

FORWARD NEWSLETTER

Edition 14: Lent 2026

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Welcome to Edition 14 of Forward, Churchill College Boat Club's termly newsletter. The aim of this newsletter is to keep you up to date with race reports and Boat Club events, as well as providing some stories of rowing interest from students.



Lent 2026 in Review



Lent Boat Club Dinner

Lent has been a term of great progression. We have had amazing numbers of novices staying on and joining the senior squads, and the training consistency has been outstanding. Crews have seen a real range of racing experience from head races (like Winter Head) to regatta style (Pembroke Regatta), bumps (of course) and taking on some tideway racing for top crews! Numbers have been really strong this term, with a W4 out training regularly, and O2 being seconds off qualifying for bumps.

Of course, the highlight of Lent term is always Bumps week! I am very pleased with the results across the board but would like to give a special shout-out to W1 and W2 who both went +3 across the week. Lent bumps is always super exciting, as it is the first experience of this style of racing for many people. I am especially proud of everyone that has competed in their first set of bumps, and hope it inspires many to keep rowing next term! It was also really lovely to see all the support from the alumni throughout the week, so thanks so much to everyone that came to watch or sent in their messages of support, it is very much appreciated.

Following on from bumps, the men sent a highly competitive 8+ to Head of the River (HoRR), for the first time since 2022. They did exceptionally well, ranking 70 spots higher than their start number and coming in about halfway through the Oxbridge/Durham colleges. For nearly all of the crew it was their first experience on the tideway, and hopefully the race will continue to be regular feature of our head race season. Due to bumps, the women's side were unable to make

WeHoRR so entered Hammersmith Head instead, where they came second (by one second!) in their category.

Churchill also had a really strong representation during Boat Race week this year. Jeremy raced in the Lightweight Boat Race for the second time, where he continued his light blue winning streak, and Mia raced in the Openweight Spares Race, beating Oxford by a dominant margin. These are both especially exceptional results, given that both of them only learnt to row at college as novices a couple of years ago!

Of course, none of these successes would be possible without the committee and coaches, all of whom put in many hours to organisation, coaching and planning. I am incredibly grateful to the support of our alumni, whether it's an email message of good luck, financial support, or being out on the towpath cheering us on! We really couldn't do it without you!

Overall, I am really proud of the progress that we have made this term, and the trajectory that we are maintaining into Mays term.

Annabelle Moger-Taylor

CCBC Overall Captain 2025-26

Race Results



W1 at Hammersmith Head

WINTER HEAD 2 HEAD – W1, W2, O1, O2

O1 revelled in the speed boost offered by the strong winds this day, enjoying the change from Fairbairns 30r20s and 5k ergs to shorter distances. After a successful first race, O1 tackled the headwind expertly, leading to one of the smallest time differences between the first and second 2ks.

W1 – with similar opinions on the conditions, and a surprise sub – placed second in their category. O2 placed in the middle of their category – a solid result for the first race of term – and W2 had an impromptu sparring session with a Lady Margaret men’s boat on their road to a solid finish themselves.

NEWNHAM HEAD – W3, W4, O1

O1 – in a division starting an hour later than intended due to earlier delays – finished in around the same time as crews surrounding them in the bumps start order later in the term.

W3 finished 6th in their category, while W4 followed with a strong performance and “artistic license” in their line around grassy corner.

ROBINSON HEAD – W1



W1 in their Robinson Head kit

An excuse to find the red line – how far and how fast could we go before the legs went numb. However, after having changed the rigging to a double bucket, and showing up dressed in bald caps, squid hats, and as much GB/CUBC kit as we could without roasting alive, this was also an exercise in keeping rowing fun. For context – there were time deductions for each of these things. With a raw race time of 8 minutes on the dot, and an adjusted time of 6mins 20 (after all the shenanigans), W1 had set a course record! Although sadly the double bucket did have to be lost before bumps...

WINTER LEAGUE – O2

A formative race for O2 – helping to benchmark the term and identify areas for improvement. Unfortunately the hard work on the ergs and in the outings did not get to shine on this occasion, but O2 continued undeterred to the next races of the term.

PEMBROKE REGATTA – W1, W2, W3

W1 lost to Caius W1 in their first race by 2/3 of a length, the closest competition to Caius throughout their path to winning the regatta. W1 took this as a success and sought out brunch, safe in the knowledge that they had put up a good fight (and avoided frostbite at Pem regatta for the first time in many years).

Pembroke regatta was described to W2 as: “A final... then another final... then a *final* final”, which would explain why they gave everything for their races against Caius W2 (a win!) and St Edmund’s W1 (I’ll leave you to infer the result here...)



W2 at Pembroke Regatta

W3 had a similar experience in their races – winning their first race against Magdalene W2 by 2.5 lengths, and following it up with a challenge against Jesus W3.

HAMMERSMITH HEAD – W1

This was the first time on the tideway for many of the crew, and a strong performance indeed. W1 (boat 337) finished 2nd in their category, losing by 1 second to “Furnival A” – boat 334, containing a former CCBC rower Margot Faguet (so really CCBC did win... right?). We finished in a time of 11:58.0, made 2 overtakes (Southampton, and Vesta), and finished half a length from boat 333, which the winning boat (334) had already overtaken... sounds like success to me.

GETTING ON RACE

Despite a crew record for their 2k race, unfortunately O2 did not “get on” to bumps, but will return stronger in Mays, and next Lents.

W3 pulled a solid race time and made it “on” to bumps, although much to our dismay, W4 were not able to join them.

TALBOTT CUP – O2



O2 after Talbott cup

Having eventually accepted (after many packets of mini eggs) that we were the fastest crew to have not made it onto bumps, we were determined to redeem ourselves in the Talbott Cup. We were informed the night before that Wolfson M2 were so intimidated by our impressive Getting-On Race time that they had decided to drop out of the competition, sending us straight into the final, which put us into good spirits as we headed down to the boathouse for what would be our final outing as a monkey crew. We soon discovered we would be racing King’s, whose GOR time was 2 seconds slower than our own. With little time to

even tap to straighten up, we were set off down the reach, rowing ferociously and keeping level with King’s for the first half of the race before they managed to creep ahead to take the title. Despite narrowly missing out on tankards, we rowed home heads held high, looking back on a term of massive improvement and ready to take on training camp and (hopefully!) Mays.

HEAD OF THE RIVER RACE – O1

O1 outdid themselves at HoRR earlier this term, finishing in a time of 20:09.6. Conditions were somewhat choppy on the tideway, but this wasn’t enough to deter O1. They beat Selwyn, St Catherine’s, Fitzwilliam, Homerton, Corpus, and Wolfson O1s in the process, setting themselves up for a very successful Mays campaign next term.

Bumps



W2 bumping Christ's W2

W1

Day 1 (Wednesday) – Result: Row over

Day 1 was a very strong row-over from W1, setting a positive tone for the rest of the week. With Catz and Clare bumping out ahead on first post corner, we put distance between us and Homerton behind, advancing four boat lengths into First and Third W1 (our overbump) by the bottom finish.

Day 2 (Thursday) – Result: +1

Day 2 saw our first bump, catching Clare W1 by first post corner - short and sweet.

Day 3 (Friday) – Result: +1

On day 3 we made it a bit further down the course, bumping First and Third W1 on grassy corner.

Day 4 (Saturday) – Result: +1

On the final day, we bumped Emmanuel W1 on the reach. It was a much longer and tougher effort, but it felt rewarding to have really worked for the final bump and achieved an overall score of +3, bringing us up to 9th on the river in Lents

~Olivia Maczka (Women's Captain)

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Day 1 (Tuesday) – Result: Row over

Strong start, okay settle with more efficiency to be found, a hard driven but comfortably spaced row over.

Day 2 (Thursday) – Result: -1

Good start, but Wolfson still moving on us, a whistle on Maggie ahead of us. All hell breaks loose around grassy. Jerry's seat loses a wheel, Wolfson have overlap but crash into the bank, we concede, Girton pull over for no reason, Caius continue rowing through despite having bumped Girton. An unfortunate set of circumstances, and we move into Baron for Friday and Saturday.

Day 3 (Friday) – Result: -1

Settled into the new boat, another really good start sees us hold Caius at station until first post, where they begin to close. We get hunted by a stronger rhythm on Ditton corner.

Day 4 (Saturday) – Result: -1

Higher hopes for holding off Corpus but they were the faster crew, with strong contact on grassy that was a third bump. Lovely to see the crowds coming out for the Saturday though, and we will bring lessons into next term.

~Jonny Townsend (Men's Captain)



O1 after day 2 of Lents

W2

Day 1 (Tuesday) - Result: Row Over

We gained on Emma III after a slightly scrappy start, but unfortunately, they quickly bumped FaT II, leaving us with ample clear river ahead. We settled in for a row-over, and the river felt free and smooth. As we entered the reach, I saw Seb's eyes grow increasingly intense as we wore away on Christs...passing under the railway bridge, he called for us to Kill and some whistles started emerging. We were on two whistles as we crossed the finish line, incredibly proud of the almost double overbump that will fuel our next three days of racing.

Day 2 (Wednesday) - Result: +1

Today we rowed like a force of nature, winding it up to 41 off the start and never dipping under that as we ploughed into FaT II under the motorway bridge. 20 strokes carried us to quick victory with our first bump of the year! We remain hungry for more.

Day 3 (Friday) - Result: +1

Today we were raring to go (or at least stroke was), as we wound it up to 42 off the start, and settled to a cool 39. Seb called for a second rhythm, and we managed to bring it down to a whopping 37. Nevertheless, we had another strong showing, bumping Clare after about 500 meters of strong, if not slightly frenzied rowing.

Day 4 (Saturday) - Result: +1

At the start line, we had been told that Christ's was planning to concede early when we inevitably approached them with our formidable speed. So, in true bumps fashion, they ended up not conceding until part of their stern was permanently lodged into our bow light mount. Another day, one more bump, for an ultimately glorious and well-deserved +3 for this fabulous crew. Yeah Churchill!

~Jasmine Kiley (Women's Vice Captain)



W2 with greenery on first post corner

W3

Day 1 (Tuesday) – Result: -1

We got off to a very quick start, knowing that no matter what, this was going to be a short race for us. The challenge: ahead of us, we were chasing Selwyn W2, who we'd beaten by 30+ seconds in previous races, but behind us, we were being pursued by Jesus W3, the fastest boat in the division. We knew it would be a coin flip on which catch would happen first, so we rowed strong and stayed together, keeping our splits low although the adrenaline meant that it wasn't our cleanest rowing ever. We gained a whistle on Selwyn, getting about 3/4 of a length away before Jesus bumped us on plough reach. If we had a bit more time, we would've gotten the bump for sure! Now with no pressure coming from behind us over these next few days, we're ready to really show the river what we've got.

Day 2 (Wednesday) – Result: Row Over

With day 1 nerves out of the way, we were cool, calm, and collected for this race. Jesus W3 bumped out ahead of us very early on (and I'll say, they bumped Selwyn W2 much earlier than they had bumped us yesterday), so we knew it was time to lock in on the overbump on Catz. Behind, Homerton were in hot pursuit of us for the entire 2k, gaining one whistle, and then a preemptive second whistle that seemed like more wishful thinking from their coach than reality. We dug deep on the reach and crossed the finish line having gained about 3.5 lengths on Catz – not quite enough for the overbump, but enough to feel extremely proud of our hard work!



W3 mid-race

Day 3 (Thursday) – Result: Row Over

Day 3 of bumps brought sunny skies and positive attitudes to the crew, although our bodies were feeling a little worse for wear from our long row over yesterday. With the knowledge that we could comfortably hold off Homerton behind us, we set our sights on Selwyn W2 ahead, getting off to a quick start and settling into a solid rhythm. In an exciting turn of events, Homerton bumped out behind us, leaving us with no pressure and the full course to go for the bump. We were stuck between one and two whistles on Selwyn for most of the race, gaining a little and then losing a little around the corners. We held strong the whole way and put up a competitive fight, but against Selwyn's fresh legs from getting bumped so quickly yesterday, really what we needed was for them to mess up – and instead both of our crews just raced really solid races. Still: always reassuring to hear that we can get up to 2 whistles! That means we're doing something right!

Day 4 (Saturday) – Result: Row Over

After a well-deserved rest day, W3 approached the last day of week hungry for a bump. We set off strong but conservatively, knowing that if our predictions were correct, we might be gunning for the overbump on this race. Instead, it turned out our predictions were not correct, and with a quick bump at the top of the division, we were in the middle of a fiercely competitive stretch of boats. Coming around Grassy Corner, Peterhouse were gaining on us much faster than we anticipated, but behind them Homerton were closing in for the kill, ultimately getting the bump just as Peterhouse were inching from two whistles to three whistles on us. Once again breathing a sigh of relief at having clear, open water behind us, we all put in a big push and locked back into the rhythm, once again gaining $\frac{3}{4}$ of a length on Selwyn but not quite closing the gap. We ended the week feeling super proud of our rowing, and really proud to be ending on our fastest 2k of term!

~Kyra Roepke

	W1	O1	W2	W3
Day 1	REST	➡	➡	⬇
Day 2	➡	REST	⬆	➡
Day 3	⬆	⬇	REST	➡
Day 4	⬆	⬇	⬆	REST
Day 5	⬆	⬇	⬆	➡
Overall	+3	-3	+3	-1

Prizes & the Boat Race

THE COXING PRIZE



For receiving a commendation from CUCBC for an excellent line around first post corner to avoid bumped out crews, this term's coxing award went to Sebastian Peel.

Seb before a bumps race

THE BOAT RACE – JEREMY WILKINSON (LIGHTWEIGHT MEN'S RACE)

As of writing this report it has been just over two weeks since the Boat Race, and it already feels like a lifetime ago. Post-Boat Race celebrations are always special, and the short break in the season this time of year provide a great opportunity to reflect on the experience.

For the longest time I didn't think I was going to trial for CUBC again this year, but crossing the finish line in April last year was the first time it became clear that I really wanted to try find a way. Slowly the pieces began falling into place as I got lucky with some extra funding for my PhD, and the generous support from the CCBC triallists fund. Showing up on day one in September, I retained a naive hope that things might be somewhat easier this year. However, the novelty of being a 'returner' quickly wore off, as the erg sheet made it clear that the new intake of Lightweight was very strong.

The focus of pre-season and Michaelmas term is for the coach to invest in up-and-coming talent that usually has a lot of power, but not necessarily the skill to move a boat just yet. This quickly transitions into the first two 5k erg tests of the season and putting together crews for the Fours Head Race in November. This was an interesting part of the season for me and the other two returning members of last year's Lightweight blue boat as we found ourselves in the second four. Nevertheless, it was a fantastic start to the year as the top boat placed first, and I placed 7th in the academic category, beating out the second Open-weight Oxford 4+, including a member of the final Oxford Open-weight Blue Boat!

After Fours Head, there's a rapid turnaround into matched 8s to prepare for trial-8s and the final selection for training camp. This was another frustrating time as it felt I was making progress, but not at the rate the coach was hoping to see from me. While I was very happy to win trial 8s, and finally be selected for camp this year, it was very much clear that I had been selected as the 'last man' out of the top 10, and once again it was going to be a big fight to make the boat by April.

Training camp was an incredible experience. It is potentially the height of what I might refer to as the 'who gets to do this' experiences afforded to you by CUBC. Camp consists of 10 days in Avis, a beautiful corner of Portugal, training without distraction at a near national-team level intensity. All meals were catered by chefs using the amazing local produce to provide optimal nutrition for training. The training itself consists of a Lightweight 8 and a spare-pair heading out to for a row on the lake twice per day, with hard pieces every other day or so. At this stage I still found myself ranked in the spare-pair, and it was tough staying positive whilst very clearly being ranked below the others. Nevertheless, Avis is truly a dream setup for a rowing camp, and I feel so fortunate to have been part of it this year.



The lightweight men's boat race

After a two day break it was back to training in the miserable weather in Ely. This time marks the beginning of the seat-racing for final selection, and I was excited to get the opportunity to prove a point to the coach like I did last year. Around this time, I also decided it was time to 'choose to be in the boat' again. 'Just choose to be in the boat' is a piece of advice handed down to me by an alum last year and is simply code for putting down maximum effort in every training session and topping the telemetry. Recovery potential be damned. Things got interesting when the first round of seat racing resulted in all four bow-siders drawing: a coach's nightmare. Two weeks later another round of seat racing, this time I narrowly won, and to my relief the following week was the final round as I ended up conclusively beating my opposite man securing my spot in the two-seat for the big race.

Race-week was very nerve-wracking as the weather forecast predicted severe wind for race day. So much so that in the final few days our coach fitted pumps and sideboards to our boat to mitigate the possibility of being swamped to the point of sinking. The race itself got off to a relatively calm start, and it became clear immediately who was the faster crew as we pulled out to a half-length lead within 25 seconds. This gave us real confidence to relax, and we proceeded

to pull ahead to around a 6-length lead by the halfway point around the Eyot. At this point we discovered just how important the sideboards and pumps were, as the wind came up against the stream and waves began smacking the side of the boat. Fortunately, we could benefit from our significant lead and focus on preventing any disastrous crabs, without the pressure of a boat beside us.

In the end we crossed the line with a 7-length lead, tying a bow on a fantastic season and two years spent trialling for CUBC, though I hope there's still an opportunity to make the most of the fitness from winter training at Henley Royal Regatta and the May Bumps. I can't say thank you enough to all the people who've supported me, emotionally, financially, and in my day-to-day; it's meant the world to me.

~ Jeremy

Here is a link to watch the race: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLfiuiRmzLc&t=11s>

Thanks

As usual, a huge thank you to all our coaches who give up their time to coach us. Furthermore, our eternal gratitude goes to Piotr and Carl for keeping our boats in working order and supporting us off the water.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

- 99s Regatta – 24th May
 - o W1, W2, W3
- Getting On Race – 12th June
 - o O3, W3, W4
- Bumps! – 17th-20th June
 - o as many crews as we can manage!
- Boat Club Dinner – 20th June.
 - o Alumni are very welcome to attend! For more information or to express interest in attending, please email Annabelle (our Overall Captain): churchill.captain@cucbc.org

As a few people emailed to express interest in hearing about our upcoming races, above is the current plan for races in Easter term. As ever, we are eternally grateful for all your support – be that cheering us on from the bank or emails wishing us good luck.

Contact us



Sunset over the Thames (taken outside Furnival Sculling Club)

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- Link to join the CCBC Alumni mailing list: https://lists.cam.ac.uk/sympa/subscribe/chu-boatclub-alumni?previous_action=info

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