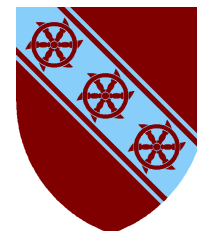




*St Catherine's College Rowing Society*  
*St Catherine's College,*  
*Oxford OX1 3UJ*



15th December, 2002

### Introduction

I blame Mike Bull, who wrote in the last newsletter: 'Although the weather has given us a few scares, so far there has been very little disruption from the elements'. The following day the Red Flag was nailed to the mast and the river remained closed for the rest of the term. In the next newsletter I will see if I can persuade him to wish for a disastrous Torpids for Catz crews.

However, Captain's report aside, somehow we seem to have managed to fill up the remaining space with items on sponsorship, motivation, the 92/93 Boat Club, and alumni news. Thanks to all who have contributed.

### PwC Sponsorship

*Bruce Mitchell, Rowing Society Chairman*

We are delighted that the Boat Club is again receiving sponsorship from PricewaterhouseCoopers. John Mitchell (M.89), the membership Secretary, who negotiated the deal visited the PwC office in London on 28th November to receive the first cheque for £3000 from Gareth Thomas and Adrienne Gumm (M.94).



Gareth Thomas (left) of PwC handing over a cheque for this year's sponsorship of the Boat Club to John Mitchell of the Rowing Society.

*Gareth Thomas, of PwC, writes*

As the largest professional services firm in the world, PricewaterhouseCoopers is a diverse fusion of culture and experience. We look for individuals like you, who are team players, excited about the idea of early responsibility and want to develop and enhance their skills. We wish everyone involved in St Catherine's College Boat Club every success in the coming year and look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the river.

### University Crews

Simon Risoe, last term's Captain of Boats, is now trialling for the Lightweights but as far as I know he is the only current Catz student in a University squad.

Lyndsey Highton (M.99), a former Catz women's 1st VIII regular but now at Green College, is trialling for the Women's Lightweights.

Matt Smith (M.99), now at St Anne's, stroked *Health* to a rather convincing 10 length victory over *Safety* in the OUBC Trial Eights race on 2nd December. That's just the sort of behaviour guaranteed to irritate the selectors since it rather spoils the purpose of a trials race. However, having already been involved in three close-fought Boat Races I don't suppose he can be blamed for a little over-exuberance when the opportunity presents itself. Especially since he's OUBC President this year.

### Results

*British Indoor Rowing Championships (18th Nov)*

	Time	Category	Place
Matt Smith	6:17.9	M U23 Hwt	33/154
Simon Risoe	6:35.4	M U23 Lwt	13/79
Lyndsey Highton	7:55.1	W U23 Lwt	26/53
Sarah Payne	7:33.1	W 40-44 Hwt	2/17

*Burway Small Boats Head (14th Dec)*

	Time	Category	Place
Tony Mitchell (M.78) & Sarah Payne	12:18	S3 2x overall	2/4 26/172

## Boat Club Report

*Dan Robson, Men's Captain*

With a large intake of novice rowers in October as well as a strong core to the men's senior squad, it seemed that we were in for a productive term. The weather conspired against us, however, and the flag prevented rowing for 5 weeks. The squad carried on training through this with the seniors making three trips to Dorney lake and the novices getting some useful time in the OUBC rowing tank. Plans for a senior crew (including two of last year's winners: Alasdair Howie and John Goldfinch) to enter Wallingford Head were halted by withdrawal on safety grounds when the lower divisions were cancelled. Hopefully the lack of races this term will be balanced out by Torpids running, where we are hoping to be able to enter three strong boats. The challenge of improving upon our place of sixth on the river is one which I believe will drive the squad to compete for seats in the first Torpid, with the other crews in good positions to gain blades.



Dan Robson, Men's Captain.

The committee would like to thank Nivedita Mani for her work as secretary this term, and Michael Bull, who in his capacity as Captain of Lower Boats has been the driving force behind the novice programme. Michael's coaching services have been of great benefit to the crews, and this will hopefully continue as they progress into the senior squad.

## Why Row?

*Tony Hancox (M.49), Rowing Society President*

In the last newsletter Anu Dudhia gave not impenetrable evidence to show that Oxford colleges which improved academically last year 'also tended to be

those whose 1st VIIIs gained bumps'. Tutors to note, please.

Earlier the Times had published their University rankings, in association with PricewaterhouseCoopers (we really are with the best). They were used by one of several speakers at the unveiling in Eights Week of the plaque in the boathouse workshop to mark Ben Sylvester's (M.48) latest gift (of no less than \$10000) to Catz rowing and the boathouse consortium. For the first time Oxford headed the 'Good University Guide'. A new formula accepted by the Higher Education Statistics Agency on Facilities Spending 'was enough to overturn Cambridge's lead on its own'. Facilities spending? Quote 'per student expenditure over three years that include sports, recreation, health and counselling'. Tutors note, please, what heads this list.

There are deep reasons why people row. It doesn't happen very often but when a racing boat is persuaded by the skill of those in it to plane *on* rather than *through* the water, and the palpable exhilaration so created gives apparently infinite time to reach out for the work, as the boat runs, it lets you *win*.

And people like to win whether they are engaged in 'performance' or 'participation'<sup>†</sup>

<sup>†</sup>*In the November edition of Regatta magazine the Amateur Rowing Association outlined their plans for extending their competition structure to include additional events at the lower end specifically aimed at those rowers at the 'participation' level, e.g., who only row once a week and would struggle to win at the current 'Novice' level - AD*



Early morning training on the Isis back at the start of term, when such things were still possible!

## The 1992/93 Boat Club

*In the first in what I hope will be a regular series of retrospectives we look at the events of 10 years ago.*

Inspired, perhaps, by the performances in the Barcelona Olympics of Matt Pinsent (M.89, gold in the 2-) and Rupert Obholzer (M.88, 6th in the 8), Michaelmas Term 1992 started with ten (!) novice VIIIs. However, quite possibly to the relief of the captains Anna Cox and Nigel Manson (standing in for Richard Cochrane for the term), not too much rowing got done due to high stream conditions — any of this sound familiar?. The Iffley Rd Rowing Centre had just been opened so this was the first generation of novices to get to stir water around the rowing tank for an hour while pondering the ultimate futility of existence.

Hilary Term started no better, but by 3rd week the river was finally rowable, just in time for the women to launch their (long over-due) new VIII *Tiger*, funded partly by a donation from the Rowing Society and our sponsors Coopers & Lybrand (as they then were). Torpids went ahead, albeit minus the Rowing On divisions. Nigel Manson wrote:

‘Initial nerves in the first race prevented us from finding our rhythm until the Green Bank, and we fell prey to Teddy Hall in the Gut. Thursday’s and Friday’s races were spent playing games with Lincoln — ‘Let’s see how close they can get before we take it home’ kind of thing — harmless really, and we actually got rather good at it; I think our best was 6”, whilst Hertford remained elusively a third of a length ahead. On Saturday, the race plan of ‘let’s go out and row like hell’ was abandoned in favour of some strategy, and sure enough, following our race plan to the letter, a Catz Men’s 1st crew hit their first moving target of the 1990’s, and in enough style to satisfy even our stroke — dead in front of all the boathouses.’

I remember there was some discussion as to whether Hertford were actually rowing with all 8 men when Catz finally caught them. The women got three bumps to move up to 4th in Div 1. Something to shout about, perhaps, but Anna Cox failed to supply anything for the newsletter so ...

‘... I’ll just have to fill the space with my favourite anecdote about their crew. It was at Peterborough Head, half-way through term, and they’d just been assembling the boat when someone notices that nearby one of the rowing-clothing suppliers has set up a stall. Five seconds later it was just me, Doug McCowen (the coach) and Rob Vetch (the cox) left holding the spanners while the rest of the crew dashed off for 15 minutes steady-state lycra-shopping. So what about this race, then, ladies? ‘It’s going to be such a

nightmare — we’re just so unco-ordinated. I mean, half the crew have got dark-blue leggings, the other half have got maroon!’ Doug and Rob seemed completely unfazed by all this. Apparently, discussing what to wear is part of their normal warm-up, so actually getting around to doing something about it must show that they’re taking things extra-seriously.’

After a long series of Oxford Boat Race victories, OUBC President Matt Pinsent and another Catz man Philipp Schuller were were surprisingly beaten by a Cambridge crew using the new ‘cleaver’ oars and a distinctive rowing style that would sustain their dominance for the rest of the decade.

The men had an average sort of Eights (down 1), but the women were finally successful enough for Anna to be persuaded to put pen to paper:

‘We were quite pleased with our performance in Eights. Well, O.K., *ecstatic!* We got blades, bumping St Anne’s, L.M.H., Christ Church and Wolfson. We had wonderful support, especially on the last day when the noise was absolutely deafening; it was brilliant!’



The 1993 St Catherine’s Women’s 1st Eight. Louise Glasgow (B), Anna Cox, Heather Booth, Jocelyn Hacker, Catherine Gower, Sarah Hickman, Rebecca Henwood, Emily Dana (S), Alayne Wilson (C).

John Mitchell (M.89) adds

‘I arrived in the UK from Greece to start my DPhil on April 1st 1993 and was met by Rich Cochrane and Jon Haynes, whom I had never met before (I assume that the ‘long arm’ of the Rowing Society had prewarned them). They were so keen to ensure that I would row that they helped me unpack the car — and I think I was on the river in the 1st Eight within 24 hours of arriving in the country!’

‘That was also the year we put together an eight with Hertford and failed to qualify for Henley (by an embarrassing 7 seconds). Cochrane, Haynes, Robinson, me, Sean Manning (Hertford) and others who I can’t remember — though the cox was from the US — Brown Univ?. Didn’t do the early stages of my DPhil any good, but we had a great time both on and off the water.’

## News from Alumni

**Phil Penketh (M.76)** *Now at the Yale School of Medicine, found me on the web and sent a bunch of photos by email from the late 1970's. See RS web-page.*

**Jim Bigger (M.86)** After dragging myself away from academia, I landed in the role of management consultant in late 1992. I spent four years in London and then six in San Francisco working in the consulting industry. We have recently moved to Colorado (where my wife Jennifer grew up) and in partnership with two friends have started two real estate investment businesses — one in Denver and one in Colorado Springs. We have two children — Nicholas is five and Christina is three.

**Steve Eyles (M.86)** I'm still working at University of Massachusetts in Amherst [Director of the Mass Spectrometry Facility]. Finally bought a house in Northampton, MA, last summer. Love being a homeowner . . . I think! I drive over the Connecticut River to work every morning and there are several college boat clubs, but they all seem to go out at 5am. Even in my younger days that was way too early to be fun. I *hope* to make it back some time next year, so I'll try to arrange it around a boating event.

**Michael Spence, Law Fellow** I don't have that much to say — I am working as Chair of the Law Board and considerably fitter than I was in 1993!

**Ramon Reyes-Carrion (M.88)** I have been working at CIMAT [Centre de Investigación en Matemáticas, Guanajuato, Mexico], since I left Oxford. I am doing research in mathematics and I am the system administrator.

**Richard Copley (M.89)** I'm working in Oxford now [Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics], doing errmm - genetics? computational studies of gene function? bioinformatics? Take your pick. Before that, I was in Heidelberg.

**Dom Layfield (M.90)** Amazingly, I am *still* a student, but in the final throes of my PhD. I've been telling people that like the Great War, 'It'll all be over by Christmas'. It's now looking more like January, but at least the end is in sight.

After the PhD is finished, I'm planning to move to San Francisco, and to find a job out there. But I'm actually looking forward to being unemployed for a while.

Finally gave up rowing about a year ago. Too many early mornings to justify rowing with mediocre crews. Plus I've completely lost any tolerance of erg tests — must be getting old. I still go out in a single once in a while though, when the weather is nice.

**Sarah Askew (M.94)** Just thought I'd mention that I finally escaped from Imperial with a PhD in biochemistry. I moved to Cambridge in July and I'm now working as a PostDoc in the Biochemistry Department. Currently spending too many weekends in London to belong to a boat club — maybe next year!

**Jana Bakunina (M.99)** I have joined Merrill Lynch, an American Investment Bank as an analyst in Investment Banking division. I live in London and miss Oxford a lot. Can't wait for the Torpids dinner!!!

## Crew Shields

Regarding the item in the last newsletter, I've received a letter from Peter Thallon (M.46) who feels that the three '49 Eights may have some claim to distinction, but doesn't know who (if anyone) is organising things. If any of the '49ers, or members of other crews, do want to volunteer to take charge of things the Rowing Society and College Alumni Office can help with contact details.

## Coming Up ...

In the next newsletter I'd like to do a piece on the Boat Club of 20 years ago, so if you rowed in 82/83 (when Mark Tucker and Ros Temple were captains) please send me a few lines to me so we know what you're doing now and pass this on to anyone else with whom you remain in contact. Also any good photos if you have them in electronic form.

We'd also like to hear from anyone else if you have any news, or rowed in '93 and missed this newsletter (sort yourself out!).

## Diary

19 Jan 2003	RS Committee Meeting
7 Feb 2003	Deadline for next newsletter
5–8 Mar 2003	Torpids
8 Mar 2003	Rowing Society AGM & Dinner
28–31 May 2003	Eights

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