

# Recruitment soars! Who needs the river anyway?

**Josiah Shields, President**

With memories of the near constant river closures that defined last year's Michaelmas Term looming large, the boat club was apprehensive as we prepared for our freshers' week recruitment campaign this year. These apprehensions proved justified as heavy rain saw the Isis red-flagged for the first few weeks of term, forcing the club to hold our novice taster sessions in the tank at Iffley Road Sports Centre rather than on the river, as is customary. However, given that our sign-ups were the highest since Covid hit, this may well have been a blessing in disguise.

Despite the lack of water training this term, the club's retainment of novices has been commendable. This speaks to the exemplary efforts made by our captains,

coaches, and social secretaries, who put a great amount of effort into ensuring that there were plenty of high-quality training sessions and social events each week, and who fostered a welcoming atmosphere in the process. While it remains to be seen precisely what impact the proliferation of post-erg pub trips will have on the club's athletic ability, in terms of club culture they have been a tremendous success and have quickly become a treasured SHCBC institution.

Over the past few years the club has gone from strength to strength: climbing the Torpids and Summer Vllls rankings, growing our numbers, and building SHCBC a reputation as one of the most

socially-active clubs on the river. I feel confident that this same direction of travel will continue this year thanks to both the club's committee, who have demonstrated an abundance of competence, commitment, and experience, as well as due to the wonderful crop of freshers who are already giving a few seniors a run for their money. While prolonged river closures have rendered Michaelmas disappointing from a rowing point of view, SHCBC has made up for this in other ways, such as the captains' fantastic organisation of the 'Longbridges Ergatta' in lieu of the cancelled novice regatta. It has been a strong start to what I hope will be an even stronger year.

## SHCBC leads 2024 Longbridges Ergatta

**Eleanor Prince, Women's Captain**

Michaelmas started and ended in much the same way – with a new lake in front of college and land training. The big difference is the addition of our wonderful new novices (plus 3 new experienced rowers!). Our brave new rowers were dedicated enough to endure 3 weeks of ergs before even setting foot in a boat, but once they were in, they were in. Thanks to some useful tank coaching, they took like ducks to water and were looking to field a fierce WNov8+ at Tamesis Regatta. Unfortunately, Bert (the storm) gave us too much river, resulting in a rapid switch to the (soon-to-be-Annual) Longbridges Regatta. Entering two teams, both made it into the knockout rounds – with the team of Abigail, Grace, Hannah and Phoebe making it to the



To the right, Rosie Mayclothling, cutting the banner to open the newly renovated SHCBC and Mansfield clubhouse. To the left, our women's captain, Eleanor Prince, and in the background our men's captain, Shea Heaney, look on! Fun fact: Rosie is actually using gardening shears, kindly lent to us for the occasion by our St. Hilda's gardening team.

final, continuing a history of novice success! The flag did stay low enough for the SHCBC women's side to make a return to racing. Coxed by the wonderful Benji, our IWL A W8+ crew completed a rate-capped piece to finish a respectable 7th – we remain excited to see what Hilary racing brings. Beyond the ergs and outings, Michaelmas saw lots of opportunities to bond, whether that be at one of our many crew breakfasts or post-erg pub. I'm incredibly proud and happy with the side and ready to storm up the Isis or rivers further afield in the new year...



In the centre, Grace, erging in the Longbridges ergatta final for SHCBC's women's team, with St. Hilda's senior and novice rowers cheering her on wildly!

## A buoyant boat and a beautiful boathouse later...

Josiah Shields, President



It was my pleasure this term to oversee the conclusion of two club initiatives that were begun by last year's presidents, namely the acquisition of a new shell for our second men's squad and the refurbishment of our Longbridges clubroom. These milestones were celebrated in 6th week at our 'Development Celebration', wherein the *Victoria Abdy* was christened and taken out for her maiden voyage, and the clubroom officially reopened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Given the strength and size of this year's fresher intake, the *Victoria Abdy* has arrived at the perfect time and will allow our second men's squad to reach their full potential, while also freeing up its predecessor, the *John West*,

to serve both the men's and the women's sides as a third boat. Our clubroom's refurbishment has also proved timely as our usage of its facilities continues to increase, and has also enabled the club to display our history in a manner more befitting of the esteem in which it is held - be that with bronze plaques for the prestigious portions, or with toilet-wall spoons for the... less so.

On behalf of the whole club, I would like to thank once again everyone who has supported us in these initiatives, as well as all of our alumnae and supporters who braved the miserable November weather to celebrate their completion with us. The event was a resounding success and augurs well for the future of the club, not least in setting what I hope will become a precedent for a Michaelmas Term alumnae event.



I feel optimistic that in next term's newsletter I will be able to share news of the *Victoria Abdy*'s success in her maiden bumps campaign, and I hope to have the pleasure of hosting those of you who are yet to see our renovated clubroom at this year's **Sirens' Day on Saturday the 17th May.**



A lucky bottle of champagne sprayed over the *Victoria Abdy* before her maiden voyage later that afternoon!



# Exposing novices and seniors alike: The real MT

xoxo The new Hearsay Hildabeast

Congratulations on having skim-read the beginning of the newsletter and making it to the only column anyone bothers reading in full detail. Your new Hearsay Hildabeast has been scrupulously watching all SHCBC's members to ensure no piece of gossip is left unsaid. Prepare yourselves, my dear readers, for the dawn of a new age of the Hearsay Hildabeast.

We once again found ourselves on the frontlines of the climate emergency this term, with the city of dreaming spires experiencing its wettest October for 145 years. One brave Hildabeast refused to let something as trivial as the river flag stop him from sharing the joys of rowing with a lucky family member. We'll have to cut him some slack- he's probably still recovering from the toll vice-captaincy took. Speaking of vice captains, the women's side has been graced with two of them this year- but I won't say more, in case it's deemed unconstitutional.

What little water training we did manage to get in was certainly eventful. Some rowers got a bit over-enthusiastic when they finally were allowed near our dear river Isis, resulting in more than one wild swimming escapade. Don't worry RW and RB, it'll be Hinksey trip season before you know it! Over on the women's side, our dear captain did not let her own watery interlude deter her from launching two matched VIII's down the Isis one historic Saturday morning. EP's seniors were rewarded for their efforts with a front-row seat to the latest instalment of the enemies-to-lovers epic playing out between MP and a certain cox. To



To the left: Novice rowers participating in their first rowing sessions in the tank at Iffley Sports Centre

everyone's great disappointment, not a single Oxrow was written about this salacious incident. In fact, SHCBC's only claim to Facebook fame this term came as a result of a SH's enthusiastic attempts at team motivation during the Novice Ergatta.

Our high fresher retention rate is undoubtedly also thanks to the tireless efforts of SHCBC's most responsible and grown-up members: our social secs. Luckily, only half the female freshers were permanently scared off by KH's spirited performance at her inaugural crewdate. Her attempt at ABC innovation quickly proved to be only the first of a long list of notable achievements our new social secs have managed to accrue. A couple of freshers managed to outdo them, however, continuing the venerated SHCBC tradition

of promoting robust JCR-MCR relations. KH and JD are reportedly ecstatic that they can add so many new skills to their CVs, such as 'detailed risk assessments' and 'strict marshalling arrangements'.

This term also provided ample opportunity for our Hildabeasts to engage their creativity, particularly when it came to interior decoration. From professionally framed photographs to avant-garde sink restructuring, our newly renovated boathouse has ruffled feathers this term- but the award ultimately has to go to the delayed arrival of LH's inaugural stash drop. I don't think she'll be visiting Germany any time soon.

That's all from me this year. Behave yourselves: the Hearsay Hildabeast is always watching.



Motivational onlookers from the Development Celebration, watching a senior crew row the *Victoria Abdy* for the first time. We are so grateful for the wet weather support!

# SHCBC finds the silver lining

## Shea Heaney, Men's Captain

It was a time of highs and lows for the Hilda's boys. Despite novice weekend being rained off, we managed to entice a group of keen novices to the tank for a taste of our sport. With some already hooked on SHCBC, both novices and seniors alike trained on land for the first couple of weeks with bated breath for a return (or debut) to the Isis. Our men's side would soon show their boundless anticipation as we managed to be the first crew to row on the Isis following the flag drop to amber. It was then but a brief two weeks until our first competition of the

year: Autumn Fours. With a men's senior 4+ entered alone, it was all on our shoulders to bring home success. Unfortunately, this was not to be, as we fell to the eventual winners Keble in the quarter finals. There was a bright side, however: we were the furthest progressing Longbridges crew in the competition! After the race, focus shifted towards novices again as we awaited their first race in Tamesis Regatta. With progress going smoothly, it looked like our new lads were in for a pretty good run in the competition. As another positive, we unveiled our new men's second eight shell the *Victoria Abdy*! However, this

celebration was accompanied by another bout of stormy weather which led to the cancellation of Tamesis Regatta. The word of cancellation was soon followed by the return of Longbridges Novice Regatta to give our lads a chance to prove their mettle. Two men's crews were entered; the A crew, marred by an AWOL substitute for JB, narrowly missed out on qualifying for knockout. Nonetheless, a promising performance for a team of three! The B crew saw more success; they made it to the knockout rounds before losing out to a powerful GTC opposition in the quarter finals. I'm very proud of the novice lads and look forward to seeing how things progress next term. Here's to hoping Torpids 2025 will be a success (or at least actually happen)!



## SHCBC Fan Crossword

### ACROSS

- 4. The name of an avid Hilda's student or supporter
- 7. The rope that connects you to the bank before a race
- 8. The area that sends a shiver down the spine of a cox

### DOWN

- 1. The most important soldiers of any race (acc to the EA)
- 2. The recently refurbished W2 shell
- 3. The event alumnae look forward to like no other
- 5. The Hilary term race, as spelt on merchandise
- 6. The ridiculous item of clothing that is near and dear to us

SHCBC members at the end of term boat club formal exhibiting blazers and big smiles.

