

OTRC Match Report

Milton Keynes Regatta

Saturday 23rd September 2017

Foreword by Race Organiser John Milborne..

Milton Keynes regatta has been a favourite of OTRC's for many years. In the early days this was an invitation event, which allowed us to bend the rules a little to give all our club members a competitive race. Milton Keynes have become a very successful club over the years, with their high performance section producing gold medal winners at the World Masters Championships. In the last two years the regatta has doubled in size and become a full blown BR event, which is a credit to their club, but means the Milton Keynes organisers have to stick to the letter of the law. The club has tried to stick to it's roots and provides the biggest opportunity for Primary rowers (those new to the sport) of any competition that we enter. In this spirit Milton Keynes kindly put on an invitation event for our new junior rowers, which allowed us to "bend the rules" a little to give all our juniors a race; which turned out to be one of the closer races of the day! However, this new era meant that we weren't able to give all our crews a race and for the 3rd event this summer no opposition for our W Vet D 2X.

The weather forecast was good although no one had told the weather gods and the "early birds" experienced rain and those that raced later had to contend with a cross wind. The wind caused a few crews, including our new racers, a little difficulty in getting lined up on the stake boats and others some problems in steering down the course. OTRC had a good day with 5 crews winning, which included John Bishop reaching a milestone of 50 wins, some juniors winning in their first competition, and a couple of stalwarts of the senior section losing their Novice status.

Despite being given a parking slot for the trailers well away from the action, the OTRC support was well in evidence and all the crews were fully supported. Parents of the new rowers were well in evidence supporting not just their offspring but joined in with supporting the club and helping with the boats. Once again the club members put in a sterling performance helping members boat, carrying equipment, sorting shoes, subbing at the last minute, rigging and trailer loading, once again showing that the OTRC spirit is alive and kicking.

Man of the Match goes to Dick, who is one of the new trailer drivers, and started his day 6.15am at the club hitching up his trailer, although his first race wasn't until 11am, and finished rigging around 9pm.

Notices

Membership—have you filled out your forms and paid your membership fees. Now Due.

Social—Saturday 14th October, The Ship from 7.30pm. All Welcome.

Fundraising for the Clubhouse—sign up sheet in the boathouse



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MasD (?) 8: Mark F, Dick, Andrew, Mark Q (supersub), Brian, **Simon**, Jon, John; cox: Rhona.



WINNERS

This was a straight final against the only other 8 entered for the regatta, a youthful but rather unknown masters B crew from Oxford Academicals.

We had a late crew change due to injury but Quiggers bravely stepped up to the plate (he did have a slightly worried look on his face when we discussed the race plan - go off at 38 and settle at 36 but we assured him it'd be ok).

A cunning plan to assemble the boat at the launch jetty was met with some derision from the marshalls as we carried it piece-by-piece past the spectators. Eventually we found all the bits, then all the crew so once fully complete we were ready to go.

Some discussion ensued as to the best way to proceed, the general opinion being that the start was a good place to aim for.

Right away, the boat ran really well, balance was good and we found a good rhythm with a couple of practice starts. Attachment to the stakeboat was a perfectly choreographed manoeuvre in a tricky crosswind, eliciting gasps of admiration from the marshalls. As the older crew we were awarded a 6 second handicap and after the seemingly endless wait by the starter (why are they all so sadistic?) we were off.

Despite a near miss with the shore, the start plan was executed to perfection and we were well on our way by the time the opposition started. Having been conditioned (!) to do nothing in the race we hadn't trained for, we settled into our race pace, had the customary fade at about 2/3 through the race, but still managed to put a few extra seconds over the opposition to win in the end fairly comfortably. Only later did we discover that we had not only won an actual TROPHY for winning, but that, as this was an official BR event, three of our crew lost their "novice" status.

Congratulations to Mark F, Andrew and Brian!

Mas F 4x-: John B, Jon, **Simon**, Nick. WINNERS



Paddling furiously probably best describes our performance.

The masters quad event comprised three crews, one from Milton Keynes and two from the OTRC quad squad entered as masters "E" and "F" crews.

The older crew (F stands for "fogey" of course) were given a bye into the final so we were able to watch our comrades take on the Milton Keynes crew, (spoiler alert) winning comfortably, so they were no longer comrades, but now the enemy.

As the older of the two OTRC crews, we were awarded a 4 second handicap for the final, and successfully resisted all attempts to forgo said handicap. There was a notable lack of banter at the start as we recognised what was at stake; the wind blew, the starter gave us his customary delay and then we were off, using most of our 4 second advantage in trying to get back on course. Rating 44, 38 then settling at 36 we managed to keep the opposition in our sights although with youth on their side, they started to close in on us. At this point enthusiasm got the better of us and the rating crept up to 38 again but we managed to hang on to win by around 1/2 length. Three cheers for Oundle!

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Invitation Junior coxed quads:

(Jessica, Ewan, George, Monte, cox: William) Winners
(Leon, Trinity, Charlotte, Jacob, cox: Molly)

For most of the rowers in this event, it was their first experience of competition, having only started their Learn to Row course this summer. For all the members just being ready to compete after such a short time was a success in itself. The coaches had tried to produce two “equal” crews but at this is always harder than it sounds. There was an older J14/15 crew made up of two girls and two boys; and a J13 crew of three boys and one girl.

Will was a late addition to the line up in the coxes seat of the younger crew. They set off to the start in probably the height of the cross wind making steering a very tricky for our inexperienced coxes and inevitably one of the crews managed to “tap” a buoy on the way up to the start.

Waiting in a queue to race is not easy in the wind but our crews managed this, but found getting attached to the stake boats pointing down the course was a little more tricky and one of the crews had to be pulled out of the reeds. Once in to the race proper the rowers gave it their all and it is a credit to their application that they rowed together as crews, which is rare for such inexperienced and feisty rowers.

Ewan drew blood but it wasn't clear whether he was sweating blood or had a case of “scullers knuckles”. The race was tight the whole way down and from the bank the lead appeared to change hands and roared on by the OTRC crowd the two crews battled down the course. According to the crews there were a few “bumps and bashes” but from the bank it all looked very powerful.

The younger eventually won by about 1/2 length.



Mixed J15 coxed quads:

(Leon, Trinity, Molly, Jacob, cox: Charlotte)

Following the invitation event earlier in the division, this crew went onto race in the Mxd J15 event with Molly swapping from cox to rower and Charlotte into cox for the first time.

With some helpful tips from Will & Molly, Charlotte took the crew up to the start with the cross wind still very evident.

The crew was up against some experienced (and rather big) rowers from Huntingdon so it was with great pride that the OTRC coaches saw our crew get onto the stake boats straight, while the Huntingdon crew got themselves into a bit of muddle.

Once into the race proper experience triumphed over guts and although the OTRC crew held their form down the course the more experienced Huntingdon crew were able to pull into the lead and take the victory.

The OTRC crew can be very proud of their efforts and we look forward to watching the development of these young rowers.



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Ian and Charlie

Plain Jane... what a busy summer she'd had?! Lots of outings, a successful steward's enquiry, a win at Sudbury, a heat win at St. Neots and an official warning for her crew's lack of club kit colours. Aiming to follow on a high, she arrived to this year's MK Regatta with hopes of carrying her crew into IM2 fame.

We were up against an IM3 Milton Keynes crew on home waters. They looked in good shape and seemed rowed together as we followed them to the start. Our warm up wasn't our best; Ian caught a huge crab in the first practice start and Charlie noticed that he wasn't rowing with his favourite oar (not enough woodworm for his liking, perhaps?!). We just needed to relax and do what we do well in practice.

Both crews had a good start. As to plan, we started at 34/35 and lengthened to our target rating of 32spm, with just under a lengths lead. The rowing felt smooth and we were holding our ground. With half way gone, stroke called for a push for 10 and our thoughts started to think about an MK counter push. Perhaps we had gone off too hard too early? They started to apply some pressure so we called for another 10. We could hear the Oundle support as we came closer to the finish line so we threw another 10, along with an "up 2" for good measure. It was just a case of holding on...

Final verdict: 1 length win for Oundle and a step up into IM2 status... this time all fair and square and no need for a stewards intervention! So... another win, another shiny item for the cabinet and more BR ranking points.

Plain Jane isn't so plain – she's becoming quite decorated!

