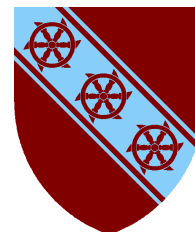




St Catherine's College Rowing Society
St Catherine's College,
Oxford OX1 3UJ



12th May, 2001

Dear Alumnus,

Due to Foot and Mouth Disease restrictions and persistent high stream the first part of this newsletter has been relocated to the Tideway. Following her piece about rowing for Imperial (5th February), RS President Tony Hancox (M.49) responds:

'Bravo to Sarah Askew. Her opening postulation "Rowing at IC is quite different from rowing at Catz" echoes and repeats exactly an experience of nearly 50 years ago when I joined Thames Rowing Club, next to IC on the Putney embankment.

'I had no idea what the Tideway would be like, though knowing that Thames was then the *de facto* home of the men's national squad. I shall never forget the first stroke of a 'firm' paddle when we had turned to row upstream with the tide, it was like being kicked in the back by a mule. Throughout the outing I must have been late every stroke, practically every one with washed-out finish caused by inadequacy, unfitness and inability to grapple with the speed of the following tide, and the work — the inexorable *work* of the crew.

'It took me five years to make it into the 1st VIII for the Grand at Henley, while working a five and a half day week, leaving for Putney at lunchtime on Saturday on a 9 or 73 bus. There was no pro-am debate then as there were no pros.

'Yes, Sarah, it is indeed different and has always been on the Tideway. Persevere, it will pay off manyfold.'

A fair number of students and alumni were also in action on the Tideway for the Head of the River Races — let me know if I missed anyone. Women's HORR: Emily Woodeson (M.97, Kingston A, 13th), Florence Williams (M.97, Osiris A, 24th), Helen Barnes (M.96, OUWLRC, 31st), Caroline Trotter (M.95, Vesta A, 40th), and Sarah Askew (M.94, Imperial, 101st). Men's HORR: Matt Pinsent (M.89, Leander I, 2nd), Tom Skinner (M.76, Henley I, 130th), Luke Howells (M.88, Thames Tradesmen II, 134th), Steve Thompson (M.72, Trafford, 327th). And myself, of course, admiring the scenery from the bow-seat of the Catz entry (191st). I met Steve in the changing rooms afterwards at St Paul's School. He'd also been dragged into the event against his better judgement, and recommended the next day's Veterans' Head as a rather more civilised affair.

In the Boat Race, Oxford, stroked by Matt Smith, lost to Cambridge by $2\frac{1}{2}$ L after a controversial umpiring decision to restart the race following a blade-clash. Well, I say 'controversial' because it raised a bit of a fuss at the time, but no one ever suggested a better alternative. Isis also lost to Goldie by 3L. I don't know if they are on speaking terms, but Matt Smith and the umpire, RS VP Dr. Rupert Obholzer (M.88) actually have quite a lot in common: Hampton School, Catz Biologists, OUBC stroke ...

The 'Henley' Boat Races were held at Nottingham this year (also due to FMD and stream). Oxford started well, winning the Nephthys-Granta race (Lwt Reserves) by $\frac{1}{2}$ L and Osiris beat Blondie 'Easily'; but then it was all Cambridge, their Women's Lightweights winning by 3L, their Women's Blue Boat by 3 feet (ouch!) and their Men's Lightweights by $3\frac{1}{2}$ L. In fact, last year's outcome was reversed in 6 of the 7 Oxford-Cambridge Boat Races, the Men's Lightweights' being the exception. Helen Barnes (M.96) rowed at no.7 in the OUWLRC crew — she's now at St Antony's so I'll leave others to debate whether or not she qualifies as Catz' first ever women's lightweight.



Sponsors of
St Catherine's College
Boat Club

President: Tony Hancox
Vice Presidents: Joanne Gough
Rupert Obholzer
Matthew Pinsent MBE.

From Floss Williams, who rowed no.3 in Osiris:

‘To be writing in the newsletter is another little wish come true, because it comes from winning my boat race for Osiris. In my crew there were 3 people who had lost boat races before, and they talked about just how much it hurt to lose.

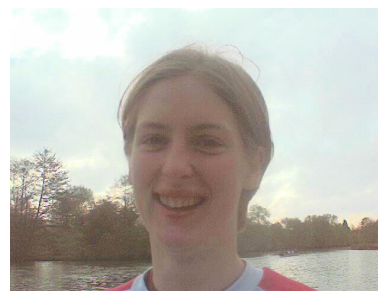
‘I spent a long time last year wondering how it is possible to spend 7 or 8 months trialling for a squad, always staying positive and believing you would win. But I was lucky to be part of a universally strong squad, and especially blessed that my crew jelled so well in the last few weeks.

‘The coaches told us before we raced that our worst performance in training would still be good enough to win. Although we never totally believed them, on race morning we felt completely ready to race. We knew that we were at our peak, and were dying to go and do the business!

‘The warm-up and race are very blurred in my memory, probably because I had thought about it so much beforehand. Everything went to plan, and after a fast clean start we were up on Blondie. I remember thinking I would give everything to hang onto the lead we had got. But we pulled away more and more, so that our winning margin is the biggest ever recorded.

‘The last eight months had had some painful and heart-breaking moments, I never dared contemplate that we would win seemingly so easily. To have a Boat Race medal means so much to me, the video and photos will never fail to cheer me up!

‘I owe a lot to SCCBC for sowing the seeds of my love of rowing, and it’s very exciting to come back and be rowing in Summer Eights. I won’t be here next year, but I hope more than anything that the success of the Club continues.’



Florence Williams

Men’s 1st Eight		Women’s 1st Eight	
<i>bow</i>	Matt Denmark*	<i>bow</i>	Lyndsey Highton*
2	Paul Hearn*	2	Jane Golley*
3	Josh Raffaelli*	3	Carla Crifó*
4	Michael Bull*	4	Helen Bray*
5	Eric Hinkes*	5	Alice Tedd*
6	Raph Schapiro*	6	Floss Williams*
7	James Johnston*	7	Fiona Howarth*
<i>str</i>	Richard Law*	<i>str</i>	Laura Goodsir*
<i>cox</i>	Emily Bailey	<i>cox</i>	Liz Beetem*

*denotes previous 1st VIII experience

The sun’s out, the stream’s back to normal, FMD restrictions have been lifted and Summer Eights will be from 23rd–26th May. Catz should have at least 2 men’s and 2 women’s crews competing. The Men’s 1st Eight have the same oarsmen as last term but with a new cox from the Women’s 2nd Eight. The three newcomers in the Women’s 1st Eight all have previous 1st VIII experience, although the cox was actually rowing in the Torpids Head crew. The

Women start 4th in W.Div I (5.15 Wed–Fri, 4.15 Sat.) and the Men 12th in M.Div I (5.45 Wed–Fri, 4.45 Sat.). I remind you of the College buffet lunch (replacing the usual dinner) and shuttle bus to and from the river on the Saturday.

Finally, I have received a letter from the Rev. J.W. Bell (cox of the 1954 1st VIII), anxious to put one or two matters straight concerning the Boat Club History — it was quite a long letter — lest ‘the mad axeman strikes before the Torpids dinner’. Apart from outrageously insinuating that his Captain’s recollections may be influenced by an excess of ‘Wallaby juice’, he explains what they *really* did to the Pembroke barge during a Bump Supper, and lays claim to the commencement of the A.A. Milne theme with the naming of ‘Winnie the Pooh’ in 1954 (didn’t say why, though). He seemed sound enough when I met him at the boathouse during Torpids, although I haven’t heard from him since the Dinner itself ...

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Rowing Society:<http://www.atm.ox.ac.uk/rowing/rs.html>