

The Scarlet Blade

Kingston Rowing Club's official newsletter

Captain's Report

Farrell Mossop

The start-up phase for 2003/2004 progressed smoothly during September and October and since then there have been many areas of success. Unfortunately there are also many other areas where I have got things wrong.

The 'Captain's review plan' (which involves a 6 week cycle of meetings to review how it's going with people who have concerns and capture things that are going wrong) brought this home to me at the recent adults club meeting last Thursday (11/12/03).

The meeting was not attended by the majority of athletes and coaches, but many of those that were present expressed considerable concern at the lack of communication and consideration that they had been given since the start of the year. Specifically, the following points were made:

- The club needs to improve communications through the use of notice boards and paper mail in addition to using e-mail.
- The captain needs to get closer to the athletes and coaches – talk to them more.
- We should run a club head - then lunch - to help in bringing people together.
- The VAMP Rum Punch scratch eights event on 4th Jan needs advertising.
- The life members who donated to Project Oarsman have not been kept informed of the progress gained with the junior schemes - this was agreed to have been a major embarrassment as all at the club feel very indebted to the generosity of these people.

Following the debates, Tim Crooks kindly offered to give a talk on sculling and rowing to active oarsmen. Tim in his day was the best rower in the UK and at the 1976 Olympics was regarded by many top coaches as the best rower in the World. He has an ARA Silver Coaching Award, has coached at international level and was the winner of the original BBC Superstars competition. A talk from Tim will give more information about how to win than all the coaching manuals put together – keep an eye out for the date and don't miss it.

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Successes

The major success within the rowing set up has been the way all the voluntary coaches have worked hard to develop the rowing squads since the start-up phase. Although the Athletes meeting was poorly attended on Thursday 11/12, the commitment by the coaches and core athletes to training has been excellent.

Congratulations to

- The Men's squads on their commitment to training and good results in the Autumn Heads
- The core group of six intermediate women who have doggedly stuck to training and always posted their ergo score – your day will come.
- The senior women and sculling group members in your determination to keep going and record such creditable results in national trials – see Internationals report from Damian West

All the above gives me reason to be positive, but that's not all because we also have a fantastic group of Novices (both a Men's and Women's eight) and then there's the juniors!

Juniors

The growth of the juniors this year fully demonstrates the spirit of people within this club to work together as a team to produce something very special. We now have a coordinated group of sixty juniors – yes sixty- and being juniors they need to be carefully looked after and this requires an army of volunteers plus some very dedicated coordinators.

At the Junior review meeting last Sunday 14th December, a clubhouse packed with happy parents gave Boysie, Martin Ellis, Dan Genazinni, Ceri Jones, Ruth Jenkins and John Hampton an extended round of applause for their efforts as the main coaches and coordinators of this group.

Boysie then gave thanks to all the helpers that have supported the junior coaches on a rota basis, plus a special thanks to Lizzy Walne and the Kingston University students who ran the Junior section last year.

In January 2004 we are committed to extending this junior group with the next wave of 'Project Oarsome' kids from our associated schools Beverley and Chessington. We need more volunteers to handle this further commitment – please think about it, I know it's your time, but the payback and appreciation from these kids is second to none. This is the future – why not be part of it.

The Project Oarsome grant has made this possible. We have built on this by applying for and being given a further grant from the "Foundation for Sports and Arts" for £3,300 to buy another sculling boat. We have also just received a donation from Lords Estate Agents for £500 and in April we are expecting a further grant to fund a professional coach – the ball is rolling.

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Life members

If the 'life members' who donated to Oarsome are reading this then please take pride because this is what you helped to start. Your donations are one of most important gestures ever in turning around this club at a time when help was needed – thank you very much and also thank you very much to the volunteers who have helped things happen on the water. We understand that some of the donors wish to keep their names anonymous but please be assured that this generosity is greatly appreciated by everyone involved with the juniors, especially the children!

To the donators to Project Oarsome thank you very much you made so much possible.

To the following voluntary coaches, thank you very much your input keeps the club alive and allows it to grow

	Men	Women
Senior	John Hampton	Ian South & Peter Hope
Intermediate	Mike Clark, Birgith Sims (land training)	John Keane, Dominic Foley & Steve Chasey, Scully
Novice	Mel Court-Smith, Brendan Tougher & Steve Chasey	Steve Chasey
Juniors Coaching and helpers team	Paul Reynolds (Boysie), Martin Ellis, Dan Genazinni, John Hampton, Ceri Jones, Ruth Jenkins, Peter Hope, Sara Bailey, Claire Barnett, Damian West, Richard West, Richard Higgins, Scott Tunbridge, Dave Kidwell, Lizzy Walne, Ruth Cushing	

NB: These coaches are not only volunteers, they are often financial contributors, out of pocket due to expenses (e.g. bikes, megaphones, launch petrol) that they never get around to claiming back from the club or the people they coach. Very few clubs can rely on this type of dedicated voluntary support, we are very lucky and grateful for their help and support.

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Junior Squad update

Charlie Reynolds

Well – here I am, having rowed at Molesey for a year I'm now part of the junior squad down at KRC. I've been a member of KRC since I was four (my dad was hoping for a life membership for me before I went to Uni!) but the junior section is really buzzing now. Project Oarsome seems to be going really well and all the juniors are very grateful to Guy, Damian, Graham and Lizzy for getting it all started.

My dad tells me we have always had lots of juniors in the past – and over 25 of them have made it to the World or Olympic championships – all because of KRC! But this is different – there are 60 youngsters from 10 different schools. And another Oarsome scheme starts next year .

And the helpers . . . I believe there are 15 but Farrell says they could do with more – some of the mums and dads are offering to help now. If you could spare a couple of hours coaching us (we go out in an octuplet sometimes which is really fun!!) we'd really appreciate it – can you please let my dad know? - Paul Reynolds (07957 365 114)

We go out on Sundays at about 10.00 and some of the more advanced guys go out twice at the weekend – Saturday and early on Sunday. We won at Kingston Small Boats Head and hope to carry on racing through the winter – so come down to cheer us on!!

What's really great about rowing in the junior Squad is, well – firstly the boats – we have a fleet of brand new Oarsome boats – designed and rigged for us (which apparently no one else is allowed to use because they are meant for lightweight kids!!). The water here is better than at Molesey and all the big guys in the main squads talk to us and make us laugh!!

I've already made some good friends and had sleepovers. After Sunday rowing all the kids go home starving for lunch and really pleased at what they are achieving.

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Veteran Rowing

Angus Gait

Do you still feel the urge to ply the oar? If there is a good time to be a veteran, then now is it for veterans at Kingston as the Captain is one of our foremost veteran oarsmen.

There's no rule about how often you do it; several times a week, once a month or only on your birthday - the choice is yours. You may not have rowed since boats and blades were hewn from solid timbers by sweaty craftsmen in dusty workshops but don't worry, the technique is still the same - avoid getting the red bit wet. Vets can also join in the land training sessions on Tuesday and Thursday at the Club, so fair weather rowers have no excuse for not getting into shape.

It is nearly 30 years since women were admitted to Kingston, so there are a lot of old, and not-so-old girls out there who used to row. And remember, veterans start at 31, or 27 if you enter the Vesta Veteran Head or cross the Channel. If you want to compete there are as many events as you want to do, from heads to regattas to championships to bars; or don't race at all. Richard West organises a social outing at 9:30 on a Sunday morning which is a gentle way to get back in a boat.

Due to a shortage of vets at Kingston last year, the men entered composite crews with Walbrook and had wins at the Molesey Vets Head, National Veteran Championships and Henley Vets Regatta. Birgith won at the International Masters Regatta in a composite crew and Andy K won 4 medals there for a club we'd rather not mention. We want to repeat this success with all-Kingston crews in the future.

Meanwhile, the vets have been representing the Club at the following Autumn events:

- Kingston Small Boats Head (2 nd November)
- Tiffin Small Boats Head (15 th November)
- Walton Small Boats Head (6 th December)
- Burway Small Boats Head (13 th December)

Why not come and join us in the New Year? If you would like further information, come down for a beer on a Sunday lunchtime or e-mail info@kingstonrc.co.uk.

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International Rowing

Damian West

Kingston Rowing Club once again acquitted itself with flying colours on the international stage. At the 2003 World Rowing Championships in Milan two members, Michelle Dollimore and Kieran West won Silver Medals in the Women's Lightweight Pair and Men's Coxed Four Respectively. Also competing for the club were Sarah Birch and Rebecca Romero. We would like to congratulate all four on their exceptional performances.

Building on this success, KRC had three representatives at the October National Squad Assessment in Boston. In the absence of the internationals from this summer (who are exempt the first set of trials) Kate Hewitt came an extremely encouraging 6th in a high class women's heavyweight field. Dan Genazini also performed well, placing 11th in the lightweight men. Joe Lackner was slightly further down the field, a position in part a result of serious cramps he suffered down the closing straight though it's a credit to his determination that he still managed to complete the race.

More recently, at the start of December, Kate and Dan traveled back to Boston for the second set of squad trials, to be joined by Kieran West, Sarah Birch and Rebecca Romero. The performance of the day was undoubtedly from Rebecca who won the women's trial, beating the best athletes in the country in the process. Kate, the other heavyweight women competing finished 12th, again a strong performance and one that certainly keeps her hopes alive of selection for the Olympics this summer.

Of the other Kingston representatives, Kieran finished 14th in the heavyweight men, Sarah finished 7th in the lightweight women and Dan finished 31st in the lightweight men. All I'm sure will be back up in Boston in February for the final set of long distance trials and hoping for that all important invitation to final trials at Easter.

Financial General Meeting

Angus Gait, Hon. Treasurer

The Financial General Meeting was held on Sunday 7th December at 11.30 a.m. The primary purpose of the FGM was for Members to approve the Club's audited accounts for the previous year, in this case August 2002 to July 2003.

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Last year the Club had a deficit of £14,733 which left us running on empty. The cost of the Boathouse is only just covered by subs and rack fees, provided that everyone pays up on time. A major concern of the Committee is to raise the money to pay for the rowing activities and we urgently need your suggestions and help to do it.

In addition to the main financial business, a rule change was passed so that the accounts can be presented at the AGM in August. This means changing the financial year to run from April to March so that the accounts can be prepared in time. The advantage of this is that they will be prepared and presented by the Treasurer who has been responsible for them.

Keep an eye on the Club's web site <http://www.kingstonrc.co.uk> for further information.

200 Club

There are some vacancies to be included in our regular prize draws! A standing order form is included with this copy of Scarlet Blade and at only £15 per number per year why not buy two numbers, or for extra luck why not three?

Recent winners, so you know who to approach for a drink, are:

- £500 Peter Izzard
- £250 Jill Thorpe
- £50 Graham Kirk, Peter Pearce, Ray Merrall, Sue Login, Terry Gostling, William Hamber, Richard Nelson, Vanessa Silverside.

To join the 200 club you can either;

1) Complete and return the standing order form that has been included at the end of this publication to:

Bryan Jones,
200 Club,
Kingston Rowing Club,
Lower Ham Road,
Kingston,
Surrey. KT2 5AU.

or

2) Set up your standing order direct with your bank. If you do this please e-mail: info@kingstonrc.co.uk to let us know that you have done it.

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Obituary

Tony Gibbs died in September, peacefully at home after a long illness. Tony has long been a familiar stalwart around the Club, having moved the short distance from Tiffin, and was notable also for his support for Kingston Amateur Regatta (among other duties he was Secretary for many years) and Remenham (he kept the flags on the Mound flying in the correct order and many will also remember him keeping the results board up to date). He also had links with Northern rowing from his student days in the North East and was instrumental in introducing rowing at the then Windsor Grammar School (now Boys School).

Edgar Rollinson, an old supporter of Kingston Regatta died during the summer. He left a generous legacy to the boat fund, which has been applied to funding the Stampfli 8, to be used as the men's first eight.

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Dates for the Diary

Social Events

A wide range of social events have already been planned for 2004. The full social diary accompanies this edition of Scarlet Blade and is also posted on the website: www.kingstonrc.co.uk

Highlighted below are some of the principle events in the first part of the New Year:

January 4 th	Vampire Rum Punch Eights – Scratch eights and Rum Punch party named in memory of Vampire, starting with registration at 10.30am
February 7 th	KRC Party
February 20 th	KRC Annual Dinner at the Bank of England Club (venue and date are confirmed, booking forms will be sent out in January)

Email updates will also be sent out from time to time both about upcoming events and club news. This is a good way of keeping up to date with the activities at the club. If you wish to receive these emails please send your email address to: info@kingstonrc.co.uk

Who's Who

Committee

The principal appointees for 2003-4 are:

President	Dick Offer
Captain	Farrell Mossop
Treasurer	Angus Gait
Secretary	Richard Rowland
Chairman	Damian West

Useful Contacts

Kingston Rowing Club:	020 8546 8592
KRC website:	www.kingstonrc.co.uk
Adult Rowing enquiries:	Farrell Mossop (07801 713 558)
Junior Rowing enquiries:	Paul Reynolds (07957 365 114)
Membership:	Craig Elliott (craig.j.elliott@lineone.net)
Social Events:	Mary Elvin (07780 706 445)
Hire of KRC facilities:	Mary Elvin (07780 706 445)
Sponsorship Enquiries:	Mary Elvin (07780 706 445)