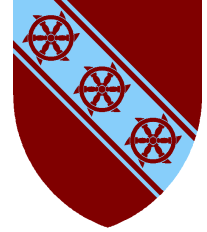




*St Catherine's College Rowing Society*  
*St Catherine's College, Oxford OX1 3UJ*



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

16th May, 2015

**In this issue . . .**

It's a strange world where I find myself standing on the towpath cheering an Oriel victory, but that was Oxford's only success at the Henley Boat Races. However, any thoughts of 2015 being the year of the Light Blue resurgence were emphatically washed away on the Tideway the following weekend. Apart from the BBC Boat Race Commentary team — Matt Pinsent (M.89), Andy Triggs Hodge (M.04) and Zoe de Toledo (M.10) — Catz only participant in this year's student Boat Races was, ahem, batting for the other side. Although Zoe did cox the Oxford Veterans.

This year is the 200th anniversary of Summer Eights (along with events of lesser historical significance, such as the Battle of Waterloo), so it seems a good opportunity to extend my historical diversions to the year 61 BC (Before Catz).

David Morris (M.57) has attempted, rather optimistically, to persuade some of his contemporaries to join him for an outing on the Isis, but they've been slightly more forthcoming with items for the News from Alumni section.

Trinity term is now well under way (this is the end of 3rd week) and we have the details of Summer Eights (27–30 May).



Ladies who *don't* lunch. Catz lightweight triallists Anna Corderoy (left) and Lucy Roberts (right), with former Catz oarswoman Danielle Bishop (now Exeter College) at the Henley Boat Races.

**Results**

**Henley Boat Races, 5th April**

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<i>Women's College Crews</i>			
Christ's	bt	GTC	3/4 L
<i>Men's College Crews</i>			
Oriel	bt	Jesus	3 L
<i>Women's Lightweight</i>			
CUWBCL†	bt	OUWLRC	3 ft 6:26
<i>Men's Lightweight</i>			
CULRC	bt	OULRC	4 ft 5:55

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† Emma Clifton (M.08) (7)

**Veterans' Boat Race, 10th April**

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Oxford†	bt	Cambridge	2 3/4 L 7:52
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† Zoe de Toledo (M.10) (cox)

**Tideway Boat Races, 10/11th April**

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<i>Women's Reserves</i>			
Osiris	bt	Blondie	15 L 18:58
<i>Men's Reserves</i>			
Isis	bt	Goldie	3 L 18:11
<i>Women's Blue Boats</i>			
OUBC	bt	CUBC	6 1/2 L 19:45
<i>Men's Blue Boats</i>			
OUBC	bt	CUBC	6 1/2 L 17:34

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**Henley Boat Races**

A quieter event this year, with the women's heavyweight crews (and their sponsors) relocating to the Tideway. Nevertheless, decent weather and decent crowds for the four-race programme: the intercollegiate races (between the fastest Oxford and Cambridge College crews) and the lightweight races.

In the women's College race, Oxford's Green Templeton, from Div. 3 in Torpids, were up against the Cambridge Lents Head crew, Christ's. While that might seem a little mismatched, GTC had been selected to represent Oxford as a result of an open time trial, where they'd beaten both the Torpids Head crew, Wadham, as well as no.3, St John's. Even so, Christ's got the better start and GTC spent the rest of the race scrambling to catch up.



Cambridge, far side, take a slight lead in the Women's Lightweight Race

In the men's race, Oriol (2nd in Torpids, having beaten Head crew Pembroke in the time trial) raced Jesus (3rd in Lents). Oriol's victory was the most emphatic of the day, although the recorded 3 length verdict was partly due to Jesus easing shortly before the finish having apparently mistaken a blast from some spectator's air horn for the finish signal. That was Oxford's men's 1st victory in the 6 years that this event has been running.

The lightweight races were more closely contested. Cambridge women took an early lead but never gained clear water. Oxford put in a strong finishing sprint but it was just not enough, and Cambridge were given the verdict by 3 feet. The men's race followed a similar pattern, although with rather more aggressive steering, and a bit more shouting, and Cambridge winning by 4 feet.

The Cambridge women's lightweight crew included Catz alumna Emma Clifton (M.08), who rowed in the winning Oxford lightweight crew last year. Together with Torpids Headship blades from Catz and Magdalen, her walls could now be adorned with quite a varied selection of painted woodwork.

So Cambridge's day in the end. Although, like many Oxford supporters, I left muttering 'Just wait 'til next weekend...!'

## Tideway Boat Races

The following Saturday, as you no doubt noticed, the Women's Boat Race was held on the Tideway. Much was said of this being the first time they had been 'allowed' to share the course with the Men's Boat Race, although to be fair to the men, it was mostly of a question of finding a sufficiently generous sponsor who could also come to some agreement with the men's Boat Race sponsor.

Presumably due to limitations of time and tide, the Osiris-Blondie race was held on the Friday (along with the Veterans' Boat Race). Surprisingly, Blondie

took an early lead of half a length. I say surprisingly because what happened next was that Osiris woke up, caught up, rowed through Cambridge, and kept on rowing away to win by 15 lengths.

So, on to the Saturday, with the Women's Boat Race held under the intense glare of live national TV coverage. Oxford were strong

favourites, and seemingly in a mood to erase any misconceptions about women's rowing that might have arisen given all the twee black-and-white archive footage of the early women's Boat Races aired during the build-up. Oxford started hard, continued hard until they got clear of Cambridge (which took about 2 minutes) and then turned the race into a procession. The Oxford stroke, US Olympic oarswoman Caryn Davies, is the same woman who occupied the stroke-seat of the Pembroke men's crew that retained the Eights 2013 Headship.

While the post-race commentators were desperately searching for ways to make the race sound more interesting that it actually was for the neutral viewers, the Isis-Goldie race was quietly unfolding into something of a classic. Goldie went off faster and by the half-way point had built up a lead of a length of clear water. But then the crews hit the headwind, Isis started to move back and rowed through a rapidly tiring Goldie to win by 3 lengths.

And finally the men's Boat Race with Oxford, again, clear favourites. Racing on Middlesex, Oxford established an early lead over Cambridge, and contented themselves with sitting about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a length up, covering Cambridge's every move. Even with the advantage of the inside of the Surrey bend, Cambridge could make no impression. When the crews met the headwind, Oxford just stepped up a gear and Cambridge had nothing left to give.

While Oxford women won in the style of the Boat Races of 20 years ago, the men's victory followed the new pattern of controlling the race to half way before making the break. Both get the job done, but there's no doubt which the BBC would prefer.

In the pre-race interview, the OUBC coach, Sean Bowden, 'admitted' to some concern that, with his crew conceding more than 5 kg a man, they could struggle in the headwind. If that was a sly attempt at misdirection, the recently-deceased (in)famous Oxford coach Dan Topolski would have been proud.

## In the Beginning . . .

The origins of racing in VIIIIs in Oxford are uncertain. In *Oxford Rowing* (published 1900), the Rev W.E. Sherwood, having extensively researched all available records, came up with a contest between Jesus and Brasenose in 1815 and, for want of anything better, that's taken as *the date*.

From subsequent accounts we know that the race is likely to have been between two crews returning from a leisurely excursion below Iffley Lock (a practice continued until 1835) deciding to race the home stretch. With the lock only wide enough for boats in single file, the crews set off individually as soon as they had cleared the lock gates. Christ Church and Exeter joined in what became an annual contest and by 1825 there were too many boats to fit into the lock and racing started alongside the towpath instead. Their boats were more like sea-going vessels, fixed seats with the oarsmen side-by-side, hence much shorter than today.

Boats were kept at Folly Bridge and crews either changed in the Boat House Tavern or in King's Barge moored alongside Christ Church meadow. Races were always held in the evenings, usually two or three days apart. The intention was that there should be sufficient races for the crew which started bottom to attain the Headship if it bumped every day. In practice, once crews had realised that this wasn't to be their year, they 'took off' (scratched) so the number of participating crews, and required days, reduced as the event progressed. The longest event was the Eights of 1844, which was raced over 10 days as Merton rose from 14th to 2nd, but failed to bump Christ Church on the last day. After that marathon effort, which had actually started in Hilary Term, it was agreed that Eights would be fixed at 8 evenings, but not until 1871 that these were consecutive days, with Sundays off, naturally. In 1878 it was reduced to 6 days (Thu-Wed, whence, presumably, the term 'Eights Week') and, in 1954, to 4 days.

College 2nd VIIIIs had occasionally competed but from 1860–1907 Eights was an event just for College 1st VIIIIs, while 2nd and lower boats competed in Torpids, which had started in 1838 and, for a while became the larger event. In 1874, now with 20 Colleges participating, Eights was split into 2 divisions and in 1876 a group of non-Collegiate students, calling themselves St Catherine's, decided it was time to join in the fun.



The 1821 Eights, painted by J.T. Serres. King's Barge is at the centre of the picture, Folly Bridge on the left.

## News from Alumni

### Douglas Adams (M.56)

Although I never aspired to the 1st VIII, we did train pretty hard. Some of the keener ones did weight training — the nearest I ever got was a run round Christ Church Meadow. That sparks memory of rowing a IV over said meadow when it was flooded to a depth of about 18 inches.

Training was all in the boat as far as I remember. We did do 6 a.m. sessions on occasion — wonderful on a bright morning, less so with hard frost around. Most outings were mid-afternoon and strenuous. Followed by a pint of milk and a Penguin (foil wrapped) in the café just across the road from the Society building (on St Aldate's).

Some of the other fun things that stick in the memory: rowing in the summer to the pub by Iffley Lock for a 'pie and a pint' lunch, and rowing gently back again. I think these outings must have been the trigger for the founding of the Beer and Blade Club in 1957 — I still have the tie embroidered with the date, crossed blades and a beer mug. The club had some wonderful dinners — one at the Restaurant Elizabeth near our building. It was the first time I had had food like that.

Winning blades was, of course, a big highlight. After one of those rows, I do remember being as close to total exhaustion as I have ever been in my life — before or since. The ensuing Bump Supper in Hall was also memorable. It may have been after that dinner that some of us took a IV out and rowed up the Chervell to avoid the Thames Conservancy launch which was approaching fast. There had been talk of painting the Pink Post pink — probably just as well that never happened.

### Peter Davies (M.57)

After leaving St Cath's I went backpacking in Europe (no gap years then) once to the Arctic Ocean and back with David (now Professor) Morris. Some language teaching in London and Oxford followed before I decamped with my wife and small daughter to Cyprus where I worked for several years for the British Council and fell in love with all things Greek. I later ran a busy Languages Department at a Hampshire Sixth Form College and then became a lecturer to international students at the University of Portsmouth. I have regularly undertaken numerous translation projects and published several language textbooks, a children's book, and educational reviews.

Rowing at St Cath's was always great fun, though our training VIII's were cumbersome clinker-built concoctions in which you felt part of an invading Viking horde minus a sail. We once collected a brand new shell from the Putney workshops and rowed it all the way back to Oxford in the winter, having had an interesting encounter with a large expanse of ice which first appeared to be a welcoming millpond until we tried to dig our blades into it. Our training clinker would have survived without a scratch.

### David Morris (M.57)

After leaving St Cath's I was a Post-Doc Fellow at Brown University in Medical Sciences, Providence, Rhode Island. After stint in UK with Pharmaceutical Industry I returned to join The Miriam Hospital as part of Brown University Medical School becoming a Full Professor of Pathology in 1981. I teach Endocrinology and Biochemistry, and was Director of Clinical Biochemistry until last July (when I became Emeritus Professor of Pathology), directing and introducing Total Biochemistry Laboratory Automation Systems for each of the major Hospitals associated with Medical School.

I ran a NIH funded research program for over 30 years investigating mineralocorticoid and glucocorticoid steroid hormones and their relationship to Sodium Homeostasis and Blood Pressure, publishing over 140 research papers, culminating with papers last year implicating intestinal bacteria in steroid metabolism steps related to high blood pressure.

As Peter has written, we travelled a lot together with a memorable trip over the Arctic Circle in northern Finland and Norway.

My fondest remembrances are associated with rowing in 1st and 2nd Torpids in 1958 and 1959, and the fun associated with Richard Hill and Rob Roughly, Captains of boats at that time. I had always wanted to row as a teenager and they made that dream pos-

sible. One of the main things it taught me was team spirit, and keeping eyes in boat, which has served me well in sailing and yacht racing here in RI and neighbouring Massachusetts.



David Morris (M.57) (left) and Hugh Moore (M.55) joined by younger past and present members of Boat Club for an outing on 25th April.

### Eights 2015

Eights will be from 27–30 May. St Catherine's have entered six crews, with the men's and women's 3rd Eights having to qualify in Rowing On.

#### Eights 2015: Wednesday Start Times

Crew	Div	Bunghline	Time
Men's 1st Eight	I	9	6.45pm
Women's 1st Eight	II	8	5.15pm
Men's 2nd Eight	IV	7	3.40pm
Women's 2nd Eight	IV	13	3.00pm

NB: on Sat. all divisions race 1 hour earlier

### Coming Up ...

In the next issue there will be reports and photos of the launch of the new women's VIII (which has *finally* arrived), Summer Eights, news of our internationals and an update on RS finances. Contributions from alumni always welcome.

Anu Dudhia

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Row.Soc: <http://www.atm.ox.ac.uk/rowing/rs.html>

[www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=93221115264](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=93221115264)

### Diary

27–30 May 2015 Summer Eights  
27 June 2015 Gaudy Paddle