



From the President

Dear Friends,

I hope this newsletter finds you well, wherever you are. UCBC has had another vibrant year with both highs and lows. I hope that all the rowers have taken a lot away from their time at UCBC, from the wide range of activities that UCBC takes part in. If you would like to watch the activities of UCBC more closely please follow us on social media.

Looking back at the past year the biggest change in UCBC has been the hiring of a head coach, Jonathan Cheeseman. Having such an experienced coach working with the first boats and overseeing the entire club has transformed the way the boat club operates. I very much look forward to working closely with Jono over the next year to further develop UCBC.

I will leave it to their respective captains to regale you with tales of UCBC's men and women at this year's Summer Eights, but suffice to say it was a mixed bag, with well-fought bumps for the women in addition to a hard-earned klaxon for M1, crucially avoiding spoons.

Next year will be a critical year for the men's side to rebuild and I truly believe that we can build a sustainable squad that will allow us to move back up the river.

One year may be over but we are already planning ahead for the next. Some of our aims include running an ergathon in the centre of college in Michaelmas Term, introducing whole club Super Sunday morning land sessions and running a whole club training camp during the Easter Vacation.

I would like to thank the Friends of UCBC for your generous support, without which the boat club would not be what it is today.

I am excited for the possibilities of the year ahead and look forward to working with the new committee as well as with the coaches, college and FoUCBC to forge a successful path forwards for the club. I hope that you all have a wonderful summer, and I look forward to reporting more victories on the river in the year to come.

Many thanks,

Angus Menzies

UCBC President 2019-20



M1 and W1 after the close of racing, Saturday of Eights 2019

From the Women's Captains

Ellie Robinson and Nicole Szekeres-Tapp (2018) are joint women's captains for the 2019-2020 season. They write:

This year the women's side of UCBC had an amazing 4 boats on the river for Summer Eights, something only one other college achieved. The week saw bumps for all four boats and gave an overall successful Eight's campaign for the women.

W1 made a strong start with training thanks to training camp. This began two weeks before term started, giving the girls a head start in gelling together as a crew. The W1 boat was set in 0th week. The standards this year were very high and required seat racing in fours to set the boat. Once the boat was set, the training programme began with one land training and 5 water sessions a week on the Isis, with longer water sessions on the weekend. The initial focus was perfecting rowing together as a crew, the focus then moved towards defining a specific race plan. Along the way W1 partook in some friendly racing against St John's W1 crew and Univ W2 crew which helped inspire competition.

Further racing practice was achieved by entering two fours into Oxford City Bumps which ran just before the start of term and then by entering an 8+ into Bedford Regatta. W1 started the week of Summer Eights 5th on the river, chasing down Christchurch W1 and being chased by Keble W1. Day 1 was a strong start to the week for Univ; the crew made a large gain on Christchurch that was down to less than half a boat length as they passed Univ boathouse. This distance shortened down to a foot, but with no concession from the cox and no physical bump the result was a row over. Perhaps alarmed by Univ's chase from the day before, the Thursday of Eights saw Christchurch hold off Univ at a larger distance, resulting in a row over for both crews for the second day in a row, with the Keble girls behind again not a threat to Univ. Day 3 brought a change in luck; Christchurch veered into the bank and caught a crab, giving Univ the perfect opportunity to gain on them, resulting in a tidy bump in the gut (see below) that promoted Univ to bungline 4. The final day saw Univ chasing Wadham W1 and being chased by Christchurch. A chunky row from the girls ended the week with a row over, finishing them the 4th highest on the river, an amazing result that the club is very proud of.



Christchurch W1 concede to Univ, Friday of Eights

For W2 Trinity term began with just over a week of trialling to select 8 girls for the crew from the 14 that trialled; the girls had water outings with Argy and a 2k test to help the decision making. Once the crew was set, training began in earnest with 4 water outings and an erg session per week. W2 began the week at position 7 in division 3, placing them as the 3rd highest W2 and surrounding them with W1 crews, meaning they faced tough competition for the week. Day 1 saw a rapid bump on Pembroke W2, with their cox conceding before Donnington bridge on the 11th stroke from Univ which put the girls at bungline 6 on Thursday, chasing Corpus Christi W1. A powerful start meant W2 slightly gained on Corpus with around a length gap by the gut, however a scuff with the bank set Univ back and in a gruelling row to the finish both crews rowed over. Going into Friday's racing W2 were again faced with catching Corpus Christi while being chased by St Peter's W1, who had bumped both previous days. The girls were prepared for a tough race ahead of them and managed to hold off Peter's (who went on to get blades) to Greenbanks. This put W2 back to their position at bungline 7 where they started the week, being chased by another W1 crew, this time Queen's.

On the Saturday, ahead of Univ four crews bumped out so the challenge was to hold off Queen's and maintain their position. By the time the crew approached Boathouse Island Univ and Queen's were the only 2 crews from the division still racing. Cheered on past Univ boathouse, Univ pulled away further from Queen's, increasing their lead to around 2 boat lengths which they maintained to the finish. Univ W2 were up against some tough rowing that week and overall had no net movement, but did move from the 3rd highest to the 2nd highest W2 on the river, a success for the girls.

W3 was set as a crew around second week of Trinity, and training consisted of around 3 water sessions a week coached by Hannah Farley with both Sarah Faulkner and Giulio Mazzotta also taking sessions. W3 had a very successful start to Summer Vllls, starting out with the fastest qualifying time during rowing on. The Wednesday began with W3 chasing Queen's W2 and soon ended with a speedy bump just after Donnington bridge. Having been successful on the Wednesday the team went with high hopes into Thursday's race, chasing Benet's W1. Unfortunately, the four crews ahead bumped out very quickly leaving W3 aiming for a double over bump.



W2 rowing over past Univ BH, Saturday of Eights

The crew refocused on their new target and rowed past Donnington bridge prepared to row the course, yet just after this the division was klaxoned, meaning W3 rowed over. On Friday the crew was chasing Green Templeton W3 boat and quickly we saw another successful bump from W3 within 11 strokes. On the final day our W3 was chasing Merton W2, the crew had an optimistic attitude and another speedy bump was made. The crew bonded throughout the races, ending up extremely proud of the performance throughout Summer Vllls, with many planning to continue rowing next year.



W3 on the bungline

W4 was a mixed boat, formed due to the large numbers of people wanting to row from the women's side and in part due to Miranda Gronow's amazing capability to seek out her Australian compatriot rowers from other colleges! The rowing experience levels in the boat were extremely varied, some with lots of experience and some had just started to learn during Trinity term. The boat also headed out into day one of Summer Vllls without a single outing as a crew. Despite everything W4 rowed powerfully together as a crew and bumped Anne's W2 on the first day! W4 had the same unfortunate timing with the klaxon on the second day having to stop only just after Donnington bridge, resulting in a row over.

On the third day the crew was chasing Queen's W2, catching up to them around the gut however a push in speed from Queen's meant W4 were left chasing them for the whole course.

The crew was determined and continued to row powerfully for the long length of the course, starting to close on Queen's but ending up with a row over on the third day. The final day of bumps saw W4 chasing Queen's again, however the crews ahead bumped out very early on leaving W4 to focus on holding off Teddy Hall W3. The crew pushed ahead but unfortunately were bumped by Teddy's around the start of Greenbanks. W4 gave an extremely strong effort during Summer Vllls and should be very pleased with how they did. A huge thank you to any rowers who subbed into W4 outings and particularly to Miranda who started bank riding and organising W4. Being able to enter four women's boats is an amazing outcome and would not have been possible without everyone who helped out.



Univ W4 chasing Queen's W2 on Friday of Eights

Overall this term was extremely successful for the women's side of the boat club, with hard work and large effort from all the rowers involved and especially the coaches who trained us all. Special thanks must go to Jono, Argy, Hannah, Sarah and Guilio who all helped in organising, coaching and supporting the women's side leading to such a great Summer Vllls campaign.

From the Men's Captain

Andy Bridger (2015) returns from sitting Chemistry finals hungry for success in his tenure as men's captain for the 2019-2020 season. He writes:

This term proved a tricky one for M1, mainly as a result of a heavy loss of the Torpids first VIII crew to Finals, leaving them overall down 3 in Summer Eights but very much still in Division I. Despite the unfortunate result the term did show a promising progression of near novice rowers into serious M1 contenders for future crews, which obviously bodes well for the immediate future of the men's side. Much of this progress can be put down to the new coach, Jono Cheeseman, without whom the high points of the term would not have been possible, notable examples being; the marked improvements of many of the less experienced crew members (with seven seat now hoping to enter the lightweights' development squad), the across the board improvement of land conditioning and a respectable performance in Bedford regatta (winning their first race, despite minimal race experience as or within the crew).

As was the case last year, a pre 0th week training camp took place at Abingdon Rowing Club, organised by the Captains, Emma Lepinay and Ruairi Clayton. This training camp proved incredibly useful for the men's side particularly, as it allowed selection of the most promising prospects for development to try and fill the finalist void left in the LLB. It also marked the addition of the stroke-man (first year student Nick Ryan) and the return of some previous Dinos (Jure Jeric and Mark Brookes). Ryan joined the crew fresh off the back of the lightweight boat race win bringing with him some much-welcomed experience and watts, while Brookes and Jeric came back in from the 2017 and 2018 M1 crews respectively. The camp also included some small boat work in 4+ back on the Isis, to really emphasise the technical improvements of each individual. The consensus from the crews is that the training camp was both enjoyable and extremely valuable in terms of progress made.

The week to week training of the crew took place, again, at ARC. This allowed the crew to train on a long stretch of river and put down some serious miles without all the interruptions and annoyances which come with the congestion of the Isis.



M1 after the close of racing, Eights 2019

Training predominantly took place on the weekends, due to the commitments of the Graduate heavy crew, with many and double and triple session to compensate for the lost time of the week. Vast improvements occurred across the whole of the crew during these hefty sessions and many thanks are extended to ARC for allowing us to use their excellent facilities for yet another year. Training at Abingdon ran from 0th week up until the end of 4th week, with the weekend of 4th week holding the first real test of the crew: Bedford Regatta.

Bedford was a key aspect of the training plan for the term, allowing some much-needed racing experience in a pressured situation for the newer members of the crew in preparation for the noise and excitement that comes hand in hand with the top division of summer eights. The performance at the regatta was thoroughly commendable with the crew rising to the challenge and winning its first race in Open Eights by half length and only being very narrowly beaten (by a quarter length) in the follow up race. The College Eights saw them matched against a fiercely strong Cambridge top eight (Magdelene College, who finished 2nd in the May Bumps this year) and so, despite a valiant and composed row, M1 could not content with the experience of such a crew and did not progress any further.



M1 at Eights dinner

As expected, summer eights proved challenging for the crew as, despite the huge strides made by all, the top division is an unforgiving landscape riddled with Blue's, Lightweights and Schoolboys. Each day saw the crew give and better and better performance, as the nerves settled, and they found their rhythm.

The Wednesday saw M1 being chased by, the soon to be Blades winning, St Edmund Hall M1. The Univ men gave a strong start but the closing speed of the S.E.H resulted in an ill-defined stride as M1 used their grit to hold off the bump as long as possible, ultimately conceding around the gut. Thursday held another strong chasing crew, with an incredibly impressive Trinity crew. This time M1 showed more composure and had a much stronger stride, commendably racing their race rather than being thrown by the approaching Trinity. It was, unfortunately, again only a matter of time until the bump, which occurred near the start of the gut. The Friday showed once more an improvement in boat speed, balance and temperament, with St Catherine's M1 chasing. Univ delivered their most polished start of the three and looked promising passed the bunglines. The extra distance to cover of the additional places down the river resulted in Catz reaching M1 at a similar position to the previous two days. With 3 days of experience now under their belt M1 were ready to set the record straight, hoping to deliver a strong row over to finish out the term. An early klaxon of the division meant that this was indeed the result, if not the way the men would have wanted it, leaving the crew to start the next Eights campaign at Bungline 11.

Next year is set to mark the return of the majority of this TT19 crew along with four of the 2018 M1 crew who took hiatus from rowing for finals. In addition, the potential from a new crop of fresher in the form of promising novice/ schoolboy rowers coupled with the retention of the coach, should leave the TT20 M1 in good stead to start climbing back up the top of Division.

From the Men's Vice-Captain

Ben Williams (2015), men's vice-captain for the 2019-2020 season, writes:

After losing a number of rowers to finals it was up to the Univ's novices to maintain the fantastic form M2 has seen in recent years.

Univ M2 started 10th in men's division 3 being one of the highest placed M2 crews on the river. After having several close encounters with Wadham during Torpids, Univ were determined to start Summer Eights with a BANG (*hilarious*)! However, pre-race nerves got the best of them leading to a start that wasn't as strong as it could have been allowing Wadham M2 to pull away from Univ. All nearby crews bumped out resulting in a clean row over for Univ.

On the second day Univ were facing off against a very strong Teddy Hall M2 crew who, after an overbump on Jesus M2 the previous day, looked set for blades. This forced Univ to adopt a 'fly or die' approach to the day's racing. Despite initially gaining on Wadham, a clinical Teddy Hall crew bumped Univ under Donnington Bridge.

Faced with the prospect of a long hard day of rowing on Friday; Univ had to settle in for the long haul. With Teddy hall ahead of them and a powerful Linacre M1 behind them, determined to get a bump after being denied the day before. In spite of a strong effort from every member of Univ M2 they were unable to hold off Linacre and were eventually bumped under Donny Bridge.

Coming into the final day of racing and Univ were looking to go for the revenge bump on Linacre with a competent Green Templeton M1 behind them. Fast off the mark Univ put themselves in a great position, hot on the tail of Linacre M1. With some of their finest rowing all week they managed to hold off eager Green Templeton M1 all the way into the gut before they could finish off Univ.

Big thanks go to Rufus Tilt for coaching this great bunch of lads and putting them in the best possible shape for Summer Eights. The future of Univ rowing looks bright if these guys continue to progress in the way they have this year.



M2 on the Saturday of Eights with coach Rufus

From the Social Secretaries

Although there are not many weeks in Trinity term before Eights drinking bans kick into action, crewdates still provided an opportunity for UCBC to mix with other clubs on the Isis (and conduct some oppo research). Our training camp at the start of term provided more wholesome entertainment every afternoon, with many a Univ rower going for a swim as they attempted to stand up in a 1x and then take out their blades.

Eights dinner 2019 was again one for the books, partly due to a Men's Division I klaxon that made the transition from river to hall a little more rushed than is usual. Speeches were rowdy, and the infamous inflatable dolphin once again made an appearance. Socialising continued in the bar and onto Emporium afterwards, with former members of UCBC revisiting old haunts and reminiscing about familiar post-Eights rituals (one for the Dinos amongst you). As always, it's a pleasure to welcome so many OMs back to college for Eights, and we hope to see many of you again next year.

Another highlight of the term's social calendar was the Leander lunch, organised by Ron Jordan (1963) and Richard Powles (1964). This provided an excellent opportunity for the younger generation of UCBC to meet their predecessors. As we discovered, although a lot has changed, a lot has stayed the same (and your friends will never let you forget it if you crab and cost them a bump). We are very grateful to those OMs who attended this event and shared their memories with us.

Rumours from the Hilary Term newsletter that we planned to ditch the water for land were indeed true, and we are proud to say that the contribution of UCBC played no small part in Univ winning the College Participation Trophy at the 2019 annual Town and Gown 10k. If you are a keen (or not so keen) runner in your post-UCBC life, you are more than welcome to join us both for the race and for brunch in college afterwards next year – we will circulate the date in a future newsletter after it has been announced.

As Angus mentioned, we are also holding a club ergathon next year, raising money for Oxfordshire Mind, who support individuals with mental health problems. As a club, we wanted to support the Rowing Together for Healthy Minds initiative (<https://www.britishrowing.org/2019/01/row-for-healthy-minds-and-beat-blue-monday/>) – you will see many of us in their distinctive racing base layers over the next year, and we hope to both raise funds and awareness for a worthy cause. Look out for more information on UCBC social media channels in Michaelmas Term.

Dan Mcloughlin (2015) and Philippa Biggs (2016)

Social Secretaries 2019-20

