

# The Numenius

Sept to Dec 2022

The latest news, views, and announcements of Curlew RC

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### Changing of the Guard

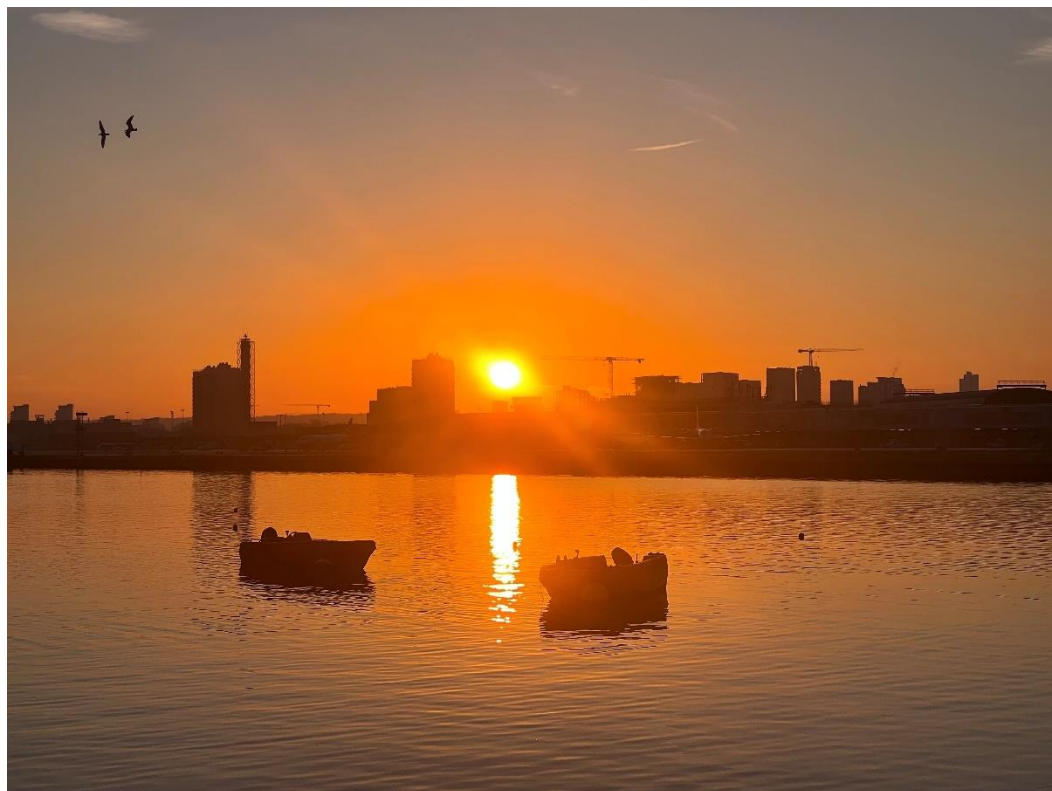
A new committee is elected, a chair retires, and a new captain takes the helm

### Parting shots

Matthew Richardson looks back on a decade of Curlew

### A (new) Coach for all seasons

Meet Ewan Murray, the man from Ireland with a mission



## A new dawn at Curlew RC

- By John Adcock, Curlew Chair 22/23

**I'm delighted to be appointed as Chair to one of the oldest rowing clubs in the UK. Since taking over my goal has been mainly to not screw things up! More seriously, I want to build on the fantastic work of Matt and his predecessors, preserving and nurturing the delicate balance of elements that help make Curlew such a great club, a club that I'm so proud to be a part of. Looking ahead I want us to be ever more successful on the water, giving as many people as possible the opportunity to be competitive at the Henley regattas and at the major head races.**

As someone who started their rowing career at Curlew, I'm also committed to continuing our very successful learn to row courses and giving those who have never rowed before the opportunity to catch the rowing bug. Equally I want to support those with the ambition and determination required to win places in our top crews through having a thriving development squad.

### Panhandlers with charm

Curlew puts the fun in fundraising with the Christmas Party, Plum Pudding Races, Taster Day and Learn to Row course.

### & MORE!

Even more racing, more rowing, more Curlew news! You hunger for it, and we give it to you!

## The Numenius

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# A new dawn at Curlew (cont.)



My aim is to foster an inclusive, welcoming, and supportive environment for all members of the club, regardless of their skill level, experience and age. I also hope to increase participation in the club by making sure everyone can, and also wants to, contribute in whatever way that suits them. Beyond training and competing I want to help those interested in helping to run the club, coaching, umpiring, or fundraising get the support and encouragement they need to help them try something new and rewarding. With more than a smidge of self-interest I want to put Curlew firmly on the masters rowing map and would love to grow our offering for masters women.

Finally, I want to ensure the long-term sustainability of the club. This includes making sure that we have the right equipment and continue to benefit from professional coaching as well as making sure that the committee runs effectively and that we are a well governed club. To be able to fully support our members and our programs we will need to continually look for new sponsors and be creative with new fundraising sources.

Overall, my goal as chairman is to help Curlew thrive and be confident that when I eventually stand down as Chairman, I can hand over a club that is even more successful, friendly, and well run than it is today!

## Curlew Committee 22/23



John Adcock  
**Chair**



Claire Postles  
**Club Captain**



Ben Mitchell  
**Men's Captain**



Wizzy Heap  
**Women's Captain**



Charlotte Green  
**Dev Captain**



Anita Jeff  
**Treasurer**



Felix Hemsted  
**Secretary**



Kat Blomberg  
**Equipment**



Issy Wilson-Scott  
**Social Secretary**



Fabien Mitchell  
**Regatta Secretary**



Kam Matulenaite  
**Alumni & Membership**



Kiernan Loue  
**Fundraising**



Charlie Woolley  
**Information & Learn to Row**

## The Numenius

# Parting shots (or twelve years a Curlew)

- By Matthew Richardson



It is always better to jump before you are pushed! Right? Although to be honest there are not many candidates that want to be chairman, and it took me a good two years to find a suitable person willing to take on the role! I did, however, manage to pass the baton to John and I wish him every success. I have been asked to write a piece for the newsletter, a sort of fond farewell, although I haven't left Curlew per se (although being based in Milan does make the commute to the docks a little more difficult) I will still be paying membership and strutting my stuff at Henley Regatta in Curlew finery. Not quite to the same level as Felix does with the Curlew trousers, but not far off.

I am not going to dwell too much on the past, you can buy the Curlew book (available on [Amazon](#) and all good retailers) for that. But I would like to take the opportunity to speak about my time involved with the club and to thank a few people on the way.

If you speak to anyone within rowing, they will say their club is special, but what I found with Curlew was that if you speak to old curlew rowers who have moved to other clubs, they always referred to Curlew as their home club. I myself have rowed for five clubs and Curlew is the only one I feel is home.

Maybe it's the fact that it's always touch and go whether you will get out on the docks, whether the equipment is there, whether the shoes are still attached to the footplate, or I having to spend the best part of an hour building the boat again before you can push off the landing stage...but I always liked a challenge. But honestly, to those rowers at Curlew now, and I feel like an old man to say it, you never had it so good. When I first joined Curlew there were hardly any small boats, and only three sculling blades, not three sets, just three sculling blades. However, what Curlew did have, has always had, was a very friendly bunch of people who took the sport seriously, but also not that seriously! I mean, we were never winning Henley,

I was hooked very early on, deciding to give back as a member of committee. In the end, I did ten years on Committee, boatman, five years as club captain and four as chair! I think that is probably enough for a while and I can enter retirement happy with what we collectively have achieved as a club! We have some great boats - although we can always have better! We have great gym equipment, and the club is in a much better place than a decade ago when I joined committee. Obviously, I will take all the credit I can, but there are some people who have been a very special part of Curlew who have made the last 11 years so enjoyable for me...and in a particular order!



1. **Emma Dyson** who I met at Curlew and became my longest ever flatmate, five years! It is true, you meet friends for life at curlew, either that or you end up married! Curlew has a great record for marriage and significantly cheaper than a dating app!
2. **Jamie Sunderland** to whom I am still feeling guilty for selling our pair. Especially now, as I could definitely sit a 110kg average weight pair! Jamie knows more about Curlew than most as I spent the best part of my tenure as Captain and Chair moaning to him/bouncing ideas/mainly moaning.

## The Numenius

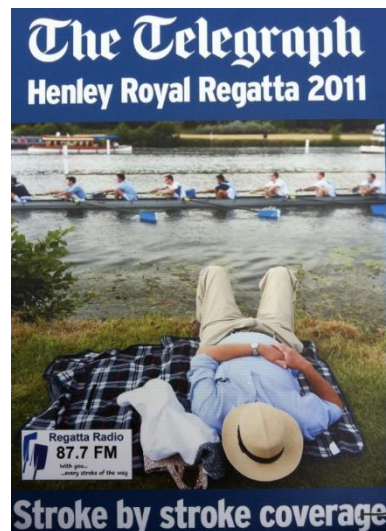
# Parting shots (cont.)

3. **Steph Jacques & Debbie Haigh** who I met very early on in my Curlew career and have counted as my friends ever since! They were the most surprised I finally stood down as chair, as they been chanting 'one more year' for the past three years.
4. **Anita Jeff** The club owes Anita a lot of thanks for her stewardship, and I would like to extend my thanks, she is a remarkable woman for her dedication and determination to Curlew!
5. **All the others that I have rowed with**, John, Sam, Tom, Sean, Alex and everyone who has carried my fat arse down the Henley stretch for Curlew. I have some wonderful memories the Brit IV, which is my favourite boat, the VIII that ballsed up against Leeds, the two Vllls qualify Henley through qualifiers! Some fantastic memories.

Curlew is a truly remarkable club, and I would urge you all to remember the more you put in, the more you get out! Keep supporting the committee, keep supporting John in his role as chair and continue to make Curlew a better club for everyone. I have had a wonderful time at the helm of the club, and I would like to finally thank everyone who supported me and the committees I chaired, without them (and there are too many to name) Curlew would not be the club it is today! Thank you!



**Editor:** We at The Numenius thank Matt for an extraordinary commitment to Curlew over the past decade, only rivalled in recent times by the likes of Anita Jeff and James Hasler. We look forward to seeing him at Henleys future and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.



## Introducing Curlew's new Coach: Ewan Murray ...or *Go n-éirí an bóthar leat!*

The Curlew RC Committee is pleased to confirm the appointment of Ewan Murray as Head of Rowing at Curlew.



Hailing from Northern Ireland, Ewan has a long association with rowing starting as a junior. He led his first Junior VIII+ to an Irish Championship gold and competed at Henley Royal Regatta. Early excellence in rowing saw him selected for the Irish lightweight rowing training squad for the 2016 Olympics \*and\* capped twice for Rowing Ireland at international level.

Since then he's moved to success in coaching. Being a member of coaching teams for Queen's University Belfast Boat Club, Liverpool University Boat Club, Lagan Scullers and Rowing Ireland. In that time he has helped athletes achieve an impressive 19 BUCS rowing medals, helped four Irish crews to reach Championships, and been part of a team coaching at the national and international level. We look forward to seeing what he delivers for Curlew. *Avé! Bossa Nova! Similis Bossa Seneca!*

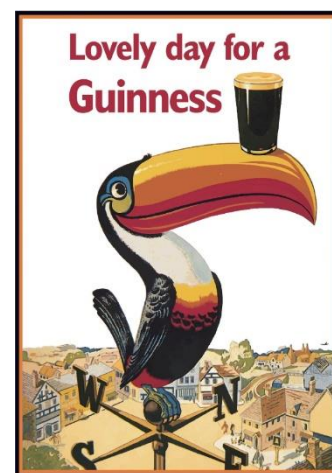
But enough of his curriculum vitae. Let's turn to the man himself for his own words on why he loves rowing, what makes him tick [Editor: Guinness. The answer is Guinness] and his coaching philosophy.

'Rowing began for me in 2008 at Portora Royal Boat Club. In my final years of school, my junior VIII+ won the national Irish Championship, competed at Henley Royal, and I had the chance for some junior Home International representation and a period training with the lightweight Irish programme. I was lucky to row with lots of extremely successful athletes during school and university, who later far surpassed

my level, going on to win medals at senior world championships and have long competitive club rowing careers. All of us can give credit to our school coaches Derek, Patrick and Dave to name a few. The competitive training environment, mental toughness and fundamentals installed into in a small club allowed us to punch well above our weight.

I was also passionate about karate, judo and Brazilian Ju Jitsu. If it was not for breaking my neck during training in 2016, I might not have come back to rowing in university. Maybe it was a twisted message to get back into the sport.

I love every aspect of coaching and rowing. The first crew I ever coached was a men's novice eight at QUBBC. Everything clicked, we had 8 huge guys who loved to train hard and a talented cox who went onto be one of the best coaches I worked with. We had our first win at the Irish University Championships, turning over a crew that beat us the month before. I was hooked on the buzz ever since.



## Introducing Ewan Murray (cont.)



Not many sports require the same amount of time and commitment as rowing, so you have to love the process and enjoy everything about it - this applies equally to coaches and athletes. I am motivated by seeing progression, individuals develop, and crews achieve their maximum potential with a sense of satisfaction and belief in the programme.

someone I coach - is that they put as much into it as I do.

In terms of my coaching philosophy, I don't believe that there is a 'one-size fits all' style. The basics of how to row and how to train are universally agreed, the style comes from what works best for an individual crew. My philosophy is that the athlete comes first and all I ask from

Consistency is key. You might be in the 'C' crew now, but that doesn't mean that next year, or even in three years you won't be in the top one.'

The Numenius is excited by Ewan, if a little terrified of his expectations around steady state. When Curlew members were asked what animal he'd be in an informal survey, the Guinness Toucan was a popular choice for obvious reasons. One member, noting the sartorial elegance of his velvet coat at the Christmas party, made reference to the Fox's biscuits panda.



## 2021/22: AGM Awards



WOMAN OF THE YEAR: Wizzy Heap

CREW OF THE YEAR: The HRR/HWR Women's VIII

JOHN STEWART AWARD (an award for being a stand-up member of Curlew): Jack Pooley

DEV MAN OF THE YEAR: Frieder Mitsch

DEV WOMAN OF THE YEAR: Jenna Holmes

## Pairs Head

The fiftieth iteration of Pairs Head saw the return of Curlew's favourite pairing, known informally as Special K, Kamile and Kat. They already had a Pairs Head under their belt, pre-pandemic 2019, and since then they've gone hard on training and become even more admirable athletes. Well-liked across the club, they are cool, calm, collected and pure class - embodying the spirit of Curlew.

Entering in the Championship category in the coxless pair, they had a great race on the day. Their vessel, The Spirit of King, known for quick releasing its riggers without warning on the water, behaved itself on the day and they claimed an impressive fourth place in their category. Well done Kat and Kam!

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# Scullers Nutter's Head



Felix Hemsted and Tom Weekes provided a punchy start to Curlew's 22/23 season. Tom placed very respectably, beating more than 200 other crews by a respectable margin, but Felix...well he smashed it. Felix placed at 33 out of 400 plus crews. It's a huge result for him and a club record, and it speaks to the man's approach to rowing that he decided to use our off-season to push for this achievement. No one is more dedicated to the training than he, even when his captain and coach tell him to dial it back a bit. Felix is all determination, and we love that about him.

In addition to putting in an early bid to be crew of the year, which will require at least three committee entmoots to adjudicate whether one person constitutes a crew, he had this to say:

'The day started off cold - but with a strong sun, things quickly heated up! A decent tailwind also meant that it would be a fast race - however there was always the fear that I'd go too fast at the start. It's always difficult to know what pace is sustainable in a head race, especially in a single! I mainly focused on making sure I was taking the best line to stay in the fast stream, whilst not getting dropped by the other scullers around me. However, the usual doubts crept in around Hammersmith Bridge, and it became a one stroke at time race. Before I knew it, I was going past Fulham FC, and starting the wind for the finish.

I don't think I've ever seen a 1:30/500m split in my single before in my single - and I don't think I ever will again - as I emptied myself. [Editor: Steady on there Felix, The Numenius is a family friendly publication]. Thankfully, it was only a short row to disembark at the Embankment, where I learnt I'd come 33rd out of 451 scullers, a club record. All in all, not a bad day out!

As The Vikings said, come back with your shield or on it. Well done Felix and Tom!



## The return of Plum Pudding!



Remember how WeHoRR got cancelled three years in a row? Well, the same thing happened with another key event in the British Rowing Calendar, the Curlew RC Plum Pudding race which took place on the same day as the Christmas party.

Curlew's inter-club 250m sprint races with crews drawn from across the club is the best kind of chaotic fun. From proud blazer rowers to folk who only picked up an oar a handle a couple of weeks ago, everyone got a chance to show their raw competitive spirit. Naturally Felix (and his crew) won, under the banner of the excellent name of Felix Navidad. We salute that pun. They are pictured here with Felix proudly....recumbent?

So great to see this event return and top quality organising from Committee members of Kam and Kiernan. We offer them a gentle nod of the head as recognition and thanks for bringing club members together for fun and fundraising.

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# But wait – there’s myrrh!



Next in the Yuletide eventium was Curlew’s Christmas Party. From racing in the morning to the most elegant of soirées in the evening, that’s just how Curlew rolls. Fine dining, witty repartee, dancing, fizz, the thrill of the raffle and a high stakes auction.

Want to know what it was like? Well, you’ll just have to see for yourself next time.

Some mentions of note. First and foremost, our Social Secretary Issy, who did the heavy lift on all of this. It’s a big effort, and one for which we are all, across the club, truly grateful. Also, thanks to Kam and Kiernan for their organisations of the raffle and auction, Fraser for the raffle roast, Fabien for being auctioneer again, anyone who donated gifts (especial Rival Kit and Karen Kramer Jewelry, and of course all of our tipsy auction bidders.

The auction, and the plum pudding race earlier in the day, raised £1965. We’re going to put that money in the club coffers and eventually spend it on things. Rowing things naturally.

## Be a patron of Curlew RC

While we’re on the topic of fundraising... Readers of The Numenius will know that while rowing is a sport for everyone, but the reality is it is not cheap! Curlew RC punches above its weight, but with more equipment and coaching we can grow, and achieve, more. This year has proved the potential of Curlew, our membership is growing, and we want to push to the next level. With our recent influx of members, we’re in a position to move to two competitive women’s Vllls and three men’s Vllls. Exciting!

If you would like to see us in better boats, you can help the club to either through a one-off donation, or by supporting us through Easyfundraising. This is a free way to support the club when you shop online, with 4300 retailers giving us a donation if you just click a button. Details below. We’ve raised more £2500 through this and it was at no cost to our supporters!

If any reader would like to make a one-off donation, help us to secure corporate sponsorship, or even buy us a boat, please email [curlewfundraising@gmail.com](mailto:curlewfundraising@gmail.com) immediately. Such largesse will be rewarded with much gushing in The Numenius.

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Over £32 million raised
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1.8 million users

## Regatta dogs



I had a bit of awkward space at the end of this page so I am filling it with some dog content. Pictured here is Curlew’s long time development coach, Nick King and his beloved dogs, Darci and Duchess. I think both of them are named after trains. Nick loves trains. And Curlew RC loves Nick! Yes, this segment is actually a little bit of Nick appreciation disguised as a dog post. Nick’s commitment to Curlew over many many years remains something that we can’t really do justice to in a few words. But it merits us saying it often and regularly, so again - THANK YOU NICK!



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# An amuse bouche of rowing, followed by the full menu!

- By Charlie Woolley



This was my fourth taster day with Curlew. I've done one as a volunteer and three as a coordinator. Like always, it was a blast and a lot of fun. I always forget this when I'm grappling with spreadsheets in the run up, or having a full on panic attack two days before the event because I forgot to hire the ergs. Speaking frankly I've had anxiety dreams about the Taster Day more than once in my time coordinating. One memorable one involved the then coach deciding to put curtains up in the tank rather than fill it with water fifteen minutes before the event was about to begin.

But no matter how frenzied the organisation is to bring this together, it is always a fun day for members and to those being introduced to the sport of rowing. On the day itself I got to talk so much rowing and all to a captive audience. A huge thanks to all the club volunteers for making this day a big success, especially Dahlia who came down to do some coaching and also got the pack down and clean up organised and completed within about

ten minutes?!? We made nearly £1000 for the club, which for a day's worth of work is decidedly not bad.

The Taster Day was followed by Curlew's ever popular Learn to Row course, to which we welcomed 20 rowing novices. This year we mixed things up and taught sweep rowing from the off. This made the coach of the course, Nick King, very happy from the off. He no like teaching the sculling. The first session on the water was decidedly hairy - cast your minds back readers to your very very first time in a novice eight. I was in the coxing seat for this session and I must confess I did wonder if we might see the rarest of all the capsizes. But with some innovation, and some seniors in the boat, the course went swimmingly and every one stayed dry! We did have some weather to contend with (is it windier than it used to be?) but with some rearranged sessions we successfully delivered the learning and raised £4000 for the club coffers. We are pleased to welcome many of the course graduates to Curlew as members and we will look forward to their first races.

This was my third learn to row course as Curlew coordinator, and likely my last as I will be moving abroad for work. It's not an insignificant amount of work, but I can honestly say I've loved it. I myself came to Curlew from the Learn to Row course, choosing to take it as part of my recovery from a severe bout of depression (potentially a bit of an overshare there, but it's the truth!) and held the genuine belief that I'd probably be great at rowing. I wasn't, but I made lovely friends (some of whom I've since gone on to holiday, and in one case lived, with), fell in love with the club and then eventually came to run the course. I'm proud of the changes I've made to Curlew's Learn to Row, incorporating the learning from my own experience, and more than that, genuinely fond of all the students. They've made me laugh a lot and I've loved to see them develop and progress - some into the senior squad!



But the course is, and always has been, bigger than one person. There is Nick, Alex Brown and Jack Pooley who have coached, and a flotilla of volunteers who have coxed boats or rowed with the novices. There are too many to name but a few stand out for how often they stepped up. In no particular order my thanks to: Claire Postles, Ben Owen, Ryan Neighbour, Desi Iveguna, Maisie Richards Cotterall, Issy Wilson Scott, Darci Dutcher, Kat Blomberg, Felix Hemsted and Charlotte Green. There are others of course, but these guys have volunteered beyond the norm.

I'll close by saying that the value of the Learn to Row course goes far beyond money. It helps renew the club in many ways and delivers benefits over years. In any given year a not insignificant proportion of the committee came to the club through the course, proving themselves some of Curlew's most loyal members.

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# Vets Fours Head

After the cancellation of Docklands Head (too much wind) and the oversubscription of Fours Head, Curlew RC was able to fit in a bit more racing at Vets Fours Head. We sent three coxless IVs of veteran men rowers to the tideway on a cold November Sunday morn. Out of over 250 boats our Curlew crews came a very respectable 34th, 40th, and 87th!

One crew, Curlew C (pictured) gave us a run down of the race itself, and how it felt from where they sat. Over to them:

**Giorgio:** 'I'm very happy with how the race went. It's still the beginning of the season, and I wanted to test whether the plan was working for me. And it is! Marshalling to the start line, I loved waltzing with hundreds of other boats - but much of the race itself was a blur as it was happening. That being said some moments stand out. Bouncing back, quite literally, from the first green buoy... Luckily no one in the boat was upset, affected or hurt, apart from my steering ego, of course. I would like to say apart from that it was just sunny weather, but there was a little, insignificant, collision with another boat before Hammersmith Bridge. Even with that we were still cruising at 10 kph... Impressive momentum! Would I have done anything differently? Probably follow Felix's rule, stay in the middle, avoid bridges, and \*ahem\* I would stay clear of other boats... Looking ahead to the rest of the season my goal is to race more, but in eights'



**John:** I'm mostly happy with the race, albeit a little ashamed about our boat cuddle with Ardingly. It's always good to finish, but this time most of the race was really enjoyable. It was actually the row up to the start that was stressful, as we only just made it in time. The cheers of 'Go Curlew' from Hammersmith bridge was a highlight and a much needed boost after the blade clash earlier. I was also delighted, and a little surprised, that we were only overtaken by one crew! I'm pleased with our row, it was a good effort and communication in the boat, with no saggy middle. The only things I'd do differently is give ourselves more time to get to the start, not second guess Giorgio's line and get out of Ardingly's way.

**Jon:** I thought we rowed much better than last year, despite possibly being less race-ready fitness wise. Getting to the halfway mark without being passed felt like a great achievement and the support from the Curlew Massive at Hammersmith Bridge was a great boost. I confess that Giorgio's line was the big surprise for me! It was fast and meant we were not sheep in the race. Reflecting back, we should have been quicker to listen to Ken's call of 'down two' when we got too frantic. Next time I'll train more and get my bloody blade off the water more!

**Ken:** I enjoyed the race and felt quite chilled out. Like the rest of the crew, I'm impressed by how little we got passed and how many crews we held off. The rate calls were good and helped us settle, but we needed to respond faster and for longer. Our line, in retrospect, ended up being quite good. We're still throwing away speed with bladework, so plenty to work on to sharpen up. A good day, but back to maintaining and building fitness.

Vets Fours Head  
2022

**S:** Jamie Sunderland

**3:** Nantas Nardelli

**2:** Alex Howard

**B:** Felix Hemsted

**MasA 4-**

Vets Fours Head  
2022

**S:** James Hasler

**3:** Tom Weekes

**2:** Henry Primarolo

**B:** Will Porteous

**MasB 4-**

Vets Fours Head  
2022

**S:** Ken Hutt

**3:** Jon Cole

**2:** John Adcock

**B:** Giorgio Sdraffa

**MasD 4-**

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# Wallingford Head

An obscure 1940s musical once had the refrain of 'give me some men who are stout hearted men, who will fight for the right they adore, start me with ten!', but Curlew RC is richer than that. At Wallingford Head we gave you three times that number - if you count our lady coxswains, coach and squint a bit.

Three Vlls of stout hearted men (not quite a Curlew first but a relative rarity in recent years) went westwards and an inspiring continuation of the season. Our top eight tied for third place with our home town rivals, and acknowledged big boy club, Lea. Most pleasing in the build to Head of the River Race.

