

OTRC Match Report – St Ives, April 2016



OTRC were invited to an unusual Head Race at St Ives last weekend. It was a Head of Two Halves. Race up, wait, turn around, race back down the river again. The times for the two legs were then added together to decide who was fastest on the day.

A small contingent of 10 crews made it to the event, but with THREE winning crews, it was very successful day! Reports follow for some of the crews.

Thanks to Peter Dunn for the trailer-age (is that a real word?) and, as usual, thanks to all first class supporters.

WJ18 2x Sofie and Daisy **WINNERS**

So this was the first race in a double together. We had a great row considering sitting on the water for around 45 minutes early of boating time.

We had already rowed in the quad so we were expecting a hard row ahead of us.

On the first leg of the race, we felt we were never moving and it would never end! However, on the way back we felt we were flying, although we were extremely tired by this point. But due to the ongoing Oundle cheer we kept motivated, so thank you for that.

Well done to all the other crews!!

Mxd2X Richard and Lauren **WINNERS**

We hadn't been out for a couple of weeks, prior to the race, but getting back in the boat on Saturday, we both felt good and positive. Come the race, the weather was on our side, but there was clearly a very strong flow on the river. When we pushed off, I made my first steering error, getting caught in the stream and promptly stuck in a tree. Not a great start but we exited and made our way to the start. The flow was indeed strong, and off the start into the first corner we both had to work hard to get the boat round. Passing the boating area, I made my second steering error hitting a submerged tree while trying to keep clear of the reeds. It didn't put us off though and we instantly reset and were back in the rhythm. The second run was much faster and happily without incident. And most importantly were won! Many thanks to Lauren for her calm head and impeccable skills at stroke, may this be the start of a good summers pot winning.

Mas D 1x: Steve (Time L1 = 7:48, L2 = 5:25, Overall 13:13)

A Day of Firsts – before I'd even left the house that morning: the first time I've competed in Oundle colours, the first time I've raced in a Masters event and the first time I've raced with cleaver blades (the last one turned out to be not such a good decision – but more of that later). Any other firsts would take rather more effort.

Having arrived early for my event, I didn't have much of an excuse not to since the venue was about 10 minutes from home, I was able to rig my boat and have plenty of time to talk. I played my usual 'experienced senior' role, aka smart-a#@e, in reminding the WJ18 quad about being responsible for checking their own boat. A suggestion that would come back to bite me on the b*m later.

On to the event: there was a significant stream running so I boated early and paddled upstream toward the finish (of the first leg) to try and spot the landmarks to best navigate the stream before proceeding to the start. Once underway, I started over 30 seconds behind the previous sculler so was effectively racing in a vacuum, I went off at a brisk pace, no idea about rating, and probably spent as much effort steering the boat as propelling it - trying to maintain a course close to the inside of the bends in what I hoped was the slower water upstream. As far as pacing the race, I could only judge against the boat behind me, a J16 1x from Huntingdon. I seemed to be holding him off, so that was reassuring. In fact, I was 7 seconds faster over the first leg. Unfortunately, I could see that he, and therefore I, had been substantially caught up by Lauren and Richard in their double. First leg complete. Total chaos waiting around for everyone else to arrive so that we could turn and re-start. I tried to start closer to the sculler in front but trying to navigate the stream, this time trying to stay IN the flow downstream, took most of my concentration so wasn't able to think about where he was. Just past halfway I found it was becoming increasingly difficult to stay on course in the stream and out of the bank – and soon realised why: the collar of my stroke side blade had come loose and slipped up the shaft. (What was it I told the juniors about checking their equipment? L) So I spend the last 500m or so just trying to maintain my course whilst unable to apply full power on one side.

Overall, 11 seconds slower than the other 'D' sculler in the longer upstream first leg, but 22 seconds slower on the second. Assuming our relative performances were the same for both legs, that's about 15 seconds lost due to the equipment failure. On that basis I would have been 18 seconds slower overall. Not a complete disaster for my first race, but some work to do to be seriously competitive. Plan for the next event: try to start closer to another boat to be motivated by being in a race – not just a time-trial.

J16 2x Will Berridge, Joe Pendred Time 11.47

We had both rowed at St Ives three times previously, so the course was familiar to us but before the race we were given some helpful advice from Peter so we didn't end up in any of the reads (thanks), we got on the water and rowed up to the start and after 2 boats before us left we set off, we spent the first 100m of the race getting into the rhythm and after quite a bit of steering around the first corner we managed to get set and we continued the race smoothly for the first leg. After about 15

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minutes rest we set of again in the other direction with the wind and stream on our side this felt better than anticipated because we were both quite tired after the first stint, we ended up in second about 35 seconds behind 1st place which was a St Ives crew.

Vet E 2X Brian and Peter 13.29 mins.

The last time this Double raced at Northampton we stopped in the reeds just before the finish. In an effort to prevent any reoccurrence of this, steering responsibilities were reversed for this race.

Arriving at the start in glorious sunny conditions we were warned by the Marshall that there was a very strong stream. Because of this and combined with a treacherous last bend in the river the course had been shortened by 200m.

Undeterred by this information and following some kindly advice by the Marshall to take a look after every stroke we headed straight into the reeds on the first bend!

Removing ourselves proved more difficult than Brexit and the row seemed over at the start.

Forlorn progression up the river was marked only by some aggressive steering action by the Oundle Novice 4 as they passed us. First leg in 8.28 mins.

Disappointed knowing that a finish time was irrelevant we decided to relax and enjoy the return leg.

And you know what! We completed the second leg in a respectable 5.01 mins, which in total for the two legs was faster than our competitors who only took the pot on handicap time.

Just goes to show..... never give up!!!!!!.

Novice 4+ Ian, Leslie, Dick, Charlie - Match report **WINNERS**

"Our normal crew had foreseen an early frosty start and made alternative arrangements in advance for the weekend. We entered as a four and was greeted bright and early by Leslie, now nicknamed Colonel, who had arrived first in order to bribe the Marshall in to shortening the course by 400m due to 'strong waters'.

The start of the first race was good and well instructed by Paul and we settled into a steady stable platform after a few hundred metres making solid ground on the Oundle pair ahead of us. Our rhythm maintained despite a minor clash against Peter and Brian who could have easily have argued a steering handicap to secure their deserved win against their competition. With the first part of the race plan ticked off, we focussed on holding a steady pace at 30spm and pushed for the last minute to meet the second half on a high. The start of the second race came upon us rather too soon with the help of the stream and we shot ourselves down the course to the last 500m. This called for an up in pace and we sat at a good 32spm past the club boathouse. Our efforts claimed a well-deserved pot for our cox Paul, who had steered an excellent route through what did actually turn out to be very strong waters. A respectable row and our driest yet thanks to the blue sky above us.