



From the President

Hello everyone, seasons greetings!

Michaelmas kicked off with a triumphant novice taster day, notwithstanding an unrowable river. And though flooding and storms successfully kept the novices off the water for most of the term, they stuck with us through many a tank and erg session. After the cancellation of Michaelmas Novice Regatta, their hard work was finally showcased in week 8, when a boat from each side debuted at The Fairbairn Cup on the much less flood-prone river Cam. This would not have been possible without the work of our novice coaches, the other seniors who helped them, and our amazing Vice-Captains, who have probably done enough admin to last them their whole lives!

Fortunately, our seniors managed to get a little bit of water time in Oxford this term! During a brief window in which the Isis was rowable, the senior women competed in IWL A, coming 8th. The men competed at Autumn Fours, where an unfortunate klaxon meant the entire course had to be rowed twice! To end the term, a senior crew from each side was entered into Fairbairns, followed by a fun night out in Cambridge. More on these races in the Captain's reports. Two Martlet crews also made it to the Cam—if you are missing the water, join the Martlets at <https://www.univboatclub.com/join-martlet!>

Our committee is working hard to plan an exciting 2025. For external racing, look out for us at Bedford, WeHoRR, HoRR and BUCS. And of course, we have racing in Oxford ... with a Torpids Headship to defend! Keep an eye out for our sponsored Ergathon in January too.

We also look forward to welcoming back alumni in the new year. Dinos and Cassies is fast approaching on **25th January 2025** (if you missed the deadline to sign up, please reach out to ucbc.alumni@univ.ox.ac.uk asap!). We will also hold a 10-year reunion for the 2014-16 crews at Summer Eights next year, followed by our 2nd annual Martlet Regatta!

On behalf of all at UCBC, thank you so much for staying invested in our club and community. As ever, do come and say hello if you see us racing, and feel free to reach out if you would like to stop by the club for a visit! Thank you also, very much, to the college and the FoUCBC for your continued financial support.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas, and a happy New Year!

Louisa Boulton
UCBC President 2024-25



From the Women*s Captain

Michaelmas term has been another remarkable success for the women*s side! Despite poor weather conditions, the women have continued to train hard and build on their successes from the summer, showing impressive results during IWL and Fairbairns.

After a long summer break, the season started with a whole club training camp. River conditions preventing any outings, so the club enjoyed many land-based activities including Parkrun, yoga, football, and ergs. As well as being great fun, it allowed us to build on our fitness and strength, ready for the start of term.

Unfortunately, many races were cancelled, including Bedford Autumn Fours, so the women decided to focus on Fairbairns. The crew*s first row together was IWL A, where they came an impressive 8th, out of 21 crews. This was a great result for a scratch crew and functioned as a marker which they aimed to improve from for the rest of term. The crew spent many early mornings and weekends training together, as well as lots of hours in the erg room. Their determination was unmatched after braving even the coldest conditions, including the morning during Storm Bert!

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Despite the hard work the crew put in, the river did not behave as we had hoped and remained unrowable for the final few weeks of term. Unphased, the crew put in extra effort in during erg sessions to prepare for their upcoming race.

Fairbairns was a great success for the whole club, with both novices and seniors participating. The senior women were spread among the Martlet crew and a set eight, with four enthusiastic rowers entering an additional 4+ race. The eights race was a remarkable success for the Martlet crew, which came 4th out of 11 in their category! The senior women also rowed well during this race, earning an impressive time of 18:27 mins over the 4.3 km course. Immediately after the eights race, the fours race started, with the women collecting another impressive time of 14:32 mins, despite having just rowed in the previous division.



The Fairbairns crew after their race

With Torpids on the horizon, and a headship to defend, the women are continuing to train hard over Christmas. The club is running a winter challenge over the break; in order to build up our strength and fitness so we can hit the ground running in Hilary term. With many exciting races planned, including Bedford Eights Head and WEHOOR, I am excited to see what next term will bring. As always, we are indebted to our coaches, Jono, Pippa, and Mark, who have continued to help us build on our skills both on the water and in the erg room. I look forward to keeping you updated with the women*s progress, with hopefully many more achievements to come!

Lenka Hozzova

Women*s Captain 2024-25



The Fairbairns crew braving the snowy conditions on a morning outing.

From the Men*s Captain

As is tradition, this term's focus rightfully fell on developing the potential of our keen novices under the expert eye of our head coach, Jono Cheesman. One might assume this left little room for the senior men to make a splash, but this would be a misguided assumption. Rising to the challenges with the same vigour as their illustrious predecessors, the senior men demonstrated that this term was not just a continuation but a reinvention of their legacy.

Undoubtedly, this term has been something of a reset for the men's side, following the departure of several leading lights. Claas Mertens, Andy Bridger, and Hari Pankhania—stalwarts of recent years—have set their sights on new horizons. Yet, in true UCBC spirit, the current crop has not only chosen to follow in their footsteps but to build something even greater upon that foundation. Predictably, Oxford's ancient canal system proved no match for the Michaelmas rains, rendering the river unrowable for much of the term. Perhaps, for once, Oxonians might begrudge our light blue counterparts and their endless hours of water time on the Cam. For some, this might have spelled disaster; for our men, it was simply an invitation to innovate.

Undeterred by the river's flow, the men threw themselves into relentless training. The erg and weights room became familiar sanctuaries of sweat and determination, while the waters of Reading provided a fresh (and, for some, nostalgic) change of scenery. For those who conquered Reading last year, the red boxes remain cherished tokens of success and motivation for more to come. Their hard work bore fruit as our BUCS IV embarked on an action-packed campaign at Autumn IVs. From my marshalling post on Boathouse Island, I had the perfect vantage point to witness their dramatic first-round clash against Trinity.



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A victory seemed certain (I assure you)—until a poorly placed Oxford River Cruiser halted the race. The resulting re-row was heartbreakingly close, with our crew falling short by just a quarter of a length.

Mercifully, the river receded in time for our Men's 1st VIII to prepare for the Fairbairn Cup in Cambridge. As one of the few Oxford crews brave enough to venture into enemy territory, the pressure to deliver was present. But UCBC rose to the occasion, finishing as the fastest Oxford college and holding their own against Cambridge crews who enjoyed both home advantage and uninterrupted water time. A result to be proud of, and one that sets the tone for an exciting year ahead. Momentum is already carrying into Hilary term. Our Winter Training Challenge, masterminded by Vice Captain Thomas Forster, has seen a record number of sign-ups—nearly double previous years. The squad looks eagerly toward Bedford Head, the Head of the River Race, and, of course, Torpids. With a high starting position on the river, we know the competition will be fierce. But with this challenge comes an irresistible opportunity to show what UCBC is truly made of.

Peter Moore
Men*s Co-Captain 2024-25

From the Women*s Vice-Captains

The novice women* have made an amazing start to their rowing journey, despite the tricks played by the Isis. After what seemed like an endless horde of tank sessions and ergs, they first took to the water in Reading, as we awaited the elusive green flag; when that finally happened, regular WNA and WNB outings could commence. Although, the chaotic flag did mean we needed to throw a first mixed outing together with 12 hours notice! Nevertheless, the new recruits have had a great term of training and we are confident there would've been a really great result for them at Tamesis regatta had it not been cancelled. Luckily, they were still able to prove themselves on the river Cam, at the Fairbairns Novice Cup. Despite being the only Oxford college there (so the only ones to have not trained on the Cam), they placed 11th out of 34 first novice women*s boats - an incredible result that we are all really proud of! We are really excited that they were able to get some racing in this term despite the inclement conditions in Oxford; clearly the future is bright for the women*s side!

Amber Ford
Women*s Vice Co-Captain 2024-25



M1 at Fairbairns



WNA at Fairbairns



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From the Men*s Vice-Captains

Once again, the powers that be have tried to decree that novices shalt not row in Michaelmas term. Despite this, we actually had a pretty successful term, starting with a very successful rowing (erging) taster day which saw a whole horde of novices enticed by the possibility of seeing a bigger number on a screen. After a few tank sessions, the novices were finally able to get their first taste of “real” rowing, taking to Reading to brave the trials and tribulations of attempting to get ones blade in the water. This was, according to some, much harder to do in a rocking horse of a boat than in the calm comfort of the concrete tank, however this did not dampen their spirits, rather seemed to reignite their enthusiasm to learn some more.

The goal for the term was originally Tamesis (formally Christchurch) Regatta, which undoubtedly would’ve culminated in a Univ MNA vs Univ MNB final, however this was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances (water fell from the sky). Instead, the focus was turned to Fairbairns, where the novices would be able to test their mettle against the finest rowers that Cambridge University had to offer. Rumours that Matt Edge was stroking one of the Cambridge novice eights did not dissuade our plucky novices, who put up a valiant effort despite everything being against them.

As we look towards Hilary, Torpids should be a time to shine for these new comrades in oars. Under the leadership of the trusty M2 coach Mark Proberts, it is almost certain that they will achieve blades unless there is some sort of divine intervention. Some scholars also claim that the Bucs 4+ might be making a mighty return, and perhaps even in a new evolved form of an 8+. Only time will tell, but we can be certain that when if this is true, it will be magnificent.

Arthur Bird & Tom Forster

Men*s Vice Captains 2024-25

From the Social Secretary

The new academic year brought new rowers to induct into UCBC’s social life, beginning with a novices vs seniors pub golf (a dominant performance from the seniors, demonstrating the benefits of years of training). This was followed by a crew date with Brasenose and Merton as well as a game of ‘ou est le poulet’; all highlights of the term’s social calendar. Michaelmas was rounded off with the annual Michaelmas boat club dinner in which the cancelled novices regatta was replaced with a specially organised UCBC boat race regatta in which Men’s novice A proved themselves the strongest of stomachs. Finally, crews headed to Cambridge for the Fairbairn Cup where the quality of the rowing was only outshone by the quality of the night out, with karaoke in Trinity Hall, our sister college, allowing for a second mode of strong performance in one day by UCBC.

We look forward to seeing many alumni at Dinos and Cassies next term as well as other events, including summer eights dinner, in the New Year.

Rory Proudfoot

Social Secretary 2024-25



Post Fairbairns celebrations



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The Martlet Club

The Martlet Club fielded both an alumni eight for both the Men*s and Women*s side at Fairbairns, with both crews achieving incredible results, especially when the lack of recent crew training is factored in. With Martlet membership growing, it is hoped that entering these sorts of regattas can become a regular thing, to help keep you all connected to both each other and the club.



You can join the Martlet Club for just £2/month at <https://www.univboatclub.com/join-martlet>. Other than covering the required registration fees for British Rowing, your subscription will help to send Univ students to Henley and other competitions throughout the year.

Finally, reminder to sign up to this year's Dinosaurs' and Cassandrians' dinner which is being held on Saturday 25th January 2025! Please contact ucbc.alumni@univ.ox.ac.uk should you have any questions! The club is also updating its historical records. If you have access to First Eight crew lists prior to 2007 we want to know about it! Please get in contact with ucbc.alumni@univ.ox.ac.uk

Pippa Biggs
Martlet Secretary

Our Blues

This year the club has an incredible 3 members trialling for the university squads, all of whom learnt to row at Univ! On Wednesday 18th December, Bertie Coomber and Dylan Dissanayake will be racing in the Lightweight Trial Eight in its fixture against Latimer Upper School whilst Paolo Cicuta will be racing in "Wallace" in the Trial Eights race against "Gromit". I'm sure you will join us in wishing them all the best of luck in their races!



Left to right: Bertie, Dylan and Paolo