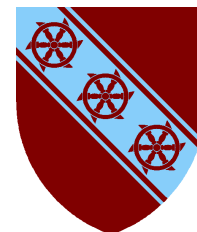




St Catherine's College Rowing Society

St Catherine's College, Oxford OX1 3UJ



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

14th December, 2025

In this issue ...

The rain held off and, just for once, a full Michaelmas Term's programme of racing was completed: 2 IWLs, Autumn Fours, the new Lion & Chough (formerly Nephthys) Regatta and Tamesis (formerly Christ Church) Regatta. Nevertheless, with Tamesis raced under fast stream conditions, Catz opted to scratch all but their top novice boats. Last to show their hand were the senior men, who waited until 8th week to compete in their first race of the term (IWL-B). We have the results and the Captains' reports.

Continuing to mark the Boat Club sesquicentennial, there is a summary of news, both domestic and foreign, towards the end of 1875. While the British upper classes were busy inventing new games, German passenger vessels were foundering off-shore and trouble was brewing in the Balkans.

The Tideway Fours Head was held for the first time since 2022. For once Oxford entered their full squad but Cambridge didn't, so no chance of a direct comparison but I'll see what I can do with the data available. There were a couple of Catz triallists in the Oxford boats.

Results

Tamesis Regatta, 26–29th November

c.40 Men's crews raced

R1 **St Catherine's A** bt L.M.H. A
R2 Lincoln A bt **St Catherine's A**

c.40 Women's crews raced

R1 **St Catherine's A** bt Exeter A*
R2 **St Catherine's A** bt Mansfield A*
R3 **St Catherine's A** bt Pembroke A
QF **St Catherine's A** bt St Antony's A
SF Magdalen A bt **St Catherine's A**
FB Merton A bt **St Catherine's A**

*'Friendly crew', not eligible to progress

Isis Winter League B, 30th November

57 crews raced

1st	4:26.0	Wolfson MA	1st/23 M8
16th	5:08.0	St Catherine's MA	16th/23 M8
25th	5:23.5	University WA	1st/11 W8
43rd	6:17.5	St Catherine's WA	7th/11 W8



The women's Novice VIII racing, with a fair degree of success, in Tamesis Regatta.



The Men's Senior VIII racing in IWL-B.

Men's Boat Club

Laurentius Heukamp, Men's Co-Captain

On the Men's side, we reflect on a successful term. We have welcomed several new senior additions: Phillip, who has joined Catz for his DPhil from Wadham, and Harry, who brings experience from school and J16 GB level. Both have been training with the senior squad under the supervision of our new Men's Head Coach, Nigel Smith. Pat, who has come from the US to study at Catz for two years (part-time), has been training with OUBC.

Nigel Smith has been an excellent addition to the boat club, bringing a wealth of experience to the programme. Training with him has taken place primarily at weekends, with Mal Spencer contributing his coxing expertise during one particularly productive session this term where we went through Iffley Lock.



Laurentius Heukamp, Men's Co-Captain

During the week, assistant coach Emilia Farrell has led morning sessions. Land training has largely been captain-led, with close communication between Nigel and the Captains ensuring a cohesive approach across the programme.

With the weather mostly on our side, we have been able to train a large cohort of novice rowers and coxes under the supervision of Orlando Williams. Looking ahead to next term, these novices will be further integrated into the wider Men's squad, with a clear emphasis that crews are not fixed and that high performance will be rewarded. We approach Bumps next term with confidence, having improved our IWL time by almost a minute compared to less than twelve months ago, despite racing with only six senior athletes in the boat.

Women's Boat Club

Lucia Pyne, Women's Co-Captain

With the stream and weather on our side, Catz women made the most of the river time not usually available in the winter months to get as many boats out as possible. After a long summer break we were keen to get fitness back on track, and show novices what Catz rowing is all about. Over the term the total session attendance was 180 from seniors, a massive increase from the 122 total of last Michaelmas, giving us a good base for bumps racing over the next few terms.

Despite graduations leaving us with only 10 senior women returning from last year, we recruited many an enthusiastic novice to back up our crew, even taking some of them racing in IWL A and B. We used the slow stream to train up some novice coxes too, with 5 senior



Lucia Pyne, Women's Co-Captain

and 2 novice women coxing boats, resulting in an impressive zero crashes, bumps or bruises. IWL-A saw 3 rowers and a cox racing for the first time, and we placed 16th of 22, a strong start for a partial novice boat.

The novice recruitment was a huge success this term, and the commitment from the novices paid off, with some impressive individual results in BUCS beginner indoor regatta 1k (including 3rd, 5th and 6th), backed up by a few senior athletes in the 2k. The highlight of the novice women's term was beating 4 crews to reach the semi-finals of Tamesis Novice Regatta, the furthest Catz women have gotten since 1998!



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



The Women's Novice VIII.

The end of term finished with a lovely Christmas dinner and commitment from all the boat club members to a 'Christmas Miles' challenge to keep us strong for next term.

150 Years Ago

In 1875 Lt Neville Chamberlain (no, not that one) is credited with inventing the game of snooker when stationed in Jubbulpore, India. Meanwhile, in Wimbledon Henry Cavendish Jones persuaded the All England Croquet Club to install a lawn tennis court, just for a bit of variety.

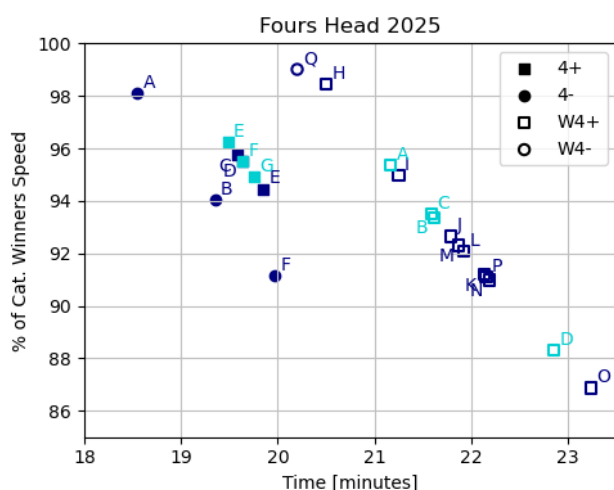
On 6th December there were two major disasters: in South Yorkshire 143 miners died in a firedamp explosion at Swaithe Main Colliery and, off Essex, the SS *Deutschland* ran aground, resulting in the loss of 157? (sources vary) lives, and moving the poet Gerald Manley Hopkins to compose *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. Earlier in the year another German ship, the SS *Schiller* had been wrecked off the Scilly Isles with the loss of 311 lives.

In foreign news, the Ottoman Empire had declared partial bankruptcy, handing control over its finances to European creditors and leading to nationalist uprisings in the Balkans. Twenty years on from the end of the Crimean War, Tsar Alexander II raised an eyebrow

University Crews

Following their recent lack of Boat Race success (just the 1 win in 18 races over the past 3 years) OUBC have had a review. One immediately apparent outcome is that they now keep their supporters regularly updated with latest news, pictures and videos. Another seems to be that they're going to do more racing. So not only did they have 16 crews competing in the Fours Head (plus one non-starter) they also entered eight(!) VIIIs for Wallingford Head, although again one of the men's crews scratched.

Below are the results of the Oxford and Cambridge crews from the Fours Head (15th November). Times are plotted along the x -axis but the y -axis perhaps more usefully shows time as a percentage of the fastest crew in each category (M/W, 4+/4-).



Cambridge only entered 7 crews but before you get too excited they were all in the 'Senior Academic' category, rather than 'Championship', so not their Blue boat candidates. Even so they won both men's and women's coxed fours in this class, while Oxford won nothing. In fact the Cambridge men's crews were all from their lightweight squad, as were their B and D women's crews. The only Oxford crew self-identifying as lightweights was the F 4-, slower than all three of the Cambridge coxed lightweight fours.

In the absence of the Cambridge Blue boat probables, what conclusions can we draw? Well, past results suggest that

to win the Boat Race requires at least two boats within 2% of the fastest time for their boat class. Of the Oxford men, only the A crew managed that and, while both the women's Q and H crews met that bar, the H boat had a couple of alumnae on board who presumably wouldn't be eligible for the Boat Race.

There were two Catz students racing in the Oxford boats: Patrick Moore (from Cornell) was in the B 4- and women's co-captain Ophelia Lanfranchi in the O W4+.

At Wallingford Head the following weekend, Oxford were the fastest women's crew, ahead of Oxford Brookes, but positions were reversed for the men's VIIIs. Cambridge weren't racing and, while I don't expect them to compete directly against Oxford in any head race before the Boat Races, I'll be checking to see if they ever come up against Brookes.

Coming up ...

There will be an update from the University Crews, prospects for Torpids, results of any early-season racing and arrangements for the celebratory dinner. I have been reminded that not only will this mark 150 years of men's rowing but also 50 years since Catz women first raced (Eights 1976).

I hear that the College dining hall might finally be coming back into use after a couple of years off-limits due to RAAC.

Diary

19 Dec 2025	Oxford Trial VIIIs
4-7 Mar 2026	Torpids
7 Mar 2026	RS AGM & Dinner [tbc]
4 Apr 2026	The Boat Races
27-30 May 2026	Eights

Anu Dudhia



The Boat Club Christmas Dinner, in the temporary dining 'shed'