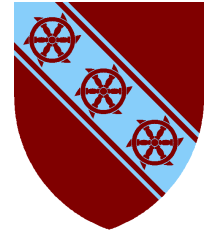




St Catherine's College Rowing Society
St Catherine's College, Oxford OX1 3UJ



President: Prof. Ceri Peach
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 Andrew Triggs Hodge OBE, Sir Matthew Pinsent CBE,
 Ben Sylvester

29th October, 2017

In this issue . . .

This edition traditionally includes a report on our alumni racing at international level over the summer. With the retirement of Andrew Triggs Hodge and Zoe de Toledo after the last Olympics, I was starting to wonder how to fill that slot. Fortunately, cometh the hour, cometh the woman . . . and, even better, cometh a report in her own words. Continuing on the subject of international racing, there has also been a redefinition of the Olympic Boat Classes.

The College Gaudy last June, for those who matriculated 1993–2002, provided the usual opportunity to see who was still willing and able (or, at least, just willing) to get back into a boat, and also an excuse for me to dust off the archives to see how the Boat Club was getting along 20 years ago (quite well, it seems). Several of those involved have also contributed to the News from Alumni. It turns out that 1998 was also the inaugural year of the ‘Gaudy Paddle’ and, advanced notice for those who matriculated 2003–2012, you’re up next: 23rd June 2018.

In the present tense, both the men’s and women’s 1st VIIIs racing for the first time this weekend, the men at Upper Thames Head and the women in the first of the IWL races. But you’ll have to wait for the next newsletter to find out how they got on.



Gaudy crew at Iffley Lock: Sarah Askew (bow), Jen Rees, Pete Murphy, Clarissa Edwards, Nick Dunne, Bluebell Martin, with 1st VIII oarswomen Holly Smith and Ryan Grimes as stern pair helping to move things along.

Results

Rowing World Championships, Sarasota, FL, USA, 24 Sep – 1 Oct

PR3 Mxd 4+ (5 entries)

Gold	GBR [†]	6:55.7
Silver	USA	7:18.8
Bronze	Italy	7:23.5

[†]Anna Corderoy (M.13) (cox)

2017 World Championships

Anna Corderoy

My first experience of rowing came when, as a fresher, I attended a taster session at St Catherine’s College Boat Club. I decided that it was probably customary to try rowing at least once whilst being at Oxford, and was keen to make some new friends. The environment at SCCBC was so supportive, fun and exciting that, when I realised that I was unlikely to become the next Katherine Grainger, I decided to switch to coxing in order to stay involved. Three years, three Summer VIIIs campaigns, one lightweight Boat Race and many, many regattas with Catz, OUWLRC and Molesey Boat Club later . . . and suddenly coxing was my full-time job. At the beginning of last month I touched down in Florida with the GB Rowing Team to compete in the 2017 World Championships.

I had been selected to cox the para squad in the PR3 Mixed 4+. The crew contained two athletes who had won gold in Rio the previous year; we were aware of the incredible legacy of the boat and the three of us that were new to the crew were determined to do our bit to continue its success. In 2017, unlike in previous years, the Paralympic class events would be raced over 2km on the same days as the Olympic class ones. Training together, dining together and staying in the same hotel meant the entire GBR team really came together in the days leading up to the championships. Watching other teams from all over the world gradually join us one by one at the Nathan Benderson Park was surreal; as the boat racks filled up I made the transition from deciphering Oxford college blade colours to working out which countries were training in the lanes around us on the lake. When, during the



The GBR Para IV

colourful opening ceremony, the 69 competing nation flags were brought onto the stage, it reinforced what a privilege it was to be there and what an amazing week lay ahead. With our preliminary scheduled for five days into the regatta, it was exciting chatting with other GB athletes over meals and hearing their accounts of how racing was going.

Our final came around on the morning of Saturday 30th September. Despite a good preliminary two days previously we were ready to step up another gear and adamant not to rest on our laurels. The day was described as a ‘19-camera-extravaganza’ and tickets had completely sold out; nonetheless everything that morning seemed to happen perfectly within our own crew. I wasn’t as nervous as I thought I’d be, as we’d been so well prepared in the lead up to the race that we knew exactly what the plan was and how we were going to deliver it. Auto-pilot kicked in from the minute we pushed off the raft. We were given a bit more of a fight off the start compared with the preliminary race; it was important to stay internal and execute our start sequence exactly as we’d planned it. 500–600m in, as we pulled away from the USA, the challenge was to see just how clean, efficient and technical we could make the rest of the race. We knew what splits to look for and which technical points we’d need to stay on top of to hit them. By the time the red buoys came it felt as though we’d set a sustainable platform to build for the line. Seeing the bubble-line getting closer and closer whilst hearing the sound from the stands was amazing.

Everything after that was a blur: landing, getting ushered into the media area, hugged by Dame Katherine Grainger and Sir Steve Redgrave, trying (and tremendously failing) to

keep my cool on camera ...learning that we’d achieved our aim, 6:55.7, a sub-7 minute world record. Then standing on the podium and hearing the national anthem — the absolute nail in the coffin *re* any semblance of media dignity as I bawled my eyes out. After that it was an immense privilege to be able to spend the rest of the weekend in the stands with the team, watching everybody else race.

And none of this would have happened had SCCBC not convinced me that this sport was one worth pursuing further than that first freshers week. Thank you to all those at the club — and indeed on the Rowing Society — who have supported me, challenged me and become wonderful friends and teammates over the years.

You’ve made the journey incredible!

Olympic Boat Classes

Rowing, as a sport, has the third largest contingent of athletes in the Olympics, requires expensive facilities and has limited revenue potential. So it has to work hard to keep the IOC happy. One (not unreasonable) ‘suggestion’ from above was to ensure gender parity for 2020, while not increasing the total number of athletes. Since there were 8 rowing events for men but only 6 for women, it came down to replacing one of the men-only events, which were the open and lightweight coxless fours, with a women’s counterpart for the remaining event.

Now, since there are currently no women’s lightweight sweep events, the lightweight category increase the medal chances of those countries genetically indisposed to producing 6’ women, and there would still be the pairs and eights for the heavier sweep men, you might have thought the choice was straightforward. But it turns out that one thing the IOC *really* doesn’t like about rowing is the concept of a weight category, which it feels should be restricted to combat sports and weightlifting. Thus it was felt that any change which *increased* the number of lightweight events was unlikely to meet with IOC approval, while any change which *decreased* the number would be considered favourably.

And so: RIP Olympic Men’s Lightweight Four (1996–2016), heroic racing and the not-at-all-usual-suspect gold medallists: Denmark, France, South Africa and Switzerland. It will continue as a World Championship event, but obviously the top athletes will now be concentrated into the one remaining Olympic lightweight event: the double sculls.



St Catherine's at the 1998 Head of the River Race

20 Years Ago

An innovation in 1997 was the creation of a the post of 'Captain of Lower Boats' (Helen Barnes), leaving the Captains (Tom Wright and Caroline Trotter) to concentrate on the senior squads, who certainly competed far and wide. Locally, Catz also won the Uni-part Trophy as the most successful club in Nephthys Regatta, held in Michaelmas Term.

Unfortunately the winter of 97/98 was a wet one. Helen Barnes wrote:

'So after all the early mornings and even video sessions, on a fateful Friday afternoon in 7th week, with a fast-rising stream, the remainder of Christ Church Regatta was cancelled, thus leaving two of our crews stranded — one of those without ever having raced. Rowing at Catz appeared doomed — I had visions of every single novice quitting on the spot. However, it seems that our work over the term paid off. Next term, we look set to have spectacular second and even third VIIIs for both the Men's and Women's Boat Clubs — literally dozens of this term's novices having decided that they want to continue'

The river remained closed until the first week of Hilary Term. Shortly thereafter, the 1st VIIIs were off to Burway Head where the women successfully defended their Novice VIII title from the previous year.

In Torpids, both Women's (2nd on the river) and Men's (15th) 1st VIIIs rowed over for the first three days, but once again the stream rose and the last day's racing was cancelled.

This was a period of Cambridge dominance in the Boat Races, and by 1998 all the Oxford heavyweight

crews were on long losing runs: OUBC 5 consecutive losses, OUWBC 6, and both Isis and Osiris 8. Nobody expected 1998 to be any different — and for three Oxford crews it wasn't — but there were a couple of Catz men in the Isis boat who had different ideas. Ollie Jones takes up the story:

'By the time we arrived at Putney, after spending a productive week with the Blue Boat in Amsterdam on the Bosbaan, we knew we had a chance. Goldie certainly didn't share our point of view, and provided us with ample free motivation leading up to race

day; we learned that they were expecting to clear us in three minutes and win by at least five lengths. So, in the race itself our plan was to stay right next to them and induce some self-doubt in their boat. After a sprint to the mile post, we dug in and rowed round the outside of their Surrey advantage, always at least half a length down. By twelve minutes in, we drew level, knowing our bend was creeping ever closer. They must have realised this too, and seemed to fade. Within little over a minute we had clear water and the racing line to ourselves. Seeing Goldie behind us was one of the best feelings, a feeling nevertheless bettered when we crossed the line in what later transpired to be a record equalling time for the reserve race.'

In Trinity term, the Boat Club mounted a major expedition to Coate Water Park Regatta, taking 4 VIIIs and returning with wins for the Men's 2nd and Women's 1st VIIIs in the Novice category, and the Men's 1st VIII losing in the Sen2 final. This was followed by a successful Eights where the women's 1st Eight maintained their position 3rd on the river, the men's 1st Eight rose three places to 14th, and Catz finished top of the stats with their 5 boats gaining a total of 15 places. The year also finished without a single Catz crew getting bumped, either in Torpids or in Eights.

And one more innovation: Nigel Lloyd (M.67), who was attending the Gaudy that year, wrote to ask if it would be possible for him and several other alumni to take an VIII out. We've changed the time to the Saturday afternoon before rather than the Sunday morning afterwards (for perhaps obvious reasons), but that's how the Gaudy paddle started.



St Catherine's Women racing in today's IWL-A

News from Alumni

Sarah Askew (M.94) Since leaving Catz I have rowed for Imperial (whilst obtaining a PhD in Biochemistry) and St Edmund's College (whilst working as a PostDoc at the University of Cambridge). Nowadays I work for Unilever, where I am the Category Patent Attorney for Beverages. I live in Bedford with Ben and our two children: Evelyn (13) and Isaac (11).

Nick Dunne (M.96) Following a few years at the criminal Bar, since 2008 I've had something slightly closer to a proper job as a lawyer in the Cayman Islands, where the lack of available rowing opportunities are a relief to all concerned. In addition to being older, I am also rather heavier, slower and hairier than during the heady days of Pete Murphy's inspirational captaincy. Married to Jo for the past seven years, and marking my fortieth birthday with the scheduled arrival of our first daughter in January: hopefully she'll be rather better at all this athletic stuff than her father was.

Bluebell Martin (M.94) Since leaving Catz I've enjoyed an interesting career in qualitative research, based in London. At the moment I'm in the middle of a three-year sabbatical, living in Tarifa, Spain, with my partner Georges, and doing lots of travelling — mainly for skiing and windsurfing.

Caroline Trotter (M.95) I moved to Cambridge 5 years ago with my partner and 2 daughters, where I am a Senior Lecturer in Epidemiology at the University. Not much time for rowing but there is talk of a Hughes Hall fellows boat for May bumps so I could be tempted! *I note that Caroline is too modest to admit to winning Senior Eights with Vesta in the 2004 Women's Henley.*

Tom Wright (M.95) After leaving Catz, I completed my DPhil in Numerical Analysis at Linacre, where I met my wife, Fiona; we are currently kept busy by our 23 month old daughter. My career thus far has been spent creating computer software for analysing medical images — extracting and displaying information that clinicians can use to help in their diagnosis and treatment plans. I began by developing algorithms in an Oxford startup which was subsequently acquired by Siemens, and recently moved to another growing Oxford startup, Perspectum Diagnostics, who are focussed on improving treatment of liver disease using MRI scans. Although I haven't rowed since Catz, when time allows I enjoy dinghy racing at the local reservoir, and I also develop and maintain my own iPhone app, Heart Graph, for tracking and analysing heart rate (Smokycatsoftware).

Coming Up ...

In the next newsletter we'll have the results and Captains' reports on the term's rowing, a first look at the Boat Race prospects and a review of the past year.

Anu Dudhia

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

Diary

28 Feb – 3 Mar 2018	Torpids
3 Mar 2018	RS AGM & Dinner
18 Mar 2018	Henley Boat Races
24 Mar 2018	Tideway Boat Races
23–26 May 2018	Summer Eights
23 Jun 2018	Gaudy Paddle