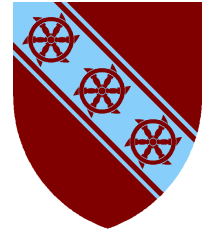




St Catherine's College Rowing Society
St Catherine's College
Oxford OX1 3UJ



20th December, 2008

In this issue . . .

Fortunately the rain held off long enough for Christ Church Regatta to be run in full, giving our novices their chance to race. With the cancellation of this event last year, several of our senior rowers had yet to experience a side-by-side race; we also managed to fix that this term — see the Captains' reports. There is a historical piece on the Boat Club of 1993/94 and some of those who rowed that year contribute to the News from Alumni Section. Finally there was some Catz involvement in the OUBC Trial Eights Race, held a couple of weeks ago. And another reminder of the RS AGM & Dinner: 28th February 2009 (on the Saturday of Torpids).

Results

Autumn Fours, 2nd November

Men's Fours (21 entries)

Catz I	Round 1	Beat Oriel I
	Round 2	bye
	Q/Final	beat Brasenose II
	S/Final	lost to Balliol
Catz II	Round 1	beat St John's II
	Round 2	bye
	Q/Final	beat Wadham
	S/Final	beat Brasenose I
	Final	lost to Balliol



The Catz Women's Novice VIII getting in some early bumping practice in Nephthys Regatta. Unfortunately, it was supposed to be a side-by-side race.

Isis Winter League A, 16th November

Time	Crew	Overall	Class
4:27	M Sen 8	4th/41	4th/13
5:09	M 4 A	15th/41	1st/3
5:11	W Sen 8	17th/41	1st/5
5:24	M 4 B	23rd/41	=2nd/3

Nephthys Regatta, 22nd November

Men's Senior VIII's (6 entries)

Round 1	beat Pembroke (row over)
S/Final	beat Jesus
Final	lost to S.E.H.

Women's Senior VIII's (7 entries)

Round 1	beat St John's B
S/Final	beat Osler House
Final	beat St John's A

Women's Novice VIII's (31 entries)

Round 1	lost to Mansfield B
---------	---------------------

Christ Church Regatta, 26–29th November

Men's Novice VIII's

Catz A	Round 1	lost to St John's A
	(MCR VIII) Repêchage	lost to Wadham A
Catz B	Round 1	lost to Balliol A
	(Torpedo) Repêchage	lost to Christ Church A
Catz C	Round 1	lost to New B
	(Hurricane) Repêchage	beat St Peter's B
	Round 2	beat Pembroke C
	Round 3	beat Corpus A
	Round 4	lost to Exeter A

Women's Novice VIII's

Catz A	Round 1	beat Balliol A
	Round 2	bye
	Round 3	lost to Wolfson A

Isis Winter League B, 3rd December

Time	Crew	Overall	Class
5:35	W Sen 8	10th/19	1st/7

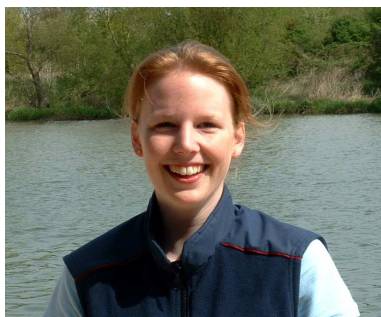
President: Bruce Mitchell
 Vice Presidents: Don Barton,
 Richard Peters,
 Sir Matthew Pinsent CBE,
 Ben Sylvester.

Women's Boat Club Report

Catherine Wherity, Women's Captain

This term Catz managed to recruit many girls all very excited to be part of the Boat Club, including five with previous rowing/sculling experience. These experienced rowers have been a great addition to our two senior crews training this term. We were also able to recruit enough novices to form two novice boats one training competitively and one just enjoying some leisurely afternoon outings! Our first novice crew organised by Clare Wilcockson and coached by Rob Hollis put in a lot of training both on and off the water. Their first taste of racing came in the Nephthys regatta which followed a week of no training because of the red flag. They fought hard but the lack of water time and an early incident which resulted in a restart meant they were narrowly beaten to the finish.

Their first race of the Christ Church regatta against Balliol was reported by the OxStu as the 'race to watch'! They dominated this race and received a bye straight through to the third round. Unfortunately they came up against a very strong Wolfson crew and despite being ahead at the start they were beaten. A huge thank you and congratulations must go to all the new rowers this term for all the hours of hard work and training they put in.



Catherine Wherity



The Catz Senior Women's VIII racing in the Isis Winter League A.

The senior women have had two crews training this term, one competitively and one not. W1 were very fortunate to have five girls returning from last year's first boat as well as some keen and committed new members. We trained hard on and off the water from the very beginning and entered both IWLs and the

Nephthys Regatta winning all three events. We are very excited going into Hilary term and will be training hard throughout the holidays and next term to defend our Headship! Hopefully the weather will continue to be kind. We expect to enter three boats into Torpids all of which should be very strong and in with a good chance of winning blades.

A massive thank you must go to all the committee this term who have ensured everything has been organised and also to Rob Hollis who has continued to coach W1 and the first novice boat to great success. In addition thanks must go to Colin Groshong who very kindly came to chat to all our coxes giving some very helpful advice.

Men's Boat Club Report

Toby Smyth, Men's Captain

This term got off to a flying start of term with over 35 new men coming to the Tank and Taster Outings sessions. This settled into three solid novice boats, solid because each boat was really a squad of 10 or 11 men with everyone getting a chance to row.

In an attempt to counter the usual high drop off in rowers that occurs over the Christmas holidays we decided to take training in a more relaxed manner this term, focusing almost



Toby Smyth

exclusively on water outings with only the weekly optional Erg Club for land training. We will have to wait until the new year to see if this has paid off.

Luckily then the weather has been quite kind to us with only a single week with the river unrowable, and Christ Church being able to go ahead, one of our novice boats made it through to the last day of racing, getting knocked out by Exeter A who went on to reach the final. However all three crews who entered did a terrific job, really giving it their all.

On the senior side of things we have been fortunate to be able to put together a squad of over ten experienced rowers. This allowed us to enter a light and a heavy IV into Autumn fours. Despite our casual training plan our boats made it to the semifinal and final respectively, losing to the same Balliol A boat. Further success followed in Nephthys regatta, where we our VIII reached the final again, and Isis Winter

League where, according to OURCs timing¹, one of our IVs was the second fastest vessel on the water, a close 5 seconds behind Teddy Halls 1st VIII!



The Catz Senior Men's VIII racing in Nephthys Regatta.

I have been very impressed with the enthusiasm and commitment shown by all the rowers this term, new and old, and I want to thank all the committee for their hard work this term, especially Aleks Kissinger and Rob Gerlach for their management of the novices. And of course our coach Anu, without whom I would have no idea quite how many technical mistakes I make.

I look forward to seeing everyone for training again in 0th week, when we will be building from the strong foundations laid down this term and stepping up our game to face the challenges of Hilary: the Men's 1st VIII start at their highest ever position in Torpids and are within striking distance of Headship, whilst our other boats have the task of reclaiming places for Catz in the fixed divisions. And with the women defending the headship it promises to be an exciting term for Catz rowing.

15 Years Ago

In 1993/94 the Boat Club was still based in the old OUBC. That year the Rowing Society and the College started a joint fund-raising campaign for the new boathouse to replace our cramped and dingy accommodation (completed just 3 years later). Summer of 1994 was also the first occasion that we started employing coaches, at least for our men's 1st VIII. The women weren't exactly neglected, having the continued services of Matt Pinsent on the bank.

The Men's Captain, Chris Mahne, also gained his Blue that year, but those were hard times for OUBC. The previous year, Cambridge had achieved a shock victory in the Boat Race. Much of this was due to their new long, flowing style, but they also used

¹I have put back the extra minute that the OURCs timers appear to have lost in the results on p1 - AD

cleavers for the first time while Oxford had stuck with the traditional macons. People drew their own conclusions. Cambridge were to dominate for the remainder of the 1990s.

The following extracts are from Rowing Society newsletters.

31st October, 1993

As the latest attempt to improve standards of coxing on the Isis, all coxes now have to be registered: a procedure involving attendance at a safety lecture after which they are issued with a licence bearing their photograph and a number (presumably all 1st VIII coxes have '00' numbers judging on past performances). I'm not convinced it's going to make much difference . . .

8th February, 1994

[after initial flooding] . . .the river subsided just enough for the official launch of the new men's eight: *Surrounded by Water*. Given the main source of funds—Catz Bar—I'd have opted for *Time for a Little Something*, but the Naming-of-Boats Subcommittee moves in mysterious ways. A couple of weeks later a set of ex-OUBC 'Hatchet' blades arrived (those meat-cleaver-shaped jobbies that Cambridge used to such good effect in the last Boat Race). Although they've been around for less than 2 years, about a third of Oxford men's 1st VIIIs have already switched over to using them, but only a couple of women's 1st VIIIs. This is based on sound sexuofiscal rather than biomechanical principles, i.e. most colleges will happily spend large amounts of money on their men's crews but not on their women's.

1994 Bumps Results & Finish Positions

(2008 finish positions in brackets)

<i>Torpids*</i>	M1	up 2	11th	(5th)
	M2	up 2	44th	(61st)
	W1	level	4th	(1st)
<i>Eights</i>	M1	up 1	17th	(8th)
	M2	down 2	50th	(40th)
	M3	up 3	68th	-
	W1	up 2	8th	(15th)
	W2	level	55th	(46th)

* Only one day's racing took place

27th March, 1994

[referring to the bumps charts] . . . As you can see by the steep descents of some crews, there was there was enough mayhem in just one day to last the rest of the week, but the apparently innocuous exchange of bumps at the top of Men's Division IV conceals the worst of it: four out of the top five crews in that

division actually sank. All of this was in the benign stream conditions on Wednesday. Faced with such an exhibition of coxing skills, the officials didn't have the heart to subject the crews to the added hazard presented by the fast stream which lasted the rest of the week [further racing was cancelled].

15th May, 1994

With a new boat, new blades, decamping to Wallingford to train, and Chris Mahne set to be the first man with a Blue² ever to row in the Catz 1st VIII, there's only one more thing that could be added—they're also employing a professional coach this term: Tim Bramfitt, the OUBC assistant head-coach. This has only been possible thanks to a one-off donation from the Rowing Society—it's not the sort of thing we can afford to do regularly—but hopefully it will instil some new ideas into the crew which will filter down through the rest of the Boat Club.

News from Alumni

Dom Layfield (M.90) I'm living in the mountains in Park City, Utah. Working for start-up based in San Francisco (computational drug development). Married 4 years. One 17-month old daughter, two dogs. Skiing, climbing, mountain-biking and running.

Emily Davidson (née Thomas) (M.92) Gosh, that makes me feel very old :) I'm pleased to welcome Robert John, a brother to Holly and Liam, born on Feb 21st 2008! Living in the New Forest and, in between babies, training in Rehabilitation Medicine. Seeing as we're not that far from Oxford now, hoping to make it up to the races someday soon. Maybe next year is our chance with the older 2 old enough and the little one not yet walking!

Chris Mahne (M.92) *We've not heard from Chris since he left but his Googletrail shows that he spent some time as a journalist in Australia, working for both the BBC and CNN, and is now head of Lansons Live, the broadcast and multimedia arm of the PR firm Lansons Communications.*

Dan Bebbler (M.93) Ah, 93/4 — a good year that. I'm still in Oxford, working for the environmental charity Earthwatch, where I direct a research programme on the effects of climate change on forests. I also do some teaching at St Peter's College, as a Junior Research Fellow. The 'Junior' title is rather amusing as I head into middle age, with two children and a mortgage. Fondest memories of my rowing days

²It was later pointed out that he was the first *rowing* Blue, we'd already had athletics and rugby Blues in the boat.

at Catz? Probably that hilarious mix tape, which accompanied our speed weights sessions in the gym.

OUBC Trial Eights Race

Three past and present Catz oarsmen lined up at the start of this year's Tideway Trial Eights Race on 11th December. Two were sitting in the stroke seats of the opposing crews: Ante Kusurin, now at Kellogg College in *Bear* while the *Bull* crew had this year's President, Colin Smith. Completing the trio, at no.4 in *Bear* was Martin Walsh from last year's *Isis* boat.

In good conditions, a close race ensued but *Bear* led most of the way and eventually ran out winners by 1½ lengths. The umpire was that famous character from Boat Race history: Boris Rankov. It is now customary for the designated Boat Race umpire also to officiate in both the preceding Oxford and Cambridge Trial Eights races, so he'll be back in March.

It also looks likely that, one way or another, Catz might be reclaiming our grip on the OUBC stroke seat: last year was the first year since 2000 that the OUBC stroke seat *wasn't* occupied by a current or former Catz man. Kusurin (in 2007) and Smith (in 2004) are actually both former Blue Boat strokes, but neither will mind where they're sat this year as long as they win.

Coming Up ...

In the next newsletter there will be the prospects for Torpids and further details of the arrangements for the Rowing Society Dinner, which is likely to be the four-yearly larger-scale College 'do'. (Hmm, what else comes in four year cycles, I wonder?). Also further news of our OUBC Triallists — as far as I know we have no one trialling for the other squads — and a look back at the events of 25 years ago, when Graham Elliot and Liz Ilett (née Oxenbury) were running things. Looking down the crew lists for that year, I see that a number of you can expect emails from me prompting you to contribute to the News from Alumni section.

Anu Dudhia

email: dudhia@atm.ox.ac.uk

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

Diary

25–28 February 2009	Torpids
28 February 2009	RS AGM & Dinner
22 March 2009	The Henley Boat Races
29 March 2009	The Tideway Boat Races
27–30 May 2009	Eights
30 May 2009	'49ers Reunion