

NEW BOATHOUSE APPEAL

The UBBC boat houses at Saltford have served the Club well for over 80 years, but they are little changed since many of our Alumni were at Bristol, and are now in urgent need of replacement. A new boat house is planned for the same Saltford site, but it will be larger than the two existing ones.

The new building will provide space for both boat storage and changing facilities to cater for a large and growing Club. The new structure will also avoid any problems caused by flooding, and will have reliable security to protect against acts of vandalism and potential break-ins.

The estimated total cost of the new boat house is £560,000, and it is hoped that work will commence by the end of 2010, with the new building opened in time for the start of the 2011/12 academic year in October 2011.

Partial funding is being provided by the University and other sources, and a total of around £370,000 has now been secured, leaving around £190,000 still to raise. The Club is hoping to raise this additional amount within the next few months, in order to meet the target opening date for the new boat house.

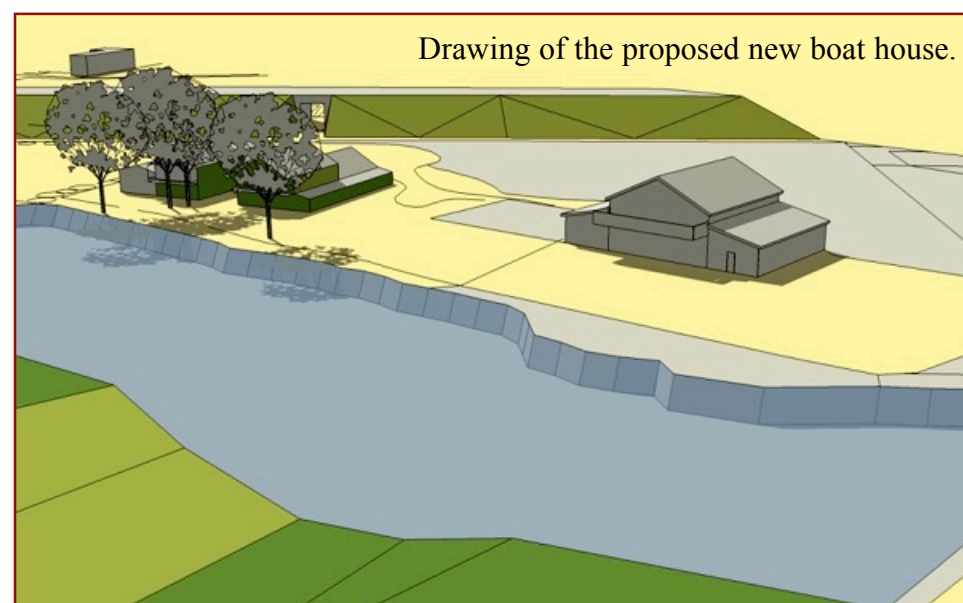
Alumni will be aware that a fundraising dinner is being held at Leander Club, Henley, on Saturday 3 July 2010, at which a raffle will be drawn. The fantastic prize list includes lunch for two at the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron (including return flights to Sydney); dinner and a 'behind the scenes visit' to Leander Club with a GB rowing coach; salmon fishing in Scotland; shooting at Bisley; golf at Wisley; and the Alumni Chairman's weight in aged claret! If you have not yet entered the raffle, or if you would

like to buy further tickets, please contact Claire Eatock (0117 331 8209 Claire.Eatock@bristol.ac.uk).

If any Alumni would like to make a contribution towards the Club's fundraising target for the new boat house, their generosity would be greatly appreciated. Until 31 July 2011, all donations received will be enhanced by a third thanks to the Government's Gift Match Scheme. When combined with Gift Aid (for UK taxpayers), this means that every £1 given towards this project could be worth up to £1.66 to your Club. There has never been a better time to support UBBC!



One of the current boat houses at Saltford.



Drawing of the proposed new boat house.

If you would like to donate please contact:

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The raffle draw will take place on

**Saturday 3rd July 2010,
at Leander Club.**

Thanks to Harry Engels (www.harryengels.com) for the use of the photos of UBBC's Senior Men's First VIII on pages 5 and 6 of this newsletter (copyright Harry Engels).



THE RISE AND RISE OF BRISTOL NOVICE ROWING

Former UBBC Captain Adam Mackenzie takes a look back at the past 5 years of Novice rowing

I vividly remember signing up for the Boat Club back in October 2005. Freshers' Fairs across the nation will often be likened to a cattle market, but the inadequately sized Avon Gorge room on the fifth floor of the University of Bristol Students' Union into which all the sport clubs are crammed is, if anything, an even more unsettling experience.

Few students make it that far up the Union building; hung-over hockey players reeking of pizza and energy drink samples greet those who do. These example University athletes and the glistening walls of the Avon Gorge room will put many off, but a minority somehow still find their way to the diminutive UBBC stand.

With that experience in mind, you may be surprised to learn that it actually took me two visits to sign up to UBBC: an expensive subscription fee (£30 means a lot to a student!) was enough to put me off initially. My mother obviously liked the idea of her son as a rower, however, and promised to cover the sign-up fee. I never saw the £30, but the incentive was enough to secure my name on a membership list.

Training started a few days later. There were over 50 boys at the first land training session, which kicked-off with a

run up Whiteladies Road, where we paused to enjoy a circuit session on the Downs, before jogging back down to the Union. Disheartened by being close to the back of the pack on this so-called "short" run, I quickly made myself available for outings on the water.

Later that week, a number of us were quietly ushered away from the relative safety of the Union building into an ageing, malodorous minibus and transported down the A4. Falling leaves welcomed us to Saltford on a brilliantly blue-skied autumn afternoon, and I was able to pick up the basics in the bow seat of an VIII.

I was moved to the six seat for the next session, where we tried rowing all-eight for the first time – afterwards the stroke remarked "It's really hard to keep in time with everyone else when you can't see them"! For the third water session I was asked to give stroking a whirl, a seat that I managed to retain for the rest of the year.

The story so far may describe the start of a rowing career at any University, and many will be able to recall similar experiences. But Bristol Novice rowing has been distinguished, in recent years, by a consistently high level of success, which in turn has contributed to the success of Bristol's Senior squads as Novice rowers have moved up through the ranks. Novice rowing

is understandably overshadowed by the achievements and news of those Senior squads, so to redress the balance I'd like to celebrate the achievements of our recent Men's Novice squads.

2005

This season pre-dated my arrival at Bristol, but I am reliably informed by the seven man that his crew won the BUSA Head Race in a "record time". They underperformed at BUSA Regatta, however, being unexpectedly eliminated in the semi-finals. They later went on to win Novice VIIs at Reading Amateur Regatta and attempted to qualify a coxed IV for the Prince Albert Challenge Cup at Henley Royal Regatta.

2006

The Men's Novice crew was the only UBBC crew to enjoy a win in the 2006 Varsity Boat Race, as the Club lost the overall event 4-1 to UWE in a year in which the Men's First VIIs event was re-rowed. The Men's Novice VIIs race was not close by any verdict, with UBBC winning easily.

At BUSA Regatta, the crew performed very strongly to hold off an impressive Imperial College crew that had won the Novice division of the Head of the River Race in some style earlier in the season. In the BUSA race, Bristol maintained a slight lead on the overlapping Head of the River champions for the entire race.

THE RISE AND RISE OF BRISTOL

NOVICE ROWING

Cont . . .

Even this was not enough for the Gold medal, however, which went to Newcastle University, whose very strong Novice squad remained unbeaten all season. Bristol were happy to take home the Bronze medal behind a University of Exeter crew that snuck into second place.

The crew went on to win Novice VIIIs at Reading Amateur Regatta, but was forced to abandon an attempt to qualify for the Temple Challenge Cup at Henley Royal Regatta due to a number of illnesses in the crew.

2007
2007 saw another easy victory for JBBC's Novice Men at the Varsity Boat Race, winning their race by around five lengths. The Club as a whole saw a reverse in fortunes, taking back the Varsity blade with a 4-1 win over their UWE counterparts.

At BUSA Regatta, the Novice crew took home a Bronze medal behind experienced crews from Oxford Brookes, who won the event at a canter, and Cardiff University.

An experienced fresher, Richard Poole, joined Bristol's Novice crew at the end of the summer season to stroke an VIII attempting to qualify for the Temple Challenge Cup at Henley Royal Regatta, unfortunately missing out on qualification by around two lengths.

2008
The same coaches from 2007 opted to continue coaching Bristol's Men's Novice squad in 2008, perhaps with aims of fulfilling any ambitions narrowly missed in 2007.

JWE upped their game in time for the Varsity Boat Race, with Bristol powering around the outside of the tight final bend for victory by a canvas in the closest race of the day. The crews were clearly very evenly matched, but how would they compare in a straight line?

A week later the crews met again at the BUCS (formerly BUSA) Regatta

in Strathclyde, where UWE were able to draw first blood with a narrow victory in the semi-final. But in the final Bristol dominated the race and enjoyed a jubilant victory with clear water, beating Durham University and UWE to the top of the medal podium.

Bristol's celebrations were short-lived, however, as the crew were invited to contest the Junior (i.e. Second) VIIIs event the next day. Qualifying to race in the final after winning the repechage, Bristol's Novice Men lined up against five University Second VIIIs, including the UBBC Second VIII.

The Bristol Second VIII dominated the final, winning comfortably by ten seconds, but the Novice VIII held their own in the chasing pack. As they passed the 1750m marker the crew were in second place, overlapping with the four other chasing crews. Tired from the weekend's hard racing, Bristol's final push could not match the other crews and was not enough to secure a medal – although fifth place is a very respectable result for a Novice crew in a Senior event.

The crew next raced at Reading Amateur Regatta, where they managed to complete 'the double' by winning Novice VIIIs on the Saturday and then Senior 4 VIIIs on the Sunday. Competition was stiff in these events,

and the Bristol crew impressed spectators by coming back on a strong Abingdon School crew and rowing through them in the last strokes of the final to take home their medals.

With the addition of a few Senior rowers, this crew then managed to round off a great season by qualifying for the Temple Challenge Cup at Henley Royal Regatta, losing to Oxford Brookes 'B' on the Wednesday.

The season's victories did not go unnoticed: the Novice crew were later awarded 'Team of the Year' by the Athletic Union. The coaches were also recognised: Peter Ashford won the 'Roll of Honour' award (not for the first time) and Rob Read was awarded full colours.



UBBC Secretary and Club Captain manning the stand at Fresh 2008.



Bristol's Men's Novice VIII and coaches looking pleased with their BUSA bronze, 2007.

The UBBC Alumni Newsletter is the occasional private organ of the UBBC Alumni

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Please feel free to contact any of the steering group at the above email addresses, or alternatively, write to us at:

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Alumni,

For those of you who need a break from the World Cup, keep an eye out for the Prince Albert as well as the Temple at Henley Royal Regatta this year. Gordon has yet to finalise his crews as I write this but UBBC is looking good - not as good as you looked, of course, when rowing was real rowing and student life was twice as hard...

I have been very touched by the generosity of so many people with their kind contributions to the Boat House raffle. There are some amazing prizes so if you are reading this prior to July 3rd, call quickly and check if there are any tickets left. You could be enjoying a cellar full of wine and be en route to Australia after having visited Scotland for fishing, London for Michelin fine dining and Roma for indulgence. Equally, the Vice Chancellor supporting us with personal funds is a fine testament to his interest and commitment. Thank you one and all.

'Go UBBC' at HRR and for those of you coming to the 'sold out' dinner at Leander - I can't wait!

best wishes

Chris Hartley, Alumni Chairman
UBBC 1980 - 1984

CAPTAIN'S REPORT

Matthew Ridley, current UBBC Captain, reflects on the trials and tribulations of a Boat Club Captain

I don't think being Boat Club Captain has ever been easy. The Captain has to deal with the ups and downs of the Club at any hour of the day; whether it is the towing vehicle breaking down the day before Finals, or trying to stop local vandals cutting the pontoons away from the Saltford river bank with wire cutters.

I was asked to describe the role of the Boat Club Captain, and thought it would be best to illustrate this by describing some of the more interesting things I have done this year. First, I think dealing with a boat falling off the trailer on the M4 after Quintin Head is pretty high up on the list. Thankfully it came off without damaging anything or anyone else, although the terrifying image in the wing mirror of the boat hanging from the trailer remains with me to this day.

Next on my list would probably be sitting in a meeting with three GB rowing coaches discussing how to tap the potential rowing talent of the South West universities. Being asked my opinion on how we could help plan for the 2016 Olympics after only three years of rowing made me realise just how awesome our sport is!

The UBBC Head of the River Race is also worthy of mention, as it presented some interesting challenges early on in my term as Captain. The 2009 race came very close to being cancelled due to an extremely fast stream.

The race is a vital source of income for the Club, however, so it was important for the race to go ahead if there was a way of achieving this safely. In the end, the race was able to proceed with the Novice crews racing upstream (i.e. in the opposite direction to the Senior crews) and the length of the third division race being halved to a 1300m sprint.

In keeping with UBBC tradition, my triumphant and painstakingly crafted Captain's speech at the Head Race Ball was completely lost on my exuberant and overly-appreciative student audience!

No article on the role of Boat Club Captain would be complete without mentioning UWE, as managing the relationship between UBBC and UWE is a key part of the job description. All readers will be aware of the healthy rivalry which UBBC enjoys with UWE. With 2010 seeing the fifteenth consecutive running of the Varsity Boat Race, this event remains the showcase for University rowing in the South West, and the event has certainly helped to raise and maintain the standards of both Bristol and UWE crews.

The intense competition between the two Clubs creates a thrilling spectacle on the Bristol Docks every year, with the rival crews battling it out for the Varsity Blade in what are often extremely close races. The event has rightly become a highlight of the local calendar.

The rivalry between the two Clubs continues throughout the season, of course, with each Club looking to go at least one better than the other every time they meet. On occasions the competitiveness has perhaps gone a little too far, for example this year's heated discussions about the colour of the ribbons on the Varsity Boat Race medals! But all in all there is no doubt that the relationship between UBBC and UWE is enormously positive for both Clubs and for rowing in the South West.



UBBC's Senior Men's First VIII in training at Saltford.

Looking to the future of UBBC as I enter my final academic term as Captain, I see the Club moving up in the world of University rowing as GB Rowing looks to improve regional rowing, as well as continuing its focus on Thames-based clubs. We may even see an uneasy alliance forming with UWE in an attempt to compete against the North Eastern and Thames regions!

Many Alumni will already be aware of the plans to build a new boat house at Saltford (the existing boat houses have changed little in the last 80 years!), details of which are set out on page 8 of this newsletter. Once the new facilities are built, Bristol will undoubtedly receive more interest from experienced rowers looking to study here, which will widen and deepen the pool of talent for our top Senior crews each year and should lead to even better results on the water.

I wish you all the best from the current members of UBBC, and look forward to seeing you at some of the summer regattas.

Matthew Ridley
UBBC Captain, 2009/10



UBBC's Women's Novice First VIII racing at Quintin Head.

THE RISE AND RISE OF BRISTOL NOVICE ROWING Cont...

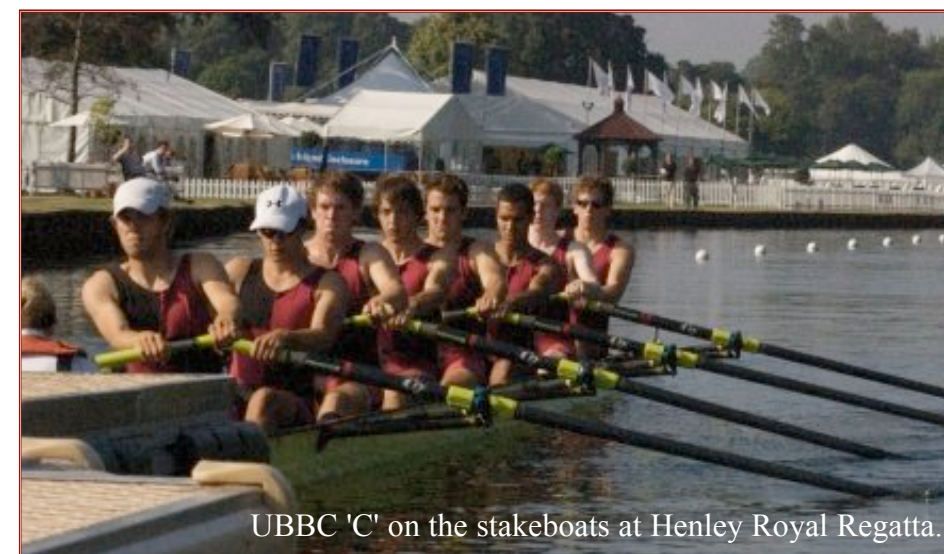
2009

With UWE continuing to push on their Novice programme in an attempt to compete with UBBC, the Men's Novice VIIIs event was always going to be a close-run thing at 2009's Varsity Boat Race. The verdict was a Bristol victory by a quarter of a length, continuing UBBC's dominance of this event.

Illness caused late crew changes before the BUCS Regatta, and although the crew performed well, fourth place was not what they had been hoping for. The podium hosted crews from Queen's University Belfast, Oxford Brookes and UWE.



UBBC power to victory in the BUCS Men's Novice VIIIs event, 2008.



UBBC 'C' on the stakeboats at Henley Royal Regatta.

Seat-racing trials were carried out the weekend after this setback for the formation of a new concept, a Senior Men's Third VIII for the regatta season, with no pre-selected rowers from either the Senior or Novice squads. Half the Novice crew managed to secure a seat in this boat, which had aims to qualify for Henley Royal Regatta at the end of the season. Only a fortnight later the crew reached the final of IM3 VIIIs at the Metropolitan Regatta, a worthy achievement in such a short space of time.

Short of a cox for Reading Amateur Regatta, the Bristol crew's coach called on an injured rower and old

friend, Zac Purchase (Beijing Gold medallist), who kindly agreed to hop back into a boat and fired the boys up for match racing. In the semi final of the IM3 VIIIs competition, the crew mercilessly disposed of UBBC's Senior Men's Second VIII, before losing by two lengths to a strong Pangbourne College crew in the final.

The Third VIII spent the week before qualifiers for Henley Royal Regatta training on the Henley stretch, and hired an ex-GB women's Empacher VIII to race in. It was the Club's ambition to qualify three VIIIs for the Temple Challenge Cup, a feat that has only been accomplished once, and not for ten years. On a warm Friday evening the UBBC 'C' crew dutifully performed and qualified to race at Henley Royal Regatta, a fantastic achievement.

With a kind draw, the 'C' crew were able to progress further than any Bristol crew in 2009, beating Balliol & Exeter College, Oxford on the Wednesday, before losing to Durham University on the Thursday.

2010 and beyond

The Bristol crews at Henley Royal Regatta in 2009 contained many 'home-grown' oarsmen and coxes, proving that our Novice squads are indeed the life-blood of our Club. The Men's First VIII contained three rowers who learnt their trade at Bristol, whereas the Second and Third VIIIs contained six members each.

Bristol will always have to face the fact that top junior oarsmen are attracted to rowing at other GB Rowing funded institutions. Consequently our facilities and provision for coaching cannot match those of some of these other clubs, despite the generosity of John Rutley at AGAS and others (including, of course,

THE RISE AND RISE OF BRISTOL

NOVICE ROWING Cont . . .

our Alumni). We have only one professional coach at Bristol, whose efforts are focussed on the Senior Men's squad; all the other squads rely on volunteers to coordinate their coaching.

Yet Bristol is very competitive at the Novice level, where talent is nurtured and accelerated in a short space of time, often beating those funded institutions. It is a testament to all the

coaches and athletes involved that we have seen so much success at this level over the past five years.

So what does 2010 have in store for Bristol's Men's Novices? Richard Poole, along with Peter Ashford, is coaching the squad again and we have already seen some strong results. At the BUCS Head Race the squad were in evenly matched VIII's, finishing second and eighth out of 42 crews entered.

At the Head of the River Race in London, UBBC finished third in the Novice division, behind Imperial College and Oxford Brookes. The squad currently train ten times per week and hope to gain further speed on an Easter training camp – another successful regatta season in 2010 is certainly on the cards.

Adam Mackenzie
UBBC 2005-2009



UBBC 'C' racing against Durham University at Henley Royal Regatta.

VIEW FROM THE LAUNCH.....

Bristol's Director of Rowing reports on the view from his coaching launch.

Every morning when I walk into our Centre for Sport, one of the first things I see is a photo of a very young Chris Hartley alongside a photo of our 1991 Temple Challenge Cup winning crew at Henley Royal Regatta. Every morning it is a stark reminder of what is still to be achieved.

The funding support which the Amateur Rowing Association is giving to other universities has meant that they can employ many professional rowing coaches. These universities, in turn, attract top GB Junior rowers,

who are advised to study there by GB Rowing. We rarely get GB level rowers coming to Bristol, as we are told that our University is 'academically unfriendly'. If that means we do not compromise on academic excellence, then that is probably right.

This is not something for which we should apologise, but it does present us with the 'underdog' challenge; a challenge which we are happy to rise to. Our Men's Novices are coached by Ritchie Poole, a current student, and Peter Ashford, an Alumnus, who

continue to produce winning crews year after year. We are very grateful for Ritchie's and Peter's hard work over the years, which has quite often put their partners into the 'rowing widow' category!

As shown in Adam Mackenzie's article on the cover of this newsletter, we produce 'home grown' top Senior rowers within a year or two from our Novice intake each year. Our Senior Men's First VIII's recent third position in the BUCS Head Race in Peterborough (rowing in the 'Liz Hatfield') was an excellent result

against crews stacked with GB level rowers. This crew is the lightest we have ever had, at an average weight of 79kg.

Our Senior Women have a dedicated First VIII this year that has produced some very good performances, and our Novice Women have a squad of over thirty rowers. However, our Novice Women lack good quality boats to row in. In fact, with our fundraising emphasis now totally on the new boat house at Saltford (see page 8 of this newsletter for further details), the Club's ongoing need for new boats and equipment has been put on the back burner.

A new Men's First VIII will be needed next year to continue the hand me down process in the Club, so if any Alumni are feeling generous next year after the new boat house is complete, you know who to speak to!

At last year's BUCS Regatta in Nottingham we won a Silver medal in the Men's Championship Coxless IV and a Bronze medal in the Men's Championship Coxed IV. We got a very bad draw in the Men's Championship VIII final, and finished fifth in the crosswind.

Nevertheless, on the strength of their Silver medal-winning performance, our Men's Coxless IV was selected to represent Great Britain in the European University Sports Association Championships in Poland last September. Many of the crews racing in Poland had just come from the World Championships the week before, and were their countries' national squads. In a field of that quality, we were pleased to finish second in the B Final, having lead all the way until the last stroke.

We have had two head race wins in the Men's IM2 category so far this year, at the Quintin Head and the

Hammersmith Head. Our Men's IM3 crew also won their division of the Hammersmith Head.

Our Senior Men's First VIII were not as successful as hoped at the Head of the River Race in March, finishing 48th overall and fifth in the Halladay Trophy, behind a number of crews which they had beaten at the BUCS Regatta. The crew were naturally disappointed with this result, particularly as they had shown their speed in pieces against the Oxford University Lightweight Men's crews at Henley the previous week.

The Men's Senior squad were in Holland in early April for our annual 'super compensation' training camp to prepare for the regatta season, which kicks off with the BUCS Regatta in Nottingham in early May and runs through to our ultimate goal, Henley Royal Regatta, in late June/early July.

In Holland we were without the stroke of the Men's First VIII, Ben Bathurst, who had been selected for the GB Under 23 trials at Hazewinkel. Congratulations to Ben, who is the first GB Under 23 trials rower UBBC has had in my time with the Club.



Ben Bathurst stroking UBBC's Senior Men's First VIII in training at Saltford.

Everyone at UBBC appreciates the support of our Alumni during the regatta season, and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on the riverbank over the next couple of months. As always, Henley Royal Regatta (Wednesday 30 June to Sunday 4 July) will be the season's highlight for our supporting Alumni.

In particular, I hope to meet many of you at the fundraising dinner at Leander Club, Henley, on the Saturday of Henley Royal Regatta (details of which are on page 8 of this newsletter). Alumni who have entered the fantastic raffle to be drawn at the dinner will be pleased to know that I have had to go back into training in order to lift the enormous Nebuchadnezar of 2005 claret which was recently delivered to me here in Bristol. The lucky winner of this prize will need to find a suitable occasion (and plenty of friends) to pull the cork on this very special bottle.

Gordon Trevett
Director of Rowing and High Performance Manager, University of Bristol



Gordon Trevett, UBBC's Director of Rowing.



UBBC's Senior Men's Coxless IV, representing Great Britain at the EUSA Championships, 2009.