



Milton Keynes Regatta - Saturday 19th September 2015

Jason Ellis compiles this match report for MK:

OTRC made its annual pilgrimage to Milton Keynes for the MKRC Invitational Regatta.

Conditions could not have been better for what was a splendid day out.

The club's organizer for the event, the venerable John Milborne, offers special thanks to the following two individuals for their contributions on the day:

To Libby Mitchel, who was a star in going back to the boathouse, canceling her morning plans, in order to try and find the missing stretcher from the eight. When unable to find it, she searched the boathouse for suitable options so the club could attempt to fabricate a spare—top effort!

To Steve Mulligan, who came to support the club and ended up helping with boating and rigging, as well as going off to buy refreshments for the club. Much appreciated!

The MK drone camera was in action again this year. Go [here](#) to see the video of the event.

W Mas D 2x Claire and Angela

We would have preferred not to have rowed against members of our own club but at least it guaranteed an OTRC medal (unfortunately not ours!)

Being a relatively new rowing combination, we were not really sure what to expect and the red mist meant we started very fast (if only the race had been just 50m long). For a losing crew we were very pleased with our performance ... may be more ergo sessions needed?

J16 1x Joe Pendred

Despite being very pleased with how I rowed, I lost by one length. Having raced and lost to the opposition in the quad earlier in the day, I knew he would be a tough opponent. I made a strong, clean start and kept within reach for most of the course until the last 25 meters when my opponent pulled ahead with the benefit of a home crowd advantage. Still, I enjoyed my first race in a single and I am looking forward to the next race in Bedford.

J17 2x Harry Buley and William Berridge

Although the odds were slightly against us (up an age group and very limited training together), we stayed confident and after a long wait for everyone to get back on the water after the boat naming ceremony, we got on our way to the start. The nerves began to kick in as we waited next to our opponents. Out of the few starts that we had practiced this one was our best and we stayed level with the opposition until just after the island, when they started to pull away and we unfortunately lost by about 2 lengths. But still a good result for our first race together.

W Mas D 2x Jo and Vicky — WINNERS

We had a good start in our semi-final against MK and kept ahead down the course, settling into a comfortable rhythm—it's always easier to find your rhythm and relax when you're ahead. A speedy turnaround to another trip down the course in the Mxd 4+, a quick drink and bite of flapjack and then we were boating again for our 2x inter-club final. No pressure then! Our oppo (Angela and Claire) got a very quick start and were off. With calls for relaxing and leg drive and all that good stuff we drew level and kept pace, gradually moving ahead. Keeping it "long and strong" and a push for the finish and it was all over. Wobbly legs told us we had worked hard.

Mxd Mas 8+ Vicky, Jo, Martyn, Andrew, Hugh, Peter, Fiona, Claire; Cox: Anita

Heat against 'Frog's sporn.'

Position second.

After a long period of training (about 600m) Anita ran through her expectations and calls for the course, this was akin to an aircraft safety announcement insofar as not everyone listened and the occasional PA break up!

The obligatory OTRC racing starts got us in the racing mood and this crew was beginning to feel quietly confident, even more so on the start when it was revealed the oppo sported at least one 79 yr old (did not like to enquire if he was an ex-Olympic champion).

In near-perfect weather and water conditions and in our almost new borrowed MK eight, with no time for adjustments, (poor Fiona had to adopt a new rowing technique spending her time 'drawing up' to her chin) we made a steady start and were guided down the course by Anita's planned commands, the ladies providing the beauty and the men the brawn, or was it the other way round?

The boat appeared to be balanced with some good catches and sends; however, the oppo slid ahead and OTRC were never quite able to make up the water and had to accept the second hooter.

It was sad that Broxbourne denied this OTRC crew the opportunity of a second outing and the chance to race against fellow OTRC competitors in the final!

W Mas C 2x Smithy and Jennie

A sudden attack of nerves got the better of us at the start; however, the first few strokes were rather good. We were given a generous three-second advantage, but Milton Keynes swept past us without hesitation. Sadly our concentration was broken by Bow's inability to work out exactly how quickly we could skillfully row into those sneaky but luminous coloured buoys without really noticing! Sorry Mrs Stroke, actual boats should be easier to miss, I hope, in the next race.

Mxd Mas 8+ Simon, Charlie, John, Jason, Angela, Mel, Martine, Becks; Cox: Rhona

Our first issue of the race was to find a boat we could use as Annie Louise had a foot plate missing!

John did a sterling job and we managed to "borrow" a boat from MK.

The draw had put us in a semi-final against another Oundle crew, so there was lots of banter before the race!

Our first race, Simon set a very good pace, which we all, with great gusto, followed. We settled into a good stride and found ourselves with great delight in the final.

The final we rowed a very different race. We had a great debrief from John and were able to implement what he asked of us. Although we were not to win our race against a very clean and efficient Broxbourne crew, we all came away knowing that we had given it our all and enjoyed it immensely.

W Mas 4x- Anita, Angela, Martine, Becks

This was our first race of the season, so nerves were showing.

Anita set a very good rhythm and pace but our opponents set a crisp, clean row.

We have taken away things to learn and work on and look forward to the head season.

Mxd Mas 8+ Becky, Jennie, Dick, Brian, Antony, Leslie, Keely, Kate; Cox: Paul

We lined up against our opposition - a good looking crew from Oundle. Both crews having broken form and practiced, anything could happen. We had a decent start and got into our rhythm with stroke pushing us with a quick pace, but our opposition pushed ahead. We took it up two and

focused on pushing hard. Alas, it wasn't enough and our opposition beat us to the finish. Looking on the bright side—an Oundle crew made it to the final!

W J14/15 2x Caroline Barnes and Erin Hodnett

After an early start, we arrived bleary eyed. With it being only our second time rowing as a crew, we were quite nervous. But after winning the semifinal (against another Oundle boat) by about three lengths, we were looking forward to the final. Having only to wait around for an hour before boating again, we had little time to worry about it. For the first half of the race we stayed with the boat from Northampton. However after catching a crab, we struggled to get the rhythm back and tired quickly. Despite fighting back, we came second by about two or three lengths. Even though we didn't win it was a good experience and we had a great time.

Vet D 4+ Peter Dunn (Compiler comment...who declined to implicate his fellow crew members in his report...)

Beaten by a bow ball by a young crew who had dark flowing locks of hair.

A four second start was not quite enough for us old gits and we were left feeling a little frustrated that we did not row as well as we should have.

We would have loved to have a crack at the eventual winners who had an eleven second start over the crew who beat us (with Hugh rowing in the losing crew).

A good day however, I think the MK club are increasingly welcoming and are putting on a good event, even though the standard is getting higher.

Mxd Mas D 4+ Vicky, Charlie E, Simon, Jo; Cox: Rhona

As a request from the organisers, Oundle offered up a mixed vet D4+ as oppo for Broxbourne's mixed vet C4+.

In true OTRC spirit, not only were we older by a few decades but we had not been in a boat together before. It was a bit like a blind date, only as well as being a bit blind, we were also a bit deaf and the men a bit stiff, but in all the wrong places.

Having introduced ourselves and decided who we wanted to sit next to, (I didn't fancy yours much, Vicky) we paddled up to the stake boats with Rhona as chaperone. A few practice starts on the way, and we all seemed to be getting along very well.

As the race started, it became apparent that the Broxbourne crew not only knew each other more intimately than we did, but this was certainly not their first date. They could even be all living together and be raising a small family of juniors...

They were faster off the start, quickly pulled away, and finished before we did. But then, I think that's the problem with these younger men...

I think Vicky and I probably would go on a double date with Simon and Charlie again if they asked us, but maybe it would be useful if we got to know each other better first. Perhaps somewhere nice for supper?

Mxd Int 2x Lauren and Richard

We have had a good deal of uninterrupted training sessions so we were confident of a good race. We boated on time, rowed to the stake boat to find nobody was there, no marshal, no small child to hold the boat, nobody. A little perplexed we did some starts which eased my nerves (I was feeling a little sick and tense) and each one got better and felt really good. Eventually all the marshals, boat holders and starter turned up and we were ready. We had practiced starts many times and I knew that as long as I didn't tense and made the first three clean we would be fine, Lauren helped telling me to row our race and not get distracted by what they were doing, which again calmed and focused me, she is a very good influence. It worked and off the start we were faster and pulled slightly ahead. However, they soon caught us and moved into the lead. We were close, but by two-thirds down the course we were a length down. Feeling we were nearing the finish we pushed for the end, and boy did we push. We were reeling them in with every stroke and it felt like we were level with them as the hooter sounded; neither crew knew who had it but they had just piped us. As many of you who have rowed this course know, it is difficult to know exactly where you are, markers change and the course is laid out differently every year, so knowing when to push is tricky. If we had been more aware of landmarks and pushed a few strokes earlier we would have taken them. We both agreed that it was an brilliant row and we look forward to the head season and more races together.

W Nov 4+ Rhona, Mel, Fiona, Kate; Cox: Claire M.—WINNERS



Looking at the live time update and seeing we were due to race earlier than scheduled, we promptly boated only to find ourselves with no marshals or opposition. So we took the time to practice our starts, which proved later to be a crucial advantage. Eventually, we were all warmed up and had our opposition and marshals. We lined up at the stake boat full of nerves, but ready. The marshal yelled go and we shot off with a powerful and steady push into the lead. Thrilled, we gained some distance in the first meters, but then our opposition recovered from their slow start and started to gain on us as we started to flag. We saw them gaining out of the corner of our eyes (heads were in the boat!) and despite our determination to continue in the lead, lost a bit of oomph. But our cox knew just what to do and spurred us on with perfectly timed calls of “dig deep!” and “only a few more meters!” We crossed the finish buoy but neither crew knew who won; it was so close. After the long tour to the jetty our shouting fans assured us we had done it. We had our first win!

**Nov 8+ Dick, Charlie D, Ian, Mark, Harry, Jason, Richard, Antony; Cox: Paul—
WINNERS**



Semi-final:

We rowed around to the start practising a start and 10 strokes. After a three point turn at the stake boat, we were ready. It took the other boat a moment or two to get ready. Just before the off our cox Paul shouted for us all to relax and breathe. We were off more of a splash and dash start, it settled down during the first ten strokes, then those words "stride" from Paul, the boat was beautifully balanced. It was as if we were all doing the same things at the same time. We shot over the finish line.

Final:

Very similar to the heat, except that the opposition manoeuvred beautifully to the stake boat, convincing us that they knew what they were doing, so we knew we had a race on our hands. Paul again shouted for us to relax those shoulders. We were off, a little rock and roll until we settled down, we soon were past the island, by then you could hear the shouts for Oundle. We knew it was ours to lose, but although the other crew put on a burst in the middle section, we were a good two lengths ahead. It's amazing we kept the lead, but it feels a shorter race when you are winning.

J14 1x (Bonnett)—WINNER

The atmosphere at Milton Keynes was great; quite a lot of people watching on, a friendly environment along with a great sense of friendly competition. With the clubs there looking strong I knew it would be hard to beat anyone at any event. But I just kept my head focused and concentrated on what I had to do. In the semis I felt as though I was in complete control of the boat at kept my pace at an even but quick one. Once I had past the finish line I knew I had to get my mind set on the final race. With the wind getting a little stronger I felt a few nerves start to kick in as I approached the steak boat. But before I knew it we were off and then it was all over in a flash. Although I had won my competitors had said it was their first races so despite finishing a little behind they both rowed very well for a first competition.

Overall Milton Keynes was a memorable event as it was my first time rowing in a single, but the encouraging environment did help me towards my win.

Match reports not received from the following crews:

W J14/15 2x (Hutchinson)

Rowability 2x (Hanson)

W J14/15 2x (Messenger)

W J18 1x (Leer)

W J17 2x (Cox)— WINNERS

J16 2x (Anand)

W J 16/18 4x- (Nesbitt),

W J 14/15 1x (Messenger),

J14/15 1x (Dew)— WINNER

W 16/18 4x- (Whitemore)

W J14/15 4x+ (Hutchinson)— WINNERS

W J 14/15 4x+ (Barnes)

The Drone

And finally, a cool shot of the opposing Oundle Mixed Masters crews (Murray vs Smith) boating, from the perspective of the MK drone camera.

