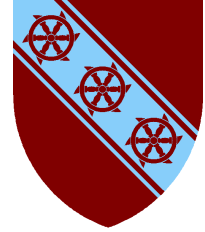




St Catherine's College Rowing Society
St Catherine's College, Oxford OX1 3UJ



President: Colin Smith
 Vice-Presidents: Neil Chugani, Richard Peters,
 Sir Matthew Pinsent CBE, Ben Sylvester,
 Zoe de Toledo, Andrew Triggs Hodge OBE.

12th December, 2021

In this issue . . .

Dear Alumnus,

The inevitable 'Christmas is Cancelled' instruction came last Thursday, the Vice-Chancellor describing the University as a 'Covid hot-spot' and placing a ban on any further social gatherings. Fortunately the student term had already ended and most of the undergraduates long since departed.

And, with only minor weather-related disruption, it has been an action-packed term: Catz crews clocked up 37 races, and the captains provide their reports. Christ Church Regatta was run for the first time since 2018, which meant Catz finally had to relinquish the Men's Novice VIIIs title, although one of that crew got to upgrade it to a Men's Senior VIIIs title instead.

The Tideway Fours Head, in mid-November, was heavily oversubscribed this year, so only two of our seven triallists got a chance to compete against their potential Boat Race opponents. I've analysed the results.

Finally, in the countdown of Catz rowers and coxes with the most bumps races, we now reach 18th place, with four men on 37 starts.

Results

Autumn Fours, 7th November

<i>Women's 4+ (19 entries)</i>				
Heats:	Mansfield	bt	Catz B	2 L
	Univ A	bt	Catz A	1/2 L
Final:	Wolfson A	bt	Wolfson B	1/2 L
<i>Men's 4+ (22 entries)</i>				
Heats:	Univ A	bt	Catz B	1 L
	Catz A	bt	Univ B	Dqd
Q/F:	St Peter's B	bt	Catz A	1/4 L
Final:	Univ A	bt	St Peter's B	1 L

The Fours Head, 17th November

Oxford crews with Catz members

404 crews raced

20:56.1	OULRC C*	Op Acad 4+	3rd/8
21:00.0	O UWBC D [†]	W Acad 4-	2nd/5

*Tom Wagstaff (B)

[†]Elizabeth Rees (3)



No matter how you dress it up, an early morning outing is still an early morning (Photo: Rowan Nicholls)

Nephthys Regatta, 19–20th November

W Sen 4+ (5 entries)

Q/F:	Catz	bt	Merton
S/F:	Wolfson	bt	Catz
Final:	Wolfson	bt	New

M Sen 4+ (5 entries)

Q/F:	Trinity	bt	Catz
Final:	Pembroke	bt	Trinity

M Sen 8+ (15 entries)

Q/F:	Catz	bt	Jesus
S/F:	Catz	bt	Keble
Final	Catz	bt	Balliol

W Nov 8+ (25 entries)

Heats:	Catz	bt	Jesus C
Heats:	Univ A	bt	Catz
Final:	Lincoln A	bt	Univ A

M Nov 8+ (33 entries)

Heats:	Ch.Ch. B	bt	Catz B
	Catz A	bt	Univ B
	Catz A	bt	Trinity A
Q/F:	Catz A	bt	St John's B
S/F:	Univ A	bt	Catz A
Final:	Univ A	bt	New A

Victor Ludorum

1st	25 pts	Wolfson
2nd	18 pts	University
3rd	17 pts	Catz

Christ Church Regatta, 24–26th November

W Nov 8+ (48 entries)

R1:	Jesus A	bt	Catz	1/2 L
Rep:	St Benet's A	bt	Catz	3/4 L
Final:	New A	bt	Merton A	

M Nov 8+ (55 entries)

R1:	Wolfson B	bt	Catz B	2 L
	Catz A	bt	Pembroke A	1 L
Rep:	Catz B*	bt	Magdalen A	1 L
R3:	Catz A	bt	1 L	
R4:	L.M.H. B	bt	Catz A	
Final:	Jesus A	bt	University A	

*'friendly crew', so do not progress

Isis Winter League B, 28th November

75 crews raced

1st	4:34.5	Wolfson A	1st/31 M8
4th	4:54.0	Catz A	4th/31 M8
14th	5:10.0	Catz B	14th/31 M8
29th	5:32.0	Jesus A	1st/20 W8
31st	5:35.5	Catz C	26th/31 M8
33rd	5:44.0	Catz B	3rd/21 W8
41st	6:02.5	Catz A	1st/7 W4
60th	6:32.0	Catz C	19th/21 W8



The men's Senior VIII racing (top) in Nephthys Regatta and (bottom) IWL-B

Men's Boat Club Report

Hamza Ahmad, Men's Co-Captain

This term has been the first Michaelmas Term to be rowed in full in the last couple of years, bringing unfamiliarity to even senior members of the squad. Besides this, the men's senior squad has enjoyed much success throughout, in both head races and side-by-side regattas. One of our goals was to assert dominance on the river by placing high in the IWL, which was achieved with the squad being the 2nd and 3rd fastest colleges in IWL A and B respectively. On top of this, we enjoyed victory in the Nephthys Regatta, comfortably beating many Torpids Div 1 crews.

Throughout the season, there has been a drastic improvement in both on the water technique as well as raw erg scores, being a testament to the new coaching, training plan, and most importantly, the squads unwavering commitment. The senior squad has also been blessed with the addition of novices, doubling the roster depth, which was only made possible due to the hard work of our Lower Boats Captains: Alex Scruton and Eugenio Vecchi.

With the gained confidence, fitness, and expanse, the momentum is heavy moving into Christmas training and HT22, with the next block being focussed on Torpids and keeping the ball rolling.



The Women's IV racing in Nephthys Regatta

We would like to quickly thank Rowan and Ilayda Karadag for all their hard work coaching this term and Niamh Louwman for all the help and knowledge she has given to us as a previous captain. Finally, a massive thank you to RS for all the support they have given us this term, especially for their generous contributions to our training camp, which was invaluable for developing our technique and experience as rowers, as well as being an unforgettable part of the University experience of the whole squad

Women's Boat Club Report

Helen Nielsen-Scott, Women's Co-Captain

Rowan [the coach] divided the focus of the term into two segments, the first of which was focused on aspects of the stroke. For the second half, training was centred on race preparation. Typically, our week included outings on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, as well as one strength and conditioning session and two ergs (one interval session done as a squad and one UT2 session which was to be done in our own time). Throughout the term, the erg sessions for the senior members of the squad were geared towards a 5 k test which was completed in the 7th week of the term. Attendance for ergs and S & C sessions has been fairly inconsistent throughout the term, and this is something we are aiming to improve upon. The novices also completed a 1 k test on the same day.

We competed in five regattas this term: IWL A, Autumn IVs, Nephthys, Christ Church, and IWL B. Unfortunately, Evesham Head, which we had also entered, was cancelled due to poor weather conditions.

The end of Michaelmas was marked by a very enjoyable, mixed-ability lock trip, which gave those who were able to attend the chance to focus on their technique over a more extended period.



Catz end-of-term outing below Iffley Lock (Photo: Rowan Nicholls)

University Crews

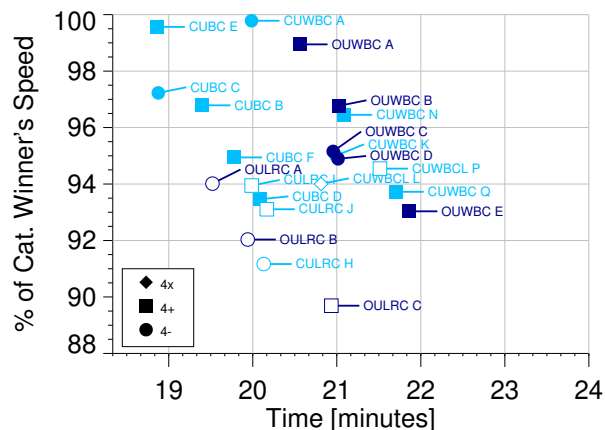
The Tideway Fours Head, held on 17th November, is usually the first opportunity to compare the strengths of the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race squads. Nowadays there is a minimum 'quality' requirement (e.g., no novice crews) but with entries closing as soon as the maximum number was reached, anyone not particularly quick on the 'send' — it's all done electronically — found themselves left high and dry. Cambridge entered 16 crews across all their squads but, either deliberately or carelessly, Oxford had only eight entries from just the OUWBC and the men's lightweight squads. Which means, of course, we'll have to wait a little longer for any indication as to the relative strengths of the men's heavyweight and women's lightweight boat race crews.

Below is a plot of the results for the Oxford and Cambridge crews. Compared with the times of the fastest crew in each boat type (which was usually a Leander crew) the best performance was from the CUWBC A coxless four, only 3 s down; but, with three Olympic oarswomen on board, they might have been hoping for the pennant. Oxford's A crew was a coxed four containing one Olympian plus assorted internationals.

They were 34 s slower than Cambridge but 25 s of that can be put down to carry a cox. Below the top boats, though, Oxford women had the edge. Catz oarswoman Elizabeth Rees rowed in the OUWBC D 4-, performance-wise the 4th OUWBC crew but only just behind OUWBC C, which should get her a seat in the Trial VIIs race.

For the men's lightweights, the pattern was reversed with Oxford's top athletes in coxless fours while Cambridge went coxed. So, again,

we need the percentages to make any comparison. This shows Oxford having the fastest crew by a whisker, but Cambridge's second boat well ahead of Oxford's. Catz oarsman Tom Wagstaff (apologies for omitting his name from the last newsletter) rowed in the OULRC C crew, some way further back.



Fours Head results for Oxford and Cambridge crews plotted as time (x -axis) and also as a percentage of the speed of the fastest boat in each category (y -axis). Open symbols for crews from the lightweight squads.

Bumps Starts

The countdown continues to 18th on the all-time list; four gentlemen all on 37 bumps starts.

Pos	Starts	Name	Active
=18th	37	Trevor Coulson	1948–52
=18th	37	Peter Murphy	1995–99
=18th	37	Arthur Simpson	1948–52
=18th	37	David Zimmer	2010–19

Arthur Simpson and Trevor Coulson were contemporaries, gaining their first experience of bumping races in the 1949 Torpids, which, as one-off experiment, were run (as now) over four days from Wed–Sat before reverting to the usual six (Thu–Wed). The next term they were both in the 2nd Eight, participants in the remarkable summer of '49 when all three Catz boats went up 6 places. Our last record of Coulson was when he returned in 1976 for the launch of a new four, the *V J K Brook*, donated by Ben Sylvester, one of his fellow '49ers, while Simpson returned in 2009 for their last reunion, although on that occasion he declined the invitation to actually get back into a boat.

Peter Murphy started his bumping career in the bow seat of the 1996 2nd Torpid, eventually working his way up, with a fair bit of coxing on the side,

to the men's captaincy in 1999. Although not quite matching the exploits of 50 years previously, it was another good year, with both men's Torpids winning blades and Peter himself leading from the front and back, as bow-man in the 1st boat and cox of the second. His captain's speech at the RS dinner that year will be remembered by most of those present for its infamous (and, so far, unrivalled) opening line.

More self-effacingly, David Zimmer rowed as an undergraduate and graduate, regularly in the 1st VIII but with a detour towards the lightweights. However, as a post-doc he's also been topping up his start-count with appearances in the 'gentlemen' VIII. Nowadays he's a chemistry (and rowing) teacher at Radley School. I don't think he's yet reached the stage of interacting with their Master in Charge of Golf (another former Catz oarsman), so should a vacancy arise, he might yet add to his bumps starts total.

Finally I'd like to thank the two RS members who contacted me after the last newsletter to shed some light on the mysterious character of Lewis Stevens. Having supplied me with a couple of extra Google search terms, it seems that the now retired Dr. Stevens used to be a biochemistry lecturer at Stirling University, authored a book titled *Avian Biochemistry and Molecular Biology*, and was newsletter editor for the Dvorak Society for Czech and Slovak Music. And very much *not* some obscure Tory MP who just happens to share the same name.

In Other News ...

Bill Coleman rowed at Catz from 1982–84, even making it into the 1st VIII once we'd persuaded him it required a different technique to Cornish gig racing (although I'm not sure he was ever entirely convinced). Anyway, his distinctive vowels were recently aired on Radio 4's *Open Country*, describing his latest project *Kerdroya — The Cornish Labyrinth*. Yes, it seems he has finally turned into a hedge fund manager, but perhaps not quite in the usual sense.

Coming up ...

Well, no one yet knows what the New Year will bring, beyond a more widespread knowledge of the lower depths of the Greek alphabet. However I think I can predict that in the next newsletter there will be some news of our Boat Race hopefuls, in particular as regards the various Trial VIIIs races, and the names of those occupying places 14–17 on our all-time list of bumps starts.

Anu Dudhia