



Men's Head of the River Race

The 1st VIII entered the HERR aiming to win the S3 pennant and the Halladay Trophy, which is awarded to the fastest all-student crew. Setting off 83rd after being relocated in the starting order due to reasons only known to the Race Secretary, a large gap was left between themselves and the crew in front in order to avoid any blade clashes and unnecessary overtaking. The Quintin crew setting off behind had another idea, trying to overtake the Bristol crew just after the start, however the rowing prowess was just not there and the gap had instead been increased by 100m at Barnes bridge. The row around the Hammersmith bend solidified what had been a good start, and by mentally starting the race again at Hammersmith bridge the rhythm and speed only improved on the stretch to Putney. The 1st VIII came alongside the two crews that had set off ahead of them as they passed the Black Buoy and proceeded to fly past them and on to the finish line.

This resulted in a finishing position of 41st, which was quick enough to secure both the S3 pennant and the Halladay Trophy, reinforcing the fact that it had been a good race. However due to unfortunate minor organisational errors and a strict entries system the pennant and trophy were taken away from the crew a few days later - something that has only increased the desire of the crew to win, and especially beat those crews that they feel 'stole' their prizes!

Matt Ridley



Novice VIIIs celebrating their Varsity victories (April 2008)

Dear Reader,

In 2009 we have seen the club build upon the foundations laid down before Christmas, and it seems that everyone is enjoying their life at UBBC more and more as the year progresses. The regatta season marks a new dawn for all those in racing crews, where the cold winter mornings are happily switched for warm summer evenings, and time spent at Saltford soon becomes far more pleasant.

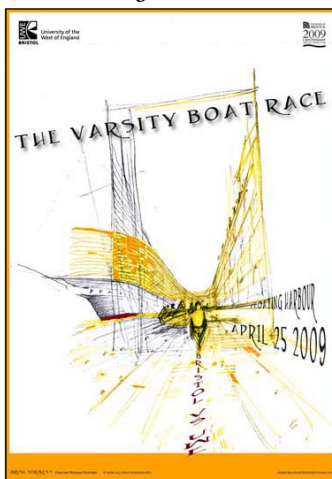
The head race season culminated in unfortunate circumstances (*see left*), although the club can look back on the results with a sense of achievement, with wins interspersed by many top-three finishes. I haven't been able to include all the race reports in this newsletter, although these will be available on the website (www.ubbconline.co.uk). Thank you to all those who contributed.

All of our crews have been built from scratch, with all four squads having almost a complete turnover from the previous year. It is a testament to both the coaches and athletes who have put in all the hard work so far, and I predict that we will only see more winning speed from these crews. As a club we have a tendency to get faster and faster throughout the season, simply due increased water time in the summer.

A major aim for the club is to qualify at least 3 VIIIs for the Temple Challenge Cup this year at Henley Royal Regatta, which is a huge ask, and has not been done by anyone since 2001.

This is the last you will be hearing from me, although I hope to see you at one of our upcoming regattas this summer. The Varsity Boat Race v. UWE is our next big event, on April 25th.

*Adam Mackenzie
Club Captain 08-09*



Commemorative Varsity Boat Race poster (right) available from www.brushstrokesrowing.com for ~£25, including shipping from the USA. State 'UBBC' at checkout to receive a 30% discount.

Quintin Head Race Chiswick, London

On the cold, bitter and frosty morning of 24th January, Bristol's two finest crews of Novice women gathered on a bleak patch of a muddy field with spanners in their hands, Britney songs in their heads and determination in their hearts, preparing to row in the Quintin Head Race. On their first trip away from home ground (water), the girls experienced rowing on the Thames, where they had to navigate tidal waters for the first time. After preparing their boats, the Novice girls heaved them to their shoulders, and as a team they strode boldly down to the riverside and began their journey down the Thames to the start line of a four kilometre race back. Many of the girls had never raced before, and for the rest they had only one short race on their home waters at Saltford to put on their list of experience. The breadth of the Thames dwarfed the stretch of Avon on which the girls had so recently first learnt how to row. As they warmed up along the way, they saw many other, more experienced crews around them. And yet despite the strange and intimidating surroundings, the Novice girls kept their focus, and were filled with excitement and only the tiniest sprinklings of fear, as they geared up to the start line. After a brief pause, their turn came to position themselves for the race ahead. Both VIII's gave all they had for the



Men's Second VIII doing just enough to take home the Senior 3 Pennant.

entirety of the long and arduous race back to Quintin Boat Club; they raced furiously to the end in contention with teams from Royal Holloway and Imperial College. The second VIII raced regatta style for a while as they attempted to overtake a boat, and rowed valiantly on despite the pressure (and verbal abuse) that was thrown at them, and by the finish, both boats had come in very respectable positions. The Novice Girls are now training hard around Bristol with the Women's Eights Head of the River Race on their radar, a race which takes place on 7th March, when the Novice Girls will be returning to the Thames to row in a prestigious race which has been going since 1927 and

stretches 7.2 kilometres from Mortlake to Putney. This race will be the Novice Girls' biggest challenge yet, where they will be joining three hundred other women's eights to complete their longest and most difficult race to date. The girls did tremendously well in their first competitive race, but all want to, and believe that they can, reach greater heights and really show what they are made of in up and coming races. And as they all look back on Quintin and forward to the Women's Eights Heads they can only think, in the words of Britney Spears, 'Gimme more.'

Eleanor Walsh

Tilburg Training Camp - 27th March—3rd April, Men's Senior Squad



Perfect rowing conditions made the training somewhat more bearable, with plenty of sunshine and little wind. The lake is in fact a widened canal, which we had all to ourselves.

A brief 5 day break from rowing was enjoyed by all after the Head of the River, though they passed quickly and before we knew it we were crammed into cars and on our way to Dover. Just when it seemed that our bodies had recovered from a hard term of training and racing, we were greeted by a dismally grey rowing lake in Belgium. Complications with an event at the lake in Tilburg meant that we had to spend a weekend at Hazewinkel. I would prefer not to talk about that weekend. Holland was a much more pleasant experience. The canal had endless flat water and the sun was shining. However, the work was brutal. The transition between long, grinding head races in the winter, and short, intense multi-lane races in the sum-

mer brings with it a whole new world of pain. To quote one rower on the last morning of camp, "my legs—they look normal, but inside there is nothing there but clouds." I feel slightly uneasy admitting that I enjoyed training camp, however, this was a different kind of camp. Highlights included; our giraffe-painted jungalows, fitting 19 people in/on a Land Rover, three meals a day involving Choco Duo spread, and our "fun" regatta. Instead of heading to Amsterdam on our afternoon off, we hosted our own Henley-style regatta in single sculls over a 150m course. As the idea was spawned, and then drawn, at lunchtime, it was recorded onto the nearest thing to hand—a plastic plate. Well done to P.T. Vickers for his victory in the Ladies Plate.

Reading University Head Race

Saturday, 28 February, started out like any other Saturday for the University of Bristol Boat Club down at the Student Union, with their destination set to be the quaint banks of the Thames at Reading rather than the lazy Avon at Saltford. As a study-abroad student and like kind of imported product I find rowing is just sweeter in the land of its birth.

Once we arrived we had little time to rig and boat. By the time we did, we made our way up the course, which was one of the nicest, and narrowest, I've rowed on. It was calm, the current was practically nonexistent, and true to English style, there were the classic river barges lining the banks in front of picturesque balconied bungalows stretching for a good length of the course. We had a great warm-up pace going, moving through the boat with a great connection, then we hit a huge traffic jam of boats a few strokes past the 2000 metre mark of the 4.6km course. See, the divisions weren't organized well, or at least the organization to get the boats to the start wasn't there, so all these boats were just jammed on a narrow stretch of river. We ended up inching our way through a jumble of school VIIIs, veteran VIIIs and other universities, and one particularly impressive octuple full of kids. After ages of waiting, we finally made it to the start, but didn't quite realize it until the official called for us to turn around and start. We turned, made some great strokes, and we were off. It was amazingly smooth. On Wednesday we had done a head race style piece down our course at Saltford at a 30-32 strokes per minute, and it wasn't bad, but this was really, really good. We kept on at a 30-stroke rating for the first two and a half kilometres, and managed to pass one of the boats from Imperial College in London. We kept a solid pace all the way down the course, and man-



All smiles after an excellent race by the 3rd VIII at Reading

aged to hit a 32 stroke rating for our last kilometre. It was the best rowing I'd ever been a part of. We moved quickly and smoothly, no rush, everyone caught and locked in the water, and there was excellent send on the boat. With each stroke came more speed and length, and once we passed the boat from Imperial, they just became smaller and smaller, until we rounded the bend and couldn't see them anymore. The end of the race came in the middle of a power ten set, and we definitely put in the work to cross the line. The paddle back to the bank was just as hectic as the navigation up the course, but this time with heaving shoulders and body heat steaming through the spandex. We were later informed that we made fifth of thirty-seven crews, which is a massive achievement. Considering we were just put together as a crew at the end of January, it was a testament to the work that we put in at Saltford as a ragtag bunch of rowers, stuck in an VIII and told to just go for it. After the celebratory post-race jaffa cake or five, it was back to Bristol for another week, until Hammersmith and Women's Head, which, from the looks of last weekend, will have some great results for UBBC crews.

Kyle Chea

Novice Women at the Women's Head of the River Race, London

7th March soon came around and the sun showed its head above the capital just in time for the three-hundred boats entered, including international crews, to take to the water and row down to the start line.

Our starting position was very high for a Novice boat at 94th out of 300, which meant that we were competing in the midst of many far more experienced senior crews. With a wooden boat, and a cox using a megaphone and a watch in the place of a cox-box, we felt conspicuously like the under-dog. But like what *Seabiscuit* was to horse-racing, we were to rowing that day. (Don't worry if you haven't heard of *Seabiscuit*, not many people have heard of us either).

Not knowing what was in store for us, we built up speed to the start line

of a race almost twice the distance of any we had raced before. We went off at a fast rate, and kept a steady rhythm for the first half of the race, all of us thinking 'when are we going to settle the pace?' some of us: 'when will it end?' and myself: 'Stroke, I hate you.'

Sitting up and readying ourselves for the most gruelling part of the race, we pushed off Hammersmith Bridge. As some Bristol supporters cheered on the bridge, other spectators gasped, one exclaiming 'it's a wooden boat!', at which our coach turned proudly round to tell him 'that's ours.' He then commented 'I'll bet once that gets going, it never stops!' Well just for your information Sir, it does. And it did. But it only happens when everyone inside it is completely exhausted having given absolutely eve-

rything to a race, which is just what happened.

On the day of the women's head, the sun broke through the clouds when we lifted our boat from its trestles, and it only went back again after we put it back on them. For all the Novice girls it was an intimidating and tiring, but exhilarating, experience. We eventually found out that we had come 13th out of the 48 crews in our division, but we felt proud of ourselves even before this knowledge. Turning our backs on the Thames after a busy day, we prepared ourselves for our return to Bristol. As we picked up our riggers and ate the last of Emma-Jane's mother's cakes, the Cambridge Blue Boat ran past in Lycra - a happy day indeed.

Eleanor Walsh

Racing Results from the Head Race Season 2009

	Quintin 24th January	Reading Uni. 28th February	Women's HRR 7th March	Hammersmith 8th March	Kingston 14th March	Men's HRR 21st March						
1st VIII	12:30.9	2nd S1	13:45.2	2nd S3	-	-	10:49.5	1st S3	15:50.0	2nd S3	18:39.3	1st S3
2nd VIII	12:51.4	1st S3	14:04.8	1st S4	-	-	11:18.1	3rd S4	16:29.0	6th S4	19:12.9	4th S4
3rd VIII	-	-	14:20.8	5th S4	-	-	11:37.2	8th S4	16:39.6	9th S4	-	-
W 1st VIII	14:56.6	2nd S4	16:11.0	1st S4	21:09.9	6th S4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nv 1st VIII	14:05.0	2nd Nv	14:30.7	3rd Nv	-	-	12:40.5	21st Nv	-	-	20:18.9	15th Nv
Nv 2nd VIII	-	-	11:40.1	1st Nv*	-	-	12:35.5	17th Nv	-	-	22:26.3	56th Nv
WNv 1st VIII	16:57.4	4th Nv	12:56.4	1st Nv*	22:08.8	13th Nv	-	-	19:42.2	5th Nv	-	-
WNv 2nd VIII	18:16.0	8th Nv	13:34.7	2nd Nv*	-	-	-	-	22:36.7	15th Nv	-	-

*raced at Avon County Head Race rather than Reading University Head Race

Upcoming Events in 2009

Bristol v UWE Varsity Boat Race	Floating Harbour, Bristol	25 April
BUCS Regatta	Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham	2-4 May
The Metropolitan Regatta	Dorney Lake, Eton	30-31 May
Reading Amateur Regatta	Reading	13-14 June
Women's Henley	Henley-on-Thames	19-21 June
Marlow Regatta	Dorney Lake, Eton	20-21 June
Henley Royal Regatta Qualifying Races	Henley-on-Thames	26 June
Henley Royal Regatta	Henley-on-Thames	1-5 July

Drinks for Parents and Alumni at Henley Royal Regatta

5:30–7:30pm, Hotel du Vin & Bistro, New Street, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon, RG9 2BP

On Wednesday 1st July UBBC will be hosting a drinks reception at the Hotel du Vin in Henley. It is here that we hope to hold our 'Auction of Promises,' which was originally mentioned in the Christmas newsletter. Our evening follows the first day of racing, where we hope to see at least three Bristol crews competing. We have had a few prizes kindly donated already; a week in a ski chalet, botox treatment and a case of fine wines. We are still looking to increase the number of prizes available, if you have anything to donate, no matter how great or small you think it is, please contact Georgia Hall at the following email address: gh7463@bristol.ac.uk



UBBC last took home the Varsity Blade in 2007

"Marathon runners talk about hitting 'the wall' at the twenty-third mile of the race. What rowers confront isn't a wall; it's a hole - an abyss of pain, which opens up in the second minute of the race. Large needles are being driven into your thigh muscles, while your forearms seem to be splitting. Then the pain becomes confused and disorganized, not like the windedness of the runner or the leg burn of the biker but an all-over, savage unpleasantness. As you pass the five-hundred-meter mark, with three-quarters of the race still to row, you realize with dread that you are not going to make it to the finish, but at the same time the idea of letting your teammates down by not rowing your hardest is unthinkable...Therefore, you are going to die. Welcome to this life." -- Ashleigh Teitel