MEDIA RELEASE
4th September 2012

The Cream of Cornish Ladies Gig Rowers take on Team GB Olympic Medallists

No less than 10 Team GB Rowing Olympic medallists will be competing off St Mawes Harbour against crews of top Cornish gig rowers in a nail biting challenge on Wednesday 12th September. All three of Cornwall’s rowing Olympic medallists Annie Vernon, Ed Coode (providing commentary throughout the racing) and Helen Glover will take part in what will be an ‘Olympic Rowing Regatta’ – but not as we know it!

The Cornish Rowing Challenge begins at 6.00pm with the first heat starting off Pendennis Point to St Mawes Quay in a single leg dash to challenge the coxed fours sliding seat (Team GB) and fixed seat (gig) crews for victory in the first race of the day. Two further races will follow, starting and finishing off St Mawes, this time with the Team GB ladies rowing gigs against invited teams from local three clubs: Falmouth, Flushing & Mylor and Roseland Gig Clubs, and mixed teams from gig clubs from across Cornwall.

The community of the Cornish harbourside village of St Mawes will host an afternoon and evening of shoreside activities on the quay, including embracing the Olympic spirit with a challenge to the public to take on the Team GB rowers ashore on Ergo rowing machines on St Mawes Quay, Cornish Pilot Gigs and a fixed seat rowing boat from Falmouth’s Greenbank Rowing Club will be on display to see at close quarters the rowing craft taking part in the Challenge. A BBQ on the Quay and hog roast at St Austell Brewery’s Rising Sun pub will add to the festival atmosphere of what will be a ‘must see’ event. Pints of Tribute Ale at the pub will be on sale for a special price of £2.50 and for every pint sold on the night, £1 will be donated to ShelterBox.
Annie Vernon is an Ambassador for ShelterBox, the international disaster relief charity that is based in Helston, Cornwall. Funds raised at the event will go towards helping ShelterBox to continue delivering emergency shelter, warmth and dignity to people affected by disasters worldwide. There will be a ShelterBox stand and the iconic green boxes and tents that the charity sends to disaster zones on display.

Annie Vernon, the inspiration and event organiser behind the Cornish Rowing Challenge enthused “I’m thrilled that so many of our GB rowers will be joining me in Cornwall to take on the county’s gig rowers on their own turf, and to be honest right now I couldn’t pick who’s going to triumph. The GB rowers are at the peak of their fitness and are amongst some of the best athletes in the world; but they've spent the last month partying.” Annie continues “The gig rowers will be fresh from racing at Newquay and will be much more familiar with the technique of gig rowing - especially the buoy turns, which is something we’re going to have to learn! I can’t wait to see who’s going to come out on top. I hope this event will show off the best of Cornwall and the best of rowing.”

Additional parking will be available in the English Heritage car parks – follow signage once entering St Mawes. A road closure will be in place from 4.30pm to 8.30pm to allow maximum spectators and to add to the celebratory atmosphere. It is recommended that visitors from Falmouth use the St Mawes/Falmouth Ferry where possible, a discounted return fare will be available for the 15:15, 16:15 or 17:15 outbound ferries and the 20:45 & 21:45 return ferries. Spectator boats will be running to watch the racing close up, with a £2 minimum donation to ShelterBox, departing around 10 minutes before race starts.

“St Mawes lends itself perfectly to watch the racing, with vantage points from the Quay or along the Harbour Wall. Come and support the Cornish gig rowers in their challenge” adds Malcolm Bell, Head of VisitCornwall, the tourism service for Cornwall Development Company. “The 2012 Olympics continue to inspire sporting events, to leave a legacy and to shine a spotlight on Cornwall.”
Generous sponsors and supporters of the Cornish Rowing Challenge to date include the Team GB Rowers, Roseland Gig Club, British Rowing, Seasalt, VisitCornwall, Fal River, Event Cornwall, St Austell Brewery, A & P Falmouth, University College Falmouth and St Mawes Harbours Commissioners, with wide support from the Parish Council, businesses and clubs in the village.

For full details of the Cornish Rowing Challenge see: [www.seasaltcornwall.co.uk/cornishrowingchallenge](http://www.seasaltcornwall.co.uk/cornishrowingchallenge) and for a full listing of events in Cornwall and inspiration for where to stay and things to do and see in Cornwall see [www.visitcornwall.com](http://www.visitcornwall.com).

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**Notes to Editors**

**VisitCornwall** is a service of the Cornwall Development Company, Cornwall Council’s arms length economic development company.

VisitCornwall undertakes the destination marketing function for Cornwall and promotes the area’s distinctive qualities to the domestic market and key international markets through targeted marketing campaigns.

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**Images:**
Cornish Gig Rowers, please credit [www.GigRower.co.uk](http://www.GigRower.co.uk)

**Websites:**
ShelterBox [www.shelterbox.org](http://www.shelterbox.org)
Roseland Gig Club [www.roselandgigclub.co.uk](http://www.roselandgigclub.co.uk)
Seasalt [www.seasaltcornwall.co.uk](http://www.seasaltcornwall.co.uk)
Fal River [www.falriver.co.uk](http://www.falriver.co.uk)
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St Mawes Harbours Commissioners [www.stmawesharbour.co.uk](http://www.stmawesharbour.co.uk)
To find out more about how to get involved with rowing, go to www.britishrowing.org