Season Review 2015-16





Robinson College Boat Club Newsletter



M1 Mays 2016

Bow: Oliver Tesh 2: Valentin Ivanov 3: Joe Mullally 4: Pierre Bräuer 5: Peter Carey 6: Michael Rawson 7: Gregory Tainter (C) Stroke: Patrick Frost

Cox: Daniel Kent

Coaches: Bill Nolan, Sam Troughton, Steve Fuller, Mark Sydenham



W1 Mays 2016

Bow: Madison Marshall 2: Heather Keenan 3: Cammy Mitchell

4: Fiona Howells (C)

5: Annie Richardson 6: Valentina Sassow 7: Amy Wilson (C) Stroke: Lottie Plaschkes

Cox: Rosalyn Old

Coaches: Steve Fuller, Bruce Bye, Sam Troughton, Peter Carey, Bill Nolan, Mark Sydenham

President's Welcome

Since arriving in 2013 I have had the pleasure of observing RCBC build the momentum to drive itself forward both as an organization and in the Bumps charts. 2015-16 tested that momentum on the one hand and demonstrated what can happen when boats truly come together on the other. I am delighted to say that momentum has been maintained for all boats from previous years, and the unprecedented explosion forwards of the Women's First Crew in both the Lents and Mays meant this has been an incredibly successful year for Robinson. Highlights from the year include:

- W1 moved up a full ten spots over the Lent and May Bumps, which I believe is the best combined result for any senior Robinson boat ever
- M1 moved up one in both Bumps, moving to the joint highest position M1 has ever enjoyed in Lent Bumps
- A solid crew of Old Blades returned to race Fairbairns, even managing to top our M1 in the race (costing me two ounces of pride and one bottle of port)
- A revamping of the Old Blades Committee via the formation of the Pegasus Boat Club, culminating in the first Old Blades dinner for several years held in London

RCBC remains Robinson's largest and most vibrant club. Our organisation continues to promote excellence on and off the river, with many members stepping up to help lead the club, for many their first taste of leadership. On the other end, we provided over 30 students with their first experiences of rowing this year, and aim to build the club's intake and college presence over the next year. Finally 2015-16 saw Peter Carey (bow seat, Goldie) become the first RCBC member to represent the university against Oxford on the tideway since Neil Holtzapfel in 2001. Overall the year saw four members trialling with university crews, significantly aiding in development for individuals and the whole club.

RCBC continues to employ four men's and two women's VIIIs, and a single recently refurbished IV+. Through current financing from college and the Old Blades Fund, we are able to effectively maintain the current fleet and outfit it with necessary accompaniments of equipment. Our outlook for purchasing a women's boat in the near future is limited; as such we've organised for refurbishment of the current W1, Matt Luscombe, as our major investment for the year.

RCBC Old Blades have been vital to the club's recent successes. The Pegasus Boat Club, created as part of efforts to revitalize alumni involvement, has worked to increase support via coaching, technical advice, and financing. The success of this revitalization was demonstrated by three events: the participation of an alumni boat in Fairbairns, a solid alumni presence at Lents Boat Club Dinner, and an Old Blades dinner held in London in September. We aim to continue to build upon this success by further encouraging any and all alumni to support the club via coaching, attending Mays BCD, and financial support.

If you are interested in more information or becoming involved, do not hesitate to reach out to us via <u>robinson.captain@cucbc.org</u>, Facebook, or other means listed at the end of this document.

It has been fantastic to watch this club grow and develop over the few years I have been a part of it, and I can report with confidence that RCBC has continued to build upon this strength over the past year. Please join us at the May Boat Club Dinner on Saturday the 17th of June to celebrate RCBC and to help RCBC maintain its momentum.

Gregory Tainter, RCBC President 2016-17

M1 Season Review 2015-16

Michaelmas opened with few experienced rowers and a large number of fresh faces keen to fulfil their rowing potential. As such, early results were challenging, with our M1 Uni4s entry suffering a stinging defeat by LMBC M1 whilst the M2 showed some promise in a closer defeat at the hands of Jesus M2. Off of these results we redoubled efforts moving into the VIII, and were able to even snatch a victory in the novice division at Winter Head. As Fairbairn's approached, we suffered illness and injury, but managed an 11th place finish.



With the sense of accomplishment improvement provides, the crew attacked Lents training determined to arrive at Bumps with heads held high ready to prove that concerns that RCBC had lost too much talent to trialling and to graduation to maintain the previous year's success were misplaced. A boat with a rower-turned novice cox and a majority of green oarsmen pushed itself to improve on every stroke. From an 8th place finish in Winter Head to Head, to the 3rd consecutive outright victory in the Newnham Short Course, we gathered speed and confidence.

The crew demonstrated this emphatically day one of Lent's, making short work of King's M1. On each subsequent day we chased Peterhouse M1, a resilient boat that despite us coming to within a quarter length of, managed to evade us each day. As a result RCBC M1 is 9th on the river in Lents, the joint highest position the club has ever enjoyed.

Next M1 continued its training after term to travel to Eights Head on the Thames. Most unfortunately, Kingston HoRR was cancelled, so the race itself was many rowers' first experience of such a long piece and of a larger river. Ultimately the crew developed physically and technically, coming 9th out of the Cambridge colleges (167th overall).

With several due to return for Mays, we saw a fairly competitive selection process and despite inexperience, the crew stepped up and further improved their fitness over Easter break. Despite this, Easter term was punctuated by ups and downs, as M1 suffered from planned absences, injuries, and exam pressures. Persevering through missed outings and a struggle for appropriate coaching outside the boat, we came together in the last weeks, demonstrating some remarkable turns of speed but suffered inconsistency. When Mays came, confidence was just being established, but sadly day 1 was a disaster. Mark Sydenham's rudder fell off on the row down, forcing us to concede a bump to Girton M1.

Returned to the sandwich boat position, M1 at first was resplendent in rowing away from all of the 2nd division, and then underperformed in pursuing Girton in the 1st division, allowing them to bump Christ's M1 on the reach Thursday. Friday, with a fresh focus and knowledge that Christ's had nowhere to go, we decided on a technical row, and while the rate was low managed to take Christ's in a solid turn of pace off of Ditton. Confidence restored, Saturday the crew committed to crushing Girton and reclaimed the gift fortune provided them before the Plough, resulting in M1 up one overall and one position safer from the dreaded sandwich position. Special thanks to Bill Nolan and Sam Troughton, whose frequent advice and coaching were invaluable. Finally to Eric Ruhlmann, who despite being away for Bumps committed to keeping the boat going by subbing in to a majority of our outings and races.

Gregory Tainter, Men's Captain

W1 Season Review 2015-16

The past year was one of the most successful ever for the women's side which saw us win blades in both Lent and May bumps and go up a grand total of 10! Michaelmas started well, and with a large pool of returning rowers and some highly experienced recruits we ran a successful, rotating squad for most of the term before settling into a fixed Fairbairn's crew. After a respectable result in Winter Head, we improved on last year's Fairbairn's time by 40 seconds. However, we weren't quite hitting our high expectations, falling short of our time goals, so we had work to do.

Unfortunately, Rowing Week turned into a dreary event, with several sessions resigned to circuits due to bad weather. This didn't dampen our spirits and we livened up the session with some inventive group exercises. Moving into Lent term three recent novices were promoted to the first boat and learnt quickly, one of them becoming the new stroke! Winter H2H saw us place 3rd in our division and we were excited to see what this crew would bring...



Then disaster struck. Amy broke both her elbows in a freak accident and was unable to row. We found a replacement quickly in Ros, a long-standing rower who was generously loaned to us from her coxing position with M2. Despite this setback we moved from strength to strength, coming 2nd in our division at the Newnham Short Course. By the time Bumps came around the crew was looking sharp and we managed some nice bumps over the first three days. The final day almost ended in disappointment with a spooning crew two boats ahead preventing a simple bump - but we persevered and managed to secure our blades with an overbump on the reach, becoming the first W1 at Robinson to win their blades since 2003.

We wanted even more success in Easter term, and the competition for seats in the boat saw an increased dedication to holiday training which resulted in an unprecedented crew average of under 8 minutes in the start of term 2k tests. This boat was very different from the previous term as we changed cox and three new rowers entered the crew, but it was no less determined than the last. We came 1st in our division for Spring H2H, followed up by several 2nd place rows in Champ's VIIIs and Xpress Head, where we lost only to Lucy Cavendish W1, the boat chasing us on the first day of bumps. Nevertheless, a heroic row secured us our bump before we could be caught, and 3 more bumps saw us win our blades for the second time this year.



Our successes this year were due to the hard work of the rowers, coxes and our coaches. We are exceptionally proud of all the work everyone put in over the year and grateful for their passion and dedication.

Amy Wilson and Fiona Howells Women's Captains

M2 Season Review 2015-16

Robinson had a slight shortage rowers this year, so M2 didn't form up until Lent term when six novices from Michaelmas stepped forward to join the boat. The crew united immediately and was determined to improve, buoyed by help from experienced coaches and coxes.

Despite being able to post some solid results showing good speed for their division, the crew approached Lent Bumps with slight apprehension, generally surrounded by boats posting impressive speeds. Despite this, M2 was able to gather swing and experience by holding Wolfson II on day 1. They watched, however, Wolfson II fall to the larger challenge: Fitzwilliam II. Day 2 then, proved the most difficult, and resulted in one of the greatest efforts in M2 rowing history. In an absolutely thrilling race, M2



held Fitzwilliam off by 1 meter for two kilometres of the bumps course; earning themselves the opportunity that came day 3, when Peterhouse II had trickled down the charts far enough for M2 to bump up. This, in turn, led to a great opportunity day 4, when the presence of two weak crews two positions ahead provided the potential for an overbump. This looked likely at the outset when FaT III seemed to overwhelm Churchill II from the start, alas it was due to an ejector crab in Churchill II forcing the race to stop and preventing pursuit of Clare Hall. Overall the term was up one, and a great success for an inexperienced crew.



The Easter holiday saw several returners, resulting in a much more experienced Mays crew. The crew was eager to maintain recent M2 successes, and felt very confident that they would continue the drive towards the 2nd Mays division. Day 1 began as designed, with a bump on Churchill II avenging last year's events. Day 2 started well, with M2 taking water from St Catz II. However, they did not manage to finish the job and both crews ended up rowing over. This left a difficult day

3, with a strong Trinity Hall II boat on their heels the crew decided on all-out attack to finish off St Catz II. St Catz II, however, had a weak LMBC III ahead of it, and managed to bump out leaving M2 with a long row, in which they held Trinity Hall II down the reach but ultimately succumbed just as they approached the P&E. Then the curse of moving down caught them, the very strong Magdalene M2 had been bumping its way forward, and was

able to close down and bump M2 by Ditton. Despite going down one, M2 had a fantastic time rowing Mays; which provided a chance for old hands to help new oarsmen and coxes develop. Special thanks to Hugh Burton for helping to organise the Mays boat, and Rosalyn Old, for all her help throughout the year coxing in M2 (and M1).



Ben Gates, Treasurer

W2 Season Review 2015-16

Michaelmas started off exceptionally well for the female novices. There were some great scores set at Queen's ergs, and Robinson finished in an impressive sixth place. For the rest of the term we tried to get two outings a week as well as erg session. Despite a few yellow flags, and difficulty in securing a full boat, the girls were in a good position. Simon also continued to provide one on one erging sessions as well, which was invaluable. The girls rowed well in Emma Sprints. Despite crashing into their bank at the start of the first race, the girls picked it up and worked as a team to row win their second race. Unfortunately, we were not able to secure a full boat for Fairbairns, and so did not race.

By Lent term, we had a whole new crew. Three of our novices were promoted to the first boat and we recruited another novice and saw the return of four members of previous crews. Unfortunately, an injury in the first boat saw us without a regular cox, which reduced our ability to row as often as we had hoped. However, the girls remained positive and we used the term to focus on individual improvement. It also provided us with a new determination when we were able to get out, to make every moment, and every stroke count. As the term



progressed, we began to train up a new cox, and the girls were able to use this time to really focus on their technique and teamwork. We were also lucky enough to receive coaching from Simon and Elaine as well as a few other senior members of the boat club. Despite finishing last in Robinson Head, it gave us invaluable race experience ready for the Getting On Race. Unfortunately, we did not get on in Lent, but I was very proud of the efforts put in by the team, despite the challenging circumstance of the term.



Unfortunately by Easter term there weren't enough girls left for a full W2 VIII boat. However, we were able to get the girls out in the IV. This was not only exciting, but still meant that the girls were able to improve on their technique. The girls were also able to sub into W1 outings and races where possible, which provided them with an excellent opportunity which inevitably improved their rowing.

Despite some of the setbacks this year, we are immensely proud of W2. Their passion and determination to keep rowing, even with no regular cox, or a full boat will have left them in an excellent position for this academic year, with many of them now holding key committee positions.

Samantha Benson and Zhuan Faraj Women's Lower Boat Captains

M3 Season Review 2015-16

Lents training started well with two or three outings a week as well as coached ergs. Under the wise tutorage of the coaches many of the recent novices gained excellent knowledge and great strides of improvements were seen throughout the boat. Lack of numbers had really put a squeeze on the number of outings possible throughout the term, which unfortunately meant even though our position on the river was secured, we were unable to field enough rowers for Lent Bumps, and regretfully had to relinquish our position on the river.

The dawn of Easter term brought more rowers back to the club and M3 was fully occupied once again. With a determination to not to repeat last terms painful end, the whole crew where eager to show commitment and hard work during training. The getting on race went very well and the crew managed to secure a position in May Bumps comfortably, an excellent result.

A row over was the result of the first day of racing, a solid start. The second brought the crew their first bump on Lady Margaret IV. Third day ended by being overbumped by a strong Hughs Hall III crew. The final day had us chase Lady Margaret IV once again and was an opportunity to hand them their spoons. Just as the crew had begun to get



overlap the cumulative hangover from the Robinson May Ball (the curse of 'Binson) kicked in and were caught by Jesus V. Overall the crew received the full experience of Bumps.

The year for M3 was mixed but was no fault of the committed members whose efforts paid diligence to the final result of qualifying for May bumps, coupled with some strong race times. With many of the crew returning for Michaelmas some solid foundations have been built for future development. I would like to thank all of those in M3, our cox Shivani Khosla as well as all of those who coached throughout the year, in particular Ewan McGregor, Greg Tainter, Hugh Burton and Ben Gates.

Joe Mullally, Men's Lower Boat Captain



Old Blades Report 2015-16

The past year has seen some major events for RCBC's Alumni society. Kicking the year off, a solid crew of alumni represented the college at Fairbairn's, even putting in a great showing as the second fastest alumni crew.

As I'm sure many of you will know, the past 12 months has also seen a transformation in the Robinson College Boat Club's alumni society. Following on from the discussions of previous years, the RCBC committee and a number of alumni have worked to redevelop the structure of the alumni society, relaunching it as the new Pegasus Boat Club.



The Mighty RCBC Alumni crew at Fairbairn's delivering a second place finish!

With a collection of new members from recent years and further back, the inaugural meeting of the Pegasus BC committee was held to coincide with the Lent Boat Club Dinner. The



Seven generations of Men's and Women's captains gathered at Lents BCD

dinner was a great success, providing the perfect opportunity for current members of the club to share stories and experiences with their predecessors whilst also allowing those returning to the college to reminisce with old friends and crewmates. At the meeting the morning after, the new committee laid down its vision for creating a diverse alumni network through high quality events throughout the year, allowing members to stay connected with RCBC and encourage support of the club.

The first of these events was a dinner held in September at Brasserie Blanc, Tower Hill. 30-odd Old Blades gathered together to reminisce, reconnect and most importantly toast the Mighty 'Binson. Leaders of the Pegasus Boat Club such as John Pritchard and Mark Sydenham spoke of the importance of a strong alumni community and encouraged further efforts to push the excellence in Robinson rowing ever higher.

It is our hope that this next year will see the expansion of these efforts. RCBC is always in need of support via coaching, advice, and financing. If you would like more information please contact us, and along with our encouragement of all events, we would like to invite everyone to Mays BCD on the 17th of June, 2017.

Hugh Burton, Pegasus Boat Club Secretary



Old Blades gathered at Brasserie Blanc in September for the annual London Alumni Dinner

RCBC off the River

Focus: Matt Hopgood, Cambridge Development Initiative (CDI)

RCBC History:

- Noviced in 2012
- 1st Men's Lents and Mays in 2013 and 2014
- 1st Men's Co-captain 2013-14
- Old Blades Sec 2014-15

Over the last two years of university I worked for an entirely student-founded and student-run international development organisation called Cambridge Development Initiative (CDI). The initiative runs four projects (Engineering, Education, Health, and Entrepreneurship) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, one of the fastest growing cities in the world. To highlight my initial work in the organization, I helped implement the world's first biogas-producing simplified sewerage network for the slums of Vingunguti. We replaced the pit-latrines of around 150 residents with brand new, functional pour-flush toilets which channel into our low-cost sewage system. The waste is then converted into burnable biogas and fertiliser in a bio-digester.



Meeting Ban-Ki Moon, UN secretary general, as a representative of CDI.

After this successful project, and after my stint as Men's captain, I took charge of CDI as President in 2015-16. As part of enabling subsequent and continuing projects, our team managed fundraising and accounting for a budget of £60,000. The highlight of my term as President was running the 2-month summer programme in Tanzania where our projects received coverage on national Tanzanian TV and we landed project partnerships with the local government and international NGOs. The experience was an incredible leadership journey, and I truly believe the skills I gained leading the men's side of the RCBC in 2013 stood me in great stead to succeed with CDI.



Speaking at CDI's 500-person Entrepreneurship conference at the end of our 2 month entrepreneurship course for new start-ups. The conference raised \$15,000 in seed capital funding for these start-ups from local businesses and funders.



Standing amongst three generations of RCBC Men's Captain's, was an amazing time and I miss RCBC already!

Focus: George Barton, University Challenge

RCBC History:

- Noviced in 2013
- 1st Men's Lents 2015 (Blades), 2016; Mays 2015

In mid-January I joined four 'Binsonites in an interview at Corpus with the producers of University Challenge. For some of us, it was our third time attending and youthful pretensions of swanning in and winning the whole thing had been long-since ousted by a grim mercenary view of proceedings; the richer and more established colleges being chosen preferentially. So it was with a resigned sigh that we continued our mundane, quotidian existence, the terrible monotony only



briefly punctuated by the much-welcomed occurrence of an early morning outing.

The news then, when it came, brought considerable surprise, a reversal of fortunes surely not seen since Robert Downey Jr.'s mid-1990s transformation. A few mad, panicked hours of telling everyone I saw were swiftly brought to a close when I actually read the email, specifically the line that stated that we should not actually tell anyone. Far more serious, however, was the revelation that the filming was to take place on Saturday 27 February, this date being etched into my brain as being the Saturday of Lent Bumps. What should I do, and how would I announce this to formidable captain Greg?

Tear-filled recriminations followed, but when Lent Bumps came around, and after a successful three races seeing us to 9th on the river, the time had come to leave. Confident that I'd entrusted my seat to safe (and probably better) hands in John Mulvey, and buoyed by Robinson's famous football cuppers win the night before, it was rather groggily that I stumbled into the taxi due to take us to the station- customarily (to the continued annoyance of captains past and present) 5 minutes late. After a journey to Salford spent vigilantly eyeing anyone who had any feasibility of being competition, we were in the studio, faces matted with foundation and airbrushed to unblemished perfection.

The action is all well-documented on YouTube, but we somehow emerged victorious, our ragtag motley crew, and prepared to be ushered into a world of flashbulbs, photographers, and sultry Saint Tropez summers. What we actually got upon leaving the studio was 5 minutes of Jeremy Paxman, an overfull glass of wine and a mediocre array of pretzels. He

stayed and chatted with us though, in the process revealing a much nicer side than perhaps appears on TV. After he left, and we were asked to leave the studios, a very frugal one-course Wagamama's quickly turned into a sumptuous three-course buffet when we remembered mid-meal that the BBC had agreed to pay for it (that's right, license-fee-payers). A rather dazed trip home the next day followed a sojourn in the glamorous Holiday Inn Salford, and then the worryingly imminent prospect of a deadline came and brought us back down with a bump to Earth. Until next time...



Results Record

Race	Boat	Time	Category	Category Result	Overall			
<u>Michaelmas Term 2015</u>								
UNIVERSITY IVs	M1	-	4+ (1st Division)	Lost to LMBC M1 (easily)				
	M2	-	4+ (2 nd Division)	Lost to Jesus M2 (12 sec)				
Cambridge Winter Head	M1	9:11	M Stu N : 8+	1 st	13 th			
Emma Sprints	NW1	-	W1 Division	Lost in 1st Round				
Clare Novices' Regatta	NM1	-	Men's A VIII (Cup)	Lost to LMBC A in 1st Round				
The Fairbairn Cup	M1	15:09.9	Men's Senior VIII	11 th	19 th			
	W1	17:42.4	Women's Senior VIII	16 th	21 st			
	Alumni	15:00.1	Men's Invitational	2 nd	17 th			
	NM1	11:46.3	Men's Novice VIII	24 th	$37^{ m th}$			
	NM2	12:14.2	Men's 2 nd Novice VIII	17 th	47 th			
			Lent Term 2010					
Winter Head to Head	M1	13:56.2	Lents 1st 8+	7 th	8 th			
	W1	16:34.3	Lents 2 nd 8+	$3^{ m rd}$	$63^{ m rd}$			
	M2	17:15.0	Lents 3 rd 8+	9 th	94 th			
Newnham Shortcourse	M1	7:04	M1 Division	1st	1st			
	W1	8:48	W1 Division	8 th	40 th			
	M2	7:59	M2 Division	5 th	16 th			
	Мз	9:11	M ₃ Division	11 th	52 nd			
Robinson Head	M1	7:29	Men's 1st	4 th	4 th			
	M2	8:27	Men's 2 nd	4 th	13th			
	W2	10:37	Women's 2 nd	5 th	$33^{ m rd}$			
Pembroke Regatta	W1	-	Women's 1st VIIIs	Beat FaT W1 Lost to Girton W1				

Race	Boat	Time	Category	Category Result	Overall			
	M1	Bump on King's						
LENT		Row over						
		Row over						
	TAT.	Row over	NT I TT					
	W1	Bump on Newnham II Bump on LMBC II						
BUMPS		Bump on						
		Overbump on Darwin						
	M2	Row over						
		Row over						
		Bump on Peterhouse II						
		Row over						
HoRR	M1	19:09.6	In3A (Halladay)	44 th	167 th			
			Easter Term 201	16				
Head of the Cam	M1	9:22	M 8+ May's 1st	9 th	12 th			
Spring Head to	M1	13:20	May's 1st	4 th	4 th			
Head	W1	15:56	May's 2 nd	1 st	40 th			
	M2	15:00	May's 3 rd and Lower	5 th	19 th			
Champs 8's	M1	4:39	Men's 8 – Mays 1	8 th	10 th			
Head	W1	5:33	Women's 8 – Mays 2	2 nd	40 th			
	M2	5:06	Men's 8 – Mays 3	5 th	24 th			
	Мз	5:45	Men's 8 – Mays 6	4 th	51 st			
	M1	Rudder Failure; Bump awarded to Girton						
		Row over / row over (sandwich boat)						
		Row over / Bump on Christ's						
	XA7-	Bump on Girton						
	W1	Bump on Sidney Sussex						
		Bump on Emmanuel II Bump on Pembroke II						
MAY		Bump on Darwin						
BUMPS	M2							
		Row over						
		Bumped by Trinity Hall II						
		Bumped by Magdalene II						
	Мз	Row over						
		Bump on LMBC IV						
		Overbumped by Hughes Hall III Bumped by Jesus V						
		bumped b	by Jesus V					

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 May Boat Club Dinner on Saturday 17th June 2017.

General Enquiries:

Gregory Tainter,

President, Pegasus Boat Club & Sponsorship Secretary: gt294@cam.ac.uk

Coaching (Men's):

Oli Tesh and Michael Rawson,

Men's Captains: robinson.men@cucbc.org

Coaching (Women's):

Valentina Sassow and Lottie Plaschkes, *Women's Captains*: robinson.women@cucbc.org

Potential Race Dates

Winter Head to Head 28rd January 2017

Robinson Head 10th February 2017

Lent Bumps 28th Feb - 4th March 2017

Head of the River Race 25th March 2017

For more information go to:

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

