

# Churchill College Boat Club: what it means to students

**I cannot imagine my experience at Churchill without the Boat Club.** I would never have been able to try rowing outside of university, but I've been supported in finding a sport I really enjoy. Rowing is not something I had been exposed to growing up, and I think it's one of the things that makes Cambridge such a unique place to study. After I got my Cambridge offer, I watched the Boat Race and decided that I would love to try rowing when I arrive at university. It was so easy to join with events like the Boat Club BBQ and try rowing day, which were so enjoyable that I have never wanted to stop.

I joined CCBC in freshers' week because it felt like a quintessential Cambridge experience, not expecting to commit to rowing so wholeheartedly. It was so much fun learning a completely new sport and immersing myself in a really supportive community where I have met many incredible friends. It's a brilliant way to get stuck into College life, meet new people from different years and courses and experience something at the heart of Cambridge University life. Rowing has been fundamental in shaping my university experience. I have made lifelong friends and had the opportunity to push myself to new levels.



**Rowing at CCBC has helped me find my ideal work-life balance at Cambridge.**

Being able to row means having an amazing community of people who have become some of my best friends at College, as well as the opportunity to get away from studies and direct my attention towards another goal for a few hours a day, especially in the summer months. It is such a supportive, ambitious, and fun club where I can grow in non-academic spheres. Rowing means so much to me, especially with the pressures of academics. It's an outlet for me to relax and think about something other than studying! Rowing helps structure my week, pushes me to be a better person, and to look after myself so that I can keep improving my fitness and technique. I get to exercise with people I care about and who share my ambition and passion for the sport. My rowing skill and general fitness have improved so much, and I have achieved things I would never have thought possible two years ago.



**Rowing is genuinely the aspect of my life that I am most grateful for in my time here.**

Rowing for CCBC has been a really important part of my time at Churchill College. The community has been incredible for helping me settle into a new environment. I have never been committed to a team sport before, and I have learnt so much about what it means to be part of a crew. I love that rowing is a team sport, and I have met most of my closest friends at College through the Boat Club. I always get to the Boathouse with a smile on my face because I get to see everyone, even if I have to wake up at 5am! There is friendly competition between students, and we all push each other to try our best, whether on the College first boats or just rowing once a week for fun. Rowing can be as competitive or intense as you like, with different crews training from three to ten times a week! It is the friendly and welcoming nature of the Boat Club that has kept me here for my fifth(!) year, and I love the community that has been built.

**Definitely one of my favourite memories from my time in Cambridge thus far.** I think there are few experiences as quintessentially Cambridge as getting to row in the Bumps races. It is the non-academic focus of so many students' term and an important outlet for otherwise very studious people. I had some of the most fun and rewarding days in my university career when participating in the Bumps: the energy and excitement leading up to the races; the people lining the riverbanks. It was an amazing feeling rowing home with the flag flying from the back of the boat. Rowing home with the Churchill flag and greenery in our hair, getting applauded from the bank: it felt incredible to know that all of our hard training through the year had paid off in the best way possible.

**Our success is all because of your support that makes rowing accessible to everyone.** The passion for the sport at CCBC is truly special, and I think that this is in no small part due to the open access provided to all students by the College and its donors. The accessibility of the Boat Club is, in my opinion, crucial. The fact that the Boat Club does not need to charge membership fees allows anyone in College, regardless of background, to join in and get in a boat. Your donations make rowing accessible to students of all backgrounds in a way it isn't at many Colleges and keep Churchill as competitive as we can be on the river!



**CCBC is such a special club, without which so many of us would not have discovered the joys of rowing.** It means so much to me to know how many people now and in the future will be able to share the positive impact on their lives that rowing here has made thanks to donations. Donations allow us to keep our fleet at an extremely high level. This means that we can train and race to our maximum potential, as well as meaning that there are enough boats for everyone to partake. Donations have allowed us to improve loads of equipment over the last few years, for example supporting the lower boats by ensuring they have good quality blades/shells and coxing equipment. This is really important as it furthers the depth of the Club as well as allowing us to grow more easily. Without your generosity, CCBC would be very different, and there would be far fewer opportunities for rowers and coxes to improve. Thank you so much for providing us with the equipment that helps enable our progress and success. We are so lucky to have access to such amazing equipment, and the fact that this does not become a stressful burden upon us as a student body means that rowing is made accessible to all, and we can focus on what is most important - making boats go fast! I am so grateful for our active and involved alumni community for supporting this Club.

Produced in Easter term 2026 using the words of CCBC members: Annabelle (U&G21) Earth Sciences, Cassie (U24) History and Modern Languages, Jeremy (G20) PhD in Particle Physics, Jonny (U23) Mathematics, Mia (U23) Natural Sciences Chemistry, Molly (U&G21) History PGCE, Odhran (U24) Law, Olivia (U23) Geography.

