



Frederick Kelly

1881 - 1916

Kelly the Rower

Frederick Kelly was born in Sydney, Australia in 1881. He was educated at Eton and then Balliol College, Oxford. He was a highly successful rower, winning regularly at Henley Regatta and a gold medal at the 1908 Olympics. He then retired from competitive rowing and lived in Bisham where he focused on performing and composing music. He was killed in action on 13 November 1916 during the final stages of the Battle of the Somme.

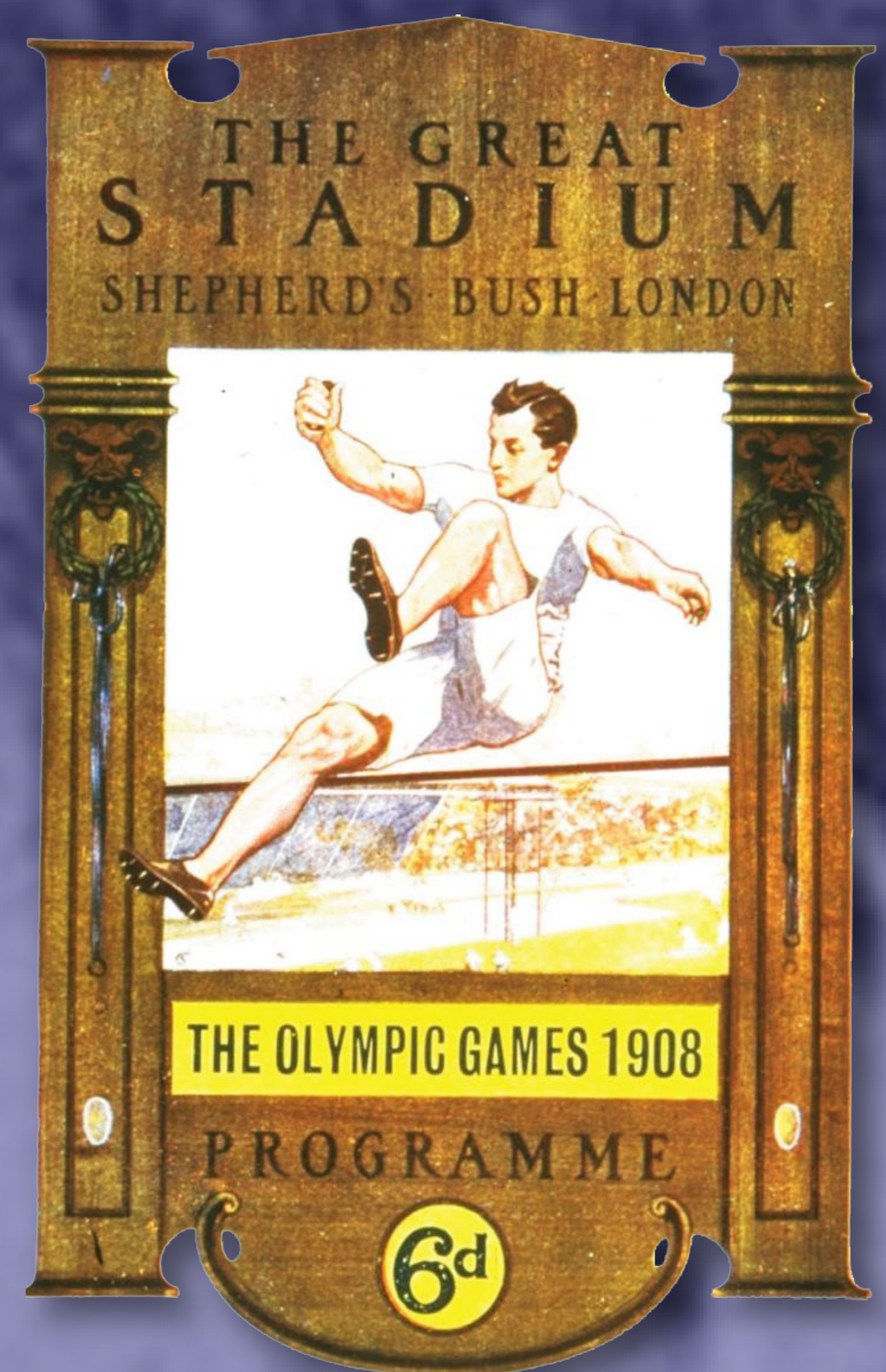
A Rowing Legend

Kelly's first success as a rower was when he stroked the Eton College eight to victory in the Ladies' Challenge Plate at Henley Royal Regatta in 1899.

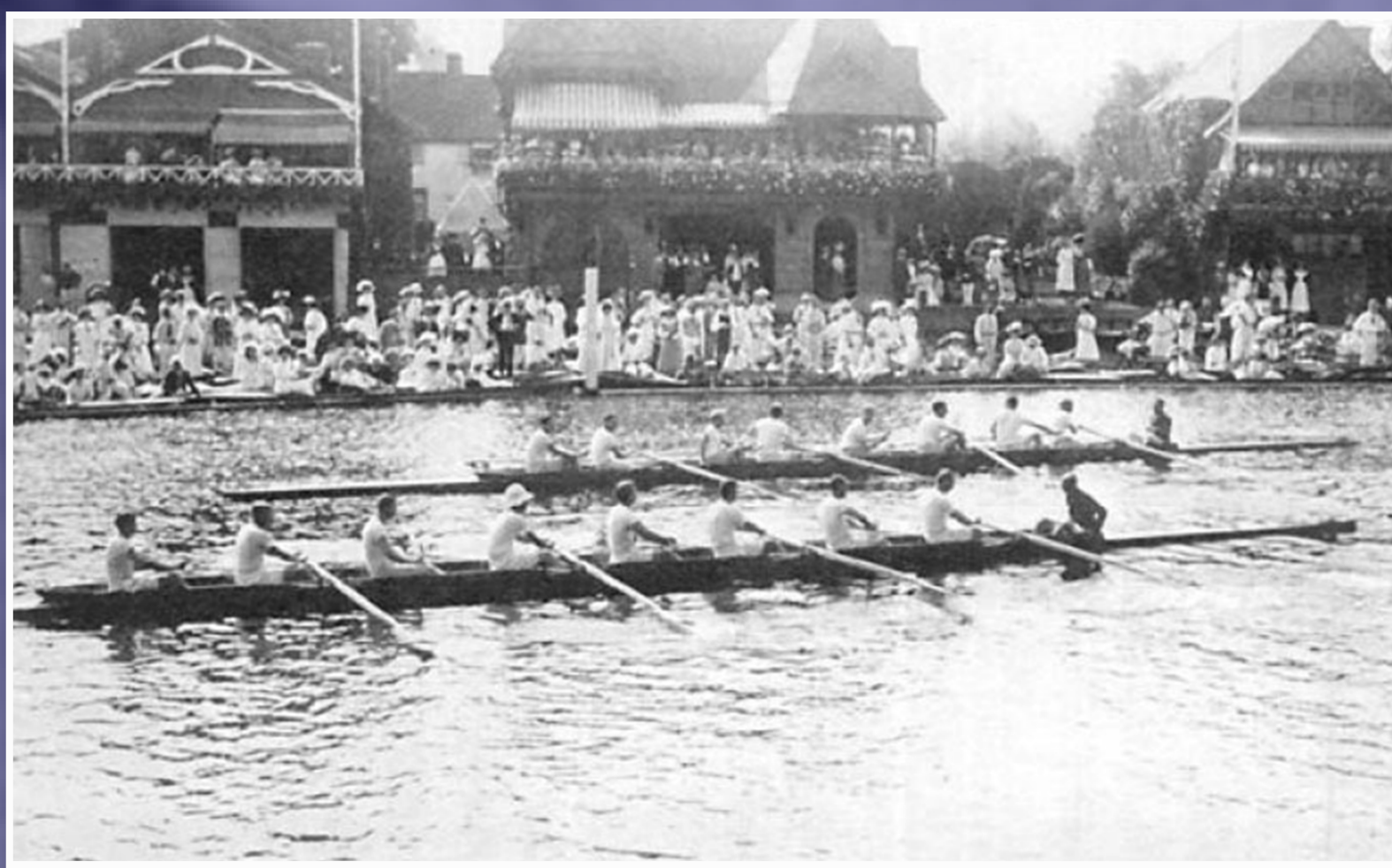
He won a music scholarship at Oxford University and continued to row as a student. He took up sculling while at Oxford and won the Diamond Challenge Sculls at Henley in 1902. He rowed in the losing Oxford crew in the Boat Race in 1903 but again won the Diamond Challenge Sculls at Henley that summer.

On leaving Oxford in 1903, he rowed at Leander Club and was in the Leander crews which won the Grand Challenge Cup at Henley Regatta in 1903, 1904 and 1905 and the Stewards' Challenge Cup in 1906. In 1905 he again won the Diamond sculls, his time of 8 min. 10 sec. standing as a course record for over 30 years.

His final competitive race was in the 1908 Olympics in London when he rowed as a member of the Great Britain crew that won gold medal.



Programme for the 1908 Olympic Games held in London



Crews rowing at the 1908 Olympics at Henley

Rowing at Marlow

After retiring from competitive rowing, Kelly moved to Bisham where he continued to scull regularly along the stretch of the river between Marlow bridge and Temple.

Although Kelly was lightly built, weighing no more than 77kg, he was famous as a rower for what one journalist described as 'his natural sense of poise and rhythm that made his boat a live thing under him'.



Kelly at the Leander Club.
Photo courtesy of the Leander Club..



Frederick Kelly sculling, early 1900s

