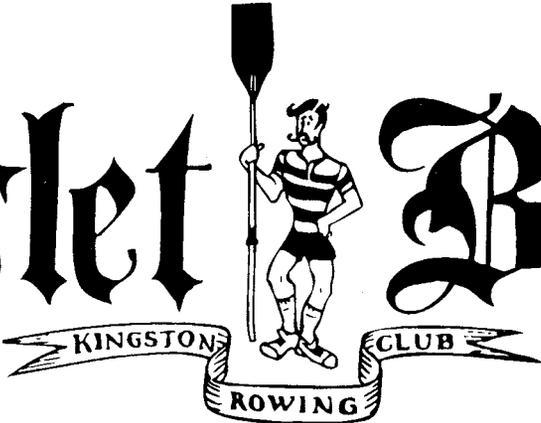


The Scarlet Blade



PRICELESS

FREE TO MEMBERS

ISSUE 16

Chairman's Message —

HURRYING THE END OF THE SEASON

Accompanying this newsletter is the Notice of the AGM, which signifies the ending of yet another season. Writing this in early June, before the major regattas have taken place it seems strange to be referring to the end of the season but by the time this drops through your letterbox, the AGM will be only weeks away.

With a membership of over 450 we would not be able to hold this meeting at the clubhouse if everyone decided to turn up, however, we are able to seat between 70 and 80 in comfort and I would urge as many of you as possible to make the effort to come along on the 24th July at 8.0pm.

The AGM is your opportunity to raise any criticisms you might have, of the way your club is being run and also hopefully, to show your appreciation of the hard work put in by the outgoing Committee.

Having recently moved I have managed to loose the computer discs that contain a record of the previous newsletters. Therefore you will forgive me if I repeat an earlier request for members who find themselves with a little spare time on their hands, to offer their services to the Club.

In today's age it is becoming more and more difficult to find members who cannot only cope with the demands of work, but also find the time required to manage the administrative tasks of the Club. If you have a little time that you could give to help out, please let me know this is definitely a case where many hands will make light work.

In just under two and a half years time we will be celebrating the millennium and I am hoping it will be possible to bring out an updated edition of the Club's history. Research has already started on expanding the current book and I would earnestly appeal to all those who might have photographs or any items that could be of use to please get in touch. If you would write to me care of KRC I would be most grateful. Previous requests have yielded one or two items of great interest, not the least being a picture of the Club beating University College Reading in a heat of the Thames Cup in 1920.

The last edition finished at 1983 so information from that period onwards would be most welcome and of course all photographs will be returned.

Those of you familiar with Kingston will have noticed that work has now started on the repair and strengthening of the Road Bridge, a task that I am informed will take between two and three years.

Those of us involved in running the various Head events are now nervously awaiting the installation of the new buttresses, which will be erected in scaffolding, to see just how they affect

the navigation channels through the bridge. I have to say that if they encroach too much on the present width of the channels we are going to be faced with a mammoth problem in running these events over their present course.

Further on in this newsletter is an update on the club's performance so far this season, I will not therefore add anything to what the Captain will write. I would however like to congratulate both Colin Greenaway and Tony Larkman on their selection to the GB Quad and congratulate the whole crew on a very fine performance last weekend in Munich.

As I mentioned earlier, this newsletter is being prepared at a fairly early stage into the main regatta season. Women's Henley and Henley Royal will not have taken place by the time this reaches you, so I would urge as many of you as can make it, to come along and give our crews your vocal support.

The resurgence in British sport that is now taking place is extremely encouraging and whilst we in the rowing world are no strangers to Gold Medals I do hope that the millions of pounds now being poured into an attempt to produce some sporting excellence, will enable the rowing world to finally demonstrate what it can really achieve when it gets a little financial support.

No article of mine would be complete without reminding any lucky winners on the lottery, that the Club is always a very worthy cause for any donations. It is always a mystery to me how the Treasurer manages to balance the books each year and the fact remains that we have a fleet of boats that is badly in need of being updated.

When I am at a regatta as I was today and see other clubs competing in new

Continued on page 4

1997 REGATTA WINS SO FAR...

Evesham Regatta 10-11 May

Womens Senior 3	Coxed Four
Womens Senior 2	Coxed Four
Womens Senior 3	Eight
Womens Senior 1	Eight
Mens Open	Single Sculls (Steve Fraser) Saturday
Mens Open	Single Sculls (Steve Fraser) Sunday

Thames Ditton Regatta 17 May

Mens Senior 2	Coxed Four
Mens Open	Single Sculls (Steve Fraser)

Metropolitan Regatta 24-25 May

Womens L Senior 2	Single Sculls (Vic Fangen) Saturday
Womens L Open	Single Sculls (Vic Fangen) Sunday

Worcester/Monmouth Regatta 24-25 May

Mens Novice	Single Sculls (Colin Mercer) Worcester
Mens Senior 3	Single Sculls (Colin Mercer) Monmouth

Docklands Regatta 7-8 June

Womens L Open	Single Sculls (Mary Stevens)
Womens Open	Double Sculls (Claire Fox, Vic Fangen)

Walton/Weybridge 7-8 June

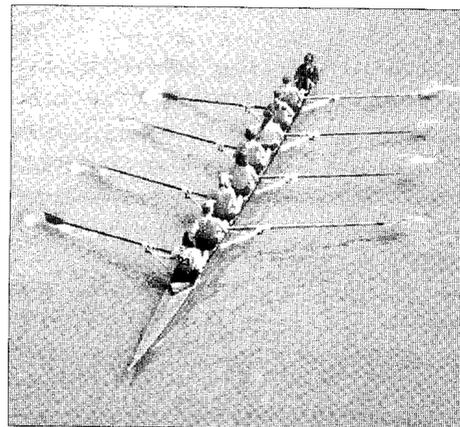
Womens Novice	Eight
Womens Senior 2	Coxed Four
Mens Lightweight	Open Single Sculls (Don Casey)

FISA Cup Munich 31 May-1 June

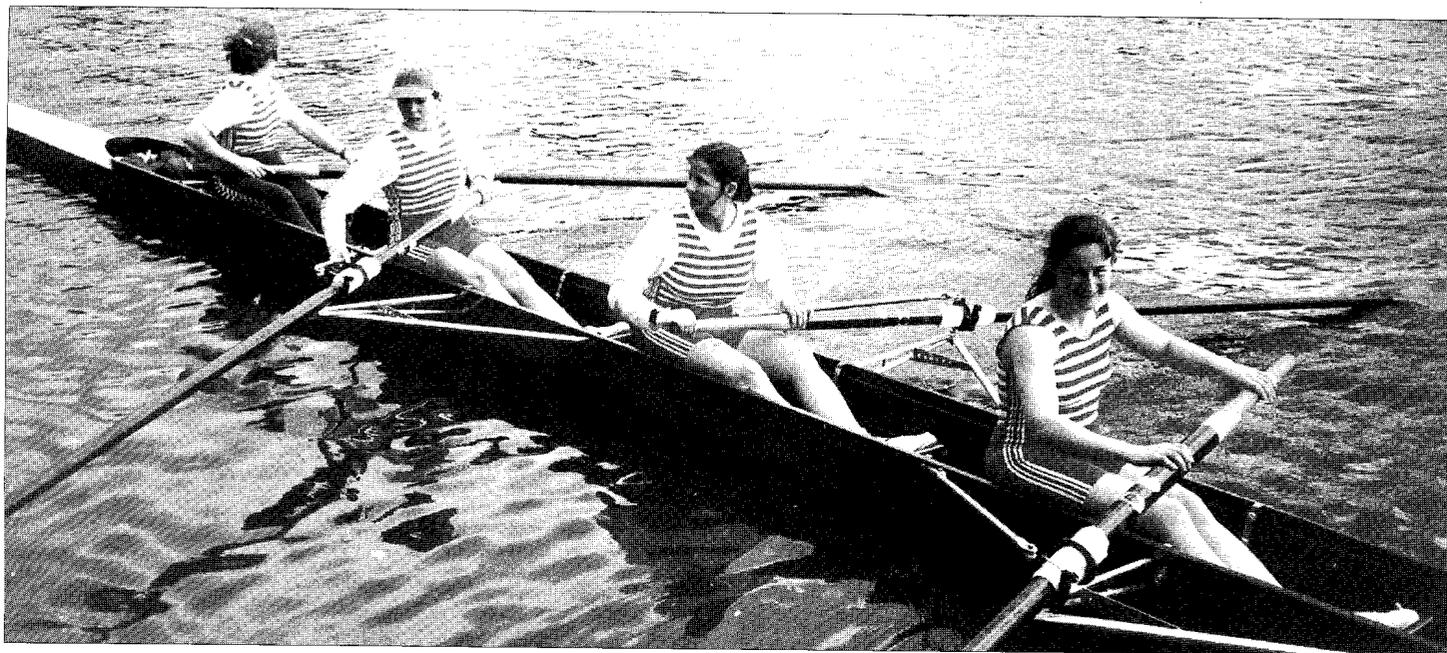
Mens Open	Quad Sculls
	4th place (Colin Greenaway, Tony Larkman)

I apologies for any wins or significant results which I may have missed. —Ed.

The Walton winning eight pictured here at Worcester



The Senior 2 Womens Coxed Four at Evesham



The Veteran Dimension

It still seems strange being one of the older brigade at the Club. As I am sure all fellow veterans will concur, I still feel capable of great things on the river. The trouble is that whilst the brain is more than willing, the body has a tendency to disagree.

It's now the nature of Veteran Suppers that the subject matter now links stories of great rowing deeds, impressive past conquests with the opposite sex (the memory is greatly improved with a few glasses of port) and the latest part of the body that has fallen apart, ripped, been strained or is shortly to be replaced by something plastic.

One thing remains constant – an affection for KRC. This, is shown in a variety of different ways in which people have chosen to make contributions to the Club over the last year or so.

Take our President – Dick Offer for instance. He should have celebrated his 78th birthday on the day I had originally planned for the last Veteran Supper – 2nd May and celebrated his 60 odd years membership of the place by donating half of the £1000 or so raised on the evening!

The Boat Fund was conceived by Domenyk and Gary to enable us hopefully to purchase a new boat this season, as this seemed unlikely with current club funding. It was also agreed that money raised by the Veterans would also be directed towards this cause. As things stand we have raised over £7,000, which is just as well since Gary has reassessed our needs as being an eight rather than the four we were originally aiming for.

A good part of this sum was raised by the Pledge Auction with contributions from Laura, Colin and Guy Lewis – who in his inimitable way conjured some

remarkable bidding from walls and ceilings to raise £1,400!

The timing of the Supper was good for this event as Guy doubled the number of pledges made during the evening – so thanks also go to all those who donated anything from “a trip on a gentlemen's skiff with tea” to a barby, tennis and swimming at the ‘Hotel’ Pinsent. (has anyone told Bob?).

Peter King, apart from always hogging the front page of this tome, combines his Chairman's role with his running of Kingston Head, coaching novices and various umpiring duties. In addition are all awaiting our first foray into the world of the Lottery money, which I believe he is fronting (could it be us?).

One of the things I miss most these days behind the bar is RR's even tempered excellence of service. Domenyk has got the whole thing so well managed that they can even do without this most unique service. And have you seen the last night of the Proms in recent years? If you have, you will certainly have seen the full regalia of RR, Dave Biddulph and Pat White gracing the festivities.

At this point a small request. Could we please have the 200 Club draw on a Thursday evening – the official club night. What is the 200 Club I hear some of you ask. Good question! This is a weekly draw for £10.00 for members of the 200 (who pay £15.00 per year for the privilege) Club which was always drawn

on Sundays and three larger draws on special occasions, made famous by Stanley West a very popular long standing member. I for one would enjoy the event on a Thursday and who knows maybe we could attract sonic more participants. How about it Jonesy?

It was good to see former treasurer Mike Bate (master to his friends) and to hear about his success in saloon car racing. Mike's heart is in the right place though with the generous donation of an Aylings sculling boat last year.

A brief word in praise of Donal and Bridget who have been feeding us on Tuesdays and Thursdays – allowing some of us oldies to stay out a little longer and attracting a number of not so oldies who would not otherwise be eating so well.

Over the last 18 months we have tried to put on Dinners or Suppers which create interest in coming down to the Club, rubbing shoulders (or whatever else is ailing!) with contemporaries and re-living fond memories. If you are of advancing years and I haven't been in touch recently (it's not deliberate!) write to me care of KRC and I will put you on the Vet's mailing list.

For those of you who like plenty of notice of the next event, the Autumn Veteran Supper will be on Friday 24th October and an invitation will go out a month before.

And remember, if there is any contribution you feel you can make – whether financial, time for a days coaching or even with a contact for sponsorship – don't hold back **Your Rowing Club Needs You!**

By Scott Tunbridge

Leslie Arthur Parsons

1905–1997

Leslie Parsons who was President of the Club from 1981 until 1993 was born in 1905, the youngest of a family of five having two older sisters. He contracted Polio in his left leg at a very early age, something that was to have a profound influence on his life.

Being unable to compete on the athletic field or on the games pitch, he discovered the sport of rowing whilst he was at Kingston Grammar School. This was a sport where his disability and lack of mobility did not matter and so began a connection with the river that was to last over three quarters of a century.

The exact date he joined Kingston Rowing Club is not known although it must have been around the early to mid 1920 s. First mention of Leslie on the Club Henley Boards is 1928 when he competed for the KRC in the Wyfolds.

At the outbreak of hostilities with Germany in 1939, Leslie went along to enroll into the Royal Air Force. At the tender age of 34, he was promptly turned down as being too old. After arguing the matter with the recruiting officer it was agreed that they would

accept him if he could do 50 press-ups. Suffice to say he got accepted by the RAF and fought for the freedom of this country playing his part in the successful outcome of the Second World War.

As has been mentioned, Leslie's association with the river spanned a period in excess of 75 years and the Record Boards in the Clubroom show him rowing again in the Wyfolds in 1930, and in the 1931 Thames Cup crew.

After the cessation of hostilities of the Second World War, Leslie rowed in the 1946 Grand crew. He obviously decided at this point having turned the magic age of 40, to give competitive rowing a rest and the following year he took over as Captain of the Club from Rowland Sawtell. A post he was to hold for two years.

When his active rowing career came

to an end, he took up umpiring and continued to play his part in the sport up to his 65th birthday in 1970. Despite being unable to continue as an umpire he still kept his connections with the sport and continued to serve as one of the officials at the Henley Town & Visitors Regatta for many years after. His lack of mobility by 1990 finally forced him to retire from this as well.

In 1981 he took over from Gerry Oldham as President of the Club, a role that gave him an immense amount of pleasure and also great pride. In those early years in office he lived at Farnham some 25 miles from the Club. In spite of living so far away, he was still to be seen on a Sunday morning having a beer or two in the bar and taking a keen interest in the training and progress of our crews.

Likewise at the regattas the familiar red blazer and walking stick would nearly always be seen in the enclosure whatever the weather conditions. At the ripe old age of 88 and with his health starting to deteriorate, Leslie decided that it was time step down as President and he handed over the office to Dick Offer.

There are few that could have equalled Leslie's love and dedication to the sport of rowing and his loyalty and support of our Club will remain as an example to us all.

SOCIAL UPDATE

by Mary Stevens

Last months social scene at KRC featured the extremely successful 'Pledge Auction'. This event, revived and organised by Laura Binns not only raised around £1,400 for the Boat Fund, but was also enjoyed by all those who attended.

The humerous element was largely due to the auctioneer, Guy 'I-can-sell-a-beefburger-to-a-vegetarian' Lewis.

His verbosity is legendary for example, he sold one free 'cat spay' to Chris Elmitt, who has no cat; a Tim Crooks roof rack to Laura Binns, whose only vehicle is a motor bike; and one minutes 'hairbrushing' to Domenyk Honey, who has no hair.

Despite the light hearted nature of the event, very generous pledges were bought and a considerable amount of money was raised.

I would like to thank all those who

pledged, all those who attended and especially Laura Binns, who despite running the clubs largest squad successfully also goes to great lengths to organise events such as this.

Laura pointed out after the event that light had been shed on what people at KRC really wanted – alcohol and coaching! Perhaps this explains why those Henley medals have been so elusive in recent years...

As most members have a heavy racing schedule until the National Championships, there will be no major social events until late July. However, I would like to remind members that the bar is open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday every week, with Brigitte Casey's delicious food on Thursday nights.

There will be end of season events during the summer and all club members are welcome to attend.

Chairman's Message

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boats and our crew in a boat that from where I was standing seemed to be held together by black tape, it does occur to me that they might just be at a slight disadvantage! Please all donations large or small very gratefully received.

The nomination list for the new committee members will go up on the notice board in a few weeks time, for those who would like to get involved please come forward and put your name on this list.

I look forward to seeing a good few of you at 8.0pm on the 24th July. In the meantime I wish all our crews the very best of luck at the regattas and in particular our representative crews at Women's Henley and Henley Royal. Lets hope for good weather and good racing.

Peter King