

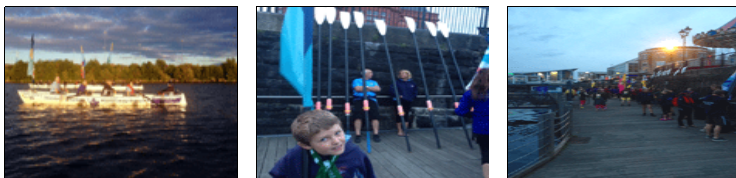
# Wiseman's Bridge Rowing Club

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## Achievements/Results

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### **Ar Waith Ar Daith - a Welsh journey of myth and magic. Saturday 12th May 2015**



Cardiff bay was the setting for WBRC's involvement, along with 25 other Celtic crews, for the 10 years celebration ( ar wraith ar daith ) of the Wales Millenium Centre, and being a part of the outdoor Saturday night celebration put on by 'Walk the Plank'

Friday morning a crack swat team of our rowers and towers descended on the capital to begin rehearsals of no less than 5 sessions, with other members travelling up later that day & Saturday morning to join them.

With Friday rehearsals complete, tired crews made their way to Nos Da hostel in the city centre to get some well earned rest, but not before liquid refreshment and a banquet of fine pizzas organised by Marja.

Saturday morning saw a lie in for the crews so shopping and general sight seeing seemed to fill time before we were needed at 2 o'clock for final rehearsals !!!

Saturday rehearsals proved a little trickier while trying to keep formation in the bay before rowing in for the march into the arena ,as a slight wind picked up ! But with the fine Coxswains skills of Andy, Neil and PhillyT we soon managed to hold a decent line .

With a small break before we performed in the evening there was only one thing to do...

Yes get the carbs in. Beer and chips and more beer. And the odd bottle of red wine!

By the time the actual performance started the wind had died much to our relief and the sun shone making a fine sight of 25 or so celtics filter a long line into the bay's pontoons to march with oars into the arena as a story teller relayed a tale with dancers doing dancy things.

The crews enjoyed artists performing in the arena before retreating to the boats to row away into the darkness of the bay with bow torch lights ablaze and much relief the performance had gone smoothly. Juniors Lotti,Lowri , Grace & Ieuan experienced their first night time rows and watched in oar from the bay waters as fireworks signalled the end of the show.

Saturday night saw live music and plenty of refreshments in Nos Da before travelling back to catch iron man on Sunday .

Many thanks to Bunty for her superb organisation skills of many emails back and forth to make it happen and to all members for making it a jolly good laugh and to the Brains pub for keeping us lubricated throughout.

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### **Aberdyfi League Race Day Sunday 24th May 2015**



Sunday 24th was the turn of Aberdovey to host their league race. Bryony, Mo, Brian (Nicky), Sian and Capt Mark setting up camp alongside our friends from Towey on Saturday evening, excitedly chatting and planning the after race party. Within a few minutes we were already in trouble, Brian refusing food and having to take to her bed with a mystery illness, it looked as though we were down to four rowers.

The following morning, poor Brian was in a worse state, so sadly we left her reclined in her tent and made our way to the harbour to register and hopefully pick up some surplus rowers to make up our numbers. Luckily Helen from Llangrannog took Brian's place in the ladies and with a stiff wind blowing with the flood tide we knew we were in for a tough race.

Capt Mark positioned the boat on the start line as close to the beach on the far side of the river risking running aground but hoping to avoid the

worst of the in-coming tide and the race was underway. Rather than push too hard against wind and tide the ladies dug in at a respectable pace, in contention but towards the back of the pack. At the first buoy turn it was obvious that several of the other competitors had shot their bolt on the first leg and were already suffering, then the Wisemans team put on a massive spurt and moved away with the leading pack of boats. With a scratch team, it was unlikely we were going to win, but the team battled hard completing the race at the rear of the winning pack.

The next time the team saw action was in the mixed race, with the three girls and Captain Mark rowing, Jane from Towey coxing we thought our chances of doing well were slim. Due to the rough sea conditions the race was shortened to two laps of a short rectangular course. With a short first leg and a field of twenty seven boats the first buoy turn became a mêlée after two boats got jammed together at the buoy and others ploughed into them and each other. Luckily with Helens calm instructions and a lot of pushing and shoving the boat freed itself and attempted to chase the leading teams. Several boats had avoided the clashes at the turn and were well ahead, but our team piled on the pressure, having a real ding dong over the last half mile chasing a PYC boat and resisting a strong challenge from Moby Dick of Fishguard. Although tired from a hectic days racing, the team quickly scrubbed up and headed to the Pig Roast where they were easily the best in all classes in the dance off!

Thanks to Bryony for towing, Nicola from Towey for looking after us and commiserations to Brian, hope you are better soon. Also a big thank you to Helen from Llangrannog making up our numbers in the ladies and Jane from Towey for magnificent coxing in the mixed. Not forgetting Lowri and Lotti for their help with the trailers and being our slaves when we were knackered.

Natalie in Oarsome's engine room joined 3 of Towy's girls to brave the worst coxing a Celtic longboat has ever seen. Nic (Towy) steered them to a spectacular grounding on the far shore sandbank. After pushing, pulling, hurdling oars and wetting her panties, Nic finally got the boat afloat once more and the girls were off, chasing down the pack. The girls rowed brilliantly and their timing was immaculate. They pulled together long and hard in tough waters. Finishing 7 overall and second in class (under 18 girls). Fantastic rowing display, shame about the coxing!

Ladies race 13th out of 22 boats.

Mixed 17th out of 27 boats.

Ladies: Bryony, Mo, Sian, Helen (Llangrannog), Cox Capt Mark.

Mixed: Bryony, Capt Mark, Mo, Sian, Cox Jane (Towy)

## Wiseman's Bridge Rowing Club League Race Sunday 17th May 2015



## Cardigan League Race Sunday 10th May 2015



Since the turn of the year the weather has not lived up to last year's promise, Wreck Race and Milford Marathon both cancelled due to bad weather, Castle to Castle and Return of the Cleddau both run in tough conditions. So with the 2015 season up and running so to speak the first league race was upon us and the weather continued to be an issue, by the time the towers hit the mist over the Preseli hills on route to Cardigan the wind had picked up considerably. As the tow vehicles entered the venue there was a stiff south westerly sand blasting anything and everything in its path. The shelter of the club house was a welcome break and also offered superb views out over the estuary towards Poppit Sands, also together with the customary hot drinks, bacon rolls and sugary delights. The normal race layout was not possible given the adverse weather conditions which created a wall of water over the sand bar, therefore the alternative timed challenge up stream into Cardigan Town was the only alternative for the assembled rowers.

First up the ladies and as always it's up to them to test the course, the first leg was against the wind with only a few sheltered areas to provide rest bite Away from the wind. Once around the second buoy the boat had the freshening wind assisting all the way back to the finish line with the ladies finishing 17th. By the time the men's race came around the combination of wind and tide meant that race officials had to shorten the race to the first bridge. The launch was a challenge which sort of prepared the rowers for a tough first leg until the bridge turn and then the boat sailed back with the wind but by this time most of the boats had also made the most of this assistance with the men finishing 11th.

With the weather not improving the junior and novice race was cancelled due to safety concerns, but organisers felt that the conditions were not bad enough to cancel the mixed race. So with a short rest period for the rowers and our weathered cox there was a chance to take on some much needed fluid before the start of the race. Again the start was staggered with Wisemans just starting ahead of Llanion, this was all the motivation the crew needed to forget about the aches and blisters and put another shift in to stay in front of Llanion around the course and finishing in 14th place.

So with the rowing all complete it was time to experience the comfort of the club house for some very hot!! Chilli and a few drinks. A great but tough day was had by all including the support crew with special mention to Cardigan for running a league race in conditions which not many other clubs could cope with. Also big thanks to Nigel for towing and of course our weathered cox captain Ryan for coxing all the races.

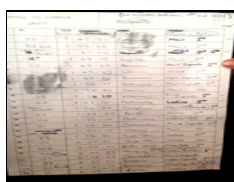
Results:

Ladies – Gabi, Diane, Joanne and Natalie – 17th – 41:36

Men – Neil, Andy, Nigel and guest rower from Aberystwyth – 11th – 50:44

Mixed – Gabi, Neil, Andy and Bryony – 14th – 30:15

## Castle to Castle - Beaumaris to Caernarfon Saturday 9th May



Crew- In Elen (58)  
Cox- Gabi  
Stroke- Bryony  
2-Jim  
3- Peter J  
Bow- Caroline  
Return vehicle duties-Polly.

The day began with an air of expectation as I nervously checked to see, from 06:30 onwards, what had been posted as the race decision. 07:05 I winged a text to the Crew that some four minutes earlier the message "It's on!!" had been posted by Elin of RWYC. Pure relief and elation!

My long awaited desire to row the Castle to Castle, from Beaumaris to Caernarfon, along the beautiful Menai Straits was about to be fulfilled thanks to the above Crew and the generosity and helpfulness of the RWYC, Royal Welsh Yacht Club, Caernarfon Rowers, in allowing us to borrow their boat Elen.

Diolch I chi gyd, thanks to you all! And the weather fairies none less!

Having met up with my fellow Crew members at the Premier Inn for an early 08:00 breakfast, contrary to what some believe, although there were indeed six breakfasts consumed, only one of these was by me, albeit consisting of four dishes!

So duly fuelled up we made our respective ways to Beaumaris, with myself having arranged a shuttle lift from Dros yr Aber (Aber Foreshore) with one of the RWYC

Volunteer drivers, only to discover that Chris and Phil, our Llanion cousins, were on board as well.

There was a real buzz of excitement at the Royal Angelsey Yacht Club, Beaumaris, where the customary pre race hot drinks and snacks were available. Before long this was to become a buzz of anticipation as Gabi and the other coxes attended their briefing, behind closed doors.

No sooner done than we then had the opportunity to acquaint ourselves with "Elen" and also just before launching for the start line, my sister Valerie and her husband ,Bedwyr, who had come to see us off and capture us on film for posterity (of a sorts!)

Starting sequence complete and the fleet of 23 boats were under way. Bryony quickly settled us into our rhythm the Wiseman's way, long and strong and Gabi ensured we kept it together. We were right in the mix and soon we left both Beaumaris Castle and Pier to their magnificent vista of the Snowdonia mountains beyond.

Onwards passed Bangor Pier,"Aye", with, for me ,fond memories of tea ,scones and ice cream with my Mother, at the café at the Pier end. Then shouts of "Oggie! Oggie!Oggie!" from the lead boats as they passed under Telford's spectacular Suspension Bridge ,with a small, but appreciative ,crowd above. As we pass under a selfie shout of "Come on the Bridge!" and yet again, as we announce our approach under Stephenson's Bridge, as well as our intention to close down on a Porthmadog ladies Crew.

Gabi's turn to show her metal now , as our Madog crew are insistent that our tight shoreline course be no less tighter ,and so with our decision made easy for us a call of "10 hard" and some , eased us into more open waters and left them in our wake.

With our line carefully calculated and with the elements on our side the notorious Swellies were not as we powered on through, long and strong with our Metronomic Menai rhythm! Although we did hear later that some crews were not as fortunate as us had danced upon the swirls!

Onwards along the Menai, passed Kyffin's old abode, Nelson's salute and Plas Neywdd on the Angelsey shore. Onwards to the voices of another crew to be chased down and to be left to ponder the Wiseman's Way!

Open water now, and with none to pressure us there is almost the atmosphere of a Tea and Toast row, with just a little extra edge, as we first row by Felinheli (Port Dinorwic) and then Plas Menai, with exhilarating memories of sea kayak jaunts and the home of the RWYC" livery yard ".

Ever nearer now to Caernarfon as a head wind picks up, and so we dig in , still keeping it long and strong through the chop we all thrive on back at the Bridge!

As we sight our only real company, a Crew on a wide Angelsey shoreline course.

We briefly ponder why? We have our own race to row.

Soon I recognise the all familiar stony shore of Waterloo Port and Alalas, where in my boyhood I picked blackberries from the brambles that lay adjacent to the shore and discovered more interesting fruits in my teenage years!

With my grin broadening visibly and internally, the expectation of the Porth yr Aur finish line beckoning, we pass by the old Pier Head ,where a young PJ attempted to spear grey mullet with a home made bow and nail tipped arrow!

Victoria Dock now and the quayside wall , which keeps at bay the invading waves just as the Old Town Walls kept its Norman occupants from danger. Within it housed St Mary's Church and for me one last and lasting memory of 25.08.81, as if etched on my heart.

A final flurry to finish in style with 10 hard, and some, and a jubilant shout of "Croeso I Gaernarfon" from a certain \*Cofi Dre who had had a  
\*\*Ras I Gofio!

Race Result- Wiseman's Bridge Mixed Supavets –1st in Class  
10th/23 in a time of 1:52:13

Acknowledgements-Thank you to the members of the RWYC for organising such a successful and enjoyable event both on and off the water. The welcome was second to none and the pre and post race atmosphere was testament to this.

A very sincere and big DIOLCH especially for allowing us to use Elen(58) without which our participation and the fulfilment of my ambition would not have been possible.

Finally to my marvellous Wisey Crew members, who realised how special this race event was to me and our Llanion "cousins" who were great company on our meal out at the Black Buoy later that Saturday night. Diolch etc.

\*the term used for a "native" of Caernarfon;

\*\* a Race to Remember.

## PYC Wreck Race – 19th April 2015



Originally intended to be held on the 29th March but called off due to (very) high winds the PYC Wreck race had already developed a reputation for being tough thanks to the inaugural race in 2014. Conditions on the rescheduled day however could hardly have been better. The sea looked almost like glass which was very unusual for Gelliswick.

Thanks to the short notice of the new race date we were only able to field 1 ladies team and have our spare man (Jake) infiltrate the Llanion ranks. A field of 14 made up of 4 ladies crews, 9 mixed crews and 1 mens crew.

Once the usual pre-race rituals had been completed (bacon rolls, tea, tape, more tea, getting stuck in the toilet, tea) it was time to head to the water. We had a senior ladies team in Oarsome with Nikki in Stroke, Bryony, Gabi, Di in Bow and our virgin cox making his debut, and saving the day, Gary. The spouses were suitably separated as much as possible in the boat to avoid any domestics (learning from previous experience).

We headed out under the Jetty and in a slight change to last year the start line was just beyond the second Jetty. After waiting a while for the last boat to come out (also the 1st boat to start) it was time to begin. A staggered start for this race starting with the ladies, mixed and mens teams with our ladies crew starting 3rd. A slight cross wind meant that we were against the wind for the first 2 legs. Along the first straight we quickly caught up and overtook the Llanion ladies and by the end of the first straight, at the 3rd buoy we had also overtaken the Aberystwyth Ladies. Our aim now was to build that gap. Once we turned back into the Haven and headed past Thorn island the wind that should have been helping us seemed to die off altogether. It was then a long straight pull back towards the Jettys, ignoring the battle between Llanion and Aberystwyth behind us. Some good steady rowing meant we were able to hold our position although it was clear that once Aberystwyth completed the cox/stroke swap they were a much more competitive boat and rounding the last buoy turn they were only a boat length behind. A slight oar clatter with PYC mixed gave them the chance to close the gap further. A real battle on the finish and our attempt at a "Sparker finish" meant that we crossed the line 1 second ahead of the Aberystwyth Ladies and thanks to the staggered start we finished 38 seconds ahead in timing. A fantastic effort by the ladies!

Jake, not wanting to blend in with the Llanion Warriors was in one of their 2 mixed boats. Importantly finishing just ahead of the other Llanion mixed boat (by 13 seconds) and coming in 8th Overall.

Oarsome – WiseBirds: Gary (cox), Nikki, Bryony, Gabi, Di. 1st in Class, 11th, 1h 34m 52s

Dragon – Full Steam Ahead: Lisa (cox), Phil, Jake, Sara, Ellie. 7th in Class, 8th Overall, 1h 30m 43s

Congratulations also to Neyland mixed winning overall in a time of 1h 17m 46s

Big thanks as always to the tower (Gary) and cox (Gary).

## Porthmadog Race Report including Snowdon Adventure 10th & 11th April



On Thursday the 9th April our intrepid band of Wisemans missionaries embarked on their expedition to the wilds of North Wales for their weekend of adventures! The team included Brent, Nat and our youngest team mate Alys, Pappa Smurf and Caroline and Mo, Neil, Lowri, Lottie and their new family member, Brian. Thursday evening saw the rendezvous at The Ship Inn in Porthmadog at 8pm to discuss the plan as the locals eyed us suspiciously.

Friday dawned bright and sunny and at 11.00am we met in Llanberis to hike up Snowdon – Pappa Smurf shot up the hill like a mountain goat reaching the peak in around 2 hours with Caroline not far behind. The rest of us took a more sedentary 3 and a quarter hours whilst Brent, Nat and Alys took the train part way up and walked down (high winds meant the train couldn't go up to the top). Alys enjoyed her first ever train journey and then surveyed the view on the way down with a smile on her face! The rest of us took photos at the top and then headed down before the mists and snow came in – an hour and forty minutes later saw us in the friendliest tea shop in Wales.. Possibly the world!! Over pots of tea, coffee and cakes in the quaint antique filled rooms we were actively encouraged to eat our own sandwiches and then were offered a parking space outside for next time as we left clutching our gift of Bara Brith!

Saturday morning again dawned bright and sunny after a night of storms, however we rescued Brian from the yellow brick road and bundled everyone into the back of the van for the harbour – special thanks to Nat for allowing Lowri and Lottie to be Alys helpers for the morning! Once the (very clean) boat was checked over, Neil ferried us to Pwelli for the start. Neil returned to Porthmadog using a detour which unfortunately meant he missed the 9.30 minibus back, on the plus side, it meant he was about half a stone lighter for the boat! By 10.15 and the start of the cox's brief, still no sign, then he wandered in having had a lift from a very kind Porthmadog rower!

Time to get the boats in as a stiff breeze whipped along the beach with a chill that would put hairs on a penguin's chest! Caroline was pipped out to Borth Ladies (not at Jim's request..) and with our quality bailers – ok two camping pans as we had no buckets, we were ready for our beach start.

Cox – Neil, Stroke – Mo, 2 – Jim, 3 – Brent and 4 – Brian the bow queen!

With the stunning white capped Snowdon as a backdrop we headed off, near the rear of the pack but as we settled into our rhythm, we picked off the competition boat by boat. With the strong wind whipping up the surf we used the conditions to progress through the pack until we were lying 4th vying for position with Porthmadog ladies and also a Porthmadog men's boat with three other just up ahead.

An hour into the race – Neil gave Jim the ten minute warning to swap, however at this point conditions deteriorated and another ten minute warning was given in the hope of reaching calmer seas – At this point the call came on the radio to head for Criccieth – conditions were too dangerous to head over the sand bar into Porthmadog so we changed course for the shore. One contributing factor to the abandonment of the race was the rescue by the RNLI of one of the support vessels, another was that the winds had scaled up from force 5 to 6 as we surfed on the swell trying to get back as quickly as we could! At one point the large head of an inquisitive seal appeared in the trough of a swell probably wondering what on earth we were doing! Then as we rose over a particularly big wave Mo caught a very large crab and flew backwards into the boat facing up between a rather bemused Jim's legs. Once Neil established there was no serious injury the crew were ordered to continue rowing through the swell as Mo regained her composure and position in the boat!

Eventually we pulled up onto Criccieth beach in fourth place, and without any more drama, we then rushed to assist the other boats – some of which were coming in sideways on the breakers.

Trailers were collected from Porthmadog and lifts were given by a very organised team and we arrived back at the sailing club a little battered and ready for the hot soup and buffet that greeted us, as well as a free bottle of 'Purple Moose' beer!

Positions – Wisemans mixed 'Wiser after the event' 4th place (2nd Mixed) – time 1:29:36

Also Caroline rowing with Borth Ladies 'Wise women of Borth' 13th place (4th Ladies) – time 1:39:20 with an inexperienced crew and a cox who hadn't coxed a race before! They were all presented with a very cute purple moose!

That evening saw partying at the sailing club with an excellent band as we celebrated Brian's birthday with energetic dancing and a few pints to quench the thirst. Alys has shown herself to be a true Wisey, partying with everyone over the whole weekend!

Special thanks to Neil for doing the ferrying around and Porthmadog Rowing Club, particularly Leslie who organised a boat for us but also to everyone for making us feel so welcome and organising an excellent race in tough conditions!

## Return Of The Cleddau – H'West to Neyland 14miles – 11th April 2015



With this being the first race meeting of the 2015 calendar, as expected it was well attended, even though it clashed with a Northern challenge race "The Madog Dash" , which was also a 14mile open sea race being hosted by Porthmadog rowing club. Wiseman's captains were able to assemble a ladies crew and a men's crew for the Return Of The Cleddau, and there was also enough interest to send a mixed crew North on missionary work to take part in the Madog Dash. So, with logistics and crews sorted all we needed was a weather window and some Vaseline.

As always with "Return Of The Cleddau" it was a timed race with staggered starts at 30 second intervals. Launching the boats carefully down the

muddy, grassy banks alongside Pembrokeshire County Council offices in Haverfordwest, our Wisebirds and Wiseguys were ready for the 12 mile race to Neyland.

An impressive 34 boats had assembled ready for this opening race of 2015 season. An excellent addition this year being 5 yoles amongst the fleet of 28 Celtics and 1 solitary Pembrokeshire Longboat..

Our Wisebird's starting 6th off the line were under the watchful eye of Bunty at cox for the duration of this long, tough 1st race of the season. The ladies kept it long and strong enjoying the scenery until going into the final 2 miles underneath the Cleddau Bridge, when wind over tide provided some challenging rowing, but together they managed to pull over the line in 2hr 5minute 54 seconds. Excellent rowing ladies..

Wisebirds in "Oarsome 32" – 7th in category – (2:05:54) 30th overall out of 34 boats

Winning Ladies, Solva – 1hr 54minutes 25 seconds

Bunty (Cox) – Tash (Stroke), Bryony, Diane, Judy (Bow)

The Wiseguys in their Pembrokeshire Bathtub "Dirty Dick", due to an administrative error started last, making the first 5 miles a very lonely experience for the men. Thankfully by "Blacktar Llangwm" our Wiseguys started catching the tail end Celtic boats. As with our Ladies the last 2 miles had become a tortuous slog through heavy water and wind, but with Towy ladies providing the men with a sprint finish "Dirty Dick" took the flag ahead of Towy with some clashing of oars to add to an exciting finish.

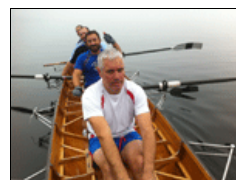
Wiseguys in "Dirty Dick" – 1st in category – (1:52:54) 17th overall out of 34 boats

Winning Mens, Mumbles – 1hr 38minutes 14 seconds

Simo/JD (Cox) – Simo/JD (Stroke), Rodders, Gary, Dan (Palm Tree)

As always thanks to Tow crew and supporters who make the race days possible.

## European Fixed Seat Championship - Reno di Leggiuno, Italy - 11th, 12th, 13th October 2014



An invitation to attend the "European Fixed Seat Rowing Championships" could not be turned down by Wiseman`s Bridge Rowing Club.

With time against us, flights needed booking and crews arranging, but due to uneven numbers, balanced crews were proving difficult to field so Llanion Warriors Rowing Club were asked if they had any interested rowers to help make up numbers.

Now, with 19 Wiseman`s and 6 Warriors a total of 3 men`s crews and 3 ladies` crews were registered and for the first time Wiseman`s Warriors Rowing Team would be representing Pembrokeshire. Additional backing was forthcoming from our sponsors "Darren Thompstone" of Trueform Ltd Concrete Specialist . Our new kit was designed and printed by Rachael Hughes, a Warrior who had joined the team for the campaign abroad.

"Sporting Club Renese" were our hosting rowing club in Italy, and they had the task of co-ordinating the logistics for 3 Welsh clubs (Porthmadog, YnysMon, Wiseman`s) and a ladies crew from Spain, 66 rowers in total! Not an easy task especially when you throw the language issues into the mix also!!

The boats being used for the event were fixed seat 4`s , but that's where the similarities with our Celtic s ended. The technique was far more technical than a Celtic Longboat rower was used to, as the requirement to "Slide" on the carpet, upon the fixed seat proved during our training sessions on the Friday and Saturday morning. With all crews now having had a couple of hours in the boats and clocked up a few Kilometres under their bums, Saturday afternoon was a programme of qualifying heats, raced over a 750m straight line course.

With very competitive group heats, our Wiseman`s Warriors were going to need to be on top form, with only the top 2 from each heat qualifying for the finals!

Our ambition at the start of the championship was to get at least 1 crew into the finals, and thankfully our ladies crew "Hir A Caled (Long & Hard)" qualified for the the ladies final along with our men`s crew "Be there Now in A Minute" qualifying for the the men's final.

The remaining crews ,Wiseman`s Warrior men`s "The Stokers" & "Warrior Squad" and ladies crews "Born to Row" & "Pembrokeshire Promise" were left to battle it out in the runners up Plate Final. This provided an amazing race with the result going down to the line and the Wiseman`s Warrior ladies crew "Pembrokeshire Promise" beating even the men`s crews across the line.

In the men`s final which saw 3 Welsh crews and 3 Italian crews battle it out, the difference in class proved too much, as the Italians took 1st, 2nd, 3rd, but with Porthmadog Men's crew in 4th closely followed by Wiseman`s in 5th then Ynys Mon a whisker behind for 6th place.

For our ladies final ,Hir A Caled, found themselves up against Spanish and Italian crews and the last thing they needed was a difficult start, however, they pulled long and strong right to the end and finished in a respectable 6th place.

An amazing result for all the Welsh crews who competed in this championship and special congratulations to Porthmadog Men and Ladies crews for coming top from all the over sea crews, but more importantly Number one in Wales!!

The hospitality shown during our 3 day adventure in Italy cannot really be put into words! Our hosts were friendly, helpful, showed patience and were always encouraging, especially during our practice sessions when many of us lost our heads while trying to come to terms with the new boats!

We thank the "Fixed Seat Italian Rowing Federation (FICSF)" and especially Marco, Cristiana and Francesco from "Sport Club Renese", who we hope to one day return the hospitality too. Gracia mille/Diolch yn fawr.

## The Pwll Du Challenge - Mumbles - 20th September 2014



The league season is officially over, and it has been a fantastic year for Wisemans Bridge with the highest turnout we have ever had and some of our best results, not to mention a few trophies along the way! With London Great River Race just around the corner it was the turn of the Mumbles Challenge Race. No league race for Mumbles this year, with them instead opting for a longer distance race that gave them the opportunity to display some of their fantastic coast line.

The race decision was made "It looks a bit breezy but the race is on" and we took the boats up the coast to Mumbles. On arrival the sea looked blissfully calm and the sun was shining. A bit of last minute negotiation and the crews were sorted. We had a Ladies Supervets team "Grumbly Mumblied" in Oarsome with Gareth coxing, Gabi, Marja, Libby and Natalie Lang's Mum, Trish helping us out from Barry rowing club. We also had a Men's team "Mumbles or Broke" in Ready Oar Knot with Mark coxing, Jim, Martin, Kevin and Kelvin (also from Barry) and our final team was a Ladies team "Dirty Mumblied" in Dirty Gertie with Ange coxing, Nikki, Bryony, Snowy and Nat.

It was a timed race so the boats set off one by one and we aimed for a steady pace with no one wanting to overdo it before London. It was relatively easy heading out with a bit of swell as we headed round the corner and we were all being lulled into a false sense of security. Then there was the lovely long stretch down the coast towards Pwll Du making it nice and easy for the coxes and beautiful to see. Once round the turn it almost felt a bit easier for a few moments and we knew we were on the home stretch. As we got closer to the lighthouse however the wind started picking up and it became choppy. Once we had made the turn around the lighthouse and started heading back towards the Verdi's slip it was clear the worst had been saved for last with a Northerly wind we were pulling hard just to keep going and at nearly high water we weren't getting much help from the tide. Over 2 hours in and our boats made it home one by one.

"Mumbles or Broke" – 4th Overall, 1st Mens in 2hrs 01min 42 sec

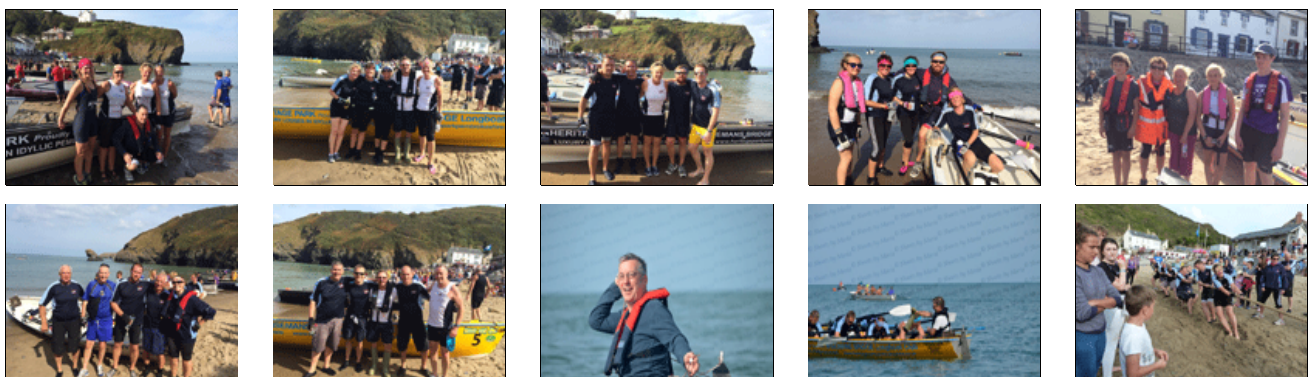
"Dirty Mumblied" – 9th Overall, 2nd Ladies in 2hrs 17min 48 sec

"Grumbly Mumblied" – 10th Overall, 1st Ladies Supervets in 2hrs 26min 38 sec

Congratulations go to our friends and rivals Llanion who, with their mixed team, came in as fastest Celtic!

Never to be accused of taking it easy we only really managed to break one or two of our rowers and they were bound to be fixed before London! The after row food, cake and beverages made everyone feel much better and with 2 trophies and a few raffle prizes to take home. It was a wonderful way to finish off what has been a very long rowing season!

## Llangrannog League Race – Sunday 14th of September 2014



Llangrannog was down as the last league race of 2014, but was very far from being the end of the season, with Mumbles, London GRR and a trip to Italy still to come. With Ironman Wales set to close half the roads in Pembrokeshire it seemed sensible to go for the camping option, taking the boats up the night before and returning the Yole back to New Quay on the way (sniff...).

A beautiful day for the last race of the season, and as usual there were some sore wise-heads after a night of camping and drinking. Also no surprise was the clamour for the late arrival of Brent to replace any of the hungover crew – Andy on this occasion getting in first with the 'you can have my seat mate' (looking green at this point). With another substantial turnout there were 10 boats registered with most down for 2 rows!

It was another early start with the first race being the ladies race and heading off at 10am and 23 boats competing. The "Wise Birds" in Oarsome with Mark (cox), Nikki, Sparker, Elen and Bryony were determined to finish the season in style. With a very crowded start the ladies quickly got into 4th spot and worked their way up the field, spending the majority of the race snapping at the heels of Aberporth. Taking advantage of the last buoy, the ladies slipped into first place and cruised home, making it look easy and our lovely cox even had time to pose for a photo!

The "Wise Gals" in Dirty Gertie with Simon (cox), Gabi, Sian, Tash and Nat came in 22nd, ahead of our Llanion friends, and our Ladies Vets, the "Wise Old Birds" in Ready Oar Knot with Nick (cox), Marja, Di, Caroline and Jo came in 7th and 1st in class!

Mens race was next and with the help of Norman from Llanion we put 3 boats out into the field of 22. The "Wise Guys" in Oarsome with Nikki (cox), Johnny, Brent, Kevin and Simon were the last to get to the line in usual wiseys fashion as Simo was 'chatting' or more likely trying to forget about the upcoming pain, having been dealt the blow that Brent was replacing Andy not Simo (negative high-5). With Nikki having just tasted glory in Oarsome, she was confident that the ladies 'spirit' had worn off on the boat, they were well positioned at the start line and by chance, next to Llanion – so once again they could observe our superior technique (it's just the hangovers that let us down!). The start was nice and quick, no faffing in these northern waters! And the boat was moving really well, soon finding ourselves in quite a bit of water, the route being anticlockwise (opposite to the ladies) so Brian could spot the difficult conditions and brilliantly cox us through some wide turns, avoiding any collisions and keeping the boat speed high. We were battling with Aberystwyth, Cardigan and a few others by mid race and it got pretty choppy – hopefully something we are accustomed to as we pulled away. Cardigan stuck with us and it was close through the last 2 buoy turns, we managed to go for some hard pulls on the finishing strait to ride some waves, which gained us a few ½ lengths each time, the boat was really cruising at this point with a lovely long stroke from JD, engine room boys doing the grunt and Simo being the quietest I've ever heard in the boat (until the finish line – Huey!). We managed 7th position – a high for the Wisemans seniors, Simo not recalling a top ten finish in recent years - such a great team effort

The Senior Vets, "Wiser Men" in Ready Oar Knot with Nick (cox), Mark, Jake, Gareth and Gary came in 17th (4th Vets) and the Senior Super Vets, "Wise Old Guys" in Dirty Gertie with Bryony (cox), Jim, Richard, Norman and Nigel came in 21st (6th Super Vets).

For the Novice/Juniors Race, with the help of Towy, we attempted to put a first ever Wisemans junior boat out, with Harry in his first ever race, Nat, 2 juniors from Towy and Gabi coxing, however due to the revelries of the previous night only Joe from Towy was available. With thanks to Louise from Crannog we were able to field a novice crew. With 13 novice and junior boats our "Wiselets" came in 6th overall and 4th Novices.

And so for the final race of the 2014 league, a field of 23 mixed boats and 3 Wisemans amongst them. The "Wise Mixed" in Oarsome with Nick (cox), Bryony, Andy, Kevin and Jo came in 10th. The "Wise Medley" in Dirty Gertie with Jim (cox), Marja, Aaran from Towy, Johnny and Gabi came in 18th and the Mixed Vets, "Wiser Mixed" in Ready Oar Knot with Caroline (cox), Nic from Towy, Gareth, Jake and Di came in 16th and 3rd in class.

With all the racing over it was time for the usual food and drink, with Llanngwannog doing themselves proud! Following this was the trophies and then the all important raffle. Although some of the crews had headed home, there were still enough to hold the Tug of War as the final activity of the day. First up was Wisemans Bridge vs Llanion, after a gruelling battle Wisemans Bridge came out the victors. In the next round Wisemans Bridge were to face Aberporth, sadly this time not getting through to the next round. With a mixture of disappointment and relief it was time to head home with our trophies. Big thanks as always go to our hosts and to the towers.

## London Great River Race - 21.6miles - 12th September 2014



It was that time of year again. Wiseman`s Bridge annual pilgrimage up the M4, across the Severn Bridge in convoy towing the fleet to yet another GRR. A large greasy breakfast is always top priority on this away trip with the compulsory stop at Chippenham trucker's café which, if you haven't tried, is a must next time you're on the M4 Junction 17. `Tell` them Johnny D from Wiseman's sent you!

Our destination again this year was Ham House, Richmond, London. This was the finish line for the 6th year in a row that the club has attended this amazing festival of rowing craft from all around Europe. The normal chaos of unloading and launching the boats then commenced with all clubs helping each other with the task at hand, but with many GRR veterans present the boats were soon afloat and ready for towing down river to the start line at Millwall, London Docklands.

This year, 3 Celtics were filled and the logistics and organising carried out by Nikki "Brian" Nelson. Fancy dress is a key ingredient to a successful GRR , and in previous years Wiseman's have sported "Where's Wally" costumes , Retro "Flashdance" leg warmers and sweat bands and Cavemen & Cavewomen (with clubs). This year's theme was in honour of David Hasslehoff's 90's classic TV series "Baywatch", so with "Hoff's Heroes", "Hoff's Harem" and "Hoff's Hotties" assembled, Wiseman's were ready to take on the Thames and all of London's bridges.

With several GRR virgins amongst the crews, the pre-race atmosphere with different boats and rowers in fancy dress gave the start line a real carnival buzz. Once on the water, coxes need eyes in the backs of their heads to avoid one of the 330 rowing craft, all attempting to keep out of the way and wait for their number to be called forward to the start cannon. The 3 Wiseman's crews had managed to find a gap alongside each other ready for the start of the Celtic longboat category and all had an excellent start with the senior ladies crew Hoff's Hotties in "Oarsome no.32" taking the lead, closely followed by the men's crew Hoff's Heroes in "ROK no.5" with the vet ladies crew Hoff's Harem in "Gertie no.30" a whisker behind.

Each boat and crew had an amazing race and did themselves and the club proud, with every Wiseman's boat coming in under the 3hour mark. Out of a field of 38 Celtics the men slugged it out to an incredible 8th place (45th from 330) in 2hrs 26min 37sec. Our senior ladies cruised in at 11th place (56th

from 330) in 2hrs 32min 32sec, and in doing so set a new ladies record and won their category. And our lovely vet ladies and Alan set a new club vet record with a 29th place finish out of 38 Celtics (159th from 330) in 2hrs 50min 04sec.

With tears, blisters and stories to share from every crew, true Wiseman's style their stories were all told with a cold beer in the beer tent afterwards. Special mentions to Captain Mark for coxing the ladies to victory and making them cry, Natalie for passaging the entire race to allow the ladies the chance to bring the trophy home, Sian for her megaphone support from the riverbank, Gary and Bryony for towing and Nikki for arranging everything else.

And finally, Llanion Warriors Rowing Club produced not only a fantastic race coming 2nd mixed crew home, but also winning the fancy dress competition for their "Cheerleaders" with our "Lifeguards" getting 2nd place, even after we saved one of their lives ?

The Crews:

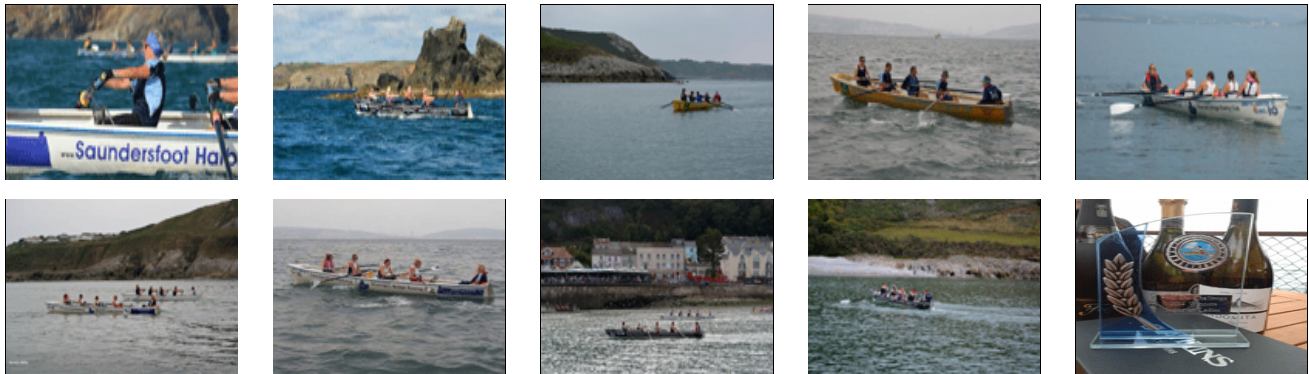
**Men Senior – Hoff's Heroes – Ready Oar Knot No.5:** Simon, Kevin, Andrew, Jake, Jim, Gary – 2hrs 26min 37sec

**Ladies Senior – Hoff's Hotties – Oarsome No.32 Cox:** Mark, Nikki, Elen, Sarah, Bryony, Natalie - Passenger - 2hrs 32min 32sec – 1st ladies crew

**Ladies Vet (and Alan) – Hoff's Harem – Dirty Gertie No.30:** Alan, Caroline, Diane, Libby, Angela, JoJo – 2hrs 50min 04sec

Big thank you to everyone who took part and made this yet another Great Wiseman's River Race.

## Solva League Race – Sunday 7th September 2014



The league season is officially over, and it has been a fantastic year for Wisemans Bridge with the highest turnout we have ever had and some of our Before the 2014 season started, Mr Cross of Wiseman's Bridge Rowing Club and Mr Langston of Llanion Warriors Rowing Club placed a bet with each other that their respective club would finish higher in the league than the others, and with the loser having to wear a Mankini into the sea on Saundersfoot New Year's Day Swim!!

So, everything was going to plan for Mr Cross, until throughout August a large contingent of the Wiseman's rowers were not available, even though Captain Bryony kept the league points ticking along with any combinations she could muster this was not enough, and with only 2 league races to go Llanion Warriors had pulled away from our Wisey team.

Mr Cross had now returned from a trip around Europe to find himself looking at almost certain defeat! Until he had the ingenious idea to mobilised "Operation Mankini". The idea was simple..... He contacted every Wiseman's rower and begged and bribed them to attend the Solva League Race and his theory was to inundate every race to gather as many points as possible.... 209 points to be exact !! Wiseman's had pulled together and saved Mr Cross bacon and fielded 12 crews across the 3 categories and turned out some half decent results considering a lot of the crews had rowed the 9mile "Towy Boathouse Challenge" the day before, and a lot of race virgins putting in a big day at the office, so with big smiles all around, it looked like everyone enjoyed their day at the races!

### Ladies Results

Ladies: "Wise Birds" Oarsome, Mark (cox), Nikki, Sparker, Elen, Bryony 2nd  
Ladies Vets: "Wise Old Birds" ROK, Nick (cox), Marja, Sian, Caroline, Gabi 12th  
Ladies: "Wise Gals" Gertie, Simon (cox), Di, Ange, Snowy, Nat 15th

### Men's Results

Men: "Wise Guys" Oarsome, Ange (cox), Simon, Dan, Tom, Kevin 11th  
Men: "Wise Men" Gertie, Gabi (cox), Neil, Andy, Jake, Johnny 12th  
Men: "Wise Cracks" Blisters II, Nick (cox), Jim, Lloyd, James, Gary 15th  
Men SV: "Wise Old Guys" ROK, Caroline (cox), Mark, Phil, Gareth, Martin 17th

### Mixed Results

Mixed: "Wise Mixed" Oarsome, Nick (cox), Nikki, Dan, Simon, Bryony 13th  
Mixed: "Wise Medley" ROK, Andy (cox), Elen, Sparker, Tom, Lloyd 10th  
Mixed: "Wise Muddles" Taran Tywi, Philly T (cox), Gabi, Martin Munro (Tenby), Nigel, Sarah Roberts (Caernarfon) 15th  
Mixed V: "Wiser Mixed" Summer Spectacular, Jim (cox), Neil, Peter J, Marja, Di 19th  
Mixed SV: "Wise Old Mix" Gertie, Johnny (cox), Sian, Mark, Martin, Ange 22nd

After the epic logistical nightmare that was Solva, with over 30 Wiseman "hamsters" to organise and the towing duties increased due to Tenby lending Wiseman's their boats for "Operation Mankini", and with only Llangrannog League race to go, have Wiseman's done enough to keep ahead of Llanion ?

Yet again, Tow Guys and Girls none of this could be done without you, and Bryony your spreadsheets for organising the crews are legendary!!!  
Onward to Llangrannog !!!!!

## Aberdyfi League Race - Sunday 31st of August 2014



After a fantastic night for the Summer Ball there were a few bleary eyes early on Sunday morning to start the long journey up to Aberdyfi for the last of the joint league races. Thanks to Towy we were borrowing boats for the day so no towing way required, however a stop at McDonalds was!

After a quick check of the course map it was clear this was not a day for novice coxes, with about 6 buoy turns to negotiate. It was ladies up first and our usual "Wise Birds" were up, with Nikki, Sparker, Elen and Bryony in Taran Tywi and a very eager Ian from Aberyswyth in the coxes seat. First leg was up against the wind and there were a few boats to overtake to get up to the front of the pack. With some fantastic coxing we were level with Aberporth heading to the first buoy turn. Constant reminders to "relax" worked really well and the Wise Birds glided into the lead. By the second buoy turn the Wise Birds lead had extended and a bit of surf rowing meant the lead was just getting bigger. Heading towards the start the whole boat felt relaxed and were preparing for the next leg against the wind when the orange flag went up and the lead boat told us to head straight to the finish with only 150m to go the power went on but there was no way the ladies boat was going to get caught. With the tide still running fast and a slight loss of concentration once over the line the boat also crashed into one of the moored boats, luckily there was no damage to the borrowed boat or oar and no serious damage to Elen who was taken off her seat. The final result was 1st ladies out of 19 boats.

Mens race up next and with the help of Charlie from Llangrannog we were able to put a full men's boat out, the "Wise Guys" with Jim in stroke, Kevin, Jake and Charlie in Bow and Nikki coxing. The men's race took advantage of high tide and headed out over the sandbar, another change to the course, but far less buoy turns. The final result for the boys was 19th out of 24 boats, 12th in class.

After our usual break during the Novice/Junior race it was time for the Mixed race. After a half hearted attempt to borrow a second boat for the mixed it was decided to put just one boat out. Despite this it was the largest field in a mixed race this season with 33 boats and as the mixed race was also shortened to match the ladies course there would only be 1 buoy turn. Our "Wise Mixed" boat went out in Enaid y Don with Elen, Jake, Kevin and Nat and Bryony coxing. With such a short race, as expected everyone hit the buoy at the same time, there was a lot of oar clattering. Our boat took a wide line around the buoy and took advantage of the surf to gain several places on the way in. It was a tough leg to the finish with some choppy water and against a strong tide. The final result was 17th out of 33 boats and 12th in class.

Aberdyfi put on a fantastic spread and we would like thank them, Towy for the use of their boats and the drivers for their efforts getting us to the race following a late night and a very early morning.

## The Mermaid's Race - Cardigan - Saturday 23rd August



With the bank holiday weekend it was the turn of the Cardigan Mermaid's Race. An annual event which should be an 11 mile handicapped row down the river, around Cardigan Island and back, finishing at the Quay and tied in with the Quay's Festival. In previous years due to sea conditions the race has been shortened with boats turning around just after the sand bar past Poppit Sands. Sadly this year was no exception. In an attempt to extend the distance of the race and to make the handicapping system fairer the finish was extended by going past the Quay up river about ½ a mile and then back to the Quay. This made it more interesting for the spectators and there were some great photos of the boats as they squeezed under the bridge.

Before the race commenced, there was demonstration row of the "Holgar" and a couple of our eager rowers headed down for a go. The Holgar was built to demonstrate how Preseli Bluestones were taken from Pembrokeshire over the Bristol Channel to Stonehenge and our very own Sparker and Mark were part of the crew that carried out the challenge.

With a £250 prize for the first boat over the line, the handicapping system was crucial. Ladies were off first in 10 second intervals and in reverse league position order this was followed by a 5 minute gap, then the mixed teams, another 5 minute gap and then the Mens. All the boats were timed and there was a trophy for the fastest boat in each category.

First boat across the line was the Aberporth Ladies followed by our very own Wise Birds in second place, beating the mixed and men teams home.

The final results were:

"Wise Birds" in Oarsome, Cleo (cox), Nikki, Sparker, Bryony and Jo. 2nd Overall, 2nd Ladies in 1hr 25min 47 sec

"Wise Guys" in Ready Oar Knot, Chris (cox), Phil, Tom, Andy and Peter J. 11th Overall, 5th Mens in 1hr 20min 12 sec

"Wise Muddles" in Dirty Gertie, Ange (cox), Caroline, Jim, Alan and Gabi. 16th Overall, 5th mixed in 1hr 29min 8 sec

2 of our rowers were also "borrowed" by Llanion

Llanion Ladies with Di came in 10th Overall, 4th Ladies in 1hr 32 min 42 sec

Llanion Men with Kevin came in 9th Overall, 4th Mens in 1hr 19min 25 sec

With all the racing done and the boats loaded it was over to the Quay's Festival for some food, a free pint and even some fireworks. Another fantastic event and a great turnout, thanks go to the organisers and fingers crossed next year we will make it round the island!

## Llangwm League Race - Sunday 17th of August 2014



With the hectic summer of rowing in full swing it was time for our 8th League race of the season. Always a popular venue, it was the turn of Llangwm Rowing club and the infamous Black Tar. It was decided, due to the early start and the number of boats, to tow to Llangwm instead of our usual row up from Llanion, but at least all our rowers were fully rested and fresh for the racing.

In a change to previous years the course direction had changed to go up river from Black Tar. With a reasonably strong wind it was going to be a tough course but much more visible to the supporters.

Mens race was on first and Nikki was back in charge of the Super Vets "Wise Old Guys" with Jim, Andy, Jake and Alan. A great view for the spectators as the boats went past the Black Tar slip not once, not twice but 3 times! A great start for our men's team in some tough conditions. The final position was 16th out of 18 and 6th in class with a time of 47:21, a long race for the boys!

Ladies were up next and we were fielding our usual "Wise Birds" of Nikki, Sparker, Elen and Bryony were in Oarsome with Banana Man Nick in the coxes spot. A good position on the start line and the 3 usual suspects quickly made our way to the front with Aberporth leading the way followed by New Quay and then us. All hopes of the final leg being easy were dashed by the cross wind but despite this the Wise Birds cruised into second place 30 seconds ahead of New Quay and over 2 minutes ahead of the rest of the pack. A final time of 36:32 for the Wise Birds and 2nd place out of 19. Our Ladies Super Vets "Gertie's Girls" were in Dirty Gertie with Sian, Judy, Libby, Diane and Alan in cox. The Girls came in 17th overall and 3rd Ladies Super Vets in a time of 43:14.

Time for the Novice race and time to break in a couple of new recruits with Caroline coxing our "Wiselets" in Oarsome and Gabi, Nigel, Gary and Nat making up the team. The guys came in 10th overall out of 14 and 5th novice crew in a time of 15:35.

Final race and time for the mixed crews, after much borrowing we were able to put together 3 mixed teams. "Wise Mixed" in Oarsome was made up of Nikki, Sparker, Andy and Bryony with Nick coxing, coming in 13th out of 26 in a time of 38:00 and only 6 seconds behind the leading Llanion boat (complete with Towy stroke) proving once again the girls are carrying the club this season. "Wise Medley" in Ready Oar Knot with Elen, Caroline and 2 Towy stand ins (who had just completed the junior race) with Jim in cox came in 20th in a time of 39:16. Our Mixed Super Vets team "Wise Old Mix" with Gabi coxing and Libby, Jake, Alan and Judy making up the rowers came in 26th in a time of 42:58.

After a long day of racing and trudging through the Tar it was time for a bit of food (until they ran out) and the all important raffle, with Llanion and Wisemans Bridge buying most of the tickets between them the raffle rather quickly deteriorated into a pantomime complete with boos for one particular South African who took on the responsibility of collecting the Llanion prizes and although Llanion may have won more prizes the Bridge definitely made the most noise!

## Llanion League Race - Sunday 10th of August 2014





Llanion's first ever league race was also tied into Pembroke Docks bicentennial celebrations and so before the league race on the Sunday there was a day of water activities on the Saturday including a Celtic Longboat demonstration race. Always happy to help our friends and rivals we took along a boat on the Saturday and with Sarah coxing and Nikki, Andy, Richard and Jo rowing against 2 Llanion mixed teams, our boat came in a respectable 2nd despite the tactics of the lead Llanion boat in the so called "friendly" race.

Following the demonstration was a torrential downpour and a nervous wait as the Llanion organisers disappeared to make a decision on the weather. With the remnants of Bertha threatening to spoil the party there were frequent checks being made. The forecasts were looking kind and the safety crew were happy to go ahead so the race was on!

Sunday morning and the forecast hadn't changed so the race was still on, but the wind was strong and it was clear it was going to be a tough days racing. A downpour when sorting the boats didn't last long and gave way to a clear and occasionally sunny day. The PA system was used to provide clear instructions and the music gave the whole event a party feel.

A slightly different race order with Men up first and it was clear from the start there was a huge advantage getting the inside line at the start. In addition to this the entire men's fleet managed to start ahead of the line which meant a 1 minute penalty to all teams. This time the Wise Guys in Ready Oar Knot were Dan, Richard, Andy and Kevin with Nikki providing the coxing. The guys had a great start and even managed to beat both the home teams back in despite the tough conditions. Final position was 12 of 16 in a time of 43.51 (44.51 with the penalty).

Next was the ladies race and 2 boats out this time, the Wise Birds were in Ready Oar Knot with Nikki, Sparker, Elen and Bryony with Nick coxing his first ladies race, and Gertie's Girls ladies super vets were in Dirty Gertie with Sian, Libby, Angela and Jo with Kevin coxing his first ever race! The Wise Birds were 3rd of 19 in a time of 35.58 and Gertie's Girls were 17th in a time of 43.20. There was controversy in this race with a few boats missing buoy turns and starting over the line, the result of which was the 2nd place Aberporth Ladies were penalised and dropped a place to 3rd which meant the Wise Birds final result was 2nd.

All hopes of the wind dying down faded very quickly and there was chaos at the start of the mixed race with no line to hold to and a strong tidal push most boats were rowing just to stay on the start line. When the race finally got going it was clear this was not going to be easy. After coming round the first corner the wind hit as well and the boats were all pulling against the tide and the wind. At points several of the boats were not moving at all. Due to these conditions the race was heavily shortened and with the buoy turn coming only just past the bridge once the boats were turned towards home they were absolutely flying. Wise Mixed in Ready Oar Knot with Elen, Sparker, Andy, Di and Nick as cox came in an impressive 6th out of 23 with a time of 29.19 but were bumped down 2 places to 8th after starting the wrong side of the start boat and receiving a 1 minute penalty. Wise Medley in Dirty Gertie with Bryony, Richard, Kevin, Natalie and Angela as cox came in 20th in a time of 34.31. A special mention goes out to Richard who following his supreme effort in the boat ended up in an ambulance with a torn bicep. Our first casualty of the season we wish him a very speedy recovery!

All the racing (finally) over it was time for some excellent food and some epic cake consumption. The raffle as well was superb with more prizes than I have ever seen at a race raffle. Sadly we did not get to take one of the beautiful trophies home but despite that it really was an excellent day.

A massive thank you goes to Llanion for a very well organised day in some very tough conditions.

## PYC League Race - Sunday 3rd Aug 2014

Photos to follow

With PYC being a local race and men's team captain being an Ex-Milford boy, the captains were keen to field a good combination of crews, and of course enjoy the excellent food and raffle PYC always dish up after races!

These were - Men :

- Simo / Andy / Dan / Jim / Nikki (cox) (Wiseguys "Oarsome") 17th overall out of 18 boats, 11th in class

Ladies :

- Nikki / Sparker / Elen / Bryony / Simo (cox) (Wisebirds "Oarsome") 1st overall out of 20 boats
- Libby / Angela / Jo / Sian / Jim (cox) (Wise Old Birds S.V "Gertie" ) 15th overall 20 in class

Mixed :

- Gog / Dan / Sparker / Simo / Gabi (cox) (WiseMixed "Oarsome" ) 7th overall out of 23 boats,
- Nikki / Kevin / Andy / Bryony / Nick (cox) (WiseMedley "ROK" ) 14th overall out of 23 boats
- Libby / Richard / Gareth (Solva) / Sian / Jim (cox) (WiseOldMix S.V "Gertie") 22nd overall

Novice :

- Kevin / Jack Southgate (tow) / Nat W / Gabi / Nick (cox) (Wiselets "Oarsome") 2nd Overall 1st Mixed

With tough condition once around the 1st buoy turn, the wind against tide made rowing extremely challenging. For the first race this season our "Wisebirds" broke away from the pack and cruised over the finish line in 1st place a good 10 boat lengths ahead of their rivals! The boys were thankful "Tenby Sharks" made their first race appearance of the season as they pushed them all the way around, but thankfully our Wiseguys had enough experience to hold them off and not finish last!!

But, the highlight being Wiseman`s Novice mixed crew winning the Mixed trophy again this season (which was lucky, as we forgot to return it) Towers and Captains keep it going... Were half ways through the season (I think) !!!

## Dinas Head Challenge Race 8 miles - Saturday 26th July 2014



No Palm Trees this year !!

For those unfamiliar with this race, it starts from "Goodwick Harbour", sweeps around Dinas Head and finishes outside "Newport Sailing Club" in a narrow fast flowing channel! This race has always been well attended, and this year was no different, with 30 boats lined up along the sandy Goodwick beach. The race is a staggered, timed start with Juniors, Ladies then Mixed crews first followed then by Men crews, thus making judging your overall position very difficult until the results are announced at the end! But, far more civilised than the chaos of league race starts!

This weekend was extra special for Wiseman`s Bridge Rowing Club as it was "Jim Ball", one of our most senior rowers 64th birthday, and so the boys all wore special birthday hats during the row to celebrate ?..

With 2 "Wisebird" crews also competing our boys knew they would have to work hard to beat the both oarsome ladies crews of Wiseman`s!

"WiseGuys" Men - Neil Stroke - Simo - Richie - Jim - Dan (Hungover Cox) (8th overall 1hr 06sec) "R.O.K"

"WiseBirds" Ladies - Nikki Stroke - Gog - Sparker - Bry - JD Cox (10th Overall 1st ladies 1hr 1 min 30 sec) "Oarsome" New ladies record

"Gertie`s Girls" Ladies Vet - Marja Stroke - Caroline - Angela - Gabi - Nat Cox 1st time ( 1st Ladies Vet new record 1hr 7 min)

The conditions were perfect and the results showed this as the records tumbled, with every category having a new fastest time with "Solva Men" smashing the "mystically" sub 1 hour marker.

Unfortunately our "Wiseguys" Missed joining the sub hour, roll of honour by only 6 seconds !

Big Thanks to JD for carrying out the land logistics and for coxing the ladies to victory, Dan for coxing the "Wiseguys" even though he still has no recollection of even being in the boat after a very heavy night in the Sands the night before, and our super 16 year old Natalie for Coxing her first race.

As always, as the sun set and the live music started, the Wiseman`s did what they do best... Party till 3am and sleep in the back of their vans!!!

Big thanks to Pete Fletcher of Newport Sailing Club and everyone else who made this another brilliant rowing weekend..

## Aberystwyth League Race - Sunday 20th of July 2014



With a few weeks break from the league races the hardcore amongst our Wisey crews made the long journey to Aberystwyth. Having been up to the Puffin race only 2 weeks before the road was starting to become very familiar and thanks to the generosity of Towy we only needed to tow one boat up.

As per the usual form there were bacon rolls, tea and cake before the race and with some mad scrambling and negotiation we were able to borrow a rower from Porthmadog and put out a 2nd ladies team.

Ladies first up and with a shortened course due to the heat it was a fast paced battle. The Wise Birds were in Dirty Gertie with Neil coxing and Marja in Stroke followed by Sparker, Elen and Bryony, coming in 3rd out of 25 boats in a time of 29:23 just behind our usual rivals of Aberporth and Newquay. Our second ladies boat Wise Gals in Towy's boat Eineid y Ton with Jim coxing and Libby in stroke followed by Caroline, Gabi and the very kindly lent Porthmadog novice came in 18th with a time of 32:40.

Men's was race next and the Wiser Men vets team in Dirty Gertie with Elen in cox, Neil in stroke and Richard, Jake and Jim came in 21st out of 27 and 4th in class with a time of 34:53.

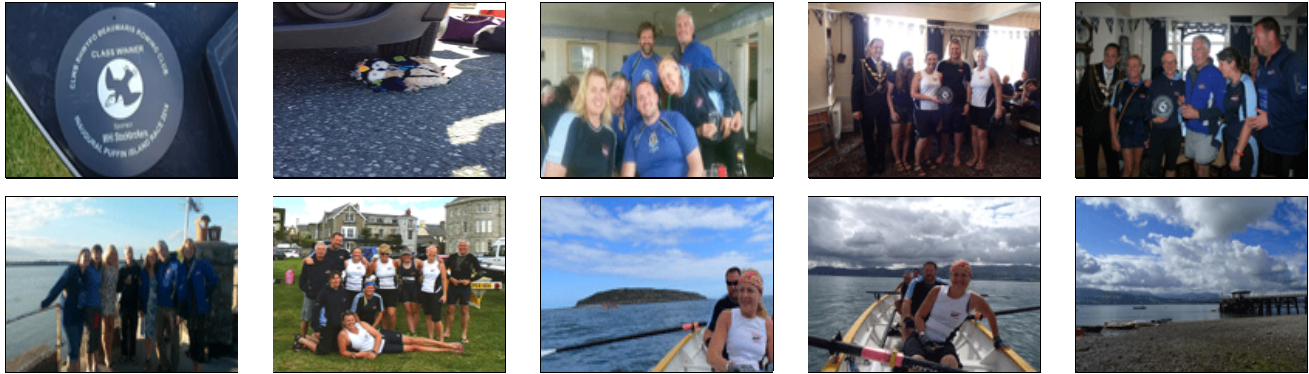
For the mixed race due to general fatigue it was decided to field just the one mixed team so our mixed vets team Wiser Mixed with Caroline coxing,

Marja in stroke and Neil, Richard and Libby had a fantastic battle with Llanion on the finish line, gliding past them into 21st place out of 32 boats in a time of 31:49, 7th in class and also beating the second Llanion team.

Racing all complete it was time for the food and a well deserved pint, followed by the long drive home.

A big thank you goes to Aberystwyth for hosting the event, Towy for lending us a boat and Porthmadog for lending us a rower.

## Puffin Island Race - Beaumaris - 5th July



Plans to attend the newly formed Beaumaris Rowing Club's inaugural Puffin Island Race began in April. After a couple of successful previous visits to Caernarfon for the Castle to Castle race it wasn't hard to fill 2 boats and with Llanion also planning on taking 2 boats up the hotels were booked and the road trip was planned. Sadly our chief organiser (Hannibal) was lost to unenviable task of co-ordinating the Wisemans Bridge League Race a willing stand in was found and Big Richard did a great job of picking up the pieces and finding out what it truly meant to "herd cats"

A few last minute drop outs meant that Llanion were down to 1 boat and Wisemans were forced to call on the coxing duo of Caroline and Jim to fill the gaps.

The road trip began on Friday evening with Bryony, Clacky and Phil towing up. Making really good time we all made it to Caernarfon just in time to get dinner in the pub (much to everyone's relief). Boats safely tucked up in the bus park there was just time for a quiet couple of drinks and an early night.

Saturday morning began bright and early meeting at 8am (7am for those wanting breakfast) and towing the boats up to the race venue at Beaumaris. Bacon rolls and tea formed part of the usual pre-race rituals.

Our 2 teams were ready:

Ladies were Nikki (Stroke), Sarah, Elen and Bryony (Bow) with Jim in as cox.

Mixed Vets were Marja (Stroke) Richard, Neil and Libby (Bow) with Caroline in as cox.

Conditions were good and although there were only a handful of puffins on the Island, they were seen!

With a Cannon for the first 3 boats home our ladies boat had their sight firmly set on a top 3 finish and were chasing down the Llanion mixed crew in 2nd until the very end.

Final results were

1st – Porthmadog Senior Supervets (1:36:58)

2nd – Llanion Mixed (1:38:25) – 1st Mixed

3rd – Wisemans Bridge Ladies (1:38:46) – 1st Ladies

7th – Wisemans Bridge Mixed Vets (1:43:09) – 1st Mixed Vets

A special mention has to go to the Porthmadog ladies crew who completed the entire race rudderless and came in an impressive 5th with a time of 1:41:24.

The race completed by lunchtime gave plenty of time for some great food and a few beverages before heading back to Caernarfon for more food and more beverages. Decision was also made to miss the Ynys Mon race in favour of a lie in, breakfast and an early arrival back in Pembrokeshire for some very tired towers and rowers. However the lie in also afforded a disappointing surprise when getting back to the cars, a trio of parking tickets courtesy of the council. A minor disappointment after a fantastic weekend of rowing and 2 trophies to show for it!

A big thank you goes out to Beaumaris Rowing Club for such a great event, certainly one we will be looking forward to repeating next year!

For more details see the Beaumaris race report at <http://www.beaumarisrowingclub.org.uk/puufinracereport.html>

## WISEMAN'S BRIDGE EDDYSTONE CHALLENGE 28th-29th of June 2014



The Eddystone challenge is a gruelling rowing challenge held in Plymouth during the weekend of the 28-29 June. The Eddystone Challenge is an open ocean rowing challenge from Plymouth, to the Eddystone Lighthouse and back, a distance of almost 30 miles around some of the most treacherous waters on the south coast.

Two teams from Pembrokeshire took part; these were crews and boats from Wisemans Bridge and Llanion Warriors rowing clubs.

Wiseman`s Bridge approached "Eddystone Consulting Ltd" to support us during this challenge as they had the obvious name connection. Some of the crew have worked with these risk consultants at the Pembrokeshire energy sites and realised that this partnership is even more appropriate given that "Eddystone Consulting Ltd" deal with special risk, emergency and crisis preparedness. " Eddystone Consulting Ltd" sponsored the team with new race equipment including race suits, life jackets and safety equipment, which, will be available for all club members to use

So the #WiseEddiCrew were named and retweeted!

With only 2 months of preparation we arrived in sunny Plymouth, raring to go with our crew and a band of supporter`s including the Managing Director of "Eddystone Consulting Ltd". Unfortunately being so far from Eddystone lighthouse meant that we were unaware that weather conditions in the Channel were ramping up somewhat. The organisers reacted to the developing weather situation in the main shipping channel (wind reaching force 6 and a 10ft swell) and cancelled the challenge 30minutes from the start time! This proved a huge disappointment for everyone involved. So an alternative reduced 16mile race inside the protection of the breakwater was quickly put in motion, showing the organising committee of "Mayflower Offshore Rowing Club" held safety at the foremost and should be congratulated in making the difficult decision to abort the main event.

After a great start the Wiseman`s Crew held their position amongst the leading boats of the 50 + strong flotilla and even inside the breakwater the waves were breaking over the bow filling the boat up with water quicker than it could be pumped out! Wisemans crossed the line in 2hrs 21minutes 45seconds (A Lot less than the expected 7hrs of the original challenge) and only 3min 6 sec behind the winning men`s team from Mumbles, Swansea. This gave Wiseman`s a 4th place in the Celtic longboat category and 1st mixed crew in class.

## Aberporth League Race - Sunday 22nd of June 2014



After the epic weekend of WBRC first league race, the Wisey crew were on the road again

These were - Men :

- Neil / Richard / Jake / Jim / Bryony (cox) (Wiserguys "Vets") 16th overall out of 19 boats, 2nd in class

Ladies :

- Nikki / Bryony/ Elen/ Marja/ Neil (cox) (Wisebirds) 2nd overall out of 18 boats
- Nic (Towy) / Angela / Jo / Nat / Jim (cox) (Wisegals ) 18th overall 15th in class

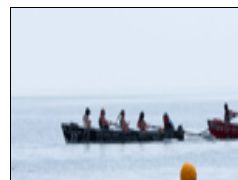
Mixed :

- Bryony/ Dan / Andy / Jo/ Nic (Towy) (cox)(WiseMixed) 18th overall out of 23 boats, 12th in class
- Nikki / Neil / Jake/ Marja / Jim (cox) (WiserMixed) (Vets) 14th overall 4th in class

Again the summer heat played its part during the races, with every team trying to keep hydrated, and with the "Wisebirds" keeping the pressure on the "Tilly Ladies" at the top of the table making everthing to row for over the next few race meetings! And Finally a special mention to Nat for completing her first senior race after only a handful of sessions and one outing in a novice race!

Again thanks to our towers and captains for organising everyone and keeping Wiseman`s on the road!

## Wiseman`s Bridge League Race - Sunday 15th of June 2014





It was finally upon us. Wiseman`s first WSRA league race....

The glorious weather of the past few weeks was still with us and from the looks of attendance so were most of the WSRA clubs in Wales!

The weekend started with a social row to Tenby leaving Wiseman`s Bridge at 1800hrs on the Saturday, with a flotilla of 11 Celtics, 56 rowers and 2 safety craft slowly made the 3 miles row to Tenby harbour. The crews were all encouraged to mix into other boats so everybody got to meet some different rowers from other clubs who you wouldn't normally get the chance to talk / row with. The clubs present being Aberporth, Wiseman`s, Llanion, Borth, Porthmadog, Barry, Towy and a couple from Aberystwyth. With a cheeky beer in Tenby Sailing Club we then headed back for sausage and chips at Wiseman`s, leaving the boats on Coppet Hall beach ready for the next morning's league race.

At 7am the operation of setting up began. Everyone having a duty allocated by the event master Hannibal, things were falling into place, and everything seemed to be going to plan until we discovered we had no electric! The tea and coffee situation was looking very grim indeed much to our captain's distress, but the bacon rolls smelt amazing! The bay was looking like somewhere in the Mediterranean, with the glassy blue sea and the golden sands showing as the tide retreated. To maximise the beach and to eliminate the issue of getting a true start line, for the first time a league race would be a beach start! This meant cox must have one foot on the floor prior to starting! But even this required policing as some crews trying to steal every yard on the start! There must have been some very long legged coxes in some crews.

With so many of our core crew tied up with marshalling, cooking, safety boats, registration paperwork and general logistics it was amazing our captains managed to assemble 11 crews throughout the course of the day.

These were - Men :

- Simon / Dan / Richie / Jake / Gog Cox (Wiseguys) 14th overall out of 21 boats
- Jim / Alan / Nick / Gareth\* / Bryony Cox ( S.V - Wise Old Guys) 20th overall 6th in class

Again the Wiseguys, in yet another new combination gave it their all, but still found themselves lurking at the rear of the pack along with the Wise Old Guys! Special mention to Gareth\* for his first league race and for driving all the way down from Birmingham on the morning just to take part!

Ladies :

- Tash / Gog / Sparker / Bryony / Simon Cox (Wisebirds) 2nd overall out of 22 boats
- Marja / Brian / Jo / Sian / Jim Cox (Vets - Wise Old Birds) 10th overall 2nd in class
- Caroline / Judy / Libby / Angela / Alan Cox ( SV – Gerties Girls) 18th overall 2nd in class

With our Wisebirds doing the club proud again with a breath taking sprint finish with new stroke Tash Dunton in the hot seat, pulling like men they came from 4th with 3 minutes to go, to cross the line in 2nd place . With all the Wise Ladies getting 2nd place finishes in all age categories it shows the WBRC ladies are certainly wearing the trousers in WBRC this season...

Novices :

3 novice crews took to the water representing WBRC in a race with 7 boats looking for victory. A men's crew "Tenby's Wisemen" (2nd overall) from the newly resurrected Tenby Rowing Club had their first taste of racing, along with our Chairman " Phil Griffiths" super boy's crew "Griffs Boys" (1st Overall) smashing the field in style and our mixed crew "Wiselets" (6th overall) pushing the other boats all the way. Well done to all our novice crews you really did WBRC proud..

Mixed :

- Bryony / Dan / Simon / Snowy / Caroline Cox (WiseMixed) 20th overall out of 28 boats
- Gog / Brent / James (Tenby) / Nic (Barry) / Alan Cox (Wise Medley) 14th overall
- Libby / Jake / Richie / Di / Jim Cox (WiserMixed) 21st overall 5th in class

As always the mixed race provided entertainment and chaos in true Wiseman's style! The coxing rivalry between husband and wife members Jim and Caroline so far this season is proving the real talking point within the club. Both very experienced seafarers, Jim is sneaking the results but not without some controversy, and today was no exception! With the beach start and 28 Celtic longboats lined up along the shallows, room was at a premium and unfortunately Jim and Caroline found themselves next to each other. As the flag went up and the surge of boats and oars flew forward looking for clear water the inevitable happened, Jim and Caroline`s crews became entangled with oars inside each other's boats and some choice words being shouted. Caroline managed to get her crew moving again and left Jim in her wake, only with the last buoy turn completed and the sprint home began disaster struck! A "1 in a 1000" chance the rudder pin became entangled in a shallow rope from a fishing buoy, the result was like putting the brakes on and the boat came to abrupt stop! During the seconds it took to un wrap the rope several boats cruised past, but with only minutes to the finish line Caroline still managed to keep her crew ahead of her nearest and dearest rival Jim.

An Amazing day, with everyone loving the bespoke glass trophies made by Saundersfoot Glass studio and sponsored by local businesses, and the fresh burgers and salads had rave reviews from all of the visiting clubs.

None of this could have happened without everyone working together, too many people to mention, but you all know who you are, thank you!!

Well done Wiseman`s, we really do know how to put on a good party! ?

Back on the road again next week up in Aberporth.. See you there

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## Fishguard League Race - Sunday 8th of June 2014



"In less than a weeks' time this will be us", was the whisper as we prepared the boats on the shore of lower town, Fishguard. The Wiseman`s Bridge Crew had yet again arrived first to unload ROK & Oarsome on the shore in readiness for the 2nd league race of 2014 and the conditions were far from perfect, with a strong N/W wind picking up as the morning progressed. The race starts from Goodwick alongside the Breakwater wall, which allows the crews chance to warm up with the 5 minute row to the start line from lower town, and for a change the Men's category started first?!

This season our captains have been trying, with some success to focus on age groups of the rowers available for each race, and in doing so the men were able to field a Senior Men`s crew & Super Vet Crew!

So with "Big Al" entering his first ever league race it was the "Wise Old Guys" against the "Wise Guys" , no other boats mattered, and on paper it should have been a walk in the park for the "Wise Guys"....

- Andy / Dan / Rich / Simon / Bryony Cox (Wiseguys) 17th overall
- Neil / Alan / Nick / Jim / Gog Cox (Wise Old Guys) 18th – 5th in class out of 6

As always our men trailed at the rear of the pack, and by the 2nd buoy they found themselves in 17th and 18th place (out of a field of 19), so the battle was then on to see who could claim bragging rights and be the first Wiseman boat across the line. With one final rally the "Wise Guys" just managing to hold the "Wise Old Guys" off to cross the line, seconds ahead of them, but in doing so our captain and stroke of the day Andy "Splasher" pulled a muscle in his arm and had to retire from the mixed race later in the day, but an excellent race finish between the our boys, even if we were a mile behind the winning boat Solva!!

Wisemans Ladies have really upped their game this season with competitive crews in all age classes. For the Fishguard race a "Wisebirds" senior ladies crew and a Vets crew of "Wise Old Birds" competed in a field of 19 boats:

- Marja – Sparker – Gog – Bryony – Simon Cox (Wisebirds) 2nd overall
- Nikki – Nic Towy – Sian – Jo – Marky Cox (Wise Old Birds Vets) 13th overall ( 3rd in class from 5)

"Wisebirds" having had a good start held their position, keeping with the lead boats and making crucial meters on buoy turns, but Aberporth "Tilly" Ladies just held our "Wisebirds" off and crossed the line seconds ahead of them. After the race the "Tilly" Ladies all congratulated the "Wisebirds" on an epic sprint finish saying how much the ladies have improved over the past seasons. Our "Wise Old Birds" also had a battle on, being mid pack, but with Captain Mark at the helm he "calmly" guided his ladies to a 13th finish beating many younger crews in doing so..

Finally the mixed race in which Wisemans entered 2 crews and a race debut for Big Al at cox.

- Gog – Neil – Sparker – Simon – Alan Cox (Wisemixed) 5th
- Nikki – Dan – Nick – Marja – Jim Cox (Wise Medley) 13th

As the racing finished the wind died off and the ultra-competitive raffle began! Needless to say Wisemans Bridge love a good raffle ? ... Thanks to Fishguard for a cracking day out and to our towers, rowers and followers for making race days possible and so much fun...

So, next week its home advantage..... See you all at Wisemans !!!!!

## Newquay League Race – Sunday 1st of June 2014



With this being the first League race of 2014 and with our Inaugural race in 3 weeks' time, it seemed a good opportunity to learn the ropes from an established "WSRA" club who had fine-tuned their race day over the past few seasons. So, with Neil and Nikki integrated into the Newquay fold, our Captains set about the paperwork to cobble together some crews. As some of the Wisey`s had made camp the previous night on a campsite on the hill,

overlooking the amazing scenery of Newquay harbour, there were some blurry eyes until the compulsory bacon butties, tea and coffee started to bump start our athletes ready for the racing ahead.

With Wise Men being thin on the ground for this, we borrowed 2 Towy boys and formed 2 mens crews

- Jac (Towy) – Aron (Towy) – Richie – Jim – Bryony Cox (Wisemen) 19th
- Johnny D – Andy – Dan – Simon – Caroline Cox (Wiseguys) 14th

With Jac suffering from a mountain biking accident a few days earlier, the "Wisemen" crew had to make a switch, part of the way around with Bryony stroking the men home to a 19th place finish ! And our "Wiseguys" battling Llanions Super Vet crew of Richard Jelly all the way around, only to lose it by a whisker on the line much to Dan`s distress!!! But an amazing finish for everyone involved with Wiseguys having to settle for a 14th place out of a field of 21 boats and Solva taking 1st place again.

Yet again our Ladies showed the Men how it should be done, with both crews pushing the field all the way:

- Nikki – Sparker – Gog – Bryony – Simon Cox (Wisebirds) 4th
- Marja – Libby – Caroline – Jo – Jim Cox (Wise Old Birds Vets) 14th
- Special mention to our Tash and Nic from Towy for rowing with Llanion Ladies 12th

"Wisebirds" had to fight through the large field of boats after a poor start to finish 4th overall, and "Wise Old Birds" cruising across the line in 14th place 3rd in class from a field of 26 boats!! Aberporth "Tilly" Ladies Started the 2014 season where they left off in 2013, again showing why they are the best in Wales with an impressive 1st place finish.

Finally the mixed race in which Wisemans borrowed a boat from Towy and entered 3 crews for the 25 boat race!

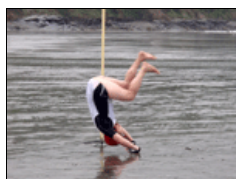
- Johnny D – Andy – Sparker – Jo – Jim Cox (Wisemixed) 13th
- Simon – Neil – Marja – Libby – Caroline Cox (Wisemuddles) 14th
- Dan – Richie – Gog – Bryony – Nic Towy Cox (Wise Medley) 15th

All 3 Wisemans boats pushed each other all the way around producing a brilliant finish with us all crossing within a boat length of each other, that's team work!!

Excellent day out and we had the bonus of bringing the WSRA Yole home with us for a 8 week trail.. Thanks to Newquay for an epic day, brilliant food and to our captains and towers for sorting everything out.

See you all in Fishguard ?

## UK Surf Rowing League "Poppit Sands" Cardigan - Sunday 25th May 2014



It was almost 12 months ago when Wiseman`s Bridge first ventured into the world of surf rowing. In June 2013 on a blistering hot day, the Wiseguy`s and Wisebird`s took on the best surf rowers in the UK on the amazing Whitesands Beach, St Davids and some of us still bear the scars today, but 2014 could not have been more of a contrast!

After all of Wiseman`s fleet taking part in the Return Of The Cleddau on the Saturday, and then most partying until gone midnight, the early trip to "Poppit Sands" in the driving wind & rain did not seem such a good idea.

With enough willing bodies to enter a Men's crew, Ladies crew and a few left over to help out Newport Ladies, the crews were ready for the speedos and inflatable arm bands and take to the water! Thankfully the surf on this day was minimal but competition in the driving wind and rain was fierce! With the rest of the Wisemans camped out in the back of the "Crosses" VW van with a tarpaulin was hung over the tailgate in a "Heath Robinson" manner to provide some extra protection, much to the entertainment of the Aberystwyth crew in their van next to us!

With Neil avoiding rowing by taking up an organising role with UKSRL, for the race the Wiseguys consisted of :

Andy – Dan – Jake – Simon

Not a pretty sight in speedos especially with them pulled up your neither regions! The boys as ever proved to be consistent and came last in all their heats, until they discovered they had actually beaten some crews due to them being disqualified!! Result.. ?

Wisebirds on the other hand showed that they are competitive not only in a Celtic but also in a Surf rowing boat, pulling off an amazing 2nd heat win against some good opposition!

Marja – Libby – Bryony – Gog

And finally Cleo along with here University friends helped Hannah from Newport Boat Club to field a crew and they certainly will not forget their visit to Pembrokeshire for a long time to come!!

Hannah (NBC) – Cleo – Emily – Sam

So after leg 2 of the "UKSRL Summer League Series" Wiseman`s Bridge currently sit 4th in the UK !!! Amazing .... Same again next year??? ?

## Return Of The Cleddau 14 miles – Saturday 24th May 2014



With the Celtic Challenge now just a distant memory and with our Celtic crew already having competed in, and doing very well in the Milford Marathon and PYC Wreck Race, which were also both held on the river Cleddau , this time the full Wiseman`s fleet was mobilised!

21 Wiseguys and Wisebirds assembled in Wiseman`s Bridge bright and early ready to carry out our pre-race warm up of musical trailers and boat flipping, which we seem to have down to a fine art now! Once on the road, our start destination was Haverfordwest , Picton playing fields and amazingly we were one of the first clubs there. So, as we busied ourselves unloading the trailers and sorting the normal issues before any race (Altering Oar lengths, lubing gates, attaching branches to the bow, have we enough bungs and finding cups of tea), our towing guys and gals then had to head to the finish line at Neyland Yacht Club with the empty trailers ready for our safe return, some 14 miles and 1hr 40 something minutes later.

Our 2014 captains this year being seasoned racer Bryony "Tetley" Jones and Wisey new kid on the block Andy "Splasher" Richards had assembled 4 fine crews in 4 different classes.

Gertie – Ladies Super Vet – Bunty / Judy / Libby / Caroline / JoJo

ROK – Ladies Senior – Marja / Nikki / Gog / Sparker / Bryony

Oarsome – Mens Super Vet – Big Rich / Andy / Jim / Banana man / Big Al

Dick (Pemb's Longboat) – Mens Senior – Philly T / Dustbin Dan / Brent the Stag / Simo / Neil

And Johnny D shore side arranging logistics and ensuring cold fosters available at finish line!

The start was a timed affair, with the launch site being a wet, muddy, over grown river bank and with the intermittent showers from the grey overhead clouds looking unforgiving; our SV ladies started the race off at No1 followed by our other ladies crew 30seconds later. One after another, boat after boat took off and negotiated the narrow passage underneath the railway bridge and reed beds and started their advance down river with the outgoing tide, passing landmarks such as Hook, Black Tar (home of the wasps), Lawrenny, Llanion (home of the Warriors) and finally underneath the Cleddau bridge to the finish line.

As always our ladies showed the boys how to do it ! Winning their categories!!!

Well done Wisebirds!

"Gertie" SV Ladies 1hr 52min 26sec – 1st in class

"ROK" Ladies Senior 1hr 42min 40sec – 1st in class

"Oarsome" SV Men 1hr 41min 11sec – fastest Wisey boat – 2nd in class

"Dick" Pembrokeshire Longboat – Mens Senior 1hr 43min 30sec – 1st in class

Big thanks to Neyland Yacht Club for arranging the race and thanks to the donor trees for Gertie's and Dick's bow adornments. Also lessons learnt, never race a Pemb's longboat with a set of oars Neil has just "Tweaked" 30 minutes before the race! Congratulations to Big Rich on his first race and for teaching the "Inside Line" rule to Dan! And finally, never under estimate the Wise Old Guys!! Because as sprint finishes go it doesn't get much better as a photo finish with Oarsome, Gertie and Dick finishing within 15 seconds of each other!

**Wisemans Bridge Celtic Challenge 2014 – WE DID IT!!**

[Click here for the Western telegraph review.](#)



The seed was sown about a year ago

when Rachael and Libby approached Simon Collins, who had been part of the WBRC 2012 CC team to see whether he thought the Celtic challenge was doable in 2014. "I don't see why not he said", and so the adventure began.

The word challenge in the title should have given us a clue as to what was to lie ahead. First of all a crew had to be assembled and fourteen willing volunteers stepped forward.

Then the planning, logistics and fund raising began. Libby put up her hand to take the lead and began a fantastic job but due to tragic circumstances she had to take a step back, so Andy a new member to the club offered to take the lead and the hard work and effort he put in personally drove the whole challenge forward.

At this point we must offer a huge thank you to all our sponsors and land crew support as without whom our challenge would not have been able to progress, without their support and financial input it would have been a non starter. A special thanks to our friends Llanion warriors who made sure our boat arrived safely.

Each member was then tasked with all sorts of jobs and the small matter of getting fit enough to be able to complete the most arduous, endurance rowing race in the world, each and every one of the team contributed magnificently.

The support boats and crew very kindly made themselves available for training and preparation, again a massive debt of gratitude is due to them, they were a huge cog in the machine, professionalism personified.

Thursday 1st may was rapidly approaching and all the hard work to enable us to take part had been done.

We made our way to the ferry for the 02.45 crossing to Rosslare with a mixture of excitement, anticipation and a hint of pure terror. We arrived in Rosslare at 7a.m. and jumped straight onto the bus to Arklow, our starting point. We were looking forward to a leisurely day of rest and sampling the legendary Irish hospitality to enable us to row for the 24 hour race ahead, but it was not to be. We were just sitting down to an Irish breakfast when the organisers informed us that due to the weather window rapidly closing the whole race was being brought forward by 24 hours and was due to start at 15.00 today!

We all laughed, but it wasn't a joke! Again at this point a massive thank you to the race organisers who managed to pull it all forward brilliantly.

Mad scrambling ensued but in true WBRC fashion all the boats and crew were ready for the 15.00 start. It was upon us!! The first crew were made ready and made their way to the start. We really didn't know what lay ahead as not one of the rowers had done anything like this before and half the crew were actually in their first year of rowing, but we had a carefully thought out roster.

The rowing began with really quite decent conditions for the Irish sea and was broken down into hourly segments. Crews changed at sea from rowing boat to mother ship with help from Tony, Richard and Mark by rib, this really was the most dangerous aspect of the race but went like clockwork. The hours ticked by and unfortunately one of our crew became ill quite quickly, but like a true warrior she dragged herself from the sick bed and didn't miss one shift. The black crosses that marked off the roster started mounting up, we were making really good progress.

Then the weather god decided to make it a little tougher for us, the wind got up and the sea became really quite messy, our progress dropped from 5knots to 2.5 knots and it became a real test of stamina and mental fortitude.

Physically we were managing really well and all crew members were keeping each other's moral up, a real team spirit was being forged. The night had been and gone and with daybreak dawning spirits lifted, we even had a brief glimpse of sun. The next moment of joy came when land came into sight, what we didn't realise was that the finish line was still 10 hours away, we had already been rowing for 14 hours!

At this time we were drawing from our reserves but looking around at our crew mates, none of whom had asked for a rest or complained and we were are driven on.

At last Aberystwyth came into view and the completion of the challenge was almost realised and with still about an hour to go we could hear our reception committee, the largest and most vocal of all supporters there. What a boost, club members, family and friends had all made the trip to see us home, some had been on the road since 3am and waited in Aberystwyth all day for us to arrive.

The final crew change had been made. The roster had been followed to the letter, not one shift had been missed!!

Oarsome crossed the line to a tumultuous reception, there wasn't one dry eye on the boat and emotionally, physically and mentally we were spent.

24 hours 17 minutes and 15 seconds was the final time!! Brilliant!! Very rarely do you have chance to experience something like the Celtic Challenge and it takes a very special type of person and club to even contemplate taking it on.

I feel very privileged to have experienced it with an amazing bunch of people, none of whom I would have changed, not even for Steve Redgrave.

Would I do it again? I'm not sure, but I wouldn't have missed it for all the tea in china and I salute WRBC and all its supporters.

We had tremendous support from our club members who helped us prepare and supported our fundraising. We had fantastic sponsorship from Valero, Murco, the Power Station, St Brides Hotel, Shoreline Café, Force 4 Chandlery, Cardliff, Ocean Hair, and many, many local businesses who gave raffle prizes and supported our fundraising.

On Friday May 16th we had a celebratory party at our club home venue – The Wisemans Bridge Inn, Wisemans Bridge where we were treated to a wonderful surprise meal to start our evenings celebrations courtesy of Mr Kemble. We had a slide show of photos of the whole Celtic challenge 2014 – preparation and the row across the Irish Sea which was a fantastic reminder of all we had been through together. We had certificates and awards and laughed and shed a few tears. We were delighted to present the RNLI, Tenby with a cheque for £1,927.34 our Celtic Challenge donation which we know will be well used and give our grateful thanks for all their ongoing support with safety training for the club.

Written for Wisemans Bridge Rowing Club by Nick Ryan.

## Milford Marathon Men's Race. Saturday 12th April 2014.

Team boat-Oarsome ;  
 Starting crew  
 Cox/- Andy,  
 Stroke/- Peter J;  
 Interchangeable 2,3,4,inclusive of "secret weapon"-  
 Dan, Nick ,Jim and "Sparker"

Billed as the longest rowing race in Wales the Milford Marathon, from Dale all the way up the Cleddau, turn left at the top, to Haverfordwest , a distance of twenty two miles, fell perfectly in the calendar as a tasty warm up, just two weeks before the Celtic Challenge.

The event had attracted a good number of Celts and Outriggers. In the Men's race there were another six crews to do battle with, in the nicest possible sense. Finally getting under way after what seemed a lifetime at the start line, there was a good vibe in Oarsome as we made our way through the chop, sensing that there were many more boats to our stern than there were to our bow. Everyone felt good.

Our line through the designated jetty "gaps"able navigated by Andy.Our first planned change came near the hour, just off Neyland.

Cometh the hour cometh a new cox. With PJ swapping out into cox and Andy into stroke, the other crew changes involving Jim into passenger and Nick into bow.

Ever mindful of the crews safety, Andy dutifully informed me to watch out for the Pembroke to Rosslare ferry, which he then helpfully pointed out was the large white and green object that was moving towards us. At around about the same time, an unfortunate incident with another marine marker type object occurred, as a smallish to medium buoy moved closer to where we were momentarily at the time. However, in hindsight, I think I probably made the right choice!!

Buoyed with confidence now we made progress up stream and I felt assured that navigating us through the Cleddau Suspension Bridge would not be problematic.

With Dan and Sparker doing a double shift in mid boat we powered our way up the Cleddau, our line at times made more zig zaggy than we would have truly liked due to the nature of the courses taken by the out riggers. Not far off Llangwm Pool, just at Llanstadwell, if I recall correctly, we came upon a "trio of paddlers" in one such out rigger, who had the misfortune to have overturned, or in boating parley, capsized. Being a gentlemanly lot and wanting to impress our Lady "Guest"Rower, as to our chivalry prowess, we offered to come to the assistance of those less fortunate than ourselves. Our offers of assistance were declined and we shouted our "Goodbyes"loudly over the words of gratitude that we received ,to save the blushes of our Lady Sparker!! Entertainment over and back to business for the last leg home.Sparker into cox, Andy at stroke,PJ two[I think] and Dan swapping out as passenger, with Jim back in bow.

With Sparker's "insider dealer"knowledge coming into play faster waters were found and we made good progress in Oarsome's overall race position, closing down and taking the mixed Llanion crew, as added incentive to power on. Encouraging each other on and through the pain barrier everyone gave their all to help each other out. Deploying some tried and tested classroom techniques we were kept in suspense, coaxed and coxed as to how much nearer the view of Haverfordwest was becoming.

And then finally it DID appear and we crossed the finish line in what turned out to be a very respectable 3 hours,18 minutes and 52 seconds.4th in our category and overall 12th.

So got the T-Shirt[2013]and finally been in the Race!Joio!!

Thanks, as always goes to our towers, supporters and planners, especially so, when the logistics of the event mean that start and finish are 22 miles away, and there was a small! matter of a certain persons wedding to factor in as well. Congratulations Mr Mrs Gilham. Congratulations also to our Ladies Crew in Dirty Gertie for their valiant effort.

Race report -PJ@WBRC.

## PYC Wreck Race - Saturday 29th March 2014



A new rowing season and a new race to start it with - The PYC Wreck Race, with all proceeds going to the British Heart Foundation.

The view over the Cleddau as we crossed over the toll bridge was pretty grey, but spirits were high for this first competitive event of the 2014 season. The boats were towed up in plenty of time to get them settled and ready and then commence pre-race preparations (Bacon Rolls, Sparker's Flapjacks and lots of Tea).

Coxes briefing contained the usual information about the course, the turns, looking out for tankers and getting in before the Ferry was due to depart! Once complete it was straight down to get the race started. A timed event this time with the ladies going off first (after the token Yole) followed by the mixed and finally men's teams. We had 2 entries in this race, an experienced ladies team and a relatively new mixed team.

The Ladies headed off in Dirty Gertie as the 3rd team to start under the very narrow channel under the South Hook LNG Jetty. With Tash coxing us out and Marja in Stroke, followed by Bryony, Sarah and Libby in Bow we had a good start and quickly caught up to the PYC ladies boat ahead of us. The first leg against the tide was steady, a few gentle sweeps rather than turns until we turned to go across the Haven towards when the wind really started picking up. A few mixed and men's boats started catching us up at this point but we pushed through and turned again towards Thorn Island. We passed through the gap and past the sunken barge before the real battle began. Now head long into the wind we realised it was going to be a hard slog back to the finish. We completed our Cox/Stroke swap very smoothly and with Tash now in stroke we went "long and strong" along the toughest part of the course. With some boats going sideways and the feeling of not moving we slowly crept up the Haven towards the last buoy. Going past the last buoy and almost coming back on ourselves meant the wind eased up and we were able to fly home coming 14th out of 19 in a time of 1:44:03 and 1st in the ladies category. A fantastic start to the season!

The mixed team in Oarsome went off as Legs Eleven with Andy coxing and Peter J in stroke for the first "half" of the course, they were backed up by Jake, Jo and Sian in the bow. The crew rowed well together and set up a nice rhythm holding water against the crews that set off behind us. Andy helped pick off the channel markers along the way and the combination of current and wind suggested why they were rather large structures and best to be avoided. Andy's encouragement to the team suggested that the second half of the course would be somewhat more "lenient and forgiving". Little did we know what lay beyond Thorn Island, although the struggle across the Cleddau should have forewarned us as we had to dig in deep to maintain our course as wind and current seemed determined to thwart our efforts! As planned our Cox/Stroke change over took place in the comparative shelter of Thorn Island. Foolishly to save time Peter decided to cox on without the benefit of another layer, Wrong move and lesson learned! The second half of the course could not have been any wetter had it rained as every now and again the waves came swamping in over the side of the boat. "Remember to pump!" was the shout from Andy as water sloshed about our feet. Maintaining a course was truly a challenge as alternatively reds or greens were called upon to "Go hard". I'm not sure that the cry "Squeeze your cheeks and keep on smiling" is in the standard book of coxing, but hopefully it lightened the

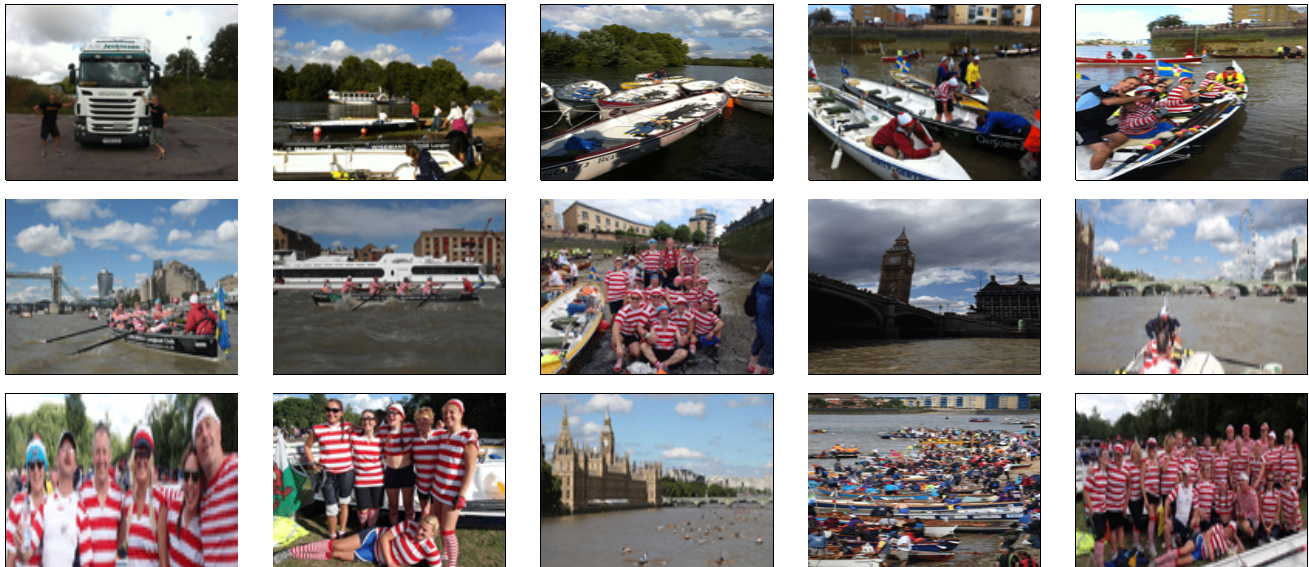
moment and helped to keep a focus as the mantra, "Every stroke a stroke nearer to home" was given as encouragement. At the end of a tough race Oarsome, some weary rowers and a very cold cox came in 16th out of 19 in a time of 1:49:58.

All credit must go to Andy, Jo for whom this was a huge step up from their "novice" rowing back in 2013 and to Jake for his debut appearance and for delaying his house move! Also big thanks to Sian for bringing her experience to the crew and sticking it out in bow. A great race in tough conditions proved to be great training for the Celtic Challenge now only 4 weeks away!

Thanks as always to our towers and organisers and to Peter and Sue Parker, our ever faithful rowing groupies.

Boats on trailers and ready to go home, we were able to enjoy the post row food provided by PYC as well as collecting our trophy and one or two raffle prizes.

## Great River Race Report – September 2013



At about 9am the two towing vehicles hitched up trailers ready for the road trip to London. With only one stop planned we hoped to be unloaded and sinking some carbs by late afternoon. The convoy had a reasonable journey, with just one stop at the 'Pitstop' to buy a full fry up and Scania T shirts. The minibus met up with the boats at the Pitstop, but then made a detour to Richmond Lock to drop off a damaged oar, having the usual satnav adventures and a prolonged rumble-strip experience.

With the boats unloaded with the help of Towy, and visiting our happy camper friends from Llanion, the towing squad headed for base camp hotel where the mini bus and a few stragglers were waiting. Everyone then hit the pub and a cheeky Italian, where red wine flowed quicker than the incoming tide of the Thames. In the morning spirits were high and with everyone dressed as Walleys, we headed for the buses and toilet queues of the start line!!

The first Wisemans boat off was Dirty Dick our newly restored Pembrokeshire Longboat. The crew of Phil G, Sandra, Brian, Dustbin Dan and PJ, with passenger Melina had a clear run up the Thames. Dan, coxing the start of the race seemed to find plenty of space and the crew really came together to get the boat moving well. The race plan was very simple, everyone to row as long as they can as fast as they can, but have a great time. So with only a couple of changeovers along the course the crew steered Dirty Dick to the end of his first race for over a decade finishing 4th in class.

A few minutes later it was time for the Celtics to start. With two well balanced mixed teams and a strong ladies team, hopes were high that we would finish ahead of last years times.

The ladies in Ready Oar Knot had a strong start, Elen's coxing finding gaps for Sian, Sparker, Snowy and Marja, to slip through with Bryony saving her energy as passenger for the first change over. The ladies had a brilliant race with smooth changeovers and managing to keep clear of any serious problems on the way. One of the highlights was passing Aberdyfi womens boat with Snowy using some unusual coxing terms, insinuating our ladies were in fact men and suitably equipped in the trouser department to take on anyone. The team worked hard throughout the race, but still managed a cheery wave to Clacky's dad who was waving and cheering from one of the bridges. The girls had a brilliant race ending 2nd in Class.

Meanwhile, Oarsome with our first mixed crew made a strong start on the outside of the pack clear of other boats. With Bunty's steady pace and Brents great coxing there were no calamities and the boat cruised on steadily picking off other boats. Change outs were smooth, Bunty taking over the coxes seat keeping clear of trouble steering through any gap she saw, keeping the Llanion Warriors in sight sensing that a race was starting to develop between the neighbouring clubs. Timing was excellent, the crew continued up stream with no hindrance. Simo now coxing still found plenty of clear water until near the end where the traffic was like the M25 on a Friday afternoon. Simo takes no prisoners racing, and tried to squeeze through the few gaps available in the narrow upper reaches of the river, but with no one prepared to give any water the team eased off until on his command they pulled hard to squeeze around the outside of a the line of boats blocking the river, taking leaves and branches off the overhanging trees and bushes on the bank, the boat was finally clear for the chase of our Llanion comrades to the line finishing a respectable 3rd in class.

The second of our mixed Celtic boats was Dirty Gertie, crewed by Tash, Nat, Libby, Nick the Banana Man, Neil and Mark. While on paper, perhaps not the strongest of the teams, Neil and Mark had decided to make a cunning plan on Friday night prior to drinking beer. Unfortunately, by the time the planning stage had come around quite a lot of beer, wine and brandy had already been consumed and what had appeared to be a cunning plan on Friday night seemed a bit weak on Saturday morning. Hence plan B, try to get the girls to do all the rowing.

With Neil coxing, Nat stroking her first race, Mark and Tash in the power house, Libby in bow and Nick as passenger, the boat was trickling along nicely towards the start line. The starting gun fired and Gertie immediately rammed into the sterns of Towy and PYC who had become badly entangled ahead of us. A minute or so later we crossed the start line and began to wind up to a good pace, but somehow every gap ahead seemed to close, leading to clattering of oars and frayed tempers. At one stage the boat was caught between two other boats a third boat jammed in our stern giving us a helping push for a minute or two.

At last the boat seemed to be in clear water and Nat and Neil were changing positions. No one quite knows how we rowed up another boats oar, with our bow riding on top of their stern. Nick our passenger in the bow had plenty of time to introduce himself to their cox, apologise for breaking their oar and hoping that the damage to their hull had not affected its water tight integrity.

With Nat now installed coxing her first race, she did a good job of keeping clear of trouble and for the next hour or so Gertie made good progress up the river. Tash and Mark had both rowed for almost two hours and were changed for Libby and Nat (Nick having swapped with Libby earlier to give her a break). With Mark coxing, hopes were high that as a professional seafarer he would show everyone a few tricks of the trade. Unfortunately he had rather overdone the rowing and was knackered and lost the will to live. At times it was more like riding a dodgem car than a boat race as the boat bounced off other boats, buoys and various obstructions in the river.

A mile or so from the end the teams spirits were lifted as Dirty Dick was in sight, although unable to catch the other Wisemans boat, it gave the team something to aim for and they managed a strong finish having a final sprint to overtake a couple more boats just before the line. With Mark and Neil in charge, it was always going to be a case of Lions led by Donkeys, but despite the carnage they had left behind them, the team finished in a very respectable time and were placed 10th in class. We are very sorry for all the damage!

That evening a few of the squad had a civilised evening meal and an early night, but the rest of us got very very drunk, danced and took it in turns to wear Simos lucky pants.

Not a bad end to a very enjoyable season for the Wiseguys and Wisebirds...

We wonder what will 2014 bring???

## PYC (Milford Haven) League Race – Sunday 1st September 2013



With this being the last league race of the season, it attracted a lot of interest from the Wiseguys' s and Wisebirds' s. So much so, we had an impressive 24 rowers and a few new social rowers who wanted to come along and see what a race day was all about.

With everyone meeting at Wiseman' s 0845hrs, ready to load the newly constructed double trailer, which was going to have its maiden test drive fully loaded in readiness for London the following weekend!

Unfortunately one of the towing vehicles had not turned up! Neil (Hannibal) was still running on French time, after spending 6 weeks driving around France eating Garlic and drinking Red wine! Thankfully once everyone had appeared, "Oarsome", "Gertie" and "Ready Oar Knot" finally got on the road for their last league race of 2013.

Registration for this event took longer than normal as we had to complete a total of 10 crew forms (A Wiseman' s record). So with the following crews registered, Wiseman' s were ready to row!

Wiseguys – Cox # Cleo – Stroke # Tom – 2 # Dan – 3 # Brent – Bow # Simo  
 Wiserguys – Cox # Gog – Stroke # Mark – 2 # Neil – 3 # Andy – Bow # Nick  
 Wisebirds – Cox # Mark – Stroke # Nikki – 2 # Sparker – 3 # Gog – Bow # Bryony  
 Wiserbirds – Cox # Neil – Stroke # Cleo – 2 # Snowy – 3 # Marja – Bow # Nat  
 Novice Wisebirds – Cox # Simo – Stroke # Nikki – 2 # Amie – 3 # Laura – Bow # Jo  
 Novice Wise Medley – Cox # Cleo – Stroke # Di – 2 # Caroline – 3 # Jim – Bow # Ange  
 Wise Medley – Cox # Jim – Stroke # Gog – 2 # Neil – 3 # Tom – Bow # Bryony  
 Odds n Ends – Cox # Mark – Stroke # Simo – 2 # Brent – 3 # Laura – 4 # Amie  
 Wiser Medley – Cox # Caroline – Stroke # Nat – 2 # Dan – 3 # Nikki – Bow # Nick  
 Towys Wiseman' s – Cox # Gail – Stroke # Nic – 2 # Arron – 3 # Simon. Towy – Bow # Di

The Results – (I think this is right ?)

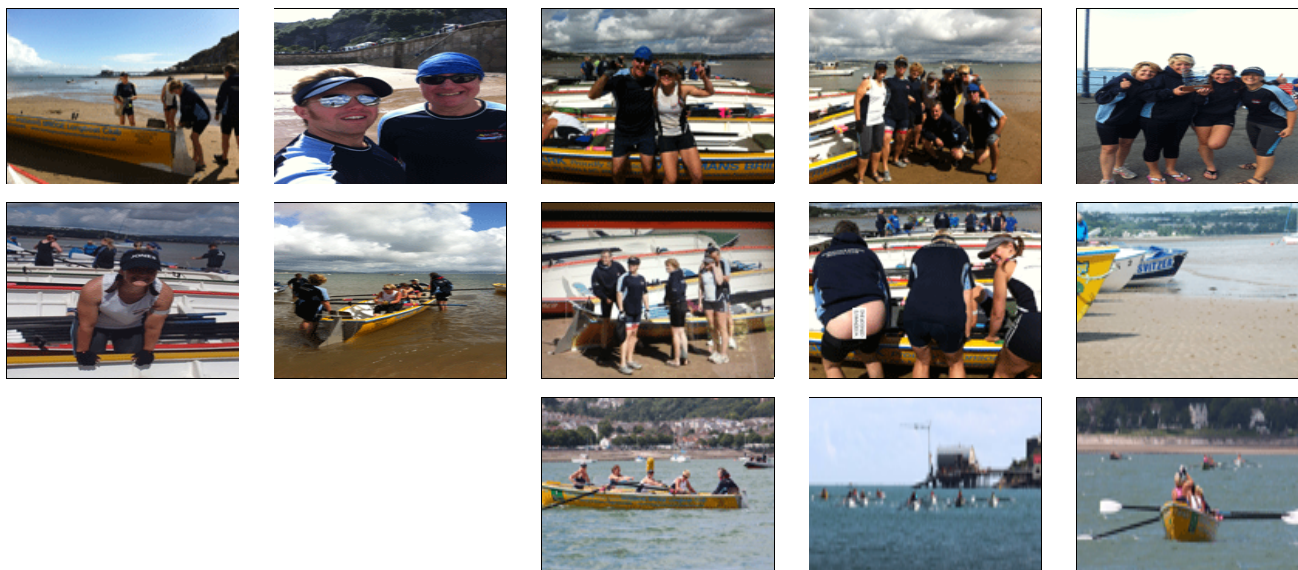
Wiseguys (Seniors) – 24 crews – 16th overall – 16th in class  
 Wiserguys (Vets) – 24 crews – 20th overall – 3rd in class  
 Wisebirds (Seniors) – 15 crews – 3rd overall – 2nd in class  
 Wiserbirds (Seniors) – 15 crews – 11th overall – 9th in class  
 Novice Wisebirds – 9 crews – 7th overall – 4th in class  
 Novice Wise Medley – 9 Crews – 5th overall – 1st in class  
 Wise Medley (Seniors) – 24 crews – 8th overall  
 Odds n Ends (Seniors) – 24 crews – 17th overall  
 Wiser Medley (Seniors) – 24 crews – 21st overall  
 Towy' s Wiseman' s (Seniors) – 24 crews – 23rd overall

An incredible effort by every crew, and a special well done Wisebirds for another 2nd place finish, and that secured your second place in the Welsh League! The club is very proud of you all; especially as over the course of the season 9 ladies have made up the Wisebird team! Our Novices also did fantastically well with our Mixed Vets crew winning the Wiseman' s "Plymouth Kock" award and while were mentioning achievement's, well done Nat for stroking her first race, Andy for stepping up to the men' s crew from the novice race, Jim and Caroline for coxing their first ever race, Ange for rowing

with torn ligaments, Hannibal and Bryony for towing, Towy for lending us their boat and rowers, PYC for arranging the race and the list goes on and on.

Not a bad end to the season ?

## Mumbles League Race - Sunday 18th August 2013



An early start to tow the boat up to Swansea turned out to be too early! and for once Wiseman`s Bridge were the first boat to arrive and Nikki and Jones had time for a bacon sandwich and a cup of tea at the Pier café before the remainder of the troops arrived.

S4C were around all day filming for the Mumbles rowing club 125th year anniversary and our very own Gog duo (Peter J and Elen) did a fantastic job of promoting Wiseman`s Bridge Rowing Club in their interview (subtitles are available) [click here](#) scroll through to about 17 mins:

As usually last minute changes during registration meant that the teams were only sorted minutes before the coxes briefing.

Unusually Ladies "Wisebirds" were up first and with Nikki debuting at stroke, Jones in 2, Gog in 3 and Libby in the Bow. Coxing was courtesy of Capt Mark and there were a few tensions on the start line, but the Wise Birds got off a great start, following the "lead boat" around the wrong buoy (along with the rest of the field). A really tough second leg with choppy seas and against the wind and the tide but the strength of Wiseman`s Bridge ladies showed, with us gaining ground all the way. Once around the last buoy and it was a sprint for the finish coming an excellent 3rd overall just seconds behind Llangwm Super Vets making them 2nd in class in an "extended" Ladies race. Well done ladies and particularly Nikki on a superb stroke and Mark on super supportive coxing! After the race we found out a complaint had been against us for an alleged incident during the race, but thankfully WSRA and Mumbles sorted this out in a fantastically professional way and the results stood as they were!

Men`s "Wiseguys" were next and with the assistance of Llanion we were able to put a full men`s team out with Simon in stroke, Peter J in 2, Norm (Llanion) in 3 and Mark in Bow. With Jones coxing the "rolling start" had covered half the first leg before the flag was finally lowered with the Wise Guys now at the back of the field. The men quickly pulled together and the first 2 legs went well with some good buoy turns and ground made up with the boats ahead. The third leg was again against a strong tide and the wind had picked up even more with Mark getting a soaking in the bow. A tough pull to the last buoy but the boat held its position in the field and after the final buoy it was just the sprint to the finish in much calmer waters. Out of a field of 19 boats the "Wiseguys" came 17th overall, but last in class (Seniors of which 12 boats qualified), must try harder boys ?

Juniors and Novices race was next, giving the rowers a much needed break before the mixed race, with the exception of Simon who coxed Towy`s under 16`s.

The mixed followed and with "Wiser Medley" crew "The Gog" as cox, Bunty as stroke, Mark in 2, Peter J in 3 and Sian in the bow we were able to put out a Mixed Super Vets boat. Thanks to Nic from Towy coxing and lending us a boat and a Junior Man we were able to put out a second mixed boat "Wise Medley" with Simon in stroke, Aaron (Towy) in 2, Nikki in 3 and Jones in the bow. A tough race at the end of the day with some very tired rowers. Final positions were

Wise Medley 14th out of 21 and Wiser Medley coasting in at 20th. Excellent rowing by both teams.

More interviews by S4C after the race meant that the Wisemans Bridge members were in the background of a lot of shots... great publicity, well done guys!

The racing done the main priority was food, courtesy of Mumbles rowing club and ice cream, courtesy of Verdi's café. This was followed by a drink in Mumbles club house and the presentation of the rather beautiful stained glass trophies.

A very late tow back home via Llansteffan meant that the boat got back to the bridge more than 12 hours after it left. Thanks to Mark, Sian and Nikki for their help to put it to bed.

It was a fantastic day in a beautiful setting. Big thanks go to Mumbles for arranging the event, Nic from Towy for the boat, cox and rower for the mixed race and to Norm from Llanion for helping us out in the mens race.

Report by Jonesy

## Llangwm League race - Sunday 11th August 2013



During the past few weeks WBRC have been very fortunate to have attracted almost 10 "Newbies" to our club, and in doing so with a little bit of encouragement from our "Secretary General" we managed to convince them it would be a good idea to enter the novice race at Llangwm!

Due to the restricted launching at Llangwm, Bryony and Angela towed R.O.K and Oarsome to Warrior Way in Pembroke Dock the night before ready for a 0700hrs meeting the following morning and a gentle 5 mile warm up row upstream to "Black Tar" Llangwm, with 11 of the crew rowing up the remaining 5 driving and met us on the shore. So with the weather being favourable with slight SW wind and a nice bit of cloud, everyone gathered together, Brentos and Bunty set about registering teams, and for a change we had an idea of teams which is not like us at all!! We never turn up with a plan! On this occasion WBRC was fielding an impressive 6 different combinations of crews –

**Mens "Wiseguys" – 18 crews - 13th overall 37.50min – 11th in class – 1st Solva 33.50min**  
 Cox # Bunty – Stroke # Simo – 2 # Dan – 3 # Brentos – Bow # PJ  
**Ladies "Wisebirds" – 14 crews – 4th overall 35.50min – 2nd in class – 1st Aberporth 33.59min**  
 Cox # Simo – Stroke # Bryony – 2 # Sparker – 3 # Gog – Bow # Nat  
**Ladies Vet "Wise old Birds" – 14 crews – 10th overall 39.25min – 4th in class – 1st Neyland 34.23min**  
 Cox # Brentos – Stroke # Bunty – 2 # Nikki – 3 # Libby – Bow # Judy  
**Novice Mixed – 6 crews – 3rd overall 14.54min – 1st PYC "son of a beach" 14.35min**  
 Cox # Brentos – Stroke # Alan – 2 # Jim – 3 # Angela – Bow # Caroline  
**Mix1 Wise Medley – 21 crews – 20th overall 37.58min – 1st Aberystwyth 30.43min**  
 Cox # Gog – Stroke # Bunty – 2 # Brent – 3 # Alan – Bow # Judy  
**Mix2 Wiser Medley – 21 crews – 14th overall 35.07min – 1st Aberystwyth 30.43min**  
 Cox # Simo – Stroke # PJ – 2 # Dan – 3 # Nikki – Bow # Bryony

#### View from the Boat – Written by PJ

"My supposed morning alarm of 05:40 (that's 05:40am Sparker) became a 06:10 mad, dazed dash to Wiseman`s too late to catch my lift so my mad scramble became even madder as I returned to my still sleeping Pleasant Valley caravan site to pick up my car and travel solo. So with no real harm done I caught the rest of my crew waiting on the slip way at Warrior Way and I deny, dispel and disperse all accusations of late night binging session, having been on a mercy mission to Wisemans Bridge Inn the night before to look for the Ladies Vet trophy for last year? Feeling very proud of my successful mission it came as a shock to be told by Brent upon closer inspection of the trophy that it was unfortunately "The Wrong Cup" (A new Wallace and Grommit episode perhaps) However, in my defence it was the only trophy I could find in the pub that night! I knew my penance awaited me later that day!

A pleasant row up river with the tide helped to drop the heart rate as in true Wiseman`s Style, we prepared our 2 Celtics for the challenges ahead with the 5 mile row to the start.

A league race is an exhausting experience and having already rowed up river and being the "bowman" in the Men`s crew I was happy with my days work, with a decent mid field finish in the men`s race (13th out of 18 boats 11th in our class), I felt I had given my all and done myself in! I thought my day was done. Little did I know!

Our Wise Birds, as ever set the standard early in the day, by coming 4th [2nd in their class] out of a field of 14 crews. And our Novices came a sensational 3rd in their first outing this year with some exceptional coxing from Brent.

It was then penance time and another form of outing!

As with Simon having already given his all in the Men`s , whilst still suffering the ill effects of a nasty virus, I stepped into the breach and volunteered, foolishly, to stroke one of the mixed crews.

The race officials and other crews had already, it would seem, been alerted to this threat! As unknown to us a handicapping system came into play. So with everybody else facing down river with the tide our boat was still turning on the start line as if we were heading for Landshipping when the start flag went up in the race had started!!

Our cox "Simon" then had the task to urge and guided us from the back of the field and we slowly started to pick off the crews ahead of us and continued to make water on others as our line took out some more crews (in a legal and totally acceptable manner).

With the outgoing tide aiding us, we reached the penultimate buoy turn with "Benton Castle" peeking out of the woods on the river bank, but we now had a hellish pull back to the finish line against the previously helpful tide!

By now we were locked in a dog fight [I know these were mixed crews but to recognise our female colleagues in the same analogy would not be PC]. For our final few miles 4 crews were all within a boat length of each other PYC [Son of a Beach] , Llanion Warriors [Freya] and NewQuays [Black Pearl].

So with our Cox voice ringing in our ears screaming encouragement ("keep it long, keep it strong", "Longer & Stronger" and " BREATHE") and trying to keep the other boats at bay, yet another Wiseman's scratch crew had their own personnel battle for glory

As the finish line drew ever closer, the lung busting, gut wrenching muscle strain became excessive and exhaustive, and totally committed. There was absolutely nothing between us as the Swiss timing results show.

PYC-13th 35.06 min, Wiseman's Oarsome 14th 35.07 min, Llanion Warriors 15th 35.23min

Winners Aberystwyth, Dwynwen 30.43. Field of 21 crews.

Wiseman's Oarsome Mixed-20th

Thanks to everyone in the crew for what for me has been the highlight so far of the racing season.

## Aberporth League Race - 21st July 2013



As always the opportunity to have an away day with a race weekend was not going to be missed and with one of the hottest weekends of the summer, a dozen or so rowers headed up the day before the Sunday league race. The advance party headed north looking forward to some chilling out, BBQ's and camping.

Once "Ready Oar Knot" had successfully been delivered on the beach at Aberporth along with "Odin" from Llanion Warriors, the team headed to their camp site to set up base (Talywerydd Caravan Park), and with the "Langston's" from the Warrior's and Wiseman's crew we were occupying a large quiet corner of the camp site.

With the rest of the afternoon free "Phil Langston" of warrior fame organised a boat and took 2 sessions out into the bay for a warm up row, while the rest of the team relaxed on the beautiful beach in Aberporth.

After an amazingly early night (2300hrs), our blurry eyed campers rose early ready for porridge, coffee and lycra! With one slightly broken kettle everyone managed a hot cuppa then with registration at 0930hrs we headed to the beach to meet the rest of the team.

As normal teams are decided on the day of races so with Tom, Dan, Nikki and Snowy making their League debut's, Wiseman's had enough to field:

Mens Senior - Cox # Bryony - Stroke # Brent - 2 # Tom - 3 # Simo - Bow # Dan

Ladies Senior - Cox # Brent - Stroke # Cleo - 2 # Sparker - 3 # Gog - Bow # Bryony

Ladies Senior 2 - Cox # Simo - Stroke # Nic Towy - 2 # Nikki - 3 # Snowy - Bow # Jane Towy

Mixed 1 (Wisey Mix) - Cox # Cleo - Stroke # Sparker - 2 # Tom - 3 # Brent - Bow # Snowy

Mixed 2 (Wiser Mix) - Cox # Clacky - Stroke # Simo - 2 # Dan - 3 # Gog - Bow # Nikki

Mixed 3 (Odds n Ends) - Cox # Jelley Llanion - Stroke # Bryony - 2 # Chris Llanion - 3 # Nick - Bow # Nic Towy

With a mix of results from the day, everyone took a lot from the team work between Towy, Llanion and Wiseman's and the blooding of our "Newbie's".

The Results:

Men: 15th out of field of 20.

Ladies: 12th and 2nd out of a field of 13.

Mixed: Mixed 1 - 4th, Mixed 2 - 12th, Mixed 3 - 14th out of a field of 20.

Big thanks to Nick (banana man) for pipping out to Llanion men and beating the Wiseguys in doing so!!! And also thanks to all our supporters, including Ben and Cruz! Llangwm next...

## Dinas Head Challenge 8 mile race - Saturday 6th July 2013



Pre-race preparation for the hot and sweaty forthcoming event involved cramming ourselves into the "Wiseman's Bridge Inn" at 0930 ready to watch the British and Irish Lions 3rd test with bacon rolls and tea a plenty, and after 2 hours and one of the best games of rugby we had seen for many years we emerged from the darkness of the pub, hooked the fleet up to the trucks and headed off to the start line at Goodwick.

Approaching Fishguard we pulled over and assembled our secret weapons for the race, 5ft tall inflatable palm trees mounted in the coxes' seats! As per

normal Wiseman`s were not letting a race get in the way of a party!!

As we unloaded R.O.K , Gertie and Oarsome a camera crew from the "BBC Coast" programme interviewed a few of the rowers (Mainly Chris) as they seemed intrigued by the relevance of the palm trees, as they wandered away still none the wiser, Hannibal aka Neil set about putting teams together, nothing like leaving things till last minute!

So, with Chris Pimped out to Solva Mixed, we had a lady and her dog as a replacement cox (Genius Neil!), the teams then unfolded like this:

"Gertie"

Men crew – Cox # Simo – Stroke # JD – 2 # Brent – 3 # Philly T – Bow # Neil

"R.O.K"

Ladies crew 1 – Cox # Bryony – Stroke # Bunty – 2 # Libby – 3 # Gog – Bow # Nikki

"Oarsome"

Ladies crew 2 – Cox # Random lady and her dog! – Stroke # Cleo – 2 # Spark – 3 # Snowy – Bow # Nat

The race had maximum entrants, so once all 30 boats were on the water we were called forward and started one after the other according to your registration number and would be a timed race finish! Not always the best, as it is difficult to judge your position in the field until the results are posted!

The heat of the sun certainly took its toll on the rowers as there was no where to hide from its glare (at least the coxes were fine under the palm trees!), and the bailer came in useful for the cox to throw sea water over the rowers giving them brief relief from the heat! (next time we should have waterpistols!)

All 3 crews turned in fantastic results with the last boat arriving at Newport in 1hr 17minutes,

Our crews posted times of:

# "Oarsome" 1 hr 9 minutes 12sec (4th in class 19th overall)

# "ROK" 1 hr 8 minutes 46sec (3rd in class 16th overall)

# "Gertie" 1hr 2 minutes 40sec (4th in class 5th overall)

Well done everyone good results in hot conditions! And special well done to Nat, Snowy, Nikki for losing their race virginity!!!

Big thanks to Newport and Fishguard rowing clubs for arranging a great event.

And everyone who camped the night enjoyed the live music and excellent food!!

## Solva League Race Sunday 14th July 2013



Got down the bridge for 7:30am (8am Neil time) to tow the boat up to sunny Solva. Best summer heatwave for 7 years! - The heat was intense, a huge difference compared to the event the previous year! (seen the film perfect storm?)

Registration from 08.30am- 9.30am.

Coxes Briefing: 9.30 am..

Race Order: Men, Ladies, Juniors, Mixed.

Race Fees: £4 Adults/ £2 Juniors.

High Water 10.45 am

Crew consisted of: Sparker, Marja, Bryony, Brian, Natalie, Brent, Neil aiming for a girls team, a mixed plus some pimping out ;-) and two race-virgins to break in! (Brian & Natalie)

The 30C+ temperatures required lots of fluids – both factor 50 and tonnes of water, it soon turned out there were a few cases of heat exhaustion following the mens race

With Llanion short one bloke for the seniors race (Super-Chris supporting Amy, and Tom&Cleo all running at the long-course half marathon - Tenby) Brent was pimped out to the Bow and Neil stepped in to Cox, with Phil Langston at stroke, George & Clacky in the power seats. Best race finish for the warriors in this class had previously been 6th – so Neil would not accept anything less than 5th.

The race was a clockwise direction this year, with a NE light breeze (whisp) the race got off to a frantic (infamous) 'Llanion death pace' which enabled a nice gap to appear at the first buoy turn. Phil found a little more length half way through and the boat started to pull away from a Llangwm boat heading up to the last buoy turn near the rock. Then the air died, and the sweat was streaming as the boat hauled against tide - but there was a Llangrannog boat near and Neil was firing us up for more power to pass them – which we did, then coming into the last 100m we were racing hard against Solva, everyone pulled with all they had left to the yellow finishing buoy and we managed half a length over Solva in the last 20m! 5th boat across the line and 4th in class out of 18 boats.

Then it was time for the ladies to take to the water, a shorter race following some heat exhaustion cases during the senior race - with Neil at Cox again (soon to lose his voice, unfortunately only temporarily) with Marja at stroke, Sparker 2, Bryony 3, Natalie @ Bow. A reasonable start, although it look a few strokes for the boat to find its rhythm. We were still in the mix at the first buoy turn which resulted in a bit of cutting up and jostling to get back in position with a pretty similar story at the 2nd buoy. Once on the home straight we were able to lengthen out and really get the boat moving. We were able to pull away from the field behind and settle into position coming back into the river with 3 boats hot on our tails and closing the gap on the Newquay boat in front. A final and respectable result of 5th out of 11 and just 20 seconds behind the Newquay Ladies in some very hot conditions. Finishing time: 34:40.

Towy, who seem to be predominantly a junior club put out 3 boats in the junior/novice race, with the crew of under-14's girls borrowing Ready Oar Knot for the race, cheered on by everyone on the quay

The Mixed race was shortened also due to tide receding and the heat of the day, this time with Marja coxing, Sparker at stroke, Brent 2, Neil 3, Brian @ Bow. A flotilla of near 20 boats for this race was always going to be interesting due to limited water space, as it proved from the very start - with '5 hard ones' after the horn sounded we were clashing with llangwm, but managed to regain our composure and our speed as everything inevitably bottled up to the first buoy turn. PYC managed to turn in on us and take out red oars, with Llanion giving us a boost up the rear as they were caught in the fracas – but we soon pulled away, a long hard slog to clear them both by the last buoy turn. The air died yet again, with a little more chop as tide was really running by now - it played into our hands compared to the pond rowers where we took another boat on the finishing straight, coming in 8th place, 5th in

class with a time of 23:31. The Llanion mixed crew with our pimped out Bryony came in 11th ?

Fantastic effort by everyone and a well organised event again with great food, special congratulations to Brian and Natalie for their first league race. Similar to rowing in a sauna I would say. After that it was home to crash out on the sofa and watch Andy Murray win Wimbledon, who could ask for more?

## Milford (Half) Marathon - June 22nd



Unfortunately the weather fairies cursed this years Milford marathon and as result the course was pretty much halved to 12 miles with a start from Neyland rather than Dale. The Wisemen being the supreme athletes they are, dropped out as having done the Cleddau Challenge several weeks before, they didn't want to repeat the same race (and they probably didn't want to get shown up by the ladies..) - However the Wisebirds, never ones to miss the opportunity of burning off several cakeloads of calories decided to go for it! Bryony all set to tow for the first time when we discovered that new tow bars have a different connection to the old ones.. luckily Elen stepped in with Simon's van and the convoy left the bridge...

Strong Westerly winds greeted us in Neyland as we waited for the cox's brief keeping warm with teas, coffees, cakes and bacon rolls! (And Sparkers special flapjacks!!)

"If you are not a strong team, you'd better drop out now.." was the start of what was probably the most negative cox's briefing I've ever sat through... As faces whitened and breathing quickened, he proceeded to tell us of where all the slipways where in case of an emergency and how to attract the attention of the safety boat... As for the route - keep left until you hit Haverfordwest was the main instruction!! (If we made it that far!)

Team captain Gog did a quick rejig of positions in light of the conditions which saw Libby coxing out Me (Mo) in stroke, Sparks in 2, Gog in 3 and Bryony in 4 with Tash as passenger. A quick launch off the beach and then we were away - timed starts are so much more civilised!! With the wind behind us, we made good progress under the bridge and headed up river with the wind and tide our helpers for now... It's all a bit of a blur but the conditions changed repeatedly from choppy waters and crosswinds to water which felt like rowing through treacle!

Crew change having just overtaken Porthmadog Ladies, saw Mo go into Cox with Libby as stroke and Bryony passenger with Tash in bow. Cheers and waves from our wonderful support crew at Black Tar spurred us on and with Bryony directing me via hand signals - we picked our best line up the river with the strong crosswinds continually trying to push the boat to shore. Another crew change swapped the guys out of the middle and Sparker and Elen coxed in stereo whilst Libby and Tash moved into 2 and 3 - Although getting tired at this point, the boat was moving well when suddenly waves were crashing over the side and we pretty much stopped... battling against the waves with the boat rocking we struggled to make headway as unfortunately Porthmadog Ladies took the opportunity to sneak past us - we broke through and chased them towards the end but couldn't quite catch up. With loads of encouragement from our cox - '2 miles to go', 'nearly there, I can see castles..' we pushed for home coming in at 1 hour 46 mins and 50 seconds - 4th ladies boat behind joint leaders Aberporth and Neyland and spookily 45 seconds behind Porthmadog Ladies (the same gap they beat us by in Caernarfon!). 13th overall out of a field of 19 boats.

A fantastic race in difficult conditions! Thanks to Gog for organising and towing, Bryony for lifts and nearly towing, Libby for breaking her race stroking and coxing virginity and everyone else for pulling so hard their arms nearly fell off!

## Whitesands - UK Surf Rowing Championships (Round 1) - 1st June 2013



Wiseman`s Bridge Rowing Club attended the 1st round of the UK Surf Rowing Championships 2013 at Whitesands beach, St Davids. With only a small number of surf rowing boats active in the UK, we were fortunate enough to be able to hire a boat and an experienced sweep (Cox) from the clubs who attended, including Croyde , Llantwit Major , Perranporth, Porthtowan and Bude who had all brought there boats down to Pembrokeshire for the weekend racing. We were also joined by the only surf rowing team in West Wales, who belong to Newport Pemb`s Sailing Club located on the Parrog.

After a hour of coaching from the experienced Cornish surf rowers, who were impressed by our eagerness and Cleo`s ability to get catapulted out of the boat! WBRC we`re ready to enter the world of speedo`s and "Wet Up , Wedge Up"!

With the Men`s team comprising of Cleo @ stroke - Simo #2 - Neil #3 - Johnny D @ Bow and our Ladies` team of Marja @ stroke - Libby #2 - Gog #3 - Bryony @ Bow.

Races took place from a beach start with all the crews stood in the shallows; luckily the swell today was a tame 1 - 2 ft. When the whistle sounds, all rowers and "sweeps" leap into the boats and start the sprint straight out through the waves towards a line of buoys placed approximately 1k out from the beach, upon reaching your buoy a "sharp" buoy turn is executed and a sprint back to the beach commences! Upon reaching the shallows the bow rower must jump out and sprint the 20m up the beach and touch your team's flag pole!

Sounds easy!?!?!?! All this lasts from start to finish between 3 to 5 minutes!!!! It's a lung and leg burning experience!

WBRC came last in all 8 heats apart from 1 when a team got disqualified for going around the wrong buoy!!! But we all had a fantastic day out and made

some new rowing friends! And I think we will be sticking to our Celtic Longboats for the time being until the "Surf Rowers" return again next summer... A big thank you to, "Llantwit Major" and "Croyde" for coaching us and to the guys from "Newport Pembs Sailing Club" for your encouragement.

For more details of Surf Rowing check out - [www.uksrl.co.uk](http://www.uksrl.co.uk)

## New Quay Ladies Race – Sunday 26th May 2013



A glorious day dawned over the picturesque New Quay harbour and it looked like summer had finally arrived. Me, Neil and the girls camped the night before and had the boat unloaded on the beach before the bedlam started. Approximately 30 boats negotiated the one way system and tricky slip way prior to the first race whilst the Wiseys crew sat and ate bacon butties in the sunshine!

A crowd gathered round for the cox's briefing but were slightly distracted by the dolphins leaping out of the sea in the background, needless to say, it was a bit of a surprise when we realised the usual race order had changed slightly and that the ladies would be going out first... maybe that bacon butty wasn't such a good idea!

So off we went and lined up with the other 19 boats taking up position right at the end alongside the Neyland crew. With Captain Mark as our trusty cox – Stroke, Marja 2, Elen 3, Sparker and Sian in Bow we jostled with the other boats trying to see the starter flag. Then we were off – As usual it was a fairly steady start in order to let the field settle and we found our rhythm alongside Neyland. From our position near the back we slowly picked off boat after boat with some excellent buoy turns until the final stretch when having finally shrugged off the PYC boat we emptied the tank pushing to catch the two lead boats – although we were gaining on them, we were held to third position behind Neyland Ladies (2) and the winners Aberpoth Ladies who won both the ladies race and the Ladies Vets category. (The same race order as the Fishguard race!) So with a very credible 3rd place and 2nd in class we went to celebrate with ice creams!!

## New Quay Super Vet's Race – Sunday 26th May 2013

We set off to New Quay on what must have been the nicest sunny day of the year so far.

The coxes briefing on the harbour wall turned into a spectacular show of dolphins leaping out of the water to the delight of all!

The race for the mixed vets team consisted of Captain Mark as stroke, Neil in 2, Libby 3, and Sian in Bow. Sarah a.k.a "Sparker" was our reluctant and ever so slightly panicked cox!

We started in a bad position but with a good speed, our cox after a couple of minutes informed us we would be turning the first buoy very soon????????????? Captain Mark realised Sparker had mistaken the reef warning buoy for the first marker and we were heading towards the wrong buoy!!!!!! The one we had to head for, was only just visible in the distance! Keeping up with the majority of the boats we got to the first marker clashing badly with another boat on our inside! After lot of swearing and shouting we completed the turn with Sparker looking like a rabbit caught in a headlamp and completely traumatised!!!! Nonetheless she kept counting us and keeping our morale's and our heads up not stopping even when a dolphin jumped out of the water in front of the boat. We turned the second buoy brilliantly and started back onto the home straight and the cheering crowds watching. With three of the rowers already having competed in the prior ladies and mens races and Neil with a damaged shoulder it was a pretty "broken team," despite this all were willing and although we came in at the back of the field there really wasn't that much between any of the boats competing. Our novice cox "Sparker" did great, steering us, perhaps not to victory on this occasion, but safely home!

## Fishguard League Race – Sunday 5th May 2013



After an extremely hectic week, rowing 92miles around the Pembrokeshire Coast in aid of the RNLI, the Wiseguys and Wisebirds took "Ready Oar Knot" up to Fishguard for the first league race of the season.

It was a late start, with the first race at 1430hrs and everyone had one eye on the time as a BBQ beckoned that night for the members back at Wiseman's Bridge to start the bank holiday celebrations. The Men's race was first and with Capt Mark suffering from a lack of skin on his rear quarters a reshuffle was required with 10 minutes to go.

Gog # Cox – Simo # Stroke – Philly T # 2 – Neil # 3 – PJ # Bow

The Wiseguys decided the seats would be better kept in Sparkers car for this race ? , so the crew gently warmed up with the 10minute row towards the start line in Goodwick Harbour. The field consisted of 24 boats and with a brisk southerly wind it proved difficult to maintain position on the start line for the rolling start, but eventually the flag went up the race started in the normal carnage of clattering oars and coxes screaming. With the wind assisting the boats to the first buoy turn the Wiseguys found themselves towards the rear of the chasing pack, but on the homeward leg toward the finish line

in lower town with the wind against all the crews, it became a battle between themselves, Mumbles and half a dozen other boats for a mid pack finish. This resulted in an excellent and exciting finish across the line with a 20th place finish for the Wiseguys and with only a boat length between 21st place and 16th place! Also well done to Llanions senior men storming in at 9th place.

The Ladies team was a race debut for Snowy and with Marja and Libby crewing for Llanion Ladies the Wisebird crew consisted of:

Neil # Cox – Gog # Stroke – Sparker # 2 – Snowy #3 – Bryony # Bow

With 18 boats making up the field for this ladies race it would prove a testing baptism for our "Newbie" Snowy! With the wind now pushing stronger from the south Neil attempted to position his ladies in a good slot ready for the start flag, but unfortunately due to a technical error the Wisebirds had a bad start and found themselves 2nd from last with the rest of the crews storming away from them! So undeterred Neil set his ladies off and took about undertaking and overtaking boat after boat until amazingly by the final buoy turn they found themselves in 3rd place with only Aberporth ladies and Neyland ladies vets in front of them but by a good 6 boat lengths proved to much for the Wisebird crew as they had given their all in the tough conditions. Our other Wisebirds who rowed with Llanion came in 11th (Marja with Super vets) and 17th (Libby with Seniors) well done everyone!!

Due to the BBQ and cold beers waiting for us back at Wiseman`s we did not enter a mixed crew and slipped off before the rush. A big thank you to Fishguard for arranging a great race day and to Llanion for letting some of our ladies get in a boat and race!

## Return of the Cleddau - 12 miles April 6th 2013



After a long,, hard winter of rowing, and with only a handful of Wiseman`s Bridge Rowing Club braving the cold dark nights, the club awoke from its slumber and sprung into life and fielded 3 full crews for the opening race of the 2013 season. "Oarsome" , "Gertie" and "Ready Oar Knot" were dusted down and made to look respectable by "Johnny`s Clean Machines" while the rest of the crew made themselves busy checking the trailers over, as there`s nothing worse than losing a wheel on route to a race!! ?

The fleet was then expertly delivered and unloaded in the playing fields at the start line in Haverfordwest, with only 1 small mishap of Neil taking the wrong turn into the fields and had to carry out the "reverse of shame" with everyone watching on! So with all 3 crews registered (WiseBirds, Wise Old Birds, WiseBoys) and cox briefing completed the crews prepared themselves for the 12 mile slog down river to the finish line at Neyland Yacht Club by drinking tea, eating cake and smoking fags! The start was at 1630hrs with staggered starts at 30 sec intervals, and it was the largest turn out for a race in recent seasons with 39 craft registered from all over Wales! With "Oarsome" and the Wise Old Birds starting at No.3 And "Gertie" with the WiseBirds at No.4 they were afloat ready to start, which left "Ready Oar Knot" on the river bank along with the Wiseboys waiting for their turn to launch. It was at that point that it became a race of 3 halves!?!?

### Oarsome – Ladies Super Vets:

Johnny D # Cox - Bunty # Stroke - Rachel # 2 - Libby # 3 - Judy # 4

Team brief simple. "Take it easy until past the rail bridge, once we`re clear long and strong until you hear the hooter which means its over". "Oarsome" eased her way into the murky Cleddau water as she was to be 3rd off the line with our "Junior" ladies taking up 4th position behind us in the water. The whistle blew and the first boat started as the rest of us were called up the start in order, then the flag raised and it was our turn! Bunty eased us off the line at a sensible pace and with the obstacle of the rail bridge negotiated the ladies spent the first mile warming up and getting into rhythm while from the river bank WBRC supporters shouted words of encouragement. The Wise Old Birds had not all rowed together until this race so with my words of encouragement ringing in their ears they settled into a great pace and with "Gertie" just off our stern this gave us just the motivation we needed to keep ahead of the young pups! Just as we approached Hook, a local old sea dog by the name of Peter Parker could be seen on his boat the "Seal Express" whistling and cheering the Wiseman crews along, which by this stage "Gertie" was pressing hard looking for a gap to sneak past us, and sure enough, before we reached the bend for Llangwm Black Tar, she pulled past us with the younger ladies shouting words of support to everyone on board "Oarsome". Once past Llangwm the wind against tide was causing some choppy water so as I knew my crew were tiring I tried to shout words of encouragement " I know your tired girls, but were nearly there! Feel all your muscles, keep working those legs, abdominals, arms" As Rach calls out "Vaginas as well" " Yes those too" as everyone laughs we come into sight of the Cleddau Bridge, were almost there. The sea state had become extremely rough under the bridge and my ladies battled hard keeping going until the hooter sounded and we crossed the line. "Gertie" had already crossed the finish line and landed as their crew came running to help everyone out of "Oarsome", with everyone smiling but quiet we were glad to have put in such a good performance for our first outing as Super Vets. Back in the sailing club whilst enjoying a cold pint listening to the results we were amazed to hear Wise Old Birds being called out as winners of Ladies Super Vet!! The table where Wiseman`s Bridge were sitting erupted as everyone in the club looked on in wonder as we screamed and cheered like crazy women! Needless to say the Oarsome Foursome got very drunk that night. A big thanks to Neil and Simo for towing and organising us and here`s to the rest of 2013 and plenty more blisters!

### Ready Oar Knot – Men`s Super Vets:

Chris D # Cox – Capt Mark # Stroke – Neil # 2 – Philly T # 3 – Peter J # 4

With Chris returning this season and making his debut as cox he was about to experience the hot seat on the Cleddau for the next 2 hours. The report from ROK was scribed by our bow master Peter J.

Gathered at the Bristol Trader, 39 crews young and old, To accept the Cleddau Challenge, As its twists and Turns Unfold.

First along the Cleddau Wen, Downstream to Hooks Reach and Picton Point, Where West Meets East, Y Cleddau Ddu, The Daugleddau now increased.

On passed Landshipping Quay, Black Tar and Llangwm Pool, "We`re half way now!" six miles behind, Six more to go, this is no time to be fooled.

Searching for the faster waters, As the tides ebb aides our flow, Rowing on to Beggars Reach, then Castle Rocks, Relentlessly on we go.

Lawrenny Quay with refreshment there, But not for us today!. Not for this crew of old salty dogs, as we must be on our way.

We`re searching for another 10 per cent, Lungs strained and sinew`s spent, The gauntlet laid that none shall pass, this Wiseman`s crew will give our last.

To the Point and then Mill Bay, Where local knowledge comes into play, Jolly Sailor and the Cleddau Bridge, We strive together towards the finish edge. The last effort from all the crew, Our fearless Captain strokes us through, With blistered hands and nether quarters, Bursting lungs and sinews slaughtered.

Out paced only by Glaslyn in the "Old Codgers Race", For us Wiseboys there's no disgrace, So as aches and pains are over come, Looking forward to our next rowing race.

"Thanks go to our ever faithful band of supporters and to Neil and Simon for towing. And Congratulations to our Wise Old Birds Super Vets, Da Iawn Pawb x"

Dirty Gertie – Ladies Senior:

Simo # Cox – The Gog # Stroke – Sparker # 2 – Nic Towy # 3 – Bryony # 4

Chaos reigns supreme when it comes to start lines in rowing races. With teams scrambling around on the bank desperate to get their boats into the small amount of water available, and it took a few strong words and a bit of diplomacy to sort everyone out into their correct starting order! So finally "Gertie" and her WiseBird crew are nestled against the quay wall behind "Oarsome" waiting for the start whistle to sound. The Gog had been moved from her preferred position of mid boat and put into the stroke seat since the unavailability of a specialist stroker, with Towy then loaning the WiseBird crew Nic, who normally coaches Towy's promising Juniors. With Sparker duck tapped into the number 2 seat and Bryony returning from injury in the bow this WiseBird crew looked slightly nervous about the impending 12 miles ahead of them. The whistle blew and the lead boats took off with "Oarsome" leading the way under the railway bridge as we all took up a single file procession through the narrow, shallow upper reaches of the Western Cleddau. With the younger WiseBird team never having rowed together before true Wiseman's style, it took a mile or so for everyone to find the rhythm and get comfortable with the Gogs stroke, but once "Gertie" started to move, she started making ground on the impressive "Oarsome" crew in front of us who we're holding us off with a fantastically long steady stroke rate. As we rounded the corner for Hook the familiar whistle and shouting of Peter Parker (Sparkers Dad) came into ear shot as we saw his Seal Express 36ft fishing boat which we found out later he had motored all the way from Saundersfoot that morning as a surprise for us ( a trip of 40miles each way). Seal Express then proceeded to follow us towards the finish line keeping his distance but making enough wake for us to curse him from time to time. Finally upon seeing Black Tar "Gertie" and her crew pulled alongside "Oarsome" and shouting words of encouragement to our Wise Old Birds left them to battle it out for a place across the finish line, but our battle was far from over as from Black Tar onwards the wind against tide combination resulted in some tough rough rowing , so with the Cleddau bridge now within our sights we set "Gertie" for home and upon passing Warrior Way the ladies gave it everything they had in an effort to turn in a competitive time across the line. The final 5 minutes resulted in some of the grittiest rowing I have ever seen from a ladies crew as the sea conditions became worse and the finish line felt like it was moving away from us, but with one last flurry lead by the Gog, the WiseBirds crossed the line 4th ladies boat home in 1hr 51min. Well done ladies you gave it your all. And congratulations to our Wise Old Birds for winning their class in 1hr 56min! Im sure once the blisters have recovered everyone will be looking forward to our next day at the races!

## Castle to Castle 13 mile Race - April 13th 2013



After "Gertie" s' adventure in the Return of the Cleddau Race last weekend she decided to go on tour and a trip to Caernarfon, North Wales was the perfect destination. A WiseBird's crew of Elen, Sparker, Marja, Libby, Bryony and Simo as Cox accompanied "Gertie" up to the Gogledd on the Friday as the race was early on Saturday morning.

5 hours, 150 miles, and what felt like hundreds of sets of traffic lights, we finally arrived, but, as with any race which starts in one place and finishes in another the logistics still had to be completed. The start line was on Anglesey in Beaumaris, a beautiful old town with grand Victorian buildings lining the shore and unspoilt panoramic views of snow covered Snowdon and the Glyders back on the main land. We unloaded "Gertie" so she would benefit from these views overnight, as we then headed back to Caernarfon with the empty trailer ready for the finish on Saturday!

Our friends from Llanion Warriors had also made the journey North with almost 2 full crews, so with one of the Wisebirds , Bryony crewing for them they could field a senior mixed crew and vet mixed crew.

The night before a race is carb loading time, so the 15 members of Llanion and Wisemans found an Italian restaurant, but it was a 45minute wait for a table! Luckily "The Albert" pub was next door for us to take shelter in, and with Llanion's Richard Jelly providing the music from a very well stocked jukebox, the beer flowed and before we knew it the night was over and we headed for our HQ "Costa Del Travelodge" . Race Day! Everyone emerged for breakfast slightly bleary eyed and fully lycra'd up! The weather was looking favourable as we all knew there was a bad weather system heading our way which had caused the league race on Sunday to be cancelled in advance!!!!

Our crew congregated in the yacht club in Beaumaris taking in the stunning view and thinking about the row that lay ahead of us! The Menai Strait has a notorious current and many hidden rocks so the cox brief was a very silent affair with all coxes listening intently and slightly concerned expressions when the "SWELLIES" were mentioned!!! Hopefully we could get some cream to sort that problem out!!!

The 15 teams that had made the journey here for this fantastic race took to the water as tide and time was against us!

During mass starts at the beginning of races, keeping your position amongst the tangle of oars and boats can prove stressful and exciting knowing that a good start can make all the difference to your position over the finish line!

Unfortunately when the cannon fired to signal the start of the race the "WiseBirds" found themselves being pushed towards the shore by the boats on the outside of them! From this poor start the ladies settled into Marja's stroke and with Elen, Sparker in the engine room and Libby our glamorous granny providing the power in the bow they took about the task of finding some clear water and finally as the 1st Menai Bridge came into sight, "Gertie" pulled clear and found herself following Caernarfon vet men's crew. As this was their home water, "Gertie" tucked in behind them following their lines through the Straits, under the Bridge Britannia and into the deeper waters of the Menai. As Caernarfon town came into sight "Gertie" pulled past our guides as we thanked them for giving us safe passage. Our WiseBirds increased the pace and knowing that Porthmadog Ladies were within sight Marja set her ladies an incredible stroke for the final 2 mile sprint finish and with every stroke "Gertie" made water on the leading boats, but Porthmadog ladies proved too strong and held our WiseBirds off to take 1st position by 45 seconds!! An incredible finish over 13 miles of hard rowing!!

Wisebirds took 2nd place ladies with 1hr 55:35 and 8th overall out of 15 boats. With Porthmadog men, Ynys Mon Mix coming in 1st and 2nd with Llanion Mix (and our Wisebird Bryony) coming in a fantastic 3rd overall, but 2nd in class. Llanions other mix boat crossing the line in 6th place overall but also taking 2nd place in class! An excellent night of eating (The Black Boy), drinking and singing (Sloop John B) took place and with a Kangaroo court and a game of "Peggy" thrown in for good measure!!

A big thank you to Sarah, Elin and Brian from Caernarfon Rowing Club who looked after us and even gave us a history tour to boot!!! This event will definitely be on the Wiseman`s calendar again next year!!

## Cresswell Quay Social Night Row 2012



On A clear, cold, crisp Friday evening in October, 30 rowers gathered at "Warrior Way" in Pembroke Dock for a social row up the Cleddau river in search of food and ale. Our 3 boats from Wiseman`s Bridge were accompanied by 2 boats from Towy Boat Club who were about to embark on their maiden night row and 1 boat of hardy alcoholics from Llanion.

With Lawrenny Arms only a hop, skip and jump up river with the 7.3m tide rushing in we were there before you could say make mine a "Bishops Finger" ! Food had been pre ordered courtesy of Ffi from Towy using her inside knowledge and a bit of forward thinking, so with a belly full of chips and a few cheeky beers we hot footed it to make the most of the still incoming tide to our next port of call, to see Maurice in the legendary Cresswell Quay and to sample some of his "Firewater" ...

On A high tide in the summer months it is common sight to see boats of all sizes making the trip up to Cresswell, but the locals were slightly amazed to see 6 Celtic Longboats performing "Dunkirk" landings outside their pub in the dark!!! We we`re all welcomed inside by a roaring fire and a blazing AGA, and made the most of the toilet facilities as the beers and cold weather did not seem to work well together!! We all spent 50 minutes chatting to the locals and amongst each other from the different clubs whilst sipping our favourite beverages when we realised the tide had turned and it was our cue to leave!

The night sky was clear and the stars and moon lit up the river and by this point sufficient "Happiness" had spread amongst the boats and the row back resulted in singing and laughter in the darkness, especially in Capt Mark/Neil and Johnnies boat, who all seemed on a mission to tar and feather the "Speckled Hen"! because before we knew it they had made an emergency stop back at the Lawrenny Arms, and so as not to be rude everyone stopped for one final night cap before the mad dash sprint back to "Warrior Way".

As the tide was now flooding out of the Cleddau we flew back with minimal effort which was a good thing really! Once back everyone helped Towy put their boats back on the trailers as they smiled and chatted about completing their first night expedition. The evening had been a success, 6 boats and 30 rowers went out and all came home, everyone wore life jackets and each boat had navigation lighting on and VHF radio as safety is always an important factor when we`re out in the boats! No Bishops or Hens were seriously harmed during the evening and did we mention it was gone midnight when we eventually got back to Warrior Way!?!? Now that`s a proper night out.. So here`s to the summer and more social evenings together!!!

## Aberaeron League Race Sept 23rd 2012



## Solva League Race - Sept 9th 2012



It was a week before the Great River Race and the penultimate league race of the season was upon us in Solva. The night before had been Glenn's 40th birthday bash at Wisemans Bridge which saw most of the club and many of Llanion Warriors there, drinking and dancing late into the evening. So it was not a surprise that the 0800 start on Sunday morning deterred many of our normal merry rowers from competing. The weather was bright but over cast with a strong South Westerly wind, so with "Dirty Gertie" hooked up, the dishevelled team with their blurry eyes headed for Solva.

Parking???? Now we know Solva is a small village, but never have we had to park so far away from the launch site before! Fair play to our intrepid tow person "Neil" as he negotiated and navigated his way down the tricky single track road to the slipway, for us to unload "Gertie" and all of our kit, to then be moved on by the race officials and begin his pre race warm up jog back to the slip.

The plan was to enter "Gertie" in the Men's, Ladies and Mixed races, but as we only had 3 men "Sparker" was deputised as an honorary man to make our numbers up. So with Gog @ Cox, Simo Stroke, Sparker 2, Brent 3, Neil in bow, we set off, out of the harbour toward the start line.

The calm and tranquillity of the harbour quickly disappeared upon reaching the start line, where the strong wind and ever building swell was going to put us to the test!!! It was a challenge just to get lined up between our start buoys as the wind was trying to push everyone around, and the waves were crashing over the bow of "Gertie" soaking Neil in the process. Finally the Start flag went up and we were off. 4mile sprint... 11 boats .... Frantic moments followed, rowing into the head wind with a substantial amount of water gathering in the boat around our feet, We could tell from our Cox's face that the conditions ahead of us were going to be tricky, so with our best endeavours we dug in and desperately tried to get some rhythm and keep time with each other, but this proved awkward as every 4th stroke was turning into an air shoot!!! Finally we reached the Buoy turn and we were scrapping at the rear of the pack with 5 other boats!! But now with wind and tide to our stern we could see what was coming and started to use the waves to our advantage and began surfing them which was surging us along, and allowing us to build up a slight lead over the chasing boats. We entered the calmer water of Solva harbour in 8th position with no boats close to our bow or stern so we gently eased our way towards the finish line.

The men returned from their race describing it as a 'bit choppy', laughing this off the Ladies crew borrowed a rower from our friends at Llanion Warriors. With Neil @ Cox, Teresa Stroke, Gog And Sparker @ 2 & 3 and Marja in bow our ladies headed out into the ever worsening conditions! With waves crashing into the bow, we knew it was going to be a tough race. When the bilge pump failed (blocked by a bunjee...) and the boat heavy with water, there was a frantic search for a bailer which was swiftly untied and passed forward to the cox, meanwhile due to the conditions, Sparker's oar had popped out of the rolick in 3 and more chaos followed as the oar was secured - any ground lost was swiftly gained as we tried to round the first buoy but in the general melee of boats we dropped back slightly in the pack. From a field of 9 boats our intrepid ladies crossed the finish line in 6th position... A good result in very challenging conditions with a fantastic stroke from Tereasa and excellent coxing from Neil.

Finally it was the mixed race, so with Sparker loaned out to a random team for her 3rd row of the day!!! "Gertie" trundled out to the start line for one final haul.... With Simo @ Cox, Marja was making her debut at stroke, Neil and Brent @ 2&3 and Lord Gog in the bow we lined up on the start, and amazingly for a "Wisemans" crew we were the first ones there waiting!!! ?? Same route.. 4miles ... 15 boats..... Flag went up and we made a fantastic start!

With Marja looking like a rabbit in the headlights of a car the crew held it together making the now terrible conditions look easy and approached the buoy turn right in the mix with several other boats all screaming toward the same point!!! Then With a Huge rally of 20 hard, "Gertie" took the buoy perfectly leaving the following boats in her wake.

Now in 5th spot but with several gallons of water on board and a blocked bilge pump, the bailer disappeared overboard with Simon's enthusiastic bailing.. The waves and wind pushed us ever closer towards the finish line, but as the mouth of the harbour began to narrow we found ourselves in a sprint between Aberystwyth and Solva ..... 100 metres to go and still the gap ahead narrowed and "Gertie" found herself the being squeezed from both sides by Aber and Solva crews!!! And then the inevitable happened "Gertie" held her own, not allowing the other boats bully her out, but then ran out of water and with a terrible clatter of oars all 3 boats came to a momentary stop!!! Nothing damaged and we were now in the "No over taking zone" so we took up single file procession towards the finish line with "Gertie" coming over in 7th, but all 3 boats knew it could have been anyone's finish! Everyone was exhilarated by the spectacular finish! All three cox's from the boats involved shook hands afterwards and one cox smiling said: "You guys did well, that was a fantastic finish, this is how all races should feel like, down to the wire!" High complements indeed for the "Wisemans" team considering the Cox in question was wild man "Bearded Mike" of Llangwm fame!!!!

Many thanks to Llanion Warriors for loaning us Teresa, Neil for towing, Lotti & Lowri for winning chocolates in the raffle and to Solva for holding a fantastic league race!!!

Oh and never let Simo look after car keys!?!?!

## Surf Rowing at Newport.

Being a keen surfer and longboat rower one of my rowing pals got me to checkout a YouTube clip of a Cornish ladies surf rowing team out on a training row.

What I saw was epic! A boat, which looked like a squashed Celtic longboat with an enormous rudder was being propelled into the crashing surf from a beach start by 4 women. They rowed through the surf with their feet strapped down sliding their bottoms up and down their seats. Their Cox or 'sweep' kept the boat square into the waves with a huge oar like rudder. It looked an absolute battle trying to get beyond the breakers. The crew then rowed like mad to buoy, where they turned and sprinted back to the beach, the main aim to catch a wave and surf it back to the beach. Once on a wave, the rowers left their seats and joined the sweep at the bow of the boat, and he steered (surfed) the boat back onto the beach.

Watching the clip I was hit with a massive pang of FOMO (fear of missing out) -I really wanted to have a go at surf rowing as it combines the physical demand of Celtic long boating with the blow your head apart thrill you get when catching a solid green wave on your board. It was the perfect combination 100% physical exertion and 100% adrenaline rush . Unfortunately there are no surf rowing clubs in West Wales...or so I thought.....

Still not deterred, I suddenly remembered a conversation I'd had with a gentleman rower from Newport RC at the Mermaid race last year at cardigan. They had started surf rowing their Celtic Longboat!! On further investigation (lots of googling and Newport Yacht Club Website stalking) I discovered that Newport RC actually owned a vintage Surf Rowing Boat!!

I found a contact for Newport Rowing Club, who put me in touch with Trevor Holland, who from his email sounded as keen and enthusiastic about surf/ sea rowing as I was!! I couldn't wait to meet him!! As well as experiencing surf rowing, I wanted to learn the techniques of how to surf row a Celtic long boat. Our club is based in a rocky stretch of coastline next to Saundersfoot. Time after time we launch the boat in flat calm conditions, only to return mid tide to rolling waves as the waves hit the rocks. We've had a few hairy moments (damaged limbs and boats) trying to keep the boat in a straight line for landing!

Trevor suggested that our club come up and have a taster surf rowing taster session up at Newport. Despite a lot of the usual suspects being on holiday I had a great response and nine rowers from both Wiseys and Llanion RC went up to Newport the night before for some pre surf rowing training in the finest watering holes Pembrokeshire have to offer.

On the morning of the 5th August a gaggle of rowers from south of the county wandered over to the Parrog where we were met Trevor's surf rowing crew. After some introductions the Newport guys started unloading giant oars for the surf boat from their club house. The oars were so big they actually made me feel like a borrower! The sweep's oar was bigger still!

The plan was to take the surfboat and two longboats out. Myself and a rower from Llanion were the first two up for the surf rowing experience. Our sweep handed us the rollocks ready to load the giant oars. The rollocks would not have looked out of place on a Shire horse - they were enormous!

Newport rowers took the bow and stroke position whilst us newbies were positioned in the middle. We had been pre warned to wear Speedos/ bikini bottoms for the surf row. You basically give yourself a wedgie, dip your bottom in the sea and this gives you sufficient lube to slide up and down your seat (which is not dissimilar to a shiny serving tray).

On the sweep's instruction we jump in the boat in unison. Initially it felt alien sliding up and down the seat, with such a heavy oar. Even the feathering technique was different to long boating. However I soon found my rhythm, and got used to incorporating my sliding butt cheeks into the stroke. The sweep had us stop and went through some basic techniques, how to turn, letting go of oars to surf the waves in etc. In no time at all the sweep had us sprinting out to sea towards an imaginary buoy, we turned (which felt cumbersome in comparison to a Longboat) facing the beach. Sprinting towards the shore my legs and bottom were screaming at me to stop – they were not used to this at all!! But wild encouragement from the stroke seat kept me rowing harder than hard, until all of a sudden we caught a miniscule wave to the shore and we were swiftly instructed to let go of the Oars. I was surprised the speed we were travelling with only an ankle height wave....

On the beach we practiced a racing start – but sadly had to imagine we were rowing through shoulder height breakers!! No surf today...secretly I was relieved after experiencing the speed the boat cruised into shore on a tiny breaker!!!

After a few more sprints and practicing a surf landing, the crews swapped out, and I had the opportunity to be taught surf rowing techniques in a Celtic longboat. This was tricky given the calm conditions!!! The Cox ran through the basic techniques of the crew putting their oars in the air when a wave was caught and trusting the Cox to steer the boat to shore safely. The logic being that when you 'catch' a wave – rowers tend to panic and everybody rows at different pressures which unbalances the boat and causes it to lose its line, resulting in a flipped boat!! By having the rowers remove their oars, means the Cox is completely in control of the boat.

After a morning of playing in the surf and long boats, it was time for a beer, and we headed back to the Parrog. Easier said than done in our vessels. The tide was out and we had to navigate both vessels up the shallow dug out channel to the Parrog against and outgoing tide. The surf boat had an old hand at the sweep position – but it looked hard work rowing and steering the surf boat. I'm not sure who had had the biggest work out getting the surf boat back to shore, the rowers, or the sweep – all five were dripping with sweat when they joined us at the Parrog.

After putting the boats to bed, and a quick shower we joined Newport surf rowers for some liquid refreshment at the Parrog. Wisey's and Llanion rowers were buzzing about the surf rowing experience!

Over a cold beer we enjoyed more YouTube clips of surf rowing courtesy of Trevor, and tales of rowing at fresh West in 8 foot waves!! What a perfect end to a lovely morning rowing!

## FISHGUARD 12th August 2012.

Photos to follow

Sunday 12th August saw the penultimate southern league race taking place in Lower Town, Fishguard. This was going to be my first 'long distance' tow in Simo's van (AKA blind spot o'clock). The journey went event free up until the very end where the hairy 270 degree turn into the harbour car park caught me out – and I had to (with lots of encouragement from Sparker) mount a curb the size of Mount Everest. Sparker assured me that this is how she drives her car, and that everything would be fine, and sure enough it was. This challenge gave me the confidence to reverse park the longboat – I was feeling drunk on my own fumes of girl power!

In typical Elen style I had overestimated how long it was going to take us to get to Fishguard – which meant we had at least an hour and a half before the rest of our team turned up. So we did what any self respecting rower would do.....eat lots of cake and drink sugary tea.

At twelveish the rest of Wiseys turned up and over the unloading of Ready Oar Knot we discussed who was going to stroke the ladies and men's teams. Both Annie and Philly Poo stepped up to the mark and accepted the challenge of stroke (hesitantly)!!

As with all races, you think you have bags of time, then suddenly it's announced that the coxes briefing will be in 1 minute – and you have at least a 5 minute walk to get to the race HQ!! By the time we arrived in HQ, the briefing had finished – not a great start for the two virgin coxes, Brent and Peter J!! It turns out Wiseman's weren't the only team who missed the briefing, and so coxes briefing round two was held much to Peter's relief!!!

Again it was a mad panic rush for the first team to get the men's boat in the water and row over to Goodick beach for the rolling start. For a change there were at least 10 boats behind us!!

The men's team saw me coxing, Philly Poo stroking, Brent at two, Sparker at three and Peter J at bow.

At the start line a few comments were thrown our way regarding the presence of Sparker in our boat, which my coxing ultra ego retorted that she rows like a man. This seemed to shut the boats up.....however when Philly Poo and Brent started stripping the neighbouring boats started chanting for Sparker to strip too!!!!...this did not go down well with our honorary man!!!

After a confusing rolling start (where you row at 10% pace holding a line between two marshal boats until the flag drops) – we were off. My crew held a good position up at the front of the middle pack, with Fishguard and Llanion Super Vets either side. It was a battle for space between these two boats for the majority of the race – but it didn't put my team of rowers off who quickly found their rhythm and were putting out some lovely competitive rowing.

Fishguard and Llanion super vets pulled away from us after the first buoy located by Dinas Head, however a cheeky sharp buoy turn on the second buoy pulled us in front of Fishguard and neck and neck with Llanion Super Vets. We managed to keep ahead of the Fishguard boat, but Llanion kept the pressure on and we were always a couple of boat lengths behind – and no amount of cheeky coxing could level us off.

We had a strong sprint finish – finishing narrowly behind Llanion...and I think mumbles?

We came at the front of the mid pack, around 8th in a field of 18.

Next up was the women's race - and we were a boat of firsts. Brent the virgin Cox and Annie the virgin stroke. I took position two, Sparker at three and Bryony at bow.

The flag dropped and Brent immediately got us a great line to Dinas. Annie set a long steady stroke – which didn't falter throughout the race. This helped the rest of the crew get strength in our stroke, and before I knew it we'd settled into a strong rhythm. The boat felt good, we were in the mix, and I was actually enjoying myself, as opposed to feeling like I was about to drop dead!

Approaching the first buoy I could assess that we were mid pack, the gap between us and the third group of boats was getting bigger. Due to the sheer number of boats, Brent had to take the first buoy wide, but we managed to keep our position with Llangwm b team. Brent, now considering himself an expert in buoy turns, nailed the second one, making up ground but it still wasn't enough to keep us alongside Llangwm.

Coming up to the third and final buoy turn Brent had us up the pace to the infamous 'bleed through your bum' rate – and it felt good, the boat roared through the water, and I could smell Llangwm's fear! The crew were empowered by Brent's encouragement as he told us that we were closing down on the three boats ahead – we all rowed harder than hard. Sadly it wasn't meant to be, there wasn't enough room or time to pass the leading boats and we had to settle for our position. However it was all smiles as we rowed back to swap crews, knowing that we'd given it our all and Annie had survived her first race at stroke!

After a short break for the novice and junior race it was the final race of the day, the mixed. It was time to break Peter J's coxing virginity. I stroked, Brent was at two, Philly Poo at three and Annie at bow.

This has got to be the most exciting/ scary/ infuriating races I have ever been in....I LOVED it! Peter expertly coxed us out to the rolling start....which was nothing other than organized chaos! We had to all turn the boats round and start the rolling start again!! Then without much warning the race started!

Pete picked his line for Dinas head, and really had to fight for water as Towy and PYC squeezed us leaving Peter fighting for water. There were lots of narrowly missed oars, but this was just the beginning. We approached the first buoy turn on the inside with Towy and PYC narrowly ahead of us on the outside. Peter, having been to the Elen school of coxing decided to do a cheeky buoy turn on the inside. Greens dipped reds pulled, but there wasn't enough water and we collided beautifully with PYC and both boats had to stop rowing completely! Seconds later a un identified white boat rammed Ready Oar Knot's stern! PYC's cox was beyond furious shouting aggressively at Pete, my ultra ego was shouting aggressively back!!! It was total adrenaline fuelled chaos and I was drinking it up! Even loving being at stroke! (the 6 gels I'd had through the course of the gel were kicking in big time!)

We managed to free ourselves up from the tangled mess and find our rhythm again – much to my delight we were now a couple of boat lengths ahead of Towy and PYC, it was down to the high speed multiple collision. Pete expertly coxed us to the second buoy....this time he went wide not wanting a repeat incident. All the way to the third buoy we were just ahead of Towy and PYC. Just as we passed the third buoy Peter J had us up the power and we accelerated ahead to the finish. An adrenaline filled Wiseman's team finished middle of the pack.

Sparker and Bryony pimped themselves to a scratch team consisting of a Newport and Llanion gentlemen. They came 5th.....cementing Phil Thomas' club's fund raising idea that we should breed uber rowers from Sparker!!! Just think how many Croacker Oars we could buy!!!!

Well done guys – you did the bridge proud, rowing long and strong!

## Goodwick to Parrog (8 mile row) 28th July 2012.

Photos to follow

Dawn broke on Saturday 28th July. It was the day of the Goodwick to Parrog eight miler. The Olympics had started the night before, I had watched the WONDERFUL sheep in the opening ceremony, the weather was fantastic. I was feeling inspired for a long hard row. Neil (our Olympic Chef De Mission) had picked up and towed the boat up to Goodwick whilst Peter J rounded up the rest of Team Wisemans. We all landed safely in Goodwick Marina. After a slightly nervous wait, wondering if the race was actually on and if we were in the right place we finally spotted some other rowing types and started to get organised. We safely deposited our trusty vehicle on the gleaming white sands of Goodwick Beach. Then basked in the heat of the day waiting for the event organisers to get into 1st gear. Bronzed skimpily clad Sun worshipers were sprawled across the beach, the sea in the bay was a wonderfully calm blue. I felt completely relaxed, it was like I had arrived in some Mediterranean paradise.

I felt completely unfazed when I noticed the lumpy looking sea out by Dinas Head and white bumps bashing themselves to pieces on the cliffs. I'd just rowed across the Irish sea, everything else was just softy rowing. Our team consisted of Bryony at 4, Libby at 3, Peter J at 2 and myself at stroke with Sparker coxing. The plan was for me and Sparks to swap halfway so we both got a row in.

The coxes briefing finally began with some vague instructions about keeping the land on the right hand side and where the finish was – Newport sailing club beach. The start was to be timed with each boat leaving a few seconds apart .

The crews assembled and each boat launched into the clear topaz waters. We started warming up in the bay doing a few circles and generally milling around waiting for the first boat to head off. After being shouted at a lot by a women's team, who appeared to be on some form of steroids (We were having a lovely time until you ladies rocked up – we didn't need your drug fuelled ranting.) we began the race.

Things began smoothly enough. I tried to beat out a steady rhythm for the others to follow and Sparks was full of encouraging words. We crossed into the more open waters on the outer reaches of the bay. The fist waves hit us. It was a big swell!! The boat rolled violently from right to left. BLOODY HELL!! I had totally underestimated how difficult this was going to be! I attempted to try and keep my stroke steady as we were swirled around by the waves. Then my oar popped out of its rowlock on a particularly nasty wave! "E^\*@E\$#"ing E\$E\$"Eer!!!" As I struggled lamely to get my oar sorted out the others carried on brilliantly. Sparker was coxing out of her skin and the other rowers were pulling mightily. I finally got my oar in and carried on.

After I had crabbed multiple times and my oar had popped out twice more we passed Dinas Head. It was super rough rowing! We decided the sea was far too nasty to even attempt a swap round – so Sarah was going to have to Cox for the duration (Well done Sparks!). I didn't really have any idea where any other boats were. I just knew that we now had most of the waves hitting the back of the boat. The boat started to get lifted up and we began surfing on some of the waves. Larger waves would still sometimes hit us from the port side - once nearly knocking me out of my seat and occasionally washing over the whole of the boat.

The row from Dinas head to the finish seemed to pass in a flash. Sparker shouted at us the whole way and we kept it together in the heaving sea. There was still some more excitement to come however as we crossed the sandbanks of Newport and caught a breaking wave into the river mouth. We surfed rowed into the finish! Epic!

This row had been a proper fight with the elements –the best kind of rowing. We had coped magnificently with everything that had been thrown at us and had come through it all. It didn't really matter about the actual race - we had survived! Later whilst I sat in the bar feeling half comatose I reflected that this certainly had not been a row for softies.

Thanks to a magnificent rowing team; Sarah, Peter, Libby and Bryony. Big thanks to Neil for being the chief co-ordinator, driver and generally good chap (although he did end up coxing for Llannion - Boo). Also a massive thank you to the safety boat crews! To the shouty, nasty, druggy ladies team - I hope you sank!

## Seal Spotting Special at Woolhouse Rocks.



The recent good weather has seen record numbers of members attending club nights and social rows, including 19 rowers taking out all three boats on a recent club night. Several social rows have also been made to Tenby for a pint and packet of crisps. In addition, last Thursday's club night was given over to a 'seal spotting special' when two boats rowed to Woolhouse Rocks where at least a dozen seals were entertained by club members.

## Pembrokeshire Yacht Club league races - Sunday 15th July



### Wiseman Bridge Ladies Victorious.

Sunday 15th July saw a large contingent of Wiseman's Bridge rowers compete in the Pembrokeshire Yacht Club league races at Gellyswick Bay. Conditions were far from ideal with a brisk wind blowing the haven and a strong flood tide making things difficult for the teams.

The first race of the day was the ladies event, which marked the first outing of the newest addition to the Wiseman's fleet 'Dirty Girty from number 30'. The team knew that in addition to their rowing ability they had to choose the right tactics to have any chance of beating their fellow competitors. The plan was to make the most of the environmental conditions and get to the front of the field on the outward leg. The ladies would then have to dig in hard against the wind and weather on the long haul home. As the race started, several of the other teams sprinted ahead, whereas the Wiseman's ladies made a more sedate start, establishing a powerful rhythm which took them through the field into fourth place at the halfway mark. Rounding the first buoy they took an aggressive line and performed a textbook turn taking them into third place and free to close the gap on the race leaders who were ahead of the pack and fighting for position. With a mile or so left to row, the team slid between the two leading boats and upped their work rate to start pulling ahead, giving them a good boat length lead over their nearest rival. With 200 yards to go, goaded by their over excited cox, the girls used their remaining energy to put in a sprint finish seeing them complete the race several lengths ahead of the second place boat.

Team: Cox Mark, Stroke Cleo, Sparker, Elen and Marja.

Next up was the men's race, where the team knew they were going to have to put in an exceptional performance against several very strong teams to emulate the ladies victory. Skillfully coxed by Elen through the numerous buoy turns to the halfway stage of the race, the team were stuck towards the rear of the main pack unable to make enough headway to challenge the leaders. Although disappointed not to have finished further up the field, it was a gritty effort by the team in difficult conditions.

Team: Cox Elen, Stroke Mark, Brent, Neil, Sparker (honouree man for the race!)

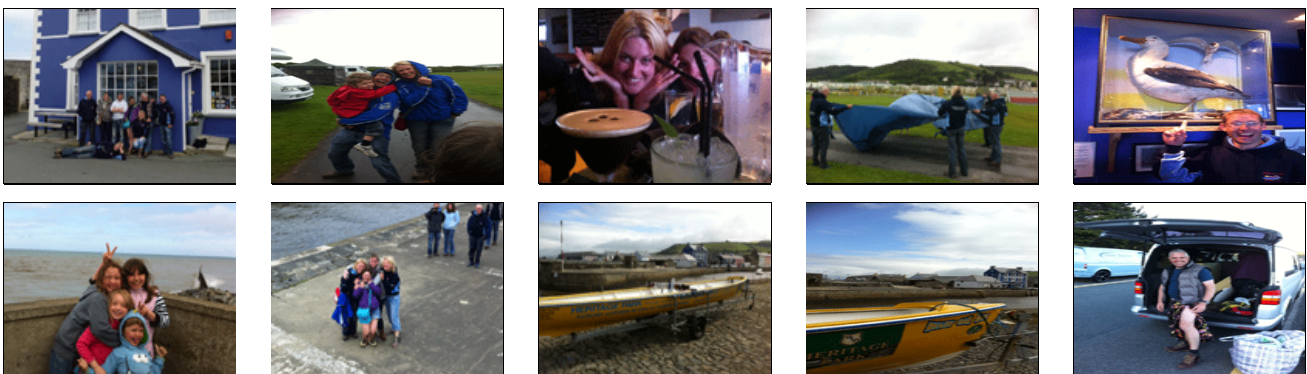
The last team to race was our mixed Super Vets. With only a handful of club rows under their belts, Liz and Nick were being blooded in their first competitive race. In deteriorating conditions, where it looked at one stage as though Nick was going to be flung out of the boat, the team put in a worthy effort in difficult circumstances. Well done Liz and Nick on your baptism of fire, once your blisters are healed we would love to see you back racing again.

Team: Cox Cleo, Stroke Mark, Sian, Liz and Nick.

In addition to the Wiseman's Bridge teams, the club joined forces with Llanion Warriors to put out several scratch teams to ensure that almost everyone was able to row twice, or in Sparker's case, three times. Whether she will ever row again remains to be seen!

Our thanks to Pembrokeshire Yacht club for hosting the event, Cleo for organising us all, Neil and Mark for towing duties. Special mention to Elen for her 'blonde moment' in thinking we were meeting at the Cleddau Bridge to get the boats ready!

## ABERAERON LEAGUE RACE REPORT - SUNDAY 24TH JUNE 2012



After the disappointment of having the North Wales Castle to Castle race cancelled on the Saturday due to the exceptionally bad "summer" weather, A slightly depleted team headed upto Aberaeron on the Saturday night to camp ahead of the race the following morning, full of hope that the weather would not cause the Sunday League race to be cancelled.....

With "Oarsome" & "Ready Oar Knot" now a long way from home, the Bridge team were on manoeuvres yet again, the team pulled into the camp site much to the bemused looks of the owners and other residents. This was mainly due to us looking more like a group of "Gypsy Travellers" rather than Wiseman's Bridge's Elite Rowing Team, A random assortment of vans, trailers, and tents set off across the camp site towards our wet and windy pitches. Once set up everyone congregated in the Gazebo and started discussing the POA for the evening. Luckily we had some refreshments with us in the form of Pear Cider, Fosters & Pringles but as the wind and rain battered the canvas around us it was decided to relocate to the Harbour Master Pub

for further beverages and some power food ready for the race in the morning. Unfortunately the bar was exceptionally busy so we had to wait for a table for food but luckily for our intrepid team there was space to wait alongside the cocktail bar!!

This was the start of everything unravelling as we discovered Neil had secret desires of being a Pimp as he gathered his WBRC Ladies around him like a harem whilst he ordered Martinis, Mojitos and Champagne. Everyone Was starting to really get into the party spirit, then we were approached by a random stranger who turned out to be a member of Aberaeron Rowing Club and she commended us for coming to support their race and was suitably impressed with the "Wiseman`s" pre race preparations. As the children were taken back to the campsite by the semi sober Johnny and Tash, the rest of the crew decided to descend upon the caravan club bar we were treated to Dancing and Cabaret and the team even attempted the phone box challenge (we managed 6 of us inside the old red phone box).

0700 the following morning and the message had been received (Via FaceBook!??!) that race was off! Upon packing up our wet and windswept camping kit we all wandered back towards the Harbour Master for A Fried Breakfast and to watch the waves come rolling into the mouth of the harbour, Surfboards may have been more suitable today than Longboats! Despite this Everyone seemed in good spirits and had had a good time including the children (who even managed a spot of Crab fishing that morning ) But thankfully we hadn't stayed sober the night before in readiness for today's race... that as Cleo put it "I would have been really annoyed if I had stayed sober last night now!"

Thanks to Aberaeron Rowing Club for attempting to host the race, shame about the weather . But after such an excellent weekend I'm sure the "Wiseman`s" will return next year to do it all again .... Race or no Race....

## Llangwm Race Report 2012 - Sunday 11th June



11 members of WBRC decided to try a second league outing of the 2012 season as normally the club tends to miss most league events. But on this occasion Neil had come up with a cunning plan!!

To make a full day of it and to save the cost of fuel and paying the toll on the bridge (were in a double dip recession don't you know) 5 members of the team along with Ready Oar Knot, launched at Warrior Way Llanion, Pembroke Dock and took a leisurely row up river with the incoming tide, and for extra company Towy Boat Club (TBC) ventured with us for their first experience into the world of league races!!!! This proved an excellent idea, as it not only gave us the chance to warm up but also settled our new friends onto the water of the Cleddau prior to the races starting.

The remaining 6 WBRC crew were already waiting for us in Black Tar along with our normal supporters Mr & Mrs P , Lottie & Lowri (who's birthday it actually was today)and Beryl the Funky Fun Bus!!!

As we started the chaos that is registration, Neil had his second brain wave of the day.... Our new friends TBC had only come with the intention of trying the novice race, but with a little persuasion and a borrowed rower (Norman) from Llanion Warriors we had enough bodies and boats to enter 6 teams in 3 different races!!!! Unheard of before!!!!!! The resulting concoction of rowers gave us ;

- Mens Super Vets
- Mens Seniors
- Ladies Vets
- Ladies Seniors
- Mixed Super Vets
- Mixed Seniors

We came away with a mixed bag of results the best being a 3rd place finish out of 19 boats for our Mixed Seniors (Apparently the clubs best finish in a league race for many seasons?) . But more importantly gave everyone 2 good rows and the experience of racing. It was agreed the intensity during the short league races is an area we could improve on but even this could not detract from the enjoyment and exhilaration everyone had during the day!! Highlights – A big congratulations to TBC who won their Novice race, but commiserations to our own PJ who had collected the Mens Super Vet trophy on behalf of the club only to have it snatched away by the cruel ginger Jelley man from Llanion Warriors who had actually beaten us but had registered themselves incorrectly (Vets not Super Vets) but the Judges ruled in favour of them during the recount!! Our Ladies have also redesigned the rowing must have clothing for 2012, due to the exceptionally warm day it appears white Bra and Knickers are the way forward ? And finally it had to happen sooner or later, a trailer puncture on way home (500m to go until the pub) no spare!?!? What do you do!?!? Keep going of course ??? ... Must remember to buy new wheels and tyres before Gogland Race next week!!!

## New Quay Race 2012 Report. Sunday 20th May 2012.



No more a convincing advertisement can be given for a staycation than that experienced by the intrepid Wisemans Bridge rowers, and their happy and faithful band of supporters, on our away day to take part in the New Quay league races on Sunday 20th May.

An advance "camping" party had gone up the night before [Neil, Marja, Lowri and Lotti] Many thanks go to Johnny for letting Neil borrow his " beast " vehicle to tow Oarsome and get us off the hook!!

Many thanks to Cleo and Ellen for going on ahead Saturday morning to ensure that we got registered and for discovering "Snog Simon" masks, which proved a useful means of distraction and hilarity to help calm pre race nerves.

Thanks to Sian , in trusty Beryl, for transporting Tracy, Sarah, Brenda and myself, as we skirted our way along the edge of the Preseli's northwards to New Quay.

What an amazing sight awaited us on our arrival. Azure blue, green clear seas worthy of the Med itself, but far better, as stretched along the beach there lay 24 other Celtic Longboats alongside of Oarsome .The weather remained bright and sunny all day, and there was to be no respite from the heat once the rowing was under way.

This was to be my first venture into competition rowing and given that I don't think I was built for sprints, and some may say not for endurance either, as each of the races unfolded the nerves did begin to take their toll and demand more Mars bar , muffins and liquid intake. With just reason as the comments of the Wisebirds crew after their valiant 6th place effort only served to emphasise how full on and demanding the 4 mile course was. Viewing

it from the gallery that was the harbour wall was exhausting enough!! Race report detail below courtesy of Cleo:

#### Women's Race

Cox-Cleo

Stroke/Crew-Tracy, Sarah, Ellen, Sian.

Final position-6th.

The ladies may have spent hours in the boat over the winter months but league racing was altogether a different matter as with only a handful of races over the year completed by the crew and the nature of the challenge ahead added to by Wilson's debut as cox, and her own admission that "rules that looked so simple on paper before the race didn't seem quite that way when boats are bearing down on all sides as positions are jostled for at buoy turns!"

Nevertheless the girls got off to a flying start and approaching the first buoy turn, about a third into the race were in 3rd place, surprising not just themselves but possibly the rest of the pack as well, many of whom will never have crossed oars with the Bridge previously. Sadly 3rd position was reduced to 5th as the first buoy turn took its toll. Undeterred the Wisebirds continued and put in an excellent performance dropping only one further place at the second buoy. 6th place, was a fantastic result in what had been a very competitive race, with around 20 entries, sounded a warning to the rest of the league that the Wisebirds have got you in their sights!!

One of the joys of the day for me and Brenda was the announcement of the teams from LLangwm and Llanion, their correct Welsh pronunciation causing some bewilderment as to who these two "new" teams were. Unfortunately all our attempts since to tutor and coax continued use of the "Welsh" way have lapsed into the local vogue/brogue.

On to the Mixed Race and for me my moment of truth!

#### Mixed Race-

Cox-Ellen;

Stroke/Crew-Cleo, Neil, Peter J and Marja.

Final position-18th

Today on the 20th May, 2012, I lost my rowing race virginity in true "Bridge" fashion, coxed by Ellen and told to keep it long and strong in time with Cleo's excellent stroke. The starting line with 24 entries lay down the gauntlet of the jostling and barracking that lay ahead. In the interests of keeping Ellen's head firmly on her shoulders Ynys Mon were warned off in no uncertain terms, but still managing to keep within the spirit of the rowing fraternity. A lung busting racing start set the pace for the remainder of the 4 mile course, in which there was no respite. Ahead awaited the 2 buoy turns, the first of which was pretty interesting as right of way had to be given as per rules. Great fun with only a handful of practises behind me!

The 2nd and 3rd sections of the race showed the true steel that the Oarsome crew were made of and with Ellen's words of encouragement and Cleo's rhythmic stroke we picked off both LLangwm and Llanion, no mean feat in itself. Our 2nd buoy turn was text book stuff and set us up for the final full out pull to the end.

The home straight and the call of "ten hard" and 100+% to be kept up all the way to the finishing line. What an exhilarating experience, especially not having raced anything in years. It has certainly whetted my appetite to get a few more events like this under my belt and I am now looking forward to Llangwm on their own water followed by the Gog[Castles] row.

Mention should be given to the excellent novice and juveniles race, so refreshing to see young blood getting involved at an early age, rather than in my case old blood getting involved at a mature age.

The Bridge also came to the rescue of Llanion's Men crew and Solva respectively as Neil made up the numbers and we lent a bung respectively.

Many thanks to Sarah and Cleo's parents for their continued support and my wife Brenda for supporting me in my rowing heroics.

New Quay Community Rowing Club are to be congratulated on having organised a brilliant day's racing and a fantastic buffet, and raffle also.

A more perfect day out I can't imagine. Arbennig.

Joint report by Cleo and Peter Jones.

## Celtic Challenge Race Report.



At around half past five on Sunday 6th of May 12 rowers from Wisemans Bridge Rowing Club and their 2 support crew arrived in Aberystwyth Harbour. Our team had just rowed across the Irish Sea completing The Celtic Challenge - it had taken 25 hours, 18 minutes and 23 Seconds; an adventure of epic proportions.

The journey to the finish line began in November 2011 when a group of masochistic Wisemans Bridge rowers began planning for the event. Countless hours were spent raising funds, organising support vessels, repairing boats and ensuring the team had a full complement of rowers.

On Friday morning 4th May the rowers and support crew with support boats Atlantic Blue and a rib congregated in Arklow. The teams began to prepare the boats in knowledge that weather conditions might be good enough for a crossing the following afternoon. Safety checks were carried out, food and water loaded and everyone prepared their bodies in their own way for the arduous task to come.

Saturday afternoon - the call had been made - the race was ON. However there were still very strong North Easterlies, the sea was a lumpy mess of white caps and large waves. The support boats for each team began to leave the harbour. Atlantic Blue crashed through the waves at the harbour mouth suggesting that just rowing into the open sea was going to be a hard enough task. However Oarsome, shadowed by the rib team, safely made her way out to the start line. Shortly after the hooter sounded -the race had finally begun!

The boats were rolling horribly in the rough sea and the rowing was very tough. The crews were getting soaked with waves crashing over Oarsome, threatening to swamp her. An hour in and it was time for the first change over. Despite the rough conditions the crew change was completed without hitch. The 1st crew change also marked the beginning of the dreaded sea sickness and it wasn't long before there was some Olympic standard pukeing being displayed by a number of the team. Two particular standouts were Cleo and Simon who started delivering impressive technicolour yawns within minutes of setting foot on Atlantic Blue.

The next hours were a blur of hard rowing, brutal seasickness and prone bodies recouping on the deck of AB. The support team worked tirelessly ferrying tired and broken rowers between the boats with Captain Mark keeping a watchful eye over the proceedings.

The wind remained strong and conditions difficult but very slowly the white caps began to disappear and around midnight, under a beacon like full moon

the sea state become noticeably easier. There was a sense that the team had made it over the worst of the conditions. When the first light of day broke over the tired team the shadow of Bardsey island became visible. Spirits lifted - Wales was in view - but there were still 30 miles left to row!

As the sun rose and the team slowly made headway into Cardigan Bay the early morning clouds disappeared and the sea calmed to an oily glass. A grey strip on the horizon slowly morphed into green hills and valleys. Dolphins played and leapt next to Oarsome. Wales was welcoming us home. After a final crew change the team made the final push to Aberystwyth Harbour. They were shouted on firstly by the rest of the team from the rib and then by a huge crowd on the harbour wall! It was a brilliant ending. Hearing the shouting support and seeing our friends and family suddenly seemed to bring home what we had just achieved.

Massive thanks has to be given to everyone who organised and helped Wisemans for the CC - it was a gargantuan task. Neil and Ellen - the instigators and organisers. Everyone who helped get all the equipment and boats ready and seaworthy. The support team of Lee and Johnny were incredible; they kept going and going and going. Mark, our skipper, was tireless, protecting us from the sea (and passing tankers). All our support, sponsors, and fundraisers.

The Team - Mark, Neil, Elen, Simon, Annie, Sparker, Rich, SirAlex, Brent, Johnny D, Cleo, Tom and support team Lee and Johnny Rees.

## Milford Haven Marathon Row 2012. Saturday 21st April 2012



With the "Milford Marathon" now into its 3rd year and with Wisemans being the current Mixed team trophy holders there was plenty of interest in trying to retain this piece of silver wear ... The Logistic of transporting boats and crew to these events prove as stressful as actually rowing the race, and this proved no different, to trying to get everyone up to London for the GRR. Unfortunately last minute we lost "Young Wilson" who did herself a mischief a week earlier lifting the boats onto the evil double trailer, so a quick reshuffle of bodies was then needed as for the first time the Wisemans fielded 2 mixed teams "Wilson's Warriors" sporting a figure head of a toy Puffin & "Crosses Crusaders" with trusty old STIG ... As the vans were unpacked we were amazed by the amount of clothes, food, drink and other random items of curiosity that laid around us. It was evident that we were not going for a 3 hour row more like a 3 day row!!!! So with items trimmed down to the bare minimum in each boat it was time to take our place on the shore line in readiness for a "Beach Start" ... A fine spectacle of all 22 longboats lined up along the water's edge in Dale, but here is where we made our first mistake, the sounding of the first horn for the 5 minute warning we were still missing 2 of the crew (Alex and Sian) who decided to go and try to "squeeze a bit more out" so upon hearing the horn came galloping down the beach and leaped into the boats, but we had placed "Ready Oar Knot" and "Oarsome" side by side in the shallow water with our oars touching so when the starter horn sounded due to our close proximity to each other "Oarsome" decided the quickest route off the beach was through "Ready Oar Knot" which resulted in clashing oars and plenty of choice words!!!

It was at this point it becomes the story of two boats -

**Oarsome** - With "Gog" coxing a strong mixed crew of Sparker stroking, Brent Tom Sian & Johnny, the team got off to a storming start with a rally call of 10 hard to clear the lines which unfortunately resulted in a clashing of oars with "Ready Oar Knot"! This good start saw "Oarsome" in the front pack of 5 boats and with using the wind and swell maintained this position around "Stack Fort" where the sea conditions became worse with waves crashing over the starboard side of the boat and Llangwm, Solva and Aber men along with Porthmadog mixed then started to pull ahead, but "Oarsome" was still in the race with Llanion's men's boats. Once round the LNG jetties and setting a course up river the conditions improved and the team got into a more relaxed rhythm, and doing what the "Bridge" do best kept it long and strong and soon Solvas men were passed with Llanion men hot on their tails. With the Cleddau Bridge now in sight Llanion men were in home water and pushed to overtake with a battle of 10 hards from each boat Llanion pulled ahead, but "Oarsome" undeterred made a quick tactical change at stroke and Bow and the crews were soon alongside each other again! This tussle continued through the choppy windy waters past Llangwm and Hook but Llanion men slowly pulled away (but during this both boats pasted the leading mixed team Porthmadog) with a final change of crew "Oarsome" set off for the finish line tight on the sterns of the leading men's boats. For the final 3 miles the crew battled cramp and shouted words of encouragement to each other to come in a fantastic 6th overall BUT 1st mixed team in a time of 3hr 6min 15sec!!!! Well done guys and girls!!

**Ready Oar Knot** - Having to contend with a poor start, took a defensive line from the beach trying to allow the team to settle into some sort of rhythm. Trace's first appearance in a club race for many seasons took the stroke seat and set a metronomic long stroke even through the difficult sea conditions. With Simon at cox the crew of Trace Mark Alex Annie Neil made steady progress from the back of the pack. The swell and wind made for interesting rowing leading upto "Stack Fort" with a few "Air" shoots from every position in the boat, and for Sir Alex this proved to be a baptism of fire as the rookie of team, only having a handful of rows under his belt, the conditions were providing him with valuable experience prior to the Celtic Challenge in a few weeks time! On the approach to Stack Fort, lead by Traces desire to "get a move on!" Ready Oar Knot pushed past Llanion Ladies and Llangrannog Ladies, and Solva Round Table men's team. An hour into the race and the first change was due, as Annie's first race back from injury she took up the passenger seat position and Mark took charge of the cox duties. With fresh legs in the boat the team set about making some ground on the leading boats and just before the Cleddau bridge ROK took PYC Mixed team who were ingeniously using a coat as a sail from the bow! Trace now into her 2nd hour at stroke lifted the pace wanting to pass more boats, but for 30minutes ROK was alone, all the way past Llangwm before we could see another group of boats ahead! So ROK made its last crew change, and with Trace now at the helm encouraging everyone the gap ahead was closing, and at Hook ROK slid past Brentas Neyland Ladies (winning ladies team). 3 miles to go and a Llangwm men's team was a boats length ahead, so with one last effort ROK nudged past, to shouts from Llangwm men that we were cheating as we did not have a passenger?!?! (Unknown to us Alex had buried himself in the Bow under a pile of coats) To which we ignored and carried on the laborious slog to the finish!

15th place in 3hr 20min 39sec Well Done everyone good effort !!!

The after race party resulted in beers, food, live music, new shoes (Marky), Trophies and to top it all off getting the van stuck in the field with the boats stuck behind us!!!

So thanks to Llangwm Rowing club for organising the race, but most of all for pushing us out of the mud at 1 am in the morning!!!! Never a dull moment with the Wisemans!!!

## Great River Race. Saturday 17th September 2011



This year Wisemans Bridge entered two teams for the highlight of the racing year, the Great River Race, 22 miles of gruelling rowing from the Isle of Dogs to Ham on the river Thames. The ladies team consisted of Cleo, Helen Jenks, Tina, Sparker, Sian and Elen who had spent much of the season rowing together honing their technique and style. The gents, Phil T, John, Simo, Neil, Brent and Mark had struggled to get together during the season and were aware that the ladies could prove a real threat to their pride and cross the line before them. Added to their lack of race practice, half the men had gone down with heavy colds and Mark was jet lagged with no idea of where he was most of the time.

Meeting up Friday evening after dropping the boats off at the start line, everyone headed into Richmond where they enjoyed an Italian meal before the girls headed off to the hotel for an early night. The men decided that they should sort out some race tactics and retired to the nearest pub.

Bright and early the next morning the teams were on their way to meet their fate. On arrival at the Isle of Dogs, the teams were busy sizing up the opposition, several of which were dressed in sporty one piece rowing kit in sharp contrast to the Wisemans' day-glow headbands and leggings. More worrying, they huddled in groups scowling with concentration as they discussed tactics. The Wisemans teams passed around some flat Fanta and the smokers had a last fag before launching the boats.

With so many other boats on the water it was a frantic start to the race, but both boats managed to steer clear of any serious trouble. With a clear start, it was not long before the two teams started to cut through the field, the boys boat slightly ahead of the ladies. After a few miles the river cut up rough around Tower Bridge, and to add to this the head wind picked up and the heavens opened. Both boats were taking water over the bow soaking everyone and almost swamping the mens boat, who never did manage to bail out all the offending water.

Once clear of the choppy water both crews got into a good rhythm, only broken by the planned changes of crew as the teams alternated between rowing, coxing and being passenger. With several other Celtic Longboats in contention, neither crew could afford to slacken the pace and managed to overtake some very strong teams and maintain their position. Both teams used every ounce of energy putting in very strong finishes, the men just failing to take another scalp at the finish line.

Both boats had survived several clashes with the opposition during the race without serious damage, however there was a mixture of bodily fluids in the bilges of both boats which is probably best to try and forget about. At the end of the race both crews were truly exhausted, but their efforts reflected in the fantastic finishing times:

Men 2hr 36 mins giving them seventh place in the Mens Celtic Longboat class .

Ladies 2hr 41 mins which won them second place in the Ladies Celtic Longboat class and third place in the overall Ladies race.

Once the boats were safely out of the water, the teams headed back to the hotel. After showering and treating their blisters, everyone re-boarded 'Beryl the Funky Fun Bus' and headed down to the post-race party and did what Wisemans do best!

As always there was a lot to organise to take part in an event like this, a big thanks to John and Neil for towing the boats, Helen for filling in all the forms and booking the hotel, Cleo who seems to do all the jobs everyone else forgets and Simon for fitting the new trailer bearings. Also thanks to the familiar faces in the crowd, our cheerleaders Sandra, Dawn, Glen, Natalie and Amy .

## Cardigan Mermaid Race - 27th August 2011



The Wiseman's crew held onto their 1st ladies position winning £150 towards the 'Save Our Quad' fund, and a lovely wooden trophy in the shape of an oar.

Time : - 58.52  
 Overall position, 5th.  
 Crew:  
 Cox - Annie  
 Stroke - Wilson  
 No. 2 - Gog  
 No. 3 - Sparker  
 Bow - Jones.

On Saturday 27th August 2011 a confident ladies team ventured north of Pembrokeshire in a quest for trophies and cash.

The ladies had a race plan which would ensure they'd return home to Wiseman's adorned with rowing crowns and pockets heavy with coins - the plan consisted of:

1. Wear matching kit including teal 1980's sweat bands - in the hope that this would unnerve the opposition - as only sporting gods wear such technical head gear.
2. Neck as many pain killers and energy gells as physically possible prior the race.

After the calamity that was Llangwm - the ladies made sure that they left Wiseman's Bridge in plenty of time for registration. However they needn't have worried as apparently Cardigan have worse timekeeping than Simon!

The ladies rocked up as registration opened and believe it or not were the first boat to register, leaving them enough time to fuel up with cake and caffeine at one of the quay side cafes. Annie did the team proud downing shots of double espresso - apparently it helps her nail the buoy turns.

The ladies ventured back for the Cox's briefing - which was an hour late Wisely the ladies used this time to their advantage, checking out the opposition and their kit.

At 17:00hrs (with help from Llangranog boys ;) ) the ladies launched the boat. There were 12 boats in total, and due to a 5 arch bridge at the beginning, it was a staggered start based on handicap. As the ladies were the least handicapped they got to go off first, with the only other ladies team, NewQuay.

Due to rough seas the race was cut short from 11 to 7 miles. Undeterred by what was to come, the ladies lined up eager to burst into life at the sound of the horn, only to have the race start delayed again due to a blockage downstream.....

At 17:40hrs the horn sounded and the Wisebird's were off. NewQuay took the lead for a short period of time, but the girls soon got into their groove and after the 5 arch bridge, which challenged Annie's coxing, took back the lead, leaving their opponents behind.

The 3 mile row down the river to Poppitt Sands was tough, the tide and wind were both against the ladies. Despite the challenging conditions the ladies held their position, but for the majority of the row out to sea NewQuay were in the crew's sights driving them on.

Annie did a sterling job of coxing her crew through the network of buoys and moored boats. Her best feat was navigating the team through the horrendous sea conditions, and tackling a turn around a make shift buoy (a rib) - the original buoy had been blown away, consequently making the race a mile shorter. Gog only just managed to avoid knocking one of the rib's passenger's off his craft with her finest Chinese oar ;).

Pulling away after the rib turn was like rowing through treacle, but the strong wind and tide quickly pushed the ladies back into the mouth of the river where the wind and tide swung in their favour. NewQuay ladies no longer became a threat as they vanished out of sight, but the crew kept the pressure on in response to Annie's echoing order that no boats would pass Oarsome.

Cardigan quay side was bouncing as the proud Wiseman's crew crossed the finish line. There to meet the girls was live commentary and the infamous

Parker whistling chorus.

The Wiseman's crew held onto their 1st ladies position winning £150 towards the 'Save Our Quad' fund, and a lovely wooden trophy in the shape of an oar.

A few people deserve a special thank you, namely:

Annie for coxing.  
Chris for towing.  
Peter & Sue Paker for whoop whooping!!

Last but not least – Cardigan Quay's Festival for putting on a epic race!!!

[www.mermaidrace.co.uk](http://www.mermaidrace.co.uk)

## Wisemans bring home the silverware...Again! (August 20th 2011)

Saturday 20th August was a big day for the mixed team competing in the Milford Marathon row, a distance of 22 miles from Haverfordwest to Dale. With the wet and windy weather promising a hard race, the team under the Captaincy of Cleo set off at a steady pace while several other teams pulled ahead. After the first few miles the wind against tide was producing choppy, difficult conditions and the Wisemans team soon started overtaking other boats.

As the rules of the race require a passenger, the team made some smooth change-overs allowing the rowing duties to be shared and a good pace maintained throughout the race.

The last stages were hard rowing with a large swell on the beam of the boat in addition to the choppy seas, but with one last crew change the team scented home putting in a strong finish.

Last year the club won the mixed title, but it wasn't until the team arrived ashore that they realised that they had finished 3rd in the overall race and retained the mixed trophy. Having fished out the dog ends and toffee wrappers, the winner's cup was soon put to good use as the wet and tired team shared a bottle of bubbly kindly donated by Marja.

The team were: Cleo, Sarah, Helen, Jon, Neil and Mark.

The following day the club hoped to field a ladies team in the Dale Three Forts race, unfortunately they were one short to make up the numbers and had to borrow a male rower from another club and became a mixed team.

The Wisemansbridge boat was quickly off the start line and at the front of the pack heading out of the bay. However despite the best efforts of the team in difficult sea conditions, their early strong showing ebbed away during the race and they finished towards the end of the field.

The ladies would like to thank Julian from Dale who stepped into the breach and enabled them to race.

The team were: Cox Dawn, Stroke Bryony with Marja and Sian. Julian from Dale as guest rower.

Thanks to Peter Parker for towing the boat to Haverford and Neil for towing the boat home.

## Dale Marathon (August 20th 2011)

Crew - Sarah, Neil, Cleo, John, Mark, Helen

The weather conditions were less than ideal as the 6 man crew prepared for the 22 mile race from Haverfordwest to Dale. Cox (Cleo) and passenger (John) were fully kitted out in wet weather gear as the team set off on the first leg of their journey. The wind was kind to them though and they made good progress down the river until they approached Llangwn where they were met with howling gales blowing up stream. Conditions were tough and although stroke (Sarah) resorted to rowing with her eyes closed, the team remained strong, gaining ground on other boats struggling in the chop.

After Llangwn it was time for the first change around which gave Sarah a well earned rest in the cox seat while Mark did some excellent back seat coxing from the passenger seat. Past Neyland and the 2 person coxing effort went slightly off course though, causing the over-tired Neil to have a minor tantrum in the middle of the boat! No severe damage was done and the team were soon back on track, seeing off their closest rivals, Dale.

Neil soon got his turn in the coxing seat and Helen a chance to eat some banana cake at the back of the boat. As the team hit the open seas for the final leg, they were greeted with a side on 2m swell of the kind rarely experienced when rowing at Wiseman's! Although slightly fearful for their lives, they pulled together and kept the focus right to the end, finishing 3rd overall and the fastest mixed team with a time of 3h 36m. It was an excellent effort by all involved and a big thanks goes to all our supporters (human and canine) and especially to Sarah's parents for towing the boat. The club's second trophy of the season stands proud in the pub!

## Ramsey Island Race. 7.5 miles (Saturday 30th July 2011)

Please click [here](#) to view the photos.

27 boats in total.

Ladies Team. Time – 1.17.38 – FIRST!!

Cox – Dawn  
Stroke – Cleo  
3 – Elen  
2 – Sarah  
Bow – Annie

The ladies were feeling fit and after consuming their own body weight in pasta (which in stroke's case, nearly made a re-appearance after 5 minutes of rowing) set off at a strong pace. As they reached the island they managed to shake off the rest of the ladies boats and got to work on the mixed and mens crews. After picking off another crew or two, they had an exciting time navigating 'the bitches' but with Dawn in the cox seat, came to no mishap and carried on. Rowing around the far side of the island there was time to take a couple more crews on before setting off at a cracking pace for home.

The ladies had a fantastic race and only required one trip to hospital (Annie) and one physio appointment (Sarah) in the days following, although Elen was reported to be seen hobbling around the office on Monday. But the main thing was – they won!!

Their (slightly wonky) winning trophy is standing proud in the club house (pub) so well done to them all.

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Ramsey – Mens Team. Time – 1.12.23. 5th place

Cox – Phil (as brilliant as ever)  
 Stroke – John the machine  
 2 – Angry Neil (trying to snap an oar)  
 3 – Brent – our secret outboard  
 Bow – Simon – best number 4 in the race.

Weather – Cloudy with sunny spells, with fantastic scenery and blue sea.

Report lodged in by Phil Thomas.

Start of race we stayed out to the starboard side of the race line to get a good start and after the first 10 minutes, with a few boats over-taking us, we got to St John's point in about 13th place, rowing against wind and tide. While going up through Ramsey sound we started picking off the boats who dared to over-take us in the earlier part of the race. Getting to the far side of the island and through the narrow gap that marks the half way point we then had the wind and tide on our side. The WMB men's team pushed hard to gain position and had to row hard to hold our position, with Cornish gig Ralph Bird pushing us hard all the way. On rounding the north of the island it was an out and out dash for the beach 2.5 miles away. There was a cross tide and choppy sea but still the Bridge men dug in and all the training that had been done was paying dividends. Again the Ralph Bird pushed us but we responded and held them off, crossing the line in 10th place after 1.12.23 in one of the best races we've entered, and only 2 minutes behind the winning celtic long boat rowed by our good friend Llanion.

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## Return of the Cleddau (May 14th 2011)

Team  
 Cox Bryony  
 Stroke Cleo  
 2 Neil  
 3 John  
 Bow Annie

With John having only a months worth of rowing under his belt and bryony coxing her first race, it was a relatively inexperienced yet keen crew that arrived in Haverfordwest ready for their first race of the season. The team got a good start and after only a minor collision with the first bridge, settled into their pace. Conditions were mixed going down the river until the team reached the Cleddau Bridge where they became near (but not quite!) impossible. The team gritted their teeth and pulled through the choppy seas until they finally reached the finish line at Neyland. Finishing towards the back of the field, the team were just pleased to finish at all! It was an excellent effort by all involved and a reminder of the value of fitness training!

## 2010 ARCHIVE BELOW

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### Cardigan 11 miles (Saturday August 21st 2010)

The Cardigan race is a hard 11 mile row, made more difficult as much of the time the boats are fighting against the tide and difficult sea conditions. Not unusually for Wisemans, a scratch team was put together consisting of Bev (Cox) Richard (Stroke), Phil T, Cleo and Mark. Under the rules this counted as a mens team, which together with the handicapping meant they were in the last batch of boats to cross the startline.

Starting in the town centre, the large crowds were entertained by a fair amount of 'argy bargy' as the boats started the race. Unfortunately for the team, they seemed to come off second best and found themselves second from last as the race got underway down the river. Struggling to find any decent rhythm Bev had her work cut out keeping the team together, then there was a brush with a moored motor boat which seemed to sober the team up and they started to pull together at a reasonable pace. The tactics (yes we had some!) were to set a steady pace down the river and out to the island, then to 'up the pace' once around the Island and make a final push when the boat was back in the river.

Clear of the river the sea conditions were a bit choppy making the row around the island hard work, but spirits were soon lifted as Cleo's mum and dad appeared in a fishing boat they had hitched a lift in to take photos and cheer the team along. Once around the island Bev had other boats in her sights and pushed the rowers to overtake one at the mouth of the river, then skilfully dodging moored boats and buoys pulled passed a second boat in the river. The last couple of miles in were a hard slog and everyone relieved to pass the finishing line in about 1 hour 40 minutes.

As usual, Bev did a great job getting the best out of a motley bunch, Richard in his last race before heading abroad for a year put in his usual strong performance forcing the rest of the team to follow suit.

Thanks to Simo for support and towing duties, despite the dodgy curry the night before!



## Wisemans Bring Back Trophy

### Saturday July 31st 2010 Wisemans Bring Back Trophy

The Wiseman's Bridge Rowing Crew were :- Phil Thomas, Cleo Wilson, Simon Collings, Sandra Ayris, Richard Hall and Elen Jones. A big thank you to all club members who came to support us and help with the boat!

On Saturday July 31st a gaggle of eight Celtic Long Boats competed in the first Haverfordwest to Dale Rowing Race, 22 Miles of river and sea rowing. Teams set off at 10:30am from the Bristol Trader after a pre race bacon buttie.

The first 10 miles of the race made for easy rowing down the river with the tide. Wiseman's Bridge played the conditions to their advantage and passed two boats taking them into third position. Challenging sea conditions faced the crew after the Cleddau Bridge but this didn't stop them passing Neyland RC, placing them in second position. Feeling confident the Wiseman's Bridge crew set about closing down the gap between them and the leading boat, Llanion RC Men's crew. The remaining four miles of the race were a battle, but Wiseman's remained strong keeping the pressure on finishing with a two mile sprint into the bay, crossing the line minutes behind Llanion. Wiseman's Bridge won the Mixed Team event, and take home their first trophy which will be displayed in their 'club house' The Wiseman's Bridge Inn.

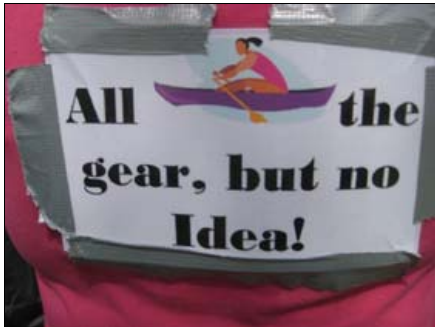


**17th July 2010 - Llangwm Novice Race**

11 Boats in total with 9 Mixed Crews & 2 Ladies crews  
Team Name – All The Gear No Idea

Cox – Tina G (not to be mistaken for Gina G the Eurovision singer)  
Stroke – Cat  
Crew - Helen – Sian A – Sarah P

It was a sunny yet surprisingly windy day, for the Wisemans bridge Novice Ladies to enter their first race. With the tide running out of the Haven and a S/W wind it would prove a difficult return leg back to the finish. The ladies all work together at Saundersfoot School and have only had a handful of rows together so they had been practicing their buoy turns in the classroom sat on chairs! This proved to be their Achilles Heel, as after successfully starting and securing a good position around the 1st buoy turn, they maintained their 3rd place until the 2nd buoy turn when it went a bit "Pete Tong"! The boat got trapped against the buoy by the fast flowing outgoing tide then Sian lost her feet bindings and to compound the issues Cat lost a false nail!!!!!!!!!!!!!! But Tina rallied the crew and they set off for the home straight fighting with Llannion and Llangwm for 3rd 4th and 5th place, but with the gap closed to 1 boat length there wasn't enough distance left to the finish line and the ladies crossed in 5th (but the 1st ladies team across the line). Well Done Ladies.  
And a big thank you to Peter (Sarah dad) for volunteering to be the clubs official Vaseline applier!!

**18th July 2010 - Llangwm Black Tar**

Men's Team – The Knot So Wisemen  
Cox – Bev (I don't mind whose boat I go in)

Stroke – Richie H  
Crew – Philly T – Simo – Marky Mark

Wisemans managed to convince 2 new male members to row for the Men's Race from Black Tar down to Benton Castle and back. Weather conditions were poor with very strong S/W wind and intermittent showers. None of us had rowed together before which seems to be a set standard for any Wisemans Bridge Crew. The outward leg proved hard going against the wind but the Wisemen held a mid pack position and with Bev picking her lines around the buoys, the trailing boats were kept at bay! So with Richard (24 non smoker) at stroke determined that no other boats would pass even if it killed the rest of us, and Bev Screaming "10 more hard" and "PYC must not Pass" I'm sure we all wished Foxy Coxy Dawn Freebury was at the helm instead! Finishing in 6th place (we think?) and time to be confirmed, we were pleased with the effort and result.

**18th July 2010 - Llangwm Black Tar**

Ladies Team – The Wisebirds  
Cox – Philly T  
Stroke – Eli G  
Crew – Bev – Dawny – Bryony

Yet another experimental ladies team, with the young Elen stroking her first race and the tide had turned resulting in a choppy river surface and a energy draining wind. A big effort was required by all on board and the ladies crossed the line at the back end of the field. Well Done.



### 18th July 2010 - Llangwm Black Tar

Mixed Team

Cox - Bev

Stroke - Dawny

Crew - Rich - George - Bryony

The Sodomasochist within the club wished to go back out on the water for one last splash so with the kind help of George from Llanion Warriors the guys once again went out. (Unsure what place they came as we were in the beer tent by this time!) But well done to all - And thanks to Sian and Mark for towing the boat and spraying their van the same colour as the club boat Ready Oar Knot (Yellow)!



### June 20th 2010 - Fishguard

Cox - Dawny Freebury

Stroke - Tina G

Elen J

Bev

Helen J

A warm but windy day for an experimental ladies team, for which it was Tina's first race for a few years, but her experience at stroke proved invaluable and for Helen it was her first race ever and never stopped smiling (even when told by Dawn she would not have time to eat her jelly babies on the way round!). For Bev it was her first race for the club since defecting to the Bridge from PYC, and young Jones pulled hard in the Engine room.

The race had to be shortened to 3 ½ miles due to an ever increasing wind, but with Foxy `Coxy` Freebury at the helm, the ladies were in for a baptism of fire, and guaranteed respectable finish.

From a field of 11 boats the `Wise Birds` came 5th close on the heels of 3rd and 4th place.

An excellent result, well done all ...

And remember don't leave pillows in the boat when driving along the A40 at 60mph ? ! more photos on the gallery page.



### May 22nd 2010 - Return of the Cleddau

Cox – Elen Jones  
Stroke – Sandra A  
Philly T  
Simo C  
Bryone J

A hot day to do the first race of the season, with minimal training so expectations were low, we were anticipating a 2 hour + finish and just hoping not to come last!!

The crew consisted of mixed sexes and mixed experience as some had never raced together before. So, 1hour 54 minutes later and some severe blistering to hands (Remember gloves next time Simo) Wisemans Bridge crossed finish line.

This result gave Wisemans a 2nd place finish in the Mixed field which consisted of 8 boats.

Congratulations all ... ( Imagine if we had trained ? ) more photos on the gallery page.



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