



March 2014 Captain's Column - By John Milborne

Since the last newsletter, we have not much competition or even much training. There was no event planned for December and we concentrated on training until 21st December after which the weather played a significant part in our ability (inability) to get on the water. Over the last 18 months most of the events we have entered have been over-subscribed and we have stopped entering mixed crews as they get cut first. It, therefore, came as a surprise to find the Star New Year Head was cancelled due to a lack of entries.

January was characterised by interrupted training, the flooding stopping the work on the water and exams interrupted the land training at PWS. The end of January brought Northampton Head which has been a regular fixture since OTRC first started competing and, although the event is always marked by 'significant' weather, it is more than made up for with the friendly welcome.

Despite little training, OTRC put in a large and enthusiastic entry and once again the weather played its part. The first divisions were held in reasonable conditions but from the third division onwards the weather deteriorated, finishing in a spectacular storm which resulted in the cancellation of the last division. There were wins for the Women's Eight, Philip in his single, boys J15 quad and the girls J16 quad.

As we moved into February, land training resumed but there was no let-up in the weather, so no water training. Bedford 4s and 8s was due to be our February competition but this was yet another event that had to be cancelled due to the weather. We look forward to better conditions and a chance to return to the river and to competing.

Dates for the Diary

Normally we compete as a whole club but in March and May there are events that are for either juniors or seniors only; but all sections of the club do get the opportunity to race every month. May sees our championship events with the Juniors going to Eton Dorney to compete in the Ball Cup and the seniors going to the National Water Sports Centre at Nottingham to compete at the British Masters.

- Saturday 15th March: Women's Head of the River Race (Women's Eight only)
- Sunday 16th March: Lincoln Head (Seniors only)
- Sunday 23rd March: Champions Head: (Juniors only)
- Sunday 30th March: Vets Head of the River Race (Men's Eight only)
- Sunday 6th April: Abingdon Head (Whole Club)
- Sunday 11th May: Ball Cup (Juniors only)
- Sunday 18th May: British Masters (Seniors only)

OTRC has been invited to take part in Oundle Town Council's 'Have a Go' Day on May 5th, Bank Holiday Monday. More details nearer the time, so please keep the date free.

Best Blazer Award

The Judge has, with sadness, decreed that his Blazer Award needs to go to - Mother Nature. She has caused untold agony to OTRC as we haven't been able to row since Christmas and that means we have been unable to SIN, leaving the Judge in a quandary as to who to punish. However, he asks that you not get lulled into a false sense of security, as his Blazer awarding antennae are hyper-sensitive from lack of use. He's looking forward to getting back to normal. ('Is that possible?' we ask).

Rowers Ark by Charlie Efford

Given that many parts of the country have been visited by torrential rain and flooding, I thought it would be worth taking another look at the story of Noah's Ark - the last time it got this wet!

The hero of our story is Rower - a good person who always turned up on time for outings and never had a hangover. Rower lived in a time when all the people of the earth were bad. If they weren't shooting at each other, then they were selling insurance policies that no one needed. God (or Tideway in Hebrew) got mad and decided he had had enough. He secretly decided to send a big flood to clean out all the badness - except for Rower and his mates. They were decent, disciplined people who were just the right sort to repopulate the earth when the badness had gone.

Tideway instructed Rower to build a great Ark that would keep oarsmen and women and all their boats safe until the water retreated. Tideway told Rower to make the Ark big enough to take two of every kind of boat and their crews (no doubling up). Rower got to work with the carbon fibre and had soon knocked up a gleaming Arkpacher (they do make good boats). He then had a lot of seat racing sessions to choose who would be saved. The oarsmen and women suddenly got very keen on their ergo machines - which was unusual to say the least.

When the rain came and the water started to rise, the lucky ones made their way to the Arkpacher and safely stowed their boats on the racks without so much as a scratch on the boats below. There were two eights, two coxed fours (I think you get the picture).

Noah had three decks on his ark - one for all the clean animals, one for the unclean animals and one for all the waste. Rower liked this idea and had one deck for all the men (because they didn't wash their kit very often), one for the ladies who were generally more fragrant, and one for all the dirty tea cups and empty beer bottles.

After nine months of bobbing about, (typical of Tideway) the rain stopped and Rower sent out an eagle and a dove to see if they could find dry land. This was not a good idea. The eagle got hungry and scoffed the Dove. It then redeemed itself by finding an old wooden oar which it brought back to Rower as a peace offering. When the earth was dry again, he found the Arkpacher had come to rest at Mount Dorney! Imagine his delight and surprise.

Rower told all the oarsmen and women to go forth and multiply - which they did, creating rowing clubs and boathouses all over the land. Tideway was pleased and gave everyone gold medals. So if you see someone building a rather large looking yellow boat – It might be worth getting back on the ergo – just in case!

Funding Success

You may have read on the website or in Nene Valley News that the Northamptonshire Disability Rowing Association (NDRA) has been awarded £8,730 from Sport England to purchase new equipment. Why are we reporting this in the OTRC Newsletter? Well, OTRC has been working in close partnership with the NDRA for several years to provide adaptive rowing opportunities on our stretch of the River Nene to people in the area.

Anita Dunn, our fundraising officer put together the successful bid which will allow the purchase of a stable Quad, 4 pairs of oars, floats and a cox box. When not in use by adaptive rowers, the equipment is suitable for use by members of OTRC. See the website home page for more details.

Has it been Raining? Our river has looked a bit different recently. The photos are courtesy of Claire Izod.



WEHORR – What?

- An anagram of the noise a bunch of builders make when the OTRC ladies' VIII rows passed?
- The Doppler effect from the cox box as the Men's VIII rows past?
- An anagram of something highly inappropriate...albeit with an extra r...?
- The sound of a donkey with a speech impediment...

Further suggestions to Chairman Mao (aka Alan McMurdo) – it's really Women's Eights Head of the River Race – in case you were wondering!

Deborah James Paintings

Debbie James has created some beautiful, limited-edition, rowing-based paintings and prints of the River Nene. She will also be adding these prints to her range of postcards. She has very generously agreed to make a donation to the club from every print that we sell. Each print has a numbered Certificate of Authenticity and is signed by the artist.

For preview images of the beautiful prints and details of prices, please visit our the dedicated page [here](#).

Snow White, Seven Dwarves and the Head of the River Race

By Jo Milborne

Snow White looked down at the first dwarf. He didn't look Happy. In fact, she thought he might be Grumpy. "What's up Grumpy?" she asked. No answer.

"Hmm. Could be Bashful," thought Snow White. "I must get my eyes tested. Maybe get some magnifying glasses. These dwarves all look the same in their little spandex all-in-ones."

She tried again. "Is there a problem? Are you frustrated by all the flooding and bad weather stopping your rowing?"

Bashful looked at his feet, and turned a little pink. (He couldn't manage a big pink, on the account of being a dwarf.)

Grumpy interjected. "It's Dopey!" He said. "He's only gone and entered us in the Head of the River Race. How stupid can you get? Everyone knows that you need 8 rowers, and we are only seven. We need a stroke."

"What's a stroke?" asked Sleepy, being woken from a gentle snooze. (He was knackered after all his ergo sessions.)

"A stroke" said Doc, with authority, "is a cerebro-vascular accident; either a bleed or a clot."

Happy looked a bit upset at this. He always tried to remain cheerful despite having to put up with the constant phlegm and spittle produced by Sneezzy. Even his pogies were covered in snot; truly bogey pogies.

Exasperated, Grumpy explained. "The stroke is the person who sets the rhythm in the boat, and sits opposite the cox". Snow White smiled. She had just realised that these little fellows had demonstrated that by only being 7 when they needed to be 8 they were a brilliant example of a "shortage" of dwarves, which was not only her favourite collective noun, but an old joke, cunningly worked into the story. Then she spoke.

"Grumpy, I think I might just have the answer. There is this incredibly handsome huntsman who lives in the forest. I'm sure I could persuade him to put his chopper down for a while and come and join us in the race."

Now, truth be known, Snow White wasn't quite as innocent as she seemed, and had, in fact, recently drifted. She had already been out for a couple of sneaky outings with the handsome huntsman, followed by a couple of trips to the Ship. She was pretty sure he could keep a steady rhythm, and a head race would be over in no time at all, if they all pulled together.

The seven dwarves were delighted with this suggestion. All they had to do next was to go into the forest and ask the huntsman if he would stroke their 8. They set off, whistling as they went.

"Hi ho!" thought Snow White, as she picked up an apple from the fruit bowl, and went to check her face in the magic mirror her stepmother had given her for Christmas. "Head of the River Race - what could possibly go wrong?" she said, as she took a bite of the apple...

Caption Competition



Judged by Jo M: There were several entries for this month's competition. After much deliberation I thought mine was the best!

Runner up: "When someone said there'd be free bacon sarnies on a Saturday, I didn't think I'd have to catch the bacon first.....!" (Philip)

Winner: "Hmm. I wonder if those pigs can fly" thought Claire, as she wandered off to see if anyone else had cleaned the loos in Cambridge house. (Jo)

This edition's competition is:



Captions to Jo please at jo.clarkson@btconnect.com . She only awards prizes for really good captions, so get thinking.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Aunty Angela,

2014 brought the first social of the year, on a Saturday at the end of January, following the club's successes at Northampton head race. As you may recall, although the first division was raced in relatively balmy conditions for January, the last division was immensely stormy, with the traditional hail and wind we always get at Northampton, but with extra thunder and lightning. As we headed off to The Ship to celebrate the success of the W8+, wJ16 4x-, J15 4x+ and vet D1x, I noticed there were a couple of people conspicuous by their absence.

The Judge and his good lady had arranged to go to a "Burns" night. At first I thought this might be like a Guy Fawkes edition of 'Casualty', what with Peter Dunn's well known propensity for dressing up in ladies clothes: long black frock, blond wig; your splash top whenever he can. (By the way, he claims he's lost his splash top again, so watch out.)

It turns out that I was almost right. Yep, opportunity for a tartan skirt! Unbelievable! The man has no shame. Even if he didn't wear one, I bet it wasn't for want of trying.

However, he wasn't the only one on a makeover mission. I hear that you now have had your head turned by a man in sequins. Whilst some of us were dutifully wetting our pots with beer in the Ship, (did I mention the victorious W8+?) I understand you were wetting your pot whilst watching Ben Cohen in a spangly waistcoat at the 'Strictly Come Dancing' tour show in Leeds.

Aunty, I have three questions for you, and I want you to be honest with me:

1. Are the male racers of OTRC no longer good enough for you, simply because they wear spandex, rather than spangles?
2. Should the judge have to wear a blazer with his tartan?
3. Did you dress up 'Strictly'? (I know you now have a new job in 'public service' and with all that experience as a teacher; I just wondered what you were wearing....)

Yours, as ever,
Anya Might-Editit.

Dear Anya

What a little worry-wart you are! You really do need to get out more. As you have so many queries (all nicely numbered – do you have OCD, too?) I'll answer one at a time.

1. Much as I do love our cuddly local MAMILS in their lovely navy and white all-in-ones, tight in some places, saggy in others, with mismatched socks, I can't help but wonder what the lovely Ben Cohen would look like in an OTRC all-in-one. Are you following my train of thought, ladies? Mmmm! It's more a case of muscles and smiles rather than spangles versus spandex. I'm sure he'd row well, too.

However, if the OTRC chaps are worried about their image, maybe a few sparkly additions would not hurt. Sequined gilets or sparkly tights might be the order of the day, but please don't 'do a

Ben' first thing on a Saturday morning. Ripping off your shirts and baring your chests might be more than us mature ladies could bear on a cold and frosty morning. And you'd frighten the children! Talk about put us off our stroke!

2. As to the question of should the judge wear a blazer with his tartan, I don't think he deserves that. But he could wear the tartan with his blazer... He does so love trying out new fashions and we have all seen his knees already. However, we really wouldn't want to see much else! He will need to be cautious of sudden winds from up-river and wear suitable 'foundation garments' for everyone's sake – unlike traditional kilt wearers. There may be sensitive young juniors around (or seniors come to that). It could be the quintessential Blazer Moment.

3. While my history as a teacher has greatly extended my 'dressing up' repertoire, it didn't really prepare me for Strictly, I'm afraid. The ability to wear false whiskers, tails, pirate hats, Victorian Mob caps and witches' noses (not necessarily at the same time) wasn't very valuable preparation for my sequined treat. And I'm rubbish in high heels! Now, if I'd ever dressed as a werewolf or as Goldfinger, I would have been prepared.

My dear Anya – you need to get out more and stop sweating the small stuff. Maybe take up ball-room dancing yourself, or even get involved in local MAMIL conservation – they are a rare and beautiful breed in need of lots of help (in more ways than one).

Kee-eeep rowing.

Auntie Angela xx

Communication

Take a look at the rest of our website. Lots of content has been added. You can now pay your subscriptions, match fees, etc. via PayPal – very handy if you don't carry cash or you're a parent who doesn't come to the club often.

The usual address applies: www.oundletownrc.org.uk so why not bookmark the site now. Also, for ease, if you can't remember the full address you can even just use www.otrc.org and that will find us too.

Please send articles for the next newsletter to the Editor angela.hook@live.com