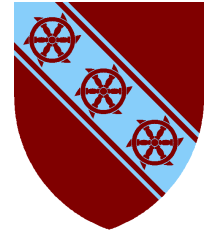




*St Catherine's College Rowing Society*  
*St Catherine's College, Oxford OX1 3UJ*



President: Colin Smith  
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Sir Matthew Pinsent CBE, Ben Sylvester,  
Zoe de Toledo, Andrew Triggs Hodge OBE.

6th November, 2022

**In this issue . . .**

It seems a long time since the last newsletter — a monarch and two prime-ministers ago, in fact. There have been a few changes in Oxford as well. Not, as you might have expected, to the PPE course that sails on blissfully careless of the havoc wreaked by its graduates, but to Broad St. The City council has finally conceded that having a car park plonked right in the middle may not be the most sensitive way of showcasing one of Oxford's finest open spaces. Also, that end-of-term festival of creative oarsmanship that, for over 60 years, has been Christ Church Regatta is no more. Or at least not with that name. An obituary seems in order.

Some of you may be familiar with the rather more serious rowing festival of the Head of the Charles, held in Boston, USA, each Autumn. It turns out there was a 'Catz' entry this year, although rowing in Oxford lightweight colours. Former captain of boats, Tom Wagstaff, provides his account.

Now that we've had a full academic year of rowing, it's time to review how the Boat Club has performed. Also, an overview of how all the various colleges have fared since before-Covid.



The Oxford Lightweight 2x racing at the Head of the Charles.

**Results**

**Pairs Head, Tideway, 8 Oct 2022**

*332 crews raced (pairs and doubles)*

1st	12:46	London RC	1st Champ 2x
27th	14:05	Oxford Lwt*	3rd Lwt 2x

**Head of the Charles, Boston, USA, 20–22 Oct**

*Men's Championship Doubles, 19 crews raced*

1st	16:01	Frg Germania	1st 2x
13th	18:08	Oxford Lwt*	3rd Lwt 2x

\*Tom Wagstaff (B), Zac Abel (S)

**Head of the Charles**

**Tom Wagstaff**

This October two students from St Catherine's College travelled to Boston MA to compete in the Head of the Charles Regatta for Oxford University Lightweight Rowing Club. Tom and Zac competed in the Championship Lightweight Double, placing 3rd as well as 13th overall in the Championship Openweight Double, whilst facing strong international competition. They also had the chance to talk with rowers from around the world and gain a greater understanding of the sport and the athletes who compete in it.

They would like to thank the Rowing Society for their continued support of triallists at St Catherine's College which helps athletes make the most of these opportunities when they are presented.



Broad St, undergoing a redesign. Gone are the parking spaces, and in come the planters and benches.



Racing in Christ Church Regatta last year but, women and equipment apart, this could have been any year.

### The Origins of Christ Church Regatta

Christ Church Boat Club have announced that they will no longer be running their Michaelmas novice regatta, the event in which most of us met with our first rowing triumphs and disasters (well, disasters mostly).

The Regatta, launched in 1958, was immediately popular with the colleges but the pundits were more cautious.

### Mixed Feelings on Early Racing

*The Times*, Tue 25 Nov, 1958

The new Christ Church regatta, which was announced after the first captain's meeting at Oxford this term, starts at 2 o'clock this afternoon on the Godstow Reach and finishes on Thursday. The finish of the course will be opposite the Oxford University Yacht Club Boat House at Medley.

Whether it is a good thing in the Michaelmas term, when quite a number of the competitors will have been rowing for only a few weeks, to have racing of any sort is questionable. Strictly, it would probably be better to concentrate on teaching men to row than on encouraging them to race at this stage. But the argument that the prospect of a race is necessary to get men down to the river is a forceful one. And if it is accepted, then a regatta of this sort, offering side-by-side racing over a short course, seems to be a good answer. There is no doubt of the popularity of the new fixture, for 62 entries have been received. There will be events for shell, clinker and novice eights, and for shell and novice sculls. Semi-finals and finals will be raced on Thursday.

*St Catherine's entered a Novice VIII who beat Pembroke in their first race but then lost to Oriel.*

*The next year the Regatta moved to the Isis, paving the way for the multilane Torpids experiments which started the following term.*

### Racing Abreast through Gut is Success

*The Daily Telegraph*, Fri 27 Nov, 1959

Christ Church regatta, which was successfully finished here to-day was, in a sense, a rehearsal for next term's new style Torpids, for in all except the novice events the crews raced abreast through the Gut.

At no time was there any threat of a collision. Nor indeed would there have been any excuse had a collision occurred, for there was ample space.

It should be added that the city rowing clubs have been racing abreast over this course for many years and there has never been any valid reason for the colleges not following their example.

Nearly all the finals were well-contested and it was satisfactory to see many of them won by colleges who have not been prominent in recent times.

St. Catherine's who won the shell eights from St. Edmund Hall, were a lively and hard working crew, while Exeter, winners of the clinker event in a time only five seconds slower, showed really promising form.

Jesus, who won the novice eights, were rough but raced very hard for their victory. The coxed four event, well won by Oriel, was a welcome innovation.

The regatta, though only in its second year, has definitely established itself as a valuable event in the Oxford rowing calendar. It was very well managed. Its communications system, with loudspeaker commentaries and announcements of results, could usefully be adopted by the University Boat Club.

*Previously all college racing on the Isis had either been bumping races or single-lane racing over the full course: two crews started simultaneously about 100 yards apart, with equally spaced finish posts, using semaphores to signal the winner. Autumn Fours, still using coxless boats, followed this pattern until the 1980s before switching to the current short-course, side-by-side competition for coxed boats.*

In 1989 Christ Church Regatta became a Novice-only event, with senior crews competing the preceding week in Nephthys Regatta, run as a fundraiser by the University lightweights.

The Regatta itself isn't disappearing. OURCs asked for interested colleges to submit proposals for running an equivalent event, and Linacre have now been awarded the franchise.

## 2021–22 Review

We’ve now completed our first full year of post-Covid rowing. Helpfully, very little rowing time was lost to high stream and all scheduled events were run.

In the Michaelmas Term regattas (Autumn Fours, Nephthys and Christ Church) the men entered 8 crews, who won 10 out of their 17 races. The stand-out performance was winning the Senior VIIIs title in Nephthys. The women had 5 entries, but only won 2 of their 8 races. The table below shows a comparison of these results with 2018, the last Michaelmas Term in which any significant amount of racing took place (2019 being largely washed out due to a persistent high stream). Bold numbers indicate the better year.

### Michaelmas Term Regattas

	Men		Women	
	2018	2022	2018	2022
Entries	4	<b>8</b>	4	<b>5</b>
Races	12	<b>17</b>	8	8
Wins	6	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	2
Win%	50%	<b>59%</b>	<b>63%</b>	25%

There were 5 Isis Winter League time-trials spread over Michaelmas and Hilary Terms, Catz men entering at least one VIII in every event but the women missing the last. The results of the highest-placed VIIIs are summarised below. The best performances came in the first event, with both men’s and women’s VIIIs recording the second fastest times, just a couple of seconds behind the winners. Catz also had the fastest of 7 women’s fours in IWL-B.

### Fastest Catz VIIIs in IWL Races

Date	Event	Men		Women	
		Pos	Time	Pos	Time
31-10-21	IWL-A	<b>2nd</b>	<b>+1.5 s</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>+2.0 s</b>
28-11-21	IWL-B	4th	+19.5 s	3rd	+12.0 s
23-01-22	IWL-C	<b>2nd</b>	+8.0 s	9th	+26.0 s
6-02-22	IWL-D	9th	+18.0 s	6th	+18.5 s
22-02-22	IWL-E	9th	+11.5 s		

We had a total of 8 triallists for University Crews, four of whom featured in their respective Trials races, in which three were victorious. 2 were subsequently selected for Boat Race crews (Angus Groom, OUBC and Augustin Wambersie, Isis) and both won. Three others were ‘designated spares’.



The Men’s 1st Torpid racing, at least for a couple of days, 2nd on the river, their highest ever position in Torpids or Eights.

Five crews were entered for Torpids, although the Men’s 3rd and Women’s 2nd crews failed to qualify, both missing out by 3 seconds. That’s two fewer crews than in the weird ‘Summer Torpids’ of 2021, in which there were 3 Catz women’s crews racing. The most successful crew was the men’s 2nd Torpid, up 3, but the men’s 1st Torpid bumped up — temporarily — to 2nd on the river and thus, in the nearly 150 years since Catz started competing, had their first shot at a headship.

Over the Easter vacation there was a welcome return to the Lago di Monate training camp and summer term started with some early racing in City Bumps and the BUCS Regatta. For Eights, both men’s and women’s 1st boats were reinforced by returning squad rowers, although it was the women’s 1st Eight who made the most of it by winning blades, for the first time since 1996. The men’s 3rd Eight continued their successful run, having bumped on each of their last 14 days’ of racing and are now the highest 3rd Eight on the river.

The Men’s 1st and 2nd Torpids, and the Women’s 1st and Men’s 3rd Eights, are all at their highest positions in the last 10 years.

### Catz Crews: Current Positions (& highest–lowest positions, 2013–2022)

	Men		Women	
	2022	Range	2022	Range
1st Torpid	3rd	( <b>3</b> –9)	20th	(8–27)
2nd Torpid	33rd	( <b>33</b> –49)	—	(51–61)
3rd Torpid	—	(62–65)	—	(60–63)
1st Eight	9th	(7–15)	14th	( <b>14</b> –24)
2nd Eight	46th	(42–49)	58th	(54–74)
3rd Eight	56th	( <b>56</b> –89)	—	(75–79)
4th Eight	—	(88–91)		

## College Standings

The table below shows the change in positions of the college boat clubs since 2019 based on assigning points for each crew according to their positions on the river in Eights and Torpids. It's an exponential scale so more points are gained for moving up places in the top division than the bottom.

College Standings and Points					
2019			2022		
1	Pembroke	348	Wolfson	364	
2	Wolfson	339	Christ Church	343	
3	Wadham	328	Oriel	334	
4	Oriel	324	University	291	
5	Christ Church	297	Pembroke	284	
6	Keble	278	Wadham	284	
7	S.E.H.	234	Keble	253	
8	University	231	S.E.H.	224	
9	Balliol	223	<b>St Catherine's</b>	209	
10	Hertford	203	Balliol	203	
11	New College	201	Magdalen	202	
12	<b>St Catherine's</b>	199	New College	198	
13	Trinity	191	Jesus	183	
14	Jesus	188	Trinity	175	
15	Magdalen	184	Hertford	162	
16	St John's	146	Lincoln	138	
17	Lincoln	137	L.M.H.	132	
18	L.M.H.	135	Merton	121	
19	Merton	116	Brasenose	104	
20	Mansfield	110	Linacre	103	
21	G.T.C.	109	St John's	100	
22	Brasenose	107	Exeter	100	
23	St Anne's	104	G.T.C.	99	
24	Somerville	104	St Hugh's	99	
25	Exeter	103	Somerville	99	
26	Queen's	100	Queen's	97	
27	St Hugh's	98	Mansfield	93	
28	Corpus Christi	94	St Anne's	89	
29	Linacre	92	St Peter's	78	
30	Worcester	89	Worcester	76	
31	St Peter's	62	Corpus Christi	70	
32	St Antony's	52	St Antony's	55	
33	St Hilda's	47	St Hilda's	41	
34	Regent's Park	26	Osler House	25	
35	Osler House	16	Regent's Park	23	
36	St Benet's Hall	14	St Benet's Hall	16	

St Catherine's continues the steady upward progress we've been maintaining since 2015 (when we dropped from 11th to 17th) and are now higher than any time in the past 10 years. Just behind are Balliol and, since all our 1st boats are currently within two places

of each other, that particular rivalry is set to continue into 2023.

Wolfson now take the top position for the first time, even though their women lost the Eights headship. Pembroke have been the big losers, dropping from 1st to 5th, with all four of their top boats going down.

Older readers may be surprised to see that some of the former powerhouses of Oxford rowing have now sunk to the bottom half of the table. There will always be good and bad years; the trick seems to be in making sure a bad year is followed by a better year. In retrospect, 2016 seems to have been a key year for St Catherine's.



The Women's Boat Club, celebrating 1st Eight blades for the first time in 26 years.

## Coming up ...

Despite all the recent rain, the river is still showing great restraint (no doubt related to the summer drought). We've already had IWL-A and Autumn Fours is this afternoon, so there should be enough material for Captains' reports. There will be a round-up of our (as-yet-unidentified) University triallists and an analysis of Oxford v. Cambridge performances in the Fours Head. Space permitting, I'll resume the countdown of bumps starts (we'd reached No.10).

## Diary

11–12 Nov 2022	Nephtys Regatta
19 Nov 2022	Fours Head
23–26 Nov 2022	Michaelmas Novice Regatta
22–25 Feb 2023	Torpids
25 Feb 2023	RS AGM & Dinner
24–27 May 2023	Eights

Anu Dudhia