

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY
BOAT CLUB
ALUMNI NEWSLETTER
MICHAELMAS TERM 2017



Well what a brilliant first term it's been! We have once again cemented our position as the biggest club on campus, already come away from Head Races winning medals and improved our fleet of boats. Of course looking forward from winning Dee Head and beating York in the majority of boat classes at White Rose Head (only 11 University weeks till Roses!) we are tremendously excited thinking about what's to come next term when we visit Tideway, BUCS events and many more.

As always, a massive thanks must go out to all members of Castrum! Your regular donations make a world of a difference to the club and have enabled us to purchase a Hudson direct from the Used Boat Centre in Reading this year, as well as a new launch engine. We are all incredibly grateful and I'm humbled that you would all choose to spend your money on continuing to further LUBC, I know the club is on for great things this year and for many to come, we couldn't do it without you.



Alex Brogan
Club Captain,
2017-2018

Dates for your diary!

Alumni Regatta and Summer Ball - Saturday 16th June 2018
ROSES (at home) - Saturday 28th April 2018
France Trip - dates either: 7th-14th or 21st-28th July 2018



ALUMNI

Charles Thirkill

Rowing was the best part of my time at Lancaster (1967-1972). I spent more time on the river than in the chemistry lab where I was supposed to be, but it was all good. As a novice, I was lucky to be in the 1968 Roses Boat Race crew with Brian Denmark, Dave Speight, Stash Berkietta, Bernard Thain, Rob Rose, Mike Crawford and Nic Franklin-Woolley, coxed by Brian Wilcox. We won that year and I still have the pot to show for it! Lancaster was a brand-new redbrick university in that era, and the club was writing its own history. Like many rowers, I was not a great soccer player, and worse at rugby, so rowing offered a sport where winning results were the reward of effort and training, not gamesmanship. As a novice, I was in the crew that won the York Regatta coxed four event, against a tough Lancaster Grammar School crew.

As club captain, I was proud to train a completely novice crew to the 1969 Roses Boat Race, even though this strategy excluded many of the veteran rowers, including myself, from winning a tankard. The novices trained hard that year and beat York by over two lengths. It was profoundly rewarding to see them win so convincingly. The crew later won the novice eight event at Durham and were so polished that one boatman asked me as captain, "Are you sure this is a novice crew?" It was a tribute to their hard work. The leadership of Stroke Roger Wilson, Bob Thacker and Cox Seb Moore made all the difference.

This is all long ago, but the training and winning continues for LUBC. I can follow your successes on Facebook, even here on Vancouver Island. I kept rowing, intermittently after graduating; at the City of Oxford RC, in Calgary, Alberta and in Nanaimo, British Columbia. The land training became a regular habitat over five decades (ouch!) and I was in my local gym over 200 times in the last year. Fitness training helped me deal with heart surgery two years ago, so I strongly recommend it. It might save your life one day.

I love everything about rowing and still tap my skiff along the lake when I can. There is nothing sweeter than gliding across a mirror-smooth lake when the sun is on the horizon. A working GPS unit tells you exactly how fast you are going and how to get home in the dark, which is nice.

Competitively, I am restricted to erg races, against the Concept II clock. Clearing 500 metres in less than two minutes is an accomplishment, and to cover 5,000 metres takes me about 22 minutes. Don't laugh, at 68 that is pretty good going. To everyone else, it is like those elderly pros who trot round the campus on Wednesday afternoons; only they know they are jogging. Writing this article is making me realise I should enter the Monster Erg Race in Victoria BC in February 2018.

Training resumes tomorrow...





Chloe Willimont

I joined Lancaster as an avid rower in 2013, and my love of rowing was intensified throughout my time at LUBC. After graduating in Maths I moved to the University of Nottingham last September to do a Masters in Mathematical Medicine and Biology, specialising particularly into modelling tumour growth. One of my first actions in Nottingham was to join the boat club, shockingly! I decided however, to really concentrate on my masters this year so my intention was to just cox recreationally, but it turned out I couldn't stay away! After coxing for a while I started to cox for the women's squad and when offered a boat for Wallingford Head in December I couldn't refuse. Since then, I decided to fully commit – yet again. I went through BUCS Head and BUCS Regatta and then competed for, and won, the opportunity to cox our eight at Henley Women's. Qualifying at HWR was a fantastic experience and the peak of

my rowing career so far. It was a step-up from anything I'd done before and so exciting to compete alongside such esteemed athletes. I'm now back at home and contemplating my career prospects while coxing for Hereford Rowing Club. I'm training now with both the men and women's squads, we're hoping to compete at Henley Royal this summer – hopefully see you there!



COACHES RUN DOWN

Good Day to you all.

Firstly, as I'm sure others have already, I need to thank you for the continued and valuable support you give to LUBC. I don't know if you take much notice of the thanks, or if indeed you fully appreciate the affect you have on the boat club but let me tell you, as an "outsider" it is immense and without it, the boat club would slowly fade away to just a fond memory.

It's been an interesting first term for me. I had no expectations and no pre-conceived about what I was walking into, I came with a completely open mind and spent the first half of it just watching and learning. The first thing I noticed was what a great group of young people the athletes are. They welcomed me warmly and helped me settle down very quickly. It was really unfortunate that so much time was lost in the early weeks because of the high river levels. We had to cancel about 8 water sessions so, in essence, most of October was lost. With a little 'encouragement' we managed to turn these lost water sessions into land sessions and spent a little more time in the gym and on the erg's. They were like sponges, desperate for guidance and direction and I am more than happy to provide that.

Once we eventually managed to get back on the water and with fully integrated squads we started to build a picture of the overall quality of the athletes and examine their potential. We needed to work on basic fitness and build strength but that was to be expected. The training program we had written for the term would at least give those that wanted to an opportunity to improve. Now this is where I come to my only real irritation for the whole term. Even though the training program has been written to accommodate their non-rowing requirements, the attendance of some athletes at some of the land sessions has been poor, in particular the senior men seem to think that it is acceptable to miss the Monday morning circuits and despite my continued cajoling this isn't improving. We have a resolution to the problem which will be revealed to the athletes at the beginning of the winter training camp. (It Starts Jan 8th if any of you want to come along and help - we would love for the company).

The boat club was represented at Agecroft Head, Dee Head, The Fours Head, Rutherford Head and The White Rose Head as well as

BUCS Regional Indoor Championships. Although I didn't attend every one of those events, I have attended those that I felt were the most important. There are two very pleasing points, the first is that the athletes know how to behave when away from home. An odd thing to say you might think but believe me, student rowers generally have a poor reputation in the wider rowing world but LUBC does not fall into the stereotype; they are helpful and considerate and represent Lancaster University with great pride. The second point is that regardless of the race results (or the weather), they clearly enjoy their sport and have a lot of fun participating in it. As a coach, that is at the top of the list of goals, although if pushed I would have to say winning gold is slightly higher!!!

My overall assessment of LUBC after this very short period of time is that on the rowing front, in terms of the North-West University rowing clubs, we are just below mid-table; nationwide we are at best third division. There is a lot of work to be done not just on the abilities of this year's athletes and I'm looking forward and very excited by that challenge but we also need to work on the longevity and therefore legacy of the boat club. We need to retain more of the new intake beyond the first year and even the first term.

We need to start to become attractive as a rowing university to those who are already within the rowing community who are looking for a suitable university place that will not only fulfil their academic needs but also their rowing needs. Which means we need better facilities and better more diverse equipment which will improve our capabilities. Which means we need more funding!

LUBC is a happy place to be and the athletes are good people. I would like to think that the relationships that they are forging, the memories they are creating and their love of rowing is life time. I am genuinely excited by and get an enormous amount of pleasure from being part of LUBC. It has revitalised me as a racer, as a rower and as a coach. With a sympathetic ear from the university (something we hope to work on) it has a fantastic future.

Have a great Christmas and New Year. I would like to met as many of you as I can so if you are in the area come down and see us – I'm the one with grey hair!!!

Best wishes,
TIM





SQUAD REPORTS

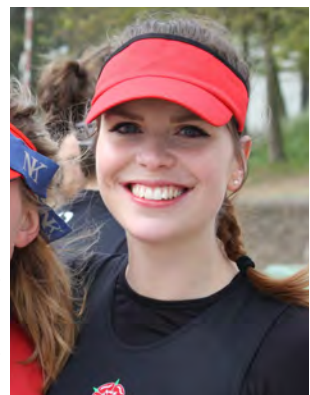


Senior Women's Squad

The senior women have achieved some great results this season despite several setbacks that we have encountered along the way. Placing 1st in the WIM3.8+ category at Dee Head (our first race of the term), this gave the squad the confidence that was needed to keep pushing through the long hours of training. BUCS indoors was a successful event, accomplishing 3rd, 4th and 5th place for the lightweights and a number of top 10 results for the openweights. Unfortunately, regular injuries have been occurring and prevented the VIII for attending Rutherford Head, however, the Lwt IV gave a strong performance placing 5th out of 10 in an extremely competitive field. Both crews attended White Rose Head placing 4th and 5th in their categories, ending the season on a high!

The Christmas holidays will give the women a well deserved break which should re-energise them to come back with a fighting attitude to perform even better in the upcoming term!

Annabel Johnson
Senior Women's
Captain
2017-2018



Senior Men's Squad

The squad has come a long way over the past 10 weeks. Beginning with a successful training camp, the squad has integrated and connected to become an efficient single unit. Training from our new coach has proven to be vital with more improvements and success being seen in recent erg tests and good results at races against some other very competitive universities. I would like to say a massive thank you again to the alumni that supported us in attending fours head earlier on in the term, to come 10th out of 25 in an extremely competitive category was an incredible achievement and we wouldn't have been able to do it without your support!

Hamish Rae
Senior Men's
Captain
2017-2018

With a tough Christmas training plan ahead, I am looking forward to next term when all of this training will pay off!



This year saw the recruitment of 4 novice women's crews named after some of our recently graduated alumni – Carman, Rees, Maxfield and Farrow. Supervised by their boat captains the new novices learnt the rowing stroke on an erg before going out on the water. Unfortunately outings at the start of this term were hindered by the typical Lancaster weather and high river levels which meant we were making use of the gym more than we would have liked. With up to 16 novice boats going out a week, the William Harpur, Sims and Wintech were certainly getting their use.

We really made an impression at BUCS Indoors on the 4th November with the Novice Women taking 10 of the top 30 positions, only having got on an erg for the first time a couple of weeks earlier. White Rose Head on the 2nd December was the first water race for the novices this year. We were lucky enough to be able to put out two Novice Women's crews with final placings of 11th and 14th. It is safe to say it was a race to remember for the girls with some impressive crabs although not quite the famous ejector crab of last year!

Novice Women's Squad



Amelia Robinson
Novice Women's Captain
2017-2018



Novice Men's Squad

The first term for the Novice Men has been incredibly positive. After a large intake in fresher's week crews have been set and are really starting to look like an incredibly competitive squad as we quickly approach some of our biggest races in the calendar.

The two competitive events we've been to so far at this early stage in the year have shown great results already. At the Northwest BUCS Indoors in week 5 we had some really competitive times, with our fastest being 0.2 seconds from a medal position. After this at White Rose Head in week 8 the guys showed what they'd learnt with our top crew coming 6th, over 2 minutes quicker than York.

This shows that come Roses and beyond, the Novice Men are a squad to watch. They've been a pleasure to be captain of this first term and I expect nothing but the best for them for the rest of the year.

Tim Mobbs
Novice Men's Captain
2017-2018





CASTRUM

You can still sign up to be a member of our Alumni Boat Club CASTRUM. By becoming a member you will have full access to LUBC equipment and facilities while also receiving a free ticket to the annual summer ball. If you would like to receive a free ticket for the summer ball in this academic year you must have set up your membership by the 1st January 2018.

For more information on how to sign up for membership or if you have any general queries please email us: alumni.lubc@gmail.com

Winter Ball

On Monday 4th December we held our annual winter ball at Ashton Hall. As always it was a night to remember and it was wonderful to see everyone dressed up away from the boathouse and out of their Lycra!

Thank you to our coaching team, Tim and Ken for their continued commitment to the development of the club, it was lovely to have you with us at the formal dinner.

We are now looking forward to the summer ball in June, where we hope all of you will join us to celebrate this years successes!



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Membership:
£8 per Month

Contact us on:
lubc.alumni@gmail.com
if you would like to know more



Free ticket to the annual Alumni Regatta and Ball

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Alumni relations officer 2017: Shani Mellor