



NEWSLETTER

February 2006

Editorial

Steaming piles of gripping material for you in this one, including your crucial call-up for Upton Regatta duty! Please contact Steve Cox and offer to help if you possibly can. Once you've volunteered, feast your eyes on the rest: news of two successful club mini-heads, a moving report on our Novice Men's first taste of competition, dates of irresistible fundraising events (get polishing those crowns for 'A Right Royal Do'!) and a crucial insight into the secrets of British Rowing Technique. Now it's time for my next Ergo session. Uuuuurghh, why do we do it? For weeks I've been trying to get banned from my gym for excessive grunting and careless fluid disposal. Just my flamin' luck to be surrounded by deaf staff with hygiene standards even lower than mine!

Your Club Needs You!

To help run the Upton Regatta on 29 and 30 July

WE NEED ALL THE HELP WE CAN GET FROM MEMBERS AND FRIENDS!

There will be conventional racing on the Saturday over a 1000m course finishing at the Kings Head (Although crews will be required to cross the finish line *outside* the pub first). We are expecting around 300 rowers on this day.

On the Sunday, we are staging a series of races between crews from local pubs clubs and businesses, whom we will have put through the foundation course during the previous eight weeks and who, fired by the whole experience will, hopefully, rush to join our club.

We therefore need volunteers to help on:-

FRIDAY setting up the landing stages, and boating area generally.

SATURDAY setting up the food and drink area.

Marshalls for organising car parking, getting boats on and off the water, safety on and off the water, etc.

SUNDAY ditto

clearing up.

The venerable Captain Cox will be in touch to silver-tongue you (Which, I am told, is legal in Upton) into volunteering. Please help him by either

- 1) Saying yes.
- 2) Phoning him on his mobile 07779637191 and saying yes.
- 3) E-mailing him on his rather singular e-mail address coxyofmingelane@hotmail.com and saying yes.

Thanks! and happy rowing!!

JD

Captain's Log

Firstly, special thanks to Bob for keeping our boats afloat and in good working order. I'd also like to thank Johnny, Ron and Pauline for their coaching and organising of the ladies' crews. And it's nice to have Clive back getting the juniors ready for racing. Foundation rowers are doing well thanks to Peter, and the Novice men are going well thanks to Patricia. Lets hope for a good Worcester Head!

Mini-heads

Since the last newsletter we've run two successful mini-heads, on 15th January and 12th February. Here's a brief summary of participants and times:

On 15.1.06 we had five crews (4 VIIIs and a double scull) racing up to a fixed turning point marked by the aptly named Graeme Turner in his fine safety boat. In speed order they were

30:32 Men's VIII

Jeremy Harwood, Patrick Adams, Peter Bishton, Bob Hinds, Steve Poole, Stewart Robinson, George Strang, Angus McLeod, cox: Steve Cox

30:52 Women's scratch VIII (including 2 token men)
Pat Cox, Johnny Birks, Lisa Belfield, Sandi Elwell, Angela Rodway, Peter Barker, Joy Larner, Freya Biggs, cox: Karen Lanni

31:30 Women's VIII
Lynne Stirling, Helen Barker, Linda Scott, Deirdre Thompson, Annie Surman, Sue Martin, Sandy Barker, Pauline Mason, cox: Andrea Oliver

32:24 Men's Novice VIII
Dennis Crowley, Ian Mackie, Dan Herbert, Richard Betts, Lewis Jones, Colin Calderwood, Andrew Scott, Brian Swindells, cox: Pat Cox

35:47 Double (James Turner and Johnny Birks)



A (mainly) women's VIII finishes the mini-head on 15.1.06 (photo by Brian Swindells)

On 12.2.06 we had four crews (two VIIIs, a double scull and a pair), but no fixed turning point:

29:39 Men's coxless pair (Mark Brooks and Andrew Longden)

30:27 Men's novice VIII
Jeremy Harwood, Ian Mackie, Andrew Scott, Brian Swindells, Dan Herbert, Richard Betts, Lewis Jones, Colin Calderwood, cox: Pat Cox

31:00 Women's VIII
Karen Lanni, Helen Barker, Annie Surman, Freya Biggs, Sandy Barker, Deirdre Thompson, Linda Scott, Pauline Mason, cox: Andrea Oliver

31:22 Men's double scull (Ron Paterson and Peter Barker)

Many thanks to Gabby and his helpers for their very efficient starting and timekeeping, and to Graeme and James Turner for marking the turning point on January 15th.

Competition

Our Novice Men's VIII had their first taste of serious competition at **Stourport Head of the River**. See the report on this exciting day from Brian Swindells below. Also at Stourport, 'The Phantoms' won their Vet. F event.

Now looking forward to **Worcester HoR**, where we hope to have five crews entered.

Winter training

Wednesday night circuit training at Hanley Castle High School continues to be well attended and makes a really valuable contribution to levels of fitness within the club. I offer special thanks to Freya for organising and running these sessions for our benefit.

Steve

Stourport Winter Head. Class of 2005 hit the Head trail!

The Foundation Course of 2005 made its debut competition appearance as a Novice 8 at the Stourport Boat Club Winter Head on Sunday 29th January 2006.

Up to the Stourport outing, the "Class of 2005" squad had been training as Dennis Crowley in the bow, Ian Mackie, Dan Herbert, Richard Betts, Lewis Jones, Colin Calderwood, Andrew Scott and me with Pat coxing, cajoling and encouraging the flagging flesh!

Unfortunately, for this Stourport event, Dan and Andrew had commitments elsewhere and, in their absence, we were joined by Jeremy Harwood, sitting in for Dan, and Peter Barker at stroke with me dropping back in to the vacant seven seat.

Drawn in Division One, and boating at 10.20am, meant an early start. We left Upton at 8am with Peter in charge of towing and enjoyed a clear trip to Stourport marred only by coming across Monmouth RC trailer and boats in disarray on the A449 north of Worcester. It transpired that their trailer turned over, destroying their boats and their day out. But it can happen to anyone – as Upton folklore attests!

The event was well supported with over 200 entries; in order to cope, Stourport BC had borrowed our pontoons to extend their landing stage capacity. The scene was one of

“boats everywhere” in various stages of preparation. The weather was great – cold but glorious sunshine.



The ‘Class of 2005’ at Stourport HoR (including subs. Jeremy Harwood and Peter Barker)

Boated on time at 10.20am – Stourport organisation was exemplary. Paddled up to the start. Waited sometime in the bank with Dennis anchoring us to a tree whilst the fours, pairs and singles started. Cheered on the “Upton Phantoms” Vet F 4+ crew as they cruised by demonstrating their “how it should be done” immaculate blade work.

In our class, Open Novice 8+, were crews from Sir William Borolase and University of Birmingham. UoB were drawn in Division Two but Borolase were with us in Division One and were, at least potentially, direct competition. “They are a school crew from Marlow” said Peter, “probably all the size of Stephen Redgrave” he added as encouragement! In the event Borolase started ahead of us, and even though in size they didn’t bear any resemblance to Sir Stephen, we didn’t give them any problems!

We started strongly and seemed to going quite fast, but then we were overtaken by an 8 going considerably faster – a bit of a put down! “They have a lot of experience, been rowing together for a long time” comforted Peter! The event passed in a bit of a blur with major effort going into holding off boats bearing down upon us in the last 1000m.

We finished third – out of three! UoB won in 12:59 beating Borolase by one second; and we cruised home in 15:51. “Well, they are younger crews” said Peter in sympathy.

A vote of thanks to the URC members who kindly loaned us club Zephyr tops – as a result we competed in style!

Flying the Upton flag more successfully, the Phantoms won the Open Vet F 4+ although the win was somewhat diminished by their Monmouth competition having come to grief earlier in the mishap on the A449.

Bearing in mind rule one of the Foundation Course notes – “Enjoy your rowing” – we had a most successful day out!

Brian Swindells

Bell Notes

As I mentioned in a recent missive, the wild winds, rushing rain, wicked waves and fick fog stayed clear of our normal Upton Head day – pity we had cancelled it two months before, really. However, I suspect that had we not cancelled, then Upton would have been knee-deep in locusts, or frogs or, for all I know, little furry things with three eyes and five and a half legs. Upton has a lot to thank us for!

The recent Quiz Night was a great success, with over 70 folk turning up to have their brains fried by the devilish questions set by Stewart and Sheena. (And I still think that Ben Elton was the answer to at least one of them). Thanks are also due to Ian - for the weird and wonderful implements he brought along (What a very strange profession) – and all those who contributed to the success of the evening.

We are in the process of putting together a funding bid to the A.R.A. that will enable us to purchase two recreational rowing boats. These will be wide (i.e. stable) and come equipped with both sculling and sweep oar rigging and blades. So if you fancy a gentle row with like-minded folk this summer - perhaps enjoying the odd cucumber sandwich and glass of vino - then God (And the A.R.A) willing, you may be able to do just that. The slight downside is that we have to fund part of it ourselves (Over 3k) – so if you and your friends can attend any (or all!) of the events scheduled for this financial year, please do so.

Finally, take a look at the URC web site: under “Our club” there lies a tale of derring-do in the year of our Lord 1835. Nice to see we follow an old tradition.....

Good rowing!

John Dean

British Rowing Technique

On 6th February 2006 four URC members (Andrea, Sandy, Peter and Johnny) attended an excellent seminar on 'British Rowing Technique' at Worcester Rowing Club. Organised by WRC's Mark Perkins and delivered by the ARA's under 23 squad coach Darren Whiter, this was a valuable opportunity for coaches to hear first-hand some of the training secrets that have brought such success to the GB squad. We were bombarded with new ideas for improving our approach to rowing at Upton, and I couldn't scribble fast enough to get it all down. Several memorable phrases helped the ideas to stick:

'Mental toughness', 'the race starts again at halfway', 'the training programme makes winners', 'taking the wheels into the water' (meaning we keep the seat moving forward up the slide until the blade enters the water), 'claws not paws' (meaning the correct hand and wrist position at the catch), 'the stroke ends when the arms bend'.

We learnt that the key elements of good technique are:

1. Good, strong posture through the stroke, emphasizing pelvic tilt and keeping the lower back straight as one approaches the catch
2. Effective stroke length by staying 'long in the arms' and using a strong sequence of muscle groups, using the back's power to continue the legs' acceleration
3. Sequencing of the drive phase (legs produce 46% of the power, the trunk 31% and the arms 23%)
4. Distance moved per stroke (maximized by getting all the above right!).

We also learnt the principles of training:

Specificity – the best training is specific to rowing

Progression

Overload

Reversibility

Type – cross-training has some value, but it won't make you better at rowing!

But the key to good training comes from RECOVERY!

Committee 2005/6

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2006 SOCIAL CALENDAR

- Friday 24th February 2006** Skittles Evening, Drum and Monkey, Newbridge Green, Upton. Contact Jo Hammett on 01684 592642 or John Dean on 01684 594221 / jwd@dsl.pipex.com to reserve your place.
- Saturday 8th April 2006** 'A Right Royal Do' in the Memorial Hall, Upton. Contact Pauline (01684 593194) for tickets.
- Sunday 23rd April 2006** Sponsored half marathon to Tewkesbury (Upper Lode) and back followed by boat(s) naming ceremony and brunch.
- Saturday 6th May 2006** Spring Fayre, in the morning in the Memorial Hall, Upton
- Sunday 18th June 2006** Garden Party in the afternoon at Welland Court
- Saturday 29th July 2006** Upton Regatta
- Sunday 30th July 2006** Upton Sprint Regatta for novice crews from pubs, clubs, firms and just good friends.
- Friday 13th October 2006** Upton RC Club Dinner, Memorial Hall Upton
- November 2006** Line dancing in the Memorial Hall - Date to be confirmed

We look forward to seeing there!

Peter Barker and the hard working sub-committee