The New Year is well with us and January has now gone. We trust you have had a great start to the year. So far, this year there have been two major regattas on the lake, as well as a number of training camps. As with many parts of New Zealand the weather has not been very conducive to outside sport. In our case, the wind has been upsetting most days and while there has been rowing most days it has not given the full compliment of rowing hours we usually expect. The picture on the right shows the training on the lake during the calmer periods.

Health and safety requirements continue to direct our thinking to the way in which we undertake our work and ensuring a safe working environment.

One other area of continuing problems is damage. We find individuals causing significant damage to the facilities. Unfortunately, this also affects the safety of the facilities and the ever-increasing cost of upkeep. We really appreciate those who have assisted with this upkeep and especially those whose actions have minimised the amount of work required to keep the facilities fully operational and safe. We now look forward to the National Championship Regatta.

Meridian Canterbury Championship Regatta

This regatta has often had issues with the wind and although this was again the case this year, all of the heats were rowed and some of the finals completed before the weather forced the abandonment of the regatta. However, the reports received from the regatta indicated that all present had at least one race and many welcomed the lack of rowing on the second day due to tiredness. The picture below was taken during the Saturday afternoon and suggests the temperature was not that warm either.

Meridian South Island Championship Regatta
This regatta went for most of the weekend with more than half the finals being completed. Saturday was remarkably calm and even when the rather variable wind did get up, the lake remained rowable. The picture on the right shows the situation where many enjoyed the pleasant conditions.

Consequently, some 162 races were completed and apparently this is some sort of a record.

But even with better weather, the picture on the right clearly shows a crew who appear to have tried the water directly.

There was also some very close racing and the picture below gives an indication of just how close this really was.

Placings for those finals not completed were based on heat times.

SI Club Championships
Regatta Duration

It is becoming clear that trying to run over 160 races in a single day is very difficult. It only takes a small change in the weather and less experienced crews having difficulties getting into the starting blocks, to halt the smooth operation. The increasing numbers of rowers for the SICC regatta increases the time required to run the heats. This leads to an increased overall time duration. For a two-day regatta, it is becoming very difficult to fit everything in. This leads to consideration of options and although some are in the process of being implemented more needs to be done.

While we have expanded to 10 lanes and that will be operational for next season, it now appears that there will still be too many races for a two-day regatta. Some have suggested that we extend the final day to say 5:00 pm, but this means that very tired people end up travelling home towing boats under difficult conditions for up to 10 hours. We consider this a serious health and safety risk.

Although some other restrictive options have been considered, the most likely is to redesign the programme. It has been noted that most of the age group people are still on holiday and therefore, it is possible to row say the U15, U16, U17 races on the Friday afternoon. The resulting program needs to be developed and refined further but this does seem to be a possible solution. Any feedback on this should be directed to the secretary.

New Car Park

During last year, further development of the car park was undertaken. While there is still some tidy up work to complete, it has been operational for the last two major regattas. The picture below shows the new extension to the car parking. The layout was different for both regattas but the key point was that the car park was well-used causing little damage or frustration.

From the Board

Apart from the current list of projects that have been highlighted in the newsletters, the Board has been grappling with some other issues that influence both rowers and the ongoing operation of the complex.

The changes to Health and Safety and in particular the concept of risk and its minimisation has occupied the focus for some time. The result will be a number of changes around the site. While this may seem burdensome it is important to realise that the rowing course and the whole site is impacted. There will be changes to signage, the types of activity that can be done in particular areas, the need for care and attention to all actions on site etc. and although not all the changes are in place at the time of writing, following the signs is important.
We have a number of volunteers and their support is greatly appreciated. However, the workload is increasing and the numbers of volunteers are decreasing. Given that with age, each individual can cope less well with the additional stresses, it is important that younger volunteers are recruited. Similarly, in keeping to the theme of Health and Safety, such things as training and induction courses are being developed for all volunteers. The impact here should come forth later in the year.

There have been requests for SI Rowing Inc. to allow/provide some storage capacity on site for Schools/Clubs who train regularly on the lake. The aim here is to minimise the amount of plant being transported to and from the lake. It is recognised that both Twizel and Oamaru Clubs have their own boat sheds. But for others, there is a need for some secure storage for plant.

The Board has responded to this requirement by deciding to install and rent out some 40’ containers to fulfil such storage needs. Negotiations are underway to have this available later this year. Inquiries should be made to the Secretary.

The picture below shows the location and foundation preparation for the containers.
Any contributions, comments or correspondence for this newsletter or website should be forwarded to the Secretary. (secretary@ruataniwha.co.nz)

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