

OTRC Match Report

Northampton 21st January 2017


Race organiser Simon Murray's forward....


Dark, cold and muddy are the words that are usually used to describe this event. This year we can add fog as well. The club has been well represented at Northampton Head for many years, and indeed has been very successful. This year 18 crews and a total of 50 competitors took part. On our arrival we met the usual conditions (see above) and there was much activity as the boats were rigged, crews boated and disappeared into the gloom toward the start. Miraculously the fog lifted during the morning and the sun came out (for a while). There were some excellent performances from OTRC crews; a special mention for the J14 boys double of Leon and Jacob who rowed extremely well at their first competition; and wrote their own match report (see below). Congratulations also to our winners (Hugh's crews?).

The event was very well organised, Northampton RC were efficient, helpful and friendly (and you don't always get that combination), so much so that the last division finished promptly and we were back home with boats re-rigged in time for tea!

Thank you to all those who supported and cheered; and also for the help in rigging/derigging both before and after the event. As always, a special thank you to John and Peter for towing the trailers - without these guys we wouldn't be competing at all.

Next stop Doncaster on 11 February

MasE 4+: Peter D, Martyn, **Andrew**, Hugh; cox: Paul.  Winners!!!

We liked the new arrangements for boating that allowed us to go  on the water almost last and avoid hanging around on the start line as we have done on previous years. We were however challenged by our cox box not working even though it had been tested while on land: it didn't somehow feel that luck was with us. However we overcame the communication problem with a lot of shouting (in a disciplined way!!) and somehow it seemed to work. Hugh gave us a good rating, Paul encouraged us, Andrew passed on the messages, Martyn gave timely advice and Peter kept quiet and did what was asked (a first time for everything J).

Stroke and 3 thought we had a good row and a moist bow and 2 didn't (understandably)?? One thing we did share is that we were surprised to win a medal so I guess Stroke and 3 have it.

Onwards and upwards!!



WMasD 2x: Jo, **Vicky**

I had a lonely start to the day as I decided to take the car to make a speedy return home after Div 3 rather than travel in the Landy. I was toasty and warm, but I think I prefer the camaraderie of Landy travel!

A chilly start boating in the mist, but then again this is Northampton, and yes there was ice to emphasise the temperature whilst waiting at the start. Pogies were definitely the order of the day.

We had a solid row, chased down by Peter and Ian, though it felt very hard work - either we were properly making the most of our catches as instructed by coach, or getting it all wrong and not as fit as we thought. In any event sadly we didn't trouble the engravers.

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WIM3 4x: Anita, Rhona, Jennie, Angela

A very cold and early start for us ladies and I think that the number of layers we all had on to avoid frost bite could have outnumbered our collective ages!! Picture that and then picture this, next to us was a crew just next to us full of youngsters down to their all in ones and then we might have started wondering why we actually put ourselves through this sort of thing. However what we lack in speed we make for by enthusiasm to be in a boat together.



Thanks to Angela for setting up the boat at stroke, Anita for steering and Rhona for keeping our heads in the boat, particularly when I thought we had passed the finishing line but it was the tent before the final tent on the real finishing line.....

WIM3 4+: Zoe, Keely, Libby, Becky; cox: Daisy - photo not taken under race conditions



Vacancy

6 month fixed term contract
Female bow side rower
Remuneration - flapjacks

Requirements and attributes – an appreciation of builders and bacon rolls, must own more than one alarm clock and effective waterproof clothing

Should enjoy early mornings and occasional inappropriate chat

MasF 2x: Nick, John B

The photo shows us just after our race & yes we still look freezing cold and that's just after completing the race!

It was an early start for the first division racers and we foolishly boated too early and ended up waiting by the start for 55 mins in sub-zero freezing fog - not the best pre-race conditions!

When the start finally came we set off at a good pace even with numb hands & fingers, the race went quickly, without any incidents and we reported a reasonable time for our efforts.

We then watched the next two division races that had two other competitors in our class and we had indeed finished with a better time than them - so we were hopeful for a Northampton pot & this is our first race for our newly adopted Oundle club.

That made us stay for the last division with one other competitor in our class, we were rather hoping that they might hit the bank or some sort of mishap but alas they didn't and they looked a well-practised double, so they reported a better time than us. In the end had to settle for 2nd place out of 4 entries, so for us it's more training to produce a better result next time.



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MasD 4x: Jon, Bob, **Brian**, Hugh— 6.63 Winners!

This quad together with Peter has had some difficulty 'getting it together'. Previous video analysis has highlighted some large discrepancies in our timing and technique.

Nevertheless arriving at the start we were hopeful of improving on the last quads' time at Northampton of 7.11s.

For this very cold start Hugh was managing his previous cramp problem with an orange and salt potion. Three seat did think a punch to the back of the head would also help but Hugh declined this kind offer. It's his choice.

GPS analysis (this is becoming a very valuable tool for training) showed that we made a very strong start pushing the boat speed up to around 17kph for approximately 400m. This was certainly the best part of the race as the GPS ultimately revealed a less impressive fade in the middle of the race (probably associated with a couple of small banking issues and manoeuvring around a forlorn Oundle IM3 4+ with a damaged rigger), followed by a gasping pathetic finish. In contrast the Mixed quad showed a much more controlled speed throughout the race albeit a little slower with something left for the finish. The crew were somewhat disgruntled about the row but were really pleased to achieve a win and improve on the previous time.

Hugh is continuing to experiment with his cramping issues.



MasB Nov 2x: Peter C, Ian—7.47.8

First division of the day so an early cold start. Much debate about what to wear in order to stay warm at the inevitable wait before the start but not overheat during the race. Decisions made we checked our seat positions, and left for the jetty. First novice mistake made here, we didn't check the rigger height. On the row up we were getting into a good rhythm during the warm up before being told to slow down by a Marshall. That was the end of the warm up, it was stop start all way to our holding point.

Usual long wait before the start with plenty of time to freeze solid and negate the benefits of the warm up. Instructed to move towards the start, following Jo and Vicky, we were off.

Just about negotiated the bend at the start and into the race rhythm. At this point the first novice mistake became apparent, I was digging in as I hadn't set the boat up properly. However, we were gradually gaining on Jo & Vicky and they were leaving plenty of room for the overtake.

Despite having plenty of room steering was becoming an issue due to second novice mistake, look over one shoulder only and not very often. Towards the end, from the bank we heard the sounds of crowd support that quickly turned to violent steering instruction. Too late.....we came to an abrupt stop, I had been too close to the bank all the way down and had not seen the obstruction (watching the subsequent divisions, this occurred frequently with other crews). A short delay ensued while we backed out and resumed.

A disappointing finish and last in the category, but after analysing the data, we had improved on our pace from the last race at Bedford.

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IM3 4+: Charlie D, Aaron, Tim, Ian; cox: Claire M—no report

WNov 2x: Becky, Daisy—7.37

It was a cold start to Division 2, boating at around 10:30am feeling rushed. Having a decent warm up to start browsing for our competitors at the start line, with marshals telling us to go left, right and centre. Once we got to the start feeling rarely warm, we had to wait for around 45 minutes whilst other crews took their time boating.

At the start, we were going well until Becky told me to watch the bank having to perform a handbrake turn with a lot of calls for me shouting "Harder on Strokeside!" 10 meters from the start.

On the way down going at a reasonable pace, managing to over take 2 crews, who were our competitors. We got to around 200 meters before the finish and we heard a roar of "Come on/Go Oundle" then we heard muffled voices from the Oundle Crew saying "Look out/Move MK" (we think).

As I looked behind me, about 5 meters away was a great pair of donkeys from Milton Keynes in a boat. So I am screaming at Becky saying "Pull harder on strokeside!!!" Luckily we managed to avoid a collision of boats but a couple of clashes with oars, which we think we lost a couple of seconds doing this, resulting in third place 2 seconds behind the second place.

Other than the Donkeys we thought it was a good if hard row.



WJ14 4x+: Holly, Lizzie, Teagan, Esme; cox: Daisy—no report



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MxMasD 4x: Vicky, John, **Andrew**, Jo

Our row was a work in progress. We are a relatively new crew, given the amount of holiday taken over the last couple of months, and so we haven't quite got to the point of unity and technique that our leader is looking for. We have consistently rowed better in training, however what we lacked in precision and poise we made up for in guts and determination. There were at various points: wobbles, splashes, grunts, lapses in technique by number 3 and it lacked the fluency we have achieved in the past but we never gave up, we maintained our boat speed at a very consistent level, we hit an elegant moment half way down the course when the boat flew and we gave it our all for a good strong finish.

Some interesting GPS analysis and comparison with the men's quad later in the pub. I

It was hard work: Jo was pleased with the time, John wasn't, and Vicky and Andrew stayed out of it. Lots of room for improvement though!

MasD 1x: Julian—no report



WJ15 4x+: Maddy, Emily, Erin, Laura; cox: Rhiana—no report

J14 2x: Jacob, Leon—9.11

This was Leon's and my first race and we didn't really know what to expect. We were grateful that the other members of the club helped us to get our boat ready and prepared.

We set off and rowed steadily down the river, waiting as we were told to for the marshals to give us instructions.

Once we started the race and got into our rhythm we both really enjoyed it. We rowed as strongly as we could and were egged on by the support from the river bank. We were really pleased with our first race.

J18 4+: Conor, Will, Joe, Rohan; cox: Ben H—7.00.9

After all getting hats to wear (thanks Ben) we set off, we rowed up to the start to the rocky theme song which meant we got some slightly confused looks from spectators and marshals a like, and after a bit of shuffling around we started. We had a strong start and were catching up to the next crew very quickly and we were easily past them by the halfway point. Onto the next crew, who were not so easy to overtake! We were really pushing for it, but then in the corner of my eye I saw their stern, and then crash! Conor's oar hit their boat, we had nowhere to go, trapped between them and the bank and our momentum was quickly lost. By the time we had a clear path, we were at a standstill, but with rage in our stomachs we pushed forward and got the boat back up to speed to quickly get past this 'troublesome' crew, and we managed to cross the finish line with a good time of 07:00.9



Are these yours? Found post Northampton—
can be collected from Claire



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MasD 4x: Dick, Antony, Ron, **Mark F**—7.37

We were in the last division so some of us turned up early to support others and others turned up as the Division before were racing. Our boat had been put together by another team - many thanks - so just a few adjustments needed. As usual Northampton provided friendly help to get us launched. The temperature had dropped and the wind slightly increased so we started as a full crew to ensure we kept warm and checked out the hazards and subtle opportunities for miss-steering we had been warned about. Our warm up felt in time and we tried out a bit of higher pressure and survived as a group. Lining up with others we first saw who we would be following, and more important who would be following us. We only had a short wait before we joined the line and set off getting our starting hoot rather sooner than we had thought. Concentrate on steering, keep the time, get the pressure well timed with the others, cripes that orange buoy was closer than I thought, are those behind getting closer, SETTLE DOWN. And we did for much of the course and felt we were getting away from those behind and catching those in front, hearing the welcome encouragement of Oundle supporters on the bank. We then upped the rating and lost our timing, getting splashy and lost our speed, so fell back a bit but finished in the order we had started in at 7.37. Much to work on with an enjoyable row that ended with again friendly help to get the boat back on land and on the trailer.



WJ15 2x: Erin, Laura—no report

WMasE 2x: Claire, Angela - 8.03

Was it going to be a five or six layer wait at the start and a three or four layer race? So much to decide in the preparation for such finely honed athletes! This was Angela's second race down the Northampton Nene course, trying to keep fed and watered and warm between the first and last divisions. Her partner held back from mentioning how much she enjoyed her lie in when it was minus 3 degrees C outside!!

Prior to the race we are able to capitalise on top tips from Jon Heaney, 'Bish' and Nick Hurford on their take on the race and best route to take to avoid the new buoys en route. Thanks chaps. Unusually for Northampton, with the exception of the expected January cold weather the conditions were fairly benign, the sun made a brief appearance when we were in the holding 'paddock' and the tail wind at 7mph was useful during the race.

The plan to build up to race pace was somewhat scuppered when a Marshal started to give Claire confusing directions as we started and so this pair missed out on a few seconds by being at low pressure over the start line.

The racing line was good with no encounters with other boat users this year and Angela set a really good, easy-to-follow stroke rate. News from the supporters on the bank was encouraging: we looked 'Tidy' (a famous Welsh saying I believe). We were pleased with our row but just need to do some work on a stronger leg drive....so here' s looking forward to some warmer weather and faster times!

There may have been points awarded for style (tidiness) but not pots for speed! We had to make do with an alternative 'pot'...of tea! See photo Thanks go to the trailer men (John M and Peter D) for getting up so early in very cold conditions and to Simon who made all the bookings to make the day happen.



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Insights from a multi gold medal winner—Hugh McCormack



Top tips on how to stay on top by a double medal winner and finely tuned athlete.

First of all, can I apologise – particularly to Anita – for my complete failure to make a speech, last night at the Ship. Don't assume that just because I'm gobby in the boat that I can make spontaneous speeches – I'm a teacher for Christ's sake – I need at least a weekends notice for planning and to produce the accompanying Power Point.

But I feel that as a 'multi gold medal winner' it is my duty to give some insight into how I have achieved my success, so that others in the club can follow my lead.

1. The 150 Rule – at the Ergo sessions on a Tuesday make a note of the people who achieve 150 or less for their split times and make friends with them.
2. Know Your Alphabet – unlike in education, F is better than D in rowing– the 'opposition' tends to 'dwindle' as you get older, increasing the chance of a win. Stuff your boat with as many old coppers as you can, to move up that Alphabet (thanks Peter and Brian)
3. Planning -avoid events where your Nemesis are likely to be taking part.
4. Fitness – apparently, according to John M, pound for pound I'm one of the strongest rowers in the clubbut more importantly make sure your crew mates train hard. (my sincere gratitude to all my crew mates – keep working on it, Andrew)
5. Where To Sit – remember that the people in the middle of the boat have to do most of the graft, so to preserve your energy and extend your medal winning career, avoid the 2 and 3 seats at all costs....and covet the stroke seat – all you have to do is go up and down the slide in time and appear exhausted at the end of the race.
6. Steering – in a Quad, is a nightmare, and can ruin your race – avoid the job and get John Heany to do it (an exciting route you took on Saturday, John!)
7. Speech Making-If you want a speech maker, you could do worse than drop the 'pound for pound' requirement and have someone like Jo Milbourne in your boat – she's a big strong rower and you can almost hear her brain cogs whirring - she would make an excellent speech 'at the drop of a hatch cover'.
8. Medal Virgins – it's always good to have someone in the boat who has never won an event and is hungry for success (well done Andrew)
9. The Water Test – don't assume a smooth row equals success – based on Saturdays performance the wetter no 2 gets the better (a price worth paying, Martyn?)
10. Trust In Your Crew Mates – is essential, but remember that they can sometimes drop you in it - like asking you to make speeches in a packed pub (thanks Peter)
11. Stats – stats are useful, but winning is more important (got that JM?)
12. Choosing a cox – obviously if you want to win, you have to have Paul coxing you.
13. Conduct – never brag, and don't complain that you don't want any more Pots because you're running out of space on your display shelf – particularly when travelling in a car with someone who has just won their first medal (Sorry Andrew)
14. Oh, and -always empty your bladder several times before the race -it aids concentration

And finally, remember going to a rowing event is a day out and the river is usually situated in a beautiful part of the countryside, so make sure that you make the most of it and take in the scenery as you race down the course, because it's a long drive for a 7 minute event and you don't want to miss out.

Hope this inspires some of you to follow in my foot steps/ puddles... Hugh