

# OTTAWA ROWING CLUB HISTORY

(Updated December 1, 2023)

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Rowing on the Ottawa River at what is now the Ottawa Capital Region probably started when the Royal Engineers of the British Army began to build the Rideau Canal. The workers were quartered on the Quebec side of the river in what was then known as Wrightville (established in 1800). They would cross the river to work at the base of the Rideau Canal in oared ferries. A settlement on the Ottawa side of the river (Bytown) was established in 1826.

Rowing as a sport started a few years later and the Ottawa Rowing Club (ORC) was founded in 1867. The founding members included: Governor General the Lord Alexander (Patron); Prime Minister Sir John A. MacDonald (President); the Mayor of Ottawa, Thomas Reynolds, Lt. Col Bernard ADC, Colonel MacDougall, Alan Gilmour, and T.D.Harrington (Vice Presidents).

The Original Ottawa Rowing Club was built on pontoons that were moored at the foot of Parliament Hill near the locks slightly up-river from the entrance to the Rideau Canal and every spring the pontoons would dislodge because of logs coming down the river from pulp and paper mills. The problem with this arrangement was that the pontoons would invariably spring a leak and the entire boat house would sink and invariably every spring the ice would move the boathouse downstream only to be retrieved annually to its moorings. This continued until 1890 when a new clubhouse was erected on solid ground at its present site.



On July 1, 1881 10 thousand came out to see a rowing regatta and Edward Hanlan came to Ottawa for this regatta to act as a referee at which time the City of Ottawa presented Mr. Hanlan a massive gold chain with a unique appendage bearing the inscription "a tribute to Edward Hanlan, champion oarsman of the world".

In 1898 according to the established charter the rowing club would be called the Ottawa Rowing Club House Company Limited. The share capital of the company would be three thousand dollars to be divided into three hundred shares of 10 dollars each with the head office in Ottawa.

In 1896, the ORC purchased property on Lady Grey Drive and built its clubhouse on the present location. The west side of the original clubhouse on the Lady Grey site remains today and is now referred to by Club Members as, "The Old Boathouse."

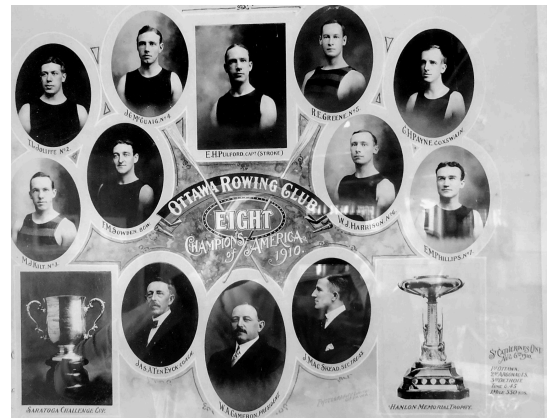
Rowing became a national event in 1880 when the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen (CAAO) was founded with an annual National Championship Regatta (The Henley). ORC hosted this regatta three times (1883,1897, and 1901). It was held on a local course opposite Kettle Island. Shortly thereafter in

1903 the CAAO decided the Henley would be permanently held in St. Catharines, Ontario (where it is to this day).

Ottawa RC has had some formidable coaches and the immortal Ned Hanlon was one. He was followed by Jim Ten Eyck of Syracuse University and succeeded by Jim Rice, another American. It was Ten Eyck who handled what was probably the club's most famous crew, the 1910-11 eight which just missed a rowing grand slam.

The crew was stroked by the famous Harvey Pulford one of the all - time greats of Ottawa sports. With him were Felix Sowden, Thayer Joliffe, Bob Greene, Jim McCuaig , Bill Harrison, Ed Phillips, Chester Payne and D. J. O' Donohue.

Actually the two renowned fours put together they emerged as an eight winning the Ned Hanlan Trophy at the Canadian Henley in 1910. A week later they added the U.S. crown and then it was onto the Royal Henley in England without Ten Eyck who was considered a professional and denied participation. (the pro – amateur bit of that era).



The prize they sought was the Grand Challenge Cup and they nearly made it, they scored a brilliant victory over a prize Belgian crew but lost by half a length to the champion Magdalen crew in a race that was only four seconds off the course record.

In 1920, the Ottawa Rowing Club became a founding member of the Eastern Rowing Association (ERA). Over the next 100 years the ERA worked harmoniously in developing and promoting rowing in Eastern Ontario and Southern Quebec. Competitions were held in rotation at each member club, culminating with a Championship Regatta competing for the Comstock Trophy. A crew's performance at the ERA Regattas was a factor in deciding whether to send crews to compete at the Henley in St. Catherines. ORC crews continue to participate in the ERA regatta held at the Montreal Bassin annually, still challenging other clubs from Eastern Ontario and Quebec for the Comstock Trophy.

In 1931, reeling from the effects of the Great Depression the ORC deeded the property on Lady Grey Drive to the City of Ottawa as tax settlement.

In 1935 the Rowing Club faced a huge financial crisis and all of the Rowing Club equipment, land and building were taken over by the city of Ottawa in 1936 and thanks to the efforts of Mayor Stanley Lewis, and with the name changed to Rowing Club of Ottawa, the rowing club continued operating.

The 1933 inventory list read as follows: 6 workboat fours in fair condition; four workboat singles in fair condition; two eight oared shells in good condition; two old eight oared shells, used for green men; one four oared shell in fair condition; one old four oared shell and a number of privately owned singles.

In 1939, through generous donations of Mr. P.D. Ross, (publisher of the Ottawa Journal) Mr. Harry S. Southam, (Publisher of the Ottawa Citizen) Mr. M. Wilson and club members, the club was able to purchase an eight, a four and other equipment.

The club won the 19<sup>th</sup> Eastern Rowing Association Regatta and claimed 6 titles at the Canadian Henley. The showing gained Sid Williams, Jack Stothart, Bob Hay and Joe Oliver a nomination as Canada's representatives to the ill - fated 1940 Helsinki Olympics.

A double that made it to the Olympics were Gabby Beaudry and Ted Graves. They won the U.S. Nationals at Detroit in 1947 and then earned a berth on the 1948 team which represented Canada at the London Olympics.

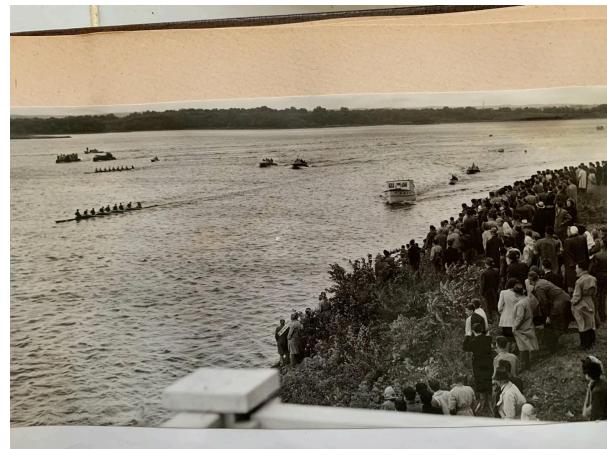
In the late 40's the club purchased two eight oared shells from Sims and Sons Ltd., England only to return them as both had a wavy shape from end to end, caused by improper shipping conditions.

By 1947 the membership had grown sufficiently that they rented out one of the buildings at Lansdowne Park for winter training and in subsequent years at the Ottawa Technical High School where dryland rowing machines would be installed.

In 1950, a fall Regatta was organized to commemorate the presidency of PD Ross, a long time club and rowing patron and an executive committee member of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen. He was also the editor in chief of the Ottawa journal and the paper wrote many articles about rowing and sponsored the P. D. Ross race up to the mid 60's. The idea for this race originated with the late "Danny" Boal and <sup>TM</sup> (Mac)Saunders while in training overseas for the Dieppe Raid. It was conceived as a distance event between two university crews. It took five years of post-war organization before the first race got underway. The original challenge was between the University of Ottawa and McMaster University. Some 2000 spectators lined the course on the Ottawa River to watch as the eights battled against each other. Ottawa popped an oarlock half-way down the course which allowed McMaster to win by three lengths. The PD Ross Memorial Boat Race Trophy was presented by General Ross of Montreal in memory of his brother.



*PD Ross Race*



*McMaster Crew in the lead*

The 60's was a decade of decline of the Ottawa Rowing Club. The rowing club was paying the City of Ottawa a rental fee annually of \$1.00 plus taxes per year to lease the premises, for the permission to

provide a rowing program. The City of Ottawa, the landlord, did not maintain the premises whatsoever and as a result the building and surroundings grounds deteriorated.

However, Tony Biernacki led in the singles in Canada, but was overlooked by the C.A.A.O. when they restricted the Olympic rowing team to 15 members. Biernacki was on the British Empire team in 1958 and the Pan AM team in 1959.

In early 1967 the City of Ottawa gave the rowing club an ultimatum to fix up the buildings by May 1, 1967 or find a new location and move out. The Ottawa Journal sports headline on March 28<sup>th</sup> 1967 read "Rowing Club in a desperate situation." A public call out went out to interested members and ex members to attend the annual general meeting publicity.

It looked almost as if, in 1967, the centennial project for the club would be to lock its doors and throw away the keys. The City gave the club an ultimatum: 'By May 1, show how the club will get needed repairs done (estimated cost \$30,000) or lose the club. However, a few individuals with help of the 'old boys' donating \$15 000, a century of tradition was not thrown away, but instead the ORC was able to rebuild itself.



This group within a month, developed a unique proposal and made the following submission to the city,

"the development of an Aquatic Sports Center and a marina on the site of the Ottawa Rowing Club which would serve more than just the rowing club needs but provide vital services to boat traffic along the Ottawa river as well as access to the river for residents of Ottawa". The proposal received the backing of two City of Ottawa aldermen who realized that the proposal provided a potential for a year round multi - purpose facility serving the Ottawa Citizens as it was the only piece of property that the City owned with access to the Ottawa river, for the rest of the riverfront was in the hands of the NCC, whose vision was to beautify the waterfront.

Subsequently, the City of Ottawa let out a modest contract in late 1967 to demolish parts of the existing building and refurbish the more stable section, which upon completion continued to serve the membership for the next several decades.

A club marina was organized in 1953 which served various water crafts travelling along the Ottawa river and was the only site between Ottawa and Montreal with fresh water and gasoline pumps. This marina which was constantly supervised was a source of income for the rowing club for over a dozen years, eventually being shut down in the mid 60's. The marina hosted many visitors as well as slips for up to 20 boats and several floating planes.

Pete Tremblay is noted in the ORC archives, as having served the rowing club as a boatman for some 53 years, the exact dates are unknown but it is understood that he served up to the mid 50's. Pete Tremblay lived year round in a small house adjacent to the original building on the upriver side and raised his family there.

Travel to the rowing club in the early half of the 20 century was by street car, which ran along Sussex street, and access to the boathouse was via a staircase from the top of Lady Grey drive. Members would ring a bell, Pete would look up and if he recognized the individual would pull on a rope which would unlock the latch on the gate allowing entrance to the club proper.

By 1968 the ORC saw a slow revival of competitiveness with a 4- and some scullers competing at the ERA regattas and Royal Canadian Henley.

1969 brought in a new coach who had a formidable task in that only two experienced oarsmen returned along with some scullers but with patience and determination he built a reasonably competitive program.

In 1969 the Ottawa Rowing Club purchased an eight oared shell from Donoratico in Italy for a sum of \$3700 after convincing the club's bank to advance this sum and the temerity of a few hardy souls on and off the executive who guaranteed the loan.

Another historic event of 1969 was the obtaining a trailer based on the design of Kaschper Racing shells and the fabrication costs of some \$1000 were met by a raffle launched by Continental Ski Imports along with some club funds. This trailer after minor modifications in the 90's, is still in use, in 2020.

The days of knocking down section boats and transporting them on automobile roof racks or pickup trucks became the thing of the past.

By 1970, the ORC was once again thriving, it had 45 competitive oarsmen, some 20 recreational oarsmen and around 30 university oarsmen, making it one of the strongest clubs in Canada at that time.

In 1974 the P.D. Ross Regatta was moved to the Rideau Canal and renamed the Head of the Rideau Regatta that has been held every fall. The first Head of Rideau Regatta was run on the Rideau Canal as an experiment, but ten clubs entered a total of 159 man-races. Participants came from as far as Boston and Philadelphia, and this success of the regatta was confirmed when 22 clubs entered a total of 324 man-races in the third year.

The original P.D. Ross Challenge Race was revisited by Carleton University rower and coach Kurt Herman in 1998 where Ottawa University and Carleton University have continued to battle it out on the Rideau Canal or Ottawa River annually to this day.

Since 1970, club members have consistently won medals at the Royal Canadian Henley and Canadian Nationals. In 1972, two Ottawa oarsmen, Jackson and Walker, went to the Olympic Games representing Canada. In 1974, Bev Cameron went to Munich as the spare oarswoman in the World Championships and Bev Cameron and her sister were both on the 76 Canadian Olympic team in Montreal.

In 1976, the ORC hosted the Ontario Championships for the first time on the ORC course from the mouth of the Gatineau to the ORC club. The water boat traffic at this time was low compared to now. The Club was able to leave the starting gate out on the course overnight, which would not be the case today. The ORC later hosted the Ontario Championships two more times, 1986 in front of the New Edingburgh



Rowing club, and in 1999 up near the Blair Road launch between Lower Duck Island and the Ottawa Shore.

In 1977 the Club started the Montebello Marathon (organized by club member David Carlisle) in which crews rowed against the clock from the ORC to the Chateau Montebello some 64 km downstream. Accompanying safety boats were organized by the Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and included assistance from many organizations. The first event was attended by 13 entries. Fastest time (4 hrs. 39.38 mins [University of Western Ontario 8]) and slowest time (6 hrs. 55.03 mins [Cornwall novice eight]). The oldest competitor at 64 was Jerry Olrich from Boston. The Marathon was held in 1978 and 1993 as well.

In 1977, with great foresight and organization by Peter King, the ORC president at this time, on the occasion of the Queen's Silver Jubilee visit to Ottawa, H.M. Queen Elizabeth II attended the Head of the Rideau Regatta to present prizes. Some 40 clubs entered and a Blue ribbon list of guests attended (Former Prime Minister Diefenbaker, Minister of Sport Iona Campagnolo, Chief of the Defense Staff Admiral Falls, Ontario Minister of Sport Robert Welch, MP Hugh Poulin, Director of Sport Canada Roger Jackson) as well as several thousand spectators.



*H.M. Queen Elizabeth II escorted by Peter King, ORC President, to watch the Head of the Rideau Regatta*

In 1978. The Summer program started with the launch of a new eight that was purchased with the generous support of many of the ORC friends. The ORC membership grew to 100 members, where 65 rowers could be on the water simultaneously with all equipment used. This made the ORC 5th largest club in Canada. Rowing started at Carleton university in 1977 and after a slow start has continued to this day. The University of Ottawa was slow in accepting rowing as a program and came on stream a decade later

In the early 80's the NCC was pushing to purchase the only piece of land the City of Ottawa owned on the entire Ottawa river, with the proposal that the ORC relocated further downstream at the New Edinburgh Canoe and Tennis club but without any concrete details. However under the leadership of Michael Butler a service Agreement was reached with the City of Ottawa in that the Ottawa Rowing Club for the fee of \$1.00 annually would run the rowing programs for the citizens of Ottawa and the city in

turn would maintain and service the buildings and grounds and the Ottawa Rowing Club remained where it had been since 1890. The City of Ottawa was extremely pleased with this partnership as there was a recreational program that the city did not have to operate and was looking for other sporting groups in Ottawa to come on board.

The relationship between the city and the ORC over the next decade varied, as funds were an issue for both sides (City of Ottawa was experiencing financial issues) and only when regional amalgamation occurred, did the City become a responsible landlord..

In the mid 80's a new building was proposed and an arrangement with the city was that the City would put up 1/3, 1/3 from Wintario and 1/3 by the ORC and the building was started in 1987. Another win win situation for the city as well as the ORC.

In the early 80's under guidance of Eugene Oscapeella a Veteran's association was formed with the objective being to raise funds for the ORC. This was done primarily through running of bingos which over the years of its existents raised close to \$250,000 of which over half was contributed towards the paying off the mortgage agreement to the city on the new building as well towards purchasing of badly required rowing equipment. Around 1990 the ORC and as well as many other charities terminated their bingo operations as they could not abide by the provincial regulations. An anecdote from the OPP inspector at the time was " no charges are being laid as many Priests and Rabbis would be in jail as well other charitable organization members, who as all worked for the common good of their community but not within the prescribed law" which meant that members of the charity had to service the operation.

Construction of the second New Club House started in 1987. Ottawa Mayor James Durrell, ORC President Michael Butler, and building designer ORC member Grant Heron attended the sod turning ceremony. Volunteers put in sliding racks and the club invested in building a new trailer to transport boats to regattas.



In the 1990s, High school finally took a hold at the ORC and these rowers became part of the summer program as youth rowers but as they graduated, new HS rowers emerged and the graduates returned to the summer program. Crews from Glebe, Nepean, Brookfield, Colonel By and Lester B. Pearson competed and won medals at the CSSRA regatta.

Bingos were revived in the early nineties with ORC members staffing the bingos and then along came the charity casinos and the ORC joined this operation, which meant staffing the casinos with 4 members for three straight days from 11 am through to 3.00 am. The casino was a lucrative project for the ORC till the provincial government shut the casinos down and the bingos became no longer profitable.

Nonetheless these two ventures generated close to \$250,000 in revenue in the years of existence assisting in upgrading the rowing equipment, facilities and surrounding grounds as well as keeping the membership fees affordable. After the shutdown of the Bingos the ORC started up an Adult Rowing

League program, giving novice rowers an opportunity to have a bit of friendly competition on the water after a short introduction to rowing, to help replace the lost revenue from the Bingos.

The 1990's were busy times at the ORC as programs were being rejuvenated and new ones introduced. High school rowing was taking root, summer youth camps were implemented, youth rowing was being established and various fundraising initiatives were implemented.

One of the first reach outs of the early 90's was to a group of rowers from a Czech Rowing Club who trained for a week at the ORC prior to going on to compete at the Royal Canadian Henley regatta.

In 1992 a camp was held at the ORC for the Eastern Ontario women's sculling team which went onto the Ontario Summer Games in Scarborough winning medals in all three sculling events.

The same year ORC hosted an acclimatization camp for the Polish National Youth Rowing team which competed at the 1992 FISA World Junior and Lightweight Championships in Montreal. During their stay in Ottawa the team members were billeted within the Ottawa Polish Community. Two of the members eventually won gold at the Sydney and Beijing Olympics.

In the later part of the 90's ORC started hosting and sponsored in part, the annual Rideau River/Canal tour which started in Ottawa and ended up in Kingston, a week long rowing event which took the participants through the locks, the canal and along the river, staying overnight at various hotels and inns along the way. This was organized by the Ontario Touring Group headed by Ernst Peters of the Don R.C.

About that same era, (mid 90's) for the first time in decades the numerous high school rowing teams had sufficient rowers from each school to form school crews which went on to compete at the CSSRA and won medals in various categories.

Youth rowing camps were started in the months of July and August, exposing young teenagers to the sport of rowing which also became a basis for youth rowing recruitment.

During the summer of 1997 a group of adults, approximately 23 people, were getting together once per week to have a few fun races. These were mostly former rowers who had some interest in being on the water without the commitment of the Masters Rowing Programs or the frequency of the Recreational Rowing Program. The limiting factor at the time seemed to be the term "corporate". There did not seem to be any critical mass from any one "corporation" that could furnish enough people to fill a boat. To get things moving, a different structure for recruiting eager rowing bodies was still needed and that is when the modern day program began.

The concept was going to be modelled after similar adult programs from other rowing clubs, but it was soon obvious that Ottawa had its own challenges based on the recreational patterns in the city. Namely, a large percentage of potential rowers were busy people who had several sports on the go, these people were interested in committing to one specific night of the week for training and for racing. Weekend training was ruled out.



After the 1997 review of corporate rowing, an Ottawa Rowing Club Adult Rowing League was planned. The model for Ottawa was set and then evolved slightly over the years which follows this general template:

- Introduction Night (May) - meet crews, explain program - training, racing, social
- Introduction Week (June) - Terminology, how to lift/move a boat, dockside, safety video, ergometer
- Training sessions (June) - one night per week
- Racing Sessions (July) - Thursday Nights - races, post race socials
- Recreational Regatta - optional

After some promotion at the rowing club and in local community papers an introduction night was planned for May 1998. There were 4 crews registered to attend (10-14 people per crew), and coaches were on hand to meet their crews. Evidently, something went wrong (or right) in the advertising because the introduction night became an information night. The league was overrun with “new applications” that night as 40-50 people showed up. Between the Thursday Introduction night, and Tuesday the first training night, shirts were ordered and 4 more coaches were found and 4 new crews were added. The first official year was set, 8 crews, a series of 4 boat races on race nights, with points for each race. This allowed race divisions to be developed and the fast crews got to compete against other fast crews and the slower crews against other slower crews. In this sense, every crew had a chance to win at least one race.

Over the years the league expanded and contracted and at its peak there were 16 crews of 12-14 per crew. This allowed for absenteeism during holiday time in July while maintaining racing. It also meant that people had to rotate in and out of their crew and even row in separate races that were added. Over the first 10 years of the program there was more than \$250,000 injected into the Ottawa Rowing Club budget while expenses remained at a minimum as this was all run by volunteers. The volunteer coaches were solicited each year and for a few years it was mandatory for Senior Athletes to assume a coaching position. The competitors were given crew T-Shirts, and at the end of the year coaches were given appreciation gifts. At one point, this program covered the cost of hiring the ORC paid coach position.

One great value of this program was the spinoff into other ORC activities. ARL participants entered development, Competitive, Recreational and Masters programs, while others have volunteered at the club.

In 1999, the ORC hosted the Ontario Championships for a third time between Lower and Upper Duck Island and the Ottawa shoreline. The club pulled docks from the club upstream to provide launching docks. Club trailers used the Blair Road boat launching area and parking lot for rigging shells. The race course was protected from main motorboat traffic and was buoyed using a system borrowed from Kingston Rowing Club. However, a microburst wind storm swept through the area mid race day and caused a lot of boat damage and forced the event to be cancelled.

This same year, the historic “Old Boathouse” was renovated as an Interpretive Center, developed in partnership with the City of Ottawa through the Millennial Partnership Program. The Interpretive Centre was meant to be open to the public to showcase the history of rowing in Ottawa. An old wooden boat was hung in the ceiling, photos were displayed on the walls showing crews as far back as 1910. Two display cases were built so that they could be rolled in and out when needed with artifacts from regattas and events the ORC had hosted in the past. A TV and VCR were encased in part of a rowing shell to show rowing videos. There was an ergometer and a section of a boat set up with a section of oar so that the public could get into a boat and give rowing a try. The Interpretive Centre is opened up every summer for ‘Doors Ottawa’ to showcase the Heritage building and rowing. The Interpretive Centre is now used to host wedding events and used as a means of generating revenue for the Club.

The ORC throughout history has relied heavily on volunteer coaches to coach the crews but over its history there were several salaried head coaches. First were the 3 during the 1908 – 1912 era, then again in 1980 with Sean Dowd for a number of years and then in the fall of 2000 emerged the Lubo Kisiov era at the ORC with year round training, on the water, in the gym, and winter Florida training camps.

In 2001, The ORC was voted the 2nd largest Club (2nd to St. Catharine’s RC) in Canada with approximately 1000 members across all of its programs. By 2010, the ORC’s performance at the ORC Championships was similarly impressive, with 55 finalists and second overall in medals won, which was a significant leap from 11 medals in 2008 and the ORC’s highest medal total ever. ORC crews attended the US Elite Nationals, with six athletes/crews reaching the finals and Morgan Jarvis winning the Lwt 1X. Quite an accomplishment for a club competing against the US National Team and some of the best clubs in the US. The ORC once again dominated the Eastern Rowing Association regattas, winning the historic Comstock Trophy at the ERA Championships, completing a sweep of the decade in winning this historic trophy. A large number of ORC athletes represented Canada at International races, Commonwealth, Worlds, FISU and Paralympics.

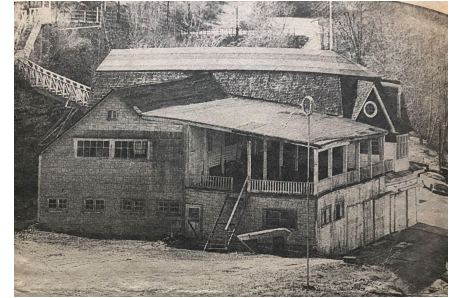
In 2002 ORC hosted the First ever FISA Rowing Tour to be held in Canada, which took the same route along the Rideau River/Canal that the Ontario Touring group had developed and established over the previous 7 years.

The Flame for Pan Ams Games in 2015 held in Toronto passed through Ottawa and was carried in a rowing shell rowed by Lana Burpee the President of the club at this time, Wes Kuran (former President of Club), Mike Walker (former President of Club), and athletes as they rowed from Carleton to Dows Lake.

Over the years the Ottawa rowing club has had various people who were employed to look after the well being of the club. Club records show that the rowing club employed a fulltime boatman, Pete Tremblay for some 53 years and in his other capacity he also controlled access to the club as he lived in a building on the up river side of the old shell house. Access to the clubhouse in the early years was via a staircase and to open the door the member had to ring a bell, Pete would look step out, look up and upon recognition of the individual would pull on a rope which would open the door.

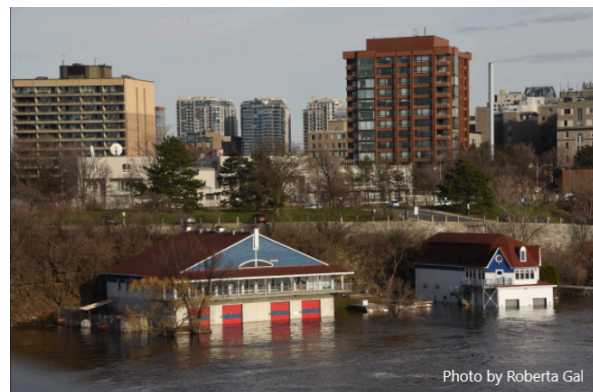
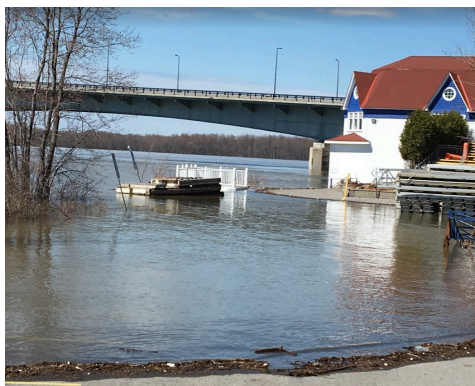
The years after Pete Tremblay, it was the executive members and/or coaches who opened the club and closed it after the end of the day's activities. As the programs developed and traffic increased through the 90's the club hired managers for the summer months who provided a presence and service to the members.

This practice served the membership well for a decade or so but as the membership kept rising, usage of the facilities increased and regular maintenance was required on a daily basis. Therefore in the early 2000s the executive of the day, after lengthy consideration, decided to hire a full time manager whose task was to look after the buildings, grounds and provide the daily need of the memberships.



Brian Adams was hired and a few years passed and Brian expanded his job description to also include boat repairs, coaching, as a truck and trailer driver and at times filled in as a spare rower. He fulfilled this role for well over 15 years until his untimely death in 2017 and although he was an employee he was regarded more as a friend, which he was to many. To this day, Brian's legacy lives on in the ORC gardens in front of the Andy Binda Boathouse, that he created and nurtured.

In 2017, major Flooding in 2017 and 2019 saw water levels as high as halfway up the doors of the old boathouse. Rowers could not get on the water until late June shortening their training season. These setbacks interrupted athlete training and had its impacts on athlete performance at races. In 2019 rowers did not get onto the water to train until June 28th, only giving athletes 5 weeks to prepare for Ontario Championships and Royal Canadian Henley. At the club's annual Henley Send-Off party the ORC celebrated its 150th (Same as Canada's 150th) and held a special ceremony including the christened the Kinoje 8+ blessed by an Algonquin Elder.



Joshua King, a rower at the ORC made his mark at the club by accomplishing to win all of the following 2017 Henley events: Sr Ltwt 1x, Sr 1x, Championship 1x and the Sr Ltwt 2-, a feat never done by any other ORC rower. King became only the sixth sculler in the 135-year history of the Canadian Henley to

win three major singles finals and be part of a small group to capture four or more victories in a single regatta. “It was a phenomenal achievement, for sure,” said Ed Fournier, who is King’s coach at the Ottawa Rowing Club. “I’ve gone to Henley for almost 30 years and I’ve never seen anyone accomplish what he did.”<sup>2</sup>

In 2019, the City of Ottawa granted heritage status to the “Old Boathouse” and the ORC named the building the “Andy Binda Boathouse”. Andy Used to row, coach, boat repairman, Umpire, and is a life member of the ORC and to this day will be seen at the club helping out.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has taken its toll on athletes. As all training facilities were closed due to lockdowns and group gatherings were not permitted training has been difficult. The ORC opened its doors in late June 2020 and at that, only experienced rowers were allowed on the water. Leaving all instructional programming at the club to be canceled. The membership in 2019 was approximately 700 with all instructional programming in place and in 2020 it only had 175 members. The ORC experienced a large decrease in membership and revenues and will once again have to rebuild itself to be great once again.

Most Recently, Wes Kuran, who is a lifelong ORC member and served as the ORC president from 1995 – 2006, was inducted in 2021 in the RowOntario Hall of Fame for his Umpiring. Kuran has over 38 years of umpiring experience, ranging from local and regional regattas near his home in Ottawa, to Provincial and National Championship events and the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta. Kuran has held many other positions within the rowing community and was involved in the creation of the Ontario Rowing Association (later changed to Row Ontario) in 1970. He served as President of the ORA from 1973-77 and then moved on to become President of the Canadian Amateur Rowing Association (later changed to Rowing Canada Aviron) from 1977-79.

The Ottawa Rowing Club, with a history that spans the same length as Canadian Confederation was poised to once again rebuild itself.

2022 marked the first year that Club operations could return to normal capacity once again, and the ORC hit the ground running with various new initiatives and events in an attempt to reinvigorate the Ottawa rowing community. Notably, the ORC wanted to push more collaborative programming, which resulted in the creation of its own in-house regatta, the *Chaos Regatta*. The Chaos Regatta puts ORC athletes of all programs against each other in friendly competition, where teams are drawn randomly. The ORC also began using a popular online messaging app, called *Discord* for Club communications, which has since allowed members to communicate no matter where they are. It’s been crucial to not only official communication, but for socializing and sharing moments as well.

Mainstays at the ORC also returned, such as the Henley Send Off, Adult Rowing League, and Head of the Rideau. Additionally, the Club saw many community driven events throughout the season as well such as a wine tasting event called *ORC Sips*, Weekly Yoga, Pub Nights and Barbeques.

*Everybody Rows Ottawa*, an ORC led program spearheaded by Head Coach Zak Lewis, also saw growth in 2022. The program seeks to support the local community through providing free rowing opportunities to underserved communities, and was able to reach nearly 200 more participants than its previous year by working with *Athletes Combating Racism*, the *Boys and Girls Club*, *Lower Town Community Centre*, and *Special Olympics Ottawa*.

The successful push of these initiatives led to one of the best years the Ottawa Rowing Club has had to date, with over 800 members registering across all programs. The Club also had great competitive success across Ontario and internationally, with over 90 podium finishes, 30 of which being Gold. The ORC was also able to reclaim the Comstock Trophy at the Eastern Regatta Association.

Through some generous grants from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the ORC was able to winterize the boathouse so that operations could continue in the winter, marking the first year that Winter Training could take place at the Club itself. Unfortunately, things would turn sour in early 2023, where the inaugural Winter Training Season was cut short due to City permitting issues. Rowers would no longer be able to train at the club for the remainder of winter despite best efforts made by the Club's Board.

In February of 2023, ORC Head Coach, Zak Lewis was awarded the RCA President's Award just after receiving the *HydroOne Coaching Excellence Award* in 2022, which is a testament to the great work he's done for the club and its culture since his arrival in 2020.

In early May, just weeks prior to the beginning of the on-water season, the Ottawa River rose to record heights that ultimately flooded the shoreline, parking lot, and boat bays. This caused a three week closure of the club and a slightly shortened season for competitive rowers.

The Ottawa Rowing Club Community is resilient though, and made the most of the season after the water receded and clean up commenced. The ORC had launched many new events in addition to running its staple events such as *Head of the Rideau*, *Henley Send Off*, *Canada Day Barbeque*, and the *Chaos Regatta* returned for its second year. Of note, the ORC had its first *Summer Blockbuster*, a movie and fundraising event, as well as *ORC's Drag Race*, a drag show and erg competition. The ORC also hosted a tent at Ottawa's Capital Pride event.

2023's *Head of the Rideau* regatta was also one of the largest that the Ottawa Rowing Club has put on, hosting over 500 athletes, coaches, volunteers and more from 26 different Clubs across a multitude of events.

One of the Rowing Club's greatest accomplishments for the season, due in large part to volunteers Marley Mullan and Ben Grenier, was the Special Olympics Ottawa Partner Program. The program sought to bring rowing to people with disabilities, and was able to host a modest 11 participants. Despite the seemingly small size, learning outcomes and





experience of those participating and running the program were immense.

Competitively, the ORC had great success competitively as well, sporting over 145 podium or top 3 finishes across 10+ regattas. The Club was awarded the Comstock Trophy for the second time in a row at the ERA.

Disappointingly, the Ottawa Rowing Club was unable to host its Winter Training Programming onsite at the Club as the City had concerns about the driveway access for vehicles in case of emergencies.

In spring 2024, The club lost Cliff Brimmell, the junior women's coach. Cliff Brimmell's involvement at the ORC was foundational. Cliff devoted his time to rowing for over 50 years. He was the lead coach for the Junior Women program for more than 15 years where he instilled a love of the sport of rowing as he taught technical skills that took many of his junior women to highly-competitive university rowing programs in Canada and the U.S., as well as Junior National level rowing. Cliff dedicated countless hours both on and off the water throughout the year to ensure that these young rowers had the confidence and competence to compete.

## ORC Presidents

year(s)	President		Year	President
1867	Sir John A. MacDonald		1958 - 1971	Jack Smith
1875 - 1888	Alan Gilmour		1971 - 1973	Peter King
1989 - 1901			1973 - 1975	Harold Leikin
1902	W.F. Beardman		1975 - 1980	Peter King
1903	D.J. McDougal		1980 - 1982	Paul Jenkins
1904			1982 -1983	Rob McGolgan
1905	L.H. Colman		1983 - 1988	Michael Butler
1906 - 1909			1988 - 1990	Peter King
1910	W.A. Cameron		1990 - 1995	Kent McLean
			1995 - 2006	Wes Kuran
1924	J.C. McCuaig		2006 - 2010	Mike Walker
			2010 - 2017	Lana Burpee
1927	F.R. Harvey		2017 -2024	Peter Thompson
			2024 - present	Craig law
1930 - 1936	Harvey Pulford			
???	Louis Fournier			
1938 to 1948	Roy Byron			
1948 - 1950	Bert Kerr			
1950 - 1952	George L. Sprague			
1952 - 1956	J.K. (Keith) Ferguson			
1956 - 1958				

## ORC Head Coaches

year(s)	Head Coach		Year	Head Coach
	Lubo Kisiov			
	Heracio Tendilla			
	Siobhan McLaughlin			
2020-Present	Zak Lewis			

## International Representation

### Olympic and Paralympic Games

Name	Year	Event Location	Event
<a href="#">Gabriel Beaudry</a>	1948	London	2x
<a href="#">Ted Graves</a>	1948	London	2x
<a href="#">James Walker</a>	1972	Munich	4+
<a href="#">Beverley Cameron</a>	1976	Montréal	2x
Trice Cameron	1980	Moscow	
<a href="#">Vicki Harber</a>	1984	Los Angeles	4x+
<a href="#">Alison Korn</a>	1996	Atlanta	8+ (silver medal)
<a href="#">Alison Korn</a>	2000	Sydney	8+ (bronze medal)
<a href="#">Caitlin Renneson</a>	2008	Beijing	TA Mixed Double Sculls
<a href="#">Morgan Jarvis</a>	2012	London	2x lightweight
<a href="#">David Blair</a>	2012	London	4+ mixed legs, trunk and arms
<a href="#">Cristy Nurse</a>	2016	Rio de Janeiro	8+
Andrew Todd	2016	Rio de Janeiro	4+ mixed legs, trunk, and arms (Bronze)
Joshua King	2021	Tokyo	spare

### World Rowing Championships

Name	Year	Event Location	Event
Jim Smith	1978		LM4-
Dan Charlton	1978		LM4-
Alison Korn	1997	Aiguebelette	W8 (Silver)
Alison Korn	1997	Aiguebelette	W2- (Gold)
Rachel Starr	1997	Aiguebelette	WL2x
Alison Korn	1998	Cologne	W2- (Silver)
Alison Korn	1998	Cologne	W8 (Bronze)
	2002	Seville	
<a href="#">Kevin Burt</a>	2003	Milan	M2+ (Bronze)
<a href="#">Caitlin Renneson</a>	2006	Eton	TA Mixed Double Sculls (Bronze)
<a href="#">Caitlin Renneson</a>	2007	Munich	TA Mixed Double Sculls
<a href="#">Paul Amesbury</a>	2008	Linz	LM8+
<a href="#">Katharine Goodfellow</a>	2014	Amsterdam	W4x

Cristy Nurse	2014	Amsterdam	W8+ (silver)
Katharine Goodfellow	2015	Aiguebelette	W2x
Cristy Nurse	2015	Aiguebelette	W8+ (bronze)
Cristy Nurse	2015	Aiguebelette	2W-
Andrew Todd	2015	Aiguebelette	4+ mixed legs, trunk and arms
Jenna Pelham	2016	Rotterdam	W4x lightweight
Katharine Goodfellow	2016	Rotterdam	W4-
Sarah Black,	2016	Rotterdam	W4-
Carolyn Ganes,	2016		
Rosie Deboef.	2016		
Joshua King	2016	Rotterdam	4x lightweight
Andrew Tood	2018	Plovdiv	4+ mixed legs, trunk and arms
Andrew Tood	2018	Plovdiv	2- mixed legs, trunk and arms (gold)
Andrew Tood	2019	Linz	2- mixed legs, trunk and arms (gold)
Joshua King	2022	Lucerne, Switzerland World Cup III	Men's 8+ (Bow Seat) (6th Place)
Joshua King	2022	Racice, CZE	Men's 8+ (2 Seat) (5th place)
Anna Currie	2024	St Catharine	Lwt 2x

## World University Rowing Championships (FISU)

Name	Year	Event location	Event
Paul Amesbury	2006	Trakai	4- lightweight
Liliane Pagé	2014	Gravelines	2x lightweight
Jenna Pelham	2014	Gravelines	2x lightweight
Marika Kay	2014	Gravelines	4+
Mathew Fournier	2015	Seoul	lwt 2x
Matt Christie	2015	Seoul	lwt 2x
Josh King	2015	Seoul	lwt 4-
Alanna Forgarty	2016	Poznan	2x lightweight

## U23 & Junior World Championships

Name	Year	Location	Event
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Arden Beddoes	2004	Poznan	8+ heavyweight
<a href="#">Paul Amesbury</a>	2004	Poznan	4- lightweight (bronze)
<a href="#">Matthew Christie</a>	2013	Linz	1x lightweight
<a href="#">Dylan Harris</a>	2013	Linz	2x lightweight
<a href="#">Madeleine Lauriault</a>	2021	Plodiv, Bulgaria	2x heavyweight
<a href="#">Riley Richardson</a>	2022	Varese, Italy	Women's 4-
<a href="#">Aidan Hembruff</a>	2022	Varese, Italy	Men's 8+
<a href="#">Rachel Weber</a>	2023	Plovdiv, Bulgaria	Women's Pair
<a href="#">Aidan Hembruff</a>	2023	Plovdiv, Bulgaria	Men's Four

## Royal Canadian Henley Wins

1868	Not documented
1869	Not documented
1870	Not documented
1871	Not documented
1872	Not documented
1873	Not documented
1874	Not documented
1875	Not documented
1876	Not documented
1877	Not documented
1888	Badgely & Ross Jr 2x
1905	Jr 4-
1909	Jr & Sr 4-
1910	Sr 4- Championship 8
1912	Sr 4-
1914	Jr 145 4-
1916	Canceled due to WWI
1917	Canceled due to WWI
1918	Canceled due to WWI
1920	Jr 4-



1923	Jr & Sr 145 4-
1927*	Not documented
1928*	Jr 4-
1939*	Jr & Sr 4-; Jr 8
1942	Dubois: Championship 1x
1944*	D. McElliot Jr 1x
1945*	J. Bisson Jr. 145 1x G Beaudry Jr 1x
1947*	Jr 4-
1948*	Not documented
1949*	Beaudry Association 1x
1952*	Jr 4-
1957	Tony Biernacki Sr
1960	Not documented
1961	Andy Binda Jr 145 1x
1969	None
1970	Peter King & Beauregard: Jr 145 2x;
1971	Jr & Sr 145 4+
1972	Sr 145 4-
1973	Jr 155 4-
1974	Jr 145 4- (?) &(?) W2x Bev Cameron W 1x
1975	Jr 135 4- (?) &(?) W 2x Bev Cameron W 1x
1976	None
1977	None
1978	Jr & Sr 135 8+; Crawley & Surray: Jr. 2x (?) & (?) Sr 155 2-
1979	None
1980	None
1981	None

1982	None
1983	Jr 145 4-
1984	Jr Ltwt W 8+
1985*	Grondin & Lanoue: Jr and Sr 140 2x
1986	None
1987*	None
1988	None
1989	None
1990	None
1991	None
1992	None
1993	Int. 145 4-
1994	None
1995	(?) & (?) Int 155 2- Dan Martin 155 lb 500 m dash 1x
1996	Jonathan Langdon Int & Sr 145 1x Dan Martin 155 lb 500 m dash 1x
1997	None
1998	Open 140 lbs 4-
1999	(?) & (?) Int Ltwt W 2-
2000	None
2001	Lysanne Lavigne Jr W1x, & U23 Ltwt W1x;
2002	Kathryn Walker SrBW 1x (?) & (?) Sr B Ltwt 2-, (?) & (?) 2-, Sr B Ltwt 4- (Law, Burt, Piermarini, Beddoes) Sr. 4-
2003	(?) & (?) Sr. Ltwt 2-, (?) & (?) U23 2-, Sr B 4-
2004	(?) & (?) Ltwt 2-; Ltwt W 4-
2005	Championship W 8+ Jr B W 4+ Sr Ltwt 4- (?) & (?) Ltwt 2-

2006	Championship W 8+ Jr W 4+ Ltw 4-
2007	(?) & (?) Jr U 23 W 2- Sr B 4-
2008	None
2009	Morgan Jarvis Sr Ltw 1x (?) & (?) Sr Ltw 2x (?) & (?) U23 W 2- U23 W 4x U23 W 4- U 23 W 8+ Paul Amesbury 1x Dash
2010	(?) & (?) U23 2x Sr Ltw 4x U 23 4x U23 W 4x Paul Amesbury 1x Dash
2011	(?) & (?) Sr Ltw W2- (?) & (?) Sr Ltw 2- St Ltw 4x
2012	Marc Bruce-Fuoco Sr 64 kg 1x Mathew Christie Sr Ltw 1x Dash Laurel Clegg Sr Ltw W 1x Dash
2013	Marc Bruce-Fuoco Sr 64 kg 1x Louise Munro U17 W 1x U19 4x U23 4x Sr 64 kg 4+ Lilianne Pagé Sr W1x Dash
2014	(?) & (?) U 23 Ltw 2- U19 W 4x Sr Ltw W 8+
2015	Joshua King U23 Ltw 1x Alanna Fogarty U23 Ltw W 1x (?) & (?) U 23 Ltw 2x (?) & (?) Sr Ltw 2x Sr Ltw 4x Sr Ltw W 4x Sr Ltw W 8+ Lilianne Pagé Ltw W1x Dash Matthew Christie Ltw 1x Dash
2016	(?) & (?) U 23 Ltw 2x (?) & (?) U 19 W 2- U 19 Ltw W 8+ Sr Ltw W 8+
2017	Joshua King Sr Ltw 1x, Sr 1x, & Championship 1x Jason Sukstorf & Joshua King Sr Ltw 2- Lilianne Pagé Ltw W1x Dash
2018	Sr Ltw W 4- Sr Ltw W 8+

	Alexander Kunkel Ltwt 1x Dash
2019	None
2020	Canceled due to COVID-19 Pandemic
2021	Canceled due to COVID-19 Pandemic
2022	Men's 64kg 1x - Brendan Edge Sr. W lwt 2- Meghan Jolley & Alyssa Pastic Sr W Lwt 4x - Alyssa Pastic Anne-Andre Sirois, Isabelle Ngo, Meghan Jolley Sr W Lwt 4- - Meghan Jolley, Alyssa Pastic, Anne-Andree Sirois, Bridget Gaudet
2023	Men's Senior 64kg Singe - Brendan Edge Women's Championship Pair - Rachel Weber (ORC), Gabrielle Yarema (CRC)
2024	None
2025	

## Club Trophies

1. P.D Ross Trophy (ref correspondence between the club, the Ottawa Journal and General Ross) Donated by General Ross in memory of his brother P.D . Ross. Trophy selected in consultation between the Club, The Ottawa Journal and General Ross, and supplied by Birks Jewelers. To at the Head of the Rideau to be awarded to the winner of the Open Eights at the Head of the Rideau
2. Ottawa Carleton United Way Campaign: United Way Trophy for Mixed Eights at the Head of the Rideau.
3. City of Ottawa Mayor's Trophy for Light Eights at the Head of the Rideau.
4. Colonial Voyageur Trophy to be awarded to the winner of the Men's Coxed Four at the Head of the Rideau
5. Carling O'Keefe Trophy to be awarded to the winner of the Lightweight Coxed Four at the Head of the Rideau
6. Richardson Securities Trophy to be awarded to the winner of the Men's Pairs at the Head of the Rideau
7. Ministry of Transport Trophy to be awarded to the winner of the Men's double at the Head of the Rideau
8. Myers Motors Trophy to be awarded to the winner of the Novice Single at the Head of the Rideau
9. Terry Smith Trophy to be awarded to the winner of the Open Single at the Head of the Rideau
10. Kaschper Racing Shells: A set of sculling blades to be awarded to the winner of the Veteran' Single at the Head of the Rideau.
11. Lachine Rowing Club Old Boys: A set of four sweep oars to be awarded to the winner of the Points Trophy at the Head of the Rideau.
12. Dominion Marine Association Trophy: to be awarded to the winner of the Lightweight Single at the Head of the Rideau.
13. Cameron Family Trophy to be awarded to the winner of the Women's Single at the Head of the Rideau.
14. Western Old Boys Trophy to be awarded to the winner of the Veteran's double at the Head of the Rideau.
15. B. Poirier Trophy to be awarded to the winner of the Women's Coxed Four at the Head of the Rideau.
16. Mrs. Jean Pigott MP Trophy to be awarded to the winner of the Women's Eights at the Head of the Rideau.
17. Ottawa Old Boys... to be awarded to the winner of the *Victor Ludorum* at the Head of the Rideau.
18. Dave Soper Trophy: In memory of Dave Soper to be awarded to the winner of the ¼ mile dash for eights at the Ottawa Invitational Regatta
19. D.B. Boal Trophy (ref club executive minutes 13 May 1958). Donated by Ottawa Business Consultants in memory of D.B. (Danny Boal) and to be awarded annually to the Outstanding First Year Oarsman with a small trophy to be kept by the winner
20. Montebello Marathon Trophy. Donated and selected by Club member David Carlisle, sculpted by Canadian artist Sigggy Puchta



## Bibliography

<sup>1</sup> <https://ottawacitizen.com/sports/local-sports/ottawas-got-game/amp> Ottawa's Got Game. by Randy Boswell Jun 30, 2017 •  
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<sup>2</sup> <https://ottawasun.com/2017/09/12/ottawa-rower-king-hopes-for-national-team-spot-in-2018> **Ottawa rower King hopes for national team spot in 2018** By MARTIN CLEARY • Publishing date: Sep 12, 2017