

ROWING REPORT

2014 has been another highly successful year for the School and members of the Old Abingdonian community.

The Boat Club welcomed new Director of Rowing, Mark Earnshaw, fresh from coaching the Great Britain Men's Sculling Squad; we hope he has a long and successful stay at Abingdon.

Ali Brown, a former Leander and Great Britain Lightweight, joined Abingdon from Bedford Modern School at the start of this year and he will coach the First VIII replacing Dave Currie in that role. Dave left Abingdon following Henley to become Director of Rowing at Shiplake. He was incredibly popular with the boys, and coached the J16 for two years before going on to coach the First VIII for a further two years, including to the 2013 Princess Elizabeth Challenge Cup victory.

At the National Schools' Regatta, the First VIII surprised many to win the final of the Queen Mother Challenge for the third year in a row.

Full of confidence, the crew were seeded and reached the semi-finals at Henley where they lost by one length to an Eton crew who had improved significantly from Nottingham in May. Although an historic fourth successive Princess Elizabeth Challenge Cup was not to be, Abingdon went down fighting; Eton's winning time in the semi-final was comfortably the fastest time of the whole event.

There were two Griffen Boat Club crews at Henley this year; in the Visitors' Challenge Cup, Vassilis Ragoussis, John Carter (both 2011) and Jakob Schleu (2010) rowed in a Griffen Boat Club / Henley Rowing Club IV losing to Leander Club in the first round.



In the Thames Challenge Cup a Griffen VIII, consisting of Will Davey, Will Sadler (both 2011), Tom Williams, Iain McKenzie (both 2004), Rory Brampton (2013), Julius Gerstmeyer, Dan Boddington (both 2010), James Richards (2012) and cox, Ian Middleton (2013), were unable to defend the trophy from last year but went through to the Friday before losing to Sport Imperial by two lengths.



There were Sunday victories for Michael Nagi (2008) rowing for Upper Thames in the Wyfold Challenge Cup whilst brothers Rory (2009) and Jamie Copus (2011) were part of a successful Oxford Brookes crew in the Temple Challenge Cup.

Two pupils represented Great Britain at the Junior World Championships in Hamburg, Germany; Henry Lambe (2014) in the VIII frustratingly finished just outside the medals in fourth place, whilst Tom Digby (2016) secured silver for Great Britain in the top boys' boat, the coxed IV. At the time, Tom was still in the Fifth Form and has a further two attempts to compete as a junior; clearly he has a very bright future.

Jack Walsh (2015) raced for England in the Home International Regatta in the boys VIII where they obtained a gold medal.

There was more international representation at the U23 World Championships from OAs including silver medals for Tim Richards (2010) and Jamie Copus (2011) as part of the Lightweight Men's Four at the U23 Regatta. Ian Middleton (2013) and Tom Pagel (2012) secured 6th place in the Men's VIII, whilst Jamie Cook and George Rossiter (both 2010) placed 5th in the Coxless IV. Strikingly, Tom listed Griffen Boat Club as his home club when competing at the regatta!