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*The Voice in Munich. Keep up with the worlds: regular results, forecast, tips, news and views. Rowing Voice live from the world championships starting on Monday 27 August.*

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Richard Chambers, James Clarke, James Lindsay-Fynn and Paul Mattick celebrate Britain's first lightweight coxless fours gold for fifteen years, in Lucerne. Photo: Peter Spurrier.

## Great and good in Munich

Your guide to the 2007 rowing world championships: **Christopher Dodd and Rachel Quarrell** give you the form for the British crews most likely to reach the A-finals in Germany.

**Event** — men's lightweight four **LM4-**  
**Crew** — Richard Chambers/James Lindsay-Fynn/  
Paul Mattick/James Clarke.

**Main rivals** — China (and all mentioned below).

**Racing record 2007** — World Cups: Linz, 1st in heat and semi, 3rd in final. Amsterdam, 1st in heat, 2nd in semi and final. Lucerne. 1st all the way.

**Comment** — In days of yore GB dominated lightweight fours (and eights), and this crew hope to restore that prowess. They have improved since Linz where China and Italy beat them, and Amsterdam where Netherlands bested them in the semi and China in the final. In Lucerne they beat the Dutch and the Italians as well as France, Canada and Australia in a race with three seconds encompassing the first five. But China was not present. As with open fours, this is a nerve-rackingly difficult event. GB on the gold standard.

**Number in event** — 27  
Number to qualify for Olympics — 11

**Event** — men's double scull **M2x**

**Crew** — Matt Wells/Steve Rowbotham.

**Main rivals** — Estonia, Slovenia.

**Racing record 2007** — World Cups: Matt Wells and Steve Rowbotham won their heats and semis outright in all three world cups. In finals they were 1st in Linz and 2nd in Amsterdam and Lucerne.

**Comment** — In Amsterdam and Lucerne the Brits were second to the Estonians Endrekson and 41-year-old Jaanson, the latter a singles world champion in 1991 and silver medallist in the single in Athens 2004. The Estonians are great tacticians and racers and will take some beating, especially if Matt and Steve rely on their very fast second half. Former world champs Spik and Cop of Slovenia could not cope with the Estonians either, nor could current champs France. GB in the medal zone.

**Number in event** — 27  
Number to qualify for Olympics — 11

**Event** — men's eight **M8+**

**Crew** — Tom Parker/Tom Stallard/Tom Lucy/  
Tom Solesbury/Josh West/Ric Egington/Robin Bourne-Taylor/Alastair Heathcote/cox Acer Nethercott.

**Main rivals** — Canada, US, China, Germany.

# Support ROWING Voice

We hope you have enjoyed this and the previous three issues of the Rowing Voice we have published this year. We very much want to continue publishing the magazine. However, both of us are freelance journalists who need to make a living, as do the professional photographers who have contributed pictures.

We are seeking advertising, but that alone will not cover costs, particularly to begin with. Eventually we're going to have to charge a subscription as well.

Before that we are asking those who have read and enjoyed the first three issues if they would consider making a donation to our costs.

If so, please visit [www.rowingservice.com/voice](http://www.rowingservice.com/voice) and click on the donations button you will see there.. This will allow you to make a secure donation via PayPal (you do not need to be a member) in any standard currency. We suggest £2 per issue, or the equivalent.

Although much on the Web is zero cost to the consumer, the concept does not work well for a low-circulation specialist magazine.

If you have already given a donation, rest assured your help is much appreciated. Either way, thank you very much indeed for your support.

Chris Dodd and  
Rachel Quarrell

**Racing record 2007** — World Cups: Linz, 3rd in heat, 2nd in rep, 5th in final. Amsterdam, 2nd in heat and rep, 3rd in final. Lucerne, 2nd in heat and rep, 4th in final.

**Comment** — The eight has had several changes in line-up owing to illness, injury and inconsistency. Good early races in Linz led to a disappointing final, beaten by Canada, China, Belarus, Belgium and Russia. A kick up the backside came in Amsterdam when chief coach Grobler put his four and pair into a super eight who won the final and spurred the GB eight to an inspiring performance. They were beaten by Poland in their heat and China in the rep before pushing the GB super eight hard in the final, second most of the way until China came through into second. In Lucerne they were second to Canada in the semi and fourth to Canada, Germany and Russia in the final. Australia with the legendary Jimmy Tomkins in the seven seat did not overtly impress; the US will make their debut in Munich with rumours of very fast times on home waters. Qualification for the Olympics looks likely, but close.

**Number in event** — 16

Number to qualify for Olympics — 7

**Event** — men's single sculls

**Crew** — Alan Campbell.

**Main rivals** — Ondrej Synek (Czech Rep), Mahe Drysdale (NZ), Olaf Tufte (Norway).

**Racing record 2007** — World Cups: Linz, 1st in heat and semi, 2nd in final. Amsterdam, 1st in heat and quarter, 3rd in semi, 6th in final. Lucerne, 1st in heat and quarter, 2nd in semi and final.

**Comment** — Campbell is in arguably the toughest event, and has changed his 2006 race pattern of charging in the last 500 metres to a

## M1x

more measured and less predictable approach. This has led him to win six world cup heats and second round races outright. In Linz he was beaten by Synek in the final, in Amsterdam by Synek, Tufte, Hacker, Drysdale and Karonen, and in Lucerne by Tufte in the semi and Drysdale in the final. He narrowly beat Drysdale in the Diamonds. Everyone mentioned is dangerous. Tufte is Olympic champion, Drysdale world champion, Marcel Hacker (Germany) unpredictable but sometimes brilliant, Synek the most improved and consistent. There's always the chance of a newcomer making waves, too, like Campbell did last year. The medal zone has about seven people in it.

**Number in event** — 32

Number to qualify for Olympics — 11

**Event** — Women's quadruple scull **W4x**

**Crew** — Annie Vernon/Debbie Flood/Fran Houghton/Katherine Grainger (*picture, below*).

**Main rivals** — China, Germany.

**Racing record 2007** — World Cups: Linz, 1st in heat and final. Amsterdam, 1st in heat, 2nd in final. Lucerne, 1st in heat, 1st in final.

**Comment** — Annie Vernon joined the world champions Debbie Flood, Fran Houghton and Katherine Grainger in place of Sarah Winckless this season. The join appears seamless. The crew fell foul of the Chinese in Amsterdam, a regatta where the giant that hosts next year's Olympics revealed a very strong hand. But GB beat China three weeks beforehand in Linz. Germany has the evergreen Katrin Boron aboard, so can never be written off. Romania, third in Lucerne, cannot be written off either, although the Russians appear to be sunk after their positive dope test at Eton 2006, after which they lost their crown. GB sniffing gold again.

**Number in event** — 13

Number to qualify for Olympics — 7



The women's quad. Photo: Peter Spurrier

**Event** — men's coxless pair **M2-**

**Crew** — Colin Smith/Matt Langridge.

**Main rivals** — Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Croatia, Canada.

**Racing record 2007** — 1st in all races to bag gold in Linz, gold in the eight in Amsterdam, 11th in Lucerne.

**Comment** — Don't be fooled by the Lucerne result - Langridge was ill with a mystery breathing problem. He's been on training camps since then, but the announcement of the pair in the confirmed team suggests the doctors have sorted this out. Smith rowed the pair with Tom James last year (6th at the worlds) while Langridge was in the eight, but this duo is part of Jurgen Grobler's masterplan to qualify all the men's sweep boats for Beijing. Racing tends to be dominated by the Aussies, but most of those likely to reach the A-final are former





Andrew Triggs Hodge, Steve Williams, Peter Reed and Tom James (subbing for Alex Partridge) cool off after coming second in Lucerne. Photo: Peter Spurrier.

medallists and anything could happen. Verdict: as long as there are no medical problems, a minor medal might just be possible for a fast pair.

**Number in event** — 24

Number to qualify for Olympics — 11

**Event** — men's lightweight double  
**Crew** — Zac Purchase/Mark Hunter.

**Main rivals** — Denmark, Italy.

**Racing record 2007** — Linz and Amsterdam 1st in all early races then 2nd in final; Lucerne 1st in the heat, 2nd in the semi, 3rd in the final.

**Comment** — This is Purchase and Hunter's first season together - last year Purchase chased and caught his world singles title and record while Hunter was in the double with James Lindsay-Fynn. These two were streaks ahead of the rest at GB trials and the combination goes fast: straight away they were top-league players. World champions Denmark are back again and looking even more impossible to beat. The Danes have taken all three cup golds, the Brits two silvers before being caught out by Hungary in Lucerne and shoved down a notch. Purchase and Hunter are aiming for gold but a lower medal looks more feasible. Expect qualification: an A-final place should be obligatory, but there might also be a medal to look for.

**Number in event** — 33

Number to qualify for Olympics — 11

**Event** — men's coxless four  
**Crew** — Steve Williams/Peter Reed/Alex Partridge/Andy Triggs Hodge.

**Main rivals** — Holland, New Zealand, maybe the USA.

**Racing record 2007** — unbeaten until Lucerne (fours and eights gold in Linz and Amsterdam respectively). Won their Lucerne heat, but then

2nd in the semi and final.

**Comment** — Selection was the issue in the winter, with all, but particularly Partridge, pushed to the limit to justify their crew place. You might expect such a process to harden and strengthen the crew, who certainly began the season looking better than ever. They saw off a challenge from the Dutch in Linz, then had the fun of winning gold in the maxi-eight three weeks later. But just as the temperature turned up in Lucerne, with the Kiwis and Dutch very strong, Partridge's injury forced a sub both there and in Henley. An unfit James, though skilful, may have accounted for the four's close Lucerne losses to first New Zealand then Holland, but USA and Canada bring untried and reputedly fast crews to the worlds. Olympic qualification, barring accidents, seems inevitable, but the Brits will have to produce their best yet to claim gold too.

**Number in event** — 24

Number to qualify for Olympics — 11

**Event** — women's double scull  
**Crew** — Elise Laverick/Anna Bebington.

**Main rivals** — Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Italy.

**Racing record 2007** — No-show in Linz and Amsterdam, 4th (just) in the Lucerne final after coming 2nd in the heat and semi.

**Comment** — Laverick and Bebington have lurked beneath the radar this summer: a persistent injury for Bebington kept them back in England for the first two World Cups. They finally used their passports to make their debut in Lucerne where, despite it being their first event of the season, they finished just 0.01 seconds off Italy's bronze medal. That was only a length behind former world champions

## Repechage system, 2007 version:

**7-8 entries:** two heats (1 from each through to final), then rep (4 through), final.

**9-12 entries:** two heats (1 through), two reps (2 through), final.

**13-15 entries:** three heats (3 through), one rep (3 through), semis, final.

**16-18 entries:** three heats (2 through), two reps (3 through), semis, final.

**19-20 entries:** four heats (2 through), two reps (2 through), semis, final.

**21-24 entries:** four heats (1 through), four reps (2 through), semis, final.

**25-30 entries:** six heats (top 24 through), four quarters (3 through), semis, final.

**31-36 entries:** six heats (top 24 through), quarters, semis, final.

## Weather forecast:

Sun 26: 26deg, light winds

Mon 27: 25deg, light winds

Tue 28: 21deg, cloudy, variable ENE winds.

Wed 29: 26deg, cloudy, increasing slight SSW winds.

Thu 30: 12deg, rain, cooler with slight NE winds.

Fri 31: 17deg, showers, NNE slight winds.

Sat 1: 20deg, cloudy, very light N winds.

Sun 2: 17deg, cloudy, sunny intervals, mod. N winds..

## Champs on UK TV:

BBC: likely to be on the finals days (Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 September). Schedule will be published after Sunday 26 August.

## Eurosport:

Thu 30 August 08:45-11:30

Fri 31 August: 13:30-15:00

Sat 1 and Sun 2 September: live coverage, times tbc.

## Adaptive crews

**Events** — Mixed coxed four (LTA4+), arms-only women's singles (AW1x), arms-only men's singles (AM1x), mixed trunk and arms double (TA2x)

**Crews** — LTAMx4+ Naomi Riches/Alistair McKean/Alan Crowther/Vicki Hansford/cox Alan (Woody) Sherman (*see picture, right*); AW1x Helene Raynsford; AM1x Tom Aggar; TA2x Karen Cromie/James Roberts.

**Main rivals** — For the four, Holland and Canada. Women's singles, USA, Poland and Canada.

**Racing record** — The four and women's single are defending world champions.

**Comment** — Getting to Beijing isn't likely to be hard for Britain's adaptives, but the field is trying to close in on the champions. The four (in various forms) have found collecting golds a bit of a doddle: they've been world champions four years running, and were streaks ahead of the field at the Amsterdam world cup. One day things are going to get tougher, but it may not be this year, even though the Dutch are strongly targeting this event. Meanwhile Raynsford was a superb find who shot straight to the top last year, and has all the determination needed to do it again in Munich. GB Rowing will be hoping Tom Aggar, a new recruit, can do the same in the men's single, while the double aim to better their sixth place last year in Eton. Unusually everyone will have to race heats, semis and finals with a much bigger entry than ever before (62 adaptive crews from a massive 23 countries). **Number in event** — 12 and 17 for the singles, 18 doubles, 15 fours **Number to qualify for Paralympics** — 8 crews in each event.



Another adaptive gold, in Eton, September 2006.

Photo: Peter Spurrier.

New Zealand, but neither Australia (reigning champs) nor China were present. Both oarswomen have form in doubles, Laverick an Olympic bronze and Bebington fourth at last year's worlds with Annie Vernon. Lack of race time together will be their weak spot, but an A-final place and Olympic qualification are both likely, and they are sniffing at the medals.

**Number in event** — 17  
Number to qualify for Olympics — 8

**Event** — men's lightweight pair **LM2-**  
**Crew** — Matt Beechey/Danny Harte.

**Main rivals** — Italy.

**Racing record 2007** — World Cup: Linz, 1st in heat, 2nd in semi, 3rd in final. Amsterdam, 1st in final. Lucerne, 1st in heat, 2nd in final.

**Comment** — Beechey and Harte were beaten by Italy and Netherlands in the first world cup, and Italy again in the final at Lucerne. In Amsterdam there was a straight final between three boats, won by the Brits over Denmark and Belgium. Lucerne was a tougher meet, with Germany and Australia close. GB in the medal zone.

**Number in event** — 13  
Number to qualify for Olympics — none (a non-Olympic event).

**Event** — women's lightweight double **LW2x**  
**Crew** — Helen Casey/Hester Goodsell.

**Main rivals** — China, Denmark, Germany, Roumania, Australia.

**Racing record 2007** — 7th in Linz, 5th in Amsterdam and Lucerne.

**Comment** — Concentrating on qualifying for Beijing will be Casey and Goodsell's first aim at their debut worlds in this partnership. Casey's been in the double for years, Goodsell graduated up from lower boats this season. They've got a bit of flair, and their boat goes at least as fast as previous combinations, but the line between third and tenth is pretty fine in this category, the only Olympic lightweight women's class. Casey's best result was a doubles bronze in long-ago 2002, Goodsell has taken bronze in the light quad the last two years, but this is a big step up. Results have been improving throughout the season, though, and making the A-final is realistic.

**Number in event** — 19

Number to qualify for Olympics — 8

**Event** — women's pair **W2-**  
**Crew** — Natasha Howard/Natasha Page.  
**Main rivals** — Canada, China, New Zealand, Germany.

**Racing record 2007** — World Cup: 5th in Linz, 10th in Amsterdam (both with Knowles instead of Howard), 4th in Lucerne as full crew.

**Comment** — Qualifying the pair is one of the main aims of the GB women's squad, and the latest combo (a pair of Tashes) makes a good stab at that. Fourth in Lucerne was much better than earlier on, though still way off the pace set by winners New Zealand. The pair will benefit where the eight suffers, from having fewer top crews to race since most of the early Cup competitors are now in their country's eights.

**Number in event** — 13  
Number to qualify for Olympics — 8

**Event** — women's eight **W8+**  
**Crew** — Carla Ashford/Baz Moffat/Alice Freeman/Louisa Reeve/Beth Rodford/Alison Knowles/Katie Greves/Jess Eddie/cox Caroline O'Connor.

**Main rivals** — Romania, China, Holland, Germany, USA, Canada, Australia.

**Racing record 2007** — Silver in Linz, 5th in Amsterdam, 4th in Lucerne.

**Comment** — There's no question: the only thing on this crew's mind is Beijing. Not that they won't be hunting medals, but if they qualify, they will also be near the podium. The biggest ask in the entire squad: on a good day they're just about quick enough, but will have to pull out a storming repechage to bring home the goods. They'll be taking hope from being so close to Germany in Linz, though the Dutch have moved past them since then and world champions USA will be favourites in Munich. The British mix has changed several times this summer: Natasha Page is now in the pair, and Georgina Menheneott now in the four. For the eight, what marks the worlds is that for the first time they will be competing against all their rivals at once, and with none doubling up on the same day, as they do during World Cups.

**Number in event** — 10  
Number to qualify for Olympics — A rather brutal 5





## Mighty miracle in the making

*Hammer Smith's guide to Olympic rowing in Beijing, with additional reporting by Bei Jing and photographs from Rac Quel*

The astonishing new Shunyi rowing and canoeing course in the Chinese capital, Beijing, was constructed by a million workers over three months and completed on the day before the junior world championships opened on 8th August. This was a year to the day before the Olympic regatta is due to start in 2008, and was used by the blazerati of FISA and the commissars of British rowing, led by Chairman Di, as a test for the whole dog's bollocks.

It came complete with an army of volunteers and an accreditation system of previously unknown complexity (and that's saying something – *Ed*). Briefly, there are nine traditional Chinese animal figures denoting areas of access, so the more you can get stamped on your ID the more places you can go. The name of the game next year will to get to as many of the parts that are not stamped on your accreditation as you can, the ultimate being the control tower which requires all nine. This should be relatively simple as there will only be about 100,000 volunteer officials supervised by 10,000 police to control the check points, not to mention the People's Army garrison in the vicinity. Public health warning: If you do succeed in reaching the top of the tower, you will most likely be shot.

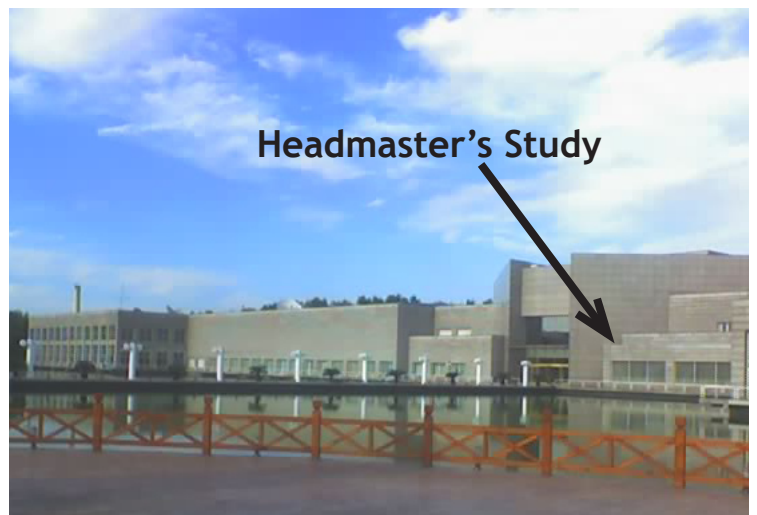
*Hammer Smith*



*Above: security fence at Shunyi rowing course*

*Left: insignia for access zones 1-9*

*Below: Commissar Tanner Hotel and Compound*





*Above: Moat at the Forbidden City, with People's Army airborne*

*Below: Kiss and Cry zone*



*Above: There are nine million bicycles in Beijing*



*Above: Athletes' village*

*Right: Regatta Control and FISA HQ*





## In the trenches

*Trevor Chambers (TC) gets busy building Sudbury International Regatta's landing stages.*

**Saturday 28th July, D -7 days.**

Having been generously "awarded" the role of landing-stage architect solely on the strength of having been injured due to poor landing stages a few years ago,

I begin by finding the scaffolding clips, carefully hidden out of the way in the boathouse since last year. Use copious amounts of WD-40 and elbow-grease to free off the nuts.

Break handles of the bin they were all in when trying to lift it to put it away as it was "a bit heavy". Those at the club know I say that with understated off-handedness...

**Sunday 29th July, D -6 days.**

Update landing stage construction guide with amendments based on last year.

Marvel that the back-of-an-envelope where I had made those notes has turned up in my euphemistically-titled "filing system". Make mental note to update immediately after the regatta this year rather than chance it a second time.

One of our Vets, retired, has the luxury of time and has been coming up with new ideas.

They look very clever, just wish I could claim to understand them: how can we know that the numbered scaffolding poles are numbered in the right order? Maybe I am just being blinded by the intimidating spreadsheet, so decide to play along and see what happens.

**Wednesday 1st August, D -3 days.**

After work, hot-foot it to the club to oversee the start of the landing stage construction.

Note use of the word "oversee" ... this, I keep telling myself, means that I can direct others and in particular get someone else to be the one in the river getting bitten, wet, muddy and cold building the scaffolding frame on which the extra stages depend.



*Crowds enjoying the sun at Sudbury International Regatta 2007.*

*Photos: David Wasse*

## Count-down to Sudbury D-Day

*The following is an account of the trials and tribulations leading up to the 2007 Sudbury Regatta, one of the few to go ahead successfully in England following the massive floods of late July and early August.*

*Three stalwarts of Sudbury RC - Andrew Blit [AB], Tricia McGrillen [TMcG] and Trevor Chambers [TC] - contributed to this collective regatta diary. Left, TC takes to the trenches as architect of a grand new landing stage.*

**Wednesday 18th July, D-Day -17 days.**

◦ [AB] Three entries so far, including two from Wales. Well, we are Sudbury International Regatta after all...

**Thursday 26th July, D -9 days.**

◦ [TMcG] Arrange to hire hedge cutter to cut reed encroaching on river. Need working party – call previously put out to members by email largely ignored.

◦ [AB] The umpire's rota has reached Draft 3. On Tuesday I was struggling to make ends meet with too many volunteers but (fortunately?) two have had to pull out, including the Heir Presumptive to the Chairmanship of the Regatta Committee. Gavin will just have to "succeed himself". Again. Have corrected the random spelling of names therein and removed anomalies such as non-existent umpire being at both start and finish simultaneously. Only one complaint so far – that we are too well organised this year.

◦ Bin is full, needs emptying. Again.

**Friday 27th July, D -8 days.**

◦ [TMcG] Threw toys out of pram, sent email to all members, subject "last night's non-event".

◦ Received several grovelling apologies and promises to complete task before end of weekend.

**Saturday 28th July, D -7 days.**

◦ [AB] AM – buy new mobile as old one dying. PM – new one fails with keys not working. Aieeeee. Oh well.

◦ [TMcG] Three working parties out on river, reed cutting will soon be completed.

**Sunday 29th July, D -6 days.**

◦ [AB] Entries so far for 58 different events. And that doesn't count the entries for the events we don't run. Only 21 actual matches though!

◦ Am considering offering to race off some WJ14s against a W Vet D crew. Tempting. It's good to see so many people want to come back to race, including old friends (Veteran I in one case) and enemies. Apparently a sculler took umbrage about a remark I made last year about 'brute force' not necessarily being the answer. ("He continues to get bigger but our job as coaches is to broaden his horizons and XXX has set about the task by entering him with a Young Lady (XXX's daughter) so he can show a caring, sharing side to his sculling").

◦ Acquire new new mobile with fancy touch screen oo er. Bin full again. Damn. Re-read RQ's guidance notes for this piece. Shouldn't have used 'damn'. Bugger.

**Monday 30th July, D -5 days.**

◦ [TC] Lull before the storm, in terms of regatta preparations. Focus on trying to do enough at work so that the rest of the week is less stressful. Fail.

◦ [TMcG] Reminder sent out re: building of landing stages on evening of D-3 & D-2, help

All has to wait after the discovery that before going off on a sculling training camp Sam had not managed to bring the tractor down to trim the banks, due to the rain and softness of the ground.

Landing stage area currently occupied by 4ft nettles. Sum total of the tools suitable to attack them with: a Stanley knife, a broken scythe, a pair of secateurs – that's it.

Rosemary goes home for the gardening tools and finally we can make a start.

**M**uch later than planned, the thorny question of who is going to get in the river. The trench foot I contracted last year took months to go away so I have no great desire to go waist deep in water (and ankle deep in mud) again. However, there are only three of us, and I am the only one who has done this before so I have to do it after all.

Our regatta secretary knows people in high places - or, since the people in question are in the sub-aqua club, maybe that should be people in low places - so we have a secret weapon this year - a dry suit.

I fight my way into this - to some sniggering about tight rubber clothing - and going. I marvel at the complete waterproofness. The light fades. We haven't got very far.

#### **Thursday 2nd August, D -2 days.**

Pick up from where we left off, and good progress is made. David's ideas prove to be more effective than their description, and by last light we have recovered and are slightly ahead of schedule. The teenage hoodie underage drinkers loiter around but don't cause any trouble...

#### **Friday 3rd August, D -1 day.**

...or so I thought... Turn up at 8am to finish off securing the planks and general fine-tuning, to find the oiks have undone a load of the boards and thrown them into the river.

Unbelievable! They were so brash, having sat there and

needed. Also reminder re: security required in marquee over D-1 and D-Day nights.

◦ Response re: security for D-Day, nothing for D-1.

◦ [AB] More than 50 separate mails. Some changes, some duplicates. The Flying Mollison Brothers appear to want to race themselves.

◦ Sadly no opposition for the Vet I. Also the caring, sharing youth has, apparently, bailed out. Shame that.

◦ Buy bigger bin.

#### **Tuesday 31st July, D -4 days. Draw day.**

◦ [TMcG] Chased promised entries to dragon boating event – numbers down on last year. Panic.

◦ [TC] As is traditional, arrive to find myself immediately playing catch up as Andrew & Alex have been up for hours. As the day unfolds we remember all the "gotchas", and the smooth process hums along. Not for us a Grand Challenge Cup at the Town Hall, though we like to think that we have our finger on the pulse of the rowing world albeit at ever so slightly a different level from the Henley Stewards.

◦ Find suspiciously few obvious doubling-up issues on the first (or indeed subsequent) passes, and after the usual merging of some events it's all looking good.

◦ Do usual trick of reformatting the draw from HTML into Word for the programme-printers, and make another mental note to ask Simon to amend his program so that this job is easier.

◦ Have made this mental note annually for years...

◦ [AB] Two Vet H scullers have emerged like wrinkly butterflies. Or they may be the same

sculler. Either way we have a true Masters event.

◦ We don't have opposition for Weybridge's J14 boys double nor their women's J14 quad. But somehow they come up with three mixed doubles from that. Not sure how they did it. Not going to ask.

◦ Some fairly tasty racing on the cards, Vet Ds against senior 2s, nippy juniors against inexperienced but HUGE men, that sort of thing.

◦ All things considered the draw goes pretty well, all done, including prettifying for the programme by 6pm. BEAT THAT.

#### **Wednesday 1st August, D -3 days.**

◦ [AB] Just waiting for all the clashes we have missed to be reported to us. "When I win my first two races I shall have a clash." Believable.

◦ Mail received from XXX RC: "Our entries secretary has gone on holiday and we don't know who is racing in what". Five phone calls from very apologetic co-ordinator from YYY BC, none of which are any problem whatsoever.

◦ [TMcG] Yet another attempt to get rest of programme in order to take to printers. Failed miserably due to work commitments.

◦ Managed to get away in time to assemble with small select band for building landing stages (see inset). Used scuba-diving dry suits this year to prevent recurrence of last year's trench foot, caused by standing in mud on bottom of river for several hours.

◦ Send blast round about response re: lack of security for D-1.

#### **Thursday 2nd August, D -2 days.**

◦ [AB] Silence, which is very worrying.

Fortunately broken at 3:30pm by sculler having to bail out with dodgy back. Cripes.

◦ [TMcG] Still month-end problems at work, unable to get away to help with landing stages. Finished work at 22:25.

#### **Friday 3rd August, D -1 day.**

◦ [AB] Happy morning trying to look busy on Regatta Meadow – accidentally get involved with armoured electric cable which is too much like hard work.

◦ Adjourn home to check validity of ARA forms thus far submitted. Some 'interesting' anomalies emerge such as men's Vet D double containing young lady. Hmmm.

◦ Attempt to kill printer by printing off Control documentation and commit social suicide by blagging rest of family into allocating the crew numbers, "they love it really".

◦ New bin too heavy to lift.

◦ [TMcG] Take programme to printers.

Assemble at regatta field to move sundry marquees, tents, gazebos, transport fridges, freezers, children's play equipment, sink,





tables etc. from club to field. Visit printers re: programme, back to regatta field to site mobile loos, PA, arrange working party to run water pipes and electricity cable over from club house.

- Arrange collection of rolls for BBQ. Set up kitchen & bar area, also control tent with computer etc. Organise & collect jigsaw on hire to complete final touches to landing stages. Straw bales used for seating arrive.
- Pressgang two club members into being security tonight.
- Visit printers who've got in a muddle over programme.
- Back to regatta field to arrange for pit to be dug for sink outflows. Check with suppliers that pots are on their way.
- Visit local cash 'n carry to pick required goods and arrange for them to deliver. BBQ on hire arrives. Local brewery arrives with beers! Cash 'n carry delivery arrives – sort supplies.
- Arrange for rolls to be filled, clingfilmed and labelled. Phone printers re: programme. Await evening security: home by 9pm.
- Printers deliver programmes at 9:15pm. Collapse in heap with glass of wine.

#### Saturday 4th August, D-Day.

- [AB] Portentous music, muffled timpani rolls.... Actually nasty hard work loading car up with pooter and Control Tent nonsense. Forget scales. Arrive 6:55 am and NO-ONE is there.
- Find one willing worker (appropriately named Will) who helps take prophylactic covers off control tent while I genuflect to the goddess of radio microphones and set up the comms. I could have his babies but he is not willing. Odd chap really.
- First crews try to register at 7:55 and we're not quiiiiiiiiite ready.... But strangely enough, we

become so. Quite quickly. Umpires arrive and in good humour. Crews register – 3 separate ladies declare themselves to be tearfully grateful for my help in accepting their entry money. Tea is brewed despite leak in tea tent and we're off. 5 minutes late on the first race doesn't bode well, but we're back on track almost immediately.

- The morning passes with precious little drama. A couple of hysterical ladies and a grumpy sculler (hit the bank) but not a lot else. Worryingly smooth!

- Fortunately in mid-afternoon we have the classic occurrence. Lea crews have done well, they're racing in 4 out of the next 3 divisions. They want to re-arrange a race against Poplar. Poplar, however, are in 5 of the next 4 but may be able to move if Maidstone will play. Maidstone are happy but only if Sudbury can move their VIII.....

- They sort themselves out without my interference and we finish almost EXACTLY on time, thanks in no small measure to our own Vet VIII rowing into the weeds. I am as burnt as toast and have been on my feet for 12 hours (owing to the schoolboy error of not pinching sufficient chairs). God BLESS the umpires, competitors and all club members who kept their cool while all about them (ie me) were losing theirs.

- [TMcG] Sun hot, wind cooling, racing good, programme running to time. Beer, Pimms & BBQ selling well. SRC ladies win lots of races, all's right with the world!

#### Sunday 5th August, D-Day + 1.

- [AB] Drink wine donated by grateful entry ladies.
- Consider how to empty bin.

watched us building them all night, and cannot have had any concern at to my ability to recognize them. They'd better hope I do not see them, as there may be an impromptu swimming lesson coming up...

We recover and the landing stages are soon finished. Only marquee, control-tent, water cables, and an armoured 3-phase electricity cable to go. The latter lives on a reel in the boathouse, and needs to unrolled and dragged across to the meadow. Unrolling it always makes me feel like what I imagine Roman slaves felt like.

Finish unrolling, and emerge blinking into the bright sunshine from the dark recesses of the boathouse, sweating buckets.

#### Saturday 4th August, D-Day.

Everything goes well, carrying on the theme which has been present all week. Dare we believe that we really are getting quite good at this lark? The build up to and the running of the regatta are good fun, in a "once a year kind of way".

It's not exactly a Royal event (the best patron we can boast is a Lord of the realm) but good nonetheless, and it's very satisfying that so many competitors took the trouble to tell us that they had enjoyed their day.

## NEWS

# Rowers on the high seas

It's a surprisingly quiet time on the world's big waves at present. Nevertheless there are three rowers on the Pacific Ocean: Roz Savage (11 days out, California to Australia); Ralph Tujin (161 days out, Peru to Cairns Australia); and Erden Eruc (44 days out, California to Australia).

Coming up in November we have Leven Brown's attempt to beat the team and overall Atlantic crossing record, in the shell which did it last time, *La Mondiale* (pictured, right). If that works, he plans to break the Pacific record in 2008 and the Indian Ocean record in 2009. *La Mondiale* will be racing against a crew of four in a multihull ocean rowboat, ORCA, which is the first of its type to make the attempt. There will be a further run at the team record by Simon Chalk in December 2007.

On 2nd January 2008 the second John Fairfax Atlantic Rowing Regatta (Gran Canaria to Antigua in 1x, 2x, 3x and 4x) will start.

For those interested, the last in a series of ocean-rowing seminars will take place at the Southampton Boat Show on September 14th: details from [www.oceanrowing.com](http://www.oceanrowing.com).



## Bradford new head

Bradford on Avon RC's new addition to the racing calendar, their autumn head race, will be held on Saturday 15th September, over approx. 1500 metres upstream.

They are starting with an invitation-only event while they test their space and facilities available, though in future it looks set to become a small open head race.

Four divisions, maximum 30 boats in each, and maybe a cross-country run for those who want Sunday exercise.

Those interested should contact Donal Casey via email: [donal.casey@gmail.com](mailto:donal.casey@gmail.com).

## Virtual BUSA

BUSA are launching a new indoor racing programme for universities this coming season, starting officially at the end of September 2007. The six-event SUPER8s series will see online and live head-to-head erg races taking place from October to February, followed by two live finals in March.

All races are just 1km, and large numbers of BUSA points are on offer to teams (of eight competitors) who do well. The first (October) round is online only, and needs no special equipment. Rowers race 1km whenever they like, and log their times on an entry form which has to be in by 2nd November.

Round 2 is live: eight ergs hooked up together for a sprint 1km, at the British Indoor Champs in Birmingham on November 18th. Rounds 3 and 4 are also online in early 2008, then the top 16 teams are invited to Sheffield for the March finals. Full information at <http://www.concept2.co.uk/universities/>

## Keep talking

The online forum board Talk Rowing, [www.talkrowing.co.uk](http://www.talkrowing.co.uk), was relaunched over the summer, with a new look and site design plus extra features such as an RSS feed, photo gallery, blogs and product reviews.

Old posts from the last year have been reinstated, and the forum search system is now working very well to find expired topics. Beware of the usual morass of kindergarten nonsense and filth on some boards, though, at least until the moderators see it. Unfortunately most public forum boards in rowing seem destined to be taken over by the toddler mentalities from time to time.

## Voice worlds updates

The Rowing Voice will be producing regular updates from the world championships in Munich during the week of 26th August to 2nd September. Check back every couple of days for the latest news.

## THE ENCLOSURE IN THE SKY

# Pinches, purveyor of medals

Although he was a successful oarsman, a decorated soldier and an author on heraldry, John Pinches was perhaps best-known for administering his family's medal-making business, which produced orders and decorations for overseas governments, commemorative issues for much of the Commonwealth, and badges and insignia in Britain. The business, which was founded in London by Pinches' great-great uncle in 1840, had a distinguished reputation for manufacturing medals and metallic art until it was sold to the Franklin Mint of Philadelphia, USA, in 1969.

Born in Chelsea of an artistic family, Pinches had joined the business after being educated at the Chelsea Polytechnic and then undergoing two years' engineering training with a London firm. Initially commissioned in the Second World War into the Duke of Wellington's Regiment, he was transferred to the R.E.M.E. because of his engineering qualifications.

He served in North Africa, Palestine, Greece and Italy. On September 22, 1943, the British Army's advance north was held up in Salerno by a lorry and anti-tank gun, which had broken down and was blocking a bridge. Under enemy fire, with the parapet largely destroyed and so making him an easy target, Pinches pulled a heavy winch rope single-handed across the bridge to the damaged vehicle. After securing the rope, he ran back to his men and ensured the obstacles were towed away. Pinches received the Military Cross for his exploit. He subsequently served in the occupation of Austria before being demobilised as Lieutenant-Colonel.

His rowing career had been flourishing before the War. He was a member of the London Rowing Club crews, which won events at Henley for four successive years from 1935, including the Grand Challenge Cup, the leading race for eights at the Regatta, in 1938. In 1947, together with Edward Sturges, he won the Silver Goblets for pairs, after a semi-final victory over Thames by six feet, one of the most memorable at the Regatta of that decade.

He was later approached by the Amateur Rowing Association (ARA) to ask if he would make up a crew with Richard Burnell, subsequently rowing correspondent for The Times and The Sunday Times, for the 1948 Olympics, which were to be held on the Henley course. However, Pinches said he would only do so if there were proper trials, something that was not customary in that era. The ARA declined. Instead, it paired Burnell with Bert Bushnell, who subsequently won the pairs

title at the Games. Their gold medals were manufactured by Pinches' own firm, which had been commissioned by the London Olympic organisers to provide medals for all the rowing events.

Pinches was captain of London Rowing Club in 1952 and did much to revive its standard after the War. Ebullient and enthusiastic, with a hearty laugh, he would sometimes urge his own crews along by shouting "Faster, Faster" as he himself strained at the oars. He continued rowing competitively until he was 60 years-old, his last victory being at Tours in France in an international veterans' regatta in 1976. As an international coach, he attended world and European championships, as well as the 1960 Olympics in Rome, when he was advising the coxless and coxed fours.

After the sale of the family firm in 1969, he and his wife, Rosemary, moved to Wiltshire. She had worked at the Royal College of Arms and subsequently had established her own heraldry and genealogy business, Heraldry Today, in 1954. Together they wrote *The Royal Heraldry of England* in 1974 and then, subsequently, he was the author, among other books, of *European Nobility and Heraldry* in 1994. He is survived by his wife and two daughters.

*John Pinches, MC, oarsman, soldier, medallist and author, born on April 9, 1916, and died on July 2, 2007, aged 91.*

— John Goodbody.  
First published in the Times.

## In Memoriam:

In April, former Emanuel School and Civil Service/Cygnets boatman **Roy Davis**.  
19 May, **Chris Lewis**, former President (1979-1991) of Cantabrigian RC, after a long illness.  
21 May, **Bill Richardson** of Bradford on Avon Rowing Club, after a short and sudden illness.  
In May, former Bedford RC President **John Smith**, and Nottingham & Union member **Harry Billyeard**.  
10 June, former Clydesdale RC member **Mary Collins**, junior national champion in 1975, peacefully after a long illness.  
26 June, Kingston RC and Skiff Club member **Bryan 'Jonesey' Jones**, suddenly.  
In June, Remenham Club Hon Treasurer **Ralph Scott**.  
2 July, London RC stalwart and Goblets winner **John Pinches**, peacefully at home.  
In August, **Bob Robinson**, Leander Club janitor and **John Scott**, Leander house manager of Leander from 1972-1979.



# Allister Bowtell, sculptor, model maker, oarsman

Allister Bowtell, who died of prostate cancer last September aged 66, was a fine sculptor, an exuberant model maker for television and films, and a larger than life character who became a stalwart of the boat club at Chelsea Arts Club, and a vice-president of Vesta. When chairman of Chelsea Arts, he achieved the feat of being hauled before his own disciplinary committee. He was also a leading light of the London Sketch Club.

His best-known recent work was the bronze sculpture of two children playing, commissioned by the Cadogan Estate for the Sloane Square refurbishment in London. He made the statues of Melpomene and Euterpe for Oxford's Bodleian Library. In contrast, for television he made models for Dr Who, including the original cybermen, and an edible bunch of flowers for Benny Hill. He made Rod Hull's emu, and Tweedledum and Tweedledee for Jonathan Miller's Alice. He made props for Monty Python and The Goodies, and body moulds for The Joys of Sex.

His most notorious commission was a 3.3 metre (10ft) penis for the Raymond Revuebar; the girls had to dance around it. It was made in a friend's back garden in Putney as there was no room in his studio, and when finished, it was too heavy to lift. It had to be made lighter by removing the armature inside it, but Allister was too large to do this himself. A slim art student wriggled inside the model and dislodged the material. She then needed assistance in getting out - which was, as Allister so aptly remarked, an unusual case of getting the girl out of the phallus. They then had to load the item on a lorry. A specially hired crane hauled the mighty replica over the rooftops, causing a stir. It was said property prices rose in Putney that day.

Allister was born in Sheen, Surrey, the son of a doctor. He took after his maternal grandfather, Alardice Arnott, who had been Lily Langtry's private secretary. His mother died when he was six months old, killed by the only bomb that fell on the suburb. She had put Allister under the stairs, and he was unscathed. He was educated at King's College school, Wimbledon, where he excelled at art. Breaking his accountancy articles, he became a trainee TV cameraman with Rediffusion before entering Chelsea Art School as a mature student in 1961.

He shared a small house, Bleak House, in Putney, on the Thames embankment, and when he needed help he employed regulars from the Bricklayers Arms. He rowed for the Vesta Rowing Club and gave legendary parties on Boat Race day.

He later moved to a workshop under the railway arches in Putney, playing Verdi and Wagner to

counteract the neighbourly blast of Capital Radio. He lectured part time at Wimbledon School of Art (1966-70) and the London College of Printing (1974-78). He was production designer of the film Sir Henry at Rawlinson's End (1980), made by Vivian Stanshall of the Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band. He endeared himself to the cast - including Trevor Howard, the star - by carrying an emergency basket of drinks for anyone overcome by thirst.

The advent of computer simulation greatly reduced the demand for TV props, but Allister's career as a serious sculptor expanded around this time. He worked in terracotta, bronze, wood, fibreglass and resin. He had many private and public commissions, and was elected to the Royal Society of British Sculptors in 2001.

For his last six months he was in and out of Trinity Hospice, Clapham, where he held court for his friends from a room decorated with his postcards of nude royals. He was generous, a gentleman, lived life to the full, smoked and was up for most things of a bibulous nature. More than 200 friends saw him off, following his hearse along Putney embankment.

*Allister Edmund Ross Bowtell, sculptor, film designer and model maker; born June 2 1940; died September 20 2006.*

— Caroline Richmond

Previously published in the Guardian

## Jonesey remembered

Kingston Rowing Club and the Skiff Club suffered a sad loss in June with the sudden death of Bryan Jones, known to one and all affectionately simply as 'Jonesey'.

Jonesey had been a member of the two clubs for fifty years, going back to their days at the Albany boathouse on the Lower Ham Road. He will be remembered for many things, but particularly for his unquenchable enthusiasm on the river and unique camaraderie in the bar off it. He was part of the 'Leviathan' group as recently as June 2007, and was often seen with a wing-mirror on his cap steering a coxless four or pair with his friend Dennis Moore.

In addition to his efforts on the water, he was also a keen cyclist and runner, sharing all these activities with blind members of the club. He will be greatly missed and fondly remembered.

—from Richard Rowland and David Biddulph

## McBUSA or bust?

Following the announcement earlier this season that the Nottingham national watersports centre at Holme Pierrepont was already booked up by another sport for next year's BUSA dates (3-5 May 2008), speculation has been rife within the student rowing community as to where their favourite BUSA pot-fest will end up.

Unfortunately there are limited numbers of multi-lane lakes which can accommodate the vast numbers of students, boats and trailers involved in a fully-fledged regatta, and none of them is as central as Nottingham.

Nigel Mayglothling, Chairman of BUR (British Universities Rowing), has started contract discussions with Strathclyde Park, Glasgow's international-standard rowing lake, raising the possibility that the regatta might temporarily shift north of the Border.

Apparently the canny potential hosts have spotted the impact a 1000-entry, three-day regatta can have on the local economy. It remains to be seen if ceilidhs and bagpipes will be enough to lure all the southern universities up to Scotland for a full bank holiday in the middle of the summer examination term.

## Cotswold lake brewing

A new water facility is being developed at Cleveland Lakes in the Cotswolds, with hopes that it can first be used in April 2008. British Universities Rowing has been liaising with Aggregate Industries, who are extracting gravel from the site, and the Cotswolds Water Park Society, to turn the lake into a proper rowing and sporting facility. 2km of rowable water is envisaged, with the potential to turn it into a six-lane racing and training location which would be available to visiting crews for the 2012 Olympics. Canoeing and dragon-boating clubs have also been consulted.

## Engelmann out



With perfect timing, just after the publication of the third issue of the Rowing Voice, the news that Thorsten Engelmann, the stroke of the winning 2007 Cambridge Blue Boat and heaviest man ever to row in the Boat Race, was to be denied his Blue. The tall German's sin was to drop out of his BA course a couple of weeks after this year's race. He informed Cambridge's coach, Duncan Holland, of his plans when Holland was visiting the German trials to see how Engelmann and Sebastian Schulte were doing. (6 and 5 in the German men's eight now.)

Engelmann earned a Light Blue with 2006 Cambridge crew. This year the 26-year-old had been studying economics as a mature undergraduate when he took the decision to drop out, no doubt related to his Olympic ambitions with Germany.

Cambridge University Boat Club chose to show their displeasure at his breach of the race's guidelines – that all competitors should be in statu pupillari and committed to their courses – by denying him his 2007 Blue. There was something of a quiet furore after this was announced, with members of Oxford University Boat Club questioning the validity of the 2007 race. A footnote is likely to be added to the race records.

## A row on the Nile

*Kathleen Saville and her late husband Curtis rowed the Atlantic from Casablanca to Antigua in 1981 and the Pacific from Peru to Australia in 1984. She now lives in Cairo and rows twice a week on the more placid Nile waters.*

The Egyptian Rowing Club is on the west bank of the Nile in the Cairo suburb of Doqqi. It is one of many Nile-side sporting and social clubs. To the northeast by five miles, is the Giza Plateau where the Old Kingdom pyramids of Kheops, Khefren, Kufu and their assorted mustabas are located. I'm not rowing exactly in the shadow of the great pyramids but they aren't too far away. The taxi to the ERC goes along the Nile on the island of Gezira where I teach at the American University in Cairo. We pass the great mosque in Midan Kit Kat on the Giza side and many old houseboats that are tied up along the Giza shoreline and are still in use.

The Egyptian Rowing Club consists of two buildings; a modern one with a marble facade and an old floating wooden boathouse. Below the open dining terrace in the modern building, in a garage-like area, is where some of the newer fiberglass racing shells are housed. The older rowing shells, mainly wood, are in the attached blue and white, two story wooden boathouse. When I come into club, I head for the wooden boathouse looking for Magdy, one of the boat club assistants. I check with Magdy that a boat is available and that he can help me get it on the water. Mohamed, the keeper of keys, unlocks the women's locker room where I change.

When I come out, Magdy is pulling the 'canoe' out for me with a helper. I carry my own oars. Initially I didn't like the idea of someone carrying my boat and holding it for me while I got in. But I've changed. Is it going with the culture? Besides, the canoe is an old lapstrake rowing shell that weighs a lot, and the dock is high above the Nile.

The current flows north at a fairly strong pace. One could almost sit and steer a rowboat and easily arrive at Midan Kit Kat not long after someone who is rowing. I have to keep this in mind, because the row back to the ERC can be hard and long against the north flowing current.

All my years of rowing in college and at the Narragansett Boat Club in Rhode Island come back to me as I row along. Despite all the miles I've rowed in singles, I still like the double and four better. The current whips under the bridges as I head towards Kit Kat. Occasionally a kissy sound reaches me from the bridges. I don't even have to look to know who and why. For the

umpteenth time, I wonder why a woman just can't row a boat in this country without some sort of comment from the surrounding shore.

Clumps of water lilies float by the boat. A working felucca crosses the river ahead of me, ferrying people to the Giza side from Gezira Island. I row on, entranced by the smooth motion of the oars: in and out of the water. The waves are minimal with barely a ripple.

Then, 25 minutes later, I reach Midan Kit Kat. As I row alongside the old wooden houseboats, evocative of times past with their faded exteriors, I imagine scenes from Naguib Mahfouz's *Adrift* on the Nile. I look to see the bohemian water pipe smokers on lattice balconies of the two story houseboats as I paddle past. The river is narrow at this point because Gezira Island intersects the river and divides the Nile into a calm, flat-water canal where I am rowing, and a mid-size river with regular boat traffic on the other side. The current feels strangely lethargic at this point in the river.

Opposite a rowing club with Empacher eights lying in slings on the docks on Gezira island, I decide to turn around and start rowing back to the ERC. Off my port oar is a strange black fuzzy thing in the water. On closer inspection, I see it is a man's wig! A toupee, perhaps? I imagine the circumstances of its arrival into the waters of the Nile: a man strolling with his wife or girlfriend one hot summer's evening when suddenly a gust of wind lifts the toupee off and he is cooler than he wants to be on top.

As I anticipate, the row back is hard. The 'canoe' is an antique by any rower's standard. The canoe's overlapping board design tracks well in the passive flow of river water, but I feel the weight of each nail and board as I push the oar handles over my knees and drop the blades in the water. Here is where the real workout begins.

When I get back to the boat club, hot and tired, Magdy and his assistant are waiting to grab my starboard oar. I undo the port oarlock, put my right foot on the footrest and lift myself up and out of the boat. How many times have I done that over the years? I carry my oars into the boathouse while Magdy follows with the canoe.

After a coldwater shower in the dark recesses of the women's changing room, I go topside for a tall lemonade and Egyptian baladi salad. While the call to prayer echoes in the background, perhaps from the mosque in Midan Kit Kat, I have lunch overlooking the Nile in the bright sunshine of the afternoon. After I finish lunch, I wave goodbye to Magdy and company, pick up my workout bag and head out to the Metro for home.

©Kathleen Saville, Maadi June 2007





## Mad about a buoy

*Andy Cox investigates what on earth makes otherwise sensible rowers take to the surf*

Going for a row on the river with friends: hard work, for sure, but not exactly life-threatening. So what possesses otherwise sensible people to race a boat weighing over 200kg out through heaving surf, turn a buoy on the distant horizon, and compound the lunacy by trying to catch and then ride a wave back into the beach?

Saturday 28 July saw the UK Open Surfboat Championships held at Saunton Sands on the beautiful north Devon coast. Among the 36 entered teams were the usual suspects from the various Surf Life Saving Clubs (SLSCs). What may come as a surprise was that roughly a third of the crews came from established and respected flat water clubs, including Marlow, Molesey, Nottingham & Union and Cambridge CCAT. What were they doing there?

Flo Davey-Atlee began her rowing career in surfboats. This year, she raced in the Blue Boat for Oxford and trialled for the GB U23 team. Home is in Cornwall, however, which means that in the summer months she competes for Perranporth SLSC and is uniquely qualified to offer an opinion: "Rowing in surf gives you a completely different kind of adrenaline kick to the speed of flat water rowing. It's really exciting, every race is different. It's a whole new challenge." She pauses, considering the issue, before adding: "There's also the whole lifestyle thing, hanging out at the beach. It's just fun."

She acknowledges that there is a greater chance of injury. "When the surf is over head height, I'll always wear a helmet but it's the risk that makes it fun." She agrees that if you want to race a surfboat, you just have to accept that there will be the odd bump and bruise.

Ed Boyns is a member of Molesey Boat Club and trialled for the GB lightweight senior team earlier this year. He also raced at Saunton as a member of the Twickenham RC and Molesey Convicts crew. "The whole weekend was just brilliant and different to what I expected. On the Friday, the novices were taken to some flat water and shown the basic drills of

starts (jumping into a stationary boat), turns and the finish (leaping out of the boat and sprinting to a flag.) We also had safety instruction concerning what to do if the boat rolled over."

Saturday was race day and there was plenty of surf with sets just over head height. "I didn't expect the racing to be so intense," he admits. "It was a lot harder than I anticipated and the heats came around much quicker – by the end of the day, it had taken its toll."

What about being in surf? "It makes for adrenaline-packed, really close racing. If a boat starts to pull away, I expected it would stay ahead as it wouldn't be possible to row it down. It only takes one big wave, however, for first place to become last place. There was absolute carnage out there at times."

He accepts there is a whole new skill set to learn. "I hadn't anticipated just how critical the turns can be. The boats turn really quickly and obviously, the sooner you can row around the buoy to catch a wave in, the better your chances of winning. The other thing that caught me out was jumping out of the boat at the end and sprinting up the beach to the finish flag. In one race, my legs were just shot to pieces and I did a face-plant in the sea. Thankfully, so did the guy I was racing."

What chance the sport becoming more popular for flat water clubs especially given the moves to bring over to Europe the best professional teams from Australia who race in the Ocean Thunder series? With a televised contest mooted for September 2008 in Biarritz, south-west France, would there be interest in becoming involved?

Flo does not take much convincing. "I'd love to be part of that." As for Ed: "There's always been a special rivalry between the Aussies and the Poms, regardless of the context in which it is set. The Aussies consider themselves the best surf rowers in the world because of the sport's popularity in their country, but every dog has its day and Brits thrive as underdogs. I'd love to be involved."

## Be careful when entering the Fours Head

A reminder to those planning to enter the Fours Head on 3rd November: the entry rules have changed this year. In order to preserve fair competition while maintaining the atmosphere of the current event, the organisers have toughened up the eligibility.

- o No senior internationals of the last four years can enter anything other than Elite events;
- o all sweep crews in every standard must have at least two points per crew both when entered and on race day, while SARA clubs must provide evidence of standard;
- o women's elite coxed fours are scrapped, to be replaced with women's senior 2 coxless fours;
- o no composites in senior 3 coxed events;
- o all coxes must be born in 1991 or earlier unless they receive permission to race under-age.
- o And there will no longer be any opportunity to declare subs at Thames RC: all those wishing to substitute on the day must do so in person at Chiswick Pier.

Coaches are reminded that they must have declared cox substitutions as well: any undeclared subs will be disqualified and the club's eligibility to enter the 2008 race may be impaired.

The 2007 Fours Head is at 10:30am on Saturday 3rd November. Entries may close early if 550 paid OARA entries are received before the closing date.

## HOLIDAY PLANNER

**August**

25 Gloucester Regatta  
 25 Torbay Royal Regatta  
 26 Bristol Avon Regatta  
 26 Ross Veteran & Junior Regatta  
 26 Port of Bideford Regatta  
 26 Aberdeen Sprint Regatta  
 26-Sep 2 World Champs/Olympic qualifying, Munich  
 27 Ross Regatta  
 27 Northampton Regatta  
 30 Port of Dartmouth Royal Regatta

**September**

1 North of England Sprint Champs  
 2 Lea Autumn Regatta  
 6-8 EUSA championships, Girona  
 6-9 World Masters, Zagreb  
 8 Great River Race, London  
 8 South Coast Championships, Dorney  
 8 Worcester Autumn Regatta  
 8 Mike Spracklen lecture, River & Rowing Museum  
 15 Bradford Autumn Regatta  
 16 Boston Marathon (Lincs)  
 16 Upton Regatta & Head  
 21-23 European Championships, Poznan  
 22 Isis Sculls  
 22 Stirling Head  
 22 Stourport Vets & Juniors Head  
 22 Yare Cup  
 22 York Sprint Regatta  
 23 Monmouth Autumn Head  
 29 Wallingford Long Distance Sculls  
 29 Durham Primary Regatta  
 29 Itchen Junior Regatta  
 30 Maidstone Sculling Head

**Look ahead**

6 Oct Pairs Head (13:30)  
 20 Rowing History Forum, River & Rowing Museum  
 25 Oct Wingfield Sculls, Tideway  
 3 Nov Fours Head (10:30)

**2008**

1 Mar Women's Eights Head (10:00)  
 4 Mar Schools' Head, London  
 5 Mar National Junior Sculling Head, Henley  
 15 Mar Head of the River Race (9:30)  
 23 Mar Henley Boat Races  
 29 Mar Oxford v Cambridge Boat Race (17:15)  
 3-5 May BUSA Regatta, venue tba  
 9-11 May World Cup no. 1, Munich  
 23-25 May National Schools Regatta, Nottm  
 30 May-1 Jun World Cup no. 2, Poznan  
 15-18 Jun Final Olympic qualif. regatta  
 20-22 World Cup no. 3, Lucerne  
 20-22 Jun Henley Women's Regatta  
 2-6 Jul Henley Royal Regatta  
 17-20 World Under-23 Champs, Brandenburg  
 18-20 Jul Nat Champs, Nottm  
 22-27 Jul World junior & non-Oly Champs, Linz  
 9-17 Aug Olympic Regatta, Beijing

## RANT

## REPECHAGES IN THE DOCK

"A question to the organisers of this year's National Championships in Nottingham: why do you run a repechage system? Is it to allow the slower crews in the semi-finals a second chance to be soundly beaten in the final, or is it to ensure that the six fastest crews contest the final? If the answer is the latter, which it surely must be, then one has to ask why, following the abandonment of racing on Friday, you peremptorily cancelled the repechages for places in semi-finals that had already taken place during the white horse conditions of the morning.

It would be helpful perhaps to recap the events prior to the abandonment of racing. For the whole of the morning, the skies had been grey and there had been a strong following wind causing white horses to run down the entire course. At lunchtime, however, the wind increased markedly and was joined by torrential rain. The course then settled into rolling waves that were large enough so that on occasion one could see daylight beneath the hulls of the boats racing. The events being rowed in these appalling conditions were the WJ14 and WJ15 coxed quads.

It is a great credit to all the girls in these crews that they battled valiantly through the conditions and for the most part reached the finish without major mishap. There were of course exceptions and the second semi-final of the WJ15 4x+, during which Henley had established a lead of four or five lengths over the rest of the field at 1500 meters, was one such example. It was at this point in the race that a particularly high roller caused one of the girls to lose her blade handle altogether resulting in the boat coming to an abrupt halt with the scull lodged vertically in the air. It took almost half a minute of struggling for the blade to be retrieved, after which the crew charged off in pursuit only to be beaten into third (and thus into a repechage) by just three seconds. Soon after (perhaps precipitated by this incident) racing was suspended and then abandoned for the day.

The Henley girls were of course downcast, but not distraught. They were confident that they would get to the final through the repechage. After all, the repechage system was designed specifically for situations such as this, wasn't it? You can imagine therefore the girls' horror on hearing later that evening that there was to be no repechage. Instead the two fastest losers (both of course from the other semi-final) were to go through.

I know that the National Championship organisers would say that they had to make compromises. And they obviously did have to cut inessential races and make others into timed eliminators to accommodate all the races that had been missed. But surely they should not have cut the repechages for races that had already been rowed on the basis that there was a repechage? Doing this just shows the repechage system to be the charade it is. To be fair to everyone, the system should either be scrapped and replaced with timed eliminators, or be made to work as it was surely intended."

*Graham Lloyd contributed this issue's RANT. To have a go too, email [voice@rowingservice.com](mailto:voice@rowingservice.com). Kindly keep it short.*