

# WCBCS NEWS

48th EDITION | 2019-2021

# WELCOME

By all rights, this should be more a pamphlet than a newsletter. Government reaction to a virus which is broadly irrelevant to the young deprived them of what will have been for many of us the highlights of an undergraduate degree. There were fewer efficient mornings on the Isis and crisp paddles at Godstow, and insufficient racing.

Yet how remarkable is the spirit in the reports that follow. I'm not banging on about the resilience of youth, because there is indeed a strong sense of the repeated frustrations of 2020-21, and the expression rankles, not least because we all get each day once, as we will be reminded when, later in this newsletter, we think of Niccolo, and the missing of Torpids and Eights means a permanent deprivation of very special, unforgettable experiences, from young people whose lives are consequently a little less full. What I do mean is that Wadham rowers have again done their best, and it's impressive, and you, dear readers, can feel good that at no point did they lack for support.

Much of the impetus this last year has come, as ever, from Rod, with many others volunteering their time and effort, notably Steph, but the students themselves have committed to 0630 Godstow outings, to Zoom circuits, and to creative competition in ways that demonstrate the spirit is strong.

Next year we all hope that WCBC will be tigers defying the laws of gravity, racing cars passing by like Lady Godiva. Or similar. We hope that Wadham rowers will again compete against the lesser Colleges. Winning is preferable, but the racing is unforgettable, and they deserve it after what they've been through.

As for the Society, well, we have all felt pretty impotent to improve the lot of recent BC members this past year. The coffers are however relatively full, and it was most excellent to see so many current students at the President's Dinner, some of whom even made an attempt to dress in such a way as to enhance the sense of occasion. Following the expansion of Rod's elixir production in St Austell, we hope that yet another year of Wadham oarspeople will benefit from his wisdom, enthusiasm and care, only this year doing so with more Heads, bumps, tears and cheers, in the right proportions.

BEN WILLIAMS  
Chair, WCBCS

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CLUB SOCIETY  
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# LOOKING FORWARD TO 2022!

ROD ANDREWS, HEAD COACH



I have started this article with the final paragraph from last year's newsletter!

'This coming academic year will be very challenging for the BC, we have lost a whole year of activity, several experienced rowers have now left, others are going into their third or final year with only one season of activity behind them and the returning novices will be starting from scratch! We are also likely to lose some to other sports that you can participate in, not train five times a week and have no river time! It is unlikely the College gym and rowing tank will be open during Michaelmas so we will look for alternatives such as moving the ergs to another more open area, group running and cycling. Forthcoming fresher development will be very difficult, but I am sure we will find some way to get them involved, maybe one to one using the bank tub so I will be looking for lots of help and support.'

A year later and very little changed from my original assumptions. After a period of restrictions and boathouse closures, only a limited number of outings, mainly sculling, were possible before last year's summer vacation and a lengthy shutdown.

Michaelmas 2020 started with a large promising fresher intake, despite covid restrictions, we were able to undertake one to one 'bank tub' and erg induction sessions. From this we put together novice/senior combined crews and boated for a limited number of outings before yet another lockdown! A combination of 'red flag', Government and British Rowing guidance reduced Hilary term to a handful of outings - the river finally reopened at the end of March, but restricted boathouse access determined how little water time was possible between the BCs' within the boathouse consortium in contrast to others, particularly

the Graduate BC's who had unlimited multi-crew outings. OURC advised there was no need for rule changes to make a level playing field, something that is now reflected by the results of any competitions!

With all restrictions lifted we were back on the water and quickly moved four eights and two launches up to Godstow during '0th' week of Trinity ready for 6.30am outing times we were restricted to!

With a strong men's squad, we were able to boat two senior eights as well as two novice crews on the Isis - unfortunately due to revision, exams and unavailability, crew orders were continually rotated so regular but reduced number of outings could proceed. Similarly, the much smaller and inexperienced women's squad encountered similar restrictions meaning most would only fit in two outings weekly. OURC went ahead with 'Summer Torpids' delayed until seventh week but after some discussion we took the decision not to enter any crews as we were not prepared nor had enough coxes with suitable experience to race safely! On reflection I think the men could have raced had we decided to settle crews rather than boating matched crews throughout the term which may have reduced the progress in preparation for next year. However, we will go into next year with the potential to start with three or four senior crews.

For the women, not racing was the sensible option, with only novices rowing their first full term and others with limited experience there was no time to prepare crews capable of racing safely. W1 would have started Head of the River - to race and lose so many places under Torpid rules would have been dangerous and demoralising for those involved. So, despite our justifiable protests all WCBC crews were subjected to six penalty bumps which could take a while to recover - the women will be restarting with a very inexperienced squad plus the incoming fresher group. I draw a comparison with 2013-14, we encountered eighty consecutive days of river closure, but the crews committed to a lengthy spell of intense land training - we all know what happened next and in subsequent years. We have done it before so we can do it again!

Throughout the year I have been really impressed with the amount of land training undertaken, either in isolation, zoom sessions, outside circuits or working in groups to introduce a competitive spirit including an external event against Jesus Cambridge. Sculling has also become quite popular particularly with the senior women, something I am keen to encourage - the progress made can only benefit sweep rowing.

Thanks to all joint Captains and coaches for all the effort put into what has been a unique year, next year will be just as challenging - we will be asking the coaches to give up yet more time at unsociable hours to help guide what I think will be a very positive forthcoming year. We cannot expect an increased amount of voluntary coaching without offering some incentive for it to continue - but I am adamant we



should try and continue to develop from within, especially as I begin to step back my own commitment level.

In Michaelmas we will be purchasing new blades for both squads, looking further ahead to early next year we hope to add two new eights, not only giving Wadham one of the most impressive racing fleets but surely an incentive to those wanting to row in them! Longer term goal is to upgrade and extend the number of small boats, but this requires more racking space before considering how 'you can help fund this'.

#### ANDREWS' ARCHIVES:

This year is the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of my late father Albert, the former OUBC Waterman, so I thought I would share two photos from our family archives. The first picture is of him driving the OUBC launch Bosphoros on a training session with the Oxford crew, I don't know if I took the photo, but I was lucky enough to join many, many of these outings, listening and learning from the various experienced coaching teams. This picture dates from 1968, the coach was Ronnie Howard a former Oxford Blue and President before becoming

Rowing Master at Radley and a regular OUBC coach. In the bow seat is the late Daniel Topolski who went on to become one of Oxford's most successful coaches - stringing together a ten-year winning run including the 1987 crew which was stroked by our very own Gavin Stuart!

Later I recall being out on the launch with Dan coaching, it was an early Tideway outing prior to the 1982 race. Rob Clay in the stroke seat (bowside) was catching the rough water during the recovery so Dan decided to raise his gate height by two washers - he then suggested we watched strokeside for the rest of the outing to see who would be unlikely to notice a change to their own gate height to balance out Rob's adjustment. After the outing debrief the crew left leaving Dan, my father and I to make the 'silent' rig changes! This is something I have remembered and used when setting up crews - rig the boat level throughout then make equal changes up and down the boat with the aim to keep the boat level and then rig bow pair lower and stern pair higher. Following Dan's legacy, I have preferred to get this done in isolation from the crew where possible.

This second picture is one of my favourites, my father with his Cambridge counterpart 'Alf Twinn'. They would spend time together at Putney during the two weeks build up to the Boatrace and in the boat tents during Henley Royal Regatta. During the long summer vacation, they would also meet up at the annual boatmen's Boatrace, alternating years between Oxford and Cambridge - a boatrace in the morning with crews made up of boatmen from Oxford, Cambridge plus a few 'ringers' from the Tideway, I had the misfortune to race a few times! This was followed by a cricket match in the afternoon and rounded off with dinner at either Jesus Cambridge or Trinity Oxford. I was fourteen when I first rowed in this, the crews were good containing both professional oarsmen and some of international standard, a good learning curve, the catches were quick but the glass emptying later faster still!

Albert and Alf enjoyed a friendly rivalry, their joint Tideway Boatrace didn't start until after the main event and everything had been packed away and loaded up ready for the journey home. Guinness v Whiskey and Soda commenced in Thames Rowing Club, moving on to Vesta, Barclay's Bank Boat Club and ending up in London Rowing Club. This continued neck and neck until the formidable Mrs Twinn escorted Alf out of the bar - Guinness went on to win by two and a half pints!

Rod







## CELEBRATING NICCOLÒ

In late 2020, we lost our dear friend and WCBC alumnus, Niccolò Torrigiani. We got to know Niccolò through Wadham College Boat Club, an institution for which he sacrificed a lot of his time during his Oxford career, and one whose culture of openness and accessibility he did a huge amount to foster. His impact on the club was however not just limited to an institutional level. Niccolò made a very large number of great friendships during his time at Wadham and a lot of them came from the Boat Club. While writing this tribute and sharing stories, we were continually moved by people's memories not only of specific moments from Niccolò's time at Wadham but also by the sense of the friendliness of the culture which he helped to build. Out of this

culture came personal friendships and, even if many of us had not seen him so much in recent years, we were always struck by how easy it was to reconnect. During his captaincy, which bore more than a little success, he could at times be slightly chaotic but the warmth of his apologetic smile meant that even the grumpiest of rowers could (usually) forgive him immediately. He was also a stalwart of the club's social calendar, which in his time at Wadham was marked not only by his personal generosity but also by the loudness of his laughter, reaching all four corners of the most echo-y of Wadham halls or the most cramped of curry houses. Niccolò's generosity could be idiosyncratic (he once gave the whole of the first

boat a bottle of skull vodka as an unsolicited present) but it was always big-hearted and much appreciated. Not only that but he had a public enthusiasm for WCBC that was infectious and insisted on wearing everything he could conceivably lay his hands on with WCBC's logo (and indeed, in the case of his fancy dress captain's hat, garments with only tangential relations to rowing). Both in sporting and social fields, Niccolò thus became a true ambassador for Wadham's Boat Club and one who will be deeply missed by all of us who had the pleasure of calling him our team mate.

For all of the above reasons, we would like to remember Niccolò in a formal way within the Boat Club. His untimely death has reminded us how important he was to a generation of Wadham rowers and we would like to create a legacy of his commitment and enthusiasm for Wadham College Boat Club. With that in mind, his friends, in collaboration with the current club, propose to set up an award in his name for "Outstanding Contribution to the Boat Club" to be awarded on an annual basis. The citation for the award is outlined below. By doing this, we hope to remember our friend within the bounds of an institution through which we were fortunate enough to get to know him. – Alumni of Wadham College Boat Club



## CONTRIBUTE

Niccolò's family have opened a Virgin Money Giving page to raise money for Cardiomyopathy Foundation and Cardiac Risk in the Young, charities that do research on the conditions that affected Niccolò as well as for the Boat Club. If you would like to make a contribution towards these charities, you can access the giving page through this link: <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/SomeoneSpecial/NiccoloTorrighiani>

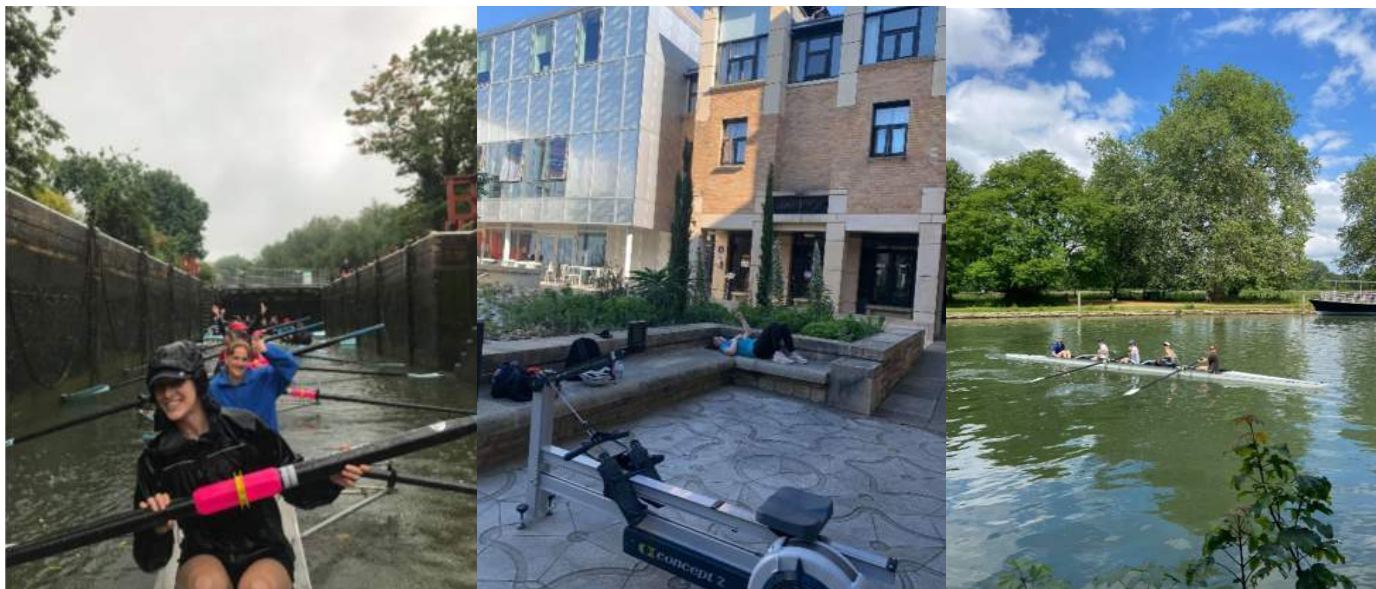
## SAVE THE DATE

To celebrate Niccolò's life we plan to host a small gathering at the Boat House on the Saturday of Eights week (28th May 2022) in conjunction with his family. We invite all those who knew or knew of him to join the celebration to share memories and stories, and hopefully see the unveiling of the boat that will be christened in his name, the "Spirit of Niccolò".

The Niccolò Torrighiani Award for Outstanding Contribution to Wadham College Boat Club Niccolò Torrighiani (WCBC Men's Captain 2012-2013) not only brought the hard work of an M1 rower nor the long hours of a captain to his boatie career at Wadham but also a warmth and generosity of spirit that was reflected in the club's spirit under his tutelage. His beaming smile and loud, staccato laugh were the hallmarks of social events (and more than a few outings) during his time at Wadham. On top of that, WCBC owes much of its sporting and social success to structures he helped to foster and nurture.

This award is intended to reflect a similar commitment to WCBC by rewarding a current member of the club, who not only commits to the sporting side of rowing but also to creating an inclusive, warm and fun atmosphere for their peers. By giving it annually, it is hoped that Niccolò's legacy to WCBC can become a permanent one and that the club's spirit which he helped to mold can be cemented into perpetuity long after his tragic death robbed him of the opportunity to do so in person.





# WOMEN'S ROWING

JOVANA PEPIC reports on 2019-20

This year I have had the pleasure of taking over a flourishing women's side of WCBC – and what a year it has been! It certainly hasn't been the most conventional year of rowing, but the growth and progress made by every single member of the club really is a testament to their hard work and resilience in the face of everything this year has thrown at us. Obviously, COVID-19 and the national lockdown have been a massive part of the challenges of this year. However, even before these were problems (which feels like a very long time ago), this year has been an unpredictable one for rowing - but with some heartening and hugely impressive results.

It all started off so well: we began Michaelmas with a fantastic returning senior squad and a yearcard packed with external races. Everyone arrived back at Oxford ready and raring to go, and recruitment got off to a strong start, with our open boat house overflowing with keen novices. We had a great intake of incredible potential and we were looking set to have 3 novice women's boats to enter into Christ Church Regatta, and we were all looking forward to the prospect of having a W3 to enter into Torpids and Summer Eights.

Pretty soon, however, the river was red flagged, and this was how it stayed. Despite the distinct lack of water time, the novices' eagerness did not waver, as they worked hard in the tank and in the gym. And it paid off: at the end of Michaelmas we entered 2 novice women's crews into Christ Church 'Ergatta', and our A crew made it to the final where they were narrowly beaten by a single second by Christ Church themselves. Although not the regatta we were expecting, this strange format created unexpected areas in which to excel. The novices practiced their erg changeovers and their 500m sprints, and showed themselves to be very impressive athletes, in ways the seniors had never had to prove.

In December, we took one crew, made up of a mixture of students and

alumni, to race in the Remenham Challenge on the tideway, which we were kindly invited to, and turned out to be our only fixture of this academic year. The Tideway didn't disappoint, and despite the slightly blustery conditions, and the scratch crew, we all thoroughly enjoyed getting back out onto the water, and it reminded us what we'd been missing. We spent the Christmas vac looking forward to a more stable Hilary, with W1 hoping to get down to work on a crucial Torpids campaign to retain our headship. We were coming up with ways to expose the novices





to more water time, worried about their relative lack of experience but confident we could make up for it.

In fact, the seniors should have perhaps been looking to the novices for tips on how to spend an entire term training off the water. The rain started at the beginning of Hilary and never really stopped, and the river level and forecast were all we could talk about. Luckily, Rod has always been a fan of a cross-training programme, and in true Wadham spirit, we pressed onwards with enthusiasm. We substituted the missed river sessions for club runs, cycles and ergs, and took the opportunity to travel to other stretches of water, including at Dorney and Swindon. We missed Godstow and the Isis of course, but again this uncharted territory compelled us to adapt and improve our skills in new ways. We became very at home in the gym, and have even missed it in our time away from Oxford, which we had never realised would be possible! Our strength certainly improved, and sessions in the tank meant we could work on our technique too. My vice captains and I were worried about the effect of this disrupted training on the commitment of the squad, but so many members actually seemed to double the intensity of their efforts, tirelessly making up for the outings we were missing. I think it's safe to say that everyone exceeded their own expectations, everyone's engagement has been truly impressive, and it has been an absolute pleasure on my part to captain such an empowering group of women! Unfortunately, the weather conditions didn't get any better throughout Hilary, and after 2 storms, very little water time, and a flurry of cancellations, the term came to an end without seeing us take part in any racing.

We hoped Trinity would bring an end to the stormy weather and allow us some much-needed water time, but, yet again, our plans were curbed – to everyone's surprise – by a global pandemic. However, all of these disruptions meant we were perhaps less phased by the lockdown and remote Trinity that we would have been otherwise. How will we train without boats? Well, at least we've had two terms of practice. Obviously, this was an extremely worrisome time and college rowing and the outcome of races was probably not anyone's main concern. However, a steady training programme still felt important to

us, and Rod recommended workouts that could be done at home, with no need for a gym or equipment. Most fun of all were the twice-weekly circuit sessions carried out over Zoom, which provided a sense of structure and feeling of normality that felt really valuable. It is a cliché, but still very true, that despite being scattered across the globe there are ways that we all came together which might not have happened in a normal term. For example, I organised the 1610 challenge which saw current students and society members collaboratively complete 1,610km for charity, in accordance with Wadham's founding date. We actually ended up massively superseding this target, and completing a total of 2635km and raising over \$2000 on the way! We were reminded of the value of pushing ourselves and proved it was still possible to work as a team, even virtually.

This year seems to have shown that, somehow, rowing is valuable even when it's not really happening. With no races to work towards, or even outings to plan, we have still kept training. At first, this was with future competitions in mind, which pushed us onwards despite never materialising. However, in these last few months, when all question of bumps and head races and 5ks has seemed trivial, the boat club has still worked so hard and been a very significant unit. It seems to be important to many people, and it has been very special to see the value of community be made so clear by troubling external events. Despite the most tumultuous year in, I think it's



safe to say, a while, the women's side has definitely developed and proved themselves in new and exciting ways. This could not have happened without a strong committee, and I want to thank my vice captains, Anna Baring and Emma Richards for making my life so much easier, and, of course, Aidan, who's done a brilliant job on the men's side. Rod, as always, kept us going in the right direction if we ever did waver. I think this year has been an endurance test, and there is certainly no guarantee that things will stabilise soon, but I know that we will go into next year prepared to face the uncertainty, and indeed benefit from it. I'd like to wish Isla Henderson all the best for the coming year, as she takes over from me as Women's Captain, with Charlotte Bogle and Zara Shepherd-Brierly, I have every confidence they'll smash it, and I look forward to continue doing my bit in my new role!

#### ISLA HENDERSON reports on 2020-21

To say that this past year has been an interesting one for the boat club would be an understatement, particularly when you consider that for most of it we were missing a rather important component: boats.

At one point the river seemed so far out of reach that we almost rebranded as the Wadham College Boat Club Cycling Club and spent more time doing challenges to Danish trap music over Teams than we did on the water. But one thing I am happy to say we never lost even in the most difficult times was that community which is truly at the heart of the boat club. The spirit of the squad is inspiring, and it has been a privilege to captain such an amazing group of people, whose continued dedication and support of the club has given a little slice of normal in such an abnormal world.

Returning to Oxford in October, the boathouse was still off limits, the gym had a capacity of all of two people and mornings on the river felt like a distant memory. Despite these setbacks the year started off well after an incredible novice intake of more than 70 keen freshers across the club. With a little help from the bank tub and small group gym inductions in the Moser theatre the freshers got a taste of rowing



with the hope that changing restrictions meant that outings were just a risk assessment away. Thanks here must be given to Aidan for his tireless work with college and the consortium to ensure the safe reopening of the boathouse. And sure enough, by third week the hard work paid off, and as October drew to a close Wadham boats were on the water once again.

The girls got in a whopping one outing before poor weather conditions and a national lockdown conspired to take rowing off the agenda for the rest of Michaelmas.

Though we were disappointed, it would take more than that to keep us down for long and we soon saw the return of the virtual circuits of the summer, this time in the form of weekly competitions in 'boats' of eight. The circuits plan we had previously enjoyed in the marquee in the college gardens was now a chance to bag points for your team, with the added bonus of making sure you knew who your downstairs neighbours were. Morten's endless creativity in the form of song challenges introduced us all to the joys of Danish trap music and weekly yoga sessions helped to counter







the spine-crunching effects of lectures watched in bed.

After spending the vac working hard in our teams and with outings still looking like a distant memory as Hilary term approached, it was time to take the competition to the next level. We sought worthy opponents and found them in Jesus College Cambridge Boat Club and so began the great Hillentry Wadjeshuams Challenge. Over the course of eight weeks we did battle in everything from squats to spelling, bake-off to botany, and of course the old favourite, running.

As the challenge came to a close, two crews were neck and neck and the result was a draw between Wadham's Wadh Would Jesus Do and Jesus' 8 Hashbrowns. There was only one option: a tiebreaker.

The big day dawned and the squad came out in full force, doing their bit running, cycling and erging their way as far as they could to ensure we travelled the furthest weighted distance as a club. At almost midnight the totals were close, prompting a late-night Teams circuits session to push us over the line and to victory, 243 points to 226.

Moving into Trinity term, things were finally starting to look up - the river was reopening and rowing was back to stay. Though we sadly had to withdraw from Summer Eights due to safety concerns with a lack of experience in the crew, Trinity brought with it lots of sunny mornings and amazing memories. We had seven weeks packed with outings at Godstow. For once, the weather was on our side and our only distraction was swimmers and ducklings.

Changing availability, due to exams looming over us all, left us rowing in different crews pretty much every week. Despite this, everyone, especially everyone new to rowing this year, was very dedicated to improving and getting the most out of finally having a term to row. Advice and patience from the senior and experienced women, alongside the perseverance of the newer women, meant we finished the term with three crews worth of strong rowers.

The year ended on a high note with the women entering in three mixed ability eights in Oriel regatta. Finally, a chance to show what all the training was for! It was a great day of racing with two of the crews progressing to the semi-finals. We didn't take it too seriously though and all enjoyed dressing up in matching outfits with our crews and celebrating all our hard work afterwards with an obligatory trip to the pub.

Looking back on the year it may seem like it was the pandemic that defined us as a boat club, but what I think it really highlighted was the importance the club holds for so many of us and the perseverance this year is truly a testament to the people within it. I cannot thank Morten and my incredible vice-captains Charlotte Bogle and Zara Shephard-Brierly enough for all their help, and also Aidan and Jovana for all their support.

Last but by no means least I want to thank Rod and Steph for all the hours they put in - we really could not do it without you! I wish Alice Edwards the best of luck next year as she takes over and have no doubts that she will absolutely smash it and women's rowing will be back next year as strong as ever.

## WOMENS SQUAD 2019

Lizzie Fox  
Jovana Pepic  
Jovana Deden  
Anna Baring  
Eloise Stark  
Emma Richards  
Dorothee Berthold  
Charlotte Bogle  
Jacinta Kynaston  
Thea Toutoungy  
Mary Brown  
Gerda Krivaite  
Cat Rooney  
Immy Dyne  
Laura Bickerton  
Isla Henderson  
Maria Beer Vuco  
Isabelle Legge  
Elizabeth Biggs  
Lily Rachel  
Elizabeth Bircham

WOMEN	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
I PEMBROKE				
HERTFORD				
KEBLE				
ORIEL				
WOLFSON				
CHRIST CHURCH				
BALLIOL				
NEW COLLEGE				
MAGDALEN				
II UNIVERSITY				
JESUS				
ST ANNE'S				
L.M.H.				
TRINITY				
ST JOHN'S				
SOMERVILLE				
LINCOLN				
BRASENOSE				
III ST CATHERINE'S				
MANSFIELD				
WOLFSON II				
ST HILDA'S				
LINACRE				
WORCESTER				
ST HUGH'S				
S.E.H.				
ST PETER'S				
IV EXETER				
QUEEN'S				
CORPUS CHRISTI				
ST ANTONY'S				
MERTON				
ORIEL II				
SOMERVILLE II				
REGENT'S PARK				
NEW COLLEGE II				
V PEMBROKE II				
WOLFSON III				
CHRIST CHURCH II				
MANSFIELD II				
ST HUGH'S II				
UNIVERSITY II				
LINACRE II				
BALLIOL II				
WORCESTER II				
VI CORPUS CHRISTI II				
HERTFORD II				
ST CATHERINE'S II				
UNIVERSITY III				
L.M.H. II				
ST PETER'S II				
ST BENET'S HALL				
MAGDALEN II				
BRASENOSE II				
VII CHRIST CHURCH III				
WOLFSON IV				
S.E.H. II				
TRINITY II				
WOLFSON V				
ST CATHERINE'S III				
OSLER HOUSE				
OSLER HOUSE II				
ST ANTONY'S II				
S.E.H. III				

## 2020

Isla Henderson  
Zara Shepherd Brierley  
Charlotte Bogle  
Jovana Pepic  
Lizzie Fox  
Georgie Grant  
Laura Bickerton  
Megan Edwards  
Dorothee Berthold  
Thea Toutoungy  
Lil Bircham  
Lizzie Biggs  
Izzy Legge  
Immy Dyne  
Lily Rachel  
Michela Giachino  
Hannah Ashford  
Annabel Staines  
Uma Gurav  
Jess White  
Eva Hayward  
Maddy Workman  
Asha Salway-Kiggins  
Anna Dowell  
Georgie Walker  
Rithica Sayeeram  
Charlotte Mathe  
Hannah Gardner  
Alice Edwards

## NOTES

2020: No Torpids or Eights.  
2021: No Torpids in Hilary. Eights was rebranded as Summer Torpids. We withdrew with exceptional circumstances but no exemption was granted so each crew recieved 6 penalty bumps.

## STARTING ORDER

Torpids  
W1 - 7th, Div1  
W2 - 7th, Div 4  
Eights  
W1 - 3rd, Div 1  
W2 - 11th, Div 3

Source: Anu Dudhia, <http://eodg.atm.ox.ac.uk/user/dudhia/rowing/bumps>

## LIZZIE FOX reflects on 2020

### BEST BIT

...September/October sessions in the single with Steph & Zara when the legs feel powerful and the boat does what I want it to and that happy but exhausted feeling at the end is just amazing.

### WORST BIT

...probably the string of cancellations leading up to wehorr - so many outings had been cancelled by then, we'd gone through the drama of torpids happening or not and we'd worked so hard in the gym to get seriously fit and it was quite an anticlimax to hear it was cancelled. Little did we know almost all of normal life would be cancelled just a few weeks later!

### MOST SURREAL BIT

...doing squats in my pyjamas while brushing my teeth for Rod's cumulative squad squat challenge. Rowers are definitely loopy...







# MEN'S ROWING

AIDEN GALLAGHER, MEN'S CAPTAIN reports on 2019-2020

It's been somewhat of a strange year at WCBC. When the river initially closed in the first week of Michaelmas, I braced myself for what I then thought would be a 'rough few weeks'. Two storms, one pandemic, and 11 race cancellations later, worry about an amber-flagged river seemed a world away - oh for our biggest issue to be a lack of X-status coxes!

In the senior squad, the year started off somewhat as planned - we had a fantastic returning squad, a great external racing yearcard, and there was lots of motivation to make the most of Michaelmas training. Likewise with the novices we couldn't have asked for a better start, with high numbers recruited and lots of potential already very visible among them. All in all, spirits were high, and the sense of anticipation of the year to come was palpable.

And then the river closed...and then stayed closed. We were forced to watch from the confines of the college erg dungeon as our externals got crossed out one by one, and the prospect of getting out on the water remained ever more elusive. Indeed it says enough that come Remenham Challenge, the one race we did manage to make it to this year, we still hadn't been able to get out on the water in the crew we were racing - a 5km windy slog from Chiswick Pier to Vesta laid very bare our lack of preparation.

Under these challenging circumstances, many other college boatclubs found themselves floundering, and indeed some simply gave up the ghost altogether. At Wadham however, things couldn't have been any more different. Under Rod's watchful guidance, the whole boatclub stepped up to the mark, and embarked on one of the most ambitious training efforts I've seen in my time rowing: we erged, we tanked, we ran, we cycled, we travelled to Dorney Lake, to Swindon, and we did some of the most horrendous circuits I could come up with in a delirium late the night before. The fruits of our hard work following a training plan described as 'especially robust' by Rod (no small compliment those who know him will understand) were immediately evident any time we did get out on the water, and especially so in the amazing achievements of the novices, who made it to a closely-fought final in ChCh 'Ergatta', beaten only narrowly by the home team.

After the two terms of river closures, I thought we might be due a break come Trinity; unfortunately the fates had other plans, and going into the Easter vac, we found ourselves in lockdown, without any prospect of summer rowing, and now spread out across the UK and the world. Nevertheless we persevered, downloaded Zoom, and embarked on biweekly circuits, at first following the British Rowing rubric, however later alternating between different athletes' plans in different weeks - with interesting and varied

results! The highlight of the term was of course the epic 1610 fundraiser, primarily organised and promoted by Jovana, where alumni and current students united to absolutely smash both the distance and the donation targets. A special mention must go to Adam Roberts, and his herculean effort in cycling for 24hrs, completing 5 athletes' work alone from his living room!

There are many reflections to be made on the last year, however the main thing that has stuck with me has been the enormous importance of community. We're lucky at WCBC to have such a great cross-boat and cross-squad dynamic, without which I'm sure none of this would have been possible. But beyond that, the active squad sits within a larger network of alumni and coaches who provide amazing support throughout the year, enabling us to do everything that we do with such great success. I'd like to extend my thanks to the whole society for everything they've made and continue to make possible, and I look forwards to developing a closer relationship between the two halves of WCBC in the future.

Thanks must also go to the outgoing committee, especially my vices, and of course Jovana, all of whom have made this somewhat challenging year survivable with their hard work and support. A mention (and much more) must also obviously go to Rod, for whom no original words of thanks can surely exist, whose tireless dedication to (and patience with!) the squad is the main reason for our continued prominence on the river.

Thanks to his rigorous programming we are going into next year whatever it may look like, in as strong a position as we could be; with high rates of novice retention and many M1 returners, I'm eager to see what we can do! I wish all the best to Morten, the incoming captain, and look forwards to working with the incoming committee across the next year in my new role.

MORTEN PAHUS, 2021 MEN'S CAPTAIN, reports.

When I, at an AGM during a first lockdown that now seems so long ago, accepted the role of captain, it seemed hard to imagine the extent to which the pandemic would define all things WCBC this year.

In many ways, there's very little to report on - and in many ways, the dynamics of this year have forged experiences and memories so unique and so different to what any other year could have.

But let's start from what we may usually call the beginning. It's October, the freshers have seized control of Bowra, limited access to the college gym has been secured through vicarious fighting by the committee, and we've set up an alluring booth at the college Fresher's Fair. The fair was split up in 3 timeslots (freshers were divided by subject), and we were very excited to see tremendous interest through-out the whole day - though of course, the STEM cohort that came as the final group of the day pulled some serious weight in getting us to more than 70 initial sign-ups.

College was still being a bit hesitant with reopening the boathouse, but we did our best to introduce as many freshers as possible to the joy of the ergs. To both ensure safety and give us a fighting chance to handle the interest, the introductions were held in the Moser Theatre, where 6 ergs were spaced as far from each other as the walls would allow.

Another hugely beneficial location switch was taking the good ole boat club Moser Theatre circuit training and moving it to a large marquee that Wadham had erected in the College Garden. Still spaced out with more than 3.5 meters from person to person, we were able to host 25 people in there twice a week. I very fondly recall these sessions - and the aggressively synchronous squats going on there must have been quite a sight for anyone thinking they'd just go for a calming stroll by flower beds and autumn leaves. Passersby must equally have been terrified at the sound of me forcefully introducing the defenseless boat club members to the joys of Danish techno.

But of course, though everyone loves some good land-training (you know you do), the bigger question was the one of actual rowing. When could we get in boats suited for more than 1 person? Now, the tale of the boathouse cannot be told without me first extending nothing less than a huge, thankful appreciation to Aidan Gallagher, who in endless communication and discussion with college and the boathouse consortium diligently worked for a safe reopening.



And in 3rd week, we got access. Heavily restricted access, yes, but access, nevertheless. Finally, we were able to do a couple of outings. But can you believe this? Saturday the 31st of October, we had no less than 6 outings planned, with which most people would have had a chance to finally try out some rowing. But late on Friday, all that had to be cancelled due to storm warnings. And by the end of Saturday, England was back in national lockdown.

We were happy that, if nothing else, all who were interested had had the chance to try out some coached oar-pulling in the 1-person bank tub, thanks to the diligence of Adam Lewis-Douglas, Rishi Anand, Steph Hall, and of course - what pandemic could keep him away from the boat club - Rod Andrews. But though somewhat expected, lockdown #2 was just such a setback right when we felt momentum was there. Right when a routine was getting established.

The winter lockdown (which just seemed to keep going, didn't it?), was really just the extreme end of the cliché that summarizes this whole year: we had to make the best out of a bad situation. That meant a return to running and to the virtual sessions of summer. To spice that up, we introduced a teams-of-8 based boat club competition with overarching challenges of running the most km's and attending the most virtual workouts - and smaller challenges that were different every week. The running part was slightly impeded by the majority of freshers having to isolate after a small outbreak in college. Luckily, being confined to the 4 walls of their rooms, they had ample surface area to work on their wall-sit record times.

And so we worked our way to the winter vacation, where some major changes occurred: new teams, new challenges, and new backgrounds seen behind people joining the virtual circuits! I must admit, it wasn't always easy sustaining the effort in coming up with alternative circuit sessions or encouraging teams to do the extra run if they were falling behind on the scoreboard. But this amazing boat club kept picking me up. It meant more to me than I think they knew, when New-Years circuits attendees were up for lining up their cameras to form a silly human chain and squatting in sync to the

delightful tunes of Auld Lang Syne. And when I saw one of the guys doing circuits alongside his mom, big smiles on both their faces, it was a strong reminder that we were not just passing time and staying fit; even now, in the dullest hours of lockdown, we were creating meaningful experiences and valuable memories - that which the boat club is all about.

Going into Hilary Term, prospects weren't looking too exciting. Another lockdown with no clear end in sight. Compared to initial sign-ups, numbers hadn't dwindled. But some new recruits, perhaps fairly enough, had delayed their commitment to the boat club to better times. To refresh motivation for rowers old and new, my wonderful and brilliant counterpart on the Women's side reached out to another college boat club. One that, given the town in which it is located, was guaranteed to stir up some fighting spirit.

We spent 4 weeks battling the boat club of Jesus College, Cambridge. An intricate scoring system converted everything from weight training to cross-country skiing into standardized exercise km's, allowing us to each week award points to each of the 10 teams that the boat clubs had split into. (Don't worry, no interclub mixing happened during team formation).

On top of that, for even more points, we ran challenges spanning all the way from drawing running route shapes and collective plank durations to cocktail creation and leaf collection. Spectacular photos and screenshots of all these creations were shared for all see and be amazed by. Particularly the baking challenge brought about incredibly creative entries. What a joy and what a sense of community; even as I had to live with the disappointment that my hearty loaf of bread was not nearly as well received as the

**definitely an eight**



gingerbread version of the JCBC boathouse. And since you of course are here for the results; the competition astonishingly ended in a draw between a JCBC and a WCBC team. But not to worry; the tiebreaker, duelled out between the full clubs, was naturally won by unbreakable athletes of Wadham and HMC.

Finally, we were emboldened by the UK government sending out a roadmap with that very important date; March 29, where organized (in an expansive sense) outdoor sports could resume. Risk assessments and everything already in place from the fall, we were ready to get going as soon as we could. Of course, no one was more eager and ready than Rod himself. All along having guided us through with training plans and strategy talks on Zoom, his glee of being back on the towpath was unmissably visible. Though this start fell in the vacation, a strong graduate student presence ensured a healthy number of men's outings were able to go ahead.

This continued into Trinity term, where we had to manage getting the mixes of novice freshers, 2nd years who because of almost year-spanning river closure had limited experience, and then the proper senior rowers in combinations that would give us the best possible progress. This required some tough choices, and some logistical nightmares resulted from too many novices and too few experienced coxes to steer them clear of danger. In this regard, I certainly couldn't have pulled through without Michela Giachino, who as Captain of Coxes always was helpful with sorting this and herself generous with stepping in when no one else could.

Ultimately, we decided to prioritize building depth in the boat club over immediately creating the fastest top boat we could. This was one of the many factors that led us to having to withdraw from racing bumps in 7th week. Although a tough one, I'm happy with the decision. Racing could have potentially been physically dangerous due to the mismatch of river starting position and ability, especially as many of our more seasoned rowers were sitting exams. The latter half of term would also not have been nearly as productive if we, instead of having the possibility of focusing on building technique and confidence after nearly 1.5 years off the water, would have to narrowly focus on racing starts and high rates in an attempt to minimize position losses on the river.

Instead, I was very happy to see significant steady improvement over the whole of Trinity term. I cannot emphasize enough how huge a testament that that is to the skill, patience, eagerness, and fortitude of Lucy Harris, who expertly fostered a boat of novices into a crew, and Rod and Adam, who in conjunction brilliantly developed the 2 mixed ability boats.

I also have to extend a very personal and heartfelt thank you to Nathanael McKibbin, my loyal sidekick/vice-captain. For supporting me this whole year, for making sure I never did a circuit training session alone, and, of course, for generously alleviating me from my practical captain duties for a couple weeks while I was doing my exams,

Finishing off Trinity term, we were happy to be able to do some side-by-side racing by participating in Oriel Regatta hosted at the end of 8th week. Although no crew was able to bring home the winner's gin, this day - of cheering and big smiles and a unity so emblematic for the WCBC - was a very satisfying end to a crazy year. And a good opportunity to give everyone some appetite for all the racing we're doing looking forward!

I am left with so much belief that next year really is going to be a massive one for the WCBC. The quality of our athletes; having shown themselves to be physically and mentally robust - and eager! The dedication and skill of our coaches and coxes; always a pleasure to coordinate with and to see in action! And of course: Freddie Zu Wied, my handsome replacement. Having had the delight of getting to know you over this year, I couldn't imagine a successor I was more comfortable with passing the torch over to. I am so excited to see you in full action, because I know you'll flourish in the role. Best of luck to you and to the boat club - see you all in Michaelmas!





## 2019-20 SQUAD

Ed C  
Adam LD  
Alex P  
Jackson CD  
Aidan G  
Shadi HY  
Morten P  
Wissam G  
Rishi A  
Nat MK  
Maxime K  
Bill BL  
Matt C  
George J  
Marcos D  
Alex G  
Thomas Z  
Stephan R  
Jack O  
Konrad VB  
Marcus T  
Pawel N  
Tom B  
Stephane M  
Ibby M  
Louis EL  
Drake SL  
Adam G  
Josh MC

Josh McCracken  
Harry Curtis  
William Bunce  
Christopher Deane  
Oli Bean  
Alex Proudman  
Will Chamberlain  
Dennis Christensen  
Stephan Rauschenbach  
Noah Mallick  
Bill Berners-Lee  
Daniel Russel  
Matt Bridger  
Adam Golinski  
Rishi Anand  
STARTING ORDER  
Torpids  
M1 - 10th, Div 1  
M2 - 2nd, Div 4  
Eights  
M1 - 6th, Div 1  
M2 - 9th, Div 5

## 2020-21 SQUAD

Benji Mclean  
Maxime Kayser  
Justin Hayden  
Adam Lewis-Douglas  
Freddie zu Wied  
Aidan Gallagher  
Jamie McElhinney  
Wissam Ghantous  
Nathanael McKibbin  
Thomas Williams  
Luke Palin  
Drake Slaikeu Lawhead  
Will Nathan  
Connor Hughes  
Thomas Zillhardt  
Tom Bannister  
Scott Fitzgerald Buchanan  
Aleksander Stawiarski  
Morten Lindholt Pahus  
Jan Hein

	MEN	TUE WED THU FRI
I	Oriel Pembroke St Catherine's Wolfson Christ Church S.E.H. Balliol Trinity Hertford	
II	Keble St John's Magdalen University New College Merton L.M.H. Corpus Christi Brasenose	
III	Lincoln Mansfield Queen's Pembroke II St Anne's St Hugh's Somerville Linacre Worcester	
IV	Green Templeton Wolfson II Oriel II St Peter's Christ Church II St Antony's Keble II St Catherine's II S.E.H. II	
V	St Hilda's Lincoln II Balliol II Trinity II Brasenose II Regent's Park New College II University II Merton II	
VI	Wolfson III Magdalen II St Benet's Hall St Hugh's II S.E.H. III Hertford II Lincoln III Pembroke III Corpus Christi II	
VII	St Antony's II Queen's II Linacre II St Peter's II University III New College III	



# SAVE THE DATE

2021

24-27 Nov - Christ Church Regatta

12 Dec - Remenham Challenge

2022

2-5 March - Torpids

12 March - Women's Head of the River Race

26 March - Head of the River Race

25-28 May - Summer Eights

17-19 June - Henley Women's Regatta

28 June-3 July - Henley Royal Regatta

## BC COMMITTEE

	2021-22	2020-21
President	Jovana Pepic	Aidan Gallagher
President	Aidan Gallagher	Jovana Pepic
Men's Capt.	Freddie zu Weid	Morten Pahas
Men's VC	Noah Mallick	Nat McKibbin
	Jamie McElhinney	Ed Campbell
Women's Capt	Alice Edwards	Isla Henderson
Women's VC	Rithica Sayeeram	Charlotte Bogle
	Anna Dowell	Zara S-B
Secretary	Georgie Walker	Alex Proudman
Treasurer	Wissam Ghantous	Wissam Ghantous
Capt' of Coxes	Agi Bragadeesh	Michela Giachino
Welfare	Isabelle Legge,	Laura Bickerton
Officers	Imogen Dyne	Catriona Rooney
Bargees	Jovana Pepic	Elizabeth Bircham
	Benji McLean	Josh McCracken

## THANK YOU

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WITH THANKS TO

All the Contributors.

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If you'd like to come back and row with your crew, think you could help figure out a strategy to support the club in the future, or simply fancy coming out on the launch to watch the crews, don't hesitate to get in touch!

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twitter.com/wadhamboatie



## JOIN US!

As it always has been, college rowing is an expensive business. The equipment costs - the boats and the blades - are only the start of it. There is also the cost of racking the boats off of the Oxford stretch of the Isis - so that the amount of people who can boat at any one time is less restricted than it might otherwise be - and the cost of taking boats and rowers off of the Isis when the river is flooded or too dangerous to row on; this happens much more than it used to and has become a regular occurrence. That's not to mention coaching, which we have always somewhat taken for granted, but we can't go on doing so forever. For the individual rowers they have to buy their own kit, they have to make sure that they can get to where the boats are, maybe buying a bike.

These additional expenses are where the boat club society really comes in and lends assistance. Rowing was a privilege that we all had whilst we were at college. Things have not got easier for rowers today, and in many respects have got harder. What might seem relatively little years after graduation, mounts up to an awful lot. Joining the society and providing an annual donation, has never been easier. The membership form is now online at <https://membermojo.co.uk/wcbcs/> and there are a number of different payment options for donations. If you'd like to set up a payment in a different amount, then just drop an email to [wcbcsmembership@gmail.com](mailto:wcbcsmembership@gmail.com).

- Jane Osborne, WCBCS Membership Sec