

## The President

It is always a pleasure when Tortoises reach out, whether they are asking to be added to the newsletter, how to donate, offering advice, or sharing old stories. Every time it heartens me to see how strong this club is and how much it is loved by its members. In my last newsletter I explained the position of current boat club funding. The students are doing an incredible job keeping the show on the road despite rising costs and fixed incomes. I received a welcome response from you with new Blades signing



up, current Blades increasing their payments, and alumni of all stripes chipping in what they can. The Tortoise Council met last week and have put together plans to reinvigorate the growth of the Blades scheme and alumni support in general. I encourage you all to [take part](#), it is thanks to this club and your generous support that Oriel can win on the river and be open to all comers.

This weekend is Boat Race weekend, with eight Orielenes competing across all crews, for details see the Captains' Reports. We will be at Furnival Gardens on Saturday, I look forward to seeing you there, as always blazers are encouraged and stash is required. On Friday there will be the Lightweight and Veteran's Boat Races at which the Senior Cup will be presented to the winning veteran crew. This cup is dedicated to Orielenis Tim Senior, and the Tortoise Club is inscribed upon it along with others who donated towards its commissioning.

Torpids was a great shame, I am sure the Oriel crews would have represented the colours well. But the spirit of healthy competition continued. Smarting from their defeats to the Alumni at Wyndhams and in the 'Boat Races' of Tortoise Dinner the students returned with a vengeance. But that will have to wait as the smarting was redoubled with defeats in both Tug of Warpids and Chug of Warpids. This led to a memorable dinner hosted by the Boat Club Senior Member Reverend Robert Wainwright. Once again I can confirm that the Club is in good spirits, of particular note were the W2 and W3 songs, they seemed to have actually practised them and have earned the honour of having their lyrics entered into the records.

The Tortoises took to the water for the Head of the River Race, led by Tom Lister. This is the first Tortoise Club crew which I have ever seen that did not include Stevan Boljevic, his is a record of commitment I am sure shall go unbroken for some time. It is great to see crews come together spontaneously like this, especially as it means I do not have to organise them. The crew list was: Eleanor Jukes (Cox and Tortoise Club Secretary), Matt Hamilton, James Halsall (Tortoise Treasurer), Tom Lister (Capt.), Phil Grunewald, Will Burrow, Anton Nieboer, George Barker, Ben Gilmore. The results can be perused [here](#), but they beat all the crews that did not turn up and had a great time while doing it.

Once again I will mention plans for the 40 years of Oriel Women's Rowing celebrations, please contact the team organising this at [1985@orielrowing.org](mailto:1985@orielrowing.org) if you would like to be involved or attend.

I look forward to seeing you on Saturday and thank you all for your support and involvement in driving forward the success of Oriel rowing and the Tortoise Club. Easter blessings to you all.

*Floreat Oriel!*

Robert Boswall

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# Women's Captain's Report



The women's side has gone from strength to strength this term, despite the weather-related challenges that have been thrown our way. We returned to college after Christmas looking to get stuck into some water training to translate the massive improvements we had made on the ergs into boat speed. Alas, the river was uncooperative from the get-go, with Boathouse Island sinking into the depths of the Isis, and the crew needing waders and wellies to get the Blessed Mary off the rack at Wally.

Nevertheless, we headed to Dorney during training camp, getting in some chunky back-to-back sessions - the wind, snow and rain couldn't keep us off the lake! Then it was time to knuckle down into the first few weeks of term and get some serious mileage done on the ergs. Once again, the whole squad rose to the challenge brilliantly, with everyone from the seniors in their fourth year of Oriel rowing, to the novices in their second term showing up consistently and making big improvements. In the meantime, the W1 also raced Quintin Head, and had a strong run down the course, taking the challenging Tideway conditions and the scratch crew in their stride.

The weather finally broke mid-way through the term, and gave us a tantalising glimpse of the potential of this year's crews. We had a play with the seat order of the W1, and finally settled on a combination that had the boat running like silk, translating the girls' considerable watts into the water. The W2 was also looking incredibly strong, and came off the water after what was to be their last session of the term (not that we knew it at this point) saying they'd 'never rowed in a boat that felt so smooth'. It was a pleasure to cox the W3, who hit the heady heights of rate 30 for the first time in their outings, despite most of them having been on the water less than 3 times. It's been incredibly impressive to see the W3 novices continuously showing up across the last two terms, despite the lack of water sessions, and their attitude, as well as their massive improvements on the land, bode very well for the future of Oriel rowing.



So, with the squad ready and in a great position to chase Headship and two sets of blades, we cracked on with the next stages of Torpids prep - 2k testing, Dorney weekends and a whole lot of ergs. With PBs as far as the eye could see, we kept our foot on the gas, building up to the big week right until Torpids was officially cancelled.

Although the Torpids cancellation was a big blow to the squad, we had a brilliant time wrapping up our term of training with Tug of Warpids and Torpids Dinner, and are looking forward to gearing up for our Eights campaign. In the meantime, we can't wait to watch Claire Aitken tear up the Tideway in the 4 seat of the Blue Boat on Saturday 30th March!

We look forward to seeing you on Boathouse Island during Eights week (22nd-25th May) and for Eights Dinner - it's shaping up to be a very exciting campaign indeed, with the W1 starting at 4th on the river, the W2 looking to build off a very successful campaign from last season, and the W3 bumping up through the W2 crews that surround them! See you then!

Floreat Oriel!

Bea Frediani

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# Men's Captain's Report

After a Michaelmas filled with race cancellations and much erging, the squad returned in early January for our pre-term training camp, ready to hit the ground running. Unfortunately, we arrived to find Boathouse Island underwater, with Wallingford also badly affected by widespread flooding. Not to be deterred, we got back on the ergs, and were also able to take the first boats to Dorney for two days of much-needed water time. We were the only crews on the lake, and so were pleased to be able to get a head start on our rivals.



Fortunately, the weather eased enough over the next few weeks so that Quintin Head could go ahead in late January. The M1 put in a strong performance, battling not only a rapid tide and vicious winds, but also a fin that had been severely damaged while marshalling. It was the first time racing on the Tideway for several of our crew, so was a valuable experience all round.

The next few weeks saw a brief period of rowable conditions, with both the M1 and M2 able to put in the hours at Wallingford to try to convert our land training to water speed. This period saw the M1 doing eight sessions a week, with the result being a series of massive 2k PBs midway through the term. When the weather turned once more, the M1 made another trip to Dorney, where, with the addition of a super sub or two, we raced a 1500m piece one split faster than the far bigger and more experienced Wolfson, who are directly ahead of us in the Torpids standings.



However, we did not get the opportunity to chase them off the bungline, as Torpids was unfortunately cancelled after yet another spell of wet weather. While it was clearly disappointing to not be able to show off the work we had all put in over the previous two terms, the squad is in a positive position for next year's campaign - our M1 remain close to head at third on the river, and all of this year's first boat are still at Oriel next year.

The cancellation of Torpids meant the second ever 'Tug of Warpids' was held by Pembroke. OCBC fielded three crews, and had a greatly enjoyable afternoon, though tempered somewhat by an unfortunate grudge match defeat to a Tortoise crew. Our social secs ran a gin and tonic stand alongside the event, and we are pleased to report that Gilpin's Gin went down a treat with the wider Oxford rowing community! It was fantastic to see a dedicated cohort of alumni return for Torpids Dinner that evening, with much exchanging of stories between students and alumni taking place at the Bear afterwards.

This weekend we are looking forward to seeing extraordinary Orielense representation in the Boat Races - we have seven Orielenses in the Oxford men's crews: in the Blue Boat William Benegri, Elliott Kemp, and James Doran; in Isis Jackson Hardin, and Chris Hull; in the Lightweight Blue Boat Isaac Throsby and Alex Abel. This is an incredible achievement and a sign that the rowing tradition at Oriel is as strong as ever.



Having been denied the opportunity to race bumps this past term, we are all highly motivated for Summer Eights. Our M1 will be starting at Head, while our M2 is a very respectable 22nd on the river - the highest second eight by far. Our other boats are also in strong contention for blades after the amount of work put in by the entire squad on the land this year. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible cheering us on come fifth week!

Floreat Oriel!

Theo Briscoe

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