

# Skiffie Worlds

[Times](#)



## *County rowers head off to world championships*

The honour of the County, and indeed the whole nation, is being carried on the shoulders of ten stalwart rowers as they head off to the Skiffie Worlds coastal rowing world championships in Stranraer, Scotland. The rowers are members of the Ayle of Quinte Skiff Club, which is based at the Waupoos marina, and the club owns three 22-foot rowboats that are drawn from a design that was widely used for recreational racing in the Firth region of Scotland up until about the 1950s. Interest in this type of racing was renewed in about 2009, and a boat building kit was made available to help

foster a wider participation. Over the winter of 2012/2013 a group of County men decided to build one of these boats as an off-season woodworking project. They started rowing in the summer of 2013, and pretty soon their spouses and partners realized what a great sport this was and persuaded the men to build a second boat. The women started rowing regularly in 2014, and the second boat was completed in time for the 2015 season. A third boat, built at a school in Connecticut, was donated to the club in 2016. "I love being on the water in a very spectacular location," said Jane Dean. "The boats themselves are also quite beautiful, works of art really. It's great to feel fit and realize that building stamina and muscle strength can happen at any age."

The club members eagerly await their first row in early May and are on the water throughout the summer and into October, when weather conditions typically deteriorate. Over the years, a number of members have participated in competitions in the US, and a team of six entered the Skiffie Worlds in Strangford Lough, Ireland in 2016, where they made it through to the 60+ finals, but finished out of the medals.

This time round the team has been training several times a week over the past couple of months, and they have the blistered and callused hands to show for it. The training is not just on the water. "Tony and I started training in the winter with the purchase of a rowing machine," said Dean. "As a team, we've been trying to get out on the water every day, but the weather has not been cooperative. We are at a decided disadvantage as most European coastal rowing clubs row all year round. They don't have to deal with Lake Ontario ice and snow." It is expected 57 clubs with about 700 crews in total, representing seven countries, will compete at this year's Skiffie Worlds—a far cry from the mere



*(Front to rear): Des Bohn, Sandy Pratt and Olivia Butler row past the Prince Edward County side of Waupoos Island last Sunday morning.*

six boats at the first regatta in 2010.

There are several different age-based race classes, and the County team is competing in five of them. Each race is 2,000 metres, with a 180-degree turn at the halfway mark, and there could be up to 15 boats in a race. "The big race for us is the 280+, where the combined ages of the four rowers is over 280 years," said Dean. "We expect to be the oldest team in the competition, demonstrating that fitness can be achieved at any age." The fitness aspect is what encouraged George Molyneux to keep rowing after coming out for a trial session in 2017. "I'm a strong believer in exercise, and we're all of a similar age, all over 50 and some considerably older, and we're all very conscious of our health, but at the same time enjoying the camaraderie and, quite frankly, learning a new skill," he said. He will be competing in three races, the 50+ mixed, the 60+ men's and the 280+ mixed. "I'm a little apprehensive, but very excited about it at the same time," said Molyneux. "Especially as we are the only skiff club in Canada, and therefore the representative of Canada at Skiffie Worlds, so we are quite excited about it and we are going to do our best."

Last Thursday, at the beginning of a club rowing session, Mayor Steve Ferguson and Councillor Stewart Bailey came to the Waupoos marina to extend their best wishes to the team before they depart for Scotland. "Congratulations, and we wish you well on behalf of municipal council and staff," said Mayor Ferguson. The club responded with request for a victory parade— á la Raptors—should they bring home a medal, and extended an open invitation to the mayor and all councillors to come out for a row.

The six-day competition begins on July 8, and updates may be found on the club's Instagram site [instagram.com/ayleofquinte/](https://www.instagram.com/ayleofquinte/).