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## Alumni Secretary's Welcome

Welcome to the 2023 Alumni Newsletter! Apologies for the delay in getting this out, but hopefully the content from the president and captains' reports will more than make up for it.

It has been a great year so far for OUHC, with us continuing to put out 8 competitive teams, as well as having an extensive coaching network from the blues teams in the 2s, 3s and 4s.

The club is in a great place after last year with the both the Men's and Women's blues teams playing in the National Leagues on a Saturday, as well as in the BUCS premier leagues on the weekend.

OUHC continues to be the largest mixed-sex sports club in the university, as well as boasting a wide range out outreach activities, college hockey and the academy set up. All of this culminates in a very happy and healthy hockey club both on and off the pitch.

Alumni day has been provisionally booked for 20<sup>th</sup> May down at Iffley Road. Typically, this consist of a round-robin tournament, with prizes for the winning team and other notable performances. Please do keep this date free as it will be great to see lots of you down there! As I'm you can anticipate, this will be followed by a Vincent's session, and I will also look to book a meal in town. If you would like to submit a team for Alumni Day, please send me an email at: [aran.johal@new.ox.ac.uk](mailto:aran.johal@new.ox.ac.uk). Ideally these would be 6 mixed players, but we can join some teams up or add some players if you are a few short!

If you do have any questions about the club or anything alumni-related, please get in touch with either myself or Grace Annetts, our president. We're always very keen to hear from alumni and we will do our best to help in any way possible. As I'm sure you are aware, the club strongly relies on donations from alumni to function, so please do consider donating to the club to help move forward!

*Aran Johal (AJ), Alumni secretary*

## Dates for your diary:

### 2s/3s/4s Varsity:

19<sup>th</sup> February, Wilberforce Road, C\*mbridge

### Blues Varsity:

12<sup>th</sup> March, Southgate Hockey Club

### Alumni Day (matches and dinner):

20<sup>th</sup> May, Iffley Road (Awaiting Confirmation)

## President's Report

As expected, the start of the 2022-23 season has been full of successes both on and off-pitch as OUHC maintains its glory as the biggest and most social Oxford University sports club. As standard, preseason began in September with the Blues teams shaking off the rust before venturing on their annual tour, heading back to Bath University for the second year in a row. The teams also braved the social scene in the city this year, donning creative costumes involving shower caps and rubber ducks. Meanwhile, back at the fortress, all 8 teams have been going from strength to strength over the course of the season. The teams are all led by sensational captains as well as the 11 Blues players that act as student-coaches to support them from the sidelines. With multiple of our student-coaches being injured and unable to play this term, coaching has provided them with that extra boost of OUHC spirit we could all do with on a weekly basis! We also continue to run outreach events including working with KEEN Oxford and running the Academy scheme at the weekend to bridge the college-university hockey gap.

Particular teams have had spectacular performances over this season. The Rads are doing brilliantly in their BUCS league, entering the new year as top of their league and pushing that promotion they so deserve. The Mavs have also been accused of being suspiciously good for their Saturday league by an opposition this year, so all credit to them! Special

individual congratulations must also be given to Fred Newbold, who continues to play for the Men's Wales Senior team and has just been selected for their World Cup Squad as well as playing for GB U20+1s in the Sultan of Johor Cup in Malaysia this season. Our mens 2s player Benedict Yorston also qualified for and played in his first ever Real Tennis British Open this year, which is an amazing achievement outside of hockey!

The OUHC social scene has - as always - been massive this year, thanks to the hard work of our social secs Louis and Lucy. Our Disney-themed Autumn Drinks Festival was as successful as ever in welcoming players to the club, ranging from undergraduate freshers to postgraduate freshers to the current Blues Captain Josh (who suspiciously had evaded welcoming thus far). Our club-wide Christmas dinner was also a huge success, with Voco Spires hotel welcoming us back again for an evening of celebrations.

Looking ahead, our teams will continue to push themselves as we head to the real peaks of the season - BDOTY and Blues Varsity. We'd love to see as many of the alumni there as possible - so please do let me know if you'll be there as I'd love to meet or catch up with you!

As always, please do let any of your OUHC friends who may not be on the mailing list or the Facebook group to get in touch so they can be kept up to date with club news. We are always happy to hear from all alumni whether that be with personal news or any stories from your time at OUHC! We are always trying to increase our reach with the network of alumni all over the world.

Happy New Year everyone!

Grace Annetts, OUHC President

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*Fred Newbold in action at the Hockey World Cup*



*Pippa Garbutt in action at Blue's Varsity with a jab tackle*

## Women's Blues

Validity Women's Conference Midlands: WDLLWDLWD

ICG Women's Premier (National): LLLLLL

The Women's Blues have faced a lot this season already. A great intake of freshers and a large amount of our squad returning from last year set us up well in preseason, coming away with a few draws and wins against top teams, and some very creative costumes. A new coach is always a challenge, but welcoming Matt Wilson into the WBs squad has been exciting and brought a new level of creativity to the WBs play.

Ups and downs are always a part of the Women's Blues seasons and with the onset of Michaelmas term, this year was no different. Countless A&E trips, injuries, surgeries, and concussions at times decimated our squad size, but we made up for it with a strong sideline social presence. In National league, we currently sit mid-table, with some great wins against Beeston, Bedford and Cannock, a draw against top of the table and some frustrating losses. Looking forward to the rest of the season we hope to push into the top three.

BUCS Premier hasn't been so kind to us. Starting with two tough losses against Edinburgh and Nottingham Trent set the scene for newcomers to the squad and pushed the WBs into action against Durham where they performed brilliantly. A nail biting close and devastating loss to Bath was hard to take but the WBs regathered and played an incredible game against Loughborough to close this half of the season, unfortunately losing 1-0 at the final whistle.

I'm extremely excited for the rest of the season to begin again, looking towards the BUCS Vase which we were runners up in last season and of course another big Varsity win on the 12th of March.

*Rachel Diggin, WB Captain*



## Men's Blues

Men's Conference East: LLDLWLLLL

Men's Premier (National): WLLLLL

After an incredible double promotion last year, the Men's Blues found themselves in two new leagues at the start of this season. For many this involved the first taste of National League hockey, and BUCS Prem has of course been a new experience for all. Despite the obvious challenges of playing at this higher level, especially having lost several key senior players, every man in the squad has conducted themselves with real class. Particularly good to see has been the rise of several O's players to the Blues, who through impressive hard work have since started to become crucial members of the team.

Season highlights so far have included a fantastic BUCS win against last season's play-off rivals Edinburgh, and a gritty late victory away on a rainy night at Indian Gymkhana. Despite some difficult results, the team has continued to develop, and several individuals are really starting to mature as players. Our off-pitch team culture has been an equally positive environment, with social victories occurring from Tiki Bar to Temple Lounge.

The second half of the season presents an exciting challenge for the Men's Blues, as we look to turn good performances into good results and maintain our hard-won status in our new leagues. Last but not least, on the 12th March we return to Southgate, and will settle for nothing less than retaining the Varsity Trophy.

*Josh Nurse (Nursehole), MB Captain*



*George Holding with a turn of pace showing  
a Tab how it's done*

## Radicals

South Central North 1: WLLWDWLWLWL

BUCS Midlands Tier 2A: WWLWWW

The Rads had a high turnover of players this season, however we gained an exciting group of freshers and some of last years Mavericks. The team has come together a long way through the season, mastering both the man-to-man press and coach Fred's international zone. As is typical with the Radicals, scoring the goals can sometimes be problematic but I am confident we have almost always been the better team on the pitch and are learning to 'just f\*\*\*ing hit it' (Fred Newbold 2022).

We had a strong start in BUCS, beating both Brookes 2s and Loughborough 5s, 6-0 and 7-2 respectively. The next game proved more challenging with a well-rehearsed Birmingham team beating us 2-0 at home. The very next weekend we travelled up to their home ground – with no coach and low in numbers; but as always, the Rads stepped up and won 4-1 under the floodlights before coming back to Temple Lounge to dominate the Is at a well-deserved crewdate. The results in BUCS kept coming and we currently sit at the top of the league where it is smelling a lot like promotion. The cup has also been a successful

campaign for the Rads as we soar into the quarter finals with relative ease.

Saturday league is a different story; with 5 wins, 1 draw and 5 losses sitting us at 4<sup>th</sup> in the South Central Div 1 North. The games have been tough and haven't always gone the way we would've hoped but the second half of the season looks promising.

Moving into the next half of the season is exciting for the Rads as we challenge the Mavs in our BUCS league (both home and away) and of course varsity of the 19<sup>th</sup> of Feb. Big thanks to coach Fred for bringing his international expertise home to the Rads.

*Clare McFall, Radical Captain*



*Emily Chevassut on a cold rainy night at the  
fortress*

## Occasional's

South Central Men's Premier Division 2:  
LWWDLWDLLW

BUCS Men's Midlands Tier 1: LLDWWLDD

The year started somewhat in the balance. We lost a few key players that have had illustrious careers in the O's – dependable players that have given us stability in the past. However, we retained a really great bunch of lads that were all keen to help the O's to reach their potential, and give me some semblance of control over this motley crew. Furthermore, we had a good intake of talented freshers. Overall, there was a feeling of optimism.

Despite an initial tight 2-1 loss against Wycombe 1s, we quickly were able to bounce back and win our next two games against Staines 2s and Amersham & Chalfont 1s. The first of which was a 3-2 gruelling game, with a deserved spectacular last-minute goal, the second a well-structured and resounding win. Our Saturday League continued with the introduction of the new, now infamous, O-zone press. There were some games of getting used to it, but it proved decisive in wins against Witney and South Berkshire. It also puts us in great stead going into key games in the new year. The likes of the wins against South Berkshire and Staines were crazy games; full of comebacks, resilience, and desperate winners, hence were my personal highlights of the season so far. We currently sit dead on midtable, with real opportunity to move up the standings.

In the BUCS League, we were littered with away games, pretty much exclusively in Nottingham. We have four different Nottingham teams in our league, with the remaining being Birmingham. We lost to the formidable Nottingham 3s, and lost in the last second to a penalty stroke against Birmingham away which was tough to take (we experienced the same against Fareham away in the Saturday League). We turned a corner however, with good wins against Trent 4s and Nottingham 4s. At this point, it looked like we didn't lose at home. Until we did. We ended the Michaelmas

BUCS campaign with a great 2-2 draw with 11 men against Trent 3s, sending them down. We also currently sit mid table here.

The socials were great, with great turnout and a real felling of a proper team taking shape. Hilary hockey with the Os looks promising.

*Jamie Bingham, Occasionals Captain*



*Lewis Collins displays some fine distribution*



*The Mavs celebrate a great 6-1W*

## Mavericks

South Central division 3 North: LWLDLWWWWLWW

BUCS Midlands Tier 2A: LLLLLL

With only 7 Mavs from last year returning to our squad, preseason meant the start of something new. Experienced veterans and silly freshers were recruited. Then came the hard work, dedication, commitment, and passion that led to a winning streak in our Saturday league and an unrivalled social turnout. A special mention has to go to our big 5-2 W against top of the league Yateley. Rumour has it our players are just too good to be true. The mavs were brought back down to earth by many a sobering loss on a Wednesday, but we never failed to bounce back, with stellar performances at crewdates and parkend each week.

We finish this half of the season 5th in our Saturday league and.... bottom of our BUCS league. Our successes would not have been possible without our wonderful coaches Cottee and Lotti, who continue to push the team from strength to strength. We have big plans for next term – we hope to climb to the top of the Saturday league, perhaps win a BUCS match, and most importantly, give the B\*ds a shoeing of a lifetime.

*Becca Waggett and Millie Crewe, Mavericks Captains*



## Infrequents

South Central Div 3 North: LDLWWDWWDW (2nd=)

BUCS Midlands 3B: LDWLD (3rd = with game in hand)

As a result of my over-enthusiasm about preseason availability and only 4 of last year's Varsity squad returning, the Is got off to a slow start to the season. Our first game saw us return to the Iffley road fortress with 5 players rocking up on the day for their first ever visit to the hallowed turf. An unfortunate L to start the season but as their captain put it, "once you guys learn each other's names, you'll tear this league apart". He seems to have been right. After a post-trials talent boost, and appropriate team-building (specifically the annual Ians black tie welcome lunch at Vinnies) things fell into place and the wins started flowing. Our first win of the season (Wycombe A, 3-2) may or may not have also been our first win of 2022: in the glorious scenery of Bisham Abbey, Ian was reborn like a Phoenix from the ashes. (Although Roddam was somehow still there...) Most notably, we've secured huge 6-3 and 2-0 home victories against the two teams currently placed above us in the league: British Airways and Marlow respectively. The fear of playing the Ians seemed too much for one team who tried to force a walkover after we asked to move the game back 30 minutes - not on my watch.

In BUCS, a similar story unfolded: we started with a heavy loss, then a frustrating 1-1 draw before crushing our local rivals Brookes 4-0 at home (no need for a 3s Oxford Derby in Trinity - we'll be too focussed on Pubmaster I'd expect). The Ians have proved we can perform when the odds are stacked against us: despite only taking 11 men and not a single hockey ball between us to Lincoln 1s, we pulled off a promising 1-1 draw. Having played both games against top of the table L'boro, we look to secure a top(ish) table position throughout Hilary.

As I say, the second half of the season brings a lot to look forward to for the Is - potential for promotion on a Saturday and even potentially (if things fall in our favour) in BUCS too. Increasing the current unbeaten

streak is the goal. Socially, we look to continue our stellar performance as our new players and coaches can look forward to a very welcoming evening, and I'm sure the Is presence will be felt at BGC and both BDOTY and Blues Varsity. Hopefully, there will be several alumni-Ians at BDOTY to see this new generation perhaps even go back-to-back against the Squanderers.

*Matt Shalless, Infrequents Captain*



*The Ian's in their natural environment at the Xmas diner*

## Renegades

South Central Division 1 Cherwell: LWLWWWWLW

The Renegades entered their third year of existence and second season in a league with all guns blazing. After establishing ourselves last year, this season's objective has been to compete for the top spot of the South Central Women's Division 1 league; and we are doing just that.

In addition to some of last year's Rens, trials brought an exciting, talented group of freshers who have been a huge addition to the squad. Under the guidance and support of Johann and Claudia's coaching, this group of individual players were quickly moulded into a cohesive team, resulting in some truly liquid hockey. Our short corner practice has been crucial to our success, as a large majority of our goals have been scored by our set pieces, with our drag flicks becoming famous. In addition to looking incredibly intimidating, our zonal press (which has been aptly named Park End Zone), has proven to be especially effective in turning over the ball. The Rens' progress in training and success at matches is truly down to the dedication and inspiration our coaches provide for the team.

Although we started the year with a difficult 7-0 loss against Oxford Hawks 6s, we have not let this set the tone for the rest of the season. After each loss (of which there have been few), we have come back stronger than before, leading to a four-game winning streak mid-term. Our streak was cut short by Tring 1s, who, after 2-2 at halftime, narrowly pulled ahead by one goal. Yet, despite a goal difference of only 1, we end the first half of the season with 18 points, placing us 4th in the league overall. We always put out a fierce team and have played some great hockey this term.

The Rens have a strong shoeing legacy, with a very consistent 3-0 Varsity win each year. As we enter Hilary, we are preparing for another Varsity domination. Each member of the team has greatly improved over the last couple of months, and in the

lead up to BDOTY I am extremely excited to see how far we can go.

Our performance is only matched by our attitude, as we always bring the chat and fun despite the conditions — even when Johann makes us do doggies during a hail storm. The full team turnout at every training session and social is a testament to how much the Rens are committed to hockey and each other. I'm excited to see us continue to improve, hopefully resulting in the ambitious but achievable task of finishing top of the league.

#UptheRens

*Anoushka Howard-Sneyd, Renegades Captain*



*The Rens after a great W on the road*

**Sporadics**

SCMN Div 5: DDLLLLLDWDWW

The Spos season started off with a derby against Oxford Hawks. A 1-1 draw at Fortress Iffley. Famously (or at least according to Jonny Cunningham), the Spos lose the first 5 games of the season. Perhaps this unusually fast start to the season was due to the inaugural Sporadicon. Sporadicon was the Spos 'preseason tour' to Sofia, Bulgaria. Highlights included altitude training, some extraordinary Pubmaster™ play and seriously confusing some tabs by playing a game of Black White Black.

Alas the hope of an unbeaten season died in Eastcote. Unfortunately, this was the start of 5 tough games on the road. Although the results may not have gone our way, great heart and passion for the jersey was displayed. Most notably, we voyaged to Leighton Buzzard with 10 men in monsoon-like conditions to completely out play them in the first half. What was most pleasing was the fact that the new generation were already starting to show more dedication to the spos than a certain veteran. Cameron Bovell (somehow still around) declared that he would play if we didn't have the numbers for the game. Did he stick to his word? No. I guess he made up for it by procuring so many Jaeger bombs for the boys.

The turning point of the season was Witney at home. This was the Spoaches first opportunity to have a look at the team play. Afterwards, we made some changes and haven't lost since. Who would have thought that they actually knew what they were talking about? Or perhaps it was just the return of Evan Slater from illness that caused the change in form.

Michaelmas has been all about learning for the Spos. The better Bingham learnt to reject his brother's demands to play for the Os. Seb Bird learnt to resist the allure of dancing candlelight homegrown mushrooms. I have learnt to wait for the whistle before taking a p flick. Some things are just too difficult for the Spos to learn. I think it is time that Nicholls and Biscuit accept that having two hands on the stick is a skill we are never going to master. The Spos have come on so

much from September that I am certain of big things come BDOTY.

*William Gibson, Sporadics Captain*



*The Spos kicking of the 8/8 clean sweep*