

# Curlew Newsletter

2019 Summer Edition



Henley Royal  
Oxford City

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# Henley Royal Regatta

This year we had two strong crews entered for Henley Royal, a mix of new rowers, Vets and Senior men representing Curlew across two boats.

Wyfold IV- Curlew vs Team Keane

Thames Challenge VIII - Curlew vs Tyne RC 'B'

## On the day....

Regatta season is always an exciting time of year, and with the prospect of Henley Royal Regatta looming towards the end of the season the competition always step it up a gear. This season was no different.

On the whole Curlews Men's 8+ had a positive season putting in some strong race performances at various events. The crews racing at each regatta changed regularly due to members fulfilling other commitments or just who was selected. Each change gave the squad the chance to show why they should be selected for the Henley crew.

With Crew selection finally made training was stepped up a gear, in preparation for the qualifier race and also the main event. The anticipation kept growing as the prospect of having to go to qualifiers and race on the Friday loomed, but thankfully the 8+ got a pre-qualification spot for the Wednesday thanks to some kind words in the right ears and also I hope the strong showing at races through the year. Finally the crew could breath easy knowing that the efforts of the season had been worth it and set their minds to the challenge ahead.



The Wednesday of Henley rolled around and as expected the crew met early and talked through the day ahead, what time to meet at the boat, what time Fred's legendary crew chat would be and various other Henley related things. Once everything had been decided upon it was then a waiting game. Waiting for the meeting time, the crew chat and finally the boating time. That moment arrived at 5 something, but I can't remember the exact detail as nerves had set in by that point all I do remember is from that moment on it was focus on the race ahead and the things we as a crew can control.

A strong paddle and a few practice starts later and there we were on the start line beside Tyne B, an opposition not to be underestimated. The race umpire made the usual calls and then its front stops, attention, GO. A solid push from the first three strokes and then a wind to 40+SPM got us off the line and up to speed quickly, before you know it you are at the end of the island, unfortunately for us it was Tyne B that came out ahead at this point. Just over a minute in and the call came for a rhythm change and one stroke later we settled onto a race pace that would help the 8 keep up the fight and push on. Markers came and went and by the time we reach the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile marker Tyne B had edged away to a length, this provided Alex with the opportunity to ask for a push for 10, the crew duly obliged, giving that little bit extra you find when you are asked, this push kept us to within a length and a half but the Tyne crew just kept finding that little bit more distance. More distance markers passed and Tyne edged away a little more, undeterred the crew pushed on trying to make up ground. A momentary laps from the cox and we hear a call saying mile and 1/8th thinking the end is in sight when it was only the mile marker. We pushed on, trying to make up the ground Alex made all the right calls and encouraged us all the way then finally the wind at the progress board and with seemingly nothing left to give the crew found something extra for another push to the beep from the finish line.

A tough race and a disappointing result against strong opposition left us feeling a little blue but on the whole extremely proud of the effort we had put in throughout the season. There is always an air of disappointment when you lose a race, but to me losing at Henley feels different, to know you were a strong enough crew to make the Wednesday makes defeat a little easier to swallow. Also the thought of a few well earned beers makes a massive difference

Words by Fabian Mitchell





## The Annual Henley Party

This year Curlew celebrated the end of Henley Royal Regatta with a classy picnic - decked out with flowers, plenty of Pimms and of course, lots of food in the form of sweet and savoury canapés. It was a lovely way to celebrate the achievements of the senior squads at HWR and HRR, bringing together over 50 members at the Henley Cricket Pitch.

A time to reconnect with friends from other clubs, watch the last pieces of racing on the Saturday, and a chance for those who were awarded blazers to give them the first whirl.

As the evenings get darker and the mornings colder, we're already looking forward to regatta season next year.

Words by Kamile Matulenaite

# Sudbury Regatta

To fit the glamour of the occasion that was the 139th Sudbury international regatta the Dev Squad sourced a suitably slick borrowed racing shell. Well prepared with a warm up jog to locate oars not supplied with the boat the men's 4+ raced to our first win of the season as Poplar were defeated by the bend in the course.

Through to the semi-finals, it was our turn for an encounter with the bank. Swiftly followed by another... and another. It was a fantastic effort by our cox Daisy to get us to the end of a bendy course in a boat deemed un-rowable after losing our rudder to the reeds.

Next was the turn of the mixed 4+, able to race thanks to the generosity of our opponents Lea who having watched our previous race were feeling brave enough to face us in a working boat/risk supplying us with a replacement. A respectable performance saw us finish within a margin that has been variously reported as within 2 and 5 lengths. The official result are under adjudication.

Words by Jai Srivastava



# The City of Oxford Regatta



## Curlew Devs take on Oxford

Despite the temperamental weather over this summer, the sun shone for the Oxford City Royal Regatta in late August. On arrival, the car park was busy with trailers and rowers re-rigging boats and manoeuvring them to the water, carefully avoiding all the obstacles en route (other rowers, other boats (some stationary others also being moved), buildings and mud patches).

Once on the water, the nerves and adrenaline started to kick in. This was the first time the Dev mixed 8 had rowed together and the first time in a while for the Senior Women's rower to be coxing. Although the water conditions

were good, the traffic on the water combined with the gentle sweeping curves of the riverbed presented their own challenges to the cox. The greater challenge though was most certainly the rowing. Our warm up was a bit shaky and the timing left a lot to be desired, which didn't instill much confidence in some of us newbies.

After a few questionable manoeuvres on the water, we made it to the start line. That's when we took a look over at our competition. It was the City of Oxford Rowing Club - these guys were rowing on their home waters! In a way, that took the pressure off. If we lost, we were losing to the home club so, naturally, they were at an advantage anyway.

There was a bit of readjusting at the start line but within moments, we were poised and ready. Attention... Go! At this point, it feels like all hell breaks loose. The boat takes off at a stroke rate that most dev members have never rowed at on the water. At a mere 35, low for an 8 apparently, the boat sped along the river. Water was going everywhere. Precision is everything. Your arms have never moved so fast. If the timing is even slightly off, you feel the blade immediately threaten to leave your control and end your frantic movement in favour of a dunk in the Thames. Although it feels like the longest thing in the world, the 1km was over in just a couple of minutes.

Thankfully, no one caught a crab and no one lost the battle with their blade. We crossed the finish line a mere length and a half behind Oxford. As we passed the finish line, our bow exclaimed with delight: "That's the least we've ever lost by!" I'll take that as a pretty good result for my first regatta.

Well done to Curlew Dev Squad who entered 6 boats at the Oxford City Royal Regatta!

Words by Dahlia Belloul



## The Seniors hit Oxford

Every year Curlew rock up to Oxford and a few things happen. We have a few drinks, Alex gets thrown into the water, and we get some wins. This year was no different. An early start meant I got to watch and cheer the Saturday morning boats down the course. But the big event was the mixed 8+ races. The Dev boat went down in the first heat, just being beaten by Oxford City. The senior 8+ got a bye through to the next round. I can't even remember this race to be honest. I just remember enjoying the speed and the rhythm down the course. I love a mixed boat. We made it through to the final and were up against Bristol. On the start line and looking over to the Bristol crew, I thought, 'man, they've got some tall people in that crew'. We had them on the start and just kept pulling away. Coming up to the finish the announcement came over the speaker, "Curlew looking relaxed" and it felt relaxed sailing over the finish at rate 21.

That night we all indulged in the new food Oxford had laid on for the regatta, stone baked Pizza! We took up our usual spot on the dancefloor to drink and dance the night away. Waking up in my tent the next morning feeling a little fragile, I heard the rain on the tent and some of the men shouting to each other in the tents to get moving. All boats made it to the water on time. The mixed 8+ lunchtime sprint felt a little rockier than the day before. Always a favourite the lunchtime sprints, all the 8's lined up 300 metres down the course. Up against Bristol in the first race, we knew from their cox that this was a more experienced crew than the one we beat the day before, and we'd already seen their pre-race warm up and heard their race plan. They came to win. The closest race I think I've ever been in, legs pumping, rate high, we both came over the finish line and nobody knew who'd won. The people on the bank thought it was Bristol. The Bristol crew thought it was Bristol. I thought it was Bristol. A tense wait and it was Curlew! Won by 2 feet. We got to the final and were up against Wilson college. The Otters told me after the race we had it till the last few strokes, but the official result was 1/4 Wilson. I felt less pained after finding out 4 of the crew were Blue boats.

Words by Emily Wilsher



# Save the date

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> Oct - Quiz Night

Nov 10<sup>th</sup> Docklands Head

Nov 23<sup>rd</sup> Fours Head

Dec 14<sup>th</sup> Curlew Christmas Party



Don't forget to follow Curlew RC on Instagram, Facebook and twitter for more information on future events and what the club is getting up to.