



## From the President

Dear all,

I am sat writing this in uncharacteristically chilly weather for April in the UK, looking forwards to glorious sunshine at Summer Eights. We haven't had a Hilary Torpids for a while due to flooding and Covid, so it has been satisfying to see another batch of rowers and coxes discover the delights of training in the cold, dark and wet! Their hard work has paid off though with a successful Torpids campaign, and the club is now gearing up for Eights. Please do read on to the captains' reports to find out the nitty gritty racing details.

Out of Oxford, we have stepped up our external racing this year as the club moves forwards under the capable coaching of Jono Cheesman, with crews making appearances at Quintin and Hammersmith Heads as well as the Women's and Men's Eights Head of the River. This means that this season the club has made appearances at all of the major Tideway head races excepting Pairs Head – surely a target for next year.

We were delighted to support our triallists for the Boat Races this year, with the lightweight men featuring Matt Hudson as OULRC President in the 4 seat and Nick Ryan at the 6 seat. Although they were not victorious over Cambridge, we know how much commitment it took to get to Boat Race day, and are very proud of them. The fact that the Cambridge lead did not increase significantly after the first mile of the race demonstrates their tenacity, and we look forwards to having them back for Summer Eights – whether cheering on from the bank or in the boat, exams permitting.

The Martlet Club affiliation has been submitted to British Rowing. As a reminder, this is our alumni club allowing members to continue training with UCBC and racing for us when they have graduated. With the paperwork ticked off and generous Old Members donating their time and skills as committee members, we are looking forwards to an official launch at summer Eights this year. We hope to even have Martlet Club stash on offer, as befits what is obviously a high performance race-focused rowing collective. I look forward to seeing bucket hats a-plenty cheering us all on during the racing!

Seeing old friends at the annual Dinosaurs and Cassandrians' dinner was a real highlight of the term, and we look forwards to welcoming you all back to Univ for the Saturday of Summer Eights. We will be hosting a dinner in the hall, with an external caterer due to college staff shortages – we did this for Torpids dinner this year and it worked well. If you've been meaning to make it back for Eights for a while then I'd encourage you to make it this year. Even if I can't guarantee the weather, I can guarantee good food and better company, and we'd love to have you back on the banks.

As always, thanks to my tireless committee, all of our coaches, our senior members and the Friends of UCBC for all their support and guidance. Navigating the past few years has been a challenge for us all, and although we now feel as if we have crested the wave, we are incredibly grateful that UCBC has been able to power on.

**Hannah Farley**  
President 2021-2022





*W1 chasing down Wolfson on day 4 of Torpids*

## From the Women's Captain

The senior women hit the ground running this Hilary term with a tough series of seat races to select our crew for the term. W1 committed to an average of 4 water sessions and 4 land sessions per week throughout the term, including a number of visits to Dorney lake and Henley at weekends. This dedication paid off in racing with a series of successes both externally and at Torpids!

At the start of the term, W1 made their first crew appearance at Quintin Head, racing the 4.6K tideway course in a time of 14.24.7 and placing 3rd in the 'Women's Intermediate 2' category. The crew continued to train hard throughout the term and returned to London at the end of the academic term to race in WEHARR. The crew started strong, holding off Leeds University BC A until Hammersmith Bridge. After Hammersmith Bridge, the conditions worsened and the crew battled against the extremely choppy conditions to finish 15th out of 59 crews in the 'Challenge Academic' category in a time of 23.05.2.

The crew were very pleased with their external racing success, however, the highlight of W1's term was their phenomenal bumps campaign. I'm incredibly proud as captain to have made History this year bumping up to second on the river, which is the highest that a Univ Women's crew has ever been! Calm and powerful starts lead to bumps before the end of the gut on Oriel W1 on day 1 and Pembroke W1 on day 2. On day 3, we closed down to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a boat length on Wolfson W1 then kept pace for the full course to row over and maintain second place. The crew entered the final day of bumps ready to fight for Headship. Another strong start saw Univ close in on Wolfson to achieve overlap along Green Banks. Wolfson fought hard, managing to hold Univ off and both crews rowed over with a final distance of  $\frac{3}{4}$  boat length at the finish. The crew were ecstatic to have got so close to bumping to headship and are very excited to bring this same drive and determination to our VIII's campaign!

**Charlie Kniebe-Evans**  
**Women's Captain 2021-22**



*W1 at WeHoRR*



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*Photos of M1 racing in Torpids are a rarity due to the speed of their bumps*

## From the Men's Captain

After a successful MT of training, the senior men were somewhat split off into crews for Hilary Term training in preparation for Torpids, which had finally returned to its usual billing in 7<sup>th</sup> week. As it would transpire, this split into crews was subject to significant chopping and changing, due to the ever-looming dark cloud of COVID, as well as injury and mini-breaks to Bavaria. The term had 3 major milestones for the Men's First VIII – Hammersmith Head, Torpids and Men's Head. The aforementioned pressures meant that none of these 3 crews were the same, despite Hammersmith and Torpids happening only 4 days apart. Despite this, the men rose to all three challenges and delivered some great results.

A fairly mild winter of weather meant that M1's training could take place mostly unimpeded, with only a handful of sessions over the term cancelled owing to flooding, and these sessions replaced with the more productive waters of Dorney Lake. While the bulk of the crew were available for any individual session, special thanks is given to Peter Manhausen, George Crooks, Marko Mayr and Sophie Wicken, who all subbed in to cover the various absences. Alongside the water training, the men really settled in to the land training with good progress being made on the erg and in the weights room.

The first test of the training was at Hammersmith Regatta, where the members of M1 and vicarious M1 super-fan and sub for the day, Dylan Dissanayake, descended on London. The goal was for the crew to have a last-minute test of rate in the famously formidable conditions of the tideway before Torpids. This plan was almost stopped before it was started, as the streets of London were struck with unprecedented 'heavy traffic', which delayed the arrival of the trusty *Norman Dix* to the boating location at Barn Elms.

While this fortunately resolved itself, and the crew were able to get rigged and on the water before boating was closed, some marshal-based confusion left Univ M1 stranded on the wrong side of the river and 150 crews out of position. Not ones to be deterred (nor disqualified), the men made their way through the marshalling area without too much in the way of resistance or unsolicited advances, and were ultimately able to slot into the race with some of the Masters Category. The race itself then proceeded smoothly, with the final result being a good one and the goal of gaining some rough water experience completed.

With the unanimous success of Hammersmith, M1 decided that Torpids was going to be too easy. To rectify this and level the playing field, World Championship gold medal winner and resident sign language enthusiast, Claas Mertens nobly broke his hip. In his haste to try and provide the crew with a more exciting week of contest, he forgot that the men's side were a bit thin on the ground bowsider-wise. This meant that in order to fit the strokesided peg of Marko Mayr into our bowside-shaped hole there were two options: have stroke man Miles Bishop move to bowside and have 6 seat, Captain and unbiased narrator, Andy Bridger move up to the stroke seat or; keep Miles in stroke seat, swap him to bowside, rerig the entire boat and make everyone else move and adjust the entire boat setup. Can you guess which we did? While some might argue that having your stroke man change sides and the entire crew order swapped the day before racing is not going to bode well, the evidence could not be more to the contrary (well I guess it could be one more 'official' bump to the contrary, but we will get to that).

As a result of last year's Summer Torpids with its division size changes and crew withdrawals, Univ M1 started this year 11<sup>th</sup> in Div 1, having leapfrogged the unenviable role of sandwich boat, and once again behind Magdalen M1. Unlike Summer Torpids, however, this was not to be another 4 days of picking up scraps as Magdalen ran away, with Wednesday seeing M1 bump Magdalen before Falcon Boathouse. Thursday and Friday told a similar tale, as Trinity and Keble were bumped coming out of the gut and going into the gut, respectively. All was set for a final bump on the tumbling St Edmund Hall on Saturday and undisputed blades. This was unfortunately not to be, as on Friday night the spiteful hands of bureaucracy snatched this chance away: M1 were dealt a penalty bump for the nature of the bump on Keble (I'm not going to get too much into what the penalty bump was for, honestly all the reasoning is nonsense and it will bloat this recap up to about 4 sides – our bowcam footage is on YouTube if you want to try and work it out for yourself). This meant that Saturday saw M1 still with three bumps in the bag, but chasing Keble yet again. Can you guess how that one played out? 32 strokes after the cannon, M1

bumped Keble again, just before Donny Bridge. This leaves the Men 8<sup>th</sup> on the River for next Torpids.

The final test of the term was HoRR. As per usual, Men's Head takes place after the end of Hilary term which makes assembling a crew that is available to race and train a bit trickier than other races in the season. With this said, it's a fantastic event to do, and offers a great opportunity to peek beyond the borders of the Isis and see what we can aim for in the larger world of rowing. The crew this year was a combination of M1 and M2 rowers from Torpids and the first full crew paddle ended up being on the way up to the start line. This again, didn't seem to matter, which I think is mostly a testament to the quality and consistency of squad training being offered across the board. The Univ Men had a great race in the blazing sunshine and provided the second fastest time of the Oxford Colleges in their category. The hope is that we can build this into being a staple for the season and that next year it will be M1 and M2 going as full crews.

**Andy Bridger**  
**Men's Captain 2021-22**



*The M1-M2 composite at HoRR*

## From the Women's Vice-Captain

Following on from a very successful Michaelmas term, we saw the majority of our novices and senior women return to train in Hilary term in preparation for Torpids; an absolute pleasure as it was the first since 2019! We had three lower women's boats, and W2 rowing in Torpids due to being in fixed divisions, with rowing on being one of the most competitive it has ever been and unfortunately eliminating W3, who had also trained hard all term.

The start of term saw a competitive trialling process taking place, with keen and skilled girls going for W2. Trials were run by their coach, Argy, and consisted of a mixture of both erg tests and water-based skills sessions. Crews were set by the start of second week, getting ready to start training for a very competitive Torpids campaign, with W2 having ended 2<sup>nd</sup> in Division IV based on the Summer-Torpids 2021 event.

W2 had 3 outings per week with their coach Argy, with Saturday's being a double session, as well as an erg session a week and the opportunity to participate in the weights programme set by Jono. They started off the term in preparation for Quintin head, which for many was their first chance at both an external and a Tideway race. The girls approached this with a lot of excitement and finished a strong 11<sup>th</sup> in their division, an

incredible performance considering the girls had had one outing as a crew due to COVID unfortunately knocking two members out for the weekend.

W3 were coached by Hannah Farley and Sophie Wicken, with Pippa Biggs subbing in. All three brought their experience from previous novice coaching as well as seasons in Univ's W1, making it a very successful trio. The girls had two outings each weekend as well as an erg session, but unfortunately the change in flags as well as the 3 IWLs reduced some of their water time.

W4 welcomed some novices after the Michaelmas success, and aimed to have two sessions a weekend, coached by member of W1 Ruth Coughlan, who brought her expertise from her time rowing at Trinity College Dublin with her. Again, the weather added some difficulty to this but the girls significantly improved, often acting as subs for W3. Lack of availability and limited water time meant they were not entered into Torpids, but we look forward to many coming back in the Summer term, aiming to enter them into rowing on.

Added to this, all crews had a session in the Iffley tank, to help improve technique. W2 worked on their front end technique whilst W3 and W4 worked on drive sequencing and placing. It was very useful experience for all crews to have and helped to compensate from some of the lost time caused by flag changes.



W2 crew at Torpids

Added to this, W2, W3 and a mixture of W3 and W4 were set to compete in IWL but unfortunately COVID once again made this difficult. W2 managed to get a full crew out and W3 competed with a 4+, both placing strongly in their categories. W3 also entered with a mixed ability crew, including some ex-rowers and W1 members!

The Torpids campaign was a very competitive one this year. W2 started off 2<sup>nd</sup> in Division IV and bumped up to last in Division III. On Day 1 they bumped Somerville W2 and went on to row as sandwich boat, bumping Queen's W1 in the gut and securing their spot in Division III, despite a crab causing the start sequence to have to be stopped and restarted. On Day 2, they went on to overbump new W2, after chasing Wolfson W3, placing them as the highest W2 undergraduate boat on their river (with both Wolfson W2 and W3 being in front). They kept this strong position on Day 3, rowing over behind Wolfson W3 despite another shaky start. The girls were starting on bungline 11 which is very hard to cox as the bank curves after and led to the boat often ending up on the wrong side of the river. On the last day, being chased by Oriel W2 and after another shaky start, and still starting behind Wolfson W3 the girls were caught and went on to row the whole course very close to Wolfson W3. Univ W2 had bumped Oriel W2 last year and will be starting behind them next year, so all is to play for in the next Torpids campaign!

The term ended with W2 competing in WEHARR, with some last minute coxing and sub changes meaning the crew also only had one outing before the race. The girls started the race by overtaking Oxford Academicals and ended with a brilliant time of 25:05.9, with a sub 1:45 split most of the way until they hit very choppy water past Hammersmith bridge which caused them to slow down. The girls persevered and gave it their all, finishing 18<sup>th</sup> in the Beginner Academic division, and their results were a reflection of the hard training this term!

Special thanks to all the coaches this term, who gave it their all despite last minute plan changes and some awful weather. Argy, Hannah, Sophie, Ruth, it would have been impossible without you and I thank you for your dedication. My personal thanks as well to all our X-status coxes, especially Nikolaos Kanellakis who took W2 through IWL when the flags changed, and through 3/4 Torpid days! And to all the crews – rowers, subs and coxes alike, who have been very motivated and happy to sub in to help each other out, thank you and I look forward to a really strong Summer 8s campaign with you all!

*Chloe Bardou*

**Women's VC 2021-2022**



*W3 at Torpids dinner*



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## From the Men's Vice-Captain

What a term to be in the UCBC men's squad ! For the first time in three years torpids was back, and our crews decided to celebrate with a clean sweep of blades. Starting back in the cold depths of winter, we had great club engagement with the mileage challenge, leading to a highly competitive trialling process for M2 and M3. The first racing came at IWL C at the end of first week which was used by our M2 coach Claire as an opportunity to test out different crew combinations.

With crews down to M4 set and training, preparations were swiftly underway. The weather it seemed was on our side - good conditions almost every weekend out on the water, progress was quickly made. IWL D saw our M3 take to the river for the first time, albeit in questionable conditions - after gale force winds and the extra baggage of a 6'5 cox, everything else seemed like a breeze ! On this fateful day they also beat coach Charlie Kniebe-Evans' W1 for the first time, causing quite the stir.

M2 and M3 were both forced to make last minute personnel changes, with Marko Von De Leyen getting his first VIII call up, leaving M2 as just M, in search of a new 2. Fortunately, the ever-reliable George Crooks agreed to go back on a previous false claim that he 'needed to do his degree' and, with just one training session under his belt, jumped in. M3 meanwhile managed to get through a string of coxes; losing Ollie Newport to covid early in term meant he didn't have the experience required and one-time standin Lloyd Arnold was rejected as being generally a bit too tall and not very good at this whole coxing thing. Women's VC Chloe Bardou stepped up to the mark, and relished taking the helm for a whole one day of racing, before OURCs required X and S status coxes only.

The weather may have been damp but the univ fireworks certainly weren't - both M2 and M3 exploded out of the blocks, taking less than 30 strokes between them before bumping Lincoln M2 and Christ Church M4 respectively. Rains overnight meant that this was unfortunately the only day of



*M3 enjoying success at Torpids*

As the spectre of torpids loomed, the weather finally broke, with torrents of rain unleashed into the Oxfordshire waterways. No trouble - M3 doubled down on their already intense land training program, and M2 joined the top boats on a weekend trip to Dorney Lake for some final preparations.

Due to the limited experience of some members of our M4, coach Nicole Szekeres-Tapp and myself made the joint decision to not enter them into torpids, but were in the strong position of being able to field a beer boat, including some of M4 plus a mix of current and returning students. This crew was edged out by the most competitive rowing on in living memory (or at least, my memory), but put in a huge performance.

racing for our novice coxes, but there are no doubts in the club that their support from the bank is what facilitated the lightning fast concessions of Merton M2 and John's M2 on day two.



As Friday rolled around and Univ's unbroken bumps streak was still going strong, there was an electric atmosphere around both crews - as Captain Andy Bridger said, 'at this point it's not pressure, its momentum'. Things didn't go entirely to plan, with Jesus M2 being caught early by Benet's M1, leaving our second VIII hunting the overbump. This came shortly after Donny bridge, following the first univ stride of the campaign. Friday also saw big things from M3, who bumped boats from Wadham and Hertford and earning themselves a spot in the fixed divs. The job not yet done, both crews came into the final day hungry for blades. M3's campaign was marred by confusion, after an early Wolfson crab led to univ bumping 100m off the start but not actually noticing, and racing the whole course 'just in case'. Tired and hurting, the guys came in for their celebrations, and to support the remaining crews. M2 were next out on the water, and caught Teddy M2 in just 14 strokes - an emphatic finish to what can only be described as an emphatic campaign.

I'd like to take this opportunity to give special thanks to coaches Claire Holubowskyj, Charlie Kniebe-Evans (or Knobbers, as she is lovingly referred to by her crew) and Nicole Szekeres-Tapp. Also, I'd like to mention Rowan Nichols of St Catz, Sam McLoughlin of Somerville and Nikolaos Kanellakis of Univ for agreeing to offer their experienced coxing services, steering our crews to victory. Finally, I'd like to mention George Crooks once again - despite taking a term off to focus on his degree, he was always available when I needed a sub, and his last minute substitution into torpids rescued our boats from an otherwise very difficult situation.

Overall, this year saw one of the most successful men's torpids campaigns in UCBC history, and it is with great excitement that we look forward to the summer season and the new challenges brought both by eights and external racing.

**Lloyd Arnold**  
**Men's Vice Captain 2021-22**

## From the Social Secretaries

After an eventful Michaelmas term, the whole boat club was left wondering what the social secs could produce to create an even more epic Hilary term, and I would like to say we delivered. Starting our term off strong with a few crew dates and the materialisation of an all-you-can-eat wings social for the men, it seemed as though term couldn't get any better. Dino's and Cassies provided us with a great chance to see some old members and learn about the joys of adulthood, though many didn't seem to be much more adult-like than our current students. The obligatory pre-Torpids pub crawl was 'hari-fied' this term, introducing an oû est le poulet element to it, much to the delight of the social secs, who managed a very cheap evening thanks to the generosity of the other rowers. The Torpids dinner itself proceeded without a hitch, with college allowing the dinner to take place in hall, allowing for the most normal dinner the boat club has had in a long time.

Looking forward to next term, we are busy organising Summer VIII's dinner as well as some form of catering for the Saturday of Summer VIII's, so please check the UCBC social channels and emails, as we will be updating all current and former members on the events and how they can sign up for them.

**Hari Pankhania and Jess Steadman**

**Social Secretaries 2021-22**

## Key Dates

- Summer Eights – Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May, annual dinner to follow racing on Saturday
- Bedford Regatta – Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May
- MET regatta – 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> June
- Henley Women's Regatta – 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> June
- Henley Regatta – 28<sup>th</sup> June-3<sup>rd</sup> July

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