



OTRC Match Report – Bedford Star 17th November 2013

Star is traditionally the start of the winter racing and, in the past, the event has been cancelled as a result of adverse weather conditions. This year we were lucky with the weather and, for our new racers and their supporters, it was a change for there to be no rain! All the coaches at the club are volunteers who also row and cox themselves. This means they are not always available to help with organising their crews and helping with boating, so our junior rowers have to be much more self-reliant. It is good to see that our juniors are stepping up to the mark and I noticed a number of parents and supporters being invited to help out with rigging and boat lifting. Once again we are grateful to all those supporters who turned up, rigged, lifted, helped and shouted for the club and we remain one of the best supported clubs.

The junior section is also showing great signs of the OTRC spirit and when we needed subs the girls section were quick to volunteer and despite being the short in a couple of the crews, everyone got to compete. Thanks to Melissa, Sophie, Emily and Jess for offering to sub.

The adult section of the club continues to show the same enthusiasm and wit, but the results don't always match the banter! Congratulations go to the Women's Vet C four which won their event after what they described as a fantastic row.

Division 1

W Vet C 8+: Vicky, Jennie, Keely, Jo, Angela, Claire, Smithy, Bec, cox: Anita Time: 8:23

This was the first real race for the women's 8 as a crew, and despite the men messing about with the clip washers etc. (Andrew, I said orange, red, black, red, orange above the gate. Keep up!) As we were rowing before them today so were able to get ourselves sorted out before the race. Coxed by Anita, we headed up to the start and arrived with the melee without much time to go through our paces. Grateful it wasn't raining, snowing, hailing or freezing fog (usual weather for Star Head) we set off at a steady lick, and quickly settled into a good rhythm. Vicky was able to get us up to a stroke rate of about 29, which we had been aiming for on our home stretch but not managed to achieve without it all going a bit ragged. Today, we hit it right; and with everyone focussed and doing their best, we had a solid row, with some beef going down the boat and Anita giving some really helpful calls. Although we didn't beat the St Neots crew that were our oppo, I think we all felt we had made a step up, and came in at a very respectable 8 min 23. Just 15 seconds behind the winners and ahead of the two star club W Vet C/D 8+ crews. (We are nearly

VetD!) Well done all. Not bad for a first race!

IM 3 4+: Richard, Tim, Charlie B, Jack, cox: Rhona Time 7:54

W Nov 4X- Lucy, Charlotte, Sophie, Lauren Time: 8:27 We felt we had a decent and strong row throughout the race and when finished we all thought it had gone much quicker than previous Bedford races! Unfortunately, our time was not quite as quick as we would have like it to be, but overall we were pleased with our row.

John's Comment: The J 18 squad also swaps the make-up of the crew in order to give everyone a chance to race 4X-. These girls also sub in the women's sweep oar squad and are accomplished rowers. To put their achievements in to context, they race in the senior age category as novice and are competitive at this level racing against university and club crews, despite being juniors. The alternate is to race at J 18 where they meet the clubs with high performance squads and aspiring junior GB rowers.

Vet D 2X: Bob & John M Time 8:23 This is a new combination and after just a couple of practice rows were full hope, expectation and there was no limit to the possibilities, even Rio seemed on the cards. But reality got the way. John was restored to steering duties and once again the boat seemed drawn inexorably to hard bits of the bridges. They were overtaken by a bunch of school kids - have the youth no respect? And still they waited for the times in expectation rather than dread. Unfortunately the reality of the stopwatch meant they well off the pace of the winners, but did beat a Star double.

Division 2

W J14 4X+: Beatrice, Olivia, Ellie N, Louise, cox: Richard Time:9:27

W J15 2X: Rochelle, Becky Time: 9:16 These two pocket rockets form the W J 15 squad and have gelled very well as a 2X. Unfortunately, in training they have been forced into subbing in W J 16 squad and haven't trained as much together and hence not been able to build upon their very good performance last time out. They don't lack for any commitment so a little bit of time training together should see they make great strides forward.

Division 3

Vet E 8+: Bob, Charlie E, Hugh, Andrew, John M, Peter, Simon, Alan, cox: Rhona Time: 7:09

W Vet D 4+: Claire, Angela, Jennie, Anita, cox: Paul Time: 9:44 Not having rowed together for a month because of essential holiday breaks and having to miss out on our Saturday row while Richard mended the broken Banana, we were feeling a little less than 100% confident. However, following the OTRC ethos we gave it our best shot, with Paul keeping us focussed all the way down for a good effort. We had a good race with just a minor loss of rhythm at the 'bumpy bit' of the course and finished feeling we had done a good job. Many thanks to Richard for mending the Banana boat at very short notice so that we could compete. He's our hero!

W J16 4X-: Emily, Beth, Melissa, Julia Time: 8:58 This is a new combination in the quad as we look to give all the girls in the squad the opportunity to race in the quad and 2X. The advantage of such a policy is that everyone gets to learn in 2X & 4X but the quad doesn't always get to train in its racing combination. The girls had a bit of a scare when Beth was ill and had to miss training the day before the race. With admirable OTRC spirit Jess volunteered to take her place if necessary. On the day the girls rowed well and are showing consistent improvement.

W Vet C 4+: Smithy, Jo, Vicky, Bec, cox: Jon H Time: 8:49 With our new cox (Jon Heaney), our first challenge was finding our boat. Having seen the men's IM3 4+ carry the Wintech down to the area that it was supposed to be in after their race, imagine our surprise when we thought it had been stolen! With Vicky having the team pre-race wee, and the vet D women boating with the Men's D 8+, we were sadly alone with our boat loss. Where were Mick Birchall and Mark Stratton, (our tame policemen) when we needed them? We had to do our own detective work. (Actually, Mark turned up later, but after we had found our boat, which was cunningly placed on top of the big trailer where we couldn't see it and, more importantly, couldn't reach it! Luckily for them, the men who had put it there had already boated.) With some help, we lifted the boat down from the giddy heights, boated, and rowed up to the start. Again, we quickly hit a great rhythm, with Smithy setting the pace and Jon giving the calls. We had a fabulous row, and although the curious starting order meant we had to row past our friends in the WD4+, we crossed the line feeling that the row had been a bit special. The round of applause from the men's 8 was much appreciated. Thanks guys. All is forgiven! Sorry we were too knackered to do more than smile! Our oppo were a MK crew that rowed in Div 5. The website has it that they beat us by 37 seconds which was disappointing, given that we thought we had had such a good row. As it turns out, our top cox not only steered a great race, but he stayed behind to collect our medals. Apparently, the MK crews time is 9.12, not 8.12, as posted on the website. Hurrah! Not only did we think we had a good row, but it looks like we won! Thanks to everyone that helped.

W Nov 2X: Keely, Katy Time: 9:02

Nov 1X: Jack Time: 8:55

Division 4

J14 4X+: Ben Honeywell, William B, BETH, Jordan, cox: Lauren Time 8:32

Nov 1X: Richard Time: 9:34 Another no incident race, my time was 3 seconds faster than the previous race but well down on performances from earlier in the year. Back to the gym for me!

Division 5

Nov 8+: Ian B, Charlie D, Oscar, Jack, Ben H, Josh, Ben J, Jock, cox: Anita Time: 7:40

Vet D 4+: John W, Brian, Quiggers, Jon H, cox: Paul Time: 7:57 This was a strong and competent row from this four perhaps lacking the zest of their last race. A well-practised start laid the foundations indicating that training and indeed fitness is the key to success. Apart from Star Club (Hunt) 7.37 who won in the Mas EG+ 7.29! as well! (who is this Hunt?) there were no other crews in the Masters 4+, including Mas C + 8.35, who came anywhere near their time. Congratulations to the Oundle IM3.4+ (7.54) who pipped us on this occasion!

W Nov 4+: Kate E, Kate P, Rhona, Fiona, cox: Vicky Time: 11:15 We balanced the boat and had what was probably one of our best rows ever. With Vicky coxing we held our nerve as various enthusiastic pairs came close. We appreciated the impressive cheering from the bank as we followed Kate's steady rhythm with Rhona's hopefully healed wrist working hard to pull us around the corners. There was rejoicing from stroke side that the balance was good and all blades were off the water. Our improved time is less important to us than the sense of having had a "good row".

W J16 2X: Julia, Jess Time:9:43 These two girls have rowed as a double in the past, but for various reasons have been unable to get together in training. It was Julia's second run down the course but had recovered well from her exertions in the quad and it must have been a relief for her not to have to worry about the steering. Considering the lack of time together in the boat, they performed well, beating a crew from Norwich.