



Match Report - British Masters - 14th June 2015

Simon writes: OTRC have viewed the British Masters Championships as the high point of our rowing year, with our training and preparation geared to this event. In the past we have been fairly successful, with many crews losing their novice status and also winning at IM3 level. Year by year the standard is improving as the event becomes more popular and we are finding it harder to be competitive. This year only four crews felt they had trained sufficiently to make the entry worthwhile, and we duly took part on the second day (Sunday) of what is now a 2 day event with almost 800 entries across all ages and boat types.

The weather was kind to us; cool with almost no wind, ideal for OTRC crews and we duly performed as described below, achieving podium finishes in all 4 events in which we entered. The usual OTRC spirit was much in evidence with cheering and encouragement for each crew in turn and the usual support with rigging, boating etc. Truly a Grand Day Out!"

Women's VetD IM3 4x Vicky(str), Jo, Jennie, Claire - BRONZE MEDAL

Without our usual stroke (Becky) available due to family commitments, Vicky hopped into the stern of the quad instead of steering, and Claire at Bow yet again meant we joined the vet D age group. Thanks Claire. (Still such a nice old lady!!) We were the first OTRC crew to boat, and managed to get boated in plenty of time, even managing a few practice starts on the way... However, as we were sitting behind the stake boats, we suddenly noticed all 5 of our opposition crews were lined up ready to begin, and we weren't!

A hasty paddle to the stake boat of lane 5 (having been actually sitting in lane 6) and an official warning for being late. Whoops, there's always one, isn't there....?

A clean start, but fourth at 500m. We held it together, settling into a good rhythm, remembering to stick our chests out and keep our form at the finish, as instructed by John in our pre-race chat. Good calls from Jenny and top steering from Claire, as Vicky held the rating up. We were coming up on the Nottingham crew, with the last half of the course quickly disappearing. As the gap closed, we held our form, and rowed through to take third place (behind Marlow and whoever came second) and an unexpected bronze medal. A good row! Hurrah!



WVetD IM3 2x (Jo, Vicky) - SILVER MEDAL

With a very quick turnaround we hopped out of the quad, collected our lane number, had the obligatory pre-race wee and got back on the water for our second race. (Thanks to the fellas for carrying our boat down for us.) We paddled back up to the start, on what appeared to be a much bouncier surface, with more wind than in the previous row. Having won at novice three years earlier, this was our first IM3 vet 2x race, and now Vet D, not C... How time flies, eh?

Carefully aiming for the correct lane this time, we attached to the stake boat and again, set off against a full set of 5 other oppo. We had a good clean start, and were with the leaders right from the beginning. We could hear the cheers from the OTRC posse (thanks again) as we passed the 500m, and began to close in on the leading crew. We crossed the line to take a silver medal, with a respectable time in a good race. Very happy IM3 Vet D ladies!

Vet E 4x Simon Murray, Brian Hardwick, Alan McMurdo, Peter Dunn - GOLD MEDAL

Fresh from all that start practice with the J15 girls the venerable intermediate masters quad took to the water at Holme Pierrepont oozing confidence and relaxed. Compared to the conditions only four weeks ago it was a mill pond and clearly played to the technical proficiency the crew had been working hard at achieving for an age.

It wouldn't be the master's championships if we didn't pick up an official warning so the pompous little twerp 'in charge' of the area beyond the start duly obliged. He took exception to our handbrake turns, practice starts, joie de vivre and haircuts. We got an official warning. Did this galvanise our heroes? ...you bet.

Lane 2...Off the start, good and solid, onlookers said we were never anything other than in the lead. Putney Town in Lane 1 came into view as we opened out a substantial lead. Over to the left

we were moving up and away from the Putney Town F crew and decided to open it up for the finish. It was at this point that we started interfering with some small buoys and our bow man had a small crustacean moment. Thankfully this was only about three strokes from the end...which he did manage to 'row' with his blade upside down in the water. He was a happy man. Not only did this interesting style fail to alter the result but he was gleefully standing down as bow steers to follow a much more sedate mission in a coxed four. He will never go that fast again!

Well done guys...Gold medal winners!

Mx Mas E 2x (Claire, Simon) 4.22

We had reformed our crew in an attempt to reprise or even improve on our result 2 years ago. Training since the winter had been intermittent, fitting in around other crew commitments and something called "real life(?)". Unlike for the rest of the OTRC crews, by the time it came to our turn to race, the weather had deteriorated with a squally shower immediately before we boated. Despite the choppier conditions, our warm up was solid with a few good practice starts. We managed a solid start to the actual race, settling into race rhythm quite quickly, but soon the effects of our earlier rows began to take their toll and our performance tailed off. Spurred on by the sound of the OTRC roar as we approached the 750m mark we picked up and finished strongly in a time of 4.22 which though modest, was slightly quicker than the last time.

I hope we have painted a picture from which you can create the race unfolding in your minds however, there was one thing missing, the competition. Yes dear reader, we were jilted at the stakeboats, as our only opposition scratched just before the race, (must have been the sight of all those medals from earlier races). Needless to say it was a bitter sweet event as we beat our previous time, which was heartening in view of the minimal training, but both of us felt slightly fraudulent, having found ourselves on the winners pontoon at the end of the race, which neither of us felt we were worthy of especially after all the fantastic rowing achievements from the rest of the OTRC crews earlier in the day.