

OTRC MATCH REPORT NORTHAMPTON JANUARY 2024

Mark, John, and David

This event is perhaps the largest whole club event since before Covid. We entered 25 rowers into 11 events. This is a significant proportion of the members who want to race – a fantastic commitment. And secured three wins! Congratulations to all winning crews – you can see their reports below.

Just like before we seemed to be sorting things out like trailer loading plans up to the last minute, realising we needed two trailers and sorting out times to leave so the right boats were available at the right times in Northampton. We had crews in all four Divisions so this was important.

However, our OTRC spirit remains as strong as ever. It was great to see so many people helping and enjoying the process: de-rigging and loading the boats was both hard work and fun and this approach of support and help ran throughout the whole competition day, with many junior's parents providing support and encouragement on what was quite a cold day.

This felt like the old days - home cooked flapjack, bacon sandwiches, looking for the best spot to cheer our crews to the finish, last minute advice and encouragement from our two coaches, helping get the crews launched and off at the end and a real sense of success with two junior wins and win for the Women's Quad. What a day with a late re-rigging in the dark and hopefully a warm meal and relaxation once back home.

Many thanks to everyone, especially our trailer drivers, John and Gary, for getting us all there and back with the right kit and boats, and not forgetting the "lazy oars" discovered hiding just before we left! Another memorable sight was David who started coaching about a year ago cycling furiously to support the juniors along the first half or more of the course, briefing them before, reassuring and encouraging afterwards, fully realising the impact of his support in training, fitness and technique. Rewarded by such a good turnout.

A very sound basis to build on through the summer



participating crews

Name	Boat type	Time
Tom, Ewan, Tim, Charles	Op J18 4x	07.05.6
Mark and Bish	Op Mas H 2x	08.37.1
Vicky, Bob, Hugh, Fiona, Jo, Becky, Andrew, Brian, Cox: Liz	Mx 8+	07.04.1
Nick, Jon, Brian, Gary	Op Mas F 4x	07.10.8
Bob, Andrew, Hugh, Mark, Cox: Fiona	Op Mas F 4+	07.22.1
Claire, Vicky, Jo, Becky S	W Mas D 4x	07.55.6 Winners
Tom and Charles	Op J17 2x	08.02.4
Jacob and Oscar	Op J15 2x	08.01.0 Winners
Jess and Isabella	W J17 2x	10.39.6
Ewan and Tim	Op J18 2x	07.45.4 Winners

Jacob and Oscar



After waiting an hour at the other end of the river we were instructed to start the race.

On the signal to go we sped up and tried to keep at a good pace. We were in time and had smooth, long strokes.

It was tough rowing against the current as well as there being a strong wind against us. We only caught one or two crabs but recovered from them quickly.

We finished with a time of 8:01 and overtook 3 singles and a double. It was great to have come first in our age category.

Jo

wmasD4x (stroke Vicky, Becky, Jo, Claire)

winners

I'm not quite sure how rowing in a mixed 8+ on weekday summers evenings turned into a scratch old ladies 4x entering the head of the Nene at Northampton in the depths of winter, but it did. Senior moments, all round!

We left the club in the dark ... and re-rigged in the dark.... Despite not having raced for over 4 years it felt just like old times! Despite our best intentions, the weather, busy calendars and a steering failure meant we had only managed one and a half practice rows.

As the day dawned we were cold, dry and windy. And that was just the weather!

We boated in the first division, rowed up to the start; spun round and headed back down to the finish. Mercifully very little hanging around, unlike the small boats, and an unexpected shortened course. We settled at a comfortable rate of 28 strokes per minute, with Vicky at stroke establishing a comfortable rhythm. Becky at 3, Jo calling at 2 (obviously) and Claire steering a fab line down the blowy course. We finished with a time of 7.55, but without anything to compare it to we headed off to watch our opposition (Isle of Ely) racing in the next division.

As Vicky and I were waiting and watching we stood next to a couple of parents waiting for their junior doubles to come down. As they appeared we thought we'd give them some encouragement. "Come on Milton Keynes" I called. "" They're not Milton Keynes" said Vicky. "Come on Norwich". We called. Luckily the parents pointed out they were from Abingdon! By the time we'd called "come on Abingdon" they had passed us, and the parents were muttering about deleting the sound on the video they were taking. Never mind...

Anyway, it turns out we had beaten our opposition by a minute and were to be the proud recipients of..



a medal!.... Not bad for a first outing!

MARK

Men's Four: Cox Fiona; Crew Rob, Andrew, Hugh, Mark

time 7.22

We had managed one outing on Saturday as a crew, which as was drily observed got better with basic balance at least. Which it did. We were all going in one car, but in the end four of us went together with an early start so we could boat from 8.15am. Arrived and met Marcus on the gate who was clearly doing well in Northampton and guided us to a great parking position for the trailer which made launching much easier than the normal trailer park.

Rigged the boat along with the Women's Quad and a junior double and took our turn to launch. Fiona took charge and put us through a warm up routine, made us concentrate and then do an Up 20 and some firm pressure rowing. We arrived at the waiting area to find it was well organised with clear instructions and really did not have to wait long before we were off, second boat to start, building up to race pace in good time with good speed as we crossed the line. We had a clear run so no issues challenged our cox in terms of overtaking or being overtaken, which always feels good, so the challenge was to keep going, keep our form and to finish strongly. Fiona was great, reminding us of all the right things, keeping our strokes long and ensuring we sat up all the way through to the finish. It felt a good row and to be a sound base for future work to improve.

The crew ahead were 7 seconds faster and one of our competitors, so not bad as this stage of our development. I have found it hard to work out what else happened to the other two competitors: I think we were faster than one of them, but slower than the other. Once it was over I was more focused on my next race.

Gary

Masters F Quad Jon H, Brian H, Gary C, Nick H

Preparation for Northampton Head was less than ideal, our last race was Newark back in early December. Since then, we had numerous missed training days through Xmas, bad weather, bouts of Covid and manflu.

Our opponents were a crew from Hollowell, my second club, and I knew all but one well. Consisting of a Henley winner and some ex-GB international coastal rowers, I knew we were up against it.

Northampton Head is famous for its poor weather and the forecast was for a moderate headwind building through the day. As we waited at the Division 2 start the combination of stream and headwind made the wait uncomfortable.

Eventually the marshals got us underway and immediately the combination of wind, stream and possibly lack of good preparation was obvious, rowing in treacle was how I could best describe it. Nick kept a good rating, and we get into a decent rhythm, Jon steering a good line, but the boat speed stubbornly remained poor. Pushing as hard as we could against the conditions we caught up and passed a coxed quad/four(?) in the later stages, which made us feel good and believe that perhaps our speed wasn't so bad after all. The finish line came not a moment too soon. The 1650 meters feeling more like 3 or 4k. Our time of 7:10.8 put us 6th fastest boat in Division 2. Was it good enough? Were conditions, as forecasted, going to deteriorate? Unfortunately for us the answers were no and no, the conditions improved by Division 4 and the Hollowell crew showed their class posting 6:01.4 which was the 4th fastest boat on the day.

That's racing, and we go again in two weeks at Peterborough.

JOHN BISHOP

Masters H 2X Mark Felton and John Bishop Masters C, E & H 2x

Arrived at Northampton in good time and Mark had already rigged the boat, thanks Mark.

Walked down the steps on to the landing stage and Mark helped into boat by a marshal, however that marshal was in my way and had to climb over her to get into the boat, tripped and fell onto my back on the landing stage. She finally got out of the way, and we proceeded to the start with no further mishaps.

When we reached the start of the race, we were directed into a position on the boathouse bank by a bank marshal. It was difficult to stay on station due to the strong cross wind and had to keep the bows pointing into the bank and constantly pulling on. Other crews were lined up on the other side of the bay. Then another marshal (this time in a launch) instructed us to move closer to the flood gates overriding the bank marshal.

This position was even harder to maintain as we were now drawn towards the flood gates by a strong stream as well as the cross wind. Then the quads came down and immediately drifted into the small boats on the other side of the bay followed by eights who drifted into the quads. The marshal in the launch tried to disentangle the boats but then broke down.

The division was already very late and after the long wait I became very cold and shivering.

Then we were off battling against the cross to head wind until we clipped some reeds on the near bank in a patch sheltered by trees. Then the race was over after what seemed no time at all, and we got back to the landing stage. My shoes were nowhere to be found and finished up in a bucket at the other end of the landing stage. Thank to those who carried up the boat whilst I went in search for my shoes.

Thanks also for those who towed the trailers as a Club event such as this would not be possible.

Just now must interpret the results as it may be that the gap between Masters C and E to H is too great and should not have been in that format, we may have to content ourselves with a time only.

After our race an unadjusted time was displayed in the Club room as 7.23 I.e. second place. Later on the web site gave a time of 8.37 I.e. third place. I have just received a notice from British Rowing to say we finished in 1st place although no time was given.

I have never entered a race where I have been awarded 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place out of 3 entries. Confused-I am, although I know the preferred option, but no pot.