

Season Review 2014-15



**Robinson College
Boat Club
Old Blades Newsletter**



M1 Mays 2015

Bow: John Mulvey
 2: Torben Jess
 3: George Barton
 4: Greg Tainter
 5: Patrick Frost
 6: Andrew Shipley
 7: Ed Osborne
 Stroke: Sam Troughton
 Cox: Laura Bampton (C)
 Coaches: Steve Fuller, Bill Nolan, James Ball, Mark Sydenham



2015 Bjoern A. Zeeb, [9208]

W1 Mays 2015

Bow: Fiona Howells
 2: Rosalyn Old
 3: Elaine Freer
 4: Cammy Mitchell
 5: Annie Richardson
 6: Vicky Bates (C)
 7: Heather Keenan (C)
 Stroke: Amy Wilson
 Cox: Daniel Chatfield
 Coaches: Steve Fuller, Bill Nolan, James Ball, Mark Sydenham

President's Welcome

RCBC has been moving from strength to strength since our last newsletter was circulated. The 2014-2015 committee were able to draw on the hard-work and experience of their predecessors to produce some of the best club-wide results in a number of years. Particular highlights of the season include:

- The 1st men's boat winning medals and blades in University IVs, blades in the Lent Bumps and securing a top-100 finish in Head of the River Race as the third fastest Oxbridge college.
- The return of the 1st men's boat to the top division of May Bumps.
- Four boats competing in May Bumps, all of which finished the week level or positive.
- A string of good Head Race results throughout the year across all boats, with M1 winning their category in Winter Head, W1 placing 2nd in their category at Champs VIIIs Head and W2 winning their category in Spring Head-to-Head.
- A second successive Catz Cardinals victory for our M1/W1 composite crew.
- The purchase of a new men's VIII, Mark Sydenham, and a boat-naming ceremony where we were able to welcome back a number of Old Blades.
- The return of several Old Blades to coach in Easter Term. Our particular thanks go to Mark Sydenham, James Ball, Ewan McGregor, Clare Cannon and Alexander Himsworth, all of whom travelled to Cambridge from around the country to share their wealth of experience.

Logistically the club is in a strong position. We have four well-maintained men's VIIIs, two women's VIIIs and a IV+ used by both sides of the club. Over the coming year we are hoping to refurbish our IV+ as well as purchase new set of blades.

The success of the club is only possible with the continued support of the Old Blades. It's been a privilege over the past year to meet and be coached by Robinson rowers of the past – and to finally put a face to the boat names we use on a daily basis! I'd like to take this opportunity to extend an open invitation to anybody who would be interested in coming back to coach or visit. We'd love coaching input from all levels of experience; whether you would feel comfortable coaching our 1st VIIIs or would be interested in taking a novice boat out and helping with the basics, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

We would like to invite all alumni back for Lent Boat Club Dinner on Saturday 27th February. We'd love as many Old Blades as possible to come and celebrate a term's rowing with us, and share your experiences. In particular, we are interested in celebrating the 20th anniversary of the M1 Mays 1st VIII blades (1996) and also hold a 10 year reunion for the 2006 Mays 1st VIIIs. If you are a member of either of these boats we'd love to hear from you.

More details will be circulated soon, but in the meantime please save the date. I hope you enjoy reading about our year, if you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Heather Keenan, *RCBC President*

M1 Season Review 2014-15

Michaelmas term started with the University IVs, in which we entered two senior boats. The 'light' IV narrowly lost their first race but the 'heavy' IV more than made up for this result, progressing to the final. A dead heat against King's M1 secured Robinson's first ever victory at University IVs. In Cambridge Winter Head we finished second, and in Fairbairns we placed fifth out of all the Cambridge colleges. I think it's fair to say this was one of the best Michaelmas performances of any Robinson M1 in recent years.

Lent term's races were even more successful than those of Michaelmas. We finished first in the Mays Division 2 category in both Winter Head to Head and Newnham Short Course, as well as coming a close second to Caius M1 in our own Robinson Head. When Bumps arrived, Clare M1 was the first to fall to the mighty 'Binson. After a brief scare on day two (where we were nearly awarded a technical row over) we bumped Girton in a re-row in less than two minutes. Day three saw us bump St Catharine's in spectacular style, before even reaching head station. On day four Christ's M1 conceded just out of first post corner, as we secured our blades. As I'm sure many of you will know, there's nothing quite like the feeling of rowing home with a bit of greenery scratching your neck, the flag flying out behind the boat, and with everyone on the tow path shouting their congratulations. A very memorable day for us all!

Our next focus was Eights Head. In preparation, we raced at Kingston HoRR the weekend before. We owe a big thank you to Robinson alumnus Dan Pring for all his advice on how best to attack the tideway. Overall we finished 98th, and 2nd out of the Cambridge colleges. I thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience of HoRR, and was delighted with the result.



Back in Cambridge for the Easter term, M1 continued the previous term's successes by securing another win in the Mays Division 2 category at the Head of the Cam. The following weekend, we travelled to Dorney to compete in Wallingford Regatta (above), for many a first experience of multi-lane racing. We came third in our heat, missing out on the repechage by just one second. We were very lucky during Easter term to receive coaching from Old Blades Mark Sydenham and James Ball. We started bumps second in division two, with the first division as our primary goal. Day one saw us row over behind Selwyn M1. On day two, we bumped Girton M1 just coming out of grassy corner, allowing us another go at Selwyn at the bottom of division one. We got agonisingly close this time (within 1/4 of a



length) but crews don't give up their place in division one easily, and we couldn't quite finish the job. Day three was a tough one, with two row overs. The crowds on the Saturday helped propel some very tired legs through yet another row over and in our final race we caught Fitzwilliam M1 on grassy corner, much to the delight of the crew, bank party, and our many supporters at the Plough. Finally we had reclaimed our place in division one, back where we belong!

Laura Bampton

W1 Season Review 2014-15

W1 have enjoyed a positive year, with changes in mentality, commitment and training style translating to successful results by Easter term. The year started well, with a good proportion of returning rowers from the previous season. The focus in Michaelmas was to increase the depth of the squad, and so most of the term was spent working in rotating VIII's. The result was an improvement on last year's Fairbairn's placing of 19th from 21 to 15th from 23 W1 crews – a good start, but we wanted better!

Rowing week saw a continuation of the squad-based work, such that moving into Lent term we were able to welcome a novice into our regular W1 crew. Progress was steady throughout the term, and with a 3rd place finish in our category at Newnham Short Course and a good performance at Pembroke Regatta, we were excited for Bumps. Unfortunately the week didn't go quite to plan, and we were forced to rely on a gutsy and exhausting row-over on the final day to rescue us from spoons. Far from being disheartened, the crew were spurred on by these disappointing results. Determined to avoid a repeat in Easter term, we enthusiastically embarked on a holiday training programme.



The commitment and hard-work were evident from the start of term, with 7/8 members of W1 achieving PBs in the 2k selection test. The progress made through several weeks of hard land training translated to the water. Determined to emulate the success of M1, we shared training plans, coaches and even some sparring sessions, which were extremely useful despite ending quickly! We produced our best result of the year at Champs VIII's Head, placing 2nd in our category in a time comparable with many of the higher placed

W1s on the river. We also benefited hugely from the coaching input of Old Blades Mark Sydenham and James Ball.

Bumps week started on a high with an extremely quick bump on Wolfson W1. On day 2 we found ourselves in a three boat sandwich, behind Pembroke W2 who were chasing Sidney Sussex W1. The race started well and we closed to within 1/2 length by First Post Corner, but spurred on by our attack, Pembroke were able to catch Sidney before we could finish the job, resulting in a technical row over for us. Friday and Saturday saw two valiant attacks on the Sidney Sussex crew, but while we started strongly both days and quickly closed, they were able to pull away before we could bump, resulting in some gruelling row overs.

W1 underwent a transformation through the year, from a crew who were relieved to avoid spoons, to one who were disappointed to only go up one place in the more competitive Mays field. It has, without a doubt, been a successful year, and we are confident this year's captains and crew will be able to build on this new committed and competitive attitude.



Heather Keenan and Vicky Bates

M2 Season Review 2014-15

It's been an enjoyable season for M2 this year. After rowing week, the base of the crew formed from members of the M2 Fairbairns crew alongside a few returners from M1. With Daniel Kent (fresher historian) taking up the coxing position, the boat showed promise and an exciting mixture of experience alongside potential.

For much of the crew, Lents 2015 was to be their debut on the bumps racing stage. The first day saw us marshalling between Magdalene M2 and rivals LMBC M3. The gun went but first day nerves took their toll and the crew never truly found their rhythm, eventually conceding to LMBC M3. The second day saw a dreadful start by them and we gained two whistles in the first 10 strokes but carnage up ahead resulted in a re-row. With wise heads, Maggie didn't give us a second chance and we rowed-over. Day 3 delivered another row-over, being chased by Corpus M2 but never really being challenged. On the fourth day the picture was very different. Coming into Grassy, Corpus had two whistles on us and were gaining fast! But as they say, "expect the unexpected in Bumps" and an untimely rudder failure for Corpus resulted in our third row-over of the week.



Easter term saw the crew bolstered with the return of 2 rowers from the first boat. With training adapted to address the impending issue of exams, we were feeling optimistic and hopeful to build upon last years blades. The first day went exactly to plan as we smashed into FaT M3 before First Post corner. The second saw us chasing Selwyn M2 who ultimately fell to our speed just outside The Plough. Marching on and up two, day 3 presented a more difficult proposition chasing LMBC M3 who had failed to hit Peterhouse M2 the day before. We didn't quite manage it and we rowed over, ending the run of 10 consecutive bumps for Captain Hugh Burton. The final day had us chasing Peterhouse M2 and being chased by an on-for-blades Churchill M2. Churchill M2 were incredibly fast and Peterhouse showed the hallmark of an experienced boat, denying us just long enough for Churchill to catch us and win their blades.

Boat Club Dinner followed and reiterated that it isn't always about winning or getting blades but taking part and enjoying it. It's been great fun rowing with M2 this year and sure we'll be back even stronger for vengeance on both LMBC and Churchill.

Ben Gates



W2 Season Review 2014-15

The women's side started off the year with just enough female novices to make a boat. However, the team set some impressive scores at Queens' Ergs showing we had some serious potential. Our first race was Emma Sprints where the conditions were awful. Despite getting soaked to the bone in our elf costumes, it was thoroughly enjoyed.



Lent term gave us a whole new crew. Promoting our most promising novice Cammy Mitchell to the first boat, we recruited 3 new novices and the Lower Boats Captains (Jess Radley and Shivani Khosla) returned. Our training plan of 2 outings a week and one erg was simple and we tried to keep it low-commitment. We'd like to thank Simon Perry for coaching every one of our outings. Unfortunately, we did not get onto Lent Bumps but instead entered the Talbott Cup, gaining valuable race experience.

After our first two terms, we decided to really up our game for Easter and Mays. We were now doing 3 water outings a week, and two land training sessions. Calling in a lot of favours from the senior members of the boat club to get coaching advice from lots of different perspectives, we were able to really push on. In Spring Head to Head, we entered a women's boat comprised of 3 W1 members and 5 rowers from W2. With W1's help, we managed to do very well, winning our category. Our next race was Champs 8 which did not return a favourable result. But, we got our own positive response because the crew experienced a major attitude change and an even stronger determination to do well, working harder on the ergs and the water than ever before. From an average crew 2K erg time in Lent term of 9:12, we together achieved an average time of 8:59, with 4 girls' times below 8:50 by the end of Easter term. We raced incredibly well in the getting-on race but narrowly missed out on qualifying for bumps. We were the second fastest crew not to get on and really gave it a good effort which is something to be proud of.



Despite all the race results, it has been a good year for the women's side. We managed to gather a casual W3 boat in Easter term as well as lots of serious rowing with W2. We have a lot of strong and keen rowers ready to start off the next academic year with a bang and continue to make RCBC's women's side something to be proud of.

Shivani Khosla and Jess Radley



M3 Season Review 2014-15

Lents training started well with two or three outings a week alongside coached ergs. Under the wise tutorage of our coaches great strides of improvements were seen throughout the boat. Qualifying for Lent Bumps was a particular highlight of the year, not just because it got Robinson M3 back on for the first time since 2012 but also because the recent reduction in the number of places made making the cut even more of a challenge.

Lent bumps provided the crew with the full experience of bumps racing; we bumped twice, rowed over as sandwich boat and got bumped twice throughout the four days. This resulted in staying level overall in the table, firmly justifying our qualifying place. A slight mishap in the first race involving a tree and one of our blades created a fitting new award for the boatclub: the broken spoon awarded to the most improved rower of the term.



Half of the Lents M3 crew returned in Easter term, with some moving on to higher boats or other commitments. However their successors brought their strengths to boat and we continued to improve throughout the term. The getting-on race went very well and the crew managed to secure its position again in the May Bumps, an excellent result. A solid row-over was the result of the first day of racing. The second day heralded the legend that is the overtake bump, a most confusing experience for the crew but one that will be hard to out do in future races. The following two days were more conventional, with a row over on day 3 and a bump by Sidney Sussex M3 to end. Once again we were back at our starting station.

Overall the year for M3 has been a great success, with some strong race times, qualifying and holding positions in Lent and May Bumps. We put Robinson M3 back on the river and have laid solid foundations for future crews to build upon. We would like to thank our LBCs, Dylan Sidle and Mikey Teal, as well as all of those who coached us throughout the year, in particular Ewan McGregor, Torben Jess, Simon Perry and Greg Tainter.

Joe Mullally



Old Blades Report 2015

This year has been a very active one for the Old Blades with members returning to the Cam to coach, the naming of our new Fillipi and discussions on the regeneration of the Old Blades committee.

The first major event of the year was the ceremony held to name the new mens' first VIII, the *Mark Sydenham*. Mark Sydenham was Mens' Captain of RCBC in 2003 and 2004. Mark led the first boat to their highest May Bumps position ever, bumping up 3 times to reach 4th on the river in 2003. Further to this, M1 also finished as the fastest Oxbridge college at Head of the River for the only time in their history. The naming ceremony was held early in February and saw a large number of alumni return to the boathouse to meet with current members of the club. Following the ceremony, Mark coached the first outing for M1 in the new Fillipi, helping them prepare for what was a very successful bumps campaign and then returned to coach again in preparation for May Bumps.



Throughout the year, the committee have held meetings to discuss the future of the Old Blade. We have decided that there is a need to regenerate the Old Blades committee with a new structure and new members. Our current idea is to split the committee into 3 sub-committees taking responsibility for social events, technical advice and financial control. In this format, we hope to be able to successfully arrange alumni events both in Cambridge and elsewhere so Old Blades can get reconnected, develop a strong technical team to provide guidance to coaches and club captains and also ensure maximum return from donations and the Old Blades endowment.

If you would like more information on our plans for the new committee, or if you would like to suggest responsibilities, roles or positions and want to get involved yourself then please email the Old Blades Secretary (Hugh Burton hb407@cam.ac.uk). More information on the new committee will be circulated soon.

Finally, we would like to invite all alumni back for Lent Boat Club Dinner on Saturday 27th February. In particular, we are interested in celebrating the 20th anniversary of the M1 Mays 1st VIII blades (1996) and also hold a 10 year reunion for the 2006 Mays 1st VIIIs. If you are a member of either of these boats we'd love to hear from you.

RCBC in Light Blue

Alongside the growth of the boat club on the college stage, Robinson has also seen ever increasing participation at university level. Following in the footsteps of many old blades, the past year has seen one mens lightweight triallist, three rowers taking part in the new year-long CUBC development programme and a number of members using the summer development camps as an opportunity to improve. Representation at university level not only helps to raise the profile of the college but it also brings a wealth of experience to the club when rowers return to college boats. In 2016, both Peter Carey and Patrick Frost are trialing with the CUBC squad.

Torben Jess - CULRC



“Last year I trialled with the Cambridge University Lightweights (CULRC). After going through the two week development camp, two training weekends, and spending a large amount of time in single sculls over the summer in Cambridge, I began trialling in mid September 2014. Training in Michaelmas consisted of various sessions in singles, small boats, and eights in the morning and weights and ergs in the evening with a day off every other week. After surviving a continuous reduction of the squad due to injuries and drop-outs I rowed with the lightweights for Fairbairns and Trial Eights in Henley.

After a series of illness in late November, I decided to drop-out of trialling after Trial Eights. Overall it was a great experience and taught me a lot of things about rowing which I hope to bring to RCBC.”

Amy Wilson - CUWBC

“Spending a month with CUWBC was a very rewarding, but intense, experience. 11 training sessions per week and 5am starts meant my free time was taken up napping when I wasn't working or eating. The coaches, coxes and rowers all worked together to form a fun, supportive community – this was wonderful to be a part of, especially when we won the Victor Ludorum prize at Kingston Regatta (personally winning the novice coxed fours).

I made the decision not to continue onto Trials with CUW based on my individual time commitments and priorities, but would encourage anyone to try Development Squad.”



Peter Carey - CUBC

“Last year I had the pleasure of taking part in the "Athlete Development Programme" with CUBC. Michaelmas saw a mix of successful college rowing and sessions at Ely, with a 6km head race on a lake in Sabaudia, Italy a few days after Fairbairns.

In Lent term I got to learn to steer and race Bedford Head in a 4-. After a frankly appalling row at HoRR (with RCBC thrashing us), we headed to Orio, Spain for a training camp. 3 sessions a day, an interesting stretch of tidal river, enormous multimillion Euro boathouse, excellent food and the incredible hospitality of the locals made for a very memorable week. The rowing progressed hugely and at the regatta at the end of the week, we beat a solid Molesey crew.



Unfortunately, injury led to me being out for Easter term, missing May Bumps and the regatta season, but I intend to trial next year.”



Patrick Frost - CUBC



Patrick started Robinson as an experienced rower in 2013, immediately joining the first boat. In the summer of his second year he took part in the CUBC development squad, racing (and winning) at Marlow and also taking part in Henley Qualifiers. In his second year, he continued to row with the Athlete Development Programme whilst also continuing to commit to RCBC first boat training.

In Lent term, Patrick focused mainly on rowing with RCBC, winning his blade with the first boat in the Lent Bumps. However, he continued significant additional land training and has begun trialling with CUBC for the 2015-16 season.

Results Record

Race	Boat	Time	Category	Category Result	Overall
<u>Michaelmas Term 2014</u>					
Cambridge Autumn Head	M1	10:23.2	M 4+ 1 st Coll	2nd	18th
	W1	13:08.7	W 8+ 1 st Coll	4th	112th
	M2	11:16.8	M 4+ 2 nd Coll	2nd	45th
UNIVERSITY IVs	M1	-	4+ (1 st Division)	Beat Christ's A (10sec) Beat Corpus Christi M1 (30sec) Beat Queens' M1 (10sec) DEAD HEAT with Kings M1 in Final	
	M2	-	4+ (1 st Division)	Lost to Corpus Christi M1 (2sec)	
Cambridge Winter Head	M1	8:34	M Stu S : 8+	3rd	4th
	W1	11:04	W Stu S : 8+	14th	160th
	M2	9:59	M Stu S : 8+	23rd	=80th
	NM1	11:57	M Stu B : 8+	17th	210th
Emma Sprints	NW1	-	W1 Division	Lost in 1 st Round	
Clare Novices' Regatta	NM1	-	Men's A VIII (Cup)	Bye in 1 st Round Lost to Jesus A in 2 nd Round	
	NM2	-	Men's B VIII (Plate)	Beat Downing B in 1 st Round Beat Queens' B in 2 nd Round Lost to LMBC B in Quarter-Final	
The Fairbairn Cup	M1	14:42.3	Men's Senior VIII	6th	9th
	W1	18:21.7	Women's Senior VIII	15th	22nd
	M2	17:11.3	Men's 2 nd Senior VIII	9th	52nd
	NM1	13:12.8	Men's Novice VIII	27th	56th
	NM2	12:26.6	Men's 2 nd Novice VIII	23rd	47th
<u>Lent Term 2015</u>					
Winter Head to Head	M1	13:23	May's 2 nd 8+	1st	3rd
	M2	15:27	May's 3 rd 8+	4th	35th
	M3	17:22	May's 3 rd 8+	11th	91st
Newnham Shortcourse	M1	6:52	M1 Division	1st	1st
	W1	8:57	W1 Division	14th	52nd
	M2	7:50	M2 Division	10th	21st
	M3	8:43	M3 Division	6th	45th
Robinson Head	M1	7:15	Men's 1 st	2nd	2nd
	W1	9:33	Women's 1 st	7th	26th
Pembroke Regatta	W1	-	Women's 1 st VIIIs	Beat Corpus Christi W1 (1/2 length) Lost to FaT W1 (1 1/2 lengths)	
	W2	-	Women's 2 nd VIIIs	Lost to Newnham W2 (Easily)	

Race	Boat	Time	Category	Category Result	Overall
LENT BUMPS	M1	Bumped Clare Bumped Girton Bumped St. Catharines Bumped Christ's			
	W1	Bumped by Jesus II Bumped by Darwin Bumped by Pembroke II Rowed over			
	M2	Bumped by LMBC III Rowed over Rowed over Rowed over			
	M3	Bumped by Fitz III Bumped Fitz III Bumped Kings II Bumped by Kings II			
Kingston Head	M1	17:53.3	IM3.8+	8th	31st
HoRR	M1	19:09.6	In3A (<i>Halladay</i>)	11th	98th
<u>Easter Term 2015</u>					
Head of the Cam	M1	9:40	M 8+ May's 2 nd	1st	7th
	W1	12:53	W 8+ May's 2 nd	4th	88th
	M2	11:03	M 8+ May's Other	6th	35th
Spring Head to Head	M2	14:43	May's 3 rd and Lower	4th	17th
	W2	17:21	May's 3 rd and Lower	1st	57th
Champs 8's Head	M1	4:53	Men's 8 – Mays 2	3rd	9th
	W1	5:52	Women's 8 – Mays 2	2nd	61st
	M2	5:21	Men's 8 – Mays 3	7th	29th
	W2	7:11	Women's 8 - Mays 4	10th	104th
	M3	5:46	Men's 8 – Mays 6	3rd	51st
Wallingford Regatta	M1	6:36.82	ELI.8+.Club	3rd in Heat A 13 th over all heats.	
MAY BUMPS	M1	Rowed over Bumped Girton / rowed over (sandwich boat) Rowed over / rowed over Rowed over / bumped Fitzwilliam (into 1 st Division)			
	W1	Bumped Wolfson Rowed over Rowed over Rowed over			
	M2	Bumped First and Third III Bumped Selwyn II Rowed over Bumped by Churchill II			
	M3	Rowed over Bumped Selwyn IV Rowed over Bumped by Sidney Sussex III			

Key Dates and Contacts

As a Boat Club and a Committee, we would be delighted to welcome any support the Old Blades can offer, by bank partying races, coaching and by continuing to sponsor the club. Please feel free to contact us on the email addresses listed below or to support us at any races throughout the year. We would also like to invite all Old Blades to Lent Boat Club Dinner on Saturday 27th February 2016.

General Enquiries:

Hugh Burton, *Old Blades and Sponsorship Secretary*: hb407@cam.ac.uk

Coaching (Men's):

Gregory Tainter, *Men's Captain*: gt294@cam.ac.uk

Coaching (Women's):

Fiona Howells, *Women's Captain*: fh320@cam.ac.uk

Amy Wilson, *Women's Captain*: aw618@cam.ac.uk

Potential Race Dates

Cambridge Head to Head	23 rd January 2016
Robinson Head	5 th February 2016
Lent Bumps	24 th -27 th February 2016
Head of the River Race	19 th March 2016

If you want to ensure you receive all the up to date information from RCBC about the club and the Old Blades, please give up date us with your contact details here:

<http://goo.gl/forms/mIoIQbeZlv>

For more information go to:

- www.facebook.com/robinsonboatclub
 - www.robinsonboatclub.co.uk
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