



NEWSLETTER

November 2006

Editorial

Welcome to the first newsletter following the AGM in September. We now have a brand new committee building on the work of John Dean's team to move the club forward, with energy and ideas positively pumping out from the pages that follow. Three cheers to those people who stepped forward to fill the vacant positions. All power to their collective elbow! You'll read lots about them and from them below, including a new and journalistically innovative section entitled 'Member of the Month'. Which brave soul was the first to subject herself to the Editor's amateurish probing? Find out later!

It's a pleasure to reveal that some members are re-arranging their ornaments to make space for shiny new tankards and medals on their mantelpieces: our women's squad deserve congratulations for two wins in the autumn Heads of the River, and the Phantoms have continued their winning ways. None of this would be possible, of course, without the hard work of some important people: Bob Hinds has had a busy few months repairing careless damage to our precious boats – we owe him huge thanks (and let's take more care in future!); we are very grateful to Brian Swindells for wrestling calmly and efficiently within the rules to ensure that our competition entries are submitted properly and on time; finally, we are indebted to Freya Biggs (one of said ornament re-arrangers), for the magic she works on our bodies at circuit training every Wednesday evening. Not tried it yet? Then come to Hanley Castle School at 7.30pm and prepare to be amazed. All welcome. Be there or be square!

One issue we must resolve is the need for a team to coach our novice juniors, now that Steve Cox has stepped down after a long and heroic stint (many thanks Steve!). This is a serious blot on our landscape. Think about it: how will it feel to keep turning away all junior beginners that approach our club hoping to learn to row? Let's sort it! You'll hear more about this at the end.

Thoughts from our new Captain

Fresh off the plane from Brazil, our breathless new Captain, Debbie Thompson, offers some thoughts on her vision for the club:

“I'd like this to be a year in which the club goes forward and we start to learn from everything we do. I'd like the coxes to all be fully trained to the same level so that in theory it doesn't matter which cox is allocated to which crew. We already have a lot to learn from this year's pubs & clubs regatta and open day, from both of which I hope we can recruit more members from next year. For the coming weeks I would like to continue running Steve's successful mini-heads and possibly start to invite guest crews from Worcester. I'd like to encourage those who want to race so that we can get a higher profile with local rowing clubs and possibly win some pots etc, whilst accommodating those who don't wish to race.”

The Mini-Heads are back!

Following the trend started by Steve Cox last winter, we've launched the Sunday mini-heads again (and the fierce spirit of competition that they produce among our members). The first was held in calm, sunny conditions on 4th November 2006. Racing in two divisions from outside the King's Head, rowing upstream to a turning point at the cattle drink near the White House, then back downstream to the King's Head (total distance about 7km), these mini-heads are great practice for long-distance Head of the River rowing. Results from 4th November are, in speed order:

Category	Crew (bow named first)	Time (minutes:seconds)
Men's pair	Mark Brooks & Andrew Longden	30:30
Mixed coxed IV	Dan Herbert, Helen Barker, Leonie Collier, Johnny Birks & Karen Lanni (cox)	31:17
Women's coxed IV	Angela Rodway, Sue Martin, Lynne Stirling, Freya Biggs & Angus Macleod (cox)	32:21
Men's coxed IV	Ian Mackie, Richard Betts, Brian Swindells, Peter Barker & Mark Brooks (cox)	32:23
Men's single scull	Ron Paterson	33:10
Women's coxed IV	Lisa Belfield, Sandi Elwell, Linda Scott, Deirdre Thompson & Karen Lanni (cox)	34:02

N.B. A junior quad did the course earlier in the day and recorded a good time (which excluded their turning time)

Special thanks to Gabby Tolkien and Jo Hammett for recording the times, and to Mercia Rescue for providing safety cover. Conditions permitting, the next Mini-Head will be held on Sunday 10th December 2006.

Admin News (from Angus, our new Chairman)

We have a new administration – please see the panel at the end of the newsletter. The Regatta and Heads sub-committees have been merged. The club development focus group is continuing and an administration focus group will be meeting to recommend improvements.

The novice junior activity of the club has, regrettably, been suspended until further notice.

With your help we will have a Spring 2007 event to recruit new members similar to last year's 'Pubs & Clubs' with racing in restricted boats. We will be looking again for corporate teams as well.

Our new Welfare Adviser is Helen Barker (picture and contact details on the notice-board). And a new post of Social Events Coordinator has been created and is held by Helen George.

Will Dutson has been appointed Asset Manager following his detailed audit of club assets. Working closely with the Boatmaster and the Captain, the Asset Manager will have a very positive contribution ensuring that our assets are better preserved and that the Boatmaster is not burdened with so many unnecessary repairs. It is the case that the Boatmaster has been under a lot of pressure due to boat damage in recent months. Much of this has not been reported and this must change. Examples include fin and rudder damage to an VIII, deep and expensive scratching of a quad and damage to blades and riggers. He asks that all club rowers take improved care and attention to the careful handling of boats and blades in particular. If there are members who wish to be involved in learning and helping with the less demanding maintenance this is likely to be welcome!

Two of our boats, *Derby and Joan* and *Eric*, are now back after having their 'shoulders' repaired. The orange launch will have a replacement engine and the other club launch is under repair and will be back on the water soon. The club is undergoing a survey to review how we look after our assets and what, if anything, can be done to further secure their practical value to the membership. The racking is being adjusted to create more space between boats.

New suppliers of splash-tops are being identified to improve delivery.

We have a temporary moratorium on spending while we wait for membership fees – if you have not yet paid, please do so now!

Autumn Successes at Stourport!

Our crews have enjoyed racing at local autumn Heads of the River (HoRs), especially at Stourport, where one of our women's IVs won in both September and November. Joy Larner, Sue Martin, Lynne Stirling and Freya Biggs (+ cox Johnny Birks) won a Vet D/C handicap on 23rd September 2006 (another Upton crew came second: Linda Scott, Helen Barker, Sandy Barker, Pauline Mason + cox Peter Barker). The same crew (coxed by Andrea Oliver) won again at Senior 4 at the Stourport small boats Head on 12th November, beating crews (half their age!) from Bewdley and Stourport. 'The Phantoms' also won their Vet F/G category on the same day, and a mixed IV (Dan Herbert, Helen Barker, Leonie Collier and Johnny Birks (+ cox Karen Lanni) had an enjoyable row.

We've also had crews racing recently at Worcester HoR (two women's IVs) and the Veteran Fours Head on the Tideway (a women's IV+ and a men's quad).



Upton's Women's Vet D IV+ with the first of its autumn pots at Stourport (23.9.06)!

On The Starboard Beam (a new column from our Chairman)

This marvellous club provides many of us with real enjoyment. It's not just a club but a functional family, giving, taking, pulling, pushing but always supportive of the overall aims: to maintain this precious gift and to nurture and grow it without losing the very essence of its ambience and rapport. John Dean and his team have done a great job in nurturing this family – I am not sure whether to thank him or throttle him for the opportunity to follow meekly in his footsteps!

The club is in good hands, some soiled and blistered from years of service, some pink and fresh! I am very happy to see Debbie Thompson as Captain: her youth and enthusiasm should help build bridges into the wider community we serve. We welcome Helen Barker as Welfare Adviser and a new role 'Social Events Co-ordinator' is in the capable hands of Helen George. There are many other unsung heroes including Bob Hinds who as Boat Master, keeps us afloat – literally!

There are strengths and weakness in the Junior Division. We need further coaches willing to help out with both the competitive and novice membership. In the summer weekday evenings and some Sunday mornings our competitive squads need coaching support. The coaching activity is led by Clive Killick (at the World Championships his name was often the first that came up when Upton was mentioned). Sadly, for this term, there is no novice junior activity due to a lack of coaches willing to support them – this is a blow. If you think that you might like to co-ordinate and/or coach to help our junior division next term, then do please come forward now. We need more coxes too – would you or any children enjoy that?

Many of you have skills and networks that are not yet harnessed in the service of this family. Please encourage corporate partnerships (see me or Peter Barker for further information), recruit people of all ages, promote and inform at work and in your other clubs, associations and networks. Do these things now and our family will grow and become stronger and healthier.

Angus McLeod
Chairman

Member of the Month
Helen George
(Social Events Co-ordinator)



When did you join Upton Rowing Club?

I joined the club in January 2006 and I expect most members heard of me, before they ever met me, as I had a rather unfortunate/embarrassing first outing. I lost my footing on the 'arnco' as we placed the boat down onto the murky and freezing water of the marina, and promptly fell in up to my waist! Needless to say 'lesson number 1' had to be abandoned so I could dash home and get out of my cold clothes. I did wonder if this was a sign that I wasn't born to be a rower, but I came back the following week, got through the foundation course and am really enjoying it.

What made you decide to take up rowing?

My partner Alan and I are fortunate to live alongside the Severn, and so we joined partly to make more use of the river and to get away from the monotony of the gym. I used to live by the Thames down in London and always regretted that I hadn't enjoyed the river more.

How do you see your new role in the club?

I think the creation of the role is a great idea, to pull together ideas and coordinate get-togethers and celebrations.

Strokeside or Bowside?

I'm ambidextrous/not fussy! But I also really enjoy sculling, which I'd love to do more of. It feels so much more balanced and almost graceful, although the fear of falling in the marina again, will prevent me from braving a single scull for a while!

Your favourite drink:

I do have my weaknesses, namely Amaretto and Kaluha, and I would not turn down a good glass of wine – any colour will do.

Favourite meal:

I'm a big fan of seafood and Italian food. I spent a few days in Venice this summer and enjoyed the most wonderful seafood pastas and risottos – heaven. And whilst I'm not a fan of a lot of desserts, if it's chocolate, I'm interested. Although I have to say the chocolate cheesecake the Upton RC Annual Dinner this year, was so deliciously rich and chocolaty, it even defeated me!

How has your life changed since taking up rowing?

I'm cursing myself for not taking it up sooner – it is certainly a good all-round form of exercise and I feel fitter than I have in a long time – probably a combination of the rowing action and the fantastic fresh air along the river. It's a far cry from a gym in the basement of a building in London! I have also gained an interesting collection of bruises!

If you have any suggestions for social events in 2007, please drop a line to: helenngorge@gmail.com

Social Calendar

Helen and others are already beavering away to create an exciting programme of social events for 2007. You'll have to wait a bit for this, but in the meantime here's a delicious taster to stick in your diary:

'Buon appetito!' To celebrate the New Year, a dinner is being organised at Puccini's Italian Restaurant in Upton on Thursday 11th January 2007. Details will be circulated soon.

More New Boats!

Clive Killick has secured a gift to the club in the form of two Janousek 4s. A much-needed junior quad and a 12.5 stone quad that is likely to be converted into a 4-. Both hulls are Janousek hulls in very good condition.

Racking Re-arranged!

Thanks to high water and cancelled club rowing, on 26th November a fine team of technicians re-spaced the junior racking in the boathouse to reduce the risk of damage to boats.



Andrew and Mark at work on the racking

Sydney 2009 World Masters Games Anyone?

Peter Barker and Colin Calderwood (who has moved to live 'down under') are planning to enhance Upton RC's international activities with a two-week sporting trip cum rowing tour to Australia (dare we set foot down there, given the way the Ashes series has started?!). Peter and

Colin are keen to hear from any members interested in going (email them on ppb@stratascan.co.uk and chhecalderswood@aol.com). This extract from the Sydney 2009 World Masters Games Newsletter gives you a taster:

As the next host city for the World Masters Games we will be striving to learn from and build upon your passion for Masters sport. Whether you were part of Melbourne's 24,886 athletes in 2002 or if you were among the throng of 21,600 at Edmonton last year, we want to make sure you make your mark in Sydney! At this early stage in planning, we only wish to say G'Day and remind you to mark October 2009 in your diaries as your time to take part in what shapes to be the world's largest ever multi-sport event. We would love to keep in touch, so look forward to the next newsletter that will detail the Games dates, the complete sports program and much more! In the meantime, check out our website at www.2009worldmasters.com or click on the link below.

Keep active and we look forward to seeing you in Sydney in 2009!

Colin suggests the following rough itinerary:

I would suggest the first week in Canberra to get acclimatized, do some training, see the sights of the national capital (there are quite a few vineyards close-by) and get over the jet lag, then up to Sydney for the games in the second week. Sydney is only 180 miles away. People might also want to think of stopping over on the flight across for a night or two in Hong Kong or Singapore.

Calling all who can help with novice juniors!

Since Steve Cox has stepped down (deservedly) after years of hard work, no one has come forward to organize and coach young beginners that wish to join up and learn to row. Do we really want our club to fossilize into a veteran ghetto for want of a thriving junior section? That's the way we're heading if we fail to re-establish a system to cater for novice juniors.



*Ali Wilkinson and Stacie Birks learning to scull in 'Baz' on the end of a rope in Upton Marina, summer 2006.
Will they get the chance to progress in 2007?*

The solution is simple: we need one or two people (they don't need to be coaches, nor even rowers) with the energy and organising skills to make things happen. Coaching novice juniors probably requires a team of at least two coaches plus helpers (all to be CRB cleared through our Welfare Officer) organised into a proper schedule. Our club has several qualified coaches. Are you one that could put time into a junior coaching rota set up and run by the organiser? Equally, the juniors need to show commitment by turning up regularly. So the critical person (or people) is the organiser who can establish and maintain commitment on both sides. Are you out there? If so, contact Angus and help to keep this club alive and kicking, innit?!

And finally, a couple of pictures of prize-winners at the club dinner on 13th October 2006



Cox of the Year, Andrea Oliver



Top Junior Crew, coached by Clive Killick

**Upton Rowing Club Committee
September 2006**

Post	Name	Home	Office	Mobile	E Mail or postal address
Chairman	Angus McLeod	01905 757587		07899 757585	chairman@uptonrc.org.uk a.mcleod@virgin.net
Secretary	Karen Hughes	01684 893638	01684 580482	07973 383452	secretary@upton.org.uk karen.e.hughes@lmco.com kesnooze@hotmail.com
Treasurer	Andrea Oliver	01684 593180		07947 806897	andrea.oliver@virgin.net
Captain	Debbie Thompson	01684 592035		07931 988688	Debs_rowing@hotmail.co.uk
Membership Secretary	Freya Biggs	01684 592007		07968 919939	Holly Villa, East Waterside Upton upon Severn, WR8 0PB
Boatmaster	Bob Hinds	01905 820887			27 Rookery Road, Kempsey Worcester, WR5 3JP
Junior Organiser Fundraising Co-ordinator	TBC Daniel Herbert	01684 576337		07906 211161	dherbert@brookes.ac.uk
Ordinary Member and Kit Sales	Sue Clifford	01684 310813			sueclifford1@hotmail.com
Ordinary Member	Peter Barker	01684 592906		07974 158839	ppb@stratascan.co.uk

Additional Posts

Women's Vice Captain	Lynne Stirling	01905 757587		0795 6518368	lystirling@yahoo.co.uk
Men's Vice Captain	Mark Brooks	01242 216764	01242 216764		m.r.brooks@talk21.com
President	Dave Semple	01684 593505		07778 755236	dsemple@dowtyauto.com
Vice President And Safety Adviser	Gabby Tolkien	01386 45334			gtolkien@onetel.co.uk
Welfare Adviser	Helen Barker	01684 575876			barkerbirks@btinternet.com
Social Events Coordinator	Helen George				helenngorge@gmail.com
Junior Representative	TBD				
Newsletter Editor	Johnny Birks	01684 575876	01531 636441	07974 083763	johnnybirks@vwt.org.uk
Asset Manager	Will Dutson	01684 293774		07980 708412	will.dutson@btinternet.com

Please check this table for errors and omissions and tell me. Thanks, Johnny