

Christchurch Rowing Club Formed

Christchurch Times Feb. 20, 1948

AT long last Christchurch can boast of its own rowing club. Formed last night at the King's Arms Hotel by an enthusiastic meeting called by the "Christchurch Times," it already has a headquarters, a secretary, a treasurer and a bank balance.

Although everyone realised that it was going to be a hard job to start a really successful club, they thought it could be done and judging by the number of people present at last night's meeting it will not be lacking in membership.

One of the most encouraging signs was the presence of two members of Bournemouth's Westover Rowing Club and they promised to find out whether it would be possible for Christchurch to borrow one of their boats for practice. "In any case we will lend you a galley for the year's Regatta," they told the meeting. In the chair was Mr. B. A. Mead, and he said that he had never seen any place with greater promise of more facilities for a successful rowing club than Christchurch.

A NATIONAL REPUTATION

"One thing must be considered," he continued. "If we are going to have a rowing club, it must be a successful one. It must not only have a reputation within Christchurch but an appeal all over England. It must have a national name." The resolution that a rowing club be formed was proposed by Mr. R. S. Rudland and seconded by Mr. A. C. Branch. There was a heated discussion on the name of the club, but it was obvious that the majority of the members wanted only one title: "The Christchurch Rowing Club."

THEY WANTED THE BEST

When it came to the election of the committee the feeling of the meeting could be seen. There was no sitting back and proposing the usual well-known names. The meeting wanted the best and in choosing a committee consisting of men who had attributes of youth, experience and ability they got it. As far as the actual rowing is concerned, there was a difference of opinion. Some wanted four-oared galleys only, but there was another section which thought that the Club should go in for all kinds of rowing—single sculls, double sculls, as well as four-oared galleys.

TEAM FOR REGATTA

This was left to be decided later. For the moment the Club will concentrate in getting the best team possible for the four-oared galley races in this year's regatta. Mr R. Lane, who used to be a member of the Newport, I.O.W., club, said that he thought that two Island clubs had petered out. "There may be some boats they want to sell over there and it would be a good thing if we could snap them up," he declared.

WILL REPORT BACK

Mr. Lane is going to the I.O.W. in the next week and he will report back to the committee. A suggestion from Mr. Branch to aid finances was that there should be a number of founder members each paying a £10 subscription. It was agreed to try and get a hundred founder members. Eight stepped forward at last night's meeting. Ald. E. J. Slinn is to be invited to become the first President and Sir Donald Bailey will be asked to be a vice-president. The Secretary is Mr. W. Trowbridge and the Treasurer is Mr. G. E. Simms.

ROWING CLUB'S FIRST BOAT

Christchurch Times April 2, 1948

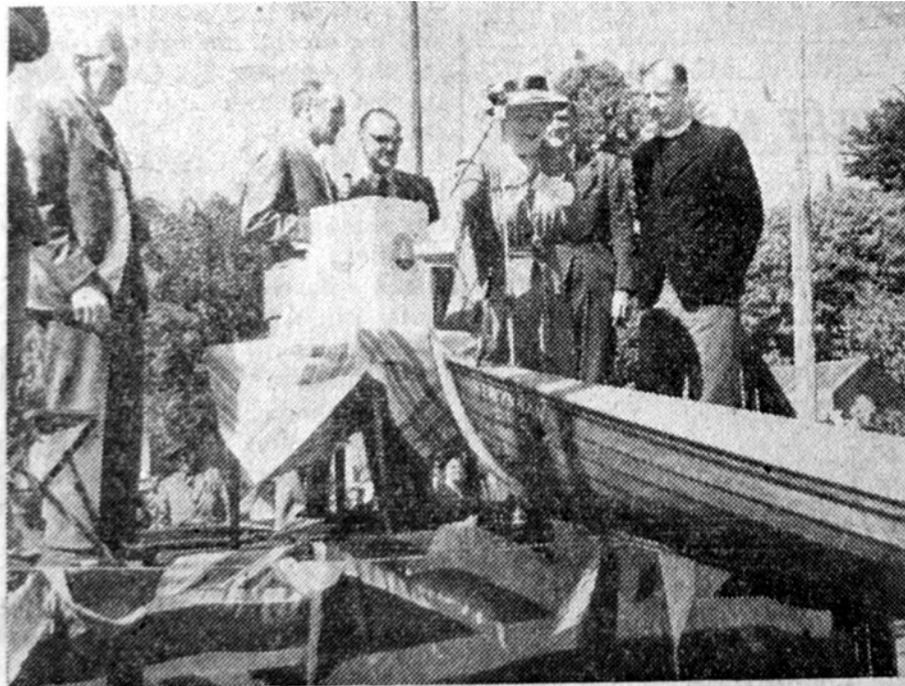
Christchurch Rowing Club obtained their first boat this week. It is a two-oared galley purchased from the Westover Rowing Club, Bournemouth.

Committee member Mr. K. Keynes said that it would make a start for members who wished to get into, training. "She'll need some doing up," he declared, "but we will soon see to that."

Mr. W. Trowbridge (club secretary) and Mr. Reg. Keynes went to Newport, I.O.W., yesterday to inspect some boats which the local club are willing to sell.

Cheers and Champagne for the New Boat

Christchurch Times May 21, 1948



THREE hearty cheers went up from the crowd on Christchurch Quay on Whit-Monday afternoon and at the same time from a loud speaker van came the opening bars of "Anchors a 'weigh."

There was a splash of oars in the water and Christchurch Rowing Club's first boat headed off downstream after an impressive launching ceremony. On a flag-bedecked rostrum stood the Mayor and Mayoress (Ald. and Mrs. E. J. Slinn), the Vicar (the Rev. R. P. Price, M.A.), with officials of the Club, and the Mayoress still held in her hand a silver tankard from which she had poured champagne over the bows of the boat as she named it "Twynham."

Before introducing the Mayoress, Mr. B. A. Mead, who presided at the ceremony, said he was pleased to see so many people at an event

Photo R. S. Rudland
Champagne splashes over the bows as the Mayoress names the boat "Twynham." Looking on are (left to right) the Mayor (Alderman E. J. Slinn, President of the Club), Mr. B. A. Mead (chairman), Mr. E. G. Trowbridge (secretary), Mr. G. E. Simms (treasurer) and the Vicar (the Rev. R. P. Price, M.A.).

which had been so eagerly awaited by the Club and at the same time was unique in the borough of Christchurch. Just as one hoped for the sun to shine on their wedding day, so he hoped that the brilliant weather that had graced the occasion augured well for the future of the Rowing Club.

He believed that rowing was a sport which promoted health of body and mind, and he was convinced that the Club was going to keep the name of Christchurch to the fore in yet another sphere of activity.

AS BEAUTIFUL A SETTING AS ANYWHERE

The Rev. Price referred to the natural facilities which the Christchurch rivers offered to such an organisation as a rowing club. He believed the setting was as beautiful as that at Henley or any other of the centres for rowing in the country.

"Mr. Mead hopes that the Club will promote health of body and mind. Well, I believe that rowing is the healthiest form of exercise as it brings into use more muscles than any other sport," remarked the Vicar. After the Mayoress had named the boat and expressed the hope that it would bring many honours to the Club, the Mayor added some words of praise for the achievements of the Club in so short a time.

He said he was proud to have been associated with the formation of the Rowing Club and he would always look upon it as one of the highlights of his term of office.

The naming ceremony over, a bouquet was handed to the Mayoress by Donald Adey who then acted as cox while E. V. Keynes and W. G. Reeves took the boat out for its inaugural run.

THEY'D NEVER HEARD OF CHRISTCHURCH ROWING CLUB BUT THE NAME IS FAMOUS NOW

Christchurch Times June 18, 1948



IT was an incredible feat for the crew sent over by the Christchurch Rowing Club to Poole Quay last Saturday to beat the hard-boiled and long-experienced men from Poole, Southampton Rowing Club, Westover and Bournemouth Rowing Club, Southampton Coalporters Rowing Club, Southampton Docks and Marine Rowing Club & Southsea Rowing Club.

Christchurch arrived with an unknown crew. Indeed, the majority of the onlookers from the quayside and from the swing bridge never knew there was such a thing as a Christchurch Rowing Club.

The lads who covered themselves with glory, won the utmost honour for their Club and brought great credit on the borough, were: Bill Reeves (stroke) ; Ernie Needham (No. 3), Ken Keynes (No. 2), Ernest Keynes (bow) and Don H. Adey (cox). These five will undoubtedly concede the justice with which we mention in the same paragraph as their own names the

names of three other men who share their honour. These three are: Mr. Reg. Keynes, who was primarily responsible for formulating the idea that Christchurch should have a Rowing Club: Mr. E. Brookesmith, a member of

"Twins" Increase the Family

"TWINS on the way." That was the wording of a telegram received at the "Christchurch Times" office this week.

Investigation showed that this was not news of a "happy event" for some local family, but that Christchurch Rowing Club had just acquired two more boats.

The message came from Cardiff where the Club Secretary (Mr. S. G. Trowbridge) and Mr. R. Keynes had bought the boats. They are river practice fours.

"We think that we shall have both of them in the water after a day's work on each of them," Mr. Trowbridge said on arrival back at Christchurch. "Of course they will have to be completely stripped down in the winter."

He said that the boats would be in the water at an overall cost of £105. This was considerably less than the committee reckoned on paying, and they think they have got a bargain because although the boats are old they are structurally sound.

The Club still have one new boat to come from Salter. Delivery has been promised by next spring. Mr. Keynes expressed the hope that Christchurch might have an invitation regatta similar to that at Poole.

the Canterbury New Zealand Rowing Club, who coached our crew during their extremely short period of training; and Mr. S. G. Trowbridge, secretary of Christchurch Rowing Club, whose enthusiasm, knowledge, experience and reputation in rowing matters is standing the Christchurch Club in such good stead. It was a wonderful achievement for a new club, which commenced its work only about a month ago, to win the Dudley Ward Challenge Cup against seven of the best-known clubs of the Hants and Dorset Association. An eye-witness account of what happened at Poole last Saturday is given on page 6.

How Rowing Club Won the Dudley Ward Cup EYE WITNESS ACCOUNT OF A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT

BY all the rules of logic Christchurch Rowing Club crew should not have won even their first heat for the Dudley Ward Challenge Cup at Poole, on Saturday. They arrived at Poole (having been held up at the level crossing) whilst the first heat was actually being rowed between two Poole crews.

To bundle out of a car, rush into rowing rig and dash around looking for places is not the ideal way to start a first race. When they paddled out, they were in a strange boat, on an unknown course, hardly knowing which was the starter's boat and on the worse side.

There was a bang and off they went. It looked almost as if, not knowing where they had to go, they decided to follow their opponents (Southampton Rowing Club) to the turn, so as to find the way. And at the turning buoys Christchurch, though rowing well, were still exploring. They took a great, round, chunky turn which lost them a good two lengths and as they started for home they were three lengths back. From then on, however, all the bustle and fuss finished. The Christchurch boys remembered who they were and where they came from and they simply rowed Southampton down to win by half a length.

CREATED A GREAT IMPRESSION.

Toby Trowbridge made the first of his three 'phone calls back to the Keynes's number. His news was received with a tinge of scepticism! "Well; I'm satisfied," said the hon. secretary of the Christchurch Club as he welcomed the crew ashore. "You've won your first race, gained some wonderful experience, and created a great impression. If you don't do anything else that's good enough. How're you feeling?" The boys were still just a little bit dazed. I don't know that any one of them could, at that moment, have said very much about what had happened between that first bang and the second.

For the second heat we were against Poole "A." We lost the toss for boats but won for side. It is a remarkable fact that during the whole afternoon only one crew won on the west bank that was Christchurch in their first race. Heads turned up twice for Bill Reeves, and we had what we thought was the better course for our second and third races.

LED ALL THE WAY.

The second heat was rowed in dead in dead slack water. "It'll be the best crew this time," said a Poole waterman just before the start. And the best team it was. Christchurch led all the way down between quays; a smashing turn rounded the marker and three parts home they dropped into an easy paddle to win by three lengths. Christchurch were in the final! Another phone call to Christchurch 1093!

By this time the Christchurch crew were feeling fine. They were veterans now. Giants, perhaps, would be the better description. In the meantime, spectators were beginning to wonder what we trained our rowers on. Toby Trowbridge nearly struck a bargain with the Captain of the Westover R.C. to sign on our crew in exchange for four new boats.

A NICER CREW TO WATCH.

And then the final. Southampton Docks and Marine, a powerful looking crew, had had their half hour rest, and out they paddled. At the getaway, Christchurch were three-quarters of a length behind, though from astern they were the nicer crew to watch: only the bow man was exactly in time in their opponent's boat! But experience was against us. Could we do the impossible for the third time

running? Our coxswain bellowed at his crew. They were gradually making up. Before the turn we were just leading---perhaps there was a canvas in it. Both boats went into the turn together. Christchurch again pulled off a beauty. Southampton was tight too; but our boys made a slightly better reckoning with the tide which, by this time was running in strongly. Starting for home and victory we were almost clear of the Southampton boat. But could we hold it? Like heck we could. Our crew could have held a final spurt as well had it come; but it didn't. We rowed in victors by a length and a half.

A POPULAR WIN.

What an achievement! For sheer audacity it would be hard to match; and it was a popular win too. Christchurch had taken over four supporters to cheer them on, but shouts of encouragement came from both quays before the afternoon was over. The Christchurch Rowing Club is on the map. What remained was of lesser importance. There was the third 'phone call back to Quay Road, followed by a fourth, fifth and sixth to spread the news around. There were autographs to sign: our boys were famous already! There was supper at the Dolphin, where they were presented with the Dudley Ward Challenge Cup and then Poole Pottery ash trays by the Rt. Hon. Lord Llewellyn of Upton, the President of Poole R.C., who congratulated them in these words: "The Christchurch crew won their races in very good style. In fact of all the crews taking part to-day they rowed together better than any." To complete the story it must be recorded that boat race night finished at the King's Arms. A proud homecoming if ever there was.

Rowing Club's Boat House Plans Disappear

Christchurch Times Sept. 3, 1948

What has happened to the plans of Christchurch Rowing Club's proposed boat house? This question was raised at Tuesday's meeting of the general committee, and the answer given by the hon. secretary, Mr. S. G. Trowbridge, was that "they appear to have been lost somewhere between Christchurch and Lyndhurst."

Here is the story of the missing plans. They were approved in July by the Christchurch Town Council and in consequence financial arrangements were made for the erection of the building. A tender was accepted and on August 18th the builders received the building licence.

In the meantime notification had come from the Council that before work could commence the plans must be approved under the Town and Country Planning Act. It was understood that a decision from the Town and Country Planning Officer at Lyndhurst would be received by August 30th.

As it was not forthcoming by that date a telephone call was put through to Lyndhurst and no-one in the Planning Office there had seen anything of the plans. Further inquiries were made and the Rowing Club were assured that the plans were sent off from Christchurch. But they have mysteriously disappeared.

MORE COPIES SENT

Four more copies of the plans have now been dispatched to Lyndhurst, but even if approval is given the Club cannot yet proceed with the building of the boat house until a development value has been agreed. "This may take at least another two months," Mr. Trowbridge told the committee. He added that if there was no way of getting out of paying a development value it might be a big blow to the Club. It was hoped to get the actual boat storage shed completed by the winter as Mr. Reg. Keynes, who at present provides storage space for the boats, will soon require this space for laying up his own boats.

WINTER ACTIVITIES

Without proper boat storage facilities the Club would have to abandon any idea of rowing activities during the winter.

This problem, however, may be solved by an offer on Tuesday by Mr. Sidney Barber of storage space in one of the garages behind the Kings Arms Hotel.

Mr. E. Brooksmith, the Club coach, who presided at the meeting, said he was very anxious to see rowing activities continued during the winter. "There's nothing finer for keeping the crews fit than a row down the river on a sharp winter's morning," he said.

After considerable discussion the committee decided to abandon the idea of having any invitation races this year. The general feeling was that the Club was not in a sufficiently strong financial position and had not the accommodation to entertain other clubs in a manner which would do credit to the borough. The subject will be raised again next May.