



**WCBCS**

**NEWS**

49th EDITION | 2021-2022

# WELCOME

Hello. Goodness, this is excellent. It's astonishing it is free. Well, it isn't really, because some of you will realise that WCBC needs you, which may have a lasting effect. In these pages, you will read of victories and joys, and some of you will be unable not to see the occasional outside shoulder dropped at the catch or will suffer personal pain when reading the history of a footplate that "came loose". Is the footplate an animate object, well, is it?! As WCBCS members our job is to make sure that these things happen less, but enough of that for now, because it's up to each of us to do what we can if we can find the time.

These pages certainly vibrate with the fun of effortful and intelligent College rowing, but, more than that, there's the sense that we all want crews to fly, to do well. Taking part is so much of the pleasure, but taking another crew apart is special. That feeling of focused goodwill is a constant, while we all contribute in different ways. Rod, and Steph, have worked and still work so hard, for so long, to turn novices into rowers and rowers into skilled athletes. Others help in smaller practical ways, or give serious money, with proper altruism. Many give their time and attention and do their bit, for years, for barely a thank you. We should remember the decades of profound support from Paul Bowen, on the riverbank or on the Society's committee, and Gavin Stewart's unfailingly analytical diligence. Those fine gentlemen are still with us but have, healthily, other interests to pursue. And then there are some who are no longer with us, whom we would all give much to see again - we think of the smiles and the voices of Tally and Niccolò. We hope they have live bumps feeds in heaven.

Many of us blessed still to inhale the optimism of this inspiringly-governed utopia, gathered for the regatta and dinner on 24 September. If you were there, we hope you had fun. I know I am still processing some of the conversations I had. We can proudly assert that, while the College bar may shrivel punier year by year, WCBC and WCBCS does not. We hope that the pages that follow will bear this out.

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# Reflections and Changes

ROD ANDREWS, Head Coach

From the outset of the academic year, we made changes to the coaching structure to try and make it more manageable, with Stephanie as the Coaching Coordinator with myself focussing on Technical and Programmes. Due to the now permanent Godstow time restrictions, especially at weekends, making back-to-back sessions impossible, we were forced to restrict the number of outings per crew. The initial idea was for Steph to focus on W2/M2, myself W1/M1 as well as Bill Berners-Lee and Scott Houghton working with W3/M3 on the Isis, supported by others when necessary. However, due to small squads and equipment damage, we ended up with fewer crews at Godstow for most of the year, with Steph and I sharing W1/M1/W2 plus the NW1/NM1 crews as they progressed towards Christchurch Regatta and M2 reverting to the Isis with Scott.

## **MICHAELMAS**

From the Captains' reports, you will read of a mixture of successes, availability issues, river restrictions, and outside pressures. Changes in Captains made it difficult to form settled crews and follow our normal workload programmes. A very inexperienced Women's squad made good progress by continuing to rotate the crew composition in order to maintain outings to suit availability. The senior Men's squad was much more experienced but again limited by consistency and regular availability. The reduced number of outings on the water was offset by both squads following a fairly robust land training programme. Due to the restrictions on numbers training in the College gym, we coaches relied on senior squad members taking an active lead in following the programme but having the freedom to introduce their own adaptations. Thanks mainly to Jovana Pepic, Charlotte Bogle, Will Chamberlain and Rob Murphy for overseeing this throughout the year. As usual, the Fresher/Novice intake was very strong, particularly on the Women's side. This was encouraging, considering the inexperience of those

who had rowed before, as 'fast tracking' would be required to achieve competitive crews. Sadly, the early dropout from the novice groups reduced the potential of future racing crews. However, for Christchurch Regatta we were able to race two women's and men's crews by using some who had rowed from last year but due to Covid had not raced before. Although we didn't win either event, the crews performed well and were not far off from our usual successes!

Representative W1 and M1 crews raced Wallingford Head at the end of Michaelmas term with encouraging results, especially against other Oxford College crews. A combination of Seniors and Alumni crews raced the Remenham Challenge in December. Unfortunately, the event doesn't fit into our Term based development, so we were not that competitive or able to show our true potential. Crew numbers were restricted, as we thought a number of newcomers were not experienced enough to row on the Tideway.



Early morning on the meadow!

## **HILARY**

Although results for the 1st crews indicate otherwise, crews rowing out of Godstow were compromised by us not being able to properly coach. The launches were not able to be used until the final week prior to Torpids. The Boathouse consortium could not offer a suitable boatman to replace the excellent 'George', so launches

remained in the boathouse and boat repairs were delayed. Steph and I spent the term watching crews by walking in Port Meadow, followed by comments afterwards meaning little constructive coaching. 2nd and 3rd Crews continued to be coached on the Isis, as options to have more boats at Godstow were not possible, meaning valuable comparisons could not be made.

Leading up towards Torpids, the 1st crews raced at Henley Eights and Fours Head, producing more encouraging results considering the lack of coaching. During Torpids, the lower boats struggled to be competitive, being short on both numbers and experience. W1 contained a mixture of experiences. Those who had rowed before but not raced, and two from the 2021 novice intake. The crew performed above expectations, improving with each race and gaining comfortable 'Blades', moving back up to Position 3 in Div 1!

A much more experienced M1 should have matched the Women's result. Limited coaching leading to 'too many' voices from within the boat on day one, resulted in a missed opportunity by not gelling as a unit. We had a lengthy de-brief afterwards and made amends in the remaining three days, going +3 places for the week! A representative M1 also raced the Tideway Head of the River, finishing 141<sup>st</sup> out of 295!



## TRINITY

After a mini '0th' week training camp, an M1 4+ raced in the Oxford City Bumps, gaining 3 places. A good start to the term! Most 1st boats were strengthened with returning Blues. Although we were lucky enough to have JoJo from OUWLCB joining W1 for the first time and Ed from OULBC

returning to M1, both crews were forced to make further changes due to finals. This compromised our other boats, as the results indicated. We had good expectations for W1. Starting third, an easy bump on Pembroke should have set us up with two chances to bump Wolfson to regain the Headship, then attempt to hold it against either Univ or ChCh on the Saturday. Sadly, not to be. Pembroke cox failed to concede early enough, causing the race to be stopped. This resulted in W1 being penalised down to 5th for day two. The revised start order for Thursday produced the 'race of the week'. Passing Wadham Boat House, we were 'inches' from an overlap on Wolfson, with a fast-closing Univ behind being closed down by ChCh. We didn't quite have the legs for the final push on Wolfson and due to a Salter's pleasure boat coming down the centre of the course, Lizzie, who was coxing, had no room to 'run away'. We were touched and caught on the line! On Friday, we succumbed to ChCh, arguably the fastest crew, followed by a Saturday row over. Net -1 for the week, but still 4th in Div 1!

M1's lead-up to Eights Week was consistent, with good commitment levels both on and off the water, only compromised by finals restricting the number of outings with a fixed crew. As always, mid-Div 1 is very competitive, but boat speeds during training pieces suggested 'Blades' could be a possibility. Unfortunately, a footplate failure on Wednesday led to being caught by Wolfson. Thursday row over, followed by the Friday bump on Teddy Hall and a row over on Saturday meant +1 for the week finishing 6th in Div 1. A disappointing result for the crew, as we had high hopes of it being better, but that's Bumping racing!

Post-Eights, we raced our usual mixed eights in Oriol Regatta - surprisingly without our usual 'win'! A 4+ from W1 entered Women's Henley Regatta - qualifying in the top 16 out of 57 entries. In the first side-by-side race, we were drawn against Bristol University, one of the seeded crews, and lost by a couple of lengths. This was still an excellent result considering the inexperience within the crew. M1 followed suit and entered a 4+ at Henley Royal Regatta. The build-up was limited due to exams and us not being able to provide much coaching support. Although we produced a strong powerful 'under-boated crew', time trial qualification was

not possible due to the strength and depth of the entry. But, most importantly, Wadham raced representative crews at both 'Henleys' to keep our name 'out there'!



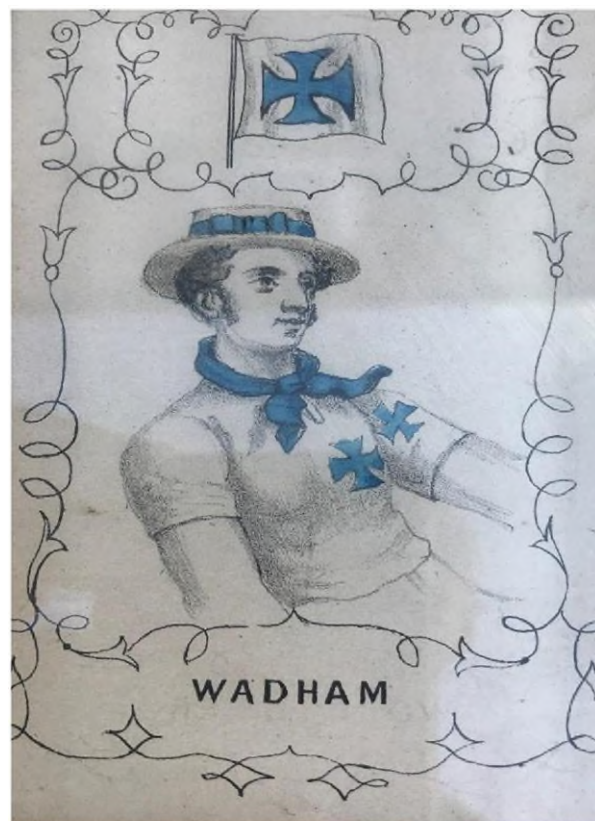
### TIME FOR CHANGE

This coming Michaelmas will start with very small inexperienced squads. Novice development will be critical to avoid a downward turn. We hope to relocate to Bossom's boat yard in Hilary term, to have more flexibility on time and number of sessions, giving more opportunities for extra coaching slots. For Steph and I as joint coaches mainly for the Godstow-based crews, continuing with up to six weekly consecutive 6.00 am outings, is not sustainable for either of us. Travelling costs and time is something I can no longer justify. A session door to door takes a minimum of 3 - 4 hours with 5.15 am starts! After 41 years, I need a break! Those coaching Isis-based crews are currently expected to cover 3 - 4 early sessions plus weekends!

How will it/can it change? With new eights and blades this year, we have an excellent level of equipment which should last up to ten years without requiring upgrades (unless anyone wishes to donate more small boats!) This increased cycle should allow WBCS/WC funding to be channelled towards coaching costs, in line with most, if not all, other College BC's. The Boat Club requires new coaches and a coaching structure to make this immediate change. Initially, Steph will coordinate coaching until the revised system is set up. I will offer the

technical direction and training programmes for both crews and new coaches if needed.

Both of us will be less involved with day-to-day sessions. Some support with the Fresher/Novice intake will be required in my case and maybe cover for other coaches or perhaps as 'finishing coach' for W1/M1? Although continued financial support is appreciated, especially with the move to Bossom's and expenses for coaches, any time you could also volunteer would be great! Developing coaches from within our ranks is preferred, rather than losing our successful direction and incurring the high costs of unknown outsourcing. We know you are out there! Dust off your megaphone, grab a life jacket, pump up your bike tyres and get some new waterproofs. The new Godstow location will relocate coaching de-briefs from the Trout Inn to the Perch at Binsey!



Wadham 1850

# Remembering Tally

MARK AITMAN, on behalf of Tally's WCBC friends



You may have heard the sad news about Tally's death on 21st May. You all will have seen him in recent regattas on the river, or as his health failed on the side supporting others, or indeed in Wadham hall looking fine and chatting with and entertaining anyone within range - often with a rum and coke by his side.

Tally grew up in Derby, then Wadham, Portsmouth, Italy, Birmingham and finally Derby for his last days. He leaves behind Ruth his wife (also at Wadham) an eldest son and the twins.



Tally was part of the '83 2nd Torpid that went down in history almost as much as it went down in the bumps. But by the end of his career in the second eight he had largely recovered those bumps. Tally's passion for rowing was possibly only surpassed by his love of a good Wadham bop although he was open to a visit to Downtown Manhattan and a kebab!!

Following College Tally worked in IT and ended as a senior PM for network projects, but he did not really talk about work preferring to keep friendships made on the river alive through the society and society conversations.



It was our loss that we did not know him better behind the scenes but the outpouring of love and support for him from the society and his wider Wadham family reflects that he was one of the good guys. Always helpful and cheerful and putting others high on his list of priorities often ahead of his own needs. Tally was a caring and supportive person and was a loyal friend who always looked out for everyone.

We loved you Tally, and we will miss you.



# In Conversation with Pete Berners-Lee

PETE BERNERS-LEE, Wadham Cox (1976 – 1979) AND ELIZABETH BIGGS, Wadham Cox (2018 – 2022)

*Lizzie Biggs, who has recently graduated from Wadham, caught up with Pete Berners-Lee, to compare their coxing experiences during their time at Wadham.*

**I (Lizzie) picked up coxing in my first term at Fresher's, knowing absolutely nothing about boats, rowing, or the number of hours I would go on to spend coxing during my degree. When did you start coxing, and can you remember your first time coxing for Wadham?**



When I was 8 years old my father took me skiffing at Richmond. I pulled so hard, that I pulled a muscle. But I was in love. Emanuel school was a top rowing school in those days, but they made me cox. Fortunately, the rowing master, Peter Jones, was an ex-Wadham cox and so coxing was taken very seriously. But I learnt a great deal of my coxing at

Quintin Boat club. I can't remember the first time I coxed, but from the age of twelve, I was captivated by the sense of teamwork and the unique feel for the boat that you get as a cox, nursing and thinking the shell over the best course with as little rudder as possible. When I came up to Wadham I was determined not to cox. But when the women's Captain of Boats asked me, I found it difficult to say no.

**I would agree with the difficult-to-say-no sentiment, as there is something rather captivating about coxing that is very difficult to pin down. The feeling of a boat gliding across the water with ease is unmatched. Aside from this feeling, there are many other parts of coxing for Wadham that are memorable. Personally, most of my coxing memories derive from outings at Port Meadow. Aside from the near misses with other college crew's boats (which were almost always their fault...), and the exhilarating feeling of facilitating a crew to reach its potential, I could connect with (or get distracted by – you choose) great outdoors in Port Meadow. I can remember on the run-up to summer eights, sitting with the W1 crew at the top of the straight, in Port Meadow. As a crew, we had just gained blades in division one the term before, and the pressure was on for summer eights as we had a shot for headship. So, every outing was becoming more and more serious. As we sat at the top of the straight, Rod was relaying instructions for our next piece, but all I could concentrate on was the kingfisher that had perched directly behind him in the reed bed (sorry Rod). I found that being on the river more mornings than not, had facilitated a birdwatching hobby, as the W1 ladies know all too well.**

**What are your memorable moments as a Wadham cox?**

Coxing Wadham was a joy. Roy Wikramaratna at stroke was a school friend and we saw eye to eye. In my second year, the eight was not so fast. Merton were going for four bumps chasing Magdalen, who were chasing us. They were afraid that Magdalen would bump us before Merton could bump Magdalen and rob them of their bump supper. Magdalen were on top of us as we went through the gut, making a number of attempts at bumping us. I did nothing special – just kept to my course and made it as tight as possible. Magdalen missed and we just made it, tucked into the Green Bank as Merton bumped Magdalen. At that moment our seven-man caught a boat stopper of a crab, so we were stationary on the Green Bank, but the threat had gone! Seven nearly went in the river, partly due to the crab, partly due to the six-man who could barely suppress the urge to push him in. Merton got us the next day and I got to go to an amazing bump supper!

**I'm glad bumps dinner, as well as the joy of preventing a rival crew from achieving blades, has remained unchanged over the years. How has communicating to rowers changed over your coxing career?**

Instructions to rowers have always been as brief and clear as possible. Reliable amplifiers were not a feature of my first few years. Cox boxes are wonderful – you can use a whole range of tones of voice.

**There have been many inventive coxing calls I have both heard and used throughout my time coxing. Do you have a favourite coxing call?**

I don't have a favourite coxing call: different crews and different races each need their own calls. A Head race, a regatta, Henley, 6-lane races, and bumps are all very different. College, University, different clubs, and different Team GB crews, all require different approaches and calls.

**I too do not have a favourite call, but I did occasionally like to pick on rowers that liked to chat more than I, and on rowers that were seemingly distracted by surrounding rival crews in training.**

**What was your most memorable race?**

My most memorable race has to be the final of the

Grand Challenge Cup at Henley in 1981. We were a rebel Oxford – Tradesmen eight up against the Team GB squad. I knew the Oxford crew were fast off the start – I'd coxed them in training the year before. I'd sit there after 10 strokes with them thinking "how come we are going so fast?". They were greased lightning. But now I was up against them in a fortified winning blue boat with a beautiful, long, powerful rhythm and great cohesion, despite being a marriage of two differing rowing styles. We went off as if to win the boat race but got dumped off the start – almost out of touch by the end of the island! I realised we would have to modify the race plan and leave our comfortable rhythm for a series of very aggressive pushes. We all hate to do that – we want to win by establishing that great rhythm – and it would have worked over a boat racecourse. I hate the pain that you have to put a crew through, but you have to do whatever it takes to win. As the grandstand approached the heroes from the Oxford and Thames Tradesmen held together and prevailed. But I never ever want my stroke man to have to go in an ambulance to recover. That memory disturbs me still, though he, John Bland, says he is fine with it.



**That really is an eventful race. Talk to me about bumps racing – how has it changed since you last coxed it?**

I have asked Oxford Olympic oarsmen, Henley winners and Boat Race winners what is the hardest race psychologically and all that have experienced it say the Oxford bumps. Things have



changed – more colleges with fewer crews. I rowed at bow in our men's 5th eight! Rowing is less popular, but the standard of equipment is uniformly high, and all coxes have cox boxes (hooray!). The standard of coxing is 8 often not what it could be with coxes lacking confidence and skill, for instance leaving it to the poler to line the boat up at the start. I think crews are less stressed on the bung line, but I am not sure that that is a good thing. Few crews are taught to row badly as some colleges were in my day with basic technical misunderstandings. I worry about safety. Crews must make this their overall concern, especially just after bumping. After all these years, bow bobbles are still pathetic little bits of rubber and a boat's bow can easily turn into a vicious shard.

**Aside from fewer boats entering bumps races, is there any part of rowing in your time that you are sad to have seen disappear?**

I am delighted to see that in international rowing the minimum weight for a cox is 55Kg, not 50 Kg. How that would have changed my life! Keeping weight off used to put me in zombie mode off the water. It is great that rudders are so efficient and small but sad that they have no feel. It must be like driving a juggernaut with power steering that gives no resistance. It is a shame that there are so few coxed events internationally and therefore so few prospects for coxes, particularly as coxed fours are so useful at club level. I paddle a kayak now, but whenever I see a rowing crew I think of the wonder of the rhythm and flow, eight oars, eight bodies, eight heroic spirits and what a privilege it has been to be a cox.



Pete Berners-Lee coxing the 1<sup>st</sup> eight boat in 1977

# Boys in the Boat

AIDAN GALLAGHER, Men's President 2020-2022

What better way to relax and unwind after finishing exams than starring in a Hollywood movie? Four members of WCBC (Conor McMahon, David Sun, Daniel Russel and I), were lucky enough to be able to put this to the test, being enlisted as extras in the upcoming release 'The Boys in the Boat', directed by George Clooney. The film is based on the true story, first told in a 2013 novel of the same name, of the 1936 USA 8+, who overcame adversity to race and (spoilers!) win at the Berlin Olympics, in the depths of Nazi Germany. Filming of the scenes, involving us Wadhamites who were members of the French and Danish crews, took place over the course of a week. Actors typically had to be going through hair and makeup at around 8 am and would usually be done

by around 6 pm. The days were long and hot, though food, drink, and Calippo's were amply provided. Much of the time was spent waiting to be called to filming, so we had plenty of time to explore and see behind the scenes of a genuine Hollywood picture. Filming took place on a lake in reconstructed 1936 eights (either adapted from existing boats or built specifically for the film), rowed with Macon blades. The technical gap between then and now was very notable, and it took some getting used to. The blades were also of course pre Concept2's 'easy sleeves', so feathering and squaring had to be done 'manually'! It was a lot of fun to be a part of, both for the insight into rowing at that age and into the filming of a (hopefully) blockbuster movie! Stay tuned for its release towards the end of 2023!



# Novices to Experts

HARRIET ALLAN AND KATHERINE MCKANE, W1 Rowers

*Both Harriet and Katherine were involved with sports before coming to Oxford. However, neither had ever rowed. Since starting, they have gone from strength to strength, finishing their year at Oxford with a successful result at Henley Women's Regatta.*



## What made you start rowing at college?

Harriet: Two friends encouraged me to have a go. I was unable to run at the time, so I was looking for what I had with cross country in St Andrews: an adventurous outdoor sport, a strong community, and the opportunity to compete.

Katherine: I originally intended to trial for the Oxford University Swim Club, aiming to make the Blues squad. However, I only made the 2nds team, which was a much lower time commitment. I wanted to fill my time up with something that would keep me active. Rowing was a great way to try something new and keep me in shape.

## How did you find the early mornings?

H: I didn't mind the early mornings too much when I had a routine. My mindset was guided by the fact I was only in Oxford for 9 months for a Master's. I wanted to do as much as I could and enjoy my time. Getting up that early enabled me to cram loads into a day, including two training sessions.

K: I found them manageable. In previous years, I had worked jobs or had swim practices that

required me to be up early, so this was nothing too new for me. There are always some mornings that are harder than others, but in the end, you get used to the early mornings and it becomes a routine.

## How did you manage your time?

H: My colour-coded spreadsheet haha. My degree was 90% independent study, so I planned out what I needed to do and made sure I was doing all my high-intensity work on days I didn't have outings. It helped that quickly my social life overlapped with rowers and rowing.

K: I kept a google calendar that had all the practice times, my lecture times, tutorials, any events, races, or other fun activities that I wanted to do. This made it easier to visualize the amount of "free time" I had to complete readings, essays and prepare for tutorials. Just knowing what time commitments I had, made it easier to figure out when to start and complete university work by the deadlines. It was also great to set mini goals for myself or set time limits on things such as how long to read each article or do a problem within a problem set.



## What was your coldest memory?

H: Henley 4s and 8s (and my warmest was Henley Women's Regatta!) At both races the conditions were extreme. Henley 4s and 8s was my first proper race. We raced an 8 against furious headwinds which made the boat feel literally stationary as we rowed downstream. That felt

like the longest race of my life. It was wet and cold and there was no indoor area for afterwards.

K: One morning practice where it was chucking it down, I believe it was a couple of weeks away from torpids. The water was choppy, the rain was cold and my clothes were completely soaked through. It was not a delightful practice, but we made it through.

### **How was rowing at Henley?**



H: Boiling, and we had a healthy crosswind. Still, we had a fantastic time. We rowed a coxed-four which felt like a very different dynamic to 99% of my rowing experience in an 8. There was so much technical pressure and I learned so much in the dedicated few weeks of training between Summer Eights and the race. The atmosphere at the race was amazing - to see so many other strong women was inspiring. Our time trial wasn't our best row and we got out of the boat feeling somewhat disappointed. We had worked so hard on setting the boat and then the crosswind had us completely down on one side the whole way. When it let up it felt amazing. When we found out we had qualified among the top 16 of 57 boats we were elated (and I dreaded the pain of another race). But we had a few hours to prepare, and then we raced against Bristol! It was fantastic!

K: Probably one of the best experiences I have ever had. It was amazing seeing so many different teams from not only within England, but also internationally. It was one of those races where I did not expect to be in the top half of the pack, let alone one of the top 16 crews in our category. Racing at Henley gave me more confidence in my rowing abilities and was insanely fun despite it being such a large (potentially high stress) event.

### **What has been your highlight of rowing?**

H: I loved the mornings out on the water, in the

fog, with Lizzie pointing out kingfishers, Katherine and Dorothy giggling behind me, Rod in his launch and an occasional seeing M1 whizzing past. I will really miss the everyday sights of rowing.

K: Winning blades in Torpids. It's something that I would never have gotten the opportunity to do in the US -- people don't just win blades! It was also something very unexpected. It showed us, as a crew, that despite being such a novice crew, we were powerful. It really gave me more confidence in my rowing abilities and showed that working hard can pay off.



### **What advice do you have for other novices starting next term?**

H: YouTube! Watch videos on how to erg and what feathering is etc. - there is so much new vocab when you start, it will help you get to grips with it faster. And stick at it! Michaelmas can be chaotic, but it is so worth it, for the community, the races, and the rowing itself.

K: Be as on top of your schoolwork as you can be. Time management is key to allowing both sports and academics to be in your busy schedule - this way you can be a reliable and dependable team player. Also, try not to get discouraged! When starting, you are not going to be very good at rowing! Listen to what the coaches tell you and be open-minded about what they are saying; they make corrections on technique to make you a better rower. With that said, put in the work. Make the effort to change your technique when something is mentioned and ask questions if you don't understand. Do the ergs, circuits and weightlifting sessions - all will help with strength and conditioning for when you're in the boat.

# Henley in all its Depth

MAXIME KAYSER, M1 Rower

The Wadham College Boat Club is a regular at the Henley Royal Regatta - every year we keep the guests at the Remenham Club satiated with insipid ales and poor chat. But one thing we haven't done in many years, is to boat a crew at the most famous regatta in the world. And that's something we wanted to change this year.

Luckily, there was a group of five WCBC athletes who didn't get enough of three terms of early mornings, stomach-churning erg sessions, boat-stopping crabs, and still not knowing what a balanced boat feels like. They wanted more, they wanted to qualify for the Henley Royal Regatta. Enjoying our last summer in Oxford with friends, starring in a George Clooney movie (!), and any chance at doing well in our exams, all things we were happy to give up for the prospect of qualifying for Henley. And why not, the odds seemed in our favour.



We had successful bumps campaigns behind us, and we were big. What we didn't realize: we were too big. Exactly 32kg above the maximum weight for our Wadham coxed four. But hey, bigger is always better, so we didn't fret about that challenge. We trained hard, daily, through stressful exam times and seeing our friends enjoy balls and everything else Oxford has to offer in

the summer. So much was at stake, and things weren't always easy. At points, it felt like half our boat speed came from the sighs that followed each time the boat tipped to either bow or stroke side. But we didn't give up, and in the last week, everything suddenly came together. The balance was there-ish, the pieces felt good, and we could bear each other again.



We drove down to Henley to get our boat in one of the iconic, blue-striped tents. Mama, we made it! The hype only grew, when Rob, in his humble ways, noted: "Mate, everyone here is tiny". What could possibly stop us? On race day, conditions were windy and choppy. Ideal for the Wadham big boys. Our boat was laying low, just an inch above the water surface, perfect for minimising resistance from the headwind. All this hard training was about to pay off. But then, just as we were about to boat, the straw that broke the camel's back: according to regulations, we had to add several kilos worth of sandbags to our boat. Our greatest strength, chunkiness, was about to mean that we would be the first submerged boat to ever take part in a Henley qualification race. Even a frenzied attempt at the start line to redistribute the

sandbags in our boat couldn't prevent the inevitable: our boat was going under. After a few hundred questionable strokes, but an unforgettable experience later, we made it across the finish line.

We weren't among the two out of twenty-seven boats that qualified for the Prince Albert Challenge Cup, but we had a good time and were proud of our efforts. On top of that, exams were all passed, and being on set with George Clooney apparently wasn't that great anyways. Henley 2023, we are coming.



# Niccolò Boat Naming

JOHN OWENS



Members of the current club joined Niccolò Torrigiani's family and friends – including WCBCS members from across several generations – to celebrate his life and contribution to WCBC on the Saturday of Summer Vllls.

For many attendees, this was the first chance they had had to come together and look back on Niccolò's life after his tragic death during the corona pandemic. Nonetheless, the mood on the day was largely celebratory with a new VIII named 'Spirit of Niccolò' in his honour.

This spirit was also given permanent form with a new award for Outstanding Contribution to WCBC

given in his name. The first recipient was Steph Hall, not only a society member who has done a massive amount for WCBC but, poignantly, also a near direct contemporary of Niccolò's.

During the naming ceremony of the boat, speeches were given in Niccolò's honour which recalled his wonderful sense of humour, infectious enthusiasm and loyalty to the club (which physically manifested itself in wearing ludicrous amounts of stash around Oxford).

After the boat was named, the attendees watched the day's racing from the boat house and exchanged bumps war stories from almost a decade of Wadham racing.

Thanks are due to the Torrigiani family for hosting (and providing everyone with some special stash for the day), to College, for providing the barbecue, and to all who came to celebrate a wonderful member of WCBC. The occasionally overlong anecdotes, laughter and bringing together of erstwhile rowers was a fitting way to celebrate a wonderful guy who – after his tragic loss – will remain a feature of Wadham rowing for years to come.



# Women's Rowing

CHARLOTTE BOGLE, Women's President 2021-2022, AND JOVANA PEPIC, Women's Captain 2021-2022, Report on 2021-2022

This year was definitely a roller coaster ride for the women's side of the boat club. We had a strong recruitment process but difficulty with putting together a cohesive W1 crew until just a few weeks before Torpids. Captaincy ended up being a collective challenge shared by many of the seniors throughout the year which created some disruption to the club. Despite this, the Wadham (and HMC) women had some great achievements and did well in both Torpids and Summer Eights.



At the start of Michaelmas, the excitement of coming back to rowing, after disruption because of covid, had not died down and we had a reasonable number of seniors keen to get back on the water as well as a great intake of novices. Alice did a great job of recruiting many women with lots of potential and gave them all the inductions to get them ready for proper training. All the freshers that joined had never rowed before, but many were very committed to improving and it didn't take long for us to put together two crews for Christ Church regatta. The 'B' crew had a tough row with a crab caught towards the start of their first race and a crab caught close to the finish line in their second race so unfortunately, they didn't get a chance to show their strength. But they took these tough races as a motivation to train well for torpids and it brought them together as some of the W2 crew in Hilary. The 'A' crew rowed strongly and were knocked out only in the semi-final.

We did a few external races this year, the first of



which was an extremely cold November day at Wallingford. After waiting on the water for about 45 minutes, trying to think about anything except our numb fingers and toes, the crew had a solid 4k row. We didn't row the fastest time but we all enjoyed it and bonded over the challenging conditions. Luckily, we were off the water before the snow hit that afternoon!

Strangely, the Remenham Challenge was a much warmer and sunnier day. The mixed alumni and students crew had a great row on the Tideway, even though I (Charlotte) caught an embarrassing crab at the start of the race.



In the New Year, the number of outings and land training sessions started to pick up, and there was some competition for places in W1. In mid-February, the crew was almost set and entered to race at Henley fours and eights. It was probably the hardest row for almost everyone in the boat because of the very strong winds and choppy water, which meant





we were a bit disappointed in our performance and determined to fix things for Torpids. With only two weeks to go, every single outing and land training session was crucial. W2 were very cohesive and just had to put in the crew ergs to build up their strength. W1 were almost the opposite, with great strength in the water and on the ergs, but with some improvement on technique and continuity needed, which led to some very last-minute crew changes being made, in classic Rod style. When Torpids week came, W2 had a bad first couple of days due to a crash into a tree and another steering fault. However, they hugely improved throughout the week and managed to keep their place in division 4. W1 had an amazing week. As a massive shock to us all, we managed to bump Hertford at Donnington Bridge on the Wednesday, before we had barely finished our starting sequence of 'rhythms'. None of us could quite believe it when Lizzie called for us to wind down after less than 30 seconds of racing! On the Thursday, Christ Church proved slightly harder to catch, but after an amazing power 10, we caught them just outside our boat house! In fact, we bumped them so hard that they filed an appeal against us for dangerous coxing, which, of course,



was unsuccessful. Oriel gave us an exciting chase on Friday, but thanks to Lizzie's superb line W1 caught them on the crossing, just before boathouse island. We rounded off the week with a full sweep, catching Pembroke in the gut, resulting in blades for W1!! To be honest, this came as quite a surprise to us all – not least Rod – considering we had had only a handful of outings with our racing crew before the start of the week.



In Trinity term, I (Jovana) took over Women's Captaincy from Charlotte since her finals were looming. We had a few new additions to the women's side of the boat club at the start of the term, which meant we were able to consistently boat 3 women's crews. As always, Trinity term flew by, and Summer Eights was upon us in no time. For the first time in 5 years, we had 3 women's boats racing in Summer Eights! For everyone in W3, this was their first ever race, so it was an exciting experience for them all. They started near the bottom of division 7, and, although lack of experience might have gotten the better of them, they had some wonderful races throughout the week, and their performance was impressive. W2 started in a tough spot, at the top of division 4. They had some strong races throughout the week, and ended up losing just 3 spaces, finishing 4th in division 4!

W1 had a tumultuous Eights week. We started with high hopes, following our superb performance in Torpids, and our first day did live up to this. We comfortably bumped Pembroke W1 in the gut, however, our boats got tangled after the bump and we couldn't get clear of the racing line, which caused the race to be klaxoned. An investigation was then



launched by OURCs, during which they threatened to not only revoke our bump but award us and Pembroke penalty bumps for causing the klaxon. This led to a very long appeal process and a sleepless night for me and much of the crew. Fortunately, our appeal was successful, placing us second on the river at the start of day 2. Pembroke, however, received two penalty bumps, which left us surrounded by some very tough competition at the top of division 1. On day 2 we had our sights set on Wolfson, with Univ hot on our tails. We were in a very tight sandwich right off the start. We came within touching distance of Wolfson, however pressure from Univ meant Lizzie had to make the tough decision to cross in front of Boathouse Island in an attempt to evade a bump. We gave it our all, but unfortunately, they caught us at the last second, just before the finish line. This dampened our spirits, and you could feel disappointment in the air as we wrapped up day two of our campaign. We sat on the start line feeling nervier than before on day 3, as we had another very strong crew, Christ Church, chasing us. We gave them a good run, but we struggled to settle into a solid rhythm and were caught just after the gut. We finished on a high on the final day, as we rowed over, 4th in division 1, having lost just one place over the course of the week. The last day was 16 definitely our strongest, most comfortable row of the week, and I think we certainly proved ourselves to be resilient, formidable competition, most definitely deserving of our place at the top of division 1.

As the rowing season came to a close, a few of us had our sights set on one last race to finish off the year: Henley Women's Regatta. Rod and I quickly came up with a crew, comprised of 5 leavers, and we crammed as many training sessions in the 4+ as we could into the limited time we had between Summer

Eights and HWR. We entered the Frank V Harry cup for Development Coxed Fours, and, although expectations weren't that high, given we'd only had a handful of outings, we were all excited to have the opportunity to represent Wadham at such a big event! We faced a pretty strong headwind during the qualifying round, and we came off the water relatively certain that we hadn't made it through to the first heat. To everyone's surprise, when the list of qualifying crews was announced, we found our names amongst the top 16 crews (out of 64 entries!) of our category. It turns out that we were the only Oxford College to qualify for HWR in ANY category, something we are all immensely proud of. We proceeded to be knocked out in the first round by Bristol University A, who went on to make it to the final of our category.



I have to say I wasn't expecting to be Women's Captain again this year, but in hindsight, I'm glad I had the opportunity to do so. It turned out to be a very rewarding ending to my 4 years at Oxford, and as part of WCBC, I'm so proud to have been part of such a supportive, encouraging community. None of what we do would be possible without our amazing coaches, so I also just want to say a massive thank you to Rod, Steph and Bill who worked with the women this year. Although my time at WCBC is over, I don't think this is the end of my rowing career, which is also something I owe to Rod and Steph, and I am tremendously grateful to them for that. All the WCBC women this year have shown themselves to be really dedicated athletes and this is something everyone can be proud of. I think all I have left to say is well done, and I look forward to seeing what the future holds for you all!

### **Christ Church Regatta**

NWA: Rithica Sayeeram (Cox), Marie Smidstrup, Anna Dowell, Harriet Allan, Izzy Grutzner, Holly Pearce, Katherine McKane, Elizabeth Robson, Rachel Finlayson

NWB: Uma Gurav (Cox), Jenny Petch, Georgina Remmer, Emily Smith, Nova Bish, Emma Haran, Eloise Hainsworth, Emily Beasley, Maddy Workman

### **Wallingford Head**

Crew: Michela Giachino (Cox), Charlotte Bogle, Anna Dowell, Isabelle Legge, Alice Edwards, Georgie Walker, Imogen Dyne, Marie Smidstrup, Uma Gurav

### **Remenham Challenge**

Crew: Elizabeth Biggs (Cox), Charlotte Bogle, Jovana Pepic, Georgina Grant, Zara Shepherd-Brierley, Eloise Stark, Anna Baring, Isabelle Legge, Thea Toutoungy

### **Henley 4s & 8s Head**

Crew: Elizabeth Biggs (Cox), Isabelle Legge, Thea Toutoungy, Harriet Allan, Alice Edwards, Dorothee Berthold, Katherine McKane, Charlotte Bogle, Imogen Dyne

### **Torpids**

W1: Elizabeth Biggs (Cox), Isabelle Legge, Jovana Pepic, Harriet Allan, Anna Baring, Dorothee Berthold, Katherine McKane, Charlotte Bogle, Imogen Dyne

W2: Elizabeth Biggs (Cox), Holly Pearce, Uma Gurav, Emily Smith, Verity Hull, Georgie Walker, Anna Dowell/Rachel Finlayson, Elizabeth Robson, Emily Beasley

### **Summer Eights**

W1: Elizabeth Biggs (Cox), JoJo Blyth, Jovana Pepic, Harriet Allan, Katherine McKane, Dorothee Berthold, Georgie Walker, Isabelle Legge, Imogen Dyne

W2: Karishma Khosla (Cox), Emily Smith, Nova Bish, Marie Smidstrup, Leah Harper, Elizabeth Robson, Uma Gurav, Georgina Remmer, Rachel Finlayson

W3: Michelle Chun-Han Hsu (Cox), Isabel Wellings, Jenny Petch, Catriona Rooney, Verity Hull/Maral Bayaraa, Divya Thuremella, Emily Beasley, Ellen Appleby, Sophie Hanck

### **Henley Women's Regatta**

Crew: Elizabeth Biggs (Cox), Jovana Pepic, Harriet Allan, Katherine McKane, Dorothee Berthold



# Men's Rowing

CONOR MCMAHON, Men's Captain 2022-2023, Reports on 2021-2022



On the men's side, we had a good year of rowing with lots of enthusiasm from all the novices and seniors. After a term of rowing, despite some of the crews missing a few outings, we had two strong crews to enter Christ Church Regatta. NMA started on Wednesday, racing against New College who were sadly too fast for them. They had another chance on Thursday, against Merton, which they won. NMB raced against Oriel on Wednesday, and despite some messy rowing, they powered through and won by a quarter of a length. Unfortunately, on Friday, some rowers couldn't race due to course commitments, so we had to scratch NMA and combine the crews to race against St. Benet's, who we sadly couldn't beat.



In Torpids, M1 had a strong run. Although they were unable to catch Keble on Wednesday, they tried again on Thursday and were successful in bumping. On the following days, they bumped Teddy Hall and Pembroke, moving up to 6th place in Division I. M2 started as the sandwich boat at the top of Division IV. On Wednesday, they rowed over, which meant they got to race at the bottom of Division III but sadly didn't bump. On Thursday, they were bumped

by Green Templeton, but on Friday, bumped St. Anne's, giving them a chance to race in Division III again. A bump against St. Anthony's meant they had climbed into Division III. On Saturday, St. Hilda's bumped them back down to where they started, at the top of Division IV. Men's 3 initially had some tough crews around them and were bumped five places down on the first two days. They managed to get bumped only once by Univ on Friday but on Saturday, despite getting bumped by St. Peter's, they continued rowing strong and achieved an over bump on Teddy Hall, allowing them to finish 2nd in Division VI.

M1 entered Bedford Regatta, a popular amateur regatta 70km from Oxford, and their first race was against Merton. They started off well, securing a lead for the first 2/3rds of the race, but towards the end, the balance of the boat started to falter, and Merton put in a huge push to win "by one foot". Sadly, M1 was knocked out of the regatta and had to head home after just one race.



In Summer Eights, M1 were looking to bump Teddy Hall and on Wednesday they were rapidly catching up to them. However, just as they were about to bump, tragedy struck as Rob's footplate came loose, causing the whole boat to slow down and they were eventually bumped by Wolfson. On Thursday they rowed over, and on Friday they had another chance to catch Teddy Hall. Without any mishaps, this time they were able to bump them, and after rowing over on Saturday they finished 6<sup>th</sup> place in Division 1. M2 had a tough run, with 3 M1 crews immediately behind them, and despite trying

as hard as they could to get away, they were bumped by Anthony's, Linacre, Green Templeton and Univ on the four days, achieving spoons. They finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in Division IV.

All in all, the men's side of the rowers definitely improved a lot over the year, thanks to the great commitment of all the crews as well as our amazing coaches Rod, Steph, Scott and Robin, and I look forward to rowing with them next year.

### **Christ Church Regatta**

NMA: Agathiyen Bragadeesh (Cox), David Morrow, Eden Jones, David Sun, Robert Allan, Sebastian Leeming, Max White, Reuben Heffer, Conor McMahon

NMB: Michela Giachino (Cox), Piotr Grynfelder, Joe Hing, Daniel Berry, Seung-Bin Joo, Daniel Gilmore, Pawel Narkiewicz, Will Nathan, Carlos Aranha

### **Wallingford Head**

Crew: Elizabeth Biggs (Cox), Rob Murphy, Noah Malick, Freddie zu Wied, Will Chamberlin Maxime Kayser, Wissam Ghantous, Jamie McElhinney, Aidan Gallagher

### **Remenham Challenge**

Crew: Adam Lewis-Douglas, Aidan Gallagher, Rob Murphy, Freddie zu Wied, Drake Slaikeu Lawhead, Wissam Ghantous, Maxime Kayser, Jan Hein

### **IWL**

Crew: Michela Giachino (Cox), Rob Murphy, Will Chamberlin, Maxime Kayser, Freddie zu Wied, Wissam Ghantous, Pablo Tretow, Aidan Gallagher

### **Henley 4s & 8s Head**

Crew: Michela Giachino (Cox), Rob Murphy, Will Chamberlin, Maxime Kayser, Freddie zu Wied, Wissam Ghantous, Pablo Tretow, Jan Hein

### **Torpids**

M1: Michela Giachino (Cox), Rob Murphy, Will Chamberlin, Maxime Kayser, Freddie zu Wied, Wissam Ghantous, Jamie McElhinney, Pablow Tretow, Aidan Gallagher

M2: Agathiyen Bragadeesh (Cox), Jan Langermeyer, Thomas Williams, Luke Palin, Dan Gilmore, Will Nathan, David Morrow, Conor McMahon, Max Hudson

M3: Michelle Chun-Han Hsu (Cox), Saoud Khz, Phillip Siller, Stephan Rauschenbach, David Sun, Piotr Grynfelder, Morten Pahus/Lucy Davis, Nat McKibben/Gina Remmer, Seung-Bin Joo

### **Bedford Regatta**

Crew: Michela Giachino (Cox), Rob Murphy, Aidan Gallagher, Maxime Kayser, Jamie McElhinney, Freddie zu Wied, Luke Palin, Conor McMahon, Jan Hein

### **Summer Eights**

M1: Michela Giachino (Cox), Ed Campbell, Aidan Gallagher, Maxime Kayser, Will Chamberlin, Rob Murphy, Luke Palin, Freddie zu Wied, Jan Langermeyer

M2: Louis Corrigan (Cox), Max Hudson, Phillip Siller, Stephan Rauschenbach, Dan Gilmore, David Sun, David Morrow, Conor McMahon, Seung-Bin Joo



# Save the Date

## 2022

23-26 Nov: Linacre Regatta (Christ Church)  
 27 Nov: Wallingford Regatta  
 18 Dec: Remenham Challenge

## 2023

1-4 March: Torpids  
 4 March: Women's Head of the River Race  
 23 March: Head of the River Race  
 24-27 May: Summer Eights  
 10 June: Oriel Regatta  
 16-18 June: Henley Women's Regatta  
 27 June-2 July: Henley Royal Regatta

# BC Committee

Position	2022-23	2021-22
<b>President</b>	Isabelle Legge	Charlotte Bogle Aidan Gallagher
<b>Men's Capt.</b>	Conor McMahon	Freddie zu Wied
<b>Women's Capt.</b>	Nova Bish	Alice Edwards Jovana Pepic
<b>Capt. of Coxes</b>	Lizzie Robson	Agi Bragadeesh Lizzie Robson
<b>Men's VC</b>	Phillip Siller David Sun	Jamie McElhinney Noah Malick
<b>Women's VC</b>	Gina Remmer Charlotte Bogle Leah Harper	Rithica Sayeeram Anna Dowell
<b>Secretary</b>	Charlotte Bogle Krishi Khosla	Georgie Walker
<b>Treasurer</b>	Leah Harper	Wissam Ghantous
<b>Welfare</b>	Holly Pearce Verity Hull	Isabelle Legge Imogen Dyne
<b>Bargees</b>	TBC	Jovana Pepic



# Thank you!

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 With thanks to all the contributors.

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# WCBCS enters the 21st Century!

For years the WCBCS membership list has been in the form of a manually updated spreadsheet, and unfortunately that means that, over the years, there are people we have lost touch with.

In the last year we have implemented a new database, which has two benefits.

Firstly, those affiliated to the society can log in and change their details (email address, postal address etc) so that we can remain in touch.

Secondly, it's much easier to give us money. You can give one off donations by debit or credit card, or set up a direct debit with various annual or monthly amounts.

The database can be found here: <https://membermojo.co.uk/wcbcs/> Your email address is your login, and once logged in you can create a password.

Do forward the link to anyone you know that might be interested in joining the society and keeping up to date with WCBC activities. They can sign up through the database.

If you have any queries either in relation to logging in, or making a payment, then please email me at [wcbcsmembership@gmail.com](mailto:wcbcsmembership@gmail.com)