

The Scarlet Blade



PRICELESS

FREE TO MEMBERS

ISSUE 13

Chairman's *message*

by Peter King

The other day whilst driving to London I got caught up in traffic chaos caused by some mis-guided Irishmen, who thought that they could influence matters in Northern Ireland by placing an explosive device in the Fulham Broadway. With all the traffic at a standstill and finding nothing of interest on the car radio, I looked round for something to help pass the time whilst the traffic sorted itself out. Imagine my delight when I discovered that my son had left the latest edition of the 'Scarlet Chopper' in the car from the previous evening. To those of you who are not actively involved (in all senses of the word) at the Club, this is an anonymously produced libellous newsletter that is a cross between Private Eye and Viz magazine. Unfortunately or fortunately, (depending whether or not you are mentioned) the newsletter is very limited in its print run, but with Club news, Club quotations and in depth interviews, it light-heartedly informs the reader who is doing what and to

whom, both on and off the water!

My thanks to Libby MacIntyre and Scott Tunbridge for organising the Annual Dinner this year. They put an enormous amount of effort into it and I was delighted that all their hard work was rewarded by a record attendance. My thanks to everyone who supported the event and congratulations once more to Libby and Scott for a super evening. My only other comment about the evening is that it was a shame that people found it necessary to get up and wander to the toilets all the time especially during the speeches. It would be nice particularly as a courtesy to the person speaking, that members and their guests remain seated for the duration of the speech. I am quite sure that should anyone have a bladder problem or be on a course of diuretics, the organisers would be able to place them conveniently close to the toilet facilities!

Those of you who attended the Dinner (and were in the room at the time!) will remember the presentation that was made to Samantha Walker. For the last

twenty years at the Annual Dinner, a cup has been presented to a member, who in the opinion of the Captain, has made a significant contribution to the Club outside of the rowing activities. This cup was given to us by Mrs Poupart a resident in the Albany, just downstream from the Club. Her late husband's family had been market traders in Covent Garden and the cup had been won by them for the best presented market stall. Originally presented to the late Mr Poupart's father by Prince Albert, it was given to the Club by Mrs Poupart in thanks for the many hours of pleasure that her husband had got, from watching our crews rowing on the river.

The only drawback with an award of this kind is, that it always raises the question of to whom should it be given. Each year the Captain must wrestle with the problem of selecting one person from a list of many. I therefore wish to say a "thank you" to all of you who did not win the Poupart Cup, but helped the Club out in so many ways. To those who carry out the many menial but so necessary tasks in and around the boathouse, to those involved in the care and maintenance of the equipment and those who help in the Head events and on occasions endure a real battering from the elements in doing so. You may all be assured, your help is very greatly appreciated.

With the Head season now finished, KRC can be justly proud of its results. Whilst I do not wish to pre-empt anything the Captain will put in his report, I would however like to congratulate Colin Greenaway and Ben Long for their excellent results at the

Continued on page 4

Blade *gossip*

by our man in the beer tent

Calais or bust

Congratulations to Paul Reynolds who with his chums from Dittons broke the cross channel rowing record in a time of 2 hours and 42 minutes - a reduction of 25%!

A fresh crew rowed the return leg from France to Dover in a time of 3:3:30 - still inside the old record, but slower than the first crossing due to 18 crates of Stella Artois and 6kgs of ripe camembert, bought at Carrefour by Boysie.

Pale imitation

The good name of the Scarlet Blade has been sullied by a tabloid sledge rag currently circulating in the Club going by the terribly down market sobriquet of the 'Scarlet Chopper'. The 'Chopper' contains stories which are inaccurate, libelous, full of ripe language and riddled with sexual

innuendo. In other words - a damn good read!

Should any of the more sensitive or elderly members come across the 'Chopper' - proceed with caution!

Baywatch

As Nick has referred to in his report, hearty congratulations to the senior oarswomen who risked their lives and dodgy stomachs to dive into the Thames to save a drowning man. Many of you may have seen this in the local newspapers - it made the front cover story in all of them.

In flagrante

The recent warm weather has produced some unusual behaviour from some of the rowing members. Two top athletes were cautioned by the rozzers recently after being caught on Kingston bridge

doing the horizontal hokey-cokey! Fortunately, they were Kingston members and therefore of different sexes.

On another occasion last Saturday night two of Kingston's oarsmen were seen wandering around Surbiton stark naked, one went into a chip shop to buy a can of drink, the other went into a kebab shop, ordered a takeaway and waited 5 minutes for it to be prepared. What's surprising about this is that both takeaway staff didn't bat an eyelid and served the lads as normal customers - what a broad-minded place Surbiton is!

Launch appeal

Over the next few months Club functions will contain collections or specific events to fund the purchase of a new launch. Unfortunately since the sinking of the Club's 2nd launch three years ago we've had to make do with one, which is not enough for a club with approaching 100 full time rowing and sculling members.

Tiffin have been generous with the lending of 'After Eights' but we really need another one to give the kind of coaching the oarsmen and women need.

Dig deep!

P.S. Where are the Sunshine Boys?

Support your Bar!

As you will know, the club bar is one of the few regular income earners for Kingston Rowing Club. Currently, I am making a big effort to increase the number of bookings for functions at the club.

I would encourage every member to make a special effort in the coming months to remember the club's facilities the next time you or your friends plan to hold a party or other function. The club is a very attractive site for birthday or office parties and I offer similarly attractive rates to club members.

Domenyk Honey

Caption competition



What did Damian say to Steve Pratley?
Steve will buy a pint for anyone giving him a witty answer.

Write here

Captain's report

by Nick Ronald

It is strange to think that after nearly 16 years involvement at the Club, during which I have held some formal post at the Club, this may be my last formal report for the Scarlet Blade. Having been a Committee Member, Secretary, Coach and Captain, retirement at last looms.

Despite the fact that my years "in office" have nearly bankrupted me and left my career in tatters, I can't help but feel a certain amount of sadness as I write this report. The rest of you will probably feel a great sense of relief that a new hand is about to pen the Captain's report, but for me it is almost like losing a good friend. A Captain's life at times is a particularly hard one because the high expectations within our Club, but it is also full of excitement, good times and the chance to make life long friendships.

Enough of that sentiment as what you really want to hear about is the rowing. The Club is as vibrant as ever to the extent that on one recent weekend we had three full trailers going to different regattas. They were the Metropolitan, The West Country week end and National Schools. The logistics are quite horrendous as you can imagine and loading the trailers on a Thursday night can be a traumatic affair. A Thursday night such as this, however, says an awful lot about Kingston Rowing Club and its tremendous state of health.

For those who have yet to hear the Head season was one of our most successful for many years. At the Womens Head we had two top twenty crews and won two Pennants. At Kingston we won three pennants and there were strong performances all round. Although only finishing 5th, the mens first 8 performance was the most exciting for sometime. They were only beaten by crews who were in the top twenty at the main Head and on average beat the opposition with whom they closely fought last year by about 20 seconds.

This result was translated into a strong row by the First 8 at the Mens Head when they came 23rd. This was achieved by a genuine Club 8, rather than one full of international mercenaries

The men and women who took part in the Scullers Head gave a clear demonstration of the strength in depth at the Club and the event saw us winning yet another two pennants. Colin Greenaway, won the Novice Pennant in an unbelievable 5th place and Ben Long, brother of the famous British Sculler Chris Long, won the Senior III Pennant in 23rd place.

In general there has been a change in policy for the summer regattas for both the mid to upper ends of the Mens and Womens squad. In recent seasons we have sought to gain a reputation by planing the point system and knocking up as many wins as we could. The aim being to make winning a habit.

This summer quality is the name of the game and we have been going to the Country's top regattas and racing either at Open events or quality points events. The only exception to this rule may be the Sculling events, but as our

Head results suggest, you have got to be extremely good to win even at novice level. It has been great to see Kingston competitive at Open events again. I went to watch the Club at Notts City early in the season. On the Saturday I was there virtually all our entries qualified for their respective finals and the worst place achieved was 4th. This was Steve Ross who was Sculling in the Open Lightweight category which was won by an international sculler. The general quality of this event was very high and Steve's 4th place was a good achievement in its own right. He has since gone on to win Open Lightweight Sculls at the Docklands Regatta. All our other finalists at Notts City either won or were in second place and it gave me a great buzz to hear Kingston's name constantly being mentioned over the tannoy.

Notts City simply reflects all the other high quality events we have been to this year where the same pattern has been followed. I would like to mention in particular the Double of Domenyk Honey and Ben Long who have proved virtually unbeatable in Open Doubles. A Quad we raced at the Metropolitan which was simply put together for the Sunday, beat the under 23 Quad by 6 seconds. The Women's group have also proved to be strong at Sculling events and I would like to mention Mary Stevens who seemed to make any boat she is in win. It is also great to see Allison Barnett rowing with some of our senior club girls and helping to pass on her considerable experience. At the Metropolitan rowing with Rachel Knight in an Open Pair they beat the opposition by what seemed almost half the course.

Flo Johnson and Ian South are putting together some exciting combination for Womens Henley and I have much enjoyed watching some of the trials. It has been good to see our Womens squad really going for it and this is reflected down to the bottom end as far as determination is concerned. The Womens Senior III 8 after a disappointing year in 1995 have come back with vengeance and had a great win over local rivals, Kingston Grammar School at Thames Ditton Regatta. Continuing with the Women, I would like to congratulate the two Womens Fours who saved the life of a man who fell out of a wheelchair on the riverbank near Kingston. The two crews responded to a cry of help from a passer by and elected four of the women to dive in the water to pull out what they thought was a dead body. This was an act of courage in itself. Fortunately, they checked for a pulse, found the man was alive and revived him. I gather he is now doing well in hospital. The nine women involved were Cath Cooper, Sarah Hay, Louise Barrat, Elaine Law, Rachel Knight, Anne Cox, Karen Ralph, Alison Barnet and cox Camilla Sykes. The calm but determined approach of all these women I believe is a reflection on the determination in general at Kingston Rowing Club. Well done to them all.

I think I have said enough for now, apart from the many thank yous I have to make. As the season is not over yet, I have asked the Editor of Scarlet Blade if I can leave my thank yous to the next edition.

Enjoy your Mens and Womens Henley respectively.

Chairman's *message* continued from front cover

Scullers Head of the River. Colin finished in 5th place taking the Novice Prize, whilst Ben finished 23rd winning the Senior 3 Prize.

A question I frequently get asked is "How is the Club doing?" Well you can all read the results of our achievements so far this season in the Captain's report and those of you who buy the Rowing Almanac can see last seasons results spread across a page and a half. However I don't think this gives the full picture. A club is more than just a rowing factory, a point brought home to me a couple of months ago. I had attended an Umpires' Seminar at a large very well known rowing club at Putney and as I left the club around about 9.15pm I noticed that it was almost deserted. It being a Thursday night I decided to look in at KRC to see if there was anyone still there. The bar was packed with the rowers from all

sectors of our club and filled with an atmosphere of friendliness, something that was non-existent in the club I had just left. So to all of you who want to know how the Club is doing, my answer is just fine, but don't take my word for it come down one Thursday night and see for yourself. If you do, I think you will agree with me that this spirit of determination and camaraderie will ensure the success of KRC for future generations.

As I write the men's crews are well advanced in their preparation for Henley. I would also like to congratulate the women's quad and the women's lightweight double, both victorious at women's Henley. In spite of unprecedented spates of illness, our crews have done exceptionally well so far this season and have been a great credit to the Club when competing at the very many regatta around the

country. Although it seems that summer has only just begun, with the arrival of the Henley regattas and the National Championships, already the season is beginning to draw to a close. Next month we have our AGM and I hope that as many of you as possible will find the time to come along. Not only is it an opportunity for you to find out how the Club is doing, but also it is the chance to have your say and most importantly elect those members to office whose task it will be, to take on the job of running your Club next season.

I look forward to meet many of you at Henley Royal Regatta and hope that the weather will be kind to competitors and spectators alike.

Please remember the AGM is on Thursday 25th July in the clubhouse at 8pm prompt.

Peter King

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