

Regatta news from Curlew Rowing Club.

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Curlew Rowing Club

Pre end of year round up!

Welcome to the last newsletter of the year with a round up of the recent Head races and an update of socials.

Fours Head of the River

Men's 4x-: 21:10.1 (12th of 19)

Men's 4-: 21:07.7 (8th of 10)

Women's 1st 4-: 23:02.4 (6th of 13)

Women's 2nd 4-: 23:46.7 (10th of 13)





Photos: Sophie Baker

Women's Senior Squad:

There is nothing quite like the first headrace of the season. In my case, this race was coupled with my last race of the season with Curlw. I wanted to write this race's segment to both reminisce and to thank Curlw for being a wonderful rowing home—a place to reconnect with the sport I love, all while making great friends.

The day of the Four's Head started off early. This was to allow for enough time to fit in a practice loop through Barnes and Chiswick. As always, a slight wait to push off but overall a good practice allowing us to get our bearings and familiarize ourselves with the landmarks and traffic pattern of the Tideway. It also just so happened to be our warm-up for the race—a few bursts leading up to race pace and a start through Chiswick (albeit the opposite direction) prepared us for what was to come.

In between the practice and the race was a time to fuel, prepare, and adjust. A slight tinker with the boat, an adjustment of clothing as it was much warmer than expected, and some relaxing was had before getting hands on. Last minute decisions and timing was decided amongst crews and the decision to “go ahead” with the full course despite high winds after Hammersmith was agreed upon by race directors-- both welcome and nerve wracking.

For both women's fours, getting on the water was interesting. Due to our positioning on the Middlesex Bank we were able to boat later, directly into our category. It was a bit of a hectic start as both women's fours waited on the bank due to congestion. There was no delay to set the boat down at the prospect of trestles.

3 build, 5 wind, GO.

Our start was at full speed under Chiswick and through the University Stone. A good start, from my perspective, executing a particularly clean ratio switch. With a focus on power maintenance we set in to our rhythm-- alone in the prospect of other boats but together through slide progression and stroke.

Look up, ratio, power on.

Under Barnes bridge our main goal was to maintain rhythm and power as we pushed on towards

Hammersmith Bridge. This fight was elongated but ultimately the crew overtook us right before passing under the middle span.

Legs on, tap down, lean back—now.

With the gusts of 100 winds we came underneath Hammersmith bridge, almost feeling as if we hit a wall. As a crew we moved to overcome the elements that confronted us head on, quite literally. A battle against wind and waves compared to the more common battle of the boats. Our focus after Hammersmith, despite the wind, was to proceed with a three-minute push at Fred's suggestion. Ultimately, this push kept us focused and thrust us into better water. Not long after that we came near Fulham Football club—our signifier for preparing to wind the hands for the sprint. With two winds from the 500 meter mark, and at long last, we received the command to “wind down” and with that the race was over. An epic battle of competitors and nature related elements and a lasting memory of teamwork and friendship.

Thanks to all those who supported during the race and to everyone at Curlew for making this last year one that was full of fun and lots of laughs.

Words by Danielle Vande Voorde, who sadly left the club to move back to the USA this month

Vets Fours Head of the River

Vets Squad catA 4-: 19:45.9 (1st of 5 - pennant winners)

Dev Squad cat A 4-: 22:54.8 (5th of 5)

Vets Squad cat C 4-: 20:24.0 (9th of 15)

Dev Squad cat C 4-: 21:45.6 (15th of 15)

Dev Squad cat A W4-: 24:46.1 (2nd of 2)



Women's Dev Squad.....A modern day Fairytale

Once upon a time there was four women from the Kingdom of Curlew, who made the mistake of saying they were available on the fourth day of the eleventh month. Their Fairy Godmothers "Ham" had decided they should be sent on the Quest of the Vets Head. They would be representing the class of the Devs - a rag-tag bunch who had not sent a group of females on such a quest for many a year. But like all good Fairy Godmothers "Ham" seeked to encourage our young heroines and thought it would be character building.

So given the challenge our merry-band - who had not been on a quest together before - did what all quest-seeking company's must do, they created a Whatsapp group. This quest would have many firsts, so sceptical of the "whinging" it strategy they got to work. Accompanied by their Fairy Godmothers they trained in the early dawn hours, coaching themselves as they were guided by the little lights on their heads. They learnt to read the vessel and they learnt to read each other.

So who you ask, were our four protagonists? Steering the quest was the Kick-ass Knowledgeable Kate who diligently studied the path our questers must take. She was accompanied in the bow of the vessel by the Avid Assuring Alex. Next up was Calm Capable Claire who had never been on a quest before. And finally Magical yet Modest Maisie who was in charge of stroking.

And so to the quest, our merry-band had only one aim, to finish the quest or meet a watery end. The King of the Kingdom had commanded them to return his vessel or he would put them in the stocks: they could meet a watery end but his vessel could not.

Around noon they waded into the River Thames wearing their glass slippers - colloquially known as 'wellies' - and set off. The details of the quest alude me, other than counting the passing drawbridges I seem to have blacked it out. Finally on crossing the finish line our exhausted band was looking forward to

over this detail...

On dry land they compared blistered hands and ripped armours; some of the heroines armour having been ripped by a vessel not built for thighs; because as Calm Capable Claire explains: patriarchy. But I diverge, the quest to overthrow the patriarchy is next week's task.

Speaking of men, our four heroines were very thankful to not just their Fairy Godmothers but their male dev counterparts who waded into the river to help them bring their vessel onto the bank and assisted some of our more vertically-challenged heroines in getting the beastly thing onto the "rack".

And so our heroines lived happily ever after, safe in the knowledge that they could accomplish anything they set their minds to.

Words by Maisie Richards Cottell

Dev Men's Squad

The Devs have had a strong start to the season with record numbers of both newer and older Devs participating in Vets Fours Head (3 crews) and Docklands Head (2 crews). Whilst vastly different in length, the two races had much in common - the wind, the choppy water, and the excitement/exhilaration/bowel-loosening dread.

The weather forecast for Vets Fours Head called for high winds and the Devs were not-so-secretly hoping the course would be shortened. Alas, it was not to be. The wind died down enough for the race to proceed as planned. Boating from Tideway Scullers meant no beautiful pontoon but did mean actually standing in the cold, dirty Thames. The fear of the race itself, soon replaced by fear of Weil's disease (it's a thing; look it up). Anyway, our races went off without a hitch – no Curlew capsizes and only a few blade clashes with crews who weren't very good at steering. Bodies were moving as one; catches going in together; finishes out together. The perfect melding of man (and woman) and machine. The row back, however, was soul-destroying. Cold, aching and knackered...it felt like we rowed for hours and hours back to the muddy embrace of Tideway Scullers.

Words by Ketan Patel

Vets Squad

Like when the latest Clean Bandit single passes us all by until it is in an M&S ad, so for the fours head the vets turn up a day later than the young'uns and act like we meant to be late.

Curlew fielded five crews in the Vets Fours Head this year: two from the masters squad, and three from the club's development squad. Perhaps we are all assured in our rowing skills, or perhaps we are lazy, but we certainly had no intention of doing a warm up like the other crews boating around us.

Experience of rowing on the tideway, or perhaps just the fact that vets boats move just that little bit slower

the wall over there" from the marshal rather than "WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! IN ALL MY TIME ON THE TIDEWAY THAT IS THE MOST STUPID THING I HAVE EVER SEEN" from a marshal who sees you doing exactly what the marshal downstream just told you to do.

Experience of the course also brings memories about which stage you realise this is much longer than a spin on the docks. For some it is going through Hammersmith Bridge, for others the pull past the bandstand and down Chiswick Eyot. For me it's when you pass the brewery and think you must be nearly there, only to realise there's really quite a long way left to go.

After surviving the relatively chilled marshalling we spun and got ready to set off. City of Cambridge behind us seemed determined to start the race with overlap as they charged after us towards Chiswick Bridge. Of course, as experienced old hands (*/really lazy rowers*) we were determined to take it up only when we got through the bridge so we didn't waste any of the energy in our aged limbs. Once through the start we settled into a remarkably good rhythm guided by Matt neatly down the course. We were set off behind a coxless four from Warsaw and Masters A quads. Our rhythm and course must have been doing something right as we scythed through five crews in the race and pushed away from the City of Cambridge crew who had seemed so keen to be next to us off the start.

I'm not sure if it was experience or lack of experience that led us to miss the finish line, but either way we completely failed to wind for the finish. Normally I'm the sort of rower who takes a cox calling a wind for the finish as an advisory notice rather than something to actually react to. However, this time I felt a bit short changed. Either we were moving much quicker than expected or we just didn't know that end of the course, but the polite invitation to spin by the moored launch wasn't quite what I expected when I was ready to give my final ten best strokes.

Boating from Tideway Scullers limits your warmup, but it does mean you get a really good warmdown on the row back. I'll be honest: if I had been forced to row that distance to the start of the race I'm not sure I'd have had much left to give. But as it was we managed to keep an eye out for the other three curlew crews past the moored boats and we had caught our breath enough to give a proper shout to the novice women's boat as they raced past.

By the time we finally - finally - got back to Scullers the results were dripping through and by gum Curlew had done well. We won the pennant for Masters A Coxless fours and came second in W Masters A, along with 5th in Masters A, and 9th and 15th in Masters C.

With the boats de-rigged and back on the trailer we treated ourselves to a couple of tinnies from the Scullers bar. Comparing times to the senior squad could give me plenty of trash talk ahead of the Docks Head, but I'm looking forward to seeing the results on the water. And then trash talking the senior squad.

- 3rd: Senior Men's 8+: 2nd in Op. 8+ Band 1
- 4th: Men's Masters (B) 8+: 1st in MasB 8+
- 6th: Senior Men's 4-: 1st in Op. 4- (pot winners)
- 9th: Men's Masters (A) 4-: 1st in MasA 4-
- 17th: Men's Masters (B) 4-: 1st in MasB 4-
- 21st: Senior Men's 4-: 2nd in Op. 4-
- 26th: Senior Women's 8+: 1st in W 8+ (pot winners)
- 28th: Dev Men's 8+: 3rd in Op. 8+ Band 2
- 32nd: Senior Women's 4-: 2nd in W 4-
- 60th: Senior Women's 4-: 3rd in W 4-
- 62nd: Senior Men's 1x (Wilson): 1st in Op. 1x (pot winner)
- 68th: Senior Men's 1x (Hemsted): 2nd Op. 1x
- 104th: Senior Women's Masters (B) 1x (Jeff): 1st in W MasB 1x
- 149th: Dev Women's Masters (A) 4-: 1st in W MasA 4-



Photo: Sophie Baker

Women's Dev Squad

The good news came through on Tuesday: our application for a women's coxless four was accepted! Unfortunately the lurgy hit the dream team and 4 became 3 and then 2.. thankfully Maisie and Christina stepped in last minute and we were back to a full crew. It was decided that Claire P should steer as she had the most experience...i.e. she had steered once before, which was once more than the rest of us.

Saturday morning we trained and looked at the beautiful calm waters..admired the sunrise and scoffed at

be that bad we headed to the docks and looked out in horror.

With the words of Gemma and Alex 'just remember to tap down' ringing in our ears we set off with the aim of remaining upright and not breaking the boat. As we got ready to head to the pontoon we were stopped by a Marshall who told us we needed to fix our footplate and couldn't go on the water until it was down. At this point Ed, clearly seeing the distress in our faces, ran off to find us help, which came in the form of Fred.

At this point it looked like we missed our slot but the Marshall told us we were lucky as someone had capsized and the times were pushed back. It's rare you are thankful for someone falling into the docks but on this occasion we were.

And then it was our turn to race....it's funny how familiar territory can seem most unfamiliar as you battle against unforgiving water. But battle we did and successfully fulfilled both our aims. We all had that thought earlier in the day perhaps it wouldn't be the worst thing if it were cancelled but were all so pleased that it wasn't.

We were proud to have a women's dev crew racing 2 weeks in a row and post mortem of the race had us thinking about what we need to work on and how excited we are to see what we can do during 2019 head season.

Words by Margaret Anne Hennessy

Men's Dev Squad

Next up was Docklands head. HOME TURF ADVANTAGE, we thought. We were wrong. The water was so choppy, we feared a Bermuda Triangle situation with boats disappearing beneath the waves. Fortunately, it was much better than expected. The 8+ held off a Lea crew and coped admirably in the tsunami-like conditions. The crews were spurred on by the deafening, yet largely incoherent, cheers of Curlew supporters on the bridge and both crews did themselves and the Club proud. Kinda.

Words by Ketan Patel

Curlew Quiz Night



October's social was a repeat of last year's popular quiz night! The event proved equally popular this time around, with lots of teams competing.

The winning team were men's squad representatives Felix, John, Stuart, Ed and Angus! Here they are showing off their prize!

Upcoming Socials

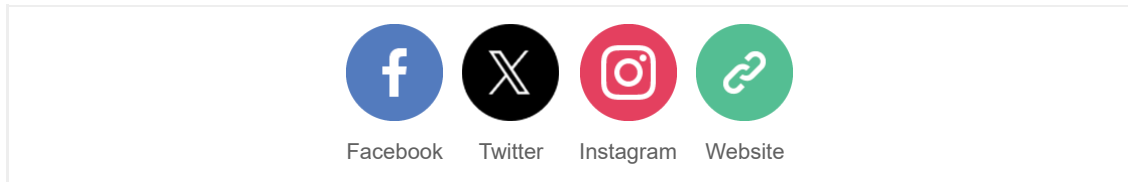
Hopefully now everyone is getting ready for the annual Plum Pudding races! This will be 12-3pm on the 15th December. Remember there is a prize for best outfit so the more festive the better. If you haven't done so already please donate via the <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/PlumPuds2018> page and update the facebook event. This is always a great day with an abundance of mince pies and mulled wine afterwards. It will also be the graduation day of the most recent Learn 2 Row group.



Following the plum pudding race it is time to get your glad rags on for the Christmas Party. This year it will be held at the Dickens Inn in St Katherine's Docks starting at 7pm. The raffle and auction will be held and we have a great auction prize of a VIP after hours tour of London on Dec 20th for 6 people! We expect this to be a popular one so get ready to bid. We are still looking for additional prizes so please get in touch if you have anything to donate.

We will be having a social a month in 2019 which will vary from quiz nights, organised events and a good old fashioned get together.

And while January may seem a long time away we have a special social event to help combat the Jan blues... Cheese and wine night! More details to follow so keep an eye out on the Curlew RC Facebook page



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