

The Robin Leach interview 13th July 2024

Introduction and Robin's early years of rowing.....	2
Rowing at Saltford	4
Avon County Origins.....	6
Equipment – then and now	8
Umpiring	13
2012 Olympics	15

Introduction and Robin's early years of rowing

AF: Good morning. This is Alex Fraser interviewing Robin Leach at Avon County Rowing Club.

RL Good Morning

AF Robin. I've only met you a few times, normally at regattas where you've been doing the commentary. I've enjoyed that and heard lots of snippets of really interesting information. And from that I want to capture your history and involvement in the club for posterity and let people other people hear your story. So my first question, Robin, is when and where did you start rowing?

RL I started rowing at school, Clifton College, and based at Bristol Ariel Rowing Club. I was into rowing because I was useless at rugby and cricket. And because my father, he rowed what would have been an Isis Crew, because he got to the trial Eights at Oxford University in the early 1920s. He then became a master at Clifton College for his career and when I was 15, I was allowed to take up rowing. We had to do cricket and rugby first and then I learned to row on the boat with fixed seats and fixed pin. No sliding seats and no swivels.

AF Goodness. It's like a gig growing in the sea.

RL I don't know about that, but it was certainly good. And it certainly toughened up the backside!

AF One of my questions was, was it sweep or sculling?

RL It was sweep. I think it was a four. And, you know, it was before sectional boats and all that sort of thing. In fact, when we came here and we used to go to the Tideway, we rowed the boat from here down to Bristol Ariel, did the Bristol Ariel Head and then a lorry came from Salters (Headington) and put the boats, all the boats from Ariel and the other clubs from here, took them to Reading. We did the Reading Head, once in a thunderstorm. Two hours sitting out in the river during a thunderstorm wasn't much fun. And then, that was when I was 15 and then onto the Tideway Head.

AF We don't know how lucky we are.

RL And they brought the boats back and dropped them off at the various clubs.

AF Goodness, we don't know how lucky we are these days. And now I remember watching my daughters at Pangbourne in a thunderstorm. Seeing the sheet of water coming down the river and the screams of horror. So, did you have a favourite seat? On your boat.

RL They usually put me in the bow and when we did the Exeter Head of the River Race, there's a bridge that goes along and then at an angle down. The Cox had to get us to go under the angle, and as I was the tallest and I was in the bow, if I got up, everybody else did.

AF Is that on the Exeter Canal?

RL That's on the canal, yes.

AF I've rowed there once. Yes, it's exciting.

RL The Bristol Ariel coach was coaching down there once during the Head Race and he was looking at his crew and not looking the fact that towpath went to the bend, and he didn't, splash.

AF Did you win many races? I bet you did.

RL No.

AF No!

RL I did win. Clifton competed at the old Saltford Regatta here, which had been going since the 1800s, and when I came to join Bristol, eventually, I won my Maidens, now known as Novices and then Juniors, which was coming to the lowest of the next tier up. I think I won two of those and the crew broke up. I tried sculling and having been beaten by the person who was regarded as the worst sculler upon the tour, I knew that sculling was not for me. I'm alright in a double scull, but certainly not in the single.

AF I can equate with that, Robin, still learning, I've only been rowing a year now, but thoroughly enjoying it. So did you go to university and row there and that kind of thing?

RL I didn't even get an A level.

AF OK.

RL Tried to (get A levels). Gave up one and failed two.

AF Just didn't have the right teaching I reckon.

RL There was something to truth in that.

AF Yes, I think so.

Rowing at Saltford

AF So when did you start rowing at the Avon site? What year would that be?

RL Well, that would have been in January 1964. I moved up and that was into Bristol Rowing Club. Well, I can tell you the history if you like, of how plenty came about.

AF Please do.

RL Well, there were three clubs in the area. In the Churches and Porters in the 50s there was the Redcliffe Rowing Club, which was based in the Bristol Docks and they had a boathouse adjacent to Castle Park.

AF Oh yeah,

RL And then there was a private dockers club as well, which really in the docks, and then there was, out here, the Clifton Rowing Club which had the old boathouse which you see in the old photographs, there, on the wall. That was Clifton Rowing Club. And in I think it was 1960, or sometime before Redcliffe had moved out from the docks and they had that long, tin shed just on what is now the land just outside.

AF And it's still standing?

RL And it's still there. And then the Clifton Rowing Club merged with Redcliffe and became 'The Bristol Rowing Club'. Don't forget the 'The' and then there was Avon Rowing Club here.

And I joined them, I suppose it was in 1964, and let's say that I didn't really want to row where my school rowed, wanted to get away from that. And then it was in 1974 when the County of Avon was being formed, now no longer, that we, Avon and Bristol merged. Because really, then there were hardly any rowers at The Bristol Rowing Club and we had the club captain attempting to scull. And I'm not quite sure what Avon had, and the University of Bristol, who had two boat houses here, ladies and men separate, and they struggled to get out one eight out.

AF Really? Quite different.

RL So very, very different. And women did not row! They were regarded as being the wrong shape.

AF Really?

RL And things changed for the better.

AF Yes, absolutely.

RL Women joining probably saved rowing (as a sport).

AF I think so. You know, I've got my two daughters, and they rowed here. That's how I started here 12 years ago, as a volunteer dad, you know, doing barbecues and whatnot.

RL Yes, very important that people volunteer.

AF I've flipped probably 2000 burgers, at least. But you know the all the regattas that we go to the now seem to be, you know, these great young women athletes. It's fantastic. Absolutely fantastic.

Avon County Origins

AF So membership at the beginning, Robin, was really a small number of people.

RL Andrew Barton has a little story. Andrew Barton and I decided that well, the club was still up there, but I think there were steps down to the river, it was by where we now finish the Head of the River Race.

And we decided that it should be a gentle concreted slope. So, he hired a dumper truck and the digger. Because the access was along the lane then, we didn't have the field which we now use. The access was along the lane and where the field is now, where they leave the boats in regattas and heads, that was it was a small car park. There was a pond, more of a marsh than a pond. And then there's a bit of lawn which led up to the boathouse. You know, we decided we were going to make this concrete slope.

And so, he hired this dumper truck, and he hired a ready mix concrete (lorry), who tried to back down the lane. Unfortunately, it ended up in the ditch. Full of concrete. But anyway, they managed to pump the concrete out and we made the concrete slope, which I think is still there today. I can't remember how they got the ready mixer out, but they obviously did.

AF Maybe it's still there under the trees.

RL Well, no, no, I don't think so. I think it would be where the Marina is, because the Marina didn't exist in those days.

AF Oh, I see.

RL That was Shepherds Boat House, right, which was a corrugated iron room tin shed where the restaurant and pub is.

AF OK

RL And they used to hire out petrol boats and be a typical nuisance.

AF Right.

RL They were rowing pleasure boats. Now it's narrow boats that cause the problems.

AF Yes, and paddle boarders. Robin. I love the story of the concrete mixer getting stuck and Andrew Barton just, you know, taking the initiative and making something without the need to get permission from anybody. I love that story from back in the day, completely different.

RL Health and safety didn't exist in those days.

AF I love the way that it was possible back then to have an impact or influence on decision making. Which leads me on to a story I've heard that you were involved in shaping the river, is that right?

RL So sort of. There were two things that came about connected with that. When you went up the river going upstream towards Bath, you got to the top of the straight, which is where the Saltford Regatta starts, they had almost a straight, but they actually came right down to the lawn that I mentioned earlier. And so, there was a slight bend at the end of the course. It's now much shorter and the finish is much further upstream. But when you got to the top of the straight though, it bent to the right towards the railway on the West side and then the sharp went round and went under the bridge, which is still there on what is now the cycle path.

AF Yes.

RL And then, you couldn't row at racing speed round there, you had to put it round with one side or the other, and then there were two more bends between Newbridge and the next railway bridge up above which we marshalled the Head. And so that took place, I suppose it must have been in 1968 to alleviate flooding in Bath, that was the idea.

AF Right.

RL And so that meant we could start running head races.

AF Yes.

RL And in 1969, we started the Somerset Head for Schools. We were in Somerset then.

AF Yes.

RL And the first race had 12 crews of which Monkton produced some and Monkton have entered every single race in the 50 plus years since. The only club that has done so.

AF Wow, that is amazing.

RL In those days I marshalled the crews up at the Bath end, got them all in order, had a sweep watch, no computers, of course, and timed them. Ran to my car, drove hoping that the traffic lights, which were where the Globe roundabout is, were green. Drove to the old little car park and ran to the finish and timed the crews at the finish.

AF Did it ever go wrong.

RL Well, no, actually. By the time the entry grew larger we had better timing, and we had a lot of help from Julian Bewick, from Monkton, who ran Monkton Bluefriars Heads. And that was the beginning of all the events.

AF Brilliant.

RL It's from the 1969 that it eventually became Avon County Head for Schools and then eventually was opened and now you get more than 12 crews, something like 250 plus.

AF Right absolutely, yes.

RL And there's the Bluefriars and the Avon Autumn Head.

AF Yes, they're great events. It's lovely seeing so many people down here. You mentioned Julian Bewick. There's a boat isn't there, named after him. That's another series of interviews. I want to find more about the names behind the boats, of course. That would be for another day?

RL Is there still a George James?

AF I don't recall seeing one, what size boat was it?

RL It was a four.

AF I don't think so. (George does still exist -it's a 80kg coxed Quad or Four)

RL George James was a member of The Bristol Rowing Club and was very involved with the regattas and things, but that is another story. He was a character.

Equipment – then and now

AF Robin, I finally started to learn a year ago after a change of job, which allowed me time to train with other people and do a team sport. You know we have lightweight boats and oars of carbon fibre. Earlier on, you talked about your fixed seat boat school days. What were the boats like, say, at the beginning of Avon County Rowing Club? What equipment did you have? We've got a boat shed now full of lovely stuff.

RL Well, we had wooden kit, the boats were made of wood. And there was a chap called Brian Moore who taught me chemistry at Clifton who then moved to Monkton. He was the boatman at Monkton, and we used to build boats.

And another story connected with when they did the bends, they built the marina up at Newbridge. And the rowing people thought really, we don't want a load of narrow boats going up and down. So we put in an objection. And of course, it went to a planning inquiry and we got the Inspector to come down and look about the boathouse, as it's still at Bristol and we then had this inquiry at the local council. They had a barrister to promote their case and he really laid into me and tried to make that that I was a liar. Anyway, I walked over him and shut him up. As he didn't get it and he didn't have his facts and I did.

AF Well done, having been an expert witness in a court and been interviewed by barristers, it's an unpleasant experience. So well done, you.

RL I enjoyed it.

AF So the boats were wooden. I guess they're much heavier and the oars are heavier.

RL Yes and an oar cost £12.

AF Cost £12. And what did it weigh?

RL Wooden oar was about 10-12lb and they cost £12.

AF Right. OK. Quite a lot of money back then.

RL It was. For the (club) subscription, Bristol, was five Guineas. That's £5.25 to you.

AF Yes. I was going to ask that. I'm not horse racing, man.

RL £5 and 5 shillings.

AF Was that an annual subscription?

RL That was the annual subscription and we paid rent to British Rail, and it was £50 a year. And this is the beginning of the story that led to the foundation of Avon County because the Bristol sorry, British Rail decided that they were going to put the rent up. It used to be done on an old boy basis, you know, where people at the club had friends in British Rail and another £50 will do you know. And then it was taken up to London and for a few years, as the decisions were made in London, not Bristol and after a few years they then decided they were going to put it up to £500.

No way we could afford it. So that's what brought about the merger of The Bristol Rowing Club and Avon Rowing Club in 1974 to form Avon County, as Avon County local or regional authorities have just been formed.

AF Brilliant.

RL And then a chap took it over and ran Saltford Rowing Club because he wanted to build a nightclub there and he didn't get planning permission. And then, mysteriously, it burned down.

AF So when was this rowing club?

RL That would have been, I suppose, in the mid 70s.

AF OK.

RL And it had a few people. It was really a front so that he could say it was still a Rowing Club while he ran the nightclub.

AF And where was that?

RL It was on the site.

AF On here?

RL Not here, it was on the old boat house at the Bristol Rowing Club. But while he owned it, it burned down and I believe he ended up in prison.

AF Who'd have thought? I can't imagine a nightclub down here.

RL I won't mention his name.

AF No, no, don't no. I'm sure paid his time. Paid his dues.

Regattas at Avon

AF So what changes have you seen over the last 50 years. We've talked about lots, the river's changed, the clubhouse has changed. We haven't talked about the clubhouse yet, have we?

RL We haven't got that far yet.

AF We haven't, no.

RL We've got the regattas, we've got the events.

AF Well, let let's talk about the events then, because we have talked briefly about the first events happening, the head races with you driving rapidly downstream. So, tell me about the events.

RL Well, we started back in 1969 and I retired having done 50, although not all of them took place because, as you know, sometimes the reverse and not what, the weather was not always kind, but after 50 potential events, I retired.

AF Yes.

RL And also in 1974, we started Avon County Schools Regatta which became the Junior Regatta. And in 1976, we had an event for Junior Under 13 boys and we had an entry from Great Marlow School. Now they won their event. The stroke of that boat, and I still have the entry form, was a gentleman by the name of S Redgrave.

AF I think I've heard of him.

RL It was his first ever regatta, which they won and they came back in again in 1975, sorry 1977. And won it again, as Under 14.

AF Wow.

RL So that's my claim to fame, though I had nothing really to do with it other than the fact that I organised it and he did come to our annual dinner, and I think it was before the 2000 Olympics when he'd won four (Olympic) races.

AF OK. That's a nice coup to get Steve Redgrave to the annual dinner. Fantastic.

RL Steve came, his rowing coach at the time, Francis Smith and his wife Anna, all came. We had a hotel near St Mary Redcliffe in Bristol. And you know, sort of all the programmes and things like that.

AF Now is he the best rower you've seen on the Bristol Avon here? I don't mean most successful, but the most talented.

RL Probably the best. We have had Olympic rowers and there's one on the board there (in the clubhouse). We had one in the 30s and then there was chap called Hugh Wardle Yarborough, who won the silver medal at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. That was when rowing became one of the most successful sports in the Olympic Games, for Great Britain, of course.

AF Yes.

RL In 1982 or in 1981, Bradford on Avon had discovered that there was a reservoir at Cote Water in Swindon. They ran a regatta there and I was then an umpire, and I went up there to help. I saw the potential, so we moved the regatta from Saltford up to Cote Water and we ran it there until 2004. Although the three previous years it didn't get held, and occasionally we did have a rather a disaster where we moved it to a sailing club.

RL I'd turned up at 7:00 in the morning and it was dead calm but by mid-day it was brewing again and we had to cancel it. But Cote Water was really successful. We ran around a four-lane race. We once had nearly 30 crews rowing and every crew got four races, and we placed them from 1 to 32. And so, it was very popular with the schools, and I think we had, probably in 1989, we had 279 crews and in 1990 81 of those were eights. And it was one of the largest (regattas) in terms of the number of people racing. It was probably in the top five in the country.

AF Why did it stop? The racing at Cote?

RL The people were doing it out of sort of loyalty to me. I mean, we wouldn't have run any of these events without the volunteers and helpers from the club and other clubs. But running a regatta of that complexity, 50 miles from your home base, it really got too much for everybody.

And so, it ceased, and the Bristol Avon Regatta took over that date and ran at Saltford. But we had entries probably from pretty well every school South of Liverpool to the Wash.

AF Wow, that's impressive. And that's a huge area to draw.

RL Nearly every school that rowed. All the (schools), or not quite everyone but pretty well everyone. Some of them came back down here as well..... Pangbourne still do.

AF Yes.

RL But goodness knows what will happen to rowing now? How many (rowing) bursaries will they give now? My grandson got a bursary (the interview was after the Labour landslide election of 2024) . And just whether they're able to do that in the future, we have to wait and see.

AF Ah I see, you're referring to the VAT (proposed for private schools)? I'm sure they'll find a way of doing it. I'm sure they will, where there's a will there is a way.

RL We also ran for three times, we ran an event called Splash and Dash. Again, at Cote Water, that was run in the autumn, there were only about three or four times that we did it, but there we gave races for families, fathers, and sons, or fathers and daughters, mothers and so on. And that was very popular.

AF Did the parents know how to row?

RL They did. Quite often you know, it was parents who had rowed and their children. We didn't have a vast number, but it was very much enjoyed and very unique. And we also ran, with the Amateur Rowing Association as British Rowing was named in those days, ran a project called Project Oarsome. And we ran Head of the River races and regattas here. Didn't really make much any money out of them, but had little competitions, skills and then awarded points for going up, turning around, then had a little race and that ran for a few years, but that was at Saltford.

AF My daughter did at the British Junior rowing champs or national schools maybe, when she was a J14, she had to do an omnium, like a multidisciplinary event.

RL Yes, that is similar to what I did.

AF She still talks about that, you know, some eight years on, it's her favourite event. I think kids love that kind of thing. It's slightly different, isn't it?

RL My son rowed for one year at Monkton and my daughter rowed for two years in the 6th form at Clifton and her son, youngest son, rows. He's just finished at Oxford Brooks.

AF Wow. So he's a he's very good athlete.

RL He's been to trials but not been successful.

AF Have you ever rowed with your children?

RL I didn't row with my son, unfortunately, he took up windsurfing, but I did row, about the last time I was in able to and be helped, pulled out of the boat, with my grandson at Stratford, which is near where they lived. And the club very kindly let us go out in the quad scull with the club cox and my grandson stroked it, I was at three, my daughter was at two and my son-in-law, who wasn't a rower, and we had few trips up and down the short stretch of river at Stratford and that was about the last time I got into a boat.

I did row for a time as a veteran, now called Masters. And we did manage, with Keith Trevett, Graham Hockley and Derek Roy, (boat named after), to row at Llandaff once and that was the only other success I had.

AF Right. I was supposed to be rowing tomorrow at Llandaff, but a couple of our crew members are injured or ill. So, I'm not rowing, but it would have been fun. I think next year I'll go for that one.

RL We used to row on what was basically liquid coal.

AF Of course.

RL The river was filthy.

AF It's the Taff, isn't it? At Llandaff?

RL Yes, it is the Taff.

AF It's now a really good trout and Salmon River, which is amazing.

RL It's quite a nice stretch of river.

AF Was it a Sprint regatta in your day?

RL Yeah. Yeah.

AF My kids rowed there. They enjoyed it, short and sweet, a lot of fun. Thinking about that, what was your favourite place to row Robin, what was your favourite venue?

RL Well, I've got to say here, of course.

AF Fantastic. Yes, likewise.

Umpiring

RL I enjoyed rowing, I mean didn't row much on the Thames. I umpired on that a lot. I became an umpire, but have forgotten when it was I became an umpire. I umpired at many, many regattas. All the ones in the West Midlands and I did get invited to the one at Reading, Thames Valley Park. But they had their own rules.

AF Did they?

RL Nothing to do with British Rowing rules. You weren't supposed to use port and starboard.

AF Right, OK. Is it red and green or something left and right?

RL No, you know I use port and starboard, but no it was regatta left and regatta right. I did actually try and get port and starboard changed but they refused to do it. The trouble is coaches do not tell their crews what port is and what starboard is. It is so easy. Four letter word for port , four letter words for left. And you go to the left in the direction you are going in. But not your left. You pull harder with your left hand and you should go to the left-hand side of the boat.

AF Yes, so regatta left and regatta right? Sounds a bit like stage left and stage right in the theatre, I don't know. But goodness how confusing it can be. When I was learning to row here, we had some club members who English was their second language. They were fluent (in English) but it was still a second language, so when they were being coxed and learning, they had to, you know, pull harder on bow, on stroke, on red, on green and so on. Confusing.

RL Red and green is better, stroke and bow is rubbish.

AF Well, it's very confusing when you're sculling (as a beginner).

RL Well also with the first women's boat race eight, the stroke was rowing on bow side.

AF Right.

RL So you know, it's not necessarily stroke side and bow side.

AF Yes. Interesting

RL A lot of us basically stroked on bow side.

AF I didn't know that. Every time I come down here, I'm learning something new, which is nice. It's a really good thing (to learn new things).

RL Overall, with the various Head Races, Regattas and a little bit of help from interest and selling numbers, we made over £102,000 for the Club.

AF From all the different regattas over the years?

RL Since 1969, one or two losses, but the overall we brought it in and you know it, it was the combined effort of a lot of club members, particularly Penny and Chris. And as captain and a lot of other people who gave up their time and still do.

AF Yes, we rely a lot on volunteers. When my children started rowing and I saw the amount of effort that Penny puts into coaching the juniors. I was bowled over and I thought, crikey, you know, that I need to volunteer here otherwise the place would wouldn't run and you could see the importance of volunteers.

RL Particularly for the events and to certain extent I suppose with catering. I mean some parents probably do get involved in coaching and for you as an umpire, sometimes the worst people you came across were parents trying to coach their child, and I've seen a parent reduce that child to tears, which was actually awful. I mean, that's very few and far between. The majority were fine. If you tried that now, I mean, you know, I'd calm him down and try to be very diplomatic. But it was great fun being an umpire. I really enjoyed it. I was on the Umpires Commission, now Committee, for many years.

AF Is that the British Rowing or committee or?

RL Well, it's the WAGS.

AF Which stands for Wales and?

RL No, no, no, no. Wiltshire, Avon, Gloucestershire, and Somerset.

AF Lovely. Thank you for the correction.

RL Wales is different, and then there's Wessex, which is sort of Hants and Dorset and Taunton, I think. No, Taunton comes under WAGS. But there's Exeter and Dart and places like that, that are part of Wessex.

AF When I think about what the parent parental role is, I firmly believe that it's to get the child to the regatta, bellow loudly or just cheering support from the sidelines and ...

RL I'm not sure it makes any difference!

AF Also make sure you got money for a burger at the end of it all. Some hot food, yeah?

RL Or a pint.

AF Not for the children, obviously. Robin, I've come to the end of my questions. Is there anything else you'd like to talk about?

2012 Olympics

RL Well, we mentioned most things. I don't know whether you want to hear when I was a volunteer or games maker at the 2012 Olympic Games? I can talk about that for a bit, if you're interested.

AF Go for it, Robin, let's make this the last little bit.

RL Yes, it was all started in 1975. I think it was, no, not 1975, 2005, when they had a regatta, or what are they called? Edit this bit. The World Cup regattas, and we were a candidate city for the London Olympics and then in 2006 there was another event, I think it was the juniors.

I think we had the World Championships at the new Dorney Lake. These were all at Dorney and then, of course, we became the Olympics and in 2011 they had the, as they always do, they had a Junior. World Championship the year before on the Olympic course, so that it basically it tests the Olympic course. And then I was very fortunate. I knew somebody who got promoted and I was asked to be one of the people on the bund between the practice lake and the racing lake. At 500 metres and my job was to make sure that the crews went up and down in the right order and got to the start on time. I had to learn the word stop in every single language.

I can repeat all of them now. STOP! It's universal. And the only crews who totally ignored what I told them to do were the Great Britain crews, but that was true. I did the para events leading up to and the Olympics and Paralympics.

And that was a huge experience, and I was very fortunate to get that. There were there were two types of games makers. There were the people who were meeting or greeting, or ran things. The people doing the mundane jobs like clearing the sewers, I think they were paid.

RL Although we were doing the same job, there were the people who were multi-lane umpires. I didn't do that, but they were given meals, accommodation and were allowed to get on the golf buggies to take them up the bund. And prior to the Olympics, we're all the same, we all did the same job basically marshalling the crews. We were known as the Un-water team, as we weren't on the water. And, come the Olympics, there were the two classes, blue uniforms and the ordinary thing or uniform and I was one of those.

And I was supposed to walk up, as they went up in the buggy but rowers being rowers of course, they said don't be stupid. Get on the buggy.

Which I did.

AF You didn't get a smart blazer then.

RL Well, on everything we had, we had to cover up any logos. We eventually got given waterproofs, but we had to fight quite hard for those. In one year, we were in flimsy, Kagool things and sitting there, absolutely freezing.

AF I can imagine, I've been there (to Dorney). It's very exposed.

RL There was a time hut just behind me and between races I was able to go and warm up in there and that was the way I found out how it is to race as a British crew. I could hear the Dorney roar from 1500 metres away, but of course I didn't know who had won.

AF Brilliant.

RL Another good story. We saw the chap called Ndoumbe who sculled and came in about, I don't know, a long way behind all the other scullers, but of course he got the biggest cheer being in Britain. He got the biggest cheer for finishing his race and taking part which is what it's all about.

AF Indeed.

RL So I can do another presentation on that!

AF We will, we will. Robin, I'm going to draw it all to a close though. Both our voices are a bit dry now and probably need a cup of tea. Thank you, though, I'd sooner something stronger. Thank you so much. That has been great fun to listen to your stories.

RL Thank you very much, I've enjoyed it.

AF Good. And we'll get these edited. I think we'll add pictures and we'll be able to show the membership and the wider world the amazing history that you've been involved in. Thank you so much.