

# OTRC Match Report

## Milton Keynes Regatta

Saturday 21st September 2019

### Foreword by Race Organiser Emma....

So this is my first Captain's match report, and one where I don't know where to start! Milton Keynes is always the last regatta of the summer season and also a very popular one for the club. This year was no exception!

We had an exceptionally long day (as normal), but unlike last year the sun shone throughout. Firstly, a massive thank you goes to Peter D and Antony for ensuring one of the trailers made its way there and back...and another massive thank you to Nick (Becky B's husband) who stayed all day to ensure the second trailer made it's way there or not!

Secondly, thank you to Daisy for all the work before the day and during the day, and thank you to everyone else who helped along the way! It is great to see the club spirit is still there.

We had a mixture of new crews and existing crews, and congratulations to everyone, it was a great day of racing and everyone should be proud! The juniors showed the leaps and bounds we have come on recently, and the adults showed how competitive we are.

I will be keeping a record of the races and the times, so that during training we can improve on these and continue the success over the winter period!!

### J16 1x Jacob Cruise

I rowed up to the start nervous as it was my first single race in a while but I was excited. When I got up to the start I was a bit early so waited around a bit and then eventually I backed onto the stake boat. The race started, I got a good start and kept level with the opposition but eventually the guy from Huntingdon pulled away from me and the other guy from Bedford. I then had a few steering issues and hit the buoys but I got back on track and I was determined to catch the guy from Bedford. Going into the last 100m I was a bit behind him so I had to really go for it to get back ahead of him and eventually I managed to beat him by a very short margin.

### Quad - Jennie, Fiona, Becky and Jo

Racing at MK was our 5th outing as a crew as per the club tradition.

We had all sorts of "happenings" involving crustaceans and round plastic things that kept getting in the way of our blades...

We kept going but glory evaded us until next time!

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### WmasE 2x Claire and Angela

Having already won two medals in our quads (yes, two!), we weren't sure whether to be optimistic about our double race. Maybe that was our problem. It was a straight final against the infamous MK double. Unfortunately we had to wait for the MK 2x for over 30 mins in the boating area (through no fault of theirs) which also messed with our heads a bit.

We had a rubbish start and visited a year's worth of buoys in one 500m race. It all felt choppy and messy. Hey ho. More practice still needed.

# OTRC Match Report

WMasE4x Claire, **Angela**, Sally, Becky S

It was a Disastrous start to the day for our first race in this crew. We rigged Swiftly, then discovered that, somehow, the rudder had mysteriously disappeared en route from the club. So, we had to borrow a quad from the host club, MK, who were very understanding and accommodating. Therefore, no point in checking seat positions, rigger heights or runner positions as per detailed coaching advice. Just get in the boat and row.

Well, believe it or not, we won our heat against MK (C) and Peterborough (E) quite easily. Who needs all that careful technical planning!?! The final was against a Bedford crew (C). We did have a bit of a handicap advantage, but we are as old as we are, so didn't feel guilty. This time we used Colin Bullock and we won again!!! Becky steered beautifully, Claire stroked a steady rhythm, which we all managed to follow, and Sally had a stormer of a pair of races for her first ever win! Hurray!



J14 4x **Tom P**, Isabella, Huw, Tom R and Jacob.

The under 14 crew had our first competitive race in a coxed quad this weekend. We had a great, strong start and were soon up on our competitors, Thames Scullers. Although neck and neck at half way, a couple of mishaps saw us lose boat speed and most of our rhythm allowing the opposition to come back into the race. We regained our rhythm and came back strongly but sadly were unable to make up the lost lead.

It was a day of glorious sunshine and a great team spirit. A special thank you to Isabelle for standing in at short notice and enabling us to still compete. Lessons learnt- remember which way to turn the nuts to tighten/loosen the riggers and to eat the Coaches biscuits whenever possible!



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Ian, Richard, Joe, Charlie

**WINNERS!:** Our winning streak in a pair over 500m regattas continues...4 wins out of 5!

It wasn't a pretty win by any stretch of the imagination.... Both crews fluffed the start and I was definitely not tapping down enough for Charlie throughout the whole race...

There was enough wind to trouble the Bedford competition and we had edged ahead by half a length at the half way stage. Gaining confidence, we found some rhythm and just focussed on holding on and opened up the lead in the final 200m to claim another win – and a second win of the day having raced together in the Four earlier on.

As we have found with pair racing, your competitors can look taller, fitter, stronger etc, but the conditions will always come into play and it's how each crew can respond which matters (over the shorter course anyway!).

**WMas B 2x- (Mariel and Liz Mace)**

We crossed the finishing line hearing loud encouraging and triumphant cheers from Oundle Town. Thank you! Mariel and I had overcome our doubts and won the final of the ladies masters B doubles against Milton Keynes.

As self declared underdogs, we had trouble coming to terms with this unexpected glory. Our spectacular Victory by two lengths came with the feeling of Mariel's uncontrolled nausea as a result of sheer effort.

Well done Mariel for dragging me across the line!

Many thanks to all those who made the day possible.

Men's open 4+

Ian, Joe, **Richard**, Charlie, Liz (Cox)

We have not actually had many outings as a crew due to holidays, honeymoons and high winds, but we have been together for a long time now and it is starting to pay off.

In the last few weeks, good things have been going on in our boat, the balance has been outstanding and once you have that, the speed can be built on..... And we seem to have found it. On race day, conditions could not have been better, sunny, warm and a light breeze. We had a straight final between Milton Keynes and St Radegund (?) who's bowman was ominously listed as "Death Star" (apparently they are all big star wars fans and each has a nickname from the films) 🤖.

We paddled out and did a few practice starts which went well and we were able to watch our opposition coming up to the start line. Milton Keynes looked scrappy but the other crew showed promise (the force was strong with them..... Oh dear, did I just actually write that?... apparently yes! ) Off the start we took Milton Keynes within the first few strokes and they fell back almost at once, but St Radegund had us and pulled away from us.

Once we settled we were just about holding them but they were edging ahead and by halfway I was starting to think we weren't going to catch them. But our new Cox, the formidable Liz, wasn't going to relent. She was bellowing for us to "push", shouting "harder on the legs" then "we are gaining on them". This seemed to rouse our spirits and we did indeed push harder on the legs, and as we approached the red boys showing the last hundred meters, Liz who had not stopped shouting at us all the way down told us "we've got them" and then came the push for the finish. They had obviously used their energy keeping ahead for the first two thirds and were fading, but it took a lot of effort from us to make sure our bow crossed that line first. But it had paid off, we had defeated the dark side (yes I am still going there) we had won! All in all a great race, fantastic effort from the crew and outstanding coxing.



# OTRC Match Report

Crew: Claire, John, **Mark**, Angela

This was a crew that started to give us two rows at Sudbury where we had a close race and lost. We did get a couple of outings in just to check we did fit into Swiftly which went well with a new order and an agreed plan for our next race. We were looking forward to trying ourselves out against opposition again.

And then I got lost within the Milton Keynes road system and arrived in a bit of a fluster about 20 minutes before we needed to boat – “the rudder has fallen off so you will need to row in a different boat” etc - all very calming!

Anyway we met the opposition on the jetty and got out with the usual OTRC welcome help and Claire tried out the steering and then we had a couple of goes at trying out our start - it felt a bit shaky as we seemed to be higher in the water and it was surprisingly windy with short waves. We got to the control point behind four waiting boats and got sent straight to the start, so no waiting.

It turned out we were F and had four seconds start on our opponents -which seemed a very short time, four strokes exactly, before they started. We settled into a rhythm with one call of "slower up the slide" and then rowed a consistent 30-31s/m for the whole race. Only one steering challenge as we caught the wind and it really is a lot easier when the opposition is behind, steering all over the place, and getting further behind. Less exciting than our close race at Sudbury but a win is a win and we certainly enjoyed it – all the more when the results showed we were the third fastest crew from Oundle!



## John B

Fresh from the victory in Mixed master's quad. I met up with my opponent before the race and he told me that he would have an 11 second start. I thought that was a wind up as that is huge start on a 500-metre course. I sculled up to the start with a strong cross wind and a swell caused by an umpire launch. When sitting on the start the starter announce that it was a G/I event, and the older sculler would have an 11 second start (not a wind up after all). I sat on the start for what seemed like hours and finally set off in pursuit. My start was good whilst in the shelter of the start area but after 10 strokes I hit the cross wind and swell from launches returning to the start. I could not find my usual rhythm and my rating stayed at 34/35 until halfway down the course when I managed to reduce the stroke rate to 32/33. Still high as I usually find rhythm at about 28/30 strokes per minute Then all too soon, I saw the red buoys and had a final push for the finish. I think that I had overlap in this last part of the race but could not made up the deficit. My final time was 3 seconds faster than the winner ( 2minutes 21 seconds).

At this point I tried to make sense of the result – how could I be 3 seconds faster than the other sculler and still loose by 1 length. Was my time taken from the first go or the second go. If it was taken from the first go then I was 14 seconds faster and should have been a length in front. If my time was taken from the second go then I was 8 seconds quicker. But I like the sound of 14 seconds. When I arrived home first thing was to pour a beer then contemplated the result a little more. On the second and third beers I considered that 14 seconds was my favourite result but . . . . .

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## Masters FGH 1X Cambridge Autumn Regatta

I entered this Regatta as masters G but when the draw became available it was in the FGH category. But was too late to change. The other competitors were 2 masters F scullers, 2 masters G scullers and a masters H sculler. My spies told me that the two masters F scullers were racing as masters E last year so were young 60-year olds. I was drawn at the wrong side of the competition with 3 races to win. All the rest were to have 2 races to win including the two young 60-year olds.

My first race was against the masters H sculler from Milton Keynes. I was drawn on the inside of the bend from the staggered start. Therefore, I was a length down. My opponent was awarded a 6 second start. I need not have worried because I drew level with him after about 15 strokes and then started to take full advantage of the bend in my favour and built a considerable lead. Not wanting to embarrass my opponent I slowed down to a paddle light but never was in danger of being overtaken.

The next race was against Jack Ward from Peterborough. Jack is just eligible to race as masters F and has just turned 60. Undaunted I was awarded a 5 second start but as I was a length down on the staggered start, we were almost level. We raced neck and neck around the bend but because I was on the inside, I could not take advantage and as the bend straightened out Jack pulled away. I pushed as hard as I could and raced to the line and the final verdict was about 2 lengths to Jack.

I was not too displeased with the race as my time was the fastest achieved for some time and I knew that I could not have raced faster. A most enjoyable day of racing although I didn't win. This was my penultimate race as masters G and in the new year will be promoted (demoted to masters H).