



The Future of Rowing at Nottingham Girls' High School

Nottingham Girls' High School held a special rowing celebration evening on Wednesday 21 June to highlight a re-introduction of the sport at the school, recognise achievements and look to the future of girls' rowing.

The evening was attended by several special guests including Helen Bloor who was the first ever female captain of Nottingham Rowing Club. An outstanding oarswoman and coach with decades of success at all levels in the sport, Helen was invited to present girls from the school with commendation awards for their recent achievements.



Also present was John McKirdy, Head Coach of the University of Nottingham Boat Club, and his lightweight women's squad who took questions from the floor after the presentations.

Head, Julie Keller, explained how she had wanted to prioritise sport as one of the key areas when she took over the headship of Nottingham Girls' High School just over a year ago, and introduce new elements to compliment those which form part of the school's core offer. When approached by Richard Whittaker of the Becket Rowing Club, Julie saw the

potential and was more than happy to get involved. She says: "Quite simply, rowing is cool! Rowing is exciting! Rowing is about strength and skill and offers the girls something entirely different. Nottingham has a strong tradition of rowing and I am delighted that my school is now also a part of that."

With the help of Richard and colleague Nigel McKean from Becket, Nottingham Girls' High School was able to provide weekly rowing taster sessions at Holme Pierrepont after school for 19 girls. Consequently 16 of these girls continued to take lessons over the summer, and 12 went on to join the school's first ever rowing squad of recent times. Competition success soon followed for Year 10 girls Katie Mellors and Charlotte Carey as part of a joint crew with Becket girls, winning their J15 race in May of this year.





Rowing success is not unfamiliar to girls at the school with prestigious alumnae such as Henley winners Charlotte Brown and Mary Wilson as role models. Several current girls are also already involved in local clubs - Ruby Poon (Year 9), Ella Grant Clapham (Year 11), Eliza Cox and Bella Barlow (Year 12) have all participated at national and international level. Bella Barlow particularly has a string of medals to her name and has the privilege of being chosen to represent Great Britain in the annual U16 GB vs France match in July of this year.

Acknowledging the successes of these girls, Julie Keller is looking to the future and said: "I wanted to open up the rowing experience to as many girls as possible and so the next phase has been to offer all Year 7s an introduction to rowing as part of their PE curriculum this term." The benefits of this were echoed by John McKirdy from the University of Nottingham who added: "Rowing is the most tremendous sport and I'm so happy to see so many girls at Nottingham Girls' High School getting involved. They will learn so much about themselves and others and the skills developed will take them far in life."

The celebratory evening was a great success enjoyed by all who attended, and Helen Bloor said afterwards: "I'm so impressed with the girls at Nottingham Girls' High School. Their appetite for sport and rowing is phenomenal. Rowing is all about fun, commitment and success and I know that those girls involved will build lifetime friendships."

Judging by the level of excitement and enthusiasm for the sport, it would appear that rowing at Nottingham Girls' High School is firmly back on the agenda.



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Notes to Editors

About Nottingham Girls' High School

Nottingham Girls' High School is an independent day school for girls between the ages of 4 – 18. Part of the GDST (Girls' Day School Trust) Nottingham Girls' High School is one of the largest schools within the group with over 800 pupils.

About the GDST

The Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) is the leading group of independent girls' schools in the UK, with nearly 4,000 staff and 20,000 students between the ages of three and 18. As a charity that owns and runs a family of 24 schools and two academies in England and Wales, it reinvests all its income in its schools. Founded in 1872, the GDST has a long history of pioneering innovation in the education of girls.

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