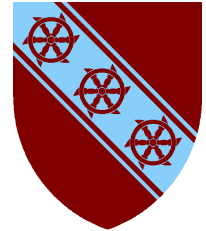




St Catherine's College Rowing Society
St Catherine's College
Oxford OX1 3UJ



8th November, 2014

In this issue . . .

Autumn on the Isis: season of near misses and mellow cluelessness. But first a round up of summer activities. At the end of June some of our senior alumni took out an VIII for the annual Gaudy Paddle, while a couple of their more junior counterparts picked up trophies on the international circuit.

Fifteen years ago everyone, with the exception of numerical pedants, was preparing to celebrate the new millennium, and/or stocking-up in anticipation of chaos ensuing from the 'Y2K' bug — days when computer software writers rather than bankers were blamed for all society's woes. Ominously, students returning to Oxford at the start of Michaelmas Term found the iconic OUBC boathouse burnt down, but at least any impending apocalypse would put an end to the ritual humiliation being inflicted annually by Cambridge in both the men's and women's Boat Races. Well, with the benefit of hindsight, we now know that the perils of the Y2K bug were vastly over-rated and, as for continued Light Blue domination, a couple of our students set about fixing that.

Back in the present, there is an update our current standing relative to the 35 other College Boat Clubs, news of major alterations to the format of the 2015 Boat Races, and a message from the chairman about changes to the Rowing Society finances.



Attention! . . . A new season about to get underway, with Catz women lining up against Merton at the start of Autumn Fours.

Results

Henley Royal Regatta, 2–6 July

The Stewards' Challenge Cup (Open Men's IVs)

Winner: Molesey & Leander
 str: Andy Triggs Hodge (M.04)

Remenham Challenge Cup (Open Women's VIIIs)

Winner: Leander & Imp. Coll.
 cox: Zoe de Toledo (M.10)

Rowing World Cup III, 11–13 July

Lucerne, Switzerland

Women's VIIIs (6 entries)

3rd GBR cox: Zoe de Toledo (M.10)

Men's IVs (10 entries)

1st GBR str: Andy Triggs Hodge (M.04)

Rowing World Championships, 24–31 August
 Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Men's IVs (17 entries)

1st GBR str: Andy Triggs Hodge (M.04)

Women's VIIIs (11 entries)

6th GBR cox: Zoe de Toledo (M.10)

International Rowing

Our two current GB internationals have had a busy summer (see under 'Results'), culminating in the annual World Championships, held this year in Amsterdam.

Andy Hodge (M.04) rounded off an unbeaten season with a comfortable win in the men's fours. As the top GB men's boat, that now looks like a set crew for the Rio Olympics. Zoe de Toledo (M.10), cox of the GB women's VIII, would have been disappointed to have finished 6th, having achieved bronze medals in the previous two World Cup events.

Catz alumni have now returned with medals from every World or Olympic Championships since 1989.

Overall, and I hope our international readers will excuse a little national focus here, Great Britain achieved 3 golds, 2 silvers and a bronze in the 14 Olympic-class events. This was better than last year

President: Bruce Mitchell

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

(2G, 3B) but down on the 4 years ago, at the same stage of the Olympic cycle (4G, 3S, 1B). Perhaps more significantly, 4 years ago British crews qualified for the A-finals in 13 events, but this year only in 7.

Gaudy Paddle

This year's Gaudy, for those who matriculated from 1962–1972, was held on 28th June and, prior to the evening's lubrication, a number of creaky alumni took up my offer of a paddle on the Isis (with valuable assistance from some rather-more-flexible students). Despite an unpromisingly wet start to the day, coupled with local traffic chaos, eventually the sun came out just as everyone finally arrived together at the Boathouse. In fact, not a bad metaphor for the outing itself. Thanks, from everyone, to Josh, Matt and Stephanie.



The 2014 Gaudy Paddle crew: Cox Joshua Morgan*, Str Matthias Steiner*, Chris Little (M.67), Stephanie Bryson*, Nigel Henderson (M.69), Steve Jepps (M.67), Stephen Grundy (M.69), Graham Williams (M.??), Mike Day (M.63). * current students.

College Boat Club Ranking

Below is an updated table showing the relative positions of each of the College Boat Clubs using a points system based on final placings in 2014 Torpids and Eights. With Torpids cancelled, obviously all changes are due to Eights and, despite our poor results, St Catz manages to hang on to its overall ranking of 11th (*cf* 12th in the 2014 Norrington Table, should you wish to make such comparisons). Pembroke retain a strong claim to be Oxford's top rowing College (and bottom in the Norrington Table). Just in case you, or your tutors, might be worrying about any correlation, the top 3 in this year's Norrington Table were Merton, St John's and Worcester.

College Boat Clubs: Total Points

		2013		2014	
1	Pembroke	354	Pembroke	352	
2	Christ Church	309	Magdalen	314	
3	Magdalen	301	Christ Church	306	
4	Wadham	296	Wadham	302	
5	Oriel	278	Oriel	295	
6	St John's	258	Balliol	250	
7	Balliol	250	St John's	249	
8	S.E.H.	239	Wolfson	241	
9	Wolfson	237	S.E.H.	239	
10	University	228	University	228	
11	St Catherine's	224	St Catherine's	211	
12	Worcester	203	New College	205	
13	Hertford	192	Trinity	201	
14	New College	188	Worcester	199	
15	Trinity	186	Hertford	179	
16	Lincoln	157	Keble	160	
17	Keble	139	Lincoln	160	
18	St Anne's	130	Jesus	136	
19	Jesus	129	St Anne's	134	
20	Merton	119	L.M.H.	119	
21	Somerville	118	Somerville	117	
22	L.M.H.	116	Brasenose	115	
23	Exeter	111	Merton	108	
24	Brasenose	109	Exeter	101	
25	Queen's	93	Queen's	89	
26	Mansfield	76	St Hugh's	86	
27	St Hugh's	75	Mansfield	82	
28	Corpus Christi	73	Corpus Christi	80	
29	St Peter's	70	St Peter's	78	
30	Linacre	66	Linacre	64	
31	Osler House	56	Osler House	50	
32	St Antony's	51	Green Templeton	45	
33	Green Templeton	38	St Antony's	43	
34	St Hilda's	38	St Hilda's	35	
35	Regent's Park	15	Regent's Park	16	
36	St Benet's Hall	5	St Benet's Hall	5	

Catz Crews: Current Positions (& highest–lowest positions, 2005–2014)

	Men		Women	
	2014	Range	2014	Range
1st Torpid	5th	(4–13)	8th	(1–13)
2nd Torpid	41st	(41–61)	51st	(47–57)
3rd Torpid	—	(62–68)	—	(50–55)
1st Eight	9th	(5–10)	20th	(11–20)
2nd Eight	46th	(38–46)	51st	(39–57)
3rd Eight	—	(73–84)		



The old OUBC boathouse (1882–1999).

15 Years Ago ...

Michaelmas Term 1999 opened with the smouldering remains of the OUBC boathouse (on the site of the present Univ boathouse). Fortunately Catz had relocated to Longbridges a couple of years previously.

RS Newsletter, 7th November, 1999

Welcome back to the Isis. A significantly changed Isis for once, following the burning down of the OUBC boathouse during the early hours of Saturday, 25th September. All that remains are a few brick walls and a lot of rubble, surrounded by a wire fence with 'Keep Out' signs. In fact, marginally less inviting than the days when Catz had to boat from there.

Torpids 2000 was cancelled due to a high stream.

Cambridge had dominated the Boat Races during 1990s, so that in 2000 CUBC and CUWBC were on runs of 7 and 8 consecutive wins respectively. Two Catz undergraduates had the unenviable task of putting a stop to that.

Matt Smith, 2000 OUBC

'Four weeks before the Race we adequately disposed of a Molesey crew but concluded that we were still, however, slower than Cambridge. We threw ourselves back into training to prepare for our race a fortnight later against the best oarsmen in the world, in the form of Redgrave, Pinsent and friends. We rowed well in one piece against them and beat them round the inside of a bend, however we lost out by substantial margins in the other two. We would have to row to our full potential to beat Cambridge.

'The last two weeks' rowing went well, we were building in confidence and speed. By the time we reached the day of the race we were confident of victory. The day itself was nothing special in many ways

as we had been through the routine many times before. We were just racing another crew with a few people watching. We were our normal rowdy selves in the race, yelling abuse at the other crew etc. The victory was especially sweet because of the way we did it.'

Oxford won by 3 lengths and, at 18 years and 8 months, Matt also became the youngest person ever to win a Boat Race.

A week later, at Henley, it was Emily Woodeson's turn.

Emily Woodeson, 2000 OUWBC

'On race day, we had a short paddle in the morning which went really well and got rid of a lot of nerves. We had our pre-race chat away from Upper Thames and it was relaxed but focused. We all knew what we had to do, and we all felt we were going to do it. Walking back to the club we watched Osiris go by and seeing them lose was really difficult, but it stiffened our resolve to go out there and nail Cambridge.

'Sitting on the stake boat I felt a bit tense, but I tried to relax as we were taking our kit off. It seemed like ages before the Umpire said go, and the first stroke of our start wasn't the best we had ever done! However we pulled it back straight away and started to move through them. We had decided that our cox wasn't going to tell us where they were until we were at the 500m mark and when he called it he was sitting on their bow canvas and was asking us for clear water — that was a fantastic feeling. Going past Remenham and Upper Thames the crowd was amazing, it was so loud and sounded so excited. We were able to settle into our cruise pace, and as the race went on it got better and better. Crossing the finish line 2 lengths up, I was absolutely knackered but at the same time I wanted to jump into the air. It was a very special moment which made all the blood, sweat and tears of the previous 6 months very worth it!'

In Eights, the Men's 1st VIII were bumped by Lincoln, finishing 12th, but the Women's 1st VIII gained their first bump since 1996 and finished 4th on the river.

At the end of the summer of 2000, on the other side of the world, one of our alumni was involved in an event which was to have a profound effect on the public perception of rowing in this country.

RS Newsletter, 29th October, 2000

So where were you in the small hours of Saturday morning, September 23rd? Chances are that you were sat in front of a telly along with 7 million other Britons watching a certain rowing race unfold in Sydney.

The British coxless four won the Olympic final, bringing Matt Pinsent his 3rd gold medal and Steve Redgrave his 5th..

University Boat Races

The big change this year is the move of the Women's Boat Race from Henley to the Tideway, on Saturday 11th April. They'll be setting off at 4.50pm, an hour before the Men's Boat Race, and half-an-hour before the Isis-Goldie Race. Hopefully they'll get a little more TV coverage than the BBC usually assign to the reserves' race.

More recently it has also been decided to move the Osiris-Blondie Race to the Tideway but (presumably due to constraints of time and tide) racing 24 hrs earlier. While it makes obvious sense for the reserve crews to train, and race, for the the same distance as the Blue Boats, and provides the Boat Race organisers with a welcome opportunity for a full rehearsal, it's going to lack the sense of occasion that they've had from racing in front of several thousand supporters at Henley. And if one of the Blue Boats wakes up on the morning of their race with a high-temperature, they'd be substituted by someone who'd had to race over the full course the day before.

This will leave the Henley Boat Races to just the University Lightweight crews and the representative College crew races. We'll have to see what impact this will have on spectator numbers and sponsorship.

To my knowledge, the only Catz triallist this year is Lucy Roberts, training with the women's lightweights. But former Catz oarswoman (and Oxford lightweight), Emma Clifton, is now trialling for the Cambridge lightweights.

RS Finances

Kevin Skinner, RS Chairman

The Committee has negotiated with the College for the establishment of a Rowing Fund within the College endowment. The main benefit of this is that eligible donations to the Rowing Fund will attract tax relief under the charities Gift Aid scheme. Although donations to the new Fund will formally belong to the College, it has been agreed that the Rowing Society Committee will decide how the funds are

used. So in that respect, nothing will change. We will shortly be sending out further details to Rowing Society members, including instructions for how to redirect your subscription/donation to take advantage of the arrangement in time for annual subscriptions/donations due in February 2015. Please look out for details by email or through the post.

Michaelmas Term

The new Captains are Ben Baron and Jessica Sutherland, both of whom learned to row at St Catherine's. Malcolm Spencer continues as the women's Head Coach while the men have appointed Siggí Martinsson, who comes from Iceland via Cambridge.

Both the men's and women's 1st VIIIs have lost many of last summer's crew, which makes training up novices even more important than usual. Fortunately the weather, and river, have been kind so far, with just one morning's rowing lost, and that due to fog.

At last count there were 3 men's and 2 women's novice VIIIs in training for Christ Church Regatta at the end of November. With Autumn Fours last week, and two Isis Winter League head races, and Nephthys Regatta to come, there is no lack of local racing opportunities for the senior squads this term either.

For those who haven't yet seen it, I recommend the Boat Club recruitment video produced by Rosemary Bridson (link from the RS news web-page), which elicited enthusiastic responses (e.g., 'sign me up right now!') from several alumni when I forwarded it via the RS email list at the start of term.

Coming Up ...

In the next issue there will be the results and Captains' reports on the term's rowing, updates on the Boat Race crews and an exploration of the events of 25 years ago. Contributions from alumni always welcome.

Anu Dudhia

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

www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=93221115264

Diary

26–29 Nov 2014	Christ Church Regatta
5–7 Mar 2015	Torpids
7 Mar 2015	RS AGM & Dinner
5 Apr 2015	Henley Boat Races
10 Apr 2015	Osiris-Blondie Race
11 Apr 2015	Tideway Boat Races
27–30 May 2015	Summer Eights