

The President



Reflecting on the end of my second year as your President I must be frank with you that fundraising has stalled. This is a vital part of our work in supporting and celebrating Oriel rowing. I ask all of you to [support](#) the boat club however you can. The threshold for being a Blade is £200 a year, and I fully understand if that is too much for some. But please give what you can, and do not simply leave it to others. It makes all the difference to the success of the Club that we love and of which we are all proud. I assure you that the money goes straight to the coaching of the club, making us better able to attract and retain coaches. It does not go into the day to day running of the club, which is funded by the Oriel budget and the students' own efforts with events such as Oriel Regatta. With the right support and sound coaching you will reap the benefits at Bumps and Tortoise Dinner celebrations for years to come.

Speaking of such celebrations, the most recent Tortoise Dinner was one to remember. We had a fantastic time, alumni both young and less young met the students who made a particularly fine effort to learn from the experience. To douse the claims of a Wyndhams tug-of-war victory the students were challenged to a boat race in the Vesta Bar, with an alumni win and a verdict of two pints clear.

At the Annual General Meeting before the dinner we thanked Helen Belgrano Operto for her great work as the Tortoise Secretary, she is changing roles to be the Club's regalia officer (for which there are exciting announcements in the works). At Helen's recommendation and voted in at the AGM, Eleanor Juckes, a close friend and wildly competent Tortoise, has taken up the mantle of Secretaryship. It is a pleasure to have her on board and she has written some words below.

The Tortoises entered a full eight for Fairbairns and acquitted themselves admirably, giving the current students some motivation for their Christmas Vac training. Particular recognition should be paid to Angus Forbes and Zachary Zajicek for organising everything. This is likely to become a fixture of the Tortoise Club calendar, we have been able to rent shells from Cambridge clubs and the event does not require British Rowing membership which makes it less logistically challenging. If anyone or any crews wish to get involved either for this event or to facilitate other Tortoise rowing them please do contact me.

The boat club is currently awaiting a new minibus which has been made possible by the generous support of Matthew Gilpin, for which we are very grateful. There are plans afoot for the 40 years of Oriel Women's Rowing celebrations, please contact the team organising this at 1985@orielrowing.org if you would like to be involved or attend. Finally the film The Boys in the Boat will be in UK cinemas from 12th January 2024 supported by the sterling work of Oriel Oarsmen. Stay tuned for a possible Tortoise Club event around this.

Thank you all for your support and involvement in driving forward the success of Oriel rowing and the Tortoise Club. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Floreat Oriel!

Robert Boswall

Tortoise-President@orielrowing.org

The Captains



OCBC began the term strongly. A record 96 freshers signed up to try rowing at the Oriel freshers' fair, and this enthusiasm continued at the extremely well-attended barbeque later that week. However, our novice program (led by our capable vices, Leah, Dylan and John) was soon thwarted by the weather. The Friday of 1st week saw the most rain in a single day since 2012, and two named storms in a row wreaked havoc on the Oxford rowing community. As a result, our eager novices have been forced to replace time on the water with ergs and tank sessions - a task they have taken to with great gusto! A sizeable number of them have even voluntarily joined senior hard ergs, which bodes well for the lower boats come Torpids.

The weather unfortunately meant that Wyndhams could also not go ahead as usual. However, the replacement in the form of a boathouse barbeque was a success, with some of the newer rowers getting to meet OCBC alumni for the first time. The annual racing was replaced by a tug-of-war, with the help of a rope very generously provided by Tom Lister's parents! For the first time in many years, the students were able to edge out the alumni to victory, a feat which will hopefully be repeated when Wyndhams returns to the water next year!

Later on in the term, the seniors made the trip down to London for Tortoise Dinner, which was a great opportunity for our newer first boat members to meet members of the Tortoise Club. A special thanks must go to Aysha and the rest of the council for organising such a lovely evening, and as ever, we are extremely grateful for the Tortoise Club's support, advice and guidance.



The senior squads have taken this term's challenges in their stride. Although Wallingford is not subject to the same stream regulations as the Isis, the speed of the river has meant that outings in the dark have not been possible. As a result, the top squads have had to resort to many early morning steadies, making us fitter, faster and stronger. We have been using our few weekend water sessions to learn how to put this increased power into the water, a process which will be continued in Hilary.

Guiding the squads throughout this period has been our coach, Jack Delaney. Keeping the instruction of current Oriel rowers in the capable hands of a fellow Tortoise has so far paid off, with the majority of the squad PB'ing on recent 2ks. Thanks must also go to former captain and ex-Tortoise President, Stevan Boljevic, for cancelling all his plans at the last minute to coach the M1 and W1 for a weekend. The dedication and devotion of Tortoises past and present to this club is one of its main strengths, and for this we are all truly grateful.

With Wallingford Head unfortunately cancelled due to high stream, the M1 and W1 headed to Cambridge at the end of the term to compete in Fairbairns. Although they were the second fastest Oxford college crew, the M1 unfortunately lost to University College, Oxford, and the Tortoises. This result has made us even more fired up and ready to take the winter training plan head-on. The W1 had an exciting race, catching Caius by the Reach, leading to some bumps-like racing

through the Cam's infamous corners, which has certainly given us a boost of confidence! We are also looking forward to the upcoming block of Christmas training to close the gap to Univ in the three months before we face them in Torpids.

Looking ahead to next term, the senior squads are raring to go, and will start off the campaign with a training camp in -1st week. In terms of racing, the M1 and W1 will be competing in both Quintin and Bedford Head in the run-up to Torpids, with the aim of gaining more valuable race experience before the main event itself.

In Torpids, the W1 are starting 3rd on the river - chasing Pembroke, with Christ Church chasing us. The W2 are starting 39th, and we look forward to seeing how far they manage to bump up this campaign! The M1 are also 3rd on the river, with Wolfson ahead and Pembroke behind. The M2 will be starting from the 37th bungline, and having had a campaign to forget last year, will now claw their way back up the charts and possibly even secure some blades. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible down at the boathouse over the course of those four days!

Floreat Oriel!

Bea Frediani and Theo Briscoe

captains@orielrowing.org



The Secretary

Hi All! I'm Ellie, and I'm extremely excited to be taking over the Tortoise Secretary position. I should firstly thank Helen Belgrano Operto for her work in support of the Tortoise Club over the last few years and for her help in transitioning responsibilities to me. By way of introduction, I matriculated at Oriel in 2016 and rowed in various levels of women's crews whilst at College, including as a member of the victorious Double Headship Torpid W1 in 2018. I was also Women's Club Vice Captain in 2018-19, and organised the fielding of four women's boats at that trinity's Summer Eights, an achievement of which I am particularly proud. Since graduating I have been involved with the Tortoise Club in various ways, including as the Cox of 2023's Floreat Fouriel, an alumni crew who entered various regattas and competitions last season, with varying degrees of success but always a good injection of Oriel Spirit...

I am confident that along with Robert and the rest of the Council we can continue to grow the Tortoise Club to give more and more back to Oriel Rowing, and I am very much looking forward to being part of that. Please do reach out to me should you have any queries or questions, and I hope to meet any new faces at events in the new year.

Floreat Oriel!

Ellie Juckes

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