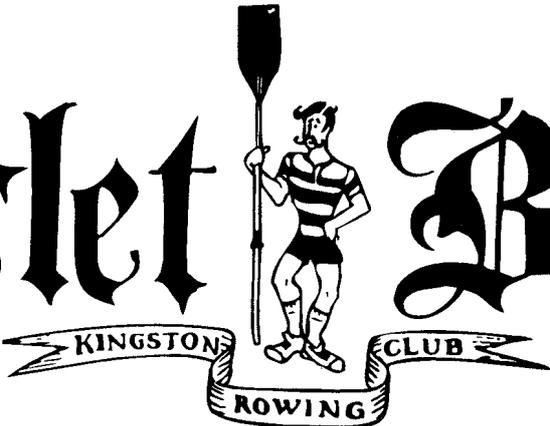


Henley '95 (3)

# The Scarlet Blade



PRICELESS

FREE TO MEMBERS

ISSUE 10

## Chairman's *message*

by Peter King

When you received your last edition of the Scarlet Blade, we were about to sit down at the Club's Annual Dinner. As in previous years we had an excellent attendance from our members and their guests, and those of you who were unable to make it missed a very enjoyable evening, with some very entertaining speeches. I know that some people missed the date as we did not circulate a letter this time, so in order to give those of our members who have a hectic social schedule plenty of notice, the proposed date for next year's Annual Dinner is the 16th February!

The United Kingdom along with Northern Europe, suffered one of the wettest starts to the year since records were first kept; The series of depressions that had been rolling in across the Atlantic and the ensuing rain produced flooding and river conditions that caused cancellation after cancellation of Head races. The N.R.A.'s red alert on the Kingston stretch meant that training outings had to be taken down on the tideway and so it was with a great deal of relief that we greeted a change in the weather in early March. It is said that every cloud has a silver lining and this is certainly true of rain clouds, as the Kingston Head enjoyed one of the highest standard of entries for some years. Weather conditions on the day were pretty near ideal, and with the river virtually back to its normal level, but still with a reasonable stream, the Great Britain Eight rowing in Leander Club colours covered the distance between Hampton Court and Steven's Eyot in 13 minutes, 22 seconds; a time 35

seconds faster than their nearest rivals.

As you are all well aware, the unsettled weather that we had in the early part of this year returned, with the result that on several occasions our oarsmen, and women have had to race under near impossible rowing conditions. In spite of this, I am delighted to be able to report they have put up truly commendable performances, and we are currently enjoying one of our most successful seasons. A report and all the results so far appear further on in this newsletter. I would just like to say that the robust state of the Club is a great credit to all the hard and dedicated work put in by Ian South, Richard Ayling, and the other coaches.

As we approach the mid point of 1995, it is hard to imagine that the end of another Committee year is almost upon us. I am only too aware that for many of you the prospect of attending the A.G.M. does not exactly fill you with enthusiasm, but before you wholeheartedly agree with me I would just ask you to pause a moment and possibly reconsider.

The membership of the Club has now passed the 450 mark, and we currently have more than 100 people rowing at all levels. As you may imagine organising and administering the budget for this alone is a mammoth task and I cannot give enough credit to the members of the Committee who have undertaken and carried out their various duties so very well, without so much as a word of complaint. On your behalf I would like to thank them for all

their time and effort. I would also thank Gary Meacham who in spite of coxing, coaching, and collecting regatta fees, has provided the Captain with the crucial help and support he has needed. The A.G.M. will be an opportunity for you to express your thanks to these people, and I hope you will feel their efforts deserve your support.

As yet I do not know how many of this year's Committee will offer themselves for re election, however I would appeal to members who feel they would like to help to submit their names to the Hon. Secretary, Keeley Jackson.

I hope that many of you will be able to support our crews at Henley and hopefully at the other regattas as well. Please remember a little vocal encouragement can often make all the difference.

Kingston Regatta this year is on the 8th July and will be held as before on the reach above Kingston Road Bridge. There is plenty of parking available in the field next to the enclosure, and the Regatta Committee look forward to welcoming club members and their guests. The bold decision to move the Regatta from its old course to above the bridge four years ago seems to have paid off, the new course being popular with the rowers.

Finally on a slightly sad note I have to inform you that Leslie Parsons, our Past President, suffered a further stroke in the early part of this year. He was taken to Kingston Hospital and after making some recovery, he has now been moved to White Farm Lodge, a residential home in Whitton. Having celebrated his 89th birthday last October, he must be one of our oldest members. I know I speak for everybody when I wish him well.

My very best wishes to everyone representing our Club at Henley Royal, my hope is that you will achieve the goals you have worked so hard for over these last ten months.

See you on the tow-path.

*Postscript* - whilst travelling with British Airways the other day I happened to be glancing through the June edition of their magazine, and there almost centrefold, was a photograph of two of our members at last year's Henley Royal Regatta sartorially attired in their scarlet and white. Who says Kingston isn't flying high!

Most athletes are already thinking of next season by the time they race at Henley and National Championships. Some are happy with results they have obtained, others may be disappointed.

# The Will to Win!

## Planning your training more effectively

by *Richard Ayling*

Having the will to win is a little more than just turning up to training. To achieve quality wins at the highest level takes planning, patience, consistency and flexibility. One of the coach's main roles is to maximise every athletes potential in all areas required.

There are few secrets to successful training, most successes come from a combination of the four points already mentioned combined with an element of good fortune. The athlete can contribute in many ways to their success other than just by being there. Over the years I have trained many athletes at different levels of experience, but most of them had one goal in common - they not only wanted to win, they wanted to contribute to winning as much as they could. The most successful athletes I can recall had an almost tunnel-vision approach to achieving success, it was difficult for any outside factor to cause any deflection to their individual and crew aims.

### CLEARING THE MIND FOR THE TRAINING AHEAD

What do I mean by this? Firstly, athletes can assist both their coach, and their own training regime by organising themselves to allow that their training can be undertaken as effectively as possible. Whilst travelling in car or train the athlete can be mentally preparing themselves for the training planned in that session. This can also help alleviate the stresses and strains that a hard working day can leave us all with, clearing the mind for the training ahead.

Secondly, they should try to involve their employers in their healthy activity, especially if they are successful. A few

tickets to Henley can work wonders with even the toughest boss.

Thirdly, and most importantly, rather than being led by the *Training Plan*, the individual athlete in talking to their coach can investigate ways where flexibility allows the training plan to be personalised and become more effective for them. The coach is their to lead, but in charge of so many athletes an element of self-help and imagination from each athlete can maximise the training efficiency of the entire group. Remember, when the coach makes the seasons plans, they are looking at so many athletes at 100% efficiency. During the year this will be eroded, and not only by the obvious and unwelcome factors, illness and injury.

Consider this - A training group consists of 20 athletes, on average they train 12-times per week, if 5 athletes during a week are 15-minutes late to training 3 times and do not make it up, over a season that is equivalent to a group loss of 180 hours or each person missing 6 x 1.5 hour sessions of training!

### DIFFICULTY MAKING GROUP SESSIONS

If an athlete has difficulty making group sessions, the coach can hear 'I can always go for a run', rather than the more satisfactory, "Coach, although I've got to work late, I've organised myself a local gym close to my work, I can do some training there at lunch-time, and catch up with the group in the evening". Although not the 100% ideal, the coach will be more than satisfied with this latter approach.

I have discussed efficiency of training, next the quality of training. Although the

competitive spirit should never be criticised, it has to be controlled when bad technical errors creep in consistently.

### SELF-HELP FRUITFUL

Of course all coaches try to be vigilant, but an element of self help and critical analysis by the athlete on their own training can be extremely fruitful. A good coach can always spot the athlete painstakingly trying hard but correctly against the 'textbook athlete' training perfectly with not a spot of sweat on the brow!

An additional "self-help" for each athlete is the copy of *technical videos*, obtained from the coaches *Master Copy* of either themselves or their crew or higher level crews. The time the athlete privately views their own technique can be extremely rewarding in the longer term, saving time for them and the coaching team.

In a previous paragraph, I talked about the loss of training efficiency. Imagine the same scenario, in terms of application to training. If 5 members of the 20-strong group, in 3 of their 12 sessions per week only tried at 90% of their ability, the net loss to the training season if this was repeated the entire year would be 72 x 1 athlete sessions, or the equivalent of the whole group missing training for half a week!

### WORK & STUDY PRESSURE

It is tougher in the current financial climate with jobs at a premium to train effectively, than it used to be. That in itself should not prove a hindrance to any coach providing the athlete can talk problems through, with the aim of trying to arrive at the most effective way to achieve the training aims and standard they feel they can attain.

I have seen many athletes with either pressure studies or jobs succeed in their aims, including Olympic competition without major problems to their studies or professions - all achieved with foresight and planning.

The will to win exists in each and every athlete at Kingston but to hone it to the maximum of each potential and increase those personal goals needs planning in short (1 year), medium (2-3) long term (4-6 years). Kingston is already one of the most successful women's clubs, and this season has started to make strong upward progress in the mens side. Our future success will only come by us taking on all opposition on our terms, it will be tough, but the right "Will to Win" from all of us *Scarlet Blades* will keep us at the top.

# Captain's *report*

by Nick Ronald

It seems an age since I last wrote an article for *Scarlet Blade* and fortunately for you, I do not intend to give you a stroke by stroke account of the season to date. The season has been an extremely encouraging, however, and there is no doubt we are moving steadily back to the top flight.

I would be foolish to pretend we have got back to Leander or UL status, but has been great for me to see the Club claiming a few scalps from clubs such as these at quality events. Having had to defend the Club's reputation in some of our mixed seasons, it isn't half a good feeling to have other clubs asking where have all these good Kingston men and women come from?

With out delving too far back in time I would like to mention the Scullers Head. Steve Ross, a home grown talent, put in the performance of his life finishing 12th overall and winning the lightweight Senior 1 medal on route. This success was popular one with the club and clearly demonstrated what hard graft can achieve. To cap a good day, 8 Kingston scullers finished in the top 100 (over 500 scullers took part) and several more made the 100 to 200 section.

The regattas have followed in the same vein and already we have notched up nearly 60 wins. When added to our Head successes we will need several pages in the almanac to ourselves. Most have been at quality events and again it has been an all round club effort. I include the veterans in this who have been incredibly supportive this season and it is tremendous to see a resurgence in veteran rowing recently.

It seems to me Kingston's most successful times are when it manages to balance young and old, novice and international. You only have to visit the club on a Thursday night to know we are getting there! At this stage I would like to welcome Edward Fox our first junior boy the club has had for a while. Edward's sister Claire represented the club very successfully herself at junior level and I hope Edward's arrival may lead to the formation of a junior boys group to compliment that of the girls.

Work and other commitments have not enabled me to attend many regattas this year but the ones I have managed to get to have been rewarding experiences despite the lousy weather. The Docks particularly was a joy! Steve Ross again came up trumps winning lightweight open lx on the Saturday. This win was followed by success at heavyweight level by German Zapata who has represented the Argentine at U23 level and was a member of their Pan Am games team. German who is rowing for Kingston this summer, also wiped up at the Met and Reading.

Together they destroyed the doubles field at the Docks and Reading also. Our womens double of Flo and Alison achieved the same feat demonstrating the depth of good sculling we have at the club. To make my grin even broader the Senior 1 4- also won beating UL, Leander and 'the Lea' amongst others to do so. What bliss!

By now I can sense the womens squad wondering if I had forgotten them! Don't worry I had anticipated good news from Womens Henley and saved space at the end of this report.

What a weekend! By the end of the Saturday we had only lost one of the 8 crews we had entered or 10 if you include composites. I do not intend to go into the details because Ian South is supplying a separate report, but I can't describe enough the huge pleasure I derived from seeing Kingston crew after crew winning.

6 of the 8 made the finals as well as the 2 crews with Kinston representatives. It was an awesome effort to quote the rugby world, and congratulations go to the womens squad as a whole. There was total commitment during the winter and it paid off. Particular mention should be made to Jane Hall who, although rowing with the squad, wore our colours and also to Robyn Morris who was also selected for GB Lightweight 4-.

We ended up with 4 golds, 5 if you include Robyn in a Nautilus boat. Thanks to all who took part, it has given the club a real boost.

Thanks also to Ian South yet again who masterminded this success, Adrian Graham who spent hours coaching the squad in the grind of winter and finishing coaches Alistar Graham and Mike Smyth.

As to Men's Henley, we hope for a kind draw from yet another massive entry. No promises I am afraid but our relatively inexperienced crews have been well prepared. Morale seems high and the mens group have demonstrated the hardness needed to win all season. Like the women, their commitment to training has been unbelievable particularly so considering the pressures of the modern world.

The crews will be:

- |                 |                             |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| • 8+ (1st boat) | - straight in (Thames)      |
| • 4x            | - to qualify (Queen Mother) |
| • 4-            | - straight in (Wyfold)      |
| • 2x            | - to qualify                |
| • 4+            | - to qualify (Brit)         |

I am sure all the crews qualifying would welcome your support at the qualifiers and I am sure you will join me in wishing good luck to all those taking part.

Lastly may I thank some of those in the backroom. Gary Meacham who as Vice-Captain has done a herculean job. The general crew administration has never been better in my memory and I know everyone appreciates his efforts. Colin Mercer has had the nightmare task of organising transport and again has achieved this with great efficiency and far too little help. Simon Mephram has also let and relet in some cases, the sculling racks. Thanks again Simon.

I will mention some of the other helpers and the mens coaches in the next edition but you can be assured I haven't forgotten you.

Whatever the final outcome of the season I have really enjoyed myself. It has been a pleasure to represent the club as Captain this year and I would like to thank all of you for giving me such a good time. See you at Henley.

# Kingston Women Dominate!



The victorious girls at Women's Henley.

Here I was Monday morning sitting at my desk, red-eyed pondering the 200 odd electronic messages that I had not had time to answer over the last 6 weeks. Its always like this on a Monday morning after a long Regatta weekend, this Monday was different because it is effectively the end of the serious regatta calendar. I was masochistically looking forward to clearing the e-mail and tidying the chaos that was an excuse for a desk, and as usual I was vowing to myself I would never do it again.

All was quite until lunchtime then the congratulation phone calls started, so by 1 o'clock I was feeling quite good and full of myself. At 1 o'clock Peter King came on the line. For those new members that may not know, Peter, is the Club Chairman and he spends most of his time working courageously in the background, trying to make people like me do things for the Club we do not want to do. For this reason I am usually guarded when Peter calls, but as you know I was beginning to warm to the phone calls, "Ian! old chap, congratulations, tremendous weekend", "Thanks Peter, it did go rather well". What I didn't realise was this was his opening

gambit. I filled him in on which crews won, which ones were in the finals and so forth, information he already knew. He followed it up with "That's good Ian, how about an article for *Scarlet Blade*", well, my guard was down so I agreed. He hadn't finished however. "Can you get it to Nigel by tomorrow evening as the deadline closed last Friday", then before I could answer... "Look Ian, I must go, somebody's at the door, see you at the Club. Well done", and the phone went dead. This left me somewhat bemused as to how what and when I would find the time to do this article. Oh well! the e-mail will have to wait another day.

For those of you that are not interested in the detail here is the summary of what happened so you do not have to read the rest of this article but can still hold those all important chats over a glass of Pimms when cornered by one of the women in Remenham at Henley. We entered 8 club crews and were also represented in 2 squad/composite crews, we made 8 finals including the composites and won 5 of them including the composites. At one stage during the finals there were so many Kingston

crews at the start waiting to race their final the Umpires put the wrong crews on the stake boats. The events won were; Club Coxed 4's, Womens Junior Quads, Womens Junior Doubles, Womens Lightweight Pairs with Thames RC, and Robyn Morris represented the Club rowing as Nautilus in Womens Open Coxless 4's.

Now to the detail. The womens Club Coxed Four was the target boat that the coaches and I agreed on as early as November. We had 2 boats entered in this event the A boat of, stroke Sarah Brooker, 3 our social secretary Rachel Knight, 2 Ella Truscott and at bow, Cath Cooper coxed by Helena Smalman-Smith. The coach some of you older members will know was Alistair Graham. The B boat was, stroke Kirsty Morgan, 3 Alli Pollard, 2 Karen Relfe and at bow Ros Ewing, coxed by our Vice Captain Gary Meacham. A special mention is required for Mike Smyth who took this crew at a very late stage and made considerable improvements. All 38 crews had to qualify for the 16 available places and I was extremely pleased when the B four qualified justifying the decision to enter them in the regatta. With all the crews requiring to qualify it was a good opportunity to time the other crews and on KRC watches our A crew were the fastest with Bedford not far behind. In the first round our B crew was drawn against Falcon B who had just beaten them in the qualifiers and it therefore promised to be a tough race and so it proved with the crews level with 250 meters to go Falcon B edged ahead to win by 1/4 length this was a tremendous race and all the crews were a credit to the Club. The A four also had a tough draw against Imperial College who had 3 past Junior Internationals in the crew, however they dispatched this crew very efficiently leading by 2 lengths for most of the course. In the second round they avenged the B four's

defeat by dispatching Falcon B easily by some 3 lengths. This earned the crew a semi-final against Bedford and as promised from the qualifiers it was a close race with Kingston getting up in the last 500 metres to win by a canvas, all to plan Alistair assured me, although looking at the relief on his face I was not so sure. After this impressive semi, the final was a bit of an anti-climax with them beating the Lea by over a length, looking quite comfortable.

Our other sweep-oar entry was the Womens Open Coxless pair of Anna Hopper and Laura Binns. This event was dominated by the potential GB U23 womens pair from UL. In the semi-final the pair led Anna and Laura by 2 to 3 lengths at the enclosures. Although a little off the pace, they were not outclassed and this promises good things for next year. This crew was coached by Adrian Graham, who should take most of the credit for the success of the crews at Henley as he has been working with me all year doing most of the water work with the club crews.

So to the sculling crews, to say we dominated this discipline would be an understatement: every crew we entered made the final. In the double sculls we were represented by, Aggie and Flo in the Heavyweights, Sue Login and Sarah Birch in the Lightweights and Nicola Ledger and Vic Fangen in the Juniors. Aggie and Flo have been training exclusively with the Men's group since Christmas, and have benefited recently from some expert coaching from a newcomer Guy Rees. Over the last 6 weeks they have been steadily improving at the regattas and Henley was no exception. They progressed comfortably to the final where they met last year's champions Rudkin and Stanhope. These two were not going to give up their title easily and a close race followed until the last 300 metres when the more established unit managed to sneak a length which they then extended to 2 lengths at the finish. With 4 more weeks to the Nationals, this promises to be a good rematch. The Lightweights also had some good races to the final rowing down both crews through the enclosures to reach the final. They were unfortunate to draw the unfavoured side in the final and found the wash and stream a little too much although they raced well finally just losing out to a Stourport double by

1 1/4 lengths. This was a good performance considering the unavoidable enforced break in training for Sarah's finals and like the Heavyweight double, promises good things for the Nationals. This crew was also coached by new man Simon Mepham, who has agreed to continue up to the Nationals. With 2 doubles already having lost I was beginning to feel that it was going to be one of those days - lots of finals but no wins the next crew up was the Juniors. Nicola and Vic had looked very impressive all weekend having already calmly and coolly dispatched 2 American crews, and a Kings Canterbury double that contained the National schools Bronze medalist. In the final against Kings Canterbury A that contained two of the GB selected scullers from Easter, the pattern was the same. They took a length at the end of the island and extended this to 2 lengths up the enclosures cruising over the second half of the course. This was an impressive performance as the final was the girl's sixth race of the weekend due to the fact they were doubling up in the Junior Quad sculls and they had only switched back from rowing the previous weekend. As I have already mentioned, Nicola and Vic were doubling up in the quad sculls with Helen Brown and Sian McCatty (Eton). Like the doubles this was an extremely tough entry, in the first two rounds they beat Lehigh High School one of the top American schools and Kings School Canterbury the Schools Head winners both by 2 lengths. On the other side of the draw Trident, the South African National squad, progressed comfortably to the final and this promised to be a good race. This was Nicola and Vic's 7th race of the weekend and probably proved to be the toughest. Both the crews were level at 500 meters but Kingston managed to squeeze 1/2 length entering the enclosures this was extended to a length in response to the vocal support from the family and club members in the enclosures and was further extended to 1 1/4 lengths at the finish. We tend to take our Juniors for granted, but this was some of the most impressive racing I have seen from our Junior group in the last 5 years. to put this in context, Nicola won this event last year and both Nicola and Vic are still eligible next year.

The other quad scull entered was in Open Quads, and the crew was Kate

Holroyd, Claire Fox, Sarah Hay and Jayne Dulling. This boat had proved to be a disaster in preparation and on arriving at Henley we had not managed to get the crew out once due to work/study commitments. Their first race turn out to be tough with Clydesdale rowing through them up the enclosures but they managed to hang on and just got up in the last 20 strokes to win by 3 feet. This earned them a semi final race against York who they beat with some ease, allowing them to progress to the final against Tideway Scullers. This was a close race with the crews level at 750 meters at this stage the more established Scullers crew squeezed out to a 1 length lead which they slowly extended to 2 lengths by the finish. This was another outstanding performance from a scratch crew and my thanks go out to Kate Holroyd who jumped in at the last minute to allow the crew to race.

Finally it is all too easy to forget our Internationals representing the Club but it was nice to see Jane Hall being allowed to race as Kingston. In the Lightweight Coxless Pairs they totally outclassed all the opposition, winning easily. This crew is now going to Lucerne seeking selection for the World Championships later this year. The other member was Robyn Morris who was in the Nautilus Womens Lightweight Coxless four competing in Womens Open coxless fours. They had some tough opposition in the UL/Notts County U23 Heavyweight four and in the GB squad development four that contained Gillian Lindsey, who was at the last Olympics. They comfortably won both races by about 2 lengths promising good things for the World Championships. This crew still has some selection trials to complete, but hopefully they will also compete at Lucerne seeking selection at the World Championships.

All in all it was an outstanding weekend for the Kingston girls, I would like to congratulate all the girls involved and thank all those members who came down and supported from the bank. It will be difficult to follow this success so I cannot promise anything in the future, but who knows?

*Ian South*

# Many thanks to...

## *Our* President

Many of you may not be aware but Dick Offer, our President, has generously funded the purchase of a pair/double this year. I cannot thank him enough, as his kindness has enabled the Club to take advantage of a superb deal with Aylings set up by my predecessor. We have acquired 2 new pairs and a new 4- for the cost of the 2 pairs and an exchange boat.

The cost of maintaining a fleet of over 30 club boats, and the lack of sponsorship would now put such a deal out of our reach. We need quality equipment, however, to be able to compete at the highest level and to reach the giddy heights we so long for.

This years squads have made the best use of this good equipment as my report indicates and they have asked me to pass on their appreciation to Dick through this article. Thanks again Dick.

### **CAPTAINS APPEAL**

Despite Dick's generosity the club has not found it easy to raise the funds to buy the matching pair. Currently we are faced with having to pay our share of the cost of rewiring the

boat house and then in the autumn the replacement of the showers which are reaching the end of their useful life. Unfortunately the lease puts the responsibility on us to carry out this work rather than the freeholders.

We have also had to buy additional equipment such as cleaver blades for the mens and womens squads. As one veteran said to me it was becoming embarrassing seeing Kingston, one of the largest clubs in the country, still competing with the less efficient spoon shaped blades when many of our smaller rivals had long since changed over.

There is a considerable need to replace equipment for the Senior 3 and Novice squads who again often find themselves competing against clubs with vastly superior boats and blades. These groups form our future and should not be overlooked.

I am aware times are difficult but I would be extremely grateful for any donations from members to help fund the second pair and match Dick's generosity. Donations from as small as £1 would be welcome. It all helps I can assure you.

*Nick Ronald*

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## *Paul* Costelloe

Paul Costelloe, the well known Irish fashion company, have generously supplied both our men and women racing at their respective Henley events with kit. On behalf of the Club I

would like to thank this company for their support.

*Nick Ronald*

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## *Lindsey* Montague

The Club would like to thank Lindsey Montague for her work in decorating the showers before the Kingston Head. They were in a dreadful state and the cause of much embarrassment.

Lindsey started her own decoration and design compa-

ny last year and undertakes any type of decorating job from basic painting to specialist paint finishes and stencilling. If you are interested in learning more about what she does or obtaining a quote from her please phone 0181 941 4401.

## **Sponsorship**

As many members know, the Club has been without commercial sponsorship for some time now. Although the Club has managed extremely well on the equipment it has, the time has come to upgrade boats and blades to become more successful.

If any member works for an organisation that could sponsor us, the Club would be eternally grateful if

the member could approach the person that holds the purse strings and plead for doosh.

It doesn't need to be major sponsorship as individual packages could be worked out for potential sponsors. This could include, kit, a boat, or even sponsoring the whole club.

If anyone has any idea in this direction, could they please speak to Nick Ronald or Richard Ayling.