

UPTON ROWING CLUB NEWSLETTER



August 2005

Editorial

With the purple loosestrife in flower and outings charmed by family parties of common sandpipers 'peeping' and flitting along the Severn's muddy margins, we should make the most of those balmy evenings on the water before the shortening days constrain us. To adapt another's wise words: 'Life's too short not to spend much of it rowing'. So don't waste rowing time reading this newsletter. Stick it beside the bed or toilet to dip into during those unavoidably idle moments 'at backstops'. You'll find some treats hidden beneath the scum and dross: club kit bargains; exciting dates for your diary; news of victory on the water by our two magnificent 'Flying Scots'; an insight into the curious blend of cakes, livestock and brave racing against 'children' that makes up life in the women's squad; and a delightful recollection of rowing nearly 40 years ago by one of our more senior members.

Johnny Birks

Captain's Log

Coaching:

As intended following the recent qualification of several members as 'IA Coaches', there has been an increase in coaching activity at the club: Peter Barker has been running a well-supported foundation rowing course for beginners, with twice-weekly outings in the octuple or an VIII; Gabby Tolkien has been coaching new scullers; Steve Cox and Clive Killick continue to run junior coaching sessions; Ron Paterson and Johnny Birks continue to work with the women's squad.

Competitive rowing:

Since the last newsletter, Upton crews have raced at:

Monmouth – A Junior Double (James Turner and Robert Killick) and a Women's novice VIII (Lisa Belfield, Helen Barker, Linda Scott, Freya Biggs, Joy Larner, Deidre Thompson, Annie Surman and Sue Martin);

The National Veterans' Championships at Holme Pierrepont - Liz Killick in composite crews; an Upton Women's Vet. Novice IV (Linda Scott, Freya Biggs, Annie Surman and Sue Martin) came second in a 3-boat final;

Llandaff - Will Dutson in single scull, George Strang and Ron Paterson in a Vet. E double and a women's Senior4 coxed IV (Linda Scott, Deidre Thompson, Angela Rodway and Sue Martin). This last crew lost to a Bristol Ariel IV that went on to win the event (special thanks to Linda Scott for stepping in at the very last minute when Debbie Thompson was struck down with tonsillitis). After a long day in baking heat, George and Ron won their final in impressive style against a Llandaff crew;

Bewdley – Another women's Senior4 coxed IV (Joy Lerner, Freya Biggs, Debbie Thompson and Sue Martin) lost by a length to some talented juniors from Worcester (the eventual winners of the event); and Ron and George were also beaten in a straight final by a youthful double from Grosvenor Rowing Club.

As ever we are grateful to Brian Swindells for managing regatta entries and to Bob Hines for keeping all our boats and equipment waterworthy.



Ron Paterson and George Strang with their tankards won at Llandaff Regatta on 9th July 2005

Towing and seat fees for competing crews

Our admirably organised Treasurer reminds us that seat fees plus a towing fee of £2 each is payable when a crew ENTERS an event. The responsibility lies with the stroke of each crew to collect these fees and pass them to the Treasurer as soon as possible. The person who tows the boat can claim mileage at 25p per mile. The entry fee has to accompany the entry form.

A month in the life of Upton's Women's squad

Sue Martin reports on wild times on and off the water for the Upton Gels:

25 May – A Lamb as Assistant Cox?

Preparation for Monmouth Regatta and Johnny and Ron have cooked up some ideas to take us through our paces, a few starts and short pieces to follow. We've not had many outings as a whole VIII, and tonight is no exception, John Dean is doubling for Annie. And very fetching he looks too. Anyway we need the practice and beggars can't be too choosy.

Up to the White House and tried a few starts and we agree to try a short piece, but no sooner have we got going than Johnny is calling us to wind down. He can hear the sound of a lamb on the bank. Now we are getting accustomed to nature notes 'Kingfisher on stroke side' 'lesser spotted dipper bow side' 'albatross overhead' ... you get the general drift... but stranded lambs - this was a new one.

We stop and paddle back down river for our erstwhile naturist - no sorry naturalist - to scramble through the trees onto the bank giving a perfect imitation of monkey man, whilst Helen is calling helpful wifely comments 'don't fall' 'you're my hero' etc. etc. The rest of us are offering less helpful comments.

Our 'hero' discovers a lonely likkle lamb with no sign of mummy anywhere, and resolves to bring young Larry into the boat. Even Johnny, skilled as he is at shimmying through the branches, can't manage it with a lamb under his arm, so wades back out to the boat. Larry quietly settles at Johnny's feet [no doubt rigid with fear at the terrifying sight of Stroke looming towards him every 2 or 3 seconds! – Ed.], and we resume our outing, amidst calls of 'get the mint sauce out' and 'that's Sunday lunch sorted'.

Back on dry land whilst walking the boat back we notice those nice young farmers enjoying a quiet drink or 10 in the bar. We discard their advice to put the wretched creature back in the water as it's not worth anything, and pursue a more humane approach and ring a few farmers. None can help so J&H agree to take Larry home. We all know that Birks Towers is a veritable menagerie, so one more won't make any difference.



Gerrard relaxing at Glen Cottage a week after his rescue

Saturday 28 May.

Larry has been formally renamed Gerrard in honour of the Liverpool 'You'll never walk alone' FC's spectacular triumph that very evening. The *Malvern Gazette* is keen to get a scoop so the young fella joins us for a photo opportunity before the outing. He forgoes the pleasure of the actual row.

Postscript. Gerrard has settled into a school farm in Colwall and is bleating well.

Sunday 29 May Monmouth 1500 metres

So the first challenge is to find the blummin' place. Oh we can see it all right, but actually getting there is quite another matter. Twice along the dual carriageway and interrogation of several passers-by later and we eventually all find our way.

The race was uneventful. We didn't win. Again. There's slight compensation in being beaten by a crew on average 20 years [or may be more] younger than us. But it is only slight! However, a treat was awaiting afterwards: Helen Barker had baked the most yummy mummy cake of 8 Upton rowers. It didn't last long.



Helen's amazing cake, consumed in a 15 second feeding frenzy by the Women's squad at Monmouth Regatta (can you spot Gerrard the sheep?)

Saturday 5 June

'Who's up for Nottingham then? We stand a better chance as it's the National Veteran's Champs, so we won't be against young, fit, strapping women – and it's only 1000 metres'. 'And we'd better enter a team of 'mature' ladies so that we stand the best chance'. Once again we sign up like lambs – oops we've done lambs already – poodles. We don't have any time to get out as a crew before the 12th so will just have to do the best we can!

Sunday 12 June blusters and blisters

It's a lovely fine sunny morning in Cheltenham but clouded over just a jot by the time I reach the boathouse. Still it's mid June so should be cleared by the time we get to Nottingham. Famous last thoughts.

We arrive in plenty of time, and guess what, that lovely June morning has turned into a blustery damp cold day, more in keeping with April. We walk the course and get nervous – we're in a straight three boat final. Launching the boat with the aid of an official we spy one of the opposition. All young fit, strapping 'veteran' lasses. What happened to the plan? Annie asked of the helpful official if our other opposition were children as well? They were a bit older. Some might even have been nearly 40. Were we put off? Well maybe

The programme was running slightly behind schedule due to strong cross winds. Time for more last minute prep, and more last minute nerves. With delicate manoeuvring we finally got ourselves attached to the stake boat. Hurray, and all credit to Johnny, especially as others were still jostling against the wind to get into position. But no sooner were we attached than the lad holding our boat let go to answer his MOBILE. Thanks to the wind we never again regained contact. After much messing about, the starter lost his patience and just more or less said 'oh get on with it'. It had been a long day for him, so got on with it we did. The fit veteran 'children' from Molesey surged ahead. But what's this. We're slightly up on the other lot. AND WE'RE GOING AWAY FROM THEM. Johnny yelling for all he was worth - we came in second, beating a crew from Broxbourne by about 5 lengths. Hurray!

Whilst all this boating preparation had been going on our intrepid and resourceful Cox had a cunning plan to divert attention from our nerves. He'd locked not only the keys to his car INSIDE the car, but also Freya's and Annie's car keys as well. Not the best of diversionary tactics. Linda's husband Andrew was detailed to await the arrival of Garage Repair Man who successfully picked the lock. But the price was that our official photographer

missed the whole of our valiant performance and hence no official record exists of our greatest triumph – so far this season. Still at least we were all able to get home that night, which on balance.....

But we were pleased. And to round off a successful day Linda had brought Pimms – not the ready mixed stuff in a can but pukka DIY. Helen had baked us another cake - yum yum! And Johnny had brought bottles of Becks. Thanks, much appreciated, but nothing less than Verve Cliquot next time for the Upton Ladies Squad. Because we're worth it!

A blissful end to what turned into a good day at the races.

Sue Martin

The GeTek 'PRO-Sport Rower' Lifejacket for rowers, scullers and coxes

In order to maximise the safety of our junior rowers, your committee has decided to purchase eight of the new lightweight and minimalist lifejackets as reviewed in *Regatta* vol 179 (page 12). The 'PRO-Sport Rower' is advertised as "the only lifejacket available designed by rowers for rowers". All juniors at the club will be required to wear one while on the water until they have demonstrated their competence to a qualified coach at the club. The club's GeTek lifejackets will be available to juniors in their first term of membership; thereafter, parents will be required to provide those juniors that still need them with lifejackets at their expense (this position may change following an ARA review). You can find some basic information at this website: <http://www.getek.co.uk/>

Wednesday Evening Indoor Winter Training!

Here is your early warning that Circuit Training at Hanley Castle High School starts again on October 5th 7.30pm to 9pm. Fee same as last year. Every Wednesday through until 29th March 2006. Organised by Freya Biggs, this training is a great way to develop and maintain fitness for rowing when time on the water is limited over the winter months. If you've never tried it before, do come along and give it a go. If you need further information please contact Freya on 01684 592007.

Clinker-built oarsmen and women

Dominic Round reflects on his Cambridge rowing memories from nearly 40 years ago:

Long, long ago, there lived in the far fen country a race of hardy oarsmen and a few even hardier oarswomen. Their broad-bottomed clinker-built boats had a natural balance, which only the clumsiest Neanderthal could upset. A 10-inch marine-ply rudder produced instant and violent changes of course and was used to wash off a chasing boat attempting to establish a 'bump'. Blades were mostly fish-tailed, though the blue boat boasted new-fangled barrel-shaped spoons. Obstructing a blue boat on a time trial, sporting its polo-shaped course-sign, incurred a heavy fine.

Rowing was not permitted on Sundays, but students rowed every other day of the week, at 7am on winter mornings, with ice forming on the backs of their heads, to get back in time for 9am lectures.

Coxes were scrupulously polite to each other in those days: '*Come by you sir/madam? Come by sir/madam. Thank you sir/madam*'. Once a year light-blue coxes formed a crew of their own, steered by one of the 'sweaty Betties' (PC hadn't reached the dreaming spires!), to row against the dark-blue enemy. The coach was a pre-war light-blue cox, Canon Noel Duckworth, chaplain of Churchill College, whose motivational language from the towpath owed rather more to his time as a P.O.W. in Changi gaol than to his seat on the chapter at Ely Cathedral! Dinner beside the Isis or Cam concluded these memorable contests.

*Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive
But to be young was very heaven!*
Thanks to Sue for suggesting the title.

Dominic Round.



Christ's College Cambridge Novice VIII, 1967, with Upton's Dominic Round in the number 7 seat.

DIARY DATES

Club AGM: This year's AGM will be held on 26th September at 7.30pm. Put the date in your diary now and make sure you attend! See the formal notice below:

**UPTON ROWING CLUB
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**7.30pm Monday 26 September 2005
Sports Club, Upton upon Severn**

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of last AGM and matters arising
3. Chairman's report
4. Captain's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Appointment of Regatta Sub-Committee
7. Amendment to Constitution*
8. Election of Committee**
9. Review of subscriptions
10. Any other business

*The committee is proposing that the following sentence be removed from the Constitution under Item 3b. Admittance to Membership:

“The power of admittance will rest with the Committee, who may refuse to admit to membership any applicant without assigning a reason for so doing.”

and be replaced with:

“If it is considered by the Committee that the granting or renewal of membership would be detrimental to the aims and objectives of the club, the Committee are entitled to refuse membership and would provide full reasons for doing so.”

**The meeting will need to appoint a new Chairman, Captain and Junior Organiser. The post of Captain became vacant during the year and the Committee appointed an Acting Captain until the AGM. The other post holders are offering themselves for re-election. However, the committee would be happy to see nominations for any of the elected posts. Nominations can be made from the floor at the AGM but please ensure that the person nominated is willing to stand.

Note: Following the AGM the new Committee will need to appoint a new Welfare Officer to see that the Club complies with the ARA's Child Protection Procedures and to act as a focal point for the reporting of any concerns. If you are prepared to undertake this important role please contact Ros Adams.

Ros Adams Club Secretary
Tel: 01531 636951 E mail: ros@riversidetraining.co.uk

1st October – Amsterdam Masters Regatta. Upton has a fine tradition of attending this historic international regatta hosted by De Hoop Rowing Club. Check out this website:

<http://www.amsterdammasters.nl/>

There are rumours that the women's squad may be organising a crew.

The Upton Rowing Club Annual Dinner is on 21st October 2005.

Book now for the 10th Anniversary Party on the Water to be held on Friday 9th September. See separate poster!

Your Committee (and non-committee posts)

Upton Rowing Club Committee 2004-2005				
Post	Name	Home	Mobile	E Mail
Chairman	Peter Barker	01684 592906	07974 158839	ppb@stratascan.co.uk
Secretary	Ros Adams	01531 636951		ros@riversidetraining.co.uk
Treasurer	Andrea Oliver	01684 593180	07947 806897	andrea.oliver@virgin.net
Acting Captain	Steve Cox	01684 593849	0781 3284082	
Women's Vice Captain	Pauline Mason	01684 593194		tmmason@btinternet.com
Men's Vice Captain	Will Dutson	01684 293774	07980 708412	will.dutson@btinternet.com
Membership Secretary	Freya Biggs	01684 592007	07968 919939	
Boatmaster	Bob Hinds	01905 820887		
Junior Organiser	Steve Cox	01684 593849	0781 3284082	
Fundraising Co- ordinator	Kath Means	01684 575599	07795 183900	kmeans@pathways-i.co.uk
Welfare Adviser	Jenny Worthington	01905 371225	07971 414834	johnworthington@zoom.co.uk
Ordinary Member and Safety Adviser	Gabby Tolkien	01386 45334		gtolkien@onetel.net.uk
Ordinary Member	Grahame Turner	01684 563289	07711 606680	grahame.n.turner@btinternet.com

Non-committee Posts				
Junior Representative	James Turner	01684 563289	07747 104036	
Kit Sales	Patrick Adams	01531 636951	07973 541724	patrick@riversidetraining.co.uk
Press Liaison	Penny Stevenson	01684 567798	07887 631024	derekstevenson@btconnect.com
Chairman Regatta Committee	Vacant			
Chairman Head of River Committee	Stewart Robinson	01684 567865	07899 978535	srobinson@pilz.co.uk
Newsletter Editor	Johnny Birks	01684 575876	07974 083763	johnnybirks@vwt.org.uk

CLUB KIT SALE

We have reduced the price on the following items of kit.

Splash Tops - without hood – Medium only
£65 reduced to £50

Sweatshirts – Small, Large and XXXLarge
£20 reduced to £15

If you would like grab a bargain contact Patrick Adams and he will be pleased to relieve you of your money!

Tel: 01531 636951 E-mail: patrick@riversidetraining.co.uk

ALSO IN STOCK

Baseball Caps	£10.00
Woolly Hats	£8.50
Club Ties	£6.50
Seat Grips	£10.00

More articles please!

Your bungling editor is constantly desperate for material to fill the next newsletter, so please dig out those amusing photos, or get composing (and save him from having to write possibly libellous articles himself). What about some more news from the Juniors?



10th Anniversary Party

Upton Rowing Club

Celebrate 10 years on the water

**With a Cruise on
The M V Conway Castle**

Friday 9th September

From 8.00pm to 11.30pm Boarding from 7.30pm

Tickets: £25 per person
To include De Luxe Fork Supper
Live 60's to 90's Cover band

A cruise on the best stretch of rowing on the Severn!!

Fully Licensed Bar

Dress: Black Tie

For tickets and further information contact:

**Ros Adams, Greenbank
The Common, Wellington Heath
Nr Ledbury HR8 1LU**

Tel: 01531 636951

ros@riversidetraining.co.uk