

# Tortoise Club Newsletter: Trinity 2024

Dates for the diary:  
Tortoise Dinner: 14th Nov  
Torpids Dinner: 1st March  
Eights Dinner: 31st May  
HRR Picnic: 5th July

## The President

The Tortoise Club's constitutional duty is to recognise and celebrate outstanding Oriel oarsmanship and support the OCBC. We celebrate through racing, winning the after party, and spreading the word. We give support in the form of war stories, singing, and donations. I ask you all to [support the boat club](#) however you can. It is thanks to alumni generosity that OCBC is one of the few college clubs which is still free to students, a principle that I will never surrender.

We have enjoyed the fruits of this principle this year, once again Oriel had the most crews of any college, the Tortoise Club is more active than any other Oxford alumni club, the culture and atmosphere attracted more University Rowers than any other college, and even contributed in some small way to a Grand Challenge Cup winner and Olympic glory. With a particular shout out to Liam Corrigan the 2023 Eights Headship seven-seat who celebrated in his one-stripe Oriel Blazer because he "didn't want to be presumptuous by going straight for three stripes." He now has Olympic Gold in the M4-.

This has been a year of celebration throughout the club, with a number of engagements, weddings, and newborns among our members. I am sure all in service of swelling the ranks of Oriel rowers and supporters. Speaking of which, I am particularly thankful to Helen Belgrano Operto for her great work as Tortoise Secretary keeping the club in order and always moving forward, she has now transitioned to be the Regalia Officer. It is a pleasure to welcome Eleanor Juckes as the new Tortoise Secretary, she is already making her mark and I am excited to see what else she has in store.

The Tortoise Club has widened its competitive repertoire this year. There was Wyndhams Tug-of-War, Torpids Chug-of-War, a four-strong Tortoise Team at the Vitoria-Gasteiz Iron Man, as well as the now regular entries for Fairbairns, the Head of the River Race, and Henley Royal Regatta. Particular thanks goes to Angus Forbes and Tom Lister for their leadership of these crews.

In other news, I hope everyone enjoyed the work of Tortoises representing the Italian eight in George Clooney's "The Boys in the Boat". The OCBC took delivery of a new minibus thanks to the generosity of Matthew Gilpin, David Beak, and the Tortoise Club. Plans are coming together for next year's 40th Anniversary of Oriel Women's Rowing, please contact the organising team at [1985@orielrowing.org](mailto:1985@orielrowing.org) if you would like to be involved or attend.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Tortoise Dinner at London Rowing Club 14th November with our afterparty at Vesta; as well as at the Tortoise Picnic at HRR, now expanded in Butlers Field.

Floreat Oriel!  
Robert Boswall (2016)  
Tortoise President



P.s. If you or others are not currently receiving invitations and newsletters then please contact [development.office@oriel.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development.office@oriel.ox.ac.uk) or [tortoise-president@orielrowing.org](mailto:tortoise-president@orielrowing.org).



## Women's Captain's Report

Undeterred, by the cancellation of Torpids and incessant rain across the first two terms, the women's squad returned for pre-season training at the start of Trinity, ready to fight for some Summer Eights bumps!



As throughout the rest of the year, the commitment and drive shown by members throughout the squad led to many further 2km PBs, and we were excited to have fielded 4 women's crews that qualified to row in Summer Eights – equal to the men's squad.

All crews raced hard in Summer Eights week, with a particularly stellar performance from the W2, who went up 3, narrowly missing out on blades! It was great to have everyone in the squad racing, from stalwart, long-time members of the W1 and 2, to our incredibly promising novices in the lower boats and some previous women's captains racing in the W4 beer boat!

Following on from Summer Eights, the women's squad sent a 4+ and a 4- to Reading Amateur Regatta, with both crews racing the semi-finals of their categories. In addition, the Women's First 4-

of Kat Mure, Claudia Amasanti, Naomi Young and Bea Frediani also raced at Henley Women's Regatta, and were the fastest college crew in the Aspirational Academic 4- category!

The Oriel Women have already been getting stuck into summer training, and I can't wait to see what next season has in store under the capable guidance of Carolina Cortes Vilaplana and Emma Gee Olmedilla, the incoming Women's Captains!

Thank you to all OCBC members, past and present for your support this year, I've enjoyed the privilege of being Women's Captain immensely.

Floreat Oriel!  
Bea Frediani  
Women's Captain of Boats 2023-24



# Men's Captain's Report

After the cancellation of both Torpids and most rowing in Michaelmas and Hilary, the senior squad returned to Oxford in -1st week for our training week, excited to finally be able to get out on the water. The week was spent productively, with everyone able to work on improving their technique while also spending time in some much-needed sun!

Before we knew it, the Eights campaign proper was underway, with all crews putting in the miles at Wallingford or in Oxford. As always happens, the five weeks sped by, and in the blink of an eye, the first boats were back on the Isis and the whole club was ready to take Eights by storm. OCBC qualified four boats on the men's side and four on the women's side, which was the joint-highest number of crews fielded by any college! The fact that Oriel takes this accolade year after year is a testament to the strength of the college's rowing culture.



Our M1 was buoyed by the return of seven University rowers, and so was in a strong position to defend the headship. The Wednesday and Thursday of Eights saw two comfortable row-overs (even winding down to rate 21 towards the end of one of the races), and while illness among the crew reduced the margin on the last two days, the outcome was never in doubt. 2024 marks Oriel's 36th Eights headship - the most of any college by an ever-growing margin. With the exception of the Covid period, the streets of Oxford have witnessed at least one Oriel headship procession every year since 2014, and it was fantastic to carry the wooden boat through the town yet again.

Our M2 had high hopes going into the racing, despite the rather daunting situation of being surrounded by other college M1s! The first two days saw rapid bumps before the Gut on Exeter and Queen's M1s, while day 3 saw the crew achieving overlap on Lincoln M1, but ultimately unable to convert this to a bump. Unfortunately, the M2 was bumped on the final day by a much bigger Worcester crew, but the overall result was still a very impressive +1. The M2 is now 21st on the river, the highest second boat by an incredible 8 places!

Our M3 and M4 both gave it their all with true Oriel spirit, but had challenging bumps campaigns nonetheless. Our M3 suffered from bankings, crabs, and even the stroke having to receive first aid after getting speared by the bow of the Hugh's M2 boat. Our M4 also had an eventful four days, which included a capsize off the landing stage! Nevertheless, both crews were in good spirits, and are looking forward to getting revenge in Torpids '25!

It has been an honour being the Men's Captain of Boats this year, and my task has been made far easier with the support and advice of the Tortoise Club. We are grateful for the continued generosity of OCBC alumni - we would not be able to achieve such success without it. I am delighted to hand over to William Schwabach, who I know will have all of our support. I am looking forward to seeing much glory under his leadership next year!

Floreat Oriel!  
Theo Briscoe  
Men's Captain of Boats 2023-24

