



# **NEWSLETTER**

**October 2003**

## **Editorial**

Welcome to this autumn's Newsletter. The season of mellow mists and fruitfulness brings the annual struggle to get fit for rowing in Heads of the River. After the summer sprints (so brief I generally can't remember breathing between thrashing start and gasping finish) Heads require a very different style involving hard rowing for 20 minutes or more. Achieving and maintaining fitness for longer distance rowing is essential if one is to avoid being a 'passenger' in a crew. In the absence of outings on the water several times a week the best way is to develop a love-hate relationship with regular long sessions on the Ergo machine (try to pace yourself over 5km, with the damper bar down around 2-4, aiming to improve your time on each occasion). Running and hard cycling can help to increase cardio-vascular fitness, as do the club's Wednesday evening circuit training sessions at Hanley Castle High School. Each offers the chance to raise your pulse rate and perspire heavily (though only circuits will pep up your social life as well!). If you're really serious about your fitness you might invest in a heart rate monitor. But be warned – this technology can be misleading: while using my new Christmas present to assess my fitness one evening last winter I apparently became significantly fitter after lying on the sofa watching television for half an hour (please don't spread this around).

Johnny Birks

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## **Chairman's Notes (aka Sweepings off the boathouse floor)**

These notes are going to be 'a quick flick of the duster' rather than sweepings.

### **The FISA Tour**

The FISA Tour took place in early September and was very successful. Stewart and I helped collect boats from Graham Water, near Huntingdon, Putney and the London Regatta Centre at Docklands. The boats were assembled at St Edwards School boat house at Godstow near Oxford. It was interesting to see these other clubs and rowing centres and to meet many interesting people from the rowing world. The tour party took a week to get to Putney stopping at many places of interest such as Leander and Eton.

The next ARA Working Party meeting, of which I am a member, is not until 8<sup>th</sup> November when the FISA tour will no doubt be discussed at length and look at the lessons learnt etc. I expect to see some good initiatives coming out in the wake of the FISA tour success.

I met a German who was helping with the tour and he is kindly looking for second hand touring boats for me as there is a good second hand market in Germany. With luck we may have one or two touring boats at Upton soon.

### **Clubmark**

Progress with Clubmark accreditation is progressing well. Jo Atkinson, our ARA CDO, has checked through the documentation and the amendments needed are not too onerous. Hopefully we will be able to submit it to the ARA before Christmas. I get the impression that we may be ahead of a lot of the other clubs in the region.

Peter Barker

## **Captains Log October 2003**

### **Amsterdam Masters**

Earlier this month a party of Upton Rowers went again to Amsterdam to compete in the Amsterdam Masters Regatta. It was a splendid weekend that was enjoyed by all who went, rowers and non-rowers. There is more about it elsewhere in this newsletter but I would just like to say that it looks almost certain that we will take part in this event next year, so this is an early notification of the date for your diaries. The event date isn't yet confirmed but we expect it to be Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2004

### **Competition**

In the year September 2002 to August 2003 we entered Upton crews in 26 events including:

- 17 Eights
- 15 Women's 4's
- 27 Men's 4's
- 6 Junior doubles
- And a few other categories.

This adds up to over 316 individual entries, so our members have been prepared to spend more than £2,200 on entry fees during the year, that's not bad going. Of course not all of these entries have actually raced because:

- Some events have been cancelled, e.g. Worcester Spring Regatta;
- Some entries were not accepted, e.g. Wycliffe Small Boats Head;
- Some entries have had no competition, e.g. Women's Novice 4+ at Ross etc.

The best turnouts that we had were for Stratford and Ross Vet & Junior. It was very nice to see Upton members together in good numbers at these events, and giving strong support for each other. We should try to do the same again next year but with even greater numbers taking part, and perhaps at more events.

### **Winning Crews**

- Our ladies in composite 8's with de Hoop at Amsterdam (2002)
  - Freya Biggs, Pauline Mason, Pat Cox, Dierdre Thompson
- Men's Vet D 8 at Bristol Ariel
  - Colin Biggs, Peter Barker, Ron Paterson, Stewart Robinson, Keith Andrews, Patrick Adams, Richard Lee, Johnny Birks, cox Andrea Oliver
- Men's Vet F 4 at Bridgnorth
  - Dave Lambert, Andrew Crowther, Paddy Norman, Richard Hanby
- Men's Vet C 4 at Stratford
  - Alan Nesbit, Stewart Robinson, Richard Lee, Will Dutson, cox Karen Lanni
- Men's Vet F 4 at Warwick
  - Dave Lambert, Andrew Crowther, Paddy Norman, Richard Hanby
- Men's Vet Novice 1x at Ross
  - Will Dutson
  - This was the very first sculling win for Upton

## **Coaching**

Adrian Barsby ran a coaching seminar for us in September which was fairly well attended. We had an evening 'theory' session, followed by a practical day. On the practical day we took turns to join Adrian in the coaching launch with the rest forming crews to be coached. In the first eight that took to the water on the day Adrian had everybody rowing on the 'wrong side'! He must have thought that if we had rowed on our normal side there would have been no errors to look at!

The intention of the seminar was to help us increase the amount of coaching we provide for each other on a regular basis. Sadly the coaching launch failed at the end of the session and is still off the water, but it should be back in service very soon so we can start putting this into practice.

## **Winter training**

By now all active rowers should have received a letter from either Pauline or myself asking for some information about availability for training and for competing during the winter. If you haven't received this then please let either Will, Pauline or me know and we will make sure that you get a copy. If you have received one but have not yet returned it we would appreciate it if you would do so straight away so that we can prepare some more detailed plans, we would also like to hear from you if you do not want to be part of the programme. If you have already replied – thank you.

## **Upton Head 2004 – Saturday January 10<sup>th</sup>**

The Upton Head is fast approaching, we have prayed to the rain god not to flood us out that week, to the frost god not to freeze us out, and to the fog god not to cloak us again.

We are planning to run the head from Fish Meadow. Peter and Annie Surman have not only agreed to this but have also spent some time clearing an area of bank that we can use for boating access onto our pontoons. Thank you Peter and Annie.

There will be a lot of work to do both in planning and preparation from now on and of course on the day of the event. We will be in touch to recruit as many people as possible so that we can provide an enjoyable competition for our visitors, and to make it a successful fund raiser as well.

Stewart Robinson

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## **Fundraising**

You'll have noticed that the Club's membership fees were raised at the AGM in September. This was necessary partly because, in the absence of a fundraising co-ordinator, we are not currently swelling our coffers as actively as we should (with some exceptions – see below). We have to accept that the equipment we need for safe, successful and enjoyable rowing is expensive; the Club cannot develop if we do not acquire new equipment. Stalwarts on your committee are struggling to arrange fund-raising events on top of their main duties but this is insufficient. Ideally we need to hold one successful event each month. So, we urgently need a velvet-gloved arm-bender with a persuasive smile to step forward from the membership to fill the co-ordinator's role. Otherwise we should expect our subs to go up again all too soon.

## **Two intrepid juniors report on their sponsored row:**

On the weekend of September 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> 2003 Tom Worthington and Matt Tompkins took up a challenge to do a sponsored endurance row to Worcester and back in Steve Cox's clinker built

rowing boat *Oh Faye*, camping overnight on the way back. We were raising money for Upton Rowing Club and Earls Croome Parish Church and numerous people were very generous in their pledges. We were waved off by Steve (First Class Painter and Decorator) at 9.00am on a warm sunny morning and for the first leg of the journey had the company of the Ladies' Saturday morning training crew. We were equipped with safety radio contact with S.A.R.A. and mobile 'phone contact with Steve but the motivation and physical effort was down to us. We took it in turns to row for 15 minutes at a time and kept up a good stroke rate through the morning. Despite previous experience *Oh Faye* did not take on too much water so pumping out was not the chore it might have been. Warm sunshine changed to a thunderstorm and hailstones at lunchtime and necessitated an unscheduled shelter stop under a tree near *Seabourne Yacht Club* at Kempsey; but we were soon on our way again and reached the southern link road bridge by 1.30pm. This had been the target turning point but we were going strong and decided to row on to Diglis Lock which we reached by just before 3.00pm. We immediately turned and rowed back to *Seabourne Yacht Club* where Steve was waiting to meet us and help to moor up for the night. We had carried everything we would need for the trip in the boat, which made the cargo quite considerable. We camped overnight at Kempsey, barbecuing and enjoying the country air! Sunday morning dawned bright and sunny and we set off on the return to Upton with enthusiasm. Rounding the *White House* bend we met up with the Sunday morning club rowers and despite the miles behind us we set a good pace all the way back to the marina. Around £300 was raised to be split between the rowing club and Earls Croome Church and the adventure was completed without a cross word!

**If you have not paid please pay Tom or Matthew as soon as possible so we can give the money to the causes.**

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### **Social Calendar**

Here are some dates for your diary. Please support these events and involve your friends too:

**21<sup>st</sup> November 2003**

Race Night with Fish & Chips in the Sports Club.

**23<sup>rd</sup> January 2004**

Quiz Night in the Sports Club

**April 10<sup>th</sup> 2004 (Easter Saturday)**

Spring Fayre in the Memorial Hall.

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### **The Boathouse Notice Board**

Don't forget to scan the board for items of interest, including forthcoming events, news from the ARA and minutes of recent club committee meetings. The ARA has produced a new Equity Policy that we shall be following. There is a copy on the board for you to read.

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### **Amsterdam 2003**

Nine club members and two partners travelled to Amsterdam in early October to compete in the FISA International Regatta hosted by De Hoop Rowing Club. We had a wonderful time competing

and socialising with many nationalities of rowers. This was followed the next day by a gentle two-hour paddle in skiffs around the canals of central Amsterdam. Special thanks are due to Stewart Robinson for making all the arrangements, and to him and Peter Barker for driving us safely there and back. For some unknown reason there is already much interest among members in attending this event next year.



*A close finish in the Dulcinea Cup for mixed international VIIIs at the Amsterdam Masters (can you spot three URC members?)*



*The URC tour party gathered outside their training base at The Bastion Hotel, Amsterdam*

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## **Circuit Training**

Have you tried out the Club's excellent weekly circuit training held at Hanley Castle High School every Wednesday at 7:30pm, followed by essential rehydration at the pub? The circuits are suitable for all abilities and are skilfully planned and conducted by Freya Biggs, a qualified PE teacher. Numbers attending so far this autumn have been encouraging, but there is always space for more!

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## **CONGRATULATIONS!**

To **Claire Caffal** for getting married to Phil in June.

To **Catherine Gearing** for getting married to Pete in July.

To **Kate Hodgetts** for getting engaged to Richmond the day after the Club Dinner!

To **Letty Stott** for getting into Cambridge University.

To **Stephen Curran, Ben Harwood, Matthew Tomkins** and **Tom Worthington** for brilliant GCSE results and going up into the Sixth form.

To Debbie Thompson for her Novice win at Ironbridge.

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## Club Dinner (10<sup>th</sup> October 2003)

We owe a special 'Thank-you' to Peter, Sandy and their helpers for working so hard to lay on such a fabulous evening for us.

### A few moments to savour from this year's Dinner:



*The 'Phantom IV' with the Chairman's cup awarded to the best men's crew.*



*The best women's crew (minus Debbie Thompson, their cox) – recipients of the President's cup*



*Freya receives the Committee Cup for the greatest non-rowing contribution*



*Andrea receives the Secretary's Cup for Cox of the Year*



*Will receives the Captain's Cup for the greatest individual contribution to competitive rowing*

**YOUR COMMITTEE 2003/2004**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Officer</b>	<b>Home 'phone</b>	<b>Mobile</b>
Chairman	Peter Barker	01684 592906	07974 158839
Secretary	Johnny Birks	01684 575876	07974 083763
Minute Secretary	Ros Adams	01531 636951	
Captain	Stewart Robinson	01684 567865	07899 978535
Womens' Vice-captain	Pauline Mason	01684 593194	
Mens' Vice-captain	Will Dutson	01684 293774	07980 708412
Treasurer	Andrea Oliver	01684 593180	
Membership Secretary	Freya Biggs	01684 592007	07968 919939
Boatmaster	<b>POSITION VACANT</b>		
Junior Organiser	Steve Cox	01684 593849	
Fundraising co-ordinator	<b>POSITION VACANT</b>		
Safety Adviser	Alan Nesbit	01684 290950	
Welfare Adviser	Jenny Worthington	01905 371225	07971 414834
Ordinary member	Pat Cox	01684 593849	
Ordinary member	Gabby Tolkien	01386 45334	

## And Finally.....

For those of you who missed the recent club dinner, I am authorised to reproduce here some words of true rowing wisdom from our resident poet, Hamish Barkley, who delivered them on the night with his customary sober gravitas:

'Twas in the year of '94 and nothing had I missed,  
sitting in the Anchor Pub, getting gently drunk.

Sad old sod, sitting breaking wind  
My friends they were of course thick-skinned.

Kidneys and liver lived separate lives,  
Divorced like so many husbands and wives.

Prolapsed muscles, distended belly,  
Veins in the eyes like vermicelli.

My trouser snake that had known no barrier,  
Now sadly become just a water carrier.

Sweaty hands, back all bent,  
Unhygienic and flatulent.

Happy though in his rustic dream,  
the body unravelling at the seam.

So, could the process be reversed,  
for someone in alcohol so immersed?

Could the candle be relighted,  
For a life by booze so blighted?

When into this life of deep depravity  
Came a man of little gravity.

A man of whom we would all grow fonder,  
Yes – it was Coxy on 'is 'Onda.

'Is 'orse and cart and hand-whittled pegs,  
'is untidy mien and black 'airy legs.

I am your path he said ....to light,  
Although you are a dreadful sight.

And from the colour of your ears,  
I'd say you'd been on the piss for years.

But shortly you'll be sound as a pound,  
I just looked up and said "your round".

And so to the Severn we were led,  
A raggedy-arsed crew, a bit soft in the head.

Big 'uns, small 'uns and some good 'uns too,  
Formed the heart of this motley crew.

Up and down the bloody river we went,  
Until all our energies had been spent.

Coxy raised his voice to be heard,  
We still couldn't understand a bleedin' word.

On the question of timing – we all did our own thing,  
In an old wooden boat on a prayer and a wing.

Some enlightened to tupperware made an illusion,  
But Coxy just thought it would lead to confusion.

What's wrong with a submarine made out of wood,  
It's the crew, not the boat, that has to be good.

In rowing there's a sort of natural demotion,  
From eights to fours to pairs is the notion.

But being a person who likes speaking his mind,  
I took up sculling – but of the solo kind.

Now single sculling can be a bit of a farce,  
'specially with a coxless four up yer arse!

Or when nearly capsized by a brummie tanker,  
I raise my right fist and call him an idiot.

And the smile on his face as I swim for the land,  
Having forgotten I actually needed that hand.

Or the unkind cries that from the King's Head exude,  
"cum an luke it's a hippo on a cigar tube".

And so with our faith in our captain unshaken,  
We were shortly to find we'd been sadly mistaken.

Instead of a new life far from the booze,  
Constantly drunk were the Upton crews.

I'd joined the club to try and give up drinking,  
Not in a pond of Guinness to be sinking.

But I have no complaints I'm happy to say,  
Because I think we were all made that way.

So my advice to you – before I'm a going  
Is stick to the drinking – and bugger the rowing!