



Oundle Town on the Tideway at the Vets Head



The warmest Sunday of the year to date was in one sense an answer to a Bowman's prayers [the wind had calmed and shifted to a balmy southerly] but was also hot on the heels of a Saturday which saw the mass cancellation of the [real] Head of the River. What would the crews make of such a test; given the fact that rowing up and down the land had been disrupted with the rain and floods.

As 209 crews mustered downstream from the start, somewhere on the Fulham reach, the beautiful coxswain of crew number 92 reclined in the stern of the boat and trailed her hand, languorously, in the cool waters of the Thames while, in front of her 8 muscular athletes carefully held the race tuned boat in the intriguing water that exists between the turn of the tide and heavy fluvial flow.

So that was happening whilst your intrepid Veteran E crew [average age 55-60...impossible I hear you say], crew number 91 were concentrating hard. Instead of the normal pep talk they were merely instructed to enjoy it, and enjoy it they did.

Off they went at such a powerful half pressure they were told to ease up before the start and then, with clear water, they were unleashed. A solid platform was quickly established and was never really lost. And make no mistake, this wasn't a peaceful practice out on the Nene, this was the Thames Tideway in the raw. A Sudbury crew, slightly aggrieved that they were pipped off the start came through but were so intent on stealing the fantastic line that Anita was taking they rowed straight across the Oundle line, oars clashed, the Sudbury stroke tried to start up a friendly conversation but your intrepid 8 kept their heads / eyes rock solid on the man in front and

pressed on regardless. Soon they overhauled a Broxbourne crew who crumbled as the Oundle 8 slipped past. From then on it remained a great row.

Results

Time to the finish was 14.58.13 which was reduced to 14.00.13 with the handicap [on account of that age that you could not believe earlier]

19th place from 30 entries in the class and 119th from 209 crews....andnot that this is important...the organisers admitted a mistake in their timings that penalised the earlier crews in terms of tide and stream. In short if crew 91 had started at 191 it would have recorded a significantly quicker time !!

A huge big thank you to the ladies who secreted a pack of jelly babies and god luck card in the boat, to the supporters who shouted at just the right time, the welly carriers....and the chocolate brownie 'bakers'. We could not have done it without your support and encouragement.

Back again next year? You bet....we have an appointment with two rowdy crews of Germans [complete with handlebar moustaches and lager] and of course crew 92...Italian and well beaten.....just goes to show....

Mao the Bow



