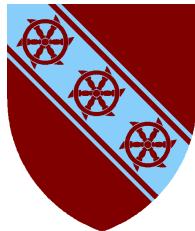


St Catherine's College Rowing Society
St Catherine's College, Oxford OX1 3UJ

President: Colin Smith
Vice-Presidents: Neil Chugani,
Sir Matthew Pinsent CBE, Zoe de Toledo,
Andrew Triggs Hodge OBE.



30th March, 2025

In this issue ...

The prospects of running a full Torpids had been encouraging. Rowing On races were held on the Friday, under Green Flag conditions and the starting order finalised. But then we had 10 mm of rain and the river went back up to red. Even so, it was a 'low' red so a reduced Torpids was run under the 'Pfhal' plan (the various OURCs contingency plans range from 'Pasanda', which is the full Torpids, to 'Pfhal' — I have no idea why they put an 'f' in it, unless it's some obscure joke along the lines of 'there's no f in ...').)

The women had more fun than the men. Neither of the 2nd Torpids were allowed to race but the Women's 2nd VIII at least qualified in Rowing On, which gained them 5 places on their previous finish position, so technically becoming our most successful crew for some years. The women's 1st Torpid finally got to try out their new shell, which has been sitting on the rack since last summer, and even registered a few bumps — their first since 2022. The men's 1st, well, perhaps their highlight was rowing over on the last day (thanks to a klaxon caused by an intrusive swan). The Captains provide their reports.

The Boat Race crews have just been announced, following some controversy over eligibility. I'll review the story so far.



The Women's new VIII. Pedants might quibble that the full chapter title is 'In which Pooh and Piglet go hunting and nearly catch a woozle' but *Hunting for a Woozle* seems both a permissible and necessary contraction.

Results

Rowing On, 21st February

Women's crews, 27 from 30 to qualify

1st	3:16.5	University III
16th	3:46.0	St Catherine's II
27th	4:14.0	St Peter's III

Men's crews, 25 from 31 to qualify

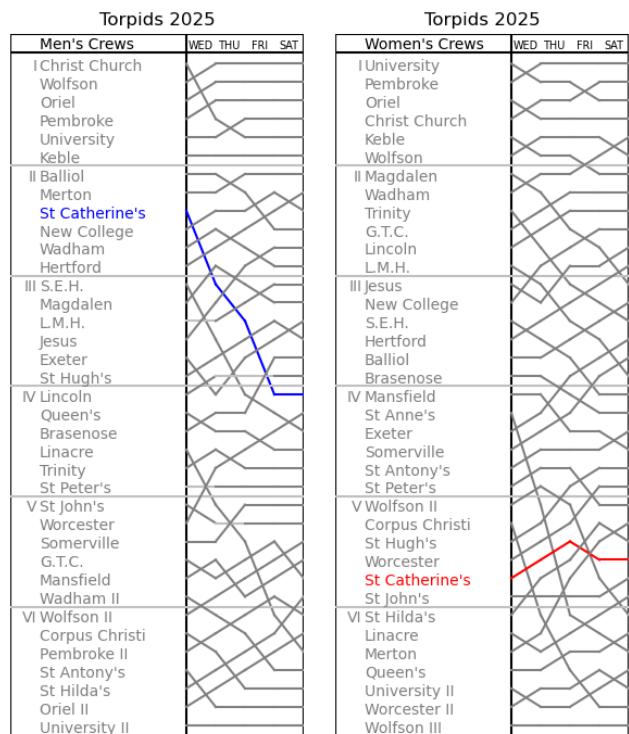
1st	2:55.5	Pembroke III
25th	3:37.0	Merton II

Torpids, 26th February–1st March

	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Finish [†]
Men's I	–4	–2	–4	=	7th Div II
Women's I	+1	+1	–1	=	4th Div III
Men's II			Did not race		6th Div IV
Women's II			Did not race		12th Div V

[†]Finish positions assuming 12-boat divisions

Bumps Charts





The Men's 1st Torpid on the Saturday

2025 St Catherine's Torpids

Men's 1st Torpid

B Ben Beggs
2 Hugo Cooper
3 Jan Jurgens
4 Charlie Knight
5 Timothy Bage
6 Laurentius Heukamp
7 Benji Sholten
S Sam Lennon
C Rowan Nicholls

Men's 2nd Torpid

B Stefan Domunco
2 Sebastian Pedder
3 Matthew Peeler
4 Joseph Hewson
5 Scott Alleman
6 Paul Hourticq
7 Mateusz Kasprzak
S Thomas Jenner
C Rowan Nicholls

Substitutes

¹Edith Darin (Wed & Thu)
²Ingrid Habrekke (Thu & Sat)
²Astrid Syvertsen (Wed)

Men's Coach
Sydney Rose

Women's 1st Torpid

B Matilda Stephen¹
2 Emma Coakley
3 Valentina Antonaccio
4 Laura Pattison²
5 Ophelia Lanfranchi
6 Emma O'Donnell
7 Emma Halliday
S Lucia Pyne
C Rowan Nicholls

Women's 2nd Torpid

B Charlotte Hon
2 Sophie Simpson
3 Fiona Zhang
4 Marissa Rimmelle
5 Sapphire Johnson
6 Ingrid Habrekke
7 Astrid Syvertsen
S Amelia Hodge
C Emma Coakley

Women's Coach
Rowan Nicholls

Men's Boat Club Report

Hugo Cooper, Men's Co-Captain

Like with Michaelmas, Hilary has been another term of rain and high streams, but the men's crew has stayed positive! All our novices continued to be engaged and keen to row following their first term, and we've picked up a handful of new starters throughout, making the squad bigger once again. Training (when the weather permitted it) was more intense than it had been last term, with M1 and M2 boats heading out on the water on at least three early mornings each week in the build up to Torpids. Unfortunately, with the high stream during Torpids week, only our first boat could race.

As we had expected, with much of the boat being new rowers this year, and limited water time, our competition was tough, but in dramatic klaxon-ed race on Saturday, we managed to row over and avoid Spoons. An eventful race to the line on Friday with Lincoln gave spectators on Boat House Island a good watch and an exhilarating finish for all those in the boat. Although poor braking during the Klaxon, from Teddy Hall, means the stern of *Catz 22* is currently undergoing some major surgery.

Despite our slide from Div 1 to Div 2, the atmosphere in the first boat and the rest of the men's side is still hugely positive, and going into our Bled training camp we are confident that next term will be more successful.



The Women's 1st Torpid on the Saturday

Following Torpids, we had a boat club dinner in the Vincent's, leaving the last two weeks of term for some of our members to try out small boats. Once again huge thanks go to our coach Sydney, who has been crucial in pushing up the standard of rowing across the men's side, and also to Rowan for stepping in as a senior cox in Torpids.

Women's Boat Club Report

Valentina Antonaccio, Women's Captain

I'm very happy to share that, despite the challenging weather conditions at the start of term, our team has come together strongly, managing to sign up two boats for Torpids. Unfortunately, due to the red flag restrictions, our second boat couldn't race. Nevertheless, team spirit has remained high.

As for our Torpids campaign, I couldn't be prouder of the girls who raced. We had a strong performance, starting with an over-bump on Corpus Christi in our first race. On the second day, we over-bumped St Anne's and successfully rowed away from St Hilda's. Unfortunately, on the third day, a crab allowed Hilda's to catch us, and we were later bumped by Merton, though we recovered to over-bump Wolfson II. In our final race, we chased Merton, who bumped Hilda's. We closed a three-length gap on Hilda's and nearly secured another over-bump.

During the Vac, we plan to continue training, with many of our rowers taking out small boats and participating in the sculling camp organised by our coach, Rowan.

It's been an exciting campaign, and we're eager to build on this momentum for Summer Eights!

Coxes, Klaxons and Swans

Apart from racing in half-divisions, the other safety restriction was that, until Saturday, only 'Senior' status coxes were allowed. Since there are only a limited number of such coxes, they were in high demand, all organised according to a central spreadsheet with OURCs launches delegated to provide a taxi service shuttling them from one appointment to the next (the films *Mona Lisa* or *Collateral* come to mind, depending on your opinion of the sort of service these coxes provided). Thus our women's coach, Rowan Nicholls, not only coxed both Catz crews but also those of several other colleges.

It has to be acknowledged that, despite the high stream, there were fewer 'incidents' than usual, although that may also be partly due to having just 7 boats racing at a time, and all experienced crews.

Also there were only two klaxons all week, and both of those due to swans. Nowadays the protocol is that the klaxon is not only used to stop racing when there is an obstruction in the racing line or someone in the water, i.e. when there is a real risk of human injury, but also if a swan gets on to the racing line.

What doesn't seem to have been appreciated is that klaxoning a division also poses a certain risk of injury to the crews if someone fails to hear the klaxon and continues racing. This is what happened to the men's 1st Torpid on the Saturday. It was particularly unfortunate that their regular cox, having finally got her chance to race, got clobbered by S.E.H. for doing exactly what she was supposed to do. I'm hoping OURCs will now decide that swans are well capable of looking after themselves.



Stern pair of the men's 1st Torpid being returned in comfort but probably not in the style they would have wished, having been evacuated from their sinking boat.

University Crews

The Boat Race has already been making the news with Cambridge accusing Oxford of unsportsmanlike behaviour for challenging the eligibility of some of their squad to race, specifically those studying for a PGCE although another oarsman seems to have fallen foul of a different rule: too much time passing since his first degree.

The independent panel has ruled in Oxford's favour and disqualified these individuals, so Cambridge's claim rests on questioning why Oxford only brought it up this year and not in the past. Had Oxford also been regularly fielding PGCE students they might have a good case but that doesn't seem to be what's being claimed. So, admittedly with an Oxford bias, I really don't think they have an blade to scull with.

Anyway, as regards actual rowing, what Cambridge do well (and Oxford don't) is publish commentaries and results of their pre-boat race fixtures, as well as compete in the major heads. Their women's Blue boat came 3rd in the Women's HRR and Goldie, their men's 2nd VIII, 7th in the Men's HRR so I can state with some certainty that they are strong again this year.

Oxford, meanwhile, look good on paper with returning Blues and internationals, but it's difficult to work out how well they are going compared to Cambridge or indeed anyone else. Not that my attempts at predicting the Boat Race outcomes in recent years have been particularly successful.

Even the various betting sites aren't yet offering odds on this year's races so, with 2 weeks to go, I really have no idea of what to expect.

Apart from Matt Pinsent (M.89), umpiring the Women's Boat Race, there are no Catz participants this year — our first blank since 2017. However, former Catz students often pop up for the alumni boat races which occur the day before.

Coming Up ...

In the next newsletter we'll have a report (and hopefully some photos) from the Boat Club's Easter training camp in Bled, Slovenia. There will also be a round-up of the Boat Races, results from any early-season racing involving Catz crews and prospects for Eights. In the absence of a RS dinner this year, moves are afoot to plan something for the Saturday of Eights.

Diary

13 Apr 2025	The Boat Races
27 Apr 2025	City Bumps
28–31 May 2025	Eights

Anu Duhdia



The Women's 1st Torpid waiting to boat on the Thursday.