



## Star Head - Bedford - 12th October 2014

This is the second of the heads held at Bedford - this time Star Club were the hosts. These Bedford events are close and have many divisions allowing OTRC to share the equipment and give everyone, that is available, a race. Star Club offer many categories of event at their Head race so OTRC were able to give one or two members their first taste of racing at this event. The new competitors were full of enthusiasm and brought some new supporters to the event adding to OTRC's legendary supporters club. Once again there were notable examples of the OTRC spirit with several members staying for much of the day to help with boating, rigging, trailer loading and driving.

There seemed to be some sort of time warp in the skipper's head as several members appeared to turn up at the last minute. Boats were rigged, subs and coxes had been organised but in the end everyone made it for their races but did nothing for the Captain's stress levels. The girls J16 quad got bumped up into the adult novice event and contained two girls in their first race. They were racing in a coxed boat but were only 15sec behind our girls J18 crew, racing in a coxless boat. Rochelle from the girls J16 squad raced in a single and was only 17sec behind Lel, one of the clubs most successful junior scullers. Well done to the girls J16 squad.

### Man of the Match:

It is difficult to pick an individual this for this event. Three club members put in a full shift turning up for the first division and helping the club crews boat, rig, trailer load and unload - so it would be unfair to pick out one individual. (From the junior section there was Ben Honeywell and from the senior section Simon Murray and Anita Dunn.) However, "Man of the Match" goes to Rochelle who stroked the girls J16/Novice coxed quad and then sculled so well in her single off very little 1X training. Well done Rochelle.

### Mas DF 2- (Philip, John M): (7.57) WINNERS

If the club's "B" crew pair were a bit more sensitive, they might be feeling a little unloved. There has been only one other Masters pair to race against in the last few events, so they have raced fit youngsters with inevitable consequences, and even the "A" crew of Mark & Jon H seem to be avoiding them - is it the "B" boys line in banter? Maybe it was rumours of the Greater Grabbing Crabs of the Great Ouse that had put off the other pairs. Our brave "B" boys are not the sort to be worried by dark stories of rare crustacea that inhabit the depths of the Ouse. It was the

second race of the day for the "B" boys so they set off full of confidence paying little attention to the creatures stirring in the darkest corners of the river. But won't you know it, the Greater Grabbing Crab has not been seen for years yet our brave "B" boys managed catch three of these between them. Undaunted our brave boys battled on to the end setting a time 37seconds faster than the opposition, but we still await the deliberations of the handicapping committee. Closer inspection of the time sheet shows the "B" boys posted the same time as Philip in his scull - so Philip is left to ask what exactly his crew mate brings to the crew.....

### **Mas CDE 2X (Bob, John M): (7.48 adjusted to 07:22)**

This double has lived the shadow the club's racing whippets in the form of Philip and Hugh and seems to get ritually humiliated by their skinnier club mates, but they still come back for more! Philip & Hugh had decided to give this event a miss leaving the event open for Bob & John. After an intellectual discussion on water flow, turbulence etc. , Bob the brains of the outfit, completely lost John but they decided on which arch of the bridge to aim for. They boated early but were caught by the eagle eyed marshals as they tried set off for a crafty warm up. After a long wait, the boys set off at an uncharacteristically low rate and Star Head 2014 caught one of the slower junior doubles - but were disappointed to find that the juniors had broken a stretcher rather than the Masters had put one over the juniors. A post-race discussion showed that neither crew member could agree on how they had rowed, which maybe the source of their problem. Perhaps John ought to leave the thinking to the brains of the outfit.

### **J.15 4x - Will,Connor,Rohan,Jordan, cox-Ben (07:38)**

Our race was quite interesting, first off Will managed to catch a crab before we had even started then Ben realised our rudder had snapped clean off so he could not steer which meant we had to put more effort into pulling the boat round some wide corners, even though our energy was being used up on turning we still managed to grasp a great time as we are the second fastest quad out of all the divisions with a time of 07:38. The crew that beat us were the Bedford Modern School BC (A) crew with a time of 07:07, but we beat their other J.15 4x+ by a fair amount of time so I'd say we did pretty well. At one point our crew was being recorded and on the video it looked like we were going to crash as we disappeared round a bend and came seriously close to the wall, it was fairly close but we cleared it with a few feet to spare! On the other hand waiting at the start and the finish was not fun, at the start we had to wait for about 45 minutes as the other crews waited on the Jetty for their other crew members to turn up. At the finish we had to wait for half an hour as they all cruised up toward the end of the course. Unfortunately we had to sit at a precarious angle in the water as the boat was tilted so the oars were on the land, this was not

helped by the fact that we had to try and level off the boat which was very uncomfortable to start off with in the first five minutes let alone for half an hour. But other than this the race was very exciting and great fun to be in!

### **MasCDE4X- John, Alan, Brian (Barry) Simon. (7:01 adjusted to 06:37)**

After our last successful foray at Bedford in October, the captain suggested we change the crew order in an effort to improve the boat speed. The suspicion is really that he (a) didn't want to steer and (b) didn't want to write the match report. We boated for Division 1 and disappeared into the mist towards the start. Despite the poor visibility we managed to avoid all obstacles (both masonry and avian) to complete the course in 7:18, 5 seconds slower than the Star Club crew we beat at Bedford. At the time of writing, the full results had not been published, so there is hope that once the handicaps are applied, we will be shown to have been the fastest club crew on the day...

### **Nov 4+: Ian, Charlie D, Richard, Peter C, cox Paul (08:04)**

Almost a scratch crew, we did have a preparatory outing on Saturday morning to introduce ourselves and to rearrange 3 bow sides and 1 stroke into a balanced 4.

The very late to arrive sub caused a bit of pre-race anxiety for the other crew members and potential replacements, but he arrived just in time to boat.

The warm up to the holding area was ok, in time and reasonably balanced.

After the usual wait for the start, we were off just missing the first bridge and settling into a good rhythm.

What followed was a good row but unfortunately we were passed by another novice crew at the finish.

### **Mas.D.1X: Philip - 7:57 WINNER**

On the day of my departure to the celebrity Jungle, I set off via Bedford Star Head at 07:00 hours – for those that don't know, the "O" stand for "O my god, it's early" (...and for a Sunday, it certainly is!) I was on the water promptly for the first division with a few other early risers.

Outnumbered by about 15:1 by junior scullers, I was concerned that someone had made a mistake (probably me...), but off we went staying in order for the length of the course. The sculler ahead amenably moved over to give me space and after considerable encouragement from the loudest supporters (come on Oundle!), I had a good row: consistent and avoiding all obstacles. Not an epic, but I was happy enough knowing I'd get a good sleep on the flight down-under afterwards.

P.S. If I could ask all those vocal supporters to vote for me after tonight's show, I'll be very grateful....(and so would my new best mate, Tinchy) 9

### **Coxed 4x - Antony, Mark, Jason, Steve (09:12)**

Sunday 16th November saw the first fully fledged outing of an all novice crew (having graduated from the learn2race course). Having been through the mill somewhat on this stretch of water earlier on in the season (Bedford Regatta July) the crew (Antony, Mark, Jason and Steve) were somewhat philosophical about their abilities to pull a decent time out of the bag. It was also the first occasion that we had raced in a 2 kilometre race so anxieties abound (would we be fit enough? against Bedford Modern School-aren't they teenagers? Bedford again- weren't we slaughtered there last time?). However, we pulled ourselves together sufficiently to make an entry and this time under the authoritative guidance of Anita Dunn as cox we duly made our way to STAR rowing club. At one point we had asked John Milborne what our time ought to be for this event. "Eight and a half minutes" he said precisely as though reading from his watch. We smiled and nodded wondering whether we had even achieved that on an ergo let alone a stretch of water! We made our way down to the jetty and eventually warmed up and rowed to our starting point where we again felt our inadequacies as the control team indicated it might be better to let at least a dozen other crews start ahead of us! However, at the end of the day we held our heads high, we were told that we looked as though we rowed like a crew and our official time at the end of the day was (for us at least!) an impressive 9 minutes and 12 seconds. All in all we all thoroughly enjoyed the experience and many thanks to everyone especially Anita for guiding us through our initiation at STAR.

### **WVetC 4+ Vicky, Jo, Becky Smith (Snr), Jennie (08:27)**

With the thought of being defeated by the same crew of older ladies from our previous race at Bedford we have become somewhat fixated by this age crisis. In order to overcome this crisis Would it be easier for the 3 of us who are about to reach, or who have reached milestone birthdays to suddenly age by a few years ( vetoed by the majority of us), or get our whippersnapper no 2 (becky) to age by considerably more years (no brainer) so that we could avoid the time advantage afforded to an 'older ' crew? As we pondered this question at the start, clothing adjustments were made- sun visor (!?) straight as a dye - Vicky- while Jo stripped to her shorts and 1 and 2 made more minor adjustments . The reality for us ladies was a steady row with a few wobbles here and there on a course well steered by Anita. The other reality is that we are who we are and actually, girls, what is needed is just more training..

### **W J16 4x - Rochelle, Sophie, Julia, Daisy (08:13)**

Early morning start and as we were selected as entry No.19 we were scheduled to set off at 9am. This was our first competitive race as a quad, it was only the day before that we had our first full speed run.

We, being Rochelle, Becky, Sophie, Julia and Myself Daisy, were all extremely excited for the race along with all the families, pets (especially Rochelle's dog who wanted to join us in the boat!), ducks and swans who had paused their daily routines to spectate this extravaganza. Teams from as far as Birmingham, Lincoln and Ely, congregated at the start, staggered from 30 second intervals. We had only a few minutes before our race which we had entered in the water and only had a couple of minutes to prepare before the full 2Km.

I think we all found it a long row, but great fun at the same time.

We couldn't have been happier about the speed the boat was travelling; it was the fastest we have ever been before. Well Done Girls!!

### **WVet ABC 2x Jo and Vicky (08:22 adjusted to 08:09)**

Last division- never good in the winter! After a long wait at the start it already seemed to be getting dark. We had a good start and quickly got into our rhythm. The full river meant a lot of bumpy water, so the middle of the race was a bit splashy and not very pretty. We pulled it back though and built up for a strong finish. Topped off with a row back in the dark and rain witnessing the Bedford illuminations!

### **Vet 8 - Bob, Charlie, Martyn, Andrew, John W, Tim B, Hugh, Peter D, cox: Rhona (07:05 adjusted to 06:52)**

After a somewhat eventful trailer tow which included pieces of rope, I arrived bang on the dot of 9:00am to be greeted by an excited marshal saying "Are you Division 2? If so you have to be on the water in 15 minutes!"

Now as I have told you a million times, I am not averse to a bit of exaggeration, but this man won this year's prize for hyperbole.

Eventually the crew turned up, some strolled down the towpath like it was Sunday morning, and we set out on very short warm up to the start.. is it me or does it seem to get shorter?

Eventually, after the 30 minute compulsory warm down we set off at good pace and settled into a rhythm with calls from Rhona that confirm she knows our foibles, like "keep your heads up", "relax your shoulders" etc., etc.

We had a couple of pushes for 10, which, sad to say, did not seem to make the slightest difference and when we reached the section of bumpy river down near the weir the rhythm went and the boat slowed as we all struggled with the conditions. This was a momentary glitch however and we gathered ourselves and finished really well.

Our time of 7:05 however did not impress the scorers and we obviously have some serious work to do.

With best wishes from Bow. A.K.A. The Judge

P.S. Who has my rigger jigger!?! I will be having rigger jigger amnesty on Saturday so would the culprit please oblige!

### **W.Nov.1x – Lel (09:00)**

I had a rather good row in the single and the improvement of my time clearly shows this, which I am incredibly pleased at. Although I am still unsure of where I came overall - as there were approximately twenty in my category - I was definitely in a good position, with the girl ahead, who was so far in the lead, coming in only two seconds faster.

### **W.J18.4x – Emily, Becky, Julia, Lel (07:58)**

We were a scratch crew heading into this race, which left us unsure but optimistic about what was to come. The crew did an excellent job and despite Emily catching a crab near the start, she recovered exceptionally well and set a brilliant pace throughout. You really could not tell that Becky was the youngest in the crew as her determination and strength did not falter one bit, a quality that really benefitted the race. The crew behind us, who we are sure was our opposition, nearly overtook but with some shouts of encouragement from Julia in the second seat, we pushed even harder to the finish, and not letting the other crew catch up. I truly believe this race lives up to the club's motto: 'Not bad for a first outing' – well done girls!

### **WJ15B 2x - Olivia H and Louise (09:00)**

This was a race of many firsts, the first time Olivia and Louise had rowed together competitively, the first time Olivia had raced over 2000m, and a first time at Bedford, but unfortunately not a first time at the front. We both felt we rowed consistently over the course and didn't get distracted by the many bridges. Louise kept a good pace and helped keep it together when Olivia tied up a bit in the middle of the race. A great experience which will stand us well for the next race.

### **WJ154x+ Moyses and crew (08:35)**

**WJ16 1x – Rochelle (09:17)**