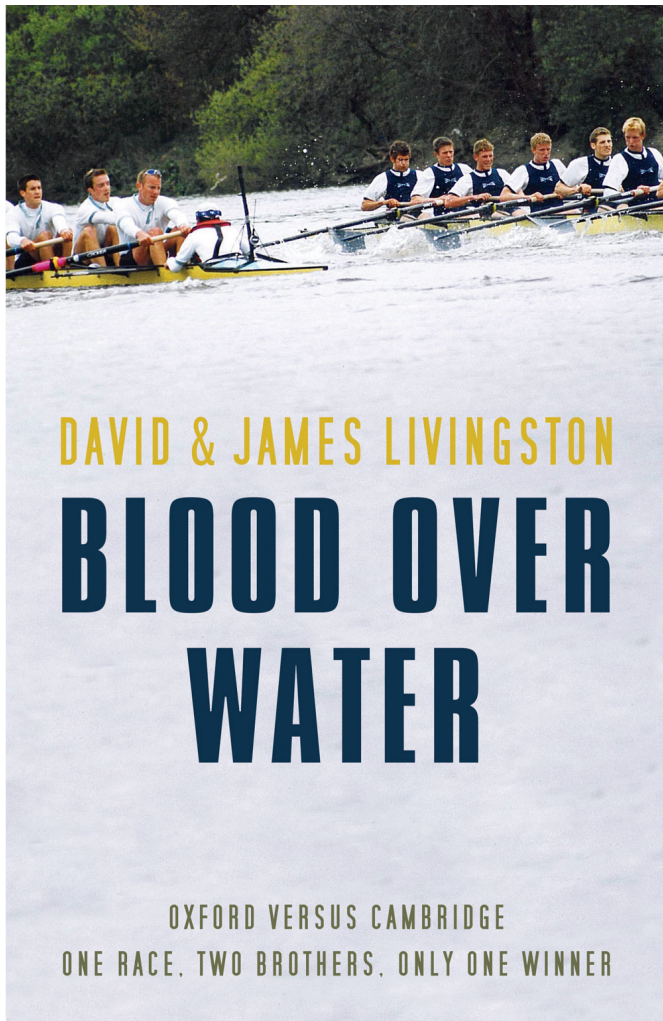


'The Boat Race is the most divisive event in rowing ... an extraordinary and gripping story of a battle between brothers' SIR MATTHEW PINSENT



**TWO BROTHERS, HEAD TO HEAD,
IN THE CLOSEST BOAT RACE
OF ALL TIME**

**Published by Bloomsbury
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On a blustery, overcast April day in 2003, David and James Livingston raced against each other in the 149th Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race, watched by over 8 million people. It was the first time brothers had battled each other in this gladiatorial and quintessentially British tradition for over 100 years. Only one could be victorious.

In this book, David and James tell their stories for the first time, giving a locker-room insight into one of the least understood national sporting occasions, normally on view for only one day a year. James, following in his family's footsteps, is a student at St Catharine's College, Cambridge. In 2002, after a last minute change of heart, David joins Christ Church College at Oxford University, Cambridge's ancient rival. The book exposes the ancient, great and secretive institutions of Oxford and Cambridge and reveals a training load almost beyond endurance.

Told in alternating narratives, Blood over Water is an emotional and searching joint self-portrait, and an account of a brotherly relationship tested to breaking point, with David and James unable even to speak to each other in the final months before the 2003 Boat Race.

It is only later, with James battling not to fail his final Cambridge exams, having dedicated so much time to rowing, that they start to reconcile their torn relationship, damaged by their pursuit of a shared dream. Blood over Water asks what you would be willing to sacrifice to achieve your dreams.

David and James Livingston will both be available for interview on the run up to publication and over the weekend of the Boatrace 2009 (Sunday 29th March.) This year marks the 180th anniversary of the first race. To arrange an interview with David and James or commission a piece, please contact Colin Midson on 0207 494 6054 or email on colin_midson@bloomsbury.com



A Q&A with David and James Livingston

What made you first take an interest in rowing?



James: Our parents had always taken us down to the riverbank on Boat Race day to cheer on Cambridge so when I got the opportunity to try the sport at Hampton I went for it. I also couldn't kick or catch a ball for the life of me so trying out a new sport was appealing. Plus just as I took up rowing, the Searle brothers (who

had relatively recently left my new school Hampton - Greg was just 19 or something) won Olympic Gold in the Barcelona Olympics in the coxed pair in an absolutely incredible race.



David: I started rowing at Hampton School after my older brother James because of my innate competition with him. He has become quite successful at a schoolboy level but I thought whatever he can do, I can do better.

At what stage did you both realise it was something at which you might become successful?

James: I think I first realised when I was 14 at the end of my first year of the sport. We had entered a few races with totally unselected crews and come soundly middle of the pack. Then for the National Schools regatta the coach selected an A eight and a B eight. I was happy to be selected in the A eight (the first time I'd been in a first team for anything probably) and we totally surprised ourselves and got a silver medal. It was the first medal I'd ever won for anything. The next year in the Junior 15 category our squad won every event it entered which was massive fun.

David: When I managed to win a bronze medal at the Great Britain Junior World Championships in my final year at school. It is still one of my proudest memories!

Whose idea was it to write the book?

James: I think broadly mine? I kept a diary on and off throughout the year and some time after the event suggested it to Dave. We got in touch with a few of the journalists who wrote a story about us for '03 and they

gave us ideas of how to take it forward. Andrew Longmore kindly introduced us to his agent, David Luxton, and we went from there!

David: James came up with the initial idea. He has kept several diaries during his rowing years and thought it might be interesting to write down our different viewpoints and might also help to clear the air between us once and for all.

How did you go about writing it? Did you read one-another's text before the book was finished?

James: We'd plot out what each chapter would look like and go away and write our sections individually. Then we'd meet up at weekends, read each others, and try to work out how to integrate them and link between them. Lots of Starbucks generally.

David: I spent a lot of time writing on my lap top in various London coffee shops. I used my old diaries and emails to help with the details. I got together with James quite often during the book writing to go through each other's passages and interweave them into the final text. Although many heated conversations resulted it helped me understand exactly what he felt and thought that year.

What do your parents think of the book?

James: I think they're excited, and have read some early drafts. But mostly they are relieved to just have us talking again!

David: I think they are very proud. They say that the race still represents one of the most emotionally difficult experience of their lives. Having two sons utterly divided by sport and trying to remain impartial to both.

Was writing the book a cathartic exercise?

James: Hugely. I think that was one of the drivers behind it. When seeing drafts of each others work we sometimes hugely disagreed, each wanting our side and our friends to come across best I guess.

David: Before we embarked on the book James and I had grown apart through our respective experiences at our two Universities. Reading what my brother had written at times led me to anger, feelings of guilt and even tears but it was great to finally have an understanding of his thoughts and feelings surrounding the race. In the end writing the book was an extremely cathartic exercise - I'd locked away my feelings from that year towards James and the writing exposed those feelings and brought us much closer together with a renewed sense of joint purpose.

Were you always competitive when you were growing up?

James: Pretty much. At everything – table tennis, monopoly.. you name it

David: James maybe didn't feel it to the same extent but I think we were, yes. Essentially I wanted to beat him at everything he did and as children that meant we fought a lot of the time. Mum and Dad were saints for putting up with it!

How much do you miss the Boat Race being in your lives?

James: I miss the camaraderie and simplicity of it. You can easily measure progress as an athlete, how fast are you going against the clock, how much weight are you lifting. Then the Boat Race itself is just win or lose. Nothing else. That's the focus all year and gives you a massive sense of purpose. I do not miss the long sessions on the rowing machine, the 20km rows cutting through ice in an Ely mid-winter, the blisters. And it's great to be able to go to friends birthday parties, weddings etc and not have to miss them and say 'sorry, rowing'.

David: Rowing in the Boat Race was a hugely difficult experience for me to get over and in some ways I feel I will never get over it. I felt like I lost my identity after I left Oxford as being a Blues rower was essentially my life for those years. I have never since felt as nervous for an event, as much part of a team or as dedicated to one single competition. In some ways I still have an emptiness as I don't have a single burning goal that drives me day in and day out; especially one that that will soon be defined simply as a victory or a loss. I have a different life now and there are certainly aspects I don't miss as well - the sacrifices, the never ending physical and mental exhaustion and the pressure to win. And of course I especially don't miss the early mornings.

Has writing the book afforded you some kind of distance? Are you able to look back on the race and laugh about it now?

James: It has allowed us to understand how we each feel about it. Watching the race on video it still stings hugely and the old 'what ifs' emerge. We've at least both agreed to disagree about certain aspects.

David: It has given me more perspective that is for sure, however the emotions involved in the race still burn extremely deeply. The pride will never leave me and I'm sure the disappointment for James will be there forever.

Do you have any regrets about how you went about dealing with the race?

James: None that I can pin down really. Perhaps Dave and I should have talked about it more, earlier but I don't know.

David: My only slight regret was that I could have consoled James better after the race but then again I wanted to celebrate with my crew and in some ways try to block out the huge guilt I was feeling with respect to James.

Do you still compete against each other in any way?

James: Well we raced against each other in Poland in an Oxford Cambridge alumni regatta relatively recently. Cambridge won but we were pulled along by recent Olympic silver medalist Josh West. We were meant to be racing in Tel Aviv later this year but I'm sure that'll be cancelled given current events. Off the water we ran a marathon in France together last September and my knee started cramping from half way round so I ended up leaning on Dave a lot. Without him I wouldn't have got round – teamwork!

David: Only on a much more light hearted level – during an old boys rowing race or some other form of exercise. We recently ran together at the Medoc Marathon in France- thankfully I was able to outsprint him at the end!

Do you feel that the result of the race has in any way changed the way you approach life?

James: In the immediate aftermath it made me burningly determined to prove myself which helped me and Tom James break into the GB rowing squad. In the longer term it reminded me to try and 'enjoy the journey' as you head towards a goal as you don't know what the outcome will be – I was so focused on the trying to win the race I forgot sometimes to enjoy the time building up to it.

David: For me I think it certainly allowed me to dispel my long feeling of always having been in James' shadow. I had become my own man and had different experiences. Apart from that I would say that it gave me 9 of the closest friends I could ever wish for – the bond between us is still so strong.

What's next for David and James Livingston?

James: Well I'm getting married in the summer which is taking some planning and Dave is working on his speech as best man! We might cycle Lands End to John o' Groats next year with the Smith brothers.

David: I'm on the lookout for a new challenge - potentially a row across the Atlantic?!

