

# Bedford Star Club Head 19<sup>th</sup> November 2017 OTRC Match Report

Open 2x Pair (Will and **Joe**)

This was our first course in the pair that wasn't in a straight line... So steering through (and not into) the bridges was our main focus of this race. Despite the coldness, there was not much wind which made it easier for us to keep the oars clean and keep good balance. Throughout the race we thought that we performed exceptionally well and were not far from catching up the boat in front... Who had asked for an enormous gap! We are now looking forward to our next race in the pair.

**Jon** and Nick, Masters E 2X. Time 7:57. Division 5.

Sunday turned out sunny but cold, especially for those of us that arrived at 7am! So having waited from the first to the last division it was time for my double with Nick, in an EG event.

Nick having just rowed in a quad in the previous division, was nicely warmed up. Our aim was to beat our time from Bedford a month ago.

We found ourselves marshalled right towards the end of the division just before the scullers, then the marshal told us that 2 of the scullers were to start in front of us. One a young guy from Peterborough seemed like the correct call, but the other was a rather unsteady looking guy from Bedford. We made a note to give him a good lead so we didn't catch him too soon.

Having cleared the railway bridges we settled into a good rhythm from the start, getting through the next 2 bridges with out incident. As we came under the new bridge I could see the Bedford sculler taking a very wide line, so that was good for us as we kept in close to the wall heading for the first arch on the town bridge. As we passed through the town bridge the Bedford sculler was getting tangled up under the other arch.

We had a push off the town bridge, the rating rising a pip or two to 30 as we headed down the embankment, got a big bouncy here from all the traffic, but we held it together. A final push off the butterfly bridge and we were finished.

As they say time will tell, had we beaten our time from Bedford, well yes, but only by 5 seconds. Did we win, no, Bedford had a very quick G crew that did 8:08, after adjustment 7:37. So more to do next time and to catch up with Ian and Peter in their double

*Quad Fx: Nick, **Brian**, Bob, Simon*

*There was certainly a keen expectation in this newly formed Vet F Quad. Three previous training outings, bordering on cheating by OTRC standards, and the anticipation of five other crews competing in this category, had pushed these baby-boomers out of their beds at ridiculous o'clock to test their talents against some of the best, including another OTRC quad racing at E.*

*It was noted the composite Vet B quad Star/Peterborough/Leicester had come second in the previous weeks' Fours Head, and they were observed performing a 500 m square-blade warm-up. All irrelevant of course. We knew they had a 56s handicap. In fact all the other five competitors, including the unprepared Oundle E quad had handicaps. Surely a 56s handicap could not be overcome! We were confident and undeterred. No big deal. It was already in the bag- another pot to polish.*

*You've probably already anticipated the outcome of this narrative.*

*It wasn't a bad row. A manageable rate. A bit splashy. Check rising. Simon had controlled his demons and successfully navigated the Town Bridge. A paddle down the River Ouse. Job done.*

Then the times arrived.

Oh dear oh dear oh dear.

Not only had we been beaten out of sight by the slick Vet B crew but we had been beaten by the other Oundle crew and everyone else in our category.

The shame of it. Lessons to be learned.

WMASD2x (Jo and Vicky) time:8min 44 (adjusted. Time 8.29)

Excuses first..

Vicky and I have not raced for a while as strangely we've had no opposition at the last few events we've been entered for. Also, we have both taken a few holidays over October and November, so it felt like a long time since we had been in the boat together. Luckily, although we'd been away, the habit of certain club members "copying all" into their e-mail traffic meant we hadn't missed out on any updates, and it almost seemed a shame to be rowing in a W2x and not the men's squad, having been privy to all their chit chat.

So, after rising in the middle of the night to get ready for our race in the first division, we met up with each other at Bedford as the sun was rising, and the boats were beginning to defrost. A cold but perfect day dawned, and bundled up in hats, coats and gloves we rigged the boats and then set off for the row to the start.

A bit of the usual hanging around at the start, listening to the cackling schoolgirls and strangely silent marshals, we were finally able to discard several layers as the temperature crept above freezing. We set off in perfect conditions. No wind, some winter sun and some opposition, finally.

We stuck to the race plan, and Vicky was able to steer a good racing line. Wonderfully, we were neither impeded or overtaken, and even had a choice of arches under the town bridge. We felt we had a solid row, keeping our rating above 31 most of the way down the course, with a good strong push at the finish. Our time of 8.44 was faster than our time of last year 8.57, which is good to know. However, we are no longer able to beat the experienced girls doubles in the club (well done girls), and although just faster than our WMas E oppo, we were significantly slower than our WMasC oppo. Even with handicapping we were not going to be drinking our bedtime cocoa out of a star club pot this time...

Maybe time to join the men's crew? They certainly talk a good race!

Vet E Quad, John Milborne, Peter Dunn, **Hugh McCormack**, Gary Coxon.

Adjusted time - 6.45, actual time- 7.21, winning time – 6.18

Yet another solid performance from the crew with the Midas Touch! There was some debate over our relatively slow rating of 24 at the start, but the 'stats' indicated a consistent speed throughout the event, rating 28 with a slight dip, which we think might have been a steering moment....and we managed to beat the 'Stalking Horse', our 'in house' competition by the traditional 1 second ( on adjusted times)...sorry about that, boys!

Yet another crew combination. Many thanks to our roving Bowman, John, who took a break from international travel to be with us and steered a great racing line. Gary did an excellent job in his first competitive event with OTRC at stroke .

Peter, 'The Judge' and 'Mister Freeze' were the 'meat in the sandwich' ...yes it was a low calorie filling ...but seems to have worked!

J18 4+ Rohan, Will, Alfie and Conor. Time-7:49

After finding out on Saturday that I would have to sub due to illness, we were in a bit of a new crew but nevertheless after a cold and early start we got on the water and luckily after not too long we were set off, we had a good race, which was clean, with good pushes and after some good steering from Joe we managed to get a bit of a lead on the following crew who seemed to be another 4+ in our category, which in the end put us in 5th against our open opposition of Bedford and Milton Keynes crews

**Chloe**, Richard, Keely, Jonny

*When I was asked a few weeks ago if I would like to take part in my first junior adult crew, I was extremely nervous whether I would be able to make the transition to an adult crew. However, Richard, Kelly and Jonny took me under their wing during practice sessions and I soon felt at home.*

*We have all trained so hard and were therefore really disappointed to discover that we had no opposition at Bedford. We decided not to put all the hard training to waste and to go for the experience and to see what time we could put down.*

*On the morning we arrived very early and it was beautiful down by the river. After an interesting challenge getting into the boat without a pontoon, we rowed smoothly down to the start. The row itself went really well apart from when we ran over a drowning pigeon, presumably a sad casualty from one of the previous boats. It is amazing how fast a boat can travel when we get the timing and balance right.*

*We all put everything into the row but stayed controlled and relaxed and it felt like we had done a good time but we weren't really sure. It wasn't until training on Tuesday night that I heard that we had done time of 7 minutes and 50 seconds which is certainly the fastest I have ever done for that distance.*

*I can safely say this was the best regatta row I have been involved with so far and I now can't wait for us to have a proper race with some opposition.*

Op2 – Ian & Charlie : 07:59

Our previous time at Bedford was 08:13, so our aim for this race was to make it a '7 something' and hopefully beat the other Oundle Pair. Plane Jane was already warmed up by Joe and Will by the time we raced, and with a quick check of foot positions we were on our way. A normal warm up to Bedford Star then a minute row to Hitchin bridge to the marshalling area. The water was nice and flat but this didn't entice us into any square blade paddling exercise – our current record is 5 strokes and we would just embarrass ourselves in front of the blazers. We set off at a good pace of 30spm and stuck to our race plan – push for 10 at the Hitchin Bridge, County Bridge, Town Bridge, Green Bridge and throw the remainder in at School's Boathouse. We took the rating up a notch under the Butterfly bridge and passed 1 second under 8 minutes. It was a good clean race and 14 seconds off previous time.

Op 2x – Ian & Peter : 07:44

We were instructed (ordered) to park opposite Marshall 2. Anybody from Div 2 might remember him well... barking out orders, reprimanding Junior crews for either not listening, going too fast, or not taking greater care and attention. Anybody seen not behaving would be sent to the front of the class and kept in line. Luckily the wait wasn't too long or we would have been writing lines in detention!

We lined ourselves up and Ian thought to avoid a tap of the railway bridge with our blades like we did last time. About 10 strokes in... and one tap of the railway bridge later... and we were off! We had a good start and settled into a good rhythm. About 1/3 of the way in before Town Bridge, a sculler in a Single started to take a move past us (he must have been from Team GB training for Tokyo or how else would he have been able to pass us!). A blazor on the bridge told us to take the furthest arch to allow him through, which through us wide out of our preferred racing line. It later transpired that it was just 'advice' and we didn't have to listen to him. In the last ¼ of the race there was a minor kerfuffle with Bow's grip on the blade, later followed by a football bobbing in our way which bow hit, superseded by stroke having a moment with his blades too. It was all falling apart! It was a good row but there were doubts about the time.

However, we were pleasantly surprised to improve on last time by 11 seconds putting us in 2nd place by just under 20 seconds.

Jonny, Keely, Richard, Chloe

Being in Division 1, an early start was accepted reluctantly by the crew, although comforted knowing we weren't the only unlucky ones.

The day started well, with bleary eyed Jonny getting completely lost on the way, and handily arrived when the boat had just finished being set up and was all ready to go.

As the only crew in our category, we felt confident that we could achieve a decent enough time to beat the competition. Luckily we were successful!

Following a nerve-wracking couple of minutes placing the boat in the water, not wanting to scratch the shiny new Colin Bullock on the river's stony edge, we rowed the 2k up to the start line, feeling confident, with our spirits high, but our skin temperature low. Particularly the hands. They were very numb.

Following the hustle and bustle of the start line gathering, we had an excellent rolling start and Keely settled into a decent rhythm. Star's women's quad pressured us the whole way, which certainly

OTRC Match Report - Star Head 19/11/17

helped keep our concentration on the pace. Luckily this didn't distract Richard from the many bridges along the course, which I expect wouldn't be as forgiving as the reeds we're used to on the Nene (not that Richard ever finds them anyway...). Unfortunately they did manage to overtake us in the last 500, but we felt we put up a good fight.

We powered over the finish line, puffing and wheezing (as the pictures show...) in a very respectable time. Although Chloe felt traumatised at the end, having witnessed a pigeon losing a fight with (someone else's) oar, we stepped onto dry land with our heads held high, having achieved our first race as a crew.

We proceeded to celebrate with a brew and some food, with Jonny finishing the day as well as it started, dropping a jam covered teacake all down him.

We look forward to many more races as a crew! Just with less jam.

#### *WM J14 x2 Jessica and Charlotte*

*This was our first race together in a double and our first time race. We were in the last division, so we were able to watch some of the other races and got a good idea of what to expect.*

*We rigged our boat quickly and when our race started it went smoothly. We managed to past all the bridges without crashing into them, until the very end when our oars got caught up with another racer. This slowed us down a bit. In the end our time was 9:33.*

*We both really enjoyed our first race together and hope to improve our time in the future.*

#### George Marlow, Monty, Ewan, Will & Joe

First I would like to say great congratulations to the J14 quad team of Monty, Ewan, Will and Myself I thought you all did a great job.

We had a good warm up on the way up to the start line guided by our cox Joe and with John cycling up with us. We had a good start building up to firm pressure nicely and we kept a good steady pace down the river but tiring towards the end. With one last push we went a bit out of time but pulled it together to get a good time of 9 mins 26 seconds. Thanks to Richard for coaching us every weekend and to everyone else who has helped us along the way.

#### *Ladies Quad: Angela, Fiona, Anita the super sub, and Jennie*

*Time: 0851*

*How Nice not to be in the first division (crack of dawn on a cold and frosty morning); the real difficulty of the day was the decision about when to eat the flapjack with a boating time of 1230 – before, during or after? Our time might suggest that it really ought to wait.*

*Anyway; we ladies got boated and rowed the course to the start line so that Jennie could get her eye in with the steering and all those bridges. She steered well, shouted some good clear instructions and we stayed out of trouble.*

*Then we had another decision to make – when to strip off so that we didn't cool right down again. Luckily we had John going up and down the path on his bike advising us of the best moment for this.*

*The row was punctuated by a couple of crablets trying to grab Angela's blade, but she bravely fought them off. Our time was a bit disappointing and there wasn't any opposition, but hey, the flapjacks were nice.*