

College Activities

First & Third Trinity Boat Club
By Matthew Griffiths

The year begun with the club hoping to capitalise on a strong novice programme generating quite a number of promising rowers. On the women's side, this led 3 of the previous year's Mays crew to make the step up to trialling for CUWBC, while on the men's side 3 of last year's Mays crew also decided to trial for CUBC as they had done the year before. This, unfortunately, left both squads somewhat depleted in terms of numbers during Michaelmas term. The women's side, led by their captain Rachel Grewcock, and coach, Peter Ford, initially focussed on doing a lot of small boats work, to both develop skill and make up for a lack of numbers for 8s. The men were fortunate to have Tom Rose, who had come over from New Zealand the year before, around for the next year to be head coach again. In the Universities 4s races, the men's side showed some strong results with the first IV losing to the finalists, the 2nd IV reaching the finals, and the light IV winning their race and competition! Whilst this was happening, the LBCs were working hard to recruit the next generation of Trinity rowers with the ever dependable support of Neil Talbott who, as ever, dedicated huge swathes of his time and energy to ably train up the next generation of First and Third rowers. This hard work lead to several strong results with the 1st novice men's boat coming second at Clare Novices and in Fairbairns, and the 1st novice women's boat coming 3rd at Novice Fairbairns. Perhaps the most impressive result was that of the 2nd Novice Men's Boat who came 3rd overall, only 10 seconds behind our 1st novice men's crew. In Senior Fairbairns the 1st Men's Boat came 5th, a solid result for a relatively inexperienced crew.

The start of the New Year heralded the traditional pre-Lent term training camp. The camp this year was held at the Gravelines Rowing Lake in France, with

nearly 30 rowers including a good mixture of senior rowers and promising novice rowers. The camp faced various challenges, including having to organise alternative transport arrangements the day before it was due to start, and gale force winds forcing the women's boat to beach at the 1km mark and be carried back to the boatyard! However the club showed tremendous resourcefulness and spirit in overcoming these various difficulties. In particular I would like to thank Chris Black, the previous captain, who at a moment's notice agreed to trailer our boats down to France; Jon Davies, who lent him the car to do so; Zoe Wible, for helping organise the camp; and Preeyan Parmar, Daisy Gomersall and Peter Ford for volunteering their time to coach. In spite of all of this, the camp was very successful allowing many quality miles of rowing, competitive side-by-side racing, strong development of novice rowers and many new friendships.



Some side by side racing at training camp.

There was no let up after the end of training camp: with Lent Bumps a scant 6 weeks away, both sides set to work to get race ready. Once again the women's side would have to integrate ex-novices into their 1st boat, so they immediately set to work inducting them into their crew. On the men's side, a senior squad of 3 crew was formed to allow the ex-novices to train and race with more experienced rowers. This strategy greatly benefitted the Men's 3rd boat, who went up two in bumps, bumping two 2nd crews. The 1st and 2nd Men's crews both stayed level, bumping once and being bumped once. The 1st Men's crew fell to a a very strong Lady Margaret crew who, after a long-fought battle, bumped the 1st boat just 300m from the finish line, while also bumping a Queen's crew outside the plough who had beaten them at Fairbairns. While the 2nd boat had a heroic row-over in front of a Queen's 2nd boat, which they then had to repeat for a re-row! The women's side struggled with injury and inexperience in their bumps campaign and ended up down 3. On the men's side training continued in preparation for the Head of the River Race. Like the year, before both crews headed down to

London to experience and train on the Tideway. The 1st boat came 145th and the 2nd boat came 238th.

During this period, the club's trialists were preparing for their own boat races. Ali Abbasi, a previous men's captain, successfully made the step up into the Blue Boat, Trinity's first rowing blue since 2007. It was an inspiring achievement, given the class of this year's Blue boat, who had dispatched strong Oxford Brookes and German U23 crews with ease. It was all the more so because Ali had learnt to row at First and Third (having only tried out because he was offered a free drink during fresher's week !). Hugo Ramambason (coxing) and Piers Kasas also both retained their places in Goldie. On the Women's side Liv Godwin (coxing), Imogen Grant and Chloe Edwards were all competing for places in crews, even though they had all only learnt to row the year before. Liv narrowly lost out on coxing both Blondie and the Lightweight crew, while Chloe just missed selection for the women's lightweight crew. Imogen, who had won gold at the European University Rowing Championships with CUW in the 8 the summer before, did not quite make the blue boat, but was selected to stroke both Blondie and the Lightweight 8, as it was decided to double up 4 of the lightweights into Blondie. At the Henley Boat Races, in very challenging conditions, Chloe won her spare pairs race, albeit with some exciting steering, while Imogen agonisingly lost by just 3ft. One week later, it was time for the heavyweight boat races on the Championship Course, with close to swamping conditions. Ali Abbasi and the Men's Blue boat put in an imperious performance to defeat Oxford and end their period of dominance, while Imogen was able to avenge her defeat by stroking Blondie to victory.



Ali Abbasi (2nd from the left).

May term started with a win in the Foster-Fairbairn Men's Pair and the Women's Lowe Double Sculls in the Small Boat Regatta. All 6 triallists returned to row with the college boats, providing a valuable injection of experience and skill to elevate the rowers around them. Last year the men's side had made a small error when overlapping with Downing resulting in them getting bumped by the crew they had bumped the day before, so this year, revenge was duly sought against Downing. The Women's side wanted to solidify their strong position from last year however faced some strong crews below them.

7 boats from First and Third competed in this year's May Bumps race, with a return of the now infamous grad boat, with even more garish tank tops. Demonstrating their speed in perhaps a unique way of blading (it would be interesting to know if this has ever happened before!) They bumped the same Hughes Hall 2nd Boat twice, as Hughes overbumped over the grad boat on the Wednesday and Friday, but were bumped by the grad boat on the Thursday and Saturday, so both crews ended up 4 while starting next to each other! The women's 1st boat started off well, rowing over well clear of their chasing crew and ending inside station on a strong Jesus crew, unfortunately it all fell apart on the Thursday, where the Clare crew chasing them caught them off guard with a fly or die sprint that they failed to respond to in time. Over the next two days the women then fell to two very strong crews. Still a relatively young crew, this hard lesson will help drive them in their future rowing careers. On the first day, the Men's boat was out for blood, seeking to bump the Downing crew that had just evaded them the year before, and in a clinical performance they bumped the Downing crew 100m before the railway bridge, exactly where they should have bumped them the year before.



The 1st Men's boat racing in bumps.

On the Thursday, a crab from the Jesus crew in front took the margin to a couple of metres, the Jesus crew just about managed to evade the crew. On the Friday, the 1st boat was chased by a fast blading Clare crew and they knew their only option was to bump Jesus. In a "Death or Glory" sprint the crew managed to get to 2 feet of overlap on Jesus in front round Ditton, unfortunately this was not quite enough and in the ensuing death were bumped by Clare.

In both bumps this year the men stayed level at 6th while the women fell to 8th. These are not the results that either side had hoped for, and perhaps demonstrate a relative lack of experience in crews. Fortunately for most of the people in these crews, these will not be their last results, and they have opportunities to take these experiences to drive them on to work harder, train better and race faster. Indeed many of the people in these crews will be trialling for the university squads next year. This process of helping people learn how to push themselves harder and seek higher goals, that can take someone who just wanted a free drink and guide them along the route to winning a boat race, is what makes me most proud to be a member of First and Third and to have been a Captain. It is one tradition that First and Third will always hold strong.

Finally I would like to thank all those who donated their time to coach and support First and Third and wish the future captains the best of luck.

Ra, Ra First and Third.