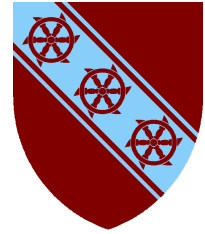




St Catherine's College Rowing Society
St Catherine's College, Oxford OX1 3UJ



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

11th December, 2022

In this issue . . .

November was particularly wet but it wasn't until 7th week, during Michaelmas Novice Regatta, that the ground finally saturated and the Amber Flag went up, causing racing to be suspended. Somewhat mysteriously given the actual river levels (and probably best not to probe too deeply) it was decided that by Saturday we were back to Blue Flag conditions so racing could be resumed, albeit in abbreviated form. Reality reimposed itself the next day as the Red Flag went up, effectively washing out the rest of the term. Just like old times.

At least, prior to that, a decent amount of rowing was to be had — even if it was generally in the rain. The Captains contribute their reports.

We're now in a pre-Olympic year and most of the internationals that packed last year's Boat Race crews have either returned to their national squads or moved on to the rest of their lives. At the end of 6th week, the new Boat Race squads made their competitive debut at the Fours Head and I've analysed the results.

I can now identify five Catz triallists: two OUBC, two men's lightweights and one OUWBC.

Results

Isis Winter League A, 30th October

55 crews raced

1st	4:16.0	Wolfson A	1st/13 M8
2nd	4:28.0	St Catherine's A	2nd/13 M8
16th	5:07.0	Mansfield A	1st/21 W8
22nd	5:13.5	St Catherine's A	7th/21 W8

Autumn Fours, 6th November

Men's Fours (30 entries)

R1	Queen's A bt St Catherine's A	1/2 L
	Pembroke B bt St Catherine's B	1 L

Nephthys Regatta, 11–12th November

Men's Eights (13 entries)

R1	St Catz bt St John's	?
Q/F	St Catz bt Mansfield	Row Over
S/F	St Catz bt Magdalen	3 L
Final	Keble bt St Catz	3/4 L

Women's Novice Eights (31 entries)

R1	Lincoln bt St Catz	1 L
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Men's Novice Eights (32 entries)

R1	Corpus bt St Catz	4 L
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The Women's Novice VIII racing in Nephthys Regatta.



The Women's Senior VIII racing in IWL-A.

Fours Head, 19th November

19:10.2	OUBC C¹	12th/19 Op Champ 4+
19:12.0	OULRC B²	13th/19 Op Champ 4-
20:37.7	OUWBC A³	6th/10 W Champ 4+

¹Johnny Davidson (Str)

²Zac Abel (Str), Tom Wagstaff (3)

³Helen Nielsen-Scott (Bow)

Michaelmas Novice Regatta, 23-26th Nov

Men's Novice Eights (56 entries)

Heats **St Catz*** bt Hertford B 3 L

Women's Novice Eights (54 entries)

Heats Lincoln A bt **St Catz** 3/4 L

Rep **St Catz** bt Oriel B Row Over

*Friendly crew, cannot progress

Women's Boat Club Report

Emma Coakley, Women's Co-Captain

At the end of Trinity term, the women's side were very sorry to say goodbye to a number of long-standing and highly regarded rowers who had finished their studies in Oxford. Driven mostly by our reduced numbers, Michaelmas term saw many outings in a four. Generally, this proved to be beneficial, giving everyone the opportunity to receive more individual coaching, enabling them to work on specific technical elements of their own rowing. The hard work paid off when we entered a senior VIII into IWL A, finishing as the 7th women's VIII, but just 6.5 s behind the fastest crew.

Our depleted senior crew was boosted by significant interest from freshers who had not rowed before. Aided by our new novice coach, Tash, the novices made significant progress, culminating in them entering both Nephthys and Michaelmas Novice Regatta (MNR). Nephthys Regatta saw our novices narrowly losing out in the first round to Lincoln WA, a strong crew who went on to lose in the semi-finals to the eventual winners (St Hilda's). In MNR, our crew was unlucky to again lose to a very strong Lincoln WA crew in the first round.

The significant progress made by the novices over the course of the term meant that we were able to hold several mixed senior and

novice outings. These proved beneficial for all, significantly helping the novices improve their technique while also giving the seniors much needed experience rowing in an VIII. We had therefore planned to enter IWL B as a combined VIII and were disappointed when this had to be called off due to adverse river conditions.

When we return in Hilary, we look forward to continuing the integration of the novices and seniors, turning the positive start we have made so far this year into a strong showing for Torpids.

Men's Boat Club Report

Lachlan Stewart, Men's Co-Captain

Michaelmas Term at SCCBC started with the arrival of our new Men's Head Coach, Laurence Whiteley MBE, a two-time Paralympic Gold Medallist in the PR2 Mix2x, whose experience and knowledge have proved invaluable.

We retained a core group of 10 returning squad members, and gained a couple of experienced newcomers. This allowed us to have a great block of training from the outset, with people making some big steps both physically and in terms of technical ability. This progress continued through the term and was spurred by encouraging results at both IWL A and Nephthys Regatta, coming in as the second fastest crew at both events, with plenty of capacity to go faster still. Although the cancellation of IWL B at the end of week 7 was frustrating, we ended the term in high spirits, with a lot of solid training in the books and a sense of optimism through the squad.



The Men's Senior VIII racing in Nephthys Regatta

We also had a reasonable novice intake, with several very committed athletes and a fair amount of physiological potential. The novice squad showed rapid improvement under the direction of our Lower Boats Coach, losing to eventual finalists at Nephthys Regatta. Unfortunately, at the Michaelmas Novice Regatta (in lieu of Christ Church Regatta), a combination of injury and illness necessitated the entry as a 'friendly crew', though this performed well until racing was stripped back due to stream conditions.

Looking ahead to Hilary Term, we aim to integrate the Senior and Novice squads, before selecting crews and beginning a 3–4 week training block leading into Torpids. We anticipate fierce competition for seats, and aim to produce an M1 that will comfortably hold position at 3rd on the River. We also expect to put out a competitive M2, composed of a mix of more experienced rowers and some promising newer faces, that will aim to improve further on its already lofty position in Division 3.

Happy Holidays!

University Crews

The full Oxford and Cambridge squads were on show in the Fours Head of the River Race, held on 19th November.

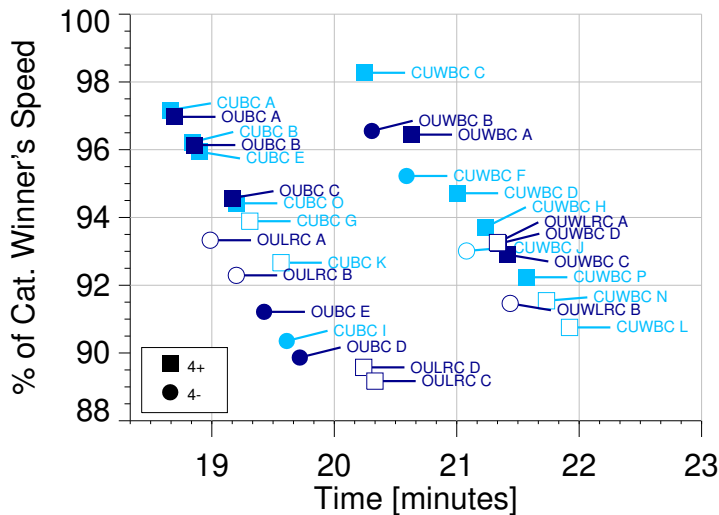
Once again I've attempted to account for the split between coxed and coxless fours by converting times to a percentage of the speed of the fastest boat in each category.

The 'emptiness' of the region above 98% is surprising; only the top Cambridge women's coxed four got within 20 s of the winning time for their boat category (set by Leander). It seems as if, this year, both the Oxford and Cambridge squads will be leaning heavily on their regular student bodies rather than on visiting Internationals on one-year courses.

Nowadays all the Cambridge squads are amalgamated into a single club, which means a bit of extra work is required to identify their prospective 'lightweight' crews. Also for the purposes of comparison I've removed the 5 sec penalties imposed on the OUBC D and CUWBC D crews (for being late at the start). Finally the OUWLRC A crew managed to get themselves disqualified (too many changes in line-up compared to their original entry) so I've given them a time based on what (I'm told) was originally posted prior to the disqualification. Sometimes I think it's almost as if these people don't actually want anyone making comparisons.



Ex-Captain Helen Nielsen-Scott rowing bow in the OUWBC A crew in the Fours Head. Photo: Jet Photographic



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

On the men's side it was close at the top, with the two fastest Cambridge coxed fours beating their Oxford counterparts by less than 2 s; insignificant, apart from bragging rights. However, the next two Cambridge heavyweight crews were significantly quicker than the next two OUBC boats.

The top two Oxford lightweight crews had faster times than the top two Cambridge lightweight boats, but since the Cambridge boats were carrying a cox a bit of scaling is required, after which Cambridge seem to have a slight edge.

In the women's coxed fours, the fastest Cambridge crew was a full 23 s ahead of the first Oxford boat, but the situation was somewhat reversed in the coxless fours with Oxford 17 s quicker. But, as with the men, when comparing 3rd and 4th boats Cambridge seem to have more strength in depth.

The Oxford women's lightweights best crew was their (disqualified) coxed four with their second crew in a coxless boat, while Cambridge went for the opposite configuration. However the two squads seem well-matched at this point.

So, to sum up, at this stage I'd say there's little to choose between the Blue Boats and lightweights, but Cambridge currently have the advantage in both reserve boat races.

There were four Catz students competing in the Oxford boats: Helen Nielsen-Scott in OUWBC A, Johnny Davidson in OUBC C, and both Zac Abel and Tom Wagstaff in OULRC B. Another OUBC triallist, Freddy Orpin, wasn't racing.

Bumps Starts

Below is the list of those placed 5–9th in the list of those who have had the most bumps starts in Catz crews.

Pos	Starts	Name	Active
=5th	45	Jim Bigger	1987–93
=5th	45	Nick Bolas	1979–85
=5th	45	Steve Eyles	1987–93
8th	44	Hugh Moore	1957–61
9th	43	Katharine Pierce	2003–07

Jim Bigger, a large physicist who, having rowed at school, stepped straight into the 1st VIII and more or less stayed there for the duration of his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. He was Captain of Boats in his 2nd year. He's now managing director of World Wide Technology analytics based in Denver, Colorado.

His contemporary, Steve Eyles, a chemist, spent a couple of years working his way up through the lower boats before making the 1st VIII. While studying for his DPhil, he also served as OURCs Secretary for two years. He now runs the Mass Spectrometry Core Facility at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Nick Bolas, a biochemist, also stayed on at Catz for his DPhil, all the while coxing various crews from the Men's 6th VIII up to the Women's 1st VIII (but somehow managing to avoid coxing me during all that time). He's the founder and director of Hallmarq, a company specialising in veterinary MRI scanning.

Hugh Moore took a theological route via St Catherine's Society and St Stephen's House. He started off coxing but eventually rowed in the 1st Torpid and was Captain 1960/61. After Oxford he served in a variety of ecclesiastical roles and, although well past normal retirement age, is currently listed as the Parish Priest of St Alphege, in Edgware, North London.

Katharine Pierce, women's Captain 2003/4, was only active in the boat club for four years but notched up a large number of starts by combining rowing and coxing. She left behind her sculling boat, which is still in use.

Coming up ...

In the next issue we'll have updates on our triallists and prospects for Torpids. As I write this, while the river level is back to normal, it is now closed due to ice. I'm assuming this is just a temporary state of affairs.

Anu Dudhia