February is always a busy month for SIR and this year saw the South Island Club Championship and the National Championship Regattas. Both of these regattas went very well and we now have to focus on the March Regatta and work through the lessons learnt and the activities that we need to initiate to enable the facilities to continue and be a world-class venue. It is seldom appreciated just how few locations in the world have a venue such as this and we all want to ensure its continuation for the good of the Sport, the Twizel area and indeed, New Zealand.

**Meridian South Island Rowing Championships**

This regatta was held in near perfect conditions and left many completely exhausted after a strenuous weekend. The picture on the right shows the finish of an eights race late in the day. The remarkably calm day and the overcast sky is a testament to the conditions. We really appreciated the extra efforts of our volunteers which enabled the completion of the regatta. Well done!

**New Motors**

This year we have been able to replace four of our unreliable motors that were proving quite unfit for the purpose we needed them. This really was a catch-up as we have simply nursed them along until they could no longer be maintained in a fully serviceable condition.

We extend our grateful thanks to the Southern Trust for their assistance that enabled this motor replacement to occur prior to the major regattas this season.

The picture above was taken at the South Island Club Championship Regatta and shows the full compliment of Safety/Umpires boats. The first three and last one sporting the new motors.
This regatta was held during the middle of the month and while there were a few difficult patches, the overall feeling confirmed this to be a very successful regatta. The records and pictures available from the various websites show the results of dedicated training. But behind the scenes, there were our Sponsors and volunteers, many who have given up their time to make this regatta a success and we are all very grateful, as they have made this regatta possible.

Thursday night was “Sponsors night” and the picture below shows Hamish Bond, our ‘favourite son’, telling the Sponsors and volunteers where he is at and his aspirations for this year.

This year saw a few new people come on board and some others move into new roles. This meant a steep learning curve for some and the requirement for others to learn how to train and mentor these people. These people included: Imogene Coxhead who assisted in the Boat Marshalls office, Sarah Henderson and Maxine Caffel in the Row Shoppe, the two T’s (Terry McQuinn and Trevor Hinkley) in the Secretary’s Office, Toby Pascoe our tireless commentator, Ged Wall in the numbers hut and the others whose exploits are not so well documented.

Twilight Rowing

With the last nine races of Nationals delayed because of wind, it was decided to start them at 1950 hrs. This meant that racing continued until 2040 hrs...past sunset time. While racing is supposed to cease 30 minutes before sunset, the picture on the right below, was taken at 2045 hrs. This tends to suggest that this ruling may be in need of reconsideration.

We observe that cricket Umpires use light meters to determine when it is too dark to play and maybe it is time to use this technique for rowing as well. Twilight rowing on Lake Ruataniwha during the daylight saving months seems to be gaining favour in some quarters. It would be particularly useful when there is a break in the middle of racing due to wind. The crowd in the picture below (taken at 2050hrs) seem to agree.
The Spectacle

Races finished every five minutes or so. Close finishes coupled with a medal ceremony for each race when all had been completed made the whole atmosphere very exciting. But spare a thought for those trying to run the ceremony. Even in daylight hours with only one race at a time means some difficulties. The picture on the right shows the general melee behind the dais with rowers, presenter, organizers, coaches and photographers all vying for their place to get their actions complete.

Imagine working at the dais in the darker hours, three events worth of crews and support people all competing with each other and the moths that are attracted by the artificial light. See picture on the right.

Ceremonial

While Toby did the race commentary it was Kerry Gregory (yes, daughter to Kay) who did a marvellous job with the ceremonial speaking from the dais (pic right). This was her first exposure to medal ceremonies, so the learning curve was steep but she learnt well with instructions beforehand from Mum. Her lessons included which were men’s and which were women’s events (easy when standing beside the medal winning crews) and even the difference between coxless and cock-less! Well done Kerry...come again and bring Mum too.

Linda Bell took on the task of organizing the medals, John Bishop was the people organizer and liaison person for presentations, and the St Hildas Collegiate students who were the medal and trophy bearers, did a wonderful job.

Being medal bearers brings photo opportunities that can’t be missed! The girls below are not saying ‘no’ to a picture with the famous!

Many thanks to Steve McArthur for his great photography and pictures for sponsors, and also Sharron Bennett Photography, for some of the photos in this newsletter.
Safety

After seeing a number of crews training on the Lake, it is often a wonder if the Coach(s) and crew know about the NZRA Safety Code. Further if they choose not to row under that code then the rules are those of the Maritime Safety Authority. In Canterbury ECAN administer these rules and they apply to every waterway in Canterbury, not just Lake Ruataniwha. Further, ECAN also have Bylaws that are specific to waterways and they are in addition to those mentioned above. We recommend that in view of the recent spate of infringement notices issued to rowing coaches, it would pay to be familiar with the “Rules” and indeed follow them.

Missing

Following the National Championship Regatta, we are missing 1 life jacket, 2 safety knives and a megaphone. That effectively reduces our capability by one umpire/safety boat. This will impact all following regattas until they are brought up to the correct number again. Unless the person(s) who have them replaces them there is little choice but to increase entry fees to cover the cost.
Behind the Scenes

Graeme Bond is one of the long time supporters of South Island Rowing and along with his wife Shirley undertake a lot of groundwork behind the scenes. They are Twizel residents and also the parents of our ‘favourite son’, Hamish. We all understand the importance of our new Medical Centre and Graeme decided to request donations during the National regatta and added some $600 to the appeal. The picture on the right shows Graeme and Shirley watching Hamish during the Regatta. Well-done Graeme!

Race Officials

Ever thought of becoming a Race Official? Many of our race officials are aging and there appears to be a shortage of younger talent stepping up to become a Race Official. In some sports learning the rules of the sport is related to umpiring junior grades in the sport or coaching. It also provides a path for continuing involvement after direct participation is no longer viable. If you want to know more about this contact your local Rowing Association. If you want to talk to someone about it call Vanessa McIver on 027 432 2410.