

The Scarlet Blade



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We have been very pleased with the response to the new headline and the developing news format which we will try and improve in the coming editions. Please feel free to write to me at the club with other suggestions and I would very much like to publish any comments on rowing, the Club or even pieces of scandal for the Scarlet Blade.

Coming up: the Head results, the Annual Dinner, regatta season preview, international hopes, two spring regattas and a 'new' Land Rover at last, a fabulous Caribbean evening and of course the Scarlet Blade on the rampage (or is it the back-page?)

Head Results

We continue to boat vast numbers of crews which was shown at the recent Kingston, Womens' and Tideway Heads. At Kingston we boated only 12 eights and a four, because we did not have boats for other crews! At the Womens' Head we boated five eights and at the Tideway, 10 eights, giving a fantastic active involvement of 135 people. Add to this six girls in the womens squad and two in the mens (not to mention those at Leander) and we are talking **B I G!**

At the Womens' Head there were some excellent results with our girls in the squad eight winning most impressively. Our womens senior A eight continued the great run we are having in womens' heads by taking the Senior A pennant, although finishing second in the event - Thames winning the top club pennant. Another remarkable result was our "Wrinklies" womens' Veteran A eight winning the Veteran pennant from strong Civil Service (including Maggie Phillips) and Thames oldies - showing there's life in the old birds yet!

The Kingston Head was again impeccably run by Brian Colbourne, who works quietly behind the scenes and comes along a week before the event to announce that virtually everything is done and we have another record entry. So, the club is morally obliged to go out and win the event - which they duly did in great style. With almost our strongest possible eight the crew rowed right away from Goldie, who obviously thought it was another bumps competition by starting a few inches behind, to win by 17 seconds in a very fast time. The club's Thames Cup hopefuls had an average row to finish ninth overall but comfortably won the Senior II (B) pennant. The third win was hard earned by the womens eight beating a strong UL/Staines composite by a few seconds amid much whooping and shouting.

The Tideway Head was held with a strong tail wind down the course providing perfect conditions for the crews. The first eight were deprived of the services of Chris Andrews (rowing in the squad sculling crew) and Terry Hine (who was working) but rowed to the best of their ability to finish 25th. The senior II eight again did not live up to their potential and finished just seven seconds down on Emanuel School who won the pennant, in 41st place. The part time semi-veteran eight with some of our past stars were celebrating long and hard when the first results came out and were in 34th place, but the time keepers obviously could not believe their time either and dropped them back to 61st place. The senior Cs finished a creditable 124th, just ahead of the veteran eight which did so well last year.

There were also two surprises later in the Head, when a KRC/KCS combination climbed into the top 100 despite rowing off the tide. The second surprise was Nick Ronald and Ian South finishing the course and actually overtaking a number of crews in the process! The pick of the club's results were Chris Andrews and Farrel Mossop who came fourth in the Sculling Squad eight, starting almost last and with no tide.

Annual Dinner

A fantastic turnout of our 160 people at Twickenham Rugby Ground testifies to the new spirit within the club. An excellent speech by the replacement, Dan Topolski, followed captin Matthew Christie's brief summary of last season and Ali Bonner's controversial outpouring on the plight of the women at the club. Our first respondent gives his opinion later. Maurice Hayes deservedly won the Pou Pah cup for the member putting in the most time and effort on behalf of the club. But the undoubted highlight of the speakers was Godfrey Woods, who proposed the health of the President, Leslie Parsons. An entirely off the cuff dig at all the previous speakers as well as his proposals, had everyone in stitches. A marvellous evening and a tribute to the organisation of Louise Norie and the participation by members of all ages.

Daf Sprint at Kingston

On Sunday 8th May the Southern regional heat of the Leyland Daf Sprint is being held at Kingston. We will of course be entering strong crews once again despite the fact that there is a selection regatta in Ghent on that day. We will need lots of help to make the event run smoothly. The event is being co-ordinated by Scott Tunbridge and there will be meetings at the club on Thursday 21st April and Sunday 24th April at 8.30pm and 12.30pm respectively. This will be to discuss both the Daf Sprint and Kingston Sprint, which is on Bank Holiday Monday, 30th May. Please come and make yourself useful as it is a great form of income to the club.

Kingston Sprint Regatta

This year we have reverted back to the Bank Holiday date which follows the Docklands Regatta and we are hopeful of a large entry and 8 hours of racing. We will again need your help so come to one of the two meetings to discuss the jobs that need to be done (21st or 24th April).

A 'New' Land Rover at last

The committee has finally taken their lives into their hands and purchased a second-hand Land Rover for towing boats around the country. Last year we spent nearly £1,500 on hire charges and this will undoubtedly rise over the years. The cost of the vehicle is just over £3,000 and we are going to launch an appeal to raise the money to pay back the loan obtained to buy the vehicle just before the Head.

We Want Your Money!

Buy a piece of the action! We are selling 'shares' in the Land Rover at £5.00 each. There are 600 shares and there will be a large poster put up at the club to show our progress. There is a form at the bottom of one of the newsletter sheets for your pledge or your money and your name (or indeed company name) will be displayed when you purchase a share. There are no restrictions on the number of shares available per person or organisation. We are aiming to have bought the vehicle by the end of the summer season to keep interest charges to a minimum. PLEASE BE AS GENEROUS AS YOU CAN. As an added incentive we will give a prize of £100 to a lucky winner as well as runner up prizes, in a grand draw when the target is achieved.

Regatta Preview

It's early days yet of course with the Heads just finished but we will give you a brief run down of the crews you can watch out for and more dates of likely regattas.

The men's novice and senior III (C) section have shown plenty of promise in the winter events but have been hit by illness, injury, boat breakage and ski-ing! Nick and Ian are confident that they will have novice and senior III eights, as well as a senior III four which will be winning before long.

The equivalent womens section has two eights worth of crews and should be very competitive in eights and fours - boats permitting.

The womens senior group will be aiming to race in Senior II and I fours, Senior I eights as well as a lightweight four or double. The mens club group will have the aim of a top result in the Thames Cup and wins at Senior II and I in eights and fours.

The top mens group seem likely to aim for coxed and coxless fours once again, although there has been talk of a Ladies Plate eight if all our wanderers return - and we would be very pleased to see them; well most of them! There is also a lightweight four who have been training in a quad so this is another possibility for Henley. There will be an update on Henley form in the next edition.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:-

April 23rd	Hammersmith
May 8th	<u>Powersprint at Kingston</u>
May 14th	Thames Ditton, Notts City
May 15th	Metropolitan (Docklands), Notts City
May 21st	Twickenham
May 28th/29th	Docklands
May 30th	<u>Kingston Sprint</u>
June 4th	Walton
June 11th/12th	Reading Amateur
June 18th	Marlow, Womens Henley
June 29th-July 3rd	Henley Royal
July 9th	Kingston Amateur

Caribbean Evening

A superb evening's entertainment with fire eaters (not Ian South) sword swallowers (Paul Wensley will eat anything!), limbo dancing, ALL in fancy dress. Real caribbean drinks and food from the beaches of Barbados - we'll scrape off the sand. So dust off your flip flops, pull on some loud Bermuda shorts and be there - it's crucial man. Cost £6.00 all inclusive and you will need the date - Saturday 21st May at 7.30pm.

Veteran World Championships

Captain Matthew has asked that anyone wishing to take part in the FISA Veteran Champs being held this year at Strathclyde on September 9th/10th, should contact him so that he can book accommodation.

Henley Sponsorship

It is likely that we will have up to three eights, three fours, a quad and a double scull amongst others at Henley this year. Why not approach your company to sponsor one of the crews for sweat shirts and a weeks accommodation. We estimate the cost will be around £500 per crew. We had three sponsors last year who contributed to the crews' cause and it was much appreciated. For the womens' group we will have a least four crews competing at the National Championships and they would benefit from a similar deal to enable them to train on the course before their big races. If you need any help contact Scott for more details.

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Dear Scarlet Blade,

Re: Alison Bonner's Speech - Annual Dinner

I would like to point out that whilst Miss Bonner's speech may well have had a point and was amusing at times, it contained several misconceptions and inaccuracies; these are easy mistakes to make for someone who has only been a member of the club for some 18 months and who has little or no idea of the mechanics of running KRC, but I believe the main problem was that it was mistimed to say the least. Her speech begged a reply.

Misconceptions : Miss Bonner seems to fail to realise that rowing is an old sport which is very much rooted in what are old (possibly staid) traditions, and change as in all things is slow. This club is now 130 years old and I'm afraid on that basis womens rowing only makes up an 11th of the tradition.

Yes, women do make up 25% of our active membership but are, in majority, of lower status - there are very few Elite oarswomen at KRC, those that are, in main have joined us from elsewhere. We do not buy equipment for our lower status men either.

Inaccuracies : The boats damaged at the Serpentine have merely been replaced and as no womens' boats were damaged naturally they have not received any new ones.

Alison referred to our winning the Womens Victor Ludorum at the Nationals - this was not truly representative of KRC womens rowing as it was achieved by Alison winning coxless pairs in a squad composite, Fiona Johnson winning coxed fours in a squad composite, Sue Rollason and partner (both from Luxembourg) winning Lightweight Doubles and a quad taking a silver which, although entered as Kingston, actually contained two Lea girls. Does this make us the leading womens club in the country? - a dubious claim, I personally feel.

One problem is that we have a very strong mens section who have Henley Royal Regatta to aim for (and succeed at to one degree or another) whereas the women, if they have an ultimate target from club level, must be looking towards the Nationals - all too often in the past our girls have not even raced at the Champs - how can they be taken seriously?

The idea of this letter is not to provoke but merely to point out an overall view of the problem faced at KRC - I just think it was a great shame that none of the womens 1st eight nor their coach or co-ordinator was at the dinner to hear Ali's speech.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice R. Hayes
Vice Captain, Kingston Rowing Club

EDITOR: I should also point out the embarrassment caused to our current sponsor - Alfred McAlpine Homes - with whom the largest sponsorship package ever proposed by the club is being negotiated for our women!

We will be happy to print any other views - please write to me at the club.

SCARLET BLADE

Your back page of scandal - have you been caught yet? No? Well you are a boring so and so, don't you know we thrive on your embarrassment.

The club dinner is usually a good source of action and this year was no exception. A certain John Grove decided that the start of the speeches was just the excuse he needed for a little nap, under the table. He asks that if whoever deprived him of his trousers could return his boxer shorts he would be most grateful as he only has two other pairs.

Do our top oarsmen get their priorities right when it comes to their targets each season? A subject discussed at considerable length at the successful Veteran Supper. Your correspondent spoke to a certain Mr. Offer, who enjoyed much Henley and international success nearly 50 years ago for Kingston. When asked which successes gave him most satisfaction there was no hesitation - a Henley medal is the pinnacle of our sport and an honour afforded to a select few. Good hunting to our boys this year.

One further success of the Annual Dinner this year was in the seating arrangements. Paul Wensley winged (surprised?) but everyone else seemed very happy. None more so it seems that a certain mens cox and a certain womens novice oarswoman who cannot be regarded as short! We would like to state categorically that she does not put him in her rucksack when she paddles home in her canoe after training, he sits in the bows like any self respecting front loader.

A few more congratulations will be due before the next edition. To Howard Prior and his bride to be, Charles and Caroline Graham on their latest addition to the family and to James and Gill Suenson-Taylor on their newly arrived daughter. Our best wishes to Maurice and Claire who tie the knot at the end of April.

A special call at this point to our veteran members. You are probably wondering who we are talking about when we spout on about the current crop of rowing men and women. Why not send me in one or two stories from the past, especially about people who have maintained their membership. It was nice to see the likes of John Edwards, Alan Manning and Don Somner among the Veterans Supper guests. If these luminaries who have done so much for the club in the past cannot think up any old nutmegs, then we will have to do some heavy research!

Has anyone seen that Steve Drury is back at stroke in the Veterans boat, no less. It might have been the sun in his eyes but I'll swear he's picked up more than a sun-tan from Hong Kong - but how do you catch slant eyes?

It may seem like a stupid thing to say but if you have not been getting a copy of the newsletter direct to your home or you know of someone who hasn't, please let us know. We are desperately trying to get the mailing list right (which was the reason for the delay in sending the last one).

Bye for now.....