

The Scarlet Blade



PRICELESS

FREE TO MEMBERS

ISSUE 12

Chairman's *message*

by *Peter King*

My congratulations to Jane Hall, who along with her partner Alison Brownless, won the team prize in the Moet and Chandon Sunday Times Sports Awards. Those of you who saw the magnificent performance they put up in their final, at last year's World Championships, will I am sure agree with me, that this award was well and truly deserved.

After a number of years of abuse by some, who ignored the written pleas from the Chairman of the Management Committee of Henley Royal Regatta, Mike Sweeney; I was delighted to hear that at their meeting last December, the Stewards finally closed the door on those Clubs who wish to flout the spirit of the rules of entry. I will not enlarge

upon these changes as they are dealt with elsewhere in this newsletter, but hopefully they will mean that certain events will only be eligible to genuine club crews. Very good news for Kingston Rowing Club!

As some of you will know we have been drawing up plans to extend the clubhouse to accommodate our ever increasing numbers of active members. A great deal of thanks is due to Andy Kapica who has done all the preparatory work and produced outline plans. Prior to making a formal planning application these were submitted to the Planning Department of Kingston Council in the latter part of last year, for discussion and comment. We have just been notified that they consider them unsuitable in their

present form, however this is just the preliminary to what I hope in the end will be a situation where the Club owns its own and enlarged premises. This is something that we are trying to achieve by 1998, when KRC will celebrate its 140th anniversary.

My appeal in an earlier newsletter for any old photographs or newspaper cuttings that are relevant to the Club's past, has brought in some more information than we will put into the up-dated version of Club's history when it gets written. May I at this time thank all those who have responded to my request and assure you that all these old photos, books, newspaper cuttings are be stored in the Kingston Heritage Society's Archives for safe keeping and future use.

After many years of use the landing stage has been showing considerable signs of aging, I am therefore most grateful to Neil French for organising the repairs, and to those members of the Senior 3 squad who gave up their Saturday afternoon to help mend it.

Likewise the men's changing room and the ergo room have undergone radical alterations and I am most grateful to Domenyk Honey, Steve Ross, Colin Mercer and Ian South, for organising and doing most of the work.

Lastly, I should just like to wish you all a very Happy New Year and hope that our rowers enjoy the successes that they strive so determinably for.

An Olympic imbiber writes...

I haven't been at Kingston very long, but since I arrived in October I've discovered its one of the busiest and friendliest clubs in the country. This is why I am particularly disturbed by the pitiful amount of people who come into the bar with the aim of serious drinking. A few people have excuses such as driving home, or "I'm working tomorrow" but what sort of reasoning is that! Equally as horrifying is the suggestion by some oarsmen that they are 'aspiring international athletes' or their bodies are 'temples' and none but water and honey sandwiches can be consumed. The suggestion that beer is bad for is a damaging marketing ploy by Lucozade and other soft drinks companies. Research has proven that beer is one of the most easily digestible carbohydrates available.

Anyway there are other reasons for coming into the bar; for those who don't

possess that widely acclaimed tome "Steve Redgrave's Complete Book of Rowing", do not despair. Any information needed about split times, gearing, linear relationships etc., can speak to Ian South. He is usually in the bar explaining some such subject to a) The barman who can't leave b) An unsuspecting veteran c) A no-hope brownnoser who has designs on the first eight. No social exchange is needed while Ian talks, just relax, drink and take it all in. If anyone is in the need of entertainment there is a TV, or better still, the live show in the form of the novice women being taken through their paces by Coach 'Safety' Dave Baldwin, there is usually a debating group gathered to discuss the merits of such exercises and other, more interesting, less politically correct topics.

If you've an interest in history, then the veterans will happily talk you through

some of the more colourful characters and events in Kingston's illustrious past. They also have some notion about how better rowing was in the past, which proves that old adage "the older I get, the better I was". The veterans however are proud of the fact that in their youth, rowing could not be contemplated without consuming over 50 pints of beer a week!

So please make an effort to come into the bar after training, Club night, Sundays or any time, meet new and old members - remember this is a Club and cannot function without the participation of both active and passive members.

Remember there's two things that separate homo sapiens from the rest of the animal kingdom;

- 1) The ability to row
- 2) the ability to brew and drink beer

Come and celebrate being top of the food chain in style and remember, misquoting Dr Johnson, "When a man is tired of rowing and drinking, he is tired of life, because there is in both all that life can offer."

Make mine a large one!

Mary Stevens - International oarswoman and part-time bar steward - *isn't that a spelling mistake - Ed!*

An Olympian writes...

"It's February and most of the Olympic boats have now been chosen including the lightweight double which I have just been selected for. Naturally I am well chuffed to say the least, but it hasn't been an easy ride to gain selection. From the beginning of October, the top sculling group were assessed each weekend at Henley, the main emphasis being the 3 x 2000m pieces each Sunday. Each athlete would scull with different partner each weekend thus producing a rank order of the scullers, and, at the same time, identifying potentially fast combinations.

By the beginning of December, a fair amount of information had been collated on each athlete. At this stage, it was

decided that matrix trials would be held at Nottingham. Each athlete sculled with everyone in their group over 1000m pieces, to produce a rank order. This allowed the group to be reduced to five scullers. I managed to come top despite having crashed into Temple island three days earlier, tearing the ligaments in both feet. To say these trials were an uncomfortable experience is an understatement. Anyway, from there, the five went to Spain on a training camp for two weeks up to Christmas - half of which I spent ill in bed. Training continued as usual over Christmas and New Year with a hard period in the beginning of January.

Final trials were meant to take place in

Nottingham during the last weekend of January, but with the extreme cold and the hurricane conditions which seem to plague Holme Pierrepont, they were postponed to the following weekend.

The trials got underway, but only after launches had broken up the ice that had formed on the course. I had a good weekend, coming out on top with Alison Brownless (Wilma) and that's the way it stands at the moment. By the time this edition of the 'Blade' comes out, I will be in not-so-sunny Spain for a two week training camp, away from the Arctic conditions!

I would just like to thank Gary Meacham for helping to coach me in my single, for coming to trials with me, and generally helping me take my first steps to reaching the Olympics."

Jane Hall

Captain's *report*

by Nick Ronald

With the Head Season approaching, there is a real buzz about the Club. The pre-Christmas blues are over, and the commitment from the majority of oarsmen and women has been tremendous, as the selection process has gone into full swing. For the first time in many seasons, there is genuine competition for most boats, and that can only help to raise standards.

On the men's side, we sent a large squad to the GB trials, and for most it was a new experience. I personally believe all benefited and those with serious international intentions learnt a lot about the quality of competition they will have to overcome to be selected. I am delighted to report that two oarsmen, Colin Greenaway and Domenyk Honey have been invited back for closed trials.

On the women's side, I am extremely pleased to report that Jane Hall has been selected for the Olympic lightweight double after extensive trials. Some of the trialling was actually conducted on our reach which makes the selection all the more pleasing. A number of other women are going through trials for places in the women's squad, and I will keep you posted on their progress in the next edition.

Talking of internationals, Kingston welcomes Klaus Geiger, who is in the Finnish squad. Klaus recently won his country's national Ergo championships in well under 6 minutes for 2,000 metres and is to represent Finland in the World Ergo championships. Klaus has been posted to the Finnish embassy for 6 months but hopes he will still be able to retain his place within Finland's Olympic squad.

There is generally an upbeat atmosphere to the Club at present, which I haven't felt for some time. There is a general feeling that this attitude should be reflected in the Club itself and a number of oarsmen and women have been working hard to try and improve the general environment. Domenyk Honey, Steve Ross and Colin Mercer have led the reconstruction of the men's changing room and Ergo room and this should be finished by the Kingston Head. This will make life a lot more pleasant for all, especially the women who no longer have to survey the horrific sights of the men changing out of their stinking kit. Laura Binns and Colin Mercer have also organised the refurbishment of many of our Ergos and again this is all-important for training. Some of the Club's historic pictures have been repaired and reframed and generally many feel that the Club has regained its pride. We want to show off our past and recent history.

I will conclude by wishing all those participating in the Head Season the best of luck and I hope you get the results you all deserve.

Safety *in Club activities*

New safety measures have been introduced at the club so as to fully comply with current ARA requirements. The measures include:

- provision of buoyancy aids for coxes.
- formal reporting of accidents or damage.
- provision of a blackboard to record which boats are out.
- preparation of Guidance Notes for coxes.
- preparation of a club Code of Conduct.

The intention behind these measures is to minimise risk to individuals and damage to equipment with evident benefits for all members. Some will already be, aware of incidents which have occurred on the river. In addition to the hazard which such incidents present to crews there has been damage to boats and equipment. Such incidents are not only costly in view of the limited funds available to the club but are very disruptive to rowing as equipment and boats cannot be replaced or repaired overnight.

The provision of buoyancy aids and the reporting of incidents are explicit ARA requirements. Records of incidents will enable appropriate preventive measures to be introduced.

A blackboard to record outings will identify if somebody does not return from the river, but, will also allow the last crew off the river to realise that they must be the ones to close the boathouse. This may avoid the sort of incident which occurred early last December when the young part-time barman had to clear up and close the shutters downstairs after ten at night leaving a door unlocked in case somebody was still on the river.

Guidance Notes for Coxes are a much needed new introduction specifically aimed at the young novice cox. Use of the notes may bring more consistency to the way in which our boats are handled on the river and ensure standards of proficiency in steering and coxing generally.

The Code of Conduct will allow members to know their responsibilities and to act accordingly as well as knowing what can be expected of others.

Lastly, one thing the Club does not need is for safety standards in the form of unwelcome, inappropriate or disruptive rules to be imposed by the enthusiastic few on the majority. Safety will only improve through the voluntary and responsible actions of Club members. Introducing the measures mentioned above should lead to a significant improvement in our standards of safety, which, with the assistance of all members should be achieved unobtrusively. By acting in such a way it is also demonstrable to any outsiders who may have views of their own that rowers are taking the necessary measures themselves.

Dave Baldwin

Club news

Congratulations

Congratulations to Jane Hall who has been selected for the British Olympic lightweight double at Atlanta this year. Jane's away with the squad at Banyoles at the moment, but if you see her at the Club, give her a hearty pat on the back. Congratulations also to Dom Honey and Colin Greenaway who were invited back to GB squad trials at Peterborough.

Erratum

Apologies to Laura Binns, Club Vice Captain this year who was inadvertently left off the Club calendar - apologies and congratulations in equal measure.

Many thanks

Many of you have noticed that the Club and its surrounds have undergone a transformation in the past few weeks. In addition to David Ford's (Dinsdale) largely unsung work in keeping the Club clean, the oarsmen have been

involved in repairing the landing stage, servicing the ergos and renovating the Club - The roll of honour as follows;

Landing stage repairs were overseen by Neil French and Neil Mears and undertaken by the senior 111 men.

Ergo servicing and repairs, masterminded by Laura Binns and Dom Honey and completed by the senior men's squad.

Club renovation has been undertaken and completed by Steve Ross, Dom Honey and Colin Mercer in record time - Colin also keeps the Club's security lights in running order.

Many thanks to all these members who freely gave their time to carry out these repairs. With the senior squad members spending over 20 hours a week training at the Club, their extra time spent on maintenance is especially noteworthy and serves as an excellent example of Clubmanship.

Money

The Club has received a £5,000 spon-

sorship from Edward Bentall this year, which can be doubled by a sportsmatch grant application. Sincere thanks to Edward and the Bentall family for their patronage and congratulations to Sam Walker of the senior 111 women's squad for her sterling sponsorship work.

An open invitation.

Following the success of the invitation Club Head on January 28, the event will be repeated on Sunday 25 February. UL have already accepted and we hope Walbrook will compete again as well as crews farther up and down the Thames. The racing will start at 11:00 and food will be available afterwards.

On the same day we will also be having a boat naming party. President Dick Offer, kindly bought a new pair for the Club last year and will officially name it "Dick and Mack Offer" on the 25th. Everyone is welcome and the bar of course will be open - so please pop in and offer support, everyone is welcome!

Great chance for Club crews

Following their December meeting the Henley Stewards introduced many sweeping changes concerning the rules for the Club events at Henley Royal Regatta. The new qualification rules are provided at the end of this article for the THAMES CUP, WYFOLDS and BRITANNIA CUP.

For the first time in my memory, clubs including of course KINGSTON will benefit. The main reason for these changes has occurred for two reasons. Firstly, the stranglehold on the Club events by some clubs is causing problems for club rowing.

Secondly, the Stewards were at last fed up with certain boat clubs attempting (and in some cases succeeding) to pull the wool over their eyes with regards to the crews they were entering in the "club" events.

KINGSTON boasts a healthy men's group of over 35 full-time athletes. This is not the same everywhere. Some famous Tideway clubs are pushed to put together more than two men's eights at a weekend.

Past Kingston crews I have coached in the club events at Henley included the 1978 Britannia winners, the 1981 and 1987 losing finalists and the Wyfold semi-finalists of the same year. All of these crews had one thing in common, they trained at least as hard and as often than the international contemporaries of their day.

In recent years as you will see from the list below, these "club" events have become tied to similar winners.

	Thames Cup (8+)	Wyfold Cup (4-)	Britannia Cup (4+)
1988	Thames RC	Notts CRA	Univ. of London
1989	Univ. of London	Leander Club	Leander Club
1990	Notts CRA	London RC	Univ Coll Galway
1991	Univ Penn USA	Nautilus RC	Notts CRA
1992	Lea RC	Notts CRA	Goldie BC
1993	Notts CRA	London RC	Harvard USA
1994	Brown Univ USA	Notts CRA	Belfast RC
1995	Imperial Coll	Lea RC	Wallingford RC

The rule changes will certainly restrict crew selection. For example from the current KINGSTON men's group, Colin Greenaway, Domenyk Honey and Ben Long are all ineligible to row in the Britannia Cup, although they would be eligible for the other two above events.

I am sure that none of these events will be any easier to win, but the changes are very welcome to us here at the SCARLET BLADES, and to the MEN'S GROUP that will be trying to take advantage from the changes this July.

Richard Ayling

(See separate sheet for Henley qualifying rules)

Henley Qualifying Rules

Brittania Cup

- 1) Any crew of amateurs who are members of any one club established at least one year before the closing date for entries shall be qualified to contend for this prize, subject to the following:
 - a) No crew of any institute, association or similar body, whose objective is to develop international representative crews, shall be qualified to contend for this prize.
 - b) No oarsman shall compete in this event if he has previously won an event at the Regatta, other than the Princess Elizabeth Cup or the Fawley Challenge Cup.
 - c) No current international squad oarsman, heavyweight or lightweight, shall compete in this event.
 - d) No oarsman shall compete in this event if he has represented his country in rowing or sculling in an Olympic Games, a FISA Senior World Championships, The Nations' Cup or the World Student Games.
 - e) No oarsmen shall compete in this event if he is a 'Blue' or a 'Purple' or has rowed in an analogous crew outside the United Kingdom, including, in the United States of America, Heavyweight Varsity crews competing in the Eastern Sprints, in the Intercollegiate Rowing Association Championships or the Pac-10 Championships.
 - 2) No one (coxswains excepted) shall compete both in this event and in any other four oared event at the same Regatta.
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Thames Cup

- 1) Any crew of amateurs who are members of any one club established at least one year before the closing date for entries shall be qualified to contend for this prize, subject to the following:
 - a) No crew of any boat club or university, college or secondary school shall be qualified to contend for this prize.
 - b) No crew of any institute, association or similar body, whose objective is to develop international representative crews, shall be qualified to contend for this prize.
 - c) No current international squad oarsmen, heavyweight or lightweight, shall compete in this event.
 - d) No crews shall be qualified to contend for this prize if more than two of the oarsmen have rowed or sculled in an Olympic Games or a FISA Senior World Championships, and any such oarsman shall not have competed in these events within the four years prior to the closing date for entries.
 - 2) No one (coxswains excepted) shall compete in this event and any other eight oared event at the same Regatta.
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Wyfold Cup

- 1) The same as rule 1 for the Thames Challenge Cup.
 - 2) No one shall compete both in this event and in any other four oared event at the same Regatta.
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GRANT WATKINS

It is with great sadness that we must pass on the news that Grant Watkins died suddenly following a heart attack at his place of work in New York recently. Grant suffered the attack during a lengthy video editing session and passed away some hours later in hospital.

It is fair to say that Grant was universally liked for his friendly personality and his capacity to help people whenever the need arose. For KRC he worked tirelessly with me to produce some eight videos to enliven the spirits at the Club and raise money for the purchase of new equipment.

Grant first rowed for Kingston in the 1971/2 season in one of the most successful senior C crews in the Club's history and went on to row for Leander and Thames Tradesmen before returning to Kingston after travelling the world to row successfully for the Club in veteran events.

The world has lost a fine man and the Club has lost an unreplaceable friend.

Scott Tunbridge