

OTRC Match Report

St Neots Regatta

Saturday 27th July 2019

Foreword by Race Organiser Jenny.....

This can be a lovely weekend with lots of sun and good rowing to watch.

Although there was lots of rowing to watch, there was very little sun and lots of rain after such a hot and sunny week.

A variety of results from OTRC , close to winning in some cases and steering dramas from others, but sadly no winners.

We had a faithful band of supporters cheering us all on which was much appreciated.

Thanks to John and Dick for ensuring the boats got there and back, Daisy and Simon who were the hardcore helpers of the day.



WMas E 4x- (Claire, **Angela**, Fiona and Jennie)

An eight second start, sadly, didn't help us stay ahead of the Broxbourne WMas C crew who were our Opposition. With a capital O.

The verdict was "Neat but pedestrian". We were stuffed!

More practice together and more Oomph needed.

The only sliver of light in the gloom was that the Broxbourne crew did exactly the same to the next crew they came up against.

Vet E 2x Philip and **Hugh**

Good points – miraculously it didn't rain in either of our races and the opposition in the first heat, Lea, crashed early on, giving us time to explore the course and Phil ample opportunity to practice his steering !

Bad points – We lost the final after leading in the first half of the race, because St Neots had a plan, which they failed to tell us about and once they'd negotiated the dodgy bend, they went up a gear and just cruised past us to a victory of just over a length, despite our best efforts.... Mind you, we were up against the club captain who probably had more to loose than us. (excellent steering by Phil though)

Lessons learned – have a plan for all possible contingencies, eat less cake and train harder!

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"MxMasD 8+ Cox: Becky; John, Brian, Libby, Alice, **Simon**, Mark, Vicky, Jo. Finalists.

"Fun is Fast!" goes the slogan. If only.

St. Neots summer regatta provided the first opportunity for the club's mixed 8 to test ourselves in competition. Although with limited training time or coaching, and other hurdles along the way including finger injuries and an abandoned curry night, we felt we were not quite at our peak.

Three mixed crews entered the event, we were drawn against a Peterborough crew (also MasD), with the winners racing against a masters E crew from Ancholme in the final.

There was no drama with boating, and with Becky in command we navigated our way to the start avoiding reeds, buoys and racing crews. We got a telling-off by the umpires (Blazered?) when we tried a practice start, so had no chance to blow the cobwebs away. As we got onto the stakeboat the rain had stopped and the wind had dropped, ideal conditions for racing. We were drawn on the inside lane so started slightly behind the competition. It wasn't our best start, but we settled into a rhythm of some sort and gradually clawed our way past the opposition so that as we came round the bend there was a length of clear water between us. We managed to hold onto the lead through the latter part of the race to come through as winners in our first competitive race. Yo!

In the final we had a 7 second handicap over our opposition. Seven second seems like forever when you're poised at the catch. And I'm sure the umpire was counting very slowly... Nevertheless we were soon off, another modest start but we managed to cut the deficit in half during the first part of the race. However we were unable to close the gap further over the latter stages and finished a length and a half down. So plenty of room for improvement ready for the next time.

It may not have been fast, but it was definitely fun!"

WmasD2x (Jo and Vicky)

After the hottest day of the year, we put our splash tops and long trousers on for the rainy pilgrimage to St Neots. With the opportunity for up to three races in our double, we had both packed several changes of dry clothes, and enough grub to feed a small army (including the world famous Vicky flapjacks.)

Our first race was against a Bedford masters F double. This two category step meant that once we had attached to the stake boat, we had to give them a **sixteen second head start**. Yes, really! So, we got attached, then sat in the pouring rain whilst the oppo set off. Time passed. Seasons came and went. Our hair and nails grew a little. I almost moved up to masters E, and finally it was our turn. A good start, and amazingly Bedford were in the reeds. Disappointing for them, but it allowed us to get ahead and stay ahead. Although they had a good push, we managed to hold them off, and were through to the next round.

We hopped in the mixed masD8+(see the other match report. Spoiler alert. We had two races) then we were back in the double to race against the Leicester masE double. It's always a bit disconcerting when your oppo peel off their FISA world rowing championship tee shirt before they boat, but more so when you realise they too get a head start. This time it was only 7 seconds, but enough to make sure we were never really a threat to them. So, we didn't get to race any of the other masD ladies doubles that were competing, and we didn't make it to the final. But we did enjoy the racing, the food, and the wild flowers in the regatta field.

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Masters G 1x – St Neots Regatta (Sunday 28th July 2019) - **John Bishop**

I loaded my boat on my car on Saturday afternoon and left it in my garden overnight with the intention of making a quick get-away on Sunday morning for a 10.06 race. The draw put me against my nemesis, Bob Milligan of Poplar & Blackwell. I woke up to rain and it rained and rained. By the time I had loaded my boat back onto the car I was wet and cold so turned the heater on (in July!) in the car on the way to the regatta. I arrived in plenty of time and rigged my boat – still raining. Quickly became wet and cold again so went to find a warming cup of tea.

At the appropriate time I paired up with Bob both carrying our boats as per the regatta instructions and found a long queue waiting to boat and was told that the wait would be about 30 minutes. Still raining. At this point I questioned my sanity and would have rather stayed in a warm bed. Finally, we boated, and the rain eased off. The access lane at St Neots is not very wide so there was not much room to warm up. We were turned by the marshals onto the stake boats without delay and we were off.

I have raced Bob in the past and I know that he is very quick, and he told me at the start as we turned that he had not rowed at St Neots for some years and that he thought the course was straight. He only races over straight courses. He started at a cracking speed and quickly moved into a lead. I pushed as hard as I could and put him under pressure and he moved off station in front of me and was warned by the umpires twice to move back to his side of the river. When I noticed that his puddles were back on the correct side, I pushed very hard but couldn't get back on terms. That was my final push and ended the race well beaten.

Just to round off a pretty miserable day it started raining again whilst I was loading my boat. The boat bag by this time was soaked and was very heavy. Having nearly given myself a hernia lifting the boat and bag onto the roof rack I set off to the refreshment tent for another warming cup of tea and something to eat. Now in the dry (but still wet and cold) I watched Bob's next race against a sculler from Yare Rowing Club who I have not met, and the regatta programme didn't give a name. This time Bob was on the other side of the river (the boathouse side) and ran into one of the moored boats about ¼ of the way along the course. He did say that he only races on straight courses. That cheered me up, but it was raining again so I went home.

I have learned today that Lester Waugh of Star Club won the event winning through in three races.

Emma & Keely

So with one member of our quad galivanting at Car Fest we couldn't compete in our quad at St Neots. Myself and Keely took the plunge in the double (and almost literally 2 strokes from the end of the race)! The first race we nailed from the start and had a strong racing line....apparently if you hit all the buoys on the way up you don't hit any on the way down!

With Keely also racing in her single we have a quick turn over for our double semi final, and the start wasn't so smooth and neither was the racing line unfortunately; although we managed to avoid almost going for a swim this time!

Thank you Keels for steering, it was nice to have a break - although I am happy to have the steering control back now :)



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Ian, Richard, Charlie, Joe

This race came on the back of a few weekends away from rowing. Certain members within the crew have been prioritising marriage, honeymoons and holidays over the elite training program of the Four – how selfish of them!!

On paper we must have looked good... not in the lowest Open band and given a bypass straight to the Semi against Lincoln. At the marshalling area the number 2 seat of our Oppo came over and shook our hands (a bit weird isn't it?...). We told them it was our first race in a Quad which gave them a false sense of security. They boated off confidently having told us moments before that they'll probably beat us (not quite as sporting as the handshake?...).

Our start wasn't as strong as it had been in practice. Ian's mind was still focussed on the expense of the recent Wedding, as he misplaced his oar during the 2nd stroke. Things were pretty even up until the bend before the buoys started to play smoke and mirrors with Richard. We hit a few which should give us some bonus points! We were down in the latter stage of the race but pushed for the finish and re-gained some ground.

They won by 2 ½ lengths but the official excuse is that we sacrificed our win so that the trailer could leave early, as our final would be of been about 7pm – you're all very welcome! Thanks to John and Dick for towing the trailers and giving us a chance to race.

