

# The Scarlet Blade



Number 2 in a (very) occasional series

*Happy New Year! Another bumper edition with all your favourite articles – crew news, ARA'Bours (that long-standing soap opera that really gets behind your ears), Head Race results, success in the ergo championships, coming events, the Summer Ball . . . all your old favourites!*

## Kingston squads aim to build on club's success

**T**HE SQUADS are gradually thinning out as the heavy training takes its toll, the senior mens and womens sections being depleted to leave only the most enthusiastic. In the mens groups Chris Andrews and Shane O'Brien are pressing hard for a place in the National Squad; Chris with ex-Kingston member and former president of Cambridge, Jim Garman; and Shane pairing with the second most successful rower in history, Martin Cross.

The lightweight men looking for selection are Martin Cruddace and Andy Mills, whose trials took place in early February. Rebecca Goswell is looking to follow up last year's place in the World Student Games team and under-23 squad with a place in the womens lightweight group, together with Sue Pratley.

The womens heavyweight group has been strengthened with the return of Fiona Johnstone from Tideway Scullers and their trials started at the end of January. This group had high hopes of a win in the Womens Head of the River before furthering their selection ambitions.

The senior men are progressing well with Dermot Sweeney's carefully planned programme and whilst a few less hardened individuals have dropped out all the remaining members have made excellent progress. The groups

is now splitting into summer combinations with a strong lightweight four and/or and eight a realistic aim. The heavyweights are looking at a double, a coxed and coxless four and an under-23 pair.

The club women, capably looked after by Scully and Ian South, are also making good progress with a win over the Oxford womens crew to their credit so far. For many this is the most intense piece of training they have done, and

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all credit to them for their perseverance.

Ian is also looking after this year's batch of junior women who have already won a number of head races and featured well in trials. I also owe these girls and last year's juniors an apology for understating their performance in last year's National Champs. To set the record straight this was as follows: Gold in Junior VIII's (this was a composite crew with five Kingston members) and in Junior IX, silver in Junior 2x and Junior 2-, bronze in Junior 14 IX. Gabriella Payne and Tara Byrne

went on to win the Coupe de la Jeunesse.

The womens Novice and Senior III group are gradually learning their trade with Louise, Hugh, Jack and Nicky and have again made excellent progress.

The mens club group run by Uncle Nick, Alistair and Keely look very promising and as usual have an excellent spirit (not to mention beers!).

They have even planned a training camp before the regatta season – although I have not heard of a six-lane course in Margate!

In addition to the junior women I believe I missed one other successful crew in my round-up of last season. How could I have forgotten what is, I am sure they will forgive me for saying, the strangest combination of scullers ever to appear in the Queen Mother's Cup?

However, they performed extremely well, progressing from the qualifiers to an epic row-through up the enclosures to thunderous roars of approval from Kingston supporters. An unforgettable performance from an unforgettable squad – Colin Greenaway (6' 8"), Damien Hammond (18-stoneish), Martin Cruddace (the Beak), and Steve Fraser (Mr Twiggy) – coached so well by Andy Kapica.

## The Club diary – don't leave home without it

You will be now have had this season's club diary, which should be kept about your person at all times. If you can make yourself available for any of our events please let us know. We also want to see you at the social functions, so keep an eye on the board for timings.

## Ergo in extremis

Since we always seem to be at the forefront of new innovations in our sport we hosted a heat of the ergometer championships at the club in January. The event was organised by Colin Fellows and John Vorley and, for those who were not there, there were 16 ergos in two lines in the clubroom.

There were various categories for difference statuses, ages, both sexes and an innovation – an eights race. There was a mens race between the lightweight National Squad and our club squad. The result was incredibly close over 2,500 metres, Kingston winning by just .125 of a second! In the womens race the Oxford boat race crew beat a spirited effort from our girls.

In the main event Ann Marden won the womens competition, but Farrell pulled on his Kingston stripes to record the fastest time of the day, a staggering 7 mins 46 seconds for 2,500 metres. In other categories Ray Rushworth won Senior III and Paul Reynolds came up against a phenomenal veteran from Southsea who was only three seconds behind Farrell's time.

All in all it was a highly successful and well organised event which was credited with a mention in the sports round-up on BBC1 in the early evening.

## Your starter for ten . . .

Magnus Magnusson eat your heart out! Ray Merrell organised a club quiz on Saturday February 10

which was, to quote Ray: "A fun evening of challenging and amusing general knowledge questions, plus a convivial dinner."

There were teams of six with prizes for the top team plus spot prizes (for those who had spots?). A marvellous evening was won by the egg-heads of Sooty, RR, Ginny Lewis, Martin Levy and Tessa, with Guy Lewis providing the moral support and an intimate knowledge of local buildings.

## Time called for a new bar



Richard Higgins explaining to Guy Lewis why the Kingston bar really needs a facelift

At last Richard Higgins has convinced the Committee that he needs a face lift (for the bar that is!). This will happen in the next few months and has coincided with a future change in brewery from Courage to Whitbread. At the same time the corridor will be turned into a proper foyer with better lighting, a carpeted floor, new phone etc.

He still needs some volunteers for bar duty on Tuesday and Wednesday nights, and also on Thursday nights. REMEMBER – the bar does not run itself, it needs help, otherwise the same people get lumbered with it night after night. If you can spare some time from 8pm to 10.30 pm on these nights Richard will be delighted to hear from you.

## Who has the biggest balls? Kingston!

To help pay for the planned improvements to the bar we are going to hold a Grand Summer Ball in the tented area next to Remenham a week before Henley (actual date: Saturday June 30, from 7.30 'til late). This will involved tables of 10 people, a superb buffet, fine wines, other drinks – some of them, anyway – and dancing (ballroom or otherwise!) to a live band.

You should by now have received your forms for tickets. To date Guy Lewis has had an excellent response with actual sales of half the 200 tickets and promises for up to 50 more. However, tickets are on a first come, first served basis, so hurry up and contact him. He's at the club Tuesdays and Thursdays (frequently horizontal) so bring your chequebooks – everyone is welcome. The price per person is £37. Coaches are to be arranged from the club. A truly memorable evening at Remenham is guaranteed.

## ARA'Bours

Otherwise known as Lower Mallers, Crossrowers, Riverside or Callouses.

The latest rulings from our governing body covers statuses and the changes to be imposed related to Head of the River races. In future all head races will count towards people's points over a season instead of being a separate status rule as in the past.

Penny Chuter's former job has now been split into two and new applicants were requested for the posts. There will be a performance director and a team manager – both full-time posts related to international rowing. The system will be that each squad will have an overseeing chief coach and the chief coaches will report to the new performance director, Bruce Grainger.

Following the tremendous outcry as a result of the overspend of last year's budget (a debt of some £130,000) and the subsequent reinstatement of the sliding scale system, there have been various parties arranging meetings to discuss the whole structure of British rowing.

The sliding scale is a tax system under which clubs pay for each one of their members on a scale which penalises the larger clubs with bigger

memberships. For example, our tax would be approximately £700. This is in addition to the increased registration charge. (Leander's bill is nearly £2,000, so needless to say they have been making quite a fuss!).

## Boat Launches

A new coxless pair, funded in part by the last pledge auction organised by Jennifer Bonner and a grant from Kingston Council, has been ordered. The boat will be called *Royal Kingston* and was launched by the Mayor of Kingston on Sunday March 4. Since this coincided with 20 years (ish!) at Canbury Gardens our chairman, Boysie (Paul Reynolds), organised a cocktail party and a jazz band to entertain us.

## A pledge to remember

The pledge auction was held on Sunday June 3, featuring a plethora of promises from breakfast at the Blue Spot to a three-girl "hit squad" pledged to attack "the person of your choice" at Kingston Rowing Club! Auctioneer and compere Guy Lewis did a marvellous job in managing to sell every lot - largely to people who didn't particularly want what was on offer but who had drunk too much to care anyway. The total raised looks at first count to be over £2,000 and could be more - a superb effort, and many thanks to those

whose hard work made this day possible.

## Small Boats Head

Another quick word of thanks to Colin Maddison who produced a magnificent event and raised some £1,400 profit from the club. Our thanks through the Scarlet Blade to him.



A young Colin Maddison practising in the Very Small Boats Head

## Operation Sweep Oar

In December, Boysie organised the first Operation Sweep Oar, in which every active oarsperson from KRC and Tiffin cleaned the clubhouse from top to bottom. The net result was a sparkling boathouse and the

satisfaction of everyone mucking in and enjoying themselves doing it. In addition we saved a lot of money and identified areas for further improvement - so thanks to Boysie and those who gave up part of their Saturday for the clue.

## Bogus Santa held on toy-theft charge

Pre-Christmas saw our first ever Kiddies party. Several members brought their nippers along for a good scream and shout which reached a crescendo when 'Santa' Farrell arrived in the launch. A great time was had by all, so watch out for it next year.

## Subscriptions: pay up, or don't play the game

Here we go, same old chestnut . . . but it really is amazing how many people still row at the club for nothing. Our general running expenses are many thousands of pounds and it's a pain for all concerned to keep asking for money, so please pay up or make arrangements to pay, or, as RR used to say, PUSH OFF!

## Dancing - is it just a lot of balls?

"Balls!" cried my wife, the moonlight glinting on her tattooed pectorals as she tossed the ergo aside and leapt into bed with a glint in her eye (the good one). "Must be my lucky night," I thought, "has the season ended already?"

"No darling," she laughed, felling me with a right cross. "Kingston Rowing Club Ball! Don't say you're not going to take me, or I'll have to find someone younger and fitter, like Rip van Winkle. And don't forget the ballroom dancing lessons this week!"

The ball: of course. How could I forget? The plunging necklines, the teasing rasp of crushed velvet, the black stockings . . . and that was just the men. The lights, the music, the sparkling conversation - rowing, ergos, training, rowing, Ian South, rowing . . . not to mention - rowing! And, of course, the chance that every young man dreams of: the chance to carry Anna Chate home after 43 Pils and a Chicken Vindaloo! Ah, I could almost smell the romance . . .

But first: the dancing lessons. Slight problem here, for I am the Rottweiler of the Roxy on the dance floor, The Man That Girls Avoid. I have two left feet. And knees. And thighs.

I suffer a further disadvantage: economy of height. "When the good Lord handed out legs," my mother-in-law informed me once, "someone else got yours." Most professional ballroom dancers are 6 ft plus with 5 ft legs. I am 5 ft 7 in with a 4 ft torso. When my wife dons high heels and condescends to clinch on a heaving dance floor, my face is at the same level as her chest. Everything goes dark and respirating becomes impossible. Pleasant, but dancing it isn't.

However, salvation was at hand in the svelte form of Sharon, our ballroom dancing teacher, a 5 foot 1 inch muscle on legs who in several short weeks tamed our two-steps, fixed our foxtrots and convinced us that a Tango was not just a fizzy drink.

It was not without incident. How can

one forget the sight of Les Hughes waltzing with what appeared to be two sculls strapped to his feet? Why did "Uncle" Nick Ronald keep smiling when he got Lindsay in a close ballroom hold? Could Scott and Louise manage more than three steps without knifing each other? Why was Annie Hodkin trying to dance horizontally with that tall chap? Why were Lesley's legs 7.9 times longer than mine? And why, when Sharon gave us a twirl, did Richard Wells start steaming around the waistband?

All these questions and more may be resolved this Saturday at the Remenham Club, when we will really see who has the biggest Balls of all. Save the last dance for me - I'm the one in the corner, revolving quietly and muttering "one, two, three, one . . . er, two . . . BUGGER!"

*'Landlubber'*

## Scarlet Blade

So what is it about our landing stage recently? Martin Cruddace – our resident Daily Mirror litigator – has been moving very well recently in his single scull – moving so well, in fact, that he fell out of his boat next to the stage at the club for our further entertainment. Not wishing to miss out on the fun Simon Mephram decided to test the water *before* pushing off from it. A couple of drips, indeed . . .

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A new act seems to be developing for this year's Review: the Johnny and Mike Bate Laurel and Hardy show. It seems that Johnny is the number one fan of this famous due in the south of England and has a collection of their videos big enough to shame the British Film Institute. Mike uses the role to live up to his nickname – Bungalow ("But there's nothing upstairs in a bungalow"). We await their Christmas act with anticipation.

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The recent pledge auction (see page 3) proved a big success and a very good source of entertainment. There was a lot of demand for the bodies of Martin Cruddace (can they be serious?) and Dave Relfe – a mystery buyer kept upping the bidding, and eventually turned out to be none other than the chairman's wife, Joan. The eventual winner shall be

nameless, but she's the one with a smile on her face. There was also a bid from Ginny Lewis, the auctioneer's wife, which was at such a level that Guy refused it! Don't these girls know that Martin and Dave have even less time than their husbands do because of rowing? Plus, if their training is up to scratch, far less energy!

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Talking of gangs, we hear that a member of Ian South's group has been approached by a not-so-anonymous caller. Ian warns he will hence be armed with a sawn-off blade – troublemakers beware!

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Julian "Nostrils" Ormerod was so exhausted after losing out in the pairs at Ghent Regatta that he later insisted on taking things a little easier – being *driven* the length of the course, leaning out of a sunroof, his superlative conk splitting the air molecules and reducing lift on the car's back wheels, shouting mingled endearments and encouragement to his loved one, Lindsay "Legs" Kirkby.

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The latest saga up the river, the other side of the lock, involves their skipper, who has recently found

himself on the other side of the law after an incident in a gent's toilet. It certainly makes you wonder what goes on in these "men only" clubs, doesn't it . . .

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Congratulations to one of our founder women rowers at the club. Debbie Raymond has produced a healthy young lad – after his initial reluctance to appear!

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### LATE EXTRA

In case we don't put out the annual Henley supplement (*no more please! Ed*) we have the following crews entered so far this year:

Britannia Cup: coxed four  
Thames Cup: a lightweight eight and a development eight  
Double sculls: Farrell Mossop and Peter Hope

Goblets: the budding under-23 pair and the perennial Terry and Gordon  
Queen Mother Cup: Chris Andrews in the Squad quad

Stewards: Shane O'Brien rowing with Julien Ormerod and two others.

Following the Glam Rock disco, Steve Fraser and Andy Mills are asking for applicants to join "their gang." Steve also wants to know if anyone has seen his medallion and hairy chest, as his hamster is missing it!

"Woodstock, are you sure this is the Hampton Court stretch?"

