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Friends of St. Hugh's Boat Club

Newsletter – MT 2012

Dearest Friends of SHBC,

Yet another interesting term has passed where many things have happened. The term started with a big list of objectives we hoped to achieve. We managed to bounce off the Olympic vibe pretty quickly and had a list of over 70 prospective rowers built up by the end of fresher's week. We even, with a bit of forward planning, managed to get a fair few taster sessions out while the river was green flag (and even some transits to Godstow, the chains of the lock story still remains an SHBC tradition)- most other colleges decided to leave it till the weekend of fresher's week, and paid for it, big time. By Friday it shot up to red; a recurring theme throughout the term.

Faced with the difficulty of keeping our novices keen we tried many things, technical ergs, bike rides, pub-crawls and even 'fun and games in the park'. But the thing that probably kept some novices interested is our nice, shiny, new Empacher. Named the 'Tony Lemon' (after a tutor at Mansfield)- we decided not to mess with a good thing and kept the name the same (a yellow boat called the Lemon, we didn't want to tempt fate). It was in an adequate state when we got it (and for a good price). Our new 'magic man' boatman Kevin McWilliams has managed to do an outstanding job fixing her up (even moulding in new carbon shoulders!), so she now sits as our new M2 boat for next term with our M3 standing to inherit 'Sam James'. We definitely can't wait to see the boats in Div V next term when they realise they're being chased by Hugh's in an Empacher, it will definitely be worth a watch...

Our boat buying abilities did not stop there, not long after, our men's captain Gavin Suen managed to spot another little find on the rowing service- a IV that wouldn't 'spontaneously fall apart'. At first we were a little sceptical, a 1986 Janousek IV, we were expecting a pile of something not so nice... To our surprise, we went to go see her, and she was in astonishing condition! She had been twice refurbished, so was in a better state than most boats 10 years younger. To quote Kevin "you could sell her for twice that..." None of this would have been possible without our recent surge of Alumni donations, that actually put us in the position to be able to purchase these, so I thank you all so, so much! In other news, our old Aylings the 'Mary Lunn' has now found a new home with Swansea University BC, we hope they do well with her. To not lose the name of an outstanding past member of our boat club, we will be naming our new VIII in a few years' time the 'Mary Lunn II'.

However, despite all our successes, the river this term has decide to make our lives difficult. The current state of the Thames is flooding, if you look at the picture one of our novices took on what was meant to be the Saturday of ChCh Regatta, you can see that



Saving our new Women's 1st VIII

rather than giving our novices the chance to race, we were more corralling them to save our boats! Fortunately we managed to get everything moved before Boathouse Island was evacuated and there should hopefully be no equipment damage, we might just have a few more amphibious supporters down at the boathouse next term.

Anyway that's probably enough for me now, last thing I have to say is a huge thank you to Sarah Outen who gave an absolutely incredible speech at the dinner on the 28th November, it was truly inspiring so thank you so much to Sarah for making the dinner possible (more about this dinner will be at the back of the newsletter). We should hopefully be holding some alumni drinks next term, following on from the tradition set last year, details to follow on the back.

All the best and hopefully see some of you soon,
Thomas Griffiths – SHBC President of Boats 2012-2013

Captains' Reports

Novice Rowing

As has been documented above Poseidon claimed the Isis for his own purposes for a rather large proportion of this term, turning our little reach into what seemed like ocean (as confirmed by Miss Outen, who I believe we can safely take as an expert regarding oceans and rowing). With much sadness we regularly visited his realm, to gaze across what at one point was most of Oxford, begging him to calm the waters and return the river to us. Unfortunately, as probably can be guessed, this was somewhat disruptive to training. However, despite this major setback, I am proud to say we have managed to produce genuinely excellent novice crews.

We started the term slightly bemused by our situation. Having run a fantastically successful recruitment campaign, we found ourselves as a boat club without (I suppose technically with far too much) water. As countless generations have done before us, we hit the ergs. Repeated technical ergs, followed by tank sessions, gave our crews a good technical foundation for when they finally made it onto the river. A technical foundation few other colleges appeared to have; shown by a lack of any rowing knowledge as they repeatedly encountered bank, boat, or bank again, or just to be different, raft.

On the Men's side:

'Bofia', coached by **Ben Harrington** and **Sofia Hauck**, were a heavy, muscular crew. We didn't quite appreciate the gravity of this until we saw the waterline when they boated in Dom'n'VIII. To prevent swamping, drowning and all manner of other unpleasant things further outings were conducted in boats that were weighted higher. Fortunately this weight translated itself over to boat speed rather nicely and they soon became a rapid and proficient boat. So much so that they were mistaken for a senior crew whilst out on a training outing.



'Bofia' - coached by Ben and Sofia



'Jimmy G' - coached by Tommy G and Jim.

'Jimmy G', coached by **Tom Griffiths** and **Jim van Horne**, were a touch lighter than Bofia, in other words they could row in Dom'n'VIII without sinking. They picked up the basic technique very quickly and gained the lovely habit of rowing long. As a crew they were a delight to coach responding to advice and making the

changes necessary to improve. 'Jimmy G' and 'Bofia' were entered into Nephthys regatta but were both sadly knocked out, by fast crews, in the round of 32. 'Bofia' was one of the few crews who raced in Christchurch regatta (head race format) before it was called off putting in a strong performance and catching up several boat lengths on the boat in front. 'Wendy', coached by **Ben Wedd** and **Andy Wilson**, started later in term due to uncooperative weather. However on the few outings they did have they showed plenty of promise and a remarkable ability to learn quickly which is only encouraging.

On the Women's side:

'Joanna' was coached by **Jono Harrison** and **Anna Maczak**; easily identifiable on the Isis by their melodic and choral accompaniment. They were a wonderfully cheerful group, even in the 6am gloom. They became a fun, efficient crew, who went out and enjoyed each and every outing, weather and circumstances irrelevant. 'Joanna' raced in



'Joanna' - coached by Jono and Anna

Nephthys putting in a gutsy performance but were sadly knocked out by Brasenose A, who went on to win the competition.

'Nicovin', coached by **Nicola Milburn** and myself (**Gavin Suen**), as a crew, were tall, really very tall, and soon learnt to utilise this gift, rowing extremely long; beautiful full-length strokes, every stroke. It was an absolute dream for a coach to see.



'Nicovin' - coached by Nicola and Gavin

The crew received its baptism of fire in IWL A entering and competing after three outings. Despite some mildly concerning moments they pulled through, showing mettle and determination, setting a strong time as the third fastest novice women's crew. This gave them the confidence to go into Nephthys in a buoyant manner. Here they defeated both New A and Merton A earning a place in the semi-final and a right to row the Nephthys long course. This was the first appearance of a Hugh's novice crew on the

Nephthys long course in many a year. They fought hard, pushing Brasenose A all the way to the finish line missing out by a length. Throughout the term the crew has shown plenty of potential, enthusiasm and ambition, topping it off with a good performance at Nephthys, as a coach I could not ask for more.

Whilst it is a shame that Poseidon chose to strike and deprive us of a chance to race in Christchurch Regatta, I have no doubt that our novice rowers will prove themselves next term in the arena that is Torpids. I am really pleased to see all our crews showing good spirit and resilience in what has been a trying term. Thanks must go to: Our rowers, for putting up with being emailed about outings (or having me show up at their door) at ridiculously short notice due to flag changes. Our coxes, for negotiating a river full of other novice crews who were mostly perpendicular to the direction of the stream. And our coaches, who gave up their mornings and weekends, as well as a majority already committing to a full schedule of senior rowing, to help kindle the future of St Hugh's Boat Club.

Gavin Suen – Novice Captain MT 12

Men's Seniors

Again this term has been a bit wet, the river decided not to be happy and land training became the norm for the male seniors of SHBC. Despite this things have been busy. Firstly I would like to introduce Alex Rhodes as our new M1 coach, I'm sure many of you are familiar with him and he has made sharp improvements throughout the half dozen or so water sessions we have had (yes it has been that bad!). As a replacement to water training we have been doing many, many 16km ergs. These could get a bit grim but the ever-cheery boys of SHBC have kept spirits high! There have even been a few team cycles to get out in the fresh air and to make a change from the underground and humid gym. Some cycles have been less successful than others though, notoriously the one where a tyre blowout occurred 8 miles from college in the middle of nowhere...

Despite this there have been many successes. Four members of M1 managed to get a few extra sessions at late notice in the afternoons. It was felt pretty soon that some racing was needed but unfortunately Autumn Fours was pretty much cancelled (changed to a head race and only 2 crews competing) so Nephthys it was then. The draw was not ideal - Brasenose M1 IV+ in the first round, who had been spotted earlier in the week looking hench and were clear favourites for the whole competition. Our boys however put up a fight, averaging mid-forties during the whole 800m race and gearing up the blades heavily (also the amazing line by our cox Gavin might have helped - he has been duly complemented by ours for this!). The surprising result was a half a length victory to Hugh's (a.k.a. "some random college near bham") after one of the most painful races I have ever experienced. One rower even was ill after the race, as they had pushed themselves hard. Unfortunately we had a quick turn around before the next race and had completely 'emptied the tank' in the first. Trinity in the second round were just too fast for an exhausted Hugh's crew and they went on to win the competition. It was a fun day of racing for all involved though.

Next term things get real again. M1 have a tough 1st day chasing Univ M1 and M2 really need to keep a boat between them and Green Templeton for obvious reasons. Also fingers-crossed the weather will be our friend again.

This term has brought with it some great memories - the spirit of M1 after going through endless long ergs and the panicked screams of Brasenose's Coach - "they're not breaking, wind it up" to name a couple. I would like to thank Alex Rhodes, all our coxes and all the rowers themselves for making what could have potentially been a horrific term into something much nicer.

Benedict Harrington- Men's Seniors Captain MT 2012

Women's Seniors

Michaelmas Term saw, besides dedicated training, a number of changes to the women's side of St Hugh's Boat Club. At the beginning of term unfortunately Mimi (Captain TT 2012) had to resign, and I was asked to take over. I am Lisa, a DPhil student in Physics and I learned to row with SHBC in Michaelmas 2009. Having also rowed and raced with the University Women's Development Squad over the summer I am excited to be captaining St Hugh's Women through Michaelmas Term and in the build-up to Torpids 2013. With the rather surprising start to my captaincy I am very grateful for valuable advice Mimi has given to me over the course of the term. The Men's Captains, Ben Harrington and Gavin Suen, must also not be forgotten. They took our women's novices under their wings, making sure the whole boat club had a new generation of rowers.

This term as our much beloved previous coach Maria Gerelle has moved on to greater things overseas we hired a new coach for the women's Seniors. Jack Atkinson is a sports science graduate of Brighton University and currently pursuing a Masters in education at Oxford Brookes. He has a lot of rowing coaching experience, and also coaches at some local clubs in Oxford. Jack is very dedicated to St Hugh's Women's success and already has big plans for the coming terms. He is currently looking at using the Abingdon Boat Club facilities for a training camp in the Easter break, including perfecting our technique using the scientific method on their "swingulator".

The Women's Seniors this term were a small but dedicated group, thankfully being supplemented by former women's and men's rowers and keen novices. However, rowing in Oxford has been difficult as strong streams, high water levels, and even flooding- preventing outings for a significant part of the term.

Having transited our still shiny new Women's First Boat, now officially named Sarah Outen, at the beginning of term, the seniors had only a handful of outings at Godstow. Yet those were especially exciting (towing a broken launch with an VIII), entertaining (having an injured and way-to-heavy, but nonetheless keen former M1 henchman as cox), and instructional, with our coach having us do all kinds of little exercises to improved technique and togetherness quickly.

With the river being as unhelpful as is was, training had to take place mostly in the form of land training, the rower's nemesis. Yet spirits were high, not least due our coach who proved to be an excellent choice: Land training, and especially Wednesday's circuits sessions were varied, creative and generally good fun, ranging from 'erg golf' to burpee races in South Parks.

The term ended with yet more flooding in Oxford, the gravest since 2007 allegedly. Having had advice from OURCS to transit our boat back to the Isis before rains predicted for the end of 7th Week, we decided to move 'Sarah Outen' early. The day after transit, Wednesday of Christ Church Regatta, torrential downpours caused the Isis go from blue to red flag within half an hour, ending our hopes of a successful Christchurch Regatta. Streams went so high that on the Saturday of 7th week OURCS had to evacuate Boat House Island due to flooding. An emergency call went out to all rowers, and an incredibly helpful crowd of novices and committee members made their way to our boat house to move Sarah Outen to a high rack and move around boats and equipment, wading knee-deep into the ice cold Isis river. A great thank you to all dedicated rowers who helped saving our stuff from the flood - that, in the end and somewhat miraculously, ended up not affecting our boat house at all.

Lisa Moevius- Women's Captain MT 2012

Events

'Sarah Outen' Formal Dinner

On the 29th of November 2012 SHBC welcomed back one of our most courageous Alumni, Sarah Outen, for our very first Alumni Dinner and speaker event. Having brought both Alumni and current boat club members together for a successful dinner, attendees sat ready to listen to stories that can only be told by the first and youngest woman to row solo across the Indian Ocean. Having recently returned early from her mission to cycle, row and kayak across the world in a continuous loop, Sarah enthralled us all with tales of tropical storms and countless adventures before ending the evening with one last photo. Having already cycled and kayaked over 11,000 miles from London to Choshi, Japan, Sarah will return to brave the North Pacific Ocean later this year. SHBC wish her the best of luck and hope that she can take a small piece of Hugh's with her on her journey.



For more information on Sarah's journey visit: www.sarahouten.com

Upcoming events in SHBC

SHBC Alumni Drinks 2013 - February 9th 2013

Following the success of last years alumni drinks SHBC invite you to join your fellow alumni for an evening of fun and fond memories. This year's Alumni Drinks will be held at **7.00pm on Saturday the 9th of February** in the **St Hugh's MGA Lecture Room**. Everyone is welcome; please RSVP to bethea.hanson-jones@st-hughs.ox.ac.uk if you would like to attend.

Torpids Regatta 2013 – February 27th - March 2nd 2013

It's been great to see so much Alumni support at Torpids and Summer VIII's in the past few years. This year we again invite you to join us for a week of bumps racing at Torpids Regatta. With excitement always guaranteed, we hope that this year you will join us to rekindle some old memories of your days in SHBC.

More information will be released closer to the event.

Torpids Roast – March 2nd 2013

SHBC invite you to join us for our traditional post-Torpids celebration. Further details will be released closer to the event, however please get in touch with Oli, our Men's Social Secretary, for further information (oliver.bishop@st-hughs.ox.ac.uk).

