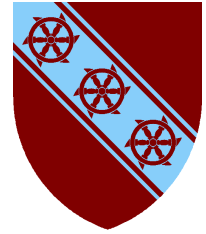




St Catherine's College Rowing Society
St Catherine's College
Oxford OX1 3UJ



13th December, 2014

In this issue . . .

It's been a good autumn for rowing: not too cold, not too wet and not too windy, although in 7th week the stream came up just enough to deter the organisers from allowing novices coxes to participate in Christ Church Regatta. But nothing got cancelled and at least one Catz crew competed in every event held on the Isis although, admittedly, not with any great distinction. We have the Captains' reports on the term's rowing.

From the archives we take a look at events of 25 years ago, including among other things an explanation of why Christ Church Regatta nowadays is an event solely for novice VIIIs, how we managed before Dorney Lake opened its gates to flood-refugees, and an incident during the 1980 Isis-Goldie race which the current CEO of British Rowing would probably rather we all forgot.

Last month's Fours Head, held over the Boat Race course but in the opposite direction, provided the first opportunity to compare the relative strengths of the Oxford and Cambridge men's and women's squads. With next year's women's Boat Race being held on the Tideway for the first time, and covered live on BBC, the main concern, given Oxford's recent dominance over the shorter Henley course, is that it could be a bit one-sided. We have an analysis of the results.



'Please look after this crew'. Checking our novices are clearly labelled before sending them off to race.

Results

Autumn Fours, 26th October

Women's Fours (18 entries)

Rnd 1 Merton bt **St Catz** 3 1/2 L

Isis Winter League A, 9th November

56 crews were timed

48th 6:21.0 **St Catz MNA** 13th/15 M8

56th 7:36.0 **St Catz MNB** 15th/15 M8

Nephthys Regatta, 22nd November

Men's Novice VIIIs

Rnd 2 **St Catz MA** bt Magdalen A

St Hugh's bt **St Catz MB**

Rnd 3 New A bt **St Catz MA**

Christ Church Regatta, 26–29 November

Men's Novice VIIIs (58 entries)

Rnd 1 **St Catz MA** bt St Hilda's A

Exeter A bt **St Catz MB**

Rep **St Catz MB** bt Mansfield C

Rnd 2 **St Catz MA** bt Worcester A

Mansfield A bt **St Catz MB**

Rnd 3 Ch. Ch. A bt **St Catz MA**

Women's Novice VIIIs (51 entries)

Rnd 1 Keble A bt **St Catz WA**

Trinity A bt **St Catz WB**

Rep Linacre A bt **St Catz WB**

Pembroke A bt **St Catz WA**

Isis Winter League B, 30th November

69 crews were timed

27th 5:47.0 **St Catz M4** 5th/8 M4

Women's Boat Club Report

Jessica Sutherland, Women's Captain

The seniors started the term off with training for Autumn IVs, which we used as a bit of a training exercise as this year it was unusually early in the term. Aside from that, the focus of the seniors has been, as

President: Bruce Mitchell

Vice Presidents: Don Barton,

Richard Peters,

Sir Matthew Pinsent CBE,

Ben Sylvester.

Men's Boat Club Report

Ben Baron, Men's Captain



Women's Novice A (nearside) racing Keble A in Christ Church Regatta.

always in Michaelmas, on getting back on the water after the long summer away and, more importantly, on supporting the Lower Boats' Captains (LBCs) as they trained up the novices.



Jessica Sutherland, Women's Captain

Aside from competing in Christ Church, both novices and seniors got involved in some erg relays put on by Mal, our coach, and there were plenty of socials to introduce new rowers to rowing culture out of the boat and off the erg. Although we did not progress past Thursday's racing, all the boats did a brilliant job at Christ Church, particularly on the Thursday, where our A boat only just lost a very close race due an unlucky last-minute crab. It was great to see just how much everyone had improved over less than seven weeks of training, all of which is down to the fantastic effort put in by our Lower Boats' Captains, our coach, and of course the novices themselves.

The LBCs did a great job this term both on and off the water, training up two full boats for Christ Church with enough people left over to make a third boat joint with the men.

the Lower Boats' Captains for the great work they did this term fostering a fantastic atmosphere amongst the novices.

The senior squad were able to establish a strong baseline this term with some tough training. I am excited to see how this work will pay off when we start racing next term with the rest of the IWL races and, of course, Torpids.



Ben Baron, Men's Captain



Men's Novice A crew



Men's Novice B crew

25 Years Ago ...

In 1989/1990 the home of the Boat Club was a dark, damp and dingy bay in the old O.U.B.C. boathouse (site of the current University College boathouse). The men's 1st VIII were 7th on the river in Torpids, 15th in Eights (*cf* to 5th and 9th now), and the women were 5th and 13th (*cf* 8th and 20th). Notable among the 1989 undergraduate intake was Matthew Pinsent. Both he and 2nd year Catz student Rupert Obholzer had achieved bronze medals in the previous summer's World Championships held in Bled (then part of Yugoslavia). Cox, and former men's Captain, Neil Chugani, also joined them for OUBC trials.

The following are extracts from RS newsletters.

10th December, 1989

For the past few years, envious glances have been cast in the direction of Christ Church Boat House, and the seriously large amount of money it generates from running Christ Church Regatta (albeit badly)¹ as the major inter-college event in Michaelmas Term. So this year the University Lightweights got in on the act and ran the events for all the Senior and Junior crews a week early, as 'Nephthys' Regatta, leaving Christ Church Regatta with just the Novice Events, and (so it seems to me) an even bigger profit margin. Nephthys, I should explain, was the younger sister of the goddess Isis, and is now used as a racing name by the Lightweights in the same way as 'Isis' is used by OUBC. Osiris, of course, was Isis' brother and is used for OUWBC crews, so it all makes sense. It's just a shame the kid sister wasn't given a few more vowels to her name.

¹That was then, it's a rather more professional set-up these days

17th March, 1990

Rowing on the Isis ceased abruptly one morning in 3rd week when 3 crews (not ours) decided to play at being lemmings by the weir at Iffley and had to be rescued by the local fire-brigade. Then followed several weeks of trailing boats about the country in pursuit of rumours of rowable stretches of water. One of my enduring memories of this term will be standing on the shore of some tiny, miserable, windswept gravel-pit somewhere to the west of Oxford, with the Men's 1st Torpid, unable to believe that anyone would seriously considering going for a paddle on it. But prolonged deprivation does strange things to rowers, and this crew in particular, and paddle on it they did.

Torpids was reduced to just 2 days racing, and only for the top 2 men's divisions. St Catz were bumped by Balliol and dropped one place.

28th April, 1990

[*Isis-Goldie Race*] Isis, coxed by Neil Chugani, starting as favourites, were 2 lengths down by Hammer-smith, staged a great comeback to overhaul Goldie and were just about to go clear when there was a blade clash. The Goldie 2-man crabbed, broke his gate and Isis were disqualified.

This was the first and, to date, the only time there has been a disqualification in either the Boat Race or the Isis-Goldie Race. OUBC beat Cambridge by 2 lengths, but Cambridge won all the women's and lightweight races that year.

14th July, 1990

[*Suzannah Rayner, Women's Captain*] Under the watchful, but somewhat silent, eye of chief coach Matt Pinsent, the Women's 1st VIII this term managed to reach a balance between 'work' and 'play' — although I think the perhaps the scales may have been slightly tipped ...

The Men's 1st Eight were fortunate to be able to train off the Isis, thanks to the influences of former Master, Sir Patrick Nairne.

At Radley, Jean le Manac'h came up with one of his more impressive little miracles and after just a few days the 1st VIII turned up at Wallingford and won the Novice VIIIs event, making up in winning margins what they lacked in style. That, I believe, was our Men's VIII's first win of an ARA event for over 10 years.

In Eights, the Men's 1st Eight dropped one place and the Women's 1st Eight two.

10th November, 1990

[Richard Peters, Rowing Society Chairman] The major achievement this summer for the Rowing Society was to obtain sponsorship for the Boat Club. Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte — one of the UK’s leading firms of accountants and management consultants — has agreed to sponsor the Boat Club for an initial three year period.

Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte, evolving into Coopers & Lybrand, and then PriceWaterhouseCoopers, continued to sponsor the Boat Club until this year (apart from a lucrative couple of years around the turn of the millennium with Madge networks).

We are currently looking for a new sponsor ...

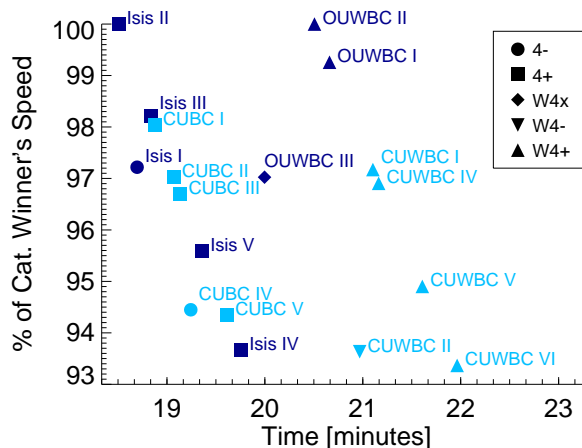
University Crews

The first big outing for the prospective Boat Race participants is the Fullers Head of the River Fours, a time trial over the Boat Race course but in the downstream direction, finishing at Putney. The event attracts 400+ entries, including many from overseas, but generally not from Oxford or Cambridge colleges. This year’s event was held on November 1st (end of 3rd week, in local reckoning).

Oxford and Cambridge men’s and women’s squads were out in force although, as seems traditional, half their boats (2 Isis, 3 CUWBC) were categorised as ‘time-only’, meaning that although they raced and had their times published, they were ineligible to win any of the category pennants, due to having made too many changes from the original entry forms. Understandable when you consider that entries have to be submitted not longer after the squads have convened, and well before the coaches have had a proper chance to assess the individuals.

Even with all the crews’ times to hand, the habit of distributing their crews into different boat classes — coxed fours (4+), coxless fours (4–) and, for OUWBC a quad scull (4x) — makes any direct comparison difficult: quads are intrinsically faster than coxless fours, which are faster than coxed fours.

Difficult, but not impossible. Below is a graph showing the results in conventional time order along the *x*-axis, but along the *y*-axis the results expressed as a percentage of the speed of the fastest boat on the day in each category. So, for example, Isis II and OUWBC II, both at 100%, were, respectively, the fastest men’s and women’s coxed fours in the whole field, while OUWBC III, although the fastest Oxford or Cambridge women’s boat, drop to 4th best given their 36 sec deficit on the fastest women’s quad.



Oxford & Cambridge results in the 2014 Fours Head

So, reading from top-to-bottom, rather than from left-to-right, Oxford seem to have had the better day of it. In fact I’d go so far as to say that, if I were a BBC producer, I’d be arranging some contingency programming in the event of the women’s Boat Race being effectively over after a couple of minutes.

Lightweight crews from Oxford men and Cambridge women also participated, but without their opposition. Cambridge lightweights are included with the CUWBC entries. In particular, CUWBC II contained Emma Clifton (M.08), a former Catz oarswoman and 2013 Oxford lightweight.

Lucy Roberts is the only current Catz student trialling for a University crew this year, rowing with the women’s lightweights.

Coming Up ...

In the next issue there will be the prospects and arrangements for Torpids, including the Rowing Society AGM & Dinner, updates on the University Crews, a look at the Boat Club of 50 years ago and, hopefully, news of a new women’s VIII. 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

- 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