



# Bath University Boat Club

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*The Incomplete Archives*

*“The Truth, The Whole Truth and Nothing like the Truth”*

Established in 1966 as the University of Bath received its Royal Charter, Bath University Boat Club (BUBC) provided the provision for students to both learn and develop the sport of rowing. Starting off rowing out of the Bath Boating Station in borrowed boats to the current base at Newbridge with Minerva Rowing Club, BUBC has grown from strength to strength producing Club and Olympic Champions.

# Acknowledgements

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## Early Years

### 1966 – Roger Ellmore

As far as I can remember, the club was formed in 1966 when I was a 1st year undergraduate. The vast majority of Bath students were then based in Bristol and the rowing club (which consisted of a handful of members) used the Bristol Uni. Boat Club facilities at Salford. I moved to Bath with the School of Chemistry at the beginning of 1968 and was able to re-establish the club at the Bath Boating Station site, between the city and Bathampton, which I believe is still there, but operating under a different name. In 1968 it was a family business (run by the Hardwicks, if I recall correctly), based on building, maintaining and hiring out rowing skiffs. It also had a couple of old clinker 'restricted' boats and a tub IV, which were ideal for the raw novices which made up most of the members - only three members including me had previous rowing experience with schools and/or clubs. The Hardwicks had been involved with rowing on the Avon for generations and were keen to see it re-established in the city. Consequently, we only paid a nominal sum for the use of the equipment. They had also built racing boats for clubs in the area and built our first boat during 1968/69 for the princely sum of around £400, which I had to squeeze out of the Athletics Union treasurer. The boat was a shell restricted IV and enabled the club to compete at local events for the first time.

When I graduated in 1970, there was a fairly healthy membership, which apparently declined rapidly - the sandwich placement process that took students away from Bath for periods was always a problem.

I took a lot of pleasure from rowing at Bath and am pleased to see that the club is flourishing. At the end of my active rowing career, I became an ARA umpire and regularly encounter Bath crews at the regattas I attend. Hopefully, crews in the future will have the opportunity to learn of the humble beginnings of their sport through your history.

### Steve Travis adds:

When I joined the club in 1990 the “Dan Hardwick” restricted four was still going strong as a novices boat, and was eventually pensioned off to be used as pub decoration in 1995. See also 1987-8.

### 1972 – Andy Nokes

So, looking back on my years at Bath, I arrived in 1972 from Hampton (Grammar) School, having devoted an enormous amount of time to rowing in the successful school crews. I didn't think of enquiring about the BUBC prior to accepting the offer of a place on the Physics and Education degree course. I was a little disheartened when I went down to the BUBC rowing club, located at the Bath Boating Station. Though a beautiful location on the Avon, it is a sinuous stretch of the river between the centre of Bath and the weir at Bathampton, barely wide enough to row a IV.. The club had an old clinker IV and a more recent restricted wooden coxed IV, built by the owner of the Bath Boating Station. Anyway, I joined 4 final year students (see 1st photo of us posing for the photo) to form a coxed IV and took the boat down to the Exeter Head of the River race - horrid conditions, but the after race dance was great fun.



1 Left to Right: Cox, Nick ?, Trevor Rushton (stroke), Andy Nokes (Bow), John Davies (3), Dave Jennings (2). (1973, probably February)

The final year students stopped rowing to study for their finals, so I continued on my own with some recreational rows with a group of other 1st year students.



2 - left to right: Andy Nokes, Louis ?, Brenden ?, Steve Burford. (July 1973).

I went off to my industrial placement (thin Sandwich Course) and raced with Staines Boat Club, on the Thames, including a trip to Joinville-le-pont, near Paris. On my return to Bath, there was very little left of the club. I managed to persuade the Students Union to purchase an Eton sculling boat, so that it was possible to row individually. We also received support from a rowing member of staff (sorry, I forget his name). Then, a few other rowers started at

Bath and we were able to create a IV, but the little stretch of windy river down at the Bath Boating Station wasn't suitable for preparing for any regatta races, so we arranged to move-in with Saltford Boat Club. Not only did we have a better stretch of river to practice on, but we were able to row in the Saltford B.C. crews.



3 Phil? at Stroke, 3 - Andy Nokes

We joined the Saltford rowers in their winter training, which included the "barf" (Canadian slang) piggyback races up the steep little road near the top of Widcombe Hill, something which beats our current club training sessions with hundreds of lunges, sit-ups and push-ups!. We quickly understood not to eat beforehand! One notable point about Phil was his passion for Van Morrison, which played on almost every trip to the boat house (Hard Nose to the Highway). He was the only one with a car - Austin 1100. I too was converted and have passed-on the love of Van Morrison to my daughter. Phil, myself, Pete Lawson and Dave Smith (Bow) joined to form a IV for the University Championships at Holme Pierrepont (see photo - crew in foreground).



4 Phil, myself, Pete Lawson and Dave Smith (Bow) a IV at the University Championships at Holme Pierrepont (crew in foreground) (1975/75)

We entered the coxed clinker pair race at Stratford-upon-Avon. Jim Ring wore jacket and bow tie to cox us. We also took part in a few Head races and Monmouth and Hereford regattas in the univ. 4+ and the Saltford 8+, with some close seconds. Incidentally, I used to develop the black and white photos of our races, the only part of the Education course that I have applied. Andy Nokes

### 1973 - Prof Alistair Spence

I joined the University in Sept 1973. The captain then was Andy Noakes (3rd year Mech Eng, I think). The boats were stored with Avon County RC at Salford. In fact we had a very good relationship with Avon County, and raced in joint eights at some regattas. I coached, rowed and was President for a couple of years. Peter Lawson (Electrical Engineering, started in 73 or 74, was also very keen). We had a good coxed four then and I think they were well placed in BUSA held at Nottingham, maybe 3rd.

## 1980's

### 1987/88 - Dave Parkinson

The new academic year dawned with a distinct lack of promise for BUBC. The club's only boat, a veritable museum piece of a restricted four, "Dan Hardwick", was racked at Bradford and Avon's boat house, a good 45 minutes from Bath by car. Our hosts kindly granted us free use of their fleet of tub pairs, and occasionally, if the wind was blowing in the right direction, a BUBC crew would take to the water.

As Tony Blair was to say nearly a decade later, "Things can only get better!" Indeed they did. Rowing was enjoying a brief spell of popularity, following the success of Steve Redgrave et al in the LA Olympics. Channel 4, demonstrating its commitment to even the most bizarre of minority interests, had even screened a rowing event called "The Powersprints".

This unprecedented level of interest in the sport generated so many members at one of Bath's clubs - Minerva - that evil circuit training sessions were organised and proper boats were purchased. BUBC's captain, the infamous and distinctly rodent-like Mark Barnett, arranged for BUBC members to attend said sessions to prepare themselves for serious rowing, should Bradford and Avon allow us to graduate to their clinkers.

Without wishing to appear sexist, it is fair to say that the presence of the lycra-clad ladies of Minerva was not insignificant in attracting a regular contingent of BUBC's men to the circuit sessions. Images of Janet Zimber circuit training were the subject of the fantasies of many a BUBC novice – or so it is alleged. I couldn't possibly comment!

Also an inspiration, although not so good in lycra, was Dr Arnold Cooke. The Good Doctor had rowed for Britain in the Olympics in the 60s, and had recently come out of retirement to try and win some prizes in the Powersprints. Despite being twice the age of the UniBoys, he was at least four times as fit and eight times more powerful. We trained as hard as we possibly could. Arnold eventually started giving us approving glances as we pounded ourselves towards oblivion. We felt it was time to turn up the voltage.

We approached Mike Mannerson, Minerva's coach to see if he would whip us into shape on water. He immediately agreed and BUBC's first ever training camp took place in the final week of the Easter holidays 1988. (This is possibly somewhat surprising as some weeks before, a BUBC contingent had attended Minerva's annual dinner. Precise details escape me, but at least the attentions of the Bath Constabulary were not aroused and the hotel did not need redecorating!)

On the water, things progressed slowly. There was plenty of power, but not much finesse as none of the enthusiastic newcomers had done any serious rowing before. Actually, there was no finesse at all, a situation that was to characterise BUBC crews for some years to come. Mr Mannerson persisted, and eventually, a functioning men's novice four was formed. This was greatly helped by the arrival of James Pearce, who had rowed at Shrewsbury School. He had the unenviable task of trying to maintain order in the stroke seat in the days when "Time on the slide is time wasted" was an undisputed fact! It was decided that the Monmouth / Hereford weekend should be graced with a BUBC representation.

Off the water, things also progressed well. Recruitment took place in crowded pubs on a Friday night at chucking out time. We were on the search for people who were tall and who could take their beer. The recruitment line went something like “Try rowing. It hurts, but it’s good fun and there are some fit women at the boat club”. One gentleman who found this line irresistible was Fraser Brown. Mr Brown was built like a barn door even in those days and he made for quite a sight in his flared rowing shorts with his Mick Hucknall like hair flowing behind him.

Two men’s fours were put together. The first crew including BUBC legends Barnett, Hardy and Cudmore raced and won the novice fours at Monmouth. Celebrations were lavish, and I think Hereford town centre has only just recovered.

The second four, with Mr Brown in the bow seat, did not trouble the latter stages of the novice restricted fours at Hereford. In those days, little was known about the damaging effect of a gallon of Scrumpy Jack cider on rowing performance, so the second four found out the hard way that it is best to celebrate victories after, rather than before the regatta in question.

A women’s crew had also formed, racing at Hereford (unsuccessfully) and memorably at Coate Water Park. This crew was so large and powerful that it rowed under the name of “The Flopsy Bunnies”. Despite this, the BUBC ladies, in a Janousek, just beat a Bristol Uni crew rowing in a clinker in the final of the women’s novice fours.

The final event of the season was the first running of “The Polypin Challenge”. BUBC had rashly challenged the Minerva Men to a best of three over 400m. The loser was to buy a Polypin of Smiles Best for consumption by the winner. Minerva won this one 2-1, with your correspondent catching a crab with 10 strokes to go in the decider! All was not lost, however. Only one of the Minerva crew could make it to the official Polypin drinking session so we got to drink most of the beer anyway.

#### **Wins:**

Mnov4+ Monmouth Regatta (Mark Barnett, Al Hardy, David Parkinson, James Pearce, Adrian Cudmore)

Wnov4+ Coate Water Park Regatta (Kirsty X, Wendy Hawes, Kate Fletcher, Louise Atthey, Adrian Cudmore)

#### **1988/89 - Dave Parkinson**

This season started somewhat more auspiciously than the previous one. There was a large turnout at pre-session training and heavy recruitment took place. Notable amongst the new arrivals this season were Charlie Blackham, Stuart Davis, David Simmonds, Rob Van Agtmaal, Sue Mayor and Sam Stroud. Bradford on Avon had been kicked into touch, and BUBC had taken up residence at Minerva’s boat house at Bathampton.

There was a much more serious air to proceedings this year. Training sessions were regular and of a serious nature. In these pre-historic days, ergometers were just a painful rumour. Land training consisted of a variety of sessions that would have done the Spanish Inquisition no disservice. Circuit training was conducted by “John The Bastard”, a mature student who had previously coached international athletes including Roger Black. These sessions were tough but they were as nothing

compared to the ultimate training session, the “Al Hardy Death Run”. This session consisted of sprints round campus, interspersed with press ups and burpees etc, before rounding off with a run up Bathwick Hill trailing in Mr Hardy’s wake.

Things were a bit trickier on the water. BUBC’s official coach was “Reliable” Rob Gibbon. Rob is a great bloke, but clearly possessed neither a diary, watch nor a map of Bath and its surrounding areas. He very rarely managed to keep his coaching appointments but despite this, the University authorities would not fund any more coaching. Jeremy Bennett came to the rescue and took up the not inconsiderable challenge of coaching the growing ranks of BUBC rowers.

The University authorities were swiftly forgiven when they agreed to fund BUBC’s share of a new boat to be bought jointly with Minerva. It was a great day when the new craft – which was eventually named “The Jolly Roger” - arrived at the newly extended boat house. Charlie Blackham was so excited that he dropped a large pot of grease on the hull of the boat before it had even been bolted together!

BUBC competed regularly during the Head season with a men’s four winning at Wycliffe and Gloucester. There was clearly something about the godforsaken wastes of the Gloucester-Sharpness canal that appealed.

The Regatta season was less successful for the men. With Mr Pearce and Mr Hardy lost to industrial placements and Mr Barnett lost to a sprained knee (a particularly nasty “crab” ejected the former skipper from the boat during training), the remainder of the squad had to travel to Wimbleball “International” Regatta to secure a pot!

Given the talent available (Brown, Simmonds and Blackham) this meagre return was somewhat disappointing. Underperformance was the order of the day, with spectacular humiliations at Evesham (beaten by knee-high schoolkids – both days!), Hereford (beaten by Minerva!) and Stratford (crabs a-plenty). I blame the joker in the 2-seat.

The women bagged some pewter as well in the novice fours at Stratford at the end of the year. This crew had great potential, but for undocumented reasons gave up at the end of the year and never returned.

#### **Wins:**

MSIII4+ Wycliffe Head (Barnett, Hardy, Parkinson, Pearce, Cudmore)

MSIII4+ Glozzer Head (Parkinson, Barnett, Simmonds, Blackham, Cudmore)

MSIII4+ Wimbleball Regatta (Brown, Parkinson, Simmonds, Blackham, Cudmore)

WNov4+ Stratford-On-Avon Regatta (Miss X, Miss Y, Miss Z, Helen Phillips, Cudmore)

#### **Summer 1989 – are you Bath Uni in Disguise? - Steve Travis**

Returning to rowing and coaching that year had rekindled BUBC Svengali Dr Jeremy Bennett’s desire for pewter. Although he had rowed in Cambridge for seven years prior to arriving in Bath, his solitary trophy was an, admittedly attractive, May Bumps blade. (This was due mainly to the Tabland habit of rowing incest - well, what do you expect from an isolated community in the Fens).

Dr Bennett's plan was fiendishly simple:

- Wait for the University season to end
- Lure large, unsuspecting University oarsmen to row with Minerva over the summer with promises of beer, women and song (and pots)
- Enter some extremely low quality regattas
- Watch the pots roll in!

Existing BUBC oarsmen Dave "Baggy" Simmonds and Fraser Brown were the first to be netted. To them were added the recently graduated and ruggedly-bearded Barney Barnett (whose training consisted of hod-carrying on a building site), and eccentric final-year architecture student (and Edward Fox lookalike) Tim Anstey. The squad was completed by the addition of holidaying Cambridge student Steve "Stoat" Travis, who at that time was a mere 10.5 stone and made Theo Hudson look like a Sumo wrestler (hard to believe). All 6 either were, or were to become, members of the University.

Three pairs were constituted: Baggy and Fraser, Bennett and Barney, Tim and Steve. A "squad rotation" system was implemented, whereby Baggy and Fraser were to pull along alternate bow-pairs, the other two racing a 2-. Mike Mannerson cast a desultory eye over the combinations and the regatta season was plotted.

First up was Bewdley, where the coxed four of Barnett, Bennett, Brown and Simmonds went through to the SIII final, coming back with the Pewter with a win over Bristol Aerial by 1/2L out of a field of 14. They repeated the feat the next day, beating a Worcester RC crew containing one Charlie Blackham by 1 1/2L out of a field of 10. Not to be outdone, Messrs Travis and Anstey weaved their way down the course to record an unlikely victory in SIII pairs by 2L over Bewdley in a field of 3, fortunately having had the semi to practice in (Bewdley unsurprisingly went through to the final on a bye). Unfortunately the next day hangovers got the better of the intrepid 2- who lost to the same opposition in a straight final. The evening was spent sampling the "delights" of Bewdley Cow Pie, and the local women, at the Bewdley party, activities that could become close to indistinguishable after 10 pints of Old Gut-Wrangler.

Next up was the sterner test provided by Henley Town & Visitors and Upper Thames Sprint. Due to the accumulation of points, Bennett & Barney took to the pair at SII, the others again racing SIII coxed fours. Alas for the four, no wins came their way, but the pair managed a surprising victory in SII at Upper Thames Sprint, beating the home club out of a field of twelve. Hospitality was provided overnight at Brown Mansions near High Wycombe.

The little-known (and now surely defunct) "Hereford Summer" was the third away-trip, an event so small it didn't even have an Almanac entry! The coxed four combination was retained, and managed to win SIII and SII the next day. The defeated finalists in SIII fours, New College Oxford (always nice to put one over the Dark Blue Scum!), teamed up with the victors to race a SIII eight against Hereford, and also won that. As usual, Hereford had managed to empty the next-door field of cows only the day before, leaving ample evidence of their presence for the campers to negotiate.

The final weekend of the season was Oxford City and Abingdon Sprint. Following their wins the previous weekend, all the squad were now SII so the Bennett pair were restored to the bows of the four, losing a magnificent final to Eton Excelsior by 3ft. A wholly Minerva eight was also put out

including this six, but failed to win – obviously due to the dilution effect. The following day matters were put right at Abingdon with a victory over the home club by 1 1/4L. Miraculously another win was recorded when the SII pair defeated Putney Town by 2L in a time six seconds slower than the SIII winners!

The severe trauma caused by prolonged exposure to alcohol, pewter and Jon Armour meant that BUBC never again raced under Minerva colours over the summer. However, it was the catalyst to summer racing in the Club's own name with a mix of current members and Old Boys, and ultimately to the founding of Meles Boat Club. This story is told in a separate appendix below.

### **Wins:**

Eight: (Anstey, Brown, Simmonds, Travis, A N Other x4, cox J Fox) Hereford Summer Sprint (with New Coll)

Coxed four: (Barnett, Bennett, Brown, Simmonds, cox A Preedy) SIII Bewdley, Bewdley Sprint, SII Abingdon Sprint; (Anstey, Brown, Simmonds, Travis, cox J Fox) SIII Hereford Summer, Hereford Summer Sprint

Coxless Pair: (Barnett, Bennett) SII Upper Thames Sprint, (Travis, Anstey) SIII Bewdley, SII Abingdon Sprint

### **1989/90 - David Parkinson**

It is worth noting that in the early 1990s, gender politics featured almost as high up the BUBC agenda as crew selection politics. The general grouse of the women was that they never got to row in the “proper” boats and that the men made all the decisions. The general grouse of the men was that the women didn't do much training and rarely helped with getting boats to and from regattas. Given the excess of demand over supply concerning “proper” boats, the democratically elected club officials (all male, as it happens) decided that the most committed members of the club in terms of training and logistics should benefit from the better equipment.

The situation was eased considerably with the purchase of “The Black Pig”, BUBC's own boat in March 1990. The situation was also eased with the appointment of the Women's Captain. To avoid further allegations of sexism, it was decided that the Women's Captain would actually be the Men's Captain in future if the elected Club Captain was a women. Confused? Well, it all made sense at the time, and we got to concentrate on rowing!



### 5 - 'The Black Pig'

The purchase of “The Black Pig” is a story in its own right. You might know Charlie Blackham nowadays as something of a smooth talking, silver-tongued cavalier, but in those days, he had the diplomatic sophistication of a Sidewinder Missile. It was thus something of a risk to include him in the BUBC delegation that went to see Tom Hudson, Director of Sport, to try and sweet-talk him into buying us a new boat. Charlie’s straight-talking style won the day (“Buy us a boat, Hudson, or you’ll get a visit from the Boys”) and Tom agreed to cough up. The boat, when it arrived, created a bit of stir, by being a “one-piece” rather than the more usual “sectioned”. Legend probably has it by now that this was to benefit from lower prices, lower weight and increased hull stiffness. All this is true, but in reality, it was a huge c\*ck up. Luckily, space could always be blagged in other clubs’ trailers to get to regattas, so disaster was averted.

The start of the year saw a veritable profusion of eager novices clamouring for a piece of the action. Newcomers included Andy Newman, Gordon Nielson, Andy Murray, Mark “Stumpy” Johnson, Steph Jones and Jennifer “Jellyhead” McEnhill. Some more experienced rowers also arrived, including Al Ryder, Jim Porter and Marcus Downes.

For the first time, selection for the senior mens’ crews was based on boat moving ability, rather than availability. The selection process was obviously somewhat flawed as the second four routinely stuffed the first four in training and Head Races during the Autumn term.

The highlight of the Autumn term was Saltford Head race at which the entire BUBC fleet was seen in action. Despite the borrowed Bristol Uni trailer bursting into flames en-route, a good day was had by all.

One event from the day stands out: Halfway down the course, Andy Newman, plying his trade in the boiler room of the men’s novice 8 broke his seat. Andy was saved from having to dive over-board to assist his crewmates as the cox, Mr Cudmore had been foresighted enough to take a supply of spare seats with him “just in case”!

Also worth a mention is the pseudo-pornographic coxing performance of Claire Edmonds as she piloted the men's senior 8 in hot pursuit of the Bristol Uni and Oxford Poly scum: "Give me ten with the legs. I want it long, I want it hard and I want it NOW!"

The term was rounded off with the first official "ban". BUBC was appraised in no uncertain terms by the owner of the Lansdowne Grove Hotel that, should we ever be thinking of darkening their doors again, then we should think again. Some people have no sense of humour. If only pre-season training had included accurate mince-pie throwing then things might have been different. As it was, all the missiles missed the intended target, (the Captain, given a moving and rousing end of term speech) and instead stuck like glue to the newly painted walls of the function room.

The Spring term was dull by comparison. The senior men again underwent selection trials. This time the process was spot on and the first crew was considerably faster than the second crew.

The main focus of the senior men was the Eights Head. Mr Blackham again demonstrated his unique persuasive skills and borrowed a Janousek and a trailer for its transport from his old seat of learning, HMP Worcester.

The focus of the rest of the squad was getting fit for the regatta season and winning whatever could be won at the local Head races. Swimming was introduced to the training regime. The first session was something of an eye-opener. We asked the swim coach what we should do. "Lengths!" he barked in response "Then more lengths!"

The Eights Head was a bit of a disaster, to say the least. In our borrowed boat and rowing with bright red blades, we were the first of the new entrants to start, directly behind the slowest crews from the previous years. Even at light pressure we caught Leicester Uni before the start and then overtook 15 crews without incident before Hammersmith Bridge. The 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> crews proved more of a problem as we ended up as the meat in a Janousek sandwich, with blades, fists and rude words all over the place. By the time we had unravelled ourselves, all hope of a decent finish had gone. Suffice to say that it was not the most cheerful trip back down the M4!

The focus of the Summer term was the UAUs (as it was then called) and Henley for the men's first four, and pot-hunting for everyone else. Much pewter was harvested, with the women's first four achieving the unusual feat of winning two novice pots in the same afternoon at Bristol Docks! The ladies teamed up with Bristol's novices to win the eights before proving who really moved the boat by tonking the same quartet of Bristolians in the fours.

The men's first four duly won the UAUs but unfortunately just missed out on qualification for the Britannia Cup at Henley. The guys hid their disappointment well, to the obvious benefit of hostelry owners across Bath, albeit to the equally obvious detriment of several of the city's historic landmarks.



### **Wins:**

Mens' SII 4+ Bristol Docks Head (Simmonds, Hardy, Brown, Blackham and Cudmore)

Mens' SIII 4+ Bristol Docks Head (Marcus Downes, Parkinson, Stuart Davis, Jim Porter and Steph Jones)

Womens' Nov 4+ Glozzer Head (...)

Womens' Nov 4+ Bristol Docks Regatta (Steph Jones, Jennifer McEnhill, Sam Stroud, Sue Mayor and Tiggy?)

Womens' Nov 8+ Bristol Docks Regatta (Steph Jones, Jennifer McEnhill, Sam Stroud, Sue Mayor, plus four mooses from Bristol)

Mens' SII4+ Bristol Docks Regatta (Simmonds, Hardy, Brown, Blackham and Cudmore)

Mens' Senior 4+ UAU Regatta (Simmonds, Hardy, Brown, Blackham and Cudmore)

Mens' SIII 4+ Monmouth Regatta (Downes, Parkinson, Davis, Al Ryder and Steph Jones)

Mixed SO 4+ Ironbridge Regatta (Stroud, Mayor, Davis, Parkinson and Jones)

## 1990's

### 1990/91 - Charlie Blackham

October 1990 saw the arrival of a few more experienced oarsmen, not least Al Ryder who's fight back to fitness saw him take 6 months before being correctly installed in the 1<sup>st</sup> boat. Three men's and one ladies' senior fours competed at various head races. The crew selection process once again proved to be "long-term" as it wasn't until the summer that 1<sup>st</sup> boat season ticket holders Blackham and Simmonds were able to find the right bow pair to pull them along the river!

Jim Porter suggested that we should support his alma mater, Tiffin School and race their head of the river race, and that we could all stay at his folks. Unbeknownst to us Mrs. P was a dab hand at feeding rowers and duly proceeded to supply the 3 crews with more lasagne than they could eat – with the possible exception of Mr Cudmore who was told that coxes didn't need 3<sup>rd</sup>'s as Carbo-loading didn't apply to them.

This year's assault on the head of the river was kindly assisted by Monkton Combe School, who offered us the use of their wooded Empacher eight. Whilst training on the flooded river Avon at Monkton we ran over a submerged tree and put a not inconsiderable hole in the bottom of the boat. Fortunately the coaching launch was on hand to pluck the heavily clothed Mr. Cudmore from the coxes seat, and the author noticed that there was also room for him. On reaching the back we turned to see the rest of the crew making for the bank with the exception of Cathal who stood at bow and saluted as the boat sank beneath him. Fortunately Monkton had a rather handy boatman who was able to make good the damage and they let us out to play again in the VIII where we had a somewhat less eventful trip down the Tideway.

The highlight of the summer was the commentator at HRR not only having to announce that "Bath University" was entering the enclosures, but that they were also doing it before someone else. However the organisers had made sure that we had the last race of the day and this historic event was only witnessed by a few close relatives, other members of BUBC (one of whom appeared rather interested in Charlie's 15 year old sister!) and a few drunks still trying to exit the Fawley Bar.

#### Steve Travis adds:

Another interesting event this year was the HRR eight's training camp in Nottingham, in March. John Deakin, cox of the NCRA Lwt 8 was a regular visitor to Bath this year as his girlfriend was studying physiotherapy at the RUH, and he (foolishly) offered to coach the club and let us join in with the NCRA training session. Highlights that I can remember (in no particular order):

- Watching everyone else climb out of a tent at 6.30am (remember this was March), having spent the night at Canope's Auntie's house in a nice warm sleeping bag
- Going round and round Holme Pierrepont doing feet-out, square blades, arms only
- Rowing in the 1980 Olympic 8's Empacher, which was slightly less than rigid and could not be readily adjusted due to the riggers and feet being connected together.
- Rowing down to the start of the course with all the other NRCA crews, proceeding to fuff and take off clothes, and then be shouted at for being useless whilst everyone else disappears into the distance.
- Doing a Trent Head course and actually beating some crews (a ladies 2x?)
- Falling asleep watching the 5N at John Deakin's Nottingham house.
- 3 outings a day ....

In addition, the first design of all-in-one appeared: black with gold side stripes, and was very fetching.

### Head Races:

HORR – 135<sup>th</sup> (SIII) (Yeats, Travis, Davis, Ryder, Van Agtmaal, Canadine, Lawson, Blackham, Cudmore)

WHORR – 103<sup>rd</sup> (SIII)

Eight: WSIII City of Bristol

Coxed Four: SII, SIII & WSIII City of Bristol head, N & WSIII Gloucester Head

### Regatta wins:

1<sup>st</sup> IV ( Van Agtmaal, Ryder, Simmonds, Blackham, Cudmore)

- Monmouth M124+
- UAU (BUSA) MC4+ silver
- HRR Britannia cup, beat City of Cambridge 1.5l, lost to UL 2l

2<sup>nd</sup> IV (Lawson, Travis, Davis, Porter, Jones)

- Monmouth MS34+
- UAU (BUSA) MJ4+ gold

## 1991/92 Season - Charlie Blackham

The October saw the arrival of that most unusual of sights at BUBC – some GB kit – belonging to one Theo Hudson who had an unusual double of winning the Princess Elizabeth at HRR whilst coxing and a Coupe Vest for rowing.

The men's first crew repeated their success 2 years previously and picked up gold in the MC4+ at the UAU's. The girls got their first medal at the UAU's with a bronze in WC4+.



### Head Races:

Coxed Four: SII Minerva Bath

Scull: WN (Jones) U of Bristol

## Regattas:

1<sup>st</sup> IV ( Neilson, Hudson, Davis, Blackham, Jones)

- UAU (BUSA) MC4+ gold

2<sup>nd</sup> IV ( Johnson, ?, Travis, Yeates) UAU MJ 4+ Bronze

It's a credit to the club that Gordon Neilson and Stuart Davis had arrived as complete novices (albeit not particularly small ones)

## 1992/93 season

This year heralded a major change for the club. Ged Roddy had arrived as Director of Sport at Easter and appeared was quickly befriended by the boat club and Charlie Blackham was elected President of the Athletic union. Ged was good friends with rowing coach Pete Proudley, who's coaching CV included W2- bronze at the Senior world champs. Ged brought Pete up to Bath and Pete agreed to turn down Imperial and coach BUBC on the condition that they got themselves a coaching launch and a better bit of water. The old horticulture research station greenhouse was bought into use as a boat shed and the club moved onto the stretch of water below Bathampton weir. The clubs equipment was expanded somewhat from its one fine and one restricted four through the purchase of:

- One Janousek VIII ( The David Vanderlinde)
- One Janousek IV+
- 12 Dreissiacker oars
- One coaching launch with outboard motor.
- One second hand wooden VIII

All this new kit had also attracted Mark Lightowler, previously a member of Minerva's "Fat Boys" four.

Ged and Pete devised a training programme the likes of which we'd never been seen before and saw the introduction of now established favourites as 1 hour ergos and 7am Plyometrics.



6 - Ged Roddy - Director of Sport (Stroke)

Pete also astonished old BUBC types with his crew selections – the first crew always went faster than the second!

The summer saw BUBC's MS14+ (Hudson, Ryder, Lightowler, Ryder, Jones) win one of the most coveted of regatta trophies - The West of England Challenge Vase, at Hereford regatta – much to the chagrin of several Elite 4's who travelled down from London to win it themselves.

### Steve Travis adds:

A good crop of novices started this year, including Carl Nicholson, James Taylor, Jon Roycroft, Mark "Geordie" Mallin and Jim Bate. Starting off racing in the banana boat, the world'd floppiest eight, they somehow managed to negotiate the Bristol Aerial bend in their first race. Later in the season they showed some promise, getting through some rounds, and a good base of experience was added which would come in handy the following year.



### 1993/94 season - Steve Travis

Summer 1993 saw a mass exodus of club stalwarts including Charlie, Cathal, Al Ryder (who went on to win the Temple this season with I.C.), Big A, Gordon, Andy Murray, Nigel, Stumpy and Steph. This left only a few experienced oarsmen such as Mark Lightowler, Theo Hudson, Steve Travis and John Golding.

Pete's gruelling training regime continued in earnest, coupled with regular trips to Southampton to be entertained on the Itchen, either from the welcoming mud at Sountampton Uni's Boathouse, or the equally welcoming mud at Vosper's. The minibus would leave around 6am full of bleary-eyed students, and the soundtrack would be Kevin Greening's morning show, complete with Gripper the dog and Crichton Wheeler, the most famous sufferer of Splicer's Disease.

A full programme of outings would be backed into the day usually in horrendous weather conditions. The canny amongst us soon learned to pack one more change of kit than there were outings. However, Pete loved the freedom to zoom around the Southampton Water yelling such comments as “time on the slide” and “pull that oar up under your boob dear” (and that was just to the men). Luckily there was a handy greasy spoon to retreat to between sessions.

Back at Bath the river was constantly in flood all winter, and time on the water was limited – another reason for going off to the Itchen. The HERR 8s did not fare that well, finishing in fairly average positions, perhaps unsurprisingly given the lack of time on the water.

After the Easter break, a new 8 was formed around the nucleus of ex-Oxford Blue Guy Blanchard, who had recovered from ME and fancied slumming it for a summer, Theo Hudson and Mark Lightowler, who had rowed in a successful Brit 4 the year previously. Added to this were new addition Jon Roberts, a product of Wycliffe and Art Student at BCHE, John Golding and Steve Travis, hoary old postgrads, and two novices from the previous year, Carl Nicholson and Jim Bate. The combination was coxed by novice Carolyn Sleath, who in later life was to pursue a career as a Police pursuit driver – surely no coincidence?

Regular sessions round the narrow s-bend “gut” on the lower Bathampton stretch up to Pulteney bridge seemed to pay off, for the combination raced successfully at Senior 1, finally picking up a win against Thames RC at Hereford, and missing out in the final at Reading. Due to Dr Lightowler being on board the decision was taken to enter the Thames Cup, then open to student crews, with the Temple being barred to non-students. At this time qualification times were quicker for the Thames.

The Friday night qualification race was memorable for a great effort by the crew, who came off the water convinced they had done enough. However, no sooner was the boat on the rack than the mother of all deluges commenced out of the blue, reducing visibility to a matter of feet and ruining the race for the remaining crews still on the course. An owner of a convertible was overheard cursing that he’d left the roof open and expecting to return to a mobile swimming pool!

The crew trooped off to stay at Theo’s parents house to race again the next day, and without quite reaching the peak of the previous evening, duly qualified. At the draw, they were scheduled to meet Durham University, bizarrely the only other student crew in the competition – what a coincidence that was.

Unfortunately due to the rather unreasonable demands of the Engineering faculty examiners, who somehow had failed to factor in the necessary breathing space for Henley-competing crews, there was not much scope to train up at the course before the race on Wednesday evening, so some momentum was lost. We duly lost to Durham, a more experienced outfit, by 3 lengths. But the first ever Bath Uni 8 had raced at Henley.

A composite 8 consisting of Charlie Blackham, Mark Lightowler, Steve Travis, John Golding and Jim Porter competed with four members of Bradford on Avon at the Boston Marathon, which Guy Blanchard also completed in a single scull. Another first for the club, all were glad to simply have finished in a respectable 3 hrs 25 minutes. Guy attained a creditable 4 hr time.



### Regatta Wins:

8o: S Travis, J Golding, J Roberts, C Nicholson, M Lightowler, G Blanchard, J Bate, T Hudson, C Sleath (S1 Hereford)

4+: J Kowlaski, N Scott, J Lee, A Jacobs, J Ball (WN Ironbridge); H Byrne (Minerva), H Brown (Minerva), S Travis, M Lightowler, S Hamilton (Minerva) (Mxd S1 Oxford)

### 1994/95 season - Steve Travis

Our very own "God's Gift" (Theo) finally departed after three consecutive Henley appearances for the University, and some of the previous 8 were on placement years. Returning from placement was Tricky Dicky Tate, and Rob Gibbon decided to add himself to the mix this year, slimming down to a svelte 16.5 stone by Christmas. Evergreen old stagers Mark L and Steve T were still around, as were Jon Roberts, Mark Bray and Paul Sheen.

Training continued much as in the year previously, with regular trips down to Southampton. The weather continued to be foul and the attendant shipping seemed to get bigger.

Also our resident arty-farties, both graphic designers from BCHE, Jon Roberts and Jo Lee (now Mrs Lightowler) redesigned the kit and blades with the now familiar yellow squares on a blue background theme. Ged Roddy had decided to change the colours to Blue and Gold to match the University crest. It is believed that the Black and Gold colours were chosen by Tom Hudson, who decided that black would wash better than blue! This year also saw the infamous Vodka Party at 3 St James' Square. The "ladies" decided to have their own social further up the square to which the men were not invited. Not at all put out (honest), the men had a vodka and poker session, the culmination of which was a cunning plan to dress up in women's clothing and crash the ladies party. Mark Bray was spotted wearing a particularly fine "Mincer's Hat", not to mention velour skirt, and later was found

doing an "I jumped out of an aeroplane without a parachute" impression spread-eagled at the back of the Royal Crescent. Later attempts to gain entry to an unspecified nightclub were unsuccessful.

For the summer, Pete decided to pull out the old, point-laden (hasbeens?) members of the squad into a coxed four. Comprising of Steve Travis, Jon Roberts, Rob Gibbon and Mark Lightowler, this was probably the oldest and heaviest crew ever to represent the University. Alas, this combination was open and at successive regattas ran up against the Brit finalists in the first round – ULBC and Wallingford. The cox was new-girl Beth Kitchen.

This crew shoe-horned themselves into the Janousek four until it was trashed at Monmouth, and for the next 6 weeks the crew raced out of Bradford on Avon in a borrowed frontloader. The weather was fine and life was good, but the crew only managed a respectable mid-table placing in the non-qualifiers. Unfortunately, due to differences within the club an opportunity retain the core of the previous year's eight was not taken and the momentum in 8s was not maintained. Bath would not return to Henley for another two years.

However, this season saw a very successful streak for the club, with 8 wins at regattas, including an O 2+ (no, that's not a Blood-Group, it's a coxed pair!) including Mark Lightowler, Rob Gibbon and Beth Kitchen.

#### Head Wins:

8o: S1 Exeter U, WS3 Southampton BTC

4+ WS3 Exeter U, S1, S3 Bristol

#### Regatta Wins

4+: M Bray, J Roberts, S Travis, J Bate, H Kerr (S2 Monmouth); A Schmidt, J Lee, J Kowalski, F Joscelyne, J Ronxin (WS3 Marlow Spring, Worcester, Hereford); L Boustead, J Ronxin, A Cullen, C Jackson, M Keverne (WN Reading); J Kowalski, J Lee, M Lightowler, J Roberts, B Kitchen (Mxd S1 Evesham); H Byrne (Minerva), J Lee, S Travis, M Lightowler H Witty (Minerva) (Mxd S1 Bewdley)

2+: M Lightowler, R Gibbon, B Kitchen (O Evesham)

### The annual pilgrimage to Oxford City regatta - Charlie Blackham

Vague memories recall this tradition starting in the summer of 91 or 92.

Fraser Brown had moved to Oriel College Oxford to study for a PhD, apparently in rowing, and as captain of the boat club he not only had keys to the boat house, but also to the most spacious captain's rooms in college. 7 other former oarsman and coxwain arrived on the Friday night for pre-race training in The Bear public house and local curry emporium. BUBC then surprised a number of crews the following day (not least their own) by strolling through 2 rounds of MS18+ before graciously admitting defeat in the final to a crew who'd been training together!

This tradition continued once Fraser had left Oriel where we took up residence in the campsite adjacent to the boathouse. Friday night training camps continued as before.

The mid 90's saw some memorable performance's, the star's of which may remain anonymous:

- Bow throwing up over two whilst approaching the line.

- Approaching the boat marshall with the opposition and asking for a short delay to the race as “stroke” was being sick in the Gents – and then subsequently winning the race
- Taking the crew off the start before the starter had even raised his flag , and getting a laugh from the Marshall.
- To the cries from the balcony of “one of them’s a girl” an entire crew” elephant walked stark naked out in front of the boathouse, swam a width of the river and scampered back over the bridge.

### Steve T adds:

The 1996 visit to Oxford City by the old boys produced a S1 final, which, when the hangover kicked in, we duly lost by 11.1 seconds to LRC. Bizarrely, the crew is listed in the Almanac as having won – being Carl Nicholson, Steve Travis, Paul Sheen, Andy Newman, Mark Lightowler, John Roberts, Al Ryder and Charlie Blackham, coxed by Steph Jones.

### 1995/96 Season

Get Angus to write something....



### 1996/97 Season - Alex “Smokey” Palmer – “Wheres my racing bike and razor?”

What was I getting myself in for on that day in freshers week when I turned up at the Monkton Comb tank for a go a rowing... after spending my youth as a competitive cyclist I was on the lookout for a new sport which didn’t require me to wear such shiny lycra or shave my legs!

The season started well with a big group of novice men getting stuck in on a regular basis, it was the year that saw myself, JJ, John “Stretch” Adams, Ian “Fabio” Jewison, Rob Ashcroft, Julian Jordan etc

all take up rowing. Interestingly enough its hard to remember much about JJ's rowing debut at this point, for someone who has now become such a club stalwart he made a rather unassuming start as a random postgrad from Loughborough who'd never done any sport and had a really bad ginger perm. It was also at this point that some legendary nick names were coined when I became Smokey (I now get introduced to complete strangers by this name thanks to Jim Byers) and Ian Jewison became Fabio thanks to a dashing combo of boxer shorts and vest he turned up to train in one summers day....

Training sessions were on the water down at the Bathampton Greenhouse, this year saw the demise of the old wooden eight [JJ: whilst it was still used, every outing required the cox to carry a couple of rolls of tape to patch the holes in the not-so-stiff hull] to the delight of the novice men after Christmas who found themselves training in the Janousek. Land training was the usual mix of ergs, plyos and circuits. With Angus leading the way and confirming his own legendary status amongst the rest of the squad (alas this did not last long as he was led astray by a certain young lady, and after a bout of illness at BUSA he has never been the same since).

With the senior squad made up of Harry Long, Jim Byers, Angus, Tom Williams plus a few others including cox Ashley Cooper, they had to look to the novices to give their boat some extra horsepower. So with my cycling fitness intact I managed to pull a better erg than most of the seniors and was duly in the boat for the Eights Head... Coaching this year was provided in the winter by.. err no one really, Angus and Jane did a fine job with the novices and we had some input from Nick Smith (ex Goldie postgrad) for the first boat... with lines like ("2 you look like you are rowing with a pole up your arse" to yours truly) we knew we were going places! JJ: The head returned a respectable result of 185 for the first boat, the seconds, with some very heavy guys on board (Tanguy for example, was about 6'9" and probably over 17 stone), rowing in a lightweight women's boat borrowed from Reading Uni, just about completed the course, coming 401 out of 402 crews completing the race.

BUSA proved to be a complete write off, even Angus showed us he was human when he got dumped out of championship singles in the first round, and it looked like the entire summer season was going to go the same way thanks to constant crew changes and bad organisation.

Cue a return for Bath legend Rob Gibbon, who by now was back to his usual non-racing weight and keen (?) to help a men's squad in need. After some more dodgy crew selection and near misses at Evesham and Coate Water, it was onto Worcester, Monmouth, Hereford to save our season and lose our Novice status. We got off to a bad start at Worcester, Monmouth proved entertaining when the second novice boat containing Rob Flashcroft, Ian Jewison and Julian Jordan capsized at the start. We got to the final in our four and then our 2 man Wiezek decided he had to get back to Bath to do some revision..... (fair play, he was on IMML which we all know is a really tough course) little did he know what he was going to miss out on. After another night of careful preparation out on the town in Hereford, including a pissed erg competition against some Sen1 lighties from Exeter, we subbed in little "Paul" Fraser and pulled out a win against Llandaff for our Novice pot.

Following this success we decided to give Henley a go.... Who's idea it was to take an eight where half the crew had only started rowing at the beginning of the year to Henley I do not know.... Looking back on it, it was madness but proved to be great experience. [JJ: actually I know...it was decided that an eight would go to Henley - half of the seniors decided it wouldn't be worth it, hence

the upgrading of said novices to a senior boat, including Fras who's sciatica preventing him going under 8:00 for his 2k!]

Clearly the Henley Stewards had kept an eye on the results of the Nov 4+ races at Hereford International Regatta that year and pre-qualified the first Bath Eight to race at Henley for a good few years. We were completely out of our depth, realised our good fortune in getting pre-qualified (complete with some dashing yellow T-Shirts with "Jammy Bastards" across the back) and duly got dumped out in the first round by Cherwell. JJ: Summer racing continued with the "Fat Boy Four" of Jules, Flash, Chris Gower, and JJ coxed by Tom Williams, completely failing to lose their novice status at Stourport regattas - still, the adversity of that summer helped to breed a new form of determination amongst the BUBC guys.

### 1997/98 - Alex "Smokey" Palmer

Still basking in the glow of our Henley campaign the previous summer, this season started off looking good... it didn't last long. New Club Chairman Harry Long was tasked with finding us a new home after we finally got thrown out of the Greenhouse. [JJ: to clarify, the approach to the BUBC greenhouse was down a track past an old people's home. All was rosey until Minerva, whilst picking up our jointly-owned trailer, knocked down the wall on the approach not once (excusable) but twice (stupidity) resulting in access to the area being rebuked and the club literally being without a home for a month.] Avon County stepped in and agreed to put us up at Saltford, so with a better stretch of water, experienced rowers Brendan McGuirk, Dylan Samuel and Pete Lee joining the squad things were looking up. About this time the women also started going places, thanks to the arrival of Laura Gill, Katie Currie, Rachael Wright and Amber Ashby. A disappointing result in the eights head saw some toys begin collectively thrown out of the pram, and tears from Sarah Lockwood our long-suffering cox.

Around mid winter of this year, saw the appearance of the now legendary Lech Crew. Formed of a crack unit of guys who by sheer fluke were still novices (as well as complete Leches): Paul "Rock" Miller, JJ Doel, Julian "Fat Legs" Jordan, Fabio, coxed by Helen "Coxen Boxen" Maguire and Sarah "Ginge" Lockwood. [JJ: Actually, not fluke at all, we were largely rubbish, but, due to sheer abstinence and a lot of hard work, we trained extremely hard and the boat despite looking shocking, started moving quickly. The crew went completely undefeated through the entire head season, being fastest sweep four at a couple of heads (I will never forget the disgusted look on the faces of the UL crews at Bristol Uni HR as our novice four beat all their S2 + S3 crews!), and winning the Adrian Millinder memorial shield for fastest four at City of Bristol HR comfortably ahead of Minerva's S2 4- !). Unfortunately the wheels fell off at BUSA, but the crew held together prior to placement departure to win N4+ at the now legendary Shrewsbury regatta and S4 4+ the next day meeting ex-Bath Tom Williams in the final. The tales of that weekend are still being told to this day - who in their right mind decided to have a regatta under a big iron bridge was a fool, as was the person who decided that Brendan was the best person to lead a liquid boat race.

Somewhere around here, most notably the morning after a heavy night at the Xmas dinner, Laura Sussens took a jolly over to Reading for the indoor champs and came back with a bronze BUSA medal, nice.] BUSA Regatta turned out to be another disappointment.. (déjà vu?) with the Lech's getting stuffed in the final, and the eight performing well below expectations. Coaching at this point was provided by Carl Purchase of Bradford on Avon- Harry and myself had done a fine job infiltrating

the SA and I got elected SA Treasurer and proceeded to siphon as much spare SA cash to the boat club as possible.... We bought a pair pretty soon after which Harry and JJ did their best to row into the bank at Saltford many times [JJ: correction, Harry and JJ were rowing the pair properly, well badly, but not up the banks, it was Dylan and ID Lee who hit the bank on 3 occasions, one time breaking off about a foot of the bow]. This continued to new levels the following year when we had the SA sewn up with Harry as President and JJ replacing me as Treasurer. A new 4+ soon followed the next year...



7 - HERR 1998

Carl's coaching proved controversial... anyone who had rowed at school hated him, the rest of us loved him and his legendary chat about the final of the 1972 Wyfolds. (as a footnote to this, JJ was talking to IC coach Bill Mason at the Furnivall Dinner a few months back and got exactly the same story as they used to row together!). The regatta season provided a good haul of pots for the Lech Crew, with the eight taking a little longer to get going. Robbed of near certain victory in Sen 3 VIII's at Reading due to torrential rain, we pulled out a close win at Worcester before moving on to Henley qualifiers and one of the most depressing moments of my time in the boat club. [JJ: Bath gained a significant victory in the summer at Coate Water Park where Harry Long and John "Stretch" Adams beat the Minerva captain in the final of S3 2-. At no point in the history of the club has the Minerva-BUBC relationship been quite so strained, or so funny!]

Having realised the error of their ways the previous year there was quite rightly no pre-qualification for us in the Temple this time around, so we turned up for my first experience of Henley qualifiers. After a pretty good row in bad conditions, we stood around in the boat tent waiting for them to call out our name... which they didn't do. Closer examination of the times rubbed extra salt into the wounds, we had finished 13<sup>th</sup> fastest with the top 12 going through. A win at Ironbridge the next day did little to restore morale until we realised that one of the crews in the first round (Shitlake College) had pulled out. Harry and I were on the phone to Henley Regatta as soon as we were back in Bath, only to be told be a terribly polite chap that we couldn't take their place in the first round as they

had withdrawn just after the draw had been made, and as he put it "... much as I sympathise with you Bath, those are the Henley rules I'm afraid". Git.

JJ: Henley Women's Regatta was a great success for the women. The coxed four of Laura "PPP" Sussens, Katie "Flapps" Currie, Rachael "Slapps" Wright, Amber Isaacson, coxed by Will Talbot-Ponsonby and Harriet Kerr moved through the racing in virtual ignomy, managing to look good but lose every final narrowly whilst underrating the other crews by some considerable distance. At Walton they turned the corner, winner WS3 4+ going on to go a couple of rounds at Henley. Their first race of HWR was missed by most of the BUBC massif, since the crack navigation crew of Will TP and Jon "Stretch" Adams didn't manage to turn off the M4 until J2!

Summer racing was limited to a brief appearance in S4 8s at the Bristol Docks. Bath threw a ragtag, if physically impressive crew together. Laura, now rowing for Birmingham RC, pulled a few strings to complement the crew with a genetic freak of a guy called Jaws. The two opposition crews duly scratched and the crew was left to row over to claim the pot. Simple? One would think so, but no. Off the start of the 500m course, Harry in the stroke seat caught an enormous boat-stopping crab that slew the boat off the regatta course and into the path of an oncoming cruiser. Umpire gave us three warnings and was close to disqualifying us. It was the closest I have come to losing a row over.

## 1998/99 - JJ Doel

98/99 began with the club maintaining a firm hold in the union, if not quite so strong on the water. Harry Long had been elected (after a recount!) as Sports President and I was Sports Treasurer. Summer training was limited to myself and Harry training for the pairs head (6<sup>th</sup> at S2) and us coaching Ged Roddy, Robin Brew (former olympic swimmer) and Richard Hobson (former GB triathlon champ) to earn some brownie points. At grass roots level the club was starting to build momentum and for the first time had over 100 members at the beginning of the season. To encompass this, committee had 11 members this year, which led to some very heated exchanges at times.

Winter season was slow to get going, but once up and rolling the eight started to move. Headship was taken at Bristol Docks and Gloucester Head where we won both S1 and S2 events with the same crew. HoRR however was a step too far as the IC novices (penant winners) came powering past us, leaving us wondering where the boat speed had gone. BUSA was a disaster but contrasted sharply with Evesham Sprint the next day. The senior eight lost the big Mooseman to a (BUBC) career-ending knee injury so as a sub we took the next best person in the squad - Katie! Winning S3 against Stourport with a girl in the bow seat was very funny - and that was despite her crab off the start. Everyone won something that day as the girls squad, who had raced two eights (a first??) in the wHoRR, had stacks of fit keen novices and competition for places was intense. Exam timings cost the senior squad a couple of well known faces, but the rapid rise through the ranks of novices such as Rubs, Karim, Joris etc allowed us to nail some good wins, taking Victor Ludorum at Worcester regatta and an exceedingly wiley piece of coxing by Alan Every at Monmouth winning us S2 8s against Thames Shopkeepers.



8 - New Sims 4+ named after Colin Jackson

As Henley drew inexorably closer the squad was starting to come together. Recruiting Julian Bewick from Monkton Combe to coach was an inspired move as he also came with Monkton Combe's 2<sup>nd</sup> eight which was vastly superior to the now tiring Janousek David Vandelinde. For the first time in many years, selection became an issue for the Henley crew, Dan and Stef losing out to the final line up of JJ, Bren, Rubs, Joris, Karim, Harry, Dylan, Angus, coxed by Alan Every. Training was intense, under the watchful eyes of Ged Roddy, Robin Brew, and Richard Hobson in the recently built new gym, maybe a little too late in the season to start doing heavy weights? Boat speed increased and increased, despite this being an extremely light eight (JJ & Dylan heaviest at 13.5 and 13.3 respectively). Reading Regatta saw us get into finals of S3 and S4 eights with a real possibility of pulling off a scoop until the weather put paid to that, lightning storms forcing the early closure of the regatta, despite Brendan's blue language to the umpires. On to Henley, a pre-qualification and anticipation of the draw, resulting in St. Andrews College, Sydney, AUS. Accommodation was in Royal Holloway college in Egham and nerves were high - Harry losing his entire carbo loading all over his sandals in the car park of the Harvester the night before the big day. Anyway, despite us performing very well against all crews we paired up with, the Sydney guys, having travelled 13000 miles were pretty quick and left us on the start, recording the fastest time of the day in the Temple. Back to Egham for the drowning of the sorrows - the photos that exist from that night tell more than a thousand words ever could.

The summer saw the first Bath trip to the City of Oxford regatta for many years. BUBC threw together two eights, the first containing stalwarts such as Carl Nicholson, Paul Sheen, Jim Bate, narrowing throwing away a half length lead in the final 250m. The second eight saw the first (and last?) race for Geoff Holloway in the Bath boat that was to later bear his name. Rowing and drinking

were as important as ever, JJ and Rock finally arriving back at the campsite the next morning at 7am, with a stolen bike and several other mementoes.

### 1999-2000 - Alex “Fumé” Palmer

After a year out in Paris on placement I was back in Bath and keen to get back in the swing of things after dabbling with rowing at Cercle Nautique de France on the Seine, whilst hoping to just turn up and row after doing my fair share of organisation in previous years. Karim was running the show this year, and we had some interesting new arrivals including Hugh McCaffrey, Ed Baker and Jens Ellrich from Germany, plus a healthy contingent from the previous years Henley boat including Reuben Ergmore, Will Randall, Dan Flashman and JJ Doel. Our first race of the year was the fours head where we came 6<sup>th</sup> in Sen3 4+. We were still based out of Saltford, and despite the massive improvements in sports facilities on campus this had still not filtered down to the boat club despite our best efforts to persuade Ged Roddy MBE otherwise (his mind must have been on other things...).

Coaching was in the hands of Alan Every who lined us up a nice training camp at Girton college in Cambridge over Easter. As well as getting in some good miles, this provided some legendary scenes with the Girton college squad on a night out with Dan Flashman winning hands down in the arm wrestling and holding a pencil between your pecs contest against some Goldie hopefuls.

In my continuing quest for a BUSA medal I was concentrating on sculling over the winter and after a swim in the Cam at Easter, I was all set for BUSA and progressed through the rounds into the final. Here I was basking in the glory of getting to a final (OK I got whipped and came 6<sup>th</sup>) only to be completely upstaged by our Novice women’s boat who had a storming row to claim the first Bath victory at BUSA for many, many years..... winning my novice pot the next day at Evesham proved little consolation!

The remainder of the summer focussed on getting the VIII qualified for Henley to avoid the disappointment of 97. [JJ: Early form was misleading as the first boat almost lost in the final of S4 8+ to the second boat, who were leading for the first half of the race, a bunch of raw and very large novices with JJ and Fabio coming out of retirement to make up numbers.] Reading Regatta proved a turning point as we doubled up to put in 2 great rows to win Sen 3 VIII’s and lose narrowly in the final of Sen 2 VIII’s. Marlow did not go quite as well, but we had done enough to secure pre-qualification.. the draw proved kind to Bath Uni as we drew Canford School in the first round of the Temple (with their Top boat being in the P.E.). A bit quick bit of re-arranging the Henley Race schedule to accommodate half the crews graduation was needed and we were all set for the big day (graduation was a mere side show in the end...)

Nerves clearly got to young Hugh McCaffrey the day of the first round, although the first we all knew of it was when he caught a boat stopping crab off the start against Canford! A sense of collective panic focussed everyone immediately and we recovered well and moved through Canford holding them off for a one length victory.. the sense of relief at finally winning a race at Henley was immense..... on to round 2 against Yale.

So here we are up against a seeded crew of Yale lighties who had a bye in the first round.. our only hope was to try and rattle them off the start and hope their nerves would get to them. Once again, the legend that was Jens Ellrich came into his own. (an explanation may be needed here, at not much over 5ft tall, Jens was pure German muscle in a tight shiny lycra, and he pulled one of the best

ergs in the boat even before weight adjusting). We thought we would trick Yale into thinking we were a bunch of German internationals masquerading as Bath Uni, so sat on the stake boats he turned round and shouted at us all in German! Who knows if it worked, but I was scared sat behind him at 7... we took them off the start but they moved through us easily and we didn't see them again until the finish. The verdict was a length and a half, which after they went on to win the Temple seems very respectable, but at the time we wished we'd known it was as close coming through the enclosures. Hindsight is a beautiful thing.

## 2000's

### September 2000 – June 2001 - Sanchez

I believe it is safe to say that the 2000-1 rowing season at Bath was to see the club make a great step forward. Hugh McCaffrey was Chairman, Ed Baker & Will King shared the role of Mens' Captain and Laura Parsonage was the Womens Captain. First notable event of the year was the Christmas Dinner at the Hilton in the centre of Bath. One of the Captain's was known to say in their speech that the only way to the top was to sleep with the coach.....a fine lesson in life! Following the Dinner, there was a city wide requirement for the club to put down a £10,000 deposit for the hire of any venue!

The new-year saw the foot and mouth scare all but end the club's ability to row from Saltford; any club seen on the Avon County stretch could face a large fine. The club was able to move a couple of Boats over to Bristol Aerial, a good half an hour away from Avon County. Four 'ignorant' novices were forced by their coach to arise at 5am to get over to Bristol Aerial in time for a 9.15 return for a good sleep in lectures! The same 'naïve' novice four were also forced by their coach, a Mr. Mark Warland, to do a 20 minute tank session at Monkton Combe at race pace!!! His language certainly didn't compliment the misty rolling hills of the west country downs, and we soon had a School Master marching up the hill to reprimand what he thought was 5 drunken fools!

The Eights Head again drew together those eight men considered best for the job. An adequate performance matched that we had seen in Nottingham Trent a few weeks previously. Our Captain, Will King arranged a weeks training camp at the then developing Dorney Lake. The club spent a week up and down the 1000m course, and the Novice Boys and the Senior Men worked on their eights & fours ready for BUSA regatta. What with the onslaught of the Windsor Boys, Ian McCaig & Ed Baker, and the blunt approach of the captain tired of 6.57 pulling maggots slowing him down, Bath secured the purchase of an Aylings AX2, a spare that had gone down to Sydney for a certain coxless four. The quad was formed, compromising the 3 mentioned, and our very special Mr. D. At the BUSA regatta the quad performed well, receiving a bronze in the elite quads competition. This would be the Henley Boat.

The preparations for the Regatta were good, with the guys securing some coaching time from GB rower Jane Hall. Three blades were smashed days before qualifiers, but all was resolved and the quad qualified for a Wednesday morning at Henley. Unfortunately for the lads, they pulled eventual winners Leander in the first round. Need I say anymore?

### 2001/02 - Sanchez

The 2001-2002 year was one of Bath's most successful to date. Dylan Samuel was appointed Chairman, Ian McCaig was Mens' captain & Sarah Hodgson was the Womens' Captain.

The start of the season saw the men head to Longleat for a starring role in the ITV drama Bertie & Elizabeth. The show was replicating a seat at Henley, so ITV decked us out in suitable 1930's attire, and provided us with two very old wooden eights. Unfortunately we couldn't quite follow the script (boats winning when they shouldn't be, crews cheering when they'd lost because they were closer to the camera!) Any way a good day was had by all, and the club was paid £1600 for their efforts.

The club was still based at Saltford, boating out of Avon County & Bristol University's Boat Houses. An influx of good school boy rowers increased the quality and depth of the squad. Relationships with

Avon County began to worsen. A notable incident being our eight crashing with their senior mens coxless four Empacher, which received a lot of damage. Our boy Phil Homsy was taken to Hospital but was ok, McCaffrey went for a paddle, good old ejector seat!

The senior Men and women travelled to Zurich for an Anniversary Regatta held by the University. Highlights included a 24 man Stampfli that was seen on the water! The weekend was a great success.

The new-year saw heavy flooding, and this meant the club established itself at the Sulis Club, now managed by Rob Gibbon, for most of its land training. The Indoor erg competitions showed that the club was quite fit, notably Ian McCaig pulling 6.27 as a lightweight. Our training camp was held at Gloucester, and Sulis respectively. A wet day of seat racing produced an eight that would reach the mighty 100<sup>th</sup> place in the Eights head, Bath's best result to date. The depth of the squad meant we also had a second eight that put out a strong performance.

Next on the cards was BUSA. The mens' squad went away to Wales, boating from Cardiff Bay. Much thanks has to go to Henry Kelly and his family for this opportunity. The Kellys remain strong supporters of the club. Many of the Meles who have graced the banks at Henley would have attended one of their legendary car park lunches. The camp was a great success, and the crews for BUSA were selected. Again the quad would be the top boat, with Ian McCaig, Ed Baker, Peter James and Hugh McCaffrey the BUSA crew. The conditions at BUSA were particularly grim, but the quad again won Bronze in an exact repeat of last year. A strong performance by our novice 4 saw them make the final; close but no cigar.

By this stage relationships with Avon County had soured so much that the club had left their boat house. Fortunately, we struck up a relationship with Stephanie Bailey Cooper at Minerva, and the club were back at their 'quaint' stretch of river. We also moved the quad and the Eight to Bristol Aerial.

The club continued to compete overseas, with a trip to Paris, for the Paris 'Croc' Cup. The quad raced against the shortest but widest (all muscle) crew from Warsaw. Our boys came second, but the Windsor Boys saw off their two best in the doubles race; a very good victory for Bath. Also successful was the 4+ of Dylan Samuel, Hugh McCaffrey, Henry Kelly & Stef Reeve. Stef let Ed Baker race in the final, and the boys won. The novice eight showed a gutsy effort but our British brut was not enough for the finesses, and Empachers of the foreigners. The after party saw one KCL chap sent to hospital. The apple sauce on the floor will provide good memories for many.

The Blues Dinner saw the club pick up the Club of the year Award; a hard working committee saw the club raise over £6000 that year, and purchased a fair amount of new equipment. Half Blues went to the quad of the previous year for their BUSA performance and Henley qualification.

The quad was eager to improve its Henley performance, and in a tough set of testing the Henley quad became a composite with Miles Sharpe from Marlow introduced, a Brit 4+ winner the previous summer with NCRA. The final crew was the Windsor Boys, Peter James and Miles Sharpe. A second quad was also formed with Hugh McCaffrey, Phil Homsy, Henry Kelly and Bruce Hellman (in a 4- lent to us by Mr. Kelly, Commodore of the Welsh Rowing Association). Fortunately for the club, Bruce was the SA President that year, and this certainly helped us step up the notch it did that season. By this stage Tracy Duncan, who had rowed in the Sydney 2000 Olympics in a Canadian double had

taken a research position and Bath and was coaching us as well. The quad qualified for Henley, but lost to Tideway SS & Northampton RC in the first round. The second quad was the fastest non qualifier! Our Brit 4 of Tobias Dean, Stef Reeve, Jon Pitkin and Jon Veness had a strong non qualifying position. Henley revelling certainly went up a level this year. Every night was an all out affair. Will Randall, Latinos and more gas chambers then you could poke a stick at on the Wednesday started a great week/end for the Bath lot.

The quad kept together loosely over the Summer, and competed at the National Championships. Ian McCaig came down with the flu the night before the race, but Ed Baker competed with three other rowers from IC and they won Silver in their division.

## 2002/03 - Sanchez

Another great year for Bath; with myself at the helm and Hugh McCaffrey and Sarah Rowe as the respective Captains. The club, based at Minerva faced another season of floods, resulting in the water at one stage reaching such high levels that the small raised boat house at the club flooded. Members of the club had to wade in to the neck high water in wetsuits to retrieve the boats! Our handy man Chip built racks for the club to store all our boats at Minerva.

The eight moved to Aerial, an early head race there saw the club pick up 54 medals!!

The fours head was a hideous day, and the quad did not perform as expected. Mike Williams, an American post grad had joined the Henley quad, Miles had moved to Imperial. The winter season saw us training for the eights head. Jon V covered the floor with his insides at the Birmingham Indoor Arena following his 6.30 erg (another lightweight). Talking of lightweights, the great John Gray went to register on the day of the indoors, as a lightweight. When 84 kilos appeared in red on the screen, a Homer Simsponeque 'doh' was heard by those near by!

In the eights, a strong but inexperienced crew saw us reach 130, a respectable result and 3rd in the senior 4 category that we raced in. Of note was that the club raced in an Empacher, thanks to our bow man being an ex Hampton boy. The man who had fallen asleep in the bows whilst waiting for the race to start!!

The club had the Easter training Camp at Gloucester, Paul Horsfell (Chip) our connection with the club on this occasion. Over Easter, the club was able to pick up two nearly new Stelph pairs that had been used in GB trials only months earlier. Bath went to BUSA with An AX2 Aylings, Our Simms, two new pairs, and our newly vortex edged smoothies – our Trailer looked respectable. Under the watchful eye of Geoff Holloway the club had a gruesome BUSA plan – enter a lot of races. On the eve of BUSA, the Blues Dinner saw Peter James pick up a Half Blue.

The quad would again be the top boat at BUSA, but a new Durham quad appeared that destroyed the field, and took with them our routine Bronze, pushing Hugh McCaffrey, Alistair Bushby, Henry Kelly and Peter James to 4<sup>th</sup> place. The novice 4+ of myself, Joe Davidson Merritt, Oli Compton and Jon Veness won a bronze against some very strong competition (an Oxford Brookes crew with 3 GB scullers for one).

Day 2 saw a great day for Bath, the women did well, and our pairs earned very valuable points for the club. A surprise Silver came in the Elite 4- of Phil Homsy, Peter James, Hugh McCaffrey & Alistair

Bushby; our best BUSA result ever. They were beaten by a very strong University of London 4-. The club ended up coming 6<sup>th</sup> overall, by far the club's best ever result at BUSA.

All attention was focused on Henley, the quad of Peter James, Hugh McCaffrey, Jo Davidson-Merritt and Henry Kelly was set. The Brit 4+ of myself, Jon Veness, Phil Homsy and Alistair Busby was to emulate a similar result as the previous years'. The draw for the quad was Bath's most promising yet; Auriol Kensington/Vesta in the first round. Following the race in the umpire's boat I watched as Bath seemed to hold AK off. They maintained the lead for much of the race, and it wasn't until Remenhem that the pendulum swung slightly AK's way; Another first round defeat for Bath. Bath was also represented by Ed Baker in a composite quad with Imperial. Miles Sharpe, who had rowed in the Bath quad two Henley's previous was also in the crew. They too went out in the 1<sup>st</sup> round. The Pimms' was opened, 15 Blazers were present, and all bar myself were evicted from the pub on the Wednesday night!

## Summer 2003 - JJ Doel

Gloucester, Bristol and Ross regattas 2003 saw the birth of Meles Boat Club on the water. A large contingent of Bathies, past and present, girls and boys, besplendoured in new kit, travelled to the west country for a weekend of rowing debauchery. Racing in Dr.F, the Furnivall ex-Molesey VIII, [recently purchased by BUBC] fours from Wallingford and small boats from Furnivall, the club competed in a range of races from Nov 1x, Mxd 2x, W4+ to S2 8+. Missing out on winning S2 8s at the docks against Black Sheep, Bath sought revenge in their own inimitable style, namely drinking all Molesey's beer, pulling their women, and beating their S2 8 the next morning. A victory celebration by Will King resulted in him losing his seat in the Molesey elite 8. Rubs Ergmore was punished for racing for Bridgnorth RC rather than Meles BC in his single by taking an early bath in the docks against someone young enough to be his son. Not only successful off the water, Meles BC won two pots, in S4 1x and S4 2x.

## 2003 – 2004 Season

Oliver Griffiths



9 - HRR 2004 - Mens Quadruple Sculls - BUBC/RUBC

## 2004 – 2005 Season

Henry Kelly



10 - Marcus Bateman 2001-2005 went on to be first reserve at London 2012 Olympics



11 - HRR 2005



12 - HRR 2005 2nd Boat



13 - HRR 2005 - Mens Quadruple Sculls

## 2005 – 2006 Season

Tom Booth



14 - BUBC representation for GB Rowing



15 - HRR 2006

## 2006 – 2007 Season

Greg Kinsey



### Bath University Boat Club

Supported by The University of Bath Students' Union, registered charity (number 1143154).





16 - Dave Lyons (3 seat) at the 2006 Under 23 World championships named Sports Personality of the Year 2007



17 - HRR 2008 - Temple Challenge Cup

## 2007 – 2008 Season

Trevor Iggenden



18 - Training Camp in Munich



19 - HRR 2008 - Temple Challenge Cup



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20 - HRR 1st VIII 2008



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21 - HRR 2nd VIII 2008



22 - HRR 3rd VIII 2008



23 - Metropolitan Regatta 2008

## 2008/09 Season

Will Wijnberg



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24 - HARR 1st VIII 2009



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25 - HARR 2nd VIII 2009

## 2009/10 Season

Paddy Allen



26 - HRR 1st VIII 2010



27 - HRR 2nd VIII 2010

## **2010's**

### **2010/11 Season**

Oliver Horncastle

### **2011/12 Season**

Nicki Godbold

### **2012/13 Season**

Rosie Steel

### **2013/14 Season**

Stuart Gordon

### **2014/15 Season**

Stuart Gordon