



SHCBC ventures abroad

Josiah Shields, Secretary

An Oxford term consists of sixty-three days. This Hilary, thanks to biblical quantities of rain, rowing on the Isis was permitted on a mere eleven of these.

Thus, SHCBC was presented with no choice but to seek refuge on bodies of water with less fearsome currents. Most other college boat clubs would appear to have arrived at the same conclusion, resulting in an epic migration of rowers out of Oxford and into Swindon to row on the town's far more placid lake.

Later in the term, the first women's squad travelled even further afield to London, in order to participate in the Hammersmith Head race. Flying down the course at blistering speeds, their dedication to their intense cross-training regime paid dividends as they finished third in their division, besting many college crews who are placed above them in the Torpids rankings.

Unfortunately but unsurprisingly, they were prevented from bumping these inferior crews down a couple pegs at Torpids due to the relentless rain resulting in its cancellation. In its

place was held *Tug of Warpids* - an event where SHCBC's limited success should perhaps be attributed to the strength of its effort in the *Chug of Warpids* contest at the Head of the River pub an hour beforehand.

Despite Hilary having been the second term in a row with virtually no rowing taking place, SHCBC has still made the best of things and is already gearing up for what will hopefully be a far more eventful, and less rainy, Trinity! Who knows, if they are lucky, maybe the novices will even get to step foot in a boat...



The composite W1/M1 team (left) doing battle at Tug of Warpids.

As you can see, while unsuit-clad SHCBC may not have won the tug-of-war, they did at least bring a bit of rowing spirit to the proceedings!

Presidents' Communiqué

Harry Hutchinson, Co-President

Despite the lack of water outings this Hilary, SHCBC has still been busy, evidenced best by the committee's latest endeavour to expand our fleet and purchase a new 8+ shell!

Upon reviewing the current fleet, it was apparent that our M2 boat, the John West, required the most attention; whilst being a beloved (and my personal favourite) boat, it was the least suited for its crew.

Following professional consultation, we decided to inquire into purchasing a refurbished M2 boat and repurposing the John West as a shared novice training and W3/M3

shell.

After months of tireless research, I can proudly announce that we have finally paid the deposit for a fully refurbished Janousek from Northern Rowing Services Ltd., beating out several other interested clubs including Balliol! An ex-Durham college boat, it last raced at the Head of the River Regatta in 2023 and has seen no major damage across its history, on top of which it will receive a comprehensive service including:

- Fortification and repair of all dents and scratches to the shell.
- Sanding, spraying and polishing of the shell.
- Brand new parts and fittings.
- Personalisation in club colours.

We are very grateful and lucky as a club for the kind support we receive from our network of alumnae and

friends of SHCBC. If you would like to donate towards this latest investment in SHCBC's fleet, please visit the donation page on our website:

www.hildasrowing.co.uk/donate

In thanks for your generous support, we are offering the opportunity to name the new boat to the highest donor. The next nine highest donors will also be presented the opportunity to name an individual seat within the boat.

We thank you once again and look forward to celebrating this exciting investment and our other achievements with you at this year's Sirens dinner, tickets for which are now on sale at the link below!

www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk/events/2024-sirens-day



The men's side at SHCBC's Hilary Term formal dinner.

SHCBC trail-blazers awe Isis

After what felt like an eternity of keen anticipation, this term at long last bore witness to the arrival of SHCBC's new and improved blazers, and oh how it was worth the wait! Making their formal debut at the end-of-term formal dinner, the blazers are style, luxury, and refinement embodied. Our stash officer, Horatio, may or may not have wept tears of joy at the culmination of a project which has, through no fault of his own besides a refusal to settle for anything less than perfection, occupied him for the best part of a year.

Speaking to fashionistas on the ground, the *SHCBC Times* can exclusively report that titans of the fashion world, from Kim Kardashian to Monsieur Louis Vuitton himself, are eyeing up the blazers for their forthcoming summer collections.

In all seriousness, the club is incredibly pleased with the blazers and a huge amount of credit must be given to Horatio for his hard work in designing, sourcing, and procuring them over the past year.

If you would like to own one for yourself then we are currently accepting expressions of interest, with a view to placing another order should there be great enough demand. To do so, please complete this form:

<https://tinyurl.com/SHCBCblazers>

or email blazers@hildasrowing.co.uk for further information.



SHCBC flaunt their splendid new blazers.

Captain's

Corner

Jack Davies, Men's Captain

Given the amount of time this term spent under red – or even black(!) – flag, it is perhaps surprising that enough took place to fill the pages of this newsletter. However, thanks both to my ability to waffle and the men's side's commitment to taking advantage of every possible opportunity, a term where nothing could have happened still turned into a term with a lot of success.

Hilary began much as Michaelmas ended, with solid red flags and a broken weir preventing any rowing from taking place. Despite this, some Hilda's rowers still managed to find ways to get on the water – either subbing into outings run by other colleges with off-Isis boathouses (clearly money can't buy committed crews!) or, in the case of Yannick, by continuing to occasionally train with the Blues squad at Wallingford and on the Tideway.

Although the men's side may not have leapt into cross-training quite so enthusiastically as did the women (according to some senior members, cardio 'kills gains') there nonetheless continued to be strong attendance at ergs until the flag dropped in 3rd week and it was finally possible to get some time on the water. A week of intense training was followed by the first racing opportunity of the year – IWL D. M1 entered this hallowed event with huge optimism which, unfortunately, turned out to be somewhat misplaced.

Shortly after this the next wave of rain swept in, prompting the flag to rise above red once again and leading to what we believe was the first time two Hilda's shells have been on a trailer since 2012, as we set off for a day's training in Swindon. Here, some proper mileage was put in and a few pieces against Peter's and Worcester showed

that we had a seriously rapid start. Our race pace, however, still seemed to be mysteriously low given both the technique and power within the boat. A week later the reason for this was found – our blades were very misgeared, considerably reducing the amount of power that we could put down into the water.

With this rectified, all our attention turned to Torpids. We were approaching bumps racing with a great deal of confidence, sure that the volume of experience in M1 would provide a competitive advantage over the other Div 3 crews (unfortunately, by this point it had become clear that M2 would not be racing despite being more than capable). While M1 had remained optimistic about being able to race, this hope was ultimately quashed on a sombre Wednesday morning when Torpids was officially cancelled.

Redemption came in the form of Tug-of-Warpids, where M1 and M2, in mixed crews with W1 and W2, were able to prove their mettle. However, this ended up mostly showing how much of our speed comes from technique over brawn! The furthest any team progressed was the quarter-finals, losing to teams we would definitely have crushed on the water. Regardless, a great day out was had by all in what was a joyous end to an otherwise meagre term.

Huge thanks must go to everyone who stuck with the sport through two of the worst terms on record for Oxford rowing, and in particular to both Shea for stepping up to run things during my exams, and to those members of M2 who continued to show up to training even after all hope of their racing had vanished. We look forward to actually getting some water time next term, and possibly even some external racing!

Captain's Corner

Georgia Sweeney, Women's Captain

This term began with yet another flooded river and the "Hilda's Lake" making a return. As such, it was back to land training for the women's side, with weeks filled with many runs, circuits, tanks, and ergs.

During a brief reopening of the river, and after only a week or so of water sessions, W1 competed in IWL D - the only IWL to go ahead this term. Despite the lack of water training, all the land training paid off as the women placed third out of twenty-six, and only 3.5 seconds off first place. Unfortunately, three days later the river was closed again and it was back to land-only training.

In a desperate attempt to get some water time, some of W1 made the trek to Swindon to row in a

composite with Mansfield W1. A double-session morning saw the women tackle many technical drills followed by some high-rate pieces, resulting in the (self-proclaimed) best composite crew Swindon Lake has ever seen.

Spurred on by the success of this training day, it was back to land training to get ready for Hammersmith Head the following weekend. With a crew that had never trained altogether, due to a last-minute sub and a borrowed cox from Hertford, SHCBC descended upon the Tideway with something to prove. Despite a strong stream and over an hour in the marshalling area, we barrelled down the course, overtaking the crew in front (despite a minor clash with a buoy) to finish an impressive third in the women's development category. More importantly, we beat the two other Oxford colleges in our categories by 10 and 20 seconds.

Unfortunately, two days later we found out that the whole of Torpids

had been cancelled. Determined not to let a hard Hilary of training to go to waste, and looking forward to WeHoRR at the end of term, land training continued. End of term 2km tests saw the majority of rowers achieve a PB, exemplifying the dedication of the whole women's side to training this term.

In particular, a shout out to the W2 rowers who, due to the weather, had little competition to look forward to but still continued to show up to land training each week.

At the end of seventh week, some of the W1 and W2 rowers had a chance to compete in Tug of Warpids, a Torpids substitute, in mixed teams with the men's side. The W2/M2 team had a hard-fought match against a strong Mansfield team, unfortunately losing in the end. The W1/M1 team took an easy initial win against GTC, progressing to compete against a strong Pembroke team. This match went on for a long time, with SHCBC holding strong and even gaining ground at one point, but, as the teams fatigued, Pembroke took the win.

Sadly, this was the final competition of term for the women's side as SHCBC, as well as many other Oxford and Cambridge crews, was cut from WeHoRR due to weather conditions meaning the draw was halved in the interest of safety. Despite a term of cancellations, a consistent land training attendance means both W1 and W2 are in a strong position going into a (hopefully) better weather Trinity.



The women's side and Coach Matt at SHCBC's end of term formal dinner.

Keeping the SHCBC Blues tradition alive

We are very proud to announce that our very own women's Vice-Captain, Olivia Ramsay, will be representing Oxford at the Boat Race in six-seat of the Lightweight Women's boat! Her race will be taking place on the 29th March, commencing at 14:13.

Liv will be following in a long tradition of SHCBC women rowing for the Blues, with the first ever women's Blue boat having consisted overwhelmingly of Hilda's women after SHCBC rower, H. G. Wanklyn, founded the *Oxford University Women's Boat Club* in 1927.

We wish Liv the best of luck and hope her devilishly intense training will pay off in a win for Oxford!



SHCBC women compete at the Hammersmith Head race, where they finished third in their division.



A Humble Hilary

The rainy weather this term has only served to whet the *Hearsay Hildabeast's* appetite for gossip...

What has this term been?! Hilary has really stumped me for rowing-related romps and revelations given that the Isis has been obscured by red and black flags all term! Alas, fret not my fellow Hildabeasts as SHCBC has more than made up for this lull with their brazen antics, making even more of a splash than OR in the lightweight women's blues boat!

Desperate to see any water action, SHCBC ventured further afield than BM made it at the "Torpid after-party", visiting Swindon for a cheeky outing. Much to the dismay of JB's cancelled holiday, the closest thing we've seen to *Torpdis* this term is SH's Instagram page, with our hunky Hildabeasts instead putting down the watts during this year's "Tug of Warpids".

Unfortunately, it was spoons for W2/M2, losing in the first round to Mansfield, whereas W1/M1 battled hard to make it to round two where they narrowly lost to Pembroke – looks like SH's 2k choccy milk eruption was all for naught! Whilst all seemed bleak, SHCBC did see some real triumph when W1 waged unwavering war at Hammersmith Head, placing almost as high as the number of erg sessions JD has missed!

Despite the lack of notice by our raving social secs this term, SHCBC has once again pioneered socials along the Isis. Beginning a new and improved formula, SHCBC hosted

Jesus for a crewdate at Long-bridges, leading to a night of revelry consisting of everything from the Crizzle Pickup to cucumber challenges – and even a post-Atik unrequited love affair! Proving rowing to be the most elite of sports, both St Hilda's football and netball clubs cowardly backed out from the next crewdate of the term at the last minute – I guess they were too intimidated by us! Thankfully, Mansfield swooped in to save the day, joining us for a raucous party that could only have been made better had there been an evening firework display!

Our last social of the term comprised a multi-college bar crawl with Merton, New, and Sommerville. Mischief and mayhem ensued, resulting in SHCBC finally enacting revenge on Merton, and New finding themselves without their JCR picture – just like we've been missing our VCs all year!

Big news this term as SHCBC has expanded its fleet, introducing a new M2 boat despite squiffy protest from a certain captain, and seeing the John West finally cast aside like MP's many relationships with W1 – hopefully the bow won't get snapped off this one within the first week of rowing it! I look

forward to hearing what name our sage community of SHCBC alumnae and friends decide to name our new boat – my vote is for the Koffmobile, no novice crew will escape us.

Fresh off the rack, SHCBC has been stunning the streets of Oxford in their snazzy new blazers, attesting the old adage that Hildabeasts really do have both "beauty and brains" – well at least until they spill a pint of Shmoon Guinness on them! Last but not least we say goodbye to our rustivating Co-President HH, whose dedication to SHCBC might have been worthwhile if he'd shown the same dedication towards his degree. I'm not sure what will be worse, MDB's heartbreak or the fact he'll have to do some President's work for once!

Well that's a wrap folks! I hope my juicy gossip has satisfied your appetites for now in the aftermath of such a dry term. Good luck with any revision for exams but do not forget that, while results come and go, Summer VIIIs victory is for life! Normally I'd tell you to get some well-needed rest but I sniff blades this Trinity, so instead go figure out how to use an erg and come back with a split that'll give the Isis swans a run for their money!

Housekeeping and links

Josiah Shields, Secretary

Thank you very much for reading this term's edition of the SHCBC Times.

I have been hard at work over the past few weeks and am now pleased to announce that the boat club's website is, at long last, fully functional on both computers and mobile phones, and now also has some useful functionality! I would be immensely grateful for any feedback you may have about it, which I request you email to:

secretary@hildasrowing.co.uk

A further reminder that Sirens tickets are now available to buy from:

www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk/events/2024-sirens-day

It should be a magnificent day so do be sure to come along if you are able to!

Finally, if you would like to donate toward the cost of our new boat then please do so here:

www.hildasrowing.co.uk/donate