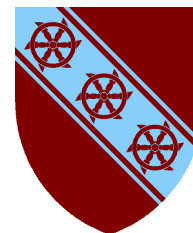




St Catherine's College Rowing Society
St Catherine's College
Oxford OX1 3UJ



21st December, 2012

In this issue ...

I wouldn't normally include rainfall statistics under 'Results' but somehow, on this occasion, it seems appropriate.

It's been wet, as you may have noticed, so members of the Boat Club have had to find other ways of keeping themselves amused: for most, the number of crew-dates has exceeded the number of outings on the water. Just one of the three Isis Winter League races scheduled for this term went ahead, and there was doomed attempt to get Christ Church Regatta under way, which lasted all of one day. Even so, our rowers have managed to notch up a couple of successes (in competitions, I mean, I don't know about the crew-dates). The Captains provide their reports.

We include a look back at the Boat Club of 40 years ago and, before bidding farewell to this Olympic year, I thought it would be of interest to include New College's tale of Olympic glory from 100 years ago (a little history is a good thing but, as a Catz oarsman, I'm quite happy not to have had such a weighty burden on my shoulders).

Finally, having spent far too much time of late sitting in front of my computer rather than out sculling, I've been pondering how to assess quantitatively where we currently stand in the grand scheme of Oxford college rowing.



Rain stops play: the view from the Gut, with helpful clarification provided by the local authority.

Results

New Coll. Indoor Regatta, 8th November
 (4 × 500 m relay)

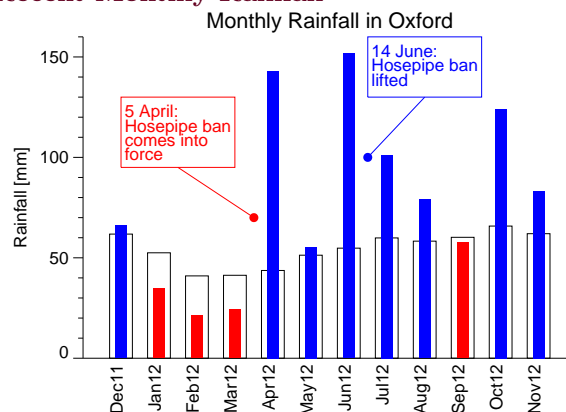
Senior Women (6 entries)

1st St Catz Anne de Geus, Inge Hertzog,
 Poppy Lambert & Isobel Renton

Isis Winter League A, 11th November
61 crews raced

1st 4:52.8 St Catz Men's VIII

Recent Monthly Rainfall



The past 12 months' rainfall, blue/red bars show months which were wetter/drier than the long-term average, shown by the white boxes.

Men's Boat Club Report

Rob Hamlet, Men's Captain

The term started encouragingly with very successful recruitment across the board, however the river was red flag from the start, setting the stage for a much disrupted term. We were given a brief reprieve in 4th and 6th week with some green/blue flags, but recent flooding saw the introduction of the 'DOOM' flag by OURCs¹, heralding 'Exceptional potential for doom' amongst other things.

With the above river conditions it was a frustrating term for novice rowing here in Oxford, culminating in

¹Even OURCs officials get bored when they have nothing to officiate

President: Bruce Mitchell
 Vice Presidents: Don Barton,
 Richard Peters,
 Sir Matthew Pinsent CBE,
 Ben Sylvester.

the cancellation of Christ Church novice regatta before either of our crews could race. Despite the lack of actual rowing so far, lower boats captains Owen Leyshon and George Shankar have managed to retain a good number of novices interested in taking it further. The crews showed great promise in the brief outings of the 6th week 'eye of the storm', and we look forward to fully integrating them into the senior way of life next term.

New arrivals to the senior squad and seasoned returning members have given us a strong group of capable athletes working towards the 1st/2nd VI-IIs. With tricky water conditions we struggled to



Rob Hamlet, Men's Captain

find opportunities for many water outings, but still managed to win IWL A with a few last minute subs. Most of our training has been focused on our conditioning, working with ergs and weights to build up a foundation for the rest of the year. The guys have approached this with great spirit, and have made some fantastic progress over the term. We look forward to bolstering our numbers with the novices, fulfilling our potential, and doing some damage come Hilary and Torpids.



St Catherine's racing in the Isis Winter League A

Women's Boat Club Report

Isobel Renton, Women's Captain

For the women Michaelmas began a month prior to the first week of term. With the help of our new

coach, Malcolm Spencer, twelve seniors returned to Oxford having spent September training. The arrival of new students not only saw a large intake of novice rowers, but the addition of a new senior, Anne de Geus, who we were lucky to retain after interest from the Blues squad!

Sadly the river has only allowed four or five outings per crew and the few outings we have been allowed were only made possible by Joshua Morgan (Captain of Coxes) who donated huge amounts of his time and experience to coxing nearly all of the women's senior and novice, and men's novice outings.



Isobel Renton, Women's Captain

Unfortunately for the novices after one very wet morning of Christ Church the whole regatta was cancelled. However our lower boats captains, Poppy Lambert and Katherine Pears, must have done something right as the number of novices moving into the senior training program has more than doubled our squad.

Despite the weather the seniors were offered an exciting opportunity to row on the tideway when Furnivall Boat Club let us launch from their boathouse in Chiswick: now nine of us can proudly claim we've crossed the Boat Race finishing line! Every water race we entered was cancelled so we branched out into other forms of competition. Cross-country coppers, an event where points are awarded for participation as well as results, saw many colleges despair when the already strong Catz athletic team were joined in the race by the entire senior women's rowing squad. But perhaps our continuous commitment to training (land or water) was best recognised at New College Indoor Regatta.

Here Inge Hertzog, Anne de Geus, Poppy Lambert, and myself won a 2k erg relay, beating a host of other colleges and, most significantly, the favoured four from Magdalen (currently head of the river in Torpids). With continued work we are confident in making a big impact at Torpids next term.

40 Years Ago

During the early 1970s, SCCBC reached a high-water mark in terms of its progress up the bumps charts: reaching 6th on the river in Torpids and 12th in Eights, levels unsurpassed until the new millennium (currently we lie 7th and 9th). This was before the days of mixed colleges and women's divisions.

At that time they were experimenting with Torpids rules and had done away with Sandwich Boats and the tiresome business of having to race twice in close succession (there being, of course, no intercalated women's divisions). Instead, the 1st division started with 6 boats while the other five divisions all had 9. On the second day the division boundaries were all moved down one position: the 1st division comprising 7 boats, the 6th division 8. And so on. The boat finishing top of each division was thus effectively promoted to the next division the following day.

During the 1973 Torpids, starting 6th (i.e., at the bottom of the 1st Division) St Catz bumped Queen's on the Thursday to rise to 5th — their highest ever position at the time — only to lose that place to Worcester later in the week. But having already peaked in Eights in 1971, Catz 1st VIII followed it with spoons the next year and 1973 was only a little better: being bumped on the first three days and dropping from 16th to 19th on the river.

The following extracts are from the Boat Club minute book

Michaelmas Term, 1972

The Captain [Roger Bricknell] congratulated the 1st VIII on its unparalleled success in Restricted VIIIs event in the Christ Church Regatta — this was the third year running this event had been won by Catz. In the summer the first VIII had equalled the course record at Hereford in the Senior C event.

The Treasurer's report [John Whorewood] was given. We still had debts of £50, with £10 in the bank. In future any Boat Club finances will be strictly cash with order. A motion that 1st VIII members should pay 50 p each for freshers' sherry was passed (just!).

Trinity Term, 1973

The Captain then gave his report. In Torpids the 1st VIII were reasonably successful, making one place (up to 5th in Division 1) and losing it the next day. The 3rd VIII made a very creditable effort. The Second VIII worked hard and rowed over on two days. However, on the final day the cox was unable to avoid

Timms² raft — despite shouts from the bank of 'Rudder! Rudder!' to which he replied, 'It's full on!' (wrong way round, though).

In Eights the 1st VIII went down 3, 2nd VIII down 2 and 3rd VIII down 4.

1912 Olympic Regatta

The following is from the New College Boat Club website. I can't vouch for its complete veracity but the results are indeed correct.

New College Boat Club is the only Oxbridge College club to have been selected to represent Great Britain at the Olympics.

In 1912, Great Britain sent two men's crews to the Olympics in Stockholm, Sweden. One was a Leander crew, mostly comprised of Magdalen College (Oxford) rowers, and captained by the Magdalen captain. The second was the New College 1st VIII.

The two British crews were the favourites for gold so started at opposite ends of the draw. They both worked up through the competition to make the final. The course in Stockholm was not straight, and one of the two lanes was clearly favoured, the other requiring the cox to steer around a protruding boathouse and then back under a bridge.

Before the final, the two British captains met to toss for lanes. New College won the toss and following gentlemanly tradition offered the choice of lanes to their opponents, who would — in a gentlemanly fashion — refuse this offer. However the Leander/Magdalen captain accepted this offer and chose the better lane. Leander went on to win the gold medal, leaving New College with the silver.

King Gustav V of Sweden was so disheartened by this display of ungentlemanly conduct that, as a consolation, he presented his colours to New College. Ever since then, New College have raced in purple and gold, the colours of the royal house of Sweden. A further tradition has been the adoption of the toast: God Damn Bloody Magdalen!, the supposed words of the New College stroke Robert Bourne as they crossed the line. The abbreviation GDBM is still used commonly, being on the bottom of the NCBC letterhead to this very day.

On June 11th, 2012, there was a rematch on the Isis between New College and Magdalen, which Magdalen again won, but this time without any complaint from New.

²The former name of Long Bridges Boathouse

Top Rowing Colleges

Which is the best Oxford college at rowing? Oriel, since they currently hold the men's Eights Headship? Or Pembroke who are 2nd in Eights, but who have the Women's Headship? Or Christ Church: 3rd in Eights, but with the highest 2nd and 3rd men's Eights and highest women's 2nd Eight? And that's not even taking Torpids into account.

The table on the right shows my attempt to quantify this.

For the mathematically inclined: I've assigned each crew finishing in position i on the river a score of

$$x = N \binom{N-i}{N-1}$$

where N is the number of crews in each event ($N=92$ for Men's Eights, 73 Men's Torpids, 79 Women's Eights, 61 Women's Torpids). This means that the crew which finishes Head gets N points, the crew finishing bottom gets 1 point, but with a non-linear scale in between. So, for example, Oriel get 92 points for finishing top of the 92 men's crews participating in Eights while Pembroke's 2nd place earns them 87.54 points. At the other end, L.M.H. get 1 point from their men's 3rd Eight who finished bottom of the river, while Keble get 1.05 points from their 3rd Eight who finished one place above. Put another way, a bump for the Headship is rated about 100 times more highly as much as a bump at the tail end, and equivalent to about 4 crews successfully Rowing on.

I don't think many would argue against Pembroke and Christ Church coming out top, but Wadham's 3rd place is unexpected. It results from their highly-placed women's 1st VIII (2nd in Torpids and Eights) and large number of crews: 13, compared with our 9.

On this basis, St Catherine's currently lies 13th. Perhaps surprisingly low considering that the average position of our men's and women's 1st boats on the river is around 9th, but I think accurately reflecting the fact that our lower boats are fewer in number and placed lower than those of the colleges above of us in the table.

We'll take another look at this after next Torpids to see how things have changed.

Coming Up ...

In the next issue there will (hopefully) be some news of actual rowing, prospects for Torpids, arrangements for the AGM & Dinner and an update on the University crews (apparently without any Catz participation this year). Also a review of the events of 50 years ago. News items or other contributions from alumni always welcome.

Oxford College Rowing: 2012 Ranking

		Total	ME	MT	WE	WT
1	Pembroke	359	117	105	89	49
2	Christ Church	332	126	86	69	51
3	Wadham	297	79	56	94	68
4	Magdalen	283	84	73	60	65
5	Balliol	255	90	70	72	24
6	Oriel	254	117	52	44	41
7	St John's	249	61	61	84	43
8	Hertford	241	72	47	76	47
9	Wolfson	235	92	62	51	29
10	S.E.H.	223	76	28	66	53
11	University	221	93	26	62	40
12	New College	207	63	42	39	63
13	St Catherine's	201	75	58	39	28
14	Worcester	181	56	41	40	43
15	Trinity	158	68	50	25	16
16	Lincoln	149	54	36	38	21
17	Keble	146	62	16	45	23
18	L.M.H.	140	44	52	22	21
19	St Anne's	135	43	42	34	17
20	Exeter	133	47	28	29	30
21	Merton	132	31	18	59	25
22	Jesus	125	49	29	29	18
23	Queen's	109	33	25	20	30
24	Brasenose	94	41	29	15	8
25	Somerville	93	27	18	33	16
26	Mansfield	80	28	14	23	15
27	St Peter's	80	39	21	15	5
28	St Hugh's	79	24	23	21	11
29	Osler House	70	6	0	46	18
30	Linacre	65	19	7	31	8
31	Corpus Christi	57	19	12	17	10
32	St Hilda's	48	9	1	25	13
33	St Antony's	44	18	10	11	6
34	Green Templeton	26	9	3	6	7
35	Regent's Park	13	6	4	4	0
36	St Benet's Hall	2	0	2	0	0

Tot: total points, summing those for ME (Men's Eights), MT (Men's Torpids), WE (Women's Eights) and WT (Women's Torpids), all rounded to the nearest integer.

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Row.Soc: <http://www.atm.ox.ac.uk/rowing/rs.html>

www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=93221115264

Diary

27 Feb – 2 Mar 2013	Torpids
2 Mar 2013	RS AGM & Dinner
24 Mar 2013	Henley Boat Races
31 Mar 2013	The Boat Race
21–24 May 2013	Eights