Rowing – Alan Meldrum community rowing challenge

Hopetoun Dig Deep for Victory

Report and photo courtesy of Donal Ferrie of Queensferry Rowing Club.

Queensferry Rowing Club hosted the inaugural Alan Meldrum Community Rowing Challenge at Port Edgar Marina on Saturday the 10th of May. The Challenge was in memory of Alan Meldrum, our first Vice Captain and a founding member of Queensferry Rowing Club. Teams were put forward by businesses and community groups, most with no previous rowing experience, for a day of racing. Groups represented included Queensferry Medical Practice, Hopetoun Estate, Queensferry Churches Care in the Community, Sodexo, Scottish Parliament Broadcasting and the New Forth Crossing Builders

The first race began at 11:00 with Medical Practice team one against Hopetoun Estate. The course was an Easterly one heading towards the Forth Bridge to a buoy and turning towards Queensferry Harbour where we turned west back to the start/finish line. The race started well for Hopetoun and they pulled ahead of the Medical Practice. However, the Medical Practice were thrown a lifeline when one of Hopetoun's oars came off its' pin. The Medical Practice managed to regain some ground as Hopetoun worked to re-attach the oar. On turning the first buoy there was a noticeable change in conditions. Both boats battled on with Hopetoun reaching the second buoy first and headed for home. Despite a strong effort by the Medical Centre, Hopetoun finished first with a time of eight minutes and 24 seconds.

The second race was between New Forth Bridge Builders, Medical

Centre 2 and the Scottish Parliament Broadcasting team – who were competing in memory of their late colleague. All teams started well with no team having a clear advantage coming up to the first buoy. However, the turn allowed the Bridge Builders to pull ahead. After the second Buoy they had a convincing lead and took a place in the final.

The final heat was QCCC against Sodexo. This was to prove to be the surprise of the day! The Sodexo team had only been in the boat once before their race, yet they tore round the course leaving QCCC trailing in their wake. Sodexo achieved a time of seven minutes and 37 seconds – the fastest time of the day and nearly a minute faster than Hopetoun's record.

Prior to the final there was plenty of opportunity to stock up on the smorgasbord of homebaking provided by members of the Rowing Club and to have a go at the Tombola set up by QCCC. The final saw a tense start as all three boats lined up, waiting for the siren. A frantic start saw Hopetoun take a narrow lead – whoever got to the turn first would have the advantage. Hopetoun took the turn first, putting some distance between themselves and Sodexo, who were followed by The Bridge Builders. At the second buoy Sodexo were still only just behind Hopetoun. All crews gave it their all and raced for the line, however Hopetoun had opened up enough of a gap to take the win and become the first winners of the Alan Meldrum Community Rowing Challenge. The crews headed back to the pontoon to rapturous applause and congratulations from all attending. The medal ceremony was carried out by Jenni Meldrum, who had commissioned a beautiful wood carving of the Forth Bridge with Ferry Lass in the foreground to be used as a trophy.

After the ceremony thanks was extended to North Queensferry for the use of their boat, The Sea Cadets for providing a safety boat and to City of Edinburgh Council and Activcity for sponsorship and also to the Club members and QCCC for providing the catering for the day.

It was an enjoyable day that brought the community together — followed by a chance for the public to have a go in the boats.

Queensferry Rowing Club is keen to encourage people of all abilities to join us for a row. More information is available at www.queensferryrowing.org