

Masters squad report 2013/14

The masters' squad is bigger than ever and we now have about 30 regulars, ranging from forties to seventies (with Tony Follows continuing to sit in from time to time at 82!) additionally many of the guys in the intermediate squad are masters qualified and age will catch up with them and force them into our squad.

The year started with the squad divided into the first and second eights (also called the black and white boats) racing, and the black boat recorded some impressive performances, defending their Rutherford title and going on to win at Head of the Trent in Nottingham, before finishing 19th overall (out of more than 200 entries) in the weather-affected Vesta veterans' head in London.

They went on to fly the Tyne flag at both National Masters and at Henley.

They picked up a few wins through the regatta season and then members of the black boat have continued to post impressive performances since; Steve Barratt and Brian Salisbury finishing as second fastest Durham (of any age category) at Boston Marathon, and then joined by captain Ken Hardy and ex-captain Dave Chappell to finish as the second fastest coxed four (out of nine crews) in their age group (50-54) at the veterans' fours head on the Thames last week.

The white boat also had a successful year, beating a load of 17 year old girls from Yarm school at Tees and collecting pots at both Cambois and Talkin Tarn despite (or more likely because of) my enforced lay off.

Currently the plan is for us to race two eights and the four at the Reece Group Rutherford head later this month, and to row through the winter with the intention of taking at least two eight – and possibly even a third – to race on the Tideway in March.

Some thanks – to our coxes, especially Helen Edge and Sarah Ward, without whom we would have hit even more obstacles, and who went with us all over the country – and to Chris Miller, who coached us so fruitfully over the winter and the early part of the regatta season.

Finally, welcome back to an old friend Allan Ballantyne, who coached us before Chris and has suffered ill health, but is now back on the water in his launch giving us his unique brand of gentle encouragement once again.

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