

NCBC Race report archive



An archive of all race reports between 2013-2019

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2019-2020

Lent Bumps 2020

W1

Day 1 - Bumped by Jesus W1

Spirit before race: Top-notch (checkout Rowbridge);

Spirit rowing up: Scared, with instances of shaky legs, but we've got this;

Spirit at start: What?! Hang on, did somebody say 9?! Cox is being dragged out of the boat!

Shooooowt is this the cannon? Yes it is - I guess we're racing NOW (phew, miraculously, a good start);

Spirit before first post: 'La-la-la' no clue what's happening but the boat feels kinda nice - in time! Good!;

Spirit after first post: Scary, whistles, commotion, what is happening?;

Spirit around grassy: Hold on, you're lying - we're not giving up, not today!;

Spirit near ditton: SCARY whistles AAAAAA, hang on, what? Are we making a move?! It seems like we are, but I can see a bow ball near my blade.. oops, I guess today! BUMP!

The end.

- Written by Stanimira Georgieva.

Day 2 - Bumped by Downing W1

Day 3 - Bumped by Emma W1

Day 4 - Bumped Emma W1

W2

Day 1 - Rowed Over

W2 had an excellent start and looked to be gaining on Corpus within the first few strokes.

The course took a dramatic turn when Corpus then halted in front of them, in the middle of the river. With Queens full steam at their heels it seemed to spell disaster. But not today.

Your crew of steel pulled out in front of the carnage and within one stroke were back in full

blazing glory. As Queens sunk into the distance, they set their sights on Wolfson. A power ten and Wolfson started to sweat. The crew gave them hell down the reach and pinned them

down at the railway bridge holding one whistle on them until the bitter end. Such an

undoubtedly strong row over left the crew buzzing and hungry for the bump on Thursday.

- Written by Clemmie Smith and Héloïse Dunlop.

Day 2 - Bumped Clare W2

With Karla in Wales on a mission to become Britain's next best glaciologist, W2 tried to keep it together and maintain their composure. However, they were off to a not-so-excellent start

when Lucy, the stroke, made the unfortunate discovery during their row up that her rigger

was attempting to yeet itself off the boat. It looked as though W2 would have to settle with

some fluorescent pink tape to control this runaway rigger. Fortunately, Pete from Emma

came to the rescue with his handyman toolbox and W2 were as good as brand new.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Boom - the canon goes off. It's time to show the Cam what W2 are made of. W2 were off to a speedy start and began gaining on Clare stroke by stroke. Cheering from the banks after Newnham bridge seemed to give W2 the send they needed to end Clare, but Queens were fighting them every stroke of the way. Clare, Newnham, Queens. All within a boat's length of one another with whistles being blown from left, right and centre. After an outstanding corner made by Shaaroni around the Gut, Héloïse found herself nearly decapitate the Clare Cox who was refusing to concede. After a few more gruelling strokes W2 finally did it. They touched the butt. BUMP.

- Written by Sophie Yang.

Day 3 - Bumped Wolfson W1

It was pouring with rain so W2 had a soggy row up to the start but we were feeling confident and rowing solidly. After a good practice start we had our heads in the game and were ready for a good race! The cannon went and we had speedy start, almost immediately gaining a whistle on Wolfson. Clare W2 were off behind us in the distance and before we knew it the race was over - we had bumped before first post corner with Newnham Bridge still in sight!! Shaaroni was even complimented on her beautiful lines by the marshal. After a great race today we're looking forward to the last day of bumps tomorrow!

- Written by Alice Bell and Helen Eastmond.

Day 4 - Bumped Hughes Hall W1

After a speedy row up with an enormous tail wind, Newnham W2 span and was ready to face the wind head on. With 20 seconds to go until the cannon, an enormous gust of wind hit, but the combination of our skilful cox, Shaaroni, and the responsiveness of bow 4 meant we were able to sort out our line and get off to a flying start. Immediately, we were inside station, and within no time we had 3 whistles on Hughes Hall. After powering through some nearly-boat-stopping gusts of wind, we secured the bump right under Newnham Bridge!

- Written by Karla Boxall and Lucy Walker.

W3

Day 1 - Bumped by Emma W3

Today was the first bumps for everyone in W3 boat, and we were ready. A strong start at rate 36, heels down and heads in the boat. Our adrenaline was rushing but as the weather closed in, so did Emma. Darwin was within two lengths, but by Newnham bridge we had to concede. With our heads in the game, we are prepared to demolish the next three races. Yeah Newnham!

- Written by Maria Victoria Rodriguez Noci and Ranait Flanagan.

Day 2 - Bumped by Clare Hall W1

We were off to a great start, until we caught feelings. Then we caught crabs. As a result, Clare Hall W1 caught us and bumped us - we're waiting to bump back!

- Written by Beatrice Beressi and Marta Kubańska.

Day 3 - Rowed over

We started on a good line heading towards Clare Hall to get them back after bumping us on Wednesday. Battling through the wind and rain, we started to gain on Clare Hall to one boat length, until we saw Tit Hall blocking the river very casually. Even with Fania's expert

steering, we couldn't get through the non-existent gap, so we crashed into the bank. The strong Evelyn pushed us off the bank and we started again quickly aware that Homerton was approaching.

After taking a strong line and some very powerful rowing we escaped Homerton and tried to regain the lost water between us and Clare Hall. Despite having to restart on the Reach, we could see Clare Hall, but couldn't quite catch them today! WE WILL GET THEM TOMORROW!

- Written by Florence Bradshaw and Emma Gough.

Day 4 - Rowed over

On our last day of bumps we were determined to make every stroke count. After a strong start, we immediately gained on Clare Hall W1 and made them sweat! Whistles blowing, cox shouting and crowds cheering, we knew we had to go for it. But so did Clare Hall - never more than a boat-length ahead of us, they pushed until the end. Even when we overlapped on the reach, they didn't give up and managed to survive the threat we posed. Well done Clare Hall, well done us, and see you in 2021! What a fantastic end to bumps!!

- Written by Imogen Wilkins and Emma Gough.

2018-2019

May Bumps 2019

W1

Day 1 -Rowed Over.

Day 2

“Headships don’t fall easily, and the Jesus women put up a good fight. But the Newnham first boat was absolutely magnificent – they shone with purpose, courage and skill, and executed a simply brilliant bump.” – Dr Emma Mawdsley, Vice-Principal of Newnham
Bumped Jesus W1 to Head

Days 3 & 4 -Rowed Over at Head

W2

Day 1 -*Bumped Wolfson W1*

Day 2- *Bumped Lucy Cavendish W1*

Day 3- *Bumped Jesus W2*

Day 3 - *Rowed Over*

W3

Day 1 - Bumped by Emmanuel W3

Day 2 - Rowed Over

Day 3 - Rowed Over

Day 4- Rowed Over

Lent Bumps 2019

W1

Newnham W1 regained Lents headship for the first time in 36 years! [Click here](#) for a local news article about our Lents victory.

Day 1 - Bumped Downing W1

Day 2 - Bumped Jesus W1 to Headship

Day 3- Rowed Over at Head

Day 4- Rowed Over at Head

W2

Day 1 - Rowed Over

W2 had a really strong row over. Maggie W2 bumped out early so we had no pressure from behind but powered through, gaining on Wolfson W1. Along the reach we were constantly 2/3 whistles away from them. It was tight right up until the end but we couldn't quite make the bump before the finish. It was a promising start to our bumps campaign, and we're really hopeful for our next day of racing on Thursday!

By Alice Bell and Helen Eastmond

Day 2 - Bumped by Hughes Hall W1

Day 3 - Bumped by Clare W2

Day 4 - Bumped by Corpus Christi W1

W3

Day 1 - Bumped Maggie W3

After an amazing display keeping it strong and together at the Getting on Race, we were excited to take on Bumps having earned our place there. It was the first Bumps for everyone except Stani who, as the adopted mother of the boat, kept everyone cool. Pumped with adrenaline and jelly babies we rowed up in slightly windy but beautifully sunny conditions. On the boom of the first canon, we de-kitted, reminding ourselves just to keep rowing hard. Due to the wind we were pushed out just before the starting canon fired. We had a strong start, but soon whistles were blaring as Clare Hall started creeping up on us. On the call of our bamboozling awesome cox we stepped it up, powering through to bump LMBC just under Newnham Bridge. Our race had ended and we didn't even realise until we were pulled in by the bank party. After such a short but exhilarating race, we were ready for whatever the rest of Bumps had in store for us. We rowed home proud with leaves in our hair, the sun on our faces, looking up at the mountains!

By Esme Fowkes and Stanimira Georgieva

Day 2 - Technical Row-Over

Day 3 - Bumped King's W2

Day 4 - Rowed Over

2017-2018

May Bumps 2018

W1

Day 1 - Bumped Caius W1.

Day 2

After bumping Caius on Wednesday, W1 were only slightly less nervous for what we knew would be a gruelling race to catch Emma. We rowed up and did the usual marshalling, jelly-baby-eating, practice starts, final final triple checks of nuts and screws, and the wait for the gun. Pushed out and with a chain with absolutely no slack (Gemma must have nearly dislocated her shoulder) we were ready...GUN!! Our start sequence was strong and together and fast - reaching rate 43 in the winds. Coming round first post corner we heard shouts of inside station! We continued to execute the calls we had practised hundreds of times and stroke side did a big push to get us round of the corner. By Grassy we were on 2 whistles and the crowd were really behind us. On 3 whistles and only a canvas off them we did our restart past the plough and pushed into them. Gemma's characteristically tasty coxing took us round on an excellent line and we got them! We had to clear quickly to stay clear of Caius who were being hunted down by Downing, but soon pulled into the bank and loaded our hair with greenery. None of us could quite believe this was actually happening and we were incredibly proud of ourselves and each other, and very much ready for tomorrow's race!
By Ellie Holloway

Days 3 & 4 - Rowed Over

W2

Day 1

W2 rowed up confidently to the start line, putting intimidation into 'intimidation paddle'. After a solid practice start, we were spinning and waiting for those dreaded 4 minutes to pass before the canon went off. When it did, we sprung into action, heads in the boat, unleashing the beast, under encouragement from our fantastic cox, Zoe! It was a long race, with Medwards being bumped out behind us relatively early on, leaving us the task to catch kings in front of us, with little to spur us on from behind. The long row ended with a row over, remaining on station with kings for most of the way. Bring on tomorrow, where hopefully we can use pressure from behind to apply pressure in front to edge towards that almighty BUMP!!
By Karla Boxall

Day 2

After rowing over on Day One, W2 knew that we had a tough fight on our hands to catch King's who had managed to hold us off for the whole course. As soon as the cannon went off, the legs went on, and our start got us within station with King's. However, it soon became apparent that the real battle would be between us and Darwin W1, who had swiftly bumped our chasing boat on Day One. They gained on us through the corners, but we held

them off for as long as we could, determined to stand our ground. They crept closer and closer until we felt their bow make contact with our stern just as we came out of Grassy onto the Plough reach. Darwin were a strong crew and worthy opponents, but we're coming back on Day Three with a clean slate ready for whatever Bumps throws at us.

By Cait Findlay and Katie Jones

Days 3 & 4 - *Bumped by Lucy Cavendish W1 and Wolfson W1*

W3

Day 1

A steady start into a strong wind saw Newnham W3 lose little water to Trinity Hall W2, however the chasing crew slowly closed the distance. A crab slowed Newnham's momentum temporarily and Trinity Hall caught Newnham just before grassy. Lady Margaret W2 was far ahead always.

By Lucy Jarman

Day 2

Unfortunately W3 got bumped again. We had a good start and were gaining on Tit Hall, but Eddie's also had a quick start and another unfortunate crab meant they caught us. Even so, we're remaining positive - tomorrow is a new day!

By Alice Bell

Day 3

The third day of Bumps greeted W3 with more favourable weather conditions than the previous day, with considerable less sun and wind. After marshalling early and fuelled by chocolate and sweets, we adopted the plan of rowing as strong, as fast and for as long as possible, in the hope of eradicating any possibilities of stray crabs being caught. After a slightly windier row down the reach, we encountered a rather stubborn narrow boat driver who seemed intent on disrupting all rowing activities... and indeed he caused a backlog in the line of boats all waiting for a practice start. Eventually we were able to get clear to practice our start and continue to row down to the loch, then discovering that our position was one away from the canon under Newnham bridge...! We were determined not to let this fact deter us from a strong start behind St Edmunds' crew and in front of Hughes Hall and as the canon blasted, we all settled into a comfortable rate which allowed us to row the longest distance out of the three days. Unfortunately, our fast start did not allow us to escape Hughes' Hall who eventually bumped us, as we were gaining on St Edmunds' crew. A proud row home after another tough day!

By Sitara Bartle

Day 4

The last day of bumps saw us starting from under the Newnham bridge. after shielding our ears from the first two cannons we were pushed out into the river. With the third cannon we were off. Our start wasn't the strongest giving Hughes Hall a chance to pull away. We picked up the pace fighting to get away from Catz but sadly couldn't hold them off and were bumped. Despite this, we got further than we had on other days so still rowed home with pride.

By Rebecca Stoklund-Lee

Lent Bumps 2018

W1

Days 1 & 2

Racing cancelled due to dangerous cycling conditions on the towpath, and the subsequent safety concerns should there be an injured rower/cox/cyclist. Newnham W1 rowed up to marshalling, only to be told to row back as the division was cancelled.

Day 3

After a momentous effort to clear the towpath, racing was finally underway for W1, whose first day of racing had been called off as they arrived to marshal. Adrenaline filled, frustrated and nervously excited, we rowed up to marshalling, throwing in some of our iconic 'confidence drills' to help focus our minds (and show off a bit!). On the start line all we could think about was staying warm enough, and as the 1 minute canon sounded, layers were frantically shed and we pushed off.

DRAW ONE! And we were off. We executed our start sequence perfectly and came inside station on Downing. But they were also having a good race and were quickly inside station on Clare ahead of them. One whistle sounded for Downing, then one whistle for us. We were all a length apart and the race was looking increasingly close. We put in a big push, focusing on our finishes and sitting up tall. But Downing did the same and the whistles were sounding everywhere. Gemma took a brilliant line around Grassy and we drew closer to Downing. Now was the time for a push and we knew it. We had overlap on Downing and our bow pair could hear their cox calling for a push. Unfortunately for us, Clare had given all they could and coming onto the Reach they seemed to die a death. Downing were never going to concede to us, knowing that they were so close to Clare, and pushed on stubbornly.

Suddenly, we had calls to hold it up. We were all exhausted and confused – who had got who first? Had we bumped or did we need to restart? It soon became clear (mainly from Downing excitedly gathering greenery) that Clare really had given up and Downing and managed to bump them strokes before we would have bumped Downing.

It was not the result we wanted, and we were somewhat disappointed, especially after days of frustration with cancelled racing, But we knew we had had a great race and rowed our best and our hardest. The fact we didn't see FaT coming to 'chase us' until we'd parked up shows how much water we had gained on the crews around us. Bumps is a cruel mistress, and it's not always the best crew who come out with the bump. We were proud of our term's training, of each other and of the fight we had put up. It is frustrating that our four days' racing had been cut short by the Beast From The East, and we didn't have another chance to chase Downing (or Jesus), but we were also grateful of our chance to race and were hungry for more action. We rowed home, and warmed up and inspected the damage to our trusty Rosalind Franklin – we had mounted Downing's rigger when we'd held it up, but she will live to race another bumps on Saturday and bump Clare in half the time it took Downing!
By Ellie Holloway

Day 4

We came into our last day of Lent Bumps super excited! After having spent all morning shovelling snow and gritting the towpath to enable the races to continue, we were ready for a fight. After yesterday's unfortunate almost-bump situation with Downing W1, who managed to get Clare W1 before we could make the final bump, we were confident that we could move up on Clare today.

With a good start we began grinding down the gap between us, and by Grassy corner we were getting whistles. Before we knew it though, Clare were also getting whistles on

Downing ahead! With the fear of a repeat of yesterday, Gemma called a restart and the last few metres were ours. A BUMP with Clare's yellow paint smeared on our bow ball to prove it!

We then had our victory row back with the essential greenery and our stroke and cox swapping places which added to the entertainment for the watching crews.

By Alice Cozens

W2

Day 1

The first day of Lent Bumps 2018 saw an excited Newnham W2 paddle up (fashionably late) to marshalling, and adorning many many layers to keep the sub-zero temperatures from getting to us. Before we knew it, we had spun at Baitsbite, and were counting down the seconds to the starting cannon. Our goal for the start was togetherness, since our natural power would come as long as we all moved as one off the start. And sure enough, we had a good start: we were within station on Robinson W1 within the first minute, and holding good ground against Pembroke W2 behind us. Around the gut, the pressure from behind eased as Pembroke were bumped out by Wolfson W1, leaving us to concentrate solely on making strides towards the stern of Robinson. For every corner push we made, they made one - and for every tight line we took, they took it just as well.

We stayed on station with them for the entirety of the race (and they stayed on station with the Sidney W1 they were chasing). As cox, my main aim was to keep the girls' power and morale high throughout the race – even though it was clear we were in it for the long run – and I'm immensely proud of the girls for keeping the pressure up and staying together throughout. The three crews passed the finish all on station with each-other, happily showing that Newnham's second VIII is evenly matched with other college's first boats!

The weather looks set to deteriorate over the next few days, and we're hearing word of Bumps being cancelled for Thursday and possibly Friday. We'll see what happens, but if we race again, it'll be another interesting three-way tussle between our W2, and Robinson and Sidney W1's!

By Hannah Jones

Day 2

Racing cancelled due to dangerous cycling conditions on the icy towpath. So, instead, W2 made a snowman on the Old Hall lawn!

Day 3

Quote of the day - Kate Randall: "Today has honestly been the weirdest day ever" – we all agreed!

The morning found us at 8am on the towpath with shovels, broomsticks, dustpans and a lot of enthusiasm that we were gonna race that day! After bumps had been cancelled the day before, and the whole of Cambridge had been frozen under the "Beast from the East", colleges put aside their competing oars and put their shovels together in a long and freezing effort to clear the ice so that we'd be allowed to race. And so we did, and bumps was reinstated!

We set off early enough to get some practice rowing in snowfall and winds of over 20 mph. We arrived at the start slightly early and got off the boat to keep warm. No one can say exactly why and how it got to what happened next but a giant group-hug ensued, followed by what could only be described as the W2 baked potato re-enactment - the outer circle of rowers in the group-hug were wrapped into tin-foil safety blankets, one of which went over

our heads in a tent-shape construction [see pictures attached]. Rowers stayed in this formation, maintained by Charlotte and Claudia, for quite some time, meanwhile gently jumping, feeding on jelly sweets, and being filmed by Cambridge Communications. The first cannon found us in this position! We moved briskly back into the boat in a slight panic, trying to de-kit and get ready to row before the 1-min gun, which didn't wait too long! We were trying to push off the bank but the bow rigger was stuck frozen to the bank, the countdown already well below 20! Last few seconds we managed to push off, and there it was - the starting cannon! Unlike Day 1, our start was much stronger. Power dropped off after the starting sequence but not completely and we carried on at a decent speed. However, we knew it was not going to be an easy race. With Robinson W1 ahead of us, Wolfson W1 were gaining on us from behind, at first slowly, and after the first whistle - swiftly! Despite pushing really hard for a power on the legs with the passionate encouragements from our brilliant ninja-cox, they had caught up with us within a few seconds. We tried to fight them off for as long as we could, but at this point it was quite obvious that a bump was inevitable. And so we were bumped by Wolfson W1 in about a third of the race-course. Defeated by a strong and worthy opponent, we rowed back home, sad at the outcome of the race, but still proud to have kept it together and to have gone out for a race in the winter conditions that got bumps cancelled the day before (hadn't happened since the 1960s)! Tomorrow is the last day of bumps and we will hold nothing back! We will be there with our shovels first thing in the morning to secure our race, and we will give it all we have got in the afternoon! It is bumps - anything could happen! And we'll be there, and we will do our best!

By Stani Georgieva and Sophie Baldwin

Day 4

This Saturday was the most exciting day for W2 on the river. It was with the most nerve-wrecking row-over in the whole campaign, which left us both proud and happy. We were off to a very strong start, immediately gaining on Wolfson W1 in our Revenge of the Bumped. Whistles were being blown already before the motorway bridge. Later around Grassy, they managed to pull away from us, but we never let them off easily. On grassy we faced some serious challenge from Lady Margaret W2 – they were coming for us with fierce determination, hoping for a bump. As they were only a boat length away, we had to put an absolutely incredible push and shot out of the corner like a bullet from a gun. Picking up the pace, we left them stranded behind. Having once again gained strength, we never let it go. By the Long Reach, Lady Margaret W2 had dropped to several boat lengths behind, and we could focus on the boat ahead. Now we were back on station with Wolfson W1, and absolutely determined to catch them. As we picked up the rate to 36 we were back in Wolfson's dirty waters and heard whistles all the way to the finish. Unfortunately, the course finished before we could get any closer. However, we will try again next year!

By wow pair: Evelyn Svingen and Lucy Gates

W3

Day 1

Fueled with pasta, garlic baguettes and jelly babies, we rowed down in the VERY cold weather, it was the first bumps for everyone in the boat, spirits were high but we were all slightly nervous and could feel our hearts beat a little bit faster. We were pushed out by our bank party and before we knew what was happening, the canon was fired.

We had a decent start, but Trinity Hall II inched closer and caught us just after Newnham Bridge. It was a disappointing outcome for everyone but we rowed home strong and are ready and excited for the rest of the week.

By Amelia Sawyers, Kai Song and Annie Cipriani

Day 2

After yesterday's bump, W3 were determined to come back strong. We battle-paddled our way up to the start, bracing ourselves against the blizzard conditions. We were chasing Trinity Hall W2 and being chased by Lady Margaret W3 and, despite putting up a good fight, Lady Margaret bumped us. We're all making the most of carb-loading and rest during our day off in the snow, and ready to come back fighting on Friday.

By Sophie Thorpe

2016-2017

May Bumps 2017

W1

Day 1

NCBC W1 had an incredibly strong first day. Having sent a strong message to FaT on the row up, our minds were firmly on the boat ahead. Starting under the bridge is never ideal, and it took us a few strokes to really hit our stride but once we did we were moving well, munching into Emma ahead of us, with FaT fast becoming a spot in the distance.

Coming around grassy the water was very rough with three boats all close together.

Unfortunately as we nudged inside station on Emma, we started to hear the whistles they had on Girton. As is the frustration of bumps, Girton couldn't hold on for long enough for us to get Emma, so Emma and Girton bumped out ahead. We nevertheless had a strong race until the end, even closing in significantly on Clare down the reach.

Girton - today we're coming for you!

By Fliss Hall

Day 2 - Bumped Girton W1

Day 3 - Bumped Clare W1

W2

Day 1 - Rowed Over

Day 2

Having rowed over the first day, we were hungry for the bump. As we pushed off we put the rowdy leisure boat and the cannon on either side of us out of our head and were set in our task. Our start was snappy and we closed in on Selwyn W1 coming in to grassy. Darwin W1 was hot on our heels, a mere boat length away. Pulling away with a bump 10, we stayed Selwyn's bow for 10 strokes before a massive call for legs sealed their fate.

By Sarah Byrne

Day 3 - Rowed Over

W3

Day 1

W3 were excited to start off bumps felling strong having trained hard all term. From the gun we had a strong start, gelling well as a boat however Christ's W2 who we were chasing also had a quick start, pulling away from us as we rowed through First Post Corner and Grassy. We never gave up as we continued a strong row onto the Reach where some great coxing saw us speed towards Christ's to move inside station on them. Christ's were not initially phased continuing to retain the distance between us, yet along the course of the Reach as a crew W3 kept a strong rhythm and kept gaining on Christ's. Following some superb coxing calls W3 surged towards Christ's past the Railway Bridge to gain a very well fought bump!

By Hannah Marks

Day 2

W3 were on a mission. We'd prepared ourselves for the sound of whistles from Christs W2 who we'd bumped past the railway bridge the day before, but with Medwards W2 in our sights we knew it was going to be a shorter race than yesterday, and determination was fierce as we rowed up.

Jelly sweets in our stomachs, lucky granites in our hatches and, in the words of Sophia, our fear truly feeling like 'DETERMINATION misinterpreted', we were ready. With the sound of the cannon just feet away, our start was executed with absolute ferocity and the whistles from Christs never came. They were outside station and with passion in our hearts we began closing in on Medwards.

One whistle came as Newnham Bridge was still in our sights and the boat felt alive. With Medwards taking somewhat unusual angles around the course, Sophia our much-experienced cox took the perfect racing line and one whistle quickly became three. Our crew being an exceptionally excitable bunch of rowers, we heard the 'KILL CALL' from Sophia and focused so much on the imminent bump and power in our strokes that we briefly lost touch with our rhythm. Having had three whistles and overlaps for the best part of 60 seconds, we brought it back together and with a final power ten we did it, we BUMPED! Our crew pasta, garlic bread, salad and chocolate that evening never tasted so wonderful! As the highest W3 on the river, higher than 16 W1 and W2s below us, our 6 sessions of training a week and next level crew friendship brought us to this point and our determination only grows stronger – Tit Hall you are next (Even if your Canadian rowing coach is magnificent)!

By Sophie Baldwin

Day 3

Today, the pressure was firmly on W3 to catch Tit Hall W2, without being caught by Murray Edwards behind us. We knew it was going to be a long and exhausting race, but we were confident that we could cope with the test of our endurance, since we'd only caught Christ's W2 after the railway bridge on the first day of bumps. Nerves were high, but so was excitement – Matt told us before the race that "it ain't over 'til it's over", and so we all had that in our minds as the cannon went off.

We had a strong start, and didn't concede any ground to Murray Edwards behind us, despite the overzealous whistles of their coach on the bank. However, Tit Hall weren't going to give in easily, and they had to be ground down over nearly the entire course. It was a hard race, no doubt about it, but the cheering from the Plough and after the railway bridge re-energised us despite our exhausted legs.

Our bodies were tired, but our determination remained strong throughout, and we finally got a whistle on Tit Hall along the reach. They managed to keep a length's advantage on us for quite a while, but when we finally heard two whistles we gritted our teeth and pushed as hard as we physically could.

We got the bump and slammed the brakes on, screaming with excitement and satisfaction – they had thought that they could keep us off until the finish, but we caught them 100m before they were safely home. And now, going forward to Saturday's race, we can finally dare to start saying the 'B word' – no matter what happens, with three bumps behind us, we can at least say we got a First (75%) in May Bumps!

By Cait Findlay

Lent Bumps 2017

W1

Day 1

We approached the first day of bumps confident that we are a strong crew, but also knowing that the race would be tough. When the cannon went off, we did not perform the best of our starts (but hey, the nerves!) and it took us few more strokes than usual to settle into our rhythm. Shortly, the nerves calmed down and we performed a strong and solid race keeping the power up throughout the whole course.

While nothing much happened all the way to the reach, we got one whistle on Downing while approaching the railway bridge. We then got to half a length at about Morley's Holt and kept gaining on Downing – up to two whistles. Unfortunately, we did not manage to bump them before the finish. We will try again tomorrow!

By Chiara Avancini

Day 2 - Rowed Over

Day 3

Having had solid row overs for the previous two days the boat was determined to put pressure on Downing I yet again.

Today, however, we had Clare I chasing us. We had raced Clare I previously in Pembroke Regatta and had come out on top, but we knew they had a fast start and we needed to watch out!

Then cannon went and as suspected Clare came up on us. We kept pushing hard, but they soon had 1 whistle on us, however at the same time we were gaining on Downing up ahead. With Katie screaming we powered on but by the top of the reach Clare were a mere metre from us (and Cam FM decided a bump had occurred and even stopped broadcasting at this point) we now had a whistle on Downing. Round the corner we absolutely beasted it and drew away from Clare, providing spectators with much excitement!

Down the reach everyone was pushing like we'd never pushed before, making sure we 'pushed everything out' by the end of the race. Unfortunately today Clare just had the edge and just before the Railway bridge we couldn't hold them off any longer and we were forced to concede.

Even if the bump was disappointing, we can take away from the race that when we were put under pressure we rowed really well and held off Clare for a good 500m after they appeared to be about to bump.

Back at the boat house with the traditional post race cake, brought by Fliss today, we looked at the positives and decided that maybe it was a good thing that we'd been bumped. Now in 4th we are still in with a shot of headship, by over-bumping on the last day, where in third, with only one day left, headship would be impossible. Tomorrow is a new day, and it's all to play for...

By Pippa Dakin and Karen Habermann

W2

Day 1

Despite an 'incident' on the row up (for those who haven't seen Spotted on the Cam [Spotted: River Cam post](#), Queens' rowed into us as we rowed up to the start, and we managed to take a considerable chunk out of their boat), it was a great race to start our

Bumps campaign. Chasing Corpus Christi W1, we got the bump only a few metres after the motorway bridge - so a very successful 200m or so of rowing!
By Rhiannon Smith

Day 2

For Day 2 of bumps, we were in the advantageous position of knowing we had a slower boat behind us, having bumped Corpus W1 the day before. Nonetheless, we knew we had to keep our heads in the game. It was a beautiful, sunny day for racing. Having felt how good our starter bump tasted, it was time for the antipasti (extended metaphor courtesy of coach Charlotte).

After the starting gun, it was all so quick that there honestly isn't much to report. Our start sequence had definitely improved, and we munched into Christ's W2, gaining whistles almost immediately. 1, 2, 3, continuous...we bumped just after the motorway bridge. We couldn't believe it – once again we had barely finished our start sequence! The sun properly came out as we rowed home, glorious in our greenery. This has made us even more focused for tomorrow, where we chase LMBC W2. Day 3 is make it or break it (the main course) so we really hope for good results.

By Kate Randall and Ellie Holloway

Day 3

Day Three. The Main Course. We knew this was to be our toughest day yet – LMBC W2 ahead of us were catchable, but Pembroke W2 ahead of them even more so. There was no space for complacency after our first two bumps as we knew we had to catch Maggie quickly, before they could bump out with Pembroke.

A focussed paddle down saw a much more subdued crew as we prepared to do battle. But we were to channel our nervous energy into the row of our lives. The canon sounded and we were flying, our start 'terrifyingly fast', and we were gaining. We knew there was no time to mess around and led strategically by our stroke, a powerful rate 36 brought us closer. Whistles sounded – us? Them? Both? Carnage ahead had forced Pembroke to stop, allowing Maggie to gain on them, but thanks to a heroic restart they held off the bump. And what a restart – it gave us the space we needed and with a final push we ploughed into Maggie with a crunch just past the motorway bridge. We may not have raced for long, but we raced HARD.

We were hungry for it today, and now we're ready for pudding tomorrow.

By Costanza Pearce

W3

Day 1

Glycogen stores full to bursting thanks to no less than six garlic baguettes the night before; nails adorned with NCBC colours by beautician Sophie ('I won a nail painting competition in year five!'); and hair tied with blue and gold bows made by Jenna, W3 set off in windy conditions with purpose and pride. After two brief pitstops – one to carry out a haka to keep warm and one to refuel with jelly sweets – we were pushed out by our bank party and before we knew it, the race had begun.

After a difficult start, the wind and a power imbalance pushing us towards the reeds, we managed to avoid stopping and swiftly got back on track. By the end of our start sequence, it was clear that the distance between us and Caius W2 was closing rapidly. As Sophie (stroke) puts it, 'as we passed under Newnham Bridge, our rhythm felt as powerful as Jenna's motivational emails and we were 100% focussed on bumping (slaughtering) Caius

(not the swans)'. However, this is Bumps, and no victory is a given. Unfortunately, due to carnage up ahead as a result of several boats' inability to clear the river, we were forced to hold it up. Despite attempting to restart, it soon transpired that the race was going to have to come to a halt. We were awarded a technical row over, and paddled home frustrated, but not defeated.

Tomorrow we face different waters, with the possibility of an overbump; indeed, with Caius W2 chasing the 'dire' Trinity Hall W2, we will potentially have a shot at taking the position of Churchill W2. This will be no mean feat, but we are confident that it is something we can achieve thanks to our crew spirit and quality training: 'our yellow and blue nails may be chipped, but our determination remains as strong as ever!' (Sophie). Bring on Wednesday!
By Sophia Russell

Day 2

W3 set of in better conditions today, with Sophie still refusing to wear enough layers to protect against the cold. Again fueled by jelly sweets, we started the race well and tried hard to catch Caius W2 before they bumped Trinity Hall W2. However, our hopes were dashed as we powered past the two crews tucked in at the side having bumped.

Undeterred, we pushed on aiming for the coveted overbump guided by our amazing cox Sophia. Coming under the railway bridge, we hit a wall of noise as the second division marshalling crews cheered us on and we managed to bump Churchill with 100m to go, a feat summarised succinctly by Jenna, 'They hit a wall and we powered through'. Big shout out to Rhiannon and Jenna for much needed motivational yelling from the bank!

By Harriet Haysom and Katie Jones

Day 3

On the dawn of day 3, we were all a bit nervous. If we couldn't bump King's before they reached ARU, we would have to try for another overbump. The additional intimidation of being chased by a very strong Caius W2, combined with torrential rain as we set off towards Baits Bite lock, was starting to sink in.

But we remained steadfast. The sky had cleared and we were ready to fight – inch by inch and stroke by stroke. At the sound of the cannon, we took our best start yet and quickly gained on King's. However, Bumps is often a question of how good the crews in front of you are, and not your speed. Today's bump was not meant to be. All the crews in front of us bumped out, and there was nobody left to chase – except us.

Newnham W3 and Caius W2 were the last ones on the river now, and we started another power ten in order to hold them off until the finish line. Our stroke Sophie kept a strong and steady pace, undeterred by Caius' looming bow ball, and we clawed our way ahead. We really put the power down, and were halfway to the finish.

The winding nature of the Cam, however, was not in our favor, and Caius caught us a bit before the Plough. We had faced a tough opponent and given it everything we had, so we rowed back proudly, with our heads held high in the face of defeat.

Tomorrow we hold nothing back. We know we will have to go for the overbump once more, but this one is coveted. We're hungry for it. Countless early morning outings and 2x6ks have given us both the physical and mental strength to get it. King's had better sleep with one eye open, because we will pass out before we die. Bring it on!

By Cait Findlay and Karla Boxall

Day 4

After a roller-coaster ride in the first few days, including a frustrating technical row-over, an exhilarating overbump, and a bump by Caius, the final day of Lent Bumps dawned with opportunity (groan-inducing pun on 'oar' resisted with difficulty) in the air. We anticipated that Caius would bump ARU almost immediately, leaving us with a clear shot at King's for a potential second overbump. We knew it would be a long and hard race, but after Jenna's words of encouragement and weeks of training, we were ready for anything. Buoyed up by excitement and fuelled by our favourite jelly sweets, we rowed down to our station to anticipate the final cannon.

After a slightly messy start, our first prediction came true, and Caius bumped ARU, which meant we could have a run at bumping King's. Fortunately for them, but unfortunately for us, they were a little bit too good, and bumped Clare Hall, meaning that the overbump was impossible. Undeterred, we gritted our teeth and pushed down through our legs, determined not to let Trinity Hall come anywhere near us.

Tiredness began to weary our legs after the first kilometre, and Tit Hall crept up on us little by little. However, we had the edge in terms of fitness, and our fighting spirit kicked in – we would not be bumped today. After a rhythm reset and a strong power ten along the river which had been cleared by earlier bumps, we pulled away from Tit Hall along the Reach and left them in our dust. When we crossed the finish line to whoops and cheers from the boats who were marshalling near the railway bridge, they were miles behind us.

Jenna cracked open a bottle of cava once we'd pulled over, and we all had a well-deserved swig after weeks on a drinking ban. We were celebrating a net result of +2 for next year's Bumps, as well as acknowledging all the hard work and early mornings which had led to our wonderful result of which the whole crew can be extremely proud. We have worked so hard, and every single erg, outing, and team chat built us up to be a formidable W3 of whom other crews should be extremely wary.

Special thanks, of course, go to Jenna for her tireless dedication and – somewhat unusual – motivational emails. Who would have thought that being told "you will pass out before you die" could be so encouraging? Nevertheless, she has been a wonderful coach, never tiring of shouting for us to slow down the slide, and always turning up with a smile on her face and determination in her messages.

Also, to our wonderful cox, Sophia: we love you so much, and could not have managed any of our successes without you. For the pasta parties and the support which you never fail to give, even when we are dying in a long piece or seemingly endless race – thank you so much.

#WeAreW3

By Sophia, Sophie, Paige, Harriet, Maria, Katie, Eleanor, Izzy, Cait, and Karla

Pembroke Regatta 2017

18 February 2017

A truly dominant performance by the Boat Club resulted in victories for both the first and second eights this weekend at Pembroke Regatta. First up, W2 made short work of Lucy/Hughes W2 before comprehensively beating First and Third Trinity W2 in the quarter-final and repeating the feat in the semi-final against Clare W2. A tough Emmanuel W2 was then beaten by a distance in the final.

Not to be outshone (and with the draw showing a pleasing level of inverse symmetry) W1 started their regatta by beating Emmanuel W1 (four lengths), Clare W1 (2 lengths) and Girton W1 (a distance) on their way to the final. In the final they faced a strong Lucy/Hughes W1 and a great race saw some exciting side-by-side racing for the first 500m. After breaking their opponents' spirits, Newnham W1 moved away at the railway bridge and went on to win comfortably by 2 lengths.

Eight races – eight big wins. Well done everyone and it's looking very good for Bumps (starting Tuesday 28th).

By Alan Hendrick

Novice Fairbairns 2016

NW1

1 December 2016

As Michaelmas progressed, NW1 were on a mission. After coming 7th in Queens' ergs and rowing oarsomely in Emma sprints, we were getting stronger and learning to row as one unit. With 3 outings a week plus the occasional erg, we were on the way to becoming race ready.

Fairbairns was here, and spirits were high. The previous Sunday we'd rowed like never before in our last weekend outing as a crew and we knew that if it came together, we could be great. Alice our cox navigated us to the starting position and we were ready to execute a racing start just like we'd practised.

Sadly, disaster struck! Ten strokes in and Philippa's footplate came unscrewed, making her crab and unable to row for about 90 seconds. Katherine dropped out and desperately tried to help as we continued rowing as a six. The less than ideal start threw us slightly, but Ellie's shouts from the river bank were exactly what we needed (in fact, *crewcial*) to regain focus and we pulled it together. Rowing down the river we'd gotten to know so well over the past eight weeks, we settled into a strong (*riggerous*) rhythm.

It just wasn't our day though, and as we reached the halfway point, Katie's seat slid off the sliders. We rowed bow six, giving it everything we had as she determinedly set about getting it back in place, refusing to let it signify the end of her race! Extraordinarily she got it sorted and we were back on form to end the race like we believed we could. Alice got our spirits back up again and after an immense power ten and some impassioned calls of 'for Newnham!' we rowed in style for the last 800m.

Whilst our final time wasn't entirely reflective of the *prowwress* we made this term, we all really enjoyed the race and didn't want to have our last row home, which we knew meant the end... Novicing together this term has been such an amazing experience, our crew really bonded as one! It certainly wouldn't have been so enjoyable without the legendary LBC Ellie who dedicated a crazy amount of time to teaching us all, so a massive thank you from all of NW1 to her, we're so grateful!

By Sophie Baldwin & Pippa Dakin

NW2

1 December 2016

As NW2 sat in the boat, ready for Fairbairns, our LBC Kate told us that the only thing that could fail us now was our equipment. We had trained as hard as we could all term, and we were ready for our final race together, thanks to Kate's dedication, for which we are so grateful!

Rowing karma must have had it in for us after we nearly collided with Pembroke in an outing a few weeks earlier, because by the end of the race we were to find out just how true those words were.

When our turn came, we started out strong with great coxing by Molly-May to help us power through. However, after a few hundred metres, her calls were lost to the wind as the cox box broke, and utter confusion reigned. Nevertheless, we remained undaunted, and continued to row our hearts out, pushing hard round the corners and keeping up a fair speed.

At least, we thought we were, until a crew from a mature college overtook us just before the Reach. Although we could see them pass us, we didn't let that stop us from doing as best as we could with no cox box, and still crossed the finish line in style. Or as best we could, given

that Eman's rigger had snapped off within ten metres of the finish, leaving her to desperately keep hold of it so that it didn't sink to the bottom of the Cam.

As bow six rowed back to the boathouse, with one oar and rigger inside the boat instead of fixed to its outside, the awareness that this was our final outing together began to set in.

Though we didn't win, and in fact didn't even come close, we had made incredible progress from a bunch of girls who weren't entirely sure which way round the oars went, to a strong eight and a great cox who finished Fairbairns with a smile on our faces.

By Cait Findlay

Senior Fairbairns 2016

Gryphens

2 December 2016

For the last few years, we have been able to enter a Gryphen's boat in Fairbairns. Wanting to continue this tradition, the call to arms was issued at the start of term, and was met by an incredible response from my fellow Gryphens, the keenness suggesting that I wasn't the only one who had forgotten how long and cold Fairbairns is! Indeed, so many said that they would like to come back and show the youth of today how to row that we managed to enter both a VIII and an IV.

The current captains, Fliss and Katie, very generously said they would be able to lend us the boats we needed, and also invited us to come to BCD afterwards. So after a couple of months of hard training (erm, what's an erg?) and organising (it wouldn't be Fairbairns if there wasn't a last minute illness crisis!), the following oarsome crews found themselves back at the boathouse once again:

The VIII:

Cox – [Hayley McDermott](#) (NC 2012)

Stroke – Sarah Faull (NC 2011)

7 – Louise Gale (NC 2009)

6 – Grace Wise (née Neal) (NC 2002)

5 – Jenna Dittmar (NC 2012)

4 – Sophie Clarke (NC 2013)

3 – Stephanie Werner (NC 2012)

2 – [Agnès de Varine](#) (NC 2012)

Bow – [Gemma-Claire Ali](#) (NC 2009)

The IV:

Cox – [Gemma-Claire Ali](#) (NC 2009)

Stroke – [Hayley McDermott](#) (NC 2012)

3 – Sophie Clarke (NC 2013)

2 – Amy Eccles (née Winsfield) (NC 1999)

Bow – Victoria Kimonides (NC 1993)

The VIII were up first, having decided to meet at the boathouse sufficiently early to get a brief go on the ergs before Jesus descended. This enabled us to devise a brief start sequence (5 draw strokes, then try to calm down from rate 38...) and a very in depth race plan of "we'll see how it goes". This all sorted, we settled down to critique the other crews as they began racing, cheer on the Newnham crews, and in my case try and think of things to say for the 18 and a bit minutes of racing. Thankfully the weather was unseasonably warm, and it was soon our turn to go. We jumped in the boat, backed it down a bit, and then set off. As proof that rowing is just like riding a bike in that you never forget how to do it, the start was nice and smooth, and we settled into a solid race rhythm between 26 and 28, which stayed that way all the way down the course. The race itself was nice and uneventful despite a brief moment where the cox forgot which way the steering worked on the way into Ditton (no harm came from this, except for an "unusual" line), and we slowly gained on the Champs crew ahead. The crew stayed strong right through to the finish, and could be very pleased with themselves for the efforts put in.

The IV were in the following division, and had rather less preparation thanks to three of the crew also being involved in the VIII. This meant that poor Amy's first strokes in 15 years were the three practice ones she got before we crossed the startline. But hey, training is cheating right! The IV initially settled at a nice, calm 22, but this was quickly remedied as we too made our trip down the Cam, complete with a good fight with Xpress W1. Soon enough, the shorter course was complete, much to the relief of Sophie, who being a true star, had already rowed the complete course with the VIII, and the IV headed back to prepare for BCD, where much fun was had by all.

When the results came out, we saw that we could be very pleased with ourselves. The VIII had a time of 18:39.0, and the IV 15:24.3. this put both crews high up among the other alumni boats, and even ahead of some current college W1s. Not bad for two scratch crews with people who hadn't rowed in years!

It was great to come back and row on the Cam once again, and we all had a really good day. Thanks to Fliss and Katie for being so accommodating, the current members of NCBC for being so welcoming, and to all my fellow Gryphens who dug out the lycra and got involved. Same again next year?

By Hayley McDermott (NC 2012)

2015-2016

Lent Bumps 2016

W1

Day 1

W1 pushed off for the row down to the start in good spirits. With two members of the crew new to Bumps, and the prospect of an extremely close cannon ahead of us, we were slightly nervous about what state our ears may be in, but confident in our ability as a crew to row through the pain!

Pushed off by Mat and Claudia we were set up in a great position on the start, with Asia at full stretch to keep hold of the chain. On the cannon we went into our start sequence and despite a few wobbles we hit a really strong 37 and immediately began gaining on Queens' W1 ahead. The whistles came steady at first before flowing into quick succession as the crew realised a speedy bump was in their sights. Heading towards first post corner, with three whistles coming loud and clear from Mat on the bank, Asia called for a final push and rather satisfyingly for us, but not necessarily the Queens' boat, we secured our first bump of Lents 2016 with solid contact. The crew responded really well to calls and we were able to come into the bank and collect greenery before the chasing crews emerged round the corner.

1 minute and 41 seconds. Not a bad start. Now let's see what tomorrow brings: chasing FaT and just those extra few meters away from everyone's favourite cannon.

By Asia Lambert

Day 2

Our speedy bump on Day One had left W1 hungry for further glory. And it may have taken slightly longer than on the first day, but further glory did we get!

With the first day's nerves out the way, W1 got off to a flying start (our 5 seat even gracing us with her presence on the second two draw strokes, and Asia remembering how to count to 10 this time). Queens' were soon disappearing out of sight, and all thoughts were looking ahead to First and Third. Approaching First Post Corner, the first whistles started to sound. We kept our calm, charging on towards an increasingly panic ked FaT crew. Further whistles followed until they blurred together as we hit Grassy. Asia steered perfectly to take a tight inside line before starting a very passionate final bumps 10. Continuous whistles continued to sound, and it looked like FaT weren't going to be giving up without a fight. But after repeated contact, no one could argue the bump was ours, we'd done it again!

Another great day was only made even sweeter by the delights of Izzy Bentley's homemade custard crèmes awaiting us in the changing rooms... Let's see what tomorrow brings – Emma, we're coming for you!

By Fliss Hall

Day 3

Today marked another exciting and victorious day on the river for W1, bumping Emmanuel to go up to 4th on the river!!

As we set off, the whole boat was eager for more greenery and determined to row even better than the previous two days. Though there were definitely some nerves just before the cannon sounded, we started calm and long. Determinedly we pressed up, inch by inch,

through First Post Corner and whistles began to sound along Grassy! We kept our composure and Asia led us through an aggressive set of 'power ten on the legs'. The whistles just kept coming faster and faster and we kept pushing harder and harder, feeling like we were flying through the water! At Asia's triumphant call of 'hold it up' we realised that we had done it again – jubilation, exhaustion and satisfaction!

Our smiles didn't leave us all the way back to the boathouse, we were all feeling super happy at another day of awesome rowing and ready for more challenges tomorrow. Bring it on Christ's!

By Izzy Bentley

Day 4

25 years. That's how long it had been since Newnham W1 had last won blades in the Lents. It had been 13 years since the first boat last won blades at all (Mays Headship crew of 2003). Plenty of crews since then had gone up three, but had been unfortunate to lack that extra bit of luck that would deliver that crucial fourth bump.

So, it's needless to say we were ever so slightly a little bit nervous when we met for one last day of racing. Everything up to that point had fallen into place perfectly, and we knew that in Christ's ahead was a crew who we were faster than, chasing a crew that was faster than them. Having not yet rowed past the halfway point of the course, we also knew we had plenty of river in which to catch them, and if we rowed as well as we had in bumping Emma the previous day, it would be a relatively straightforward case of rowing our own race and gradually grinding them down. Or so we thought...

The start wasn't our best, but it was decent enough. Emma behind were nowhere, and we were gradually reeling in Christ's, getting the first whistle as we came into the Gut, and the second as we went into Grassy. We did a push out of Grassy, and got the third whistle shortly after. All was going to plan, at least as far as the rowers were aware. At this point things got a little odd, as Mat started blowing continuous whistles whilst Claudia was still on three. Unsure of quite why this was happening, and with Asia still sounding in control of the situation, I resolved to do what I usually do when I hear anything directed towards me when in a race or piece, which is try to push even harder than I already am. This worked, and we made the bump on the entrance to Ditton. After some clearing confusion, we pulled in and began celebrating the first W1 blades for a very, very long time.

It was only afterwards that we learnt that things had really not been going to plan at all! Downing had managed to catch a boatstopping crab on the Plough Reach, and were sat stationary whilst Christ's scented blood and made a charge towards them. Christ's were less than six feet away from Downing when they managed a racing restart, escaping the bump and allowing us to finish the job and win our blades. Mat had begun to blow continuous whistles in an attempt to get us to throw our final bumps push in before Christ's caught Downing, but thankfully all the rowers were completely oblivious to the drama ahead and didn't panic, as had we shortened up and lost our strong and solid rhythm, we may well have lost the bump. Somehow Asia managed to keep her cool through all this, despite being able to see that Downing had stopped, and we cannot thank her enough for just keeping coxing as if all were still proceeding as planned! It really did prove the adage that "great crews go up three, lucky crews get blades", we didn't just need the luck to have the start order fall nicely for us, but for Downing to manage to get their boat moving again in time. Perhaps saving it up for twenty five years helped a bit there!

We celebrated for a while on the bank with the wonderful people that had come to support us, the first bottle of fizz being opened there and then, and the boat club flag being unveiled and presented to Asia. Mat then declared that training for WEHoRR began right then, and we should ensure that our row back was technically perfect, not least because it would look better to everyone watching us row with a great big flag and lots of greenery. So with that in mind, we pushed off to lots of cheering and applause, then completely screwed up our first stroke because only half the boat heard Asia! Hey ho, the rest of the row back went better,

even when Mat made us do strike-downs when waiting in a queue. On getting back to the boathouse we celebrated with even more fizz and the obligatory photos, before throwing Asia in the river as per tradition (thankfully doing a better job than the last crew that tried to throw her in, as this time she landed in the river rather than on the hard...). Since it's February and the water is rather cold, we all then jumped in too in solidarity, before heading off to BCD to do even more celebrating of a job well done!

Winning blades with W1 is incredible, and even as I write this a day later it still hasn't really sunk in. For me personally it is particularly special, as not only is this my 4th and last year of rowing for Newnham, but my godmother rowed in the last crew to do it in the Lents in 1991 (incidentally, they also went from 7th to 3rd). Her reaction when I phoned her from the boat and told her what had happened is something I shall never forget. Of the many emotions I felt rowing back with the flag flying, the foremost one was pride at what we had achieved, and I doubt if anything else I do in sport will quite match up to that feeling.

When I got out of the boat this time last year, having gone up three to 7th, I genuinely thought we had gone too high for blades to be a possibility. Now, W1 is able to mount a headship campaign in 2017, for the first time in many years. I am gutted I won't be able to be part of it, but I'm so so proud that I was able to be a tiny part of getting the boat into a position where it is possible!

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our small band of coaches. Alan, Mat, and Claudia, we are absolutely indebted to you for all you have done for us, thank you so much for giving up so much of your time to make us a properly beastly boat!

By Hayley McDermott

W2

Day 1

The excitement, tension and nerves were high in Newnham W2, who, apart from our trusty cox Sophia, were all Bumps Virgins. But with 'ice in our minds and fire in our bellies' (and lots and lots of stash on our bodies) we rowed up to our start point.

The cannons sounded and we had a strong start, pushing away from Robinson W1, and quickly gaining on Pembroke W2 ahead of us. Ahead of them, Lady Margaret were coming closer and closer to a bump from Pembroke, and we were soon in a gruelling four-boat-sandwich; with only inches between each of LMBC, Pembroke, Newnham and Robinson. Countless whistles were blown, cries from the bank and Sophia's 'KILL NOW' commands were spurring us on, but in the end Robinson bumped us before we could catch Pembroke, who went on to bump Lady Margaret. The drama was far from over though; grassy corner had seen many a bump and Newnham collided with Lucy Cavendish/Hughes Hall combined club, who had already bumped out. Neither rowers nor coxes of either crew were hurt, but our dear boat, Lady Godiva, only recently returned from a footplate injury, has an impressive battle-scar as Lucy Cavendish's rigger tore a large gash in her bow. Not even Claudia's tape will be able to patch her up, and Lady G will unfortunately be out of action for the rest of the week.

Today's introduction to bumps was dramatic and exciting; it was an incredibly tightly fought contest, and really did come down to fighting for every inch. W2 will be back on Thursday, ready to chase those inches and fight for that greenery!

By Alice Cozens and Ellie Holloway

Day 2

Another sunny day at the river cam, and W2 set out for another day of racing. After being bumped by Robinson W1 on Tuesday, we were focused on revenge. The cannon went, and we made a good start, focusing on keeping our technique controlled. We were, slowly, making advances towards Robinson. Before we got the chance to hear the first whistle, they

bumped LMBC W2 ahead. Slightly further up, Jesus and Pembroke had also managed to bump early on, and we were met by an eight-boat pile up at first post corner. With boats failing to clear, the gap left for us was too narrow to pass through, forcing our cox Sophia to shout "HOLD IT UP", sparing us both damage and injury. Finding ourselves completely stationary only two minutes into the race was a bit of an anti-climax, to say the least. As if that wasn't enough, Corpus Christi W1, when arriving behind us, reacted too slowly to the carnage and proceeded to 'mount' the stern of our poor battle-scarred Lady Godiva. It took a couple of minutes of wriggling and a good few strokes in the bow to get Corpus off our boat, while a group of bystanders observed in a mix of horror, confusion and amusement. Out of this situation, we were thankfully awarded a technical row-over. We are now preparing to meet LMBC on Friday for the penultimate day of bumps, and are feeling hungry for greenery.

By Sophia Peacock and Becky Illingworth

Day 3

After the technical row-over of yesterday, we were truly pumped to be given another chance to come back. Having not yet got round Grassy Corner, we hoped to be able to row for a long stretch given all the training we'd done in the expectation that we'd be doing so. There was a revived sense of drive when completing the pre-race routine which by now was a comfortingly familiar series of actions: face paints, blades out, row up in sixes, jellybabies at Chesterton (courtesy of Claudia). The nipper air at the lock meant we were not quite able to brave just the onesies, though this did not detract from the determined and focused atmosphere as we were pushed out...45...30...10...5...CANON!

We set off with the strongest start sequence and settled into a sustainable rate better than we had ever done before. Being chased by Corpus, who we had been assured were not visibly stronger than us, powered us on. Meanwhile, LMBC up ahead were our targets. Though completely absorbed at the time of course, we were thrilled at our unity of rhythm and control of the strokes, something our boat often struggles with under pressure. We felt that we could have thundered on for miles, and as two whistles were heard, we eagerly anticipated Sophia's promised call of 'BUMPS 10'.

However, once again for W2, it was not to be. Due to some appalling parking by the Darwin and Emma crews at Grassy, we were unable to negotiate the line, and had to come to a sharp stop, whacking the former's cox in the process. This gave Corpus the chance to row on past us a couple of seconds later, which counts as a technical bump. We were absolutely crushed. This had been our day to reverse our bumping fortunes, and it had not been allowed to happen due to circumstances outside our control. Again, we have to be thankful that everyone in the crew (including Lady Godiva herself) remained unhurt; and that the stretch we did do counts as productive training. Nonetheless, we need to channel our frustration and bad luck into a powerful campaign tomorrow in the hope of bumping Corpus back again, something which we still believe to be possible.

By Kate Randall and Máire Ní Leathlobhair

Day 4

W2 went into Day 5 of bumps ready to get revenge on Corpus after a technical bump the day before. After a delay in the previous division and fuelled up on jelly babies we rowed up to the start point between Corpus and St Edmunds. When the canon finally went we were all ready, in the words of our coach, to "empty the kitchen sink, rip it off the wall and throw it and everything we had into the race". Despite the windy conditions, our strong start coxed by Sophia had us gaining on Corpus. Unfortunately a strong start saw Eddies gaining on us by First Post corner. With Newnham rowing strongly and set for a tough fight, the bad luck struck again. With LMBC bumping Christ's earlier within the division and again failing to clear quick enough, the lower half of the division had to 'hold it up'. After a few tense

moments Newnham were awarded a technical row over, which we celebrated drinking cava provided by the coaches on our row home.

Overall our first bumps has been an incredible experience, growing as a crew over the campaign. Despite some difficult circumstances, we felt we gave it our all and are even more determined to show the river what we've got in Mays!

By Hannah Marks and Alicia Winthrop

W3

Day 1

Having given our all in the Getting-On race and reclaiming our position in Lent Bumps for 2016 – becoming the first Newnham W3 to compete in them since 2011 - we felt proud of our performance as a team before this season's races had even begun. It's the taking part that counts – and all those early morning outings suddenly felt worth it as we proudly took our spot on the start at Baitsbite, and nervously awaited the cannon.

We knew the race would be tough, being a Third crew entirely new to Bumps, surrounded by Second boats. But we also knew we had the strength and ability required to put up a bump-worthy fight and show Newnham W3's power – after all, we had beaten four Second boats in the GoR, and were only one of two Women's Third crews competing in Lents this year!

All too soon, the cannon fired. Off to a powerful start, we cut the corner and inched closer to Downing II ahead. We held their tail for a good several hundred metres, and I as cox had never known adrenaline like it! The madness of the chase, the pressure from both sides of the boat – ahead and behind – it was an exhilarating and dramatic experience and I'm sure the girls could hear the excitement (and possibly slight panic) in my voice. Under the motorway bridge, an unfortunate crab – although well-recovered – meant we had lost some of the initial momentum we had locked in at the start. A power reset and we were back up to speed, but this time with Wolfson II growing ever-nearer from behind, and Downing II using our slip-up to pull away ahead. Feeling the sustained pressure from Wolfson II, we pushed through, making every stroke count – but Wolfson's solid strength outweighed ours, and they eventually caught us, but not without a fight. Tomorrow's goal: the revenge-bump, which we can focus on fully given there won't be anyone chasing us!

By Hannah Jones

Day 2

After the first shock of yesterday's race (yes, the cannons are real!), we were more relaxed and confident for our second day of Lent Bumps 2016! Having no one chasing us, we managed to focus on taking the best strokes we could, and keeping the boat calm and controlled.

We were chasing Wolfson, who bumped Downing quite early, in front of them, Kings managed to bump Caius. Still optimistic, we went for a double overbump, and carried on rowing our best. Unfortunately it wasn't meant to be. After an unfortunate corner, we collided with a parked boat, that had already pulled over to the side of the river. We restarted and then continued in a steady state to the finish line. It was way more enjoyable than yesterday; as we knew more or less what to expect. We were more confident and we are all impressed with our overall performance and the effort each and every one of us put in.

Next goal: We will bump Downing!

To finish off, a quote from our coach Claudia is worth being mentioned: "It is not a mistake, it is a learning opportunity."

By Katerina Menelaou and Nicole Church

Day 3

I was really very confused when we passed the finish line.

Before everything started, there was the countdown. Those ten seconds before the chase are always very strange. You really have to break out of all the gentleness and good manners of a typical Newnhamite and slowly transform yourself into a ravenous wolf, ready to tear the magenta Downing meat into pieces... at least that is what our coach told us... For me those ten seconds were about humming the words 'hunger', 'chase', 'meat' to myself...and then the bang went.

I don't really know what happened afterwards. I don't think anyone really knows. On day 1 and day 2 of bumps, Newnham W3 was exactly that, a fairly strong W3 team, but just 3rd team amongst many 2nds. For some reason today it clicked. I think all of a sudden we realised that we could push way beyond what we had initially thought was our limit.

There were just a few moments of lucidity... in particular when at one point we scraped against the bank, and lost the rhythm of the boat. I thought the others would panic and that we would slow down. But the pack was more famished than expected (despite the jelly babies before the race).

So the chase continued. Second moment of lucidity...the cox saying "we are getting closer"...Still chasing...Third moment of lucidity... whistles....whistling? Are we actually that close? Despite being really concentrated on the race, it was hard to restrain the urge to look behind and see how close we were getting. Whistling, more power, whistling. Then the race was over.

I was really very confused when we passed the finish line. I sort of knew we hadn't bumped, but I wasn't really sure. My body was glad to stop rowing, but at the same time the voracity wasn't placated. Yet despite the bittersweet end, I still can't stop smiling. That race was amazing... I don't think anyone really expected such nerves from a W3 boat. It is definitely the best we've rowed and I think it also shows how much we have bonded as a team... and I really confident that we have the potential to bump tomorrow... and swallow Downing. Tasty tasty.

By Maria Chiara Storer

Day 4

Final day of bumps. Only this time last week we were celebrating to have qualified at the Getting on Race. What an amazing experience this week has been for all of us!

Chasing Downing once more, we gave it our all - 'throwing the kitchen sink at them' as our coach said. Despite the wind (proper waves on the Cam today!), we maintained some strong powerful strokes under Hannah's calls.

Unfortunately Downing caught up with Caius and so we were left with no-one to chase! But we finished our final piece with pride, and made sure we made the most of our last outing as a crew. It didn't matter that we didn't manage to bump, we were proud to be able to be able to represent Newnham W3, and we hope that this experience is a step towards May Bumps!
By Haruka Kobayashi

May Bumps 2016

W1

Day 1

How well you do in bumps also depends on the crews around you. We knew that Girton W1 was a strong crew and we were ready for a tough battle. Trying to keep our eyes off Lady Margaret W1, who were chasing us, the cannon went off. Although we didn't perform our best start, we efficiently pulled away from Maggie. We settled down into a strong rhythm but

Girton proved to be much stronger than their target, Christ's W1, and they bumped in the Gut. At this point the only thing we could do was row well and aim for the overbump with Clare W1. Coming out of the corners better than how we did during training, we kept on pushing knowing that it was going to be a long race. By the reach, Maggie was not a threat anymore and we were closing up on Clare. We finished the race with a row over, but today we are ready for more action!

By Chiara Avancini

Day 2

We started the second day with the typical bumps nerves, but were confident in our ability to walk away from Maggie after a solid row over the day before. Having already celebrated bumps from W3 and W2, we were determined to make it a hat-trick. After a strong start, we gradually reeled in Christ's W1 ahead, gaining whistles before First Post Corner. Despite a crab and some overexcitement at the large crowds gathered by the Plough, W1 continued to close the gap and conclusively bumped Christ's at Ditton. This was the first ever bump for three of the crew (including me), and we look forward to hunting down Girton again tomorrow.

By Molly Hindhaugh

Day 3

While excited about bumping Christ's yesterday, we found ourselves in a similar position as day 1: facing the tough challenge of bumping Girton, who in turn were chasing a slower crew, FaT. The cannon went, and we began gaining on Girton ahead, coming inside station within a couple of minutes and even hearing the first whistle. However, Girton quickly bumped out, as well as other crews behind and ahead, leaving us to row over on a relatively empty river. We are hopeful for our final day of bumps tomorrow - fending off Churchill, and munching down FaT.

By Sophia Peacock

W2

Day 1

Day 1 of Mays dawned bright and sunny, with W2 extremely excited to get their hands on the facepaint and show their shiny new stash off to everyone. Oh, and do some rowing, apparently that bit is quite important...

Whilst we were quite confident in our own strength and speed (shoutout to all those who decided the weekend preceding was a nice time to get a 2k PB), and suspected Sidney would be too concerned with what was behind them to be any real threat, we didn't know very much about how we compared to the crews ahead. Nonetheless, we resolved to go out and see just how much we could scare Emma.

Our first stroke was, well, a bit rubbish, and I must confess that I was "slightly" concerned at this point that we had collectively panicked. However, thankfully that was the only rubbish stroke of the race, and we very quickly got things back on track, and settled into a very fearsome, strong rhythm. Emma had got a bit of a jump on us with the start, but we soon started reeling them in, as Sidney dropped back and were soon bumped by Robinson. There had been a few concerns that the stacked Lucy Cavendish boat (full internationals don't often feature in the bottom half of the 2nd division...) behind would then try for an overbump, but they were caught up behind the bump, leaving us free to concentrate on moving into Emma. Emma had expended a lot of their energy trying to catch Pembroke before we got

too close, and soon started dying, whilst we kept strong and drove into them, the bump occurring on the entrance to Ditton.

Whilst for the granny in the stroke seat this was the 16th bump of a career, for bow 6 this was their first ever bump, and a very satisfying one it was too! Now that the taste for bumping has been acquired, Pembroke had better watch out!

By Hayley McDermott

Day 2

Still revelling from bumping Emma II the previous day, which for 6 of us was our first ever bump, W2 pushed off in the sun hungry for another. According to results from previous races, Pembroke II seemed quite similar to Emma II, so we were cautiously optimistic.

As the cannon sounded, we took a much better first stroke than the day before and we were off. Pushing off from Newnham Bridge we had already found a good rhythm. Even as I tried to keep my eyes in the boat I could not help but notice that Emma did not seem to be gaining on us at all.

The first whistle came as we came out of First Post Corner and by Grassy we were already on two whistles, we were within half a boat length. Hearing cheers for Newnham from supporters at the Plough helped to fight against the muscle pain that was beginning to settle in.

I found it hard to decipher how many whistles were being called at this point so had no idea how close we were getting. Until I heard the shouts from our coaches of 10 feet...8 feet...6 feet... And just as we rounded Ditton corner in almost exactly the same position as the day before we bumped Pembroke!

The exhilarating experience was topped off when we watched W1 bump Christs, making it 3 for 3 for NCBC!

By Becky Illingworth

Day 4

Having had an extremely successful and enjoyable experience of the first three days of bumps, W2 entered the final day of the May Bumps campaign ready for a final hard row. Donned in matching stash and face paint for the last time of the week, the crew made the final row down to the start with roaring support from NCBC supporters along the course. Starting under the Newnham Bridge W2 made a powerful start despite the distractions from being so close to the cannons going off. Newnham moved to inside station on Murray Edwards W1 but it became apparent we were chasing a strong crew and this would not be a quick bump. W2 remained determined pushing hard for the bump moving to two whistles, which would lead to Murray Edwards pushing away harder, determined not to gain spoons. Newnham rowed extremely hard the full length of the course chasing down Murray Edwards, despite Newnham being the faster crew there simply was not enough river and a determined crew ahead who would not allow us the final bump.

Overall W2 rowed an extremely gutsy, determined and admirable row for the full course, yet it was not quite enough to chase down the strong Murray Edwards crew ahead.

Unfortunately, we were denied blades with the row over but we can all be extremely proud of such an impressive row and bumps campaign as a whole moving up 3.

By Hannah Marks

W3

Day 1

It couldn't have been a more beautiful day to mark the start of the Mays 2016 – the sun shining, spectators cheering, and cygnets waddling (though hopefully not in front of our blades...) – altogether, spirits were high in W3. With a few newbies to Bumps in our boat this term, the mania that goes along with the event was sure to be an exciting experience for the whole crew.

After a strong paddle up enjoying the scenery, we took our place just downstream of the motorway bridge and awaited the cannon, with Selwyn II behind and Emma III in front. For now, all was normal and going as anticipated - 30 seconds to go, we were pushed off the bank... ten seconds to go, all eight to front stops... then BOOM, the piercing cannon shatters the eardrums of anyone within sight of the bridge, and the race begins! As planned, our trusty start sequence got us off to a fast start, and before we knew it we were pushing off the bridge and away from Selwyn. It was then that something rather unplanned occurred - the wire that controls the rudder, to the cox's surprise and horrifying panic, snapped mid-lengthen stroke, leaving her with the two wooden control handles loose in her hands. Still luckily able to steer the boat, we pushed through, and the panic short-lived as the cox somehow maintained control whilst the crew focused back in on what they had come to do. With renewed power and determination, we began to make waves, ignoring the crowds along the bank and the sun beating down on our backs. A beautiful day for spectators makes for a difficult and particularly sweaty row, but we were keen to prove ourselves in the face of adversity.

Pushing ever further away from Selwyn, and gaining fast on Emma down the gut, our crew's endurance shone through as we clawed back those inches and meandered through Grassy with surprising agility, testing the limits of our poor rudder. Emma soon bumped out in front of us, leaving Selwyn II in (not-so-hot) pursuit - they were soon caught by Jesus III behind them as they took an extremely wide angle round Ditton corner, leaving us with clear water all around. We were in for the long row to the end, and with a final push down the Long Reach into top finish, we ended our race proud - the rowers for having given their all, and the cox for having steering W3 round the course holding "what looked like two handles of a skipping rope", according to one of the spectators. Despite not having bumped, we were proud to escape unscathed and for having coped with what can only be described as the cox's worst nightmare - minus an ejector crab, that is. They do say that in Bumps anything can happen, and now we're ready to take our rightful place as the text book example for posterity. Our grit shone through and our cox delivered a stellar performance - a great start to Mays 2016.

Today, First and Third, we're coming for you.

By Costanza Pearce and Hannah Jones

Day 2

The weather couldn't have been any better for the second day of May Bumps 2016! We were so hyped from yesterday and more than determined to bump FaT W2.

Once the cannon went off we knew we should once again give our best, we believed that we could bump! At one point we could see the distance between us and Jesus W3, who were chasing us, increasing, and almost before we realised it we started hearing whistles.

Two whistles came few strokes after the single one. We continued rowing trying to ignore the whistles and within a minute probably (at least that's how soon it felt), we ended up not only getting three whistles, but also the continuous one! And soon, "HOLD IT UP". We hadn't even reached Grassy corner yet.

Claudia immediately picked up greenery for us, as soon as we cleared from the middle of the river. The best thing was the row back to the boathouse. People at the banks were congratulating us, shouting "Well done Newnham" and that was the best feeling ever!
Emma III, watch out for us tomorrow again!
Katerina Menelaou and Lucy Emanuel

Day 3

We had successfully bumped FaT on the Day 2 for the first time this year, and was fully confident and excited to experience that victory again. On the Day 3, we were chasing Emma, again. We had chased Emma on the Day 1, but only to row over. This time, we were more confident than ever, and was determined to catch Emma and bump them! As the gun fired, we rowed strong and firm. But Emma was not an easy competition with strong crew members. Unlike the Day 2 we bumped FaT not long after the race started, this race was long and exhausting. I could hear our crew members breathing heavily with pain. We didn't give up, however, and when we almost reached the end of the race, there was finally the first whistle! That excitement we had on the Day 2 was near. We heard the crews standing-by for the next race, and our NBCB members were yelling "Go Newnham!!". We knew that only if we rowed just a little bit stronger, we soon will have the victory. We pushed stronger than ever, and finally there it was! We bumped Emma! Our crew members pushed the limit and gave more than what we had, and it was a one epic race.
By Jiyeob Kim

Day 4

The whole boat was extremely nervous today. Having gained W3 headship from Emma W3 the day before, we were keen to retain this position. Yet we knew that today was going to be a long and challenging race. Starting in seventh position, we were directly next to the cannon, which to our surprise was very small for the massive sound it makes!
We had a strong start, and maintained a good distance from Emma. However, Tit Hall bumped Christs ahead of them, resulting in a blockage at Ditton corner before the Long Reach. Our cox handled the situation very calmly and decided to hold it up. The marshal was sympathetic and awarded us a technical row-over, and Christs were given a hefty fine. Although it was unfortunate that we ended on a technical, we were very proud to be able to keep our position as the highest W3 on the Cam!
By Haruka Kobayashi

Queens' Ergs 2015

NW1

10 November 2015

The girls of the Newnham novice first boat were pumped for the race. We had prepared with several hard core ergs--putting everything we had into the 500 meters. We were fortunate to have some incredible members of our team.

The race was nerve wracking and I deeply wanted to win. Our dear Becky went first, pulling an impressive rate, and the rest of us followed suit. In the first race we took an early lead, and remained far ahead through all eight rounds. Though we won, we knew we couldn't celebrate too much. The next race was mere hours away. We rested some, stretched, and a few hours later were standing in the hall with the top female novice teams of the day.

Again Becky led us out. A girl from St. Catz, however, immediately took the lead. This race would be nothing like the last. To the credit of my team mates, our next team members did not panic, but pulled as hard and strong as they could. We took the lead by a hairs breadth. When I took my turn, my single goal was to ensure we hadn't lost it by the time I finished. I

pulled until I had nothing left, and fell off the erg, nauseous and knock-kneed. We hadn't lost our lead. Though St. Catz fell behind, we were soon neck and neck with Lucy Cavendish. It was too close to call. But when our intrepid Alice, the last Newnhamite, took to the erg, she pulled with such power and regularity that Lucy Cavendish was edged out at the last second--we crossed the finish line only moments ahead, and immediately erupted into wild cheers. We were the fastest women's novice team in Cambridge! We collected our trophies and congratulated the other winners. It was an exceptional experience.

By Madeleine Ary

Emma Sprints 2015

NW1

22 November 2015

Still grinning and enthusiastic from our victory at Queens' Ergs, and dressed up as 'Newnham's Ark', NW1 were excited to show what we could do on the water at Emma Sprints, and it did not disappoint.

In our first race, Newnham beat Clare by over a length, but there was little time for celebration as the next heat saw Newnham racing Hughes Hall/Lucy Cavendish. This proved a more tightly fought race, but Newnham took the win, and were now through to the semi-finals, where we faced Fitzwilliam. Tired after two tough races, and feeling the pressure, this race was hard; two crabs early on meant Fitz took the lead. While Newnham chased hard, and the gap was closing, the railway bridge was approaching fast and the course was just those few metres too short. Sustained by jelly babies, we still had our forth race of the day, the play-offs for 3rd place, racing against Magdalene. Having only ever done three race starts (all of them in the previous three races) Newnham struggled to get a strong lead and Magdalene gained half a length. Although we held them for the whole race, the slow start proved fatal, and Magdalene just snatched third place. Fitzwilliam took first overall, having beaten Selwyn in the finals.

Nonetheless, Newnham's NW1 rowed home, knackered but happy with our fourth place, and proud of how far we'd come, from clueless novices to (if we do say so ourselves) a pretty respectable team!

By Ellie Holloway

NW2

22 November 2015

Coming off an enjoyable first taste of competitive rowing at Queens' Ergs, NW2 were eager to begin the first race on the water as a team, a 500m sprint. The excitement to get in the boat was heightened by the fancy dress element of the race with our boat deciding to be Santa's sleigh with eight elves in the boat and our cox Izzy as Santa!

The first race of the day was against Churchill NW1 which proved a very tough battle against the eventual winners of the division. Despite one seat coming off mid-race NW2 rowed well at race pace without any crabs. As a team however we realised the importance of staying in time with each other, something we struggled with throughout the race. Having lost the first race there was still a second chance in the row back against Queens' NW2 which proved a much closer encounter. Taking a slightly slower pace our timing was significantly better than the first race allowing us to hold our ground against Queens' only losing by a small margin. The improvements made during the day and over the season were encouraging and all came away from the day excited for the races to come.

Senior Fairbairns 2015

IV

4 December 2015

Racing Fairbairns in a IV was quite an exciting prospect, as most of us had never raced in anything else than an VIII. It was also quite stressful as we had not been training as a IV for the whole term, but just a couple of weeks. In that short time, we improved quite quickly, and by race day, our boat felt good to row in and powerful. The start sequence went exactly as planned. We remained calm and controlled, while getting the rate up steadily to achieve racing speed. The first part of the race went very well, as the half-point results showed. Our cox Asia took beautiful lines, as usual, and helped us through the crucial 4th minute, which was always difficult moment for us. The tiredness kicked in and the second part of the race was less graceful, making us slip down a couple of places in the final ranking. Overall we were all quite happy with our performance as a crew: we had trained well, worked hard in every outing and erg, and knew that we had done our very best. Our coach Mat seemed reasonably satisfied, which is close to the highest possible compliment coming from him.
By Emma Karlake

Novice Fairbairns 2015

NW1

3 December 2015

Having shown our power at Queens' Ergs and our fighting spirit at Emma Sprints, we proudly self-declared NW1 a rather 'beasty boat' and entered Fairbairns with determination and optimism. After all – we had to end our last race of novice term proud!

We knew the Fairbairns course would take its toll. The intimidating 2700m stretch was a distance we'd only first covered fully at race-pace a few days beforehand on ergs, not on water. But, with a lengthy race-plan which was sure to guide us through any inevitability (crabs, swans, crashes...), we felt prepared and were ready to give it our all, and to "fight for every inch", as our coach Katie had told us!

So, fearsomely adorned with Newnham coloured facepaint, we rowed up to the start and, with a suitably long gap between us and the boat in front, Lucy Cav/Hughes Hall whom we'd comfortably won against in Emma Sprints, we anxiously awaited the marshal's order... "Attention, Go" - and we were off!

A powerful race start sent us flying past JCBC's flagpole where the timer starts, with Becky, our stroke, setting a strong but efficient rhythm for the crew to follow throughout the race. As cox, my priority was getting us round corners and not hitting houseboats, whilst the rowers had the far less demanding task of giving it their all on every stroke, catching together with no crabbing, keeping a steady rate with no slide rush and ensuring the boat remained well sat. All of which our beastly crew did brilliantly - through Clare Footbridge, Elizabeth Way Bridge and up to Chesterton Corner we were in control, spirits high, and in our stride!

Just over half-way and coming up to the tightest corner of the race at Chesterton footbridge, I was nervously ready to drop out bow and 3, worrying that steering and pressure on stroke side alone might not be enough to get us round at race pace. But Alice, our 5, came to the rescue by crabbing just as we entered the corner (a deliberate tactic in accordance with the race plan, of course!), helping steer us to the right on a perfect racing line. Displaying, in hindsight, less concern for her wellbeing and instead praising her for helping us round the corner, I called a Power 10 once we had recovered on the P&E stretch, to get our rate and power back up. Legs were tiring, but spirits were not. Coming up to the railway bridge, I could see Lucy Cav/Hughes Hall in the distance, and, some might say optimistically, told the

crew “we’re catching up to the boat ahead, girls!” – though fully realising our plans to overtake may have been slightly ambitious given that their boat was already at the far end of the reach. The final stretch was gruelling – not least for my vocal chords – the girls were tiring, and so encouraging calls of anything I could think of flowed through the cox box, being careful to avoid a list of ‘no-go’s’ such as “empty the tank” and “how much do you want this”. With the wind behind us, keeping those strokes long and strong, and a final Power 10 to “finish this!”, we flew past the marshals at the finish and celebrated our powerful, composed race, though with mixed emotions as this would be our last together as NW1.

Our final relaxed row back to the boathouse became slightly less relaxed when Ellie’s seat decided to shatter underneath her, but thankfully this hadn’t happened during the race. And, on returning home we were excited to hear Newnham NW1 had come fifth of the 35 boats in the first novice women’s division – and only five seconds behind third place!

Fairbairns was a gruellingly great, if not bittersweet, experience to end our novice term on - it’s certainly been a journey coxing NW1’s bunch of rowing beasties!

By Hannah Jones

NW2

3 December 2015

Thursday 3rd December saw the grand finale of all our novice efforts of Michaelmas term: the Fairbairns Cup. Prior to the race our senior coaches were insisting how much of a blast it was; yet we were well aware that racing 2.7km would require a lot more stamina and co-ordination than the 500m sprints we’d done up to this point. This led to mixed feelings of excitement and anticipation among the NW2 crew as we warmed up along the bank, watching the other boats whizz off one by one. The charged atmosphere was heightened by the appearance of NW1 who had just come off the river, their faces still wet with facepaint and sweat, bounding over with various shouts of exhilaration and encouragement. Though by the time we were sat in our trusty boat Andy Silk, we were fully in the zone. Not even the sight of a Sidney boat immediately careering off into the bank just before us could prove a distraction...

Suddenly, all the extra outings and erg sessions of the past couple of weeks culminated in a single moment: the shouts of Izzy our cox: DRAWW 1, DRAWW 2!! Everyone powered down, and we were off. Hannah at stroke set a rapid yet consistent pace, meaning settling into a manageable rate was not a problem. One of our concerns beforehand had been how we were going to maintain concentration over such a distance. However, when the time came we found that the intensity of energy we were putting into our strokes sustained our momentum. We gave no thought to the familiar surroundings of the route we’d practised along all term. Instead, our eyes were only on the rower in front: we were moving as one, not eight, like never before. Izzy’s frequent instructions of ‘power down’s and ‘legs’ carried us through, and although at one point just before The Reach our timing slipped, it was recoverable. The finish line came sooner than expected- we had all begun to enjoy the smooth experience so much that there was no room for tiredness. The elation of finishing the race with NO CRABS (every novice’s nightmare) was unparalleled. Although when the results came in we were not in a winning position (14th), NW2 can wholeheartedly say that Fairbairns really brought out the best in our crew in terms of coordination, power and commitment. We all left the boathouse feeling genuinely euphoric, both at our performance and at how thrilling a longer-distance race is. It was the perfect finale to Michaelmas term, representing how much fun we’ve had as a novice crew and how much we’ve learnt from our coaches. A massive thank you to Alice for preparing us and cheering from the bank on the day- we took the fact that she veered off on the wrong path halfway through as an indication of how transfixing our mad skills are...

By Kate Randall

Winter Head to Head 2016

W1

23 January 2016

The Winter Head to Head race marked the first race for W1 of the Lent term (and my first race ever as a senior!!!) and we were all super excited. The prospect of two uninterrupted 2k stretches of river seemed amazing after the early morning congestion of the Cam and I was looking forward to my first taste of crushing some other crews!

The day dawned fine and even Fliss was only wearing 4 layers – positively summer garb for rowing! We were also very happy to have Molly as a sub (thank you Molly!). After a gentle row down and some rather confusing marshalling, the first leg began. We set off at a steady rate, focusing on keeping it stable for our first race as a crew. It was awesome to be out on the river and the 2k seemed to fly by! However we all knew that we could beast more on the way back, so we set off at a higher rate and with significantly more aggression! Midway through the stretch Asia, our fabulous cox, called ‘we’re catching up to Maggie!’. At first I thought she was just trying to inspire us but soon I realised that we had caught up with the LMBC men’s boat two places ahead. This just pushed us harder along the last stretch of the reach as we finally drew in overlapped with their boat. Hopefully the first of many overtaking and bumping experiences this term!!!

Overall we came 2nd overall (3rd in our ‘slower’ leg and 1st in the second leg)! The Head to Head race was an amazing experience anW1

6 February 2016

Pembroke regatta took place in a cold, windy and gloomy day. Not the best weather for a weekend race, especially for seat 6 and 5 who have not yet evolved any resistance to cold temperatures. Despite the conditions, Newnham W1 was ready to put on a good show and was aiming to a place in the finals.

The first round saw Magdalene W1 as opponent. Although Magdalene started with a good fighting spirit, a crab forced them to easy few strokes after the start sequence. Despite the clear outcome, Newnham W1 did not stop racing and took the chance of an empty river to row a solid piece all the way down to the finish line at the P&E.

The second race was expected to be a tough battle against Jesus W1, who had beaten Caius W1 in the first round. Newnham does not get intimidated easily and was ready to claim its place in the semi finals. Our W1 and Jesus raced neck to neck till half way down the reach. Then Jesus started gaining a few feet, but Newnham bravely fought back and regained water. Then, something happened. As mentioned, the weather conditions were not ideal and the crosswind on the reach pushed Newnham close to Jesus who was racing on the inside station. After one whistle warning, our talented cox Asia steered the boat back on the racing line. Unfortunately, this did not prevent a blade clash, which is a likely event during side by side racing. Newnham bow side showed extreme determination and epically won the blade clash. On the other hand, Jesus caught a crab and their coach decided that Newnham would eventually be disqualified and therefore... why bothering to finish the race? Indeed, Jesus’ coach told his crew to easy and casually paddle down to the finish. Newnham instead kept the fighting mood up and raced solidly to the P&E.

Although Pembroke Regatta is supposedly run by Pembroke and not by other crews’ coaches, the Marshal disqualified Newnham on the basis of Jesus coach’s decision. Surely, Alan and Matt were not happy about it but the Marshals were inflexible.

Newnham might have not won the race but bow side won the battle.

By Chiara Avancini

Pembroke Regatta 2016

W2

6 February 2016

Waking up at the break of dawn on a cold and rainy Saturday, the crew of W2 with the lovely Lizzie George subbing at bow dutifully cycled to the boathouse, assembled quickly and efficiently, and pushed off at 7.40am, to the dismay of the marshal who found our keenness rather unexpected – even confusing, and also slightly inconvenient given our early arrival (the marshals remained in this confused state of mind it appeared for the entirety of the race). Indeed, we were the first in our division to arrive, thanks to our lovingly time-pessimistic cox and captain, Sophia Russell. A short hour-and-a-bit later, we nervously took our first strokes towards the start line. Our first contender was King's W2. Racing started, and we took off, stroking like man-men at rate 34 at first, adrenalin and fear (and, lets face it, energy from breakfast) pushing us forward. We made it to the finishing line, beating King's by 1 ½ lengths in the process. Wow, winning feels great! The competitive beast inside me was beginning to stir. But, while we had to return to the start line, King's crew were now able to return home. This would not have been a cause for jealousy if it hadn't been for the beginnings of Storm Imogen being felt in the form of rain and bone chilling wind. On top of this, our crew seemed very adept at splashing one another very effectively – with the cold wind blowing on my drenched tech-top, I pondered on whether I had ever felt so cold in my life. Well, life goes on, and winning beats going home in any case. Racing continued, and we remained strong and determined against the ever-increasing wind. Our next unsuspecting rival was Caius W2 – quickly, we rowed away and beat them 'easily'. 'Brilliant, we're getting rather good at this!' we might have thought while catching our breaths. On we went for round three – I was now beginning to feel the effects of the strenuous exercise and the unforgiving wind. We bravely rowed and lined up against the French team HEC Paris W1. The wind was getting stronger, as was our determination. The race began and we were head to head – gritting our teeth, we began pushing away, winning by 1 ¼ lengths.

All of a sudden, as we had parked up by grassy in wait of the next race, it dawned on me that we were in the final, evidenced by the very sparse number of boats remaining. It was between Jesus and us. 'You could win this, but ultimately the faster boat will win, AND it is a good opportunity for training and working on FASTER CATCHES' – I think Mat said something along those lines as we were waiting and feeling rather anxious (as well as promising us a pint if we pushed ourselves to vomiting point, confirming the sadistic nature of the sport we all voluntarily embarked upon). Anyway, off we went, and we learnt the hard way that sacrificing technique for speed would never work. Jesus made headway early on as we grappled with regaining our composure and overcoming our nerves – as we did so, we gained on Jesus and but they ultimately won by 1 length, and it seemed, for now at least, they were the faster boat.

We returned home, wet, exhausted, and chilled, but so incredibly proud for having come second. W2 had a good second race of the year and are now looking forward to taking on Bumps.

By Sophia Peacock

Robinson Head 2016

W1

12 February 2016

We were all quite looking forward to today, with the usual Lent early morning mess preventing us from doing more than 2 minutes of continuous rowing over the past few weeks, the idea of an empty river was very appealing. We were quite confident about the race, the conditions were perfect – admittedly quite chilly, but most importantly wind free – and we were ready to beast it.

And off we went, doing a nice rolling start just past Newnham bridge and reaching a strong chunky rhythm by the time we crossed the start line. There is little to say about the race itself, Asia steered us beautifully around the corners and kept us going with power calls at strategic points. As expected it quickly started to hurt but the boat was moving well and it was feeling good, making the pain a lot more bearable. We were also steadily pushing away Peterhouse W1, who started right behind us, whilst also gaining on the M1 we were chasing. Although obviously tired we were all really happy as we passed the finish line, this had been a really good race and despite our lack of practise for long pieces we held it together well and it felt good and powerful all the way to the finish. We were even the cause of much admiration from the men's boats who were marshalling for the next division, with our perfect roll-up as we set off to go home.

A few hours later the results confirmed the feeling we'd had, we rowed fairly well today... and finished fastest women's crew of the day!! We beat some crews that are around us in bumps by significant margins, as well as a good number of men's boats, including an M1, in the process. With less than 2 weeks to go until the start of Lents we are all quite excited to see what more we can get out of this crew and looking forward to a good bumps week!

By Agnès de Varine

2014-2015

Lent Bumps 2015

W1

Day 1

Coming into Lents this year, W1 were filled with confidence, having crept under the notice of most towpath speculators but knowing we were just as fast as the Jesus crew that were being predicted to blade to second. More importantly, we knew for sure that we were quicker than the boats immediately ahead and behind us. In contrast with last year's crew, everyone in the crew was a year more experienced, with a combined 84 days of bumps racing between us. Thus, as we awaited the gun on Day 1, we knew that we would be able to put all the pressure to one side and row our own race. Murray Edwards behind us would be looking to try and prove their point in the battle of the all-female college, but we weren't worried about them at all.

Our only real concern on that first day was whether we would be able to catch Queens' before they caught a worryingly slow Catz, but knowing we had no real control over what happened there, we just had to row as hard as we possibly could. Starting at Station 10, the start was a good one and we immediately started to draw away from Murray Edwards and into Queens'. By Station 3, we had our first whistle. However, shortly after that Queen's themselves started getting whistles on Catz, who utterly capitulated under the pressure, and were bumped shortly into the Gut. Nicole did a beautiful job of coxing us past the two freshly bumped out crews in the narrowest stretch of the river, and subsequently past Jesus and Clare, who'd bumped out on the inside of the exit of Grassy.

From here, the tale is typically one of settling into head race mode and pushing away from the crew behind whilst your bank party and cox pretend that the overbump hunt is on. And we did continue to push nicely away from Murray Edwards, who had never made any inroads into the gap. However, there was no pretending about this particular overbump hunt! As we came onto the Reach, we did a racing restart to get the power up again, as it had flagged a little on thinking our shot at bumping was over, and set about steadily cruising into a Caius who had come onto the Reach five lengths ahead, but were dying spectacularly. Coming under the Railway Bridge, and being told to keep going to top finish (as the crew starting 10th, we had the choice of top or bottom finish), we knew that something might actually be on, and cheered on by all the watching M1s, we kicked it up another gear, and were rewarded by a whistle from Mat. We were just one length off overbumping Caius W1! However, the course was just that little bit too short, and so despite our giving absolutely everything, Caius wriggled out of our grasp. Never before have I wished for the Bumps course to be longer!

There was of course, a fair amount of disappointment that the chance for blades had slipped through our fingers through no fault of our own, we were incredibly pleased about how we'd rowed. Overbumps are, rightly, incredibly rare in the top half of the first division, and that we had come so close was something to be very proud of. Taking 5 ½ lengths out of a crew like Caius W1 confirmed that we were the fast crew we knew ourselves to be, and meant that other people would start taking notice.

By Hayley McDermott

Day 2

So, after yesterday's intense start to Lent Bumps 2015, going straight for the overbump without much introduction, we were all really pumped up for today. Although we didn't actually overbump Caius, closing 5 ½ lengths and getting so close to them confirmed the feeling that we had about this crew: we are fast and we can hold it together. Knowing that

we didn't have too much to fear from Murray Edwards, who didn't come anywhere near us on day 1, it's confident and looking up that we paddled down to the start. Having all done bumps before and the usual fear of the cannons on the first day being out of the way, we all managed to keep calm and had a great start. Then everything went really fast from there; indeed it was all over in a mere 1 min and 53s!

Hearing that we were closing right from the start and getting our first whistle on Catz during our start sequence as we came under Newnham Bridge meant that we slightly failed to stride down, but by then, we all knew it was just a matter of time. The second whistle came soon after the first one and then Catz just yielded. I personally heard 2 whistles, followed closely by Alan doing his traditional distance count-down... but starting from 2 feet. Despite being one of the Europeans in the crew for whom 2 feet doesn't really mean anything, I'm pretty sure it's significantly less than $\frac{1}{2}$ a boat length! Before we reached First Post we heard the long awaited call of 'HOLD IT UP' from Nicole and there we had it, our first bump of the week and Newnham W1's first bump since Lents 2013! After having cleared the river quickly, it was followed by much celebration, as one would expect for a first bump for that crew, a first bump ever for a couple of rowers and a first bump in a long time for a few others! And most importantly for those of us who were in that same boat last year it was a first taste of revenge after our difficult Lents 2014 campaign... and it felt sweet ☺

Mat had apparently decided that we hadn't worked hard enough today yet, so we did a rolling start and a race piece past the Plough on the way back, although most of us were mainly worrying about our greenery risking to be blown away by the wind any second! We were back at the boat house quickly and all really looking forward to tomorrow, having the feeling that our ascension would not stop there.

By Agnès de Varine

Day 3

After the first W1 bump in two years the day before, it was unanimously agreed (by Newnhamites at least), that greenery rather suited W1, and more of it should be acquired at the first opportunity. And we were rather confident it wouldn't be that long a wait for some more, as we were now starting a mere length and a half behind Caius, who of course we had taken $5\frac{1}{2}$ lengths out of and nearly overbumped on the first day. With Catz now behind us, we were solely focused on reeling Caius in.

The rowing itself was pretty straightforward, we steadily gained on Caius, got the first whistles around the headship station, kept rowing as we had been, and bumped them halfway down the Gut. This was a particularly satisfying bump, not solely because Caius had wriggled out of it two days prior, but also because for the majority of the crew (myself included), the first time they had ever been bumped had been when Caius had caught W1 on the first day of Lents 2014. Revenge did taste rather sweet!

Unfortunately, the satisfaction was rather short-lived, as subsequent events unfolded rather dramatically. Having bumped in the Gut and pulled in, we were very conscious that we were in the narrowest part of the river and drifting out would likely cause issues for the crews still racing behind us. Nicole did an excellent job of keeping us as tucked in as possible and most of the crews made it past us with no issues whatsoever. And then Girton arrived, under heavy pressure from Tit Hall, forcing them to go wide around First Post and head straight towards us. The Girton cox realised the danger and steered past with inches to spare. Tit Hall however were so fixated on the possibility of bumping that they had fallen into the trap of steering for the bump rather than taking the racing line. This put them even wider than Girton, with no chance of being able to avoid crashing into us. Here, a sensible cox would have held it up and restarted, rather than run the risk of rowing into a stationary crew.

However, Tit Hall were so desperate to bump Girton that no effort to hold it up was made until the 2 woman's blade was approximately six inches from Nicole's back, despite warning shouts from both us and the bank. Fortunately, I had been able to see what was happening and dragged Nicole down into the footwell so I could attempt to fend off the incoming blades.

It was extremely lucky that Nicole in particular was not seriously hurt, and we would all be lying if we said we were unhappy to see Tit Hall punished with both a technical bump against them, and a substantial fine.

A bit shaken up, but still happy with our performance, we limped home, and made sure that our freshly damaged rudder would be usable for one last day of bumping action, which we were now even more psyched up for than ever!

By Hayley McDermott

Day 4

Given the drama of the previous day, we can be forgiven for plotting our attack on Clare such that we would bump on the widest possible part of the river, where we would be well out of the way should Tit Hall wish to have any further adventures!

However, as soon as the gun went, our competitive spirit took over, and a little over two minutes of hard rowing later, we found ourselves pulled in at First Post Corner, having just recorded our third bump of the week on Clare W1!

Having timed our bump to beautifully coincide with where W2 had stood to cheer us on, we celebrated there, and collected the biggest greenery yet for our victory row home. Once back at the boathouse, we decided it was of course necessary to crack open the champagne and give Nicole a nice cold bath in the Cam (purely to help the bruising of the day before of course ;)), before heading back to college and BCD.

We were of course sad to have missed out on blades, but we rowed extremely well all week, and can be very proud of proving the saying that "great crews go up three"!

By Hayley McDermott

May Bumps 2015

W1 – Down 2 – Rowed over, Rowed over, Bumped by Christs I, Bumped by Girton I

W2 – Down 2 – Rowed over, Bumped by Homerton I, Bumped by Pembroke II, Rowed over

W3 – **Up 4!** – Bumped Anglia Ruskin I, Bumped Girton II, Bumped St Catharine's II, Bumped Selwyn II

Queens' Ergs 2014

NW1

11 November 2014

As someone who grew up on a desert island, rowing was never on my list of potential hobbies. However, armed with an Australian sense of competitiveness, I set off as a novice to join Team Gold at Queens Ergs.

Tuesday night arrived and as we were baptised with Newnham coloured war paint a quiet hush descended on the room. No longer were we distracted by the relatively impressive biceps of male crews surrounding us – we were here to win. After some warm up drills and a quick team photoshoot, it was time for the first heat. We pulled well, coming in second in the heat and through to the final.

Having silver win their division as we waited for our final turn was a massive kick up the proverbial – Newnham hadn't won a division before and the pressure was on! The final produced some definite PBs and more screaming than a One Direction concert filled with tweenagers who really should know better and will live to regret their music choices when they grow up. My personal highlight was having the marshall point 'number 1' with excitement as we pulled into first place with 7th rower before our 8th rower smashed it and drove us home for Newnham victory!

Singing “we are the champions” with the team later, it struck me that Newnham victory wasn’t having ‘the star’ rower that other colleges had in their possession – we simply had an overall team of strong rowers who consistently pushed themselves. That was the winning difference. And drinking champagne out of our tankard trophies made all the pain and our new sexy calluses SO worth it.

By Kate Crowhurst

Winter Head 2014

W2

15 November 2014

After pushing off a bit late in an attempt to get the novice boat spick and span, W2 had to hurry down the river in order to marshal before the race. Once we got over halfway down, however, disaster struck and Mona in 4’s shoes had unattached themselves from the footplate. Because of the large number of boats on the river it was difficult to sort the problem out and in an attempt to get to the side of the river where Mona could actually get out of the boat to fix the problem, I was told W2 handled a very tricky and intricate spinning situation beautifully. The space we had to spin in was limited but we kept our cool and followed Alicia’s orders.

The other boats then all started to row down to start the race and we were left last so that we could do our best to deal with the footplate situation. After hurriedly wolfing down the last minute sugar boost of jelly beans Alicia passed down the boat, we were told to set off and off we went.

For many of us, this was our first ever race and we had not had our final outing before the race nor had we done that many race pieces before, so we were kind of thrown in the deep end, but they say that’s how you learn best! And so we pushed and pushed with Alicia encouraging us to keep going and not stop even when our bodies felt like they couldn’t cope anymore. Theresa in 3’s footplates came off in her attempt to push her hardest, but like a champion, she kept rowing as best as she could. She carried on so flawlessly that it wasn’t until we crossed the finish line that anyone noticed something so drastic had happened. Given these conditions, I think our efforts were heroic and now that all that went wrong, there’s nothing Fairbairns can throw at us to phase us anymore. I’m also quite proud that we didn’t catch any mythical crabs or ejector ones during the race, so let’s hope that remains true for Fairbairns!

By Patricia Perez

Clare Novices 2014

NW4

28 November 2014

Up against Clare NW2 in Clare Sprints we knew this race was going to be a challenge. The weather was pretty mild and conditions were good for race day. Newnham’s NW4 Vikings approached the starting line at the reach on the meadow side with confidence. And that was where it started to go slightly downhill. Drifting over to the bank we tried to straighten ourselves, with the marshals shouting instructions from the other side. Our cox Charlie kept her cool and managed to successfully get us into a good starting position.

‘Attention, go’ and we were off. The first draw strokes were strong and together, but it was as we sped up that we got out of sync. Magali subbing in at stoke did an admirable job of setting a good stroke rate, and after a bit of a shambolic start we eventually fell into place. Our coach Charlotte shouted encouragement from the towpath and after Clare’s smooth start we caught up half a boat’s length to follow just behind them. By the time we reached the railway bridge we had picked up a good rhythm and were managing to hold our position a boat length behind Clare. This continued to the end, and we crossed the finish line

knowing that it may not have been our best start, but at least we worked together as a team to finish well. Overall, a good first attempt from NW4.

By Anna Rowell

Senior Fairbairns 2014

The IV

5 December 2014

Fairbairns. Cold, long, and painful. Happily slightly less long for IVs than VIIIs. Cold and pain still applies though!

We were the 2nd last boat to go off in the division, being chased by our own Gryphen's IV, so spent a pleasant afternoon critiquing everyone else, lending some support to the Cantab's IV that was essentially half NCBC, and managing to persuade the JCBC Captain and Fairbairns Sec to give us the cheer of "NC NC NC! BC BC BC!".

Eventually the rowing thing started, and, as had happened through the term, because none of our coaches were anywhere nearby to see it, we actually rowed quite nicely, with a sat boat and no rushing. Indeed there was some disbelief from the stroke seat when Nicole told us we were already at our target rate of 30! The first half of the race continued as such, with some of our best rowing of the term, by the P&E we had caught the Murray Edwards boat that had been given an increased start gap over us. Nicole's shout of "MURRAY EDWARDS! MOVE TO THE LEFT!" injected a brief moment of happiness as we cruised past them and left them behind.

Halfway down the reach the distance started to tell, and we began to fall apart a bit. With help from our injured member Izzy on the bank we got through that, and smashing out of the last corner to finish very strongly. Helped by the finish being sooner than we all thought it was!

Fairbairn's survived, we broke out Alan's mini Daim, and then swapped Nicole to the stroke seat to attempt to row home. This lasted approximately three strokes amid much panic over actually having to do some exercise, so we swapped back and settled for playing music over the coxbox speakers.

It was our best row of the term, and a great way to finish the term in the IV before we head back to the VIIIs for Bumps next term. Massive thanks to Mat and Alan for persevering with our inability to row nicely when they were trying to coach us, and also to Hele for failing miserably at quitting rowing and filling in for Izzy's injury.

By Hayley McDermott

NCBC goes in Seine - Les Régates en Seine 2015

31 May 2015

Taking "off-Cam" racing to its logical conclusion, at the end of May NCBC sent a crew to Paris to compete in the Régates en Seine, a side-by-side regatta with a course taking us right past the Eiffel Tower!

It being the height of exam term, the crew was not any of our bumps crews, but a composite made up of current and former first boat rowers, with a special guest appearance from Sarah Allen, whose Blue and three boat race appearances were deemed to make up for not having rowed for Newnham W1...

The crew lined up as follows:

Cox: Nicole Fowler

Str: Hayley McDermott

7: Sarah Allen

6: Agnès de Varine

5: Jenna Dittmar

4: Charlotte van Coeverden

3: Izzy Wiggans

2: Hele Francis

Bow: Francesca Benzi

For obvious logistical reasons, we were unable to bring one of our own boats across, and so borrowed one from our host club. It was very entertaining to arrive and locate our appointed boat, a nice heavy wooden boat that may well have been older than everyone in the crew. Even funnier was when we realised that every other crew racing had brand new shiny Empachers... Oh, and there was no coxbox speaker system... Hey ho, such is life, we had a boat that we were reasonably confident would float, and would just have to do the best we could with it.

After rigging the boat, receiving strict instructions that we all must match our kit exactly (even the cox...) and confusing our hosts by not doing a land-based warm up, we boated. Or attempted to boat. Rather embarrassingly we'd managed to attach a rigger in the wrong place, necessitating a very quick re-rigging before finally boating successfully, onto a Seine that was rather more bouncy than it looked!

We were not expecting to be up off the start, given that (a) we'd done a whole one practice start as a crew together and (b) were in the heaviest boat we'd ever rowed in... So, we were pretty surprised to find ourselves a length up 10 strokes into the race, and moving away rapidly!

Sadly, it was downhill from there, as bow's seat then decided that remaining on the slides was optional, and wouldn't go back on. Essentially now rowing in sixes, with those in the stern having no idea what on earth was going on behind, our opponents began to move through us and took the win. However, despite being a pair down for the best part of 500m, we lost by only a canvas.

Naturally, it's always disappointing to lose races due to equipment failure outside our control, particularly given that we were reasonably confident that we would have done well in the regatta without those issues. However, life goes on, and it was an incredible experience to be able to race as NCBC on the Seine!

By Hayley McDermott

2013-2014

Lent Bumps 2014

Lent bumps 2014 was an eventful week for NCBC. W2 got technically bumped on the first day, because of a hold up just in front of them, but they did not give up and managed to climb back up, getting an average of +1! W1 started in a difficult position, having very strong crews behind them; however they gave it everything they had on all 4 days and despite going down 3 they fought very hard. We can't wait for Mays now!

W1

Day 1

After discussing our pre-racing nerves for about a week, the day started full of confidence. The sun was shining and we were fully planning on smashing Pembroke even though we knew we needed to keep clear from Caius. Rowing down to the start the crew had a calm, confident feel about it and we were focussed on looking tall and intimidating. To our dismay, we then arrived at our starting position, we realised we were right underneath the motorway bridge accompanied by a pair of cannons. After surviving the shock of the 4 minute cannon we quickly de-kitted leaving our bank party with about a man's weight of clothes to carry on their back.

And suddenly, there it was, counting down from 10 in our first bumps race this week. The shell shock from the bang was incredible. For the first strokes Nicole was barely audible in the horror and confusion, but we had practised the hell out of this start and so we nailed it anyway. Three draws, five winds and we were off to a great strong start. Nicole was doing a great job steering us through all the ideal lines. After what seemed like both the longest and the shortest three minutes of my life we were gaining on Pembroke at what I understood later to be a crazily high stroke rate. Thanks to Nicole we were going straight for them. However, in our sights we also had Caius pulling up dangerously close to us and Clare was behind them in the distance. Suddenly Caius seemed to speed up and Nicole had to concede quickly after that.

Of course we all felt gutted, but a small source of amusement was supplied by Clare who heroically caught up with Pembroke and over-bumped. At least this left us with a feeling that justice had been served. We all seemed to be thinking the same when we got back to the boathouse: 'Caius might have got the best of us on the first day, but it remains to be seen who will have the last laugh'.

By Charlotte van Coeverden

Day 2

Day 1 of Bumps had given the majority of W1 their first ever taste of being bumped, an unfamiliar flavour which we were very determined would not be sampled again. Despite the fact that Pembroke would have been expected to put up a fight to spare their blushes somewhat after the embarrassment of being overbumped from 6th in the 1st Division, it became very clear very quickly on the row down that we would have very little to worry about from behind, Nicole keeping us right up close to their stern, whilst pausing every three strokes, eventually causing Pembroke to do an extra practice start just to get away from us. With that in mind, all our attention was squarely focused right where it should have been, that bright yellow boat one in front of us. We knew that having bumped us on Day 1, Caius would not be expecting a challenge from behind. We also knew from Day 1 that our starts were much faster than theirs. Our race plan was a simple one: bomb it right from the start and scare the living daylights out of an unsuspecting Caius.

And so we did. With everyone in the boat now having at least one day of Bumps experience under their belt, the start was even better than the day before. When the call to stride came, we even managed to take the rate down to a marginally less unsustainable 38 than the previous day's 42 (apparently the over-excitabile Labrador at 6 is to blame...oops...). Before we knew it, we had the first whistle from the bank. Then two. Then as we rounded First Post Corner, three whistles, and that unmistakable Irish voice: "Half a length Newnham!". Going into Grassy: "Third of a length!". Unfortunately, as we exited Grassy, Caius found an extra gear, and started to draw away, so that was the closest we got to them. However, given that as we went through Grassy on Day 1 we were being bumped by Caius, and as we went through Grassy on Day 2 we were just a third of a length away from bumping them back, if we extrapolate that improvement we are on for a very good day tomorrow. More importantly, we proved that we are a crew with determination, that can fight back from a disappointing first day with what was the gutsiest row I have ever been involved in, and give a crew that bumped us one heck of a fright. Let's go in tomorrow with even more of that fighting spirit, find that extra "Alan length", and smash Caius back right where it will hurt them most!

By Hayley McDermott

Day 3

Yeah, so remember how we had set out to "find that extra "Alan length", and smash Caius back right where it will hurt them most" (a.k.a. kick them in the cox)? Well, that didn't quite happen as planned. Here's what did happen.

We all arrived to the boathouse already thoroughly soaked from cycling in the rain. You could just read off our faces how happy we were at the prospect of wet slippery handles and sticky cold leggings that feel like wetsuits. I'd pretty much say that this point was the highlight of the day, when we cheekily listened to the Cam FM live coverage of our very own W2 bumping Jesus W2 – hiding on the balcony to avoid inappropriate displays of joy in front of the rest of JCBC. Soon it was time to push off! We rather uneventfully rowed up to the marshaling point and sat there in the rain/mud good bumps customs require. Nonetheless, we did brighten up everyone's day by delighting our (possibly perplexed) audience with an extremely well-executed performance of a classic from our repertoire - "HAPPY BIRTHDAY", dedicated from the bottom of our hearts to our lovely Claudia who couldn't be here with us today. *** Claudia we miss you! NCBC loves you and thinks about you all the time! *** Also, in case people hadn't realised, coxes wear microphones.

Anyway, soon enough it was time to row to the start. A few minutes and a practice start later we were all pulled in and de-kitting from the gazillion of layers we'd stacked onto ourselves (did I mention it was raining?). The cannons cannoned. Our start, which was the pillar of our strategy for today, was unfortunately not quite as good as yesterday's. Catz didn't seem like a threat at this point, but we were struggling to gain on Caius. Coming into the corners, we could vaguely hear a 'Within station!!!' from the bank, but no whistles. Corner after corner, still silence. Soon enough though and to our dismay, Catz's whistles started sounding. I think it's fair to say that we all really gave it all – you could feel everyone putting in the maximum effort for the boat (we did beast it massively on a 'Claudia ten' that we'd agreed on), trying as hard as possible not to undergo a second experience of getting bumped. As Catz were gaining on us Nicole used her magic powers to steer away from an overlap up until the bottom of the long reach, where we finally yielded. Though we were tired, damp and disappointed for getting bumped so far into the course, we were also really glad to feel that we had all been trying our best together as a crew, and had ultimately managed to hold off so well (really, Nicole did wonders with her steering).

Tomorrow is another (hopefully brighter) day, and NCBC W1 is resolved to end Lents 2014 on a high! So we'll try to return the favour to Catz and hopefully stick a green smiley face on our line of the chart too!

By Francesca Benzi

W2

Day 1

We arrived at the boathouse enthused and excited for our first day of bumps; for all but our veteran Sophie Clarke, this was the first bumps race of our rowing careers. Naturally we were both thrilled and nervous, but we were ready to get going. Arriving at the starting position and hearing the first cannon was more exhilarating than terrifying, although our cox who had been afraid of remembering to drop the chain apparently no longer thought that would be a problem. With 20 seconds to go Sarah pushed us off the bank. We rolled to front-stops, buried our blades, breathed, focused, and then...

BOOM

"Draw One!" We were off to a powerful start and rowing better than we may have ever rowed together as a crew. The boat felt powerful. The blade work was clean. We were set and rowing together. Our start sequence went off without a hitch, and we had a good race line in motion.

We had settled into a high and strong rate after our starts and were going strong.

Unfortunately, that is when the race took a turn for the worse. The Hughes Hall/Lucy Cavendish W1 hybrid that we were chasing managed to bump a sluggish Jesus W2 before we could catch up to them. This resulted in Jesus sitting stationary in the middle of the river and Hughes/Lucy drifting across with their hands in the air in celebration over their bumping victory. We were approaching at full speed, and neither of the boats made any effort to clear the river. Asia was left with two decisions: crash into the two crews or take drastic evasive action. Due to the extreme but necessary maneuver, the rudder wire on our boat snapped. Asia made the wise decision to concede as we were forced into the tree on the bank, despite Robinson's W1 still rowing about half a length behind.

After detaching ourselves from the tree, we limped across the river to hear the verdict. We hoped that we would at least be awarded a technical row-over due to the impedance. In a contentious decision, Robinson was given the bump. We went to appeal the decision. Regretfully, our appeal was unsuccessful. We were frustrated and heartbroken at the idea of losing our chance at blades. Despite all that had happened, we maintained our poise and gave Robinson W1 a congratulatory cheer. We were still proud of our strong performance on the water and headed home with our heads held high, although we were greeted with a very mood-appropriate torrent of rain after putting the boat away.

While our first bumps race was disappointing, we are content in the knowledge that our performance was solid. There are 3 more days of bumps, and we will be back to fight! We know what to expect, and we know the crews that we will challenge. We are thirsty to show what we can do. We have confidence in our skill and strength on the water. We rowed as a team, and we rowed with fire.

By Gabrielle Peterson

Day 2

"OH MY GOD! Does stroke really think we can maintain this pace over the course?" That thought is a milestone in every college rowers career. A milestone, usually followed about 8-9 minutes later by a second series of mini milestones, the realizations that 1) Yes, Stroke did think that, and 2) Stroke was right, and 3) Stroke is gonna do that race after race after race, or they're probably not gonna be stroke anymore. To that end, the stroke seat of Newnham W2 Lent 2014, Leanne Young, fits the bill to a T, and a good thing too, because lining up in our new "favorite" spot at 13th in the second division of lent bumps, it was time to regain some lost honor after a dubious and less than glorious start to most of our Bumps Careers. With Pembroke behind and Robinson in our sights, we nervously settled into waiting for our start on the second day of Lents Bumps, a little more confident (knowing now what cannons sound like) and prepared to row as hard as we could after Robinson's blue jackets, and

when the cannon did fire, our coaches had us artfully maneuvered out, and we were off without a seconds hesitation, following stroke at what always seems like an insane pace, before settling into the sound of our first whistle and our cox screaming into the box. In the end, Robinson caught Jesus before we caught Robinson, (a seat came off the tracks according to locker room conversations with Jesus), but not before we got two solid whistles on Robinson's boat.

Coming around Grassy we got the now-famous Newnham call of "Glutes 10!" featured on CamFM's live coverage of lent bumps. A row-over, although not as glorious as bumping Robinson might have been, did give Newnham Lents W2 a chance to show our stamina, strength and simple bull-headed doggedness over the course of a race. Maintaining a stroke rate of 32/33, the boat settled into a steady rhythm. Oar locks clicking as we watched Pembroke slowly disappear behind us, until they could barely be seen, and our coach Sarah called for a "wind it down" 1/2 way down the reach, turning our racing speed into a high-ish rate steady-state row under the bridge, and then past the men's crews lining up for their division, and hence (as Newnham is mysteriously popular with the boys :p) a series of cheers from every boat we passed. Despite weather forecasts for rain and misery, we're looking forward to coming back Friday and chasing Jesus down.

By Callie Vandewiele

Day 3

So we all knew today was going to be awkward when arriving at the Boathouse that we share with the crew we are chasing. Unlike on Day 2 there was no friendly banter or tactics talk, there was a very distinct us and them feeling in the air. This was not helped by the fact that our face paints had mysteriously disappeared and their boat just happened to have been left in our way. After getting the blades half-out (leaving the handles in the boathouse to keep dry in the torrential rain) we had a team talk, basically consisting of "You can do it, Pembroke are never going to catch you". After a casual row down and smashing our practice start, having to pause at hands-away after catching Pembroke solidified this idea. So now we're sat there in the pouring rain, thinking of nothing but the people in the Jesus boat in front of us. The 4 minute cannon goes and we consider de-kitting, leaving it to the last minute in an attempt to stay as warm and dry as possible. The 1 minute cannon goes and this is it, Sarah starts to push us out and we're ready, the exact same line as day 2 we can do this! And we're off!

The start goes perfectly, draws, winds, legs, and rhythm (with Asia managing to keep the count right) and we're settled and that's when we hear it, our first whistle, we're gaining, we knew this would happen. Asia pulls our focus back with a power 10 but that double whistle is nowhere to be heard, we keep going. At this point I see Pembroke bump out, I know no one is chasing us but we can't let up, we have to do this. A few more legs calls and I can see Asia is getting excited, there it is, 2 whistles!! We keep going, the calls from the bank party can't be heard over Asia's constant instructions to "keep going", "on the legs", "you're catching", "power through". Asia is practically bouncing in her seat, 3 whistles are apparently going somewhere but most of us don't hear them over Asia yelling at us, we focus on our cox and keep going, trusting her to take the perfect racing line (as usual) then it happens "HOLD IT UP!" comes over the cox mic and we've done it, most of us can barely contain our excitement and I try to hug Asia forgetting there is an oar handle in the way.

We are rowing home with our greenery and our heads held high and proud when Asia tells us we were stroking at 37, about 5 strokes per minute faster than normal but none of us care. We achieved what is, for 8 out of 9 of us, our first bump and we cannot be happier, and we dedicate our bump to Claudia on her birthday and Sarah for being an amazing coach. Bring on tomorrow.

NCBC disclaimer : Jesus probably didn't steal our facepaint.

By Leanne Young

May Bumps 2014

Despite getting an overall average of 0, NCBC had very exciting May Bumps 2014:

- **W1** had a slightly dodgy start, getting bumped by FaT on the first day, but then had 3 very gutsy row-overs, especially on the last day, when they were chased by Lady Margaret, who were having a very good year. Although Maggy had closed the gap to 1/2 a boat length by first post corner and had overlap for the whole reach, W1 never gave up and somehow managed to avoid the bump (despite CamFM announcing an 'imminent bump' several times), giving it absolutely everything they had until the finish line. "The most epic race I have ever had, there is no way to describe it other than gutsy"
- **W2** were in a difficult starting position, but then showed how strong they could be as a crew on the last two days, when they simply destroyed Pembroke II and Sidney Sussex.
- **W3** had a very good start, with the first bump of the season for NCBC, but then unfortunately happened to be in front of two very strong crews, including a W1 on for blades; however they remained very strong and had good races on all 4 days.

W1

Day 1

It is an accurate description to call us a colourful bunch. With a Cantabs rower on stroke followed by varying levels of experience in NCBC and a handful of CUW rowers we had some interesting first outings with very different body movements and some rhythm challenges. Like every good dance crew we did eventually get our act together and we were STRONG. So then bumps week arrived and with practise starts on varying degrees of goodness and some pieces fitting the same description, we were as prepared as we were going to be. However, as I learned later, nothing can truly prepare you for the first day of Mays.

We started just in front of Newnham bridge, which is a fitting place for us to start since the colourful NEWNHAM above is truly inspiring when rowing away from it. Caius, an absolute 2014 Mays favourite, was in front of us so we had hard work to do if we were going to bump them.

As always the cannon was loud and varying levels of panic ensued. I have to remember what Mat once said in one of our practises: "If you can't do it well, then at least do it hard". And that last thing is what we did. Our start was not the best we've ever done but it got us moving, there was a noticeable wobble in the boat over the entire course which could partially have been caused by a clump of weeds that had gotten caught in our rudder. Our poor nicole tried her best to steer through the corners but it was difficult to take the optimal line. FaT was getting closer and was cutting off large chunks of distance in the corners. We fought hard and we got to the reach at which time the rudder cord finally snapped under the pressure. we were straight now and still pushing but alas, FaT were faster and caught us. Cheers to FaT for a good race and to Nicole for coxing us so strongly in tough times. We will get another chance to show FaT what we can do tomorrow.

By Charlotte van Coeverden

Day 2

Well what a race!!

So the first day of bumps didn't exactly go as planned, but we were all determined to keep it together today, and get FaT back. There we were under Newnham bridge, without the weeds, without the outflow and focussed in our own boat, ready to beast it, when the 'Defend your ears' - no we can't - canon went off. Although completely deafened by the canon, we knew exactly what we had to do and our start was significantly better than

yesterday. Putting the power down together we started steadily gaining on FaT and whistles started to be blown. Confident that we could do this we kept calm but powerful, the rowing itself feeling much better than yesterday, getting closer and closer to FaT while seeing Christ off in the distance. By the top of the Plough reach we had 3 whistles on them - 1/4 of a length - and there the real fight began.

FaT decided not to give up and fought every single stroke; so close to revenge that we were, we did everything we could to close that 3 feet gap, pushing harder and harder all the way down the reach. Unfortunately we didn't manage to get them in the end, and having had given everything we had on the reach, the last 2 minutes from the railway bridge to the P&E felt absolutely endless. What a hell of a race that was though, well fought FaT! We then rowed home with our heads up, knowing that we had done our best and given it everything together. As our dear coach Alan said 'Between getting bumped on day 1 and nearly bumping FaT back on day 2 we improved by 3 lengths in 24 hours. Tomorrow we only have to improve by 3 feet'.

By Agnès de Varine

W2

Day 1

Writing a race review is tricky when all you can remember of said race is a blur of pain, unintelligible shouting, and more pain. However, a review must be written, so here is my best attempt to explain Day 1 of W2's Bumps campaign.

We turned up at the boathouse knowing we couldn't be more prepared. Sarah had been driving us hard all term, with full course pieces and sparring with men. Erg PBs were being set all over the shop. And of course, we had our lovely grippy new blade handles ready and waiting for us. All that remained was to put the finishing touches to our freshly painted blades...which went well... (who needs the yellow anyway, the rustic look is where it's at!) The row down felt good. The many many many backstops builds we'd done paid off when stuck in the queues behind Emma II. Casually pausing at arms away and backs over, with square blades, whilst sitting the boat perfectly. Intimidation phase one, complete! We did our practice start. Also felt good. I believe it was around here we concluded Robinson were nothing to worry about. Once we'd waited around for long enough to get very nervous the cannon finally went off. From this point I can't really remember what happened. There was pain, and lots of shouting. We gained a whistle on Emma, then lost it, then got it back, then lost it again. Robinson behind were nowhere, and our epic battle with Emma continued right to the finish, where they got a sniff of a potential double overbump. So we rowed over in the end. We learnt three things: 1) we're pretty decent at holding it together over the long haul, 2) it sucks to have the three fastest 2nd boats on the river (who are all fairly evenly matched) lined up one behind the other, and 3) there is a lot of driftwood in our division coming our way... So the plan for the rest of the week is a simple one. Go hard, and smash whatever gets in our way!

By Hayley McDermott

Day 2

As we stood in the boathouse applying our facepaint (blue-yellow-white Hayley, NOT blue-white-yellow apparently!) we knew it was likely to be a long one today. The start was better than Wednesday's and the first couple of minutes felt great but, as expected, Emma and Pembroke bumped out ahead of us before long. With Homerton bumping Robinson behind we were left in a big gap with nothing much to push us on. Instead of writing the day off, we settled into the head race mentality to see how much ground we could take out of Sidney. This kept us unusually focused all the way down the reach without going into any of those

bad patches that always crop up in training. We ran out of space to get the overbump but by the end the gap had closed from 6 1/2 to 3 lengths and we'd shown that we have the potential to do some damage later on in the week.

By Eleanor Ainscoe

W3

Day 1

For NCBC Mays 2014 WIII, the start of May Bumps marked the first Mays Bumps for the majority in the boat (8 of 9) and the first ever bumps race for three of our rowers. We couldn't have asked for a more positive start to a May Bumps season, or an NCBC Bumps career. Sandwiched between FaT II and Pembroke III, we arrived at the boathouse happy, nervous and determined. With some solid exams-weeks outings under our belts to tighten up our start, and learn to settle into a stride, we collected our oars and then clambered into our boat. With a rower who'd arrived from a flight that landed literally an hour before, and a last minute sub because of exam stress, we'd been hoping to get some practice starts in on the way down, but had to settle for rolling starts as the race officials were trying to move the divisions back into order after a post carnage re-row in M5. Once at our starting position we were pushed out before we knew it, and listening to the countdown from 40, with barely enough time to have gotten settled, let alone more nervous. Launching off the start, Asia, our fabulous cox, pulling a solid line down the river, we were gaining on Pembroke III before Alan could find his whistle, so Matt stepped in (we are told) to alert us as we gained on the crew in front. By first post, we had our very first bump, as we nearly plowed into Pembroke III. We are looking forward to a longer, harder row tomorrow, as we take on Emma III.

By Callie Vandewiele

Michaelmas Novicing 2013 - A Review

6 December 2013

As term began, Jenna and I were informed by our dear leader (normally known as Hele) that we had to be really on it with the recruiting and raising awareness of the boat club. And so we were, with posters, facebook propaganda, even a video (courtesy of our captain who had too much free time this summer). The pièce de résistance had to be our stall at the fresher's fair however, which we covered with every piece of NCBC stash owned by Hele, Jenna and myself (being NCBC, this was quite a lot of stash...), and several trophies and plaques won by NCBC over the years. We even had a blade from 1925 on there. Needless to say, we comprehensively outdid every other college club or society with a presence in that room. It was only that evening, as we took stock of the 82 names that had been signed up, that we realised that we might have been a little too effective with our recruitment...

The challenge had been set though, and aided by some natural attrition, our millions of baby boaties were soon sorted into five novice crews. Training commenced immediately, our novices joining the carnage on the Cam (though I'd like to think we didn't contribute too much to that particular aspect of things...). We were even able to throw some novice coxes into the hot seat before too long, and faster than we thought possible, we headed towards the first competition of term, Queens' Ergs. Queens' Ergs was probably the event of the term that Jenna, as our resident erg maniac, had been most excited about. It was also the first chance for the novices to prove that they were committed to their task of bringing NCBC domination to a new generation. And it is fair to say they acquitted themselves well, even if their coaches had no voices left by the end. NW1 made the final, and came home as the 4th fastest crew overall, NW2 were the second fastest 2nd boat, beating several 1st boats in the process, and NW3 set personal bests all over the place. Several senior rowers were left quite worried by some of the times that were produced.

Following all that excitement, it was back to the river to get as much water time in as possible before the upcoming races. All was going well until disaster struck, a "bit of a bump"

was had, and NW1 limped back to the boathouse with several cracks and a rather large hole in the bow of the novice boat. Things were looking a bit iffy, but then up stepped our amazing boat fairies (i.e. Alan and Sarah), who working their miracles with filler and paint late into the nights, somehow managed to produce a riverworthy boat less than five days after the crash happened.

Lessons learnt, it was back in the newly floating boat for Emma Sprints. NW2 or "Dwarf Domination", coxed by Snow White and with the Evil Queen/Witch and her poisoned apple bank partying, were up first, against the Trinity Hall Dalmatians. A strong start was made and things were looking promising, up til the point when Bow's blade popped out of its gate... An epic recovery was staged, coming from a length behind, but unfortunately it seemed that 500m was a bit too short. Keen to prove their worth, as well as their sportsmanship, in the race home against a rather wounded Hughes Hall boat, NW2 showed having to row in sixes did not dent their competitive spirit, clawing their way to a well deserved victory. NW1 (101 (8) Dalmatians + Cruella De Vil) took to the water that afternoon. Surely things would be much smoother this time round? Well... again things went extremely well against Emma, building up an early lead. But then, much to mine and Hele's utter disbelief, another blade decided it didn't want to stay in the gate, this time at 2. The loss against Emma was more than made up for by the crushing victory over Corpus though. It is easy to wonder "what could have been?", but both crews did infact do very well indeed, and they can't be faulted for continuing the noble NCBC tradition of messing up the first round in order to destroy their opposition in the losers' race off home.

Then, it was the turn of NW3 and our composite NW4/5 crew in Clare Novice Regatta. NW3, who had been ably coached by Sophie and Maire, were up against LMBC A, and once their cox (who may or may not have been me...) finally dragged herself out of bed and made it to the boathouse, were raring to go. It is very unfortunate that they were up against LMBC first, but performing so well against the eventual overall winners of the regatta (and later Fairbairns) is nothing to be ashamed of. And then there was NW4/5, the classic underdog story that came so close to happening. From a scratch crew of which the majority had not even rowed all eights less than a week before the race, Agnès produced a boat that rowed with incredible composure to a victory over none less than Pembroke's NW1. And then they kept winning, with an easy victory over Homerton. Indeed, the only thing that halted their progress was the appearance of Christ's in the semi-final, and once again the only crew to beat a Newnham boat were the eventual winners of the division of the regatta.

Following their first taste of racing, our baby boaties decided they weren't satisfied with breaking the boat, and so set about doing an excellent job of breaking themselves. We had everything from broken thumb ligaments, through strained backs and shoulders, finishing with a dislocated and fractured elbow. With impeccable timing, these all of course happened less than a week before Fairbairns... Many, many, many emails later (a boat's worth of subs was needed in the end), we had three boats ready to go for Fairbairns. Well, almost. An extremely last minute crisis resulted in Sam Flint, who was supposed to be coxing NW1 and rowing in NW3, agreeing to row twice, subbing into NW2, while I had my rather unplanned graduation as a novice cox as I wound up filling that seat for NW1. In truly horrendous conditions (by the time we reached the Reach I was convinced we were rowing not on the Cam, but on the sea!), both crews did amazingly to keep it together and row with a composure beyond their eight weeks of rowing experience. This is even more true for the row home, in which they were faced with an extremely strong headwind in addition to having to dodge the various pockets of carnage caused by other crews who couldn't cope with the weather. Final results had NW1 with the incredible result of 6th overall, and NW2 with the very strong position as 5th NW2. Sadly, by the time NW3 were lined up to race, the wind was too strong (it took three of us hanging on with our full weight just to keep the boat attached to the hard!), and the decision was made on safety grounds that they would not be racing. Shortly afterwards Jesus were finally forced to cancel the remainder of the division anyway, after a tree fell into the river... Even though NW3 did not get to race, they can be proud of the fact that it was the first time since 2004 that NCBC have had an NW3 entered and lined up ready to race Fairbairns.

On the whole, this term has been a great one. From my point of view, it really has been fantastic seeing how the novices have come on from nothing, to being ready to be unleashed on the Cam as senior rowers next term. There are a few people who deserve thanks, for without them this term would not have been as successful as it has been. Hele, for both being an incredibly supportive captain, and for not murdering us when the boat got broken. Alan and Sarah, our “boat fairies” who worked so hard to get the boat useable again. The amazing team of coaches; Jenna (NW1), Sophie and Maire (NW3), and Agnès (NW4/5), who gave up so much of their own time to make all this happen. And finally, to the novices themselves, whose constant keenness and eagerness made everything so much more enjoyable. I look forward to rowing with you next term!

By Hayley McDermott

Queens' Ergs 2013

NW1

12 November 2013

Decked out in our blue and yellow face paint, which we luckily remembered to apply AFTER putting on our white Queens' Ergs t-shirts, we fuelled up on probably a few too many jelly babies (quite the novelty for our American team members) as the clock ticked towards 5pm. On a bit of a sugar high we started to warm up, which quickly transcended into us jumping around whilst blasting The Eye of the Tiger much to the bewilderment of the other teams. After what felt like forever – about half an hour in reality – we were called in for our first round. Cheered on by our teammates and other Newnham girls from the gallery we each then proceeded to row 500m on the ergometer. Cheering on our teammates we all had one eye on the screen at the back of the room – watching our ‘boat’ race against the others. After a total of 4km, some tears and a lot of sweat we were done and had come third in our heat.

The waiting game then began as we returned to college to await the outcome of the other heats. Instructed to eat sensibly, not just biscuits and jelly babies, we all went about our evenings as normal although the slightly smudged face paint did raise some eyebrows from the other girls on my floor. After a couple of hours we knew that we were definitely through to the finals for our division and had to go through it all again. Returning to Queens full of determination – and more jelly babies – we once again warmed up and focused on the task before us. Despite our slightly hoarse voices from our earlier heat we all cheered and attempted to motivate – generally shouting “legs” – as one by one we took our turn on the ergometer. After some amazing splits, with most of the team pulling personal bests at some point that evening, we finished a respectable fourth and all felt very proud of what we had achieved as a team.

By Charlotte Slaven

Winter Head 2013

Thunder

16 November 2013

Winter Head was the first chance to race together as a crew, although sadly Sophie couldn't join us as she was in Paris – and it was also the first time to get stash for those of us who had noviced last term!

Complete with our new tops (featuring the fabulous slogan of ‘Th-under-estimated’), we rowed up to the start, and then spent some time judging the various blades, onesies and bizarre spinning techniques of the other clubs. Despite a slightly stressful start, in which our marshall told us not to worry and then suddenly panicked and starting shouting ‘Go NOW, Newnham, stop trying to crash into the bank!’ we managed to get off with some strong wind-ups to start.

The rate was a bit out of control at the beginning, but we soon settled into a more manageable rate, while watching the crew behind us disappear away (and then get overtaken by the crew behind them...). Nicole's power-tens and shouts of 'NCBC AND PROUD' got us through the tough middle section, supported by our cheerleading bank party of Alan, Abbie and Gemma. The push off the bridge got us close to the end, with a final 'power ten' to fly under the bunting, and we were done! The row home was fairly uneventful, and we were all pretty happy with how we had rowed.

The results were perhaps the most eventful part of the entire experience – when they came out, Thunder appeared to be over a minute behind the Lightning crew which was a bit of a disappointment, and according to Alan's time-stamped photography, it must have taken us 1:33 to cover about 50m over water at one point! The confusion was exacerbated by the fact that the results stated that the crew behind us (who had been considerably slower) apparently beat us by 45 seconds! Alan sent a suitably angry and confused e-mail to Cantabs, and it was eventually sorted out, with a much more reasonable time of 11:10, and many happy (and relieved) rowers.

Thunder ended up in 9th position out of the 19 Cambridge women's crews in Winter Head, and 19th out of all 42 women's crews overall in the race - a fantastic result, with lots of potential for this year!

Three of our crew had noviced last term, so this was our first experience of a racing situation, which was very exciting. On the whole, it was a great opportunity for Nicole to try out some racing lines without being stuck behind incompetent novice crews, and for us to really put the power down for an extended period of time. Despite the confusion over results, we ended up with a highly respectable time, and are hoping to work on the rating and balance in preparation for Fairbairns!

By Hilary Samuels

Lightning

16 November 2013

NCBC was split into an uncommon rivalry between two boats – Thunder and Lightning – each competing to be top boat in Winter Head results, since the pairing had matched more senior boatees with newer boatees in hopes of a delightful, somewhat wobbly, learning experience for all. As Team Lightning sat at the traffic lights at the bottom of Newnham hill, we saw Team Thunder biking back to Newnham, having done the race we were just about to do. We put the Baroness back into the water that she'd just come from, marvelling at the miracle of her lightness, which was really only the comparative consequence of training on Andy Silk for a month.

We marshalled for a good hour, maybe hour and a half, passing up Jelly babies up and down the boat, giggling at the Trinity novices and relishing the hot Kings coach in a purple jacket who told the boat next to us in a sexy, dignified way that 'pain lasts for a moment, but glory lasts for a lifetime'. We took it straight to heart and paraded our way up the river, backs straight, our awesome new team shirts on cocky display. We hit the bank when we parked in station before the race, screwed up the lineup for spinning with number 528 and when the marshalls eventually said, 'screw it, just go before them' we took off under the bridge and highlined our way down the race strip.

We went so fast that we couldn't see people, trees or bridges. In the middle we got a bit wobbly with a few crabs on the less experienced bow end of the boat but we recovered quickly, and pushed on all the way until the end, with Liz doing a fantastic job screaming 'PRESSURE ONE. PRESSURE TWO' and kindly counting all of our pressures for us.

Towards the end of the race people on the bank tried to relieve our fatigue by yelling, 'you're nearly there' but they probably should have waited until the actual finish. But we crossed that line, collapsed in our positions, and although we ended up being faster than Thunder, and finished 8th out of the 19 Cambridge Women's crews, much more importantly we carried Newnham colors proud for 2.5 kilometers and we had good, solid training for Fairbairns.

By Suvi Joensuu

Emma Sprints 2013

NW2

24 November 2013

Our first race on the river as the mighty NW2... also known as Dwarf Domination! As we plastered on the newnham colours across our cheeks in paint, we were filled with both nerves and excitement. This was our first proper race - a 500m sprint; what we had practiced at erg sessions for weeks. Team spirit was high, just as it had been at Queens' Ergs, and we were all buzzing to get in the boat.

Emma sprints is fancy dress and we had chosen to be Snow White and the eight dwarfs (hence our brilliant team name thought up by Rosa). Asia, our fab cox, was dressed in a Snow White outfit and we were Doc (Stroke Sarah), Grumpy (7 Oana), Sleepy (6 Elspeth), Happy (5 myself), Bashful (4 Katharine), Dopey (3 Tessa), Sneezy (2 Leyla) and finally Dwarfie (Bow Rosa). Beards were worn for the occasion as well as hats and our coach Hayley was the wicked witch; wearing a cape that blew in the wind dramatically as she cycled along! The fun continued with Agnes dressing up as the poisonous apple in an amazing red outfit.

Our first race was against Trinity Hall. We had a great start and despite an early crab and an oar coming loose we managed to shoot back up the river; sadly though not catching the opposition. Our second race was against Hughes hall. Their boat was broken so we agreed to row in sixes and despite not having our full power we rowed strongly. Both boats were side by side for the first 250m, but we managed to keep going and stayed strong until the end with a great final power 10, beating Hughes hall by a boat length. A great finish and row back home in high spirits singing the dwarfs song "hi ho, hi ho, it's up the cam we row". We were certain our hearty singing was enjoyed by many strolling along the river banks.

A huge thanks to Hayley our coach and to everyone who helped us have a great first race on the cam... Followed by a delicious team brunch of course!

By Lucy Pickworth

Clare Novices

NW4/5

Day 1 - 29 November 2013

Following some hectic emails in an attempt to get a full boat, the team was finally set and ready to go. Arriving at the boat house and doing some practice starts with moans of "it's too fast" and short replies of "it should be" you could tell that there was excitement in the air for the race. Face paint was roughly applied with many girls ending up with green stripes and we were ready to go. On the water the excitement of having a cox-box quickly dissipated as it broke (as usual), and then lots of relay shouts of cox orders in an attempt to get us to the start in one piece. After a minor hiccup and a rower needing to get the all clear and some quick strapping from the lovely young men from St John Ambulance we were there and the pressure was on.

Attempting to line up was a fun affair with the random shouts of "bow take a stroke" and the marshal getting visibly irritated at our already late start due to the slight first-aid issue we hear "GO" before the teams are lined up properly as the marshal has given up. Upon hearing GO that's exactly what we do, the start might not have been the cleanest but we were flying. The race was tight as both boats battled to get a rhythm and then came our stroke of luck. Following the events of Emma we'd made sure our blades were in the gates properly, they were tight and not going anywhere, Pembroke on the other hand had not, so when a blade came out the gate it wasn't ours and we took full advantage. Pulling away we could see them getting further and further away before they finally managed to sort

themselves out but we were also tiring, with multiple shouts to keep us going and a few hairy moments we crossed the line first, maintaining a healthy lead, and then had the realization that NW4/5 had beaten an NW1!

A slow row home singing Hakuna Matata, getting weird looks from the men lining up to race, but we didn't care; then a few renditions of Pineapple Crunch and we were home, taking pictures and celebrating our win.

By Leanne Young

Day 2 - 30 November 2013

After our success the previous day, we were keen to prove we could do it again, even without the help of gates breaking. Knowing what was expected of us from the day before, the excitement had reached new levels (making going to morning lectures pointless for some of us). After a bit of magic being worked on the cox-box and mild hysteria when the face paint was missing, it was time to get back on the river and focus. The row up was completed with a forced calm, some pineapple crunches thrown in to aid the concentration. A short marshal later, we were ready to line up against an intimidating Homerton team; easier said than done apparently. Quite a while later, after some interesting parking, the call came for frontstops and then we were off.

Keeping heads focused in the boat, our draws and winds gave us the advantage that we wanted. As Homerton were left further behind, we could row with less tension, in turn giving us the smooth and together strokes we wanted and fewer crabs than the previous day. We couldn't let up though, as earlier novice races had taught us just how quickly things could go wrong. Thankfully we crossed the finish with an intact boat and rowers, and, happily, first. Any celebrations had to be postponed though, as we were not done yet. Just how far could we go in this regatta? Another short marshal and we lined up against Christ's. This time our start was less effective and matched by the opponents. Unable to make an immediate break, tension set in. We slightly lost our rhythm, panicked and soon were left behind. After some shouting to get it back together, we did eventually start working as a team again. Alicia did an incredible job as our cox calling some power 10's but, despite encouraging shouting from our bank party that we were closing on Christ's, it was too little too late. Christ went on to win that division - we all agreed to say that losing to the overall winner was fairly acceptable. No matter the result, we can be proud that we had had reached the semi-finals - not bad for learning to row as an eight in only our previous outing - but most importantly we had given it our all. A huge thank you must go to the awesome subs, whose keenness allowed us to race, and especially to our coach Agnès, who did a spectacular job of getting us race-ready in such a short time.

By Hannah Cairns

NW3

30 November 2013

Inspired by NW4/5's victory over Pembroke the day before, NW3 showed up on the Saturday determined to make their own mark in their first race on the Cam. That is, once their cox had resolved her slight alarm clock mishap and finally made it to the boathouse (yeah, that may have been me, oops...) Happily, in my absence, Maire had been really on it with getting the mighty Andy Silk onto the water, so as soon as I got there, threw a lifejacket on and jumped in the boat, we were off on our merry way down the river to marshal, making it with what I would like to call perfect timing (others might say that we left it until the last possible minute to arrive in the marshalling area...) Mad rush over, we settled down to the staple of racing on the Cam, the ever-present long wait for the race to actually get started. There were some benefits to this however, as it gave Maire some much needed opportunity to learn how to actually use a camera.

Before we knew it, it was our turn to row down to the end of the Reach, throwing in a couple of practice starts on the way, to face our opposition, LMBC A. A strong start was made, and we soon settled down into a nice rhythm. However, it transpired that LMBC were just that little bit faster, and moved into the lead. NW3 refused to give up, gritted their teeth, and grimly battled to hang on. Sadly, it was not to be, but given that the rowers of NW3 performed so well against a crew that not only won Clare Novices, but later went on to win Fairbairns, I think you can all hold your heads high and be very proud of how you did.

By Hayley McDermott

Novice Fairbairns 2013

NW1

5 December 2013

Wednesday, December 4th, NW 1 met for a short outing. Just one last practice outing as NW1 before Fairbairns and the end of our existence as a set crew. The weather was perfect. Sunny, not too cool. The water was pristine. Flat, even. Empty. The most perfect rowing conditions the Cam has to offer. Basically everything that Thursday, December 5th--race day--was not. Thursday, December 5th, was so windy that several of the girls decided to walk from Newnham to the boathouse because they figured it might not be totally safe to cycle. The flatwater of the Cam stirred up about as nicely as the atmosphere in the locker room when NW2 (racing in the same division as NW1) realized they were short of a rower as a lovely morning surprise. Jenna screaming "Call ANYONE who has ever held a blade NOW!" was how we started out our race prep. Sarah Adams, our stroke, saved the day (it seemed) when she talked a friend who had rowed in college to join us---until that friend called back after puking. Messages were left, hair was pulled out, madness occurred and in the end NW1's cox, Sam Flint, threw in her sweater and donned her lycra to row for NW2, and NW2's coach, Hayley, nabbed said sweater and pinned on a boat number as NW1's new cox. Already down a rower (Leanne did GOOD on breaking basically everything in her thumb except the bone) Gabby ended up being swapped sides to Bow side (for the first time), and the footplate on seat 6--a constant culprit for needed boat repair--got re-inserted literally minutes before push off.

Marshaling 50+ boats on a river barely wider than an 8 is long, was everything anyone whose rowed the Cam could ever dream it might be. Beautiful chaos. All that was missing was an orchestra to provide a soundtrack. Angry swans, screaming coaches, cox and near collisions galore. NW1 happily pulled off our first ever rolling start as a crew (in our last row as a crew) and off we went for 2.7 kilometers of Cam, wind, rain and then sleet down the river, under the bridge and onto the reach, with our coach Jenna, and injured teammate Leanne, cycling along. Hayley took every opportunity to power 10 us up through the fabulous new cox box (somehow breaking the boat earlier in the season meant it reappeared not only fixed, but updated). With a final time of 12:01.1, NW1 came 6th in our division, and even better than that, we managed to spin and row home without getting blown into the bank. Not something either the boat ahead of us, or behind us, were able to manage. By the time the afternoon races rolled around the rain had turned to solid sleet, a tree fell over and blew into the river, and hence races were cancelled. Overall, a very good day for Newnham novices. We're officially ready to keep rowing and as seniors now :) Oh yeah, it was basically the best time ever.

By Callie Vandewiele

NW2

5 December 2013

Well, what a day Fairbairns was. Weather wise you would not be exaggerating to say that conditions were not ideal. 28mph winds swept across the Cam turning it into something more resembling the English Channel than a river (sorry about the hyperbole, it is

sometimes needed) - needless to say we were not overly enthusiastic about rowing our first ever 2.7k on the Cam in such conditions.

But that wasn't the end of our problems. NW2 were a man (well, woman) down unexpectedly and had to find a sub urgently at 11am for the race at 11.30. Tensions rose in the Boathouse as on finally finding a sub, they had the misfortune to throw up ten minutes later. But the amazing Sam Flint was to the rescue! She bravely volunteered to row as part of my bow pair, giving up the opportunity to cox for NW1. Unfortunately the replacement cox was our very own Hayley so NW2 had to row without their coach (and mummy) during the race. However Agnès was at hand to bank party for us and we were all happy to say she did an amazing job!

After the inevitable delay, both boats were finally out on the water and (after another delay) the race proceeded. As a crew, (and I'm only a little biased) NW2 did really well, the boat was sat and, though there was much splashing and we all had another shower, we finished 5th in the NW2 division and 28th overall (YES!) Agnes cheered us on and Asia did a brilliant job coxing, calling 'power 10' whenever we slacked and generally cheering us on - plus the cox box was working so we could all hear her loud and clear. The wind was generally with us during the race and we made the most of it.

The row home however was another story entirely. After marshalling for what felt like ages (though the supply of jelly babies helped) we span (also catching our first glimpse of Newnham Bridge) and proceeded to row home. However as mentioned, the wind was now not with us and you could say that we noticed that tiny detail. The Reach was definitely the worst part with crews being blown everywhere and the poor coxes struggling to keep control of their boats (though the Newnham coxes dealt with the situation very well, again showing that NCBC is the best boat club on the river). It is fair to say that we were all exhausted when we arrived back to the boathouse after the inevitable traffic jams and having to battle such gales.

Both crews were very happy with their results (NW1 coming 6th overall) so the event was a success! Sadly NW3 couldn't row as their division was cancelled due to a tree in the river (although the weather had got worse by then as it was raining too) despite Sam's enthusiasm to go and race again!

By Rosa Jenks

Senior Fairbairns 2013

Lightning

6 December 2013

After the chaos that had been novice Fairbairns the day before and the tree that was supposedly blocking the river, we were a bit nervous about how it was all going to work out. However our great crew getting together on Thursday night, watching plenty of inspirational videos got us mentally ready to face these long 4300m and fortunately by Friday morning the ouragan was over and the tree 'out of the way'.

Once at the boat house, face paint was put on and there we were, taking the mighty Lady G out and warming up on the bank, as the start was Jesus (aka Newnham) boat house. With Thunder and the Gryphens who had raced in the previous division, the pressure was on for us to do as well as they both did. But before we had time to think we were backing it down away from the boat house to get space for our rolling start and after some powerful draws and winds we were off, crossing the start line.

Pressure was down in the water and our rythm was strong, and thanks to Liz's amazing calls of every single body part she could think of, we reached the P&E before we knew it. However this was not it and we still had a long way to go... the reach felt endless but some power 10s thrown in at strategic times got us through it and then we were only 'a few corners away from the finish'. Giving it everything once Newnham bridge was in sight, we managed to (somehow?) cross the finish line alive.

With a time of 18:31 we finished fastest W2 on the river! This was an amazing way to finish this great term of training with the Lightning crew; which we made the most of celebrating at BCD.... that we had been waiting for for a long time, and I think we can say we deserved it! Bring it on next term!
By Agnès de Varine

Gryphens

6 December 2013

Gryphens make a splash at the Fairbairn's Cup races

It had been somewhat quiet in the Gryphens group on Facebook but suddenly a notification popped up. "Who's keen for a Gryphens entry for Fairbairn's?" This is how Gemma-Claire Ali, former NCBC captain and cox extraordinaire, got the ball rolling. The old girls had been summoned!

On the 6th of December 2013, three NCBC boats raced in the senior women's event of the Fairbairn's Cup, one of them filled with illustrious Gryphens. This is the first appearance of a Gryphens boat since 2009, when they demolished several old boys boats in the since abandoned Cambridge alumni regatta.

The crew line-up was as follows:

Cox: Gemma Claire-Ali (NC 2009)

Str: Sarah Faull (NC 2011)

7: Claudia Catacchio (NC 2004)

6: Chloe Squires (NC 2003)

5: Becky Scholes (NC 2002)

4: Emma Fairbrother (NC 2002)

3: Patricia Rosewell (NC 1975)

2: Katt Preston (NC 2003)

Bow: Louise Gale (NC 2009)

Being true sportswomen, we stuck to the credo that training constitutes cheating and limited ourselves to a 20-minute warm-up paddle on the morning of the race. We then set off in the first division of the day, chasing the current first boat down to the Little Bridge, a course of 4300m. Five draw strokes to race pace, casually going over at rate 30, taking no prisoners. While perhaps not the most powerful boat on the river on that particular day, it certainly felt like a very steady and well-balanced row. There may have been some deep fuchsia faces in the boat, but the results were respectable. With a total time of 18:41.5, we were about 22 seconds slower than the first boat and 10 seconds slower than the second boat. However, we actually managed to beat some current college Vllls such as Pembroke, Girton and Selwyn (to name just a few) as well as the Sidney Sussex alumnae crew.

Enthusiastic encouragement from the bank was provided by trusty head coach Alan Hendrick as well as honorary Gryphen M.J. Gifford, who somehow got roped into doing a bit of marshalling. At the finish line we were greeted with some revitalising mulled wine, cava and sweets.

Some of the Gryphens rowers could even be persuaded to attend Boat Club Dinner that night, which was great to see. Personally, I was particularly pleased to welcome back a Gryphen from the 1970s in the fearless and beastly Patricia Rosewell. She had some fantastic stories and plenty of leg power to offer. I hope her example will encourage many other Gryphens from previous decades to come out of the woodwork and give it a go. NCBC hopes to offer some more opportunities for alumnae rowing in the future. Keep your eyes peeled!

By Claudia Catacchio

Winter Head to Head 2014

W1

25 January 2014

Lents crews have been set and once again NCBC are set to dominate the river Cam. We kicked off the term with City's Head to Head, with two legs of 2km along the river. This may have been a daunting prospect for those of us who thoroughly enjoyed their Christmas Turkey but W1 were ready to start the term in style! The boathouse was buzzing when we all arrived, with W2 also racing in the same division. We managed to persuade the wonderful Hilary to come back and sub for Charlotte so we were raring to go. Our wise coaches were ready for an afternoon of cheer-leading and Nicole had a super race-plan ready. Lady G was carefully taken out and put into the over-flowing Cam. The forecast was good for the race, but we had an added incentive to row faster to avoid an incoming hailstorm. Claudia snapped a pre-race photo. We had a decent row up to marshal, with the crew already setting the balance of the boat quite nicely. In the marshalling chaos we inadvertently scraped passed Causis W1 but no matter – as long as that's the only time our boats bump this term! After some sunbathing along the bank and some confusion about what start sequence to go for, we set off to beat our first leg. And beat it we did! With Nicole coxing us the whole way, we powered through our first kilometre at a high rate. We then punished ourselves for the last half and emptied the tanks for the first time as we passed under Newnham Bridge. After a quick break and some sweets we got ourselves prepped for the next race. Once we detangled ourselves from other boats we set off to do the other 2k. This time we were determined to settle the balance and focus on the drive. We got off to a great start and gave a spirited performance the whole way down the river. Nicole's coxing was fabulous and her calls to each pair as we raced really got the boat moving. The second leg was harder and we dug deep to find the strength we need but we managed to complete it admirably. We finished the day off with a team bonding meal at the Fort – our post-race carb reward and never were we so motivated to do a power 10 with Nicole's carbs and food call! After an evening's agonising session of refreshing the City webpage, results came out and we got a total time of 16:56, having completed the first leg in 7mins25s and the second in 9:31, which put us 10th of the W1 crews. It was our first outing as W1 and we were all feeling a little bit nervous. But after such a great race we're feeling mighty, confident and ready to train hard for Lent Bumps!

By Maire McHugh

W2

25 January 2014

As a great way to start term we entered the Winter Head to Head, our first race as W2. Having had only two outings as a crew before and needing two subs we were slightly nervous but obviously also excited to get racing! After adjusting a couple of footplates we were ready to go.

It is fair to say that we're not the neatest crew on the river (yet!) but we're really strong and beasted it all the way through. So much that after the first few strokes of the first leg 5's seat came off, resulting in a massive crab and the first couple of hundred metres being rowed in sixes. Probably not an ideal start but we recovered really well and pushed as hard as we could for the rest of the head. Thanks to Liz' amazing coxing and a steady stroke we stayed in time got the feeling of rowing as a proper crew.

After reaching Newnham Bridge there was some waiting before the second head where we got to wish W1 good luck before they were off for their second part. Although tired we were in good spirits and ready for the last 2k. This time we got off to a nice start and pushed down hard together. Sometime during those last 2k a footplate also managed to get loose but we managed to keep it together nonetheless.

We finished with a total time of 18:07, 8:01 for the first leg and 10:07 for the second leg. With the first race as W2 done we are all looking very much forward to all the races to come this term. We're ready for many more crew outings and are counting at smashing everybody in the following races. Practicing as much as possible so we can beast it at bumps!

The next race we race we won't compete in since it's the Newnham Shortcourse. With Unilever sponsoring we are super excited and are sure the whole boat club will pull off an amazing event. Go NCBC!

By Julie Jorgensen

WEHoRR 2014

15 March 2014

WEHoRR is a very special race for a college crew. As we prepared for it, we knew it would be the biggest race some of us would ever get involved in, and of course, we weren't exactly planning on "winning WEHoRR", although we did joke about it, especially since we were entered in the Elite category!

The challenge was to make sure we just killed ourselves trying to be as good as we could. I believe we did quite a good job of doing that. It did feel very good to overtake two crews fairly quickly while gaining on a third one and see that the visibly fast crew three boats behind us, despite having overtaken two crews itself, did not come close to us and even slipped back towards the end. It did also feel good that the boat did not split open and that no riggers fell in the water, because although the boat had been checked fully by (almost) experts, I personally thought dismantling a boat and putting it back together ourselves was pretty scary.

The race we were all most terrified for took place in the best imaginable conditions: the sun was shining and the water on the tideway was as flat as it gets –I must admit that I was somewhat excited for waves, but I shall not complain. We had lots of supporters considering this was an off-Cam race: Mat came to London with us especially to help us out, Hayley stayed with us all along even though her tragic pinkie injury didn't allow her to row (Jenna kindly accepted to sub in) and we heard cheers from other boats and bridges. Even Anna Watkins -London 2012 gold medalist who noviced at Newnham- told Hayley she would 'look out for crew 235'!

The marshalling, which took over two hours, went down much better than I thought it would, thanks to our (almost) official sponsor Jelly Babies and approximately 10 trips to the lavatories each just before pushing off. As for the race itself, I'm not sure any of us would be able to produce anything very detailed: the rowers were too busy blacking out while our delightfully aggressive and loud cox was steering a boat (which she was officially entirely responsible for) on the tideway for the first time. I will however just say that the two highlights of these painful 21:03.86 minutes were some of Nicole's calls, when she screamed a few minutes into the race: '233 MOVE TO STROKESIDE' as we were about to overtake, which gave us this extra will-power to surpass ourselves. For the last minute of the race we were motivated by her very emotional call: 'and most importantly don't let down the seven other people killing themselves in this boat'.

I think it's fair to say none of us were disappointed. This race was truly amazing and I would do these painful 6.8 kilometres again anytime if I had the occasion.

By Emma Karlake

St Radegund Mile 2014

Lady G

22 April 2014

A week after returning to rowing from the Easter holidays, the St Radegund Mile was a good opportunity for the crew of Lady G to take advantage of a free stretch of river for a practice

piece. We had never rowed together before so we used the warm up to get a feel for the boat with a couple of practice starts as we went up to marshalling. We were the fourth boat to start so after a very short wait we were off. We started off a little rocky but picked up a good rhythm as we came onto the reach. We had aimed to do the race at a slightly lower rate as it was a scratch crew, however the boat felt really racy and the rate came up higher easily. As we came towards the finish, we held it together pretty well and did a few sets of power tens to take us to the line. After a long wait for the results, we were pleased to win both our division and fastest women of the day, bringing home pots and a trophy for Hele's stash. Even more importantly, we gained confidence in the strength of our rowers, and identified key areas for improvement. Indications suggest we will have some speedy crews come May Bumps!
By Tamsin Samuels

Baroness

22 April 2014

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. Mainly the worst, because we were overtaken by Darwin WI - a most unnatural state of affairs. Needless to say, no one expected this, it took us all by surprise. Despite a promising start, those monstrous Darwin women were just too strong and managed to sneak past us on the reach. Well, I say sneak, but it was fairly obvious that they were gaining on us. We were racing on an open river after all. However, as a scratch crew (including people who hadn't rowed since last Mays - naming no names), who had not even had one outing together (who made the Rowing Week timetable anyway?), we put up a good fight and kept them off until the very end. We had a fabulous one-woman bank party in the form of Gemma, who kept our spirits up in spite of our impending doom. Gemma said the main thing was that we had a great attitude and tried our best, but everyone knows that the main thing is actually winning. Fortunately, the Lady G boat won the highly prestigious title of fastest women's crew, and the honour of NCBC remains firmly intact. Even more importantly, St Radegund Boat Club generously provided all crew members with a free pint, so all was not lost. And if any Darwin rower is reading this, BEWARE! Revenge will be sweet!
By Alice Buckley