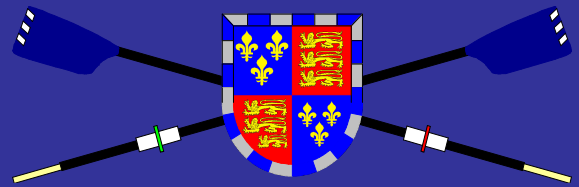


Christ's College Boat Club

THE BLADES



Alumni supporting the future of the boat club

Another year has started, and another batch of Freshers has started at Christ's. Yet this year the Boathouse seems to be even more of a hive of activity than usual. Perhaps the most noticeable output of this activity is the women's results - they won both the Senior and Novice pennants in Fairbairns, and picked up a number of excellent race wins along the way, including University Fours competition. Yet it was not just undergraduates turning out, for in addition to the ten college crews entered into Fairbairns there was not just one, but two alumni crews racing: one based on crews from the 1964-68 period, and the other based around the 2005 May boat. Both managed successfully to complete the course, and beat other alumni crews, including Peterhouse and Downing. There has been more going on in addition to racing, including the naming of a new Women's boat - The Professor Malcolm



W1 Rowing to victory in Fairbairns

Bowie, which is the replacement for the Beagle, now ten-years old. There have been a number of changes at the Boathouse, including underpinning the bay where the Vills are kept which was suffering from severe subsidence, and installation of sliding racks to keep the boats from being damaged so frequently getting on and off the racks. There is now the Lents to watch, and the future for that is certainly bright.

Women's racing report - Fairbairn's winners

Eddie Surtees - Captain of Women's Boats

Well what can I say! The word 'unbeaten' sums up the term pretty well with wins in the Autumn Head, University Fours and the Fairbairns. We are unbeaten because of the mentality and dedication of the crew. We moved all our outings to afternoons as we knew that mornings would be more or less useless due to the high levels of congestion on the river, but afternoon outings require a high level of dedication and organisation because of all the teaching that goes on in the afternoons.

The run up to Fairbairns was incredibly exciting but also very nerve racking for the whole crew. There was a lot of talk about us from the other clubs and they did their best to intimidate us on and off the river (Facebook!). The nerves in our crew were raised again when we were predicted to win Fairbairns by Varsity. We knew we had the potential to do it but we also knew Jesus were going to do everything in their power to beat us. Our motto going into Fairbairn's was 'We'll



W1 with their Fairbairns trophy



M1 near the start

just do what we always do' – that is race hard while keeping cool heads and good technique, and this is exactly what we did. We made a fantastic start, winding to rate 42 and then striding down to 38 but with power in the water. I (stroke) was well aware that we would burn out at this rate so we strode again down to a nice, powerful rhythm at rate 32. Throughout the race we had many pushes and a lot of calls for concentration on certain parts of the stroke which kept our minds off the pain. I can definitely say that we put everything in. When Esther (cox) called for a final push at the finish we had nothing left to give. It was a fantastic row and a highly deserved result. The crew has trained very hard making big improvements in technique. I would like to thank our coaches Neil Cobbett, Andy Neild (who put us through some painful erg sessions) and of course Kat. I would also like to thank everyone that has donated to the Boat Club which allowed us to purchase the new Women's VIII. She is a lovely boat to row in and has had a great start to her rowing life winning all her races so far.

It is not only the Seniors that have seen success this term. Novice W1 trained hard all term and were a powerful crew. In Fairbairns they had a brilliant race. They maintained their technique as they got tired and put in a huge amount of effort. You could see the pain in their faces as they went under

Chesterton footbridge but they kept the pressure up right to the finish: they had won by 14 seconds - a fantastic achievement and well deserved. Novice W2 also had an amazing result, coming fourth out of all the second boats and beating many first boats. This is such a big achievement as they are not a large powerful crew and yet they beat many bigger crews.

Overall this has been a great term for the Christ's Women. I am incredibly proud and impressed with everyone's hard effort and dedication. We have a fantastic base to start building on next term with, I hope, more success to follow. We start next term with a week-long training camp, starting on the 7th January. We will be training on the Cam for the first few days and then we are hoping to take 4 crews (2 Women's Vllls, 2 Men's Vllls) to Nottingham racing lake

for the last few days. This will allow us to get in some intense training before work starts and give us a chance to get to know each other even better.

Men's Racing Report

Jack Eyre – Captain of Boats

Firstly, I think the women must be congratulated for not only a superb Fairbairns result, but a fantastic term, where they could not have done any better (although they didn't enter a four into Fairbairns, *Varsity* still predicted them to win!).

The first boat this term lacked somewhat in physical stature - though as our hugely inspiring boatwoman Kat Astley put it, "they've got the brawn, but you've got the balls!" This says a lot about how we prepared for the day, and how we raced on the day; we went out aggressively from the very beginning (though our start felt one of the neatest we had done all term) rowed aggressively through the middle, and then finished aggressively! Things became less technically precise towards the end, but we held it together enough to come in 9th.

We were pleased with this as it represented a significant climb up the field since the Winter Head two weeks before. Also, we proved ourselves faster than many of the crews around us in the bumps, and learnt the valuable lesson that rowing hard and rowing together CAN do more than being big and



'Crustaceans 1' (most of the 2005 May Boat) settling into its rhythm



'Crustaceans 2' heading through the gut

experienced.

We have the potential to do well next term, though it will take a lot of determination - rowing harder and more together than ever before!

The Fellows/M2 hybrid had a slightly disappointing race by their own admission, though their result was respectable, and they even beat Fitzwilliam I, whom our M1 chase in the Lents.

The two fours came 8th and 13th of the college fours. They consisted of some M1 rowers, some M2ers, and some people who "weren't rowing this term" but couldn't stay away from the river for 8 weeks! Not bad for 4 and 2 training sessions respectively! Rowing Fairbairns twice in one day is not recommended!

The novice 1st men did fantastically well to come fourth in a strong field. They have been looking strong and technically good all term, but a first round knock-out in Clare Novices (by the eventual winners, Jesus) gave them a bit of a scare, and with more hard work through the last week, and huge determination through the race, they really got what they deserved - a significant improvement on the Fairbairns results from the last couple of years, putting us in a strong position for the Lents.

The aims of both alumni crews were achieved - beating college first boats, other alumni crews, and most importantly, I think, they were back on the Cam, in Vllls, and enjoyed the experience hugely.

Next term has the potential to be an even more successful term for Christ's - the women will not want to let go of their dominant position, and the men's boat club want some of the glory too! The first race of the term is likely to be a Head-to-Head race on the Cam, on January 20th, so please keep checking the website, to see how things are progressing.

Alumni Racing

No fewer than two alumni crews were entered into the Fairbairns, one from 2005 alumni, and the other from the late '60s testing themselves over the Faribarins course. Racing under the banner of the Crustaceans I and II, both crews had successful and enjoyable races.

Tom Swallow writes:

Crustaceans II finished in 60th place out of 61 in just under 20 minutes; we were not last, as we beat Peterhouse by over half a minute, and we did that in the second half of the course - gritty stuff! The weather was kind - pogies were not needed; if you need to ask what pogies are then

you are of the right era to join this crew next year.

The two boats that overtook us were obviously underestimated by the organisers, as shown by their lowly position in the start order. Cross Keys (344) were 3.5 minutes faster and Fitzwilliam II (345) were 2.5 minutes faster. Taking all things into consideration, including a total lack of any pre-race training, and, for most the fact that this was the first time in a racing boat for 40 years, I believe we upheld Kat Astley's stated conviction that we could do it. Thanks for your belief in us, Kat!

There is already a full Crustaceans II crew in place for Senior Fairbairn's VIII on Friday 5th December 2008 but we welcome enquiries from anyone else from the 1960's who would like to race. Please email to Tom Swallow tom@swift-associates.demon.co.uk. You would then be recorded as a reserve, cycle the towpath as a supporter and then row back from Bait's Bite Lock after the race. If enough volunteer reserves come forward then there could be a Crustaceans III. Special thanks go to: boatman Kat Astley for making this all possible and encouraging us at every stoke and turn; cox John Eade whose precise professionalism was a great support when the overtaking boats loomed up behind us; coach Richard Greenhalgh whose wise words were a great encouragement throughout the day - I especially appreciated "Only 10 strokes to go!"; reserve Peter Nelson and his good lady who provided, at the very last minute, the guarantee that the boat would race. Glad you enjoyed the row back Peter; Debbie Lloyd for unflinching towpath and video support; Chris Lloyd for having the sheer temerity to give away several years, and still be able to do the race twice in one day. Steady as a rock; Ruth Eade for bringing our cox and keeping him in enthusiastic style over the years(!); the friendly coxes of the Women's VIII who made

themselves known to these curious greybeards that appeared in their boathouse; and finally...the crew. Within a wide range of abilities and aspirations, from Blue Boat Triallists to ambidextrous substitutes, you were magnificent on the ergos, and gutsy on the water. It was a privilege to row with you.

Response to appeal

There was a very generous response from Alumni of all generations to our recent financial appeal. We had a number of new members join the Blades, with many also making a financial contribution. In addition a number of existing Blades upgrading their contributions. The club is hugely indebted to everyone who responded and wishes to thank everyone who is able to assist the club financially.

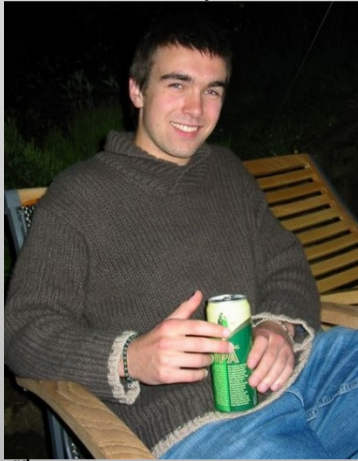

Funds contributed by the Blades are enormously beneficial to the club, and this latest appeal has helped to improve the maintenance and replacement of key equipment to ensure our rowers get the most out of their efforts! Thanks to a few sizeable donations we have also been able to make a small step towards creating an endowment fund that we hope will secure the financial future of the Boat Club. We hope that we will be able to increase the size of this fund over the next few years. If you have any thoughts or ideas for this then please let us know!

If you, or Alumni you know, have not received information on the new Blades membership structure (Fairbairns, Lent and May Blades) or the appeal then please do get in touch (details below) and we will send a pack.

Professor Malcolm Bowie

The Boat Club decided to name its latest boat, a Janousek VIII for the women's club, "Professor Malcolm Bowie". Professor Bowie was the President of the boat club for the all too brief period that he was Master, and was an enthusiastic supporter.

Meet the Captains

<p>Captain of Boats Jack Eyre</p>  <p>3rd Year – Maths and Physics</p>	<p>Captain of Women's Boats Edwina Surtees</p>  <p>2nd Year – Economics</p>
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I took up rowing at the start of my first year, rowing in the first Novice boat. I progressed through the second Lent and May boats in my first year, moving to the first boat at the start of my second year, and I haven't looked back since!

What I enjoy most about rowing: (I could go on at some length here)

- winning
- going faster than in the previous outing
- that tired feeling that means you have been pushing your hardest, and (on a good day) the feeling of satisfaction among the crew that means it was worth it!
- the fact that for a whole two hours during training you can forget about how far behind you are with supervision work!

I had not rowed before I came to Cambridge but I went tubbing in Fresher's week and loved it. I rowed in the first Novice boat and then made the first Lents and Mays crews. During the Summer I rowed in Development Squad run by CUWBC.

I ran for Women's Captain because I wanted to build on Becky's work last year, and I had a lot of ideas for how the Women's club could become one of the fastest crew on the river. I also wanted to create more of a feeling of being part of a team not only within one's crew but also between crews. I think we are well on the way to achieving these aims and much more.

Thank you for supporting women's rowing at Christ's and following our progress this term.

Perhaps his enthusiasm was most evident when he cycled to watch the 1st divisions in the Mays only very shortly after making a brief recovery from his illness. His subtle humour and engaging wit always made his addresses to the Boat Club the only time the Hall was silent during the dinners. His congratulations further enthused the successful crews and his

soothing words were an encouragement to those less so. The Professor Malcolm Bowie was officially named following the Fairbairns races, at the boat house. A number of alumni and current members attended the ceremony. The late Master's parents and his widow, Professor Alison Finch, were also present. Professor Finch performed the naming ceremony and

commented on how much it meant to the entire family to have a boat named after Malcolm. Dr Nick Gay, President of the Boat Club, spoke of what a great supporter of the Boat Club Professor Bowie was and how his support never went unnoticed or unappreciated. Perhaps the most pleasing part of the naming was that the women's first VIII used it that day to win Fairbairns – an auspicious way to start its life!

Training Camp

An unprecedented 30 rowers were involved in the recent training camp preceding the start of the Lent term. Starting on Monday 7th January, two men's eights, a women's eight and a women's four started their training, at first on the Cam, and then at the National Water Sports centre in Nottingham. Despite far-from-ideal conditions, enthusiasm and commitment were high. The early parts of the week were spent getting used to being in boats again (after many hours of ergo training over the holiday!), and then serious mileage was racked up - some recent ex-novices commenting that they rowed further that week than all of the previous term. The benefits of having a large, straight piece of water to train on in Nottingham were felt by all. We also ventured onto the nearby river Trent, where most of us were somewhat taken aback by how large a river could feel in comparison to the Cam.

As well as technical and fitness gains, there was a real club feel that developed through the week. This was particularly

evident at the hotel in Nottingham. A great time was had by all and hopefully the usefulness of the week will be reflected in results through the term. (In fact, the recent Head-to-Head results have shown the camp was effective in allowing the women to continue their winning streak, and the M2 crew came 4th in their category, beating several boats in the Bumps division above them, as well as all those entered from their own!)

We hope to continue this trend of well attended camps, hopefully away from the Cam to give more focus to training and promote crew bonding. One current idea is to train on the Upper Thames in the week before Full Easter term, and we are seeking Blades who might be able to help with accommodation in this area. We would be extremely grateful to hear from anyone who can help, or direct us to people who might be able to help.

Boathouse Works

Following confirmation (as if any were needed!) by our insurers that our lean-to Vllls shed was falling down, a programme of repair works has been initiated. Subsidence was identified as the cause and the results were multiple cracks to the single storey building. One corner of the whole building was sliding inexorably along the damp proof course towards the river! So far cracked bricks have been replaced, and various load-spreading devices applied. Underpinning is taking place before Christmas, and the building is due to be fully

repaired by Lent Term 2008. The problem was, thankfully, limited to the lean-to, and does not affect the original main boathouse. The other major structural change has been to the boat racking in the Vllls bay. Most boathouses along the Cam have long sported sliding metal racks, and Christ's has now joined the crowd.

Web

The boat club website has had a massive overhaul, and is now based on a wiki interface. You can now add your own content and crew lists, as a number of alumni have already done. Many crew lists and results from previous years are available online. See:

www.christsbc.co.uk

For full Fairbairns results see the Jesus College Boat Club website **jbc.jesus.cam.ac.uk/Fairbairns/FairbairnsResults.html**

The Fellow's Boat even has footage from their BumpsCam taken when they bumped the St John's Fellows in the Town Bumps available on YouTube: **tinyurl.com/26mmxp**

More info on the sliding racks is available at: **www.powerhouse-design.com/boat_storage.htm**

Blades Events

Lent Bumps 26 Feb-1 Mar

HORR 15 March

Boat Race 29 March

May Bumps 11-14 June

Blades May Bumps picnic 14 June

Women's Henley 20-22 June

Henley 2-6 July

Blades Henley event 5th July Tea-time