

SPECIAL OLYMPIAN EDITION 2012



THE KING'S SCHOOL  
CHESTER

# Herald

The latest news from The King's School, Chester

## OLYMPIC ACHIEVEMENTS from our fantastic four...





## Tom exceeds early prediction for great potential

Tom joined King's in the autumn of 1997 and started rowing with the J14s under Andrew Priory and Duncan Little. At the end of his first year, his rowing report concluded that he could 'achieve great things in the future', which showed remarkable foresight. Tom's potential was identified early.

Whilst at school, he won several National Schools' Regatta medals and represented Great Britain as a junior in his Lower and Upper Sixth Form years; winning bronze in the GB eight and then silver the following year in the coxless four.

He left King's in 2002 and went on to Cambridge University's Trinity Hall to study engineering where he was also a Cambridge Blue, in his freshman year. He rowed in the Boat Race four times and it wasn't until his final year in 2007 when, as President of the Cambridge Boat Club, he tasted his first Boat Race victory.

In 2003, Tom was selected to stroke the GB eight at the World Championships, winning a bronze medal. He took a year out from Cambridge to concentrate on his rowing and stroked the GB eight at the 2004 Olympics in Athens at the age of 20.

They did not do well but the experience stood him in good stead. During 2005 he concentrated on his studies, only rowing for Cambridge in the Boat Race.

In 2006, he was selected in the men's pair late in the season because of his academic commitments. Alongside Colin Smith, they had a dramatic race at the Lucerne World Cup Regatta narrowly losing to the New Zealand World Champions, to take silver. At the World Championships at Dorney Lake they qualified for the A final finishing a creditable 6th.

He continued his studies in 2007 and was subbed into the flagship British rowing boat, the coxless four and won the Stewards' Cup at the Henley Royal Regatta in July. Seven days later Tom took silver in the Lucerne World Cup Regatta.

He was selected in the GB coxed fours for the World Championships in Munich, but was promoted to the bow seat of the eight when the original incumbent fell ill on the morning of the heats. The crew made the final, securing GB qualification for the Beijing Olympics and took the bronze behind Canada and Germany.

In the spring of 2008, his place in the GB coxless four was confirmed with Andy Triggs-Hodge, Steve Williams and Peter Reed.

After a difficult early season, with Tom picking up injuries, the four raced together for the first time in Poznan in the final World Cup event of the season, finishing 2nd.

In Beijing at the 2008 Olympics, the GB four dominated their heats and semi finals. In the final, however, the Australian four led for most of the way. After a dramatic push by the British boat in the closing stages they beat the Australian four in one of the finest races of the Olympic Regatta and he became an Olympic Champion gaining his coveted gold medal.

Following his Olympic victory, Tom decided on a 'year out' from training and undertook a variety of charity, coaching and work-related activities and ran the London Marathon. He returned to training for the 2010 season but sustained an injury which kept him out of competition for the year.

At the 2011 World Championships in Bled, Slovenia, Tom raced in the men's four with crew-mates Matthew Langridge, Rick Egington and Alex Gregory, winning a fine gold medal ahead of Greece in 2nd and Australia in 3rd.

At the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games, the GB coxless four of Tom James and Alex Gregory, Peter Reed and Andy Triggs-Hodge beat main rivals Australia in the semi finals and then repeated their win in the final. All British gold medal winners at the 2012 Olympics were honoured by the issue of Royal Mail postage stamps showing their gold success and having a post box in their home town painted gold. Tom's 'golden' post box is in Wrexham where he grew up.



“King's holds a very special place in my heart as it was here that I first learnt to row. The dedication of the teachers and coaches at King's gave me the foundation which has helped me achieve my ambitions today. I am proud of my former school and often visit the current pupils and watch the progress of the young rowers with interest.”

**TOM JAMES**, DOUBLE OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALLIST



## Laying strong foundations at school



Rowing coaches, Matthew Hackett, Neville Orme, Duncan Little, together with John Blackwell, all worked with Tom when he was at School. Tom learned to row at the Boathouse, aged 13 and his progress was watched with interest. Duncan predicted in his first year that he would go on to be a Junior International rower. Whilst at School, Tom won many National Schools' Regatta medals and represented Great Britain as a junior.

English teacher and Lower Sixth Form Tutor, Dr McMahon, remembers Tom fondly as he was in her Tutor group on her first day at King's and watched his career develop with much pride. Tom left King's to go to Cambridge after gaining four grade A levels in Physics, Maths, Further Maths and General Studies.

## Sweeping to victory in London

Expectations were high as Tom's first race with the coxless four set the scene for success to come, the crew sailed through the heats, going straight to the semi finals.

In a charged semi final against rivals Australia, the GB crew were behind for most of the race. They hit back from a length down to row through the Australians, with a steady push in the last 500m, to complete a confidence-boosting victory. The final was an amazing race. The GB squad swept aside their Australian arch rivals for a second time, leading throughout to win the sport's flagship event for the fourth successive games.

Tom's second gold medal has parachuted him into the record books and he said after the event, "It's pretty amazing to be a double



Olympian, but the whole experience has been really memorable. There is so much goodwill around the country at the moment and I couldn't have asked for more."

## Proud pupils celebrate success

The King's rowers, parents and supporters celebrated Tom's gold in style at a fundraising brunch for the Senior girls' trip to Boston Regatta, USA in October.

Gathered in the garden of King's coach, Helen Gillies, the 60 strong crowd cheered Tom to victory as he won his second gold medal.

The guests were joined by the BBC, ITV, Heart Radio, BBC Radio Wales and local press, all wanting to get reactions from Tom's coaches, friends and pupils. Pupils were interviewed and said how amazing Tom is, how proud they are to know he started rowing at King's and that his success spurs them on to training harder and hopefully emulating him one day.



## King's revisited

Tom is a frequent visitor to King's, bringing with him his gold medal after the Beijing Olympics which was seen by everybody in the School. Tom often visits the Boathouse when he is in the area seeing his parents. His last visit in November 2011 saw him out on the river with the coach, offering advice to the rowers!





## Chris' lightweight endeavours have delivered heavyweight rewards

Chris joined The King's School at 11 years old and was in the same year group as Tom James. He learnt to row at the Boathouse aged 13 and left the School to go to Nottingham University in 2002 to study a BSc in Biology and a MSc in Biological Photography – graduating in 2006. He then moved to Reading to train with the senior lightweight squad at Caversham.

In 2005, his first season of U23 trialling, he stroked the lightweight men's quad to a silver medal in Amsterdam. He was the World U23 Champion in the lightweight men's pair in 2006 and in the same year went on to race in the senior lightweight pair at the World Rowing Championships, finishing 6th.

In 2007 he won a bronze medal at the World Championships in the lightweight quadruple scull. In 2008 Chris raced in the World Cup Series in the LM2 taking 4th place in both Lucerne and

Poznan before finishing 12th at the non-Olympic World Championships in Linz-Ottensheim.

Chris raced in the lightweight men's four at the 2009 World Championships in Poznan, winning the 'C final' having competed in the men's four in the 2009 World Cup series where the crew made the 'A final' in all three regattas. Earlier that year Chris raced in a lightweight pair at the 2009 GB Rowing Team Senior Trials, competing in the open-weight division and finishing a creditable 5th in the 'A final.'

In an incredibly tight final at the New Zealand 2010 World Rowing Championships, Chris and his crewmates took gold. In the lightweight men's four by a staggering seven hundredths of a second. Australia came a close 2nd to win silver and China took the bronze. A fabulous performance by the team to cap a great season for the British crew.

For the 2010 World Cup Series, Chris raced in the lightweight men's four winning gold in Munich and Lucerne and silver in Bled. This was an exceptional World Cup season for the four in a very competitive field.

For the 2011 World Rowing Championships in Bled, Slovenia, Chris raced in the lightweight men's four. The crew came through from 6th for an extremely close finish to eventually take a bronze medal, just being pipped by Italy.

At the first World Cup of 2011 in Munich Chris won a bronze medal in the lightweight men's four. Because of injury, Chris was unable to race at the Lucerne World Cup.

At the 2012 GB Rowing Team Senior Trials held in March 2012, Chris was 8th in the lightweight men's single scull.

During the 2012 World Cup season, Chris raced in the lightweight men's four. Following an exciting final in Belgrade, the crew won a silver medal with Denmark taking the gold and China the bronze.

Once again Lucerne provided close racing for this event where the crew won bronze. At the Munich world cup finals in 2012 the crew won a gold medal, two seconds ahead of the silver medallists from Australia.

At the 2012 Olympic Games in London, Chris raced in the lightweight men's four with crewmates Peter Chambers, Rob Williams and Richard Chambers. In an extremely close final, the British crew took silver, less than a second behind the winners.



## Chris in winning form at the National Schools' Regatta

Whilst at school, Chris won many National Schools' Regatta medals before competing for Great Britain in the Coupe de la Jeunesse as a Junior.



Duncan Little recalls Chris at School, "He was always good technically, by the time he was 16 he rowed with Tom at the J16 Anglo-French match. Chris was very small when he started rowing at 13, he didn't make the top boat when he was 14, however by the time he was 15 he had grown a bit and he was in the top J16 crew."

Whilst at school, Chris won the National Schools' Regatta in 1999, competed in Henley in 2000-2001 and 2002 before rowing for Great Britain in the Coupe de la Jeunesse as a Junior.

Chris left King's to go to Nottingham University after getting four A levels in Biology, Chemistry, Physics and General Studies.

## Celebrations as Chris wins silver

The new Shells' rowers were experiencing their first few days of rowing on the day Chris Bartley won the silver medal.

Rowing stopped as pupils, coaches and friends of Chris gathered around a screen to watch the race. After such a close fought race there was many a hoarse voice! Joined by the BBC, ITV, Radio Wales, Dee 106.3 and local press, they recorded the reactions from the delighted crowd. The pupils talked of their pride in Chris' achievements and the inspiration he has given them, knowing the King's Boathouse is where it all began.



“I enjoyed my time at King's immensely, especially the time I spent as part of The King's School Rowing Club. I always felt part of something that was more than just a rowing club, and I still do. The School helped me link hard work with success, both academically and on the field of play, this has stayed true throughout my sporting career. If I had any advice for current students, it would be, if you enjoy something, never give up because you never know when your breakthrough might happen.”

**CHRIS BARTLEY**, OLYMPIC SILVER MEDALLIST

## Nail-biting final ends with a silver

Chris competed in the lightweight coxless fours and with an emphatic performance in the heats, overhauled World Champions Australia to win.

They continued that form in the semi finals, pacing themselves through the first 1500m before upping the stroke rate and coming through to secure their place in the final.

Chris went on to a nail-biting final with an incredibly tight race to the line, edging defending champions Denmark into 3rd position, but pipped to the gold medal position by South Africa.





## Olivia's winning ways

Olivia joined the Sixth Form at King's in 2002 from a local state school. She had never tried rowing before and decided to have a go, encouraged by the coaches who could see that her height would lend itself to rowing. At the time the School did not have many girls rowing, unlike today, but were able to compete in a few events such as the Women's eights event at the Schools' Head.

Olivia joined the GB Rowing Team's Start Programme, sponsored by Siemens in 2006. Domestically she has been successful, winning the women's senior coxed fours event at the Women's Henley Regatta in 2005. She has also won seven BUSA medals, including two gold medals between 2004 and 2006.

At the 2007 Essen International Regatta she took gold in the Under 23 women's pair event, before becoming World U23 Champion in July winning gold in the pair with Heather Stanning.

She had also competed at the World Cup Regatta in Amsterdam, winning the 'C final'. Olivia was selected in the women's pair for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and finished 6th, an exceptional performance after qualifying the boat at the final Olympic Qualification Regatta just seven weeks before.

Olivia won the women's pair event at the GB Rowing Team Senior Trials in April 2009 and she continued to race in the pair for the rest of the season, taking gold at the first World Cup in Banyoles and bronze in Lucerne. They also doubled up into the eight for the first two World Cups. At the 2009 World Rowing Championships

in Poznan they came 6th in a remarkable final where a close four seconds separated the gold winning Americans from Britain's pair.

At the 2010 World Rowing Championships in New Zealand, Olivia and her crewmates in the women's eights finished 4th.

For the first of the 2010 World Cup Series in Bled, Olivia raced in the women's pair with Louisa Reeve taking 5th place. This followed their 1st place in the women's pair event at the GB Rowing Team Senior Trials in April. She also raced in the women's eight in Bled, winning gold. In Munich and Lucerne she was in the women's eight which won silver and bronze respectively. This was a promising season for the women's eight who had shown consistency throughout the World Cup series.

During the 2012 World Cup Season, Olivia raced in the women's eight. The crew won a bronze medal in Belgrade, finished 5th in Lucerne and won bronze again in Munich.

At the 2012 GB Rowing Team Senior Trials held in March at Eton Dorney, Olivia raced in the women's pair finishing 3rd. At the 2012 Olympic Games in London, Olivia raced in the women's eight, finishing 5th.

## Olivia at School

**Late start to rowing leads to some incredible quick finishes.**

Olivia rowed in the first ever King's girls' VIII boat in the Schools' Head when they came in 2nd place and went on to crew in a coxed fours and a pair at the National Schools' Regatta. Olivia's progress in rowing was incredible, from never rowing before the age of 16, to becoming an International U23 champion in a mere six years.

The foundations laid at the School have helped Olivia reach the Olympic final in 2012. Olivia left King's to go to Nottingham University to study Environmental Science after gaining three A levels in Biology, Geography and Chemistry and an AS level in Physics.



## Olivia's Olympics challenge

Olivia rowed in the Women's eights in the bow seat, having a tough heats race to be placed in the repechage.

The GB crew went on to qualify for the Olympic final after finishing 4th place in the repechage. In the final, the GB team came in 5th, an improvement on the last Olympics where the United States team won the gold medal.



## Boathouse roars for Women's eights

At the Boathouse, pupils, coaches and friends gathered round to watch Olivia's race and to cheer her on. She is seen as a great role model, particularly for the girl rowers.



## Back to school for Olivia

Olivia has been a frequent visitor to King's. After the Beijing Olympics she gave an assembly to the School about her Olympic adventure.

She was a guest at the Schools' 50th anniversary celebration ball in September 2010. The following day Olivia took the time to visit the Boathouse to see the boat made by John Blackwell which is named after her.



“Studying at King's was one of the best decisions I have ever made. The School's nurturing environment allowed me to make the most of my individual strengths and achieve not just academically but at World and Olympic level.”

**OLIVIA WHITLAM, OLYMPIC FINALIST**



## Fair play from the off

James joined The King's School in 1993, aged 11 and left the School in 1999. He learned to play hockey whilst at School and first tried goalkeeping at Deeside Ramblers when a regular goalie didn't turn up! He started to rise in the adult game through the GB Academy Scheme where he played alongside Russell Hornby and some of the current GB team.



He made his international debut in 2005 and has competed for England and Great Britain at numerous tournaments. To date, James has achieved 87 caps representing England and 47 caps representing Great Britain.

James was also named in the International Hockey Federation (FIH) All Star teams 2010. He was selected to represent Great Britain in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, although he did not play any matches.



## From hurdles to hockey...

Mr Neeves, former Head of PE said "James was an outstanding all round sportsman. His greatest talent was in Hockey where he played either centre forward or goalkeeper for the school 1st XI for at least three years."



He could play at either end of the hockey pitch with equal effectiveness, which demonstrates both his talent and the versatility of his hockey skills. James was also a superb all round athlete in his younger days at King's. His specialist event was the hurdles and he was not only the School Champion on many occasions, but also the Chester Schools' District Champion for several successive years. As District Champion he would also have competed in the Cheshire Schools' County Athletics Championships.

Andy Price, former King's school hockey coach recalls:

"My favourite quote from James was after he came back for the opening of the new all weather pitch at Kings and the School 1st XI played a fantastic old boys hockey team. After the game he said, tongue in cheek, but in typically blunt James Fair style – 'Sir you are still the worst hockey referee I have ever known!' So he was never one to mince his words and he always played hockey with complete dedication and determination, even a 'friendly' old boys' match.

The School 1st XI had no all weather pitch to play or practise on, but they still reached the National Quarter finals (in the days when you had to beat all of the Club teams as well). Even then, James' team only lost to Millfield School in a very close game. That team also made the semi final of the National Indoor Hockey Championships.

James was the fastest player in the team and often played centre forward for us in school matches. One year he was the season's top goal scorer and I seem to recall – not bad for a future international goalkeeper. He was generally quiet and reserved off the pitch, but a fearsome and combative player on it. He was certainly single minded which is, no doubt, part of the reason for his success as an international player, but his loyalty to School teams over many years was unquestionable.

James was also a fine cricketer – a hard hitting, attacking batsman – who played regularly for School teams and eventually the School 1st XI."

Mr Seb Neal recalls, "James represented the School 1st XI cricket team for three years, 1997-1999. He was a versatile and highly competitive player, good enough to bat as high as number four, quick enough to open the bowling and agile enough, of course, even to keep wicket on occasion (with a catch and a stumping to his credit).

He debuted as an opening bowler in his Lower Sixth year in the game against Birkenhead School. Opening the batting for them was Simon Marshall, who went on to play for Lancashire. He renewed his contest against Marshall the following year, this time with the bat. James batted very combatively – launching Marshall's leg spin for six and reached 43, the top score of the day and James' best score for The King's School, but sadly the School fell just short of the Birkenhead total. I can still remember James' disappointment; he did not like to lose – the sign of a top level sportsman."

James went on to study Geography and Geology at Birmingham University after gaining four A levels in Geography, History, Spanish and General Studies.

## The highs and the lows of the Olympics

James and the GB team celebrated great moments of triumph and despair in the tournament. They started their group games with an outstanding win against Argentina, only to struggle against the weaker South Africa, drawing 2-2. They picked up their game again to win 4-1 against a strong Pakistan side and then went on to draw against Australia, the favourites to win gold. The final group game saw a draw with Spain to take them through to the semi finals.

The semi final match against the Netherlands was a defeat for GB 9-2. However, James played very well in the game but GB were outclassed by a very strong Dutch team.

The bronze medal play-off against favourites Australia was a hard fought match with a score line of 1-1 at half time. The GB team were very unlucky and eventually were defeated 3-1 by the Australians.



## Celebrating at school

The School watched avidly as James passed through the qualifying matches in London. Mr Russell Hornby met up with James after his qualifying match against Australia.



“I really enjoyed my time at King's, making the most of all the things the School had to offer. Obviously sport played a huge part, playing football, cricket, hockey and being part of the athletics team. In these teams I made some great friends and shared some great moments, including, making the quarter finals of the National Hockey tournament, being lead by hockey coach, Mr Price. King's played a huge part in helping me get to London 2012 and I'm sure that this is the same for the others from The King's in Team GB.”

JAMES FAIR, OLYMPIAN

## Elite Olympians past and present

The King's School has a long history of sending elite sportsmen to the Olympics. One of the first was Arnold Cooke who left the School in 1959. Arnold learnt to row at King's aged 15 and went on to compete in the European Rowing Championships held in Bosbann, Amsterdam. Rowing with Peter Webb, the pair came 2nd and won the silver medal. Following this, Arnold went on to compete in the final of the Double Sculls at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics.



**Stephen Peel** who left King's in 1985 and learnt to row at the School, aged 13, went on to row at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Stephen was in the coxless fours which came 4th in the final with a time of 06:06.74 minutes, they were beaten by the West Germans with a time of 06:06.22. The crew comprised of Peter Mulkerrins at the front, Simon Berrisford in second position, Stephen Peel in third and Mark Buckingham at the back.

**Jim Walker** who left King's in 1986 began rowing at the age of thirteen at the School. His international rowing career spanned 15 years and included a silver medal at the Junior World Championships, a bronze medal at the World Championships and appearances at the Olympic Games in 1992 and 1996. He retired from the sport in 2000 after an unsuccessful bid at selection for a third Olympic Games and devoted the next seven years establishing himself in Environmental Management.



**Simon Cottle** who left King's in 1992, rowed for Team GB as a semifinalist in the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. Simon was the second Welsh rower to make the Olympic Team and joined Tom James who was the stroke in the men's eight. He rowed alongside Alan Campbell, Peter Gardner and Peter Wells where they came in 6th place, finishing with a time of 06:07.87.

This year, King's has 24 elite sports boys and girls, all who of whom are already representing their country or bubbling below National selection level. They include:

**Ralph Elsegood** reached National Schools' level, National Regional Championships and J16 GB Trials in rowing.

**Toby Miller** rowed at National Schools' level and has been a North West representative and regional champion who attended the J16 GB Trials.

**Finn Abberton** rowed at National Schools' Level, National Regional Championships, the Welsh Junior Trials and GB U16 Trials.

**Jack Webber** reached National Schools' level, succeeded in National Regional representation and Championships and attended the Welsh Junior Trials.

**Alice Carr** rowed at National Schools' level and Women's Henley Regatta also attended the J16 GB Trials 2012. In summer 2012, she rowed for the Welsh coxed fours.

**Harry Brightmore** competed as a cox in GB Junior Men's eight cox – Junior World Championships and Coupe de la Jeunesse European Championships in 2012.

**Henrietta Green** reached National Schools' level, competed at the Women's Henley Regatta and had been selected for the Welsh Junior Trials.

**Harry Chappell** attended the Junior GB Trials 2012 and rowed in the coxed fours for England in summer 2012.

**Freddy Hill** attended Junior rowing GB Trials 2012 and rowed in the coxed fours for England in summer 2012.

**Will Miller** was selected for rowing Junior GB Trials 2012.

**Harry Ashworth** attended the Junior GB Trials 2012 and Junior World Championships summer 2012. Harry also joined the Wales coxed fours.

**Tom Thelwall-Jones** plays tennis and has reached International level.

**Sara Ashworth** has reached National level in Eventing and represented GB in Summer 2012.

**Cameron Hogg** plays tennis and is ranked number 11, U16 and is an Aegon Futurestar.

**Fraser Smellie** plays cricket for Wales.

**Jonny Verity** plays hockey and is currently North of England Hockey Captain and plays in the National league.

**Tom Williams** has reached the National GB squad in Topper and Laser in sailing and was selected for the Junior World Championships summer 2012.

**Tom Joesbury** was previously ranked number one in GB sailing and now is ranked number two in sailing Laser class.

**John Marsden** rows and reached the final stages of the GB trials in 2011.

**Courtney Dowinton** is a rowing cox and was a GB trialist. Courtney was selected to cox the England Girls' coxed fours and VIII.

**Liz Williams** has rowed for the Welsh National Squad and over the summer 2012 rowed in the Welsh coxed fours.

**Tommy Reeves** who coxed the Wales Girls' coxed fours in summer 2012.

**Josh Dawson** sails in the Optimist Class and reached the GB Intermediate squad U16 and the Welsh Sailing Squad: 2010, 2011 and 2012. Josh was 11th out of the GB sailors and 42nd overall, from 270 in the International Easter Regatta, Netherlands 2012.

**Olivia Lewis** was selected for the Welsh coxed fours in summer 2012.

**BOYS & GIRLS, 7-18**

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