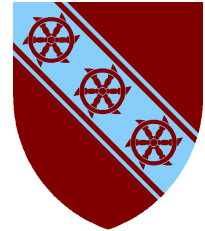




*St Catherine's College Rowing Society*  
*St Catherine's College, Oxford OX1 3UJ*



President: Prof. Ceri Peach  
 Vice-Presidents: Don Barton, Neil Chugani, Richard Peters,  
 Andrew Triggs Hodge OBE, Sir Matthew Pinsent CBE,  
 Ben Sylvester

10th December, 2017

**In this issue . . .**

The weather this term has been kind (well, until today) and the whole Boat Club has had a busy racing schedule. In this issue we have the results and the Captains' reports — I make no comment as to how well these match up.

A month ago the 2018 Boat Race squads made their first competitive appearance at the Fours Head, which presents an opportunity for some considered analysis followed by wild extrapolation towards next March.

As this is the last newsletter of 2017 there is a review of the past year. I don't think I'm giving anything away here to say it went rather better for the men than the women, but did the net gains outweigh the losses in the rowing equivalent of the Norrington Table?

Finally, with sadness, we note the death of Bruce Mitchell (M.54), one of the founding members, and former Chairman, of the Rowing Society.

**Results**

**Upper Thames Head, 29th October**

*Div 1: 158 crews raced*

1st	9:04	Thames RC	1st/6 Club 8
3rd	9:18	Oriel	3rd/6 Club 8
4th	9:27	U. West of England	1st/8 Acad 8
9th	9:35	<b>St Catherine's (M1)</b>	3rd/8 Acad 8

**Isis Winter League A, 29th October**

*36 crews raced*

8th	5:08	Pembroke A	1st/9 W8
21st	5:39	<b>St Catherine's (W1)</b>	7th/9 W8

**Nephthys Regatta, 17–18th November**

*Women's Senior VIIIs (8 entries)*

Q/F	Keble bt <b>St Catherine's (W1)</b>	1 L
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**Christ Church Regatta, 22nd–25th November**

*Men's Novice VIIIs (67 entries)*

Rnd 1	<b>St Catz A</b> bt Merton A	Easily
	Exeter A* bt <b>St Catz B</b>	1 1/2 L
Rnd 2	Magdalen A bt <b>St Catz B</b>	2 L
	Wolfson A bt <b>St Catz A</b>	2 1/2 L

*Women's Novice VIIIs (51 entries)*

Rnd 1	Brasenose A bt <b>St Catz A</b>	Easily
Rep	<b>St Catz A</b> bt Exeter B	Row Over
Rnd 3	Keble A bt <b>St Catz A</b>	Row Over

\*'Friendly crew' — ineligible to proceed

**Isis Winter League B, 26th November**

*32 crews raced*

=1st	4:28	<b>St Catherine's A (M1)</b>	1st/13 M8
=1st	4:28	<b>St Catherine's C (M1)</b>	1st/13 M8
8th	5:14	<b>St Catherine's D (M2)</b>	8th/13 M8
16th	5:34	<b>St Catherine's E (M3)</b>	12th/13 M8



The Isis this morning: Oxford's first significant snowfall for several years (but term ended a week ago).



An inspirational image of the senior women embarking on a dawn outing ...

## Women's Boat Club Report

### Rachel Ibbetson, Women's Joint-Captain

It's been a good start for the women's senior squad this year. With two new fantastic coaches in charge (Chloe Laverack and Matthias Mergenthaler) we've been able to come on leaps and bounds as a boat. Although a slight mishap with a seat prevented us from performing at our absolute best at IWL-A in late October, improvements continued to be made all term, and all nine rowers have been extremely pleased with our progress. We can't wait to prove our worth at Torpids next term!



Rachel Ibbetson and we're excited to see how SCCBC women can continue to develop into a force to be reckoned with!

The Novice squad has been very popular this year, with one boat being entered to Christ Church Regatta and some good races rowed. Next term we're looking forward to the addition of the novices to the senior squad,

## Men's Boat Club Report

### Oliver Berry, Men's Captain

After a successful Trinity term and a long summer break, the returning men were itching to get back into the boat again. A couple of the old guard from last year said farewell, but their seats were taken up by a new batch of experienced oarsmen and coxes. The Novice squad also looked promising in its size and attitude.

The first competition was Upper Thames Autumn Head for a scratch M1 crew. For the first race together for some of the crew the performance was rough but gutsy, especially the start, however it wasn't enough to overturn Oriel's 9:17 compared to our 9:35, placing us 9th and them 3rd. As one of the potential crews who will be in our crosshairs come Torpids, the gap is something that we are endeavouring to make up come March.

On the Novice side we were able to field 2 crews for Christ Church Regatta (the titles A and B were just to distinguish them — they were matched crews). The B crew got beaten by a strong Exeter A crew in what was a very close race however we later found out that the Exeter crew was 'friendly', having a couple of senior oarsmen in it, meaning the B crew survived another day. The A crew easily dispatched Merton A crew, no surprises there. The next day however saw the B crew knocked out by Magdalen A due to a crab caught 100m into the race that was never really recovered from, and the A crew followed suit (minus the crab) against Wolfson A in what was a strong race against the eventual winners of the event.

Finally, we managed to get both the Novices and Senior men out for their first joint race together at IWL B. M1, with a couple super subs confusing the OURCs entry system, managed to come top of the event, M2 came 8th in what was a big step forward for the mainly novice crew against entirely senior opposition, and M3 came 16th.

With Michaelmas term over, the Men's squad is looking ahead to what could be an exciting Hilary term.



Oliver Berry

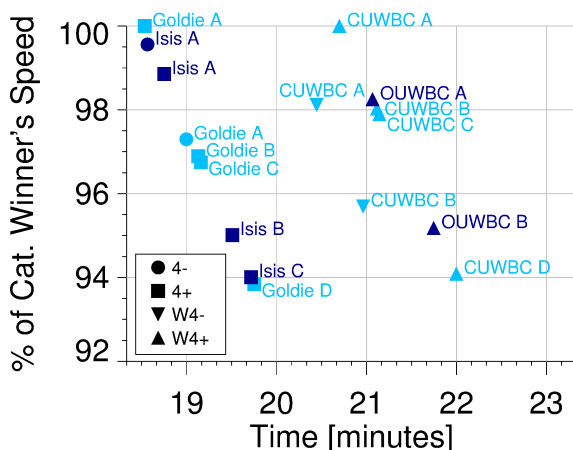


... compared with the rather more mundane actualité experienced by the novice men.

## University Crews

The Tideway Fours Head, on 12th November, was the first opportunity to compare the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race squads competing in the same event. And, barring careless accidents over entries, also the *only* opportunity other than the Boat Races themselves (24 March 2018, by the way).

Below are the results, plotted in time along the  $x$ -axis, and as a fraction of the speed of the fastest boat in each category on the  $y$ -axis.



Oxford & Cambridge results in the 2017 Fours Head.

OUWBC only raced in 2 fours — a bit of a worry considering that they'll need to fill two eights by next March (the Oxford women's lightweights managed 3 fours, and they only need to fill one eight). Cambridge, on the other hand, boated 6 crews, including the winners of the coxed IV category, 22 s ahead of Oxford's top boat which finished 4th, and with two more Cambridge boats just behind in 5th and 6th.

Oxford's men were also outnumbered (4 to 5) and, in the coxed fours, outraced: Cambridge won the men's event, 13 s ahead of Oxford's top boat, with two more Cambridge boats behind them. However, the Oxford coxless four finished well ahead of their Cambridge counterparts.

Over the past week the squads have had their Trials Races (apart from OUWBC, who have postponed theirs until the New Year). The real crew selection process doesn't start until January, and at this stage of training there are always a number of key rowers out through illness or

injury. So the main purposes of these races seems to be to give the prospective coxes a chance to show off how much they can get away with, and for the designated Boat Race umpires to show them how little (Matt Pinsent will be umpiring the Women's Boat Race, by the way).

At this point the men's Boat Race looks to be a close thing but Oxford do have the better reputation for moving up through the gears. As for the women, I fear Cambridge may already have clear water.

## 2017 Review

As 2017 draws to a close, it's time to reflect on the successes, and, erm, not quite so's, of the past year.

It went well for our men's 1st and 2nd boats: both up 3 places in Torpids, followed by Blades in Eights. A big factor in this was undoubtedly the 2016 trip to Japan, which encouraged a core of oarsmen to keep training through the long vacation, and they sustained that momentum all the way through to Summer Eights. The 1st Torpid is back at 4th on the river — equalling its highest ever position — and, after a bit of blip a couple of years ago, the 1st Eight is now back in Division I. The 2nd boat is also close to its 10-year high in both Torpids and Eights. A concern is that *only two* of last year's Michaelmas Term novices were persuaded to set foot in a boat again — that fact may come back to bite the men next summer.

**Catz Crews: Current Positions**  
(& highest–lowest positions, 2008–2017)

	Men		Women	
	2017	Range	2017	Range
1st Torpid	4th	(4–9)	27th	(1–27)
2nd Torpid	42nd	(41–61)	—	(47–57)
3rd Torpid	—	(62–68)	—	(50–55)
1st Eight	10th	(6–15)	21st	(13–24)
2nd Eight	42nd	(40–49)	74th	(44–74)
3rd Eight	80th	(73–89)	—	(75–79)

For the women, the 1st Torpid dropped 10 places to its lowest ever position. Part of the problem was that half the boat were novices. In the past, and for other Colleges, this wouldn't have been anything particularly unusual but the Catz women's novice programme has gone seriously awry of late (the last win in a side-by-side race in Christ Church Regatta was in 2013, since then: 0/16). By Eights, a few more experienced oarswomen were found to stabilise things for the 1st boat, but the 2nd boat continued to drop and is now at *its* lowest ever position. But at least this term they've had a senior VIII in regular training.

The table on the right shows the standing of the various College Boat Clubs based on positions of all their crews in Torpids and Eights. Catz has moved up from 16th to 15th, overtaking Trinity and Lincoln, although we ourselves are overtaken by Jesus. Pembroke remain head, although Wadham are closing. Magdalen had a nightmare year, and drop from 4th to 10th.

### Bruce Mitchell (1935–2017)

Bruce Mitchell died on 9th November after a long illness. He rowed for St Catherine's from 1957–1959, followed some decades later by both his sons. During his student days he founded the 'Beer-and-Blade Club' (which has evolved into the RS Dinner) and in 1984 helped set up the Rowing Society, serving as Chairman from 1997–2005, a period during which he cheerfully co-opted various family members to help out with the administrative tasks.

Those of us who only knew Bruce through the Rowing Society were always aware that there was much more to the man than his interest in the Boat Club and, at his funeral service in Gloucester Cathedral, we heard something of the many other parts of his life. The next *St Catherine's Year* will contain a full obituary.

**College Boat Clubs: Total Points**

		2016	2017	
1	Pembroke	390	Pembroke	373
2	Wadham	316	Wadham	340
3	Oriel	314	Christ Church	320
4	Magdalen	308	Oriel	305
5	Christ Church	303	Wolfson	295
6	Wolfson	308	Keble	263
8	Keble	227	Hertford	227
9	New College	227	Balliol	219
10	Hertford	224	Magdalen	219
11	Balliol	222	St John's	197
12	S.E.H.	193	New College	194
13	St John's	188	Jesus	192
14	Trinity	179	S.E.H.	188
15	Lincoln	167	<b>St Catherine's</b>	180
16	<b>St Catherine's</b>	164	Trinity	170
17	Jesus	159	Lincoln	163
18	Worcester	144	Mansfield	134
19	Mansfield	120	L.M.H.	124
20	L.M.H.	114	Somerville	122
21	St Anne's	106	St Anne's	114
22	Brasenose	105	Worcester	110
23	Somerville	101	Brasenose	94
24	St Hugh's	96	Merton	94
25	Merton	94	Exeter	92
26	Linacre	84	Linacre	88
27	Exeter	80	St Hugh's	81
28	Queen's	77	Queen's	80
29	Corpus Christi	67	Corpus Christi	72
30	St Peter's	66	St Antony's	69
31	St Antony's	58	G.T.C.	66
32	G.T.C.	55	St Peter's	59
33	St Hilda's	41	St Hilda's	45
34	Osler House	35	Osler House	27
35	Regent's Park	21	Regent's Park	21
36	St Benet's Hall	5	St Benet's Hall	7

### Coming Up ...

In the next newsletter we'll prospects for Torpids, updates on the University crews and, space permitting, another plunge into the archives.

Anu Dudhia

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### 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