



Regatta - July 26th 2014

July 26th and OTRC travel to St Neots to row in their “Every Race: Bow Ball to Bow Ball” regatta.....

But, wait, what’s this? Our Race Captain spotted in Oundle Town Centre at 10:30 am on the day of a regatta? Why was he not at St Neots? Where was the trailer? Why wasn’t he roaming manically along a river bank with a rigger jigger, a scrap of paper and a stubby pencil, looking hassled? Had the event been cancelled and no-one told me? What’s gone wrong? The end of the world is nigh! Or am I in a parallel universe where Captain John doesn’t spend his life organising rowers?

But the St Neots regatta was that kind of day – just chilled and relaxed. Oh, and quite successful. A few club members lost their “sculling virginity” and now have points on their licences!

St Neots regatta is a very civilised affair. The setting is delightful, there’s lots of space, a beer tent, a bit of retail therapy on offer and an ice cream van. With only 3 boats on the trailer it was much more relaxed than normal, too. So relaxed that the Captain deposited the trailer and went home again. Even Rhona was reduced to spectating/supporting/taking photos, as she had no crew to cox. A couple of racers were rather miffed at the lack of company, as you will read below. I don’t think we would like every regatta to be like this, as we don’t all get to row, but it made a nice change.

Even the commentator (yes there was a race commentator, too) couldn’t dampen our spirits, in spite of insisting every race was ‘bow ball to bow ball’ at the finish (in the spirit of the regatta theme), when there was lots fresh air between the stern of one boat and the bow of the other. It got a bit wearing, but the sun and the atmosphere made up for it.

Come and hear the details and the gossip at OTRC Social at the Ship this Saturday (2nd August).

Nov 1x Jack Stratton

So after waking up and leaving to get to St Neots for 7:30, I was consequently told that my oppo didn't exist. Then St Neots tried to get one of their crews a cheeky race against me but they were then informed that this was, in fact, against the rules of racing! After that I had breakfast and waited for another 2 hours for my first race, which I lost! I then waited another 3 hours for another Oundle person to arrive. Luckily St Ives were there so I became their 'boat bitch' for the day.

Vet D 1x Philip WINNER

In line with the usual experience of the single sculler, I arrived at St Neots to find a deserted trailer and no-one to offer support....

The Lynx deodorant theme ran through my head: "One is the loneliest number, (rpt).....that you'll ever do-oooo....".

Hang on a moment Philip – what do you mean no support....Jack, the stalwart of the junior section had rigged, prepped and even warmed up your boat for you, you ungrateful sculler, you! True, Jack had indeed been there since the first break of wind day so other than collect my number and carry the boat down, I had very little to do.

My oppo for the heat decided to leave it to the wire and turn up half an hour late, but due to a stake boat coming adrift and another sculler having an early swim, he did not immediately cause the umpires any concerns.

At the start however, he received an official warning for not having a number on his boat (shocking, I know!).....and then proceeded to give us chapter & verse as to why. If he'd put in as much effort into his row as he had done for his excuses, then it might have been a tighter race, but if nothing else, the outing served as a warm up for what was to come. A convincing win.

Steeling myself to row in the final against a sculler from the inauspiciously named club "Nemesis", I once again found myself at the trailer with only the tumbleweed for company.....

So, back down to the river I went trying to suss out my nemesis. As it turned out, even Nemesis had deserted me....so my heat had in fact been the final and I had won the event!!!

Now, about this lonely sculler bit: I think I might have to take more notice of the general idea behind the Lynx deodorant I mentioned earlier – you've all been very good in not mentioning it before, but if I arrive next time slightly more fragranced, do you suppose I will benefit from some company...?

WVetC 4x (Keely, Angela, supersub Jo, Becca)

This was yet another scratch crew, with Jo kindly stepping in for Claire who was committed to spoiling a good walk with a long stick and a little white ball. We had managed 2 practice outings in which the quality of rowing was, shall we say, variable, so the boat was a bit twitchy with nerves before the start of the race. After a bit of banter with a (surprised) umpire – or should that be marshall? – and the opposition, who were rather lovely, we were off.

And what an off! We had a cracking start, pulling away from our oppo and steaming down the course. Unfortunately, the high rating meant we couldn't maintain our lead. If only the race had been 300m long instead of 500! It really was 'bow ball to bow ball' as we approached the finish but Milton Keynes pipped us to the post. Maybe they had a longer boat....

Back to the ergos to develop a bit more power in the legs and the lungs.

Mas E 4X (Simon, Brian, supersub Philip, John) WINNERS

With Chairman Alan away, Philip (Pots) Chandler kindly stepped into the crew, in time for an unprecedented practice outing the day before. Suitably prepared, we were drawn against our old friends and rivals Milton Keynes. With modest expectations we boated and rowed past the cheering supporters on our way to the start. As a Masters E crew we had a 3 second advantage over the "D" crew from M-K and made full use of it, moving out to a length lead off the start. We maintained this for half the race before pulling clear over the last 20 strokes or so to win comfortably and book our place in the final.

Another Masters D crew awaited us, Maidstone Invicta, of whom we knew little. On the way to the start, they were seen square blade rowing past the grandstand and some (nay, all) of our supporters were moved to speculate that this would not end well. However our 3 second advantage allowed us to keep them in our sights for the first half of the race, and it would be nice to report that our skilful bladework and tactical nous enabled us to control the final stages to win by one foot. In reality we won because the racing line taken by our steersman meant that we didn't hit any of the buoys along the course.

It emerged afterwards that the Invicta crew had rowed together for 2 years and were unbeaten in their previous 8 races. Captain Tactful surpassed himself by announcing that we were a scratch crew who had rowed for the first time together the previous day. Didn't go down too well...."

Vet E 4- John W, Mark Q, Brian H, Jon H, cox: Paul

The Vet E event, it was fair to say, was not over-subscribed, there bring only 2 entries. So St Neots added a vet G crew to make things interesting. Then gave them a bye to the final. So that left us up against Star Club. Rumour had it that it wasn't our nemesis Hunt, but the rumour was wrong.

After a fast turn round for Brain from victory in the quad heat, hoping he had saved a little for our race, we got boated. Star had somehow already got on the water without us, so our planned warm up was gone.

We did manage a quick 10 stroke start before lining up next to our nemesis. As we were late, the starter didn't hang around, no sooner we're we attached, we were off.

We got off to a good start. Unfortunately, they got off to a better one and had half a length out of us. We kept it together and felt we had a good row but Star eased out their lead to a length hand a half which they maintained to the line.

What can you say? We had a good row but were beaten by a better crew.

A little picture to sum up the atmosphere of the day!

