

Rowing Report 2003/4.

The seasonal cycles that define a rower's career are remembered by the photographs that hang his wall. In this Olympic year there have been several photographs that stand out, and which appear here and on the LRGsBC web pages(www.lrgs.org.uk/page?sp=43). The Club also has its own historical web site maintained by Tim Lucas (ex Master i/c). New material is always welcome and can be found at www.lrgsbc.org.uk.

Junior 15

The squad concentrated early on in the season on producing a competitive coxed quad. They started well, winning at medal at Runcorn October Head against limited opposition. After that, they competed at Northwich and York Heads but were overshadowed by more imposing outfits. Nevertheless, the squad produced tidy crews and there was a constant dilemma as to who should be selected.



J154x+ at The Yorkshire Head

By the time the summer had come along, it was time for a change and under the guidance of Mr.Sullivan, the squad turned to single sculling. The standard improved, culminating in

J.Eardley winning the J15 Sculling prize at the end of term. The time spent in singles freshened the squad up. They finished off their season at the Rendsburg Youth Games, where they won the quad event. Credit must go to Mr.Sullivan for a successful medal haul at the Youth Games.

Medals:

Runcorn Head J15 4x+ (J.Eardley, J.Yule, J.Cowan, G.Cooper, J.Taylor cox)

Barbecue Row J15 1x J.Eardley
Rendsburg Youth Games 4x+ (J.Yule, J.Butler, G.Cooper, J.Eardley, L.Birkill)

Junior 16

Gary Herbert, cox of the GB 2+ at the Barcelona Olympics, motivated the Searle brothers to win a gold medal in their final push for the line with the following words: "If not now, when?". The quote can be used to summarise the position J16 oarsmen find themselves in their careers as junior rowers. The J16 squad, backed up by a few tremendously enthusiastic parents, were fired up to take up the challenge.



J16 4x at the National Schools Regatta

The Michaelmas term started well enough with the squad entering all local events. Their first at Chester Long Distance sculls saw them third behind King's Chester and Merchant Taylor's in J16 quads. They looked neat but questions over sculling or sweep oar remained. At Runcorn, a coxed four was entered against Salford

University in Men's Novice Fours. The result was promising and the Durant twins also picked up a win in J16 double sculls. The next event at Northwich saw the first real indication of what everyone else was doing. The decision to concentrate on sweep oar started to pay off with a much needed win against Shrewsbury School. The opposition in J16 quads was again too strong. Decision made. The only problem was that there were no J16 fours to race against. At York Small Boats Head, the four came fourth against university Novices.



Below freezing at York Small Boats Head.

By the end of January, the Durant twins and I.Fishwick had worked their way into the crew with D.Sparks at bow due to wins in the January and February Red Rose time trials. It was a changed crew that faced Goldie (Cambridge University) on the start line at Trent Head. Only the hardest crews braved the conditions. They notched up Newcastle University's scalp after letting Goldie past early in the race. The rewards came at the Yorkshire Head where there was a J16 4+ event and which they won convincingly beating Oundle.

Going into the summer regatta season, the 4+ crew was fixed A J16 quad (4x), with J.Mercer and B.Wilson onboard, was entered at the first two regattas to keep the whole squad racing. At Nottingham regatta, the 4x was outclassed but the 4+ continued to impress coming second (7.50min over

2000m) to York City RC in the Men's Novice Four event.



J16 4+ at Nottingham Regatta

A couple of weeks later the squad were back in Nottingham for the National Schools regatta. This was their biggest test so far. The 4+ came second (7.54) in their heat behind RGS Worcester and then fourth with their fastest time of the season (7.26) in the semis behind Latymer Upper, Stratford and St.Peter's. At Lancaster regatta they won the Men's Novice event against Tees RC and at the National Championships they earned their colours by reaching the final. The standard was high with Bedford Modern (7.07), Abingdon (7.13), Latymer Upper (7.16), Abingdon 'B' (7.20) and RGS Worcester (7.22) showing their class. LRGS (7.47).



J16 4+ final at National Championships

Medals:

Runcorn Head J16 2x (S.Durant & M.Durant)

Northwich Head J16 4+ (B.Wilson, L.Kershaw, J.Mercer, D.Sparks, L.Birkill cox)

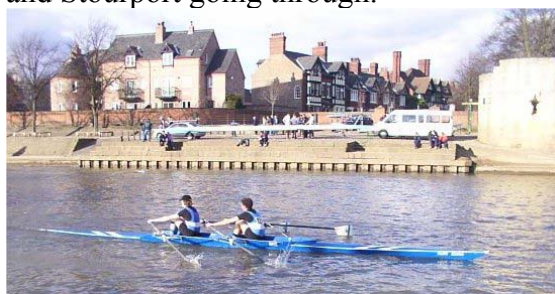
J16 4+ wins: S.Durant, M.Durant, I.Fishwick, D.Sparks, cox L.Birkill
Yorkshire Head J16 4+

Lancaster Regatta Novice 4+
Nat.Champs. J16 4+ 6th in final
Barbecue Row J16 1x (J.Mercer)
Rendsburg Youth Games 1x Silver
medal (S.Durant)
Rendsburg Youth Games 2x Silver
medal (S.Durant & M.Durant)

Junior 18

There were two regular crews: a J18 2x (M.Stott & A.McDougall) and J18 1x, H.Shepherd (Captain of Boats).

The J18 2x is a difficult event, and they sculled extremely well throughout the year to live with the quality field. They picked up a win at Runcorn Head early in the season and then found that there was always another crew claiming the medals. By the summer, they had become very proficient in what they did, managing third at Nottingham Regatta behind rivals Runcorn and Ponteland HS. They came fourth in their heat at the National Schools Regatta beating Kingston GS with Marlow, Burway and Stourport going through.



J18 2x at the Yorkshire Head

H.Shepherd always had the pressure of matching his success as J16 National Champion in Single Sculls. The J18 age group is very competitive. A strategy of entering junior events where medals looked possible and senior events where medals looked easier was adopted. J18 sculling in the UK is strong and there is no room for error. He was unfortunate to clip a buoy and fall in with a 100m to go at

Nottingham Regatta. At the National Schools Regatta, Harry made fourth place (8.21min) in his heat on a hot day behind three of the eventual finalists from Marlow (8.08), NCRA (8.16), and Dulwich (8.19). A similar result was achieved at Nat.Champs. Harry has been our most successful single sculler and enjoyed racing the Mens quad as well. We wish him well in the future.



J18 1x at National Championships

Medals:

Runcorn Head J18 2x (M.Stott & A.McDougall)
J18 1x H.Shepherd wins:
Runcorn Head J18 1x
Northwich Head. J18 1x
York Small Boats Head. Sen. 4 1x
Lancaster Regatta J18 1x
Barbecue Row J18 Sculling Blade
Barbecue Row J18/J16 Double Sculls
Tankards (H.Shepherd & D.Sparks)

Senior Men

The club has run a successful combined staff/boys quad for the last three seasons. The quad started well, coming third at Chester LDS and then won Runcorn Head, for the third successive time, and also Northwich Head. York Small Boats was a lottery with quads in each division throughout the day. LRGS came fifth with other crews beating the favoured Notts.Union quad. A good result in elite quads at Trent Head (2nd behind Notts.County) really encouraged the crew. At York, the bad Clifton bend allowed St.Peter's School in their

'banana' boat to close up on LRGS and win by a miserable 1.1 seconds.

The crew decided to push on into the regatta season. Henley Royal Regatta was the target. The quad had a good build up coming fourth at Nottingham Regatta behind two elite Notts.County quads, the mighty Leander, and City of Cambridge, clocking 6.52 in their opening round. At Durham Regatta, they were disappointed to be beaten by two feet by a good crew from Yarm over a short 800m dash.

Unfortunately, public exams got in the way over the Henley qualifying races and OL, Mark Nicholson, kindly stepped in for H.Shepherd at the last moment. LRGS were the fastest non-qualifier in the Men's Quadruple Sculls. A case of, 'if only!'



Mens Elite 4x at Nottingham Regatta

Medals: 4x S.Sullivan, H.Shepherd, P.Jago, B.Bloin

Runcorn Head Sen3 4x & Head crew Northwich Aut. Head Sen3 4x & Head Lancaster Regatta Sen3 4x

Durham Regatta Elite 1x S.Sullivan

ROCAP & Fund Raising

The dedicated few that make up the Parents Committee have tackled each new challenge with enthusiasm and belief, which has given the Club a new direction. Many thanks are due to them for hosting all fund raising events such as the Bowling Evening and the Barbecue Row. Thanks must go to Mr.&Mrs.Leech , Mrs.Proctor for all their fund raising efforts and to Mr.&Mrs.Sparks, Mrs.Durant and

Mrs.Shepherd for transporting the boys to events and always helping out.

In December ROCAP bought a boat. Mr.Sparks delivered the eight from Thames RC. It was quickly re-sprayed and refitted, thanks to a Sports Hall grant, and was used for the first time at the North of England Head.

The boys set up a 24 Hr. Ergo Challenge before Christmas to help raise funds. Twenty boys (and one staff!) rowed for a combined time of 24 hrs. They completed a total of 337 km which is the equivalent straight line distance between Lancaster and London.



Pot winners at Lancaster Regatta

Thanks must also go to Mr.Davies, who secured a new set of sculls via the 'Gifted & Talented' fund.

Fund raising is necessary to sustain an active club. This year we have had major flood damage in February to contend with as well. Four boats had to be repaired. Even in early August, another flood required boats to be rescued again. The bad news is that this is becoming more common.

JPJ