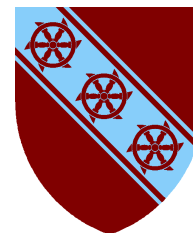




St Catherine's College Rowing Society
St Catherine's College
Oxford OX1 3UJ



10th November, 2013

In this issue . . .

Ahem . . . please excuse all the dust, I've just emerged from the archives. It all started when the manager of the *The Dove* at Hammersmith unearthed a couple of our oars from 1913/1914. It seemed a good excuse to extend the range of our usual retrospectives to cover the events of 100 years ago and, well, one thing led to another — Suffragettes, an overlooked Catz Olympic medallist, a future king spotted running along the towpath, a corner cabinet on e-bay — and soon there was enough Edwardiana to fill most of this newsletter.

In more recent news, our two active internationals have had a busy summer, culminating in the World Championships held in South Korea; and, following on from Tony Mitchell's recollection (in the last newsletter) of training down at Radley, arranged by the late Sir Patrick Nairne, we now also have the view from the coaching launch.

Results

Rowing World Cup II

21–23 June, Dorney Lake, UK

Men's VIII's

1st GBR str: Andy Triggs Hodge (M.04)



Demonstrating that women have made *some* progress towards equality in the past 100 years, an almost entirely female contingent of attendees at this summer's Gaudy take to the water: Amy Carr (bow), Zoe Thomas, Lydia Hutchinson, Caz Woffindale, Ilsa Haeusler, Catherine Wherity, Alex Winstansley, Hege Larsen (str), with Tim Rooney as the token male in the cox's seat.

Henley Royal Regatta, 3–7 July

Grand Challenge Cup (Open Men's VIII's)

Winner: Leander & Molesey
 str: Andy Triggs Hodge

Remenham Challenge Cup (Open Women's VIII's)

Winner: Leander & Oxford Brookes
 cox: Zoe de Toledo (M.10)

Rowing World Cup III

12–14 July, Lucerne, Switzerland

Men's VIII's

4th GBR str: Andy Triggs Hodge

Women's VIII's

4th GBR cox: Zoe de Toledo

Rowing World Championships

25 Aug – 1 Sep, Chungju, S. Korea

Men's VIII's

1st GBR 6: Andy Triggs Hodge

Women's VIII's

4th GBR cox: Zoe de Toledo

International Rowing

Zoe de Toledo is now the established cox for the GB women's VIII (these days the VIII's are the only coxed events in senior international competitions). Due to a lack of entries, she had to sit out the 2nd World Cup regatta at Dorney while other members of her crew competed in smaller boats, but they did get to race as an VIII at the final World Cup and in the World Championships, finishing just outside the medals on both occasions. Added to their 4th place in the first World Cup race back in March, it's been a frustrating season but at least they picked up a Henley trophy.

The GB men, unusually, put all their best oarsmen into the VIII this year and things had been going well until the disappointment of a 4th place at Lucerne. After a reshuffle, including moving Andy Triggs Hodge from stroke to 6, they came to the World Championships back on form and took the title in some style, beating crews from nations which traditionally prioritise this event: Germany, USA and Canada.

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

Old St Catherine's Oars

Back in May, the landlord of *The Dove* at Hammersmith contacted our Domestic Bursar saying that, while having a rummage around the building, he had come across up a couple of old illuminated blades of ours (which are now, I believe, in the College's possession).



Blades from the 1913 Torpid (top) and 1914 Eight (bottom) discovered at *The Dove* at Hammersmith.

Although the blades are in poor condition, it is possible to make out that these are from the 1913 St Catherine's Torpid and the 1914 St Catharine's Eight. Yes, the spelling of Catherine/Catharine is different. It was supposedly standardised to 'Catherine' in 1919, although even then 'Catharine' — the 'Cambridge' spelling — persisted for some years. But the discovery of the oars seemed a good excuse for dusting off our records for that period.

100 Years Ago

St Catherine's then was a Society for students who were members of the University but not of any College, and published the 'Non-Collegiate Students' Magazine'. Bumps were contested over 6 days and, in 1913, 33 crews participated in both Torpids and Eights. The St Catherine's VIII started 32nd and 30th, respectively, in the two events.

NCSM, April 1913

[Ed] It is with real pleasure that we record in this number the successes of the Torpid. After so long a barren period it almost overwhelms us to be presented with five successive victories; a greater number than has been made by any boat of ours since 1882, unless our memory fails us. It is, of course, merely human, though none the less odd, that we should actually experience a twinge of disappointment that the total was not just one more!

[Clubs] The following is a quotation from *The Tatler*:

'St Catharine's success was especially praiseworthy and welcome as their resources are limited, and for a good many years they have been among the lean kine in Fortune's favour. They should do well in the Eights.'

On the first day, February 13th, we started with Exeter II behind us and Trinity II in front. From the start we left Exeter II far behind and went up on Trinity, and made our bump just before the Free Water Stone¹. For fully ten seconds after the bump Trinity cox refused to acknowledge it, and by that time had bumped Christ Church III. The bump was therefore disputed, and at a special meeting held at the Boat House and presided over by Mr. Tinne [presumably C. E. Tinne, former Blue], it looked as if the verdict would go to Trinity, but the photographs taken by Gillman's arrived just in time and proved conclusively that we had our bump first.

Our success was due to a sporting crew, backed up by no less sporting members, both past and present. The Rev. H. Johnson merits our sincerest gratitude for his coaching as does Mr. Clarabut, of Corpus, Cambridge, who both polished up the Torpid and is coaching the Eight.



The 1913 St Catharine's Torpid, photographed at the start. Crew: F. Sharpe (bow), W. G. Harris, E. Mollenhoff, R. G. Grant, J. C. Roberts, D. von Pritzbuer, W. M. E. Attale, H. A. Wilsdon (str) and F. C. Sellar (cox)

The Times, May 1913

[The first day of Eights] The Prince of Wales [then an undergraduate at Magdalen, later King Edward VIII] watched the racing from the Magdalen College Barge. He also ran down the towing path cheering the Magdalen crew, who made a desperate effort for the headship by New College managed to finish a length ahead.

¹Also known as the 'Gut Stone'.

[On the last day] There was a large crowd at the riverside and the sinking of a raft and immersion of about 30 people, all of whom were got out safely, caused some commotion.



'College Barges, Folly Bridge, Oxford', by A. R. Quinton, 1914.

New College remained Head of the River, and Magdalen 2nd, although the previous summer a mostly-Magdalen crew rowing as Leander had controversially defeated New College in the final of the Olympic Eights in Stockholm. At the other end of table, St Catherine's struggled to match the expectations raised by their Torpids performance.

NCSM October, 1913

St Catharine's Eight was a far better boat than its achievements on the races would lead one to think. We made two bumps but were bumped three times, so we ended up one place down. Many of the boatmen had prophesied six bumps for us, and had we the funds I do not think we should have been disgraced had we sent the boat up to Henley.

The ready response of old members has had a wonderful effect on the present members. It has shown that the Non-Collegiate body is indeed a fact and not a myth. Now that those leaving this term have added to the number of old members, the financial aid should be even greater than it has been this year. Gentlemen, I beg of you to make an annual subscription towards the Boat Club a duty.

Congratulations to H. M. Kusik on winning the University Sculls and also representing us at Henley.

We will return to Mr Kusik shortly. Meanwhile, back at the river, just when it seemed that all the excitement was over ...

The Times, 4th June 1913

Rough's Boathouse, situated within a few yards of the Long Bridges on the Lower River at Oxford, was

destroyed by fire early yesterday, and it seems clear that suffragists were responsible for the destruction of property valued at more than £3000.

Shortly before 2 o'clock the watchman at the University boathouse noticed a glare in the sky, and almost immediately afterwards Rough's Boathouse was seen to be on fire. The boathouse was full of valuable racing craft of all descriptions, and there were many boats in course of construction, some of them being got ready for Henley Regatta. One was a particularly fine boat which was being built for the Eton Boat Club. A quantity of cedar wood which had been seasoning for years and which cannot be replaced was destroyed.

The Oxford Fire Brigade were quickly on the spot, and it was at once seen that the building could not be saved. The heat was so intense that a large punt moored in the stream caught fire, and the railings of one of the bridges some distance away also became ignited. The attention of the firemen was directed to the saving of Mr. Fred Rough's house, which at one time was in danger, and in this they were successful. Nailed to the woodwork of the bridge was a card on which were the words, "Votes for women. No peace till we get the vote."

Shortly before the fire broke out three women were seen running along the towing-path towards Iffley, and there is reason to believe that a motor-car had been left in a country lane within a short distance of the main road, and that they escaped by this means. The property is only partly insured.

It seems likely that the boathouse was rebuilt and re-named 'Timm's', subsequently redeveloped as our own Long Bridges Boathouse.

H. M. Kuusik (1877?–1965)

The reference to the sculler H. M. Kusik in the NCSM merited a little further investigation (his name also appears on the 1914 Eights oar as rowing at no.5).

The Times mentions that H. M. Kusik of St Petersburg R C (Russia) was one of the favourites for the 1913 Diamond Sculls event, but that he lost to Watts of Thames RC in the first round. So why would he have been one of the favourites? Probably because Hugo-Maksimilian 'Mart' Kuusik of Russia had won a bronze medal in the single sculls in the 1912 Olympics (In Cyrillic, 'u' and 'uu' would have been rendered the same, i.e., 'y').

Wikipedia reveals that he was an Estonian, born 9 Dec 1877 and died 24 Aug 1965, and that his home club was in Pärnu in SW Estonia. www.sports-reference.com gives the same dates and adds that he was born in Narva in the NE of Estonia, and died

in Battle Ground, Indiana, USA in 1965, but it gives his club as Kalev St Petersburg, which is consistent with the Henley entry. It also provides his height, 5'8" (173cm) and weight 154lb (70 kg) — clearly no giant — which exactly matches the weight (11st 0lb) on the St Catharine's oar.

Renée Prud'homme provides the following information from the College archives. 'Hugo Maxmilian Kusik' is recorded in the Censor's entrance book on 24 April 1913, born 26 Nov 1885 in Kuokkala, Finland, and the second son of Jack, lawyer, from Yamburg [?], with a note saying 'Univ [St] Petersburg'. It seems likely that Kuokkala was the town just NW of St Petersburg later renamed Repin rather than the current Finnish town of that name. Yamburg is the former name of Kingisepp, to the SW of St Petersburg, near the Estonian border. The date of birth is puzzling — 8 years later than the date from the web, but both plausible for a mature student pursuing a second degree. His name appears again in the Oct 1914 NCSM, listed as serving as an officer in the Russian army, but she could find no record of him being awarded a degree so it seems unlikely that he ever returned to complete his studies.

Pieces of Eight

My attention was drawn to the following item which appeared on e-bay over the summer:

'A mahogany and teak cabinet made from part of a rowing boat belonging to St Catherine's Rowing Club, Oxford University in 1904. The cabinet was made for E. C. Casey who was captain of the rowing team in 1903 and 1904. When a new boat was acquired, each member of the crew was allowed a portion of the original boat. As you can see the back part of the cabinet is part of the hull as are the shelves/partitions inside. The carving on the cornice bears the date 1904, OX with a sun or a cog symbol [Oh for goodness sake, it's obviously a Catherine Wheel!] and to the left the letters E.C.C.



... I have now acquired an old handwritten note which details how each member [...] received that section of boat which they occupied during the races. This section fell to Mr Edward Comerford Casey [and was] made into the cabinet in 1925 by W. G. Wallace.'

Described as 'used', the cabinet had a starting price of £90. I was hoping it that it would not attract much interest and so we might persuade the seller to part with it for rather less. Unfortunately it sold for £250. Did one of you buy it?

Sir Patrick Nairne (1921–2013)

In the last newsletter Tony Mitchell wrote of the experience of the Men's 1st Eight being coached at Radley in 1982, arranged by the new Master, Sir Patrick Nairne. As an addendum to their obituary of Sir Patrick, The Times (22 June 2013) published the following from one of our Radley coaches.

Andrew Trotman, Radley coach 1982

I remember when Sir Patrick (obituary, June 5) had just taken up his post as Master of St Catherine's, Oxford. I was beginning my teaching career and was asked (with a colleague) to coach the first rowing crew for Summer Eights. They were a really committed group and responded positively. When the event came, Sir Patrick was there (in suit and tie) on the towpath. He ran briskly alongside the crew and was delighted with their effort. They won their oars with 13 bumps in total [I assume he refers to the total for the men's 1st and 2nd Eights, and women's 1st Eight, all of whom won blades in 1982]. His boundless enthusiasm was, I am sure, contagious.

Andrew Trotman went on to become Warden (Headmaster) of St Edward's School, Oxford, from 2004–2011.

Coming Up ...

In the next issue we will have reports on this term's rowing, the University crews and, hopefully, a little more on Mart Kuusik. News items or other contributions from alumni always welcome.

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

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

Diary

- 27–30 Nov 2013 Christ Church Regatta
- 5–8 Mar 2014 Torpids
- 8 Mar 2014 RS AGM & Dinner
- 28–31 May 2014 Eights