

# Tortoise Club Newsletter: Hilary 2023

Dates for the diary:  
The Boat Race (Furnival Gardens):  
26th March from 15:00  
Eights Saturday: 27th May  
HRR Picnic: 1st July

## Remembering Tim Senior

TIM SENIOR (1998), Chairman of the Boat Races, rowed for Oriel in 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2003. He was part of the 2001 1st Torpid that regained Headship and the 2001 1st VIII that defended it. He died suddenly at Henley on Saturday 11th February; he is survived by his wife Sarah Jane and their children.



I have written to Tim's family to express the condolences of the Tortoise Club and our wish to honour him at an appropriate moment. The Boat Race will be naming a cup for the Veterans' Race in his memory; the race and its presentation will take place on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March. Tortoises have been encouraged to attend, and details are attached.

Tim was a respected member of the Tortoise Club and well known for his full commitment to our cause. He represented some of the club's greatest strengths, expressed through his continued love of rowing and his service to the sport more generally as Chairman of The Boat Races.

*Photo: the men's First VIII in 2001, Tim Senior in the four seat*

## Women's Captain



THE WOMEN'S SIDE of the Boat Club had a very promising Hilary Term. Despite various initial obstacles (including but not limited to an asbestos scare and a prolonged red flag on the Isis) we came back after the New Year ready to train hard. After becoming well-acquainted with the ergs we finally got back on the water at Wallingford with a few weeks to go until Torpids.

Soon afterwards W1 raced at Bedford Head, and despite the limited preparation time we were not only the fastest Oxford College there but the joint-fastest women's crew of the day, earning us our first tankards. Spurred on by our victory, we headed into Torpids with our sights set high on moving

up from our starting position at 5th. W1 chased Pembroke on the first two days, and although they bumped out early both times we managed to catch up to both Wadham and Wolfson for an overbump twice in a row. The third day was trickier, with a very close chase between Pembroke and Univ ahead of us and a shaky start on our part meaning we rowed over. On the final day we quickly gained on Pembroke, and were within inches of bumping them when the division was klaxoned. This leaves us at 3rd on the river, and needless to say we will be looking to move up those final places next year. Summer Eights will provide us with an opportunity finally to catch up to Pembroke as we start behind them again, this time at 7th on the river.



W2 have enjoyed training this term, and thanks is due to Dr Phil Grünewald for volunteering his time to coach them. After the blades-winning success of last year's W2 they began in a difficult position, and this coupled with several unfortunate equipment failures and encounters with the bank meant that they moved down four places over the week. However, they managed to avoid spoons with a clean rolover on the final day, even almost catching up to Christ Church W2 who started two places ahead of them. They are excited for what is to come with Summer

Eights next term, especially as this Torpids was the first bumps campaign for many of them.

To end the term W1 travelled to London to race at WEHoRR. This was the first experience on the Tideway for several members of the crew, and they took the slightly rougher conditions and long course in their stride, finishing 172nd. We are now looking forward to brighter mornings, longer evenings, and lots of hard work over the Easter vac ahead of Summer Eights next term.

### *Captains' Boards for 2.1*

As is well known, the Men's Captain's sitting room contains photographs of previous men's captains dating back to the 1800s. This acts not only as an significant historic record but also as an important physical reminder both to captains and current members of the Boat Club of the generations of Oriel rowers on whose shoulders they stand, and whose legacy they honour. I would like to set up a similar physical record for the Women's Captains in 2.1. To that end, I am looking into having a board made to list the names of the Women's Captains of Boats down the years.

However, when backdating names for 35 years or so, I want to make sure that they are all accurate! If you could spare two minutes to have a look at this [spreadsheet](#) and let me know if you can fill in any gaps or notice any mistakes for the years that you were at Oriel, I would be extremely grateful. Additionally, in order to fund this project, I will be asking for donations from members of the Tortoise Club who would like to contribute to this permanent legacy. More details will follow at a later date, but if you are interested in supporting the idea, please do contact me.

*Floreat Oriel!*

Amelia Monaghan

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## Men's Captain



AFTER TRAINING HARD over the winter vacation, the squad returned to Oxford in Minus-1st week for a training camp. To the disappointment of many this materialised as even more land training: with the stream too high to row both at Wallingford and the Isis, and a trip to Dorney Lake at Eton unrowable thanks to fog, we weren't able to get in the boat until 3rd week.

Training hard at Wallingford began as soon as conditions allowed, fitting as many sessions as possible in before an early 6th-week Torpids. M1 got some race practice at Bedford Head, conveniently shortened to a 1600m course. The crew were happy with their performance and it resulted in a win in the Band 3 Op 8+ category. Torpids came along quickly. M1 met with disappointment on the Wednesday when bumped by a much larger Christ Church crew. On Thursday M1 started ahead of Wolfson (a faster crew than Christ Church) but were able to hold them off for a similar distance. Starting at 3rd on the river on Friday, M1 didn't let the disappointment on the first two days affect them and raced hard, comfortably rowing over on both Friday and Saturday. Oriel M1 will start at 3rd on the river in Torpids 2024, and with almost all of the crew having multiple years left in their degrees they are hungry to come back strong next year.



M2's Torpids campaign was eventful, to say the least. On the Wednesday M2 took to heart the Oriel tradition of not conceding, which unfortunately resulted in a fall of 4 places. They took back one of those places on the Thursday, bumping Corpus Christi, but were again met with the chaos of Division III, being bumped down to Division IV after an incident with the bank on the Friday. On the Saturday M2 rowed over as sandwich boat, meaning that Oriel M2 will start at 37th on the river for Torpids 2024.

After the end of term Oriel headed to the Tideway for the Head of the River Race. With a few substitutions from the Torpids M1, the crew came 160th overall, with a time of 19:34.5, the 3rd fastest Oxford college crew after a Wolfson/Univ M1 composite and the Tortoise Club. The club looks forward to watching the Oriel trialists stack up against the Tabs in the Boat Races, with Oriel

members racing with all four of the University clubs. We hope to see many of them in the OCBC squad in Trinity term where we will be gearing up for a strong Summer Vllls campaign.

*Floreat Oriel!*

Alex Abel

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## The President

THE ONLY THING I have to add to the Captains' reports is that from what I witnessed at Torpids the Oriel Spirit is alive and well. OCBC is a club that strives to win, in which members hold each other to high standards and aim to make their mark on the Oriel legacy. Despite the outcome I was heartened by what I saw; W1 in particular worked very hard for two over bumps only to be denied a shot at Headship in the last two days.

What I ask of all Tortoises in response to this is simple: become a Blade or increase your Blades donation. Christ Church now have in place a system of resources and coaching, and we need to work fast if we are to compete against it. They have built a boat house by the Sandford Lock to access the Radley stretch and have a full-time experienced head coach who has now been with them for three years and plans to stay for many more. We have just passed our initial target of £20,000 a year for the Blades scheme, which is not yet enough to offer a competitive College Head Coach salary. So we need every additional donation, which will go straight into the OCBC funds to hire more long-term coaches and to take the other steps required to regain both Torpids Headships.

George Clooney is directing a film adaptation of the greatest book on rowing I know: *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown. When casting about for crews to represent the crews of the 1936 Berlin Olympics naturally his eye (or that of his casting director) fell on the Headship defending Oriel M1. So in June 2022 a dozen Oriel men took part in this production, predominantly as the Italian crew. The film is likely



to be released later this year, and the Oriel Development Office has been in touch about hosting an event around its release. Further good news is that we have been able to purchase the replica wooden shell that the Oriellenses rowed, thanks to the generous donation of a fellow Tortoise. It is reinforced and in very good condition and so will be used as the processional headship boat for many years, continuing the current practice of building a boat shaped bonfire in Front Quad (the supply of wooden boats having dried up in recent years).



The Tortoise Club is back out on the water, and for a change we thought we would do some training as well as racing. We raced a coxed four at the Henley Fours and Eights head race, performing well and finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in our category with a ten second spread. We then raced at the Head of the River Race finishing 138<sup>th</sup>, which is lower than our 121<sup>st</sup> finish last year but we were 25 seconds closer to the winning crew than last year. A great time was had, and as always please do contact me if you want to be part of these crews or want to discuss getting out crews of your own: my policy is one of survival of the keenest. I

would also stress that any Tortoises can put together Tortoise crews; no stamp of approval is needed.

Jonathan Macfarlane, Claire Toogood, and Sarah Keifer's terms as Membership Officers on the Tortoise Council have come to an end. I am grateful for all the support and advice that they have given both me and the Club over the past few years. We are looking for new members, so please do get in touch if you would like to be part of the Council or better understand what we do. I am especially keen for members of women's crews from before 2010 to get in touch as currently they are not represented on the Council. On the note of women's rowing at Oriel: 2025 marks 40 years of women at Oriel and so the Council has started to discuss an event specifically to celebrate 40 years of Oriel women's rowing. Anyone interested in being involved with this is invited to contact me or our events officer, Aysha Strachan.

Meanwhile, Oriel remains well represented in the university squads: Claire Aitken in the Women's Blue Boat; James Doran in the Men's Blue Boat; Olly Featherstone in the Lightweight Men's Blue Boat; Colson Andrews, Harry Amad, and Jan Ole Ernst in Isis; and Bea Vernon in Tethys. The Boat Races are obviously this Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> March, and we will be cheering them on from Furnival Gardens as usual. Blazers encouraged; the first race goes off at 16:00. I hope to see many of you this weekend, and also at Summer Eights when I am sure we will have much to celebrate.



*Floreat Oriell!*

Robert Boswall

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### **Veterans' Boat Race – Dr Tim Senior**

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

Dr Tim Senior, Chair of The Boat Race Company, unexpectedly passed away in late February. Tim had been involved in rowing since taking up the sport as an undergraduate at Nottingham University. His passion for the sport continued after graduation at Cygnet Rowing Club, London Rowing Club, St Catharine's College, Cambridge University and Oriel College, Oxford University. He continued to compete through a very successful professional career and more recently was an active masters rower with Upper Thames Rowing Club.

The Boat Race would like to honour Tim by naming a cup for the Veterans' Race in his memory. The Senior Cup will be crafted for the 2024 race and will honour past and future winners of the men's and women's veterans' race. It is hoped that it will be ready later this year to join The Boat Race Trophies when they are moved to the River and Rowing Museum in between each boat race.

The Veterans' Boat Race will take place on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March. As in previous years the races double as the BBC rehearsal for The Boat Race that will take place the following day. We would like to welcome members of your club and those that knew Tim to join his family to remember him at this year's race. Refreshments will be provided in Crabtree Boat Club, Putney Embankment, SW15 1LB. Following the races there will be a prize giving ceremony at approximately 4:30pm with Master of Ceremonies Claire Balding and Tim's family.

- 13:15 Coin toss and briefing - both crews
- 14:45 Women's Vets' race start - Matt Smith WBR umpire - BBC following
- 15:25 Men's Vets' race start - BBC Flotilla following - Tony Reynolds MBR umpire
- 16:30 Approx time men's crew land in Putney after rowing full course
- 16:30 Senior cup - presentation of trophy with TS family + Clare Balding - TV recording

If your club or any friends of Tim would like to contribute towards the commission of The Senior Cup please contact [admin@theboatrace.org](mailto:admin@theboatrace.org). All donors will be recorded inside the bowl of the cup.