College Activities

Trinity College First & Third Boat Club

Luke Barratt (2018)

If the previous year or so had been a winter in the rowing scene at Trinity, this year has certainly been First and Third's spring. Coming out of the tough restrictions of the pandemic, which often halted all rowing, and at other times limited us to rowing in IVs, we faced an uphill struggle. We had lost almost all of our experience in a way many other clubs had not: over half of our Mays rowers and coxes had noviced in 2021. Going into Michaelmas, we were essentially building a boat club from scratch.



The Club at the 2022 Mays Supper.



M3 about to bump Pembroke M3 at May Bumps 2022. From left to right: Luke Barratt (coxswain), Patrick Winter, Oscar Allen, Jonathan Edwards, Thomas Gaertner, Jonny Lee, Jakob Alwall, Kian Moshiri, Andrew Farquharson.

In Michaelmas, the Novice Captains quickly got to work, taking out more than one hundred novices into tubs. By selection this had whittled down to sixty rowers and seven coxes, split over four men's and three women's novice crews. In the Novice Fairbairn Cup, our NW1 came second only to Caius, rowing 12.1 seconds faster than the next fastest crew. Our NM1 came fourth, 17.2 seconds faster than the next fastest crew. Impeded when overtaking Churchill, our NM2 was the fourth fastest NM2, and our NM4 was only 4.5 seconds off Maggie NM3. Meanwhile, our senior boats were beset by injury and COVID, meaning that our men's boats were filled with subs, and our W1 could not race. It was a tough time for the senior club.

However, the injection of novices into the senior club brought fresh life in Lents. Stephen 'Bomber' Harris was not averse to sending novices straight into top boats, and a new generation of the Club was born. Three boats went to race off-Cam – a first for the majority involved – to Bedford Head. Coming into Lents we knew we faced a difficult struggle, but as a club we were only down one overall, with W2 ending up three. Our spirits were lifted, however, when W1 came fifth of the Cambridge Colleges at the Women's Eights Head of the



NW1 racing Novice Fairbairns. From left to right: Daniel Leong (coxswain), Gabrielle Doyle, Lily Kearney, Phoebe Hall, Ina Jaentgen, Sophie Harper, Blanche Darbord, Elizabeth Zazycki, Isabelle West.

River Race, beating Trinity Hall who had bumped them the previous week. The women's side brought even more pride to the Club when we won the women's double sculls at the Second Trinity Challenge Sculls.

The Head of the River Race provided a wake-up call to the men, who at the start of Easter Term won their category at the Head of the Cam. Then, at Bedford Regatta, M1 won their open VIIIs band. In the College VIIIs, they lost to Oriel by just over a length, having been a minute slower than them in Fairbairns. This was followed by M3 being the fastest M3 at Radegund Mile, and the third of the lower Mays VIII category despite being in Division 4. Our trusty women's double came second. At X-Press Head, W1 claimed their victory in the 1st Mays VIIIs. In the Mays we as a club ended up one, counteracting our down one from the Lents, despite having no returning Blues or Olympians to help us out. This was in no small part due to the tremendous performance of the lower boats, W2 ending up three and M3 ending up four.

The year ended with a flurry of celebration. We had a wonderful Mays Supper in the Great Hall to celebrate the end of the Mays, which President Tony Pooley remarked was the best to which he had been since he was a student. The Dinner concluded with a rowing parody of Smash Mouth's All Star by our Mays M2. This was followed up the next week by a garden party in the Fellows' Garden with plenty of brown bread and Trinity burnt cream ice cream. At Henley, we watched as Imogen Grant, who noviced at First and Third in 2014, made it to the final of the Princess Royal (open weight single sculls) for Cambridge. She then set a world record for the lightweight women's single sculls at Lucerne. We look forward to seeing her successes at Paris 2024.

With the vast majority of the men's side returning in Michaelmas, we can expect strong performances from them next year. It is clear our training programme, led by Stephen 'Bomber' Harris, is improving our crews much faster than those of the rest of the Colleges. It is worth noting for example that M1 went from being beaten by Jesus by a minute at Fairbairns, to being bumped at the bottom of the reach by them in the Lents, to being bumped quite literally at the last second with our bow ball past the finish in the Mays. There is no sign that this progress is slowing, and with such great strength in the lower boats things will only be up from here.

On the women's side, we now have a consistent squad of rowers, meaning we will hopefully never again not be entering a W2 into the Bumps. Indeed, at the start of the Mays we were looking at entering our first W3 into the Bumps for the first time since 2011, and I am confident we could make this happen next year.