



Northampton Head - Saturday 24th January

On Saturday 24 January, OTRC went, yet again, to Northampton. It's always one of our less popular venues – not because it's Northampton, but because it's always cold or wet or snowing or all three, with any extra, nasty weather conditions thrown in. This time, for a Northampton Head it wasn't too bad. Cold, yes, but not wet or icy. There was even a bit of sun. However, I have to say, some of the Junior match reports are a bit 'whingey' about the weather. They haven't done much living/head racing yet, then. Bless!

Vicky and Anita did sterling work in their first attempt at organising the motley crew into an efficient team and we all got there, rowed and had a good day. Result! Well done, girls.

Congratulations to all the pot winners – this was an impressive haul for us. Thanks to all our supporters (loudest voices from the bank, yet again) and to everyone who took a full part in the day by loading/unload and rigging/de-rigging before and after the event.

The reports below are roughly in division order. Enjoy...

WMasBNov 2x Keely, Bec Time 08:55

Our training on the water had been somewhat limited, once, in 8 weeks, but this did not stop Keely and I from racing at Northampton.

Many conversations were had over the past week, as to how many layers to wear, and whether I would still be able to row !!

Once we had established stroke side and bow side we were off... To wait for nearly an hour at the start..

Keely and I had a strong, steady row, our timing sadly, reflects our lack of training but, hey, not bad for a first outing.

WJ15 4x+ Olivia M, Olivia H, Beatrice, Louise cox Ellie N Time 08:54

No report.

WMasD 4x- Fiona, Angela, Kate E, Anita Time 10:05

Hanging about at the start we amused the bloke with the clipboard by appearing to wish to travel sideways much of the time, but without all this effort our core temperatures would have plummeted even more.

We got going nicely – our on-board ex-Teacher was barking her commands with volume and clarity and our steerswoman did well with this unpopular job. There was a little mixing with vegetation of some sort but we made it to the line and even had a burst of firm pressure saved up for the final few strokes.

MasC 4+ Vicky, Jo, Smithy, Jennie cox Rhona Time 08:38

After a very, very early start we then waited at the start for longer than the journey time to Northampton, or so it seemed. Frozen fingers and other extremities aside it was a steady row throughout, ably steered by Rhona. Just goes to show there's life in these girls yet even after Christmas, birthday parties and, for some of us, well me really, holiday in the Big Apple.

Nov 1x Richard Time 09:26

As we are back in head season I decided it was time to reacquaint myself with single sculling. Not being able to train in the boat I always see this as my fun, technical row, purely for myself. I boated and started up towards the marshalling area, soon it was all coming back to me and I settled myself. I was mildly put out of my stride on the way up when passing the canoeists and hearing one of them say “he’s a bit short for a rower” but as this is something I have heard often (and is largely true) I forgot it and moved to my position in the queue. After a hairy moment where my blade got away for me and nearly went in waiting on the bank, I composed myself and was soon heading for the start. The raced went as they usually do, the J16 singles who are always put behind me in races soon passed me and I was able to settle into a rhythm and row my race without incident. While my time was not fantastic it was nice to be back in a scull again.

WJ16 2x Rochelle, Becky Time 08:59

I don't think I've worn so many layers and still be freezing before, at least in the first division it wasn't that winding. We got down to the river and everyone seemed to be very organised with getting the boats on the river until we got down to the start line where we were waiting for so long. Everything was disorganised and really confusing which got me really nervous for the race. We finally started the race and it was some of the best rowing I think we've done as a double. Our finish time was not the best we've ever gotten but at least we had some fun.

MasD 8+ Bob, Charlie E, Martyn, Andrew, John W, Peter C, Hugh, Peter D cox Rhona Time 07:09

No report.

MasD 4x- Simon, Brian, Alan, John Time: 07:11 WINNERS

This crew is developing the skill of talking a much better race than they actually produce. Those that could bear to listen to their geriatric ramblings will have noticed the phenomena at close hand and by the time they had been in the pub it is surprising that they are not favorites to represent GB at Rio. They did not have any opposition at Northampton, so measured themselves against the club's Eight, who contain several of OTRC's star rowers. So the Quad were amused to hear the Northampton marshals screaming at our Eight to spin and get on with the racing. Either the Eight was frozen solid from waiting so long up at the start or they have reached a certain age and couldn't hear or understand instructions, either way good news for the Quad. John "the bridge basher", who steers the boat from the bow seat, has a history of entertaining incidents so it is disappointing to report that the Quad had an uneventful row. Initial results suggested that the Eight and Quad were almost equal on time and so the Quad embarked on some "sporting banter". Unfortunately for our "sporting" quad, Northampton had problems with the timing and on "final revised times" the quad were now 2 secs behind the Eight and might have to eat some of their words.

WMasC 2x Becky, Jennie Time 09:25

So, not the fastest row in the world, however we stayed on top of the water, kept away from land during the race, and battled with some mere whippersnappers who felt compelled to keep steering as close as possible to us throughout the race. A fairly successful outing by all accounts and we are definitely ready for more.

IM3 1x Jack S Time 08:11

After the horror of finding out that I would have to wake up at 5:30am the night before, I was still buzzing for my first race in over 4 months on the way there. The excitement slowly faded as it got rather chilly waiting around, but then out of nowhere some entertainment arrived in the form of Falcon RC who managed to break two boats before getting any off the trailer! So after trying not to laugh when near their trailer as it probably wouldn't of gone down well, I froze a bit more and then got in my single and rowed up to the start. After freezing a bit more in the shade with the wind and becoming quite impatient I set off! I overtook a double at the first corner seeing as their line was a bit off (they may have forgotten there was a corner) and stuck ahead of a Nemesis sculler for the duration. I was a bit disappointed with the time seeing as on the wall Phil had apparently beaten me by over half a minute! But after checking the actual results when I got back from the pub I was a bit relieved as it turned out to be only 7 seconds, so a good day in all and nice to get back rowing and racing!

WJ16 1x Rochelle Time 09:45

No report.

Nov 4+ Ian, Charlie D, Adam, Richard cox Paul Time 07:51

Our training for this race had been a bit sporadic, what with Christmas, work commitments and the appalling weather (I am still bearing the marks of where the boat was thrown out of the water at me by the wind). This aside we all turned out and the mood was positive, we boated and after sorting out Charlie's backstay which had come adrift, we began our warm up. At this point a rather large clunking noise was heard, on investigation a large portion of the button on my blade

was missing causing it to jump around in the gate. This was overcome by keeping firm pressure pushing out towards the gate, sadly this also resulted in another large chunk snapping off on the way to the start line although this turned out to cause an issue later on in the race too. We continued to the marshalling area without a problem took our place in order behind the other crews. At this point a women's coxed four pulled up behind, they had come a few too many places up the order but seemed to have found a place to sit until they could join in their place. Sadly though they were unable to hold their position and soon were beside us, then in front of us, and in passing us put a stroke in very close to us causing water to come over the side of the boat and Adam to get a little wet. In short this university crew were less than in control of their boat and once past us proceeded to jam themselves horizontally across the river, their cox from his front loading position seemed incapable of getting them facing the right way, and at one point had the whole crew rowing pushing them further into the bank. It was at this point that Paul took control, seemingly unable to stand the inept nature of the other crew's cox, he shouted a few basic instructions through our cox box and soon had them pointing the right way. After this they continued to head towards the front of the line of waiting crews and the marshal decided it would be safer to put them out of the way and sent them down the course early.

All this and we hadn't even started the race! All this over we were duly called, turned and were racing. We were very stable and Ian was doing an admirable job of setting our rhythm, we passed one crew and had a fun tussle for position with a ladies coxed quad in the closing stages of the race and we nearly took them. Then in the closing stages of the race Charlie got cramp, and did fantastically well to keep going for the full distance and in the last 20 strokes I caught a crab where the broken piece on my button jammed tight against the gate and pushed me down. Luckily I was able to recover immediately without missing a stroke to finish the race.

All in all a very eventful row, and really good fun. We all came away thinking we had had a good row and were pleased with our time.

WJ16 4x- Daisy, Sophie, Becky P, Becky S Time 08:25

I think we were all feeling quite nervous before this race considering that we hadn't rowed in about 6 weeks. Also, I hadn't steered a coxless quad in while which was going to be interesting. As soon as we got on the river, I almost crashed us into another Oundle boat but quickly got the hang of the steering. We were waiting at the start for ages which meant staying still very and not hitting other boats was very hard. The boat that was in front of us for the race had their coach by the start line and she kept moaning at me for getting too close to her crew. She told me to 'give

them space' even though there was no space to give! The start felt really strong and in time but we were soon over taken by Hugh and Phillip. As soon as we reached the last corner near the finish, we were hit by a massive gust of wind which made the last 20 strokes very difficult. We crossed the finish line feeling very tired and quite wet at bow end (thanks Daisy).

WJ18 1x Lel Time 09:12 WINNER

The first race of the year was most definitely a struggle after a long Christmas break– I was regretting the excess of pigs in blankets and mince pies! However, I felt I had a reasonable row despite the strong winds and current and my two-second win against a Northampton girl came as a lovely surprise. Also, a special thank you to those who rigged/ de-rigged my boat – I owe you!

J15 4x+ Ben, Rohan, Alfie, Connor, cox Joe Time 08:53

Considering the fact that we haven't rowed for 6 weeks our performance wasn't too bad. We came in third with a reasonable time of 8.53. Although our performance could have been improved by keeping in time better. Hopefully before the next race we can get some more practice!

MasD 2x Hugh, Philip Time 07:17 WINNERS

There were several breaks with tradition in this race. First of all we're normally in an early Division and second it's normally our first event and Hugh had just rowed in the 8x. So, we both enjoyed slightly longer under our duvets which, judging by the comments from those poor so-and-sos who had to brave the elements was, by far, the best place to be! Having warmed up with tea and visited the gents on a number of occasions (!) as a consequence before boating, we set off for the inevitable brass monkey treatment at the start. We were cheered up by the close company of the W.J16A.4x- and then rather rudely overtook them on the course: sorry ladies!

We kept a steady pace and interspersed our progress with a few "Power tens", going on to win our event by 7 seconds from Stratford-upon-Avon BC.

Nov 4x+ Mark F, Antony, Steve, Jason cox Jack S Time 09:00

Saturday January 24th saw another outing of the the Learn2race crew- Anthony,Mark,Jason and Steve. After a week of yo-yo emails debating whether we were racing at all- cox less four/ in a brand new boat !, what not practised over Christmas and New Year? But you' re entered as a coxed four with Jack Spratt as cox ! But you've never rowed at Northampton! They have not got anyone for you to race against ! We eventually found out that were racing at 12 noon on the Saturday on the Thursday night which all adds to the exhilaration of racing when you are new to it. It was a done deal since we had no one to race against we beat the competition hands down! However, we enjoyed ourselves immensely and what's more we knocked 12 seconds off our previous time at Bedford Star in November! Our overall time was 9 minutes exactly. It was bracing weather but a good start to the New Year for us and we are looking forward to many more events.Thanks to all who supported our efforts especially Jack for coxing us!

MasD 2x Vicky, Jo Time 08:39

Having had a very chilly row earlier in the day in the 4+ we boated in sunshine hoping for a warmer experience. The wind had got up for Div 3 so though the row up was warmer, the wait was as cold. Still - we have had to break the ice in previous years! We had a solid row, found our rhythm and kept it going pretty much the whole way down the course. Aching muscles told us we had worked hard, but this was a time only row, so sadly we were only rowing against ourselves.

WNov 4x- Emily, Sophie M, Ellie T, Lei Time 07:52 - WINNERS

Considering such a long wait at the start, the crew delivered an excellent performance – we steamed down the course, overtaking another girls' quad, thanks to Emily's brilliant pace and the strength of Sophie and Ellie in the middle. It was an enjoyable yet tough row, and the win was well deserved. The teamwork was fab!

J15 4x+ Ben, Jordan, Will B, Josh cox Josh Time 08:13

No report.

J15 2x Rohan, Connor Time 08:36

After a whole month deprived of any practice during the Christmas break, myself and Rohan were put straight into our second race of the day. Desperate to get moving after waiting for what seemed like hours stood stationary in the queue to row, we were relieved when we finally got going. Despite the aches from the previous race, we finished with a pleasing 8:36, 17 seconds faster than our race in a quad earlier that day.

MasD 1x Philip Time 08:04 WINNER

Along with everyone else doing two or more events, I'd not had chance to warm up from the previous outing and not had time to take on board more than a slice of flapjack with a(nother) cup of tea, so I wasn't in the best of spirits at the start of this one. With the sun going down behind clouds, there wasn't even the suggestion of heat to cheer me up at the end of the day!

In the race itself I passed one junior double and had a go at a second, although they seemed to do their best to avoid letting me pass...., but I finished after steering a reasonable course in the circumstances and beat my oppo. from Nemesis BC – a club we come across a fair bit – by only 2 seconds, but it was enough!

Finally, I want to say well done to Vicky & Anita, the real winners of the day for seamlessly organising the club entry - although not without stress, if the timing of some of Anita's messages was anything to go by! I'm sure every club entrant was very grateful for your efforts – especially as there were no (apparent!) hic-coughs!!!

MX IM3 2x- Claire and Simon 08:40

The 4th Division of the Northampton Head can be considered the "graveyard slot" as most sensible rowers will have used the fading light to pack up their boats and head homeward. Not

being used to the lofty heights of IM3, we cast anxiously around for sight of undoubtedly younger opposition; and a recce. by Claire earlier in the day had confirmed that they were (a) younger (well, younger than me at least), (b) from Falcon and (c) competent. We eventually boated, after having been sent back for being too eager (not many crews can claim that), and met with our opposition during the long wait at the start. We had a steady but unspectacular row in the gathering gloom, maintaining a good rhythm but with modest time (surely a stronger headwind than earlier in the day), better over the second half of the course. Not successful this time but as the Falcon crew surely looked at least 3 Vet categories younger we can satisfy ourselves that we could have won on handicap."