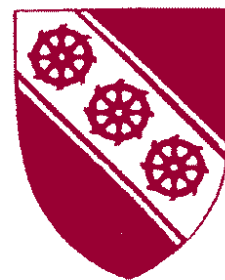


St Catherine's College Rowing Society
St Catherine's College
Oxford OX1 3UJ



16th December, 2006

In this issue ...

Not too much rowing to report on — the 'Red Flag' went up in mid-term, and again at the end of 7th week, and remains there to this day (except that it's not a 'real' flag anymore, just an 'e-flag'). Fortunately, those who rowed in the Boat Club 20 years ago have been more garrulous than usual so the Alumni News section has expanded to fill the space. Our aspirant University oarsmen, who train off the Isis, have suffered less disruption and we have reports on their trials races.

Results

Christ Church Regatta 22–25th Nov

Round 1

Somerville B	beat	Men's B
Women's B	beat	Keble A
Linacre A	beat	Men's A (disq)
Women's A	beat	Queen's A

Repêchages

Men's B	beat	Mansfield B
Men's A	beat	St John's B

Round 2

Men's A	beat	Hertford A
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Further racing cancelled due to high stream

British Indoor Rowing Champ. 12th Nov

BUSA Men's Lightweights (64 entries)

31st	Alex Zdravkovic	6:53.2
35th	Malcolm Spencer	6:57.9



The Men's Novice B Crew winning their repêchage race in Christ Church Regatta

Men's Boat Club Report

Malcolm Spencer, Men's Captain

Like the fluctuating and often frustrating levels the Isis has reached this term, the rowing has had both its ups and downs. Still, thanks to the commitment and hard work of the committee and many senior members, rough waters have been successfully navigated and Michaelmas can be viewed as a valuable term that will act as a stepping stone for the coming year's rowing.



Malcolm Spencer

Beginning with a new senior coach and, thankfully, the same old boathouse, the focus was however on novice recruitment ready for Christ Church Regatta. My own duties as captain were nevertheless distracted by trials with OULRC and as a result my thanks must go out to the club and committee for rallying

together to see a strong body of eager rowers were brought together and trained through the term. The last eight weeks were notable for the strong female recruitment SCCBC has enjoyed, with eventually two boats ready for Christ Church and many promising novices making the jump to senior training already. On the men's side numbers were matched and again, to make up for the loss of senior rowers suffered this year, many promising novices joined senior training. This ensured at least some water time was achieved with all the problems faced by the weather and novice coaching commitments.

Thus, even with nearly two weeks of training lost to conditions on the Isis, by the time Christ Church quickly appeared four strong boats — two men's and two women's — represented SCCBC's contribution to racing. That strength and commitment would be quickly demonstrated in the opening days of the regatta, yet the weather would once again prove greater competition to Catz success than their rival colleges

President: Bruce Mitchell

Vice Presidents: Don Barton, Rev. Joseph Bell,
 Lord Garden KCB, Richard Peters,
 Sir Matthew Pinsent CBE, Ben Sylvester

as the regatta was cancelled before its proper completion. A real disappointment then, with conditions worsening to the extent that any hopes of a return to the river before the end of term or a return to competition at Wallingford Head dashed. As I write now in the middle of ninth week the red flag continues to fly over the Isis and one can only hope for much dryer conditions over the vacation!

Eyes must now look ahead to Hilary term and the prospect of a return to bumps racing. A week's training camp is planned for 0th week before the distractions of the academic routine return. This should offer an excellent opportunity to build on all this term's novices have learnt and hopefully remind a few of the seniors what rowing in one of the top boat clubs in the University feels like!

Women's Boat Club Report

Bianca Rautenbach, Women's Captain

The women's rowing this term kicked off with a wonderful start, with a very large recruitment from the first years and visiting students. We realised that we would easily get two women's Christ Church boats, which is unusual and a great achievement. All novices were extremely enthusiastic and willing to learn. There were two weeks when we were unable to take the novices out due to bad weather and the girls never lost their determination and were eager to get back on the water as soon as possible.

Throughout the term the senior rowers kept up a regular training regime, with a few experienced rowers joining us we were able to get a competitive boat out and get some good time on the water, working hard at our technique and fitness.



Bianca Rautenbach

Both the first and second Christ Church boats took part in the Isis Winter Leagues, this was wonderful racing experience for the girls and both boats did really well, with the first VIII getting the second fastest time of all the novice women's boats. After this success we eagerly anticipated Christ Church, and after a few more weeks of intense training our chance to shine approached.

The Women's 2nd VIII made us all very proud on

the first day when they pulled together rowed to victory against Keble's 1st boat, they then automatically bypassed the second round and were standing in a great position when the weather ruined the fun. Sadly the first boat only managed to race one race, but it was a spectacular one, with them rowing like superstars and convincingly winning against Queen's A.

It was a very successful term despite the rain, and we are all looking forward to next term. I am especially excited at the prospect of having a second boat for Torpids, seeing them qualifying and working their way up the lower divisions. The first boat has a term of hard work ahead of them, to improve our position from 3rd on the river, will be challenging, but we are keeping both eyes fixed on the headship.

20 Years Ago ...

In 1986 Oxford's long run of Boat Race victories had come to an end. From St Catz, Keith Pritchard and James Lovegrove attended trials for the 1987 OUBC squad. Keith takes up the story in the Michaelmas Term newsletter:

RS Newsletter no.2, Michaelmas Term, 1986

'Our main problem, as far as squad rowing was concerned, is that we seem to be of the wrong nationality, i.e., not American. We turned up for the first training session to be greeted by a group of large American imports all of whom seem to have been more or less guaranteed places in the Blue Boat. We were told, along with many other 'true' Oxford oarsmen, that there was very little chance of any of us even being looked at by the senior squad coaches. ... it does seem as if OUBC have got a 'win at any price' attitude — whether this is good for Oxford rowing in the long term, only time will tell.'

Oxford did go on to win the 1987 Boat Race but, of course, there was the small intervening matter of 'the Mutiny'. Back on the Isis, the Men's Captain, Charles Courquin, was having more basic problems:

Captain's Diary, Michaelmas Term, 1986

'Well, at least we've got something going this week. Tuesday, 7.15 am, *moi* turns up at the river and, yes, 7 turn up. So six sent out on the river and one goes for a run. On Thursday 7 again turn up, so super hero here decides to coach from the bow seat — bad idea. Do people in Oxford have a brain? I tell the crew to balance the boat by lifting their hands, so what do they do? All hold up their arms in the air! The mysterious eighth man apparently turned up at the punt house believing it to be the boathouse — Aaargh!'

The men's crews had a good Torpids, the 1st boat rising 3 places to 9th in Div 1 while the 2nd Torpid continued their rapid ascent of previous years, gaining blades and finishing 7th in Div 3. In contrast, the relatively inexperienced women's 1st Torpid dropped 4 places to 7th in Div 1. They fared no better in Eights, dropping another 4 places, while the men were disappointed to only remain level at 6th in Div 2. Following on from the item about Boat Club Blazers in the last newsletter, 20 years we had this:

RS Newsletter no.1, Trinity Term, 1987

Cap'n Chas, the only man I know who can understand the whole of 'East-Enders' without the CEEFAX subtitles, went looking for cheap blazers around 'ackney over the Easter vacation, only to find that his source had left the country (closely pursued by the tax-man). He did, however, come up with someone who could get us a trailer cheap (no doubt fallen off the back of a minibus). The latest price I was quoted for a blazer from Castell's was £90 plus (clunk!) Someone out there must know a better source, even done legally?

News from Alumni

James Sergeant (M.84) 20 years — good grief! Looking back through my records, I see that in the 1987 Torpids Survey I won the 'Prettiest Male' category — I was surprised by this until I saw the award was signed by K. Pritchard, President and P. Miron, sidekick. However, this probably was the highlight of my rowing career and possibly of my career full stop. My records also reveal the fairly predictable Beer and Blades Dinner fare of Smoked Salmon, Fillet of Beef Rossini, Chestnut Gateau and Mushrooms in bacon, accompanied by 'fine wines, port, mints, beer, ginger pop and much jollity' — all this for the princely sum of £12.50. I would be interested to know how Boat Club Dinner inflation compares to Retail Price Index inflation over the same period.

20 years on and married to ex-1st VIII cox Helen (née Sagar) with two children aged 10 and 7, I am still accomplished at responding to rapidly barked orders. Probably a stone and a half heavier, 3 extra inches round the middle (that's me, not Helen) but still capable of going through the motions of running, while cracking pavements on saunters around Wimbledon and even occasionally on the odd half-marathon.

Steve Brindle (M.85) Here's a summary of me at 40 years old: happily married with a six year old son and living in San Francisco, California. CEO at a boutique technical consultancy — Advoco — and running marathons in sub 4-hours.

Charles Courquin (M.85) *I haven't heard from 'Chas' but a Google search reveals that he is now Senior Director for Applications for the Oracle Corporation UK and there's even a picture of him looking earnest and wearing a suit.*

James Lovegrove (M.85) I continue to forge ahead with the writing career. My most recent novel was *Provender Gleed* (still available in paperback, folks!) and I've just published the first in a series of books for teens, or Young Adults as they are officially known in publishing circles. That's being put out under a pseudonym, which I'm not at liberty to divulge, yet.

I've recently become a cryptic crossword guru at the BBC's MindGames magazine, contributing a monthly column on, er, how to do cryptic crosswords. I've got a few other book projects in the pipeline, as they say, plus some journalism.

At present I'm living in a village in north Devon, technically known as the Middle of Nowhere, with my wife, Lou, our two sons, Monty and Theo, and an obstreperous black cat called Ozzy. Oh, and I have a Concept 2 in the spare bedroom. I even use it regularly. But not perhaps quite as energetically as I did when I was at Catz.

Jim Bigger (M.86) Still no real rowing option here in Colorado so, over the last 4 years, I have turned my attention to Kenpo Karate (a mixture of Karate, Judo and Aikido). In September, after a couple of months of pretty intense testing, I became a Black Belt and a *Sensei*. On the family front, Jen, Nicholas (9) and Christina (7) are well and thriving and all are already, as feared, better skiers than me.

Richard Estall (M.86) I'm now a senior Partner in General Practice in Putney, and have just moved to the great new Putney Medical Centre on Upper Richmond Road. My rowing days are long gone, but I have been doing Triathlons since 1996. I'm now getting slower, thanks largely to a 6 year old daughter and 3 year old son!

Steve Eyles (M.86) Hmm ... 1986. Well I came up to Oxford knowing nothing at all about rowing, except of course the Boat Race. My next door neighbour on Staircase 16 was none other than Chas Courquin who immediately decided that at over 6 feet tall I should definitely at least be thrown into a bank tub. I even explained to him that I couldn't swim, but that was in the good old days when people just grabbed on to passing flotsam rather than wearing life jackets and being rescued by safety boats. What's next? Mandatory scuba gear for all oarspeople? I seem to remember signing a form to the effect that if I drowned then SCCBC wouldn't be held responsible. Next thing I knew I was getting up for, or sometimes

sleeping through, 7.00am outings, getting shin splints on Sunday mornings while Anu glared at me for coming in at the end of the 4-Bridges pack (how was I to know that was actually him being friendly?) and being kept up all night by the Boat Club committee fighting next door about money, kit, photos, or just generally goading Rachel McKay. All in all a good year — thanks Chas & Steve B. for getting me into a boat (oh god!) two decades ago. I still drive over the Connecticut River every morning just as crews are coming in from outings and, just for a moment, think ... ‘Nyah — I like sleeping too much!’.

Andrew Silverbeck (M.86) On the work side, I have recently joined Environmental Resources Management (ERM), an environmental consulting company, as their Finance Director. I now live in Elstree, so if anyone is coming to watch Big Brother evictions, please drop in for a drink. My 3 children are beginning to be sceptical about my rowing stories, so I would love to reminisce with someone else with as hazy a memory as mine!

Alan Supple (M.86) We’re still living in Brussels (since moving from the US in May 2005), and settling in well. Our latest news is that Maria is expecting twins in January, so our lifestyle is about to undergo quite a transformation! Despite the good intentions of my last update, I have not yet signed up at a rowing club here. Thus despite some dips during occasional bursts of running activity, the number of pounds gained since Anu was last shouting ‘3, you’re late!’ at me from the towpath unfortunately ‘outweighs’ the number of years that have passed (I’m not saying by how much!). I’m still in contact with Jim Bigger, Steve Brindle, Rich Estall, Neil Chugani, Mike ‘Robocox’ Robeson and Andy Silverbeck. Would love to hear from anyone else from the era, and please get in touch if you’re passing through Brussels.

Emily Thomas (M.92), now Davidson [who missed the deadline for the last newsletter] Being kept pretty busy these days with two little ones and trying to fit in a bit of doctoring in between — I see you didn’t get anything from Rich [Law] either — his excuse will probably be something along the lines of being newly married and still over in California — so I’m sorry we didn’t get our act together in time, but I did enjoy the memories that the photo brought back (even if they were a bit hazy!)

Sarah Askew (M.94) Just to let you know that I’ve changed job. I’m currently working for Unilever as a cell biologist — not perhaps the most logical job considering I read chemistry at Catz! I’m still living in Bedford, but haven’t made it as far as a boat club (yet). Don’t seem to have as much free time as I used

to now that I have two little ones to entertain (Evie is now 2 and Isaac is 9 months old).

James Darbyshire (M.98) I am now (albeit temporarily) sitting in a racing shell once more. I am currently in Bristol, where I moved last year after qualifying as a solicitor. One of my colleagues coaches the women’s squad at City of Bristol club. As ever, the club is desperately short of coxes, and after being plied with beer and the promise of ‘it’s only a few social bits’, I was persuaded to cox a few outings at weekends. The upshot is I’m now sitting in the front of a bow loader and am coxing the women’s squad 4+ at the 4’s head in 2 weeks ... Not sure if there are any other Catz alumni around. It may be a short lived renaissance, as I return to London soon and free time may not permit such aquatic activities.

University Triallists

This year’s OUBC Trials Race was held on 7th December, in squally conditions, over the Boat Race course. Croatian Ante Kusurin, a new arrival at Catz this year, stroked *Sickle* to a 4 length victory over *Hammer*, coxed by Nick Brodie, who has coxed Isis for the past two years. Kusurin was in the Croatian men’s double scull which finished 8th in this year’s World Championships, bringing the total of current, ex- and pre-Catz men competing at Dorney to 5.

The Men’s Lightweights held their Trials Race over the Henley course yesterday afternoon. Malcolm Spencer and Alex Zdravkovic were both rowing in *Crime*, who were up against *Punishment*. Setting aside the social implications of the outcome, we can take some satisfaction in the criminals having the upper hand on this occasion.

Coming Up ...

In the next newsletter there will be details for Torpids and the Rowing Society Dinner (to which we’d like to extend a special invitation to those of you who rowed in 1982 and 1957), a look at the Boat Club of 30 years ago, when Tristram Sutton and Christine Maggs were Captains. News from alumni of other years is always welcome.

Anu Dudhia

email: dudhia@atm.ox.ac.uk

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

Diary

28 Feb–3 Mar 2007	Torpids
3 Mar 2007	RS AGM & Dinner
1 Apr 2007	Henley Boat Races
7 Apr 2007	The Boat Race
23–26 May 2007	Eights
26 May 2007	Boathouse lunch