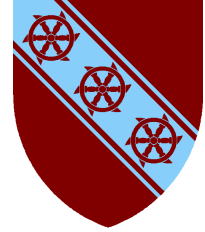




St Catherine's College Rowing Society
St Catherine's College, Oxford OX1 3UJ

Vice-Presidents: Don Barton, Neil Chugani, Richard Peters,
 Andrew Triggs Hodge OBE, Sir Matthew Pinsent CBE,
 Ben Sylvester



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In this issue . . .

First, it is only right that we spare a thought for our University triallists who, after building up to their 'season finale' of trial VIII's races last December, had just a few days to enjoy Christmas before jetting off for their winter training camps in France (OUBC), Spain (OUWLRC) and, er, Wallingford (OUWBC).

One hundred years ago college rowing was just getting back on its feet after the war, a process described in articles from the Society magazine and *The Times*. Perhaps the most surprising thing — given the continuing turmoil elsewhere — is how little time it took before Oxford could once again turn its attention to such essentially trivial matters (yes, I said it!) as bumping races and how to actually spell 'Catherine'. So, from that perspective, we can look forward to this term's potential triumphs and disasters.

For rowing it's been about as benign a January as can reasonably be hoped for (although February has just announced its arrival with a sudden dump of snow). The Boat Club hasn't wasted the opportunity and, one week into term, they had twice as many crews racing in the opening IWL as any other college. Torpids will be from 27th Feb – 2nd March, with the RS AGM and Dinner held, as usual, in College on the Saturday after the end of racing.



Folly Bridge, after yesterday's snowfall

Results

Isis Winter League C, 20th January

39 crews raced

1st	4:31	Wolfson MB	1st/20 M8
4th	4:39	*St Catz A (M1)	4th/20 M8
8th	4:45.5	*St Catz B (M1)	8th/20 M8
=17th	5:20.5	St Catz C (M2)	17th/20 M8
=17th	5:20.5	L.M.H. WA	1st/16 W8
19th	5:25	St Catz D (M2)	18th/20 M8
22nd	5:37.5	St Catz A (W1)	2nd/16 W8
36th	6:27.0	St Catz B (W2)	13th/16 W8

University Crews

Falling just a few weeks after the centenary of the end of WW1, this year's OUBC and CUBC trial eights were named after former Blues who were casualties of the war. So on a wet and windy day on the Tideway, nine OUBC hopefuls rowing as *Flea* (nickname of Lt Col William Fletcher), took up position alongside their counterparts in *Reggie* (2nd Lt Reginald Fletcher). The crews made a fine race of it: *Reggie*, on the inside of the Hammersmith bend, moved out to a half-length lead but failed to capitalise and, in the second half of the course, *Flea* rowed through them to finish with 2/3 length of clear water. Seems like the man in the stroke seat of *Flea* did his selection chances no harm at all. That man would be our semi-mythical Belgian-Brazilian, Augustin Wambersie.

Oriane Grant is trialling for the women's lightweight boat. Last term she was one of three Oxford women entered for the GB lightweight assessments (2k ergs followed by 5k in single sculls), where she finished 8th in the U23 category. But for their trial eights race, the Oxford coaches had something rather more demanding in mind: a series of six races over



The men's 1st Torpid racing in IWL-C earlier this term

500, 1000 and 2000 m spread between Dorney and Henley over the whole weekend. Ultimately, *Faff*, with Oriane at no.5, lost out to *Speculation* by 10pts to 18 (*Faff* and *Speculation* being their coaches' pet hates — should one worry about the nature of the athlete-coach relationship here?).

A third Catz student, Heather Tong, didn't make it into the OUWBC Trial Eights race (which turned out to be rather one-sided), but she's part of the larger squad and attended their New Year training camp in Wallingford. There's still a lot more rowing to be done between now and 7th April.

This year the men's lightweight Boat Race will be held, for the first time, on the Tideway, on Saturday, 23rd March. The Henley Boat Races take place the following Saturday, with the women's lightweights as the only remaining varsity Boat Races on programme, along with various intercollegiate and alumni races. The weekend after *that*, it's back to the Tideway for the four heavyweight Boat Races.

100 Years Ago

Racing was suspended during the First World War, so during 1919 efforts were made to revive college rowing, with the full Torpids and Eights resuming in 1920 from the 1914 finishing order. The following extracts are from the The Times newspaper and the St Catharine's Magazine (SCM).

SCM, January 1919

It is satisfactory to be able to report that the Boat Club was revived last term with promising results. There is some talk of races this term. 'Cat's' must row and do well.

The Times Thu 30 Jan, 1919

Major E. D. Horsfall¹, R.A.F. (Magdalen College), president of the Oxford University Boat Club, took the chair at a representative meeting of Captains of College Clubs at Oxford yesterday.

An important discussion took place as to the future prospects of rowing at Oxford. It was decided to approach the committee of the Cambridge University Boat Club with a view to arranging an inter-university race, or races, to take place at the end of the Summer Term. It was also decided that the Torpids should not be rowed this year, but that a race for fixed-seat eights should be arranged towards the end of term. It was further determined to make an appeal to old members of the Boat Club for financial assistance. There may be some sliding seat racing next term, but this is very uncertain.

SCM, Hilary Term 1919

After a forced abeyance of five years owing to the war rowing was again started in Michaelmas Term, 1918. Though a lot of tubbing was got through, the Club did not resume its normal activities until Hilary Term, 1919. This term brought back several old members of the Club, including Attale and Osmond. The continued occupation of the Delegacy Building [No.74, High Street] by the Military caused much difficulty in finding suitable men, so that nearly a fortnight elapsed before the Captain (Parry) was able to start work.

The Times Tue 11 Mar, 1919

The Oxford University Boat Club began a series of eight-oar and four-oar time races yesterday afternoon as a substitute for the Torpids.

¹a crewmate of 'Reggie' Fletcher in the 1914 Boat Race



The women's 1st Torpid racing in IWL-C earlier this term

The weather was fine, but there was a strong wind, and the stream, which was only just inside the river banks, was running at a great pace and told heavily against the lighter crews. Some of the finishes were very close. The competition is on the American tournament system, and, after three eliminating rounds, the winners in both the contests will race on Thursday.

It seems these races started line astern, with separate start and finish posts for each crew. St Catherine's were in Div A of the Fours event, the winners of which, Merton, lost to the winners of Div B, Lincoln, in the final. Magdalen won the Eights event.

The Times Thu 1 May, 1919

The Summer Eights at Oxford this year will be confined to four days [instead of the usual 6]. The racing will be open to anyone who is in residence or who has rowed consecutively for 10 days before the races. There will be two classes of races for best Summer Eights with sliding seats and for Torpids with fixed seats. The result of these races will not affect the position of the boats when normal conditions return next year, when the crews will start in their 1914 order . . . Races under the same conditions that govern the Torpids may also be held.

Magdalen, with a largely Etonian crew, bumped up to finish Head, a feat they repeated the following year when Eights officially resumed from the 1914 finish order. St Catherine's, however, did not participate. . .

SCM, Trinity Term 1919

The OUBC decided to hold two series of races — Summer Eights as usual in the middle of term and Junior Eights for novices at the end. We could not

hope to reach the standard of the former in time, and unfortunately we did not know about the latter races until too late.

The prospects for the future are distinctly good. We are to be back in our Delegacy Building once more, so that we shall be able to get in touch with one another. Furthermore our barge is being repaired, and is to be ready for our use at the beginning of term.

There was to be no Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race that year, although both clubs did compete in the Peace Regatta at Henley during the summer.

SCM, Michaelmas Term 1919

To our great joy we were able to move back into our own barge after the first week of term. This is a great asset, as it promotes *esprit de corps* to a large extent. We should like to see more non-rowing members down of an afternoon. The barge is not the property of the rowing men only, but is a club room for all members, and provides a reasonable amount of comfort. It is very stimulating to the rowing men to feel that other members of the Clubs take an interest in their activities, and the presence of non-rowing members in the barge or on the tow-path is tangible evidence of their interest.

The Finance Committee last term solved the problem of an 'a' or an 'e' in the name of the Clubs. They decided that the correct spelling was 'St Catherine's'. We understand that their authority for this decision was mainly classical.

Incidentally, if you Google 'Eights 1920 Pathe' you should find a short film clip from Summer Eights from the following year.



The men's 2nd Torpid racing in IWL-C earlier this term

Torpid 2019

The Boat Club was quickly up and running this term and both men's and women's 1st and 2nd boats competed in the first IWL race at the beginning of 2nd week (both men's VIIIs raced twice). Apart from further IWL races (the next is tomorrow) the senior boats are also expecting to compete at Henley Fours & Eights Head on 16th Feb (so, racing every weekend from now until Torpids).

Torpid will be from Wednesday 27th February until Saturday 2nd March, with racing every half hour from noon until 5 pm. If they succeed in Rowing On our men's 3rd and women's 2nd Torpids are likely to be racing at 12:00 and 12:30 respectively. The men's 2nd Torpid start 6th in Div IV (2pm), immediately followed by the women's 1st Torpid (1st in Div III, 2:30pm) and the men's 1st Torpid take to the water for the last race of the day (5th in Div I, at 5pm).

Torpid 2019

Starting positions of our 1st Torpid and last year's change

Men's Div I		Women's Div II	
1 Oriel	+1	9 Wolfson II	+2
2 Pembroke	-1	10 Linacre	-1
3 Wadham	=	11 Brasenose	+2
4 Christ Church	+2	12 Mansfield	-2
5 St Catherine's	-1	Women's Div III	
6 Wolfson	+2	1 St Catherine's	+2
7 Hertford	-2	2 Worcester	-2
8 Balliol	-1	3 Exeter	+1
9 Jesus	+2	4 St Hugh's	+1
10 Magdalen	-1	5 St Hilda's	+2
11 S.E.H.	+3	6 Merton	+2
12 Trinity	+1	7 Wadham II	-5

Last year Torpid was hit by the 'Beast from the East', which reduced the event to just two days, which was particularly unfortunate for our women's crews, and leaves the women's 1st Torpid starting at the top of Div III. But at least the plan for their first race is clear. We've not seen much of Mansfield or Worcester so far this term or last (which is generally a good sign), and we'll have a better idea of Brasenose and Exeter's speed after tomorrow's IWL race.

The men's 1st Torpid have a difficult task starting ahead of Wolfson, who've been consistently faster than

them in IWL races and Wallingford Head. As for the crew ahead, Christ Church, again we don't have much form. There are a couple of Christ Church men's VI-Is entered for tomorrow's IWL, but probably not their 1st VIII. The top men's crews tend to train off the Isis, which limits their participation in the IWL races. However, based on their performances at Wallingford Head at the end of last term, I don't expect to see Oriel to be displaced from the Headship, nor Pembroke from second on the river.

AGM & Dinner

You will shortly be receiving information about the Rowing Society Annual General Meeting and Dinner, which will take place in College on the evening of Saturday, 2nd March, with plenty of time to make your way back from the river and re-heat/dry out after the end of Torpids. That's my plan, anyway.

Coming Up ...

In the next issue we'll have results and reports from Torpids and other racing this term, updates on our triallists and prospects for the University Boat Race crews.

Diary

27 Feb - 2 Mar 2019	Torpid
2 March 2019	RS AGM & Dinner
23 March 2019	Lightweight Boat Races
30 March 2019	Henley Boat Races
7 April 2019	Tideway Boat Races
29 May - 1 June 2019	Summer Eights

Anu Dudhia

email: anu.dudhia@physics.ox.ac.uk

Web: eodg.atm.ox.ac.uk/user/dudhia/rowing/rs.html