David Cant. We think we have the distribution list right, but if you are on by mistake or no longer wish to receive it, let David know – [Secretary@alnmouthrowing.org](mailto:Secretary@alnmouthrowing.org).