

An oar-inspiring line-up

4:14pm Wednesday 5th November 2008

 Comments (0) [Have your say »](#)

By Liz Wray »

Chiswick-based Tideway Scullers School defend their Fuller's Head of the River Fours title on Saturday (10.30am).

Their star-studded crew, featuring New Zealand's Olympic bronze medallist Mahé Drysdale, GB Olympic sculler Alan Campbell and Slovenian Olympian Iztok Cop, face strong opposition from crews from Leander, Reading, Carlow and RCN Vigo, which all contain international rowers.

Andy Triggs-Hodge, who won gold in the coxless fours in Beijing, will be racing for Molesey Boat Club, defending his 2007 win in the elite coxed four event.

The first Fuller's Head of the River Fours (HOR4s) took place in 1955, when 30 crews competed.

This year, 2,427 people in 548 crews will descend on the River Thames for the 54th race, over the famous 4.25-mile championship course between Chiswick Bridge and Putney.

Spectators on the day will have plenty of quality crews to watch, as most members of the 2008 GB senior, U23 and junior international squads (including a number of British and foreign Olympic rowers, recently back from competing in Beijing) will be racing for their home clubs.

The race also provides an early opportunity to see the form of the 2009 Oxford and Cambridge boat race squads as they compete for the first time.

Cambridge have five crews entered, while Oxford, racing as Isis, have six.

With everything from junior women's quads to elite men's coxed fours on the water, the variety of events on offer ensures that, as well as attracting many international level rowers, the race also caters for hundreds of school, universities and club level rowers.

Competitors will be travelling to the river from across the UK and Europe, with oarsmen and women coming from Italy, France, Spain, Ireland, Germany and Sweden.

Specific events for lightweights have been added for the first time this year, following the introduction of men's and women's elite lightweight quads (on the day, lightweight men have to weigh no more than 75kg and lightweight women no more than 61.5kg).

Starting at 10:30am, all crews taking part in the 22 separate events will set off in quick succession and be timed over the course.

The action will last for a couple of hours and there are plenty of good vantage points to watch for free.



Golden boy: Beijing hero Andy Triggs-Hodge rows for Molesey Boat Club Deadlinepix EL12505

