



## From the President

Dear all,

Even this time last year, I don't think many of us would have predicted the full scope of the impact that Covid-19 would have over the course of the next 12 months. I am sure I am not alone in feeling as though we have all weathered a storm, and our thoughts are with those for whom the past year has been particularly difficult, whether due to a change in family circumstances or the isolation of shielding.

Thanks tends to be given at the end of this letter, but given the circumstances I think starting with a massive thank you to everyone who has made the Boat Club possible this year is justified. We would not have been able to even get on the water without the support of Jonathan Cheeseman, who continues as head coach for the Club, and members of the College, particularly Angela Unsworth (Domestic Bursar), Andrew Gregory and Michael Collins (senior members). The support that the new Master, Valerie Amos, has demonstrated for the Club is also received with much thanks, and it was a fitting way to end the year to welcome her to our somewhat altered Club dinner (outside, in socially distanced groups)!

Back to a more traditional order of things, and starting at the beginning of the year, our hopes were high. We were compliant with the various Covid-19 security measures, senior and novice bubbles were arranged, and we were looking forward to getting Michaelmas, traditionally novice term, off with a bang. But the rapid rise in case numbers followed by the November lockdown meant that most novices only managed a few outings at most before the various winter lockdown measures started.



*(The majority of) The Boat Club members at Summer Torpids dinner*



Morale was kept up by a series of training plans from Jono and a few attempts at virtual socials, though I think we can all agree that Zoom has nothing on face-to-face interaction.

We skip forwards then to the start of Trinity. Would Bumps happen? No one seemed to be sure, so we decided to act as if it was and also set our sights on external regattas to give the 1<sup>st</sup> Vllls something to train for. Thanks to a wealth of keen and experienced senior rowers, both the men's and women's 1<sup>st</sup> Vllls did not struggle for members this year – and it must be said that most of us in those boats realised just how much we did actually enjoy rowing, having been prevented from doing so in the preceding 6 months!

Novice training began in earnest a few weeks before Trinity, first of all with graduates and students still resident in Oxford, with numbers building as more returned. The enthusiasm and commitment of our newest members really energised the Club, and we were delighted to be able to field 3 men's and 3 women's Vllls in Summer Torpids in 7<sup>th</sup> week. In addition to this, we had a finalists' bubble training, adeptly organised by Nicole Szekeres-Tapp, to give those who could not race due to exam clashes the chance to get out on the water regularly. The Boat House was a veritable hive of (Covid-19-secure) activity.

I will leave it to the captains to provide a detailed summary, but as a long-standing member and now president, I couldn't be prouder of what the Club has accomplished over the past few months. Achieving blades for both the women's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vllls does deserve a particular mention, congratulations in particular to the novice-heavy W2 for all their hard work.

Plans are underway for the next academic year and we look forward to welcoming a new cohort of novices in October. Please do let us know if you plan to be around Oxford at all and would like to get out for a row, and we will do our best to help.

Thank you to the Friends for their encouragement and support (albeit over livestream) this year, and we hope to see you at the Boat House in person to cheer on next year's racing!

Best wishes,

**Hannah Farley**

**President 2021-2022**



*M1 and W1 at Summer Torpids dinner*



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## From the Women's Captain

Rowing this year has been a challenge to say the least. But UCBC rowers thrive in challenging situations, and in 2021, have triumphed despite the circumstances.

The women's side had an incredible 3 boats on the river for this year's 'Summer Torpids' and an additional 2 crews that trained casually throughout the term. This was particularly impressive in a year with such limited training time and very few senior rowers at the start of Trinity term!

Then, in Division 1, an exceptional start saw Univ W1 bumping Magdalen before the end of the bunglines. Throughout the course of the week, Univ proceeded to bump Balliol, New College, and Keble a little further down the river until they bumped Keble in the gut on day 4, winning blades!

I am also incredibly proud of our lower boats. The achievements of these boats are detailed later in the newsletter in the Vice-Captain's report!



*W1 at Dorney Lake after racing in the Metropolitan Regatta.*

W1 started training with a set crew from Week 1 of Trinity term. This was an exceptionally strong crew, consisting of many rowers who had previously trained in the University squads. They attended The Metropolitan Regatta at the start of June for some pre-bumps racing practice and qualified for Final D where they completed the 2000m course with a time of 7:15:20.20.

W1 entered the week of bumps racing feeling strong following their Met Regatta success. The racing practice clearly paid off as they bumped each day and achieved blades! On Day 1, Univ rowed over peacefully at the top of Division 2 as the sandwich boat.

After a very successful Summer Torpids campaign for the women's side of UCBC, we started training up to race in Henley Women's Regatta. Our top four rowers entered a 4- in the championship category. Sadly, due to an untimely isolation, they were unable to race in WHR. However, they did have a successful practice race at Marlow Regatta where they placed 3rd in the B final with a time of 7:55:57 for the 2000m race.

UCBC also entered an 8+ to Henley Women's Regatta. Three members of this crew had only started rowing in April 2021, but they were resilient and determined to make UCBC proud.



Left: Univ W1 bumping Keble on Day 4 of Summer Torpids 2021.

Right: Blades celebrations for W1!

Our 8+ also raced at Marlow for practice 2 weeks prior to HWR. The speed and power improvements between the two Regattas were astonishing and testament to the hard work that all crew members put into training, in addition to the excellent coaching and support from Jono. I am still amazed at how quickly and effectively Jono managed to train up three beginners to be race ready for Henley and firmly believe that UCBC is extremely lucky to have such an excellent and committed coach!

UCBC qualified in the time trials on Friday with a time of 4:51:0 and went on to race against Oxford Brookes University on Saturday. All crew members thoroughly enjoyed the experience and are keen to train hard and qualify again in 2022!

I hope you have enjoyed reading about the success of UCBC's women this year. I will now be looking forward to the next year of many more bumps, blades, and successful races, as I'm sure you will be too!

Many thanks,  
**Charlie Kniebe-Evans**  
**UCBC Women's Captain 2021-22**

## From the Men's Captain

Finally, some bumps racing. After what feels like an eternity of complaining about the weather and/or pandemics M1 (and the rest of the Club) are finally back in competition.

As with all things this year, things have still been a little bit different. The bumps race was scheduled for 7th week and would be following Torpids rules and charts. In theory, this would give more time than usual for training, however, due to the lightweight boat races delaying until 4th week, M1 only existed in its 8+ entirety for a fortnight. The start of the term was not wasted, however, with the available members taking to UCBC's ever expanding fleet of small boats. While Univ's own Nick Ryan was winning the Lightweight Boat Race and Matt Hudson was winning the Lightweight Spare pair, the rest of M1 were diligently chunking fours, pairs, doubles and singles up the Isis in ISL (Isis Summer League) A and B.

M1 on the final day of Summer Torpids from Univ raft.



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Once the eight finally manifested, it was full throttle for bumps. The first test of the crew came in MET regatta, hosted at Dorney Lake. After seeding 6th for the E final, M1 crossed the first 500m mark in the lead, off a powerful start, and crossed the line in 5th, off an equally powerful blow. The day was chalked up to a success and led into a final week of training before bumps.

Day 2 saw Hertford M1 at the top of the division having been bumped by Keble as the sandwich boat. Day 2 played out almost exactly as Day 1 with Univ closing Magdalen and Magdalen closing Hertford. Again, Magdalen bumped out and again Univ overbumped, with the bump coming at the expense of what commentators described as 'a severe crab from the University College bow', Dylan Dissanayake.



*M1 following a successful MET Regatta*

Summer Torpids started on Tuesday, using the Torpids charts but with reduced division sizes of 10. M1 were sitting 4th in Div 2, chased by New College M1 and behind Magdalen M1, St John's M1 and Keble M1. As the cannon went off, M1 found a strong start and closed quickly on the Magdalen crew, who themselves were closing quickly on St John's (John's just seemed happy to be there). Entering the gut, Univ were about a quarter of a length off Magdalen, but Magdalen's bump on St John's was imminent, so Univ took a wide line to avoid getting tangled. This allowed New College to close the gap quickly, but fortunately New College decided to park up on the bank, thus setting future crews up for a better opportunity for blades. With Magdalen bumped out and New College watching the division go by from their arborous vantage, Univ quickly closed down St John's and overbumped out.

Day 3 therefore started with Magdalen at the top of the division and M1 having no concerns from behind. Despite two strong rows, M1 didn't manage to catch Magdalen on either of the following days, spending most of the races sat between a quarter of a length and a canvas off, but unable to find the necessary closing speed while sat in their wash. M1 ended the week +2 and 11th overall on the river, putting them back in Division 1 for the first time since 1998.

Following Summer Torpids, M1 has been busy trying to organise a Henley Royal Regatta entry, settling on a composite 8+ with Wolfson College. Qualifiers will be held on Saturday 7th August at Dorney Lake.

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

## From the Women's Vice-Captains

After a long awaited arrival of Trinity term, and the return of most undergraduates to college, UCBC could finally get back out on the water. With Summer Torpids a mere 8 weeks away, and not one but two years of novices (due to Covid-19 and flooding) to train up, time was against us.

Luckily, the novices were so keen to sign up to outings that we had 30 rowers wanting to be part of the lower boats this term. Swim tests were booked, taken, and passed, and we could get on with a term of rowing like no other.

In total, we had a W2, W3 and W4 crew this term, all of which experienced racing at some stage. W4 raced in ISL B, and W2 and W3 raced in both ISLs and bumps. Both crews were required to qualify this year at rowing on (Covid-19 and limited water time meant smaller divisions and more rowing on divisions), and both W2 and W3 soared their way through rowing on to find themselves in Summer Torpids.

W2's bumps campaign was quite simply incredible. Coached by Argy, the crew bumped St Hugh's twice (due to a huge confusion with Christ Church on the first day), Pembroke and Oriel, and won blades. They even climbed a division, successfully racing as sandwich boat in Division 4 and bumping Regent's Park W1!



*W3 celebrating their bumps*

W3 put in gutsy rows every single day, and after bumps, appeals and penalty bumps, ended up -1 on the river – an astonishing achievement given that all 8 rowers started rowing at the beginning of Trinity.

Whilst W4 did not race in bumps, they continued training and ended the term hungry for more rowing – and all three lower boats are excited to come back in Michaelmas and get lots of time out on the water with the senior squad (Covid-19 and global warming allowing!)

This term would not have been the success story that it has been without the hard work of last year's vice-captains, Hannah and Sarah, and the stellar coaching that the lower boats received. Our biggest thanks to Jono, Argy, Hannah, Sophie and Nina who all coached various lower boats at points in the term.

***Sarah Chapman and Chloe Bardou  
Women's Vice Captains 2021-22***



*W2 celebrating their bumps*

## From the Men's Vice-Captain

In a normal year, squad selection for Summer Eights would take place immediately before term commences; this is often preceded by a training camp to ensure everyone in contention for seats in the boat is able to bring their A game to trials. For the Univ's lower boats this year, we were in a slightly different position - that of trying to train a crew of complete novices in time to make Summer Torpids, in 7th week. From these humble beginnings comes the story of M2 and M3 in Trinity term of 2021; a noble tale of commitment, group effort, ringers, and rowing of the kind of quality that it's better not to look too closely at.

Focusing first on M2, they came a long way from 0th week and, despite losing several rowers to exams / a swim test that wasn't taken, were able to put a huge effort in for what was for many a first experience of bumps racing. Guided by a highly experienced stern pair and expert coxing, the boys pulled hard off of their start on Day 1, from bungline 8 of men's division 5. With a soon-to-be blades-winning Merton II behind, and a strong New College II in front, the race was intensely fought, with Univ ending up engrossed in what can only be described as carnage at

the bottom of the gut. As far as can be established, Univ were bumped by Merton (themselves already bumped by St Benet's M1); Univ appeared to get a bump on New College II after this, but it was later realised that New had already bumped out on Regent's Park II at this point. Our M2 then got a row past bump on Regent's, without fully realising it, and with that Day 1 was done – a happy crew, with all eight celebrating their first bump.

Day 2 saw the crew starting down one on the previous day, despite the bump – a result of the chaos in the gut. Their target was Merton M2, a strong crew that caught them on Day 1. Informed by ISL performances earlier in the summer and extensive research of the opposition, it was realised Univ had a stronger start, but Merton were better over the whole 2km. This left our M2 with a simple choice – hold off Regent's, and aim for the row over, or empty the tank on the front end and try to reel in Merton. Going for the latter, they gained quickly, getting them down to less than a canvas by the bottom of the gut. However, a strong performance by Merton saw them hold on, leaving Univ with the unenviable position of having to dig deep and power through, having expended their efforts at the start.



*M2 at Summer Torpids dinner*

Dig deep they did, and despite a late scare from Regent's, we held on for the row over, hurting but ready for day three.

Days 3 and 4 both saw huge performances from the crew, resulting in early bumps - Thursday being Balliol M2 just before the first bungline and then taking Brasenose M2 under Donny bridge on the final day.

Moving on to M3, their story of Torpids was also a strong one, coming very close to blades – a remarkable effort, considering no two days of racing saw the same crew.

Despite the fact that a large proportion of the boat no longer attend College, the whole crew embraced the Univ team spirit, dressing in painfully bright yellow t-shirts, with a banana suit making an appearance later in the competition. Ranked 5th in Division 7, the crew were keen to climb the rankings, and made great headway towards this. Day 1 saw a huge start and closing quickly, Univ were able to get a bump on St Peter's M2 just before the entrance to the gut.

Building from this, the (slightly altered) crew were looking and feeling good heading into the second day of racing, where they set their sights on a St Anthony's M2 that had dropped two places on Day 1. Once again, Univ started strong, and seemed on track for a bump just prior to Donny bridge. Unfortunately, an early crab scuppered these dreams, but it was quickly recovered and the crew maintained their composure, eventually gaining a concession from Anthony's by the Falcon Boat House.



*The mixed Oriel Regatta 1st crew*

On Day 3, M3 set out looking to continue their record of not rowing for more than a minute. Unfortunately, Queen's M2, who set off in front of them, bumped out in about five strokes, leaving Univ searching for an over-bump on Lincoln M3. There was intense battle between Univ's banana suits and Lincoln's Hawaiian shirts, but ultimately the bananas won, with Univ securing a textbook bump in the gut. All of this left our M3 on track for blades as they entered the final day. However, the old adage that good crews bump three times and lucky crews blade proved true, with M3 just missing out on bumping Corpus M2 in the gut, despite a heroic charge. Having emptied the tank, Christ Church M3 caught Univ and bumped out, leaving our crew to settle for a gruelling finish. Things got serious around the Univ Boat House, when the bowman's banana costume was unpeeled to improve aerodynamics, but ultimately it was to no avail, and Univ finished the day down one on their previous.

Overall then, both crews managed to bump on three days out of four, leaving M2 ranked 7th in Div 5, and M3 ranked 3rd in Div 7. Looking forwards, there were huge efforts by both crews, with valuable experience gained, especially by our novices. Everyone enjoyed the week, and it is with excitement we look forward to more racing next year.

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



*The M2 ISL crew*



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## From the Social Secretaries

In a strange year we find ourselves writing to you about social events when so many have been cancelled! The year has been difficult for everyone, but UCBC has persevered and ended up hosting a magnificent Torpids Dinner. With all competing boats in attendance, including the questionable blazer choice of M3, the evening was a great way to round off a year where the whole Club had not been able to meet before, especially for the novices, who really didn't have a clue who anyone else was! With some delicious food, good weather and questionable banter it almost felt as though the world had returned to normal again, which has, unfortunately, become increasingly rare nowadays. But, on behalf of all those who attended, the evening was an all-around success, even if Nik's speech went on for a while!

Looking to the future, we hope to be able to provide the incoming wave of freshers with as normal a social experience as possible, with many a crew date planned for the coming term. In addition to this, the welcome days planned for freshers will provide us with a great opportunity to create a place for new rowers to be welcomed into the Club. The unfortunate news of the cancellation of the MCR open day at the end of this term gives us the chance to host a bigger and better event for these rowers in Michaelmas. These two events will provide new rowers the chance to not only go on the water for the first time, but also to meet others in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. With the hopes of increasing the number of boats competing next year, the social side of rowing becomes increasingly important in retaining new and old rowers and making sure they cannot escape the fun!

In these uncertain times, planning social events for the coming year is difficult but we're sure UCBC will pull through and be able to provide an exciting and action-packed year of activities to keep its members amused. We look forward to this challenge and pray that next year will be smoother than the previous one!

***Hari Pankhania and Jess Steadman***  
***Social Secretaries 2019***



*Smiles all round at Summer Torpids dinner*



*Below, the finalists' bubble at Summer Torpids dinner*

## Novice Rowing Report

If you're an avid reader of the UCBC newsletter, you might recognise my name – I wrote the novice report back in Michaelmas. Back then, I reported on having just a handful of outings, and conceded that balancing the boat was our primary problem. Flash forward to present day – when myself, and a couple other novices, competed with the W1 crew (and qualified!) in Henley Women's Regatta. The W1 crew was down a few rowers, so they welcomed myself and two other novices to compete with them in Henley Women's Regatta. The days leading up to Henley were slightly chaotic – Covid-19 isolations meant that our crew was constantly changing. However, our determined women's captain, Charlie, worked tirelessly to get our boat there. The day of the race was bittersweet – the rowing was great fun, but there were so many girls that deserved to be there who simply couldn't. We hope we did them proud at Henley! It was brilliant fun and we can't wait to do it again next year.

Thanks again to Charlie, Jono, Hannah, and Sarah, for all your hard work to get us to Henley.

**Kim Becker**

## Univ's University Rowers

We had several athletes for whom this middle-of-the-year period meant a lot more erging than they had predicted in their futures. Nick Ryan, Dylan Dissanayake and Matt Hudson all trialled for OULRC, with Nick making the Blue Boat (and winning the Boat Race) for his 3rd successive year. Matt stroked the spare 2- to victory against the Tabs, and all three enjoyed competitive racing at BUCS. I'd highly recommend taking a peek at the OULRC's Twitter account to see Nick sprinting to the line to secure a bronze in the Championship Lwt 1x. Matt stroked the Championship Lwt 4x to a silver and was recently elected as OULRC president for the 2021-2022 season.

Emma Lepinay and Pippa Biggs both trialled for OUWBC, with Emma being selected in the bow seat for Osiris. Emma moves to Cambridge to start a DPhil this autumn and intends to trial with CUW.

## Appeal to Old Members: History of UCBC

UCBC is currently looking for a member, past or present, to write about the history of our Boat Club for the future UCBC website. If you're interested, please contact Kim at [Kimberly.becker@Univ.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Kimberly.becker@Univ.ox.ac.uk).



*UCBC Women's 8+ racing at Henley Women's Regatta in the Aspirational Academic Category.*