



7 Years On:  
A Report to Ely Boathouse Donors  
2024





Your kind donations have funded transformative change in the performance and well being of our athletes. Thanks to you, more than 7 years on from the opening of the Ely Boathouse, our athletes have had incredible success on the water. Since 2017, we have defeated Oxford in 30 out of 38 races, culminating in 2023's clean sweep. We hope you take incredible pride in what you have enabled. Thank you again.

The Boathouse was built to fulfil the training needs of the men and women of Cambridge University Boat Club, so that we can all boat from the same base, appropriate to a high-performance programme. The £4.9 million boathouse was opened in December 2016.

Rowing at Ely consistently provides good water over an almost limitless distance. The boathouse features a wet dock, four bays, rooms to rest, stretch and eat between sessions and a landing stage for three eights.

It is a place for hard athletic work, and as we walk in each day we are reminded of our purpose. Above the door is a sign that says this is "Where We Prepare To Win Boat Races".

**THIS IS WHERE  
WE PREPARE  
TO WIN BOAT RACES**



*Photo credits: We would like to thank the following photographers for their contributions to the Club and to this report: Ben Tufnell & Row 360, All Mark One, Veronica in the Fens.*

## Cambridge University Boathouse Limited Board of Directors



Peter Jacobs (Goldie, 1985)

Catherine Mangan (Blondie, 1991)

Brian Potterill (Men's Lightweight 1988, 89)

Charles Rowley (Men's Lightweight 1987)

Stephen Wyborn (Treasurer)

CUBC's home on the Fens is an integral part of the Club's identity, much like Goldie represents our historic Cambridge HQ. It's remarkable to reflect on the facilities that our former students, now alumni, were training in at Ely prior to the Cambridge University Boat House opening in 2016.

Many of you will remember the basic, uninsulated shed in Ely, where the men tried to warm up before their outings. Others may vividly remember the tin lean-to with an outside toilet and a single cold-water tap next to the King's School Ely boathouse, where the women's boats were housed. Our lightweight men made do with whatever space they could find, often just boating off from the hard.

Back in 2010 a member of the men's CUBC committee, Chris Dalley, joined me in my capacity as Chair of CUWBC to discuss the idea of a joint fundraising effort for new shared facilities. We quickly brought in Bruce Perry of CULRC, kicking off a period of intense negotiations, debates, fundraising, and investments to modernise Cambridge University rowing.

The significance of those initial meetings cannot be overstated, as they marked the beginning of several projects including the Goldie extension (a strategic priority for the women's club as a Cambridge base), the Ely boathouse, the relocation of the women's and lightweight races to the Tideway, and ultimately the unification of the three clubs as CUBC.

The individuals and institutions involved throughout this period are too numerous to mention, but it is fair to say that we could not have achieved what we did without any one of them. Many are recognised in this inspiring report that looks back over the past seven years and celebrates the impact of the boathouse itself. I want to pay special tribute to those who believed in the transformative potential of a shared facility and generously contributed, with their names now recorded on the building as a way of eternal thanks. I also extend my gratitude to the three legacy club committees at the time who decided to move forward together, as well as the many others mentioned in the report who dedicated their time and energy to make daily decisions regarding planning, design, and construction. The project would not have been possible without the support of the University of Cambridge, Vice Chancellors Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz and Professor Stephen Toope, Pro-Vice Chancellor Graham Virgo, and our Senior Members. Sir Richard Dearlove chaired the initial working group, and Mike Sweeney steered us through some challenging late-night discussions about what was essential and what could be spared, along with Sarah Winckless and, of course, Roger Stephens, who led the fundraising effort with the true spirit of "what would make the boat go faster."

Reading the various testimonials in this report has been both emotional and uplifting. While there is no doubt that we can do more to enhance and refine the original concept, for now it has exceeded our wildest expectations. I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who dedicated themselves to making it a reality and to all the students who have trained there alongside one another since 2016, proving that the investment was truly worthwhile!

**Annamarie Phelps CBE OLY, Club Chair**



# Ely Boathouse Impact: The coaches' stories

## Rob Baker, Men's Chief Coach



It's no coincidence that when I was coaching the women's team at Cambridge, we won the Boat Race the first year we rowed out of the new boathouse, after several years of losing. It's hard to overstate how important the new boathouse was; being able to rest and recover well in the right environment is crucial for athletes, and student-athletes in particular. It's also a real draw for prospective students if they know we have top-tier facilities.

Ely Boathouse has been transformational to the CUBC. For me space is the key component, to be able to have quiet chats with individuals at key points, sometimes positive selection talks, sometimes harder selections talks need spaces to be able to do this sensitively, the new facility has these spaces in abundance. Also to have the big talks, to get the whole group together and set our mission statements, to set overall goals for the team, the new boathouse ticks this box too. To be able to rig boats properly, store all of our equipment correctly, we have all we need now in Ely.

## Patrick Ryan, Women's Chief Coach



Moving into the Boathouse after being in the King's Ely Boatman's workshop for the previous three years was like winning the lottery. We had a dry warm up space, no keys required to go to the toilet, reduced boating times, space to work on boats when athletes weren't around. The boathouse was transformative to the coaching and athlete experience. We appreciate everyone coming together to make this possible. The results speak for themselves. Thank you to every person involved in this effort.

# Ely Boathouse Impact: From the athletes' perspective

## Seb Benzecry, Men's President



The Ely Boathouse has been absolutely crucial in allowing our squad to prepare as best as possible to race the Boat Race each year. The space it affords us, coupled with the fantastic equipment that we have there, allows us to get the absolute most out of every session on the water and the Ely stretch. It really has become a home away from home; it is a space that the whole squad enjoys coming to, is comfortable in, and ultimately – and most importantly – helps us win the Boat Race.

With all of CUBC united under one roof, we are able to come together as a full team like never before. Training alongside all the other squads creates a palpable sense of community and teamwork, and it is inspiring to see everyone working together so well on and off the water. Such a powerful team spirit has fostered by the Ely Boathouse; it really has been transformative for CUBC, and is undeniably a huge factor in our continued success.

## Jenna Armstrong, Women's President



Our crews have benefitted from the state-of-the-art facility that CUBC offers. The ease of access to all boats and the large launching pontoon allow us to be highly efficient in the morning sessions and enable us to get more mileage in each session. The kitchen, locker rooms, and social space were clearly designed with the athletes in mind so that we can start each session refueled and recharged. It is a space that we love and a space that really facilitates performance.

Training in a space that is shared by all the crews has been so wonderful in all aspects. From a performance perspective, we have been able to share equipment and benefit from the expertise from all the CUBC coaches. We have the incredible opportunity to train alongside each other—we race each other on the water, spot each other in the weights room, and offer shouts of encouragement during erg workouts. The shared space has brought us together socially, and we have truly enjoyed the expanded social network that comes along with the united club. Thank you so much for providing the financial resources to allow us to build/maintain such fantastic facilities. Your contribution has provided the foundation to allow us to develop into the best athletes we can be.

## Ben Jones, Men's Lightweight President



The outstanding Ely Boathouse facilities allow all CUBC athletes to perform day in, day out and enable the coaching staff to get the most out of every athlete. The Ely Boathouse not only houses our outstanding shells, but also allows the squads to relax and properly recover between sessions. Having access to the highest quality equipment and facilities is crucial for the Club's success.

Having all crews training out of the Ely Boathouse has fostered a team environment within which every athlete feels they are valuably contributing towards a shared, common objective. Training together has led to a constructive and competitive atmosphere that acts to continuously raise standards and take athletic performance to the next level.

## Lauren Britten, Lightweight Women's President



My experience of training in a space shared by all the squads has been unbelievably positive, most noticeably because of the greater number of people supporting each other and sharing their wisdom. Each individual, and each squad, has their own particular strengths and weaknesses. In the shared training space, the squads can take inspiration from each other's strengths, and provide guidance and encouragement where people are struggling. The shared training space creates a friendly, supportive atmosphere, where there are many people to turn to for help or motivation.

On behalf of the lightweight women's squad, a massive thank you to all the donors and volunteers who made the building of the Ely Boathouse possible. Cold and dark January mornings are infinitely more bearable when you have such a fantastic place to warm up in and return to. Without a doubt, the boathouse boosts both the performance and the experience of all the CUBC athletes. Thank you so much to everyone who contributed!



# The architect: Jerry Bailey



“What a fantastic location to build the new permanent home of the CUBC at Ely – a perfect setting for the finest boat club in the world.”



## Inspiration

Back in 1978 when I was in training for the Boat Race, one of our coaches used to stop us alongside Fore Mill Wash, on our way back to the marina after yet another hard outing, and the guys, cold, tired, and just wanting to get home, would grudgingly do as instructed to see the sun setting behind the magnificent Cathedral.

He was right. And what a fantastic location to build the new permanent home of the CUBC at Ely – a perfect setting for the finest boat club in the world.

When we visited the site, on that lovely sunny day, we were struck by how beautiful and desolate it was – long horizons and vast areas of nothingness, as only the Fens can serve up – with the odd clump of trees, factory chimney and the stunning Cathedral to break the skyline. And how wild and natural the river's edge was. We felt that whatever intervention was made here, it had to be respectful of the local natural habitat, leaving as much as possible undisturbed. We also felt strongly that any building had to work as a piece of sculpture in the landscape.

We came away with a strong image of a low building growing out of the Fens with a roof hovering over it conjuring the impression of birds flying low over the water or the protective wing of a large nesting bird on the reeded riverbank – something a bit intriguing and abstract in form and definitely more landscape than building when seen from a distance.

## Design

The brief was to create a new iconic home for Cambridge University rowing on the banks of the Great Ouse outside Ely which was to be designed to last at least a hundred years. The new building was to provide boat storage for racing shells on the ground floor and crew and coaching facilities above for all the Cambridge crews who race against Oxford each year – bringing the clubs together for the first time.

Our scheme was selected primarily because of its unusual and distinctive roof – designed to produce an abstract profile in the landscape which changes as you move around it. It is formed by four gable-ended pitched roofs, tapered in plan with resultant sloping ridges, placed “top-to-tail” over the orthogonal plan below. The resultant “twist” in the roof reinforces the diagonal axis across the site towards the Cathedral.

The chosen site, a 12.5 acre long thin strip of riverside meadow about a mile outside Ely to the south east, was not without its complications, requiring a new road access up and over the fen bank, the flood barrier to the low lying fens to the south, a new river edge and boating pontoons, an inlet from the river for mooring the coaching launches, power, water and drainage (none of which were available on or near the site), and the creation of a large reeded lagoon at the far end of the site to provide enhanced habitat for local wildlife.





## The Outcome

Looking back, it seems that one of the most important and successful aspects of the boathouse is not any one thing about the design but the very fact that it is there - an iconic new building to provide a new home for everyone all under one roof. For this we must be hugely grateful to those who donated to make it happen, as well as the vision and determination of the Project Ely Group and especially Ewan Pearson, Roger Stephens, Bruce Perry, Tom James, Paul Sansome, Cath Bishop and Mary Hood. Whilst I would, of course, like to think that it is the design of the building that makes the difference, in truth it is the fact that there is a building at all which does that. A place which enables everyone to come together in a common cause providing the best facilities to train effectively and together.

I am extremely proud that the boathouse has been so well received, and that it basks in the reflected glory of so many victories since completion. It also made a wonderful alternative venue to host the Boat Races during the difficult years of the pandemic - although I suspect Oxford wouldn't agree and won't want to return in a hurry!

Prioritising funding is never easy, but for me, the real game changer will be when we are able to complete the subsequent phases of the scheme. To have athletes' dormitories on site would enable the facility to be used for training camps out of term time, for entertaining visiting crews who may wish to come to Ely for some racing fixtures, and to hire out through the summer for training camps to help cover the costs of running the building. And who knows, maybe some aspiring young athletes on training camp at Ely (in the summer when they could be seduced into thinking it was a lovely place to train) might then decide to apply to the University to further their academic and rowing careers.

“

“Looking back it seems that one of the most important and successful aspects of the boathouse is not any one thing about the design but the very fact that it is there - an iconic new building to provide a new home for everyone all under one roof. For this we must be hugely grateful to those who donated.”

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– Jerry Bailey





Bruce Perry was a lead fundraiser for the Ely Boathouse project, alongside Ewan Pearson and Roger Stephens, with treasurer Mary Hood also playing an integral role in the initiative. Here, Bruce recalls the early stages of the scheme:

“A select few had long held the view that rowing as one club was the way to create future excellence in Cambridge rowing and that being together was also the most equitable and overall most fun way to go. We had to begin that journey and given the poor facilities for most of the clubs, if not all of them, a boathouse seemed the most useful place to start. It would also galvanise the clubs by aligning to one objective even whilst operating separately.

Building a plan around alumni donations brought the clubs together and also (re)engaged alumni into something much bigger.

We were proved right. Whilst I cannot and would not claim that the record since coming together was down to any one person, I do believe donors played a pivotal role – through our enthusiasm and openness to change – and between the women’s and men’s clubs. I further felt these results have proved our position and our hard work well worth it and right!”

“

**“The new boathouse was more than just about modern facilities for a modern race. The Boat Race needed to represent the whole University and that meant that we had to continue as a united Club. Putting all the historic organisations under one roof, literally and figuratively, was very important to me. I wanted to see the CUBC thriving for another 200 years, and we certainly have made a great start by winning 30 of the 38 races since we opened the doors at our permanent home in Ely.”**

– David Cassidy, donor

”





# Results since moving into Ely Boathouse in 2017

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Men's Blue Boat	L	W	W	NR	W	L	W	<b>4 out of 6</b>
Women's Blue Boat	W	W	W	NR	W	W	W	<b>6 out of 6</b>
Goldie	L	W	W	NR	W	L	W	<b>4 out of 6</b>
Blondie	W	W	W	NR	W	W	W	<b>6 out of 6</b>
Men's Lightweight	W	W	L	L	L	W	W	<b>4 out of 7</b>
Women's Lightweight	W	W	L	W	W	W	W	<b>6 out of 7</b>
								<b>30 out of 38 total</b>

In the seven years prior to the opening of Ely Boathouse, Cambridge defeated Oxford in only 17 out of 42 races.





# Acknowledgement of Donors

## Benefactors

The members of our community and crews listed below represent donors who made gifts of £100,000 or more in support of the Ely Boathouse. Their philanthropic leadership is deeply appreciated.

J.A. Bernstein  
M.J. Brittin  
P. Broughton  
A.C. Buckmaster  
Sir Adrian Cadbury C.H. D.L.  
R.M. Cashin  
D.J. Cassidy  
R.E.B. Crombie  
B. Colgan  
S.P. Colgan  
G. Combs  
M. Davies  
H.S. Elkington  
J.R. Garman  
R.J. Gaughan  
D. R. Gillard  
Dr. S.B. Gorvy  
Dr. S.M. Hood  
H.R. Jacobs  
A.M.J. Keeley  
Cambridge University Boat Club  
S.C. Holt  
D.F. Legget  
Dr. P.J. Marsh  
M.J. McAdden  
R.C. 'Pete' Milton  
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M.L. Pasternak  
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Dr. A.D. Sansome  
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A. Shultz  
M.R.A. Sorrell  
J.C.G. Stancliffe  
R.J. Stephens  
D.J. Tait  
K. Whyman  
University of Cambridge  
The Archetypals

## Crews

1954 CUBC  
1957 CUBC  
1963 CUBC  
1964 CUBC  
1965 CUBC  
1966 CUBC  
1969 GOLDIE  
1970 CUBC  
1971 CUBC  
1972 GOLDIE  
1973 CUBC  
1974 CUBC  
1976 CUBC  
1980 GOLDIE  
1982 CUBC  
1984 CUBC  
1984 CUWBC  
1985 CUBC  
1985 CULRC  
1986 CUBC  
1987 CUBC  
1988 CUBC  
1989 CUBC  
1991 CUBC  
1992 CUBC  
1992 GOLDIE  
1993 CUBC  
1993 GOLDIE  
1994 CUBC  
1995 CUBC  
1995 GOLDIE  
1996 GOLDIE  
1997 CUBC  
1998 CUBC  
1998 GOLDIE  
1998 CULRC  
1999 CUBC  
1999 GOLDIE  
2000 CUBC  
2002 CUWBC

## Friends

The members and crews listed below invested in the building of Ely Boathouse with gifts of £10,000 or more. We are grateful for their generosity.

M.T. Arnold  
J.H. Ashby  
M.P. Baker  
Dr. D.E. Bangert  
B. Braithwaite  
P.St.J. Brine  
C.J.C. Brun  
R.P. Cantwell  
R.G. Chisholm  
P.A. Cunningham  
J. Daboo  
C.J. Dalley  
P.G.R. Delafield  
M. Ellis  
D.N. Fawcett  
S.L. Fowler  
Dr. M. Gilbert  
C.E.S. Green  
S.A. Harris  
M.N. Haycock  
Dr. K. Hillier  
A. Holmes  
C.M Horton  
P. Jacobs  
M.C.G. Justicz  
J.D. Kinsella  
The Ruth Parasol Foundation  
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Dame P.L. Makin  
J. Marks  
Sir Michael Marshall C.B.E. D.L.  
J.R. Meadows Jr.  
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A. Phelps C.B.E.  
R.C. Phelps  
R.J. Pim  
J.M. Pritchard  
R.J. Smith  
J. Spink  
R.A.B. Spink  
R.P.Stokes  
M.A. Sweeney C.B.E.  
Q.R.C.L. Travis  
R.G. Ward  
A.R. Watson  
R.A. Waterer  
M.D. Williams  
Lord Wilson of Dinton  
M. Wilson  
J.S. Witter  
Queens' Ye Cherubs

## Crews

1961 CUBC  
1966 LMBC Ladies' Plate Crew  
1967 CUBC  
1968 GOLDIE  
1968 Queens' Head Crews  
1972 CUBC  
1974 GOLDIE  
1975 CUBC  
1975 CULRC  
1977 CUBC  
1977 GOLDIE  
1978 CUBC  
1985 CUWBC Lightweights  
1993 CUWBC  
1995 CUWBC  
1996 CUBC  
1997 GOLDIE  
2005 CUWBC





## Donors

The following members and crews supported the building of Ely Boathouse with gifts of £500 or more. We thank them again for their involvement.

A.D.G. Adam	R.J.S. Clarke	M.J. Hart M.B.E.	S.H. McFie	Dr. C.H. Sweeney
R.S.N. Ames	J.H. Clay	L.G.H. Hatfield	Dr. S.L. McGladdery	D.L. Taylor
Rev. M.H. Ashton	I.F.C.S. Clayre	S. Hawkings	M. Mesenholler	R.D. Taylor
K M Astley	A.J. Collier	R.J. Heanley	W.S. Mills	M.D. Tebay
E. Ayer	P.H. Conze Jnr.	DR. S.D. Heenan	S.A. Molton	M.E. Thomson
L.W.J. Baart	A.E. Cooke-Yarborough	G. Henderson	D.P. Moore	S. Thormann
J Bailey	Dr. P. Copham	L.J. Henderson	P.E. Morris	S.C. Tourek
C.L. Baillieu	J.C.E. Court	S.C. Henstridge	C.M. Moss	J.M.Tovey
H.A. Baker	K.K. Coveny	J.F.S. Hervey-Bathurst	J.M. Mouldsdale	Dr S.C. Trowell
R.D. Baker	J.A.F. Cowderoy	T.C. Heywood-Lonsdale	The Rt Hon Lord Napier	P.W. Trueman
J.F.E. Ball	H. Craik	L.P. Hirst	Prof. A.A.P. Narula	A.N. Utley
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Sqd Ldr M.P.C. Barnett	M.C. Crossman	A.G. Hobart	Dr. S.B. Newton	C.A. Wait
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C.J. Bishop	S.J. Dawson-Bowling	S. Irish	K. Pocock	M.O'K. Webber
G. Blessley	R.M. Dowbiggin	N.W. James	W. Pommen	M. Weber
N.J. Bliss	A. Dubrovina	T.W. James M.B.E.	Dr. G.R. Pooley	Dr. A.J. West
Commander	R.P.B. Duncan	E.L. Jarvis	A.F.U. Powell	Dr. K.M. West M.B.E.
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A.C. Bloomer	R.C.E.C. Dunn	J.R.W. Keates	G.M.A. Proffit	S. Welch
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J.F. Busvine	Dr. E.A.F. Gibson	J.H. Maasland	A.J.M. Shannon	
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J.R. Butler	G.J. Glassman	N.E. Maclean	D.F.C. Shepherd	
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H. Cammell	M.E.K. Graham	J.P. Manser	G.D.C.R. Smith	
J. Capelluto	P.C. Graham	P.M. Mant	R.A.B. Smith	
S. Cassidy	A.N. Gray	V.K. Markham	D.B. Sprague	
Dr. M.D. Castle	R.A. Greatorex	G. Marshall	R.J. Staite	
C.D.C. Challis	K.L.F. Grose	W.T.W. Mason	R.G. Stanbury	
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D.C. Christie	J. Hamilton	F. McAnena	R.O.J.H. Stutt	
W.E. Church	S. Hammond	P.G. McClelland	A. Summers	
H.G.C. Clarke	M. Harbour	L.J. McCrae	C.J.C. Swainson	

### Crews

1962 CUBC  
 1986 Blondie  
 1991 Blondie  
 1996 CUWBC  
 1996 Blondie  
 2002 CUBC  
 2004 CUBC  
 2010 CUBC  
 China Citic Bank

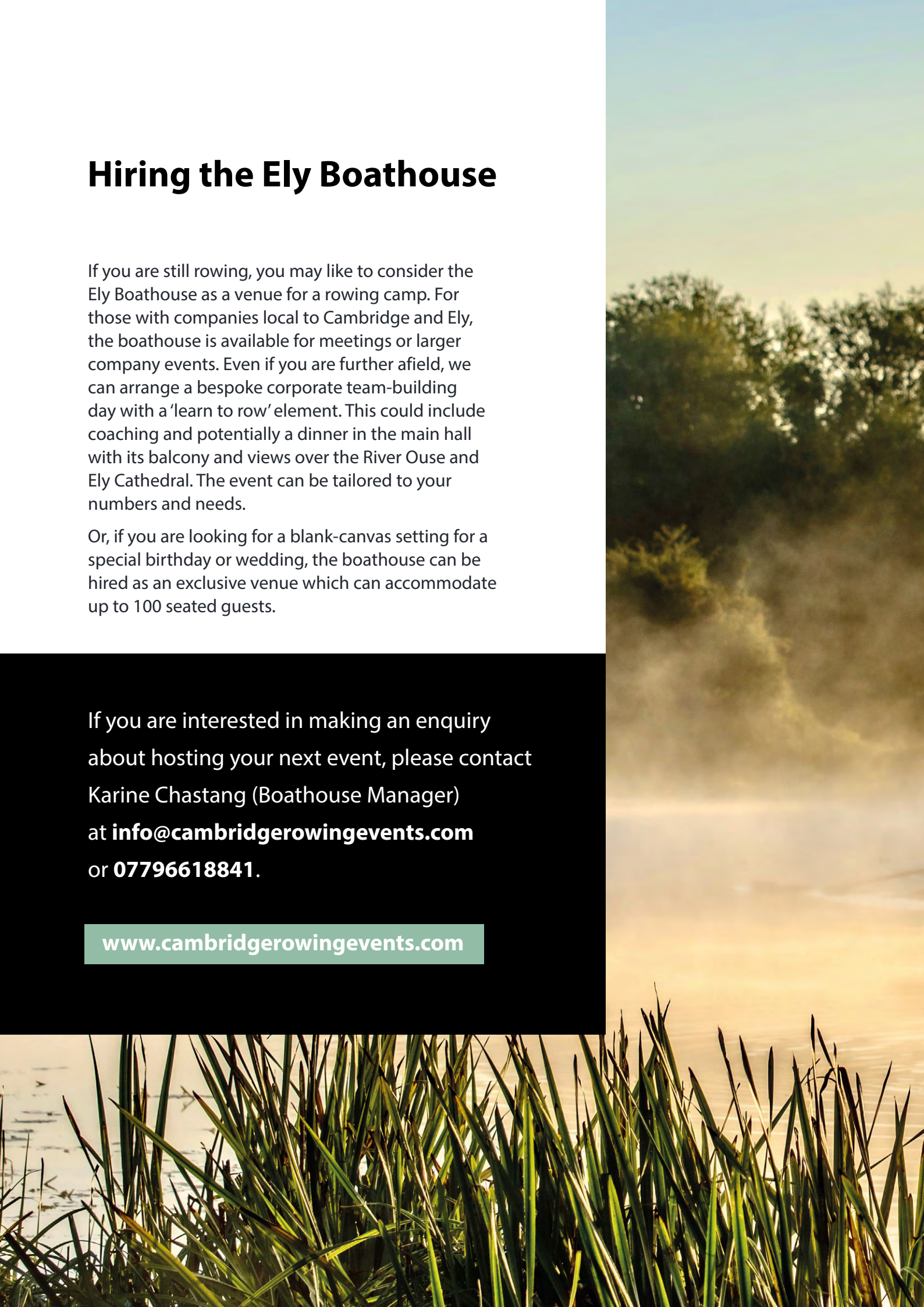
# Hiring the Ely Boathouse

If you are still rowing, you may like to consider the Ely Boathouse as a venue for a rowing camp. For those with companies local to Cambridge and Ely, the boathouse is available for meetings or larger company events. Even if you are further afield, we can arrange a bespoke corporate team-building day with a 'learn to row' element. This could include coaching and potentially a dinner in the main hall with its balcony and views over the River Ouse and Ely Cathedral. The event can be tailored to your numbers and needs.

Or, if you are looking for a blank-canvas setting for a special birthday or wedding, the boathouse can be hired as an exclusive venue which can accommodate up to 100 seated guests.

If you are interested in making an enquiry about hosting your next event, please contact Karine Chastang (Boathouse Manager) at **[info@cambridgerowingevents.com](mailto:info@cambridgerowingevents.com)** or **07796618841**.

[www.cambridgerowingevents.com](http://www.cambridgerowingevents.com)









**Sarah-Kate Roberts**

**Head of Philanthropy and Communications**

**Cambridge University Boat Club**

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