

Water under the Bridge



Walton Rowing Club's newsletter

November 2016

Apologies for the long gap since the last newsletter, despite an extremely successful and eventful summer season. We hope that members will have been following news on the website.

HORR and Scullery

After both Burway and Kingston Heads were cancelled, the year got off to a great start with what is probably the Club's first full win at the **Head of the River Race** (the Novice eight dead-headed for the pennant in 2012), when the Junior eight (Ed Wilkinson, Michael Cleary, James Pickering, Thomas Philpott, Ardan Suphi, Rohin Johal, Navid Mohamadzade, Ben Harris and cox Myles Anderson) won the Novice Pennant.



Ardan and Thomas were joined by Matt Heywood, Olli Brew and cox Jacques Philpott to win J15 quads at the **National Junior Sculling Head** at Dorney. The J14 boys' and girls' crews also achieved good results.

These results led to Thomas and Ardan (in J15 2x) and Hal and Rowan (in J14 2x) being invited to represent Thames London at the **Junior Inter-Regionals**. Both doubles won gold, helping their team to win the boys' event.

Head of the Erne

A Walton crew travelled to Enniskillen to take part in the



legendary Head of the Erne—and to enjoy the legendary Irish hospitality. Despite the hospitality, they had the pleasure of beating the Molesey Vets' crew on both time and handicap!

Walton & Weybridge, Weybridge Ladies

Walton & Weybridge now counts as an early season regatta (two weeks earlier than its traditional date) but is still followed by WLARC's regatta in the Desborough Cut. The Club had an extremely successful weekend, with a total of fourteen wins across the boys, girls and Masters squads. Highlights included the mixed Masters eight beating Henley by a foot on Saturday, a first win in WJ14 doubles for India Catlin and Amelia Grimshaw, Alex Poole in WJ15 singles, Ellie Alexopoulos in WJ16 singles, and a great start for the J13 4x+ crew of Noah Gilbertson, Archie Goldfinch, Jacques Philpott and Kaan Suphi.

Nat Schools, JSR

The following weekend it was the turn of the juniors racing at Dorney. On Friday, at the National Schools Regatta, the J15 quad had to get the J14 cox to sub into the crew between the time-trial and the semis, but still managed the bronze! Rowan then helped Aidan, Oscar,

Ethan and Patrick to win bronze in their J14 quads event.

On Monday, at the new Junior Sculling Regatta (also organised by the Scullery committee), Thomas and Ardan won gold in J15 2x, the girls' J14 quad (India, Amelia, Tallulah and Millie c Maddy) won silver, as did Hal and Rowan in J14 2x. This new event needed a new team of helpers, and Walton played a major part: one of the organisers commented that there seemed to be Walton members and parents everywhere, doing everything!

Marlow

Many of the J14s had their first taste of 2000 metre racing at Marlow Regatta, where the J14 octo, in its third outing, came fourth in a very tight final.

Henley Masters

Moving to the Masters' squad, there was quite a large entry for Henley Masters Regatta, but everyone came up against unexpectedly tough opposition; in the end Glyn and Neil, in Mas E coxless pairs, were the only winners.

Egham

As usual, we had a very good day at Egham Regatta, winning the Victor Ludorum; there was a great series of wins



in girls' doubles (Ellen and Lola J13, India and Amelia J14 and Maddy and Alex J15). The J13s and 14s came together to win WJ14 quads, and Ethan raced four powerful races to win J14 1x.

Molesey Junior

The Brit Champs committee this year decided to scrap most of the conventional J14 events and to replace them with "skills tests" in singles. This promised to be a very expensive logistical nightmare, on what for some juniors was the last day of term (speech day/sports day), so we decided instead to focus on Molesey Regatta ...

... which turned out to be a good decision! On a lovely hot and sunny day, Walton juniors won a total of thirteen events, including all three divisions of J14 singles, both divisions of J14 doubles, J14 quads, both divisions of WJ13 singles and WJ13 doubles, WJ14 singles and doubles, WJ15 doubles and J18 singles (James Pickering in a re-row following a dead-heat). There was some very close racing and even those who didn't win had a great day, mostly doubling (in some cases trebling) up. Sculling down and back added some spice to the day as well, and was followed by a celebratory swim at Walton!

International

Walton alumni continued to make their mark on the international stage. Ali Douglass again won a bronze medal in the lightweight four at the World U23 Championships in Rotterdam. At the World University Championships in Poznan, Oli Knight took a fantastic gold medal in the men's four, while Annie Withers won bronze in the women's four.



Angus gives a masterclass

But the main event this summer was the Rio Olympics; Angus Groom was in the men's quad which came fifth in the final, while Mat Tarrant travelled with the team as a spare man for the sweep squad. Mat and Angus are now aiming for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and they have been joined by Annie Withers, Walton's first alumna to win a World medal, who has been invited to train full-time at Team GB's Caversham base in the women's sweep squad.

In October we named a new Stämpfli quad "Angus Groom"; Angus shared his experiences and gave some advice on how to reach the top of the sport. He then spent a considerable time on the water in the new boat with a range of junior and senior crews.



Spot the missing 0.04 seconds!

Winter head-races

The Club enjoyed a very good day at **Burway Small Boats Head**: the J15 quad (Aidan, Patrick, Oscar, Rowan c Millie D) came fourth overall and were the fastest junior crew, beating all the older coxless crews. Great wins also for the J14 boys' quad (Jacques, Archie, Noah and Kaan c Rowan), the J15 and J14 girls' doubles (India/Amelia and Ellen/Lola), and for Mike Everington and Richard Thiemann in Masters E pairs.

At the **Pairs Head**, Neil and Glyn won Mas E pairs in a time that would have won MasD. The junior squad also produced some good times in the tough conditions on the Tideway, but had to be satisfied with several second places. Also second-placed—by 0.04s—were Steve and Ali in Mx Mas C doubles.

Walton had a fabulous day at **Weybridge Silver Sculls**,



winning more events than any other club, including J14 quads, doubles and singles (a great first win for Max), J15 doubles and WJ15 singles (Amelia), J16 and WJ16 singles (Matt and Katherine), J17 doubles, WIM2 singles (Ali), NovMas 2x, MxMas 2x, and Mas D and E doubles.

Kingston SBH saw "only" three wins: in MasD quads, Mas D/F fours and J14 quads, but again several second places.

Similarly at **Hampton SBH**, Patrick and Rowan won J15 doubles and Ellie WJ17 singles, while most of the rest of the squad came second or third in their divisions. But Walton had more medal placings than any other club, and had three crews in the overall top ten out of over seven hundred boats. J16 sculler Matt Heywood, who only did a beginners course last year, came a remarkable second out of 64 entries in his event!

Fours Head and V4H

Four junior crews raced the **Fours Head** on the Tideway: a quad and a coxed four in both boys and girls. All raced really well and improved considerably on last years positions. As this race has no junior classes other than J18, we look forward to success in future years as many of our athletes were only 15, 16 or 17 this year.

At the **Vet Fours Head** we entered five crews and came away with two wins: first for the Masters D quad of Neil, Richard Lewis, Steve Heywood and Glyn, who won in convincing style in a very competitive division, and then in the Mixed C/D 4x event where a win was secured by Jane Alsop, Hilary Poole, Graham Pointer and Richard Thiemann.

Walton Small Boats Head

Walton SBH will be held this year on Saturday December 10th; this is the longest-established and one of the largest events of its type in the country and needs a large crew of helpers to run smoothly. This year there are three divisions: at 10.00, 12.00 and 14.00, so it's possible to race in one division and still help in another. Parents and friends are also asked to help run this key event in the Club calendar (and a major fund-raiser for the Club).

Club Dinner

Turning now to the social side, we enjoyed another excellent Dinner and disco at Burhill Golf Club. The junior eight which won the novice pennant at the HORA was awarded the "best junior crew" prize, while there were also "hat-trick" prizes for the three J14s who won three events each at Molesey Junior. Mike Everington was given the Dick Thompson award for service to the Club, and there were also awards for Maddy Jackson and Rowan O'Neill for their wide contribution to the Club.



Elmbridge Sports Personality of the Year

Last year's J14 squad were runners-up in the Elmbridge Sports Personality of the Year Junior Team awards, while Rowan O'Neill was third in the individual section, recognising his all-round contribution to the club. Callum Gathercole won the Senior Sports Personality award for his transatlantic row and associated fund-raising efforts; he was unable to attend so Wendy collected his award.

In memoriam



The Club sadly said "good-bye" to Robyn Mercer in April, with a memorial service held at the Club. Robyn was an enthusiastic and popular member and her untimely death was a shock to all her friends, family and colleagues. Later we named a double scull "Robyn Mercer" and we also plan to re-install the club flagpole in her honour.

In September we also learned of the sudden and unexpected death of Grant McKenzie's wife Angela. Many members attended her wake, which was held at Ashford Manor Golf Club, where she played her last game of golf a day before her death. In her memory the Club is organising a gift of dictionaries to a local primary school.

Survey results

In February we carried out an online survey of members; we have not done this for over six years and so as expected the results largely reflected the improved facilities on offer. Members were also asked for suggestions, and as a result of those suggestions a number of new squad groups and activities were put in place.

Future social events

In the run-up to Christmas there are several social events in the calendar: a Christmas party and quiz night on Friday 16th December, followed by a Christmas Regatta on Sunday 18th.

The annual Turkey Triathlon will be on Tuesday 27th December—start training now! Team entries are accepted (e.g. one person sculls and cycles, the other runs).

And on Saturday 21st January Lizzie Gill is running a Comedy Club night at the club to support her Atlantic Row next year. Email Lizzie to book tickets.

Survey results

