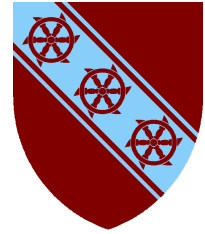




*St Catherine's College Rowing Society*  
*St Catherine's College, Oxford OX1 3UJ*



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

8th May, 2023

**In this issue ...**

Another clean sweep of the Boat Races for Cambridge and last year's wins for OUBC and Isis now look more like a post-Olympic glitch than the start of an Oxford revival. Not content with dominating the present, Cambridge also set about erasing memories of past defeats by taking both veterans' races. Three Catz students, and one alumnus, took on their share of the pain. Helen Nielsen-Scott shares some reflections on her time with Osiris.

The Radcliffe Observatory has recorded the wettest Oxford March since their records began (1767) and the Red Flag was up until 0th week (mid-April). Luckily the Boat Club had flown south for their Easter training camp. As you'll have noticed from Saturday's coronation, we're not done with the rain yet but the vegetation is now soaking it all up and hopefully the multicoloured bunting of the various river flags can safely be packed away for the summer.

After last term's results I think we're all approaching Eights with a fair degree of trepidation. However, I think I can convince myself that our 1st VIIIs should, give or take the odd shark, be venturing into safer waters this term.

And finally, after nearly 40 years of service, our boatman Jim Ronaldson is paddling off into the sunset. No, I don't mean in the metaphorical sense. He is literally planning to row across the Atlantic.

**Results**

**Lightweight Boat Races, 20th March**

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<i>Women's Lightweights</i>				
Cambridge	bt	Oxford	6 L	ntt
<i>Men's Lightweights</i>				
Cambridge	bt	Oxford <sup>1</sup>	11 L	ntt

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<sup>1</sup> Zac Abel at Bow

**Veterans' Boat Races, 25th March**

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<i>Women's Race</i>				
Cambridge	bt	Oxford	5 L	9:24
<i>Men's Race</i>				
Cambridge	bt	Oxford <sup>1</sup>	5 L	7:31

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<sup>1</sup> Ante Kusurin (M.06) at Stroke

**The Boat Races, 26th March**

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<i>Women's Boat Race</i>				
Cambridge	bt	Oxford	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> L	20:29
<i>Women's Reserves</i>				
Blondie	bt	Osiris <sup>1</sup>	3 L	21:20
<i>Men's Reserves</i>				
Goldie	bt	Isis	1 L	18:53
<i>Men's Boat Race</i>				
Cambridge	bt	Oxford <sup>2</sup>	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub> L	18:18

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<sup>1</sup> Helen Nielsen-Scott at 3

<sup>2</sup> Freddy Orpin at 3



Meanwhile, on a lake far, far away ... Catz rowers take to the water on their Easter training camp in Varese, Italy.

## City Bumps, 23rd April

18 Men's VIII's raced

R1	2nd Div II	Rowed Over	=
R2	2nd Div II	Rowed Over	=
R3	2nd Div II	bpd Jesus	+1
	10th Div I	bpd Wadham	+1
R4	8th Div I	bpd by University II	-1

## Isis Spring League A, 30th April

62 crews raced

1st	4:21.0	University A	1st/25 M8
3rd	4:37.5	<b>St Catz A</b>	3rd/25 M8
18th	5:18.5	Lincoln A	1st/23 W8
35th	5:40.0	<b>St Catz A</b>	8th/23 W8

## The Boat Races

The first ominous signs appeared in the lightweight races. While it was no surprise that Cambridge won the women's race, their men's 11 length victory over an experienced Oxford crew was a shock. Without some drastic overhaul — discussed below — the future of Oxford lightweight rowing looks very bleak indeed.

The main Boat Races were rowed the following weekend in unusually rough conditions, particularly over the first part of the course.

In the women's Boat Race Cambridge got themselves ahead but then played a dangerous game crossing into Oxford's water far too soon. Oxford, naturally, made a big push for the bump, so attempting a win by disqualification, but Cambridge (subsequently backed-up by video evidence) just about got away with it.

In the Osiris-Blondie race there was a heavy clash soon after the start (with the umpire warning Oxford) but having disentangled themselves Osiris seemed to be having more problems with the rough water than Blondie who gradually began to pull away.

The Isis-Goldie race was hard-fought, with the lead changing several times until Goldie took control on the final bend.

Finally in the men's race Oxford, on the Middlesex station, took an early lead but as the crews hit the rough water, the Cambridge cox steered for the calmer reaches of the Fulham shore and by the time Oxford had decided to join them they were half a length down and never recovered (it was the exact same ploy used by Oxford in the '87, the year of 'the mutiny'). On another day, I think either of the men's races could have gone Oxford's way.

The Veterans' Boat Races, now with a women's crew for the second year, are rowed the day before

the main boat races, partly as a rehearsal. Oxford won both last year's races so I suppose a reaction from the Cambridge alumni was inevitable and this year they weren't just there for fun. While the men's crews were evenly matched in age (44) and weight (14st), the Cambridge women not only included three Olympic medallists, they also averaged 6 years younger than Oxford (43 v 49). I daresay they were heavier than Oxford, too, but somehow that information seemed not to make it into the official programme.

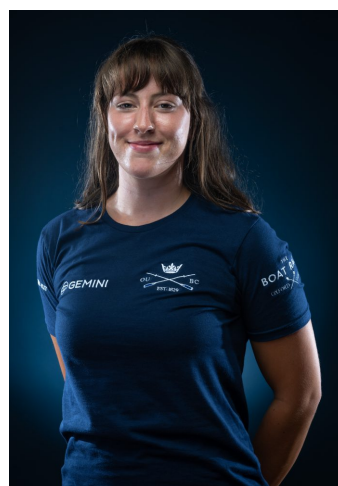
Looking at the bigger picture, Cambridge nowadays race as a single club, CUBC, and few would argue that this has been anything but beneficial for their women's and lightweight crews, and with no apparent detriment to their men's heavyweights. Simply on logistical grounds, this makes obvious sense.

Somewhat belatedly OUBC and OUWBC are now undergoing their own process of amalgamation and one hopes that the lightweights will also be included. I assume that Oxford's difficulties are financial rather than political — Oxford's University rowing is less well-endowed than Cambridge's, and simply cannot afford to fund 6 Boat Race crews at the same level.

## Rowing with Osiris

### Helen Nielsen-Scott, Osiris no. 3

After learning to row at a Catz training camp during the Trinity term of my first year, I caught the rowing bug and decided to spend my last year at Oxford



Helen Nielsen-Scott  
(Photo: theboatraces.org)

trailing with OUWBC, which was been an immensely rewarding and surreal experience. Having dedicated around six months of training 12 times a week, it was of course disappointing to not get the win against Blondie in the Reserve Boat Race. Nevertheless, there have been many highlights to the season, including a Christmas training camp in Temple-sur-

Lot, which was, by all accounts, a big improvement from last year's rather rainy camp in Wimbleball. I am looking forward to more summer racing (finals dependent!) and cheering Catz on in Summer Eights!



Catz men's VIII racing in ISL-A

Catz men put out a scratch crew for City Bumps, a more polished version for ISL-A, but are still expecting a few more reinforcements. I'm less sure about the women's boat club — their only squad rower being 'finalised' — but, with a large number of novices, they should be going into Eights with almost twice the rowing experience they had at the start of Torpids.

## Easter Training Camp

### Lachlan Stewart, Men's Co-Captain

Before the start of Trinity Term, SCCBC again embarked on a five-day training camp on the beautiful Lago di Monate in Varese, Northern Italy. A solid core of the squad was in attendance, spanning athletes with several years of rowing experience through to newer members with just two terms. We were very fortunate to have the entire lake to ourselves for three sessions each day, and access to a full complement of shells. The majority of time was spent making use of an 8+ and 4-, with mixed experience levels (for example, a 4- with three more experienced athletes and one newer one). This was highly productive in terms of athlete development, with a large number of people showing significant development throughout the week, and this progress has been evident during the opening part of Trinity Term. Everyone also had a chance to gain some experience in sculling and small boats, which was also very worthwhile. All in all, it was an incredibly enjoyable and successful five days, and we are already excited and beginning to plan for another, very similar trip next year.

## Summer Eights

Summer Eights will be from 24–27th May, with racing from 12:15 (W.Div VII) until 18:15 (M.Div I), and everything moved forwards an hour on the Saturday. Catz are planning on entering at least 2 men's and 2 women's Eights, but the 'Army of the Dead' may turn up at the last minute to leap into their boat and defend their 3rd Eight Headship. Both W2 and M3 would have to 'row on' but, in recent Eights that's largely been a matter of getting up the course without being disqualified.

## Eights 2023

Starting positions of Catz 1st Eights and Torpids changes in position

Men's Div I		Women's Div II	
1 Oriel	-2	1 St Anne's	-4
2 Christ Church	+1	2 <b>St Catherine's</b>	-9
3 Keble	+4	3 Balliol	+2
4 Pembroke	+3	4 St John's	-1
5 Wolfson	+2	5 G.T.C.	+4
6 Wadham	-5	6 Linacre	=
7 Balliol	-2	7 Lincoln	+7
8 S.E.H.	-5	8 Somerville	=
9 <b>St Catherine's</b>	-6	9 L.M.H.	+1
10 Magdalen	=	10 Trinity	+1
11 University	+4	11 Wolfson II	-4
12 Trinity	-11	12 Mansfield	+4

Our men start behind S.E.H., who were encouragingly slow in Torpids and in City Bumps, but posted some quite respectable times at Bedford Regatta yesterday. Behind Catz are Magdalen, who are yet to race, but there is no reason to expect them to be particularly fast. Other crews are probably similar to their Torpids form, although I expect L.M.H. to replace Trinity after the first day. So, with slower crews ahead and faster crews behind, the first day may well determine the rest of the week.

The women's 1st Eight start behind St Anne's, who rowed well enough in City Bumps but haven't raced since. After the first day they could send down Hertford whom Catz might catch if they can keep ahead of Balliol, but Balliol are an unknown quantity. Behind Balliol are St John's, who were 8 s quicker than Catz in the ISL-A, but then G.T.C. and Linacre who were slower. Lincoln are probably the fastest crew in the division.



Catz women's VIII racing in ISL-A

## Atlantic Challenge

Jim Ronaldson has been the boatman for Catz, and several other colleges, since the late 1980s. If you thought it was the magic pixies that came in the night and repaired all the damage you'd inflicted on the equipment during the day, no, it was actually Jim.

Now pushing 70, instead of winding down, he's decided to take on the Talisker Whiskey Atlantic Challenge, the annual fleet of rowing boats that sets out from the Canaries each December, heading for Antigua, 3000 miles away. And Jim being Jim, he doesn't just want to row it, he's also after a record. In his case as one of the oldest pair to complete the challenge.



Ian Davies & Jim Ronaldson (on the boat) before the start of a 24 hr erg fund-raiser in Oxford's Westgate Shopping Centre a couple of weeks ago.

Naturally, as soon as I heard that he was on the lookout for any currently active rowers of a certain age to help meet that requirement, I did what any sane person would do, and kept well out of his way. But it seems he's now found a fellow traveller so I can come out of hiding.

Of course there are funds to raise and charities to support so I'll pass on the link

[gofundme/543789a4](https://gofundme.com/543789a4)

I've made a contribution based on how much

I would have paid someone else to take my place if Jim had managed to pin me down and persuade me to sign on. Quite a lot, it turns out.

If you do decide to contribute, please leave a message to say you're from Catz. Come the end of racing on the first day of Eights, when Jim comes back to the boathouse to survey the long list of damage requiring his attention, perhaps then he'll look more kindly on our own Captains' requests.

## Coming up ...

In the next issue there will be results and photos from Summer Eights, and I'll also be sending the usual evening round-ups to all those on the RS email list. We'll have the Captains' reports on the term's rowing as a whole, and the announcement of the winner of this year's Ben Sylvester Award.

Finally, this serves as advance notice of the Gaudy Paddle, which is open to any RS members in the area, not just those attending the Gaudy. For calibration, those returning for the Gaudy will now be in their 40s. Therefore still far to young to be of any interest to the tow-path press-gangs rumoured to be lurking around these parts.

Anu Dudhia

## Diary

20 May 2023	Eights Rowing On
24-27 May 2023	Summer Eights
24 Jun 2023	Gaudy (M.1993-2002)