



NEWSLETTER

March 2005

Editorial

'Yet another cancelled Upton Head' is one of those phrases we long to stop repeating. Excessive wind was our problem this time, something on which Ron Paterson was well-qualified to adjudicate as HoR Chief umpire, having miraculously and poetically survived huge waves on the Tideway with an Upton VIII last spring. Poetry appears here again in a therapeutic role to enable us to come to terms with our loss. As the disappointment recedes we look forward to calmer waters for the rest of 2005, with news items on the Upton Marathon, Upton Regatta and the World Cup Regatta. We have a new Acting Club Captain and a newly-fledged clutch of coaches, so the club is now well-placed to accommodate beginners and raise standards among existing members. The women's squad, for example, has survived a brutal new coaching regime (more on this from me later) and represented the club well at two Heads of the River. We have a string of social events to look forward to and some novel fund-raising ideas from Kath. Finally, after an evening's instruction on 'British Rowing Technique' from Jo Atkinson, there has been a rush to buy Pilates Cushions designed to improve core stability. Pre-outing chat in the boathouse has been enlivened by debate about whether to use them with the nipples up or down (on the cushion, that is).

Johnny Birks

Your Committee (and non-committee posts)

There is just one change to report on the committee: Following Stewart Robinson's resignation as Club Captain due to pressure of work (thank you for all your hard work Stewart), Steve Cox has been appointed as Acting Captain by the Committee. Steve is still helping to organise Junior rowing together with Clive Killick and Kath Means. The Committee will probably be looking for a new Junior organiser from among the newly qualified coaches within the club.

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	Clive Killick	01531 640052	07747 767456	rckillick@hotmail.com
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

Captain's Log

Both the women's and men's squads have been training at regular times on Saturdays, though absence, injury and illness have limited the numbers attending men's squad sessions. There has been little competitive rowing to report. However, a veteran women's VIII (Linda Scott, Freya Biggs, Joy Larner, Deidre Thompson, Angela Rodway, Sue Martin, Annie Surman, Pauline Mason and cox Johnny Birks) raced at Senior 4 in the Worcester HoR on 26th February. Although well beaten by a young Stourport crew, the Upton VIII had a good row and finished over 40 seconds ahead of a Bewdley crew.

Almost the same crew (Sandy Barker replaced Linda Scott) went to the Tideway on 20th March 2005 for the Veterans' Head. They had a good row, coming second in their division and beating some younger crews (2 x women's Vet A, a women's Vet C and a mixed Vet C). John Dean provided valuable support on the day and was a tower of strength (literally) when the now traditional trailer-towing incident on the way home brought some colour and excitement to the otherwise empty lives of car-drivers near Hammersmith Bridge (bound to be a poem out about this soon! Ed.).

Thanks are due to all those who have helped to coach the women's squad over the winter, and to Bob Hinds, Boatmaster, who has worked tirelessly to maintain and repair the equipment.

After Easter, club rowing will take place on Sundays at 10am and Wednesdays at 6.30pm (to follow on from winter circuit training – thanks to Freya for running this again). The women's squad plan to continue their Saturday morning sessions.



Our women's Vet D VIII in the marshalling zone above Chiswick Bridge before their row in the Veterans' Head



Approaching the finish at Putney – you can almost hear the grunts!

Fundraising, fundraising, fundraising.....

Kath Means reports:

Upton Rowing Club has set a very ambitious fundraising target of £25,000. Our aim is to buy new boats and equipment so that we can develop and extend both Junior and Veteran rowing opportunities. We hope to purchase 2 new singles, a double scull, a lightweight quad (for women and young juniors), contribute to a new eight and buy various needed accessories (like blades and shoes).

To reach this target we need support from all members. Our strategy involves a number of different activities:

- a Corporate Appeal (raising donations from businesses who sponsor the URC),
- submitting proposals for matching grants funds from various bodies,
- involving the juniors in 'Push Yourself', a programme where junior rowers obtain sponsors who pledge a contribution for the kilometres juniors row in practice and regattas this year,
- various rowing and social events.

In the next month URC members will receive details of the Corporate Appeal in the mail. We will be asking all of you to look at this programme and contact us if you know of any companies in the region that we should be contacting. Many of the Juniors have received their information on the 'Push Yourself' programme and this is hoped to be in full swing after Easter.

Committee and members have been busy organising some engaging and challenging social functions that cater to all tastes. We have already had a fun and successful quiz night and are looking forward to Line Dancing in May!

SOCIAL CALENDAR

Look out for the following events!!

- *Line Dancing – Friday May 13th in the Memorial Hall*
- *Trip to the World Cup, Dorney Lake – 28th May*
- *A second quiz night – Spring*
- *Pub and clubs*
- *URC Regatta – Sunday 17 July*
- *Summer Garden Party – date to be announced*
- *URC Anniversary Dinner/Ball - Sept.*
- *Grumpy Old Veterans Night Out - Oct*

Hope to see you there!

Kath.

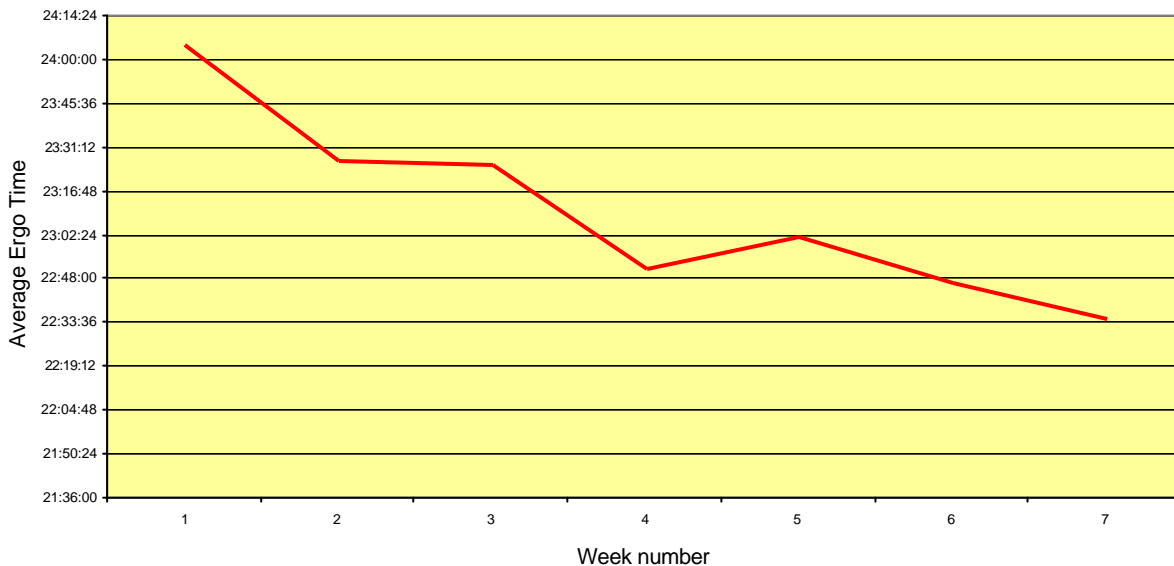
5km Ergo Sessions (or S & M meets Concept 2)

In the interest of improving performance during Head of the River races, several members have submitted to a new form of masochism this year. Rowing five kilometres at firm pressure weekly on the Ergo is as much a mental challenge as a physical one, with the aim each week being to improve upon the previous best time. Like completing a 4+ mile race on the water, achieving

your best Ergo time depends upon carefully choosing and maintaining the highest sustainable pressure. Set off too hard and you risk ‘blowing up’ before the end. Too soft and you finish with a poor time and juice left in the tank.

The benefits of all this masochism are clear: the average of times entered on the weekly ‘torture chart’ in the boathouse fell week by week (by 90 seconds in the first seven weeks for the women’s squad, for example, as shown on the chart below); some impressive 5K times have been achieved (whatever your gender, being born a Barker seems to confer an advantage!); through gritted teeth, the women’s squad report an improvement in endurance during long pieces on the water; some juniors, too, have started entering their times in the boathouse. Congratulations to all who stuck at it and saw their times improve steadily through sheer hard work. Although the HoR season is all but over now, I have a horrible feeling we may revisit this bit of madness next winter.

URC Women's squad average 5km Ergo Times, Spring 2005



My own feeble efforts on the ‘pain chain’ involve constant battles against negative thoughts and the urge to give up in response to imagined injuries. Also, in my gym you have to steel yourself against the pitying looks of other gym users unfamiliar with a pulse rate over 140bpm (I’ve got used to being likened to a demented stick insect). Desperate for inspiration in the later stages of a painful 5K piece, I try to view it as a form of spiritual rebirth resulting, with luck, in a stronger, fitter me. There are some ghastly parallels with my real-life trip down the birth canal nearly 49 years ago: lots of grunting and the odd shriek as I flop damply to a finish amid an array of body fluids, bright red, gasping for air and unable to walk or talk for quite some time. But like a newborn I can drink, and the first one tastes awfully good!

Johnny Birks

Planning the World Cup Regatta

Ron Paterson, ARA Treasurer, ambidextrous Upton rower and part-time poet, gives us an insight into the nitty-gritty of organising the big rowing event of the summer:

Question: How could you use the following items to help you run a major regatta?

- A length of leaky hose
- A case of wine
- 6 cheap fishing nets

These are just some of the hundreds of items that have so far been bought in preparation for the World Cup Regatta at Eton in May. To put you out of your misery, the leaky hose, when laid on the bed of the lake along the finish line and connected to an air pump, creates a 'bubble line' that shows the crews where the finish is. The case of wine is for the Oxfordshire farmer who is kindly letting us store our new umpires' launches in his barn until they are required for the regatta. And the 6 fishing nets will be used between races by the stake boat personnel to fish out the water bottles that the rowers throw overboard at the start.

These examples illustrate the degree of detail that running a big event involves. Conducting the race programme is the easy bit; it is the surrounding logistics that create all the headaches. All the crews have to be met at the airport, conducted to their hotels, and ferried back and forward to the course whenever they want to go, throughout the regatta and the training period before it. Similar arrangements have to be made for the umpires, the media and the other FISA officials. All these people have to be fed and watered, as do the spectators, sponsors and VIPs. Facilities have to be set up at the course for medical care, physiotherapy, drug testing and boat weighing. The gentlemen of the press have to be supplied with suitable work stations, equipped with power and telecommunications. A supply of bicycles has to be arranged to hire out to coaches who want to follow their races (and deposits taken from them to discourage them from accidentally putting them on their boat trailers before heading back to Russia). Overflow parking facilities have to be found on the other side of the Thames, and landing stages have to be built and boats hired to ferry across the people who use them. Grandstands have to be erected, together with a huge amount of tentage, and all these have to be supplied with electrical power, water supplies and toilet facilities. The whole event has to be planned in conjunction with the BBC, who will be presenting the Grandstand programme from Eton on that day. And so on, and so on.

Organising all of this takes literally thousands of volunteer hours. In my role as treasurer of the event, I am one stage removed from most of this detailed decision-making; however since every decision has a financial implication and since I am custodian of the budget, it is my happy task to keep telling everyone else that they can't spend that amount of money! The total cost of mounting the event will be of the order of £650,000 and we have budgeted for a small deficit, but since this is the first time the regatta has been held at this venue, there are many uncertainties as to the financial outcome. And if £650,000 seems like a lot of money for running a regatta, next year's World Championships is budgeted to cost four times as much. So if you have detected that my hair has recently become both greyer and thinner than you remember it, you now know the reason why. But it's all good fun! (So they tell me.)

Ron Paterson

Upton Regatta

Closer to home, Clive Killick reports on plans for our own Regatta:

The Upton Regatta is planned to take place on Sunday 17th July to coincide with the Blues festival weekend that will no doubt provide an enthusiastic audience. This is a great opportunity to show the club off, to attract new members and make some money. Several people put their hands-up at the AGM to volunteer to help. Yes that's you – Peter, Ros, Patrick, Stewart, Pauline, Terry, Will, Freya, Kath, Gabby, Deirdre and Sandy there is nowhere to hide as the initial committee work will be getting under way soon.

The concept is to run an invitation regatta aimed primarily at veterans with possibly some senior events (novice S4, S3) and novice junior events as well. We should try to speak to the captains of all the invited clubs about one month beforehand to determine the best events to hold, particularly small boats. Wherever possible the events would be round-robin. This makes more work for the organisers and helpers as crews get a free second go if they lose but hopefully the competitors will like our approach and more will come. In addition we plan to have a scratch event with 'committee boats'. The obvious candidate is mixed VIIIs for all-comers. We would share the people out by gender and status to give the best balance possible. One innovation is to specify 'open' events not men's. Hence a club could enter a IV with 3 men and 1 woman or any other mix if they want. May not go slower!

Registration, control commission and boating would be from the club side of the river – the same as the head. Ideally, everything else would be on the town side as close to the bridge as possible. It would be great to have a small enclosure with food tent, PA, etc. because the view of the course is much better from the town side of the river.

All comments gratefully received. More volunteers even more gratefully received. Please look at the list below, if you feel able to take on one of these tasks please contact Clive Killick.

Details:

Date	17 July 2005
Course	1,000 m
Finish line	King's Head flagpole or in regatta enclosure

Regatta Events

Veteran IV+	Novice –handicap C/D/E+F (open, women)
Veteran VIII	Novice – handicap, C, D (open and/or mixed)
Senior IV+	Novice, Sen 4, Sen 3 (open, women)
Junior IV+	Novice (open, women)
Small boats	As requested

Scratch Event

Mixed VIII	mix of male/female/vet/sen/jun
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Things we need to organise

Umpires	Regatta enclosure
Start/Finish	Registration tent
Marshals (boating)	Control commission
Safety Coordinator	Car parking
Life Saving	Publicity
Doctor/Ambulance	Badges
Public Address system	Trophies
Food / drinks and tent	Etc.
Toilets	

There are many laudable and effective ways of achieving closure in the weeks and months that follow a distressing event. Freya Biggs has picked a good 'un – poetry - that is becoming a bit of a club speciality.

HEADACHES

If you should try to hold a Head there's lots of rules which must be read
You must ask British Waterways (whose paperwork is a real maze)
If you can use your own water for clubs from every quarter
To row at UPTON HEAD

Likewise the ARA has ways to make you pay (within five days)
To organise your own event. Of course it's only to prevent
Incidents, that you must install a Committee to plan it all
And run the UPTON HEAD

The planning work takes pride of place so all is ready for the race
You allocate the tasks around - boating, water, power and sound
As each is done, tick the boxes, invite marshals, rowers, coxes
Come to the UPTON HEAD

We must arrange tables and seats, stop watches, clipboards, result sheets
Parking for trailers (but no cars), BBQs, real ale for the bars
Marquees with heating, public loos (enough to avoid lengthy queues)
All for the UPTON HEAD

New Year is here, entries are in, medals are counted for those who'll win
Working parties complete each job, food is collected for the mob
The landing stage is firmly lashed, this year our hopes will not be dashed
We'll hold the UPTON HEAD

URC signs are nailed to handy poles, SARA is briefed, all know their roles
We're ready now for the influx, the treasurer's seeing megabucks
With plans like these what can go wrong for crews from many clubs who long
To win the UPTON HEAD

Alas! Alack! what can this be? Yet another conspiracy
In '03 dense fog (how we swore) followed by high floods in '04
This year the final straw is wind so yet again our plans are binned
Cancel the UPTON HEAD

Are we down-hearted? Course we are - optimism only goes so far
Our best hope for paying the bills may be selling our well-honed skills
To other clubs - "For big fat fees we'll run your Head" - it'd be a breeze
Forget the UPTON HEAD

Yet surely we can stop the rot, perhaps we'll get another slot
When fewer hazards thwart our plans. (Can plagues of frogs cause rowing bans?)
For all those rowers who say 'your venue's wonderful, we'll pay
Please run the UPTON HEAD'

The Upton Marathon – Sunday 2nd April

Yes, once again it's time to grease those buttocks and dig out that extra-comfy cushion to keep you smiling all through the marathon row. Please check the notice board in the boathouse and sign your name up. Helen and I will be yomping up a fell in the Lake District that day, but we'll be thinking of you, buttocks and all!



The women's Vet D VIII replacing lost body fluids on Putney Embankment after the Vet's HoR 2005.