

College Activities

First & Third Trinity Boat Club
By Christopher Black (2012)

The year started off with mixed feelings across the Club. The women's side were anxious as they knew they had a tough act to follow after achieving the headship in the Lent Bumps last year and performing strongly in the Mays. Nevertheless with Lydia Bass (the three seat of that headship crew) as Women's Captain, they set about a hard training schedule to hold on to their prize. On the men's side there was quiet excitement with myself, former captain Ali Abbasi returning from a year abroad, and two unknowns in Piers Kasas from St. Paul's and cox Hugo Ramambason from Westminster. People were mentally counting seats in the May eight and saw there would be no room for passengers. To add to this Tom Rose was back from New Zealand for the year and keen to run the men's squad. The women's side was also not lost for hopeful Blues with Daisy Gomersall, last year's women's captain, and Sarah Gibson competing for CUWBC. Our set of fresh-faced LBCs did an incredible job of recruitment, and the boathouse was full during Michaelmas Term with novices going out in tubs and eights. Assisting the LBCs relentlessly was Neil Talbott, who filled the already eager Freshers with even more zest and some rowing finesse. The women's side were grateful for the new recruits and were soon fast tracking those who showed most promise into the senior squad, while the men were mixing things up – running a squad programme and putting in the miles or 'money in the bank' for the upcoming terms. In the Fairbairn Cup, the novices stole the show with the NW1 coming first, NM1 coming second, and NM2 winning their category.

The new year started off with our winter training camp again returning to Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. Thomas O'Neill, Neil Talbott, and former captain Rob Stroud ran a smooth and fun camp despite heavy winds restricting rowing in the

last few days and the general damp cold of 'The North'. On returning to College the training schedule switched up a gear from Michaelmas. The women's squad were running out of time to put everything in place before the Lent Bumps and the men were also setting about forming solid crews to get some results out of the base they had created in Michaelmas. M2 formed as a strong composite of experienced and novice athletes, with Rosemary Ostfeld, CUWBC's top cox, coaching them and even steering them to victory in the Robinson Head. Clearly M2 was starting to turn the corner from the previous years. The Lent Bumps were surrounded with controversy with CUCBC keeping the reduced number of divisions in the interest of safety albeit with reduced participation. This sparked angry debate between college captains and the CUCBC committee to the point where it even threatened the running of the event. Nevertheless the Bumps went ahead and all eyes fell on the women sitting in pole position. With a late substitution of Julia Attwood into the 7 seat and a mostly young crew, they set off ahead of Emma to defend the headship they had worked so hard for the year before. Off the start they were pulling away but Emma ground them down over the rest of the course and made the bump just before the railway bridge. The disappointment was clear but the resolve of the crew returned and they fought hard again and again, first with Christ's, then Jesus, before finally Downing. The result was disappointing but a valuable tough experience for those in a crew that has much racing ahead of them and one that would strengthen them in time. For the men, Tom had been punishing the team with brutal lightweight-style training and it was time for things to get bumpy. A solid row and push on the first day gave them Christ's. On the second, it was feared that Queens' would bump Maggie early on and so M1 set off at full speed to catch Queens' before they could do so, but Maggie proved faster than previously thought, and stayed away from Queens', with our guys running out of beans out of Ditton. It wasn't until Saturday that there was a clear shot on Maggie. The battle went all the way, but the hard training paid off with the crew keeping their nerve to bump them just 10 strokes before the line. Throughout the year we – perhaps over ambitiously – decided to try and get as much off-Cam racing as possible, which led us on numerous adventures including the Head of the Nene and Peterborough. Here we were poorly organised but always rescued at the last minute by Neil and Tom. A new lightweight trailer was bought and taken down to the Tideway for the London HORR where Jonathan Davies helped show the two eights around the troubles and difficulties of the Thames. The Thames Flu claimed many athletes over the week but subs were flown in from all around and the racing went ahead

along the iconic course just weeks before the Boat Race. With the Boat Race over (Ali, Piers, and Hugo getting their Goldie's and Sarah her Blondie) both sides were at full strength; seat racing began in earnest. The men took to an unusually bright and calm Adelaide Straight at Ely for two days' seat racing in fours to decide the top boats. The women stayed and made their decisions on the Cam. Small boats regatta brought an impressive medal haul. Piers Kasas won the Freshman's sculls followed by the Lowe Double sculls with Bence Banhalmi. Ali Abbasi and I paired up to win the Foster-Fairbairn pairs. Imogen Grant won the Fairbairn women's scull before winning the corresponding women's pair with Chloe Edwards, a pair in which they also challenged themselves to row all the way from Cambridge to Ely! Blanka Kesek won the women's Maiden scull and Barney Plummer won the Peter Brandt sculls bringing the total medal count to ten!

May Term was as chaotic as ever with both sides of the Club struggling to keep athletes on the water and training together, and with the needs of revision creating a gently growing level of background stress. Despite this I remember a particularly nice sunny day out at Nottingham Regatta driving the crews around in the CUBC minibus. It was great to get see so many alumni coming back to the Club to help boost boat speed including Pete Summers, Ming-Chee Chung, and James Strawson to name but a few. Come the May Bumps, six FaT boats took to the water. M4, the Graduate VIII, with arms exposed in garish yellow and pink tank tops, had without a doubt the best fun of any College boat on The Cam in 2015 and produced a solid result rising three places, through the sandwich boat, into the 4th division, and in the process taking back the M4 headship. M3 had a difficult term barely reaching the required 10 sessions to row in the Mays, but with a little help from myself and Daphne Martschenko (CUWBC) they made it to the start line. Unfortunately this was only to be bumped over on each of the 4 days. On the other hand there was no stopping W2, who produced a solid set of performances to win their blades. It was an excellent result for such a young crew and shows promise for the women's side going forward. W1 made this even sweeter news by carving the way for future generations to achieve the greatest goal of all, the headship. They held what was their highest position in the May's headship for the first three days as Christ's were jumping up the stations behind them and on their way to blades. This was of course before they came up against the FaT crew. The previous days of racing had not been lacking ambition but two days chasing Clare had become two days of cautiously defending against Newnham. This was not the case on Saturday. It was do or die now. This added

fear drove the girls to find an extra gear straight off the line. The fast approaching crew rattled the Clare women ahead and the bump came in First Post corner taking the women to 5th in the May Bumps, their highest position ever and within reach of headship. Sadly the same cannot be said about the men's result. We had been training very hard and were really coming together as a crew. Hugo had injected life into the boat and we had developed a great identity and attitude towards racing. Every day and every race we were getting faster. Things went more or less to plan on the first two days with us powerfully catching Jesus on the second. With a slow Downing ahead of us we planned to take them out just like Jesus the day before. As we were closing down on them fast along the reach, Hugo felt the bump and called us down. But there was no bump. The cox had not conceded and contact hadn't been made. In a haze of confusion and shouting from the bank we watched Jesus row past and slowly realised our mistake. It was a huge hit to the whole crew, especially Hugo, and is among the greatest disappointments of my nine years of rowing. Saturday brought no reprieve as Jesus bumped Downing ahead of us. A great result in a tough field had disappeared in a matter of hours. Everyone in that boat will remember the feeling that they had that day, but they will also remember everything that occurred up to that day and the feeling of the boat speed that they achieved despite not having the complementary result.

Rowing will forever have its ups and downs just as the bows rise and fall in the water, but so long as the boat keeps moving forwards the passion will endure, and with that it gives me great pleasure to wish future captain Matthew Griffiths and women's captain Rachael Grewcock all the best of luck in the coming year. Ra Ra First & Third!

Field Club

Basketball

By Zhenyu Cai (2013)

Following a great season last year, we finally became a Division I team this year. Thus, as expected, the competition was much fiercer as five teams fought to become absolutely top of the League table. What made it harder for us was that three of our starters last year had graduated. However, this also meant more new blood and more fresh energy into the team.