



Bedford Rowing Club

Bedford Rowing Club Newsletter November 2024

President's Report

Congratulations to everyone who received awards at the club dinner last month, as well as to those awarded their club colours. A big thank you to Hannah and Emma for organizing such an enjoyable evening. You may have noticed that Ian has arranged for new club blazers to be made, and I look forward to seeing everyone looking resplendent in them at Henley and future club dinners.

You may recall that, around this time last year, we sent out a membership survey asking for your views and feedback. The key message from your responses was clear: we needed to address the club's finances before considering investments in the boat fleet, ergometers, and gym equipment.

We are pleased to report that we have made significant progress in rebuilding the balance sheet, putting us in a better position to start investing in equipment. The crowdfunding campaign for the gym refurbishment is well underway, and we would like to extend a big thank you for all your help and support. To date, we have raised £1,800 (including Gift Aid) from 52 supporters. The next step is to promote the campaign beyond the club, reaching out to the local Bedford community through our multimedia channels. Please help by sharing our posts!

Soon, you will be invited to complete a new membership survey, which is anonymous. This will include some repeat questions from last year for benchmarking purposes, along with more strategic questions. The purpose of this survey is to gather input for developing a five-year strategy for the club. This strategy will provide a clear roadmap for where we want the club to go over the next five years and beyond.

Your insights are invaluable, and we look forward to sharing our initial ideas with you by early spring. You can find the link to the survey [HERE](#). Please do not hesitate to share your thoughts and suggestions.

Unfortunately, I have some disappointing news to share. At the Club dinner, I mentioned that we had been awarded £20,000 from a government levelling-up fund for the clubhouse doors. This funding was intended to be used alongside Lottery funding that we had hoped to secure. However, the Lottery unfortunately turned down our

application for various reasons. I am confident that we can address these issues in the future, which should make us eligible for funding for other projects.

Following this, we returned to the joiner for a new quote, only to learn that due to other commitments, they would not be able to start the work until mid-to-late February 2025 at the earliest. The guidance for the government fund stipulated that the project had to be completed by January 5th. While we had negotiated an extension to complete the job by the end of January, the grant making body were unable to commit to any further delays and withdrew the funding.

Although this is really disappointing, we have gained valuable insights into the grant application process, particularly the type of wording and examples we need to include in future applications. We'll keep going!

To finish on a lighter note, we are very much looking forward to welcoming everyone to the Clubhouse over the festive period. For those of you who may be new to the Club, the highlight is the Boxing Day Eights. This event usually attracts at least six crews and is a fantastic way to shake off the cobwebs after the indulgences of Christmas Day!

Hugh

Two months round up the junior squad!

The Juniors have had a busy few weeks at various competitions recently. Starting off at Bedford Small boats head where they competed in several categories.

Picking up wins in:

J152x - Henry Crisp and Zac Pendall

J151x - Henry Crisp

WJ164x+ Gosia Malaj, Matilda Smith, Estella Dean and Annabel Fishwick with cox Bea De Serpa Pimentel

WJ162x - Annabel Fishwick and Estella Dean

WJ182x - Liv Phillips and Evelyn Woolley

There were also some very close calls in the J162x and WJ171x! Congratulations to all the Juniors who raced!

Continuing the trend of strong racing, 3 Junior singles travelled to Henley sculls a few weeks later. This was the first time for most of them rowing on the famous Henley stretch of the Thames. Conditions were tough rowing against a very strong stream, but BRC juniors put in some strong performances. Louie Balen in J161x came 21st, Mea in WJ171x came 10th and Estella Dean in WJ161x came 13th. All three gained great experience from this race against very tough competition.

The Junior Squad have just kicked off their Christmas fundraising raffle. Top prize is 7 nights ski in/out accommodation for 4 people in the French Alps (prize can be taken in

the winter for skiing or in the summer for walking. T&Cs apply) along with several other fantastic prizes.

Please do contact either of the Junior Captains - Liv or Mea, for more information or to buy a ticket.

Liv and Mea (Junior Captains)

Annual Dinner 2024

Thank you to everyone who came along to the annual dinner on the 9th of November. A great time was had by all, and we managed to raise lots of money for the club. Yet again the wonderful team at The Mercure Bedford put on a fabulous night. It was a great occasion, and nice to see everyone in something other than Lycra!



Fundraising

The annual dinner has always been a fundraising event for the club, and this year the event supported us with our fundraising challenge.

Sports England have offered BRC a grant towards the upgrade of our gym they have pledged 50% of the costs (total of £8,500), but the BRC members must raise the other half!

Throughout the evening, we managed to raise a whopping £2421 which takes us over halfway to our target of £4250 member donations.

If you have not yet donated, do not panic, scan the QR code below!



Awards

The annual dinner also provided the opportunity for our wonderful coaching team and the captains (past & present) to honour those members of our club who have had an exceptional year.

Winners 2024

Male Rower of the year – Alex Brown

Female Rower of the year – Lydia Swift

Junior Male – Henry Crisp

Junior Female – Evelyn Woolley

Crew of the year – Masters 4+ (Kevlala Walsh, Nathan White, James Rankin, James Watson, C=Emma James)

Most Improved – Emma James

Spanner of the year – Miles Seabrook

Social Club Award – Sandra Wisbey





Special Thanks

Hannah & Emma would like to extend special thanks to the following people for making the event such a success:

- Our glamorous assistants in raffle ticket selling (Alex Brown, Miles Seabrook, Connor Fraser, Ray Chambers).
- Paul Brown for the loan of the sound system.
- Nick Weetman for the expert help in setting up and taking down.
- Graeme Truluck, Hazel Rawdon Smith, Emma James, Mike James & Andrea Reeves for the provision of our silent auction prizes.
- Sara Reay & Sian Clarke-Rodney for all the printing

And lastly, thank you to Jayne Smith for running the annual dinner so smoothly for so long (and for handing everything over brilliantly).

Hannah & Emma x



Star Head

It was great to see a great turn out for the Star Head, BRC gave it's usual support and made a few few pounds along the way, selling home made soup, cake and savouries. Thank you to Rebecca and her helpers who force fed a very willing general public. It was super to see a busy bar too.



Photos by Jim Godbolt

Festive Night Row

The Recs enjoyed a night row with a festive twist recently, lighting up boats AND people, no fireworks this year, you know who you are!!!



Membership subs

REMINDER folks if you havent already, please will you change your bank details over to the new one ASAP. We need to close the old virgin account urgently, so that we do not continue paying fees.

Details of the new account are:

Virgin

82-12-08

Acc: 40135971

Thanks All,

Ali and Paul Pointing.

Club Blazers

As result of the considerable interest in having a new batch of club blazers created since early autumn BRC has been working closely with Perry's of Leeds to finalise designs and specifications to allow a new run of blazers to be made in time for the summer regatta season of 2025.

Final designs have a new bolt of cloth in the are now also in the



as soon as the New club buttons ham (Buttonmaker

You can see the design of each of the Standard, Half Colour, and Full Colour Blazers. The "Schooner" is the men's style blazer and the "Skylark" the women's blazer. Inevitably a good deal of time passes with each iteration of our club blazer and each manufacturer has their own slightly different design standard. While not being identical carbon copies of those that have preceded them, differences are minor ones and there will be no doubt of the proud BRC allegiance of its wearer.

Club members wearing them will no doubt cut a magnificent and impressive dash on the river banks and regatta enclosures next year.

BLAZER DESIGN

Bedford Rowing Club
Schooner - Standard



BLAZER DESIGN

Bedford Rowing Club
Schooner - Full Colour



Dates for your Diaries

6th of December Christmas Party in the Bar, delicious food at £15 per head. See Spond for details of tickets and menu.

Burns Night, end of January, details to follow.

Boxing Day 8s. Be a hangover Ninja and turn up to this much (er) loved, annual event. Details on Spond.

Bar opening hours Winter 24-25

Weds: 6.30-10pm

Thurs: as above

Friday: closed

Saturday: 9-4pm

Sunday: 11-3pm

Venue Hire Charges 2025

Non members, Saturday evenings: £350

Friday evening: £250

Other times, contact the Club.

Members: Friday or Saturday evening: £250

Finally, another article in the occasional series spotlighting our Bedford Rowing Club Alumni.

Serjeant Harold Hadland, 19th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (2nd Public Schools)

Harold Hadland was a true-born son of Yorkshire, born in Beverley in the East Riding on 2nd January 1895. While he may have been Yorkshire-born, he was Bedford-bred, living with his parents, John, and Susan Hadland, and three sisters at 42 Clarendon Street. He attended Bedford School and, upon leaving, joined the family's retail business in Bedford.

Like so many young men, he was swept up in the patriotic fervour and excitement of the late summer and early autumn of 1914 that heralded the outbreak of war with Germany.

He volunteered to become part of Lord Kitchener's volunteer army, joining one of the "Pals" battalions: the 2nd Public Schools Service Battalion, a.k.a. the 19th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London) Regiment. In any other regiment, he would probably have been commissioned as a Lieutenant, but Harold was still considered a capable enough leader to be made Serjeant in the 4th Company.

The battalion formed up at Epsom, and Harold and his colleagues undertook their initial training at the Clipstone Barracks near Mansfield in Nottinghamshire. By late summer 1915, they moved to Salisbury Plain for trench warfare and live-fire training. Upon completing their training at Salisbury, the battalion was attached to the 98th Brigade, 33rd Division, and shipped out to join the B.E.F. in France. After some orientation, they entered the lines near the village of Cuinchy, a little to the northeast of Arras in France.

Through December, they undertook the usual rotation of front-line troops of the period: four days at the front, four days in reserve. The 19th Battalion had the good fortune to be in reserve for Christmas 1915, but their turn came around quickly, and on 29th December, they moved forward once again, in time for New Year in the trenches.

The weather that New Year was terrible: a storm swept in from the North Atlantic, bringing high winds and heavy rain. In many places, they were up to their knees in mud.

Fortunately, in every other way, it was quiet, and New Year passed uneventfully.

Harold and the rest of the 33rd Division were scheduled to be sent back to reserve in the mid-morning of 2nd January, with surely the prospect of celebrations for Harold later in the evening. Perhaps acting on information passed by a suspected spy network based in a nearby estaminet, the German Army had a plan. Throughout the autumn and early winter, teams of German miners had been steadily tunnelling towards the British front line.

At 02:00, a moderate and prolonged barrage opened up from the German artillery. As dawn approached, its intensity began to increase. It was, of course, designed to maximise the difficulties and casualties, as two units of the British Army were now in the front line, one trying to move forward, the other back.

By 10:30, trenches were jammed with men fighting through the mud, and the relief effort slowed to a crawl. The German shelling was heavy and intense. Suddenly, a small mine exploded to the left of Harold's position, beneath the line of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. The conditions were now becoming ever more challenging, with stretcher-bearers and engineers trying to rescue and recover the injured adding to the mêlée of soldiers in the trenches that morning.

At 11:30, a few hundred yards to the east, a German engineering officer turned a handle to charge a coil and pressed a button to create a spark that detonated several thousand kilograms of high explosive immediately beneath the trench and dugout defended by the 4th Company of the 19th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers.

And so, on the morning of his 21st birthday, Serjeant Harold Hadland, once of Beverley and Bedford, died, along with 18 others of his battalion, buried beneath hundreds of tons of the broken earth of France. Only one man in the command dugout that morning survived the day. Their bodies were eventually recovered and taken back behind the lines.

Harold still lies in France, at the Woburn Abbey Military Cemetery, Cuinchy, Pas-de-Calais, forever 21.

Ian Pendell

Thank you for reading,

The Committee