



## The Sunny Hours

In the good old, bad old days at CAI, we played Rugby in the first two terms and cricket in the summer. However, come the age of 16, we could opt for rowing. The Headmaster, Major White (the Chief) regarded rowing as a refuge for eccentrics and also suspected, probably correctly, that it was an excuse for boarders to escape downtown and make contact with High School girls.

My first experience of rowing – in 1952, I think – was not favourable, being conducted in tub pairs and a tub four of such amazing heaviness that it required the whole club to launch it. We were supervised by two teachers who were good at organising and supervising us but who knew very little about rowing. My first outing in a clinker four (a real racing boat!) coxed by one of the teachers, made me fearful and consider going back to cricket. However we persevered and were helped by some of the Bann rowers (the CAI boathouse did not exist then), one of whom produced a little booklet entitled “Buttons up and slowly forward”. In it, advice on rowing technique was attributed to “Berry”- that is, Jack Beresford Snr, father of the more famous son and a stalwart of



Rowing on the Bann in 1958

Thames Rowing Club. Each section concluded by saying “and that must be right because Berry says so”.

So we slowly improved and then one Saturday morning in my final year, everything changed. A smallish, rather vague, middle sized, middle aged man appeared and announced that he was taking over coaching. His name was Johnny Leonard and he had rowed in Bann crews who had won the Senior Championships in 1921 and 1924. Johnny was an out and out Fairbairnite\* and as well as instilling discipline in the boat and

teaching us how to balance the boat, he talked of the beauty, the poetry, of being at one with the crew, the oar and the boat. Our enjoyment and our technical ability increased by leaps and bounds. Rowing attracted more and more pupils, until at one evening meal time, the Chief stopped at my chair, placed his hand on my shoulder and announced “Anderson, from tomorrow, the Boat Club will consist of two fours and two coxes”. And so it was. The Club consisted of a heavy four and a very light four, in which I rowed

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 1)

bow. Johnny continued to coach both crews from the cox's seat. Strangely enough, I cannot remember us ever racing each other or anyone else, although the purpose of the exercise was allegedly to race Portora for the Wray Cup. One Sunday morning, however, our Sunday school teacher said to me "I believe the first four couldn't catch you yesterday" This was news to us; we had, it is true, noticed the other four in the distance but hadn't paid them much attention, perhaps because Johnny was coaching us or because, as Fairbairn observed "The best coach in the world is the bow of another boat coming up behind you". Still, this episode showed what a small place Coleraine was in those days (and maybe still is?). The Wray Cup was held after term time and since our four were all boarders and had gone home, we never raced Portora. I think the other crew did and suffered the usual fate of CAI crews in that event.

Three of us from that era at CAI

ended up in the Queens Senior 8 in 1956 (Ian (IC) Henderson, Seamus McBride and myself) and at Henley that year, our crew was round the boat for an early morning outing, when into the tent came a very elderly, white haired gentleman carrying the bows of a double scull, the remainder being borne by Dick Phelps, the Thames Rowing Club boatman. Old Berry (for it was he!), sensing an audience, announced to us "Phelps isn't as fit as he used to be. It took us 18 more strokes to get over the course this year". Berry was, I believe, 92 at the time, while Dick Phelps was a mere 60 or so. Old Berry was a very memorable character and stories about him abound.

However, back to CAI. I went to work in Coleraine in 1963 and was amazed at the changes which had taken place; the school had at least two eights, a coaching launch, pots on the shelf and was preparing for its first visit to Henley. The crews rowed all three terms. All this progress was mainly due to the unflagging efforts of the late Eric (Mickey)



Johnny Leonard

I Eyre, helped by Maurice McDevitt and it must be said, with the full and enthusiastic support of the Headmaster, Dr George Humphreys.

What a change from the days of Buttons up and slowly forward! Nevertheless, I look back on those days with great fondness - I know we rowed only in the summer but in my memory, the sun was always shining and the winds were always light. Or perhaps, like a sundial, I count only the sunny hours.

*Jim (Dusty) Anderson*

*\*Note from the editors; we had no idea what a Fairbairnite was but a little research lead to another article by Dusty for Queen's. In it he states, "At this juncture, I should explain to modern readers that the (British) rowing world was then split into factions - the 'Orthodox' and the 'Fairbairn'. The former believed rowing could be taught by trying to get the oarsmen to copy 'perfect' or ideal body positions throughout the cycle of the stroke, while Fairbairnites preached that the important thing was what the blade was doing and that if the action of the blade was correct, then the body would more or less naturally take up its strongest position."*

<http://www.queensrowing.org/Resources/Documents/History/Queens-Rowing-History-4-1952-1962.pdf>



# International Rowing 2013

Following the success of 2012 for Coleraine rowers and the London Olympic Games, it was going to be a challenge to even match those performances. However the end of an Olympic cycle brings change - some rowers retire, other change boats, coaches or even countries; all of which creates uncertainty, challenge and opportunity for the new Olympiad.

For Richard Chambers, 2013 was to see a change of boat, moving from the lightweight four into the lightweight double, partnering younger brother Peter. As the GB lightweight double had also won Olympic silver in London, the bar was already set high for the Chambers'. Their season started well with a win in Sydney at Australia's first rowing World Cup, although the field was small with mainly Asian countries competing. The remaining World Cup races had stronger fields, and the brothers finished 2nd in Eton and 3rd in Lucerne; beaten only by Poland, France and Italy. The Rowing World Championships travelled to



Richard (bow) and Peter Chambers

South Korea for the first time. Winning their heat and semi-final put Richard and Peter in the centre-lanes for the final, however in a very close race the crew had to push in the last 500metres to get into a medal position, with Italy subsequently falling from 1st place to 4th. In the end the GB double was only 2 seconds off the winners Norway, with Switzerland also ahead. The brother's Bronze medal was earned at the expense of a tiring Italian crew, but has meant a successful

start to the Olympiad in a new boat, with all the challenges that brings; even if the crewmates are very familiar!

Alan Campbell's season has been one that doesn't live up to the highs of recent years. It started well with a silver medal at the Eton World Cup, behind Olympic silver medallist Ondrej Synek, but that was followed by Lucerne, and a 6th place finish. Alan was back in form at the World Championships and made the A final to fight for medals, and a fight it was. Alan challenged throughout the early part of the race, sitting in a medal position up until the German Marcel Hacker pushed pass in the second half of the race. Whilst Alan closed the gap as the race finished sadly it wasn't enough to get him his fourth World Championship medal. However with one Olympic medal under his belt, building towards Rio and the 2016 Olympic Games is all that really matters.



Alan Campbell

*(Continued on page 4)*

(Continued from page 3)

Jonathan Mitchell is the youngest of the current Internationals and in 2013 experienced his third and final Under-23 world championship before he is overage. Unexpectedly when the event came round Jonathan was in fact in an open-weight boat and not the lightweight crews he had competed in recent years. The move to open-weight occurred during the season but opened up the opportunity to row in a wider variety of crews, and whilst

Ireland doesn't have recent pedigree in 'heavyweight rowing', there are a group of developmental athletes at that level. Finishing 9th at the event in the Coxless fours was a repeat of Jonathan's 2012 result but having made the move to the heavier weight category within the season, makes the result more meaningful. Jonathan is currently coaching school rowing for a year in Australia.

Not a past CAI pupil, but the daughter of a CAI old boy and double Olympian Iain Kennedy did compete

at the World Championships in Korea this summer. Having been a successful GB rower at Under-23 and Senior European level, Leanora Kennedy made the decision in 2013 to move home and compete for Ireland, partnered by Monika Dukarska. Their 10th place finish leaves them in an Olympic qualifying position two years ahead of the Rio 2016 qualifiers.

*Richard Archibald*

## The Inst.



Junior 18 eight

It seems like only a short time ago our guest Richard Chambers was back at Coleraine Inst showing the senior squad members what it takes to train like an Olympian. Mr Chambers generously gave up his time to kick start our season by taking us through one of the most gruelling training days of our lives, completing three full sessions on the water and in the gym as well as

learning about drug testing and receiving some valuable advice on rowing injuries and how to avoid them. All the boys were very grateful for the opportunity to learn about rowing at the Olympics from world class athletes even though most admitted that they would struggle to maintain that schedule every day.

With the inspiration of our Olympian Old Boys Richard Chambers and Alan

Campbell to motivate the rowers they tackled the gruelling six days a week training programme. The combination of many miles on the water and rowing machines along with strength and endurance work in the gym gave the rowers an excellent base for the upcoming Head Season.

Early results in the Head Season were excellent with the Junior 18 8 and Junior 18 4+ winning their categories at Bann Head of the River. The Junior 18 8 continued their undefeated winter run winning the Festive Head in Belfast beating Methody, RBAI and Portadown as well as claiming the fastest crew of the day. This form continued in the January Mini Head where the eight once again took the fastest Junior 18 eight defeating Methody by over twenty seconds.

During the Christmas break the senior squad continued their training in preparation for the annual race against the Old Boys. Tensions were higher than usual with last year's CAIBC victory still fresh in the minds of the Old Boys. They were keen to exact revenge but the school boys were





Castlewellan winners

equally keen to retain the trophy. The school took an early lead but The Old Boys were determined and pushed hard to pull level. The school boys were ready for the attack and pushed hard under the Sandelford Bridge to re-establish their lead. The battle continued right to the finish line where the school boys won by just half a length, retaining the Hamburg Trophy. The Head Season culminated with the school travelling to London to compete in the annual School's Head of the River against some of the top rowing schools in the country. Despite some promising results in the run up to the event Philip McCullough came down suddenly with illness days before meaning Reuben Simpson had to substitute in at the last minute to bolster the crew, but did a fantastic job integrating into it. The crew started well, establishing a strong rhythm in the first mile and gaining on several of the crews in front until Callum Marshall suffered a shoulder injury at the half way point but heroically persevered, enduring great pain to reach the finish.

At Queens Regatta the Junior 18B eight put in an impressive

performance in their heat and progressed through to the final. After a determined row they won their event claiming the clubs first win at the regatta for several years. Here the J16 8+ and four put in some gutsy performances and the J15 coxed



Junior 18B eight at Castlewellan Regatta

quad got their first experience of regatta racing.

Portadown regatta saw many tight races and most crews made the final of their events. Ben Taggart and Oliver Gage put in strong performance to win the novice double sculls. The Junior 18 eight again proved difficult to beat

narrowly beating Methody in their heat they progressed to the final where they defeated City of Derry convincingly. At Belfast Sprints the Junior 16 eight who had progressed rapidly throughout the year saw the results of their hard work by winning a closely contested final.

All of the club's achievements could not have been possible without the dedication and support of the club's coaches. Mr Black has dedicated an immense amount of time coaching all sections of the club as well as planning training programmes and organising trips to regattas, not to mention the countless hours spent maintaining the club's fleet of boats. Dr Hull has been involved in organising and coaching as well as acting as the club official photographer. Miss McLaughlin has

also been fantastic running junior circuits throughout the year. Charlie McMullan, Andy Wright and Terry Knox have been invaluable in coaching during the week giving their experience and insight to the younger rowers. William Wright and

*(Continued on page 6)*

(Continued from page 5)

Ross Cochrane have been important throughout the year, travelling to many regattas to support the club, as well as spending countless hours on

the river coaching. Terry Kane and Trevor Gage have also given up their weekends to drive safety boats in the depth of winter providing invaluable support when it was most needed. The club would like to thank all

coaches for their invaluable support over the season without which it would not be able to run and be as successful as it has been in recent years.

*Matthew Warke*

# Reunion Row



Reunion Four

The summer of 2013 signified the five-year reunion of four of CAIBC's old boys. The crew, which consisted of Jonathan Mitchell, Robert Hart, Michael McNaul and Jamie McBurney, rowed successfully through J15, J16, and J18 together picking up medals in both fours and quads, most notably a silver in the J18 quad at the 2008 Irish Champs, which was a fitting tribute to the end of their CAIBC careers.

Having not been in a boat together for the previous five years, the crew was eager to relive old memories. On pushing off from the steps and beginning the row towards the Cutts the boat ran surprisingly smoothly, however, after less than 500m a

break was needed and it was soon apparent that some crew members had preferred the pub to the gym over the last few of years. Despite this, the crew managed to arrive at the Cutts in one piece where they were greeted by another four of 'new' old boys who had just left the club in July and were COBRA's most recent recruits. There had been whispers of a third crew lining up in this race, but unfortunately the J18 four from 2003 (the last crew to win a Champs medal before the 2008 quad) were unable to reconvene for their ten year anniversary. It will never be known which crew would have triumphed in the clash of the titans - maybe 2018 could see the

much anticipated race finally go ahead!

In true CAIBC fashion, a 2km race was arranged with the younger crew being given a 'slight' head start. After a strong fight and erratic steering from both crews, the older quad was able to pull ahead and add another win to their tally.

The crew then pulled their boat into the steps, out of the water and placed it back on the racks, agreeing that another five years shouldn't pass before rowing together again.

*Jamie McBurney*



# COBRA Day 2013

The Coleraine Old Boys Rowing Association annual 'COBRA day' was held on 27th December 2013. As has become the custom, the day started with an early wake-up for everyone involved with the Old Boys vs. School Boys race.

It turned out to be one of those days when the group of supporters who had gathered to cheer on the crews would rather have stayed sheltered from the driving rain in the warm, dry boat house. However duty called and we all braved the elements on the pontoon in Christie Park to cheer on our respective crews.

The bad weather did nothing to dampen the zeal and commitment of the School Boy or Old Boy crews. The former's confidence was riding high on the back of two wins against their older foes in the previous two meetings whereas the tension in the latter crew showed that they were determined to wrestle back the Hamburg Trophy at any cost. The School Boys in the "Arrow", donated by COBRA last year, had the Antrim station whereas the Old Boys in the



The revellers

"Camus" had the Londonderry experience and strength of the Old Boys gradually took its toll on the younger crew and by the finish at Bann Rowing Club COBRA had pulled out a lead of a length. No one in the Old Boy crew, the umpire's launch or on the banks of the river could fail to be impressed by the fight that the School crew put up. They didn't give up, and like a true CAIBC crew they

The School crew pulled out a lead of a length from the start at the Cutts and gave everything in their power to hold it. However the greater

held it. However the greater

*(Continued on page 8)*



Current and Old Boys at COBRA Day

*(Continued from page 7)*

fought to the bitter end.

The School Boys – Jordan Gregg (bow), Jack Murray, Jack Mullan, Oliver Gage, Jonathan Kennedy, Matthew Warke, Reuben Simpson, Aaron Meenagh (stroke), Jonny Woods (cox)

The Old Boys – Corey McDowell

(bow), Adam Millar, Philip McCullough, Callum Marshall, Graham Hunter, Elliot Clarke, Michael McNaul, Steven Archibald (stroke), Callum McBurney (cox)

In the evening it was time for the club's AGM and Christmas Dinner at Shenanigans in Portstewart. It was especially good to be able to

welcome COBRA's newest members, those who had left CAI in September. As always this was enjoyed by all who attended, giving us not only the opportunity to hear what CAIBC and COBRA had been involved with in the previous year, but also the chance to catch up with old friends.

*Andrew Wright*

## COBA Annual Dinner

Over a hundred old boys of Coleraine Inst arrived at the Royal Portrush Golf Club on Friday 8th November to take part in the annual COBA (yes, that's not a typo, there is not meant to be an "R") Presidents Dinner. The formal black tie dinner was a great event with the table of COBRA members getting a special welcome from the Headmaster of the school David Carruthers, and thanks for all the support we provide to the boat club.

The COBA President the Rev Dr Isaac Thompson oversaw the after-dinner proceedings, in his own unique style, although the main speaker Rev D Selwoode Graham MBE (Chairman of the NEELB) paled in comparison to the speaker in 2012, our very own Richard Archibald. The Headmaster gave a brief overview of the schools activities in the previous year and its



The COBRA contingent

future plans, before the attendees retired to the bar area to finish off the evenings in style. Next year's COBA President's Dinner is on Friday

7th November so please keep the date free and we'll try and take over a 2nd table next year!

*William Wright*

For more information on COBRA or rowing past or present at CAI, visit our website at

[COBRARowing.co.uk](http://COBRARowing.co.uk)

or

[facebook.com/COBRARowing](https://facebook.com/COBRARowing)

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